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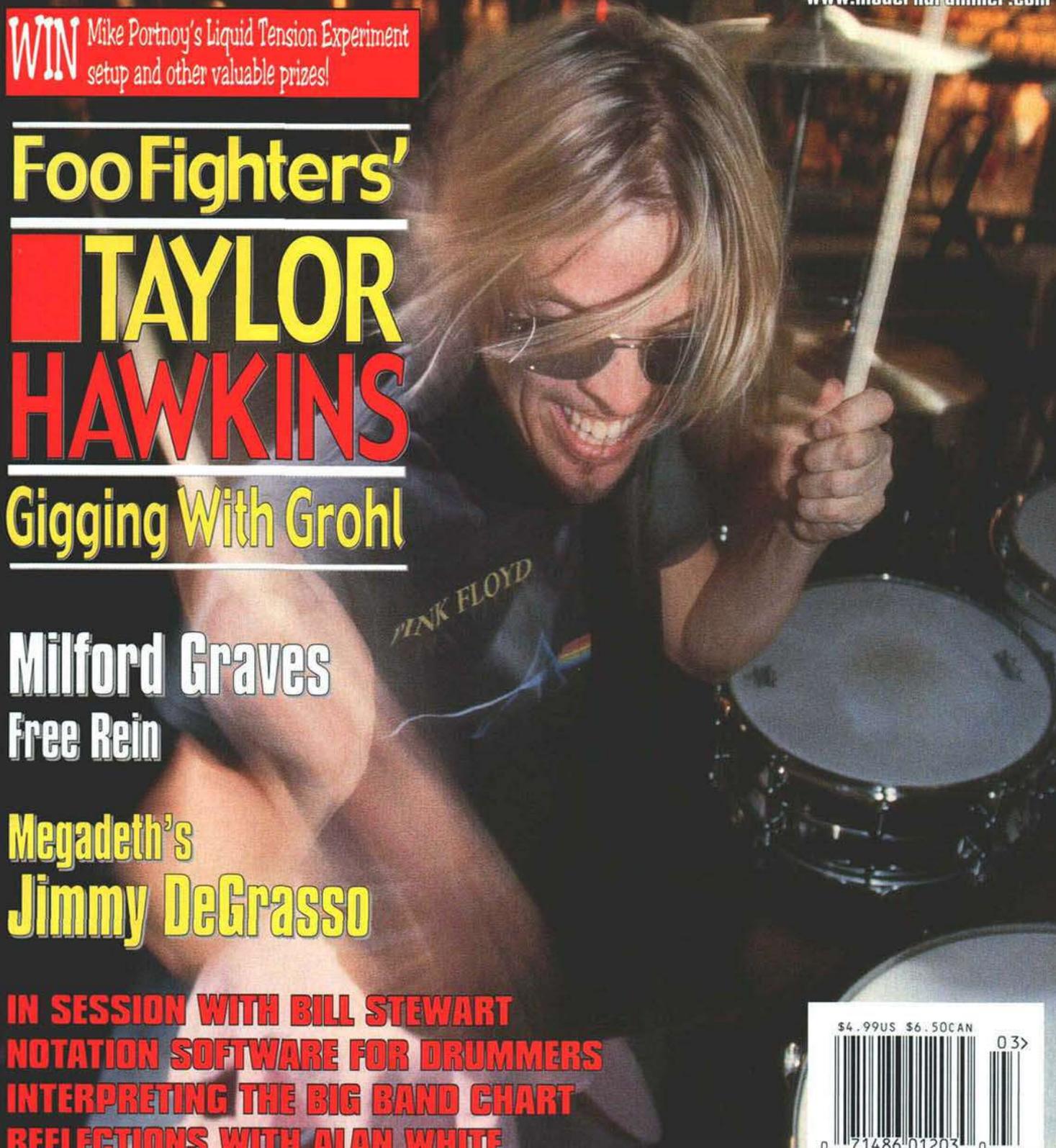
**TAYLOR HAWKINS**

Gigging With Grohl

Milford Graves  
Free Rein

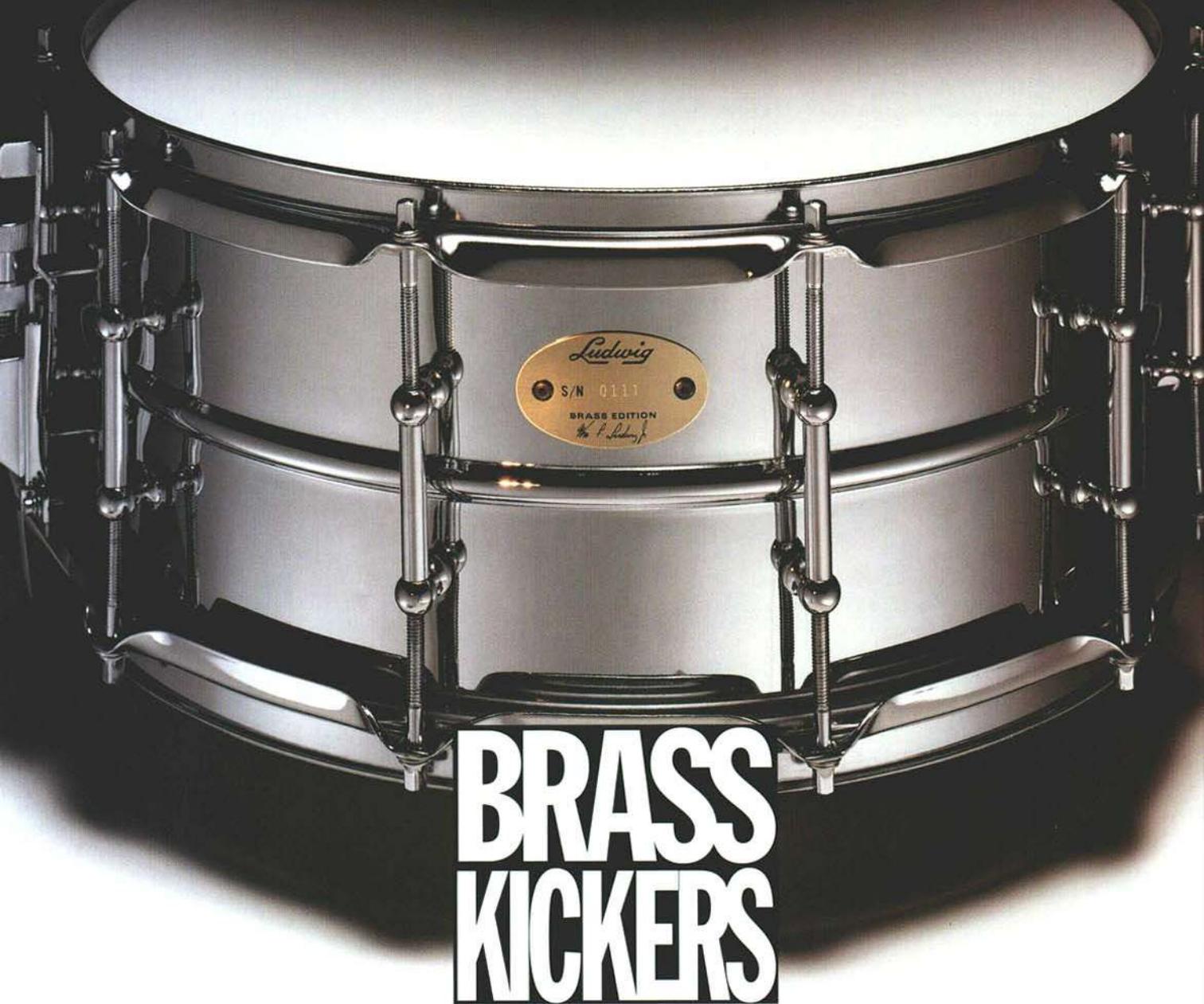
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# HOW HARD DO YOU ROCK?



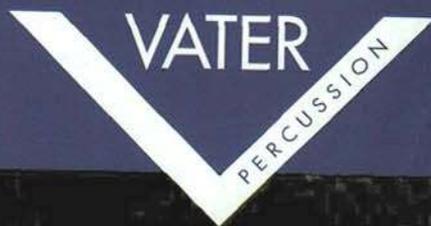
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# Gear Addiction

It was a tough couple of months for drum gear addicts. First, Christmas was approaching, which always gets visions of maple-shell "sugarplums" dancing in our heads. Then there was *MD's* look at high-end drumsets in the February issue. Between *MD* editors Rick, Bill, Adam, and myself, there was some serious drooling going on throughout our "research" for that article.

But temptation is hardly seasonal. Advertisements lure us. Retailers lure us. And, by golly, the gear itself—drums, cymbals, and hardware, all glittering and colorful—lures us from music store windows. All powers conspire to blur the line between what we *want* and what we *need* to better express ourselves as musicians.

Every now and then a voice of reason intervenes, preventing us from hurling ourselves into the time-payment abyss. Several years ago I was in the drum department of a New York music store when a

customer came in seeking some recent revolution in drum gear—I don't know, a triple-strainer, zebra wood cowbell or something. The department manager—I'll call him "Joe"—told the guy, "Forget about all the stuff you can buy, man. Just play!"

I was profoundly impressed. Sacrificing a sales commission, Joe told his customer to stop obsessing about equipment and start practicing. Imagine that! (A note to the store owner who might like to fire Joe: He shortly thereafter defected to one of your competitors.) Similarly, in a temporarily sobering response to the other editors' recent drumset frenzy, *MD* publisher and editor Ron Spagnardi quoted an old teacher who had once told him, "A drum is a drum is a drum."

In light of our looking like chimpanzees in possession of shiny objects, Ron's intent was well placed. But in fairness to *MD* advertisers (who, indirectly, pay my rent),

playing good gear is always more inspiring than playing crappy gear. Drums are tools, after all. And nobody points a finger when a carpenter buys the best hammer or saw. They call him wise for investing in quality tools of his trade. (Of course, except in the military, most hammers don't cost \$8,000.) The trick is in deciding when an \$8,000 tool will do the job appreciably better than a \$2,000 tool. More importantly, it's in not focusing on the *drum* to the point that it impedes your pursuit of *drumming*.

Distinguishing "I want" from "I need" isn't always easy. It may even go against human nature. Resisting the impulse to acquire new things takes maturity and responsibility and restraint. But for anyone who cares, my birthday is coming up, and I really *need* a new drumset. An \$8,000 one would be nice. And while you're at it, throw in one of those triple-strainer, zebra wood cowbells, will ya?

*Rich* ✓

## MODERN DRUMMER

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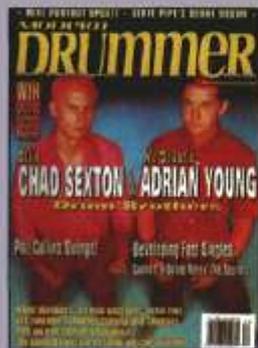


Cabasas

## CHAD SEXTON & ADRIAN YOUNG

Thanks for the great cover story on Chad Sexton and Adrian Young!

[December '99 MD] These are two of



the hottest drummers on the planet right now, and it was great to see them together. (By the way, the swimming-pool cover

has got to be the *coolest* you've ever done.)

I really enjoyed how the guys talked about their lives on the road. I hope to be on tour myself someday, so it meant a lot to me. Thanks again!

Peter Samuels  
Miami, FL

Road stories, road stories! I'm *sick of* road stories! Sexton and Young are both fine players, so why didn't they talk

about their *drumming!* Most of us will never be on a tour—major or minor. But we might very well want to play some 311 or No Doubt tunes—even if only in our humble basements. If drummers are going to be featured on your cover, let's hear more from them about their playing than about how hectic their touring schedule is or how much they need to unwind.

Frank Irvington  
Chicago, IL

Chad and Adrian sure aren't going to win any fashion awards. Neither will they impress anybody with their wit & wisdom. Fortunately for both of them, those things aren't required to man the drum chairs in their respective bands. After I stopped laughing at the photos and the descriptions of life on tour, I decided to check out some of 311's and No Doubt's music. These guys can *play!*

Benjamin Weiss  
via Internet

## PHIL COLLINS SWINGS

I've been playing rock for many years, and although I'm confident in that area, I've never learned any jazz techniques.

Sometimes I take my wife to a jazz club, and those cats just rip me apart. My wife will be having a great time, while I hang my head and say, "Man, I can't even touch that. I can't read music. I can't use brushes. I'll never be as good as this guy."

The Phil Collins interview in your December issue provided both inspiration and hope. Phil showed how drummers can recognize their abilities and limits, and then overcome their weaknesses. More importantly, he revealed that even the most successful musicians still worry that they might not achieve their goals. He set a good example of how to succeed by putting forth the best effort possible and

following a task through to the end. After reading the article, I felt wiser in regards to drumming, and better about myself and my own abilities. Thanks for the excellent article, and special thanks to Phil for providing such a great inspiration!

Lowell Parker  
Dallas, TX

I'm thirty-eight years old. I grew up with Genesis when Peter Gabriel was the vocalist and Phil Collins was the drummer. Great stuff. But since the late '70s drummers have been subjected to the effects of disco (the death of funk), drum machines (the extinction of the studio drummer), sampling (another way of exploiting drummers), and DJs (the new "alternative" drummer). Now here's another vanity project from a prog-rocker. What can we look forward to next? "Coming soon on video,

CD, in concert, and here in the pages of *MD*: Peter Erskine sings the songs of Yes!" Sound like a ridiculous idea?

Dear Phil: Why not funnel some of your well-deserved songwriting royalties into jazz education in school band programs in the UK, America, Africa, India, or Japan? I'm sure Quincy Jones' fee alone could have funded a dozen or more such programs well into the millennium. This could help us all to enjoy the next Sonny Payne or Harold Jones: a sixteen-year-old who's practicing away in Indianapolis, Manchester, or Dakar without proper teachers, records, books, videos, and so on.

Dan Thress  
Paris, France

## FROM ONE EDITOR TO ANOTHER

Just read the Dec. '99 *An Editor's Overview* and *Readers' Platform*. Regarding Jim Cochran's kudos to the *MD* family: Hear, hear! Having spent a few years as an editor for a noteworthy guide-book publisher, I truly appreciate *MD*'s editorial integrity and snappy writing. To me, it's just one of several examples of your staff's energy and attention to detail. Such qualities are what make *MD* such a top-notch publication—and a pleasure to peruse each month.

And to Rick Van Horn: Thanks for the heads-up. Right on time for my reality check. Think I'll go stretch for a spell.

Dan DeGregory  
Chesapeake, VA

## STOLL ON THE MOVE

I would like to take a moment to thank *MD* for featuring me in the *On The Move* section of your December issue. I consider it a great privilege to have appeared in the magazine in any small way. However, I would like to point out that my name is Steve Stoll, not Steve Soil as printed. Thanks again.

Steve Stoll  
New York, NY

*Editor's note: Sorry about that, Steve.*

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## KUDOS TO DAVE

I'm an American currently residing in Sydney, Australia. When I heard that The Dave Weckl Band was performing in town recently I immediately ordered my tickets. Dave was inspirational and nothing less than hypnotic that evening.

After the show I approached Dave and the other bandmembers (Jay Oliver/keys, Tom Kennedy/bass, Buzz Feiten/guitar, and Brandon Fields/saxophone). Despite the fact that the band had gone without sleep for almost twenty-four hours and had

just finished an intense three-hour set, they were extremely friendly and accommodating. I had the privilege of speaking with Dave for some time. He also gave me a pair of his drumsticks.

In an age when people can get so caught up with themselves, it's reassuring to know that people like Dave Weckl do exist, and that they do care about their fans. Dave is, in every sense of the word, a professional. He truly deserves the term so often used in reference to him: an idol.

Brian Tyler Lamborn  
via Internet



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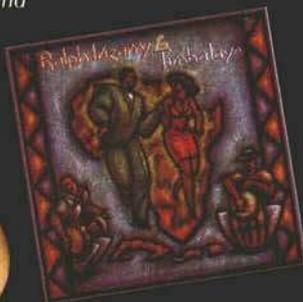
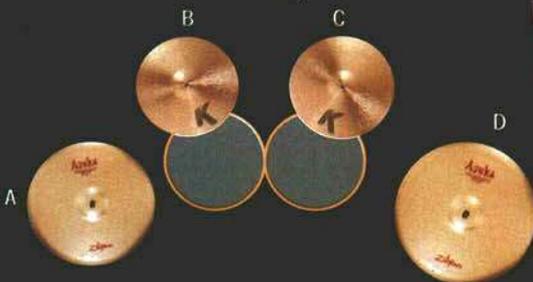
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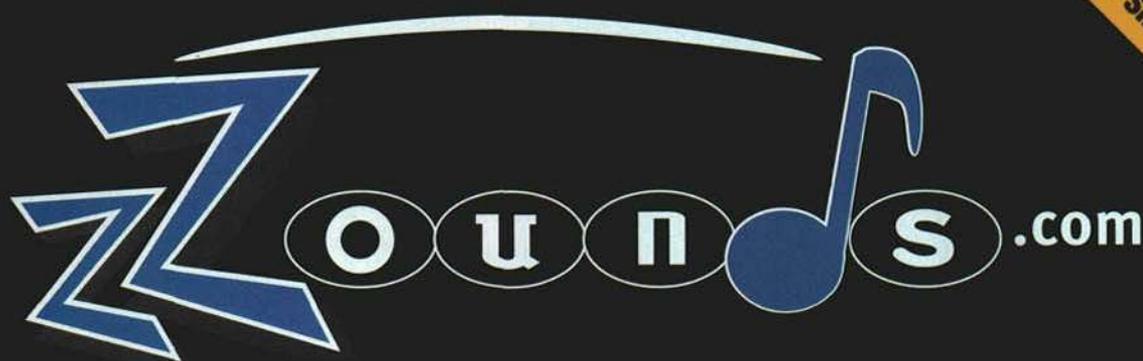
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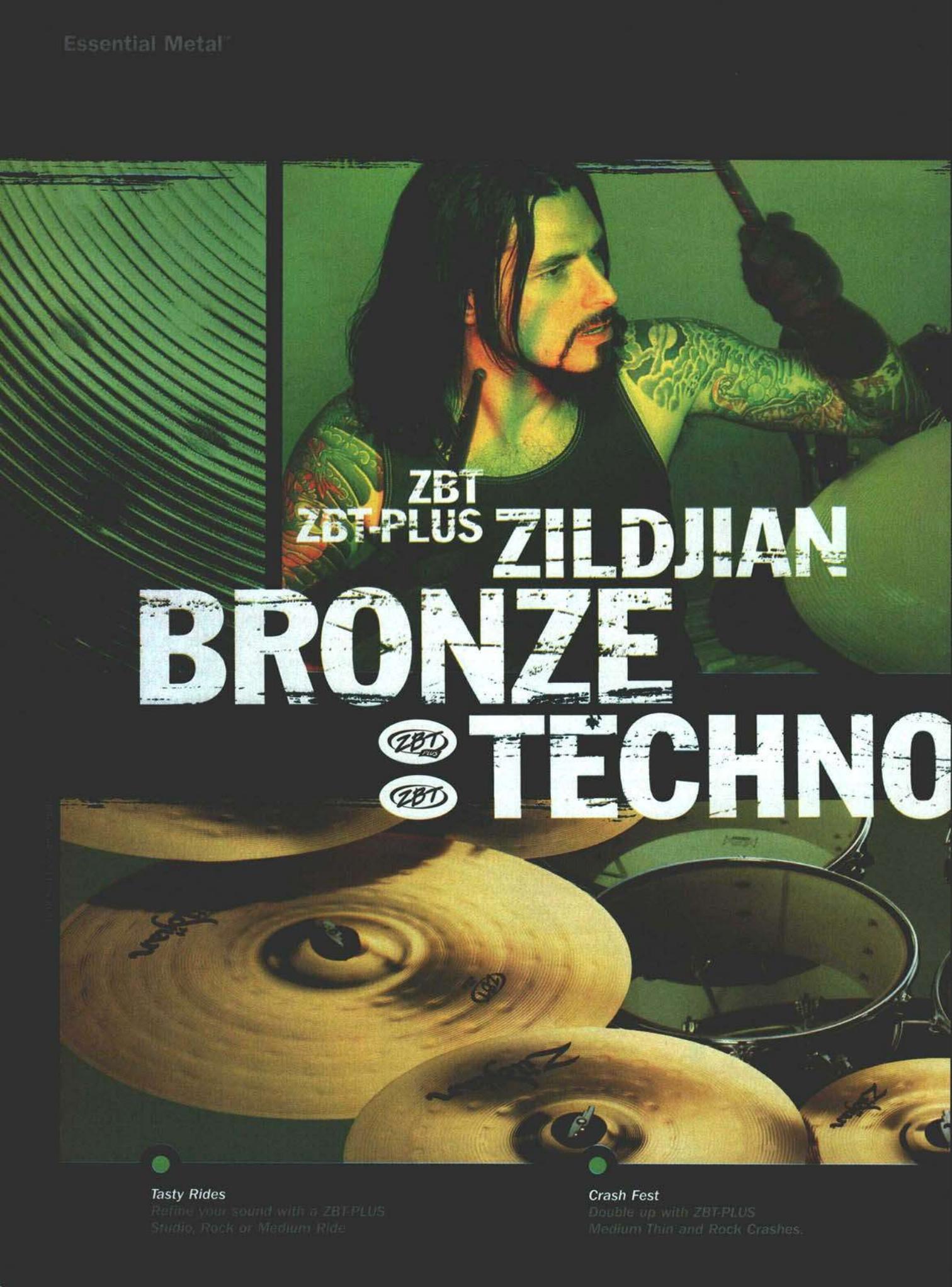
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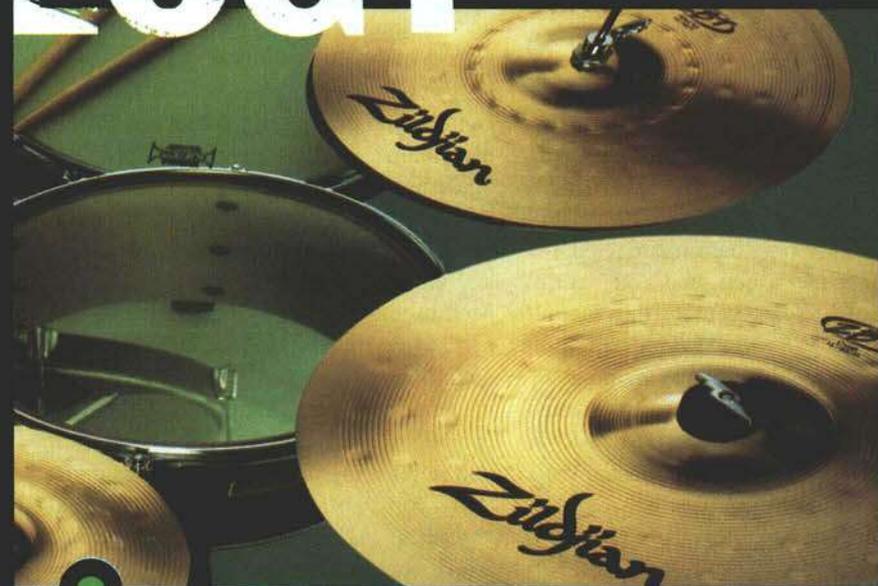
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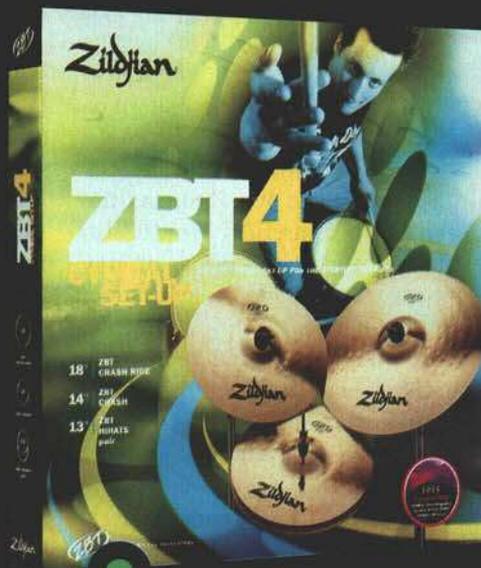
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## Cymbal Selection With Peter Erskine

**Q** I love the cymbals you used in your instructional video *Everything Is Timekeeping 2*. Could you tell me what they were? Also, they seemed to have an unusual finish—almost a subdued platinum color. Is this something that Zildjian only supplies to endorsers?

I'd also like to ask for your recommendations for a cymbal setup for playing in a Top-40 band as well as a jazz group. I'm playing in two different bands that cover those formats, and I'd like your opinion on a possible ride cymbal, hi-hat, crash, and effects cymbal setup that could cover both situations. I'm currently in possession of a 20" Zildjian K Custom Dark ride, and I'd like some suggestions regarding cymbals to complement it.

Rick Pickard  
via Internet

**A** Thank you for your questions. Regarding the appearance of my cymbals in the *Everything Is Timekeeping* videos 1 & 2, their dark "platinum" look is simply the result of an overzealous lighting director spraying the cymbals with a non-reflective (temporary) paint to cut down on reflections that could have complicated the video shoot. Admittedly, the cymbals look like I purchased them at a Zildjian "fire sale." If you look carefully, you'll also notice strategically placed pieces of gray duct tape on various parts of the drumset hardware. Hollywood! The sound of the instruments was not disturbed by this cosmetic touch-up, but I can report that it took me several weeks to finally remove the results of the lighting director's handiwork!

The cymbals I used for that video were: a pair of 14" New Beat hi-hats, a 22" K ride, an 18" crash ride, an 18" K ride with three rivets, a 16" K crash, and a remote pair of 10" SR series hi-hats. I hope you



enjoyed and learned from the video.

As evidenced by later videos, my cymbal setup evolved. In the performance video *Peter Erskine Trio—Live At JazzBaltica* (available from Hal Leonard, or at my Web site, petererskine.com), which was shot a few years later, I was playing a 22" K Pre-Aged Dry Light ride, the same riveted 18" K ride, the same hi-hats, and a 16" crash. Fast-forward to last year's *Abercombief/Erskine/Mintzer/Patitucci Band* video on Hudson Music, and I was playing on a 20" K Constantinople ride, my trusty riveted 18" K, a 22" Swish Knocker, 14" K Custom hi-hats, and a 17" K crash. While always searching for the "perfect" cymbal, I have played Zildjian cymbals my entire life. Somehow, they keep making 'em better, and my playing style, touch, and abilities seem to keep maturing. Together

we've reached a point where I am now playing a 22" K Constantinople ride, a 22" Swish Knocker, an 18" K Custom brilliant crash, and 14" K Constantinople hi-hats. I have replaced my treasured riveted 18" K with a remarkable new instrument, the 18" Breakbeat Ride, which is part of the Re-Mix series of cymbals. I occasionally add a 13" splash or 15" K Crash with three rivets to complete the picture.

You'll be able to hear my current cymbal setup on two new recordings of note: Joni Mitchell's new album with a symphony orchestra, and my new Trio album *Live At Rocco*, which was recorded live in Los Angeles this past October. It will be released on Fuzzy Music.

To answer your second question, ultimately you should trust your own ears to direct you towards a cymbal setup that will work best for you. I've never found a single setup that will work for *everything*. That being said, a good crash cymbal is a good-sounding crash cymbal! (I like the texture of the Swish Knocker.)

For The Yellowjackets, I use a K Constantinople 21" Big Band cymbal for my "main" ride. However, I should note that I use all of my "rides" and "crashes" for both purposes. In other words, when you find a good cymbal, it can satisfy most any musical need or expectation. You just need to take care with your choice of ride cymbal to find a good balance between definition and "spread" or "warmth." Also, it's usually a good idea to stay away from cymbals that are too heavy, especially if you're planning on playing any music that calls for subtlety. A "good" cymbal "breathes" and has clarity. Good luck, and enjoy your search for the Holy Grail of cymbals. I found mine!

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# Manu Katche On Video And CD



**Q** I'm a very big fan of your playing, and I'd like to know where I can get any books or videos by you. Also, would you please describe the drums and cymbals you used on Peter Gabriel's *Secret World Live* tour?

Igor  
via Internet

**A** The only video I'm on is a Zildjian promotional

video called *Studio Grooves*, which was made a few years ago. I'm also on a promotional CD called *Stick Around*. Contact Zildjian's customer service department to see if any of the videos or CDs are still available. I've written no books as yet, but I may some day.

My drum setup with Peter Gabriel was a Yamaha Maple Custom kit, with 10", 12", and 13" rack toms, a 16" floor tom, a 22" bass drum, and a 6 1/2x14 Manu Katche signature snare drum. The toms all had Remo coated Ambassador heads. I used Zildjian cymbals, including 13" New Beat hi-hats, two K crashes, 8" and 10" splashes, a 12" China Boy, a 21" Rock ride, and a 10" EFX cymbal.

Submit questions for your favorite drummer to Ask A Pro, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Or you may email [rvh@modern-drummer.com](mailto:rvh@modern-drummer.com). We will do our best to pursue every inquiry. However, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to reach every artist or that any given artist will respond. Also, due to *MD's* publication schedule, artists' touring schedules, and other considerations, it sometimes takes several months before an inquiry and reply can be published.



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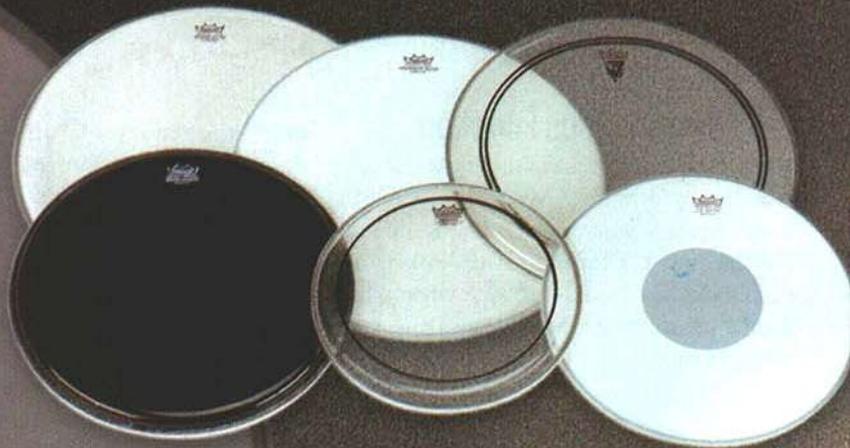
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## Form Versus Function

**Q** How can I get a unique look and feel for my drumset? My dad tells me to put everything where it feels comfortable. I do that, but I want the kit to look more stunning when I look at it. And when other people see it, I want them to say *Wow*. Can you help me?

Matt Smith  
via Internet

**A** First and foremost, the drumset is a performance instrument. It's also the most personal instrument there is. It should be arranged in such a way as to fit your body size and shape, allowing you to reach everything comfortably. That way, you'll be able to execute your musical ideas with the least effort.

Once you've put everything where you need it for the reasons listed above, *then* worry about what the kit looks like from out front. Keep it clean and polished, keep your cymbals shiny, and keep the front of the bass drum clean and attractive. That means no raggedy-cut hole or scuff marks on the head, and no digged-up hoop.

Image is important to a performer. But it is absolutely secondary in comparison to functionality. Keep your priorities straight, and you'll make people want to look at *you*, not just your drumkit.

## Drumhead Response

**Q** I recently purchased a set of DW drums. The drums have a wonderful rich tone, and they sound great. However, when I strike the tom heads there is no stick rebound, and it simply feels "muddy." It feels sort of like the stick buries into the head. Could this be a tuning problem—or maybe just the head selection itself? I really want to feel more when I strike the drum. Any suggestions?

Brad Cochran  
Rome, GA

**A** The feeling you describe is common when heads are tensioned fairly loosely. Many drummers like this tuning, since it lowers the pitch of the toms. Others

enjoy the feeling of "digging in" to the drum. They aren't looking for rebound or stick responsiveness. It's a matter of personal taste and musical application.

DW's coated/clear single-ply heads are designed to provide a quick, clear attack, and then to let the drums expand fully for depth and projection. They succeed very well at this, but because they are fairly thin they can have a lot of "give" at lower tensions. This would produce the "muddy" feel you describe.

If you want more rebound from your tom heads, you need to give them more tension. This, of course, will affect the tuning. If tightening the existing heads up to where they feel good makes your drums sound too high-pitched, consider using two-ply heads. They provide more depth at a given tension than single-ply heads do. Thus they can be tightened a bit more without sacrificing low end.

## Ghost Notes

**Q** I'm still learning about drumming, and I've heard a lot about playing "ghost notes." Can you tell me exactly what that is?

Stephen Gibson  
via Internet

**A** Ghost notes are low-volume strokes played "in between" backbeats and accented strokes on the snare drum. They are called "ghost notes" because they are more "felt" than "heard." However, they serve to create a subtle movement and feel in a drum pattern.

In technical terms, ghost notes are played by raising the stick only an inch off the surface of the drumhead. This is in contrast to accented notes that are played from a higher position for more volume.

An absolute giant when it comes to ghost-stroke technique is David Garibaldi, the once and current drummer for Tower Of Power. His funky patterns are legendary, and are built on the use of ghost notes. David has written columns for *MD* on the subject. For information contact our back-issue department at (973) 239-4140, or email [sueh@moderndrummer.com](mailto:sueh@moderndrummer.com).

## Drum Rack Advantages

**Q** I'm trying to reduce my set-up and breakdown time for practices and gigs. My set consists of 10", 12", 14", and 16" toms—all suspended. I'm currently using four stands with miscellaneous clamps to mount the toms and my cymbals. Is it really faster to set up using a rack system versus using individual cymbal and tom stands? If not, what other advantages can you share about using a rack system?

Larry Oshiro  
via Internet

**A** The primary advantage of a rack system is that the kit can be set up the same way every time, with no possibility of the positioning of all the items ever changing. This advantage becomes greater the larger and more complex the kit is. Your kit is not particularly large in terms of drums and cymbals. However, do you use any percussion instruments (bells, blocks, drumset tambourine) or other special effects? Do you mike your drums? Mounts for these items can also be affixed to your rack, keeping everything "locked in" for easy setup. And since all of the mounts can stay fixed to the rack, it's easy and fast to insert tom arms, cymbal booms, etc.

Another advantage of a rack can be strength. Depending on its size and configuration, a rack can be more stable than individual stands for supporting drums—especially suspended "floor" toms.

*MD* senior editor Rick Van Horn adds: "Another appealing feature of a drum rack is the amount of floor space it can save. For example, I have a kit consisting of one bass drum, three rack toms, two floor toms, a primary snare, a secondary snare and a tombek (both to my left), two traditional hi-hats, one aux hi-hat, fourteen cymbals, one cowbell, one drumset tambourine, and three microphone boom arms—all mounted on a three-sided rack measuring 5 1/2' across the front and 5' deep on each side. Were I to use traditional stands for all of that equipment, the 'footprint' of the kit would be much larger."

The downside to using a rack for a mod-



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erate-size kit is that it can wind up being heavier than the individual stands you'd otherwise use. (This becomes less the case as you replace more and more stands in a larger setup.) It can also require a larger bag to transport.

## Drummer Slang

**Q** I'm a little confused about some drummer slang. Please help me out with definitions for the following terms: fat, backbeat, groove, chops, and trash.

Glenn Hammel  
Suffolk, NY

**A** Some of the terms used to describe drum sounds or performance styles can be pretty vague. But it's a little like the terms used to describe wines ("...piquant, with just a hint of pretentiousness..."). Over a period of time, people get to know the definition more by experiencing what a term conveys than by any literal meaning of the term itself. All that being said, we'll try to give you *some* idea of what your listed terms mean.

**Fat:** Usually referring to a drum sound, this generally means a very big, full-bodied sound with lots of presence. It doesn't nec-

essarily mean loud, but definitely a major element in the music.

**Backbeat:** Literally, this refers to the beats in a measure opposite the downbeats. If you're in 4/4 time, beats 1 and 3 are downbeats, beats 2 and 4 are backbeats.

More specifically, this term usually refers to the beats played on a snare drum that establish a simple, powerful groove or pattern, as in, "Just lay down a solid backbeat." Certain drummers are famous for their backbeat. Al Jackson of Booker T. & The MG's is perhaps the greatest of all time; more recent examples are John "JR" Robinson and any number of top country drummers, like Eddie Bayers or Paul Leim.

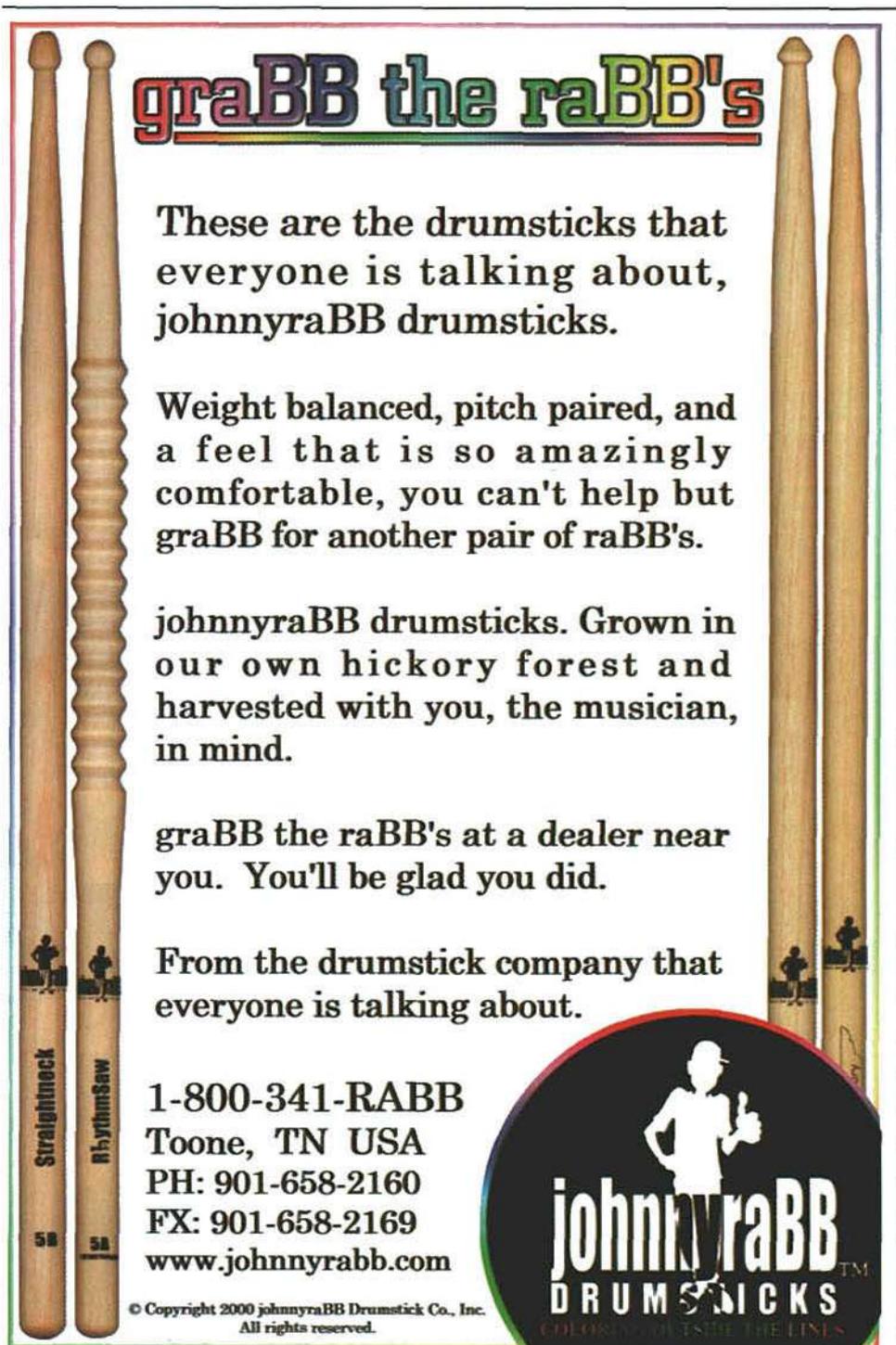
**Groove:** This term has several meanings. One refers to the nature of the music being played. Usually, "groove" music is fairly straightforward and simple, very rhythmic, and designed expressly to "move" the listener physically. R&B, blues, funk, and some pop music are all primarily "groove" styles.

However, *any* music can (and should) "groove," in the sense that the musicians should be mentally and musically linked, the direction of the playing should be a unified one, and the overall outcome should be that the listener is fully engaged. Even very "busy" music (fusion, jazz, progressive rock, etc.) can and should groove in this fashion.

When used as a verb, "to groove" means to lay down the solid time feel and rhythmic structure that *makes* a song have a great groove. ("He really knows how to groove.") Again, this also involves listening to and locking in with other musicians. Classic examples of groove drummers include Bernard Purdie, Jeff Porcaro, Clyde Stubblefield, and John "Jabo" Starks.

**Chops:** This term also has a double meaning. If a drummer is said to "have chops" or "be working on his chops," it refers to technical abilities, such as speed, dexterity, the ability to play lots of notes in fills, etc. No particular style is involved; jazz, rock, or any other type of drummers might have "chops."

If a drummer is said to be *playing* with a lot of chops, that means that he or she is playing a fairly busy part, with a lot of notes. This could be meant as a compliment or as a criticism, depending on the music and who is making the comment. Mike Portnoy, with Dream Theater, plays with "lots of chops," because such playing is appropriate for the band's style. If he were



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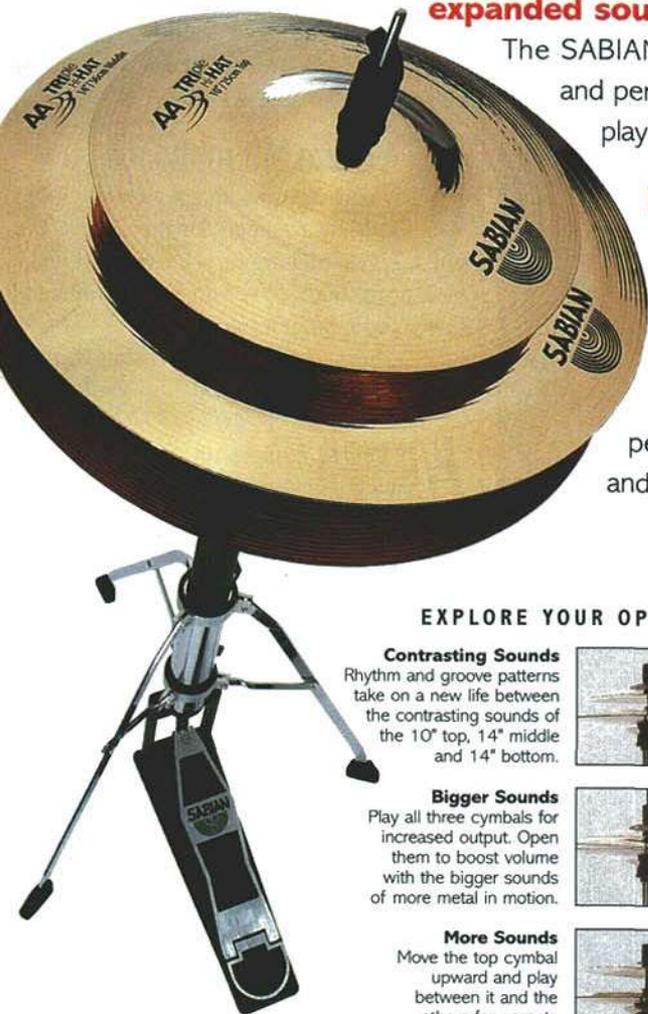
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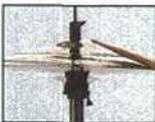


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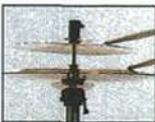
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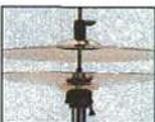
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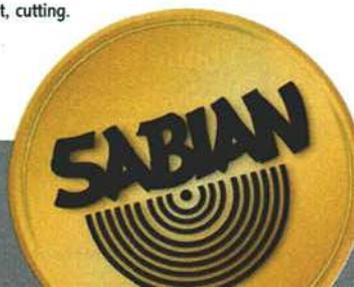
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playing the same way in a country or R&B tune, however, it would be inappropriate.

By the way, nothing says that a drummer can't be both a groove player *and* a chops player. Dennis Chambers, Billy Cobham, David Garibaldi, and Carter Beauford (among others) are masters of both styles.

**Trash:** This generally refers to a certain characteristic of cymbal sounds. The explosive, washy, sheet-metal sort of sound that a China cymbal produces (as opposed to the more bell-like sound of a standard cymbal) is the greatest example of trash-

ness. Even within China cymbals, certain models will have more of this characteristic than others. In addition, other types of cymbals—crashes, rides, and even hi-hats—can sometimes contain a certain amount of "trashiness" in their sound.

## Shell Sources

**Q** I have several old drums that have been painted and drilled so many times that restoration is no longer an option. I'm interested in replacing the shells only, since all of the hardware looks

good. Where can I buy just shells?

Russ Cooke  
via Internet

**A** Several companies offer "raw" drumshells. Try contacting: Eames Drum Co. (229 Hamilton St., Saugus, MA 01906, [617] 233-1404), Modern Drum Shop (167 W. 46th St., New York, NY 10036, [212] 575-8893), or Precision Drum Co. (151 California Rd., Yorktown Heights, NY 10598, [914] 962-4985).

Universal Percussion distributes drumshells, but does not deal directly with consumers. Your local drumshop can order the shells from Universal for you. Their number is (800) 282-0110.

## Drum Microphones

**Q** My church wants to get a couple mic's and a clear screen for the drums. For mic's I was thinking of one overhead and a bass drum mic'. What do you recommend that's good, but not too expensive?

Matt Drumm  
via Internet

**A** If you're going with only two mic's, they can't be *too* inexpensive, or they won't do the job. (Keep in mind what it would cost to buy enough mic's—even inexpensive ones—to close-mike the entire kit.)

For your kick drum, there are several fine dynamic mic's that aren't terribly expensive. Here's a quick list of suggestions: Audio-Technica ATM-25, Audix D4, Beyer TG-X 50, K&K Dyna B 07, and Shure Beta 52.

If you plan to mike the rest of the kit with a single overhead, we suggest a good-quality stereo mic'. This will raise the cost, but will give you much better fidelity and a wider pickup spread. Stereo condensers will run \$800 to \$1,000 or more. If this is out of your price range, K&K Sound Systems makes an excellent monoral overhead condenser mic' that's priced quite reasonably. You might be able to afford two of these, and thus obtain the same sort of coverage you would from a single stereo mic'.

Audio-Technica, Audix, Beyer, and Shure mic's are generally available (or can be ordered) through most pro music stores. K&K mic's are a little harder to find. For information, contact them directly at (541) 888-3517.

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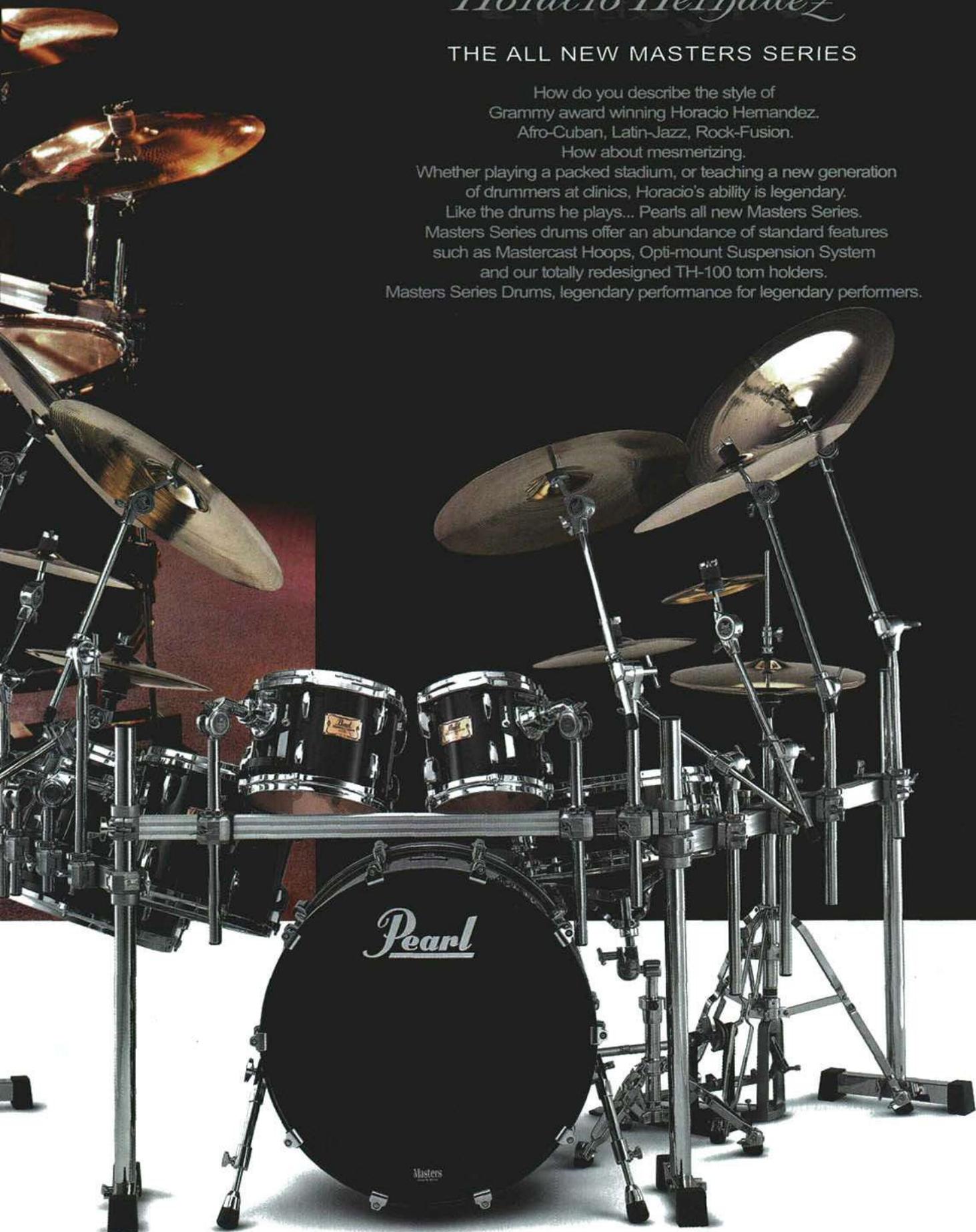
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## New With NIN Jerome Dillon

While most folks talk about "taking a step up" in reference to career advancement, Jerome Dillon's story is like a thousand-foot dash up the stairwells of the Sears Tower. After all, Dillon just landed one of the prized thrones of rock gigs, as the touring drummer for Nine Inch Nails.

Coming out of almost nowhere—and ultimately ending up with his first NIN gig on the stage of the 1999 MTV Video Music Awards—is more or less one big surprise for this thirty-year-old Columbus, Ohio native.

Dillon speaks of playing the awards show, recalling his nervousness. "It was kind of scary, playing in front of the most widely watched television awards program in American history," Dillon recalls. "Right before we went on, they were doing something with Madonna. She was like fifteen feet in front of me, and I was thinking, 'Well, it can't be all that bad. I'm sitting here behind my drums looking at Madonna's butt.' That kind of chilled me out."

Originally from the rock band Howlin' Maggie, Dillon received a tip to audition from his manager and went for it. Dillon explains, "I went down in the beginning of March, auditioned, and got called back in the beginning of April."

The transition from guitar-rock to synth-industrial could've been a rough ride, but Dillon was fairly confident about mastering the task awaiting him. "I had studied many different types of music on my own," Jerome says, "but I was never formally trained. Howlin' Maggie was an alt-rock, R&B, rock 'n' roll band, and I was playing that to my fullest ability. So when I did finally get into the Nine Inch Nails thing, it was a smooth transition because I was familiar with the material and I really knew where things were going."



Dillon employs an Orange County Drum And Percussion acoustic kit with an Alesis DM Pro sampler and ddrum triggers. With his gear in place and his mind on the right track, Dillon approaches his stage show with a no-holds-barred attitude. "At times

it's a challenge to play as musically as possible, when all you're trying to do is get the point across emotionally. Most of the time that means me trying to break every part of the drumset."

**Waleed Rashidi**

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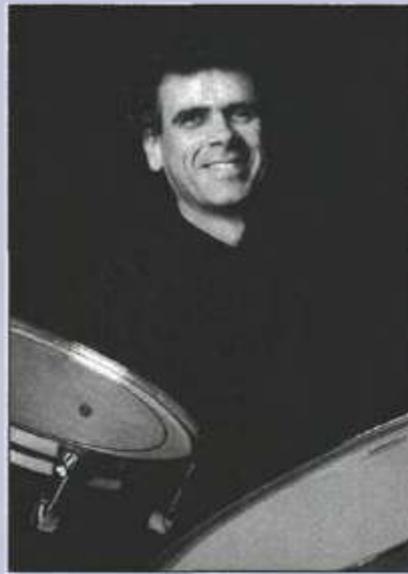
# David Garibaldi

## Back Home With Tower

**T**ower Of Power made David Garibaldi a household name among drummers back in the '70s. But David insists he had no intentions of going back to his old band—until fate intervened. "I went to see them at the Fillmore and enjoyed the show," Garibaldi recalls. "Then they went to Europe, and their drummer at the time, Herman Matthews, decided it was time to leave. So they called to see if I'd be interested. Initially I thought I'd just do a short tour of Japan in early '98. I hadn't played that music in eighteen years! But after doing a few shows, we all realized that I belonged there."

According to Garibaldi, it took him about six months to really get into the flow of the music. Even though he had a hand in developing their original sound, the years had changed his approach somewhat. "I feel a lot more comfortable with the music now than ever," he states. "It's probably because I feel more comfortable on the instrument in general, and I have a better sense of who I am musically and as a person. I think the experiences I've had over the past several years loosened me up a bit. So I think I approach the music in a much looser way. It's still in the tradition of the music, and it's still very groove- and part-oriented. But I just play it differently."

The Tower concerts cover all the eras of the band, and Garibaldi admits he had to relearn some of the parts. "I changed some of the things because I felt I needed to either upgrade them or make them simpler to play. I made minor modifications to almost everything. I would think, 'Is this the way I want to do it now? Does this make sense, or was I just trying to prove a point that I could do it back then?' I moved a few snare drum hits or used a different bass



drum beat or simplified a hi-hat pattern. When we do the tunes everybody likes, I still play those pretty much the same way. And since I've been back for the past year and a half, we've changed things further, added a lot of things, and changed the arrangements. It's a very dynamic situation."

Tower's double-CD anthology, *What Is Hip?*, was recently released, as was a live record, *Soul Vaccination: Tower Of*

*Power Live*. "By the time we got to the end of last year, when we decided to record the shows, we were all pretty toasted from so much touring," David says. "Still, I think the performances on the record are really cool."

Garibaldi can't say enough about what a pleasure it is to be playing with his old bandmates. "I realized this was something I was perfectly suited for," he says. "I get along great with the guys in the band. I don't have anyone looking over my shoulder, and I have room to create and do all the crazy things I want to do. And I get to play with Rocco Prestia, one of the greatest bass players who ever lived. So it's incredible. I feel like I'm at home."

The band is planning to record a new studio album in the spring of 2000.

**Robyn Flans**

## Filter's Steven Gillis Title Holder

**A** couple of years ago Steven Gillis got a call from his old drummer friend Matt Walker, who had been playing in Filter. Walker told him to go buy Filter's *Short Bus* and learn it, because he was going to get the call within twenty-four hours. *Eighteen months later*, Filter's Richard Patrick showed up at a weekly jazz improv gig Steven was playing and asked him to join the band. As the man once sang, what a long strange trip it's been.

Gillis, for his part, wasn't sitting by the phone waiting. Instead he was out there playing any gig he could get, no matter the style or pay. "I felt like that was when I really learned how to be a musician," he says, "just by playing all night long for

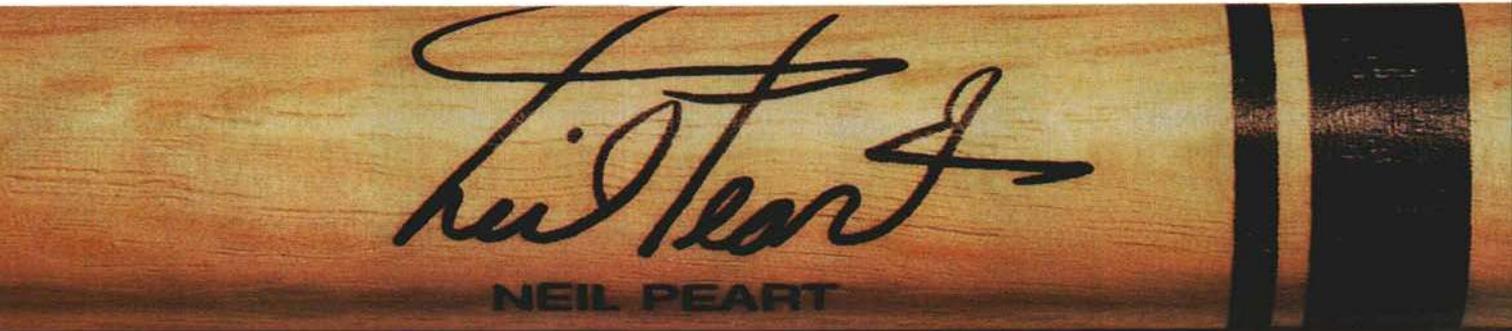
\$50." Though Gillis had been playing in jazz, blues, and rock bands, the Filter gig didn't phase him one bit. "I was a huge Ministry fan back in the day," he insists. "And I feel like I can jump into any situation and really sink my teeth into it."

While Filter's musical style involves sequencing, Gillis was asked to come in and lay down live drums on every song for their recent release, *Title Of Record*. More often than not, he says he had to tone his inclinations down. "When Richard presented me with certain tunes, I'd be pumped up and I would know how I wanted to approach them. The reality of it was that I had to pull back and play simpler, which is totally cool." Then came the song "It's Gonna Kill Me," where the drummer had the chance to

play out. "The first take I did was 'the' take, with me just going nuts. I was playing way over the bar line and reacting to Richard, who was *screaming* his vocals. I needed to do *something*, and I reacted."

Steven's ability to play over the barline and adapt to changing moods gives Filter new depth. Gillis is not shy about guessing how he got this gig. "I think Richard asked me to be the drummer in Filter because of all the experiences I've had," he says. "He didn't see me playing with a metal or industrial band; I was playing with a ten-piece improv band. But he thought that my style, or my aggressiveness, or whatever it was that I brought to the plate, was what he wanted in Filter."

**David John Farinella**



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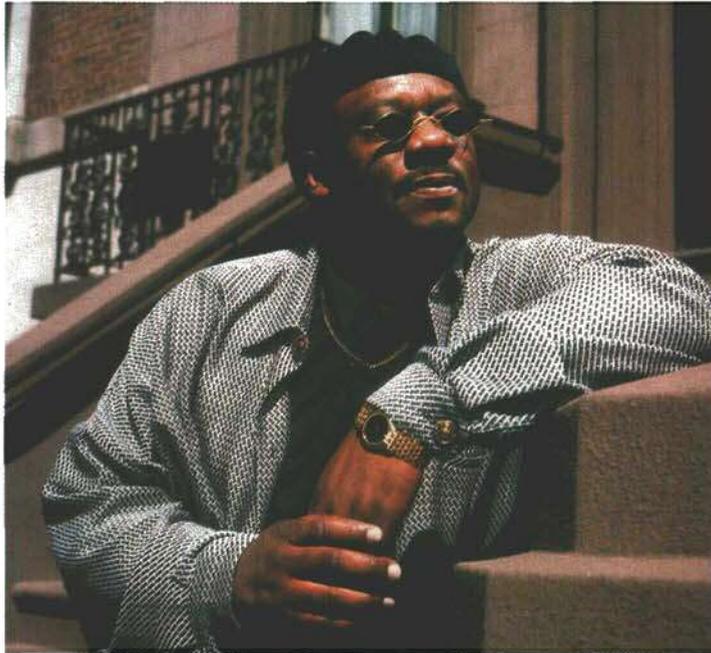
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# RALPH PETERSON Is BACK!

Who said he *went* anywhere? Seems the master jazz drummer has been prolific enough, both with his Fo'tet and guesting on others' albums. So why is the jazz drummer/bandleader calling his ninth album, on Sirocco Jazz, *Back To Stay*?

To be blunt, Peterson's substance abuse put him out of touch. For those concerned with how several years of sobriety have affected the thirty-seven-year-old Peterson's playing, rest assured, the boisterous, rollicking fills are all there. Ralph also talks a crusty blue streak. "When you make a comeback," he says, "you've always got the naysayers who are waiting for the other shoe to drop. This album is a message that I'm not going *anywhere*."

And the humor remains, first in evidence when Ralph introduced Don Byron's clarinet to his Fo'tet in the mid '80s—a perfectly maudlin, disruptive touch. In addition, his quirky arrangements have emerged unscathed, as in his take on the Walt Disney theme from his 1994 album, *Art*. "If I couldn't laugh, I probably wouldn't be here now," Peterson explains.



