

MODERN DRUMMER™

The International Magazine Exclusively For Drummers

DECEMBER 1982

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Elvin JONES

The Doors'
JOHN DENSMORE

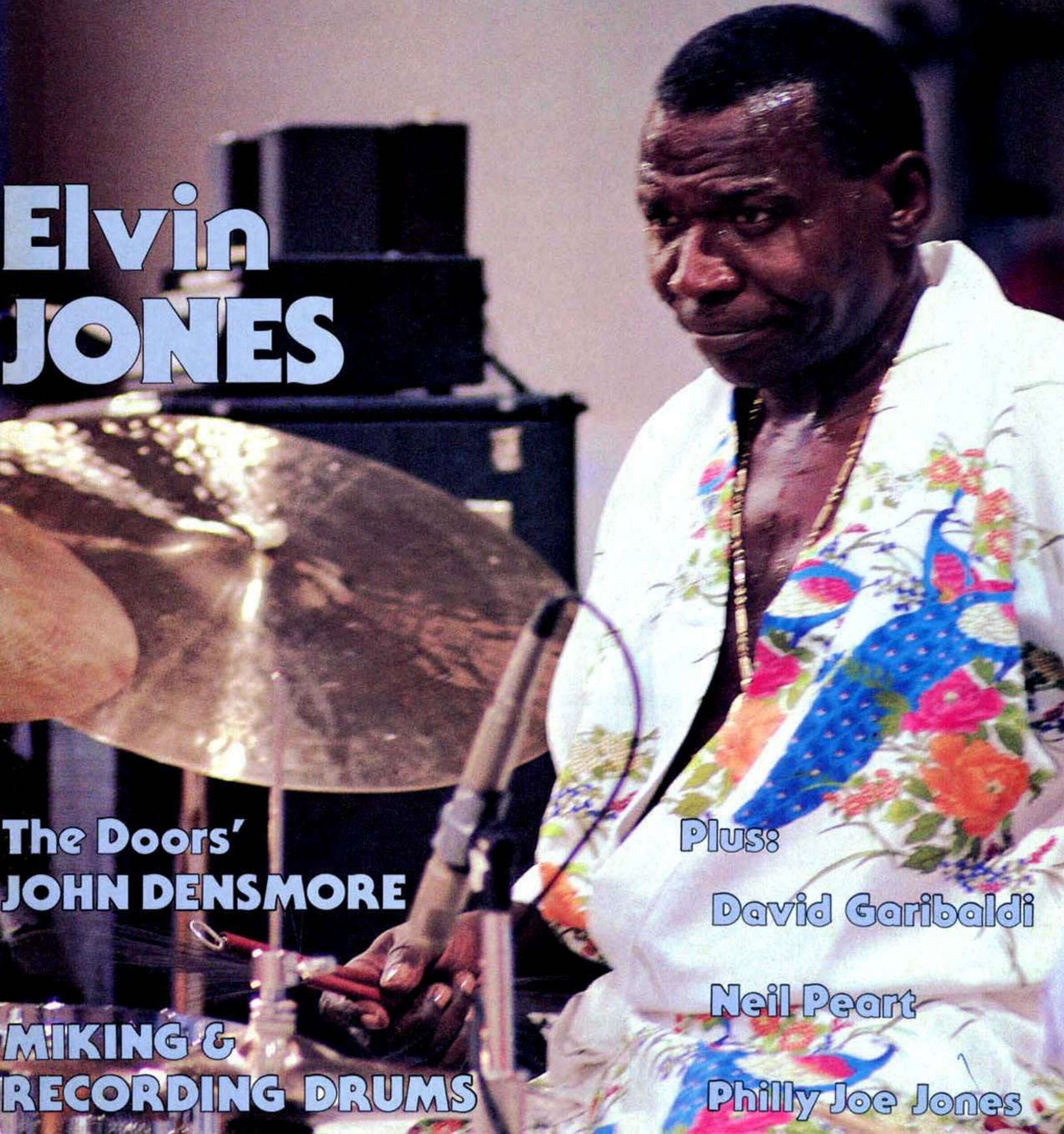
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RECORDING DRUMS

Plus:

David Garibaldi

Neil Peart

Philly Joe Jones





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Cover Photo by Mark Harris

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ELVIN JONES

When Elvin Jones first became involved with drums, his goal was to master the instrument. Elvin met that goal to such an extent that he has actually established new standards for drumset mastery. Here, he discusses his concept of the instrument, and shares his concerns about the future of drumming and of the music business.

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JOHN DENSMORE

Although it's been over ten years since the death of Jim Morrison, The Doors remain as popular now as they were in the '60s. As the drummer for that group, John Densmore is in a unique position to comment on that important musical era, and he does so in this exclusive MD interview.

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Photo by Rick Malkin



Photo by E. Shaw Green

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EDITOR'S OVERVIEW



It's an indisputable fact that all musicians require some form of feedback to accurately gauge their accomplishments as performers.

As musicians, who are now magazine people, we also require feedback. Where once we obtained an immediate response from a listening audience, we must now receive it from our reading audience. Simply put—it's *essential* we hear from you, not only on what you liked about an issue, but what you didn't like, as well.

For instance, we'd like to know if you felt a particular interview missed the mark, or if it delivered precisely what you had hoped to learn from or about that artist. Are the column departments too complex, too simple, or is everything alright as far as you're concerned? Are you learning something from the columns, or do you feel you're not getting as much out of them as you'd like? How can it be changed to better fill your needs as a player? Did you like the photos, the cover shot, the graphics? If you did, tell us about it. If you didn't, well that's certainly okay—provided you don't keep it to yourself. Let us hear about it.

The point is, communication is essential for us to continue to deliver the kind of product you need. So, sit down and write that letter you've been meaning to write for six months, even if you've never written to a magazine before. Rest assured, your letter *will be* read. Oftentimes, letters are circulated to all members of the Editorial staff, because what a reader truly feels, is the single most important ingredient he can supply to a publication. So, good or bad, let's hear it.

December's MD kicks off with the incomparable Elvin Jones, and what may well be one of the most intelligent interviews ever with this outstanding artist, conducted by our own Rick Mattingly.

Joining Elvin in this issue is former Doors drummer John Densmore, New Orleans based James Black, and the gifted Sheila Escovedo.

Studio drummer Mark Stevens recently spoke with some of the nation's busiest audio engineers for the first of a two-part article on miking and recording. If you've ever wondered what goes on behind the glass window, *Audio Engineers: On Miking And Recording Drums*, is must reading.

We've also added two new departments to the regular MD roster: *Taking Care Of Business*, as the title implies, will address itself to the business of music, with a series of informative articles and an opportunity to ask questions of specialists in the entertainment field. *The Jobbing Drummer* is our second new entry; a much requested department specifically designed for the serious semi-pro on the local music scene.

We hope you'll find both new departments helpful. As I said earlier, let us know what you think.

RS

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READER'S PLATFORM

CHARLIE WATTS

I would like to thank MD, Robyn Flans, Jim Keltner and Scott Fish for bringing us the Charlie Watts interview.

RICKY D. PEARSON
HARTINGTON, NE

ED MANN

Congratulations on your article on Ed Mann. It takes a true professional to be able to play the calibre of music that Zappa produces. Playing in Zappa's band is a compliment to any musician.

BRUCE ARMSTRONG
EDMONTON, CANADA

FOR THE RECORD

First, I would like to thank drummer Jerry Allison, of Buddy Holly and The Crickets, for the very kind compliments he made about me and my drum style while I was with Little Richard, in *The History of Rock Drumming, Part II*. I still do play my set, low-rider style! Secondly, with all due respect to Earl Palmer and his great contributions to rock 'n' roll drumming, it is *me*, not Earl, who created and recorded the explosive four-bar drum intro to "Keep A-Knockin'" recorded in 1957 with Little Richard and his road band, The Upsetters, of which I was the original drummer! But still, I think, Earl Palmer is one of the greatest drummers of all time! Last, but not least, I want to compliment you on your fine magazine, which I try to read every issue. Keep up the good work, and . . . Keep A-Knockin'!

CHARLES "KEEP A-KNOCKIN"
CONNOR
LOS ANGELES, CA

PREMIER "S" STICK

In *It's Questionable*, May '82, S.G. asks for a company producing the Premier S stick. There's a music store in Holland which sells these sticks using their own name: The "Hampe S." The store name and address is: Hampe, Spui 11, 1012 WX Amsterdam, The Netherlands. They're willing to send sticks to foreign countries.

HUGO PINKSTERBOER
THE NETHERLANDS

STEEL DRUMS

As a Trinidadian and an active drummer, I was proud that you featured "our" contribution to the world of music: steel drums and calypso. Wyn Sargent's account of the steel drum's historical roots, manufacturing, tuning, etc. were quite accurate. The only part that miffed me was your final "profile column." No mention was made of the real innovators of the '40s, such as Winston "Spree" Simon, who first burnt the pans and used rubber on his sticks. Also Ellie Mannette of the Invaders Steel Band, who tuned some of the sweetest pan heard in Trinidad and who is now practicing his art in New York City.

KEITH D. HERCULES
TAMPA, FL

EXPLORING SELF-AWARENESS

I enjoyed the article by George Marsh, *Exploring Self-Awareness*. His concepts on drumming are excellent. It's refreshing to hear of such an approach to the drums. I'm looking forward to future articles from him.

ERIC MAXWELL
SAN JOSE, CA

I appreciated your articles *Mentally Preparing* and *Exploring Self-Awareness*. I frequently feel anxious before playing and didn't realize so many other drummers did also. I'd like to see more about these subjects.

ALAN REIZNER
LAS VEGAS, NV

DAVID DIX

I thoroughly enjoyed Scott Fish's interview with David Dix. I've been a fan of David's since I first heard him on the live Outlaw's album. I disagree with you Dave, I don't feel like you overplayed on that album—I was especially impressed on the "Green Grass and High Tides" cut that, after your solo, you continued to "kick" for the remainder of the song.

BERNIESCHALLEHN
VOORHEESVILLE, NY

MAGADINI VS. BUERGER

I want to thank MD for reviewing my two new books, *Learn To Play The Drum Set, Vol's 1 & 2*. I felt Joe Buerger was trying to be fair in his assessment of Book 2, and I appreciated the kind remarks. However, it's obvious that Joe didn't go into the material in depth. If so, he would've realized that Book 2 is not a "crash course." It's the result of twenty years of playing and teaching, and the book deals with essential learning techniques. I'm also disappointed that Joe didn't seem to take a look at Book 1 before he wrote his review. If so, he would've realized that I ended Book 1 with flams and covered that basic. Rick Mattingly reviewed Book 1 and I feel he put more time and effort into that review. Book 1 has now been translated into six languages.

PETE MAGADINI
TORONTO, CANADA

MILESTONE

I appreciate MD's coverage of the smaller, lesser known companies. I've just received a custom-built Milestone kit that's by far the best built and best sounding kit I've ever owned—and I've had them all! If it hadn't been for Craig Ferrel's writeup and MD's inclusion—it might never have happened. Keep up the excellent standard. Success is assured.

RANDY SPAID
WELLINGTON, KS

ANTI-DRUM NOISE

We especially enjoyed Jim Murphy's article on getting rid of drum noise in the Aug./Sept. MD. The article was accurate and informative; a great help to studio and recording drummers. All the problems discussed in the article have been encountered by us at Eddie Jamm. We hope to see more articles by Jim in the future.

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Jeff Porcaro

TOTO



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ASK A PRO

ROD MORGENSTEIN



Photo by Lissa Wales

Q. What kind of drum heads and muffling did you use on the Dixie Dregs *Industry Standard* album?

David Doyle
Fayetteville, N.C.

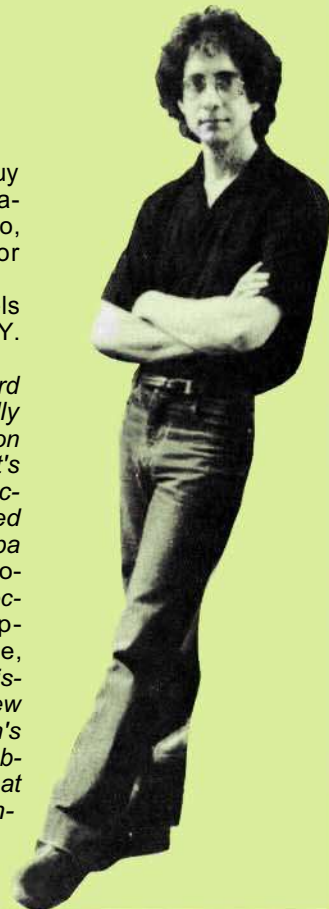
A. *I've never really used muffling on my drums. I usually go for a wide-open sound. The bass drums had just the slightest bit of padding, probably a packing rug barely touching the head. I did have the front heads off and the bass drums were miked from about five feet away, which I've never done before. I'm constantly trying different heads. I don't think I ever have a matched set of heads. They're usually coated Ambassadors. There might've been a clear one in there. There's a coated Ambassador on my snare, and I might put a piece of duct tape on the snare if there's a ring that's bothersome. But, basically it's wide open.*

DAVID SAMUELS

Q. I'd like to ask David where I can buy records of Double Image which features him and David Friedman? Also, what books would he recommend for vibraphone and marimba studies?

Dean Samuels
Hempstead, N.Y.

A. *The records are out in any record store. The first album was originally recorded on Enja Records and is on the Inner City label in this country. It's simply called Double Image. The second album is on ECM and that's called Dawn. For vibraphone and marimba studies I'd recommend the Bach Sonatas and Partitas for Violin. I'd recommend my book, A Musical Approach To Four Mallet Technique, published by Excelsior Music and distributed by Theodore Presser in New York City. Also, David Friedman's book, Dampening and Pedaling, published by the Berklee Press. I'd look at transcriptions of jazz solos and transcriptions of Bill Evans piano parts get voicings.*



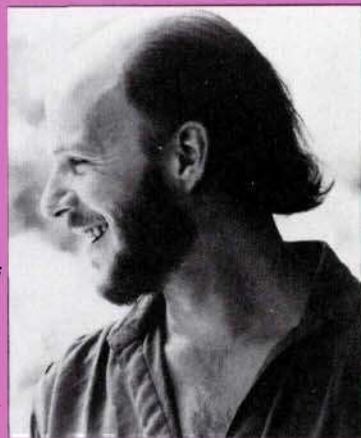
COLLIN WALCOTT

Q. I'm interested in learning to play tabla. Could you recommend any books on the subject? Also, how long did you study with Allah Rakha?

Tim Fisk
Halifax, Canada

A. *Because of the complexity of the technique, there are really not any books that cover how to produce the sounds. There is a record and booklet on Folkways records, I believe, called 42 Lessons for the Tabla. That gives good information.*

I traveled with Allah Rakha and Ravi Shankar for about two years pretty consistently. Even now, if we cross paths on the road, I'll take a few lessons or get a lick! But, as far as consistent study, I studied about a year with him.



continued on page 112

DECEMBER

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David Garibaldi

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CYMBALS SOUNDS GONGS



ELVIN

What would Elvin Jones' drums say if they could talk? How would they describe their relationship with Elvin? Would they speak fondly of the times they have been caressed by their master—the times he has used mallets and brushes to bring forth their most delicate sounds? Or would they painfully recall the times Elvin has assaulted them with his sticks—almost daring them to respond and hold up under the barrage of ideas and rhythms that seem to literally explode from him? Perhaps they would try to explain "Jonesy"s" exuberance when he plays, and how he transmits that in a way that makes them sing. Or possibly they would fear Elvin, because they never know what he is going to demand from them next; what limits he is going to try and push them beyond. Elvin Jones' drums might speak of any or all of these things. And yet, I suspect they would speak of Elvin with love, for despite the seeming abuse he subjects them to, he is one of the very few drummers who allows them to reach their full potential.

RM: Musicians talk a lot about the people who influenced them, but often, they simply tell who the people were, without explaining exactly what it was that they got from these people. When a drummer says that he was influenced by another drummer, I think a lot of people take that to mean that he actually tried to imitate that drummer's style in some way, but is that what it really should mean to be influenced by someone?

EJ: To me, "influenced" means "encouraged" in some way. It doesn't necessarily follow that you have to adapt that person's style, or that person's habits, or whatever. It's simply that this particular individual—or those people or that group—inspired you. They gave you that extra push of an intangible something that we all need to keep going; to take another step. And it doesn't have to be a musician—it can be your mother. In my case it certainly is. Also my father. Certainly no one could influence me more than he did because I thought he was an exceptional man. I like to believe that I've got at least a little bit of his strength. So I'm influenced by him as far as my character is concerned.

Of course, when you're talking about musicians and music, people tend to think, like you said, that your influences have to be people whom you should play like or emulate in some way. But that isn't the way I choose to take influences. The great psychiatrist Harry Stack Sullivan had a theory that we are all part of our environment in the way that our interpersonal relationships affect the molding of our characters. So as far as music is concerned, you have to be influenced by a little bit of everything. We hope that when our final musical character is mature, it will be individual, but part of that gigantic whole.

I suppose you can pin it down more specifically as to say, "Who do you like?" or "Who did you listen to the closest?" That's an-



IN

by Rick Mattingly

other approach to it. So in that sense, I listened to Duke Ellington, Jo Jones, Max Roach, Art Blakey, Buddy Rich, Gene Krupa, and everybody who played in a band and who I thought was a master of the instrument. There are a lot of people whose names I can't even recall right now but who probably had a great deal to do with molding my musical character. And it's not just drummers. My brother Hank, for instance, gave me a great lesson one day when he made me play along with an Art Tatum record. You see, there are lessons all around us. If someone really wants to learn how to function on an instrument; how to understand and get some insight into the instrument's capabilities and into one's own approach to the instrument, then influences can come from any source. I don't think it necessarily has to follow that it has to come from someone who has mastered *that* instrument per se. I think it can be from any source. Usually it's a musical source, because that's the environment.

Another important source for me was my band master in junior high school, Fred N. Weist. He had such a strong character that one wanted to be like him. Some teachers have that, whatever it is. Charisma, perhaps. But anyway, the students want so much to please him; to appear in the teacher's eyes as something perfect. So he was one of these people who bring out in a student the desire to do well. I thank God that I was fortunate enough to have the experience of being under his influence in my formative years.

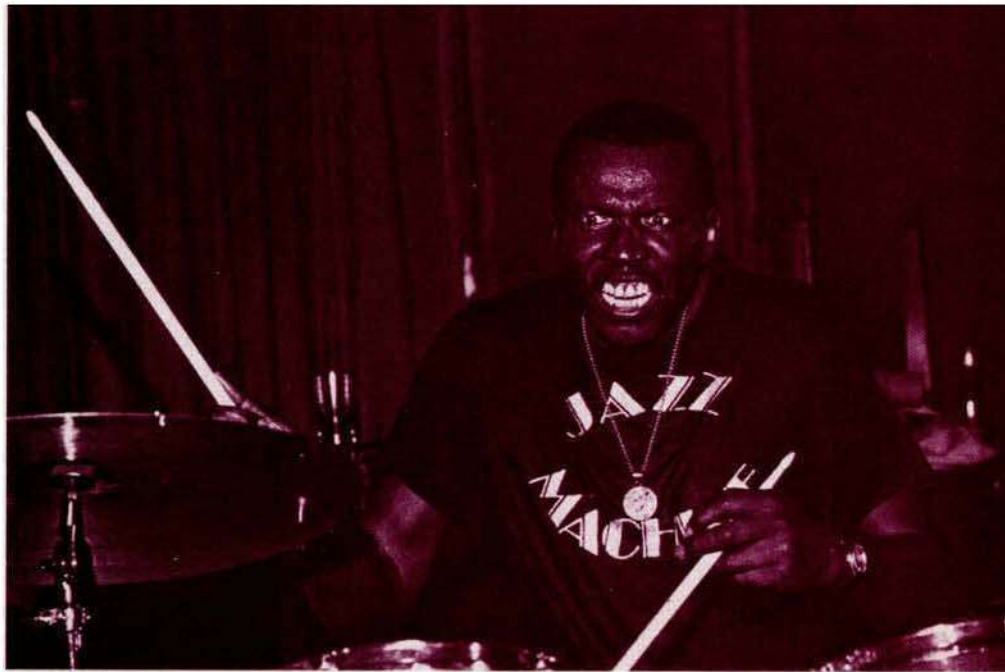
RM: You referred to the drummers you admired as being masters of the instrument. So you didn't necessarily want to play like Krupa, for instance, you simply wanted to master the instrument as he had done.

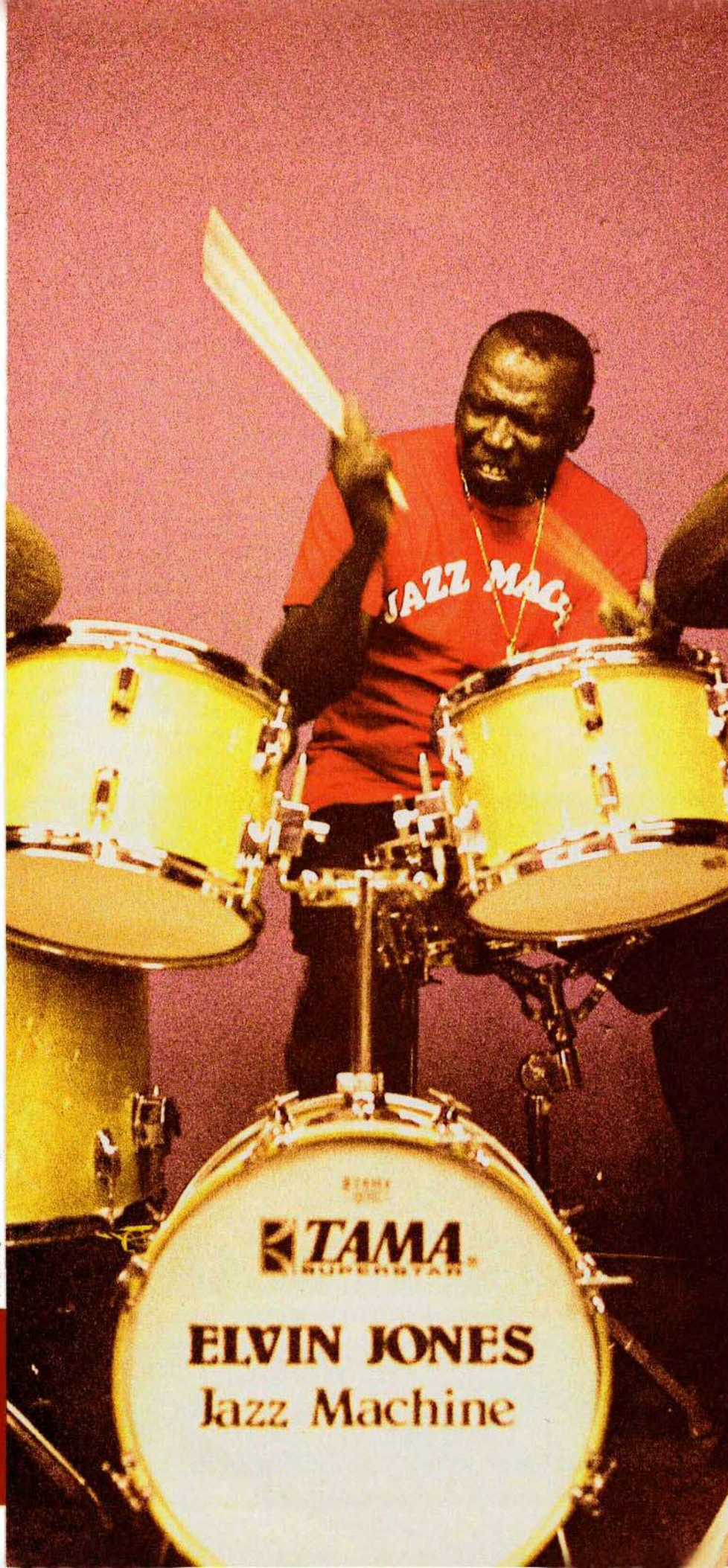
EJ: Exactly. The thing is, we have to learn to respect that which is an accomplished fact. Krupa was a man who, to use the vernacular, had "paid his dues." There's no question about his ability; there's no question about the fact that he studied and worked very hard to accomplish the things he did; there's no question that he was outstanding and exceptional. He was a master, and I admire that. He certainly was part of my development; part of the reason for me being persistent in my pursuit of knowledge through the drums.

RM: In the documentary film you did [*A Different Drummer: Elvin Jones*], you said that when you first started out, the word was out that you were hard to play with because of your style. Did you ever have doubts about whether you were doing the right thing?

EJ: No, I never questioned it. I knew I was doing the right thing. I also knew that it sounded complicated, but it was only an appearance of complication—it wasn't really. It wasn't status quo, so to speak, but I didn't feel that it was all that different. I grew up with the old methods and learned them, and then I had to reject them. Not really reject, but rather I chose to use the parts of them that suited me, which isn't exactly a rejection. I think it's an improvement. It adds more responsibility to the drummer, but it also offers greater opportunities. When approached properly, it broadens the musical scope of the player, and it *has* to be musical—it can't be an ego trip, something used to show off someone's personal achievement. It's not that kind of thing because it's not a gimmick. It's an addition to the responsibility that drummers have to eventually accept. One of the responsibilities involves being flexible enough to support the soloist within the full range of support.

Photo by Tom Copi





You won't be just following the soloist, but rather, you will become a partner.

It didn't seem logical to me that the music we were playing could be approached in any other way, and still have logical conclusions. Music has to be logical, I think. No matter how complex it is, it's still based on logic.

RM: When you were first doing this and people didn't understand it, did you ever actually lose gigs?

EJ: Well, I'll put it this way: my telephone didn't ring as often as it could have. But one never knows; maybe they just didn't know about me. I don't think it's that important now, but at the time . . . it's hard for a young person when you feel that what you're doing is correct, but you're not fully accepted. I'm sure, though, that Monk and Miles and everybody else who has ever had new ideas has had the same experience. So this was simply my turn to have that experience. I look at it like that.

There were certain people who accepted my approach with a lot of grace. I worked with Harry "Sweets" Edison for a while, and from all appearances, he is absolutely "old school." It used to be a popular thing to "trade fours," and I could never lose Sweets. He would always know exactly what I was doing because he was counting. It was as simple as that. No matter what you do inside that four-bar structure—no matter how complex it is—there's a time frame there. There's a certain amount of time between the first beat of a four-bar section and the first beat of the next four bars. Some people choose to not bother to count, so when something complex was played, it would throw them off and make it seem difficult. The time I was with Harry gave me renewed confidence in myself. Sometimes you have to wonder. You think, "I can't be *that* wrong; not all the time." You're playing along and suddenly you hear the beat backwards and you know you haven't changed anything.

RM: That's why I asked you if you had ever had doubts.

EJ: Certainly I wondered, but on the other hand, I knew that I was right. So my doubts were only momentary, if at all. I was too busy to worry about it. I still had to practice everyday; I still had to see to it that I paid my rent, got my clothes cleaned, ate properly, and all the other things it takes to live in a big city. So I wasn't discouraged that much.

RM: So you didn't have to compromise your style just to work?

EJ: No, not at all. But then, I wasn't stupid



either. It depends on who you're playing with, and you have to be the judge of that. On some gigs, believe me, you just play it the way the bandleader calls it and leave it at that. Don't try to fight the system. Go ahead and make your Union scale and tomorrow's another day. Look at it that way, which isn't compromising; it's simply that you're being sensible—you're being realistic. So there is that phase of it as well. You have to be realistic, but you still have to stick to your principles.

I don't mean to say that it was that much of a struggle. I've enjoyed every minute of my career and I still do. The early days were very exciting. There was a lot of very exciting music being played then, and everybody was excited by it. There were also a lot of people listening to the music and identifying with it. So I think there's a great strength in that kind of support.

RM: And then I suppose you got a lot of support from people like your brothers.

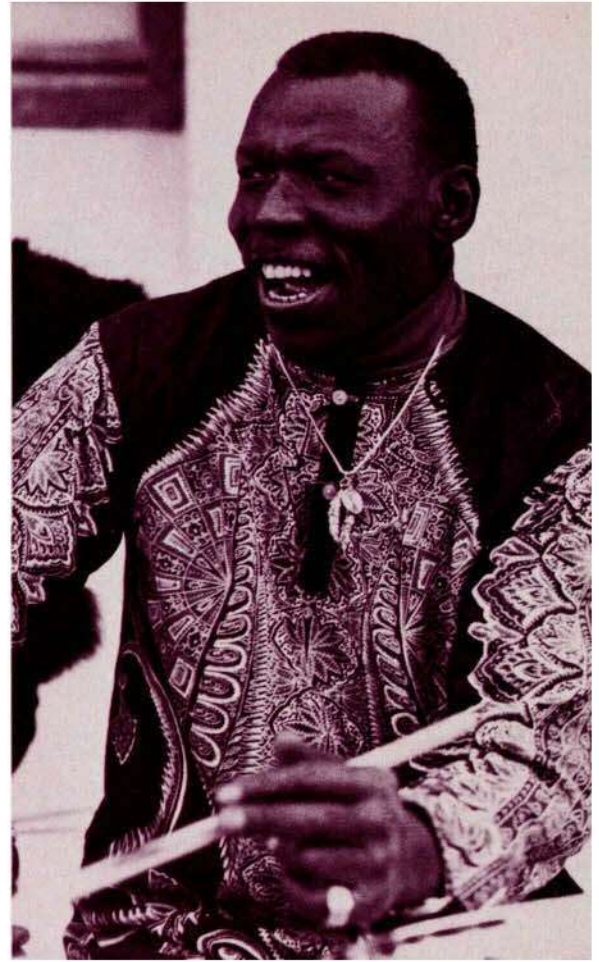
EJ: Of course. I never got any discouragement. Like that song, "Home On The Range": [sings] "Where never is heard a discouraging word." That's what I got from my family. They always encouraged me. That's really what you get from your family—moral support. Getting that pat on the back when you know you need it, and they know you need it, and it makes you feel good. You can go out and struggle along again for another year, or however long it takes you to get back home again. So in a nutshell, I didn't have too much cause for concern at that time. Things happened too quickly. I was very involved in *doing*; not in self-analysis.

RM: It would be ridiculous to refer to a piano as being a collection of eighty-eight instruments, and yet, many people seem to think of a drumset as being a collection of instruments. They talk about the function of the cymbal, and the function of the bass drum, and so on, as though these things were not connected. You seem to play the set as though it is one instrument.

EJ: It *is* one instrument, and I would hasten to say that I take that as the basis for my whole approach to the drums. It is a single musical instrument of several components. Naturally, you've got tom-toms scattered around, and the snare drum is in front of you, and the bass drum is down there, and you have cymbals at different levels. But all in all, just as a piano is one instrument, a drumset is one instrument. That is not to say that the cymbal *isn't* an instrument. But in order for it to be an instrument you have to use it as an instrument. They are individual instruments if you have them set up that way and you have a tom-tom player and a bass drum player and so on. Okay, then they are individual instruments. It just depends on how one chooses to apply it. So I think that's probably where people get confused.

In a dance band (to use that phrase), or a jazz band—small group, big band, combo, or as college kids call them, "stage bands"—then this is a single instrument. You can't isolate the dif-

"I GREW UP WITH THE OLD METHODS AND LEARNED THEM, AND THEN I HAD TO REJECT THEM. NOT REALLY REJECT, BUT RATHER I CHOSE TO USE THE PARTS OF THEM THAT SUITED ME ..."



ferent parts of the set any more than you can isolate your left leg from the rest of your body. Your body is one, even though you have two legs, two arms, ten fingers, and all of that. But still, it's one body. All of those parts add up to one human being. It's the same with the instrument. People are never going to approach the drumset correctly if they don't start thinking of it as a single musical instrument.

We live in a world where everything is categorized and locked up into little bitty compartments. But I have to insist that the drumset is one. This is the way it should be approached and studied and listened to, and all of the basic philosophies should be from that premise. If you learn it piecemeal, that's the way you're going to play it. You have to learn it in total.

Perhaps a good comparison would be the way some arrangers can blend everything together so that no matter how many instruments are in the band or orchestra, you will find yourself hearing everything without consciously trying to do so. I think this is because it's been so skillfully done that the music comes to you as a total experience. This, of course, is one of the beauties of classical music. It's a phenomenon how the great masters applied their skill. The music was written so completely and so thoroughly that when it was played, people came away having experienced the whole composition. This is the same principle that drummers have to use in their concept of the instrument. No matter how many compo-





nents, it can certainly be played as a single instrument and blended with any combination of instruments.

RM: Did you have anyone to tell you that when you were young?

EJ: No. No one ever did. They used to call it "traps." I suppose they called it that because it dated back to the old street musicians: "Here come the music makers and their trappings." They would have bells and tambourines and things and these were considered trappings. So I suppose that's where the term originated.

The drumset as we know it now has only been in existence since about the early '30s. This is a relatively new art form that we are involved with. And it's an American art form, I might add. Some people might argue about that, but that's what I believe, and I'll live with that. So anyway, I think that people who intend to learn how to play this instrument have to start regarding it for what it is. Until then, they're never going to be able to listen to it properly; they won't be able to hear the total picture. So that should be of primary importance to all teachers and instructors from now on, into the future. We must take the correct look at the instrument so that we can begin to develop ways of using it properly.

RM: A lot of people still start with a snare drum, and the rest of the set is added later. Would you start someone on a full set?

EJ: Because of the expense involved, I don't think you should give a young kid a \$2,000 drumset. I mean, that's ridiculous. But I think there *could* be teaching aids to employ all of the coordination and all of the reasons for the coordination. Give them something that would make them appreciate the values that are there. You can build almost anything nowadays, so I think the drum companies could build a beginner's model so they could develop coordination from a very early stage. It would be a real asset to teachers. Naturally, the first step would be to accept the "one instrument" theory. That has to come first. I believe the rest would follow.

RM: There seems to be an emphasis with drummers to be more concerned with technique rather than with musicality. Why are drummers so prone to this?

EJ: That *is* a problem. I think students get the notion that they have to prove something, and they have to show progress. They have to justify the time they have spent with some kind of a display: "Look. I've been practicing for two years and I can now play

2,000 paradiddles in five minutes." Another thing is that this has become economically feasible for publishers. There are a thousand books out showing you how to strengthen this, and build that, and if you do this exercise you'll be able to play these speed beats, and if you do *this* you'll be able to sound like Buddy Rich and Gene Krupa and everybody rolled into one! It's kind of an exhibitionist attitude that prevails, and people get completely away from what drumming is *really* about. The drums should be as musically supportive of a composition as the rest of the instruments. And this should be normal—this shouldn't be something exceptional. When you hear a drummer playing musically, you shouldn't say, "Oh my! Isn't that unusual?" It should be normal. It's a musical instrument, playing with other musical instruments. It should all be one, big, happy, musical thing. But for some reason, it isn't. For some reason, a lot of drummers

are turned away from the natural course of things.

I've noticed with my own students that the first thing some of them want to do is play a drum solo. They don't even want to base it on a composition. They just want to hit everything in sight, play as fast and loud as possible, say "thank you," take a bow and walk off the stage. This is very prevalent. I don't know what to do about it, or even what to say.

RM: As you said, playing musically should be natural. But yet, I frequently hear people express amazement over the fact that when *you* solo, they can hear where you are in the tune. Again, it's based on something simple—you base your solo on the melody. Why have people lost sight of the most obvious things?

EJ: Well, I don't know if I can answer *that*. I would like to know that myself, as a matter of fact. I wish someone would tell *me*. But nevertheless, the fact remains that many people have. Or else they just don't bother to think about it. I think we all have to constantly remind ourselves, and be reminded, of the realities. I think we need to do more things to pass on our concerns about the course of our development. We need to keep up with things and have conscious aids that will tell us what the heck it is that we're doing wrong and where we should go, and some suggestions, at least, as to how to correct some of the mistakes we keep making. Your title, "Modern Drummer," suggests the future, or at least something very current. So if we take care of what's going on now, then the future will take care of itself as well, because we're talking about the future.

RM: Are there, then, any guidelines you could offer in terms of playing musically?

EJ: The only guideline you can have that I think is practical is that you know the composition well enough that you know the form—you know when the bridge is coming up, and so on. After that, it's enough to allow yourself to be guided by the soloist and follow your instinctive understanding of the instrument in the support of that soloist. When you work with a group of people for any length of time, rapport develops between the individuals. The longer they work together, the deeper this rapport can go. Sometimes it can almost become telepathic, and when that happens, of course, you have something really unique. But short of that, to break it down into simpler terms, just listen to one another and respond to one



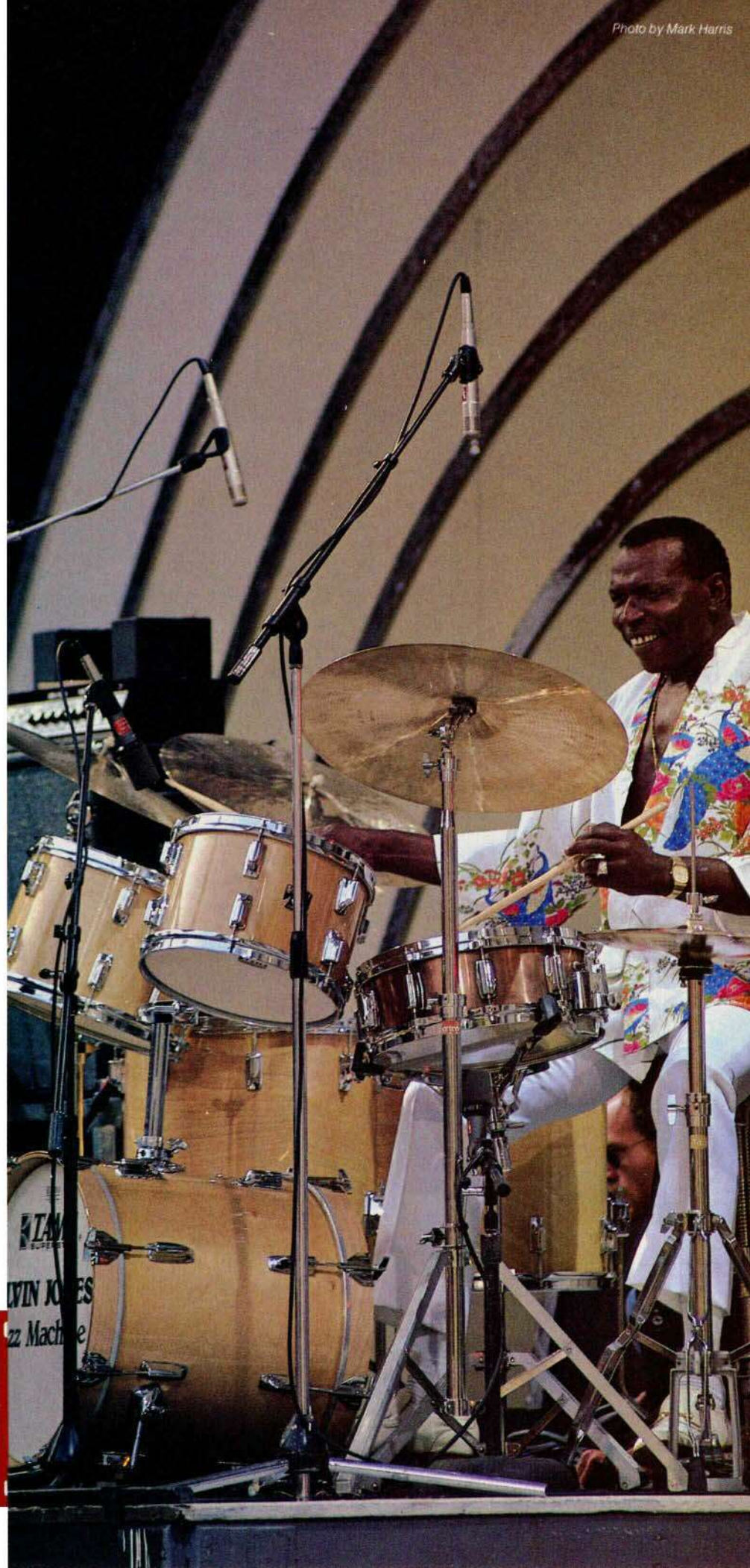
another. That will add more genuine quality to a group than any device you could possibly think of. I think the more natural it is, the better. You can form the cliches later. But I think the whole idea of it is that you're supposed to enjoy it. I think you should have *fun*. That's the beauty of it all—that you can go to a gig and have a good time playing the music, playing with each other, and encouraging and supporting each other in this endeavor. When that is adhered to, then something meaningful occurs.

RM: I've heard various explanations of why jazz drummers started using 18" bass drums. Some people go into detail about the function of the bass drum in modern jazz, and give reasons why the 18" drum was more suited to the music. Others contend that the only reason the smaller drum was used was because it was easier to carry around.

EJ: Well, that's the reason why I used it. Twenty years ago, we travelled a great deal by car. We would throw all of our stuff in a station wagon or a car, then we'd all pile in and off on the road we would go. That's the way bands travelled then. So it made a difference if you had a compact unit of equipment. I only used two tom-toms in those days: the floor tom-tom was 14 x 14, and the small tom-tom was 8 x 12. But when I used a 20" bass drum, it just would not fit in the trunk of the car. If I put it in the back seat, that took up the space where two people could sit. So that made it necessary to tie the damn thing down on top of the car on a rack. I ruined a lot of drums that way. Whenever it would rain, with the car going sixty miles an hour, the rain would be forced right through the case, onto the drum itself. So the drum was a soggy mess when we arrived at where we were supposed to go. And then there were times that the ropes would slip and the

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"PEOPLE ARE NEVER GOING TO APPROACH THE DRUMSET CORRECTLY IF THEY DON'T START THINKING OF IT AS A SINGLE MUSICAL INSTRUMENT ... IF YOU LEARN IT PIECEMEAL, THAT'S THE WAY YOU'RE GOING TO PLAY IT. YOU HAVE TO LEARN IT IN TOTAL."



JOHN DENSMORE

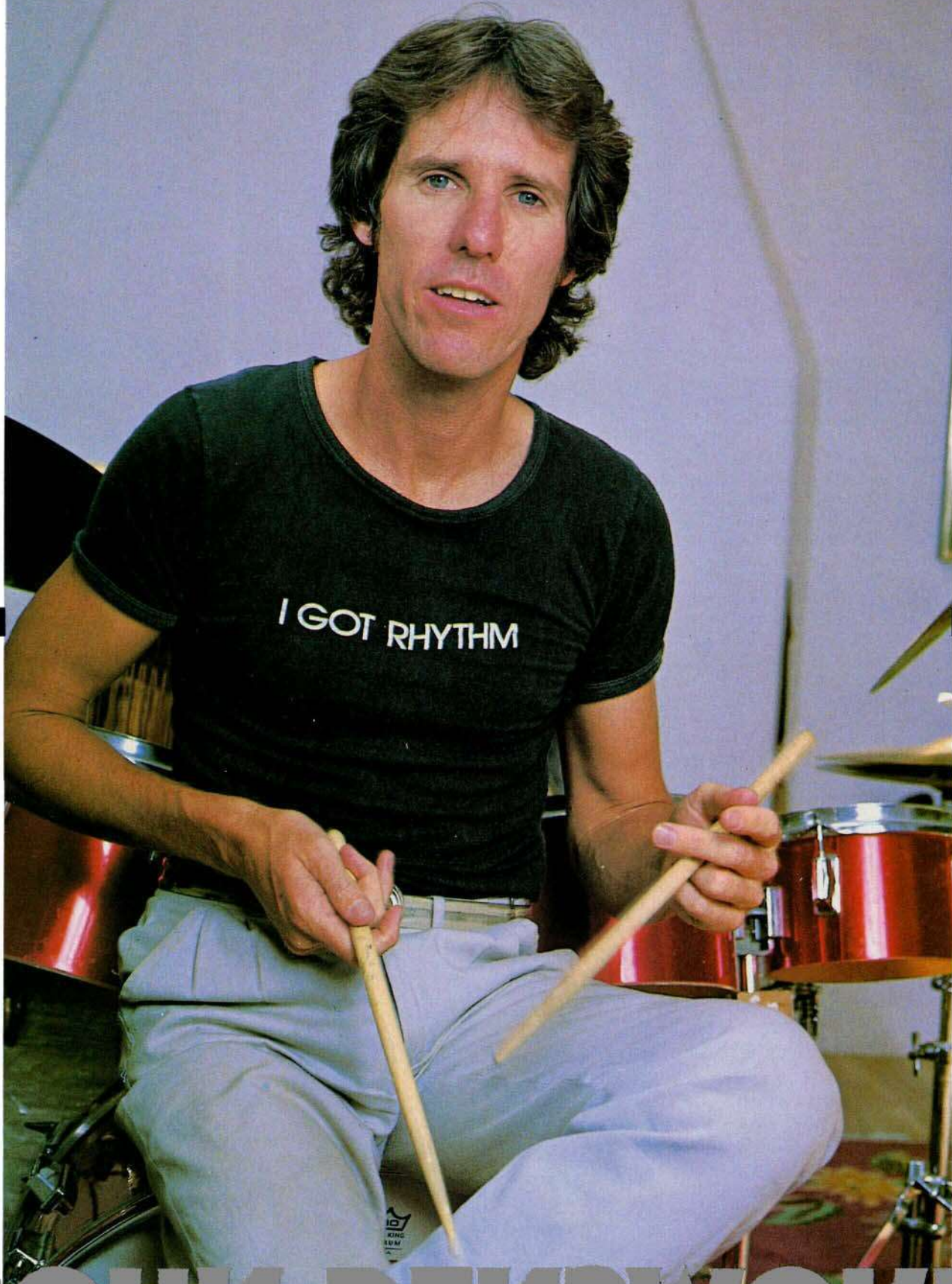


Photo by Rick Malkin

JOHN DENSMORE



Photo by Jim Marshall

reflections

by Robyn Flans

An interview never seems to translate perfectly on paper, and as hard as the journalist tries to paint a vivid picture of the subject, certain aspects are lost, or at best, dimmed.

In the following interview with the Doors' John Densmore, it is impossible to catch all of his sense of humor or see his very animated way of expressing himself. It is also impossible to see the extent of sensitivity and pain with which he speaks about the loss of his friend, Jim Morrison. There were a couple of times when the subject matter became so intense that we actually had to take a break in order to gain afresh, and less emotional, perspective.

What is evident on paper, however, is that John is an extremely articulate, intelligent and creative man, and his willingness to be open provided one of the most effective interviews I have had the opportunity to conduct.

RF: Why and when did you start playing drums?

JD: I was in junior high school and I enrolled in the band in the 7th grade, so I guess I was twelve. I loved music, so I knew I wanted to play an instrument. I thought I wanted to play clarinet, but my teeth weren't too great and the dentist said that it would screw them up more. But the teacher said, "Hey, nobody is playing drums this season." At first I thought I couldn't because they'd be so loud at home, but he told me to get a little pad, so that's where I started. I got a little pad, and then the teacher told me if I really wanted to improve quickly, I should take private lessons, so I started private lessons right away. I was in the dance band, finally, and the orchestra where I played tympani. I played set in the dance band and snare drum in the marching band all the way through school.

RF: Who were your influences?

JD: When I started going to Shelly's Manne-Hole—I got in with fake I.D. when I was sixteen or seventeen—I used to see Art Bla-

key. I would sit right next to him and watch everything he did, and Elvin Jones. I really had Elvin Jones down. I still have him down. He was my main guy. Now I would say Billy Cobham, but I copied everything Elvin did. I had this piano player friend and he sort of would pretend he was McCoy Tyner and we'd just jam forever after seeing Coltrane live and all. There was Philly Joe Jones and bebop, too.

RF: So your prime influences were jazz.

JD: Yes, totally.

RF: Let's go back to formal training.

JD: I took private lessons for years. I stayed with Mr. Muir, the neighborhood drum teacher in West Los Angeles, and I continued playing in all the musical classes I could get in school. Then I started playing casuals, \$15 scab wage for weddings, fraternity parties, Bar Mitzvahs, everything and anything, and that really broadened my musical horizons. I had to play waltzes, fox trots, cha-cha-chas, so that was really good for me. I started doing that when I was fifteen or sixteen. Rock 'n' roll was sort of getting in there a little bit.

