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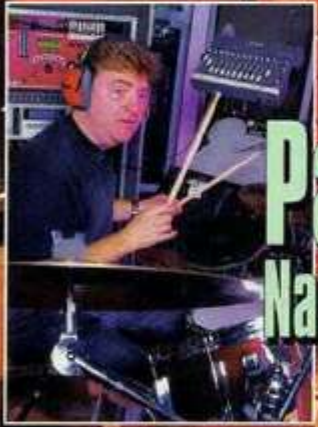
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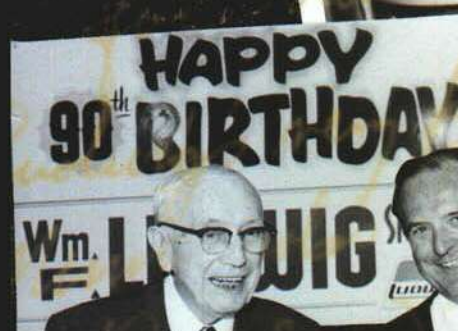
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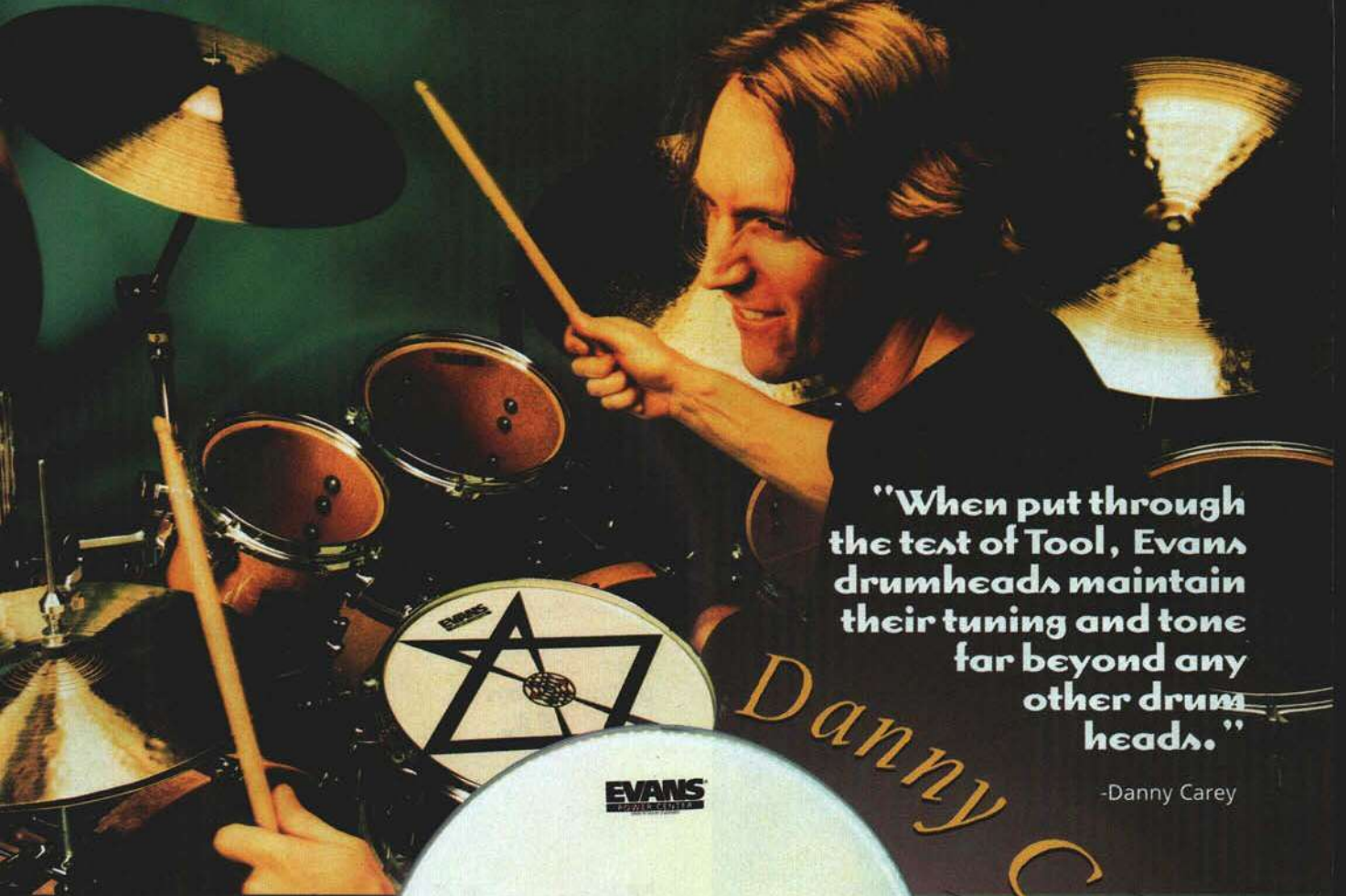
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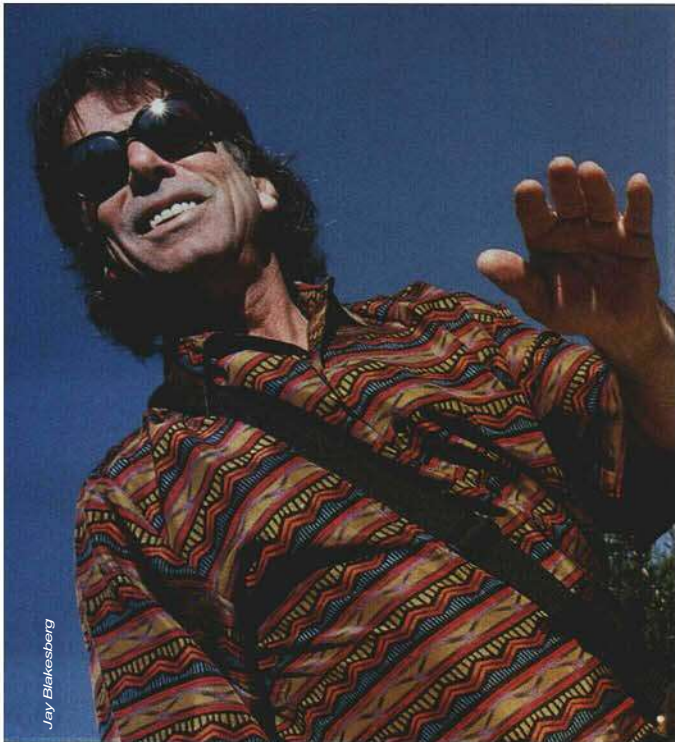


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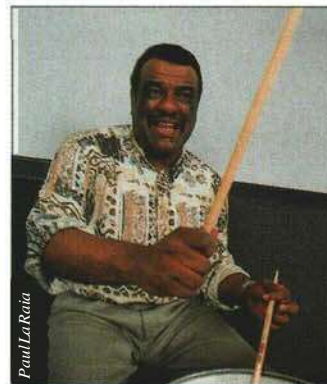
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Playing Outside Your Level

Many years ago, when I was fresh out of high school, I fell into an audition with a jazz band of recent Berklee graduates. I can only surmise that some weird drummer plague had decimated my competition, since, against all sense and reason, they hired me. Eight months later they replaced me with someone much better. As painful as it was to lose that gig, in retrospect, those eight months honed my playing better than a "good fit" ever could have.

Many of us limit our playing experience to situations that seem to suit our own musical proficiency, fencing ourselves off from a range of gigs with caution on the high end, and pride on the low. Because each of us plays on only one level at any given time, and gigs at *any* level are scarce, this rationale often compels us to retreat to our private, insular woodshed, secure in the knowledge that we are "right where we belong."

What terrible fate could befall you if you try out for a much higher-level band? You might never get past the audition. But even from that experience you'll at least get an idea of what skills you need to work on. Or, like me, you might get the gig, then ultimately crash & burn. But prior to that fiery impact you will learn things you'd never encounter in a comfier setting, so that when the *next* higher-level gig comes down the pike, you'll approach it from

the on-ramp, not the breakdown lane. Or you could just rise mightily to the occasion. Move over Kenny Aronoff.

What about playing "below" your level? While you improve most by playing with musicians who are better than you, even playing with "lesser" players will help you develop in ways untouched by playing alone. If the music is in a style you're not drawn to, chances are it will present rhythms you haven't worked on, but which might later be applied to material that *does* appeal to you. Also, if it is technically simple, you will (or should) be led to focus on the more basic elements of your playing, such as time-keeping and groove, which tend to be neglected in chops-oriented bands and your practice room. Humble thyself also for any opportunity to play in front of an audience, which heightens concentration and refines playing much more efficiently than practicing.

No gig is a life sentence, and none is irreplaceable. So take some chances, knowing that change is inevitable, and change is good. *Modern Drummer* is full of stories about great drummers who, during their formative years, played in every situation they could find, ignoring the "level" they were on, and focusing instead on the personal level of musicianship they hoped one day to achieve.

Rich

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MATT CHAMBERLAIN

I just got your January 1999 issue with Matt Chamberlain on the cover. I loved the interview. As a fan of popular and alternative music, I constantly see Matt's name popping up. It was great to read about such a backbone of today's music.



Andrew Friedman
 via Internet



THE GREAT ORGAN DRUMMERS

I am writing in regards to Mark Griffith's article "The Great Organ Drummers." I am pleased to see some mention of Chris Columbus, as well as the others. Truth be told, as president of the Atlantic City Musicians Union, Chris had an effect on most of the drummers coming out of AC. Ask Ralph Peterson (Senior or Junior), or Harvey Mason. And Bobby Ward. Bobby knew Chris from the time he spent in Atlantic City. Bobby said Chris was full of tricks (that's where Sonny Payne learned his twirling, etc.). Chris taught Bobby how to move two parallel sticks held in the traditional grip so they would sound like a roll.

The article does appear to have an error regarding Bobby, however. This is because there are at least two East Coast drummers with the same name. The Bobby Ward from Boston (whom Mark refers to) is the one who was mentioned in the PAS magazine's article on Alan Dawson after Alan died. The Bobby Ward who played with Groove Holmes is from Baltimore, and is one of the baddest drummers in that city. He's still gigging around town, making great music and getting the most out of a minimal kit.

Nick Costa
 via Internet

SENNHEISER MIC' REVIEW

I just read the Sennheiser microphones review in the January edition and I have a small hint for anyone using or planning to buy the 604 model. Your review points out that the clip positions the mic' too far towards the center of the drum (it does!), and mentions that Sennheiser offers a \$32 (ouch!) adapter to fix this problem. I've used the older version of these mic's many times and I've always unscrewed the clip and reversed the mic'. (The knob faces the drum.) Simply turn the mic' on the pivot to face the drum, and you're in business. You may lose some positioning flexibility, but I've always been able to make this solution work. It sure beats having to choose between shelling out \$32 or smacking the mic' with a stick.

Great magazine, by the way. I've been a subscriber since issue #2.

Donn Deniston
 via Internet



NEW SWING DRUMMERS

I have to admit that I had begun to lose faith in the drummers that the magazine was covering lately. But my faith was renewed with the swing drummers issue (with the added bonus of the Ian Paice feature). Danny Glass from Royal Crown Revue is an unbelievable drummer. Even if you don't like swing, you gotta go see RCR and watch Glass play. How about a "solo" article on him?



Stacey W. Hood
 Birmingham, AL



IAN PAICE

Thanks for the December '98 *MD* magazine and specifically for the interview with Ian Paice. To a teenage drummer in the mid-'70s like me, Ian and Deep Purple were so influential! I saw the band in Hinckley, Minnesota this past August with a wonderful drummer

friend of mine, and we both loved it! We got back stage and met and spoke with Roger Glover and Steve Morse! Both were down-to-earth and really happy to be rockin' with the current lineup. I was refreshed by the lack of swagger that I kind of expected.

From a personal standpoint, the timing of the Ian article couldn't have been better. As you might expect, it took me a little while to completely assimilate that memorable August evening. For me, it was one of those "like seeing the real Santa Claus" nights!

Thanks to *MD* for helping me to savor the moment! Your magazine and staff behind the scenes are first-rate!

Dan Vaught
 via Internet



FEMALE IN A MAN'S WORLD

I've been trying to bite my tongue since I read Linda McDonald's column in the December issue of *MD*. But I can do it no longer.

To her credit, I will say that she sums up her article on a positive note. But give me a break. Ms. McDonald, you have to face some facts. I've been in three different bands over the last six years, and without fail every one of them has attempted to put women on the roster—to no avail. I advertised for female musicians (all instruments) to back my last band, and I didn't get one response. The fact is that there aren't a lot of female musicians willing to even come to an audition.

You say (with apparent exasperation) that your first teacher started you on a "disco beat." What's wrong with that? By not going back for your third lesson you have no idea where he was trying to take you. You have to start somewhere. I guess if he had started you with rudiments, you would have been equally upset. As for the "guy drummer friends" who wouldn't show you any of their tricks, I have lots of such friends, and none of them has ever shown me a trick either. If you want knowledge, you have to go get it. Why would you make a statement like "They just wanted me for my drums...gee"? Why didn't you say what you meant? I have friends who come to my practice space just to play my drums, but if I

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don't want them there I tell them to leave.

If, when you went to the Musicians Institute, you knew your ability level, why did you let them put you in a beginners class? If you never said anything, how did you expect them to know?

Now let's talk about the thing that really annoys me about your article: drum companies that "couldn't even consider speaking with a female, because they already had a female on their roster." Frankly that's a crock. Drum companies endorse drummers based on one thing: the fact that having that musician in their stable will sell more drums. If endorsing you won't sell more drums, they aren't going to do it. It doesn't matter if you're male or female. Furthermore, how can you expect an equal female-to-male endorser ratio when there simply aren't as many women playing drums as there are men? Should you be given special consideration just because you're a woman?

You say you've never gotten respect from a sound engineer or stage hand. Well, neither have I. You being in their club is a pain to them. They want to make their money for the night and go home, not deal with whiny musicians. Again, your gender makes no

difference. The reason your manager can make things happen isn't because he's male, but because he has the ear of the owner of the establishment. Any managed musician deals with the same thing every night.

You play music because it's what you love to do. I applaud you for that. Your statements about perseverance and the joy you get from playing the drums are to be commended. But the simple fact remains that this is a tough industry. We, as musicians, have to deal with a lot of junk so we can do what we love.

It sounds like you expected the industry to take special notice of you because you're a woman. The obstacles are the same for both sexes, Ms. McDonald. Be thankful that your career has gone as far as it has. There are a lot of very good musicians—women and men—who never get any of the opportunities you've been given.

Jay Martineau
via Internet



RESPONSE FROM MAGADINI

I always thought that responding to a questionable review was not necessarily the right

thing to do. But I would like to clarify a few points regarding my new book *The Complete Drumset Rudiments*, which was reviewed in the December *MD*.

As many *MD* readers know, two-thirds of the rudiments found in the book initially appeared as two articles in *Modern Drummer*. "The 26 Poly-Rudiments" [December 1995] and "The 26 Drumset Rudiments" [July 1997]. Also, the French drum magazine *Batteur* included "The 26 Poly-Rudiments" in their 1996 special issue *Caisses Claires*, an expose on snare drums.

The book itself was never intended to be an "instruction" book per se. I thought that this had been made clear in both the content of the pages and in the introduction found on the CD. The substance of the book exists in the rudiments themselves. The rudiments then do what rudiments do. They challenge us, they improve our technique, they increase our abilities, and they (should) inspire our imaginations. The original thirteen snare-drum rudiments came to us without instruction, as have all the additional snare-drum rudiments that followed. (These are all included in the book.) It has been up to us to search out the resources that are available as to how to play them and how to

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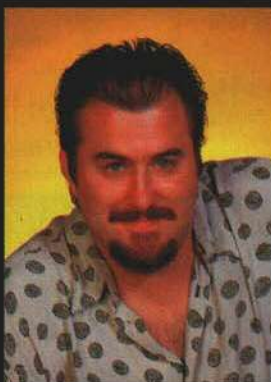
Clyde Stubblefield (USA)
John "Jabo" Starks (USA)
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Tom Williams (USA)
Nashville Studios



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Peter Michael Escovedo (USA)
E-Train



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Keith Capsuto (USA)
E'nuff Said, Clinician



apply (some or all of) them to what we already know.

Do the drumset rudiments and the polyrhythm rudiments have such resources? Not yet, but there are many volumes out on the snare-drum rudiments. (Charles Wilcoxon comes to mind.) As for polyrhythms: Want to find out how they work? I can think of several books on the subject (if the reviewer desires to know more).

After seeing one or both sets of rudiments in *MD*, over 200 readers wrote me personally. They ordered the cassette that was offered, and most also included endorsements of the concept and content of new rudiments themselves.

My book took three years to develop. It is edited by Rick Mattingly, endorsed by Steve Smith, and published by Hal Leonard Publishing. It has been receiving good reviews in other journals and on the internet. The idea of expanding these rudiments into exercises, etudes, and solos may be a good one, but I (purposely) chose to leave that to someone else.

Peter Magadini
Novato, CA

RESPONSE TO HOPPI

I'm writing in reply to Hoppi's plea (in the December *Readers' Platform*) on behalf of Midwestern drummers who feel unloved due to the lack of major drumming events in that part of the country. First, as the event planner and emcee for Zildjian Day Chicago held about five years ago at The Vic Theater, I'd like to ask: Where were ya? We missed you, and we had a great time!

Second, as a member of the PASIC '99 drumset committee and a product of the Midwest myself, I'm thrilled to point out that PASIC '99 is set for October 27-30 in Columbus, Ohio, and will be very cool, indeed! Please come and visit me in the Remo booth, so I know you made it!

Mike Morse
National sales and marketing manager
Remo, Inc.

SO, TELL US WHAT YOU REALLY THINK

Dear *Modern* (Commercial) *Drummer*.

Inspired, while writing this letter listening to "Big Swing Face" by Mr. Buddy Rich (in my opinion, quite possibly the greatest drummer to have been), I wish to let you know I'll no longer need my subscription to *MD*, and cancel my sub to *Drum Instructors Only* as well.

The rich keep getting richer with you guys. What I mean is, the same big-name drummers get more and more exposure, or the promising up & coming commercial names get exposure. And we know what a lot of them are about.

Yeah, I'm sore. What about us impoverished freaks who have been suffering and working over-diligently our whole life, who have devoted our lives passionately and aggressively to the cultivation of our music and our religion of drumming? What about us who have not had the same fortunate breaks being recognized for trying to develop quality artists and trying to innovate, locked away in our laboratories?

If you knew me, you would know I would be the last mof to be a crybaby. That's my life. I live keepin' my shit real.

Part of the reason for what I explained above might be that you guys are more about money than the passion and essence

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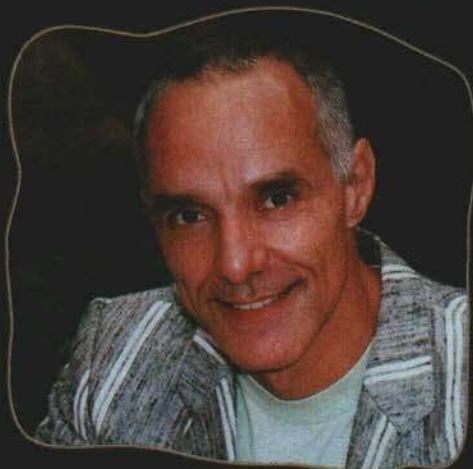
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joey kramer

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ones to have ever seen Aerosmith live, you've heard the powerhouse playing of one of

the most influential drummers in rock history. Joey Kramer has cemented grooves that have made Aerosmith a top-charting mega-hit for the last thirty years. And Kramer has a straightforward plan he follows for his drumming that would be good advice for any player: "I'm really only interested in the groove and what's going on time-wise. My playing is based on that, combined with feeling and emotion."

Kramer's focus on the groove is certainly what he's about on stage. In fact, the drummer now prefers putting his energy solely into the songs and finding ways to keep them fresh rather than performing solos, which he did for eighteen years. And as for Aerosmith's secret to success for such a long career, "I don't know if there is any secret to it really. I think it's just a common denominator of all of us loving to play live and getting up on stage and rocking out *together*. There is nothing else in our lives that's going to take the place of that."

For the band's current tour (in support of their recent live album, *A Little South Of Sanity*), Joey is using a custom DW kit with a purple satin flame finish with white ionized hardware. "It looks pretty cool," he says enthusiastically. "As for DW drums, they are without a doubt the best product out there, *and* they're American made."

Kramer is lucky to be playing those drums—lucky to be playing *any* drums—after surviving a dangerous mishap that occurred last summer: His Ferrari caught on fire while he was at the wheel. Thankfully he did not sustain any nerve damage or scarring from the second- and third-degree burns. In fact, Joey reports that he's feeling fine. He must be, as Kramer and company are still out on the road.

And while Joey is a man totally committed to his band, the drummer does have a side-project he would like to get to someday: "I suppose somewhere down the line I would like to do something with the stockpile of original songs I have written with a friend," he says. "It would be nice for these songs to see the light of day. But I am not one who runs off and does a solo project. My allegiance is to Aerosmith. Besides, this band is a full-time job."

Steven Scott Fyfe





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Akira Jimbo

Independence Days

Nineteen ninety-eight was a busy year for Akira Jimbo. The thirty-nine-year-old Japanese drummer spent a good deal of time on the road performing clinics in Europe and the US, demonstrating his incredible four-way independence to appreciative audiences, including those at the Montreal Drum Fest in November.

Akira is a virtual "one man band," combining his acoustic set with pads that trigger bass, chords, and melody sounds. "I'm not using any sequencers or backing tracks," he insists. "Everything is live. I can play faster or slower if I want." The effect is startling, as he plays his kit *and* all the band parts.

Jimbo's coordination is further demonstrated when he uses a foot pedal attached

to an LP *Jam Block*. While playing left-foot-clave patterns, Akira is able to solo and play some intense fusion-style drumming on top. His recently released third video, *Independence*, goes into detail on how he developed his technique. "I didn't go to music school or use any books," Akira explains. "I used my ear. Steve Gadd is my idol. But I don't want to imitate. I always try to put my own ideas into what I copy. When I was learning clave, I tried to imitate the feel of a drum section."

Last year also found Akira back with his old band, Casiopea, who are one of the most popular fusion bands in Japan. "I left



eight years ago [after twelve recordings]. They got a new drummer, he left, they got another, and he left. So they needed a drummer and I went back with them. Currently, we only play in Japan."

For those who'd like to learn more about Jimbo's current activities, check out his homepage at plaza!4.mbn.or.jp/~jimbo/.

Michael Bettine

GEORGE PENDERGAST BRUSHING DISHWALLA

Rather than jetting off to a faraway, big-name studio to record a new album, modern rockers Dishwalla used their studio money to stay home. The band rented a house in the woods of Santa Barbara, rented recording equipment, set up shop, and started to jam.

"For the first two or three weeks we just hit the record button and played," says drummer George Pendergast. "Then we listened to the tapes for hours and took pieces of those jams and made them into songs. It was a cool way to do it, because you play differently when you are working on a song than when you are improvising, which allows you to stretch out."



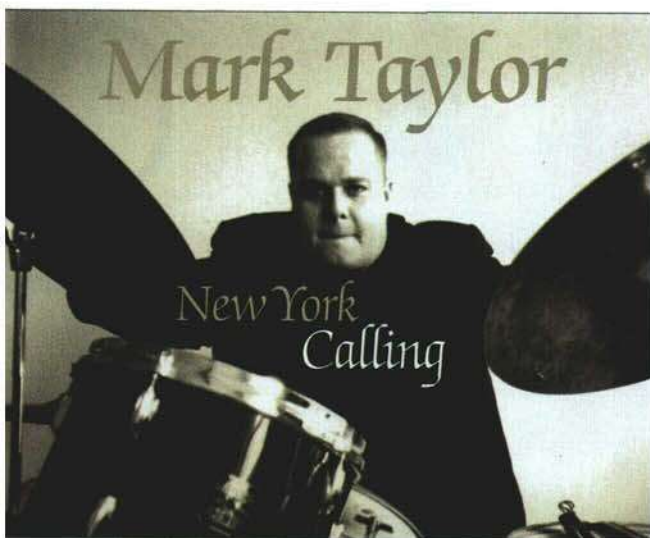
Pendergast and his Dishwalla bandmates are now touring in support of their second A&M release, *And You Think You Know What Life's About*. The band has a tough act to follow after the success of their major-label debut, *Pet Your Friends*, which included the hit single "Counting Blue Cars."

Discussing the new album, Pendergast speaks enthusiastically about both the hi- and lo-tech approaches that he took on new songs. He points to the acoustic drum loops on "Stay Awake" and "5 Star Day" as moments that capture a vibe similar to The Beastie Boys and latter-day U2. Yet he also digs the more simple approach he took on "Until I Wake Up."

"I did a brush pattern, but the idea wasn't to do your traditional figure-eight," he says. "I used one deep snare for the left-hand circular pattern, and it sounded a lot like an old record. Then I did the 2 and 4 on a smaller snare with the right."

The most significant changes in Pendergast's drumming are likely to go unnoticed, though, as they are more subtle than the use of brushes and loops. George spent a portion of the time between the last tour and the house-in-the-woods recording sessions recovering from a shoulder injury, caused by the wear and tear of heavy touring. "I had been leaning to the left and slouching my whole life," he says. "And, as the tour continued, we were playing louder and heavier. After the injury I had to concentrate on technique, hitting the drums properly rather than just bashing. It was a harsh lesson, but a good lesson in going back to work on posture and technique."

Harriet Schwartz



Mark Taylor set up the rental drums, made a few tiny adjustments, and fluttered gracefully across the snare and toms, paying no mind to any discrepancies with the usual kit. A working pro, he has gotten used to these things.

From ten paces behind his throne, one could tell there was something in this young Brit's light touch that was uncannily reminiscent of jazz great Billy Higgins. "Actually, Billy's my man," Mark responds to the mention. "Many a time have I sat a few feet from him, watching all the inside stuff. I've been doing that since 1977, when I was fifteen! His groove and sound on the instrument are so unusual, I can recognize Billy within one second."

But back to Mark's challenge—getting a good sound on rental drums. Tonight, it happens to be a 1960s Camco set. Tomorrow, who knows? "You choose drums because they make you more comfortable than anything else," he explains. "But I've found that with the really good drummers it doesn't matter what they play on. They transcend the instrument. I mean, we all have preferences, but at the end of the day, you can make any set sound like you. Same with cymbals. People think there's a magic cymbal out there. It's actually a marriage of several factors: the cymbal, the stick, and the *touch*. How many times have you heard someone sit in on your drums and they sound completely different?"

Before leaving London, Taylor placed in the "Best Drums" category of the British Jazz Awards for seven years running, based on his work with British stalwarts like John Dankworth, Ronnie Scott, John Taylor, and Dick Morrissey. And when Americans Johnny Griffin, Pharoah Sanders, James Moody, George Cables, or John Hicks crossed the water, Mark would get the call. He says he began to get itchy to see what made these musicians tick.

Within days of touching down at New York's La Guardia Airport, Taylor was working. Today he balances regular commitments with Lew Tabackin and George Coleman with up & comers like Eric Alexander, Jim Rotundo, and Peter Bernstein. Why New York over London? "In England," Mark recalls, "I used to work a lot, but during the day I never played that much. In New York it happens all the time: People get together just to play. People don't live in New York for the quality of life; they live here for the music."

T. Bruce Wittet

CARMINE APPICE THE POWER OF ROCK

Legendary rocker Carmine Appice shows no signs of slowing down. His career has seen him play with the likes of Vanilla Fudge, Cactus, Jeff Beck, Rod Stewart, Ozzy Osborne, and Edgar Winter. He also has his own company, Power Rock (www.carmineappice.com), which releases instructional videos and his perennially strong-selling book *Realistic Rock*.

Appice was actually one of the first rock drummers to release instruction books and do clinics. "I remember my first clinic," he says. "It was at Sam Ash Music on Long Island in 1971. It was quite an experience for me because I didn't know what I was doing! Nowadays I really like to do stuff off the questions I get."

January finally saw the release of both volumes of Carmine's *Guitar Zeus* project in the States. The CDs feature Carmine, bassist Tony Franklin, and rhythm guitarist/singer Kelly Keeling. "It's my own trio project, and I brought in friends of mine to play solos. We've got Steve Morse, Yngwie Malmsteen, Ty Tabor of King's X, Slash, Paul Gilbert, Richie Sambora—all kinds of people. I'll be supporting that all year. I've always tried to be different, and I thought it would be funny for a drummer to do a guitar album."

Not one to slow down, Carmine keeps busy with a number of projects. "Kelly and I have done a soundtrack with Roger Daltrey for a movie he's starring in called *Romantic Moritz*. "I also spend three months a year in Japan playing in a band called Pearl, with Tony Franklin and two Japanese musicians. And we might be doing a Vanilla Fudge reunion later this year. But that's it, the last time. We're getting too old!"

Michael Bettine

news

- After thirteen years, **Will Kennedy** has quit The Yellowjackets. He is keeping busy now freelancing and producing. Replacing Will in The Jackets is **Peter Erskine**.
- **Dave Lombardo** is on Grip Inc.'s latest, *Solidify*. He has also been recording with Testament, a new project led by former Faith No More vocalist Mike Patton, an avant-garde project with John Zorn, and Italian film-maker Lorenzo Arrigo's double bass-meets-Vivaldi pet project! And Dave's new book, *Power Grooves*, was just released by Hal Leonard.
- **Steve Smith's** upcoming dates include the Berks Jazz Festival in Reading, Pennsylvania on March 25 with an all-star band and on the 27th with Vital Information. Steve will also tour Australia and New Zealand in June with Vital Information and play a few European jazz festivals in July with Larry Coryell and Tom Coster.
- **Mike Clark** has been touring with Delbert McClinton.
- **Chester Thompson** is back touring with Phil Collins. (Phil's drummer of late, **Ricky Lawson**, is currently working with Steely Dan.)
- **Gregg Field** is on three new releases, Vince Gill's *Breath Of Heaven*, Barry Manilow's *Tribute To Sinatra*, and the self-titled release from Henry Mancini's daughter Monica. And congratulations to Gregg and Monica on their recent marriage.
- **Mike Nichols** is now the drummer with A.J. Croce.
- **Ron Welty** is on tour with The Offspring, supporting their latest release, *American*.
- **Chris De Rosa** has replaced **Moe Tucker** in Magnet.
- **David Kemper** has been on the road with Bob Dylan.
- **Phillip Duncan** is currently on tour with Newsboys.
- **JD Blair** is touring with Shania Twain.
- Congratulations to Kim and **Frank Bellucci** on the birth of their son, Daniel.

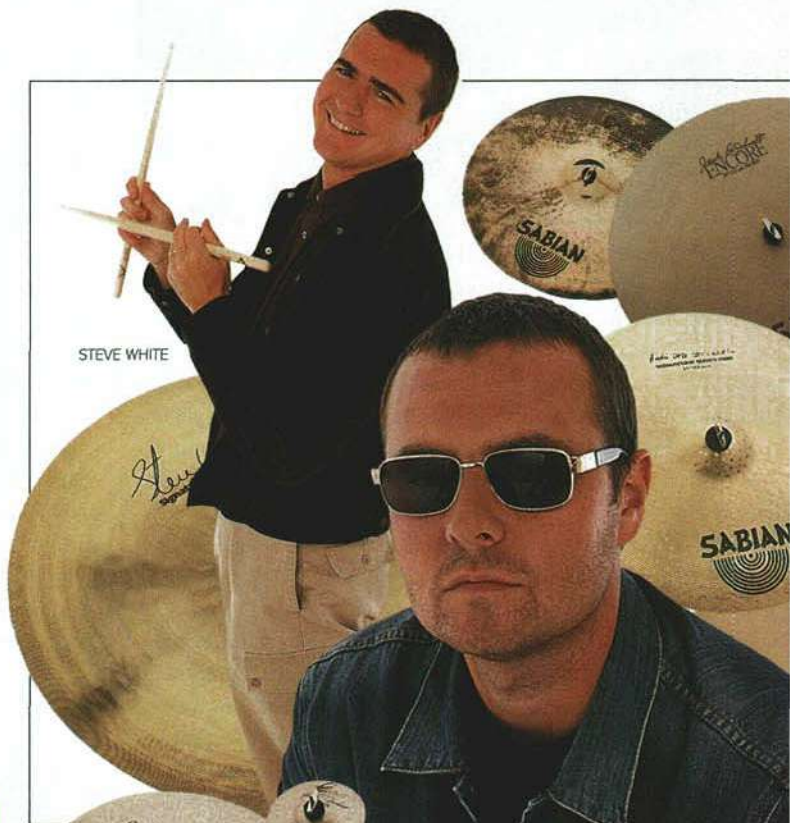


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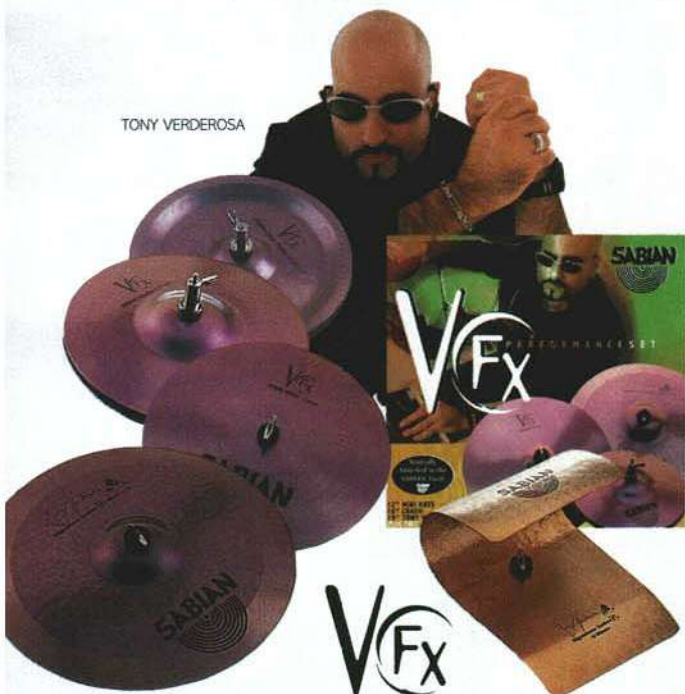
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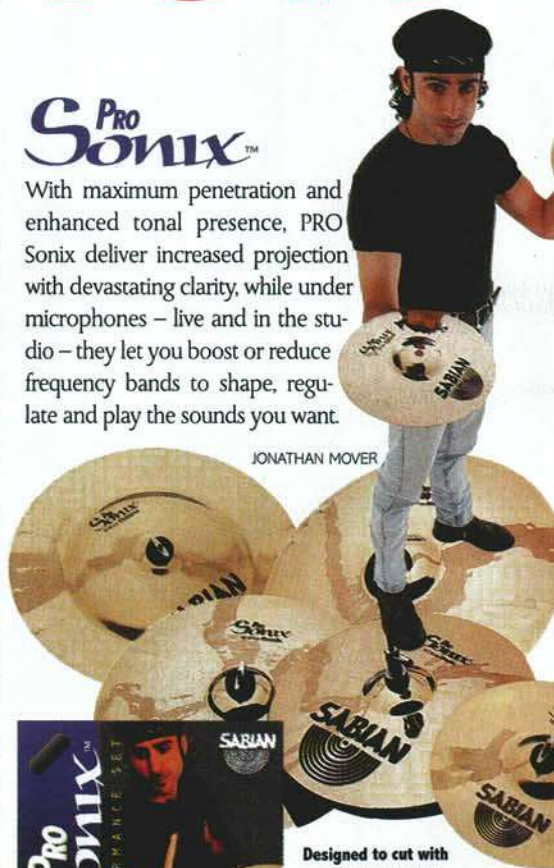
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UP & Coming



Roy Mayorga OF SOULFLY

BY MATT PEIKEN

When Max Cavalera left Sepultura to start Soulfly, the first person he called was Roy "Rata" Mayorga. On one level, it was an odd choice. Until then, Mayorga was known more for his studio engineering and remixes than for his drumming in New York's hardcore underground. But in this business, relationships often mean more than resumes, and Mayorga rewarded Cavalera's call by contributing to one of 1998's most passionate hard music performances.

With Soulfly's self-titled debut, Mayorga ditched much of the digital sampling and kick-oriented drumming that were his signatures with Nausea, Thorn, and other projects along New York's underbelly. While Mayorga brought his own passion for sound-creation, Cavalera's new music brought out an earthy, soulful approach to drumming that Mayorga had never before explored.

Along Soulfly's US club tour late this past year, Mayorga talked about the making of *Soulfly* and how the band indulges his finer musical traits.

MP: Tell me about your days as a sound engineer.

RM: When I was twelve or so I was listening to a lot of new wave electronic stuff. My brother was making a lot of electronic music on his 4-track, and when he wasn't around, I'd sneak into his stuff and make my own music. It just kinda grew from there. I was into making music and doing remixes. I started mixing sound professionally when I was around nineteen, as a house guy at CBGB's, Wetlands, and Coney Island High.

MP: How did you find your way into drumming?

RM: I was into drumming from day one. My parents bought me a practice pad when I was four, and I got a real drumkit when I was seven. I took lessons briefly, but I wasn't into that. I liked playing to records—just aiming two speakers at myself and cranking the stereo to 10. I'd play to Black Sabbath and KISS records. It was great.

MP: It seems like you played drums to a com-

pletely different style of music than the music you created on your own.

RM: I was playing to the music I grew up with on the radio. But there was a time during the '80s when I got out of the whole rock thing and all the electronic stuff and got into punk and hardcore. I started playing in all kinds of punk bands, including Nausea, from New York, and a band called Youthquake. Drumming was always the thing I wanted to do; I looked at engineering more as the job that would get me where I'm going, a way to pay my bills. If I couldn't make drumming happen as far as making a living, I could always fall back on engineering. But I loved engineering, too. It was like art to me. It's all spur of the moment when you do mixes, like delayed reverbs, and catching a vibe on tape.

MP: How did you hook up with Max Cavalera?

RM: It was really strange. I met Max for the first time about eight years ago, when I was in Nausea. I heard that he liked us, so I wanted

"I know this might sound totally weird, but I was listening to ABBA and the *Saturday Night Fever* soundtrack around the time we were recording—and I guess I was inspired by that. Of course, I didn't tell anybody in the band about it."

to meet him. Then a few years later, I got signed to Roadrunner Records when I was in Thorn. I did all their sequencing and MIDI stuff, and I sampled a bunch of Sepultura stuff and made this weird remix track of "Refuse Resist." Max heard it and liked it, and my name stayed in Max's mind. When he was looking for another drummer, he called a friend of mine who mentioned my name to him. Max remembered me, so he called. That's how we got together.