"When I sit down to write, I'll just bust out laughing because of something new I've discovered—or from something I learned fifteen years ago that finally clicks in. That excitement is pretty much unmatched with clothes on!"

Ralph's song "Surrender" speaks of his belated nod to a higher power—although it's not a particularly mellow or subservient tone he takes. "No!" he snaps. "That's the nature of surrender: It's not always tranquil. Some shit I let go has claw marks in it! But most of my suffering

now is when the university is trying to remove something from the curriculum and I don't want to let it go!" The university Ralph's referring to is Rutgers, where he is a jazz drumming professor. "Swinging in 4/4 is undergrad," Peterson notes wryly. "Finding the groove in 17/8 is big-boy stuff."

For a young drummer looking to discover jazz, Ralph Peterson would be an attractive first stop. Ralph doesn't tinkle behind hanging plants so that nightclub patrons can converse freely. His Mapex drum sound is robust, his Sabian cymbals brooding and washy.

On these matters, Peterson reflects, "I was thinking recently to myself, You've hung around long enough to come back into style."

Not long ago, one of Art Blakey's daughters approached Peterson backstage at a gig. She had tears in her eyes, says Ralph. "She told me, 'I never thought I'd hear my father's sound again.' It was a chilling, spiritual moment that was more meaningful to me than any Grammy nomination."

T. Bruce Wittet

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## Brian "Brain" Mantia

### Primus Meets The Police

What do members of Faith No More, Limp Bizkit, Metallica, and Rage Against The Machine, as well as Bootsy Collins, Tom Waits, *South Park* co-creator Matt Stone, and legendary Police drummer Stewart Copeland all have in common? They each had a hand in the making of the recent Primus release, *Antipop*.

"John Bonham and Stewart Copeland were probably my two biggest influences as I was learning to play drums," says Primus drummer Brain. "To have Stewart agree to produce on our record was an honor for me. We walked into the studio and there were the drums that he had played with The Police, with heads that looked like they'd been on there for ten or fifteen years. He wanted to jam with me first, so we had two drumsets set up. We just went off."

Copeland's influence can be heard particularly in Brain's playing on the Copeland-produced track "Dirty Drowning Man." "When you have Copeland looking over your shoulder while you're recording, you can't help but draw on his influence," says Brain. "He actually suggested certain fills and patterns to use in the song and sat down and played examples. We talked shop and really had a great time."

As involved as Brain is in the modern dance-groove scene, creating sample loops and break beats for deejays on his own label, his drumming on *Antipop* is very old-school rock 'n' roll, with raw, live-sounding drum tracks. "I wanted the drums to sound as natural as possible," he explains. "I wanted to capture the sound that you would hear on a Jimi Hendrix or Led Zeppelin record."

Mike Haid

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A busy week on the Billboard Top 100 album charts the week ending March 28, 1981. **Steve Smith** and Journey *Captured* the number nine spot, while Steely Dan's *Gauche*, with drummers **Bernard Purdie**, **Jeff Porcaro**, **Rick Marotta**, and **Steve Gadd**, hit number 26.

March of 1985 was an active month for **Phil Collins**. He played on and produced Eric Clapton's *Behind The Sun* while enjoying solo success of his own the week of March 30 with the number-one hit "One More Night."

*Birthdates*

**Mickey Dolenz** (March 8, 1945)

**Kenny Aronoff** (March 7, 1953)

**Tony Brock** (March 31, 1954)



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**S**tephen Perkins will be playing drums live with **Tommy Lee's** *Methods Of Mayhem*. (The two may "duet" at times as well.)

**Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez** is on tour with The John Patitucci Quartet promoting John's new record, *Imprints*. El Negro and **Giovanni Hidalgo** play together on half, and **Jack DeJohnette** is on the other half.

**Steve Ferrone** is on the new Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers home video and DVD called *High Grass Dogs\*Live At The Fillmore*.

Legendary jazz drummer and band-leader **Chico Hamilton's** *Timely* was recently released on Wild Pitch's All Points Jazz label.

**Jose Pasillas II** is on *Make Yourself*, the latest album by Incubus.

**Jim Keltner** is on the soundtrack to the recently aired CBS mini-series *Shake, Rattle & Roll*.

**Pete Lewinson** and **Chris Sharrock** are on The Eurhythmics' *Peace*.

**Scott Krauss** and **Anton Fier** are on (respectively) Pere Ubu's *The Art Of Walking* and *Song Of The Bailing Man* rereleases.

**Simon Phillips** is on Toto's *Mind Fields*.

**Matt Abts** is on Gov't Mule's latest studio offering, *Life Before Insanity*.

**Charlie Quintana** is on *Under The Influences* by Mike Ness.

**Robin Goodridge** is on Bush's *The Science Of Things*.

Bruce Cameron's *Midnight Daydream* CD features drummers **Buddy Miles**, **Mitch Mitchell**, and **Neal Smith**.

**Matt Wilson** is on The Palmetto All-Stars' *The Other Side Of Ellington*.

**Mike Johnston** with the group Simon Says is out on tour promoting their debut CD, *Jump Stan*, on Hollywood Records.

Percussionist **Norman Hedman** is busy with two solo CDs, *One Step Closer* and *Taken By Surprise*.

32 Jazz has released *The Complete Muse Recordings* of **Dom Um Romao**.

**Gary Moffatt** is on *38 Special Live At*

*Sturgis*.

**Joe Ascione** is on Joey DeFrancesco's latest, *Goodfellas*.

**Scott Donnell** can be heard on *American Made*, the debut release from the Hal Lovejoy Circus, as well as tracks on Ben Lee's latest, *Breathing Tornadoes*. He will also be on Superfine's cut from the *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* compilation.

**Mel Gaynor** spent most of 1999 touring Europe, Japan, and the US with Robert Palmer. But in the latter part of the year he found time to complete a new Simple Minds album, slated for a mid-2000 release. Mel will continue touring with Palmer until 2001, when Simple Minds is scheduled to hit the road again.

**Alex Gonzalez** is on Mana's new *Unplugged* release.

**Karl Latham** has released *Dancing Spirits*, featuring Bob Malach, John Lee, Bryan Steele, Tom Guarna, Kermit Driscoll, Steve Jankowski, Kip Reed, Mitch Stein, and John Hart.

**Matt Chamberlain**, **Jim Keltner**, and **Butch** are on Fiona Apple's *When The Pawn...*

**Paul Deakin** is on The Mavericks' new album, *Super Colossal Smash Hits Of The '90s...The Best Of The Mavericks*, which contains four new tracks.

Dance Hall Crashers will release a live album with **Gavin Hammon** on drums.

**Gary Novak** is on Alanis Morissette's newest, the *MTV Unplugged* companion CD.

**Charlie Benante** is on Anthrax's recently released *Return Of The Killer B's A's (Best Of Anthrax)*.

**Guy Hoffman** is on Violent Femmes' new live CD, *Viva Wisconsin*.

**Abe Laboriel Jr.** and **Juju House** are on Scritti Politti's *Anomie & Bonhomie*.

**Bob Harsen** has been recording and doing live gigs with Glenn Hughes.

**Rich Redmond** is working with a variety of artists, including Susan Ashton, Big Kenny, and The Evinrudes. He can be heard on new recordings by Kelly Zullo and Ivory Joe & The Joy Kings.



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# Corey Glover's Nathaniel Townsville

by Rich Watson

**Y**ou might say that Nathaniel Townsley III is blessed. Though young and self-taught, he's already mixed it up with heavy-weight talent the likes of Mariah Carey, R. Kelly, Dru Hill, Stevie Wonder, Special EFX, Public Enemy, Chico DeBarge, and former Living Colour front man Corey Glover. But then blessings come naturally to Nathaniel. The son and grandson of ministers, he teathed on gospel in hard-driving Brooklyn church bands, making his performance debut there when he was just three.

Some of Nat's glitzier credits tread the paths of pop, hip-hop, and commercial R&B. But his gift, as he calls it, allows him enviable stylistic latitude. His fluid chops and seemingly effortless independence fuel the funky world-beat jazz of African guitarist J.C. Doo-Kingue (pronounced doo-KING-gay). And with muscular backbeats and a loose, balls-to-the-wall abandon he renders the requisite bash factor for Corey Glover's gritty, grinding groove. Despite some ruthless ribbing by his more rock-seasoned Glover bandmates, Nat's as convincing as a heart attack.

Whatever the vehicle, Nathaniel Townsley drives it straight to the pocket. His ministry of groove is built on a strong foundation of natural talent. But he also possesses a contagiously positive attitude, musical wisdom beyond his years, the humility to recognize what he

doesn't know—and the gumption to then do his homework, dig deep, and deliver the goods. We should all be so blessed.

**MD:** It seems like quite a stretch from gospel to Corey Glover. How did that happen?

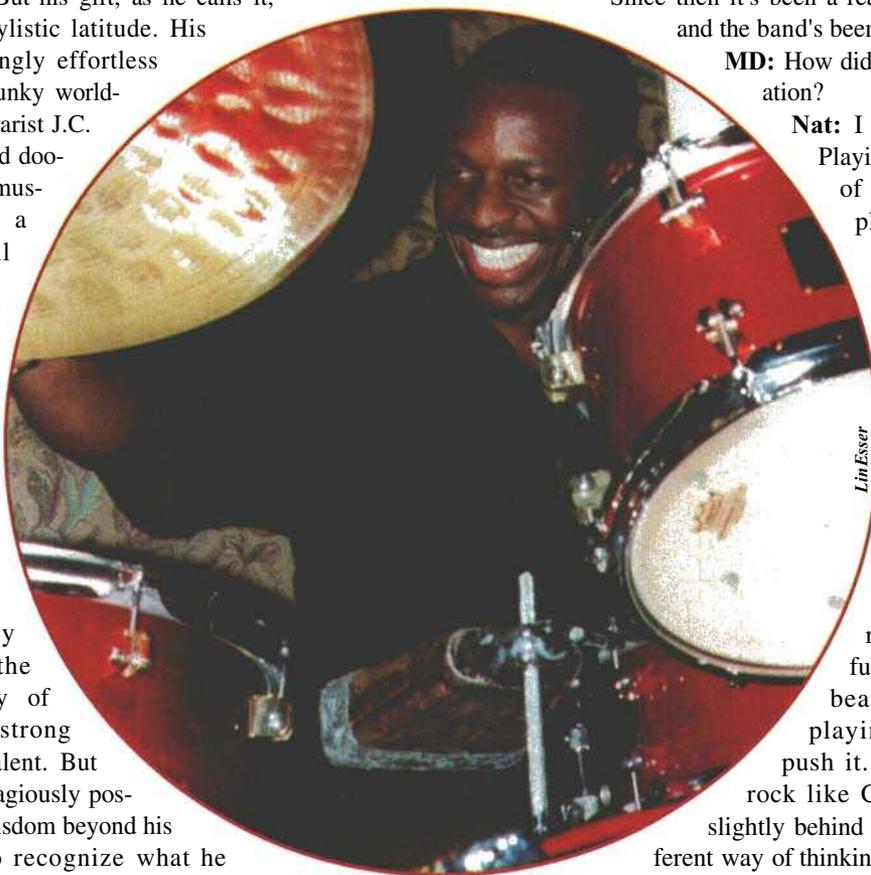
**Nat:** Originally I didn't want the gig with Corey. Other than gospel, I'd played mostly jazz, funk, fusion, and R&B. I'd never played a hard rock gig, and I didn't think I was ready for it. But Corey was in a jam. He had a gig in a couple of days, and no drummer. I'd been playing with Mike Giro, Corey's guitarist, at some showcases in New York with [Sony talent scout] Ron Grant. Mike was like, "C'mon, man, you can do it." So I just went for it.

Since then it's been a real learning process for me, and the band's been very supportive.

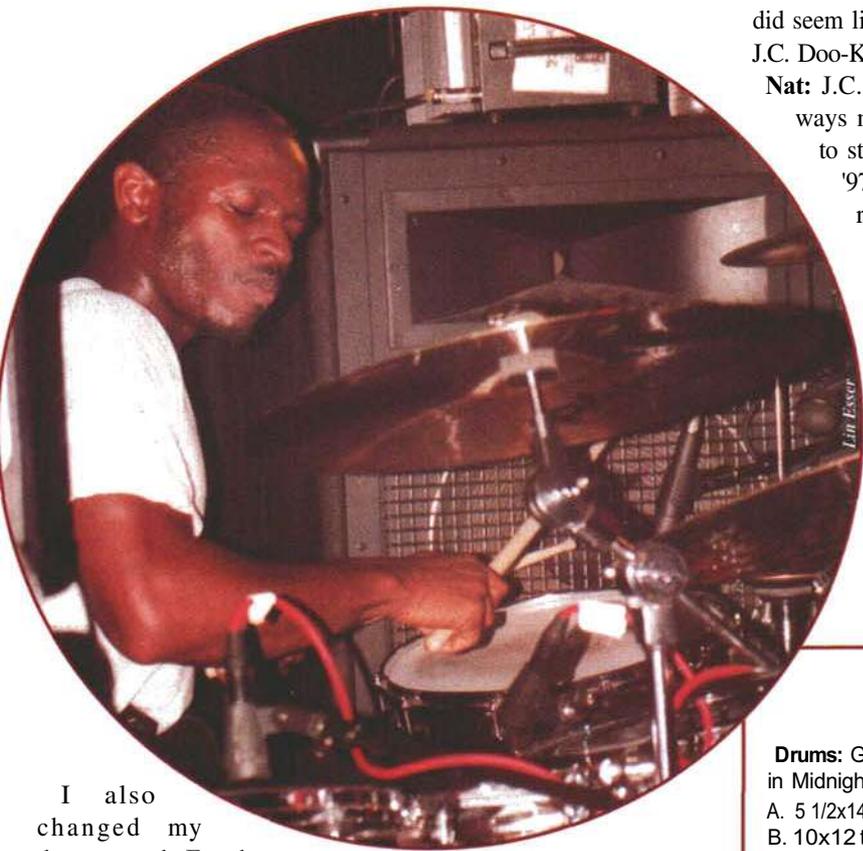
**MD:** How did you adapt to the new situation?

**Nat:** I really had to work at it.

Playing rock is a different kind of power. Obviously you play harder, and you play *less*. And for it to feel right, it should be a bit "sloppier" than, say, funk or R&B. The grooves are there, but they shouldn't sound so anal. On most R&B recording dates today, you play along with a computer sequence or a pre-recorded track or click, and you have to be right on it. I play R&B and funk slightly on top of the beat, or right on it. If I'm playing a fast rock tune, I'll push it. But for medium-tempo rock like Corey is doing, I play it slightly behind the beat. It's a totally different way of thinking.



Lin Esser



I also changed my drum sound. For the past couple of years I had played a four-piece kit with 10" and 14" toms, or maybe a five-piece with 10", 12", and 14" toms and a 20" bass drum. With Corey I'm using 12", 14", and 16" toms, a deeper snare, and a more open-sounding 22" bass drum. Normally I use a coated Emperor on the snare, but for Corey's record I put on an Ebony Pinstripe. He loves it.

Playing with larger drums and thicker heads also feels different. The tones are much deeper, and that makes you *feel* big and powerful. Playing that way, I feel like I have long hair—and like I'm 6' 3". [laughs]

That's what I love about music. There's always something new that challenges you to become a different person. Corey does that with his voice. He has so many voices, and he uses them to take on the different personalities of the songs he sings. I've had to do that too. I have to be one person for R&B, another person for jazz, and definitely another for rock. You know: Forget the technique, forget the wrists—get my arms into it—to *be* that person.

**MD:** When I heard Corey's new album [*The Redemption Of Reverend Daddy Love*], where you're playing *so hard*, you really

did seem like a different person than the drummer on the disk with J.C. Doo-Kingue [*Mood Swings*, on OCDK].

**Nat:** J.C.'s album was a different kind of challenge, but in some ways my approach was similar to Corey's gig. I needed time to study J.C.'s music. He offered me the gig in February of '97, but I didn't take it until that May. I'd never played real African music before, and I didn't want to just play it like fusion.

J.C. programs all the parts ahead of time, and he gives everyone a tape. He's one of those artists who wants you to stick to the pattern, and *then* bring who you are to the part. That involves the energy you bring to it, as well a degree of embellishment.

**MD:** Does it bother you to take so much direction from other players?

**Nat:** There's a way to embellish a part without taking away from its identity. When I finally joined J.C.'s band, he couldn't believe that I'd learned all the parts exactly as he'd programmed them on the

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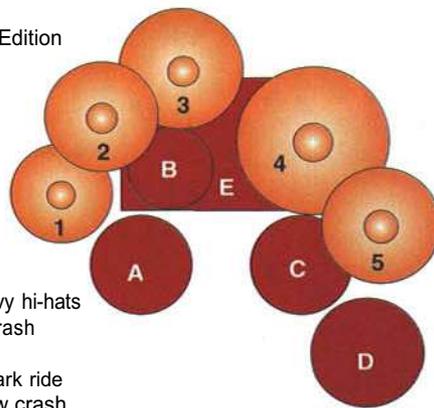
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demo. But who was I to tell this great musician from Cameroon that a particular snare drum hit shouldn't be there in an African song?

It's the same with Corey's band. Sometimes I stick to my opinion when I don't want to sound that sloppy, but for the most part I

# Nathaniel Townsley

go with what they say. I was the one who hadn't played hard rock before, and they've lived and breathed it for most of their lives! Am I going to tell *them* how it's supposed to sound?

Knowing that you'll never know all there is to life is the beginning of wisdom. A lot of musicians today tend to forget about the people who paved the way. But to be really happening you gotta pay your dues. There were players who spent twenty years reaching a certain level to be able to open a door that the new players are just walking through now. You gotta be thankful to the pioneers, the people who know the music, and you have to listen to what they have to say.

**MD:** Are you still paying your dues with Corey?

**Nat:** Definitely. At rehearsals the guys were screaming, "Hit 'em harder! Play sloppier! You've been playing R&B too long!" Then Mike gets on the drums and says, "See, it can't be all sweet and tight. It's gotta be *sloppy* and *hard*. Open hi-hat! Behind the beat! What—you need more *hair*? Play it hard, like a real white boy." [laughs] Arid every time they catch me listening to John McLaughlin or Michel Camilo on my Walkman, they say, "Go get some Zeppelin. Put on some rock, *jazz-boy!*" They're always pickin' on me, calling me "jazz-boy."

**MD:** After hearing the record, it's obvious that you heard them loud and clear. Besides, they must be happy. Corey seems to give you a fair amount of room to express yourself.

"Pursuing chops is about trying to be 'the best.' But there really is no 'best,' because everything you play has already been played before—by Philly Joe, or Buddy, or Tony—and probably some guy over in Africa playing on a log."

**Nat:** Sometimes I'll throw something in onstage that Corey isn't expecting, and he'll go "Whoa!"—he loves it. And sometimes he'll sing "off—add some accents or hits in the middle of a song—to try to throw *me* off, and I'll follow him. Corey's energy is amazing. He drives everybody else, and he likes everything up. We communicate a lot on stage.

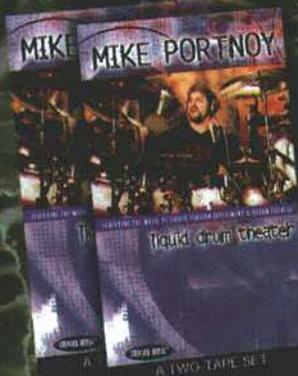
**MD:** So where would the track you did with Mariah Carey ["Outside," on *Butterfly*] fall in the free musical expression continuum? Something like "Play *these* notes"?

**Nat:** Exactly. You bring the music to life when you play exactly

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what they want you to play.

**MD:** Did that bum you out?

**Nat:** I just look at it as another challenge. There are some artists you work with who are real sticklers for your sticking to a pattern—nothing more, nothing less. The challenge is to make that part *feel* like it was your idea, and that everything you had went into it. If I didn't look at it as a challenge, I might get bummed out.

**MD:** Did Mariah beat you up at all?

**Nat:** [laughs] No, she was very nice. She came in and said hello to everybody. But she did let us know what she wanted. The verses were supposed to be real quiet. She didn't even want the beat to be subdivided on the hi-hat. Then she wanted it to build through the choruses. She said she didn't want too much going on—just to keep it pop-ish.

**MD:** So she didn't say, "If you screw this up, you'll never work again"?

**Nat:** [laughs] She might have said it in the control room.... No, she was really cool. We played to a pre-recorded track. I kept the sequenced drum track on in my headphones to hear where the tempo was. Playing to a pre-recorded track is different from playing to a click track. If it's just you and a click, you play right with it. They'll erase any reference tracks, like sequenced drums, bass, or keys, and build the track off of your part. But when you're overdubbing and everything has already been recorded, you have to be sensitive to slight tempo fluctuations. Like, if the singer is behind the reference drum track, you have to be careful with your fills and lay back so they don't sound like they're rushed. In that

situation, you have to follow *and* lead the music.

**MD:** How does the music on *The Redemption Of Reverend Daddy Love* compare with the couple of tracks you played on Corey's last album [*Hymns*].

**Nat:** There are more rock tunes on the new album.

**MD:** Is that because you finally got your act together?

**Nat:** [laughs] Basically. They're saying, "Okay, we can record the album now. Nathaniel finally caught on how to play rock. He's got the right tom sizes, the right sound. He's not anal with the feel...."

**MD:** You're doing a fair amount of R&B these days. Between that and the jazzier stuff with J.C. Doo-Kingue and the rock with Corey Glover, do the different styles ever tend to seep into each other?

**Nat:** You have to stay true to the style you're playing at the moment. If you're playing R&B, what you play in fusion doesn't usually work. You don't play a lot of notes in R&B. It's just really tight. It's all about the pocket.

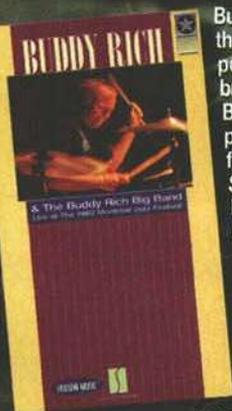
In pop music, you have to realize where the boundaries are. Sometimes you won't be able to say a lot of things. Sometimes you just have to keep that groove. Whoever you're working for has to be able to ride the wave that you and the other musicians create. And especially in R&B, the audience is depending on you to hold things together. When you're holding that floor, they can move and breathe, they understand the message in the music, and it can lift them up. That way you can take them on the trip too. It's no fun if you're the only one who's traveling.

**MD:** The other night when I saw you with Ron Grant, you did just

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# Nathaniel Townsley

that. Even when you were soloing—and that was killer—you maintained the vibe of the room and the band.

**Nat:** Playing a solo in that context just drives me to groove stronger to compensate for the other notes I'm playing. R&B audiences are people who go to a club to dance and groove. You can't take that away from them just to do your own thing. If you turn the beat around, they'll be goin', "Huh?" If you're going to solo, you can stretch without losing the groove. You can keep a steady hi-hat/snare or hi-hat/kick thing happening to keep people feeling the groove, and then throw in other things on top of it.

I've always admired the way Steve Gadd can keep such a strong groove while he's soloing. I've been working on keeping press rolls or single-stroke rolls going underneath a basic groove, and then breaking it up between the kick and toms. I never want to play something that can't *befelt*. Music is not made for displaying your chops and trying to impress people, it's about showing who you are.

**MD:** Nevertheless, you have some pretty impressive chops. Did you practice a lot as a kid?

**Nat:** Not really. I got my first kit when I was three, and the first time I played it, I got a beating. My mother was like, [in a higher voice] "Be quiet in there!"

I was always beating on things, like my mom's pots and pans, or with straws on the table at McDonald's. My father thought it was cute, saying, "Wow! Did you hear that, Mary? He's got good rhythm." And my mother was like, "Cut that noise out."

When I got into high school, they already had a great drum-

mer—Greg Hutchinson. He was a year or two ahead of me. Even then Greg's chops were incredible. I learned a lot from him. But I played trumpet during junior high and high school. That taught me how to read and how to play big band music. It also taught me how the different parts in the band fit together like a puzzle, and that every part is important to make the music happen.

**MD:** Is there anything you work on now to keep your chops together?

**Nat:** Nothing special. I just do single strokes, double strokes, paradiddles, and double and triple paradiddles. But that's not to get faster, just to stay where I'm at. For my lower body, while I'm playing on the practice pad, I keep time with my feet on the floor.

I guess everybody goes through the stage of trying to acquire as much chops as possible. But as you get older you learn that you rarely use it, except when you're soloing in certain styles. It's good to have if you need it, but eventually you learn that the music is more important than all of that.

It seems to me that pursuing chops is about trying to be "the best." But there really is no "best," because everything you play has already been played before—by Philly Joe, or Buddy, or Tony—and probably some guy over in Africa playing on a log. It's all been done before.

**MD:** How has playing gospel affected your drumming?

**Nat:** There are different situations within gospel. You can be playing with a small group with six to eight people, or a choir with twenty-five to a hundred. And there are different styles, too. Contemporary gospel has elements of R&B and even hip-hop,

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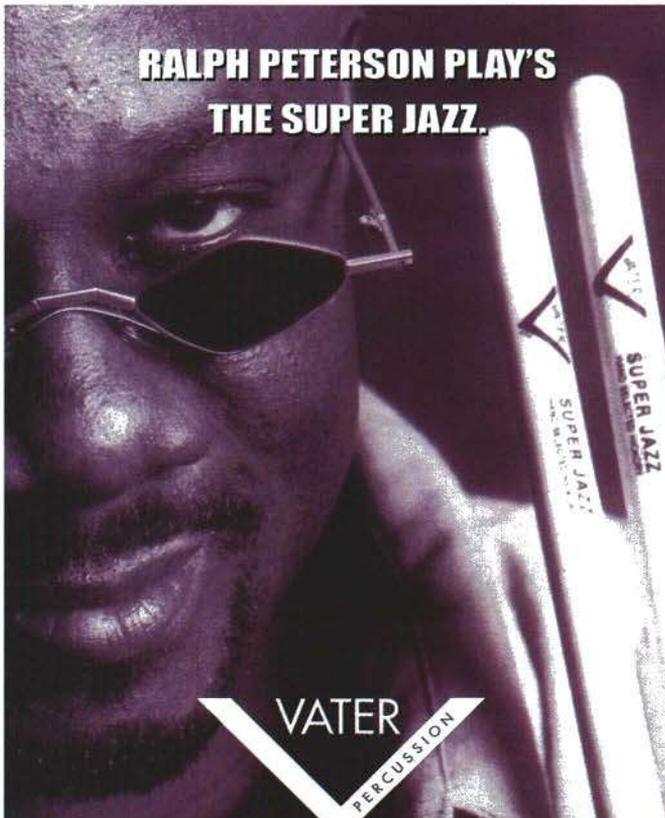
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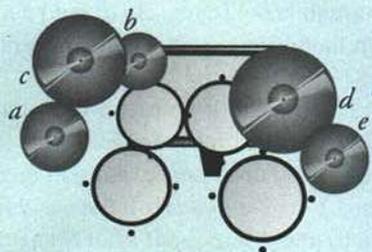


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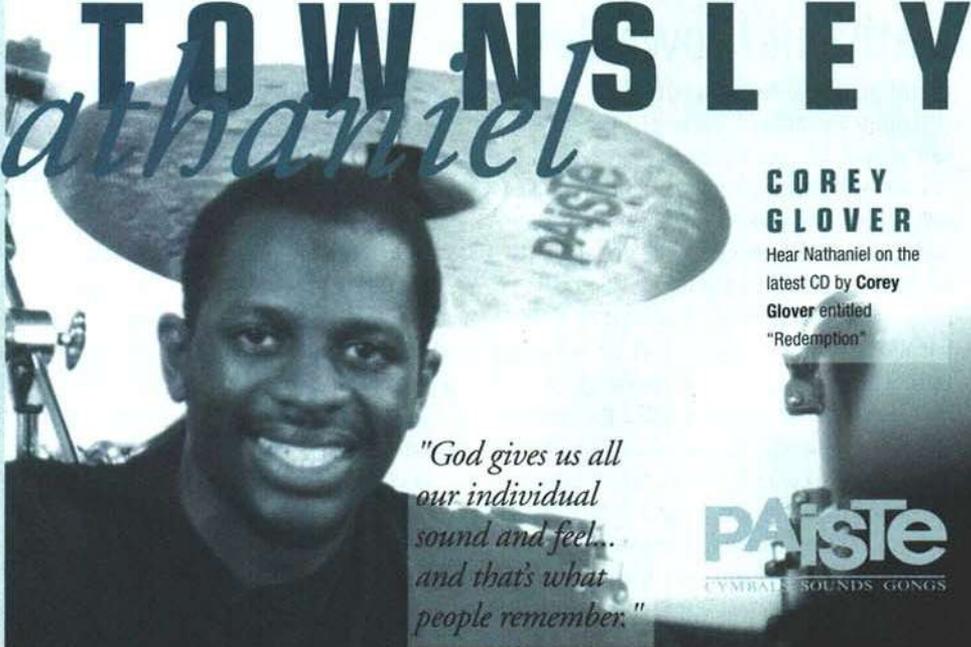
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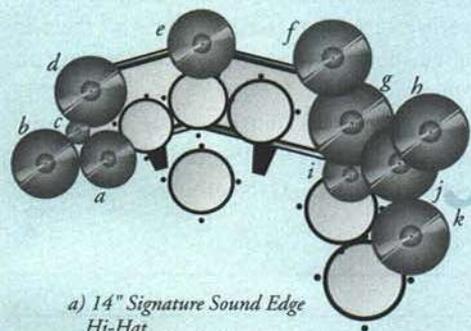
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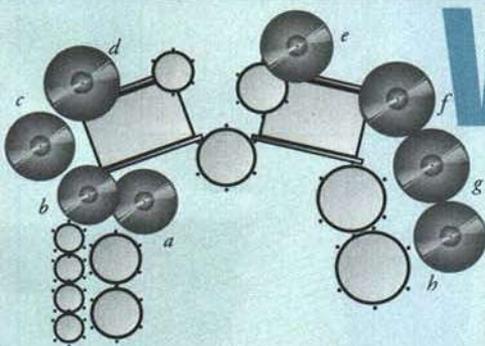
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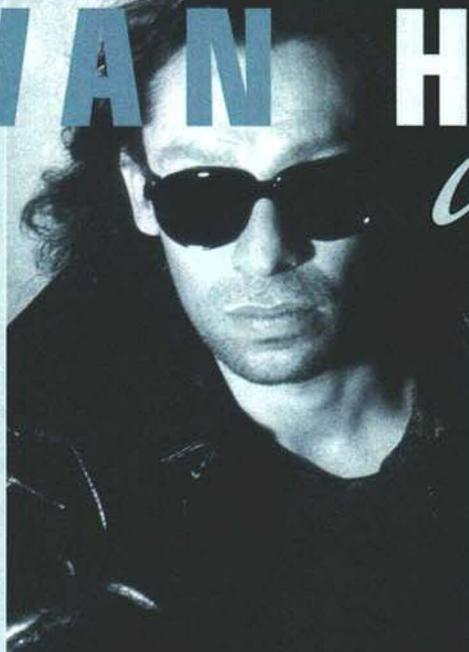
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- Brihadaranyaka  
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# Nathaniel Townsley

where you have to lay down a groove. The music is very spiritual and uplifting. When you're playing it, you just have to allow yourself to feel. It's not necessarily very technical.

I started performing when I was three, doing church concerts and services. The first thing it taught me was endurance. In black services, sometimes you have to keep a hard, fast groove going for hours. It also taught me how to hold the pocket. There's a groove happening in that music, but a lot of gospel music can tend to rush, because of the up tempos and all the energy and emotion. It also taught me about song structure, how to bring in choruses and bridges. It's all about levels; the music is supposed to climb. Really, all music should do that. Through listening to gospel drummers like Jeff Davis, Joel Smith, Bill Maxwell, Gerald Haywood, Monte Grier, and a guy who played with my father named Tommy Spivey, I learned how to play the right thing for the various parts in the song form.

Then when I was about fourteen I started listening to jazz. That opened my ears to a whole other thing.

**MD:** Are you still playing gospel music?

**Nat:** I still play at my father's church whenever I'm in town.

**MD:** In recent years you've been working with some artists who write pretty explicit lyrics. Do you ever have difficulty reconciling your background and spirituality with the lyrics in some of the material you play?

**Nat:** There is some music out there, like some of the Dru Hill stuff, that's just about sex. But there's a poetry in some of it that's about making love—not just a quickie in the hallway. With

Corey's music—you kind of have to know Corey. He likes to push people's buttons to make them think. He likes to create that conflict.

I also recognize that music is a business. If I based everything I do on a spiritual aspect, I'd be broke. I'd also be musically limited. To grow as a musician, you have to be open to play with different types of people. Some are going to move you and influence you. Others are just going to serve a business purpose. It's not changing who I am just because I'm working with someone who's singing about sex or happens to curse more—a *lot* more—than I do. You have to take each experience for what it is.

**MD:** Being versatile has opened up a wide range of gigs for you. How have you developed that breadth?

**Nat:** For one thing, I listen to a wide range of music. I've been getting into Brazilian music lately. I think about tap dancers and the rhythms they do. And I listen to all the great drummers, from Philly Joe Jones and Buddy Rich to Max Roach and Tony Williams. And then there are contemporary guys like Steve Gadd, Vinnie Colaiuta, Will Kennedy, Steve Ferrone, and Dave Weckl. Even though all those guys are really different, they all play with a groove. There's a groove in everything. In rock, that's *all* there is [vocalizes a simple, heavy rock beat]. And there's a groove in jazz—but it's more like tapping.

There are so many ways I've heard things said on the drums, and they all get mixed into my playing. But the thing that ties it all together—and what I listen for mostly—is the groove.



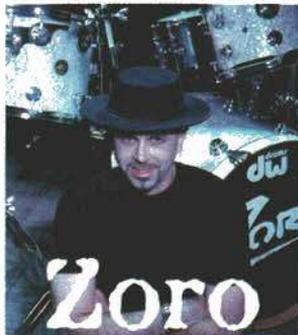
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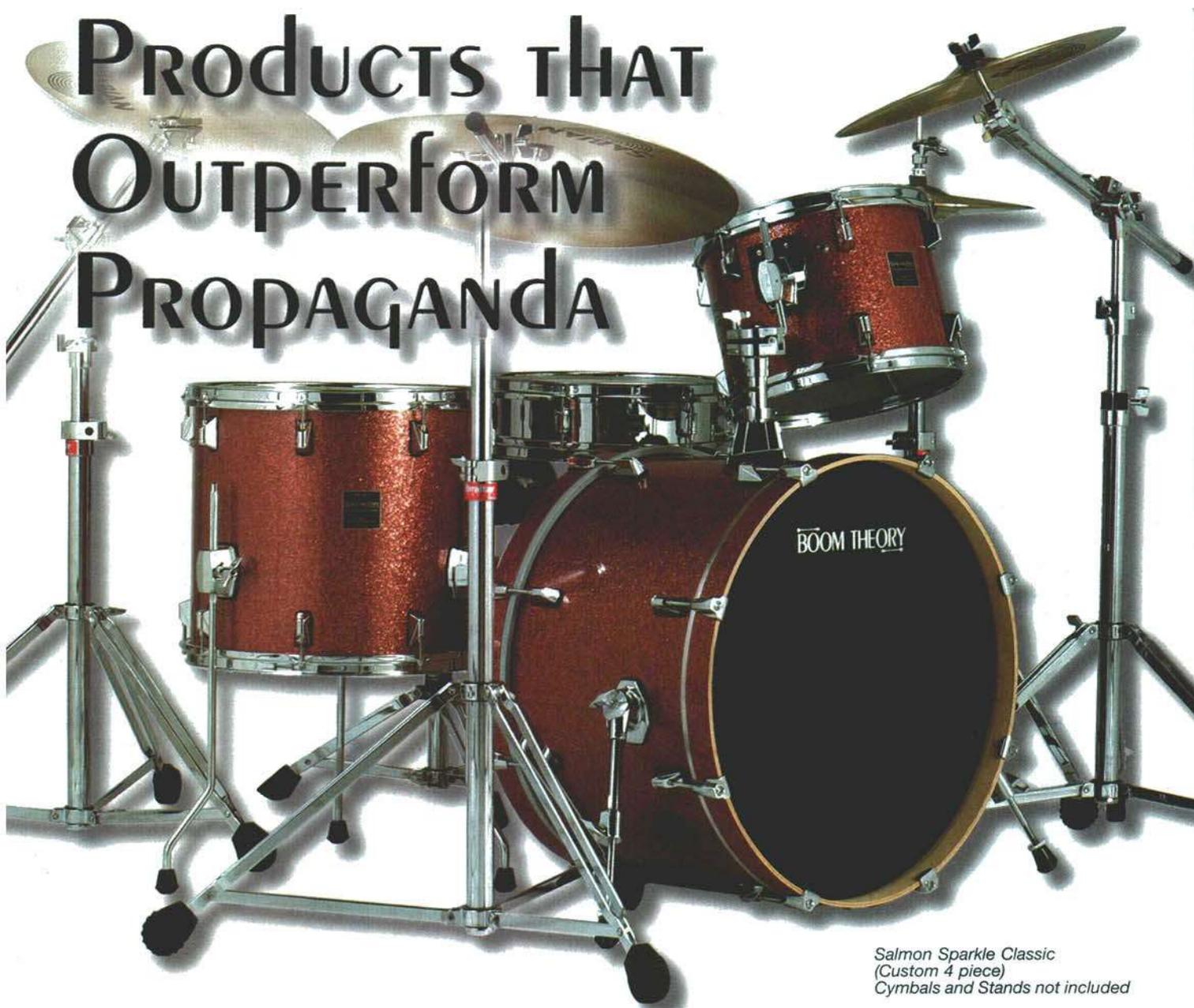


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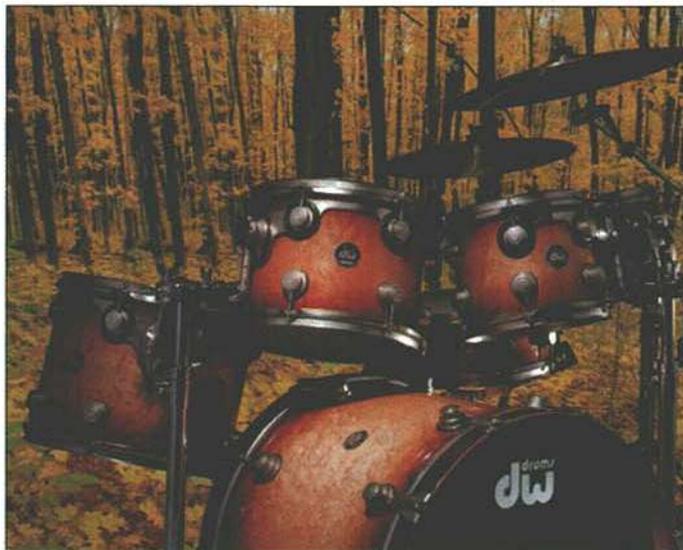
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## Care To Play A Brand-New Antique? DW Timeless Timber Drumkits

Drum Workshop modestly states that their new Limited Edition Timeless Timber kit is "perhaps the most rare and spectacular set of drums ever produced." Handcrafted from 600-year-old North American maple recovered from the waters of Lake Superior, the drums combine the "classic qualities" of this unusual wood with DW's drum-making expertise to create drums "with a sonic and visual



beauty on a par with the world's greatest musical instruments and unparalleled in the history of drumming."

The wood for Timeless Timber drums comes from trees that were seedlings before Columbus discovered America. Millions of these trees were harvested in the 1800s, and thousands became waterlogged and sank into Lake Superior as they were floated to nearby sawmills. The icy temperature and low oxygen content of the water preserved the wood, while leeching out the tree sap and minerals. The age, slow growth, and unique preservation of Lake Superior wood is said to give it "a noticeably more resonant, musical, and distinctive tone."

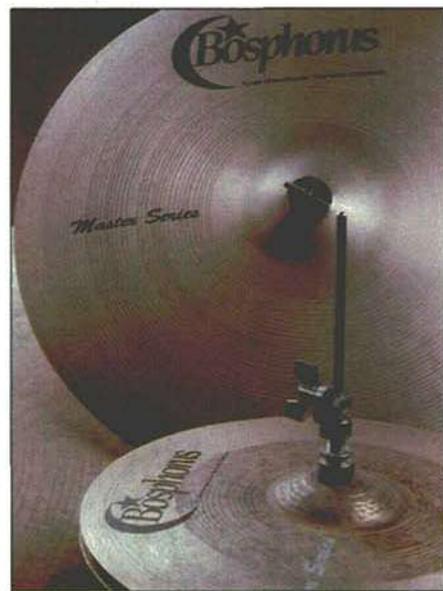
With the help of master drum-builder

Johnny Craviotto, DW has developed a process for rotary-cutting Lake Superior logs into veneers. Inner, center, and outer plies are then selected for their specific sound qualities, and crafted with the same shell/reinforcing hoop structure and TimbreMatch shell selection process used for DW's Collector's Series drums.

Only one hundred Timeless Timber kits will be produced. Each will have a hand-rubbed vintage sunburst lacquer finish, satin nickel-plated hardware, and a certificate of authenticity stating the kit's approximate "birth" and harvest date, age, and sequential serial number. Standard configurations will include 7x8, 8x10, 9x12, 11x14, and 13x16 toms, an 18x22 bass drum, and a 5x14 snare drum.

## The Masters Speak Bosphorus Masters Series Cymbals

If you're looking for a brand-new cymbal with the vintage sound of cymbals made in the 1950s and '60s, check out the Masters Series from Bosphorus. They're made "the old-fashioned way." To begin with, they are completely hand-made from the casting process through the final hammering. The alloy used is from an ancient formula passed down by first-generation cymbal-smiths, giving the cymbals what Bosphorus calls "a soft, 'played-in' feel." And the cymbals are much thinner than most cymbals made today. So much so, in fact, that they have a characteristic "ripple" at their edge when played. The series includes rides, flat rides, and two hi-hat models.



## Sometimes You Feel Like A Nut... Slicknut Quick-Release Cymbal Fastener

Tired of spinning—and invariably dropping—wing nuts off your cymbal stands during pack-ups? Tired of worrying about other people doing the same...and then walking off with your cymbals? Check out the Slicknut, from Samson Fastener Company. Its unique design allows you to tighten it down the way you would a wingnut, yet release it with the touch of a thumb.

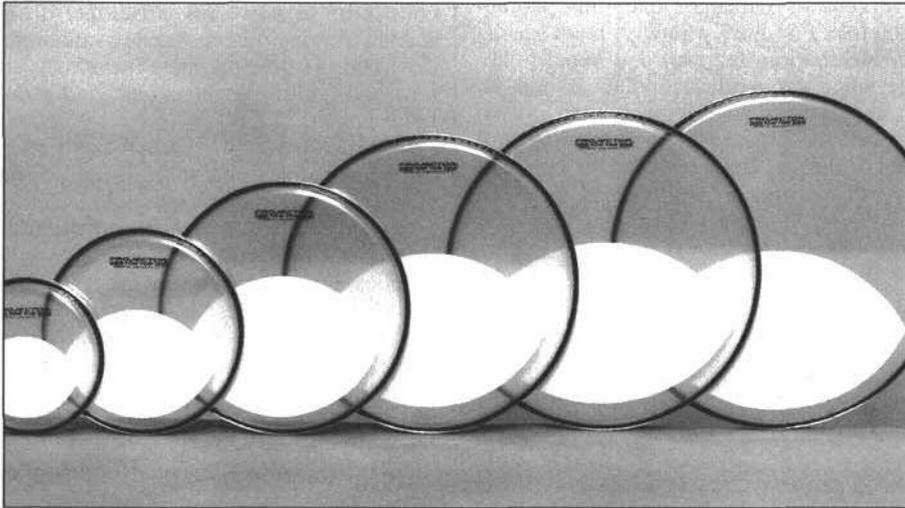
Made of stainless steel and aluminum, the Slicknut offers the convenience of a quick-release device, yet provides a locking mechanism that acts as a theft deterrent. A felt washer is attached to the bottom, creating a one-piece unit, and a universal adapter (included in the package) allows you to adapt the unit to any cymbal stand. Individual units sell for \$29.99, with discounts for larger amounts.



## Aquarian On The March Aquarian Projector Marching Tom Heads

Projector marching tom heads from Aquarian are said to have a clear, penetrating tone that projects on the field and indoors. A special "Impact Material" on the heads enhances both attack and durability. Aquarian was recently granted a

patent on these new heads, which are formulated using the company's "vacuum process," which virtually eliminates wrinkles and air bubbles between the two plies. Heads are available in sizes from 6" to 14".



## Silver Bells...Silver Bells Meinl Chromed Realplayer Steelbells

Okay, they aren't really silver. But they sure are shiny. Meinl's newest addition to their Realplayer bell line is a bevy of chromed Steelbells. The line includes four mountable models, two hand-held models, and three a-go-go bells. Also included are two shaker bells, which are made with a

small sleeve filled with shot located at the inside rear of the bell.

Each Steelbell includes two self-adhesive soft rubber dampers. These allow the player the option of fine-tuning the overtone spectrum.



## Kenny, Mike, And John Help Set 'Em Up Tama Drumkit Setup Video

Tama's Rockstar Custom, Rockstar, and Swingstar entry-level and beginner sets are now being shipped with a new 90-minute instructional video. Called *Out Of The Box And Onto The Stage*, the video features Kenny Aronoff, Mike Portnoy (Dream Theater), and John Tempesta (Rob Zombie). The three drummers literally open the boxes of new Tama sets and then show new players how to set the kits up, tune the drums, hold the sticks, and play some basic grooves.



There's also new before-released concert footage on the three drummers.

## Keep 'Em Rolling King Kong Kases Cymbal Tote

A full bag or case of cymbals can easily outweigh the biggest bass drum. So don't carry your cymbals, *roll* them to the stage. King Kong's Cymbal Tote is an ATA-style case that can hold a large selection of cymbals up to 22" in diameter. A pull-out style handle is mounted on the front, while recessed heavy-duty casters are mounted on the rear. This allows the cymbals to be conveniently moved in a hand-truck fashion. Suggested retail price is \$375.



## On The Stage And On The Field Yamaha Concert Snare Drums and Marching Percussion Catalog

Yamaha's symphonic percussion now includes five concert snare drums. Models include a 6 1/2x14 6-ply maple drum (\$625), a 5 1/2x14 copper model (\$595), and a 4 1/2x13 6-ply birch drum (\$425). Also included are 5 1/2x14 (\$410) and 6 1/2x14 (\$425) steel-shell models that feature a black finish and three air holes designed to create a rich, controlled tone.

Each concert drum offers unique acoustic characteristics and features extended steel-cable snares, said to balance sensitivity with clear articulation at all dynamic levels. The snare system features smooth, quiet strainers with vertical adjustment on both sides for precise snare alignment and tension, and high-carbon

steel wire snares for bright, delicate response.

Also new from Yamaha is a complete marching percussion catalog. With oversized pictures and summary text, band directors and educators can get an overview of Yamaha's marching percussion line. For those who wish more specific information, features and benefits are presented through bullet points around the product photos. A reference chart is also included as a tool for writing school bid requisitions. A free copy may be obtained by contacting any authorized Yamaha dealer or Yamaha's Band & Orchestral Division.



## Hot Hard, And Loud Brady Exotic Desert Linner Drums

For their latest creations, the Brady crew has trekked out into the Western Australian desert and goldfields to collect and utilize the area's unique timbers. Growing in some of the most severe conditions in the world gives these woods exceptional strength and density, which contribute to powerful, articulate drum sounds. Among others, woods available in the Exotic Hardwood range include desert redwood, goldfields blackbutt, and goldfields gimlet.

In related news, Brady has recently reintroduced solid-wood snare drums. First pioneered by Chris Brady back in the early 1980s, these drums are literally hand-carved from a section of tree trunk, with no plies, no seams, no joins, and no glue. All such drums are one-on-one projects with Chris Brady himself, and each customer will be involved in every step of the way. Shells are available in jarrah and wandoo.

Finally, Brady has launched its Web site. The address is [www.bradydrums.com](http://www.bradydrums.com).



## Mike To The Max Sabian Mike Portnoy Signature Max Stax and Max Splashes

The latest items in Sabian's Signature cymbal series are Max Stax and Max Crashes created for Dream Theater drummer Mike Portnoy. Max Stax are stacked effects models, available in low, mid, and high formats. Each consists of a specially designed Hand-Hammered splash or crash topped by a China Kang. Combinations available include 8" splash/8" Kang, 10" splash/10" Kang, and 14" crash/12" Kang. Their sounds are said to be "punchy and immediate, with a raw, trashy bite favored

by Mike in his fills, rhythm patterns, and accents."

Max Splashes are super-thin, highly responsive models in 7", 9", and 11" sizes. Designed to deliver "fast, simmering accents," they're available individually or in a set comprising all three sizes.



# Mic'Kits For Drumkits

## Audix Percussion Microphone Packages

Drummers and engineers alike should appreciate the convenience of Audix's new percussion mic' packages. Several versions are available, combining the popular D Series drum mic's with Audix's new ADX-50 condenser. Kits range from three to six mic's, along with up to four D-FLEX drum clip adapters. The full kit (DP3, pictured) contains one D4 snare mic', two D2 tom mic's, one D4 bass drum mic', and two ADX-50s for overheads. Everything is contained in a handy aluminum flight case. Packages range from \$931 to \$1,755.



## And What's More

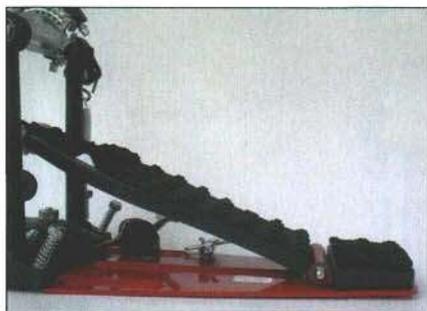
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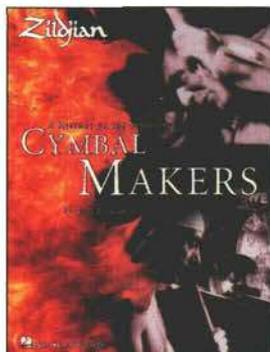
any existing Axis pedal.

For those who have problems slipping and sliding on their pedals comes **GRIP PEDDLER**. It's a polyurethane foam traction pad that adheres to hi-hat and bass drum pedals to provide additional control and comfort. A wide variety of "treads" is available, along with different colors and shapes (contoured to major pedal footboards).



If you're interested in how cymbals are made, check out **HAL LEONARD's** *Zildjian: A History Of The Legendary*

*Cymbal Makers*. Written by Jon Cohan (author of *Star Sets* and *The Drummer's Almanac*), the book is filled with information, history, and rare photos. A limited-edition hardcover version is available for \$29.95; a softcover edition sells for \$19.95. Both are available at music and bookstores nationwide, or by calling (800) 637-2852 or visiting [www.musicdispatch.com](http://www.musicdispatch.com).



Spanish-speaking drummers may enjoy *Como Tocar En Bateria*. Authored by Jorge Leon Pineda and Rafael Leal Ramirez, it's the first drum text ever published in Colombia. For further information email [jorledin@coll.telecom.com.co](mailto:jorledin@coll.telecom.com.co).

**PURESOUND PERCUSSION** has expanded its line of custom-made snare wires. New are a ten-strand unit for 10" drums (\$34.95), and twelve-strand units (\$39.95) for 12" and 14" drums. The new snare sets are said to produce a dryer sound than standard sixteen-strand models, offering increased articulation and less sympathetic snare buzz.



## Making Contact

**AQUARIAN ACCESSORIES**, 1104 N. Tustin Ave., Anaheim, CA 92807-1735, tel: (714) 632-0230, fax: (714) 632-3905, [aquarian98@sprintmail.com](mailto:aquarian98@sprintmail.com). **AUDIX**, 9400 S.W. Barber St., Wilsonville, OR 97070, tel: (800) 966-8261, fax: (503) 682-7114, [castle@hevanet.com](mailto:castle@hevanet.com), [www.audixusa.com](http://www.audixusa.com). **AXIS PERCUSSION**, 24416 S. Main St., #311, Carson, CA 90745, tel: (888) 549-2947, fax: (310) 549-7228. **BOSPHORUS**, 6020 Dawson Blvd., #F, Norcross, GA 30093-1709, tel: (770) 662-3002, fax: (770) 447-1036, [info@bosphoruscymbal.com](mailto:info@bosphoruscymbal.com), [www.bosphoruscymbal.com](http://www.bosphoruscymbal.com). **BRADY DRUMS**, 17 Stone St., Armadale, WA 6112, Australia, tel: (011) 61-8-9497-2212 fax: (011) 61-8-9497-2242, [cpbrady@merrilweb.com.au](mailto:cpbrady@merrilweb.com.au), [www.bradydrums.com](http://www.bradydrums.com). **DRUM WORKSHOP**, 101 Bernoulli Circle, Oxnard, CA 93030-8011, tel: (805) 485-6999, fax: (805) 485-1334, [DWDrums@aol.com](mailto:DWDrums@aol.com), [www.dwdrums.com](http://www.dwdrums.com). **GRIP PEDDLER**, Unichem Industries, 1100 Calle Cordillera, San Clemente, CA 92673, tel: (949) 361-9999, fax: (949) 361-9998, [www.grippeddler.com](http://www.grippeddler.com). **HAL LEONARD CORP.**, 7777 W. Bluemound Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53213, tel: (414) 774-3630, fax: (414) 774-3259. **KING KONG KASES**, PO Box 6595, Ashland, VA 23005, tel: (804) 798-7320, fax: (804) 798-7323, [koeniginc@earthlink.net](mailto:koeniginc@earthlink.net). **MEINL PERCUSSION**, c/o Tama Drums (see below) or Chesbro Music Co., PO Box 2009, Idaho Falls, ID 83403-2009, tel: (208) 522-8691, fax: (208) 522-8712, [cmc@srv.net](mailto:cmc@srv.net). **PURESOUND PERCUSSION**, 1759 Glendon Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90024, tel/fax: (310) 441-2976, [puresound@earthlink.net](mailto:puresound@earthlink.net). **SABIAN**, 219 Main St., Meductic, NB E6H 2L5, Canada, tel: (506) 272-2019, fax: (506) 272-2081, [www.sabian.com](http://www.sabian.com). **SAMSON FASTENER CO.**, 1 Gigante Dr., Hampstead, NH 03841, tel: (603) 329-4313, fax: (603) 329-4741, [www.slicknut.com](http://www.slicknut.com). **TAMA**, 1726 Winchester Rd., Bensalem, PA 19020-4542, tel: (215) 638-8670, fax: 215-245-8583. **YAMAHA** (Band & Orchestral Division), 3445 E. Paris Ave., S.E. Grand Rapids, MI 49512-0899, tel: (616) 940-4900, fax: (616) 949-7721, [www.yamahadrums.com](http://www.yamahadrums.com).

### Corrections

The *Making Contact* listing in the December '99 issue incorrectly listed the Web address for Yamaha drum information. The correct site is [www.yamahadrums.com](http://www.yamahadrums.com).

Contact information for MIM Films, distributor of the *Anga Mania* video listed in November '99's *New And Notable*, was incorrect. The toll-free order number is (800) 997-2972; MIM's direct number is (212)358-3877.



## Cadeson Royal Custom Chinese Water Color Snare Drum East meets West to create a work of musical art.

by Rick Mattingly

**Y**ou can't judge a drum simply by its finish. However, the attention to detail (or lack thereof) that is immediately apparent when first viewing an instrument often does reflect its overall quality. Such is the case with Cadeson's Royal Custom snare drum.

Cadeson (pronounced KAYdeson) is a relatively new drum company from Taiwan. Besides a variety of wood- and metal-shell snare drums, they offer complete drumkits, timbales, hardware, and xylophones.

The most obvious—and striking—feature of the Royal Custom snare we reviewed is the hand-painted "Chinese Water Color Design" graphics. These illustrate different plants, such as plum, orchid, chrysanthemum, and bamboo. The dark-brown paint against the golden hue of the maple shell is offset by gold-finished lugs and hoops. The result is a truly beautiful drum. And although

every drum features a similar design, each one is unique due to the hand-painting.

Of course, good looks do not assure good sound. I've been deceived in the past by drums that were more pleasing to gaze upon than to play. So before allowing myself to be seduced by a pretty face (or a good makeup job, as the case may be), I placed the drum on a stand, grabbed a pair of sticks, and found out what this drum really had to give in the way of sound.

Within moments the answer was obvious: This was a drum with which I could have a meaningful relationship. Regular playing with sticks produced a crisp, articulate sound with just enough meat to prevent it from sounding brittle. Snare response was excellent, right to the very edge of the head. Rimshots had a powerful crack. The dynamic range was wide: good response to very soft playing, and also standing up to heavy backbeats. Brush response





### Hits

- distinctive graphics give each drum a unique appearance
- excellent construction quality and attention to detail
- versatile acoustic performance

### Misses

- chromed throw-off and butt plate conflict visually with gold-colored lugs and rims

was also good. Overall, this is a fine general-purpose drum that would serve drummers who play different styles at a variety of volume levels.

The bearing edges on the 6-ply maple shell felt smooth to the touch. More importantly, the drum tuned quickly and accurately, which attests to the integrity of the bearing edges. The drum's ten brass tuning lugs are similar in design to classic tube lugs, but with slightly flared tubes. Tuning nuts are isolated from the hoops by nylon washers. Die-cast zinc rims are reminiscent of those on Gretsch drums.

The snare strainer/throw-off is a simple lever design. It and the butt plate were the only metal parts that were not gold-finished, detracting slightly from the visual effect. The snares themselves were standard 20-strand spiral wires.

Although the finish on the "Chinese Water Color Design" series drum is certainly unique, the drum itself is very traditional in

design and construction. Cadeson hasn't reinvented the snare drum; they've simply concentrated on getting it right. (Not that "getting it right" is all that simple.) The result is a versatile drum with quality sound and distinctive looks.

As we went to press, we learned that Cadeson is in the process of changing distributors in the US. For the time being, you can obtain information from Chris Wabich, at Accurate Percussion, PO Box 3901, Torrance, CA 90510, tel: (213) 482-4010, accper@juno.com.

## The Chinese Connection

### Cadeson Royal Custom Snare Drum

- shell:** 6-ply maple
- finish:** Chinese Water Color Design
- lugs:** flared brass tubes
- rims:** die-cast
- heads:** Remo Ambassador Renaissance batter, Ambassador snare-side

5x14(SH-1452):\$585

4x14(SH-1442):\$549

# Zildjian K And A Custom Mastersound Hi-Hats

by William F. Miller

Are your hats giving you "air lock" problems?  
Well, Zildjian might just have the solution.

## Hits

- "air lock" virtually eliminated by the Mastersound design
- 14" A Custom's half-open ride sound is happening

## Misses

- the overall sound of the hats is on the thin side

A few months back I had the pleasure of reviewing Zildjian's K Constantinople hi-hats (October '99 MD), some of the finest-sounding hats I've ever played (dark, warm, full). When the company sent us their most recent hats—K and A Custom Mastersound models—I was interested in hearing where *they* fall in the sonic spectrum. As soon as I started playing them, the thing that jumped out at me is just how broad the Zildjian product line is. These new hats are the bright, quick, and polite cousins of the K Constantinoples.



So just what's the deal with the Mastersound line? Well, in an attempt to eliminate "air lock" (you know, that lousy-feeling and -sounding occurrence that happens when air gets trapped between two closing hi-hat cymbals), Mastersounds have a specially designed bottom cymbal that has little crimps along the edge that let the air that's trapped between the cymbals escape.

Does the design work? In a word, yes. I didn't experience any air-lock problems with the Mastersounds in either the 13" or 14" K or A Custom models. That made for a very consistent chick sound (although not noticeably louder, as you might expect). The hats had a fast, easy-to-move feel to them, even when I was pulsing out fast 8th notes with my foot. And the ol' heel-toe rocking motion



on 2 and 4 felt effortless, with no annoying burps bubbling up between the cymbals.

I did notice a couple of general characteristics about the sound of all the Mastersounds. First, the overall stick sound is on the thin side, even in the K line, which would normally be where you'd hear fuller tones. (The 13s in the A Custom line—the brightest-sounding combination—are *very* thin and glassy sounding.) The chick is not overly "cutting," and the splash sound on all the hats is pleasant, although a little light.

Drummers who like a slightly more controlled-sounding pair of hats, one that won't overshadow the musical setting, will dig the Mastersounds. (I would imagine they'd be a breeze to record.) My favorites of the bunch were the 14" A Customs, and I particularly liked riding on them half-open. Their higher pitch combined with that indefinable A Custom tone made for a killer "wash" sound.

Of course, let's not forget their best feature: no trouble with air lock. The Mastersounds solve that problem...well...masterfully.