RF: With your roots in jazz, how did you feel about rock 'n' roll?

JD: Oh, we were snobs. Jazz was it. When we played fraternity parties, though, we had to play danceable stuff. We made these sort of avant-garde electronic music tapes like John Cage, where we'd just break some glass and make a bunch of noise, and then we'd go to these fraternity parties and play "Louie Louie." We'd turn the electronic music on in the middle of it, but we still kept the beat, so they just thought we were weird.

RF: There's a definite jazz feel to your playing. Do you feel that background aided your playing?

JD: Yes. My hands are good. My feet have caught up. When fusion came in, oh my God, the bass drum! "Come on foot, catch up with these hot licks!" It took me years to get that going. I always try to

do jazzy stuff. Ray's [Manzarek, organist] background was Chicago blues, but he listened to Miles and Coltrane, so it wasn't like I was selling out by being in a rock band. When I hear the heavy metal type players, you can just hear the stiffness in their playing. The power is in the wrist—the snap—not the arm. A lot of people say, "God, you're 120 pounds and you play as loud as Buddy Miles sometimes." He would just drop his arm. But that's what I learned in the 7th grade.

RF: So then you went to college.

JD: First I majored in music and got A's in music all the way through everything, even music appreciation. and C's in every-

well in Anthro and, in fact, in one more year, I would have had a BA in Anthro and could have gone out and dug.

RF: You were still playing music on weekends?

JD: Oh yeah, always music.

RF: Something I read said you were in bands with Robbie Krieger [Doors' guitarist].

JD: Yeah, well, we took acid together, Robbie, this piano player, Grant, Bill Wolf and I and then we decided, "Well, let's form a band!" We were the Psychedelic Rangers. It was back when the word "psychedelic" wasn't really known.

RF: What kind of music were you doing?



Photo by Rick Maiklin

"HE [MORRISON] KNEW THAT I DISAPPROVED OF WHAT HE WAS DOING TO HIMSELF BY MY ACTIONS. I WOULDN'T BE AROUND, OR I WOULD STORM OUT ... IF MORE PEOPLE HAD CONFRONTED HIM, WE MIGHT HAVE HAD ONE LESS GREAT ALBUM, BUT MAYBE HE WOULD STILL BE AROUND."

thing else. But I always thought that music would be a hobby or avocation, something on the weekends to give me money to buy my books or something.

RF: Because of the financial chances?

JD: It's such a crap shoot: all or nothing. I loved music and I loved playing, but I never considered it a possibility to make a living. So after a year of being a music major, I thought, "Well, this isn't realistic. I have to make money to live, so I will be a business major." Business equals money, right? Very naive, since I got a D in accounting and then I took it again and got a C in the same course. That was not too good. I don't think it was because I was dumb, I just could not apply myself. I hated it. So then I thought I like people, I felt sympathetic towards people and helping people, "I'll be a sociology major." I took that for a semester and never even did my term paper. What a flake! But you see, now I was going to Valley State, which is now Cal State Northridge, and I was taking a little LSD. My parents found out and they were paying for this little house I was living in with my piano player friend in Topanga Canyon, which is another bad area for drugs. So I was dropping acid and I was dropping sociology, but there were some great teachers in the anthropology department. Fred Katz, who used to be the cello player with Chico Hamilton, was teaching ethnological music there. You couldn't get into the class, it was so popular. There were no tests and he gave everyone A's, so I changed to Anthro just because of him and this other guy, Edmund Carpenter, who was a Marshall McLuhan devotee. So I got A's in that stuff and I got an A in my term paper for Anthro, which I wrote about an LSD experience. At that time, no one had ever heard of LSD aside from Leary and those people, but it wasn't in the press. When I started reading about Art Linkletter's daughter is when I stopped taking it. Then I got paranoid. Before that, I was innocent. I had no idea what it was. I wasn't programmed to be negative, but when I knew what it was all about, I stopped. I did very

JD: We were just screwing around and we would jam on blues and a couple of originals. One was called "Paranoia."

RF: So you really hadn't played a pro gig yet?

JD: Well, I'm not sure what you mean by pro. I played all these frat parties, weddings, Bar Mitzvahs, and I feel you have to be at a certain level of proficiency to be able to fulfill that. At a wedding, you can't play Chuck Berry the whole time; you have to be well rounded. So I was in little bands that would fulfill these party gigs.

RF: So then you went to a Maharishi meeting with Robbie Krieger and met Ray Manzarek.

JD: And Ray said, "Hey, I hear you're a drummer. Let's form a group." And I said, "Yeah, okay." And he said, "The time's not right yet. I'll call you in a few months." And I thought, "Gee, that's pretty cosmic. Far out." We used those words a lot back then. So Ray finally did call me and I went down to his parents' garage in Manhattan Beach, California, although he lived in Venice. The original Doors were Ray, Jim, Ray's two brothers and I. Ray's brothers quit after a little while. One day, Ray's brother Rich just said, "These songs aren't any good, I quit," and some of those were "Hello, I Love You," "Moonlight Drive," some biggies in there. I looked at Ray and he looked at me, like, "Is this guy crazy? We've been working on this and don't we believe in what we're doing here?" So that's when I brought Robbie in.

RF: Was it all original material from the beginning?

JD: Well, we knew that we should learn "Gloria" and a few little ditties in case we got some fraternity parties. All the clubs were top-40 in those days. That's what's great about today, you can play your own stuff.

RF: Can you recall your initial reaction to the music?

JD: There wasn't any music. It was just Jim's words. Ray said, "This is Jim, the singer." He had never sung. But they showed me some of the lyrics and they were real out there, yet I could see the fluidity and rhythm to them and right away thought, "God, put

this to rock music? Yeah!" Jim was real shy and sung facing the corner of the garage, but he was different and great looking and his words were real off the wall. I thought, "Okay, I'll stick with this for a while." I was playing in a bunch of bands, but I figured, "Okay, I'll rehearse here for a while and see what happens." In fact, finally when Robbie got in the band, he said to me, "Would you just quit the other bands you're in, damnit. Are you in this or not?" And I did, finally. I could see the potential. I could see that Jim was real special.

RF: So then, primarily, you created the music? Was that the case throughout the Doors?

JD: Yeah. Jim had his lyrics and melodies. He didn't play instruments and didn't know anything about chords, modulation, anything.

RF: How did he present the melodies?

JD: A cappella. He would say, "It goes, [singing the tune with lyrics to 'The Chrystal Ship'] before you slip into unconsciousness . . ." He would just sort of peck it out that way and we'd go, "Well, let's see. A-flat." I'd say, "Sounds like it's in 3/4. Let's try it in 3/4."

RF: That's amazing.

JD: It is? Well, I guess it is. I guess most musicians say, "Okay, this is the song." Robbie had chords and melodies. He wrote the hits like "Light My Fire," "Love Her Madly," "Touch Me," so when he brought a song in, it was a little more finished. Jim's were real raw. We arranged it all together. The way I view it is that all though school, we were doing our homework individually. I had been in music and worked on my drums since I was eight, Ray was playing blues in Chicago his whole life and Robbie was playing Flamenco. While Jim was growing up, he was writing. He was an English student, graduated UCLA in 2 1/2 years in the smart-kid program and he read everything. So he was doing his homework too, and when we all got together, we made it in a year and a half, which is pretty quick. A lot of bands say, "You assholes, you didn't pay any dues." Well, yes and no. We paid our dues growing

aren't getting off on certain sections. That's what most bands do for years and that's how they get their stuff together.

RF: So how did the contract come about? Tell me about the days playing in the clubs and the Whisky.

JD: Our first gig was at the London Fog which was a few doors down from the Whisky. It was sort of a sleazy bar that attracted derelicts and strange people. We auditioned and packed the house that night with UCLA film students. The club manager went crazy and hired us. The next night it was empty, but we had the gig and we got paid \$10 each, Thursday through Sunday, 9:00 - 2:00, five sets. Later he asked us to play Tuesday and Wednesday for \$5 a night. I refused because, hey, I was a musician; a working professional. Jim wanted to do it and so we did. In the back of my mind, I knew it was invaluable honing of the material.

RF: With five sets a night, you were obviously doing cover material.

JD: Yes. We would do "Gloria," "Louie Louie," and that kind of stuff. Plus, we got to do our own, like we had this song where we just hit kind of a Latin groove and we would play it for fifteen minutes. That was "Latin Bullshit #2" and we had "Latin Bullshit #1," which was a different lick of some Latin feel, samba. We were fired because there was a fight in the bar and we were blamed for it, when we had nothing to do with it. But before that, always between the sets, we had gone down to the Whisky to look in the door. We'd see Love playing or the Byrds, and I'd be drooling, thinking, "Why am I in this band? I can play better than that drummer. I can be in that band." And Jim was chatting up Ronnie Haran who booked the Whisky, and that night, before we got fired, she came down and heard us and went crazy. She talked Elmer Valentine into hiring us as the house band without an audition. A week later, we were the house band at the Whisky and played for four months, opening up for Them [Van Morrison], the Byrds, Captain Beefheart, everybody. We developed a following, Vito and the Freaks, this troupe of freaks, and record companies started coming in. To be honest, we were pretty shrewd, business-wise. We

Photo by Rick Malkin

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I'D CRY AND GET A
NEW ONE AND IT
WOULD BE A FEW
WEEKS BEFORE I
COULD STAND THE
SOUND OF IT."**



up, individually, and when we met, it was the right synthesis. So here's this guy who has these words, but he also has melody ideas, just out of nowhere, a cappella, off the top of his head, so that was special. And then the fact that we hacked it all out together was special, which made it a real democracy in honing down those songs. Everybody had equal input and if anybody was dissatisfied about anything, he said so. There was no paranoia about that, so the songs got absolutely the best treatment they could get. And then when we started playing clubs, they got further honed because of the feedback. Live, you can feel what is boring and where people

didn't know a lot about business, but we were cautious. We wouldn't just sign stuff. Robbie came from a sort of semi-wealthy family and his dad kind of oversaw us and that was helpful. Record companies started coming in and everybody knew "Light My Fire" was a hit, but nobody knew how to do it. Sonny & Cher's manager wanted 75% of the publishing, which is immoral, so we thought, "No, no." Jac Holzman at Elektra Records was really the only one who made a good offer, \$5,000 and 5% so we could get equipment. So we did it. Since "Light My Fire" happened to be on the first album, through guilt, they improved the contract shortly

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Audio Engineers On Miking & Recording Drums:



Photo by Rick Malkin

by Mark Z. Stevens

Part 1

Danny Wallin

Murray McFadden

Larry Forkner

Stan Miller

As with many good articles, this two-part series is the expanded result of a less detailed idea. The original idea to give a brief, concise rundown of common mic's used to record drums and to amplify them in concert, was expanded on by Mark Stevens. We'd originally contacted Mark for advice and guidance. He grew excited by the idea and took it upon himself to interview six of the best recording engineers in the world, who represent a cross-section of experienced engineering in early rock 'n' roll, to prime time television, to major motion pictures, to jingles. Instead of simply discussing microphones, Mark decided to delve into exactly what a microphone was; how many different types were used; which mic's were best in a particular situation, and beyond that to discuss the relationship between the drummer and the engineer.

Mark Stevens is one of the busiest and best studio drummers on the West Coast. His playing experience covers the entire spectrum of drumming. He's extremely knowledgeable about microphone and studio technique. Many of the questions he asked were geared towards a drummer who had no understanding of these things.

In the first part of our series, Mark talks with Murray McFadden, Danny Wallin and Larry Forkner. Stan Miller was interviewed by Scott Fish and was added to this series to shed light on the subject of miking drums for outdoor concerts.

Murray McFadden

MS: How do you approach miking drums?

MM: Well actually, you just mess around and find out what works best. You see other engineers do stuff, and you see what you like. An engineer doesn't really go out and say, "Oh, he's got *Pinstripe* heads on a set of Pearl drums—then I know I'm going to use such and such."

There aren't any hard and fast rules. You can vary your style of recording. Like how much of each mic' that you actually put into the drum mix—that varies a lot. But, as far as the type of microphones you use—the microphone makes *less* difference

than most people realize. It makes a difference, but the difference is 10% to 20% all the way around.

MS: The major difference then is the engineer and what he does with the board?

MM: It's the EQ and the mix. When you're recording drums *mono*, like in a situation if you're doing a TV show . . .

MS: Let's explain what recording drums mono means and why that would be different from stereo 8-track.

MM: When you're recording drums mono, all the drum mic's—say if you've got ten drum mic's out, you're mixing

down to one track. If you're mixing them stereo onto a multi-track machine—most people split their drums up on four tracks, maybe five—you still end up having to mix ten mic's down to a smaller number of tracks.

Say, for example, a kick, snare, and drums left and right. There's four tracks. So, it's the relationship between the microphones, and how you mix them down to those four channels which makes the *most* difference.

MS: In other words, what you favor?

MM: Exactly. That makes more difference than the *kind* of mic' you use.

MS: What do you like to use as far as a snare drum mic'?

MM: AKG 452. I use 452's all the way



around on the drumkit except for the kick drum, which is still a little too radical for a condenser mic'. Sometimes you can get away with it in some situations, but if you've got somebody who really smacks his kick drum—a condenser mic' is pretty much going to die. So, I usually use a Sennheiser 421, which is a real wide frequency response dynamic mic'.

MS: Do you prefer that over an Electro-Voice RE20 for a bass drum?

MM: Absolutely. RE-20's are too "poofy" sounding. They don't have the high "pop" that you want in a contemporary drum sound. I mean, if you've got nothing else, it's okay. Anything's okay to use.

MS: Preferences?

MM: A Sennheiser 421, or even a Shure SM-57's better than an RE-20 as far as I'm concerned because you just don't get the crack. Or you don't get that little slap at the top. You want the "poof" at the bottom and the little attack at the top. An RE-20 is just kind of muddy sounding.

MS: Overheads?

MM: Overheads are usually high enough that they're not subject to the same abuse as mic's which are right next to the attacking surface. You can be a little more selective with your overheads. I use AKG-452's, but you can use just about anything you want that has a nice high frequency response to pick up cymbals. You can use an AKG-414 or AKG-452's or Neumann 8Ts.

MS: How about hi-hats? AKG-452 also?

MM: No. I usually put up a hi-hat mic' and then I don't use it! Hi-hat mic's are for emergencies. Unless you've got a guy who plays real light, you can usually pick up the hi-hat in the overheads. There's usually more hi-hat than you need before you put the mic' up. But if I do need a hi-hat mic', I use a Neumann KM-84.

I've heard a lot of different philosophies as far as hi-hat mic's are concerned. The main thing is to get the bottom out of the hi-hat mic' so it doesn't screw up the rest of the drumset sound. If you're going to use a hi-hat mic' with a real broad frequency response, you should roll the bottom end out of it so it doesn't tubby up your whole

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Danny Wallin

MS: Without getting real technical, can you talk about the different kinds of quality in sound between microphones?

DW: I use various mic's for different purposes. I use the ribbon mic's on brass because of the mass, the rhythm, the fact that they don't put out quite so much voltage when the brass are playing loud. Too much voice crushes the pre-amplifiers. I use two condenser mic's because I prefer the two pre-amplifiers for the strings and woodwinds. I use dynamics on a drumkit a lot, because they don't overload at all if you're

using them right. And I like the sound of them.

MS: Okay, let's talk drums. How come my drums sound so good? It's not my drums, because I take the same drums all over.

DW: I work for The Record Plant, and that's really a hot place to make records. The guys are all really capable and they get great sounds. But, they'll spend hours trying to get a drum sound and I spend about five minutes.

MS: How do you do it?

DW: I think it's all relative. I know how

the drums should sound, having been a drummer. And I just go for that relative balance of the drum itself. I don't over-mike it. I don't use nearly the mic's those guys use.

MS: What mic's *do* you use, and where?

DW: I use a big diaphragm dynamic for the kick drum, like a Shure SM-7.

MS: What about the Electro-Voice RE-20? Do you ever use that?

DW: I would use the RE-20 in a pinch. It's a good mic' for a kick drum. I use the Shure SM-57's for the toms. And for the snare I use an SM-57. I hate that overloaded sound that everybody gets when they use a condenser microphone. A Neumann KM-84 does pretty well. It's a

Larry Forkner

MS: It's always been my contention that no matter what my drums sound like in a room, I'm only going to sound as good as the engineer—or better.

LF: It's a teamwork thing. I can't make lousy drums sound great. And if you've got a lousy engineer, he can make great drums sound lousy, too. If you have good drums and a great engineer, then they will sound good.

MS: When I hear drums, I'm behind them. When you hear them, you're on the other

side of the room. They sound like drums there. If you put your ear near where you put a close mic', it doesn't sound at all like a drum.

LF: At that point you're sampling only a small portion of the drum and you're losing a lot of the ambiance.

MS: Do you ever change mic's because you're not happy with the sound?

LF: Oh yeah, constantly. Usually before I start EQing. If it's marginal sometimes I'll try a couple of EQing tricks. If I can't

bring out what I want to hear, then for sure I'll try something different.

MS: Well, you can do something else too. You can always ask for a different snare drum.

LF: Right. That's another option. But that depends on the situation and if you have the time; and the rapport you have with the drummer; or if he's even got another snare drum with him!

After the microphone considerations, the miking technique and the way the drums are tuned work together. Because you're actually listening to a small area of sound compared to what the man behind the kit is hearing.



Stan Miller

by Scott Fish

SF: When you're miking drums at an outdoor concert, what are some of the first considerations you check for?

SM: The interesting thing about miking drums is, it's not only *how* you mike the drum, but hopefully you have a drummer who knows what *he's* doing and can tune the drums properly to help you. A badly tuned set of drums, no matter what microphone you put on them or how you position the mic', is *still* going to be bad. If you don't put something good *in* to begin with,

it's not going to come out good. That's something a lot of people in the audio business don't understand. I don't know if a lot of them understand that a drum is a musical instrument. Sound people think of drums as being a bunch of things you bang on. They're musical instruments and they have to be *tuned musically*. The weather, temperature, humidity—all those things affect how that drum sounds and how the skin is going to react. The type of material the shell is made of affects how it's going to sound. The most important thing is to find

a drummer who tunes his drums well. For example, Dennis St. John, who drums with Neil Diamond and has for many years—one of the things that he's a real peach at is tuning. He's *very* good at it.

SF: We get a lot of questions on miking differences between musicians who like to play their drums muffled, and those who like to play them open. Is this much of a consideration when you're miking outdoors?

SM: Well, obviously how the *guy plays* has some effect on it. Miking outdoors is somewhat different than miking inside, only because if they're inside, you probably don't have to use as many microphones; you can probably pull away from the instruments

good solid microphone. It gets a really good "poppy" sound. It's a little condenser mic'. I use the SM-57 on the snare because I like a more mellow, deeper sound. For my overheads I use hot condenser mic's. That gets me a nice, crisp sound on the cymbals. And if I were to use like a disco hi-hat thing, I would use a KM-84 on the hi-hat. And not hit it from above. I'd hit it from below the hi-hat and away from it so I don't get a lot of the other stuff leaking into it. And I don't use nearly as many mic's on the toms. I don't use a mic' on every tom, for example. I usually use one mic' for every two toms, and I try to get it so that it goes across really nice. I just try to get that relative balance going, and get

the overheads and everything working so that it all sounds really cohesive and powerful. It really works. The more microphones you have, the smaller they sound.
MS: What about the guys who are miking under and over the snare?
DW: I guess that's one way of doing it. To me, you're dealing with a phase problem already. There's a phase difference between the two mic's. They're going to start cancelling. There's a phase difference between two identical mic's at any given distance. You're always out of phase at some frequencies. But if you get one right above the snare drum and one right below, you really are amplifying your problems in phase. It's a sound I don't like.

MS: So you automatically start out of phase.
DW: Yeah.
MS: But what if you switch one?
DW: Well, then you're turning it electrically out of phase and then you *truly* are out of phase! You're just out of phase at various frequencies when you're above and below like that. Even if two mic's are electrically in phase, you're going to have a phase differential there no matter what you do.
MS: You mean acoustically.
DW: Absolutely.
MS: Do you make the drum sound adjustment after you hear the kind of music it is?
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MS: What do you do when you work with a drummer for the first time?
LF: You go with what you know the best. The set-up I use on you is the most common set-up I use. We're talking about jingles. We're talking about enough dynamic mic's to get reasonable coverage of the tom-toms, however many there may be.
MS: One mic' per tom, or split?
LF: That depends on how many toms there are. You can put a single mic' between two small tom-toms. The bigger the toms get, they don't sound as good split. The lower toms just don't translate as well as the higher ones.
MS: You're using Shure SM-57's ?

LF: Right. That's a microphone you can trust to not give you any problems as far as breaking up. It's a tough microphone. I know what kind of EQ I have to use to get what I want out of them. They work on the snare and the toms. I can use them across the kit, but I usually use something a little brighter for the cymbals. The AKG 452's are one choice, Sennheiser 405's are another. You could use Neumann 57's.
MS: The crucial thing for me is always snare and bass drum.
LF: When you're on a jingle, you don't even get enough time to get that balance. You make sure that the snare, hi-hat and kick are all right there, definitely present

and no problems.
MS: What do you like to use on the bass drum in that situation?
LF: Bass drums are a whole other thing. I've got about three mic's that I can rotate with. The Electro-Voice 666; the Sennheiser 441 and the Electro-Voice RE-20. Sometimes an RE-15. That works okay on some kick drums. But, when you know it's going to be for TV, it doesn't matter if you're picking up 40 cycles. So why bother? Accept that the client generally doesn't want to hear something that sounds like cardboard. He wants to hear it bigger than life just like everybody else.
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more, from the individual drum. Because the environment is going to *help you*. Now, it may hinder you, but in most cases it will help. When you get outside, all of a sudden you don't have the environment to help direct the sound into the microphone. The other thing is, if you're outside, nine times out of ten you've got a wind problem. So, if you start pulling a microphone back a long ways from a drum you obviously have to increase the gain; you have to turn the level up higher since you're asking more out of it. It's more sensitive and susceptible to other things going on around it.
 So, outside I try to mike the drums as *tight* as I can, with as many microphones as I can get on them. For example, with

Dennis, who has a very large drumset, I sometimes use between eighteen and twenty-four microphones. He has at least eight rack toms and I use one microphone on every tom. The rack toms are open from the bottom so I mike them from the bottom. Sometimes you can't do that; the drum doesn't sound right there. Sometimes you've got to try it somewhere else.
 I always tell people to experiment. There are *no* hard and fast rules. Don't do something just because you see somebody else doing it that way. Musicians and sound people are guilty of this. They see Joe Blow doing it a certain way and they say, "My God, that was the best drum sound I ever heard. *That* must be the way to do it." So,

they do that everyday, the same place the same way. I tell people: don't be afraid to experiment. Try different things.
 The other thing I was going to say about outdoor situations, is a lot of times I try to use some kind of a noise gate on a lot of the drums, particularly on the toms, if I can get them adjusted. Sometimes they're difficult to get adjusted. They shut off at the wrong time. But, if you've got a large number of microphones, and you're gating them, you might use a Kepex type unit, or there's another unit that we bought that's relatively inexpensive for a 4-channel gate. The noise gates will help because now you're closing down microphones. You
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Photo by Pat Jolly

BACK HOME WITH



The first person to get me excited about James Black's drumming was Jaimoe Johanson. We were listening to records and Jaimoe asked me if I'd ever heard James Black. I said, "No." He pulled out an old Riverside record of the Adderley Brothers, placed it on the turntable, put the needle on the record and admonished, "Listen to this!"

Many months later, Jim Keltner called from New Orleans where he was touring with Dylan. One of the first people Jim called when he was there was James Black. James came to the Dylan concert and he and Jim stayed up until the wee hours talking drums. I remembered an MD interview with Freddie Waits, Bill Hart and Horacee Arnold (Colloquium III). Billy Hart said, "I don't care who goes to New Orleans, they're in for a shock, as long as James Black is there."

This interview was taped in two sessions. It's always been a kick for me to get to know the-guy-who-plays-drums-on-this-record as a human being. The drummers we refer to as "monsters" or "incredible," "unbelievable" and "fantastic" usually turn out to be down-to-earth souls with an obsession for their instrument. I felt the personality of James came out well in this interview. There's a pattern in here of James referring to the "discouragement" he's had in his career and how he dealt with it. Something I read in James Baldwin's short story, *Sonny's Blues*, captured the feeling I got from James about his music. Just substitute the word "drums" for the word "piano."

I had never before thought of how awful the relationship must be between the musician and his instrument. He has to fill it, this instrument, with the breath of life, his own. He has to make it do what he wants it to do. And a piano is just a piano. It's made out of so much wood and wires and little hammers and big ones, and ivory. While there's only so much you can do with it, the only way to find this out is to try to make it do everything.

JB: I majored in brass at Southern University. I'm a converted trumpet player. Drums was my main instrument, but when I went to grammar school, they had about fifty or sixty young fellows who wanted to play drums. My band teacher asked me if I wanted to play the flute. I told him no, because the flute was for chicks. He asked if I wanted to play the trumpet, so I started playing trumpet in grammar school.

I don't know the name of the man who was my main influence on drums. He's dead now. He was a short, almost midget-sized drummer. He had a scene painted on

his drums and he played Dixieland. I thought he was the greatest thing I had ever heard; a local drummer in New Orleans. I was a little kid about eight years old. I wanted to play the drums way before then, but seeing him play and listening to what his drums sounded like added to my interest in drums. My mom said I used to beat on the walls and the chair and everything. I was just a natural drummer, I guess. I had a certain fascination for drums for some reason, but I got steered into trumpet. My

with you and Freddie Kohlman. Were you able to learn from the New Orleans drummers like Freddie Kohlman and his generation? Were they open to passing along tricks of the trade and conceptual things?
JB: I never really went up to anybody and asked. I'd just sit down in the audience and see what they were doing. I guess you could say I *did* study with somebody indirectly. I just watched and listened and I'd go home and practice. Ed Blackwell, believe it or not, was a great influence on me too. I used

Photo by Pat Jolly



teacher said, "You already know how to play the drums. You need to know some harmony and some melody." So, I played trumpet all through high school and through Southern University.

My drums were like a sideline axe until I got to the point where I made a decision and said, "Aw man, I'm going to leave this trumpet alone and stick with my drums." I liked the trumpet, but I loved the drums.

SF: When you weren't in grammar school did you play the drums with friends?

JB: Right. There was this friend of mine, Marcel Richardson, who lived around the corner and we grew up together. He played the drums and the piano. Mom used to give me piano lessons and we had a piano at the house. Marcel would play the piano and I'd play the drums. We had a little makeshift set. Then we'd switch over and I'd play the piano for a little while and he'd play the drums. We just learned like that.

SF: So, you never went through a methodical approach to the drums?

JB: After I got in school I started reading books and practicing to learn how to read. I knew how to read trumpet music. But, I never actually went for drum lessons as such. I never studied with anybody.

SF: I read an interview Valerie Wilmer did

to go up this place where Ed Blackwell, Ellis Marsellis, Chuck Beatey and Matt Perilant used to play. I thought Blackwell was the greatest thing I'd ever heard. I said, "Wow! I never knew you could get all this out of the drums!" It made me go home and practice more!

SF: Were you friends with Ed?

JB: I was younger and sort of fearful of going up to him and saying, "Hey man, what's happening?" I never did really talk to him too much. I'd just sit and listen on the sidelines.

SF: Well, how did you get from being a little kid who banged on walls and chairs to the way you play today?

JB: I don't know. I guess it was just in me and it came out. All I needed was some inspiration and some stimuli and these people stimulated me to practice. Believe it or not, one of my favorite drummers was Shelly Manne back with Shorty Rogers and His Giants. I used to listen to him a lot and I liked all the colors that he played. I know Art Blakey and Philly Joe from when I was living in New York. I met Philly Joe at a joint down here called Zoomin' Charlies. It was like the local jazz club where everybody played. I saw this man sitting there in the audience and I

JAMES BLACK

by Scott Fish

thought, "This man's face looks familiar." I didn't even know who he was until I was passing by on a break and a fellow said, "Man, I want you to meet Philly Joe." I said, "Well damn! No wonder your face looks familiar." I'd seen it on album covers and all that. We hung out all night and went to different places and played a few times. And I got to know him like that.

I met Art Blakey in New York. I also met him in Los Angeles when I was working with Yusef Lateef. Blakey and I got to talking and we just became friends. We had a mutual respect, I guess. I respected him more than I guess he respected me because *he* was Art Blakey. I was a little unknown dude named James Black just coming up. It was a pleasure for me just to be in this man's company.

SF: Well, how old were you when you owned your first drumset?

JB: I owned a snare drum and we had a pasteboard box filled with paper and we had a little makeshift footpedal we put on. This is when I was somewhere around eight or ten years old. I played snare drum and the box! I didn't own a set of drums until I was about seventeen or eighteen. At that age I played in a lot of rhythm and blues bands all out in the little country towns. There was a little group called June Spears and The Rocketeers. It was basically rhythm and blues, yard parties and stuff like that. I got into playing jazz through

first jazz gig. I was thinking about that the other day. "How did I ever get started playing jazz and learning that particular style?" I remembered it was them two people. They passed by and heard me and said, "Hey little ol' chump. You want a gig with us?" "Yeah!" Because they were famous people around the city, I was honored.

out?

JB: They taught me a lot of self-discipline because they were hard on me. "Hey man! You're playing the *wrong stuff!* Why don't you *practice?* Why don't you do *better* than that?" They still had me on the gig but they would just ride me and make me discipline myself enough to play with

"NEW YORK BECAME REAL SERIOUS AND HEAVY AND DEPRESSING TO ME AFTER A WHILE. I JUST HAD TO GET AWAY FROM ALL THAT DEPRESSION."

They took me to Baton Rouge, coached me, and nurtured my jazz experience and made me want to study more. They'd turn me on to different people to listen to on records. It was like they were big brothers that were hard on their little brother because they saw he had potential. They just brought it out of me.

SF: What kind of things were you practicing in your garage?

JB: I used to play along with records. Jazz stuff. Shelly Manne, Stan Kenton, Shorty

them. "Alright. You say I play bad? Wait until I come *back!*" I'd get mad and go home and practice, come back and burn them down. They'd jump on me again and I'd get mad and go home and practice and come back again.

SF: Would they tell you to listen to different drummers?

JB: Right. You got it. "Why don't you listen to so-and-so, man? You're playing all funny like that. You ought to quit listening to all that West Coast stuff. Listen to Art Blakey and Philly Joe, man. Listen to *these* people. Man, listen to Roy Haynes and people like that!" There was East Coast jazz and West Coast jazz at that time, and I really didn't like East Coast jazz. It wasn't harmonized enough. They were just doing a lot of solos. But, I started listening to it and that's what happened.

SF: So, while you were playing drums and trumpet you were also studying piano?

JB: My mom used to give me piano lessons. She'd keep me inside and make me practice the piano.

SF: Do you feel that knowing piano and trumpet, melody and harmony, has helped your drumming?

JB: It helps you out a great deal. I found that out later. It gives you an insight into the harmonic and melodic elements of the music; different colorations that the drums can play instead of just being a rudimental-type person just playing a rhythm. You can hear the melody, too. You know where the melody's going and what it's doing. We all know that music is three things: rhythm, harmony and melody. Just to know the rhythm would mean you'd be an incomplete musician. That means you *must* know a little harmony and a little melody if you're going to play the drums. I feel that people who deal in harmony and melody should know something about the drums. I was just lucky that I had people around me to guide me in the right direction. I already had the rhythm. They

two friends of mine, a saxophone player and a guitar player, who used to play with Fats Domino. Their names were Nat and Roy. They used to pass by my house. I would practice every day after school. At 3:15 or 3:30 I was in the garage practicing the drums. They heard me and said, "Man, we need a drummer." It was my

Rogers, Art Blakey, Philly Joe ... all the people. Clifford Brown. All the jazz things. When I was younger, I had a fondness for West Coast jazz because of the harmonies involved. I guess that was because of my trumpet upbringing.

SF: How did Nat and Roy coach you? What did they give you that helped you

taught me the harmony and the melody.

SF: You were a teenager in New Orleans when rock 'n' roll started. People like Fats Domino with Earl Palmer were happening in New Orleans. How did that affect you?

JB: I played it! I became multi-styled. I just tried to learn as many styles of playing the drums as I possibly could. I played like Elvin Jones for a little while. I played like Art Blakey for a little while. Like everybody else did, you just imitate a style for a while until you develop some ideas of your own. When rock came out I joined this rock 'n' roll band and we used to go out in the country and play rock for colleges and stuff.

SF: Ed Blackwell told me that in New Orleans the musicians have a mutual respect for each other regardless of what style of music they play. Nobody puts anyone down.

JB: Right. Everybody wants to know what everybody else is doing. You're in your own field but we're not musically prejudiced. We'll play anything, from Dixieland to Bach! We specify one particular area that we like to express ourselves in, but we're familiar with *all* of the areas. There's a certain musical culture about New Orleans that we learn multi-styles. You can't just be limited to one style. If you do, you'll starve to death.

SF: When did you first come to New York City?

JB: I came to New York with a man named Joe Jones. He was the piano player who had a hit called "You Talk Too Much." And The Dixie Cups; I played on the Dixie Cups' session, "Chapel of Love." I think it was 1960 or '61. I worked in a club called Jazzland right down the street from a joint called Beefsteak Charlie's, until me and Joe Jones fell out. We got mad with each other. The next thing I knew, I was in a hotel with a bus ticket to go home. I get this call on the phone and it's Horace Silver! It was the last three nights that Birdland was open that I worked there with Horace. I feel that was an honor.

SF: How did you like New York?

JB: Man, I loved New York. Everything that happened, everyday there was something new, something I hadn't seen, somebody I hadn't met. It was like I was in Wonderland. You've heard of Wilbur Hogan, right? He was a good friend of mine. After the Horace Silver gig he told me that Lionel Hampton needed a drummer and he asked me if I wanted to audition. I said yeah because I was looking for a job and I didn't want to leave New York. If I couldn't find a job I would've had to come back home. Going to New York was like going to Mecca in them days. I guess it still is.

So, Wilbur and I were walking down Broadway when we ran into Lionel. We walked up and he said, "Yeah Gates. What's happening?" Wilbur said, "This is James Black, my homeboy from New Or-

leans. He's looking for a job. He's a very good drummer. Why don't you let him audition?" He said, "Yeah." So I went around to the studio they were auditioning at. They put the book in front of me and I knew how to read. I auditioned and got the job. I stayed with him about three years.

SF: If you felt like New York City was Mecca, why did you leave?

JB: After a while I got sort of bored with it. It just became a hassle to me. I got homesick. I lived there for about six years. It was just too much for me to be dealing with. I decided to come back home. Basically, I guess I'm a country boy. I missed the trees and the life was maybe just a little too fast for me at the time. I couldn't handle it. I came back home and said, "Why not stay here?"

SF: Do you think a person would have to come to New York City to make it as a drummer?

sort of closed. They used to act like they didn't know me. They knew who I was—they just *acted* like they didn't. That kind of got to me too.

SF: If a New York drummer moved to New Orleans to make a living, how would you guys treat him?

JB: People down here would probably love him and accept him with open arms, if he could play. If he *can't* play, we'd tell him that too! A bunch of people have come down to New Orleans and just made it their home and started working around here. People here are a little more close. New Orleans is *sort of* a metropolis, but not like New York. New York has got people from all over the world there. People here are from all over the country and the world, but the musical society is a little closer here than the musical society was back then in New York.

SF: Are there second- and third-generation



Photo by Pat Jolly

JB: Eventually, sooner or later, you've got to go there. Just to go there and say, "Alright. Here I am. I've come!" If you don't stay there, at least you can say you've been there, made your little mark and now it's time to go. It's your choice. If you want to stay—beautiful. If you want to live like that—fantastic. If you don't—you can leave. I didn't particularly want to live like that. After a while I had a few domestic problems and some other stuff was happening. My wife was a country girl and I was a musician. She left because she got mad with me. I had two kids at the time and they didn't like New York. They said, "Well Daddy, we don't even have a backyard!" They weren't used to living in an apartment. Here in New Orleans we have a yard and patio and all that kind of craziness. In New York it was apartment living. They just didn't dig it, so they left. After a while, I got to missing them, so I left too!

SF: How did the New York musicians react to you when you first came to town?

JB: I had to break into the circle. They weren't all that open. Everybody was trying to make it. They were sort of distant. They were friendly enough, but they were

families of musicians in New Orleans?

JB: Right. Fourth- and fifth-generations of musicians. There are musical families of people. And it's more family oriented here.

SF: Is having your family together important to you?

JB: Most definitely. Man, if you're secure in your home life—when you go out to work your music is more secure. If you're having hassles at your house, man, you can't play. I mean, how can you play if you and your old lady are hassling and the kids are hassling? You can't play if your home life is all messed up. You can *do* it, but it's harder. It's much easier if you know everything is alright at home. It makes it easier to express yourself.

SF: In your interview with Valerie you mentioned that your concept on drums was born out of hearing parade drummers, and trying to duplicate everything you heard the parade drummers do on your drumset.

JB: That's right. In New Orleans, I guess you know about the second line, the funerals and all that. Anybody who grows up in an atmosphere like that—with the

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Industry Insights: Drum Workshop's Don Lombardi

by Rick Van Horn

The name "Drum Workshop, Inc." is not exactly a household word among drummers. But those who play or have heard DW drums are prone to say, "They're built the way they built them in the good old days." Yet in the same breath they'll mention some of the innovative new features incorporated into DW drumsets.

This merging of the best elements of past and present technology is largely due to the personal influence of DW president Don Lombardi. Don is not your average music-industry executive. You wouldn't expect to find the president of a drum company out in the shop adjusting spring tension on bass drum pedals. But that's exactly where he was when I interviewed him at the factory where DW drums are made. Don is basically a casual person, and not what you'd consider outspoken. But he believes intensely in what he and his partners are doing, and waxed eloquent on the subject nearest to his heart: the instrument created at DW.

RVH: How and when did Drum Workshop get started?

DL: We're celebrating our tenth anniversary this year, in that it was ten years ago that I actually legally started operating as the Drum Workshop. It operated as a drum teaching studio for about a year. Then I became partners with Fred Gruber, who was a very important part of DW at that time. It's amazing that Fred is not more well-known; he's the most in-demand drum teacher around when people are aware of what he's doing. When we got into manufacturing I needed help, so John Good became involved with the company, in '73 or '74. At that point it was still part-time. I was still playing actively, still doing some travelling, and John was working at keeping the doors open when I wasn't around. The first thing we were making was an adjustable trap-case seat. At nights we'd close up the teaching studio and pack all the drums away and bring out tables and make drum seats. About 1977 the opportunity came up to purchase the Camco dies and molds. How that came about was that I was teaching the son of the owner of Camco (Tom Beckman) when Camco was brought out here to Los Angeles. Tom was interested in marketing the seat with his Roland Keyboard line, and also with the Camco drum products. A few years went by, and the opportunity came up—when he decided to sell the Camco company—for him to sell the trade name only, and then to sell everything that was physically involved with the making of Camco drums separately. So the sale of the company was split into two parts. At that point, I went to a long-time friend, Paul Real, who was a drummer and also sings very well. I had actually been employed by him on and off through the years as a drummer with groups playing in town. We thought it was a very good opportunity for us to get into what we eventually wanted to do in terms of manufacturing a complete drum line. We bought everything that it took to make the stands, the hi-hats, the pedals, the drums, the lug molds; even some rim-rolling equipment that dated back to Oaklawn Illinois, which Tom Beckman hadn't even used. At that

point we pretty much went into business, from a standpoint of manufacturing, renting a building, having a front office, employees and what have you. Paul handles all of the sales end of the operation. As far as the actual manufacturing and the nuts and bolts, we've diversified so that I'm doing that. At this point, it's more than a full-time job for both of us. That brings us up to the present. We originally started out four years ago with just the pedal and did that for a couple of years.

RVH: You've referred often to Camco. I know that you purchased the Camco pedal patent, and their dies and molds. In what other way is your corporate heritage from the Camco company?

DL: The heritage of the actual drum itself doesn't go really past the lug. The round lug was always the symbol of the Camco drum. That had a subconscious feeling about it that went hand in hand with quality, which was always synonymous with Camco drums. The thing that makes our drums very much identical to the early Camcos is just our intention of keeping those two things together. I was always a Camco lover. True, I grew up and slept with my Ludwig catalog, as every kid did, but then when I got to playing more professionally, I had Camco drums. I always used a Camco pedal; I never dreamt I'd ever be making it. The heritage is really a matter of us wanting to continue something which, whether it's called Camco or Drum Workshop or whatever, is the idea that there's a small company of drummers making something they believe in, and are very proud of. That's where Camco and the others were in the beginning. There was a person, as you're standing here talking to me, who's name was Slingerland; who's name was Gretsch; and those were real people who were making their drums at one point in their lives years ago.

The way we came about getting to the point where we could make drums like we are now was kind of a fluke. In fact, it would be economically almost impossible in today's times for someone to embark upon this from scratch. We were able to buy all these twenty or thirty-year-old dies, which don't really get old, at a discounted price. If you were to go out today and purchase even the mold to make a lug on a drum, you would be years and years downstream before you'd see a return just on that investment, much less getting into anything else. And the same is true with the bass drum pedal. We have upgraded all of the tooling and molds—you can rework those things so that parts keep coming out nicely—but to start from scratch and do it today is out of the question.

RVH: Is there now a Camco brand of drums being manufactured somewhere else?

DL: To my knowledge, not at this point. For a while there was, since the people who produce Tama drums bought the trade name of Camco. A year or so after the sale was consummated they did come onto the marketplace again with Camco drums, with heavy-duty hardware. For whatever reason, it seems that they have discontinued marketing. The name is used on the bass drum pedal which they have duplicated similar to the size and dimensions of the original mold of the Camco pedal which we make. It's a Camco pedal which they have also done with a chain and sprocket on it. That's the only place that I'm aware of that the name is out into the marketplace.

RVH: Your shells are your big selling point. What's special about them?

DL: The thing that we feel the strongest about in terms of the construction of the shell is that it's thin; it's a six-ply shell. The shell itself, unlike an eight- or nine- or twelve-ply shell, will allow you to play the drum lightly or heavily and still get a response out of it. From my personal experience, if you play on drums with thicker shells, it seems you have to hit them harder in order to really hear the "drum" sound, otherwise you get a "drum head" sound; you don't get as much life. With this drum, the louder you

play it the more projection you're going to get, but you have the option to play it lightly and still get a true drum sound. I think it goes back to the era of the older drum shells which were made similar to this; guys were playing jazz on them.

The counterhoops which we put on the tops and the bottoms of the shells are again a six-ply, solid maple counterhoop, so you actually have twelve plies at the top and the bottom of the shells. That keeps the concentricity of the drum, and the strength that you need. I think a lot of the drum sound problems in recent years (and by that I'm going back fifteen years, anyway), is the advent of the mylar head over the calf head, where it has a certain inherent sound quality to itself. If you tighten it up it doesn't have the "give" that the calf head has. In other words, there is almost an exact place for the bearing edge to rest on a mylar drum head, whereas with a calf head, if it's oversize you're just going to pull it that much tighter and create your own bearing edge as you stretch the skin. With a mylar head, you want the tuck of where the bearing edge should rest on the mylar to be exactly where the bearing edge is on your drum shell. And when you tighten that up, you don't want your shell to collapse in at all. With a six-ply shell as thin as ours, without the counterhoops you don't have a very strong shell. You don't want the strength to come from the thickness of the shell; I feel you want the strength to come from the counterhoop. You want the thinness of the shell so it will resonate and give body to the sound of the drum.

We feel the key factors in the sound of our drums are the shell construction and the way in which we make the drums: the fact that they're made one at a time; the bearing edges are hand trued; we have the bearing edge shaped so that it fits perfectly within the cup of a mylar drum head hoop; having the counterhoops at the top and bottom to give that extra strength. It's important for the smaller drums where you have the head tension the tightest. It's also important on the larger drums, not so much from the sound of the drum standpoint, but from the standpoint of strength: a sixteen-inch six-ply shell gets real floppy. In recent years it's become fashionable (and more economically feasible) for larger drum companies to make drum shells without counterhoops. It's more cost-effective to make an eight-ply shell where you get the strength of the drum without putting counterhoops in. There's much less labor and fewer operations involved.

RVH: You have a very limited shell-size range, but the sizes you have are unique. Your deep shells were out before the current "power tom" movement. Why those sizes?

DL: I wish I had twenty pages of scientific information to back up the reasons for which we did that, but again it's a personal preference after doing experimenting and talking to people. There had been some information I had read on various shell sizes. They seemed to me the most natural differences in the ranges of the drums: 9x10, 10x12, 11x13, 12x14; we just added a 14x14 floor tom and a 20" bass drum which we had been missing. For toms to move up one inch in depth as they go down the line (10, 12, 13 and 14) just seemed to be the easiest and most natural difference in tuning range. I had heard all kinds of reasons why you had 8x12's, 9x13's, 10x14's, and don't know factually if they're true, but they go back to the idea that you're working with a 4' x 8' piece of plywood, and you want to be as cost-effective as possible and throw away as little as possible. It was an interesting problem for us in making the drums, in that when we approached a couple of different mills to make shells for us, they were all set up to make longer sizes and then go back and chop them up, which is what they do for other companies. By getting two inches longer in our shell length, it really clobbered us in the cost department, because there was more leftover from each long shell tube. We had to do a convincing job with the people who make the raw shells for us to get them to make it exactly the way I wanted it made. I had to keep saying, "No, this is the way. Can you do it?" The gentleman actually came out here from New Hampshire, which is where the shell comes from, and I showed him exactly what we wanted and convinced him that we were talking about a very limited production; pretty much a custom-ordered item. If we have a place in the

marketplace at all, it's going to be as a result of making the drums the way we make them.

Our shell is a very close duplicate of the original Camco drum shell. It's an *exact* duplicate in terms of shell construction, counterhoop thickness and dimensions. The outside diameter is slightly larger than what the original Camco shells were because we don't account for using a plastic or synthetic to cover the shell. Personally, I think that's going to inhibit the sound of the drum; natural wooden-shell drums without the plastic on them will give a little truer sound. When you talk about sounds, you're talking about something that cannot be graphed, measured or equated on a ma-



Photo by Paul Jonason

DW President, Don Lombardi (in typical, down-to-business working attire), carefully checks out operation of the rim rolling machine.

chine. You can do that up to a certain degree; some drums have more ring than others, some have more highs. But when you talk about the warmth in the sound of the drums, or the body in the drum, or the bottom, or the way the drum sounds when you're actually *playing it*—who cares about all the rest of it? That's all that counts. Then you get into a subjective area where it's a combination of a lot of things that add up to that. We have a lot of little unique features about our drums, like the nylon lock in the receiver so the tension rods won't come out, things like that. Well, that's not going to convince someone to buy a drumset who wasn't inter-



Photo by Paul Jonason

Concerned with the quality of his product, Don can often be found among his workers at the DW plant, critically inspecting every phase of the production process.

ested in the sound or the quality of the shell itself in the first place.
RVH: But if somebody is going to look at your drums, they should be aware of the foam-packed lug casing, and the nylon lock, all of these various details. They need to appreciate your philosophy on the shell, because otherwise it *looks* like another drum but isn't *priced* like another drum and they might be scared off.

DL: People who are thinking about getting other brands of drumsets—and this is nothing negative about any of the other drum companies because they're very, very important—probably haven't gotten to a point in their playing where they're more interested in getting a particular drum sound or quality. On the other hand, if they *are* looking for that quality they have to pay a little bit more for that. It's very important for there to be as inexpensive a drumset as possible out there for kids to buy. And there almost is no gap in between, which has been a real problem in the drum market. You're either going to buy as inexpensive a drumset as you can which does the job (at that point you're buying a *product* you're going to be able to play drums on), or you're going to get to a point where you're looking for an *instrument*, and then that puts you in a little different ball park. The semantics might seem like I'm being real picky, but there's a difference to me between a *product* and an *instrument*. I feel like we really make an instrument. I feel like there are a lot of products out there which look the same because they're round and you put heads on them and you hit them and you can play them. But when you're talking about professional players, or even younger players who are becoming more and more astute as to the quality and the sound they have to get out of their instrument, I think there's a definite void, and that's what we are anticipating being able to fill for drummers. To give them an option of upgrading what they have to what we produce.

