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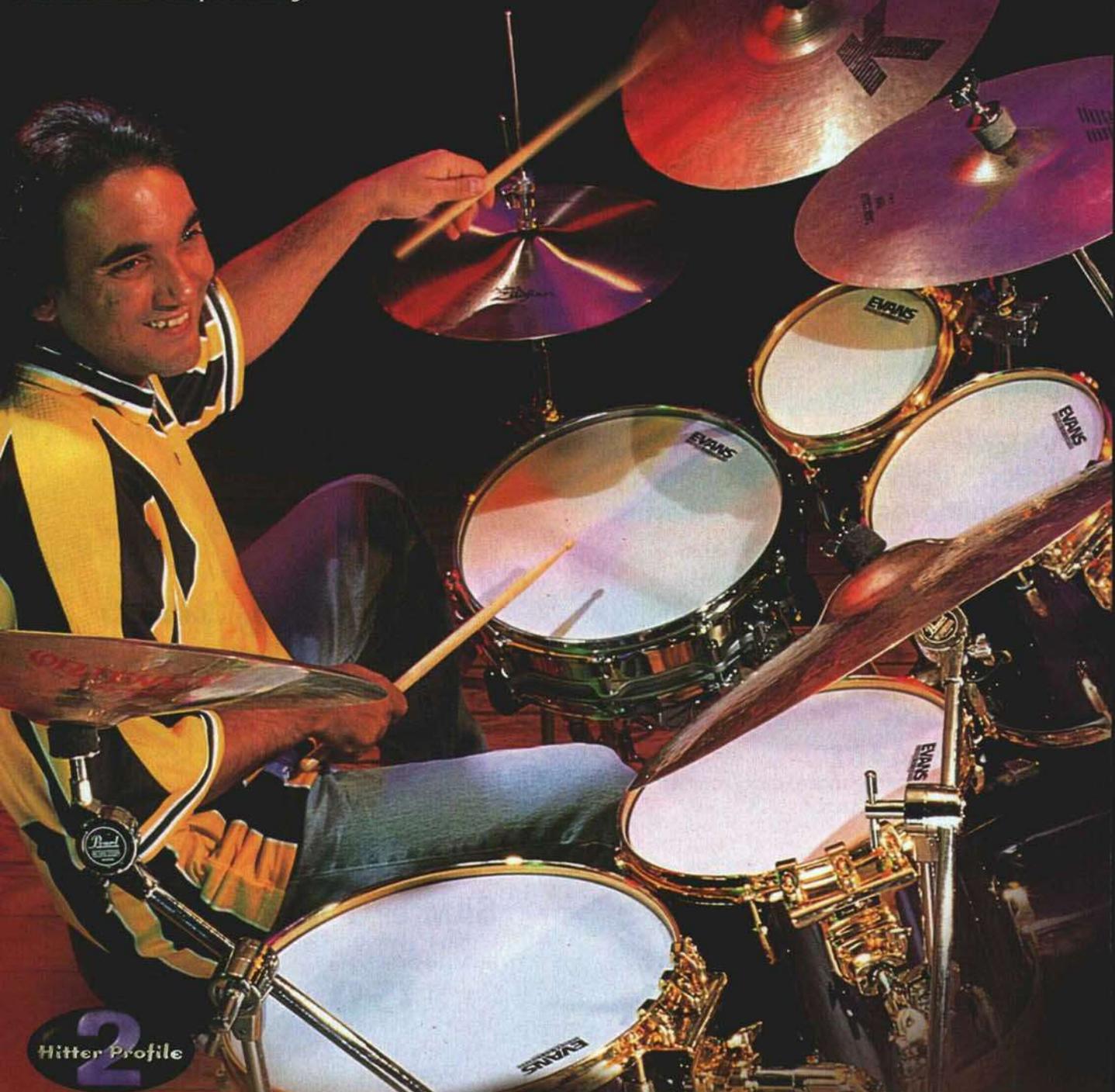
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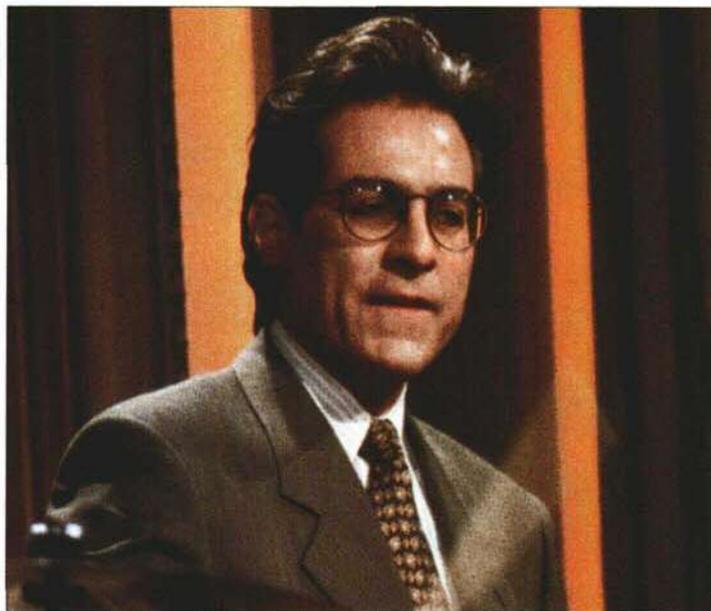


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<b>Bass</b>	EQ4	EQ3	Thick attack, big low end, focused sustain



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# Growing Our Industry

Several years ago the drum industry supported the formation of a non-profit trade organization called the Percussion Marketing Council. Headed by a list of key industry executives, including our own Kevin Kearns (who serves as vice president), the PMC's mission is twofold. First, it aims to expand the percussion market by increasing public visibility of all forms of drumming, and promoting drumming as a positive activity for the general public through a variety of programs, projects, and events. Second, it wishes to unify the percussion industry by providing a forum for intra-industry communication.

The goal of the PMC is to bring all facets of drumming to beginners, amateurs, and professionals, young and old, male and female. Using the "Be A Player" catchphrase, the organization has hosted a variety of events including educational seminars at NAMM conventions, ventures with Radio Disney, and participation in the *Warped* tour. They've also been the primary force in November's International Drum Month, which offers an assortment of events that target drummers and non-drummers alike.

The Council has also promoted community drum circles and given support to The Fabulous Leopard Percussionists, an accomplished percussion ensemble made up of elementary school children. In addition, they've participated in sponsorship of the King Biscuit Flower Hour FM radio show, promoting drumming awareness via a national giveaway contest. The activities of the

organization also extend to Middle School Concert Programs, as well as the support of "Drumscape," a drumming simulator designed to stimulate interest in drumming at video arcades. And they've supplied products and literature in support of the "Black History In Music" campaign, and presented concerts highlighting the diversity of percussion at the National Association Of School Music Dealers convention.

According to PMC executive director David Levine, "Recent research shows that the drum market has nearly doubled in the past five years, and grown twenty-five percent in the last two alone. The future will provide us with even greater opportunities to increase the number of drummers and percussionists on the planet. If you agree that the PMC's programs help sustain this growth, I urge you to join us."

We at *Modern Drummer* stand firmly behind the ideals of the PMC, and we strongly encourage industry-wide participation and support. Manufacturers, suppliers, retailers—and drummers—can contact the national headquarters of the Percussion Marketing Council at 12665 Kling Street, Studio City, CA 91604. Anyone who would like more information can also visit their Web site at [www.playdrums.com](http://www.playdrums.com).

*Bon Spagnardi*

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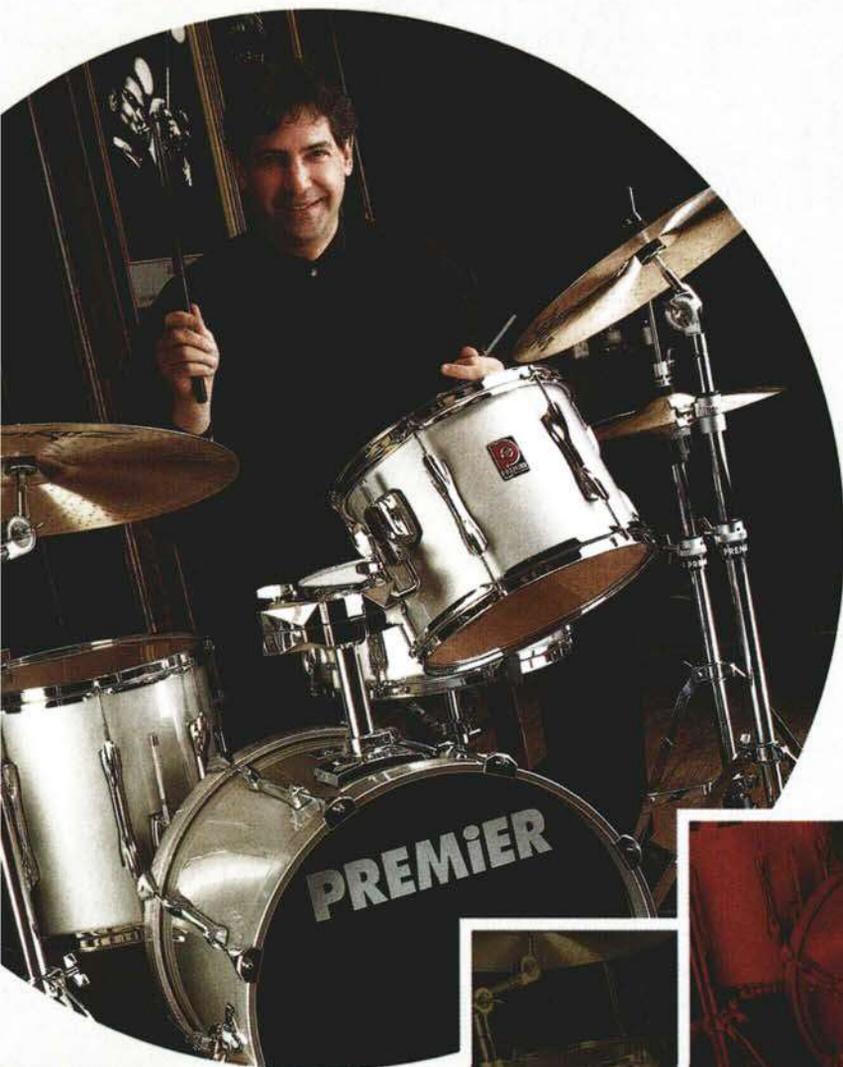
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MD FESTIVAL WEEKEND '99

I came away from the Festival Weekend like Moses returning from seeing the burning bush—enlightened. I enjoyed it all: the monsters (Minnemann and Mangini), the rock icon (Ian Pake was awesome, and I don't even like Deep Purple), the studio guys (Chamberlain and Purdie, who made my day opening with "Home At Last"), the techno-guy (boy, can Danziger play!), the clave-master (I really loved Ignacio's spirit), and the jazz guys (Bruford's Earthworks and Riley's VJO kicked). And just when I thought I had seen it all, I was absolutely floored by Steve Smith's performance with Vital Information.

Another remarkable Festival phenomenon is the professionalism and camaraderie among those present, which is unmatched anywhere. Where else could you bump into Freddie Gruber, Mike Portnoy, Joe Franco, or Frank Belluci in attendance as spectators—or get an impromptu lesson from Jim Chapin between performances?

Your readers should know that the weekend is not only entertaining, but is also an unparalleled inspirational experience. Thanks to all those involved in making this remarkable event happen, including the sponsors. (I know the event could not happen without them.)

Gregory P. Matarrese  
via Internet

Thanks for the opportunity to play before your great Festival audience. The band and I had a ball! When I left on Sunday evening I went directly to Newark airport—only to find my flight canceled. But I did get to



spend an hour in the coffee shop with Bill Bruford. What a nice, inspiring, and thoughtful man. I finally arrived at the studio in Amsterdam at 1:30 Monday afternoon—7:30 A.M. New York time—and recorded for four hours with Jim McNeely, Vince Mendoza, Joe Lovano, and a 50-piece orchestra. All went fine, 'cause I was still "warm" from the Festival.

My thanks to Ron and everyone at the magazine for your support and encouragement.

John Riley  
Cornwall-On-Hudson, NY

While we were standing in line for Sunday's show, Festival coordinator Rick Van Horn was informally polling the people in line about their reactions to Saturday's show. Very classy. Thanks for your gift to the drumming community. And congratulations to all the MD staffers and others who make it happen year after year.

Dave Willard  
Centerport, NY

As an appreciator of effort, I recognize your staff's successful efforts for the difficult and sensitive tasks that they are. I extend my appreciation to all those who worked on the show. It matters to me to have been there.

Mike Mangini  
Los Angeles, CA

As a Festival "first-timer," I was expecting a confab of drum nerds. (Think Star Trek convention.) What I encountered was a widely diverse collection of humanity—

metal-heads, bikers, businessmen, jazz cats, fans, and fanatics—all there in the mutual love of drumming. The boy sitting next to me with his dad was eleven years old—and attending his sixth Festival!

Thank you for recognizing those of us who think the coolest player in the band is the drummer. Please save a seat for me for Festival Weekend 2000.

Angus Mackay  
Jamaica, WI

I've been coming to the Festival for three years now, and I feel so inspired when I hear the great drummers there. I also love the raffle prizes. I've won an Impact cymbal vault and a leather Vic Firth stick bag full of sticks at past Festivals. This really helps the financial side of my drumming!

Brandon Kurzawa  
via Internet

This was my sixth year. It's great to come up from Virginia and experience the music, the brotherhood, the personalities, the warmth of the MD staff, and even the line! (I'm a nine o'clocker, and it's fun to just hang out.) The Festival has become the highlight of my spring. I'll see you next year.

Chris Cole  
Fishersville, VA

I want to thank you for the whole super event! I'm very honored having played at your Festival. I've received lots of great feedback from the US, and from my sponsoring companies. Having played the MD Festival was a very important step in my career, so thanks again.

Marco Minnemann  
via Internet

THE PURDIE SCUFFLE

Thank you all for another excellent festival. All the artists were great. But I have to respond to Bernard Purdie's statement that he played on twenty-one Beatles tracks in place of Ringo. He claims that he replaced tracks in sessions, that other drummers are also involved, and that the only witnesses

were an engineer and the group's then-manager, the late Brian Epstein.

To begin with, I don't think it's possible to "replace" tracks on a 4-track recording. Besides, given the rather divided opinions as to the quality of the drumming in question, why would Bernard want to lay claim to it? Just which "twenty-one tracks" are in question? Who are the other drummers?

What do The Beatles and George Martin have to say?

I hope that this whole situation can be put to rest once and for all. Bernard mentioned a book to be released shortly. Where is it?

Jerome Deupree  
Carlisle, MA

Purdie did not appear "Pretty" to those of

John "Jabo" Starks

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us who were left with our jaws hanging open after his verbal bombshell about having replaced Ringo on Beatles tracks. Beyond that, he spent less than 25% of his allotted time playing—or even *talking about* playing. The rest was spent convincing us that he was partly responsible for Aretha's fame, clowning and primping for the audience, and endorsing products for commercial gain.

Some of us travel to the Festival at considerable cost in order to see our icons play and teach. We deserve more from those invited to perform at this highly publicized and well-attended drumming event.

Mark Polis  
via Internet

After returning from the MD Festival, a buddy of mine said it was the best one he had seen in years, with one exception: the diatribe Bernard Purdie spewed from the stage regarding his "twenty-one recorded performances with The Beatles." Purdie's rhetorical blasphemy has sickened me since I first encountered him at a drum shop in LA in 1977. I have been in the drum industry for nearly twenty years.

During that time, I have never had one drummer tell me he or she started playing because of Purdie. On the other hand, I have had *thousands* tell me they started because of Ringo—as did I!

I ask all of you who have, for some reason, been persuaded by this lying, egotistical blowhard, to walk away. Drum, cymbal, stick, and head manufacturers: Walk away. Publications, music stores, drum shops, and record companies: Walk away. He is a blight on our wonderful world of music, and he needs to be banned! Ladies and gentlemen, just say no to Bernard Purdie!

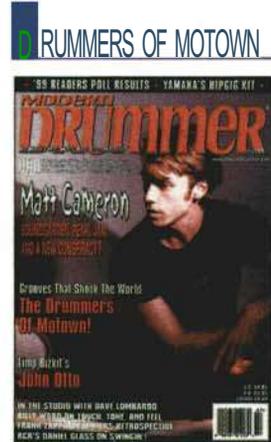
Ken Austin  
President, JohnnyraBB Drumstick Co.  
Nashville, TN

## THE DRUMMERS OF ZAPPA

While getting caught up in the details of my story on the drummers of Frank Zappa, I erred on perhaps his most influential recording. I incorrectly and carelessly named Aynsley Dunbar as the drummer on *Hot Rats*, when in fact the drumming was done by Ron Selico, John Guerin, and Paul

Humphrey. I apologize to those gentlemen, and I thank the many MD readers who brought this error to my attention.

Mark Griffith  
Wallington, NJ



Thanks for the long overdue article on "The Drummers Of Motown" in your July issue. Thanks to Alan Slutsky and Zoro for sharing their experiences with these wonderful musicians. Most of all, thanks to Benny Benjamin, Pistol Allen, and Uriel Jones for the continuing education on the grooves they have given to the world of music, by way of this article and by way of their recordings.

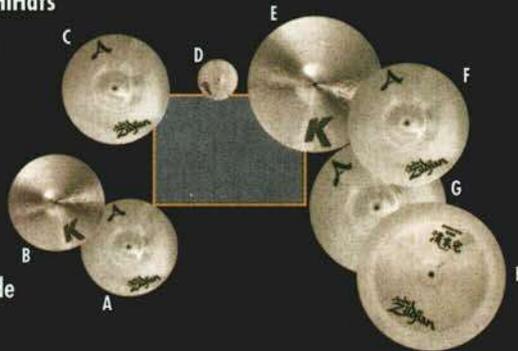
Bill Lanham  
Forest Hills, NY

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I found all the "attaboy" advertising that followed the results of the 1999 Readers Poll ironic, in light of the outstanding "Drummers Of Motown" feature that was sandwiched in between. The very idea of million-selling records being made by anonymous drummers playing on drums of mixed brands with catsup-stained heads is funny today. But there could have been no Benny Benjamin signature snare, because Benny would probably have played the box it was shipped in—and still shook the house.

In the age of Pro-Tools, thin-shell birch or thick-shell maple kits, die-cast or triple-flange hoops, old Ks or new Zs, and "If I use oak wood-tip 747s too will I play like him," the Motown article really offered a lot. It's what you've got *inside*, folks!

Sean McCue  
via Internet

memory holds ten seconds worth of music, to ensure a constant play rate even if the CD is jostled by a bump in the road (or a rimshot). Nearly all portable CD players have a "line out" jack that can be connected to an amplifier for use with either headphones or speakers.

David Cole  
via Internet

*Editor's note: Several readers wondered why we didn't recommend a non-skip CD player, since such a device would be an effective way of eliminating the problem of CD skipping during drum practice. However, the original question asked what could be done with an existing CD player. Our suggestions addressed that question, rather than offering the more expensive solution of purchasing an entirely new player.*

### NON-SKIP CD ALTERNATIVE

In the June 99 *It's Questionable* section, David Raub asks what he can do to avoid CD skipping while he is playing rimshots or crash cymbals. The advice you gave was to use a pillow, move the CD player farther away, or even suspend the player from the ceiling!

A simpler solution is to buy a portable CD player with ESP (Electronic Shock Protection) for use in cars. The player's

### HOW TO REACH US

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## Making Progress With Spock's Beard



"The simple things can be just as fun as playing a billion notes in 7/8."

**R**un a finger around the lip of a wineglass. That's the sound that gets us into *Day For Night*, the new album by Spock's Beard. Your attention then turns to a rumbling—the band's idea of a pickup—and then guitars, keyboards, and drums jump onto the first of many hooks. It's a real flag-waver in the spirit of late '70s Genesis. Hey, that's not a criticism! There's nothing pretentious—or tentative—about the way Nick D'Virgilio plays. He puts the backbeats squarely in place and dices his fills with the sharpest of knives. At age thirty, D'Virgilio has become a major contender in the nouveau-progressive medium.

Since *Modern Drummer* last chatted with Nick, he recorded with Tears For Fears and has started a band with David Baerwald and Will Sexton called New Folk Underground. You may also catch him doing clinics for Mapex and Alesis.

For Mapex clinics, Nick's angle is practical: "I don't see a lot of guys showing what it is to lay down a basic 2 and 4 groove—and what *that* means in regards to getting work as a drummer. A lot of guys play as busy as they can. If you're in your own band, that's great! But the *simple* things can be just as fun as playing a billion notes in 7/8."

Back to those bars of 7/8 and Spock's Beard: There's no mistaking a Phil Collins influence, circa *Selling England By The Pound*. Nick admits, "That's what made Genesis great. Phil gave that 'white man's music' soul. He brought that R&B feel to progressive rock. He's my favorite drummer of all time." Similarly, Nick researched his sense of swing with a study of "John Bonham and lots of Beatles, Motown, Stevie Wonder, James Brown, and Latin. I'm not a fan of stiff drumming."

Although Spock's Beard songwriter Neal Morse likes it when Nick rides a crash cymbal, Nick's taste is toward cleaner articulation on a Paiste Sound Formula 20" Dry Ride. "While I'm riding, I try to use the hi-hat as 'ear candy.'" The combination cuts nicely through Spock's thick Mellotron textures. Nick dials up low end with loosely tensioned Aquarian DeJohnette tom heads, ambient mic's, and studio compression.

Spock's Beard enjoys a substantial following. "We've gotten lucky," says Nick, "because our label, Metal Blade, is really behind the band. We feel like a big fish in a small pond, rather than the other way around."

**T. Bruce Wittet**

"I was  
**BLOWN AWAY!**  
A **PRO KIT** without paying  
serious money."

Morgan Rose of Sevendust checks  
out Tama's new Rockstar kit  
with the Star-Cast Mounting System

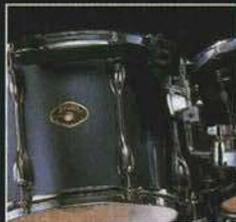
# TAMA ROCKSTAR

"You know the old saying, 'you only get what you pay for?' Well Tama just blew that right out of the water.

"I knew the older Rockstar kits because I owned and played them. Good drums for the price. But when Tama asked me to check out the new Rockstar set with the Star-Cast mounting system, I was blown away."

With addition of Star-Cast mounted toms to all the other improvements we've made since Morgan first played Rockstar, it's no wonder he was blown away. With better heads, the MYH900 modular tom holder, high tech bass drum hoops, great sounding shells, and other upgrades, Rockstar drums now have more professional features than a lot of pro priced kits.

Morgan says it better: "Basically you're getting a pro kit without paying serious money. Tama Rules!!"



When rack toms are suspended by the rims they vibrate much more freely and sustain better than toms suspended by the shell. Which is why so many modern pro kits feature suspended toms. Now Rockstar drums come equipped the simplest and most effective version of suspended tom mounting available, the Star-Cast mounting system.

# Smithereen Dennis Diken

W o r k i n g D r u m m e r

**W**hat is a working drummer? Studio session player, live performer, producer, liner-notes author, jingle composer, and full-time member of The Smithereens: Now *that* is a "working drummer"!

For Dennis Diken, the past couple of years have been filled with projects: arranging, producing, and drumming on Ben E.



King's track for *One Step Up/Two Steps Back: The Songs Of Bruce Springsteen* (Right Stuff/EMI); performing on Debby Schwartz's *Wrong Of Passage* (Mercury); playing drums and co-producing Dan Markell's *Big Ideas* album (Fermada Nowhere Music), and much much more. One wonders when Diken has time to sleep.

Growing up with Smithereens guitarist Jim Babjak, bass player Mike Mesaros, lead singer/gui-

tarist Pat DiNizio, and a bunch of 45s, Diken learned how to play by listening to recordings and then jamming with the guys. A self-described "song player," with influences like Ringo, Hal Blaine, and Earl Palmer, it seems Diken's sum is greater than his parts. "What I've always admired in drummers and tried to put forth in my musical endeavors is the ability to play the song and to use, more than anything, my heart, soul, and imagination."

Diken made use of all those tools and much more when recording the new Smithereens CD. He played an old double-headed (no hole) 14x22 Slingerland kick, a WFL 9x13 rack tom, and a Ludwig 16x16 floor tom. His kit was topped off by an (out of the box) Ludwig Black Beauty snare drum. "Whatever sounds good and makes players play good is all that matters," he says. Live, Diken plays a four-piece Pearl Masters Custom kit and Zildjian cymbals with Pro-Mark sticks.

This year will find Diken touring and promoting the new Smithereens release, in addition to writing and recording various projects for his Nun Bett-R Productions company. When at home, he'll be writing liner notes, playing around New York City with various artists, and working in his home studio. "I'll always be writing, looking to produce, doing session work, and playing with the band. There's too much work to be done—and too much fun to have!"

Fran Azzarto

## SLEATER-KINNEY'S Janet Weiss IN THE SPOTLIGHT

**S**ome people might say that Janet Weiss picked up the drumsticks a little bit late. While many drummers start during childhood, playing in school bands, and taking lessons, Weiss, now thirty-three, didn't start playing until she was twenty-two. Since then, Weiss hasn't wasted any time. Sitting behind the kit with indie-rock faves Sleater-Kinney and the progressive pop duo Quasi, Weiss is confident in her drumming ethos.

"Sometimes it's easy to fall back on the first thing that you hear when you're working on a new part or a new song," she says. "But I push myself to interpret the song on the drums, guide it, and lead the listener through its dynamic changes. Sometimes that involves not playing the hi-hat or ride and playing less traditionally. It can be a 'less is more' kind of thing, like maybe just playing the toms or some syncopated thing that completely changes the dynamic of the song."

Though she looks to a range of drummers for influence, Weiss leans most heavily on Charlie Watts and Ringo Starr. She calls Watts "one of the best drum hook players," and grooves on Ringo for similar reasons.

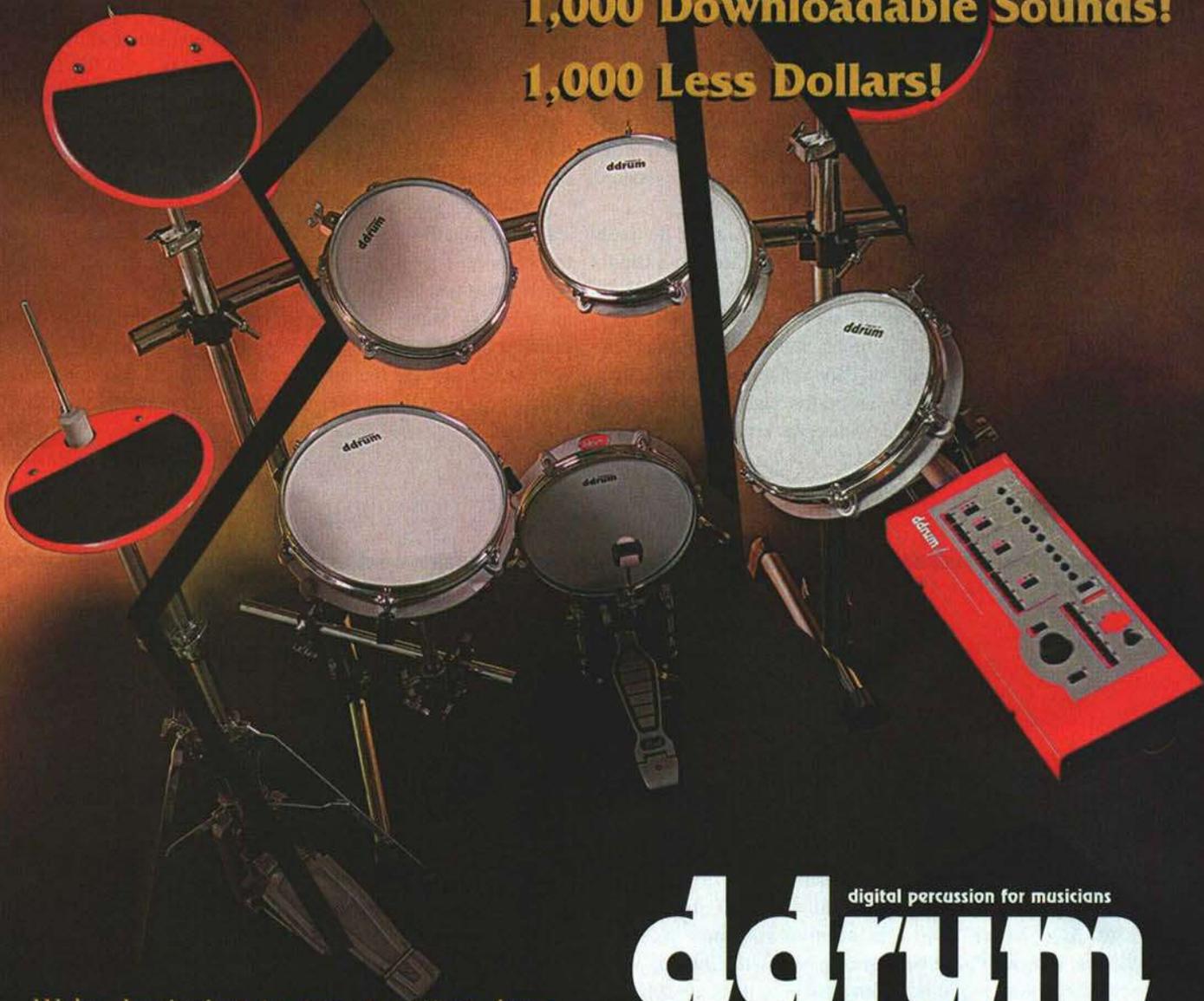


Weiss and the rest of Sleater-Kinney are currently touring in support of their latest release, *The Hot Rock* (Kill Rock Stars). Initially "Don't Talk Like," "Burn Don't Freeze," and "Get Up" were Janet's favorite songs on the album. But she says touring gets her more in touch with the power of other songs on the record. "'God Is A Number' is very dynamic, and there's a moment where the whole thing blows wide open, which is kind of fun. And 'The End Of You' has a big snare roll. It's my moment in the spotlight."

Harriet Schwartz

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# Jim Bogios

## Beating Crow

**L**et's be polite and say that Jim Bogios is a bit, um, hyperactive. Oh, there might be better ways to put it. But how else would you describe someone who spends six weeks on the road with Sheryl Crow, only to spend the majority of his time at home during a short break where? In a recording studio! Bogios just laughs it off. "I do it because it's fun," he says. "Sometimes I wish I could chill a little bit, but I get bored. There's nothing more fun than a good session or a good gig."

In addition to being a part of Crow's touring band for the past three years, Bogios has been hopping into the studio with a handful of bands from the Bay Area, as well as being the drummer of record for Papa's Culture and its off-shoot Sunkist. It was with Papa's Culture where Bogios says he learned the ins and cuts of the art of music. "The thing about Papa's Culture was that the band was so diverse. All the musicians in the band had to play lots of styles. We played all the time, so whatever kind of player I am today stems from being in that band."

Whatever that may be, Jim's found a way to meld a handful of different styles and make them work in Crow's band, which will go from out-and-out rock to ballads to pop numbers all within one set. It's also enabled him to take the tracks recorded by other drummers and make them his own. From what Bogios says, the challenge isn't covering their tracks note-for-note or even fill-for-fill. "More than playing everybody's licks, I think the trick is to capture whatever *essence* they had on that song."

And then it's to take that sound and make it come together on stage. In fact, Bogios insists that providing that type of performance is how he'd like to be remembered by fans. "I think the most important thing is to make the music feel good and to bring a lot of energy to the table," he states. "There's nothing worse than seeing a band that's flat or uninspiring. You gotta kick people in the ass and provide that energy, that wave for everyone to ride. You're all in it together, but a bad drummer is gonna kill any band."

**David John Farinella**

# Fran Breen

## Irish Twist With Lucinda Williams

**"W**e've been getting so many reviews, and people keep calling me 'John Green,'" jokes Fran Breen. "So I'm anonymous once again." Though reviewers who have been seeing him with Grammy winner Lucinda Williams might be getting it wrong, fans of such acts as Nanci Griffith, The Everly Brothers, Mary Black, The Commitments, and The Waterboys know Breen's real name.

By moving to the United States from his hometown of Dublin, Ireland in 1993, Fran continued riding a personal wave of success that started with a handful of Dublin bands. His Irish roots, he explains, provided him with a great musical education. "Ireland is a great cross-pollination of what goes on in England and the States. That's really good for your playing because you're hearing everything that goes on." The well-schooled and full-of-feeling playing that he heard coming from the States, Breen adds, made him want to jump the pond. When he landed here, Breen contin-

ued his sideman dates with Nanci Griffith and added a tour with The Everly Brothers to his resume.

Throughout his career Breen has learned what it takes to come into a situation after someone's laid down the original ideas. "It's difficult to fill in for anybody, because everybody has their own style and feel," he says. "You can get any Tom, Dick, or Harry to come in, but to make everybody else feel as comfortable as the guy who was there is a challenge." As a prime example, Fran points to the recent Williams tour, when he came in after Donald Lindley passed away. "He was the only guy Lucinda had ever worked with. I would say there were a couple of lumps and bumps in the road along the way, but nothing that couldn't be sorted out. I now hear from people that this is more of a band than the other band was, simply because we listened close to what they were doing and have brought it on a bit."

**David John Farinella**

# news

**Butch Vig** is in the studio with Garbage working on a record that should be released by the end of the year.

**Mark Schulman** is on tour with Cher.

**Roy "Rata" Mayorga** is on tour with Soulfly.

**Charlie Drayton** is on the recently released *Jellycream* by Doyle Bramhall II.

**Milt Sutton** is on *Little Mystery* by Todd Thibaud.

**Style Scott** is on Roots Radics' *Forward Ever, Backwards Never*.

**Willie "Big Eyes" Smith** is on a recent Rounder Records release called *Muddy Waters In Concert 1971*.

**Jason Roeder** is on tour with Neurosis, supporting their recent release, *Times Of Grace*.

**Dan Thompson** can be heard on Protein's current album, *Songs About Cowgirls*.

**Eddie Bayers** has been working on a George Strait Christmas album. Congrats to Eddie for winning the ACM "drummer of the year" award.

Cork, featuring **Corky Laing** (of Mountain fame) and The Spin Doctors'

Eric Schenkman, have just released *Speed Of Thought*.

**Geoff Dugmore** is on Level 42 bassist Mark King's *One Man*.

**MD** contributor **Mike Raid** can be heard on the latest release, *Distorted Views*, from guitarist Michael Harris.

**Pete Thomas** is on Ron Sexsmith's *Whereabouts* and Randy Newman's *Bad Love*.

**Ricky Parent** is on Enuff Z'nuff's *Paraphernalia*.

The impressive playing of **Jim Gordon** can be heard on *Now That Everything's Been Said* by The City, ostensibly Carole King's first solo album, available for the first time in thirty years.

**Two Lenny White** albums from the '70s have been recently released on CD, *Big City* and *Venusian Summer*.

Latin great **Tito Puente** received an honorary doctorate of music degree from Columbia University.

Twenty-one-year-old New Yorker **Samantha Maloney** has officially replaced **Patty Schemel** in Hole.

# DRUM DATES

*This month's important events in drumming history.*

**Art Blakey** was born on October 11, 1919. He passed away in October of 1990. **Gene Krupa** also passed away this month, in 1973. **Papa Jo Jones** was born October 7, 1911 in Chicago, Illinois.

Speaking of Chicago, drummer **Danny Seraphine** and company scored their first Number-1 record, "If You Leave Me Now," on October 23, 1976.

In October of 1922 Albert Della-Porta founded the **Premier Drum Company**.

And on October 17, 1963, **Ringo** recorded "I Want To Hold Your Hand" with his buddies John, Paul, and George.

## Birthdates

**Earl Palmer** (October 25, 1924)

**John "Jabo" Starks** (October 26, 1938)

**Roger Hawkins** (October 16, 1945)

**Mike Clark** (October 3, 1946)

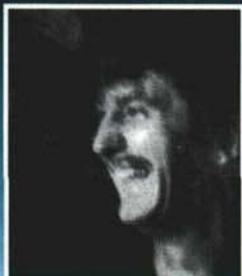
**Chad Smith** (October 25, 1962)

**Tommy Lee** (October 3, 1962)

**Zak Hanson** (October 22, 1985)



# LOOK WHO'S SHOWING THEIR STRIPES



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**Fran Breen**  
LUCINDA WILLIAMS



"Pro-Mark makes STICKS and nobody makes them better."

**Ian Paice**  
DEEP PURPLE



"Pro-Mark is simply the best."  
**Marco Minnemann**  
ILLEGAL ALIENS



"Stick with Pro-Mark and you stick with the best!"  
**Bill Bruford**  
EARTHWORKS



"The versatility and durability of Pro-Mark 7AS allow me to play with power as well as finesse."

**Dennis Diken**  
SMITHEREENS

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# Thomas Haake

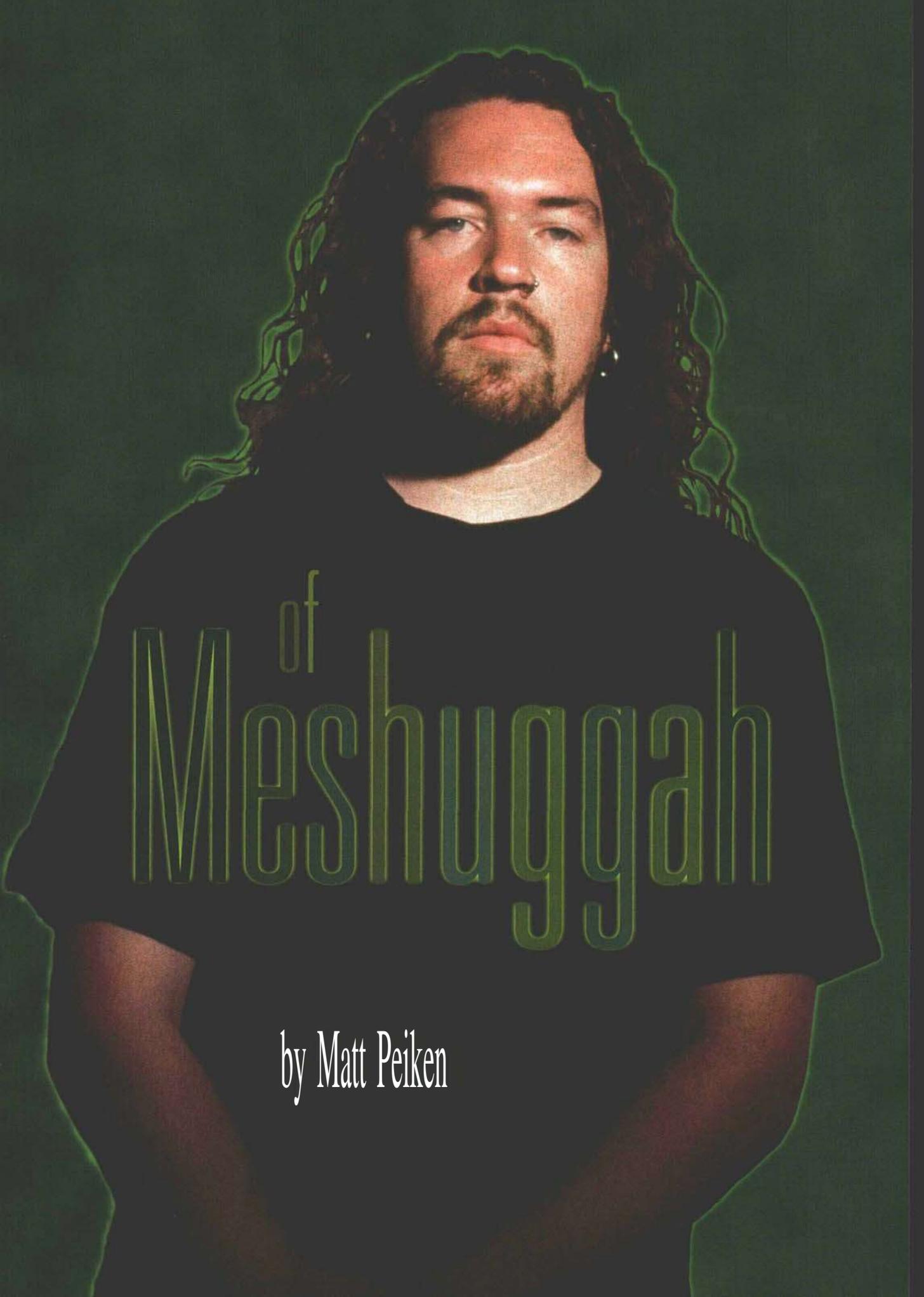
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## Earlier this year

*Rolling Stone* declared Meshuggah one of metal's most important bands. But you'd never know it in the United States. Meshuggah hardly cracked American consciousness, let alone the charts, during a decade of mostly European recording and touring. An opening slot on Slayer's tour this past fall was big on prestige but low on exposure. The band had to forfeit at least one performance because Tomas Haake couldn't squeeze his drums onto what was left of the stage. And they performed so early at the Milwaukee Metal Fest that a fan who flew in from Japan solely to see Meshuggah missed their set.

But if there's honor in innovation, intricacy, and intensity, then Meshuggah might have no metallic peer. Nor might Haake. As proof, slip on *Chaosphere*, 1998's most intoxicating, brain-bending disc of hardcore-tinged heaviness.

---



of  
Meshuggah

by Matt Peiken

"Sometimes I'd stand up and scream and throw my sticks, just because I was so frustrated."

**Although there's** enough there to titillate simple headbangers, more adventurous ears can spend countless hours attempting to unravel the polyrhythmic and gymnastic twists. Haake (pronounced HOKE-ee) attacks his parts like a mathematician, confidently smoothing out the seemingly complex. The results are remarkable, considering Meshuggah's grueling, pressure-packed creative process—which, with deadlines looming, included trashing an entire album's worth of music and starting fresh.

Tomas Haake grew up burning his ears on Sabbath, Maiden, and Priest, then later turning to Marillion, Rush, and Bay Area thrash. During Meshuggah's early years, Haake went to woodworking school as a career safety net. Now when he works with wood, it's mainly to build loud, dense snare drums that can cut through an arsenal of amplifiers.

As Meshuggah made small inroads this spring into America's metallic echelon, Haake talked about Meshuggah's creative evolution, the panic behind the making of *Chaosphere*, and his growth as a drummer.

**MP:** Tell me about your start with drums.

**TH:** I got my first kit when I was about seven, but even before that I played on "kits" made of pillows. I stacked up small pillows for the small toms and bigger pillows for the big toms. I did the same thing with cookie jars with plastic lids, and I filled them up with cotton, gravel—anything I could find to make different tones. My first real set was a small Premier jazz kit, and the first music I played to was Elvis Presley tapes. Then I got a kit that was a mix of a few different brands. It had something like six rack toms—just huge. I got a Pearl double-kick pedal when they first started making them. It didn't feel at all like it would feel playing two kick drums, but it worked okay for me at the time.

I saw drum teachers a couple of times, but I was never into practicing the rudiments. I was too young, and I didn't have the determination. I started taking drums more seriously around fourteen, and by then I was already playing in bands. They were thrash bands, and we did a lot of odd-time music. I don't know if I had any special ability to play that kind of music, but it's sort of what I grew up with, so it didn't seem strange to me. Marten [a guitarist from Meshuggah] and I grew up together and always played in the same bands, and that's just the music we made.

The most serious practicing I did to increase my overall abilities was during my first year with Meshuggah. The other guys were way ahead of me, at least in the direction they wanted Meshuggah to go in, and

they were really on me to catch up. It was a different kind of complexity than I was used to. Before that, I was in an instrumental band called Barophobia, which was somewhat Rush-like, but more a mix of thrash and metal. Meshuggah had already passed that. They didn't deal a lot with odd time, but it *sounded* like odd time. We practiced for stretches between eight and fourteen hours some days so that I could keep up with what they were doing.

**MP:** Much of the complexity of Meshuggah's music seems to come from what the drums are doing. Your polyrhythms contribute to that odd-time feel.

**TH:** Well, I had to learn to play like that. I could more or less play the songs they were doing at the time I joined, but I kind of misunderstood them. I could handle it on a *physical* level, but I was in the wrong place *mentally*. Sometimes I'd stand up and scream and throw my sticks, just because I was so frustrated. I knew what I wanted to get out of the drumset, but I just couldn't pull it off.

I made it harder on myself, too. I was used to playing in really odd rhythms, like 13/16, and I kept wanting to turn around the rhythm like that. I had to get over the threshold to where I could flow with the music and not think about it too much. I spent a lot of time with the guys as they were writing music with their porta-studios. Being close to them during the creative process helped me understand how they wanted the drums to be.

**MP:** It's one thing to understand what they



wanted, but another thing to pull it off. How did you develop the agility to start and stop these complex patterns and move so fluidly into another pattern?

**TH:** We rehearse new songs very slowly, not only to break down the tempos better, but to learn to play the parts more accurately. It's more difficult than you'd think to play at half-tempo and still be clear and accurate with your ghost strokes and your timing. But as for agility, I don't consider myself as being fluid or smooth even now.

I'm not a fast drummer, in my opinion. I can't do fast single-stroke rolls for a very long time. But if you're talking about independence, that's just something that came along over a certain number of years. My bass drum work is more intricate now than it used to be. It just took time to feel comfortable enough to not fight with the music so much and just play what feels right. But when I listen to our first album right now, I wonder sometimes if I could still do some of that stuff. The first album was a lot more jazzy, and the hand work was maybe a little more complex. During the early years, we all listened to a lot of fusion rock, and that came across in the way we wrote music and the way I approached drums.

**MP:** Everyone in Meshuggah writes music independent of each other, and you use the Internet to communicate ideas back and forth. How do you think that's affected your end results?

**TH:** We used to write music how most bands do. We would bring ideas into the rehearsal studio and jam things out and make tapes. But we started doing things more independently as the technology grew, around '94 or '95, and I think it's allowed us

# I knew what I wanted to get out of the drumset, but I just couldn't pull it off."

to be more precise and intricate with our parts.

Our guitarists and vocalists are all very good with drum machines—my whole kit is sampled—and they'll send me MP3 files with complete drum parts on them. I write music, too, but often I will take a drum part someone else has written and practice it so I can play it live. I definitely do a lot of homework, but not nearly as much now as I used to. Sometimes the parts are very intricate; I'll listen to a file one of them

has made and think, "Thank you very much!" But they've never written anything that I just couldn't play.

**MP:** It's interesting that some of your drum parts come from your bandmates, whereas you write most of the lyrics. How did that come about?

**TH:** I wrote lyrics for a couple songs on the first album, and it just grew from there. I guess the other guys just like the way I write. I'm inspired by films, books—a lot of Clive Barker—but I'm not trying to write about any specific themes or ideas. The latest album is very tripped-out, kinda weird. I have a bunch of lyrics just lying around in my computer. Once we finish a song, I might feel a certain way about it and take lyrics I've already written and fit them into the song. I try to pay attention to how the vocals fit with the other instruments—matching accents, figuring out how long the notes should be. Sometimes I have to take away certain lyrics because they won't fit. I'll have to rewrite the whole passage so it makes sense.

**MP:** Did you work your parts out thorough-



ly before recording *Chaosphere*?

**TH:** We started writing material at the beginning of 1998. We had studio time set for that May, but the music just didn't feel right. We wanted something different, so we scratched all the music we had up to that point. But we still had to go into the studio at the time we'd booked. So we only rehearsed seven times before we had to record, and we didn't even have lyrics for half the songs. By the time we got into the studio, only one song was complete. So we just got in and basically recorded one riff at a time.

I'd figure out one drum part and record that, then figure out another part and record that. It was a lot of starting and stopping. On top of that, it was just me, alone. The guitarists didn't know the songs any better than I did, so having one of them play along with me would have doubled the risk of messing it up. Plus, we had to hustle because we only had a certain amount of time before we had to be out of that studio.

We had the songs in the computer, so we had a reference all the way. We knew what

parts were supposed to go where; we just hadn't rehearsed them. I can tell the difference between this record and other Meshuggah records. The drum parts are more stripped. There aren't a lot of fills. It's pretty much what we had on the computer, because I just didn't have the time to get comfortable enough with the material to lay over and around it. I put all my concentration on just nailing the parts. I don't think the songs really suffer from it, because there really isn't a lot of room in the music to play around with my

parts.

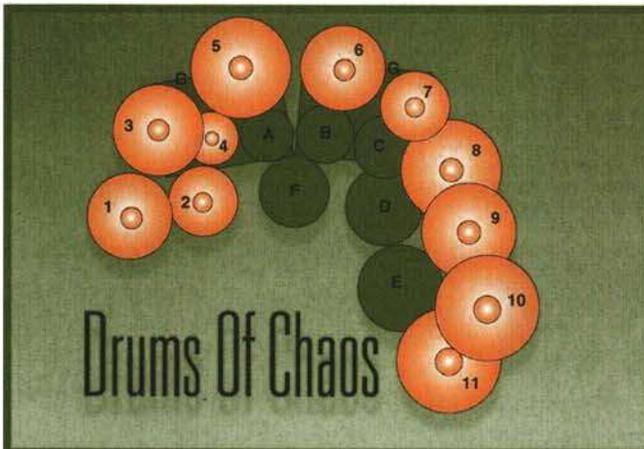
**MP:** What are some keys to maintaining a solid tempo with such busy music?

**TH:** I'm not an expert at it by any means. I still practice a lot to be steady, but I also rely a lot on our lead guitarist—at least live. He has a great sense of rhythm and meter, like a clock, and that helps me to stay disciplined. Sometimes I can tell if I'm speeding up or if I'm off a bit because he's very solid.

**MP:** Tell me about the snare drum you built. I have to say, it's an incredible instrument.

**TH:** Thanks. I put between eighty to one hundred hours into it. It's a block shell made out of pockenholz. It's not the densest wood on the world, but it's the hardest. The wood alone cost me around \$400. It's kind of tricky to use, too, because it's very fat and difficult to glue together. I had to use an ammonia or acetone to clean up the surface, so there's a lot of labor involved. Every block has three holes drilled into it and is fitted with wooden joists.

The drum is somewhere between 13 1/2" and 14" in diameter at the head. I had thick brass lugs made especially for it, and I use



## Drums: Sonor Designer Series

- A. 10x10 tom
- B. 12x12 tom
- C. 13x13 tom
- D. 16x16 tom
- E. 18x18 tom
- F. 7x14 pockenholz block-construction snare (made by Tomas)
- G. 18x22 bass drum

## Pedals: Axis

## Cymbals: Sabian Hand-Hammered

- 1. 18" Dark Chinese
- 2. 14" Rock Hats
- 3. 19" crash/ride
- 4. 10" splash
- 5. 21" Dark crash
- 6. 18" Chinese (with 15" crash on top)
- 7. 14" Mini Chinese
- 8. 21" Power Bell ride
- 9. 20" thin Chinese
- 10. 22" Darkcrash
- 11. 18" Ed Thigpen Crystal Bell ride

birch bands for reinforcement. It's constructed like a conga. Every single piece is graded, cut at a 4° angle, and about an inch thick. Obviously, it's a very loud drum, but it's surprisingly bright. And what's amazing about this drum is that, unlike most snare drums when you hit them really hard, this one doesn't choke.

**MP:** I love the green color. Is it a dye?

**TH:** No, that's actually the natural color of the wood. But I wanted to maintain that color, so I dyed it softly. If I didn't, even after lacquering it would have turned brown after a certain amount of time.

**MP:** Do you see yourself doing more of this kind of work down the road, perhaps for other drummers?

**TH:** Definitely. I've already built an electric bass, and it turned out really well. Our bassist has played it and he really likes it, but I wouldn't let him take it on the road because I didn't want anything to happen to it.

**MP:** You've played around a lot with your kit over the years, haven't you?

**TH:** I had a Sonor Phonic Plus until about four years ago. I played a Pearl Custom Z for a year and a half, and now I'm back to Sonor, playing the Designer series. I made

the latest record with the new kit. It's not like I was more satisfied with Sonor than Pearl, because the Phonic Plus drums were really hard to tune. The Designer drums are a thinner-shelled maple and it's a lot easier to get a good sound out of them.

**MP:** Are you tuning to specific pitches?

**TH:** I try to match my rack toms to the first three notes of that jazz song. [Tomas hums the introduction to Louis Prima's "Sing Sing Sing."] I use my floor toms for a different purpose, more like deep thunder. So I'm not as meticulous about the floor tom sound, as long as there's a difference between the 16" and 18".

I'm using coated Ambassador heads because I want the drums to sing, so to speak. I don't see a lot of metal drummers using those because they're not as durable. I do change heads often, but it's worth it for me. Ambassadors are great for attack and a lot of punch.

**MP:** Why do you use Axis kick pedals?

**TH:** They're very smooth and fast. I get really irritated when I can feel give anywhere. With a chain pedal, the plate continues moving after you drop your foot off it. But since Axis pedals have a firm link in between, you don't get that movement.

There's absolutely no give in the heel plate, either. They're very accurate and solid, and once the tensioning is set, I never have to readjust them.

By the way, I play barefoot. I think it started from playing my drums in the house. I suppose if I'd played outside or in the garage when I was little, I would have had shoes on. But now, I can only play barefoot. I've tried thin-sole shoes, and I suppose if I were playing real fast and long double bass parts, it would be better to use shoes for the support. But for the music we play, I need to feel my bass drums more.

**MP:** What are your long-range goals as far as music and drumming?

**TH:** I don't really care about doing anything outside of Meshuggah, because I feel there are no boundaries with our music. I don't think I've come anywhere close to mastering this music at all. I have a long way to go and so much to learn, and it's always challenging on many different levels. Right now, I just want more people to discover us. And I'd like to get to the point where we don't have to worry about working under anybody's schedule but our own.



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## David Silveria

**Q**I'm pretty sure that you used a green Tama drumset to record the first, self-titled KoRn album, and also *Life Is Peachy*. Was it a double-bass kit? What were the sizes of the drums? Also, what cymbals did you use?

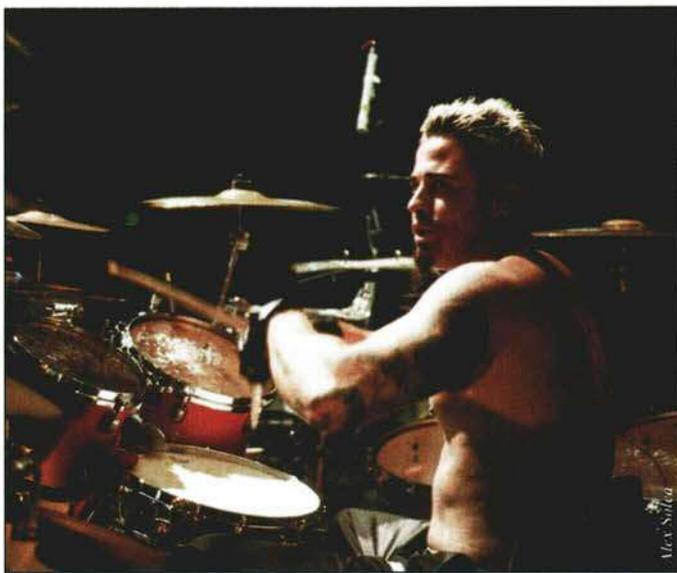
SPyder  
via Internet

**A**Actually, I recorded both records with a double bass pedal on a single drum. I used a DW double pedal at the time, but now I use a Tama Iron Cobra.

I use a smaller-sized kit than a lot of rock drummers: 20" kick, 10", 12", 14", and 16" toms, a 20" Gong Drum, and a 6 1/2x14 snare. I also use some electronic pads.

On both of the records you mention I used Paiste Rude cymbals. I now use their Signature Power series. I have a couple of 18" crashes, one 20" crash, an 18" China, 8" and 10" splashes, a 12" bell cymbal, and a 22" Power ride.

I hope this is enough info for you. Thanks for the support!



## John "JR" Robinson

**Q**I've always been impressed by the solid grooves you lay down. A lot of that has to do with your bass drum parts. They always seem so fluid and comfortable. Do you play heel down or heel up? Also, what type of bass drum pedal do you prefer, and how do you have it adjusted?

Paul Melvin  
Sarasota, FL

**A**A number of years ago I switched to an Axis foot pedal. It gave me the finesse I had been looking for. I now use the Axis exclusively. It's great for flat-footed players like myself, as well as for heel-up players. It has many adjustments, allowing you to tailor your pedal to the kind of music you play. I like to keep my spring tension not too tight. Try it out and enjoy!



## Terry Bozzio

**Q**I've seen you perform on several occasions, and I'm amazed by your incredible independence. I'd like to know how many years and how many hours per day you have dedicated to that independence. Also, what different exercises do you perform in your daily workouts?

Brian Hayman  
Port Charlotte, FL

**A**Thanks for your interest and your compliments. I've been formally playing for over thirty-five years now—and I'm very grateful for being able to be a drummer and to have made a living at it (so far).

I've practiced different amounts of time per day at different times in my life. I got up to six hours a day during summers when I was not in school. Nowadays I try to put in an hour a day. If things go well I might get in two to three hours. But I always practice things *I don't know how to do*, in order to learn, grow, and move ahead.

Balance in one's life is an important consideration. By that I mean, don't be obsessive. There are other things in life that have to be done. Sometimes I don't

get to play for weeks. Just keep coming back to it when you can.