## Hat Trick

Model	Size	Price
A Custom Mastersound Hi-Hats	13"	\$382 (pair)
	14"	\$424 (pair)
K Mastersound Hi-Hats	13"	\$436 (pair)
	14"	\$490 (pair)

# Bear Percussion Drumheads

## From out of the past comes a new alternative.

by Chap Ostrander

### Hits

- Studio series provides depth and control for close-miking purposes
- Concert series offers bright projection with limited overtones
- Stadium series combines Mylar acoustic performance with Kevlar durability and character

**S**cenario one: A concert percussionist is about to perform Ravel's "Bolero." The opening section is known for the delicacy of the snare drum part. A successful performance depends on the player's ability to execute the part with great touch and finesse. The player is able to play the snare drum part from pianissimo to fortissimo, the drum responding with equal response along the dynamic range.

Scenario two: A rock drummer sits at the kit, slamming into the snare with tremendous force and speed. A successful performance depends on the player's ability to consistently execute the part with clarity and power. The snare complies night after night, performing with response and dependability.

What do these two scenarios have in common? In both cases the performers depend on their snare drums to do the job without fail, in terms of acoustics and reliability. A batter head that doesn't respond or that can't hold up will not make it in this business.

According to Bear Percussion, their drumheads will work in both of the above situations—and everything in between—and will never fail suddenly. Why? Because they are made of *Kevlar*, not *Mylar*.

For those of you who are tempted to stop reading now simply because I mentioned *Kevlar*, I invite you to embrace a new concept: *Kevlar heads are not just for marching anymore*. To learn why, we must take a quick look back.

### Out Of Hibernation

*Kevlar* heads with the brand name of Duraline were developed by Sam Muchnick (who also invented the *Mylar* drumhead) and Peter DeBear. Introduced in 1967, they were available in Studio and Concert models, which were essentially the same as they are today. Back in those days I used a Duraline head on my snare. I loved the definition and clarity it provided. Unfortunately, as sometimes happens, the company ran out of money and was sold.

Now, over twenty years later, Peter and Dan Muchnick (Sam's son) are back, having redesigned the coating material and the hoop of the old Duraline versions (with patents pending on both) to create Bear heads. The new brand offers an alternative to *Mylar*, and some interesting claims.

Bear heads come in three distinct lines. The Studio series is made of raw, untreated *Kevlar*, and looks like woven gold. The Concert and Stadium series start life as Studio heads, but are then sprayed with a coating that changes their sound quality. Studio

heads are available in natural finish only; Concert and Stadium heads are available in black or white.

The main difference between *Kevlar* and *Mylar* is that *Kevlar* will wear out slowly over the course of time, while *Mylar* can—and generally does—give out suddenly, without notice. Because of the fibrous nature of a *Kevlar* head, if a hole occurs in the playing surface, the fibers surrounding the area retain the total tension of the head, allowing you to keep playing. (Bear drumhead displays in music stores actually feature a head with a hole in it that drummers can try for themselves. It's quite an unusual experience!)

The bottom line for you, the player, is that a *Mylar* head may split or develop dents and pits where it has been struck with undue force. A *Kevlar* head will wear gradually. Even if a hole finally does fray through during your performance, the head will continue to function until you can change it. You can check the Bear Web site for testimonials from players using Bear heads, stating how they were able to keep playing, sometimes well *after* a hole had worn through.

### If You Play A Bear In The Woods...?

We were given a complete set of heads from the various series to test out. Let's start with the Studio series, since it's the most fundamental *Kevlar* head in the group.

The sound produced by the Studio heads is rich and dark, with no need for muffling. On toms they produce a fat but somewhat thumpy tonality (reminiscent of the '70s studio sound). On a snare I got great stick response and snare sound, but no ring at all. This would be great in close-miking situations where snare isolation is desired.

The real fun began when I put a Studio head on my bass drum. The sound was all punch with a slight ring. The head produced a dark fundamental tone with plenty of depth. It's like the sound and feel of a single head with a pillow up against it. When I used two Studio heads on the bass, the sound was all punch and fundamental, with *no* ring. This, too, might work well in the studio.

Concert heads are available only in snare and bass drum sizes. They're fairly bright, but with limited overtones. I tested this model on several different snares, and in each case the drum needed no external measures to control the sound. (No tape, no *Zero Ring*, no nothing.) At the same time, the drums all had great reserves of volume, and fingertip-touch snare sensitivity. One drum in particular—a 6 1/2x.14 wood snare—had never behaved well in terms of its voice. It was either too ringy or too boxy. Using a Concert head on that drum opened it up and gave it a fairly dry sound. I'm playing the drum now for a small local production that demands fullness but lots of control and sensitivity. I never would have considered using that snare for a gig like this before hearing it with the Bear head.

When used as a bass drum batter, the Concert head limits the overtones—as if you were applying some muffling to the drum. There is some ring, but the sound is more reserved. With Concert heads on the front *and* back, the drum produces window-rattling lows. But the sound is not out of control. The presence and punch is there, but the ring is reduced.

The Stadium model is the brightest of the Bear heads. It has, as Peter DeBear puts it, "All the obnoxious overtones of *Mylar*." Employing a different coating material than that on the Concert



model, this head produces the loudest, biggest sound of the three series. Used on toms or bass drums, it has a big, open sound. The toms sing and the bass booms. On a snare drum, you get a full sound with lots of crack.

My wife, classical percussionist Adrienne Wilcox Ostrander, put a Concert head on her snare drum and took it to several gigs and rehearsals. She reported that the drum responded with sensitivity and clarity. Even other players had positive comments on the drum's sound. One of them said that it sounded like a calf head.

Thinking in terms of jazz or low-volume applications, I tried playing brushes on the three head models. The coated surfaces of the Concert and Stadium heads took to brush work quite naturally, and the heads were very responsive. The response and sound was fine on the Studio series too, but the brush wires tended to get caught on the uncoated fibers of that model.

I discovered that using various *combinations* of Bear heads allowed me to fine-tune my drum sound—especially that of the bass drum. For example, using a Studio batter and a Stadium resonant head gave the drum punch and warmth, with very limited ring. Switching to a Concert resonant head contained the sound even more, and slightly reduced the depth. A Concert batter with a Studio resonant was short, deep, and punchy, with excellent definition. Changing to a Stadium resonant made the drum sound *deep*, with lots of fundamental pitch. A Stadium batter with a Studio resonant gave a big round sound with depth. Changing to a Concert resonant resulted in a big sound with reduced ring. Get the idea?

Another interesting aspect of Bear heads is that they sound better with age. Where a head might have sounded slightly papery at first, once I had seated it, tuned it, and played on it for a while, the sound improved.

### Takes A Licking And Keeps On...

Since *Kevlar* is touted for its durability, I decided to really test the endurance of a Bear head. I used the thickest, heaviest pair of sticks I own to pound on a snare drum fitted with a Stadium head, using as much force as I could muster. I had to wear earplugs

while punishing the head. Things were toppling off the shelves in my teaching studio/drum lab/basement. When I finished, I removed the head—fully expecting to see a replica of a lunar landscape. But other than some slight scuff marks on the surface, the head showed no denting or damage *whatever*. And it still sounded fine.

Some people have a concern about the physical risks of playing on a *Kevlar* head, which has been linked to tendinitis and carpal tunnel syndrome. This may very well be true with marching drumheads, which these days are often tightened with a pipe wrench. However, my experience with the Bear heads on a drumkit was that they sounded best when tensioned pretty much the same as *Mylar* heads. Under those circumstances their playing response felt like that of any other head.

### Look Ahead

If your only impression of a *Kevlar* head is that of a quarter-inch-thick slab that sounds like a kitchen countertop, you need to expand your horizons. Yes, Bear's *Kevlar* heads have the endurance to take anything you can dish out. But they also possess the sensitivity to be taken seriously across the musical spectrum, from classical to jazz to rock. Bear's advertising says, "Can you play with a hole in your head?" The answer is a resounding "Yes!" (Of course, they do sound better *without* a hole.)

## The Bear Facts

### Bear Percussion Drumheads

**Studio:** uncoated Kevlar, natural color only

**Concert:** coated Kevlar, black or white

(note: snare and bass drum sizes only)

**Stadium:** coated Kevlar, black or white

### Snare/Tom Batters

6": \$23.25

8": \$25.00

10": \$26.50

12": \$28.00

13": \$29.50

14": \$32.50

16": \$35.50

18": \$39.50

### Bass Drum Batters

20": \$64.00

22": \$67.50

24": \$72.50

Bear heads are unconditionally guaranteed not to fail due to materials or workmanship for a period of thirty days from date of purchase.

# Audio Technica KitPak Drum Microphones

by Mark Parsons

## You don't have to go broke to be heard!

### Hits

- exceptional value for the price
- admirable performance in live situations

A wise man once told me, "The world doesn't need another thousand-dollar snare. What we need are really inexpensive drumsets of decent quality, so that more kids get into drumming."

You could also say that while we're certainly not suffering from a shortage of thousand-dollar microphones, it would be nice to see some budget drum mic's of decent quality so that more drummers could begin amplifying their kits. And as a matter of fact, there has been a trend in this direction lately. Sennheiser's Evolution series mic's (reviewed in the January '99 issue) come to mind as a recent example. But even with these "value priced" models you're looking at a price equal to that of an entry-level drumset for enough microphones to mike up that same drumset. No, I'm talking low budget. *Really* low budget. Dare I say...*cheap*?

### Enter The KitPak

Audio Technica to the rescue, with their newly released KitPak drum mic's. As far as I know, this is the first (and only) product in a new category that should be of interest to many readers: entry-level drum mic's.

The idea behind the KitPak is to give the aspiring "amplified"

drummer everything he or she needs to mike up a basic four- or five-piece kit. The set consists of four mic's, two each of two different models. The Snare/Tom mic' is designed for use on snares and mounted toms while the Kick/Tom is for kicks and floor toms. The whole package comes in a sturdy plastic carrying case (including a bonus plastic drum key that clips to a cymbal stand). Suggested list price is \$259. No, not for each mic'. That's \$259 for *all four* mic's (and street prices, of course, will be even lower). Pretty amazing, huh?

So what can you get for this kind of money? Let's take a look.

### The Mic's

The two models share a number of features. Both are dynamic mic's with a cardioid polar pattern, and both feature all-metal construction with a nice semi-gloss black finish.

The Snare/Tom is a fairly compact cylindrical microphone, with a body 4 1/2" long and 1 5/8" in diameter. The weight is 11.4 oz. The front half of the mic' is a large windscreen (slightly larger in diameter than the main body of the mic'), giving the Snare/Tom the look of a somewhat shortened typical "dynamic instrument mic'." One nifty feature is an integrated pivoting-stand mount (also made of metal—yay!), which eliminates the need for a clip.

The body of the Kick/Tom is identical to that of its litter mate, except that the windscreen is of the "ball" type (giving *this* model the look of a typical "dynamic vocal mic"). All other physical

## Quick Looks

### New From Vater

The folks at Vater have been busy lately. They've introduced several new products, including sticks, brushes, mallets, and even a bass-drum beater. Let's take a look at all these new goodies.

### Sticks

Vater's newest drumstick models fall into two general categories. Three are based on the traditional 5B size; three others are based on the 5A size. All are made of hickory.

The new "Player's Design" models are the ones based on 5Bs. Smitty's Power Fusion sticks (named for Marvin "Smitty" Smith) are just a bit smaller, Virgil's Assault sticks (named for Virgil Donati) are a bit larger, and Chad's Funk Blaster sticks (named for Chad Smith) are right on the money. The differences between these sticks and traditional 5Bs (and between each other) involves the tapers and beads. Smitty's Power Fusion has a gradual taper and a round bead. Virgil's Assault has a thicker shoulder with a short taper, and a rounded (as opposed to perfectly round) bead. This model is also longer than a traditional 16" 5B, having an extra 3/8" to its length.



Chad's Funk Blaster has a thicker neck than a standard 5B and a fat acorn bead. The "Player's Design" sticks list for \$11.45 per pair.

One of the models that resembles a 5A is the Studio 2, which is slightly smaller than a 5A but beefier than Vater's Studio 1, with a thicker shoulder, neck, and bead. The New Orleans Jazz is very close to a traditional 5A, and is available in both wood-tip and nylon-tip models. The nylon-tip version is slightly longer and has a more



specs are close to those of the Snare/Tom.

The mic's arrived with no frequency response curves or polar pattern graphs. The only information given as to their acoustic performance (besides the fact that they're cardioid) was the frequency response, listed as 100 Hz-12 kHz for the Snare/Tom. The

Kick/Tom went a little lower, starting at 60 Hz and going up to the same 12 kHz.

Okay. They're solidly built, they look good, and the price is certainly right. But if they don't perform, they're just paperweights. Time to make some noise.

## Quick Looks continued

gradual taper than the wood-tip model. Finally, Vater's Fusion model, which is slightly larger than a 5A, is now available with a round nylon bead. Wood-tip models list for \$10.45 per pair; nylon-tip versions list for \$10.75.

### Brushes

Vater's Whip consists of thick nylon bristles attached to a 5B-size wooden grip. The bristles have a collar that can be adjusted to control the articulation. When the collar is all the way back (at the stick end), the Whip produces a fat, brush-like sound. When the collar is near the tip, the Whip sounds more stick-like. The collar can be positioned anywhere in between for more or less of either characteristic. The wood grip allows for slammin' rimshots, and the bristles are firm enough that one could even flip the Whip over and play certain things with the wood end, although there is too much flex for it to function exactly like a traditional drumstick. Overall, it's a versatile device that can be used for a variety of colors. List price is \$20.95.

Poly-Flex brushes also consist of nylon bristles attached to a wood handle. But whereas the Whip is closer to a drumstick than a traditional



brush, the Poly-Flex model is more brush than drumstick. Like the Whip, it's very versatile. It could certainly be used in traditional jazz settings, but could also stand up to more aggressive playing in other musical genres. The wooden handle allows for solid rimshots and accents, and these would be perfect for that country/bluegrass "train feel." The thickness of the nylon bristles makes them especially effective when swished across textured heads, such as Remo's Legacy series or Aquarian's Jack DeJohnette batter head. List price: \$20.95.

## In Use

Normally when I'm reviewing application-specific mic's I start by putting them up against "the usual suspects" commonly used for the same applications. I try to get a handle on the test mic's' characters, trying to A/B products in the same price range. For the applications under consideration here I might typically compare to a Shure SM-57 on the snare, a Sennheiser e604 on small toms, a Sennheiser MD 421 on large toms, and an AKG D112 on the kick.

The problem in this case is that there's really nothing *in* the same price range. While none of the above examples is considered particularly exotic or expensive, their list prices add up to well over \$1,000. In fact, the 421 and D112 alone each sells for more than all four KitPak mic's together. Because of this, I decided the fairest thing to do was to listen to the KitPak mic's on their own, to get an overall impression first. Then I'd subject them to the sonic scrutiny of A/B testing against other, more costly microphones.

I placed the mic's in the standard positions on a four-piece kit and listened both through studio monitors and—since these mic's were primarily intended for live use—through small PA-type speakers. The bottom line for any instrument mic' is that it must render the sound source faithfully enough that the basic personality of the instrument comes through. The KitPak mic's easily met this minimum requirement. The drums sounded like *drums*, instead of like some weird distorted parody of a drumset (which, believe it or not, is not always the case with budget sound equipment).

The resulting sound (without any EQ or effects) was not the smoothest I've ever heard, but it wasn't too shabby, either. And with the addition of some typical "club PA" equalization (pull down the lower mids overall, then add some beef to the kick and toms and some snap to the snare) the KitPak mic's put forth a nice tone that was more than adequate for small to medium

live-music venues.

Now that that's been established, let's reference them to some known standards. Comparing the Snare/Tom to an SM-57 on a snare, the 57 had a bit more fundamental tone (around 125 Hz or so), as well as greater presence in the upper mids. (To be fair, the 57 beats almost *every* mic' in this regard.) The 57 also had greater high-frequency extension, bringing out more of the sound of the snare wires. This was also to be expected, as the 57 goes to 16 or 17 kHz while the Snare/Tom rolls off at 12 kHz. By carefully applying equalization to counteract these differences, we were able to get the Snare/Tom to sound similar to a 57 when heard through a PA. You could still distinguish between them on studio monitors no matter what we did.

We also compared the Snare/Tom to a Sennheiser MD 504, starting with mounted toms. Overall the 504 was a little smoother and beefier and had a little more clarity, but the Snare/Tom was close. This was a moral victory for the Snare/Tom as the 504 (now known as the e604) lists for almost what the entire KitPak lists for. With both mic's on a snare drum, the results were again fairly similar—as long as the volume was sensible. Then I decided to try my official "El Marko High-SPL Torture Test": slammin' rimshots with 2Bs on a tightly tuned solid maple piccolo with die-cast hoops...with the mic' an inch away. At these stratospheric volume levels the 504 faithfully reproduced the woody character of the drum, while the capsule of the Snare/Tom started to compress a bit and lose some clarity.

The first thing we did with the Kick/Tom was run it next to the Snare/Tom on a 12" tom. The Kick/Tom had a bit more beef on the bottom, but other than that it was sonically very close to the Snare/Tom. Parked next to a 504 over a 14" floor tom, the Kick/Tom acquitted itself very well. The 504 was a tad cleaner on the top and a touch smoother in the mids, but the difference was

## Multi-Tone Mallets

Vater's Multi-Tone mallets feature five double-ended mallet combinations. The M1 combines brass and wood heads, the M2 has rubber and Lexan ends, the M3 combines hardwood and softwood heads, the M4 combines brass with rubber, and the M5 features felt and hard rubber. (A recent Vater catalog shows the M4 as a brass/phenolic combination, but a Vater spokesman verified that the ones *MD* received for review, which had the same red rubber head as the M2 rather than a phenolic head, are the correct product.)

The different heads can create a variety of sounds on different instruments. Most of the models should find favor with mallet-keyboard players who need to make quick switches between marimba, orchestra bells, vibes, and/or xylophone. But these models have multi-percussion applications as well. The felt end of the M5 is especially nice for dramatic cymbal rolls, and either end can be used for "jungle" effects on toms, congas, or bongos. The wood and hard rubber heads all sounded good on synthetic woodblocks, providing a fuller tone than that produced with the butt end of a drumstick. One should use the brass and Lexan heads with caution, as they could

damage drumheads, cymbals, and real woodblocks. But they work fine for synthetic woodblocks and cowbells. The M1 and M3 models list for \$30.95 per pair; the M2, M4, and M5 list for \$33.95.



subtle. You'd be hard pressed to hear any appreciable difference through a PA—especially in a mix and not just a soundcheck where you solo one drum. Next, the Kick/Tom went inside the kick to do battle with the five-times-as-costly AKG D112. The D112 certainly had a fatter sound (they don't call it a *large* diaphragm for nothing) and it was smoother in the lower mids due to its pre-shaped response curve. But the Kick/Tom had a very nice sound all its own. Perhaps not as immediately "exciting," but a natural tone that was certainly useful. Adding some highs and lows to punch it up a bit brought out a very respectable kick sound indeed.

### Q&A And Conclusions

**Q:** The KitPak is touted as being for a four- or *five*-piece kit. Can you really mike five drums with four mic's?

**A:** Certainly. I did this for years in clubs, using one mic' between a pair of mounted toms (or two mic's on four toms). The toms should be within a few inches of each other and at approximately the same angle with respect to the mic'. Both of these requirements are almost always met by the mounted toms of a standard five-piece configuration.

**Q:** But what about overheads and hi-hats?

**A:** The typical KitPak user will be purchasing the mic's to use in a club environment. In bars and clubs you can usually get away without miking the cymbals because they'll carry to the audience acoustically. (Plus there is always a certain amount of bleed.) If it's a larger venue where virtually all of your drum sound must come through the sound reinforcement system,

then yes, you must mike the cymbals. But in those situations there's usually a sound company involved, and they'll carry a full compliment of mic's anyway.

So what's the bottom line? When you're evaluating a product like this you have to take into account its intended use and target market, and determine how well it fills that need. These mic's were not really designed for professional recording (although they might be just the ticket for someone looking to make home demos on a budget). However, if you're making the transition into the ranks of "working club drummers" and you're looking for some solid mic's that won't break the bank, you'd be foolish *not* to audition the Audio Technica KitPak.

## Package Deal

Product:	KitPak Snare/Tom	KitPak Kick/Tom
Type:	dynamic	dynamic
Polar Pattern:	cardioid	cardioid
Impedance:	500 ohms	500 ohms
Frequency Response:	100Hz- 12KHz	60 Hz- 12KHz
Length:	4 1/2"	4 5/8"
Diameter:	1 5/8"	2 1/8"
Weight:	1 1.4 oz.	1 1.2 oz.
Finish:	semi-gloss black	semi-gloss black
Recommended applications:	snare, toms	kick, floor toms
Suggested list price:	\$259 for (2) Snare/Toms and (2) Kick/Toms, with plastic carrying case.	

## Quick Looks continued

### Bass Drum Beater

The round shape of Vater's Poly Ball beater, combined with its synthetic-material construction, produces a bass drum sound that has a lot of punch and plenty of low-end overtones. Additionally, the round shape ensures a consistent strike, even if the shaft is angled slightly due to the design of the pedal or the size of the bass drum. List price is \$24.95.

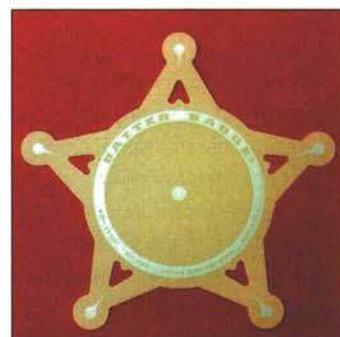


Rick Mattingly

### Slug Snare Drum Batter Badge

Slug Percussion's new BB-STR Batter Badge is an impact pad specifically designed for snare drum use. It's Slug's thinnest Batter

Badge yet, at only .007" thick. (The BB-675 tom version is .010" thick and the BB-535 bass drum model is .020" thick.) Because of its thinness, the new model reinforces a snare drum head without seriously interfering with its vibrational qualities or response. The new badge also has a large center area, which assists when using both sticks on the snare drum for fills or rudimental-type patterns. The Batter Badge adds just a bit of articulation to the drum-head's center, but has less affect on the overall tone quality than a traditional center dot.



The Batter Badge itself is almost transparent, and so is nearly invisible when mounted on a head. (Note that the Batter Badge pictured has not had its brown, peel-away backing removed.) List price is \$7.95.

Rick Mattingly



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# Create Your Own Drum Charts!

## Notation Software For Drummers

by Ted Bonar

As the years go by and technology improves, even drummers can benefit from the products available to the computer generation—and not just through the use of drum machines, samplers, sequencers, or drum triggers. Drummers of all shapes and sizes (and both students and teachers) can utilize the advantages of the technological age through the use of some fairly common computer notation software programs.

The notation software available today is powerful and attractive, and there are many versions available for the beginning musician as well as professional composer. These packages are all designed to enable you to create your own sheet music quickly and to have the ability to print out clean, professional copies of virtually anything you desire.

For the purposes of this article, six different programs by three different software brands will be presented and explored: Cakewalk's Score Writer and Overture 2 programs; Coda Music Technology's Finale line, which consists of PrintMusic!, Finale Allegro, and Finale 98 (a 2000 upgrade has just been released); and the Sibelius software package.

It should be noted that there's a huge amount of subjectivity involved when analyzing these programs. Simply stated, they're all designed to do precisely the same thing, but to varying degrees. While some are beginner packages and some are advanced, the sole purpose for each is to enable the user to input music onto a staff and print it out from a personal computer. Each has its own bells and whistles. Some programs offer more bells, others offer more whistles—literally! Some cover only the basics.

Although there are six programs represented here, there are really only three dif-

ferent "looks" to discuss: the Cakewalk line, the Finale line, and the Sibelius program. Cakewalk and Finale each offer easy-to-complex versions of the same basic programs, and Sibelius offers one version only. Therefore, for an overall view of these programs, we will talk about three different approaches rather than six.

In general, each program achieves the goal of entering notes onto a page in similar ways. Each offers manual input via the computer mouse and various "tool palettes." Each offers some sort of "step time" or "quick entry" procedure. And again, each line (although not every version) offers some version of MIDI-capable notation input. All of the programs offer templates from which you can choose to start a score, and all of the programs offer some sort of playback feature to varying degrees of success.

So now that we know what the programs all do in general, let's take a look at what they do specifically.

### Cakewalk

#### Score Writer And Overture 2

Both programs open with a general piano score as a template (bass and treble clefs joined in a single system), and it didn't take very long at all to begin entering notes using the mouse. The Cakewalk programs are based on a group of palettes containing notes, ornaments, articulations, staves, clefs, barlines, and the like. These palettes are all displayed in a tool bar across the top of your computer screen just under the traditional Windows pull-down menus.

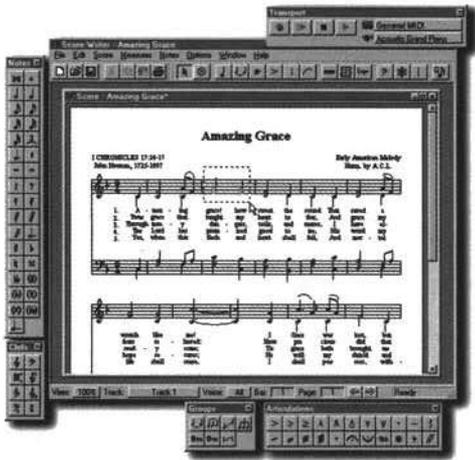
An inherent problem (not confined to Cakewalk) with notation programs is that entry of notes with a mouse can be quite cumbersome. There are so many variables for music notation—note duration, articula-

tions, dots, placement on the staff, note head shape (quite important for percussionists)—that excessive mouse movement is almost unavoidable.

All of these programs solve this problem by providing a number of keyboard shortcuts, and Score Writer and Overture 2 are no different. Both of these programs offer key strokes to determine the rhythmic value and articulations of a note, while your mouse can remain in the staff and measure on which you are working. The key strokes—for the most part—are helpful and easy to remember: 1 = whole note, 4 = quarter note, 6 = 16th note, a period provides a dotted note, etc.

Flams, rolls, and accents are all easy to create, although the measures and note spacing do not automatically reformat themselves to accommodate these additional markings when they're entered after the original notes. The automatic formatting (when notes are initially entered) tends to squeeze all of your notes and rests into a measure, and busy rhythms can get a bit...*smushed*. However, these programs will reformat and justify your music upon





a messy score while inputting). The other will actually reset the stem direction default. Resetting the default is highly preferable, although it's not a terribly easy thing to do. Rest assured, however, this option is available and effective.

Editing and copying are not at all difficult, although there are some minor glitches when moving a group of notes with the mouse. Admittedly, these glitches could very well disappear upon continued use of the program, as there are many different ways to do similar things in these programs. I did like the ease

your command, so this is a minor problem.

When writing drumset notation, drummers tend to break some traditional notation rules regarding stem direction. With piano music and pitched instruments, the direction of a stem on a note is based entirely on a note's placement within a staff. This creates a problem with drumset notation, because it follows rules almost exactly the opposite of traditional rules. Traditional notation guidelines say that a note near the bottom of a staff will have a stem going up, and a note at the top of a staff will have a stem going down. But because drum parts overlap each other (cymbals, snare, and bass drum primarily), drum notation must break these rules in order to have bass drum stems point down and cymbal parts point up.

Most notation programs are defaulted against breaking these rules, even when you pull up a blank drum track from a template or set up a track from scratch. Although initially frustrating, both Score Writer and Overture 2 allow you to override this default setting. There are two separate ways to flip the stems. One is easy to find but is done after you have already entered your notes (which makes for

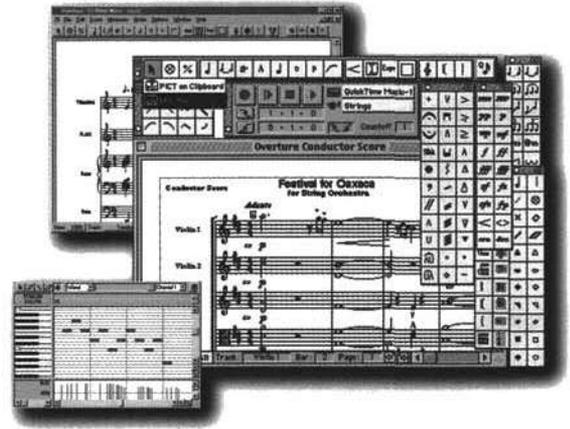
with which these programs retained traditional Windows cut, copy, and paste options. By simply selecting one note, a group of notes, or an extended section, I was able to create exercises and repeated parts very quickly and easily.

One minor complaint is that the piano score, which opens the programs, feels limiting and inappropriate for anything other than piano. The two staves can be renamed as drum and snare (or any other instrument) fairly easily, but it was not easy to figure out how to simply delete one of the staves in order to input a drum chart only. Of course, this option is definitely available. But the frustration incurred in figuring out this process felt unnecessary.

Overall, Cakewalk's programs are very good options for drummers looking to get into software notation. Both Score Writer and Overture 2 create sharp, attractive printouts with simple, effective note input. They both offer relatively easy text input, and they have some standard templates for song title, artist, copyright notice, etc. Score Writer contains the basics only, and would

suffice quite well for drum charts, while Overture 2 is a deep program, with many more tool palettes and options available—bells and whistles!

Score Writer does not offer a part extraction option, so it would be fine for drum tracks only. Overture 2 easily handles big scores while having the ability to create separate parts. If you're looking to create guitar, bass, and horn parts as well as drum parts, Overture 2 would be the program to pick. But if you're only interested in creating a drum part or drum exercise library,



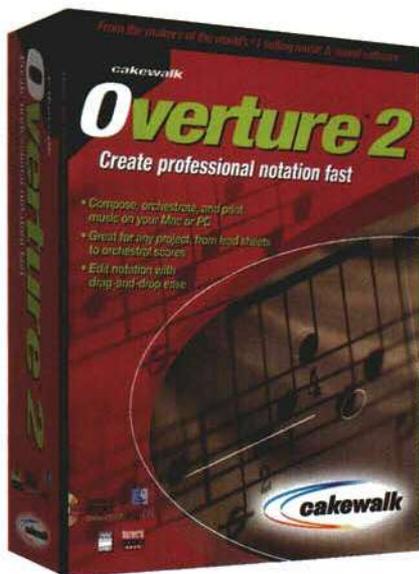
Score Writer would be more than adequate.

It should also be noted that both programs are MIDI compatible, and it's possible to input notes from a MIDI keyboard or percussion controller as well as play back the parts you created.

### Coda Music Technology PrintMusic!, Finale Allegro, And Finale 98

The Finale product line is great in that it offers three different levels: beginning, intermediate, and advanced. A provided demonstration CD-ROM is a huge benefit to new users.

Taking a look at the intermediate program, Finale Allegro, the program opens up with tool palettes and one staff line that runs off the right of the screen. Finale is defaulted to a "Scroll View," which is intended to let you create your parts without worrying about number of measures per line until your part takes shape. This has benefits (page layout formatting is done all at once rather than continuously) and drawbacks (you can only see about three measures at once at a view size suitable for editing). However, the overall look



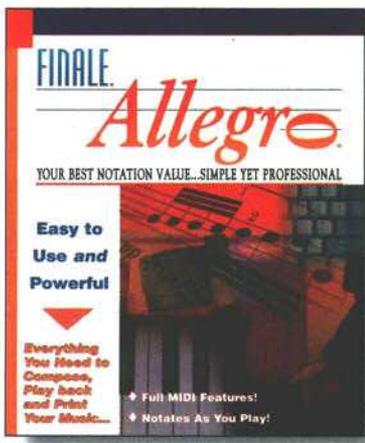
and feel is very clean and sharp, and you can toggle between the two views easily.

The "simple entry" procedures in the Finale line are remarkably similar to Cakewalk's programs, with just a few changes in key strokes. While you can utilize a mouse in almost precisely the same way as in Cakewalk, the quick-entry keystrokes don't make quite as much sense. For instance, the number "3" activates 16th notes, "4" activates 8th notes, and "5" is



for quarters. While this makes sense sequentially, that's just not how musicians think about rhythms. This may be considered nit-picking, but it's a *minor* annoyance for us rhythmically conscious drummers.

The Finale line makes a huge leap forward by offering a "Speedy Entry" mode, which allows the user to enter notes on a



staff without using the mouse at all. Basically, this procedure involves a cursor that you manipulate with the arrows on your keyboard, while you enter note values with keystrokes. Note entry becomes easy

and quick with this method, although editing can be tricky.

One complaint about the Coda software line is that it's easier to use the provided templates than to start a score from scratch. (This is confirmed almost word for word in the CD-ROM demo.) There is a general percussion template provided, and it is sufficient in that "x's" are the default setting for cymbals and the stem directions are defaulted correctly. However, if you want to create your own score with an instrumentation not provided in the templates, you may be starting a difficult journey.

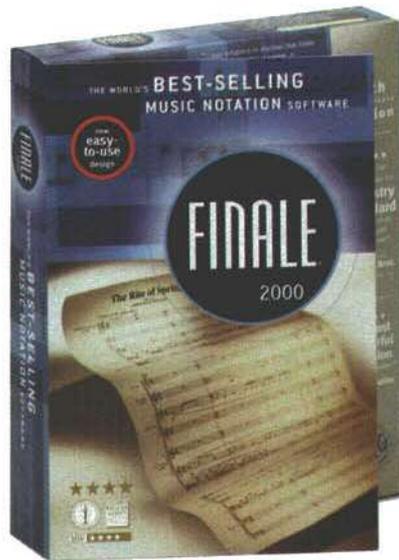
The PrintMusic! program is the beginning package, and it is a bare-bones program that will enable the user to write single parts. Finale 98 is an extremely deep, deluxe package with enormous tool palettes and many options, making it optimal for extensive scores and highly complicated rhythms. All three of Coda's programs are MIDI compatible, and all offer numerous ways to enter notes and play back your parts via an external keyboard or MIDI percussion controller and sound module.

## Sibelius

Ah, the Cadillac! As good as the Cakewalk and Coda lines are, Sibelius seems to be King Of The Road.

When Sibelius opens, it asks the user precisely which instrument should be entered into the score. Following some easy instructions, the user is able to create extremely detailed and beautiful scores in seconds.

This program uses an entirely different screen concept from the other two lines. One palette, designed in the shape of the numeric keypad on the right of computer keyboards, is provided on the screen, and this palette has literally



hundreds of uses. Rather than accommodating the "constantly moving mouse" problem, Sibelius has found a way to bypass this altogether by creating some simple, common-sense key strokes in conjunction with the numeric keypad. (The tool palette on the screen is an extension of the numeric keypad on your keyboard.)

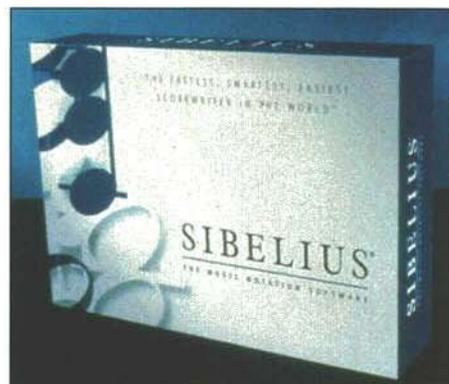
Of course, mouse entry is possible (and easy), but the user can

utilize whatever entry method he wishes at any time. To compare, Cakewalk's step-entry procedure is a combination of mouse placement and keystrokes. Coda has either manual entry or step entry exclusive of one another. In Sibelius, the user can enter notes any way he wants at any time, and this can be done without changing modes or using any complicated keystrokes. It is a positively brilliant idea.

Sibelius is both the easiest and most complex program of those presented here. The basic keystrokes are very easy to use—but there are tons of them. The numeric keypad design is wonderfully convenient, but you have to get used to working without the mouse. This can be a challenge, simply because so many other software programs have become dependent on the mouse.

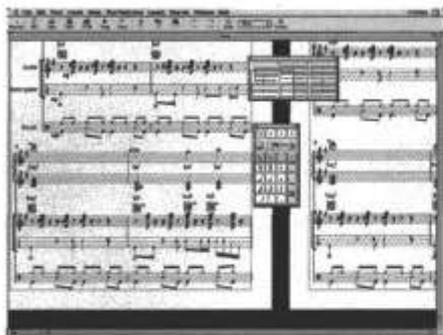
Also, when entering notes without the mouse, Sibelius can sometimes outsmart itself. This is a highly intelligent program,

but it is somewhat geared towards composition or orchestral use, and not towards entering drum parts. Thus, when entering notes without a mouse, the notes are not defaulted to traditional bass drum or snare



drum placement on the staff itself. For instance, when trying to place a bass drum on F and a snare drum on C in a staff

(using treble clef for purposes of explanation), Sibelius will not place these notes in the correct octave. There are keystrokes to correct this problem as well, but fewer keystrokes are preferable, and this is a flaw in the keyboard-entry procedure that is frustrating. Sibelius is almost perfect, but it falls slightly short for exclusive drum notation purposes because of this.



Otherwise, Sibelius can do pretty much anything you want it to do. There is no time signature, rhythmic notation, Polyrythm, articulation, note placement, or score view that this program does not accommodate well. Single line staves (or any number of lines) are available, and the automatic page layout formatting is beyond compare. The program also comes with its own general sounds, so you can play back your scores and drum parts *without* an external MIDI sound module (a huge plus for drummers who are not keyboard-equipped).

There are many templates available, but it is so easy to create your own score from scratch that they seem to be there as examples of what is possible rather than as working tools. Sibelius provides an auxiliary program called PhotoScore Lite at no extra charge, which allows the user to actually scan sheet music into a computer and turn it into a Sibelius file. In essence, this means that the program works both forward and backward. This is a fantastic tool for teachers. Sibelius also enables you to save your work as an HTML file, which will allow you to include your work on your own Web page. Sibelius can fully accommodate your internet publishing needs.

There is a demonstration CD-ROM available, which is extremely helpful but inexplicably left out of the actual package. It is available for free via their Web site,

however. Watching this CD-ROM is highly recommended (and entertaining as well).

Cadillacs, however, can be gas guzzlers, and Sibelius definitely has some drawbacks. Its internal sound settings, while a huge advantage for this program, are somewhat difficult to change. Confusingly, the default snare drum sound is actually a whistle, and I was not able to change this sound easily. There are a few other glitches like this in Sibelius, but with a program so deep, some forgiveness should be granted.

Again, Sibelius can be simultaneously easy and difficult. It can do things so simply you will gasp, but it can also be intimidating. In addition to all of the features discussed above, if you want power, this is the program for you.

### Conclusions

When all is said and done, every one of the programs represented here is a quality product. They have their differences, and Sibelius has a much different feel from either the Cakewalk or the Coda lines. The advanced versions of these programs are fun to use, but may not necessarily be entirely useful for drummers.

The programs run between \$69 and \$599 (see chart), and each provides good value for the expense. The user's manuals are all of appropriate depth, running anywhere between 30 and 90 pages for the inexpensive programs, and 300 to 800 pages for the deeper programs. Each program also provides convenient key-stroke menus/summaries for quick reference while working on a score.

There are some pricey options available, but those programs are extremely deep and virtually unlimited. The less expensive packages are also excellent options for drummers looking to incorporate their notation needs with available technology. The packages may not provide every option under the sun, but your drum charts will be clean, sharp, and professional after only a modest investment. Each company has its own Web site, so researching the numerous bells and whistles is relatively easy.

Program	Price
<b>Cakewalk</b>	
Score Writer	\$ 99
Overture 2	\$269
<b>Coda Music Technology</b>	
PrintMusic!	\$ 69
Finale Allegro	\$199
Finale 98	\$545
	(\$275 Academic Version)
<b>Sibelius</b>	<b>\$599</b>
	(\$299 Educational Version)

If you're looking for a better way to create sheet music, you should be encouraged to research these and other notation software packages. There are options available to suit any musician's needs, and we drummers can now take advantage of the latest technology to have that much more fun doing what we do!

## Contacting The Companies

### Cakewalk

5 Cambridge Center  
Cambridge, MA 02142  
Tel: (888) CAKEWALK  
Web: www.cakewalk.com

### Coda Music Technology

6210 Bury Drive  
Eden Prairie, MN 55346  
Tel: (800) 843-2066, (612) 937-9611  
Fax: (612) 937-9760  
Web: www.codamusic.com  
email: finalesales@codamusic.com

### Sibelius

The Helms Building, Ste. 216  
8800 Venice Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90034  
Tel: (888) 4-SIBELIUS, (972) 930-9552  
Fax: (972) 713-6327  
Web: www.sibelius.com  
email: infoUSA@sibelius.com



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Hundreds of years ago, long before the discovery of America, the forests in what would eventually come to be known as the Great Lakes region of North America were just beginning to take root. In this setting a natural canopy of shade created by the forest's taller Pine and Evergreen trees allowed the smaller Birch, Elm, Oak and Maple trees to mature slowly, much more slowly and much more fully than their modern-day ancestors. With rich, fertile soil and a hearty climate, the seedlings grew strong and sturdy—untouched by the hand of man for nearly 1000 years.

During the great U.S. land and population expansion of the late 1800's, millions of these trees were harvested to supply the lumber to build the great cities of the United States. Every one of the lumberjacks who worked the forests during that time was given a registered sawyer's mark that he used to identify his trees and the year each was felled.

Once cut, the logs were marked and taken to the closest body of water where they would be floated to nearby sawmills and processed into lumber. Many of these logs ended up on Lake Superior and while most made their journey to the mills without incident, thousands became water-logged and sank to the bottom of the lake. There they rested peacefully for the next hundred years.

Recently this underwater forest was accidentally discovered by divers searching for treasure from sunken ships. As they raised the logs to clear their view, they found the real treasure was this perfectly preserved "slow growth" wood with incredible figuring (flame, birdseye, quilt) and a significantly greater density (5-6 times the growth rings per inch) than any of today's premium hardwoods could provide.

As a few independent collector's and custom instrument makers began investigating the musical properties of the "Lake Superior" wood, it quickly became apparent that not only had the icy-cold temperature and low oxygen content of the lake's deep water made time stand still by stopping aging and preventing deterioration, the long submersion had also given the wood a noticeably more resonant, more musical sound by washing out the tree sap, minerals and other organic materials.

Through an exclusive agreement with the Lake Superior Water-Logged Lumber Company and with the assistance of master drum-builder Johnny Craviotto, a handful of Lake Superior's Maple logs were acquired by Drum Workshop just before the end of the 20th Century. Using hand-selected inner, center and outer plies that were chosen for their specific sound qualities, DW succeeded in creating a "Lake Superior" drumset with the same proven shell/reinforcing hoop structure and proprietary shell production and TimbreMatch® shell selection processes as their legendary Collector's Series.

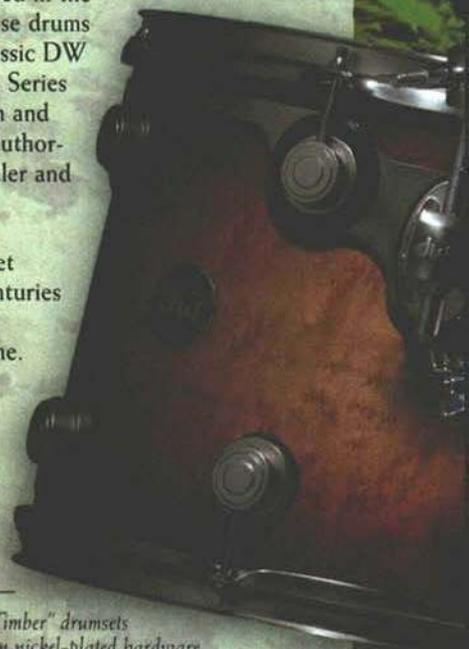
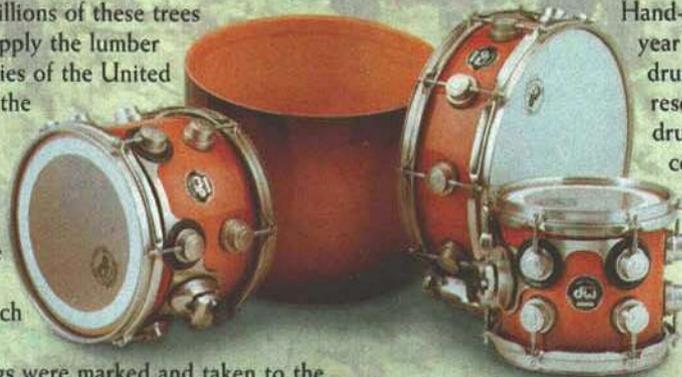
Hand-crafted from highly-figured, 500 year old North American Maple, the drums combined this unique natural resource with the state-of-the-art drum making expertise that continues to make Drum

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DW's Limited Edition "Timeless Timber" Drumset made exclusively from centuries old Lake Superior Maple. Finally, their time has come. Has yours?



*Due to the rarity and limited availability of Lake Superior Maple, only 100 of DW's "Timeless Timber" drumsets will be produced— each featuring a hand-rubbed, vintage sunburst lacquer finish, special satin nickel-plated hardware and a certificate of authenticity stating the kit's approximate "birth" and harvest dates, age and sequential serial number. "Timeless Timber" kits will include a 5x14" snare drum, 18x22" bass drum and 7x8", 8x10", 9x12", 11x14" and 13x16" tom-toms.*

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# Foo Fighters'

# TAYLOR

# HAWKINS

# Riding High

Story by Robyn Flans

Photos by Paul La Raia

**T**aylor Hawkins says he can't help but wonder when his life is going to fall apart. Things have just been going too well. He *does* have a point, though: The last time Hawkins was featured in *MD* he was working with the hottest female artist going, Alanis Morissette. He eventually left that gig to become a member of Dave Grohl's Foo Fighters. Not too shabby for a basically unschooled drummer who grew up in Laguna Beach, California listening to The Police and Queen.

Before all of this success, though, Hawkins did have some trying times. His first band, Sylvia, had a development deal with Hollywood Records

that never reached fruition. He spent his time working long hours at a music store, then going straight to seemingly endless rehearsals, all the time pulling his hair out wondering why the band wasn't happening.

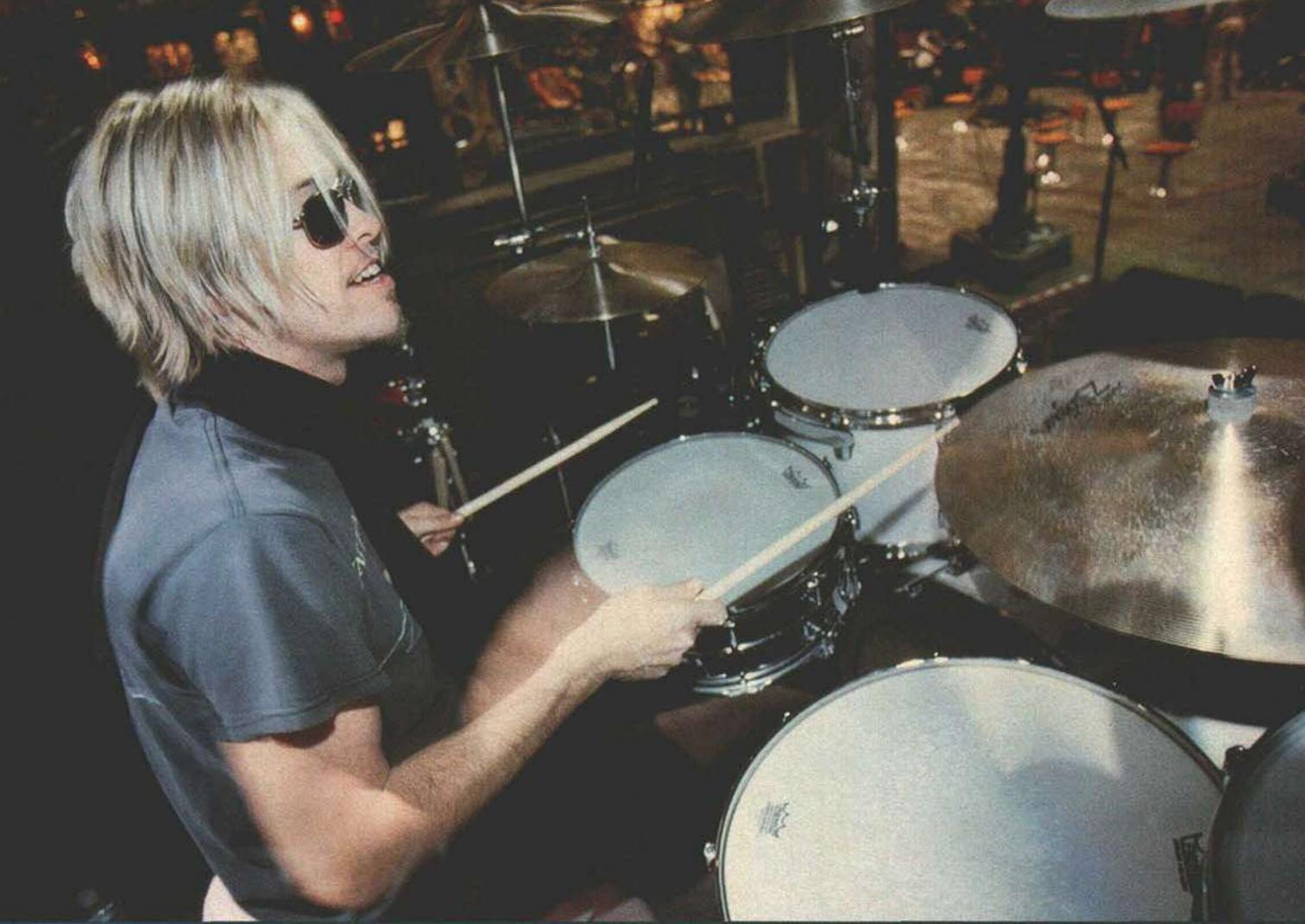
Hawkins gave up on Sylvia and landed a gig with Sass Jordan. Musically it wasn't exactly Hawkins' cup of tea, but he grew from the experience, and a bigger gig came out of it. When Alanis Morissette's manager brought her to a Sass Jordan show to check out the young drummer, the rising star was impressed, and asked Taylor to work with her. Within months of Hawkins joining,

Morissette went from playing clubs to performing in stadiums.

Now with Foo Fighters, Taylor just shared recording duties with Foo leader (and famed Nirvana drummer) Dave Grohl on their latest, *There Is Nothing Left To Lose*. The album was recorded at Grohl's comfy home studio in Virginia.

Taylor does seem pretty darn fortunate, especially since on the surface his earlier musical experiences bear little resemblance to his current gig. Watching Taylor perform with Foo Fighters, you see why Grohl is happy to have him. His kick-ass, energetic style works perfectly in the band.





**MD:** How did you hook up with Dave?

**Taylor:** I was on tour with Alanis doing European festivals, and we played some shows with The Foo's. I met Dave and the rest of the guys and we just hung out. Dave and I hit it off immediately. After that we kept in touch. I saw him a few

months later and then they made their second album, *The Colour And The Shape*.

During the making of that record, drummer William Goldsmith left, and Dave ended up doing the drums on the album. William is a great drummer, and

his band, Sunny Day Real Estate, is totally awesome. But not every drummer is right for every situation. So they needed a new drummer, and at that point the Alanis tour had finished up and I had been home for a couple of months. Alanis wanted to take off something like a year, and you have to remember that her situation wasn't really a band. Franz [Stahl], the guitar player who used to be with Foo Fighters, said to me, "We need a drummer. You really should call Dave." I felt weird just calling and going, "I wanna be your new drummer." Dave and I hooked up, and he asked *me*, "Do you know anybody?" I said, "No, not really." We talked about it for a little bit and he said, "Well, what about you? What are you doing?" I said, "I'm just chilling. I'd like to come down and jam with you guys and see what happens." Dave said, "Okay, I'll bring a tape over." As soon as he came over, even before we played, we were having a good time together. We became such good friends

## The "Foo" Kit

### Drums:

- Ludwig Classic Maple in white finish
- A. 6 1/2x14 brass snare
- B. 12x15 tom
- C. 16x18 floortom
- D. 16x20 floor tom
- E. 16" Remo RotoTom
- F. 18" Remo RotoTom
- G. 16x24 bass drum

### PercussiorrLP

aa. cowbell mounted above Jam Block (low)

### Cymbals:

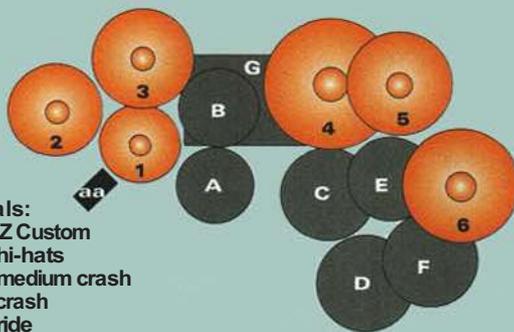
- Zildjian Z Custom
- 1. 15" hi-hats
- 2. 18" medium crash
- 3. 19" crash
- 4. 24" ride
- 5. 20" crash
- 6. 22" crash

### Hardware:

Ludwig stands, Drum Workshop pedals

### Heads: Remo

Sticks: Zildjian



that he just said, "Dude, you've got to be in the band." He knew I could play, even though my style was so totally different then.

**MD:** How did you feel about it?

**Taylor:** I was psyched because that was right when music in general was getting kinda crappy. To me, one of the only good American bands was Foo Fighters. They're a real band, not like a Matchbox 20 and all those other bands. The Foes are a band with an identity, with good music, good albums all the way through, and good live shows. So at that point I was psyched. We jammed a couple of times and it felt right, probably more personally than musically right off the bat.

**MD:** What did you do musically to get into that very different approach?

**Taylor:** I had to relearn how to play in a way, especially to play some of their older stuff. I changed around a lot of the parts to fit how I play, as you would any

## DAVE GROHL

### Taking The Lead

A lot of people have wondered why Dave Grohl relinquished the drum seat when he began to tour with his band Foo Fighters. As Nirvana's drummer, Grohl became one of the most influential and revered drummers of the past decade. But his talents far exceeded the drums. As the mastermind behind the group, Dave entirely created and recorded Foo Fighters' first release. Of course, going on the road as a one-man band was never going to do, so he had to find the right musicians to make music with. In this candid conversation, Grohl talks about life post-Nirvana, his feelings about the drums, and the making of *There Is Nothing Left To Lose*.



**MD:** Do you miss playing the drums?

**Dave:** Absolutely.

**MD:** You did a little on the album.

**Dave:** Yes.

**MD:** Tell us how you and Taylor worked together. You must be intimidating.

**Dave:** He is as well. Watch him play the drums?

**MD:** True, but your reputation...

**Dave:** Reputation, shmeputation—that's what I always say. Basically what we did was get a bunch of songs together and decide who wanted to do what. Taylor and I assigned songs to each other: "I think you should do this one, I think you should do that one." "Yeah? Well, I think you should do this and you should do that."

**MD:** Did your lists mesh with one another's viewpoints?

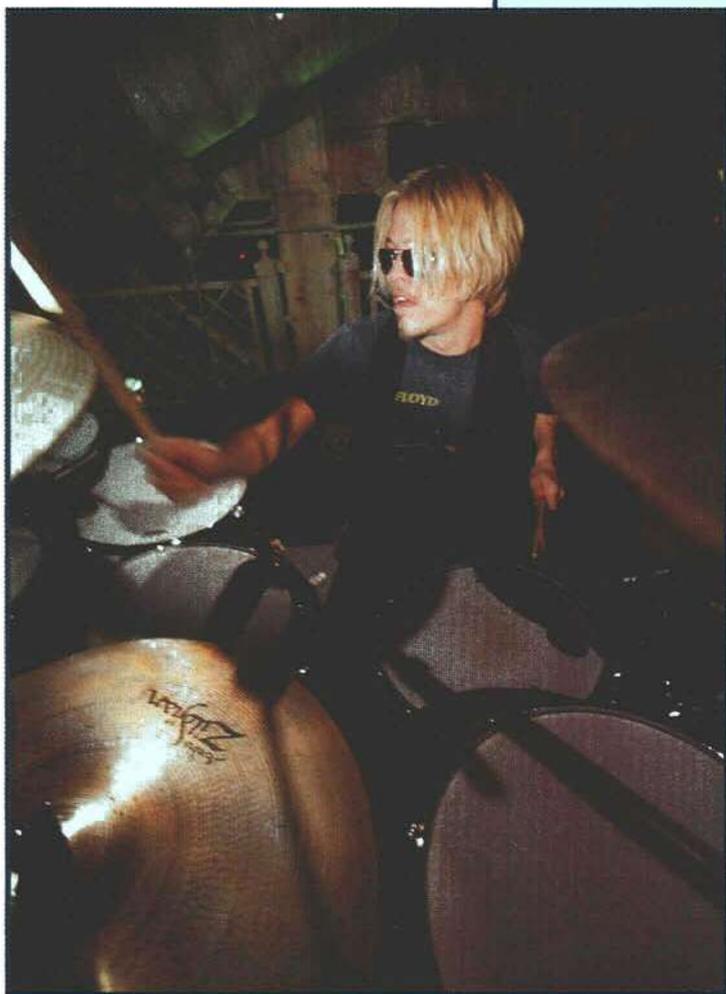
**Dave:** Definitely, because we know what kind of drummer the other is. Taylor is all about finesse and tricky stuff, things that I don't understand. I'm a more meat 'n' potatoes, four-on-me-floor groove guy. Some songs deserved that and some deserved what Taylor had to offer.

**MD:** People would like to know who did which tracks.

**Dave:** But we're not telling! What's also funny is that after playing with each other for the last couple of years

**"I'll bump into people who say, 'Aw, I used to play the drums, but I sold my set.' And I think, 'How could you do that? Are you insane?'"**

continued on page 68



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time you take over a job. I can't play it exactly the way Dave would play it. It just took a while.

Playing with The Foes definitely takes a lot more out of you than an Alanis set, because the band plays all-out. There are a lot more peaks and valleys and points where you can rest in an Alanis set.

**MD:** How did you go about learning the band's material?

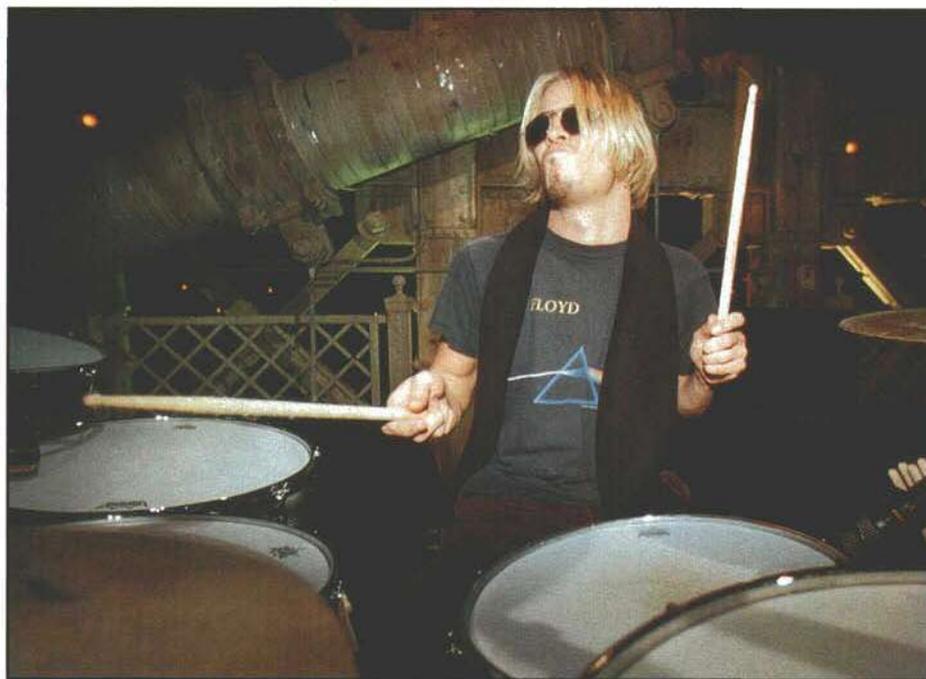
**Taylor:** I'm not that quick of a learner. It took me a long time to remember all the songs.

**MD:** What method do you use to learn

things?

**Taylor:** I have no method whatsoever, no charts or anything like that, so maybe that's the problem [laughs]. I just listened to the material a couple of times and practiced it a little. I figured, "Oh, it'll come together when I get there." This whole band is lazy. We do what we have to do to get the material together. We save the work for our shows, when an audience is there. But when we rehearse, it's a joke, especially if we're rehearsing a set of music we already know.

**MD:** That must be part of the magic some-



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how.

**Taylor:** Um, I guess—if that's what you want to call it [laughs]. Actually, it *is* very spontaneous. And sometimes we're really good and sometimes we're crap!

**MD:** Do you talk about it after the show?

**Taylor:** No. Once the show is over, we're done with it. We don't sit around and critique each other's performance. Can you imagine if I said, "Dave, I felt you were singing that one part off key." He'd tell me where to go. Although if Dave goes, "Dude, you know you should play that one part straighter," I'll listen to that. But usu-

ally he won't say anything like that, especially after a gig.