RVH: Why can't they get that "optional" high quality from every drum company?

DL: When you're mass-producing things it's nobody's fault. The thing that happened was that you had small, independent drum

companies, and then suddenly drums became big business. I'd think we're looking at 1961, '62. Drum sales just went crazy during that period. The Beatles; rock 'n' roll music; four bands on every street. At that point it became not only an instrument which was being produced for drummers, it became a product which had to be produced for a lot of consumers. And the small, independent drum companies got swallowed up by these corporations. The money the big companies could make by purchasing the *name* and then manufacturing the drums themselves was just too appealing. The drum industry got into the hands of corporate giants, and has been since then. They're not in the business of making drums, they're in the business of making money. They sell products in order to make money. And there's a very important place for this, because it can be done at a reasonable cost, and it can function like a drum. Again, I'm not negative against any of the other drum companies or what they're doing. They had to make a lot of drums during those peak years, and you can only get to a certain point before you have to sacrifice somewhere. Quality control is a good word to use for what we're talking about now. I don't use that in terms of our company because we're at a size at which quality control is not a problem. I *am* quality control, and if something goes wrong I'm the guy who's going to get nailed for it.

RVH: Getting back to DW drums, do you incorporate the Gary Gauger RIMS system for all your tom-tom mounting or is it optional? Do you mount any traditional brackets at all?

DL: No. The hardware war is one I don't anticipate us ever preceding into. I see no necessity for it, although I have some ideas and I hear almost daily from players who have ideas about tom-mounting situations. I always am open to sit down and see what they have in mind; different ways to build things which meet their particular needs. Most are not marketable, because to make it for one guy is one thing, but to make it and try and sell it through distributors and retailers would price it way out of the ballpark. I almost push the idea down someone's throat who purchases our drums to use

the Gary Gauger RIMS principle, because it's so important to the sound of our drums.

RVH: The drums and the RIMS system are a complementary arrangement, then?

DL: Very much. If you have a drum with a thin shell which speaks and has a musical quality unto itself and you inhibit that by putting a mounting system on it, you've just choked the shell off. If you're holding the drum *by the side of the drum*, then it doesn't make any difference whether you have a six-ply shell or a twelve-ply, because you're killing the resonance of the shell itself. The mount that they would ultimately use with the RIMS system is up to them; the system is universal to anybody's tom mount.

RVH: What's the difference between putting a piece of hardware in the center of the shell versus putting a piece of hardware on the outer rims of the shell? You're still holding onto the shell aren't you?

DL: At this point the knowledge I have to draw from is that of a drummer; I don't have the scientific answers. Gary would, probably, because he's really methodical and a perfectionist in the quality of the product that he has. The only way to appreciate the difference is really to try it on the drum. If you mount one of our shells conventionally on a tom mount and play on it, and then you mount it on a RIMS system, or even if you mount it conventionally and play on it and then take it off the mount and just hold the rim in your hand and hit the drum, you're going to hear a tremendous difference.

Of course, you are to some degree restricting the shell because you even put lugs on it. We put our lugs on with torque wrenches set so they're barely tight. If you tighten the heck out of them, or use self-tapping screws where you're just literally cramming the shell in between the screw and the lug, then you are going to restrict that portion of the shell from resonating. It's interesting, though, that if the lugs are put on right, and you don't have any rattle problems with your lugs (springs are packed and the like), it actually adds more mass to the drum. If something is permanently affixed to the drum, it will resonate with the drum. You'll have more mass involved with the shell to resonate, as long as it is a permanent part of the shell.

Aside from the fact that drilling holes in the shell is a negative mounting system, putting anything *inside* the shell is even worse. A tom mount which actually protrudes into the shell will work almost as a tuning fork. It's going to change the sound that you get out of your drums.

RVH: Most of the major companies mount that way.

DL: They do it, and it works; it holds up the drum and it's fine. Why then am I so averse to somebody putting that type of a mount on one of our drums? It gets down to the sound that the drummer is looking for and how much it is called upon him to get a certain sound out of the drums. If you are the first and last say as to what you want your drums to sound like, then the way you muffle them, the way you mute them, is totally a personal thing. But if you've got engineers telling you that they want your drums to sound like *this*, or you're playing in live circumstances and you've got bands telling you they want *that*, you want your drums musically to project and allow you to fulfill the needs of everybody around you.

RVH: Some of the current set-up systems allow a great deal of arrangement flexibility, which might not be possible with the RIMS method. That flexibility might have to be as important a consideration to the player as the drum sound, especially at the club level.

DL: It's a problem at every level. Some of the biggest-name studio drummers here in town have problems with drum booth size. Nick Ceroli, who uses our drums, can't get a 22" bass drum on the riser for the Merv Griffin show, so he's got to have a 20". You're always working within the confines of what somebody is giving you. I can agree that the way a drummer is used to having his drums mounted is going to be something that he has to deal with every night. Hopefully, he wouldn't necessarily have to sacrifice the sound of the drum for a set-up which might be as comfortable. The most requests I get as far as helping drummers out with products is mount-

ing stands, racks, etc. Individually, they don't care if it takes a half-hour to put it together; once you're working a club and you set it up it's there, or if you're on the road you've got somebody doing it for you, so forget that aspect of it. But it's very hard to market something which is not easily torn down or set up.

RVH: It also has to be useful to the general consumer, right?

DL: Exactly. A statistic I read recently states that the median age of the drum consumer is seventeen or eighteen years old. That's why most of the major companies who are mass-producing products have to gear them to somebody who is just starting out, who has not made the commitment or thought about going to the next step where maybe he's going to be playing professionally or maybe getting involved in recording. I don't have a double-tom mount which solves all the problems, but to my knowledge the Gauger RIMS can be used with any hardware. What it might do is have your drums a little further apart than you might have on a standard tom set-up.

RVH: Do you manufacture hardware at all?

DL: The extent of the hardware made here is the DW-5000 and some accessory items: speed keys, bass drum practice pads, etc. The hi-hat and cymbal stands we have discontinued. The decision was made to pretty much offer drums and drum shells and allow the drummer to have his selection of whosoever hardware he might like. The reality is 99% of the people who are purchasing our drums have existing hardware they're happy with. They got their drumset, then they upgraded their hardware, and now they're upgrading their drums. The hi-hat is an exception in that although

continued on page 100

Don and Production Manager, John Good, pause to look over a variety of Drum Workshop shells being prepared for final assembly.



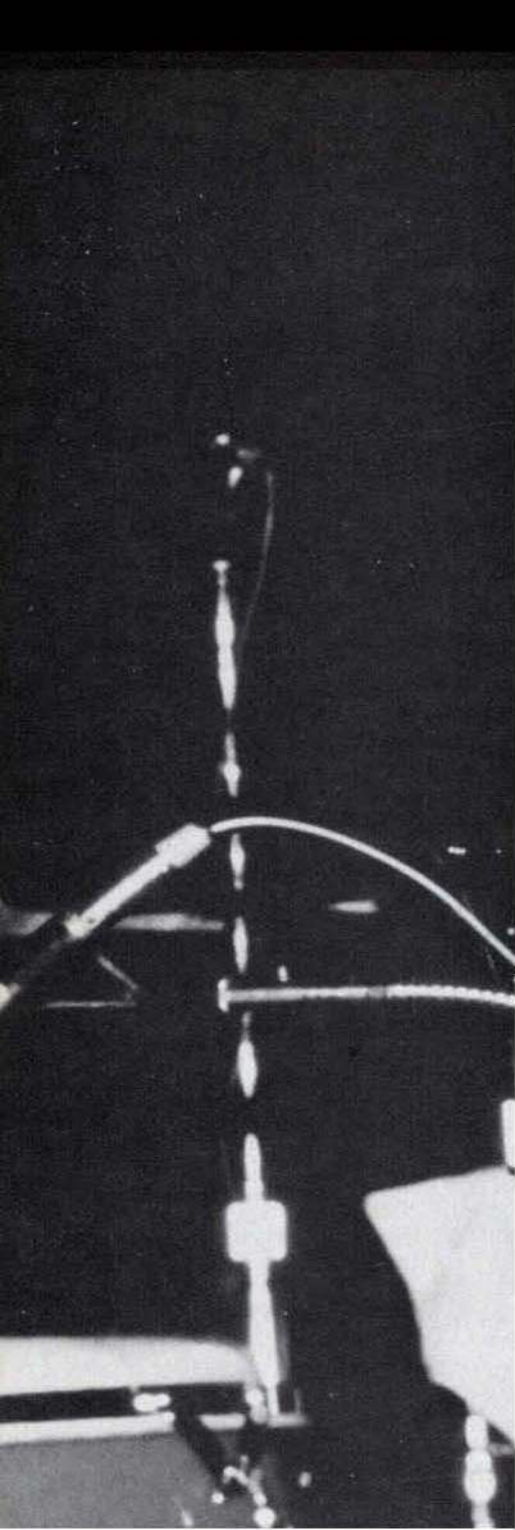
Photo by Paul Jonason

Photo by Randy Bachman



SHEILA ESCOVEDO

a natural approach



Sheila Escovedo is striking and diminutive, and can spark a band with the flash of a smile or an outrageous, ingenious percussion lick. At the age of twenty-four, she has performed with Billy Cobham, George Duke, Alphonso Johnson, Azteca, Harvey Mason, Labelle, and Spyro Gyra. Sheila also has two records out on Fantasy with her father, percussionist Pete Escovedo.

The Escovedo Family has been a percussive force in the San Francisco area dating back to the 1950s, when Pete and Coke began playing nightclubs and after-hours spots all around the bay. Both brothers have been featured in Santana, were major forces in Azteca, and have been part of many other Latin fusion projects. To say that Sheila was around music as a child is a dramatic understatement. But it is amazing how much of the technique, innate knowledge, and flair for playing she picked up just from being around it.

Sheila now has several projects going. She performs in local nightclubs with Pete once or twice a month, and the musical chemistry there is something to behold. An old band of Sheila's, Kick, gets gigs from time to time, and is still a powerful unit, featuring Ray Obiedo on guitar, Curtis

Ohlsen on bass, vocalist Linda Tilery, and other fixtures from the local scene. But Sheila's funk band is what has taken the bulk of her time over the last year and a half. It is the first band of which Sheila has been leader, and at the time of our interview they were close to a recording deal with Solar Records.

When Kick opened a recent show for Narada Michael Walden's Warriors, Sheila put on a virtual percussion clinic. The independence of her arms during her conga solo was a visual and musical wonder for the crowd. Whenever she switched instruments, to timbales, bells, shekere, whatever, it seemed to give the rhythm a new kick. Sheila kept rallying the band all night, and that ability should continue to carry her far.

RT: I heard that the first instrument you were trained in was violin.

SE: Yeah. My father wanted me to play violin and play in an orchestra. That was his dream for me, but I didn't want that. I played drums when I was small, so when I became fourteen or fifteen I began playing drums again. And then when I played a concert for him in front of thousands of people, I just said, "This is it." So I gave violin up.

RT: I guess you at least got a lot of music training on violin.

SE: Yeah, I did. I took it for five years, and I had two or three scholarships that I turned down, because I didn't want to play violin, even though I liked it at times.

What changed it too was the people I was hanging around with. It was square to play the violin, so that made it even easier to get out of it.

RT: Your heart just wasn't in it.

SE: No. Drums.

RT: Where did you get training on drums?

SE: My father. I think my first gig was at Sam's Ballroom when I was five. It was Pete and Coke and Phil Escovedo—the Escovedo Brothers Band. I remember my mother dressing me up in a white dress and black patent leather shoes, and taking me to my father's club to see him play. And I sat in. I had to sit on a stool, but . . .

He used to just play around the house, and just from being around it all the time I kind of picked it up. Even though I played when I was small, I didn't start playing again until I was thirteen or fourteen. I'm really into sports, and all during that time I ran track, and played soccer for eight years, so I was mainly into that. But all of a sudden I started playing congas again, and when I did it only took about two months to learn everything that I do know now. So it just started coming out. I guess it was always there.

RT: Is conga a physical instrument?

SE: I think every instrument is, in a way. I mean if that's what you want to play, if that's your axe, it's physical. I think so.

RT: I saw Raul Rekow of Santana recently, and was amazed at the size of his arms. He says he plays wrong, with his arms more than his wrists.

SE: Yeah, and that's a hard gig for him to do, playing with Carlos. Because they have to play two- or three-hour shows, sometimes twice a night. And when you get into a rock 'n' roll band like that, and you're kind of like the side person, you have to put out a lot more because you're really not being featured. You have to really play hard because a lot of times you're just a color added to the music. So he has to really play with his arms, where for me, in a lot of bands I've played with, that's not really my technique. If I do play like that, I get tired too fast. My technique is playing with my wrists. But if I played with my arms I probably would have arms like that. I'm glad I don't.

RT: What kind of music was being played in your house when you were small?

SE: Latin music. Salsa. There were a lot of people. I didn't know who was who, and I didn't understand it, until I got older. But it was like Eddie Palmieri, Tito Puente, Mongo Santamaria, a lot of people like that. Salsa bands from New York or Cuba. And a lot of jazz too.

RT: What instrumentalists have influenced you the most?

SE: The person who probably really influenced me was my father, only because I

by Robin Tolleson

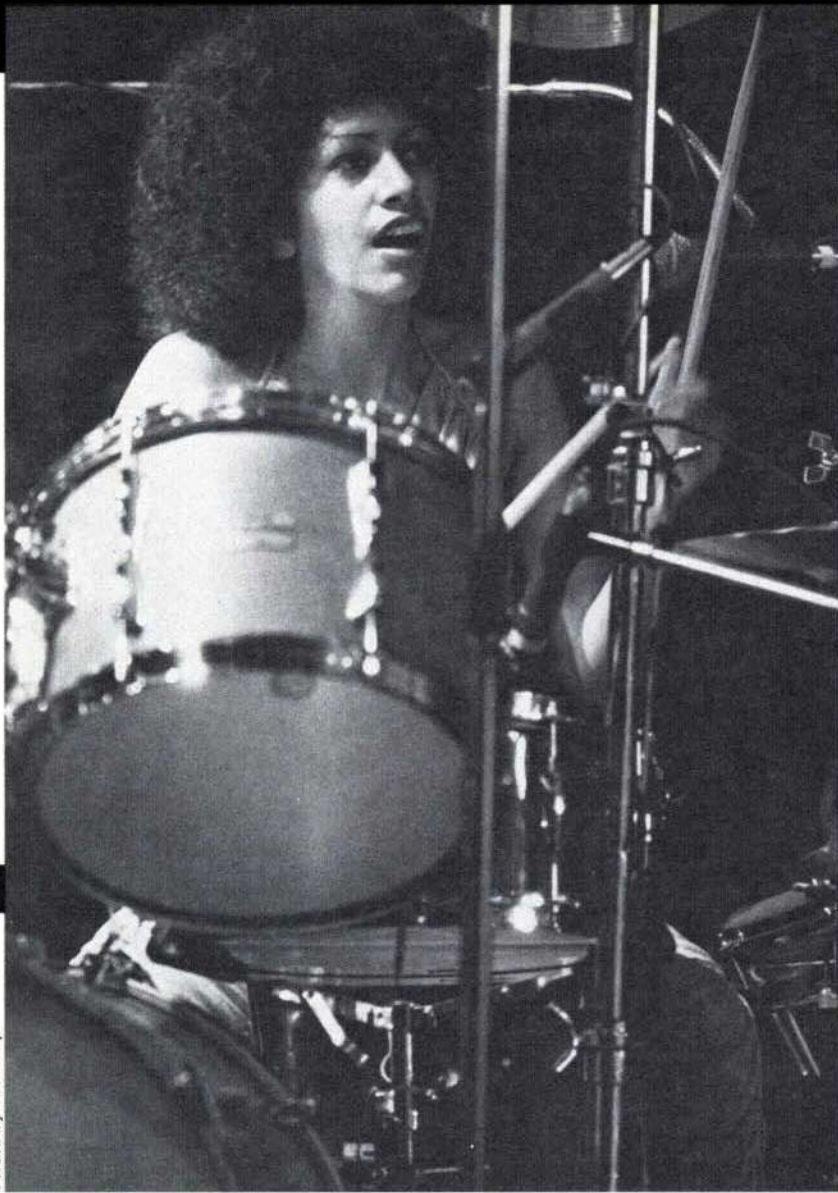


Photo by Tom Copi

lived with him. He brought me up. I was his child, and just being around that, he influenced me to play. If it wasn't for him being in that, I don't think I would have been in it. But as far as musicians now, I listen to everybody and every instrument, so it's a variety of things. It's not just percussionists or drummers. It's everybody. Musicians, period. Guitar players, singers, everybody.

RT: I enjoyed your work on Alphonso Johnson's *Moonshadows* album. One song, "As Little As You," has you doing a lot of slide type sounds on congas. What do you call that technique?

SE: You mean where it goes, "Vooooom." I don't even know. I don't think anybody does know what that is. They just made it up, really. You know, you just wet your finger, hit the drum and rub the skin on the inside of your finger, and it makes that sound. Your fingernails have to be short. It's strange, I don't know what you would call it. Everybody says, "Hey, what's that thing you do where you lick your finger and do the slide?" I won-

der if there is a name; I really don't know.

RT: There are some songs on the Johnson album in odd time signatures. Were you used to playing in odd times when you went in to do the album?

SE: It was different for me, because at that time I was playing with Billy Cobham. He showed my father and me a lot of stuff, not really sitting down to show us, but just from playing with him. He played in all kinds of signatures, which I never even played in before. And half the time you can't count it; you just have to feel it. If you count it you could get lost. And to play the 7/4, the first time I had to count to see where the "1" was, and after that you just keep on playing. But to really play through all that stuff you have to feel it, you can't count it. I think on different time signatures like that, other than 4/4 or 6/8, it depends on what you want to play—your own style. I don't think there's a lot of certain beats. Usually for 4/4 there are three or four beats you can play. With 7/4, whatever you feel like playing fits, as long as you come back down on the "1".

RT: How old were you when you first went on tour with Azteca?

SE: I was fifteen or sixteen. We did a few States gigs—I think we went to Denver and some places in Colorado—and after that we went to Bogota, Columbia. We went overseas, and that was an experience in itself. I didn't know what it was like over there, and that was in '73 or '74. You'd walk off the plane and see people with machine guns. It kind of scares you, and I didn't know what to expect. I don't think I'd ever been on a plane. It took us a couple days to get out of there. We had to pay our way out; the government didn't want us to leave. They thought we were smuggling a bunch of cocaine. We weren't. That was when platform shoes were in, and their platform shoes were real cheap, and they were leather. I remember I got about four pair, and my dad got three, because they were only about ten or fifteen dollars each. I remember getting those, and going to the airport. They pulled the bottoms off of all our shoes, because they thought we were smuggling stuff in the heels. I was real mad at that. It was crazy. So we ended up paying about \$3000 to get out, because they wanted us to pay a whole bunch of taxes on

the money we made there. And they kept our equipment, so it was like \$30,000 of our equipment over there. They finally sent it a week later—we thought we had lost it.

RT: Speaking of equipment, what kind of congas and percussion are you playing now?

SE: My congas are LPs. Mostly all of LP's percussion stuff, and other odds and ends from different companies that make things LP doesn't. I use Yamaha drums and Paiste cymbals.

RT: You mentioned that you learned most all your conga technique in about a two-month period. That's almost hard to believe. How did you learn to play the small percussion—the toys?

SE: I don't know. I just started buying things when I was in George's band. He said, "Do you have this? Do you have that?" I said, "No," so I went out and got it. And I kind of knew, I guess, how to play everything, because wherever I felt like something should be, that's where I played it. And I guess that's how I learned, because nobody really taught me. Somebody should have taught me, because half the things I play, I don't know what they're called. I don't know the names of the beats, I just play what I feel. In my first band we played a lot of Santana stuff and things like that but it was original. I was playing drums in that band, and they wanted to get this other drummer, because he had a P.A. So I thought they were going to fire me, and they said, "No, why don't you play congas?" We had a conga player

already, and he turned out to be my boyfriend. So he started showing me these beats, and I started playing them. And every time he showed me something I'd add something else, and he'd say, "What are you doing?" I'd say, "I don't know." He'd say, "Well where did you learn to do that?" I'd say, "I don't know. I just . . . I don't know." So he showed me as much as he could, and then all of a sudden, that whole month that we were playing, rehearsing everyday with the band, I kept learning more. Then the second month I just passed him up, and was taking solos. I don't know what happened; it was really *crazy*. I can't believe it either, but that's the only way I can explain how it happened. I just started playing a bunch of things, and what was strange was that I don't even play the way you're supposed to play. You are supposed to have the conga in front of you, and the tumba on the right side, if you're right-handed. So you slap with your right hand and you have the tumba on your right side. And because of watching my father, I slap with my left hand, but I still have the tumba on my right side. So I'm playing with both hands on all the drums, and it makes me play faster.

thing he did with his right hand I'd do with my left hand. And that's how I learned to play that way. I don't remember learning when I was small. I just remember playing that one gig. I don't know why. I even asked him, "Did I really play it?" He said, "Yes, I don't know how you remember it, but you did. He didn't want me to play drums at all. He said, "No, no, no. You just stay in violin and stay in your sports." I broke a few records in track and I was really into that. But all of a sudden I just wanted to play drums, and I just started playing. Even when I tried to get in his band, he told me, "No, you're not good enough, and you don't want to be in this business." He told me everything to depress me not to play drums, or be in the business. But I finally convinced him. His conga player, Victor Pantoja, had gotten sick, and I told him to let me play the gig. He said, "No," but he couldn't find anybody. I told him I knew the songs and to just let me play. I had never played with a band that big in my life. I don't even know what made me say I could do it. I just said it, and had no idea whether I could do it or not. I just kind of felt that I could do the job. I don't even think we had a rehearsal.

drums, he's sit there and play them for a minute to check them. And I'd just stand there with my mouth hanging open, like, "How can you be that fast?" He'd just do that "brrrrrrrrrr" all the way around with no sweat. And I used to just stand there and watch him, and that's how I learned a lot of my rolls and stuff playing the trap drums. People do tell me I play like him once in a while. I also learned how to play a lot of different time signatures which I never played before. When he met my father and me, we were playing a lot of salsa in Roger Glenn's band, we weren't playing a lot of jazz. And we let Azteca go, but Azteca didn't play a lot of different things. Billy played in and out of everything you could think of. He played those kind of songs, and when we played with him, or did his albums, we did exactly that. He said, "Well, we're going to play this," and he really didn't even teach us—he expected us to play through it even though we didn't know how to play it. He made us really learn quick. And I thought that was really fun, because I didn't know all that existed—the 15s and all kinds of things he counted. The things he does make me wish I would have gone to school and learned

Usually if you play with your right hand you have to do everything with that one hand, and the left is just like to keep time with, and play the in-between fills. But this way I'm playing a lot faster. There were a lot of things he showed me that were kind of awkward to me, but I learned to play like that. The same for timbales. I think you're supposed to play, if you're right-handed, with the bell on the right side, the high drum on the right side, and the low drum on the left side. I play the bell on the right side, the high drum on the left side, and the low drum on the right. Bongos even, everything is mixed up. It's crazy, I don't know how I ended up playing things like this.

RT: So no one ever sat you down and said, "This is a mambo."

SE: No, never.

RT: Did you ever learn those many different rhythms?

SE: No. I learned them only by listening, and not even trying to listen, but just going to see people play, or listening to records. And I just played it. But people laugh at me to this day because I do not know the difference between this beat and that beat. There are different kind of rumbas that have three or four parts to every section, and I don't know what they are. I've had time to sit down and learn it, but I never have. When I was small and learned to play, I would be right across from my father and I would play every beat he'd play, and that's why I ended up being left-handed. He was right-handed, so every-

He played the album for me, and told me what the tunes were, and what we were going to go into. And he couldn't believe it. He said, "I can't believe you're doing this. This isn't right." So I played the gig, and people went crazy. I said, "This is it, I'm going to quit high school." I didn't finish high school, and I played music.

RT: Did you learn anything about playing traps while working with Billy Cobham?

SE: I think I did, not that he even taught me. After his roadie would set up all his

drums. He does things like press rolls, and even does it backwards with both sides of the stick, and it still sounds the same. He does things you would not believe.

RT: Did you learn anything about the recording process from being in the studio with him?

SE: Yeah, because I think that was one of the first times I was ever really in the studio too. I learned what things should sound like. How to mike the congas—I watched

continued on page 108



The Sixteenth-Note Triplet

by Nick Forte

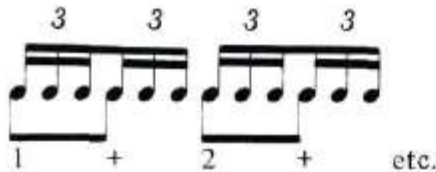
As I stated in the previous lesson, a triplet is a group of three equal notes that assume the same duration that two would ordinarily possess. This is due to the fact that any note(s) used under a triplet sign receives a shorter than normal duration.

A sixteenth-note triplet may be thought of in two basic variations:

(A) You could think of them as double the speed of the eighth-note triplet.



(B) You could think of them in terms of a sixteenth-note triplet equals an ordinary eighth note.



In form A, the sixteenth-note triplet sounds like an extension of the eighth-note triplet, because you see, feel, and play *three groups of two*, per beat/count.

In form B, each sixteenth-note triplet (because of the way it is distributed, *two groups of three*) equals one-half beat/count. This is the most widely used sixteenth-note triplet form. The count, as you can see, is subject to change with each form. To stress this, let me suggest the following practice routines.

1.) With your right hand, play a series of eighth-note triplets. This could be on any drum or cymbal, but for now, let's use the floor tom. Between each of these tom-tom notes, play a note (to form a sixteenth-note triplet) on the snare drum with the left hand. With both hands going, you should have a steady flow of sound, while *thinking*: eighth-note triplets = floor tom-tom. This is notated in Example #1.



In Example #2 the concept changes because we have to deal with the redistribution of the sixteenths.



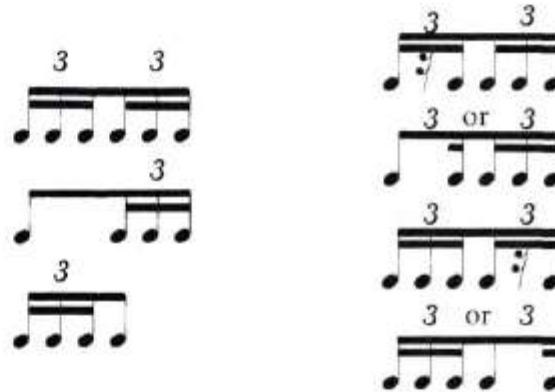
No matter how you divide them, however, six sixteenth notes (in triplet form) always take up the same time as one quarter note!

SIXTEENTH-NOTE TRIPLET GROUPINGS

The following groups are based on eighth-note triplets:



The following groups are based on straight eighth notes.



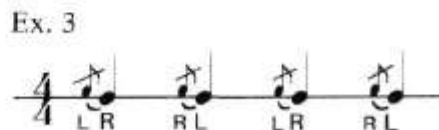
It is wise to become familiar with each of these groupings, as each is used in this and subsequent lessons.

GRACE NOTES (Part 1)

Grace notes are artificially short-duration notes. Written smaller than the size of regular notes, they are used as rhythmic embellishments. Placed in front of a main note, the grace note is played very close to the main (following) beat. In some cases you will find a group of grace notes leading to a main note, i.e. the three and four stroke Ruffs (described in the next lesson).

THE FLAM

The Flam has a single grace note followed by a main note. The small, single slash indicates a note of unusual value. This, or any group of grace notes, may appear before any type of note. If you are unfamiliar with the execution of a flam, let me offer the following: The grace note is played as close as possible to the main note, but you must avoid hitting them exactly together. The grace note part of a flam is played softer; which means it is best played with the hand that is closest to the drum at the time. In example #3, use the "hand to hand" system.



SNARE DRUM READING

SNARE DRUM READING

The first section contains ten staves of musical notation for snare drum reading. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The notation consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with many groups of three notes beamed together and marked with a '3' above them, indicating triplets. Some notes have accents (>) above them. The exercises progress from simple eighth-note triplets to more complex patterns involving sixteenth notes and various rests.

DRUMSET EXERCISES

DRUMSET EXERCISES

The second section contains three staves of musical notation for drumset exercises. On the far left of the first staff, there is a vertical label: Q.P.D.H. The notation uses a standard drumset notation system with 'x' marks for cymbals and 'o' marks for toms. It features various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and includes triplet markings. The exercises are designed to be played on a full drumset.

continued on next page

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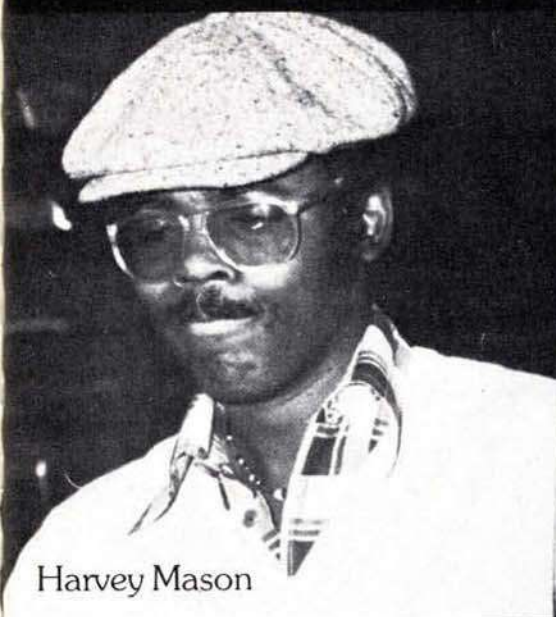


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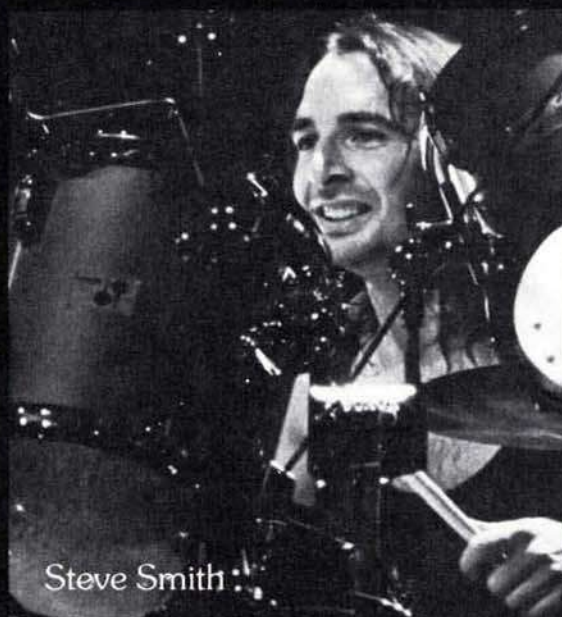
DRUM SOLO #1

DRUM SOLO #2

ARTISTRY IN RHYTHM



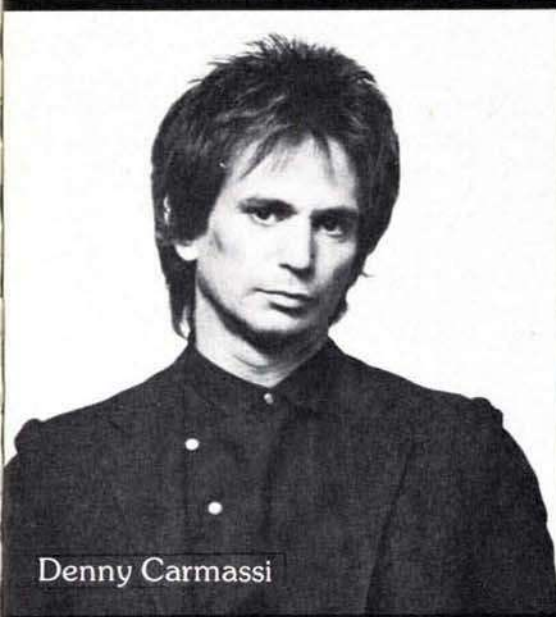
Harvey Mason



Steve Smith



Billy Cobham

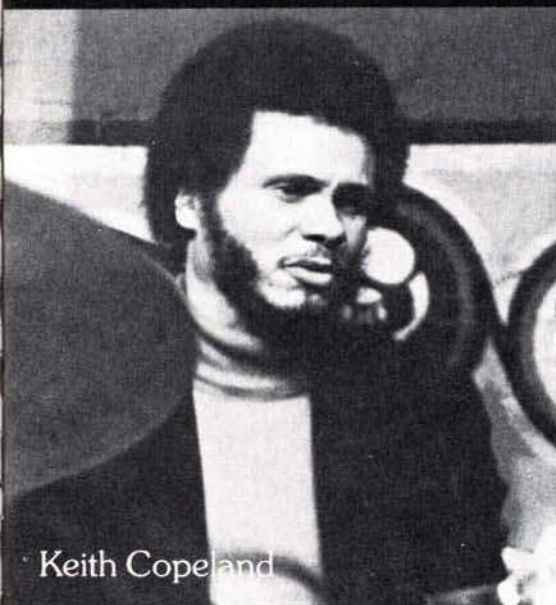


Denny Carmassi

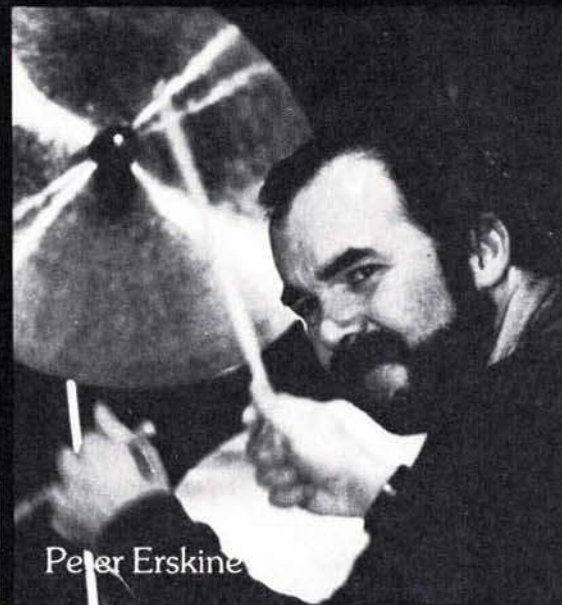
**“What do
these
great artists
have in
common?”**



Akira Tana



Keith Copeland



Peter Erskine



**They all
make
time
with my
sticks.”**

**vic
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Remo Pre-Tuned Percussion

by Bob Saydlowski, Jr.

Remo has been known to bring out some pretty innovative products: *RotoTom*, *FiberSkyn* heads, etc. And now, Remo is daring to change the way that drums have been made. Since the age of the dinosaur, drums have been made by stretching a skin over a hollow cylinder. Remo has found the technology to *shrink* drumhead film, rather than stretch it—developing Pre-Tuned drumheads, drumsets, and educational percussion instruments.

HEADS

PTS ("Pre-Tuned System") drumheads are available, for now, in three tonal variations: Bright (high pitch), Mellow (medium pitch), and Dark (low pitch). Imagine two Remo metal hoops with coated *Ambassador* weight Mylar in between. The top retaining hoop also serves as the counterhoop; eliminating the need for separate hoops. The PTS drums themselves need no lugs or rods, either. PTS heads can be used on conventionally-tuned drums by way of special "S"-shaped claw-hook adaptors. The hooks have holes for tension rods, and clamp to the top hoop of the head. If desired, the head can be fine-tuned up to other pitches after the initial finger pressure on the rods that will secure the head. On a 10-lug drum, you don't even have to use all ten rods; half of them work just fine to secure the PTS head to the shell.

I tested all three PTS heads on various drums. The top hoop holds up amazingly well to hard rim shots, but the rods seem to back off a bit more than usual from hard playing. Durability is the same as a regular coated *Ambassador* head. Being in tune with themselves, all the heads produced clear sound and even response. I especially liked the Dark head for a deeper, flatter sound.

The use of PTS heads could certainly facilitate drumhead changing and tuning—especially if in a hurry! In fact, if need be, the drum *could* be played by just *laying* the head atop the shell and then tightening it down when you get the chance. The heads produce definite pitch and could be played by themselves as tuned tom-toms, with the proper style mount—not even *needing* a shell! There are only three variations of pitch currently available, but fine-tuning will give a slightly larger range. PTS heads

are available in 12", 13", 14", 16" Batter, 22" Bass Drum (all coated *Ambassador*), and 14" Snare Side. Prices start at \$12.50. I do hope they decide to produce PTS heads in their other varieties (CS, *Pinstripe*, etc.).

DRUMSETS

Remo is also making complete Pre-Tuned Drum Kits in three, four, and five-piece configurations. The drums have *Acousticon* shells, which are made on high-density, resin-coated tubing, similar to a phenolic shell, and lighter than wood shells. Retaining clips hold the heads onto the shells—they have no lugs or rods. (Here, the fine-tuning capability is not available.) The 5-piece kit retails at \$390 with hardware.



Drum sizes are: 14x22 bass drum, 8x12 and 9x13 tom-toms, 14x16 floor tom (with legs), and 5x14 snare drum. The toms are fitted with *Mellow* heads top and bottom. The snare drum has a *Bright* batter, and a special weight snare-side head which has a slot cut into both sides of its rim to allow the snare connecting strips to pass through. For pedal mounting, the bass drum head rims are widened to the size of a regular bass hoop. A felt strip is fitted under the batter head. White plastic tape is included to inlay all rims the same color as the drums.

Hardware includes a three-tier cymbal stand, tri-arm snare stand, hi-hat stand, (all with tripod bases), a double-spring pedal and a tom-tom holder mounted on the bass drum, using separate hex arms with a swivel angle adjustment.

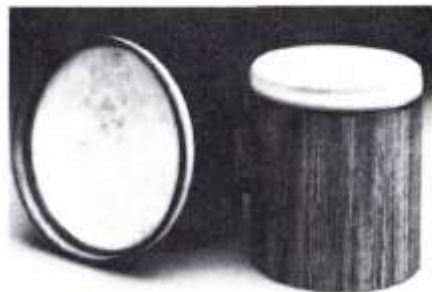
All the drums sound remarkably good—and, of course, all are in perfect tune. The retaining clips holding the heads in place can enable a change to a full concert tom set with single-headed bass drum in seconds! Affordable for students and the

budget-minded, yet with enough quality and sound to be used as a home practice kit for pros, the PTS kits seem to be an ideal thing—a complete set of drums at a price we haven't seen in a long time.

EDUCATIONAL PERCUSSION

The PTS concept branches out into educational percussion as well. A 4x14 snare is available at only \$39, having PTS heads recessed into an *Acousticon* shell. An internal knob-operated brush serves as the snare unit.

Pre-Tuned bongos in six and seven-inch diameters have either replaceable or non-replaceable *FiberSkyn* 2 heads, as do PTS tambourines. There is also a range of Orff/Schulwerk instruments. The replaceable



models need only a flat tool to change their heads.

Remo also promises a 3-piece junior drumset for the Christmas season with a 16" bass drum, 12" snare, 10" tom, pedal, snare stand, and cymbal mount for less than \$100!

Remo says that this is only the first step in PTS technology. The Pre-Tuned products are ideal for bringing percussion to students at affordable prices. At the same time, professional drumset players and percussionists should realize the value of the PTS heads—even used as solo percussion instruments. We've all heard, at one time or another, that a certain product will revolutionize the whole drum world. Remo's Pre-Tuned products seem to be on the way to doing just that.

MD Readers may write to Bob Saydlowski at: 183 Francis Ave., Pittsfield, MA 01201. Enclose a S.A.S.E. for a reply.



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Case Repair and Maintenance

by Rick Van Horn

Last time, we talked about the various types of drum cases on the market. This time I'd like to talk about ways you can maintain your existing cases to make them last longer and prevent your having to buy new ones at all. Although I described several innovative types of case materials currently available, I'd be willing to bet that 90% of all club or casual drummers are using the familiar fibre case. Since starting my column in MD, I've received several letters with questions regarding case repair, and the problems seem to fall repeatedly into a few categories. In order of frequency, they are: strap problems; edges pulled apart; handles pulled out; weather damage. These represent chronic problems for steady drummers who frequently move about from club to club, putting a constant strain on the cases, handles and straps.

STRAPS

Since broken straps seem to be the most frequent problem, let's address that first. How best to repair worn straps depends on a few variables:

- 1) *What kind of straps—leather or nylon web?*
- 2) *Where are they worn? At the buckle; at the point where they are attached to the case; somewhere in the middle; or all of the above?*
- 3) *Do you want to keep the existing strap or replace it?*
- 4) *Do you want to change materials?*

Some of my cases are over fifteen years old, and they all came with leather straps. Leather tends to deteriorate with age, and wear and tear only aggravates the condition. That's why, in recent years, manufacturers have gone to nylon-web straps. Nylon is also less expensive than leather. But I like to stay with leather because it's easy to work with and actually pretty cheap to come by if you know where to look. Let's suppose the strap holding the buckle is in good shape, but the other strap (with the adjusting holes) has worn thin; some of the holes have ripped out and the strap won't buckle tightly anymore. You

need to replace the entire strap, or splice on a new length of leather into which you can punch new holes.

Your best source of strap leather is the local thrift store belt department. For a couple of bucks, you can pick up some good used leather belts which you can use as raw material for your project.

Be sure to get real leather, not man-made material. And get a belt as wide or wider than your original strap. It should also be about the same thickness. Black is usually available, but if you're not choosy about color, your selection will be wider. Make sure the belt you select is long enough to replace the worn strap from wherever you plan to attach it (either from the case or spliced to the existing strap).

For the actual repair project you'll need a few tools, most of which you probably already have. You'll need a hammer, a pair of pliers, an electric drill and a leather punch. If you don't have the punch, a fairly inexpensive one can be obtained at the local hardware store. Don't go overboard; get only what you need for the job. I use a pliers-punch which I keep in my trap case to punch holes in bass drum pedal straps. You'll also need some hammer-type rivets, similar in size to those on your case now. If necessary, explain the project to the clerk and ask for help in choosing the right rivets. If all you have to buy is the punch and the rivets, you shouldn't spend more than about \$10.00. If the belt is going to need trimming to size, you'll need a razor knife or sharp scissors and a good cutting board. You'll also need a very hard hammering surface; a concrete driveway worked for me.

If you intend to completely replace the worn strap, first *carefully* drill out the existing rivets attaching it to the side of the case, using a small drill bit. The trick is to loosen the rivets without enlarging the holes in the fibre material of the case. When the rivets have been drilled through, use pliers to collapse them as much as possible and remove them from the case, again being careful not to enlarge the holes.

After the strap has been removed, use it as a guide to make a new strap out of the

belt you bought. Match it for length, placement of holes (using, of course, the original hole positions, not the ones that have stretched out due to wear), etc. Use your leather punch to punch holes for the rivets and buckle adjustments. Once the new strap is constructed, rivet it back to the side of the case. Using hammer-type rivets is easiest and neatest, but if you happen to have a Pop-Rivet gun in your shop, that will work too. If you're using hammer rivets, lay the case on its side with the strap in place. Insert the lower half of the rivet from the inside of the case towards the outside and place the cap of the rivet on the outside (on top of the strap). Then position the whole thing on a hard surface and rap the rivets together with your hammer. Make sure the rivets are assembled tightly, or the leather will tend to work them apart.

If you have foam-lined cases, it may be necessary to carefully separate the lining from the side of the case (if possible), or to cut a very small area out to expose the rivet point.

If you prefer to leave the existing strap attached to the case, you can splice a new length of leather onto it and punch the adjusting holes into the new piece. Select a point far enough back on the existing strap so that the splice will not interfere with buckling the buckle. Then lay about two inches of the new strap over the old, punch rivet holes in both, rivet them together and you're in business. It isn't the neatest job, but it works, and you don't have to drill into the case or damage your foam lining.

If your problem is with the strap holding the buckle, then the same process applies, with the added problem of re-installing the buckle in the new strap. Just study how the buckle is attached to the old strap and duplicate it on the new one. Be sure to allow enough length for foldover around the buckle.

The use of nylon web has eliminated many of the problems of leather. Webbing is usually so flexible that you don't have the wear problems leather is subject to, and since they use the sawtooth-grip type of buckle, there are no strap holes to wear out. Webbing is virtually unbreakable, so

very few straps ever snap in half. But webbing does have its own unique problems. These include rivets pulling out of the straps; ends of the straps too frayed to get into the buckle; the buckle bent or flattened so that it can't grip securely.

Rivets tend to pull through the webbing when the case is lifted by the straps instead of the handle. Even with grommets installed (which is rare) the fibrous nature of the webbing makes it expand around objects inserted through it. The obvious solution to this problem (*before it occurs*) is to never pick up the loaded case by the strap. The solution after it occurs is to replace the strap. The trick to installing a new web belt is in riveting it to the case. Once again, you drill out the old rivets. But do *not* try to punch rivet holes into the webbing. Instead, use a small-tipped soldering iron, or an awl or ice pick heated in a flame to melt a hole for the rivet. The melted nylon will bed up around the edge of the hole and create a sort of grommet. Also, be sure to double the strap back on itself an inch or so and melt the holes through two thicknesses of the strap for extra security. If you have plenty of length on your existing strap, it might be possible to back it up a few inches and put new holes in it. If not, nylon webbing is readily available at the hardware store, and rather inexpensive. If you need a new buckle, they go for a few cents at the same store.

The ends of web straps tend to fray with wear unless something holds them together. Some come with metal edging already installed. If yours did not, a piece of tape folded over the end will sometimes work, as long as the strap can still get through the buckle. Melting the fibers into one solid edge works better, but takes a little skill and some source of controllable heat, like a large soldering iron or small propane torch.

Bent or flattened buckles can sometimes be reworked with a screwdriver and a hammer. If not, then they must be replaced. They aren't expensive, and if you study the way in which they were originally installed, it's pretty easy to put in a new one.

EDGES

Now let's talk about the problem of edges pulling apart. Usually this happens on the bottom edge of a case due to the weight of the drum repeatedly pressing down when the case is lifted. If the edge starts to pull apart, a quick *temporary* repair can be made by bandaging it securely with gaffers (or duct) tape. Use enough length on the tape strips to get support from high up on the side of the case, and reinforce the actual edge with at least two layers of tape. Don't plan on this as a permanent repair; it won't last forever. The best repair is to obtain some thin, flexible material (I've used very thin sheet metal, and also double-thick denim fabric) and create a new bottom for the case, with

enough overlapping up the sides to form a cradle for the drum. You can shape the material to fit the *inside* of the case. Then affix it to the fibre material using contact cement, rivets, or whatever seems appropriate. One drummer I know lined the bottom half of all his cases with fiberglass fabric and resined it to form a reinforced bottom. It added some weight to the case, but he felt the additional strength was worth it.

HANDLES

Over the last few years, handles have been better-secured in drum cases with stronger rivets and backing plates. As drums became heavier this was a necessity. Problems generally occur when newer drums are carried in older, less well-constructed cases. If you pull a handle out of a case in such a way that only the rivet holes are pulled out, you can re-install it by getting a sheet-metal backing plate, placing that inside the case and riveting the handle back on. It would be a good idea to glue the plate to the fibre with contact cement. If the handle ripped off a large section of the case, it would be difficult to attach a large enough backing plate to disperse the strain of lifting. In such a situation, I'd recommend a new case.

PUNCTURES

When the side of a case is punctured, it's a simple matter to obtain a flat piece of material (masonite, plywood, sheet metal, case fibre if available) and glue it to the *inside* of the case to cover the puncture. If your case is foam-lined, you may find it necessary to cut out a small piece of foam to get at the hole. With a little luck and care, you should be able to keep the foam piece intact and glue it back in. If not, get a small replacement piece of foam at a fabric or upholstery shop and fit it into the case.