MP: From a drumming standpoint, Soulfly is a lot different from anything else you've been involved with. Did Max leave a lot of room for you to experiment with different sounds and moods?

RM: Yeah, he left room for all of us to do our own thing. But my playing is a lot simpler on this record than the drumming I was doing before. It's a lot more groove-oriented. In a way, I think I found my style through this band. I always liked the tribal element in drumming. I've listened to a lot

of world music, and I always wanted to do something like that.

Even when I was a kid, I was more of a tom-oriented drummer. I just loved how they sounded—more musical than just keeping a beat. You'd realize how different this music is for me if you listened to my playing ten years ago. I was into fast, thrash, hardcore playing with a lot of double bass.

MP: Were you much of a woodshedder growing up?

RM: Not at all. I couldn't have been even if I'd wanted to because I lived in an apartment in New York City. But I'm not the kind of guy who's gonna do rudiments while I'm sitting in front of the TV. I don't know anything about rudiments. I learned how to play by watching and hearing people. That's how I've done it my whole life. I've always had to work full-time, five days a week, and then rehearse or play shows at night. There was never really time to practice, even if I wanted to.

Sometimes I wish I'd built more technique, but at the same time, I'm happy with the way I play now. I'm not the best drummer in the world. But for what I do now, I do okay. I'm not out to compete with anyone or be better than anyone. I just play, and it comes from the heart.

MP: But you must have developed some skills along the way just to pull off the music you were into. Who were your drumming influences when you were younger?

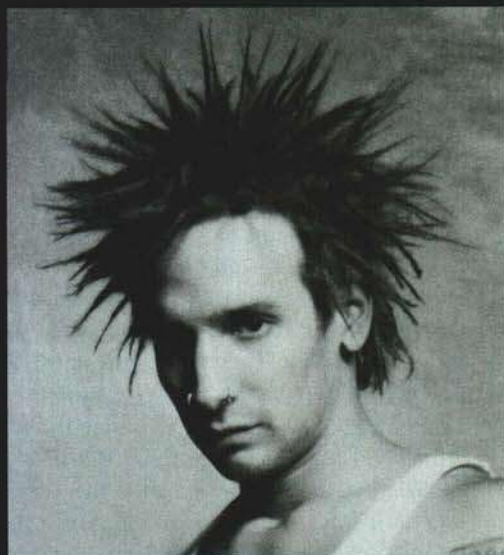
RM: As far as the heavy groove playing, it was definitely Bonham. The more technical side—the 32nd-note patterns—came more from listening to guys like Neil Peart and Stewart Copeland.

MP: Was it difficult to scale back your drumming when you first started working on the Soulfly record?

RM: Yeah, it was kinda weird. At first I thought Max was looking for something similar to Sepultura. I started doing a lot of double bass stuff, and Ross [Robinson,

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producer] would tell me, "Hey, chill on that; keep it simple through the whole verse," and I liked it. Max had fifty songs he'd already written and ten or so that he wanted to work on. He had a lot of beats on a 4-track, which I mimicked, and I added more to what he had programmed.

A lot of the percussion stuff came from two people in this Brazilian salsa band called Chico Science & Nacao Zumbi, just to add that authentic taste to it. Max also got Scott Bobo, who plays percussion for Cypress Hill, to be on it. We all fed on each other a lot. Sometimes I laid my tracks down first, but sometimes we'd all do it at the same time. The great thing for me about Soulfly was I could be a totally free-spirited, free-flowing drummer. I hadn't played that free in a long time. I could speed up if I wanted to, slow down if I wanted to. It was great. The thing is, my timing is way better now because I played to a click for five years with Thorn.

MP: Were there any songs on the Soulfly disc that stretched your boundaries as a drummer?

RM: At the end of "No," I did a little jungle rhythm, and it's the only part on the

record where I played to a click. I wanted to get that really crusty, high-pitched sound, so we slowed the tape down and played that drum beat to a click that was around 80 beats per minute. So when we sped it back up, it sounded like a loop sample, and it was at a cut-time tempo. At first, I was just gonna sample myself playing a drum beat and then just loop it, but I wanted to stay away from using samplers on the record. So it was challenging to play that slow, to be exactly on that click. But it came out cool.

Then there's the song "Prejudice," where I'm playing this fast, dancehall reggae beat. I know this might sound totally weird, but I was listening to ABBA and the *Saturday Night Fever* soundtrack around the time we were recording—and I guess I was inspired by that. Of course, I didn't tell anybody in the band about it, and everyone seemed to like what I came up with, so it was cool.

Another thing that was a weird adjustment for me was the rehearsal schedule. With other bands, I was used to two rehearsals a week, maybe. Before doing the Soulfly record, we rehearsed five days a week for six hours a day. This went on for

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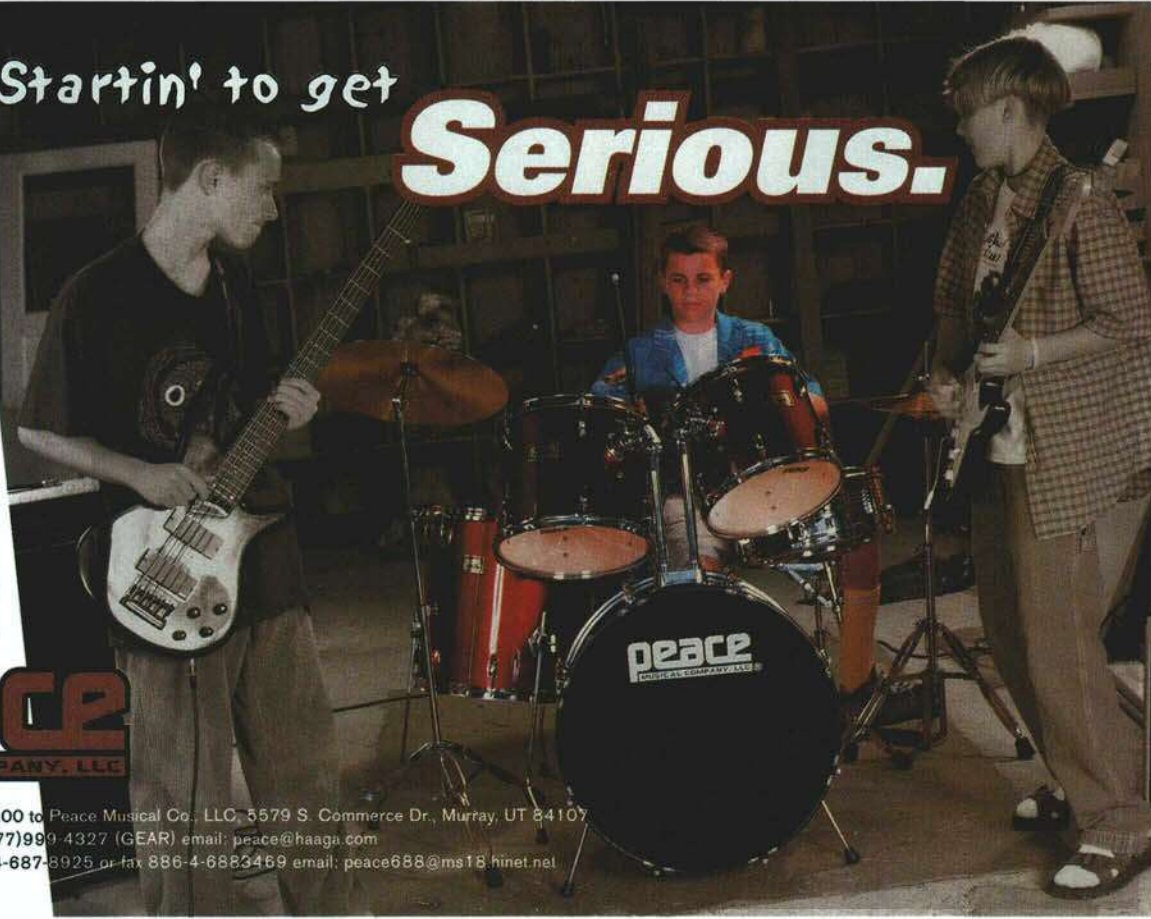
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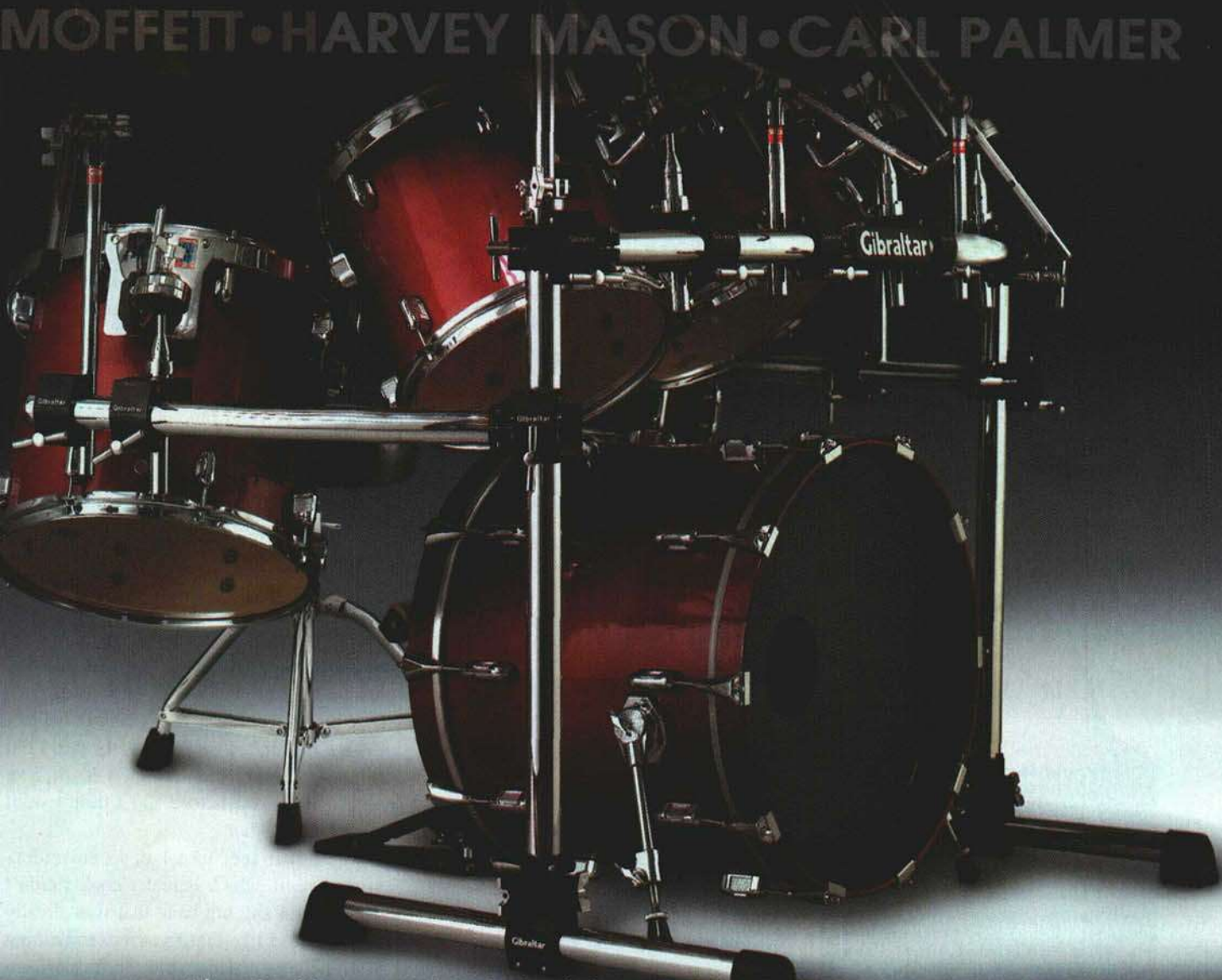
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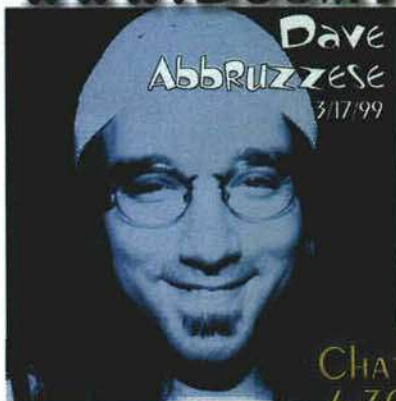
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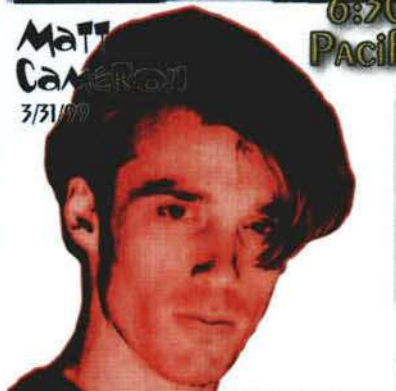


Dave
Abbruzzese

3/17/99



3/24/99
Chuck
Biscuits



Matt
Cameron
3/31/99

CHAT TIME
6:30 P.M.
PACIFIC TIME

SPACEMUFFINS

March 17th—Dave Abbruzzese
Dave emerges from his studio to answer the tough questions about life, music and his new BMW cruiser.

March 24th—Chuck Biscuits
Our newest endorsee in his 1st online chat! After brutalizing his X-Series with *Social Distortion*, Chuck goes on record about his days with *Danzig*, *Black Flag*, and his future. An unruly group is anticipated...we'll accept nothing less!

March 31st—Matt Cameron
O.K., Enough! He's comin' back! New Daddy, Matt Chats Live about his recent *Pearl Jam* tour, current projects and changing Ray's diapers. Get here early!



about three months, and I was sucking air. I didn't think I could deal because I wasn't in shape. But I got *into* shape pretty quickly. I'd get up at around 11 A.M. and bike around Tempe, Arizona—and it was blistering because this was July, August, and September. Then I'd drink power-pump smoothies all day before rehearsal. The whole experience down there mellowed me out and opened up my mind. It was a blast.

MP: Tell me about your kit. You told me your snare is a little different.

RM: Yeah, I just got a *Tama Artstar* kit, but I'm playing a Firche snare. I bought it at Sam Ash. I thought it was a killer snare drum. It tunes like a *RotoTom*—first you tighten the head and tune it with the lugs, and then you can spin the drum to raise or lower the pitch. It's all die-cast chrome, and it looks kinda weird because it's 14" on the batter side, but it tapers to 13" at the bottom. I like it because it's a loud, cracky drum. I didn't have it when we made the record. I used four different snares in the studio. I got the Firche before we started the tour.

MP: You've been involved in several different bands and engineering situations over the years. Do you plan on keeping up with all that while also doing Soulfly?

RM: No, I want to do Soulfly full-time. All that other stuff was just to get me by until I could get to this point. My dream was never to be an engineer or to bounce around between bands. My dream was to be doing what I'm doing now. The thing is, just before I got the Soulfly gig, I was really wondering if it was ever going to happen for me. I didn't want to be forty years old and still working sound in New York. I've seen that happen before and I didn't want to end up like that.

But I still feel like I'm in an underground band, which is really cool. I didn't have to join any big band that was already established. I like that I got into something new and could help create the music from the ground up. But we also have the resources to tour on a level that I was never able to do before. I'd never been on the road before for more than three days to a week, touring in a station wagon. Now I get to play in front of a lot of people, on really good equipment, and meet a lot of cool people. I want to do Soulfly for as long as Soulfly wants me.

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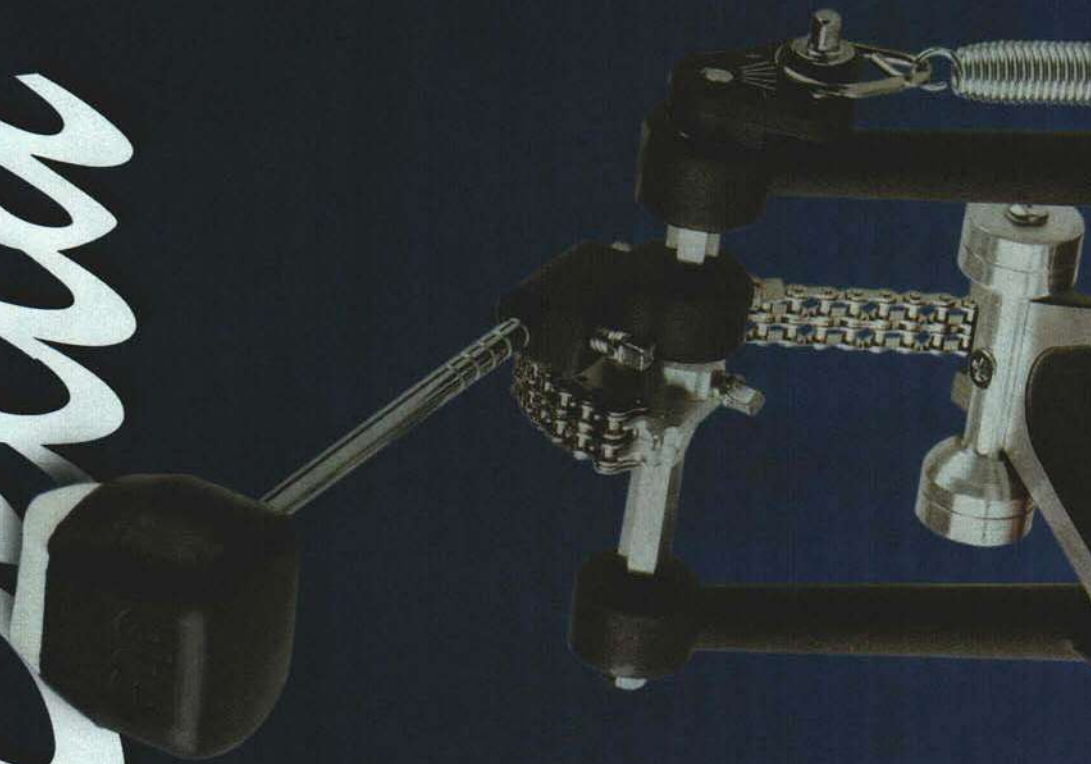
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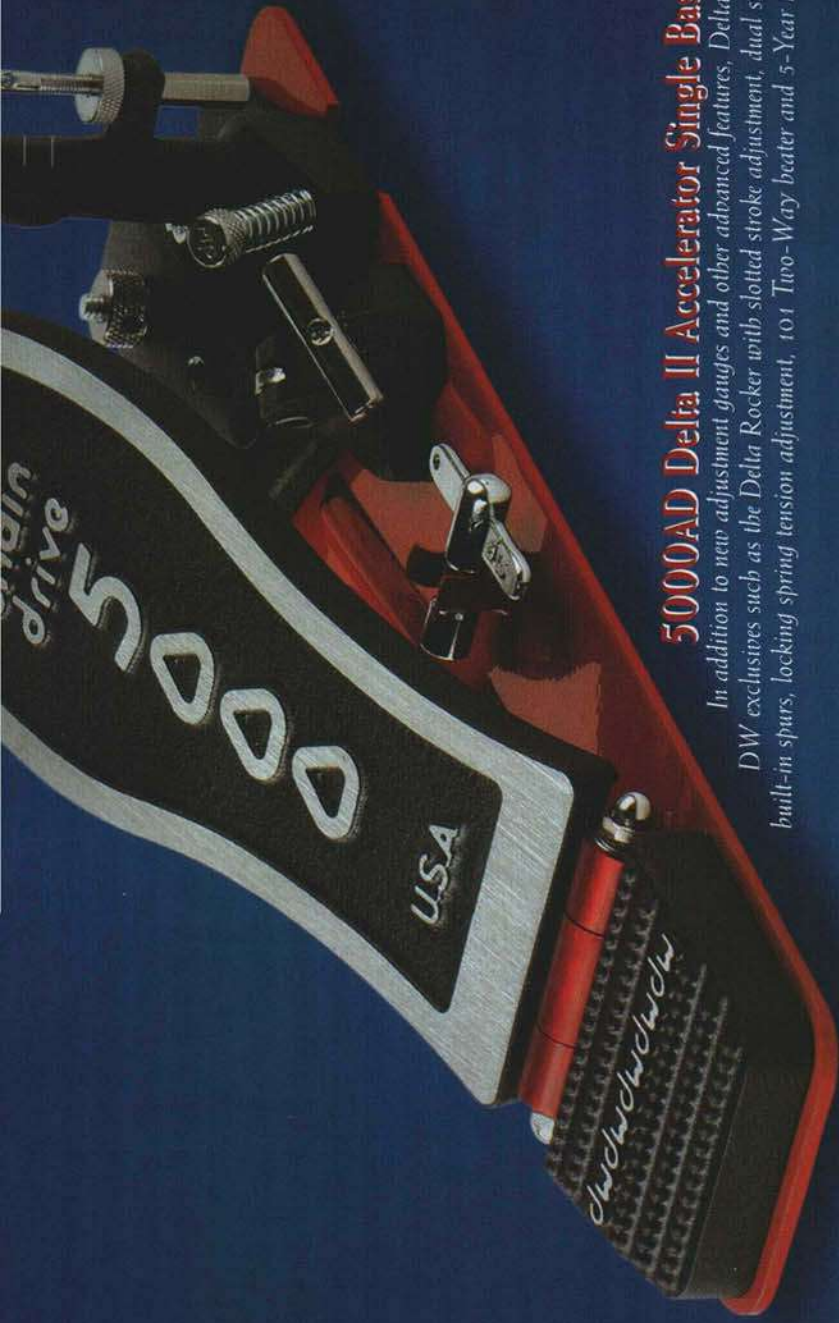
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Joel Rosenblatt

Q Would you please describe the drum and cymbal setup you use with Spyro Gyra?

Bill DeMarse
via Internet



Q You are one of my main inspirations and influences. With reference to the *Road Scholars* live album, how do you get your kit—especially the snare—to sound so crisp?

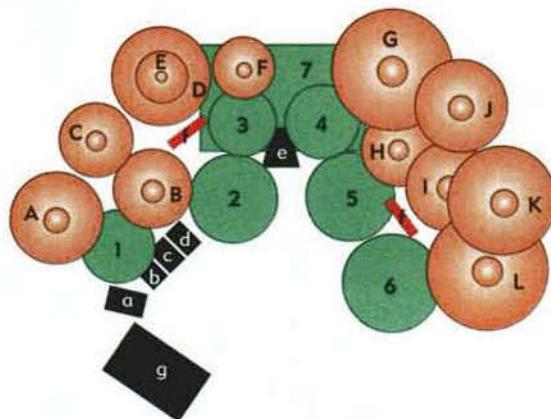
Danny Cavazzi
Bronxville, NY

A Thanks for your questions, guys. My drum and cymbal setup is diagrammed at right. It's a Tama *Starclassic Maple* kit in a cherry black finish.

In regard to the "crisp" drum sound that Danny mentioned, I try to go with the most resonant sound I can get, along with plenty of slap. I use Attack clear single-ply medium heads on the toms, with no muffling at all. As for the snare drum(s), on the *Road Scholars* album I used two in my setup. My primary snare was a 5 1/2x14 bronze model (mounted on Tama's *Air Ride* stand) with a double-ply coated head and no muffling. (For other gigs and recording I sometimes vary this with a 5 1/2x14 maple or a 6 1/2x14 brass snare.) My second snare is a 7x12 maple with an Attack single-ply medium-weight coated head, also with no muffling.

I try to tune all the drums to the pitch at which they are the most resonant, being careful not to get them too high in order to prevent them from choking. On the album, the choice of microphones (Applied Microphone Technology, Shure, and Electro-Voice models) as well as the mixing engineer (Doug Oberkirker) also greatly influenced the sound.

In regard to my cymbal selection, Spyro Gyra's music requires me to cover a lot of styles, so I tend to use cymbals to change the



Drums: Tama *Starclassic Maple*

1. 7x12 snare
2. 5 1/2x14 or 6 1/2x14 snare
3. 9x10 tom
4. 11x12 tom
5. 13x13 tom
6. 15x15 tom
7. 16x22 bass

Pedals and Percussion:

- a. LP *Gajate Bracket* with *Jam Block*
- b. LP *Gajate Bracter* with *Mambo Bell*
- c. Legless hi-hat
- d. Second bass drum pedal
- e. Cowbell

Electronics:

- f. KAT *poleKAT*
- g. Electronics rack containing:
Yamaha *DTS-70* MIDI interface,
Roland *MEQ-20* mixer, and
Yamaha *RM-50* drum module.
Hart Dynamics Triggers

Cymbals: Zildjian

- A. 15" *Azuka* with rivets
- B. 13" *K Custom Dark* hi-hats
- C. 11" *Oriental* splash
- D. 16" *K Custom Dark* crash
- E. 6" *A* splash (upside down)
- F. 9" *Or/en/a* splash
- G. 20" *K Custom* ride
- H. 12" *S.R. Recording* hi-hats (on *X-Hat* mount)
- I. *Oriental Trash* hi-hats (10" top, 14" bottom)
- J. 15" *K Dark* crash
- K. 18" *A Projection* crash
- L. 20" *K flat* ride with two rivets (or 20" *K Custom Dark* ride with two rivets)

Sticks: Vater

Heads: Attack single-ply medium tops,
Thin Skin single-ply bottoms

textures. For example, I need the clean bell of the *K Custom* ride for the funk and Latin stuff, but I need the full body of the *K Custom Dark* for the ballads and jazz tunes. (It's a lot easier to change to a different cymbal than it is to change the tuning on a drum in the middle of a show!)

Jeremy Taggart

Q I saw you play with Our Lady Peace in St. John's, Newfoundland last year, and I thought you were great. Could you answer the following questions for me?

1. I really like the way you play your snare drums. Did you develop your own style or take pieces of other drummers' styles and put them together?
2. I also like the *sound* of your snares. The way they ring really appeals to me. What drums are you using, and how do you tune them?

3. What are the sizes of your second and third toms?

4. On your 1998 tour poster the ride cymbal looks like it's clamped very tightly on an angle. But I saw you at the 1997 Muchmusic Video Awards, and your ride was positioned differently. You also didn't use your piccolo snare, splash, or electronic pads. Can you explain this?

Robert Pittman

St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada

A Thanks for your support, Rob. I hope I can help you with your queries.

In terms of snare sounds, 50% is mic placement and the way the miked sound is processed (compressed). The other 50% is the way I strike the drum. About 3/4 of the stick is into the drum from the rim—which means the stick hits the drum off-center by about 3". And as soon as the stick hits the drum it's off it again. That's why I get the ring that you mention.

The reason I play the way I do could

only come from the music and the people surrounding me throughout my life—including my father, Ron Taggart, as well as Elvin Jones, The Beatles, and Ted Williams (yes, the splendid splinter). So I put these and many more things into a mix and started to make music out of it.

All of my snare drums have steel shells made by Greg Keplinger. Ayotte produces great drums with Greg's shells; you can reach them at (604) 736-5411. My second and third toms are Ayotte floor toms (with legs), in 18x16 and 18x18 sizes.

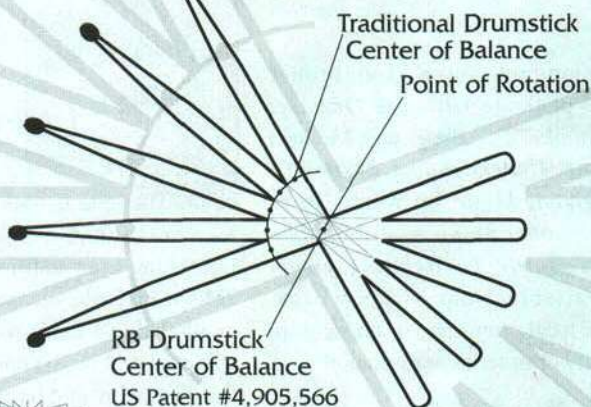
The angles of my cymbals tend to change depending on what style of music I've been getting into. I get very inspired by different things quite easily. (I went jogging after seeing *Rocky*.) So my setup can change from time to time. As for my reduced setup at the Muchmusic Awards, we were only playing one song, so I didn't need my extra snare (the 5") or my KAT.

I hope these answers give you some insight into your questions. Stay safe, and—more importantly—be yourself!



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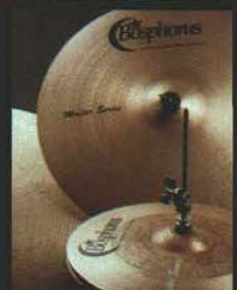


Chart Reading Instruction

Q Can you recommend any good books on learning how to read drum charts of different types, and tell me where I could find them? I'd prefer one that comes with a CD.

David Gutierrez
via Internet

A We recommend Steve Houghton's book/CD package *Ultimate Drumset Reading Anthology*, (Alfred) and Michael Lauren's book *Understanding Rhythm (A Guide To Reading Music)* on Warner Bros. Also check out Steve's video *The Drummer's Guide To Reading Drum Charts*, available from Warner Bros. Contact your local drum shop or music store for availability or ordering information.

Yamaha Info

Q What does "Y.E.S.S." stand for? (I think it has something to do with Yamaha.) Also, can you tell me how many plies there are in a Yamaha *Maple Custom* bass drum? I know all the other shells are 100% maple, but I don't think the bass drum is.

Sam Jenkins
via Internet

A "Y.E.S.S." stands for "Yamaha Enhanced Sustain System." It is Yamaha's version of a suspension mounting system for their toms. The system involves a small bracket that attaches to the shell with only two bolts, and a tom arm that does not penetrate the shell.

According to Yamaha's catalog, *Maple Custom* drums feature 7-ply, 7 mm-thick rack tom shells and 10-ply, 10 mm-thick floor tom and bass drum shells, all 100% maple.

Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About Zildjians (Almost)

Q I've had most of my Zildjian cymbals for over thirty years, but my first (bought for me by my parents around 1966) is unusual. Unlike my 20" A ride and 16" crash (both made in the US), this Turkish-made 15" has unique markings, a "hammered" texture, and a darker bronze



color. The tone is dark and it serves better as a crash than as a ride cymbal. Most interesting is an additional stamp above the "Made In Turkey" crescent-moon-and-star cymbal that I can't make out, and a tiny "G" stamped on the underside. Any info on this cymbal would be appreciated.

Bob Santoianni
Snellville, GA

Q I recently came across an 11 1/2" K Zildjian cymbal with the "Made In Turkey" stamp and trademark on it. It cleaned up very nicely, but left me wondering about its size. Is it rare? If so, what might it be worth?

Rod Kesby
from Australia, via Internet

Q I have an old pair of 13" Zildjian hi-hats with a logo unlike any Zildjian logo I've ever seen. The top part is similar to a modern K logo (a crescent moon and star). Under this is "USA," then the normal Arabic writing associated with Zildjian cymbals. Beneath all of this is the phrase "Constantinople cymbals." Could you shed some light on the history of this logo?

Nick Williams
via Internet

Q What are the differences between Zildjian's *Pre-Aged K* rides and *K Constantinople* rides?

Dan Duffy
via Internet

Q I have some Zildjian *Amir* cymbals that I picked up over fifteen years ago. They're pretty heavy-sounding and have lasted for a long time despite much gigging

and recording. What's the history of these models?

Jon Weiner
Hollywood, FL

Q I started playing drums about a year ago. I recently bought a used Zildjian *Scimitar* 18" crash/ride that sounds like a trashy gong. I'd like to find other cymbals with a similar sound, but I can't locate more *Scimitar* cymbals anywhere. Could you give me some background information on this series, and tell me where I could find some of them?

Konrad
Mattawan, MI

A Whew! It's rare that we have such a barrage of questions pertaining to the same manufacturer. Fortunately, Zildjian's product specialist (and cymbal historian) John King was up to the task of researching and responding to all these inquiries. Here are his answers.

"In response to Bob and Rod's questions about 'Made In Turkey' cymbals, after Avedis Zildjian established his factory in the United States in 1929, a faction of the Zildjian family continued to make a small number of cymbals in Istanbul, Turkey. According to Armand Zildjian, 'The Gretsch Company, who distributed these cymbals in the US, held the registration of the trademark at that time. Which particular trademark was used when is information kept exclusively by Gretsch until 1972, when the Zildjian family regained sole possession of all *K Zildjian* trademarks. It was also at that time that the Zildjian factions in Turkey agreed that all *K* cymbals should be manufactured in North America.'

"Older Zildjian trademarks are always difficult to use in trying to date a particular cymbal. It would often be necessary to resurrect a trademark stamp that had not been used for some time in order to maintain the validity of its registration. Other clues—such as lathing techniques or bell design—can sometimes be used to determine a time period when a cymbal was manufactured, but that often requires someone who worked within that period to verify the style of man-

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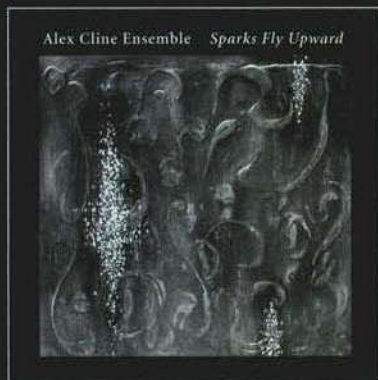
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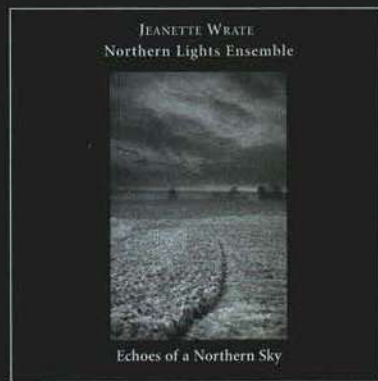
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ufacture. On occasion, the individual craftsman might leave an identifying mark (like the "G" on Bob's cymbal), but particulars such as these were never recorded. The lack of a trademark on a cymbal would mean that it was not manufactured by the Zildjian family.

"As to the odd size of Rod's cymbal, it was quite common for cymbals not to have 'even' sizes during the first half of this century. Craftsmen would often make the most of what a particular casting would give them once it was thinned down to its working weight. No one wanted to 'cut away' material that often took many hours to complete. As technology progressed, consistency in all aspects of cymbal-making allowed for more uniformity in cymbal sizes.

"Depending on the overall condition and sound of an old cymbal, it could bring as much as the retail price of a new cymbal. But remember, 'beauty is in the ears of the beholder.'

"Regarding Nick's question about the 'Constantinople' trademark, in 1972 Avedis Zildjian began producing cymbals with our brilliant finish, and he used the 'Constantinople' notation with the 'crescent moon' trademark to better delineate this new product from our 'regular finish' line. We continued to use this trademark in various sizes up until 1989, when we started to use the traditional A or K trademark for all brilliant cymbals.

"Dan, the *Pre-Aged K Dry* ride was actually a derivative of the *K Custom* ride. The *K Custom* was the first design of a cymbal that incorporated a 'hybrid' style of hammering. First, symmetrical (A-style) hammering was used to allow the cymbal to have a higher bow to create more mid-range and high-end overtones. Then random (A"-style) hammering was used to add more body and low end to the sound. After realizing the unique sound properties this type of hammering generated, we developed a proprietary method of 'stressing' the alloy just prior to the lathing process that created a unique 'feel' and expression to a cymbal with a light ride weight. These prototype cymbals were acknowledged as having properties that compared favorably to instruments that had been played for many years. The *K Pre-Aged Dry* ride continues to be a popular choice with players looking for a versatile light ride cymbal.

"The new *K Constantinople* rides are a

different breed altogether. This range of cymbals has a unique blend of overtones due to extensive computerized random hammering and vintage hand-lathing techniques. The profile (bow) is not as high as the *Pre-Aged* model, and the bell of the cymbal is smaller and heavily hammered to help contain the spread of sound without sounding 'dry.' The deep hammer marks and minimal lathing (done with antique cutting tools) helped produce an extremely wide range of overtones and an excellent balance of ride articulation and breadth of sound. Many drummers consider these cymbals to relate very well to the 'old K sound.' They should only improve with age.

"Finally, regarding *Amir* and *Scimitar* cymbals, the introduction of the *Amir* line in 1983 was the first time Zildjian manufactured 'sheet bronze' or 'Euro' style cymbals, using B8 alloy (92% copper, 8% tin) rather than the B20 alloy (80% copper, 20% tin, with trace amounts of silver) used in our 'cast' cymbals. The *Amir* line originated with 18", 20", and 22" rides, 16" and 18" crashes, and 18" and 20" Chinas. Hi-hats were offered in 14" and 15" sizes in traditional and *Power* models. (The latter had a bottom cymbal with cutouts around the outer edge.) *Amir* cymbals had an emphasis on the high end, which might have produced an effect of a heavier cymbal, but with the response of a lighter counterpart. The *Impulse* line, introduced in 1985, was a derivative of *Amir* technology and definitely was a heavier product.

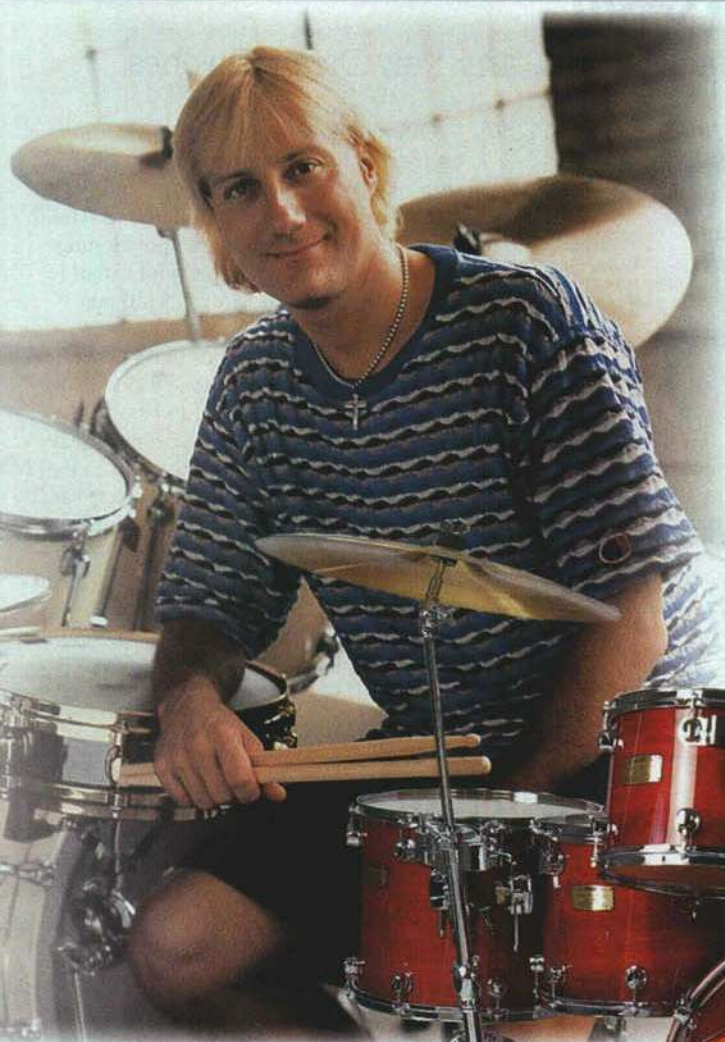
"All of the *Amir* product variations were successful, but due to technological advances in hammering and shaping techniques, the line 'evolved' into the *Scimitar* and *Scimitar Bronze* lines. The new cymbal process allowed us not only to create new cymbal sounds, but to make them more consistent (and more affordable).