**MD:** What about critiquing yourself?

**Taylor:** I used to be very hard on myself. With Alanis, if I didn't have a 100% show, which I rarely did—who does?—I'd be upset. There are shows where you're on fire and others where you feel like you're treading water the whole time. It's very black & white for me. Music has always been more of an emotional thing to me: Did I feel good during the show?

**MD:** Is there anything you do before a show that helps you get into the right frame

**Grohl** continued from page 65

we've both learned to appreciate each other's assets and we've also adopted a lot of each other's habits.

**MD:** Elaborate on your assets and habits.

**Dave:** When Taylor first joined the band, he was Stewart Copeland and I was John Bonham. But since then we've met in the middle. I have a greater appreciation for Copeland and I think he has greater appreciation for Zeppelin and AC/DC. We've kind of melded into this one overall style. So it'll be interesting because I think some of the songs on the album that people will imagine Taylor playing will be me and some of the ones you hear Taylor playing you may think are me. It's not so predictable. Even the managers and people who've known me since Nirvana and have known Taylor since the day he joined the band can't get it right.

**MD:** Can you describe some of the sculpting of the tracks between you and Taylor?

**Dave:** He and I would sit down together, me in a chair with a guitar facing his drumset, and we'd go over the riffs. We'd concentrate on where the kick and snare accents should lie, where the dynamics should move, according to the guitar riff or the arrangement of the song. He's got an amazing ear, so it's not like I had to tell him what to do.

The object of arranging with a guitar player and drummer is to complement everything else. There are no big solos for anybody in this band. We're all supposed to complement each other. Nate [Mendel, bassist] was left in the hot seat, because Taylor and I would come up with the arrangement and all the accents and then Nate would have to come in with his bass and find his place in the middle of that.

**MD:** That's unusual. Usually bass and drums record together.

**Dave:** This is why Nate is such a genius. He can sit upstairs practicing bass lines all day long while Taylor and I are mapping out a song. Once we're finished we say, "Okay Nate, do whatever you want," and he comes in and ties it all together.

**MD:** When you first met Taylor, when he was touring with Alanis Morissette, I know you guys hit it off.

**Dave:** Absolutely.

**MD:** One would not have automatically put him into the Foo Fighters' situation based on his drumming style, though.

continued on page 74

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# Taylor Hawkins

of mind?

**Taylor:** I have my little rituals. I don't eat for three hours before a show, I don't like to smoke or drink before a show. And that's just my own personal preference; the other guys might drink beers before we play.

**MD:** What did Alanis say when you left her band?

**Taylor:** It's funny, I remember when we were in Europe and on the same bill with Foo Fighters, and even then she knew I was a huge fan of theirs. When she saw the connection that Dave and I had, she actual-

ly commented about it: "What would you do if they asked you to join?" Besides, she was going to take a year off anyway.

**MD:** You can't expect people to sit around for a year and wait.

**Taylor:** She was going to pay me during that year, but that's not productive. Idle time is the devil's playground for me. I'll find some serious trouble. It's better for me to be busy.

**MD:** You mentioned that you were a big fan of Dave.

**Taylor:** He's such an influential drummer.

Everybody was playing like him and stealing his licks, although I was kinda on the other side. As much as I loved Dave's drumming, I was more from the Stewart Copeland school. You should see my drumset now—it's out of control, so *not* alternative rock. It's so, as Dave puts it, "pro." But it's very cool. Dave is awesome and amazing. I always loved his energy and his musicality when he was with Nirvana, without a doubt. He's very economical in the way he plays, whereas I'll throw in everything but the kitchen sink. I'm learning to be more economical from Dave.

**MD:** Were you allowed to throw in everything with Alanis?

**Taylor:** Oh yeah. Bless her heart, she didn't really know what I was doing. She'd go, "That's cool," and I'd go, "Yeah, I stole that lick from Rush's 2772." She was very sweet and awesome. I wish we were still friends.

**MD:** Is she mad that you left?

**Taylor:** I did another interview after leaving her band where I said stuff the wrong way and the writer wrote it the wrong way. The headline was "Good-bye Alanis, Hello Foo Fighters," so right off the bat it didn't look nice. And I said some stupid things. The drummer she has now, Gary Novak, is awesome. He can play circles around me, so everything is as it should be. But I felt bad.

**MD:** The music was expressive and you got a chance to play what you wanted, so that must have been great.

**Taylor:** It was totally expressive. I was able to do anything and she was totally

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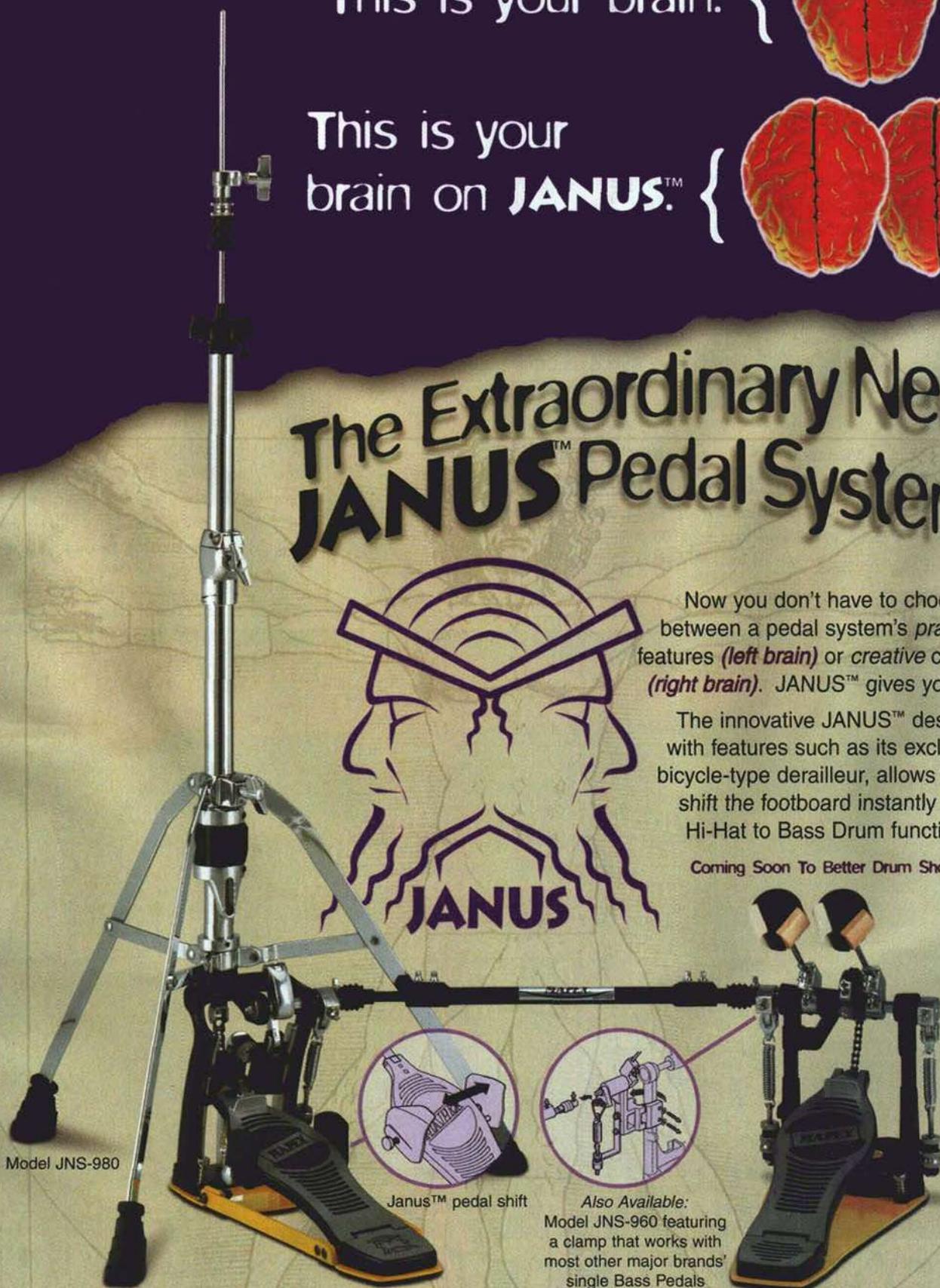


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## Taylor Hawkins

cool with it. Plus the drumset I was using with her was amazing! It looked like a music store.

**MD:** How has it changed with The Fools?

**Taylor:** This music is obviously more like Bonham meets Ringo, which is always how I saw Dave's style. I've had to learn to play more like that, which has been great for me. So I have less of the percussion things, although I am adding more and more all the time. Dave will come in and go, "What the hell is that?" I added some tone blocks, but the main reason was because live it's really hard to get a side-stick to be loud enough. Our soundman is always trying to gate the hell out of the drums so they don't distort live because I play so hard. Oh, I did just get these bitchin' RotoToms, the big ones, 16" and 18", and they sound like cannons.

**MD:** What are you using them for?

**Taylor:** For ruining the songs [laughs]. I actually use them all over the music now. When Dave saw them, he said, "No way." But now he loves them. Everybody loves them. My kit is starting to look ridiculous

continued on page 76



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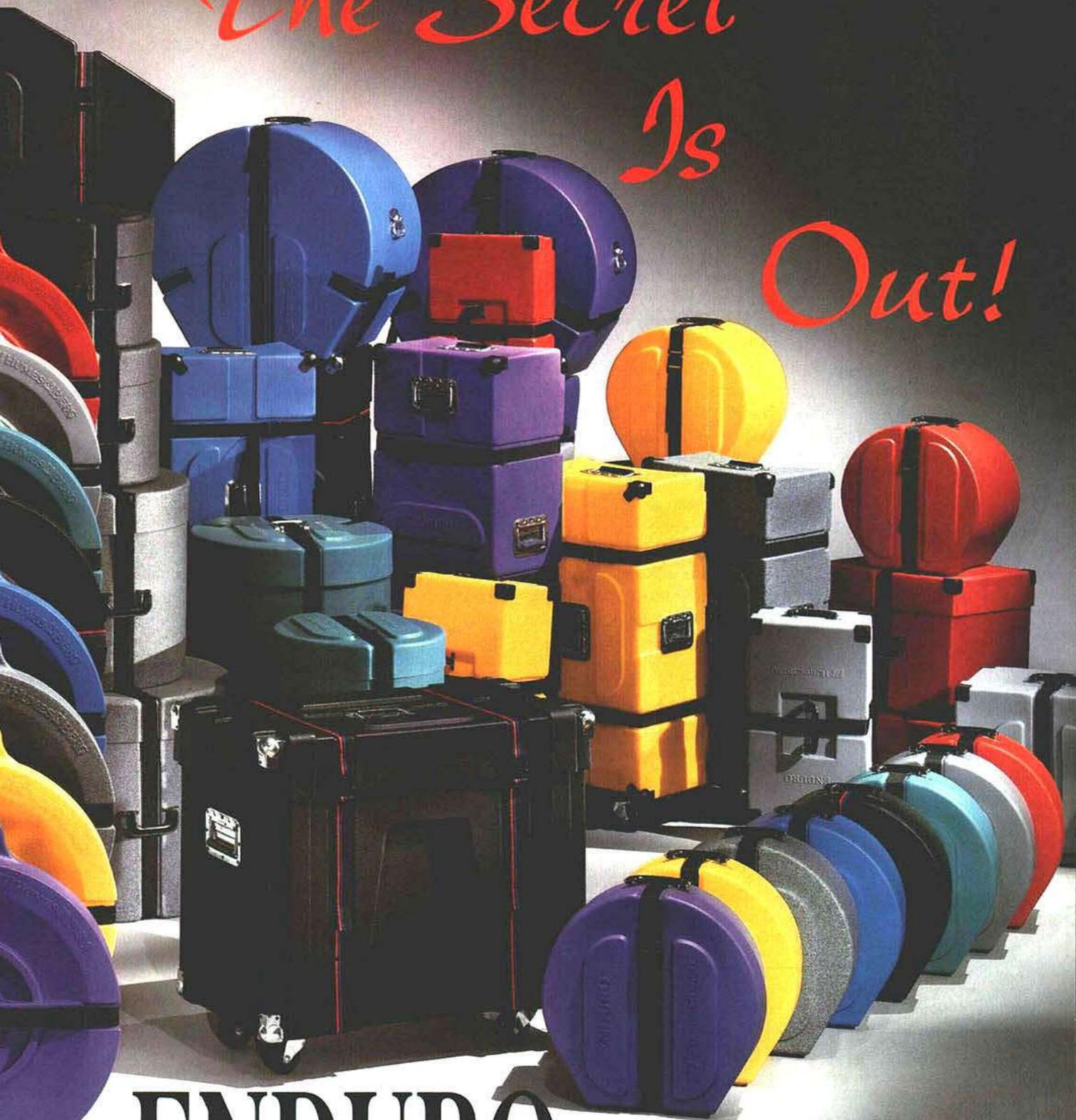
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## Grohl continued from page 68

**Dave:** I couldn't see that kind of drumming gel with what we were doing, but I did see that kind of *spirit* gel with what we were doing. The guy played like he was playing his last show every night. Every time I saw him play I thought, "Man, that guy is doing it for all the right reasons. He absolutely loves to play the drums." That's what's hardest to find.

**MD:** So why did *you* stop if you miss it?

**Dave:** After being in Nirvana, I had offers to join a lot of other bands. At the time I was twenty-five years old and thought, I'm a little young to become a drummer for hire. I always know I can return to that, I always know that I can join another band playing drums, and I'll love it just as much as I always have.

**MD:** But why couldn't you create *and* play?

**Dave:** I could, which is what I did with the first Foo Fighters record. It wasn't meant to be a band. It was an experiment that I was going to release, kind of what Stewart Copeland did with his Klark Kent record. And then I thought, What the hell, I'll try playing guitar and singing. I've played guitar longer than I've played the drums, and I was always a back-up vocalist. So I thought, I've got nothing better to do—let's find a bunch of fun people to tour around in a van with. I'm still young. I wasn't thirty-eight years old and had to resort to joining Crowded House, which I was asked to do. Danzig asked too. But the big one was Tom Petty. When he asked me to join I was really interested. Now I

can't listen to a Tom Petty song without getting kinda wispy. I've got to say it was a difficult, difficult decision to make because if there was anyone in the world I would have done it for, it would have been him. And he knows the day I have nothing to do, the day Foo Fighters stop working, I'll be on the phone with him.

**MD:** So you consciously decided not to play drums in Foo Fighters? Why?

**Dave:** I couldn't see myself singing and playing the drums at the same time. Those little headset microphones look pretty silly if you ask me, so it was a conscious decision not to remove drumming from my life, but to change the direction of what I was doing with music. It'll never leave me. Every time I go home, I sit down and play for hours and hours, especially now with the studio in my house.

**MD:** Once a drummer, always a drummer.

**Dave:** I believe that. I'll bump into people who say, "Aw, I used to play the drums, but I sold my set." And I think, "How could you do that? Are you insane?"

**MD:** This album was recorded in a far less analytical manner than the last one, where you made demos first and used Pro Tools and all of that.

**Dave:** The reason we recorded this album this way is because I feel a lot of the music that has been recorded in the last five years has fallen victim to production. I feel as though people are relying too much on things like Pro Tools or Autotune for vocals and drums—and man, I'm a drummer! I miss hearing a song on the radio that speeds up in the



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chorus. I miss hearing a miss-hit on a snare in the second verse. I miss all the things that made John Bonham, Keith Moon, and Stewart Copeland some of the most memorable, influential drummers in history.

It's a drag that people have become so concerned with perfection. I think it has something to do with the concern that something that isn't pristine and perfect isn't safe. We left a lot of glitches in. What some people would call a mistake, we called charisma. What some people would call a glitch, we call personality. At the same time, we didn't just throw down eleven songs in a week and say, "Here's your record." We really focused on arranging, instrumentation, where things were going to fly in, how one instrument could complement the other, and the movement of the song from point A to point B so it wouldn't just return to a verse. If it was going to go to the second verse, it was going to have to feel like you were in a new place.

**MD:** Even though you were recording at your home in Virginia, you worked very long hours.

**Dave:** I pride myself on having a pretty strong work ethic when it comes to recording. When it comes to being in a studio you should take advantage of that experience while you can. Getting to record is a luxury. And you know what? In our case someone else is paying for it! Someone else is giving you the opportunity to go in and express yourself to the world, so how dare you not appreciate it!

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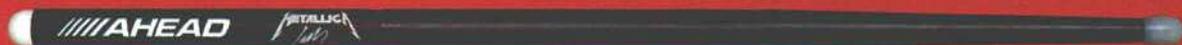
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## Taylor Hawkins continued from page 72

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again. When was the last time you saw anybody using RotoToms? In the garage in the '70s, probably. Actually, I stole the idea from Roger Taylor of Queen. He had two RotoToms on his drumset and they sounded very cool live. I put them above my floor tom and try to hit them in weird places in the music. I'll be doing a fill and throw in one little RotoTom hit at the end, next to the lowest floor tom. It adds this little "pop."

**MD:** Nothing is out of date as long as it's musical.

**Taylor:** And as long as you're mixing it up. I love bands like Supergrass and Radiohead. Bands like that take the old equipment and make something new and fresh with it. Those are the resources I like to use.

With what we do, there's a certain "purity" motto that says, As long as you can do it with real instruments, you're allowed to do it. If we made an album with a bunch of techno and drum loops in the background, people would go, "Oh, trying to fit in with the times?" If we ever wanted to do anything like that, we'd start a side band; it wouldn't be under the banner of The Foos.

This band started out with a garage vibe.

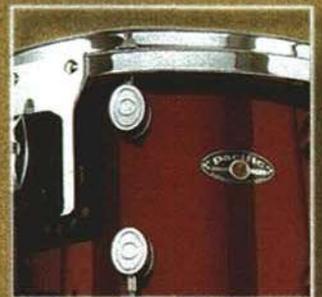
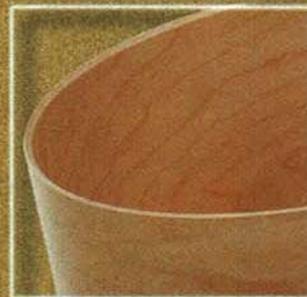
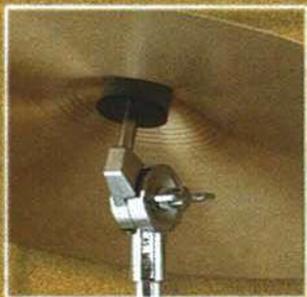
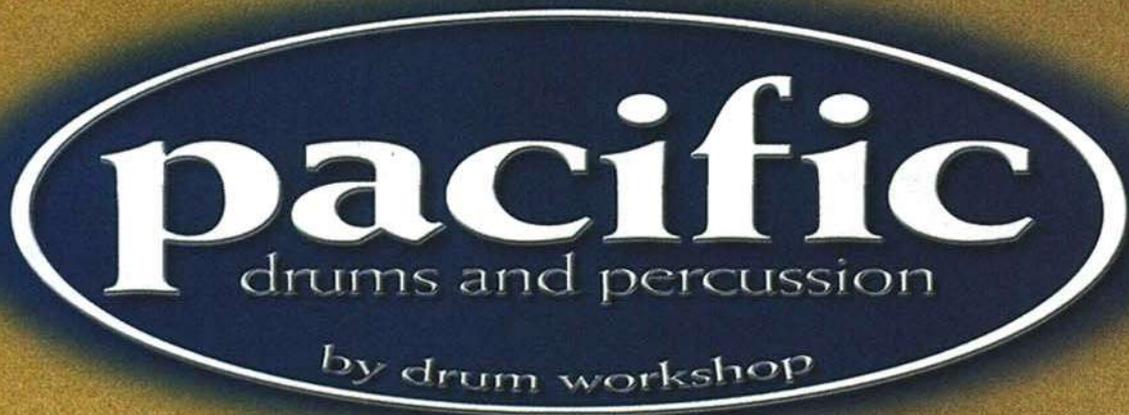
Dave did the first album on his own and it sounds like it was recorded in a garage. And that's what's great about it. You think about bands like Queen and bands who did it and sounded fresh and exciting with real instruments. When Bad Brains came out they presented a whole new way of playing punk rock. That completely influenced that style. I don't really like a lot of punk rock stuff, but I like Bad Brains and some of the other '70s English punk rock. I'm not crazy about the American, Orange County punk rock stuff you hear these days.

**MD:** Let's talk about the making of the new album.

**Taylor:** It was really tough for me. I've been doing stuff on my own in the studio for a long time. I have a little side project called Walkie Talkie, so I've worked in the studio a lot. But when I got in the studio to do *this*, it was different. It was tough to find how I wanted to play.

**MD:** What was the process?

**Taylor:** We went into a rehearsal studio three months before we recorded. The first thing we wrote was actually the most band-written song on the album, without a doubt. That was "Aurora," and it's one of my



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# Taylor Hawkins

favorite songs on the album. I saw Chris Squire, Yes's bass player, at a hotel in LA, and I chased him down to tell him how the end of "Aurora" reminded me of Yes. It was pretty funny.

**MD:** What about the process you went through to record this album? You said it was tough going.

**Taylor:** It was tough. It was just a matter of buckling down and trying to hear what Dave was hearing in his head and keep it interesting for me and him. He didn't really want to tell me what to do all the time, but a lot of times I wasn't exactly sure where the song was going because he writes the melodies and lyrics last.

The studio is a different beast. I've been on tour for the last six years. That's a challenge, and there are some pressures involved. But there's a lot more pressure in the studio, mostly pressure you put on yourself. Dave didn't put the pressure on. I did it to myself. There are definitely a couple of things on this record, which I'd rather not mention, that will always make me cringe, and I'll always wish we could go back and redo them.

**MD:** Is it a weird pressure that Dave is a drummer?

**Taylor:** I made it weird for myself in the studio. It was like, "Everybody's looking at me," or "Dave's the most influential drummer of the '90s." That made me a little insecure. There have been a couple of times where it's beaten me down a little—it's an identity kind of thing. But the most important thing is the songs, so I try to play for

them and be creative. And there's a certain sound to the band that I didn't want to stray from. I didn't crank my snare up really tight or try to change the drum sound too much.

**MD:** How *did* you approach the drums?

**Taylor:** We had a great engineer/producer, Adam Kasper, but we didn't have the Drum Doctor or anybody come in and get perfect drum sounds. There are messed-up snare sounds all over the place, but they're cool. There was no real method. Whatever drumhead happened to be on there that day, we'd hit it until Adam said it sounded good. I never even went into the control room to hear what they sounded like. Adam Kasper is the most laid-back kind of guy, and he'd get a drum sound in like half an hour. Sometimes I'd just sit down and play and he'd turn on the mic's and move one dial and go, "Sounds pretty good, let's go for it." Not too intense. The most intense thing was what I put myself through. Everybody's got insecurities. Not only was I excited because it was my first big album, but I was also scared and nervous. I can't wait to do the next one.

**MD:** What was the most difficult track for you on the album?

**Taylor:** Probably "Generator." The drum track is so weird, and Dave and I sculpted it together. I came up with the verse idea, and then there's the part on the chorus, which was Dave's idea because he had already demoed it. The arrangement changed a lot, so I remember that as being a difficult drum track. It's not one of my favorites on the album.

**MD:** What did you do to try to get a grip on it?

**Taylor:** I just did it over and over again. That was the extreme in that direction. The opposite was "Aurora," which came so easily. I feel that the playing and the feel on "Aurora" is the way I play naturally. The swing that it has is really who I am.

I think the hardest thing for me with this music is the straightness of it and making that feel good. I was so used to syncopating and swinging with Alanis that it's hard for me to play very straight music now.

**MD:** What about recording some of the mellower stuff, like "Ain't It The Life"?

**Taylor:** That one is very Eagle-y and Beatle-y. Dave took all my drums away except for snare, kick, hi-hat, and ride cymbal, and we went for the most Don Henley drum sound possible. We put duct tape everywhere—all over the snare and kick. And then we put this echo effect on the drums so that it has that sort of Beatle-y toilet bowl drum sound. As we kept doing the song, Dave was telling me, "There are too many fills. No fills." So there are no fills in the song. It was exactly what the tune needed.

**MD:** What in your formative years do you think prepared you for this situation?

**Taylor:** Everything. I don't want to sound too general, but I really feel like every little thing I've done—from high school band and cover bands to the Alanis gig—has prepared me. With each step you learn something new about playing and music.

**MD:** You didn't have any lessons. Were



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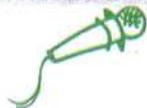
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# Taylor Hawkins

you playing to songs as a kid?

**Taylor:** Yes, and I was trying to get bands together as soon as I could pick up a pair of drumsticks. That was the whole reason I started playing—I was completely enthralled with music from the time I was a little kid. I also thought it would be so cool to play drums. Instead of getting everyone together for a baseball game, it seemed more fun to me to get four of my buddies together in my garage and play Rush songs.

**MD:** What do you think your strengths and weaknesses are as a player?

**Taylor:** I think my strength is my enthusiasm to play and to make everybody around me have a good time. I think also the fact that I try to write songs on my own gives me a good approach to the drums. I'm thinking about songs as opposed to workouts. I think my weakness is that I don't hunker down and keep the time solid enough. I tend to speed up a bit. I had to use a click for the album because I'm a spaz.

We recently did a TV show where we felt we sucked really bad. Dave hadn't had any sleep the night before, and it was this eight-song thing. After watching the video of it, though, we realized it was really

good. We realized that we do whatever we do and even if it isn't technically all together, it works. Sometimes you play even more earnestly when things aren't perfect. We watched it and realized there was a lot of emotion, sweat, and guts.

We were watching *Rushmore* the other night, and the Who tracks came on and it was, "Yeah, Keith Moon!" Nobody in the world can play like that. He could go from being the greatest drummer in the world, the most poetic, expressive drummer to stopping the song in the middle. It's really emotional. But good rock music has always had that element. That's what scares me a little about technology. We didn't use any Pro Tools on this album. We didn't go through a computer to fix things. We left all the warts. There are so many flubs, but the more we listen to it, the more the flubs become part of the song. All we wanted to do was capture how we sound as a band.

**MD:** The album notes say the songs were written by Foo Fighters, which indicates a collaboration.

**Taylor:** We're a band and we get along unbelievably well. It's gross how well we get along together! We're like twelve-year-

olds. We hug and stuff. We roast each other too. The roast sessions are really intense, but it's a real loving vibe. But you know what? It's not fun to be on the road when there's animosity.

I think a big part of what makes us feel so good together is that Dave is such a good person. He's already done so much more than anyone can hope to do in their musical existence. He's in his *second* great band, so the attitude is we're here to enjoy it.

**MD:** When you look at your career, it has to create some anxiety when you're with this hot superstar girl and then go right from that to one of America's coolest bands.

**Taylor:** It's the impending doom syndrome. I feel like, "I've been too lucky. When's the shit going to hit the fan?" Plus I feel guilty sometimes because I make so much money doing this. It's hard when you call your friend back home while you're on tour in Australia with your girlfriend, having a great time, and your friend can't even pay his rent. Sometimes I feel terrible. But I've been able to help out my family and friends, which feels good. I do feel lucky.



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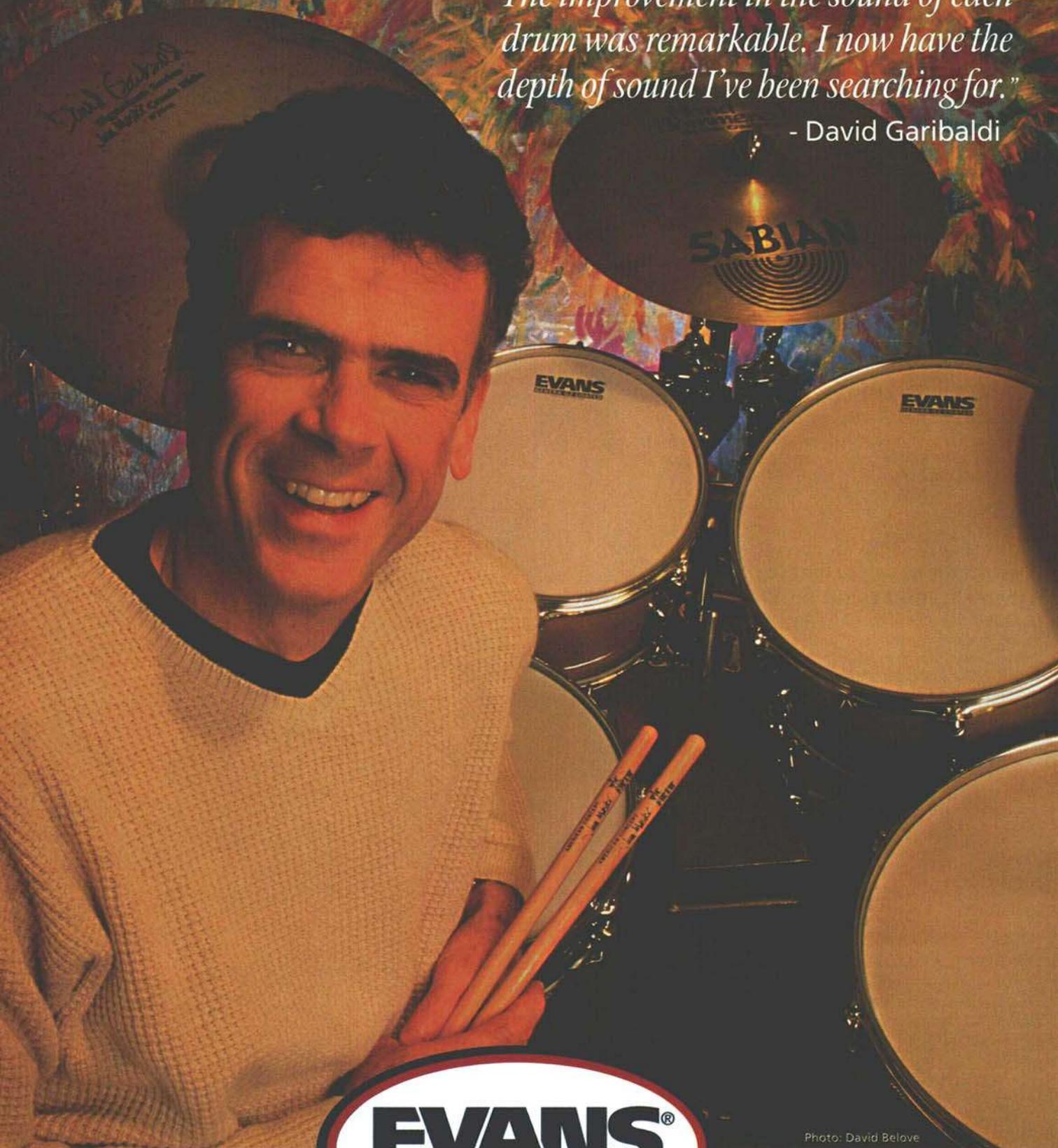
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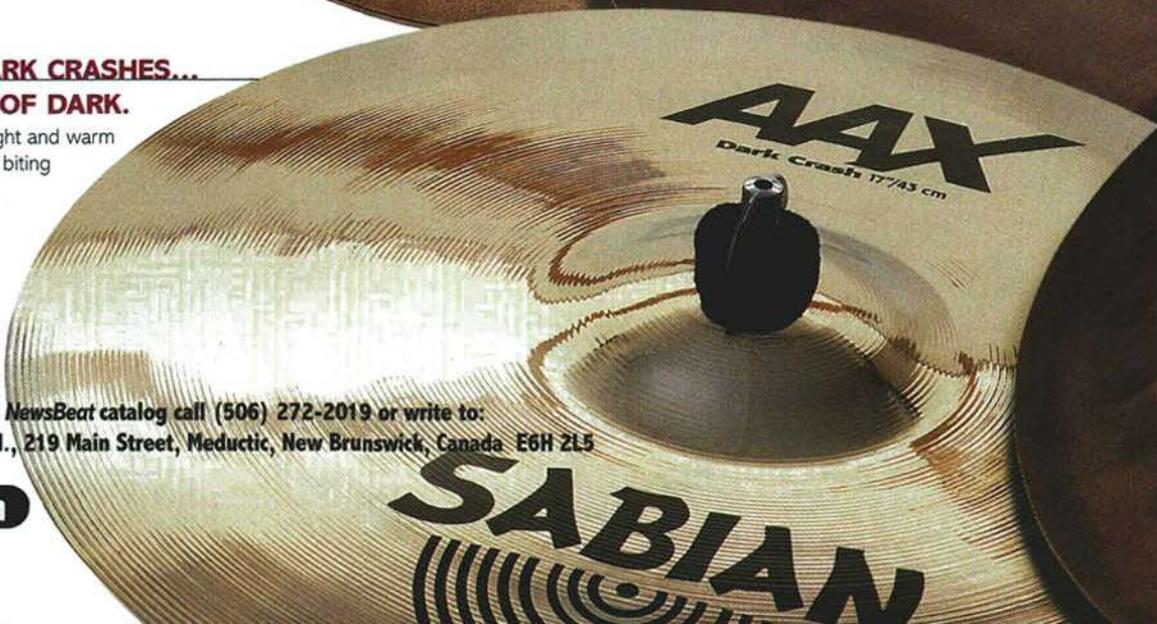
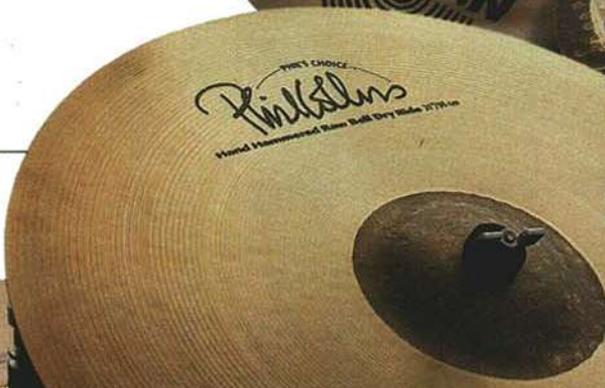
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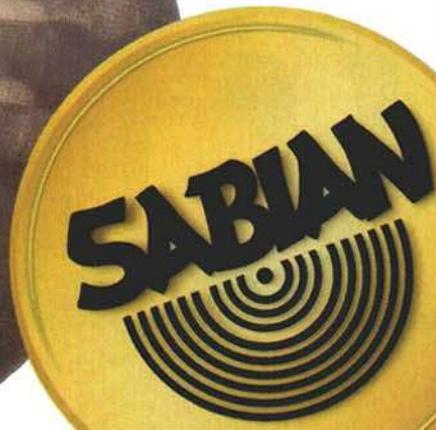


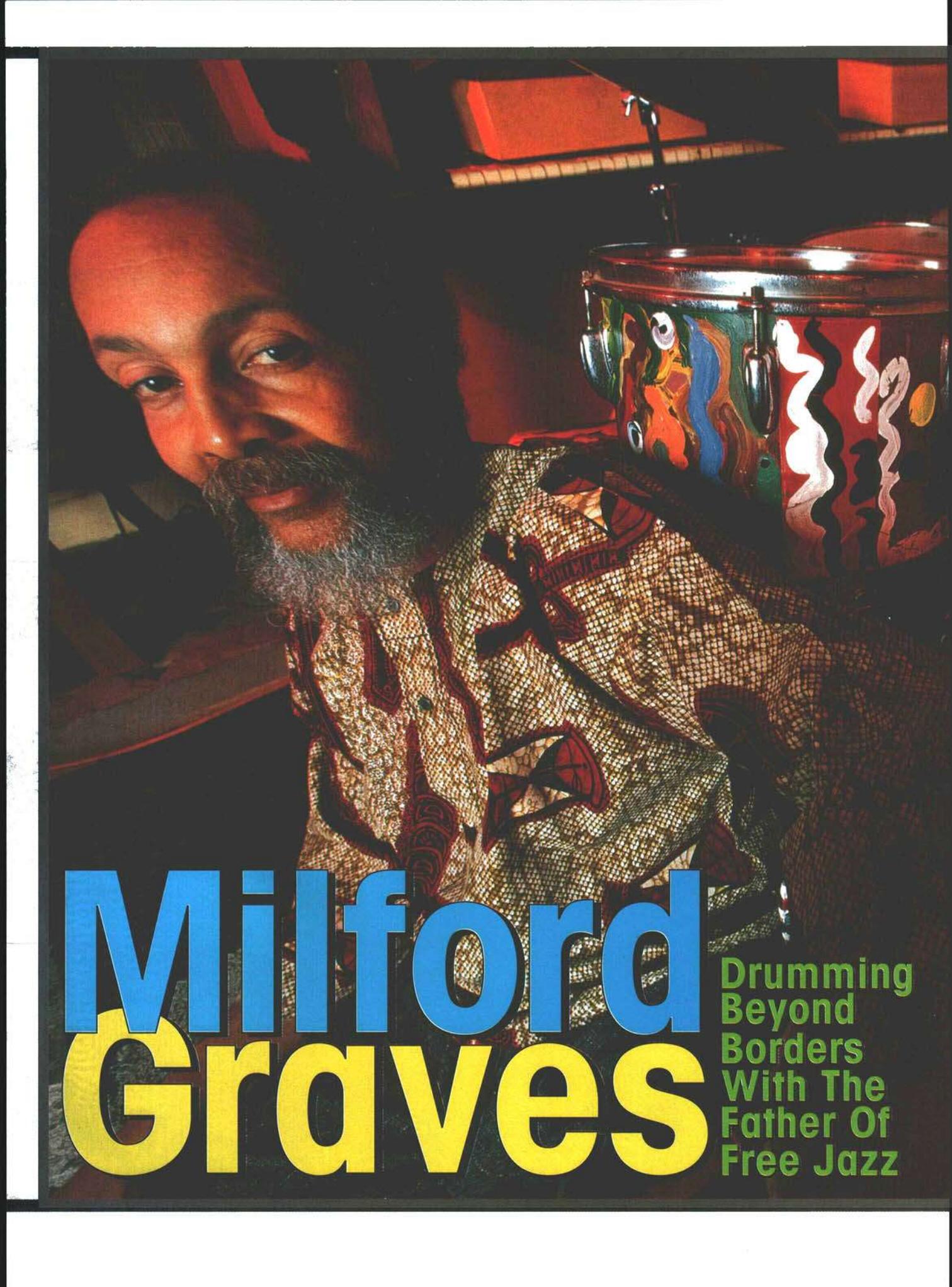
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# Milford Graves

Drumming  
Beyond  
Borders  
With The  
Father Of  
Free Jazz



Story by Ken Micallef

Photos by Paul La Raia

**S**ssssrhhhhhaaaBOOM! Cha-boom, cha-boom, FLAP! FLAP-ADA-FLAP FLAP. Bringgg-ka boom! Kink-da-dink, spanga-lang, a lang, Lang.

Just what was drumming before we standardized it and confined it with commercially viable terms such as "chops," "groove," and "fills"? Rhythm shaman Milford Graves doesn't bother with such pigeon-hole limitations. The free-jazz legend digs deep into drumming that exists beyond borders, at any moment embracing styles from New Orleans to Cuba to Senegal.

But Graves lives his *life* beyond convention, norms, and expectations. He's a percussive exhibitionist, a multi-instrumentalist, an herbalist, a cardiac adventurer, a martial arts expert—and in performance, a primal force.

One of the first free jazz drummers of the early 1960s, Graves made his mark with Albert Ayler, The New York Art Quartet, and Giuseppe Logan, and has since recorded with David Murray, a handful of like-minded drummers, and precious few others. Instead of capitalizing on his early success, Graves chose to study occidental medicine, herbology, and martial arts, then took up a twenty-year teaching residency at Vermont's Bennington College. Performing infrequently, Graves took on students such as young free titans Susie Ibarra and Walt Dickey. Not surprisingly, his are not ordinary teaching methods.

**"Most guys said we weren't playing jazz. We didn't even want to title it, because to us we were just playing music."**

**G**raves now seems to be on the verge of a musical comeback of sorts, performing and recording more. At a recent show with pianist Misha Mengelberg at New York's Tonic, Graves produced both blustery storms of sound and airy shimmers of delicacy. While Mengelberg plonked and plinked. Graves ran a gamut of unusual techniques, at one point using his elbows to mute the snare drum and floor tom while simultaneously performing a powerful Afro-Cuban rhythm on the remaining sound sources. (Graves calls this muting technique "sympathetic resonance.") In another improv, Graves used 20" dowels in unique fashion. In his right hand, two dowels played the ride cymbal and floor tom, while in his left he used a single dowel to comp on a talking drum that sat between his legs. And he did all this while singing in unusual tongues! As for recordings, recent, amazing examples of Milford's conception can be heard on the David Murray album *The Real Deal* as well as the drummer's own *Grand Unification*.

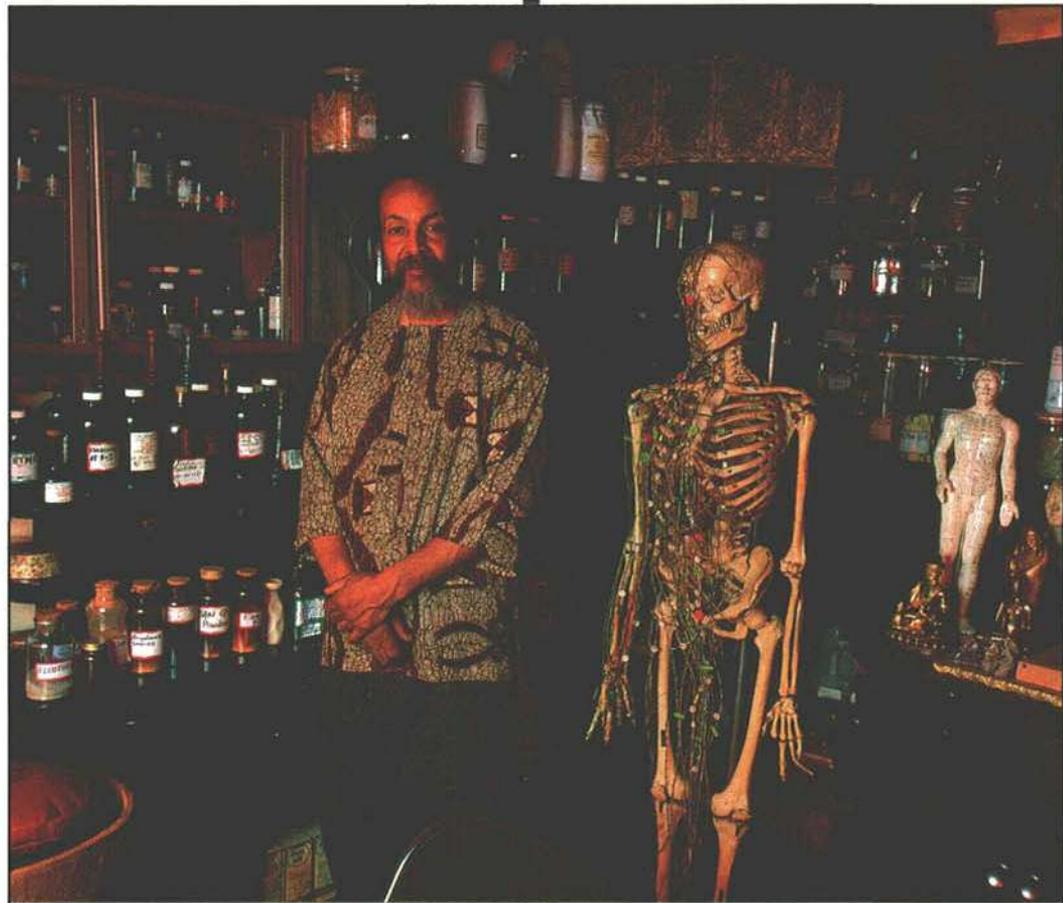
The basement of Graves' Queens, New York home is a laboratory of music, medicine, and ideas. Formerly an illicit jazz club in the 1940s, the space now houses Milford's multi-colored drums, walls filled with hundreds of herbs, a skeleton covered in acupuncture needles, numerous frame drums, eleven talking drums, incense burners, xylophones, African stringed instruments, balafons, shakers, a computer, a row of bipotential amplifiers, bells, and an ancient player piano.

You are about to read an interview with a unique individual. Leave your preconceptions of life, art, and *drumming* at the door. Or as they used to say, "Free your mind, and the rest will follow."

**MD:** Your touch on the drums is unique. It's very dynamic and it draws the listener in.

**Milford:** I started out playing very naturally. I played the piano first. The drums were left at my house by this man who rented a room at my parent's house. He died and the drums were left there. They were old field drums. I just started playing them because of a genuine love for the instrument. Some of the old guys, friends of my parents, used to play congas. I was fascinated with that too. I would do my stick thing and they would show me hand patterns. But even early on I got compliments for my touch on the instrument.

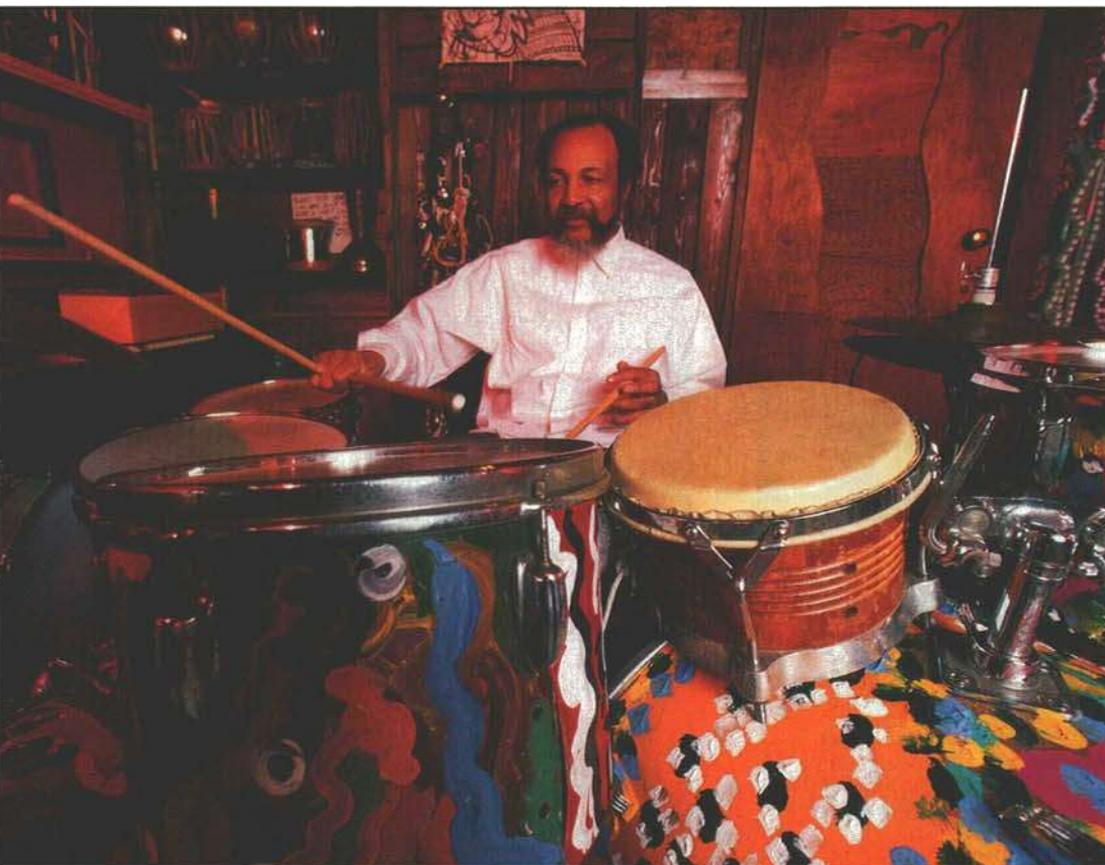
**MD:** What kind of music were you playing?



**"Drummers spend too much time on the drums and not enough time cultivating themselves."**

**Milford:** A lot of dance music. I played for an interpretive dance school. There were always guys who played different African beats, beats I tried to figure out but found out later were very non-traditional. I was trying to play rhythms on my own that would normally be played by two or three guys.

In the sixth grade I was initiated into Cuban drumming. My eleven-year-old buddy then was from Cuba, and his dad was a respected Cuban hand drummer. He showed me all sorts of patterns, and I got into hand drums. Just by hanging around the family and hearing conversations in Spanish, that whole Cuban thing seeped into me. I really got into and learned the Cuban



concept of playing. I got the Cuban touch 'cause we played all the time. I wanted to be Cuban!

**MD:** Had you started listening to jazz yet?

**Milford:** No. My uncle was a drummer and he wanted to show me the basics, but at that point I didn't necessarily gravitate to trap drumming. I wanted to be in Latin hand drum bands, around the guys who just wanted to play drums. I thought the drummers in jazz weren't doing all that much and that there was a limited amount of rhythm they were playing.

My friends and I formed drum bands that played in the neighborhood for local dances. Eventually I got serious about traps only because

# Milford Graves

people suggested I play them. Then I got some gigs with Latin guys, where I was playing traps, and they would say, "Man, you play jazz good." It's strange, 'cause I didn't want to play it.

**MD:** What year was that?

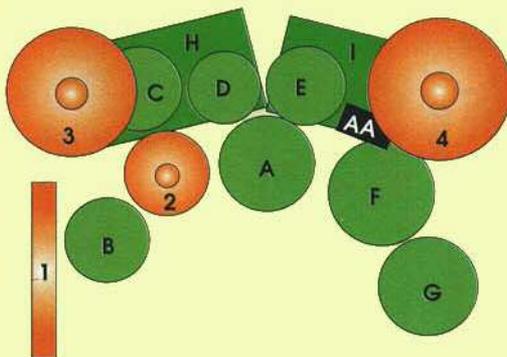
**Milford:** The jazz thing really started heavy for me in 1962. A friend of mine took me to hear John Coltrane at a club out here in Queens. Elvin Jones was in the band. They played "My Favorite Things," and that hit me, man. I realized I could play jazz and create in three and six! I saw that Elvin was playing a little more free than the other guys I had heard before. That was the point when I *knew* I was going to play jazz.

I went to some jam sessions at this place called Copa City. Billy Cobham was the house drummer. I sat in and they thought I was way out. Then from '62 to '63 I started concentrating heavily on trap drums.

**MD:** Where did you play with the Latin bands?

**Milford:** We played dance halls in Manhattan—all the clubs in the Afro-American and Latin communities. I was the guy people knew on all the Latin gigs.

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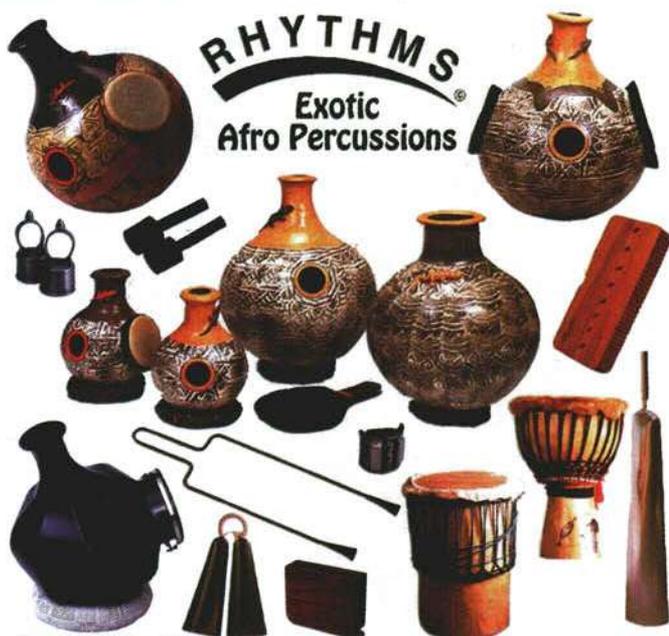
**Sticks:** Durawood 5A mallet/sticks

Eventually I played funk and all sorts of styles in the McKinley-Graves band. We played funk, blues, calypso, and Latin jazz. And we were popular.

Hey Lois! [Graves calls to his wife.] Can you bring me that photo album? That group was one of the most surprising Latin jazz bands. I was a person who enjoyed people. I could hang out in any community and

groove right in. So I would listen to all kinds of music. I didn't know why I shouldn't mix this with that.

[Milford's wife enters, bringing a 1961 photo.] This is a big-time picture. Recognize anyone there? [Next to a nineteen-year-old Milford on timbales is a teenage pianist, Chick Corea.] The McKinley-Graves Band was one of



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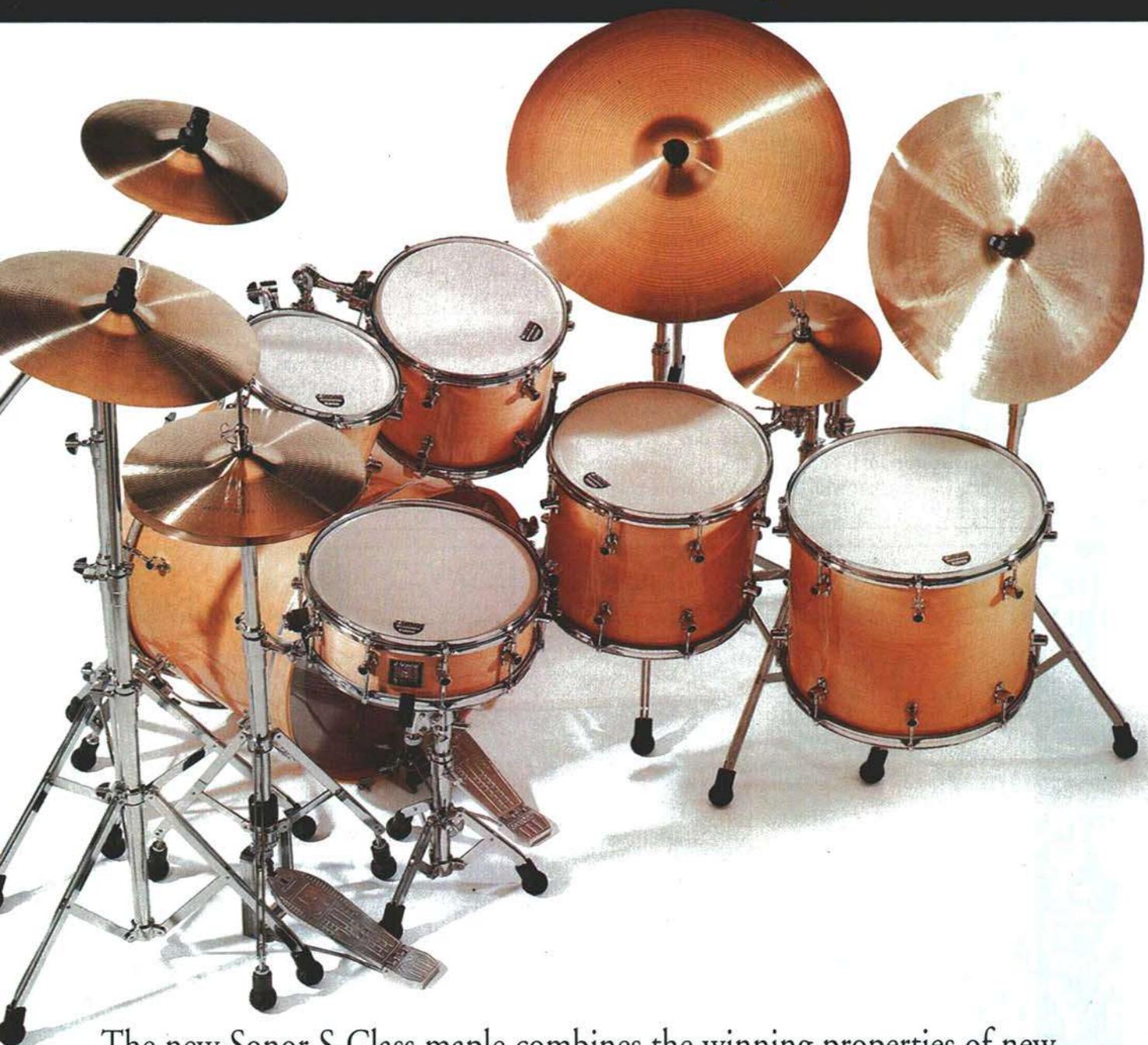
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# Milford Graves

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**MD:** It's obvious in that photo that your grip is solid, you have good technique. Did you do traditional drum studies?

**Milford:** No, none of that. I just played. But I *did* watch. I would go to the Palladium and watch all the guys: Tito Puente was the main guy, plus all the timbaleros who were coming from Cuba at the time.

**MD:** What happened to that band?

**Milford:** Everyone wanted Chick, so he left and we had to do something else. But it was a blessing in disguise because it forced me to find my own thing. I had to develop something else.

**MD:** Was it soon after that you recorded with Albert Ayler?

**Milford:** That came after I recorded with Giuseppe Logan in Boston in 1963. The first time I recorded was on *ESP* with The New York Art Quartet.

## The Real Deal Indeed

These are the recordings that Milford says best represent his playing:

Artist	Album
David Murray/Milford Graves	The Real Deal
Milford Graves/Don Moye/	
Kenny Clarke/Andrew Cyrille	Pieces Of Time
Albert Ayler	Love Cry
Milford Graves	Grand Unification
Milford Graves/Don Pullen	Pullen Graves
Paul Bley	Barrage
Montego Joe	Arriha! Con Montego Joe
Giuseppe Logan	Giuseppe Logan Quartet
Montego Joe	Wild And Warm
New York Art Quartet	New York Art Quartet
Lowell Davidson	Lowell Davidson Trio
Sonny Sharrock	Black Woman
Andrew Cyrille	Dialogue Of The Drums

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

Cal Tjader, Willie Bobo, Machito, Tito Puente, Tito Rodriguez, Art Blakey, Sabu Martinez, and Mongo Santamaria

**MD:** Back then, did you think you were playing jazz with Ayler, Logan, and The Quartet?

**Milford:** Most guys said we weren't playing jazz. We didn't even want to title it, because to us we were just playing music. What some people don't understand is that with *that* music we weren't trying to be

way out or different. It was the times. There was so much energy going on in the world at that time—student rebellion, the Vietnam War, the civil rights movement. Everybody throughout the world was saying, "We protest, we want our freedom,"

continued on page 94

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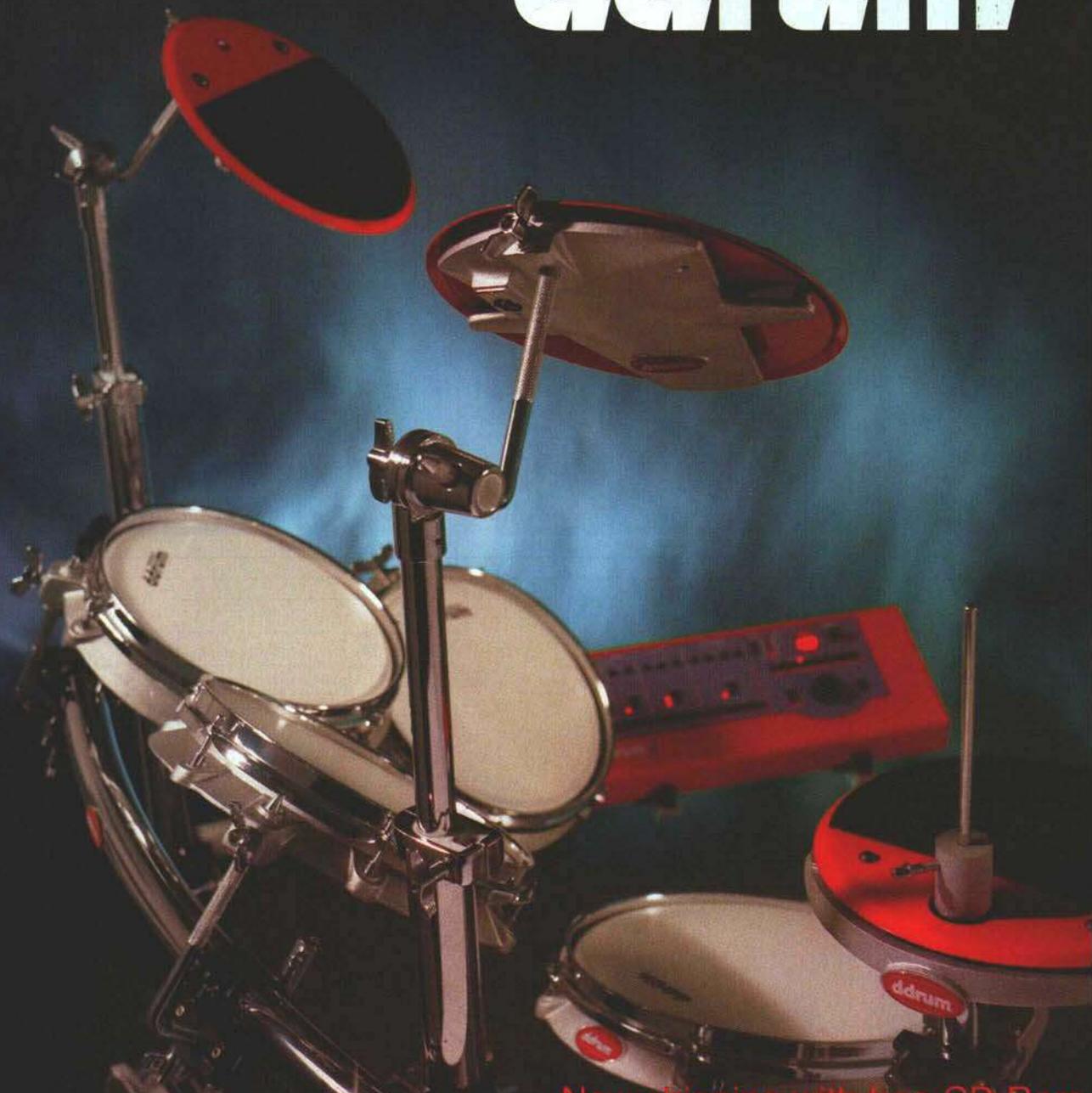
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# Playing "Free"

by Abbey Rader

For thirty years I've been involved in a style of music variously labeled "free jazz," "avant garde," "new music," "the new swing"—even "the big room." Whatever name it goes by, "free" music is usually thought of as a style that throws all the rules regarding time, rhythm, form, and tradition out the window. It certainly is true that the best free players take the music to places previously unimagined. But playing this style *well* also requires a solid foundation in the traditions of jazz.