WEATHER DAMAGE

Today, there is no reason why cases, or the drums inside, should suffer from weather damage. MD published some excellent tips on weatherproofing cases by Jim Piekarczyk in the Dec/Jan 79 issue. These included felt and/or foam lining, polyurethane varnish inside and out (I also recommend Thompson's *Water Seal*) and neatsfoot oil on leather straps. The process is not costly and the steps are easy to follow. This protection should be afforded to any case that is going to move more than three times a year.

CYMBAL CASES

Fibre cymbal cases have their own particular problems. One weakness is that their foam lining doesn't really provide much protection to the edges of the cymbals if the case is dropped on its edge. Nor do the sides of the fibre case offer much real crush protection. My suggestion is to line the inside edges of the bottom section of the case with 1/4-inch plywood, so as to


create a solid wall on the four sides of the case. Then, if the case should be dropped, the edge of the cymbal will strike the wood (which is softer than the metal cymbal, and infinitely softer than hard pavement) and run less risk of cracking. The "walls" also help prevent the sides of the case from being crushed if any weight is placed upon it while loading.

An important thing to remember with cymbal cases is not to overload them. Remember, when cymbals are mounted on the central bolt inside the case, they pull down when the case is carried by the handle. This weight pulls that bolt to one side, and can eventually pull it right out of the bottom of the case. Better to have two cases instead of one overloaded one.

I've actually performed each of the repair operations I've described; some several times. I'm an active club drummer, and I've been on the road nationwide, so my cases have taken a beating. I'm also cheap. In my entire career, I've never replaced a case, choosing instead to maintain them. A big part of preventing case wear is caring for the cases as well as you'd care for the drums inside. Be careful when loading and unloading. Keep them out of bad weather as much as possible. Use the handles and not the straps for carrying, and don't overload trap and cymbal cases. A little common sense can save you a *lot* of money.



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a good thing,
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Jones continued from page 13

drum would fall off on the highway. So when I got an 18" bass drum, there was no problem at all. My drums would all fit comfortably into the trunk of a car, along with a suitcase, and perhaps even some golf clubs. So the drums had to be as practical as they were functional.

Another good reason for having the smaller set was that it fit in with the overall image of the group. If there were only four or five people on the bandstand, the drumset was not obtrusive; it blended with that whole image. I remember the first time I saw a drumset in a store. I didn't have one then, of course, and everything looks good to the person who doesn't have one. So I saw these drums and I said, "My God!" Here were these drums—white pearl, of course—with two huge floor toms (they looked huge to me; they were probably 16"), two mounted toms, and about a 28" bass drum. They were huge. They were beautiful. I had never seen anything so pretty in my life. But they were made, basically, for an 18-piece dance band. They were designed to be part of the overall design of the stage. The drums and the music stands would all be white mother-of-pearl. In those days, the drums were not considered that much of an instrument. They were more a part of the decoration on the bandstand than they were an instrument. I mean, you certainly didn't have mother-of-pearl basses and trumpets. So anyway, we sort of got pushed into that corner by the designers. But then we started to come out of that. Musical drummers have something else in mind entirely. This is not our intent at all. It is the instrument we are concerned with. I no longer see a problem with whether a bass drum is an 18" or a 24". I think that simply has to do with an individual's preference. I don't think it should be dictated; I think the choice should be left to the person who picks out the instrument. We can only say, "I know what suits me and what I like."

Playing in a small group context, I found that I didn't need the heavy timbre of, say, a 24" bass drum. It wasn't necessary. All I needed was something that would be felt throughout that small group. And through a little experimentation, I found that by tightening the front head, making that taut, and making the beater head a little looser, I could control the pitch of the instrument without losing any of the tonal consistency. The sound was never impaired; I could get the same depth out of that small bass drum as I could a larger one. It's simply a matter of tuning. If you know how to tune it, you'll have no problem. I mean, it isn't going to sound like a 30" bass drum, let's face it. You have to stay within reason. But within a reasonable range you can get all the depth and timbre of sound that you need in a small band context.

RM: Several years ago, you changed from

using a four-piece set to using a six-piece. What was your reason?

EJ: Basically, I've never really been a multi-drum man. I've always thought that even the snare drum has never been fully exploited. After all, you've got a tom-tom there as well. You can throw the snares off and there's a tom-tom. It's just a matter of having a throw-off that is efficient enough to expedite some sort of technique that would incorporate the snare strainer. And I think a snare drum and a tom-tom—the two together—is certainly sufficient for any kind of solo pattern. You could work up an endless variety of combinations with these two components. Add to that a bass drum, and perhaps a floor tom-tom, and that would be a handful in anybody's band. It's simply a matter of how proficient you are. By having more equipment than that, you would simply be able to duplicate what you could already do in a different direction. But it wouldn't mean you were making more music, or playing more of a variety of rhythmic patterns. There are more tones, of course. But as I say, one tone might just be a duplicate of what you could get by releasing the snare strainer. Or you could probably get extra tones out of one floor tom-tom by pressing your finger into the head. So I don't know if the need is really there for an infinite variety of drums. But again, I can only say that it's up to the individual. If one feels that's his need, then by all means he should do so. As long as it's musical. The only thing that justifies it is the music. If it's required by the music, then by all means you should have it. You should certainly have what you need, although, it's another experience to be able to improvise the things that are not there. For instance, when playing the Latin-American style, you can improvise the sound of timbales or claves. This is some of the fun in playing drums—to be able to imitate those sounds. That's why it's such a wondrous instrument. It's an instrument with infinite variety, I think. So before acquiring all this superfluous material, I think it would be practical to explore the drumset from a simplistic point of view. One should reach a point of non-expansion, so to speak, before one expands. In this way, you are assured of control of

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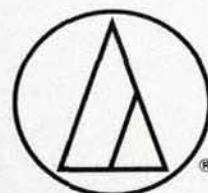
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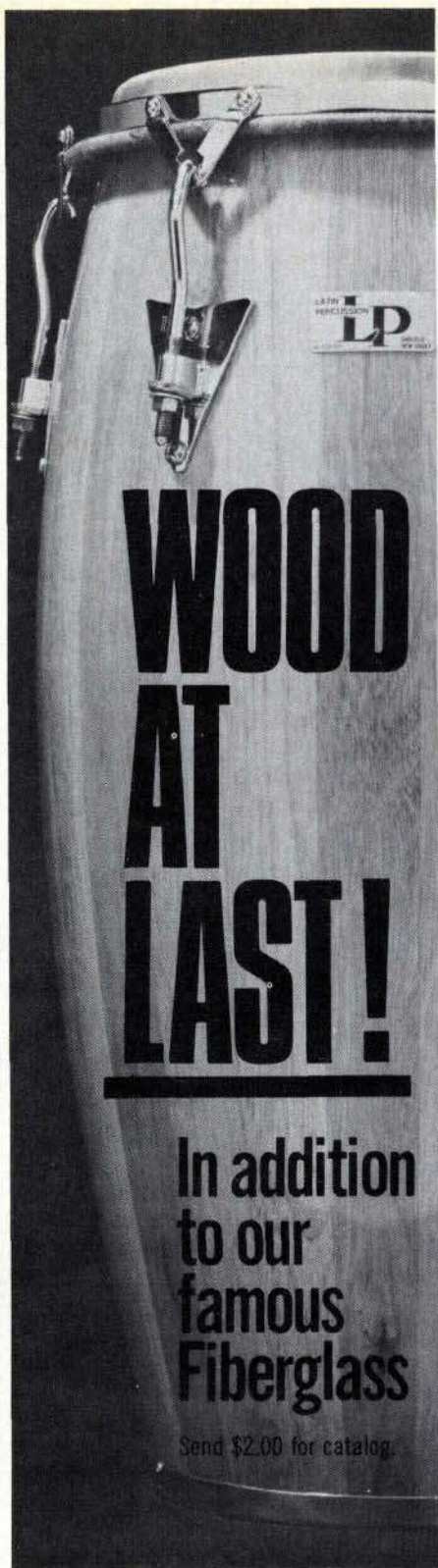
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what you have in front of you. It's more important to have the control over it than to just have it there as a cosmetic.

RM: So you added drums because you felt your music called for it?

EJ: I think so, and I felt confident of being able to control it. That's why I haven't added anything more, because for what we're doing, I don't see any need. There is probably music around which would require a number of extra components to the set. But we haven't played music in that context yet. I think there has to be a definite reason for using anything.

RM: You switched to Tama drums a couple of years ago.

EJ: I'm glad you brought that up. I think this company really has a sincere interest in the future of the music and of the uses to which the artists will put the instruments and apply them to the art form. The Tama company and the Hoshino family have proven to me that they have the integrity that I had sorely missed in my relationships in the past. They make a quality instrument. I can't say too much about them, and not just because I endorse them. I was already using the drums before I was asked to endorse them. What happened was, I went to play in Europe, and I had been promised the use of a set of drums by a European drum company. When I got to Paris, the drums didn't show up, so I had to go out and buy a set of drums. I just picked Tama off the shelf. I didn't know anything about them. I just saw that they were wood and they were the size I wanted. I learned later that they were Tama. So I was already using the drums. When they asked me to endorse them, it wasn't a snow job. I knew about the quality of the instrument. Nobody had to snow me and I don't have to snow anybody. I just tell the truth.

RM: I understand you had something to do with the K. Zildjian cymbals that are now being made in America.

EJ: I had some old K.'s that I gave them to use as the prototype for the cymbals they're now making in Norwell. I have a very high interest in these cymbals because I'm going to use them. It's something I believe in.

RM: Some musicians play with the same people for a long period of time, and other musicians are constantly playing with different people. Having been in both situations, do you prefer one over the other?

EJ: I think if you've got a group of people who stay together and grow together for a protracted period of time, you certainly stimulate each other and feed each other. Providing that you've got the right people and the chemistry works, it can be extremely creative, as was the Coltrane Quartet. That was an ideal group. There have been other groups that I have been with, and although circumstances decreed that they didn't last as long, they were still tremendous experiences for me. I was with

Bud Powell for a year, for instance, and it gave me so much insight into myself and how I could use my instrument. Unfortunately, it was decreed that it wouldn't go any longer than that, but even for that short period of time, it was very rewarding.

As for groups that interchange; since 1966, I've had my own groups, and they have been more or less transient. They have been nothing like the protracted period of time—six years—I was with Coltrane. Although, Pat LaBarbera has been with me seven years now, and my bassist, Andy McCloud, has been with me four years. And I expect that this guitarist, Jean-Paul Bourelly, will stay. He's that kind of person, you see. His motivation is such that he wants to have that experience, gain that knowledge, and he's willing to spend that time to develop that discipline. So it's the motivation of the musicians that really determines the ability of a group to remain under a certain structure for protracted periods of time. I think in some ways it's a great advantage—in some ways it isn't. But there's always something to be gained and learned from the experience. People have different motivations, and some of them are very selfish. Let's face it—it's a cruel world, you know. There are people who are very selfish and there are people who are not. There are all kinds of personalities around and you never know until you've had the experience of living with it for a while. When the manifestation occurs, there's a decision to be made, one way or another.

But all in all, given the conditions of the industry now, I think it's probably beneficial if a group can stay together for a long period of time. I think they can gain a great deal. There is only one way to get that kind of experience, and that is with each other. Of course, you have to be willing to make a few sacrifices to stay together. It's almost like a marriage. You make a commitment to your colleagues just as you make a commitment to your music and to the study and pursuit of your development. You want to develop yourself; you want to pursue this career; you want to pursue the knowledge of the instrument. There are many ways of doing it. But the best way, I think, is with someone whom you are congenial with; whom you can play with; whom you can experience musical opportunities with. All these things have tremendous value. And even when you leave it, you don't really leave anything, because you take all of that experience with you. And if there are ten of you, that means that ten people have shared that experience and they can go in ten different directions and utilize that knowledge and spread it out to that many more people. So it's perpetual—it never ends. People can still, for instance, benefit from the experiences I've had with Coltrane.


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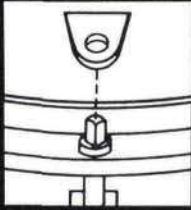
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In a way, I miss the nights out on the road, travelling in a car. The long hours, with nothing to do but talk about the music. Those are the times when you can do it. Sharing that kind of hardship, as it were, adds something to what you have to say about experience, and what you have to project in the emotional content of your music.

RM: You have the distinction of having been associated with a group that has become legendary. But have you ever felt that the Coltrane Quartet has overshadowed the things you've done since? Are there people who still think of you primarily as Coltrane's drummer?

EJ: I don't think that's what people really think. What I think is that people experienced so much, and enjoyed the music of Coltrane to such an extent, that they have almost a reverence for it. And when they encounter me, it invokes all those memories they have of that time. Perhaps they were some of the best times of their lives. I know it was certainly one of the best times of *my* life. I know how people feel because I feel somewhat the same way. So it doesn't bother me, really. As they say, "You're talking about the man I love." So I can understand when people feel like that, and I certainly can sympathize with that feeling. I understand that it can be trivial as well as meaningful, but I prefer to

think that people mean well when they ask you about these things. Maybe they don't understand completely what they want to say, but they *do* know they want to make that contact. I don't expect everybody to be a music historian.

What I *do* object to is that sometimes a journalist will, for lack of any preparation for a meaningful, intelligent interview, use that as a crutch. In other words, they don't do any homework. They figure, "I'll just ask him some questions about John Coltrane and then I can go home." So *that* I object to—that attitude; that kind of approach.

RM: You left the Coltrane group over a year before he died. If he had lived, do you think you would have played together again?

EJ: Probably. I think so. He didn't approach me and say in so many words that this was what he had in mind, but he used to come by and listen to my group quite regularly at Pookie's Pub. We never lost touch with each other.

RM: At first, you were using your own name for your group, but then you changed it to the Jazz Machine. Why?

EJ: First of all, it was my wife, Keiko's idea. I concurred of course. I thought that prefacing everything with "Elvin Jones" personalized things in a way that wasn't necessary, because everyone knows I'm the drummer. When you say "The Jazz Machine," everybody knows what it is and what it stands for. It is instantly recognizable. It has its own identity and it sort of took my name out of the limelight to an extent. You need your personal life. The more recognition you have, the more you need that privacy. Taking your name out gives one that added bit of privacy, so I'm glad she thought of it. And it looks very nice on our sweaters and jackets and things.

Another thing one has to realize is that this is the music *business*, and this made it easier to handle as a business. People can deal with you on a different level. The kind of thing we have is just a small business. It's like a "mom and pop" business where Keiko runs the store and I drive the truck, [laughs]

RM: When I first heard the name, I knew that I was going to hear a *band*, not "the drum star and his sidemen."

EJ: Exactly. And that's another point that justifies giving a name to a group. If you had no other reason, that would be sufficient, and we also considered that.

RM: I sometimes have to laugh, though, when I hear the word "machine" applied to your group, because you are certainly one of the least machine-like players I've ever heard. This is the age of drum computers, click tracks and multi-track recordings, but frankly, I find it hard to imagine your group using any of these devices. Have you ever overdubbed anything?

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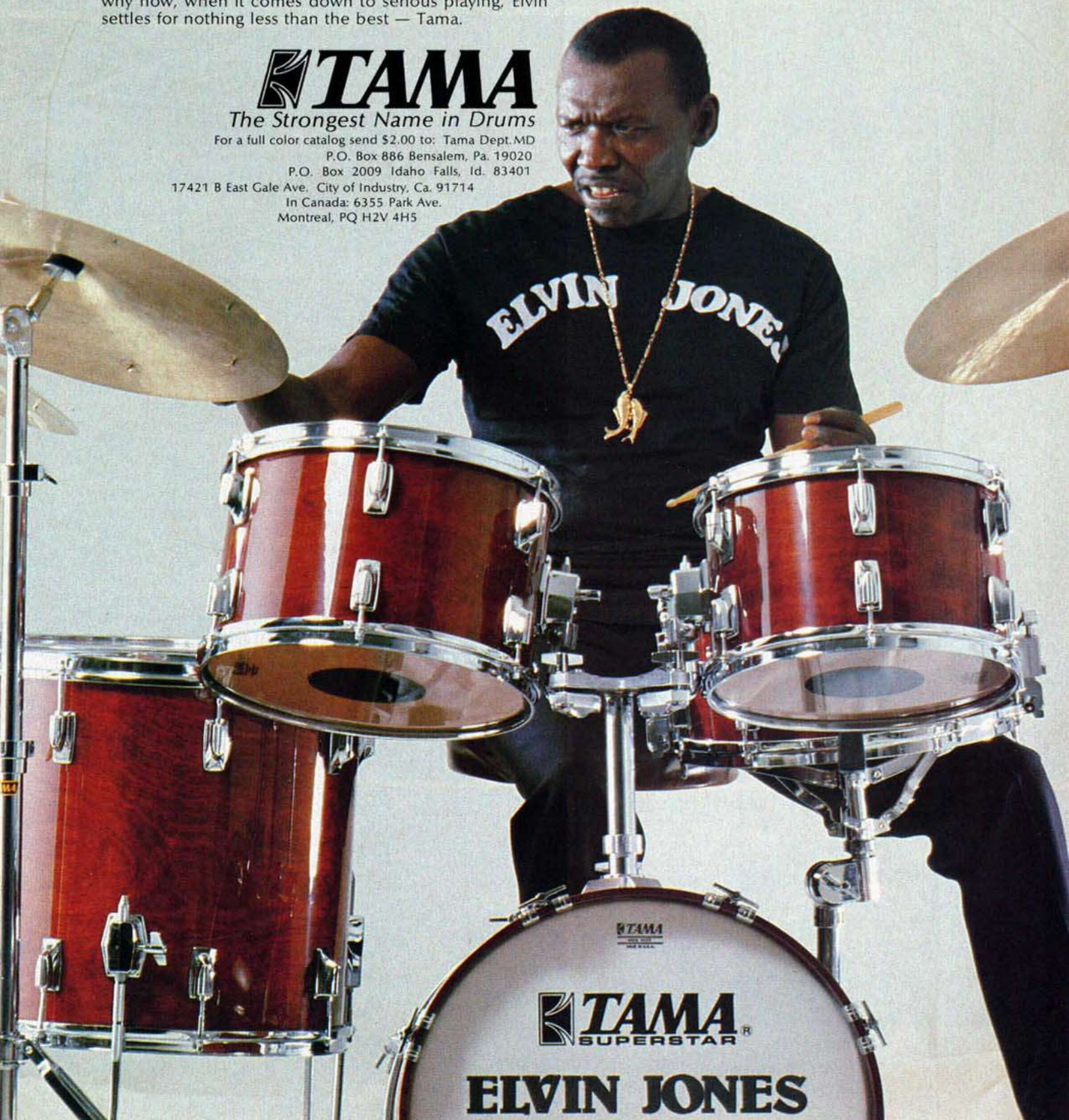
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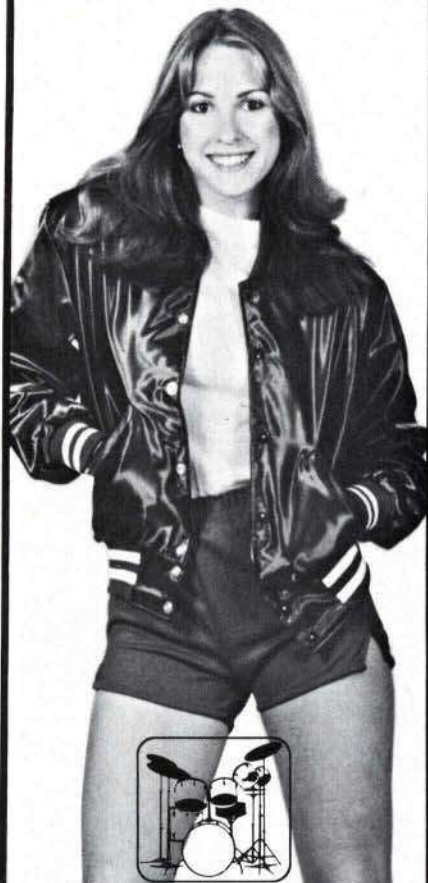
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EJ: No! I'm happy to say that I've never overdubbed in my life, and I don't intend to! I just can't conceive of myself becoming that impersonal about my music. I feel that when one records, it should be just as much of a personal commitment as playing in a live concert. The only difference is that you don't hear people in the background—talking, coughing, or sliding their chairs around. That kind of sound is eliminated in the studio. The engineer has an opportunity to capture the sound under perfect conditions. But that's the only thing, I think, that should be different. The rest is absolutely the same.

I don't think you should try to trick people. I don't believe in that. I don't believe in gimmickry. But I suppose it is necessary when you are dealing with people who are less than artists. They have to compensate somewhere, so they do it with machines, and they've got very efficient machines that can do that, I understand. But for the way I choose to approach music, I think all of the quality should be in the person. It should be in your dedication, in your habits, and in the way you play. The degree of ability has to come into play there, and this is what we can't compromise with. So I refuse to overdub.

RM: All of these things are done in the interest of perfection, but what is the relationship between perfection and beauty?

EJ: It varies. There are no two snowflakes alike, and what could be more beautiful than a snowflake, if one looks closely at it? I think what we really mean when we say that we're striving for perfection is we're striving for some kind of consistency in our efforts. We want to get a standard that we can sustain, and we call that perfection, I suppose. But I can live with the high standard I set for myself. I say to myself, "Well, I'm not going to make *too* many mistakes. I know I'm going to make *some*, but I hope they're going to be a minimum." So I think this is the kind of perfection we mean when we say that. I know it certainly is what / mean. Being the realist that I am, I know that there's really no such thing as perfection. Let's face it. Even Pablo Casals has made a few bloopers, but even when he did, he plays so beautifully all the time that who cares? I'd rather hear one of Casals's mistakes than to hear someone else's so-called perfection—the click track perfection—because it's human. *That's* the whole difference. We're human beings; we falter, we slip, we stumble, we stutter, we do everything. But we can also sing as clear as a bird, and that's very beautiful.

RM: A magnificent tree is not perfectly symmetrical. If you pruned it to be perfectly round . . .

EJ: You would take the beauty right out of it.

RM: People are doing that with music.

They splice all the right notes together but lose the soul.

EJ: That's the commercial side. I believe that they are kidding themselves, because even with all of that, they have to keep telling themselves how great it is. That's why I'm not yearning to get into that crowd. It's based on flaw.

RM: You are one of the few artists that I've never heard accused of selling out. Have you ever been pressured by a record company to be more commercial?

EJ: Oh yeah. I had a producer offer me a charge account at one of the popular music stores. He instructed me: "Go there and pick out any of the sheet music that you want. Just charge it to me. And you can have tickets to any Broadway shows, just to see if there is any material there you can use for a recording." That was the research I was *instructed* to do. I didn't do it, of course, [laughs] But nevertheless, they always tried, and they never ceased. And a *lot* of pressure was applied. It wasn't just a casual conversation. But I managed to resist.

RM: What kind of strength does it take to resist that kind of pressure?

EJ: I think it's simply your own conviction that what you represent is what you intend to pursue. It's no more than that. Your employment was based on that conviction; the talent you had as a jazz artist. So this is the reason you were approached and given the contract—in order to pursue these convictions; in order to develop that talent. That was the whole understanding. And so you can't let that be usurped. You have to *insist*. I think it is the artist's responsibility to maintain the artistic freedom to pursue objectives artistically. This is not debatable; you don't contest that. So I don't have any problem; I don't see that there's any room for argument. Not with *me*.

RM: So, in a sense, you are living proof that an artist can resist that kind of pressure, and still survive.

EJ: Exactly. You should just never lose sight of what your true objectives are. I think most record producers are *not* out to corrupt young artists. Most of them are very ethical, but there are a few who are not, and these are the people you have to be careful of. That's why it is always important to get good counsel. No artist should ever sign any kind of a contract unless an attorney is there—an attorney who is also a friend, who understands the artist as a person, and who is willing to help the artist reach the artistic objectives. A recording contract is a very important step in a musician's career. It's important to make sure that the objectives as an artist are not corrupted.

RM: What about the listeners? Could they be doing more to support the music they claim to love?

EJ: A lot of people don't do anything. The

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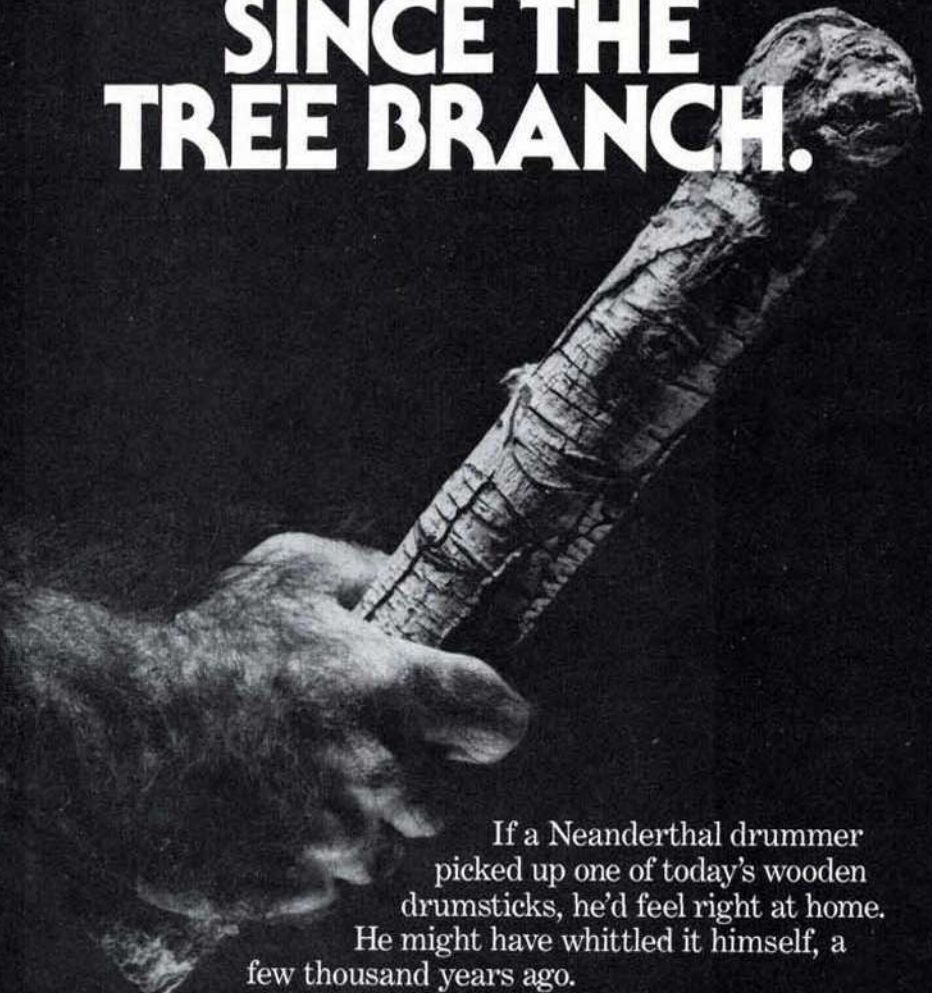
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password is "action"; not "wishing." Go into the record stores and tell them that you won't buy anything else until you get what you want.

RM: Would the record companies be responsive?

EJ: Of course. They want to make that money. All they need is a demand. And you can demand it. You know, when lawyers go into court, they don't *ask* for anything; they *demand* it!

RM: The last couple of years, I've started seeing quite a few ads for independent record companies.

EJ: I wish you'd see more. If you see enough ads for independent companies, the big ones will wonder what it is these independent companies are doing that they're not doing. Then they'll try to duplicate it and be better. Competition—that's all it is. Healthy competition. That's what this whole country is based on. If we had more competition . . . the reason why the Blue Note catalogue almost got burned—I mean literally; it almost happened—was because the small record companies were all sold. One after another, they went around buying up all the small record companies until there weren't any more. Then they started dropping the artists and burning the masters to make more room for the commercial music. And the people who really loved the music—musicians included—sat around and didn't complain too much.

I just think people have to become more aware. You know, these are some of the subjects we should discuss at our drum clinics. These are some of the things we should touch on, even if just to give a verbal newsletter as to the state of the art at the moment. This kind of information can be helpful to some people. I hope that those who read *this* article will gain some insight, and perhaps even some direction.

RM: You haven't had too many records released the last couple of years. What's your situation with recording these days?

EJ: I have two albums out in Japan on Trio Records. That company is now in the midst of negotiations to secure facilities for the distribution in the United States of the product they already have, and for future releases. As part of this, I'm forming my own label, and certainly some of these records will be distributed through my label—at least the albums that I participate in. That's about as far as I can go at the moment. I'm not planning any big operation or anything like that. Simply, I know of a decent man who has access to one of the biggest distribution circles in the country, and he happens to be a friend. So we are going to go into business and distribute my records in the future.

Having distribution is the key. I would never consider having my own record company if I didn't have access to distribution. I mean, I could make records all day, but if

DECEMBER

they're just going to pile up in my basement, they're not going to do me any good or the public any good. They wouldn't serve any objective, really. So first, you have to secure adequate distribution. *Then* it makes it a practical step to form a company.

RM: That's interesting that you have albums out in Japan that are not available in the States. I've been told by several jazz musicians that the Japanese are more interested in American jazz than most Americans, and they support the music better.

EJ: That's all very well, but what they don't see is that Japan is a small country. Although they have a lot of people, it's only a small segment of the jazz audience.

The heart of the Japanese people is beautiful. They certainly give the American artists as much courtesy—more perhaps—than they've ever received anywhere in the world. It's a great boost to the ego of the American artists, and they probably need it. But the point is, as generous as they are, it's still a small country and you can't just rely on that. It's *here* that the fight has to be won. *This* is the market that has to be cracked. The American audience is the one that has to be convinced that this art form is valid and worthy. We have to persuade *our* society to move over a little bit and make some room. So if people consider that wonderful hospitality of the Japanese people as an indication of a breakthrough in the economics of the music business, I think they're misleading themselves. This is the wrong way of perceiving that gesture of friendship. *Here* is where the economic battle has to take place.

RM: And it is a battle. There are a lot of problems here.

EJ: Of course, but people have beaten larger problems in the past. Like my father—I mean, these guys came out of the cotton fields in Mississippi. They didn't know *nothin'*. My father didn't go to school. He had to teach himself how to write his own name. Shit, he had a bigger problem than *we* do. And he beat his. He taught himself how to read and write, and he taught himself how to be a mathematician. He overcame his problem. I'm sure that next to that, what we're trying to do is like eating cake. I mean, we should be able to do this with no sweat at all.

RM: So this is the kind of thing that's making you start your own . . .

EJ: Exactly. That's it. That's what it's all about. You've got to get up off your ass. The people who are complaining are the ones who are just sitting around waiting for somebody else to hand them something. Nobody's going to. It doesn't happen that way. I think you've got to work for what you get. And that's what it's all about. There aren't any magic words in solving your problems any more than there are in learning how to play the drums.



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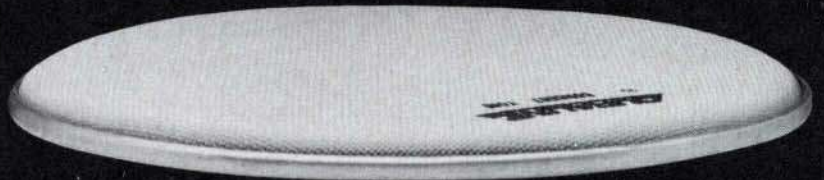


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Art vs. Money

by Roy Burns

If you run your own business, at the end of the year you review profits and expenses. If you made a profit it is considered to have been a good year.

The musician has a more complex problem. He also has to show a profit at the end of the year. However, if he hates the music he plays to make a living, he may not consider his year a total success. He will often be very frustrated. On the other hand, he may love the music he plays but have a very difficult time paying the bills. This is an old story with musicians of all styles. Jazz, classical, studio and club musicians all have ups and downs financially.

It seems as though good musicians have two basic needs: making a living and achieving emotional satisfaction from the music they play. The businessman has it easier in that his goals and needs are clearer. He just has to make money. The musician, in order to survive, has to make money, but he is also driven to play something he loves.

Unfortunately, what musicians love and what the public loves is often not the same. Occasionally an artist "breaks through" and connects with the public by doing what he loves best. But more often than not, the public wants to hear what is promoted on AM radio. I am not trying to criticize the buying public, but it would be good for young musicians to realize (and remember) that they are not performing for musicians.

Groups who do not play well, but who cater to public tastes, often make more money than really good players. However, good musicians who decide to be "commercial" often do very well, even though critics are rarely sympathetic. It comes

down to art vs. money. The musician wants to pursue art, while the club owner and record executive care more about the cash register and the record sales. This is understandable because they have to pay the salaries and royalties. Both sides can present a good argument for their point of view.

There are several important ideas that can help the young player resolve (at least partially) this age old conflict between art and money.

1. Decide what your career goals really are. If you want with all your heart to play jazz or classical music, resolve yourself to the idea that you most likely will not make a great deal of money from performing.

2. If you want to do well financially as a performer there are two major avenues for musicians: Become a member of a popular (commercial) group or become a well-trained studio musician. Both are tall orders and will demand dedication and hard work as well as talent.

3. No matter which path you choose, avoid criticizing musicians who choose another path. It won't change anything anyway, so save your energy.

5. Consider compromise approaches whenever possible. For example, many good drummers teach. This gives them an economic base so that they can pursue the playing situations they are most interested in. In other words, don't put all of your eggs in one basket. Have more than one source of income.

6. Many fine players prefer to work a normal job during the day and play freelance jobs in their area. In this way, they can accept only the jobs they want and turn down situations that are less appealing musically.

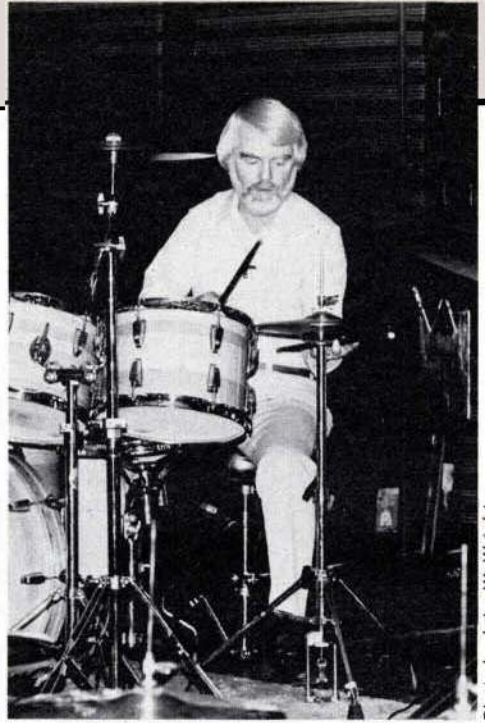


Photo by John W. Wright

7. Musicians who have developed notoriety often do clinics and seminars to supplement their income. Sharing information with younger players is also very rewarding.

8. A number of musicians start publishing companies. They publish their own songs or their own instruction books.

9. I've met a number of truly fine players who have degrees and teach at the high school or college level. These same musicians often do quite a lot of playing in their area.

Last of all, don't waste a lot of time criticizing people who have been successful. You may not like what they do or the way they do it, but success over a period of time must be respected.

All successful drummers play well. The key is to discover exactly what it is that makes them special. In this way you can learn from them and apply the understanding to your own career. The more you understand about music, drumming *and the music business*, the greater your chances of achieving both musical and monetary success.



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Playing Simple



by David Garibaldi

The following material is a presentation of some simple ideas I've developed for use with my private students. These exercises have been quite successful with *my* students, so I thought I'd pass them on to you. The simplicity of this material will allow you to begin developing a fuller sound when utilizing "The Big Three"—hi-hat, snare drum and bass drum—with a special focus on the snare drum. Having a solid snare sound on the accented notes is too often overlooked. Here is a snare drum technique which allows maximum snare drum projection with much less effort.

Play a rim-shot (not a rim-click, which is an entirely different thing), while striking the drum dead-center with whatever end of the stick you prefer. At the same time, the shaft of the stick hits the rim *between* two lugs. This gives a lower sound than hitting the rim *over* a lug. When thinking rim-shot, many drummers will unconsciously pull their hand back so that the end of the stick hits the drum between the center of the head and the rim, with no consideration of where the shaft is landing on the rim. This produces a thin,

inconsistent sound. Being conscious of every detail of your playing, no matter how miniscule, will develop within you the consistency necessary to perform at a quality level at all times. Striking the center of the head and the rim simultaneously (between two lugs) gives you the full sound of the drum with less ring and the "crack" sound of the rim. This technique is used primarily for live playing. In a recording studio the rim shot has a tendency to choke the sound of the drum slightly and some producers prefer no rim shots. The situation you're in will dictate what will work best. Also, be aware of the tendency to follow the bass drum part with the right hand. Strictly adhere to the written right-hand part.

Use the following hand patterns as you play pages four and six of Louie Bellson and Gil Breines' book *Modern Reading Text in 4/4* with the right foot on the bass drum. Play the written pages as one long exercise or isolate one- or two-bar patterns and play as individual time feels.

1

R.H./H.H.
L.H./S.D.

2

a.

S.D./T.T.

b.

T.T./S.D.

c.

S.D.

d.

S.D.

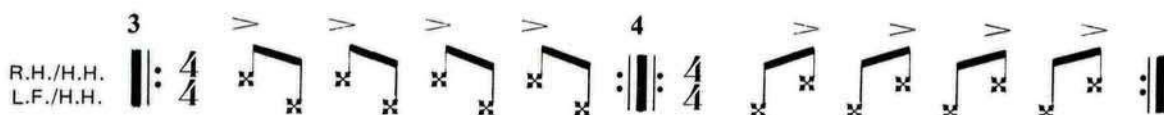
e.

S.D.

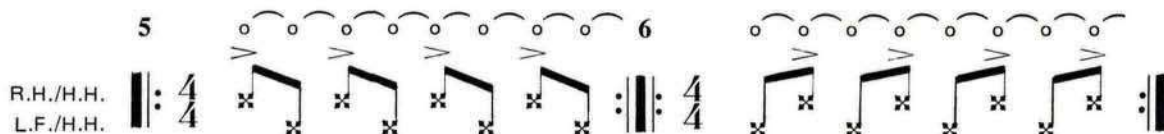
Play right foot/bass drum as accented notes. (Ex.'s 1 and 2 can also be played with open hi-hat).

Exercises 3 and 4 utilize the same left hand/snare drum, right foot/bass drum idea, but in these exercises the hi-hat is split between the right hand and left foot. Play the left foot/hi-hat with

the heel up. This produces a tight "chick" sound and doesn't allow the hi-hat to "swish" when combining the right hand and left foot. Remember, the hi-hat shouldn't be allowed to swish, but should sound similar to the closed hi-hat sound of Example 1. The difference is the *two closed* hi-hat sounds.



Exercises 5 and 6 are also done in the same manner as 3 and 4, except the hi-hat is played with all *open* hi-hat notes.



The sound here is achieved by hitting the hi-hat with the right hand for one open sound and "splashing" the hi-hat with the heel of the left foot down to produce the second open sound. Remember, to achieve this sound with the left foot, *do not* kick the hi-hat

with your heel. Simply keep it down on the footboard while splashing with the ball of the left foot. The addition of the left foot in examples 3 through 6 gives you a basic four-way coordination.

See you soon and God bless!



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Notes On The Making Of MOVING PICTURES Part 1

by Neil Peart

Having been a regular reader of MD for the last couple of years, I've noticed most of the studio information has been for the "session" drummer. This is very good and valuable, but there are many drummers who will be (or hope to be) making records as part of a more-or-less permanent group, who will want to know how to make the studio work for *them*, rather than learn how *they* can work for the studio. I hope I can offer a few useful observations.

As difficult as it is to please someone else *on demand*, it may be even more difficult to make the decisions and learn the technique to please yourself. The modern studio environment, personnel and language can be overwhelming to the uninitiated. It can be frustrating trying to translate what you hear in your head and onstage to what you hear on tape.

Learning to "see" the shape of a sound is one very important step in the understanding and communication of recording. Sounds are often described as "round," "pointed," "flat," "tubular," "boxy," "bright," et cetera.—This can give you a common language to describe what you like or dislike about a particular sound.

Over the course of seven studio albums with Rush, I've been fortunate enough to be limited only by my ability and imagination in exploring and developing my drumming. This is a very large and rare advantage. One of the nicest things about being a part of Rush is *that* freedom to work "over my head," and to be able to learn by experiment and analysis. Every album is a kind of "final exam" for me. I expect to hear new ideas and significant improvement in my playing after the yearly term of touring, writing, and rehearsing.

In general, we all wanted to try some different rhythmic devices for *Moving Pictures*. In the past we've often used many

time and tempo changes around a chord sequence we liked. This time we wanted to revolve the note structure around a good, strong pulse. This made for some interesting developments in the style and substance of our writing, and it seemed generally to give a more unified thrust to our music.

There have been no real revolutions in my own approach—just a little growth along a fairly linear path. I find myself playing harder all the time. As my tuning gets better and I don't have to worry about the sound "choking," I just want to squeeze out, thrash, hammer, or wallop that extra bit of sound. My smaller 12" and 13" closed toms are tuned quite a bit higher than before, and I find that if I lay the stick almost flat across the head and hit it *very hard*—the head will stretch to the point of de-tuning, similar to a guitar player bending a string. This athletic and unsubtle approach produces a nice throaty tone and a good strong attack, which allows greater definition and a more percussive effect from a closed tom-tom.

Another device I've been working on is the "left hand emphasis" approach to rolls. This involves beginning a single-stroke roll with a triplet, which shifts the downbeat to the opposite hand. This allows for a nice eighth note "push" in the right hand or, the completion of the roll with the left hand, *or* you can shift the emphasis *back* to the right hand with another triplet. For the non-ambidextrous drummer, this type of "opposite-hand" thinking and playing can be very difficult to master, but it does open up infinite areas of rhythmic variations that were formerly awkward or impossible.

Another sensitive area of recording is *editing*. For those who haven't experienced the studio first-hand, editing involves the cutting and splicing together of the best parts of two or more separate performances to form one perfect perform-

ance.

Editing is an art form for the engineer, but for the drummer it can be demoralizing and of questionable ethics. Why not just keep trying until you get it the way you want it? There are a few valid reasons that I would like to try to clarify.

One reason is *spontaneity*. Sometimes your part will not be firmly arranged. Everytime you play the song it will be slightly different. Sometimes it's nice to leave a section wide open, close your eyes, and go for it! Great things *do* happen by accident. Editing is the only way to capture these "accidents."

A good example of the principle of editing is the pair of long fills that introduce each vocal section in the second half of "The Camera Eye." I wanted something really special and exciting there, but I didn't want it to be organized and pre-arranged. The only way to capture that spirit of wild abandon is to *be* that way. Every time we did a take of the song, I would close my eyes to those sections, let go, and flail away. This ranged from the ridiculous to the sublime, but I was able to choose the most successful, exciting fills for the finished track. What it really boils down to is that it's always *you* playing. Editing just gives you the opportunity to choose the very best you can do.

A good analogy between playing live and recording in the studio is the difference between *talking* and *writing*. When you're writing, you can cross out unnecessary or inaccurate words, and replace them or shift them around until you arrive at the *essence* of what you wanted to say. They are still *your* words. They're just refined and distilled into their ideal form. In the case of "The Camera Eye," I had to go home and learn how to play the "accident" so I could play it that way live!

Another good reason for editing is *time*. Studio time is precious and costly, and the pressure during basic tracks will bear down



on *the drummer!* Everybody else can repair a note here or there, but the drummer's part has to be perfect. The number of microphones involved in creating a drum sound precludes the possibility of "dropping in" to fix one bad snare beat or a click of the sticks. If a difficult track takes a long time, it's *you* they're waiting for! This can be really frustrating and lead you to over-concentration, and reproachful looks from the other musicians as you try it "one more time" because of some silly mistake you'd never make before or again in your life. AARRRGGH!

This was brought home to me sharply during the recording of "La Villa Strangiato" for our album *Hemispheres*. For four endless days and nights we played that very long and difficult instrumental again and again! We wouldn't give up. Over and over we played it until our fingers were raw and swollen and our minds were drained and dark. We were determined to get the whole thing perfect, but in the end I just couldn't do it, and we ended up putting it together from a few different takes.

Three years and hundreds of performances later, it continues to change and improve tour after tour, and remains very enjoyable, challenging and satisfying to play. Sometimes it's a case of ambition over-reaching ability.

Magic is still another reason for editing. This is always the subject of heated debate. Even if you define magic as "perfect synchronicity of rational factors," the fact remains that *sometimes* the combination of sounds, feel, and execution is so good that it must be kept; even if it's only half a song. Painters, writers, composers, and filmmakers must all know that you take advantage of a good thing when you've got it. You don't hope that it will return later! Somerset Maugham said "Only a mediocre man is always at his best." Amen.

We took a slightly different course in constructing "Witch Hunt." Usually our songs are put together as a three piece, but we sometimes set aside one project to be a studio production number. Being a cinematic type piece, "Witch Hunt" also allowed a lot of atmosphere for unusual percussion effects which I took full advantage of! I emptied my armory using the gong bass drums, wind chimes, glockenspiel, tubular bells, conga, cowbell, vibraslap, various electronic effects, and in one section I double-tracked the whole drum kit. It was fun.

The "percussion ensemble" in the second verse was very interesting to do. When we recorded the basic track, I left that section largely blank, and went back and overdubbed each drum separately. I used different sounds and perspectives on each drum to create the dramatic effect of things alternately being very distant and very near. I also removed the bottom heads of my toms on this track to get a darker, more primal sound.

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Densmore continued from page 17

thereafter. We got fired from the Whisky for playing too loud and Jim did the Oedipal section of "The End" one night. We had never even heard of it. We're just playing along and all of a sudden, he's killing his father and screwing his mother. Elmer's old partner, Phil Tanzini, also thought he was crazy and fired us. So, that was the Whisky.

RF: Did you play clubs after that?

JD: Yes. It was a real frustrating time in there for me. We played Gazarris, which was a hole in the wall. Before the record started moving and between getting fired from the Whisky and getting decent gigs, there were several months there where it was like, "What do we do? We can't get a gig, we're playing places we don't like." And I started thinking, "Hey, I could get another job." As a drummer, I had been working before this.

RF: Later on, as far as the putting together of the material, did that happen in the studio or out of the studio?

JD: Well, the first two albums were written in these early days, but the third album, we found ourselves writing in the studio, which is not good at \$100 an hour.

RF: Besides the financial, why was that not good in your estimation?

JD: All this incubation time, you work on the songs, you thrash them out in clubs and they get time and growth. You make it and you go out there and it's, "We want 'Light My Fire,' 'Light My Fire.'" You sneak in an original or two that you're working on, but it's a bigger auditorium and it isn't the same. And then when you're off the road, you're recording and that's pressure, so the natural thing you started in the beginning, changes. The writing becomes secondary and that's what got you started. That's a problem.

RF: What was the difference for you between working with Paul Rothchild, your producer, and when you didn't?