The types of things I work on are explained and documented in my videos *Melodic Drumming & The Ostinato, Volumes I, II, and III*, and *Solo Drums*, which you can get at your local drumshop.



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## Jazz Sound From Big Drums

**Q** I own a Tama Artstar II drumkit, with a 14" rack tom, an 18" floor tom, and a 24" bass drum. I bought this kit during my heavy-metal years, but a couple of years ago I started getting into jazz. Until I get the money to buy another kit, what could I do to the drums to help me achieve more of a jazz sound?

Carlos Pena  
Mexicali, B.C., Mexico

**A** If by "a jazz sound" you mean the high, ringing, lively sound often favored by bebop drummers, your best bet is to use single-ply heads (usually white-coated) and to tension them up reasonably high (given the size of your toms). This does not mean to a point where the drums sound choked or "tinny," but rather to a point where they ring with a pure tone, rather than having the deep "thud" or "swooping" pitch more commonly found with rock tuning.

The same goes for your bass drum. Although a 24" is a little big for most jazz situations, remember that the late, great Tony Williams used that size for years. The main aspect of jazz drumming when it comes to bass drums is the lack of muffling used on the drum. Instead, the drum's sound and projection is controlled by the player. Dynamics are the key. You just don't want to slam the drum all the time.

## Triggered Rimclick?

**Q** A friend of mine saw a Kenny Rodgers special on television recently. He noticed that during the song "You Decorated My Life," the drummer was striking something near his hi-hat. This gave the sound of a very consistent cross-stick. We don't think it was a Jam Block. Was it perhaps a trigger pad?

John Dwyer  
via Internet

**A** Although we cannot say for certain, it's very likely that the device being struck was indeed a trigger pad. This has become a very common practice in studios (especially in Nashville) and also in live performance. The cross-stick sound triggered by a pad can be as loud as necessary without actually changing the nature of the sound.

Conversely, if a "live" cross-stick sound must be played louder (by actually hitting the rim harder), the quality of that sound can be adversely affected.

## 18" Rides

**Q** I have a Sabian 18" medium AA crash cymbal. It has a bell sound that works for riding, but it's a little light on the ride sound otherwise. What can I do to make it sound heavier? Someone told me that putting duct tape on the bottom would decrease the vibration. Is this possible? If not, is there such a thing as an 18" ride cymbal, and can you tell me who makes one?

Frank Piraino  
via Internet

**A** Virtually every cymbal company offers 18" ride cymbals, though not in all series and models. They tend to be available most frequently in jazz-oriented models, since that size is and has always been popular for jazz work. For example, Sabian just introduced an 18" version of their Manhattan ride. Check the catalogs of your favorite brands, or contact the customer-service departments of the companies for some guidance.

Taping your current cymbal will cut down on some of the sustain (the vibration). However, it will also reduce projection. Depending on how much volume you need for your ride work, that solution may or may not be effective for you. There is no way we know of to make a cymbal of a given weight sound "heavier" or "thicker."

## The Harry Show

*From time to time we turn a large portion of this department over to our intrepid drum historian, Harry Cangany. As usual, Harry has been hot on the trail of a wide variety of inquiries from MD readers. Here's the latest batch.*

**Q** I came across this old John Grey snare recently. It's a bit "dinged," but otherwise everything is there. Can you tell me anything about its history?

Thomas Watson  
Auckland, New Zealand



**A** John Grey & Sons was established in London in 1832, and was acquired by Rose-Morris & Co. LTD in this century. The Dulcet and Dulcetta drums (like yours) were single-tension models fitted with thumb rods. In 1937 such drums were a little over two English pounds in cost. Yours looks like it survived the Blitz. Good luck with it.

**Q** The only thing I know about the drums I recently purchased is that they were made by a company called Beverly Of England. The floor tom is a 16", the bass drum is a 22". Could you provide any information?

Joe Derrick  
Nackawic, NB, Canada

**A** I asked my good friend John Clarke about Beverly drums. John is a UK studio player who corresponds with me. He said: "In its early days Beverly was a private company, but it was subsequently bought by Premier. Premier then made Beverly drums for Rose-Morris, a London distributor, who marketed them until the mid-1960s. At that point they were discontinued. The drums were designed as semi-pro sets to compete with Ludwig's Club Date series."

This is similar to the "Leedy goes to Slingerland" story. I'd suggest that each of the drums is in the \$80-125 range at this time.

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Photo by Jon Cohan

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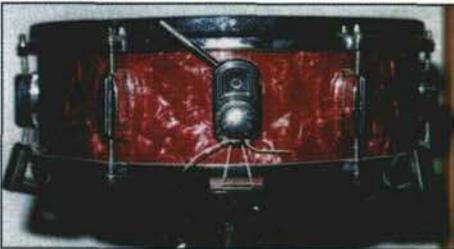


GOOD WOOD . . .perfected



Here are some photos of drums that I've acquired. The old marching snare drum is a 15" size; the red drumkit snare is 14", with cast hoops but no markings, and the Pearl tom is 9x13. I'd be grateful for information on them.

Keith McMenamie  
Manuals, NF, Canada



The marching snare is an Olympic Cadet "side drum" from the '60s. Olympic was a division of Premier. This old guy has been repainted, and someone has tacked silver sparkle on what was once a channel for a decorative band.

The red marine pearl snare is a '60s Japanese import with what appears to be Gretsch hoops and a Micro-Sensitive strainer. That's almost sacrilege to a Gretsch fanatic, so I urge caution if you're seen in public playing this drum. Seriously, I'm pretty sure you have a Tama predecessor made to look like Gretsch. I've seen these hoops on Zim-Gar drums and the strainer on Star drums, both from what is now Tama.

Your Pearl tom is a '70s Slingerland clone. My, have they come a far distance since then!

I'm a Civil War collector, and I purchased these drums from another collector. Allegedly, they've been in a museum for over a century. I'm told that they were drums made for the Confederate army, since the "CS" markings on the leather tabs stands for "Confederate South" or "Confederate States." The badge on the side of the snare (and inside the drum) says: "Nokes & Nicolai, Drums, Tympani, Orchestra Bells, Xylophones And Chimes, 5 Appleton Street, Boston, Mass."

What can you tell me about these drums?

John Cucchi  
Babylon, NY



I wish I had better news, and I hope your antique dealer simply made an honest mistake. Nokes & Nicolai was founded in 1912, and was one of the better-known drum manufacturers of Boston. They were successors to the F.E. Dodge Drum Company, also of Boston, which started in 1868. So there is no way that these drums could have come from the Civil War. (And even if they had, the drum makers of Boston supplied the Union army.) So you don't have a "Confederate South" drum. Perhaps it's a "Chatham School" or "Charlie Smith."

Rope tension snare drums were still popular even after World War I, so it's hard to tell more history than that. Your snare was cataloged as a Rope Street Drum. It cost about \$24 in 1912, while the bass drum was priced at \$60.



## Expand Your Sound...

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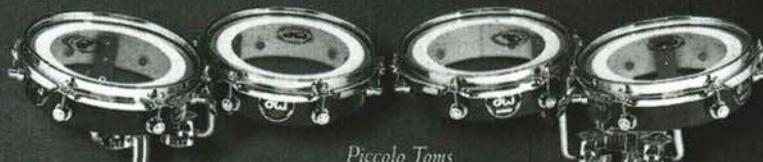
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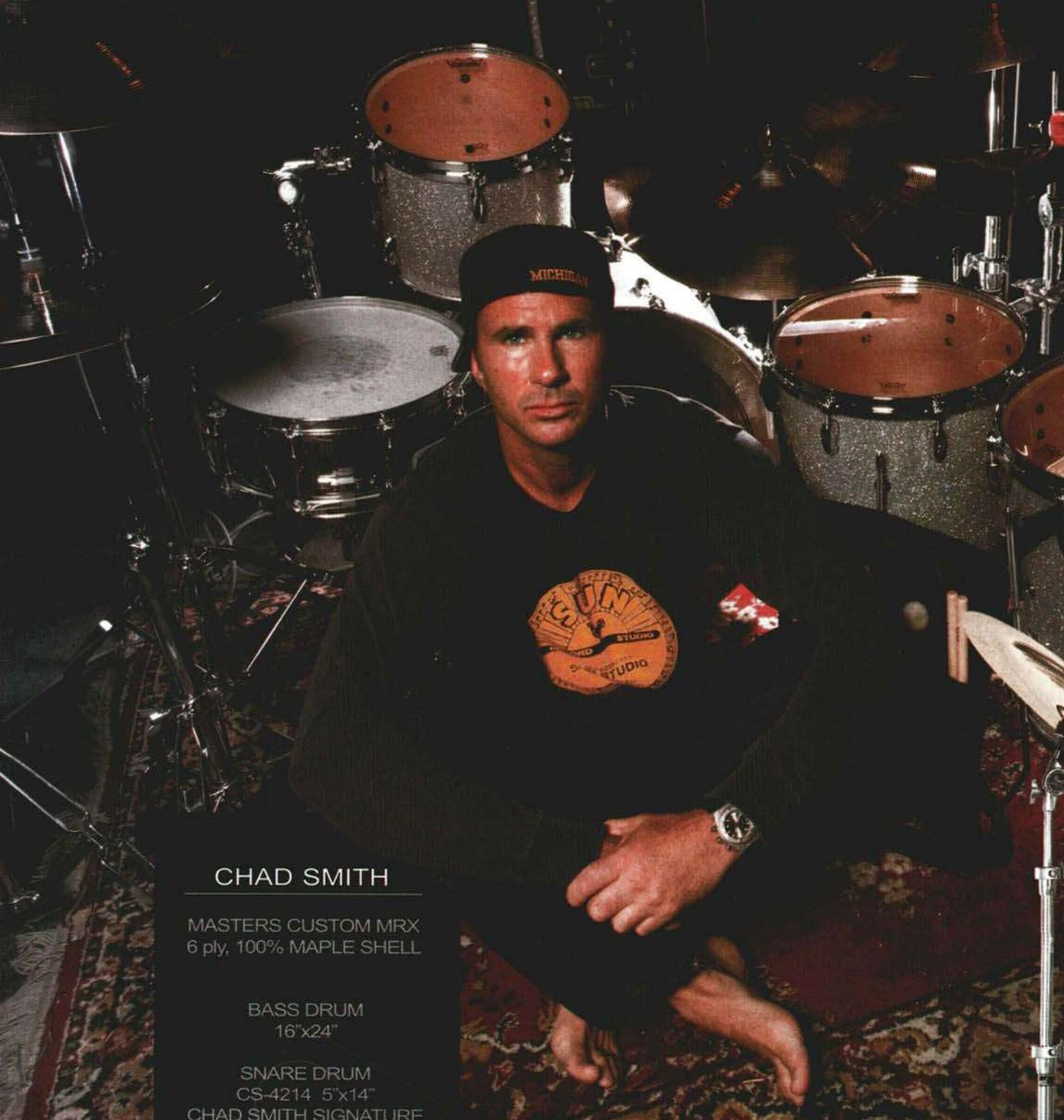
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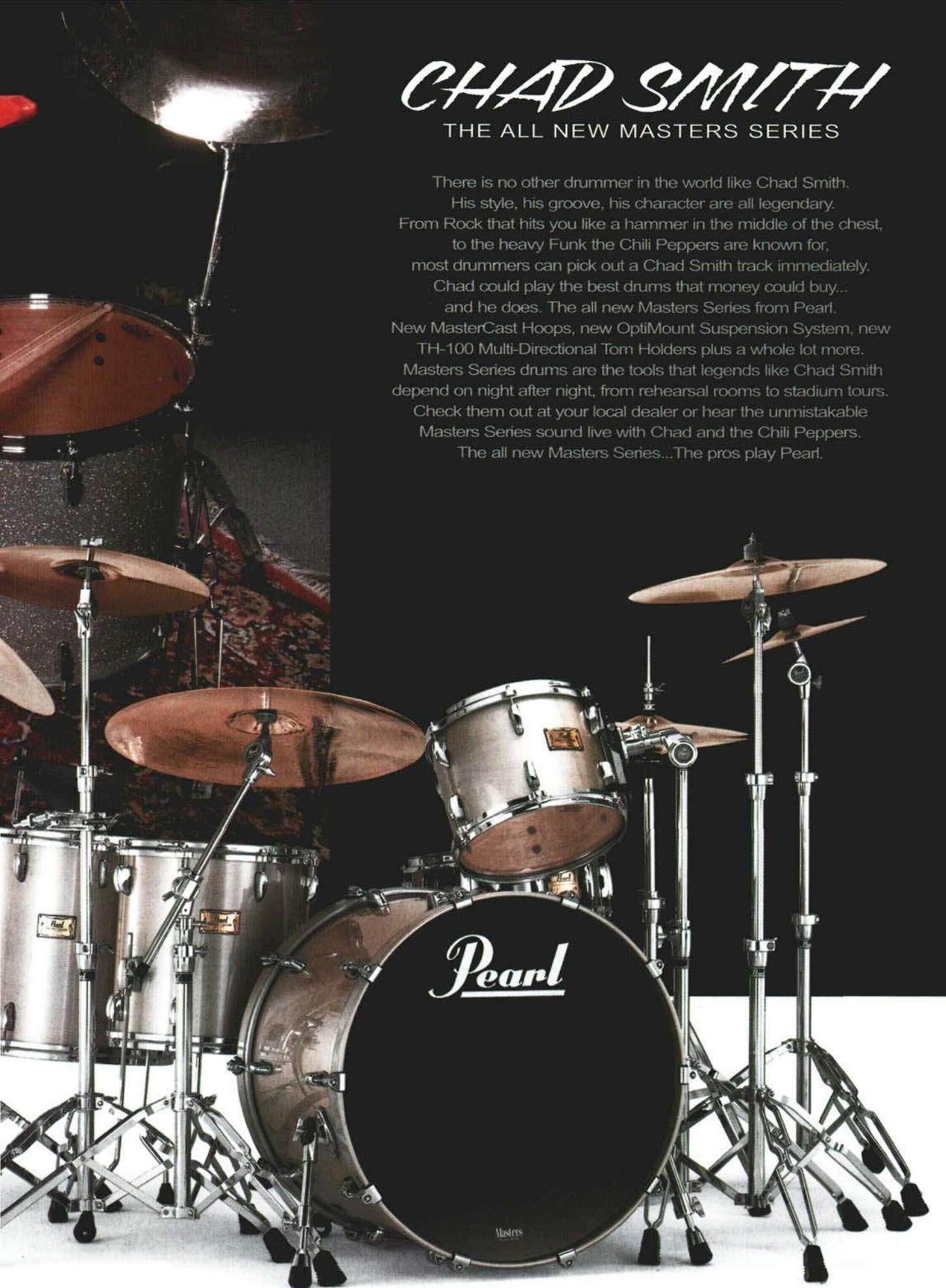
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## The Cult Of Personality

### Tama Signature Snare Drums, Starclassic Performer Birch Kit and Detachable Backrest Thrones



Artists the caliber of Simon Phillips, Bill Bruford, and Kenny Aronoff are known for their recognizable, "signature" snare sounds. Tama now offers those sounds to the rest of us with Signature snare drums bearing their names.

9-ply maple/birch/maple shells with a black metallic sandblast finish. Their lugs and steel Mighty Hoops have black chrome hardware. The BB146 model (\$799.99) has a 6x14 shell; the BB1055 (\$699.99) has a 5 1/2x10 shell.

Simon's Gladiator model (\$599) features a 5 1/2x14, 1 mm nickel-plated bronze shell and flanged brass Mighty Hoops. The Pageant Model (\$649.99) has a 5x12, 9-ply quilted maple shell with a charcoal quilted finish and die-cast hoops. Both drums have gold-plated hardware.

Both Bill Bruford snares feature with a black metallic sandblast



All three of Kenny's new snares feature 1 mm brass shells with an engraved gloss-black nickel finish. Lugs and brass Mighty Hoops are clear nickel-plated. The KA145 Trackmaster model (\$649.99) has a 5x14 shell; the KA154 Trackmaster (\$549.99) has a 4x15 shell. Then there's the KA145LTD Trackmaster Limited Edition (\$1,599.99), with its shell, lugs, and hoops hand-engraved by master drum craftsman John Aldridge.

Tama's Starclassic Performer kits now feature 100% birch shells (no basswood internal plies), die-cast hoops, and numerous hardware upgrades, including the Star-Cast tom mounting system. Prices start at \$2,599.99.

The First Chair Backrest Throne solves many pack-up problems because the backrest detaches from the seat section. It can also be angled to support drummers who lean forward when they play. It's priced at \$249.99.



## Hit The Silk!

### Brady Silky Oak Finish Snare Drum

New to Brady's exotic wood drum range are snares with nine plies of jarrah and one outer ply of silky oak, the grain pattern of which is said to have a "striking, slightly 3D effect." Exclusive to Brady, the plies are not cross-laminated; their wood grains all run horizontally, resulting in a solid-wood-shell sound. Silky oak finish drums are available in 4x10, 5 1/2x10, 4 1/2x12, 5 1/2x12, 7x12, 4 1/2x14, 5 1/2x14, 6 1/2x14, and 8x14, in a choice of red, black, or natural finish, and are priced from \$679 to \$959.



## The Incredible Shrinking Drum

### Drum Workshop Piccolo Toms

Drum Workshop's new Piccolo Toms are shallow, 8"-diameter, single-headed toms developed in conjunction with Terry Bozzio. Designed for use in a variety of musical situations, they're said to sound like a cross between a concert tom, a bongo, and a small timbale. Piccolo Toms can be used as add-on toms, or tuned to specific pitches for use individually or in pairs, trios, quads, or octaves. They feature 6-ply maple shells, mini-lugs, and clear drumheads, and are priced at \$129 (including DW's TB-12 mounting bracket).



## Hot Items From The Cool North

### Sabian Hand Hammered Manhattan Groove Hats, David Garibaldi Jam Master Hats and Mini-Hats, Richie "Gajate" Garcia Effects, and Molto Symphonic Hand Cymbals

Inspired by R&B guru Zero's enthusiasm for the sounds of the '60s and '70s, Sabian has created 14" Manhattan Groove Hats. Their low-profile shapes produce "warm, funky sounds with a soft and loose traditional feel," while the sticking response remains definite. Open/closed accents recreate the era's hot "hiss-and-shimmer" sound. The cymbals are priced at \$416 per pair, in natural or brilliant finish.

David Garibaldi's Jam Master Mini-Hats have reversible top and bottom cymbals with distinct tonal properties, allowing them to be switched to create, in effect, a second pair of hi-hats. The unlathed medium-heavy top cymbal features an oversized bell for increased volume, response speed, and cutting power. A flat, medium-heavy bottom cymbal solidifies response clarity and precision. When reversed, the sound is "drier and tighter, with a strong but less aggressive sticking presence." Both cymbals are

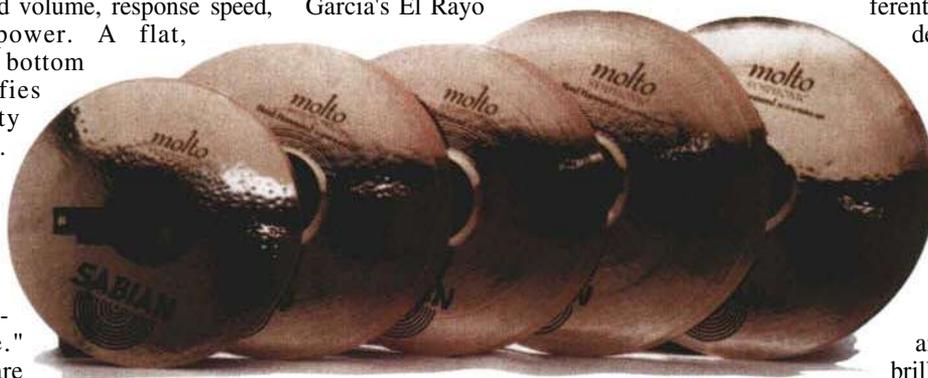
hand hammered for musical warmth. The hats are available in natural or brilliant finish, at \$356 per pair.

The 13" Jam Master Hats feature a low-profile, medium-weight top for a soft, warm, funky sound and feel. The extra-heavy bottom cymbal tightens up the overall sound while boosting the crispness, volume, and projection, "ensuring a funky mix of warm tonality with a bright, cutting edge." When reversed, these hand-hammered cymbals produce a brighter, more definite sound and increased volume. The hats are priced at \$407 per pair, in natural or brilliant finish.

Drummer/percussionist Richie "Gajate" Garcia's El Rayo

("The Lightning") is a flat, B20 bronze cymbal fitted with finger cymbals. Designed to overlay the snare drum head, the interaction of El Rayo with the drum produces a "penetrating, gated white-noise effect, like a synth drum." The Cascara ("The Shell") is a curved, solid B20 bronze plate that can be mounted to the side of a floor tom or timbale. Played with a stick or beater, it produces a dry, metallic response that resonates with the drum. It is designed for playing ostinato, clave, or funky sticking patterns and solos. El Rayo and The Cascara are each priced at \$177.

Each pair of Molto symphonic hand cymbals consists of two cymbals with different, complementary sounds: one designed for warmth, and the other for brightness and penetration. The result is said to be a broad tonal base as well as "the bright pitch necessary to cut through the power of an orchestra." Medium Light and Medium Heavy pairs are available at \$500 (16"), \$588 (18"), and \$680 (20"), in natural or brilliant finish.



## Education Is The Future

### Pro-Mark Future Pro Pack, Scholastic Pro Pack, and Percussion For Children

Pro-Mark's Future Pro Pack includes one pair each of Future Pro drumsticks, xylo/bell mallets, and rubber accessory/marimba mallets, along with a drumstick/mallet bag—all priced at \$59.95. The sticks and mallets are specially designed for younger players with smaller hands. For more advanced students requiring full-size sticks and mallets, the Scholastic Pro Pack includes one pair each of SD-1 maple drumsticks, medium-hard yarn mallets, xylo/bell mallets, multi-purpose timpani mallets, and a durable drumstick/mallet bag—all for \$114.95. Additional mallet selections are available for either pack, and substitutions or custom orders are welcome.

Pro-Mark has expanded its PK educational keyboard mallet line (previously

available only with birch handles) to include six models that are additionally available with rattan handles. Mallets are priced from \$32.50 to \$48.50 (rattan) and \$21.50 to \$36.50 (birch), with soft, medium, or hard heads of rubber or yarn.

Wrist Jingles feature three pairs of tambourine jingles attached to a one-size-fits-all wrist strap. Drummers and percussionists can thus produce interesting sound combinations while playing other instruments. The Jingles are also recommended for elementary school students. They're priced at \$9.95. Also for kids are KidTubz, shorter versions of the Tubz



designed by Pro-Mark endorser Paul Wertico. They're made of a slightly softer material for safe use by children, and are priced at \$6.95.

# Splash 'Em, Crash 'Em, And Bang 'Em

## Paiste Flanger Splash, 15" Signature Fast Crash, and Professional Cymbal Bag

Paiste's new 12" Flanger Splash features "a short, sparkling, splash-like sound," which is further enhanced by "an exotic, modulating decay" and "a dark, airy sound character." It is available in the Percussive Sounds Collection, which features Finger & Accent Cymbals, Cup Chimes, Sound

Disks, Rotosounds, Trash Sets, and Bell Chimes.

In Paiste's Signature line, the new 15" Fast Crash is said to "reach its full and transparent sound character very quickly at all volume levels." The cymbal is further claimed to be "an extremely fast-reacting crash."

Research into drummers' storage and transportation needs has yielded Paiste's 22" Professional Cymbal Bag. Made of heavy-grade black cordura, it features a heavily reinforced bottom and interior dividers that prevent cymbals from touching each other. A 15" outside pocket can hold hi-hats and other smaller cymbals. A lockable heavy-duty zipper provides security, and a hand strap, shoulder strap, and backpack straps provide convenient transportation options.



# Hooked On Sonics

## Sonor Upgraded Sonic Plus II Kits

Evolved from the Sonic Plus series, Sonor's Sonic Plus II kits are now made of six plies of maple surrounding three plies of mahogany. The TIM (T-bar Isolation Mount) system has also been added to this series, which is available in emerald green, midnight black, cherry red, and natural hand-rubbed finishes. All drums are fitted with Unicorn heads, made by Remo. The price for a five-piece set is \$1,650.



# They're Baaaack!

## Ocheltree Carbon Steel Snare Drums

Ocheltree Carbon Steel snare drums (used by Carter Beauford, Billy Cobham, and others) are back! Now marketed under the name of The New Millennium and redesigned with sharper bearing edges, these drums feature 3/16"-thick carbon steel shells with a black chrome finish, chrome-plated brass lugs, die-cast hoops, and the new Piston Drive Snare Strainer by Nickel Drumworks. Each drum is signed by Jeff Ocheltree. Sizes available include 5 1/2x13, 5x14, and 6 1/2x14; prices range from \$500 to \$700.



# Sudden Impact

## Impact Mini Snare Drums and 600 Series Drum Bags

Joining Impact's existing line of 4x14, 6x14, 7x14, and 12x14 snare drums are new 4 1/2x10 (\$280), 5x12 (\$295), and 5 1/2x13 (\$330) Mini Snares. Impact's ultra-thin, super-hard fiberglass shells are said to be "extremely responsive, with a tremendous dynamic range." Drums are available in black, white, chrome, wine red, and grey finishes.

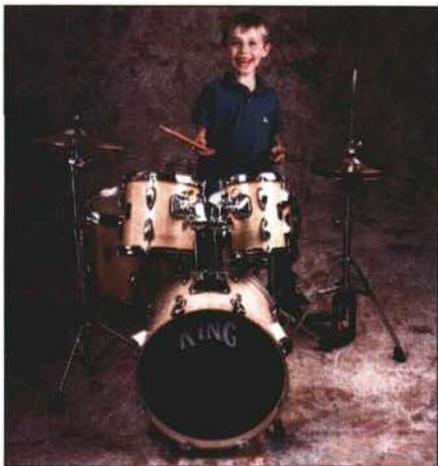
Impact's new 600 Drum Bags feature a water-resistant, puncture-proof outer fabric, 1/2" foam padding, and an E-Z Slide interior, which allows drums to slide in and out of the bag without snagging. Other standard features include heavy-duty webbing, soft-grip handles, and self-healing zippers. A pre-pack for a five-piece drumset is priced at \$234.



## In The Beginning...

### King Drum Company Bopcat Drumset

According to King Drums, their Bopcat is the first complete, professional-quality beginner-sized drumset. It includes a 12x14 bass drum, a 5x10 snare, 8x6 and 8x8 mounted toms, and a 10x12 floor tom, all with high-gloss lacquer-finished maple shells. Also included are a cymbal stand, a snare stand, bass drum and hi-hat pedals, and bronze 14" crash/ride and 10" hi-hat cymbals. All components are sized for aspiring drummers between four and ten years old. Professional features include matching maple bass drum hoops, retractable bass drum spurs with adjustable rubber/steel tips, an individually height-adjustable tom-mounting system with memory locks, and premium-quality two-ply batter heads. The Bopcat is priced at \$995.



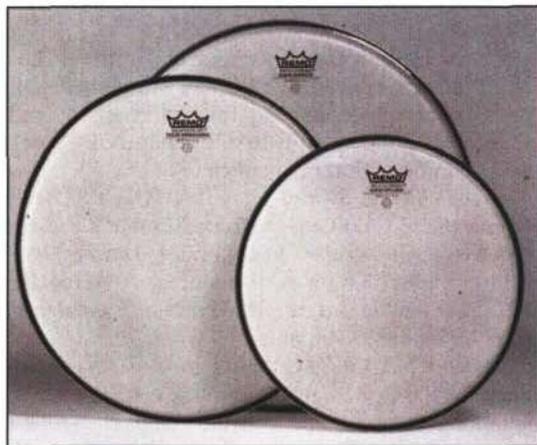
## It's All In Your Heads

### Remo Suede, Ebony Snare-Side Corps, and SoundMaster Heads

Remo's new Suede heads utilize a new process that creates an irregular texture on both sides of the head, producing a tone quality described as "between the resonance of Clear and the warmth of Coated, yet with some of the depth of Renaissance and FiberSkyn." Models are available in Diplomat, Ambassador, and Emperor weights.

Remo also now offers a mid-priced range of heads called SoundMaster. The line includes heads for snare drums and toms (8" to 18"), snare-side (10" to 14"), and bass drums (18" to 24"). They feature Remo's new molded SoundMaster hoop, said to "securely anchor the film while allowing

optimum acoustical balance, articulation, and resonance."



## Tiptoe Through The Tulipwood

### Premier upgraded and Expanded Cabria Series

Introduced in 1998, Premier Cabria drums now feature an inner ply of tulipwood for a cleaner, more attractive finish, as well as enhanced clarity, tone, and projection. The outer face of the bass drum hoop is now color-matched to the rest of the kit, while the inner, front, and back faces are left natural. Black, blue, and silver metallic lacquer finishes have been added, bringing the total number of choices to ten. A new four-piece shell pack includes an 18" bass drum, a 5 1/2x12 snare, a 12" Quick tom,

and a 14" floor tom. The kit is available at \$1,095 to \$1,195, depending on hardware package.

Also upgraded is the Cabria Exclusive series. This line adds an outer layer of basswood and an inner layer of tulipwood to the standard Cabria shells, which feature Premier's special microwave construction. They also feature Quick (slightly shorter) toms, as well as five new stain and lacquer gloss finishes, including amber, emerald green, hazel, Pacific blue, and ruby.

## I'll Have Drums, Stands, And A Shake

### LP Galaxy Giovanni Congas, Generation III Triple Bongos, Triple Conga Stand, Santana Egg Shakers, and Chick-litas

LP Music Group has released a bevy of new percussion equipment for the pro and the amateur player. To begin with, improvements to LP's flagship Galaxy Giovanni Series congas include an extended collar head design that allows a more relaxed hand position and greater head resonance, a new tapered shell for deeper and richer bass tones, and integrated ProCare shell protectors, which remain on the drum during tuning. Prices range from \$705 to \$745, depending on size.

Generation III Triple Bongos, made of kiln-dried Siam oak, feature 9", 6 5/8", and 5" drums, which can be arranged in a triangular configuration or in a straight line. Cuban-style bottoms and traditional rims

are made of high-strength, chrome-plated steel. Shell-hugging lugs provide maximum playing comfort. The bongos are fitted with natural rawhide heads specially treated for soft feel and uniform color, and sell for \$395.

Complete with three of LP's Quick Mount brackets to retrofit any LP conga, LP's new Triple Conga Stand allows for mounting up to three congas in a close, easy-to-play configuration. An optional feature allows one drum to be placed higher than the other two. The stand includes caster wheels with newly improved brakes, and also works with just two congas. It's priced at \$290.



Santana Egg Shakers are durable plastic egg-shaped shakers available in red, yellow, black, blue, and purple. They produce a "lively, delicate" sound. Santana Chick-litas are similar egg-shaped shakers with comfortable plastic handles, and are available in red, blue, and purple. Both shaker types are imprinted with Santana's "Let The Music Set You Free" slogan.

# And What's More

Due to strong used-market demand for the PureCussion compact drumset (also known as the **RIMS Headset**), **GAUGER PERCUSSION** has begun offering replacement parts for the kits. Gauger, again the owner of the product's patents and trademark, will also soon offer redesigned and significantly improved Headsets.

On the heels of their success with Groove Juice cymbal cleaner, MBT has introduced Shell Shine drum shell polish. Shell Shine provides drummers an easy (just spray lightly and buff), no-mess way to bring drum shells to a brilliant shine. Shell Shine comes in a 4 oz. bottle with spray applicator at \$6.95.

*Swing, Swing, Swing!* from **TAHOE PRODUCTIONS** is the long-awaited follow-up to Brace Klauber's acclaimed video retrospective, *Gene Krupa: Jazz Legend*. The new tape presents fourteen complete Krupa performances, covering the years 1937 to 1972, and includes a rare interview with Gene himself. It's priced at \$24.95, plus \$3 shipping.

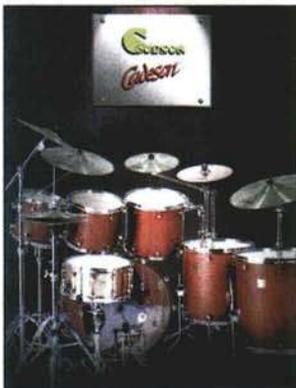
**ALTERNATE MODE** is now offering upgrades to the drumKAT 3.8, 3.9, and Turbo 4.1 versions. On all three models, additional control screens include bank change, kit change, and/or tempo change with one hit on a pad or trigger. New latch mode allows drummers using samplers or sequencers to start a sample or loop with a single hit, and stop it with a second hit on the same pad. Additional improvements on the drumKAT 3.9 include 50 user kits and 16 program changes (with bank changes) per kit. The DK 10 1.8 has also been upgraded with the new latch mode. Additionally, roll mode eliminates the dreaded "machine gun"

effect produced by some drum machines and samplers. Program change allows the user to select a specific kit or sound in a sound module. (Previous upgrades, including velocity curve, pad sensitivity, and gate time are also included.)

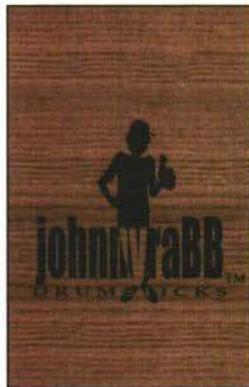
**PURE SOUND PERCUSSION** has created 16-strand, 14" snare wire sets designed to fit the classic and collectible Rogers Dyna-Sonic snare drums. The snare/frame units sell for \$58.80.



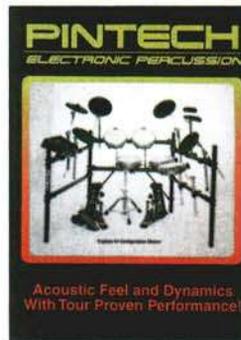
## Read All About It! New Drum and Cymbal Company Catalogs



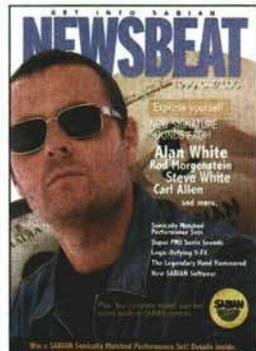
Cadeson Drums are featured in a new full-color, full-line catalog.



JohnnyraBB's new catalog includes drumsticks, piccolo snare drums, wearables, accessories, and educational products.



Pintech's new catalog details their electronic drum pads, hardware, and accessories.



Sabian's 1999 *Newsbeat* features drumset cymbals, wearables, and accessories, as well as new product and endorser news and cymbal selection tips.

Impact is celebrating their twenty-fifth anniversary with a new full-color catalog featuring their drums,

snare kits, carts, cases, and bags. A separate catalog covers all marching percussion products.

# Making Contact

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Australia  
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cpbrady@merriweb.com.au

## Cadeson

2122 Kellington Dr.  
McDonough, GA 30253  
tel/fax: (770) 957-5478

## Drum Workshop

101 Bernoulli Circle  
Oxnard, CA 93030  
tel: (805) 485-6999, fax: (805) 485-1334  
www.dwdrums.com

## Gauger Percussion

15108 Highland Lane  
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## Impact Industries

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Wausau, WI 54403  
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info@impactind.com  
www.impactind.com

## JohnnyraBB

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(800)341-RABB

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tel: (973) 478-6903, fax: (973) 772-3568  
www.lpmusic.com

## MBT International

PO Box 30819  
Charleston, SC 29417  
(800)845-1922

## Paiste

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Brea, CA 92621  
tel: (800) 472-4783, fax: (714) 672-5869

## Pintech

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Greenville, SC 29607  
(800) 445-0506  
play@edrums.com  
www.edrums.com

## Premier

915 N. Lenola Rd.  
Moorestown, NJ 08057  
tel: (609) 231-8825, fax: (609) 231-8829

## Pro-Mark

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Houston, TX 77025-5899  
tel: (800) 233-5250, fax: (713) 669-8000  
info@promark-stix.com  
www.promark-stix.com

## Pure Sound Percussion

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## Remo

28101 Industrial Dr.  
Valencia, CA 91355  
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www.remo.com

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sabian@sabian.com

## Sonor/HSS

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tel: (804) 550-2700, fax: (804) 550-2768

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## Tama

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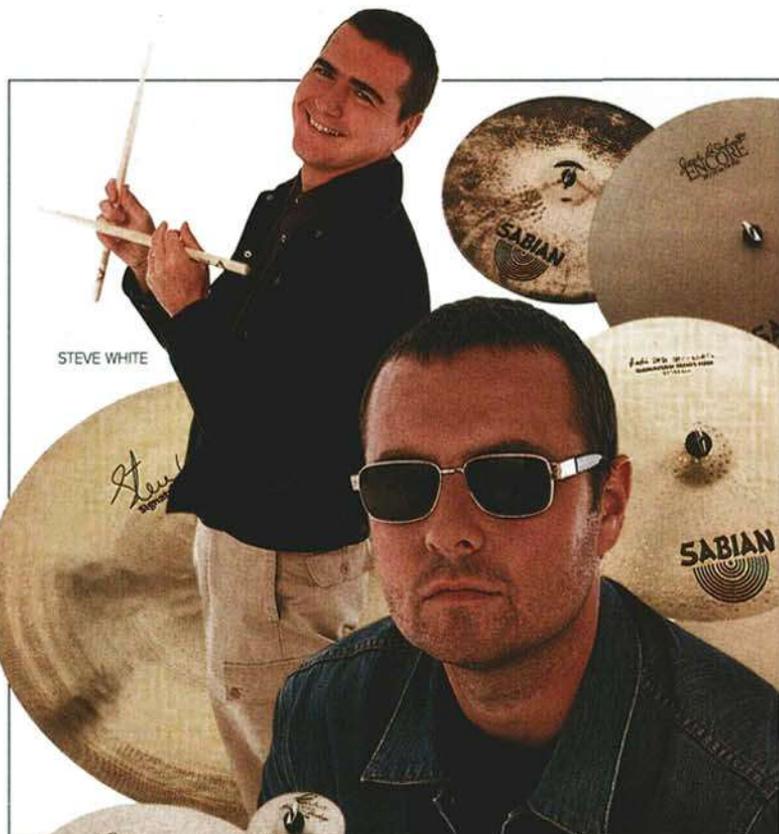
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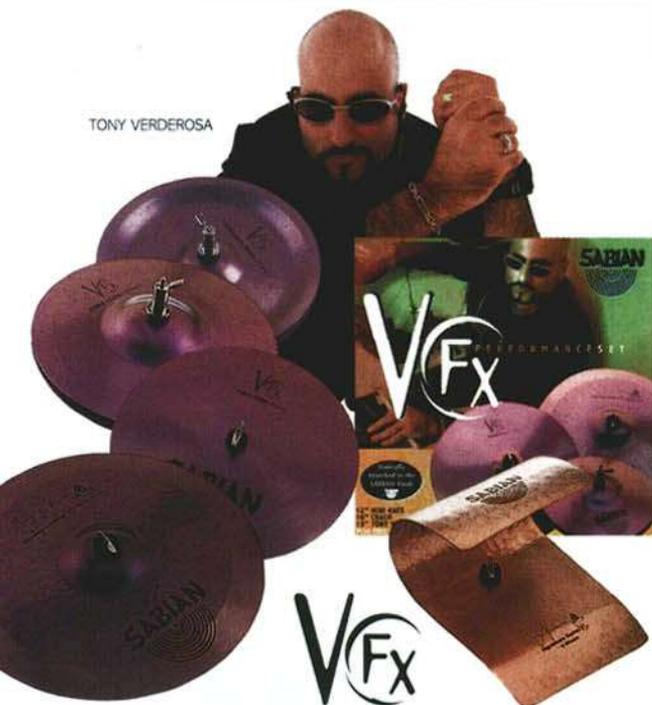
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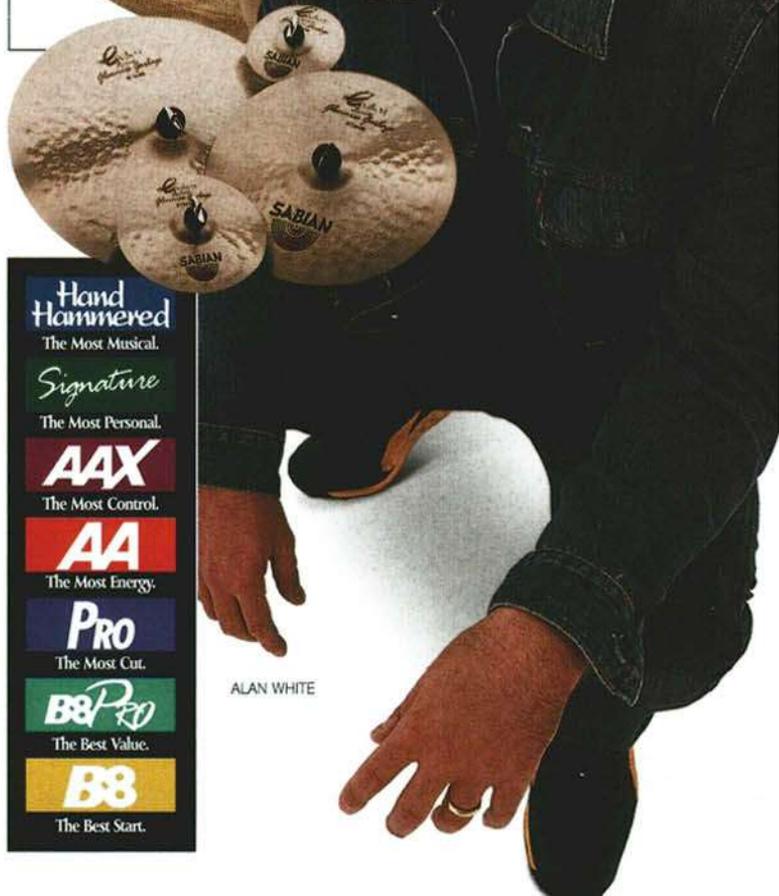
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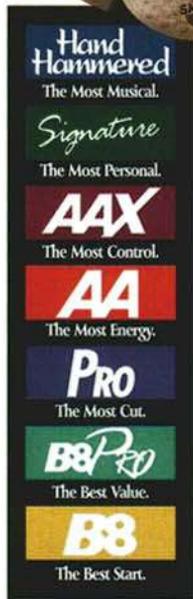


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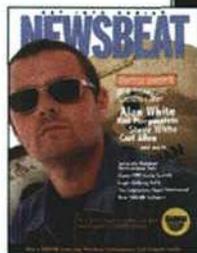
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# Ayotte Custom WoodHoop Drumkit

Vintage looks and high-tech features make a great combination.

Review by Rick Van Horn • Photos by Jim Esposito

## Hits

- unique acoustic character: dry and warm, yet resonant
- Turret Tom Holder offers infinite tom positioning over bass drum
- outstanding quality of construction and finish

## Misses

- tom holder may place strain on bass drum shell when used at full extension

Canadian custom drum mavens Ayotte only build drums to order. And when they build 'em, they deliver them to the buyer right away. So there haven't been any kits "in inventory" for *MD* to review up till now. Fortunately, Ayotte endorser Matt Chamberlain was a performer at this year's MD Festival Weekend. Ayotte created a kit for Matt to use, and offered it to us to examine following Matt's appearance.

Although we conducted our own tests on the kit as usual, I'd be remiss if I didn't comment on its performance at the Festival. As it happened, I played the kit myself for the soundcheck, and I did what little tuning of the toms needed to be done (which wasn't much). Matt tweaked the snare drums a bit; the bass drum was left alone. I'm here to tell you, that kit sounded *great* miked up. It was fat, powerful, melodic, and controlled. The only dampening used was a tiny piece of tape on the 14" snare drum, otherwise everything (including the bass drum) was played wide open.

When we played the kit in our testing room, I was pleased to discover that it sounded just as good un-miked—just a little softer. The toms had tremendous natural depth, resonance, and sustain. I attribute this to the drums' thin shells and to Ayotte's SuspensionBridge mounting system. That system attaches the brackets to the rack toms beneath two of the lugs, each isolated from the shell by a glass-filled nylon pad.

The toms and snares were fitted with coated Remo Ambassador batters and clear bottom heads, providing plenty of attack and cut without sounding "slappy." The floor tom especially produced a deep, penetrating "whoomp," but was never muddy or indistinct. Likewise the bass drum, which utilized a clear Remo Powerstroke 3 batter and a black Powerstroke 3 solid front head, was big and deep, but still punchy and clear. I was able to add more punch by loosening the front head just a little, or maximize sustain by tight-





AYOTTE

ening the same head a bit. Nothing else needed to be done to obtain a fat, full sound.

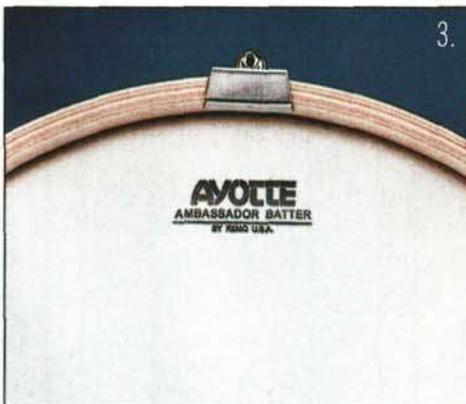
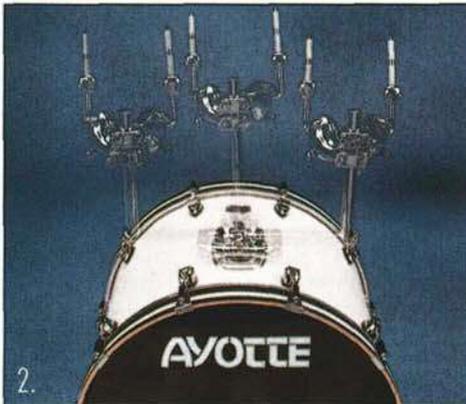
The snare drums took advantage of their thin shells to offer fatness and depth beneath their crisp snare response. These drums wouldn't be my first choice for achieving a piercing attack. Instead, they offer a full-bodied sound, full of highs *and* lows, with lots of character. I don't want to say it's a "vintage" sound, because that sounds old-fashioned. It's a *complete* sound, which is uncommon amid today's trend toward specialized snare drums. (Ayotte is part of that trend; they offer MultiPly snares ranging from 10- to 50-ply in thickness.)

The 7x12 "auxiliary" snare was naturally higher in pitch than the larger-diameter 5 3/4x14. But the smaller drum's deeper shell gave it plenty of body and personality. Unless I planned a lot of brush work and/or cross-stick playing (where the diameter would prove awkward), I could easily use the 7x12 as a primary snare.

All of the drums exhibited a certain characteristic that I attribute to the WoodHoops. Even when played squarely in the center of the drumhead, each drum had a warmth and a certain dryness that I've not heard on any drums with metal hoops. Rimshots played on the snare drums had a very satisfying, organic sound—a "crack" instead of a "clank"—that metal rims can't provide. Cross-stick rim clicks were also extremely nice.

Speaking of rimshots, I've heard comments from drummers who doubt the durability of wooden hoops under today's high-impact playing. According to Ray Ayotte, the 12-ply cross-laminated construction of the maple hoops actually makes them harder than hickory drumsticks. In fact, the batter-side hoops are beveled inward to accommodate rimshots without damaging sticks! To test Ray's contention, I whacked a dozen or so rimshots with a pair of hickory 5Bs. The hoops won hands down.

Of course, some drummers think wooden hoops *look* a little strange (which is ironic, since they pre-date metal hoops on drums by hundreds of



1. This view illustrates Ayotte's Turret Tom Holder and Suspension Bridge tom-mounting brackets. 2. The Turret Tom Holder permits a dramatic positioning range. 3. WoodHoops are made of 12-ply laminated maple for exceptional durability. 4. Ayotte's Rack & Pinion Snare Release provides smooth tension control.

years). But it doesn't take long to appreciate the look—especially in light of the acoustic value the hoops provide.

And while we're on the subject of looks, the Vintage White Satin finish on our test kit was exquisitely done. It's a durable lacquer finish, too. (Many satin finishes are oils, which require a certain amount of maintenance.) Ayotte is well known for its custom finishes, including deep pearlescent colors, fades from one color to another, and other exotic looks. The quality of their finishes is second to none, and they'll work with you to create virtually anything you can conceive of. Pricing is the same for all lacquer finishes, except for special orders that require colors not normally used by Ayotte (like attempts to match an old finish on another brand of drums). Such special finishes are 10% extra.

Ayotte doesn't make stands, but the hardware on their drums is quite innovative. Their exclusive TuneLock lugs utilize solid stainless-steel claw hooks to hold small cylindrical receivers for the tension rods. Each cylinder is fitted with a set screw at one end, to secure the tension on the rod and lock in the tuning of the drum. It's a creative system, and it works great. (The solid steel claws prevent any rattling or buzzing, too.) And talk about attention to detail: All of the phillips screws holding the claws on the shells are aligned so that their slots are in identical "+" positions. They're also made of stainless steel, and are individually polished—as are the simple and relatively subtle logo badges.

The spurs on the bass drum look like 20 mm armor-piercing shells. A bit massive, perhaps, but they certainly work well. They're designed to fold up against the shell for pack-up, with memory locks to lock in their lateral position. The ends of the spurs rotate, with incremental marks and counterlocks to establish the perfect length.

I really like Ayotte's Turret Tom Holder. It combines a sliding bar with a 360°-rotatable base to provide infinite tom positioning anywhere over the bass drum. I like to set up with the bass drum offset, where the right drum in a double-bass setup would be. With a

normal tom mount, this puts the rack toms too far to the right. With the Turret mount, I was able to position the two toms well to the left of the bass drum, keeping them directly in front of me. Separate omni-ball mounts that attach to a central post give each tom even further positioning flexibility.

A cautionary word is in order, however. I'm not a hard hitter, and the 10" and 12" toms on this kit weren't exceptionally heavy. Even so, with the sliding arm of the tom mount extended out as far as it would go, there was definitely some strain on the base of the mount—owing to the leverage involved. This strain was transferred to the thin shell of the bass drum, which flexed visibly if I actually pushed down on the toms. Granted, most drummers wouldn't set the toms up in the extreme fashion that I did, but it's a factor to be aware of. Smaller toms would probably pose no problems, but I'd suggest keeping any larger ones closer to the center of the bass drum.

Ayotte's Rack & Pinion Snare Release has no "snap point" from which the snares simply drop away. Instead, it maintains its hold on the snares while moving smoothly from "completely on" to "completely off." This allows the drum to be played with the throw-off lever in any position—and thus the snares at any tension—with confidence that the sound won't change. It's a nice feature that provides a lot of versatility from the snare drum.

Ayotte's WoodHoop kit offers a unique and satisfying sound,

great looks, superb quality of construction, and innovative hardware design. It's a custom kit at custom prices, and you'll need to buy your stands and pedals elsewhere. Even so, this is a kit to covet. Vintage Satin drums are available only two to three weeks after ordering, because Ayotte is making some drums ahead of time. Normal delivery for totally original kits is four to six weeks.

Believe me, it will be worth the wait.

## Into The Woods

**Kit Reviewed:** Custom WoodHoop

**Configuration:** 8 1/2X10 and 9x12 rack toms, 15x16 floor tom, 17x22 bass drum, 5 3/4x14 snare drum, 7x12 auxiliary snare drum

**Shells:** 10" tom is 5-ply hard white sugar maple, with 5-ply sound rings (reinforcing hoops). All other drums are 6-ply with 6-ply reinforcing hoops. 5-ply shells are 3.55 mm thick (.14"); 6-ply shells are 4.26 mm thick (.17"). WoodHoops on toms and snares are 12-ply cross-laminated maple; bass drum counterhoops are 10-ply

**Shell Finish:** Vintage White Satin lacquer; grain shows through

**Hardware Finish:** WoodHoops are stained black, with an inlay strip that matches the shells; lugs are finished in chrome.

**Pricing:** five-piece basic kit as reviewed: \$5,950, including Turret Tom Holder, SuspensionBridge rack tom brackets, floor tom legs, and bass drum spurs. Does not include any pedals or stands.

## Zildjian Newcomers

by William F. Miller

### Hits

- K Constantinople hi-hats have classic warmth, killin' chick sound
- K Constantinople crashes are incredibly musical—beautiful with mallets
- Breakbeat ride has loads of personality and great versatility

### Misses

- Re-Mix EFX, with its tambourine jingles and cut-out design, is a cool idea, but doesn't have a whole lot of presence

Man, Zildjian is expanding their tonal palette—and in all directions! The five new models reviewed this month go from one extreme to the other, from warm, beautifully lush tones to some of the brashiest razor-edged sounds you've ever heard. Read on... and get ready to go shopping!

### K Constantinople Hi-Hats



Last year Zildjian turned a lot of heads with their introduction of the K Constantinople rides, some of the most impressive and authentic-sounding "classic" cymbals ever produced. (They succeeded at capturing a new spin on the

much-prized "old K" sound.) Now Z's designers have expanded the line to include hi-hats and crashes (which we'll get to in a minute).

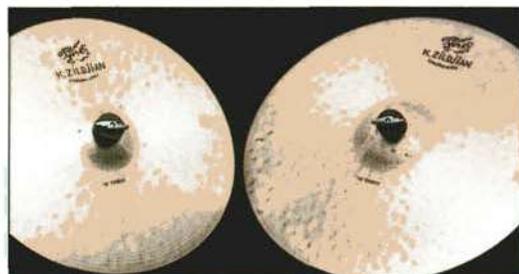
If you've ever played "old K" hats, you know that, *in general*, they had a nice, warm stick sound with lots of personality. The only troubling characteristic was that the "chick" sound could be a bit lacking. (There are bunch of different reasons for this, which we won't go into here.) Sure, in an acoustic trio setting you don't want too much chick. But in many cases those hats were just plain mushy. You really had to know *your* hats and know how to make them work.

The K Constantinople hats are a breakthrough. Not only do they have that very dark, rich stick sound associated with the old-timers, they also have a consistent, nicely balanced chick. It's a pleasure to play brushes on a snare drum and listen to these hats chip away on the 2 and 4. As for the splash sound, it's delicate, with even an "antique" quality to the sustain. Oh, and riding on these hats is simply inspiring.

If you're doing a gig with even a hint of jazz, or looking for a little more attitude in your hats, these bad boys are the answer.

### K Constantinople Crashes

As you'd expect, both the 16" and 18" K Constantinople crashes have that dark, mysterious timbre. The 16" is just a bit quicker



and higher-pitched than the 18", but still *pa-lenty* low. (Zildjian describes these cymbals as "the darkest crashes in the K line.") What's particularly appealing about them is that, while having such a deep tone, there's not even a hint of "gongy-ness" in there. The sound is deep, explosive, and with a surprisingly quick decay—especially the 16". (The sound of these cymbals time-warped me back to Tony Williams' *Believe It* era. Remember the solo crash intro on "Fred"?)

While Zildjian also states that these are thin cymbals, they actually have a slightly rigid feel to them. They don't "give" as much as most thinner cymbals do when you strike them. This made me a little concerned about how hard I could play them. Obviously you wouldn't want to bash these beauties. If you're doing a louder gig and thinking about adding one of these for a dark crash effect, you'd want to be a little careful how you strike them. In low- to medium-volume gigs, it wouldn't be a concern.

Want to hear the K Constantinople crashes really shine? Pull out your mallets. Rolling on these cymbals with mallets, particularly the 18", is dramatic. (Legit percussionists might especially love these in that context.) Also, the tonal grooves on the top surfaces are deep, making them particularly good for scraping effects—brush ends, wires, and such. These are fine musical *instruments*.

### Oriental Trash Crashes

Zildjian describes their new Oriental Trash crashes as being "the perfect hybrid of a China and a crash, with the shorter sustain and quick trashy attack of a China and the full-bodied sound of a crash." These cymbals are much more crash-like than China-sounding, but they do produce a pleasing sound. (Unusual for most Chinas, wouldn't you say?)

The Oriental Trash crashes are thin, with a very flat taper and a short, flattened bell ("square"). They also have a brilliant finish. The sound they produce is exotic, with a hint of the Orient in there, which dies off quickly due to the cymbals' short sustain. Plus they have a nice feel, in that there's a lot of "give" when you strike them.



One thing I particularly liked about both the 16" and 18" Oriental Trash crashes is that they aren't painfully loud, as some China-inspired cymbals can be. It's a soft, rich crash sound. These cymbals would be especially effective in low- to medium-volume settings (or in any situation where you need a controlled crash sound), as you get the Oriental spice without the bite.

### Re-Mix EFX

Zildjian got wacky with this one, taking a thin 16" crash, cutting slots in it, and attaching nine sets of tambourine jingles to the outside edge. The idea is to recreate the white-noise accents heard in drum 'n' bass music, which is the main focus of the Re-Mix line.



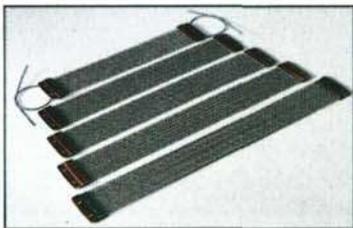
This is actually a pretty cool cymbal. In some ways it has a sound reminiscent of a China cymbal, with that short, trashy effect. However, the EFX is nowhere near as loud. It's a more controlled sound than I would have expected.

## Quick Looks

### Pure Sound Snares

The vast majority of snare drums today—regardless of price range—are fitted with essentially the same coiled-wire snares. Most of these are made in Taiwan, and they're a pretty generic item that most drummers take for granted. Good sets will provide good response and excellent sound. But bad sets can include unevenly tensioned wires that buzz, or wires so poorly soldered to the endplates that they pose a puncture hazard to the snare-side drumhead.