"The sheet models mentioned above should not be considered as 'entry level' cymbals merely because of their comparative cost against our cast products. The alloy is simply different, and it cannot express itself dynamically the same way that the cast alloy can. These cymbals just ranked as another sonic option within the Zildjian line. The *Amir* and *Scimitar* lines have now been superseded by our new ZBT (Zildjian Bronze Technology) and ZBT Plus lines of sheet cymbals."

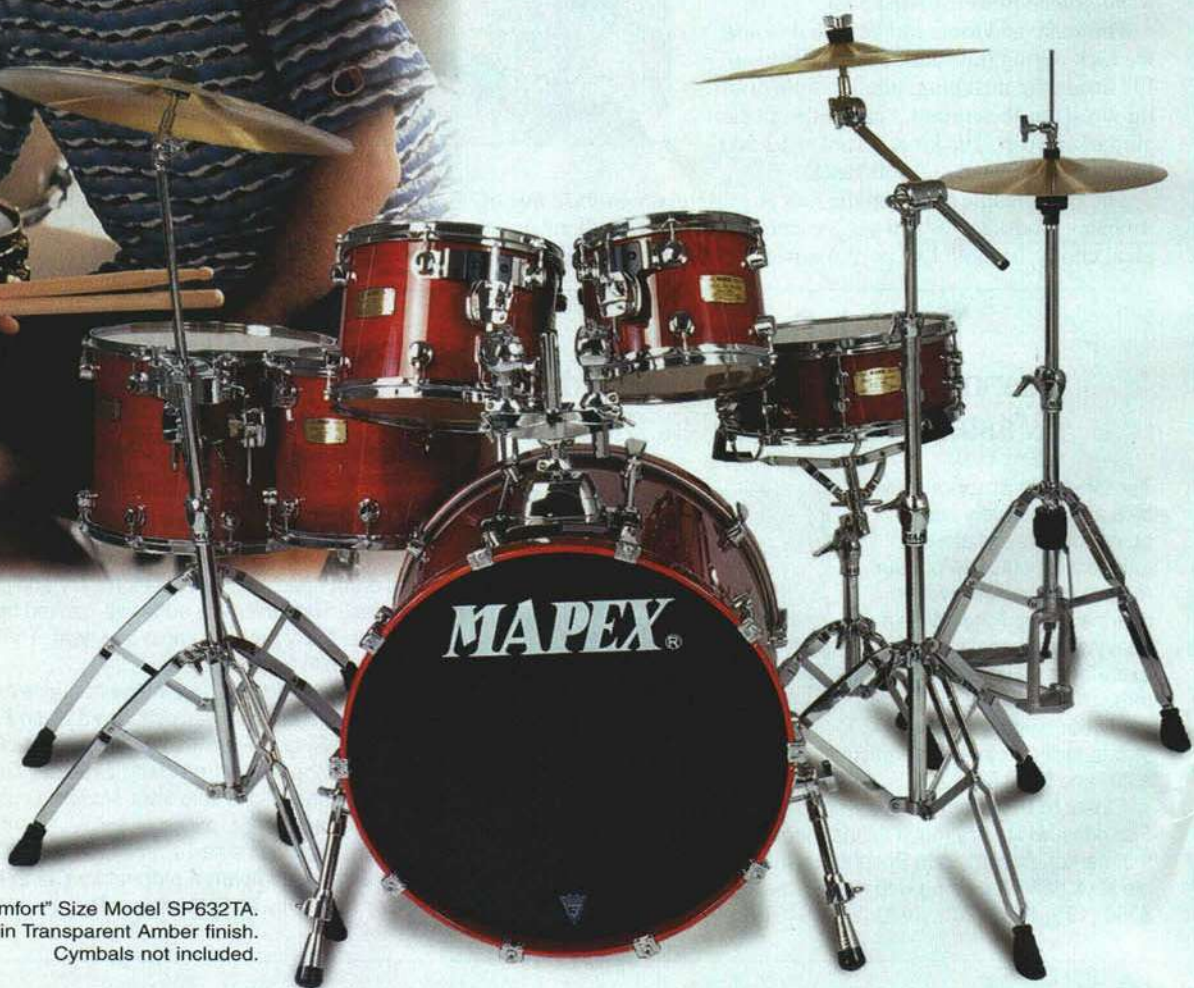


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The snare and toms can be stored inside the kick during transport, and all hardware fits inside the matching, tubular-style drum throne. Thus the entire kit can get from car to club in one trip. The kit is priced at \$2,500, including hardware and soft cases.

The 6-ply maple shells on the new *Alex Acuna Signature* line of timbales produce a "warm yet present tone that makes them an ideal choice for both live performance and studio recording."



Offered in diameters from 8" to 15", each drum includes an aluminum suspension ring for high head tension, and fits on a standard Yamaha ball & clamp tom holder, which allows for flexible positioning. Drums are available with a white sparkle lacquer finish, from \$250 to \$350 per drum.

Getting to the bottom of things, Yamaha has unveiled four new throne models: the *DS-640*, *DS-840*, *DS-940*, and *DS-1000*. The *840*, *940*, and *1000* have a new heavy-duty casting used to attach the seat to the base. The *DS-940* adds a bench-style seat and extra-stable quad base. The flagship *DS-1000* throne includes all those features, plus a heavy-duty hydraulic system (developed by the auto industry) said to prevent

bouncing, even during a heavy workout. The entry-level *DS-640* is the least-expensive throne Yamaha has ever offered. Retail prices are: \$79 (*DS-640*), \$170 (*DS-840*), \$240 (*DS-940*), and \$295 (*DS-1000*).

Turkish Delights

Bosphorus King Ping Ride and Master Series Thin Flat Ride

Turkish-made Bosphorus cymbals are a relatively new brand, but they've already gained a reputation—primarily for jazz cymbals. However, their new *King Ping* ride is a heavyweight beast with an extra-large bell designed to cut through the loudest rock. Still, overtones remain well below stick attack for clarity and articulation. The cymbal is priced at \$435 for a 20" and \$550 for a 22".



Closer to Bosphorus's established territory are *Master Series Thin Flat* rides, which are much thinner and darker than other flat rides on the market. According to Bosphorus, these cymbals produce "incredible stick definition along with musky, low overtones." List prices are: \$390 (19"), \$435 (20"), \$470 (21"), \$495 (22"), and \$525 (24").

A Hole In Your Head... And Other Goodies

Aquarian Port Hole, Essentials Pak, and Precision-Corps Kevlar Marching Head

Bass drum need a little ventilation? Try adding a *Port Hole*, from Aquarian. *Port Holes* are adhesive-backed hole-cutting templates that make this tricky project simple and neat. They're available in either black or white for \$6.95.

A perfect gift for the drummer who has everything (but needs more), Aquarian's *Essentials Pak* contains a *Satin Finish coated 14"* head, a *14" Studio Ring*, a *Port Hole* (in black), a *Kick Pad*, a medium-weight *Cymbal Spring*, and a free *Basic Drumset Tuning* video by Roy Burns (which features Roy's solo from *Modern Drummer's 10th Anniversary Festival*). Each *Pak* is priced at \$56.

Finally, Aquarian's new *Precision-Corps Kevlar* marching heads are made with the company's proprietary *Compressed Resin Process* for greater sensitivity and projection. They're available at \$44.50 (13") and \$45 (14").

Hey! I've Been Framed!

DrumFrame Version 2

The DrumFrame is a device that enables drummers to mount their drumset in a reclined position, which the makers claim greatly reduces upper-body and back fatigue while taking up less room than a traditional drumkit. The original version introduced in 1998 has now been superseded by Version 2 (V.2). The unit allows the mounting of any acoustic or electronic drumset, using DrumFrame's *FrameWork* rack system or the drummer's own hardware. V.2 adds the following features: a swivel seat that permits easier access to lateral portions of

the kit (as well as a more natural feel), a redesigned snare drum mount that provides greater stability and positioning options, and lighter weight (by 10%).

Also new is the version V.2L *Rocket*, which allows for the mounting of a compact electronic percussion set. This unit takes advantage of the DrumFrame's ergonomic benefits in an even smaller footprint, due to its unique wing. Pedals attach directly to the wing unit with hook-and-loop fasteners, and a multi-pad controller (*drumKAT*, Roland *SPD-20*, etc.) mounts to the snare drum holder. Additional pads, acoustic cymbals, or other percussion are added via the two small *FrameWork* arms that span the front of the *Rocket*.

A Slew Of Surprising Sounds From Sabian

Sabian Pro Sonix Series and New Manhattan, Will Calhoun, and B8 Models

With input from drummer/producer Jonathan Mover, Sabian has introduced a new range of models to its popular *PRO* series of unrolled B8 bronze cymbals. *Sonix* cymbals are specially designed to produce a bandwidth of sound that can be manipulated in amplified and recording situations. Cymbals in this new series feature large hammer marks that emanate from the bell to the edge in a radial pattern.



Coupled with the high profile, hand lathing, and tonally focused nature of the B8 alloy, this hammering delivers sounds that are said to be "bright, cutting, and much more musical than metallic." The crashes "explode with focused, directional projection" while the hats and the ride are "tonally tight, with clean sticking that remains highly defined at all times." *Sonix* cymbals are finished in a highly polished brilliant finish and sealed in clear protective lacquer. Retail prices are: \$91 (10" splash), \$222 (14" hi-hats), \$150 (16" crash), \$168

(18" crash), and \$201 (20" ride). All cymbals carry a one-year warranty against defects in material and craftsmanship.

Sabian's *Manhattan* line, known for its traditional Turkish tone and vintage sounds, has two newcomers. The 16" *Manhattan Bridge* ride is so named because it is said to "bridge" the role of crash and ride, combining "simmering ride capabilities" on its bow with full-wash ride and punchy crash responses across its edge. The other newcomer—the 18" *Manhattan*—delivers the "warm, semi-raw 'tah' stick sound of the larger *Manhattans*,

but with a tighter tonal output and great stick definition." The 16" *Manhattan Bridge* ride lists for \$250; the 18" *Manhattan* ride sells for \$294.

Will Calhoun's heavy *Signature* ride has now been complemented with a thin, heavily hammered raw bronze *Ambient* model. The *Ambient* ride is said to deliver a "big, breathy, multi-colored sound that rises up from a dark, low-pitched soul." It has a low- to mid-pitch "exotic roar" said to be ideal for drum 'n' bass, funk, and jazz, and retails for \$321.

The success of Sabian's *B8* line has led to the addition of several new models. They are as follows: 8" splash (\$54), 12" splash (\$63), 10" China splash (\$60), 16" medium crash (\$94.50), 18" medium crash (\$110), 16" *Rock* crash (\$94.50), 18" *Rock* crash (\$110), 20" *Rock* ride (\$132), 14" *Rock Hats* (\$144), and 14" *Mini Chinese* (\$72).

Improved Features At Lower Cost?

Pearl Forum and Export Improvements

Pearl's entry-level *Forum (FX)* kits now feature the company's exclusive scarf joint (overlapping seam) construction, said to make the shells "substantially stronger" and to allow them to "vibrate uniformly, unimpeded by air pockets, for superior resonance and sustain." Newly designed low-mass lugs enhance the drums' tonality, resonance, and appearance. The snare drum has been upgraded to the *SS-414*, with a newly designed Gladstone-type strainer. The line's tom-mounting brackets have been streamlined to complement the slimmer lugs, and the tom arms have been upgraded to the *TH-88*, with sixty teeth for more precise tom placement. The kits are priced at \$899 for the standard *FX 22-5* five-piece configuration (which is unchanged from the 1998 price despite the upgrades). Additionally, a 10x10 tom is now available separately for added configuration versatility.

Pearl's popular *Export (ELX)* has new available kit configurations. The *ELX 20-5* offers 8x10 and 9x12 rack toms, a 14x14 floor tom, a 16x20 kick, and a 5 12x14 snare. The *ELX 20-5H* features 8x10, 9x12, and 12x14 rack toms, a 16x20 kick, and a 5 12x14 snare. Suggested retail price for either configuration is \$1,399. Meanwhile, price reductions of up to 22% have been applied to the suggested list prices of component bass drums and toms.

Standard *Export (ELX)* features include Sens/toner steel snare drums, I.S.S. suspension tom mounts, double-braced *PowerPro* hardware, and *Pro Tone* heads. Cobalt mist and Sahara mist colors now join the other five available finishes.

DW Invades The Middle Ground

DW Workshop Series Drums and Delta II Bass Drum Pedals

After years of producing only high-end drums, DW recently hit the entry level with their *Collarlock By DW* kits. Now they've entered the mid-priced kit market with a new line of production-style drums called the *Workshop* series. Made in the US with thin maple DW shells without reinforcing hoops, the line features a "post-production shell selection process" said to ensure each kit's overall tonal quality, while still containing costs for consumers who don't require the unlimited choices of sizes, colors, and configurations that custom kits provide.

Along with a new oval-shaped lug that incorporates the concentric-circle design of DW's trademarked round lug, standard features of *Workshop* drums include contoured *STM* (suspension-style) tom mounts, *True-Pitch* tension rods, *Crystal/Clear* top and bottom heads, *BDF* bass drum muffling pillows, and precision bearing edges. The kits are available in five-piece (9x12, 11x14, 13x16 toms, 18x22 kick, and 5x14 snare) and six-piece (8x10, 9x12, 11x14, 13x16 toms, 18x22 kick, and 5x14 snare) configurations in a choice of transparent cherry red, royal blue, or emerald green. Matching component snare drums, bass drums, and toms are also available.



DW has also introduced their *Delta II* bass drum pedals, which represent the latest improvements to the company's *5000 Series* pedal line. Innovations include a double chain & sprocket drive, a larger footboard and heel castings, an oversized external *Delta*-style ball-bearing hinge, a dual side-adjusting hoop clamp, and a new interchangeable footboard weight system. (The last two are also sold separately.) Pedals are available in single or double versions, with a choice of *Turbo* (center) or *Accelerator* (offset) sprockets.

Get Down...Get Funky...Get Ethnic!

Meinl Solid Brass Triangles and 20th Anniversary Bongo Set

Meinl's new brass triangles are intended for symphonic, pop, and ethnic music applications. Available in small, medium, and large sizes, each is equipped with a nylon band with a wood handle and an appropriately sized beater.

In continuing observance of their twentieth anniversary, Meinl is offering a special *Free Ride* bongo set/bongo bag package.

Available in African brown, red, and vintage sunburst finishes, the bongos have a special anniversary logo badge, *True Skin* heads, and Meinl's *Free Ride* isolation mounting system, and are priced at \$229.



Ludwig's Leather Look

Ludwig Cymbal and Drumstick Bag

No, it isn't *real* leather. Ludwig's *LMOOB Deluxe* cymbal bag is made of a leather-like material with a tough canvas bottom for durability and two insert liners to help protect its precious contents. The main section of the bag can hold as many as six 22" cymbals; there's also a hi-hat compartment attached to one side of the bag, and a drumstick/accessory compartment attached to the other. The bag also features heavy-duty nylon zippers and a detachable shoulder strap, and lists for \$125.

Like its cymbal-bag sibling, the *LM01B Deluxe* stick/mallet bag is made of a leather-like material. The bag has two ties to attach to floor toms or other instruments, along with heavy-duty nylon zippers, a detachable shoulder strap, and a special compartment for sheet music and instruction books. It's priced at \$50.

Pounding The Indoor Beat

Vic Firth Corpmaster Indoor Multi-Tenor and Bass Drum Mallets



Corpmaster Indoor Multi-Tenor mallets (top)
and Indoor Marching Bass mallets

Indoor drum corps-style events are becoming ever more popular. As a result, sticks and mallets specifically designed for this activity are also growing in popularity. Vic Firth's model *IMT10* multi-tenor mallet features a small nylon head with a curved playing surface that is mounted on a heavy-gauge aluminum shaft. Its smaller head produces a clear attack and a pure sound without unwanted and excessive overtones. The mallet is 14" in length with a 1" x 5/16" head size, and retails for \$34.50 per pair.

Vic's *IMB10* bass mallet was specifically designed to achieve clarity and articulation in the indoor marching environment. The diameter of the super-hard felt disc on this extreme cartwheel mallet is full-sized, but its playing surface is greatly reduced. The shaft is made of heavy-gauge aluminum for reduced weight. The mallet has a length of 14" and a head size of 2" x 5/16", and sells for \$39 per pair.

Yo! Keep It Quiet In There!

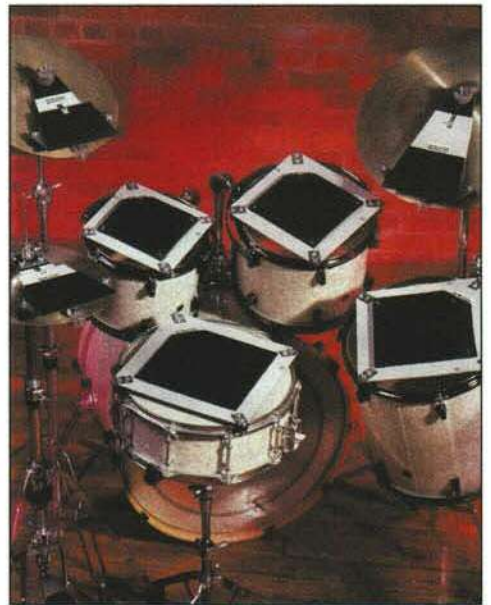
Revolution Drumkit Mutes

Okay, they look a little weird. But according to the manufacturer, Revolution *Drumkit Mutes* provide "radically pure drum tones and up to 80% noise reduction." The *Mutes* are fully adjustable and conform to virtually any brand and size of drum. The pads are further claimed to offer "tremendous sensitivity, response, and tone," while allowing the user to "play drums at conversation-level volume."

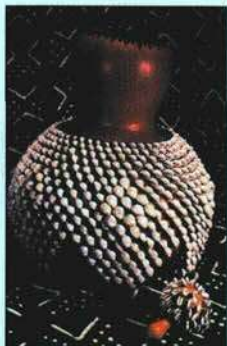
The *Warhead* model, designed for snares, mounted toms and floor toms, comes in sizes to fit 10"-16" drums and is priced at \$39.99. The snare model attaches to its own separate base, so drummers can use the mute off the drum as a stand-alone practice pad. Snare and tom models each have different striking surfaces to more closely mimic the sound and feel of each type of drum.

The *Cymbulator* is designed for 20"-22" rides, 15"-18" crashes, and 13"-15" hi-hat cymbals. (It's not recommended for Chinas.) The device provides "excellent sound and sustain," and can be adjusted to modify volume and tone. It's priced at \$49.99.

Revolution *Drumkit Mutes* are currently available through Sam Ash Music stores or directly from the manufacturer.



And What's More



LUCINDA ELUSON has expanded her line of hand percussion with shekeres of all sizes, including models with cowrie shells and hand-carved gourds. Prices start at \$50.

KAMAN has announced the return of their CB MX series drums, originally manufactured from 1988 to 1995. All drums have 9-ply

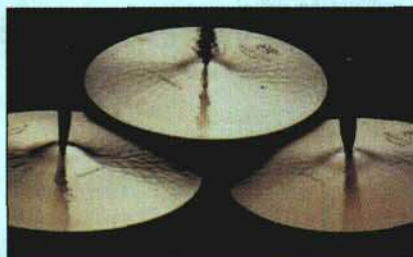


mahogany shells, metallic coverings, and "quick" depths. *MX* hardware features full-sized, double-braced stands with professional features such as locking adjustment mechanisms, a dual-surface beater, and a firm drum throne seat. A five-piece kit with hardware retails for under \$900.

The new version of **TAMA'S Air Ride** suspended snare system doesn't require Tama's *Star-Cast* die-cast hoops, so it can be used with any snare drum. And it's cheaper! Retail prices are: 12" and 13"—\$195.99, 14"—\$199.99.

Fashioned after the wood tone blocks introduced by **TOCA** in 1994, the company's new *Tone Blocks* are said to produce a warmer, richer tone than is generally found in a synthetic block. They are available in small (\$36.95) and large (\$39.95) sizes, each with a heavy eye-bolt/wing nut mount that will fit most accessory posts.

ZILDJIAN has added 15", 16", and 17" orchestral suspended cymbals to complement the existing 18" model in their *K Constantinople* line. Zildjian says these medium-weight



cymbals are "very rich, with a full-bodied sound and long sustain." They're priced as follows: 15"—\$360, 16"—\$400, and 17"—\$435.

Zildjian has also published a new *Cymbal & Drumstick Selection Guide*. It includes size and finish availability, as well as sound and design characteristics of each model in all lines. It also features many endorser photos, cymbal setups, and testimonials. Contact a Zildjian dealer to obtain a copy, or request one directly from Zildjian.

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Slingerland Studio King Touring Series Drumkit

by Rick Van Horn
photos by Jim Esposito

A grand old name is making a grand play for your business.

I have a soft spot in my heart for Slingerland drums. I cut my teeth on Gene Krupa records, and I adored Buddy Rich. Although Buddy played various brands of drums over his career, he was playing Slingerlands when I purchased my own BR-model big band-style

kit in 1976, and he was playing them again (albeit some 1930s-era *Radio Kings*) just prior to his passing in 1987.

So it was with regret that I witnessed the demise of a once-great brand of drums during the late '70s and all of the 1980s. However, after a few false starts in the '90s (and one change of corporate ownership), it looks as though Slingerland finally has their feet firmly on the comeback trail.

Up until recently the company was focusing on their extremely expensive high-end *Studio King* drums, which feature die-cast hoops, custom finishes by finishing artist Pat Foley, and other wonderful (but price-boosting) elements. This put them in the unenviable position of having great drums that almost no one could afford.



In an effort to retain their quality but become more competitive (at least with other high-end lines), last year Slingerland introduced their *Studio King Touring Series*. These drums feature the same basic design elements of their *Studio King* cousins: all-maple shells, *True Timbre* hand-burnished bearing edges, suspended rack toms, and classic Slingerland lugs. However, to reduce cost the kits are fitted with Slingerland's traditional rolled-steel *Stick Saver* hoops (as opposed to the *Studio King* series' die-cast hoops) and are available only with wrapped or *Professional Series* satin painted finishes. In addition, the drums are available either with stands or without (as "shell packs").

Our test kit is indicated in Slingerland's price list as the *Metropolitan* model. It included a 16x20 bass drum, 8x10 and 9x12 rack toms, a 14x14 floor tom, and a 5x14 snare drum. Kits are available with either "traditional" rack-tom mounts (on the bass drum) or with "isolation" mounting, which puts the rack toms on combination tom/cymbal stands, away from the bass drum. Our test kit was of the latter style. (The toms are fitted with RIMS mounts in either case, while the floor tom in either setup is fitted with legs.)

Additional hardware included a bass drum pedal, snare stand, and hi-hat stand. (We were also sent an additional straight/boom cymbal stand not indicated on the price list as being part of this drumkit model.) The kit was wrapped in a classic black diamond pearl covered finish.

The toms were fitted with coated Remo *Ambassador* batter and bottom heads. The snare also had an *Ambassador* batter, along with an *Ambassador* snare-side head. The bass drum came equipped with a Remo *PowerStroke 3* batter and a black *Ambassador-weight* Slingerland logo head with no hole.

Construction

The first thing I noticed about the *Studio King Touring Series* drums was how light they are. The toms feature 6-ply, 6 mm shells, with no reinforcing rings; the bass drum has an 8-ply, 8 mm shell. The snare is the thickest drum, at 10 plies and 10 mm. But with its rolled-steel hoops even it is lighter in weight than most comparable snares.

Are these thin shells strong? Yes, says Slingerland's Pat Foley. Pat points out that although the company's shells are supplied by Keller, they're not the same as those of other companies who use the same source. "Keller makes shells to the specifications that a company gives them," says Pat. "They hate making our shells, because we have a special lay-up for them. But it's that lay-up that allows us to have shells that are as thin as they are and still as strong as they are."

Along with Slingerland's unique shells comes their equally unique bearing edges. Their process of hand-burnishing the edges results in what they term their *True Timbre* edge. Along with being sanded and polished to an incredible smoothness, the angle of the edge (sloping into the drum) is less acute than that used by most companies. In addition, the *outer* edge is more rounded, which allows it to seat well into the collar of a drumhead.

Sound

Slingerland's bearing edges are a large ingredient in the overall sound created by their drums. The edge creates greater contact

WHAT'S HOT

construction quality—especially bearing edges—is outstanding
drums have a unique sound: warm, round, and full
new hardware design is innovative and attractive

WHAT'S NOT

pricing may make drums difficult to afford

between the drum and the shell, which, in turn, tends to promote a warmer, fuller sound—heavy on the low end, with perhaps a bit less emphasis on the attack. Between this effect and the resonance and low-frequency focus of their thin shells, the toms on our test kit sounded wonderful. With their *Ambassador* batters they had plenty of articulation and clarity, but they also offered depth and warmth—a round, broad character that I've only ever heard on other Slingerland drums. When features editor Bill Miller tightened them up a bit to create a classic "jazz" tuning, they got even livelier—but never sounded thin.

The bass drum also benefited from its edges and its relatively thin shell. Although only a 16x20 drum, it sounded absolutely *huge*. Because it had no hole in the front head or padding in the drum, it had a certain predictable boominess. But that could be controlled with a little pedal technique (or the application of a simple felt strip). Drummers who preferred a dryer sound could achieve it by the use of a front head with built-in muffling, such as a Remo *PowerStroke 3*, Evans *EQ3*, or Aquarian *Regulator*.

The 10-ply, ten-lug snare drum had a very "middle of the road" sound, which would allow it to serve in just about any capacity you could think of. Its shell was thick enough to promote plenty of highs, but the shallow bearing edges kept the sound warm and full-bodied. (The drum could also be tuned down nicely for a swampy, throaty sound.) At all tensions the snare response was excellent. Upon first playing the drum, one *MD* editor remarked, "This is what I remember Slingerland snares sounding like!"

Appearance

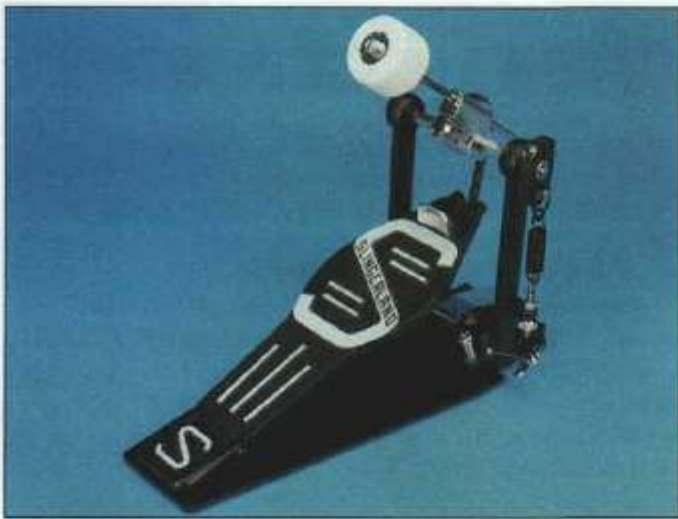
What can you say about a black diamond pearl finish except that it looks classy and "historic"? Everybody at *MD* liked the look of this kit; the general feeling was that the black pearl seemed to go well with the "jazz" sizes of the drums. But if you aren't a black pearl fan, Slingerland offers these drums in six other wrapped finishes and eight hand-rubbed satin painted finishes.

The *MD* editors also agreed that the historic "cloud-shaped" brass logo badge on the drums is a nice touch: subtle and attractive, yet readily identifiable. An added nicety is the Slingerland name—in the famous script logo design—engraved on the rims of the toms and snare.

A highlight (no pun intended) of the kit was its excellent chrome plating. Many people figure that "chrome is chrome," but some companies have plating with more reflectivity and "gleam" than others do. On the drums and the stands alike, Slingerland's chrome finish is deep and lustrous.

Hardware

Slingerland has totally redesigned its stands and mounting hardware in the past year or so. Frankly, the new *Magnamax* hardware



The *Tempo King* pedal supplied with the *Studio King Touring Series* kit appears somewhat low-tech, but performs surprisingly well.

is light-years ahead of anything the company has produced in recent memory.

Toms are now secured by ball-and-socket mounts fitted with knurled L-arms. (I'd prefer hex rods to absolutely prevent slipping, but Slingerland's arms are fitted with memory locks to reduce this possibility.) Our test kit had the tom mounts attached to dual-purpose tom/cymbal floor stands; traditional bass-drum mounts are also available. (The snare-stand basket is also adjusted by a ball-and-socket system.)

Speaking of stands, the *Magnamax* cymbal stands are quite innovative in design. All of the stands we tried were of the straight/boom combination design, with a short boom that can either be utilized or can "disappear" within the stand to make it a straight model. (I personally think *all* cymbal stands should be made this way to maximize their versatility.)

At first I didn't care for the boom arms' rather industrial-looking tillers, which are basically large U-fittings wrapped around a barrel and adjusted with a big spring-loaded bolt. But then I discovered that not only did this design afford infinite tilting capability (as opposed to an incremental ratchet), but also allowed the tilter to rotate on a side-to-side axis. Admittedly this same rotation could be achieved by the traditional method of loosening the bolt that secures the boom arm in the stand and rotating the entire arm. But once you get a cymbal on a boom arm it's often awkward to *reach* the point where the boom connects to the stand. Being able to adjust both the forward/backward *and* side-to-side positioning of the cymbal at the same time is very convenient.

The stands themselves all provide tremendous height capability. This is an advantage if you need it, a disadvantage (in terms of the weight of that long tubing) if you don't. Ditto for the very heavy, very solid double-braced legs on each stand. However, an indisputable advantage is the fact that each tripod can be released at both the top *and* bottom points at which it connects to the stand's central shaft. This means that the leg bracing can be folded up in different ways, which can help you "bridge" bass drum spurs, other stand legs, pedals, etc. It's a nice feature.

The hi-hat stand features a simple chain-pull operation, and was smooth and quiet to play. Spring tension is adjusted by a large plas-

tic dial above the pedal; the bottom cymbal tilter is another plastic dial that creates different angles as it is rotated around a series of notches. The nice thing about this design is that there is no tilter bolt to back out under heavy playing.

The only negative feature I saw on the hi-hat was the fact that the swivelable base was secured at the top by a wing screw, but at the bottom by a drumkey bolt. I'm sure Slingerland's thinking is that once you set the angle of the tripod in relation to the footboard, you'll probably lock it in and not re-adjust it. But some positionings can make it impossible to fold the legs and the pedal up for transport. The tripod has to be released and repositioned for pickup, then positioned again during the next setup. This would be made simpler if *both* adjustment points were secured by wing screws.

The *Tempo King* bass drum pedal was a pleasant surprise. At first glance it looked a little clunky, with a black oversized footboard and a fairly low-tech mechanical design: simple yoke, single chain drive, not a lot of adjustments. But right out of the box it proved to be quick and responsive, with a light action and plenty of power. It also has a side-adjusting hoop clamp, which is a nice touch.

The throw-off on the snare drum is simple and attractive: a long wedge-shaped design as opposed to the very "boxy" look common to many high-end snare drums. It also had a very smooth operation, with no "snap" between the "off" and "on" positions.

Finally, the bass drum featured drumkey-operated tension rods. I've said it before and I'll say it again: This is simply the way to go. It prevents de-tuning during pack-up and makes casing or bagging the drum much easier.

Conclusions And Pricing

If by now you've gotten the impression that I liked this kit, you're absolutely right. In fact, everybody at *MD* had a ball playing it. Other than the minuscule suggestions I made about hardware improvements, I couldn't find a single negative thing to say about the kit—except that I question Slingerland's idea of "affordable."

Our review kit as described carries a suggested retail list price of \$4,753. That hardly seems a "reduced" price, even for a high-end drumkit. (Of course, everything is relative; the same kit in Slingerland's *Studio King* series with a painted finish and die-cast hardware would list at \$6,283!)

I spoke with Pat Foley about Slingerland's price structure, and he was quite candid with me. He said that with the size of their operation and the fact that the drums are made in America, they cannot hope to compete on price with the high-end lines of the major "offshore" manufacturers. So their goal is to be able to go head-to-head on price and quality with the major *onshore* drum companies. "Our kit is actually less expensive than a comparable kit from the biggest name in high-end American-made drums," says Pat. "In addition, consumers shouldn't be frightened by 'list' pricing. We're able to offer our dealers pretty good discounts—which they can pass on to their customers. As a result, a major retail chain could offer the *Metropolitan* kit for a price *substantially* lower than the suggested retail price."

Let's hope so. Slingerland's drums are too good to languish by virtue of being priced out of the market.

Slingerland Radio King And Studio King Snare Drums

by Rick Van Horn
photos by Jim Esposito

Sometimes you *can* go home again.

Radio King Snares

With the possible exception of the Ludwig *Black Beauty*, the Slingerland *Radio King* is the most venerated name in the history of snare drums. For generations the *Radio King's* steam-bent one-piece shell—and the sound it created—has represented the ultimate in wood snare-drum performance. This reverence is further borne out by the number of custom snare drum companies that came into being in the '80s and '90s (including Noble & Cooley, Select/Solid, and Johnny Craviotto) with the expressed intention of offering snare drums built in the tradition of the *Radio King*. Many of the major drum manufacturers also offered solid-shell models.

Ironically, the one company that *wasn't* offering *Radio King-style* drums in this same time period was Slingerland. The company was virtually dormant through much of the '80s and '90s, and only started seriously marketing drums again a few years ago. And although "new" *Radio Kings* were introduced then, those early models weren't up to the standards that their ancestors had established.

However, years have passed and the work force at Slingerland has gained more experience. Additionally, finish artist Pat Foley has come into the picture to add his special talents to the mix. The result is a series of drums that combine the best elements of *Radio King* history with the advantages of modern production technology.

For anyone who *doesn't* know what a *Radio King* is all about: Each shell is constructed from a single piece of maple, which is steamed to make it pliable. The maple board is bent into a cylindrical shape, and its ends are glued together to form the drumshell. Reinforcement hoops (also of one piece of wood) are used on the inside of the shell to strengthen it. Then the drums are given their bearing edges and snare beds according to Slingerland's *True Timbre* hand-burnishing process.

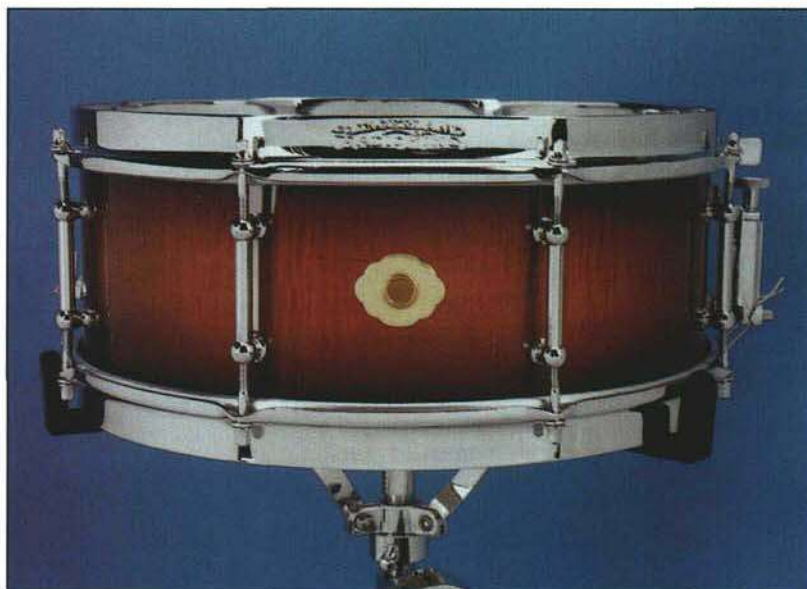
The advantage of a one-piece shell is that it can resonate as one body, in the manner of a marimba bar or a clave. Many drummers feel that a ply shell, which is

WHAT'S HOT

Radio Kings offer unique, historic sound with contemporary construction quality
Studio King piccolo has extensive pitch range for its size
all drums feature outstanding finishes



6 1/2x14 Super Radio King



5 1/2x14 Radio King Select (with custom tube lugs)

actually many layers of wood bonded together by glue, cannot duplicate this resonance, no matter how well that shell is made. The resonance and reflectivity of the solid shell translate as increased responsiveness and projection from the drum.

There are currently four models of *Radio Kings* available. The *Radio King Original* features a chrome-plated, straight-sided brass hoop engraved with the *Radio King* logo, and eight classic Slingerland *Streamline* lugs. This is the most accurate reproduction of the classic drums of the '30s and '40s.

The *Radio King Die-Cast* is identical to the *Original* but for the substitution of die-cast hoops, for those who prefer the durability and tuning consistency that they afford. The *Super Radio King* features die-cast hoops and a ten-lug design. This drum is

sanded as smooth as a baby's bottom.

Slingerland's bearing edges, I believe, are the basis of the unique and very identifiable Slingerland sound. Slingerland drums—ply or solid-shell—never sound "brittle" or "sharp." Instead, they sound warm, round, fat, and sensitive. The solid, one-piece shells of the *Radio King* snares enhance and project that sound, which is why *Radio Kings* have been so popular as recording drums for generations.

