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Virgil Donati

A LEGEND IN THE MAKING

Punk Rules!

Ron Welty

Of The Offspring

Clem Burke

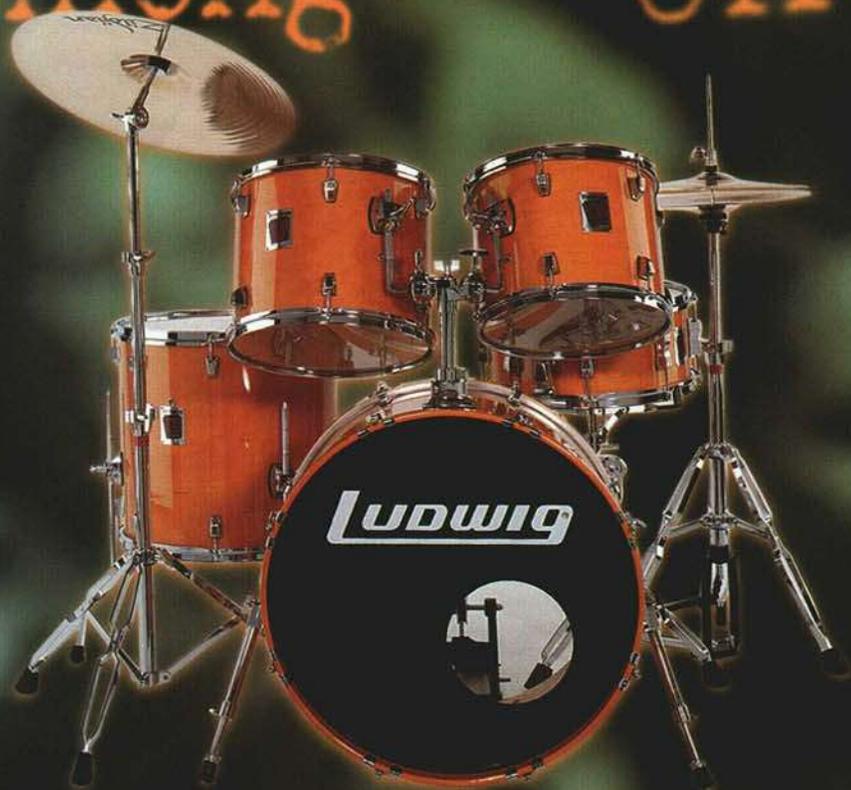
The Return of Blondie

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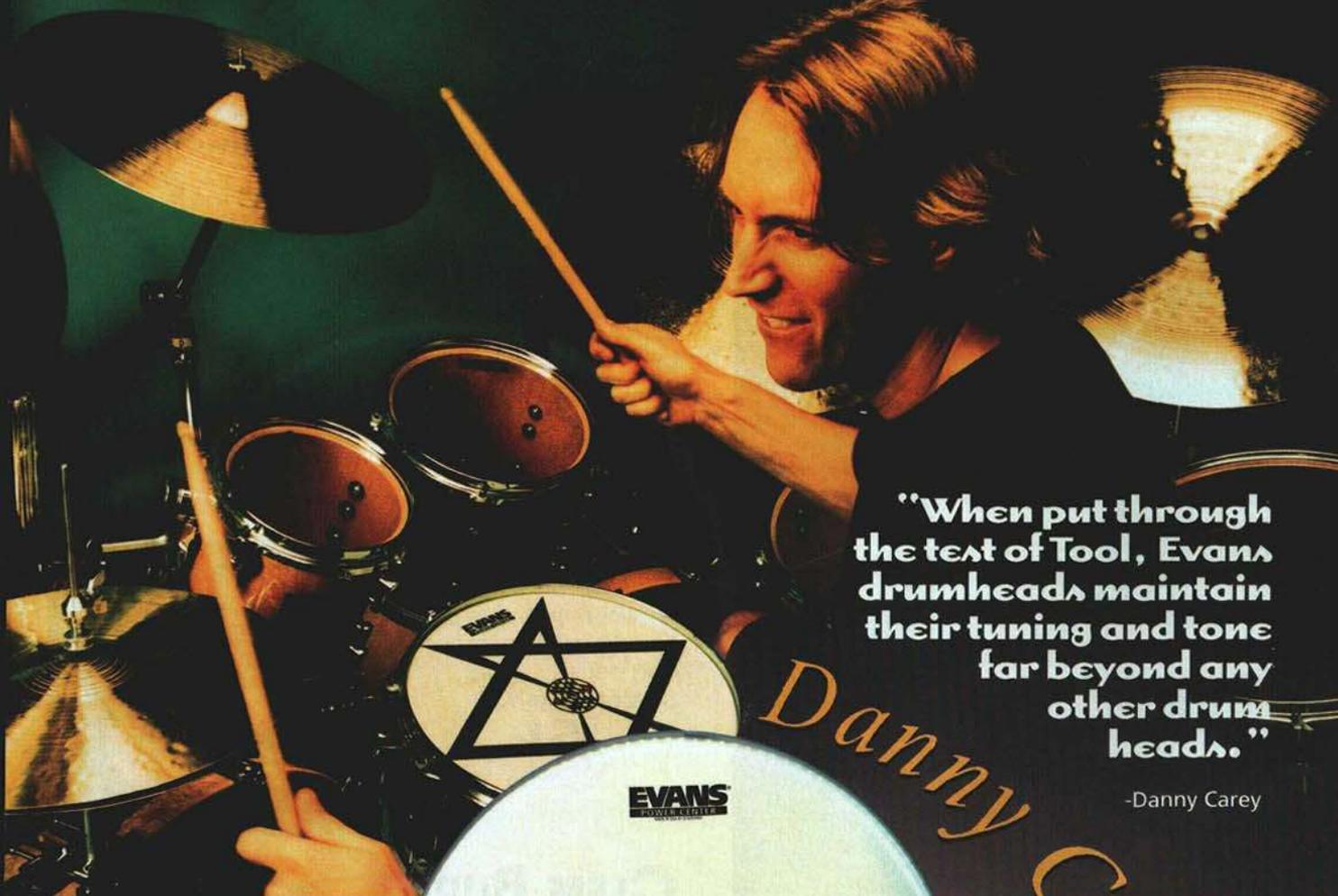
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Danny Carey

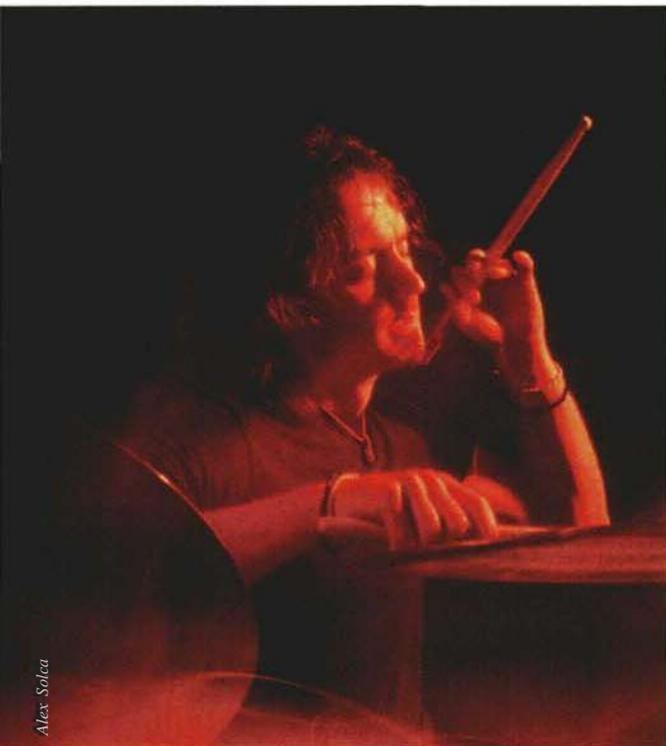


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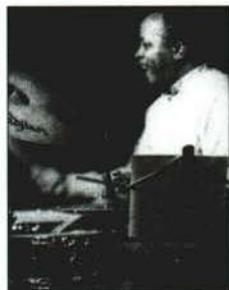
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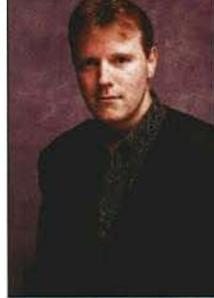
Live Well. Drum Well.



It's not just New age, throughout the ages drumming has had a link with mental, physical and spiritual health.



Drumming Is Great Series: No. 5/Layne Redmond



Don't Give Up!

It was a depressing sight. Seeing a young drummer being brought almost to tears by another drummer's performance was upsetting, to say the least. Drumming should be a positive experience, something that's rewarding, something that you find fulfilling—something that just plain makes you happy.

It happened at last November's Percussive Arts Society convention, at a clinic given by this issue's cover artist, Virgil Donati. I was sitting in the second row, behind two young drummers—I'd guess they were about twelve or thirteen years old. From what they were saying before the performance it was clear that they had heard of Donati, but had never actually seen him play. They both sat there fidgeting with sticks in hand, happily twirling and tapping on their legs, waiting for the clinic to begin.

Well, if you've seen Virgil Donati play, you know what a spectacular performer he is. He's completely dedicated to the instrument and works incredibly hard at his craft. I won't take up space here describing Virgil's work ethic or playing style (it's all in the story), but let me just say that by the end of his fifty-minute clinic, a lot of drummers in the room were shocked. I'd imagine a few were upset. And unfortunately, at least one young man—one of the kids sitting in front of me—was about to give up. "I'll never be that good," he told his buddy, looking down, shaking his head. "What's the point?"

I've seen this same scenario play out a number of times over the years, where a great drummer plays well and essentially rocks the world of some young drummer. This of course happens in varying degrees to everybody at some point—me included. I can remember, when I was growing up, thinking I was hot stuff on the drums. But the first time I saw Buddy Rich, Louie Bellson, and Billy Cobham, I was pretty shaken up. It hurt my ego, and made me realize that I had a lot to learn. But it didn't stop me from doing the thing I love.

I want to make the point that *all* of us should try our best to shed the competitive attitude we have about each other. Rather than being upset by another drummer's good performance, we should be open to it. Take what you can from a performance—inspiration, technique, showmanship...maybe just one lick—and add it to your repertoire. Make it your own. Don't let somebody else's *positive* work affect you in a negative way.

And to the younger or less-experienced drummers reading this, hey, there's nothing wrong with being blown away by some monster player. Use it to fuel your desire to improve. Appreciate the work that the artist has put in, and realize that you too can make a contribution to the instrument if you apply yourself. Who knows? Maybe someday *you'll* be the one inspiring other drummers.

Bill Miller

MODERN DRUMMER®

Volume 23, Number 6

The World's Most Widely Read Drum Magazine



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MODERN DRUMMER magazine (ISSN 01944533) is published monthly by **MODERN DRUMMER Publications, Inc.**, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. PERIODICALS MAIL POSTAGE paid at Cedar Grove, NJ 07009 and at additional mailing offices. Copyright 1999 by **MODERN DRUMMER Publications, Inc.** All rights reserved. Reproduction without the permission of the publisher is prohibited.

EDITORIAL/ADVERTISING/ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES: **MODERN DRUMMER Publications, Inc.**, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Tel: (973) 239-4140. Fax: (973) 239-7139. E-mail: mdinfo@moderndrummer.com

MODERN DRUMMER ONLINE: www.moderndrummer.com

MODERN DRUMMER welcomes manuscripts and photographic material, however, cannot assume responsibility for them. Such items must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Printed in The United States

SUBSCRIPTIONS: US, Canada, and Mexico \$34.97 per year; \$56.97, two years. Other international \$41.97 per year, \$63.97, two years. Single copies \$4.95.

SUBSCRIPTION CORRESPONDENCE: Modern Drummer, PO Box 480, Mt. Morris, IL 61054-0480. Change of address: Allow at least six weeks for a change. Please provide both old and new address. Toll free tel: (800) 551-3786.

MUSIC DEALERS: Modern Drummer is available for resale at bulk rates. Direct correspondence to Modern Drummer Retail Vision, 2 Maple Street, Suite 6, Middlebury, VT 05753, (800) 381-1288.

INTERNATIONAL LICENSING REPRESENTATIVE: Robert Abramson & Associates, Inc. Libby Abramson, President, 720 Post Road, Scarsdale, NY 10583.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Modern Drummer, PO Box 480, Mt. Morris, IL 61054.

MEMBER: Magazine Publishers Of America
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 by email: rvh@moderndrummer.com

DAVID SILVERIA

I would personally like to thank Matt Peiken and *MD* for a terrific article on David Silveria [March '99 *MD*]. Mr. Silveria has to be one of the most remarkably down-to-earth drummers in the industry today. Not only is he my greatest influence, but he also gives me faith and reassurance that I too can someday be a talented drummer. In this age of out-of-this-world drummers whose skill level appears to be unobtainable, we find artists like David who make the art of drumming enjoyable and encouraging. Thanks again for the inspiration.



Matthew Pord
 via Internet

Thanks for the great March issue featuring my favorite drummer, David Silveria. You'll probably get a lot of mail from the jazz players saying it sucked, but it's the best *MD* so far! If it wasn't for Dave, I don't know if I'd be drumming today. I think it's great that *MD* presents so many artists from so many different music styles.

Steve Sype
 via Internet

BILL WARD

When I was growing up as a drummer in the late '70s, Bill Ward was the one true influence on my playing style. The way he described his role in Black Sabbath's music in your March feature is an exact description of the way I see myself today. I like to color the music, or go with a vocal line to add something behind it, or play different fills even while playing the same song twice in a row.

Bill's playing on the old Sabbath albums

holds up to any of the other drummers from that era—and to most drummers from this one. The music of Black Sabbath is heavy, and can be difficult to play. For Bill Ward to be out on the road after all he has gone through makes me respect him even more. Thank you, Bill!

gunther2
 via Internet

Your interview with the legendary Bill Ward was much appreciated. It's about time, people! Every time I listen to the drumming on the first few Sabbath albums, I always find something new to marvel at. Thanks for the great article!

Will Broadbent
 via Internet

CINDY BLACKMAN

Your March '99 interview with Cindy Blackman was awesome. She showed intelligence, experience, and knowledge that is sometimes lacking in interviews. She proves that more can go into drums than just beating the hell out of something. Thanks!

Mike Brawdy
 via Internet

TOMMY LEE UNLEASHED

I am a longtime subscriber of *Modern Drummer*, and I consider it to be the bible for drummers from all walks of life. Your magazine has always been very educational and informative. But I gotta ask: What possible reason did you have to give a standard human being like Tommy Lee a full page of publicity?

Of all the great drummers out there, why would you pollute your pages with the likes of a convicted wife-beater? What kind of example are you setting for all the young people who read your magazine?

A person like Lee should not be glorified in an otherwise credible magazine! He beat his wife and she left him. She agreed to a reconciliation, and he beat her again. He went to jail, and she left him for good—a very sound decision on her part. With

regard to the fact that she refuses to reconcile with him again, he states in the article: "I wish it wasn't happening to me and my kids." This unremorseful jerk is virtually blaming his wife for hurting him and their children because she won't reconcile.

Lee says he's more appreciative of the natural beauty around him—but not once does he mention feeling bad for all the pain and suffering he's caused. He's so into himself he can't even feel for anybody else. What's next—a full-page ad with O.J. Simpson saying, "I love my Pearl Masters Series"! Please leave the garbage out of your magazine!

Richard Lombardo
 via Internet

LONNIE WILSON

Kudos for your story on Lonnie Wilson in the March '99 issue. Lonnie is a fantastic player—and a heck of a nice guy. He recommended me for my first gig when I moved to Nashville two years ago! There are not a lot of guys in his position who would have taken the time to help a "new kid in town."

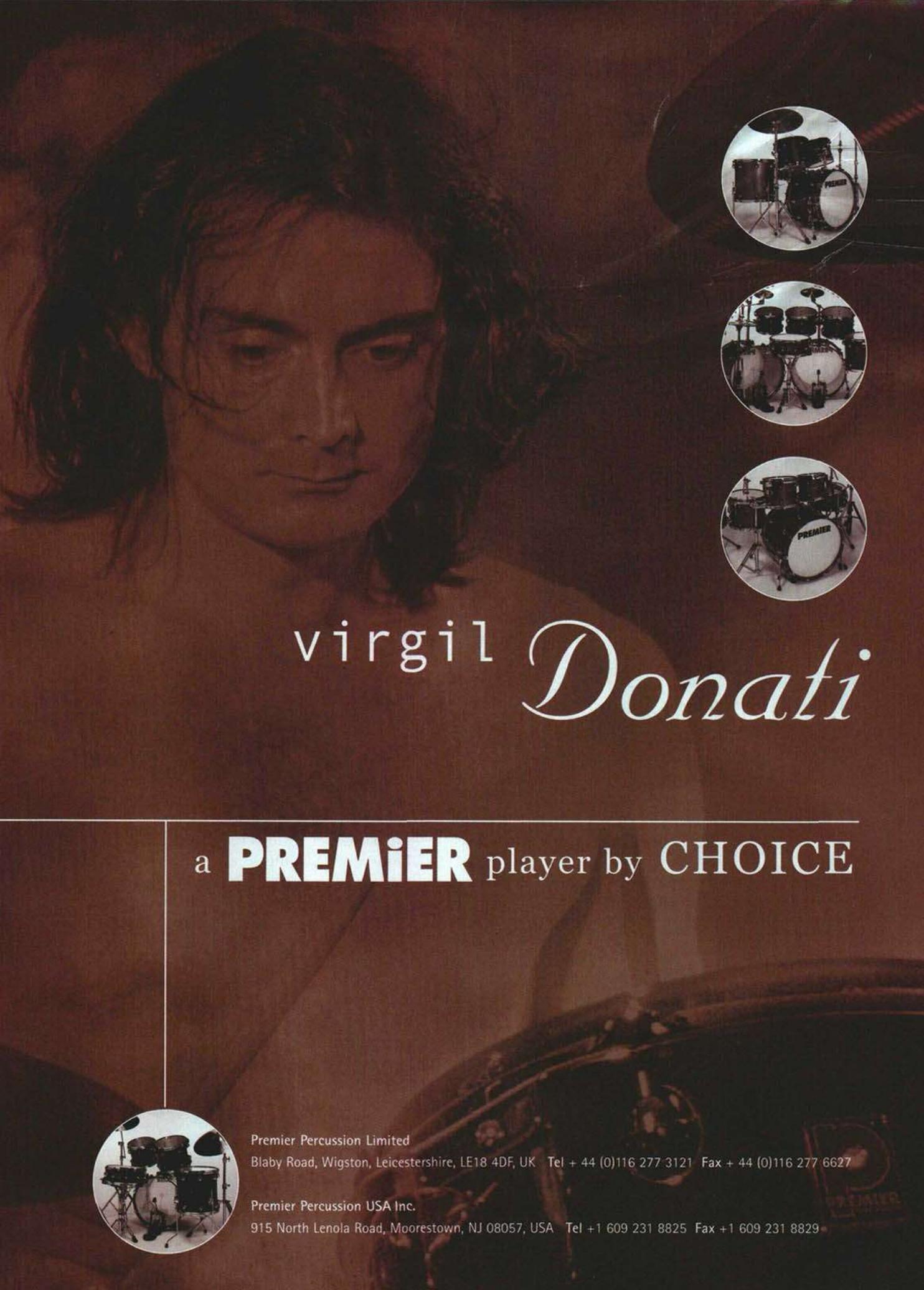
Now, how about articles on some of Nashville's other top recording drummers? I'd suggest Greg Morrow, Steve Brewster, Shannon Forrest, Chris McHugh, and Chad Cromwell.

As a side note, I want to say that I have not missed an issue of *MD* since 1984! Keep up all of the great work!

Rich Redmond
 Nashville, TN

YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT YOU MIGHT LEARN

I was going through back issues of *MD* recently, and I was quite dismayed at the negative *Readers' Platform* letters that show up every now and again. It's amazing how many people berate this drummer or that drummer who made it to the cover. I remember when I first picked up a *Modern Drummer* with Vinnie Paul (a great drummer) on the front cover. His music, along with that of many other hard-rock favorites, was what I was listening to at the time. However, through a long association



virgil *Donati*

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with *Modern Drummer* that began with that article (on a drummer some drum snobs would've dismissed) I have come to learn about, listen to, and ultimately appreciate masters such as Roy Haynes, Elvin Jones, and the late, great Tony Williams. I love listening to these guys now. But had *MD* never put drummers I could identify with at the time on its cover, I might have never been exposed to the great drummers of the past. My point is, when you only put one part of the drumming community on the cover, that's the only readership you attract. That would be a great disservice to a lot of folks—particularly to that young and impressionable drummer who picks up *MD* to read about David Silveria, and gets introduced to Buddy Rich. Thanks, *Modern Drummer*, for not being too elitist.

SBM
via Internet



AVOIDING CYMBAL BREAKAGE

In the March '99 *It's Questionable* department Chris Parson asked how to avoid cymbal breakage. I used to break cymbals left and right. I tried larger and heavier cymbals (16" rock, 18" mediums and rock, and 19" rock, of all manufactures), but they would still break. My solution: smaller sticks. I went from *2B* to *5A*, and ultimately to a great Zildjian *6A*. These sticks have been very consistent and durable. Of course, eventually they do break, but replacing broken sticks is a lot cheaper than replacing broken cymbals.

Chuck Geisel
Lewisville, TX



KUDOS TO VIC FIRTH

I am writing you in praise of Vic Firth, Inc. As the father of a disabled son, my main focus over the course of his disability has been to seek treatment and therapy for him. In the course of his occupational therapy I saw a therapist work with a little girl using drumsticks. Being a drummer myself, I took special interest. I asked the therapist what she was doing. She explained that many disabled children have a bilateral disorder. That is, trouble using both sides of their body at once. It seems that children

will play with drumsticks bilaterally, even when they won't often engage in other bilateral activities. In other words, it's always fun to hit a drum!

Unfortunately, resources for therapeutic aids are few and far between for some of these disabled children. Many times families are spending more than their salaries on therapies for their children. Knowing that the school system also has very limited resources, I decided to contact Vic Firth, Inc. I know that Vic Firth does not sell "seconds," but I figured that they must have *some* sticks that did not make the cut.

I spoke to a very friendly Ms. Bartlett at Vic Firth, and she was only too glad to help. They sent twelve pairs of sticks, in kid sizes, to the developmental preschool that my son attends. Everyone was thrilled. Most likely these sticks will be of great use for years, seeing as how the children won't be putting them through rimshot and cymbal torture.

I am extremely thankful for this gesture, and I am proud to be part of the same drumming community as Vic Firth, Inc. I have been playing Firth sticks for about fifteen years. I guess I will always play them.

Ian Braun
via Internet

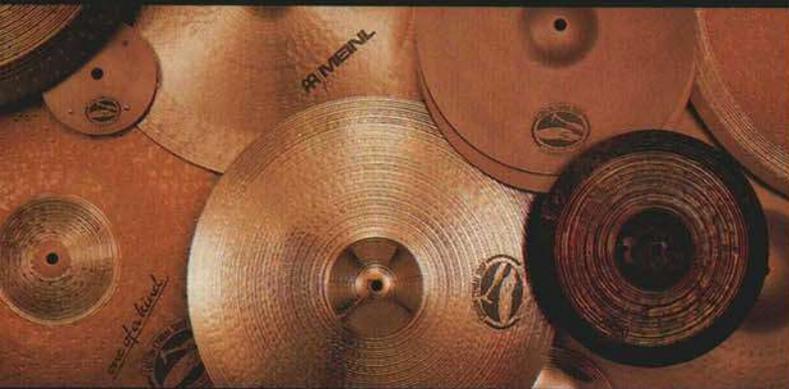


CORRECTION

In our February '99 *Show Drummers' Seminar profile* of Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey circus drummer Sam Wiley, Sam was quoted as saying that he auditioned for the "blue unit" band in 1994 after listening to then-drummer Tim McGinley play the show in Los Angeles. In point of fact, Tim had already left the show by that time, and had been replaced by Matt Hankie—who was only seventeen at the time. Matt toured with the blue unit until August of '94, when he left to attend the University of Miami. Sam Wiley confirms that he did, in fact, learn the show from Matt, rather than from Tim McGinley.

Matt has since returned to the circus. He is currently touring as the drummer with the red unit band.





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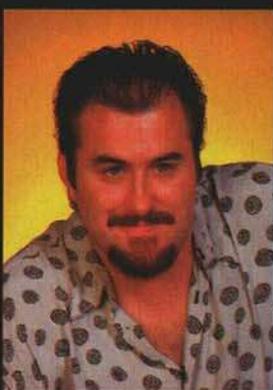
Marco Minnemann (Germany)
H-Blockx, Illegal Aliens



RAKER

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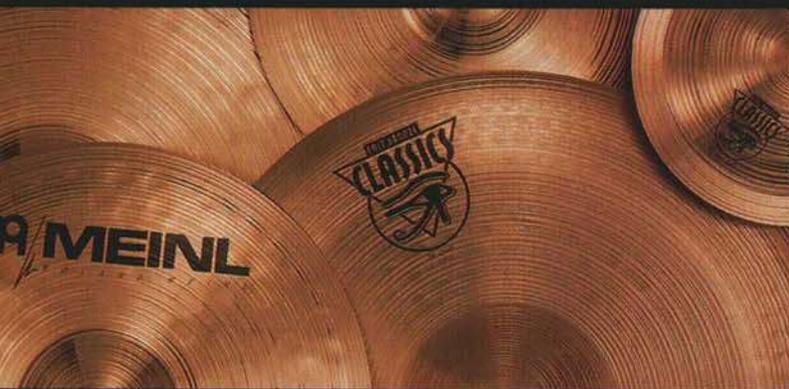
Clyde Stubblefield (USA)
John 'Jabo' Starks (USA)
James Brown



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Tom Williams (USA)
Nashville Studios



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Peter Michael Escovedo (USA)
E-Train



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Keith Capsuto (USA)
E'nuff Said, Clinician



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bass drum claws with rubber hoop isolators and Air Suspension floor tom feet help your kit perform as good as it sounds.

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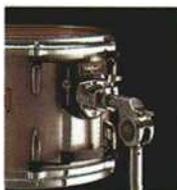
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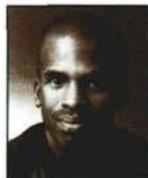
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René Creemers

Dutch Treat

Dutchman Rene Creemers has built up a reputation as one of the best drummers in Europe. In addition to his work with the band Blowbeat, who should have a new CD out this year, Rene has become one of the most in-demand clinicians in Europe. "I bought a house last year," Creemers says, proudly, "so I need to work more! But I'm a bit over-worked and have been feeling it. When you get to my age [thirty-nine], you need to take better care of yourself."

Last year saw the release of a CD Creemers did with longtime friend and bassist Pieter Douma. *Paradox* is an all-instrumental outing showing off Creemers' drumming chops and composing skills. "I put out the CD myself, and it's been a lot of work," Rene explains, adding that these days he has to be a businessman as much as a drummer. "It takes a lot of my time away from the drums to organize distribution." To support the release, he and Pieter have been trekking across Europe doing clinics and performances.

Rene also maintains a busy teaching schedule in Holland and Germany, and with the help of one of his old students, Andy Gillmann, he has put together an instructional book. "Like a lot of other books," Creemer says, "*Drummer's*



Inspiration deals with coordination. But there are some interesting concepts of mine. It's about a hundred pages long and has a CD with exercises, soloing concepts, and some drum duets. It's aimed at advanced drummers, to help them develop their own grooves."

All this hard work has paid off, as the readers of the Dutch drum magazine *Slagwerkkrant* voted Rene "drummer's drummer" in 1996 and "best fusion drummer" in 1997 and '98. (Learn more about Rene at his Web site, members.tripod.com/~Creemers/index.html.)



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Matt Johnson

A Sheik Gig

When Matt Johnson first came to New York City from Houston ten years ago, he was ready to jump head-first into the city's fabled jazz scene. The only problem was that once he really looked at that world, he lost interest. "Eventually I figured out that jazz has very little, if anything, to do with what I wanted to do on an emotional level," he explains. "That's my own personal idiosyncrasy; it doesn't reflect the quality of jazz as a music. I found that I resonate much more in the field of rock."

While it was a dramatic shift in styles, Johnson did not leave those jazz roots behind. In fact, that vibe still inspires the way he plays. "The idea of playing

dynamically is something that jazz musicians are masters of," he says. "There's also a certain amount of improvisation in jazz that's good to apply to any music."

The first time Matt had a chance to show those influences on any type of release was while playing on Jeff Buckley's 1994 effort, *Grace*. Johnson was a member of Buckley's band for a couple of years, leaving a year before the singer's death in 1997. Subsequent work included gigs with Elysian Fields, former Fishbone member Chris Dowd, and Tom Freund. Johnson has lately found a home with the more pop-oriented singer Duncan Sheik, a relationship that Johnson says is just fine for singer and drummer. "I think Duncan wanted somebody with a little more edge than his first record," he explains. "I'm not a hard hit-

ter, but I think there's a certain kind of passionate explosiveness that he wanted to have in the rhythm section that wasn't on the first record."

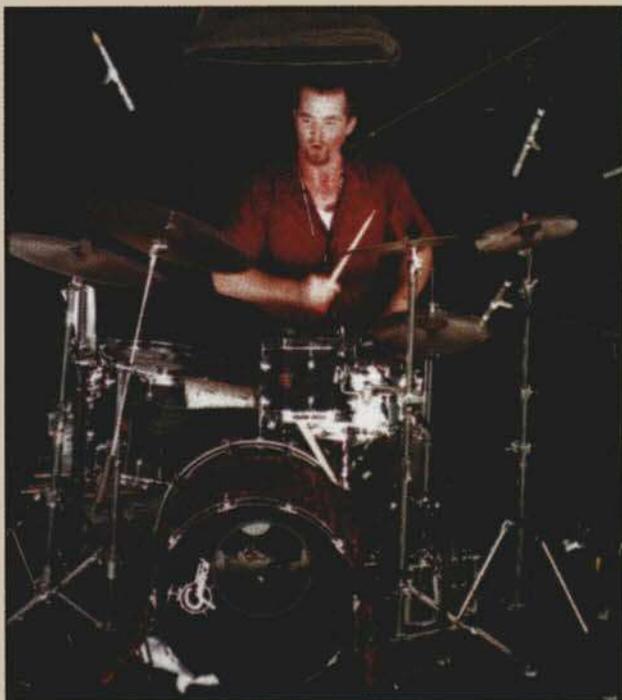
Not only does Johnson contribute traditional drumkit to Sheik's *Humming* album, he also plays tabla. Matt feels that his recent study of tabla and North Indian classical music adds another dimension to his playing. "Ultimately my influences over the past three years have been my tabla teacher and North Indian classical music," he reports. "That's pretty much the meat 'n' potatoes of what I listen to and where my head's at—though I don't necessarily want to *be* a tabla player." Matt pauses and then adds with a small laugh, "Yeah, I'm a rock drummer, but my head's in another world."

David John Farinella

Nate Brown

PLAYING FOR EVERYTHING

Pushed to describe his drumming, Everything's Nate Brown says his style is sort of "go-go meets French Caribbean." While that might sound like a bizarre blend, it's the perfect fit for these modern rockers. Everything's six-man lineup combines rock, funk, and R&B into a high-energy, groove-driven sound.



Brown began his drumming career like many other rhythm keepers, banging on pots and pans. He got serious in his mid-teens and began taking lessons from Gary Rockwell of Washington DC's Old Guard Fife & Drum Corps. "I learned all the basics from him," Brown says, "and he introduced me to sitting and breathing right." Two years later, the drummer began taking lessons from Bruce Guttridge, who remains one of his heroes. "He had insane chops and musicality—and big ears."

Nate continued his education at James Madison University, where he earned a snare position with the marching band in his freshman year, and also played with the jazz band. While studying music at J.M.U., he connected with the five musicians who had recently formed Everything—and promptly changed his major. "I have applied my studies to the school of hard knocks for the last eight years," he says, laughing.

The years of touring have paid off. Last summer Everything garnered national airplay and critical attention with "Hooch," the breakthrough single off the band's Blackbird debut, *Super Natural*. Though "Hooch" has snagged the most airplay, Brown says that the title track remains one of Nate's favorite songs on the album. "'Super Natural' was the first time that we delved into samples and loops," says Brown, who also sings lead on two songs and back-up on several others. "We made all the samples and loops on the album, and then I played to that, using the loop as a click. We ended up with layers and layers. It came out as we had planned—on the cutting edge of technology while staying true to our more soulful roots."

Harriet Schwartz

To say that the Chicago jazz scene has been heating up lately would be an understatement. Long a world-class music town, Chi-town has become the adopted home of many leading European musicians. At the center of this resurgence is drummer Hamid Drake, who has become the first-call player for free-jazz artists like Peter Brotzmann, Mats Gustafsson, and George Grawe. "I've also been busy working with Pharoah Sanders, Marilyn Crispell, Joe McPhee, Fred Anderson, and

Ken Vandermark," Drake enlightens us.

Hamid has been expanding the drummer's role by using frame drums in a free-jazz context; the Middle Eastern tar, the djembe, and the tabla figure into his percussive mix. "My favorite frame drum is the Moroccan bendir," Drake says, and, indeed, to hear him playing the instrument behind the blazing sax of Brotzmann is awe-inspiring, as he matches the German saxophonist's intensity note for note.

The Solstice drum concerts Drake gives

with fellow percussionist Michael Zerang are invariably sell-out programs, and have consequently been expanded to run for two nights. Drake and Zerang have released one CD, *Ask The Sun* (Okka Disc), which features the duo on hand drums, as well as a short drumset piece. A second CD, *Homage To Ed Blackwell* (also on Okka Disc), should be out in the spring. The title track is a fifty-seven-minute composed drumset duet in honor of the late drummer.

Michael Bettine

Paul Culligan Happy On Edenstreet

While working up arrangements for the songs that appear on Edenstreet's debut album on A&M, drummer Paul Culligan found that his diverse background in rock, funk, fusion, and jazz gave him many options. "A lot of the songs could have been approached five different ways," he enthuses. "I felt blessed that I had a choice, rather than just knowing it would be rock, or fusion, or whatever. Ultimately I just listened to the song and went by what the music needed. I was able to be creative, but I was also conscious of making sure it was marketable. You can't just throw in anything you want."

The result is a largely hard-driving approach, but one that is informed by a variety of styles and a sense of flow and finesse. A good example is "Cuckoo Man," which features a power-rock bass/snare groove under a swing-jazz hi-hat.

With the mix of power, sophistication, and pop-consciousness in his drum parts, it comes as no surprise that Culligan cites Phil Collins as a major influence. "I grew up listening to Genesis, Yes, UK, and King Crimson," he elaborates. "When I

went to college I got into bebop and jazz, and I was listening to Art Blakey, Max Roach, and Jack DeJohnette."

Culligan got back into rock through

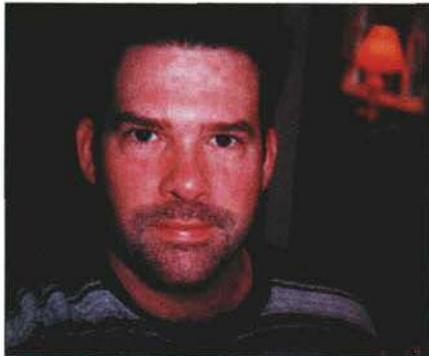
a couple of local bands in his hometown of Louisville, Kentucky, and that led to Edenstreet. The group was signed to A&M and recorded the *Edenstreet* album a year ago, but everything was put on hold when Polydor

was bought out by Seagram. "That was hell," Culligan says of the waiting period. "They dropped forty percent of the bands, but we made the cut."

Prior to the album's February 1999 release, the group did several "meet and greet" club tours to build a following and hone their live act. The band plans to continue touring extensively to promote the album.

"Compared to a lot of what's out there, our band has a positive message, and a lot of the songs are about love," Culligan says. "The musicianship is top-notch, and I'm able to draw on my background. In the end, you don't want people saying, 'You sound just like so-and-so.' My influences are everything I've ever listened to, but when it's time to play, I just do whatever feels good for the song."

Rick Mattingly



news

- **Gregg Bissonette** has been in the recording studio with Don Henley, with drummer **Stan Lynch** producing. Gregg has also recently been working on a Sheena Easton record, three tracks for an upcoming Santana release, and a loop CD for Spectrasonics.
- **Eddie Bayers** has been recording with Alan Jackson, George Jones, Sherrie Austin, Matt King, Chad Brock, Clay Walker, Mark Wills, Kenny Rogers, Sammy Kershaw, and Mindy McReady.
- **Josh Freese** is working on a new Guns 'N' Roses album.
- **Petur Smith** is in the studio working on Naked's new album, due out in the summer, as well as recording with Abby Travis and doing local LA gigs with her band, Foundation.
- **Roger Carter** can be heard on Leah Andreone's *Alchemy*. He recently concluded Meredith Brooks' tour and is currently working live with Andreone.
- **Dave DiCenzo** is on recent releases by Duran Duran, Two Ton Shoe, Shelter, The Jon Finn Group, Samsara (ex-Cro-Mags and Suicidal Tendencies), and Suze DeMarchi (ex-Baby Animals). Dave also recently did a short tour with Steve Morse.
- **D.J. Bonebrake** is on Skip Heller's *Couch, Los Angeles*.
- **Chico Hamilton** is currently touring the Midwest and West Coast with his band, Euphoria.
- **Adam Nussbaum** is on several projects at the moment, but a particularly tasty one is *Time Lines* (Concord Jazz), by pianist Christian Jacob (with Steve Swallow on bass).
- Congratulations to **Zig Wajler** and The Animal Band on winning a Nashville "Nammy" award for the "best children's recording" category.
- Former Dixie Chicks drummer **Tom Van Schaik** is now touring with Robert Earl Keen and can be heard on Keen's new CD, *Walking Distance* (Arista).
- **Joe Smyth** is on the new Sawyer Brown album. And congratulations to Joe and wife Dana on the birth of their son Bryce.
- And on a very sad note, we'd like to offer our condolences to the family of **Adam Ward Seligman**, who passed away this past January. Adam was a writer for this and several other music-related magazines, and he also was a dedicated activist for the rights of the disabled. He will be missed.



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In two previous ads, we've seen the details of two very different Starclassic Maple series kits: Kenny Aronoff's on the Smashing Pumpkin's Tour and David Silveria's on Korn's Family Values Tour. And as you would expect, John Tempesta's kit for Rob Zombie represents his own concept of what drums he needs and just how and where they should be placed.

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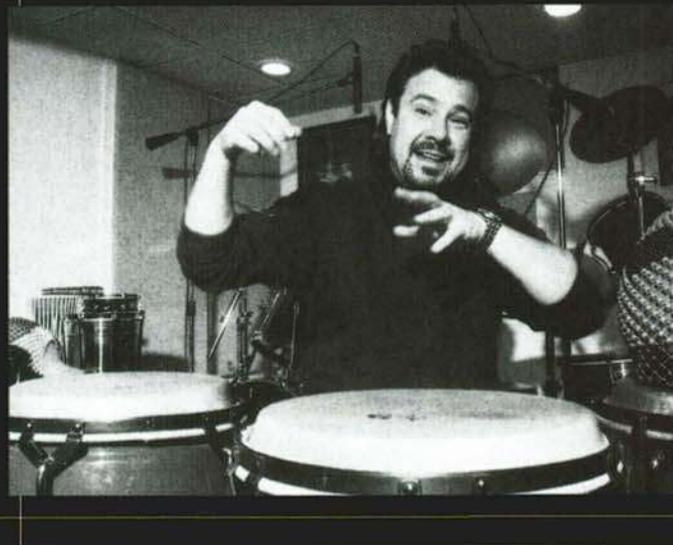
Technology

With

Tradition

story Stephan S. Nigohosian

photos Eleanoro Alberto



Master drummer. Electronics whiz. Teacher, author, businessman. Ed Uribe has succeeded in multiple areas of the music business. His secret to success? A burning passion for learning.

Like so many other aspiring musicians who were fortunate enough to grow up in the San Francisco Bay area during the late '60s and early '70s, Ed Uribe enthusiastically welcomed the funk, R&B, and jazz that made up the live music scene. He frequented legendary venues like The Fillmore West and Winterland, where he saw some of the greatest rock bands in the world perform. Ed also fondly recalls witnessing a fledgling Tower Of Power with David Garibaldi come to life in Oakland-area bars, and being inspired by the funk drummer's groove and technical ability. "I feel lucky to have been exposed to such an abundance of great talent," Ed says, "including the fusion scene pioneered by guys like Miles Davis and Herbie Hancock."

Born to an Ecuadorian father and Spanish mother, Ed's first affinity was not, as some would imagine, for Latin or Afro-Cuban music, but rather funk, rock, and R&B. Being surrounded by

some of the most talented musicians in these genres made it inevitable. "I was into Motown and bands like The Meters, who had a funky groove that really grabbed me," he says. "Then came The Mahavishnu Orchestra with Billy Cobham, and that compelled me to backtrack and discover masters like Philly Joe Jones and Art Blakey." Interestingly, it's this appreciation for funk and a solid groove that would actually seep its way into Uribe's Afro-Cuban and Latin drumming later in his career.

Ed began playing drums at the age of sixteen, and, after a few years of study in San Francisco, enrolled at Boston's Berklee College Of Music. At Berklee, he learned classical percussion under the tutelage of [now chairman of the percussion department] Dean Anderson. "I learned multiple percussion pieces on marimba, timpani, and xylophone," he recalls, "which I still draw upon today when I play and



"I always
listen to the
music and
play what it
tells me to play."

arrange solo electronic pieces using MIDI and multimedia technology." Apart from the school, Ed also studied drums with Boston residents Alan Dawson and Gary Chaffee. After graduating from Berklee, the talented Uribe was invited to join the faculty, where he taught and later developed the curriculum for the school's Latin percussion program. Today, some of this material can be found in two of the instructional books he has written for Warner Bros. Publications, *Afro-Cuban Percussion & Drumset* and *Brazilian Percussion & Drumset*.

Given his experience and technical ability, it would have been easy for Uribe to overplay his parts for the sake of impressing listeners. However, it is the *musician* within him that opts to move people in a different way: by playing exactly what the music calls for, which even includes *not* playing at some points to let the music breathe. This approach has helped Ed secure work with notable artists in a variety of genres, including Dave Samuels and Paquito D'Rivera. "Whether it's folkloric-type music in which your playing must be faithful to the music's origins, or more contemporary styles, which allow one to 'spread out' a bit more, I always listen to the music and play what it *tells* me to play."

Uribe has applied his practice of complementing the music rather than

overpowering it to other aspects of the music business. Though mainly visible as a drumset player, he plays various ethnic percussion instruments, from congas, timbales, and udu drums to Brazilian instruments such as surdo, cuica, and pandeiro. Ed is also recognized as one of the first experts on MIDI and electronic percussion, having worked this new technology into many of his compositions. Today he continues to work as a MIDI clinician and consultant, which allows him the opportunity to share his knowledge with tomorrow's musicians.

Though he's learned a great deal since he began playing, Uribe refuses to simply sit back and rest on his laurels. Quite the contrary, it's the thrill of learning something new that gives Uribe the drive and desire to continue seeking out and experimenting with different sounds. He admits to always having been inclined to learn as much as he could, regardless of the instrument. "The excitement I feel when picking up something unfamiliar fuels both my musical and personal development," he says. In addition to learning something new for his repertoire, Uribe finds that this exploration also gives him a fresh "slant" on the instruments he already knows how to play. As a result, he channels that enthusiasm back into his trapset playing, and the newfound inspiration further continues the learning process.

Ed believes so strongly in the practice of experimenting with new instruments that he suggests any musicians wishing to broaden their horizons do the same. He recognizes the fact that anyone can make music, within their own realm, with any number of ethnic percussion instruments. "It's important to not feel that you have to strictly learn how to play an instrument in its absolute purest tradition just to benefit from it," he asserts. "Of course, if you want to play that instrument within traditional music, then you'll need to learn its origins and be true to them. But inspiration can be gained just from picking it up and getting to know it." Clearly, Uribe feeds off of the possibilities a new instrument holds for expressing his musical ideas.

When the MIDI/electronic wave swept the drumming industry in the late '70s and early '80s, Uribe embraced this new technology with the same zeal as he does any new instrument. "I remember around 1982, when the first MIDI instruments came on the market, I took my drum machines and synthesizers to a music store to have them 'MIDI-ed' so they could 'talk' to each other," he recalls. From that point, Ed taught himself how to operate the new technology by hanging around others who were also experimenting with it, asking a lot of questions, and through plain old trial-and-error.

Today, Uribe is well-versed not only in MIDI, but in digital programming, sampling, multimedia authoring and development, and Web site construction. Even amidst all of this technology, though, he remains true to his musicality. "Learning this new technology



seemed like a natural extension of my playing," Ed says, "since I approach working with it from a musical standpoint." Again, Ed's thirst for knowledge and a new way of expressing his musical ideas is one of the driving forces behind his work in the multimedia realm.

As a result of his passion and dedication to this new technology, Ed recently outfitted his home with a studio/multimedia production suite. He also founded his own company, Dancing Planet Mediaworks, which specializes in audio/video production work and multimedia productions. "My company now enables me to put all of the things I've done individually—playing drums for someone, writing music and effects for a video, constructing a Web site, creating digital audio work and sampling—all under one roof."

Despite all of the new technology that can be found in music today, Ed feels confident that music's traditional origins will continue to be a source of motivation for players of all ages. He has noted the mainstream community's desire to learn the origins and cultural applications of ethnic percussion instruments and rhythms. "People have stopped calling everything 'Latin,' and realize that there is music indigenous to countries like Cuba, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, and Colombia," he says. "Even more, the mainstream is realizing that certain areas within *each* of these countries has several different types of music and rhythms."

Uribe has observed that drummers today are taking a closer look at the origins of Afro-Cuban, Brazilian, and other Caribbean rhythms. "These cultures have a great deal of music that is predominantly percussion-based," he adds. "Even if you never play a Brazilian gig, you can't help but positively expand your perspective on drumming by studying Brazilian or Afro-Cuban music."

Ed suggests drummers learn to play congas and other percussion instruments, or study with someone whose primary instrument is not drumset. By learning rhythm from a non-drumset player's perspective, you can see things from a different angle and explore new ground. "Within drumming, all of the instruments are part of the same musical picture," he says. "Regardless of which drum you're playing, they all help enhance your performance on other instruments." Judging from Ed Uribe's experience, there's no doubt that exploring other instruments will shed new light on an instrument you may have thought you knew completely.

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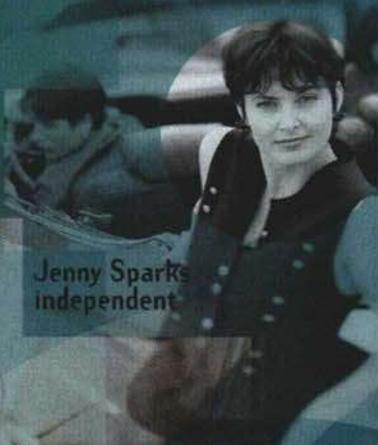
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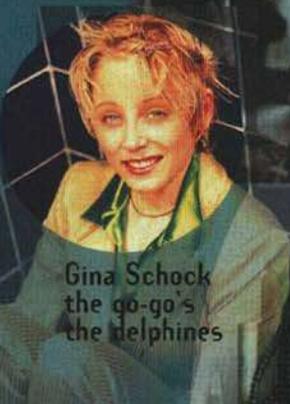
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John "JR" Robinson

Q I recently bought a 4x14 Pearl *JR Robinson Signature* snare drum. I really love its crisp, full sound. I've played with it to get the best sound from it, and so far I've found that using the batter head tight (but not *too* tight) and the bottom head at a medium tension (not *too* loose) gives me the best results. But I've heard your snare sound on various recordings and I think it's incredible—so full of tone and flavor. I would appreciate your recommendation on how to tune my snare drum, what heads to use, etc.