Yoav DeBasc doesn't take wire snares for granted. He firmly believes that snares that are made with care out of high-quality materials will yield a better overall snare drum sound. He's offering his Pure Sound snares to prove his point.



Pure Sound snares feature polished copper endplates shaped to allow the snare wires to lay flat against the head all the way across the drum. Each wire is individually coiled, stretched, and heat-

treated before being hand-soldered onto the endplates. The workmanship is exemplary. The snares come with their own very thin—but very strong—attaching cable.

I tested 13" and 14" models (10", 12", and 15" are also available) on a DW 5x13 10-ply maple snare and a 5 1/2 x14 Magstar solid-maple drum. Each drum had been equipped with a generic coiled-wire snare set. In both cases the performance of the drum was affected dramatically by the Pure Sound snares. The 13" drum sounded bigger and louder, with significantly improved snare response. The 14" drum, which I favored for its already excellent snare response, gained even more sensitivity at lower volumes. (No tuning adjustments were made in either case; only the snares were changed.) I was impressed.

Pure Sound snares cost \$40 per set, which is significantly more than the average cost of generic wire snares. But they offer significantly better performance than such snares, so the investment is a good one. If the snares aren't in your local store, contact Pure Sound Percussion, 1759 Glendon Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90024, (310) 441-2976, [puresound@earthlink.net](mailto:puresound@earthlink.net).

Rick Van Horn

If you're one of the few (but growing) number of drummers playing drum 'n' bass live, this would seem to be the perfect cymbal. For the rest of us, the EFX could work well for very quick punctuations. I had fun playing upbeat-8th ride patterns on it, for sort of that Carter Beauford/China effect. And the EFX does that without being too loud or painful.

While the basic effect of the EFX was good, I'd sure like to hear a similar design but with a bit more presence. Maybe using smaller slots or fewer jingles (so many seem to really stifle the sound) would give this cymbal the added *oomph* it seems to need.

### Re-Mix Breakbeat Ride

Now we're onto something with a ton of possibilities. Again, Z's Re-Mix line is designed to reproduce the sounds of drum 'n' bass. In the case of the 18" Breakbeat ride, it's supposed to reproduce the "techno" ride sounds prevalent in that music. (The 18" is a larger brother to the 17" that was introduced last year.) It does that, and a whole lot more.

At 18" in diameter, the Breakbeat is a relatively small ride. Small rides tend to be washier, but here, due to the hammering—and a rough, almost sand-blasted finish—this ride has definition. Sure, there's a good amount of wash, but it doesn't obscure the stick's tip sound.

And just what is the sound of the wash? Well, it's *gritty*, with all sorts of "skankiness." This cymbal might be right for techno music, but there's also a strong smell of "old K" in the air that makes this ride unique. (For a rough comparison, the Breakbeat is reminiscent of that funky MMW/Billy Martin ride sound.)

One of the reasons that this larger version of the Breakbeat was created was to give the design a more playable bell. The bell sound isn't incredible, but it's certainly usable. And also, the Breakbeat is just thin enough to produce an okay crash effect.

Who could use this cymbal? I think anyone looking for a ride with lots of personality would dig the Breakbeat. Jazzers could certainly embrace it, as there's a certain "flow" to the ride sound.



(An individual stroke doesn't produce a tight 64th note, it produces a "tah" the length of a *quarter note*.) And drummers looking to add a secondary ride would be interested, as the Breakbeat would be a big contrast to just about any other "normal" ride.

I had a ball playing this cymbal. I used it at a Wednesday night rehearsal with an eight-piece, New Orleans-inspired funk band. It bashed with gusto. And on Thursday night, I used it on a gig with an organ trio. To my surprise, the Breakbeat worked beautifully in both settings, its personality adding some real "earthiness" to the music. If you're looking for something a little different, the Breakbeat is definitely worth a listen.

### Cymbals Of Excellence

Model	Weight	Size	List Price
K Constantinople hi-hats	thin top, medium bottom	14"	\$650 (pair)
K Constantinople crashes	thin	16"	\$400
	thin	18"	\$475
Oriental Trash crashes	thin	16"	\$257
	thin	18"	\$292
Re-Mix EFX	thin (with jingles)	16"	\$237
Re-Mix Breakbeat ride	medium thin	18"	\$280

### Drum Workshop 6710 Flush Base Cymbal Stand



There are several reasons to like DW's new 6710 cymbal stand. Its base can sneak under the legs of some of your other stands, and it'll add just 3 3/4 lbs. to your trap case (only half as much as most current single-braced "medium-duty" stands). What's more, although its flush-base design reaches back about four decades, DW has ironed out problems associated with those sleek-but-weak low-tech ancestors.

The stand's tilter (the same one found on DW's 9000 series stands) has a big T-handle with a rubbery plastic covering for a sure, comfortable grip, as well as a short key rod that can be tightened to lock the tilter into position. The T-bolts at the two section joints are small but adequate; not much tightening is required to secure the upper tubes' height position, thanks

to the nylon sleeves in the joints. These sleeves also eliminate the annoying rattles and tube scarring the '60s-era stands were prone to.

Each leg of the 6710's base extends a full 12", resulting in a fairly wide footprint and good stability. When crashing a larger cymbal mounted on the 6710 in its fully extended position, the stand wobbled slightly. While I never got the impression that it wouldn't hold up, heavier players won't be inclined to replace their double-braced monsters with 6710s—and speed metal is clearly not this stand's gig. But for lighter playing situations, and certainly for most ride cymbal applications, the 6710 should have us all flush with excitement. It's priced at \$79.

Rich Watson

### Kenner Custom Drumsticks

Do you envy the major artists who get to design their own sticks and put their names on them? Well, Kenner Custom Drumsticks offers you the opportunity to "design" sticks from among five basic diameters, two different tapers, virtually any length you desire, and over twenty-three different tip shapes! With all these combinations to mix and match, it shouldn't be hard to come up with something all your own.

continued on page 47

# Drum Workshop 5000 Series Delta II Bass Drum Pedals

DW's new Deltas serve up more speed and strength than the NFL draft.

by Rich Watson

## Hits

- smooth, virtually silent action
- double chain and wider footboard provide greater stability
- adjustable weight system tailors pedals' power to individual needs with minimal effect upon its action

The bass drum pedal benchmark has been pretty much parked at DW for the last couple of decades. Over the years, Drum Workshop has significantly refined the simple design it adopted from Camco in the late '70s, but the new Delta IIs include upgrades and innovations destined to tempt even the previously un-convertible. DW sent us a 5000TD single pedal and a 5002AD double pedal to represent the line.

The most radical feature on the new Deltas is the Force Maximizer System. The system's removable weights (shaped like tiny barbell weights) are bolted to both sides of the footboard to increase the impact of the pedal stroke. In one respect, the effect of the weights is like using a normal wooden baseball bat instead of a plastic whiffle-ball bat. But unlike a heavy bat (or even heavy drumsticks, to use an analogy that's closer to home), you don't have to lift or swing the extra weight on the footboard; it moves with gravity, amplifying your foot's own downward motion. As a

result, the effect on the pedal's feel is minor compared with the enhancement of its power, which can be subtle to dramatic, depending on how many weights you use.

For me, the Force Maximizer System alone makes the new Deltas worth the price of admission. Especially as manufacturers began introducing pedals with low-mass components, I felt the need to compensate with a longer stroke length, higher spring tension, and heavier bass drum beaters (sometimes with beater shaft weights) to achieve the desired oomph out of the kick. Although I have grown accustomed to the slightly lurching, "front-loaded" trajectory produced by heavy beaters, I was impressed by the 5000's ability to deliver the same or considerably *more* power, but with a more even, continuous feel.

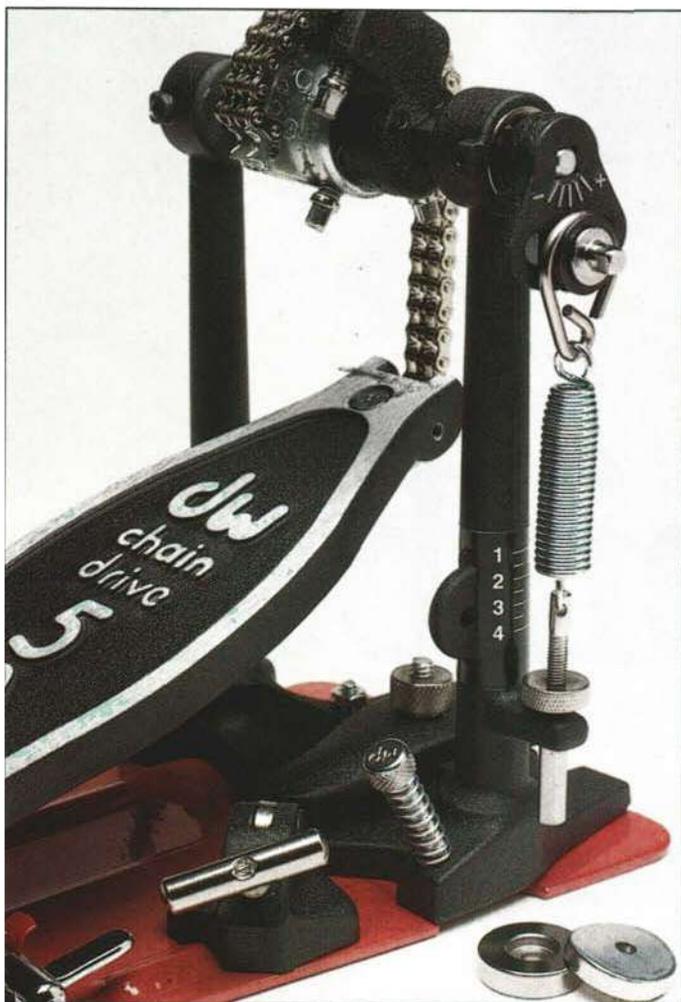
Each Delta II is shipped with two 14-gram "starter" weights (shaped to fit the contour of the footboard) and two 22-gram steel weights pre-mounted, plus two additional 22-gram weights. Since my left foot isn't quite as Herculean as my right (okay, so my left is even *wimpier* than my right), I tried applying the additional 22-gram weights to the 5002AD's left-foot pedal to compensate. The difference was huge, and over time it would probably help develop my left foot to be comparable with my right. But for the short term I preferred the left pedal with DW's "standard" weight configuration of two weights per side of the footboard, and the right pedal with just one per side. I used the 5000TD as a clave pedal with no weights at all, since I prefer a lighter touch for this application—and because I feared the additional force would shatter the Blast Block the beater was striking. The point of all this detail about *my* preferences is to illustrate how much latitude the Force Maximizer could provide toward achieving *yours*.

After years of offering only single-chain pedals, DW put a double chain on these Deltas (although they're still offering many single-chain and strap-drive models as well). The second chain helps eliminate lateral movement or "sway." A new wider hinge further contributes to the stable feel, and a wider footboard and heel plate

potentially enhance the player's sense of "security" on the pedal. All around, the new 5000s *look* like heavier-duty pedals, but their action is still as light and fast as can be. Well done, DW! Consider me converted.

DW has made adjustable settings easy to reproduce with reference "gauges" on three of the Delta II parts. Lines on the beater shaft indicate relative beater ball height. A mark on top of the rocker triangle hook can be aligned with reference lines on the stroke-length adjustment plate. And the top of the spring adjustment screw can be aligned with numbered positions on the base-





Stroke length and spring tension reference "gauges" help you reproduce preferred settings. (Removed Force Maximizer weights in foreground)

casting post. These markings might not impress set-and-forget types, but they'll be welcomed by players who adjust pedal settings for different performance situations, as well as those who must reset their equipment after it's been used by other drummers.

There are a few other features that aren't new to this series, but that warrant mentioning because they're just so good: The Delta II ball-bearing hinge at the heel plate keeps the action silky at the back end of the pedal. The side-access hoop clamp bolt facilitates easier mounting and removal of the pedal. The angle of the spring-loaded hoop clamp can be adjusted with a knurled nut, which can be locked into the desired position with an internal set screw. And the three carpet-grabbing strips on the baseplate keep your kick as good as *nailed* to any low-pile rug. It's small stuff, yes, but very, useful.

### Conclusions

After test-driving the latest Delta IIs, I'm not at all surprised that the double pedals in this series won *MD's* Consumer Poll award for the most valuable product of 1999. Fast, rock-steady, ultra-quiet, and with the Force Maximizer System, as "empowering" as anything you're likely to put your dogs on. If you're in the market for a bass drum pedal—double or single—don't leave the store without trying the new 5000s. Let the Force be with you.

### Kick Starters

**Reviewed Models:** 5000TD (Turbo center cam drive single pedal)—\$268, 5002AD (Accelerator offset cam drive double pedal)—\$595  
**Others Available:** 5000AD (single Accelerator)—\$268, 5002TD (double Turbo)—\$595, 5002TDL (left-foot double, offered only with Turbo drive)—\$595

## Quick Looks

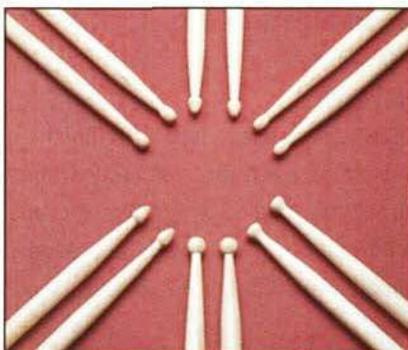
continued from page 45

Don Kenner cuts and dries his own lumber to maintain consistent quality. Standard domestic woods available include white straight-grain hickory, hard maple (lighter than hickory), and white oak (heavier than hickory). Sticks can also be ordered in exotic hardwoods, such as cardinal, cocobolo, and purpleheart (subject to availability). Don will also make special cutters for stick models no longer made by other manufacturers.

Kenner sticks are available in Jazz (1/2"), 3A (9/16"), 5B (5/8"), and Marching (11/16" and 3/4") diameters. Each is available with either a long, narrow taper or a more front-loaded short taper. Marching sticks come in a choice of four tip shapes, Jazz sticks offer eight tips, and 3As and 5Bs can be made with twenty-three different tips. The tip shapes run the gamut from familiar oval and spherical beads to arrow points, barrels, and T-shapes. All stick models are available in wood tip only.

We were sent a selection of 5B sticks with six

widely different tip shapes, each in both the long- and the short-taper versions. Construction quality, finish, and consistency were excellent throughout our sample group. The various tips produced a dramatic range of sounds on cymbals and drums, and the two different tapers provided a distinct difference in balance, rebound, and overall playability. These performance variables attest to the advantage of being able to choose one's own stick design to achieve a personal sound.



Six tip designs—each available on sticks with two different tapers—are only a fraction of the variety available from Kenner

Kenner's pricing is great: \$5 per pair for drum-set sticks, \$9 per pair for marching sticks. And there's only a six-pair minimum purchase required, which is a pretty small order to get such specialized features. Don Kenner can keep this price structure because he sells direct. Best of all, Don will personalize your sticks with your name at no extra charge. For more information contact Kenner Custom Sticks, Rt. 1 Box 150, California, KY 41007, (606) 635-5218.

**Rick Van Horn**

# Max Weinberg

by Robyn Flans

## "To thine own self be true."

Yes, it's an old expression that sounds kind of corny, but it's the moral of our story. It's about the journey of a man whose life's passion was stirred as a youngster, whose dreams were realized in his twenties, and whose identity was challenged in his thirties. Mostly, though, it's about the rekindling and rediscovery of dreams—and the courage it takes to admit to self-deception.

On October 18, 1989, Max Weinberg received a phone call that not only altered his employment status, but changed his life. Weinberg had worked for fifteen years with Bruce Springsteen, during which time they reached the heights of superstardom together. It had been everything Weinberg had dreamed of as a kid growing up in New Jersey. By the time he was eight, Max felt a connection with the drums that would turn into an integral component of his personality

and his future. After the standard school and private lessons, early bands, gigs at dances, club work, and lots and lots of one-nighters, Max hooked up with a fledgling Springsteen. Being a band-member and playing music that he believed in had been Max's goal. Eventually he would record a body of classic work with Springsteen and take great pride in being part of the team that was The E Street Band.

By the end of Weinberg's fifteen-year position, though, it was clear that this drummer had become so associated with Springsteen—even to himself—that when the call came that disbanded The E Street Band, it plunged him head-on into a crisis.

Catharsis usually follows turbulence, and so it's been for Weinberg, whose turmoil precipitated a reawakening and reaffirmation of who he is at his very core. It steered him to the ideal situation:

playing music and being able to be home for his family by leading The Max Weinberg Seven, Conan O'Brien's *Late Night band*.

"F. Scott Fitzgerald was wrong when he said there are no second acts in American lives, because I have certainly enjoyed my second act," Weinberg says. "Everything I did before the band broke up, and after the band broke up, led me to that second act."

And Thomas Wolfe said, "You can't go home again," but now that Weinberg is back with Bruce on a year-long international tour, maybe that expression doesn't ring true either. "I don't **trk** you can go home," Max insists, though. "But you can revisit it as the person you've grown up to be."

We caught up with Max on tour with Springsteen, revisiting his former self, but bringing to it his last ten years of experience.

## Back On E Street



**RF:** What was it like the moment you got the phone call telling you The E Street Band was disbanding?

**MW:** It was a shock, but not a surprise. Things had been changing for a while in terms of the band. We had done the *Tunnel Of Love* project, which was Bruce's solo album, and then we went on tour to accompany him. Although it was great fun and ended up with the Amnesty International tour, it felt at the time like something was winding down, so I made plans to go back to Seton Hall University. I had dropped out with twenty-one credits

to go in the fall of '74, when I met Bruce. When I got off tour in October of '88, I contacted the school. It was a year before the band broke up. To my surprise, they'd kept my records open.

I had a very supportive music professor, Dr. William Burns, who shepherded me through the process of reapplying to Seton Hall to finish my twenty-one remaining credits. My thought was that I'd get a law degree, which is what I was going to do when I met Bruce in '74. When I got that call on October 18, 1989, I'd already been in school for six months—even made the dean's list



with a 4.0, thanks to my hard work and the hard work of my wife, Becky. She's a school teacher and she really helped me focus. I had already started my second semester at Seton Hall when I got the phone call.

That call and time period has been widely misreported through the years. Bruce's decision was put to me in the most supportive, amicable, and loving way you can imagine. It had to do less with me and anybody else than it did with what he, as an artist, wanted to do with this particular period of his life. I understood that, as difficult as it was.

**RF:** Did Bruce actually make the call?

**MW:** Of course.

**RF:** In lots of situations it's the manager who makes phone calls like that, which makes it even more hurtful for the musician.

**MW:** Bruce was as supportive as he could be: "Come out to my house, let's talk about this." He eased all of

us through that transition and said, "I know this is easier for me than it is for you." I'll never forget, I was sitting on his lawn out here in LA, telling him about my decision to go to law school. He never tried to talk me out of it, but he said, "Don't stop drumming, whatever else you do." And through the whole period, when we didn't play together from '89 until recently, he's been the greatest, most supportive friend one could have, always staying in touch.

Apart from the fact that we're friends, I've always credited him with being a mentor. If it hadn't been for his tutelage in the early days, there's no way I would have known *how* to be a bandleader. The spin the media put on it was that this was a fir-



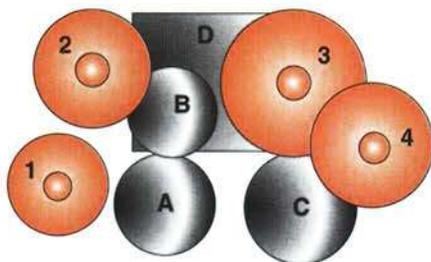
ing, and our services were no longer needed. It wasn't that at all, and as Bruce has said, he never broke up the band, but he wanted to explore other things, which would be good for him and everybody else. As it turned out, everything he said was 100% right. It was hard to see it at the time, but it turned out to be one of my greatest experiences.

It forced me to grow up and to take stock of myself. Suddenly all I had to depend on was me and my wife, who was a tower of strength. As the drummer in The E Street Band, I had accomplished what I had set out to do. But as a drummer, I hadn't been in control of my life or career, and *that* was something I had to change. I was thirty-eight, I had a two-year-old daughter, and my wife was pregnant with our second child. I didn't have the luxury of waiting around for someone to call me to play drums. I had to take action very quickly.

**RF:** How do you get from the feeling that your whole world is falling apart to the strength to move beyond that? That's a jour-

## Mighty Max's Kit

Here's the setup Weinberg is currently using on tour with Bruce Springsteen.



**Drumset:** DW with white pearl covering

- A. 6x14 Edge snare
- B. 9x13 tom
- C. 16x16 floor tom
- D. 18x24 kick

**Cymbals:** Zildjian

- 1. 14" A Mastersound hi-hats
- 2. 17" A medium crash
- 3. 21" A Rock ride
- 4. 18" A medium crash

**Hardware:** DW, including a 5000 Turbo bass drum pedal with square felt beater

**Heads:** Evans Power Center on snare batter with Hazy 500 on snare side, coated Genera G2s on tom batters with coated Genera G1s on bottoms, EQ4 on kick batter with Remo coated Ambassador on front

**Sticks:** Regal Tip 5A with nylon tip

ney a lot of people have to go through.

**MW:** My journey was about finding out what I really *didn't* want to do, by doing things I *thought* I wanted to do. For almost four years, I was running as fast as I could down the *wrong* roads, all the while learning a tremendous amount from life's experiences.

I finished out that semester and thought I'd go to law school and perhaps join an entertainment law firm. I took the law school aptitude test, applied to six law schools, and was accepted at two. I ended up going to Cardozo School of Law in Manhattan, which has a very good entertainment law department. I started in the spring of '90. It was a two-and-a-half-year accelerated program. I was up at 5:00 every day, studying all the time—I was really putting myself through the wringer.

At the end of about a month, Dave Edmunds called to see if I wanted to go to Japan to do a club tour with him. At that point I felt like my head was being worked over by a baseball bat, so I dropped out of law school, and in May of '90 I did this gig with Dave Edmunds. I really enjoyed playing with Dave, but I didn't see myself as an individual with a two-and-a-half-year-old

daughter and a newborn son, bouncing from one band to another. There had to be something else that would satisfy my need for structure and organization.

At one point I was being courted by a Washington lobbying firm, which was very interesting, and then during the late fall of 1990, I was talking to a newspaper-publisher friend of mine in New Jersey, telling him I believed I had a head for business. My friend said I should meet this other guy he knew, the CEO of a New Jersey mail-order record company located right near my house. I did meet him, we began to talk, and we came up with the idea of starting a small rock label that would deal in the retail world. He was a very big force in mail-order classical and jazz music, and he wanted to get into rock retail. The idea was that with me at the head of this small sub-

## Maximum Max

These are the albums that Weinberg says best represent his playing...

Artist	Album
Bruce Springsteen	Born In The U.S.A.
Bruce Springsteen & The E Street Band	Tracks
Bruce Springsteen & The E Street Band	Live 1975-1985
Meat Loaf	Greatest Hits
Bonnie Tyler	Bat Out Of Hell
	"Total Eclipse Of The Heart" (single)

...and these are the ones he listens to for inspiration:

Artist	Album	Drummer
Frank Sinatra	Capitol Years	various
Buddy Rich	Big Swing Face	Buddy Rich
The Beatles	Meet The Beatles	Ringo Starr
Phil Spector	20 Greatest Hits	Hal Blaine/Earl Palmer
Rolling Stones	Exile On Main Street	Charlie Watts

sidary, we'd be able to attract some acts, and make some records.

From the spring of '91 to the spring of '93, I worked every day at this label in New Jersey—as a businessman. I hardly played at all with the exception of once in a while at a party or a local benefit. I didn't *want* to play. I wanted to develop my ability to take care of myself in the business sense, and thereby take care of my family. It had been the one area of my life that had gone undeveloped. The label gig was a fabulous experience, but the more I learned about business and the better I got at it, the less I was playing and the less I was actually involved in being a musician.

**RF:** How did you feel about that?

**MW:** I was a little numb about it. I didn't really think about it that much because I was convinced that my future rested in the *business* of music. I'd sit down and play the drums occasionally, and I began to notice that the little things I used to be able to whip off had to be thought about ahead of time. It was very subtle and it wasn't something anyone but me would notice, but I felt my ability to have my drumming be spontaneous—that more-than-spontaneous thing where you're so in the flow of it—was leaving. That concerned me because that had never happened to me before. I had never gone this long in my life without playing, and I felt my abilities slipping away. There was nothing I could do about it, though, because I was in business. I became a very good businessman, and the more I became adept at that, the less I was playing or thinking of myself as a drummer. But, as I've said, what was important to me at that time was to develop the ability to take care of myself in a practical way.

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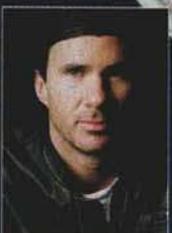




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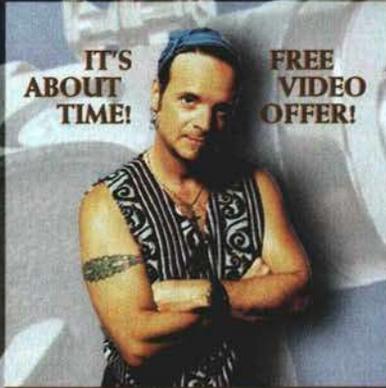


Mangini

# DW 5000 Series Pedals

The entire line of Drum Workshop 5000 Series Bass Drum Pedals combine the latest in technology, innovation and design for superior speed, smoothness and accuracy. Along with a host of exclusives, the new 5002AD Delta II Accelerator Double Pedal (shown above) features adjustment gauges, Force Maximizer weight system, larger footboard and patented Delta II Ball-Bearing hinge—providing contemporary drummers with the legendary yet advanced performance that has made DW pedals The Drummer's Choice® for nearly a quarter of a century.

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**FREE VIDEO OFFER!**

Purchase any Delta II Bass Drum Pedal and receive a free copy of Joey Kramer's new drum video, "It's About Time".

Offer valid at participating DW dealers during June, July and August and only while supplies last.

In August of '92, I was sitting at my desk when I got a phone call from the manager of 10,000 Maniacs. He called because their drummer had been slightly injured in a car accident and they needed a replacement and someone they knew suggested they call me for a six-week tour. I hadn't played the drums for more than a day or two in years, and I wasn't really thinking of myself as a drummer. I had never heard a

record by these people, but in the back of my mind there was this feeling that my drumming was slipping away—not just career-wise, but the actual execution of playing the drums. The tour was scheduled to start two weeks later, and they needed to rehearse immediately. I discussed it with my business partners, who thought it was a good opportunity because it was a young, hot band and maybe I'd meet other people we could sign to our label.

So the band's manager Fed Ex'd me a copy of their show, and two days later I was on a plane to Buffalo. When I started to rehearse with them, I felt a very strange combination of things—here I was a businessman, but I instantly felt comfortable doing this. I played with them for six weeks—riding a bus, staying at Holiday Inns—and I started to get really good again. It felt great.

I remember the night it really hit me. We were playing the Mann Music Center in Philadelphia for 18,000 people. I hadn't played a concert like that in a long time. I heard that huge roar when the band hit the stage, and it blew my mind—"the smell of the grease paint, the roar of the crowd" kind of thing—and I went back to the record company feeling very different. All the synapses were working in the right firing order, and my drumming was really good. Plus, because I was working with this much younger band, I was able to impart some tips from my own experience, which made me realize that I had spent a lot of time learning how to do this. Maybe it was rash of me to just throw it away.

Looking back, what I had obviously been

doing was trying to put "Mighty Max" the drummer aside. I didn't think I needed that individual in my life, and I wanted to go on as Max Weinberg. It was a self-deceptive view, and in a way very destructive, because I was not being true to myself. It wasn't until I did that 10,000 Maniacs tour that I got a gnawing feeling in my gut that maybe I had made a mistake with the business stuff.

More playing followed. In October of '92 I was asked to put together a benefit concert for World Hunger Year. I called Clarence Demmons, Garry Tallent, and Danny Federici, and we called it the E Street Revue and backed up people like Mitch Ryder, Percy Sledge, Darlene Love, and Ronnie Spector. We played two concerts, which I had a great time organizing, and it raised about \$100,000.

Following that event came the experience that put me back on the right road. Clinton had just been elected president, and a friend of mine asked if I might want to do something for the inauguration ceremonies. He put me in touch with the guy who was in charge of all the talent for the shows and the balls, and again I was asked to organize a concert. This was for the New Jersey Ball, which was held at the Washington Armory during inauguration weekend '93. It was basically the same band as the first benefit band, this time with Southside Johnny and Johnny Rivers singing and The Miami Horns. The president came up and played sax and it was great fun. It combined both the drumming and the business parts of me because I had to organize it. Again, I wanted to be the master of my own destiny insofar as it was possible. I never wanted to *suddenly* be out of work again.

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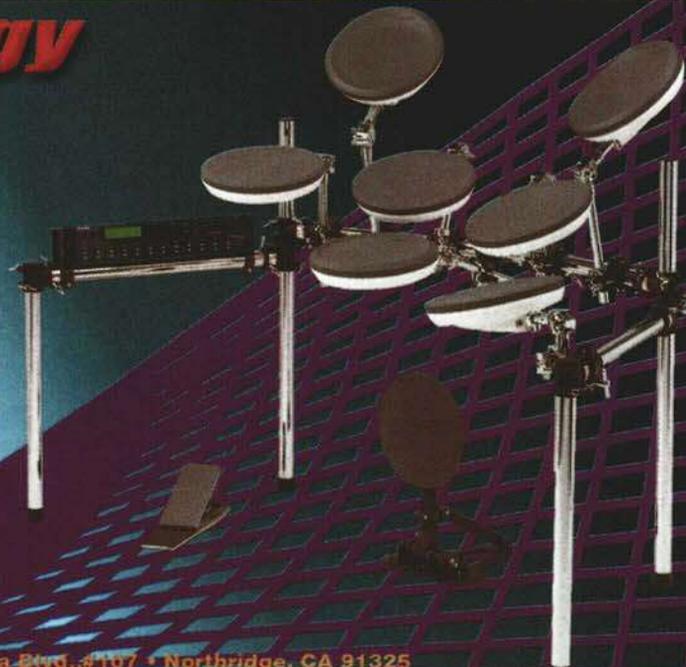
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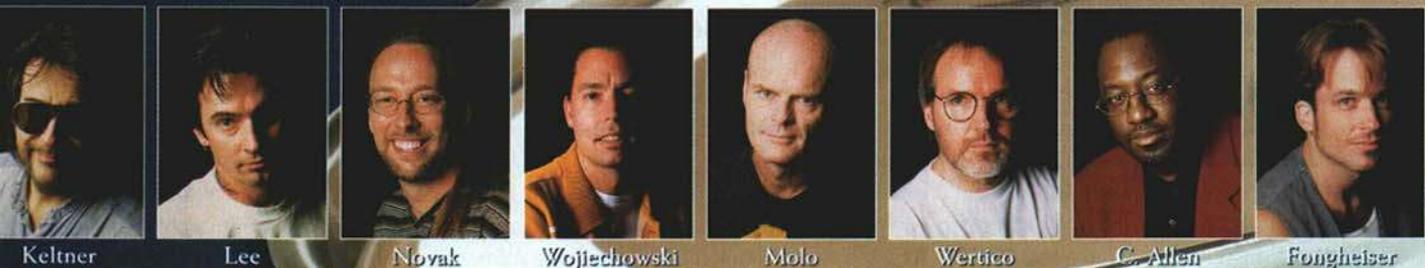
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During the inaugural festivities, I was asked to play drums in an all-star band backing Little Richard and Chuck Berry on the TV show of the inaugural gala, which was the night before. The band had great players like Nathan East, Greg Phillinganes, Steve Stills, and others. Again, I was in with musicians and I felt great doing it. It felt normal to me. It felt like that's where I belonged. After that weekend, I went back to the record company feeling maybe I was on the wrong track with this business thing.

**RF:** You had recalled your true self.

**MW:** I was stripping away the layers of artifice that I had built up through the years, thinking I had to be this other guy, to the exclusion of the real guy. It was a real life lesson in "To thine own self be true."

This was in January of '93, and a couple of weeks later Becky and I rented the movie *Field Of Dreams*. I guess because of the mental and spiritual state I was in, the movie really hit me hard. I started to use the line "Build it and they will come" as a metaphor for my career. I thought, "If I just drum, something is going to happen, because I'm good, I'm experienced, I'm hard-working, and I deserve to be a drummer." My mantra became, "Drum and they will come": Somebody will come with a good gig. Two weeks later I sat in with the band at my sister's wedding, and that felt great, so I made the decision I would go back to playing drums no matter where—at weddings, bar mitzvahs—I just wanted to be a drummer again. I realized in my soul that I was still that little kid drummer who

just wanted to play the drums because they made him feel he belonged. I realized that my drumming was a gift. But that had nothing to do with playing in stadiums, the private jets, or any of the trappings. It had to do with recapturing that feeling that *this* is what I do.

**RF:** It's great that someone of your stature didn't have an attitude about playing a wedding or bar mitzvah.

**MW:** I didn't because to me a bad day at playing drums is better than a good day doing anything else. To me, if you're a musician, there's no job beneath you. When I was struggling to come back, I put as much energy into playing bar mitzvahs as I did in playing Giants Stadium in New Jersey.

I saw an ad in the paper for open auditions for the Broadway show *Tommy*, which was being mounted. They had a drummer, but they were looking for subs. I called the contractor for the show, who quickly gave me the lowdown on Broadway: It doesn't matter how many stadiums you've played or how many gold records you have. I taped the show one night and for the next month I practiced and learned it, which was 120 pages of music. Then I auditioned. There was a piano player, the conductor, and myself at the audition. The conductor counted off. We played about thirty seconds and he stopped and said, "That's fine, you'll do. You can be the second alternate sub," which means if the first sub doesn't make it and the first *alternate* sub can't make it, they'd call me. I was overjoyed. It paid

something like \$87 a night, but it was the first drumming job I had gotten on my own since I had met Bruce.

**RF:** Did you ever get to play the show?

**MW:** No—and this is the most amazing part: The night of the audition, Becky came up to New York. We went to a party and we were going to stay at a hotel on 54th Street. I had the cab drop us off at 55th Street because I wanted to get something at a deli. We were coming out of the deli and standing on the corner of 54th and 7th Avenue was Conan O'Brien. I said to Becky, "That's Conan O'Brien standing on the corner," and she said, "Who is Conan O'Brien?" I said, "He's the guy who's replacing Letterman on NEC." I had seen him when they announced him on *The Tonight Show*, so I recognized him, although nobody really knew him yet. He was standing on the corner, waiting for the light to change. I was a little hesitant to go up to him at first, but Becky said, "Go say hello." The light changed, and before he stepped off the curb, I said, "Conan." He turned around and looked at me. I said, "Max Weinberg from The E Street Band," and he seemed to recognize me in that context. I said, "Congratulations on the show, I saw you on *The Tonight Show* and it's a great opportunity." Meanwhile, the light had changed and he hadn't moved. I said, "What are you doing for music?" He said, "We have some ideas. Why? Do you have any ideas?" And it was like a lightbulb going off in my head. I said, "Do I have any *ideas!* I have a million ideas—I'd love to tell you about them." He told me who to

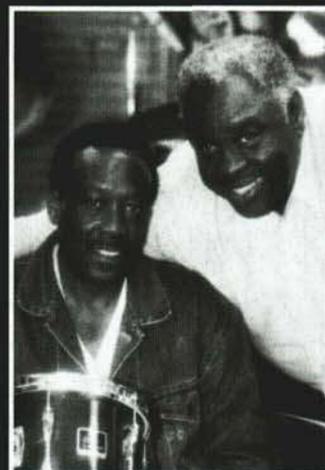
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contact and I wrote a letter.

Soon after, I got a phone call from Conan's people. They wanted to meet me. So I went to New York and met with the producer, Jeff Ross, Conan, and Jim Pitt, the music hooker. And then I walked the original co-producer and head writer, Robert Smigel, who came over to me immediately and said, "I have to tell you, I'm a big fan," which was great to hear!

My first idea for the music of the show was based on a record I had produced for the label I worked for called *Killer Joe*, which was kind of a jump blues, oldies

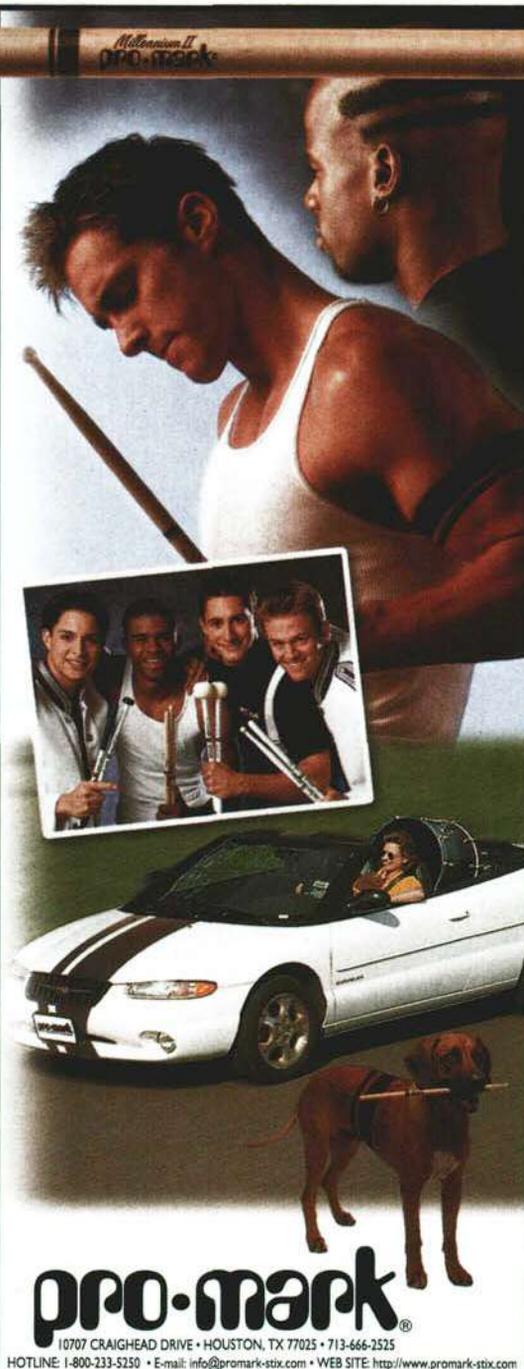
rock kind of record. I brought a copy of it to the meeting. I told them about some of my ideas, yet I was completely shooting from the hip because I really didn't know what the job entailed. But I did say something that I found out later really impressed Conan. I was talking mainly about my experiences with Bruce and The E Street Band, and one thing Bruce used to say was that we took our fun very seriously. That struck a chord with Conan, because though *his* show would be about fun and comedy, it had to be taken seriously. But the meeting ended with them saying they would get

back to me.

I was still working at the record company, still waiting for *Tommy* to call, and still doing the occasional wedding or bar mitzvah. But then during the first week of August I got a call from Jim Pitt. He said, "We really enjoyed meeting with you. Now we'd like to hear the band." I said to myself, "Hear the *band!*" I never told them I had a band, I had only said I had a really good *idea* for a band. So I said, "When?" This was Wednesday, and he said Friday. I said, "That's really short notice, the guys have gigs. Let me call you back."

I immediately called the people I used for the inaugural gig, and I found out that most of them had gigs that weekend, but they'd all be back Sunday. The first guy I called was Jimmy Vivino, the guitarist and arranger who is now leading my band in my absence. I said, "Jimmy, I'm working on something. You know me, my gigs are really interesting and if this works out, it's gonna be big. I can't tell you what it is, but trust me." I called Jim Pitt back and said, "Friday is a little early, do you think we can play for you next week?" So he changed the audition to Tuesday. I had Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday to put a band together. The only directions they gave me were it couldn't be a rock band, it couldn't be a "rock oldies" band, they didn't want a funk band like Arsenio had at the time, and they didn't want a real jazz band, which wasn't a problem because I wasn't a jazz drummer. The thing I kind of latched onto was what I did with *Killer Joe*, which was sort of a jump blues vibe. It was a little jazzy, it could be instrumental, but it had a muscular feel to it, which I felt comfortable with.

Sunday morning, Jimmy and I got together and wrote five songs. In the afternoon, the guys started to filter in one by one, and by Monday we had these five songs down. The six acts we were up against were auditioning at this studio in New York that looked like a real '70s kind of place—lots of wood, kinda country. I didn't want to play there, so I asked if it would be a problem if we auditioned at Carroll Music, which is the last remaining rehearsal studio in New York that looks like the 1940s. I rented staging, lights, and curtains, and I set it up like a TV studio. I told everyone to wear the loudest Hawaiian shirt they could, and the night before I had my wife put big letters on my bass drum



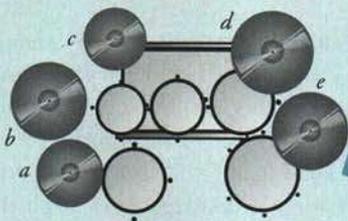
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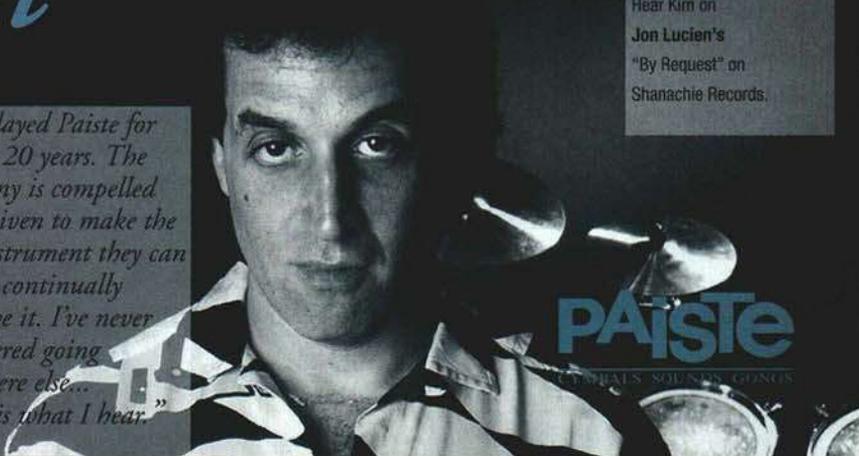
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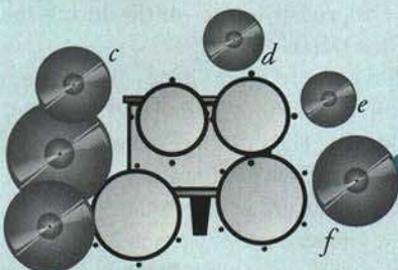
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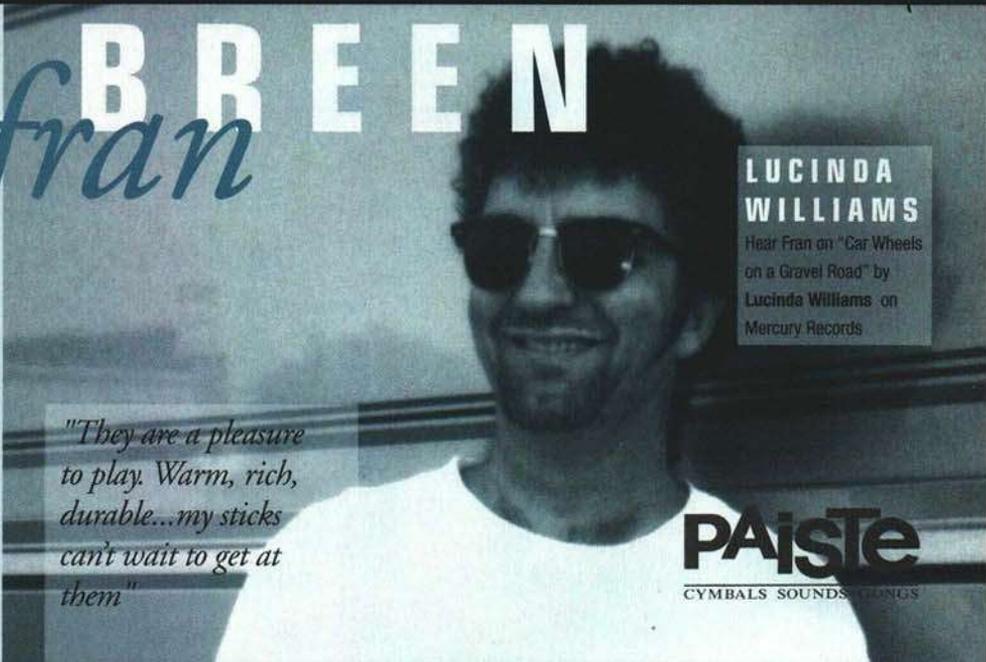
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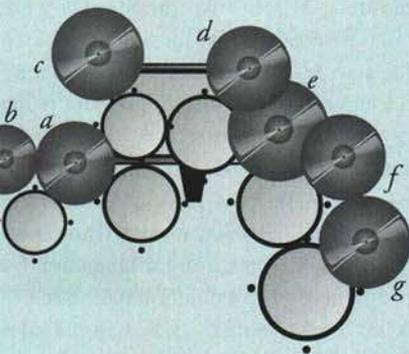
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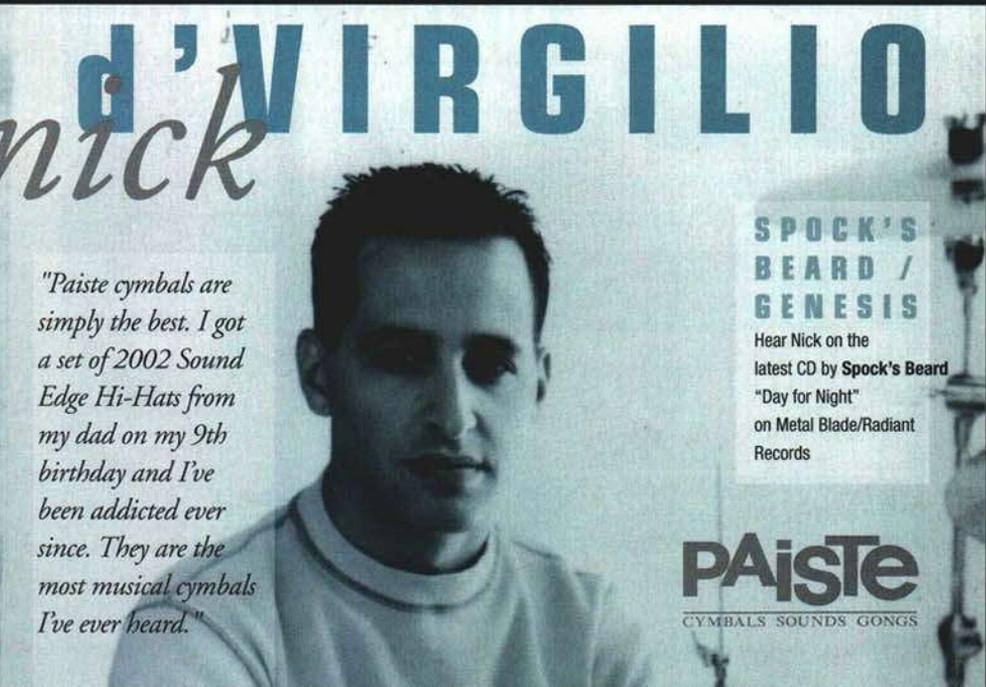
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head that said, "MAX."

So then came the audition. Things seemed to be going well. When we began the third song, which was a second-line, New Orleans thing, Conan jumped up and started to dance around. I figured that was a good sign. I'll never forget, when they left I was so glad it was over I went into the bathroom and threw up. This was the first Tuesday in August.

The following Monday morning, I got a call from Jeff Ross, the producer. He said, "Max, can you go to LA? Executive producer Lome Michaels wants to meet you."

"Sure, when?" "Now." I got dressed, went to the airport, and flew to LA, where a car picked me up and took me to Paramount Pictures, where they were shooting *Wayne's World II*. I met Lome, he asked me a couple of questions, and that was it. I came back Tuesday, and Tuesday night we started to rehearse. Ten days later, on September 13, 1993, we were on the air. We went on the air knowing fifteen songs, and now we have over four hundred full-length songs and close to 3,500 thirty-six-bar walk-ons. The band runs like a machine.

But I think my story is a good example of why you shouldn't let other people say, "You can't do this" or "You can't do that." You should stay true to what turns you on, because good things will happen. No matter how long it takes, or how high the stakes are, if you do what you're put here to do, it will happen.

**RF:** But as proven by your life, you had to do all the other things to find that out. Even though you weren't being true to yourself, you were on the necessary journey to get there.

**MW:** That's the point: If I hadn't gone through the four years of being out of it, I wouldn't have missed it so much and I would have been so frustrated, trying to get ahead and getting in another band. By leaving it, I got a whole fresh perspective, so by the time I got back to drumming as a career, I really *wanted* to be a drummer.

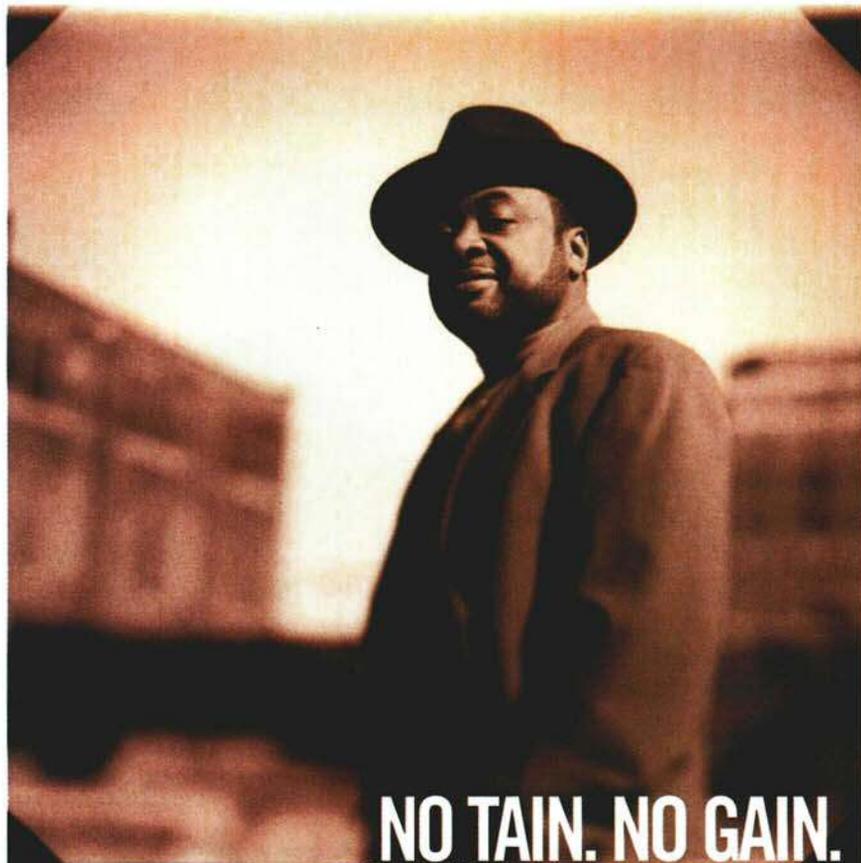
**RF:** Did you listen to music during the time you weren't playing?

**MW:** The only thing that cooled me out during the period from 1989 to 1993, besides my children, was listening to Frank Sinatra music, which I had never explored. I had met Sinatra in '87 through his long-time drummer Irv Cottier, and I had had a really nice moment with Frank at a Jersey concert. After the band broke up, I didn't listen to any rock 'n' roll. I only listened to Sinatra, and I began to really get attracted to the drumming on the records—the swinging, the ease. His voice mellowed me out. That music led me into Count Basie, and I began to develop a whole appreciation for what Tony Bennett calls "the American pop songbook."

So by the time I got the *Late Night* gig, I was pretty well versed in another musical vocabulary, where instrumentalists were the stars instead of just musicians backing up the star. When I got the TV show, I realized I had an opportunity to go from being a guy backing up an artist to being an instrumentalist in my own right, and to develop a whole new style of drumming. The TV show has opened up a whole new vista for me in terms of my appreciation for music. Where else would I have gotten to back up Tony Bennett, B.B. King, James Brown, The Staple Singers, Roger McGuinn, Sheryl Crow, and Bonnie Raitt?

**RF:** What did you have to learn about TV?

**MW:** A lot. I did 1,065 consecutive shows—never missed one. And if you look at the early shows, I'm playing like a rock



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drummer in a stadium, totally over the top. You can't do that on TV. You have to be much *cooler* or you look silly. TV is a small medium, it's a cool medium. Less is definitely more. I had to learn it all, though, *while* I was on TV. Timing is crucial. For example, when Conan says, "We'll be right back," I know his timing, boom, we go into the music.

**RF:** You don't take cues from a director?

**MW:** No, when we "bump" to commercial, I take my own cues and it's worked out. The first year, I'd leave on Friday not knowing if we'd be back on the air on

Monday. But my whole thing was, "I don't care what's happening on Monday, I'm playing on TV *tonight*."

**RF:** How did you emerge as a personality on the show?

**MW:** Our writers call me "the guy who'll do anything." The comedy just came as a result of the trio of Conan, Andy, and me. Other TV bandleaders have done a little bit of that. I had a flair for it and I enjoyed it, and it was an opportunity to take myself a lot less seriously, whether it was walking naked down the hallway, or dressing up as Liza Minnelli or Carol Channing. My atti-

tude is, if it gives someone a laugh at 1:00 in the morning, then it's worth it. It's hard enough to find anything amusing today. They just think of outrageous things for me to do and I do them.

**RF:** Tell us a little about the daily schedule on the show.

**MW:** It's an administrative position—I have a staff I oversee, I have responsibilities, I have a budget. The things I learned at the record company enabled me to exist within the bureaucracy of the corporate world at NBC.

The night before a show I'll get a list of the guests who will be on the following day's show. I'll read their bios, and something will jump out to give me an idea of what song to play behind them when they walk on. When someone like Joan Collins comes on, you want to play something like "I've Got You Under My Skin," in a very sultry kind of tempo. I go in at 11:00 A.M. and meet with Jimmy Vivino. We'll try to pick a song that suits the guest. Jimmy will write the songs out for the band, usually two or three guest walk-ons, as well as what we call "the walk-across," where we're introduced, which is a twenty-two-second snippet of any song I feel like playing. We will cop that exactly from a record. Jimmy is brilliant at de-constructing records. He can hear every single part and write it out perfectly.

At 11:30 we have a production meeting to determine what's going to happen that day. If there's an extended musical piece to write or record, we'll do that then. From 1:00 to 2:00 is lunch. The band comes in at 2:00 and we'll rehearse from 2:00 until 4:00, or earlier if there's not much to do. Also during that time is when we rehearse comedy bits. Very often I'll be running out of the band rehearsal room to rehearse bits. Then I get dressed.

At 4:30 I'll get made up, then I'll warm up a little bit on a drum pad. We go on at 5:08 to do a warm-up for the audience, and then Conan comes out at about 5:15 for six or seven minutes. Then the show is taped live from 5:30 to 6:30. I can usually get out of there by 7:10, and I'm usually home by 8:40.

It's an ideal job. Plus, I work with these great musicians and sometimes we'll work on things we don't even play on the show, just to keep the band sharp. There are some songs that have taken me three weeks to learn how to play, like the Bill Holman chart for Buddy Rich called "Ready Mix."

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It's at a very fast tempo, and you have to hit all the horn lines with your left hand. I work on these things until I get them down.

About two or three times a month we'll back someone up, and sometimes we'll have someone sit in. I was very privileged to have Tony Williams call to ask if he could sit in while he was in New York. Roy Haynes came on, Levon Helm, Joe Morello, Louie Bellson, and Earl Palmer. Watching Earl play made his style of rock drumming immediately apparent to me. Everything he played had that little New Orleans foot kick thing he does, and I could see him doing it. It's like a bebop thing, very interesting.

**RF:** How did the reunion of The E Street Band and Bruce come about?

**MW:** Last summer ['98] Bruce was putting together what became the box set *Tracks*. One day he called, saying, "Hey, I've been working on this bunch of music. Can you come over and check it out? I think you'd really get a kick out of listening to it."

I went to his studio in New Jersey and he and I sat for four hours listening to everything he'd been working on, compiling old tracks that we had done years before. I was blown away, because most of it I had never

heard. We used to record five, six songs a night. We'd play them once or twice and then forget about them. This was twenty years ago, so I didn't remember a lot of the stuff. I was blown away by the energy, the intensity, and the songwriting!

A few months later, around the middle of November, the idea of playing together again came up, and that started the ball rolling. It was an opportunity in the context of everyone's careers that was able to happen. In my case, I was very fortunate that NBC allowed me to take a hiatus to revisit my role as Mighty Max, the rock drummer.

**RF:** What's different being back with Bruce after having all these other musical experiences? Your approach must be very different.

**MW:** My approach is very different. I don't have calluses or blisters on my hands after a month of playing concerts because I've been playing every day for four hours for the last six years in a high-pressure situation. I'm relaxed and mature as a drummer. Everyone in The E Street Band has grown as a musician and as a person, so it's easier now. It's the best band we've ever had—there's a maturity and depth to the playing, but we still have the energy and

excitement. Bruce is better than he's ever been, and he's always been great. He's amazing. It's a thrill to play with him, it's a thrill to play with the band.