JD: Rothchild was great for us. In the beginning, he taught us how to make records. We didn't know how. It was very frustrating the first few days, getting a "sound" on our instruments. I didn't know what the hell it was. He wanted to muffle a lot of the skins and it felt horrible. After a little while, I realized that you can't have the same sound in the studio as you have live. Live, the room echos and the whole thing would be a big mush. But it was kind of frustrating learning that. By the second album, though, it was a joy. We knew what you do and we kind of wanted to be out there and put in some electronic sounds. Rothchild was also really innovative and creative. We had moog synthesizers on our second album. I'm sure there was no other group doing that in 1968, but they're very subtle. Then Jim started self-destructing. Now here, Rothchild was really good because he was strong and he was one of the few guys who wouldn't take shit from Jim. He would say, "The session is over, Jim," and Jim would want to do more. But it started getting hard. Rothchild had to do lots of takes on the vocals and his perfectionistic thing got so excessive. He really wanted "his sound." To me, he would go past the good takes, trying to get the ensemble sound he heard. When we finally said goodbye to him, it was so refreshing doing *L.A. Woman*; just heaven. Bruce Botnick was the engineer all along, and the co-producer. Sometimes it would have taken half a day, previously, to get a drum sound and go around each drum getting a sound, which is fine when you're making *Sgt. Pepper* or whatever. But with Bruce, I started playing my drums and he said, "That's great, that's great," and in half an hour, it was together. And then I thought, "Shit, this is the sound I've always loved." I had a lot more jazz influence in *L.A. Woman*. "Riders in the Storm" is a very jazzy, light thing and I thought, "Ah, finally getting to really do it!" When we were having the dispute with Rothchild, we had played a few of these songs and he called "Riders" cocktail music. And he was somewhat crazed from working with Jim. The third album [*Waiting for the Sun*] was very hard to make. The first two albums were songs we had worked on for years and we loved them. But then Jim started getting drunk or stoned. He'd have to do more takes on the vocals and possibly even them up to get one good one. That was the beginning of the end. That last album, without Rothchild, was much more together because we were more in con-

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trol, so Jim was more involved in it and it was a lot of fun to make. We did it in our rehearsal hall. We brought in remote equipment. The album before it, *Morrison Hotel*, was sixteen tracks and *L.A. Woman* was eight. We went back to eight tracks, which sounds crazy, denying the technology, but, in fact, what it did was force us to put only really great stuff on that tape. I think of it as the first punk album. Elvis Costello made his first album for something like three grand, which was great, because as much as I love Springsteen and Jackson Browne, those albums cost a quarter of a million dollars or whatever. Costello's point was, "You go in, you play it with heart and feeling, screw the errors, and put it out!" That's what we did on *L.A. Woman*, exactly. On Miles' *Live at Carnegie Hall*, there was a big error in the beginning where the trumpets just go BLAH and we remembered reading that Miles said, "If it has the feeling, screw the errors." So on the *L.A. Woman* sessions, it was, "I hit a wrong note," and Robbie would say, "So what? Remember what Miles said." "Great, okay." So on that album, it was one or two takes on every track, whereas the fourth album, *Soft Parade*, was the ultimate in indulgence. "Unknown Soldier" was the biggie, and Rothschild had us do 130 takes. It was two sections, so it was about 70 and 70. It was ludicrous. I like the song and I like the way it sounds, but come on.

RF: You lose the heart after the third take.

JD: The heart was lost. I think with the albums in the middle period, there are better takes in the can than what came out. Maybe with a mistake here and there, but with heart.

RF: How long did it take you to make *Soft Parade*?

JD: Several months. Back then, that was a long time. It took us two weeks to make the first album. That was on four-track, ancient times. The next album, maybe a month.

RF: What about *L.A. Woman*?

JD: Two or three weeks.

RF: How did the technology change from the first album to the last, even as far as miking?

JD: On the first album, there were just a few mic's on my drums. By the last album, there were seven or eight. I always went for the drums to have real personality. I always had the bottom heads off all my drums and I hated new skins and new drums. I liked to beat them up until they started barking back at me. If you listen to "Hello, I Love You," that's when the heads were just rancid. That was my sound. They would all sort of talk. When I broke one, I'd cry and get a new one and it would be a few weeks before I could stand the sound of it.

RF: You did all your own tuning in the studio?

JD: Yes. I used to tune my tom toms to the I, IV and V chords, just approximately, if it was the blues, because I used to play tympani in the orchestra.

RF: Why didn't the Doors ever hire a bass player?

JD: We thought we needed one and we auditioned several. Every time they played, though, we sounded like the Rolling Stones, or some regular old blues/rock band. Then Ray discovered the Fender-Rhodes keyboard bass, which was mushy, but we thought, "Yeah, this is different. We're different." In the early days, we played the San Francisco Ballroom, Filmore and Avalon. Owsley, the guy who used to make acid, the original guy, came backstage to me one time and said, "You guys need a bass player. You've got a big hole in your music." He went out the door and Ray and I looked at each other and said, "We're definitely not getting one now! If it makes the King of Acid a little edgy, then we're on the right track." But in the studio, we always had a bass player.

RF: Except for the first album.

JD: Well, it's not credited, but Larry Knechtel played a little bass on "Light My Fire." The tracks were done with the keyboard bass, but for recording it's too mushy. You need a pluck to get a punch. Robbie played bass on "Backdoor Man," just overdubbed a little. And then from the second album on out, we always had a bass player.

RF: Who was the unidentified bass player in the very first days?

JD: I don't know. Those were the early days with Ray and his brothers, Jim and me. It was some girl bass player. We played the

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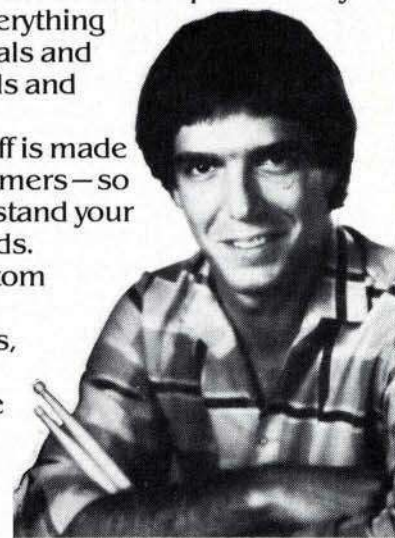
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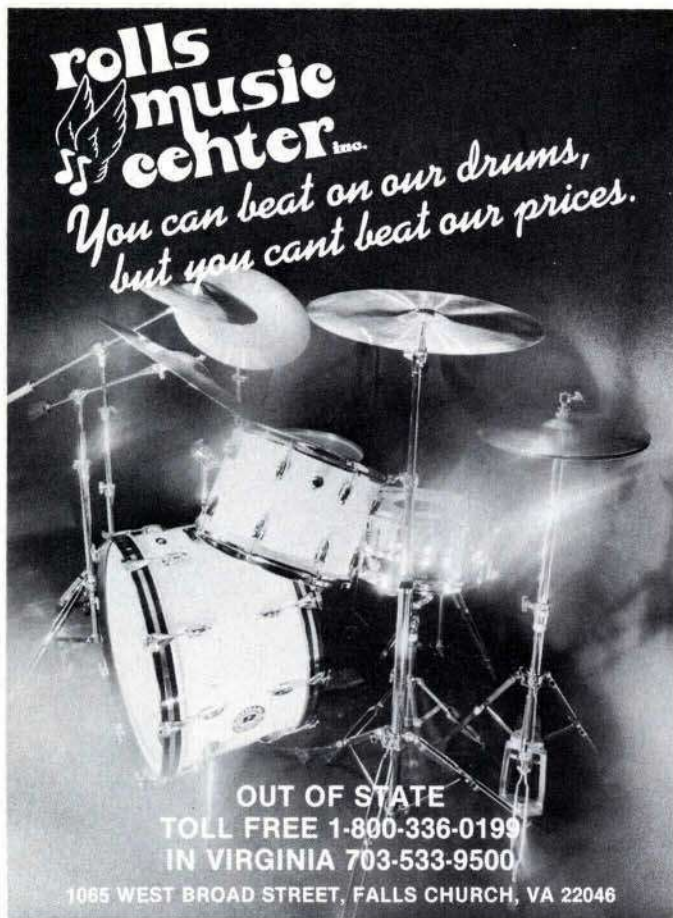


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Marina Hotel and played "Gloria" over and over again.

RF: Did you miss having a bass player to work off of?

JD: No. There was more of a responsibility to hold the tempo down because it was just me and Ray's left hand, which would only play simple repetitive patterns. But there wasn't the big bass filling the sound, so I was free to mess around and answer Jim's words with accents. It was real freedom for me. Like on "The Music's Over," in the whole middle section, the tempo drops way down and I think I keep a little beat with my bass drum or something and Jim goes into, "What have we done to the earth . . ." And I'm going, "Yeah! What have we done?!" answering the words with the drums. It was real loose and improvisational. Live, I had to work real hard to make sure it didn't rush or drag.

RF: Do you have favorite tracks?

JD: "Riders in the Storm," "L.A. Woman," I like that track very much. "Light My Fire" was pretty much a joy for me to play live and at least for the three of us, because of the long improvisational section in the middle. We used to play the song for about fifteen minutes live and Jim would get a little bored sometimes. Sometimes he'd be shaking his maracas and playing with the folks or sometimes he'd just go backstage. But it was real long and no one did that then. God, there's a lot of them. I like the second album a lot [*StrangeDays*], the third album, eh, the fourth album, we got a lot of flak for the strings and horns. Even before the first album, Ray and I, old jazzers, had talked about using horns someday. There's a song or two in there with Curtis Amy, this West Coast sax player. We told him to play like Archie Shepp or Coltrane and just lose it, go outside the chords. We had a real good time, but people said, "It wasn't the Doors' sound." Well, if you didn't like it, we had to go through with it. We wouldn't have gotten back to *L.A. Woman* without experimenting. I didn't like *Morrison Hotel*, although people love it. It was more Rothschild dominated. I love the *L.A. Woman* album.

RF: Something I read said that Jim much preferred the club days. I wonder how you felt about that, musically.

JD: I don't know that that's true. Yes and no for all of us. The intimacy in the early days was great. You get off the stand and you talk to the people and all that, but we enjoyed getting larger and larger crowds off. It was a great experience. At some point, it got too big, that's for sure.

RF: But even sound-wise. A lot of musicians say that larger arenas make you lose taste in your playing and the subtleties get lost.

JD: I think you could generalize about the Doors that we liked the sort of small, 5,000-seat halls around the country, with the old thick drapes and the dead sound. These large arenas are for sports, not music, and they echo and that's the worst. But we were excited about being the first rock 'n' roll band to play the Forum and Madison Square Garden. They were very reluctant to have us, but we were pretty excited by that mass thing. Later, we did a tour where we went back to the smaller halls, purposely. Unfortunately, Jim was really self-destructing, but it was a good tour. It was after Miami and all the shit. Promoters were saying, "Hey, you can fill double this," but we wanted to do that. That's when we got to play the *L.A. Woman* album for the first time live, and it was really nice. But then some nights Jim was so ripped that it was the worst.

RF: How does that affect a musician when you don't know what is going to happen next? How do you get a handle on the music, and even the vibes?

JD: Well, there was a point where Jim's intoxication freed him up. We had cues and a framework and we knew how to get in and out of a lot of stuff, although a lot of it was up to him. I would always wind up Ray's organ solo in "Light My Fire." Why me, I don't know, but it just worked out that way. Sometimes Jim would have to have a line that would start us back into something and he might meander around for ten minutes or improvise poetry, which was pretty neat because it was real spontaneous, like jazz. But if he was too ripped, we'd vamp forever and it would be very frustrating. Very. In the early days, we were really, really good. It was important to us. We always did sound checks.

RF: When did that change?

JD: By the third album, he was pretty crazy in the studio.

RF: How does one who works with someone who is self-destructing, keep his head on his shoulders?

JD: Well, I quit a couple of times. On the third album, we were in the studio and Jim had a few of his latest friends in there who were just screwed up people and I said to Paul, "I quit," and left. I came back the next day. I couldn't give up my soul. Music is my soul and as painful-as it was, I couldn't give it up. I think Jim's self destruction was hardest on me. I mean, I can't speak for the others, but Robbie is quiet, he keeps things in, and Ray is sort of the father figure, and maybe he really understood Jim way back. I didn't. I thought he was going crazy. Now I look back and I understand him much better and his lyrics and what he was doing.

RF: How so? What didn't you understand that you understand now?

JD: Something about commitment. Now that I look at his whole background, I can understand. His dad was in the military and he was dragged from base to base and I'm sure it was a very strict upbringing. When he came out with "Father I want to kill you, mother I want to ..." I thought, "Okay, over the deep end here." Now I understand what he was trying to say, Oedipal, etc.

RF: How did it affect you? You say you took it very hard.

JD: Well, in the very beginning, the first few years, we were like brothers. And as time went on, it became three and one. It was harder and harder to communicate with Jim. Musically, it was always okay because musically we really didn't talk that much, we didn't philosophize about what we were doing, it was intuitive. As crazed as he was, musically somehow it was real special. Hey, you know, a friend self destructing and you can't stop him. It was back in the '60s when everything was "mellow" and you didn't really confront. Now I would take him by the shirt. But I was afraid of him, too. He was very powerful. He was a little older and real smart. Just coming into a room, it was, "Jesus, who is that?" That kind of power. So what I'm saying is that he knew that I disapproved of what he was doing to himself by my actions. I wouldn't be around, or I would storm out. I never directly said it though. It was the times. You didn't do that. And I would rationalize, and still believe it, that if someone is going to really change inside, it has to click, no matter all the verbal drilling you do to them. But if more people had confronted him, we might have had one less great album, but maybe he would still be around. I can't shoulder the entire responsibility, but there was a lot of guilt there. It's eroding a little.

RF: And a lot of anger.

JD: Yes. I'm trying to write a book and maybe I'll get it out someday. But what I'm trying to say is that self destruction is not that glamorous. You can't just wear leather pants and drink. That's not the road to freedom necessarily. It was for Jim. He was a special guy, but that book, *No One Gets Out of Here Alive*, reads as if Jim is going from one binge to the next, and that's not it. There was stuff in between. There was a sensitive guy, who the next morning, wrote down some stuff. I think he could only reveal his pain through his words. He was a little macho.


RF: Was there ever a point when you were caught up in the craziness?

JD: Yeah, just in the logistics of being on the road for a couple of years. I didn't really know where my roots were. I knew I lived in L.A. and I was born here, but I was very scattered. But I remember Jim getting up in the morning and smoking ten joints in 1967. Then acid came along and he took more than anyone on the planet. It did not fry his brains at all. And then alcohol, and that did him in. So here, all the time, was this example of it being too far to go, so the three of us became a little more conservative and felt the responsibility of hearing 10,000 people upstairs stomping, "Doors, Jim, Jim," and we're downstairs and Jim is under the toilet and we're supposed to go on. And they all paid \$6.00, which was a lot of money then.

RF: So you felt a responsibility towards your audiences and what was happening.

JD: I felt a responsibility when the percentage of good perfor-

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maces got less and less. That made me crazy! I also remember, I kind of felt a responsibility about giving the impression that drugs were possibly the key to whatever. We didn't blatantly say, "Take drugs," but we did. See, this is what makes me crazy. In the early days, Jim was like a street scientist. We all were. There was LSD, but it wasn't in the press, and we would take it and go anywhere, into a coffee shop or whatever, and we would be having an incredible time looking at the silverware. But no one knew. No one had heard of anything. Alcohol is another thing, though. That is escape and deadening the senses, not heightening. That's what makes me sad about Jim, because in the early days, here's this incredible, beautiful, smart guy who was curious about everything in the world. When you turn to alcohol, you're trying to stop something. Whatever he created, he couldn't handle. That's real sad.

RF: You went in the other direction when you could have gotten caught up in it. I wonder what that thing inside of a person is that determines that.

JD: My brother committed suicide and Morrison committed slow suicide. I can't and I won't. It makes me value life a lot more. That's the reason.

RF: Was your brother before?

JD: Yes. His name was Jim. He died at 27; Morrison died at 27. He was a real talented musician and painter.

RF: There were two albums after Jim died. Why didn't you proceed with that? Why did the group disband?

JD: Well, I'm kind of proud of the first one, *Tightrope Ride*. It's not bad. We've got a lot of little jazzy things in there. We didn't replace Jim, of course, because that would have been ludicrous. So Ray, who had sung before, sang, and Robbie tried to sing. We had played together for many years and we didn't want to give it up, but by the second album, we were getting scattered, musically. We were fighting, because we didn't have our unity, which was Jim. He had been our focal point, so it was over.

RF: Is it hard to put the pieces back together again after something like that ends? How do you get motivated to do something else?

JD: That's what keeps you going. You can't just sit around. That's why we made those albums, to keep doing something. Then there was the Butts Band. Ray, Robbie and I went to England to find some other musicians and to do something. Ray decided to go back to L.A. and Robbie and I stayed. We found some musicians, Phil Chen, a Chinese guy born in Jamaica, a great bass player who was Rod Stewart's bass player for years, and he introduced us to reggae. There was a singer, Jess Roden, and we made an album on Blue Thumb, which was pretty good, actually. But it was very hard trying to have a band with half of them living in London and half of them living in L.A., so it fell apart. Then we had some other musicians here. We made an album in Jamaica, which was fabulous. It was a year or two before the Wailers ever played here and we were really into reggae. It was a great lifetime experience. But we'd get all these musicians together and they were kind of into it and working on songs. But the first singer was sort of fantasizing a solo career, even before we did anything. I thought, "These people don't know what it takes. Everybody has to be dedicated for years." At least we got to play, we made an album, we played live a little, got to create. Ray did a solo album and he also had the Doors first clone band.

RF: You reunited a few years ago to do *An American Prayer*, an album of Jim's poetry.

JD: Ray's solo album didn't do well, *Night City*, the clone band didn't do well and Robbie had a jazz album out on Blue Note, which was very good, but very esoteric, and I was acting. So we were all doing those things individually for a few years when John Haeny comes around, this engineer who did a couple of cuts on the third album, and said, "Hey, we've got all this poetry." So we listened to it and decided to do an album. Jim wanted a poetry album. That's why he recorded it all on his birthday. He was going to do it with an orchestra, but he died. So years later, we thought, "Let's do this." Our old producer, Paul, dumped all over the album in *BAM* Magazine and I wrote a letter in reply. Certainly it was planned for an orchestra, but he died, and who better to do it than his old musical friends who used to support all his poetry with

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music anyway? We always viewed his lyrics as poems from the very beginning. So all we had were his words. If you listen to the record, it's like a movie for your ears. That's how we made it. It's real complex; a trip. It didn't sell well, but we knew it wouldn't. It was so esoteric. But if you think about it, all we had was Jim reading, and not with a lot of drama. We'd chop it up, sometimes we'd let it go and support that musically and sometimes we'd say, "No, no, he's got to wait here," and we'd stop and play a little music and then we'd drop in a line or two. So that was the tribute we did. I think he would be blown away.

RF: You were quoted as saying that Jim always wanted you to play an Indian rhythm and you finally did on that album.

JD: That's right.

RF: But there's some of that on previous cuts; "Strange Days" for one.

JD: "Five to One" is sort of your basic Indian rhythm. He would always be on me to play simple primitive stuff and I'd be thinking in my head, "Damnit, I didn't play jazz for 400 years to do that. I want to show my licks." But sometimes when I would play something simple and then he'd start some words and Robbie and Ray would find a lick, I'd think, "Oh yeah, right." It's the whole song, not showing other drummers what you can do. And I really haven't showed off at all. I know that Jim Keltner said to Robbie, "I thought John was shit until I heard *L.A. Woman*. Damn, that's good stuff, 'Riders in the Storm,' that subtle jazz. He's good." Well, I was that good from the beginning [pats himself on the back] but I was surrendering to the song and I worked. We all did, that's why the impact was so big.

RF: Didn't you guys get up on stage in Paris together during the time of the poetry album?

JD: Don't ask me about this. Okay, I'll tell you about it. We went to Paris on a talk tour. We couldn't play *An American Prayer* without Jim and it was so intricate. We really worked hard on it and we wanted to promote it somehow, so we went out and did interviews all over Europe. I guess I might as well tell you just what

happened and dump it. Danny Sugarman, who was doing our press, said, "Hey, it's Jim's birthday, we went to his grave, do you want to sit in at a club tonight?" And we thought, "Great, yeah." We hadn't played together in several years, but we were just going to sit in, what the hell. It was a nice idea, but I was worried. We go to the club in the afternoon and it's a damn 1,000 seat-place. We're doing a sound check and we're not just sitting in. They've rented equipment for us and I'm playing on rented drums. With drumming, it's like wearing a glove. Your drumset is like a tight glove. You pick up a guitar or a piano, the keys or strings are the same distances. All the levels of everything are all different on the drums, it's not your sound and it's the worst. So, in fact, it was this incredible disco in Paris, the Palace, with laser beams. It was usually just records; no band at all. So everything stops and they go, "Special surprise, the Doors." It was a show! And we weren't too good. And there was a little blurb in *Rolling Stone's* Random Notes about the Doors sitting in on Jim's birthday, but it was mediocre. It had been presented as sit in at a club on Jim's birthday. Yeah, I love to play with other musicians, I miss it terribly. Play the blues, or an old Doors' song. I played "Roadhouse Blues" with Robbie at the Troubadour recently when he was playing with some band. But this was not at all how it was presented; an out and out exploitation.

RF: What was your set-up?

JD: Well, in the beginning, I had one tom-tom on the bass drum and one floor tom and a snare.

RF: Gretsch, I presume.

JD: Yes. Then I went to Ludwig not too long after, like the third album. I had a Ludwig snare all the way and still have my Ludwig snare. I have a couple of them, but I still have the original Doors one. I still love the sound. Now I have a whole flock of Pearl tom-toms. A few years ago, the Japanese really got drums down! They're great tom-toms. I have a Ludwig snare drum and a Ludwig floor tom and Zildjian cymbals. I love old cymbals. I'd go to Pro

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RF: They didn't have too many endorsements back then, did they?

JD: I never endorsed drums. I never was asked, damnit! In the last several years, I've been asked kind of casually once or twice, but I haven't been pursued. Now I'm doing a movie [working title: "Get Crazy."] and the character I'm playing is a Keith Moon-type. I hope they're going to check with me on the drums. I'm going to get 400 drums: two bass drums, a gong, just a mammoth set. I've never played two bass drums. I don't know how.

RF: Do you still practice? Do you have a set at your house?

JD: Oh yes. I have a studio for rehearsal, not recording, but with padded walls.

RF: Where did the acting come from?

JD: My dad used to act when he was twenty. He had a little theatre group and then he decided, like me, that he couldn't make a living in the arts, so he became an architect. So, forty years later, a few years ago, he went back to the stage and he does stuff around town. I went to see him and it was a different guy on that stage. He's real shy but he opened up and I thought that's what I wanted to do, and so I studied for a couple of years with Lee Strasberg. It's new and exciting. I would get as nervous for twelve people in my acting class as Madison Square Garden because it was risky and no drums.

RF: You were nervous before you went on stage with the Doors?

JD: It grew. I played little parties and got used to being a performer. That's why I think there's some connection between acting and music. I was always the one who wrote the sets for all the live performances. I could never get more than three or four songs out of anybody and then we'd go on stage. By the time we got to the third or fourth song, we'd fight in front of everybody sometimes. But I always had a sense of, "Alright, we should play this other song instead of this one because they're in this weird place and we should take them over here," which has something to do with acting.

RF: You were also involved playing and performing with a dance company.

JD: I went to this dance concert and it was real interesting. Avant-garde people doing art for art, no money, trying to say something. And I met this girl, Bess, and she said, "We should do a piece together." So I put down five different rhythms on a cassette and gave it to her and she was going to choreograph dancing to it. It evolved. I rehearsed with her and thought, "Hey, I'm an actor here. I'm not just going to be a Sideman, I'm going to be a character. I'll be her husband or boyfriend through the drums. She'll dance and we'll have an argument through movement and drumming." It evolved and evolved and turned into this piece called "Funny Honey." It was real good and we did it all over the Southwest, San Diego, L.A., Santa Fe, Arizona. I never considered myself a solo drummer; that wasn't my thing. My thing was augmenting and spurring on the soloist and Jim. Keeping the beat, that's your first job, but really driving the others. Here I was playing alone for ten minutes for this dancer. It was good. It made me think composition. It's all rhythm, but composition-wise. This movie I'm doing, I've had to think the same way. I have a fairly extensive drum solo, so it was necessary for me to work out several sections which built to a climax. This kind of discipline is good. My character in the movie is a heavy-metal-type drummer, so I had to think of how he would play. It was a real challenge, and although I was a little nervous about it, I've just finished the solo and I think it works. So after the ten-minute piece, Bess said, "Hey, you're agile and have rhythm and have been into acting. Be in this piece." I was real scared, but I was in a half-an-hour dance piece with eight people. There was speaking, it was called "Conversations," and it was real personal. You had to go out and do a solo, which was a monologue that you wrote yourself, about yourself. Very psychological. And she would choreograph movement to the words you wrote. We did it in New York. I got standing ovations every time I did my solo. In the early days, people didn't know I was in the Doors, so it

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meant that much more. I did that for a year or two and that's as fulfilling as any Doors gig.

RF: How do you feel about the Doors' resurgence?

JD: Well, 75% of me loves it and the other 25% is a little mixed up about it, awkward, "What does this mean?" When I get asked for autographs by people who were three years old or not born yet, I feel kind of weird, or see my picture on their T-shirts. But the good thing, of course, is that our music has lasted two decades. I never would have believed it. The last year or two with the resurgence, the compliments have been flying and some of them really good. A couple of nights ago, I was in a bar and this girl comes up to me: "Are you . . . , etc., etc." And then she says how we changed her life and how she might be dead if it hadn't been for us. She was talking about how we represented breaking away from parents, etc., and how we inspired her to do so and she's very independent and happy. When you get that kind of feedback, it feels pretty good.

RF: Are you interested in returning to music?

JD: I love music. I don't have any immediate plans to get in a band, but it's my life. If there's a Doors movie made, there's a possibility of Robbie, Ray and I doing some instrumental tracks in addition to the old songs. That's a very exciting idea for the future, if we ever get a deal confirmed for the movie. I always wanted to make an instrumental album with them, but it's never happened. If you listen to *American Prayer*, there's a prerecorded tape of Jim's voice and nothing else. And then you listen to what we did and there is some musical chemistry between the three of us that you don't lose because you've played together six or seven years. Even when you go away for years, you know them musically. I look forward to doing it again if it ever happens. But other musical things are exciting also. I just jammed the other day with Fear's bass player and some others and it was great. I miss playing. It's not out of the realm of possibility that I would play in another group, but it's not in the immediate future. I'm real excited by acting, but ever since I first started piano lessons, I've just been crazy over music and I always will be. It really is the thread through my life.

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Chord Scales

by David Samuels

In my last column, in the August/September issue, I discussed "Voicings for Mallets," where I described briefly how to construct triadic chord voicings. In this article, I'll discuss the connection between chords and their chord scales.

A brief review of the modes is necessary to understand chord scales. There are seven different modes, each with different Greek names. There are, to be sure, more than just seven modes that are used as chord scales, but we will concentrate first on these seven modes. Each mode, or scale, is a series of whole and half steps. Each scale has two half steps and five whole steps. Take for example the first mode—the Ionian mode (or major scale). This scale has half steps between scale degrees 3-4 and 7-8 (each of the other scale degrees is a whole step apart). Knowing the whole and half-step formula for each mode enables you to start on any note and play any of the seven modes. The following is a list of where the half steps occur in all seven modes:

Ionian	3-4,7-8
Dorian	2-3,6-7
Phrygian	1-2,5-6
Lydian	4-5,7-8
Mixolydian	3-4,6-7
Aeolian	2-3,5-6
Locrian	1-2,4-5

Practice these modes in both of the following ways:

First, play each of the modes starting from the lowest root position on your instrument to the highest note on the instrument in the same mode, i.e.: a G aeolian mode would start on the G below middle C and would go up to the highest note on the instrument in the G aeolian mode (F) and then back down to the starting note.

Second, play each mode starting from any note other than the root up to the highest note in the mode on the instrument and then back down to the starting note. Remember that the purpose of this is that you learn the sight and sound of each mode and that you can start any mode on any note.

As you start learning these modes you will start to hear that each mode has its own distinctive quality which can imply a specific harmony. Here is a list of each mode and its corresponding harmony:

Ionian	Major
Dorian	Minor
Phrygian	Minor
Lydian	Minor
Mixolydian	Dominant
Aeolian	Minor
Locrian	Diminished

For our purposes here we will be dealing with just major and minor triads, so we'll be concentrating on the Ionian, Lydian, Dorian,

Phrygian, and Aeolian modes. Record the following progression six times:

C- A- D- E- B- C#- Bb- Ab- Eb- F#- F- G-

Now take the three minor-sounding modes—Dorian, Phrygian, and Aeolian—and practice them while listening back to the recorded progression, changing scales each time the chord changes.

At first, just use one of the minor modes for all the different chords while playing constant eighth notes:

Now take each of the minor modes and practice it through the progression. Once this feels comfortable try switching the modes for each chord.

C dorian A aeolian D dorian E aeolian

B aeolian C# phrygian Bb aeolian Bb dorian Ab dorian

Eb aeolian F# phrygian F aeolian G aeolian G aeolian

Now record the following progression six times:

C B \flat A \flat G \flat F D E A G E \flat D \flat B B \flat A \flat G \flat E E \flat C

D G F D \flat B A A \flat G \flat E D D \flat B \flat C F E \flat B A G

Now take the two major modes—Ionian and Lydian—and practice them while listening back to the recorded progression, changing scales each time the chord changes. At first, just use one of the major modes for all the major chords while playing constant eighth notes. Then take the other major mode and practice it through the progression in the same way. Once this feels comfortable try switching the major modes for each of the major scales.

Try writing your own progressions combining both the major and minor chords, record them, and then try practicing the appropriate modes over the progressions. Your goal should be to create melodies over these and other progressions by choosing notes that sound "right" to you from the modes that fit the chords.

I've appreciated your letters and questions about mallet playing. I hope to answer some of them in my next column. You can write to me in care of Modern Drummer.



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Al Duffy

by Michael Rozek



Al Duffy has been playing drums for forty-seven years. And that fact, perhaps more than any other, accounts for his singular reputation as a drum designer, craftsman and innovator. Now the key research and development source at Nashville's Pearl International—and a man deeply involved in the company's future—Duffy is perhaps best known for his late '60s tenure at Frank Ippolito's Professional Percussion Center in New York, where he gained a reputation as a player's best friend (qua technician and all-around ear), and for several seminal inventions, including the chain pedal. Recently, I visited him in Nashville, where we talked at length about drums and Al Duffy, past, present and future:

MR: Al, tell me how you came to be a person who knows as much as you do about drums.

AD: Well, in the first place, I don't know everything there is to know. You never stop learning. I starting playing when I was four years old. My grandfather was a military-style drummer in the Spanish-American War, and the first recollection in life I have is sitting across the drum pad from my grandfather learning rudiments. Then I studied with a very good drum teacher up in Massachusetts who nobody

knows, and eventually, he sent me to George Lawrence Stone in Boston, who I studied with for several years. Then, I went to the New England Conservatory of Music, and spent some time at Tanglewood and in various community orchestras around the Boston and Springfield area, all of those little jobs that you do while you're a student at music school. I graduated in 1954, and then in '56, I was in the U.S. Army, stationed in Germany, where I played in a band. Then I came out of the Army and spent one season with the North Carolina Symphony, touring, and then went to the Portland, Oregon Symphony. There, I first met Walt Johnston, who is the President of Pearl International here in Nashville. He used to play third flute and piccolo in the orchestra, and extra percussion. He's a damn good drummer as well as an excellent flute player. We became friends then, and I guess from that point on, we were destined to work together. I stayed in Portland for six years, and then came back to the East Coast and became tympanist with the Baltimore Symphony for a few years. Then, I went to New York City, and got a job playing with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, which had been one of my goals throughout life. It was then that I became involved with the Pro-

fessional Percussion Center in New York.

MR: This was what year?

AD: Maybe '66 or '67, I really can't remember for sure. But I did help Frank Ippolito get Professional Percussion Center going. From there, I went to Hinger Touchtone Corporation, which manufactures tympani, over in New Jersey. Dan Hinger, the president, is a tympanist with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. They make the state-of-the-art for tympani. I stayed with them for five years, and then one day when Pearl International was formed, I got a call from Walt Johnston.

MR: When did you become aware of your ability—or tendency—to invent for the drums?

AD: It probably started with my grandfather. He and I used to make practice pads out of discs of birch and cover them with pieces of rubber innertube tires. Under that we had rubber heels, that you could buy in those days to repair your shoes with. I can clearly remember that being a whole lot of fun. And that's the key, really, to designing or building things. It's got to be fun to do. And it's got to be something that challenges your interests, challenges your creativity.

MR: Take me through your career as a drum designer.

AD: Well, a whole lot of things that I've done, of course, I've done for myself. I've needed this, that or the other thing, and then just sat down and made it for myself, and maybe for one or two other people who said, "Yeah, I could use that too."

MR: Like?

AD: Well, like tympani sticks, or maybe a toe strap on the pedal to help me move the pedal, or a stop to keep me from sliding off of it. Then, one time, a particular tympani didn't have a pitch indicator, but I felt a need for one. So I developed and built a very crude but workable pitch indicator. But, that's past history. Today, I think I have one patent to my credit: the chain pedal. It's a sprocket-and-chain-design pedal that was built out of necessity, because the leather straps that were being

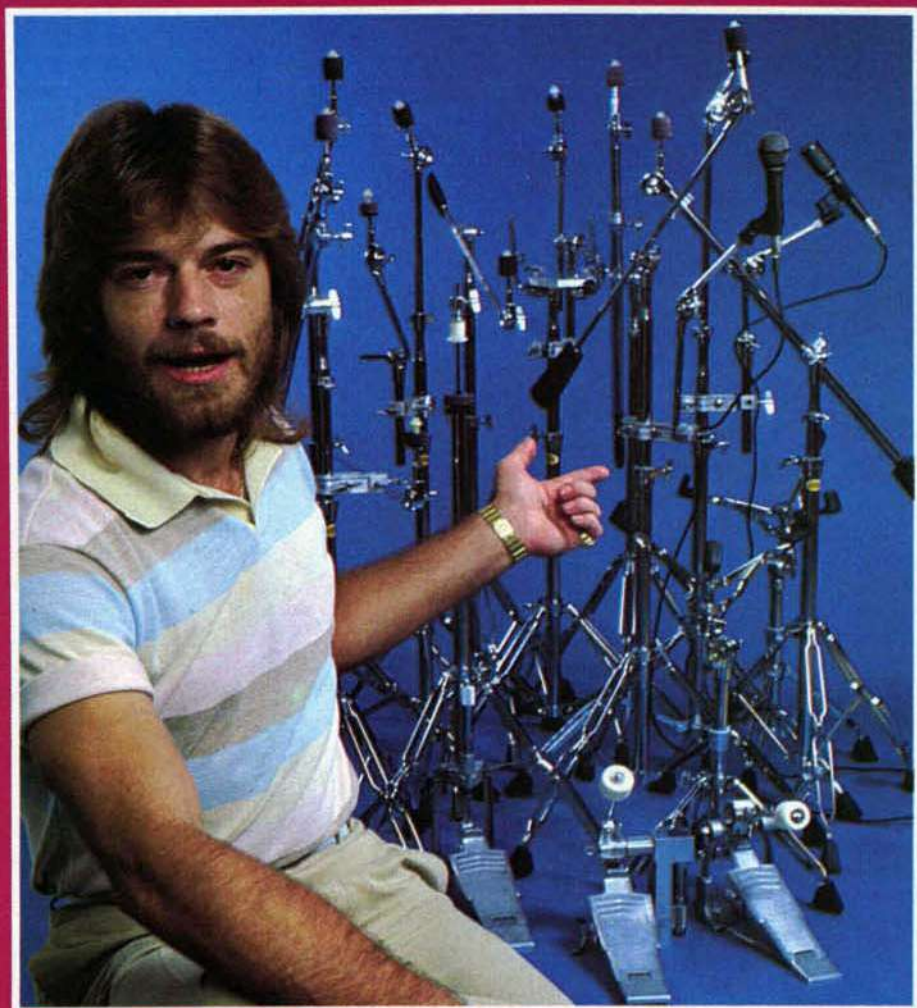
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Photo courtesy Professional Percussion Center

Frank Ippolito, Elvin Jones and Al Duffy at the Professional Percussion Center in 1969.

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Steve Gadd's reasons for playing Yamaha System Drums.



Because I've always been very concerned with the quality of sound in a drum, I use the Recording Custom Series drums, with these beautiful all-birch shells and a black piano finish. They give me a very controlled resonance with a lot of tone. They let me relax with the music, so I can adjust my touch to any volume requirements. Yamaha drums are very sensitive, and there's always a reserve of sound.

I've always tended to go for simple equipment like the Tour Series snare drum with eight lugs, because it's easier for me to get the sound. Same thing goes for my hardware, which is why I like the 7 Series hardware. I don't require really heavy leg bracing so the lightweight stands are just fine; very quiet, too. For more information, write: Yamaha Musical Products, A Division of Yamaha International Corp. Box 7271, Grand Rapids, MI 49510.



used were constantly breaking. While I was working at Professional Percussion, one of the biggest repairs we had to do was replacing them. One night, I was working on one of my own tympani, one that had a chain-drive mechanism on it. It suddenly occurred to me that damn, this chain was strong as a devil, but how could we use it on a bass drum pedal? Well, first I took the Camco pedal, and just bolted a piece of chain between the toe of the foot board, and wrapped it up over the strap cam on the shaft of the pedal. And it worked; it was strong. But then, it suddenly occurred to me, "Well, let's take it one step further, and add the wheel as well." And when I did that, I got one of the smoothest actions I've ever felt in my life. And I was granted a patent for that. And then, I sold it to Drum Workshop in California, shortly before I came to Pearl. They're marketing that mechanism now, I guess, quite successfully.

MR: Tell me more about the days at Professional Percussion.

AD: Well, Frank Ippolito took over Bill Mather's shop, when Bill died. Bill was an excellent drum technician, and he had a wonderful little shop in the basement, on 47th Street, down by the river. And after Frank took it over, he ran it as a sort of repair-and-retail type shop. I knew Frank, and I was in there from time to time visiting or whatnot, and he asked me one time if I could put a pedal mechanism on a rack of chimes that he had. I figured, "Yeah, I could do that." I had a little workshop over in Brooklyn at that time, just for my own personal needs and a place to store equipment and whatnot. So I carried the rack back there and built a pedal mechanism on it. One thing led to another and we finally formed an association.

MR: What were some of the other things you developed at Professional Percussion?

AD: Oh, double-ended sticks, so that you can do two things with one pair of sticks without having to put one pair down; a stick with a brush on the end of it, which is nothing new. A lot of other people have done that . . .

MR: You're that guy who, on any job, sticks out, because, "Here comes Duffy with all his homemade stuff."

AD: Well, it takes somebody to think of things. I guess some people perhaps feel more challenged than others about developing things.

MR: How about your developing the extended drums?

AD: The *Extenders* are becoming more

and more popular. But, I didn't invent them. I stole the idea from the Dresden tympani, that were made 150 years ago, with oversized heads. Now, I'm not an acoustical engineer, although I have done some experiments with acoustics just to prove some of my own points. But, I noticed that when you put an oversized head on a drum, and the *Extender* is one-inch oversized in diameter, you increase the resonance of the drum and increase the decay rate to the point where, in some sizes, you get up to six-and-a-half or seven seconds of decay. And also, I noticed that when I played the conventional type tympani with the very short collar and a very tight head, in comparison to the diameter of the shell, the clarity of the pitch wasn't as good. And I was not as happy playing that kind of tympani as I was when I played the Dresden type with the extended collar. With the extended collar, you've got a great clarity of pitch, a very true pitch, and a lot of resonance and much more volume. And back in, must have been '65, or '66, it suddenly occurred to me—it got through my thick head—that, "Wait a minute, if this can work in tympani, it can also work on tom-toms."

MR: Was this before you went to Professional Percussion Center?

AD: No, this was while I was there. So, for my own personal use, I made a drumset with extended head tom-toms, single-headed. Nobody else seemed to be too interested. They thought, "That's a funny-looking drumset," and that was about it. But, all along I knew I was saving it up for something, and of course Pearl was that something. So, I did some experimental work here using double-head drums, and lo and behold, it worked great on double-heads too. Of course, I only extended the batter head—but there again, my reasoning why may help folks understand a little bit about how the *Extender* works. You see, I likened a drum head to a stringed instrument. A drum head really is a string in a little different shape, because it has a bridge, an area that you're actually playing on, and another area, the collar, where you don't play unless you want to get a special sound. It's similar to the area on the cello beyond the bridge between the bridge and the tailpiece. Now, if you think of a cello, the cello makers don't draw the string right up to the bridge and then bend it in a sharp right angle and bolt it firmly to the body of the cello, do they? You can imagine what that would sound like! So, why should we do it to drums? So, the whole thing made a

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whole lot of sense. I sent prototype samples over to Pearl Musical Instruments in Japan, and their engineers got very excited about them. They immediately adopted the idea and extruded the plastic stand-out blocks for the casings—in about a month's time, which is very unusual for a drum company. I think that brings me to a very important point for Pearl: here, we don't make a product in-house, design it, develop it, test it on machines that test things, and then say to the market, "Here it is. Play it." We go to the market, we go to the players and we say, "What do you need? What's breaking? Here's an idea, what do you think of it?" Before I even sent my prototypes with the *Extenders* over to Japan, I tried them out on Larrie Londin, Mark Stevens over on the West Coast and various other players, and just watched their reaction to see how excited they got.

MR: When you look back over the history of drum making, which you have a pretty good knowledge of, do you think most innovations have been invented by drummers or by drum companies?

AD: Well, I don't think it's an ethical thing to take somebody's idea and pawn it off as your own. So, if somebody sends me an idea, and they do frequently, I'm going to just send it back to them and say, "Look, you're not protected. Protect yourself by patent or copyright or whatever."

MR: And then if they want to send it to you?

AD: Then, we'll talk about it.

MR: But, getting back to my question . . .

AD: An answer is pretty hard to pin down, but I would say offhand that most things have been developed by drum companies for the simple reason that they have the financial ability and resources to do it. But I'll bet you, if you were to add up, or to have some way to figure out all of the things that have been developed over the years, you'd find that it's mostly players who have developed them.

MR: It sounds like you just said two different things. What's the distinction?

AD: Well, if you go to the patent office in Washington, D.C., you'll find reams and reams of patents, of funny things that have been developed for percussion, good things and bad things. And not so long ago, I got a letter from a player. He wrote me and asked, "What if we put, like, a *toner* inside a drum to focus sound?" Well, somebody way back in the '20s had already marketed that very idea. My point is that there are literally hundreds of things in the patent office that players developed.

It's just that nobody knows about them. And yet, of course, the big things, tomtom holders, spurs, hi-hats, things of that nature were developed by drum companies. Except, don't forget, William Ludwig was a drummer.

MR: And you're a drummer, so . . .

AD: A drummer who's lucky enough to be working with a major drum company.

MR: Do most major drum companies *not* have drummers working for them? They would have to, wouldn't they?

AD: Well, I wouldn't want to malign any drum company, but seriously, some of the things some of the major drum companies have come up with—I look at them and I become totally amazed at the incompetency involved.

MR: Generally speaking, what do you think drummers need? Is there something that ought to be supplied and maybe hasn't been invented yet?

AD: Well, another thing I've worked on at Pearl is individual strand adjustment, so that each strand of the snares can be tuned, one at a time. It always offended me when you had to loosen the screw to tighten the strand. I guess you could get used to it, but it just offended me. Nobody ever made an attempt to do it any other way. It suddenly occurred to me, "Okay, instead of mounting the snare to the screw in one way, the old way, you could do it this new way and have a traveling block that runs along the screw. By tightening the screw, you tighten the strand, and by loosening the screw, you loosen the strand. And this is what I incorporated into our new individual strand adjustment strainer.

But, we also have a kind of unwritten motto at Pearl: "Sound and durability." I think essentially what drummers need is the best sound they can get, from the strongest equipment they can get. All the basics are invented already. The potential durability is there. The potential sound is there. There's only so much you can do with a drum, other than make it sound better, make it more round, make it more true, make it more parallel, make it more square between the bridge and the felt.

MR: I get the feeling that you don't go looking for things to invent. Instead, they find you.

AD: I think if you go looking for something to invent, *per se*, then you're straining. And every time you stop straining, you get a good result. Some of the best ideas I've had have come when I quit thinking about them. I just put them completely out of my life, and went to work on my car.



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Legally Speaking

by *Stuart Eisenberg*

Over the years, the necessity of good legal counsel for drummers entering a music career has become apparent—particularly in interviews with pro drummers who've had heartbreaking and horrifying legal hassles. When Mr. Stuart Eisenberg wrote to us in July and offered his legal assistance to our readers—we decided to give it a shot. Not only does Mr. Eisenberg have twelve years experience in the music business—he's also a drummer and an avid MD reader. This introductory column was written by Mr. Eisenberg, who represents the law firm of Rader, Eisenberg & Feldman, P.C., in Detroit, Michigan.

The purpose of this section is to offer MD readers an opportunity to have legal questions answered, which they may have encountered as drummers. These questions can cover the whole spectrum of the legal profession, including contract questions, injuries which arise on the job while performing, defective equipment or even questions concerning criminal and domestic law.

We feel this is very important, since many of the readers may be at a stage where they are about to sign a recording contract with a local production company or may have legal questions which need to be answered, but cannot afford the fee of a practicing attorney. The submission of a question may help to point him or her, plus other readers with the same thought, in the right direction.

We have seen many musicians come to us with an Agreement signed by themselves and with no understanding as to what they have signed and for how long it is binding.

In the early stages of a musician's career, he has little bargaining power. However, if he becomes successful, he could be tied to that initial Agreement for a substantial period of time and could be giving up valuable hard-earned dollars.

We feel that even the established drummer or reader of *Modern Drummer* may have questions which could be answered

without the necessity of contacting his or her attorney and being charged \$75-\$125 per hour to answer the questions.

We are practicing Trial attorneys in Detroit, Michigan for 13 years and are members of the Michigan Trial Attorneys, American Trial Lawyers and American Bar Association. We would welcome your questions and hope we can answer all of your inquiries or point you in the right direction so that your questions could be answered.

This section will take the form of a question and answer forum. The reader will address the questions to *Modern Drummer*, who will forward the questions to me for answering. We have prepared the following as a sampling and ask you to submit your questions. Drumming is hard enough; why worry about the legal problems also?

I'm in a local garage band and have been asked by a local independent production company to sign a production agreement. What should I do?

An agreement such as this *should never* be signed without an attorney or a representative of your choosing examining such a document. However, if such an agreement is signed, you should be concerned with its duration, handling of royalties for records sold and publishing royalties. The independent production company should have one year to place you with a national label or come out with an album or single with proper distribution. If not, then the contract is void. Royalties are subject to negotiation of the parties.

I am in a local band and the name of our band is "Rock-A-Billy Cats." What is the minimum we can do to protect that name?

There should first be an agreement among the members of the band as to who owns the name. There should also be an agreement that when members of the band leave, the departing members will have no right to use the group's name. It would be wise to keep a careful record of performances so you can show that you used the name. You should also file an assumed

name with your local County Clerk's office. A group name used for entertainment services is legally known as a "service mark," while a "trade mark" is a brand name used for a product.

We are members of a local band starting to get national attention. Do we need a manager?

We would say that a manager is necessary so the group does not have to be worried about planning, organizing or making of deals. The manager acts as the supervisor and coordinator of the band activities as entertainers. However, there should be an agreement in writing and the group and the personal manager should each have an attorney to represent their interests in the preparation of a satisfactory agreement.

How does the manager get paid?

The manager will get a percentage of earning, from 10% to 25%. This is a negotiable item and can be based on "gross income" or can be limited.

I am the writer of songs for my band. In addition to the royalties from the recording contract, do I get royalties for writing the songs?

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Max Roach

McFadden continued from page 19

drum sound.

MS: So you make most of your adjustments by EQing. Would you ever go out and change a mic' because of the nature of what you're getting?

MM: I would, but I'd be less likely to do it than most mixers would. I'd make my adjustment in the position of the mic'. I'd make my adjustment in the tuning of the drums before I'd change a microphone.

MS: How would you do that?