I thoroughly enjoyed playing both of our test drums, but my personal preference was the *Select* model. With its eight-lug design and fairly thin brass hoops, it had an "earthy" character that I liked a lot. (The hoops did chew up sticks on rimshots, though.) The drum sounded very lively and quite a bit bigger than its size would indicate, yet was always tasty and a touch mellow. All of this was with the factory-installed *Ambassador* heads. The drum *really* got mellow and warm when I fitted it with a *Fiberskyn 3* batter.

The 6 1/2x14 *Super Radio King*, on the other hand, packed more of a punch. With its ten-lug design and die-cast hoops, it had a more pristine sound—perhaps even a little more "contemporary." Its depth gave it a throatier overall character, and allowed for a great "fatback" tuning. Yet it had plenty of drive at a higher tension, too. I'm not overly fond of die-cast hoops due to the weight they add to a drum, but I will say that the hoops on this drum helped to maintain consistent tuning even under some *serious* whacking. (And they didn't eat my sticks nearly as much when I played rimshots.)

To sum up, the *Radio Kings* we tested combine the "classic" look and character of yesteryear with the quality and technological know-how of today. These are beautiful instruments worthy of their heritage, and with a sound that rivals—if not surpasses—that of their revered ancestors. The 6 1/2x14 *Super Radio King* has a list price of \$1,450; the 5 1/2x14 *Radio King Select* (fitted with standard Slingerland *Streamline* lugs) is priced at \$1,895.



4x14 *Studio King*

designed for those seeking additional strength and tensioning capability.

Finally, there is the *Radio King Select*, which is identical to the *Original* in all but finish. These snares feature shells of flame and birds-eye maple that are hand-selected for their unique grain characteristics. Each drum is finished, signed, and numbered by Pat Foley.

For our review we received two *Radio King* drums: a 6 1/2x14 *Super Radio King* with an amber burst finish, and a 5 1/2x14 *Radio King Select* in a custom brown burst finish over flame maple. (This drum was further customized for a specific buyer by the addition of 1930s-style tube lugs.)

Let's start with the characteristics shared by both drums. First, they were both visually stunning. Finishes on drums today are almost universally excellent, but Slingerland's finishes are simply exquisite. Whether Pat Foley actually does them himself or just supervises, his touch is evident. Then there is Slingerland's excellent chrome plating, which just gleams.

The drums also shared Slingerland's *True Timbre* bearing edge. The shallowness of the edge's angle is more apparent on *Radio Kings*, which have reinforcing rings, and thus "thicker" edges, than on other Slingerland shells, which do not. The edges are also quite rounded on the outside (as opposed to having a straight counter-cut), which helps them to mesh with the collar of a drumhead. All of the edges on our test drums were cut flawlessly and

Along with the ten-ply, covered-finish snare drum that was reviewed earlier as part of the Slingerland *Studio King Touring Series* kit, we were also sent an example of the higher-priced *Studio King* series. This 4x14 piccolo drum featured a ten-ply all-maple shell, a gorgeous tobacco burst lacquer finish, die-cast hoops, and *Ambassador* heads.

This drum proved to be more versatile than many piccolos I've played in the past. It performed well in the traditional role of a piccolo (at the high end of the pitch scale), although perhaps without quite as much sheer piercing crack as some other drums. However, it could be tuned down lower—and it produced a warmer, broader sound—than most drums of its size. I attribute this characteristic once again to Slingerland's bearing edges.

The die-cast hoops and fairly thick shell make this a heavy little drum, but it certainly is lovely to look at—and to play. It's priced at \$836.

Slingerland Tre Cool Signature Spitfire Drumkit

by Rick Van Horn
photos by Jim Esposito

Would you like to be green for a day?

Slingerland's *Spitfire* series is its lowest-priced, budget/student line of drums. Most major companies sell such drums; they're made in Taiwan by factories who supply several different brands in a pretty generic fashion. These are drums designed specifically for the beginning player for whom sound quality is not yet a major consideration, but affordability is.

Slingerland offers a traditional five-piece *Spitfire* configuration that's virtually identical to every other kit in the budget-drum marketplace. But Slingerland also has an endorser by the name of Tre Cool, whose band appeals largely to the very age group at whom the *Spitfire* drums are targeted. It's a match made in marketing heaven, except for the fact that Tre doesn't play a standard five-piece kit. And since those young Tre wanna-bes are only likely to be interested in a kit "just like" the one he *does* play, it's understandable—in fact it was well-nigh inevitable—that Slingerland would offer one to them.

Of course, it isn't *really* the same kit. (Tre plays a *Studio King* set.) But it features drums of the same sizes, and with the same finish, and with logos bearing Tre's signature. And while it certainly won't sound the same as Tre's kit, it's priced so that our eager young drummers can actually *buy* it. (Which was everybody's goal in the first place, right?)

Now, to be fair, there are a few features on the *Tre Cool Signature* kit that aren't on the regular *Spitfire* model. The toms and bass drum feature the same 6-ply mahogany shells fitted with classic Slingerland lugs. But the snare is a 5 1/2x14 chrome-plated metal model (as opposed to the standard 6 1/2x14), and all the drums are fitted with 2.3 mm Slingerland *Stick Saver Rimshot* hoops. The toms and bass drum are covered in Tre's own *Indica* green wrap finish, as opposed to the red, black, or white coverings on the regular model.

The biggest difference, however, between the standard kit and the *Tre Cool Signature* model is the rack tom size(s). The standard kit is fitted with 10x12 and 11x13 toms. The *Tre Cool* kit boasts a single 11x14 rack tom. Rock 'n' roll!

The kit comes with what I found to be very practical and durable double-braced stands (including one straight and one boom cymbal stand, a hi-hat, and a snare stand) that were strong enough to withstand as

WHAT'S HOT

great color
very practical and functional hardware
association with Tre Cool might be a
motivation to practice

WHAT'S NOT

11x14 rack tom has physical and musical
limitations

much bashing as I could do, and yet were quite a bit lighter in weight than most double-braced hardware. This is an excellent choice for beginning rockers who may be smaller in size than in aspiration. The bass drum pedal is functional and simple to operate, while also being fairly light in weight.

I did have a problem with the design of the snare stand. The casting of the tilter ratchet is shaped in such a way as to prevent the basket from folding up compactly for transport. This could be improved by redesigning the casting to trim down the amount of metal around the circular tilter itself.

My only real criticism of the *Tre Cool Signature* kit concerns an area over which Slingerland really had no choice. If they were





A drummer's-eye-view of the *Tre Cool* kit illustrates how high the 11x14 rack tom must be positioned.

going to emulate Tre Cool's kit, they had to go with the 11x14 rack tom that he uses. It's just too identifiable to "cheat" on. (I guess they figured they could get away with substituting a 16x16 floor tom for Tre's 16x18.) Okay, I understand that. But there are two problems with this decision.

The first problem is functional: A rack tom of that size has limited positioning flexibility, and simply has to be set up fairly high. This could pose a difficulty for smaller players, or for people who just prefer to have a lower setup. It may also give impressionable young drummers the idea that this is how big and how high rack toms normally are, which is certainly not the case.

The second problem is musical: A rack tom that size isn't very versatile. It's good for big, deep, rock 'n' roll sounds—period.

That's fine if you're playing that kind of music. But what happens when your teacher wants you to learn a jazz fill or a samba pattern?

I should point out that the bass drum is fitted with a double tom mount, and that two tom arms came in the hardware package. Perhaps a second, smaller rack tom could be made available by Slingerland as an add-on item. This would go a long way towards making this kit configuration a more versatile instrument.

I also question the large hole in the front bass drum head. While it's true that inexperienced drummers might have trouble controlling the "boominess" of a drum with two solid heads, it wouldn't take much imagination or expertise to figure out how to muffle that boominess down. However, it's entirely possible that those same young players might not be aware that the lack of low end and resonance produced by the bass drum is largely due to the hole in the head, rather than exclusively to the drum itself. And even if they did, they'd be required to buy a new head to correct the problem. My philosophy is: Give the buyer a whole drumhead. He or she can always cut a hole in it if one is desired.

The acoustic performance of the *Tre Cool Signature* kit is as good as any of its ilk. I'll admit that the oversized rack tom does give the kit a bigger, more powerful sound than that of most "budget" kits. With a little judicious tuning and muffling, this kit could certainly serve as a learning tool, or as the rhythmic foundation of a neighborhood garage band. The finish is more attractive than those usually found on kits in this price range; the *Stick Saver* hoops are a nice feature as well. And the sales appeal (and, hopefully, practice motivation factor) of the Tre Cool name is undeniable. Given all that, I can recommend the *Tre Cool Signature* kit as a good value for its list price of \$949 (which is likely to be marked down quite a bit by most major retailers).

Aura Sound Bass Shaker And AMP-75

by Rick Van Horn
photos by Jim Esposito

Want to get more kick out of drumming?

Take a look at almost any concert stage today, and you'll notice a distinct absence of large floor monitor cabinets. Next, look carefully at the performers, and you're apt to see little plugs in their ears, with wires leading to a box hidden elsewhere on their person. Welcome to the world of in-ear monitoring.

In-ear monitors have gained tremendous popularity because they do two important things. First, they provide the performer with discreet monitor sound at a fidelity level and with an isolation factor far superior to those produced by traditional floor wedges or side-fill cabinets. Second, because they fill the wearer's ear and thus act as barriers against outside noise, in-ear monitors (if controlled sensi-

WHAT'S HOT
Bass Shaker simulates the physical effect of low-end sound through large monitor speakers
Bass Shaker attaches inconspicuously to a drummer's throne
AMP-75 serves as monitor mixer

WHAT'S NOT
both units are heavy for their size, which could create pack-up problems

bly) double as hearing protection devices—even while they're providing more accurate monitoring of the desired sound.

However, one thing in-ear monitors *can't* provide is the physical sensation that one gets from a kick drum or bass guitar amplified through big speakers. Those speakers move a lot of air, in-ear monitors don't—it's as simple as that. So some performers—especially drummers—have been missing that low-end "kick."

Enter the Aura Sound *DSK-50 Bass Shaker*. It's a "bass actuator," which means it converts low-end sound signals into physical vibration. The *Shaker* attaches to the vertical shaft of a drum throne, and provides the physical "feel" of low-frequency sounds—a sensation that cannot be reproduced by in-ear monitoring systems. You don't hear more bass in your ears, you literally feel it through your seat. (If you've ever sat in a vibrating recliner, you've experienced the same principle.)

The *Bass Shaker* is powered by Aura Sound's *AMP-75* amplifier, which is a gem of a device. Besides providing the necessary power and amplification for the basic function of the *Bass Shaker*, the amp also serves as a mixer. It has line- and mic-level inputs that allow the user to mix the incoming low-end signal (such as the kick drum) with another signal (such as the band's monitor mix, or a practice tape or CD). The amp also has a stereo headphone jack, which can power headphones (for practice purposes) or in-ear monitors (for performances). Rotary controls adjust mic' in, line in, and headphone out levels. The compact amp is only two spaces high and 1/3 space wide in an amp rack, and it can also be mounted to a drum or cymbal stand by means of an optional bracket (which I employed for this review).

Using a K&K Sound Systems trigger bug (recommended by Aura Sound) on my kick drum, I fed the signal into the *AMP-75* and mixed it with some music from a CD player (which I listened to through Etymotic Research *ER-4* combination earplugs/headphones). The amount of "bass shake" effect is adjustable, from barely perceptible to a bone-jarring kick in the...well, you know. I set it more or less in the middle. Let me say right now, I've been using in-ear monitors for years, and I never realized how much low-end

"feel" I was missing until I played with the *Bass Shaker*.

I hasten to add that the effect is not metronomically precise. That is, you don't get a single, distinct "shake" in response to each bass-drum beat. Instead, you get a low-end rumble, which spikes with each beat and then diminishes quickly thereafter. This is pretty much like the effect I've experienced on the occasions that I've performed with large monitor wedges: not so much the pure beat as the rumbling impact of the air coming from the speakers. It's more of a psycho/physiological satisfaction thing than any real form of musical guidance. But boy, does it feel good! It's like getting the entire picture, instead of just part of it.

There are a couple of down sides to using the *Bass Shaker* and *AMP-75*. First, even though they are both relatively compact and attach easily to your throne and stands, neither is light. So you'd have to determine whether or not

you'd want to remove them from their "playing positions" and carry them separately, or leave them in place and thus dramatically increase the weight of your hardware bag.

Second, using the full capabilities of the *Shaker* and *AMP-75* requires a small investment in patch cables, perhaps an AC extension cord, and some sort of headphones and/or in-ear monitors. (Of course, the whole point of the *Bass Shaker* is that you already *have* headphones or in-ear monitors.) These items can create a bit of a cabling mess around the kit. But I found that a small price to pay for the benefits provided by the *Shaker* system.

The *DSK-50 Bass Shaker* and the *AMP-75* are sold as a package at \$399.99, or separately at \$179.99 for the *DSK-50* and \$219.99 for the *AMP-75*. If the system is not available from your local music retailer, contact Aura Sound at 2335 Alaska Ave., El Segundo, CA 90245, tel: (310) 643-5300, fax: (310) 643-8719.



The Aura Sound *AMP-75* (left) and *DSK-50 Bass Shaker*, with the patch cables and headphones necessary to fully implement the system



The *AMP-75* is a compact yet sophisticated mixer that permits versatile self-monitoring control.



The back panel of the *AMP-75*. The single mic' input can accept either low-impedance (XLR) or high-impedance (V) connections, while the line input can accept either RCA or 1/4" plugs.

ZOMBIE John Tempesta

Starclassic Maple "Stealth Kit"

16 x 18 floor tom
16 x 16 floor tom

HC84B upper boom
arm with detachable
counter weight and the
new iron cobra lever
glide hi-hat

Check out John's Starclassic Maple kit on the new Rob Zombie album,
HELLBILLY DELUXE and upcoming Rob Zombie tours including tour dates with Korn.

"These Drums Are As Tough As They Sound."

17 x 24 bass drum (x2)

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

"I decided to move to slightly larger drums...I did like the tightness of smaller sized drums, but I wanted more power...just wanted to feel more air. But the larger sizes, especially two 24" bass drums, take up a lot of room. So I use Tama's Power Tower racks to get everything into a reasonable amount of space. The racks are tightly attached to the riser so nothing moves. I've even got electronics for self-contained monitoring mounted to a rack behind me. The triggering is primarily for the monitors. Through the mains is pretty much the acoustic sound of the drums themselves.

"With the custom black powder coated hardware and tom interiors, my kit's kind of menacing looking. People call it the 'Stealth Kit.' The whole set-up looks powerful, which is as it should be because these drums are as tough as they sound."

new iron cobra
powerglide bass
drum pedal

star-cast mounting system

11 x 12 rack toms

11 x 13 rack tom w/ mth900m
modular holder

PL565 tama bell brass snare drum
(with zinc die-cast hoops instead
of the standard bell brass hoops)



For a full color catalogue on Tama Drums and Hardware, send \$3.00 to: TAMA dept. MDD53, P.O. Box 886, Bensalem, PA 19020, or P.O. Box 2009, Idaho Falls, ID 83403. Visit our website at www.tama.com

TAMA

Mickey Hart

Mickey Hart wears a lot of hats during a Planet Drum concert.

He wails on a suspended set of bells, then leads the musical parade with a booming surdo. He is digital programmer, musical enabler, and cheerleader empowering his comrades. He's an environmental spokesman and an ethnomusicologist. He's a teacher, a player, and a hell-raiser. And in the middle of a stage crammed full of drums and folks who know what to do with them, Mickey Hart is jumping up and down with childlike abandon, performing music from Planet Drum's latest release, *Supralingua*.

Two things are clear looking at the career of the forty-eight-year-old Hart. One, he likes hat-wearing. And two, he is a dedicated rhythmist. Hart was born in New York and touched at an early age by the music of Tito Puente and Machito. His family's move to the West Coast gave Mickey the chance to become a second drummer in The Grateful Dead, and that band gave him the space to explore his passion—the drums of the world.

Mickey saw the historic Grateful Dead tour of Egypt as a chance to record, and he took his field recording equipment into remote locations to capture the music and sounds of everyday life of indigenous people. As producer of Ryko's *The World* series, Hart released *The Spirit Cries* in 1993, a compilation of endangered sounds from the Nubian Desert to the Arctic Circle, recorded by various anthropologists and ethnomusicologists in Colombia, Peru, Belize, Panama, and elsewhere. As well as dusting off the Library Of Congress sonic archives, he has gone into his own rich vault of field tapes of Great Lakes Indians and Tibetan monks, and produced percussionists Babatunde Olatunji and Hamza El Din for numerous other titles in the series. Hart even went to Washington, DC and testified to US senators about endangered musics and the healing powers of music.

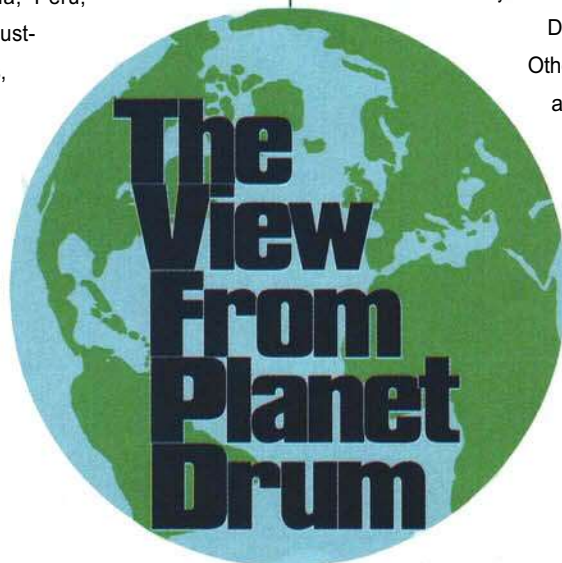
story by Robin Tolleson

photos by Jay Blakesberg

Hart was at the helm of the Diga Rhythm Band in 1976, and he and Grateful Dead drumming partner Bill Kreutzman built the percussion rig called The Beast that was featured on the soundtrack to the film *Apocalypse Now* and in Dead shows for years after. Later he led the Rhythm Devils (a preview of Planet Drum, with Kreutzman, Flora Purim, Airtó, and other guests) in the early 1980s.

Hart's first Planet Drum album spent nearly half of 1991 atop the World Music charts, and won a Grammy Award for Best World Music album. His first book, *Drumming On The Edge Of Magic*, has sold nearly 100,000 copies, and he followed that up by writing *Planet Drum: A Celebration Of Percussion & Rhythm*. In 1995 he formed Mickey Hart's Mystery Box, a world-groove band with a gospel vocal touch. And his latest Planet Drum CD, *Supralingua* (meaning "beyond words"), is a stone-solid mix of groove and wordless voice, featuring Giovanni Hidalgo, Zakir Hussain, David Garibaldi, Sikiru Adepóju, Chalo Eduardo, Airtó, and others. A bonus CD includes retakes of several of the numbers by contemporary mixmasters like Loop Guru, Meat Beat Manifesto, Richie Hawtin, and The Eye.

During 1998, Mickey toured as part of The Other Ones (featuring The Dead's Bob Weir and Phil Lesh), and a new live album culled from those shows has just been released. But it's pretty clear Hart is not satisfied just being an Other One. Of all the surviving members of The Grateful Dead, planet drummer Hart may have the strongest feeling that what he's doing is important, and that there is serious work yet to be done.





“Music doesn’t know geographical boundaries. It doesn’t know where the borders are. It’s blind to gender. It’s blind to race. It’s blind to age. That’s the wonderful thing about music.”

RT: You've been a sort of percussion ambassador in your career, bringing drums into the mainstream.

MH: Well, we *all* know what rhythm is. We know that in this rhythm culture the primacy of rhythm is here. And we know that this next century is going to be a rhythm century, that's not a secret. Listen to modern music—it's all rhythm-driven.

RT: And if you listen to hip-hop rhythms you can hear the clave in there.

MH: Right, you can hear the clave almost everywhere. Not only in rock 'n' roll—Bo Diddley had it, right? That's a direct, absolute clave. The clave rules, it really does. It's like a musical totem, a cultural badge of identity as well as a rhythmic landmark. If you know the clave, you know a lot. You can use the

clave in a million ingenious ways. Have you ever heard El Negro [Horacio Hernandez]? He's another interesting hybrid, playing the clave with his left foot and then playing all around it. Amazing.

In this Planet Drum performing band the clave really rules. It's very strong. We lay heavily on the clave because a lot of it is Afro-Cuban, Yoraban, black dias-

pora-influenced music.

It seems as though I've wound up where I started from, because my first real hit of rhythmically complex, powerful rhythms was the Latin music of Tito Puente and Machito. And now I'm back to that, pretty much where I started from.

RT: Heavy into the Afro-Cuban?

MH: Yeah, I find them to be the most powerful rhythms on the planet. So it's





Earth-shaking grooves: Planet Drum circa 1997

not really surprising to wind up here, enjoying and being able to relax in the clave.

RT: Did you hear your first Afro-Cuban music growing up in New York?

MH: Yeah, on the streets. Everybody was playing out in their backyards, on their porches and their patios, and dancing. That was a big thing in New York back then. And the New York "after hours" clubs in the '50s—*that's* where the music of the Caribbean took hold in America. That was the dance of choice, and the music of choice, in New York. All the musicians, no matter what they played, enjoyed the Latin scene. That was the big thing happening back then.

RT: You also had a rudimental drum background, thanks in no small part to your parents, who were classically trained.

MH: That's correct. I grew into that. I inherited that. But you can't dance to rudimental drums, and I loved to dance. So my dance music of choice was Latin music. That music influenced The Grateful Dead and all the popular music of the day.

RT: I just reread an interview you did in 1981, and even at that point you already had a big interest in instruments from beyond our shores.

MH: All of the rhythms that we have here in America came from Africa. They're all part of the black diaspora. Slave trade brought us all of these powerful rhythms. It brought the

"As a musician
the idea is to uplift
your spirit, because
if you don't uplift
your spirit, you
won't be able to lift
anybody else's."

John Molo

Drumset Duties On Planet Drum

by Robin Tolleson

John Molo has spent the last year working pretty closely with Mickey Hart, playing drumset on tour both with The Other Ones and Mickey's own Planet Drum. But Molo is best known to *MD* readers as the long-time drummer with Bruce Hornsby (and is featured on the new Hornsby album, *Spirit Trait*). You can also check out John with his own band, Motorico, on the new *Pro-Mark Compilation, Volume Two*.

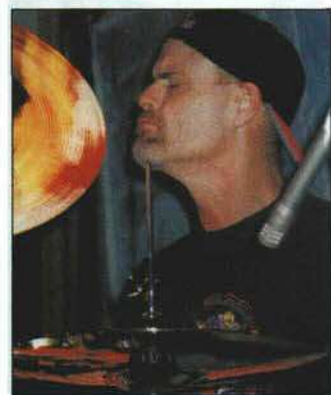
RT: Have you kept up with Mickey Hart's percussion doings in past years?

JM: I saw The Dead in 1978 at the Mosque and in 1982 at American University, and I hung out with a lot of people who really liked The Dead. But I've got to say I didn't

really get it. I thought the songs were interesting, but it wasn't for me. I wasn't a Deadhead.

With Bruce Hornsby, we would do some Dead songs as covers, so I was familiar with what Mickey and Billy were doing, and their approach to music—their library, so to speak. Bruce's brother, Bobby Hornsby, was a big Deadhead, and I played with Bobby for years. Bobby's style is really similar to Phil Lesh. Little did I know that this was all preparing me, in a weird way.

Bruce got asked to play piano on several gigs with The Dead, so I was around those guys a lot, around the scene. I started hearing them again, and I liked what they were doing. I familiarized myself with some of their odd-time



continued on page 68

backbeat from the Yoruban Nigerian West African traditions. It came through Bahia, up through Central America by the Caribbean, and after the Haitian revolution in the 1700s it worked its way up to New Orleans. Then the river took it all the way up, to Chicago, New York, Kansas City. And that's how the blues and rock 'n' roll were born. And Planet Drum is into the roots of that—that's why I went back to it. I mean, The Grateful Dead was a blues band. With all of the American music, all the rock 'n' roll started out as blues-based bands. But I went back further than that. I went back to the Yoruban chants and the Afro-Cuban spore. I find it to be a real soul music that is irresistible.

RT: And The Grateful Dead was a band that allowed, even encouraged, you to grow in all those directions.

MH: Yeah, it was interesting in that respect. It was a spawning ground for world music. It was a world music band, and it allowed the input of all these musics: classical, blues, Indian, jazz, R&B, and then the world influence and world rhythms—even the more obscure rhythms from out there. The band didn't reject it—



Dead days: Mickey and company in 1982

you know, like a transplant; we added a new organ to the body and it just took it in without rejection. So it was a very healthy organism in that respect.

It was a great place to cultivate and nurture a new musical and rhythmic geography. Because if you look at music—if you think of the musical tradewinds that helped The Grateful Dead to evolve—there were

no limits. There are no limits to music. Music doesn't know geographical boundaries. It doesn't know where the borders are. It's blind to that. It's blind to gender. It's blind to race. It's blind to age. That's the wonderful thing about music.

RT: As you were hearing this great music in New York, did you begin playing percussion or drumset?

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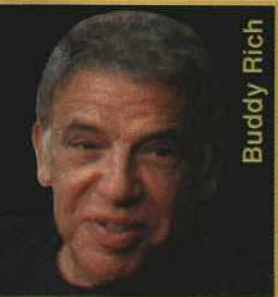
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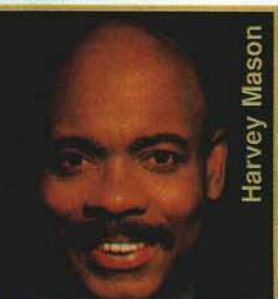
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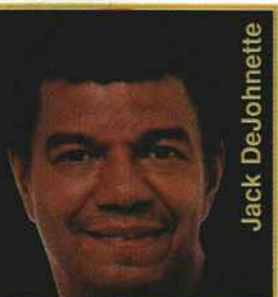
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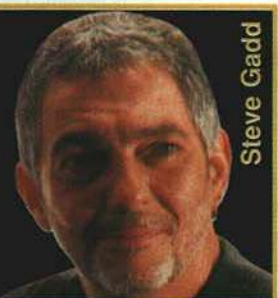
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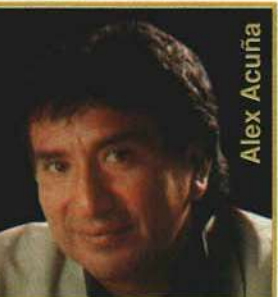
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MH: I started on a drum pad, then I went to a single snare drum. Then I went to a drumset—a simple set. Then I started picking up guiros, bongos, claves. These were my instruments of choice. I remember going to the beach and playing bongos, and those were the days of beach parties. We would light fires, and anybody who had rhythm.... See, it attracted the chicks. Girls, that's what it was all about. That's what drumming and music was all about back then. It was a socializing thing.

Music allows one to survive, to duplicate, replicate, reproduce. It attracts women, and men and women get together over this. I was a very small, frail kid, so that was a way I could compete with the big jocks. I became big like they were once I had a drum in my hand. I realized this early on. You didn't have to be very smart, you just had to have a drum. So I would supply the rhythm and they would dance, and I would be part of the scene. That's how that worked. I also wouldn't get beat up by the big guys, [laughs]

RT: It was a community builder.

MH: It was a community-building thing, indeed it was—a way for us to group, to

socialize, and to come together as a culture. We were finding ourselves in a rhythmic sense here in the West. Remember, in the West it wasn't a rhythm world that we lived in. We were born into a world of melody and harmony, and we were just inheriting European music here. We were just wallowing in the vestiges of old European art music or whatever, polkas and all kinds of cockamamie stuff that wasn't ours, wasn't American, had nothing to do with us. So we were trying to create, unknowingly, a new music, using the instruments of the diaspora and the Afro-Cuban instruments.

The only real American drumming invention is the traps. That was truly one of the greatest of the American musical inventions—the trap drums. We took instruments from China, from Turkey, from all over the world, and made them into the traps, from the word "contraption." And we used it in the theater to accompany the silent movies. That was strictly an American invention.

We inherited the military drum from the British. The drums of the Caribbean were brought here from Africa. We just com-

bined different instruments and called them our own. But you couldn't take it everywhere. The thing about these other instruments was that they were portable. You can take claves anywhere, you can take bongos, a conga, shakers, caxixi, shekere—any of these things you can walk with. These were portable instruments where you would be able to move from fire to fire, build a rhythm, and then move on.

It was interesting. Here were all these white guys playing rhythm instruments for the first time. So it was a novelty back then. Most of the people that were playing rhythm instruments were Puerto Rican or Cuban or black, not white. White guys didn't play dance drums, the big band stuff. There were only a few of them—Buddy Rich, Gene Krupa. Other guys came from different rhythm cultures. The Africans were rhythm cultures, and Puerto Ricans and Cubanos and Brazilians, rhythm cultures. Different. We weren't from that. So here we were being infused by these ho syncopated rhythms, and *whoa*—this really caught our soul and imagination and gave us a new groove. A new day needs a new groove, and so it was a perfect place for

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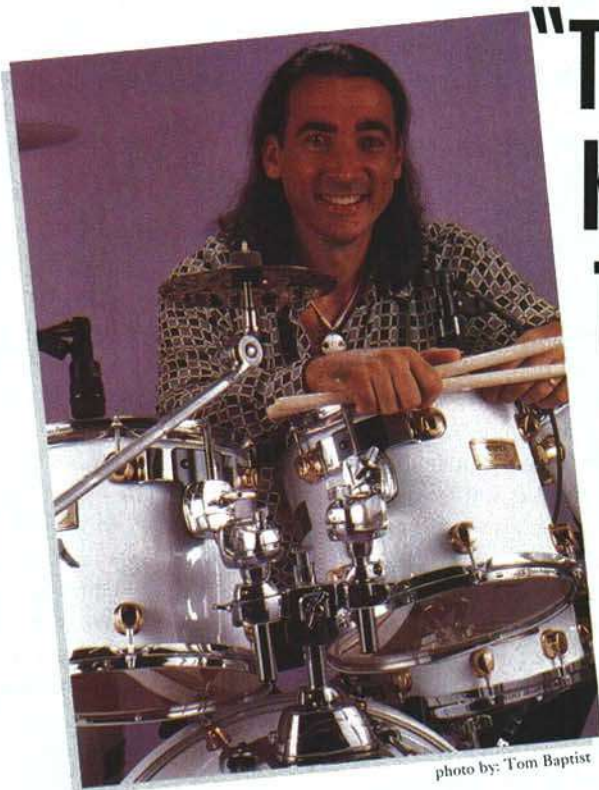
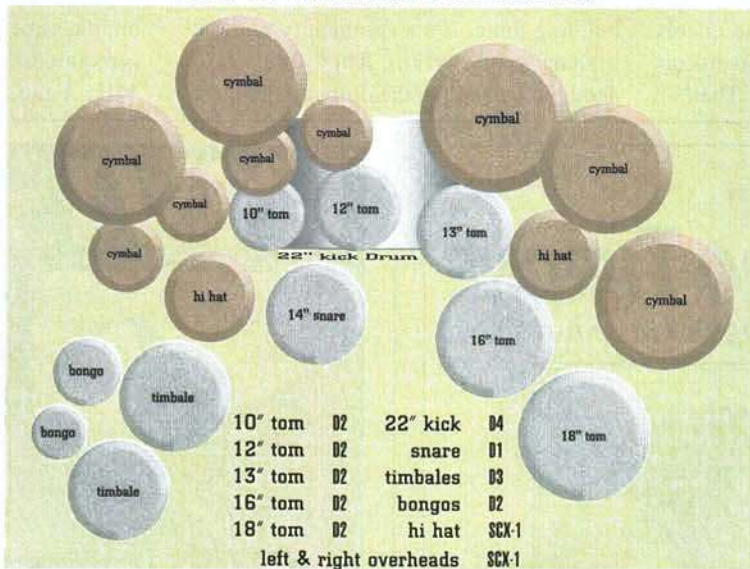


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this rhythmic entertainment to take place. We didn't know what we were doing, nor did we care. We just knew it felt good. The birth of a music is always like that. You're not thinking about it, you're just dancing to it and feeling it.

RT: Is it important to get back to the rudiments of each instrument, or is the magic more in finding your own way on it?

MH: Both. It's a two-fold process. First you have to develop the skill to play the instrument. Then you've got to find out what you want the instrument to sound like and what you sound like on the instrument. You've got to be able to entrain that instrument. You've got to find its voice. There has to be a connection between you and the instrument, not that you're just holding it in your hands or putting it between your legs. You've got to be able to take the skill that you learned from the traditional performers, which they've inherited from thousands of years, and build on that. You take what you can from that and then develop your own personal style. That's where the power comes from, the energy and the enjoyment of the instrument, not from copping somebody's style. That's a

small payoff. The idea is to let your personality come through your instrument. That's the goal, and that's the power. If you sound like yourself, you've succeeded as an artist.

So you have to get the skill and then you've got to be able to forget all that. Next you must develop your own nuance, play your own groove, and make your own rhythm, or else the other stuff is just like punching the clock, and it's not transcendent in nature. As a musician the idea is to uplift your spirit, because if you don't uplift *your* spirit, you won't be able to lift anybody *else's*. If you can't move in and out of the trance, you can't expect to take people there. It's a very important factor, and that takes more than skill.

RT: But the skill has got to be there....

MH: You have to have a certain amount of it, but you don't have to have an enormous amount. Take the drum circle-ists, for example. What they're trying to do is not a skill thing. It's more a listening thing. It's like being aware. It's a consciousness-building thing. It's a community thing, it's a sharing of rhythm. They don't know about guaguano in the drum circle, there's

no need for that knowledge. All you need is to be able to hear the person next to you and be conscious of the groove and let the sound drive you and create something of great beauty with other similar-minded people. And make it loud, so the auditory driving really sets in, so your system really gets the full impact of the rhythmic pattern. You entrain, you get in the flow state, and you attain rapture. And once you're in a rapturous state, then you achieve the goal of the groove. That's what the groove affords you, the rhythm and rapture. And *that* leads to trance and to the ecstatic state.

In drum circles we can find intramural players really enjoying the power of rhythm, without having to spend ten years learning the instrument. It might *lead* to someone getting greater skill and becoming a professional rhythmist, but I look at that as more intramural, more civilian-oriented, which is good.

RT: The concept of double drummers, like The Dead had, is kind of an East-West concept, in that you're playing the trap sets, but the same kind of listening to each other is required.

MH: Yeah, it's about coming together,



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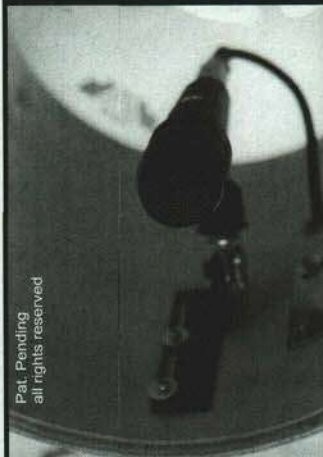


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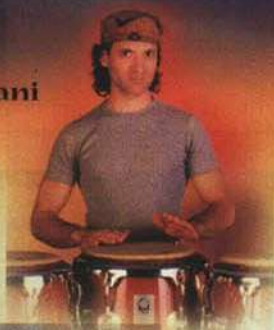
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communing. It's about the group mind. That's what this whole thing is about when you have multiples. It's to attain a group consciousness, and that is very powerful. Somehow when you get two or more people playing a rhythm in a groove it becomes more than the parts. Listen to a great drum section, whether it be a rudimental section, or a great Latin percussion section, or a rock 'n' roll section. The power is manifest multiple times more than the parts. The group mind is what's sought, not necessarily the artistic invention. Yet I've been in some drum circles that have been rhythmically stunning. Not many, but some.

The thing is, they're unique creations. No one totally has control of a drum circle, really. So what you're doing is creating something of great beauty, something unique, for just that moment, never to be repeated again. Everybody feels a part ownership in it, and that's what makes it valuable—not necessarily the musical integrity, but that something was created from nothing, and then it's gone. That's the payoff for the drum circles. And of course there's the obvious stuff—community,

teamwork. Drum circle knows no gender, it doesn't know how much you make a year, how tall you are, how fat or skinny you are, good-looking or ugly or any of that. Drum circle is a great equalizer, as opposed to other more entertainment-oriented endeavors.

RT: I thought that the work you did on "A Call To Nations" for the opening of the '96 Olympics in Atlanta really captured the human spirit.

MH: It's what the Olympics were all about: coming together in rhythm, the tribes of the world coming together as one. It was a beautiful statement. At least the first twelve minutes were.

RT: What was your thinking when you put together this version of Planet Drum for *Supralingua*?

MH: I had a different vision for this one from the others. This one was partially composed when they showed up, and we had sequences, and it was going to be more electronic-oriented. I wanted to mix the archaic percussion with state-of-the-art processing, and then I wanted to wed it to powerful vocal chants that didn't necessarily have strict literal translation. That's what

we call the "supralingua," beyond language. Maybe this is what we did before speech, or when we first got together before we codified language.

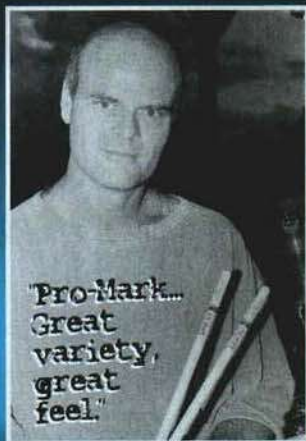
When I was a kid I used to listen to the Utoro rain forest music, the pygmy stuff, and loved it—the Folkways records. And I always wanted to do a record like that. On those records the artists of course must have known what they were saying, but I didn't know they knew. So I took it as...well, I didn't know what the word "supralingua" was back then—but I thought they were working in the supralingua. So I always wanted to do that with a real rhythm band. So that was the direction I took it in.

Every day we performed these composed pieces, and then we opened the microphones up for free play. Some of these compositions were just jams that I cut up, and we made compositions out of them. So the group came for a couple weeks and then left, and then I took over and I edited it and mixed it.

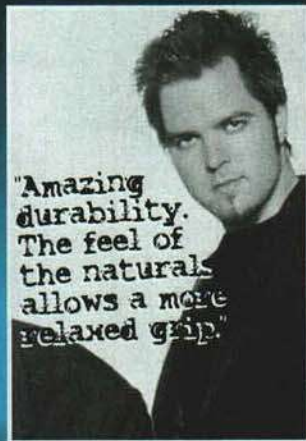
RT: Nearly all the songs are listed as group compositions.