Some of the differences are that this isn't a swing band, it's a rock band, so I use different kinds of heads and a different grip. On TV I play pretty much in the traditional style because it lends to swinging more. The physical demands of playing rock are one hundred times more intense than what I do on TV. I have to play the bass drum much harder, so my ankle hurts. And it's much louder.

I started the tour using my basic DW drumset with *Ambassador* heads, but after one show it became completely inappropriate. They dented and didn't sound good after two songs. I have been finding that the heads I have typically used for a long time don't work, so I've been working with the people from Evans to try a variety of head combinations. I cut a hole in the front head of the bass drum, which you wouldn't necessarily do for a big band sound. I have to use heavier cymbals; I've switched from using thin cymbals to medium thin and medium cymbals, as well as to rock hi-hats. I had to go from a 3A stick to a 5A, which

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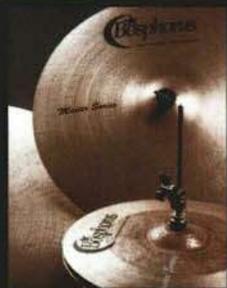
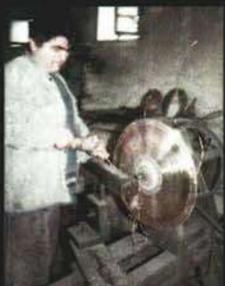
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# BOOM THEORY

was a big adjustment. I prefer the 3A.

My thing with Bruce is about single strokes, machine-gun drumming, and dramatic crescendos. There's not a lot of subtle technique, although there are a couple of songs where I'm playing with brushes—"The Ghost Of Tom load" and "The River," which we've totally revamped. I wouldn't have been able to do that ten years ago. Clayton Cameron was very helpful in showing me some tricks with brushes. He was on the show several times with Tony Bennett and he's the best brush player in existence.

**RF:** So you cornered him and asked him to give you a lesson?

**MW:** I do that with all the drummers who come on the show who I want to pick something up from.

**RF:** How are your hands and muscles surviving on the tour?

**MW:** I get sore. I've had two back operations, so I sit very straight to keep my body in alignment. I eat right. These rock tours are not an excuse to party. It's business and we're out there to service people's expectations, and we aim to please. We're playing for two hours and forty-five minutes straight, so it's very physically exerting. I don't even get to put the drumsticks down for the first forty-five minutes to take a drink. It's different on TV. TV is about making a quick impact on five million people in six seconds. You hit the ground running. With The E Street Band we do that too, but it's an ebb and flow over a longer time period.

**RF:** Are you doing anything to take care of your hands on the road?

**MW:** I ice my hands like I used to. I warm up on a pad for twenty minutes, doing the first couple of pages of *Stick Control* by George Lawrence Stone. Then for about three minutes I'll play along with a metronome at about 40 beats a minute, which is really slow. That's to get my accuracy really defined. The groove is *between* the beats. I try to keep everything very restrained.

If you listen to my drumming, I definitely play behind the beat a lot of the time. In big band and swing music, I play on the beat or in front of the beat, but in rock I try to hold everything back. With Bruce, he likes the heaviness that's in the music, rather than letting it rash ahead. After the show I put my hands in ice for a few minutes and I get a full body massage every

night—we all do. Some of the songs were recorded twenty years ago when I was in my twenties, but I still have to play those songs at those tempos and with that energy. It's a real challenge.

**RF:** What do you think you brought to Bruce from Conan?

**MW:** What I believe I brought is my continued growth as a drummer and as a musician, because I've played in so many different high-pressure situations. Also, my understanding of how music fits together is better. When they talk about the contour of a horn chart, I know what they're talking about. Ten years ago, I didn't know what it meant when they talked about writing outside the range of tenor saxophone. I never appreciated how hard it is to play a horn. I've become a much better legitimate musician.

**RF:** What do you think you'll bring back to Conan from this hiatus?

**MW:** I've learned there's a big difference between being a bandleader and a band-member. Being a bandleader enables a certain kind of freedom, yet at *Late Night* I'm constantly making notes of how to make things better. With Bruce, I don't do that. I wake up, I have breakfast, and I wait to go to the soundcheck. I'm waiting all the time, which is what you do when you're in someone else's band. It's *not proactive*. It's *reactive*.

On a TV show, there has to be discipline because it's the same thing every single day. You can't let it get boring. You can't become complacent about it because, "It's every day and tomorrow's another show." You have to treat each of those shows as if it's never going to happen again, and the guys in my band are really great about that.

**RF:** Being a cheerleader is difficult because you have to keep yourself up all the time too, which sometimes takes some work.

**MW:** It doesn't take anything at all for me to get up. It never really did, but it particularly doesn't now, having had the experience of '89 to '93. I so appreciate doing it now that I have a totally different perspective.

If it's up to me, I will *never* not work as a drummer again. I had to leave it to find out how much I love doing it. No matter what else I do—and I found that I *can* do other things—this is the core of what I do. If I hadn't climbed up the mountain, been on the mountain, and fallen down the mountain, I would never have known how much it meant to me.



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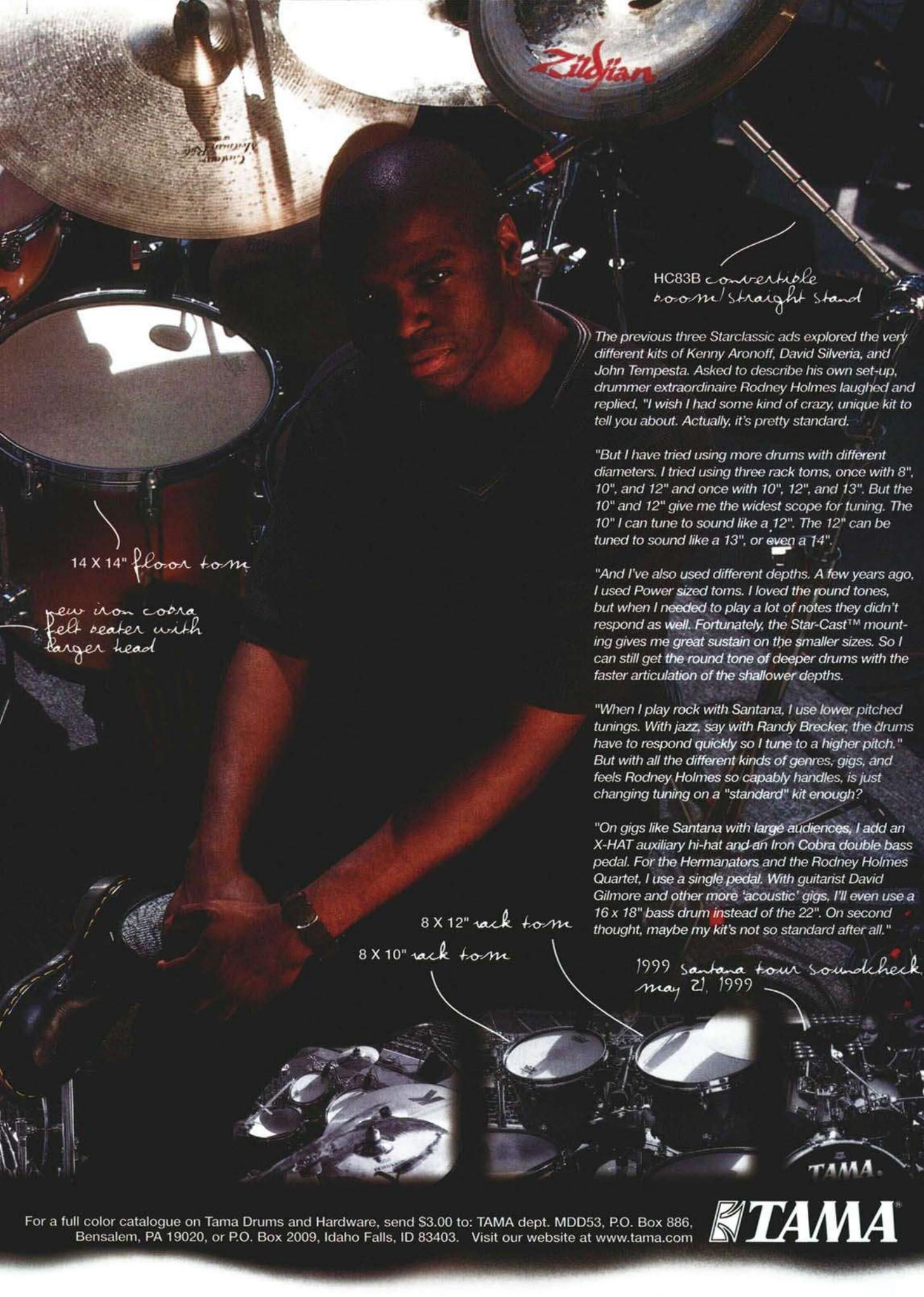
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The previous three Starclassic ads explored the very different kits of Kenny Aronoff, David Silveria, and John Tempesta. Asked to describe his own set-up, drummer extraordinaire Rodney Holmes laughed and replied, "I wish I had some kind of crazy, unique kit to tell you about. Actually, it's pretty standard."

"But I have tried using more drums with different diameters. I tried using three rack toms, once with 8", 10", and 12" and once with 10", 12", and 13". But the 10" and 12" give me the widest scope for tuning. The 10" I can tune to sound like a 12". The 12" can be tuned to sound like a 13", or even a 14".

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"When I play rock with Santana, I use lower pitched tunings. With jazz, say with Randy Brecker, the drums have to respond quickly so I tune to a higher pitch." But with all the different kinds of genres, gigs, and feels Rodney Holmes so capably handles, is just changing tuning on a "standard" kit enough?

"On gigs like Santana with large audiences, I add an X-HAT auxiliary hi-hat and an Iron Cobra double bass pedal. For the Hermanators and the Rodney Holmes Quartet, I use a single pedal. With guitarist David Gilmore and other more 'acoustic' gigs, I'll even use a 16 x 18" bass drum instead of the 22". On second thought, maybe my kit's not so standard after all."

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**TAMA**

# BOBBY PREVITE TRAILBLAZER

by Ken Micallef

**B**obby Previte is a rare person in American life, a total original. Not only an original drummer, but an original composer as well, who through his many groups expresses the kind of freedom and exploration associated with the *best* in groundbreaking American tradition. Melodic iconoclast, drumming maverick, risk-taker, zany conceptualist, and industrious label boss, the forty-something Previte is a restless soul who defies convention with every thread of his scrappy frame,

But that individualism does not mean, as the so-called "out jazz" label implies, that Previte's art is *unlistenable*, or simply some mad improvisations for a freak audience in Manhattan's Lower East Side. Far from it.

In the group Latin For Travelers, Previte feeds the unlikely beast of world music-drenched blues bumps with funky-as-a-monkey drumming. This is deep groove music your grandma could love, as well as your nose ring-wearing girlfriend. Ditto for groups Empty Suits and Weather Clear, Fast Track, where Previte's drumming is second only to his playful, inspired compositions,

With saxophonist John Zorn on *Euclid's Nightmare* (on the drummer's Depth Of Field label), the downtown duo salt malleable improvis with rambunctious racing and playful excursions

into uncharted instrumental water,

And while he often seems to be looking over the next horizon, 1980s Previte albums such as *Pushing The Envelope* and *Claude's Late Morning* offer wonderfully serene, contemplative moments,

Then we have Ponga, Previte's latest project featuring Wayne Horvitz, Dave Palmer, and Skerik, which puts the electronica pedal to the metal. Creating blistering improvis over a dizzying batch of scorching samples and loops, Ponga couples the scalding burn of addled-acid jazz with the twisted minefield of the twenty-first century sampledelia. Throughout, Previte plays the baddest drumming of his life. Influenced by the exotic programming of UK artists Photek and Squarepusher, Previte slams the skins like a man-machine, whirling rhythms and whittling accents in a time-tumbling fury,

Whether working with Elliot Sharp, Horvitz, Zorn, Jane Ira Bloom, Tim Berne, or one of his own bands (including the improv animal The Horse), Bobby Previte proves you need not follow drum trends or musically fashionable styles to have a long, fruitful career,

Grab a seat, pop a bottle, and get ready for a read of a different stripe,,,,,



**KM:** *Ponga* is marketed as more of an alternative record than the other records you're on. That seems like a good thing for this music.

**BP:** Yes, I agree. Though I am not one of those people who think, "If only the label would take out an ad in *Billboard*. Then I could sell more records." But I do think that too much is made of the alternative-ness of this music, and a lot of people want to feel that they are privy to some sort of cabal. And the people at the record company and in the industry are very loathe to say to people, "You may really like this music."

**KM:** If you played the Latin For Travelers album for the average guy walking down the street, he would dig it. It crosses so many lines, from blues to funk to jazz to improv. But this music is becoming labeled as "Knitting Factory" music.

**BP:** I didn't make the Latin For Travelers album to cross over or for any other similar reason. I made it because I had to make it. It's where I was at the time. I am a human being. I am not such a strange entity. I am a regular person. I like things that people like. Why should my music be considered so out? Some people need to feel that they are in on some grand secret. They put the music



there with the idea that only certain people can appreciate it. I really protest against that.

**KM:** Well, what Tim Berne and John Zorn do is not as accessible as Latin For Travelers or Ponga. That music seems designed for the out-jazz intelligentsia. Even *Pushing The Envelope* is very pretty in a way and accessible.

**BP:** You don't have to say "in a way," you can say it's pretty. And you won't insult me. I am making a point. What, is it a sin to be pretty?

**KM:** Latin For Travelers is a good entry into your music. Your drumming is very organic. You generally play more actual drums than cymbals.

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Why is that?

**BP:** I don't know why. That's just what I heard at that point, but I love the sound of cymbals. I've been known to do a solo on just one cymbal just for the sound. I do play a lot of drums, because I like the earthy feeling, I guess. It connects me.

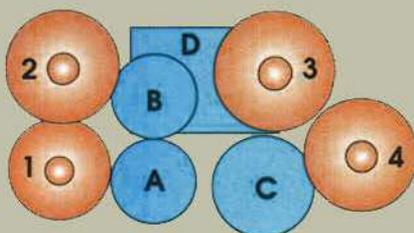
**KM:** Doesn't it make you work harder?

**BP:** Yeah, they don't ring as long.

**KM:** And you almost never just mark time on a cymbal. You're all over the place, constantly, always driving and slamming. You seem to have a lot of endurance.

**BP:** I have less than I used to. I have to

## No Endorsements, Please



While Previte is happy to diagram his setup, he has strong feelings about discussing the brands he plays. "I don't want to list brands because it creates too strong an emphasis on the company and the tool. Do you ask a carpenter what brand of hammer he uses? Besides, the same cymbal played by two different drummers sounds completely different.

"A rep from a cymbal company told me that they were coming up with a new series of cymbals that 'all sounded the same, so you could just order a replacement.' I was horrified! That's *just* what I want, a cymbal that eight million other cats have!"

### Drumset

- A. 6x12 snare
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do some other physical activity other than drums, because I feel like I'm losing some kind of physical thing. But it's not a problem, I'm not a big technique guy. I don't put much emphasis on technique when I listen to music. Technique is not a big part of my interest.

**KM:** You don't practice now?

**BP:** I practice, but I don't practice as much as I should. I am traveling and writing and trying to run my record company. I am trying to have a life. It's hard. When I was a kid I practiced hours and hours straight, five hours at a time. I can't do that now. Now other things are more important to me than practice, like having a life. I'm getting my music from that life. Everything you live comes out in your music.

What separates the great from the merely talented is probably that they have the ability to dig inside themselves further and have the courage to show everyone the results of that excavation, which can render you quite unclothed. The greatest artists are standing naked before us. That takes either a kind of craziness or a deep strength.

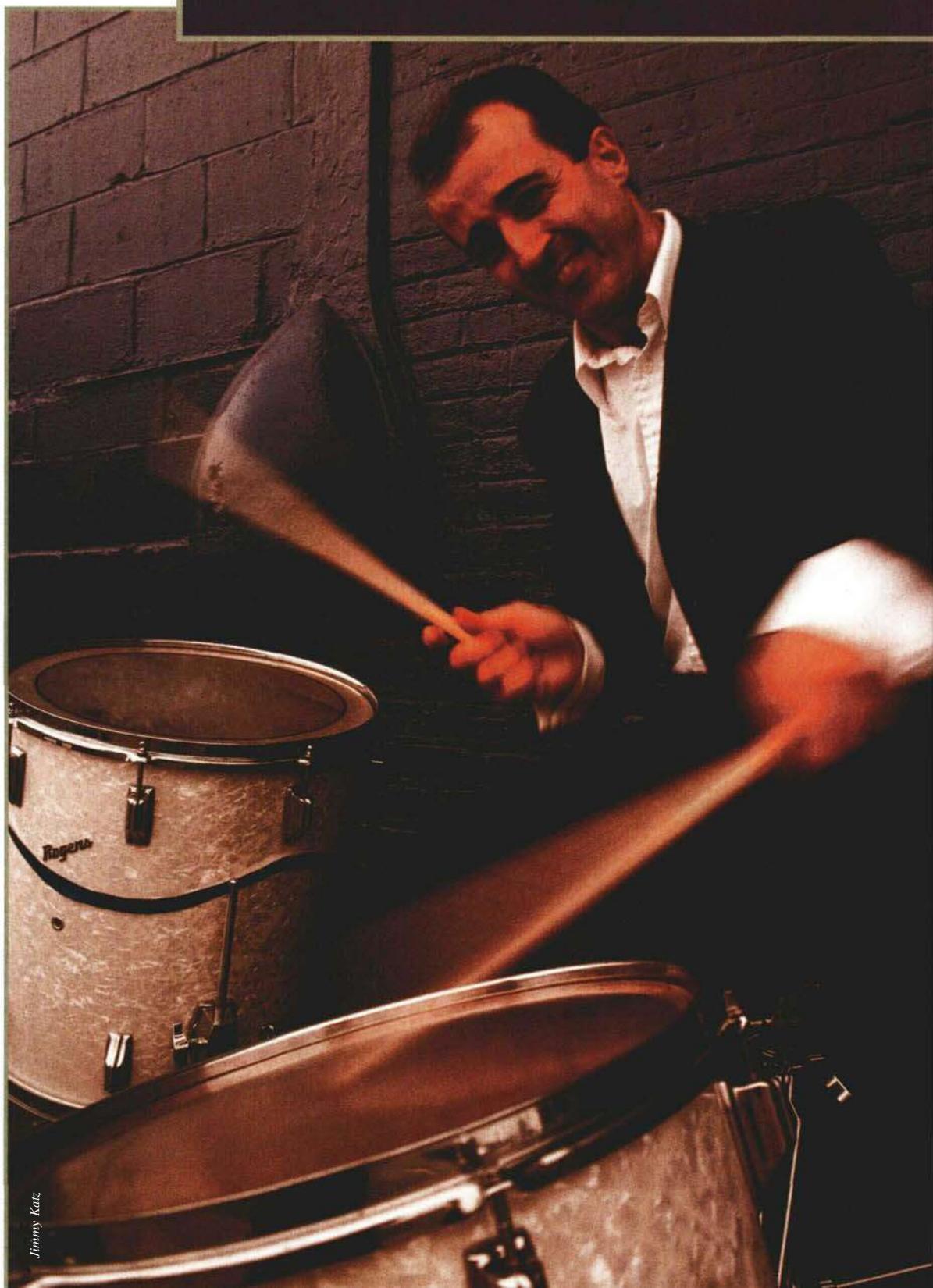
**KM:** When you made *Pushing The Envelope* [1987] did you want it to lead to where you are now musically? Did you have a goal then?

**BP:** No, I could never have known, and it would have been really boring to know

where I was going. I would not have taken the circuitous path I did, no *Claude's Late Morning*, no *Too Close To The Pole*. I had no idea, I never have an idea. I never want to be somewhere. I just try to be where I am. I don't plan. That doesn't work for me. I have music in my head *now* that I want to get out.

**KM:** Has your drumming changed since *Pushing The Envelope*?

**BP:** Sure it has. I'm the same person yet I'm not the same person. I am Bobby Previte, and in some ways I'll never be able to play any differently from the way I play. You can't erase those things. Those are the things all of us want to



jump out of sometime. Who among us hasn't wanted to jump out of our own skin to be something else?

**KM:** You have the thing that all drummers want, an instantly recognizable style. One can recognize your drumming quickly. I would never confuse you with Jim Black or Joey Baron, drummers who play with the same musicians that you do. You never even play what would be a straight jazz cymbal pulse, the old spang-a-lang.

**BP:** That I grant you. [laughs]

**KM:** How old were you when you began the drums?

**BP:** Thirteen. I was and am a miserable reader. I get by. I went to percussion school at the University of Buffalo, where I studied Western percussion, timpani, vibes, snare drum, triangle. But I never really did anything else in terms of studying drums. I was an economics major. Then I began playing in bar bands. One of them was called Thermopylae—it was free. I played my compositions there. Before that I played in a rock band called Black Ice, which did Traffic, Jethro Tull, Rolling Stones, and Motown covers.

## A Little Traveling Music

Here are the albums Bobby says best represent his playing:

Artist	Album
Previte	Pushing The Envelope
Previte	Claude's Late Morning
Latin For Travelers	My Man In Sydney
John Zorn/Previte	Euclid's Nightmare
Tim Berne	Chaos Totale
Horvitz, Morris, Previte	Nine Below Zero
Ponga	Ponga
Previte	Bump The Renaissance
Previte	Dull Bang, Gushing Sound, Human Shriek

And these are the ones he listens to for inspiration:

Artist	Album	Drummer
Miles Davis	Filles de Kilimanjaro	Tony Williams
Cream	Disraeli Gears	Ginger Baker
Art Blakey	Headhunters	Art Blakey
Herbie Hancock	Mwandishi	Billy Hart
Jimi Hendrix	Axis: Bold As Love	Mitch Mitchell
James Brown	Live At The Apollo, Vol. 2	Jabo Starks/Clyde Stubblefield
Bill Evans	Simple Matter Of Conviction	Shelly Manne

**KM:** When did you start playing free music?

**BP:** For a couple years before I came to New York I only played free music. I didn't play anything that wasn't free, whatever that means. We did a lot in Buffalo.

Before that I also did a lot of casuals—all kinds of gigs—all over the East Coast. I got a lot of experience. But there wasn't enough of an improv scene in Buffalo, so I had to move to New York,

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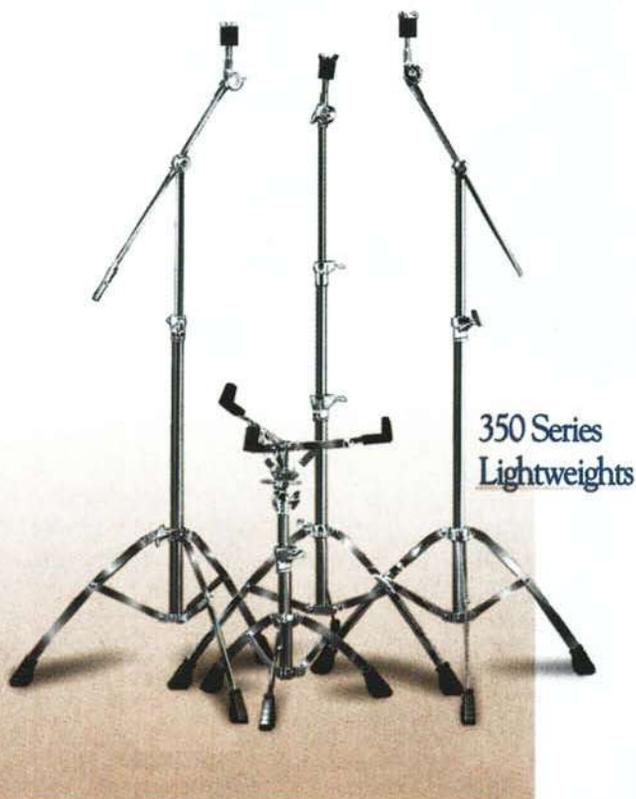
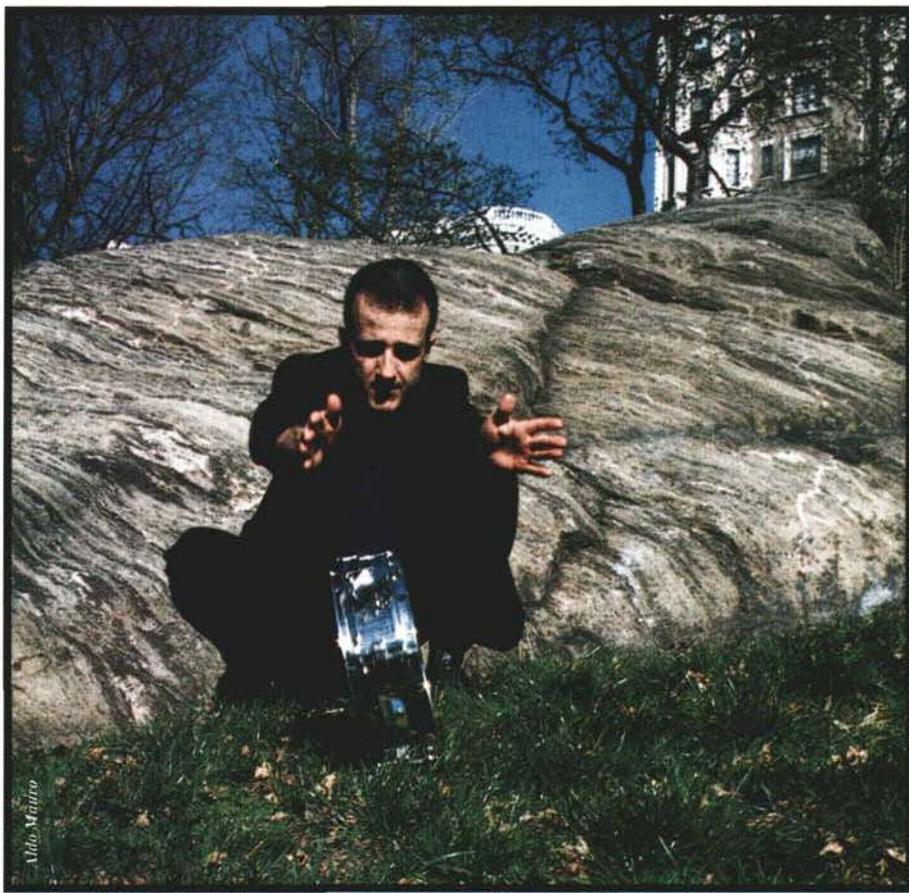
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**BP:** All I can say to that is, the one thing I've done is to be true to what I hear and to try not to play what someone *else* wants me to play. I play what I feel. That doesn't mean I have to play something new. What is new, anyway? But what isn't okay with me is if I play something that strikes a false note within me. You can't worry if someone else is going to like you or not or if you're going to get the gig with blah blah blah if you play a certain way. You should play the way *you* feel and the way *you* want to play.

**KM:** Is it a better scene now for improvisational music than it was during the loft scene of the '70s?

**BP:** I dunno. It never seems great, that's the problem. It's so hard to be a musician. You're surrounded by a lot of elements that will lead you astray in so many different ways—artistically, financially, personally, health-wise. Real musicians know there's no pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. The satisfaction is in your work, in your peers' work, and in your own playing. The instant you look for it somewhere else—if you are a real musician—then you get pun-



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ished severely the instant you stray. If you do something just for money you'll be miserable.

I used to get physically ill when I played bad music. My back would go out. It would really hurt. Steve Swallow told me he had the same reaction to bad music, or music that he didn't hear or feel. I'm talking about playing a whole evening of really dreadful stuff, or perhaps when you know you should not be playing with a certain person. You are soiling the very thing that means the most to you. The best thing you can do is quit music and do something else. You'll love music much more if you don't sully it all the time.

**KM:** Be true to yourself.

**BP:** That's it. But everything these days is telling you not to do it. Everything in the culture tells you not to do it. We should just do what the television tells us to do.

**KM:** What was the early downtown scene like?

**BP:** It was great. There has been a revival going on lately. In the late '70s and early '80s, when the downtown scene was really flourishing, it was like anything that is

really happening at the time. It was of the moment. You never knew what was going to happen. I came in '79. I worked with Wayne Horvitz, John Zorn, Elliot Sharp, Bill Frisell, and the whole surrounding area of people. We all worked in that scene, some more than others. It was an exciting time when people were trying stuff and nobody censored you. We weren't making career moves. There were a lot of clubs to play. You could really do all the projects you were burning to play.

Now the scene is codified, like all things become. The beginning is always the most exciting time, all the cross-pollination is happening.

**KM:** *Ponga* is unlike the other records you've done. It sounds more contemporary. What was the idea of bringing Dave Palmer and his array of samples to the *Ponga* project?

**BP:** He's bad. Something clicked. He has that way of playing keyboard bass that covers rock and funk.

**KM:** Is *Ponga* influenced by jungle and electronica?

**BP:** Oh, yeah. That's what I listen to a lot.

I like Photek and some Aphex Twin, which has some really good drum programming. And I like Plug and Squarepusher. That's what's happening now. Nobody knows what they're doing from one album to the next, and it's so hip. That makes my blood rush.

**KM:** Does that influence your drumming on a track like "Bookin" (from *Ponga*)?

**BP:** Oh, yeah, can't you hear it? When we made that record I was less involved with it than I am now. It more influences the way I play now in the Miles band [The Horse, which uses *Bitches Brew* as source material]. My head is really being turned by that stuff. The British guys are really good programmers. There's more bombast with the American guys. The Brits are more willing to break the beats up. You have to pervert it. Finally, the drum machine is being used correctly. We finally figured out that the thing has to be used to do what no drummer could ever do or want to do. It's a machine and that's how it has to be looked at. It's a machine and it plays like a machine. Some of that stuff is killing.

**KM:** How does that affect your drum-

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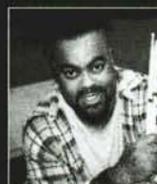
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ming?

**BP:** I'm much more likely now to break the beat abstractly. I think it makes me go over the 1 more in my playing. I play more pulse than meter, not ignoring the 1, but playing through the 1 so the feeling of 4 becomes obscured. In funk, the 1 is very important. In jungle, the 1 is obscured in the drum pattern. If you just solo off the drum pattern, those patterns are pretty wild. They repeat asymmetrically. That's what attracts me.

**KM:** How does The Horse approach *Bitches Brew*?

**BP:** We avoid any kind of imitation.

**KM:** Do you like Bill Laswell's *Panthalassa* remixes of *Bitches Brew*?

**BP:** [pause] I'm not going to answer that. [laughs] Imitation is the cardinal sin. Trying to re-create something from the past—what could be worse? I think my Miles band is strange anyway. But Horse began as something to do just for fun. We don't use a trumpet. I don't like a lot of these tributes, I've always done my own music. We just wanted to play *Bitches Brew* for fun. Then it got away from us: Festivals called, etc. The band sounds

great. Now we don't do *Bitches Brew* or *In A Silent Way*. We're using Miles' music for source material. We might play the theme from "Selim" on top of a Herbie Hancock track like "Ostinato" from *Mwandishi*. But we never do anything twice. We played "Jack Johnson" and underneath that was "Spanish Key." We're experimenting with it. We're just using it as a way to play, and we try to play it as open as possible.

**KM:** How does your drumming change in that setting?

**BP:** I only use a snare drum and a bass drum because we have percussionists playing djembe [Johnny Medham] and conga [Peter Basel]. I don't need any tom-toms. And I use two cymbals and hi-hat. We can go wherever we want. If you really know the music, you'll hear Miles' melodies in Horse, but you might hear them in another key, or orchestrated differently from the way you're used to, or you might hear them with another part of another Miles Davis tune underneath or in a completely different tempo from the one you're used to.

**KM:** Has playing Miles influenced the other music you play?

**BP:** Oh, yeah. Patience. That's the biggest thing I got from Miles' music. Patience and courage. He was very patient and he allowed the music to speak. He just let it go. Those guys could sit there and just let it cook and grow for a long time. It's one huge slow orgasm. The guys in the band are young: Peter Epstein, Dave Binney, Pete McCann, Rob Thomas, Peter Herbert, Jamie Saft.

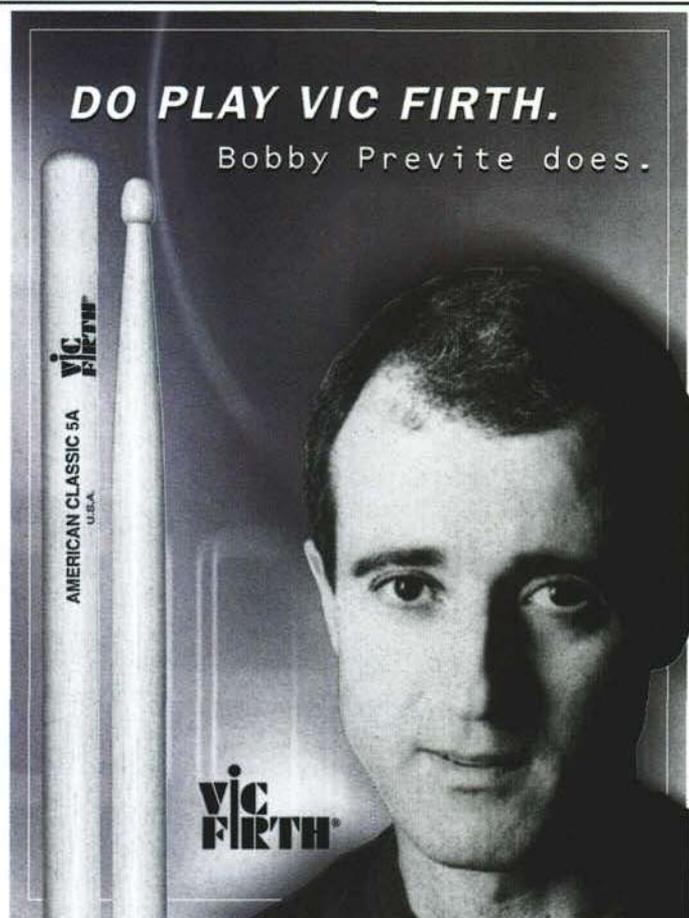
**KM:** You've had so many groups: Latin For Travelers, Empty Suits, The Horse. Does each group represent a different style?

**BP:** They're all the same. [laughs] I'm saying the same thing with different orchestrations.

**KM:** But they play different music.

**BP:** The intent is not to have a horn record or a guitar record—I go where my fancy leads me. All these things, from Miles to Photek, are leading me in different directions. I don't know where, and I'm not *interested* in knowing ahead of time where I'm going. Look at those old videos of Miles and his band. They didn't know exactly what was going to happen.

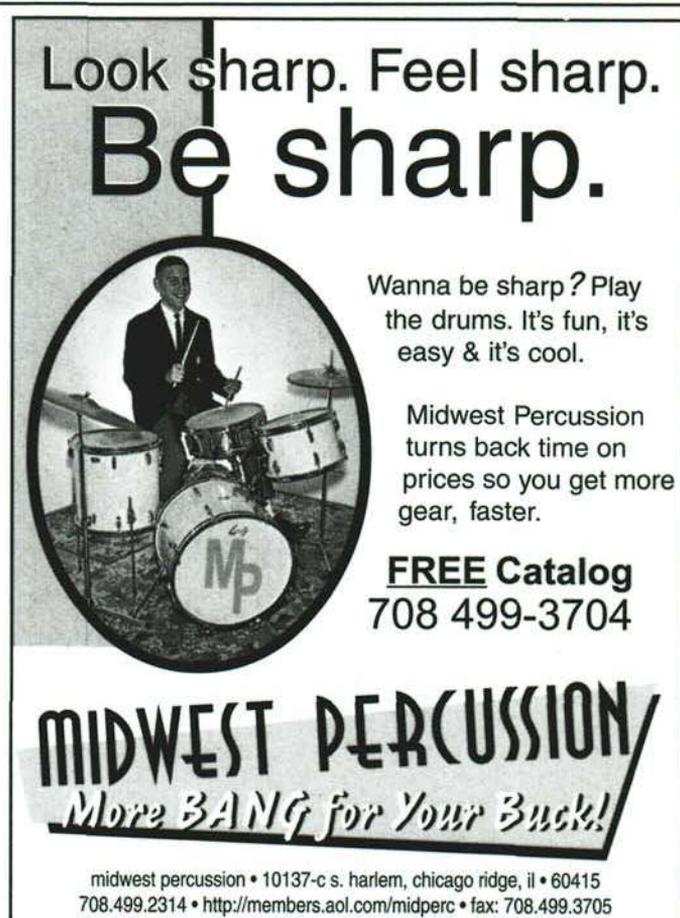
**KM:** What guidelines do you give to your



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bands?

**BP:** I say as little as possible, just enough to convey the general emotional territory of where I would like the music to go. A lot of it is in the music. The way I write should tell them the way I want it to sound. A lot of mistakes are made when you think it has to be one way, and it turns out another way. When I was younger I was much more rigid, but I'm much looser now.

**KM:** As a musician, do you like to live dangerously?

**BP:** How dangerous can it be? It's just music. Nobody is going to kill us if we mess up onstage. They won't imprison us or drive us from our homeland. But I do try to banish thoughts of predetermination and get rid of all my ideas of what this should be or any ideas of what I as Bobby Previte should be. Those things are a drag on the music. You have to get rid of those.

**KM:** How do you keep it fresh and not repeat yourself, which is what keeps your music exciting? Drummers grow up practicing patterns over and over again.

**BP:** Worry. [laughs] I don't do anything until I really have a reason to do it. I do it when I feel there's a need in myself and

hopefully in the outer sphere in the world. But it's not always fresh. There have been plenty of times when I had no ideas at all, when I couldn't stand my own playing.

**KM:** But in the physical act of drumming is there anything conscious happening?

**BP:** It's about losing your conscious. And when I'm trying consciously, that's when I play my worst. I play my best when I'm linked to my subconscious, when I have erased myself the most. It's never about playing what you've practiced. How can that be music? Theoretically, you can practice something, but the musical moment for that to occur might not happen for twenty years. Who has that kind of discipline?

**KM:** What do you practice now?

**BP:** I try to cop some of those Photek grooves! If I could just cop that groove on "The Hidden Camera" [from the *Risk Vs. Reward* CD]. That cymbal thing is so wild.

It might be a disadvantage to be a drummer, in terms of coming up with new things on the drums. The reason a lot of that drum N bass stuff is so interesting is because the guys doing the programming aren't drummers. They don't have drummers' things. We have all of the drummers'

shit.

**KM:** With all of the "out" stuff you do, I was surprised at all of the blues you have played in your career.

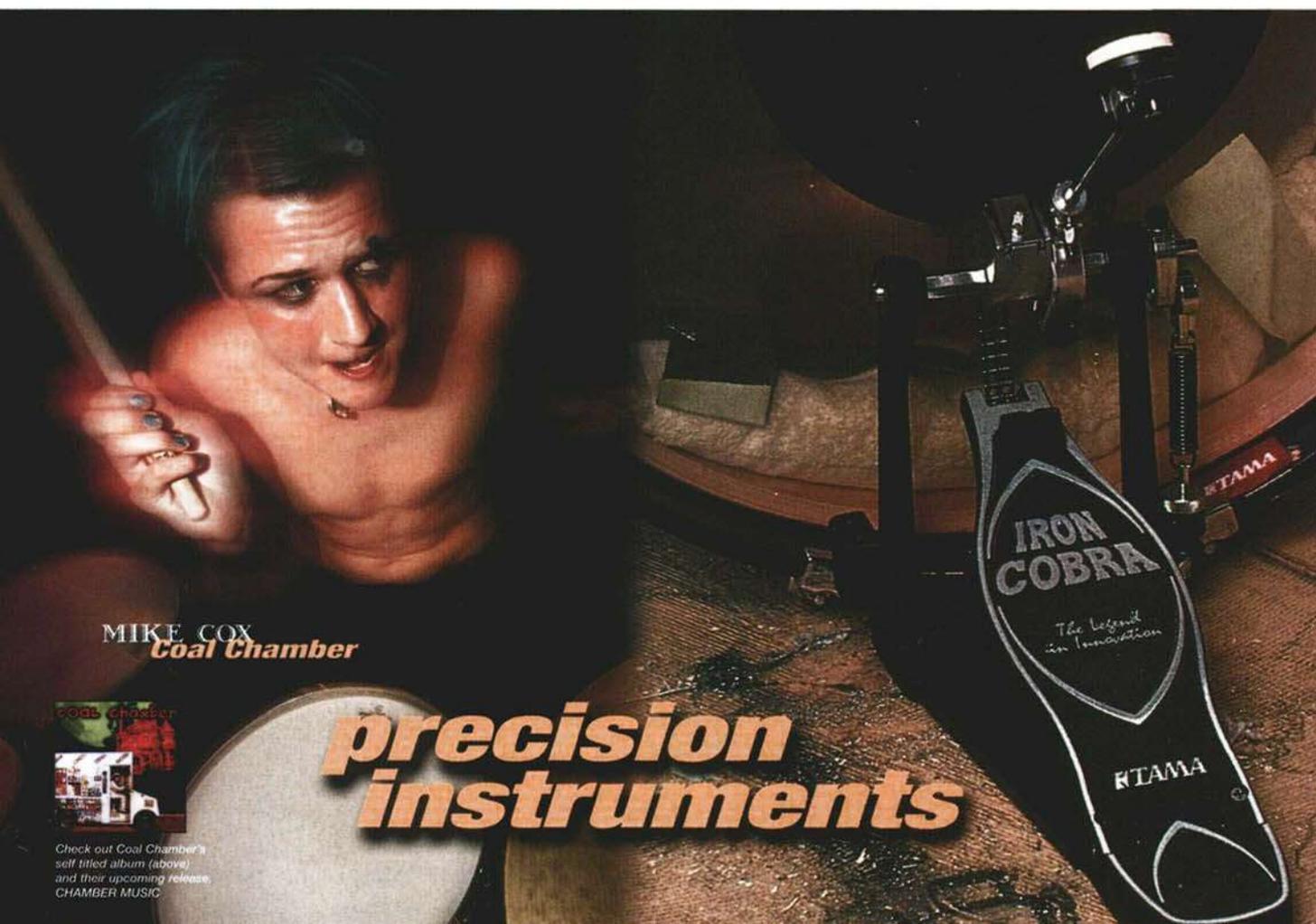
**BP:** Yes, with Johnny Copeland. And I worked with Bobby Radcliff for years. He's great. I love to play deep in that groove.

**KM:** How do you capture that depth of the blues and not sound white and sterile? It seems there is some magic line you have to cross.

**BP:** It's a magic line you don't cross. That's the secret. It's what you don't play. It's *always* what you don't play. You can always tell when people are trying too hard. But for that music you shouldn't try at all. The deeper you go, the more patient you are, the more you are willing to not make anything happen, the deeper you'll go. Especially in that music. You can't be sitting back there trying to make it happen, because it's already happening.

**KM:** Steve Jordan says the same thing. On some of those Keith Richards records he never even plays a fill. He said you don't need it. It's straight. It's almost Zen-like.

**BP:** People play *at* the blues but very few



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people can play the blues. It's very happy and tense and there's a deepness to the groove.

One time I was playing with Johnny Copeland and I didn't know he was from Texas, so I was doing all my best Chicago stuff, up on the cymbal, near the bell. Chicago style is very light and kind of fast on its feet. He kept turning around, but he wouldn't say anything to me. He was pleasant. At the break, Johnny's guitar player said, "Johnny is from Texas." That was all. Then I got it. For the next set I went over to the hi-hat and played a harder, more rocking groove, none of this fancy cymbal shit.

**KM:** How did you know to do that?

**BP:** I just knew that style. It's stuff you pick up. I also got to play with Albert Collins. He was concerned with the depth of the feel. The emotional feel, not the time. Only pro cats are concerned with the time. It's great to have good time. I work on my time. I'm no Steve Gadd, but I have good time. The time is not my first concern, but it's not my last either.

**KM:** You said that Copeland didn't speak to you. Maybe you've adopted that same

approach with your bands?

**BP:** The music should speak for me. If I was a better composer the music would damn near speak for me completely and I wouldn't have to say a word. My philosophy is to let the rope out—you can always pull the rope in if you have to. If you stifle musicians, you'll never get the best out of them.

**KM:** You don't solo.

**BP:** I am almost tempted to say that I don't like drum solos, but in the abstract I like drum solos. I hardly ever hear a solo that does anything for me. They're normally just a succession of chops and clichés.

**KM:** Your drums could stand to be louder on your records.

**BP:** I'm always fighting with the engineer, who wants to turn them up! That's just the way I hear it.

**KM:** The ensembles you play in are truly improvisational, while much corporate jazz is still about playing the head and then solos all around.

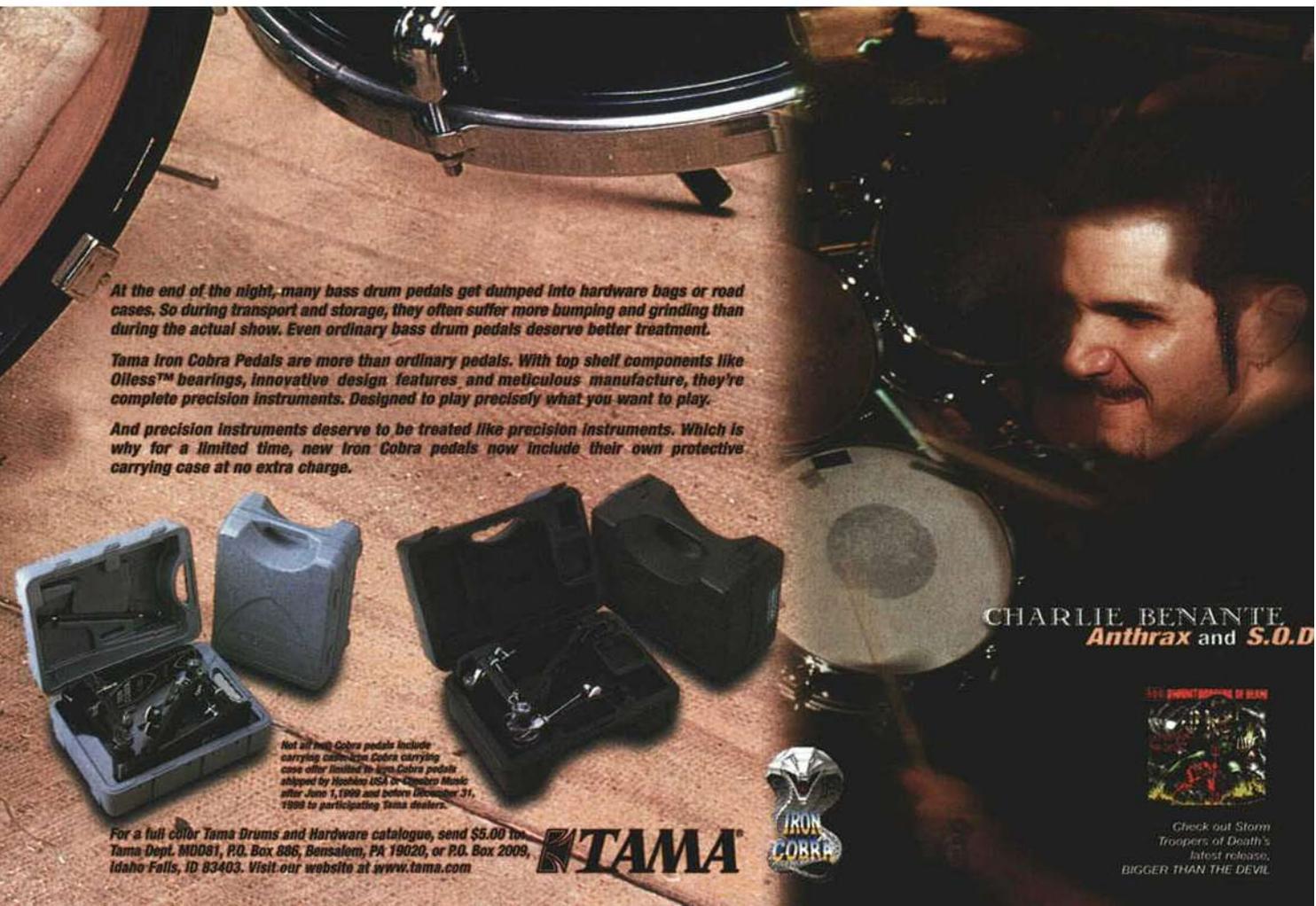
**BP:** People like to hear heads. I would be bored by it, but a lot of people aren't. If you're listening to Sonny Rollins, if he plays head/solo/head, then fine, he's great.

The word "jazz" has been so co-opted. I feel that I don't play jazz. I play what the *spirit* of jazz was. It doesn't go ding-ding-a-ding, and I'm not using the blues scale particularly. But in the spirit and the soul of it, yes, I am playing jazz.

**KM:** What advice would you give to drummers who want to play in the kinds of groups you do and who want to write improvisational music?

**BP:** It's damn hard. I am loathe to tell kids that because I know what a tough road it is. Besides, most kids want to have the gig with blah-blah-blah. Following the improvisational path will take you off the menu of those name gigs, especially if you become an idiosyncratic player.

This path is very rewarding, but it is difficult. You have to get your inspiration from things other than music and other than drummers. You have to be influenced by things like painting and dance. Go to all the disciplines and find within them what resonates with you. Sure, work on technique, but don't get caught up in another drummer's style. You want to explore *you*.



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# GOV'T MULE'S

# Matt Abts

by Robin Tolleson

Gov't Mule is the ideal gig for drummer Matt Abts, and he knows it. The forty-four-year-old grew up loving the drumming of Mitch Mitchell and John Bonham, and he's right at home with the open-minded jamming nature of Gov't Mule. The instrumental freedom heard on the band's new release, *Live... With A Little Help From Our Friends*, is "something we strive for," according to Abts. "It's a living, breathing thing, and we like to take it somewhere new every time we do it. That's what Gov't Mule is all about."

Growing up an army brat, and then becoming a successful touring musician, Matt Abts never learned the meaning of the word "unpack." "We moved around constantly," he recalls. "As a kid that was really exciting, because there was always the adventure of going somewhere new—the adventure of going on the road.

"When I was fourteen and we lived in Panama," Abts continues, "I got my first drumset and really started getting into music at that point. I grew up listening to Armed Forces Radio. Anybody who's lived overseas can verify this: The latest music

was always a little late in getting to Armed Forces Radio, maybe a month or two behind. But we'd listen for all the cool music, and sometimes we'd pick up radio stations from the US mainland. This was in the late 1960s, so things were obviously a lot different. This was pre-CD, pre-crack, pre-AIDS. The Jimi Hendrix Experience and Cream came out, and we had all heard of those bands, but the records were a little late in getting down to South America. We waited patiently for their arrival at the PX so we could go buy them.



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"In Panama I ordered a Ludwig drumset from the Chicago factory, and it took what seemed like forever to get down there. I was so excited and anxious to get it. This blue sparkle Ludwig set finally arrived and it was just a shining gem. I had that kit for a number of years." (These days Matt plays a new Slingerland kit. "Thin maple shells, die-cast hoops, low-mass hardware—they kick ass!")

Matt says he started playing in bands in eighth grade, primarily with GIs who were on the base, at the enlisted men's clubs and the officers' club. "I was this little white kid playing Motown tunes, usually with older black GIs." Eventually the Abts family moved to the Washington DC area, where Matt attended high school in Fairfax, Virginia. "Some of my biggest influences at the time were Mitch Mitchell and Ginger Baker," he remembers. "When I was a kid I learned all of Ginger's 'Toad' solo, as so many kids growing up at that time did. Seeing The Beatles on Ed Sullivan, that did it. There were people coming in and out of the Washington DC area all the time, so you had a lot of different influences."

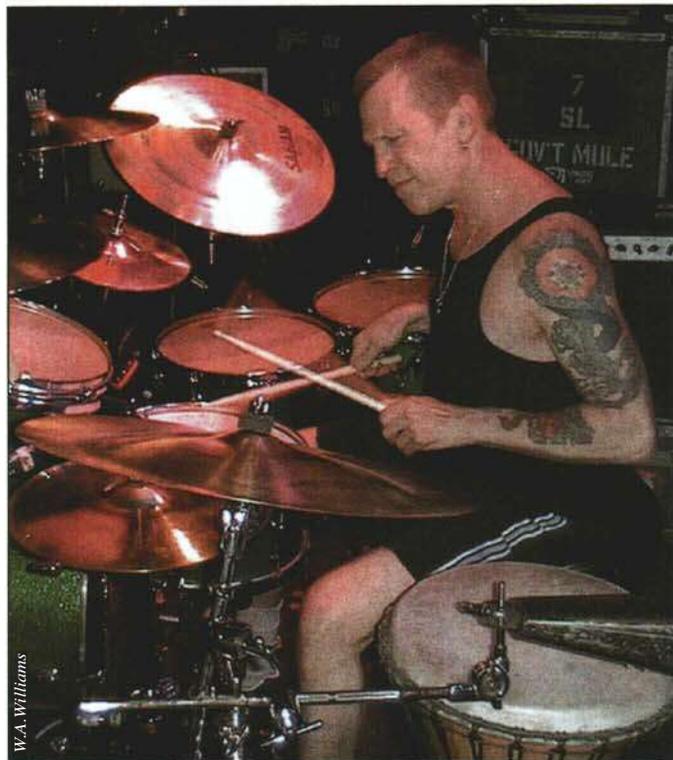
Matt took some band classes in high school, but no other formal studies. "I was more motivated by the whole rock 'n' roll lifestyle—playing in bands, growing up at the tail end of the Vietnam War, and trying to stay out of the draft. Bands were such a social thing. You made a stand on what kind of person you were."

Abts learned mostly by playing along with records. "I had the drums set up in my bedroom and drove everybody nuts, but they put up with it. I had 'Toad' down pat. 'In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida.' All that stuff. It was such a fertile music scene at the time.

In hindsight, the great rock bands came out of that five-year period from '67 to '72, which is an era that Gov't Mule has kind of tapped into. We all grew up then, when there was so much improvisation going on, and it was closely related to jazz in a sense. At least The Jimi Hendrix Experience was.

"I never really took any formal lessons," Matt adds, "but I must say I've gone through some reading materials. A friend of mine recently gave me *The Rudimental Ritual* by Alan Dawson, so I've been practicing and working out of that, and it's great."

After high school, Abts started playing in bar bands, show bands, and big horn bands that would do two-week road dates. He says he's never had trouble finding work. "When I was growing up on the East Coast, I made my money and honed my skills playing in original and Top-40 bands on bar/nightclub circuits. I've always loved the drums, and I've always wanted to make my living playing in bands. The whole lifestyle of being a musician is appealing to me. It hasn't been easy. There are so many ups and downs in this business, as we all know. I've had no problem finding work, though. Of course, some work is better than others. But I've done whatever I've had to do to continue doing this, just for the love of playing."



After working the DC/Baltimore/Virginia area, Abts moved to Sarasota, Florida to play with a Top-40 band. Allman Brothers guitarist Dickey Betts happened to live next door to the drummer. "I met all those Allman Brothers guys, and that started a relationship with Dickey," Matt explains. "I was with Dickey's solo band from 1984 to 1989. Gregg Allman was living down there at the time too. We'd play at clubs and the Allmans guys would come in and jam with us."

"I played in many incarnations of Dickey's band," adds Matt. "Warren Haynes was the guitar player in the last edition, and he plays with me in Gov't Mule now. We did a record with Dickey in '88 called *Pattern Disruptive* on Epic records. That was a great version of the band. After that The Allman Brothers got back together and Warren was asked to join. So I said, 'Well Warren, I'll probably see you somewhere down the road.' At that point we had established a relationship and we had a lot of fun playing together. So we kind of left the door open when I left that situation."

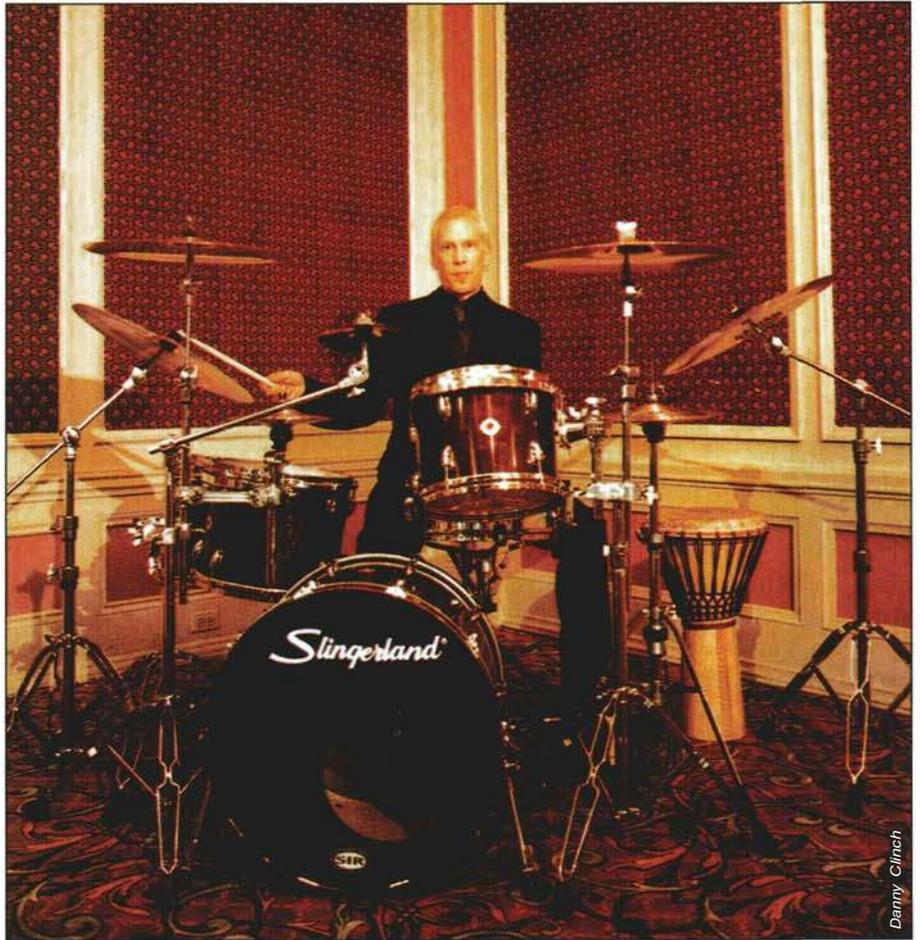
Abts worked in the San Francisco Bay Area for a while, then moved to Los Angeles in 1991, playing clubs and doing a lot of records on spec. "I really tried to work the town," he says. "At the same time

I was getting calls to do other things. I did a record with a guy named Chris Anderson out of Florida on Sony/Relativity, and then Gov't Mule got together in '94. Warren and Allen Woody, the bass player from The Allman Brothers, came up with the idea to start a power trio, and they thought of me.