Alberto Martinez
via Internet

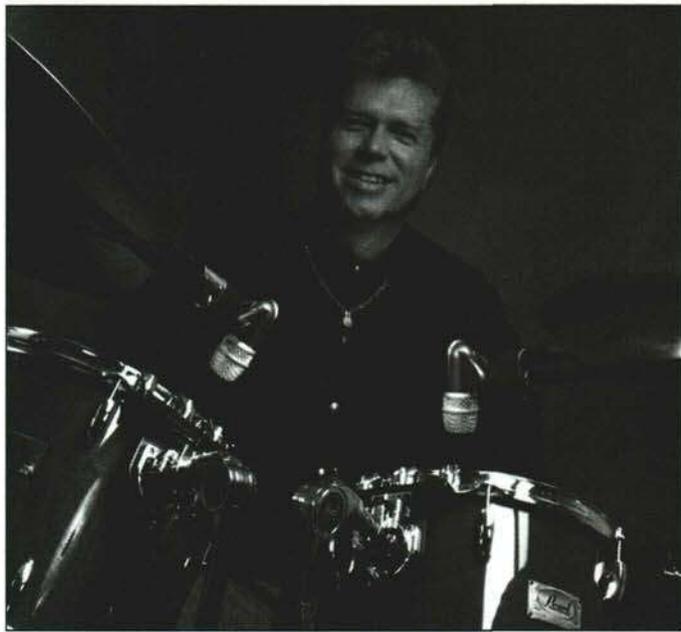
A I'm happy you purchased my "signature" snare drum. I use it live and in the studio 90% of the time. You can use a wide variety of drumheads on it. I actually have three drums set up for different situations. The first has a Remo *CS* ("black dot") *Emperor* coated head on the batter side, tuned from very high to medium-low. A standard *Ambassador* snare-side head works perfect. This combination covers all the bases, but leans toward heavier playing.

The second drum is fitted with an *Ambassador* coated batter and an *Ambassador* snare-side head. This combination seems to be what the majority of drummers (and many producers) like. My third snare is set up for orchestral work, with a *Diplomat* coated batter and a *Diplomat* clear snare-side head.

No matter what your head selection, don't tune the snare-side head too low, or you'll lose some of the crack. Conversely, if you

tune it too high, you'll lose some of the drum's body. I usually don't keep the snares themselves too tight, since doing so tends to choke the drum.

I really believe that my 4x14 drum will accommodate all musical situations. The only thing left to do is *groove*.



Bill Stewart

Q I would like to express my admiration for your beautiful drumming on *Hand Jive* with guitarist John Scofield. For a

long time I've been curious about the special sounds of your cymbals. Could you describe the setup?

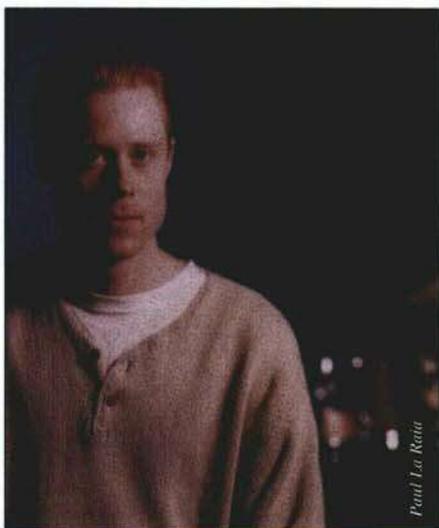
Guillermo Acosta
Campina, Brazil

A Thanks for your interest in my playing. *Hand Jive* (recorded in October of 1993) is one of my favorite albums, and one that I had a lot of fun recording.

My cymbal choices vary a bit from time to time, but here's what I used on *Hand Jive*: For hi-hats I had a very old 14" *K* Zildjian cymbal of medium weight on the top, and a very heavy American-made *K* Zildjian (from the early '80s) on the bottom. On my left was an old 20" *K*. On my near right was an old 21 1/2" *K*. On my far right, depending on the song, I used either an older 18" medium-weight *A* Zildjian or

a very thin old 18" *K* with a big chunk cut out of it (in an attempt to repair severe cracks). It's a hilarious-sounding cymbal. I also used a little 5" or 6" cymbal (with a short, piercing sound) made by Steve Hubbeck, and a small Wuhan hand gong.

Because the Zildjian cymbals used on *Hand Jive* are old, they don't have any writing on them, so I can't label them as "ride" or "crash." I ride *and* crash on all of them anyway, and I usually choose cymbals that enable me to do that. Nowadays I still use some of the cymbals from *Hand Jive*, but I'm also using a 22" *K Constantinople* prototype, and I recently recorded with a 22" *K Custom Dark* flat ride. They both sound very mysterious, and they blend naturally with my older cymbals. Best of luck to you in your musical endeavors!



Paul La Rosa

Ricky Lawson

Q I'm curious about something I noticed in your July '98 *MD* cover story. On page 53 there is a rear-view picture of your double-bass drumkit. I noticed that you have a double *pedal*, with both beaters on the right-side bass drum, and no beater at all on the left-side bass drum. I don't mean to be rude, but is the second bass drum just for show?

Snuf Leamon
Ft. Wainwright, AK

A My best answer to your question is: Yes and no. It's true that I don't actually strike the left bass drum. However, I'm still doing full double-bass playing, using all the same techniques. I'm just doing it with a setup that's more comfortable for me.

A few years back I hurt myself playing basketball. I suffered a groin injury, so I couldn't spread my legs far enough apart to play a traditional double-bass setup without discomfort. Using a double pedal allows me to bring the two pedals a little closer together. I just got used to that setup, so for the past couple of years I've stayed with it.

At one time I mounted my 8" tom on the left bass drum, so that bass drum had to be there whether I played it or not. Since I switched to a Gibraltar rack that's no longer the case. However, I (and my employers) prefer the symmetrical look of the double-bass kit, so I've kept that setup.



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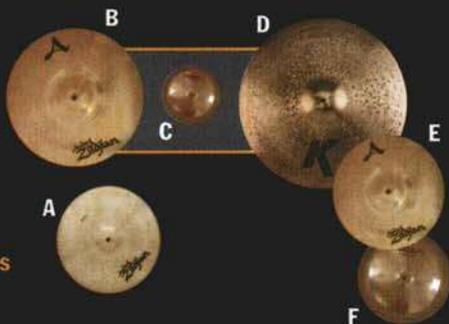
C - 11" Oriental Trash Splash

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Avoiding CD Skipping

Q Along with taking lessons, I find that playing along with a CD is helpful toward improving my drumming skills. However, whenever I hit a rimshot, crash cymbal, or the cowbell, the CD tends to skip. This really throws me off beat and makes me want to bring out the old turntable. Moving the CD player to several different locations in relation to my drums has been no help. Do you have any advice on how to keep a CD from skipping?

David Raub
via Internet

A Our first thought would be, where and on what are you placing your CD player? Apparently it's close enough to the kit to be affected by the shocks you describe. Options would be to place it on a much softer surface (like a small pillow, foam pad, etc.), or further away from the kit (using a longer headphone cable). The former method will keep the player conveniently close, but may still allow some shock interference; the latter will probably eliminate the shock problem but make controlling the player less handy.

We know of one drummer who happens to practice in a basement beneath open rafters. He suspends his CD player above his head in a small "harness" that's actually a macrame house-plant hanger. You might consider a similar system, if feasible.

Five-0 Drummer

Q I was watching some episodes of *Hawaii Five-O*, and I noticed that the theme song has a fairly complicated drum line. Can you tell me who played that?

Matt Dillon
via Internet

A The drummer was LA studio great John Guerin. John was the subject of a feature article in our January '99 issue, and in that article he discusses the *Hawaii Five-O* sessions. If you're interested, check with our back-issue department to order a copy. Contact sueh@moderndrummer.com or call (973) 239-4140 for information.

Jeff Porcaro Live Video

Q I am a big fan of Jeff Porcaro, and I'm trying to get every bit of video and audio recorded information on him that I can. I have seen Jeff's Star Licks video, but I would like to see a video of him live in concert. I recently came across a Web page tribute to Jeff, and on this page was listed a video called *Toto Live Zenith, France 1990* on Sony Music Inc., Secam Ref. CBS 49993-2. Do you know of this video, and how to get it? Or do you know of any other video available with Jeff's live playing on it?

Conrad White
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

A The video you cite sounds like *Toto Live*, recorded in Paris in October of 1990. It's available from Audiophile Imports, PO Box 4945, Lutherville, MD 21094-4945, tel: (908) 996-7311, fax: (410) 628-1948, email: audiophile2@erols.com.

Pearls Of Wisdom

Q I have a Pearl drum rack, which I purchased not too long ago. I got home and tried to put a Gibraltar stand on it, but the pipe was too thin to be held by the clamps. I have four *PC-08* clamps. I was told by my dealer that Pearl offers other sizes of clamps for my rack. So I was wondering if you could tell me the names of the clamps and what size stands each one will hold.

"mph"
via Internet

Q I have a Pearl *Export* kit, and I'd like to know more about its construction—like how the shells are formed, how the bearing edges are made, etc. I notice that the seam on the inside ply doesn't match perfectly, and looks like it was "filled" with some sort of putty. Likewise, the bearing edges have some putty that is visible in some places and not completely smooth. Is this a problem?

I live in a pretty humid/rainy part of the country, and I have to store my drums in an unheated and sometimes damp area. I'm concerned with how moisture will affect them. I've heard that "sealing" the bearing

edges with some sort of wax will help to prevent moisture from entering the shells. Should I do this, and if so, how is it done?

G. Spelvin
Key Biscayne, FL

A Pearl product specialist Gene Okamoto provided us with the following answers. "To 'mph': The *PC-8* pipe clamp is designed to accommodate 7/8"-diameter tubing. (An earlier clamp, the *PC-07*, was capable of accepting a variety of tubing sizes. However, when the dies for that clamp expired, it was replaced by the *PC-8*.)

"We also offer the *PC-50* pipe clamp, which fits the *DR-500* series *ICON* racks and the older *DR-110/210* and *DR-100N/200N* racks. The *PC-50* is also designed to accept 7/8" diameter tubing. It replaced the *PC-10*, which, like the *PC-07*, accepted a variety of tubing sizes.

"Our original *DR-1* and *DR-2 Porcaro Racks* featured the *PC-3* and *PC-2* pipe clamps. The *PC-3* held 7/8" diameter tubing; the *PC-2* featured adjustable jaws and was capable of accepting various tubing sizes.

"The clamps mentioned above are product specific; that is, they fit only the racks that they're designed for. The *PC-50* pipe clamps will fit a *DR-80* rack, but not as well—and thus is not recommended.

"To G. Spelvin: All Pearl drums are formed using our exclusive Heat/Compression shell-molding system. During formation, the glue is literally boiled into the pores and grain of the wood, thus assuring total bonding of the plies. The shell is compressed, using a hydraulic press system that exerts 154 pounds per square centimeter of pressure (that's a lot!) while the glue 'sets'—again to assure that the plies are thoroughly bonded. Besides creating incredibly strong shells, the Heat/Compression system also assures that the shells resist moisture, because where the glue is, moisture *isn't*.

"An extreme example of the moisture-resistance properties of Pearl shells was demonstrated in Rotterdam, Holland on September 5, 1992. On that day, the world record was set for the largest number of

drumsets played in unison: 1,000 drumsets! As part of the festivities, a SCUBA-drummer played a Pearl *BLX* set underwater to set a record for underwater drumming. After the event, the set was fished out and dried—and the drums were perfect! So even if your drums are stored in 'unheated or damp areas,' your shells should be perfectly safe. Rusting hardware is a bigger concern.

"Our covered sets, *Export* and *Forum*, currently feature middle and inside plies with butted seams. Sometimes the seams don't completely touch, and a gap is formed. We (and all other drum manufacturers) fill these gaps with putty or similar substances. I apologize that the putty on your drum wasn't as smooth as you liked. Normally, after the putty is applied, the bearing edges are trued and sanded smooth on an automatic sanding machine.

"All Pearl bearing edges feature a 45° cut from the inside out, and a 45° back cut. For strength, the edges are slightly rounded, as opposed to having a 'knife edge.' We feel that this type of bearing edge allows maximum resonance and sustain. However, to realize your drum's full sonic

potential, it's best to use a suspension tom mounting system like our *I.S.S.* (Integrated Suspension System) or others that are on the market.

"Regarding sealing bearing edges, we apply a coat of paraffin to the bearing edges on our *Masters Series* drums. However, since the shells are already virtually sealed by the Heat/Compression system, the wax is not for moisture resistance. Instead, it allows the heads to slide easier for ease of tuning. Applying a coat of paraffin to the edges of your *Export* set will help achieve the same effect—and certainly won't hurt in terms of protecting the edges."

Sonor Hilite Hoops

Q I'm currently using a Sonor *Hilite* snare drum. It sounds great generally, but is a little dry for my personal taste. I think this may be partly the result of the die-cast hoops that came on the drum. Are there any alternatives to those hoops?

Dan Laurin
Kitchener, Ontario, Canada

A According to Sonor's Rusty Martin, Sonor sells triple-flanged steel hoops to fit your drum. You can order these through any Sonor dealer. You may also be able to use more generic steel hoops available as after-market items, but take your drum to the store and check for correct fit. Also, make sure that your existing tension rods will serve with the new hoops. Only Sonor tension rods will fit into the lugs on your *Hilite* drum.



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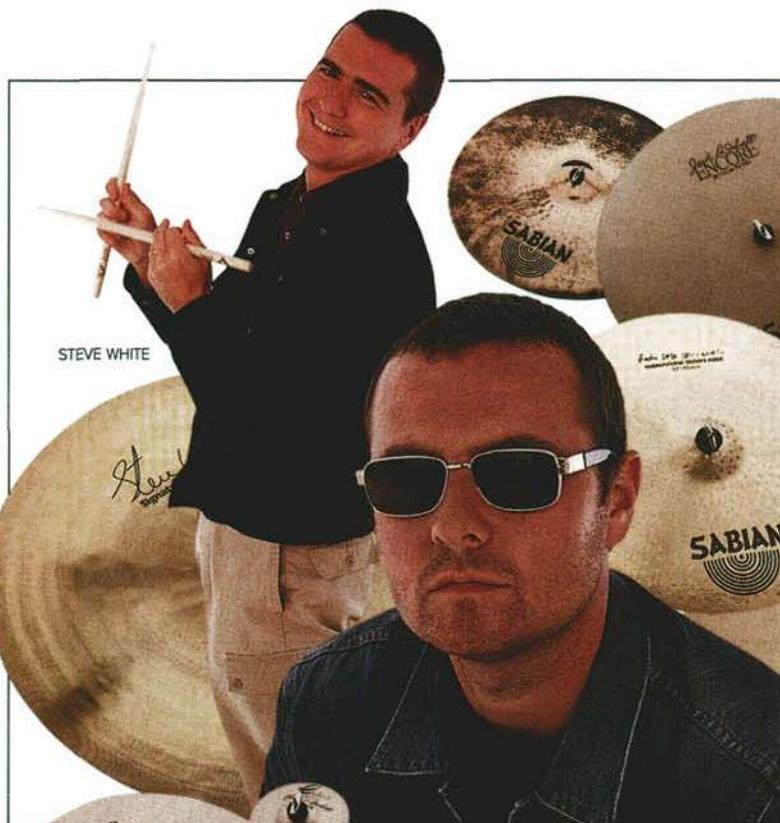


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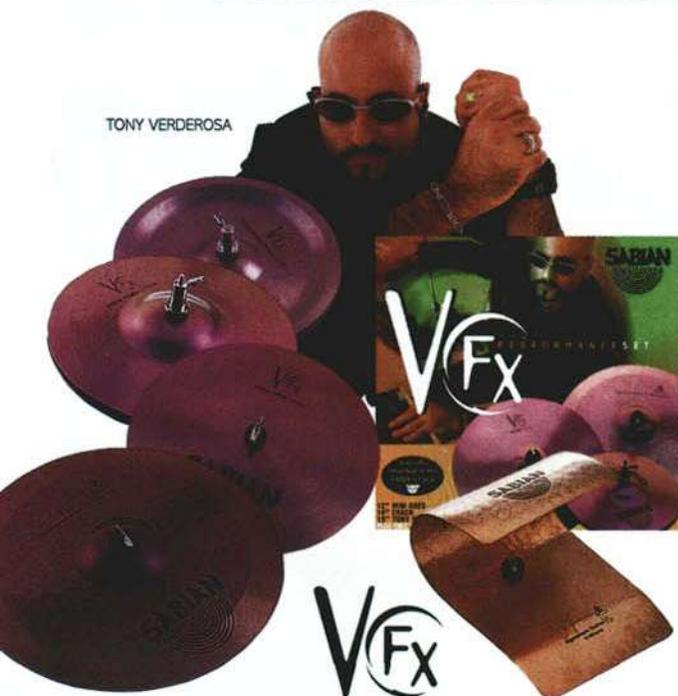
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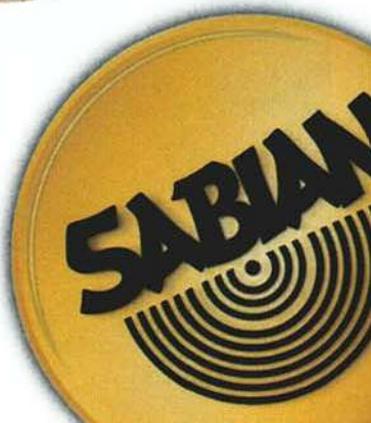
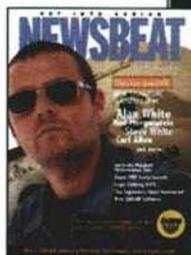
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Ludwig Rocker Pro Drumkit

by Rick Van Horn / photos by Jim Esposito

This mid-price performer is new from the ground up.

In my feature on Ludwig's 90th anniversary in last month's issue, I noted that for many years Ludwig offered only two drumkit lines: the *Rocker* at the entry level, and the *Classic* at the high end. There simply was nothing in between.

Recognizing that they needed to fill this gap, Ludwig reorganized their product line in 1998, adding a budget line *below* the *Rocker* series, expanding the *Rocker* series itself into two different lines (entry level and entry-level plus), and adding the totally new *Rocker Pro* series as a pro-quality, mid-priced line. It's a savvy move that puts the company in a much more competitive position in the marketplace.

Of course, that's *if* the quality of the new lines meets the already high demands of today's drum consumer. With that in mind, let's take a look at what the *Rocker Pro* has to offer.

Drum Construction

We were sent a five-piece *Rocker Pro Jazz* outfit, including 8x10 and 10x12 rack toms, a 14x14 floor tom, a 5x14 matching wood snare drum, and a 16x22 bass drum. (A 16x20 is also available.) The drums were all finished in sea blue, which is a rich turquoise blue over the natural wood grain.

The shells in *Rocker Pro* drums are completely new for Ludwig. They're 7-ply, 7 mm-thick shells made of a combination of Finnish birch and Italian poplar, and fitted with rolled-steel rims and newly designed mini-lugs. Between the choice of woods and the small lugs, the resulting drums are *extremely* light in weight. (I could sling the bass drum around pretty handily.) Many potential buyers of pro-quality mid-priced drums are weekend or steady club drummers who have to handle their own equipment. To them, lightweight drums offer significant practical advantages. Such



drums also offer very specific acoustical properties, too. But more on that later.

One interesting aspect of the shells was that they were "undersized." That is, the 12" rack tom actually only measured a little over 11 3/4" in diameter. This allowed the hoop of a 12" drumhead to sit well off the shell, with an obvious space between the shell and the hoop. This is the way timpani and gong bass-drum heads are fitted, in the theory that both the head and the shell are allowed to resonate to their maximum potential, without one "choking off the other because of too-tight contact between them. It's a good idea—although it does require a bit of care to "center" a new drumhead properly on the shell.

The interiors and edges of the shells were nicely sanded, although not what I'd call "polished smooth." Though the interiors had been given a sealant, they were not "finished" in the sense of having a noticeable coating. I could still feel the textured, porous nature of the wood. (This, too, has an affect on sound, which we'll discuss later.) The bearing edges on all the drums were nicely trued.

I visited Ludwig's Monroe, North Carolina factory to do my May-issue story, and I watched these drums being made. They underwent the same manufacturing steps and were given the same attention to detail that went into the creation of Ludwig's high-end *Classic Maple* drums. There was a lot of pride evident in the way Ludwig's builders went about their work, and it shows in the finished products.

Hardware

In addition to the new mini-lugs, the *Rocker Pro* has been equipped with Ludwig's new *Elite* double-tom holder. This is a complete departure from the company's previous *Modular* system, and one that I think is a great improvement.

Instead of using large ratchet arms that penetrate the shell, the new mount has two 10.5 mm L-arms fitted into omni-ball adjustments—permitting infinite positioning. Each L-arm has a memory collar to help secure the drum and lock in its position. In addition, the two omni-ball brackets are themselves attached at a hinged point, so that they can be adjusted independently on a forward-to-back axis. This allows for a little more positioning flexibility, which is always limited with this type of L-arm mount design. Even so, I think the down-post holder on the bass drum is a little far forward on the drum; I was unable to get the rack toms as close to me as I would have liked. I'd like to see that holder moved back an inch or two. This would allow smaller drums to be brought closer to the drummer, if desired. Larger drums could be kept at a proper distance by rotating the omni-balls and/or their independent holders more toward the front of the drum.



Mini-lugs, the *Elite* tom-holder system, and a striking wood-stain finish are all new on the *Rocker Pro* series.

WHAT'S HOT

- minimalist hardware and gorgeous finish combine for a striking appearance
- very practical single-braced stands help keep weight (and price) down
- controlled sound could work well in both acoustic and amplified situations
- extremely attractive price for the quality of sound and construction

WHAT'S HOT

- lightweight shells may not offer as deep or resonant a sound as some drummers would like

The same mounting brackets used on the shells of the rack toms are also used to hold the legs on the floor tom. They work fine, but it would be nice if they were fitted with the same little memory collars as are used on the L-arms holding the rack toms. It's a small thing to do, but represents a very great convenience for a drummer when it comes to quick setups.

In a nod to tradition and simple practicality, Ludwig has equipped the *Rocker Pro* snare drum with its venerable *P85* snare throw-off. It's a small, simple design that's been on Ludwig drums (and lots of copies) for generations. It's easy to operate, reasonably quiet, and reliable. Why mess with a good thing?

The bass drum is fitted with drumkey-operated tension rods, which is a plus in terms of tuning and portability. The drum's spurs are industry-standard rotating models, which can be locked at a variety of forward angles for setup, and fold straight back for pack-up. They feature convertible spike/rubber tip feet.

Portability was a major consideration in Ludwig's choice of *800*

Series Modular stands for the *Rocker Pro* series. They're heavy-duty enough for just about any sort of gigging, but are single-braced to keep weight down. Straight and boom cymbal stands, a "low" snare stand, a professional hi-hat stand, and the *LM914FP Modular* bass drum pedal are all included in the hardware package.

The snare stand that accompanied the kit featured an omni-ball basket tilter, similar to the system used on the rack toms. This design permits infinite adjustment of the drum in every direction, which is a professional touch. The stand itself is designed to go very low, which seems a little strange in light of the fact that the snare drum in this outfit is only 5" deep. But for those who like to *sit* low the stand would prove handy—especially if the kit was fitted with a 20" bass drum.

The hi-hat was a mixed blessing. On the plus side, it had a very smooth, solid

feel, with a chain linkage and easy-to-adjust twin external springs. However, those twin springs are housed in posts that extend up from the pedal assembly, directly in front of two of the hi-hat's legs. Since these posts would prevent the tripod from rotating, this hi-hat cannot be made with a swivel-able base for use with double bass drum pedals. But for all other applications, it would serve admirably.

The straight and boom cymbal stands were pretty generic, but proved more than adequate in terms of sturdiness. The tilters feature small-toothed ratchets, which allow for a good range of tilting positions. I had no trouble getting my cymbals where I wanted them.

The bass drum pedal had a couple of features that I haven't seen on other pedals. One was simply the duplication of the drumkey-operated bolt holding the beater shaft into the pedal. Two bolts means twice the protection against the beater slipping out. Nice idea.

The other new feature is an adjustable "foot" on the underside of the hoop clamp, included in addition to the normal wing bolt used to tighten the hoop clamp. The idea is that the standard wing bolt has only so much range, and is applying pressure to the hoop clamp from its opposite end. (Kind of like pushing up on one end of a see-saw to hold the other end down.) In order to get a good grip on the hoop, the bolt has to squeeze the jaw down at an angle—which can damage the bass-drum hoop. The adjustable foot on this pedal, on the other hand, pushes *straight down* onto the hoop from directly above, exerting the maximum pressure where it's needed—and not crushing the outer edge of the hoop in the process. Once the "foot" is adjusted, it takes only the slightest loosening of the standard wing bolt to remove the pedal from the hoop. This is a nice design that not only protects the drum hoop, but adds additional security against the pedal slipping sideways during high-intensity playing.

The action of the pedal proved excellent. It's not a design with lots of bells and whistles; just your basic beater-angle and spring-tension adjustments. But I had no problem getting the pedal to feel comfortable under my foot.

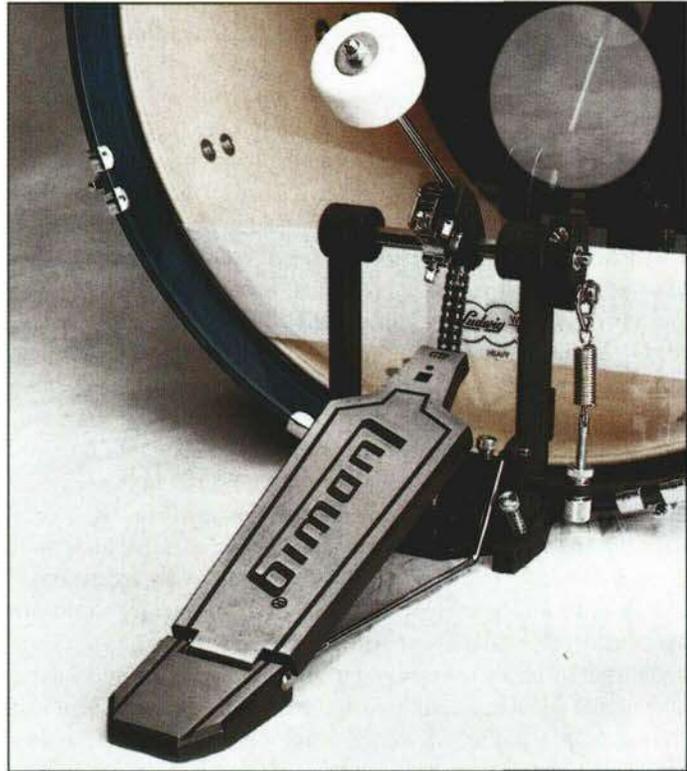
Appearance

The drums on our test kit were finished beautifully. The sea green color was attractive, deep, and rich. (Other finishes available include natural birch, midnight black, and hunter green—all of which are stains that let the wood grain show through.)

The small size of the mini-lugs allows for an unobstructed view of the shell. Ditto for the small tom-mounting brackets on the toms and bass drum. The drums are fitted with small, chrome "keystone" style logo badges, which readily identify them as Ludwigs, but are not obtrusive. Overall the kit looks very streamlined and professional, with just a hint of "Ludwig traditionalism" about it.

Sound

The toms on our test kit were fitted with Ludwig's *Weather Master* drumheads, in clear, heavyweight models top and bottom. These are one-ply heads designed to withstand heavy impact and produce a low, clear tone. The snare drum was fitted with a white



The bass drum pedal features a smooth, fluid action, two bolts to lock the beater shaft in place, and an adjustable "foot" on the hoop clamp.

coated medium-weight batter. The bass drum had a clear heavy batter and a black, ported logo head. This arrangement is the standard issue of heads for *Rocker Pro* kits.

With the heads described above, the toms had plenty of power, clarity, and attack. But even when I tuned the heads down as far as possible, I couldn't get what I'd call "bottom" out of them. They seemed to focus primarily in the mid range, with good sustain. (In fairness, let's remember that the toms were "jazz" sizes, not rock monsters.)

I fared about the same with the bass drum. It had punch, clarity, attack, and power. What it didn't have was a lot of, *well...bass*. It also had a fairly dry sound—owing largely to the felt muffling strip on the batter head and the hole in the front head.

The snare drum, on the other hand, sounded very good right out of the box: bright, cutting, and with excellent snare response and sensitivity. The batter head produced quite a bit of ring, but just the slightest bit of muffling took this out instantly. This gave me a clue as to the overall character of the kit, and led me to some interesting experiments.

It's my theory that the birch/poplar shells of the *Rocker Pro* are not as dense or reflective as maple shells are. (The porous nature of the shells' interior surfaces add to this characteristic.) They also tend to vibrate (resonate) a bit less than "harder" and/or thinner shells would. As a result, they create a dryer, more controlled sound than maple shells of the same dimensions. They also turn over a larger role in the creation of the overall sound of the kit to the heads—making the choice of drumheads a more critical element.

I tested my theory by making several changes in the head selection on the kit. First, I swapped the single-ply *Weather Master* tom and bass-drum batters for twin-ply clear Ludwig *World Standard* heads. (See the review that follows.) I put clear one-ply *World Standards* on the bottoms of the toms, and a solid ebony front head on the bass drum. I left the snare drum alone.

Well! The bass drum sound got a *lot* bigger—with more depth and more body, but still not a lot of undesirable ring. The beater attack sound was reduced slightly with the thicker batter head, but the overall drum sound remained focused. And if you wanted the attack sound back, a hard impact pad or the use of a hard beater would do the trick.

The toms also gained more low end, although their attack sound was reduced more noticeably. But remember, attack is primarily a function of the head. If you want more attack, you have to be willing to use a thinner head and thus sacrifice a little low end—and vice versa. Personally, I'd opt for the added low end, because that seemed to give the overall drumkit sound more body.

Did my head changes add any more resonance or sustain to the drums? Well, the solid front head definitely gave a bit more boom to the bass drum. But as far as the toms, they were *lower*, but not any *boomier*. But don't take that to mean that the toms sounded flat or dull. Quite the contrary. They offered a clear, clean impact sound, a full-but-quick response, and then a rapid decay. For many drummers these are desirable performance characteristics.

For example, the *Rocker Pro* should be a very easy kit to mike up, either live or in the studio. It would also be a great kit for unmiked live performances, where a controlled drum sound would

help keep the drums from overpowering the rest of the band (without the drummer having to "hold back" on his or her playing). And remember, I'm not talking about *volume*. These drums could get plenty loud. I'm talking about *sustain*, which can just as often be a problem as it can be an asset.

Okay, you say. But what if I play unmiked in a loud band, and I *want* lots of sustain? Should I avoid the *Rocker Pro*? Not at all. The sustain can be increased by the use of RIMS mounts, which are available as factory-installed options on the toms. I was able to confirm this simply by removing the rack toms from their mounts, holding them by their rims, and striking them. They definitely rang longer than when attached to their mounts. This is no criticism of the *Rocker Pro* drums or their mounting system; it's my experience that *any* drum will gain resonance and sustain by virtue of a suspension mounting system.

Conclusions And Pricing

The *Rocker Pro* is just the sort of kit that "working drummers" have been screaming for: an outfit with good-sounding drums, practical and durable hardware, an attractive appearance, and a genuinely affordable price tag. The suggested retail price for the *Rocker Pro Jazz* outfit with either a 16x22 or a 16x20 bass drum is \$1,895. The *Power* outfit, with a 16x22 bass drum, a 16x16 floor tom, 10x12 and 10x13 rack toms, and a 6 1/2x14 snare, lists for \$1,995. By the time you figure in the discount that most major dealers will offer, you're talking about a professional-level drumkit you could be proud to play, for something between \$1,500 and \$1,700.

Ludwig Weather Master And World Standard Drumheads

by Rick Van Horn

Ludwig is one of the few remaining drum companies in the world that still manufactures its own drumheads. It's the *only* such company in America. And, ironically, it has done so virtually since its inception. In the days of calf, drummers could buy various grades of calfskin heads with the Ludwig logo. When plastic heads became practical in the late 1950s, Ludwig was among those who moved into the new technology. So Ludwig's heads are anything but "new."

But the history of the drum-equipment market over the past couple of generations has been one of specialization. Since the late '50s the major drum companies started dropping their accessory lines, focusing instead just on drums and related hardware. Heads,

sticks, and other accessories became the province of companies dedicated just to those products. As a result, a large portion of the drumming public today has no idea that Ludwig even *sells* drumheads, much less manufactures them.

As with virtually every other aspect of their operation,

WHAT'S HOT

- *Weather Master* heads offer bright, sharp attack sounds
- *World Standard* twin-ply heads produce deep tonalities

Ludwig's entire drumhead line was re-structured in 1998, with certain heads totally eliminated and others instituted. And if that weren't enough, Ludwig's "line" was actually expanded into two very different lines, with models unique to each.

We were sent several models of Ludwig heads along with the *Rocker Pro* drumkit reviewed in this issue. The heads were sized to fit that kit, so I utilized it for testing purposes.

Weather Master Heads

When Ludwig first introduced their own plastic heads in the late 1950s, they created the *Weather Master* brand name for them. Several years ago that name was replaced by heads carrying just the Ludwig brand, and series names like *Rockers*, *Groovers*, *Striders*, and *Ensemble*. When the company decided to revamp the drumhead line last year, they chose to return to the venerable *Weather Master* brand name, and to consolidate all their previous heads into that one series. These heads are made in the Ludwig drum factory in Monroe, North Carolina.

The *Weather Master* series offers clear, white coated, and smooth white models—all single-ply, in a choice of medium (7.5 mil) or heavy (10 mil) weights. Also available are clear and coated *Silver Dot*, smooth black, and *Power Collar* models, all heavy in weight. Sizes from 6" to 40" are available to fit kit, marching, and concert drums. All heads feature Ludwig's patented *HeadLock* hoop system, which uses a steel hoop within an aluminum channel to lock the head in place (instead of gluing it in with epoxy).

Along with the clear, heavyweight heads already described in the preceding *Rocker Pro* review, we were sent a variety of other *Weather Master* heads to test, including black, *Power Collar*, and

medium-weight smooth-white batters for toms and snares, and black, *Power Collar*, and coated white bass-drum batters.

As I discovered while conducting the *Rocker Pro* review, the clear, heavy heads were the most resonant of all the *Weather Master* models we were sent. They sang out nicely, and had a good blend of clear tonality and stick attack. (They're thick heads, but they're still single-ply heads, after all.) These were my favorite among all the *Weather Master* heads for use on the toms, and would be my second choice for use on the bass drum.

My first choice for use on the bass drum would be the *Power Collar* head. This is Ludwig's self-muffling model, and boy does it work. When you take a thick single-ply head and circle it with a second layer of plastic, what you get is a thuddy, flat-sounding head with virtually all of the high-end removed. (Removing the high end fools the ear into thinking that the heads are producing a lower sound.)

That flat, thuddy sound used to be very popular on toms, and some drummers still like it—even though contemporary drum sounds lean toward more open toms. But where it's still very appropriate is on a bass drum. The *Power Collar* bass drum head offered a punchy impact sound and power, but simply *no* overring. When I used one in conjunction with a heavyweight black *Weather Master* (with no hole) on the front head of the bass drum, the combination produced a very nice, big, controlled sound. (When I slipped in a medium-weight single-ply head from the *World Standard* group on the front, the drum had even more projection and liveliness.)

The black *Weather Masters* offered essentially the same performance as the clear versions—which makes perfect sense, since the only difference between them is the black coating on the black models. However, that coating did have the effect of reducing the overall resonance of the heads just a bit. They weren't as lively as the clear heads, and had a slightly mellower attack. I could see using these heads on my toms and bass drum if I wanted a clear, open sound, but not *too* much of anything: highs, attack, projection, etc. Remember, though, I'm talking *minimal* differences here.

The only medium-weight heads we were sent in the *Weather Master* line were smooth whites. Not surprisingly, their thinner weight made them more responsive than any of the other models, with a much sharper attack sound and a greater focus on high frequencies. Their smooth white coating may have mellowed them just a bit; we weren't sent a medium-weight clear head to compare them to. I'm sure they were not as dry as coated white models would be.

Actually, it's rare to see smooth white heads used as batters anymore. But they make excellent "resonator" heads for the bottoms of toms. When I swapped the smooth white medium *Weather Masters* for the clear heavy models that had been on the bottoms of the *Rocker Pro* toms, their thinner weight allowed them to contribute added life and resonance to the overall drum sound, no matter what type of batter head was used.

The only *coated* white *Weather Master* head we were sent was a bass drum batter. All *Weather Master* bass drum batters are heavy weight, for durability. Our coated head also had excellent attack and plenty of ring. The coating added a little dryness, as compared to a clear head, but did not dull the sound. This would probably be



This 22" *Power Collar* bass drum head, 12" smooth white batter, and 14" black batter (upside down to show the *HeadLock* hoop) are part of the *Weather Master* line.

the head of choice for jazz players—especially those who might opt for a smaller bass drum with a livelier, more open tuning.

One thing that I found about the *Weather Master* heads in general was that they were particularly easy to tune—which is rare with single-ply heads. Granted, most of our test models were heavy-weight heads, and I've generally found that the heavier a head is, the more forgiving it is of minor tension variances. Even so, I attribute a certain amount of this tuning ease to Ludwig's *Head Lock* system. It's a more rigid holding system than that provided by an epoxy hoop, and therefore I think it tends to distribute the tensioning force of the lugs a little more evenly, with less likelihood of the hoop itself being warped out of shape. (It's a little like the principle of a die-cast rim versus a rolled-steel rim.) At any rate, it's a nice characteristic.

Pricing for *Weather Master* heads is fairly simple. All "standard" heads—white coated, clear, smooth white, and clear *Silver Dot*—are priced the same, according to size. Heads that require "special" treatments—black, *Power Collar*, and coated *Silver Dot*—are a bit higher, but are still priced the same according to size. Here's a quick price list, showing representative sizes. Prices are shown "standard"/"special." 10"—\$17/\$22; 12"—\$18/\$23; 14"—\$20/\$25; 16"—\$24/\$30; 18"—\$26/\$32; 20" bass—\$42/\$45; 22" bass—\$44/\$48.

World Standard Heads

Ludwig firmly believes that the *Head Lock* system used on their *Weather Master* line offers exceptional protection against pull-out. However, the company is well aware that the majority of drummers around the world are more familiar with epoxy-hoop heads. So they offer their own line of such heads, aptly called *World Standard*. These heads are made in the United States, to Ludwig's specs, by one of America's leading drumhead manufacturers.

The *World Standard* series offers both single- and double-ply tom and snare-drum batter heads, in clear and white coated models. The line also includes snare-side heads, clear heads specifically for use as bottom heads on toms, twin-ply clear batter heads for bass drums, and clear and black front bass drum heads. Sizes available are 6" through 26", for drumkits, snare drums, and concert drums. Our test group of *World Standard* heads included clear and coated single- and double-ply models.

The single-ply clear heads were the liveliest and ringiest of this group. On toms they produced a sharp, penetrating tone, without sounding too "plastic-y" under stick impact. They also responded well to softer playing, and would serve nicely in a jazz context where a nice, sustained tom sound at a moderate volume level was desired. Ditto for the bass drum, although the heads' thin, somewhat high-end tonality might not provide enough bottom for anything *but* a jazz situation. I wouldn't use a clear head on a snare drum, simply because such a head lacks the dryness and control generally desired in a snare-drum batter. A clear head also offers no brush surface.

However, speaking of dryness and control, that's what the single-ply coated heads had to offer. Like the clear heads, they tend to focus their tonality in the mid to high ranges, but they produce a little more distinct attack sound. Whether or not you'd want those characteristics on your toms or bass drum is a personal preference. A whopping number of the world's drummers certainly do use



The *World Standard* line includes models like this clear two-ply bass drum head, 12" one-ply white coated batter, and 14" two-ply clear batter (upside down to show the epoxy hoop).

single-ply white-coated heads, after all. But these heads definitely lend themselves to the sound of a snare drum.

The double-ply clear *World Standard* heads were extremely *thumpy*. They had very little stick-attack sound, and they required a good whack to bring out their overall tonality. But that tonality was deep and fat, with lots of body. I liked these heads particularly on the toms and bass drum. I'd particularly recommend them for heavy hitters looking for a fat sound coupled with durability.

Although the double-ply coated heads had the depth and power of their clear siblings, they were dryer and more articulate. These heads would be the choice for those seeking a compromise between the thumpy sound described above and the more precise stick-attack sound of coated single-ply heads. They'd also be appropriate for use on snare drums, in situations where power playing was called for.

Pricing for *World Standard* heads is based on model and treatment. Single-ply heads are less expensive than double-ply models, and clear heads are less expensive than coated heads within each weight. In addition, thinner tom-bottom heads are significantly less expensive than batters. Here's a representative price list. Toms and snare head prices are shown single-ply clear/single-ply coated/double-ply clear/double-ply coated. Bass drum prices reflect the availability of clear double-ply batters only. 10"—\$16.00/\$16.50/\$17.00/\$17.50; 12"—\$17.00/\$17.50/\$18.00/\$18.50; 14"—\$19.00/\$20.00/\$20.50/\$21.00; 16"—\$23.00/\$23.50/\$24.00/\$24.50; 18"—\$28.00/\$30.00/\$31.00/\$32.00; 20" bass—\$40.00; 22" bass—\$44.00.



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SATURDAY, MAY 15



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Steve Vai's polyrhythmic powerhouse

(Courtesy of Pearl Drums, Paiste Cymbals & Drumsticks, and Remo, Inc.)

Studio and touring sensation

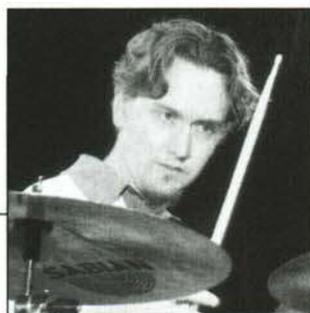
MATT CHAMBERLAIN

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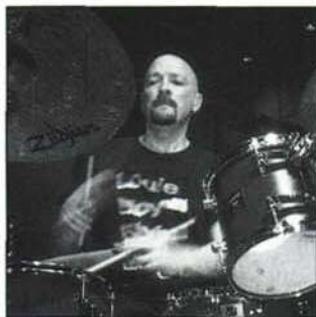
Saturday, May 15 and Sunday, May 16

Memorial Auditorium, Montclair State University, Upper Montclair, New Jersey

Doors open 12:30 P.M. Show begins 1:00 P.M.



Sunday, MAY 16



Contemporary drumming star

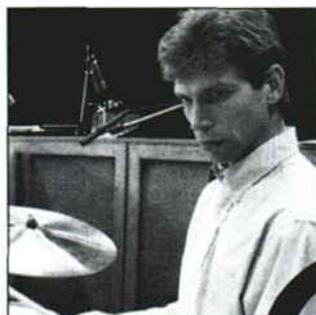
STEVE SMITH
and Vital Information

(Courtesy of Sonor Drums, Zildjian Cymbals,
Vic Firth Drumsticks, and Remo Inc.)

BERNARD PURDIE

R&B studio legend

(Courtesy of Slingerland Drums and Slingerland Cymbals)



Premier jazz performer and educator

JOHN NILEY
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(Courtesy of Yamaha Drums,
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ZACH DANZIGER

Drum 'n' bass and electronic music specialist

(Courtesy of Zildjian Cymbals & Drumsticks and Yamaha Drums)

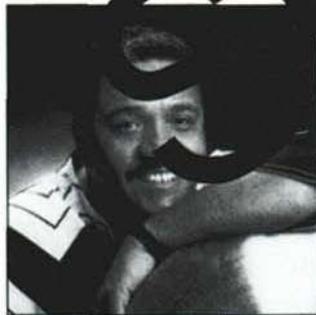


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Virgil Donati

Determination, Dedication,

And The Power Of Discipline

Story by William F. Miller

Photos by Alex Solca

The rumors are flying.

In fact, if the stories are true, Virgil Donati is one of the most determined and dedicated drummers of all time.

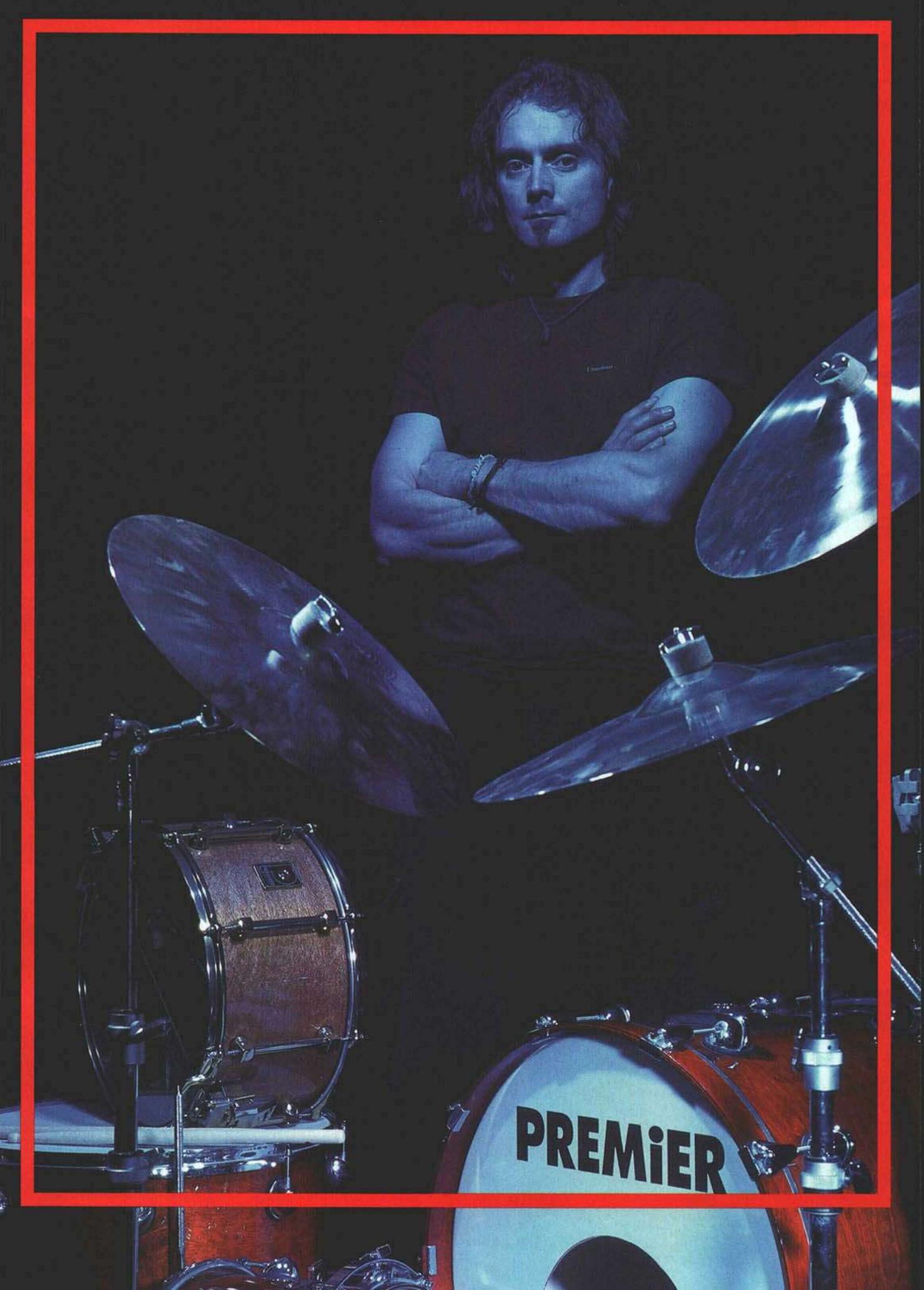
How much do you practice? How much of your life do you commit to drumming? In Donati's case, word is he *lives* for the drums, *lives* to improve at his craft. Six-, eight-, even ten-hour daily practice sessions are the norm for this man. And when he's not practicing—or working—he's exercising or composing music.