## Where To Begin?

Most artists are constantly searching to express themselves and to respond to environmental stimuli. Jazz for me is a mirror of the world we live in. In our music, we can reflect all influences exerted on us. By its very nature, free music is an amorphous form. It symbolizes the order *and* chaos of the world. Expressing this requires an extraordinary journey for the player.

Since "free" jazz always incorporates elements of traditional music, it's important to go through the beginning period of study—listening, playing, and *more* playing. Experience is the best teacher, and understanding the original music forms that led to free music—blues and swing—is key. (Though it's true that some improvisers come from other traditions, such as classical, here we'll deal with the drummer coming from a jazz background.)

Once you have a foundation, you must understand what "free" *really* means. As we said, it seems to imply throwing out the restrictions of pulse and structure. But this isn't correct. What "free" truly means is not having to *maintain* those restrictions. To understand how this can be done artfully, it's helpful to study the changes in rhythmic approach that took place during the free jazz revolution.

Basically, beat was replaced with pulse, and meter was replaced with a swelling and shrinking of rhythmic intensity. This resulted in unprecedented freedom for the drummer to respond to the mood of a piece or interpret a composition with no constraints—which is a wonderful feeling. The goal was now to be "in the moment" with the other musicians, with no pre-planned agenda.

## The Tools Of Freedom

Players discovered that free music affords the space to use many elements for mood-setting, shading, and coloring—drums particularly. Hand drums and rhythms of other cultures like India and the African continent began to be utilized. Spirited musicians found that gongs and metal sounds could trigger some very introspective moods.

The drumset (and all its "trappings") should be viewed as an orchestra within itself. The possibilities are endless, and the ideas of designated roles for certain instruments must be abolished. The ride cymbal need not carry the pulse. The hi-hat needn't mark a specific part of the beat. The snare doesn't have to accent backbeats. The toms don't need to fill in. All of these instruments are at your disposal to offer as many contributions sonically to what you're playing as your imagination can muster.

Newcomers to free music are sometimes so shocked by its extreme nature that their immediate reaction is to think that playing it doesn't require solid technique. This is simply not true. At least a basic level of independence and a mastery of rudiments are essential. With these tools you'll be free to respond to environmental and musical input from collective improvisations of other players. The modern drummer must be *four* drummers, with each limb offering interpretation.

## Music Of The Mind

The role of emotion in this form of music is paramount. Music has struck all of us as sad, happy, aggressive, etc. Free players must transcend the emotion to a place where it is remembered on a molecular level, rather than as a real-time influence. It makes no sense to be a slave to these emotions, but it makes perfect sense to communicate them to the listener.

The practice of meditation has been very helpful to me in responding to

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# Milford Graves

continued from page 90

especially in the Afro-American communi-  
ty. It went through politics, art, everything.

We had to express ourselves, and the  
free thing started to catch on with a lot of  
people. But it never turned into an institu-

tion or an organized movement, and that's  
why it dissipated. Plus there were so many  
elements against us—the press, trad jazz  
musicians, and so on. You could not relate  
what we were doing to bebop, blues, rock,

the all-important moment. I believe these practices are directly related to the style of spontaneous improvisation. In meditation we look to let all thoughts disappear and function out of the large open space called "original nature" or wisdom. In free music we also try to interact spontaneously with no fixed ideas, only relying on our ability to react and on the immense vocabulary each seasoned artist has in reserve.

A giant of free jazz, saxophonist Albert Ayler, once said, "We are the music we play, and our commitment is to peace, to understanding of life. We keep trying to purify ourselves, our music, so that we can move ourselves and those who hear us to higher levels of understanding."

This represents spirituality to me. The great Sun Ra touched on similar themes: "Music is a spiritual language. When musicians play, it goes straight to the throne of the creator of the universe, and that's how he sees you, according to your music. Music is a universal language, so it goes to the creator as your personal message. Be careful! Nature never repeats itself, so why should I?"

## Dedication To The Cause

Any player who has the burning desire to express himself should check out this style. But you must really *need* it, and you must really *mean* it. The journey requires dedication to the art form and conviction to grow, regardless of external pressures. You must deeply trust your intuition or spirit guide. You must follow this voice and your beliefs.

You must also realize that, though this is a very rewarding journey, it can also be a painful one. Mass acceptance is rare, and financial rewards are not guaranteed. You must risk your life for the art form, and you must create what comes from you, not what's currently accepted by society. The reward is that when you uncover your musical heart, the music will open its secrets to you, and you will be able to offer it to those who will listen. And that's a beautiful thing.

## Open Ears

One of the problems with certain forms of music education is that we're told only certain elements represent particular styles. The unfortunate result is that from that point on we will always listen in terms of whether what we were taught is present. If it isn't, the tendency is to shut ourselves off to the music's value.

We should not categorize music. And we should be open to all kinds of music—the music that came before us, the music of other cultures, and the music that is current. Most important, we must always listen without preconceptions.

Though there are numerous examples of great free jazz, here's a short list of *historic* recordings you should check out. For many they comprise the ultimate representation of all we have spoken about here. Remember: Be open, and let the music play *you*.

Artist	Album	Drummer
Ornette Coleman	The Shape Of Jazz To Come	Billy Higgins
Ornette Coleman	Free Jazz	Ed Blackwell, Billy Higgins
John Coltrane	Ascension	Elvin Jones
John Coltrane	A Love Supreme	Elvin Jones
John Coltrane	Interstellar Space	Rashied Ali
Albert Ayler	In Greenwich Village	Beaver Harris, Sunny Murray
Albert Ayler	Spiritual Unity	Sunny Murray
Cecil Taylor Unit/		
Roswell Rudd Sextet	Mixed	Sunny Murray (tracks 4-7)

Abbey Rader has performed with many greats of the jazz and free movements, including Dave Liebman, Billy Bang, Philip Gelb, Ed Schuller, Mal Waldron, and Ron McClure. Check out his Web site at [www.abbeyrader.com](http://www.abbeyrader.com).



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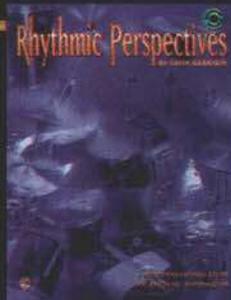


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# Milford Graves

funk—none of that. It was its own thing.

**MD:** So you called it "protest music"?

**Milford:** The writers named it that. But in a subconscious way we were protesting without being aware of it. It was just something that people did and gravitated towards.

**MD:** Did you see yourself as a timekeeper or a colorist?

**Milford:** I never thought of time. I thought of life itself, how one functions in life. You can't categorize yourself all the time.

**MD:** I understand a big part of your playing involves heart rhythms. How did you get involved in studying these rhythms?

**Milford:** I studied as a laboratory medical technician, but before that I looked at every medical book I could find. I bought this record called *Normal And Abnormal Heart Rhythms*. We all know the common heart rhythm—ba-doop, ba-doop ba-doop. But this album listed all these different rhythms. And from listening to these rhythms I realized that I was playing all of these different things in my drumming. They were like African bata rhythms. In fact, for every heart rhythm, I can show you a bata rhythm.

**MD:** I didn't realize that there are different kinds of heart rhythms.

**Milford:** Oh sure. There are many kinds. Think of a short crispy roll. That's a murmur. Then you have shuffles: badomp, badomp, badomp. That's a four-beat heart pattern. And you have three-beat heart patterns that are common in a lot of children. If you lay a kid on his side and listen to his



heart, you just might hear the ride rhythm.

It's interesting how the study of heart rhythms affected my playing. Whenever something beats in 4/4, your heart tries to find its balance again, and that balance comes from a triplet rhythm. You may not die from a 4/4 heart rhythm, but the balance will not be there. Heart problems and non-organic heart balances come from anxiety and stress, and in that case you have irregular, 4/4 rhythms. You hear those rhythms in ritual music. I refuse to play a lot of rhythms because they simulate heart

rhythms that have a tendency to put stress on your heart.

**MD:** So a 4/4 rock beat is dangerous?

**Milford:** There is that debate. But you never know what you are about until you decide to elevate yourself to another level of being. You can do what everyone else does and that may be fine. But as soon as you put a lot of stress on yourself—smoking, drinking, eating red meat—you may still be alive, but on what level?

Hang out with me and I'll take you on a mental, physical, and spiritual trip. We'll

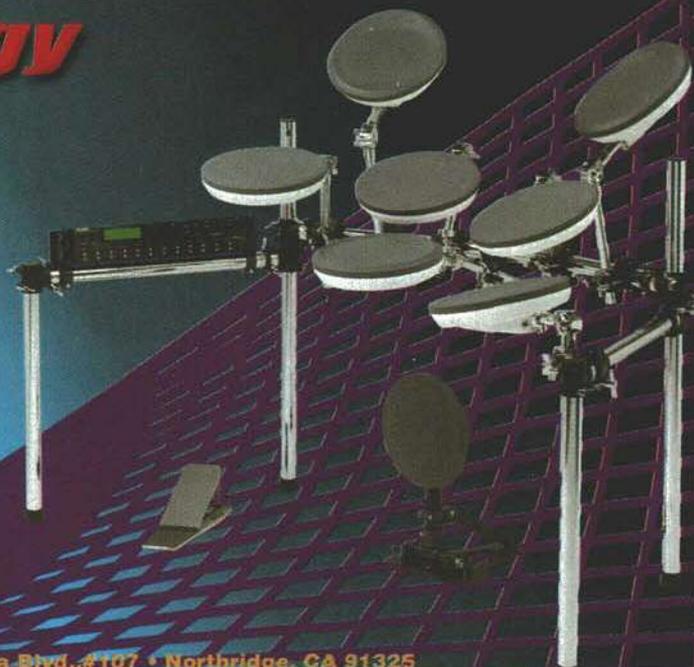
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# Modern Drummer's 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Readers Poll

No doubt about it, we at *Modern Drummer* just love scouting the hottest drum talent and bringing their stories to you. But we also dig finding out who you feel the most notable artists are. That's why we created our annual Readers Poll over twenty years ago. You could say it keeps us on the ball. But just as important, it gets you in on the action—and lets the players know how much you appreciate them.

Any regular reader of *MD* knows that we don't usually play the "Drummer A is better than Drummer B" game. Drumming isn't a sport, after all. But that doesn't mean we can't have a little fun and honor those whose recordings, performances, and educational activities particularly knock us out, does it? Of course not. So whip out your Bics, and tell us what you think!

Some quick notes: This year we've added three new categories: Instructional Book, Instructional Video, and Clinician. More players than ever are hitting the clinic trail or putting their thoughts on paper or on videotape. We're betting you'll jump at the chance to tell the world who you think did the best job.

You might also note that some category names have been

changed. It's never easy putting creative musicians into strict categories. But it's a necessary evil, and we feel we've come up with a darn fair and accurate system this year. In addition, the Honor Roll, which recognized five-time winners in particular categories—but kept them from being eligible beyond that—has been eliminated. Many of the artists who received that award are *still* out there kickin' butt, and as this is the first Poll of the new millennium, we felt it would be cool to get them back in the game. How about letting us know how you feel—with your votes!

## Instructions

1. You must use the official *MD* ballot—no photocopies.
2. Please print or type your selection in the corresponding box.
3. Make only one selection in each category. Leave blank any category for which you do not have a firm opinion.
4. Affix appropriate postage and mail the ballot to *Modern Drummer's* offices at the address shown on the reverse of the ballot card.
5. Ballots must be postmarked no later than **March 1, 2000**. Results will be announced in the July 2000 issue of *MD*.
6. **Return Address/Prize Drawing:** Fill in the return address lines on the address side of the ballot to be eligible for *MD's* voter-appreciation drawing. Three ballots will be drawn at random; each winner will receive a free one-year subscription to *Modern Drummer*.

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(Note: Your browser must accept cookies in order for your vote to count.)

## Category Descriptions

### Hall Of Fame

Vote for the artist, living or dead, who you feel has made a historic contribution to the art of drumming. Current members of the Hall of Fame are not eligible for this category. They are: **Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, John Bonham, Keith Moon, Neil Peart, Steve Gadd, Louie Bellson, Tony Williams, Billy Cobham, Joe Morello, Carl Palmer, Bill Bruford, Art Blakey, Max Roach, Jeff Porcaro, Larrie Londin, Elvin Jones, Vinnie Colaiuta, Terry Bozzio, Ringo Starr, and Roy Haynes.**

### All-Around

Not intended to indicate the "overall best" drummer, but to recognize drummers noted for performing in a variety of musical styles and applications.

### Studio

Drummers who record with many different artists and/or on jingles, TV, and film scores.

### Mainstream Jazz

Drummers performing in small acoustic jazz groups, in styles such as bop, avant-garde, etc.

### Contemporary Jazz

Drummers performing fusion, jazz-rock, new age, etc.

### "Big" Band

Drummers performing regularly in traditional big bands, stage bands, etc.

### Up & Coming

The most promising drummer brought to the public's attention within the past twelve months.

### "Percussionist

Hand and specialty percussionists (as opposed to drum-set players).

### R&B

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

### Clinician

Name the drummer or percussionist whom you found most inspiring and educational in a live clinic presentation.

### Educational "Book

Your favorite educational drum book released within the past twelve months. Please name the book, the author, and the publisher.

### Educational Video

Your favorite educational video released within the past twelve months. Please name the video, the artist, and the video production company.

### Recorded Performance

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

# Milford Graves

run, work out, wrestle, and you'll eventually realize that you should change your life. You have to take care of yourself. If you are constantly performing certain kinds of rhythms that stress your circulatory system, I don't think that's best for you.

**MD:** Rock rhythms? Hip-hop rhythms?

**Milford:** If you're always playing rhythms that are in multiples of four beats, there is stress. But if you play rhythms that divide into multiples of three, you're more in balance with the way your body vibrates.

**MD:** The great drummers, from both the jazz and rock fields, all swing. From Ringo to Bonham to Mitch Mitchell to Jeff Porcaro, they all swing.

**Milford:** Right. But if the rhythm is tight it's not swing. Our bodies move in a certain way—we are oscillating in a sense. So to swing means to keep in balance with the natural way our bodies flow. When you're locking in a rhythm and not curving or angling it off—playing just a linear straight four without those curves—you're knocking yourself inside. There's too much collision and resistance.

**MD:** What are those small amplifiers next to your computer?

**Milford:** They're connected to a twelve-lead electrocardiogram. By hooking this up to my body I can see different graphs on the computer screen that show how my heart is vibrating. I can put this wire on you [*Milford unwinds wires connected to computer*] and it will show us your EEG. We put this cap on you as well. Then we'll get your brain waves. With this equipment I can find out what tones and rhythms affect the heart and the body. I'm not talking out of my hat about certain rhythms messing you up; I know this stuff to be fact.

I am truly interested in the healing aspect of music. In the tradition of a lot of societies, the drummers were very important. The drums were popular with everyone. Today's drummer has to realize that the drums are very important. When I was coming up, the drummer was not respected. You were told to play time. But in Africa the drummer is the man. There the drummer has to study.

**MD:** Was the bias against drummers initially a racial thing, since the drums and the genesis of rhythm were from Africa and most melodic instruments were from

Europe?

**Milford:** If I was to think superficially I would say yes. But I think we're coming around because people are waking up.

**MD:** Tell me about the courses you teach at Bennington College. You cover a lot of ground. One course is "Analysis Of Two Ancient Middle Eastern Texts On The Influence Of Music." What's that?

**Milford:** Those are translations of some text by a Scottish fellow that are a discussion of eight traditional Arabic rhythmic modes. I teach rhythmic modes that they used in ancient times.

Everybody that takes my class learns how to play basic polyrhythms. I show them how to play basic heel and toe tap, tell them where the downbeats are, then how to subdivide that into two parts, four parts, and three parts. And then I tell them how to count triplets, two against three, and basic independence.

**MD:** You also cover Yoruban bata drumming, which involves dun-dun speech drumming.

**Milford:** I have different texts where I show students all the diacritical marks in how to speak the language. It deals with different vowel and vocal accents, highs and lows, like a melody. It's also about how you can speak something in the nasal cavity, then drop down into the nasal area, and then slide back up into the nasal area. The anatomy that is involved—the muscles and vocal cords—if you do it right, will change your energy inside. It's more than the rhythms; it's about manipulating things inside of yourself.

**MD:** Is that what the vocals are doing on *Grand Unification*?

**Milford:** I do that, as well as sounds from the Ituri Forest in Congo. They have similar lines. Leon Thomas used to do that with Pharoah Sanders, and I picked up on what I heard from the Cuban thing. That gives you a whole different dimension.

**MD:** The course description also covers Ashante, the drumming system of Ghana, Cuban bata and rumba drumming, ragas and tabla drumming....

**Milford:** I have the students listen to the music. I demonstrate and try to get them involved. That course is determined by the level of the students taking it. We have many different disciplines at Bennington. It's a school of freedom.

**MD:** Did drumming lead to all these differ-

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# Milford Graves

ent areas of study?

**Milford:** Yes. People have asked me why I do all these things. All I know is that I am real in what I do; I am not trying to be hip. I am from the old school that believes you don't know anything until you're fifty. I am fifty-eight and I'm still trying to figure things out. I ask myself, How did Buddha get enlightened? How did Jesus get enlightened? Where did they get this stuff? That's my mission on this planet. I don't want to come off like a guy who knows everything, but I feel this stuff. And I just keep moving.

**MD:** Getting back to your playing, you draw the sound *out* of the drums.

**Milford:** When you hit the skins, when you come down the second time after you've hit the head, you touch the skin in a way that subdivides the skin. This creates a different pattern. When the skin is vibrating you want to catch the sound on the upward vibration.

**MD:** How can someone learn that?

**Milford:** Really think about how you are stroking the instrument. Experiment with a harder touch, lighter touch, dig down into the skin, press into the skin, then press less

and less. If you do that a lot you get the feeling of different pressures.

**MD:** What accounts for the times when your cymbals sound like the wind?

**Milford:** That comes from my training in tai chi and aikido. It's all about flow. You can't just play drums. Drummers spend too much time on the drums and not enough time cultivating themselves. Tai chi and aikido involve smooth body movements, and I've combined them with certain African dance movements in my drumming.

**MD:** What are you thinking about when you play a solo drum piece?

**Milford:** I pay attention to my audience. I watch them when they first come in, the way they walk and the way they're moving. Then I listen to their conversations—to the *sound* of their conversations.

Right before a performance people get into a mood of almost being happy, because they're going to hear some music. If you hear all those sounds together, you hear a fundamental sound. Once I hear that I start to sing that fundamental sound inside. Once I get the tone I know the harmonics. So when I initially come out and

play, I try to complement the audience sound. I build my sound off of the people's sound so I'm in touch with them. If I came in with a predetermined approach, that might not be what that particular audience is about.

**MD:** Why are there no snares on your snare drum?

**Milford:** Snares are for effect. I'm a tonal drummer. I don't need to hear that drone all the time. Somebody said, "Just turn the snares off. You don't have to remove them." But I don't use bottom heads on any of my drums either. Whenever a drum has another skin on it, you're supposed to play it! [laughs] That's the way I came up. You don't use it for a resonance factor.

**MD:** How do you tune your drums?

**Milford:** I use a system based on old Greek and African cent values. There are basic things I'll do. See that chart? [Milford points to a chart next to his computer.] Tesla, the famed Italian scientist, figured that there were three resonant frequencies. Modern science says that there are frequencies of the Earth that keep the planet in orbit. It's between these notes. [He points to a complicated series of graphs on the chart.] These are very powerful notes, man. That's where I try to tune to.

**MD:** Much of what you are involved with in science seems to be coming from primitive cultures. Didn't modern science debunk a lot of the ancient systems?

**Milford:** A lot of money is paid by the big drug companies to get all the information from the so-called witch doctors. There's a lot of valid information available from primitive cultures.

**MD:** Finally, what does *Grand Unification* mean?

**Milford:** I've followed and seen all these quantum physicists—Newtonian physicists, the Einstein groups and the non-Einstein groups—fail to figure out how to hook up the theory of relativity with quantum physics. They can't figure out how gravity plays into all of this. They're all looking for this grand unified theory. But I deal with the general theory of relativity with my drumming, and there's gravity *there*. If these scientists would focus on drumming, they could figure out nature.

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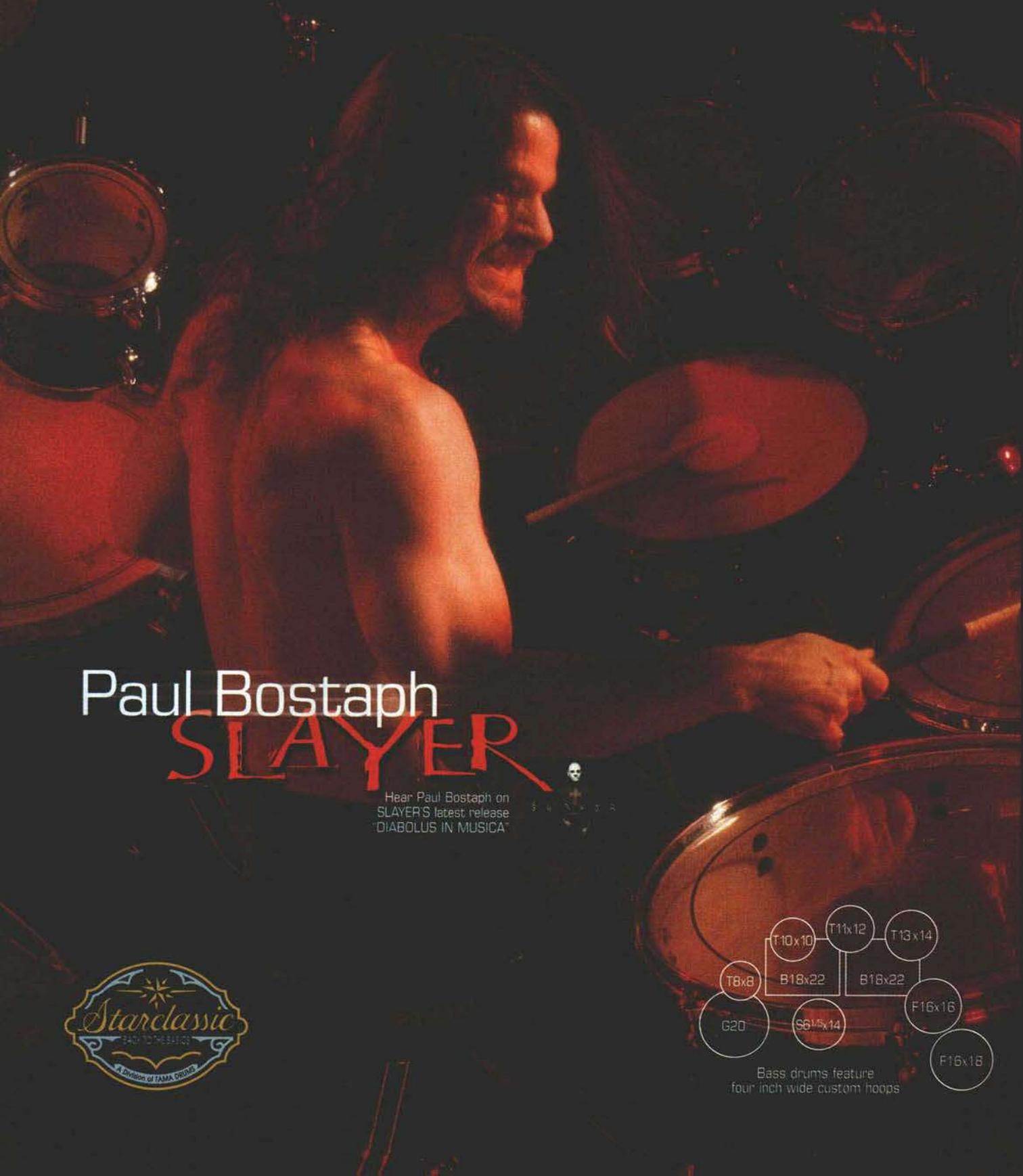
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"The funny thing is that when people look at my drum set they think it's big," remarks master speed metallist, Paul Bostaph, Slayer's demon of the double bass. "Well it's not big when you compare it to kits in the '80s, when some guys had drums just for the sake of having them. But I use everything on my kit. And I get a wider selection of voices and tones than I would out of small kit. Naturally, I need the bigger drums for the really heavy parts. But unlike a lot of metal players, I actually do most of my playing on the smaller toms."

"I also like the contrasts you get in a bigger kit. One of the best contrasts came about when I moved the 8" tom over the Gong bass drum to make it easier to play my 15" hi hats. That got me into working with ideas featuring the contrasts of those two different drums to use in future recordings."

"I do use a smaller kit when jamming and for about two years I actually used a single bass with a double pedal. I found that one bass drum doesn't have a compelling feel for me. With two bass drums, there's so much more definition and sound."

"In the studio I use a 6 1/2 x 14" bell brass snare on the slow material and the bell brass piccolo on the fast stuff. Live I only use the piccolo. I'd love to use the 6 1/2" in concert, too, but in Slayer we play songs from 15 years worth of albums back to back to back. There's no time to switch drums and mikes. Fortunately, the bell brass piccolo not only cuts; it's also got a lot of warmth."

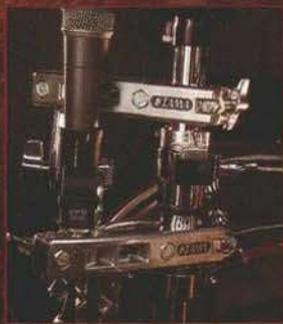
"The challenge in what I do is to get tones that are both warm and fast. Even with a large kit, each drum has to be able to cut through and still sound big. It's hard to get all of that out of one drum. But I'm able to get everything I need in both tone and speed out of my Starclassics. And that's the truth."



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# Megadeth's

# JIMMY DEGRASSO

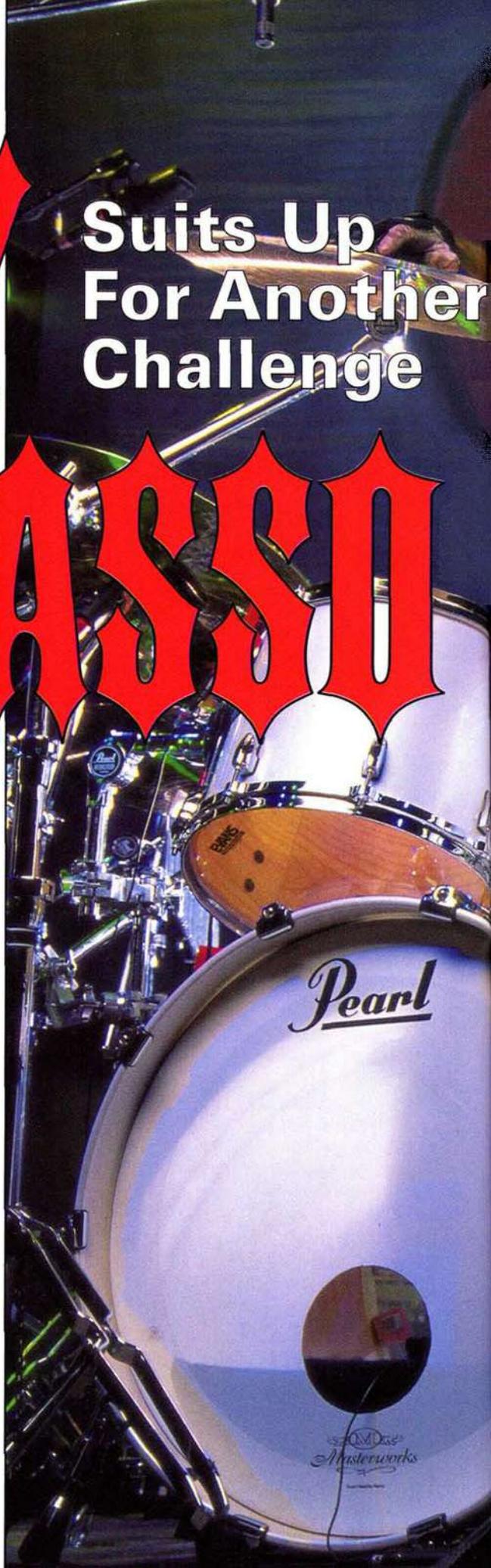
Suits Up  
For Another  
Challenge

Story by David John Farinella

Photos by Gene Ambo

So much of life is perspective. Odds are that any other drummer in the world would be a bit out of sorts if they got a call to join a band just three days before a show for 9,000 rabid fans. No time for rehearsals, no time for soundchecks, no time for nothin'. Just show up and play the gig. Yeah, some drummers probably would have passed.

Jimmy DeGrasso, on the other hand, shrugged his shoulders and showed up for Megadeth's gig. Oh, and the fact that he was on tour with Alice Cooper in Germany with a couple more dates to play didn't phase him. Nah, he had a little talk with Alice, packed his bags, flew from Copenhagen to San Francisco on Monday, and played the show on Tuesday. "It's funny, because it's a big deal, but it's not a big deal," DeGrasso

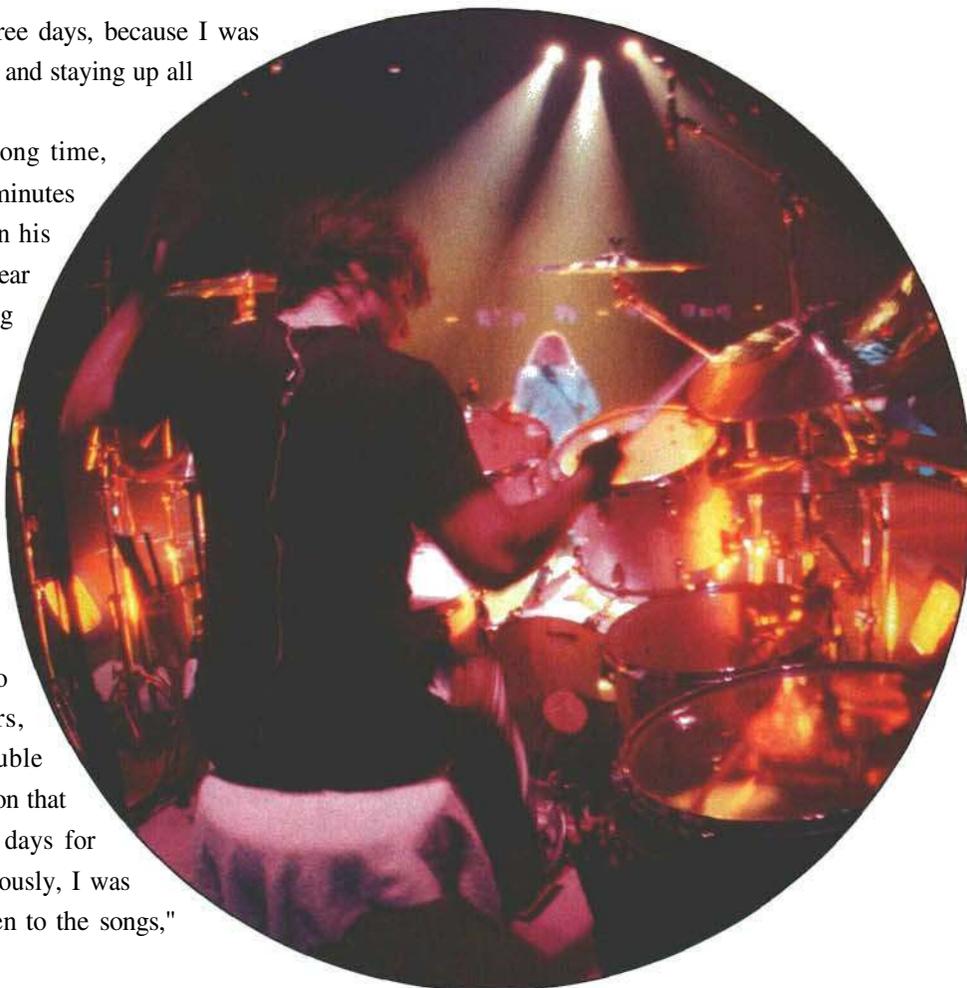




says. "I basically didn't sleep for three days, because I was doing the Alice Cooper shows at night and staying up all day listening to Megadeth songs."

Three days. Doesn't seem like a long time, does it? For DeGrasso it was 4,315 minutes longer than he had to prepare earlier in his career for a show in Australia. The year was 1992 and DeGrasso was playing with Suicidal Tendencies, who were opening for Alice In Chains. Five minutes before the Alice In Chains set the band came running up to him and asked if he knew any of their songs, because drummer Sean Kinney had suddenly taken ill. If DeGrasso didn't do the show they'd have to cancel. With classic DeGrasso attitude he shrugged his shoulders, picked up his sticks, and pulled double duty. "I only had five minutes' notice on that one," he says. "So when I had three days for Megadeth...well...that was a *lot*. Seriously, I was like, Three days? I can actually listen to the songs," he says with a laugh.

See, so much of life is perspective.



**"If you're familiar with Megadeth, you know we can play a million notes, all the metal licks, odd meters.... This time we wanted to do something *different*"**

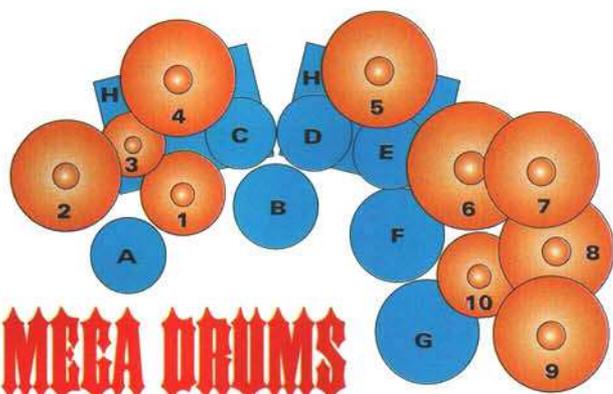
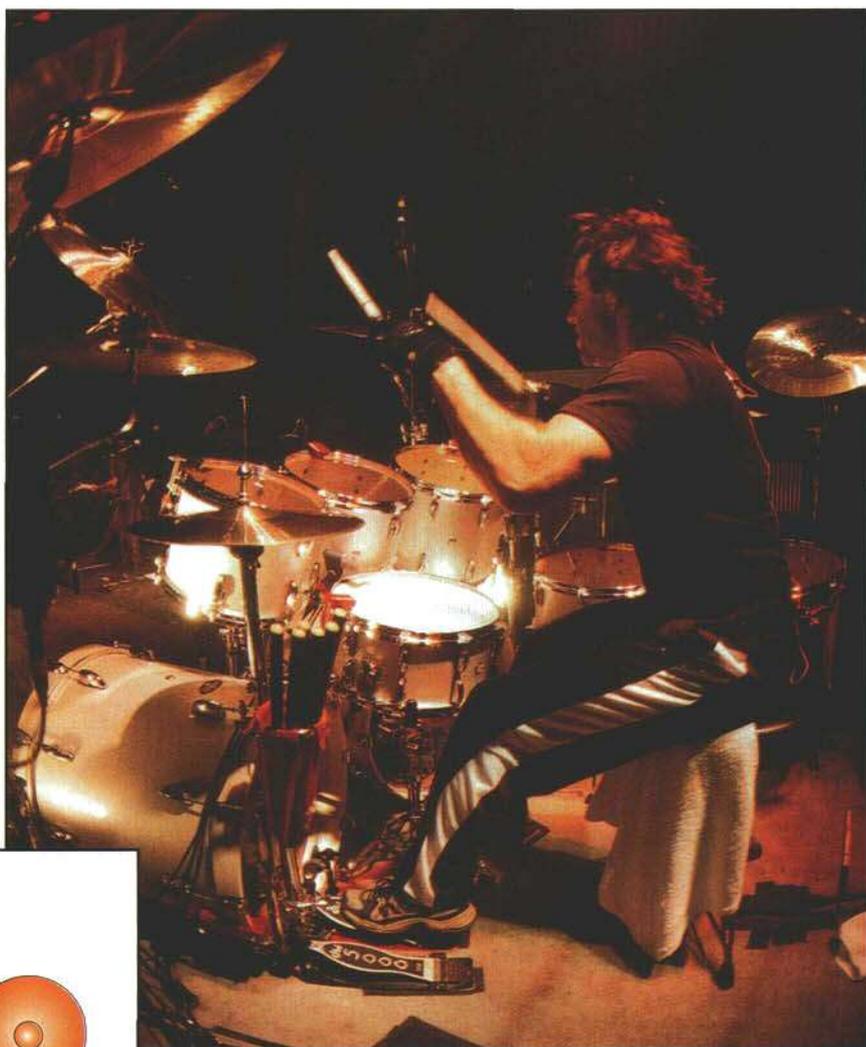
**A**fter spending a few minutes listening to DeGrasso, it doesn't seem like these hurry-up gigs are any different from how he started out in the music business. Growing up in Allentown, Pennsylvania, Jimmy got his first drumkit from his father, who was a weekend-warrior musician. Jimmy got his first "good" drumkit when he was around four years old. He learned how to read music at five, started playing with other musicians at ten, and took lessons until he was twelve. He smiles when he recalls how high school kids would knock on his parents' front door when the young drummer was only ten and say, "Can your son jam with us?" "At the time it was more fun to play drums



in the garage than to go out and play football, which I was terrible at," DeGrasso recalls. "So what at the time was just about having fun became this invaluable experience."

DeGrasso went from garage bands in his early teens to playing in full-fledged cover and original bands during his late teens. He went from big band gigs to rock bands, from country dates to jazz trios. To be sure, those early playing experiences influenced his future, though he admits he never thought rock was where he would settle. "To be quite honest, I didn't start out with this grand plan of being a rock drummer," he says. "I just liked music and I liked drumming. Most of the time I definitely like aggressive rock drumming more than anything. But I like to think of myself as a well-rounded player. I play just about anything with conviction; I don't want to sound like a fish out of water. I try to think of myself as being fairly musical, as opposed to just a straight-ahead drummer."

When he was twenty Jimmy packed up his drums and moved to Los Angeles. Six months later he found himself just starting to break into



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- G. 16x18 floor tom
- H. 18x22 bass drum

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Pearl (various 800 and 900 series); Drum Workshop legless hi-hat stand, DW bass drum pedals (tensioned as tight as possible)

### Sticks

Pro-Mark 747B oak (wood tip) with Pro-Mark Grip Tape

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the session market when he heard about an Ozzy Osbourne cattle-call audition. He went and got the gig. "That was my first scrape with big recording ordeals," he remembers, explaining that when Ozzy shuffled through yet another band, DeGrasso was out. Though he landed back in Pennsylvania following the Ozzy experience, Jimmy moved back to California once again to join Y&T. Jimmy played with them until 1990, when they disbanded, then joined Suicidal Tendencies, staying until 1995, when *that* band broke up.

So, is Jimmy DeGrasso the proverbial band black widow? He throws his hands up in the air, laughs out loud, and begs, "Don't say that." Actually, the trend was broken when he was in Australia with Suicidal Tendencies and got the call from Alice Cooper's manager. Jimmy stayed with that gig until his phone rang in Germany and Megadeth's Dave Mustaine asked him the big question.

For the record, Mustaine's call was not a cold call. DeGrasso has known the band since 1992, when Alice Cooper toured with Megadeth in South America. And Jimmy had also worked with Mustaine in his side project, MD-45.

Though he's been trained to read music, DeGrasso doesn't spend time charting out songs when he joins a new outfit. Rather, he makes what he calls "cheat sheets," where he jots down bar counts and sonic abbreviations. He made those once he got the Megadeth call, though he adds, "You can't look at those

# Jimmy DeGrasso

when you're playing. It's just more of a thing to help embed the form of the tunes into your memory bank."

When it comes down to joining a band midstream—drummers Gars Samuelson, Chuck Behler, and Nick Menza preceded him in Megadeth—DeGrasso doesn't believe he has to necessarily change the old drummer's parts outright. Some of the band's older songs are considered classics, "And I feel I have to play all the basic needs of those songs, including fills," DeGrasso explains. "I try to stay within the framework of what the song originally was. I don't take the old songs and go, 'Oh, I have to bring myself to these songs and play them as if I played them originally.' That's nonsense. My ego isn't that big." Then again, there has been the occasional time when the band has asked him to do something different with an older song.

One thing's for sure: DeGrasso's not playing what he thought he was going to play when he first got the call. "When I came into the band I thought I was going to be playing some speed metal and that we were going to write some really fast material for this new record," he says. "I was

## DRUMMING AT YOUR OWN RISK

These are the albums that Jimmy says best represent his playing:

Artist	Album
Megadeth	Risk
Suicidal Tendencies	Suicidal For Life
MD-45	The Craving
Stef Burns	SwampTea
Alice Cooper	Fistful Of Alice

And these are the ones he listens to for inspiration:

Artist	Album	Drummer
Tony Williams	Lifetime	Tony Williams
Buddy Rich	various	Buddy Rich
Led Zeppelin	The Song Remains The Same	John Bonham
Rush	Hemispheres	Neil Peart
Jeff Beck	There & Back	Simon Phillips
Steely Dan	Aja	Paul Humphrey, Jim Keltner, Steve Gadd, Ed Greene, Rick Marotta, Bernard Purdie

wrong. They were all into groove. The last couple of years I've been doing 'pocket' gigs. You know, just laying it down. So I was anxious to go back to Megadeth's aggressive speed metal type of thing." Then with a laugh he adds that when they

asked him to play in the pocket, "I was like, 'Damn!'"

Clearly, the pocket vibe was a new one for the traditionally thrash 'em up Megadeth, and you can hear the band's groovier approach on their new record,

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# Will Kennedy

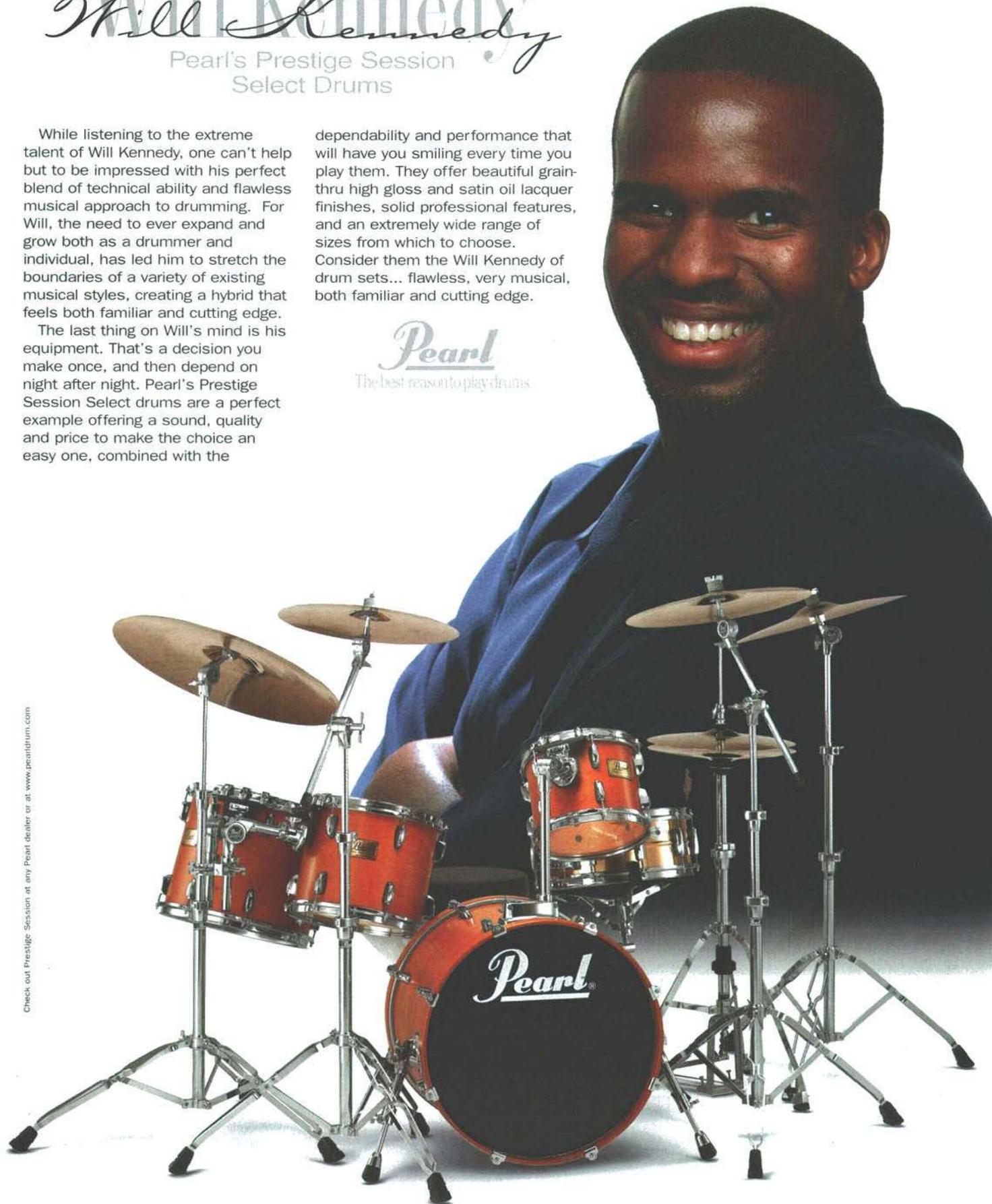
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## Jimmy DeGrasso

*Risk.* "The whole idea with this record was to focus on melodies and lyrics," he explains. "If you're familiar with Megadeth, you know the band can play for days. We can play a million notes, we can play all the metal licks, we can play odd meters—but we've already done that. This time we wanted to do something *different*. The guys felt like it would be new territory for them to craft some really good songs. Songwriting is hard. We can write a bunch of really heavy licks and throw 'em together, but can we craft a really good song? That was the challenge this time."

Good songs call for good drum parts. So, though he didn't bash it out too much, Jimmy was asked to play a handful of different styles and in a variety of vibes. "It was important to not overplay during the recording sessions," he offers. "I can go in a lot of different directions, but just because I *can* doesn't mean I should. It's important to have a good vocabulary, but you don't want to use a lot of big words no one understands. For example, I can play some really cool Latin grooves, but it doesn't mean I take one to Megadeth and say, 'Hey, I've got this Latin groove.' It doesn't fit."

On the other hand, sometimes outside influences *do* work. Take the intro to "Prince Of Darkness." One day in the studio, DeGrasso was goofing around on some toms, playing some timbale-like patterns. As he explains it, "I was just messing around playing this weird Latin thing that was obviously not ready for Megadeth, but Dan [Huff, producer] said, 'Hey man, that's cool. What are you doing?' I said, 'I'm just playing this Latin groove.' He said, 'Just straighten that out a bit. We might do something

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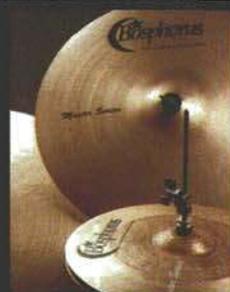
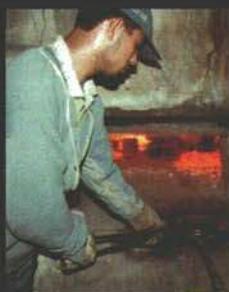
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with that." That something became the song's intro. "So, even though you might not bring in all these extreme musical influences," Jimmy says, "a taste of them might come in."

Another example he points to happened while they were working up the groove for "Seven." The drummer remembers that he and guitarist Marty Friedman were jamming on some old Cheap Trick songs and DeGrasso drifted into a Bun E. Carlos type of groove. Once again producer Huff leaned into the talk-back microphone and said, "Hey, that sounds cool. We should use that." DeGrasso shrugged it off, saying that it didn't seem like a Megadeth type of feel. "But they were like, 'Hey, we've never done anything like *that* before.'"

DeGrasso says he used some different gear on the new record to create some cool parts. "For the song 'Crush 'Em,' I had the idea to play three different-sounding hi-hats, but it could have been too much. I ended up creating a loop using the different hats." For the song "Ecstasy" Jimmy played a piccolo brass snare that was tightly tuned and that the engineer added an odd effect to. "You have to listen to it real carefully; it almost sounds like there's something wrong with the tape," he says.

That brass snare was one of ten Jimmy used throughout the album. While he owns a vast array of snares, he stayed true to his Pearl Masters series kit, Paiste cymbals, DW pedals, Evans heads, and Pro-Mark drumsticks during the recording of the album and on the band's current tour. Just days before the band left for the first leg of their tour, Jimmy got a beautiful custom birch kit with a white fin-

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Ironically, he's alive  
and kicking.

Jimmy DeGrasso.

He's been the beat  
behind Alice Cooper  
and Suicidal  
Tendencies and now  
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the new Megadeth  
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# Jimmy DeGrasso

ish from Pearl. "When the UPS guy pulls up and he's got this really angry look on his face and he straps on the back brace, I go, 'Yes, new drums.'"

While Megadeth's *Risk* has been a professional benchmark for DeGrasso, it's just one of many. Whether it was his Y&T work of the late '80s, the Suicidal Tendencies opportunities, or even the Alice Cooper years, DeGrasso has carved out a solid career. He admits that he wouldn't be the player he is today if it weren't for each of those adventures. "Everything's a learning experience," he says. "In twenty years who knows who I'll be playing with or what I'll be doing. I'm sure I'll be pulling stuff from the gigs I've done. Life is a learning process. There's a lot of things you learn and a certain amount of maturing that happens. God, I sound old," he says with a bit of a laugh and a sigh.

For now Jimmy says he's really enjoying the Megadeth experience. In fact, DeGrasso admits that last year, before this offer came up, he had considered taking a year off from the road to concentrate on racing mountain bikes, one of his passions. But the pull of the audience brought him back. "There's nothing like playing for



those huge audiences," Jimmy admits. "When I started playing with Megadeth, I felt like I was sixteen again. After gigs I would just laugh. The guys in the band would ask, 'What's wrong with you?' I'd

say, 'Man, I feel like a kid.' But this gig has really been good for me personally. I feel like I'm fresh again and that I want to play. It's renewed that spark."



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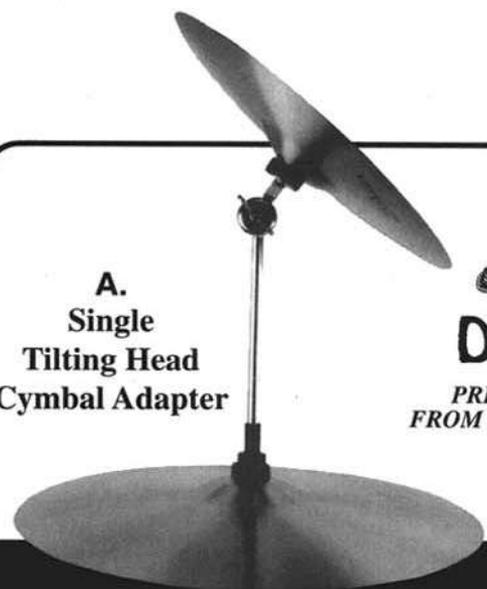
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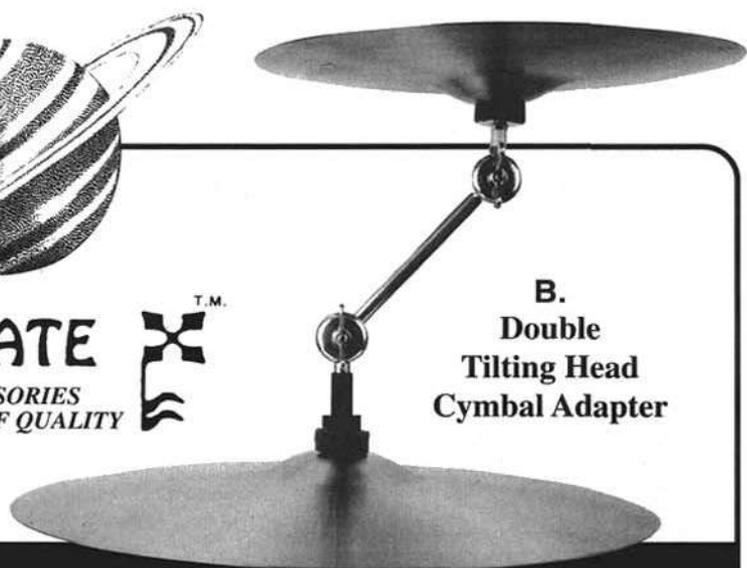
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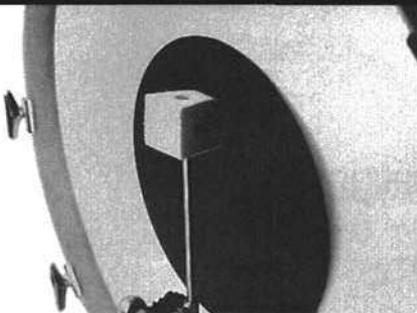
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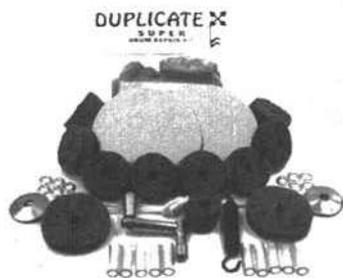
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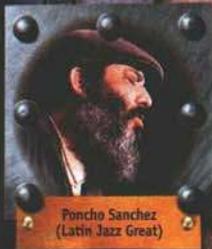
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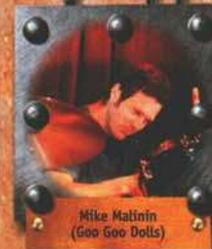
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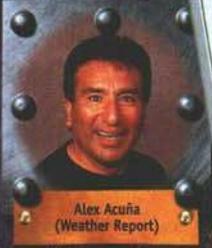
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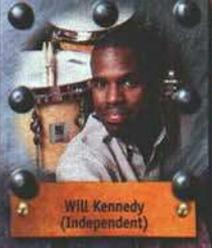
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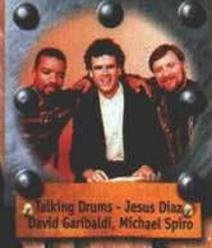
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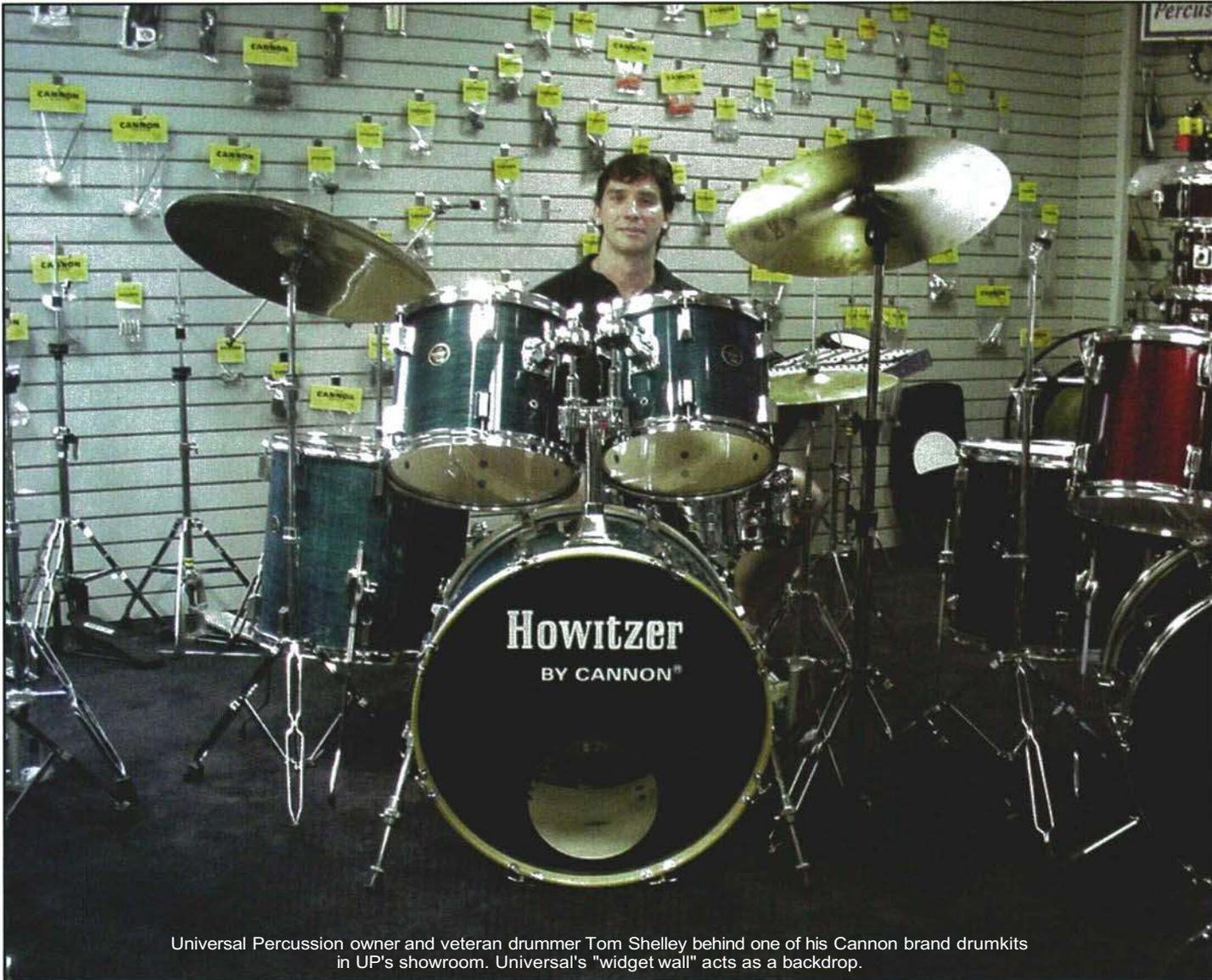
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Inside

# Universal



Universal Percussion owner and veteran drummer Tom Shelley behind one of his Cannon brand drumkits in UP's showroom. Universal's "widget wall" acts as a backdrop.

# Percussion

## All Things To All Drummers

In the middle of a cornfield in eastern Ohio sits an impressive business.

It's not the building itself that's impressive—it's a pretty standard industrial warehouse. What makes it impressive is the tangible enthusiasm and "busy-ness" that emanates from it. You can feel it across the parking lot.

What is also impressive—or at least a little mysterious—is an inscription written in the concrete driveway leading to the warehouse: "The 3rd Return From The Ashes, 9/98." Something tells you this isn't your standard percussion-supply business.

And you'd be right. Universal Percussion is, in fact, America's largest exclusive distributor of percussion products. They don't sell directly to consumers; they supply dealers across the country with a wide variety of products made by dozens of manufacturers. If you bought a pair of drumsticks or a method book lately, there's a very good chance your dealer obtained it from Universal.

But the company is much more than just a distributor of other people's products. They also sell a variety of what are called "proprietary" items, equipment that they have manufactured exclusively for sale under their own brand. One of these is the Cannon line, which includes budget and entry-level drums and cymbals, medium- to pro-quality hardware, and literally hundreds



of specialty accessories and spare parts.

Universal is also the manufacturer of Attack drumheads, a brand that has only been on the market since 1994, yet has already gained a reputation for quality and affordability. Latin percussionists might want to check out Universal's Hands On line of congas, bongos, and other ethnic percussion. And drummers everywhere may be excited to know that authentic Wuhan cymbals are once again being actively imported into the US by Universal.

The point is that Universal Percussion is a company dedicated to fulfilling the needs of drummers—quickly, efficiently, and thoroughly. This philosophy permeates the company's staff at every level, but it starts at the top, with owner Tom Shelley.

## In The Beginning

A lifelong drummer himself, Tom originally planned a career as a player. But times were tough in the early '70s when he graduated from high school in Youngstown, Ohio. Tom needed a job. With a combination of youthful audacity and pure optimism, he decided to parlay his interest in drumming into a business selling drum equipment. So at the age of eighteen (!) he opened his own drumshop.