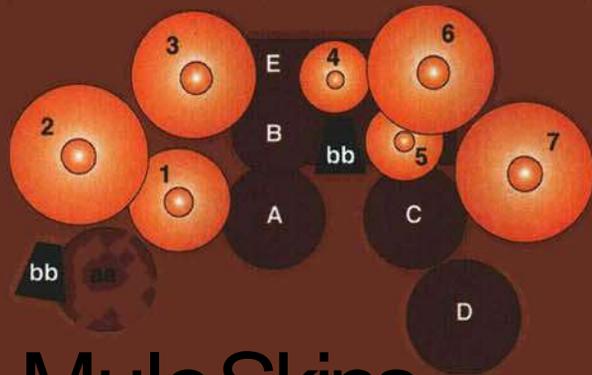
"We sort of put Gov't Mule together in between Allman Brothers tours," says Matt. "We initially thought of going in the studio and putting out something ourselves, but within a couple of months we were signed to Sony/Relativity. We put out a record in '95, and all of a sudden this thing was blossoming into something that was more than a side project. We decided to put all our time and effort into Gov't Mule, and at that time Warren and Allen left The Allman Brothers to concentrate on this. This was in '97, and then Capricorn, which was standing on two strong legs, offered us a deal."

As for musical influences on Abts, he says he listens to new music, but retains his loyalty to his favorite drummers from the early days of rock, jazz, and fusion. "There's no doubt there are a lot of good drummers out there," he says. "But my main people are Mitch Mitchell, John Bonham, Ginger Baker, Billy Cobham, and of course Tony Williams. You could spend a lifetime studying them...that's where it all came from—Elvin Jones, Tony Williams, Max Roach, and on down. So I'm a great lover of the history of drumming. There are tons of CDs being reissued and videos to check out, so the music's all out there. The way records are being made these days is a lot different, with loops and samples. That's cool, but I'm really from the old school, and so is Gov't Mule. We like to go out and present ourselves like the great bands, like Miles Davis's band with Tony Williams, or The Jimi Hendrix Experience, where you go out there and take it somewhere. That's what we all draw from."

Gov't Mule's latest live record was recorded in Atlanta last New Year's Eve, and the band made it a special affair by inviting some friends to play. They first enlisted keyboardist Chuck Leavell, who lives in Atlanta. Previously they had done



Danny Clinch



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some jamming with keyboardist Bernie Worrell in New York, so they flew him down for the evening. Then they added Marc Ford from The Black Crowes, Jimmy Herring from Jazz Is Dead, guitarist Derek Trucks, and percussionist Yonrico Scott from Derek's band. "We just started putting together whoever wasn't playing that night," Abts laughs. "All of a sudden there was a mobile truck outside and the ball started rolling.

"We had an idea of what was going to go down," Matt insists, "but there was no rehearsal. It really was just a jam. We let the tapes roll and it turned out to be what it was. That's a fun thing about Gov't Mule: It takes on many identities. We're basically a trio, but we can add a lot of elements to it, and it evolves into a completely different animal. There was actually supposed to be some rehearsal, but there wasn't time. The whole night went like that—everybody was patching in cords here and there, mic's were going down—but that was the beauty of it."

Abts clearly loves playing in the power trio situation of Gov't Mule. "In so many ways this is a dream gig because there's

## A Dose Of Abts

Here are the albums that Matt says best represent his playing:

Artist	Album
Gov't Mule	(new disc untitled as of press time)
Gov't Mule	Live...With A Little Help From Our Friends
Gov't Mule	Dose
Gov't Mule	Live At Roseland
Hook Herrera	Tonite
The Dickey Betts Band	Pattern Disruptive
Gerry Groom/Mick Taylor	Once In A Blue Moon
Chris Anderson	Old Friend

And these are the ones he listens to for inspiration:

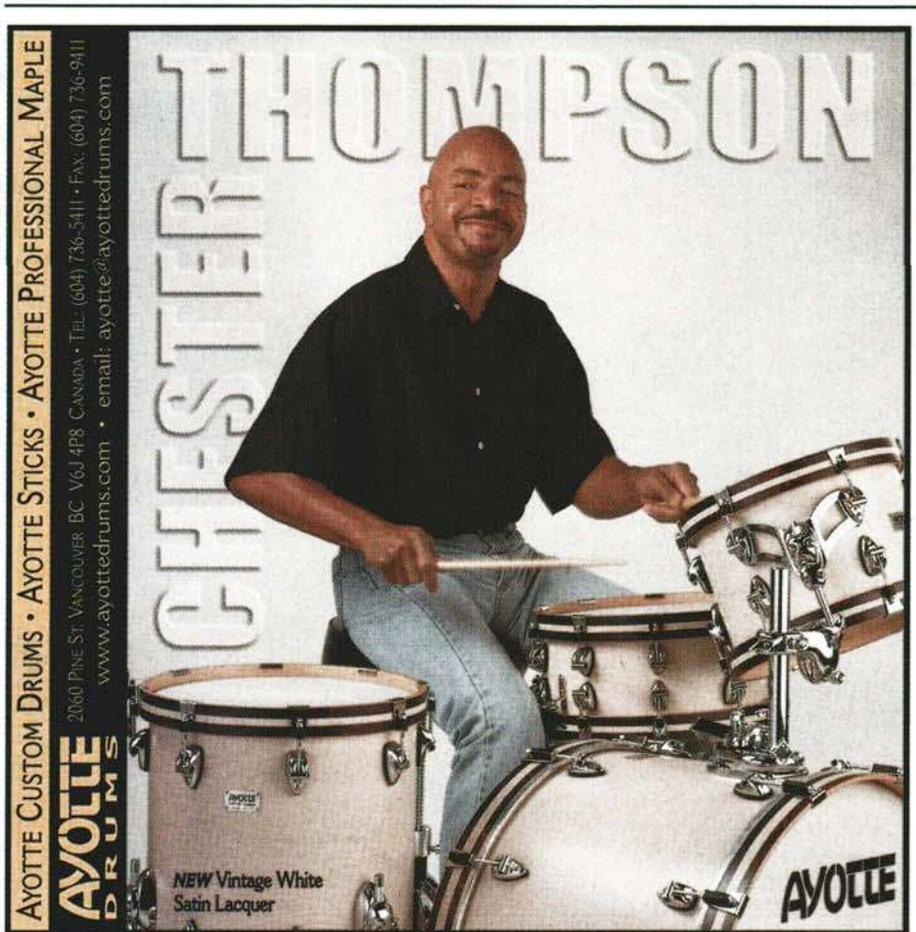
Artist	Album	Drummer
Tony Williams	all	Tony Williams
Jimi Hendrix	all	Mitch Mitchell/Buddy Miles
Deep Purple	Made In Japan	Ian Paice
Led Zeppelin	Led Zeppelin IV	John Bonham
Billy Cobham	Spectrum	Billy Cobham
Dewey Redman	Red & Black Live	Ed Blackwell
Steely Dan	all	
James Brown	all	

nobody telling me what to do, and there's so much freedom to do whatever I want, especially in a live situation. I'm playing drums but I'm thinking drums *and* percus-

sion. When you play with a quartet or quintet, it's a lot different because you're playing more of a part. In a three-piece—with a serious jam element thrown in—there's a lot for me to do. It's just a lot of fun." It also allows him to think in terms of bigger sounds, like leaving the hi-hats open a little more, for example. "Making the cymbals go for the whole note, you know. And you can be busier, or just go any way you want."

Of the tunes on *Live*, "Thorazine Shuffle" is one of the more interesting, with Matt playing a nice rimclick and a djembe with his hands *and* sticks. Matt says the song started out with an odd rhythm he came up with. "It was originally called '5-5-5-7' because that's the time it was in," he explains. "All I did was keep a click going straight through the whole thing, and at the end of it it comes out on the beat. One reason it's so much fun for me in this band is because I can contribute by coming up with beats. I throw them over to Warren and Woody, and they go, 'That's cool,' and put a little melody to it."

The trio's version of Black Sabbath's "War Pigs" was a special New Year's Eve surprise. "We were literally in the parking lot of the venue about ten minutes before the gig when somebody suggested we do it. Warren was frantically writing down the words. That's another thing about Gov't



# GINA SCHOCK

## THE GO-GO'S

### JOHNNYRABB

### DRUMSTICKS



## Gina Schock's SUPERSLAM



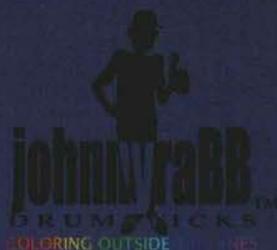
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**Mule:** Anything's possible. We all come from the same head space, and we listen to a lot of the same music. If anybody has an idea about doing something it's just, 'Yeah, let's do it tonight.' We just wanted to do something that we'd never done and kind of light up the audience, which it did. The record has no overdubs and runs completely from the beginning of the concert till the end." The band also pulled out "Soulshine," which Haynes had written and previously performed with The Allman Brothers. No rehearsal there either.

Abts does some nice kick drum work on "War Pigs." "I've been playing double pedal for a number of years now," he explains. "There's a lot of space you can fill up in a trio that you can't in a quartet. It can get to the point where maybe you're overplaying sometimes, but somebody's got to hold it down. If it isn't me it's one of the other guys."

"Look On Yonder Wall" is a classic shuffle groove featuring Chuck Leavell's keyboard touch. "If there's one thing you learn how to do after playing with The Allman Brothers, it's how to play a shuffle," Abts says. "[Allmans drummers] Butch and Jaimoe have a beautiful shuffle thing going on, and playing with Dickey for so many years, I just learned to do that. It's really fun to play. I can play a shuffle all night; you can find a million ways to do it."

Another highlight from *Live* is "Mule," from the band's first CD. "We took the inspiration for that from a ZZ Top song, although it doesn't end up sounding like it," Matt says. "It's turned more into a funk excursion because we put Van Morrison's 'I've Been Workin'" at the end of it, and Bernie Worrell just played his ass off on that song. It took many different twists and turns, but the tune has a certain heaviness, a certain rock sound, and then it breaks down into a funk song—I love playing funk."

Matt says such musical alchemy is nothing for the band. "We'll do a set that starts out with a Black Sabbath song, and then we'll somehow work it into the John Coltrane/Mongo Santamaria tune 'Afro-Blue.' That's our thing. We like to pretend we're John Coltrane's group or Black Sabbath. That makes things really interesting. It's something we pride ourselves on. We like to be able to play all kinds of

music. There's a lot of good music out there in every genre."

In true Mule style, "Devil Likes It Slow" swings in from out of nowhere. "Warren wrote that song, and that was only the third time we had done it. It's really kind of a hard bebop tune. Bernie had never played it, so he was holding on by the seat of his pants. Jimmy Herring played so well on it. We broke it down to a shuffle in the middle, which was really fun, and then went back into the head. You could actually put a big band arrangement to it. That song is fun to do because I'm really playing it like a bebop tune. I'm definitely thinking Tony or Elvin."

Abts feels fortunate to have been able to develop a core audience while basically having free rein creatively. Gov't Mule recently finished recording a new studio record, which features songs all written by the band, and "It covers the gamut," according to Abts. "Our record company, Capricorn, allows us to do a bebop tune here and a hard rock tune there. Now, if that's not freedom, I don't know what is. It just excites me that I'm able to do this with a band that I love, with people and friends that I love, and a crew and organization that can go wherever we want. On the new record we've modified our game plan a little in the sense that we have a number of four-minute songs on it, although there are some longer ones too. It's a new concept for Gov't Mule, in that our other records had songs that were thirty minutes long. So we're kind of balancing it out."

Abts doesn't take his band's success for granted. "This is the ultimate," he says. "I'm now directing my own future, in my own band, which we own. You can only be a sideman in other people's groups for so long, at which point you either have to get it together or get with a group of people and do your own music and be your own boss. So many people rely on other people to get them work. But to have any longevity in this business, the real goal is to create your own work. We've been out on the road working our asses off—and mind you it is a lot of work. I don't think people realize how much work it is. But at this point, what else are you gonna do? To live your passion—you couldn't ask for anything more."



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# Inside Modern Drummer's 1999 Festival Weekend

Story by T. Bruce Wittet • Photos by Alex Solca

It was the final *MD* Festival of the century—and they sure ended it with a *bang*. All that was missing from the two-day, sold-out event was a fireworks display! (Actually, we saw plenty of *musical* fireworks.) When the sizzle and flash from some of the world's top drummers ended on the stage of the Memorial Auditorium at Montclair State University in Upper Montclair, New Jersey, we all knew that we had witnessed a historic event.

First off, the place was buzzing with excitement. Performers joined us in the hall and became students. Bill Bruford took a seat to check out John Riley (*everybody* was checking out Riley), and veteran Bernard Purdie was keeping an eye on trailblazer Zach Danziger. Throughout the theater master teachers Freddie Gruber and Jim Chapin held court over informal workshops, sticks and pad in hand. In the lobby, the legends walked among us, signing autographs on CDs, T-shirts, posters, cymbals—you name it.

There was a warm glow among the thousand-plus drummers in attendance, and it wasn't just the sunshine outside. Conversations sprung up among participants. Impromptu discussion groups spilled out onto the lawns. Pros shared tips with amateurs. The feeling was that we're all part of a family, a family of drummers.

## Saturday, May 15

**Marco Minnemann** led off. Talk about getting the hot spot! Straight from Germany, he was the wild card of the festival. There was certainly a buzz about this up-and-comer, but would he live up to the hype? Yes, and then some! Marco's chops were astounding. The dexterity, speed, and power he brought to his Tama drums and Meinl cymbals brought back memories of an upstart from a past festival, Virgil Donati. We're talking frightening control. Expect to hear a lot more from this amazing talent.

Recording veteran **Matt Chamberlain** made a wise decision to follow Minnemann's onslaught with the solid mid-tempo grooves he uses on singer-songwriter albums, including those of Tori Amos, Fiona Apple, and Chris Isaac. The audience broke into spontaneous applause on several occasions when Matt turned



Dream Theater's Mike Portnoy was on hand to receive his *MD* readers poll plaque.

up the heat. And his question and answer segment was as quirky and entertaining as his playing.

Then, a surprise move—Matt invited audience members to join him onstage. While he played time, they got tribal on his toms, jiggled shakers, and played the rims of his Ayotte WoodHoop drums. Sure, it could have been a train wreck, but it was a model of collaboration, ending in ear-to-ear grins.

One look at **Mike Mangini's** symmetrical drum and cymbal configuration—the left side a sort

of "mirror image" of the right—and you knew some bizarre stuff was going to happen. It's no wonder why this guy is Steve Vai's drummer of choice. People who saw Mike's performance are probably *still* talking about his total ambidexterity—and about his one-handed roll!

Mangini explained his unique "rhythm knowledge" system, and included fun ways of simplifying complex time signatures by breaking them into bite-sized chunks. Mike got laughs for his candid, street-wise observations and ovations for his fearless attack on the banks of cymbals and drums that surrounded him.

**Ian Paice**, drummer for veteran British rockers Deep Purple, proved that he hasn't lost his single-stroke roll chops or his ability to lay down a heavy groove. Fresh from a recording date with Paul McCartney, the drummer was looking and sounding good on a green Pearl kit and large-sized Paiste cymbals. Ian shared



(far left) Early birds! *MD*'s Ron and Isabel Spagnardi chat with members of the now infamous "5:30 Club," people who show up at that early morning hour every year to be first in line for the show.

Veteran educator Jim Chapin (left) could be seen all over the theater helping drummers with their stroke.



Most of the 1,000 eager attendees begin lining up early.



Once inside, it's obvious to everyone just what "sold out" means!

humorous anecdotes about the rock life. And when he played, Paice mixed the powerful beats he's known for with Buddy Rich-influenced big band solos.

Closing Saturday's show was **Bill Bruford** & Earthworks. Bill's latest band, comprised of Steve Hamilton on piano, Mark Hodgson on bass, and Patrick Clahar on sax, spurred him to heights really only hinted at in earlier incarnations of Earthworks. The group performed an intriguing mixture of acoustic jazz and progressive music. But the "new" Bill swings effortlessly at high intensity levels, much in the tradition of the great American jazz drummers.

Bruford, who was preparing to turn fifty the following Monday, was in a reflective mood. Backstage he remarked, "When I was twenty, I knew all the answers. Now I realize how little I know!" The festival audience would disagree with that statement. They screamed their approval, gave the group a standing ovation, and demanded an encore.

### Sunday, May 16

New Jersey weather was not fickle. Again, the sun was high in the sky. Before the doors opened, *MD* publisher Ron Spagnardi met with the crowds, including the "5:30 Club," a small group of fans that arrive early each year to be first in line. (They come equipped with lawn chairs, coolers, and boom boxes!) *MD*'s festival production coordinator Rick Van Horn was also outside, listening to suggestions for next year's show from the audience.

Latin-jazz master **Ignacio Berroa** and his band were first up, and they really got the blood circulating. Berroa, a veteran artist credited with fusing Cuban and American styles, was more funky than Latin on this occasion. Explaining this turn of events, the drummer demonstrated the close relationship between the two forms, and showed how to play the clave against a backbeat.

Berroa concluded his spot with a funk-up version of the late Don Grolnick's "Nothing Personal," complete with upside-down drum breaks and a wickedly fast single bass drum technique. Ignacio, performing on a Yamaha kit with LP timbales, exuded confidence and wis-

dom. (Speaking of those timbales, they were just one of *many* door prizes given out to audience members during the changeovers.)

**Zach Danziger** has become a leading light in the emerging jungle/drum 'n' bass style. Zach demonstrated his considerable technique on a Yamaha HipGig kit, three snare drums, an auxiliary bass drum, and many electronic pads. He explained that his small-diameter drums and his Zildjian Re-Mix cymbals enabled him to mimic the "sped up" sampled sounds common in drum 'n' bass.

Later on, Zach gave credit to another festival performer, Bernard Purdie, for playing on old soul records that artists sample today. As Zach emphasized, electronics aside, you gotta have a real drummer for it to happen. Improvising with-in and around some break-neck-tempo funk loops and "out" sounds, he gave weight to his provocative argument that drum 'n' bass is *the* creative music of our era.

The next act was the showstopper. **John Riley** & The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra was the surprise hit of the festival, and they lifted the roof. Jaws dropped. People gasped in awe of the precision performance of this sixteen-piece big band. Although John is familiar to *Modern Drummer* readers as a writer of columns and books on jazz drumming, on this day he left no doubt that he can put some muscle where his mouth is.

Riley the *player* pulled it all together, motor-ing through intricate charts containing a million shots and transitions—always watching, nodding, prodding, and otherwise communicating with the band. Whether it was soft brushes, blistering sticks around the toms, or painfully fast ride cymbal work, John was a portrait of self-control and drove the band without faltering. At one point, he removed his sports jacket—but the man was barely perspiring! (He is fit.) Long after the riotous applause, the audience was

buzzing about what it had witnessed: So *that's* what Monday night at the Vanguard is all about!

**Bernard Purdie**, who has drummed on hundreds of soul and R&B hits, performed on Sabian cymbals and a signature Slingerland drumset with gold lugs. Fronting a seven-piece band, he ran down some of his famous funk grooves, leading off with his "Purdie Shuffle" on a version of Steely Dan's "Home At Last." When Purdie played a New Orleans second-line groove, it reeked authenticity.

There was a bit of controversy during questions and answers with the audience, as Purdie openly talked about being burned on numerous recording sessions where others got the credit and cash. He also brought up his contested statement of having recorded several Beatles classics. According to Bernard, it was him, not Ringo. (Apparently Purdie will tell all in a forthcoming book.)

The festival closed with the best **Steve Smith** and Vital Information ever! Rather than rest on his laurels, Steve constantly refines his musicianship, exhibiting absolute command over his kit. Power and sensitivity

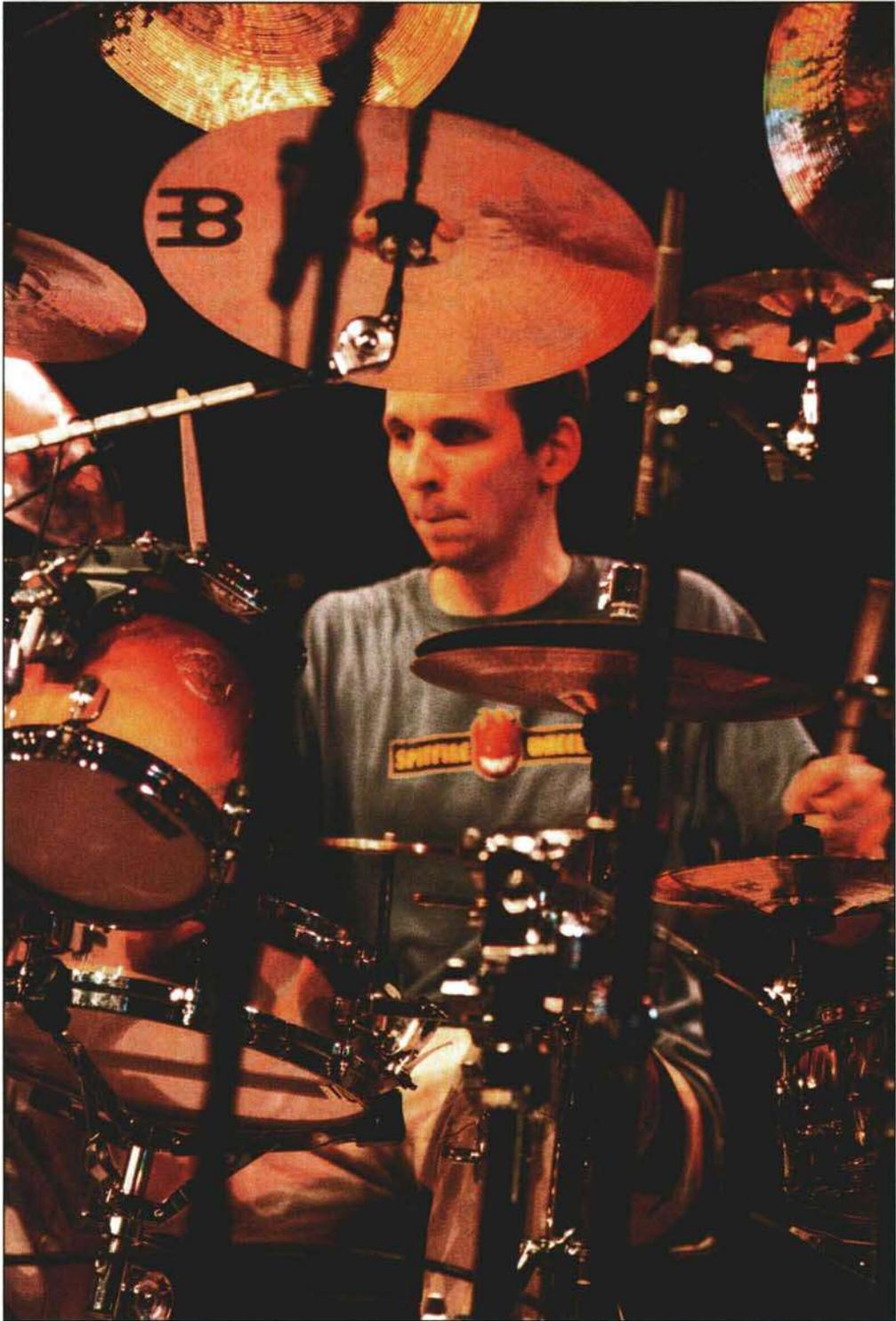
seemed to tumble out effortlessly.

Smith was a role model for the class of '99, slipping convincingly from style to style with the band. High points of his set included ripping solo work by keyboardist Tom Coster, bassist Baron Browne, and guitarist Frank Gambale. But the encore drum solo Smith played burned the house down. Steve began it on hi-hat, Papa Jo style, introduced his contemporary techniques and innovative bits into it, and then progressed right into the next century!

Lessons learned at the close of a wildly successful festival? Respect our roots, stay open to new ideas, and develop our craft. And most importantly, enjoy drumming to the fullest!

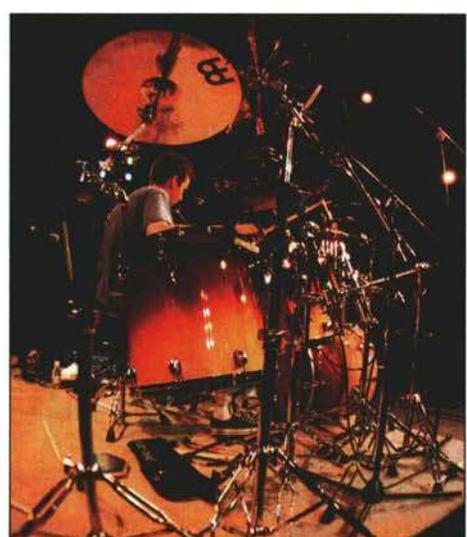
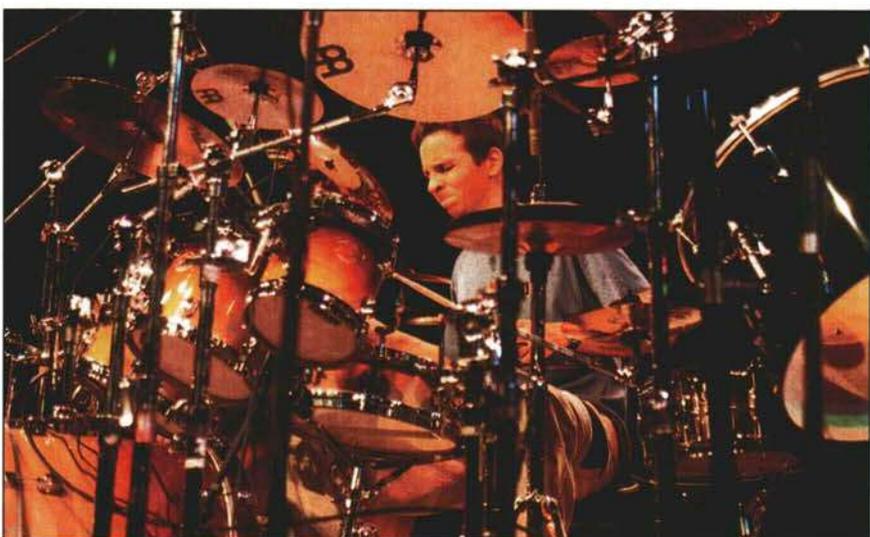
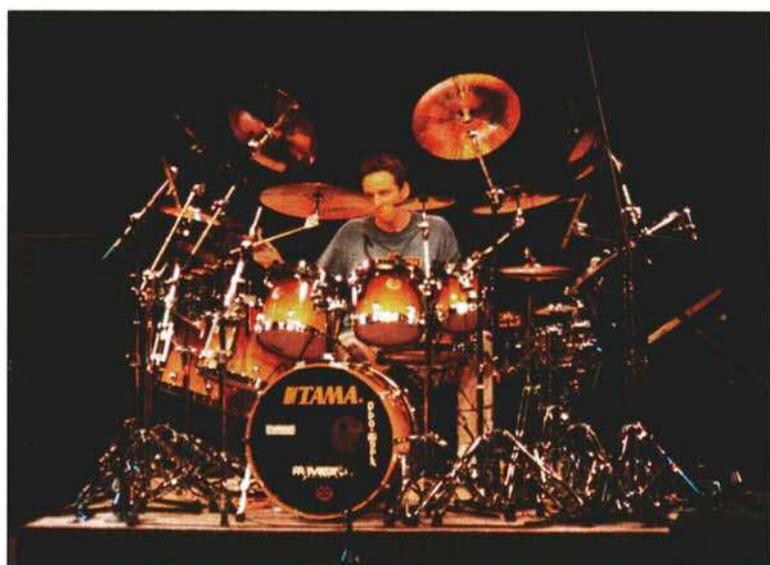
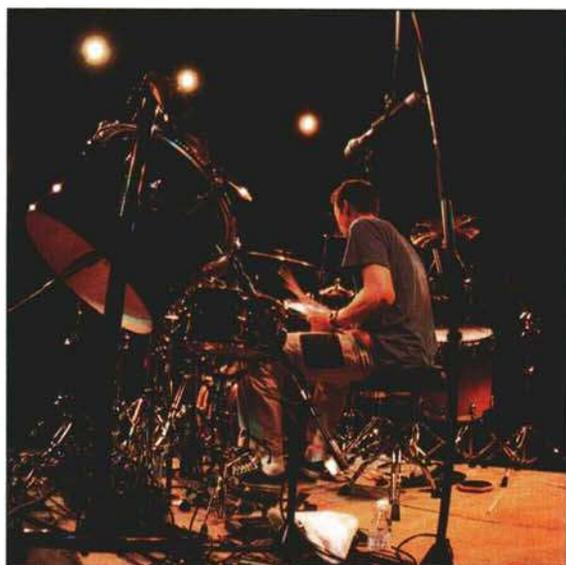
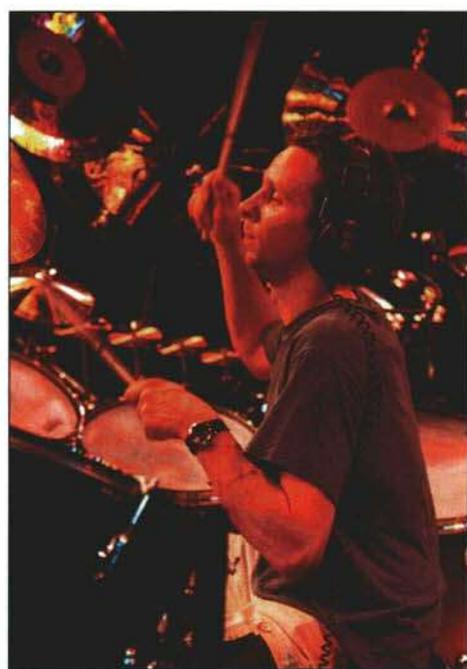
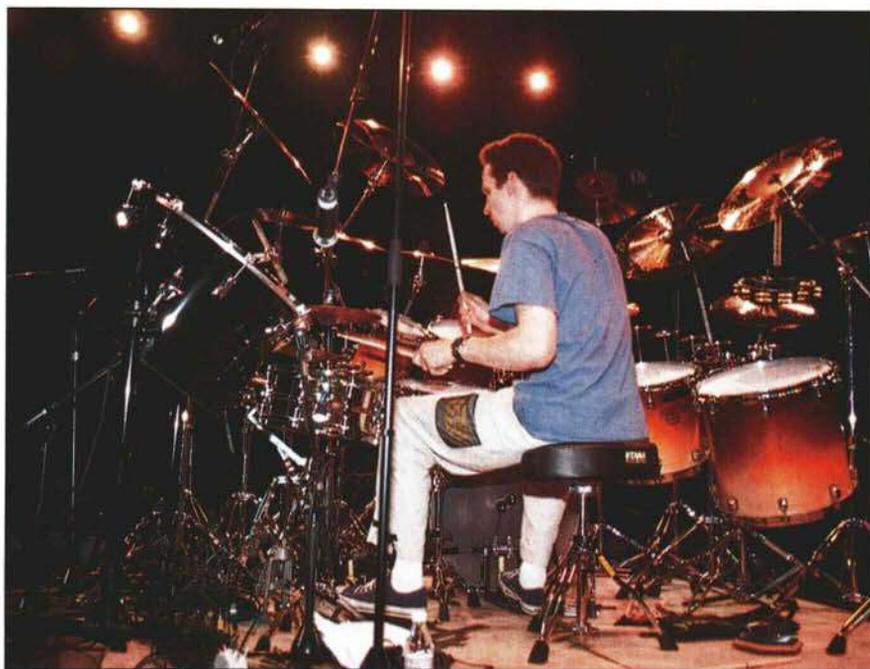


It's one big hang: Bernard Purdie, Ignacio Berroa, and John Riley.



# Marco Minnemann

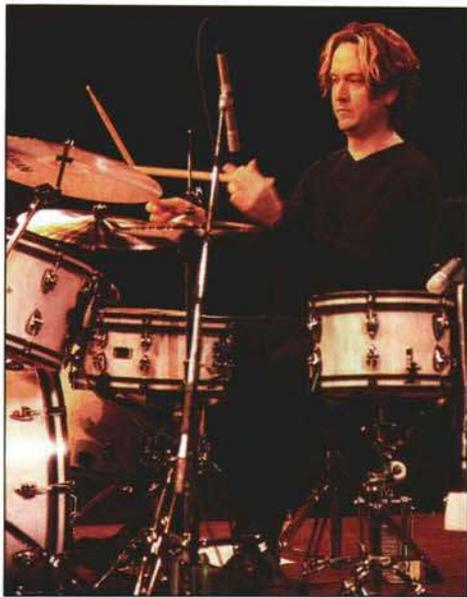
Marco's performance was sponsored by **Meinl Cymbals** and **Pro-Mark Drumsticks**.

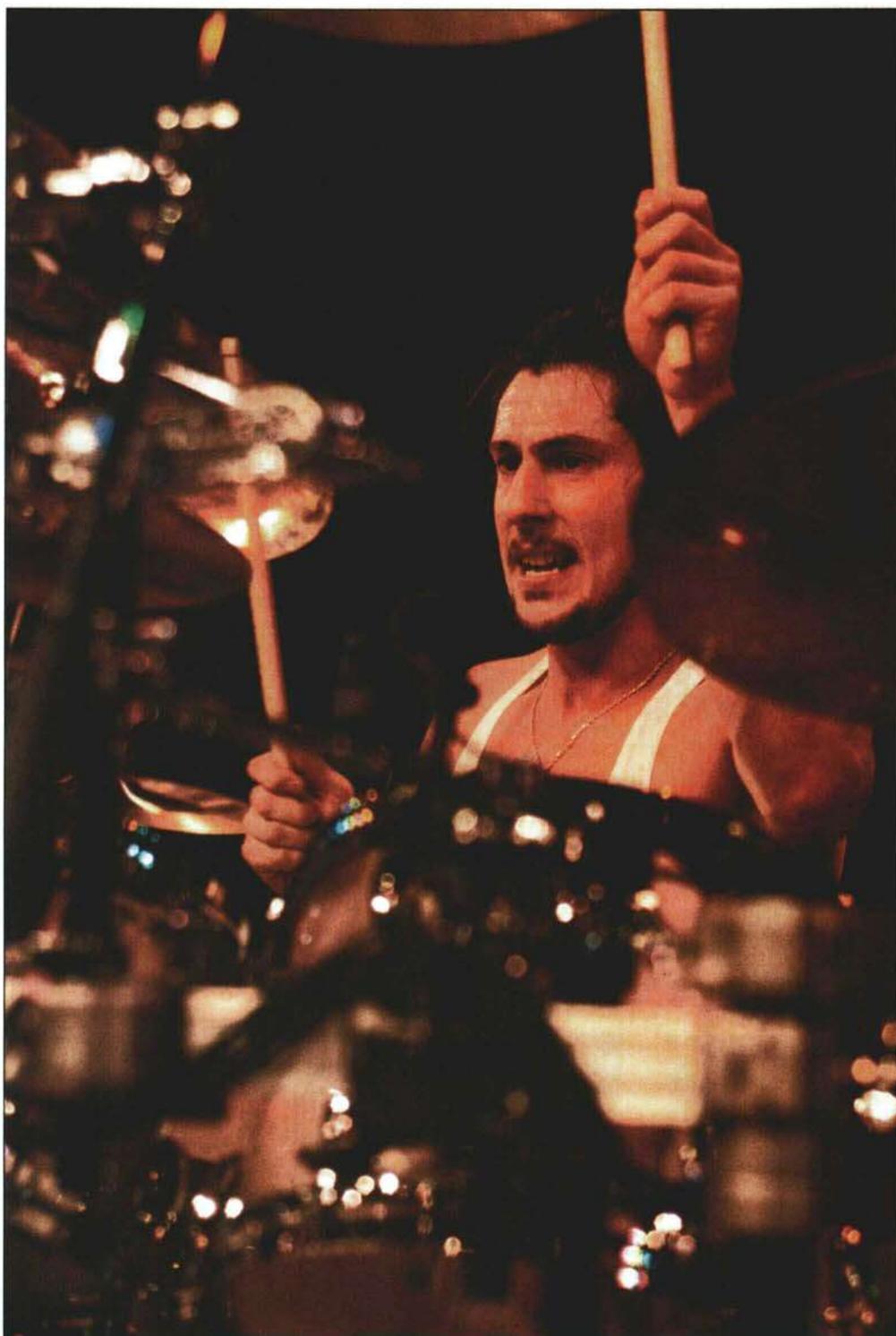




# Matt Chamberlain

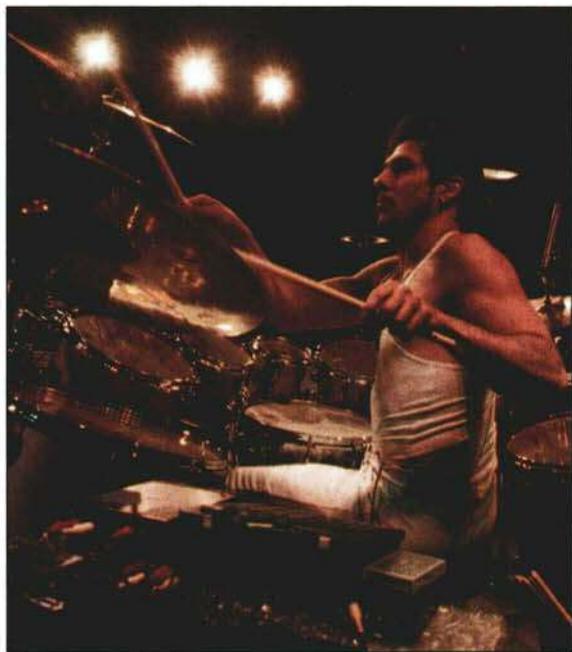
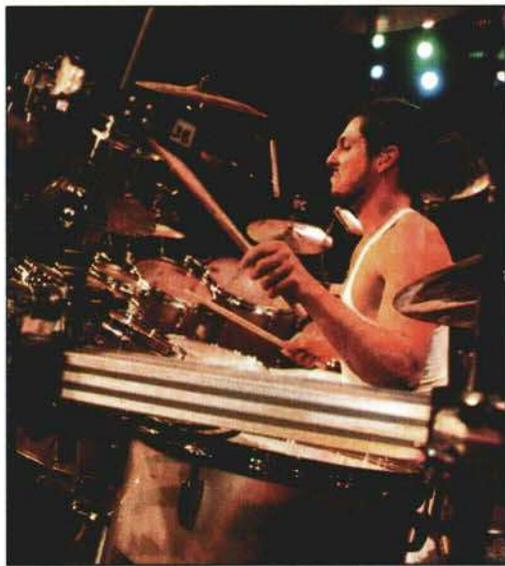
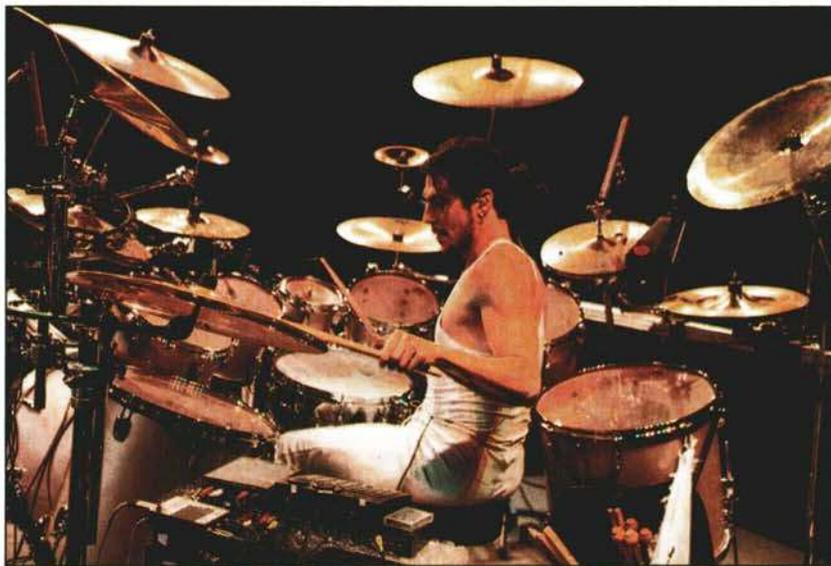
Matt appeared through the courtesy of Sabian Cymbals, Ayotte Drums, Vic Firth Drumsticks, and Remo, Inc.





# Mike Mangini

Mike's performance was presented by Pearl Drums, Zildjian Cymbals and Drumsticks, and Remo, Inc.





# Ian Paice

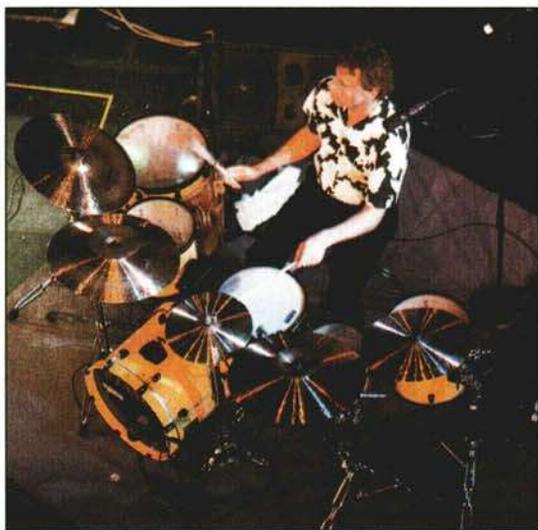
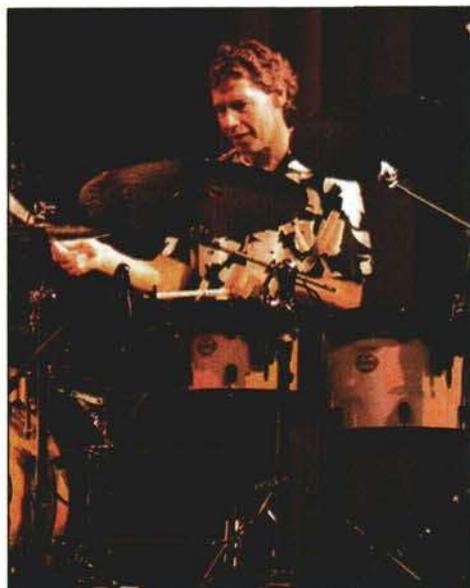
Ian's appearance was sponsored by Pearl Drums, Paiste Cymbals, Pro-Mark Drumsticks, and Remo, Inc.





# Bill Bruford

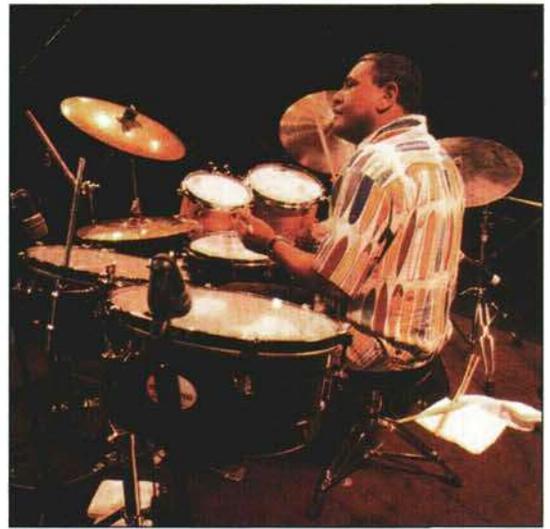
Bill & Earthworks were presented by Tama Drums, Paiste Cymbals, Evans Drumheads, Pro-Mark Drumsticks, and Shure Microphones.





# Ignacio Berroa

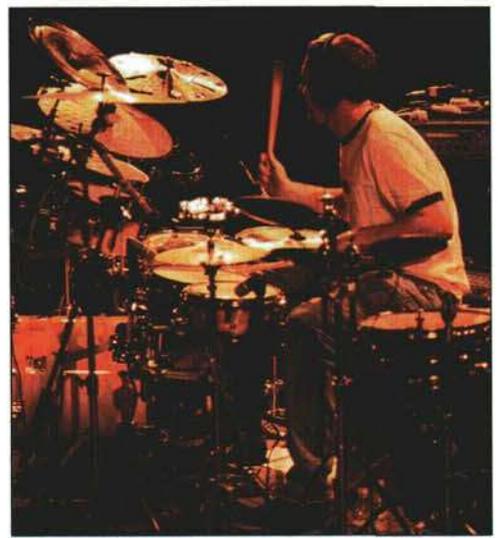
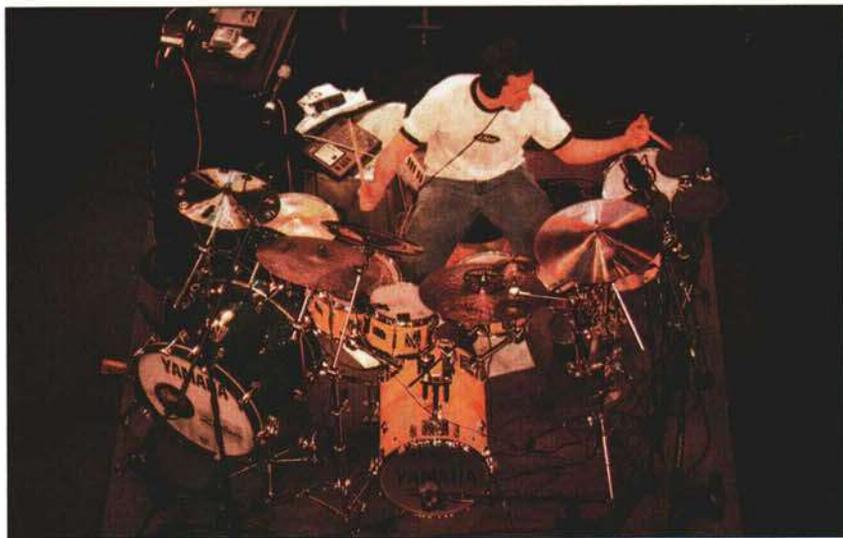
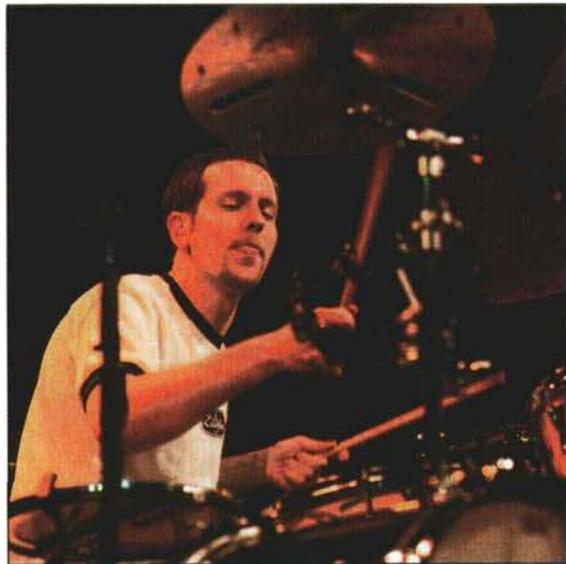
Ignacio and his band were sponsored by LP Music Group, Yamaha Drums, Zildjian Cymbals, Evans Drumheads, and Vic Firth Drumsticks.

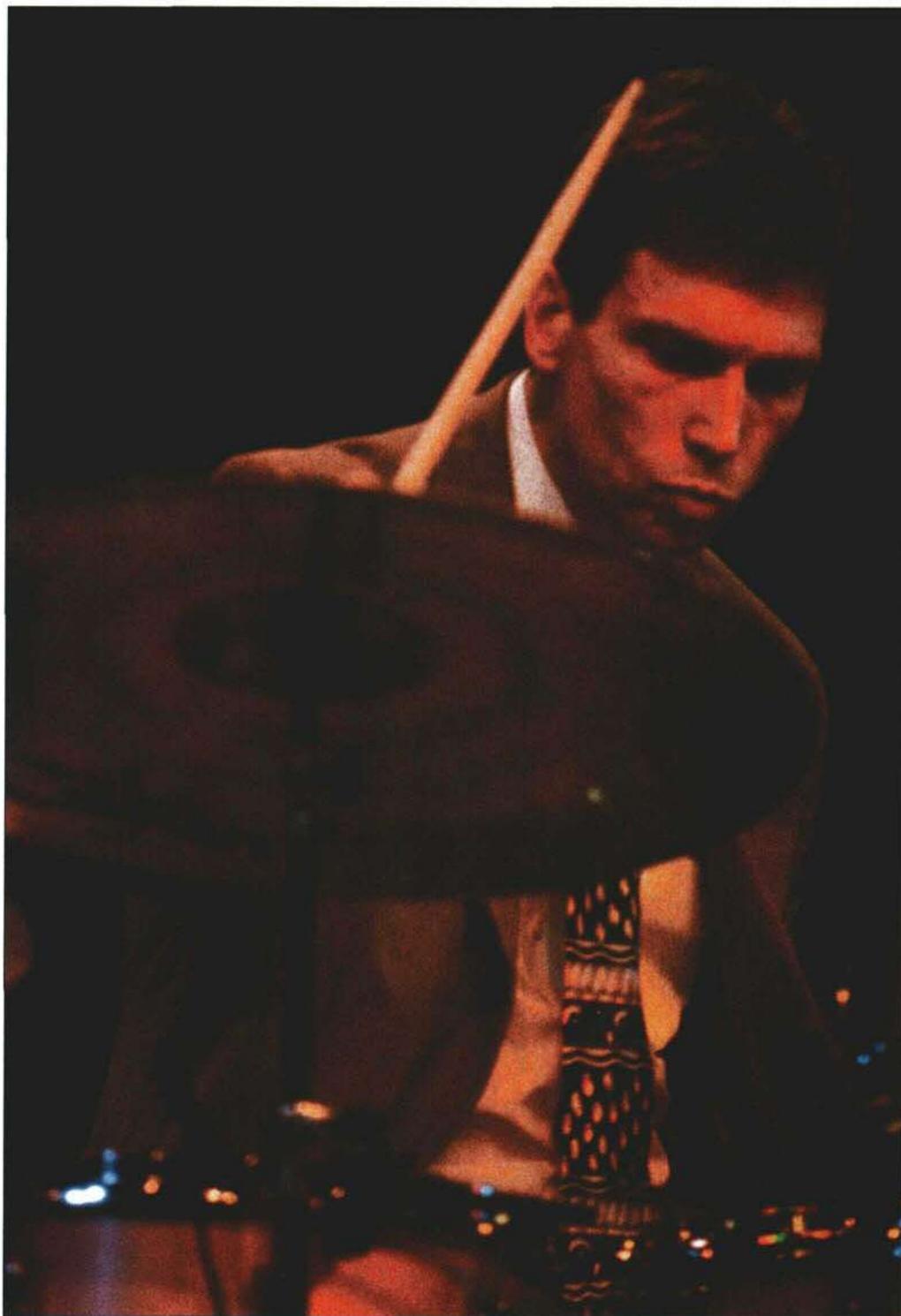




# Zach Danziger

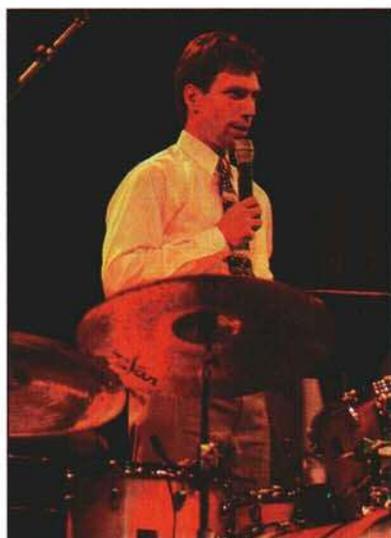
Zach appeared through the courtesy of Yamaha Drums and Zildjian Cymbals and Drumsticks.