A representative from one drum industry manufacturer told me a story of how Donati requested that a set of drums be available for him to practice on when he visited their factory. No problem. It was the weekend, the place was closed, and the drummer said he would call when he was finished. Hours later, no word from Virgil, and the reps began to get nervous. They went back to the factory and found him stripped to the waist, covered in sweat, and wailing away at some "unbelievably complex pattern."

Another Virgil vignette comes from a different manufacturer, who flew Donati out to offi-

cially welcome him as an endorser, meet the staff, and select some new equipment. They prepared a nice greeting and a factory tour, which went well. But then, when the company reps wanted to take the drummer out for a celebratory meal, Donati declined, saying he had to get back to his room "to get some work done."

I knew these and a few other Donati tales before we hooked up for this interview at last November's Percussive Arts Society convention in Orlando—and he *still* managed to surprise. I showed up at his hotel room door, knocked, and when the door opened, WHOOSH!, I was blown back by a sauna-like, hot-air blast. The room was filled with a post-game locker-room haze—that dense, thick scent that comes from physical exertion. It was *drippy*. Even the windows were fogged over. Next to the bed sat a practice pad, sticks, and a bass drum pad with a double pedal attached; a high-tech metronome clicked rapidly nearby. Virgil must have noticed a funny look on my face, because he looked at me, shrugged, and apologetically offered, "I've been practicing."



If you've seen Virgil Donati play, there's no need for apologies. He is methodically—and painstakingly—expanding the limits of our instrument, both in terms of sheer physical ability and in the creative concepts he's developing. Speaking of chops, Donati's hand technique is a powerful combination of speed and endurance—using traditional grip no less! And, of course, his phenomenal double pedal technique is mind-boggling; Virgil plays all manner of fast sin-

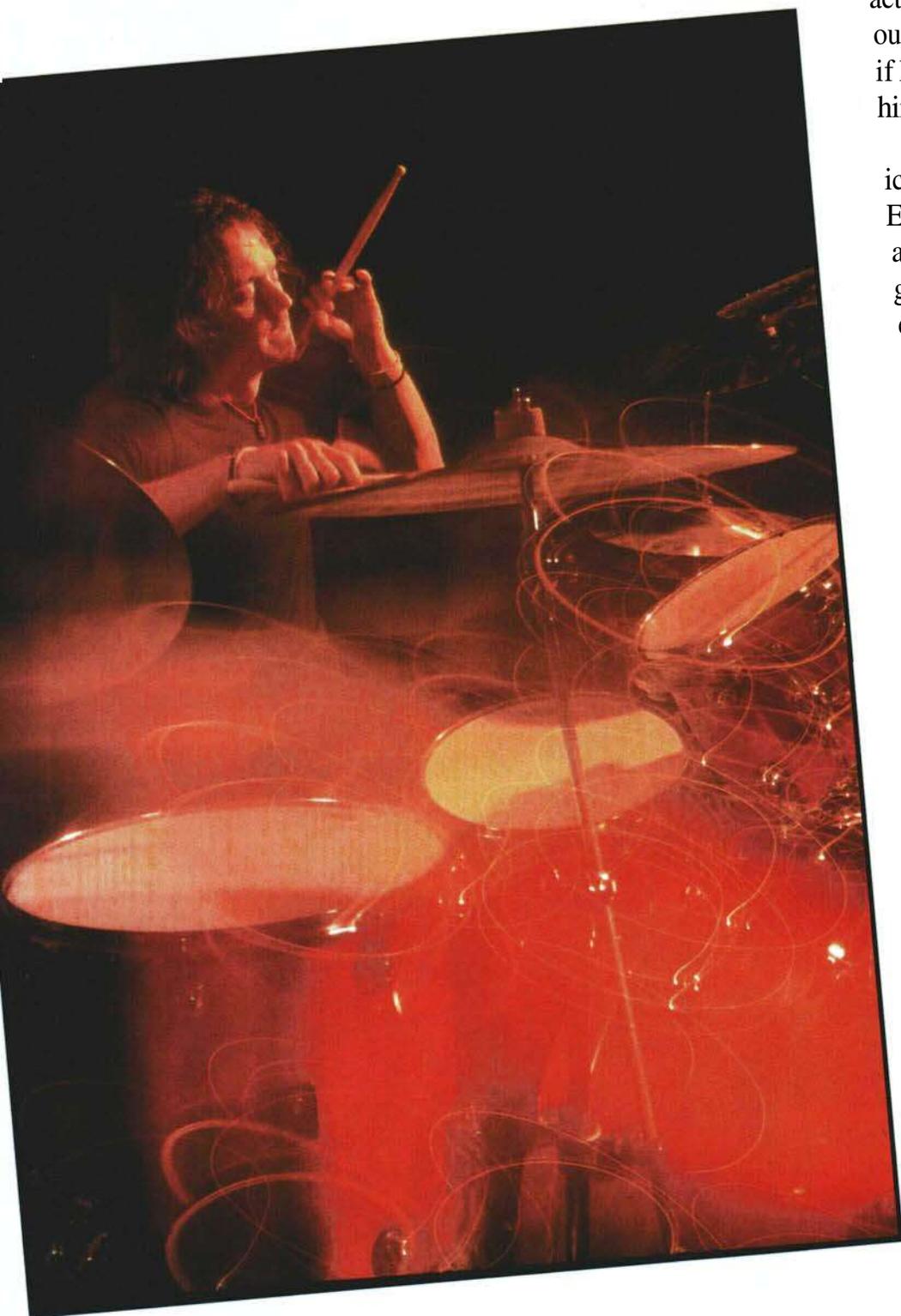
gles, but he's also the first drummer to successfully employ double-stroke combinations with both feet. Toss in his showy performance style—twirls, tosses, stick clicks, cross-sticking—and you have one amazing player.

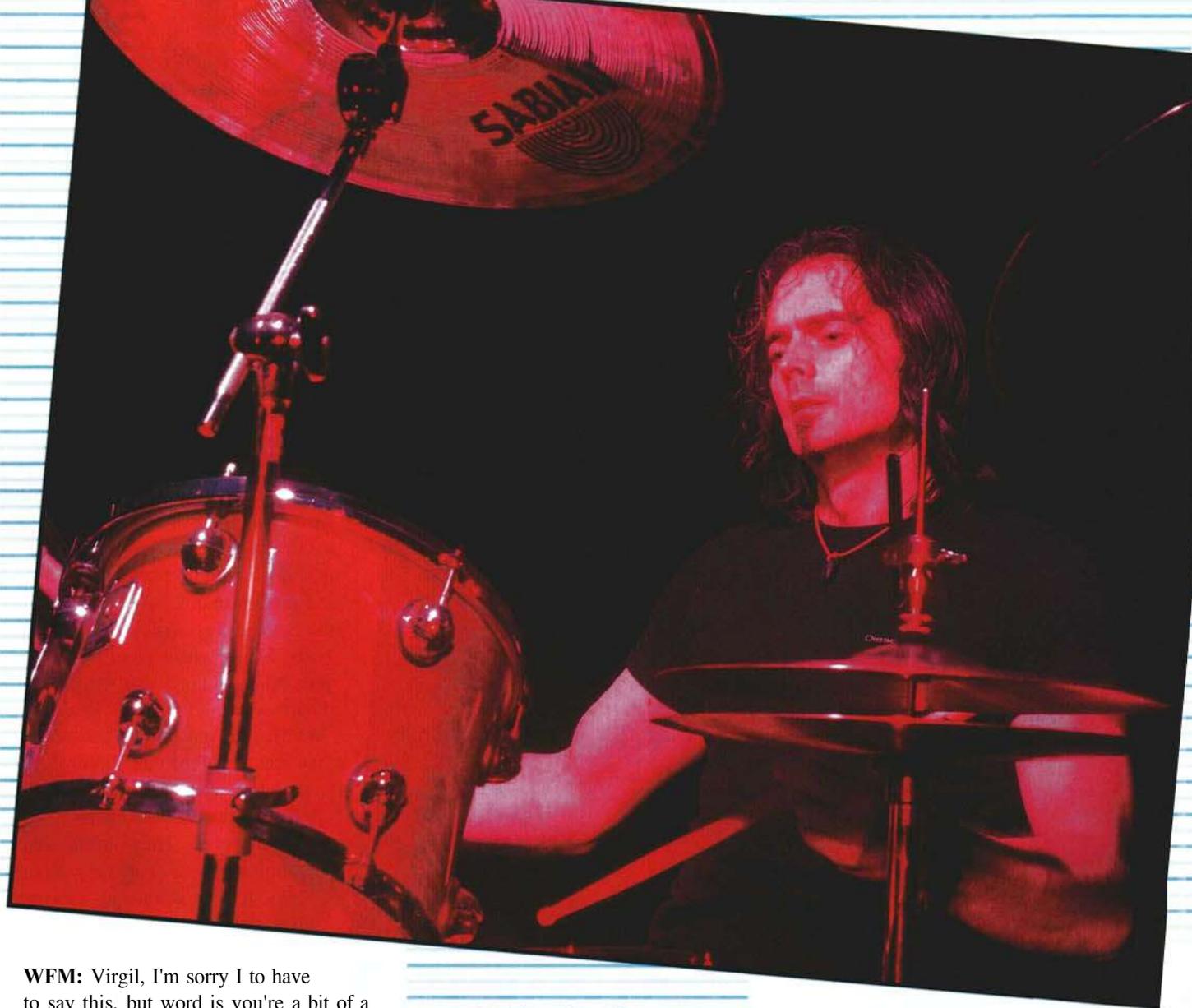
If it seems like Donati came out of nowhere...well...he did. It's been three years since he left his native Australia, where he had developed a solid career recording and touring with many area rock and pop acts. But Virgil longed to break out, come to America, and see if he could make a name for himself on a world-class level.

Three years' worth of clinics in North America and Europe, including solo spots at some of the most prestigious drum festivals, have earned Virgil star status among drummers. His impressive solo albums, *Stretch* and *Just Add Water*, and videos, *Power Drumming* and *Virgil Donati At Modern Drummer Festival '97*, have further helped to cement his reputation. Simply put, he's taken the drumming community by storm.

Now this unique individual is setting his sights on the rest of the music world. Donati is ready to contribute, and little by little the calls are coming his way.

C'mon... with his intense drive and dedication, there's no doubt Virgil Donati is going to succeed.





WFM: Virgil, I'm sorry I to have to say this, but word is you're a bit of a freak in terms of how much you practice. You must lead a monk-like existence.

VD: Well, I don't consider myself a *monk*, [laughs] I do feel that I'm a committed musician and drummer. Actually, I'm totally committed to my craft and to the development of my personal skills and musical abilities. To me, music is such a profound art form. To really contribute to it, to really move it forward, requires a lot of time and effort. It's as simple as that. I have a deep desire to take it as far as I can. So I openly admit that I practice and take the time to develop my skills.

WFM: So the rumors about all of the hours are true.

VD: Well...they are at times...depending on my work schedule.

WFM: It's nothing to be ashamed of.

VD: Oh no. I'm not ashamed *at all*. I'm probably one of the few drummers striv-

"That's the beauty of working hard consistently: You feel the growth. It's a wonderful feeling—a reason to live."

ing at this level who admit to doing a lot of practicing. And I do it with a lot of passion.

WFM: So when you're home in LA, and let's say you're not working, what's your practice schedule like and what do you work on consistently?

VD: My schedule involves a lot more than music alone. I make a total lifestyle commitment to my drumming. And drumming, being one of the most athletic and physical of the musical instruments, requires a certain degree of physical fitness. Plus you need to take special care of your health, because we are really hammering our bodies—in particular our legs, hips, shoulders, elbows, forearms, and wrists. They take quite a belting if you work hard at it.

So there are things that I consider apart from the drumming itself that I work on consistently. I am concerned about proper nutrition, feeding the muscles and joints correctly

so that they can repair themselves in time for the next onslaught. I take care not to dump a lot of junk down my pipe, and I try to strike a proper balance of carbs, fats, and proteins. I've been following the diet described by Barry Sears in his book *Entering The Zone*. I've noticed it to be very helpful to my energy level. So diet is certainly one important aspect I consider.

The degree of intensity that I like to perform at requires quite a high level of fitness. So I train to enhance that. My main exercise apart from drumming is running; I go out to the beach or up to the mountains—the Hollywood Hills—to get some miles in. I also like to swim whenever I can.

A usual day for me would start with some type of training in the morning—running or swimming. Then sometimes I attend yoga classes in the Iyengar style, which is very dynamic and involves intense stretching. I've been doing it on and off for ten years, and I've found it to be very helpful both physically and mentally. After that I'll eat, and

then I'm into the music for the rest of the day. And that can range anywhere from practicing to writing new material. Most of the time it gets broken up by my having to attend rehearsals for someone's project or a session. But then I'll come back to my practice space and do some more work later in the day. So it's a very full schedule, and I try to stick to it.

WFM: Many top-level pros at one point in their lives have put in a lot of time on the instrument. But in most cases, as their personal lives have gotten busier, they couldn't keep up that commitment. What fuels your desire to stay focused and to put in these hours?

VD: A totally honest answer is I think it stems from the frustration I feel at knowing what is possible—the things I imagine myself playing—and trying to develop them. The other thing about me personally, which might seem strange to some, is that

I cannot live with complacency. The "field of the known" should not be a part of any creative musician's make-up. I don't want to play what I know and rest on that. I have to step into the field of the *unknown* on a daily basis. That's where you find all the possibilities. I guess that's what really drives me.

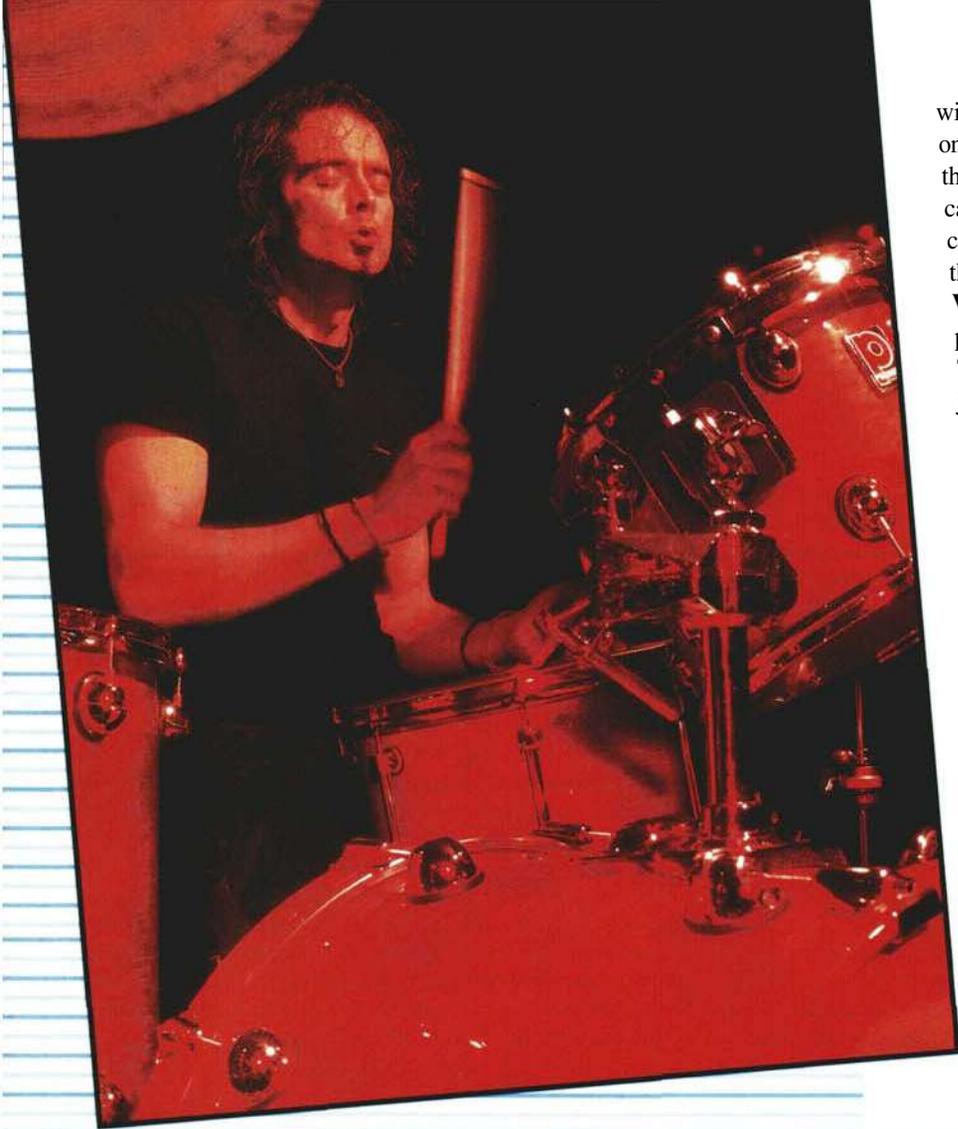
WFM: Are you finding yourself in musical situations that allow you to take advantage of these abilities?

VD: Oh yeah. Sheer chops is not the only goal. These things can exhibit themselves in very subtle ways. It's not always about some incredibly difficult technical challenge or some drumming onslaught around the kit. Things like touch and feel are concepts I work on as well.

I get called to do a lot of rock and pop music, which may seem very simple on the surface. But I enjoy playing that music. It may not be technically challenging, but there are elements involved that are deep: groove, touch, dynamics. Also involved in that is the movement of your limbs—the grace and beauty that you develop, which comes through in the music. I have no problem with playing 1 and 3 on the kick and 2 and 4 on the snare. That can be a challenge in itself; there is a set of difficulties even in simplicity.

Touch on the instrument is really important to me. And by spending a lot of time





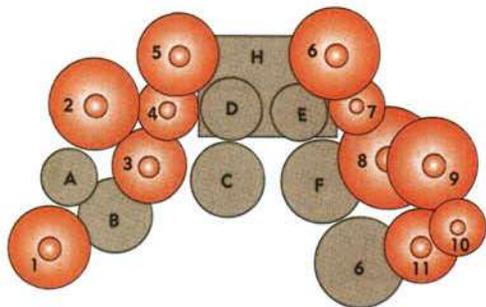
with the sticks in your hands and with your feet on the pedals, you develop touch. But it's something that is almost, I guess, quantum-mechanical or metaphysical. It's something that you can't explain, it's intangible, and something that just develops with time.

WFM: Some people, though, can pick up a pair of sticks and have that touch right away. They can sit down and play a groove and it just feels good immediately. Would you say that you had that initial talent?

VD: I think we all have a pure potentiality within us, which manifests itself more in some than in others. We all have aptitude in certain areas. Some people sit down on the drums and it's just rigid, stiff, and awkward-looking. Where does that come from? And yet others can be really loose and have a natural aptitude. With me, I started at such a young age that I can't remember what it was like. But I do have video footage of me playing at three years of age, and believe it or not, it looks okay. The touch looks alright...well...alright for a three-year-old! [laughs]

I feel that these things can be developed. I've felt it develop more and more over the years in me. That's the beauty of working hard consistently; you feel the growth. Sometimes it will hit me

DRUMSPEAK



Drumset: Premier (either Signia or Genista series)

- A. 6x10 soprano snare
- B. 12x14 tom
- C. 5 1/2 x14 snare
- D. 10x12 tom
- E. 9x10 tom
- F. 16x16 floor tom
- 6. 16x18 floor tom
- H. 18x22 bass drum

Sticks: Vater Assault Shedder, and Powerhouse models, Retractable brushes

Cymbals: Sabian

- 1. 16" HH thin crash
- 2. 18" AA El Sabor
- 3. 14" AA Fusion Hats
- 4. 12" AAX Mini Chinese
- 5. 17" AAX Stage crash
- 6. 18" HH crash/ride
- 7. 10" Mini Hats (mounted on remote stand; pedal to the right of bass drum pedal)
- 8. 20" AA heavy ride
- 9. 18" AA El Sabor
- 10. 10" HH China Kang
- 11. 14" AAX Mini Chinese



Hardware: Premier 5000 series, Premier 277 double pedal with either Vater or Danmar wood beaters, DW remote hi-hat stand

Heads: Remo coated Ambassadors on snare batters (with Moon Gel for muffling), coated Emperors on tops of toms, clear Ambassadors on bottoms, clear Powerstroke 3 on bass drum

overnight. I'll pick up the sticks, and all of a sudden it just feels totally different—stronger, better.

WFM: That'll keep you inspired.

VD: Oh, it's a wonderful feeling. It's a reason to live.

WFM: But all of the devotion you give to your drumming must come at a price. I hate to be blunt, but do you have a personal life outside of music?

VD: Ha! I think you have to have a very strong will to achieve high goals. So far I've resisted the choice of marriage, fami-

ly, and all of the distractions they can bring.

WFM: See. *That's* why you have this monkish reputation, [laughs]

VD: I guess I feel comfortable with my own independence—and isolation. But I do have really strong family ties—my Italian background—and there's always been a lot of support there for what I want to do with my life.

WFM: Speaking of family, let's talk about your background.

VD: I come from a musical family. My

father was a keyboard player, and mum is a singer. They were immigrants to Australia and settled into the nightlife there. Dad worked all night at two or three different clubs, and he was practicing all day as well, either by himself or with his bands in our house. I made it real easy for mum; she didn't have to wonder where I was, because all I wanted to do was sit and watch those rehearsals.

I still have vivid recollections of those days, even though I was only about three at the time. I'd sit in the room and watch the

Donati's Double Cross

Along with all of the amazing technical chops Virgil Donati has, the drummer also loves to incorporate the showier elements into his playing. Back-sticking, stick twirls, and stick-on-stick licks all make their way into a Donati drum solo.

One other element that is a big part of Virgil's visual bag-of-tricks is cross-sticking, the art of moving around the kit while the arms sweep back-and-forth in front of each other. It's a technique that master drummers like Louie Bellson and Ed Shaughnessy employ to add flair to their playing. Donati kicks it up a notch, adding a level of physicality to the movements that more resembles Bruce Lee than Buddy Rich.

"Cross-sticking is probably not used all that often by drummers," Virgil explains, "because it can be difficult to execute. But it can be invaluable for increasing your level of stamina and endurance, especially with the bigger movements, like crosses that go from one side of the

drumkit to the other. Cross-sticking can really take it out of you. I've also found that developing these techniques has really helped my precision and accuracy around the kit.

"I have a few patterns that work really well," he continues. "They mainly deal with right and left floor toms as well as the whole kit. As you work through any of these types of things, start very slowly. Get used to the feeling of the sticking and the movement around the drums before you increase speed."

Here are a few of Virgil's cross-sticking patterns that involve the snare drum (notated on the third space), a floor tom in the normal position (notated on the second space), and a floor tom located on the left side of the kit next to the hi-hat (notated on the middle line with an "x"). If you don't have a tom on the left side of your kit, the patterns will work just as well playing the hi-hat for the tom part.

1a

R L R L R L R L R L R L
or R R

1b

L R L R L R L R L R L R
or L L

2a

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

2b

L R L R R L R L L R

3a

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

3b

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

4a

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

4b

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

These examples were excerpted from the accompanying booklet to the Warner Bros. videotape *Virgil Donati At Modern Drummer Festival '97*. Used with permission. If you're interested in more cross-sticking examples, check out MD publisher Ron Spagnardi's thorough treatise on the subject, *Cross-Sticking Studies*, published by Modern Drummer Publications, Inc.

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Virgil
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drummer, and I felt like I wanted to contribute, so I'd start tapping. I had a little toy drum dad had gotten me; I ended up putting my foot through it one day because I wanted a real drum. Finally, I think it was my uncle, who was a drummer himself, who said to dad, "Why don't you buy him a drumset?" This was a month before my third birthday. I clearly remember the day. We went out and bought a drumkit for me, and that was it from then on.

WFM: Three years old is an early age to start. What training did you have?

VD: The best training I had at that stage was playing with dad and one of his bands. I started playing gigs almost right away. They'd wake me up in the middle of the night and take me out to do what in Australia were called "floor shows." I don't know what the equivalent here would be. I would do a half-hour spot at a nightclub in the middle of the set—play with the band, do a drum solo, and then get up and do a dance routine with a milk bottle. Seriously! I wouldn't do that now. [laughs] Then my mum would take me home and I'd go back to bed.

So I started playing very early on. After that, I guess from age eight and up, I'd go on weekends and do gigs with my dad. I'd

be working on Fridays, Saturdays, and after school. From there I gradually got into the rock scene, touring and recording with bands around the country all through my teenage years.

WFM: Any formal training?

VD: I had some teachers in Melbourne, who were wonderful and who gave me some great direction. One was a guy named Graham Morgan. I had about four years of lessons between the ages of seven and eleven. And then I had a couple of scattered lessons after that. But that was about it, really, until I came to the States for the first time when I was nineteen. That's when I had some lessons with Philly Joe Jones.

WFM: Let's step back for a second: Who inspired your drumming early on?

VD: As soon as dad realized that I was into drums, he started buying me Buddy Rich and Louie Bellson records—the big band stuff. I loved those records. Then I started listening to the rock 'n' roll bands of the time, particularly Zeppelin and Purple. And when the whole fusion thing started happening, I got into that too—Return To Forever and Mahavishnu Orchestra especially.

At some point around that time I began

Stretching Out

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Artist	Album
Derek Sherinian	Planet X (Magna Carta)
Virgil Donati	Just Add Water (Thunder Drum)
	Stretch (Musos)
On The Virg	Garsed, Hecmerich, Donati (Thunder Drum)
	Serious Young Insects (Vorticity)
Southern Sons	Jesus Christ Superstar (Polydor)
	Southern Sons (RCA)
Jon Stevens	Nothing But The Truth (RCA)
	Are You Satisfied? (Sony)

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

Artist	Album	Drummer
Steely Dan	Aja	various
Miles Davis	Nefertiti	Tony Williams
Wayne Shorter	Speak No Evil	Elvin Jones
Mahavishnu Orchestra	Visions Of The Emerald Beyond	Narada Michael Walden
Led Zeppelin	IV	John Bonham
Toto	IV	Jeff Porcaro
Los Lobotomys	Live	Jeff Porcaro/Vinnie Colaiuta

Virgil On Video

Power Drumming (CPP Media)

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checking out bebop—you know, cool jazz and all the Miles and Coltrane stuff. That really opened my ears to everything and gave me a broader idea of what music really is. I was playing in pop and rock bands, but at the same time I'd always have some type of experimental group on the side doing jazz and fusion things.

WFM: You mentioned coming to the States at nineteen. Why?

VD: That was always a dream of mine. I just *had* to get over here because, in those days in particular, the only access we had to music was on record—on vinyl. We didn't get to see many tours. I had to come here and see those musicians play.

I went to New York and spent six months there. I joined a black funk band, and that was a bit of fun. And at the same time I started taking lessons. I went to see Philly Joe play one night. He was a very gracious gentleman to me, and he gave me his address and phone number. So I went to see him and we spent the whole afternoon together—wonderful memories. And from there I started studying with him.

WFM: What did you study with Philly?

VD: I was surprised. He was very much into the old Charles Wilcoxon book [*Modern Rudimental Swing Solos*]. He wanted me to master that stuff. It's funny, but after I worked through that book I could really hear it in his soloing—all those beautiful, lyrical rudimental things he'd do on the drums.

I also wanted Philly to explain some of his brush techniques and the movements he used, so I did some of that with him too. And it was fun to just spend time with him. He had a lot of interesting things to say, and he was totally open-minded. I checked out his record collection, and Philly had everything—R&B, funk, fusion, and some rock things in there too. He wasn't a jazz purist.

WFM: Where would you say your playing was at that time? Did you feel you were competent enough to stay in the States and start building a career?

VD: I felt confident. As a matter of fact, Philly left his gig with Bill Evans' band at that time and recommended me for an audition. They were holding auditions at

The Nature Of Virgil

At Virgil Donati's home page (located, appropriately, at www.virgildonati.com), you'll find the standard internet fare—news, gigs, clinics. You'll also find a couple of fun bits—cartoons of the drummer's abused gear and photos of the man himself "pretzeling" into some of his favorite yoga positions.

What's really outstanding at the site, though, are Virgil's thoughts on practice, technique, and most importantly, the dedication he has for his craft. These words reveal a lot about the man and how he's been able to forge himself into one of the greats of the instrument.

One area of Virgil's site actually contains a few verses written by the drummer himself, capturing his deep-felt beliefs about drumming. See if the following mantra, which Virgil calls "The Nature Of Drumming," strikes a chord with you:

"I always felt the need to discover, understand, and expand the rhythmic and tonal possibilities of

my instrument, to craft an individual sound that goes beyond what the textbooks give you. I have always accepted the nature of the instrument to be physically and mentally challenging—night after night and performance after performance, extending your endurance, expanding your creativity, and reaching beyond all limits. The vitality and excitement in the controlled pounding of hypnotic rhythms or explosive polyrhythmic structures, and the ability to create a musical, visual, and emotional experience for an audience—this is the heart of drumming.

"Though our initial training is directed at overcoming the technical hurdles, it must never be forgotten that music is much more than this. It is the development of our imagination that really enables us to broaden what is possible on the instrument. This is how we develop true expressive meaning in our playing. Music is so much more than just technical development. It is an art form that expresses our highest aspirations,

ideals, passions, and beliefs. This is the soul of drumming.

"How far one travels on such an adventure is dependent upon personal commitment, desire, and musical taste. Today our musical culture is incredibly rich and diverse. What was once considered to be absolutely correct in popular music is no longer necessarily the case. Our culture no longer provides us with all the rules as to what is ultimately right or wrong. Awareness of this diversity gives us the greatest freedom of all. The character and expressive nature of your performance becomes just as important as your technical adequacy. This is the new culture of drumming.

"If you keep a humble perspective and you do the very best you can, ultimately what you are supposed to do here on this earth will come to you. You may not always get everything that you desire, but you will get enough of what you need to keep going. This is the nature of drumming."

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the Vanguard. Philly gave me Bill's manager's number, but I called and she was confused, saying that Bill had already chosen someone. But the next time I saw Philly, he said, "Where were you?" He had gone down to see the auditions and wondered where I was. So that was a disappointment. And eventually I ended up moving back to Australia.

WFM: Up to this point we've been talking about your background, but I'd like to get your thoughts on your approach. First off, traditional grip. You came up at a time when people were beginning to play matched exclusively. Considering that you like to play in a heavier style, why did you favor traditional?

VD: I grew up playing traditional and persevered with it even under the physical duress of heavy rock bands. I just thought that grip was really how I liked to play. Now it's very natural for me. Besides, I've surmounted all the problems of being able to play with enough power. Traditional grip doesn't limit me in any way.

That said, I would not necessarily recommend traditional grip, because it is a

much more difficult grip to maintain and to develop power with. You find that a lot of players who do play traditional will often flip over to matched for heavy backbeats. But I feel like I've managed to find a sweet spot and play quite hard with it.

WFM: You've mentioned the limitations, but what advantages does traditional grip offer?

VD: There are a few: I find that there are some multiple-stroke, one-handed stickings that I can do better with traditional-grip left hand. There are certain movements around the drums that feel great with traditional, and believe it or not, there are certain things I'll play that feel better in my left hand than in my right.

Frankly, I think the disadvantages involved with traditional grip outweigh the advantages. Any student starting out would be better off focusing on matched. Traditional grip takes more patience and more practice. But for some reason, maybe just because it isn't used as much anymore, traditional grip just seems a bit more hip.

WFM: You mentioned playing heavy. In

fact, any time I've seen you perform you've either been soloing in a very forceful style or playing in a loud rock band. Is that approach more satisfying for you?

VD: Yeah, it fits my fiery constitution. I really like to make a strong statement. But I'd like to make the point that a louder approach isn't the only way I play. Back in Australia I was always involved in many different styles, playing the heavy rock gigs and then going and doing acoustic jazz. It's very important that you develop all these different touches on the instrument.

WFM: But since you enjoy the louder approach, can you offer any tips on how to play in that setting and yet still have control over your technique?

VD: What really helps is your physical condition. I believe that physical training is as important as the drumming. Next you have to look at your tools. I occasionally use a fairly heavy stick, a large stick that I've designed for Vater called the *Shedder*. It's slightly bigger than a 2B. I just find that the extra weight and density actually help rather than hinder my technique. It



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really gives me something more to work with. And I like the feel—more wood in my hands.

WFM: It's funny how many of the great technicians play with bigger sticks. I'm thinking of Tony Williams, Vinnie Colaiuta, and Billy Cobham.

VD: A larger stick helps your control and helps you get a bigger sound—to me a much more satisfying sound—from drums and cymbals. The thing I like about the *Shedder* is that it's bigger but it's not too long. If you get too much length it creates an imbalance in the hand. Somewhere around 16 1/4" is a good length. It just feels like I can find the sweet spot, the balance point, a lot easier, and I don't get any strange vibrations in my hand. Obviously we all have different-sized hands, but I think in general a larger stick is the way to go.

As for what to practice to develop your strength on the kit, I did a video a few years back called *Power Drumming*, where I demonstrated a strength-building routine. In fact, that routine is a good indication of how I go about building endurance and sta-

mina around the drums. It takes various forms as far as the actual exercises are concerned, but the intensity of those exercises is what needs to be developed.

When drummers perform, we have to deal with the influence of adrenaline, the environment, the atmosphere we perform in, and so on, and all of that makes us work harder. But when we *practice*, we never work ourselves anywhere near that hard. I try to rise to that level in my practice routine. And to do that takes a lot more effort, because in practicing we don't have that adrenaline surge that we get when performing. And that's why drummers go on stage and sometimes start cramping up and have all sorts of problems—their endurance runs out.

WFM: Do you have favorite exercises that you work on that help your chops both in terms of touch and power?

VD: I do. I had some lessons with a rudimentary snare drum champion named Rob Carson. He is just a remarkable guy. He has such a wonderful way of articulating drumming—the *art* of drumming. I really enjoyed taking lessons with him.

Rob really turned me on to some wonderful things. One thing in particular that I like doing is a one-handed exercise that he calls the "locked grip," where you don't use any fingers at all. You actually hold the butt of the stick in the palm of the hand, and without using any fingers at all, you isolate and work the wrist. This develops some serious power and endurance for the wrist. And when it comes to power, the fingers are limited. In fact, I think of the fingers simply as a tool for controlling the rate of rebound once you can really work the wrist.

As far as specific exercises to use for playing the "locked grip" approach, I just take basic combinations—fours, eights, sixteens—and play them along with a metronome, varying the tempo. Do that for a while and your hands will be able to fly around the kit.

WFM: What about playing accents within the pattern?

VD: Oh yeah. I like to use a lot of contrast too between accented and unaccented notes. I am very aware of stick height when I work on this and any exercise. Again, it's

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WFM: What about *finger* exercises?

VD: I think isolating and strengthening is the best way to develop control with the fingers. I'll hold the stick in a normal fashion, but then play exercises keeping my wrist still and using only one finger to propel the stick. I'll start with the index finger, then I'll go to the second finger, then the third, and then the last, and then go back and fourth. I'll set up patterns—eight or four beats, or triplets—moving as smoothly as I can from one finger to the next. I also try not to just go in a set order: Start with the index, then the fourth finger, and so on. Variation is a good thing here. So by doing all of this you are strengthening the individual components. Then you put them together and it's a *lot* stronger.

WFM: That sounds very Morello-esque. Any other hand exercises you've found helpful?

VD: I've worked a lot with flam combinations, and they're great for control and also translate well to the drums. One exercise I can recommend is to take a basic flamadiddle,

but then move the flam within the pattern. The usual flamadiddle has the first note flammed. I'll play a few of those and then move the flam to the second 16th, then the third, and so on. That's a fun one for developing control and coordination. It really gives you the ability to throw flams in anywhere you'd like in a solo, pattern, or fill.

WFM: Let's move to another area that you're becoming known for, your double pedal work. Your speed and dexterity is mind-blowing—especially your groundbreaking work in playing doubles with both feet.

VD: Thanks. It's an area of drumming that I particularly enjoy.

WFM: You've obviously spent a lot of time working on it and thinking about the best way to approach double bass. How do you do what you do?

VD: First off, I primarily play heel up.

WFM: I noticed from watching you perform that you seem to turn your feet inwards slightly on the pedals.

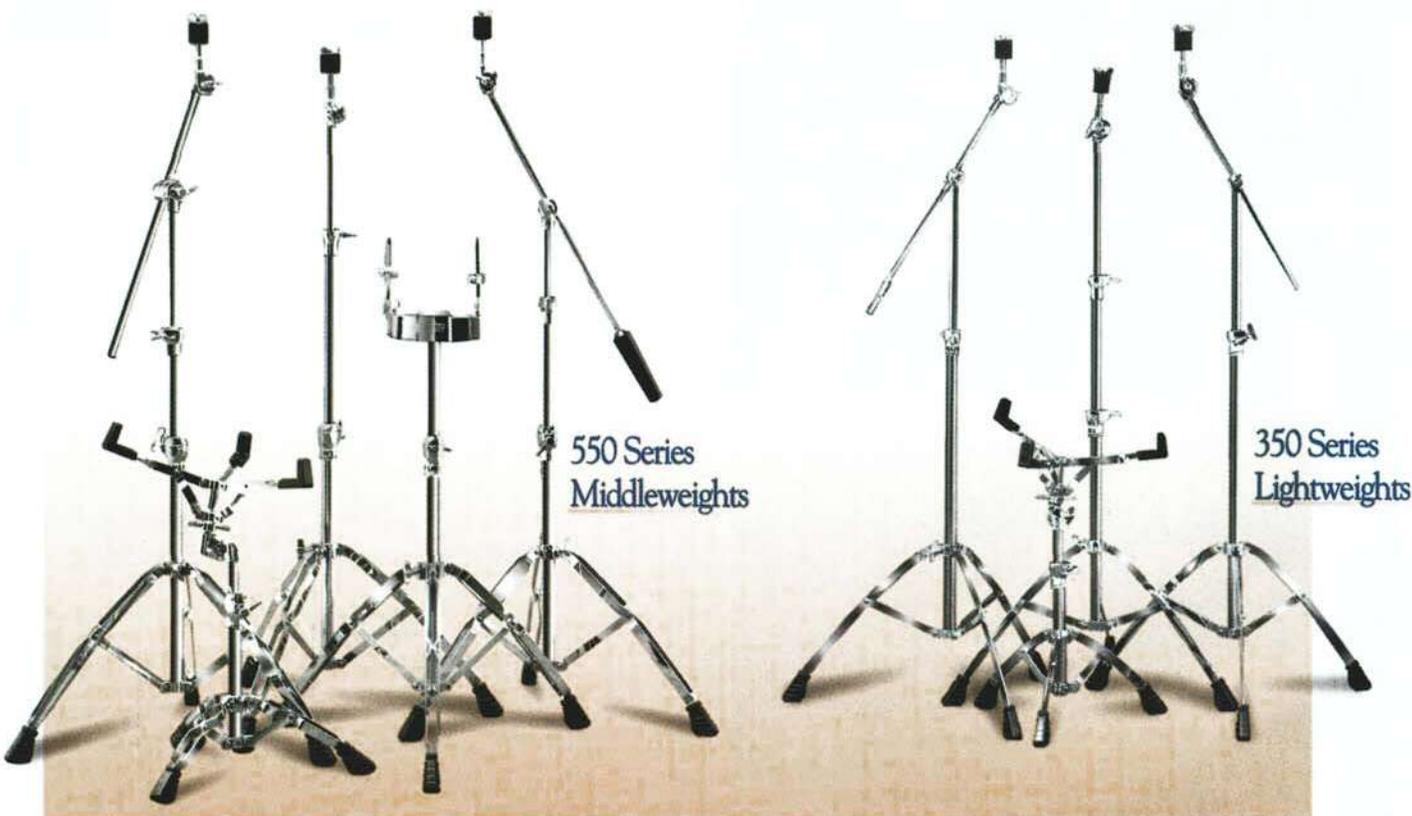
VD: I probably need to see a chiropractor about that! Well, there may be a reason for

it. I like to have the bass drum pedal come straight out from the drum so that the beaters are moving in a straight line to the head. And since I want both pedals to be set up symmetrically, the left pedal is set at the same angle on the other side. I have both pedals positioned as if there were two bass drums slightly turned in front of me. Now, if I were to position my feet straight on each foot plate, it would be unnatural and very awkward. It may look like my feet are turned in relation to their position on the pedals, but they are actually in a straight line down my leg.

WFM: What about positioning the pedals closer together?

VD: I actually have them as close together as possible in relation to my setup. I have experimented a lot with where I position my snare drum. I now position it just a bit farther away from me so I can move the pedals closer together. I found that when I can bring my knees in a bit closer together, my legs have more energy and things seem to flow a lot stronger.

I like to sit fairly high as well to create freedom for the hip joint. If you sit low



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you're cramming that joint inwards, which really limits your movement and causes stress. I have more freedom of movement by sitting higher, and I can really push my energy into the drum from that height.

WFM: And what pedal tension do you recommend, especially when playing doubles with both feet?

VD: I like a medium tension. I like to have enough tension in the spring to get a fairly efficient return. Obviously, if you set the tension lighter it would reduce the effect of exhausting the muscle when pushing down. But by the same token, having a slightly heavier tension enables the actual movement of the beater to work more efficiently.

WFM: You've talked about some of the basic concepts, but what about how you develop your feet to such a high level?

VD: I have no secrets. It's just hard work. Well, there's also another element: imagination. I think that the stereotypical heavy-rock, single-stroke double bass roll has become a bit tired. There is so much more scope and potential for the instrument. But to have that type of scope requires a lot more effort, patience, and diligence.

Once you start using your imagination with double bass you will eventually have to stray from single strokes. I feel like I've covered a lot of the single-stroke territory. I can take it to a point now where the speed and clarity isn't an issue. And I've experimented using more interesting syncopated rhythms—broken rhythms and patterns—and that creates a certain level of independence problems, especially when you try to play something with your hands over the top. But after developing a lot of that, I just wanted to really do something else, really push the instrument. I thought it must be possible to play things other than singles, so now I'm experimenting with a couple of other areas, namely doubles and flams.

WFM: Experimenting? It seems you have it pretty well under your feet at this point.

VD: No, I'm still trying to push the envelope in certain areas, especially now with the flaming thing. For example, I'll use flams as part of a groove, where the typical bass drum part is "fattened" or doubled. Or I'm working on things like playing fast flam accents as a sort of ostinato.

The way I like to set up the flam accent to make it a bit more challenging is to

phrase it in four as opposed to the common triplet setting. That creates a nice polyrhythmic affect, moving the accents and the flams around. That's a good independence workout.

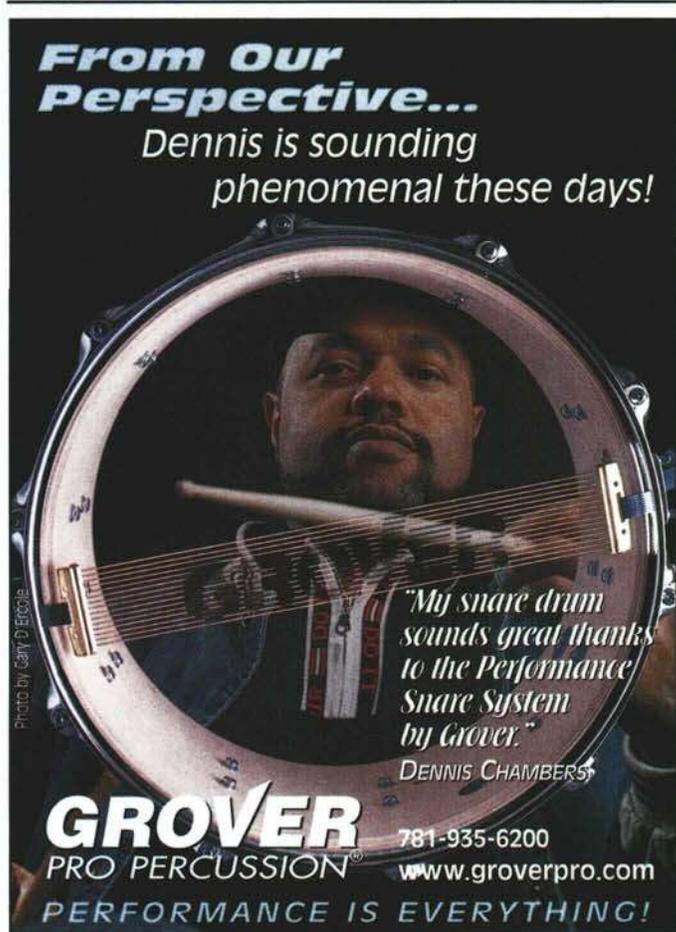
WFM: And what about the doubles? Dennis Chambers has done some very good work with playing three-note combinations, where the left foot plays one and the right plays two. But you're into double-stroke rolls with both feet.

VD: Honestly, I really didn't think too hard about it. I felt it was the next obvious step for double bass. The only problem was that developing it was going to take some hard work. Ideally I would like to get to the point where my feet match the dexterity that my hands have.

WFM: Playing even doubles with the left foot seems at first like a very unnatural motion, especially when you consider what we normally play with it on the hi-hat.