MH: I leave enough room in all of the bits

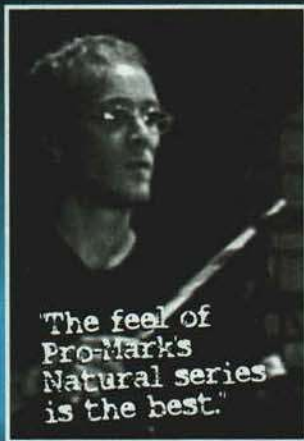
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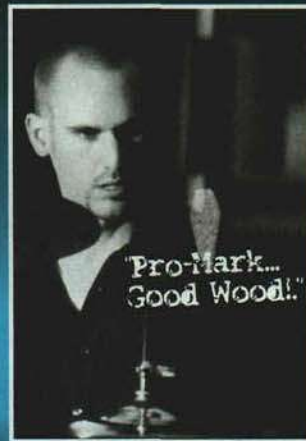
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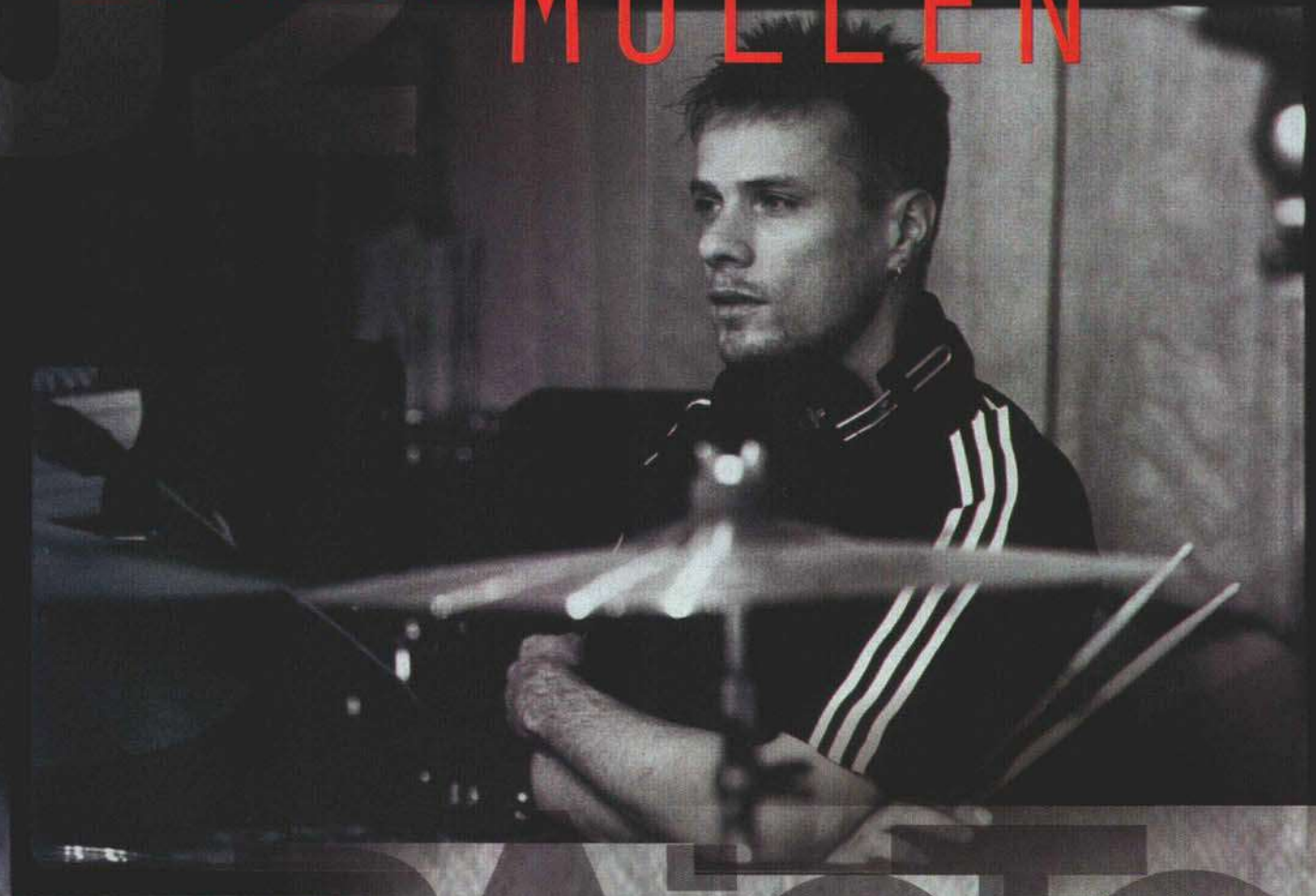
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for group composition. I try to compose just enough to give direction and maintain the vision. But it's not a jam. We only have a couple weeks together, not months, so there has got to be some direction. And then, credit is an easy thing to give, because it's earned. They all contribute a unique part that I can't write for them. It's not something that you say, "You play this and you play that." So you give them compositional credit.

RT: Listening to all the power of "Angola," I'm thinking, "Percussion, bass, and vocals, that's about all you need."

MH: That *is* about all you need, baby, that's what I was thinking. That's exactly what I was thinking. That's heaven to me. It's not for everybody, but for anybody who thinks like that, this is for them.

RT: Tell me about your RAMU [Random Access Musical Universe], the device you're using to bring out your exotic sounds. Is it some sort of super sampler?

MH: [laughing] No, it's not a super sampler. But it is. I like to think of it more like a digital workstation. More like a sound droid. A robot, really. It's a computer. It's got high-performance samplers, a lot of

processing, and a digital computerized board with total recall as part of it. It can be accessed by a keyboard or by pads. And it contains all of my samples that I've gathered over the years, my personal percussion samples, my sounds. But with RAMU you're able to play it at volume. You can play a balifon real loud, or crushed glass, or wine glasses, or didgeridoo. I can create running melodies with it or transpose sounds up or down octaves. It's a very sophisticated droid. In the future other percussionists will have things like this. It's sort of an instrument of the future. And I have drums around it, so I get the best of both worlds. I have acoustic drums and I have RAMU as part of my setup.

RT: Is this something that's on the market?

MH: Naaaw, it's not on the market.

RT: But the pieces are on the market if you can put it together.

MH: Yeah, if you can afford it. And if you spend enough time programming it. I mean, there's no sound in here that I haven't made. That sound library is not available to anybody, and it's not like you buy something with the Yamaha sounds or the Roland sounds. There's none of those

on there.

RT: So this has got a lot of your NAGRA [high-tech field recorder] captured sounds....

MH: Yeah, and my collection, which is formidable. It took me years to sample all of this, and eventually I put it into RAMU and designed it. And it's a MIDied instrument, of course. Someday there will be other RAMUs for the public, for working drummers; it's just inevitable. It allows you to paint with all of these colors. Plus you have all this processing—reverb, delay, multiple instruments. I occasionally have four different sets of steel pans playing simultaneously. Or a xylophone and an udu combination. You never could get that live and never could play it at 105-110 dB without feeding back. Got a berimbau, and it's right in your face at 110 dB.

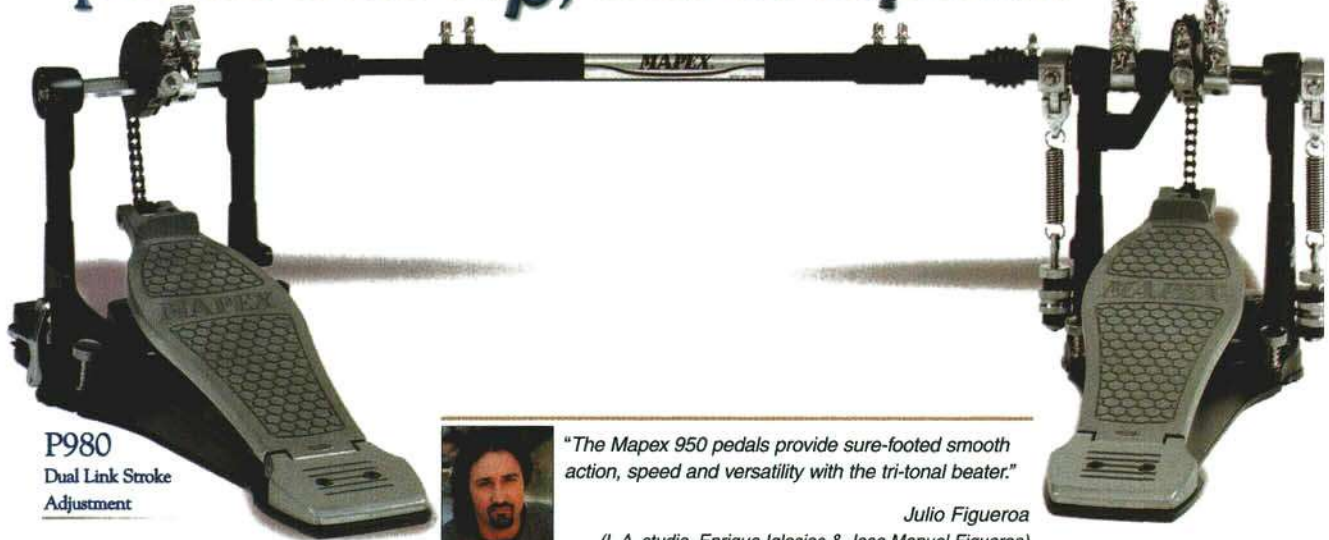
RT: On "Wheel Of Time," is that high vocal part something that you're manipulating on keyboard?

MH: Yeah, that's actually Zakir Hussain's voice, sampled and processed severely—backwards, inside out, upside down.

RT: That's a great track, something I'd like to wake up to every morning.

MH: Yeah, you're not the only one. I try to

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step outside a little bit and take it to the next step. This is the new music. I like to think of it as an adventure in rhythmscape. It's not the drum solo anymore, it's like drums playing together in ensemble with voice. *Supralingua* looks in both directions: It looks back to the black diaspora, to its roots, to the archaic world, and at the same time it looks forward into the digital domain. So I'm looking in two directions simultaneously while standing on the mount. This is a golden age in music, especially for the percussionist, for the artist on the edge anyway.

RT: Then there's a song called "Frog Dance," which is another favorite—just to hear you wailing on those bells.

MH: That was just one live take with Giovanni scatting.

RT: And Garibaldi playing a straight funk beat underneath.

MH: He's a great drummer, a real funky guy. It was a good scene, you know. A good group.

RT: Then hearing Giovanni wailing on "Dama Wu"...

MH: Yeah, Giovanni is a powerhouse. He really came out on this record. He dominated

on this, he was really there.

RT: And the sounds on "Indoscrub" are out there.

MH: First of all, that little laugh is my daughter's voice. And that scrub stuff—that was the *Mystery Box* album cover that I scrubbed in time with the song, and got that "whhssh" sound. That was out there.

RT: Do you have a home studio where you can do a lot of this work?

MH: Yes. I've had a studio since 1969, never been without it. It's important—that's where I get to do all this stuff. I experiment a lot to come up with these ideas. I have my own workstation and I work every day. I go to the gym, do my yoga, and I go to work.

RT: Is the San Francisco Bay area a good place for a percussionist?

MH: Sure, it's a hotbed. There's a lot of Afro-Cuban going on, and a lot of great powerful rhythm stuff in the city. That's what's really happening.

RT: The more music you hear from around the world, are you struck more by the similarities or the differences in the music?

MH: The similarities, yeah. That's always amazed me, to hear how similar things are,

the influences of one culture on another culture, unbeknownst to either culture. How things have traveled. Once we started commerce and trade with other countries, we didn't just trade silks and spices and stuff, we traded musical ideas. So music has been fused for centuries. Every culture calls a certain music their own, but it's the *world's* music.

RT: On each track on the record you're playing a different combination of percussion instruments. How do you decide where to go? Is it always starting from a clean slate, from scratch?

MH: Right. I try to be inventive and never repeat myself. I try to advance the craft, my own personal craft, and also answer the call of the dream. A lot of the stuff I come up with originates in the dream space. You have to trust your dreams. Dreams are the connection to your subconscious, where all the good stuff is. If you can listen to that voice and remember your dreams and play your dreams, then you'll be probing your real being.

RT: Do you actually dream of music in a literal sense?

MH: I'm a lucid dreamer. I do a lot of

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dreaming every night. And a lot of times my best ideas happen in the waking hours, in the early morning. I write them down or I record them immediately, and I have techniques to remember my dreams. I do most of my business there.

RT: You've been playing with The Other Ones. Tell me what's going on with that group.

MH: Nothing. It's on the shelf. I had a great time. We said we were going to do it, we did it, and it's over for now. When we get together again we'll decide its fate. It's Planet Drum that I'm interested in now. That's what I really want to do. I've already done The Other Ones, and The Grateful Dead—that's great. I like to do that, but Planet Drum is my love.

RT: You've had a pretty fascinating career so far—there's a lot of scope and substance to it.

MH: Thank you, but it's not over. We're in midstream.



John Molo continued from page 57

things. It was something that they did really well. And at that point I started shedding those odd meters. I also realized that I love the idea of jamming. All of a sudden I was thinking, "I don't think the Dead will ever play again, but if there was ever a big gig I would want to do, that's the one."

I actually first met Mickey on the Further Festival tour years earlier, where he had been playing with Planet Drum and Mystery Box. We jammed with each other at the end of the night a couple of times. I always watched Mickey like a hawk. I would try to stay right with him, and we sort of got along. It felt like we just had a little bit of a chemistry there.

After Jerry [Garcia] passed away, the Dead talked about getting back together. For some reason, on a gut reaction—and this is very strange in the music business—Billy Kruetzman didn't want to go. Bruce was on the gig, and Phil Lesh and I had done some playing and gotten along very well, so with all of that, I got asked to do The Other Ones. I showed up for rehearsals, and I think on the second day Mickey asked me to do

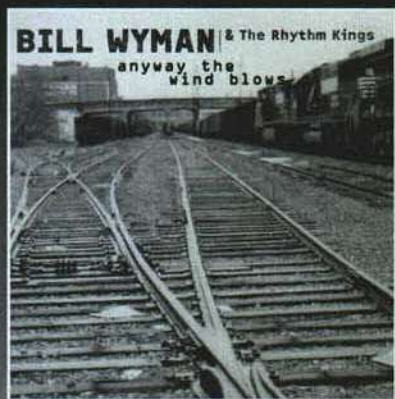
Planet Drum.

One of the things I love about Mickey is that he treats musicians who work with him very well. Most guys you work for will say, "This is my drummer John Molo." Mickey always says, "This is my partner." I like that.

RT: It seems Mickey's really into the camaraderie that exists when making music, and the mystical part of it.

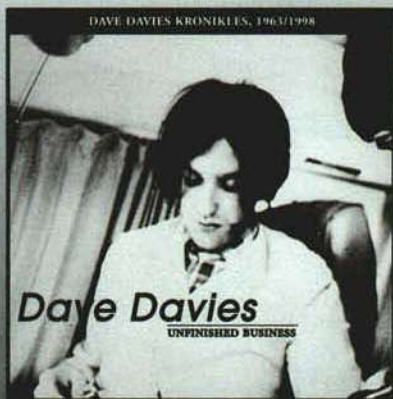
JM: Yeah. He really lets it go, but he does have an overall vision. For instance, this incarnation of Planet Drum is very Afro-Cuban, with a lot of 6/8 and songo-influenced stuff. Mickey would occasionally say to me, "Now, Johnny, lay that bass drum on the 1 there. We don't want to lose everybody." He wants me to make sure that the whole thing is squared up. I know very clearly what my job description here is, and that's how we get along. But at the same time, within that job description, I think Mickey wants me to excite the crowd a little bit, connect with the audience, and get the band off, so I've got to play as well. I really try to stay on top of it.

Mickey and I will have conversations after gigs about what went right, mostly,



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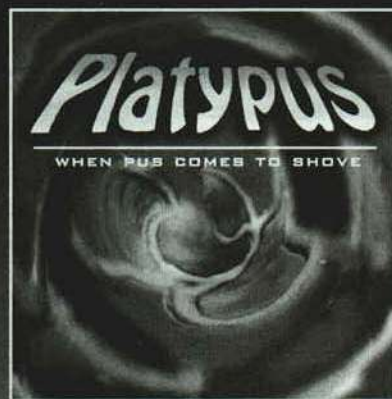
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and occasionally what went wrong. There's an improv piece that we do in the middle of the set that's called "Speed Bag," and it's kind of a double kick thing. I just blow my brains out on that, and he's very encouraging.

RT: Working with Giovanni Hidalgo must be fun.

JM: That guy loves music. He'll listen to anything, from movie soundtracks to solo classical piano pieces. He's into some serious music. Giovanni is the Buddy Rich of the congas. His hand speed is tremendous. But the other side of Giovanni is this constant search for music. In hanging with him, he's always documenting stuff, teaching, writing, coming up with melodies. He's tremendously inspiring to be around. I can't say enough about the guy.

Different drummers have said to me, "Oh man, you're doing the gig with Giovanni. Do you know how to play this or that traditional thing? If you play it this way he'll really dig it." And it was nothing like that. Giovanni wanted me to be myself, which was great. He was a real fan the whole time, and very encouraging. He reminded me a little bit of Jeff Porcaro, of that confidence that he'd give to other musicians, like

"You're the man."

RT: Sounds like you're getting some of that from Mickey too.

JM: Absolutely. It's the confidence thing of letting people be themselves. And that doesn't mean you just go up there and blow uncontrollably. The thing that I noticed about Giovanni too is that he really wants the songs to get off. There's a side to Giovanni that a lot of people don't see, where he's just playing a very slow, laid-back groove, just a two-bar phrase repeating, for a long time. He really is dedicated to that deeply. It's a real music-first thing with him, and I think that's pretty much consistent with Mickey's lineup in Planet Drum right now. The main concern is the great chemistry among all the musicians. Yeah, we'll get the applause or whatever, but the power of the music is the group.

RT: In terms of your setup, do you do anything different for this gig?

JM: I pretty much use my traditional kit, or traditional drums. Usually I'd have a percussion setup on the left side of my kit, with timbales, bongos, cowbell, woodblock, a second hi-hat, two toms, and a djembe. But in Planet Drum I use more of a traditional kit, with three

toms, snare, kick drum, double pedal, cymbals, and a couple Sabian cymbal discs for the bell tones.

RT: They were definitely giving you the low end with the kick.

JM: Yeah, Mickey really likes the massive powerhouse kick.

RT: Did it sound that big to you on stage?

JM: Occasionally, yeah, I was thinking, "Man, this is unbelievable." He really likes that low end to move. But it can affect the way you play the bass drum a little bit too. The more cognizant I was of it, the less I played. Have you ever been in the audience before and thought, "Man, I'm getting hammered with this bass drum"? I'm aware of that from being at concerts where the drums are unrealistic and painfully loud. But Mickey likes to be moved by it, and the sound person has his hands absolutely filled.

RT: It sounds like this has been a good outlet for you.

JM: The Planet Drum gig is a great gig for a drummer. Playing with Bruce is a great gig. But to be able to do both has just been fabulous.



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Paul Leim

MAKING STUDIO MAGIC

story by Robyn Flans

photos by Rick Malkin



In 1978, during a session for what is widely considered to be the first music video, *Elephant Parts*, artist/producer Mike Nesmith said something that became Paul Leim's musical credo: "I know you guys are double-scale and are the best in town, so good time and all the right notes are a given. What I want is what *you* can bring to a session."

That philosophy had always been Leim's approach innately, but no one had ever said it aloud and given it such definition. But it is just that tactic that has showered success upon this drummer from Troup, Texas. Paul hadn't had a lesson in his life before he was nineteen, when he found himself in a studio situation he couldn't cut because he couldn't read. Well, he learned. In 1970 Paul moved to Dallas, where he says Ronnie Tuft's departure from the scene (to work with Elvis Presley) left a hole that he was able to fill. Leim did nearly everything that was recorded there, including a few name artists like Doc Severinsen. Between 1974 and 1976 the drummer played on over four-hundred-fifty sessions.

On January 15, 1977, Leim created a new challenge for himself by moving to LA, which initially resulted in a terrific financial loss. But within a couple of years his reputation there had grown, and it wasn't long before Paul was recording what would become the classic Lionel Richie songs and working with artists such as Amy Grant, Stevie Nicks, Diana Ross, Neil Diamond, Peter Cetera, Whitney



Houston, Dolly Parton, and Belinda Carlisle, on soundtracks like *Dirty Dancing*, *Beaches*, and *Star Wars*, and on TV shows such as *Spencer For Hire* and *The Fall Guy*.

By 1983, some of the Nashville producers had caught wind of Leim's talents and began requesting that he come there to work. Artists like Randy Travis, Dan Seals, Rosanne Cash, Eddie Rabbitt, Michael W. Smith, Sandi Patti, Crystal Gayle, and Kenny Rogers welcomed him with open arms. By '88, Paul was ready to relocate again.

From the looks of a recent *Billboard* chart displaying the Top-75 country albums, it is apparent that Leim hasn't forgotten his basic philosophy of giving to the music, above and beyond. Paul is on the biggest records by the biggest artists: Hit records by Shania Twain, Faith Hill, Trisha Yearwood,

Reba McEntire, Collin Raye, Kenny Chesney, Steve Wariner, Randy Travis, Ty Herndon, Lari White, Olivia Newton-John, Kevin Sharp, Neal McCoy, and Mindy McCready have all benefited from his touch.

No matter where he lives or the genre of music, Paul Leim brings his love of music and the challenge of creating it, his technological expertise, and his humility to the table. That's probably why he's one of the most recorded drummers in history.

To get better insight into Paul Leim—both the man and his career—this interview was put together in a unique way. We selected a few topics that we felt might launch Paul into discussions about life at the top of the recording game. Here's what he had to say.

Recording With Shania Twain

PL: Shania is produced by Mutt Lang, who has produced artists like AC/DC, Bryan Adams, and Def Leppard. He writes the songs as well. If Mutt had been born in the 1700s, he would have been a Beethoven or Mozart. He can hear in his head all of the parts that each of the instruments should play for an entire tune. He knows what he wants.

With the technology that we have today, most pop records are recorded one instrument at a time, although that isn't the case in country music, where it's more live. Mutt comes to the table with everything in his head. He's very specific with the parts he wants and how he wants them played.

If you listen to Shania's "Man I Feel Like A Woman" and you look at the timer on your CD player, you'll see that the first verse ends right at thirty seconds. That's not an accident. After Shania's first album with Mutt, she did a lot of TV shows, and they had trouble editing the tunes to fit the shorter time slots that TV allows. There were so many modulations and different parts in the music that he had a hard time editing the songs. So when they wrote the songs for the next album, they built in edit points so the songs could be easily trimmed.

"A lot of drummers' heroes were Buddy Rich, Tony Williams, and Billy Cobham. But I can guarantee you that those guys haven't made the kind of money I've made. And I've been able to do it while staying home and being with my family."



Shania is a real trooper. She works hard. We'll start on a song at 10:00 in the morning, and by 1:00 or 2:00 in the afternoon we might have gotten to the bridge, running it down and working on the parts. Then we'll break for lunch, and when we come back we'll work on the rest. Normally by 8:00 or 9:00 at night we'll have the basic track, and then Mutt will go back and redo the bass first,



then the guitars, and then the piano. He replaces everything individually so he can be sure that each will be exactly the way he wants it.

RF: What about the drums and the fills?

PL: When Mutt is putting an album together, he calls me and sings me each song with an acoustic guitar over the phone. He sings *each* part to me—we'll be on the phone for a couple of hours. For the *Woman In Me* album, he wasn't as specific as he was on the recent one [*Come On Over*]. *Woman* was the first record he did with her, and I think he was under pressure to go fast, because he didn't have the kind of budget he's used to dealing with.

On *Come On Over* the budget was bigger, which normally happens after you sell ten million records. I think Mutt took

more time, although we actually got the basic tracks in about the same amount of time. Dave Hungate's bass parts on *The Woman In Me* were recorded with me on the go-down. For *Come On Over*, the minute we got a good drum take they immediately redid the bass. They took time, but they didn't waste a minute.

Sometimes Mutt will have a drum fill in mind, and as we start running the thing down he'll talk in terms of "breathing" with the drums. And he's very precise about the parts. You'll notice on those Shania records that the bass has to always be off by the time the snare drum hits. There's no bass note ringing over the snare drum. He wants the tracks that clean.

RF: Do you like so much specific-direction? Doesn't that hamper the creativity?

PL: Not when that's what he wants. He's got a plan, and



frankly, he's a genius. It's my job to give him his plan. It's my job to lay down on tape what he hears in his head.

RF: Have you ever wished—and not just with Mutt—that someone would shut up and let you do it the way you want to do it?

PL: Yes, that happens. But I do occasionally get to play what I want, too. I get to do that with producers who don't have as much of a specific game plan. I like both situations. It would be very boring if everyone produced the same way.

RF: I wouldn't like it very much if someone told me exactly what to write.

PL: I know what you're saying, and there are drummers here who can't take that environment. But it's not a steady diet. Besides, I'm being paid to do what the producer wants me to do. I take that very focused approach as being part of the variety of the creative process, because we don't get to do quite the variety here that we did in LA.

RF: Speaking of that, what do you think you brought to Nashville from LA?

PL: Occasionally I can pull something out on a record date here that I might have used on a pop record in LA. One of the examples of that is a Collin Raye song called "What The Heart Wants." The first verse has a lonely feel before it breaks into the chorus, and I got to use some different sounds on that—a tambourine tuned down about forty notes.

"When we were cutting Trisha's new album, I was trying a hip alternative sort of rhythm. The producer stopped me: 'Hey Paul, you're scaring me.' I said, 'It fits great with the vocal,' and he said, 'Yeah, I know, but I want to keep my job.'"

If I can avoid sounding SOS—the same old stuff—I will do it. But if a tune calls for cross stick-snare drum, like on a Randy Travis tune, then that's what I obviously need to do. But anytime I can offer something different, I will.

RF: With the quick pace of recording, is there time to come up with things that are different?

PL: At this point, the minute I hear a song, my mind starts working. By the time I'm walking out to my drumset with my chart I'm already thinking of something. I may say, "Give me ten minutes to program something here" or "I have a great sound for this. Tell me what you think." If they deep-six it, then that's it. To me, it's all about trying to

bring something else to the table other than just playing the part right.

RF: When you have a situation like Shania, can you add something else?

PL: Not as much, but on other projects I can. For example, on the Trisha Yearwood stuff: The minute I heard "There Goes My Baby," it had such a classic Roy Orbison chord structure that I immediately thought, "How can I combine the great feel of Buddy Harman from thirty years ago with the sounds of today?" I view it as an opportunity to pay tribute to Buddy. I might even lean towards his licks on something like that. The minute we finished cutting that tune we were all jumping up and down.

Then there's another tune on that album called "Powerful Thing," which has a Louisiana swamp feel. It's not a shuffle and it's not a straight-8th feel—kind of in the middle. We also cut one on Billy Ray Cyrus, "Under The Hood," that was very much like that—that half-dotted swampy feel.

Mutt likes things to be real basic. He calls it "Neanderthal": "Play it Neanderthal." Sometimes it will just be a real wide beat—half notes on the bass drum and backbeats on the snare drum, and just slamming. Shania's "Love Gets Me Every Time" and "Don't Be Stupid" were recorded that way. On "You're Still The One" we actually moved to a different room to get a more intimate sound.

I love working with Mutt because he thinks in terms of emotion and colors and he tries to set a mood, which is what I try to do. I think "You're Still The One" is a great track. It feels like some of the old Lionel Richie stuff. "Honey I'm Home" is real controlled Neanderthal at the top, real tight and specific.

When I do a master class



for students, the biggest offense I hear them make is that they don't listen to themselves and play controlled. They just kind of play. They're not used to hearing themselves recorded, which is why I always recommend that drummers get any experience they can in a studio or go out and get some simple gear to record themselves. When I first got started and played clubs, I would record myself playing all night, then go home and listen to myself all day, and then go back to the club and re-tune my drums and alter my performance. I got very specific with it. One week I'd work on the sound of the bass drum, the next week I'd work on snare drum, just listening and recording, trying to develop a sound that was the best of Louie Bellson, Ronnie Tutt, Larrie Londin, and all my heroes at that time.

Getting back to Mutt, he schedules triple sessions every day. For *Come On Over* we did sixteen sides, so he scheduled sixteen days in a row, with Sundays off. That's working fast for him. But I'm used to that kind of pace from my experiences in Los Angeles and doing all the Lionel Richie stuff. We cut "Stuck On You" in three days of triples.

RF: Why? What did you do for three days on "Stuck On You"?

PL: I don't know. To me, the second time we played it sounded the same as the fiftieth time. But Lionel just looks for that one thing. We cut "Truly," his very first hit after he left The Commodores, for two days of triples. He couldn't get back to the emotion of the vocal performance he had on his demo, so we went back and overdubbed to that.

RF: But how do you cope with those kinds of multiple takes?

PL: My reason for playing drums is to do whatever it

day, and then go back to the club and re-tune my drums and alter my performance. I got very specific with it. One week I'd work on the sound of the bass drum, the next week I'd work on snare drum, just listening and recording, trying to develop a sound that was the best of Louie Bellson, Ronnie Tutt, Larrie Londin, and all my heroes at that time.

YOUR HEARING AND THE STUDIO

by Paul Leim

Paul Leim has logged literally thousands of hours in recording studios, exposing his ears to a lot of stress. He has learned an awful lot about the potential dangers for drummers in that environment. Here are his thoughts on the subject:

With records being more aggressive than ever, my playing intensity level has risen commensurably. Also in recording, being able to hear yourself is a constant issue. Headphones are different from studio to studio, and mixes are the most difficult because you have several musicians all trying to hear *themselves* perfectly (the loudest) out of the same cue mix.

About five years ago, in an effort to improve my listening situation, I added a headphone/cue/click mixer to my rack. Dave Wilkerson at Tech Star Services in Nashville built the *MoMe* (more of me) unit and recommended a pair of Sony *MDR-V6* headphones because of their brightness and volume. What a difference! All of a sudden I had so much top end: cymbals were brighter, snares cracked louder, bass was more clear and consistent, and I could get the click as loud as I wanted. Life was great again.



continued on page 86

takes to make the producer happy. I'll have an opinion of a song, whether I think it's good or bad, but I won't tell anybody what that opinion is. And I'm damn sure not going to tell some producer how I think he should produce a song. That's none of my business.

RF: But aren't you crazy by the fiftieth take when the second one sounded just fine to you?

PL: You just keep trying to find what it is they're looking for. You try to find that magic.

RF: Doesn't the magic go away after so many passes?

PL: Yeah, it's tough. I've gotten to where, after a few takes, I have to stand up and walk around the room or go outside to get a breath of fresh air or just rest my head—the takes all start sounding the same. But I'm used to it from working with Lionel and doing all the Amy Grant records with producer Brown Bannister, who works from 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 the next morning. With Brown, we'd work on sounds all day and wouldn't even start recording until 11:00 at night. You just learn to pace yourself. You can't play all-out the first time, but you learn your producers and who to do what with.

With [producer] Billy Walker, I'd better get it the first time. He likes first takes so much. On the new Travis Tritt album, everything I played was first takes. The latest Mindy McCready album is all first takes too. On the other hand, I'm working on the new Ronnie Milsap album, and

Ronnie hears so many different things that they want seven master takes of everything. They take those tracks and edit them together. It's my job to do whatever is necessary and have whatever piece of gear it will take to get what they want. That's why I carry so much equipment to a session.

Tools Of The Trade

PL: The day before the Shania sessions started, Mutt and I got together to listen to drums. We had eight bass drums, four sets of tom-toms, and three sets of cymbals. We also assembled *eighty-two* snare drums from all over town to choose from. I went everywhere looking for old drums because he had mentioned something about using Gretsch drums. We brought in some Gretsch drums as well as my Yamaha *Maple Custom* and *Recording Custom* drums. I had all my snare drums and Larrie Londin's snare drums, and we had all of Harry's [from *Drum Paradise*] drums. I think I ended up listening to twenty-five of the *eighty-two*.

Mutt came across one I had found at Amanda's Underground, which was a '68 or '70 6 1/2" Slingerland chrome-over-brass with an old-style throw-off. That drum has become one of my sweetest. I obviously bought it. Every time I'd try to switch away from that drum, he'd call out, 'Did you change the snare drum?' I don't like to use the same sound on everything, but he just loved that drum, so it's on eleven cuts. I also used a chrome-over-brass Ludwig on a couple of things, and the new Yamaha

Ndugu Chancier snare drum on one or two. Mutt doesn't like piccolos. I tried pulling out a piccolo on one thing and he said, "Oh, no, it sounds too thin and cheap." He likes big, meaty-sounding drums.

As for the cymbals, we chose different sounds for different songs. Sometimes I used an 18" China for a ride, especially if we were really wailing on a chorus at the end of a song. But I have to set up for that, which is the great thing about being in the studio. For Shania's tune "Looks Like We Made It," we moved from the Rock Room at Masterfonics, which is where we recorded most of the album, to one of the other iso rooms so we could get everything sounding tighter, closer, and more concise. I used a 4 1/2" Ludwig chrome-over-brass drum and an old, blue 32x22 DW bass drum from Larrie's stuff. I had a hi-hat, a snare drum, that bass drum, and three cymbals set up. We didn't want any toms ringing or anything. For the rest of the album we pretty much used the Yamaha birch *Recording Custom* tom-toms—8x10, 10x12, and 12x14—and the cymbals are all Paiste—mostly *Signature* and *Sound Formula*.

RF: What do you bring to an average call?

PL: I carry a lot more stuff than most of the guys in Nashville. I carry a ddrum system, which I trigger off the set, although it's getting to where we don't use triggers much anymore. We're going back to mostly live drums. But there are a few producers and engineers who want the whole set triggered in addition to the acoustic drums. Some just want a triggered cross stick. I

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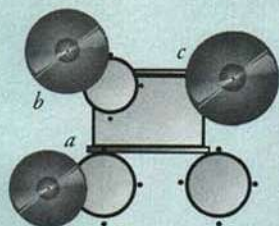
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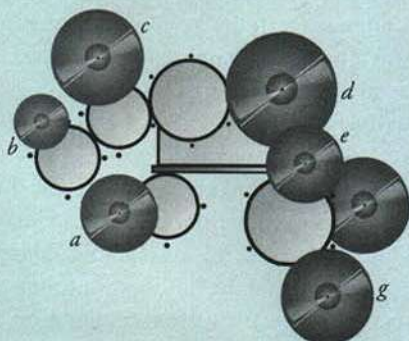
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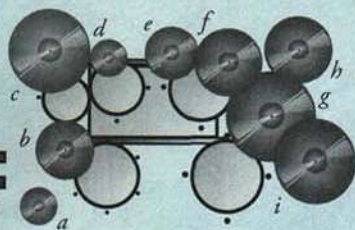
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carry Akai samplers and basically everything I carried in LA. Back then I never knew *what* they might want, so I brought it all. If it was Kenny Rogers, it was all straight-ahead, but if it was Peter Cetera, there might be some programming or triggering going on.

RF: Your equipment is part of what you can add to the music as well.

PL: Definitely. That stuff is part of what I do. On Shania's "Any Man Of Mine," I used every hand clap and kick sample I had—the "boom, boom, whack, boom, boom, whack." The hand claps are programmed, the kicks at the top are programmed, and then the sound changes a little when I come in. And I had to program that on the go-down.

You need to use a SMPTE/MIDI converter so you can come off tape and convert it to MIDI time code to be able to run your sequencers. The trail of that runs from the SMPTE time code on tape to my PPS MIDI time converter. That goes into the sequencer, which leads via MIDI into the samplers or whatever you're using as your sound source—for me it's a Yamaha RN50 or a Roland MC50. Then with the MIDI information from the sequencer that's running the samplers I trigger the ddrum with analog triggers off the drumset. That way I can have the ddrum doubling the acoustic drumset. We started doing that in LA fifteen years ago with *Spencer For Hire* and *The Fall Guy*.

The guy who probably took it the fur-

thest was Mike Fischer—he is so fast at programming. I got proficient at it because I was just doing so much music. What happens with that is, on a session, while everybody is off having a coffee break, you're back there programming, getting ready for the next thing that's coming up. And the TV stuff was a tremendous learning experience for that. Playing alongside the great percussionists—Joe Porcaro, Emil Richards, Kenny Watson—who were schooled and knowledgeable beyond anything I was capable of, really made me stretch. It made me want to be better at what I was good at, which was the programming thing. I was always good at math, and all the programming stuff just seemed to make sense to me.

When producers here know they're going to want the programming and playing coordinated quickly, very often I get the call. One of my favorite records I ever played on that I thought could be Record Of The Year was "Forever Tonight," the duet between Peter Cetera and Crystal Bernard. To me, it's one of the best pop records I've ever played on. I programmed the top with a real quiet, simple, seductive program—some 808 sounds—and you can almost imagine her sitting by the fireplace. Then it exploded into this very emotional chorus. I really thought we captured it. If only he had been on a record label that could have done something with it, it could have done as well as his "Glory Of Love," which was Record Of The Year.

Just a little aside: I'd like to mention that after we cut "Glory Of Love," Pete called me, all excited. It was the first thing he had done after he left Chicago, and when it went Number 1 he called me and said, "Hey Paul, we're number 1." I said, "Man, it's *your* record," and he said, "Well, you were on it." He's the only guy who ever did that. When it got nominated for an Academy Award, which we ended up getting, he called again, congratulating me.

Heartbreaks

PL: The most disappointing thing for me is when I've gone in and done an album for somebody and they say things like, "I just can't believe what you bring to the project; I'll never do an album without you"—and the next one they do, they don't call, and you don't really know why.

I did an album with Steven Curtis Chapman called *The Great Adventure*, which he got a Grammy for, and it was by far his best-selling album to that point. It really hurt when I didn't get the call to work with him again. I think you grow to a point where you don't expect anything from anybody, and that way you don't get disappointed. There's also an old saying—for every door that closes, another one opens. It doesn't always happen on the same day, but it does happen.

Other Notable Projects

RF: What is Pur?