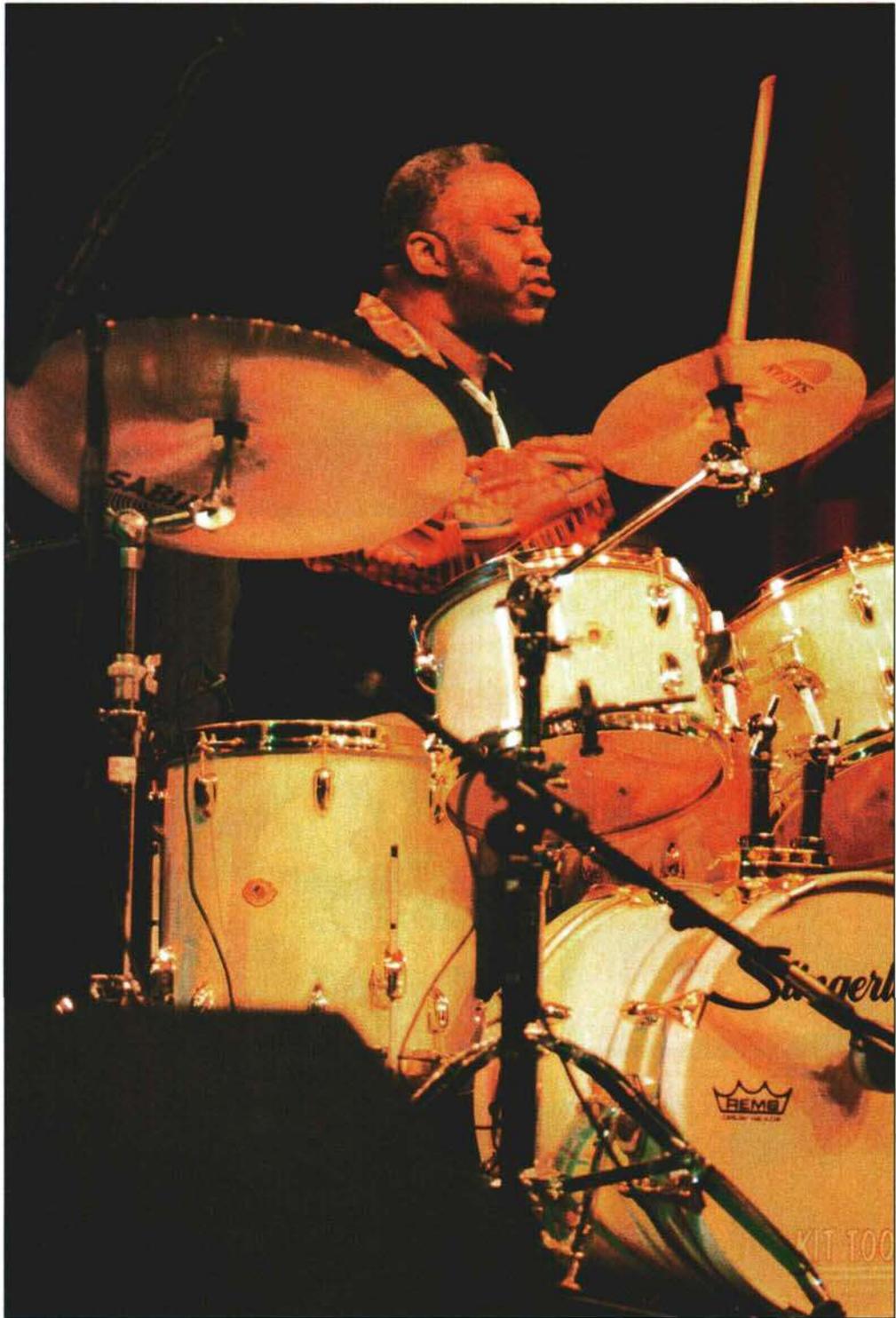




# John Riley

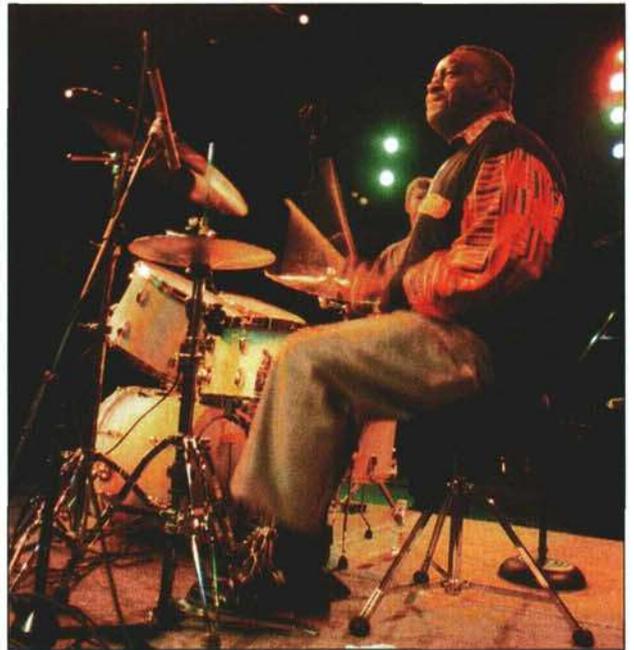
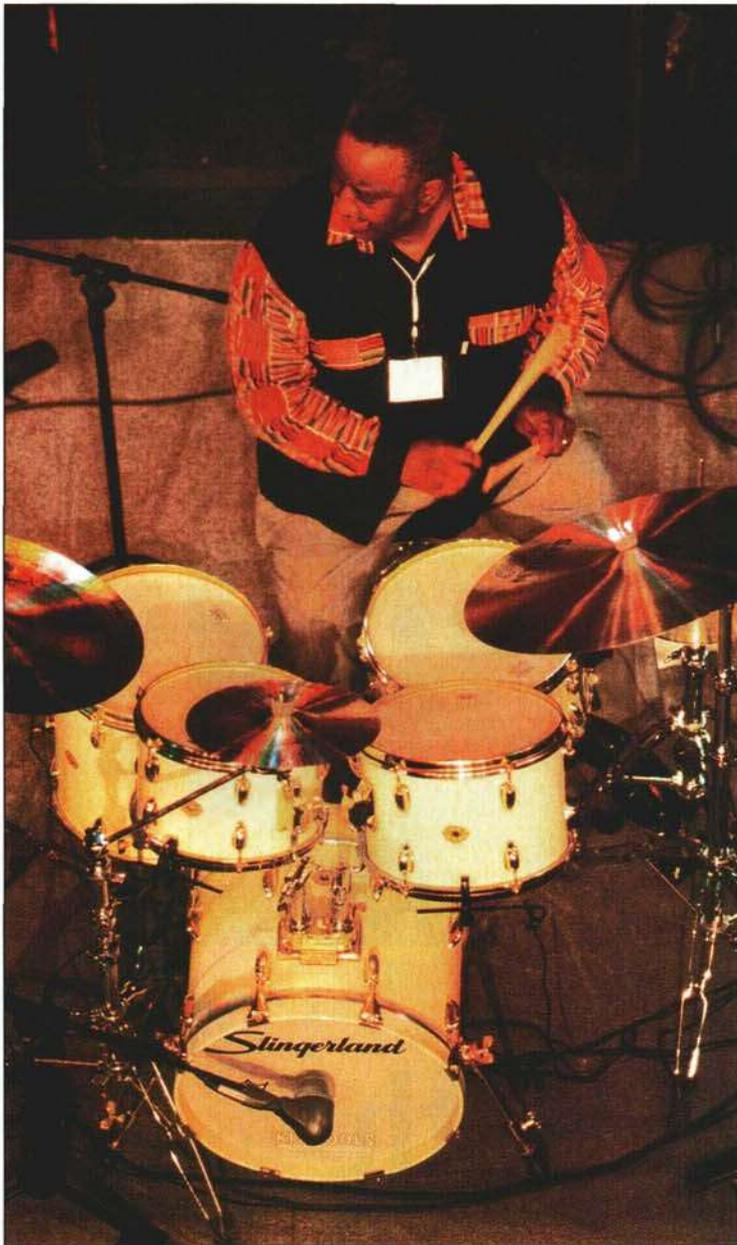
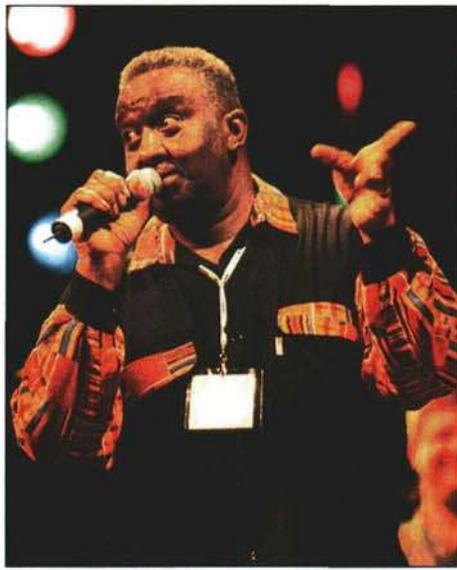
John and The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra were sponsored by Yamaha Drums, Zildjian Cymbals and Drumsticks, and Remo, Inc.





# Bernard Purdie

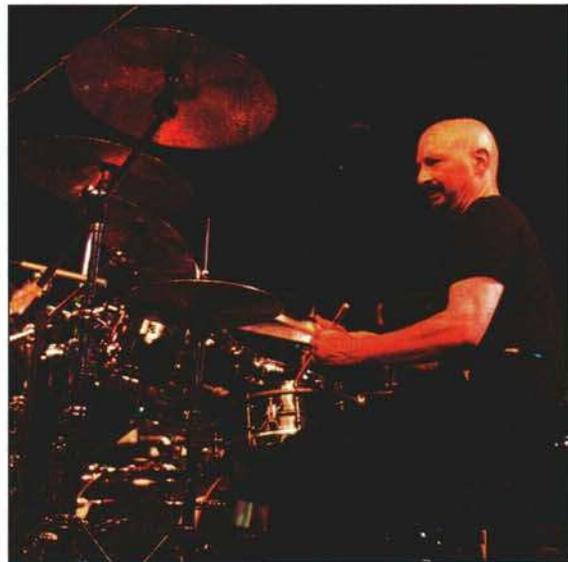
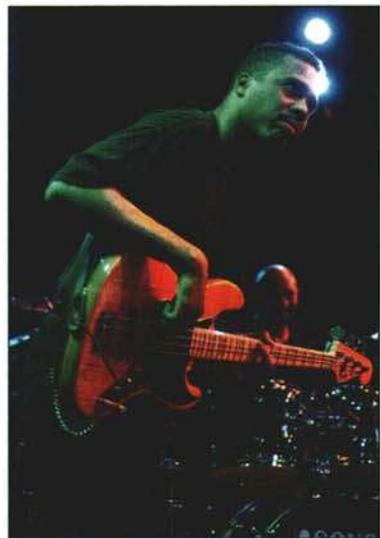
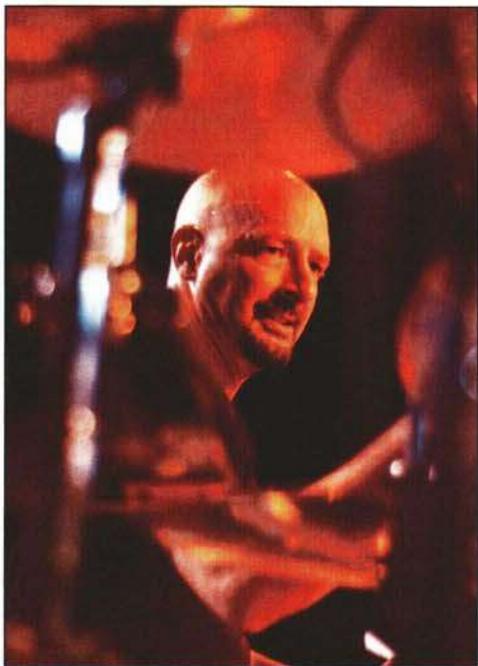
Bernard's appearance was presented by Slingerland Drums and Sabian Cymbals.





# Steve Smith

Steve and Vital Information were sponsored by Sonor Drums, Vic Firth Drumsticks, and Remo, Inc.





When practicing these techniques, play four bars of straight 4/4 time, then play an example, then play four bars of straight 4/4 time again, and so on. Start out simply, playing just bass drum, hi-hat, and ride cymbal. Make sure you count the meter changes and subdivide accurately. Use a metronome. Eventually you'll get used to hearing and *feeling* the meter changes. Try to make everything sound natural, not stiff or contrived. This technique is also more effective when the time signature changes are clear to the listener. Later, as you get comfortable, you can get more and more adventurous by adding various drums and different rhythms, as well as accents and dynamics, within the time signature changes.

I would also suggest that you practice giving a clear and solid downbeat on 1 of the first 4/4 bar after your exercise. This will

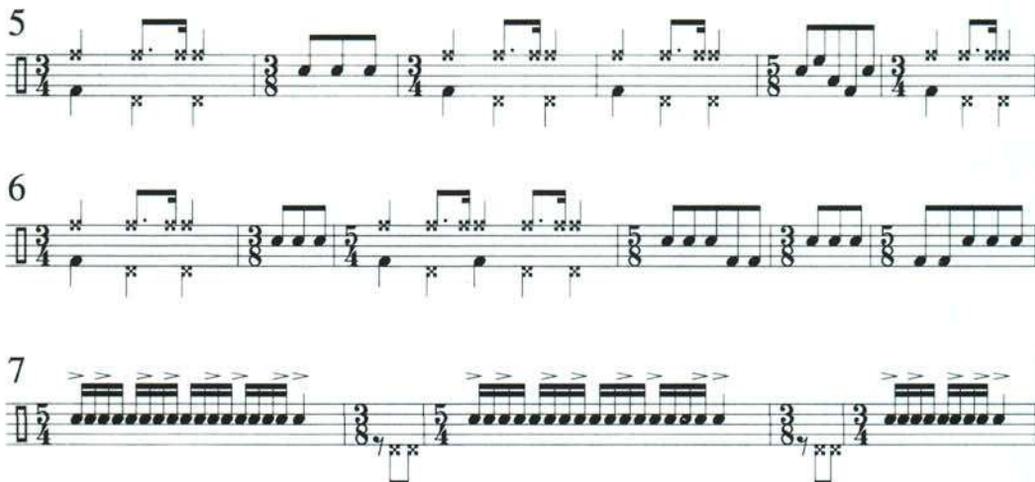
help later when you try playing these kinds of fours with a band. By giving a clean and solid downbeat on the 1 after your four, you will help solidify the band's re-entry. (These types of fours are supposed to inspire your bandmates, not trip them up or completely lose them!)

As a variation to this approach, I also recommend that you try to play these exercises not as mixed-meter groupings, but as odd phrases over straight 4/4. Feel and hear 4/4 time and play the odd groupings as superimpositions over four bars of four. See example 1B. It's identical to example 1A, except that here you think of four bars of 4/4 time grouped in threes and fives. This will strengthen your ability to play odd phrases in 4/4 time.



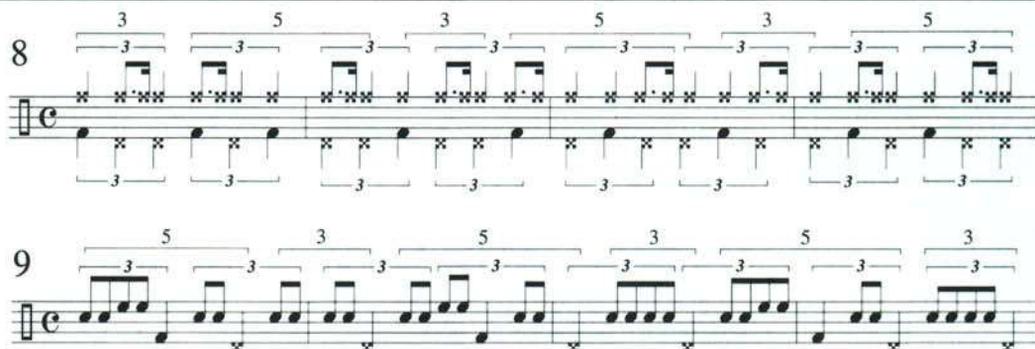
Now let's look at breaking up those sixteen beats in the four bars of 4/4 using 8th-note subdivisions. (This results in a total of thirty-two sub-beats.) Look at examples 5, 6, and 7. Here we add some 3/8 and 5/8 bars to the rhythmic equation. In doing this, we can displace the 3/4 and 5/4 bars by an 8th note. This makes a nor-

mal rhythmic figure seem displaced, as in example 5. The effect can really make things sound "backed-up." Again, when you try out all these examples, be sure to count, subdivide accurately, and use a metronome.



Next let's look at this technique utilized in a polyrhythmic way that also implies mixed meters. Look at examples 8 and 9. In these examples, a similar approach is used, but in a "six over four" manner. Here, the total number of "poly-beats" (made up of quarter-

note triplets) in four 4/4 bars is twenty-four. You can group the quarter-note triplets any way you want to, as long as they total twenty-four.



You can expand this approach ad infinitum, applying the concept to trading 8ths and 16ths, playing fours in various time signatures, using five quarter notes over four, and so on. These techniques should not only help expand your concept of fours, but of time in general. It should also help you to know where you are in the flow of time during those times when you decide to "go for it." However, when you try these techniques out, make sure to use musical discretion. Always be sure that the other musicians you're playing with are capable of following what you're doing and that the fours you play fit the type of music you're playing. (I don't think that playing these types of fours while doing a traditional Dixieland gig would fit all that well!)

Also, there's nothing worse than when a drummer throws off the entire band, or when everyone on the dance floor stops and looks up at the bandstand in bewilderment and disgust.

Remember, even if what you play is in time, if the end result is a train wreck, then there'll no doubt be some bad feelings. And you certainly don't want to jeopardize the music (and maybe even your gig) in the pursuit of some hip-sounding four that everyone else needs a pocket calculator to figure out.

However, if your fellow bandmates are talented and open to new ideas, then this type of approach might not only open up your playing, but maybe *their* playing (and composing) as well. Have fun, and don't hurt yourself!

*Paul Wertico is the seven-time Grammy Award winning drummer with The Pat Metheny Group. He also leads The Paul Wertico Trio, teaches at Northwestern University, and performs drum clinics around the world. You can visit his Web site at [www.paulwertico.com](http://www.paulwertico.com).*



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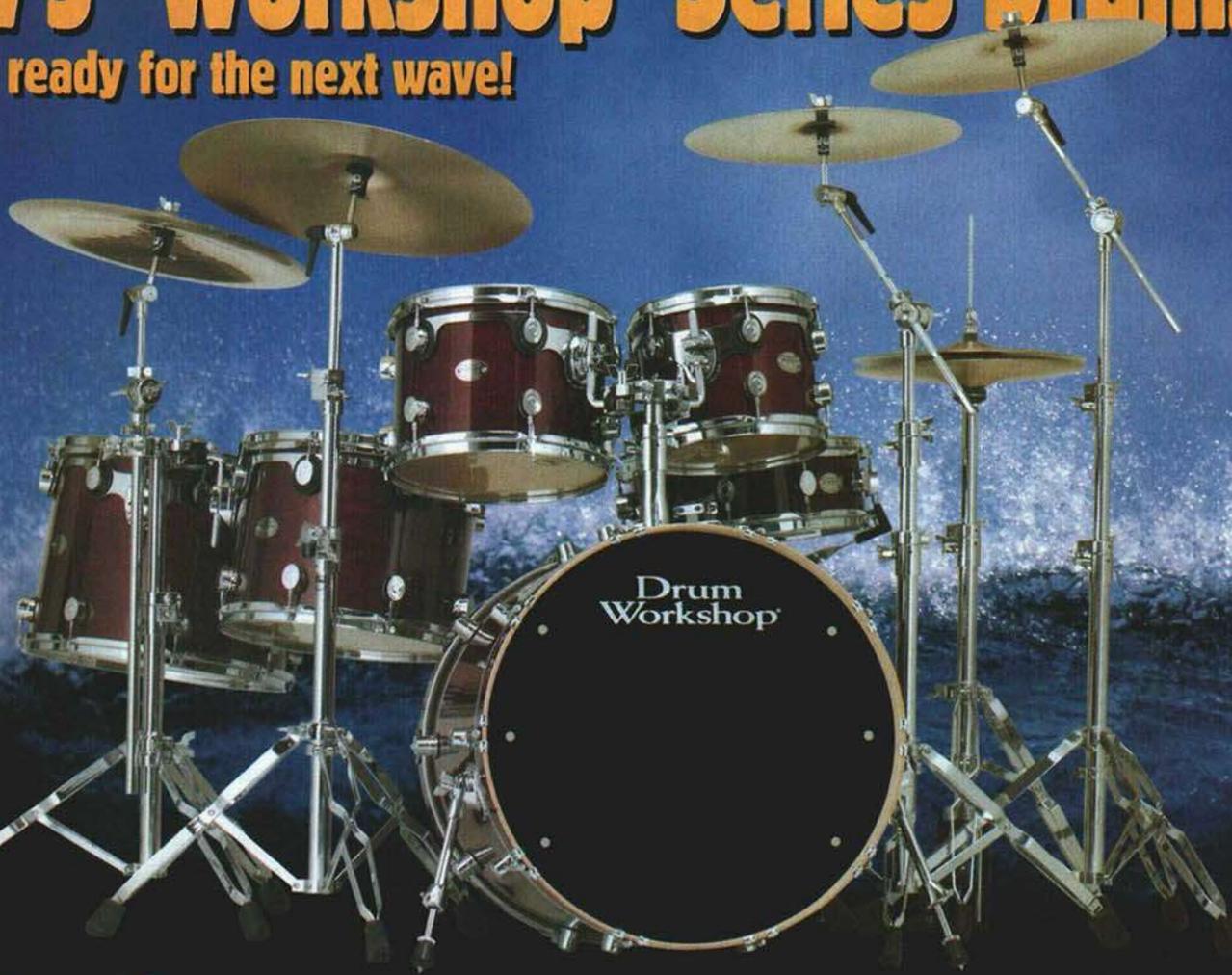
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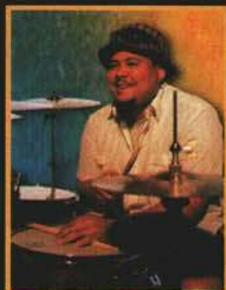
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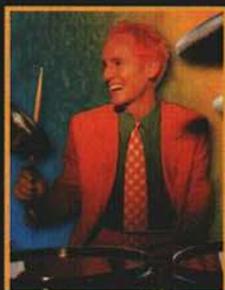
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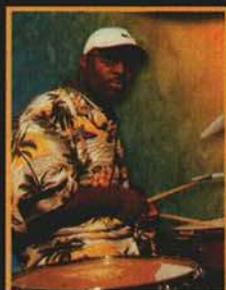
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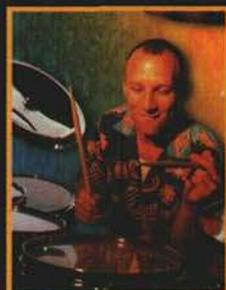
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# Cross-Stepping, Part 2

## Getting Even More Out Of Your Left Foot

by Rich Rychel

**MUSIC KEY**

Open	○	R.C.	✕
H.H.	✕		
S.D.	●		
B.D.	●		
H.H. w/foot	✕	Left	B.D.

This article will explore cross-stepping possibilities with triplets. As we discovered last month, cross-stepping is the technique of playing the hi-hat pedal and second bass drum pedal simultaneously with the left foot.

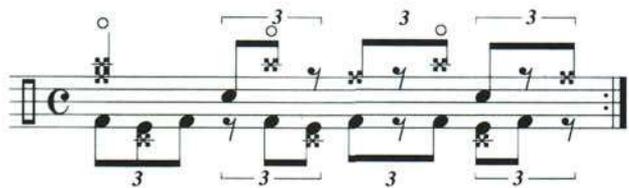
The following pattern uses triplets with the bass drum in alternating fashion, beginning with the right foot.

The following hand patterns use the above bass drum/hi-hat pattern. Once again, all ride-cymbal notes are to be played with the right hand, and all open hi-hats and snare notes with the left. (Snare notes played with the right hand will have an "R" below the note.) While the above bass drum/hi-hat pattern is played, you will have access to hi-hat barks (openings) on every other triplet.

The next exercises still use the previous bass drum/hi-hat pattern. But now we'll alternate the right hand between ride and

hi-hat while the left hand stays on the snare.

Now let's break up the bass drum pattern. The hands will go back to their previous status of the right hand on the ride and the left on the open hi-hat and snare. (The right hand does move to the snare on the last three examples.)



Try experimenting with the following ride patterns. Note that playing these patterns will cause you to play many of the backbeats with your right hand.



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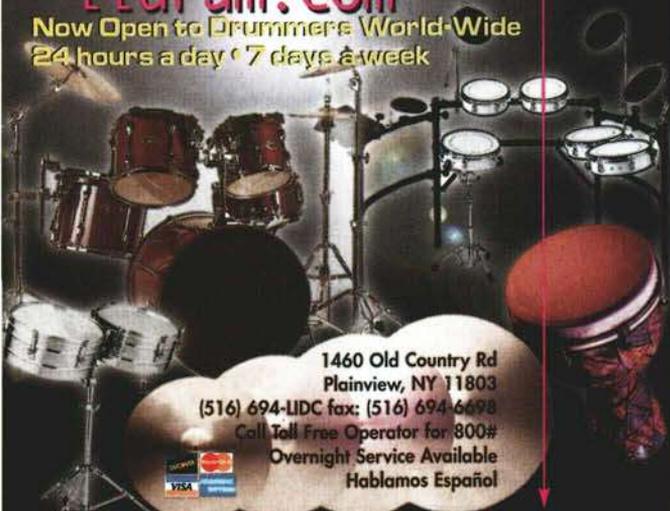
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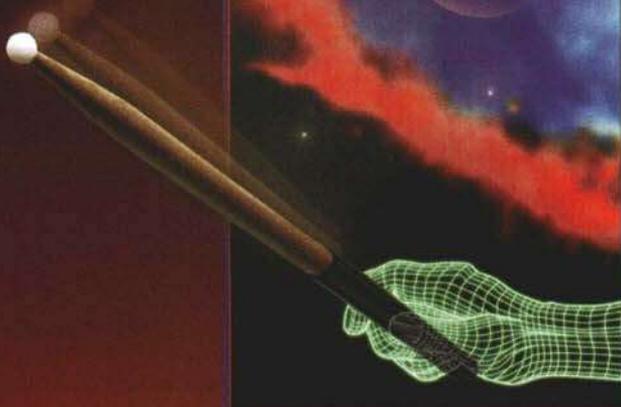
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# Musical Accents, Part 2

by Ted Bonar and Ed Breckenfeld

**MUSIC KEY**

Last month we explored different ways to make accents a musical part of your drumming vocabulary. We discussed how accents are a vital tool in the effort to play musically, and how the study of accents can only help to give you new ideas on the drums.

In Part 1 we took five different approaches to forty exercises, which contained various combinations of single accents. This month we'll concentrate on the development of double-accent combinations. To review the five steps used to develop these skills, let's use example 6 from this month's exercises.

## Step 1

Learn all exercises on snare only. Stay relaxed, play consistently, and keep your accented and non-accented notes of equal stick height and strength. As always, the use of a click track or metronome during practice is invaluable!

## Step 2

Add a quarter note on the bass drum to each exercise:

## Step 3

Add an off-beat hi-hat:

## Step 4

Move the accents to the high tom, and keep the non-accented notes on the snare:

## Step 5

Play the right-hand accents on the low tom and the left-hand accents on the high tom:

With single accents, the mental aspect of playing the accents doesn't really change when you change drums. You're really making only a minor physical adjustment and gaining a new sound and texture on the kit. However, with double combinations, you'll soon discover that the exercises become much more physically challenging due to more simultaneous (or *nearly* simultaneous) movement to different parts of the drumkit.

If you begin to get flustered when approaching Step 5, add another small step to the program. Simply go ahead and move the accents to the low and high toms, but leave the feet out at first.

You can now also begin to think in terms of groupings of notes a bit more easily. By looking out for specific RL and LR combinations, you'll start to turn "mental cues" into physical ones. For instance, try exercise 19, played on the toms:

When playing this exercise for the first time, it's easy to become frustrated by all of the quick movements required. However, because the two groups of accents are so close together, notice that the left hand does not return to the snare until the "e" of 2. You'll begin to recognize these patterns, and instead of becoming overwhelmed with all of the arm movement, you'll realize that this type of pattern actually requires *less* movement than some of the others, because the left hand is staying put for most of the figure!

By learning these exercises you'll become fluid around the kit, and your ability to place accents into your drumming will increase dramatically. You'll also note that exercises 35 and 36 are two measures each. Once you become comfortable playing these longer patterns, you can combine any of the others, or even read through all of the exercises without stopping! Then you'll *really* get an idea of how effective these patterns can be in fills or solos.





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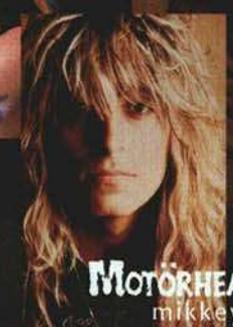
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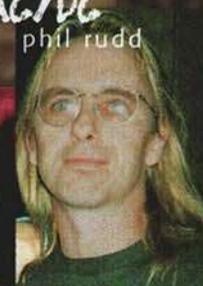
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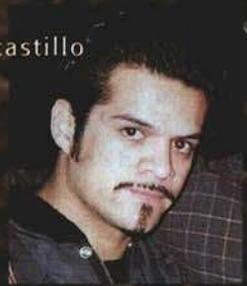
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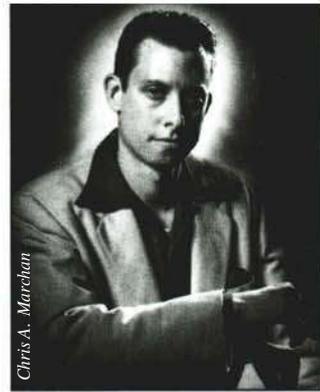


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# SWINGIN' IN A MODERN AGE

by Daniel Glass

## Driving The Band

**T**he return of swing has brought with it the return of a band setup that today's average drummer may not be prepared for. In place of the typical rock scenario (with the usual screaming singers and heavily amplified guitars), drummers are once again contending with horn sections, upright basses, and vocalists trying to sing melodically over it all. Everything from brushwork to ensemble figures to (gulp!) dynamics are once again being demanded of us.

Since neo-swing bands often play in rock situations (Royal Crown Revue actually opened for KISS recently), we're sometimes required to play at dynamic levels far greater than what the inventors of this style ever intended. And all this while wearing a suit! Under the circumstances, the old big band adage "the drummer's in the hot seat" rings truer than ever. For those who might be feeling a tad uncomfortable under all the added pressure, this segment of "Swingin' In A Modern Age" is designed to help ease the transition from rock to big band, even if your band isn't all that big.

### General Issues

As with *any* style you play, groove is king, and as the number of bandmembers increases there's more opportunity for the time to go awry. But there are a few things you can do to drive a larger band more effectively. As a general timekeeping rule, try to keep the hi-hat consistently "chicking" on 2 and 4 through the entire tune, including every punch and fill—and even through your solos. This will ensure you a smooth transition between sections—and keep the dancers happy, too. It's also important to clearly define beat 1 at the beginning of every new four- or eight-bar section. Remember that your bandmates may be as new to this as you are. Unless you're intentionally playing bebop, too much deviation in these departments may earn you some funny looks or, worse, cause a train wreck.

### Upright Bass

Unlike its electric counterpart, the upright's large body and ultra low frequencies mean that the sound of the bass may not travel so

part 4

quickly or clearly, especially on bigger, hollow stages. In many cases, pumping up the bass volume in your monitor results in feedback or other nasty sound problems. Rather than trying to "hear" the bassline, then, I've found it easier to "feel" for it, particularly in the way that its "walking" movement lines up (as it should) with your kick drum feel. Try it. You'll save your ears and keep the stage volume down at the same time.

### Horn Sections

The primary "issue" that comes up when dealing with a horn section is one of time placement. Due to the physics involved in getting a sound (either pushing air through many feet of metal tubing or using it to vibrate a cane reed), different types of horns tend to put the time feel in different places—usually brass on top of the beat and saxes behind it. Similarly, a horn player (or the vocalist for that matter) may choose to lay the time back (sometimes severely) against what you're playing, which is a perfectly acceptable technique in jazz.

As the drummer, you *must* maintain a steady pulse even if you feel the time pull in one direction or another. This can be a bit uncomfortable at first, especially if the vocalist, rhythm players, and horn section all seem to be pulling in different directions. But in reality, everyone is depending on you to put the time where it belongs. We get into trouble when we spend the entire tune chasing these various sections around, trying to match their time feel.

### Setting Up Figures

As any jazz or big band drummer can tell you, setting up horn and vocal lines is a huge part of the job, and doing it fluidly and with style takes years to perfect. There are some great instructional books on this subject, so we won't go into too much detail here. But the following examples demonstrate how you can take a simple rhythmic figure and play any number of setups over it. (Be sure to swing all of the 8th notes.)

Figure 1

1

Setups

In general, the best philosophy to follow here is always "less is more." Find the right spaces in the music and choose your hits selectively: Not every horn punch needs to be articulated by a cymbal crash. If you're playing a jump swing shuffle that requires a solid backbeat (a la Jordan or Prima), try to articulate the horn figures without losing that 2 and 4 feel. Again, let's start with a simple figure, then show various ways of articulating it while maintaining the backbeat.

Figure 2

2

Setups

Once you've learned the horn lines for the particular songs that your band performs, practice them on a wide variety of setups, both big and small. This will increase your flexibility and allow you to be more sensitive to the dynamics of the tune. You'll also be able to play the song at several different intensities, which will allow the band to sound appropriate whether at a wedding or a punk rock show. That translates into more work for the band, and no more day job for you!

### Be Cool

The most important lesson to be learned from playing in a larger ensemble is ego sublimation. It's a tough one for us showboats, but the more you view your role as a supportive one, the better the songs will hold together—and the more the music will make sense. I learn and relearn this lesson every time I get onstage. Don't worry, though. Swing is one of the few pop styles in which it's okay for the drummer to step into the spotlight. (Just make sure you get a spot in the set to strut your stuff.)

I hope you enjoyed this series, and I encourage you to keep listening to and studying the past as you swing in this modern age!



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# THE MAKING OF SYNERGY

SONG BY SONG THROUGH THE DAVE WECKL BAND'S NEWEST RELEASE

by Dave Weckl

**W**hen I first got a record deal around 1990, I was still heavily involved with The Chick Corea Elektric and Akoustic Bands. Touring and making records for both groups took nine to ten months of the year, so there was a relatively small window of time in which to make my own recordings. This meant that we had to write the music and make the albums very quickly.

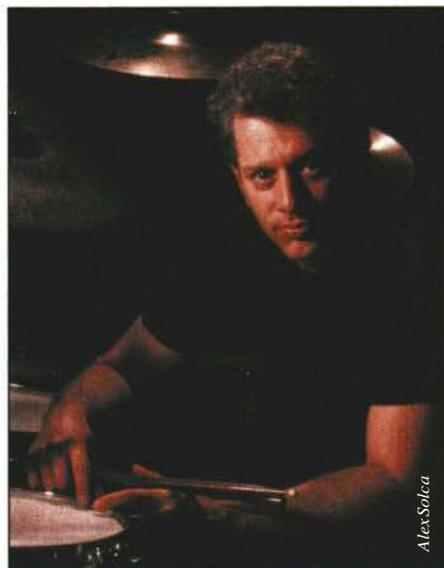
For my first three CDs I really had no interest in putting a band together. There simply was no time, and it was not even possible for me to mentally conceive of doing such a thing. By late 1992, after four years or so of this full-on schedule (and just after my second release, *Heads Up*) I was on the verge of burnout. Around '93 Chick and I decided to part ways; it was just time for us both to move on. I was also about to release my third CD, *Hardwired*.

The manner in which all three of my CDs had to be done forced me and my partner, keyboardist Jay Oliver, into a formula that we had been developing for quite

some time. We would start composing the songs using a Macintosh computer and a sequencing program, employing all of Jay's synths and samplers. Jay is quite good at making a sequence sound and feel like real musicians playing the parts. I would play my drum parts to these demo tracks, with some of the synth tracks remaining as final parts. After my drum tracks were complete, we would bring in the other musicians to overdub their parts.

I attempted to put a band together to play the music from those records, but it was pretty obvious that the music had not been composed with a band in mind. We needed two keyboard players to cover all the parts, and a lot of the music was fairly complex—a style of composing/playing that I had already started to pull away from. I decided to continue doing "featured sideman" gigs with great artists such as Steve Khan, The Brecker Brothers, and Mike Stern rather than dive into the bandleader role.

Times were also changing at GRP—the label of my first three CDs—and I ended

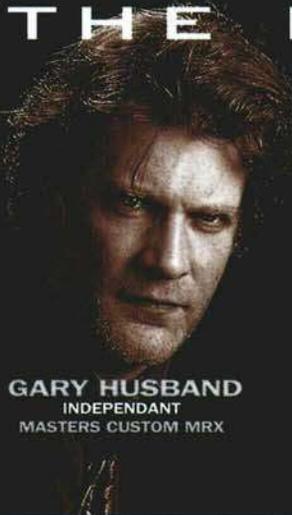


Alex Solca

up losing my deal. Although I was having fun working with Mike Stern's group and making some great creative music, the time was approaching to try things my way and really go for it with my own band.

Jay and I decided to start a band project and to compose music with that concept in mind. We opted to explore composing in a style that we both loved but had never fully

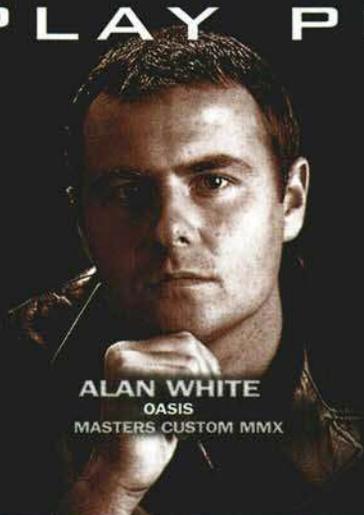
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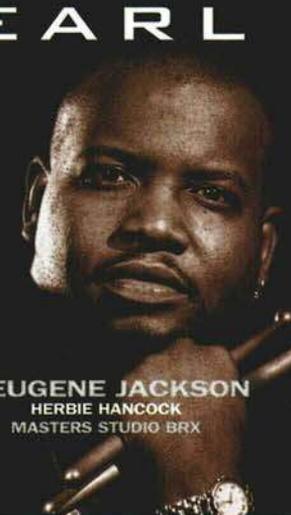
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focused on. The music would be primarily groove-oriented and blues-based, with a major role for the guitar—an instrument not used very much in my previous music.

We actually started this adventure with the thought of starting our own record label. But this concept became less and less feasible, and we quickly changed our minds when I was offered a deal with Stretch/Concord.

We finished the compositions for what would become *Rhythm Of The Soul*. I wanted to record that CD much differently from the previous ones, with as much live playing as possible. As with my previous CDs I used my home studio. It was a little cramped, with guitarist Buzz Feiten and Jay out in the control room, and bassist Tom Kennedy in the drum booth with me. The one instrument that still had to be overdubbed was the sax, as there was no possible way to record him live.

We did five songs as live rhythm-section tunes. The rest were done in our old way, with me playing to the sequence first. I used two different guitar players and two sax players, so at the time of the recording the actual band was not formed yet. Even so, the project still had a lot more focus than my first three albums.

The actual Dave Weckl Band formed in the fall of 1997. Saxophonist Brandon Fields agreed to fill in for Steve Tavaglione, who could not make our debut gig or commit to touring. Brandon played so well and was so right for the music that he quickly became a permanent member.

After touring for a year playing mostly the music from *Rhythm Of The Soul*, the

chemistry of the band really developed. It became the type of great-feeling unit that can only be realized after spending a lot of time touring and playing together. My main goal with *Synergy* was to capture the band's stage energy live in the studio.

I also wanted to open up the creative doors at the composing stage, inviting all the guys to contribute their own material and also attempting to co-write a few songs together as a band. Our soundchecks throughout the year had almost always produced some great groove ideas and possible song foundations. So I got the rhythm section together for a rehearsal/writing day, brought an ADAT, and recorded everything.

Jay and I then took those ideas and began finishing a few of them. Others became the basis of group-writing sessions. That's a very difficult thing to make work when everyone has strong composing skills, so it was a good exercise in letting go of some of the control—especially from Jay's and my standpoint. Thankfully, the chemistry we enjoy on stage carried over to the writing, and we eventually all agreed on a conceptual approach.

When writing your own material, you are basically focused on *your* ideas, musically and drumistically. One of the nice things about bringing in different writers is that it puts me in the position of creating a drum part for existing music, rather than creating the music from the drum part. My idea of being a solo artist includes being heavily involved in the writing aspect—otherwise I would just play on other people's records. But having a few songs on your own CD that you didn't write is a nice way to give it

some variety.

Songs like "High Life," "Swamp Thing," and "Cape Fear" all started from drum grooves I wanted to play, while "Panda's Dream," "A Simple Prayer," and "Where is my Paradise?" are all Buzz Feiten compositions. Brandon brought in "Lucky Seven" and contributed to "Cape Fear" and a few others. Although Tom was not able to be at the writing sessions after our initial jam, he had lots of input on the songs we started that day.

Equipment-wise, I used basically the same kit I did last year on *Rhythm Of The Soul*—except that I use two bass drums in my setup now. This really adds to the color of some of the songs. For instance, in "Cape Fear" I am using both drums at once in the basic groove. In the sax solo in "Swunk" I go to the 18" drum for a bebop sound and approach, then back to the 22" as we start to slide back into the swunk feel. I use the two drums again to differentiate some of the sections of "Lucky Seven." My main snare for the entire CD was my signature aluminum-shell 5 1/2x14; the secondary one is my signature 5x13 maple drum.

Much of the inspiration for the first track, "High Life," came when I subbed for Steve Gadd with Paul Simon during the period when Paul was writing music inspired by African musicians. I learned a lot from bassist Armand Sebal Lecco and the others in the band, and I was very inspired to learn more about their wonderful musical culture. Most of the rhythms are based in 12/8, which is a feel I love to play. This tune started from the drums, and

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**MATTHEW CROSS**  
ORANGE 9MM  
MASTERS CUSTOM MMX

**ANDY KUBISZEWSKI**  
STABBING WESTWARD  
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the term "fusion" really represents its definition. This is not just a 12/8 African tune but a mix of many different styles.

On the jam day I started playing the basic groove, against which Buzz started playing an R&B shuffle groove. The two parts worked very well together. The B section melody has more of the African vibe to it, while the solo sections have more of an open, improvisational approach, touching on all of the feels mentioned. One of my goals was to play a drum solo over the African feel. I used a lot of rhythms inspired by guitar parts I often hear in the authentic forms of this music, heavily based off the middle note of a triplet.

"Panda's Dream" was a song that Buzz started playing on electric guitar at the jam day, without mentioning that it was an existing tune. So I played what I thought fit the vibe he was playing. The song took on a whole other approach from what Buzz originally wrote—but he dug it. So he rearranged it with the heavier funk/rock feel we got into (a slow 16th groove). We didn't have anything like it for the record, so I really wanted to do it.

I wanted the snare to be fat, so I used a "detuning" method I often employ to get that sound immediately. Starting with a snare tuned medium-high, I detune the lug farthest from me about two or three turns. The drum theoretically goes out of tune, but it does sound fat and wet. Adding a little of famed producer Jay Graydon's older EQ-ing style (no mids!) and a little reverb helps get the desired sound.

Buzz's other two contributions were bal-

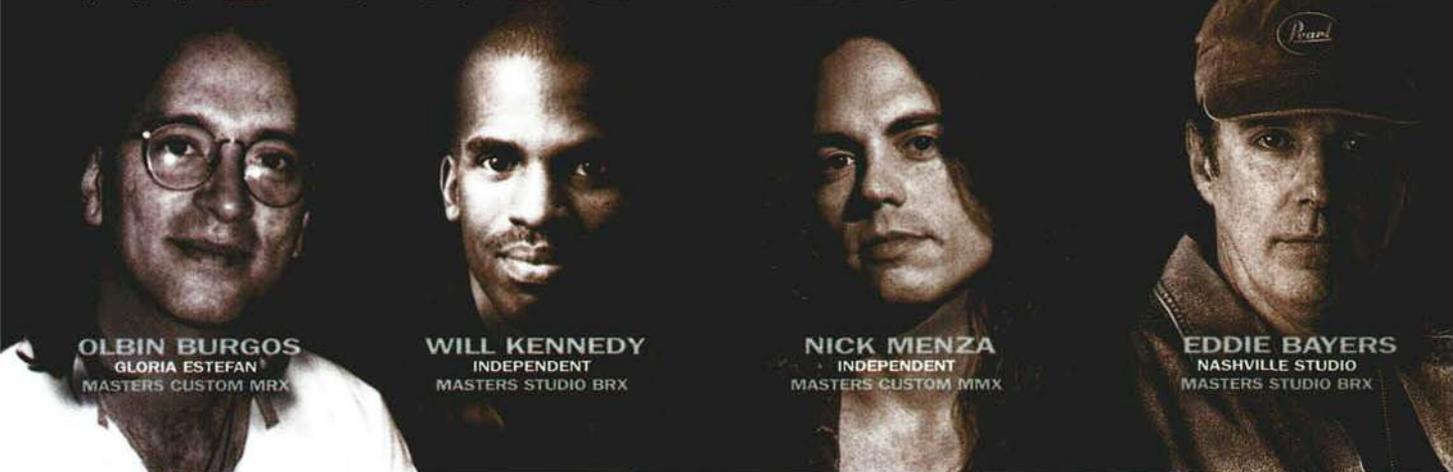


lads. "Where's My Paradise?" got a sort of jazz feel, with brushes throughout. The other, "A Simple Prayer," took some time to find the right approach drum-wise. We could have gone nuts with production, with a lot of hand drum parts. But I wanted to simulate the live approach and be able to play the song live without missing any production aspects. I decided to play a part on the snare (snares off) in which I used a mallet in my right hand and used my left hand to muffle/unmuffle the drum. I also played some notes with my bare hand. I overdubbed some bell tree and finger-cymbal parts, a brush on a cymbal, and toms to help build the sax solo. The drums are mixed back so the feel doesn't get too heavy for the nylon-string guitar.

The feel of "Swunk" is, as the title suggests, a mix of swing and funk, composed by Jay and myself. It is compositionally inspired by a couple different sources. Back when I used to go hear Peter Erskine and Jaco Pastorius in New York clubs, they would play tunes with a similar feel. In the acid jazz arena, great drummer and friend Jo Jo Mayer composed a tune for The Screaming Headless Torsos with the basic drum part playing a swing ride pattern and hi-hat on 2 and 4, over the top of the bass drum on 1 and 3, with the snare backbeat on 3 as well. Finally, being huge fans of big-band-style hits, we wrote a sort of "shout chorus" into "Swunk" as a vehicle for the drums to have fun with.

Probably more so than the other songs,

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INDEPENDENT  
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**NICK MENZA**  
INDEPENDENT  
MASTERS CUSTOM MMX

**EDDIE BAYERS**  
NASHVILLE STUDIO  
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"Cape Fear" is a product of the group writing effort. The concept started with a double bass drum groove I developed during my solo in our live shows. I had envisioned the song going in a funk direction, but Brandon was hearing some darker, Eastern European harmonies, so we went in that direction. Jay had come up with a great chord progression (which later became the sax-solo section), and Buzz contributed the bass-line idea. This was a great lesson in letting go for me, since most of my ideas for different sections of the song were not used—which in the end better served the

direction of the song.

"Wet Skin" was another product of our jam day. It was basically Buzz's idea, inspired by James Brown's "Good Foot" vibe. Jay and I had taken the bare-bones demo from our get-together into a more structured direction. But Buzz had a much simpler, more fun little groove tune in mind. Since it was his idea in the first place, Jay and I had Buzz finish some of our melody ideas and arrange the song as he had envisioned, which is what ended up on the CD.

Jay and I wrote "Synergy" from scratch. It's inspired by the Cuban/salsa influence,

which is a style we love. The song travels on a journey of many atmosphere and feel changes, always maintaining the Latin overtones. It earned the status of title track because everyone got to solo on it!

I was vacillating on whether or not to use a click on the entire record, since sometimes with new material I prefer a click to be there. But we had been playing the music all week live, so after trying a click on a couple of the songs I decided not to use one. I wanted to keep the live vibe of the band. On "Synergy," however, with all its section changes, I wasn't getting what I wanted. So

## DAVE'S SETUP

### Drumset: Yamaha Maple Custom

- A. 5x13 Dave Weckl signature snare
- B. 5 1/2x14 Dave Weckl signature snare (aluminum shell)
- C. 8x10 tom
- D. 8x12 tom
- E. 12x14 tom
- F. 14x16 tom
- G. 16x22 bass drum
- H. 16x18 bass drum (played with remote pedal)

### Cymbals: Zildjian

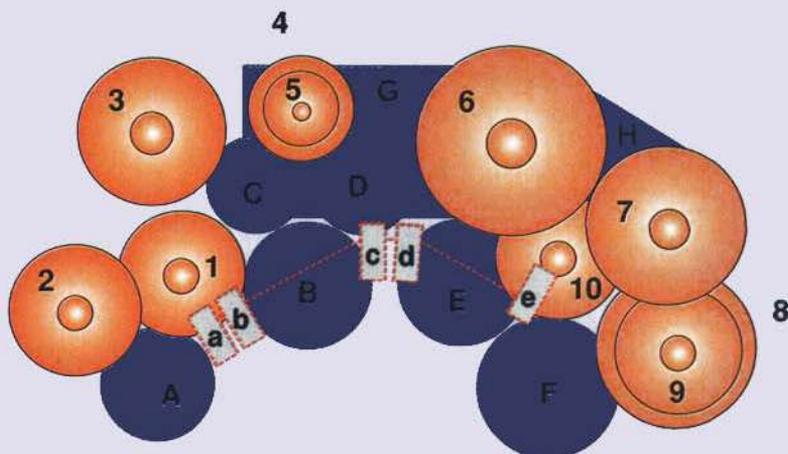
- 1. 14" hi-hats (New Beat top, Rock top on bottom)
- 2. 15" Azuka (or 10" K splash)
- 3. 17" A Custom crash (or K Dark crash)
- 4. 12" K splash (Brilliant)
- 5. 6" splash (mounted upside down on top of 12")
- 6. 22" K Custom medium ride (or 20")
- 7. 19" A Custom crash (or 17" K Custom Dark crash)
- 8. 18" K Custom Dark crash
- 9. 14" K China
- 10. 14" hi-hats (A Custom crash top, K top bottom)

### Heads: Remo

### Sticks: Vic Firth

### Pedals:

- a. hi-hat
- b. remote for 22"
- c. main for 22"
- d. remote for 18"
- e. main for 18" (not played; used to anchor remote)



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we used the click from Jay's computer—into which Jay was recording all his keyboard parts. But in our haste we didn't make sure enough measures of click had been programmed, so the click stopped halfway through the keyboard solo. It was such a good take that we kept going, and it ended up being fine. But I had an interesting moment when the click suddenly stopped!

We originally heard Brandon's tune

"Lucky Seven" on a rough demo cassette that Brandon created. The programmed drum part was fairly angular. I immediately heard something else, part-wise and groove-wise. I sang what I was hearing to Brandon and he dug it, so he finished the tune and brought it into rehearsal. The feel is of the laid-back, straight-8th variety. To help differentiate some of the sections of the song, I hooked up a small hi-hat tambourine to my right-side closed hi-hat attachment and played on it instead of a normal hi-hat part.

"Swamp Thing" began with a New Orleans-inspired feel. This is an interesting feel to play, as it falls somewhere between straight and swung 8th notes. I used a double pedal on the main bass drum to create a lot of the motion and feel from the bottom of the kit. On jam day, Tom and Buzz fell right into the groove, with the initial guitar and bass groove becoming the foundation that Jay and I used to finish the tune. Our idea was to take the rock-oriented vibe suggested by the groove and write a Brecker Brothers-like melody over it. It became one of the band's favorite tunes, and a great vehicle for Buzz to wail over at the end.

On the drum solo piece, "Cultural Concurrence," I played the whole solo on the drums first, using an ostinato double bass drum part. Then I overdubbed the other parts: a wooden slit drum from the Aztec culture of Mexico, and a South American clay drum. I also played a brush part on a cardboard box to give a shaker effect.

"Tower 99" is based on "Tower Of Inspiration" from my first record,

*Masterplan*. When the band started doing this tune live (as on the *Modern Drummer Festival '98* video), we played it in its original uptempo version from top to bottom, varying the original arrangement only slightly. However, in the fall of 1998, Jay, Tom and I did a clinic tour for Yamaha. At one of the soundchecks I started playing a slow funk groove. Tommy started playing the bass line to "Tower," and Jay joined in with the melody/harmony. The song was fun to play that way, so we incorporated the idea for the rest of the clinics, picking the tempo back up just before the organ solo. I brought the arrangement into the band and thought it would be nice to include it on the CD.

The word "synergy" is defined as: "The action of two or more substances to achieve an effect of which each is individually incapable." What makes the synergy happen with this band is the combination of all of those sensibilities: a playing relationship I've enjoyed with Jay and Tom since childhood, along with Buzz's swampy, Mississippi-mud influence, and Brandon's total versatility and musicianship.

What I like about the outcome of all our work on *Synergy* is that the music is a mix of everything: blues, Latin, African, soul, rock, and jazz. I think the CD has a lot to offer, containing moments of hard, adventurous playing counterbalanced with songs possessing a lighter touch, finesse, and subtlety. While synergy is what the album is all about, balance was also a quite important factor in the thought process of making this CD.

## DREAM OF PLANET X



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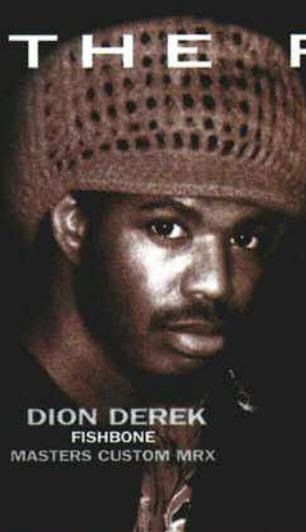
Derek Sherinian (X-Dream Theater) has descended from the Hollywood Hills, delivering his craziest stunt yet: a big revolving chunk of molten asteroid called PLANET X.

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# Art Blakey

## Part 1: 1944 To 1958

by Mark Griffith

Art Blakey was a bandleader, teacher, and talent scout. But first and foremost, Art was a *great* drummer. Drummers who try to grasp the polymetric thunder of Elvin Jones or Tony Williams often forget to go to the source: Blakey's influential and polyrhythmic drumming. Blakey had great time and amazing musical instincts, and was an exciting soloist. His sound and style is instantly identifiable.

Art's enormous recorded legacy can be broken into several stages: early sideman (1940s-'50s), early Jazz Messengers, middle sideman (1950s-'60s), middle Jazz Messengers, drum ensembles, late sideman, and 1970s and '80s Messengers. This article will examine the first half of that long recording career.

Blakey's first gigs were with jazz legends Mary Lou Williams and Fletcher Henderson. His first *recordings*, however, were with the Billy Eckstine big band. Art was in "Mr. B's" band from 1944 through 1947. Unfortunately, the recordings of this band didn't focus on its legendary instrumentalists (Blakey, Dizzy Gillespie,



Charlie Parker) as much as on their vocalist and leader. But we still hear examples of a very young Blakey on *Mr. B And The Band* and the outstanding *Live In 1945*. On these recordings, Blakey sounds like a combination of Chick Webb and Jo Jones, with a touch of Big Sid Catlett. His drum sound was very similar to Webb's, his attitude and swinging approach were pure Papa Jo, and his economical accents stemmed from Big Sid. An important lesson to learn from examining Blakey's early work is that it takes a long time to devel-

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**JOHNNY KELLY**  
TYPE O NEGATIVE  
MASTERS CUSTOM MRX

**TIM HAINES**  
JO DEE MESSINA  
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*Pearl*

op one's own distinctive voice on the drums. Blakey himself often commented in later years that stylistic development takes time, and is something that can't be rushed.

In 1947 Blakey assembled a seventeen-piece big band. His first recording as a leader was made with a stripped-down version of this band. By this time Blakey is sounding somewhat stronger and more confident, and is also starting to "drop bombs" in the traditional bebop style. His left-hand accents push and prod the soloists, and his bass-drum feathering pushes the time feel. Make a special study of how Blakey's left hand and bass drum accents ("bombs") never got in the way of the pianist's "comping," thus creating a textbook on how to work with a pianist in a rhythm section.

In 1948 Blakey recorded with James Moody's Modernists. The date also featured Cuban hand drummer Chano Pozo. Blakey worked well with a percussionist, and the two never got in each other's way. Blakey learned many hand-drumming techniques, rhythms, and beats from Pozo (who died soon after these sessions). His interpretations of the "hand drumming" repertoire often surfaced in his drumming, and became trademarks for the rest of his career. Many of Blakey's unique grooves can be traced directly to his interpretations of conga and bongo beats. These two valuable sessions are collected on Art Blakey & James Moody's *New Sounds*.

In 1947 Blakey did several recordings with Thelonious Monk, all of which are collected on *Genius Of Modern Music Volume 1*. Blakey's drumming fit Monk's music perfectly, and it's telling to listen to these two geniuses working together. Listen closely to "Who Knows" and "Nice Work If You Can Get It" for the sounds

that Art Blakey coaxes from his hi-hats. Papa Jo was the first to get this type of roar out of a pair of hats, but Blakey carried the torch. Monk's relatively sparse piano style left a lot of room for us to hear the distinct sound of Blakey's drums. While Art's peers leaned more towards a high-pitched and hollow drum sound, Blakey's drums were tuned lower and flatter, with less tone and much more attack. This attack matched the extreme confidence of Art's drumming.

Blakey's confidence had its roots in several places. First, he had a rough upbringing in a particularly tough section of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Second, early in his musical career Blakey learned directly from the jazz masters: Errol Garner, Monk, Dizzy, and Bird. Art's survivalist attitude and his direct link to the "truth" (as far as jazz was concerned) bred in him a self-confidence that was often mistak-

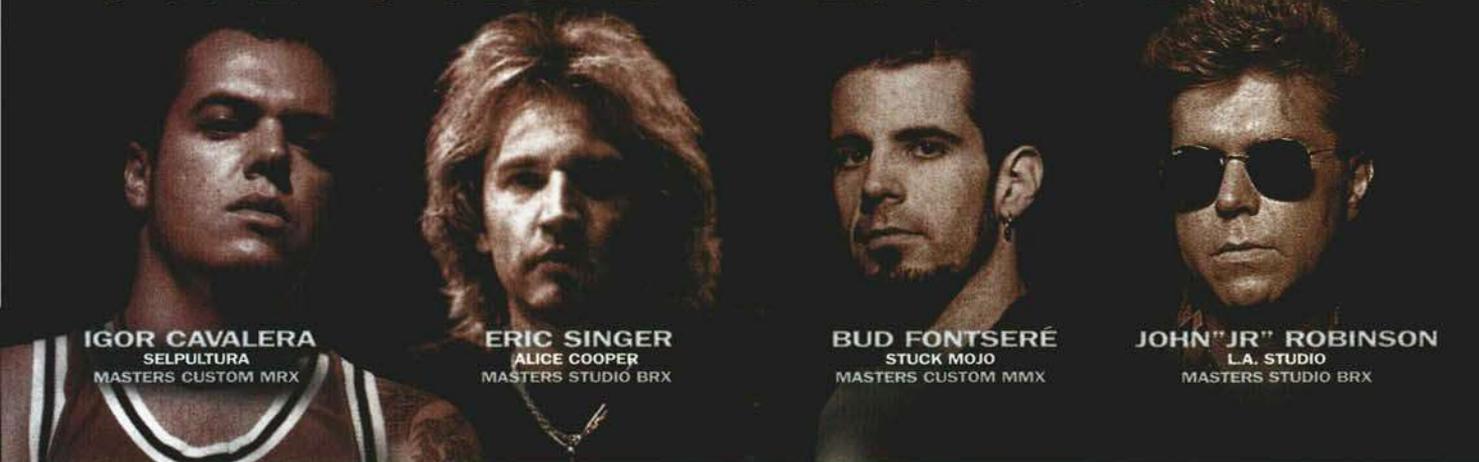
You often get the feeling that what Art was playing was completely new (and even a complete surprise) to him. This sense of being 'in the moment' is one major factor that makes his drumming so enjoyable.

en for arrogance.

A trip to Africa in 1947 had a strong impact on Blakey's drumming. As a result, when Blakey recorded again with Monk in 1951, we hear a very different drummer. The instantly identifiable heavy 2 and 4 on the hi-hat was now present. Additionally Blakey sounded more settled—or humbled (either by his trip, or by Monk's music). Art brought back from Africa a wealth of 6/8 ideas that he freely infused in his drumming. This underlying 6/8 pulse is what makes Art's drumming different from that of his peers in that same period. Blakey's polyrhythmic drumset playing is some of the first on record, and is one of the things that make him a supremely important figure in modern drumming.

Listen to the 1951 Monk recording *Genius Of Modern Music Volume 2* for the new components of Blakey's drumming. This is

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also a good chance to check out a young Max Roach, who is on this recording as well. Upon examination, you will find that (contrary to popular belief) these two masters are *very* different drummers.