VD: I've always felt a natural tendency with my left foot. I never really had problems adapting it to a bass drum pedal and playing typical bass drum patterns. But I don't want to mislead anybody—it has taken me a *long* time to develop it to this

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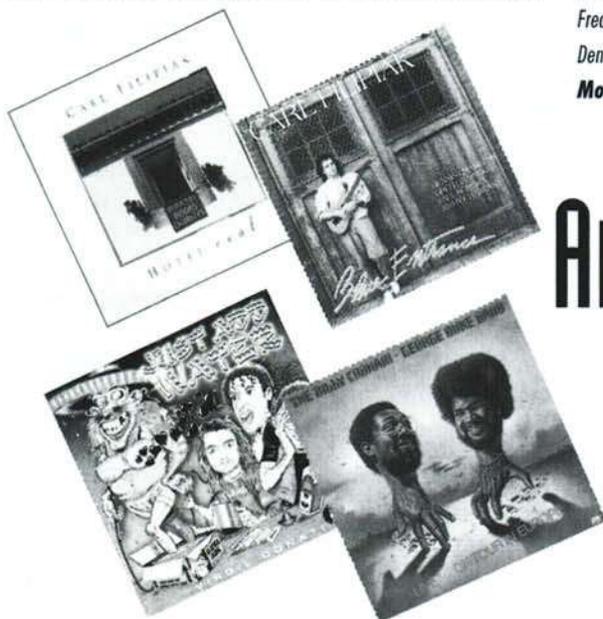
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point. I work on it more or less on a daily basis with a metronome for approximately thirty minutes. I began very slowly, and then used the metronome to make sure I was playing them as evenly as possible. As it started to improve, I would break that thirty minutes up by playing five minutes at 100 bpm, the next five minutes at 110, and so on.

WFM: It seems you do a lot of work with a metronome and feel it's important. Do you keep records of your development so you can see how you've progressed over the years?

VD: You know, I haven't, but I wish I had. That's something I would definitely recommend. Watching yourself improve, and having hard facts to back it up, is a great motivational tool.

I do know in general terms how I've improved in certain areas. I taped my *Power Drumming* video in '91, and that was the first time I publicly played double-stroke rolls. And at that time I can remember quite clearly that 180 bpm was my absolute limit. Now I can certainly do it comfortably at 200, and I can *squeeze* it out at 220. So over eight or nine years it's pro-

gressed nicely.

WFM: Do you find that when playing double bass you favor leading with one foot over the other?

VD: I've always been an advocate of total ambidexterity—being able to lead with either hand or foot. I'd say that eighty to ninety percent of everything I practice I do both ways, including my feet.

One thing I do to ensure a certain amount of equality is to create patterns that turn around, so that I'll play it leading one way, and when the pattern repeats, it automatically reverses itself. It's gotten to a point now where it's second-nature for me, and I'm quite comfortable with it.

WFM: Besides double pedal, you've done some inventive work with double hi-hats—pedaled hi-hats, that is.

VD: I use two hi-hats from time to time. It's fun for me because I can transfer some of my double pedal technique to the two hi-hat pedals. It's funny how that change just puts you in a totally different space. All of a sudden you have the sweetness and crispness of the hi-hats rather than the thundering belligerence of the bass drum. It creates patterns that are unusual to the ear.

WFM: Another area of your playing that you excel at is showmanship.

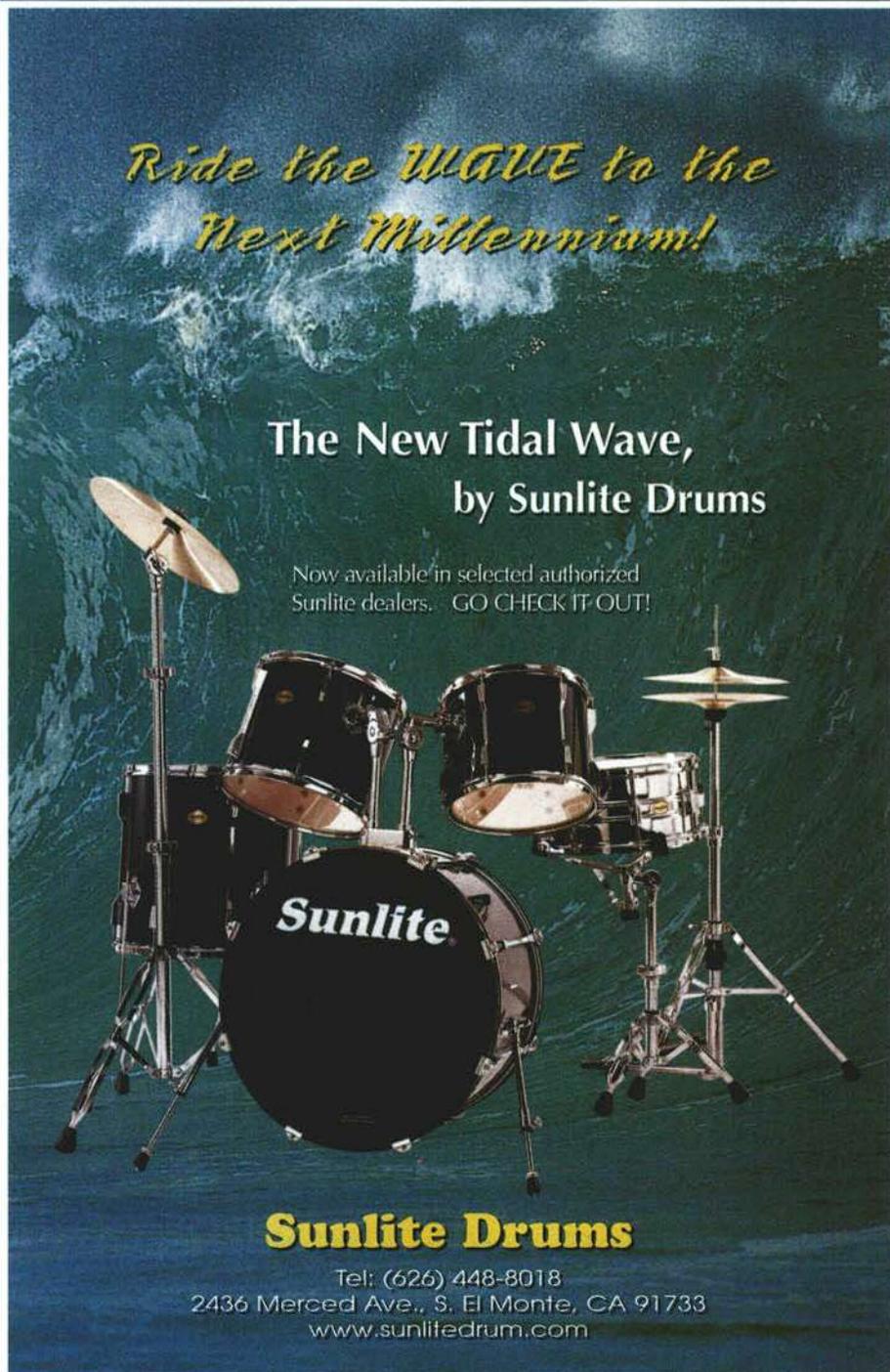
VD: I feel that part of being a musician involves being an entertainer. Yes, people come to listen, but they also want to see a spectacle. They want to go home feeling elated, like they've seen something remarkable and inspiring.

WFM: Can't that come from just the playing?

VD: Of course. But by the same token, stick twirls, back-sticking, and cross-sticking are an added dimension that draws the audience in and focuses them on the performance. [See the cross-sticking sidebar on page 46.] And in a sense it gives you the feeling that you ultimately are in command of the sticks. You can do whatever you want with them. Unless, of course, you drop them, which occasionally does happen! [laughs] But I like that feeling of risk-taking too, which I think the audience can sense. It makes the performance more exciting.

WFM: Besides the motivation for self improvement, what outside influences have inspired you? Other drummers?

VD: You can always find something that someone else can play better and can say differently from yourself. That can be an



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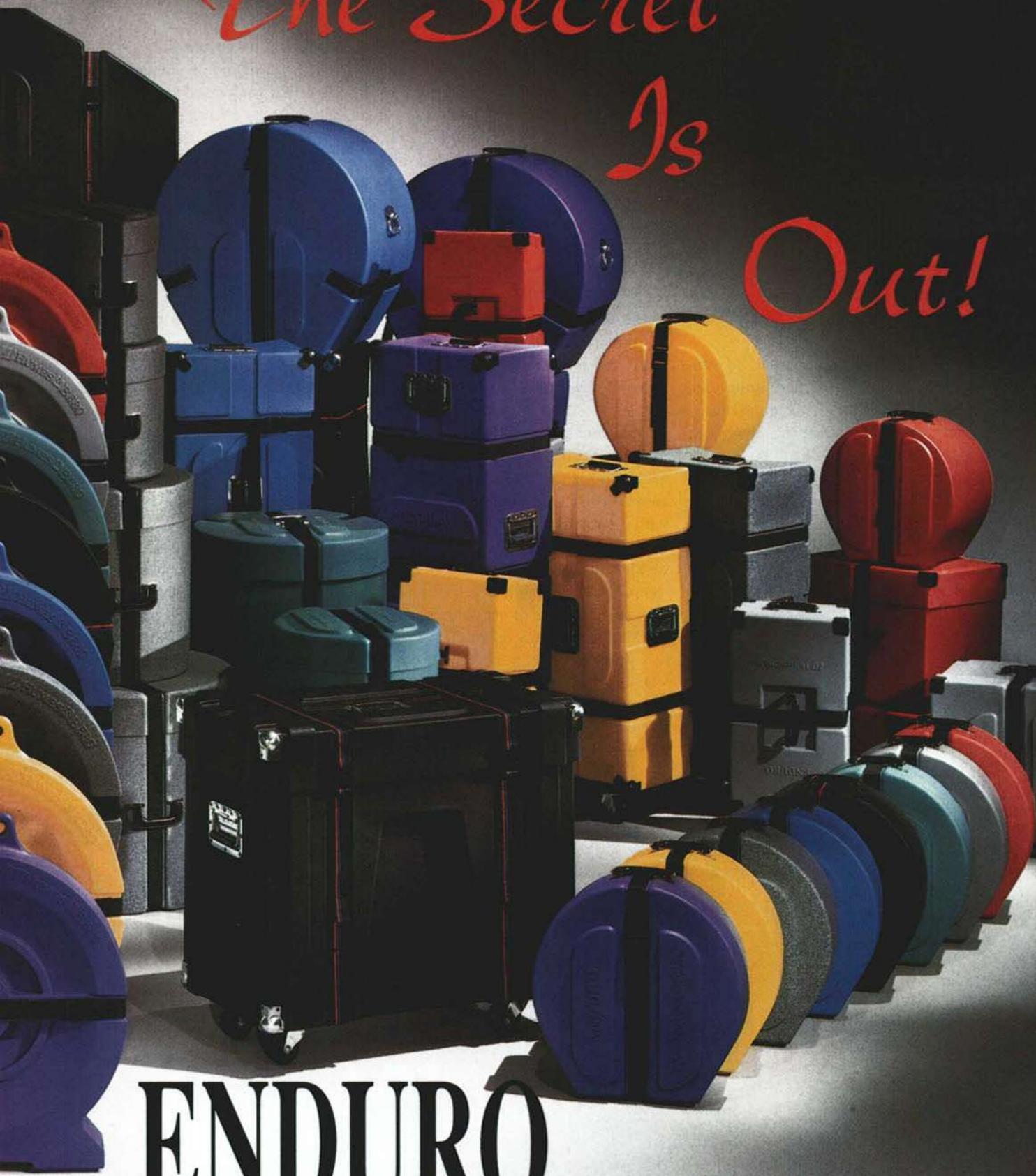
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inspiration. But I have found lately that other, non-drumming artists have inspired me more. Walk into any museum and see what mankind has created, all the great things that have come before, and all of the toil and sweat that mankind has put forth to create art. That makes our contribution seem so minute. Go to the Sistine Chapel and look at what was created there—it can easily move you to tears.

I think drumming is an art form that is still developing—evolving, I should say. The drumkit is such a relatively new instrument compared to most. I think there is still a lot more ground to be covered, and that's why I think it's important that there are people out there who strive to reach for the unknown.

WFM: Speaking of that, though, do you think that the pursuit of technique can become a trap, to a point where the music you play may suffer—where the temptation to play a lot of notes will take over?

VD: Technique is innocent. It doesn't know any better. It's how we use it that counts. That really comes down to the maturity, the understanding, and the ego of the individual.

WFM: You spend hours every day practicing—don't you want to put it on display?

VD: You know what? Not at all. I'm sure there are many people out there who have seen me play at clinics and thought, "Oh, he's a tech head." But I can guarantee you that there are people who have seen me on pop gigs who had no idea I can play the other thing. I can honestly say that I do not

desire to play any more than the music requires.

WFM: On the other end of the spectrum, do you feel you've had the opportunity in a band setting to really show it?

VD: Oh yeah. I toured last year with Scott Henderson and Tribal Tech, which was fun. And I am currently working on two projects that give me that kind of freedom of expression. One is Derek Sherinian's solo album. He's the keyboard player with Dream Theater. That will be out on Magna Carta records.

The situation with Derek evolved over the course of a week or so. It began with a phone call, and a time was set up for a jam, just to see if we were musically compatible. From there, I started contributing compositional ideas to the rehearsals, and it ended up being a totally collaborative project.

The other project I have is actually a band project of mine called On The Virg, which also allows me to explore the more adventurous side of my playing. It got started back when I was still in Australia. Then, when I went back for a visit in '98, we all decided to get serious about doing a record. So we wrote a bunch of tunes and rearranged a bunch of our older material.

WFM: Overall, how do you feel about the way your career has been going?

VD: I've had a good amount of success in Australia. But I want to do more in the US. I've only been here three years, and in that time I've achieved more than I expected—well, not more than I *wanted*, [laughs] At

this point it just feels nice to be accepted on an international level. Australia is so isolated that it can be really hard to break out.

WFM: You've certainly been welcomed by the drumming community. But do you feel like you're still just breaking into the general music scene?

VD: Yes. I think that probably is something that doesn't happen overnight for anyone who moves to a new country. I'm just starting to get some recognition among the general music population other than the drumming fraternity, and that's starting to translate into more calls for work and recordings.

WFM: Your situation reminds me of when Vinnie Colaiuta first came out of Zappa's band. It was said that there was a certain amount of fear by producers who felt he might only play in that over-the-top way. Obviously he proved himself. Now you've been wowing drum audiences, building a similar reputation. Do you feel there's any danger in becoming known in musician circles as a technician?

VD: That's an interesting point, that maybe I can't play outside of drum clinics. The thing is, I know I can. I'm not ashamed of saying that because I really didn't start *doing* many clinics until I moved here. Most of my career has been about playing with other musicians, getting out there on the road, in clubs, and in the studios. So I rest easy on that fact.



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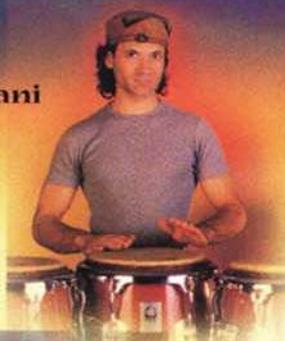
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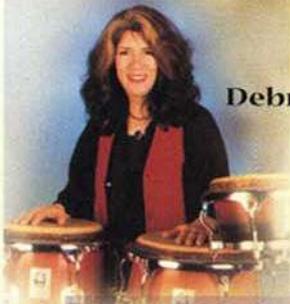
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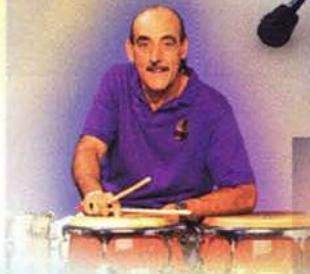
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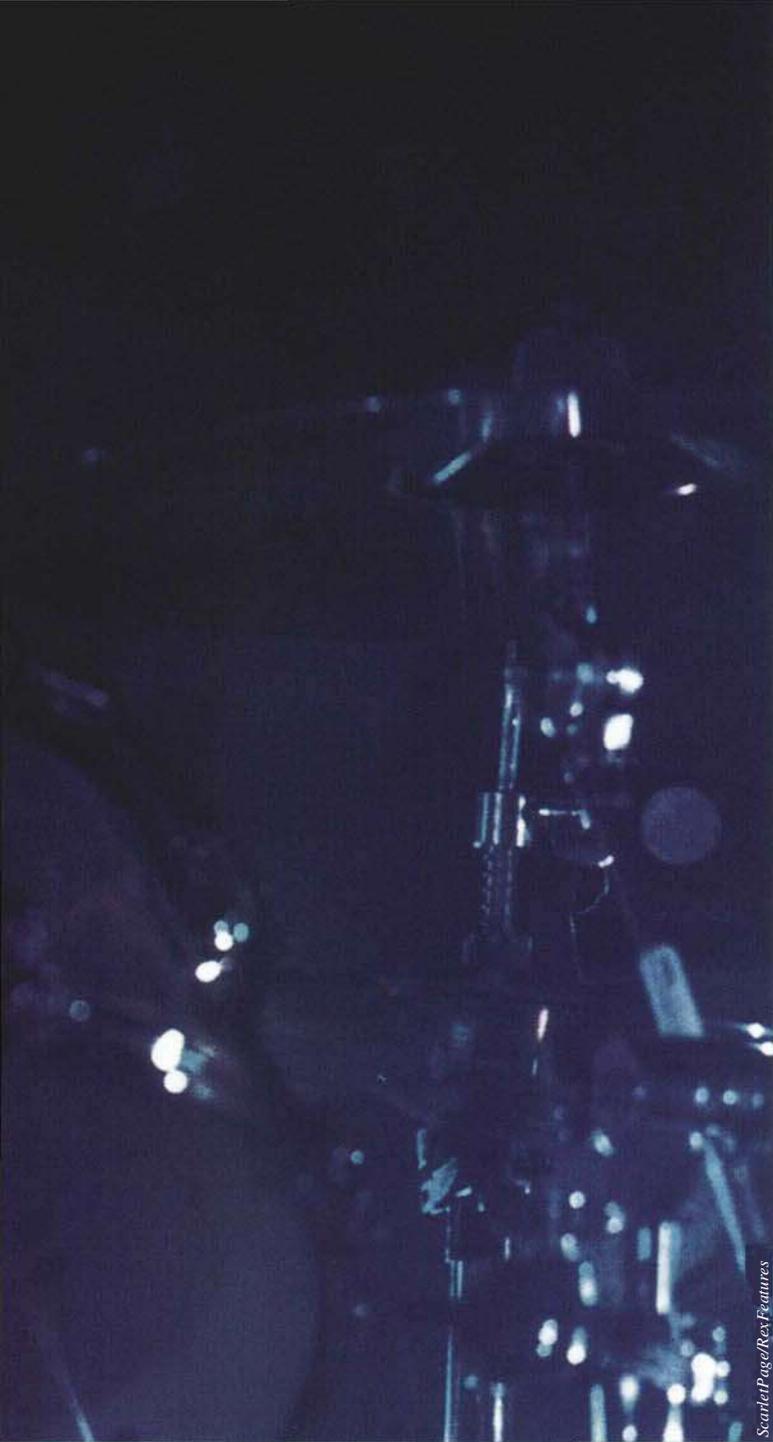
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the
offspring's

ron welty



ScarletPage/RexFeatures

flying high

>> by matt peiken <<

Ron Welty didn't think about changing his life. He just wanted to learn the drums, play with some buddies in a band, and, ultimately, have fun. Welty's still playing a simple five-piece kit and rocking alongside the same friends from Anaheim, California. He's also having more fun than he ever imagined.

Of course, a few hit songs, chart-topping albums, and packed-house tours will contribute to anyone's fun factor. But even Welty's amazed that The Offspring—the band he stepped into as a sixteen-year-old high schooler—became the central focus of his life. The Offspring beckoned grungester fallouts to "Come Out And Play" and *Smashed* into the national limelight on the forefront of early-'90s pop-punk.

Just when it looked as though other bands, styles, and trends had come along to turn them into pop culture orphans, The Offspring have bounced back big-time. They launched a new phrase into the pop lexicon—"Pretty Fly (For A White Guy)"—and launched their new disc, *Americana*, into everyone's shopping bag.

More amazingly, Welty says, The Offspring have done it all without stretching far from their original foundation. For his part, Welty's still playing the same straight-ahead, up-tempo rhythms, striving to hit hard, and, above all, to hike his endurance.

Just before hitting the stage on a recent tour stop in the former Czechoslovakia, Welty talked to *Modern Drummer* about his stamina-over-style approach, along with the help—both human and technological—that goes into his "physically taxing" drumming with The Offspring.

"My main goal right now is to go out there and try not to suck," he says. "I worry about sucking every night. Even after all this time, I know I can still get better. This music can be so physically taxing. But for maybe the first time ever, I feel really confident I can do my job every night and have a lot of fun at the same time."

MP: Is there anything about this tour, in terms of your sound or technique, that marks a shift in the way you've done things?

RW: Yeah, my tech is Chris Lagerboard, who's played with Joykiller, Down By Law, and some other great bands. This is his first tour with us, and he's awesome. We have some samples for "Get A Job," and he's playing some pads for the shakers on that, and he has three rack toms set up so he can play along with me on "Have You Ever," to give it that flam-delay sound. He's just following me, and I have him completely out of my mix, so I don't have to worry about synching up to another drummer.

It's kind of a trip how we're doing "Pretty Fly." We have samples for the backup singer, and that's a set tempo, so I have to hear those and keep my tempo right in line with that. It's a little difficult to do, and there is a little leeway at the beginning before anyone notices if it's out of whack, but it definitely took some practice to get comfortable with it. I'm also playing to a loop in "Get A Job." The loop starts the song, then I come in with the regular drum beat on top of that, so I

have to crank that up in my monitors to stay on top of that loop. That's something I've never done before, but it all makes the shows more fun and interesting.

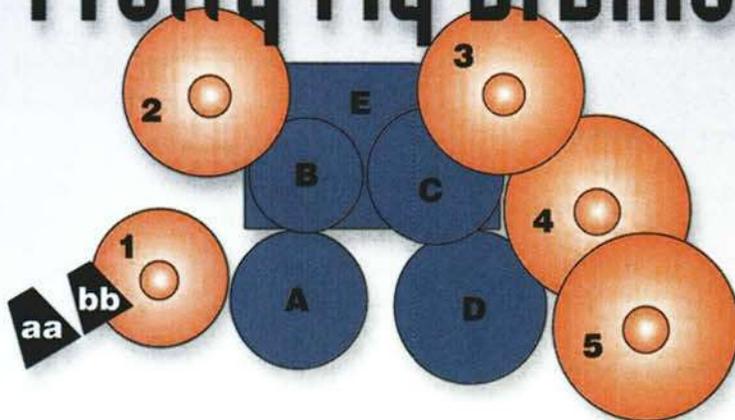
MP: On the surface, The Offspring's music hasn't changed all that much since the early days. But how would you say your playing has evolved?

RW: After playing so many shows, I'd like to think I'm more solid and confident, and I can lay into my drums more without losing the feel or the tempo. I'm also

in better condition as a drummer. We've upped our set to something like nineteen songs now, and it used to just work me so hard before to do fifteen songs. It was hard to get through the set without cramping; I had to work really hard on my speed and endurance.

That's one of the things my tech, Chris, has really been helping me with. He comes into the dressing room an hour before we go on and just kicks my ass—has me jumping rope, doing stretching exercises, playing on a pad, and other things he's picked up from drummers. I was doing some of it on my own before, but I'm definitely doing much more conditioning with him before every show. It's almost like he's my personal trainer, and it's made such a big difference because I'm not cramping anymore. I'm grateful, because instead of worrying about just getting through the songs, I can enjoy them more now and have more

Pretty Fly Drums



Drumset: Tama Starclassic

- A. 6 1/2 x 14 wood snare
- B. 10 x 12 tom
- C. 12 x 14 tom
- D. 15 x 16 floor tom (suspended)
- E. 16 x 22 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian

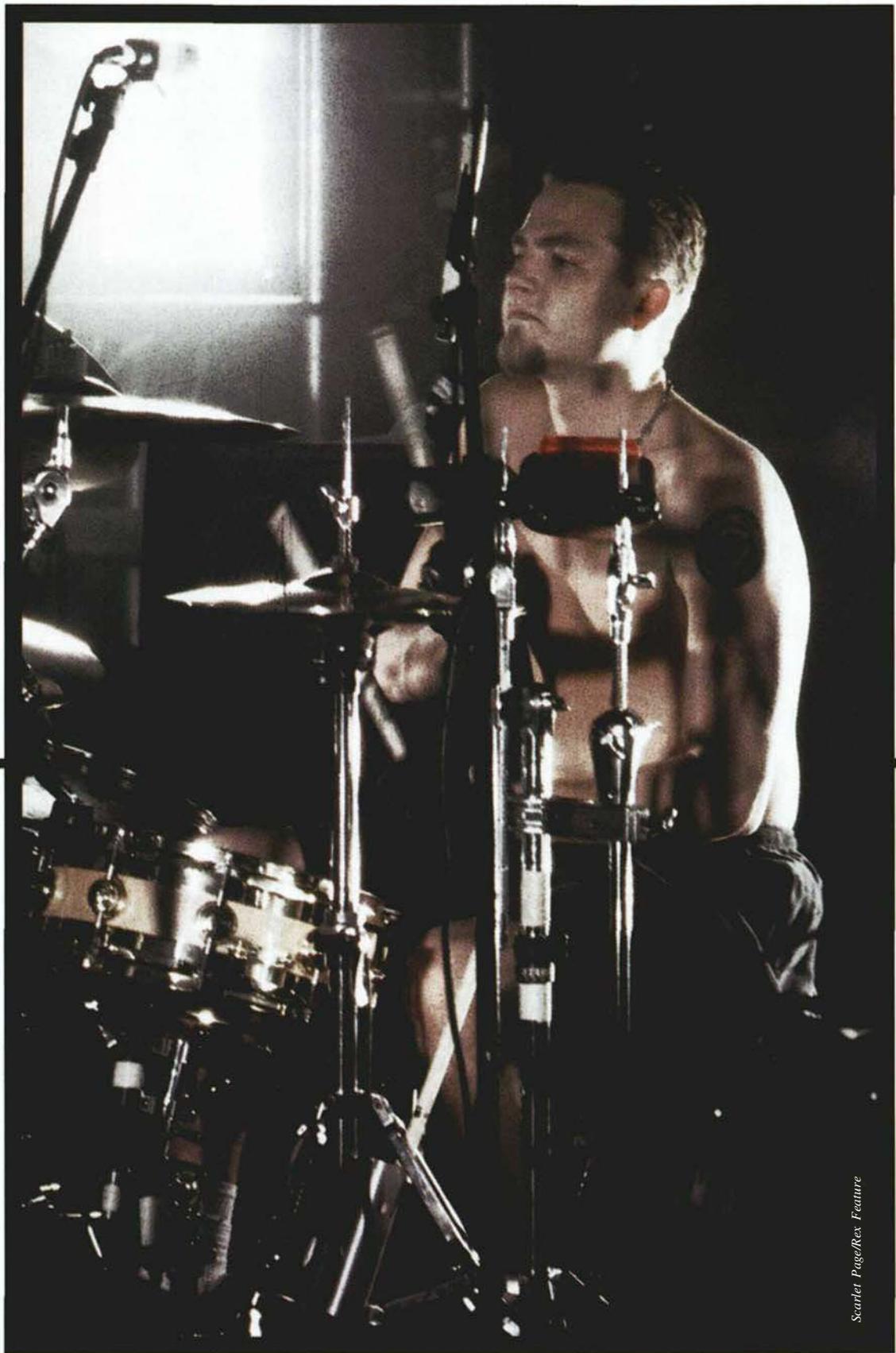
- 1. 14" A New Beat hi-hats
- 2. 18" A medium crash
- 3. 18" A medium-thin crash
- 4. 20" A Ping ride
- 5. 20" A China Boy High

Percussion: various

- aa. small cowbell
- bb. large cowbell

Hardware: Tama

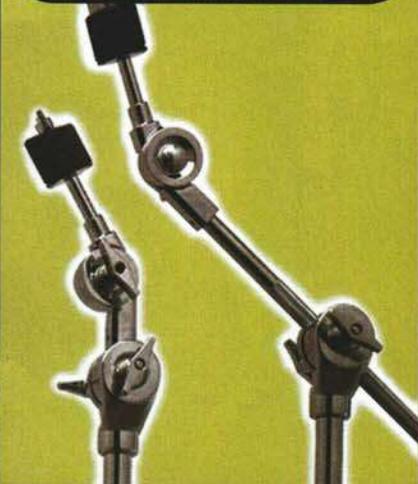
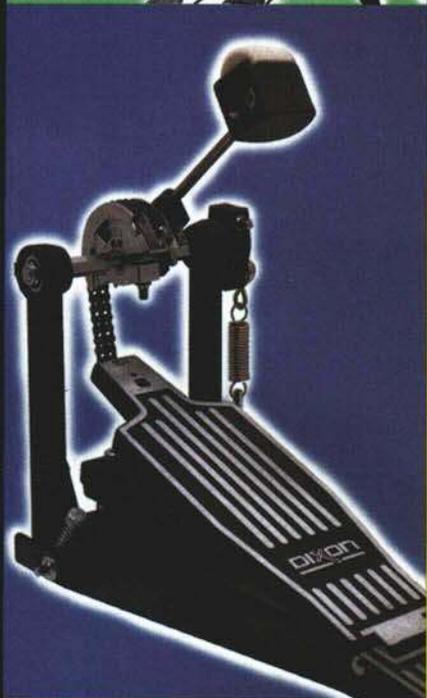
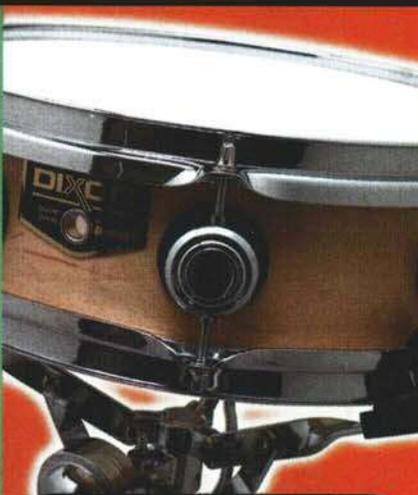
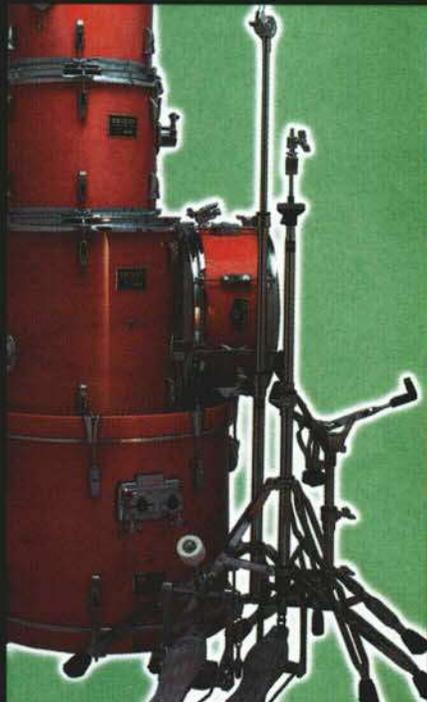
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MP: Was your endurance a major concern for you until recently?

RW: It's always been a concern. In the past, we had to make up our set list with that in mind. We'd have the real fast punk songs that we'd have to separate with some of the slower ones, like "Self Esteem" or "Gone Away," so I could get my wind back. Nowadays we just make the set list according to how we think it will go over. If that means three or four fast songs in a row, I can pull it off now.

MP: In your faster songs you do a lot of hand work, but you're not really playing blast beats. It seems like you hold your kick notes for specific beats in the measure, deliberately to accent the vocal or guitar punches.

RW: Yeah, that's definitely intentional. When we're rehearsing the songs, we break down the guitar and bass parts to make sure my kick notes match up with their strums on the downstroke. When everyone's hitting at the same time, it makes it more punchy. That's something we've always been conscious of, and it's something we learned from our first producer, Tom Wilson. He taught us that everything needs to move the woofer at the same time, and if you're doing different things, then you don't get the power you need to make a song come across. So we've always been aware of that, we've just gotten better at that as we've gone along.

One of the potential downsides of that is things can sometimes sound the same from one song to the next, especially when you're doing punk songs. When you've done four or five records, you're bound to play the same beats and rhythms a few times. But we're conscious of that, too, so we're always trying to play different rhythms, even if the differences are only subtle. We tape our shows and I go back over them sometimes to make sure I haven't slipped away from something I'm supposed to be doing, making sure my kick notes are where they should be.

MP: Do you have any role in songwriting for The Offspring?

RW: No, that's all Dexter [Holland, singer]. He writes everything, including the drum parts. There are a few songs where he'll ask for input here and there. But for the most part, he already has in his head how he wants it to go. Just like wanting the

kick notes tied to the strumming of the guitars, there's not a whole lot of room to do other things. It's already dictated.

Dexter lays down very specific things he wants me to play. He comes up with some pretty cool things—some things are pretty different from the way I would do them on my own—and I trust his judgment, for the most part. We hash out a few things once in a while. But it's my job to take what's given to me and be real solid and nail it.

MP: When you were just starting out, how did you juggle school with your growing schedule in the band?

RW: It really wasn't that big of a conflict while I was in school because we didn't do a full-on tour until just after I graduated. It escalated from there. My parents weren't really that excited or supportive about it at first. They didn't understand why I was spending so much of my energy with the band. I don't think it really hit them until the *Orange County Register* or *LA Times* would come out and write about us, and then it was like, "Oh, we've *always* supported you." [laughs]

I actually went to an electronics and engineering school and got an associate of arts degree, but I couldn't really use it. I was trying to get a job at Fostex, but the guy who was gonna hire me wouldn't let me take off from the job so I could tour during the summer. So I ended up just working at a frozen yogurt and muffin shop until I could support myself doing music.

MP: Were you that committed to music and drumming, or was it more The Offspring, specifically?

RW: I think it was all of the above. I liked playing drums from the moment I started, but I've never had any lessons and I never even really played to records. I just got in the band, and all my development came from getting on the road and playing. That's pretty much how everyone in the band did it. None of us took lessons. We just stuck together and learned along the way.

We all had about the same ability when we started, and we've all grown together. It was always serious for me—though I never really believed it would pay off—but playing was just so much fun at the time that I was gonna do it anyway, regardless of what happened. Luckily, it worked out.

MP: Is there anything you want out of your playing that you didn't necessarily

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concern yourself with before?

RW: I've never worried about learning new fills or trying to be a drummer's drummer in that way. I want to get through a show with more stamina, to hit hard and keep control of the tempo. It's just about being more solid. It's hard to do that at consistently fast tempos, but that's what I'm striving for all the time. That's why Dave Grohl is one of my favorite drummers, because I like how hard and powerful he plays.

MP: Along with that, is it important to you to play cleanly, with precision?

RW: Fortunately, with technology, it's easier to make your parts sound cleaner in the studio than you're actually playing them. I do the best I can, but we used *Pro Tools* on the new record to sharpen up some of the parts. If there are certain fills I'm going to do again and I'm not quite nailing the next time around, Dave Jerden, our producer, would take an earlier fill and just splice it in, to make it sound perfect.

One part that comes to mind is on the song "The Kids Aren't Alright." I'm hit-



ting pretty hard during the regular beat, but when it comes up to that fill, it's kinda fast and it's hard to keep up that intensity, and I had to do it over and over again. I pulled it off a couple times, but we pretty much cut and pasted the rest of it in—which I found out a couple of months later.

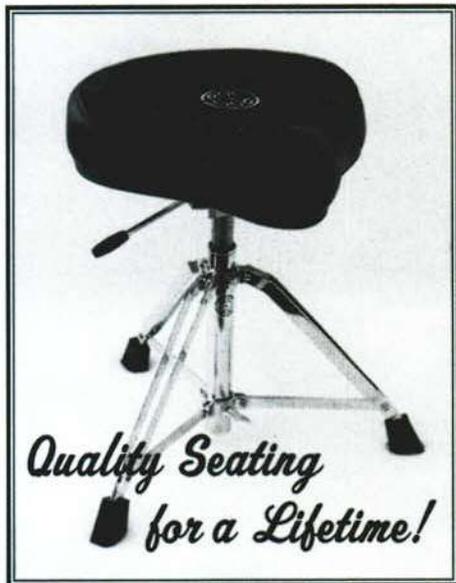
MP: Would you like the record to be more pure, even if it's imperfect, or does that matter to you?

RW: I just want it to sound right on the record. I'll try my best to do that on my own, and I really push myself to the limit to do that. We don't have to edit a lot, but



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sometimes it doesn't work out and it's a nice tool to have.

MP: How do your choices in equipment come into play with regards to hitting hard and getting the sound you want?

RW: In the studio, I usually leave that up to Dave Jerden, and I have the Drum Doctor, Ross Garfield, come out with every album. I usually use this drum called *The Terminator*, which is used on about ninety percent of the recordings in Hollywood. Everyone who rents from the Drum Doctor gets *The Terminator*. It's a snare that was made by Zildjian and Noble & Cooley, I believe, and it's the heaviest thing on the planet. It's this really thick brass snare that must weigh fifty pounds, and it just cuts through the mix like mad. There are probably only four of them in existence.

I've used *The Terminator* on every record with the exception of this last one. I did some different things for *Americana*, like using concert toms without bottom heads on them. It was weird for me—the sound was just bizarre and hard to get used to—but they were going for different things on the record. I don't know if people

can really hear it, but the snare and toms sound different from our other albums. I used a *Black Beauty* and another snare, which I can't really recall, and I also used the newest Roland electronic drums on a few parts. We used them in combination with the acoustic drums in the breakdown part of "Have You Ever."

I guess the strangest part about my kit is the angle of the rack toms. I sit really low and have my rack toms facing toward me, instead of flat. Every drummer who sits at my set can't deal with it, but it's just easier for me. The time it would take for me to go up and over my drums, on each stroke, is more than it is for me to just go *at* them. It's easier for me to get through some of those fast rolls, like on "Feelings." The snare is set up at pretty much the same angle as the toms, so it makes sense.

MP: By having the snare angled so sharply, isn't it hard to nail a rimshot?

RW: No, I just have to pull my left leg out of the way a little bit.

MP: Tell me about the drum sounds on "Why Don't You Get A Job" and "Pay The Man." They're noticeably different from

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the rest of the album.

RW: The loop on "Why Don't You Get A Job" came from my playing on the Roland drums. Then I went in and played the acoustics on top of that. "Pay The Man" was a song we originally recorded and

mixed for *Ixnay On The Hombre*, so we just pulled it from that session for this record.

We spent a lot of time on that song. It's long and hard to get through, but it's really different for us, and I think that's one of

the reasons it didn't make it onto *Ixnay*. It was just a little too out-there, so we saved it for a time we thought we could take more of a chance with that kind of song.

MP: Are you still active in your side-project band, Spinning Fish?

RW: Yeah, but there's really no time for it when The Offspring is going. We do it whenever I'm home, which won't be for a long while now. It's a totally different style of music, not punk in any way. It's a rock band—some of it's kinda Jane'sy, some of it's kinda Alice In Chains, but the vocals are different. The tempos aren't as fast, so I'm able to hit harder and I'm able to come up with beats that use the toms more, rhythms that are more tribal and interesting and fun to play.

It's just a really fun thing I have going with my best friend. If something comes of it, that's great, but for me it's mainly just an outlet for fun, and I don't think that's gonna change. We've only recorded in my garage studio, but that's another thing I really enjoy—engineering. I've always watched our producers work, taken mental notes from them, and tried taking it all back to my studio. It's fun affecting the music from a producer's perspective, and I'd like to get into doing that a lot more down the road, working with other bands on their records.



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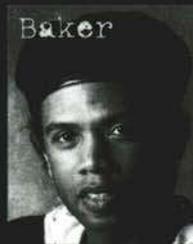
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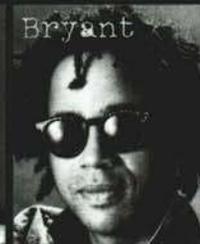
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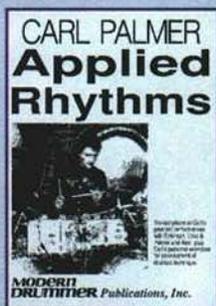
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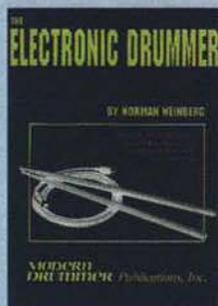
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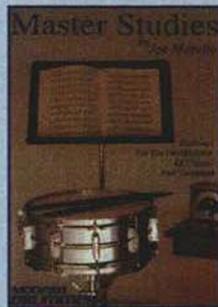
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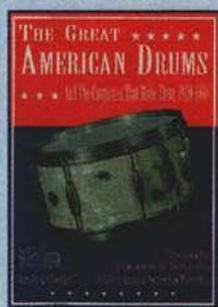
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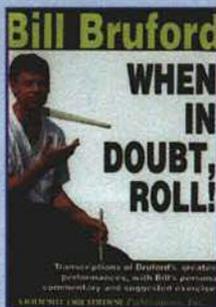
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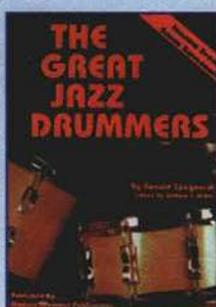
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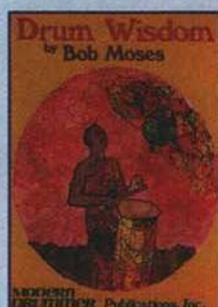
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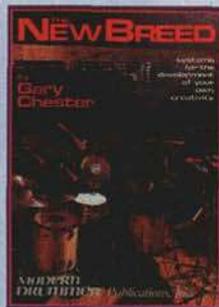
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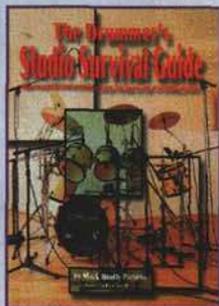
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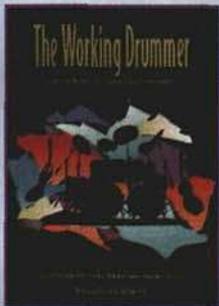
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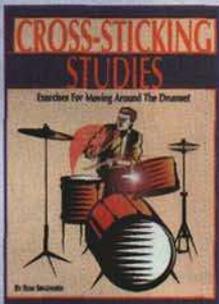
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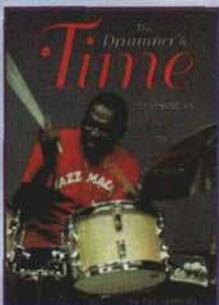
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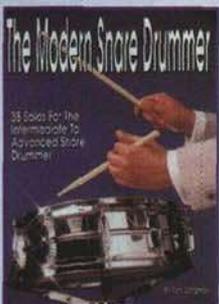
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Of course, fame is often fleeting. By the early '80s Blondie was gone from view. Besides lead singer Debbie Harry, who released the occasional solo album and acted in some offbeat films, Burke kept a higher profile than any of his bandmates, recording and/or touring with Pete Townshend, Bob Dylan, The Eurythmics, Dramarama, Iggy Pop, Joan Jett, The Romantics, and The Plimsouls.

Technically speaking, though, Blondie never called it a day. An official breakup announcement hadn't been made, and their business affairs weren't officially dissolved. It was more like the band was put on ice for...like...sixteen years.

Now the four core members of Blondie—Burke, Harry, guitarist Chris Stein, and keyboardist Jimmy Destri—are back. The band's brand-new album, *No Exit*, features the exquisite hit single "Maria," which debuted at Number 1 on the British singles chart and almost as impressively at home. Primo late-night TV appearances and a scalding performance on this year's American Music Awards knocked out thirty-some-things with skinny ties in their closets and baggy-legged No Doubt kids alike. And Web simulcasts, VH-1's airing of their February 23 New York Town Hall concert, and tours through Europe and the States proved the once mighty band could still bring a cauldron of contagious live energy to boil.

In each forum, Clem Burke provides the sights and sounds that literally draw you in. This particular fan clearly remembers, as a teenager, being completely floored by Burke's Keith Moonish abandon on an *American Bandstand* performance of the gloriously tom-heavy hit "Dreaming." Twenty years later, Clem looks barely a day older perched behind his red sparkle Premier kit, trademark Beatle shag making a blur with each roundhouse 16th-note fill. Like a poster boy for the drums, Burke visually and sonically represents the pure joy of hitting like *very* few other players do.

That Blondie has reunited at all is due in no small part to Burke's dedication and enthusiasm. At a Chelsea studio during a break between rehearsals for their current tour, Debbie Harry put it this way: "Ever since I've known him, Clem has been dedicated to rock 'n' roll and being a pop star and musician. That's really all he ever wanted to be. It's his dream. He's worked for it, and now he's done it."

It's not just the trappings of fame that interested Burke in a reunion. Even more than working with legends like Dylan and Townshend, it's Blondie—the players, the music, the *idea*—that's closest to his heart, and the drummer says he and the others had no interest in simply re-treading past glories. "The whole impetus to get back together was to make a new record," Clem insists. "It wasn't to go out and play some kind of revival thing. We wanted to make a musical statement."

Though Clem says Blondie's

record company initially wanted to release a best-of disc with a couple of new songs, "That was ludicrous in everyone's mind. There have been so many reissues of Blondie stuff, and I think it's unfair to people who are interested in the band to have to buy all the old songs again just for one or two new songs. I also think that our starting up again is somewhat of a media event, and it would have been a waste of time and energy to publicize the fact that we had another greatest hits album. So everyone agreed that if we were going to do this, we'd take our time and write new

material."

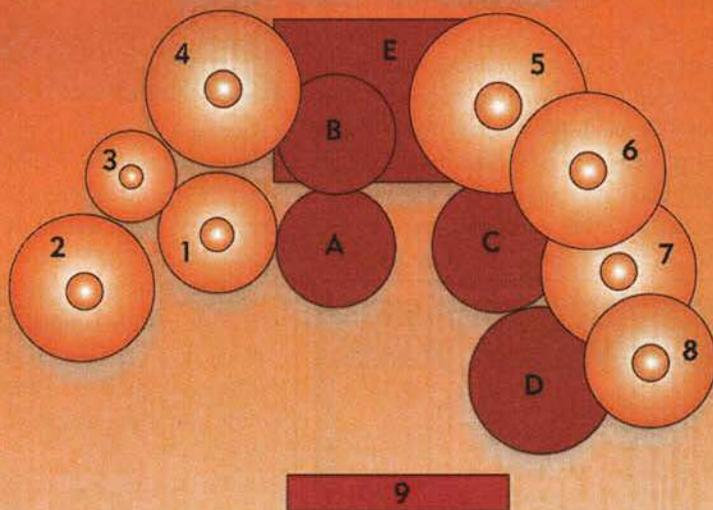
According to Clem, Blondie's resurrection didn't come out of nowhere. "We always remained friends," he explains, "but we approached getting together to make music again slowly at first. We tried to become 'a band' again—finding a place to rehearse, figuring out what songs to do, what kind of haircut to have.... *No Exit* has been three years in the making. We didn't want to just jump into this."

Tentative baby steps or not, after extensive rehearsing in Chris Stein's basement studio in downtown Manhattan, it became



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According to drum tech Matt O'Connor, Clem occasionally uses a gold sparkle Premier Resonator kit from 1979 (similar to the setup here), which has been rebuilt and has had its bearing edges recut by Bill Detamore of Pork Pie Percussion.



apparent to all that a Blondie for the '90s was indeed possible. "I don't think there was any one moment where we all went, 'Wow, this is great!'" Burke clarifies. "It was more like, This *seems* like it could work; let's continue and see where it takes us." Where it took them was into a proper studio for six months with Craig Leon, who in 1976 produced the band's first, self-titled record. "We only spent six weeks of that time recording," Burke says, "but we did a lot of pre-production and writing. We all contributed to the album."