"Minimum wage was \$1.60 back then," Tom recalls. "I figured if I couldn't make \$1.60 an hour in business for myself, I'd hang it up. My first customer was a local drummer named Patsy Palumbo. Twenty days later, my *second* customer was Patsy Palumbo."

Tom wasn't making any money, but he had a passion for the business. He started re-covering drums and doing repairs. Then in 1977 he created Cannon Toms, which were long, tubular single-headed drums with wooden shells. Says Tom, "I really liked working with wood, cutting my own bearing edges. I'd look at the Gretsch bearing edge and think, 'They cut it their way, and I know what that sounds like. If I cut it another way, what would *that* sound like?'"

Cannon Toms proved successful, and Tom started wholesaling them to music stores. Later he added a line of Cannon snare drums. "We bought the shells from Keller Wood Products," says Tom, "cut our own edges and snare beds, and installed import hardware. I think we were buying the old Fibes throw-off at the time. We sold a *lot* of those snares. I think I personally built five or six thousand drums."

Tom wanted to expand into making entire drumkits, so he sought parts from various major manufacturers. They all turned him down, so he had to look elsewhere—which meant going overseas. This was a painful move, considering that Youngstown was a mill town where people made their living by fabricating metal parts. Says Tom, "Importing metal parts from overseas made us the worst kind of...well, I don't know what the word is. But I was forced to do it. I was bringing in rims, tension rods, and other parts."

Tom's move turned out to be a savvy one, because in the latter half of the '70s the economy went bad, and the mills closed.

Tom's father lost his job at one of those mills. "My dad had been my partner from the very beginning on a part-time basis," Tom says, "so he started working for me. We both actually worked for free for eight years. We put all the money back into the business."

Things looked great for Tom's drumshop/manufacturing operation until one fateful night in April of 1978. "I had Tony Williams coming in to do a clinic," Tom recalls. "The night before that clinic, my place was firebombed. I had no insurance, so I lost everything. I got three SBA loans, and I got my business restarted. We were mainly a retailer, but in the back room I was doing a lot of rebuilding and repairs, and building Cannon toms. Three years later, in 1981, I was firebombed again."

## Back From The Ashes

Tom was determined not to let anyone or anything keep him from what had become his dream as well as his livelihood. "We had a 'return from the ashes' sale. I hung a big banner in the drumshop window. I was telling the world that nobody was going to put *me* out of business."

Tom and his father realized that while they were still primarily a retail drumshop, they were selling Cannon Toms and snare drums to dealers almost every day as a manufacturer/wholesaler. Tom remembers, "My dad said, 'We're shipping all these boxes of drums out of here every day. Why don't we ship more stuff...different stuff?' So we started adding lines. We got Pro-Mark and Regal Tip sticks. Vic Firth came later, then Zildjian cymbals and accessories. And then it was one thing after another. Where I used to ship a box with a hundred dollars' worth of merchandise, now it was five hundred dollars' worth. Just more stuff in the same box going to the same guy."

This "more stuff approach turned Universal into a multi-million-dollar distributing operation by 1985. For the next thirteen years the business developed as a major source of innovative accessories, major-name products, and affordable entry-level gear.

Then came 1998, and a series of events that might have daunted a less determined individual. In January of that year Tom's father passed away. "We used to play pool together a lot," Tom says, fondly. "So I have a pool table in what used to be his half of our office. It's sort of a sentimental thing. He never got to see our new building, which was finished at the end of October of 1998."

The "new building"—Universal's present headquarters—comprises 25,000 square feet of warehouse space for merchandise and 3,000 square feet of offices for the seventeen-person staff. Proud though Tom is of the new facility, he hadn't planned it to be built in 1998. It *had* to be built after Universal suffered a *third* suspicious fire. As Tom explains, grimly, "A car with nobody in it was driven into my store, where it blew up. All the merchandise either got burned up or damaged by smoke and water. I ran a half-page ad in the Sunday paper offering a \$50,000 reward, I hired a private investigator, I bugged the police to death. I've collected information and dropped it off at the FBI...and that's all I'll say about that."



Wuhan cymbals and Hands On percussion are two of Universal's specialty lines.



Seemingly endless aisles of merchandise ready for immediate shipping allow UP to respond quickly to dealer orders.

Unplanned though it might have been, Universal's new building gave the company the opportunity to streamline its operations and modernize all of its systems. This, in turn, allows Universal to offer an even wider range of products, and to service dealers' orders for those products promptly. What this means to the individual drummer is that if a given product is not on a dealer's shelf, a phone call or fax can have it there *very* quickly—often within twenty-four hours.

Tom Shelley is thrilled with the modernization his company has enjoyed. However, he's the first to say, "I'm not a corporate guy. The mentality of this business is the same as it's been from the beginning. I'm a drummer who sells things, not a salesman who happens to deal in drum products."

**"We had a 'return from the ashes' sale. I hung a big banner in the drumshop window. I was telling the world that nobody was going to put me out of business."—Tom Shelley**

## — A Few Of His Favorite Things —

Tom is actually understating the case. Truth be told, he has a passion for the development of useful drum products. Shortly after he created his Cannon Toms and snare drums, Tom turned his attention to the dozens of small items—which he calls "widgets"—that drummers need to replace frequently on their kits.

"There were a lot of small after-market items available from lots of different sources," Tom explains, "but not from any single source. And some of them frankly weren't very good. I spent a lot of time correcting what was wrong, to make widgets that were efficient and valuable for the working percussionist. I also spent a lot of time working with fabricators in Taiwan and Korea, developing unique things that hadn't existed before."

Early products offered by Universal include cymbal stackers, adhesive dots for use on drumheads, leather straps and pads for cymbals, and leather straps for bass drum pedals. "We just started selling stuff that drummers liked," Tom recalls. "It gave us an identity under our own Cannon/Universal Percussion name."

Tom reinforced that identity with a simple philosophy. As he puts it, "What matters most to me is: When I take something to the

gig, is it going to last? Is it of value? For example, on a generic' bass drum beater the felt is often a piece of mush. The sound is lousy, and there's a good chance of the beater popping off the pot-metal shaft. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure that the beater would be better with a carbon-steel shaft, high-quality felt, and a pin in the top so that the beater ball won't pop off. So that's how we make ours. Every part that I carry has to have quality. I want to be sure that the drummer at the other end is getting something that he or she needs at a price that makes it a value."

The sheer diversity of the Cannon Percussion accessory line is impressive. Tension rods, for example, are offered in sizes from 1" to 10" long, and with special threading. "A normal rod

only threads about half-way up," explains Tom. "But some drummers—particularly marching drummers—want a little extra tightening potential. So our tension rods thread all the way up except for the last 1/4". The long lugs are used on marching drums, and also on some old vintage drums. Those drums have become more popular, and they're very hard to get original parts for. My manufacturer didn't have long lugs originally. I had to buy several thousand of them and pay a mold charge to make them."

Cannon also offers an array of snare-wire sets in lengths from 8" to 15", in a variety of widths and styles. "We have snares

for the little auxiliary snare drums that are becoming so popular," says Tom. "We also have the snare cord to attach them. And instead of just cutting the ends, our snare cord is burned through to seal the end against fraying. Little things like that make us different from the next manufacturer. I'm thinking about the drummer on a gig, working in the dark trying to feed a new snare cord through that little hole in the strainer. You'd have to be that drummer to understand how much better it is to have the end of the cord fused."

Tom's "widgets" go beyond standard replacement items like bass-drum beaters, tension rods, snares, and snare cord. There are also cymbal-stand stems to replace the top part of a stand or boom—which frequently breaks. "Other suppliers don't want to deal with a little spare part like that," says Tom. "But drummers don't want to have to replace an entire cymbal stand either. I like to think of my business as a 'service center' or hardware store for the drumshops."

That includes shops who may want to build their own drums. Universal carries drum shells, lugs, tension rods, and drum covering material. And Tom is particularly proud of his selection of rims. "I have every size and configuration of rim in stock," he says. "A normal 12" rim is six-hole, but I also have five-hole 12" rims. I have 16" rims in both six- and eight-hole configurations. And I have all these things in 2.3 mm *and* die-cast. I have things that I don't think anybody else has. Maybe we don't sell a million of 'em, and the corporate mentality would be to drop them. But the



Only introduced in 1994, Attack drumheads have become popular due to their quality and affordability.

drummer in me tells me to carry what drummers want."

Drummers want a lot of things, including percussion items that Universal doesn't make but does distribute. These include a new line of congas, bongos, and other hand percussion called Hands On. And the company has recently become the exclusive US distributor of Wuhan Chinese cymbals. "There's a huge business for authentic Wuhan," says Tom enthusiastically. "We thought that the brand might have lost momentum since so many other cymbal companies have their own versions. But people want that real trashy sound. This is the real, authentic trash, with no mass production."

"I'm a drummer who sells tilings,  
not a salesman who happens to  
deal in drum products."

Realizing that the professional-level drumkit market is already crowded with excellent products, Tom has focused Universal's efforts on the extreme low end. "I think we've successfully reinvented the wheel with our five-piece low-end Radical set," he says. "At first the kits had four-lug toms with limited tuning capability. So we made the kits with five-lug toms and a six-lug bass and snare. The kits come in seven colors, including green, blue, black, metallic blue, wine red. We offer add-on toms, with two drums on a stand. The pricing is low, and we carry all the parts for replacement. When you get inexperienced drummers playing on low-end kits, things break. I have every part in stock by the zillions."

Even a budget drumkit is incomplete without cymbals. So Universal offers a line of low-cost brass cymbals called Basics.

Characteristically, Tom "tweaked" the product before adding it to his line. "Normally budget cymbals are flat and smooth," he says. "We had tonal grooves lathed on to make them look and sound a little more 'professional.' Then we created cymbal/throne

packs with a pair of hi-hats, an 18" crash, and a drum throne in a very attractive and durable package, for an extremely low price.

"A dealer can add the cymbal/throne package to the Radical kit, and mom and dad can buy Junior a complete drumkit with regular replaceable heads for under \$350. It's a viable starting point for a youngster, who can genuinely say, 'I'm going to be a drummer.'"

Universal also pays special attention to packaging, in order to prevent damage. All the drums are carefully packed in one box, with all the hardware in a second. "My early competitors shipped low-end kits with everything loose," says Tom. "They operated on the theory that it wasn't a very good set so they shouldn't have to spend money on packaging it. But if you were a twelve-year-old drummer, how would you feel if your first kit arrived with the floor-tom legs sticking through the bass drum head?"

## Using Their Heads

Drumkits would be unplayable without heads, and at one time Universal was a major distributor of Evans and Remo drumheads. However, in 1994 Tom Shelley decided to introduce his own line of heads—a move that almost backfired on him.

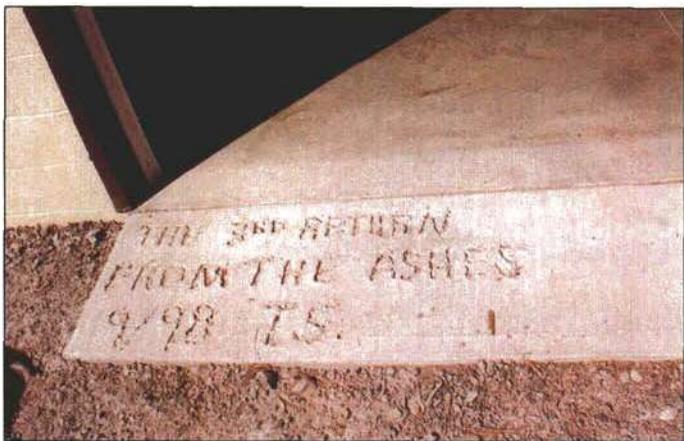
"Our first heads were called Deadheads," Tom recalls. "They were thick, two-ply heads with a Tone Ridge, mainly for heavy metal players. We sold them in bags imprinted with a skull and crossbones, which we thought would be a cool image for young rock drummers. But in some areas it hurt our business. We had all kinds of marketing problems in the Bible Belt. So we changed the name to Attack. The package had a tank on it, which was still appealing to high-school kids."

Today's Attack line is the culmination of several years of research and development. Again, Tom tends to understate his involvement, saying, "I don't care how something is made; I'm not in the 'making' business. All I need is an engineer who's willing to work with me to achieve what I want. Fortunately I've had such an engineer since 1978—in Taiwan. We've spent years working together to develop Universal's products."

"All drumheads are made out of polyester nylon," Tom continues. "One manufacturer calls it *Mylar*, another calls it something else. Ours is called *Dynaflex*. We spent a lot of time and money experimenting with different colors, thicknesses, and ply combinations. With each one we had to fit it into our hoops to determine what it would sound like. And then we had to consider durability. It was an involved process, but the result is that we are now a complete drumhead manufacturer. Whether you're a metal player, an orchestral percussionist, or a marching drummer, we've got heads for you."

Attack's current line includes traditional coated heads, Thin Skin 2 models (which are thin two-ply heads), and the DH series, which are the former Deadhead model. There are No-Overtone heads for bass drums, a calf-like series for a warm, dry sound, and *Kevlar* marching snare heads. There are even novelty heads like the Jingle Head, which has tambourine jingles built in.

Although the heads are manufactured in Taiwan, they utilize



The inscription "The 3rd Return From The Ashes, 9/98" on the entry to UP's warehouse testifies to Tom Shelley's determination in the face of incredible adversity.

several US-made components, including rims and coating material. "We're also buying plastic film from several manufacturers now," says Tom, "one of whom is DuPont. We recently drop-shipped \$50,000 worth of *Mylar* to our factory to make our Terry Bozzio series. If you like the Remo Ambassador sound, it's basically the same head, fitted into our glueless steel-channel locking hoop, which we think is a better design.

"Other heads are made with a glue channel in the hoop," Tom continues. "A zillion holes have to be punched in the edge of the plastic film so that it can be held by the glue. This allows for a de-tuning and wear problem as the head releases from the glue. On an Attack head the film is wrapped around a steel ring. That ring seats into the outer aluminum channel, forming a locking collar that resists de-tuning and pull-out."

In addition to their locking collar, Attack heads are made with "Accuform" technology, which conforms each head to the bearing edge of the drum. Tom heads are made with a slightly thinner hoop to fit better on top of the bearing edge and within the drum rim. All Attack two-ply heads feature a thin ring of glue at the outer edge to help control overtones. And when it comes to black heads, Tom says, "The black color is injected directly into the mold during the forming process of the head. The color goes all through the head; it's not just one laminated layer. This makes the Attack black head the most resonant on the market."

Attack also offers a variety of Signature drumheads, each of which has special attributes. "Every drummer has his or her own thing," says Tom. "For instance, we had to experiment with four or five prototypes to get the exact size dot that Charlie Adams wanted on his snare head. For another example, Peter Michael Escovedo wants his line of Latin heads to be black, and he wants them real thin for a high-pitched sound. *And* he wants pictures of palm trees on them!

"We have a head we call the Blast Beat," Tom continues. "It's the heaviest two-ply head we make, and it only comes in coated. Raymond Herrera of Fear Factory loves that head—but he wants it in clear for his toms. So each drummer takes us to the next level in terms of adding more and more choices.

"We think we have a good product for less cost than anyone else's," says Tom. "But there are hundreds of heads out there, if you figure all the brands, styles, and models. We're the relatively

new guy, and we want people to get to know about us. So we've been running an ad in *Modern Drummer* offering two Terry Bozzio heads—a coated medium top and a clear medium bottom—and a four-page pamphlet on how to tune your drums called *Terry's Tuning Tips*. With a coupon from the ad, drummers can order the package directly from us for \$12.95, including shipping. We've been getting upwards of fifty orders a day. The idea is to send consumers to stores to say, 'I really like these Attack heads. Can I try some others?' We're getting acquainted with the drummers out there."

## — Keeping The Drummer In Mind —

Drummers are Universal's top priority—even though as a wholesaler/distributor the company doesn't deal directly with consumers. As Tom Shelley explains, "Everything that goes out of this building—whether it be a drum, a cymbal, a pair of sticks, a drumhead, or a tiny widget—ultimately goes into the hands of a consumer. So it's important that the products we sell offer quality. It's also important that we have things in stock, so we can ship them in a hurry. There's a drummer or a band director at the other end who needs this stuff right away.

"As a drummer," Tom concludes, "I'll never be a Terry Bozzio. But when I go out to a gig and see my products in use and the drummer comes up to me and says, 'Man, you saved my butt because I needed that widget and you were the only ones who had it,' I kind of feel that I've made it—in my own way."





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## The Fast Face Lift

### Play Uptempo Swing With Ease!

by John Riley

**MUSIC KEY**

T.T.	●	R.C.	×
S.D.	●		
F.T.	●		
B.D.	●		
H.H.	×		
w/foot	×		

Playing uptempo swing with fluidity is a challenge, since your coordination and endurance are taken to their limit. Let's check out how an underutilized rudiment, the paradiddle-diddle—played RLRLL—can spice up the comping flow and provide some relief from right-hand fatigue.

I first heard the paradiddle-diddle used at uptempos on the late 1950s playing of Elvin Jones. Today Adam Nussbaum and Jeff Watts use it to great advantage.

Examples 1-4 feature various foot combinations under the paradiddle-diddle.

1 R L R R L L R L R R L L R L R R L L R L R R L L R L R R L L

2 R L R R L L R L R R L L R L R R L L R L R R L L R L R R L L

3 R L R R L L R L R R L L R L R R L L R L R R L L R L R R L L

4 R L R R L L R L R R L L R L R R L L R L R R L L R L R R L L

In example 5 the sixth note of the sticking, a left, is replaced by the bass drum.

5 R L R R L R L R R L R L R R L R L R R L R L R R L

Example 6 drops the hi-hat on 2 and 4 and adds an accent to each first left.

6 R L R R L R L R R L R L R R L R L R R L R L R R L

Example 7 transforms the phrase into something thicker by moving the pattern between the ride cymbal and the drums.

7 R L R R L L R L R R L L R L R R L L R L R R L L R L R R L L

The final example incorporates the drums and foot combinations.

8 R L R R L R L R R L R L R R L R L R R L R L R R L

Practice these phrases at an easy tempo but work them up, because they sound best at tempos above half note = 130. Feel how each phrase crosses the 4/4 bar lines, and be sure to straighten out your 8th notes as the tempo gets above 140. Good luck!



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# Improving Your Time, Part 1

## Subdividing The Beat Is Key

by Lorne Entress

**D**rums is division. In fact, the ability to precisely subdivide the beat is elemental to good drumming. But it would appear that many drummers view their craft as a process of *addition*. They begin with the bare pulse, then add more and more notes, flams, flourishes, rolls, and rattachues, imagining that this grand accumulation will lead to drumming greatness.

The danger of thinking (even subconsciously) of drumming as addition is that you uproot yourself from what drumming truly is—a sophisticated, artistic process of dividing time. Learning how to precisely

divide the beat (or subdivide, as the process is commonly referred to) should be moved to the top of the list of rudimental drum exercises, because it is here that you begin to learn the significance of solid meter.

### Directions

1. Practice the following exercises on the snare drum and/or on the drum pad.
2. Practice with a metronome, striving for exact note value. Remember, your goal is to strike precisely with the beat of the metronome, so as not to create a flam.

Listen keenly and be patient!

3. Repeat each exercise eight times before moving on to the next one.

4. Spend ample time practicing these at very slow tempos (40-60 bpm), as this will really hone your concentration skills. (Of course, at faster tempos, certain 16th- and 32nd-note exercises will not be playable.)

5. While the rule of thumb here is alternate sticking (right, left, right, left), it's beneficial to practice these exercises using only the right or left hand, or both hands simultaneously.

### Primary Subdivisions

1. 4/4 time signature. Four quarter notes: | ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ :|

2. Four eighth notes: | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ :|

3. Four groups of eighth notes, each with a '3' above it: | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ :|

4. Four groups of sixteenth notes: | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ :|

5. Four groups of eighth notes, each with a '5' above it: | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ :|

6. Four groups of sixteenth notes, each with a '6' above it: | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ :|

7. Four groups of eighth notes, each with a '7' above it: | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ :|

8. Four groups of sixteenth notes, each with a '7' above it: | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ :|

### Division Shifts

1. 4/4 time signature. Four quarter notes followed by four eighth notes: | ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ :|

2. Four quarter notes followed by four groups of eighth notes with a '3' above each: | ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ :|

3. Four quarter notes followed by four groups of sixteenth notes: | ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ :|

4. Four quarter notes followed by four groups of eighth notes with a '5' above each: | ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ :|

5.  $\frac{2}{4}$  | Quarter notes | Sixteenth-note triplets (fingerings: 6, 6, 6, 6)

6.  $\frac{2}{4}$  | Quarter notes | Sixteenth-note triplets (fingerings: 7, 7, 7, 7)

7.  $\frac{2}{4}$  | Quarter notes | Sixteenth-note triplets

8.  $\frac{2}{4}$  | Eighth-note pairs | Triplet eighth-note pairs (fingerings: 3, 3, 3, 3)

9.  $\frac{2}{4}$  | Eighth-note pairs | Sixteenth-note pairs

10.  $\frac{2}{4}$  | Eighth-note pairs | Triplet sixteenth-note pairs (fingerings: 5, 5, 5, 5)

11.  $\frac{2}{4}$  | Eighth-note pairs | Triplet sixteenth-note pairs (fingerings: 6, 6, 6, 6)

12.  $\frac{2}{4}$  | Eighth-note pairs | Triplet sixteenth-note pairs (fingerings: 7, 7, 7, 7)

13.  $\frac{2}{4}$  | Eighth-note pairs | Triplet sixteenth-note pairs

14.  $\frac{4}{4}$  | Triplet eighth-note pairs | Triplet eighth-note pairs

15.  $\frac{2}{4}$  | Triplet eighth-note pairs | Triplet sixteenth-note pairs (fingerings: 5, 5, 5, 5)

16.  $\frac{2}{4}$  | Triplet eighth-note pairs | Triplet sixteenth-note pairs (fingerings: 6, 6, 6, 6)

17.  $\frac{2}{4}$  | Triplet eighth-note pairs | Triplet sixteenth-note pairs (fingerings: 7, 7, 7, 7)

18.  $\frac{2}{4}$  | Triplet eighth-note pairs | Triplet sixteenth-note pairs

19.  $\frac{2}{4}$  | Triplet sixteenth-note pairs | Triplet sixteenth-note pairs (fingerings: 5, 5, 5, 5)

20.  $\frac{2}{4}$  | Triplet sixteenth-note pairs | Triplet sixteenth-note pairs (fingerings: 6, 6, 6, 6)

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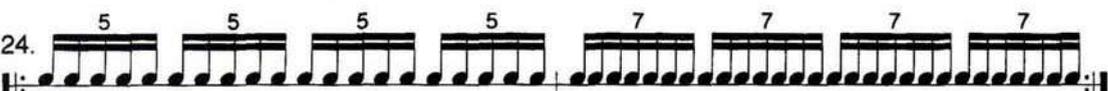
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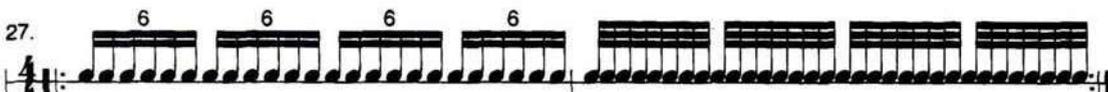
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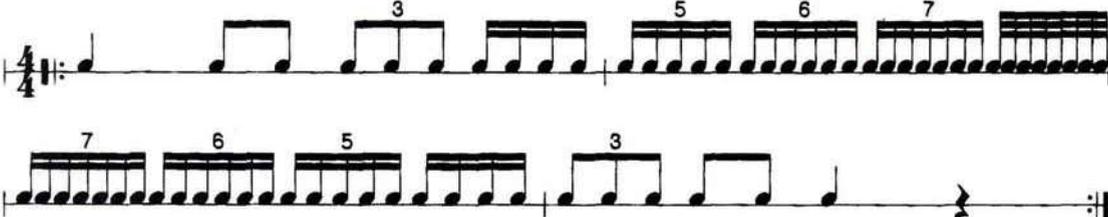
25. 

26. 

27. 

28. 

### Quick-Shift Exercise



### Time Tip

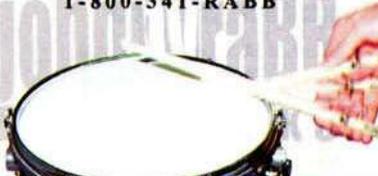
For a real test of your concentration, try practicing these subdivisions with a radio playing in the background. This annoying distraction will demand that you increase your focus on the beat. (Sometimes playing in a band can feel like this!)

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# Interpreting The Big Band Chart

by Ron Spagnardi



Interpreting a typical big band chart can present a challenge to beginning and experienced drummers alike. The problem lies in the fact that arrangers and copyists have different ways of writing a drum part. Unfortunately, one clearly defined system doesn't exist, so it's up to *us* to determine what the arranger wants and what's appropriate for the music.

Bear in mind that the average big band drum chart is, for the most part, just a basic outline. It will include time signature and tempo markings, and hopefully the musical style of the arrangement (rock, jazz, Latin). Many arrangers also write in dynamics, along with cues that detail which sections of the band are playing during the arrangement (saxes, trumpets, trombones, ensemble). You'll also be confronted with a "road map," which includes section repeats, Dal Segnos, and Codas. Bar numbers or letters that act as reference points should also be clearly marked, along with the primary section and ensemble figures.

With just a basic sketch to go by, you have to pretty much depend on your musical instinct and creativity to decide what to play, how to phrase, where to fill, and how to accompany the soloists. Hopefully this article will help guide you through the task and take some of the mystery out of it as well.

## The Basic Time Pattern

The first item that often creates confusion, particularly for beginners, is the manner in which the basic time pattern of an arrangement is notated. Some of the ways an arranger may indicate the pattern he wants played for a jazz or swing tune are:

Though all of the above could be taken literally, it's doubtful they're what the arranger actually wants you to play. For a jazz or swing arrangement, it's almost always safe to assume that the standard jazz-time beat with a triplet feel is what's required.

To save time and space, arrangers and copyists often use slash marks with a number placed above. This simply means to continue playing the time pattern for the number of bars indicated.

One-bar repeat signs basically mean the same thing.

## Section Figures

Section figures are those that are played by only *one*, or possibly two, sections of the band (saxes, trumpets, trombones, rhythm). Arrangers generally notate section figures *above* the staff, with slash marks, repeat signs, or the time pattern written directly beneath.

It's important to remember that section figures are meant to be emphasized without causing an interruption in the time flow. Below are three examples of how section figures would be played without disturbing the time.

### Ensemble Figures

Ensemble figures are those played by the *entire* band. Usually the arranger wants these figures emphasized strongly. In most cases, the time pattern will be interrupted, since ensemble figures must be played more forcefully and require stronger definition from snare drum, bass drum, and cymbals. Ensemble figures are generally placed *on* the staff. Here are a few examples:

### Staying Alert To Inconsistencies

Though the system seems simple enough, not every arranger adheres to it, so inconsistencies can run rampant. Subtle section figures may appear *on* the staff, where an ensemble figure would normally be. Conversely, ensemble figures could appear *above* the staff, where you'd expect to see a section figure.

Here's where careful listening becomes absolutely essential. Listening to what's going on around you is the only way to discern the difference between what's written on your part and what you're hearing in the band. If you're listening, it's a simple matter to pencil in the correct notation.

Another approach is to ask to see the lead trumpet part. Most of

the primary figures you need to be aware of will usually be on the trumpet part. Note where the strong figures fall, and copy them onto your part.

### Phrasing

Phrasing refers to what components of the kit you use to accent the band figures. Here's where your musicianship, taste, and attention come into play. Though there are many ways to phrase section and ensemble figures, most good big band drummers adhere to a few basic principles.

First, big band figures are basically composed of long sustained notes or short staccato notes. And though it's been said that long-note phrasing emanates primarily from the sax and trombone sections and short notes from the trumpet section, in actuality both types can originate from any section of the band at any time. Let's look at each type individually.

**Long Notes:** Sustained long notes are generally best orchestrated on the drumset with bass drum and cymbals. Though the bass drum doesn't always simulate the full sustain of a long note, it does supply substantial bottom end. Many big band drummers certainly use it to reinforce long notes. However, cymbals are the *primary* means of simulating the sustain of a long note.

Typically, figures containing dotted quarter or longer notes require sustained phrasing. The three examples below demonstrate the type of figures (section and ensemble) that would necessitate sustained phrasing on the kit.

**Short Notes:** Figures containing 8th notes or shorter are considered short notes. Many big band players also use the bass drum and cymbals to phrase short notes. However, staccato snare drum accents, rimshots, or fast cymbal crashes are the accepted norm. And though the majority of short-note figures may come from the trumpet section, they could originate from *any* of the band's horn sections.

Here again, careful listening to the arrangement is the only way to determine how to orchestrate the figures. Here are a few examples of figures best duplicated with short phrasing.

21

### Fills

Entire books have been written on big band drum fills. Suffice it to say, while a fill is a rhythmic pattern played immediately before a section or ensemble figure to add color and intensity, its *primary* job is to set the band up for the figure that follows. Fills can range from a simple, strategically placed four-stroke ruff to a full-bar figure—or more. Again, taste and musical sensitivity are essential.

Overplaying fills can be pretty ineffective, and those that come off as mini-solos are rarely musical and often out of place. Listen to some of the great big band drummers to get an idea of how fills are used to add excitement and intensity.

The four examples below demonstrate how fills can be used to set up the band figures that follow.

22 Figure:

With Fill:

23 Figure:

With Fill:

24 Figure:

With Fill:

25 Figure:

With Fill:

### Applying It All

Finally, here's an example of a typical hand-written, moderately complex big band chart containing most of the elements discussed in this article.

First, notice how the arranger tells us it's a medium swing tune played at 116 bpm. Then take note of the "road map." Along with section repeats, be aware of the D.S. and Coda signs. The D.S. al coda appears at the end of letter H, which takes you back to the sign at letter A. From there, play until you reach the Coda sign at letter B, and then go directly to the Coda at the bottom of the chart.

The arrangement begins with an eight-bar piano solo that repeats once. Though straight quarter notes are shown, the jazz-time beat in four is what's actually intended. Note the section figures at letter A, the sixteen-bar trumpet solo at B, and the eight-bar sax solo at letter C that repeats.

Letter D contains some trombone section figures, while E offers several opportunities for fills in amongst the ensemble figures. Also note the two-bar drum solo at the end of letter E. Watch the repeat sign at letter F and the mix of ensemble *and* section figures at letter G. More ensemble figures appear at letter H, followed by an eight-bar bass solo that leads directly to the D.S.

The Coda has some strong ensemble figures with several drum solos interspersed. The fermata on the fourth beat of the final bar means to sustain the note until the leader cuts the band off.

#### MEDIUM SWING (♩ = 116)

INTRO: (PIANO)

7 (TRUMP) PLAY 16

8 (SAX SOLO)

9 (Tromb)

10 (Ensemble) (Fill) (Fill)

11 (BASS) PLAY 8

12 (Ensemble) Solo.....

13 (Ensemble) Solo.....

14 (Ensemble) Solo.....

D.S. AL CODA

RICKY LAWSON • VAN ROMAINE • LARRY BRIGHT • BOBBY RONDINELLI • HILARY JONES • ED THIGPEN • JOE STRONISICK • JOHN MICELI • DEREK ORGAN • STEVEN WOLF • STEVE BERRIOS • JOE PORCARO • BILL WARD • NIR Z. • ROBERT RODRIGUEZ

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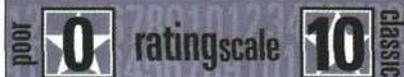


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RECORDINGS



**10** Gonzalo Rubalcaba *Inner Voyage*

Ignacio Berroa (dr), Gonzalo Rubalcaba (pno), Jeff Chambers (bs)

One of the best jazz releases of '99, *Voyage* marks another milestone for the gifted Rubalcaba. His jazz, Latin, and contemporary classical influences have seamlessly united in a very personal sound and style. Balancing virtuosic chops with eloquent restraint, this new outing highlights the pianist's introspective side with a remarkably intimate trio. Guest tenor star Michael Brecker also adds fire to two cuts, especially on the angular, uptempo, and aptly titled "The Hard One."



And Ignacio Berroa is simply one of the most important and underappreciated drummers today. It's impressive enough that he has deep experience in both the jazz and Afro-Cuban worlds. But the real beauty is that it's hard to define where one influence begins and the other ends; in truth, he's just always *responding* to the music. Super-sensitive, yet propulsive, Berroa is, in short, an ideal drummer for this ideal trio. (Blue Note)

— Jeff Potter

**7** Live The Distance To Here

Chad Gracey (dr), Patrick Dahlheimer (bs), Edward Kowalczyk (vcl, gtr), Chad Taylor (gtr)

Avert your ears from the maniacal vocals of Ed Kowalczyk, and you will discover the powers of drummer Chad Gracey. Less of a groove player than an ornamental one, Chad fuels Live by a variety of methods. Often he uses his hi-hats to accent the vocal lines, opening on Kowalczyk's screams and closing on his growls. When the band shifts into hyper-drive, his treatment of the snare drum is nearly soloistic, with unique and varied placement and a firmly on-top feel. On "Sun" Gracey creates a wall of low end by riding on the toms, then approaches the chorus as one extended fill on the snare and open hi-hat, punctuating every accent by slamming a crash before shifting back to the tension-filled toms. A fine performance. (Radioactive)



— Fran Azzarto and Lisa Crouch

**8** Steve Vai *The Ultra Zone*

Gregg Bissonette, Robin DiMaggio, Mike Mangini (dr), Steve Vai (gtr, vcl, dr programming), Mike Keneally (kybd), Bryan Beller, John Sergio, Philip Bynoe (bs)

Any guitarist who can program drums to sound great *and* fit the song deserves to be recognized by the drumming community—especially when he



also includes three great drummers on the same release. Though the programming here is scary, Vai knows when it's time to bring in the real thing. The beautiful 6/8 ballad "Frank" features Gregg Bissonette laying down the basic feel with confidence. The uptempo, odd meter, Zappa-esque "Lucky Charms" shows Robin DiMaggio's ability to groove in a complex format. But Vai's current touring drummer, Mike Mangini, sounds the most lively here. His hypnotic 11/8 groove on "Windows To The Soul" and blazing fills on "Jibbom" are inspirational. This is an album of many charms. (Epic)

— Mike Haid

**8** Art Blakey

Blakey/Introducing Joe Gordon

**Blakey:** Art Blakey (dr), Joe Gordon (trp), Gigi Gryce (al sx), Walter Bishop Jr. (pno), Bernie Griggs (bs)  
**Introducing Joe Gordon:** Art Blakey (dr), Joe Gordon (trp), Charlie Roose (tr sx), Junior Mance (pno), Jimmy Schenk (bs)

This single CD comprises two long out-of-print 1954 albums, killer hard bop from the masters who invented the genre. The music uses the darting melodies of bebop tempered by the deep groove of hard bop. Everyone plays with no-nonsense drive, smoking behind concise solos. Blakey is at the core of both albums, and he's selfless to a fault, letting his big ride cymbal and chirping 2-and-4 hi-hat do all the work. (But no solos!) Art is so infallible, you could drive a train through these grooves and never notice. *Blakey* largely features the compositions of Gigi Gryce, while Quincy Jones writes most of

SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

Still not sold on the hipness of drum 'n' bass? You owe it to yourself to check out Squarepusher's latest, *Selection Sixteen*. **Tom Jenkinson** is a real live multi-instrumentalist who just happens to use electronics to get his ideas across. And some very cool ideas they are, like mixing in live fuzoid snippets, or constructing a killin' manipulated "drum solo" on "Tomorrow World." (Nothing)

Like Ringo Starr a generation before him, Gorky's ZygotiC MynCi drummer **Euros Rowlands** has two things going for him: gifted songwriters as bandmates, and the sense to play the right thing at the right time. On Gorky's latest, *Spanish Dance Troupe*, Euros helps power one of the most tuneful and understated pop releases in ages. (Beggars Banquet)

Drummer **Larry Finn** unites with bassist Anthony Vitti and Boston friends for a heavily grounded funk-based fusion excursion, *Dig This*. (DaaDoo Music, 28 Country Meadow Rd, Haverhill, MA 01832)

Brazilian drummer **Duda Neves** has released *Temporal*, an album of eighteen technically impressive and sonically pleasing percussion-based compositions recorded in Sao Paulo, (dudaneves@uol.com.br)

Zonzee is a Tel Aviv, Israel-based fusion trio whose *Time Flies* brings Allan Holdsworth to mind, with fine drumming from **Azmon Zimring**. (NMC Music, atzmon1@isdn.net.il)

The masterful self-titled album by Hands On'Semble features **John Bergamo, Randy Gloss, Austin Wrinkle, Andrew Grueschow**, and guests **Pandit Swapan Chaudhuri and Poovalur Srinivasan** working out a kaleidoscope of compositions featuring doumbek, tabla, riq, djembe, and various other worldly hand drums. (PO Box 220548, Newhall, CA 91322-0548, (805) 521-1648, (818)353-3472.



*Introducing.* A hard bop primer for the uninitiated, a mellow swinger for jazzbos.

(Verve)

— Ken Micallef

## 9 Los Lobos *This Time*

Pete Thomas, Alex Acuna, Aaron Ballesteros, Victor Bisetti (dr), Steve Berlin (kyhd. horns), David Hidalgo (gtr, vcl), Conrad Lozano (bs, vcl), Louie Perez (gtr, dr, vcl), Cesar Rosas (gtr, vcl)

Who said soul music is dead? Los Lobos, the venerable LA rock veterans, stick to the basics: great songs, great sounds, and great vibe. Consequently, *This Time* is full of all sorts of drumming goodies. Drummers, listen: Put the CD in your player and repeat the title track *until you get it*. It's likely the best mid-tempo soul groove you've heard in ages. The rest of the CD (I did eventually force myself past track one) is outstanding. The under-appreciated Pete Thomas rocks as hard as anyone this year on "High Places" and "Viking," and none other than Alex Acuna shows us *exactly* how to groove Latin-style on "Cumbia Raza." Beautiful stuff. (Hollywood)

— Ted Bonar

## 5 Big Bad Voodoo Daddy

*This Beautiful Life*

Kurt Sodergren (dr), Scotty Morris (vcl. gtr), Dirk Shumaker (ac bs, vcl), Joshua Levy (pno, vcl), Glen Marhefka (trp. vcl), Karl Hunter (al & tn sx, dr, bs clr), Andy Rowley (bar sx, vcl)

Though *This Beautiful Life* delivers a sweet vintage sound, it's missing the wantonness suggested by this neo-swing band's name. Drummer Sodergren's big moments come when he mixes it up with the horns and keeps the band moving along, like on the album's highlight, a cover of *The Jungle*

*Book's* "Want To Be Like You." Moving around the kit, Sodergren applies a slick Latin feel to a jungle-gym of world percussion, delivering spot-on and enthusiastic fills. Elsewhere, though, Sodergren generally swings on the safe side. His technique is clean, precise, meticulous—but maybe he should have injected a little more hoodoo into that voodoo. (Coolsville)

— Fran Azzarto and Lisa Crouch

## 8 The Lonely Bears

Terry Bozzio (dr), Hugh Burns (gtr), Tony Hymas (kybd), Tony Coe (sx)

This 1991 import has finally been released in the US—but it's been well worth the wait. Having just recorded the Grammy-winning Jeff Beck release *Guitar Shop*, Bozzio was ready to express himself in a more open forum, and *The Lonely Bears* was the perfect vehicle. Bozzio dominates the mix with his melodic and articulate phrasings. His timing is impeccable and his orchestrations are a true testament to his musicality and creative genius. The material explores progressive, Middle Eastern, and world music, as well as orchestral composition. Bozzio's snare drum technique is finely tuned, as is his trademark double bass playing. This is some of Bozzio's finest work to date. (Pelican Sound Recordings, PMB 1820, 208 East 51st St. New York, NY 10022-6500, [magnacarta.net/pelican.htm](http://magnacarta.net/pelican.htm))

— Mike Haid



## FROM THE EDITORS' VAULT

Rediscovering drumming's dusty gems

## 9 Maynard Ferguson MF Horn 4&5—Live At Jimmy's

This live double album marks the zenith of Maynard's pop-tinged big band ventures of the '70s. You can not only hear the club audience's reaction, but feel it fanning the flames of the aerialist trumpeter's best crew of that era. Ferguson's horn section never needed to be "driven." But with fast hands and an implacable left foot, drummer Randy Jones drives them nonetheless through the sparkling, complex arrangements' time and feel changes, inspired solos, and shout choruses that define the term.

A grass-roots Web campaign at [www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Castle/2685/maynard.html](http://www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Castle/2685/maynard.html) is working to have all of Maynard's vinyl recordings reissued on CD. Until then, you'll have to hunt for a used *Live At Jimmy's* LP. (Try [www.musicfile.com](http://www.musicfile.com).) Well worth the search—and the retro-tech accommodation—in all senses of the word this album represents "live" recording at its boisterous best.

— Rich Watson



## 9 Anthology Of Jazz Drumming, Volume 4, 1938

Paul Barbarin, Ray Bauduc, Alvin Burroughs, Sid Catlett, Kenny Clarke, Sonny Greer, Lionel Hampton, Manzie Johnson, Gene Krupa, O'Neill Spencer, Chick Webb, George Wettling (dr)

On a single January 1938 New York night, Benny Goodman's band played their historic Carnegie Hall concert while Chick Webb battled Count Basie's Orchestra at the Savoy Ballroom. It was surely an explosive time for swing big bands (not to mention small combos). This latest installment in the wonderful seven-CD *Anthology* series, which chronicles jazz drumming from 1904 to 1945, focuses on that one prolific year.

The star of this volume, featured on five cuts, is the great Jo Jones, heard propelling Count Basie's Orchestra and also The Kansas City Five. Other highlights include the seminal Chick Webb and his orchestra playing a classic, vivacious "Liza"; Gene

## What In The World Hot drumming from the far reaches of the globe

8 *Back To Africa* by Mor Thiam, master drummer from Senegal, provides enough drum lessons for years to come. Drumset accompanies kora, bass, and vocals. With tight syncopated grooves and breaks, talking drums percolate and evolve and djembes just plain *dazzle*. (Just In Time/DNA Distr., [916] 661-6600)

7 *Sacred Insanity* by Eman & Friends is an amazing stew of multi-ethnic instrumentalists and vocalists. The mandala on the cover is a visual indicator of the music—colorful, circular, and in motion. Some great fusion drumming by Sivamani and Kip Richardson, as well as Eman's tasty tabla and percussion. Mahavishnu meets

Mustapha. (Etemal Music, [www.etemalmusic.com](http://www.etemalmusic.com), distr. City Nall, [415] 457-0080)

7 *Skalene* is a band from Quebec whose CD *Passion Macaque* moves along with great ease. The guitarists cover a wide range of sounds without being overly processed, and the percussionists, Martin Bonin and Richard Gingras, have an organic style that blends and builds. The music flirts with a sense of the Grateful Dead, a loose jam that suddenly stops and then flies on. A nice combination of strings and Skin. (World Chart, 5505, bonl, St. Lauren, St. 3017, Montreal, Quebec H2T 1S6, Canada, [514] 276-5033, [www.tot81.net/~lostchar/index.html](http://www.tot81.net/~lostchar/index.html))

— David Licht

Krupa's throbbing pulse behind Benny Goodman's Orchestra and trio, as well as the newly formed Krupa big band; Kenny Clarke in his pre-bop days with Edgar Hayes And His Orchestra; and the influential "Big Sid" Catlett driving Chu Berry And His Little Jazz Ensemble, featuring the powerful trumpet soloing of Roy Eldridge. This important series continues to delight with scholarly info and inspired tracks. (Masters Of Jazz, [0] 1 42 62 27 73)

— Jeff Potter

## 8 Satyricon Rebel Extravaganza

Frost (dr), Satyr (vcl, bs), others

Satyricon's new album *is* an extravaganza—of extreme music. Throughout the disc, this Norwegian black metal band combines sprawling, multi-dimensional arrangements with infectious thrash guitar riffs and raspy vocals recalling Venom (who helped pioneer the explicitly satanic black metal genre in the early '80s) and Slayer. Along the way, the drumming of Frost often serves as a potent sonic centerpiece. During the multi-part opener, "Tied In Bronze Chains" (which lasts nearly eleven minutes), his double bass pounds out 32nd notes (most drummers can't do this well with their *hands*) while his hi-hat and snare jog in double-time. And on "Supersonic Journey," a warp-speed grind eventually mutates into a mysterious 4/4 section filled with hypnotic effects. As *Rebel Extravaganza* demonstrates, Satyricon have turned black metal into a serious art form. (Nuclear Blast)

— Jeff Perlah

## 7 Isotope 217°

Utonian\_Automatic

John Herndon, Dan Bitney (dr, perc), Jeff Parker (gtr), Rob Mazurek (trp, keys), Matt Lux (bs)

This latest release from Isotope 217°, who are a spinoff of the influential Chicago "post-rock" band Tortoise, has a comfy, low-fi feel and strikes no grandiose rock 'n' roll postures. But don't let that fool you: Isotope bursts with clever ideas, enhancing trancy, cucumber-cool instrumentals with horns, percussion, and loony electronic effects. From there, though, it's anybody's guess—free jazz, songo, new wave, and lounge music are all hinted at. John Herndon's kit drumming (along with Dan Bitney's percussion shading) feels great. For most of the record he stays firmly in the pocket, quirky as that pocket may be. But at times he cuts loose with wicked fills that come out of left field. Herndon also creates wacky sonic illusions by syncing up with, then diverging from, Bitney's vintage drum machine patterns. (Thrill Jockey)

— Michael Parillo

## 8 Doc Severinsen

& His Big Band Swingin' The Blues

Ed Shaughnessy (dr), with Doc Severinsen (tp, flghn), Barbara Morrison (vcl), Ernie Watts (tn sx), others

Doc Severinsen's *Tonight Show* band was one of the finest ever to hold fort over late-night TV. After host Johnny Carson retired, the West Coast vets continued to tour and record as The Doc Severinsen Big Band. This disc features the crew rompin' through a selection of blues charts, most of

swear it's true. On *Superjaded* **Robin Diaz** is never content to keep time on just one instrument. He rides the hi-hat, the floor tom, the crash, and he has a trigger-sharp right foot and stays tight with the guitars throughout. (Foodchain)

6 On *Breakfast With Girls*, Self takes a fuzzy approach to drums. Blurring the line between man and machine, the band combines a variety of drum machines and organic drums for a fresh blend of hip-hop and pop sensibilities. On "Suzie Q Sailaway," drummer **Jason Rawlings** plays it clean with sharp 16th-note fills that provide the toy-soldier hook to this little ditty. (Dreamworks/Spongebath)

— Fran Azzarto and Lisa Crouch

## The Hands Have It Noteworthy Percussion Releases

8 Perhaps the most unusual of the discs reviewed here is *Afro Sol*, the ambitious work of percussionist Noah Waldman. Waldman left Berklee College to find a Cuban folkloric music teacher, and recorded more than thirty-five hours of music on the streets of Havana with drummers **Orlando Suarez, Rey Naldo Rodrigues Torre, Gabriel Quesada, and Jose Liven**. The amateur tapes were edited stateside at Real Sound Remedies, and the results are astoundingly crisp. (Noah's Ark Productions, noah-waldman@hotmail.com, afrosol.iama.com)

8 **Richie "Gajate" Garcia's** *Mis Tres Hijos* is an excellent production—fine music all through and a nice drum showcase. The percussionist uses the talents of saxman Justo Almario, keyboardist Rique Pantoja, bassist Guillermo Guzman, and others, and the music showcases Gajate-Garcia's independence on multiple instruments. (Pulpo Records, PO Box 3791, Granada Hills, CA 91394-3791)

6 **Adam Rudolph's** *Moving Pictures* features the acclaimed hand drummer along with **Hamid Drake** on traps and Ralph Jones on assorted woodwinds. The CD is a live performance with dancer Oguri, so parts of *12 Arrows* naturally miss the visual aspect. But there are enough fine musical moments here to make this worthwhile for serious percussion students and fans. Set ears on *wide*. (MESA Records, 2024 Glencoe Ave., Venice, CA 90291, www.metarecords.com)

— Robin Tolleson

which were arranged by John Bambridge and Tommy Newsom.

For over thirty years, Ed Shaughnessy has inspired this ensemble with solid time, clean fills, and thoughtful phrasing. From the straight-ahead swing feel of Ellington's "C Jam Blues" to the down 'n' dirty grooves of "West End Blues" and "Supreme Sacrifice," Shaughnessy prods and propels with a masterful touch. Top it all off with some sensitive brushwork behind Barbara Morrison's soulful ballads and a nicely executed solo on Cozy Cole's "Topsy," and it's clear Big Ed has the genre covered from every angle. (Azica, 1645 Eddy Road, Cleveland, OH 44112, [216] 681-0778, www.azica.com)

— Ron Spagnardi

## Kickin' Out The New Hot Releases From Tomorrow's Heroes

7 Throw a tie-died scarf over your lamp and set some candles burning while listening to Gomez's latest. A "trippy" album if there ever was one, *Liquid Skin* sees drummer **Olly Peacock** setting the laid-back vibe on tracks such as "Blue Moon Rising" through the use of specialty cymbals, bongos, and odd placements of the snare drum. Moving way beyond the groove, he plays to the song. (Virgin)

5 Remember the kid in the back of the classroom who never stopped tapping? Books, glasses, the desk, the floor, his head? Well, he grew up and joined Liars Inc. We



## VIDEOS

### 6 Akira Jimbo Evolution

level: advanced, 55 minutes, \$39.95

Akira Jimbo can surely find other musicians to play with. But considering his continued refinement of the drummer-as-solo artist concept, it wouldn't seem he needs to. Jimbo plays twelve songs straight through on *Evolution*, which makes it a fine showcase for his integration of the Yamaha DTX triggering system and acoustic kit. Jimbo has all the sounds figured out on the trigger pads and plays songs based solely on a few well-placed melody fragments and his strong, outrageous rhythms. He's got the triggering thing *down*, and has corralled some interesting sample sounds. Still, the highlights for me are when he concentrates on the acoustic kit, pulling off some wild left-foot-clave thing or drum 'n' bass groove at about 160. There's a lot of meat to chew on here for the player already in this zone. Unfortunately, though Jimbo includes program notes with transcriptions of some of the main beats he plays, there is no verbal



explanation during his performance, which would truly help those of us not quite up to this level. (Warner Bros.)

— Robin Tolleson

## BOOKS

### 9 Secrets Of Subdivision, Vol. 1

by David A. Pandone

level: beginner to advanced, \$14.95

David A. Pandone has accomplished something that drummers and teachers have been attempting for decades. *Secrets Of Subdivision* is as good a rhythmic primer as exists in drum publishing.

Understanding and describing rhythmic subdivisions (for snare drum only) dominates most of this book. However, counting, sight reading, performance, and proper technique are also explored in depth. Mr. Pandone's method makes perfect sense, and he has a way with words that truly shows how much time he has put into his methods. *Secrets* rivals the great *Syncopation* by Ted Reed, taking that book's concept even further with a clearly written text, deeper rhythmic development, more exercises, and even some duets.

While there are many classic books devoted to the description of rhythm, there is always room for another—if it's as unique and useful as this one. Teachers

would be wise to contact Mr. Pandone, utilize this special book, and thank the author for the years' worth of benefits it offers. (Pandone Enterprises, 588 Ruth Dr., Hubbard, OH 44425, dapandabear@earthlink.net, home.earthlink.net/~dapandabear)

— Ted Bonar

### 4 Essential Reading

by Frank Briggs

level: beginner to intermediate, \$14.95 (with CD)

Frank Briggs' goal in *Essential Reading* is to "help the beginning to intermediate-level student recognize and interpret many of the rhythms found in popular music today. Many of the rhythms include their enharmonic counter parts." Briggs' ideas may be worthy of a 40-page book and CD. Unfortunately the confusion in this effort starts on page 2.

The lessons are written at three levels. Level one instructs the drummer to play one measure at a time, then play the full phrase. Level two, however, requires reading down the page in columns. Now why would you want a beginning student to learn how to read music in a format that doesn't exist anywhere else? Level three simply states that you should read the entire book front to back. Is this really necessary? In addition, in the seemingly random bars where a sticking pattern is not given, the author suggests writing your own. Why have sticking sometimes and not others? Once you get past these oddities, the rhythms do start to fall into place. But these are unnecessary and frustrating obstacles.

The numbering of each measure is a nice touch, Briggs wisely suggests using a metronome throughout, and having a CD to listen to before attempting an exercise is always handy. Unfortunately, *Essential Reading* may be too difficult a read to make these pluses add up to anything. (Mel Bay)

— Fran Azzarto

## Madness Across The Water

The Latest, Most Burnin' Import Drum Releases

Recommended by Mark Tessier of Audiophile Imports

**David "Fuze" Ficzynski** *Jazzpunk*. Solo project from the Screaming Headless Torsos' guitarist, with three different rhythm sections tearing up some standards. Features Gene Lake, Zach Danziger, and Billy Hart.

**Dennis Chambers** *Getting Even*. Recently reissued full-length solo debut from Dennis Chambers featuring John Scofield, Jimi Tunnell, Jim Beard, Bob Berg, Anthony Jackson, Gary Grainger, and Victor Williams on percussion.

**Michael Landau** *Tales From The Bulge*. Michael Landau gets to show all aspects of his superb guitar playing on his solo debut, along with Steve Lukather, David Garfield, Jimmy Johnson, Wayne Shorter, Steve Tavaglione, and Larry Klimas, with Vinnie Colaiuta, Carlos Vega, and John Keane on drums, Lenny Castro and Luis Conte on percussion.

**Blue Montreux I & II**. All-star fusion band featuring Steve Khan, Michael Brecker, Randy Brecker, Mike Mainieri, Warren Bernhardt, Tony Levin, Larry Coryell, and Eddie Gomez, with Steve Jordan on drums, recorded live at the Montreux Jazz Festival in 1978. Available as two separate CDs.

**Neil Zaza** *Staring At The Sun*. Guitarist Neil Zaza leads his power trio, with the reunited Journey rhythm section of Ross Valory on bass and Steve Smith on drums. Guests include Michael Lee Firkins and Stu Hamm, with Robin DiMaggio on drums.

To order any of these releases, contact Audiophile Imports at [www.audiophileimports.com](http://www.audiophileimports.com), (908) 996-7311.



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# The Benefits Of Songwriting

by Ted Bonar

In past installments we discussed the benefits of learning music theory. We also explored the different ways learning a second instrument can help you as a drummer. We found that studying musical concepts, rather than studying rhythms exclusively, will help you become a more complete player. And we discussed different ways to listen to drums from new perspectives.

Now how about taking your new skills a step further? We drummers have so much technique to worry about when learning our instruments that we often don't train ourselves to think creatively in other musical directions. Because our instrument is not based upon melody or harmony, we are simply predisposed to thinking of other things than writing a song.

What do guitar players and keyboardists have that we do not that allows them to write music? In terms of musicality and dedication, that depends solely on the individual. But surely, as a group, we have as much musical talent and commitment as any other instrumentalists. So the only difference in these two groups is that non-drummers use instruments more suitable for songwriting. If we take the time to learn a second instrument, that difference is thrown right out the window.

What can we learn from songwriting that will help our drumming? The simple answer is: *everything*.

## Getting Started

The first thing you need to do when you sit down to write a song is to get over your fear of *creating* for the first time. Even an advanced drummer with mountains of experience will face a blank page with absolute panic. When writing a song, not only are you required to create melodic and harmonic ideas, but even more terrifying, you have to come up with lyrics! *Horrors*.

Have no fear. Draw upon your wealth of experience as a drummer, and remember that the first time you picked up the sticks, you couldn't even play a clean double-

stroke roll. In fact, you probably had no idea what a clean double-stroke roll *was*. Sitting in front of a blank page for the first time is no different from picking up your sticks for the first time. Writing songs is a craft and a discipline to be practiced, just like your snare rudiments were.

The purpose of writing songs as a drummer is two-fold: First and foremost, the process will help your drumming. Second, you may discover a hidden talent that will allow you to become a truly integral mem-

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**"What can we learn from songwriting that will help our drumming? The simple answer is: *everything*"**

---

ber in any creative situation. Of course, not every drummer has all the ingredients to become a great songwriter (although what a bonus *that* would be). But every drummer *will* benefit from making the attempt.

## Gaining A New Perspective

Songwriting can be humbling. But the process of writing three verses and a few choruses—even if the outcome is, well, *not good*—will open your ears as a drummer like no other exercise you have done previously.

If you've gone through the process of writing a song, this means that you've spent time and energy devoted to creating a melody, writing interesting lyrics, and crafting a total musical package. This experience will give you a new perspective

when you're back behind the drumset playing other people's songs once again. You'll be more aware of the lyrics, the phrasing, the overall feel, and the message of the song. How can this *not* affect your drumming? Maybe you'll need to hear more vocals in your monitors from then on. Maybe you'll spend more time crafting your drum part to fit what the songwriter wants to hear. Are you playing angry songs? Happy songs? Are the songs political? What emotion is the songwriter trying to capture? There are many ways to play drums to each of those moods and ideas, and if you even *attempt* to put yourself in the songwriter's position, you will immediately become aware of all of these different options.

Writing songs will actually help you to learn other songs on the drums at an incredibly fast rate. As a songwriter, you will have to choose the form of a song: key signature, harmonic structure, dynamics, etc. When you are playing behind the drums again, those musical ideas—even though created by another bandmember or writer—will jump out at you. You'll recognize verses, choruses, bridges, intros, and outros immediately. You will have moved up tremendously on your own learning curve on the drums simply by making the attempt to write songs.

## Taking A New Role

If you have enough commitment to songwriting, you just may find that you have the ability to write some good songs! If this is the case, you have an even better opportunity to improve as a drummer. Once you have a song or two in which you have some confidence, gather the troops and get a jam session going. Only this time, you won't be on the drums. Invite your favorite drummer friend to come by and jam for a night. You may have to pay for the rehearsal space or buy some pizza to thank your friends for their time. But what you'll learn in one rehearsal of your own material,

with you as the leader, will be well worth the price.

As a leader and as a songwriter, it's your responsibility to *teach* your song to each musician in the group. As intimidating as teaching your songs to guitarists or keyboardists might be, that task is a breeze compared with teaching your songs to the drummer. You'll find that while concentrating on melody, harmony, and lyrics, you'll most likely have ignored a drumming concept. Even if you *have* some loose ideas about what you want from the drums, you'll most likely consider the drum part "done" because that's your natural instrument. But you're not playing that part this time. So you must find a way to communicate your part to the drummer verbally.

Even if you *show* your drummer how to play your songs, you'll quickly find that each drummer is different, with styles and instincts that may not fit exactly with what you would feel. This isn't necessarily a bad situation, but in order to get used to it you'll have to place a tremendous amount of trust in your drummer.

While listening to your drummer play

your songs, you'll start to think, Was that fill appropriate? Did he set up the "B" section of that song well enough? Or even, Would I have thought of that? The next time you sit behind your drumset—whether you are playing your own songs or someone else's—you will be asking these very same questions of *yourself*. What does the songwriter want? Am I playing the right groove under that lyric? Are my dynamic choices working for the song as a whole? You'll have a new-found respect for the songwriter in your group. You'll develop patience when listening to someone give you directions. And you'll have an improved sense of the song and how to play it appropriately.

Some outstanding drummers have been equally outstanding (and extremely successful) songwriters: Louie Bellson, Jack DeJohnette, Neil Peart, Vinnie Colaiuta, Peter Erskine, Steve Smith, Phil Collins, Don Henley, Billy Cobham, Bill Bruford, Max Roach, Tony Williams, Stewart Copeland, and many others. The diversity of the drumming styles represented in that list is astounding, but the one thing they all

have in common is their ability to play for the song and to play as a part of the "big picture."

Every single one of the drummers mentioned above had to write their first song, just as they had to pick up their sticks for the first time. They had to write their first lyric or choose their first melody in the same manner that they had to play their first drum fill. Through the years, they combined their drum skills with an overall musical approach. The results are in their music, which speaks for itself.



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# The Keys And The Throttle

## Driving Your Band From The Drum Throne

by Philip J. Hendrickson

**M**usicians sometimes refer to the drum throne as the "driver's seat." We say, "The drummer drives the band," meaning that the drummer controls the music. But many drummers are reluctant to accept this leadership role, and their music suffers as a result.

Why is that? And just how do we drive the music? I like to explain it this way: The drummer drives the band with the *keys* and the *throttle*. Passion and creativity are the drummer's emotional *keys*. And the drummer's confidence is the *throttle* for the band.

When a drummer is the youngest (or newest) member of a band, it's understandable that he or she might be uncomfortable with the idea of leading. Other bandmembers might tell the drummer, "Just keep it simple and stay out of the way." But sooner or later it becomes obvious that no one else can drive the music as effectively as

mostly ignores the band.

The next night you witness the opposite. A band playing in a talent show really doesn't have any. The guitarist is trying licks he hasn't mastered yet, the bassist can't find the groove, and the singer is posing for glamour shots. But the drummer is playing with intensity and fire, and the audience is dancing and clapping.