Also check out Charlie Parker's amazing live recording *One Night At Birdland* from 1950. Although the recording quality isn't great, this is one of the only chances to hear the two legends, Parker and Blakey, together. Art really pushed Bird to create one of his greatest recordings.

A little later, in 1951, Blakey played on Miles Davis's historic recording *Dig*. This session didn't feature tunes that were as challenging as Monk's, therefore we hear a more relaxed ensemble of musicians. But of the several recordings Blakey did during this period, this is perhaps the finest. All of Art's early trademarks are present: the pushing time feel, a heavy 2 and 4, polyrhythmic ideas, and a sense of surprise in everything he played. Listen to the amazing fours that Blakey takes on "Denial": For most of them the ride cymbal and hi-hat remain completely unchanged, while Art plays some unique ideas with his other limbs. You also get to hear some of the first well-recorded Blakey press rolls on "Out Of The Blue" and "Bluing," as well as some very effective backbeats.

These early Monk and Miles sessions illustrate another important Blakey characteristic. Art's drumming was always "in the moment." Art was always tied in to what the other musicians were playing, and to the melody and harmony of the composition. As a result, everything Art played sounded rehearsed or orchestrated, *without* sounding preconceived. You often get the impression that what Art was playing was completely new (and even a complete surprise) to him. This sense of being "in the moment" can't be transcribed or written in a book, but it is one major factor that makes Art Blakey's drumming and improvising so enjoyable.

Blakey didn't make many piano trio recordings, but the Horace Silver recording *Trio And Spotlight On Drums* is a classic. Art creates a comfortable pocket, while often inserting phrases that demand attention. Art also shows some influence from one of his peers: His breaks and solos are much more melodic than they had been in the past, a la Max Roach. We also get to hear some of the

## Tracking Them Down

Here's a list of the albums mentioned in this month's column, including labs and catalog information. Below the list are several sources you might want to check for hard-to-find releases.

### Billy Eckstine

*Mr. B And The Band*, Savoy Jazz SVY-0264  
*Billy Eckstine Orchestra 1945*,  
Alamac QSR 2415

### Thelonious Monk

*Genius Of Modern Music Volume 1*,  
Blue Note CDP 7815102  
*Volume 2*, Blue Note CDP 7815112

### Charlie Parker

*One Night In Birdland*, Columbia JG34808

### Miles Davis

*Dig*, Prestige OCJCCD 005-2  
*Volume Two*, Blue Note CDP 7815022

### Horace Silver

*Trio*, Blue Note CDP 7815202  
*The Jazz Messengers*,  
Blue Note CDP 7461402

### Kenny Dorham

*Aim-Cuban*, Blue Note CDP 7468152

### Jimmy Smith

*At The Organ Vol. 1*, Blue Note TOCJ-1551

### Johnny Griffin

*A Blowing Session*, Blue Note CDP 815592

### Clifford Jordan/John Gilmore

*Blowing In From Chicago*,  
Blue Note CDP 724382897729

### Sonny Rollins

*Volume 2*, Blue Note CDP 7815582

### Hank Mobley

*And His All Stars*,  
Blue Note CDP 724383766826

### Cannonball Adderley

*Somethin' Else*, Blue Note CDP 7463382

### Art Blakey & James Moody

*New Sounds*, Blue Note CDP 7844362

### Art Blakey Quintet

*A Night At Birdland Vol. 1*,  
Blue Note CDP 7465192

*A Night At Birdland Vol. 2*,  
Blue Note CDP 746520P.

### The Jazz Messengers

*At The Cafe Bohemia Volume 1*,  
Blue Note CDP 7465212

*At The Cafe Bohemia Volume 2*,  
Blue Note CDP 7465222

### Art Blakey And The Jazz Messengers

*A Night In Tunisia*, RCA BVCJ7337  
*Ritual*, Blue Note CDP 7468.82

*With Thelonious Monk*,  
Atlantic 1278-2

*Moanin'*, Blue Note CDP 7465162

### Art Blakey

*Orgy In Rhythm Vols. 1&2*,  
Blue Note CDP 724385358624

*Holiday For Skins Volume 1*,  
Blue Note TOCJ-4004

*Holiday For Skins Volume 2*,  
Blue Note TOCJ-4005

### Art Blakey And The Afro-Drum Ensemble

*The African Beat*, Blue Note TOCJ 4097

### Art Blakey Percussion Ensemble

*Drum Suite*, Columbia CL1002

### Various

*Gretsch Night At Birdland*,  
Roulette CDP 724382864127

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Rick Ballard Imports, PO Box 5063, Dept. DB, Berkeley, CA 94705

Double Time Jazz, PO Box 1244, New Albany, IN 47151

Scott Davidson Music, (302) 529-1081

earliest examples of Art's funky Latin or "mambo" patterns. These grooves, in which the African and hand-drumming influence is

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MICHAEL CAMILLO  
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SHANE EVANS  
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*Pearl*

obviously present, would become another of Blakey's trademarks. In this stripped-down trio instrumentation, we also get to study the balanced sound that Blakey got from all components of his drumset.

When Art solos on "Safari" we hear another hand drumming influence, as he raises the pitch of his snare drum (snare off) with his elbow in the style of the great congueros. Also study the sound of the brushes on the ballad "I Remember You." This CD is augmented by the inclusion of a duet between Blakey and master conguero Sabu, as well as a classic Blakey solo composition titled "Nothing But The Soul."

Also from 1953, check out the solid Miles Davis sextet recording *Volume Two*. This recording, though not as fantastic as *Dig*, collects all of the aforementioned Blakey drumming attributes, along with some great press rolls.

In 1954, Blakey led a group (not yet officially called The Jazz Messengers) that was captured on two volumes of *A Night At Birdland*. We were over ten years into bebop, and jazz was changing. On these two CDs Blakey and company groove, breathe fire, whisper, and do everything in between. Pay attention to the perfect way that Blakey and bassist Curly Russell hook up. We can also start to observe the difference in Blakey's playing as a sideman and as a leader (as well as live versus in the studio). These are two fantastic and highly essential live recordings.

The most familiar aspect of Art's drumming is his signature press roll. But "the roll" is only half of the magic. Make special note of how Art comes *out* of these rolls. You'll find that it's never predictable, and it always has a different effect on the music. Sometimes a roll brings the music down, but often it pushes the

music way *up*. Rolls often end in a crash, but they sometimes conclude in a brief silence, a choked crash, or an unaccented return to the ride cymbal. Also note the *speed* in which the roll reaches its full dynamic. Blakey often referred to these rolls as a sound that emulated the sound of coal being dumped out of a bucket!

Nineteen fifty-five brought the *Jazz Messengers* recording, under the leadership of Horace Silver. Perhaps due to the studio confines, or perhaps because it was not "his" date, Blakey sounds more restrained here. However, there is an important lesson in this restraint. Blakey's propelling drive never withered, even when he was "low-keying it."

Compare this record to both volumes of the live recording *The Jazz Messengers At The Cafe Bohemia*. About these recordings, I can only quote Blakey when he said, "In jazz you get the message when you hear the music." This is music you must *hear*.

Check out Blakey's "bongo beat" in the middle of "Sportin' Crowd." Dig how The Messengers turn into a percussion ensemble for the intro for "Avila & Tequila" (which hints at Blakey's later drum group recordings). And *throughout* this recording, listen to the control that Blakey exhibits while playing his very thin and multi-riveted ride cymbal—especially on the brisk "Just One Of Those Things." (If you don't know what I mean, try playing a very thin ride with a lot of rivets and keeping the sound under control. That's what the masters call "touch.") Also check out Kenny Dorham's recording *Afro-Cuban*, featuring Blakey and conguero Patato Valdes.

Nineteen fifty-seven was a very busy year for Blakey. He was the fire behind two saxophone battle/blowing sessions: Johnny

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Ringo Starr (l) of the Beatles with West L.A. Music Sales Manager Mark Spiwak.



Ginger Baker (r), legendary drummer with Cream visits West L.A. Music Drum Manager Glenn Noyes.



Tommy Lee (l), of Motley Crue chatting with one of the friendly staffers at West L.A. Music.



Fritz Lewak (l), Jackson Browne's drummer with one of West L.A. Music's helpful drum staff.



Armand Zildjian (l), patriarch of the Zildjian cymbal family visiting West L.A. Music.



Jason Bonham (l), son of Led Zeppelin drummer John Bonham and leader of his own band at W.L.A.M.

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Griffin's *A Blowing Session*, and Clifford Jordan and John Gilmore's *Blowing In From Chicago*. The volcano known as Blakey never lets these two dates idly simmer; he pushes and pulls the saxophonists to new heights. The Chicago session again features the "hand in glove" team of Blakey and bassist Curly Russell. Sonny Rollins' *Volume 2* and Hank Mobley's *All Stars* sessions are good examples of Art's "supportive sideman" persona.

Art also recorded with organist Jimmy Smith in 1957. For my thoughts regarding Blakey's organ drumming, see the *MD* feature on the great organ drummers [Feb. '99]. Also in '57, The Messengers recorded *A Night In Tunisia* and *Ritual*, both featuring Jackie McLean. The latter includes a spoken track from Blakey.

Blakey assembled two outstanding percussion ensemble recordings in 1957. *Orgy In Rhythm Vols. One & Two* is the first of the two. It brought together Blakey, Art Taylor, Papa Jo Jones, and Specs Wright (all playing drumset) with five Latin percussionists and a rhythm section. The second recording, *Drum Suite*, featured almost the same lineup. These are the first of many Blakey drum recordings that seem to have been completely—and unfortunately—forgotten by the drumming community. Blakey revisited this concept in 1958 on *Holiday For Skins Vols. One And Two* (with Philly Joe Jones, Art Taylor, seven Latin percussionists, and a rhythm section) and in 1962 with *The African Beat* (featuring only Blakey on drumset with six Latin and African percussionists). Drummers should become familiar with *all* of these important recordings—especially *Orgy In Rhythm* and *The African Beat*.

Blakey also arranged *Gretsch Drum Night At Birdland* (now a

CD produced by drummer/historian Kenny Washington). This one-of-a-kind recording features Blakey, Charlie Persip, Elvin Jones, and Philly Joe Jones, backing a combo and collaborating on five long tunes (all featuring two or more of the drummers). The four masters exchange ideas, rhythms, and musicality in a unique drummer's jam session.

We'll conclude in 1958 with three great recordings. The Jazz Messengers album *With Thelonious Monk* is another example of Blakey's drumming backing Monk, but this time Monk is a guest of The Messengers. Art's swagger is intact, and he pushes this classic into the stratosphere. There have been few musical pairings like Blakey and Monk.

Blakey was also the drummer on the legendary Cannonball Adderley all-star session *Somethin' Else*. Listen to the slow version of the aforementioned bongo beat on "Autumn Leaves" and "Love For Sale." I cannot stress enough the importance of this groove to the language of jazz drumming. Finally, The Messengers' *Moanin'* is a jazz essential. The title track features Art's bluesy backbeats within the signature Blakey shuffle. The classic "Drum Thunder Suite" features a stellar Blakey solo. The popular and timeless "Blues March" is a Blakey standard, built around the military march repertoire. The rest of the tunes are jazz standards that every aspiring jazz musician should know. This recording is quintessential Blakey, and one that every drummer should own.

We'll pick up next time with the classic Messengers of 1959-60, and chronicle the rest of the career of the great Art Blakey. But for now, listen, learn, and enjoy.

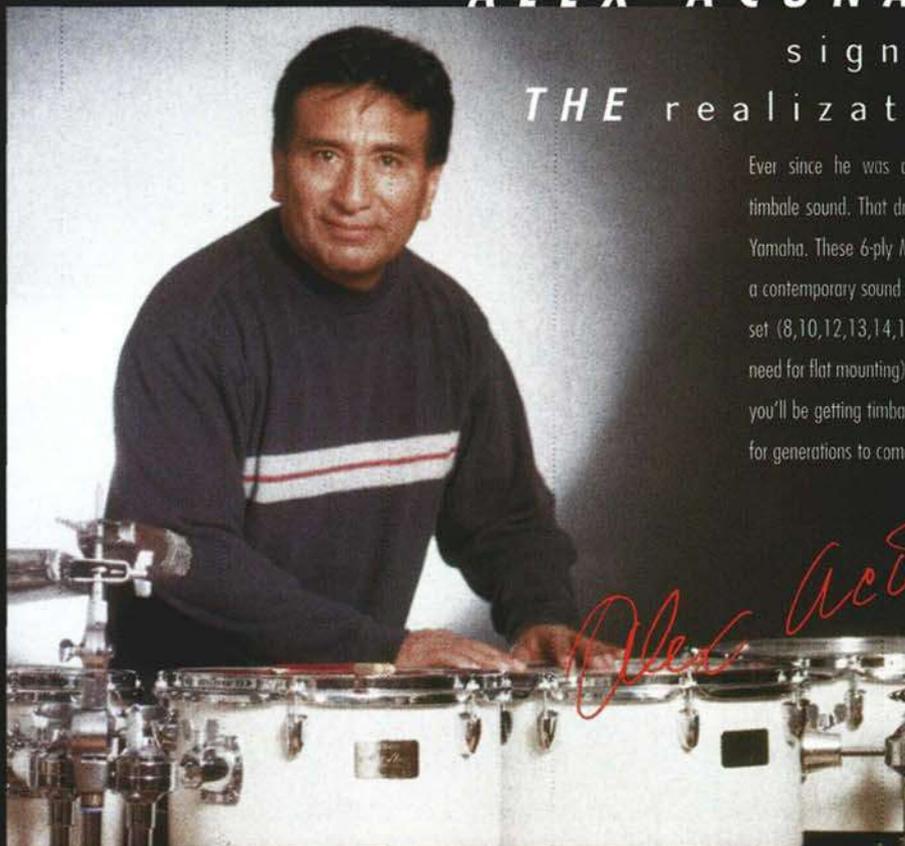


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# MD's 1999 Consumer Poll Results

by Rick Van Horn

The May 1999 issue of *MD* contained the ballot for our fifth tri-annual Consumers Poll. We invited you to list your choices of manufacturers and/or products in a variety of categories. Well, you did, and in no uncertain terms. Those companies you liked, you liked *a lot*, and you said so in terms usually reserved for a favorite sports team (or a girlfriend!). The ballot didn't have categories for what you *didn't* like, but many of you told us that, too. (Of course, only a few of those comments would be printable.)

The drum industry has seen tremendous expansion since the last *MD* Consumers Poll was conducted. New brands of drums have come on the market at a staggering rate, challenging the established "majors" for consumer interest. Likewise, the cymbal market—pretty much a three-horse race for almost a decade—has exploded with new names. Hardware, drumheads, sticks, percussion...every product area has grown in number of manufacturers. At the same time, the quality level of the products made by these manufacturers has continued to improve. Today, the drum consumer is blessed—or confused, depending on your point of view—by an abundance of excellent instruments and accessories to choose from.

With all this diversity, it's not surprising that a sizable number of candidates were nominated in almost every category. (For example, twenty-one drum companies were nominated for "Most Innovative.") Many of the nominees were familiar names, but there were some significant new contenders. Drum consumers are always on the lookout for something new and/or different, and our poll results reflect this.

In a trend that started with the 1992 poll, continued in 1995, and proved even more prevalent in this year's poll, responses in all the "Electronics" categories were significantly fewer than in the other categories. In the "Best Quality & Craftsmanship" category, for example, only 46.2% of all ballots received had responses pertaining to electronics manufacturers. And of those manufacturers receiving votes, seven make microphones, not electronic percussion.

Those of you who *are* interested in electronics supported your favorites with enthusiastic and meaningful comments. Interestingly, voters *not* into electronics simply left the spaces blank this year. In the 1995 poll, there were a significant number of negative comments, including some that were downright hostile. Apparently the issue has finally settled into a "some people use electronics, some don't" situation that drummers are willing to accept simply as the way things are.

So now to the results. Each winner's vote tally is expressed as a percentage of the total number of votes

cast in that category. (Some categories received greater responses than others.) We're also including tallies and comments for other manufacturers who figured highly in each category, as a way of recognizing their popularity among the *MD* readership.

## Most Innovative Company

**Acoustic Drum Company:** Drum Workshop led this field, with 27.2% of the total vote. Comments about DW included, "Their inventions are the most drumming-oriented and useful," "They continue to improve and refine products that are already innovative," and "Their ideas always seem to lead the industry." DW products cited for their innovation included Short Stack toms, the Woofer low-end enhancer for bass drums, and the Craviotto series of solid-wood snare drums.

Also figuring highly in this category was perennial contender Pearl (with 17.7% of the vote), which was cited for the development of the Sensitone snare drum series and the Power Shifter bass drum pedals. Developments within the Starclassic and Iron Cobra series earned Tama 10.9% of the vote, while the HipGig kit drew 7.5% of the voters to Yamaha. Ayotte (6.1%) and Arbiter (4.8%) were two new names that drew significant attention.

**Cymbal Company:** While this year's poll was distinguished by the appearance of seven different cymbal brands, the leader was the most familiar name: Zildjian (with 50.3% of the vote). The company was lauded for the development of the K Constantinople, Edge, Azuka, and Re-Mix series, among others. Comments included, "Constantly experimenting with new



Most innovative drum company: DW, thanks to products like their Short Stack drums and Woofer bass drum enhancer.

sounds," "They grow and change with the times," and "They focus on meeting everyone's needs."

Sabian followed Zildjian with 35.5% of the vote, and was cited for its Signature Ride, Radia, and B8 Pro series. Paiste garnered 11.3%, with the Traditionals series and specific Signature series models receiving the greatest comment. Meinl, UFIP, Grand Master, and Bosphorus were other companies that received votes for the first time.

**Electronics Company:** In a nod to product diversity, not all of the votes in this category went to electronic percussion companies. For example, five different microphone companies received votes, as did one manufacturer of electronic accessories and one maker of sound sources. However, the company receiving the overwhelming number of votes (69%) was Roland. Voters repeatedly cited the development of the V-Drums as the most drummer-friendly electronic achievement in years. Roland's SPD-20 was also mentioned as a helpful and affordable tool for drummers and percussionists alike.



Roland's impressive V-Drums helped the company gain a Most Innovative Electronics Company award.

Other contenders in this category included ddrum (11.3%), Yamaha (4.1%), and Alesis (also 4.1%). Voters appreciated ddrum's attention to digital sound detail (and reduction of price), Yamaha's expansion of the DTX series, and the perennial usefulness and affordability of Alesis's sound modules.

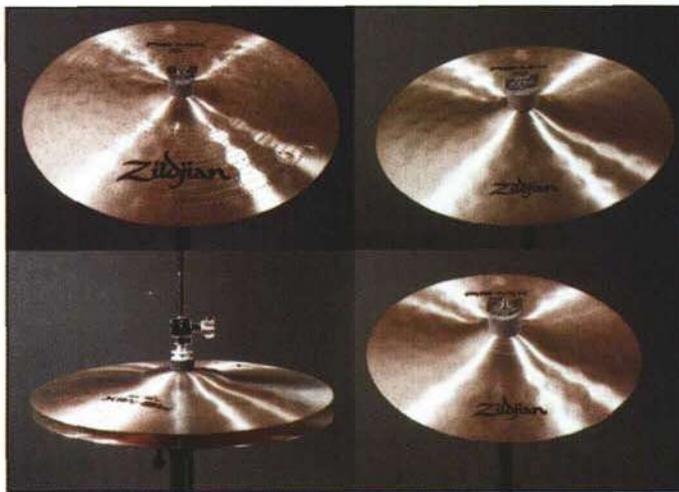
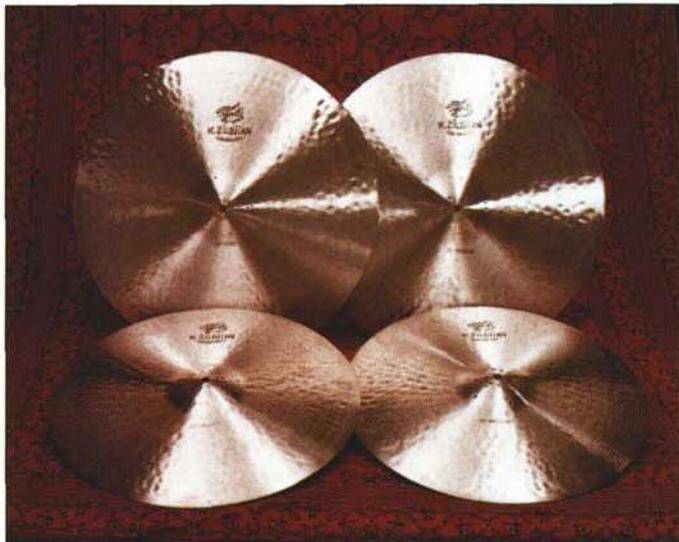
**Accessory Company:** The accessory area is where new products can most easily be developed, so it's not surprising that this category saw the greatest number of nominees: twenty-nine. But the outcome of the voting was at least a minor surprise: a tie between Pro-Mark and Gibraltar (with 17.9% of the vote each). The former company was noted as being "concerned with the needs of all players for specific tools," and lauded for its multiple-model series of Multi-Rods, Tubz, Multi-Percussion Sticks, and Americorps marching line. Gibraltar was cited for "making new and useful mounting hardware," "always offering what drummers need when they need it," and "keeping their developments priced within the realm of reality."

Other accessory companies receiving recognition included Regal Tip (13.1%) and LP (8.3%). Voters appreciated Regal Tip's ever-evolving brush line, while LP was cited for the introduction of new and durable drumkit-oriented sound effects.

## Best Quality And Craftsmanship

**Acoustic Drum Company:** Drum Workshop won this category handily, with 30.5% of the vote. Voters stated, "They make production drums of custom quality," "Shells are superb, finishes are great, and hardware is rugged," and "They offer the best tuning range, durability, and sound."

Other contenders were Pearl (15.9%), Tama (8.5%), and Yamaha (7.3%). Each company had its advocates, who listed such factors as shell construction, hardware durability, quality of finishes, and mounting designs as reasons for their vote.



Zildjian's K Constantinople (top) and Re-Mix lines

**Cymbal Company:** Eight companies received votes in this category, indicating an increase in drummer awareness of the validity of "smaller" brands. But again, Zildjian took the prize, with 52.6% of the vote. Comments included, "They offer sound, variety, and durability," "Quality control has been raised to a new height," and "The quality always remains consistent, and the company puts sound first." Sabian and Paiste received 23.4% and 15.6% of the vote, respectively, with UFIP, Meinl, Bosphorus, Grand Master, and Istanbul completing the field.

**Electronics Company:** Roland dominated this category, with 61.3% of the total vote. Again, the returns focused on Roland's pad kits, but this time mentioned the established TD-7 and TD-5

series more frequently than the newer V-Drums. The consensus of opinion was that the Roland kits were well-made, durable, and "easy to understand and play on." Other top finishers included ddrum (8.8%) and Yamaha (7.5%)—both cited for ease of use and good sound quality.

**Accessory Company:** Pro-Mark nudged out Gibraltar in this category, by a score of 19% to 16.3%. Voters commented on the consistency and durability of Pro-Mark sticks, along with the playing comfort afforded by the Millennium II finishing process. Gibraltar advocates mentioned the roadworthiness and functionality of Gibraltar racks, stands, and pedals. Other notable finishers in this category included Regal Tip (14.3%), Drum Workshop hardware (9.5%), and LP (6.1%).

### Most Consumer/Service Oriented Company

In past polls the voting in this category referred almost exclusively to after-the-fact service, such as information requests or repairs (warranty or otherwise). While those factors figured highly again this time, other activities received mention—and votes. These included the establishment and maintenance of good Web sites, the preparation of useful printed information, answering phone calls promptly (and by a human being instead of a recording), and—perhaps most importantly—keeping pricing realistic in accordance with product quality.

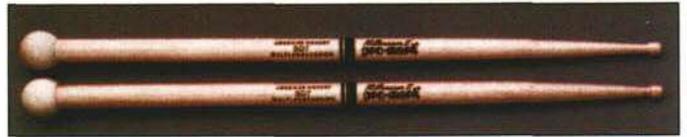
Items mentioned as being *negative* factors in this category included the lack of a toll-free phone number, poor response to phone calls, and lack of readily available (and free) catalogs. The positive and negative criteria for voting were cited repeatedly in every manufacturer category, so we won't repeat them. Here's our list of winners and runners-up in this important department.

**Acoustic Drum Company:** Pearl, with 26.9%, followed by DW (20.6%), Tama (11.1%), and Ludwig (10.3%). Pearl was particularly singled out for its responsiveness, personal attention to problems, and efforts at providing product information to consumers.

**Cymbal Company:** Zildjian led the field with 46.5% of the vote. Sabian took 37%, while Paiste received 14.2%. Zildjian was lauded for "contributing a great deal to the drum community" with scholarships and special events, along with "focusing their efforts on maintaining a positive relationship with their customers—before and after the sale."

**Electronics Company:** This category received the fewest votes in our entire survey. This may simply indicate that most drummers have had no personal encounters with electronics manufacturers. It may also indicate that the products on the market are so good that they don't require much customer service. At any rate, Roland was the big winner again (47.6%), in recognition not only of their warranty service, but also for their clear manuals, *Roland Users Group* magazine, and customer information hotlines. Other companies cited for their helpfulness included ddrum and Yamaha (with 6.3% each).

**Accessory Company:** Pro-Mark's Drummers' Hotline, Project X group, Web site, and general pro-communication attitude made them an easy winner, with 29.7% of the vote. Regal Tip figured highly (17.1%), largely based on a "replace anything" policy and their new Regal Tip Institute educational Web site. Gibraltar followed with 13.5%, mainly due to warranty service.



Pro-Mark makes customers happy.

### Most Interesting Ad/Marketing Campaign

This year's poll reflected some changes in the response to this category as well. While printed ads were the focus of most of the voting, other marketing efforts were lauded, too. These included promotional giveaway items and Web sites. The consumer is now involved—and approachable—in many non-traditional ways. Those companies who realized this and took advantage of these new avenues gained the most response.

Having said all that, the ad/marketing campaign that received the greatest recognition in our poll *was* a traditional printed ad—actually, a *series* of such ads. These were the two-page, full-color spreads from Tama that featured such artists as Mike Portnoy, Kenny Aronoff, and David Silveria—photographed on their touring kits, with notes about those kits and the products being used. The combination of artist appeal and product-oriented detail was a big winner, taking 14% of the total vote.



Pearl's series of product-oriented layouts (primarily focusing on their Masters series drumkits) were also popular, garnering 8.6% of the vote. On the other hand, Remo's non-product-specific "Living is good...Drumming is great!" ads were cited as extremely motivational, and earned a 7.8% return.

Although no one of their ads earned them a win, Paiste actually gathered the largest total of votes for several of their ads. These included the recent all-female-drummer series, the name-player cymbal setups (with comments from the player), and the now-infamous Tommy Lee pig-sty ad. (Like it or hate it, it did attract attention.)

In the non-printed-ad area, Regal Tip received 10.9% of the vote for its new Regal Tip Institute Web site. And Pro-Mark was lauded for its Collector's Edition CD promotion, which earned a 6.9% return.

### Most Valuable Product

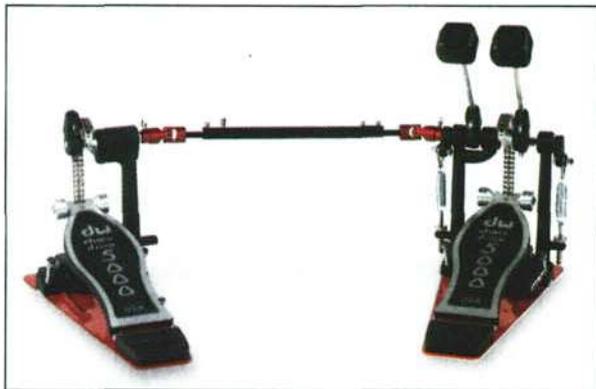
The incredible diversity of percussion products today, and the overall usefulness and quality of those products, was reflected dramatically in the voting for "Most Valuable Product." Over fifty products were nominated within this category! As a result, it's no

surprise that the ultimate "winner" earned that position with a seemingly small percentage of the vote. It's also not surprising that the winning product is a hardware/accessory item applicable to a variety of musical styles or situations.

And that winner is: DW's re-designed and improved 5000 Delta II Series double bass drum pedal. The DW double pedal led the MVP field with 7.6% of the vote. Commenting on the importance of his pedal to his playing, one drummer wrote, "If my bass drumming is happening, then the rest of my playing can build on that. The DW double pedal is fast, smooth as silk, and indestructible. It's my foundation." Other comments regarding the pedal included, "superior feel, construction, and durability," "always delivers a reliable performance," and "It's the smoothest, sweetest pedal out today."

Acoustic drum developments got their share of votes, with a surprising parity among four models (or series) of snare drums. Votes were evenly distributed among DW's Craviotto Lake Superior snares, Pearl's Sensitone snares, Mapex's Black Panther Precious Metal series, and the Noble & Cooley Alloy Classic. It seems clear from this response that drummers still consider their snare drum sound to be the primary expression of their musical personality.

Zildjian's K Constantinople ride cymbals took the greatest number of MVP votes for cymbals. Also cited was Sabian's Manhattan ride. It's interesting to note that these two "vintage-style" ride



DW 5000 Delta II double bass drum pedal

cymbal models attracted voters, while models geared toward more contemporary sounds were not represented.

In the area of electronics, Roland's V-Drums and SPD-20 received accolades for their user-friendliness and applicability. No other electronic percussion products received votes in the MVP category.

Among drum hardware, pedals seemed to be the focus. Along with the MVP winner, Tama's second-

generation Iron Cobra pedals and Pearl's Power Shifter series were also lauded. Other accessory items noted with favor by poll respondents included Groove Juice cymbal cleaner, Remo's FiberSkyn 3, Mondo, and Renaissance drumheads, Pro-Mark's Americorps marching sticks and mallets, the Evans Retro Screen, Rhythm Tech's MemoLock drumkey, and the redesigned LT Lug Lock Beat Bug.

We're proud to report that a leading vote-getter in the MVP category was *Modern Drummer* magazine. Drummers reported that "The information contained in each issue of *MD* is as useful as any product on the market." Thanks, folks!

Well, there you have the results of *MD's* 1999 Consumers Poll. We extend our congratulations to the winners, and offer our thanks to all the readers who participated. We'll give the industry three years to develop yet more new and exciting products, and then do this again in 2002!



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## RECORDINGS

**10** Duke Ellington *Ellington At Newport 1956 (Complete)*

Sam Woodyard (dr), Duke Ellington and his Orchestra, circa 1956

Forget the millennium. The real reason to celebrate is The Year Of The Duke. This year marks the one hundredth anniversary of Ellington's birth, resulting in concerts galore and a slew of fine CD reissues. The towering genius's output is so vast one can't digest its scope without commitment.

If your name is Bill Gates, you'll pick up the twenty-four-CD box set, *The Duke Ellington Centennial Edition, The Complete RCA Victor Recordings*—though your collection still won't be half complete. Fellow plebeians might consider the single-CD *Best Of The Duke Ellington Centennial Edition*. Columbia is showcasing their catalog with the three-CD box set *The Duke*, plus five LP reissues augmented with bonus tracks: *Anatomy Of A Murder*, an atmospheric film soundtrack; *Such Sweet Thunder*, a sophisticated jazz reflection on Shakespeare; *Meets Count Basie*, a raucous "battle royal" between the monster swing big bands; *Ellington At Newport 1956 (Complete)*, a retooling of the legendary live set, and *Black, Brown & Beige*, the maestro's great long-form piece on the black experience featuring Mahalia Jackson's exquisite vocals.

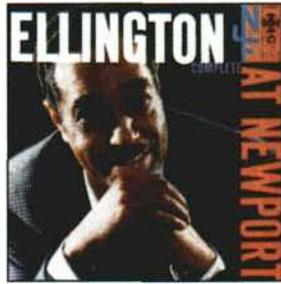
Drummers take note of the latter five CDs; it's time to revisit and honor one of the great long-term (1955-66) Ellington drummers, Sam Woodyard. The wonderful Woodyard was one of the most visceral, hard-driving swingers ever to grace the Duke's drum chair. Jazz history has repeatedly lionized his predecessors, especially Sonny Greer (serving 1920-51), but Woodyard deserves equal glory for driving the band through their pivotal comeback. Nothing demonstrates Woodyard's revitalizing influence better than the *Ellington At Newport 1956 (Complete)* reissue.

Before the legendary conceit, Duke's career had slumped. Big bands had faded and critics jabbed at Duke for standing still. He was poised for the critics at the fest with a powerhouse set and a new stealth weapon in Woodyard. It worked. The crowd was frenzied, the media raved, and the LP became Duke's best seller.

Listen to how *hard* Woodyard swings the rollicking, backbeat jump blues "Diminuendo And Crescendo In Blue" behind the legendary twenty-seven-chorus tenor solo for fourteen solid minutes. A shocker is revealed in the liner notes: Because of bad mic' placement, they didn't capture the moment; the LP in release until now was a studio take mixed with phony crowd noise! Now, reconstructed through audio archeology, you can hear the entire *actual* live concert.

Cut after cut, Woodyard sets a standard in infectious jazz time playing. And his extended solo feature, "Skin Deep," shows power tom playing joined with double bass 8ths that point a decade ahead. Happy birthday, dear Duke, and a salute to Woodyard and all your glorious drummers! (Columbia/Legacy)

— Jeff Potter

**6** Drain STH *Freaks Of Nature*

Martins Axen (dr), Maria Sjöholm (vcl), Flavia Canel (gtr), Anna K (bs)

"Geez," you sigh, "yet another all-female Swedish hard rock band?" Seriously, Drain STH is no novelty act—these metal-crazed *Ozzfest* veterans ('97 and '99) are in it for the long, heavy haul and don't give a damn about gender. Instead they



rely on jackhammer guitar riffs and Goth-y synth backdrops that make you wanna paint the walls black and fire-up the candelabra. Just be warned that (in the age-old tradition of European bands from Abba to The Scorpions) Drain's English-as-a-second-language lyrics are a bit, shall we say, simplistic. Luckily, though, the crude words don't diminish the catchiness of the layered vocal melodies or the feisty appeal of Maria



## SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

The reissue of **Buddy Rich's** 1972 release *Stick It* might not lend credence to those who've argued that he was the greatest *rock* drummer in history. Still, this was a pretty damned hot big band,



and Buddy's spirit and, yes, taste make this a wonderful all-around performance. They even managed to swing rock staples like "Something" and "Uncle Albert/Admiral Halsey." Imagine! (RCA Victor)

Okay, fess up. You've always toyed with buying an **Icicle Works** album just for their great drum-bastic



single "Birds Fly (From A Whisper To A Scream)." Now comes *The Best Of The Icicle Works*, featuring **Chris Sharrock's** well-earned three minutes and forty-five seconds of fame—and a few other neat pop gems, too, like "Understanding Jane." Go on, you know you want it. (Beggars Banquet)

Guided By Voices take the leap into the big leagues with *Do The Collapse*. Yea! Now we can all hear GBV's brilliant pop tunes in high-fidelity, without the loss of any of their weird and warm sounds. Ex-Breeders drummer **Jim MacPherson** benefits the most from Ric Ocasek's production, especially on the screaming "Zoo Pie." (W)

Joan Of Arc is a strangely wonderful art/pop outfit from Chicago (where they seem to breed the strange and wonderful lately). By all accounts, their latest full-length opus, *Live In Chicago, 1999*, isn't. Live, that is. No matter. Very unusual song structures fail to hide the creative kit concoctions of **Scott Adamson, Bob Akai, Mike Kinsella,** and **Ryan Rapsys.** (Jade Tree, [www.jadetree.com](http://www.jadetree.com))

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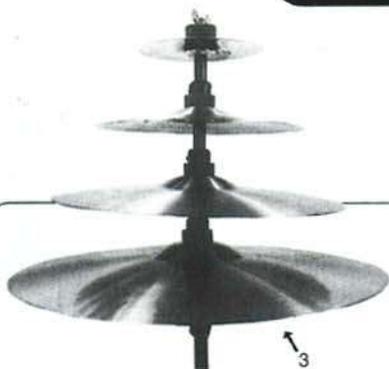


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## Cymbal Adapters

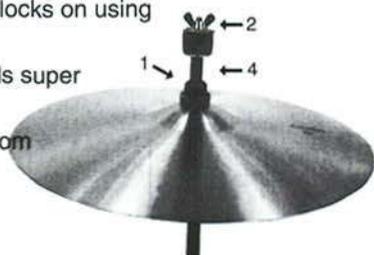
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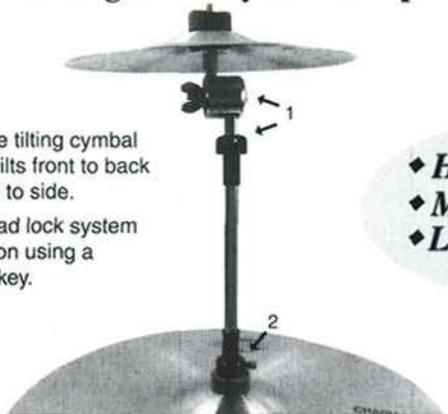
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Sjoholm's assuredly cranky voice.

Drummer Martina Axen favors meat-and-potatoes arena rock bashing over heavy metal fanfare. She keeps fills to a minimum and pounds out a streamlined backbeat that's sure to reach the back row with all its bite intact. Not unlike the great AC/DC pummeler Phil Rudd, it's not the notes Axen's playing, it's the precise heavy feel that makes such bare-bones rhythms work. Like many hard rock records these days, *Freaks Of Nature* also features a few brief drum loops scattered here and there, usually during intros or transitional passages. But when Martina crashes into a tune, her thunderous beats send the skinny little loops running for cover like Jawas in a sandstorm. (Island/Def Jam)

— Michael Parillo

## 9 Captain Beefheart

### The Dust Blows Forward (An Anthology)

Drumbo (John French), Art Tripp, Terry Bozzio, Jim Keltner, Robert Arthur Williams, Cliff Martinez, Gene Pello, Paul Blakeley, Alex Snouffer (dr), Captain Beefheart (vcl, hrm, horns), others

Chances are that Captain Beefheart (aka Don Van Vliet) is someone you've heard about more than actually heard, but that's about to change. These days he's experiencing a mini-renaissance, with the release of a rarities box, reissued early albums, and this collection, a double disc of material drawn from his entire career. Of all the releases, *The Dust Blows Forward* is the most accessible, even though it reveals the staggering versatility of Beefheart and his (ever-rotating) Magic Band, from raw electric blues to soul to skronk to out-there jazz experimentation.

Like his high school buddy and sometimes-collaborator Frank Zappa, drums were a crucial part of Beefheart's musical excursions, and the players he worked with possessed both the improvisational skills of free jazz players and rock-solid groove. Beefheart's astonishing vocal growl and bursts of woodwind propelled the music from its blues springboard into uncharted territory, but his drummers were never far behind, no matter how out he got.

Including selections from the garagey-blues of *Safe As Milk* (including Drumbo's tribal stagger on "Abba Zabba"), the landmark, exploratory *Trout Mask Replica* (Drumbo's kaleidoscopic accents behind the insane "Ella Guru"), the Zappa collaboration *Bongo Fury* (a green but groovy Terry Bozzio), and the rock thud of *Clear Spot* (Art Tripp's swampy "Nowadays A Woman's Gotta Hit A Man"), this fascinating anthology reveals why Beefheart and

his drummers were innovators, without alienating the uninitiated. (Rhino)

— Meredith Ochs

## 8 Jeff "Tain" Watts Citizen Tain

Jeff "Tain" Watts (dr), Branford Marsalis (tn, sp, sx), Kenny Garrett (jal, sx), Kenny Kirkland (pno), Reginald Veal (bs)

Jeff Watts' gusto as both drummer and composer is on full display on his solo debut. One look at the song titles will make you bust a gut: "Sigmund Groid," "Blutain, Jr.," "The Impaler".... Though it reportedly took him ages to finish, *Citizen Tain* is a killer record that underscores Watts' rhythmic thunder with simmering compositions mostly inspired by his tenure with the Marsalis clan.



Right out of the gate, Jeff is in full-on mode, and he never lets up. "The Impaler" couples lashing Afro-Cuban with scalding straight-ahead a la Miles' *Four And More*, with Watts' snare-stabbing, bomb-dropping commentary stoking the fire. On the Monkish "Mupkin Man" his ride cymbal pulse and *harrumphing* snare ruffs suggest Philly Joe with muscle. "Attainment" uses Elvin logic: roaring sizzle cymbal and rolling mallets on toms building to a crescendo of passion. "Wry Koln" begins with some seriously funky drumming, then goes all third-stream, then swings, like an acoustic Chick Corea track kidnapped by a band of crazed rhythmic pirates.

*Citizen Tain* proves Jeff Watts is more than a fiery, rambunctious drummer. He's a musical thinker with turbulent tales to tell. (Columbia)

— Ken Micallef

## 6 Skunk Anansie Post Orgasmic Chill

Mark (dr), Skin (vcl), Ace (gtr), Cass (bs)

Fusing heavy metal crunch and punky adrenaline with hooky pop structures, the third LP from London's Skunk Anansie finds the once-underground group banging on the door of mass popularity. *Post Orgasmic Chill*—the title is a metaphor for the "comedown" period after a long, crazy tour—nudges you through several musical moods with varying degrees of success. You might even feel an occasional chill yourself when they follow a meaty rocker by a so-so bit of pop fluff. But that's not to say the band isn't up to the task of playing diverse material. It's just that the ballads and lighter tunes aren't nearly as satisfying as the metal-flecked



Dub is that slow, bass-heavy reggae offshoot invented by Jamaican geniuses like Lee "Scratch" Perry and King Tubby in the mid-'60s. These sonic architects would add lots of effects and drop vocals in and out of the mix on the fly, then slap the results on the B-sides of singles, giving the dancers a whole 'nutha thing to groove on. Several excellent releases hit the shelves recently.

Lee "Scratch" Perry compilations are hit or miss; *The Upsetter Shop, Vol. 2:1969 To 1973* is just a hair shy of bull's-eye. **Hugh Malcom, Winston Grennan, and Carlton Barrett** set the pace and make a good point that Perry and his Upsetters were the Booker T. & The MG's of Jamaica. (Heartbeat)

King Tubby & Friends' *Dub Like Dirt* is a primo collection of 75 to '77 sides. Some say this is the cream of the genre. I won't disagree. Turn out the lights (but hang onto your lighter) and float away.



**Carlton "Santa" Davis and Sly Dunbar** cut these classics, including "Thunder Rock" and "Sly Want Dub." (Blood And Fire)

Burning Spear is a reggae giant. *Living Dub, Vol. 4* takes his excellent *Appointment With Her Majesty* release and dubifies it with supreme slipperiness. **Nelson Miller** and (the other) **Tony Williams** make it very easy to absorb the heavy messages. (Heartbeat)

Twilight Circus Sound System pretty much is Legendary Pink Dots member **Ryan Moore**, a white Canadian expat—though you'd never know it by his latest collection of heaviosity known as *Horsie*. Moore constructs lots of cool atmospheres and has a rare groove that always swings. (M Records, PO Box 469, 6500 Al Nijmegen, The Netherlands)

— Adam Budofsky

slugfests. Vocalist Skin, for example, shines brightest when her huge, tormented voice dares to compete with a surging wall of guitars.

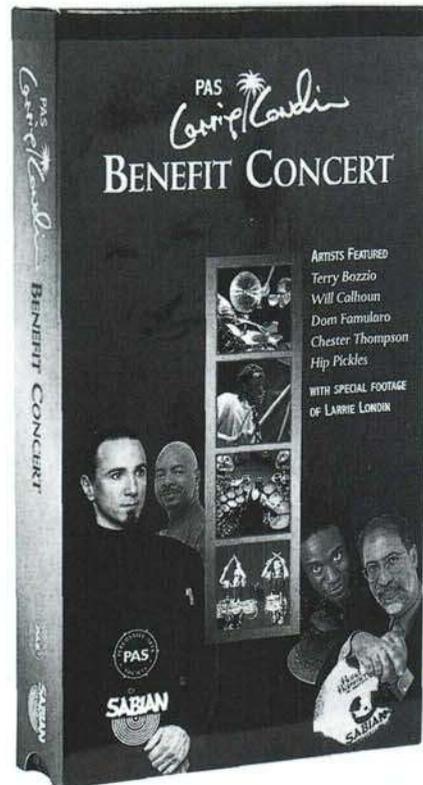
Likewise, Mark, Skunk's simply-named drummer, does his best work on the louder stuff, pretty much sticking to obvious patterns for the pop ditties. He sounds fluid and finds the pocket regardless of tempo or style, though. And his mastery of dynamics (including a mean rimclick) proves him to be a valuable asset to songs that constantly rise and fall. His tasteful, "play-for-the-tune" grooves highlight the chord changes in clever ways, especially his snare/tom licks on "The Skunk Heads."

Mark's confident drumming and tight execution imply that he's capable of cutting loose more than he does here. But a tad of restraint fits well with Skunk's lean,

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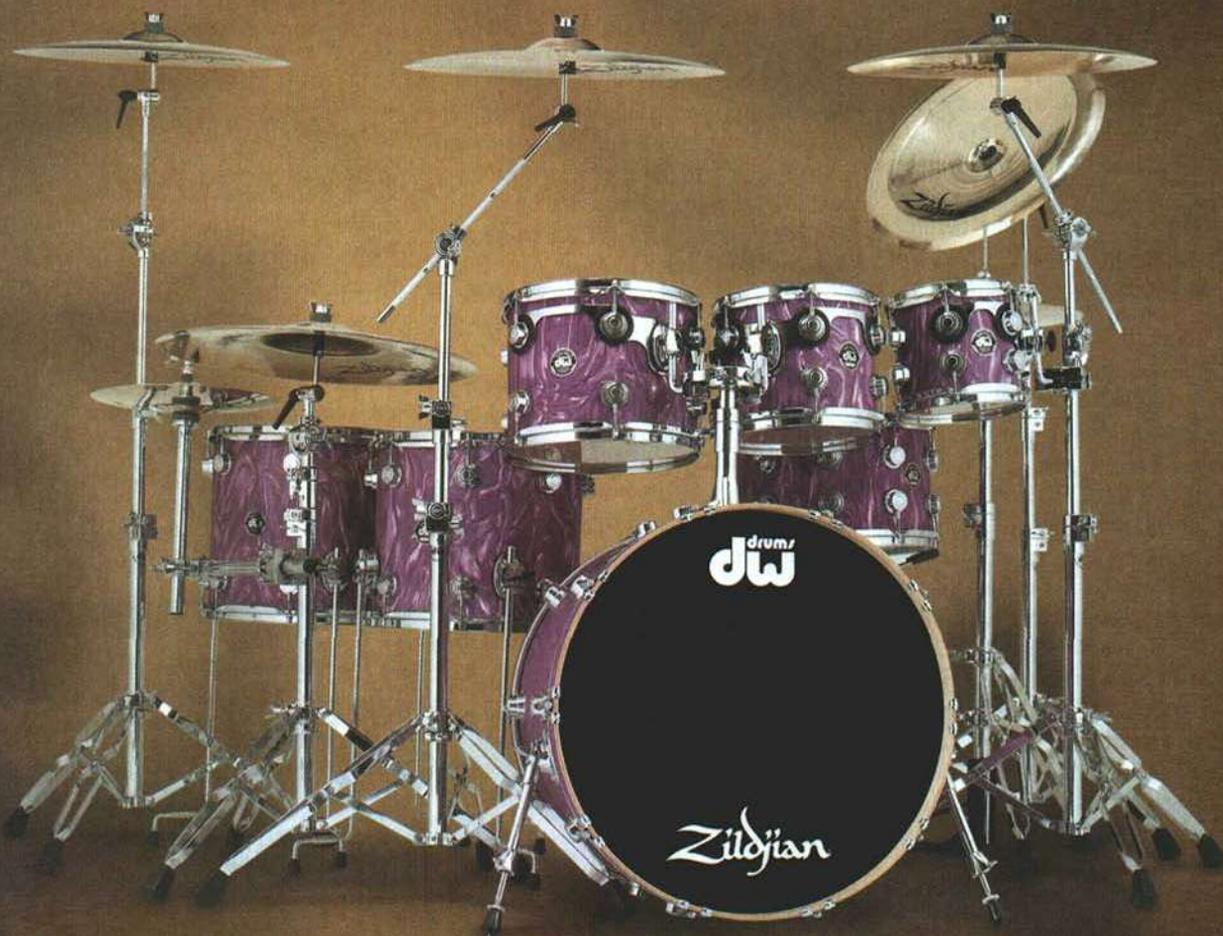
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mean philosophy. This is a band, after all, that needs a confident driver seated at the kit, not a mad scientist. (Virgin)

— Michael Parillo

## 8 Speaker Orizaba

Scott Devours (dr), Tom Gonzales (vl, gtr), Matt Jacovides (vcl, bs)

Swimming in rhythm, loose and fluid, Speaker's Scott Devours is an aquatic maestro of drums. Rounding up everything from loops to vibes to African percussion, Devours' talent is natural and intuitive, and it carries you away in the flow of the song.

It's not often that the drummer stands out as the star of a band, but when he's also doing most of the arranging, it isn't unlikely. Opening track "Texas Style" binds you right up in the percussive vortex. Behind straightforward guitar riffs, Devours *swings*, bringing a whole element that wouldn't exist without him. Sliding all around the kit, he opens with a delicate cymbal intro, then dives into a backbeat that melts into fusion jazz noodling before bumping back to the beat. Whew!

Simple or complex, Devours provides whatever's necessary, and mesmerizes. (Capricorn)

— Fran Azzarto and Lisa Marie Crouch

## 7 Dave Weckl Band Synergy

Dave Weckl (dr), Brandon Fields (sx), Tommy Kennedy (lbs), Jay Oliver (kybd), Buzz Feiten (gtr)

*Synergy* finds Weckl in top form and back in touch with his creative fusion roots. Dave knows he's proven himself as a player, so the focus now is more on the material. Extended touring has resulted in The Weckl Band sounding quite focused, with a willingness to share equally in the improvisation and writing chores.

Opener "High Life," an African 12/8 piece, lets Weckl solo a bit—quickly reminding us that drumming is still a top priority. "Swunk" proves Weckl's skill at setting up big band kicks, embellishing the melody, and swinging hard. The title track displays his trademark Latin fills. "Cultural Concurrence" is a dynamic 6/8 drum solo inspired by ethnic percussion. "Tower '99," a remake of his own "Tower Of Inspiration" (even featuring some of his original licks) goes for a live band vibe, but might have been more interesting if it had stayed at its initial slower, funkier tempo rather than upshifting. No biggie, though. Welcome back to fusion, Dave! (Stretch)

— Mike Haid

## 7 Dangerman Dangerman

Dave Borla (dr), Chris Scienni (gtr, bs, vcl)

The danger here, man, is losing your soles to this playful album that promises to wear your feet out. From the get-go what sets you moving is Dave Borla's spirited backbeat style. A mixture of the traditional and modern, he combines percussion, vinyl scratches, samples, and acoustic kit to deliver something fresh and fun.

Bringing the past into the future, the band builds some of its best songs on samples of musical icons. The Cuban great Mongo Santamaria is heard on "High Heeled Sneakers," a freewheeling conglomerate of congas, timbales, tambourine, and guiro that keeps on kicking. "On The Eastside" sees Borla accompanying a measure or two of sampled Elvin Jones—guaranteed soul! But Borla sure doesn't need to rely on samples for feel. On "Let's Make A Deal" he fuses Latin and hip-hop attitudes, bringing the snare in at the last second, syncopating the kick, and topping it off with a classic samba cowbell that sends you into a funkified world of deep grooves and dancing percussive sounds.

Clean sound, flawless performance, and dangerous talent rolled into one disc. Buy a copy for your friends so you won't have to bring yours to their house, and let's get this party started! (Sony 550 Music)

— Fran Azzarto and Lisa Marie Crouch

## 6 Graeme Kirkland Beat Truths

Graeme Kirkland (dr, perc, buckets), Dutch Robinson (vcl)

The mild-mannered, tie-clad gent on the cover of *Beat Truths* is actually the master-

mind of a brutal, terrifying, and important musical and social statement. Kirkland, a street bucket player for years in Toronto and New York City, not only captures the calamity of the big city, but forces listeners into an awareness of a world where racism, drugs, homelessness, and other societal ills are the norm rather than the exception. Kirkland's playing makes you want to concentrate on the drums and the groove, but to do so is almost to miss the point of this work. *Beat Truths* is not a drum record that is meant to be enjoyed in the traditional sense. Nonetheless it certainly demands being taken seriously. Graeme Kirkland pushes the envelope of what a drummer can say, and it is brutal. Pay attention! (Graeme Kirkland Music, www.graeme-kirkland-music.com, bing@graeme-kirkland-music.com, PO Box 524 Station P, Toronto, ON M5S 2T1, Canada, [416] 966-BING.)

— Ted Bonar



## VIDEOS

### 8 Gene Krupa Swing Swing Swing!

level: all, \$24.95

That driving extroverted beat and great showmanship! Krupa, the man who put drums out front, is a gas to watch even with the sound turned *off*. This lively tribute is produced, written, and narrated by Bruce Klauber, who also wrote its predecessor, *Jazz Legend Gene Krupa* (Warner Bros.). Fans might want to pick up the *Legend* volume first, which focuses on the '40s and

## FROM THE EDITOR'S VAULT

Rediscovering drumming's dusty gems

### 10 The Specials The Specials

John Bradbury (dr), Terry Hall (vcl), Jerry Dammers (kybd), Neville Staples (vcl, perc), Roddy Radiation (gtr), Sir Horace Gentleman (bs), Lynval Golding (gtr, vcl)

It all starts here, kids. Of course, ska was really invented in Jamaica over a decade before this 1979 album. But as far as mixing skinny white punk with soulful black island dance, The Specials were there first—and best. The songs are timeless ("Gangsters," "A Message To You Rudy," "It's Up To You"), the performances ridiculously spirited, and the grooves just...right. John Bradbury should be knighted solely for his tom/timbale fills on "Blank Expression." His dynamics throughout ooze humanity, and his timing is flawless. Soooo good. (Chrysalis)



### 10 Elvis Costello This Year's Model

Pete Thomas (dr), Elvis Costello (vcl, gtr), Bruce Thomas (bs), Steve Nieve (kybd)

Seeing how he produced *The Specials*, it seems a crime not to at least mention EC's historic second album, which introduced his great backing band, The Attractions. Pete Thomas *tears* through this set, from his edgy accents on the opener, "No Action," to his super-cool tom-centric beats on "This Year's Girl" and "Pump It Up," hyper fills on the quasi-reggae "Chelsea," and crazily explosive performance on "Lipstick Vogue." Anyone who's ever taken the term "new wave" in vain doesn't own this album. (Rykodisc)

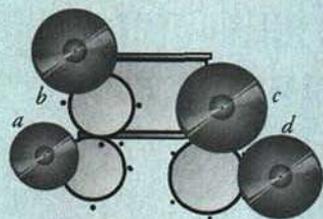


— Adam Budofsky

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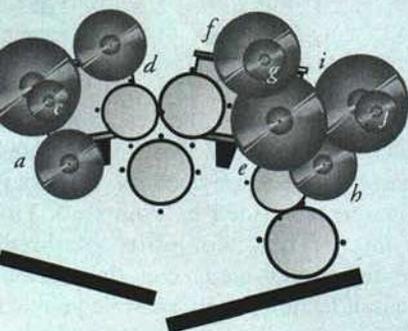


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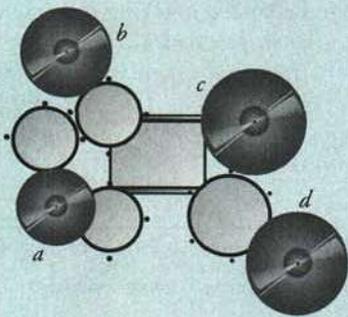
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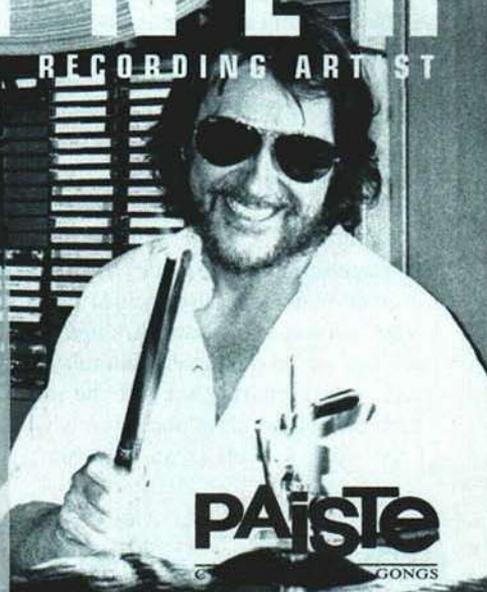
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ends with loud,  
clanging,  
clashing, high  
sounding  
cymbals."*

- Psalms, 150:5



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contains the prime clips.

But for Supa Krupa fans, *Swing* is a fine follow-up. This newest release features later clips, mostly from early TV broadcasts spanning the mid-'50s to the early '60s. A couple of rousing early film bits are also included: The Benny Goodman Orchestra in 1937 swinging through "House Hop/Avalon," and The Gene Krupa Orchestra play-synching to their hit "Thanks For The Boogie Ride" (1941) during their peak period with vocalist Anita O'Day and trumpet star Roy Eldridge. Highlights of the later TV spots include a '54 reunion of the legendary bass-less trio with Goodman and Teddy Wilson, a re-creation of Goodman's big band on Sid Caesar's show (1954), a wailing trio outing with tenor man Charlie Ventura and pianist Bobby Scott, and Jackie Gleason hosting a teaming-up of Krupa and Louis Armstrong.