No Exit starts off with "Screaming Skin," an uptempo ska-rock number seemingly written with Clem's drum style in mind. "That sound at the beginning is a press roll from another take of the song that we processed," Clem explains. "I like that song a lot; it's one of the songs we do live now." Featuring a four-on-the-floor bass drum and a signature five-stroke roll orchestrated differently throughout the song and ending on a snare/crash accent on the upbeat, the tune is all energy, and reintroduces the band in a grand fashion.

"Forgive And Forget" sounds like it's programmed, but Clem corrects, "There is

"WE WERE ON A ROLL, SO ON 'DREAMING' WE WERE LIKE, LET'S GO FOR IT! BUT EVEN I WAS SURPRISED THE SONG GOT THROUGH LIKE THAT."

programming going on, but not drum programming. First I overdubbed the 16ms on hi-hat and the basic 2/4 on kick and snare over the keyboard sequence, and then I overdubbed the tom-tom pattern. That tight percussive sound is an empty water cooler that I played with my hands like a conga. That sounds very much like a sequencer, especially when you compress it. The whole percussion track was then mixed and



processed. I've done that kind of thing before, like on 'War Child' from the last Blondie record. I learned that from Dave Stewart of the Eurythmics. There's a song on their *Sweet Dreams* record, which I didn't play on, but during the bridge there are milk bottles being played live over a sequencer. I like using organic sounds, like tables and chairs. In the old days they would use a guitar case a lot for percussion."

"Maria" proves that Blondie can still construct the perfect straight-ahead pop single. "I'm really happy we chose that song as the first single," Clem enthuses. "It's like a classic Blondie pop song, in the tradition of 'Sunday Girl' or 'Dreaming.' We were talking the other day, and out of the four Number-1s we've had, one aspect of Blondie that's *not* been a big hit is the 'Maria'-type sound. 'Heart Of Glass' is a disco song, 'The Tide Is High' is a reggae song, 'Rapture' is like rap/funk, and then 'Call Me,' which was co-written with Giorgio Moroder, was kind of based on a shuffle-boogie riff transposed into an electronic medium."

No Exit's title tune is a rap-rock piece featuring Coolio on vocals. Before you accuse Blondie of catering to the latest trends, though, remember that "Rapture," from 1980's *Autoamerican* album, successfully mixed rock and rap at a time when Rage Against The Machine were still start-

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ing food fights in grammar school. According to Clem, "For the drums on that song, I was basically trying to cop a Bonham feel. There have actually been a lot of Led Zeppelin samples that have turned into rap songs. In fact, Puff Daddy just did a thing with Jimmy Page with a similar vibe to it. 'No Exit' was a quick take for the drums, maybe the first take."

Burke states that *No Exit's* title was his idea. "We were rehearsing on a particularly frustrating day," he recalls, "and I happened to look up and see a 'No Exit' sign. I studied some existential philosophy in college, and there's a play by Jean-Paul Sartre with the same title. It's basically about these people in a room who have died and are waiting to see if they are going to go to heaven or hell, and it transpires that they are already in hell, because they just keep getting on each other's nerves. That's sort of like the downside to being in a band. Nietzsche said that there is only madness in groups. If you are on your own, no one is going to think you're insane, but if you get out in society, that's when it's noticed. And there is a certain madness that arises out of being in a band situation. The third reason that the record was called *No Exit* is because Blondie has never really left me. People say, Oh, that's Clem from Blondie, or, That's Debbie from Blondie. It's always been with us in some way. You turn on the car radio and there might be a Blondie record on. We grew up with it. It's part of our lives."

Other cuts Burke points out are "Night Wind Sent," a quiet tune that he uses rods

on, and the closing track, "Dig Up The Conjo," which was written around a drum groove inspired by Ringo's part on The Beatles' "Tomorrow Never Knows." Perhaps most unusual in the Blondie oeuvre is the half-time country waltz of "The Dream's Lost On Me." "I like playing in 3/4 and 6/8," says Clem. "But I was disappointed because there was supposed to be a tambourine overdub on that tune, which made it into a 6/8 feel, and for some reason the tambourine got lost. But I like country music a lot; I love Hank Williams, and I go to see Buck Owens play a lot. It's been said before, but I guess as you get older you realize there are only two kinds of music: good and bad."

"We've always played different styles," Clem relates, "and I think that's part of being a good musician—and certainly being a good drummer. The songwriter might come in with a song in a style you may not be used to playing, so it's good to be well-versed in different types of music, like understanding what a shuffle is and what a waltz is."

Clem suggests studying the masters to hear how different styles should be approached. "One problem I have is that a lot of rock drummers don't make it swing. If you listen to Chuck Berry or Little Richard or someone like DJ. Fontana on the Elvis records, they are doing a triplet swing beat. If somebody goes to play 'Johnny B. Goode' and starts banging out straight 8th notes on the hi-hat, that's wrong. Steve Jordan was so great in the Chuck Berry movie *Hail! Hail! Rock 'N*

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As Clem points out, Blondie has always betrayed varied influences. In fact, the drummer insists that the members' shared taste for The Ramones, The New York Dolls, The Velvet Underground, and girl groups like The Shangri-La's—whose "Out In The Streets" Blondie has finally committed to tape on *No Exit*—is what kept them together through their tough early days. "We had mutual musical ground that a lot of people didn't have at the time," he recalls.

Conversely, their individual obsessions also guaranteed that they not only mixed their common interests into one identifiable sound, but pushed each other into uncharted waters. "We all influence each other," says Clem. "Chris was always heavily into R&B; 'Rapture' was basically his song. I have a little more of a pop sensibility, but I also love Tony Williams and Miles and all that stuff. Over the last fifteen or twenty years I've been getting more into jazz—not that I'm a jazz player, but since Debbie was working with the Jazz Passengers, I decided to write this sort of fake jazz song, 'Boom Boom In The Zoom Zoom Room.'"



We all like soundtrack music, too, and if you are doing a film soundtrack you're not really writing one type of music. If you go back to the first Blondie record, we may not have executed all the styles we were attempting—maybe our thoughts were beyond our skills at the time—but we did have a lot of different styles on there."

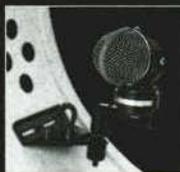
As Debbie Harry suggests, Clem has

always been driven to succeed in the rock 'n' roll world, and his recollections of life as a young drummer in Bayonne, New Jersey bear this out. "Everybody around me seemed to think that becoming 'a rock star' was unobtainable, but I never felt that way. I felt that this was how I was going to be able to escape my working-class existence. I was on a quest to find the perfect

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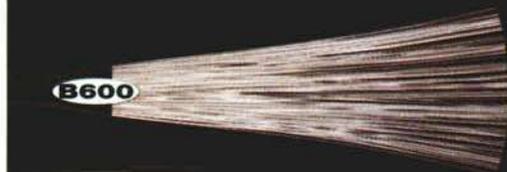
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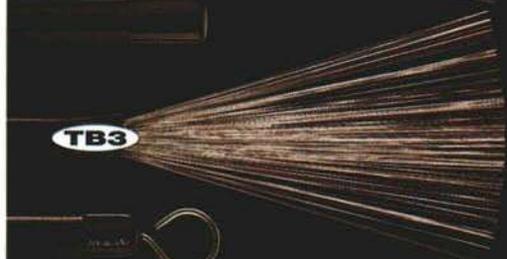
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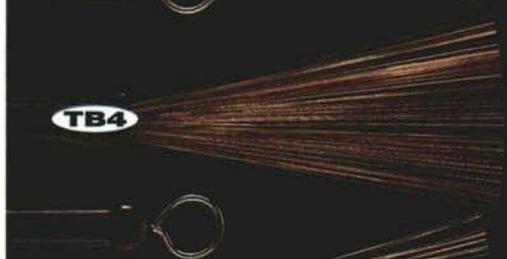
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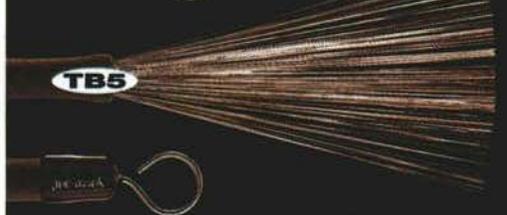
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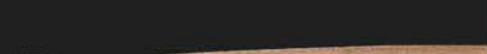
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lead singer. I always say that when I met Debbie I sort of found my Mick Jagger."

Burke says that as a kid his drum heroes were "the obvious people": Bonham, Ringo, Charlie Watts. "Early on I was always in one of the better local bands," Clem recalls. "We would do the whole Battle Of The Bands thing, and it wouldn't be unusual if we were the winners or in second place. My high school band entered this contest with deejay Bruce Morrow of WABC AM. You would record a song and send it in to the station—and they played ours on the radio. The finalists would get to go and play at a ballroom like the Hilton, but that year it was at Carnegie Hall."

Later Clem would hang out at a bar in New York called Club 82, where a band called The Stilettos, featuring Chris Stein and Debbie Harry, would open for The New York Dolls. "I was very influenced by that," Burke says. "There was a handful of bands that I liked that my friends didn't particularly like—Bowie, The Raspberries, The

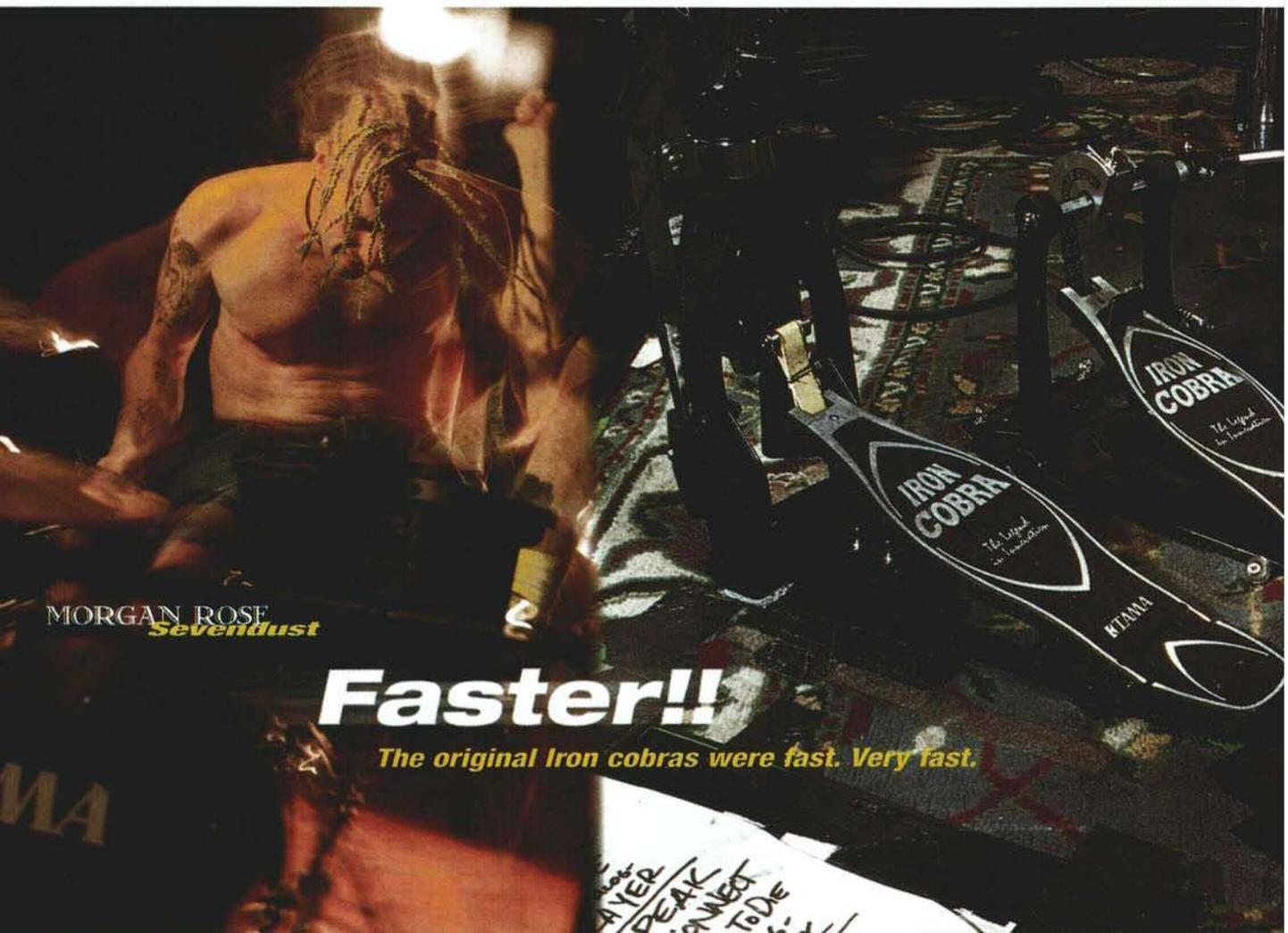


Clem Burke's greatest recordings...

artist	album
Blondie	No Exit
Blondie	Autoamerican
Eurythmics	Revenge
The Plimsouls	Kool Trash
The Romantics	Made In Detroit
Dramarama	Hi-Fi Sci-Fi
Iggy Pop	Live In San Francisco (video)
Mark Owen	Green Man
Eurythmics	Live

...and the albums that inspire him the most

artist	album	drummer
The Who	Live At Leeds	Keith Moon
Miles Davis	Bitches Brew	Billy Cobham, Jack DeJohnette, Lenny White
Booker T. & The MG's	The Best Of	Al Jackson Jr.
The Small Faces	Anthology, 1965-67	Kenney Jones
Muddy Waters	The Best Of, 1947-55	Francis Clay, Elgin Evans, Fred Below
Miles Davis	Live At The Plugged Nickel	Tony Williams
Little Richard	"Long Tall Sally"	Earl Palmer
Max Roach & Buddy Rich	Rich Vs. Roach	Max Roach, Buddy Rich
The Beatles	all	Ringo Starr
The Ramones	The Ramones	Tommy Ramone
The Velvet Underground	V.U.	Mo Tucker



New York Dolls. I did have one friend in high school who was a couple of years older than me, and he was a big jazz freak. He actually toured with The Jazz Messengers at one point, and he influenced me in a lot of ways as far as stepping outside of AM radio. But when I saw David Bowie at Carnegie Hall in 1973, that was a big turning point for me. There was great musicianship going on, but it was also complemented by a great show and a great image. That's the direction I thought I should head in."

Around this time Chris and Debbie put an ad in the *Village Voice* that Clem saw. "I was probably about eighteen at the time, and I came over from New Jersey with my girlfriend on the bus to a little rehearsal loft on West 30th Street to meet them. It wasn't an 'audition' so much as a 'chat,' and we found we shared musical ideas and had common taste in bands like The Velvet Underground, The New York Dolls, Iggy Pop, and The Shangri-La's, and soundtrack composers like John Barry and Ennio Morricone.

"More than anything else, I think they liked what I was wearing," Clem laughs. "We were doing an interview with *People*

the other day, and Chris was saying, 'I really liked the shoes that you had on.' I had seen a picture of Keith Moon with a sailor suit on, so I had a blue sailor shirt on. But I was immediately taken by Debbie's charisma."

Clem wasn't the only one. During a very early gig at a bar on 13th and 3rd called Monty Python's, during a time when "Platinum Blonde" was their unofficial theme song, an unusual incident hinted at things to come. "These people came in and wanted to hire us for a party in this townhouse downtown, for some equestrian show. All they said was, 'Just make sure the singer wears those boots.' Debbie had on these high-heel boots with some kind of fur around them, but the point is they were really taken by her. I'm sure we sounded pretty sloppy and horrible."

That amateurism wouldn't last too long, however, and as the band improved and scored more gigs on the seedy lower east side, they found themselves ensconced in a scene that would become the stuff of rock 'n' roll lore. With clubs like Max's Kansas City and an ex hillbilly joint called CBGB's as the focal points, New York's East Village became the breeding ground for the bands

that would change the world. Rule-breakers like The Ramones, Talking Heads, Patti Smith, Richard Hell & The Voidoids, and Television found themselves crowned as kings and queens of the American punk revolution. Their individual styles might have been radically different, but their ideas pointed in bold new directions that would influence legions of bands for years to come. Blondie was right there in the thick of things, and would eventually become the most successful group of the whole lot. But—and this is well documented—it might not have ever happened for them if not for Burke's persistence.

"I think the first time I played at CBGB's was the night our original bassist, Fred Smith, quit. In between sets he told us he was leaving to join Television. Blondie briefly kind of dissolved because of that, but I kept pushing to continue, and I brought in a friend of mine, Gary Valentine. The two of us were living in a storefront on East 10th Street, and even through he wasn't really a bass player, he was very artistic. He didn't really audition for the band; he just read some poetry, then sat down at the piano and sang one of his

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songs. So then at least we had the nucleus of a band once again, and we continued from there. But when it looked like the band was going to stop, I decided there was no way I was going to let that happen. You know, perseverance is a big part of any endeavor."

After adding Jimmy Destri on keyboards, Blondie recorded their debut, which included the Australian hit "In The Flesh." Valentine left soon after, and the remaining four released *Plastic Letters* in 1977, which featured "Denis" and "(I'm Always Touched By Your) Presence, Dear," which catapulted the band to instant fame in Britain. Blondie-mania in America wasn't far behind. The follow-up album, *Parallel Lines*, featured an expanded lineup that included Frank Infante on guitar and Nigel Harrison on bass, but more importantly contained the hits "One Way Or Another," "Hanging On The Telephone," and the disco-crossover "Heart Of Glass." Blondie found themselves the focus of a media frenzy.

Nineteen seventy-nine saw the release of *Eat To The Beat*, which spawned two more hits: "Atomic," and the leadoff track, "Dreaming," a showpiece for Burke's crazed full-kit abandon. When it's suggested to Clem today that a lot of drummers would never be able to get away with playing with such "enthusiasm" on the follow-up to a hugely successful album, he replies dryly, "Honestly, even I was surprised that one got through like that. When we did *Eat To The Beat*, there was a real exuberance in the studio. On *Parallel Lines*, producer Mike Chapman was very much of a taskmaster; he'd be in the studio conducting us to keep the meter, almost like a Phil Spector type of thing. He worked really hard at making that record perfect, and it ended up being Chrysalis Records' biggest seller ever. We were on a roll, so he kind of gave us free rein on *Eat To The Beat*. So on 'Dreaming' we were like, Let's go for it! A lot of people say that they like the drums on that song."

Despite their huge success, the pressures of stardom began to wear on the band. Their next album, *Autoamerican*, though containing the hits "The Tide Is High" and "Rapture," received less enthusiastic praise, and egos, substance abuse, and a tireless schedule conspired to drag the band down. They managed to squeeze out one

more album, *The Hunter*, before letting the whole thing fizzle out.

Initially Burke joined Nigel Harrison and Steve Jones from The Sex Pistols in the band Chequered Past, which toured and recorded one album. In 1985 the drummer worked with The Who's Pete Townshend on the album *White City*. "That was one of the high points for me," enthuses Burke, who can be heard on the cuts "Brilliant Blues" and "Second Hand Love." "Blondie was very popular in England, so Pete's management called mine—that's how I get most of my gigs, by word of mouth—and I went to Twickenham, where Pete had his studio, the Boathouse. Pete hadn't picked up a guitar in quite some time, and we hung out for about a month and jammed."

Clem was in heaven. An avowed Who fanatic, he relished the opportunity to occupy the seat his idol Keith Moon sat in for so many years. "Early on," Burke recalls, "all I cared about was Keith Moon and The Who. When I was about eleven or twelve, my favorite part of drum lessons was the last ten minutes, when I'd get to sit at the drumset and play along to my favorite record. I'd bring in 'My Generation.' At the end of the song the drums go nuts. 'My Generation' was a turning point for me because before that it was all the Charlie Watts and Ringo type of thing."

The experience clearly stuck. Rarely is one drummer's influence on another as clearly identifiable as Moon's is on Burke. So it's understandable that, when on September 7, 1978 Moon died of an overdose of anti-alcoholism pills, Burke was quite shaken. "I remember very distinctly where I was when I heard the news. We were on tour in Rotterdam, and we were ready to go to London to do three or four sold-out shows at the Hammersmith Odeon. The British tabloid press was full of headlines like "Who Drummer Dies" and "Keith Moon Dead At Thirty-One," and I was completely in shock. We played that night, and at the end I just kind of...actually, I wanted to get an ax and some gasoline, but no one would give them to me. So I wound up basically throwing all my drums into the audience as sort of a sacrifice to Keith. The roadies retrieved them, but I didn't want them back. I was really, really bummed."

Clem had in fact come close to The Who's inner circle earlier, in 1980 when he

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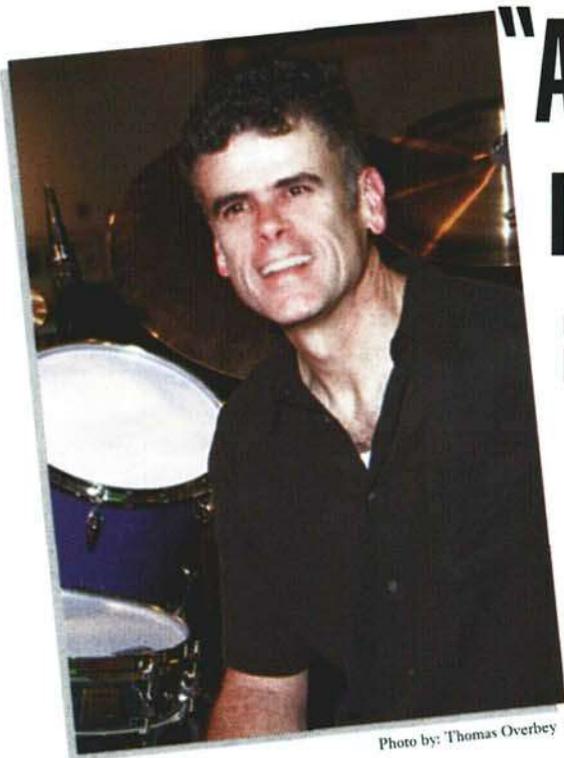
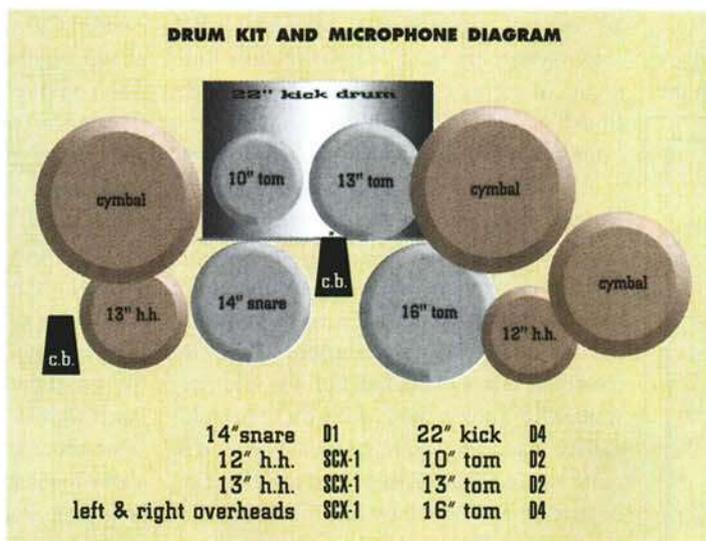


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befriended Ringo Starr's son Zak. "Zak played drums on The Who's recent *Quadrophenia* tour," Clem explains. "He's such a great drummer. The first time I met him was at a club in London. I went to see a band, and this young kid came up to me and said, 'You're a drummer, right? My dad's a drummer.' And I go, 'Oh yeah? Has anybody ever heard of him?' He was such a sweet kid, really young.

"Zak invited me out to his house, where he had a set of Keith's drums—actually, the last set that he had, the white ones with brass fittings. The Premier people told me that Keith wanted them to be white with gold fittings, but gold is very fragile so they told him, 'You better rethink this, Keith, especially if you're going to be smashing them!' Plus, I'm sure Keith had a full endorsement, so...." Clem laughs at the thought, and continues, "Zak and I went out to where his dad was living and set up the drums and played them. That's something that I'll always remember. We've kept in touch; in fact Zak came to one of the shows that we just did in London.

"I was actually at the party for Kenney Jones when The Who asked him to join the

band," Clem continues. "He was *very* happy. He's another one of my favorite drummers. I love The Small Faces, and I always listened to Kenney's drums; he was so great on all that stuff. That's why I like that band The Raspberries; I think they tried to copy The Small Faces quite a bit, though they had their own thing going on too."

In 1986 Clem recorded the Eurythmics' *Revenge* album, which contained the Grammy-winning single "Missionary Man." Though the album was stylistically less adventuresome than any Blondie release, Burke explains, "With the Eurythmics I became a lot more groove-oriented, but I always wanted to find a balance between Al Jackson of Booker T. & The MG's—who I listened to continuously—and Keith Moon. The *Revenge* record is a favorite of mine; I learned so much from working with Annie Lennox and Dave Stewart."

Clem had actually met Lennox several years earlier, when he was living in London. "After we made *Autoamerican*," he explains, "we took what turned out to be a two-year break. I was at a club one night...it seems I used to get a lot of work from hanging out in night clubs, doesn't it? I don't really hang out that much anymore, so it's lucky I'm back in Blondie! But anyway, ironically they had been playing *Autoamerican* in the club from start to finish. This very attractive woman came up to me and introduced herself. I was somewhat disappointed when she started talking to me about a band she had, but she said she wanted to maybe work with me. She told me she was a fan and that she had been in a band called The Tourists with her ex-boyfriend, and now they had this band The Eurythmics. They were going to Germany to make a record, and she asked if I would be interested in going."

Clem was, and went with Lennox and Stewart to a farmhouse outside of Cologne to work on *In The Garden*, beginning an on-again/off-again relationship that continues to this day. "I did some TV shows with them when the record was released, but I moved back to New York after that. We remained friends, though, and they would come and visit me at my apartment here. Later they regrouped and rethought things, and just the two of them made the *Sweet Dreams* record, with synthesizers and drum machines. They decided to put a band together to promote it,

so just as the record was released, I went with them on a tour of the UK."

Burke was in the right place at the right time, because the album, which contained the hit title track, quickly became a smash. "England is such a small place," Burke explains. "You could release a record and six weeks later see it become this huge hit, and if you're on tour, the momentum really builds. So we went in a van and did a college tour of the UK, and at the end of that six weeks *Sweet Dreams* was Number 1. It was like something out of a movie. They asked me to join the band, but Blondie was still going at that time—even though right after that Blondie kind of ended."

Clem got a second chance with Stewart and Lennox when he joined up for the *Revenge* album and tour. Another huge hit, the record's success saw the band playing a three-year tour that included 70,000-seat stadium gigs in Europe, such as a Nelson Mandela benefit concert in Wembley Stadium. Dave Stewart turned the band's popularity into a lucrative producing role, including work for Bob Dylan, and he recommended Clem for the gig. "We spent a couple of weeks jamming," Clem recalled, "and I was convinced we were making the next *Blonde On Blonde*. I thought, 'This record is going to be *great*,' and then one track came out like two years later on the album *Knocked Out Loaded*." Clem good-naturedly laughs at the way things worked out—he's used to such things in the world of rock 'n' roll, after all—and is just thankful for the opportunities presented to him by people like Stewart. "When Blondie was in London last, I had lunch with Dave, and there's talk of us doing some more stuff because they are thinking about doing another project. Dave has always helped me along with gigs. We have an interesting relationship, because I befriended him when I was more of a success than he was, and now he's obviously got more success than me!"

Of course, Clem's being modest in his self-assessment. In addition to his work with Blondie, The Eurythmics, Dylan, and Townshend, his drumming graced the splendid 1991 album *Hi-Fi Sci-Fi* by Dramarama, a band he was a member of for three years. He's also been a sometime member of The Romantics (of "What I Like About You" fame) and critics' darlings The Plimsouls, both of whom have new records out soon. He even worked with David Bowie on an unreleased cut



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Perhaps contrary to current drum wisdom, Clem says he gets calls not so much because he is some kind of musical chameleon, but rather because of his individual qualities. "I've been lucky," he insists. "People usually want to work with me because of what I do, so they do give me somewhat of a free rein—though of course I have to be aware of my situation and not go too overboard. With people like Dylan and Pete Townshend, a lot of the musical communication that goes on is not necessarily verbal anyway. Bob communicates through his guitar a lot, through his grooves. Pete is a little more eloquent about what he wants. But I think most musicians communicate through their music. I find that people who are so anal about what they want don't really have a clue in some ways; they don't let the musicians do their job, and they're not really setting the tone for good musical interaction."

A big part of what other musicians love about Clem Burke's drumming is simply the boundless energy he brings to the table. Go back to Blondie's "Dreaming," or the new album's opening track, "Screaming Skin," or Dramarama's "Hey Betty," and you'll hear an inherent liveliness that you don't necessarily get even from triple-scale LA studio cats. Perhaps that's because Clem treats playing in the studio just as he does playing live: "I just go for it when I play. In concert, I try to envision what I would like to see if I was in the audience. I am really inspired by people like Moon and Gene Krupa—such showmen. Buddy Rich too. I really like playing live, I like being in front of the audience. Blondie, The Romantics, The Plimsouls—they are all great rock bands in the traditional sense. Everyone rocks out."

Clem also understands that, well, you gotta *look* good while you're rockin' out, too. "One of the luxuries of being on tour now is that we have a wardrobe person. Tommy Hilfiger has been sponsoring us, and he made us all these great clothes, kind of like leather Rat Pack suits. It's kind of impractical, though. Even Charlie Watts, who is like a sartorial man of elegance and is always seen in a suit, doesn't wear one when he plays. The problem with wearing suits when you play a heavy rock gig is that the linings shrink."

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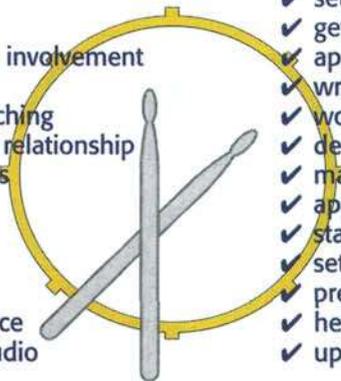
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THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR SERIOUS DRUM TEACHERS • Vol. 1, No. 1 • OCTOBER 1995

14 Tips For The Responsible Teacher

by Ken Vogel

A drum instructor, you must be aware of our responsibilities to **avoid students**. Here are a few tips that have helped me to better help my students:

- 1) Set a good example, especially in the areas of conduct, appearance, values, and discipline. Be on time and be prepared. Inspire the same from your students.
- 2) If a student wants to learn material in an area where you're weak, direct him to someone who's more of a specialist in that area. This benefits the student and also reflects well on you. It says you're looking out for your student's best interest.
- 3) Don't let a student just slide by material. Make sure the material is well understood and developed.
- 4) Keep the parents of younger students posted on their progress. Your encouraging words can help provide the added support and enthusiasm to the student from the parent. Communicate regarding lack of progress should also involve the parents.
- 5) Discuss your student's goals with him, and explain how you will help it help

attaining those goals.

- 6) Include questions and material of personal as part of the lesson if possible. If the student isn't individually ready for the material, explain why and what skills are needed first.
- 7) Present lesson material in a clear manner. Make sure your student fully understands the week's assignment. Have recorded examples ready available to give a clearer picture of how the material sounds in a musical situation.
- 8) Always show that you're open-minded to the musical tastes and interests of your students.
- 9) Present correct practice requirements as an early stage. Discuss how much of time should be spent on the materials, how often exercises should be practiced.

Continued on next page

Drumming Up Business

by Stephan S. Neghosian

Managing a private teaching practice can be a fulfilling learning experience for a teacher. Fortunately, there are many ways you can become successful, regardless of whether you're just beginning your practice, or looking to expand an already existing center. Furthermore, most of these methods are fairly inexpensive, considering the number of additional students and revenue they can generate.

Continued on page 3

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When reminded of classic old photos of Gene Krupa, where you can often see proof of his vivacious performance in the huge patches of sweat on his suit, Clem can relate. "Yeah, that was part of his style. Krupa was amazing. And Jerry Nolan from The New York Dolls, he'd always wear the greatest clothes. I can understand why musicians, drummers especially, come out wearing shorts. But it's just not my style.

Lest we forget, it *isn't just* about being exciting and looking good with Clem. He's got the chops to back it up, in particular a strong bass drum foot, which he often uses in neat patterns with his hands. "Independence between your hands and feet is an important thing to develop," Clem insists. "I try to think of the foot as another hand. Practicing paradiddles between your hands and feet is one way to improve that. That gets your foot working on double strokes."

Though Burke's busy schedule has kept him from taking proper lessons, he says he'd like to find a way to work with some of the great drummers he's met since moving to LA fifteen years ago. "There's always room for improvement," he states.

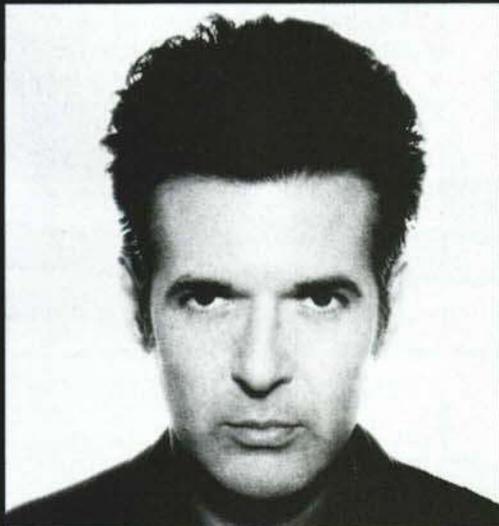
"There are a lot of good people in LA, like Ed Shaughnessy and Joe Porcaro, and they both give private lessons. I'd also like to take some lessons from Earl Palmer. I go and see him play quite a bit in LA. He plays every Tuesday night at this place near my home, and he's such an inspiration to me. He's got to be in his seventies, but he looks great, the chicks dig him, and he's such a gentleman. When Earl has his jams, all kinds of people turn up. Last time The Stones were in LA, Charlie Watts and Jim Keltner were there just studying his moves. Hanging there has really opened me up to a lot of interesting, great musicians.

"It's important not to get too complacent," Clem states firmly. "There are a lot of physical aspects to drumming, especially rock drumming, and as you get a bit older you really need to keep your muscles in tune. I'm an avid jogger and I lift some weights and things like that. I just really feel a need to be able to do that in order to help my playing. Plus, working with people like Dave Stewart and David Bowie is always a really good experience. That's how I learn."



The Perfect Pair...

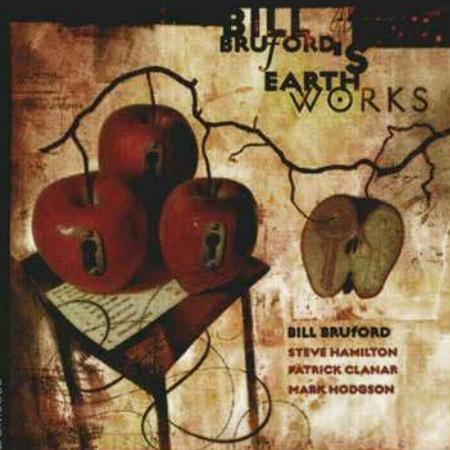
Clem Burke & Vic Firth



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also available: DGM9705 Bill Bruford with Ralph Towner & Eddie Gomez: *If Summer Had Its Ghosts* DGM9805 Bruford - Levin: *Upper Extremities* (price each: \$13.00)

TOUR DATES MAY 1999

8/9 Blues Alley, Washington DC; 10 Ram's Head, Annapolis, MD;
11 Theatre of the Living Arts, Philadelphia, PA; 12 Iron Horse, Northampton, MA;
13/14 Knitting Factory, New York, NY; 15 Modern Drummer Festival, Montclair State University, Upper Montclair, NJ



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New From The MD Book Division...

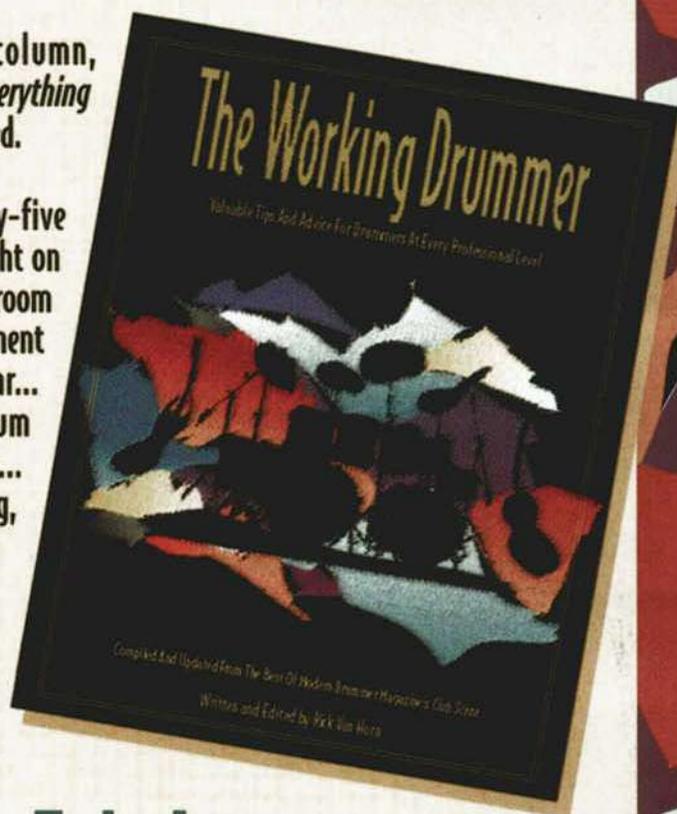
The Working Drummer

by Rick Van Horn

Compiled from MD's immensely popular *Club Scene* column, **The Working Drummer** offers 144 pages of practical advice on *everything* the full- or part-time professional drummer needs to know to succeed.

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The PIT STOP. This very cool unstructured black hat features a "purple night" suede visor, a leather closure, and a unique *MD* logo directly embroidered in front and the classic *Modern Drummer* logo on back.
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Boom! Bang! Crash!

New Drum Gear From Winter NAMM

Drums and cymbals might be the simplest of all instruments, but, just to keep us drummers salivating like Pavlov's dogs, manufacturers continuously come up with cool new ideas. These are traditionally introduced at the National Association of Music Merchants winter market, which this year was once again held at the Los Angeles Convention Center. In addition to the expected finish and size additions, some truly new and unusual designs practically begged for closer examination. (Good thing we brought our sticks!) In fact, there was so much neat stuff to wail on, we at MD decided to expand our '99 show coverage—just so you won't miss a thing!

Photos by Alex Solca

DRUMS

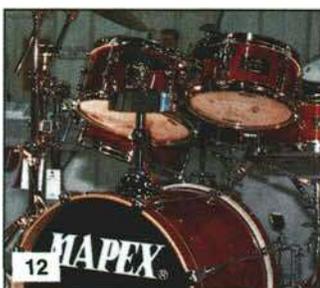
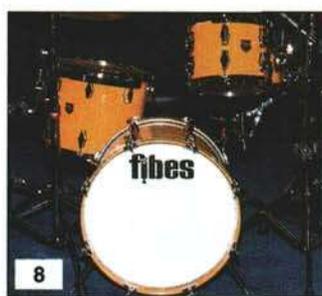
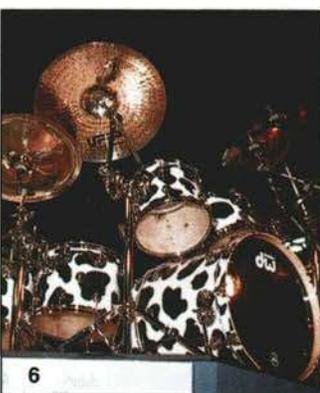
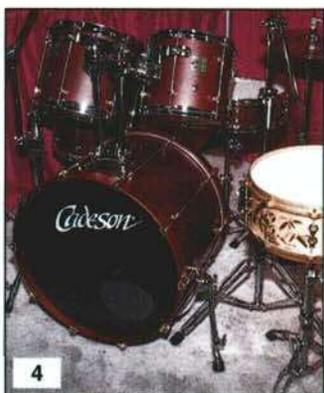
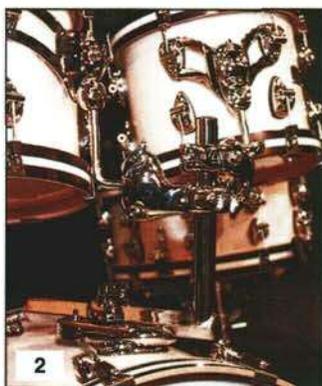
1. Arbiter showed drumsets with their lug-less AT one-touch tuning system and a choice of maple or Vibrasonic shells, as well as new metal-shell snare drums. **2.** One of the show's exceptional innovations was **Ayotte's** new Turret tom holder (also available on their *drumSmith* line), which allows the center axis point of two mounted toms to be positioned "anywhere, 360°." Ayotte also introduced a classy antique white satin finish and new, brighter sparkle finishes, including attention-grabbing fuschia and chartreuse! Several new models of sticks and mallets were added to the company's stick line as well.

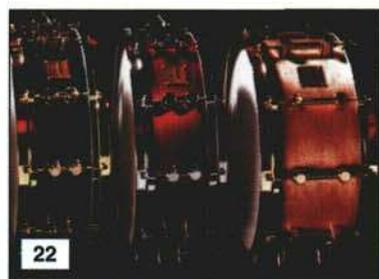
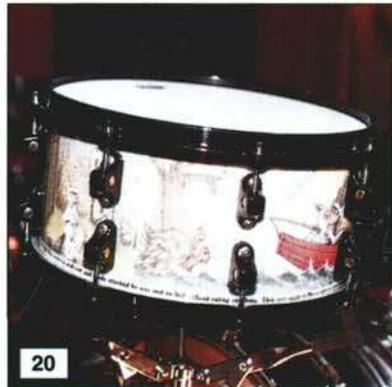
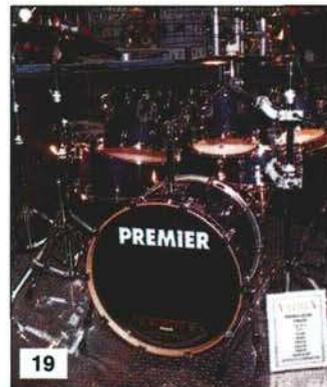
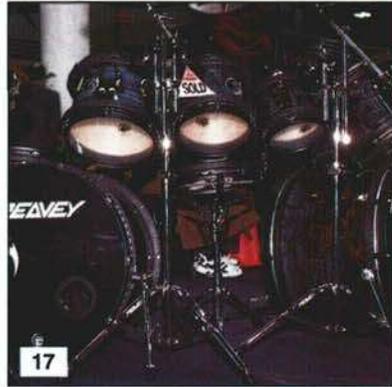
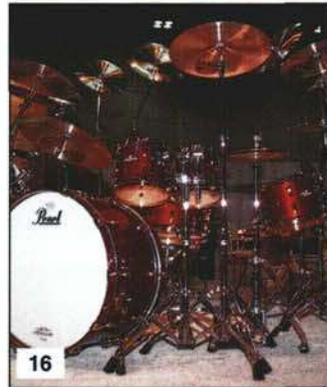
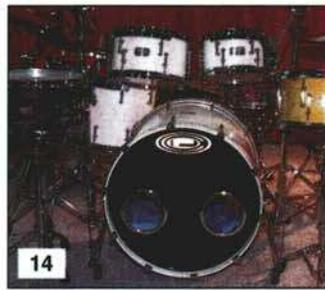
3. Baltimore Drum Company showed a nice silver sparkle kit at the Aquarian booth. **4.** China's **Cadeson Drums** turned heads with their *L-Class* leather-like-finish drumsets, as well as snare drums with Chinese water-color designs on their shells. **5.** **Dixon's** line of affordable snare drums includes models made of phosphor bronze (second from bottom), maple/bass/bee, and steel.

6. Drum Workshop introduced their new mid-priced *Workshop* range of drumsets, upgraded *Delta II* pedals with a weighted footboard, and some cool new finishes, including tiger print, leopard print, and this truly moo-ving bovine print!

7. Small drums with a big sound, **Fever Drums' Baby Bebop** kit garnered a lot of attention.

8. Fibes debuted their "Lifetime Yellow" polyurethane ("commonly, though mistakenly, called 'lacquer'") finish, which is exactly the same color as the late Tony Williams' famous Gretsch kit. They also showed a new "vintage" hand-rubbed satin finish that is available on all of the stain-finished maple drums that Fibes offers. **9.** **GMS** introduced a new small-profile lug on their *Special Edition* line that ten-





sions from the bottom of the lug to significantly reduce the outward stress on the shell. The line features maple shells with a choice of a satin-finish oak (shown) or mahogany outer ply. **10. Gretsch** added 16x18 and 18x22 bass drums to their *Broadcaster series* drumsets. **11.** Among **Ludwig's** hot new kits were (front, left to right) *Rocker Elite* lacquer-finish entry-level and *Accent* budget kits. **12.** In addition to a new limited-edition mahogany-shell *Classic* snare drum with nickel-plated lugs, **Mapex** presented *Mars Pro* kits with "comfort-sized" toms designed to facilitate portability and lower, more accessible positioning. (*Saturn Pro* and *Horizon* kits are available with "comfort-sized" toms that aren't quite as shallow.") Mapex also introduced the *P580* mid-level double pedal. **13. Maxtone** had a set of multi-colored acrylic tom-toms on display. **14.** New finishes from **Orange County Drum & Percussion** included purple riff, lime green bird's-eye maple, and this white sparkle pearlescent. **15. Peace's** line included this *Origin Plus* drumset with six outer plies of mahogany and three inner plies of Asian hardwood. **16.** Pearl's vast exhibited line included this sumptuous *Masterworks* kit with 24 kt. gold-plated hardware and their new *OptiMount* tom suspension system. The shells on this kit, made of two plies of mahogany and four plies of maple, had a burnt orange metallic finish. **17.** In honor of their fifth anniversary, **Peavey Drums** created fifteen drumkits with dazzling, one-of-a-kind custom finishes, one of which depicted an image of the surface of Mars that had been downloaded from a NASA Web site. **18.** This **Pork Pie Percussion** kit sported apropos colors for the company that proudly proclaims "Made By An American." **19. Premier's** new *Vitria* upper-midrange kits feature maple/eucalyptus/ maple

shell construction, "quick"-sized toms, die-cast hoops on all drums, double-braced hardware, and a choice of eight lacquer finishes. **20. Rocket Shells** introduced tinted and custom finishes (shown) including sparkles that are built into their shells under a durable epoxy finish. They also showed off their small-

er, more attractive logo. **21.** Affordable pro-level *Spirit* snare drums from **Slingerland** included models with shells of chromed steel, lacquered copper, lacquered brass, and maple/mahogany. The line also features dramatically upgraded hardware. **22.** The **Smith Drum Company of**

Connecticut displayed their new sets and snares, which feature North American birch and maple shells, minimal-contact brass lugs, and 27-step lacquer finishes. **23. Sonor** displayed their new *Force 2001* mid-level drumsets. **24. Spaun's** new custom finishes included this beautiful gray-to-black burst.