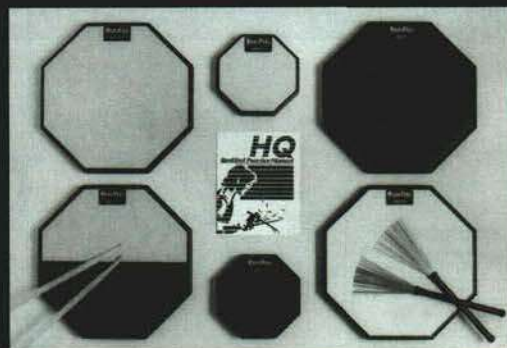
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German history. They're a rock band, kind of a combination of Journey and Aerosmith. Before I started doing them in '92, they were selling about 200,000 units. And when I came on board we joked, "The next one will be platinum." But that's nearly impossible in Germany because there just aren't as many record buyers in that country—there aren't as many people. But the record I did went *double* platinum. The next one we did went triple platinum. They're just huge there. On their tour last summer they sold 600,000 tickets six months in advance.

RF: How does not understanding their lyrics affect your approach?

PL: I ask them to explain what the songs are about. In general, their songs all have real positive messages.

RF: Speaking of notable projects, you also did Trisha Yearwood's *How Can I Live Without You?* Who produced that and how did recording that differ from Shania?

PL: Tony Brown produced that, and it was for the movie *Con Air*. It was also on Trisha's greatest-hits album. When we were cutting the pop version, the one with the sax solo, they showed us the scene from the movie where that was going to fit—where Nicholas Cage sees his daughter for the first time—and it just took our breath away. So I tried to re-create that feeling by using cymbal swells every other bar. Then at the end of it, I did a real fast one-handed cymbal swell and then reached up and cut it off in the middle, which has that sensation of taking a deep breath. It's a little thing, but as stupid as it sounds, it felt like an accomplishment.

I actually programmed a little percussion part for that too, so I didn't play hi-hat. But when they sent the first version of the tune to the movie, the producer said he didn't want the programmed thing. But since I hadn't played any hi-hat, you'll notice the first verse doesn't have a lot of movement because they took out the programmed part.

RF: Having that creative moment you mentioned isn't stupid at all. So often you're having to do the same kind of things over and over. Many people say that with Nashville records you can take a track from one song and use it on another.

PL: In some instances I would have to agree with that. With the number system [Nashville studio notation system], if you

take 11, 44, 55, 11 at 120 beats per minute and it's a country song in 4/4 with an 8th-note feel, how far can you take it? I think we've proven with Shania's stuff that you can stretch beyond that a bit and it can still be a success. And I believe that labels are starting to realize they can't sign sound-alike artists anymore.

RF: How do you know when you're allowed to do something different?

PL: If I hear something I'll try it, and if the producer doesn't like it, I know. When we were cutting Trisha's new album, I was trying a hip alternative sort of rhythm in the chorus instead of a straight backbeat. The producer stopped me: "Hey Paul, you're scaring me." I said, "It fits great with the vocal," and he said, "Yeah, I know, but I want to keep my job." So at that point it was my responsibility to regroup and play it like everybody else would.

It's my job to fit within the painting they're trying to paint. It's my job to show them purple, but if they want blue, it's my job to give them blue. I've got to show them all the colors in the rainbow if I can. Trisha's new album is one of my favorites that I've done recently. She's a great singer. "There Goes My Baby" is just a neat song. It reminds me of a Roy Orbison tune, and those are some of the best-feeling records I've ever heard, again, with Buddy Harman on drums.

I think that's something you have to be aware of when you come into the Nashville scene. If you play for the song, you'll be a success. A lot of drummers' heroes were Buddy Rich, Tony Williams, and Billy Cobham. But I can guarantee you that those guys haven't made the kind of money I've made. And I've been able to do it while staying home and being with my family every night.

My heroes have always been Hal Blaine, Ronnie Tutt, Larrie Londin, and especially Buddy Harman. They did record after record of just great feel. I do a master class here once a year, and the first thing I'll do is play an eight-minute drum solo as flashy as I can. They all go, "Man, we didn't know you could do *that*." And then I'll say, "That's because you'll never *hear* me doing it. You don't make any money playing that way."



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Your Hearing And The Studio

continued from page 79

Guess what? Just because you might love to see a hand grenade go off doesn't mean you should pull the pin and watch it go off in your hand!

Within a year of this change I was getting a ringing and thumping sound in my ears at night that was loud enough to actually wake me up. I was also having hearing fatigue, where I was unable to clearly hear high end, earlier and earlier in the day. I was also developing a mild

case of tennis elbow! Dave had given me just what I asked for: *More volume*. I was listening louder, so I was playing harder, so I would turn up my *MoMe*, listen louder, and play harder still!

I met Belmont University professor Wesley Bula, who was doing an OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) study for Vanderbilt University on sound pressure levels in the workplace. He had included studio engineers. I told him what I had been going through, and he asked to study my situation. These are the shocking results of that study:

"In recent years there has been a lot of attention given to hearing loss among musicians," says Professor Bula. "Because drums are one of the loudest and more explosive musical instruments, a great deal of attention has been given to drummers in general.

"Like many working drummers, Paul is concerned about his hearing and wants to continue to sustain a successful career. We collected data on the sound levels Paul was exposed to during a typical day of recording. Sound pressure levels were measured with a device called a noise dosimeter, which samples and records ambient sound pressure in a room. We clipped a microphone to Paul's shirt approximately three inches below his chin in the center of his chest. We set the meter to OSHA specifications for an eight-hour workday for workers in 'general industry.' Basically, OSHA will allow a worker to be exposed to an average continuous level of 90 dB for an eight-hour workday. This level is considered the maximum 'dosage,' or 100%. The table below shows Paul's estimated noise levels from a single day of recording.

Exposure Data For One Day Of Recording

Time In The Studio	7:11:35
Transient Peak Level	146.8dB
Average Maximum Level	117.5dB
Average Level	99.5 dB
Highest Transient Peak Recorded	172.8db
Estimated Noise Dose	333.4%

"Let's put some meaning to these numbers," Professor Bula continues. "A gunshot at the ear of a hunter with a normal-length 12-gauge shotgun is about 140-150 dB; the average level of a jet taking off is 130-140 dB; the threshold of pain for a normal-hearing adult is 120 dB; and with 100 dB of background noise in a room, if you wanted to talk to the person next to you, you would literally have to yell directly into their ear for them to understand what you are saying. The most frightening statistic here is, according to OSHA specifications, Paul received over three times (300%) the maximum allowable noise exposure for a single workday."

My problem all along was volume off the set. I had to lower that level. I switched headphones, going to a small Sony *Walkman* consumer model (\$18), with a headband that turns 90° into your ear canal. Then I wear a comfortable 30 dB noise reduction Gun Muff over those. I began listening to cue mixes at the *lowest* possible level I could and still hear everyone. Within six months the thumping at night and the tennis elbow were gone.

My advice to you is, please take whatever steps are necessary to protect your hearing.

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(not pictured)

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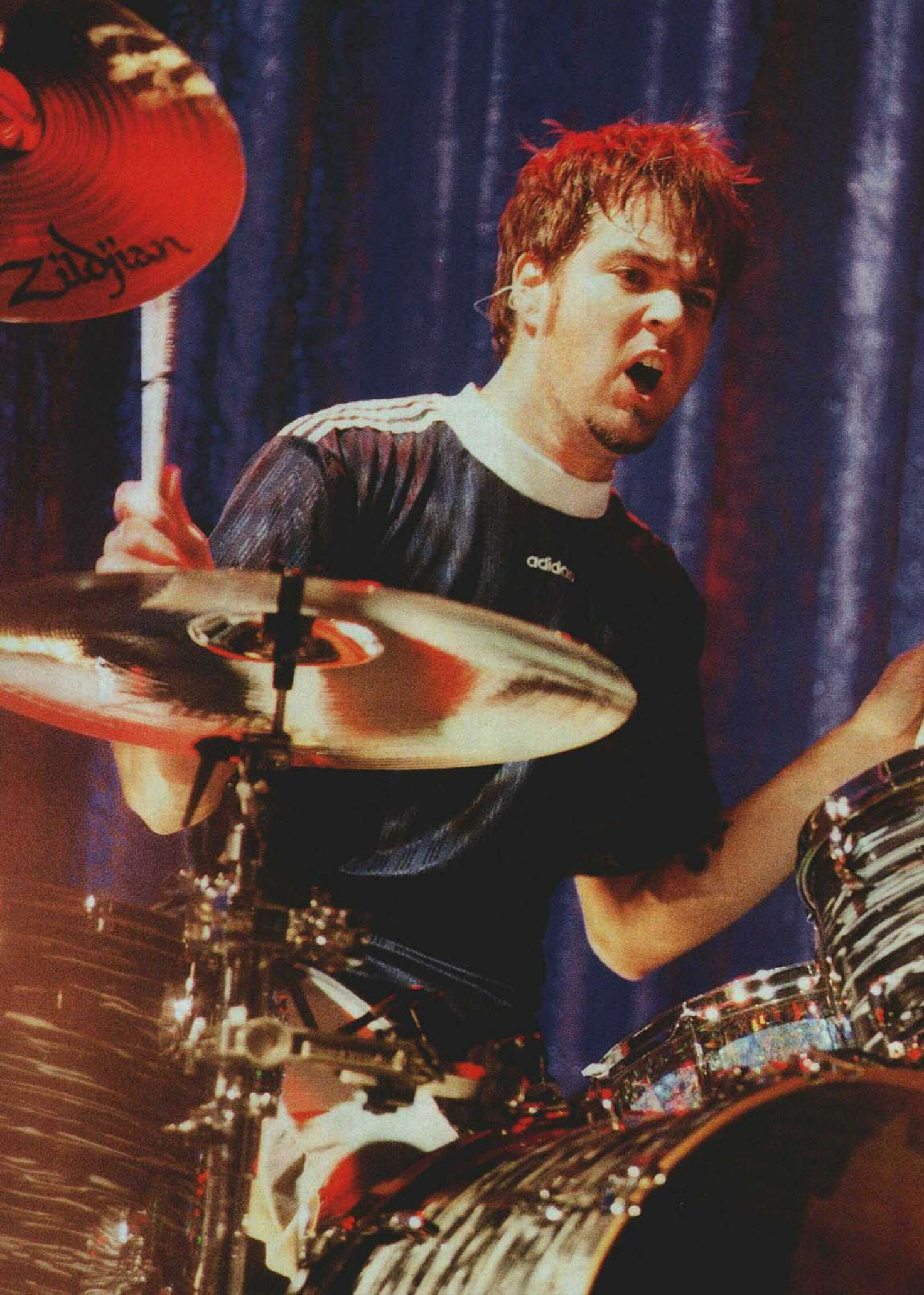
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Better Than Ezra's Travis McNabb

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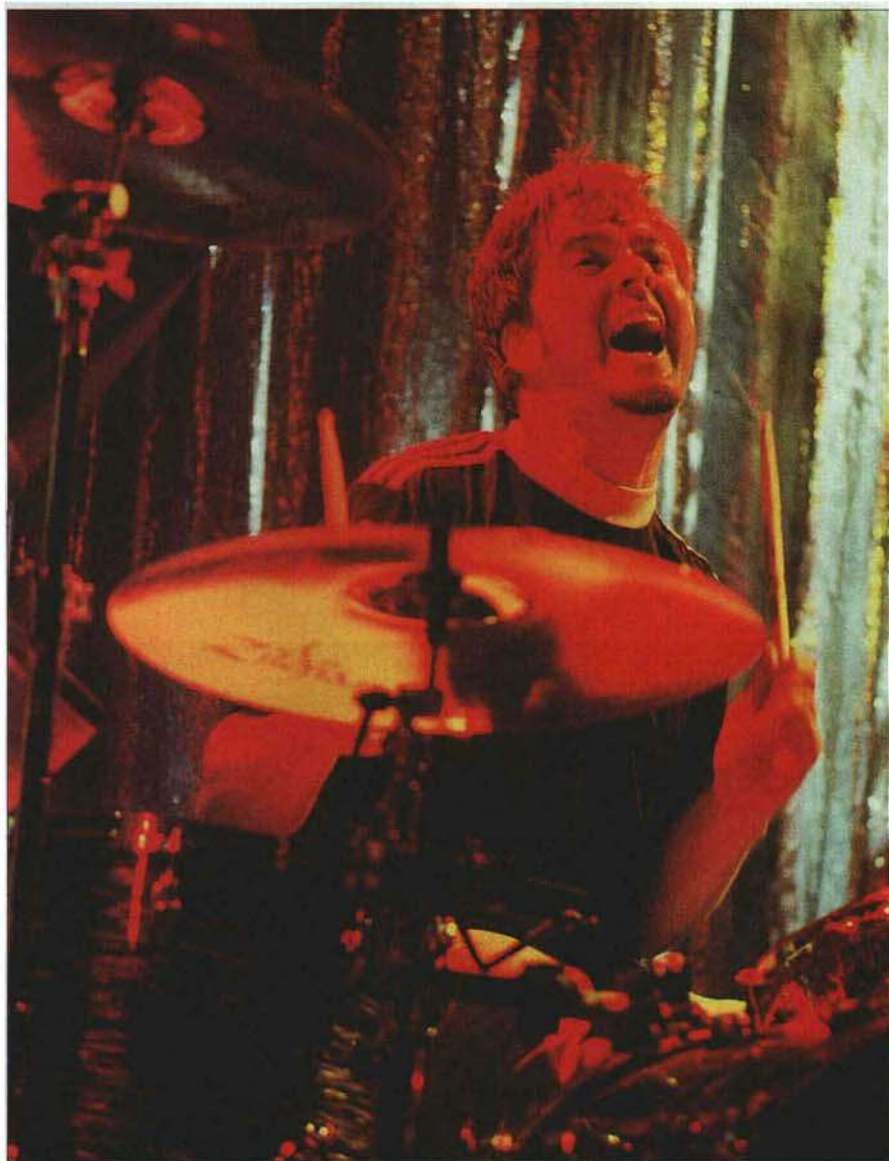
Travis McNabb has always wanted to be part of a successful band. So in a sense his good fortune with Better Than Ezra comes as no surprise. The big jolt for him was the ridiculous touring schedule—but then that's what it takes for a band to go platinum. Their last album, *Friction Baby*, is still scoring high, while their latest, *How Does Your Garden Grow*, has spawned successful singles like "One More Murder." Another conspicuous sign of their arrival: They have placed songs on TV's *Party Of Five* and *Charmed*.

STORY BY T. BRUCE WITTET • PHOTOS BY ALEX SOLCA

Before joining Better Than Ezra in 1996, the New Orleans native was active in other bands that had record deals, such as Vigilantes Of Love (Capricorn), and on the session scene. In fact, years back McNabb demoed a song for singer Shawn Mullens that has just surfaced as a single—"Shimmer."

McNabb has not gone unnoticed by *MD*. For a while now, readers have been inquiring about the twenty-nine-year-old drummer who exhibits finesse beyond the pounding he lays on bridges of Better Than Ezra songs. These are places full of trashy block chords and inventive pushes. McNabb's inflections—including a rollicking drum and cymbal approach—are an important part of the cacophony. However, that role dissolves quickly when hushed verses come 'round, and Travis plays fluttering drags and ruffs close to the rim. Some of these are barely audible, but contribute subtly to the flow of Ezra's music.

In this interview, McNabb looks at a nagging issue—namely how drummers ought to take care of the finer details of execution and projection. Putting his money where his mouth is, Travis tailors parts both for the song and for the microphone, structuring his internal balance at the drumset to deliver a performance that is "pre-mixed" by the time it reaches tape. A devotee of vintage drums, and a regular reader of *Modern Drummer*, he is head over heels about his vocation. First, some background on the self-taught drummer:



TM: I never had training, although my dad is a musician, and his dad is a musician. My dad played through the '60s, until he got married and got a day job, but music was always around the house. I remember learning a few chords on guitar, but it wasn't intriguing because it was something that was so normal in our household. I thought I'd try bass, but my brother wanted to. Eventually I got it into my head to play drums. At the same time I was into art and graphic design, and had made some money at it when I was fourteen—enough to buy a \$125 piece-of-junk drumkit. A week or two later, on my fifteenth birthday, my parents bought me some hi-hats, and then at Christmas they helped me out again. By watching drummers on TV, and from talking to my dad, I knew which limbs you used where, and I did air drumming. The first day I got the drums, I played songs with my dad.

BW: You never had a teacher to help you with stumbling blocks?

TM: Not really. In high school, across from my art class, the jazz band rehearsed. Every day I'd peek my head in the door and watch, and the best drummer would be showing the other drummers things. I'd go home and try to do them. For pretty much any lick or independence thing, I would adopt the simple practice of doing it over and over again, really slowly.

BW: How does one teach oneself a press roll?

TM: I never really learned the rudiments. Most of what I do is single-stroke, right,



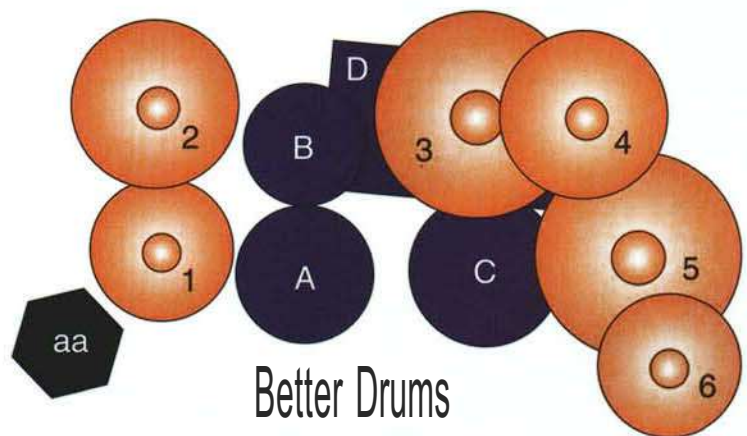
left, right stuff, because that's how I figured out how to make things work for me. When I have to do things on the kit that don't work with singles, I'll do double strokes—so I'll end up playing rudiments anyway. It's cool because I had to find ways of playing what I wanted to hear. I feel like I'm faking my press roll, and I couldn't do a good, clean double-stroke roll.

BW: It sure sounds as if you can.

TM: What you're probably hearing are fast single strokes: right, left, right, left. Any 32nd notes I play are all singles, alternating, and played really hard.

BW: I've watched you play really quiet, graceful stuff.

TM: That's something I feel is part of my playing. We're in a rock band and we want it to hit you in the gut, but it's still *music*. It's not about pounding. In a rock band, part



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of playing for the music is beating the shit out of something, but on the other hand, it's knowing when to leave air or space. It took five or six years of playing until I got to a place where technically I could do what I wanted to. That's when the *real* learning started—about feel, about different kinds of movement. Is the snare laid-back? Is there a little bit of swing to the 8th notes?

BW: Living in New Orleans must have helped.

TM: Definitely. Zigaboo Modeliste from The Meters was a favorite—along with Ringo and Bonham. I did lots of listening to Zigaboo. He doesn't play the same thing throughout, but it always has the same feel. He's got a real confident pocket. The band just knows where he's going to land, even though he's not always hitting the bass drum on 1 or the snare on 2. It's also got a bit of laziness that's comforting.

BW: Was there a component of Modeliste's sound that influenced you?

TM: Oh yeah. I'm a big fan of drums-in-a-room, although not necessarily a huge sound. The Meters stuff that I love—the early '70s stuff—sounds like there's a mic'



or two in a room by the drumkit, and the bass drum has this mid-range, and the snare is kind of trashy. Actually, *all* of it's kind of trashy. You can envision the space the band is in.

The whole thing with close-miking

drums is a bit foreign. You never put your ear up to a drum like that, an inch away from it. That's not how you hear a drum. Though, it's a good thing to have those mic's there in a recording situation, to help define things when you need them.

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The whole idea of *mixing* drums is tricky, because you should be playing them the way you want them to sound. If you can't put up a room mic' and have your drums sounding the way they're supposed to, you're not playing them right!

BW: That's the British concept of recording, like with Bonham, where they *started* with the overheads—not the close mic's.

TM: Exactly: capturing what the guy is doing in the room. If you don't look at it as a whole, then you're missing what's beautiful about it.

I'll contradict that, though, by saying there's something cool about early '70s stuff like Fleetwood Mac, where everything is really padded down and close-miked. I love that all of these options are available. You don't *have* to sound one way. But I prefer hearing Bonham, where you hear how he meant the sound to come out in the room.

BW: You can hear his *touch*.

TM: That's the thing Bonham had—his touch and his feel. That's something I'm still trying to get a good grip on: getting a good balance within the kit. When you hit the toms or snare, or play ghost notes versus a backbeat, it's about having all that stuff balanced. A guy will say, "My ghost notes are not coming out; you need to compress my snare." *No!* You need to hit your backbeat a little less hard so your ghost notes will be at a relatively proper volume.

BW: How did you come by this knowledge so early in your career?

TM: I was with a few bands that had record deals. There would be dry spells where I wouldn't be able to pay the rent. Fortunately, I was able to get studio work—generally singer-songwriter situations. Also, for a period of time, I was an engineer at a studio. I learned that, sure,

you can fix stuff and make something work for the general listener's ears, but drumming that's really musical goes way beyond that.

BW: Tell me about your engineer's perspective on drummers' faults in the studio.

TM: A lot of guys don't think in terms of

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having the noise they make on the drumkit sound the way it should off the floor. They want to do this or that in the control room to get that sound. I also think a lot of guys don't listen to records closely enough. The liveliness of drums is important: When you hear a kit in the mix, you don't always hear all the overtones, because there's bass, guitar, and keyboards taking up that harmonic space. When you get moments where there's a little more space, you can really hear what the drums sound like. But a lot of guys focus on the way the drums sound when the whole band is playing on the recording. That often leads to *Pinstripe* heads and duct tape. That sure ain't what Bonham was playing! Then they want to put a big old reverb on it to liven it up, but a reverb is only going to take a dead, muddy sound and extend it for a longer time.

BW: How did you hook up with Better Than Ezra?

TM: In late January '96, they flew me in for an audition. We did three days of rehearsing, and on the third day we went into a MIDI studio and recorded it all. We

went to dinner, had drinks, and went to a show. Playing, working together, and the *hang* were all important: They wanted a bandmember, not a hired hand.

I left on Saturday, and they told me I'd know by Wednesday or Thursday. By Tuesday I was going insane! I got back from a movie and I had a message that they'd called: "Yeah man, you have the gig." Meanwhile, *Schoolhouse Rock! Rocks* [an album of bands covering tunes from the educational cartoon on Saturday morning TV] came up, and I had to immediately get on a flight to LA to record "Conjunction Junction" with them. That tune turned out to be the "Stairway To Heaven" of *SchoolHouse Rock*.

After that we rehearsed for a month straight, and then we went into the studio and recorded *Friction Baby*. I didn't play with them live until *Friction Baby* was completely recorded and mixed. My first gig was to a hometown crowd of 50,000 people!

BW: You use a lot of retro gear.

TM: On the road I'm using an old Gretsch

kit that I bought piece by piece: Some were the old round-badge and some were the square-badge. They sound great. Because Ringo's the guy for me, I had the drums covered in black oyster pearl—although I know that wasn't an original Gretsch finish.

BW: I noticed you have your cymbals pretty high.

TM: Yeah, they're high, but I'm a tall guy—I'm 6'2" and have long limbs. Even though the cymbals look high, it makes sense for my reach.

BW: You used another vintage kit when you performed on the TV show *Viva Variety*.

TM: That kit was a cool, old Ludwig & Ludwig; I used the same kit on Leno. A few years back, I saw Stone Temple Pilots on *Unplugged*, and they had a cool drum sound. Their drums were rented from the Drum Doctor, so that's the kit I rent as well when I'm in LA. My drum tech, Kenny Corbett, is essential in handling this kind of detail. We call him "Can Do Kenny."

It's important for me to use American-made drums and cymbals. It's funny, I've got a Zildjian/Noble & Cooley and a

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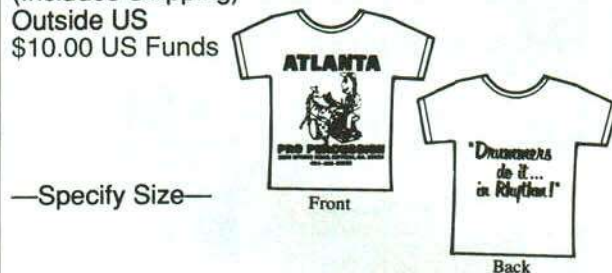
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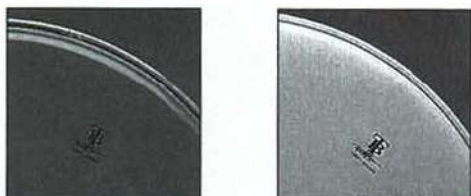
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\$1,500 Clevelander snare drum, but the drum I use on tour—and the one I used on 60% of the new record—is an 8x14 Remo. With a deep drum, you can tune it up and get sensitivity, but still have some meat when you hit a backbeat.

BW: On "One More Murder" the head is not tuned up like a tabletop.

TM: No, it's medium and the snares are medium-tight. I think a lot of drummers over-tighten their snares. I hit mostly rimshots: That's a big part of the Zigaboo and Bonham sound. On lighter stuff, I'll try just to hit the head, and appreciate that as a true option. But I've hit rimshots for so long—due to listening to drummers like Stewart Copeland—that it's hard not to.

BW: I'm thinking that on "Allison Foley," you are hitting the head dead-center, no rim.

TM: Actually, I was hitting rimshots, but I detuned the heads a lot. That's the Remo drum, and it was pretty slack. I think it's the same drum on "One More Murder," tuned differently. You can check my memory by downloading a video of us recording "One More Murder" from our Web

site: betterthanezra.com.

BW: Going from the studio to a large stage, are there subtleties that don't make the transition? Have you had to adjust your playing?

TM: I hate the notion that you would adjust your playing drastically because of the room you're in. I mean, you *do* tend to adjust it, because you're hearing the space you're in. Sometimes ghost notes tend to get lost in bigger places; it's just an unfortunate part of things. A lot of times, when the band is playing, you don't hear all those notes anyway. Those finer parts of the rhythm aren't necessarily meant to be heard note-by-note, but you'd notice them if they *weren't* there.

BW: Because of those ghost notes, I guess you don't gate the snare drum?

"The whole idea of mixing drums is tricky, because you should be playing them the way you want them to sound. If you can't put up a room mic' and have your drums sounding the way they're supposed to, you're not playing them right!"

TM: No I don't, and I preach to the soundman on a daily basis. He likes to gate the toms, and I make the point that if I *breathe* on them, I want them to open. Most of

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what I've got in the monitors is the front-of-house mix, so I can bust him on stuff, like, "Hey man, in the breakdown part of the song, I hit the floor tom, and it wasn't there!"

BW: How do you get that full bass drum sound?

TM: I'm using internal mic's, and I just started using a full front head. I tend to leave the beater against the head, and for that reason it was hard to get used to the feeling of a full front head. On the last tour I cut two small holes in the head for venting, so there wasn't so much bounce off the drum. But I like the idea of leaving the entire, uncut head there, so this tour I've gotten used to it.

For live situations, the bass drum has to have a sound that'll work for every song. I muffle it to the point where there is an attack sound plus a split second of tone—just enough to feel that bottom end that naturally happens. You don't sense the pitch too much; it's not out of key.

BW: Are you going to get involved in writing? The liner notes say it's mostly Kevin [Griffin] right now.

TM: Probably. Each guy is an admirer of what the other does. Tom [Drummond] and I fiddle around at home, and put some stuff on tape, but Kevin has been at it for much longer. He may come in with chord changes and melody, or things may develop out of a jam. He's coming up with the vocal melody and lyrics, but as far as arrangements go, that's something we all do together.

BW: I really like "New Kind Of Low." There are two bands that come to mind when I hear the intro: G Love & Special Sauce and The John Spencer Blues Explosion.

TM: Definitely. I'm a fan of both of those—especially G Love. When we were recording *Friction Baby* at Kingsway in

New Orleans, he brought his parents by to show them the studio. I have seen him play a fair amount in New Orleans.

BW: The song has that broadcast mic' sound in the A section, but when it goes to section B, it sounds Pink Floyd-ish.

TM: That is the closest to Pink Floyd or The Beatles that we've ever gotten. That was a cool thing and a track I'm really proud of.

BW: You can really hear the hand of producer Malcolm Burns.

TM: That was what we wanted. He joins a band for the record, which is perfect for us, because he's a keyboard player. "New Kind Of Low" originally went to a loud 6/8 feel. We wanted to make some sort of shift, and he encouraged us to make it completely different.

BW: You even got that Pink Floyd ride sound.

TM: That is something I normally use as a crash—an 18" or 19" K medium-thin. I'm playing it really lightly. I went through every cymbal I had, looking for a particular thing I wanted the ride to do.

BW: When I first heard "New Kind Of Low," I made the assumption that you were finicky about cymbals. Do you collect old *Ks*?

TM: I don't collect old *Ks* because I'm too much of a basher and I'd wind up breaking them. I'd hate to do that, because there are people who will find them and use them for their whole career, and who deserve to have them. I'm finicky when I'm recording in that I'll change hats or a ride for a given

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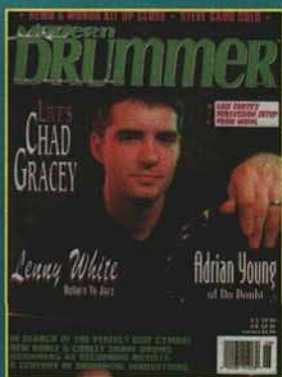
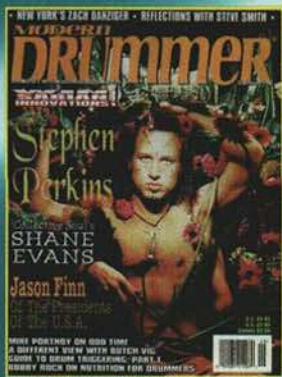
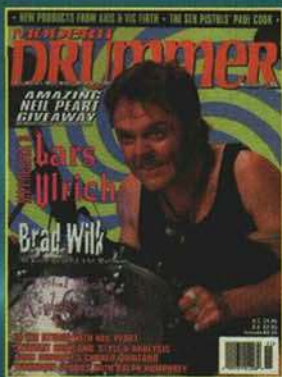
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song. If I'm playing lightly, I'll crank the tom heads up tight and use smaller cymbals. I have this swish with rivets I love; you can just touch it and get a great spread from the rivets. For someone who plays as hard as I do, getting my backbeats and all the in-between stuff right in "New Kind Of Low" made me feel out of my element. Near the end, I played something I stole directly from Jim Keltner: square 8th-note fills right through the middle of a 6/8 section that has a swing to it. Kevin hated it at first.

BW: "One More Murder" is another example of a song that has dynamics and space.

TM: "One More Murder" was originally really on top of the beat and driving. It was Clash-influenced. Kevin started playing the chords to "One More Murder" on the *Rhodes*, and Malcolm said, "Keep doing that!" From that jam came the song. On that track, there is an arpeggiated keyboard part and a drum loop that begins the track. The drum machine sends a MIDI time code to this great keyboard, a *Nord Lead II*, so that will play in time to the drum machine. We're not locked into a sequence—which is good, because we adjust the arrangement a little bit every night. I have a little pedal to the left of my

hi-hat so I can turn the machine off. Tom, our bass player, is triggering samples from footpedals. Live, we use a fourth guy, Jim Payne, who plays guitar and organ. There is never a time when we're playing to a sequenced song, where we've got to hit the chorus when it hits the chorus. It's a live band—not a band performing parts of its record that are already playing themselves.

BW: I hear some Radiohead and U2.

TM: We're all fans of those bands. In fact, when I was seventeen I met Larry Mullen, and talked to him for about two minutes.

BW: That's about all the time he'll talk to anyone about drums these days!

TM: After talking to him about how his influence on me, his quote to me was, "Hit 'em hard!" So when I sign something now, I put, "Hit them hard."

BW: I've heard that Larry suffers from physical problems that come from hitting hard.

TM: The more I play, the more I'm learning that you can play loud—but to make it feel good, it has to be relaxed. You can hit a strong, loud tone on a drum, but it's not a push-the-stick-through-the-drum kind of thing.

BW: Especially when you're going for

those ghost notes.

TM: It'll kill them—and the feel. If you're beating the crap out of the drums, your loudest notes are going to be so much louder than anything else you do dynamically that when they fit you in the mix, all that's going to come through will be your loudest stuff.

It's also important to me to think more musically, rather than just rhythmically. Rather than asking what rock beat will work in a given song, I try to look at exactly the way drumming and rhythm affect the music—everything from feel to patterns to tone.

You know, this conversation about the specifics of what I do is such a rare occasion. I think through examining these kinds of things you learn about getting good at these kinds of things. I have read *Modern Drummer* since I started playing. It's always been insightful. People will be talking about concepts you don't understand when you are younger—like playing ahead of the beat, behind the beat—but it led me to pursue an understanding of that stuff. I would go and buy records that they mentioned to hear examples of things. It's not every day you get to talk to a Jim Keltner or a Matt Chamberlain.



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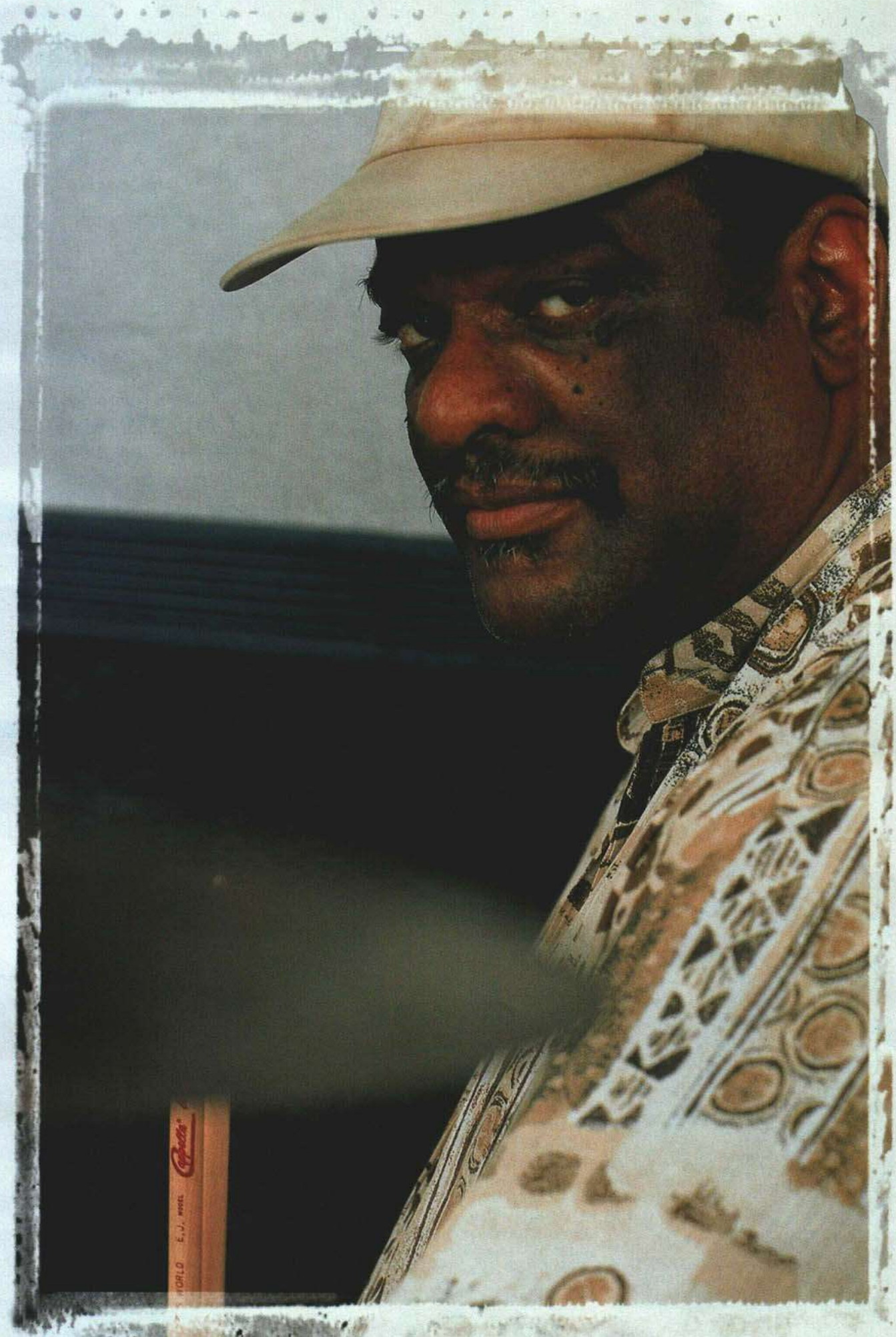
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MORLO E.J. White 

joe chambers

mode for joe

The title track to Joe Chambers' recently reissued 1973 album, *The Almoravid*, is the kind of percussive tour de force most drummers would love to lay claim to. Based around Spanish themes, *The Almoravid* is representative of Chambers' mastery of jazz, both as drummer and composer. First, you hear a fiery conga solo by Ray Mantilla, followed by timpani and various percussion played by Omar Clay and David Friedman. Chambers' drums enter center-stage, challenging and driving the other players. As the liner notes state: "An ostinato figure in 16/4

arrives; the rhythm is subdivided as 7/4 + 9/4. Piano enters and the music segues into a 4/4 blues. Mallets maneuver a 16/4 section.... Chambers' thunderous drums control the movement of the piece."

Around the blistering improvisation and hard-knuckled drumming of *The Almoravid*, dark, exotic melodies weave and bend like snakes being charmed out of a pot. As an example of serious intent within intelligent, riveting compositions, *The Almoravid* is a good example of the burnished, brooding jazz coming out of Manhattan in the early 70s.

story by Ken Micallef

photos by Paul La Raia

As one of the most outstanding musicians of the 1960s scene (comprised of players who were raised on bebop and went on to record some of the most innovative and lasting jazz of this century), Joe Chambers is a seminal figure, as important to jazz as Tony Williams, Elvin Jones, and Roy Haynes. Beyond his gritty, flexible drumming, Chambers is also a highly developed though blatantly unrecognized composer, having contributed to many leaders' albums, including those of Bobby Hutcherson and Freddie Hubbard. Chambers' latest album, *Mirrors*, signals his return to the Blue Note label fold.