In both examples, the drummer held the keys and the throttle. But only the second drummer knew how to use them.

### Emotional Keys

Experienced musicians will tell you that the drummer sets the mood for the band. A band can only play with as much enthusiasm as the drummer exudes. And enthusiasm in the band creates an emotional impact on the audience.

Take a look at Yanni. Why do his audiences get so fired up and have so much

beats are still laying the foundation for hit rap songs thirty years later. Likewise, any big band horn player will tell you that the horn section will kick harder and soar higher when the right drummer is on the throne.

For a less conventional example, watch as mild-mannered pianist John Tesh jumps behind a set of timbales. He becomes an energetic drummer and whips his audience into a lather. (Witness this on his *Live At Red Rocks* video.) John isn't going to win any drummer of the year awards, but his audience doesn't care. They are excited, they love it! A drummer turned the key to their emotions.

And how does a drummer set moods and evoke emotions? By playing with creativity, passion, and intensity. Intensity may come as a flurry of crashes, but it may also consist of a swelling cymbal roll during an acoustic piece, or delicate chimes and finger cymbals under a piano intro.

**"Sooner or later it becomes obvious that no one else can drive the music as effectively as the drummer."**

the drummer. Consider the following examples.

You are watching a club band in a hotel lounge. The drummer is so obviously bored that you think he might fall asleep. The musicians are good, but the band sounds lackluster and predictable. The singer turns around several times to give the drummer dirty looks. And the audience

fun? Because his drummer and percussionist do! Watch Yanni's *Live At The Acropolis* concert video. Charlie Adams and Kalani feed generous portions of energy and emotion to every person on stage and in the seats.

Consider Jabo Starks and Clyde Stubblefield. Their work with James Brown was so funky that samples of their

The popularity of world music has made a wealth of ethnic percussion instruments readily available. Adding some international flavor to your kit may inspire your creativity to new heights. But you don't have to go shopping to be creative. Good drummers can pull a plethora of sounds out of a basic drumset, or even a single drum. More on that later.

## Confidence Is The Throttle

Listen to Miles Davis's *The Complete Concert 1964* to hear what a confident drummer brings to a group. That night at Lincoln Center, an eighteen-year-old named Tony Williams drove Davis's band of all-stars to new heights, taking familiar material to new places. Davis said later, "There was a lot of creative tension happening that night," and, "[saxophonist George Coleman] played better that night than I had ever heard him play." Without Williams' confident leadership, the magic of that concert would have been seriously throttled back.

Buddy Rich once told *Downbeat* magazine, "This is what I play, man. Take it or leave it." Another famous Rich quote is, "Mister, I *am* the band." No one ever accused Buddy of being timid! Players on a bandstand can only stretch out on their instruments if they know the drummer will keep them together. In Rich's band, the musicians always knew where the beat was. Or else!

Buddy and Tony were two of the most talented drummers ever to hold sticks. But if they had lacked the confidence to play what they felt, we would never have heard of them. Their confidence opened wide the throttle for their music.

So how do *you* gain the confidence necessary to open your band's throttle? Practice and experiment. Spend time getting to know your instrument. Take command of what it can do.

Try this experiment with one cymbal and a stick. Strike the bell of the cymbal with the tip of the stick. Then hit it with the stick's shoulder; then the butt end. Now work your way to the edge of the cymbal, stopping every inch or so to strike it with each part of the stick. Try single strokes, doubles, flams, and ruffs. Continue with your other cymbals and drums. Don't forget the rims and stands. Experience the possibilities around your set!

Listen to a wide variety of music. Expand your horizons. You like rock? Listen to some jazz. Try some salsa or Celtic folk music. Hear how the good drummers know when to fill space and when to leave space. Then use your fresh perspective to create interesting parts that support and encourage the musicians you play with. Remember, you are not a drum machine. You don't have to repeat the

same rhythm every four bars.

If you play with confidence, creativity, and passion, you will inspire your fellow musicians to do likewise. Besides, playing with creativity is fun. After all, aren't fun and creativity the main reasons we keep playing?

The more time you spend with your instrument, the more confidence you will have commanding the throttle. And the more creative and passionate your playing is, the more your keys will influence people's emotions and make them listen to what your music is saying.

Learn to use the keys and the throttle. Then drive your band!



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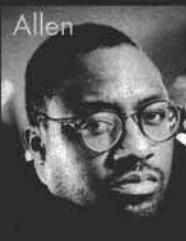
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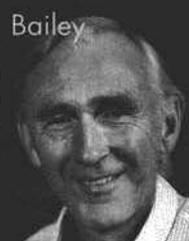
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Bailey

## Chris Badami



At the age of five, Chris Badami was inspired by Animal from *The Muppet Show*. This led to drum lessons and an exploration of percussion that continues to this day. Along the way Animal's

influence was augmented by that of Buddy Rich, John Bonham, Neil Peart, Omar Hakim, and Tommy Lee.

The New Jersey drummer's musical studies covered "everything from rock to jazz and classical," including piano and composition. Now twenty-two, Chris holds an A.S. in percussion and a B.M. in percussion and music technology from NYU. He currently serves as professor of music at Morris County College in Randolph, New Jersey, and as percussion instructor at Pequannock Township High School.

Chris also operates his own studio, where he records, produces, and drums on demos for local bands. Among those "local bands" are two in which Chris performs. Gate is a progressive/groove band whose material runs from high-energy rockers to dramatic ballads. Casual Blue leans toward folk/rock with a pop edge. Both groups play extensively in the New York/New Jersey area and have received airplay on college radio. Their CDs testify to Chris's versatility, musicality, and emotional performance style.

An avid collector of drums, Chris favors a Pearl Prestige Session kit for large gigs, and a Yamaha Stage Custom kit for smaller venues. He uses DW, Pearl, Premier, and Slingerland snare drums, Zildjian and Paiste cymbals, and DW pedals. His goal, he says, is to "make my mark as both a player and educator. Music has been the driving force in my life. I'll never stop my efforts to be the best I can be."

## Chris Muller

Twenty-nine-year-old Chris Muller is a mechanical engineer by day and a performing drummer by night. But perhaps his day-time vocation has influenced his drumming, because Chris plays with a precision and accuracy that border on the scientific. With his Orlando-based band Aura Djinn (pronounced "origin"), Chris performs challenging vocal and instrumental "music for musicians": full of odd time signatures and rapid-fire feel changes. But unlike some other "progressive" bands, Aura Djinn manages to keep the music extremely tight and the groove solid. This is "progressive pocket" music, and it has garnered the band a serious following—to say nothing of gigs at the Hard Rock Cafe and the House Of Blues. Their CD *Say Goodbye To Mars* showcases Chris's energetic and imaginative drumming, and is worth checking out at [www.auradjinn.com](http://www.auradjinn.com).

Chris cites his early teachers—Mark Foster and David Bittner of Albany, New

York—as major influences who kept him open to all musical styles. As for drummers, he's studied the work of Peart, Bonham, Bruford, Morgenstein, Bozzio, Phillips, Portnoy, and Beauford. Before Aura Djinn, Chris played with bands in New York, Pennsylvania, and Florida. He's also recorded demos and soundtrack projects. He performs on a Premier Signia kit, with Zildjian cymbals, a Gibraltar rack, LP percussion, and Roland electronics.

"My ultimate goal would be to make a living playing original music," says Chris. "But I know this isn't a simple matter. So I'll keep the day job while we shop our CD to national labels. That way I can enjoy playing the music I love, on my terms, without financial pressure."



## Jimmy Carr

Tucson, Arizona's Jimmy Carr is not your "average" gigging drummer. You're just as likely to find him walking down the street with a single snare drum slung around his neck as behind a kit on a club stage. Or he might be on the back of a flatbed truck, or in clown makeup at a special benefit event. It's all in a day's work for the drummer in *Crawdaddy-O!*, a decidedly *different* brass quintet.

Combining elements of the Dirty Dozen Brass Band, Lester Bowie, Spike Jones, and Tower Of Power, *Crawdaddy-O!* blends impressive instrumental prowess with a freewheeling sense of humor. Their CD *Last Night On Earth* is streetwise and rowdy, with absolutely no concern for stylistic labels. The tunes range from polka-esque romps to funky grooves that would make James Brown shake his booty. Jimmy might play only a ringy snare drum, or he might play a tight-sounding kit. Either way,



all the necessary drive, rhythmic invention, and technique is there.

With *Crawdaddy-O!* Jimmy has performed at various festivals

and showcases, including the High Sierra Music Festival and the Fremont Street Experience in Las Vegas. The group was named the Tucson area's best new band in 1997 and band of the year in 1998. (And there isn't a guitar string or amplifier between the lot of them.) You can check them out at [www.crawdaddyo.com](http://www.crawdaddyo.com).

Jimmy Carr's playing is a major ingredient of this unique musical stew. He personifies what one critic called the entire band: "good-timers with attitude."

If you'd like to appear in *On The Move*, send us an audio or video cassette of your best work (preferably both solo and with a band) on three or four songs, along with a brief bio sketch and a high-quality color or black & white close-up photo. (Polaroids are not acceptable. Photos will not be paid for or credited.) The bio sketch

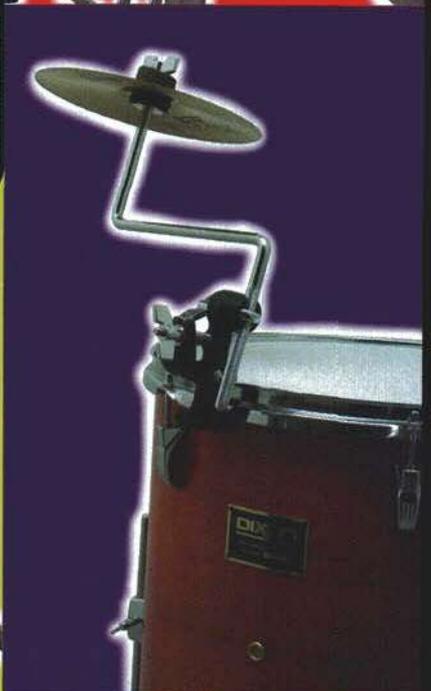
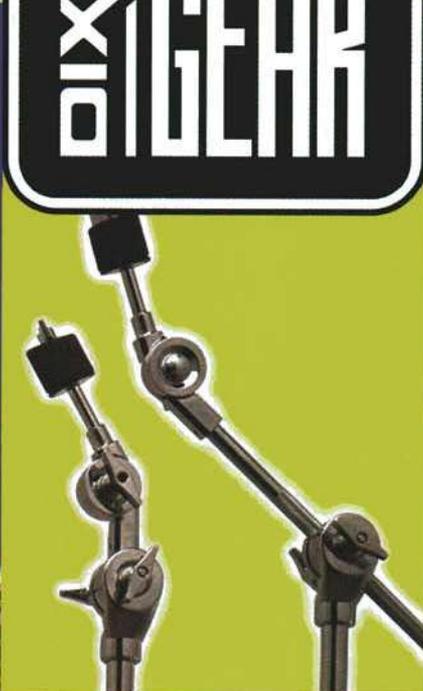
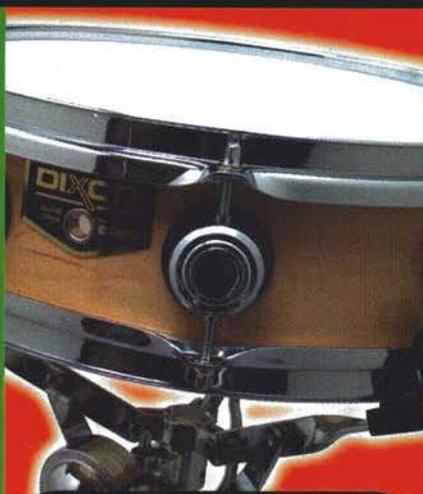
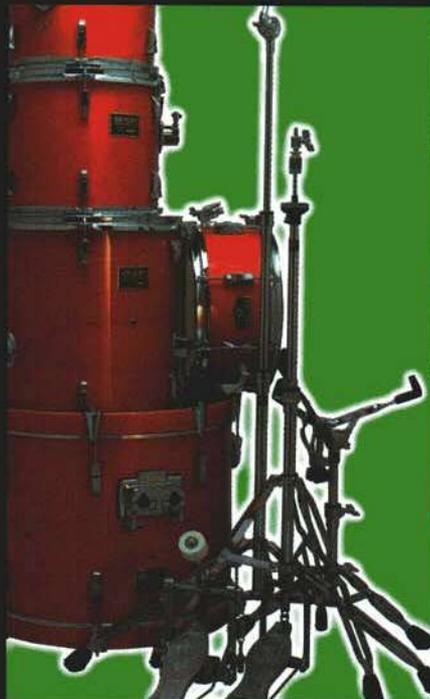
should include your full name and age, along with your playing style(s), influences, current playing situation (band, recording project, freelance artist, etc.), how often and where you are playing, and what your goals are (recording artist, session player, local career player, etc.). Include any special items of interest pertaining to what

you do and how you do it, and a list of the equipment you use regularly. Send your material to On The Move, Modern Drummer Publications, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Material **cannot** be returned, so please **do not** send original tapes or photos.



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# MIKE PORTNOY

*"Doing the new videos was a lot of work, but a lot of fun. Now, I'm proud to announce that my new instructional videos, Liquid Drum Theater Volumes I and II, have just been released!*

*"To help me celebrate, the good people at Tama, Sabian, Latin Percussion, Pro-Mark, Hudson Music, and Modern Drummer are giving away all kinds of great stuff...from the videos themselves to a complete set-up configured just like my Liquid Tension set."*



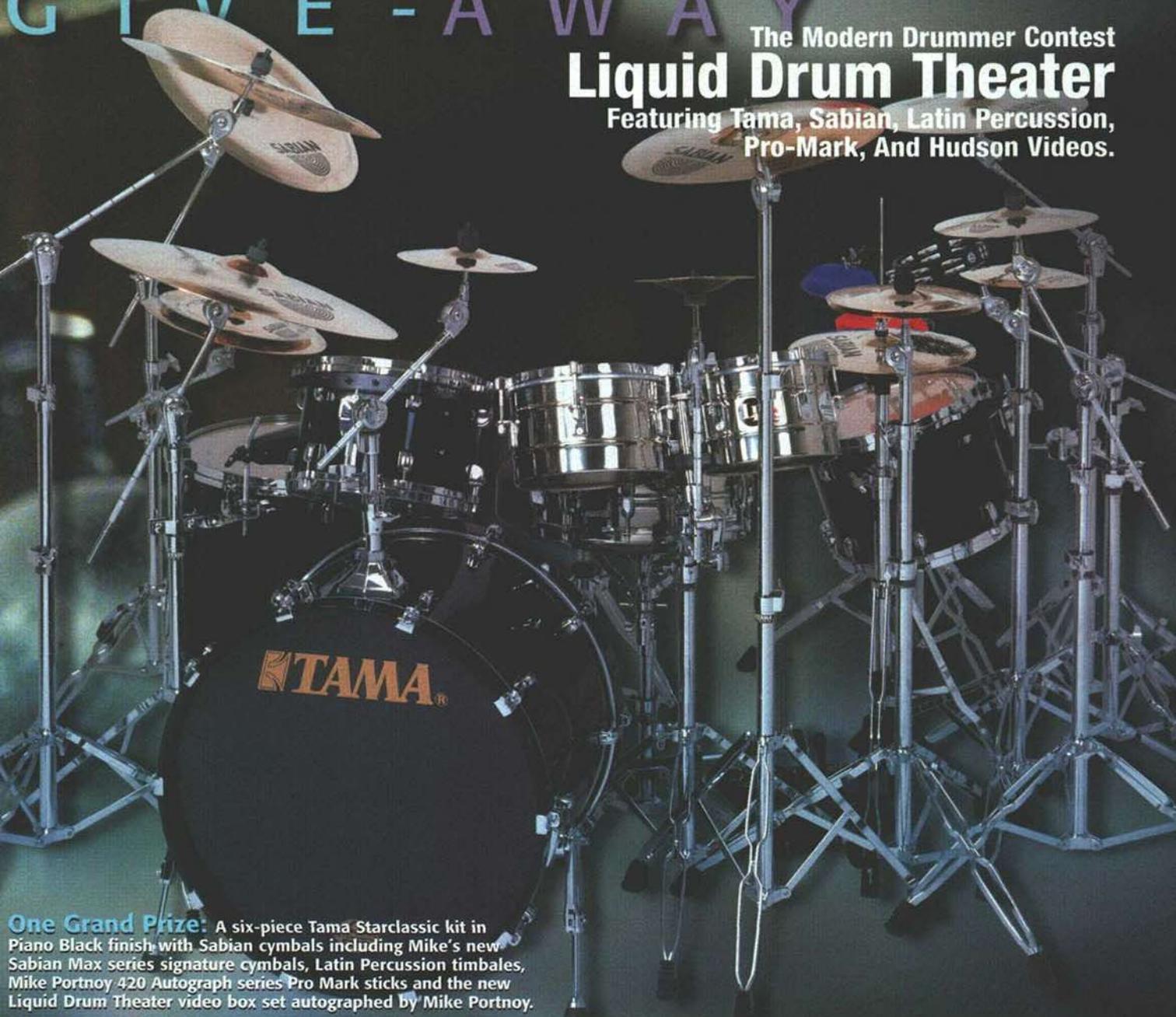
Mike Portnoy's Liquid Drum Theater Volume One video includes songs, segments and parts breakdowns from Liquid Tension Experiment, how to develop a "toolbox" of fills and patterns, and more. Volume Two focuses on Dream Theater and isolates the drum parts from Falling into Infinity and Scenes from a Memory, plus how to play in odd time signatures, double bass technique and more.

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**Thirty-Five Third Prizes:** The new Liquid Drum Theater video box set autographed by Mike Portnoy.



**CONTEST RULES (here's how to enter) ENTER EARLY AND OFTEN!** Consumer Disclosure: 1. Two ways to enter: (a) Call 1-900-786-3786. Cost: 99c per call. You must call from the number where you wish to be notified. Or (b) send a 3.5" x 5.5" or 4" x 6" postcard with your name, address, and telephone number to: Modern Drummer/Mike Portnoy Contest, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. 2. Enter as often as you wish, but each entry must be phoned or mailed separately. 3. ODDS OF WINNING EACH PRIZE DEPEND ON THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE ENTRIES RECEIVED. 4. CONTEST BEGINS 2/1/2000 AND ENDS 4/30/2000. PHONE CALLS WILL BE ACCEPTED UNTIL 11:59 EST 4/30/2000. POST CARDS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY 4/30/2000 AND RECEIVED BY 5/3/2000. 5. Winners will be selected by random drawing on 5/10/2000 and notified by phone on or about 5/11/2000. 6. Employees and their immediate families of Modern Drummer, Tama Drums, Sabian, Latin Percussion, Pro-Mark and Hudson Music and their affiliates are ineligible. 7. Sponsor is not responsible for lost, misdirected, and/or delayed entries. 8. Open to the residents of US and Canada (except in Florida and the Province of Quebec), 12 years of age or older, provided that CALLERS UNDER THE AGE OF 18 OBTAIN PARENTAL OR GUARDIAN PERMISSION TO ENTER. California residents under 18 may not participate. Residents of MN, GA, LA, NJ, and Canada may enter by mail only. Void where prohibited by law. 9. One prize awarded per household per contest. 10. Grand Prize: One winner will receive from TAMA: one (1) Starclassic drum set in Piano Black finish including one (1) 18x22 Bass Drum, one (1) 51/2 x14 sitar drum with Air Ride Snare Stand; one (1) 9x10, one (1) 10x12, one (1) 13x14, one (1) 15x16 Rack Toms with Sound Focus Rings; one (1) HH905 Iron Cobra Lever Glide hi-hat stand, one (1) HP900PTW Iron Cobra Power Glide bass drum pedal, two (2) HC83B New Titan cymbal stands, two (2) New Titan tom and cymbal combination stands, one (1) New Titan double tom stand, one (1) Tama 1st Chair Wide Rider throne; from SABIAN: one (1) each Mike Portnoy 7", 9" & 11" Max Splashes, one (1) each Mike Portnoy Mid & Low Max Stax sets, one (1) pair Hand Hammered 13" Rock Hats, one (1) Hand Hammered 22" Rock Ride, one (1) Hand Hammered 20" Chinese, one (1) Hand Hammered 16" thin crash, one (1) Hand Hammered 17" medium crash, one (1) Hand Hammered 19" thin crash, one (1) BacPac cymbal bag, one (1) Sabian Baseball Jersey; from LATIN PERCUSSION one (1) LP272-S Tito Puente Timbales, one (1) LP068 Rock Ridge Rider cowbell, one (1) LP160 Cyclops tambourine, one (1) LP236C Mount-All percussion bracket, one (1) LP1205 Blue High Pitch Jam Block, one (1) LP1207 Red Low Pitch Jam Block; from PRO MARK: Twelve (12) pair Millennium II TX420N Mike Portnoy Signature Sticks, one (1) JSB5 jumbo stick bag, one (1) CC10 cymbal case; from HUDSON MUSIC one (1) video box set Liquid Drum Theater, Volumes I and II, autographed by Mike Portnoy. Approximate Retail Value of Grand Prize \$10,635.00. 11. Second Prize: One winner will receive from SABIAN: one (1) each Mike Portnoy 7", 9" & 11" Max Splashes; one (1) each Mike Portnoy Low, Mid & High Max Stax, one (1) Bac Pac cymbal bag, one (1) Sabian baseball jersey; from HUDSON MUSIC: one (1) video box set Liquid Drum Theater, Volumes I and II, autographed by Mike Portnoy. Approximate retail value of Second Prize \$1,170.00. 13. Third Prize: Thirty five (35) winners will each receive from HUDSON MUSIC: one (1) video box set Liquid Drum Theater, Volumes I and II, autographed by Mike Portnoy. 59.95 each. Approximate retail value of all 35 Third Prizes \$1,500.00. 12. Approximate retail value of all prizes \$13,305.00. 13. Sponsored by Modern Drummer Publications, Inc., 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, (973) 239-4140. 14. This game subject to the complete Official Rules. For a copy of the complete Official Rules or a winners list, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Modern Drummer Publications/Mike Portnoy Contest/Official Rules/Winners List, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009.

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# Milt Jackson

by Rick Van Horn

**J**azz Vibist Milt Jackson—"Bags" to a generation of musicians and fans alike—died on October 9, 1999, after a lengthy battle with liver cancer. He was seventy-six.

Jackson's contribution to jazz percussion cannot be overstated. He was the first vibes player to adopt the bebop style, and he fathered a lineage of players who approach the instrument more like a horn player or a singer than pianistically. He introduced the concept of extended tones and phrasing, slowing down the oscillators on his vibes to create a broad, expressive sound.

Born and raised in Detroit, Jackson began playing the vibes in high school. In 1944, after a two-year stint in the army, he was eager to catch up on all the music he'd missed. "I was running around, staying up until 6:00 or 7:00 in the morning," Jackson said in his September 1987 cover story in *Modern Percussionist*. "I had little bags under my eyes. The bass player in the group I had nicknamed me 'Bags,' and the name just stuck."

Bags moved to New York City in 1945 to join trumpet great Dizzy Gillespie's sextet, and later his big band. In 1951 the rhythm section from that band (drummer Kenny Clarke, bassist Ray Brown, and pianist John Lewis) left to create their own group, The Modern Jazz Quartet. Shortly thereafter Connie Kay replaced Kenny Clarke, and Percy Heath took over for Ray Brown. That lineup went on to perform together for the next forty years, establishing themselves as the longest-standing quartet in jazz history. Their concept was an eclectic view of musical history, melding various styles into a foundation over which Bags would weave his melodic magic.

In addition to his work with The MJQ, Jackson also recorded with such artists as

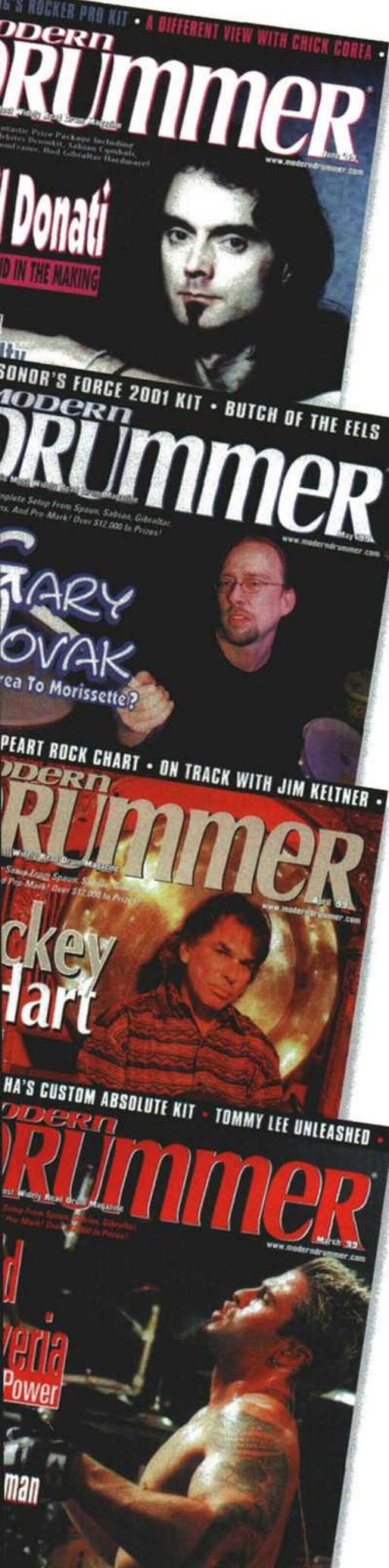


Thelonious Monk, Coleman Hawkins, and John Coltrane. In 1981 he recorded his own *Ain't But A Few Of Us Left*, a tribute to the originators of the bebop style. He was also known as a composer, with his most famous work being his signature tune, "Bags' Groove."

In contrast to his lyrical, flowing musical style, Jackson was known as a man of

strong opinions and uncompromising views. In his *Modern Percussionist* feature, he said, "I've been a rebel all of my life. I never agreed with what the system dictated. Most musicians don't have to get involved in politics to make a living playing music, but you have to learn about the political structure in order to learn what's happening in the world."





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# Painting Your Drums

## Give Your Kit A Custom Facelift

by Chris Edwards

**P**ainting your drums is one of the best ways to customize and personalize your own kit. Using today's automotive paints offers an infinite number of possibilities in color and graphic design. I have painted shells in colors as simple as green metallic or basic black, and with designs as radical as granite with cracks running through it. You can stripe your drums, fade them, or even flame them. You can choose from any color available on cars and trucks, select a custom finish like a candy apple, and even get a "moon glow" effect with a tri-coat pearl. Designs can be "ghosted" on the shell with pearls so that they can only be seen at certain angles. You can even go so far as to add airbrushed artwork to your shells. The only limits are those of your imagination and your budget.

Some of the most exciting colors today are known as "chameleon colors." These are special basecoat-clearcoat paints that completely change color when viewed from different angles. There are colors that go from gold to purple to green in this way. It makes for an impressive and unique-looking drum. The only downside to chameleon colors is that they are very expensive when compared to normal automotive colors.

Once you decide to repaint your drums, the first step is to contact your local auto paint store and talk to them about what you want to do. Because different parts of the country (California, for example) have strict environmental regulations that govern what types of paint you can use, you'll want to make sure that the products you buy meet any applicable requirements in your area. All paint companies make products that meet the strictest environmental

regulations and are just as effective as products available elsewhere. Your local paint supplier is a marvelous source of information. They can assist you in making the right choice in your paint purchase.

With auto paint, as with drums, you get what you pay for. There are a number of quality paint brands available today. Among them are DuPont, BASF, Sikkens, PPG, Spies Hecker, Standox, ICI, House Of Color, and Sherwin Williams. All of these companies produce high-quality products and have an unlimited color selection. I strongly suggest using a basecoat-clearcoat urethane system when you paint your drums. Automotive urethane products produce a finish that will look beautiful and last for a long time.

The most important thing to remember is that today's refinishing materials contain many chemicals that can be harmful, partic-

ularly isocyanates. All paint manufacturers recommend wearing a supplied air respirator while spraying these products. Always carefully read and follow the paint manufacturer's recommendations for safety, mixing, and application of their products.

It's best to have a professional apply your paint, if possible. This can save a great deal of time and money in mistakes, and it will give you what you are really looking for: a great finish. Most painters will check your prep work and spray your drums for around \$100. Believe me, it's money well spent. The place where you can save a lot of money is by doing the prep work yourself. The following is a list of the steps I use when I do a kit. (Keep in mind that with paint, less is more. You do *not* want to stack on endless coats of primer, color, and clear. This will alter the sound of your drums.)



Our drums to be refinished: a Tama Swingstar 8" tom and a raw 14" shell from DW.



Tools you will need include (clockwise from top left): polisher & compound, gravity feed spraygun, sandpaper of various grits, sanding pads, and masking tape.



Here is our Tama shell disassembled, along with the tools required to disassemble it. From left: a plastic pry tool, a small putty knife, a small regular screwdriver, a drumkey, and a stubby phillips screwdriver.

**Step 1:**

Carefully strip the drum of all rims, lugs, mounting brackets, and emblems. Bag and label all of the parts for each drum.

**Step 2:**

If the drum is covered in plastic, carefully remove the covering. Use a heat gun to slightly warm up areas that are stuck. Be careful not to overheat.

**Step 3:**

Using a soft hand pad (available at auto paint stores), sand the drum thoroughly with 220 grit sandpaper. Don't leave any shiny spots.

**Step 4:**

Carefully blow off the drum with an air blower, and check for defects (nicks, gouges, etc.). Then mask bearing edges and lug holes with 3/4" masking tape. Mask the inside of the drum with paper.

**Step 5:**

Fill any defects with polyester putty (available at auto paint stores). Once the putty is dry, sand with 220 grit sandpaper. Fill any unwanted holes with "Kitty Hair" Bondo (also available at auto paint stores).

**Step 6:**

Blow the drum off again.

**Step 7:**

Apply a sprayable wood sealer and allow it

to fully cure. After the sealer cures, lightly scuff-sand the entire surface with 320 grit sandpaper.

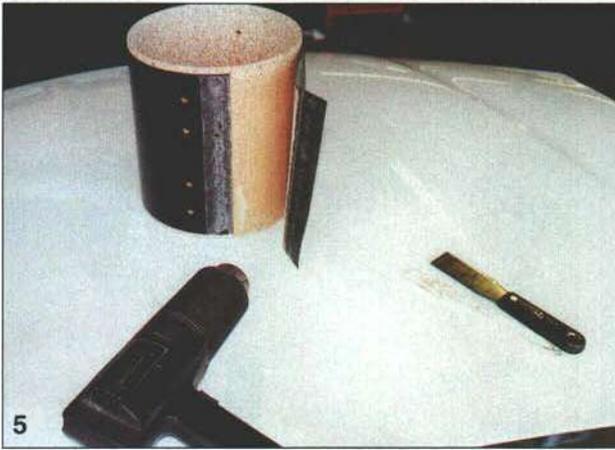
**Step 8:**

Mix and apply a urethane primer to the drum. Follow the manufacturer's instructions. Apply no more than two or three

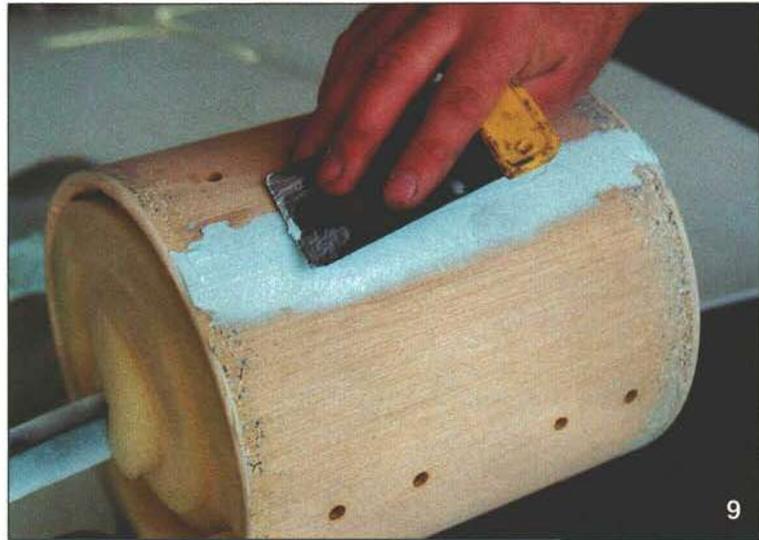
coats. This is all you'll need if you followed steps 4-6 properly. Allow the primer to dry overnight. (Note: When painting your drums, place them on the table edge-down, on top of toothpicks. This will keep the edges of the drum from sticking to the table.)



When removing the badge and air vent grommet, use a putty knife to brace the screwdriver so that you won't tear up the shell.



5 Remove the plastic covering using a heat gun to loosen the glue. Work slowly and carefully.



9 Apply putty to fill the defects in the shell.



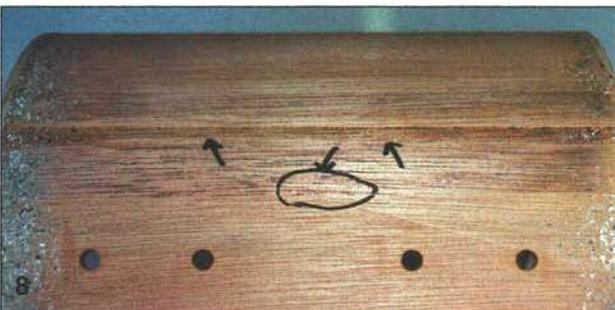
6 Use solvent to clean off remaining bits of glue. Note: be very careful when using any solvent on bare wood. It will soak into the wood, and it can take a long time for it to dry out. Before you apply any primer, make sure that the shell is completely dry.



10 Sand the putty smooth.



7 Sand the bare shell with 220 grit sandpaper.



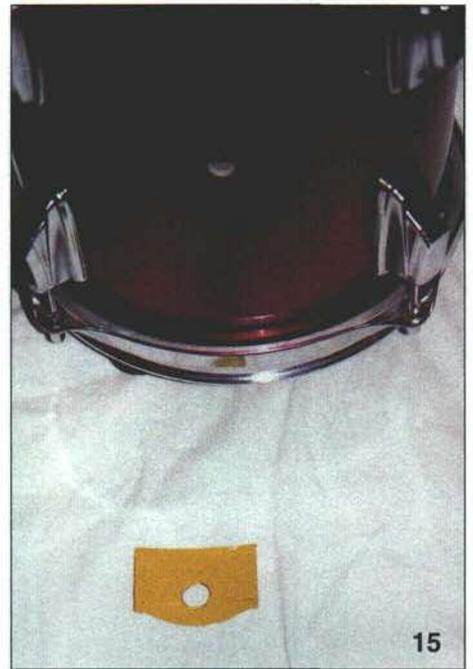
8 Some areas that need filling include a deep gouge (circled) and the lap joint of the shell. This is common on entry-level kits.



11 Mask the bearing edges along with lug and mounting holes with 3/4" masking tape. Use paper to mask the inside of the drum.



Apply urethane primer.



After painting, reassemble the drum. Use two-sided tape to replace the badge.



Dark gray primer with a white guide coat applied

**Step 9:**

Apply a light misting of a spray-can black or white paint over all the primer. This is called a guide coat, and you should be able to see the primer very clearly through it. The guide coat will settle into any scratches and defects in

the primer. This will aid you in sanding out all defects.

**Step 10:**

Dry-sand the drum with P-600 grit sandpaper. (I use 3M Gold.) Sand off all of the guide coat, but do not sand through to the wood. (If you do, no problem. Re-apply primer in the spots that you sanded through to the shell, and repeat steps 8-9.) Once all of the guide coat is gone you are done sanding.

**Step 11:**

Re-mask the bearing edges and all holes with fresh tape and paper. Clean the primered area of the drum with the surface cleaner recommended by the manufacturer of the paint you plan to use. Do not allow the solvent to touch any bare wood.

**Step 12:**

Wipe the drum down with a tack cloth to remove any dust.

**Step 13:**

Mix and apply basecoat until you achieve complete hiding (that is, until you cannot



At the top of the shell is raw guide coat. At the center of the shell is the guide coat showing imperfections being sanded with P-600 grit paper. At the bottom of the shell the guide coat has been completely sanded off.



These photos show the same Tama drum! This is "Absolute Purpleen," a chameleon color that ranges from purple to green to blue to bronze, depending on what angle you view it from.

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Both shells side by side. The DW shell has been given a custom design.

The process I've described turns out some dynamic-looking drums. Keep in mind that just about anyone can handle the prep work, but it is really worthwhile to find someone who is highly skilled and experienced to apply your primer, color, and clear. Always follow the manufacturers' directions for safety, application, and use of their products. Good luck!



see through it) as per the manufacturer's recommendations. Some colors will require more coats than others will, but three to four coats is standard.

**Step 14:**

Mix and apply the clearcoat. Apply only two to three coats, as per the manufacturer's recommendations.

**Step 15:**

After the clearcoat has cured—usually overnight—wet-sand out any defects with 1500 grit or finer paper (if necessary). Keep the water out of lug holes and away from any bare wood.

**Step 16:**

If you do sand out defects, you'll need to polish. Using an electric buffer at 1500 rpm, polish the drum to a high shine using a clearcoat-safe polishing compound (available at auto paint stores).

**Step 17:**

Allow the finish to cure for a few days prior to reassembly.

**Paint materials list for painting a five-piece kit with power toms.**

- 1 spray can of black or white lacquer (If your primer is a light gray use black; if it is a dark color use white.)
- 1 small can of polyester putty
- 1 quart of surface cleaner
- 1 pint of sprayable wood sealer (Urethane clearcoats work well for this.)
- 1 quart of urethane primer plus activator and reducer
- 1 quart basecoat (most colors) plus reducer and activator (if necessary)
- 2 quarts of urethane clearcoat plus reducer and activator



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# Buying And Selling Used Gear

## What To Look For And Where To Find It

by Harriet L. Schwartz

**T**he newspaper advertisement looks promising: "Five-piece drumset, hardware, cymbals, and throne, \$300." After calling to inquire about the set, you decide to check it out. You drive to the neighboring town and step into the owner's garage to view the kit. The snare stand is held together with two pounds of duct tape, the finish on the floor tom is scratched in several places, one of the mounted toms is clearly from a different set, one cymbal is cracked, and two of the drumheads look like they've been through Keith

After checking the hardware, examine the drumshells. Sean McDonald, a salesperson at Swissvale Music in Pittsburgh, offers a test to assess whether the shells are still in good condition. "You have to check the roundness of the drum," he says. "If it's not round, it'll never sound good."

The first method to test the roundness of the drum, according to McDonald, is to remove the rim and drumhead. Next, spin a new head on the shell. If the head sticks, the shell is not round.

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Whether or not used equipment is a good deal depends largely on who is buying the set and for what purpose.

---

Moon boot camp. Believe it or not, in some cases this may still be a good buy.

Whether or not used equipment is a good deal depends largely on who is buying the set and for what purpose. Working drummers looking for a good-looking set to play on stage aren't likely to find the set of their dreams among used equipment. Likewise, touring drummers who need good manufacturer support and easily fixable components should probably buy new.

So when is a banged-up, taped-up, sloppy-looking old drumset worth considering? Well, if you're a new drummer looking for your first kit and working with a low budget, this may be just the kit to get you started. Or if you're a working drummer looking for a second set to keep in your practice space, this set may be a find. If you're a punk rocker, you might appreciate a kit you can not only beat the heck out of every gig, but that won't be a huge loss should your lead singer go crazy one night and put his mic' stand through your kick drum. And of course, collectors and vintage enthusiasts almost always buy used.

So first be clear on the use and potential abuse of the drums, hardware, or cymbals to be purchased. After that, you're more likely to get a good deal and avoid bad investments by knowing how to assess equipment.

### Drums

According to Rita Walters, founder and owner of Rockin' Rita's Recycled Drums and Percussion, located near San Diego, the first order of business is to make sure all parts are intact. Check to see that all the hardware, including lugs and mounts, is in good working order and that nothing is missing. If the bottom heads have been taken off the toms, make sure the owner still has the rims, heads, tension rods, nuts, and bolts. If any of these pieces are missing, check with a drum dealer regarding replacement availability and cost. If any of the pieces on the drum seem to be replacement pieces, check thoroughly to see how well they work.

McDonald also advises checking the flatness (or trueness) of the bearing edges. Place the shell (minus the rim and head) bearing-edge-down on a truly flat surface, like a piece of glass or marble. If the shell wobbles, it is not true. In addition, most drums are made of plied shells, so you should check to see whether the plies are separating. And, of course, do a thorough visual check to see if any of the shells are cracked or seriously scratched.

If you don't want to do the thorough check that McDonald advises, Rita Walters suggests to, at the minimum, remove all heads, particularly non-clear heads, to be sure the edges of the shells are in good condition. She also notes that used sets frequently have beat-up heads and/or heads that don't match. But she considers this to be a minimal detraction, noting that most drummers will replace the heads anyway.

Some buyers may choose to purchase a set even if the shells or hardware are not in perfect condition. Vintage enthusiasts often buy sets in less than perfect order. And, as we mentioned earlier, there are situations where a slightly damaged kit will still serve a buyer's needs. Regardless, you will make a better decision if you are fully aware of the condition of the kit.

### Hardware

Along with checking the tom mounts, inspect the stands and pedals. Sean McDonald says that because hi-hat stands contain so many moving parts and are used so extensively, they are likely to have broken parts. In addition, some parts of a hi-hat stand are normally concealed within it, which can make finding and fixing problems difficult.

After checking the hi-hat stand, open and close and adjust the other stands to test for broken parts, dents, or damage to the bolts or pipes. In the case of lighter-weight stands, try them with the cymbals you'll be using (or comparable models) to be sure the stands will handle the weight.

Check to be sure the bass drum pedal is in good working order.

Sean McDonald notes that most pedals can be repaired. (Though if a pedal is broken or damaged, you should get a repair estimate and deduct that figure from the cost of the set.) However, Sean suggests checking with a salesperson before assuming that the pedal can be fixed. "There are a few older pedals, like the Ludwig Speed King, that feature a different sort of spring system from the norm. It can be hard to get parts for such pedals," he says.

Finally, Sean suggests considering the aesthetics of the kit. While some buyers won't care if a kit features drums of different colors or even different brands, others prefer uniformity. Color may be especially important to some buyers. "If you buy an old yellow Pearl kit, are they still making that color?" McDonald asks. "That's something you should know in case you want to add a drum to the kit later."

### Cymbals

Assessing used cymbals is a more difficult task. "You can't really gauge the wear and tear," says McDonald. "If there's no visual indication of weakness, you won't know there's a problem. It might last for years, or it could crack the next time you play it."

Rita Walters says a visual check can identify *some* problems. "Look for cracks or nicks," she says. "Next check for 'keyholing.' That's a condition that develops when a drummer fails to use a sleeve on the cymbal tilter. The cymbal rubs against the threads on the tilter bolt, which wears the hole in the cymbal unevenly."

In addition, Walters suggests inspecting the edges of the cymbal to see if any spots are worn more than the rest of the cymbal. This unevenness could indicate that the owner tended to hit in the same place repeatedly, which may ultimately weaken the cymbal.

### Thrones And More

Used thrones are a little less common than used drums and cymbals. Still, persistent shoppers may find them—particularly in stores that sell a significant amount of used gear. When it comes to thrones, Rita Walters says to check all the rivets—including those covered by the rubber feet—to make sure the seat doesn't wobble. Also check all clamps, bolts, and other parts to be sure nothing is stripped or broken. Sean McDonald adds that most basic thrones

can be repaired, but some hydraulic thrones have hard-to-find parts and may be difficult or nearly impossible to fix.

Drum stores that carry used equipment occasionally handle used hand drums, as well as drumset add-ons like RotoToms. When evaluating these items, shoppers should follow the same guidelines that apply to a drumset, checking hardware, shells, and overall condition.

### New Or Used: You Decide

Sean McDonald says, "If you're educated and you know what you're looking for, and you're diligent about looking in drum shops, in pawn shops, on the Internet, and so on, then someone else's misfortune could be your gain." However, he and Rita Walters agree that in some cases, buyers will find better value with new equipment. "A lot of people think that just because it's used, it's a better deal," McDonald says. "Sometimes if you work with the salesperson at your local drum store [see sidebar] and do the math, you'll realize that for maybe \$40 more, you can get a new drumset."

Walters adds that sometimes stores have "blow-out" sales in which new kits are actually *cheaper* than used kits. Along with considering real price differences, consumers should consider the availability of replacement parts and add-ons. Parts may be harder to locate for older used kits. And if the kit is no longer manufactured, additional toms may be nearly impossible to find.

### Back To Our Example

Now that we know what to look for, let's take another look at the kit I described at the beginning of this article. Is it worth purchasing or not?

If a thorough check of the drums and hardware reveals no other problems, then the first issue to resolve is the snare stand. If the duct tape is the only thing keeping the stand from total collapse, then you need to subtract the \$45 or more it will cost to replace it from the asking price of the kit. Next you need to determine whether the scratches on the floor tom are just in the finish or go down into the wood, weakening the drumshell. (Let's assume they're only surface level.)

A cracked cymbal may still be okay to play, if you can live with the sound. Some drummers are able to use cracked cymbals for

## Used Gear On The Internet

The Internet has given drummers dozens of venues for discussing technique, equipment, band situations, and other relevant topics. It's also given drummers a new place to shop. A few minutes spent surfing the Web can take you to choices ranging from large urban drum stores that use the Web as an extension of their showrooms, to independent dealers who sell vintage equipment out of their homes.

Steve Velasquez of Santa Cruz, California buys, sells, restores, and repairs drums. Though he deals primarily with vintage equipment, he says that all shoppers—whether seeking collectible drums or a set to play every day—can find good deals on the Internet. "The biggest advantage to shopping on the Internet is that you can find just about anything," says Steve. "Rather than just looking locally for the one piece that will complete your 1960s kit, you expand your search nationwide—or even worldwide."

Selection and range may be the biggest advantages of shopping on the Internet. The most obvious disadvantage is risk. After all, shopping for drums involves getting more than just a visual sense of a potential purchase. Sound is equally—if not more—important. To deal with this aspect of drum buying, Velasquez often sends interested buyers photos of the kits and other items he is selling. If the buyer is still interested, he or she makes the purchase with a cashier's check, which Velasquez deposits, but holds. Steve's customers have the option of returning anything they're not happy with, and obtaining a full refund. They pay only for the return shipping.

Drummers planning to shop on the Web should follow Velasquez's model. Ask for additional photos of the kit. Even if it is a standard model, photos may provide

some indication of the equipment's condition. Deal only with sellers who will permit returns, allowing you to check the sound of the gear before the purchase is finalized. And be sure to check references. Velasquez says that particularly within the vintage drum community, many people who do business over the Web know who is reputable. "There is a code in the vintage drum community," he says. "Honesty is the best way."

### Here's a small sample of Web sites for used or vintage gear:

- A Drummer's Tradition: [www.adrummerstradition.com](http://www.adrummerstradition.com)
- Crocodile Rock Music Shop: [www.crocrock.ndirect.co.uk](http://www.crocrock.ndirect.co.uk)
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- Vintage Drum Center: [www.vintagedrum.com](http://www.vintagedrum.com)
- Wray Music House: [www.wrays.com](http://www.wrays.com)

years. However, if the crack looks like it could cause a piece of the cymbal to break off under playing conditions, the cymbal should not be purchased. Worn or damaged heads can easily be replaced. But again, subtract the cost of replacement from the asking price. For the two toms on our sample kit, figure about \$35.

### Where To Shop

If you've decided that used equipment might be right for you, where do you go to shop for it? There are actually many places, including drum stores, newspaper classified ads, pawn shops, and the Internet. Drum stores are more likely than the other sources to have a return policy that will provide at least some protection against equipment failure. Sean McDonald adds that a drum or music store is also more likely to sell quality used gear. "Before I sell anything from this store," he says, "I go over it to make sure it'll work. It would damage the store's reputation to sell something that breaks soon after it's purchased. That's one reason we have a limited selection of used gear. I'm not going to take just *anything*."

In many cases, buying a set from a drum store will include some degree of technical support. "A salesperson who is doing his or her job will make sure you are buying a set that's right for you," McDonald says. "He or she will need to know what you're planning to do, and how much you can spend, in order to help you get the best bang for your buck. After you buy the kit, the salesperson should work with you to get the kit set up and tuned, get you the right heads, get you mic's if you need them, and so on. You'll get this from a dealer, but not from some guy in the newspaper."

Rita Walters offers this advice to parents buying drums for their children, or to any other buyers who may not know a lot about drumming: "Get someone who's knowledgeable to tell you about the pieces of a kit so you understand what you're looking at. Learn what the different drums are, and how the hardware works. It's also a good idea to go into a store and see how the drums are set up."

### The Salesperson Is Your Friend

"If you're a new drummer and you don't know a lot about equipment, an experienced drum salesperson can be a good source of information," says Sean McDonald. "If you're a more experienced drummer and your job is to learn songs, book gigs, and play, the drum salesperson can be like your pit crew. If you have a problem or you don't like the way your drums are sounding, you can bring them in and ask, 'What do you think?'"

McDonald says that smart drum salespeople work hard to build and nurture relationships with their customers. The salespeople benefit from such a relationship because their profit will extend beyond the immediate sale, as they sell you everything from sticks and heads to a more advanced set. "If you give people good price, good attention, and good information, they'll come back," says Sean. "Anyone can sell a snare drum, but helping people get the sound they want is the next step."

McDonald offers the following advice to drummers looking to build a strong relationship with a drum salesperson: First, make a personal connection. "Many customers call or email for information. But you'll do better if you stop in and meet the salesperson."

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That way he or she will get to know you, and you'll get a feel for who you are dealing with."

Second, respect the salesperson's time. If you just have a quick question, ask it. But if you are looking for a longer conversation, call ahead and find out when the store is less busy so the salesperson can spend time with you without feeling pressured to get to other customers.

Third, be clear about your purpose. Tell the salesperson whether you are seriously ready to buy, gathering information for a possible future purchase, or just want to discuss something out of mere interest. "Whether you're seeking serious information about which heads to use or shooting the breeze about Terry Bozzio's four-bass-drum set, your salesperson may be willing to talk with you at length," McDonald says. "But you should respect the fact that most salespeople are on commission. They make their living by selling equipment."

### Selling Your Gear

Buying used equipment from a drumshop rather than through classifieds or other sources has advantages. However, drummers wishing to *sell* gear may fare better by selling it themselves, rather than selling it to a store.

When a drumshop salesperson buys used equipment, he or she is likely to pay less than its maximum value, because of the need to make a profit upon resale. In addition, according to Rita Walters, "An individual is more likely to get psyched about your set than a salesperson, and so may be willing to pay more." On the other hand, if you don't have the time to field calls from classified ads, you may be better off selling the equipment to a local shop, or selling it on

consignment through a store.

No matter how you plan to sell your kit, clean it up. You'll get a few more dollars if your kit looks sharp. Similarly, when selling equipment directly to another drummer, new heads may enhance the value of the kit. (There is little value in replacing the heads if you're selling to a shop, since they can replace heads themselves more cheaply than you can.)

Sean McDonald adds that anyone selling gear should know which market they are working with: buyers seeking vintage equipment, or those looking for used gear to play regularly. He suggests that sellers should anticipate getting approximately half of what they paid initially for the kit (assuming that it's in good shape). And he notes that the drum-equipment industry has a blue book that retailers use to determine the value of used equipment, a practice that is similar to that of the used-car business. In addition, many drum shops will appraise equipment and suggest resale value.

Regarding vintage or collectible gear, McDonald says, "Determining the value of vintage gear is more abstract. Collectors decide what's cool based on several factors. How many of the kits are there in existence? Are all parts of the kit original? People who collect drums want all of the parts to be original and in mint condition. Anything down from there will devalue the kit."

### Do The Groundwork

Whether you're buying or selling, and whether you're concerned with used workhorse gear or vintage gems, the principles are the same. Do your homework, be as prepared as you can, and seek expert assistance. That way, you'll always be pleased when your transactions are concluded.



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# Elaine Leighton

## Jazz Pioneer

by Harriet L Schwartz

Somewhere on a plane over the Atlantic Ocean in 1954, drummer Elaine Leighton faced a difficult decision. Should she agree to back Billie Holiday on upcoming European tour dates? Or should she refuse and play only with The Beryl Booker Trio, the group she had planned to play with when she left the States earlier that day?

"While I'm on the plane, I'm hearing that Billie Holiday only has her piano player," Leighton recalls. "She doesn't have a drummer or a bass player. I'd also heard horrible things about Billie—that she was nasty and would insult you on the bandstand. So I decided, I'm not going to play for her if that's the case."

Initially, Leighton clung to her decision. But her trio-mate Booker intervened and encouraged the young drummer to take the high-profile gig. Leighton relented—and received quite a surprise.

"Playing for Billie was an unbelievable experience," Leighton exults. "She was nothing like what I had heard about. She was a nice, warm, lovely lady. She was also a *terrific* singer, with depth and perception. I adored her. To me it was a horrible thing that she walked around with a stigma. I'll never forget the first night we were in the concert hall in Stockholm. When they announced 'the great Billie Holiday,' the screams and applause were like nothing I had ever heard before. It gave me goosebumps from my head to my toes. How they loved her."

Leighton remains astonished at the misconceptions about Holiday that persist to this day. But drummers and jazz aficionados are likely to be equally amazed at the ground Leighton was breaking in the 1940s and 1950s, as one of the first women to drum professionally.

*"Billie Holiday said, 'You're a very good drummer and I'm glad you're playing for me. Don't forget that, child.'"*



### From Spoons To Sticks

Like most other Americans in the 1940s, Elaine Layton's father had never seen a girl play the drums. So when she first showed an interest in the instrument, he ignored her. When a neighbor offered to teach her to play, Elaine convinced her father to give her fifty cents a week for lessons. Eventually, Elaine began studying with

Bill West, a professional drummer in Manhattan who introduced her to other professional musicians, such as drummer Ed Shaughnessy and Ed's bass player, Ken O'Brien. The three became fast friends, often playing and listening to music late into the evening. As time passed, Leighton and O'Brien grew closer. Ten months later, they were married. In the meantime, Leighton continued playing. Eventually she decided it was time to turn pro.

### Paying Dues

After a kindly aunt helped raise enough money for Leighton to join the musicians' union, the drummer began playing in New York City clubs and meeting other musicians. She also met a woman in the union office who was particularly supportive of women musicians and got Leighton a job playing at The Pied Piper in Greenwich Village. Leighton's voice is still full of passion when she remembers her first night at the club.

"That was when I discovered the type of music I wanted to play, and the way that I wanted to play it," she says. "The musicians were all very accomplished. I learned very fast. It was a thrill—the sound and the feeling. Having a bass was the most thrilling thing because it gave the music fullness, bottom, and body."

Leighton remembers her early days in The Village as a time when she was confident, but also knew she had a lot to learn. People would regularly tell her that she would never make it as a drummer. "But I knew that was not so," she says, "because I believed in myself. Other people believed in me too, such as my husband and Ed Shaughnessy. When you're in a clique like that, they spur you on."

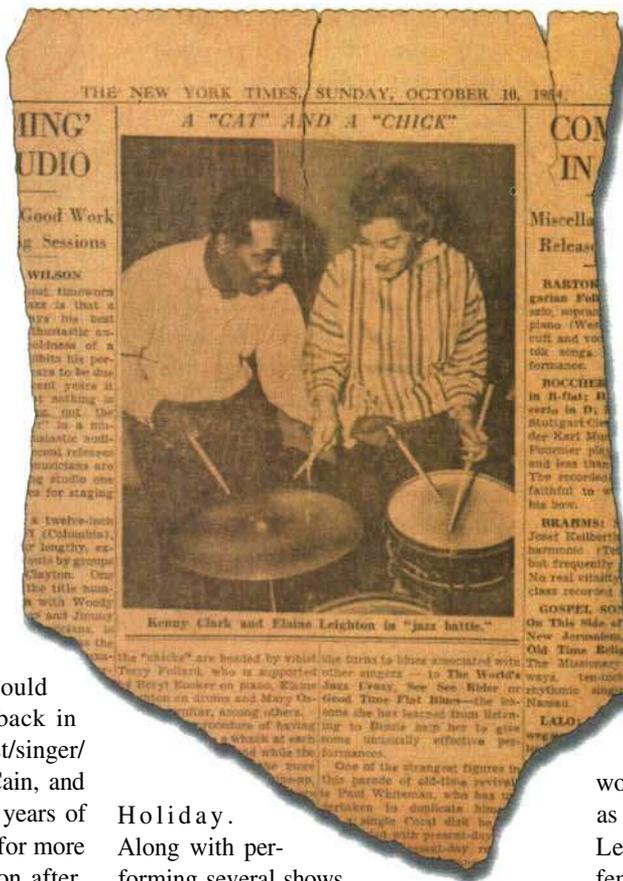
Along with gaining confidence from the supportive friends and musicians around her, Leighton gleaned inspiration from other musicians in the city. She still remembers the thrill of going to 52nd Street to hear Max Roach, Harold West, Kenny Clark, and Sid Catlett.

Leighton took every gig she could get, playing not only the clubs in The Village, but also weddings and bar mitzvahs. Though she took on a variety of playing situations, she preferred playing in small groups—trios, quartets, and quintets. Eventually Leighton took a year and a half off to have her daughter Joanne.

### On The Road Again

When Leighton felt that she could leave her daughter with family back in New York, she, her husband, pianist/singer/arranger Roy Kral, singer Jackie Cain, and a cellist decided to tour. After two years of touring, Kral and Cain left to look for more work, and the group broke up. Soon after, Leonard Feather, a promoter and a writer for *Downbeat*, asked pianist Beryl Booker to start a female trio that would include Leighton and bassist Bonnie Wetzel. Leighton calls The Beryl Booker Trio the pride of her life. She comments that the three women sounded terrific and got along "perfectly."

After the Trio was established, Feather decided to plan a European tour that would also include Billie Holiday, Red Norvo, and the Buddy DeFranco quartet. That was when Leighton was convinced to play with



### Holiday.

Along with performing several shows in Europe, the group made a few records. "We recorded in Munich in a barren hall that was like a barn," Leighton says. "The acoustics were bouncy and there was no way to get a good sound. But you have to do the best that you can. While I was on the tour, we also did a recording in Stockholm with a couple of Swedish musicians."

Leighton recalls that Holiday was pleased with her drumming. "Billie said, 'You're a very good drummer and I'm glad you're playing for me. Don't forget that, child.' She called me 'child,'" Leighton remembers with a smile.

After returning to the States, The Beryl Booker Trio continued to tour. They also recorded several albums. In addition, Leighton played a short stint with The Sweethearts Of Rhythm, an all-female big band. In 1952, she and the band played a two-week engagement at Harlem's famed Apollo Theater. Leighton then returned to play with The Beryl Booker Trio until

the mid-1950s, when the members of the Trio decided to quit.

Leighton continued playing, forming The Elaine Leighton Trio and Quartet. Finally, in her late thirties, she decided to retire. "The way things were going in the music business, I didn't want to remain in it," she says. "At that point, The Beatles had come along and jazz stopped. Nobody was doing much. There were no more big bands. It was a horrible thing."

Leighton eventually got a job in advertising, sold her drums soon after that, and never played again. "I felt it was time to retire," she says. "I didn't want to struggle. I wanted something solid. I didn't want to wonder if I would get work the next week."

Though relatively brief, Elaine Leighton's career path is impressive—not only in the context of music, but in the fact that when she began playing professionally, few women had careers of *any* sort—much less as professional drummers. Nonetheless, Leighton has never viewed herself as a feminist, though she will acknowledge that she *was* a pioneer.

"To be a good professional drummer was my career goal," she says. "Of course I knew that not many other women were doing this. I had the stage to myself more or less. And I had people who helped me. I would see things I wanted to do and I would talk to my teacher, or to Eddie Shaughnessy or my husband, Kenny, who helped me a great deal."

### Looking Back

Now seventy-two, Elaine admits that she has missed drumming, but not to the point where she's been tempted to pick up the sticks again. Nonetheless, when she listens to one of her old recordings, her eyes light up. Then she seems to fade off, perhaps back into the groove she created.

"I was mostly concerned with the orchestra and the rhythm section," she says, describing her style. "I played solos too, but rhythm was my meat. I had the technique to play solos, especially fours. I never liked solos that were too long. What I liked was having a blend within the rhythm section."

Though the press often highlighted the fact that Leighton was a woman drumming



Papa Jo Jones shares a tip with Elaine.

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# Leighton

in a man's jazz world, she says that audiences focused more on her playing, responding very positively to her performances. Other musicians and club owners also respected her. "I think that I had an impact on the jazz scene," she says. "Good things were said about me. And I got good jobs that I wouldn't have gotten if I couldn't cut the mustard."