MM: I'd just ask the guy politely. This is something I'm real careful about because you can elicit a lot of attitude from drummers if you start telling them how to tune their drums. It's a real personal thing and they don't want to hear it from an engineer. I usually try to make the most of whatever the drummer's giving me. If there's something that's just horrendous, then I'll say real politely, "Do you think you could tighten up the bottom head on your snare?" Or, "Could you take the front head off your kick drum?" I get jazz drummers in here with both heads on the kick drum. That's a pretty big request. I hesitate to do that. But, as far as changing microphones—usually not. Because I've found a system that works pretty well, and I'll change like the relationship that the mic's are used in the mix. I'll change that to fit the style of the drumming that's being done. If it's a real heavy rock 'n' roll type thing, then I'll have the tom-tom mic's and the snare, and so forth, predominant in the mix. If it's a jazz type thing I'll have the overheads more predominant in the mix and almost have the tom-toms off. A lot of jazz players will get nervous. They'll see ten mic's on their kit, they'll have all their tom-toms miked and they'll say, "Wait a minute. This isn't a rock 'n' roll session." I have to reassure them; "Don't worry. I'm not even going to have those mic's on. I may use four of them." But, you're just covering yourself when you've got ten mic's out there. You don't have to use them. If you only put up four you've only got four to use. If you put up ten and only need four, then you only have to use four. The less mic's you can get away with using, the better. The only problem is, most drummer's kits are so out of balance.

MS: What do you mean?

MM: The traditional way of miking drums ten to fifteen years ago was to put up one overhead, a kick drum mic', and perhaps a snare drum mic'. That was it. The tom-tom and the cymbals were all to be picked up by the overhead microphone. And if the guy's tom-toms don't speak at all, and the guy's cymbals are real loud, you get all cymbals and no tom-toms, or vice versa. So you're kind of at the mercy of the drummers. In recent years, with more inputs being put in consoles, engineers could afford to put more mic's on the drums and take more of the balance into their control. So, if a guy's cymbals are real loud, you just

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Steve Morrisette writes from Norfolk, Virginia—



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bring the overheads down and bring the tom-tom mic's up, and vice versa.

MS: Is there any drum that's more difficult to mike than another? Are snares harder to mike than tom-toms?

MM: The sound of a drummer's drumkit is more up to the drummer than the engineer. All the engineer can do is maximize what the drummer gives him. Eighty-five percent of it is the drummer and fifteen percent is the engineer. If a drummer wants to have a good drum sound, it's up to him because an engineer can't make magic on a drumset that is tuned poorly and is played poorly. It's up to the drummer.

MS: I know how it feels from a drummer's side of the glass, but I think many times the musicians don't realize what the engineer is up against.

MM: I think the drummer has to be closer to the engineer than anybody else. Drums are more open to interpretation by the people on this side of the glass. An oboe is an oboe, and a violin is a violin pretty much, but you can make a radical difference in the type of sound that you're getting from the drumset on the engineer's side of the glass. It's really good to have a cooperative effort between the drummer and engineer and not have them mad at each other, because they depend on each other a lot. The engineer depends on the drummer to make *him* look good, and the drummer depends on the engineer to make *him* look good.

MS: Are there any examples of things to do or not to do?

MM: If you're a drummer, don't come into the control room and say, "What are you doing to my drumset? That sounds horrible. I was just over at so-and-so studios and it sounded great! I come here and it sounds horrendous. What are you doing to me?" Most of the time, the drummers aren't aware of the situation the engineers are in.

For example, Joe Blow the drummer is over at another studio and he's doing the rhythm section, piano, bass and guitar and his drums sound great. He comes over to the studio where you're working and he's doing a session with a live orchestra that's got 75 guys in it, and frankly, the client's not really concerned about how the drums sound. He's concerned about how the orchestra sounds because it's a movie score, or something like that, so the drums are less important than they were in the rhythm-section session the guy just finished. A lot of drummers are ignorant of this situation. Everybody wants to hear more of themselves!

And nothing will lose a drummer gigs faster than walking into the studio, or control room, and saying, "Boy, can't you get a little more bottom out of my snare drum?" fifteen seconds after the producer said, "Don't you think there's a little too much bottom in the snare drum?" They don't want to hear that stuff.

If you've got a real problem, like,

"more click, less click, more drums, more piano," then just take the mixer aside and say, "Hey, can you help me out?" Usually they'll be happy to. Just try to do it when he doesn't have five people breathing down his neck. Say you're doing a big session—a TV show or a legit session with a big artist—and they've got a big band out in the room, and you play what you think was a great part. You go in the control room for a playback and you hardly hear yourself. You say, "My God, I really played my ass off and I can't even hear it." A lot of drummers' first reaction would be, "Okay, if he isn't going to turn me up in the mix, I'm going to play louder." Then they come back in for the next playback and they sound further away than they did before. The thing they have to keep in mind is that in big, legit sessions—less is more! This applies to any instrument that's loud.

MS: I think it was Hal Blaine; as soon as he didn't hear the drums he would automatically go back into the studio and play softer.

MM: That's a good philosophy because then you're picking up the drums on the drum mic's and not on the violin mic's. The louder you play, the more leakage you get, and the more drums you're getting in the mic's that are across the room. And that's not the mic's you want to pick up the drums on.

MS: At that point, how comfortable do you feel about saying, "Can you hold back a little bit?"

MM: Oh, I'll say it! At this studio it's not a problem because we have real good isolation. Actually, I don't have that problem. I'm talking generalities now. In my situation I actually would prefer to have the drummer play a little harder, because the drums sound better when you smack them. I mean, tom-toms sound better, snares sound better, kicks sound better when you smack the hell out of them, in most cases. But if a mixer asks you, "Would you back off a little bit?" he's not doing it because he wants to hear less of you. He's saying that because he wants to hear more of you. And don't get insulted when the guy says play a little softer.

MS: Let me just revamp that. If he asks you to play less, he can reach for you with the mic's on the drums and you're not going to be spilling into everybody else's mic's, which really makes the drums sound bad.

MM: Exactly. If you play softer you'll actually hear more of yourself than if you play loud. This is something a lot of drummers have yet to learn. If they want you to play disco with a pair of brushes—don't grumble about it! Play disco with a pair of brushes and get your rocks off on some other session that's more fun for you. Just grit your teeth and bear it because it'll get you more gigs.

MS: I wanted to ask you a question about

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when you were talking about the room being dead, and isolation. Do you like wood underneath a drumset?

MM: It depends. A lot of engineers like sort of a real dead drum sound.

MS: I'm talking about the floor underneath the drums.

MM: A lot of mixers, especially in New York, like a real tight, dead drum sound. A real, distinct, tight sound on the tom-toms, and then the snare sounds almost like another tom-tom. That's just a philosophy that a lot of mixers have, and you hear a lot of that kind of material on the radio, TV shows, and commercials. I don't have that philosophy. I have a philosophy of pretty much a live type sound. I don't mean real leaky and bleedy, but just a little more of a woody sound.

MS: When I play and you record my drums they always sing nicely. Not real dead.

MM: I want a lot of reflection and to sound like the drumset is actually there. I don't want to try to make it something that it isn't, and make a manufactured sound out of it. If you want a manufactured drum sound you use a synthesized drum. Wood underneath a drum is a little more reflective. It just sounds more like you're actually there listening to a drum rather than a manufactured sound that's very popular with a lot of people.

MS: But that isn't what drums sound like.

MM: It's not necessarily what drums sound like. I like a little ring on the tom-toms, and to make them sound big, you put a little echo on them and it sounds like a cannon going off in the Carlsbad Caverns. So, you can pretty much manufacture any kind of sound you want out of that.

The wood thing is not a hard and fast rule either. If a guy's got a kick-drum head that tends to resonate a little bit, then you can put a little rug underneath the drumset itself and then wood around that, and that'll get you basically the same thing. Or, you can put wood-side baffles—if you're going to baffle off the drummer in a large situation—on the inside so you've got wood facing the drummer, which makes it a little more live.

Now in a lot of situations with big studios that have a lot of leakage, you can't get away with that. You've got to deaden the drummer as much as you can.

MS: Usually when the drums are baffled, they're baffled with an absorbent; something that's cloth or a foam. So, the enclosure that baffles the drumset doesn't have to be absorbing. It can be more reflective, which wood would be.

MM: Exactly, because theoretically it will just reflect back into the microphones that are on the drums, and make it sound a little more like it's in a room rather than a shoe box. But, from a drummer's standpoint, don't walk in and say, "Hey, what are you putting me on a carpet for? I should be on wood because it'll make my drums sound

more alive." The engineer's more aware of the situation, because he's talked to the composer and he knows the instrumentation. Try to take that into consideration before you make a judgement about how you're being recorded, because he just probably has more information than you do about what the composer wants. The composer may have made a particular request: "I want a real dead drum sound. I want a real tight drum sound." So, it's a battle to try to get what the composer wants. And all that really matters is whether the composer or the producer likes it.

Wallin continued from page 21

DW: Yeah.

MS: If we're playing bebop or something like that, it's entirely different than playing hardass rock 'n' roll.

DW: I change.

MS: That's attributed only to your ability to know all the differences musically.

DW: The drums are really important in rock 'n' roll. But *real* rock 'n' roll is really a guitar sound. So the drums are an adjunct to that. I use a lot of snare, and the toms are a little important in rock 'n' roll. So you use a good hot snare sound, good tom sound and the kick should sound good, but shouldn't have the disco pop. It should be a rock 'n' roll sound. It should be meatier and not as upfront.

MS: How come the only place I get an earphone balance, as soon as the date starts, is when you're here? Most of the time they're trying to run the cue down, I'm in a box someplace. I can't hear the orchestra and they're saying, "Well, let's run the first cue, guys." I say, "Hey, I don't even hear the bass player!"

DW: I got tired twenty years ago of drummers yelling at me about the earphone balance. I decided the best thing to do would be to start off with an earphone balance. I know about where everything is going to land, having done this for a long, long time. Even though I start with everything closed, I start with my earphone balance about where I think it's going to hit. Every system has it's own gain, but I figure that out right away.

MS: You spend very little time asking to hear the drums and the bass. It's usually very, very quick.

DW: I'm pretty secure about the miking technique.

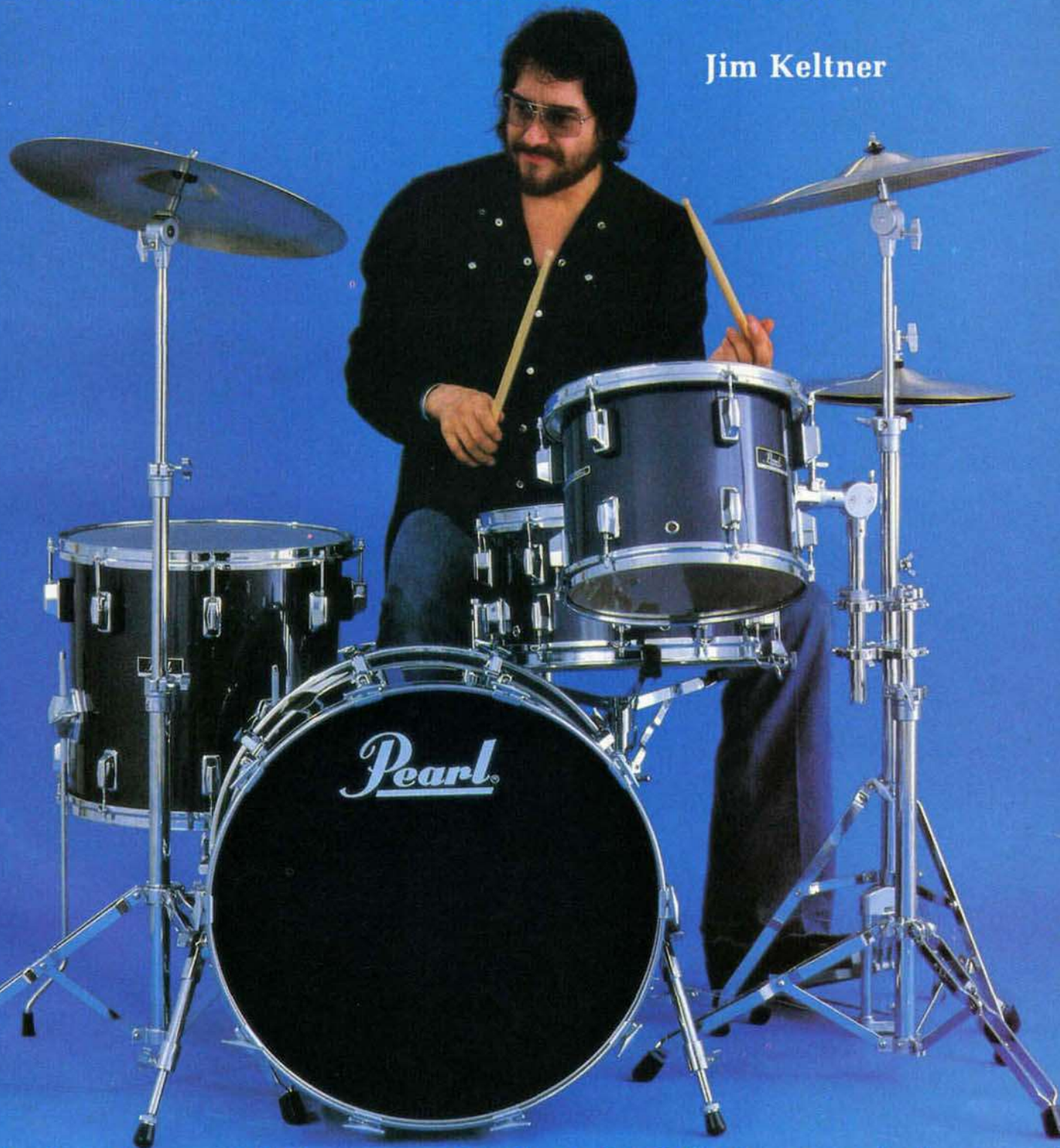
MS: It doesn't bother you as different drumsets go in and come out?

DW: No. It's just a little change of EQ or a little position here. I rarely have to change mic's on a drumkit. In fact, I would see no real advantage to changing the mic's. If it's a bad drumkit, it's a bad drumkit. I would go out there and start working on the drumkit rather than start working on the mic's. There are a few guys around who really have their recording thing knocked. You, Steve Schaeffer has a good sounding drumkit, and Larry Bunker's got a great

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MS: What do you do when you get drums that don't sound good to you?

DW: I try to tune them and go out and play with them a lot. The guys let me, and they usually end up with a pretty good sound.

MS: So, you're not reluctant to ask someone to change?

DW: Well, most of the guys know that I was an ex-drummer, and they know that I'm going for a specific sound. They usually don't get uptight when I tune their drums a little bit. I never get too far away from where they want to be.

Forkner continued from page 21

MS: How about snare drums and hi-hats?

LF: Hi-hats, I have a little Beyer dynamic that I use a lot. The hi-hat is probably one of the most variable sounding things from kit to kit. It's even worse than snare drums. It also varies a lot according to where you point the mic', especially if you're using a reasonably tight-pattern microphone. Since the hi-hat is always sitting next to a couple of toms and other cymbals, you don't want to get too wide open with it. Again, we're talking about jingles. Records are another story. Any tough, bright little microphone will work.

MS: Why do you use the Beyer instead of the Shure SM-57?

LF: It has a different quality that I prefer in general. In some cases I can't stand it! Some of them sound a little clanky. Sometimes I prefer a little more "spit" out of them. There are so many variables. But, I get good results out of the Beyer and I like the way it sounds. That's pretty much why anybody picks a microphone.

MS: Tell me about snare drums. I have many different snare drums that I know will work. It comes back sounding better to me than it does in the room. That's true of a couple of drums I have. I don't know what it is about the drum, that when I hear it back in a lot of different studios, it stays pretty much. If no other drums work, there are a couple I know will always work. But, they sound terrible in the room.

LF: Quite often that gets to be a matter of taste as well. I've heard drums that sound both good *and bad* in the room and they all sounded good in the booth. In a close-miking situation it creates sort of a compression situation. It's like turning the volume up on a speaker. As you bring the level up, the sounds that are sticking out of the pack tend to have less importance. They compress. Your ear starts hearing everything at the same level. The microphone is doing the same thing in terms of what it's picking up. It's picking up part of a wave that goes into the mic' and becomes something in the booth, where out in the room that wave propagates and makes a whole big sound that may be totally different.

MS: What about miking a snare drum. Do you like miking above and below?

LF: That's a good way to do it unless the snare drum has a lot of loose snares. Then you can usually get a balance between the two mic's which gives you a brightness that you can't get by EQing. I don't do it on jingles because it's usually not necessary. On records these days, the snare drum is second in importance only to the vocalist. You really spend some time cultivating, working, and tuning the sound.

MS: How do you feel about putting drums on a platform in the studio?

LF: I cannot imagine any reason to do it, other than the resonance you're going to get out of that platform which is covered with carpet and is so heavy. I can understand that the drummer may play more aggressively being up there.

MS: I'd rather *not* be up there.

LF: You get differing opinions. It's New York, is what it is.

MS: Phil Ramone used to get the drums off the floor. Not that high; maybe a foot off the floor.

LF: I don't know how many people cue off a drummer's actions visually. When I played bass I never watched a drummer to get my time. I always listened.

MS: I've done a couple of dates where they've had the drums really up there, more than a foot, and it's very uncomfortable. Most of the time the drums are isolated enough.

LF: It might keep the tom and the kick drum from going oh the floor. I don't know.

MS: Do you think it matters since you have so many baffles in front of you anyway?

LF: That stuff still has three or four inches under the bottom that's open. I'm going to try it a few times in the future and see. People think an engineer is being evasive when they ask him, "How do you do this or that?" and he says, "That depends." But, it really does.

MS: Would you use the same mic' on top and bottom?

LF: No. I'd use a bright microphone on the bottom; a condenser like an AKG 452. But, then you're liable to use a condenser on top and bottom. I might use identical mic's. There aren't any rules. It would depend on if you were getting what you wanted, if you had time to fool around. It all ends up to be time considerations.

MS: Do you ever mike underneath toms?

LF: I never mike underneath double-headed toms. They always have the bottom head off. Sometimes you get interesting results. It seems to work better with the bigger toms because the whole reason for doing it is to get more resonance, which you don't worry about on small toms anyway. They generally have a flatter sound.

MS: I like the two heads because I get a rounder sound.

LF: You get more of a resonant sound with the two heads.

continued on next page



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MS: Though a single head is maybe easier to record, I just can't stand the sound. It sounds so much like a slap.

LF: Now you're getting into another thing about what type of drum head, what kind of drum and how you tune them. You're getting into a drummer thing there. Heavy, wooden laminate tom-toms with no bottom head and a top head that you can tune really loose and flappy with a lot of ring—how much of that comes from the bottom head or the body of the tom, who knows? All I know is, if you can tell me the drummer and what kit he's got, I can tell you how it's going to work.

MS: How about the use of overhead mic's in jingles?

LF: They're just there for the cymbals. If I know you're not going to use your crash at all, then I'll turn it off so I have less leakage. Occasionally, I've been in a totally mono situation where I just use one overhead to tape everything.

MS: What do you do about the bass drum in that situation?

LF: We put a mic' on the bass drum and one over the top. That'll cover a kit. I'd use an AKG C-12 or AKG 414 as an overhead.

MS: How would you modify what we've discussed for a jazz date, where you'd want more of an open, live sound?

LF: I'd probably change mic's and placement. After changing both, there probably wouldn't be a lot of EQing. I'd probably start out by covering two toms with something like a 414 or a C-12, maybe one Neumann 87. I'd get more of the sound the drums get themselves by backing off them, and I'd probably be picking up some of the cymbals at the same time. I'd get a couple of overheads in stereo. I'd still mike the snare and the kick, with an Electro-Voice RE-20 on the kick probably, and any number of condenser mic's on the snare to get a more natural sound.

MS: How do you feel about putting drums on a platform in the studio?

LF: I cannot imagine any reason to do it, other than the resonance you're going to get out of that platform which is covered with carpet and is so heavy. I can understand that the drummer may play more aggressively being up there.

MS: I'd rather *not* be up there.

LF: You get differing opinions. It's New York, is what it is.

MS: Phil Ramone used to get the drums off the floor. Not that high; maybe a foot off the floor.

LF: I don't know how many people cue off a drummer's actions visually. When I played bass I never watched a drummer to get my time. I always listened.

MS: I've done a couple of dates where they've had the drums really up there, more than a foot, and it's very uncomfortable. Most of the time the drums are isolated enough.

LF: It might keep the tom and the kick drum from going on the floor. I don't

know.

MS: Do you think it matters since you have so many baffles in front of you anyway?

LF: That stuff still has three or four inches under the bottom that's open. I'm going to try it a few times in the future and see. People think an engineer is being evasive when they ask him, "How do you do this or that?" and he says, "That depends," But, it really does.

Miller continued from page 21

don't have all those leakage problems. In other words, if you've got one down tight against the head, or under the skin up under the bottom of a rack tom, that microphone is really closed until the guy hits the drum. The problem is getting it gated; getting it opening and closing at the right time. But, if that microphone is not open, than you don't have other leakage things going into it. You don't have the phase cancellation problems between microphones, because you're only using the microphone that's open for that particular thing.

Now, it's difficult to gate overheads, but you can usually gate snares, sock-cymbals, although sometimes *that's* a problem because the snare is so close it'll open when you don't want it to. But, toms are real easy to gate and it works real well.

SF: How about the bass drum?

SM: The bass drum also, although it's not so much of a problem because the bass drum's usually playing all the time. So, it doesn't really make any difference. Again, there are no hard and fast rules about how to mike a bass drum. Move it around. Try it inside. Maybe the guy's got two heads on his bass drum. In some cases I've used one mic' around by the beater and another one inside. I've seen every kind of mic' you can think of stuck inside a bass drum. Guys come along and say, "That's the best. That's the thing you should always use." Well, I don't agree with that. For example, I like an AKG *D12E*. I like an Electro-Voice *RE-20*. There have been times when I've made a Shure *SM-57* work, or an *SM-56*. There are *no* hard and fast rules about that.

SF: Do cymbals present any kind of problems?

SM: Well, I prefer to use some kind of condenser if I can. I like an AKG *451* or a *452* which are actually the same microphone. Most people know it as a *451*. I like the Neumann *KM-84*. Sometimes I use it, although outside it's very difficult to use because of the wind problems. I like to use some kind of condenser though, for an overhead. And I use those overheads down in the cymbal area rather than just a general overhead. I'll use them tight in an outdoor situation.

Cymbals are normally grouped. If the guy doesn't have a real large set, I may use two mic's. I may have to use three or sometimes even four.

continued on next page



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SF: Do you have any preference for drum shell material? Is it easier to mike a wood drum as opposed to a fiberglass drum?

SM: No. But you can't take an AKG *D12E* and put it on every kick drum in the world and expect it to sound right! Because maybe the drummer's tuning is different. The shell is different. That's my point. I say, "Try it."

I saw a guy this summer at the Greek Theatre with a double-kick drum and an *RE-20* suspended inside the drum and the front head on. The microphone was suspended with guide wires. It sounded sensational. But, the guy spent a lot of time doing that.

SF: How about if a drummer sings? Does that present any kind of problem?

SM: It's a horrendous problem! Usually you've got things going into the vocal mic' that you don't want going in. It really is a problem. Usually the biggest problem is finding some kind of a stand that doesn't fall over and hit him on the head, so he can move around and play, but have access to the microphone. For a vocal mic', I would always use some kind of dynamic that has a lot of proximity effect, like a Shure *SM-58*. A mic' which wouldn't have so much leakage.

I have other favorite microphones. On rack toms, I like the Sennheiser 421. That's kind of a standard thing. It seems to be real popular with engineers all over. The AKG *451* is kind of common for an overhead. I see lots of people using that.

I've been using the *451* on toms, particularly on floor toms, and I use the little angle thing to keep the mic' off to the side so I can hear the stick hitting the thing. The reflection goes right into the microphone.

For overheads I've also used Electro-Voice *CS-15's*, and the Shure *SM-81*.

SF: Do you do much work with plexiglass shields that surround drums to prevent leakage?

SM: Well, usually that's to prevent the drums from leaking into other things. You'll see those in the Vegas shows that have string orchestras, to keep them from leaking into the string mic's. Yes, sometimes we use them. Although, we're learning our microphone techniques with the instruments themselves so it's not so much of a problem.

SF: What do you like to feed through to a drummer who uses monitors?

SM: I like to feed him whatever he wants to hear. Whatever makes him happy, so he doesn't complain!

SF: Do drummers complain?

SM: Oh no. Never! Sometimes I fail to understand how they cannot hear their kick drum. That's something they always want more of, and that's why you sometimes see huge monitor stacks around a drummer. I've also found that using more than one channel for a drum monitor is useful. If I can give him maybe a two channel monitor mix so I can give him one thing in one monitor and something else in the other, that helps him to hear better.

The other thing that's important for *any* engineer to do, *particularly* a monitor engineer working on stage, is if a drummer says, "I can't hear something," you ought to go sit with your ears next to him, or stick your head in when he's playing. The sound pressure level around a really powerful drummer is incredible! It's absolutely incredible. Particularly with cymbals. Being able to give them enough monitor is sometimes a real problem. I like to give them the minimum amount of monitor, because I want to avoid as much leakage as I can. If you've got a hot overhead, and you've pulled the microphone back from the instrument and all of a sudden you've got a monitor blaring away at you—you've got a leakage problem. It just muddy's up things.

SF: How about drummers like Danny Seraphine who wear headphones onstage? Does that create any engineering difficulties?

SM: Not really from an engineer's perspective. But I haven't found very many drummers who can do it.

SF: Yeah, it would seem kind of strange.

SM: It is *very* strange. And I have them constantly asking me for it. I did one thing with Neil's drummer because he was always bitching, "Turn this up! Turn this down!" He was driving the monitor engineer crazy. We finally gave him his own little mixer console, and we've fixed it so he can't get some things too loud, to get them into feedback. But, we've given him some things to give relationship. Sometimes he wants Neil's voice up and the next time he wants it down. So, we gave him a little console and we let him mix his own monitor. Then if it's not right, it's *his* fault. I found out all my problems went away. There was no one he could complain to.

SF: For drummers who cannot afford the expertise of someone like yourself, but who *are* playing outdoor concerts and would like to buy mic's for, say a 5-piece kit, what would you suggest they go with?

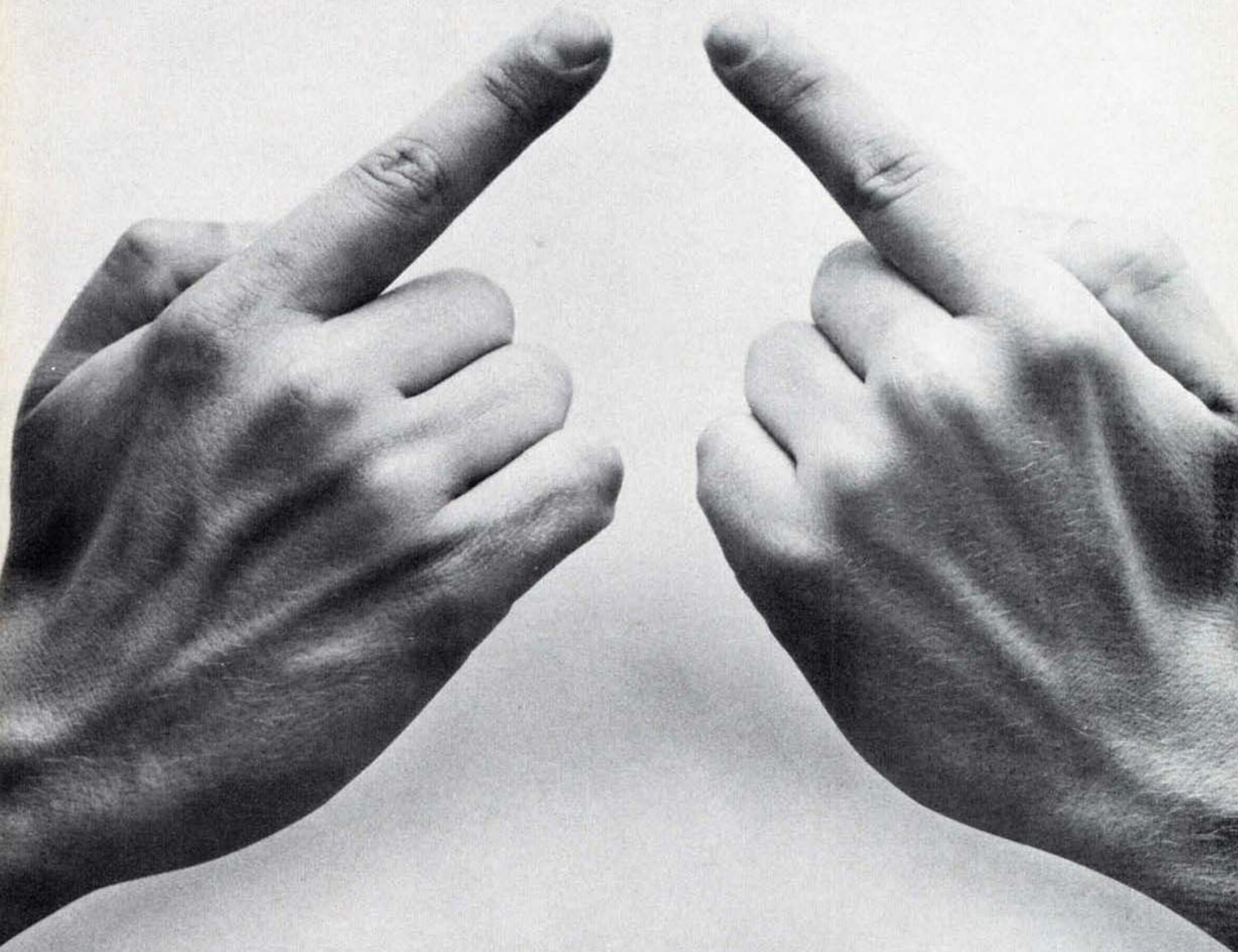
SM: I would mike the kick drum, snare, hi-hat, and then try to double up on the toms. If he's lacking in channels to mix, sometimes I'll "Y" tom mic's together. That will help him. And probably an overhead, and let it go at that.

SF: In closing, could we say that one thing drummers could do to make the engineer's job a little easier is to make sure their drums are tuned?

SM: Well, it has to be a two-way thing. The engineer has to be able to work with the drummer, and vice-versa. They need to work together. You need to spend some time with the drums *always*. You need to spend time with mic' positioning, and different types of microphones. But, if you don't have that luxury, then obviously the guy should spend a little bit of time trying to tune his drums so he's got them sounding half-way decent.

In the concluding part of this series, we will talk to Armin Steiner, Michael DeLugg and Mark Hogue.

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Studies in Style: Part 1 Philly Joe Jones

by Howard I. Joines

The "perfect combination of Blakey's unquenchable fire, Catlett's melodiousness, and Roach's subtlety"—such is MD's description of Philly Joe Jones. Joe was all of the above, and more, on the 1958 album, *Milestones*, with Miles Davis, Cannonball Adderley, John Coltrane, Red Garland and Paul Chambers, creating many moods ranging from the cool "Miles," to the fiery "Two Bass Hit."

The most noticeable aspect of Joe's playing is an incredibly strong and consistent right hand. His cymbal rhythm is always powerful, accurate, and dead center in an almost exact 12/8 interpretation:

Ex. 1

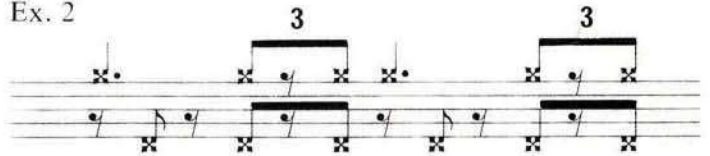


Ex. 1 shows a cymbal rhythm on a single staff. It consists of a steady eighth-note pattern with two triplet eighth-note figures. The first triplet is on the first, second, and third eighth notes of a measure, and the second triplet is on the fourth, fifth, and sixth eighth notes of a measure.

The strength of Joe's ride cymbal is even more apparent on "Dr. Jekyll." The hi-hat's absence is noticeable only upon close listening. It still swings! Furthermore, Joe has such dynamic control over his cymbal that he's able to ride over every bass solo without covering Paul Chamber's efforts.

Against his strong cymbal, Joe usually places his hi-hat on the conventional two and four. However, when comping, he often uses his hi-hat independent of the ride cymbal. During the bass solo on "Sid's Ahead," Joe plays a syncopated triplet figure on the hi-hat: (Ex. 2)

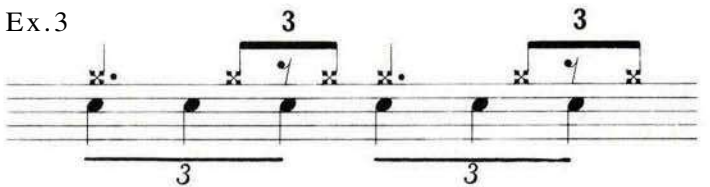
Ex. 2



Ex. 2 shows a syncopated triplet figure on the hi-hat. The notation is on a single staff with a treble clef. It features a triplet of eighth notes starting on the second eighth note of a measure, followed by a quarter rest, and another triplet of eighth notes starting on the fourth eighth note of a measure.

Joe uses the snare and bass drum independently in comping. The ride rhythm usually remains unchanged, despite the actions of the left hand or right foot. A favorite device, used in "Sid's Ahead," "Billy Boy" and "Straight, No Chaser," is triplets against the ride rhythm:

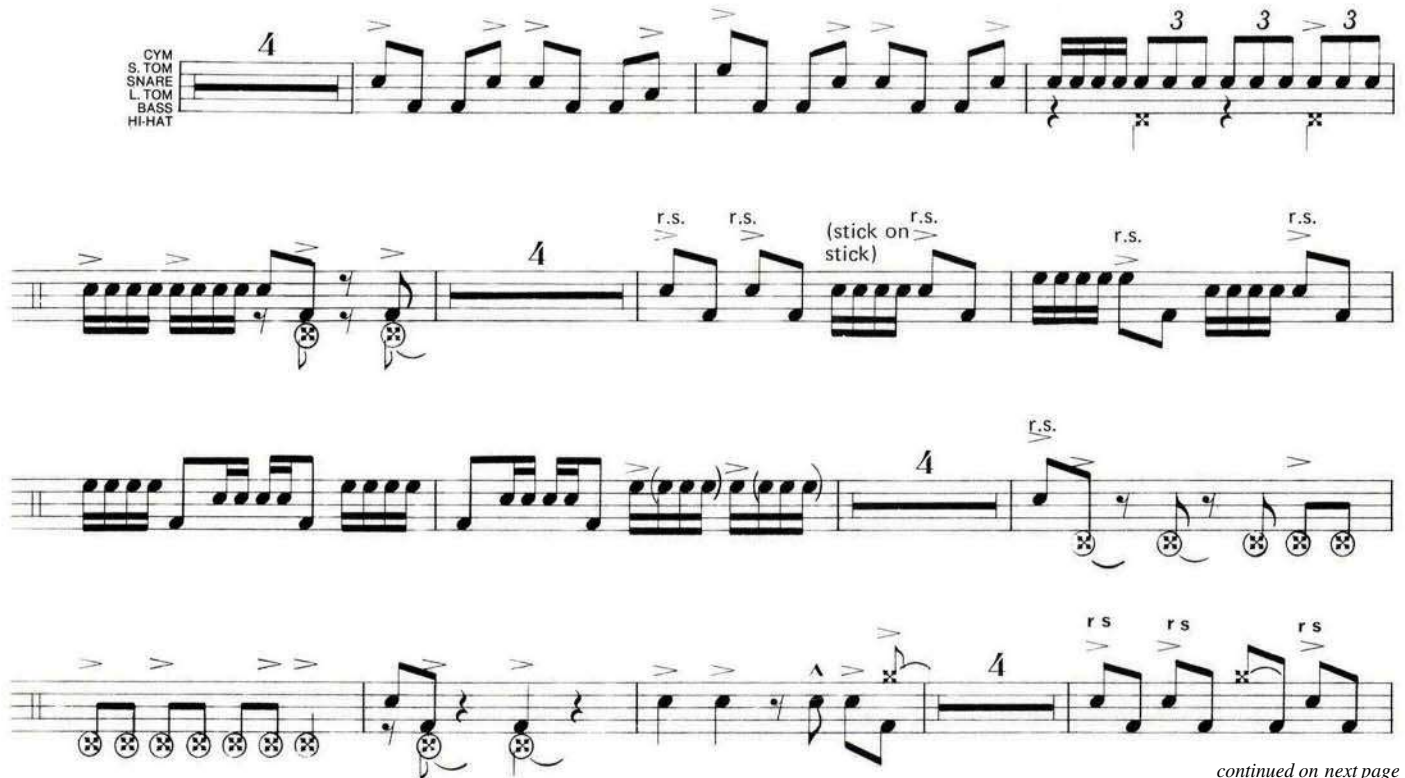
Ex. 3



Ex. 3 shows a triplet figure against the ride rhythm. The notation is on a single staff with a treble clef. It features a triplet of eighth notes starting on the first eighth note of a measure, followed by a quarter rest, and another triplet of eighth notes starting on the first eighth note of a measure.

Joe's solo style is extremely musical and technically exciting. In the following transcription of "fours," notice Joe's penchant for repeating figures, lending unity to the entire solo. Also, notice his frequent use of cross-rhythms, his independent use of drums, cymbals, and hi-hat, his mixtures of duple and triple rhythms, and his use of colors.

Ex. 4 "Fours" with Red Garland



Ex. 4 is a transcription of "Fours" with Red Garland. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff is a drum set notation with a legend: CYM (Cymbal), S. TOM (Small Tom), SNARE, L. TOM (Large Tom), BASS, and HI-HAT. The notation shows a complex rhythmic pattern with various drum and cymbal sounds. The second staff shows a melodic line with a 4/4 time signature and various rhythmic markings like 'r.s.' (right stick) and '(stick on stick)'. The third staff shows a melodic line with a 4/4 time signature and various rhythmic markings like 'r.s.' and 'rs'. The fourth staff shows a melodic line with a 4/4 time signature and various rhythmic markings like 'rs' and 'rs'.

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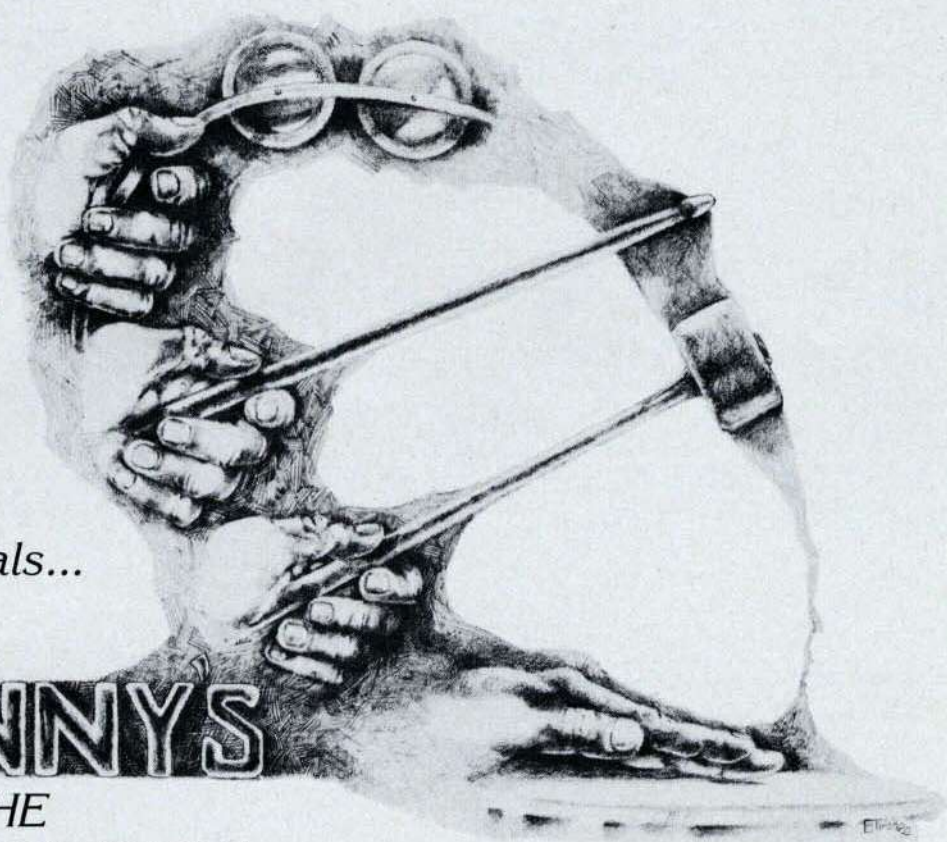
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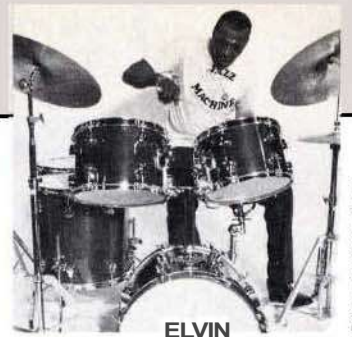
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DRUM SOLOIST

Elvin Jones: "Crisis"



Transcribed by Jean-Etienne Roch

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Cymbal High Tom Snare Hi-Hat Cross stick Low Tom Bass Drum

Latin (♩ = 160)

Swing

Latin

Swing

The image shows musical notation for drumming exercises. The top section is labeled "Latin" and features complex rhythmic patterns with triplets and sixteenth notes. The bottom section is labeled "Swing" and features simpler rhythmic patterns with triplets and eighth notes. The notation includes various rhythmic values, rests, and articulation marks.

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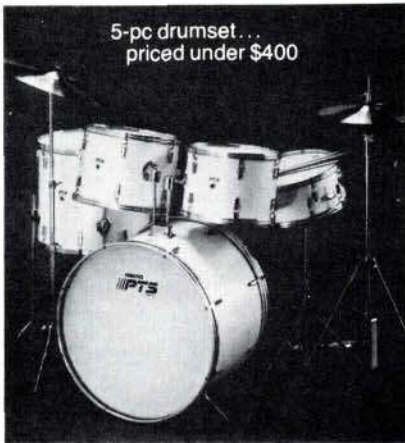
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drums and all—if you're musically inclined, you've got to play that kind of music. After I heard it I just transferred it right onto the drums like everybody else did. It's a sort of a style of playing. Like the Dixieland style—if you don't know that style, you ain't from New Orleans. I had to learn it. You call it "good time" jazz, because everybody has a good time playing it. It's not as serious and depressing sometimes as some of the New York jazz is to me. You know, it becomes real serious, and heavy and depressing, like New York became real serious and heavy and depressing to me after a while. I just had to get away from all that depression.

SF: Do you see the music of a group like The Meters coming out of the "good time" jazz too?

JB: Everything we do musically down here is coming from so-called Dixieland-style jazz. It's just like the next step in the evolution of the music. If you listen closely, they still have that same feeling, even though they're not still playing that rhythmic pater, that sort of "good time" parade feel. Like marching down the street having a good time.

SF: Did you study the rudiments?

JB: I studied rudimental things. Maybe I just had the intelligence to realize that if I'm going to play an instrument, I have to learn all the things about it. If you're going to play piano you have to know all the scales. If you're going to play the drums you've got to know all the rudiments because they strengthen you. They give you a foundation to go further. I learned the rudiments and all the rest of the stuff about the drums on my own. I just got me some books, opened my ears and practiced, because they told me practice makes perfect.

SF: Who told you that?

JB: Everybody! This is common knowledge. Practice makes perfect. I said, "Yeah, that makes sense. If I practice I'm going to get better." All my partners tried to discourage me from playing the drums. "Man, you ought to play the trumpet. You ought to leave the drums alone." That's what I was hearing from most of the drummers around here when I was growing up. I saw right through that. I said, "I see why you don't want me to play the drums, because I think I play a little bit better than you. You're trying to discourage me so you'll have an open field. I'm going to play everything." In fact, that was my main stimuli. I'm a person like this: If you try to discourage me, that's going to make me want to investigate and wonder why! "Why are you trying to discourage me like that?"

There were a couple of drummers down here, my good friends—and they'll deny this of course—but they were playing drums before me. I used to want to practice with them and they'd let me play for a little bit, then they'd try to discourage me.

The more they tried to do that, the more it would make me want to practice. It worked just the opposite on me. I'd say, "Alright. You tell me I can't play. Just wait until you hear me again!" I'd get pissed. I'd go home and come out again and say, "Listen to this!"

SF: How many hours a day would you practice?

JB: From 3:00 in the afternoon until 6:00. Three hours a day, seven days a week, forever!

SF: Are you still practicing?

JB: Of course. I practice piano a lot now because I'm doing some composing and arranging. I practice the drums maybe an hour a day. I practice piano about two or three hours. Maybe I've gotten cocky on drums and I feel like I know how to play a little better drums than piano. I'm in the pre-production process of recording ten sides for Sansu records with Allen Toussaint. My own arrangements; my own compositions.

SF: It's going to be an album under your own name?

JB: Right. I don't know exactly when.

SF: Did you practice bass drum technique quite a bit?

JB: The bass drum is very important in the style of drumming that we play here in New Orleans, because the first thing you hear in the parades is the bass drum. You know when you hear that beat from far away, "Man, it's a parade!" Our bass drum was the main thing. In Dixieland jazz, the bass drum was the thing. The bass drum and the snare drum—they were both important, but the bass drum most of all.

SF: Were there certain things you'd practice on bass drum?

JB: I have all sorts of different stuff I do. Mainly what I do is just play what I feel and hear. If it comes out—it comes out. If it don't—it don't. Now my playing has become a little more refined since I've been working in the studio. I play what they want to hear because they're paying for it! They say, "We want to hear this on the bass drum." So I'll play that. But at least I feel like I'm capable and qualified to do that. On the album I did with Eric Gale, *A Touch of Silk*, that's somewhat of how I play, but you've heard the other albums I've done too and you can compare the styles. It's two different styles all together. When I'm working with Ellis Marsellis it's one style of playing. When I worked with Yusef Lateef it was one style of playing. When I worked with Lionel Hampton it was another style of playing. And when I worked with Eric Gale it's another style of playing.

SF: Well, when you practiced rudiments did you apply them to the set or just on the pad or snare?

JB: I used to practice paradiddles between snare drum and the bass drum. Instead of playing paradiddles with two hands, I'd take one hand off and play the other part of

the paradiddle with my bass drum. Then I'd swap off between my *left* hand and the bass drum and my *right* hand and the bass drum. Independent coordination was what it was called. I used to practice independent coordination a lot. I'd practice all the rudiments like that too. This way my bass drum foot would become a little looser because it was kind of sloppy back then. It's still kind of sloppy. It's really not up to where I would like it. I haven't played the kind of music I really want to play yet on the drums.

SF: What kind of music would that be?

JB: My own kind of music! That's why I'm doing this record.

SF: To *this day* you've never played the kind of music on drums that you really want to play?

JB: Maybe a couple of times. But, to this day I really haven't done it yet.

SF: Man, well it's about time!

JB: Yeah! I think so! I've been playing everybody else's music; playing what they want to hear, how they want to do it. But I've never actually done it the way I want to do it. It seems like people would always try to discourage me. "Oh, don't play that like that." And it just made me want to play it more.

SF: That happened even when you were playing jazz gigs?

JB: They wouldn't let me just express and go out on it. Folks would just try to stop it.

SF: That *would get* discouraging.

JB: Yeah, it has been pretty discouraging and frustrating. All these years I've been sitting here trying to do it. But I think maybe I might have a chance to do it now. With Ellis Marsellis I got as close as I possibly could. But then after I got to the drum part of it I couldn't get Ellis to play the piano part like I wanted to hear it. I'm just as guilty as they are. There are things I wanted to hear and there are things they wanted to hear. But they were the bandleaders. So they got to hear what they wanted to hear. I didn't get to hear what I wanted to hear because I was just the sideman. But, now that I'm the bandleader, I'm going to try to get to the things I want to hear and see what happens.

SF: What are some bands that you like to listen to?

JB: I like Herbie Hancock's melodic concept.

SF: The new material he's doing or back in the *Maiden Voyage days*!