Interview footage of Krupa reflecting on his career ties the clips together. All sixty minutes are packed with great, fun numbers. The unjaded joy Krupa expresses through these performances remains ageless. (Taboo Productions, Box 496, Lafayette Hill, PA 19444)

— Jeff Potter



## Madness Across The Water

### The Latest Most Burnin' Import Drum Releases

Recommended by Mark Tessier of Audiophile Imports

**Sixun Nouvelle Vague.** Sixun are the premier jazz/fusion group from France, featuring the great Paco Sery on drums. On this recording he's joined by percussionist Manolo Badrena, known for his work with Weather Report.

**John Tropea Live At Mikell's New York.** Guitar session great John Tropea leads an all-star big band live in 1980, featuring Will Lee, Don Grolnick, Randy Brecker, and many others, with the double drum rhythm section of Steve Gadd and Rick Marotta.

**Dixie Dregs The Great Spectacular.** The Dixie Dregs' first release, recorded in 1975, two years prior to their major-label debut, with a very young Rod Morgenstein on the drums. The original lineup, lean and mean. A classic.

**Steve Tavaglione Blue Tav.** LA sax player Steve Tavaglione backed by a stellar group including David Garfield, Jimmy Johnson, and Vinnie Colaiuta. On one of the heavier tracks, Mike Landau plays guitar with Allan Holdsworth.

**Joe Diorio and Robben Ford Minor Elegance.** Guitar legends Joe Diorio and Robben Ford live in the studio with Gary Willis on bass and Peter Erskine on drums. What more could you ask for?



To order any of these albums, contact Audiophile Imports at [www.audiophileimports.com](http://www.audiophileimports.com), (908) 996-7311.

complex symbols like *del segno* and *coda*. Let's not forget which choir we are preaching to!

The CD is split into two sections. The first six tracks are performed with drums and the second six without. The volume of the introductory click is good, yet the number of measures could have been two instead of one. You simply need more time to settle into the groove. Strangely, the order of songs on the CD does not match up with the order in the book, and I can't figure out why. The performances are decent and clear—pretty much what one would expect from a package priced cheaper than an ordinary full-length CD. Jamming along with this songbook was pure fun, but don't forget to use those ears. (WarnerBros.)

— Fran Azzarto

tions, signal sending), nerves (nerve line, spinal chord, etc.), and muscles. Volume 2 is more of an exercise book for developing the concepts learned in Volume 1. This consists of his "not quite doubled" approach to odd-meter counting and his system of learning every possible permutation from 2 to 20. His counting system goes through three types of notation: lefts and rights, standard music notation (whole, half, quarter, etc.), and the computer-based binary code of 0's and 1's. Cassette tapes are available to help develop an understanding of these exercises.

Mangini so badly wants readers to understand his well-thought-out concept, he too often repeats the most valuable issues. A major publisher could organize this into a more attractive and affordable package. Still, the wealth of knowledge and groundbreaking concepts here make this a highly recommended tutorial for any musician interested in taking the time to be the best he or she can be—in every way. (Rhythm Knowledge, [www.rhythmknowledge.com](http://www.rhythmknowledge.com))

— Mike Haid

## 8 Rhythm Knowledge Volumes 1 & 2

### by Mike Mangini and Frank Dolan

level (each): advanced, \$24.99 (each). Cassettes (sold separately): Tape 1—Odd Number Groups From 19 Through 3, \$12.99, Tape 2—Rhythm Pairs From 4 & 6 Through 17 & 19, \$12.99

Mike Mangini is a role model for music education. His dedication to understanding all aspects of rhythm and to playing with emotion and confidence is incessant. And his learning system is like no other.

Volume 1 of *Rhythm Knowledge* covers Mangini's method for developing the perfect practice patterns via his "Practice Behavior Management Pyramid." This is composed of six "basic life categories": emotions, academics (math, biology, etc.), morals, brain (memory storage, area func-

## BOOKS

### 7 Alternative Rock Drum Jam With Songbook

level: beginner, \$10.95

When I was a wee drummer I used my ears to figure out what was going on, but now the beginner has a little help in the *Alternative Rock Drum Jam With Songbook*, from Warner Bros.' Ultimate Beginner Series. Short but sweet, this book contains six modern rock songs ("Sex And Candy," "Walking On The Sun," "One Week," "One Headlight," "I Will Buy You A New Life," "The Downtown") that should be familiar to most young musicians, as well as a twelve-track CD. Being part of a beginner's series, the notation is accurate and easy to read. The manuscripts come with chord changes for guitar/piano, and also include lyrics and bridge, chorus, and verse markings. Tempo markings are on the money, but missing are musical key charts that tell the student which part of the kit is placed on what part of the staff, as well as an explanation of

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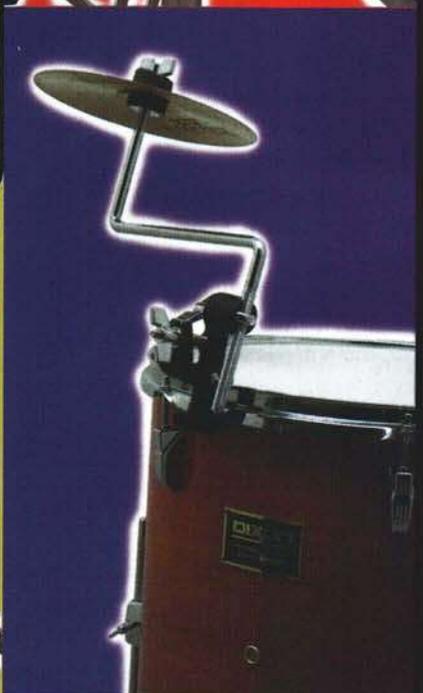
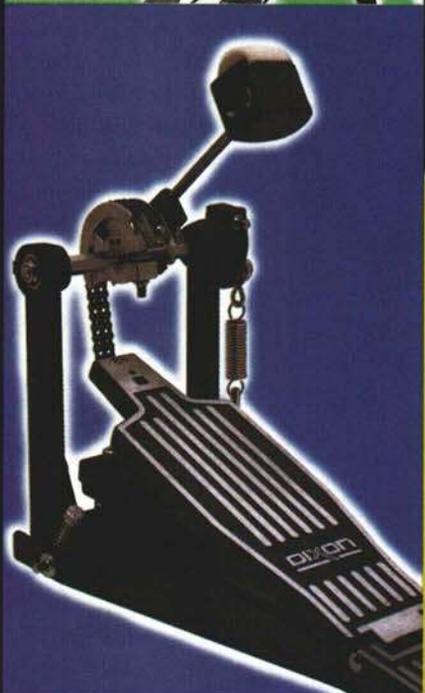
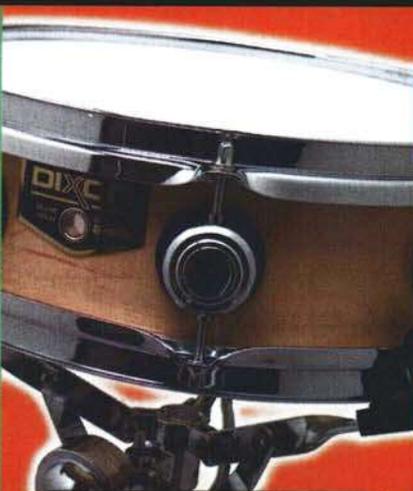
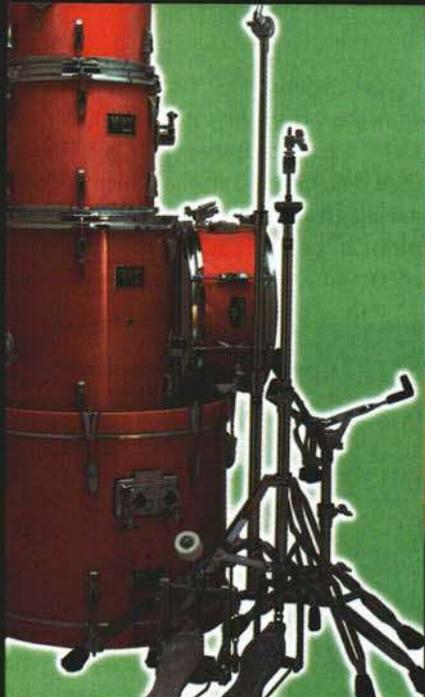
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# Sam Woodyard

## Ellington's Swingin' Genius

by Mike DeSimone

**D**ark booming double bass drums that sounded like roaring lions, and a high crackling snare that sounded like thunder. This was the sound of Sam Woodyard, whose drive and musical personality figured prominently in the work of Duke Ellington & His Orchestra. Sam's tenure with Duke—1955 through 1968—was the longest, save Sonny Greer. Sonny played with the band from the early 1920s through 1951. Charlie Smith took over from Sonny, until Duke raided Harry James' band and came up with Louie Bellson—a tremendous talent who provided the Ellington band with the drive that it needed. Louie remained with the band until his marriage to Pearl Bailey in 1953. Several excellent drummers occupied the drum chair from 1953 until Sam took over in July of 1955.

Sam Woodyard was born in 1925 in Elizabeth, New Jersey. Although he was completely self-taught, he was a keen observer of other drummers, which helped him form a style that to this day cannot be well defined. His hero and main influence was the great Chick Webb (considered to this day the father of modern big band drumming). Chick's crackling beat and dynamic fills were lessons that Sam never forgot, and he often employed them throughout his own career.

Jazz musicians, critics, and fans considered Sam and Sonny Greer to be the quintessential Ellington drummers. The feature common to both was that they were totally on Duke's wavelength. Ellington wrote no drum charts; he simply expected his drummers to "be there." The comparison with Sonny Greer should end there, however, simply because Sonny and Sam were of different generations, and they served different eras of Ellington's growth as a composer.

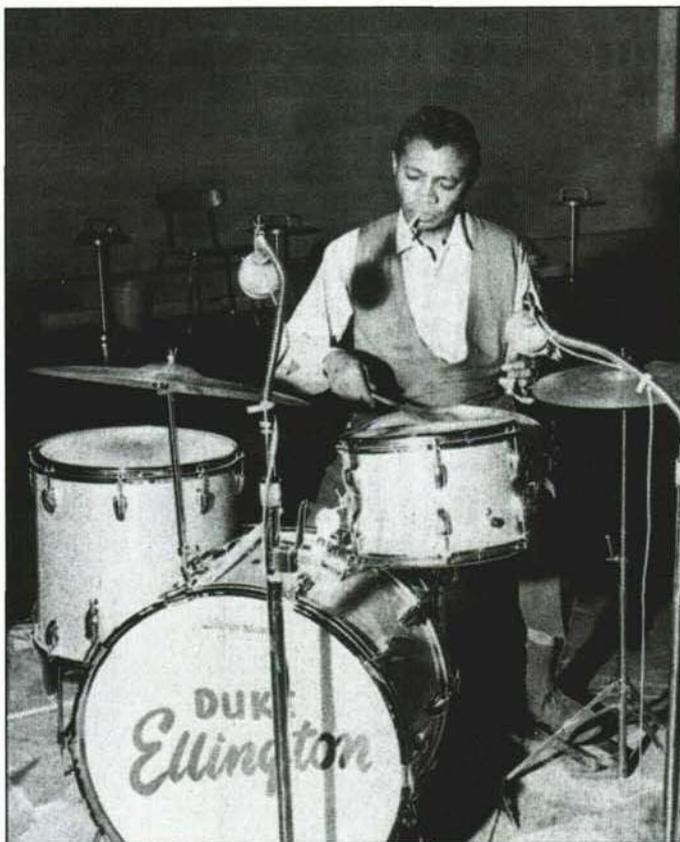
Sam Woodyard began his career on the jumping Newark and Atlantic City music scenes. For all intents and purposes, he always played a big band style, which he adapted to different situations. The gig that brought him to prominence was his two-year stint

with the trio of the great organist Milt Buckner. It was in this group that the high-powered, over-the-top swing that made him such a fixture with Duke was born. It may have been in this context that the influence of both Gene Krupa and Sonny Greer began to show, with Sam making greater use of his toms.

Sam's earliest performances with Duke were met with initial shock by some listeners and critics. His high-powered beat and unrelenting drive had a powerful effect on Ellington and the band. In many ways Sam changed the sound of the orchestra with his unique approach. He did not play the sharp, precise fills favored by Sonny Greer or Louie Bellson. Rather he would often play very dark-sounding and (for lack of a better term) "sloppy" fills. The fills were made to *sound* imprecise, but they never were. Unlike other drummers, Sam would consistently avoid section figures and even ensemble figures, addressing those parts only when he felt that the music required it. If there was anything that defined Sam, it was his cross-stick 2 and 4, and a shuffle that could make a statue groove!

Duke Ellington's orchestra always had a sense of refinement, from the way the orchestra dressed to its classic ensemble sound. It was revered by many as a symphony with a rhythm section. Sam's driving beat brought the street and funk elements that were so much a part of jazz back into the band. His gutbucket inclinations aside, Sam used mallets, brushes, maracas, and his bare hands on his drumkit, with great rhythmic and dynamic skill. In the years that I knew him, I never heard him discuss any of the technical minutiae of drumming. He was more concerned with how to broaden the beat out, how to give it more swing, and, most of all, how to get inside the head of one of the most advanced composers in music history.

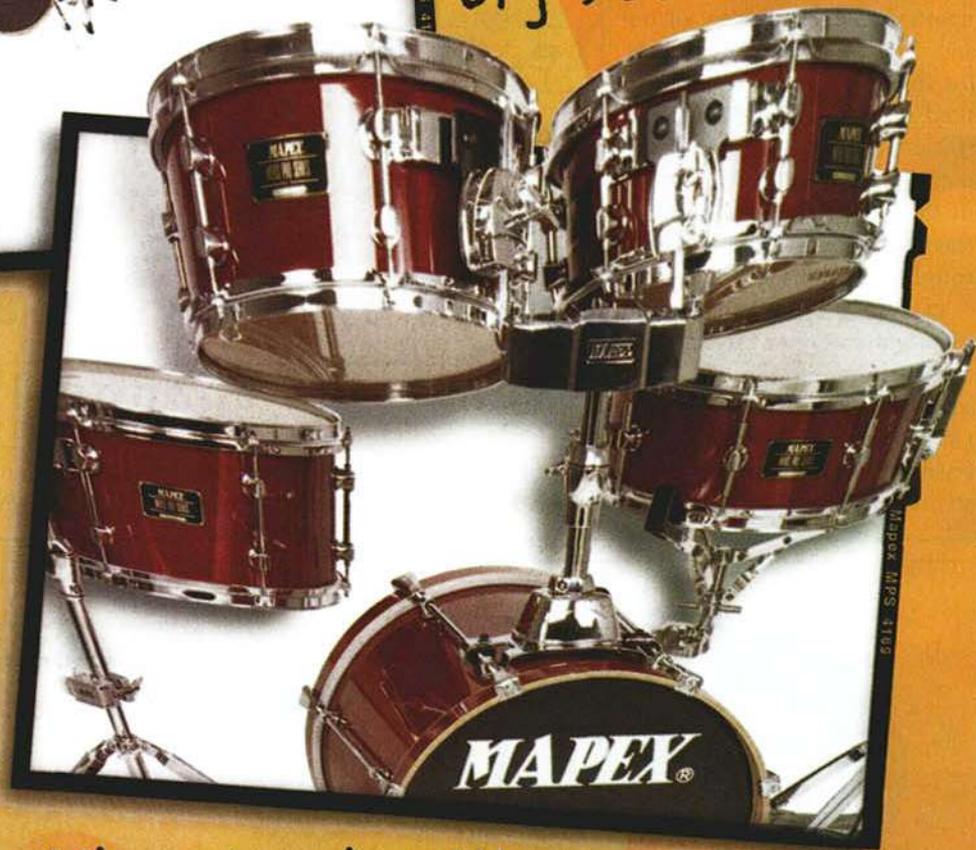
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concentration that only a select group of musicians possessed. Duke rarely discussed music in concrete terms, so it was up to the men to watch him like a hawk. Sam always made it a point to say that it was Duke's facial expressions and his physical movements that told him where the music was going. A good example of this can be seen in the two-part PBS *American Masters* special on Duke Ellington (first aired in 1987 and often rebroadcast). In a long segment from a concert on Scandinavian Television you can see Sam following Duke's every move, particularly on a new arrangement of the Ellington classic "Mood Indigo." That performance is pure Woodyard, and is important to every student of big band drumming. This lesson was also imparted to me when Sam asked me to learn the music of "Harlem." In my teenage ignorance I went home and wrote it out the best way that I could. When I saw him a month later, I brought the chart with me and began to play from the part. The proverbial roof was raised, with Sam telling me to learn the *music* and not the drum part. He went on to say at considerable length that burying my head in the part took me out of the game. Sam lived by one rule: Learn the music, listen, and, most of all, watch the leader,

because "When Duke's eyebrows go up, everything changes!"

There are many recorded performances by Sam with Ellington (and other leaders) that any student of the drums would find noteworthy. But one gem is *Ellington At Newport*, on Columbia. It's a lesson in dynamics, taste, and explosive swinging that has as much relevance today as it did when it was recorded in 1956. (See this month's *Critique* for a full review of this and other recently reissued Ellington albums.)

In the late 1980s there was a treasure trove of recordings released from Duke's private collection. Known among musicians as the "road band" series, these recordings not only provide great insight into the Ellington band as they played a series of live dates, but have the added advantage of presenting some of Sam Woodyard's best work. *Volume Two: Dance Concerts, California, 1958* (Saja) contains excellent examples of Woodyard playing arrangements from the band's dance book. "Stomping At The Savoy" and "One O'Clock Jump" are examples of truly stunning big band drumming, which I recommend to all drummers, no matter what their specialty. This recording also has some hilarious moments. The best one is Duke

**Sam lived by one rule:  
Learn the music, listen,  
and, most of all, watch the  
leader, because "When  
Duke's eyebrows go up,  
everything changes!"**



The image shows the 'MODERN DRUMMER online' logo in a large oval. Below it are several covers of the magazine 'MODERN DRUMMER', including one featuring a drummer and the headline 'Deep Purple's Ian Paice Playing With Awe-inspiring Virtuosity'.

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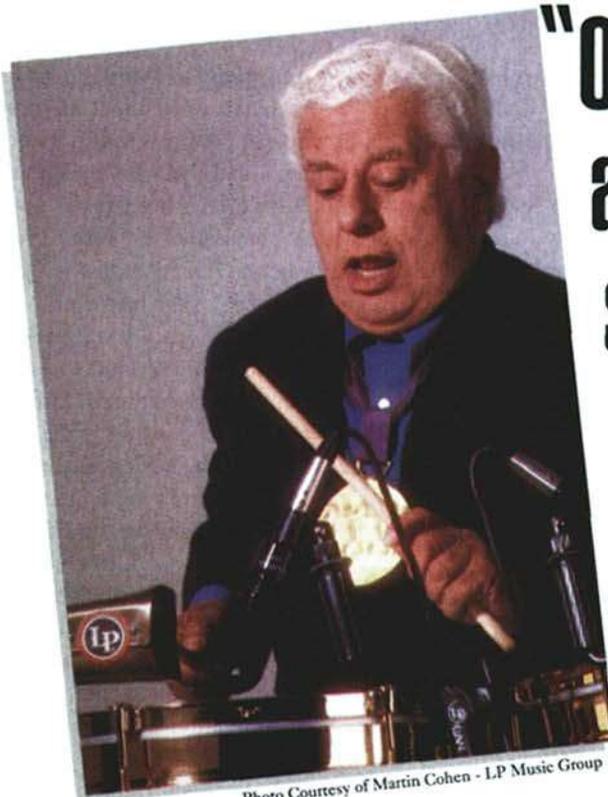
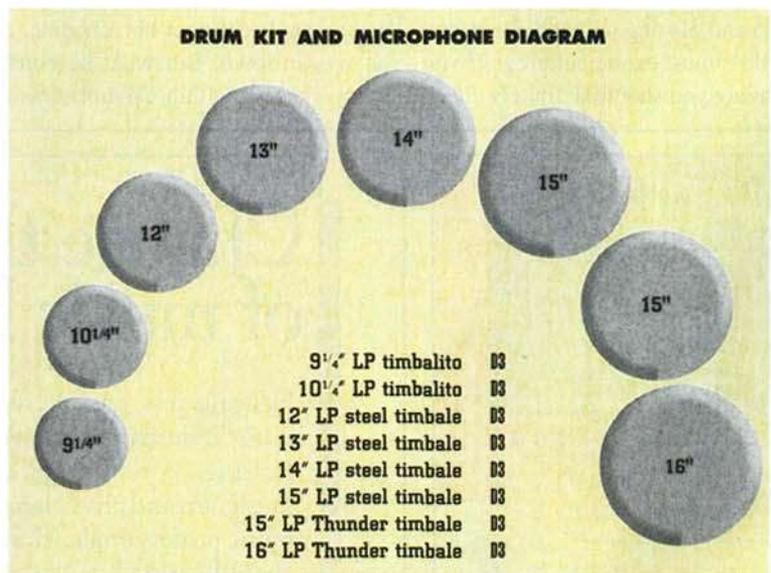


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playing the intro to his theme, "Take The 'A' Train," while members of the band can be heard saying, "Where's Sam?" Duke cues the band to play without Sam. Finally, on beat 2 of the fifth bar, Sam comes roaring in.

One of the truly great live recordings was a date in Stockholm, Sweden that was recorded on March 9, 1964, but only released in 1985. Titled *Harlem* (Pablo), the recording contains old and new material—and a comprehensive view of Sam Woodyard's talent. It is peppered with drum breaks that feature Sam's double bass playing, which most technique-oriented drummers still consider weak. I'm the first to admit that Sam's double bass playing never could stand up to Bellson's, nor to many of today's players. But Sam's view of that extra bass drum was that it was another sound source on his set, and he used it more for interior fills (like the one in the middle of the bridge of "Satin Doll") than for blazing barrages of 16th and 32nd notes.

On *Harlem* (and many others), Sam refutes the criticism that his playing sometimes lacked precision. His shuffle on "Tutti For Cootie" is brilliant—it's swinging and precise, and it has a dynamic range from *pianissimo* to *forte*. "Caravan" has a Latin groove with an "Oriental tinge" (as Duke liked to put it). The arrangement is very soft, with drum breaks that used the hi-hat and sticks on the shells and rims of his drums.

This kind of playing foreshadowed many of today's well-known Latin and world music players. Much of Sam's knowledge about world music came from listening to and playing with the ethnic and folk musicians of many of the world's most exotic cultures. (If you wish to hear more of his exotic playing you should definitely check

out *Far East Suite* and *Afro Bossa*.) *Harlem's* title track is a musically descriptive work about the richness of a Sunday morning in that section of New York. It's written in several movements, with time, tempo, and dynamic changes. Sam plays this complex piece with the drive of a big band drummer and the sensitivity of an orchestral percussionist. These were the tools necessary to survive with Ellington. This recording is well worth the price, and this version of "Harlem" is the best ever played by the band.

Stanley Dance, who was a tireless chronicler of the Ellington band, listed in his liner notes to *Harlem* the many countries that the band covered from the Middle East in 1963 to Europe in 1964. The tour schedule was, to say the least, staggering. How Sam continued to play with such excellence is something I still marvel at to this day. What is even more interesting is the amount of recording that went on, both in the studio and live. I urge every drummer interested in Sam's work to check these recordings out. They are far too numerous to describe here. As a veteran of many big band tours and the grind of one-nighters, I know that the band bus and the aspects of dealing with so many personalities in close quarters can drive anyone to distraction. Yet Sam accepted the touring with very little complaint. He had a passion for life and for playing that went way beyond the pale.

I got to know Sam in the mid-1960s, when my teacher sent me to him for some lessons to quench my insatiable appetite for Duke's music and Sam's playing. The lessons were not formal in any sense; because of his schedule, Sam would fit me in whenever he was in town. But what he constantly impressed on me (and everyone else within earshot) was to learn the music inside and

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out. He also stressed the ability to play a ballad with beauty, intensity, and sensuality. This explains Duke's battle cry to Sam during the recording sessions of *Recollections Of The Big Band Era* (Atlantic) to "Put a little more sex in there!"

For such a great musician, Sam Woodyard was marvelously uncomplicated. He was always honest, direct, and without pretense. Those personal qualities were hallmarks of his playing. But he also had certain negative qualities that most certainly added to the several illnesses he suffered during his lifetime. Too much booze, too many cigarettes, and too many long nights on the road without rest or food began to snuff out a brilliant career. By late 1967 Sam had grown erratic, and Rufus "Speedy" Jones increasingly began to occupy Duke's drum chair. At one point I had not seen or heard anything about Sam for many months. I then began to hear that he was ill, but that he was still returning to Duke from time to time.

One of Sam's last recordings with Ellington's band was Duke's masterful tribute to his late co-composer, Billy Strayhorn. The album, recorded in late 1967, was titled *And His Mother Called Him Bill* (Bluebird). Sam split the drumming duties with Steve Little. The entire recording is a masterpiece, with superb playing by all.

In 1973 I saw Sam for a few minutes in a music store. We talked about his health and the beginning of my career as a touring musician. A little later, we shook hands and said good-bye. I would never see him again. Sam went on to work with trumpeter Bill Berry, singer Ella Fitzgerald, and many others. But his best work would always be with Ellington. Duke, like all great masters,

simply brought out the best in everyone. He also always hired the best, which virtually guaranteed that all of his work would be performed at the highest level. Sam Woodyard was a central part of that greatness.

In the mid-1970s Sam moved to Paris, where he was much in demand. But in the late 1980s the devastating clutches of cancer began to take hold. There was to be one final and major act of kindness and appreciation before his death. A large benefit concert was held in Paris to raise money for him, since he no longer could support himself. Enough money was raised for him to live out his life in relative comfort. The benefit featured many major musicians who contributed their time and services to "Sam The Man."

Sam Woodyard died in 1988 at the age of sixty-three, just as a new generation of drummers began to tout his work to the music press. Duke Ellington, who died in May of 1974, was to provide Sam with a most pointed and poetic epitaph in his autobiography *Music Is My Mistress* (Doubleday). "Sometimes we would write something that seemed, or was expected to be, below bland. But when Sam added his thing to it, immediately it took on a new dimension—exotic, zesty, or maybe lecherous soul. Sam The Man, who began with his hand on the plan for the stand of his drums—exotic as the tabla, lecherous as the cuica, his elbow on the snare drum."

There is no higher praise for a musician than that he took notes on a piece of paper and gave them life and a soul. I shall add my belated good-bye to Sam with another of Duke's favorite expressions. Sam, you were and always will be, to me, "beyond category."



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**Y**ou thought you had it bad promoting your drumming. Some day, just to build character, try to book an act consisting of a drummer and a poet. Doors close in your face. People raise an eyebrow. Yet Tom Teasley persists in his struggle and has met with success. He and actor/poet Charles Williams now have a busy concert schedule and perform in inner-city Washington schools.

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story by T. Bruce Wittet • photos by Jeffrey Kliman

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# A

nd that's only part of what Tom Teasley has going for him. You get a glimpse at the rest in his video *The Drum: Ancient Traditions Today*. At one moment he's doing a funky street beat on drums. Then he strikes the malletKAT to his right to get a dark, blossoming swell. Then it's over to a hand drum, or maybe to the roughly hammered Chinese cymbal above his hi-hat. Partly following a rough chart and partly following his instincts, he keeps you on your toes. Just when you think you've got him figured out, he pulls another rabbit out of his hat.

But don't get the idea that Teasley is a dabbler. On the contrary, he spends time learning proper techniques and respecting the traditions of all his instruments, ethnic or otherwise. It's just that the way he glides around his kit, hand drums, and electronics, it looks simple and free.

Of course, that's what makes good art. Watching Tom Teasley can generate all sorts of ideas on how to make use of resources that stare us in the face. Take the snare drum, for example. He'll cross-stick it, turn the snares off and play it with his fingers like a piano, then grab sticks and do a funk beat. No instrument has a limitation for him. Once he learns the basic rules—like how to work a talking drum—he'll go off in his own direction. Give Tom a bass drum, a snare drum, and a djembe, and he'll give you part Stravinsky, part Art Blakey.

Teasley gets considerable help from drum manufacturers, academic institutions, and kindred spirits. Chief among his collaborators is folk/operatic vocalist Charles Williams, fellow artist in residence at Washington's Levine School of Music. The two strike a vivid image. There's Tom in flowing white smock, his shaven head shining, and there's Charles, who could double for actor James Earl Jones.

"I have nothing up my sleeve!" thunders Williams at the outset of the duo's video *Poetry Prose Percussion & Song*, proclaiming righteous intentions. His partner,

on the other hand, has a whole arsenal of surprises, including techniques of fingering, brushing, scraping, and sticking his drums, cymbals, and ethnic percussion.

Even if you didn't buy the poetry/drums thing initially, within a couple of minutes into their video you're hooked. It's the *restraint* they exercise, a control that arises from proper pacing and the knowledge of when to back off once they make a point.

Not that Tom lives by poetry alone. He has recently released a CD called *Global Standard Time*, in which he covers Monk and other standards. Check his version of McCoy Tyner's "Passion Dance," featuring electric guitar and trombone. Here again, Tom demonstrates his ability to inject new life into familiar themes.

Looking back, Tom reflects that his current creative bonanza probably had little to do with his stint in the Navy band. In fact, he termed it a "creative wasteland." But it gave him daily playing experience—and enabled him to buy a house. Before that, he toddled along like the rest of us, self-taught until he got serious and took lessons with Al Merz of The National Symphony. The next step was Baltimore's Peabody Conservatory.

"After I graduated," Tom recalls, "I went on the road with Catfish Hodge. We'd tour a lot to New Orleans. We played at Tipitina's with Professor Longhair. That was a huge influence. I'd hang with Johnny Vidacovich, and we'd talk about drums. I'd

watch him play every night, and I fell into that sort of thing. It wasn't on purpose, though! I was trained as a *classical* percussionist."

How does a classical player learn how to *groove* so well? Tom smiles: "It's by design that it worked out that way. I studied with Joe Morello and with Glen Velez. I would take the conceptual thing from Glen and combine it with the technical exercises I got from Joe. Right now I'm working with ride patterns on shakers, going through Alan Dawson-type exercises with the Ted Reed book."

Tom has shakers shaped like shoe polish tins, which fit snugly in his palm. "They're made out of wood, and they're flat on top and bottom," he says. "That allows me to get different colors by turning them perpendicular to the floor, flat, or somewhere in between. And they're small enough that I can cover them with my hand to muffle them. When you're playing a drum or a cymbal, you're playing one surface. With a shaker, though, you're dealing with all the areas *in between*, and you're manipulating the flow of gravity."

Here's another example of the way Teasley takes the road less traveled. He'll go from Irish bodhran to timpani, revealing a delightful kinship. Mind you, he's adapting conventional technique on both instruments: "One of the things I'm experimenting with now is playing the timpani with my fingers while I'm holding a frame drum, manipulating the timpani tuning with the tuning pedal. Like any drum that you would play with your fingers, the tighter the tension, the more articulate a sound you're going to get."

Tom is similarly casual with his electronics. He'll use stock synth sounds if he has to. "I'm using a Yamaha QY700 sequencer. I'll do quite a lot of manipulation with its internal sounds. I'm interested in what would happen if, say, I sampled a frame drum and a timpani playing the same pitch—but the timpani with a mallet and the frame drum with my hand—and blended them together. I like to think that the stuff I do on electronics is an organic progression from these ancient percussion practices—just using the equipment available today."

Ultimately, electronic palettes are a

Give Tom a bass drum, a snare drum, and a djembe, and he'll give you part Stravinsky, part Art Blakey.



means, not an end, says Tom. "It's still all about what kind of gut, rhythmic hook it's got. If it doesn't have that, then it's lost what drew me to it in the first place."

That gut feeling is what drew Tom to Charles Williams. Tom recalls, "I had heard a tape of Max Roach playing along

with the Martin Luther King 'I Have A Dream' speech. I thought that it was effective. But how much *more* effective would it have been if they were doing it in real time and *reacting* with the phrasing. For a concert, we did the Martin Luther King speech 'I Still Believe.' The audience was

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crying. It was really moving."

Teasley and Williams perform a piece called "The Creation," featuring the poetry of James Weldon Johnson and lots of percussion, both scripted and improvised. With only one drummer to handle all the parts, it could have easily gone vaudeville. "It could have ended up being a Spike Jones thing," agrees Tom. "People immediately assume it's the quasi-beatnik thing with the bongos, but it's much more compositional. I'm *reading* the text. Beside the text I'll write a certain figure or style."

It means Teasley has to edit on the run. He can't beat a particular sound to death, nor can he strike blindly at his collection of instruments. As they used to say, it's all about *spacing*. "That's largely an influence of classical music," Tom advises. "I try to borrow from the way composers orchestrate colors and interesting sound combinations—a gong, a triangle, or maybe a cymbal played with a mallet."

On drumset, he will frequently play with bare hands. "A lot of the drumming on my video was influenced by conga or dumbek playing, where I'm trying to exploit the

nuances of the drum by virtue of how much pressure my hand is putting on the head. I use the Senegalese technique of playing with one stick and one hand, making a lot of variance of the pressure on the drum-head."

A high, bop tuning will not work, according to Teasley. "I'll tune the top heads of the drums looser. As a result, the head has more play in it, so when I'm pressing with my hand it allows the pitch to bend. I'm using Remo Renaissance heads, and they sound really natural with the other percussion." The latter includes hand drums fashioned by former clay artist Steve Wright, who also produced two of Teasley's videos.

The Levine School has recently given Tom a grant. "It's to do concerts using my eclectic approach to percussion," he says. "I'm going to co-op them with Sabian and Yamaha. The school supplies a lot of concert opportunities." Tom has hired someone to market his CD, *Global Standard Time*, which he places in "crossover" territory between world music and jazz. He is aware of the criticism that states that by

blending the various ethnic musics, we risk diluting them. "I hear that criticism, although not leveled at me. The only thing I say is that I try to be respectful of the traditions, and combine them in a way that ultimately brings out the best of everything."

Back to that shaven head and white shirt. Is it a sign of at least a shred of religious fervor? "It's more than a shred," Tom responds. "It almost sounds trite when I say it, but to me, drumming is my religion—or a manifestation of it. Especially the stuff I do with Charles. We do concerts in the school system, and it's very spiritual, although you might not want to denote it as such. But drumming has been part of religious traditions since the beginning of time."

Check out Tom and his CD and video releases at [www.tomteasley.com](http://www.tomteasley.com), email his distributor at [northcountry@cadencebuilding.com](mailto:northcountry@cadencebuilding.com), or contact Wright Hand Drum Company at (800) 990-HAND.



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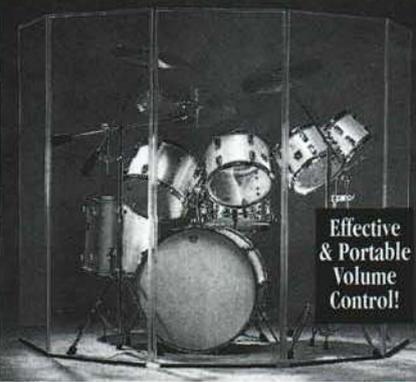
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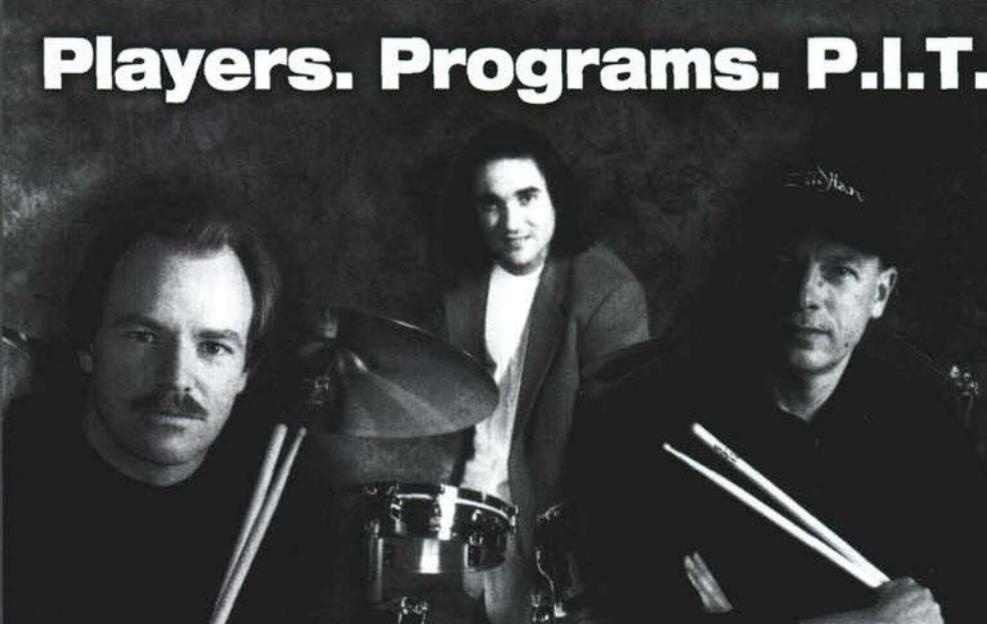
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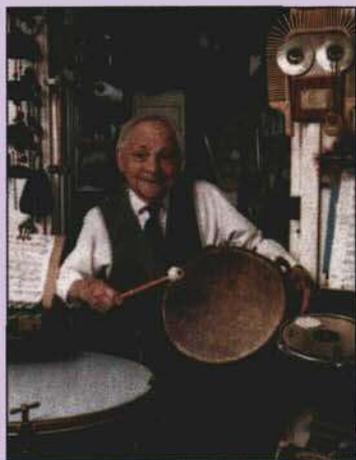
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## In Memoriam James Blades



James Blades, perhaps the percussion world's most renowned academician, died Wednesday, May 19 at his home in Cheam, Surrey, England. He was ninety-seven.

Among other works, Blades was the author of an encyclopedic reference called *Percussion Instruments And Their History*, released in 1971. It detailed virtually everything known about percussion instruments from

around the world—from the aburukuwa to the zuzu.

Born in 1901, Blades became interested in percussion as a child. He joined a circus at the age of fourteen, providing the beat for a dancing elephant on bass drum and cymbals. Blades spent most of the 1920s creating sound effects for movie theaters (gunshots, thunder, trains, etc.), and playing in dance bands around Britain. In 1932 he joined the London Film Society Orchestra. He played the gong sound that opened films made by J. Arthur Rank studios (though the visual was of a bare-chested muscular man swinging a hammer at the gong). Sought by symphonies in the US and Britain, Blades joined the London Symphony Orchestra in 1940. He moonlighted with other orchestras and ensembles until his retirement from public performance in 1971.

Accomplished as a performer on timpani, xylophone, marimba, and many more instruments, Blades was appointed professor of percussion at the Royal Academy of Music in 1954. A gifted lecturer, he mesmerized audiences ranging from music-oriented teenagers to professional musicians and music teachers. He also often worked with physically and mentally handicapped children.

Perhaps James Blades' most influential performance came during World War II, when he recorded the familiar four-note phrase that opens Beethoven's fifth symphony for the BBC radio network. The BBC used the percussive phrase (which Blades played with a timpani mallet on an African membrane drum) to represent the Morse code for the letter "V" : dot-dot-dot-dash.



James Blades in a 1920s movie theater pit.

Broadcast 150 times per day, the percussive "V" stood for "victory," encouraging the Resistance in continental Europe during the war.

A lifelong contributor to the science and art of percussion, James Blades was made an officer of the Order of the British Empire in 1972. He was named to the Percussive Arts Society Hall Of Fame in 1975.

## Mel Torme



The drumming world joins the entire music-loving public in mourning the passing of Mel Torme on Saturday, June 5. The multi-talented singer/songwriter/arranger/actor/drummer/author died following a prolonged illness, at the age of seventy-three.

Mel was well known to jazz aficionados as one of the preeminent vocalists of his time, and to television viewers as a frequent guest actor on *Night Court* and other shows. "His composing skills may be less well known, simply because his most cherished composition is more often associated with its original performer than with its composer. Nat "King" Cole's rendition of "The Christmas Song" (better known as "Chestnuts Roasting On An Open Fire") has entered the pantheon of holiday classics. But it was a Torme composition, and over the years Mel managed to take the success of the tune—and the tune itself—back for his own.

Above all that—and actually *before* all that—Mel also made a contribution to music as a drummer. He began his career during the big band era as a "boy singer" and a drummer with several bands. Although skilled on the traps, Mel's vocal talents gained him greater acclaim, and he began to focus his performances in that direction. However, he retained his love for the drums throughout his career, and always included a tune or two behind the kit in his concert performances.



A swingin' Mel Torme on drums in the early 1950s

Mel also wrote several books, including *The Other Side Of The Rainbow*, in which he chronicled his year working on Judy Garland's television show. In 1991 he employed his talents as an author to document the history of his lifelong friend Buddy Rich in *Traps, The Drum Wonder*. Written from the dual perspective of drummer and close friend, the biography is considered by many to be the most complete, yet personal, view of the volatile drummer.

# Cozy Powell Tribute

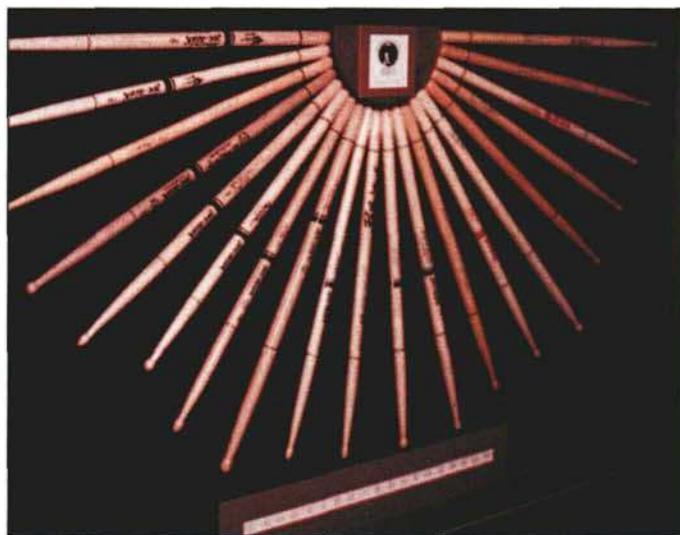


Bobby Rondinelli honors Cozy Powell on the late drummer's kit.

Saturday, May 1 saw a star-studded tribute to rock drummer Cozy Powell, held at the Buxton Opera House in Derbyshire, England. Cozy himself had played this venue on two previous occasions with Peter Green: at a 1996 tribute concert to British blues legend Alexis Corner, and in 1997 at a tribute to Rory Gallagher.

The evening opened with a contemporary rock/blues-influenced band called Dare, featuring up & coming British drummer Russell Gilbrook. This was followed by members of Rainbow, with Bobby Rondinelli on drums. (Bobby had taken over the drum chair in Rainbow several years ago when Cozy left that band.) Bobby played Cozy's last kit: a Yamaha *Maple Custom* in natural finish, with double bass drums, two custom wood Octoban-type toms, plus Cozy's standard tom setup. Bobby's playing was absolutely awesome throughout the whole set.

The concert finished with a "special project" band that Cozy had played with, called the S.A.S. band. It was led by Brian May of Queen. The idea of this group was to bring together many players



Pro-Mark raffled off a collection of sticks dedicated to Cozy.

and singers from other bands. Featured on drums for this part of the concert was Johnny Marter, the new drummer for Marillion. Johnny played with great taste and style. As part of the evening's festivities, a display case full of drumsticks and a plaque dedicated to Cozy—provided by the Pro-Mark drumstick company—was presented to a lucky raffle winner.

The evening proved a fitting tribute to a stellar drumming personality, who, in the course of a career that spanned three decades, had been a member of Black Sabbath, Rainbow, Whitesnake, and Emerson, Lake & Powell, and who had guested with artists from Donovan to Roger Daltrey, Jack Bruce to Jeff Beck, Gary Moore to Brian May, and Peter Green to Glen Tipton. Kudos to Harry Lee and Norman Beaker of Active Music Festivals, who worked extremely hard to put the event together.

Tim Franks

## MD Giveaway Winners

The following is the list of winners in the "Spaun, Sabian, Gibraltar, XL, Pro-Mark, and Evans" giveaway that appeared in the March, April, and May 1999 issues of *MD*. The drawing was conducted on May 10, 1999. The grand-prize winner is John R. Wagner of Oak Ridge, Tennessee. John's postcard earns him a seven-piece all-maple Spaun drumkit, a complete set of Sabian AAX cymbals, a complete set of Gibraltar stands and pedals, Protektor cases (from XL Specialty Percussion) for all the drums, cymbals, and hardware, and thirty-six pairs of his choice of Pro-Mark sticks (with his own autograph), along with a deluxe stick bag and a variety of accessories.

Bill Verutis of Waterford, Ontario, Canada is the first-prize winner. Bill will receive a Spaun 6 1/2 x 12 maple snare drum, a Gibraltar stand, twenty-four pairs of Pro-Mark sticks, a jumbo stick bag, various accessories, and an Evans drumhead pre-pak. Second-prize winner Robert T. Bove of Wilmington, Delaware will receive Sabian 13" Pro Fusion hi-hats, a Gibraltar Liquid hi-hat stand, twelve pairs of Pro-Mark sticks and various accessories, and an Evans drumhead pre-pak.

Third prize—a Sabian 10" Pro splash, a Gibraltar Grabber cymbal arm, twelve pairs of Pro-Mark sticks and accessories, and an Evans drumhead pre-pak—goes to James E. Murphy of Brookville, Indiana. Mark Ulmer of Phoenix, Arizona will receive the fourth prize: twelve pairs of Pro-Mark sticks and accessories and an Evans drumhead pre-pak. Congratulations to all the winners from Spaun, Sabian, Gibraltar, XL Specialty Percussion, Pro-Mark, Evans, and *Modern Drummer*.

## Attack Drumheads Drumfest '99

Cannon Percussion, manufacturer of Attack drumheads, will present Drumfest '99 on Sunday, September 5, from 1:00 P.M. until 7:00 P.M. The event will take place at Austintown Fitch High School, in Austintown, Ohio. A suburb of Youngstown, Austintown is sixty miles east of Cleveland and sixty miles northwest of Pittsburgh.

Drumfest '99 will feature clinic/performance appearances by Terry Bozzio, Charlie Adams, Hilary Jones, and Tommy Igoe. The first two hundred children entering the auditorium will receive free toy drums; the first one hundred adults will receive free hand drums. At the end of the day, all four performers will appear on stage to "trade fours." Audience members with free drums will be invited to participate. Additionally, each person in attendance will be eligible to win a Cannon V drumset to be given away at the end of the day.

Tickets for Drumfest '99 will only be available at the door, and are free in exchange for two cans of food per person. The food will be flown to Albania by the Columbiana, Ohio Rotary Club, to be donated to Kosovo refugees. Space is limited, so interested parties should plan to arrive early. Call (330) 482-5750 (during regular business hours) for further information.

## Sennheiser Evolution Band Contest

Sennheiser's Evolution Band Contest invites bands from across the country to submit original or cover songs of any style for evaluation by a panel of music-industry insiders. Each song will be judged on originality of performance and style. The grand-prize winner will be flown to Hanover, Germany next summer to perform at Expo 2000, and will also receive Sennheiser microphones valued at \$7,500. The first-place entry will receive a Sennheiser Digital 1000 Wireless vocal microphone system. The top 100 finalists will each receive an Evolution E835 vocal microphone.

Entries should be mailed to Sennheiser Evolution Band Contest, 1 Enterprise Drive, Old Lyme, Connecticut 06731, no later than October 31, 1999. MP3 files can be emailed to [bandcontest@evolutionmics.com](mailto:bandcontest@evolutionmics.com). Songs may be submitted on audio cassette, CD, MP3 files, videotape, DAT, or DVD. Contestants may enter as many songs as desired, but each must be entered separately. (Entry song must be clearly marked on any formats containing multiple songs.) Each entry must include band name, member names, instruments, address, phone, email, song title, and signatures of the bandmembers. Entrants and their collaborators will retain full rights to all work submitted. Entrants must be US residents and may not be employees of Sennheiser, their families, subsidiaries, or affiliates. Grand-prize and first-place winners will be announced at Winter NAMM in January 2000. To keep updated on contest news, surf to [www.evolutionmics.com](http://www.evolutionmics.com).

## Chili Peppers Promote Teen Tolerance

The promise of a free Red Hot Chili Peppers concert this summer inspired thousands of teens to send their views on youth violence and tolerance to sponsoring radio stations in five cities. Selected essayists were rewarded with tickets along the RHCP *Teen Tolerance* tour. The band had planned several youth-only shows

before the June release of their new *Californication* album, but they didn't just want to give away tickets. Instead, they embraced the idea of a socially conscious theme.

"The real troubled kids may not come to the show," said Peppers drummer Chad Smith, "but it gets kids thinking and talking about the issue. We're just a band, and we may not change things ourselves. But if we can get kids started, I'm pretty sure a lot of them will take it from there. A lot of kids are pretty fired up about this."

Many of the entrants admitted they wouldn't have written the essays without the payoff of a free concert. But April's fatal assault at Colorado's Columbine High School, coupled with the late-May shootings at a school near Atlanta, has brewed fevered sentiments among American youth. Some surprised themselves once their fingers touched their keyboards. Others were surprised that the Chili Peppers would be the band behind such an effort. Said one, "They've done a lot to come off as showsters...as players. But now that they're doing something like this, it shows them as real people. It shows that they care about things, too."

Matt Peiken

## Indy Quickies

Swiss-made **AGNER** drumsticks are now distributed exclusively in the US by MTC (Music Trade Center) in New York City. For a current catalog or other details contact MTC at 495 Lorimer Street, Brooklyn, NY 11211, tel: (718) 963-2777, fax: (718) 302-4890, [Nycdrums@aol.com](mailto:Nycdrums@aol.com).

**PRO-MARK** is conducting chat sessions with several of their endorsing artists. Tony Verderosa was a recent guest, and the company plans to feature drummers from all styles of music in future sessions. For further information, check out [www.promarkstix.com](http://www.promarkstix.com).

**THE NASHVILLE PERCUSSION INSTITUTE** (NPI) has a new home. The school has joined forces with longtime Nashville recording engineer and producer Harold Sloss to form a complete creative musical environment. The joint venture between NPI and Sloss's Top Of The Stairs Studios is located at 203 McMillin Street, Nashville, Tennessee 37203. The school's new phone number is (615) 340-0085.

The 10,000-square-foot building, which dates to the early 1800s, was once the home of the warden for Tennessee's first state prison. It provides space for NPI's teaching facilities, Sloss's 24-track studio, and the one-hundred-seat Mitchell Barnett Theater, which will be used for clinics, performances, and seminars. Grand-opening ceremonies were held in the theater on May 19.

**KEENY BROS. MUSIC CENTER** will present its **DRUM SET SHOW & SHINE**, the largest display of new, used, and vintage drums and drum memorabilia in the Pacific Northwest, on October 8-10. Designed to imitate classic auto shows, the event will be held at the Palouse Mall in Moscow, Idaho. There will be a quarter mile of drums and drum displays, clinics and performances by major drum artists, and product giveaways. Admission is free. For further information contact Keeny Bros. Music Center, (208) 883-4948.

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### Avila Drum Day

10/9 — Benefit, artists to appear: Aírto Moreira & Flora Purim, Michael Shapiro, Keyvn Lettau & friends, Walfredo Reyes Sr., Walfredo Reyes Jr. and Danny Reyes, Karl Perrazo & Advance, Tommy Aldridge, and many surprises. Avila Beach Resort Golf Course, Avilila Beach, CA. Contact ETuduri@aol.com

### Berklee College of Music World Percussion Festival

8/17- 22 — Staff members include Mohamad Camara, Randy Crafton, Sa Davis, Kenwood Dennard, Ernesto Diaz, Dave DiCenso, Joe Galiota, Jamey Haddad, Skip Hadden, Victor Mendoza, John Ramsay, Mikael Ringuis, Bobby Sanabria, Casey Scheuerell, Steve Wilkes, Giovanni Hidalgo, Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez, Karl Perazzo, Raul Rekow, Trichy Sankaran, Arthur Hull, Valarie Naranjo, and Orestes Vilato. Berklee College, Boston, MA, (617) 266-1400

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10/3 — Stockholm Drumfestival, Stockholm, Sweden, 011-4621300059

### CMJ Music Marathon

9/15-18 — New York Hilton, New York, NY. Contact Vicki Aubin, (516)498-3130

### DRUMFEST 99

9/5 — Clinics/performances by Terry Bozzio, Charlie Adams,

Hilary Jones, and Tommy Igoe, with giveaways and prizes. Austintown Fitch High School, Austintown, OH, (330) 482-5750

### Drummers Workshop Drum Circle

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### Dom Famularo

10/3 — Stockholm Drumfestival, Stockholm, Sweden, 011-4621300059

### Tom & Catherine Float

8/21 — Sounds of Summer, Anaheim, CA. Contact Nick Rail, (805) 569-5353

### Richie Garcia

10/3 — Stockholm Drumfestival, Stockholm, Sweden, 011-4621300059

### Evelyn Glennie

8/21-30 — Lucerne Festival, Switzerland, 01480 891772

### Thorn Hannum

8/15 — DCI Clinic, Madison, FL  
8/21 — MTSU Percussion Camp, Murfreesboro, TN

### Bob Harsen

9/9 — Special guests David Garfield & John Pena. Guitar Center, Hollywood, CA. Contact Pork Pie Percussion, (818)992-0783

### Hollywood Custom & Vintage Drum Show

10/2-3 — Special guest Louie Bellson, with giveaways and sur-

prise guests. Remo building, North Hollywood. Contact Kerry Crutchfield, (323) 461-0640

### Arthur Hull

11/6-7 — Boston Playshop, Boston, MA, (978) 371-2502

### Keeney Bros. Music Center

10/8-10 — Second annual Drum Set Show, with displays, vintage drums, drum memorabilia, clinics, and giveaways. Palouse Mall, Moscow, Idaho, (208) 883-4948

### NEXUS Multipercussion Ensemble

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10/30 — Sunbury, PA. Contact Lawton Drum Co, (717) 988-0655

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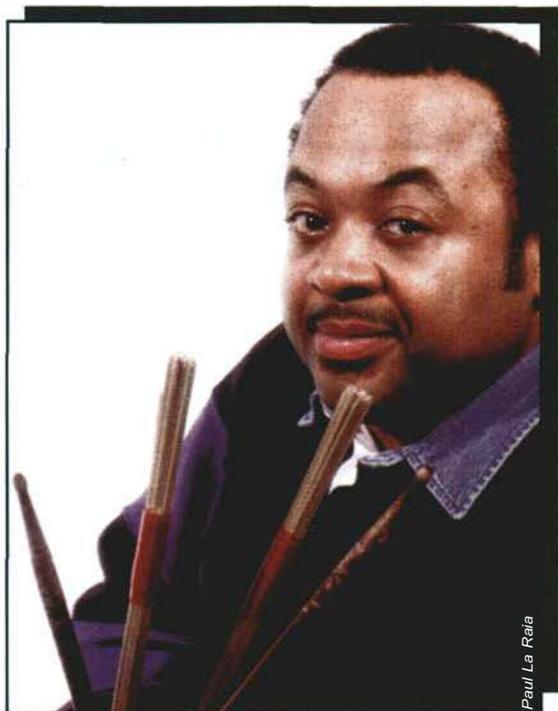
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**K**enn Rowe of Virginia Beach, Virginia is one of those drummers who quietly but firmly believes that less is *not* more...more is more. "I think a drummer should be more than a glorified timekeeper," says Kenn. Not surprisingly, Kenn's drumkit design was mainly influenced by Alex Van Halen ("for his use of many different Paiste crash cymbals") and Simon Phillips ("for the appearance and drum selection"). The kit took Kenn over six years to assemble. He uses it with his band Big Sandwich, playing everything from Hendrix to Nirvana.

Kenn's basic Pearl Export kit consists of 8", 10", 12", and 13" rack toms, 16" and 18" floor toms, two 22" bass drums, and two snare drums: a 6 1/2 x 14 steel Free-Floating model, and a 3 1/2 x 13 maple piccolo. His Paiste cymbals include 15", 16", 17", and 18" Full crashes, a 20" Full ride, 16" and 18" thin Chinas, and 14" Alpha Sound Edge hi-hats. He also has a pair of 13" Istanbul secondary hi-hats. LP Mini Timbales and high and low Jam Blocks complete the kit, which is all mounted on a Pearl DR-80 drum rack.



#### PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

1. Photos must be high-quality and in color. 35mm slides are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted. 2. You may send more than one view of the kit. 3. Only show drums, no people. 4. Snoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds. 5. Clearly highlight special attributes of your kit. Send photo(s) to; Drumkit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. **Photos cannot be returned.**



A portrait of Jimmy DeGrasso, a man with long, wavy brown hair and a goatee, wearing a black zip-up shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. His arms are crossed, and a watch is visible on his left wrist.

# Jimmy DeGrasso

of Megadeth  
talks about  
Pearl's  
Session Series  
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