In the 1960s, Joe Chambers contributed to many Blue Note albums, which remain the stuff of legend and of great influence on legions of young musicians. Bear-like in stature, yet quiet in conversation, Chambers prefers to let his music do the talking. And "talk" it did, on powerful albums that still resound with all the weight of the chaotic 1960s, expressed in memorable performances and innovative compositions. Now highly awaited as reissues, Chambers' Blue Note entries include records by the aforementioned Hutcherson and Hubbard, as well as Wayne Shorter, Joe Henderson, McCoy Tyner, Andrew Hill, Chick Corea, Archie Shepp, M'Boom, Charles Mingus, and Stanley Cowell. He's also recorded numerous solo albums, and even for filmmaker Spike Lee.

Though he can solo with great ferocity and originality, Chambers' drumming is often so musical as to be transparent. It is

hard to pin down specific licks in his work, so in-the-moment and musically unselfish are his performances. Perhaps his serious studies in composition, piano, and vibraphone make his drumming more melodic than drum-oriented. Whatever the case, his is the sound of agitation and fury, propulsion and incandescence.

Raised in the Philadelphia suburb of Chester, Chambers benefited from that city's then quality educational system, allowing him to fully explore instrumental and compositional studies. Playing his first gig at twelve years old—in a strip bar—he went on to play rhythm & blues before enrolling at the Philadelphia Conservatory and then the American University in DC. He made his recording debut on Freddie Hubbard's 1964 Blue Note album, *Breaking Point*. An avalanche of recording work in the '60s and '70s followed. Chambers joined Max Roach's collective M'Boom, traveled often to Japan, cut many albums as a leader, and began to teach at various Manhattan institutions, including New York's New School.

Mirrors, an album of related themes and subtle performances, shows a mature musician. As well as originals, Chambers covers songs by Janet and Michael Jackson, transforming pop fodder into jazz gems. Playing drums and vibes, his trademark drumming transparency and swinging, edgy cymbal pulse are still fully in evidence. A modern master with much to teach and more music to explore, Joe Chambers is a gentle giant with a tough-fisted touch. That is the mode for Joe.

KM: There is such a high level of musicianship and improvisation in the music of the Blue Note era and the eras directly preceding and following it, say from 1955 to 1966. What forces came together to create bop, hard bop, and post bop?

JC: I was at the *Jazz Times* convention a few weeks ago, and they had a seminar titled "Racism, Sexism, and Ageism in the Music Business." I made the comment that, in regards to sexism, in the evolution of jazz there have always been women,

though also male dominance. But the music of the bebop era and the hard bop era, particularly in the '50s, and then the Coltrane era, was extremely masculine. Women could not play that music. And they jumped on me at the convention, they misunderstood. But if you see McCoy Tyner, for example, he will bash out a drummer. Women could not do that. It was very masculine music, and women could not handle the physicality of it.

Regarding the post bop of the '50s, that

was a time when there was still a circuit where jazz musicians could play at neighborhood clubs and bars. There was a lot of work. With Lou Donaldson I used to run all up and down the Eastern Seaboard, excluding the South. It would stop at DC. We're talking Boston, Philly, Detroit, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Cincinnati, New York, Kansas City. Industrial cities. That had a lot to do with the music and things happening politically. It was a healthy atmosphere, you could make a living.

KM: What bands did you work with?

JC: I played some R&B with Bobby Charles, who made "Tossin' And Turnin'." Then I worked with Eric Dolphy and Freddie Hubbard. We got uniforms and we toured. In those days you dressed—black suit and tie. That was a tradition that went out in the mid-'60s when the idea of freedom came in, a downtown Greenwich Village attitude. Freddie and the band toured for six weeks behind his album *Breaking Point*.

KM: Your style seems to have arrived on the scene fully formed.

JC: I was trying to play fast tempos differ-

joe's traps

Drumset: DW in mahogany finish
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C. 9x13 tom
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ently, without having to play da-da-ding, da-da-ding, da-da-ding. I was breaking it up between everything.

KM: Your drumming is very transparent, meaning you play through the music and around the music, always pushing and driving with the cymbal without playing much drums. You let the music breathe.

JC: I would say that is an analysis after the fact. Often guys don't really know what they are doing, they're just doing it. I was just into the sound. I always tried to play the piece.

A student once asked me how to avoid sounding the same all the time. I said you have to play the song. Play the composition, whatever the flavor. If you do that you will never repeat yourself. I always try to do that.

KM: You let the melodies and the players breathe while also pushing them. Your drumming has a lot of air, but it's always pushing. Does that come from the fact that you also play vibes?

JC: No, I don't think so. When I recorded all those records I would always get the

piano chart and learn the tunes. I could play them on piano. So I was really inside the songs, I knew what was happening. In this kind of music you do repeat yourself; everybody has licks they play over and over again. But I always made a conscious effort to approach each piece as an entity in itself, as a story in itself. I tried to avoid clichés. I have licks, but I just try to find ways to place them.

KM: Were the Blue Note sessions well rehearsed?

JC: We'd rehearse a week and then go in and hit it. It was all part of the deal that [Blue Note co-founder] Alfred Lion had for each record.

KM: On June 14, 1965 you recorded Wayne Shorter's *Etcetera*, seven months later you did Joe Henderson's *Mode For Joe*, and a month after that you recorded Shorter's *Adam's Apple*. From Hubbard to Henderson to Shorter to Bobby Hutcherson, do you remember particular sessions?

JC: Oh, yeah. I couldn't tell you *exactly* what we were talking about; it's really a

blur. But when I hear the records it comes more alive. All the sessions at Rudy Van Gelder's studio were recorded pretty much the same way. The horns would be lined up facing each other, parallel, with the drums in the center and the bass and piano to either side. I might have a small baffle. There weren't isolated booths. Maybe four mic's on the drums. We'd never spend a lot of time on a particular song. We would do stuff over and over, but never more than three takes in succession for one tune. We would come back to the tune if there was a problem. But none of this four or five takes. Most of those sessions were done in one day.

KM: Is there still a large black audience for jazz? Now it all seems to be about hip-hop.

JC: Hip-hop is young people's music. When bebop came in the late '30s and early '40s, there were a lot of social and political factors that helped to disenfranchise the music. That is the beginning period of drugs flowing into the black community and the association of drugs with jazz

musicians. And then the big bands were killed by the 20% surtax on clubs that had dance policies. They had to pay 20% above the normal tax, which helped in the demise of what the clubs could put on. It turned the clubs into tables and chairs and people sitting down instead of dancing. Couple that with the changes that began to happen in bebop music. But that is the era of the liberation of the drums. The drummers began to free themselves and develop the modern style. The patrons of the clubs and the writers couldn't understand the music or the harmonies Charlie Parker brought in. But we could dance to bebop in a kind of a half-time fashion—we called it "the bop."

KM: Were there black alternative bands to the accepted big bands of Glenn Miller and Tommy Dorsey?

JC: Yes. Jimmie Lunceford, Duke Ellington, Fletcher Henderson, Bennie Moten, Alphonse Prince, Jay McShann. There was a saying then: If you wanted the band to sound clean, precise, and in tune, you got white musicians; but if you wanted it wild, you got black musicians. But then the big bands fell apart.

The main attitude of the beboppers grew from the fact that before 1941 a black musician couldn't get a job unless he was smiling or grinning and showing his teeth. The bebop musicians wanted to be accept-

ed just for the music; that is what being cool was all about. That is the opposite of the grinning Satchmo; people couldn't deal with it. So rhythm & blues or race music came about in 1944 or '45 so people could dance, with bands like Louis Jordan and Amos Milburn. Bebop still had an audience, but it was beginning to be a cult audience. Beatniks and bohemia. But black folks liked to dance, so they took on the R&B.

As soon as R&B started to blossom you had the creation of rock 'n' roll in the early '50s. Jazz receded farther into the underground. But you still had the neighborhood bars in the '50s, you still had jazz. Around the height of the civil rights riots in '64, though, the bars were dwindling because they didn't get support from the white people and the tourists coming to the black neighborhoods. The big riots in '66 and '67 ended all of that. Then white people stopped coming and the black folks did too. The responsible blacks who could maintain the neighborhoods, they moved out and left the neighborhoods to the criminal element. Nowadays, the idea of going out to the clubs in the black neighborhoods is a thing of the past, and the young audiences want hip-hop.

KM: For musicians such as yourself, Wayne Shorter, Joe Henderson, Bobby Hutcherson, and Freddie Hubbard, was there a political element to the music?

JC: Sure. Trane did it a lot. Not only was that the era of the Vietnam war, but it was also the drug era, peace and love.

KM: Were there drugs at the Blue Note sessions?

JC: Absolutely. We were part of the drug era, although we didn't use heroin. That was still being used by the old hard-line guys like Art Blakey. But heroin was not the drug of choice in the '60s among us. For us it was cocaine, marijuana, mescaline, and LSD. And only cocaine on the sessions.

We were a part of the drug scene. And we were aware of political things, but we were also spaced out. I could have done my own date for Blue Note—Alfred Lion asked me to. But I was so spaced out I didn't even pursue it.

KM: But Bobby Hutcherson's *Components* and *Medina* albums are practically built around your compositions.

JC: I was working. The Blue Note crowd was not verbally political. We were deep into the music. Max Roach was always making political statements.

KM: Let's switch gears and talk about your sound on those records, specifically your cymbal sound. Are we hearing the same cymbal on all your Blue Note sessions?

JC: I played an old dry A Zildjian ride on *Adam's Apple*, *Mode For Joe*, and some others. I also have the same K Zildjian ride cymbal I've used for thirty years. When I hear those sessions I can remember what the drums were. In 1965, my drums were stolen on the way to an Andrew Hill session, and I had to borrow Jimmy Cobb's set. And Blue Note rented some sets. But I played a Gretsch set for years on some of those sessions.

KM: You played on ten of Bobby Hutcherson's eleven albums in the '60s [including *Components*, *Spiral*, *Happenings*, *Patterns*, *Dialogue*, and *Total Eclipse*]. Was your relationship particularly strong with him because you also played vibes?

JC: I didn't play the vibes back then. That started when we got M'Boom together in 1970. I was a drummer first and I played some piano. I met Bobby in DC when he was with Eric Dolphy. When he came to New York he became part of the crowd. We played in Eric's band together. We were part of the core Blue Note group along with Joe Henderson, Freddie Hubbard, Lee Morgan, Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter, Hank Mobley, McCoy Tyner, and Grachan Moncur.

KM: Your favorite Blue Note session?

JC: Let's put it this way: The sessions that I enjoyed myself on and I feel I interpreted well are different from the ones most often named by others. A lot of people talk about sessions that I don't even like. But Sam Rivers' *Contours* is one of my favorites. Bobby Hutcherson's *Oblique*, Chick Corea's first session, *Tones For Joan's Bones* [Atlantic], *Charles Mingus With Friends At Carnegie Hall*, Wayne Shorter's *Etcetera*. I liked most of his *Schizophrenia*, but not all of it. There is a session I did with Ray Mantilla on Inner City Records I like. And one by a guitarist named Karl Ratzer on Vanguard.



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Larry Young/Joe Chambers	Double Exposure
Sam Rivers	Contours
Bobby Hutcherson	Oblique
Chick Corea	Tones For Joan's Bones
Charles Mingus	And Friends In Concert At Carnegie Hall
Wayne Shorter	Etcetera
Andrew Hill	Compulsion
Ray Mantilla	Mantilla

...and here are a few recommended by writer Ken Micallef:

Chick Corea	Inner Space
McCoy Tyner	Tender Moments
Joe Henderson	Mode For Joe
Wayne Shorter	The All Seeing Eye
	Schizophrenia
M'Boom	Collage
Stanley Cowell	Back To The Beautiful
Andrew Hill	One For One
Archie Shepp	New Thing At Newport



KM: Where did the different leaders fall in relationship to your time conception? Were they behind the beat, ahead of the beat?

JC: In terms of the beat, Joe Henderson was more like Sonny Rollins; he had a wide beat and he played more in the lower register of the horn. Joe always had his own sound. Wayne also; he didn't sound like Coltrane, like people say, but more like Miles Davis. That is how I would analyze those players as far as that goes.

KM: Did playing vibraphone with M'Boom affect your drumming technique?

JC: I am not a master mallet player or a master pianist, but at one time I had quite a

bit of chops on the piano. I still know a lot of theory. So when I started to play mallets it was like a piano to me. It was easy to get the action. I didn't have mallet technique, but I knew what to hit because I knew the keyboard layout. I don't want to make mallet players mad, but it was not a difficult transition.

KM: What albums are you playing vibes on?

JC: On my latest, *Mirrors*, of course. And I played on some Blue Note records back in the day. Some Japanese records. One called *Islaverde* on King Records.

KM: You are best known for the Blue

Note dates, but you've kept playing right up to now.

JC: Around 1970 we started M'Boom and we spent a lot of time just rehearsing. We didn't have a lot of work, just a few gigs [recordings included]. I was doing sideman stuff and going to Europe a lot with Jeremy Steig. There was a group formed around Eddie Gomez, Jeremy Steig, Ray Mantilla, Karl Ratzer, and me, doing fusion gigs. And that is when I started to teach in the schools. I got my first job in 1974 at Nassau College in the jazz program. I spent a lot of time with Donald Byrd and The Blackbyrds. In the later part of the '70s, M'Boom got busy. That helped me make a really good Japanese connection, and I began doing lots of Japanese dates with Archie Shepp, Tommy Flanagan, The Super Jazz Trio, and Art Farmer. Around the mid-'80s I started teaching at City College [in New York]. And I still go to Japan a lot.

KM: And you had your group, The Jazz Connection.

JC: That was like a concept, a consortium. In this business, if you don't have a good amount of work in succession, you don't really have a band. When I led a band,

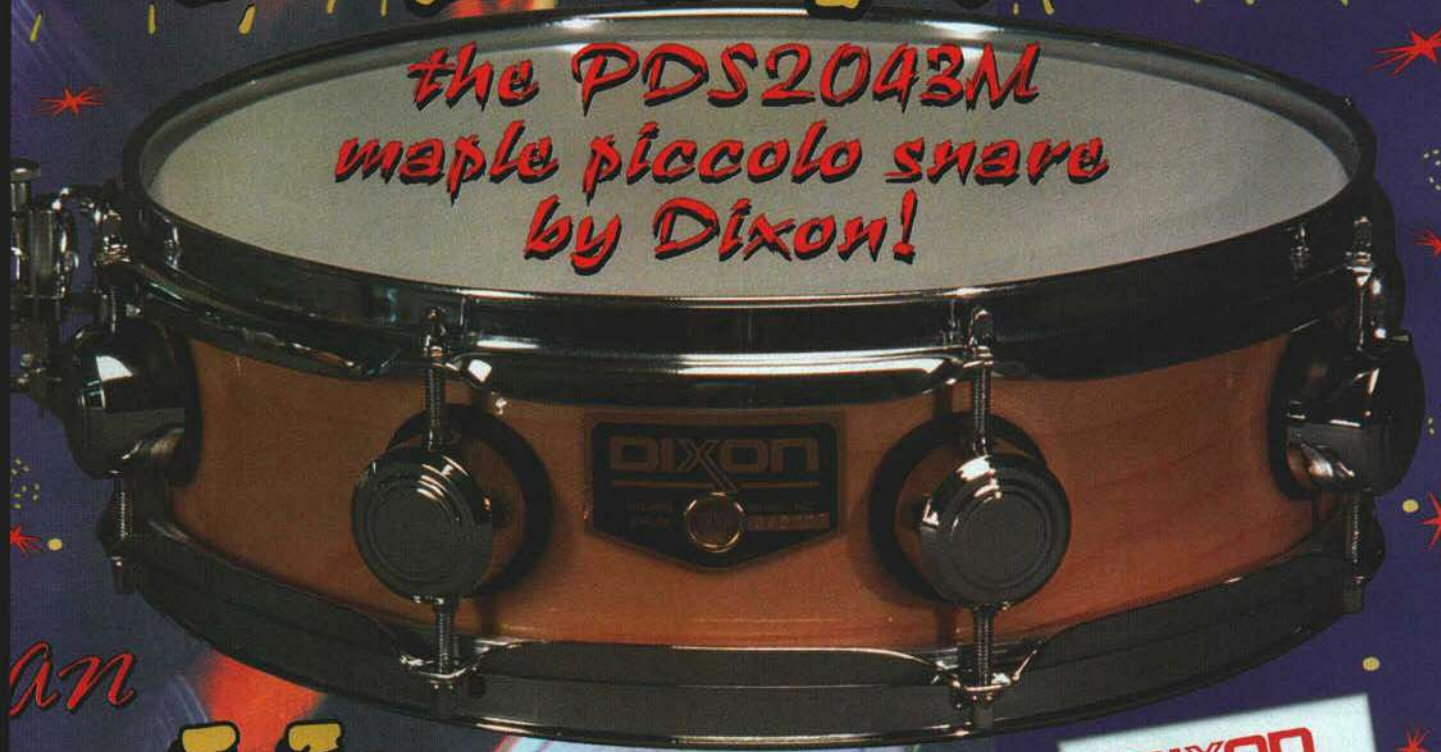
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there was always a core group of players who I could rely on. They were my Jazz Connection. It is hard to keep people together if you don't have work.

KM: In the Blue Note era, how many of the bands were actual working bands?

JC: Not many. Herbie had bands, and Freddie. Joe was sporadic. The Bobby Hutcherson-Harold Land band had steady work.

KM: Did you ever get a chance to play with Miles?

JC: Yes, I did a date with Miles. It is about to be re-released. It was during the period of *In A Silent Way*, with three pianos—Chick Corea, Joe Zawinul, and Herbie Hancock. John McLaughlin, Wayne Shorter, and Larry Young were on it too.

KM: Who were your drumming heroes?

JC: I'd say all of them, which is true. I liked a lot of them for different things. Going back to the old style, I liked Max Roach for solos, Klook [Kenny Clarke] for the ride cymbal, Philly Joe Jones for concept and solos, Roy Haynes for color, Elvin Jones for the dynamics.

KM: Did you take lessons as a kid?

JC: I was in school band. The schools I

grew up in outside of Philly in Chester, during the time that we grew up, were a very fertile environment. The place was rough, but the education was good. We had so many programs in school—marching bands, jazz band, dance band, concert band, concert orchestra. I was introduced to all of that at an early age. In high school I was studying theory and composition. I was being instilled with all the classical works and music appreciation. I was always trying to write, so that was my major when I went to study at the Philadelphia Conservatory for one year, then at American University in DC.

KM: Blue Note has released *Mirrors* now, while 32 Jazz has re-released *The Almoravid*, which originally came out on Muse Records in 1973. What exactly is "The Almoravid"?

JC: [laughs] History is my thing, and you have to be careful when you put out titles like this one. One critic reviewed *Double Exposure* and said that Larry Young and I shared the same religious beliefs, but that was not true. I know the history of Islam, but I am not a Muslim.

The Almoravid was a Moroccan dynasty



during the time of the Moors' excursions into Spain and Europe. They were a particular band under Ben Yusef at the time of El Cid. The music on the album wasn't purely Moorish modes, I was just thinking along those lines.

KM: On a few tracks, you were using drums, two mallet players, conga, percus-

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sion, and bass. This was a very percussive record.

JC: Yeah. I was trying to incorporate some of the stuff we did with M'Boom.

KM: *Double Exposure* was a duet album between you and Larry Young?

JC: Right. I liked that, it was the first record I ever did on piano. One side is piano and organ, the other side is drums and organ. On *Joe Chambers Plays Piano* I cover some standards. That was a Japanese date for Denon.

KM: And you played drums on a few Spike Lee soundtracks.

JC: His father, Bill Lee, was a bassist. I knew Spike when he was just a kid, and the next thing I know he is making movies. We did *Bed-Sty Barbershop* with him first, and he didn't even have money to pay us. We recorded in a garage in Brooklyn. Then he did *She's Gotta Have It*, and we did that too, and the next two after it.

KM: The songs on *Mirrors* sound related, like they're a suite.

JC: That is intentional. Miles always tried to do that, like on *Kind Of Blue*. It's all

right there, and it's all related. But I also learned that in my compositional studies.

When you study music composition, you learn the history of opera, which is very interesting. Of course, you get to Wagner. The whole idea of movie scoring and program music in general comes out of Wagner and his "leitmotiv" concept. For an easily understandable example of what that is, the low cello notes in the movie *Jaws*, when the shark is coming into shore, is the leitmotiv. Wagner unified themes within opera using nonstop music interludes moving from one scene to another, and they called that the "transformation of themes." Whenever a character appears you hear this theme, or this motif, as with the shark in *Jaws*. This is from Wagner, and it is central to any music.

Themes have to be unified, and the music on *Mirrors* is unified harmonically. There are sections in the tunes that all relate. So that is part of what I've learned and what I've tried to incorporate into my music.

KM: As a student of history, do you see the

1960s as the zenith of American culture?

JC: You know, there is not much that I really like in this country anymore. I like pro football. I played ball in high school and college. But the zenith of this culture is jazz. That is the thing saving this country, keeping it going artistically, whether people know it or not. Music is the universal language, and jazz is the universal music, which is why a lot of foreign cultures like it. Jazz offers freedom. It is a true democracy in music, an individual democracy, the only form that can offer freedom and individual expression. It is true democracy, and that makes it dangerous. And that's why it is suppressed.

KM: You still feel that jazz is suppressed?

JC: Absolutely. It is suppressed by the system itself, not by any particular thing in the culture. Jazz can't be sold; it's free, as free as you can be. You cannot be that free in this society, in life in general—not in this life. Look, jazz is really the music of right now. It's twenty-first century expression.



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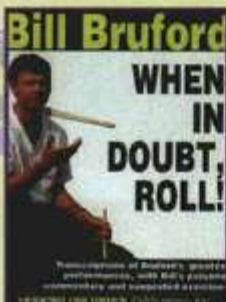
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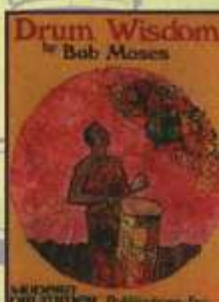
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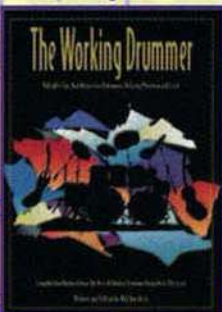
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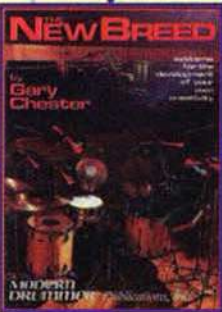
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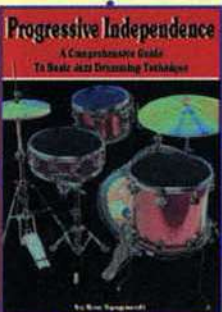
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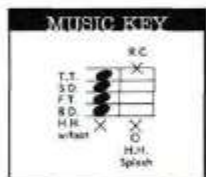
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Your Left Foot

by Steve Anisman



Drummers often think of their left foot merely as a large paperweight whose sole purpose is to hold the hi-hat cymbals together. In this article, I hope to explore some of the possibilities you may not have considered—possibilities that can enrich your playing, expand your rhythmic horizons, and enhance your ability to communicate *pulse* to the band.

Hi-Hat Sounds

There are four fundamental sounds you can make using only the left foot: the "chick," the "splash," the "crash," and the "sizzle." The "chick" is the easiest to explain and the simplest to perform. Simply push down on the toeplate of the pedal with the ball of your foot and hold it down. You'll hear a short, tight sound as the cymbals come together.

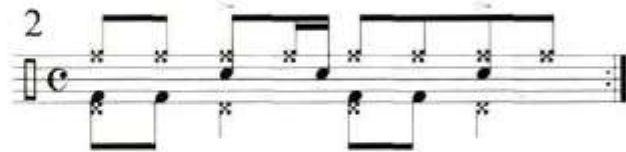
To perform the "splash," push down quickly on the toeplate with the ball of your foot. As soon as the cymbals make contact, remove your foot from the toeplate so the cymbals touch gently and briefly. You want the cymbals to ring, so be sure they don't remain in contact with each other for more than a fraction of a second.

The "sizzle" is basically a cross between the chick and the splash. Bring the cymbals together with the ball of your foot and allow them to bounce against one another for a fraction of a second. However, don't completely release the pressure with your foot. You want the cymbals to remain in gentle contact with one another, one vibrating against the other.

The final technique is the "crash," a variation on the splash. Here, instead of using the ball of your foot, you use your heel. Strike the toeplate low, down near the hinge, and use a forward motion with your foot rather than an up-and-down motion. You want the cymbals to come into complete and sharp contact with each other, followed by an immediate release of the foot. Think of it as a strong, glancing blow. This results in a similar sound to what you'd get striking a crash cymbal with a stick. Just be sure to carefully aim your toes off to the side of the footplate or you'll bang your foot on the stand.

Basic Techniques

Now let's look at some of the ways you can use your left foot to accompany and interact with the music you're making on the rest of the drumset. The most basic accompaniment your left foot can provide is simple quarter notes. Try a few favorite rock beats with the right hand on the ride cymbal, while your left foot plays quarter notes on the hi-hat.



You can also try soloing over quarter notes with the left foot. This can be tricky, so take your time. As you get more comfortable with this, try adding an occasional bass drum, but avoid the temptation to let your bass drum fall into an identical quarter-note pattern.



The next step would be to learn the standard 2 and 4 jazz hi-hat pattern.



The simplest and most common method is the "heel-toe" technique. Here, the heel of the left foot strikes the heelplate of the pedal on beats 1 and 3, while the toe comes down on the toeplate on 2 and 4. Using this method, the leg is basically still bouncing on every quarter note, though the resulting sound has changed.

Be careful using this technique. Since you're only hearing the hi-hat on 2 and 4, it's easy to get sloppy with the heel on 1 and 3. You won't be able to hear it if your heel is always early or late or if it wanders randomly. Pay attention to these "silent notes," and make sure they're in time. Even if you can't hear an irregular pulse from your heel, it can't help but communicate that "wandering" feel to the rest of your limbs.

The 2 and 4 hi-hat is the backbone of jazz and some Latin playing. It can be challenging to improvise with your hands and bass drum while maintaining steady time with your left foot on 2 and 4. This is an essential technique if you're considering playing in any jazz situation. Most horn players will tell you that they listen mostly for the drummer's hi-hat, especially if the bass player is playing anything other than straight quarter notes.



You should also become comfortable playing the hi-hat in 3/4 time. The hi-hat can be played in either a straight, 3/4 waltz pattern (on beats 2 and 3—example A below), or with a jazz waltz feel, on the 2 only (example B below).

More Advanced Techniques

Once you've mastered the basics, the next step would be to start using the hi-hat as an equal limb in your playing. Instead of using it *just* for support, begin to think of the hi-hat as another "voice" available to you as you compose melodic or rhythmic lines on the drumset. Carter Beauford of The Dave Matthews Band uses the hi-hat extensively to spice up his playing, although he generally uses his hands to achieve the effect. You can just as easily use your foot for these accents, thus freeing up your hands for other tasks.

Probably the best example of this style is John Guerin, who played with Joni Mitchell for many years. Listen to "Help Me," or almost any song from the *Court And Spark* album. Listen to the way John substitutes the hi-hat for the bass drum in many of the beats he plays. Notice how this makes the music sound so much looser, and how it helps the band flow.

Another great example of this technique, and the beautiful effect it can achieve, was demonstrated by Alex Acuna on Lyle Mays' self-titled solo album, particularly on "Highland Aire: Ascent."

To develop facility with this type of playing, start out by playing 8th notes on the hi-hat with the foot, gently bouncing your leg.

Practice this while your other limbs improvise freely over the steady left foot. Start out slowly until your leg muscles get used to this kind of activity.

Next would be to apply the heel-toe technique to 8th notes. Here, the heel comes down on 1, 2, 3, and 4, while the toe strikes on the "&s" of each beat.

Work on this until it's second-nature. Try soloing over it with just the hands, and then add the bass drum. Finally, move on to full rock or jazz patterns with all three remaining limbs.

You should repeat all of these exercises using the other three fundamental hi-hat sounds. First try the exercises with each sound individually; then try the various combinations of sounds.

Remember the crash sound made by striking the toeplate with your heel and letting your foot glance off to the side? If the crash sound is played in a quarter-note pattern, you can pretty much imitate the percussion section of a high school marching band all by yourself. Once you've got the hang of making the crash sound, try combining it with the chick. If you play a chick on 1, 2, 3, and 4, and a crash on the "&s," you'll create a "disco" feel with your left foot.

If you remember the song "Crazy On You" by Heart, there's a section where the disco beat is played on the hi-hat while a tomtom figure is played above it. I would imagine this was accomplished with overdubbing, but you can do a similar thing with your left foot by yourself.

There are infinite variations of these exercises. Experiment and find the techniques that feel best to *you*. Remember, the hi-hat is the *only* instrument on most drumsets with the ability to completely change the sounds it produces. The possibilities for expression are almost endless. Your left foot doesn't need to be just a paper-weight.





Rhythmic Illusions, Part 2

by Gavin Harrison

MUSIC KEY

H.H.	X	R.C.	X
S.D.	()	()	()
B.D.	()	()	()
H.H. w/foot	X	Ghost Note	

Continuing on from last month's article, let's take a closer look at rhythmic "modulation." For those of you who missed the explanation about rhythmic illusions in Part 1, here is a brief summary of my "A and B Status" theory. The A status is where your mind should be while playing the illusion, meaning, still in the original tempo and still knowing where 1 is. The B status is how the listener is hearing it, or the new beat. The B status examples in this column are not intended to be played. They are there simply to provide a check on the illusion that is being conveyed. (Please note: Any example that is followed by an "A" [1A, 2A, 3A, etc.] is referring to the A status, and likewise the examples followed by a "B" are meant to be understood in the B status.)

Before getting started with these examples, one word of advice: When practicing these illusions, make sure you play them with a click or metronome. This will help keep you in the A status.

Now let's look at example 1A (which is, of course, A status).

1A

While playing example 1A, it is likely that the listener will hear the B status.

1B

Onto example 2A.

2A

And here is the pattern the listener will hear:

2B

The reason the listener will hear it this way is because it is a very common pattern, and if you were to slip into example 2A while playing a song in 12/8, it would create an illusion of a slower 4/4 rhythm (the B status example 2B).

Please note that although the first two examples are written in 12/8, these illusions will fit into any triplet-based time signature such as 9/8, 15/8, or 8th-note triplets in 3/4, 4/4, etc. In fact, it will

work in anything that uses triplets as a subdivision. As long as your brain stays in the A status and you still know where 1 (or the downbeat) is, you can go in and out of these rhythms with ease.

Here are some 16th-note-based illusions.

3A

3B

You may well recognize the famous pattern hidden in example 4A.

4A

And here it is written out as the listener will be hearing it:

4B

Example 5A is based on the same four-over-three pattern as example 3A, except the spacing between the bass drum and the snare drum is now widened to give us that old "Motown" ballad feel. I've written this out in 3/4 because it resolves quickly, though you could play it in 4/4. (It would require a lot of space to write it out that way here.)

5A

5B

Last month I wrote about tuning into the middle of a song that sounds like it has a very interesting and unusual rhythm, and then suddenly realizing you're hearing the rhythm the wrong way. Sometimes it's disappointing when you hear it the way it was intended. In fact, this happened to me recently. What I thought was going on was this:

6A

I loved the hi-hat foot part going right across the beat. But after a short while I realized it was actually being played like this:

6B

Of course, this rhythm is much more conventional, and the hi-hat foot part I *thought* I liked was actually just playing a regular four to the bar. Whenever I listen to that tune now I try to hear it in the "more funky" A status.

Here is another interesting one that I heard:

7A

But as the song developed, it turned out to be this:

7B

So not only was it "modulated" from 3/4 to 12/8, but it was also "displaced" because I had heard the first bass drum beat (in ex. 7A) as a 16th-note anticipation.

See you next month for more illusions!

Gavin Harrison is a freelance drummer working in London. He has performed with Lisa Stansfield, Level 42, Iggy Pop, Paul Young, Dave Stewart, Mick Karn, Eros Ramazzotti, and his own band, Sanity & Gravity.

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Neil Peart: "Hemispheres (Prelude)"

Transcribed by Joe Bergamini

MUSIC KEY

Open	O	R.C.	C.C.	China
H.H.	X	X	X	X
T.T.				
S.D.				
F.T.				
B.D.				
H.H. w/foot	X			
		Add'l		
		T.T.		

It's hard to believe that it's been over twenty years since Rush recorded their *Hemispheres* album, really their last release to feature a lengthy concept piece. This month's *Rock Charts* reveals the nuance-filled track Neil Peart

laid down for the prelude of the piece. Many of the classic Rush/Peart trademarks are here, including an involved arrangement, changing meters, wide dynamic shifts, sweeping fills, and wonderfully inventive drum parts. Listening back to a track like this reminds us why Neil is so revered by drummers.

Two notation explanations are needed for the following transcription: "spl" written above a cymbal crash indicates a splash cymbal being played. Also, many of the written closed hi-hat notes are played semi-open. Check out the recording to hear how Neil "shapes" the part.



An early rush: Peart in action in 1978.

This page of musical notation is for a drum set, consisting of ten staves of music. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, triplets, and dynamic markings such as accents (>) and breath marks (choke). The music is written in a single system with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, triplets, and dynamic markings such as accents (>) and breath marks (choke). The music is written in a single system with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C).

This page of drum notation is written for a snare drum and consists of 12 staves of music. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, dynamics, and articulations.

- Staff 1:** 6/8 time signature. Features a series of eighth notes with accents (>) and asterisks (*).
- Staff 2:** Common time (C). Features eighth notes with asterisks (*), a double bar line with a slash (/), and a triplet of eighth notes.
- Staff 3:** 3/4 time signature. Features a double bar line with a slash (/), a common time (C) section, and a triplet of eighth notes with a triangle symbol above them. Ends with a double bar line and a slash (/).
- Staff 4:** Features a double bar line with a slash (/), a series of eighth notes with circles (o) above them, and another double bar line with a slash (/).
- Staff 5:** Features eighth notes with circles (o) above them and accents (>). Includes the articulation *spl*.
- Staff 6:** Features eighth notes with circles (o) above them and accents (>). Includes the articulation *spl*.
- Staff 7:** Features eighth notes with circles (o) above them and accents (>). Ends with a double bar line and a slash (/).
- Staff 8:** Features eighth notes with circles (o) above them and accents (>). Includes the articulation *spl*. Ends with a double bar line and a slash (/).
- Staff 9:** Features eighth notes with circles (o) above them and accents (>). Includes the articulation *spl*. Ends with a double bar line and a slash (/).
- Staff 10:** Features eighth notes with circles (o) above them and accents (>). Includes the articulation *spl*. Ends with a double bar line and a slash (/).
- Staff 11:** Features eighth notes with circles (o) above them and accents (>). Includes the articulation *spl*. Ends with a double bar line and a slash (/).
- Staff 12:** Features eighth notes with circles (o) above them and accents (>). Includes the articulation *spl*. Ends with a double bar line and a slash (/).

Musical staff 1: Drum notation featuring eighth notes with accents and circular ornaments above the notes.

Musical staff 2: Drum notation featuring eighth notes with accents and circular ornaments above the notes.

Musical staff 3: Drum notation featuring eighth notes, a triplet of eighth notes, and accents.

Musical staff 4: Drum notation featuring eighth notes, a repeat sign, and accents.

Musical staff 5: Drum notation featuring eighth notes with accents.

Musical staff 6: Drum notation featuring eighth notes, a triplet of eighth notes, and accents.

Musical staff 7: Drum notation featuring eighth notes with accents.

Musical staff 8: Drum notation featuring eighth notes, triplets of eighth notes, and accents.

Musical staff 9: Drum notation featuring eighth notes, triplets of eighth notes, and accents.

Musical staff 10: Drum notation featuring eighth notes, triplets of eighth notes, and accents.

Ritard



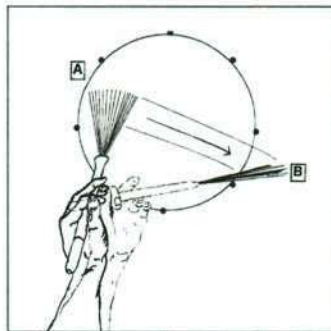


The Staccato Sweep, Part 1

by Clayton Cameron

The "staccato sweep" is one of the most neglected yet most unusual sounds one can produce with brushes. This article will familiarize you with the basic stroke involved by introducing it through diagrams and some simple exercises.

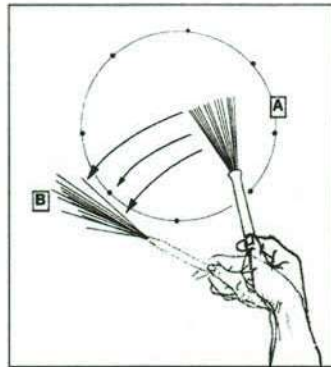
In this first diagram, you can see the left-hand starting position for the staccato sweep (position A) and the motion that follows. (This is for an inward-moving stroke.) Place the tip of the brush on the drumhead. Then turn your wrist toward the center of the head,



quickly sweeping the brush across the surface.

Now for the right hand. Place the tip at position A, the starting position, and then turn your wrist inward to sweep the brush across the head.

Here are a few exercises that you can work on to develop this technique. The right hand is notated above the line, the left hand below. The arrows that appear above certain notes show which ones involve the staccato sweep and which direction the motion is.



1
Right
Left

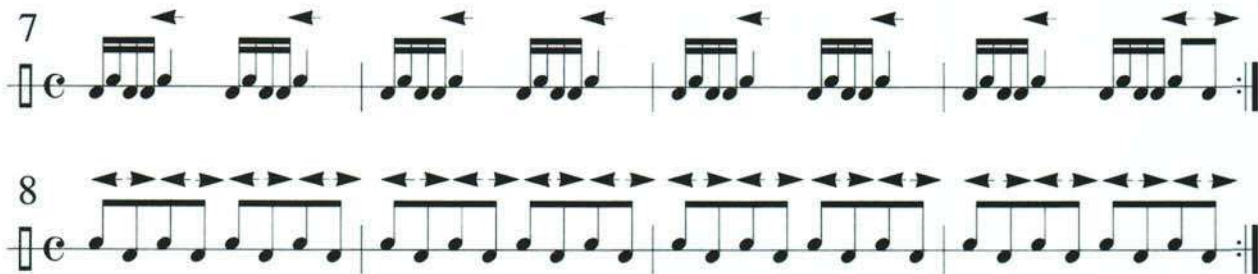
2

3

4

5

6



Experiment with these basic strokes and see what types of patterns you can come up with. Next month we'll look at executing the staccato sweep in the outward direction.