25. Spirit Drums, from Australia, brought some very impressive snare drums to LA, including a couple of *Cooktown Ironwood* drums, which are made from one of the hardest timbers in the world. **26.** Recent upgrades on **Sunlite** drums included new teardrop-shaped lugs, heavy-duty tom mounts, sturdier stands, and Remo heads. **27. Tama** presented "very limited-edition" blue sparkle fade and blue-gold sparkle finishes, and a limited-edition *Starclassic Performer* birch drumset. But the big unveiling (literally, by the endorsing artists themselves) was of the new snare drum lines designed for Kenny Aronoff, Bill Bruford, and Simon Phillips.

28. Tamburo displayed exquisite stave-construction drums made in Italy.

29. WorldMax is making a play for more serious drummers: In addition to their kids' sets, they were showing new double pedals and professional kits featuring Keller custom maple shells. **30.** Cleverly designed for maximum portability, the **Yamaha HipGig Kit** drew many curious NAMMers. Also new are concert snare drums including 6 1/2x14 maple, 4 1/2x13 birch, and 5 1/2x14 copper models.

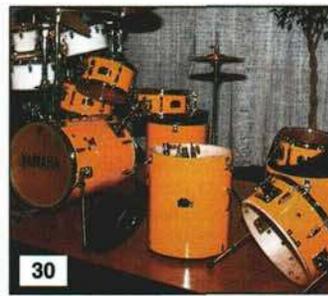
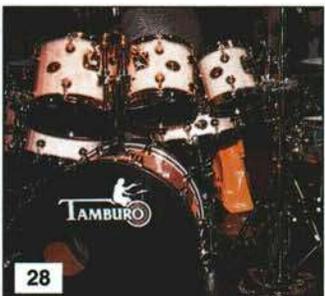
and 18" and 20" *Light Flat* rides. **38.** The folks at **Sabian** have clearly been working overtime, producing a boatload of cool and innovative sounds. Additions to their *Signature* line include the *Will Calhoun Ambient* ride, the *Richie Garcia Salsero* ride and *El Rayo* and *Cascara* effects, and the *Carmine Appice* hand-hammered B8 ride and machine-hammered Chinese cymbals. More

radical is the *V-Wave*, a curled sheet of raw bronze that produces different tones on the top and bottom surfaces. Sabian also launched the entirely new *Solar* line for beginners.

39. Turkish Cymbals provided dealers with yet another option for cymbals from that country with their *Four-Sticks* crash/ride. **40. UFIP** introduced new flat rides and several

models of heavier-gauge crashes and rides.

41. Zildjian extended their world of sounds with (left to right) an 18" *Breakbeat* ride and a 16" EFX cymbal in their *Re-Mix* line, and 16" and 18" *Oriental Trash* crashes. Also new were 12" and 14" ZBT Chinas, and 16" and 18" crashes and 14" hi-hats in their *K Constantinople* line.

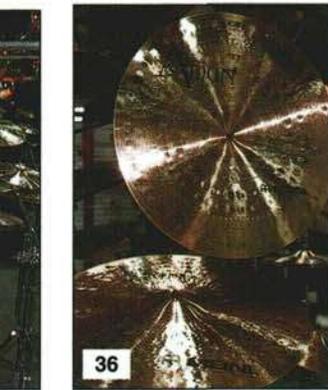


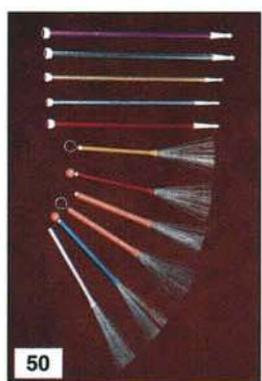
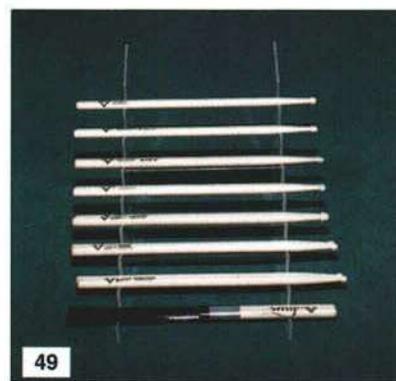
CYMBALS

31. Ace Products was showing their **Camber** line of entry-level cymbals, including their new pre-pack with an 18" crash/ride and 13" hi-hats. Also at the Ace booth, **Tosco** introduced a new thin crash. **32.** The huge variety of **Bosphorus** cymbals included the new *Turk Bell* models with a totally unlathed, dry bell, and a splendid prototype *Turk Ultra Thin Flat* ride with rivets. **33. Grand Master** was on hand with *Paper Thin Onion Skin* rides, available in 20", 21", and 22" sizes. **34. Istanbul (Agop)** displayed their *Alchemy* line of professional rock cymbals.

35. Istanbul (Mehmet) spotlighted their new *Istanbul Nostalgia* line of cymbals, which features a dark, traditional sound. **36. Meinl Cymbals' Amun** line is a professional series that includes thin, medium, and powerful models aimed at all players, from jazzers to rockers.

37. Paiste exhibited a 15" *Fast* crash and a 12" *Flanger* splash in their *Percussive Sounds* line. New entries in the *Traditional* line included 20" and 22" *Medium Light Swishes*, a 20" *Swish China*, a 20" *Medium* ride,





Sticks

42. Canadian company **EMMite** manufactures synthetic drumsticks in several colors. The sticks are made from an "oriented" plastic, which the company says gives them the same stiffness of wood at three times the strength. 43. Newcomer **JohnnyraBB** hit the scene with some great-looking sticks, including the *Rhythm Saw*, whose ribbed sections can create really cool scraping effects on rims, cowbells, etc. (Johnny Rabb himself is pictured.)

44. **Mainline** introduced a new barrel-shaped tip on their model 7A stick. 45. **Pro-Mark** presented their *SD5* and *SD7* multi-percussion stick/mallets, as well as several models of sticks made especially for indoor drum corps. Also on display was the company's *AmeriTape*, designed to be economical and convenient for wrapping drum corps sticks and mallets. 46. **Regal Tip** featured their new easily retractable, mid-priced *Throw Brush* and a nylon version of their *Walfredo Reyes Jr.* mounted cowbell beater. The company is also now offering four of their most popular stick models, *5A*, *5B*, *Rock*, and *2B*, without the final lacquering step in their finishing process, for drummers who prefer an unlacquered feel. They call the sticks "But Naked."

47. **Trueline** displayed signature sticks by Daniel Glass of Royal Crown Revue, Rick Steel, MycKale Thomas, and Simon Wright, as well as a 3SG "reverse taper" marching stick. 48. **Uni-Grip 2000** introduced a line of sticks (and one brush model) with hexagonal and octagonal handles, designed to facilitate a better fulcrum, playing technique, and stamina. And believe it or not, they feel pretty good!

49. New products from **Vater** included "designer" model sticks bearing the signatures of Chad Smith, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, and Virgil Donati. Other new products included *Fusion Nylon Tip*, *Studio 2*, and *New Orleans Jazz* drumsticks, *PolyFlex* brushes, and a *Wood Handle Whip*.

50. **VeriSonic** continues to add new colors to its line of aluminum sticks and brushes.

51. Vic Firth expanded their *American Classic* hickory and *American Custom* maple drumstick lines, added *Matt Cameron*, *Akira Jimbo*, and *Milton Sledge* models, and introduced bamboo-handled timpani mallets. Other new developments included the availability of nylon tips on *Dave Weckl* and *Steve Gadd* signature models. **52.** Besides their new *Cindy Blackman Artist Series* model, **Zildjian Drumsticks** had their new *Bill Stewart* model stick, *Super Drumstick Bag*, and four different *Drumstick Sampler Boxes*.



HEADS

53. Aquarian's Precision Corps heads combine the first - ever single-layer *Kevlar* head with Aquarian's *Power Dot* for a livelier, louder sound and better feel. **54. Attack** was displaying their new *No Overtone* heads, which feature a thin sound ring laminated to the underside of the skin at the hoop. Also new are their *Calf-Like* snare drum heads (shown) and extra thick and durable *BlastBeat* snare drum heads. All heads come in 12", 13", and 14" diameters.

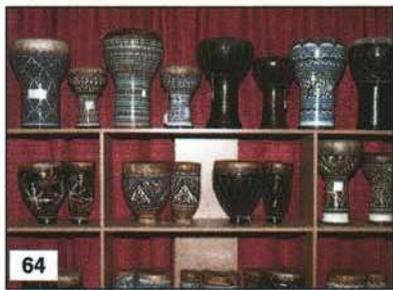
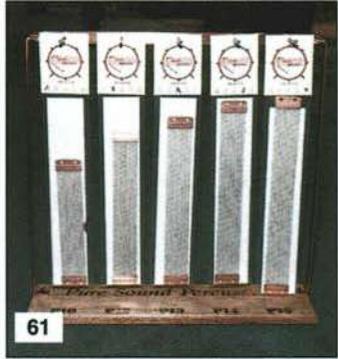


55. Evans showcased their *EQ-4* bass drum head featuring a muffling ring proportionate to different-sized heads; *Power Center* dotted snare head; *Retro Screen* front bass drum "head"; synthetic conga head (shown); head *PrePaks*; and *EQ Bass Drum Patches*. **56. Remo** showed their new mid-priced *SoundMaster* heads for snares, toms, and bass drums, as well as their new *BlackMax* marching heads (pictured).



HARDWARE

57. Axis showed a cork beater for their bass drum pedals that's also available as a retro-fit item for other manufacturers' pedals. **58. Danmar** introduced the *J-Hoop* snare rim, designed to make replacing top snare heads fast and easy, without having to remove the lugs. **59.** A slew of upgraded bass drum and hi-hat pedals highlighted the **Gibraltar** booth. **60. The MacRobert Corp.'s Duallist** double pedal now has independently (between two beaters) adjustable stroke length, beater angle, height, and "power." Footboard angle, pedal distance from kick, and lock-off (for single strokes) are now also adjustable.



61. Pure Sound showed their new series of longer, "easy-mounting" snare wires, featuring individually coiled, stretched, and heat-treated wires. **62. Roc-N-Soc** heavy-duty drum thrones boasted about their "1990 NAMM Show prices."

PERCUSSION

63. In addition to cowbells with "power flanges" and a mini djembe, new items from **Afro Percussion** included beaded maracas, a basket ganza, a *Shakerine* and *Mini Shakerine* (both in pairs), and a *Mini Ganzeiro*. **64.** Pittsburgh's

Casablanca Percussion specializes in imported hand drums, including dumbbeks and double Moroccan bongos.

65. Everyone's Drumming unveiled a djembe with a rope-tension system and a new mount, made of molded ash, whose cinch system is designed to work with virtually any model stand. **66. Fat Congas** featured a series of cherry-wood and bird's-eye maple *Cajons* and *Batajons* featuring beveled edges, as well as oak congas with stainless-steel hardware and a large resonating chamber.

67. Perhaps best known for their

cymbals, **Istanbul (Mehmet)** also displayed djembes, an expanded Latin percussion line, and some gorgeous darbukas, such as the copper-shelled model shown.

68. Latin Percussion's booth was packed with limited-edition afuche/cabasas, *Jam Blocks*, cowbells, and 35th-anniversary congas featuring new shell protectors; redesigned *Giovanni Hidalgo* bongos with slightly thinner shells; *Giovanni Hidalgo* bongos made from North American ash; *Aspire* bongos and congas to take the place of LP's CP line of percussion; tunable

bongos with graphics on the shells; *Egg Shakers*; *Chaquitas*; a *Museum Udu* with a limited-edition lizard design; and a new clothing line. Pictured here are new LP plastic agogo bells (mounted, single, and double versions); a new *Percussion Handle* for marching purposes; and *Triple Bongos* and stand (without wingnuts), which can be arranged in a row or in a triangle shape. **69. Lawton Percussion's** booth featured this natural-cord shekere and Cuban guiro, all made in California. Lawton shared a booth with **Taniguchi Designs**, who displayed beautiful ceramic dumbbeks. **70. Meinl Percussion's** *Mongo Santamaria* congas and *Woodcraft* bongos are made in Germany out of elm, maple, wild cherry, and 5,000-year-old Moor oak. The company also displayed many new hand percussion instruments and a new catalog.

71. Mountain Rhythm's *Simple Twist* tuning system on their djembes and ashikos make their high-quality, goatskin-headed, hand-lathed drums even more attractive. **72. Remo's** expansive world percussion line now features the bass drum-conga hybrid *Kick/Conga*, as well as wide-body *El Conguero* series congas. The company has also introduced *Jingledrums* (to celebrate the new millennium) and *Fingerdrums*. **73.** New items in **Rhythms'** strikingly beautiful line include (clockwise, from top) the *Udu-Guiro*, a *surdo*, the *Zumbi*, and the *Okanga*.

74. The diverse line of percussion products at **Rhythm Tech** now includes the *Laptop*, a single-headed, pre-tensioned instrument with snares designed to be used with brushes as a practice pad, or in low-volume, "unplugged" situations. **75.** The aptly named **Rolling Thunder** company displayed taiko drums, as well as some nifty shell-less, cowhide-headed drums called *Uchiwa-Daiko*. **76.** Among **Sol Percussion's** items of note were (left to right) a conga-shaped cajon, Brazilian ganzas, and their *Backpack drum*.

77. Offerings from **Taos Drum Company** included gong drums in 6", 5", and 4" diameters, as well as 12"-deep *Pow-Wow* drums in 36" and 32" sizes. **78. Toca** featured their upgraded *Premiere* congas and bongos with fiberglass shells, Remo *Mondo* heads, and a specially shaped bearing edge that produces the warm sound associated with wood-shell drums.



67



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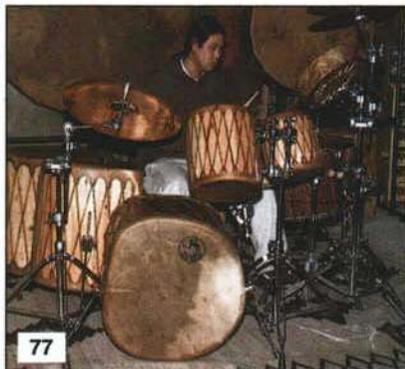
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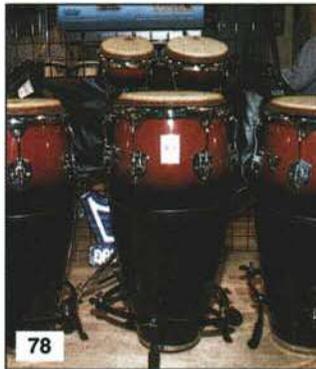
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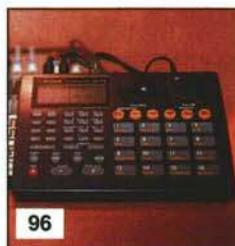
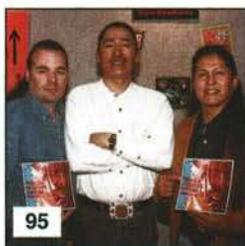
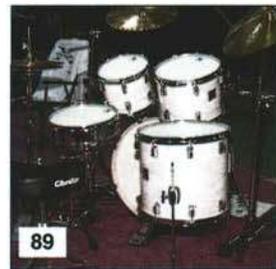
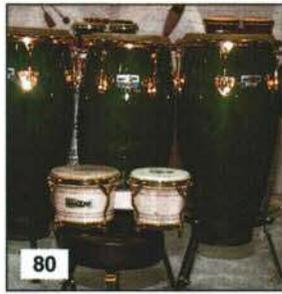
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77



78



79. Trinidad & Tobago Instruments featured their new *Double Mini* steel pan set. **80. Universal Percussion** showed off their new *HandzOn Pro* congas and bongos. **81. Yamaha's** new Alex Acuna maple-shelled timbales, with a snazzy white sparkle lacquer finish, come in six sizes.

CASES

82. Humes & Berg introduced steel handles on their *Enduro* drum cases, as well as their *Snuggles* machine-washable, protective drum inserts. **83. Impact** debuted a sharp new timbale case that stows the drums, stand, and additional small percussion items—and doubles as a trap table. They also showed off snare drums in 10" (available with a student-sized back pack carrier), 12", and 13" sizes, as well as padded case liner material that is much stronger and allows easier drum loading. **84. JP Custom Cases** displayed their *Deluxe* series of drumset bags, specially designed to accommodate drums fitted with RIMS mounts. **85. New Levy's Leathers** canvas drum, cymbal, and stick bags have joined their line of heavy leather and tapestry-style bags. **86. XL Specialty's** booth featured the new *EZ Stak* drum cases and a completely revamped *Protektor Cases* line.

ELECTRONICS

87. Alesis unveiled the impressive new *DM Pro* drum module. **88. Big Fish Audio**, distributors of Ross Garfield's Drum Doctor CDs, presented *The Roots Of South America*, *Acoustic Drum*, and *Drum Sound Power* sample CDs. **89. Boom Theory's** exhibit generated a lot of interest with electronic and electronic/acoustic drumkits, and especially their powerful new *Spacemuffins 0.0* drum sound module. **90.** New products from **ddrum** included a cymbal trigger pad and a hi-hat trigger pad that employs the drummer's own ("real") hi-hat pedal. The company also drastically reduced the price of their *D4* sound module. **91. Drum Tech** had on hand their new *Pro Pad 2-Zone* electronic drum pad, which features precise dynamic range adjustment and adjustable compatibility with "virtually all drum modules on the market." **92.** Among their electronic drum and percussion equipment, **Hart Dynamics** was featuring their Custom X complete electronic

drumset, *Hammer* accessory pad, and *Mach I* rack-mountable, low-priced monitor speaker systems designed specifically for electronic drummers. **93.** The *Electrabe A* analog modeling synthesizer and *Electrabe R* rhythm synthesizer were groovin' hard at the **Korg** exhibit. **94.** **Mackie** introduced a few affordable non-powered mixers, including the *EFX 20*. **95.** **Q Up Arts** spotlighted a drum 'n' bass sample CD and CD ROM done by Paul Kodish, as well as

Voices Of Native America volumes 1 and 2. **96.** **Roland** presented their new *DR-770 Dr. Rhythm* drum machine.

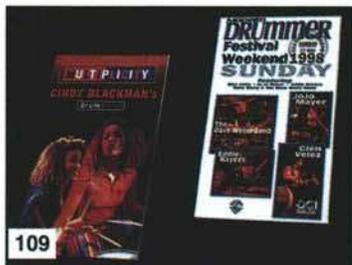
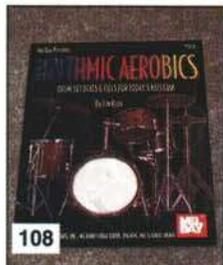
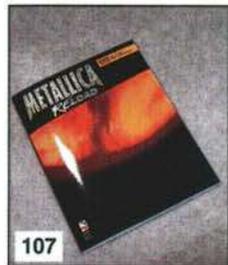
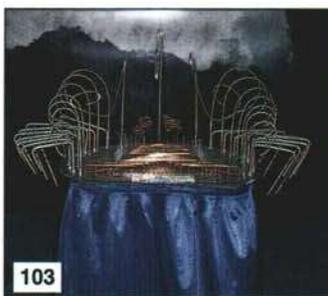
MICROPHONES

97. **AKG** spotlighted their new *C 4000B* mic' (left), recommended for use as an overhead, on toms, or even on kick drums, along with their *D 112*, popularly used as a kick drum mic'. **98.** **Applied Microphone Technology**

introduced a tiny head-mountable trigger whose jack mounts on key rods. **99.** Drum mic's at the **Audio-Technica** booth included the *ATM25* and *ATM87R* for bass drum, the compact *ATM351* or toms, and the *ATM23HE* for snare and toms. **100.** **Audix** had their new *D2* drum mic'. **101.** **Big Bang** presented the *SIB Systems* internal mic'-mounting system. (Model shown is for bass drums.) **102.** Featured drum mic's at the

Electro-Voice exhibit included the *NB5* for kick, the *N/D168* for snare, and the *N/D468* for toms. **103.** **K & K Sound Systems** upgraded their *CTM3* (toms) and *CSM4* (snare) clip-on condenser mic's. They were also displaying their contact mic's on this bizarre music sculpture.

104. **Sennheiser's** *Evolution Drum Packs* are available in several configurations. The display pack included four *E604s* for snare and toms, one *E602* for kick, and two *ME64/K6PS* for overheads. **105.** New drum mic's in the **Shure** line are the miniature *Beta 98D/S* tiny condenser mic' for toms and snare (left), and the low-profile *Beta 91* boundary mic' for kick drums. Shure also introduced a newly designed drum-mic' mount similar to that on the *Beta 98*, but for larger-sized mic's.



BOOKS/VIDEOS

106. **Alfred Publishing** is hot on *The Ultimate Drumset Reading Anthology For The Working Drummer* by Steve Houghton. **107.** **Hal Leonard** has released transcriptions of Lars Ulrich's drum parts from Metallica's *Re-Load* album. **108.** **Mel Bay** had on hand a new drumset tutorial, *Rhythmic Aerobics*, by Jim Ryan, as well as *Building Blocks Of Rock* by Dawn Richardson of 4 Non Blondes fame. **109.** **Warner Bros.** featured Cindy Blackman and *Modern Drummer Festival '98 Highlights* videos.

MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT

110. **Drumspan** offered their stretch-on, non-adhesive drum covering material in several wild designs. **111.** **Percussive Innovations'** broad line of "tone tools" for drums includes the new *Luis Conte Magnifico Pad*, a rubber practice pad with adhesive backing designed especially for hand drummers. It is available in regular and super-thick (shown) models. **112.** New drum mutes with real tensionable heads from **Quiet-Tone** lightly clamp atop your own drums, dramatically reducing their volume, but maintain familiar positioning, tone differentiation, and a natural feel. They can also be used on a table-top.





Double Bass Ideas, Part 1

by Rod Morgenstein

MUSIC KEY

T.T.	R.C.	Bell	Cowbell
S.D.			
F.T.			
B.D.1			
			B.D.2

The addition of a second bass drum or double pedal opens up a world of rhythmic possibilities on the drumset. For some reason, however, the vast majority of double bass beats seem to focus on a constant barrage of continuous 16th notes or triplets with various ride patterns played on top. Effective as this can be, there's a great deal more that can be accomplished.

The following beats consist of non-continuous double bass patterns that combine notes of different values, including 8ths, 16ths, 16th-note triplets, and 32nd notes. Examples 1-4 are straightforward, while 5-12 are more syncopated and unusual. Examples 9-12 explore these rhythms in time signatures beyond 4/4. Apply each example's ride pattern to the other beats for increased coordination and drum beat vocabulary. And remember, your feet are probably not nearly as developed as your hands, so be patient working these beats out.



Drums that say something!



Orion Classic Model TM622 in Wax Emerald Green finish with matching Black Panther snare. Cymbals not included.

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Mapex artists to create drums that speak clearer and translate ideas better than any other drums made today. The results can be seen in this Orion Classic Series set. It has thinner, ultra-resonant all maple shells with precise bearing edges plus the exclusive I.T.S. isolated tom mount system. Available in a choice of shell dimensions that offer a wider range of voicing, Orion drums project without the muffling effect thick plies and evasive hardware often cause. Orion's elegant hand rubbed finish in an array of dramatic colors and gold plated lugs also speaks for Mapex quality as does its Performing Artist Series pedals and stands with

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Roll Modulation

by Chet Doboe

Rhythmic modulation is a very exciting and energy-generating technique that is becoming a common writing device in today's drum corps percussion scores. Simply put, rhythmic modulation is a logical progression of rhythms that passes from a basic rhythmic figure to figures that add more notes as the musical phrase evolves. The effect is an illusion of an acceleration of the tempo. Rhythmic modulation can also start with figures that are very dense (with many notes), progressing to a series of figures that "thin out" with fewer notes. This effect implies a slowing down of energy, while maintaining a sustained tempo.

The following exercises are ideas that I call "Roll Modulation,"

because they feature the predominant use of doubles to create the illusion of a roll that either speeds up or slows down. For all of the following exercises, using a metronome as a tool to help maintain time control and accuracy is highly recommended. It's also very helpful to tap your foot to give yourself a consistent handle on the groove.

These exercises can be challenging to play perfectly. Patience and persistence are the keys. I also recommend playing all of the modulations in this article using single sticking. Using singles will present a whole new set of challenges for these exercises.

The first exercise starts with a statement of 16th notes, which modulate to the more dense figures of sextuplets and 32nd notes, followed by a reverse modulation. I've also included a second sticking system that features a weaving of triples and doubles, which is standard vocabulary for contemporary corps percussion.

The next roll modulation exercise moves at a quicker pace than the previous one. Whereas the first exercise was a two-pulse statement of each figure, this exercise moves at a single pulse pace. Except for the two written accents, be certain to keep all notes equal in volume, struck from equal stick heights.



Four-Way Coordination

As Taught By Alan Dawson

by John Ramsay

MUSIC KEY

	R.C.
S.D.	X
B.D.	X
H.H. w/foot	X
	Rim Click

Alan Dawson had more than forty ways of interpreting the eight pages of syncopated exercises in Ted Reed's *Progressive Steps To Syncopation For The Modern Drummer* (pages 38-45, new version). This article offers a selection of those examples. (The first three are a prerequisite for learning the rest.)

While playing these exercises, it's important that you do not stop or go back if you make a mistake; Alan was adamant about this. Rather, try to make a mental note of where the mistakes occurred, go back after you've completed the page, isolate the measure or measures, and then play them repeatedly. First, play the measure alone, and then as a repeated two- or four-bar phrase. This approach is essential for establishing good reading habits.

Following are ten ways Alan used Ted Reed's book. Each approach is demonstrated using one or two examples from the book. Spend at least a week on each approach, using the entire syncopation section of the Reed book, before moving on to the next approach.

1. Snare Drum Plays The Line

In this approach, the left hand plays the syncopated line on the snare, the right hand plays jazz time, the bass drum "feathers" (plays lightly) quarter notes, and the hi-hat plays beats 2 and 4.

Written:

Played:

2. Bass Drum Plays The Line

This time the bass drum plays the melody line, the right hand plays time, the left plays rimclicks on beats 2 and 4, and the hi-hat plays 2 and 4.

Written:

Played:

3. Short And Long

In this approach the short notes (8ths) are played on the snare, and the long notes (tied 8ths, quarters, dotted quarters) are played on the bass drum. Play jazz time on the ride cymbal with your right hand and 2 and 4 on the hi-hat.

Written:

Played:

Written (consecutive 8ths example):

Played:

4. Left Hand Fills In Triplets

This is the first of several exercises that use the idea of filling in triplets. In this example the short notes are played by the right hand on the small tom, and the long notes are played on the cymbal (by the right hand) and the bass drum in unison. The left hand fills in triplets on the snare drum and the hi-hat plays on 2 and 4.

Written:

Played:

Written (consecutive 8ths example):

Played:

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

5. Alternating Triplets

With this approach, the sticking remains constant: alternating RLRLRL. The short notes are accented on the snare drum, the long notes are on the cymbals/bass drum, with the hi-hat again on 2 and 4. The key to making this one sound good lies in playing the unaccented notes on the snare drum close to the drumhead so that the accented notes stand out.

Practice tip: You may want to play all of the notes (accented and unaccented) on the snare to get comfortable with which hand they fall on; then follow the short and long assignments.

Written:

Played:

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

Written (consecutive 8ths example):

Played:

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

6. Triplet Roll

This is similar to the alternating triplets, in that the sound sources are the same. Short notes are accented on the snare drum, long notes are on the cymbals/bass drum, and the hi-hat is on 2 and 4.

Written:

Played:

R LLR LLRRL R LLRRL RLL

Written (consecutive 8ths example):

Played:

R LLR L RRL R LLR LLRRL

7. Bass Drum Plays The Line, Left Hand Fills In

In this example the bass drum plays the melody line while the left hand fills in triplets on the snare drum. The right hand plays the jazz ride pattern on the cymbal, and the hi-hat plays 2 and 4. Be sure to get a good blend among all the voices of the drumset.

Written:

Played:

Written (consecutive 8ths example):

Played:

8. Hi-Hat Plays The Line, Left Hand Fills In

In this example the hi-hat (left foot) plays the melody line and the left hand fills in triplets on the snare drum. Just like in the last example, the right hand plays the ride pattern on the cymbal, but this time there's no bass drum. Be sure to get a good blend between the hi-hat and the snare drum; keep the snare drum strokes low and the notes soft.

Written:

Played:

Written (consecutive 8ths example):

Played:

9. Hi-Hat Short, Bass Drum Long, Left Hand Fills

In this example, the hi-hat plays the short notes while the bass drum plays the long notes. The left hand fills in triplets on the snare drum, and the right hand plays the jazz ride pattern. This example is truly a four-way coordination challenge. Be sure to get a good blend of all the parts. You should be able to clearly hear the melody line.

Written:



Played:



Written (consecutive 8ths example):



Played:

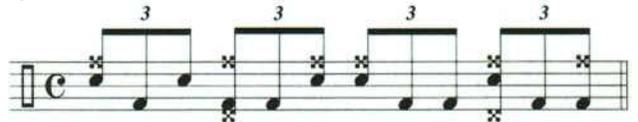


and the bass drum fills in triplets (the way the left hand does with exercise 1). I suggest using heel-down technique in order to more easily allow the beater to rebound.

Written:



Played:



Written (consecutive 8ths example):



Played:



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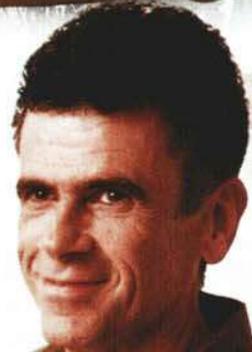
Dom Famularo - Pad Stick/Kit Stick



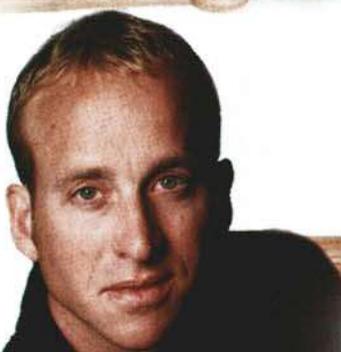
Chad Wackerman - Fire Sticks



Vinny Appice - Viper



David Garibaldi - Jam Master



Russ McKinnon - Funk 3B



Ricky Lawson - Time Keeper



Casey Scheuerell - Sure Shot



Kenny Aronoff - PowerPlay



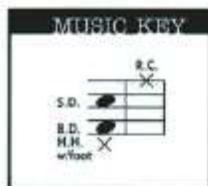
Will Calhoun



Dom's Pad Stick and Casey's Sure Shot are maple.

Getting Started With Click Tracks

by Ted Bonar



There may be no greater debate in all of music than whether or not click tracks and metronomes are useful musical tools. Quite often, the statement is made that using a click track will make one play "cold" or without feeling. In fact, playing "stiff with a click" is a common occurrence, and therefore there is credence to this argument.

However, playing with a click track without losing "feel" is a skill that can be acquired, and it can be learned through practice just as a drummer would learn how to play rudiments or grooves. In fact, learning to use a metronome correctly can improve one's playing drastically from both a technical standpoint *and* in terms of groove.

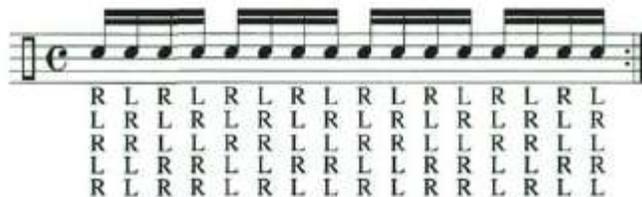
It should be noted that one problem with practicing to a metronome actually has nothing to do with music: The fact is, drums are loud—and most metronomes aren't! Simply put, you can't hear a metronome if you're playing a snare drum or a drumset. Therefore, you must find a way to amplify the click so that it's a useful tool.

My metronome has an audio-out jack, from which I plug it into a small, inexpensive 40-watt amplifier and run the amplified sound through headphones. For guaranteed protection, I *never* do this without also wearing earplugs. Beyond the hearing protection, the earplugs/amplifier contraption that I have set up offers the added bonus of acting as a mixer for the click and the drums. I can turn up the click as loud as necessary, and yet neither the click nor my drums are loud enough to be painful or damaging to my ears. (You definitely end up in your own little click track world with this setup, but it works wonderfully.)

As with most acquired skills, it's best to learn to play with a click one step at a time. As a general rule when playing with a metronome, always practice exercises slowly at first. The primary reason for this is, since you should strive for the exact placement of rhythms "within the click," it's more accurate and beneficial (although more difficult) to learn this at slow tempos. It's always possible to speed up exercises *after* they are learned slowly and correctly.

Rather than jumping straight into drumset grooves and patterns, take a step back to the beginning and get used to playing with just your hands and the click track. Pick a nice, easy tempo to start. Each drummer's starting point will be different, but these lessons are useful for beginners and advanced drummers alike.

Set your click to somewhere around quarter note = 90 bpm and play the following:



Note the different feeling between the similar stickings of RLRL and LRLR. If you weren't playing with a click track, these alternating strokes would have no reference point and would therefore sound virtually identical. However, once the click track is thrown into the mix, you now have the true feeling of what a "left hand lead" should feel like. There *is* a difference—a huge one—between the feel of these two stickings.

Let's take this exercise a step further by adding the hi-hat on quarter notes (same stickings as before, quarter notes on hat, with quarter note = 90 bpm):



Adding the hi-hat into the fold at this point is crucial for a drumset player for a couple of very important reasons: First, this is where you "connect" the top half of your body to the bottom half. A drummer must be able to keep time with his hands, feet, head, and heart, and playing consistent quarter notes on the hi-hat while changing your hand patterns will "lock" all the pieces together. In addition, as seen in the RLRL and LRLR stickings, there is a coordination issue to tackle between your hands and your left foot.

Play as many stickings as possible to gain the maximum control over the instrument *and* the click. Dust off your copy of George Lawrence Stone's *Stick Control* and play the first eight pages with a metronome, with quarters on the hi-hat (or half notes, as the Stone exercises are in cut time). After these stickings are mastered with the click and the left-foot hi-hat, you can slowly increase the speed of the click. Then you can move on to Joe Morello's *Master Studies* for more advanced stickings and snare patterns. (You can even play snare solos in this manner.)

As you move through these stickings, you will be developing an intrinsic sense of "where the click is," and the exercises will become easier. In time you will be able to increase your speed, although speed is really not the goal here. (It is simply a result of this exercise and your newly improved control.) Your left foot should now have the tempo firmly imbedded in it and should also be impervious to any stickings you may want to play. You now have your own personal metronome, and it's located in your head and your hi-hat!

Now it's time to approach the drumset. At this point the *sound* of the click track should be discussed. Using quarter-note clicks with 16th notes on the snare drum is sufficient, as the rhythm being played is consistent and uncomplicated. However, when you start playing drumset patterns, the overlapping rhythms of the different limbs—even when just playing basic 8th-note patterns—become much more complex, and the click needs adjusting. If you continue to practice with quarter notes on the click, there's a much greater margin of error *inside* the click track. We are trying to eliminate that margin of error with this exercise, and therefore, when playing drumset exercises, you must be able to feel the 8th-note pulse.

On my metronome setup, I have the quarter notes at a very high volume, and I set a different, quieter sound to play on 8th notes. Many advanced metronomes offer this feature, and if you have a drum machine, you can program any sound you wish to accomplish this. If, however, you only have access to a basic metronome with only one sound available, it's best to double the metronome marking so that you are listening to 8th notes rather than quarters. This isn't the optimum situation, as the overall sound can get cluttered and confusing. But you need to understand *exactly* where the 8th notes are placed in order for this exercise to be done correctly. Once you get the feeling of this exercise, move back to quarters on the click. (I choose to keep two different sounds for quarters and 8ths on my metronome, but as you get comfortable with the click this becomes less a matter of necessity and more a matter of personal preference.)

As with the exercise with your hands, get back to your basic drumkit patterns and learn how they feel with a click. Think of it this way: What are the types of beats most often used in drumming? Simple ones! If you start playing extremely difficult patterns to the click right away, you may be missing the point. After all, you can always work up to the complex patterns after you have mastered the simpler ones.

Again, take this nice and slow at the beginning. About quarter note = 100 bpm is a good starting point.



Also try playing all of your basic 8th-note bass drum patterns with this basic groove.

Pay particular attention to how "locked in" this will start to feel after you play with the click for a while. If you've never done this before, you'll experience some frustration, as you'll have the feeling of a "wandering click" and you'll be fighting to stay in time

and in control. After you get the feeling of whether you're "ahead of" or "behind" the click, you'll learn to adjust your playing to get back "on" the click. (Hint: If you can't hear the click, you're probably "on" it. This is tricky to get used to, but it's a great sign that you're doing well!)

Once you can do the above patterns consistently, move the tempo up and then down (anywhere between quarter = 80 and 140 bpm), practicing the exercises at various tempos while adding 16th notes to the bass drum. You'll probably be surprised at the different feelings each tempo and pattern will give you. Playing at extremely slow tempos (70-90 bpm) is especially challenging, and it can't be overstated how much this will help your playing at *all* tempos.

After getting comfortable with your basic grooves, go ahead and start throwing some fills into the exercise. Use your imagination. (Again, start this at a nice, easy tempo of about quarter = 100.)



Drummers commonly rush or drag through fills. If you get excited during a fill, it's natural to rush the tempo, and if the fill is especially complicated with many notes, it's easy to drag the tempo. Practicing your fills with a click will guard against both of these common drummer maladies.

Play all your grooves and make up fills at various tempos. This exercise is virtually unlimited, and it's highly effective. By doing this you'll learn how to *groove by yourself*, how to create excitement and color in your fills while staying in control, and most important of all, how to control the tempo at all times and in any situation with any band.

Regarding the initial argument that playing with a click will sound stiff and cold, you should remember that everything improves with practice. After you've played and practiced the above ideas for a while, you'll learn how to intentionally play "ahead of" or "behind" the beat. You'll learn how to push your fills to create excitement and then recover to get back on the click. Also, by developing your internal metronome through these exercises, you'll be able to understand and feel your drumset patterns better when you're *not* playing with a click. Your playing will be as emotional and as exciting as it ever was, only now it'll be even more effective due to your newly developed sense of groove, control, feel, and tempo.

Be patient, and persevere. Learning to play with a click can be frustrating and difficult, but you and your bandmates will notice—very quickly—that you have become *the master* of the groove. Good luck!



RECORDINGS

Drumhead

Drumhead (Perishable)



drummer/percussionists: **Sheila McCarthy, Josh Matthews**

with Tony Maimone (bs, synth), plus guest artists Eric Marc Cohen, Benny Masserella, Marcus Righter, and Doug Scharin

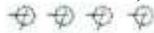
Drumhead is a frightfully enjoyable foray into the world of the captured rhythm, and is the result of "a collection of drummers and groove-enablers given the freedom to be the totality of the music." Rather than being in a supporting role, the percussive element is given free rein on this big mess o' drumming fun.

Drumhead is the concept of Sheila McCarthy, who has gathered and arranged her percussive brethren and all of their instruments for a captivating approach to a modern percussive experience. Loaded with unique live grooves and traditional drums, *Drumhead* is also infused with playfully manipulated electronic stimuli. It's a great listen precisely because the drummers display a high sensitivity to space, time, texture, feel, and mood. A combination of masterful players *on* instruments and the studio *as* an instrument, the album treats the listener to booty-shaking rhythms morphing into heady "virtually created" music. At one point, for example, an army of drumsets segues into an electronic fuss, which fades into hand-drumming and bells, which then turns seamlessly to a section of vibraphone, piano, and timpani as heard through a scratch-laden vinyl record.

By turns playful, brooding, and exciting, *Drumhead* is a unique and stimulating experience with a successfully fresh approach to drum recording. (PO Box 57-8804, Chicago, IL 60657-8804, www.perishablerecords.com.)

Toto

Toto XX (1977-1997) (Sony Legacy)



drummers: **Jeff Porcaro, Simon Phillips**

with Steve Porcaro, David Paich (kybd, synth, vcl), Steve Lukather (gr, vcl), Mike Porcaro, David Hungate (bs), Joe Williams, Bobby Kimball (vcl)

Growing up in the '70s and '80s and hearing the many hits that Jeff Porcaro played drums on, you never mistook his trademark style and sound: the artful tom fills and powerful rock grooves he perfected with Toto; his thoughtful and innovative work with Steely Dan; his sly 16th-note R&B grooves on Boz Scaggs' *Silk Degrees* and *Down Two, Then Left* albums. Porcaro's groove was as deep as the ocean, but as shapely and inspired as a painting by Botticelli. And Porcaro's legendary, deep-dish shuffles could even make the Pope get up and boogie.

Toto XX, a collection of unreleased tracks, does justice to Porcaro's lasting legacy. For Toto fans this will be a welcome new album, as many of the tracks are as good as anything on *Hydra*, *Toto IV*, or *Fahrenheit*. Spanning the years from 1977 to 1997, *Toto XX* offers a wealth of grooves and tunes for those young-uns who may wonder about all the fuss.

"Tale Of A Man" rides over a turbulent melodic figure, driven by IP's sailing tom fills and boisterous hi-hat-infused 4/4 feel. Midway through, Jeff unleashes a torrent of tom/bass triplets, another of his indelible trademarks. "Right Part Of Me" is a rock ballad featuring Jeff's delicate cymbal work and cotton-soft groove. "Miss Sun" recalls the blue-eyed soul of Boz Scaggs, with Jeff's drag rolls and Caribbean lilt; he had the perfect feel for island music, building grooves with graceful, percolating hi-hat shuffles and a snare drum touch that was solid yet sexy. "Love Is A



SIGNIFICANT OTHERS



Just when you think they've plundered the Hendrix vaults one too many times... The double-CD *Band Of Gypsies Live At The Fillmore East* (MCA) greatly

expands on Jimi's post-Experience band's classic live album, and once again proves that drummer **BUDDY MILES** added a whole 'nutha thing to the psychedelic soul stew Jimi sadly never got to fully explore.

Swedish bassist Jonas Hellborg has worked closely with Ginger Baker, Tony Williams, Trilok Gurtu, and Glen Velez in the past, proving him a master of worldbeat synthesis. His latest album, *Aram Of The Two Rivers—Live In Syria* (Bardo), places his substantial prowess alongside percussionists **NABIL KHAIIAT, TAREK MALAS, and MAHFOUZ AL HOSAINI** on several long, searching, incantatory instrumentals. Heavy. (532 *LaGuardia Place, #421, New York, NY 10001*, www.hellborg.com.)

Between important work with deep-pop groups like Stereolab, Tortoise, and Gastr del Sol, **JOHN MCINTIRE** has released the soundtrack to the feature film *Reach The Rock* (Hefty). On it, John explores his fascinations with space, mood, and rhythm, displaying an original instrumental and compositional voice. (1658 N. Milwaukee, Ste. 287, Chicago, IL 60647, www.heftyrecords.com.)

Some of you may be familiar with top Egyptian percussionist **HOSSAM RAMSY** from his work with Peter Gabriel. On *Immortal Egypt* (New World Music), Ramsy and multi-instrumentalist Phil Thornton create a sound similar to that of Gabriel's *Passion* album: ancient yet pristine-sounding, spooky yet driving riffs peppered with all kinds of cool percussive sounds. This is pretty hip stuff. (888-4-R-MUSIK, musikintl@aol.com.)

Rating Scale

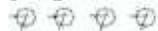
- ★★★★★ Excellent
- ★★★★ Very Good
- ★★★ Good
- ★★ Fair
- ★ Poor

Man's World" and "Last Night" are the last words on the Porcaro Shuffle, a groove that has been studied and emulated ever since. For Simon Phillips fans, three live tracks from Toto's '97 South African tour are included, with a blistering take of "Africa." Get this while it's still in print!

Ken Micallef

Don Caballero

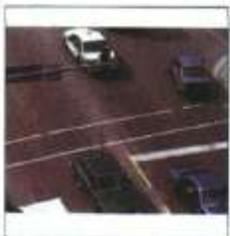
Singles Breaking Up (Vol I) (Touch And Go)



drummer: Dainon Che

with: Ian Williams, Mike Bandfield (gtr), Pat Morris (bs)

Chronicling the evolution of Don Caballero's visceral, intelligent noise, this compilation of singles and previously unreleased material begins with demo tracks from 1992 and concludes with pieces recorded just before work began on last year's excellent *What Burns Never Returns*. Though the early tunes are faster and more punk-influenced than the moody, richly textured later stuff, *Singles Breaking Up* plays well as a whole, maintaining a dark, haunting vibe while showcasing the development of new ideas.



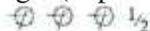
If you scare easily, DC is not the band for you; crank this baby up and you may feel spiders crawling across your flesh. Throughout the muscular, overdrive-laden older selections, dual guitars scrape away at relentless, pummeling riffs while drummer Damon Che terrorizes the beat with economical yet distinctive groove-oriented playing. But it's later on, when the guitars begin to bypass distortion in favor of chiming interlocking patterns, that things get truly disconcerting, as evidenced by Che's frantic rolls and shocking metric modulation.

Don Caballero, whose music is tightly arranged, is in many ways a drummer's band, featuring Che as the focal point and primary colorist. No matter the year each tune was recorded, his kit has thundering presence, and his playing, which often features demonically skewed versions of common beats, remains full of nuance even while assaulting the listener's tender eardrums.

Michael Parillo

Lenny White

Edge (Hip Bop)

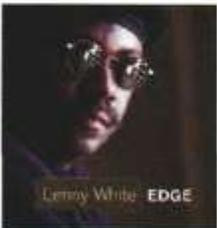


drummer: Lenny White

with: Bennie Maupin (sx), Patrice Rushen (kybd), Nick Moroch (gtr), Victor Bailey (bs)

Back in 1979 (wow, twenty years ago!) I attended a memorable show by Lenny White and his band. He took the stage wearing his trademark wide-brim, then coolly sashayed over to the mic: "We're not playin' any of that fusion stuff tonight; we're gonna lay down the funk." Lay it down they did, but Lenny and company also aired some serious chops, beautifully mixing the funk with the fusion. And when the drummer took his solo, he put down his sticks, crossed his arms, and played the fastest one-footed bass drum roll anyone's ever heard. Yeah, he was *bad*.

Since then White has dabbled in very commercial-sounding projects, and from



Big And Still Bad

The golden days of big band swing might be a distant memory, but two new releases prove the pilot light is still on.