JB: *Maiden Voyage* and stuff like that. I like that kind of harmonic concept. I like Earth, Wind & Fire.


SF: I'm trying to get an idea of the sound you're looking for.

JB: I like that dissonant sound with the suspended chords with a lot of rhythm and harmony and a lot of melody. I like different meters. I like Max Roach. He's the first person I ever heard play 5/4. I like 5/4 a lot. I like all the different meters. I like to

continued on next page

Woodblocks, chimetrees, cuckoo call, drum sticks, timpani sticks, cymbals, leg rests, bongos, gongs, cowbells, rubber feet, temple blocks, tambourines, drum keys, mallets, pop gun, snare drum stands, Roto-toms, muffers, crotales, tuning forks, brushes, cases, ratchets, congas, music stands, metronomes, sistrum, almglocken, labors, maracas, stick totes, sirens. REALISTIC ROCK-Appice, PICKERING, COOKBOOK-PICKERING, RUDIMENTAL JAZZ-Morris, RHYTHMIC ANALYSIS-Albright, PROGRESSIVE STUDIES-Gardner, FUN WITH TRIPLETS-Rothman, PORTRAITS IN MELODY-Cirone, TRANQUILITY-Houllie, SUITE FOR SOLO VIBRAPHONE-Lepak. Woodblocks, chimetrees, cuckoo call, drum sticks, timpani sticks, cymbals, leg rests, bongos, gongs, cowbells, rubber feet, temple blocks, tambourines, drum keys, mallets, pop gun, snare drum stands, Roto-toms, muffers, crotales, tuning forks, brushes, cases, ratchets, congas, music stands, metronomes, sistrum, almglocken, labors, maracas, stick totes, sirens. REALISTIC ROCK-Appice, PICKERING, COOKBOOK-PICKERING, RUDIMENTAL JAZZ-Morris, RHYTHMIC ANALYSIS-Albright, PROGRESSIVE STUDIES-Gardner, FUN WITH TRIPLETS-Rothman, PORTRAITS IN MELODY-Cirone, TRANQUILITY-Houllie, SUITE FOR SOLO VIBRAPHONE-Lepak. Woodblocks, chimetrees, cuckoo call, drum sticks, timpani sticks, cymbals, leg rests, bongos, gongs.

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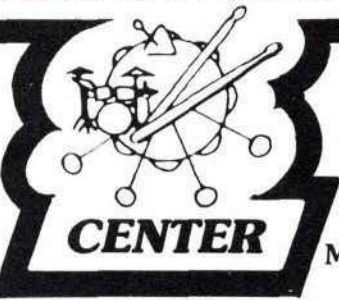
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put jazz style chords to all of these different beats. In New Orleans there's a lot of Caribbean beats and a lot of voodoo-style beats. After you play them a while they become very hypnotic and they invoke a certain spirit in people.

SF: Did you pick that up by listening?

JB: By listening and feeling and talking to different people about different things. There's this book called *Muntu* by Janhein Jahnz [Grove Press]. Charles Neville gave it to me. It explained a lot to me about what I was doing. About where most of the rhythms and stuff that I was playing came from. They came from the voodoo rituals. Read that book and it'll give you a good idea what I'm talking about. It's almost a sort of ritualistic style of rhythms that came out of New Orleans. I really didn't know what it was until Charles gave me this book. I'd been playing it and noticing that after you played this kind of beat for a while—the people seemed like they changed. I was wondering *why*. It's because it embodies all these African rhythms and traditions. The book says that the rhythm doesn't actually get faster or slower. It just sort of changes direction. If you listen to African rhythms, on any part of the beat, it seems like it's suspended in midair. It's like a complete thing. This is like what I've been doing, or attempting to do.

SF: You're trying to do that all by yourself on drumset?

JB: Yeah. It's something I just normally did from living around folks like that and hearing people play. I just picked it up by ear. Most of the people here that I know of—plenty of them can play, but they can't read music. They play by ear. Basically I started learning by ear first and then later I found out what I was playing that I had learned by ear.

SF: Do you think it would've screwed you up if you'd learned to read first?

JB: I think it would have. If I'd learned to read first, it seems like my ear wouldn't have developed *because* I'd have been reading. If you put something in front of me I could read it, but I wouldn't have nothing inside of me to play because I wouldn't be listening. My ears would've turned off. In my case, my ears were turned on first. After my ears reached a certain point, *then* the written text came. "Alright this is what you've been playing. Take a look at it and see what it looks like." I said, "That's impossible. I couldn't be playing nothing that looks like this." Because to look at what I'm playing on drums—it's fantastic. But, to hear it—it's nothing. So, playing by ear first is the best way to learn how to play the drums. Play by ear first and then learn what you're playing next.

SF: Do you teach, or have you ever taught?

JB: Yeah, I've got a couple of students. I take a couple of students from intermediate to advanced. They come to me from time to time and I give them my ideas and

basic philosophy on rhythms and whatnot.
SF: Do you enjoy that?

JB: Yeah, if I get a good student and it seems like he's really interested. That actually helps *me* to learn because it enables me to express what I've got in my head. Especially if somebody picks up on what I'm talking about. That reinforces my own beliefs and ideas. Because I've been discouraged a lot.

SF: Are the younger guys you're teaching as open to all musics as you were to the New Orleans traditions?

JB: Definitely. I've got a couple of students I'm real proud of. Stanley Stevens went on to play with the show *One Mo' Time* and toured Europe. I played with the show first. And the little drummer who died who played with Freddie Fender: Joe Lambert. We studied together for a while.

SF: What do you teach as your philosophy of drums? Can you elaborate on that?

JB: It's basically a philosophy as a drummer about the people you meet, bass players you play with, guitar players, and how to play in a rhythm section. Not just how to play the drums, but how to play with other people and how not to get sidetracked; how not to get thrown off. How to keep a certain amount of concentration on what you're doing and to do that no matter what the other person does.

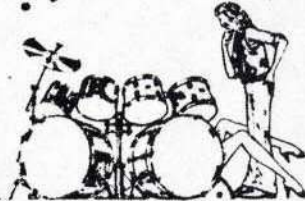
I used to depend on the bass player to play. When the bass player would fall down I'd fall down too. The bass player and the drummer are the foundation of the band. I got to the point where I'd say, "Hey man, if you fall down you just fall down by yourself. I'm going to keep playing." I try to get my students to realize that if you're playing, don't depend on nobody but yourself. If the bass player falls down, plays a wrong note, has a heart attack, passes over or goes up in a puff of smoke—you keep playing. That's true. If the man goes "POOF"—up in a cloud of smoke—just keep playing. He'll come back sooner or later.

It's sort of selfish, but it's the only way you can play. When you hear it back on a tape you say, "Wow man. That sounds really good." But if you try to play and just go along—you're limiting yourself to the amount of expertise that the other person has. You may have more expertise rhythmically than they do. But if you limit yourself up to the point where they are, you never grow. You've got to grow in spite of them. I told my students that there's a lot of people who are going to hear you and think you're really great and they're going to become jealous of you. They're going to try to stop you from playing. *They* want to shine. They don't want *you* to shine. But you shine anyway!

SF: Does your concept change when you're in a jazz rhythm section and a rock rhythm section?

JB: No it doesn't. My *style* may change, but my basic philosophy is the same. I'm

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going to do my best. I'm going to give 100%. Now if you go up in a puff of smoke around me—I'm going to be sitting there on the bandstand giving 100% until I think the song's over.

SF: If you're in a jazz quartet with trumpet as the lead instrument, and then piano, bass and drums, who are you locking into?

JB: When I play, I lock into James Black first. After I lock into him, then I listen to everybody else. But, my first thing is locking into me because I feel like I've studied enough to know exactly what's happening. Just because so-and-so is the leader on the union contract don't mean that he's the leader in the music.

SF: Do you think the drummer should always be the musical leader?

JB: If they do it right the drums are leader. They lead the music; they lead the band. Like the drum major leads the band. I mean, what is a drum major? He's the major drummer. You just come on the bandstand and lead the band, irregardless of who's supposed to be the leader. If you're the drummer, you're the drum major. You primarily lead the band. You pace the band off. You give them their time, you put them in their place. You control. If you lose control, you've messed up. You're supposed to be in control, but you're supposed to be in control of yourself first off. If you're in control of yourself you've got everything else under control.

SF: What do you do if you're hired for a gig; after the first song is over the band-leader comes over and says, "James, you're playing too busy. I can't even tell where "I" is. You've got to play simpler."?

JB: That's a matter of decision. Do you want to play simpler and keep the job and make the money, or do you want to tell him to go fly a kite and quit? If you're professional enough about it, you'll know that it's just a job. You play simpler. Discipline yourself to just follow direction. Different people like to hear different things. If you're working for somebody, you've got to do the job that they want you to do. There have been people who've told me, "Hey man! You ain't playing enough! Play more!" So I play more.

SF: When you were getting discouraged, how did you handle that?

JB: I prayed a lot. I asked the Lord to help me. "Lord could you please help me, because I need your help." I fell on my knees and went to praying. That sort of gave me a little spiritual boost. Instead of just dealing with the materialistic aspect of it, I started dealing with the spiritual aspect of myself and got that together. It worked out. I didn't do too bad. I'm talking to you; getting interviewed for *Modern Drummer!* Everybody here in New Orleans has got some kind of spiritual something about them. Just the fact that they deny that the spirit exists makes it exist. It

continued on next page

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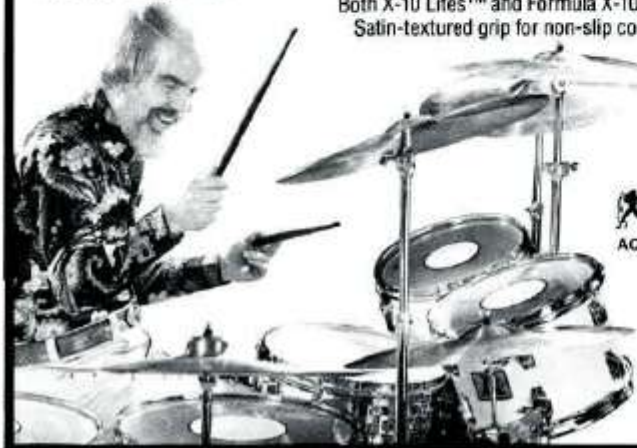
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don't mean that it don't exist. After a while, you get to dealing with the regular material side of life and you come to realize there's more to it than this. Not to become a fanatic or anything like that, but just have your things balanced. We said rhythm, harmony and melody is like a trinity. You're physical, you're mental and you're spiritual. It's a trinity. It's like all things come in threes. You get your three things together so you can be a complete person. Instead of just being a drummer who doesn't know harmony and melody—just rhythm. That's like a machine. They've got electronic Sideman that you can plug into the wall and it'll play the straight rhythm for you.

SF: That's what most of the people playing drums are trying to be like.

JB: Right. This is what I like about jazz. It gives you a chance to express yourself. I like to play funk and rhythm and blues and all that, but I still like to play jazz too. Each style of music has its own benefits and its own limitations. I wouldn't want to play jazz constantly because it would seem boring to me. It would be like eating steak everyday. I want to eat a little chicken, a little fish and maybe just eat some vegetables sometime. I try to teach my students to become multi-styled drummers. Be able to play anything, anywhere at anytime. Be a

musician that plays the drums. Don't just limit yourself to, "I want to be a classical musician." Be able to play anything; any kind of music anywhere. Be able to play Chinese music if it's necessary. Be able to express yourself in any style. It's like becoming multi-lingual.

SF: Right. And as far as being able to make a living . . .

JB: Your chances are better and then you get to meet a whole bunch of different people. Not just in one particular facet. "I want to be a jazz drummer." Then they just listen to all the jazz people. That's what happened to me. I just wanted to be a jazz drummer and it became boring! After you see the same faces and play the same songs about 20,000 times, then what else is it? Man, there's got to be something else. I got off into funk and rock and went back to my roots. I thought, "I used to play rhythm and blues. That's true." I went back to that and found that that was paying off too. Now I get a chance to play a little r&b, a little rock, a little jazz, a little Afro-Cuban and a little of this and that. A little Martian music! Play some music from Pluto for a while; some of the avant-garde kind of stuff and just space out! Just get all your stuff out of you. Then after you play your little avant-garde for a while, go back and play some funk. If you can do

that, you're well rounded.

SF: Have you read Valerie Wilmer's book, *As Serious As Your Life*?

JB: I got it from Alvin Fielder and I never read it.

SF: It's a strange perspective. She writes about a lot of the drummers who are strictly into avant-garde drumming . . .

JB: Right! And they can't play nothing else but that. Hey man, you can get anybody to play avant-garde drums. I'm not trying to put nobody down, but you could get just about anybody to play that kind of drums. I think the avant-garde is just New York musicians' frustrations over social conditions. It's not really the type of music that you lock yourself into. It's like complete chaos. "I'm just letting the world know that it's *chaotic!* And I'm *frustrated!* And I'm *tired!* And I'm *pissed!*" Alright, good. We've expressed that. But that's not where I think the music is going. That's alright for a while, but if I had to play that kind of music constantly, I'd be in Bellevue.

SF: What comes across in the book is that these guys decide to focus on avant-garde and then they get bitter because they're not making any money by doing that.

JB: Right. Because who are you playing for? You're playing for people, right? People know what they want to hear and what they want to feel like. If a person doesn't want to eat meat—you can't make him eat it just because you like it. They may be a vegetarian. So, if you qualify to perform in a whole bunch of areas as a musician—you can get away with playing just about anything. But not just one consistent diet of the same thing. That's boring. After you've heard the first two songs of an avant-garde band—you've heard their whole repertoire. The rest is just redundant.

SF: Do you like Ornette Coleman's and John Coltrane's music?

JB: Right. I knew John Coltrane. I met him and talked to him. We played together once down here in New Orleans. Yeah, I like what they were doing, but *they* did that already! It's been done. So it's time for us to try to come up with something new. The music right now is stagnant. It's in a very depressed kind of a state. I'm trying to inject some life into it because it's really becoming depressing. Everything's starting to sound alike. Everybody's starting to look alike. Where are the innovators? It's like it's all been done and nobody's trying to do anything different. They are just reaping what the past has done and just trying to improve on that instead of coming up with something new and different. It's a sad state of affairs in music.

You know what I'll be trying to do when I record? I may do a couple of funk things just to make a few bucks for a bit. But sooner or later—from maybe the third side—you'll hear the *real* James Black come out!

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Drumming For The General Business Scene

by Tim Smith

So you've just been hired to do a few General Business (GB) dates with a local band and you say to yourself, "Those gigs are a breeze, no sweat." I'm sure you're grimacing at the thought of playing with the town's worst musicians, too. Well, think again! I've met some of the finest musicians I've ever heard while playing a wedding.

You might be wondering why high-calibre players would want to dress up in a tuxedo and do these affairs. The answers to this are many, depending upon who you ask. Many serious musicians play GB because it allows them more free time to pursue their musical interests. Others teach privately or have a family and find they can earn a good amount of money in a fairly short period of time. Whatever the reason, playing GB can be a viable alternative for a lot of musicians.

Another major advantage of playing the GB scene is that you learn to play an enormous repertoire of music requiring a wide

variety of feels and styles. Since a typical wedding is attended by an age group ranging from 5 to 85, you are playing to and for all of them. Consequently, you'll be playing everything from Benny Goodman and Jobim, to Barry Manilow and Pat Benatar. Obviously, it would be to your advantage to be able to play all of these styles with decent execution and feel. This will not only increase your versatility as a player, but will boost your confidence as an all-around drummer, as well.

If you find yourself faced with some GB work and are a bit uncertain of what will be expected of you, here are some examples of beats in many styles which you're most likely to encounter on the gig. Experiment with these examples. Then try some of your own ideas within the same styles. The main thing to remember is, play stylish and feel it. Use brushes, mallets or whatever it takes to play the style. Remember, being a versatile player can only help you, so use your talents to your advantage.

Swing

Cym.
S.D.
B.D.
H.H.

2 beat Swing

Cym.
S.D.
B.D.
H.H.

Rock

Cym. or H.H.
S.D.
B.D.

Funk

H.H.
S.D.
B.D.

Disco

H.H.
S.D.
B.D.

x = closed ⊗ = open

Shuffle

Cym or HH
SD
BD

Reggae

H.H.
Stick on Rim
B.D.

Bossa Nova

H.H.
Stick on Rim
B.D.

Rhumba

Bell
S.T.T.
Stick on Rim
F.T.T.
B.D.



Tango

S.D.
B.D.



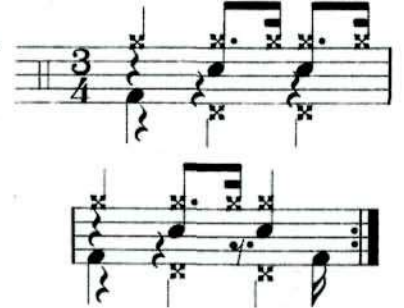
Mambo

Bell
S.T.T.
Stick on Rim
B.D.



Waltz

Cym.
S.D.
B.D.
H.H.



Cha-Cha

Bell
S.T.T.
Stick on Rim
B.D.

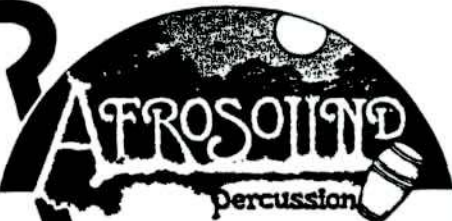


Polka

Cym.
S.D.
B.D.



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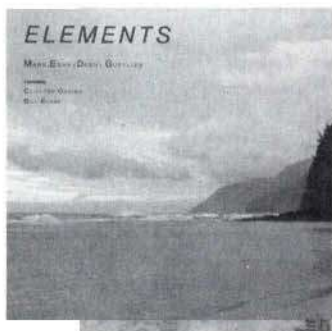
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The newest release from Bad Company features a very new musical style from the group. Simon Kirke plays solid and creatively and co-wrote one of the album's best songs, "Untie The Knot."

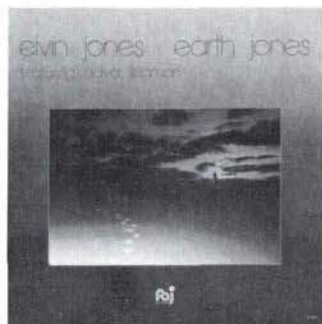


ELEMENTS—*Elements*. Philo 9011. Danny Gottlieb: dr. M. Egan: bs. B. Evans: sx. C. Carter: kybds. *Color Wheel / Starward / Electric Fields / Haena / Conundrum Valley / Aerial View*.

Elements is the conceptual name for a series of projects by Mark Egan and Danny Gottlieb. This first album features an intriguing blend of acoustic, electric and natural sounds, with each musician given plenty of room to stretch. It's different—check it out.

ANDRAE CROUCH—*Finally*. Light LS-5784. D. Williams, H. Hockensmith, W. Keene, D. Ferguson: gtr. D. Miner, A. Laboriel, N. East: el bs. Bill Maxwell: dr. L. Muhaberac, J. Sample, A. Crouch, T. Keene, H. Rogers, M. Lang, K. Shultze: kybd & syn. A. Acuna, B. Maxwell: perc. Assorted vocalists. *We Need To Hear From You / Finally / Everybody's Got To Know / We Are Not Ashamed / Sweet Communion / All The Way / He's Waiting / Let's Worship Him / That's Why I Needed You / My Tribute*.

A super new release from a master of contemporary gospel music. Drummer Bill Maxwell is rock solid, musical and co-produced this album with Andrae. Don't miss it.



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On his first American release

in several years, Elvin has assembled a fine group of musicians and a good variety of tunes. This session is a delight, and it's nice to hear Jones and Liebman playing together again.



MEL LEWIS & THE JAZZ ORCHESTRA—*Make Me Smile*. Finesse FW 37987. M. Lewis: dr. E. Gardner, J. Mosello, J. Marshall, T. Harrell: trp & flghn. J. Mosca, E. Neumeister, D. Purviance, E. McIntyre: tbn. S. Fauber: fr hn. D. Oatts, K. Garrett, J. Lovano, G. Pribek, G. Smulyan: al sx, fl, tn sx, cl, bs cl, bar sx. J. McNeely: pno. M. Johnson: bs. *Make Me Smile / Nevermore / The Nasty Dance / McNeely's Piece / My Funny Valentine / Goodbye World*.

An amazing album that forever dispels the rumor that Mel Lewis wouldn't be able to run a big band on his own. All these musicians play well and deserve respect. Mel Lewis is one of the most verbal, opinionated drummers in the business—but this album proves, once again that whatever he says, he can back up.

ECHOES OF AN ERA 2—*The Concert*. Elektra/Musician 60165-1. Lenny White: dr. N. Wilson: vcl. C. Corea: pno. J. Henderson: tn sx. S. Clarke: bs. *I Want To Be Happy / I Get A Kick Out Of You / 'Round Midnight / Rhythm-A-Ning / 500 Miles High / But Not For Me / My One And Only Love / Them There Eyes*.

This acoustic jazz session, made up largely of jazz standards, gives White a chance to use his jazz roots—and he proves he hasn't forgotten them.



JEFF HAMILTON—*Indiana*. Concord Jazz CJ-187. Jeff Hamilton: dr. J. Clayton: bs. B. Cooper: tn sx. B. Hannon: pno. L. Morgan: al sx. M. Murphy: vcl. *It's You Or No One / Girl Talk / 2nd Street Samba / Jeff's Express / Split Season Blues / Indiana / One By One / Long John / Triste*.

For his first release as a leader, Hamilton has produced a straight-ahead jazz session which fulfills any expectations one might have of an album by a member of the L.A. Four. Jeff's use of brushes is especially tasteful.



BILLY COBHAM'S GLASS MENAGERIE—*Observations & Elektra/Musician EI-60123.* D. Brown: gtr. Billy Cobham: perc. G. Goldstein: kybds. T. Landers: bs. *Jail bait / M.S.R. / Arroyo / Chiquita Linda / Take It To The Sky / Observations & Reflections.*

Interesting meter changes and good compositions make this an enjoyable album. Cobham and the band play as a unit rather than as leader and sidemen.

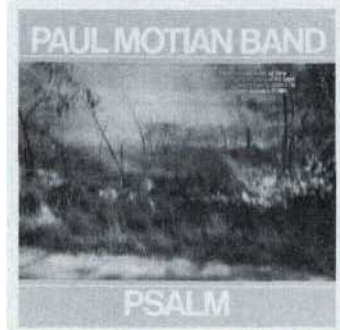
JIMMY WEBB—*Angel Heart.* Columbia FC 37695. J. Webb, D. Paich, D. Foster, M. McCauley: pno, el pno, syn. L. Sklar, B. Glaub, D. Cortese:

bs. Jeff Porcaro: dr. S. Lukather, F. Tackett, D. Parks, F. Mollin: gtrs. Victor Feldman, Fred Mollin, Matthew McCauley: perc. B. Shank: fl. J. Heys: trp. Assorted vocalists. *Angel Heart / God's Gift / Scissors Cut / Work For A Dollar / His World / Our Movie / Nasty Love / In Cars / Old Wing Mouth.*

A great album by one of the top five songwriters in the world. The backup musicians include the cream of the West Coast studio crop. Jeff Porcaro told us they recorded this LP in three days. It sounds it! It's fresh, the songs are exciting, and the production is not too slick. It's alive. Buy it.

LES DEMERLE—*On Fire.* Palo Alto Jazz PA 8008. Les DeMerle: dr. L. Morgan: al sx, sp sx, fl. D. Menza: tn sx, al fl. B. Shew: flgn, trp. J. Wilson: pno. B. Magnusson: bs. *Stargazer / Ellingtonia / Janie Huk [Blues] / Little BeBop Drummer Boy / All Blues / No Llores Mi Corazon / Little Chicago Fire.*

This is a small group who play with the energy and drive of a big band. Les does not overdominate the session, but rather, does what a drummer is supposed to do—plays with the band, supporting and stimulating them.



PAUL MOTIAN—*Psalm.* Paul Motian: dr. B. Frisell: gtr. E. Schuller: bs. J. Lovano: tn sx. B. Drewes: tn sx, al sx. *Psalm / White Magic / Boomerang / Fantasm / Mandeville / Second Hand / Etude / Yahllah.*

Motian continues to explore with his music and his instrument, drawing on everything from the ethereal to the funky.



CLIFFORD BROWN & MAX ROACH—*Pure Genius: Vol. 1.* Elektra/Musician EI-60026. C. Brown: trp. M. Roach: dr. S. Rollins: tn sx. R. Powell: pno. G. Morrow: ac bs. *I'll Remember April / What's New / Daahoud / Lover Man / 52nd St. Theme.*

Hats off to Elektra/Musician for this important release. The Brown & Roach Quintet represent the epitome of hard bop bands. All the musicians play excellent. All the tunes burn. This is never-before-released material and deserves listening.

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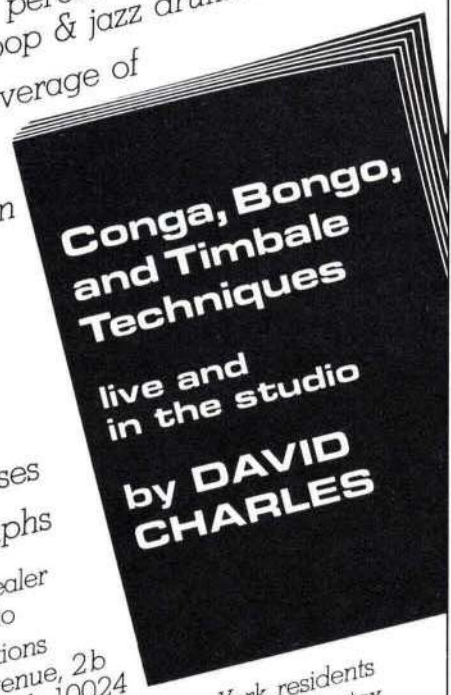
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Drum Workshop *continued from page 29*

we've taken it out of the catalogue, we have a lot of requests for it, and so when we have a little leftover production time we'll jump in and make some hi-hats.

RVH: Your hi-hat is smaller than most others on the market.
DL: Our hi-hat is a spin-off on the original Camco dies and molds, with some improvements. The size stock that we use was used for years, up until the heavy-duty stands became popular. It works, and it holds up and it's never a problem, but the plating cost alone is only about three dollars less than a complete imported hi-hat, so it's impossible to be competitive.

RVH: There's something special about your rims. What is that?
DL: We have a major problem—it's held up our drum production—in that in order to make a heavy-gauge steel rim as we do, there are a phenomenal number of steps involved. The way that the imported rims are made is an entirely different mechanical principle and you can mass-produce them rapidly at a very low cost. We also have the problem of other American manufacturers: to my knowledge none of them are doing their own plating, and every time you go outside your own shop you're talking more and more money. The major difference is that we're using a heavier gauge steel to fabricate the rim. Also the way that we punch the ears on the rim: instead of being flat, it rounds over the side. The look is similar to a die-cast rim. I feel that a well-made steel rim gives you the best of both worlds. The advantage to a die-cast rim is that you have more tensile strength; if you take the rim and try to bend it over your knee it won't flex as much. The disadvantage is (and this is a personal preference), a rimshot sound from a die-cast rim doesn't seem to give as much body as from a good steel rim. From the manufacturing standpoint, a die-cast rim is molten zinc, poured into a mold. That mold is a very large, thin circle; it's real hard to bring the rim out and not have it warp slightly. And if it ever does warp, it's warped—you can't bend it, and it's not going to conform to the drum head when you tighten it up because it's much stronger in tensile strength. It's weaker in crush strength; if you take a hammer and hit a die-cast rim you'll crack the rim. If you hit a steel rim you might put a little dent in it. If you make a good, old-fashioned metal rim, with sensitivity as to the roundness and the fact that it has to be level, and you make it really well, I think you've got something. But when you get into making them for all the various sizes, it becomes a very costly operation. Dollar for dollar, I can buy an imported rim complete for almost the same price it costs me to plate one of our rims, and there are thirteen separate steps we have to go through to make a drum rim. We have a machine which turns the rim into round, but there's a tremendous human element involved. I can show you stacks of rims which we have made for production. I can also show you stacks of them which I'm not going to use because they didn't come out exactly right.

RVH: Let's talk about the background of the DW-5000 chain-drive pedal.

DL: The adaptation of the chain and sprocket to a bass drum pedal was originally done by the Professional Percussion drum shop in New York. That pedal was around for many years before we bought the Camco dies and molds. The [chain-drive] patent was owned by two individuals: Frank Ippolito, the owner of the shop, and the person who worked at his shop at the time the invention was made, Al Duffy. Al got the idea of adapting a chain and sprocket to a bass drum pedal while fooling with the chain tuning on a tympani. Elvin Jones worked with it for a while and loved it, and it became kind of the underground bass drum pedal; it felt really good. The Camco pedal was the natural one to do it because it felt really good anyway, so if you can improve that, you've really got something. At the point at which we were making the [standard strap-drive] pedal, we knew that people weren't aware of the chain design because no one was manufacturing and marketing it. Very suddenly came Frank Ippolito's untimely death, before we were

continued on next page



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able to negotiate anything with him in writing. At that point, we were in the position as a new young company where it was very important for us to have a product which was *different*. That way, you're not competing dollar for dollar in the advertising market with the majors. We had a pedal which had always sold, because the professional players were aware of the way it felt. That was the pedal they'd always used. So we had problems in the marketplace making *enough* pedals. We did not have the capital to go into drum production at this time, and we knew the chain and sprocket adaptation would give us something which would eventually stabilize our cash position and allow us to get into drums. We had met, almost through a fluke, Al Duffy, and became aware of the fact that he was a co-inventor. Al, being very astute in the mechanics of the pedal, really liked the changes we had made when we originally bought it. It had been in the hands of non-drummer manufacturers and it was made for several years from the standpoint of being the most cost-effective. That's a nice big word for "make it as cheaply as you can so that you can make as much money as you can." We took it back to the original way it was made and made several improvements. Al liked what we had done, and within a couple of weeks we purchased his interest in the chain-drive patent, which gave us the rights to market it. Meanwhile, Jayne Ippolito, with her half of the rights, had negotiated with Tama and sold her rights to them.

Earlier we were talking about attention to detail, and the idea of putting felt into the pedal spring is something that I like to talk about in reference to that. It's something that only a drummer would ever think about. It's not a big selling point—someone isn't going to be knocked out because this one has felt in it. But it's the attention to detail: "Look, they *even* put felt in the spring to cut down noise."

RVH: Now the big question: When the Ludwigs and Slingerlands are being swallowed by corporate giants, why *now* for Drum Workshop as an independent?



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DL: I don't feel like I'm in competition with any of those companies (not to sound superior to them; we do make the same product), even Camco in its heyday had only two or three percent of the marketplace. But you can't live on custom orders the rest of your career. What you have to do is draw a very definite line as to what your production can be, and keep all of your expenses in line to that. We are an unbelievably small company. It's hard for people to realize that the people who work here on a daily basis are Paul, myself, my wife—who answers the phone and does all the books—John Good—who's pretty much the shop foreman—and a half-dozen guys working in the shop. That's the Drum Workshop. From a standpoint of drum production we're barely into the marketplace; it *is* a special-order item. A drumset order will come in and I'll go back and pick out the shells. But we'll reach a point where it'll be impossible for me to do that. At that point you have to surround yourself with people who you have the utmost confidence in; who will do the job as well as you would do it. We do plan to increase the amount of drums that we sell, but we have to do that very slowly, because as you know, there are not a lot of drums being sold. I think what we have is a viable alternative which gives a drummer an option to get what you hear guys talk about: "I want an old Camco set; I want an old Gretsch set." You hear this guy's got a '57 Rogers set and wow, what a sound that drum gets.

RVH: Contemporary rock 'n' rollers rave about their classic Leedy snare or Slingerland *Radio King*. If everybody's talking "older is better," there must have been something going on then that isn't going on now.

DL: What was going on then was that there was a guy who had pride in the drums he was making. He was a small drum company and he didn't worry about competition because he could sell as many drums as he could make. When I say we're not in competition with the majors, what I mean is the fact that they make drums and sell them doesn't have anything to do with the degree that I think my company is going to grow or the number of drums we're going to make and sell. It's so miniscule in terms of what you would normally think of as volume in the drum industry.

I said a couple of years ago in your magazine [Dec 80/Jan 81 MD] that I could see small drum companies popping up in future years again. It can't be done at this time because of the amount of money you'd have to put into tooling. If we had paid for tooling brand-new, we'd have to be selling fifteen to twenty times more drums than we're selling right now just to keep the doors open and pay costs. If there were five or six Drum Workshops right now, that would be great, because at least ten times as many people out there would be able to purchase a drum.

RVH: What are your plans for the immediate future?

DL: Something we're going to be embarking on is more of an active clinic program. That's something I've always wanted to do, but never had the time with all of the other functions of the business. So David Levine is going to help with setting up the clinics with such artists as Nick Ceroli, John Hernandez, Colin Bailey, John Ferraro and Burley Drummond.

And then by January we expect to have established our network of dealers so that our drums will be available at music stores throughout the country. Drums are available now through special order, but with our new location, we should be able to service dealers much better in the future.

A new product we will be coming out with is a functional double bass drum pedal. We've been working on it for about two years, and have had various different versions of it. Guys would take them out on the road, but there were always problems with them. But now we've come up with one that we're really satisfied with. With this pedal, it would be possible to use the pedal you already have, and add the auxiliary one to it with the linkage connection. Along with the product, we are going to put out some fact sheets to educate drummers about different ways to use it. So we're really excited about the product itself, and about the idea of expanding the horizons of what drummers can do.

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Q. I've noticed drummers like Steve Gadd and Ronnie Tutt have the biggest part of their front bass drum heads cut out. Why?

M. J.
McKinney, TX

A. *Several reasons. Having a hole cut in the front bass drum head gives a sound somewhere in-between having a single-headed bass drum and a double-headed bass drum. It gives you the punch of the single head and some of the tone of a double head. The relationship of tone versus punch will be determined by the size of the hole. Also, it's easier to mike a bass drum with a hole in the front head.*

Q. I read in the Philly Joe Jones interview that he teaches drums. How can I get in touch with him?

M.M.

A. *Write to Philly Joe in care of MD and we'll forward your letter.*

Q. I purchased one used Zildjian bottom light hi-hat cymbal. I'm using it as a top cymbal. Is there a difference in the design or flexibility of a "bottom" cymbal?

M.A.
Bridgman, MI

A. *Generally a bottom hi-hat cymbal will be heavier in weight than a top hi-hat cymbal. However, if it sounds good to you, we see no problem. It's fairly common for drummers to mix and match hi-hat cymbals.*

Q. Where may I purchase the Zalmer bass drum pedal?

P.B.
Edmond, OK

A. *If you can't find a Zalmer pedal at your local drum shop or music store, try contacting Zalmer direct at P.O. Box 224, 320 High Hill Rd., Wallingford, CT. (203) 265-9785.*

Q. What's the reason for the switch to smaller and smaller kits by rock drummers, especially while touring?

N. L.
Royal Oak, MI

A. *A few of the drummers we've spoken to about this say that they're tired of the "predictability" of the sound of the multi-tom set-ups. Some of them are looking for the challenge that comes with having to be rhythmically more creative with a smaller kit. In other words, it's real easy to fall back on the descending melodic fills that so many drummers use today with the larger kits. Also, portability might be a factor. Touring is an extremely expensive venture and there aren't that many bands who make money off it. So, the less equipment they have to haul around—the less expensive.*

Q. I've been reading about K. Zildjian cymbals. Are these older model Zildjians? I've been told that cymbals sound better with age. Is there anything to substantiate this claim?

R.M.
Argentina, Canada

A. *Originally, K. Zildjians and A. Zildjians were made by two different manufacturing processes. Basically, the K's had a hammered look and the A's were spun on a lathe. The heyday of the K's was probably in the bebop era when they were used by most of the great bebop drummers. The K. Zildjian facilities were moved to Canada and for many years were very hard to find. Original K's became like collector's items. Recently, the Zildjian Cymbal Company in Massachusetts borrowed Elvin Jones' and Mel Lewis' original K's and used them as prototypes for manufacturing their new line of K's. The sound distinction between the A's and K's is basically that the K's are darker sounding and the A's are brighter sounding. As for a cymbal sounding "better" with age—that's relative. Some do and some don't. A lot of that would be determined by the care of the cymbal and whether or not the cymbal sounds good to begin with.*

Q. I have three Zildjian cymbals and as I practice, only one section of each cymbal is played on. I move them, but after a while they rotate back to the side that's always played on. What causes this and is it ruining my cymbals?

S.B.
Whitehall, PA

A. *We spoke with Len DiMuzio at Zildjian. He said that absolutely no harm can come playing the cymbals in that one spot. Probably the reason that the cymbals rotate to that one spot is because of a slight weight difference in that part of the cymbal.*

Q. I'd like some information on counting the beginnings of songs. How can I start tempi consistently every night? I've used a metronome, but that's not always practical onstage.

A.R.
Las Vegas, NV

A. *Being able to count off songs consistently will depend on your familiarity with the material. Take a few seconds before each song and sing it to yourself and feel where the tempo should be, then start to count it off. There also has to be trust from the other band members that you're a strong enough player to be able to pull this off. You can be right on the money in counting off a song, but if the guitarist or bass player, for example, start rushing immediately after you've counted, you're in a situation of either picking up the tempo or holding it steady and pulling them back. Perhaps it'd be worthwhile to rehearse song beginnings until that trust develops. Also, there's a tendency to play songs faster onstage because of the flow of adrenalin and the excitement. This is where taking a few seconds to think about the upcoming song will help. You can be excited—but you always have to be in control.*

Q. Can you tell me the difference between power toms, tom-toms and concert toms?

D.R.
Astoria, NY

A. Basically, tom-toms are double-headed drums that come in conventional sizes such as 8 x 12, 9 x 13 and 10 x 14. Power toms are usually double-headed toms that have the same head size as conventional tom-toms (usually), but have a deeper shell, such as a 12 x 12, 13 x 13, and a 14 x 14. Concert toms come in various sizes and their chief characteristic is that they're single-headed.

Q. Where can I find a case for a set of wind chimes? My set has thirty-five chimes.

H.H.
Macon, GA

A. We spoke with Om Percussion in Clearwater, Florida. To the best of their knowledge, no one makes a case specifically for wind chimes. However, Om has plans to market a hard-shell case by the end of '82. In the meantime, they suggested contacting a company who makes cases, like Calzone or Anvil, and they would probably make a special case for you. Or you could find a carrying case for something else and adapt it to the wind chimes. Latin Percussion ships their wind chimes in a thick plastic bag, according to Om.

Q. I have a Rogers black set, a Power Tone model. Can you tell me when these drums were made?

S.S.

A. We checked with Rogers' Service Center technician, Charlie Davis. He told us that Rogers made a Power Tone snare drum in the late '60s to early '70s. There never was a Power Tone drumset.

Q. When I play my hi-hat in the high position I have better clearance on my snare and better volume from my hi-hat cymbals. But it chews up sticks in minutes! When the hi-hat is in the low position the sticks last longer but I loose projection and it has an unnatural feel. Any suggestions?

P.D.
Seattle, WA

A. If you're unable to find a happy medium in your hi-hat height, a next step might be to try experimenting with your snare drum height and/or your seat height. Another consideration is in the way you're holding your sticks. You might need to pay some attention to that detail; possibly you could use some improvement there. Finally, if none of the above ring true, you might consider trying some of the synthetic drumsticks on the market that are designed to withstand more abuse than a wood stick.

Q. I have a new Tama Swingstar drumset. I'm using clear tom-tom heads and I can't get a low sound on any of my tom-toms. Please help!

I.M.
Longmont, CO

A. The Swingstar set is a 14 x 22 bass drum, 8x12 and 9x13 tom-toms and a 16 x 16 floor tom. The set-up also comes with 8 x 8 and 10 x 10 Tama X-tras as options. The challenge with using clear heads is that they eliminate much of the drum tone. Many of the drummers who are known for a deep tom-tom sound will use a Remo coated Ambassador head on top and a clear Remo Diplomat head on the bottom of the toms. The coated head retains some of the overtones while the clear head adds depth. Try tuning the top head so that it gives a good response and use the bottom head to change the drum pitch.

Q. In your June '81 issue, Simon Phillips said he plays a 21" Earth Ride cymbal. The Zildjian catalog lists only a 20" and a 22" Earth Ride. What's the correct size?

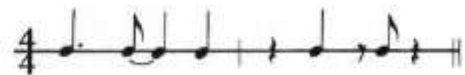
R.L.
Jackson Heights, NY

A. Twenty-one inches is the correct size of Simon's Earth Ride cymbal. We spoke with Len DiMuzio at Zildjian. He told us the cymbal was specially made for Simon, and even though Zildjian lists the Earth Ride in sizes 20" and 22", they would honor a request to make a 21" Earth Ride. Phillip's Earth Ride also has a Brilliant finish, which Zildjian would also honor a request for.

Q. I'd appreciate a definition of the word "clave" and the pronunciation. I'd also be interested in some etymological information.

J.B.
Naples, FL

A. Clave is a two-syllable word pronounced "clah-vay." Percussionist John Rae described clave this way: "Clave is to the Latin musician what "2" and "4" are to the jazz musician. It is a pulsation that, whether played or implied, is always present." A basic clave pattern would be:



or the reverse:



We're not sure of the origin of the term.

Q. In the July '82 MD I noticed the long, clear drums used by John Panozzo. What are they and who makes them?

D. M.
Tyler, TX

A. Those are Octobans, made by the Tama Drum Company.



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Escovedo continued from page 33 that. How to mike the drums, and what kind of sound he got. Overdubbing this, and trying to EQ that. I tried to sit there and listen and learn, which was important, because it helps me now. Now when I go into the studio I know what I want to hear. My father had been in the studio too, so I also listened to him. Even though it was my father's and my album, my father would mostly say everything about this or that. I was scared to say things, because I felt like I didn't know anything, but after a while I started speaking up because I learned a lot from them. And I think they taught me good, because it's paying off.

RT: The guys in Santana's percussion section were saying that they had been frustrated in the studio by engineers and producers who really didn't know much about percussion.

SE: Yeah, that's true. But in doing the album with Billy, it was easy because he is a percussionist in a way. And he loves percussion—he just went crazy. We could put ten million things on. But I've done a lot of different albums, and there are a lot of producers who don't understand. Sometimes they hear something and want you to play it their way, which sometimes to us seems real stupid. A lot of things can't be so complicated because then it doesn't sell. Commercial stuff. And sometimes producers

don't even let you express what you're trying to do. Sometimes half the conga beats that they make you play, you could play with one hand because they're so simple. You really do get frustrated, and it's hard. But it's starting to open up now.

RT: How did you get with the George Duke band? Was that through Billy?

SE: Through Billy. Before my father and I did our album, Billy said he was going to do an album. He said he was going to call us in about six months, which seemed so long—I said, "Yeah, Okay." He did call us, and we did his album. That was the first time I met George Duke, and Ray Gomez was on guitar. I think Alphonso Johnson was on bass. And George was saying that he and Billy were going to split up their thing pretty soon, and he said he was going to call me. And I didn't believe him either, but he did call. I went to L.A. for rehearsals and stuff. He got the band together who he thought would work, and everybody worked. That band stayed together for about two or three tours; two, three, or four years. And that was the best band I've ever been in. It was fun. I've been in a lot of other bands, but George's band was like a family. It was sad that it had to break up, only because of the business thing, which wasn't together, and people couldn't take it any more. But George is really doing good now, and

we're still trying to talk him into getting the band back together—doing a band album or something. A lot of people miss it, from what I hear. I wouldn't mind doing it.

RT: You were playing a lot of timbales in that band.

SE: Yeah, I was. I was playing a lot of everything. He had me playing keyboards, drums, congas, and timbales, and out singing and dancing. So that was fun. He let you do what you really wanted. If you wanted to try something that you never did before, he'd let you do it. It was very open. And if it worked, fine, if it didn't well, let's try something else. But he had us doing all kinds of crazy things. We did whatever we wanted, and it was really fun. I think I was at my best playing with George, because we were constantly working, and to play in his band you had to play good all the time. You had to stay at your best. So playing every day, two or three shows a day, I just kept playing and playing, and I was really happy with my playing then. For the last two years I've mostly been playing trap drums and trying to sing. So as far as my conga chops, they've kind of been cooled out. I wish they weren't. But playing with George, playing all those gigs, you play every night and you build up endurance.

RT: Do you have pain in your hands when you play congas?

SE: Oh yeah. I would always tell the sound

guy to turn the congas up at the beginning of the show because my hands wouldn't be numb enough until the middle of the show for me to really play hard. So on the first song, every single time, I would have tears coming out. I'd be smiling but there would be tears coming out of my eyes because it would hurt so bad. You had to literally just hit them so hard that your hands got numb until you got used to playing. And that's every night. And that's what I'm saying about Raul: I don't see how they can do it—him and Armando. I mean that's every night, and they play hard. I couldn't play that hard; that would kill me. After a while you get the callouses, and you get blood clots. My hands aren't too bad right now, because I haven't been playing that much, but you get blood clots and stuff. When they get that bad, they burst and you get blood all over. Then people really go crazy. "Oh, it's blood!" And the bad thing about it is there are a lot of conga players who play hard, after so many times of hitting the drums that hard, there's something that happens that makes you urinate blood. And I think that's happened to Raul and Armando. I know it's happened to Francisco Aguabella and Mongo, from playing so hard. Somebody explained it to me before, and it's pretty painful for that to happen.

RT: Did you know Raul before he joined Santana?

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SE: Oh yeah. He was my idol for a while. I'd seen him in Malo. And when I saw him play he did all these rolls and he was so fast. I said, "Golly, I wonder what it would be like to play with him." And this promoter used to take me and another girl around to have us sit in with bands, which was crazy. I always felt bad about it, you know, when people force other people to play. And I remember one time we got to California Hall in San Francisco and Raul's band was playing. I wanted to play with them really bad, so I think I sat in and played. Raul didn't want me to, I don't think, but I sat in. And after that we became friends. But Raul was one of the first that I saw who could play that fast and that good, and that hard.

RT: In George Duke's band you were working with Ndugu on drums.

SE: He is really good. He's into percussion too, so it's really easy to work with him. He had a lot of ideas. He was with Santana too, and he produced a couple of albums. He knew a lot about the percussion, so it was easy for me to learn some things from him too. That was the first time in a while that I had played the trap drums. He suggested I play them.

RT: I saw Ndugu at a clinic, and he was saying that a drummer who works with a percussionist really has to make sure he doesn't overplay, and add too much stuff.

SE: Yeah, it's for both of us. It's on us for either of us to lay the time—the beat—down. If he wants to stretch out, I should be able to just lay that thing down. And if I want to stretch out, he can't overplay, or it becomes real complicated. Especially if you're playing a tune with so much energy, everybody wants to go out, which at times we ended up doing anyway. Because it's hard to hold that feeling. You just want to go out, and go crazy. So we have to feel each other out and do it at just the right times. At least we did it at the right times, and that's just by playing together for so long. It worked out to where we knew when somebody was going to do something. And I'd just play, and vice-versa.

RT: What do you look for generally in a

drummer?

SE: Time. How consistent his time is. He doesn't have to do a whole lot. It's hard to play with a drummer if he doesn't lay that thing down where it's supposed to be laid, at the right time. Then he's not a very good drummer. That's very important, especially in the studio, and I learned that when I was younger. When I did that Alphonso Johnson album, with Lee Ritenour, Chester Thompson—those are top L.A. studio musicians, and when I went in there I learned right away. I started playing a lot of stuff, and they were laying that thing down, and they said, "Wait a minute, that's not the way to do it." That's when I learned if they want you to play more it's better for them to tell you to play more than for you to overplay. Also, when I was in George's band, I was mostly the one to keep time, because it was really consistent. If someone went even a taste too fast in the studio when we were doing things, or a hair too slow, I would notice it right away. It was hard, because a lot of drummers aren't really that consistent. I've done things with Harvey Mason, and he's real good. Then when Ricky Lawson came in the band, he was really good. I've played with some really good drummers, and it was easy for me to learn because they were all so good. I mean, they don't have to play a whole lot of stuff, not unless they're that "bad," and that's fine. But there are a lot of drummers who think the more they play the better they are. Trying to be like Billy or somebody like that. Instead of laying that thing, they'll play and then lose the time, and play a whole bunch of rolls and a lot of fills in between things, where nothing really ever gets settled. And dynamics are important, when a drummer knows when to break things down and build things back up, go to a ride or stay on the hi-hat, whatever. That's real important.