Asked about incidents that stand out in her memory, Leighton recalls a weekend early in her career when she was playing with a female quartet. The club owner told her she'd have to let a young man sing with her group. The young man's name was Anthony Benedetto, and he had just returned from the Army. "He came in and sang, and he sounded very, very good," she says. "I saw immediately that this guy was going to make it some day. At the end of the engagement he came to me, because I was the acting manager of the group. He said, 'I understand you'll be going on the road. Do you think you can use a guy singer and take me along?' I said, 'Gee, I don't think so. This is a girls' group. I'm awfully sorry. But you're going to be a big guy some day. Keep it up.'"

## *From Ed, With Love*

Elaine Leighton and Ed Shaughnessy became friends in the 1940s when Elaine was dating Shaughnessy's friend, bass player Ken O'Brien. (Elaine later married O'Brien.) The three often listened to music together, and also played together. Shaughnessy notes that when he first heard Leighton play, he knew she was one of the most outstanding women drummers he had seen.

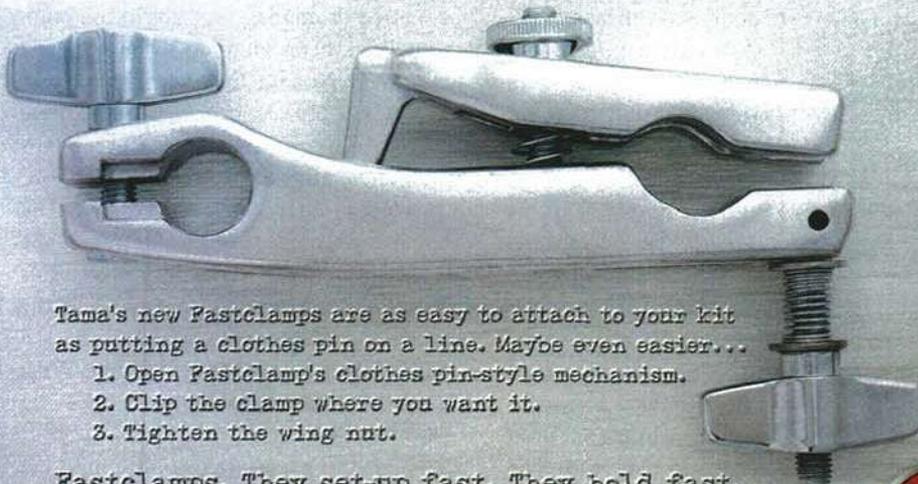
Says Ed, "Elaine always sounded very musical, had a good sense of swing, and had great time. I always say that those are the big three requirements of a great drummer. She was also a good brush player. And she tuned her drums very well; she always got a nice, melodious sound."

Shaughnessy believes that Leighton pursued her drumming career during a difficult time. "I don't think you can com-

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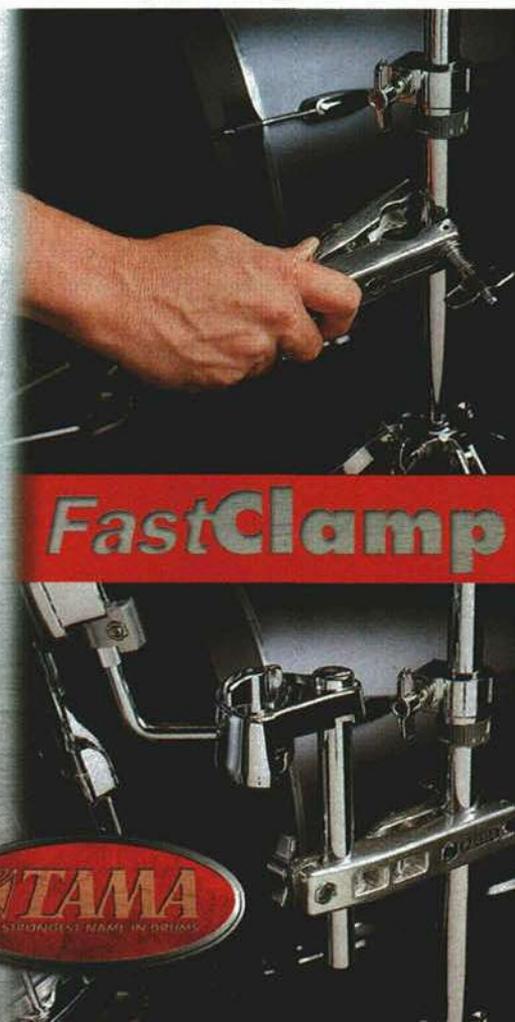
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pare it with today, even as tough as people think it is. Today you have drummers like Terri Lyne Carrington, Cindy Blackman, Sheila E, Hilary Jones, and several other fine women rock drummers. When Elaine played it was all jazz, and the door wasn't as open as it is now. It was desperately hard for a woman to gain acceptance."



Rick Malkin

Remembering Elaine fondly, Ed recalls that he would often joke with her about being talented—and feminine—at the same time. "I always said, 'You're very good. But I *don't* know how you can play a bass drum in heels!'"

Leighton smiles brightly as she reveals how that "boy singer" changed his name and went on to build a memorable career. The singer was Tony Bennett.

### Today

Leighton's one disappointment is that years after she broke through jazz's gender barrier, there are still few women drummers in the jazz world. "There is still a lot of prejudice among male musicians," she says. "Maybe they're jealous, maybe they don't want you to take their jobs away. That's how they felt when I played, but eventually they took me for what I was worth."

Ultimately, though, Elaine encourages all drummers to pursue their dreams. "If this is what you want—whether you do it for yourself, for a living, or both—go for it and stick with it," she says. "It doesn't happen overnight; it takes quite a number of years before you start to feel comfortable with yourself. But eventually, if this is what you *really* want, it will happen. You'll feel that comfort from within. And you'll make yourself a very happy person."

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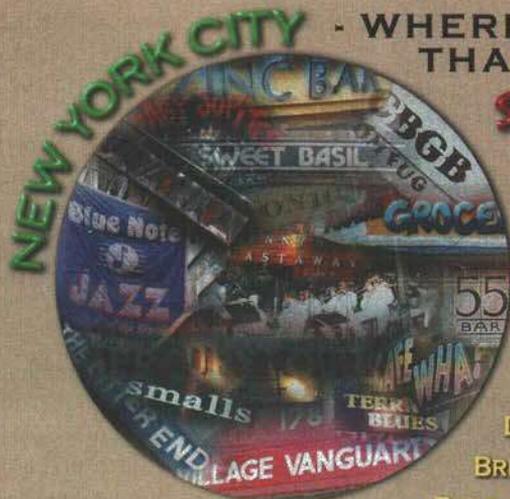
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New York City

# Yes's Alan White On...

by Robyn Flans

Alan White describes Yes as "a band that doesn't like to look at the horizon; we try to see over the *top* of the horizon." Indeed, with Yes's latest release, *The Ladder*, their objective was to discover new vistas *and* look to the past.

"There was a lot of interaction between the players on this one," the veteran drummer states. "We recorded it a lot more like we did in the '70s than some of the more recent albums. We wanted to play the whole thing live in the studio so the musicians could bounce off of each other musically. Of course, during the first two weeks of recording we put all the backing tracks down, with the focus being on the drums and bass. I enjoyed the stress factor, as it were, of everybody looking at me to see if I got my parts right. But we recorded it basically like a live band in the studio and that's what I enjoyed about it. That's one of the things producer Bruce Fairbairn stressed, that it be a '90s version of what we sounded like in the '70s."

"Lightning Strikes" is one of White's favorite tracks because of his rhythmic approach to it. "I came at that one from a weird angle," he explains. "I tried to fuse African music with progressive music. We play kind of an African rhythm, but it's in 7/4 time."

White says the tune "Home World" was an adventure to play. "It's one of the longer tracks on the album. I was experimenting with some different kinds of space sounds at the beginning of the track. We wanted to create that kind of void atmosphere, which

the song comes out of.

I also like the tune 'New Language,' which is a techno kind of track. The beginning of it is like a lot of Yes's '70s-era music. Then it goes into another song and has a time change in the middle."

White's mastery of odd meters has been well-documented. In fact, he became known for complex odd-time playing early in his career. At the end of the '60s, his reputation earned him a role with Ginger Baker's Airforce, a band formed by Baker and Traffic's Steve Winwood. John Lennon then nabbed White for his famed Plastic Ono Band, with whom the drummer recorded such legendary tracks as "Instant Karma," "Imagine," "How Do You Sleep At Night," and "Jealous Guy." In 1972, White was invited to join Yes, whose celebrated drummer Bill Bruford had recently departed. (Bill re-turned in '91 for a reunion tour.) Yes has served as the perfect outlet for White's progressive, experimental style for the past twenty-eight years.

Although a fan of great drumming, White was a bit reluctant to play the *Reflections* game and discuss *other* drummers' playing. But with a little coaxing, he offered his thoughts on a few players.



## Bill Bruford

[chuckles] I have to laugh, because he's the first one on your list. I figured his name would come up.

Bill is a very creative player, and when I worked with him we got on very well. That was obviously a strange period for both of us, playing with all the members of Yes on stage together in '91 for the *Union* tour. But he's a great guy and I enjoy his playing.

I especially like the work he does with Earthworks. He does some inventive playing with that band. He's created a great vehicle in which to experiment with other musical possibilities.

## Neil Peart

Neil and I have been mentioned in the same sentence a few times. I think to some degree our styles are similar, what with both of us working in the progressive rock genre. Yet in a lot of ways our

two bands are *very* different. But Neil's a great drummer and he's done fantastic things in his career.

## Tony Williams

To be missed forever. I used to listen to him a lot in the early days. None of the recordings he made particularly stands out in my mind only because there are so *many* fabulous performances. I saw him play twice, and it was awe-inspiring. Without question, he's one of the greatest drummers of all time.

## Vinnie Colaiuta

Vinnie is also a great player. I've had the pleasure of meeting him a couple of times and he seems like a real nice, regular guy. He's made some fantastic recordings, but I especially like his work with Sting.

## Carl Palmer

ELP's career and Yes's career in the old days were very parallel. We met each other quite a few times back then, although Carl and I never had the chance to sit down and have a long conversation. It's funny how you can be in this business for a long time yet not have a chance to meet with other artists. But I must say Carl has done some great work in his time, for me mostly with ELP.

## Billy Cobham

Another stalwart musician. I can't call these guys drummers, they're *musicians*. Billy's Mahavishnu stuff was fantastic, and it was a great source of inspiration for me to draw from with some of the things I did with Yes. His odd-meter work with John McLaughlin showed me how one could approach playing some things that were *very* off the wall.

## Terry Bozzio

Terry's a great guy. And he's got some amazing chops—always has. He's the player who comes from the outside, trying new things all the time and being very experimental. The last time I saw him perform was a couple of years ago. He was doing new things with melodic drumming. I've been trying to do that for years. In fact I've always wanted to do a record where the drums played the rhythm *and* the melody.

## Mike Portnoy

Dream Theater is a terrific band and Mike is a great player. I did a clinic with him for Zildjian a while back. He's got excellent double bass technique.

I get the impression that Mike's the driving force in Dream Theater. He's perfect for that band. I also admire the work he did with Liquid Tension Experiment, which is a similar kind of thing to DT, but they took it to a jazz-improv level.

## Simon Phillips

Another fabulous player. I especially loved his work with Pete Dinklage. However, he's great at whatever he does.

## Phil Collins

Here's a guy who has had to take on the scope of a whole band—doing the drumming, the singing, *and* the writing. Very admirable.

He's always been a solid drummer behind everything he's done. I think his best work was early on with Genesis, where he had to be very versatile playing some of their odd-meter stuff and holding the fort down on the straight-groove material. A great *musician*.

## Steve Gadd

What can you say about Steve Gadd? Mr. Cool. He sits there and does his thing and you don't have to stray any further than that. He can hold the band down and inspire them to be as tight as possible. Everybody knows how he plays. He's a master. I do think it's fun to see him play live, though, because he can get wild—much different than the image one might have of him working in a recording studio.

## Steve Smith

Steve did a lot of great work with Journey, and I like some of his solo stuff also. He's another good guy, someone I've done clinics with. He's one of those drummers who has a wide variety of things he can tap into. Very talented.

## Dennis Chambers

Dennis plays some *outlandish* stuff. That's what I like in drumming: I like to see people being creative and doing something new. He comes up with new things all the time. I don't play like Dennis, but when I sit at the drums I always try to come up with something new. That's important to me.



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# A Convention Of Legends

## PASIC '99 In Review

story by William F. Miller

photos by Rick Malkin

It was awesome. Over 5,000 drummers and percussionists came together this past October for the Percussive Arts Society's annual four-day convention, this time held at the Hyatt Regency in Columbus, Ohio. Yes, it's an annual event, but this particular PASIC was special.

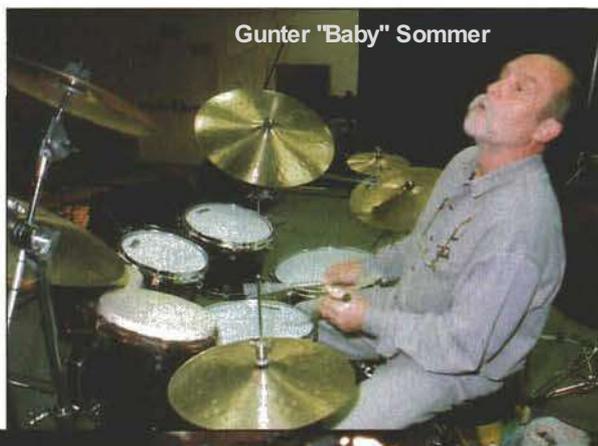
To celebrate—and honor—some of the important contributors to our instrument, the theme of the '99 show was, appropriately, "Legends Of The Twentieth Century." And to that end PAS pulled out all the stops, inviting some of the all-time greats to perform. Louie Bellson, Earl Palmer, Jim Keltner, Dave Weckl, Omar Hakim, Jack DeJohnette, Dennis Chambers, and Billy Cobham delighted drumset enthusiasts with their clinic and/or concert performances.

But that's not all. *Every* aspect of percussion was well represented, including world, orchestral, marching, electronic, and mallet. "Legends" performing from those schools included percussion group Nexus (who was inducted into the PAS Hall Of Fame at the show), Indian virtuoso Trichy Sankaran, African master Babatunde Olatunji, LA studio/mallet expert Emil Richards, steel pan trailblazer Andy Narell, and famed British all-around percussionist Evelyn Glennie.

In addition to the legends, all sorts of experts were on hand to educate and amaze. And future legends had fun in the large exhibit hall, where over one hundred drum and percussion manufacturers offered up their latest gear for testing.

Some fabulous advice and tips were discussed at the clinics, especially the drumset events. Here are a few of the highlights:

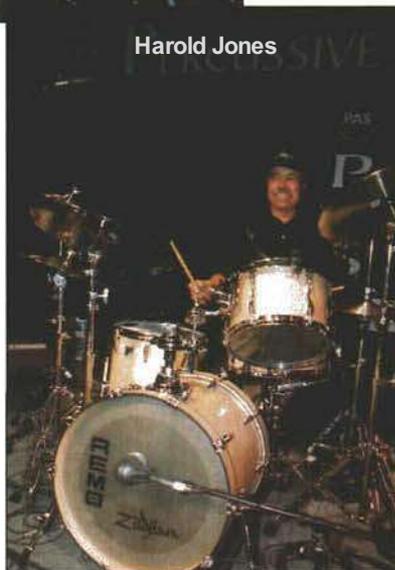
North American drummers may not have been familiar with German free traps-man **Giinter "Baby" Sommer**, but he presented a memorable clinic that revealed his very creative nature. Sommer at times caressed his kit, at other times attacked it with a clear focus and a swinging pulse. And his



Gunter "Baby" Sommer



Steve Ferrone



Harold Jones

stick bag came loaded with surprises: He stroked his drums, cymbals, and *body* with brushes, sticks, towels, hands, pie plates, and even feather dusters. His best tip: "Always think melodically: My drumset is a piano to me."

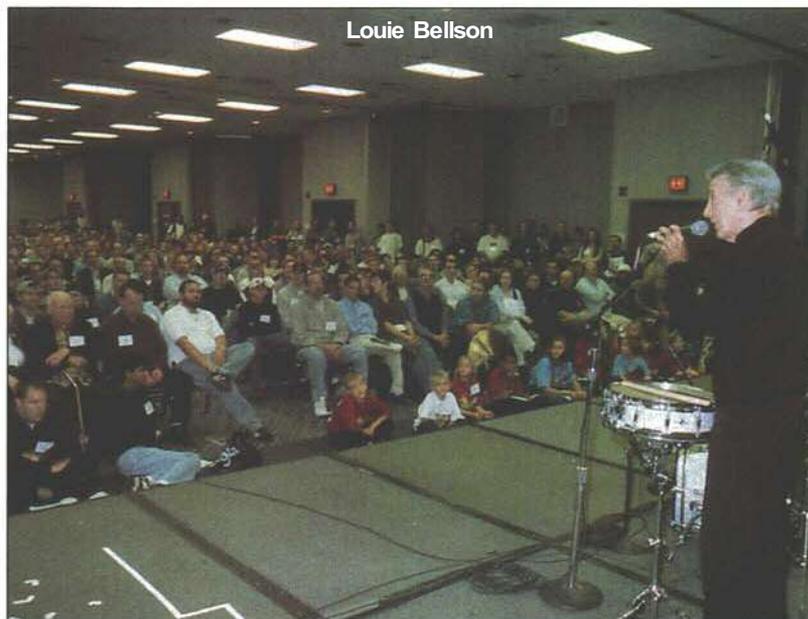
Just off the road with Tom Petty, groove merchant **Steve Ferrone** (Average White Band, Eric Clapton) found himself in

a strange land: the world of drum solos. It seems Ferrone misplaced the tape of tunes he was going to perform with, so he begrudgingly played a nice little solo that touched on funk and samba. Then, on the mic', he offered up some good advice: "When I'm playing with a band, if I get a good idea for a fill, I *don't* play it. Always stay in control." Steve also mentioned that playing snare drum exercises is great for your hands, but if you want to make them great for your groove, practice them along to James Brown records."

Talk about a legend—certainly an extremely talented veteran—**Harold Jones** presented a clinic that showed why he's had an amazingly successful career with the likes of Count Basie, Sarah Vaughan, and, for the past decade, Natalie Cole. The seasoned pro performed with a trio, then ran down a list of important topics. Jones emphasized the fact that knowing the basics—touch, technique, and especially having the ability to read—is what has kept him working for so many years.

**Louie Bellson** is a bona fide legend, and the more than eight hundred people who packed his clinic performance were thrilled to see him play. Louie celebrated his seventy-fifth birthday this year, and while the passage of time may have taken a step or two off his game, he still has a beautiful touch on the instrument and that seamless single-stroke roll.

Studio veteran **Harvey Mason** played some slick stuff at his clinic. While either soloing or drumming along to Fourplay tracks (the top-selling contemporary jazz group), this veteran grooved hard, stayed very relaxed, and revealed some impressive technique both with his hands and feet. Best Mason quote: "My main goal is to make the drums sound as beautiful as I can."

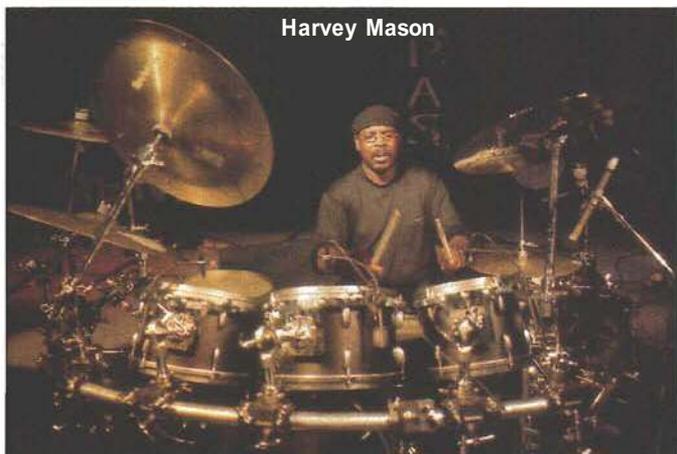


Louie Bellson

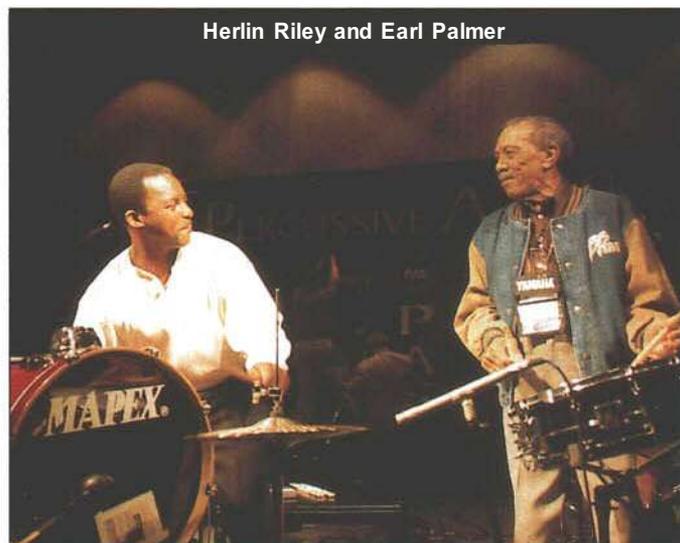
A big crowd turned out to see the legendary **Earl Palmer** perform with Wynton Marsalis drummer **Herlin Riley**. The topic: the drumming of New Orleans, the birthplace of both men. They opened their set with Herlin on upright bass drum and hi-hat and Earl on snare drum, the two laying down some swaggering N'Awlins second-line skank. Then Earl talked about the history and Herlin played examples of the evolution, occasionally drifting off into some other topics.

(Riley played his butt off and got a big response to an amazing unaccompanied tambourine/drumset groove.)

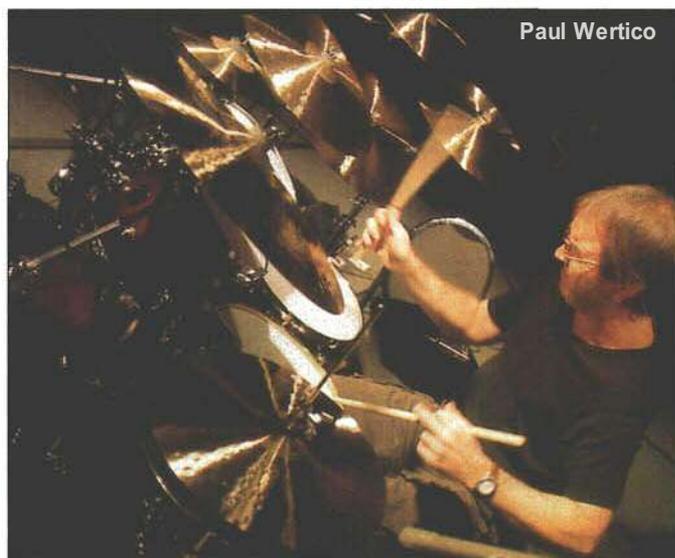
A last-minute scheduling snafu caused another legend, Billy Higgins, to have to cancel his PASIC performance two days before the show. Pat Metheny skinsman **Paul Wertico** ably filled the spot, playing along to tracks from his killer new trio album, *Don't Be Scared Anymore*. Paul surprised people with a slammin' style (not the ballerina cymbal approach he's known for with Metheny) that touched on heavy fusion and out jazz. The best part of the clinic was Paul's palpable devotion to music. That kind of attitude is infectious.



Harvey Mason



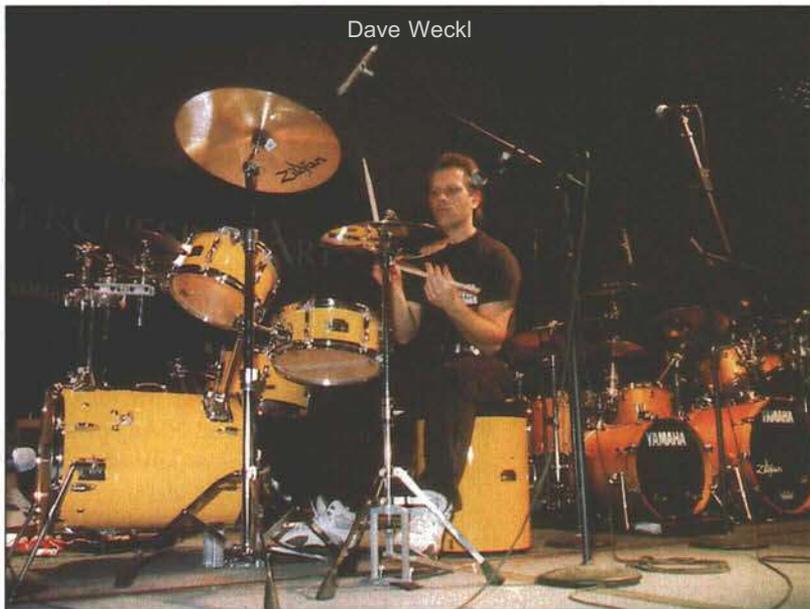
Herlin Riley and Earl Palmer



Paul Wertico

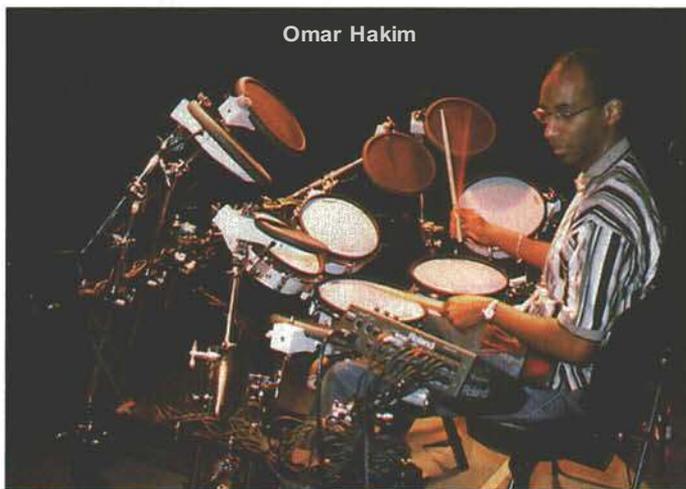
One of those experts mentioned earlier who put on a great clinic was Broadway veteran **Brad Flickinger**. Seated at a kit with his back to the audience, Brad performed the music to current B'way hit *Fosse*. The audience got to see up close what's required of a big-time pit drummer. Also fabulous was the show's music being projected on a large screen so the audience could follow along and see how the charts are interpreted. Well done.

# PASIC'99



Calling it a rare clinic appearance is an understatement: legendary drummer (are you keeping count?) **Jim Keltner** was well received at PASIC, even though he didn't play enough. Humble to a fault, Keltner opened by having the audience listen to tracks recorded by other drummers (Krupa, Higgins, and Purdie), who he said were key in his development. Eventually, at the audience's urging, Jim did sit down at the kit and give a brief taste of that fabulous feel of his. And he did emphasize a point that he wanted everyone to think about: "Let's stop looking down at drummers who either play a lot of notes or who play simply. We're *all* drummers. Let's support everybody." (Jim ended his clinic by inviting stick-trickster **Johnny Rabb** up to demonstrate some fun drum 'n' bass grooves, one-handed rim rolls, and guiro-like effects with his ribbed sticks.)

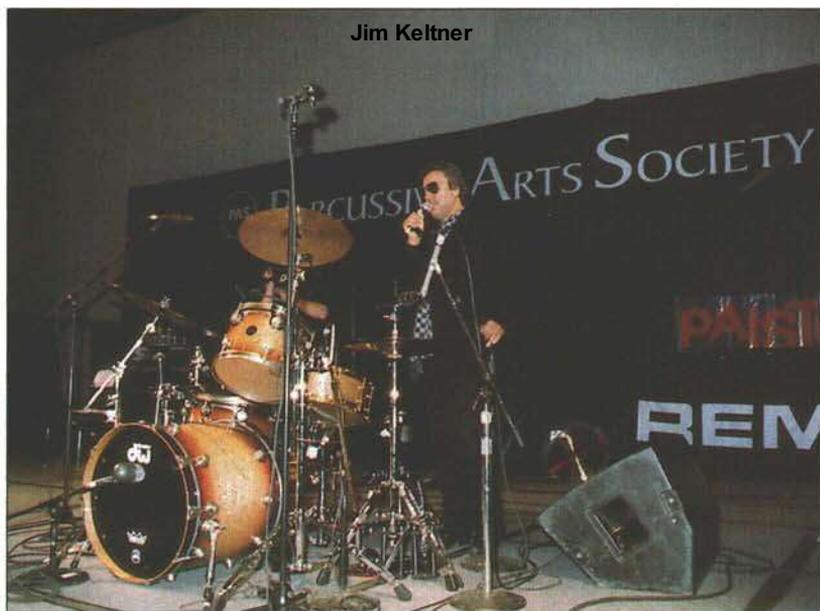
Master jazz drummer **John Riley** gave a focused and *very* educational master class on implied time. John presented the topic by playing recordings of contemporary artists (Jeff "Tain" Watts, Bill Stewart, others) doing their magic, then revealing just how they create those rhythmic illusions. He also sat down and played—and embellished on—the examples. Besides being a great player, Riley has developed into one of the best clinicians on the scene today. If he comes



through your area, be sure to check him out.

The great **Dave Weckl** presented a clinic that will only add to his legendary status. Dave wasted no time demonstrating his "natural body approach" to playing on a tiny Yamaha HipGig kit. Then he quickly moved to his regular set and brought out a smokin' local band to demonstrate just how he goes about working out arrangements. Dave offered many solid pointers, as form, feel, dynamics, and even countoffs were discussed. Then he simply kicked ass, driving an already good band to new heights. It was particularly fun to see the looks on the faces of the bandmembers as Dave's groovin' kit work inspired everybody both on and off the stage.

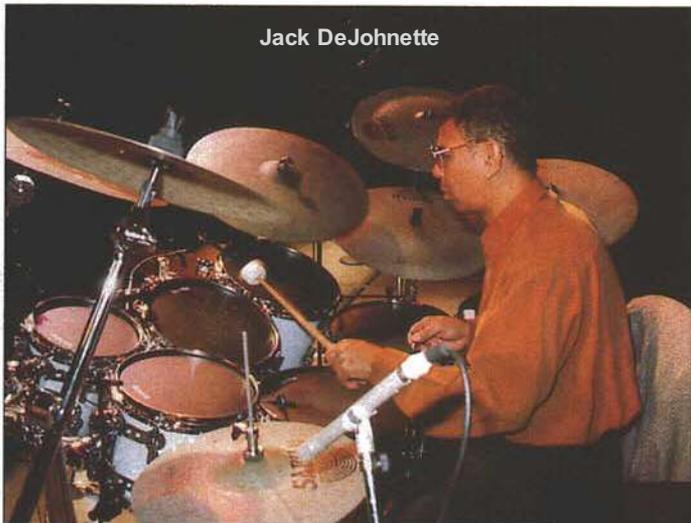
In what could be considered a true "blast from the past," *Modern Drummer* and Hudson Music sponsored a video presentation titled "**The History Of Jazz Drumming On Film.**" Put together and hosted by video producer/drummer/author Bruce Klauber, this enjoyable hour-long event presented clips of many of



the giants of jazz, including rare glimpses of artists like Zutty Singleton and Dave Tough. And, of course, inspiring bits from Buddy, Gene, Max, Art, Tony, and Elvin (among many others) were shown. Great stuff.

The drumming community hasn't heard much from **Omar Hakim** lately. But with his performance at PASIC '99, Omar announced that he's back. With a new album due out shortly (*The Groovesmith*) and a tour in the works with his own band, the veteran drummer (Weather Report, Sting, Madonna) is excited to step back into the limelight. Apparently he's also excited about electronic drums, as he performed on a set of Roland V-Drums. But

Jack DeJohnette



certs/jam sessions and one clinic performance. And frankly, Chambers was on fire at every occasion. His clinic opened with a long solo that showcased his blistering hand technique and sheer funk power. At one point he set up a funky ostinato in seven with his feet on a double pedal that he eventually soloed over—tremendous.

Another standout performance was given by **Tom Teasley**, an emerging artist who has a fresh take on combining various percussion techniques with the drumkit. The man can play. And in a goose-pimplly moment, Teasley dueted with spoken-word artist Charles Williams. (Try to imagine a voice like James Earl Jones' weaving in and out of drumming flurries.) Effective, innovative, and very moving.

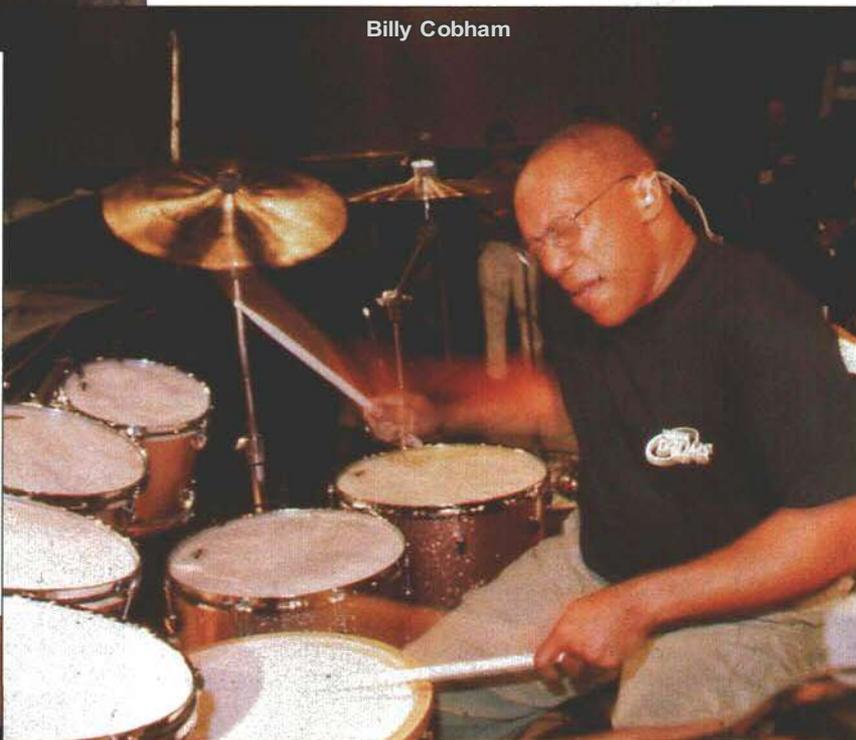
The final clinic performance of PASIC '99 was given by fusion legend **Billy Cobham**—who had to fly the Concord from London

no matter what he plays on, Omar has one of the best-feeling pockets on the planet. Just about every head at the mid-morning clinic was bopping to Omar's beat. The man's philosophy of drumming is no surprise: "Always, I mean *always*, keep it funky."

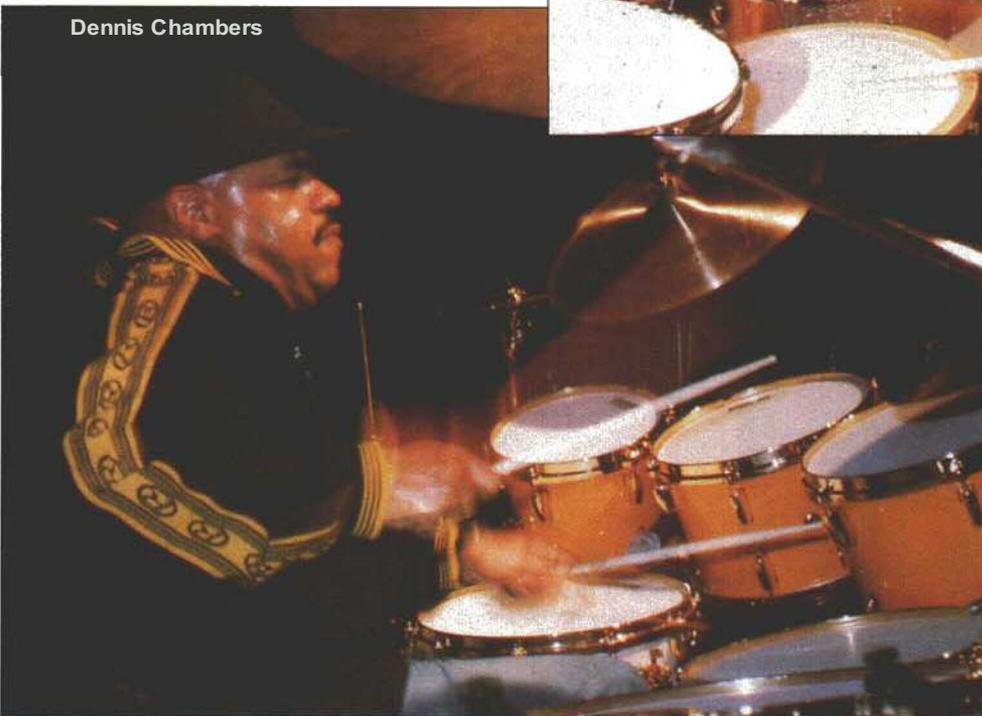
Another legend, **Jack DeJohnette**, was welcomed at his clinic performance with a standing ovation. He then played a long improvised solo that had everything to do with flow and nothing to do with licks. Melodic themes and variations emerged and disappeared as DeJohnette tapped into the muse and explored large dynamic leaps using mallets and sticks. A true artiste of the drums.

PASIC '99 could be called "The Dennis Show," as **Dennis Chambers** played two con-

Billy Cobham



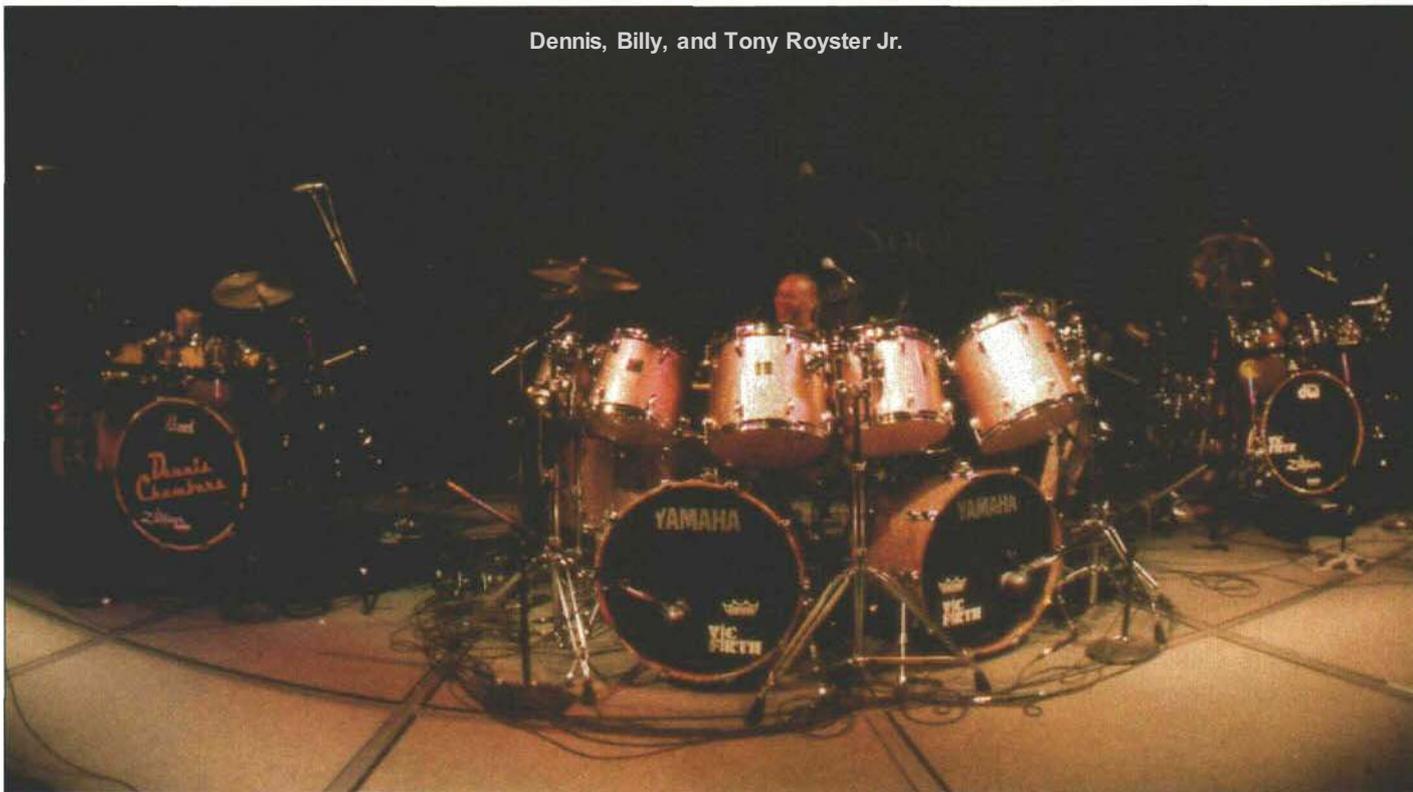
Dennis Chambers



because of a gig he had the previous night in England. It was amazing to see a room with a capacity of 2,500 filled to overflowing with excited drumming fans. Cobham was obviously touched and a little revved up by the huge crowd. Of course, his fans love to go "wow," and Billy delivered, playing some of those super-fast, go-every-direction fills on his massive Yamaha kit. After receiving a standing ovation for playing to tunes from his recent disc (*Focus*) and an extended solo, Billy made the point to everyone that, "Drums are about freedom. Play them any way you want."

Cobham ended the show by inviting

Dennis, Billy, and Tony Royster Jr.



Dennis Chambers and fourteen-year-old phenom **Tony Royster Jr.** up to jam. (Their kits flanked his.) Wow. Seeing three generations of master drummers in action together was thrilling. And don't think for a moment that young Royster couldn't hold his own with the vets—many in the audience felt he *smoked* the old guys! No matter who did what, you had a room full of smiling drummers.

Other noteworthy drumset clinics were presented by Skip Hadden, Joe Porcaro, Ed Soph, Colin Bailey, Maria Martinez, and Bob Gatzen. And evening concerts, including Dennis Chambers with a fusion band, Steve Houghton with a concert band, and Louie Bellson, Harold Jones, and Dave Weckl with The Columbus Jazz Orchestra (big band), gave drummers seemingly 'round-the-clock inspiration.

Does all this sound like fun? Well, PASIC 2000 will be held in Dallas, Texas, November 15-18. For more info contact PAS at (580) 353-1455 or visit their Web site at [www.pas.org](http://www.pas.org).

## QUICK BEATS: ERIC SINGER

(KISS, ALICE COOPER, BRIAN MAY)

### 1) What's the best concert you ever attended?

The best show I ever saw was Queen at Knebworth, 1986. This was the last concert the band ever did with Freddie Mercury. They just *killed* that day. What a band! And Brian May had the best guitar tone I ever heard.

### 2) Do you warm up or do any type of physical exercise before gigs?

I do warm up before gigs. I like to work out on a practice pad with metal-weighted sticks. I also use bass drum pedals attached to practice pads for my legs and feet. I stretch a bit too, mostly for my legs. I find that all of this helps a lot and keeps me from pulling muscles.



# Taking The Stage

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### Latin Jazz

1/28 — Michel Camilo Trio & Paquito D'Rivera, Union Congregational Church, 176 Cooper Avenue, Upper Montclair, NJ, (973) 746-6068.

### National Association for Music Education

3/8-11 — Conference, workshops, clinics, and performances, Washington, DC. For info & registration call (800) 828-0229.

### Doug Tann

12/4 — Professional Music Technology, Southend, Essex, UK, 2:30 P.M.

### Percussion Extravaganza 2000

3/12 — Jazz vibist Dave Samuels returns as a guest artist with the New Jersey Chamber Music Society, along with percussionist Dave Friedman. They will be joined by Milton Cardona and Mark Walker for an all percussion performance. New Jersey Performing Arts Center, 1 Center Street, Newark, NJ, (973) 746-6068.

### Philadelphia Music Conference

1/19-22 — Keynote addresses, panels, exhibitions, showcases, special guest, Philadelphia, PA. Contact David Rath, [dave@gopmc.com](mailto:dave@gopmc.com) or (215)587-9178.

### Steve Smith

1/10 — Online chat, 10:00 P.M. EST, log on for details, [www.stickhead.com](http://www.stickhead.com)



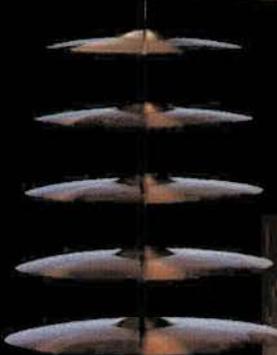
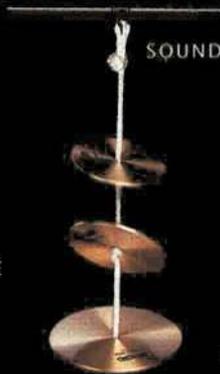
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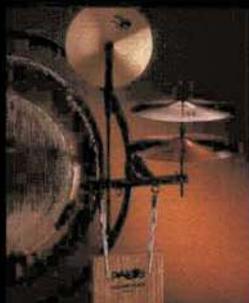
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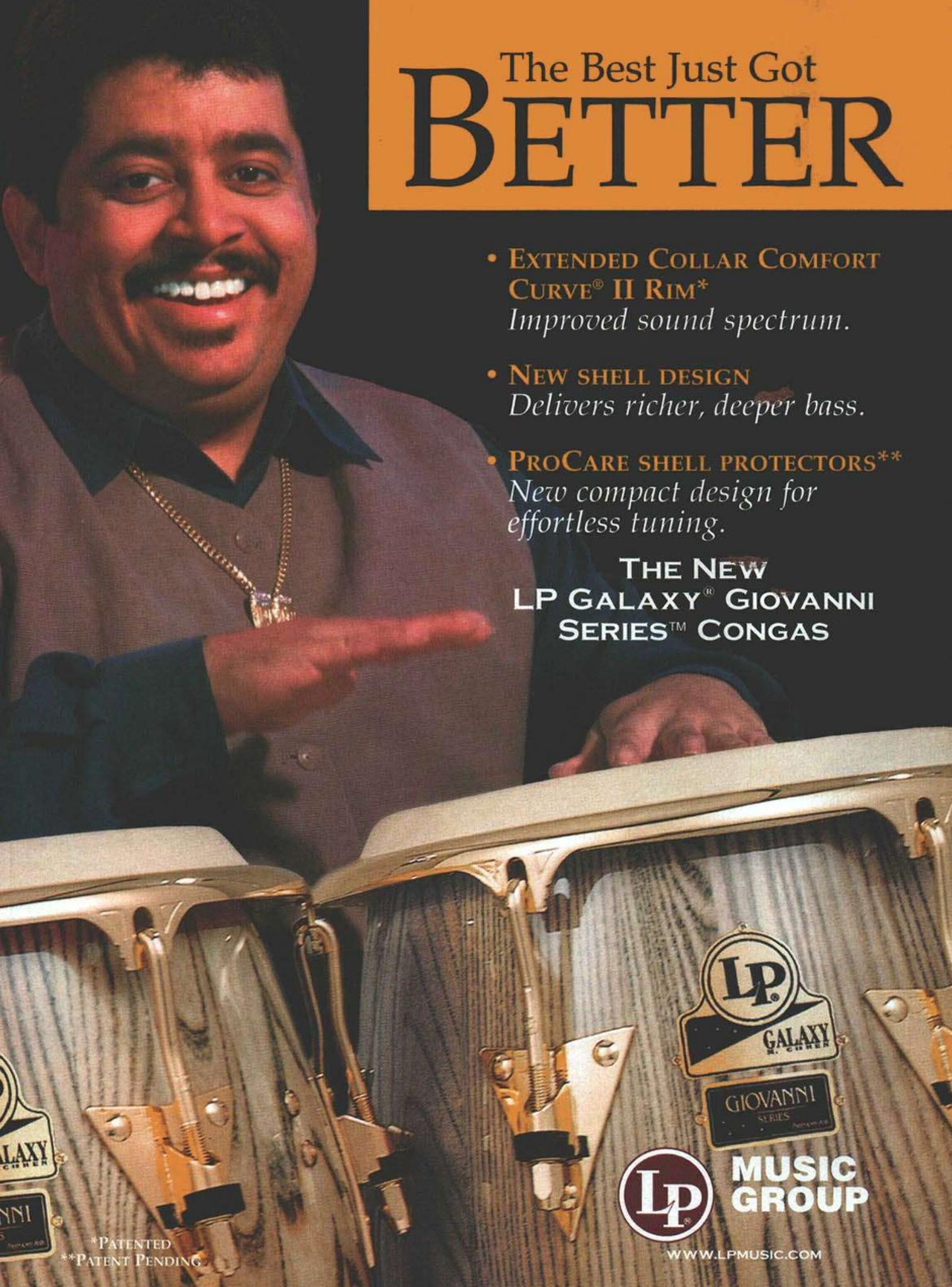
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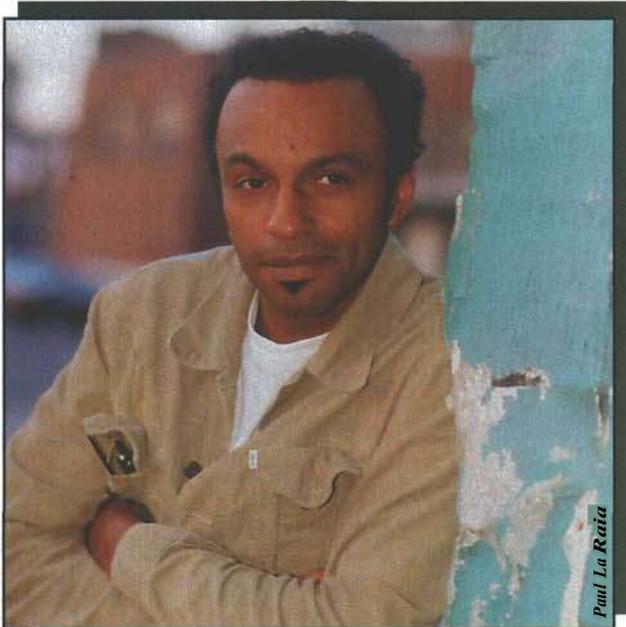


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Modern Drummer is proud to announce its thirteenth **Drum Festival Weekend**, and the first of the new millennium! Each day, MD will present

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## Saturday, May 20 and Sunday, May 21

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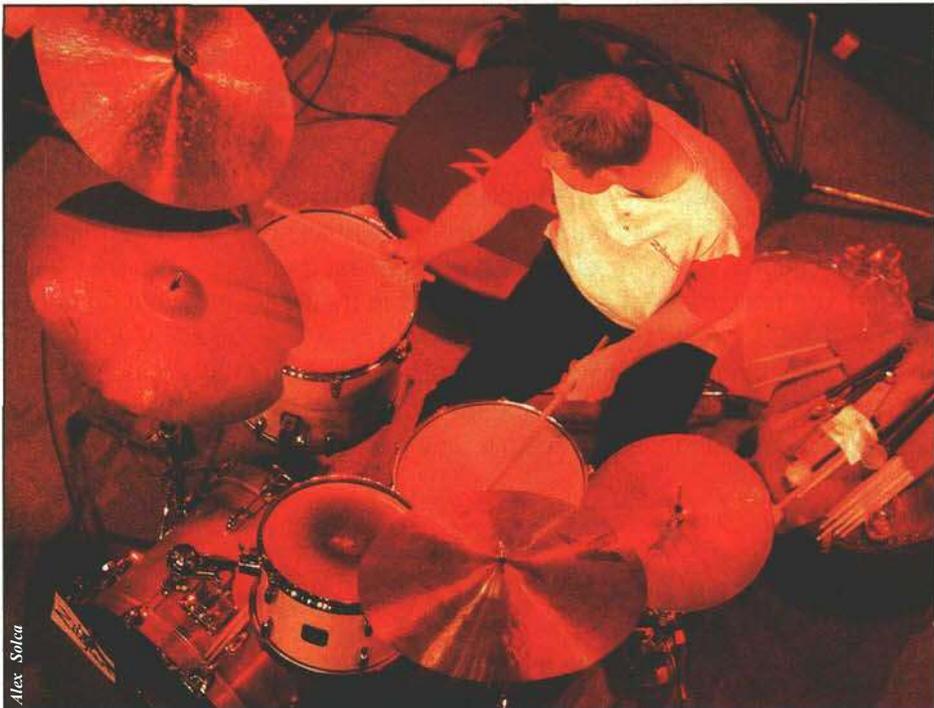
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**Drummer: Bill Stewart**  
**Studio: Right Track, NYC**  
**Artist: Jazz guitarist Pat Metheny**



**F**or the latest Pat Metheny Trio album (untitled as of press time) Bill Stewart fought 48th Street traffic to lug his own Gretsch kit to Right Track studios, rather than use what he calls *drums du jour*. Similarly, bassist Larry Grenadier carted an upright. Although Bill prefers his own gear, he states adamantly, "I don't play differently or change my equipment for the studio as opposed to live."

One of the tunes the trio cut was John Coltrane's "Giant Steps." On it, Bill recalls, "Pat asked me to play a feel between swung and straight 8th notes, which is something I've done before. But one thing that was different about this

entire session is that we did a lot of *playing*, rather than listening in the control room. That's okay with me. I'd rather keep rolling.

"The studio had a little life to it when you hit a drum," explains Bill, "but not too

much." Engineer Rob Eaton took advantage of the fact that the drummer was alone in the big room (Metheny and Grenadier were in booths), augmenting conventional miking with distant mic's, unencumbered by guitar and bass leakage. Says Bill, "He had room mic's set high a few feet in front of the drums, two set low in front of the drums, and another two high in back of the drums."

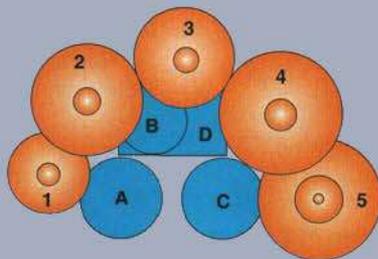
## Session Gear

**Drums: Gretsch, except as noted. ("If you've seen my MD video, you've seen them.")**

- A. Ludwig 6 1/2 x 14 hammered brass snare drum. ("I keep the snares tight.")
- B. 8x12 tom
- C. 14x14 floor tom
- D. 14x18 bass drum

**Cymbals: Zildjian**

- 1. 14" hi-hats (Turkish-made K Zildjian over heavy American K Zildjian)
- 2. 20" Turkish K Zildjian ("Kind of medium, ride-able and crash-able, although I'm not as comfortable riding on my left side.")
- 3. 18" Turkish K Zildjian with chunk missing
- 4. 22" Turkish K Zildjian with one rivet
- 5. A Zildjian 6" splash atop 22" K Constantinople prototype with one rivet



### Heads & Sticks

- bass drum heads: Remo clear Emperors—an experiment for this session, according to Bill
- tom and snare heads: coated Ambassadors top, clear Ambassadors bottom
- sticks: Zildjian Bill Stewart model, hickory

### Tuning & Approach

- Higher, open, unmuffled—including bass drum. Felt beater. Bill usually does not "bury the beater."

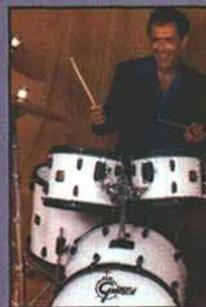
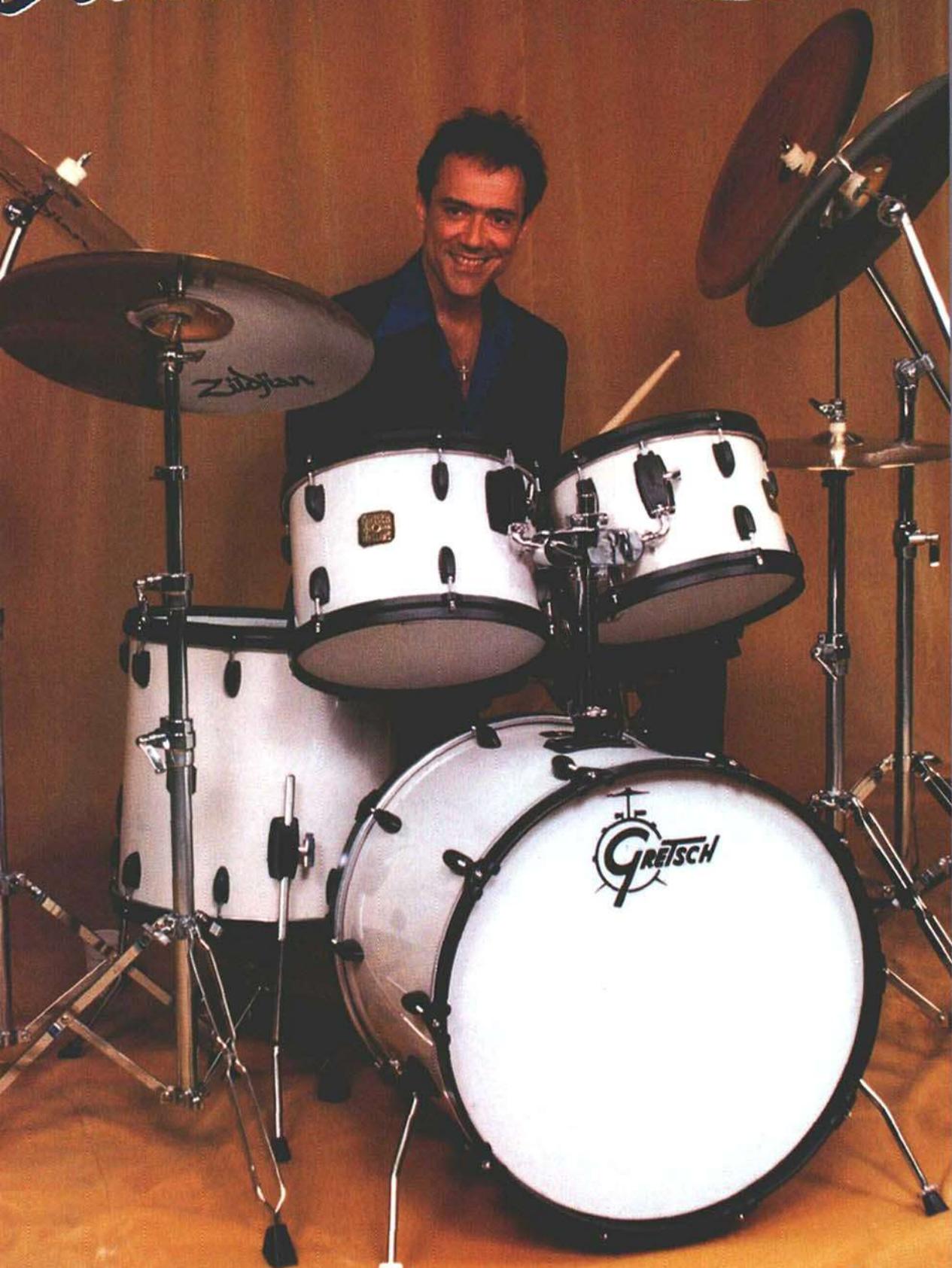
**Inside Scoop:** Bill unashamedly places his 12" tom on a standard Yamaha mount that—*gasp*—protrudes into the drum. "I have the drum at the very edge of the mount," Bill explains, "so it rings as much as possible. Also, I hate floor toms mounted off cymbal stands on RIMS mounts—the drum wobbles and the stand takes up a lot of floor space. I like a floor tom with *legs*."

Stewart insists he doesn't put on a special show for the mic's. "I'm being mixed by an engineer, so if I try to bring out some part of the kit, they might just turn it down anyway! I'm not in control of how loud, say, the cymbals sound on the final product, so it doesn't make much sense to play them louder."

T. Bruce Wittet



# Vinnie Colaiuta



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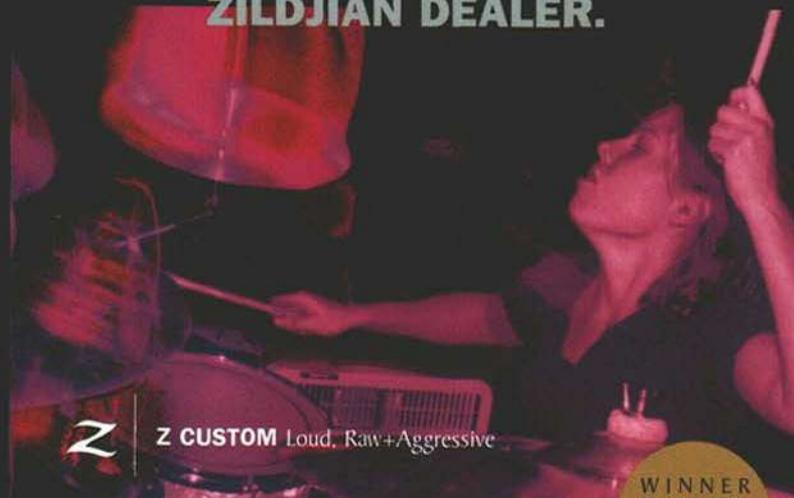
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