Woody Herman Orchestra

A Tribute To The Legacy Of Woody Herman (NY Jam)



drummer: Jim Rupp

with John Hicks, Alan Broadbent (pno), David Ruck (bs), Frank Tiberi (tn sx, sp sx), John Nugent, John Gunther (tn sx, fl), Frank Foster (tn sx), Mike Brignola (bs sx), Tom Harrell (flghn), Roger Ingram, Peter Olstad, George Rabbai, Bryan O'Flaherty, Greg Gisbert, Pete Candoli (trp), John Fedehock, Paul McKee, Mark Lusk, Urbie Green (tbn), Buddy DeFranco (clr), Terry Gibbs (vbs)

Maynard Ferguson's

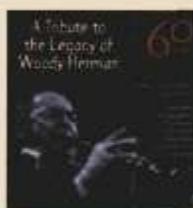
Big Bop Nouveau

Brass Attitude (Concord)



drummer: David Throckmorton

with Maynard Ferguson, Frank Greene, Carl Fiseher, Wayne Bergeron (trp), Tom Garling (tbn), Matt Wallace, Sal Giorgianni (tn sx, al sx), Denis DiBlasio (bar sx, vcl), Ron Oswanski (kybd), Paul Thompson (bs)



Woody's Herd was one of the most hard-charging big bands ever, and he would be proud of this reunion and resulting disc. Drummer Jim Rupp provides some thunder, slamming 'em hard over "Four Brothers" and zinging just the right kicks on a bouncy "Woodchoppers," but then he supports beautifully in a restrained arrangement of "Laura." Trumpeter Tom Harrell's elegant "Sail Away" is read full and fat by the drummer, each beat a statement. His kick drum is completely in sync with the horn punches on Neil Hefti's "The Good Earth," a memorable 2:28. His dynamics shadow the dramatic rise and fall of Alan Broadbent's "Woody 'N Me," and he keeps up with the brisk demands of "Woody's Whistle." (501 11th St., Brooklyn, NY 11215, [718] 788-8032, nyjam@compuserve.com.)



Since the mid-1970s, Maynard Ferguson's big bands have successfully reached out to younger audiences while retaining the essence of classic big band—a strong sense of swing and flash—with the dynamic Randy Jones on drums. This new unit is as tight as any of Maynard's: big-sounding, but at nine pieces small enough to retain more elements of group improvisation than a full big band would be able to. Good arranging is evident from the opening "Love For Sale," which is neither tired nor tame, as well as a cooled-out version of "Bluesette." David Throckmorton's drumming includes all the right beats—and he's *not* just playing it safe. As Maynard's best drummers have done, he not only cements the horn parts, but gets the band excited around him and makes the whole thing simmer.

Robin Tolleson

time to time explored his bop roots. But with *Edge*, Lenny leans more towards his fusion side (both in sound and style), and drum fans should welcome it. We love to hear Lenny play.

Sure, things are a bit smoother here than, say, White's raucous *Astral Pirates* days, but there are still glimpses of drum-god brilliance. Stand-out tracks include the pulsing "Raiders In The Temple Of Boom," the style-hopping "Exit," the flailing "Mr. DePriest" (Lenny's outro solo is pure Tony), the phat "If Six Was Four?" (ignore the cheesy rap), and the swaggering "Semi-Five." The inventive White also puts a strange twist on the Sinatra chestnut "It Was A Very Good Year," mixing slippery brush work with programmed drums. But it's on the drum solo feature-piece, "Chatter," where White shows he's *still* bad.

William F. Miller

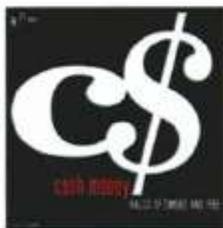
Cash Money

Halos Of Smoke And Fire (Touch And Go)



drummer: Scott Giampino

with: John Humphrey (vcl, gtr)



That clanging is no ordinary drum, it's a frying pan, and Cash Money drummer Scott Giampino has been known to flip it over midset at their live shows and fry up some bacon for the audience. This Chicago duo borrow more from the South than just a penchant for cholesterol, though, mixing Delta mud with ferocious guitar growls and John Bonham-style grooves. Call it "sludge-a-billy," or whatever you want, but check "Bad Case Of Bitter Pills" for Giampino's soul-brother take on the spirit of "When The Levee Breaks," or his 7/8 bombastics on "El Toro," where "loose" means anything but "sloppy." You can't teach this stuff.

Despite the looming legacy of Led Zeppelin over Giampino and guitar slinger/screamer John Humphrey, their love of the *real* roots—early Sun Studios recordings and Southern boogie—bleeds through each track of *Halos Of Smoke And Fire*, their sophomore release. Though they employ the same vintage tube mic' distorto-vocals as bands like The Delta 72, John Spencer Blues Explosion, and Flat Duo Jets, Cash Money openly disdain such comparisons; on *Halos* they push out beyond the blues and into a little more experimental territory, bringing in guests on violin, lap steel, and

organ on nearly half the record. The guys always bring it back down to earth, however, with Humphrey's romantic-as-a-date-with-Lux Interior vocal performance and Giampino's hard-as-his-arteries pounding.

Meredith Ochs

Jon Finn Group

Wicked (JFG)



drummer: Dave DiCenso

with Joe Santerre (bs), Jon Finn (gtr), Ross Ramsay (kybd)

This instrumental progressive fusion group comes across like Dixie Dregs meets Dream Theater, with a bluesy rock attitude. Drummer Dave DiCenso carries his weight with solid time and powerful chops.

Actually, DiCenso keeps his chops to a minimum until absolutely necessary. But when the time is right, as on "This Two" and "Stinky," he unleashes an arsenal of impressive Weckl-style licks combining single- and double-stroke patterns and over-the-barline phrases. The three-part "Pompous Music Suite" showcases DiCenso's strong double bass chops and excellent odd-meter playing, and "If Stevie Ray Vaughan Went To Berklee And Studied Jazz" displays his solid blues/swing feel. Finally, the closing Jeff Beck cover, "Definitely Maybe," gives DiCenso a chance to play with a strong yet laid-back and emotional half-time feel.

Dave DiCenso's abilities are an excellent example of how the more recent progressive and fusion-style drummers have influenced a new generation of players. (PO Box 569, Hanover, MA 02339, www.jonfinn.com.)

Mike Haid

Smile

Girl Crushes Boy (Headhunter)



drummer: Scott Reeder

with Mike Rosas (vcl, gtr), Bob Thompson (bs)

Scott Reeder swings through Smile's *Girl Crushes Boy* with the agility and enthusiasm of a surf drummer on recess in a pop-rock playground, looping through jungle-gym compositions that put

Going Underground

Ethiopiennes, Volumes 1-5 (allegro)

Ethiopia's history is plagued by political and cultural repression. But during a small window of time at the end of emperor Haile Sellassie's regime and before the 1974 takeover by a brutal military junta, the country—and particularly capital city Addis Ababa—was the focal point for emerging social openness of every kind in Africa. Just as in Europe and the States, Ethiopian music was going through wild and revolutionary changes. Several volumes of the amazing series *Ethiopiennes* collect classic examples of this music, and offer a treasure trove of unusual and breathtaking sounds every musician should hear at least once.

Though Volume 2 focuses on current urban Ethiopian music (which on the whole sounds strangely more "ancient" than the older works), the

rest of the series mines releases from between 1969 and 1975. Sound quality is understandably mediocre, but not bad—certainly clear enough to identify a musical culture with one foot in centuries-old concepts, but with enough access to modern sounds to make the results exceedingly interesting.

There's far too much music in this collection to dissect individual cuts, but here's some of what you'll find: odd soul/jazz with hypnotic Middle-Eastern-sounding vocals; psychedelic rock you'd swear is from San Francisco circa 1966 if it weren't for the vocals and that unearthly approach to groove; wild frat rock played by a '60s ska band; and Fela/James Brown-like freakouts that without warning completely change the groove and ride it out until the fade. In each case the musicianship is great, the ideas creative, and the beat so deep you can't help but be inspired by the total dedication to the groove. And the drum parts that these guys come up with are often too cool for words. A beautiful presentation of a wonderful—and truly underground—musical discovery. ([800] 288-2007, www.allegro-music.com.)



Adam Budofsky

Reeder's kit to full use.

A musical melange that stirs together Batman grooves, sunshiny Beach Boy background vocals, and occasional caterwauling—this is not a situation where a drummer can sit back and play 2 and 4. Constantly on the move, Reeder doesn't waste a note.

Throughout the idiosyncratic "The Best Years" and "Lawn Darts," he bangs on everything but his skull—riding the crash, the hi-hat, and floor toms, always staying on the center of the beat even while adding a tambourine hit to the rhythm. Toying with your ears, "Peach And Brown"'s intro has no sense of time signature, then slams into a heartfelt ballad without missing a beat.

Reeder's drums sound natural, his performance is pure, and his high spirit is a joy to listen to. In the school of drummers, he's definitely the coolest kid in the courtyard.

Lisa Crouch and Fran Azzarto



where solos occur in the music include a click track that is loud enough to hear while soloing on top, giving the player a better understanding of where the beats are falling in the bar. At first I thought that this would be annoying, but for practicing purposes it's a nice touch.

Bailey's respected tome *Bass Drum Control*, first released in 1964, has been recently revised, with a CD added. Bailey spends a good bit of time discussing the proper, light touch to use on the pedal, always stressing to bring the beater back off the drum after striking it. There is talk of the "sweet spot" that gets the best play on the pedal, and the part of the foot he uses on the pedal—the ball at the back of the big toe. Bailey's pedal has fairly slack spring tension to allow a lot of play, and his ankle moves very slightly in a side-to-side motion to prevent tension in the foot, with the heel down most of the time. Bailey also writes about keeping muscle tone in the legs, includes all types of exercises (some with sticks added on snare or toms), interprets the rudiments for bass drum, and includes some funk-style bass drum solos for fun. An on-target tutorial.

Robin Tolleson

VIDEOS

Primus

Videoplasty (Interscope)



85 minutes, \$19.98

level: all

There are a lot of folks out there who feel Primus just isn't the same without Tim "Herb" Alexander on the skins. (We especially miss his quirky double bass work.) But the band's new concert video, *Videoplasty*, shows replacement drummer Brain (Brian Mantia) to be solid. He's fiery and fun, and his driving groove gets stadium crowds jumpin'. And besides the sharply filmed concert footage on this tape, there's plenty of backstage hijinks. (Marilyn Manson doesn't stand up well to the true weirdness of Primus's fishy leader Claypool.) Definitely worth picking up.

Frederick Bay

Mister, I Am The Band Buddy Rich: His Life And Travels

by Doug Merriwether
(Hal Leonard)



\$49.98

levels: all

Mister, I Am The Band may appeal mostly to hardcore Buddy fans and swing-era sentimentalists, but with slightly better graphics this hardcover could have had coffee-table aspirations.

Mister... has three distinct sections. The first 140 pages comprise a thoughtfully written but not overly gushy biography of the magnificent entertainer, never glossing over his outspokenness, perfectionism, or quick temper. (There are even quotes from the infamous "bus tapes.") Part 2 features a photoessay of the drummer's career, with some wonderful black & white images. And the last 250 pages are dedicated to a painstaking discography containing commercial recordings, reissues, previously unissued masters and alternate takes, private tapes, radio broadcasts, motion picture soundtracks, and television shows.

Care was taken in this last section to include complete personnel listings, dates, and times, whenever possible. If you want to know who played in Woody Herman's Swinging Herd when Buddy was in the drum chair for the 1966 Newport Jazz Festival, what tune Buddy's band played on *The Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson on April 6, 1970 ("Cute"), or who the band's guest was at the Nice Jazz Festival in 1978 (Jo Jones), this is your ticket. Discographies are by nature incomplete, but obviously this one packs a world of research. It's too bad the publisher chose to use a typeface from the early stone age for this section. Still, any Buddy-phile worth his salt should check this book out.

Robin Tolleson

BOOKS

Drum Solos: The Art Of Phrasing



Bass Drum Control



by Colin Bailey
(Hal Leonard)

level (each): intermediate to advanced
price (each): \$17.98 including CD

Colin Bailey is a tasty jazz player, and his book of soloing ideas reflects a real musical maturity. Bailey explains that solos for drums, like all other instruments, should have organization and continuity. His suggestion? Solo in phrases. To work on that concept, he gives the reader exercises using two-bar phrases, four-bar solos, four-bar solos using hi-hat with left foot, and four- and eight-bar solos in 3/4. He also divides paradiddles around the set, discusses four-bar phrases that cross bar lines, and explores the concept of whole-chorus soloing. All in all, Bailey delivers some solid ideas upon which drummers can compile their own vocabulary.

On the accompanying CD, five songs are recorded with a fine jazz quartet, and are presented with and without drums. Spaces

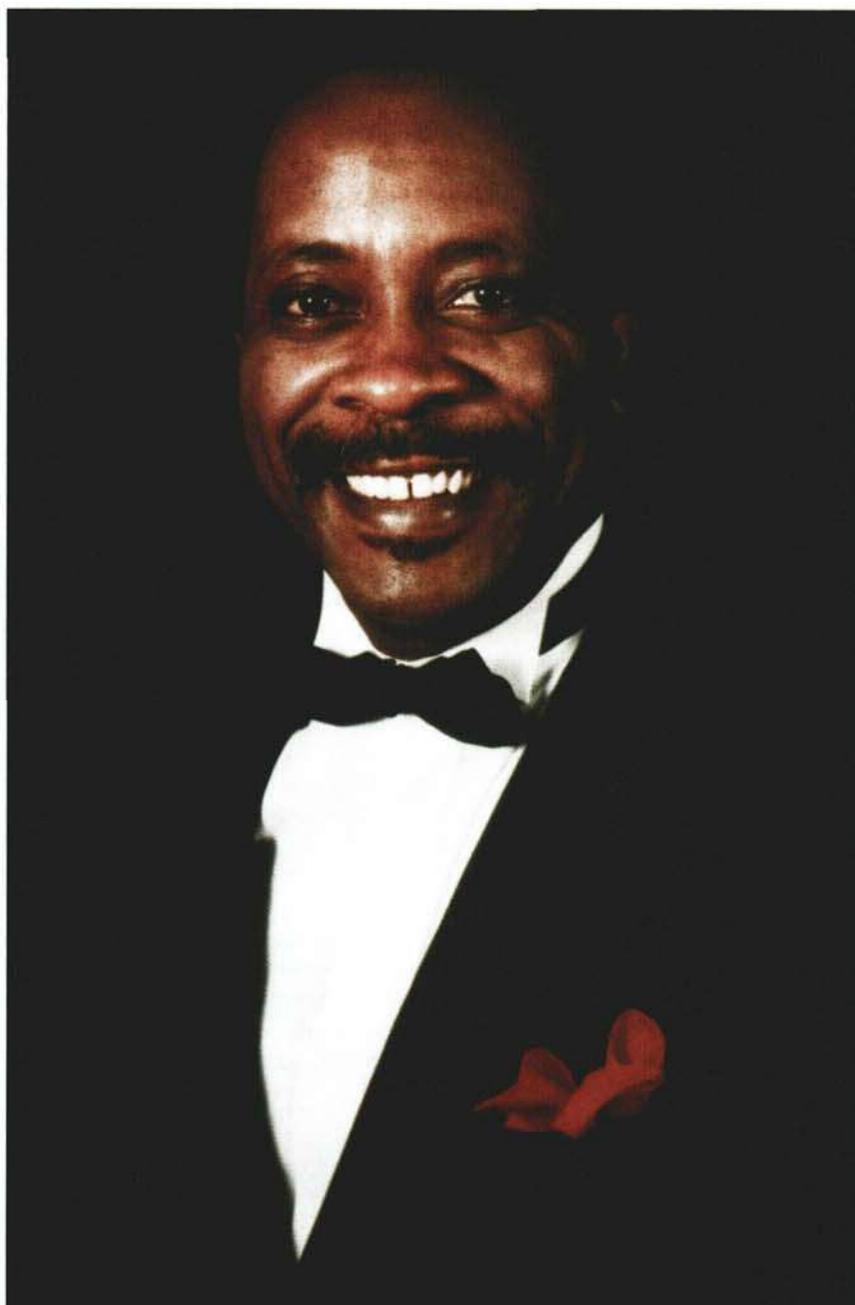
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mel brown

by James Bash



When Mel Brown sits behind his drumset, you know you're in for a treat. Noted for his work with The Supremes, The Temptations, Diana Ross, and numerous jazz musicians, Mel is one of the most energetic and hardworking men in the music industry. It's almost hard to believe that someone of his stature grew up in Portland, Oregon, and launched his career from there.

Mel set out on his quest to become a great drummer as early as the seventh grade. "I heard a Miles Davis album called *Milestones*," he recalls. "I immediately began to think that this was the way music was *really* supposed to be played, and I got into it from that point on.

"I was a workaholic," adds Brown. "In the summer I'd start practicing at 8:00 in the morning and go until 3:00 A.M.—six days a week. I barely took time out to get something to eat. And Sundays my family went to church.

"Guys used to tease me in Babe Ruth baseball, because I'd have a glove in one hand and a practice pad in the other. I'd get out my sticks and practice while sitting on the bench, and they'd yell at me to stop making the noise. They'd send me to center field so that I wouldn't bother them."

Despite his rhythmic obsession,

a lifetime on the drums

Mel enjoyed athletic competition. He made the most of his years at Portland's Washington High School, where he excelled in track and football. As an ambidextrous quarterback, Mel could throw with either hand, and he received All City recognition before graduating in 1962. His athletic prowess earned him a track scholarship to the University of Oregon in Eugene, and a football scholarship to Willamette. "But Eugene seemed far away from home," explains Brown, "and I didn't want to get knocked around by the big guys in football, so I chose Portland State. It was a real bonehead school back then. There were no activities for students. You just went to class and went home."

Another reason for Brown to stay in Portland was work. "I used to play in nightclubs in Portland," he says. "The Jazz Quarry used to be The Mural Room. There's still an M embossed on the sidewalk in front of the entrance.

"Anyway, when I played there, we all wore fancy band uniforms: tuxedos with cummerbunds. There was a different color for each night. You could tell the bands by what they wore, because of the different styles—from gaucho stuff to plaid jackets. When I had a break, I'd run around the corner to another club and jam with the band there. And they'd do the same thing; on their break, they'd come over and jam with me."

In 1965, Mel took a year off from school to play for Earl Grant, eventually moving to San Francisco and traveling with the band throughout the country.

Returning from a tour that extended to Montreal, Brown made a side trip to Detroit to visit a friend who played organ for Motown. "It was just a house with some people milling around in front," says Mel. "But it was the new thing and a new sound, and it was very exciting."

After Brown returned to Portland the following year, he decided to change his college major. "I saw a lot of musicians come into town after being on the road, and they'd be out of work and out of money. I didn't want to get into that position. Plus, what if I got into a car wreck and I couldn't play the drums any longer? I needed something to back me up. I'd always been a number-cruncher, so I earned a degree in business administration. I figured that I could always be an accountant. It's a profession that won't die. After you see me to find out how much you owe in taxes, you'll get the blues and go to the bar to get a drink. I'll see you there, too, because I'll be in the band!"

After graduating from Portland State



University in 1967, Brown went to Vancouver, British Columbia to play with Bobby Taylor & The Vancouvers, where he stayed for a year and a half before Martha Reeves discovered him. After signing up with Martha & The Vandellas, Mel moved to Los Angeles, where his first gig was at The Whiskey A Go Go. From that point on he was in the Motown stable. From 1970 until 1974 most of Mel's work was with The Temptations; from 1974 to 1976 he played drums for The Supremes. This was a natural fit for Brown, who had developed a strong sense of how to play with and motivate the dance motions of singing groups back in his early days at The Mural Room.

During this period Mel also became a sales representative for a company that specialized in stereo amplifiers, because he wanted to know the business side of the music industry. "I'd be on a tour with The Temps," Brown recalls. "We'd finish a concert at 12:30 or 1:00 in the morning. I'd catch a red-eye to the next town at 2:30, check into a hotel, put on a suit and tie at 8:30, call on all the stores and dealers, take a nap for two or three hours, and when The Temps got into town, I'd be up and ready."

In 1976 Brown returned to Portland to concentrate on jazz. Soon he was a fixture at The Hobbit in Southeast Portland, and at jazz festivals around the country. He also opened a drum shop, which he ran successfully until 1979, when he got a call from Diana Ross. She needed a drummer for her

band in an upcoming concert. "I thought that this would be a one-time shot, but it turned into eleven years," Brown recalls with a laugh. "I was in and out of Portland so much that I had to dissolve the drum shop."

It was with Diana that Brown gave his most memorable concert. "We played at The Royal Albert Hall, and the Queen of England came to hear us. It was one of my best shows. I was on a cloud, floating on top of everything. After the concert, the Queen wanted to meet us, and she asked me if I'd had a chance to do anything while in England. I said that I hadn't, but that I'd love to play a round of golf. So she invited me to play on the royal golf course. Diana Ross was totally ticked off. Sidemen weren't expected to hold a conversation with the Queen of England. But I was always the bold one in the group."

After Mel's mother died in 1989, he decided to gradually reduce his commitments away from Portland. A couple years later, he began working as an accountant. "It's a great fit for me," he says. "I still love to crunch numbers, and I can go to the office and bring work home. So it fits my

schedule."

But Brown still loves straight-ahead mainstream jazz, and he has continued to tour with artists like Teddy Edwards and Bill Watrous. He regularly teams up with legendary jazz bassist Leroy Vinnegar at Atwater's Restaurant in Portland, and the duo has recorded a number of CDs, including the remarkable *Walkin' The Basses* in 1991.

"Mel Brown is great," states Vinnegar. "In New York City everybody calls him 'The Fuller Brush Man' because of his skill with the brushes. It's like he's whippin' up some eggs."

Regarding his own style, Mel says, "I've tried to compress the things I liked about many of my favorite drummers into something that I can call my own. I wanted the smoothness of Philly Joe Jones, the speed of Max Roach, and the unrelenting power of Art Blakey."

Over the past ten years Mel has become very active in the area of musical education. He was one of the founders of the Mt. Hood Jazz Festival, and he serves on the board of the Portland Youth Philharmonic. Much to his dismay, the folks at the Mt. Hood Jazz

Festival have discontinued their workshops for jazz students. This disappointment, however, has inspired Brown to become involved with a new series of workshops at the Jazz On The Water Festival in Newport, which has been enthusiastically received by kids and parents.

"My advice for young musicians is to study as much as you can and learn how to play in different styles," Mel concludes. "That always helps with employment. I've never been without a job."



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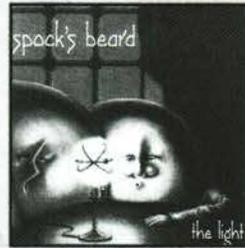


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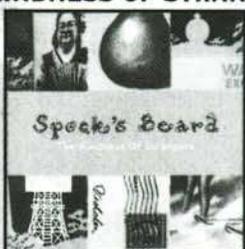


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Chick Corea

by Mike Haid

Chick Corea is a jazz icon. After coming to prominence as keyboardist for Miles Davis, Chick went on to organize some of the most influential electric jazz groups in history, including Return To Forever and The Elektric Band. Along the way he worked with legends like Tony Williams and Roy Haynes, and helped to shape the careers of drum luminaries like Steve Gadd, Lenny White, and Dave Weckl.

Chick's insight into drumming is particularly keen, since he is also a drummer himself—in fact, he made a living playing drums for a short while. Recently, Chick applied that insight to a discussion about the many drummers with whom he has performed over his stellar career.



MH: Who are some of the drummers you worked with early in your career?

CC: I played in grammar school and in high school in Boston with my friend Lenny Nelson. He has retained a unique style to this day, and I stay in touch with him in Boston, where he still teaches. I also worked with a drummer named Bobby Ward. He's still playing too, and is another phenomenal and truly unique drummer. He had incredible technique and a totally free mind and imagination. You can make comparisons between Lenny and Bobby's style, and then, later on, to Tony Williams' style. Tony was younger than us and we admired him when he came to Boston.

MH: When did you first work with Tony?

CC: I worked with Tony a little before he left Boston, and I played with him for my first six months in the Miles Davis group.

MH: In what ways do you feel that Tony changed the course of drumming?

CC: Tony's impact on the drum world was monstrous, not only in terms of the way he played the kit, but the *sound* that he got out of it. He had such a completely

different sound. He tuned his drums up high, so they resonated a bit differently. His choice of cymbals was very different as well. The sound of his early kit was always my favorite sound. Towards the end of his stint with Miles he changed his sound a little, using heavier cymbals. When he went on to play with his own band he started using a larger kit and played with a lot more volume.

You can sometimes separate drummers between guys who are technicians and guys who are more emotional about their playing. Tony combined those two elements to a deeper degree than any other drummer. Tony also brought onto the scene a new way of orchestrating as he played. You could hear him orchestrating his drum patterns very thoughtfully, not only in his accompaniments but in his solos. That was something that I hadn't heard before.

MH: Discuss some of the other drummers you played with.

CC: One of the greatest experiences I had working with a drummer was when I followed Gary Burton into the Stan Getz quartet and began to work with Roy Haynes. That rhythm section was so passionate, and Roy played so delicately and creatively. Roy has remained my all-time favorite drummer to work with.

When I joined Miles, the band consisted of myself, Tony Williams, Dave Holland, and Wayne Shorter. During that time I developed a great rapport with Jack DeJohnette and Dave Holland. Dave, Jack, and I were very comfortable playing together. We knew that when Tony left Miles' band, Jack would come in. When Jack did join the band, things really fired up in a whole new direction. That quintet stayed together for about two years. The way it finally turned out was that Dave

Holland and I decided to start our own group based on a more free structure. Jack stayed on with Miles. When Keith Jarrett came in on keyboard, Jack and Keith developed a long-term relationship.

At first, Dave Holland and I were working as a duet. We had a certain thing we were trying to reach with improvisation and sound between bass and piano. We both decided that we wanted to add a drummer, and that's when Barry Altschul came along and found a creative place in what became Circle. We talked about the tuning of his drums, and I brought out the ride cymbal that Roy Haynes had used when we played together with Stan Getz. It was the first flat ride that Paiste ever made. I fell in love with that sound, so Roy gave me the cymbal, which he thought was kind of dull-sounding. To this day, that cymbal remains my favorite for a drummer to play in a trio setting. Barry Altschul used it in Circle, and Airtio used it on the two Return To Forever albums that he played drums on. In fact, I'm having Jeff Ballard play that cymbal in the current Origin group. Adam Cruz also played that cymbal in Origin, and he really started to dig it. It has a unique character that's totally different from where modern cymbal-making is going, which I think is loud and clangorous. This cymbal is wispy, with great attack, and it really leaves a lot of space open for soloists. The drummer gets all the effects he wants out of it, without covering things. When people talk about the great sound that Roy got on *Now He Sings, Now He Sobs*, the sound of that cymbal is a big part of it.

MH: Was Circle the first group that you actually put together?

CC: It was the first group that really was more of my own thing. Circle played together and recorded for about a year and a half. Then I found Airtio, Flora Purim, Stanley Clarke, and Joe Farrell, and formed Return To Forever.

Airtio was really a trip as a drummer. When I met him in New York he was mostly known as a percussionist. Horacee Arnold was the drummer in the first group with Stanley Clarke on bass. I hired Flora to sing, and she brought her husband Airtio. I knew that he played percussion and Latin music, so I asked him to sit down at the kit and show Horacee how to

"A band, to me, is a family of musicians who go out and hit the survival aspects of life, while trying to get to know one another enough musically to have the music develop."

play a samba beat. Man, he blew us away! After a few gigs, I wanted to go ahead and use Airtio on the drumkit. He and Stanley provided a resilient, light, and very Latin-ized rhythm section that was perfect for the kind of music I was writing at the time.

MH: Did Airtio and Flora help inspire the material that you were writing?

CC: I wrote some of the material before I met them, but when Flora started to sing and Airtio began to play, it really inspired me to write more. The result of that inspiration was the second Return To Forever album, *Light As A Feather*.

MH: The next version of Return To Forever featured Steve Gadd on drums. Can you remember the story about when you first met Steve and turned him on to Tony Williams?

CC: I was working with Chuck Mangione one weekend in upstate New York. Steve was playing with Chuck. He was very young at the time. The music I brought to play with Chuck was all Miles Davis tunes. Steve was playing with a solid "four on the floor" bass-drum style, and the hi-hat going "chick, chick, chick, chick." So I thought that maybe he hadn't heard Tony Williams or some of the other styles of jazz drumming. I spent a day or two with Steve listening to Tony on *Miles In Europe*. We talked about the music and the drumming. At the club, we sat down behind the drums and I played a little for him. I told him that he didn't have to use the hi-hat like that...and to try using the bass drum like this...and so on. We just talked concept, because I really had no technique, but I was as much into drummers as Steve was. He took some of Tony's recordings home and practiced over the weekend. He came back at the beginning of the next week with a whole new sound that was more like what Tony's sound was, which included a smaller bass drum, different drum tunings, and different cymbals. His style had altered overnight. I wouldn't say that he was playing like Tony, but he took that *concept* and made it work with the Miles

Davis music that I had brought along. Everyone was amazed by it, including Steve himself.

Shortly after that I hired Steve for the Return To Forever band that included Stanley Clarke on bass, Mingo Lewis on percussion, and Bill Connors on guitar. We made a few tapes together, but Steve had other projects that he wanted to do. So I had to make a change.

MH: Didn't Steve actually record a whole Return To Forever album?

CC: Yes, there's a tape somewhere with material that was actually a transition from Circle. It included the material for *Hymn Of The Seventh Galaxy* and *After The Cosmic Rain*. But there was something I didn't like about the tape, so we decided not to use it. We continued touring, and that's when Steve left the band. Lenny White came on, through Stanley's recommendation. So the *Hymn Of The Seventh Galaxy* record was re-recorded with Lenny White.

MH: What attracted you to Lenny's playing?

CC: He was able to play the music from a jazz point of view, but with backbeats that were funky. He made the music rock and kept the beat strong, without losing the responsiveness that I love in jazz drumming. I think he set a precedent in that way.

MH: Then came Gerry Brown.

CC: Gerry was also recommended by Stanley. I wanted to write some orchestral music, and it turned out that Gerry was perfect because he was able to read the charts down while doing everything necessary to keep the music alive. With this final version of RTF, I was scoring things more thoroughly for a larger ensemble, and Gerry delivered big-time in that regard. He's also a great live performer. He's got some tricky stick twirling and some interesting techniques.

MH: Now we enter into your electric solo recordings, beginning with *The Leprechaun*. Steve Gadd's playing on that album is legendary among drummers.

CC: I called Steve back because I had

enjoyed playing with him so much. I didn't know how we would approach it at the time. I knew there was no sense in me trying to write out drum parts, because I wanted Steve to *invent* the parts. I sat down at the piano and played through the music while he stood there tapping things out. I handed him conductor scores that showed the piano, bass, horns, and string parts. He spread them out in front of him and was very quick to come up with parts. By the time he sat down at the drums, he had completely formed parts in his head. It was totally amazing. The drum part that he came up with on "Lenore" was a touch of brilliance. Who would ever have thought to put a drum part together that way without using cymbals, and using the toms within the groove. It was a great percussion arrangement.

MH: What happened after you disbanded Return To Forever?

CC: Gerry Brown was in the last group that I called "Return To Forever." After that I put a thirteen-piece project together. I was looking for a new rhythm section, and I found Tommy Brechtlein. I believe he was seventeen at the time and right out of high school.

It was a huge project and we toured around the world with it—until I came home broke. Actually more than broke. [Laughs] We then recorded *Again And Again*, which featured Tommy and Don Alias. Those two were magnificent together. Tommy was one of the first drummers I'd met whose early heroes were not Philly Joe Jones and Elvin. He was totally into Steve Gadd, and came from that school of playing.

MH: The *Touchstone* record followed shortly after, with Alex Acuna on a couple tracks.

CC: Right. Alex is a Latino guy who grew up in the United States with jazz influences. As a result, he makes a beautiful blend of music.

MH: There was a period in between your solo recordings when you really had no band.

CC: After the last Return To Forever band there was a gap where I didn't have a band at all until The Elektric Band. I did the *Three Quartets* record and a few other projects before I decided that I wanted to put a band together again. I started auditioning again, and I found Dave Weckl and John Patitucci, and that turned out to be about an eight-year association.

MH: How did Dave come to audition for you?

CC: I was speaking with Michael Brecker in New York about who the hot young guy around town was. He said, "Dave Weckl." The next day, I went to visit Tania Maria at her New York loft. Tania's husband put on a cassette of a piano player that he was managing by the name of Michel Camilo. I was immediately drawn to the drummer. I asked Tania's husband who it was, and he said, "Dave Weckl." So I immediately put him on the list. The next day, my wife, Gayle, noticed in the paper that Weckl was playing that night with The Bill Connors Trio. We canceled our plane flight and went to see Weckl that night. After the show I asked him to come out to LA to do some rehearsals. Dave, John, and I played for several months as a trio until the first recording.

MH: How did Vinnie Colaiuta end up on the *Akoustic Band Live In Tokyo* CD? The musical communication between you and Vinnie on that date is stunning.

CC: I learned of Vinnie through John Patitucci. We had a trio gig that Dave Weckl couldn't make, so I called Vinnie. I

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gave him the charts to *Three Quartets*, which we were playing at the time. We had a short rehearsal and then played that night. The result was great. We did a month-long tour in Japan, and the *Live In Tokyo* CD was a result of that. I knew that this was the new band that I wanted to put together, and that Vinnie had to be the drummer. But he couldn't do it because of prior commitments. This was the same thing that happened to me with Steve Gadd in *Return To Forever*. I would love to see Vinnie become more involved in his own music and really flap his wings.

MH: How was the transition made from the original Elektric Band to The Elektric Band II?

CC: We had taken things to a point creatively, and we had established a sound and a way of playing. I needed to change the basic sound of the band. To do that, I started to write tunes that were more jazz-like. The new sound was a different musical taste from what Dave wanted to create. He had created a sound and an approach that, understandably, he didn't want to give up. It was an artistic choice for us to move on.

MH: How did Gary Novak come into the

band?

CC: A funny thing happened in terms of adding Gary. I played a gig at the North Sea Jazz Festival, and this guy stopped me on the street. It was Gary's father, Larry Novak, who is an excellent pianist. I hadn't seen him since the '60s. As we spoke, I realized that Gary was his son. At one point he said, "If you're looking for a good drummer, you should hire my son." It was kind of a funny omen. So I called Gary up—and he was perfect for the band. He actually became one of my favorite drummers. He was able to create a great drum sound with a small kit. At that point I started asking my drummers if they would please play a small kit.

After that version of The Elektric Band I felt that I needed a breather. I went back to the woodshed, and that's where I've been until the recent Origin band.

MH: And how did that project come about?

CC: I missed having a band, which to me is a family of musicians who go out and hit the survival aspects of life, while trying to get to know one another enough musically to have the music develop. The only way it

can develop is by being together, traveling, and playing. I had Jeff Ballard in mind from the start to be the drummer in Origin. However, Jeff had a schedule conflict in the beginning. So when I put Origin together, Adam Cruz was the first drummer. Adam had a very interesting way of combining Latin and jazz drumming. He has a cleaner, more snare-drumistic approach. His dad's a timbale player, so he grew up with salsa music as well as jazz.

But eventually Jeff Ballard became available. Jeff's got a whole other thing going. His approach is more loose and free. He's also into percussion sounds, with metal bells that surround his kit, and hand drums and various other sounds. Another factor with Jeff is that he and bassist Avishai Cohen have a long relationship, and they play together very well.

MH: Among the great drummers you have worked with, the four most recognized innovators include Tony Williams, Steve Gadd, Dave Weckl, and Vinnie Colaiuta. What makes them so special?

CC: Tony had an intense drive as a band-leader and as a musical creator. After turning the drum world upside down, he



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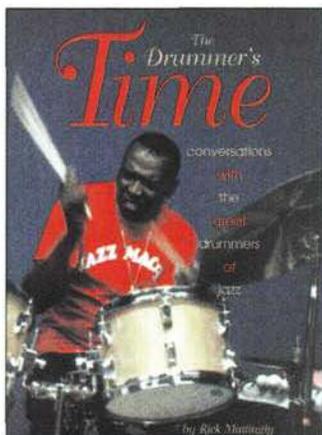
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humbly studied as an arranger and composer for years. That's the biggest difference between Tony and the other guys.

Vinnie is quite a composer and arranger, which was evident on his solo release. Similar to Tony's writing, Vinnie's writing doesn't always feature the drums, which shows that the composer's mind is very much at work. Weckl is doing it now, which I think is wonderful. He is taking his idea of what a band should be and writing and arranging for it and putting it on the map.

There was a new creativity that came into the drumkit through Tony Williams and later through Steve Gadd. They began to employ influences, control, and technique that took drumming to a whole other level of performance and composition. Tony was one of the first drummers I ever heard who was very compositionally inclined, even *before* he began to write music. He would place his notes and his phrases so much in context with the music. Then Steve Gadd came along and began to create beats that didn't always use the hi-hat and cymbals in the standard way. He was able to play with all of his limbs, creating different parts, sounding like several drummers at once.

Dave Weckl took Steve's concept even further. He had the compositional mind and chops to create some incredible stuff. Then he got into the whole MIDI thing, and into the *sound* of his drums. He cared more about the sound of his drums than any other drummer I've worked with.

They all share incredible technique and have taken the things that can be done with the hands and feet to very wild places. They hold the torch to the modern drum world.

MH: When did *you* start playing drums?

CC: When I was a kid I started sitting in with my dad at parties. My dad bought me a kit when I was eight, and since then I've had a kit by my side in the studio. I've always thought of myself as more of a pianist, except for a short, quirky time in New York. I was having failures as a gigging pianist, so I got serious about playing drums for about a year and a half around '64 or '65. I rented a loft and took my kit there to get my chops up so I could get some gigs. The way I decided to get my chops together was by transcribing Philly Joe Jones and Max Roach. I'd seen Philly play every now and again, and I actually played with him a couple times. He was my total hero at that time.

MH: Was Tony ever an influence on your

drumming?

CC: I do make attempts at his style, because he had a way of striking the drums that was so different from other drummers. Sometimes it reminds me of a guy playing a mallet instrument. He got a tone out of his drums that was very special. Tony always looked "correct" when he was playing, with his hands in perfect position. He would hardly move, but you would hear this "roar" come from behind the kit. His snare drum technique and the way he played his rudiments was almost more glisteningly clear than most classical players. He applied rudimental phrasing to all four limbs. That approach fascinates me, so I fool with it.

A lot of my drum approach nowadays comes completely from a composer's standpoint. I don't have the time to sit there and work on pure chops and speed. So I take what technique I do have with my hands and feet and try to use it compositionally. I've got a setup now that combines a set of timbales tuned real low—to make them sound like timpani—and a couple of the plastic wood blocks that are of different pitches. I also have a pair of bongos tuned relatively low that sit above the timbales. So I've got

several pitches going from top to bottom, along with two toms, a snare, and a bass drum.

MH: Do you feel that your drumming skills have helped in your writing skills?

CC: I think so, in that they give me another point from which to view the ensemble that I'm writing for. For example, when notating a drum part for my piano concerto, I took the individual percussion parts that I had originally written for stand-up orchestral players and combined them into a drumkit part. That took me about two weeks to do. I did it by sitting at the kit and approaching it like a set of individual instruments tuned the way I hear them tuned. Now when I compose for the sextet, I sit behind the drums and try to approach the composition from the drumkit's viewpoint.

With Origin, I'm trying to let some of my percussion ideas exist in the band. I have my timbales set up, with a couple of wood blocks, a cymbal, and a marimba. The marimba has become my great solution to playing the piano *and* drums together. I'm having a lot of fun with it.



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Becoming A Working Drummer, Part I

by Russ McKinnon

As a teenager in a very small Oklahoma town, I spent many restless nights listening to my favorite records and flipping through pages of various drum catalogs. My ambition was to make a living as a musician. But it all seemed so impossible—I could only dream of what it would be like to someday actually "make it" playing the drums. I had no idea what it would take.

If you, like me, ever aspired to be a professional drummer, I have good news for you: Forgive the cliché, but dreams can come true. You *can* become a professional drummer. (If I can do it, so can you.)

I'm writing this series of articles to try to help you focus that ambition, to share ideas and principles that I've learned are necessary to be not just a drummer, but a *working* drummer. I've been fortunate enough to work steadily in LA for the past seventeen years doing all kinds of studio work, touring gigs, and even being a band-member—six years with Tower Of Power. I've picked up a few pointers along the way that have helped me continue to work. I'd like to pass them along to you. (In this article I'll cover some broad topics, and in following articles we'll get into some of the finer points.)

Blue-Collar Drumming

First of all, let's look at someone who is just getting started and trying to get gigs. Let's call this type of work "blue-collar drumming." Just as in any other profession, you have to work your way up from the bottom. And the first step involves learning the fundamentals—or I should say, the *correct* fundamentals. You need to first concentrate on the artistic fundamentals and then address the business fundamentals with equal passion if you are to succeed professionally. The goal is to master these things so that you can move to the upper-level, "white-collar" work—better-paying gigs. You might consider those to include a great road gig, consistent studio work, being a member of a successful band, or maybe having a prestigious teaching position.

Now for a serious reality check: All drummers, even the people

we consider to be the true greats of the instrument, started at the "blue-collar" level before they landed a big gig: Dave Weckl used to play weddings in New York; Gregg Bissonette played his share of bar mitzvahs in Los Angeles; Jeff Porcaro got one of his major "breaks" while playing a Halloween dance at a city park; Kenny Aronoff played community "sock hops"; Simon Phillips' first gig was playing in his father's Dixieland dance band; Steve Gadd played in the Army jazz band. Just like you, these awesome drummers had to start *somewhere*. The point is, humble beginnings gave them great experience and enough income to allow them to pursue their dreams!

"Just as in any other profession, you have to work your way up from the bottom. And the first step involves learning the fundamentals—or I should say, the *correct* fundamentals."

Being A Pro

Having been part of the Los Angeles music scene for quite a while, I've witnessed many changes in the musical climate. But with all its uncertainties, one thing remains constant: Truly professional and versatile musicians *will* work!

Let's talk about being a pro: As a working drummer, our primary role is a supportive one; we should make other people and their music sound and feel good! Think about it: In almost all situations, the drumset is rarely a solo instrument. Can you name one song in the current Top-40 of any commercial style that contains a drum solo? I racked my brain and had to go back in time over twenty-five years to come up with just two: The surfing classic "Wipeout" by The Surfaris and "Frankenstein" by Edgar Winter. But these songs were quite the exception—and some of you weren't even born when they were released!

Answer these two questions for me: What do we actually play 99% of the time in a working situation? But what do we practice almost 99% of the time? Gotcha! It's the old "chops vs. groove" dilemma, and yes, we are *all* guilty of this. Once a drummer gets relatively comfortable playing basic grooves behind the kit, the boredom factor kicks in, and, before you know it, you are "chopping out."

I can't think of one example of a drummer getting fired for

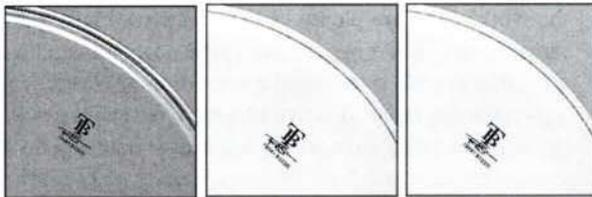
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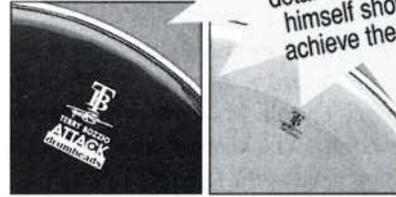
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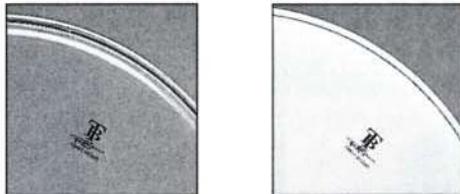


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playing too simple, too solid, too musical, and too stylistically correct. However, I *can* recall numerous examples of drummers (sometimes even well-known players) blowing it by doing the extreme opposite. Listen to the popular songs on the radio. *Really* listen to the drum part—not just what you think the drum part is. Realize how very basic the track is. Next, sit down at the kit and try to precisely emulate that part. No cheating! No fancy fills or super syncopated bass drum patterns allowed! I tried this many times as a student drummer—and failed miserably.

Chops do help you with the creative element of your playing. However, you should consider focusing more of your practice time on playing grooves and learning how to play in the pocket. If you can lay it down, *everybody* will want to work with you. And as far as overplaying, everyone does it early in their careers. You need to develop musical maturity to know when, and more importantly, when *not* to let loose. In most commercial working situations, *when in doubt leave it out!*

I've heard artists and producers say that they've checked out musicians in clubs and heard a lot of overplaying—obviously those players didn't get the call. If an artist walks into a club and hears you playing every lick you know, there's a very good chance he won't hire you simply out of the fear that you'll overplay on his gig too. And if you're playing to impress other drummers.... Guess what? Drummers don't hire other drummers to tour with their band, track their CD, or play on their film score!

If you're not careful, chops can hurt you—and even get you fired. Occasionally a gifted, hot, young drummer will come into

town and immediately work with everyone—but he might only work *once* with each artist, group, or producer. Why? You tell me.

Why do contemporary drummers such as Ricky Lawson, John Robinson, Kenny Aronoff, and Eddie Bayers work *all* the time? It seems like every time you turn around you see their faces on TV or their names listed in the credits of a CD. Is it because of their soloing ability? I'm sure they are all quite capable of impressive soloing, but as "sidemen to the stars" they all make substantial salaries playing very basic grooves well.

During my tenure with Tower Of Power I performed nearly 1,000 shows, and not once did I play a full-out solo! Please don't get me wrong: I've had the pleasure of witnessing, and sometimes even sharing the stage with, some of today's most exciting drum soloists. But again, my point is that for every hot-shot, gun-slinging, chops-busting drum solo virtuoso, there are thousands of "blue collar" drummers—players who work constantly. All over the world there are plenty of bands, artists, clubs, parties, restaurants, hotels, weddings, cruise ships, theaters, studios, churches, and other situations that need a good drummer—and you can make a living doing those gigs! And frankly, the players who are honing their craft at this level have a great shot at making it to the next.

Learning The Right Things

Let me share one other observation that I feel is partially responsible for young players, at times, being so chops-happy behind the kit. Many music schools have become sterile environments of academia. Competition for advancement is sometimes

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fierce. Often there are far too many students for the number of ensembles that are available. Students therefore spend most of their time alone in a practice room working on technique and chops that they might not ever use on a real gig!

Often the teachers in these institutions have advanced very quickly from being students themselves, without first experiencing a truly diverse career as a professional player. So what happens is many teachers pass along info that, while being excellent technical knowledge, has very little to do with the true working environment.

I challenge fellow teachers to get back to basics. They should begin by focusing their students on the fundamentals of playing different grooves in a stylistically and musically correct manner. That should be given much more importance early on and should be done before working on a bunch of licks and chops. Insist that students be patient, and talk to them about musical maturity. It sure seems that topic isn't being addressed enough.

Versatility

Again, our professional role is a supportive one. We must be team players—groove players! With that in mind, I cannot stress strongly enough the next specific point: You must know the subtleties of many different musical and drumming styles. As the drummer at the session or on the bandstand, it's more your responsibility than anyone else's! You are the groove dictator!

Can you, right now, sit down and demonstrate the differences between the following grooves? Bossa vs. beguine; samba vs. rumba; ska vs. reggae; songo vs. congo; merengue vs. mambo;

cha cha vs. cumbia; waltz vs. Viennese waltz; shuffle vs. Texas shuffle; train vs. two beat; tango vs. tarantella.

If the answer is "no" to any of the above examples, it's time for you to get your "you-know-what" back in the practice room and learn the differences! Also, learn the correct tempos associated with the different styles to make them feel authentic and danceable. (I'll get into this topic a bit more in a future issue and include transcriptions of the above grooves.)