RT: In your current band, do you work out drum fills with the drummer?

SE: No, I let everybody play what they want to play, and if it's not happening, then I'll say something. But the drummer I

continued on next page

have now, we work real good together, and what's good is that he can play timbales too, so we trade off". When I play drums, he plays timbales. And the singer plays congas, and I'm trying to get everybody to play everything, trying to make the band very versatile. I really don't work out parts. Right now we're going to start working on a drum thing in the middle of the show, which we haven't worked out yet. It'll be something like what I used to do with my father. We'll just break up some rhythm parts, and some people have to do certain things, and we'll sing the chants or whatever. That will have to be worked out, but as far as fills and stuff, I don't like working all that out. I don't like it when somebody says, "Play this fill." That drives me crazy, so I don't want to do it to somebody else. Not unless it's necessary. I'll tell them a certain feeling that they should play, or that they shouldn't play a fill so jazzy, or too commercial. It depends on what's happening.

RT: So it's more a matter of listening to each other.

SE: Yeah, listening and knowing what each other wants to hear, or what they think would work.

RT: Is there a lot of pressure on you as a bandleader at twenty-four?

SE: I'm being pressured just being a bandleader period. This is the first time I've ever done it. In my father's and my band, he always took on all the responsibility of all the problems, calling people, and this and that. I'd just collect the money and play—that was it. He'd always say, "You got it easy. Wait till you get your own band." Yeah pops, you're right. It's crazy. It's hard for me to do this. I try to be real fair and understanding with everybody in the band, and while I'm doing that there's also

business being involved. I get really emotionally involved with this. I mean, this band is all I'm working for right now. I started it when I came home from the tour with Spyro Gyra. I had decided in Japan that I was going to get a band together. So I came home and decided to do a demo. And certain people said, "Well, I know somebody," and that was how I got this whole band. As far as hand-picking, I didn't go through all that mess about auditioning a bunch of people. And the guitar player and one of the keyboard players, it was like as soon as I saw them, just looking at them I knew—the same with the drummer. I said, "You don't even have to audition. If you want the gig you can have it." It was just something about them. And then before I heard them, I thought, "Am I doing the right thing, saying this before they even play?" But I was right. Sometimes I get that feeling. It's really hard to be a bandleader and have demands and stuff. I don't know how to tell people they're doing things wrong. I'm always the one to take the backseat, and for me to be like that and sometimes put my foot down is really hard.

RT: It's not your nature.

SE: Not at all. But it's working out pretty good. Everybody is understanding, and we're trying to make it a family first, before musicians, so that it does work out. Because if we get a contract we're all going to be married to each other as long as we can stand each other. It's really hard, and I want them to understand it. And because they're all really young, and a lot of them haven't had the experience of being on the road or of being in the studio, I'm trying to show them that it's not really as easy as they think it is. I'm really glad that everybody is so dedicated. That's why I got young musicians who haven't had that experience, because I said I was going to get musicians who haven't had that chance, and give them the chance. I'm hoping that

they're going to make it more than I do. Because I've been there, not even at the top. I've only gone so far, but just to be there was an experience, and I think they deserve it. They're all really young and talented, so I really want to see them make it, and see what it's really like. I could have gotten a bunch of musicians who play around here all the time, and always get the gigs—you know, certain musicians are always in that clique. But I said if it's going to take me a year to do it, I'll do it. And it's taken me a year. I had to turn down gigs just so I could rehearse with the band, even though I needed the money. Struggling like everybody else. But I would rather work with my band. That's just what I did, and it paid off.

RT: Are you actually in on the writing in your band?

SE: Oh yeah, the writing and arranging. Everybody is basically writing, and they're trying to push me, because I don't like to take the credit for a lot of things. And they're trying to get me to get out there and sing, which I don't like, but I guess I'll have to do it. I have to try to like my voice. It's going to work out; I just have to be confident.

RT: Is your band more of a funk band than a Latin band?

SE: Yeah, it's commercial-type stuff like Shalimar, The Whispers, Earth, Wind, & Fire—the kind of stuff that would be played on the radio and sell a lot of records.

RT: How do you approach the funk differently than you would a Latin setting?

SE: It's completely different. The feeling, for one thing, is completely different. The Latin thing—you have to feel that. There are a lot of people who are taught to play the Latin or Salsa stuff, but they play it real stiff. You have to know where to play the time. And the funk stuff is a lot different. You have to lay it in the pocket, and you can't overplay. You have to play the right amount of stuff, and it can't be too simple or else it'll be boring. So it's really hard. You have to make it commercial enough to understand it. You don't want it to be too commercial that you don't even like what you're doing, but you want to sell records to make money. So it's hard. That's why I'm saying it took me this long, because I didn't know what direction I wanted to go in. I like the Salsa stuff, the Latin stuff, I like jazz, funk, fusion, everything. I like to play everything so much that it's hard to pick one thing that I have to do in order to

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make it. I tried the Latin stuff with my father, we tried the fusion with Azteca, you know, so I'm going to try this. If this don't work I guess I'll get married and have kids, [laughs]

RT: Are more and more women getting into percussion?

SE: I don't know. When I first started playing, I only knew two or three girl percussionists. One was Carol Steel, she was from around here. Then there's Bobbye Hall, and somebody else, and that was it. And all of a sudden I had about ten or twelve students, and I started teaching a lot of women how to play. And it was taking too much of my time, even though I wanted to do it, because I started getting called for a lot of gigs. I heard of a lot of women wanting to learn. I had to turn down so many women. They got mesmerized—"God, a woman is playing percussion, and she doesn't have to look masculine," so I taught a lot of women. And there's a lot of women who have been successful in Bay Area bands that are playing right now. But I don't know if it's a trend or not. I think that women aren't afraid to play men's instruments and still be feminine. It's really hard because there's always talk about this and that because she's playing a man's instrument. It's hard. But there are a lot of women now playing the bass guitar, saxophone, trombone . . . so that's good. I'm glad. Because there are a lot of women who can play them just as good as a man could.

Drum Market *continued from page 107*

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Q. Your drums sound fantastic in concert. What head combinations and/or miking system do you use to obtain that sound?

Robert J. Leonardo
New Bedford, MA

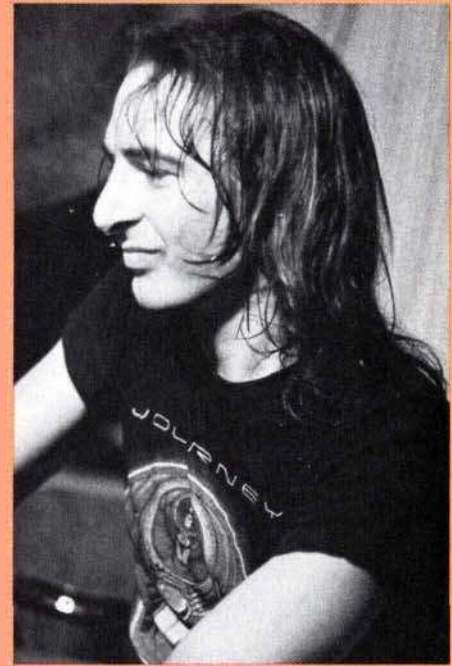
A. *It's really so much more than the heads and mic's. It's the fact that Kevin Elson does the sound; it's tuning and the way I hit the drums. I use Remo clear Ambassadors on the tops and bottoms of all my drums except the snare. On that I use a rough coat white Ambassador on top, and a Remo Diplomat snare head on the bottom.*

For the hi-hats, tom-toms, cymbals and snare I use Beyer 201s. Eight of them. For the bass drums there are two AKG B12s and there are two Shure SM-57s as overheads. Kevin doesn't use any condenser mic's on the drums because they tend to give it a harsh sound and they don't stand up on the road after a lot of use and abuse. Kevin is so much a part of the

sound. He really features the drums in the mix. He doesn't process them through any kind of special effects other than a few times during the night for specific special effects. A lot of guys put drums through digital delays to widen them out. But, Kevin can get that sound from my drums live just by miking them and putting them through the P.A.

The other part is tuning and playing. I tune the drums fairly tight with the bottom heads tighter than the top heads. I don't use any muffling or tape on them. They ring wide open. I find that if I tune the drums real deep onstage, by the time they get through the P.A. and out to the people, they're so low in pitch that they're undistinguishable. I tend to tune the snare drums and the tom-toms higher so they still have a lot of clarity and attack when they get out to the large hall. I hit them right in the center without hitting rim shots so I get the full-sounding resonance of the drum. I don't hit rim shots on my snare drum.

STEVE SMITH



Q. In the early years, when Rush played back-up to headliners, how were you able to play your best when the warm-up act is usually expected to go on "cold"? How did you warm-up with no time or room to do it onstage?

A. *This is an excellent question, and a problem which was difficult for me and many other drummers that I know. Another problem for the drummer in being in the "opening" situation is that you usually only get to play for a half-hour or forty-five minutes a night, which is not enough to keep you in good shape. I used to be plagued with cramps and stamina problems much worse than I experience now playing for two hours straight.*

I used to have my kit set up off-stage, and do a bit of practicing and warming-up while the headlining band was doing their soundcheck. It would have to be fairly quiet so as not to disturb them, but it was better than nothing, and actually was ideal for working on my long-neglected rudiments. It's also nice to work with a band who tries to let you have a sound-check when possible. On a three-act show this can be difficult. Perhaps a practice kit in the dressing room, or a regimen of exercise would be helpful to you.

NEIL PEART



Photo by Karen Larcombe

Q: The parts you play in all of Rush's material are incredibly precise and tastefully played. Do you write out the parts in chart form? How do you remember the intricate rhythms, fills, etc.? Also, on "YYZ" you use a very strange cymbal with a thin, trashy sound and quick decay. What is it?

Lee Rothstein
Easton MA.

A: *Thanks for the always-appreciated kind words. No, I don't use charts to remember my parts; I put together a sequence of patterns that's comfortable and interesting, and I memorize it. There is some kind of wordless language that drummers have to trigger and retain patterns like this, that makes it possible to set off a sequence of rhythmic progressions without really thinking about it. I'm sure it's similar to the routine of a gymnast, a dancer, or an actor. The cymbal that you describe is a Chinese cymbal I originally acquired from Frank's Drum Shop in Chicago. I've since had a great deal of difficulty replacing it (it's cracked!). Being made by hand in China, these cymbals are subject to much variation in quality and sound and consequently can be very hard to duplicate exactly.*



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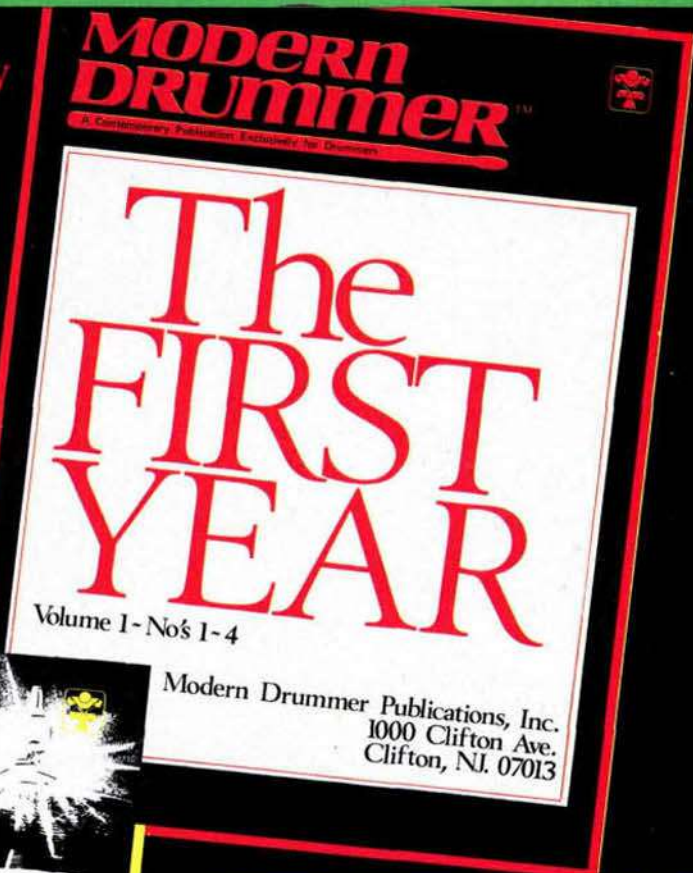
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In Nashville, **Bobby Daniels**, Kenny Rogers' drummer, will most likely be taking most of this month off, from Roger's projects that is. When he's not on the road or recording with Rogers, he keeps busy with a production company called Stones River Productions, that he heads with two other Rogers' co-members. Currently they are producing black contemporary gospel artists and the company is also an umbrella for two publishing companies. Also, Rogers' seven-piece back-up band, Bloodline, is finally working on their own group project. "We've been a band all along, half-heartedly, but everything was too comfortable, too complacent with Kenny Rogers' success. Now we're trying to prepare for three or four years down the line and we've made the commitment to stay together as an entity when Kenny finally says, I don't want to work any more." He says outside projects also help keep the adrenalin pumping. "I think you have to involve yourself in other types of music as well so that when you come back to the same situ-

ation, it does hold some freshness." Having been with Rogers for the past seven years, he said it was a major adjustment learning to play country music. "I had reservations after the first two months. I came in with that Buddy Rich school of thought that if you play R&B, jazz or whatever, country is a breeze. I realize that was wrong. There is an art form there and it took a lot of pains for me to get immersed into country music. I owe an awful lot to [producer] Larry Butler for saying, 'This is what country is all about.' Anytime something is new to you and you aren't real sure of it, it can be a little frightening. I couldn't understand why I couldn't comprehend all at once, but Larry gave me an understanding so I could not only make a living and get by on stage, but so I could really appreciate it. He could have continued to use the regular session musicians, but when Kenny said, 'No, let's use my guy,' Larry just had a way of saying, 'I'm not going to tell you what to play, but I'm going to tell you what I'm trying to do. The lyric is saying this, so musically, I want this

to happen.' Through that kind of communication, there was an understanding. Plus, he had a lot of faith in us. Even when there were two drummers in the studio and I said, 'Larry, I think he ought to do this one,' he said, 'No, you've got it. Let's do it.' That trust in me made me do everything in my power to get it, so I learned quickly. And Kenny's feeling was that the reason we were there was that we could do anything. There was never any pressure."

Daniels also is Bloodline's leader, although he modestly refers to it as "coordinator." He handles all the band matters including travel arrangements, paying the bills, designing and buying the uniforms and is a liaison between the management and the band. He takes the job home with him and says, "I'm always thinking of seven people at once as opposed to just myself, when I make a decision. I also think I know what Kenny is going to say five minutes before he says it. I'm so attuned to what that man wants that I hired two guitar players before Kenny even mentioned it."

In Muscle Shoals these days, **Roger Hawkins** is in the process of producing a Huntsville, Alabama singer by the name of Kathy McDonald. Local Milton Sledge is playing drums. With the way the economy has been, however, few record companies are dishing out the kind of money it takes to send their projects to Muscle Shoals these days. Lately, the farthest away they have been coming is from Nashville (which is actually fairly close), but the Oakridge Boys recorded their upcoming release in Muscle Shoals with Hawkins on drums. "I feel like the slump is going to end within the next five months or so," he said optimistically. "It won't end and bounce right back, and I think there are going to be some ups and downs in the economy, but I think progressively over maybe a five-year period, it will get back to what it was."

He stills maintains that musicians should keep a positive attitude. "Persistence is the key. You've got to love what you're doing. If you don't love it, it's really easy to get discouraged when things don't pan out for you when you think they should. I think there would be some room for musicians here who were serious about learning how to do sessions or musicians who already have some experience. For those who feel L.A. or New York is too big for them, I think Muscle Shoals is the perfect place."

Currently, he is hoping to find a band with whom he can play live around town.

And in Southern California, **Brent Brace** is setting a live-playing precedent, bringing jazz/rock fusion to some of the large restaurant chains in addition to playing the jazz clubs. With *Into the Reeds* (Jazzworks label), an album by him and partner saxophonist Steve Carr, doing well, Brace and Carr are working on their second album to be released on a larger label. "It's unusual to be able to make a living at playing jazz, but really, the most money I've made playing has been from playing jazz. It's in spurts, but when I was with Don Ellis, we made some very good money. Right now I'm making my living playing fusion music, and occasionally in the studio, and pop music for different contractors. In this business, though, the key to making a living playing your instrument is to be able to play everything very well."

Brent, himself, has played for everyone from Phyllis Diller to Art Pepper to Bill Medley to currently recording with the rock group, The Toys. Primarily a soloist, he says, "I'm featured with solos and it doesn't matter what kind of music it is. You must play the music first, tastefully, with good time, and be able to read. Playing the concept of the music, whatever the music may be, is the main thing. When your solo comes, you must relate to the music as well. It should be exciting and the kind of solo which is not just a technically good solo, but a tastefully good solo so it's not only challenging for you to play, but challenging and fun for the listener to hear and see."

While the month of December is generally quiet as far as releases, touring and recording, Peter Allen's album released last month has **Vinnie Colaiuta** on drums. Hubert Laws producing Houston based saxophone player Kirk Whalum with group member **Steve Summer** on drums, due out early next year on Arista. **Darrell Sweet** is on the road with Nazareth. **Michael Shrieve** is on the road with Novo Combo. **Rick Marotta** can be heard on Marty Balin's upcoming album. **Craig Krampf** can be heard on *Silver Condor*, Billy Burnette's next record, and a project he co-produced for Elektra, *Pam Tillis*, all to be released early next year. **Terry Bozio** ending tour with Dec. 18 performance in Hawaii and is beginning to record new album. **Tris Imboden** finishing last legs of Kenny Loggins tour. **Kenney Jones** finishing last leg of Who's farewell tour. **Don Baldwin**, formerly on the Tom Johnston Band has replaced the exiting **Aynsley Dunbar** in the Jefferson Starship. **John Panozzo's** next Styx album due out early '83. MCA's Christmas releases (released just prior to Dec.) include a solo album by Crusader's drummer **Stix Hooper** and an album by percussionist **Bill Summers**. Drummer **Larry Tolfree** and percussionist **Sue Hadjopoulos** winding up lengthy tour with Joe Jackson. **Bruce Gary**, just ending tour with ex-Door's guitarist Robbie Krieger, also did an instrumental album with Krieger called *Versions*, on Passport records. Gary and **Jim Keltner** appear on Bette Midler's new album.

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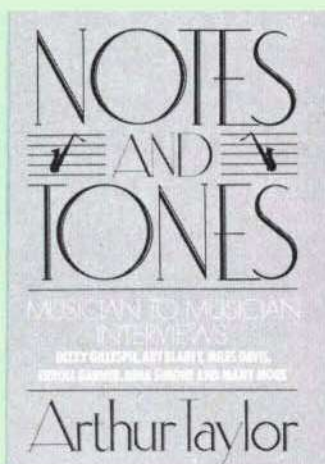
Photo by Charles Bernstein

George Marsh announced the release of his first album as a leader, entitled *Marshland*. The record features George on drumset and Mel Graves on acoustic and electric basses. Percussionist Jose Najera appears on two of the selections. Most of the music was composed by Graves and Marsh with the exception of a few standards like "Bags Groove" (featuring George on thumb piano.)

Shelly Manne said, "George Marsh has the kind of imagination and musicianship that has always excited me." David Garibaldi said, "*Marshland* is amazingly complete for just two musicians. I believe this is a testimony to the depth of George's musical abilities."

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JACK DEJOHNETTE TAPE SERIES



Photo by John W. Wright

Jack DeJohnette has announced a series of instructional cassette tapes called *Concepts*. These tapes are designed to bridge the gap between what's available for the beginning student and what's necessary for the advanced student and professional musician.

The first tapes will be offerings by guitarist John Abercrombie, bassist Dave Holland and Jack DeJohnette. Future projects include series by some of the most influential and effective instrumentalists

and improvisors.

Some of the tapes emphasize instrumental technique and others focus on philosophy or an individual approach. All are designed to transcend the individual instruments and relate to musical development as a whole. These tapes and other artist-initiated productions are part of Multi-Directional Music Concepts, Inc.

For information contact: Marianne Collins, MDM, Inc., Box 95, Willow, N.Y. 12495.

continued on next page

The May EA.

It gets into the sound and out of your way.



Inside the drum.
That's where the sound happens. That's where the May EA miking system fits.

The first real breakthrough in drum amplification, the May EA system can be mounted easily inside any drum, quickly plugs into live or studio boards. Once installed, it mikes the internal acoustics of each drum individually, amplifying only the drum in which it is mounted, to eliminate microphone leakage and phase cancellation. What you hear is what you feel—pure, unadulterated drum. Nothing synthetic about it.

Capable of being rotated 180°, the unit allows each drum to be individually equalized to balance tone and volume, to let you isolate a wide range of internal frequencies. You get more sound per drum. You get total control.

And the May EA stays out of your way. It eliminates mike and boom stands and frees up the batter head of your drum—frees up your playing. It cuts way back on set-up and break-down time, too. You just plug in and play.

The system that turns on your drum.

- The specially designed shock mount eliminates mechanical vibration.
- The external turning knob allows the system to be rotated a full 180° for proximity effect.
- The 3 pin cannon plug connects the unit through a shielded cable to balance the line out for compatibility with live or studio boards.

Look for the May EA at your local drum dealer or contact: May EA, 8312 Seaport Drive, Huntington Beach, California 92646, Phone (714) 536-2505.

May EA

Listen for the May EA when played by these leading artists: Chad Wackerman with Frank Zappa/Danny Seraphine with Chicago/Carmine Appice with Ted Nugent/Joe Lizima with Johnny Mathis.

The microphone element (a modified SM-57) is manufactured exclusively by SHURE BROTHERS, INC. for May EA. May EA is also available through Slingerland Drum Company on all catalog drums.

May EA is protected under U.S. Patent #4,168,646. Other U.S. and Foreign patents pending.



ZIGMUND AND DENNARD JOIN DRUMMERS COLLECTIVE

Drummers Collective in New York City announces the return of Kenwood Dennard to its teaching staff. Kenwood had taken a leave of absence to tour with Manhattan Transfer. Also added to the staff is Eliot Zigmund. Eliot has performed and recorded with Bill Evans, Red Mitchell and Eddie Gomez to name a few.

For further info call: (212) 840-0433, Rob Wallis or Paul Siegel—Directors.

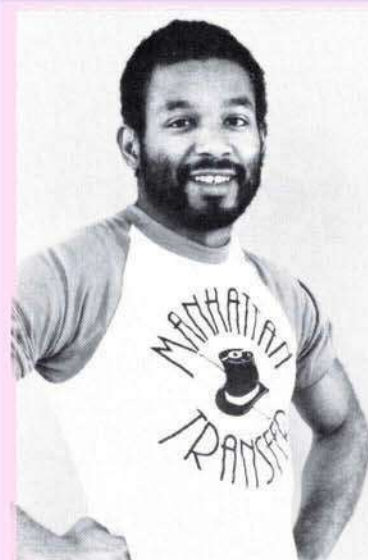


Photo by Laura Friedman

CARABELLO IN NEW YORK

The MD office had a call recently from original Santana percussionist Mike Carabello. Mike moved to New York City, where he is studying at Juilliard and is putting together a new group with assistance from Roland Vazquez. Although Mike is primarily known as a percus-

sionist, he's also a vocalist, keyboardist, composer and arranger and he's performed and recorded with The Rolling Stones, Stevie Wonder, Miles Davis, Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, Tower of Power and Boz Scaggs, to name a few art-

ists. He's appeared on ten gold albums, nine platinum albums and one gold single. One of his most recent recordings was *Tattoo You* by The Rolling Stones on which he played percussion. Mike will also be writing some articles in future issues of MD.

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- Full Drum and Percussion Teaching Staff
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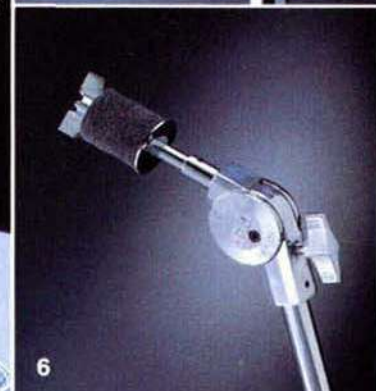
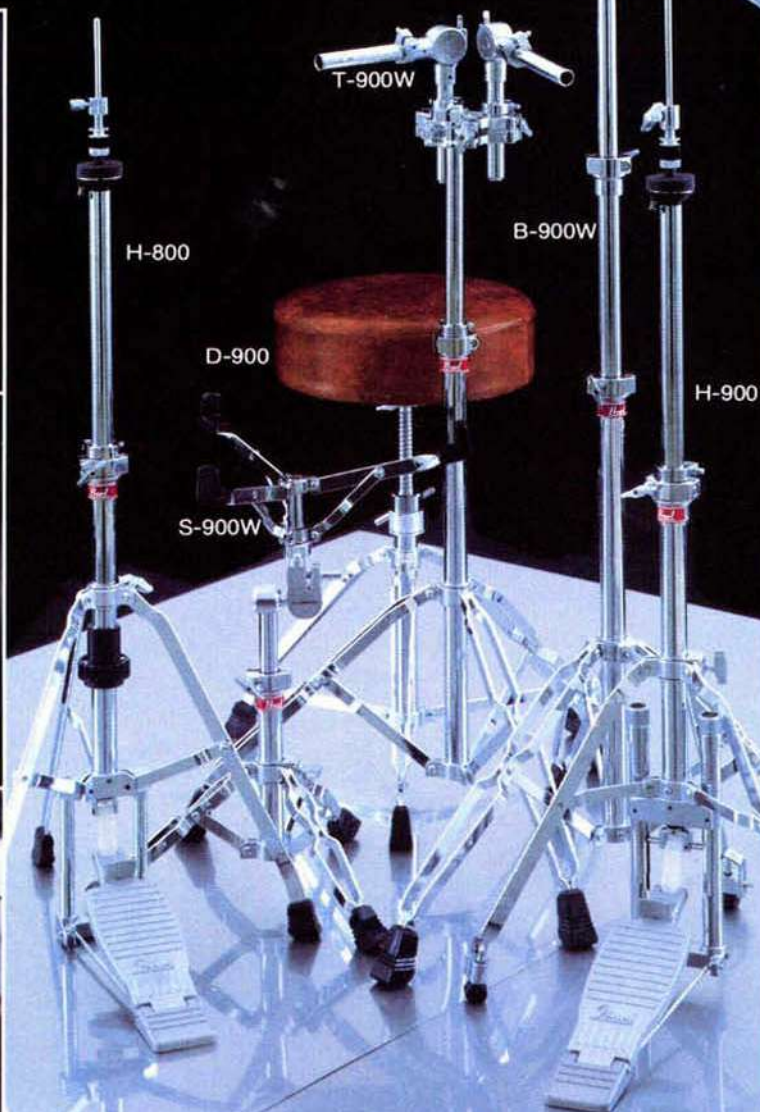
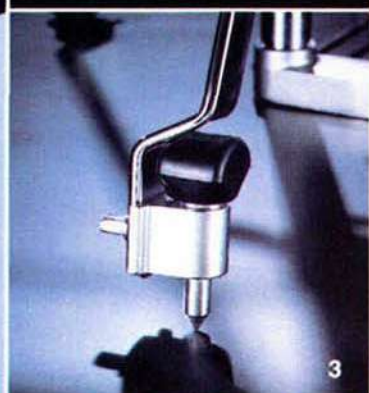
Joe Hibbs, a 15-year veteran of the retail music sales industry, has been names sales manager for the United States and Canada, according to Herb Brochstein, president of Pro-Mark Corporation.

Hibbs will work closely with distributors and directly with retailers, and is also responsible for developing Pro-Mark's Canadian retail market. Herb Brochstein added, "Joe is a most valuable addition to our organization. His experience as a professional drummer, coupled with his sales and management expertise, will help us give customers around the world the very best we can offer."

If you're looking for the strongest, most innovative hardware made, you can stop looking.

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A product of Pearl International, Inc., 408 Harding Industrial Drive, Nashville, Tennessee 37211

In Canada contact Pearl Music Division, 161 Alden Road, Markham, Ontario, Canada L3R 3W7

JUST DRUMS

UNIVERSAL PORTABLE STAGE



For drummers who want to be seen as well as heard, *Porta Stage* is now offering plans for a raised drum platform that can be constructed inexpensively with simple household tools. The stage can be used without modification in any type set, from rock to lounge to concert performances. It requires no more floor space than a standard drum setup.

Easy to follow, do-it-yourself plans provide full details, permitting simplified construction of stages in sizes up to

10' wide by 10' deep, one or two feet high. A special "memory" feature permits quick, identical setup each time the stage is moved to a new location. The unit can be assembled and dismantled by one person. Portability is assured since the *Porta Stage* will fold to 25-percent of the assembled size and will fit in most automobile trunks.

Plans are available for \$5.95, plus \$1.00 postage, from *Porta Stage*, 1772565th Avenue, Tinley Park, Illinois, 60477.

THE KIT



MXR is proud to announce its appointment as sole U.S. distributor of *The Kit*, England's electronic percussion device. Essentially a four-piece drumset in a four pound electronic package, *The Kit* is the most usable electronic drum device for live as well as recording applications.

All sounds are played by the user with bass drum, snare drum, hi tom-tom and low tom-tom being triggered from touch-sensitive pads. The cymbals are operated from smaller pads—three are provided for open hi-hat, closed hi-hat and variable crash/ride cymbal sound.

Each sound has its own level control so that the overall mix of the drum kit can be adjusted to suit your individual requirements. Individual outputs are also provided for recording and other creative applications.

A rhythm unit with variable tempo and time signature modes is incorporated in the unit and can be set to automatically trigger the hi-hats.

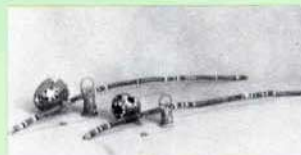
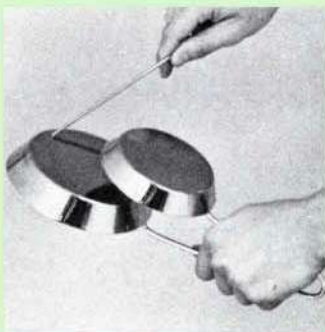
The Kit is powered with a nine-volt battery, or you may use the optional MXR Model #176 AC Adapter.

For further information contact; MXR Innovations, Inc. 740 Driving Park Avenue, Rochester, New York 14613.

WORLD PERCUSSION FRIJIDEIRA

The frijideira is a small frying-pan-shaped instrument with a chrome finish and accompanying metal beater. The frijideira is common in all styles of Brazilian music. It comes as a double-pan or single-pan model. The double pan has flexible handles, allowing for three separate tones. The metal beater strikes each pan for a high/low agogo sound, and the pans can be clasped together for a third sound.

For more information: Send \$1.00 for a catalog to World Percussion, PO Box 502, Capitola, CA 95010.



WORLD PERCUSSION BERIMBAU

This instrument has become the foundation of the Brazilian martial art Capoeira, with applications in all types of Brazilian folklore and samba music. The berimbau consists of the hardwood bow strung with a metal string, the resonance chamber, a hollowed open-ended gourd called the cabasa, the playing coin, a woven shaker called the caxixi, and a bamboo beater.



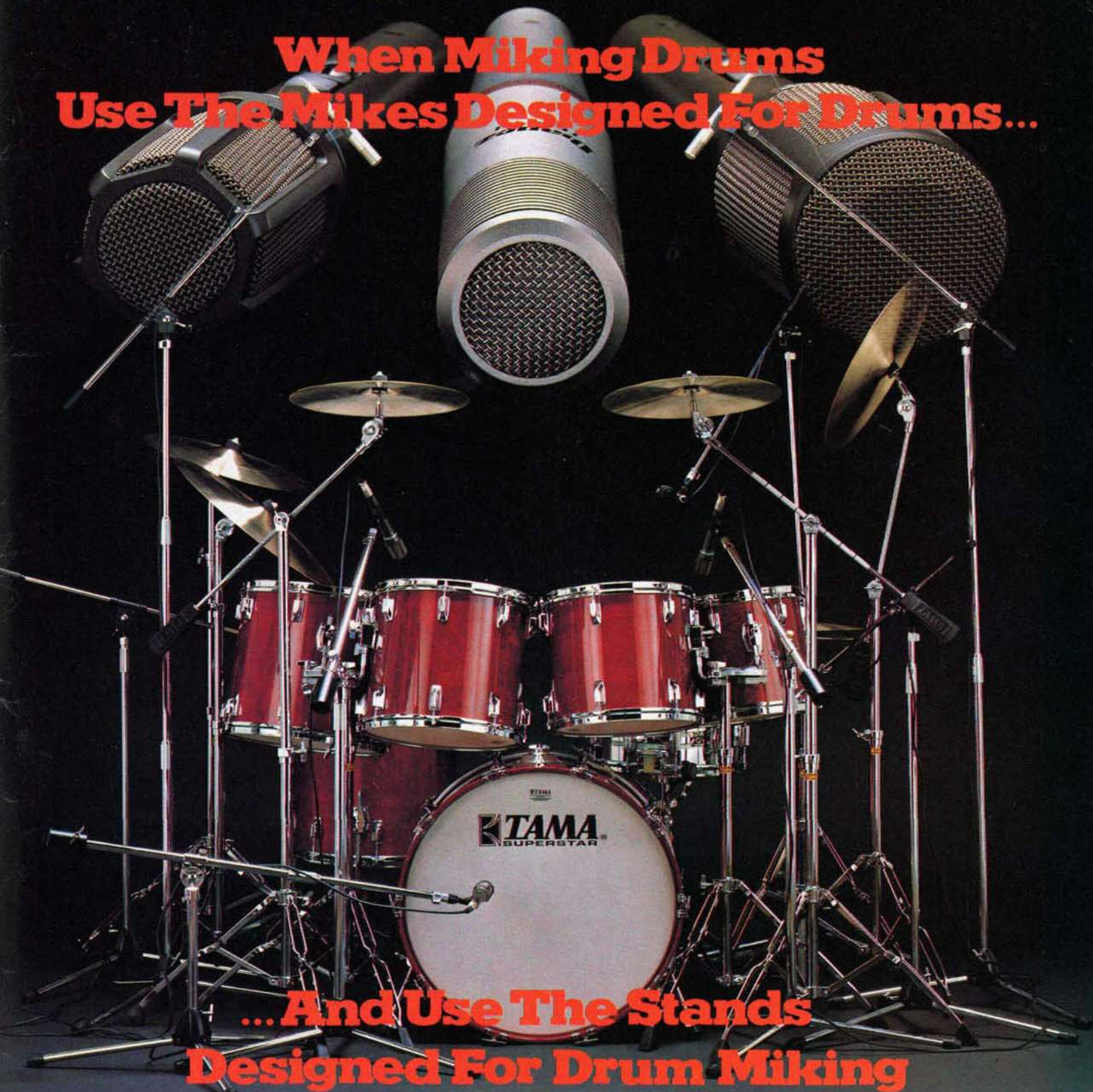
CHINESE TEMPLE BLOCKS FROM LP

Hand-carved camphor wood in the ancient tradition, these temple blocks are works of art, both in a visual as well as musical sense.

Available in three sizes, their uniqueness makes them not only suitable for traditional applications but offers new possibilities in the percussive fabric of today's music.

continued on next page
DECEMBER

When Miking Drums Use The Mikes Designed For Drums...



...And Use The Stands Designed For Drum Miking

Drums are unlike any other instrument. They create their own special problems for the soundman. That's where Ibanez Tech Π Mikes come in. The Ibanez IM70, IM76 and IM80 were designed specifically for drums and percussion. The IM70 has superior transient response, so the sharp attack of your snare and Tom won't be lost. The IM76 gives extra drive to low frequencies, so the floor toms and bass will punch through, and the IM80 condenser handles cymbals, gongs and



other high frequency percussion like the champ it is. Mike it right with Ibanez.

Most mike stands weren't designed for miking drums. Extended boom positions and heavy mikes don't mix with traditional designs, so Tama incorporated its best drum hardware ideas into the most stable mike stands you can use—Tama Strong arm Stands. See them both at your dealer today.





OM ROTO CHIME

Om Percussion, Inc. introduces the *Roto-Chime*—a rotating chime that creates a vibrato effect when struck with a drumstick or a triangle beater. Each *Roto-Chime* comes with swivel and universal cymbal stand clamp. *Roto-Chimes* come in three sizes: 10" (with a dark, triangle-like tone), a 24" (with a deeper, richer sound), and the 36" heavy model (capable of producing an extremely loud, bell-like flanging effect).

Write to: Om Percussion, Inc., 627-E Pinellas St., Clearwater, FL 33516.

CYMBALS AND PERCUSSION, LTD.

Cymbals and Percussion (UK) Ltd., Britain's top percussion specialists, now have available for the U.S. market some of their best selling European percussion products.

Among these are a range of drum sticks in both rock maple and hickory, with a brand name of *Pro Tip*, and their *Tri Sti* sticks which come in a 3-stick pack. There is a signature series with models from Phil Collins, Simon Phillips, Dave Matlocks, John Coghlan, Phil Rudd and many others.

C and P manufacture their

own range of drumheads in both smooth white and transparent finishes and have gauges available for both marching and orchestral markets.

Cymbals and Percussion (UK) Ltd. are also the UK distributors for many leading world brands in the percussion market including Sabian cymbals, Tosco Cymbals, Remo and Evans drumheads, Vic Firth Sticks, LP Percussion, Regal Tip, Pro-Mark and Goodtime sticks.

For more information: Sabian Ltd., Meductic, New Brunswick, EOH 1LO, Canada.

ROGERS INTRODUCES THREE NEW DRUM LINES

Rogers Drums is introducing three new drum lines, all priced under \$1,000, to appeal to beginning and intermediate-experienced drummers.

David Gordon, Rogers' marketing director, said, "We're making intermediate and professional quality sets available at prices formerly reserved for beginner's equipment."

The *R-340* is a pre-tuned line. It includes drum outfits, bongos, tambourines, educational hand drums, snare drum kits and a line of pre-tuned drum heads. These new products incorporate a technology in which the heads are mounted and tensioned under controlled

conditions to achieve the desired drum sound. The drumsets—aimed primarily at beginning drummers—include bass pedal, hi-hat, snare stand and cymbal stand. The drums are available in white finish and are offered in three-, four- and five-piece sets.

Bongos and tambourines are available with replaceable or nonreplaceable heads. All drums are made with *Acoustic-con* shells.

The *R-360* outfit is a standard size five-piece set available in black or white finish, with a 9-ply mahogany construction. The *R-380* outfit is a five-piece set with 9-ply mahogany shells and heavy-duty hardware.



TAMA STRONGMAN STANDS



The *Strongman* mic' stands include the all purpose MS/55, a two-section upright/two-section boom, the MS355, a two-section upright/two-section boom for all overhead applications, and the MS455, a one-section upright/two-section boom for those difficult floor positions.

Strongman stands feature a new boom tilter derived from the Tama *Titan* snare stand. The boom tilter operates on the brake drum principle with a specially designed friction material that totally eliminates boom sag during a performance.

Other features include metal height-adjusting grips and heavy metal boom counter weights. Tama *Strongman* mic' stands are available exclusively from Hoshino U.S.A. Inc., P.O. Box 886, 1716 Winchester Rd., Bensalem, Pa., 19020, in the East and Chesbro Co., 327 Broadway, Idaho Falls, Id., 83401, in the West.

JANUARY'S MD



PETER ERSKINE



CHESTER THOMPSON

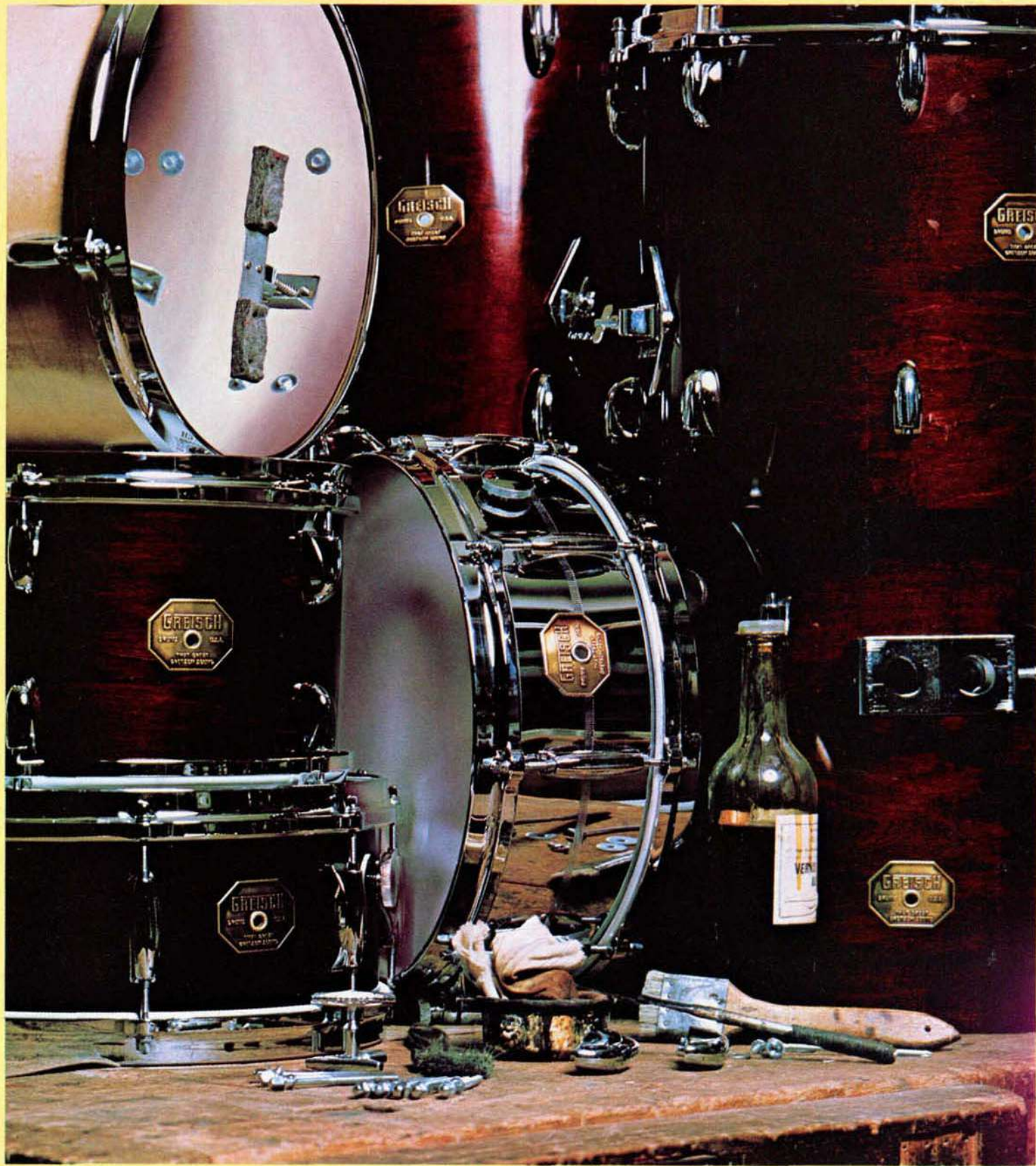


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BUDDY RICH IN A CLASS ALL HIS OWN.

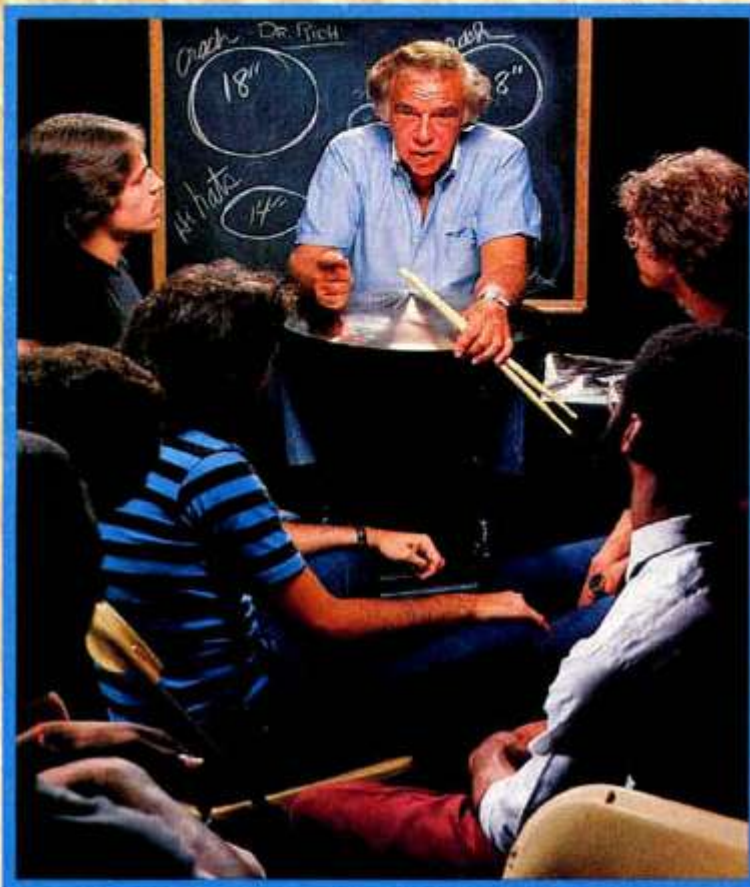
Buddy has been described as a "Blindingly gifted performer - his talent begins where other drummers' ends." No, Buddy didn't say that - he would have, but he didn't. Recently we sat in with Buddy and a group of students during a classroom session in New York. Here's what Buddy did have to say:

On The Drummer's Role.

"When I get on the bandstand, I have to play for my band. Listen, if I don't play good for them, they can't play good for me. So all I am, for the first hour and twenty minutes that I'm up there is the drummer in the band. When I play my solo, that's different, but up until that time, I have to approximate my band's sound. And that's what a drummer is for. The drummer is a timekeeper."

On Practicing. "Practice as long as you feel you want to practice. As long as it's a kick. If it's only 15 minutes and you feel like you don't want to play anymore, put the sticks down and go out. Play stickball, go out and do whatever you want. But then go back when you feel the urge to play, and really play! Remember, there's no substitute for practice."

On Technique. "What you do with one hand you should be able to do with the other. It will help you to get around



Buddy's no stranger to higher education; he was recently awarded an honorary doctorate from Boston's prestigious Berklee College of Music.

the set better and make you more versatile as a drummer."

On The Crash Cymbal.

"It's got to be fast. When the brass plays a figure, the crash has to accompany it. It isn't something that you hit after the brass; it has to be right there. It can't be obtrusive, and it can't be more cymbal than brass. The cymbal has to sound like the brass sounds, so that's why I use a higher pitched 18" Medium Thin Crash on the right side and a lower pitched 18" Thin Crash on the left."

On Zildjians.

"Why do I play Zildjian cymbals? Because they're the only cymbals that are playable. You just have to listen to them to know what I mean. I started playing

Zildjian cymbals when I was ten years old - I've never used another cymbal in my entire life."

If you're a serious drummer, chances are overwhelming that you, like Buddy, are already playing Zildjians. Zildjian: a line of cymbals played by drummers on six continents - a line of cymbal makers that spans three centuries.



For your copy of the full color Zildjian Cymbals and Accessories Catalog and Cymbal Set-Up Book of famous drummers see your Zildjian dealer or send \$4.00 to Zildjian, Dept. 12. **Avedis Zildjian Company**, Cymbal Makers Since 1623. Longwater Drive, Norwell, Mass. 02061, USA

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