Imagine yourself at your very first recording session in the "big city." The producer in the control room instructs you that the first tune you're going to record has a merengue flavor to it. If you have to ask what a merengue is, you'll seal your fate right there.

Trust me, when you least expect it, you'll be put on the spot. You need to know these subtleties. Don't blow it! You want to be hired back! Remember, getting the gig is only the first part. *Keeping* the gig is the harder (and more important) part!

In the next article I'll present my survival tips, some practical suggestions that will help you obtain and maintain a professional edge. See you next month.

Russ McKinnon is best known for his recording and touring with legendary horn band Tower Of Power. His solid playing led to his being honored five consecutive years in the funk category of Modern Drummer's Readers' Poll. Russ remains very active in the Los Angeles music scene, and he's also in high demand as a clinician.



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DeHaven

Born and raised in Southern California, DeHaven began playing drums at a young age, and quickly "discovered his future." With over twenty years of drumming experience behind him, DeHaven has worked with dozens of regional artists including The Clark Sisters, Daryl Coley, Ricky Dillard, and Brent Jones. Says DeHaven, "Growing up in Orange County exposed me to everything from metal to R&B, so I was raised on versatility." That philosophy was furthered by the influence of artists like Prince, Led Zeppelin, Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis, The Police, Jimi

Hendrix, and "old-school funk and R&B."

DeHaven brings his musical mix to Olio, a funk/power trio described by

a Southern California music paper as "brilliant, animated, and distinct....a trio that combines a wanton, experimental funk groove and eloquent soulfulness." He also brings an interest in the melding of acoustic and electronic sounds, expanding the parameters of the band's music. He plays Premier drums and Zildjian cymbals, and triggers Yamaha DTX 2.0 and Roland TD-10 drum modules with assorted pads and triggers from Yamaha, Roland, Pintech, and ddrum. He also employs the Walkabout wireless MIDI system to free him from the kit during performances.

Olio's self-produced live CD (*Ain't No Party Like An Olio Party...LIVE*) reveals DeHaven to be a drummer with a deep pocket, a nasty groove, and a vivid imagination when it comes to "flavoring" the music with novel sounds. The CD is garnering college radio airplay, which DeHaven hopes will help lead him to his goal: success with Olio.

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John Popp

Warren, Ohio's John Popp is going forward by looking back. He's working on advancing his career by becoming a member of Left End, a group that enjoyed regional performing and recording success in the 1970s hard-rock scene. Recently re-formed behind the original lead singer, Left End is making an attempt to again find the success it had in the '70s with its album *Spoiled Rotten*—a recording that earned the group opening spots for the likes of Alice Cooper and The J. Geils Band, along with a place in a recent Rock 'N' Roll Hall Of Fame exhibit honoring Ohio-based bands.

With influences like John Bonham, Neil Peart, and Peter Criss, the thirty-three-year-old drummer is the right man for the job of driving a "classic rock"-style band. But John's no garage basher. He's studied drums since the age of nine, and he majored in



music at Youngstown State University. Playing a massive, late-'70s vintage Rogers double-bass kit fitted with Paiste cymbals, John combines his training and technique with raw energy, throwing in what he describes as "sometimes humorous" antics on stage. The result—amply demonstrated on a live-performance video—is a style that's solid, powerful, and creative.

John's immediate goal is to help Left End return to its former glory, including a major-label deal and headline performances. His ultimate goal, he says, is "to make it big, with this band or another. I want to bring classic, solid drumming back to rock 'n' roll."

David Clive

David Clive developed an interest in jazz and percussion at fourteen. He attended Berklee College of Music in Boston, returned to his home town of New York City to study with Narada Michael Walden and Kenwood Dennard at Drummers Collective, and earned a masters degree from the Manhattan School of Music. He now teaches drums and percussion at his own studio in Brooklyn.

But David considers his strength to be as a performer. Influences like Airtro, Alex Acuna, Robby Ameen, Billy Cobham, Jack DeJohnette, Horacio Hernandez, Tito Puente, and Tony Williams have prepared him for regular gigs with a number of ethnic-style acts. But his main focus is Iguazu, a group that combines Afro-Cuban and Brazilian rhythms with modern jazz and funk harmonies. The band has opened for such artists as Acoustic Alchemy, Alex Bugnon, Ray Mantilla, and Pe-De-Boi Power Samba Band. On the group's self-produced eponymous CD, David sails through a variety of styles, from steamy

ballads to blazing Latin funk, from bop to hip-hop. On each tune he injects just the right amount of percussive energy, setting the foundation for—but never overpowering—the dynamic level of the band.

David plays Gretsch drums—lots of them. He's an avid collector, and has been accumulating Gretsch drums for over twenty-five years. (His 1935 kit was the December 1992 MD "Kit Of The Month.") He also uses Sabian cymbals and gongs, DW and Pearl hardware, and Latin Percussion congas, bongos, and timbales.

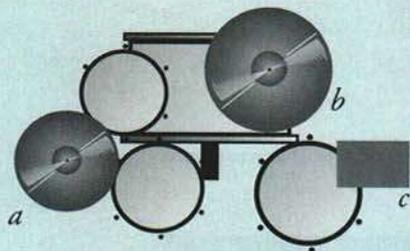
David's goal is a simple one: "I look forward to performing and recording as much as possible."



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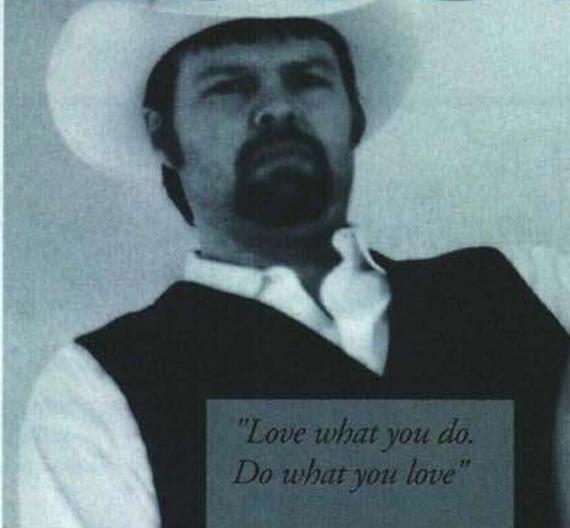




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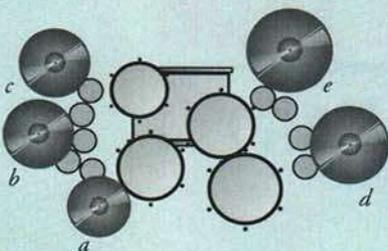


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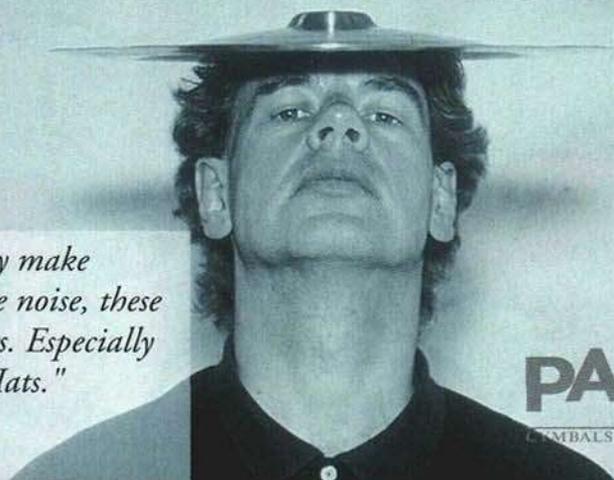
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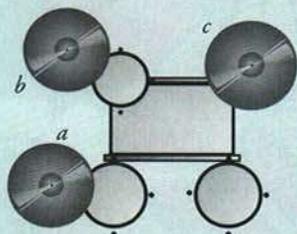
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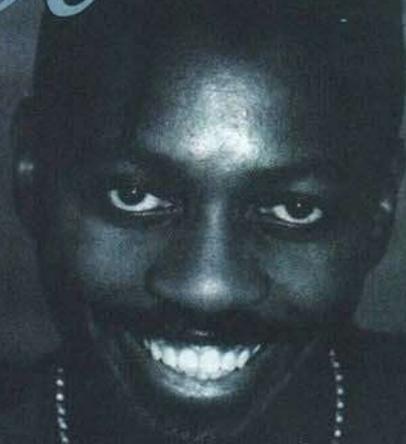
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TALE OF A DRUM LINE

A DOCUMENTARY OF THE MIND

PART 1



The following story is a departure from the usual *MD* format. Instead of reading it as a traditional article, imagine it as a film documentary. We view it in episodes, scene by scene, as the story unfolds. For atmosphere, we hear selected songs as background music behind each scene. After the opening title credits have rolled (over a blazing brass arrangement of Aaron Copland's "Fanfare For The Common Man"), we segue to the following introductory narration.

Introduction

[*Music: "Stand Or Fall" by The Fixx*] There comes a time in the history of every drum corps where, for any number of reasons (none of which are relevant here), things do not go as planned. Instead of preparing for a run at a possible Drum Corps International (DCI) Championship or other significant accomplishments, the corps finds itself in a struggle for its very survival.

The members and staff of a corps in such a predicament essentially have two choices. The first is to accept the downfall of the corps and/or rationalize the disastrous season as a "rebuilding year." The second is to take a stand and fight. Fight to get the corps back on its feet. Fight until no one has anything left inside of them to give, and the season finally runs out.

This is a story about some young men and women who chose to take that stand.

Scene 1

A Cold October Night At SCV Hall

[*Music: "Do You Know The Way To San Jose" by Dionne Warwick*] After a brief stint in Los Angeles I find myself living in San Jose (again) and on the drum staff of the Santa Clara Vanguard Drum & Bugle Corps (again). It is the 1993 SCV "Orientation Night," and the drum staff is in a meeting with percussion caption head Scott Johnson. At around 5:30 P.M. we begin to hear prospective drummers out in the parking lot, as they furiously attempt to play flam drags on the heavy copper snare and tenor drums. Although their drums are still here, it appears that the vast majority

of eligible veterans from the talented 1992 percussion section are conspicuously absent.

After a speech from new corps director Dr. Len Kruszecki, the auditions begin. One by one, scared young drummers enter the vast room and face us as we sit behind a long wooden table. Over the next three hours we audition the majority of the SCV Cadet Corps drum line, some members of the Freelancers corps, one Canton Blue Coat, the entire Oak Grove High School snare line, and a few local "percussionists" who might be better off trying out for a kickball team. As it turns out, some of our new recruits have never even *seen* a live drum corps, let alone marched in one. We spend most of the night waiting for talent that never appears. Not good.

The evening concludes in San Jose with a spirited game of Sega video-football between fellow drum-staff member Kevin Murray and myself. The game keeps us from dwelling on the disaster of an orientation night.

Scene 2 Live From Santa Clara: Saturday Night Ensemble

[*Music: "Bring On The Night" by Sting*] It is Saturday night of the camp weekend, and things are beginning to look very grim. Several of our veteran pit percussionists handed in their resignations yesterday—although they can still be seen lurking in the shadows and watching the corps rehearse in the poorly lit parking lot.

There is not much for them to see. Age-wise, the group looks more like a high-

school band than a drum & bugle corps. The intensity level is somewhere around three notches below "ham sandwich in a puddle." Luckily, we have recently been able to fill some of the holes in the percussion battery with a few seasoned veterans, including a bass drummer from the San Jose Raiders Color Guard. We have also recruited an assorted cast of veterans from our own Cadet Corps to "play the role" of our snare and tenor line.

As the alumni watching the rehearsal soon discover, we have a unique ensemble sound to complement our impressive display of inexperience. It could politely be described as "not quite presentable." In fact, the only section of the entire corps that is playing at a level anything near what SCV is traditionally known for is the bass line, taught by SCV bass-drumming legend Kent Cater. Instead of the music from Sir William Walton, our crummy ensemble sound is more like an episode of the TV show *The Waltons* (when you can actually understand what the corps is attempting to play).

This is obviously the lowest point of the season so far. Our pit is in hiding. The horn line sounds like a kazoo band. The drum line sounds like a loud AM radio in between stations. Wonderful: We have a kazoo band on the radio. Ladies and gentlemen—the Santa Clara Vanguard. Maybe we should just call it "performance art" and tour Quebec all summer.

Scene 3 The Overfelt Mud Bowl

[*Music: "Wipeout" by The Surfaris*] The corps spends most of a rain-soaked weekend learning their drill at Overfelt High School in San Jose. Every eight counts or so, corps members fall into the pools of mud that cover the football field. The corps soon resembles a mass audition for a rugby team, and it doesn't take long for most of them to be covered in mud from head to toe. Despite the horrific conditions, drill designer Myron Rosander and the marching staff continue to demand that the mud-covered marchers give them their absolute best efforts.

At the conclusion of the camp, our section leader makes the painful decision to leave the Vanguard to march with the Blue Knights. He is in tears as he tells the drum line, many of whom sit in the bleachers after rehearsal in a state of sadness and shock. Not only are we left without a section leader, but we are now without any veterans whatsoever in the snare line.

The drum staff reacts quickly. We instantly promote a rookie snare drummer by the name of Tony to the position of section leader. After one year of marching with the Freelancers, and a few months of our rag-tag rehearsals, Tony finds himself unexpectedly drafted into a position of leadership. We salute him after shaking his hand. "Tony, thank you for attending. You are now the center snare and percussion section leader of the five-time world-champion Santa Clara Vanguard. Congratulations, and good luck."

Tony is stunned, and so are we.

Scene 4 Memorial Day Weekend

[Music: "Squeak...Boom...Quack...Buzz-Buzz" by SCV] It is Sunday evening of Memorial Day Camp, and SCV prepares to

perform its traditional "preview show" for the local townspeople and other supporters. Pit arranger Scotty Sells has been flown in from North Carolina, bringing the drum staff to full strength. As our inexperienced corps takes the field, we climb to the top of the rickety press box for the first public run-through of the season.

The announcer intones: "Santa Clara Vanguard, you may enter the field for exhibition." The drum major salutes, and the corps begins the show. It takes only about fifteen seconds for everything to completely fall apart.

At one point, the entire horn line stops playing—except for one soprano enthusiastically tooting something resembling a duck call. The drum line fares somewhat better, as we have *two* musicians who don't stop. Unfortunately, they are forty yards apart, and neither is currently in step *or* watching the drum major. Several corps members trip over each other and fall down. A member of the audience actually laughs. Somehow the corps "regroups," and the miserable show continues.

The world premier of our drum-section solo begins with a loud suspended cymbal crash from every member of the pit. After

the crash, they quickly kneel down behind their keyboard instruments. They are not performing a visual effect, however. They have dropped out of sight to hide the fact that they still have not learned their music to anything after the initial downbeat of the solo.

To complete our "fine presentation," the terrible drumming going on behind our hidden pit is probably the loudest "Rice Krispies being smashed in a bowl" sound in the history of the free world. Eventually, everything just kind of stops...after a raucous barrage of "ticks" and a loud "schlock."

Oh yes...and chirps. The sound of chirping crickets, which can easily be heard over the level of the polite applause that follows the corps as they dejectedly trudge off the field. The announcer innocently adds to the humiliation with his enthusiastic, "Ladies and Gentlemen, the Santa Clara Vanguard!" Clap, clap...chirp, chirp.

It is now official. A new standard has been set. We have just had the distinct honor of witnessing (and producing) the worst performance in the history of the Santa Clara Vanguard—and quite possibly in the entire history of drum & bugle corps.

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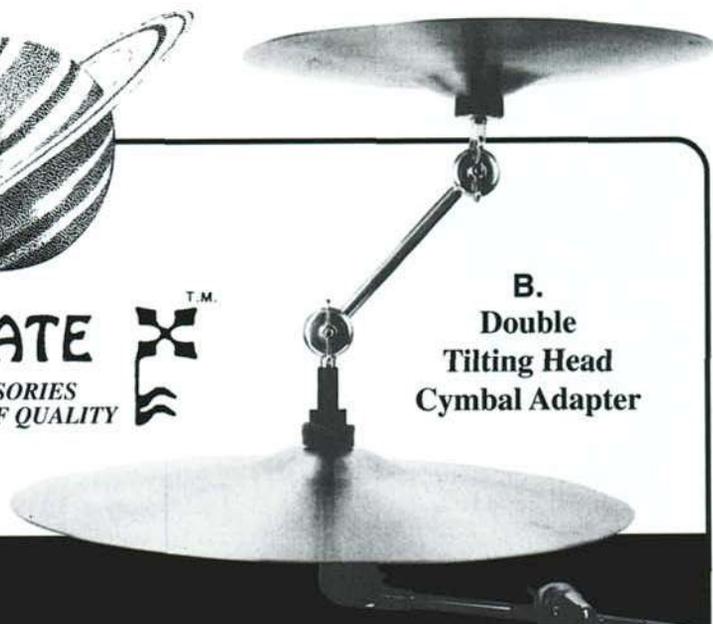
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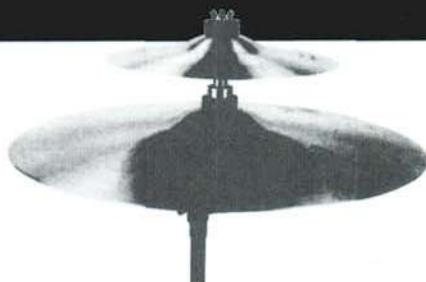
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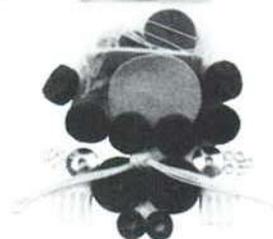
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And of course, this is one of the few times when the announcer reads off all of the staffs names correctly. Wonderful. Maybe we can sign autographs in the parking lot.

[Music changes to: "Ball Of Confusion" by Love & Rockets] Monday morning arrives, and we decide that the drum battery will get "back to basics." Once again, we try to get them to play 16th-note check patterns as they march around the field. Once again, with the solitary exception of the bass line, we are largely unsuccessful. Off in the distance a pit player chases her music after it blows off the music stand. All of us on the staff are thinking the same thing: Inexperienced corps or not, we may be in serious trouble.

Scene 5 The First Show (Public Humiliation #2)

[Music: "Nobody Loves You When You're Down And Out" by Sophie Tucker] It is the first show of the summer, and we are fortunate enough to have added one veteran of the 1991 season into the snare line. Our

competition is the Concord Blue Devils. As usual, their horn line is spectacular. Unfortunately for us, the rest of their corps is just as prepared. The Blue Devils have perhaps fifteen seconds of slight ensemble phasing in their show. We have perhaps fifteen seconds in our show where the ensemble is *not* completely falling apart—and *zero* seconds where the entire corps is in step at the same time.

After our less-than-stellar performance, my girlfriend (attending her very first drum-corps show) looks at me and tactfully announces: "You guys suck." I have no rebuttal to her at this time. When the scores are announced, we are lucky enough to have lost to the Blue Devils by only eleven full points. (Most competitions are decided by *tenths* of points.)

It's a long drive home to San Jose.

In the spirit of movie serials of days past, we'll stop at this dramatic point, with the words To Be Continued flashing across the screen. Join us for the conclusion of "Tale Of A Drum Line" in next month's issue!



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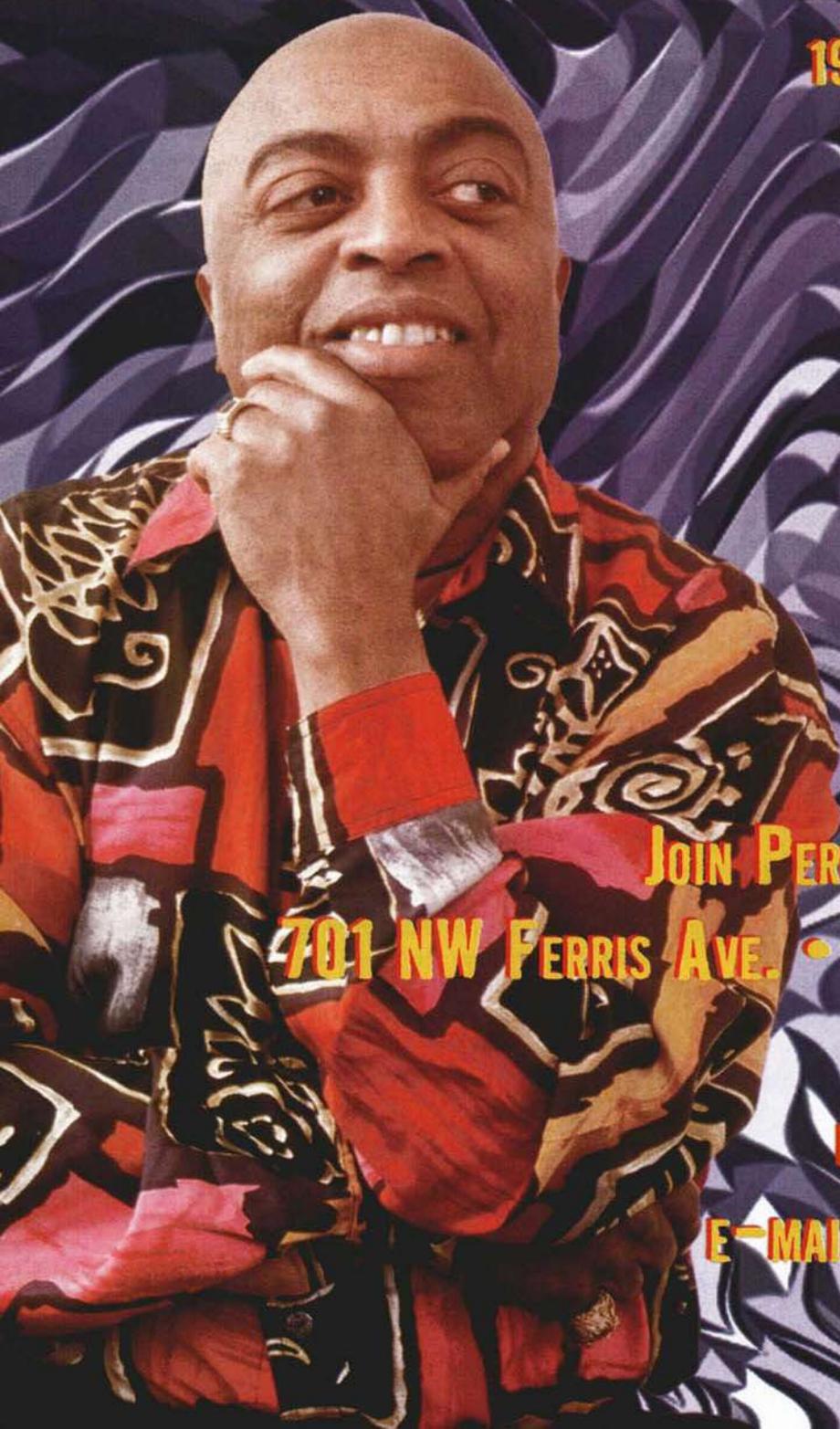
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Legitimate Or Illegitimate?

by Ron Hefner

Recently I was looking through the pages of an old drum method book, one that had thoroughly intimidated me when I was a fledgling drummer. It began with pictures of the author posing behind a parade drum, demonstrating the "correct" way to hold the sticks. Further into the text there were photographs of him seated behind a drumset, with close-ups of his feet demonstrating the "correct" way to play the pedals.

I acquired the book at the age of thirteen, years after I'd begun playing the drums, and it had sent me into a panic when I realized that, as a self-taught player, I was doing everything wrong! When I tried to hold the sticks like the book's author, I couldn't even get them to bounce. And when I tried the pedal technique, it felt like my feet were glued to the floor. Did this mean I was an "illegitimate" player? It seemed that I would have to relearn everything I knew.

But destiny stepped in. Shortly after I'd discovered that book, I saw Ringo Starr with The Beatles on the Sullivan show. There he

looked, nobody had come up with a better idea.

The trick is to use the rudiments in fun ways. My favorite is to play them on the set. As soon as my students learn a paradiddle, I show them how to use it on the hi-hat and snare to play funk beats. Rather than reinvent the system, I find it easier to adapt it to modern use.

Stick grip is not an issue any more. Even most traditional die-hards have conceded that matched grip works fine, and actually makes more sense. However, I encountered a related phenomenon that was new to me, and I had to adjust quickly. I had a student who played in high school drum corps, and I noticed he wasn't raising the sticks very far. I commented that he needed to increase the arc of the stick when it came off the head. He told me his band director wanted all the snare drummers to use short, concise strokes. He felt it increased precision and looked more consistent. This is the opposite of how I was taught. In my marching band days, we swung the sticks back as far as possible, which devel-

"Is there such a thing as 'correct' technique anymore? A lot of drummers have come along and broken the rules with good—even groundbreaking—results."

was, the world's most famous drummer, and he had no technique at all—at least not according to the pictures in my method book. Yet I couldn't honestly say he was a bad drummer. In fact, he sounded pretty good.

Is there such a thing as "correct" technique anymore? A lot of drummers have come along and broken the rules with good—even groundbreaking—results. Over the years I've witnessed changes in popular music, and I've become far less of a purist than I used to be.

The rudiments have traditionally been considered the basis of drumming technique. I've heard them referred to as the "scales" of drumming. However, I think that's a little far-fetched. On a melodic instrument, scales are useful for learning interval relationships. The rudiments are basically technical exercises that help develop facility.

Does a drummer need to know them to play well? Of course not. Many teachers have suggested that rudiments force a drummer to play within certain technical parameters, thereby hampering creativity. I'd agree that undue emphasis on rudimental technique may have that effect. The only problem is, the last time I

oped a terrific bounce. Obviously, in this student's case, I had to defer to the band director, who knew exactly what he wanted. There seems to be a trend toward this. Notice how Billy Cobham plays, or how the late Tony Williams stroked a drum compared to Buddy Rich or Joe Morello. Neither method is more correct or "legit" than the other—they're just different.

The teacher in my method book demonstrated playing the pedals with his heels firmly planted on the floor. Many great drummers play this way. However, the first time I sat down at the drums, my instinct was to play heels-up. Yet, over the years, I've seen a lot of jazz players use this technique—and it's the norm among rock drummers. There is now ample proof that either technique works.

Over time, even experienced drummers may develop bad habits that hamper their ability to execute. Obviously, these should be corrected. But what about inexperienced drummers? In my experience as a teacher, I've found that it's best to let them go with their instincts. As long as they're able to play freely with no inhibition of motion, who cares if it's "correct" or not?

One of my students is left-handed, so I reversed the kit's config-

uration for him at the first lesson. He couldn't play anything at all, so we went back to a right-handed setup. He immediately played with no problem, riding the left cymbal with his left hand. Is it right? Wrong? This "open" style of playing actually has some clear advantages, and some of today's better drummers—even right-handers—use it. (All I know is, I get disoriented just watching him!)

I have a photo of Buddy Rich taken at a concert less than a year before his death. In it, Buddy's left hand is clearly visible, and he's using a grip I've never seen in any method book. The thumb is hooked firmly over the stick, and the first and second fingers are almost completely off it. Try it sometime. It's terribly uncomfortable. Then listen to some Buddy recordings and judge whether it worked for him.

So much for "legitimate" versus "illegitimate"!



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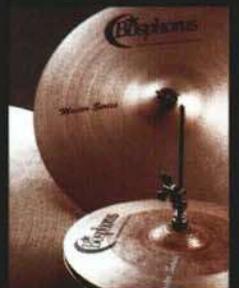
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Straight, No Chaser

by Roger Cohen

I was deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Charlie Perry a few months ago. Musicians are probably most familiar with his name from his drum method books, which have become standard fare for anyone serious about drumming. But Charlie was also a terrific drummer who performed with many of the top names in jazz, including Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker. He was also one of the most genuinely warm people I've ever met.

I had the great fortune to study with Charlie in the mid-1980s. He gave of his knowledge and his time in a way you rarely see. A forty-five-minute lesson with Charlie was never shorter than two and a half hours. It would be an afternoon of playing drums, listening to records, and talking about music. And of course, with friends like Roy Haynes, Tony Williams, and Jack DeJohnette, Charlie had no shortage of great stories.

Charlie's love of music was infectious. After spending an afternoon with him, my head would be filled with new concepts to explore, and new music to check out. After leaving Charlie's house I couldn't wait to get to my drums.

Charlie once invited me to sit in with his trio at one of his gigs. Naturally, I was very excited about this. So a handful of my friends and I piled into my '74 Buick the following Friday and headed out to Sonny's Place in Long Island. However, there was one thing Charlie didn't warn me about. Not only did his piano player hate having Charlie's "punk kids" sit in, he also had no problem humiliating them on stage. So there I was, thinking I was really killing on "Straight, No Chaser," when, in the middle of his solo, the pianist stopped playing, turned completely around to face me, and began to flail his arms like he was landing a 747. I'm not talking about a second or two of this either. This went on long enough for everybody in the club to see. Since I didn't think he was trying to start "the wave," I assumed this was his subtle way of telling me I might be playing just a bit too loud.

I began to hope that the flat ride cymbal, that Charlie loved so much would fall off the stand, bounce off the floor tom, and cut my head off, so that I might exit the stage gracefully. No such luck. As soon as the tune ended (which felt like an hour), I got up from behind the drums. I anticipated the merciful "hook" from

Charlie, who I assumed would save me from any further humiliation by reclaiming his drums. Again...no such luck. Either Charlie was really enjoying his club soda, or he felt it would be a better learning experience for me to finish the set, because he never got up. Instead, he yelled from the bar, "Let the kid play another one!" I don't know who was more distressed, me or that crotchety old piano player.

We ended the set with a ballad. I played brushes, and no one got hurt. But then I had to go back to my table and face all of my friends who'd made the long trek out to Long Island to see me play at a *real jazz* club, with *real jazz* musicians. I must say they tried to be supportive. One of my friends even suggested that while it may have *looked* as though the piano player was berating me about playing too loud, it may actually have been his Tourette's Syndrome kicking in. Well, he was trying. Needless to say, it was a long ride home.

I spent a week considering alternate careers, and wondering how much I could get for my drums. And I started having a recurring nightmare, in which the piano player is not just waving his

arms at me like a whooping crane, but also cursing at me in Yiddish. Not only are all my friends, family, and acquaintances in the audience, but I'm pretty sure that's Coach Arnold, my junior high gym teacher at the bar, and he's yelling at me to get down and give him twenty. Of course all of this is in slow motion. Oh, and did I mention I'm in my underwear?

A week later, with my head hanging low, I drove back out to Long Island for another lesson with Charlie. To my astonishment, the first thing out of Charlie's mouth was, "Great job last week. The guys thought you were a real good young drummer!"

"Are you kidding me?" I asked. "After being traumatized by your piano player, I spent a week thinking that aluminum siding might be a sensible career change."

"Oh, don't worry about him," Charlie laughed. "He's just pissed off because he's not as famous as Herbie Hancock. Besides, he *liked* you. You should have seen what he did to one of my kids the week *before*." He then went on to tell me how, while one of his unsuspecting students was up on stage, right in the middle of a

"I began to hope that the ride cymbal would fall off the stand, bounce off the floor tom, and cut my head off, so that I might exit the stage gracefully."

song, our favorite piano player stood up from behind his keyboard and yelled across the bar, "Damn it Charlie, will you come back and play!" Suddenly I didn't feel so bad.

After Charlie was able to convince me that I wasn't the worst drummer on the Eastern Seaboard, it was back to the business of analyzing Tony Williams' ride-cymbal playing, and demonstrating how Billy Higgins could "swing you into bad health."

Is there a moral to this story? Can something positive be gained from being made to look like a jackass in a jazz club? (Hold it...I think I just found the title for my autobiography!) I don't know, but here are some thoughts: Perhaps, when we're playing with musicians we don't know, especially in the context of this great American art form known as jazz, we should try extra hard to be sensitive to what those other musicians need from us. Then again, maybe it's much simpler than that: Just don't play loud with old guys!

On a serious note, I'd like to extend my most heartfelt condolences to Charlie's wife, Eve, and to the rest of his family. Rest assured that the spirit of Charlie will live on in the musicians he inspired, both on and off the bandstand. Perhaps most of all, his spirit will continue on with the drummers who were fortunate enough to study with him. Like myself, I'm sure many of his students also went on to teach. I'm also sure that I speak for many when I say that I rarely teach a lesson in which I don't use something I learned from Charlie. It could be anything from a warm-up exercise to one of his many quotes. Sometimes it's just a funny story he told me that will get a kid to laugh and relax a little.

Thanks, Charlie.





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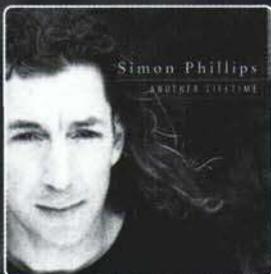
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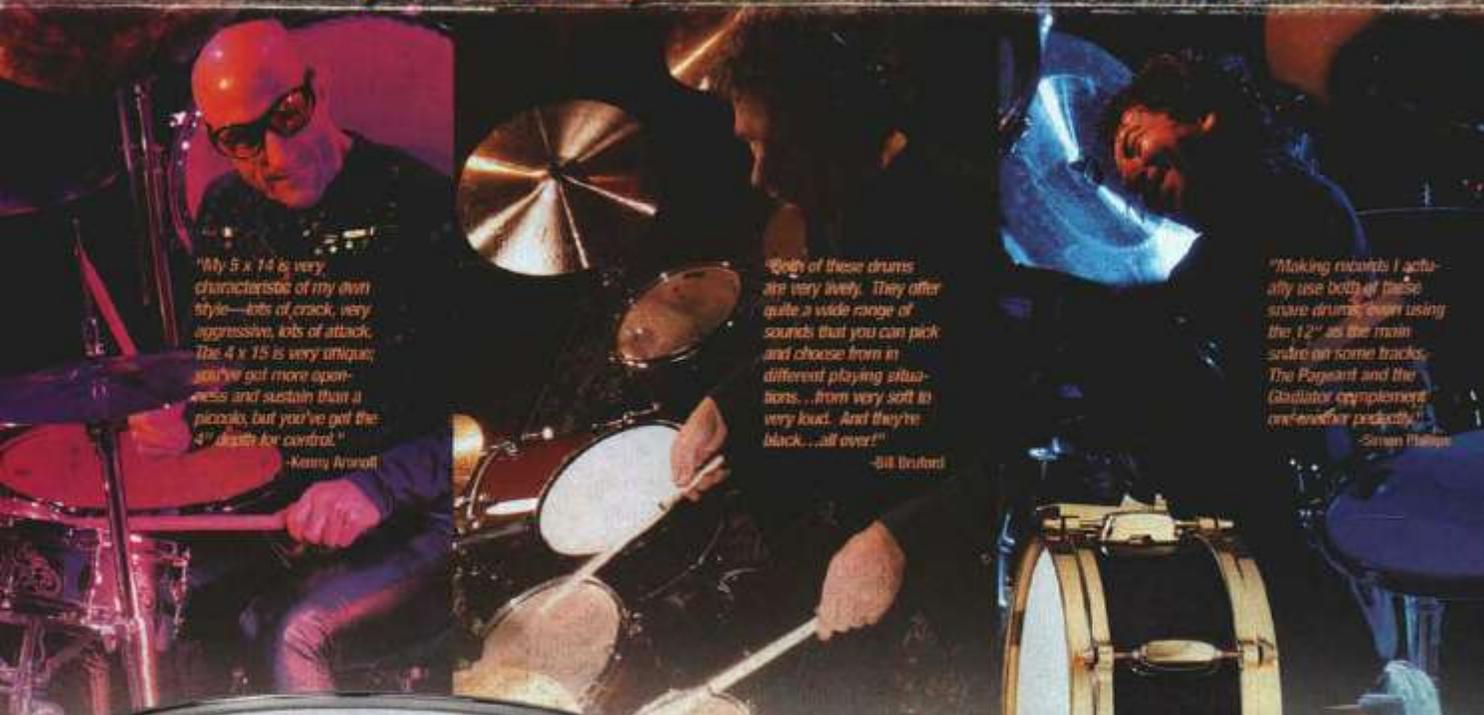
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1999 Rhythm Sticks Festival

The 1999 Rhythm Sticks UK Festival will run from Saturday, July 17 through Sunday, July 25 on London's South Bank. The Festival is one of the world's most extensive events dedicated exclusively to percussion performance and education.

The currently scheduled lineup of high-profile percussion artists (subject to change) is as follows: The week will open with Poncho Sanchez, and close with Airto Moreira (featuring Bosco d'Oliveira and Carlos Puentes). In between will be Danny Gottlieb (with his new multi-media project), Alessandra Belloni, John Bergamo, Pete Lockett, Paul Clarvis, Ensemble Bash, and the Safri Duo. Louie Bellson (with The BBC Big Band), Joe Morello, Giovanni Hidalgo, and Ed Thigpen have been invited, but were yet to be confirmed at press time.

World music performers scheduled for the Festival include: A.A. Sivaraman (on mridangam), Suresh (ghatam), Kobayakawa Suigun Taiko Drummers, Joji Hirota (Japanese), Master Drummers of Africa, Stree Shakti (an all-female Indian percussion group), Moire Music, Tommy Hayes (on Irish bodhran), and an Iranian percussion evening, featuring female drummers who are traditionally forbidden to perform in front of men in their homeland.

As an added attraction, foyer and outdoor events, and a program of workshops, are conducted throughout the week. For more information, contact artistic director Pam Chowhan, at SBC, Royal Festival Hall, London SE1 8XX, England, tel: 011-44-171-921-0815, fax: 011-44-171-928-2049, email: pchowhan@rfh.org.uk.

1999 KoSA International Percussion Workshop

The dates and location for the 1999 KoSA international Percussion Workshop have been announced. The one-week workshop—featuring hands-on classes with Changuito, Gordon Stout, Horacio Hernandez, Glen Velez, Aldo Mazza, Jim Chapin, Marco Lienhard, John Beck, Ed Shaughnessy, Bill Ludwig II, Jim Petercsak, Gordon Gottlieb, and Repercussion—will be held August 2-8, 1999, at the Crane School of Music, on the Potsdam, New York campus of the State University of New York (SUNY). This is a new venue for the workshop, which has been held in Vermont for the past several years. For further information, contact KoSA at (800) 541-8401, email: lkosa@istar.ca, or Web site: home.istar.ca/~kosa/kosaperc.htm.



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Endorser News

New Sabian artists include **Matt Taul** (Days Of The New), **Jeff Burrows** (The Tea Party), **Tyler Stewart** (Barenaked Ladies), **Nick Pointer** (Arena), **Billy Thommes** (Johnny Lang), Joe Sirois (Mighty Mighty Bosstones), **Andy Stochansky** (Ani DiFranco), **Dave Krusen** (Candlebox), and **Glenn Gibson** (Savage Garden).

Lee Mangano (independent) is on board as a ddrum endorser.

Now playing Bosphorus cymbals are **Stanton Moore** (Galactic), **Chris Searles** (Shawn Colvin), **Tim Horton** (Kool & The Gang), **Rocky White** (Duke Ellington Orchestra), **Brian Moore** (Usher), **Chuck McPherson** (Freddie Hubbard), **Jim White** (Crystal Gayle), **Willard Dyson** (Charlie Hunter), **Johnny Rabb** (Tanya Tucker), **Neal Smith** (Benny Green), **Keith Killgo** (Blackbyrds), **Robert Kaufman** (Berklee College of Music), **Kevin Leahy** (Shawn Mullins), and **Phil Smith** (educator).

Paul Doucette (Matchbox 20) and **Brad Hargreaves** (Third Eye Blind) are now playing Pro-Mark drumsticks.

GMS drums endorser **Peter Tornell** was incorrectly listed in a previous issue as playing with Corey Stevens. Peter has left Corey and now has his own band, Naked To The World.

Recent Yamaha signings include **Giovanni Hidalgo** (percussion virtuoso), **Ben Riley**, **John Riley** (Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, Bob Mintzer), **J.D. Blair** (Shania Twain), **Steve Borgovini** (Fun Lovin' Criminals), **Keith Carlock** (Wayne Krantz, The Blues Brothers), **Leroy Clouden** (*Bring In Da' Noise, Bring In Da' Funk*), **Kirk Covington** (Zawinul Syndicate, Tribal Tech, Gary Willis Project), **Clint de Ganon** (Hiram Bullock), **Loraine Faini** (Peabo Bryson, Nestor Torres), **Patrick Forero** (Paquito

D'Rivera), **Kenny James** (The Samples), **Willie Jones III** (Roy Hargrove), **Karriem Riggins** (Ray Brown, Vinnie Green), and **Oscar Seaton** (Bozz Scaggs, Lionel Richie).



We don't normally run photos in *Endorser News*, but this one has too much character to resist. **Joe Denis** is playing Gretsch drums with The Riders Of The Purple Sage. The band has been performing authentic Western music for over fifty years.

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In Memoriam

Butch McDade

Popular Nashville drummer David H. (Butch) McDade died November 29, 1998 at his home in Maryville, Tennessee after a lengthy battle with cancer. He was fifty-two. A founding member of The Amazing Rhythm Aces, McDade also toured or recorded with such artists as Leon Russell, Lonnie Mack, Roy Clark, Tanya Tucker, and members of the Subdudes.

Butch formed the Rhythm Aces with singer/songwriter Russell Smith in the early 1970s. Their debut album, *Stacked Deck*, was released in 1975. McDade drummed on all six of the Aces' '70s and '80s albums, including hits like "Third Rate Romance," "Amazing Grace (Used To Be Her Favorite Song)," and the Grammy-winning "The End Is Not In Sight." He was also an accomplished songwriter; the band cut his "Same Old Me," "The Beautiful Lie," "Last Letter Home," "Pretty Words," and "Living On Borrowed Time" during their first period. He sang his own "Oh, Lucky Me" and "Get Down" on their 1997 release, *Out Of The Blue*. Butch toured with the Aces as they began their 1996 comeback, but illness kept him off the road for the last year and a half of his life.

Butch McDade is survived by his wife, Leslie, son Gabriel, and daughter Caralie. Contributions can be made to the Butch McDade Memorial Fund, PO Box 110551, Nashville, TN 37222.

Martha E. Moore

Steven Solder

Jazz drummer Steven Solder died of kidney failure on December 6, 1998, in Southern California. He was fifty years old, and had been on kidney dialysis for twenty-two years (making him one of the longest-surviving dialysis patients known).

Managing his illness with courage and grace, Solder never gave in to his infirmities. Instead, he continued to contribute to the community through his music, by mentoring many younger musicians, and by counseling other dialysis patients.

Born in Los Angeles, Solder performed with such artists as Mary Lou Williams, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, McCoy Tyner, Frank Foster, Clark Terry, Reggie Workman, Hank Mobley, and Buster Williams. In the 1970s and '80s he was part of the New York "loft" scene, working with players like David Murray, Sam Rivers, Pharoah Sanders, and Hilton Ruiz. He also covered the R&B scene, touring with The Drifters and singer Zulema, and later worked in the genres of theater and dance, including the Broadway musical *Your Arms Too Short To Box With God*.

As was Solder's wish, a drumset has been donated in his name to Billy Higgins, to support the jazz and percussion program at the California Institute Of The Arts.

Cheryl Banks-Smith

Upcoming Clinics

Berklee College of Music World Percussion Festival

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6/21 — Bands of America, Schaumburg, IL, (800) 848-2263

6/24 — Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA, (412) 396-6080

7/11 — Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, IL, (217)581-3817

KoSA

8/2-8 — Artists tentatively scheduled include John Beck, Changuito, Jim Chapin, Dom Famularo, Gordon Gottlieb, Horacio Hernandez, Marco Leinhard, Bill Ludwig, Aldo Mazza, Jim Petercsak, Repercussion, Ed Shaughnessy, Gordon Stout, and Glen Velez. Crane School of Music, Potsdam, NY, (800) 541-8401

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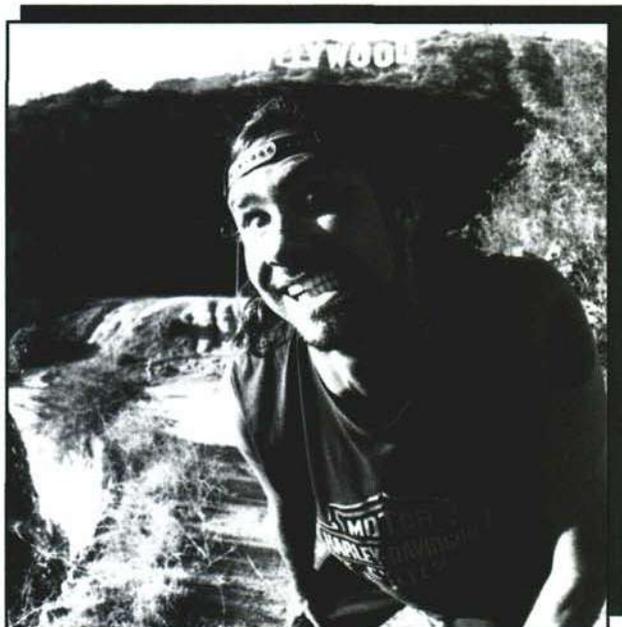
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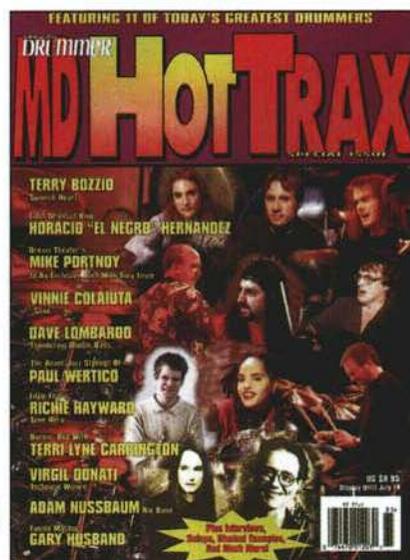
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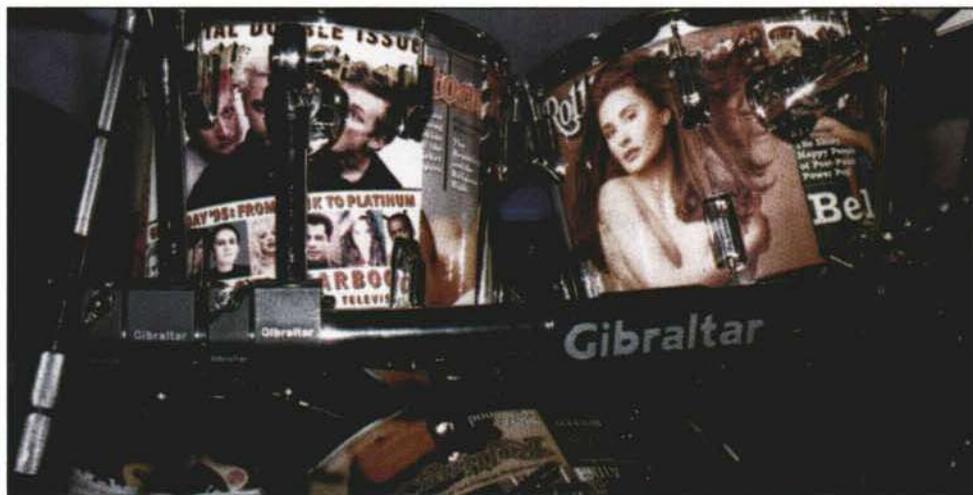


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