Clayton Cameron is a recognized master of the brushes and is the long-time drummer with Tony Bennett.



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Jim Keltner

by Mark Griffith



Jim Keltner is a drumming legend. His drumming has absorbed the grooves of Ringo and the elasticity of Elvin, while applying the attitude of Jim Gordon and the conviction of Levon Helm. Jim is a bridge between the early studio giants (Hal Blaine, Earl Palmer, Shelly Manne) and the more recent favorites (Vinnie Colaiuta, Jeff Porcaro, Kenny Aronoff). In fact, Keltner has played on more recordings than most of us can even imagine.

Although Keltner's career has often straddled the line between jazz and rock, his first recording was a pop album. Gary Lewis & The Playboys' *She's Just My Style* was a "typical" late-'60s offering: sometimes Beatles-influenced, sometimes Beach Boys-ish. Throughout, Keltner is solid and supportive. Yet even at this young age Keltner sounded somewhat different from the studio norm. With Lewis, Jim's drumming was powerful while remaining light-handed, and was mixed more towards the front than the drums on many records of the time. Check out the popular title track, the creative "Down In The Boondocks," and the rock-solid "Heart Full Of Soul." While this record is not a drumming masterpiece, it provides a stimulating starting point from which to study the elusive greatness of Jim Keltner.

We next examine Keltner in a very different musical atmosphere. Guitarist Gabor Szabo was one of the first musicians to bring the sounds of the Middle and Far East to the jazz landscape. Szabo, a gypsy guitarist in the tradition of Django Reinhardt, often employed a percussionist and a drummer. Jim's light but strong drumming followed Szabo down a path that should be considered one of the beginnings of "world jazz."

Keltner's drumming was integral to Gabor's concept. Szabo often employed a rhythm guitarist, so the group had a lot happening musically. Jim always managed to find "his place" in the music, working with the percussionists to form a seamless drum/percussion part that sounded like it was played by one person. Listen to the groundbreaking recordings *Bacchanal* and *Dreams* that Jim made with the Gabor Szabo group. Then compare the 1971 Szabo effort *High Contrast*. This recording is not at all in the previous world-jazz vein. Instead, it is an outstanding recording of groove-oriented jazz. *High Contrast* is deeply funky, and Jim

Keltner is one of the main reasons why.

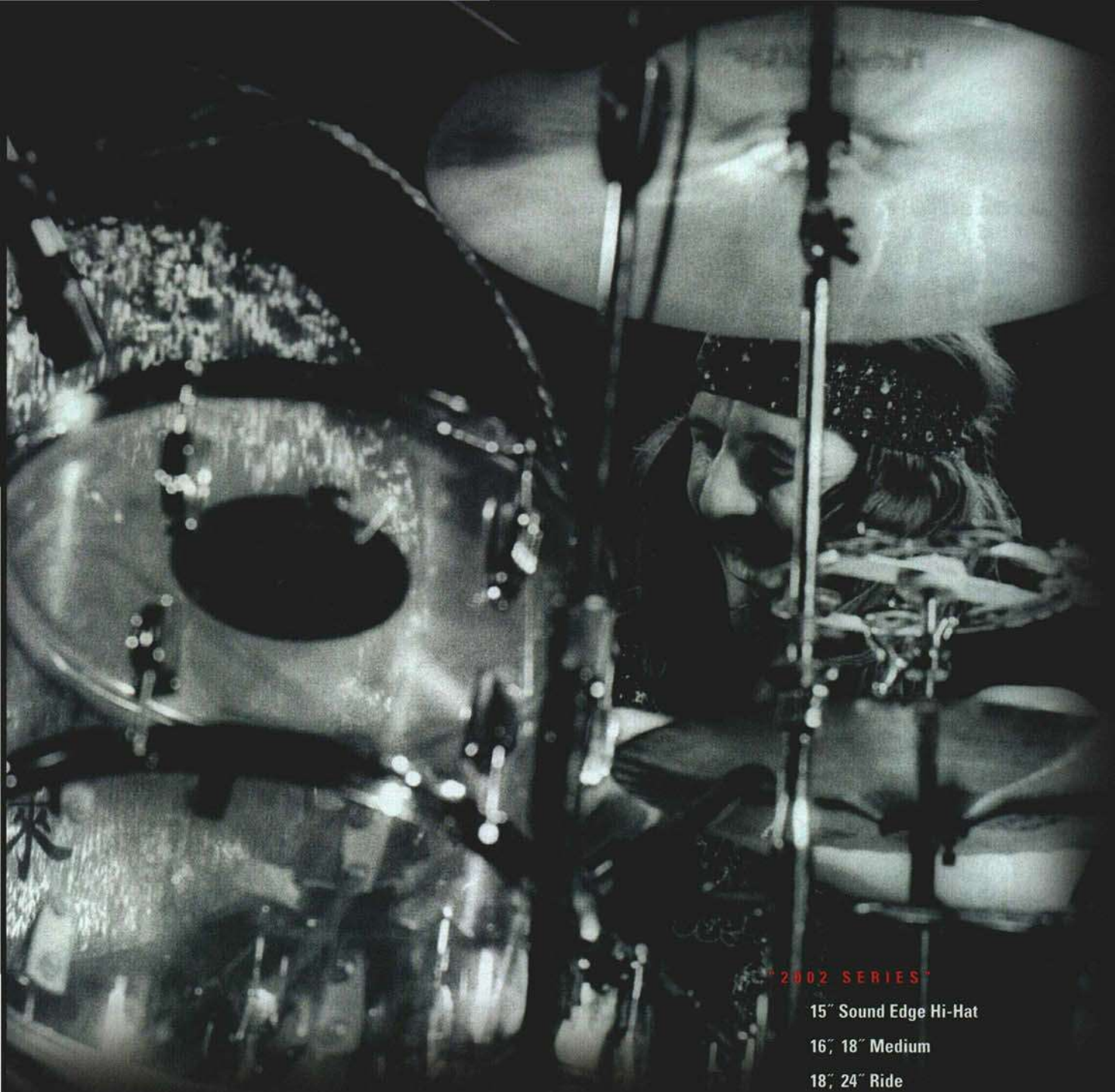
Singer/songwriters Delaney and Bonnie Bramlett often filled their groups with well-rounded, established session musicians. Jim Keltner fit this mold. Keltner participated in many Delaney & Bonnie recordings, most importantly 1969's *Accept No Substitute*. The varied musical styles that the band performed (R&B, country, gospel, and blues) highlighted Jim's ability to make *any* music groove. Keltner also appeared on the later acoustic recording *Motel Shot*. Although there isn't much drumming on this one,

Keltner's presence is felt in this relaxed and easygoing jam session. Selected cuts from all of the Delaney & Bonnie recordings are featured on *The Best Of Delaney & Bonnie* (which also features great drumming by Jim Gordon and Ron Tutt).

Many people associate Jim with John Lennon's band in the mid-'70s. However, the call from Lennon actually came as a result of Keltner's playing on the Yoko Ono recording *Fly*. Although some of Yoko's experimental vocalizations make this recording tough to digest at times, many of the grooves are exciting. (In fact, some are so funky that I'd be surprised if they haven't been sampled for use in the hip-hop or drum 'n' bass fields.) Jim's bluesy shuffle on "Midsummer New York" shows his natural ease at playing the blues. His snakey groove on "Mindtrain" is exhilarating, as is Jim Gordon's groove on "Hirake." Both Keltner and Gordon also sound good playing tabla on "O'Wind."

Keltner made appearances on many of John Lennon's recordings, but the album *Walls And Bridges* is a musical high point—and a textbook of rock 'n' roll drumming. (Simply put, *every* drummer should become familiar with "What You Got.") Listen to how Jim leaves ample space throughout the album for percussionist Arthur Jenkins to add touches that really set this recording apart. Every drummer who works with a percussionist in a rock group should pay special attention to this record. The empathy and respect between Keltner and Jenkins is what creating a groove is all about.

Walls And Bridges also affords a perfect opportunity to study the "hookup" between Keltner and bassist Klaus Voorman. Voorman appears on many sessions with Keltner, and their relationship is equal to that of Philly Joe Jones and Paul Chambers or Sly Dunbar



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CYMBALS SOUNDS GONGS

and Robbie Shakespeare. They fit each other like a hand in a glove, and are the perfect example of how to anchor a rhythm section. (And to put things into a live-performance perspective, check out Lennon's *Live In New York*.)

Jim Keltner's association with many of the Beatles on their solo projects has generated comparisons between Jim and Ringo Starr. This comparison is made easier because of the deep influence that Ringo obviously had on Jim. The similarities grew even closer when Jim and Ringo played side-by-side, as they did on George Harrison's *Living In The Material World* and Ringo Starr's *Ringo*. Pay close attention to the double drumming on Harrison's songs "Living In The Material World" and "Give Me Love," and on Ringo's "Have You Seen My Baby," and "Oh My My." The ability to be a part of a "double drummer team" is one of Keltner's specialties. (More about that later.)

On Harry Nilsson's *Pussy Cats* (produced by John Lennon) Keltner again plays alongside Ringo, and they are joined on two tracks by Keith Moon. The contrasting styles of the three drummers is outstanding. Keltner also plays on Nilsson's storybook concept recording *The Point*, where his original grooves are enough to keep any drummer's attention. And Jim plays on Van Dyke Parks' Broadway-show-style *Jump*, based on the story of Br'er Rabbit.

To hear Jim Keltner play is amazing; to see him play is enlightening. Much of what Keltner plays is so subtle that you don't always hear it, but you certainly "feel" it. Jim's drumming never breaks from the music, instead it stays woven within the musical

fabric. The listener knows that the music feels good, and we drummers know that Jim is playing the drums, but it's often difficult to explain why the music *feels* so amazingly good.

The answer is found in watching Jim play. More so than with others, Keltner's greatness is found in how he moves behind the drums, and how he strikes the drums and cymbals. Thankfully, there are two videos available that enable us to watch the way Keltner grooves. Joe Cocker's *Mad Dogs & Englishmen* and John Lennon's *Live In New York* are both still widely available on video, and are well worth watching. There is also a great PBS special on the making of Joe Cocker's recording *Organic*. It offers many wonderful views of Keltner and Kenny Aronoff working their collaborative magic. This special is worth keeping your eyes on the programming guide for.

Jim Keltner and Jim Gordon wrote the book on double drumming while playing with Joe Cocker on the album *Mad Dogs & Englishmen*. Could one drummer have played this tour? Sure. Could one drummer have had the same effect as Keltner and Gordon playing together on this recording? Never. *Mad Dogs & Englishmen* overflows with soul. From the Stax-influenced "Introduction" to the deep grooves of "Space Captain," "The Letter," and the classic "Delta Lady," this is an *amazing* recording.

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Tracking Them Down

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

Gary Lewis & The Playboys

Site's Just My Style, Liberty LRP-3435

Gabor Szabo

Bacchanal, Skye SK-3

Dreams (out of print)

High Contrast, Blue Thumb BTS-28

Delaney & Bonnie

Accept No Substitute, Elektra LP-74039

Motel Shot, Atco SD33-358

Best Of Delaney & Bonnie, Rhino R2 70777

Yoko Ono

Fly, Rhino RCD101415/16

John Lennon

Walls And Bridges, Capitol CDP 7467682

Live In New York, Capitol CDP 746576

George Harrison

Living In The Material World, Apple SMAS-3410

Ringo Starr

Ringo, Apple SWAL-3413

Harry Nilsson

The Point, DCC DZS-158

Pussy Cats, RCA APD-10570

Van Dyke Parks

Jump, Warner Bros. 923829-1

Joe Cocker

Mad Dogs & Englishmen, A&M CD 6002

Organic, Sony 550 BK 67880

Jack Daugherty

Class Of 1971 (out of print)

Bob Dylan

Saved, Columbia CK 36553

Shot Of Love, Columbia CK 37496

Lincoln Mayorga

Distinguished Colleagues Vol. 3, Sheffield Labs CD 1

Ry Cooder

Into The Purple Valley, Reprise 2052-2

Borderline, Warner Bros. 3489-2

Boomer's Story, Reprise 26398-2

Gel Rhythm, Warner Bros. 25639-2

Slide Area, Warner Bros. 3651-2

John Hiatt

Bring The Family, ASM 75021-5158-2

Little Village

Little Village, Reprise 926713-2

The Traveling Wilburys

I, Wilbury Records 25796-2

III, Wilbury Records 26324-2

Eric Clapton

From The Cradle, Reprise 945735-2

Bill Frisell

Gone, Just Like A Train, Nonesuch 79479-2

Various Artists

The Sheffield Track And Drum Record, Sheffield Labs CD14

On Video

Joe Cocker

Mad Dogs & Englishmen, Polygram Video

Organic, PBS TV show

John Lennon

Live In New York, Capitol Video

Tower Records Mail Order, (800) 648-4844

J&R Music World Mail Order, (800) 221-8180

Audiophile Imports, (908) 996-7311

Third St. Jazz And Rock, (800) 486-8745

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

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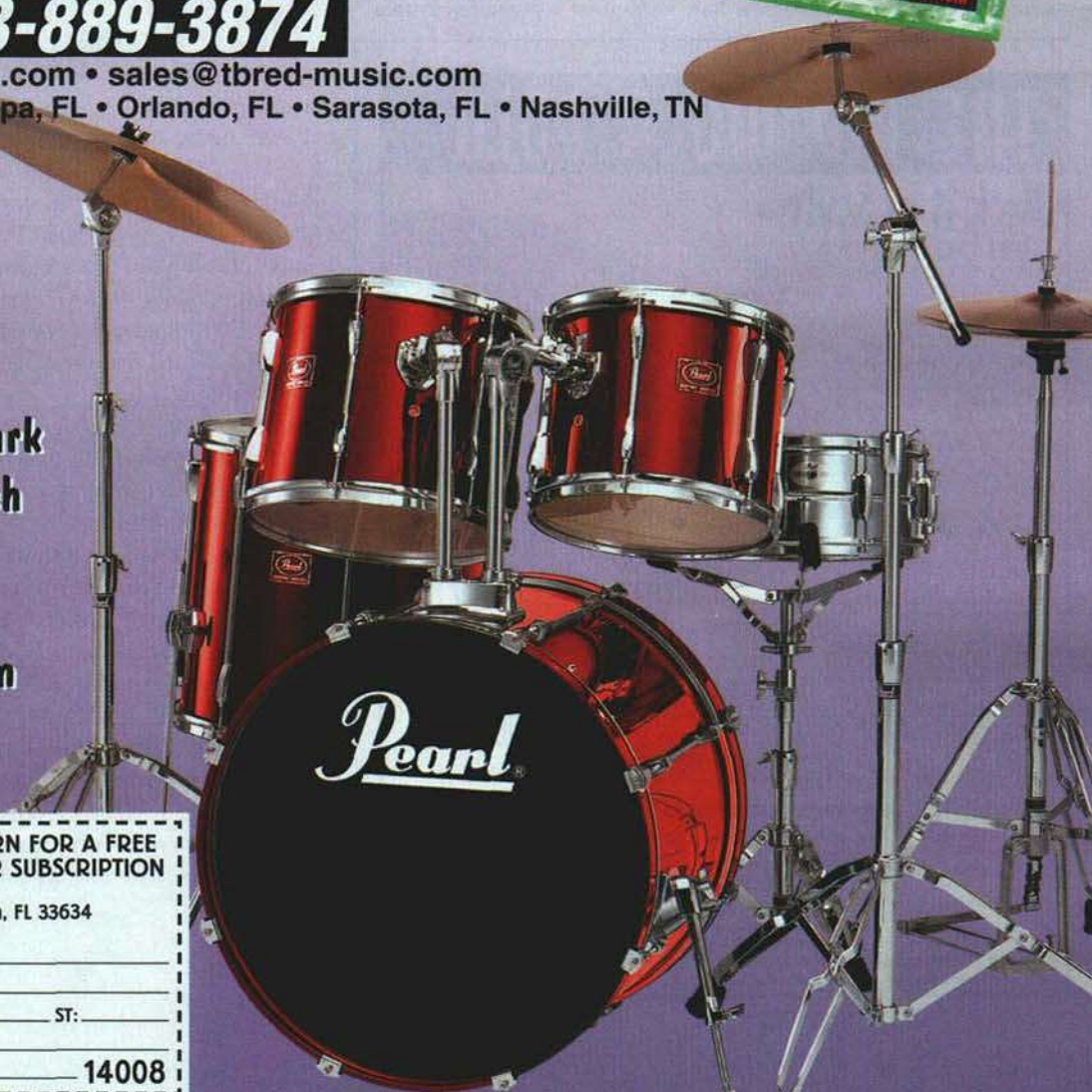
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The double drumming during the breakdown section of "Give Peace A Chance," and the patient groove of the "Blue Medley," are classics. Jeff Porcaro once spoke of playing with Jim Keltner on Jeff's first recording (Jack Daugherty's *Class Of '71*), and he stressed the inspiration he got from Keltner and Gordon's drumming on this recording. With this weighty endorsement in mind, go experience Joe Cocker's timeless classic *Mad Dogs & Englishmen* on CD and video.

Keltner recorded some of Bob Dylan's most popular hits, including "Knockin' On Heaven's Door." But he also recorded two entire albums with Dylan in the 1980s. On *Saved*, Keltner matches Dylan's sanctified gospel influences with the same feel on the drums. Keltner's time feels very precise with Dylan, which could have been in response to Bob's natural looseness. If *everyone* in a band lays back, there is no reference point. Keltner keeps the time very relaxed, but insistent. Jim's playing on *Saved* (and 1981's *Shot Of Love*) proves that "grooving" and laid-back drumming doesn't mean sloppy or loose execution.

Jim has the unique ability to play "straight" time between his snare and bass drum while "swinging" the rhythms of his right hand. This is what gives him the ability to play a relaxed groove while staying right on top of the time (and often even pushing a little bit, as he does with Dylan). This profound ability may come from the experience of double drumming. When two drummers play together, they have the opportunity to combine straight and swung rhythms simultaneously. Part of Keltner's greatness is that

he can accomplish this effect on his own.

The *sound* of Keltner's drums on *Saved* is outstanding. Jim is one of the only drummers of his era to exhibit real control over a big drum sound. This control is essential when a drummer is "on the clock" in the studio, and is part of what some people refer to as "studio chops." Listen to how Keltner controls his sound on the recorded solo on the *Sheffield Drum Record*, and on Lincoln Mayorga's *Distinguished Colleagues Vol. 3*. The drum recording features one of Keltner's rare extended unaccompanied solos on record. It is outstanding.

Guitarist Ry Cooder has been a constant employer and collaborator with Keltner, in a relationship that has allowed Jim to take a lot of musical chances. This entire column could have been filled with Jim Keltner's drumming on the many Ry Cooder records on which he's appeared. We'll start with Jim's unique "funky country" style on Cooder's *Into The Purple Valley*. "How Can You Keep Moving" and "Money Honey" are examples of Keltner's trademark country funk. "Teardrops Will Fall" features Jim at his simple best. *Borderline* has Keltner weaving reggae, rumba, country, and New Orleans funk into an original (and danceable!) fusion of time feels. Pay close attention to "Speedo," "Why Don't You Try Me," and "Down In The Boondocks." From the quintessential *Boomer's Story*, "Crow Black Chicken" could be Zigaboo, but it's Keltner. The title track from *Get Rhythm* could be Buckwheat Zydeco, but it's Keltner. On *Slide Area* the drummer couldn't be anyone *but* Keltner.

Many of Cooder's tunes start without drums, and they sound like they'll be played with predictable rock beats. But when Keltner enters, look out! His unconventional grooves come out of left field, and seem oddly spontaneous while remaining carefully orchestrated.

While we're referring to unrecognized classics, John Hiatt's *Bring The Family* is just that. Little Village's self-titled album is a worthy followup to Hiatt's masterpiece, and unites the same players (Hiatt, Cooder, Keltner, and Nick Lowe) in a band project. Keltner also drummed for two other all-star albums, *The Traveling Wilburys I and III*. Needless to say, his playing is great on all of these recordings.

Recently, Keltner participated in three very different sessions. In 1994 Eric Clapton did a live blues recording called *From The Cradle*. Keltner's contributions were essential; *nobody* shuffles the blues like Jim Keltner. In 1996 Joe Cocker re-recorded many of his biggest hits on *Organic*. Keltner and Kenny Aronoff recapture the double-drumming magic to make this Cocker's best recording of recent history. Finally, eclectic guitarist Bill Frisell couldn't have made his captivating *Gone, Just Like A Train* without the slippery and soulful grooves of Mr. Keltner.

When Jim Keltner provides the pocket, musicians like Frisell, Cooder, Hiatt, Cocker, Lennon, Szabo, and Dylan can focus on making great recordings. As you can discern from the recordings mentioned here, Keltner's groove and control—and the confidence that they inspire—know no musical boundaries. We can all learn a great deal from listening to and watching master drummer Jim Keltner.

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RECORDINGS

Billy Ward**Two Hands Clapping** (DrumPike)**drummer: Billy Ward**

playing duets with Bill Champlin (B-3, vcl), Glen Phillips (gtr, vcl), Jim Beard (kybd), John Patitucci (bs), Chris Whitley (gtr, vcl), Joy Askew (kybd, vcl)

Billy Ward must munch on a steady diet of hipness pills. Everything he plays just sounds so cool. And with *Two Hands Clapping*, the journeyman drummer (Leni Stern, Bill Evans, Yoko Ono, Ace Frehley) reveals the awesome depth of his talent, ducting in a freestyle, one-take, no-overdub setting with a list of celeb musicians. The result is a remarkable album, my personal choice for drum record of the year.

When you lay a heavy load like that on an album one would expect to hear a logjam full of drum chops. And yes, Ward has a *forest* to draw

from. But what really impresses here is Billy's emotional and spirited performance; he's way beyond the notes, deep into the moment. Adding to that is the drummer's quick mind—instantaneously twisting and turning through the interplay with the given musical partner—his fabulous touch, *and* the beautifully recorded skin and metal sounds (exposed all the more by having only one other instrument in the mix).

Style-wise, the music leaps all over the map—vocal, instrumental, bop, funk, trad, blues, world, even swamp-rock. All ten tracks are standouts, but faves include "Step Inside Again," a percolating jaunt with keyboardist Jim Beard; "Devaney's Goat/The Whistling Postman," where Ward plays what sounds like shakers on native toms while bassist extraordinaire Patitucci gets nimble; the ripping nanigo-inspired "Some Mortal Drama" (oh, those double-pedal fills!); and the haunting ballad "Wee Small Hours," where Ward's tasty brushwork caresses Joy Askew's voice.

While listening to this disc there were times when I found myself laughing out loud at some of the audacious stuff Billy laid out. At other points he brought me to a focused silence. Inspiring stuff. (359 West 21st Street, Suite 2, New York, NY 10011-3001, tel: [212] 647-1423, www.billyward.com.)

William F. Miller

Pearl Jam**Live On Two Legs** (Epic)**drummer: Matt Cameron**

with: Eddie Vedder (vcl, gtr), Mike McCready, Stone Gossard (gtr), Jeff Ament (bs)

"We're making up for lost time here," Eddie Vedder says between songs on Pearl Jam's new live LP. Indeed, Pearl Jam's lengthy crusade against Ticketmaster, and the subsequent cancellation of many shows, deprived its rabid fans of the chance to catch their favorite band in the flesh. No longer: After completing an ecstatic US trek during the summer of 1998, the band now rewards faithful listeners with a powerful 70-minute docu-

SIGNIFICANT OTHERS



A benchmark of trans-global musical experimentation, Brazilian legend Gilberto Gil's latest, *O Solo De Oslo* (Blue Jacket), was mostly recorded

in Oslo, Norway, utilizing several decidedly non-Brazilian musicians. Drummer **TRILOK GURTU** certainly fits the bill, yet not only eases Indian strains into the sophisticated South American grooves like he was born in the Amazon, but brilliantly intertwines his own worldly instincts within tunes so strong, you don't even notice how unusual the approach is until you really study it. Amazing.

The youngest member of the Marsalis jazz dynasty, drummer **JASON MARSALIS**, makes a splash on two very different CDs from Basin Street Records. His leader debut, *The Year Of The Drummer*, showcases his strong jazz playing and promising multi-influenced composing, while *Los Hombres Calientes*, co-led by Irwin Mayfield (trp) and Bill Summers (perc), highlights a blend of Afro-Latin and jazz rhythms.

And speaking of great jazz clans and their younger drummers, The Heath Brothers' new *Jazz Family* (Concord Jazz) features the superb talents of Jimmy, Percy, and younger brother (at sixty-three) **ALBERT "TOOTIE" HEATH**. Tootie's regal, smooth swing speaks class, pure class.

The late **TONY WILLIAMS'** final recording, now available domestically, features the brilliant Mulgrew Miller (pno), as well as Ira Coleman (bs). Focusing on standards, *Young At Heart* (Columbia) brings veterans of Williams' quintet into a more intimate trio setting; the result is a lucid, inspired, fresh take on familiar tunes spanning the ultra-sensitive to muscle-driven straight-ahead. It's a fine farewell from one of the true originals in drum history.

Rating Scale

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

ment of its onstage prowess. And at the drum chair, filling in for Jack Irons, is one of today's most creative rock drummers, Matt Cameron of the now-defunct Soundgarden.

Retaining the original spirit of Pearl Jam's studio tracks while integrating his own licks and fills, Cameron fits seamlessly into the band's esthetic, which should come as no surprise given his 1991 collaboration with several PJ members on the Temple Of The Dog LP. Right out of the gate on the leadoff track, "Corduroy," Matt establishes the inventive, propulsive timekeeping that belies his temporary bandmember status. In high-energy mode and bolstered by a deep, clear drum sound, Cameron plays broadly, knowing that subtle ghost notes get lost in a packed arena. Thus, grand gestures like fiery sextuplets, razor-sharp hi-hat barks, and throbbing tom-tom/bass drum bursts figure prominently in his prized ability to set up transitional passages with the forward-thinking cleverness of a big band drummer.

Though it is unclear whether Cameron's association with Pearl Jam will continue, *Live On Two Legs* preserves forever his vital contribution to their triumphant 1998 return to the concert stage.

Michael Parillo

Gary Willis Bent (Alchemy)



drummers: Dennis Chambers, Kirk Covington

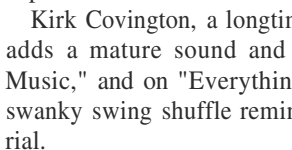
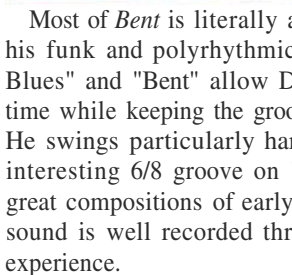
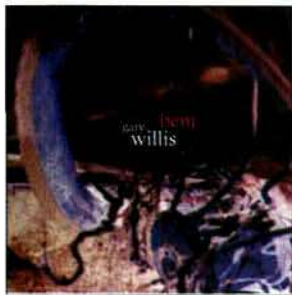
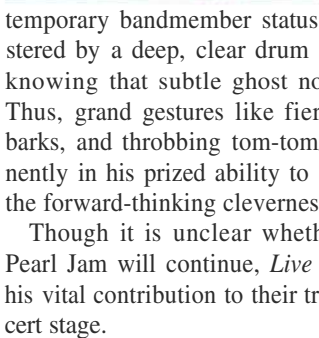
with Gary Willis (bs), Scott Kinsey (kybd), Bob Berg (sx),
Steve Tavaglione (EWI, sx)

Gary Willis, who has worked with legendary sax man Wayne Shorter (Miles Davis, Weather Report) and co-leads his own group, Tribal Tech, is well-known in the fusion world for his superlative bass technique and musical compositions. On *Bent*, Willis takes many turns, from melodic swing to electric funk. Drummers Dennis Chambers and Kirk Covington supply the perfect percussive edge to this collection.

Most of *Bent* is literally a showcase for Chambers to stretch his funk and polyrhythmic chops. Tunes like "Armageddon Blues" and "Bent" allow Dennis to creatively play over the time while keeping the groove implied but strong at all times. He swings particularly hard on "Big Time," and creates an interesting 6/8 groove on "Emancipation," which recalls the great compositions of early Weather Report. His "live" drum sound is well recorded throughout, enhancing the listening experience.

Kirk Covington, a longtime Tribal Tech bandmate of Willis, adds a mature sound and smooth swing feel to "It's Only Music," and on "Everything's Cool" uses brushes to create a swanky swing shuffle reminiscent of early Headhunters material.

The seasoned playing styles of Chambers and Covington,



Going Underground

...and going downtown! The avant-garde/experimental percussion scene is alive and flourishing, and has at least a few rising stars among its ranks.

Gregg Bendian and Alex Cline impressively display "spontaneous dual composition" on *Espiritu* (Truemedial Jazzworks, ****), a record that features these fine two percussionists alone on drums, percussion, and vibes. This tandem displays a welcome sense of excitement, humor, and conversation over the course of six extended tracks. (PO Box 24543, Cleveland, OH 44124)



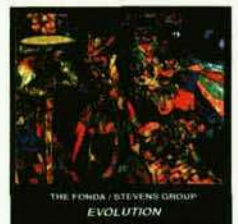
Christine Bard, Michael Evans, and James Pugliese comprise the modern percussion ensemble EasSide Percussion, and ESP (Avant Recordings, ****1/2) gets very



experimental with the timbres, textures, and sounds one can make with a percussive tool. ESP contains a plethora of sounds you would not expect nor believe could be derived from percussion, but with some minimal electronic manipulation from their toys, this ensemble sets a new direction for the percussive voice and composition. (338 E. 13th St., #A, New York, NY 10003, tel and fax: [212] 473-6689, esp@webcom.com, www.webcom.com/jimp/esp.html)

As part of The Fonda/Stevens Group, **Harvey Sorgen** holds *Evolution* (Leo, ****1/2 together on the most "traditional" of these releases. The music here definitely has some basic structures and arrangements, but there is plenty of stretching and improvisational freedom within the pieces. The standard jazz quintet instrumentation allows this music to be accessible while sacrificing none of the originality or concepts of the music itself. Not a bad place to begin if you're interested in checking out some new free jazz, (tel: [718] 768-1363, fax: [718] 768-7881, mjsjazz@aol.com, members.aol.com/mjsjazz/index.htm, www.ctclubs.com/fonda/fsg.html)

Kevin Norton continues to emerge as a stand-out of the avant-garde as both a drummer and as a composer. *Knots* (Music & Arts Programs of America, ****1/2), recorded with his own ensemble, proves the drummer has quite a bit to offer in the way of original compositional concepts and approaches. Most remarkably, everything on *Knots* feels great (something missing on much music of this type), even while the tempos and feels are constantly bending or altogether "out." Mr. Norton may not be "underground," nor downtown, for very much longer. (PO Box 771, Berkeley, CA 94701, musicart@sirius.com, www.musicand-arts.com)



Ted Bonar

New On The Scene

You might not be familiar with these bands and their drummers yet, but it's our bet you will be soon.

Dripping Goss

Blue Collar Black Future
CCBGB)



drummer: Tobias Ralph
with Brian Goss (vcl gtr), Daniel B. Souza
(gtr, vcl), Curt Steyer (bs)

Guess what? Hardcore has grown up.

The math-punk rock of *Blue Collar Black Future* is all about staccato beats, and drummer Tobias Ralph's deadly arsenal of chops attacks the senses with an assassin's precision. With a jaw-dropping single-stroke roll and masterful use of the double kick pedal, Ralph's playing is concentrated and dense—not *condensing* sound, but fitting more into smaller places.

"Mercenary Woman" opens with a standard shuffle, but quickly becomes anything but. Throwing triplet fills into the mix just for fun,



Ralph zooms through a song that morphs from country-punk to disco to a groovy 2/4 without missing a beat. A montage of shakers, tambourines, and maximum kit usage, the

wild intro of "Cost Salvation On Parade" sends listeners reaching for the oxygen tank while speculating where this cyborg came from. And then, as if to prove he's actually more man than machine, "Cost" gives way to the mournful "Save Your Prayers," accented by immaculate brush work and a supreme sense of dynamics that balances out the decidedly rhythmic sensibility of Goss's style.

A virtual drumming clinic, *Blue Collar Black Future* suggests that Tobias Ralph is possibly the quickest and most proficient drummer to erupt from New York's underground scene in a long time.

Fran Azzarto and Lisa Crouch

You Am I

#4 Record (rooArt/BMG)



drummer: Busseli Keith Hopkinson
with Timothy Adrian Rogers (gtr/vcl),
Andrew Charles Kent (bs)

You Am I is one of those bands who get lots of extra points for enthusiasm and good taste, even if the territory they tread is well-worn. Catchy, jangly, energetic, soul-tinged pop/rock has been steadily streaming out of places as distant as London, Los Angeles, and New Zealand for decades, and these three Aussie lads know very well that strong hooks, impas-

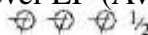
sioned vocals, and on-top-of-the-beat drumming has well served everyone from The Searchers to The Smithereens to Supergrass. #4 Record would sit admirably next to albums by those bands on anyone's shelf.

Drummer Russell Hopkinson knows exactly where to do what on the dozen tunes here. Whether it's the beautifully spaced off-beats of "Junk," the optimistically dancing fills on "Top Of The Morn' & Slip Of The Day," or the slappy push-push-pushing of half-opened hi-hats throughout, Hopkinson simultaneously serves the songs *and* gets his rocks off. No, it ain't rocket science, but sometimes a good pair of walking shoes is the best way to get where you wanna go. Well done.

Adam Budofsky



Dovetail Joint Level EP (Aware)



drummer: Joe Dapier
with Robert Byrne (gtr),
Charles Gladfelter (vcl, gtr)



Dovetail Joint's *Level EP* offers just about everything from a classic rock single to a power-drive anthem to a tip of the hat to the *Abbey Road-vintage* Ringo sound. But

what saves this release from randomness is the solid drumming of Joe Dapier. Dapier stays on top of the beat throughout, and is always thinking. For instance, his grooves on "Protocol" give the feel of an odd time signature, when the song is in fact in straight time. Tossing in fills at the end of each bar, Dapier's performance seems almost fusion-like. And while some might consider it over-playing, his choices always work well.

On the lead track, "Level On The Inside," Dapier shines. The key to his style is sixteenth-note rapid-fire fills and a Stewart Copeland-like use of hi-hats, opening and closing with the vocal accents—uncomplicated, but brilliant.

While it has its melodic moments, this sampler of B-sides and outtakes is definitely a rhythmic monster, each song laden with percussive hooks. And this is only an EP; imagine what Dapier has drummed up for the full-length record. Can't wait!

Fran Azzarto and Lisa Crouch

along with the outstanding compositions from Willis, make *Bent* one of the best fusion releases of the past year.

Mike Haid

Soul Coughing

El Oso (Slash)



drummer: Yuval Gabay
with M. Doughty (vcl, gtr),
Sebastian Steinberg (ac bs),
Mark De Gli Antoni (kybd, samples)



With its third album, Soul Coughing enhances its position as a real player, not just an art-rock novelty. Sure they like to monkey around, but they're also one of today's better funk-rock bands. Drummers will note that Yuval Gabay mixes in strong sections of mighty rock playing, dirty funk grooves, and drum 'n' bass. The latter of those styles is especially prominent in the opener, "Rolling," and on "Blame," which features an acoustic bass intro, ambient piano, and Gabay's interestingly timbre-shifting snare work. Parts of "Monster Man" sound like they were recorded inside a box, with a deteriorating, distorting snare signal that is suddenly purified, and "So Far I Have Not Found The Science" seemingly employs a micro-cassette miked through a kazoo. This is a band that obviously likes a good audio illusion, but Gabay's drumming is the real thing, always betraying a human touch. He's a smart, talented player, propelling the music and coloring the scene as he goes.

Robin Tolleson

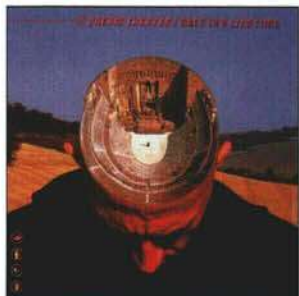
Dream Theater

Once In A Live Time (EastWest)



drummer: Mike Portnoy

with James LaBrie (vcl), John Petrucci (gtr), John Myung (bs),
Derek Sherinian (kybd)



Does Mike Portnoy really deserve all the attention that he gets? Well, the best way to judge a drummer is usually by his live performances, and Portnoy gives a very solid performance on this two-CD set of "the best of Dream Theater material. The live setting certainly gives more "life" and intensity to some of the newer tunes. Classic Dream Theater

tracks like "Take The Time" and "Pull Me Under" are also very strong here, with each member allowed the opportunity to display his individual virtuosity. In particular, Portnoy's solo is like a Peart-meets-Bozzio hybrid, as he incorporates lots of flashy double bass chops while utilizing his entire kit.

Portnoy *does* deserve all the attention that he gets, simply for the fact that he makes drumming exciting to listen to. And like one of his great predecessors, Neil Peart, he isn't afraid to go out on a limb and insist on being more than just a timekeeper. This release is a "must have" for Dream Theater and Mike Portnoy fans.

Mike Haid

Ed Thigpen

Out Of The Storm (Verve)



drummer: Ed Thigpen

with Clark Terry (trp), Kenny Burrell (gtr),
Herbie Hancock (pno), Ron Carter (bs)

Ed Thigpen. When most people hear his name two things generally come to mind: flawless brush playing and decisive accompaniment while with Oscar Peterson's trio. However, on the recent re-issue of this album from 1966, Thigpen proves his drumming vocabulary goes far beyond these characteristics. Employing sticks, brushes, and hands, he provides a percolating rhythmic tapestry that both supports and propels. Furthermore, beyond the inherent musicality of his rhythms, a unique melodic element is added on this album by the use of a pedal-operated, pitch-shifting drum and various hand muffling/bending techniques on the drumheads.



After opening with an upbeat Latin tune, the band explores a range of moods throughout the album. This is a well-chosen group, and everyone turns in an excellent performance. As for Thigpen, in addition to demonstrations of high-speed brush work, straight-ahead playing, and Afro-Cuban grooves, two tracks stand out in particular: "Heritage," and the title track, essentially a tone-painting beginning in free time and eventually settling into a slow, atmospheric groove. In the intro, Thigpen provides abstract rhythms and rumbles against Hancock's rainy piano runs. Next, Thigpen's brushes evoke waves on the sand, gradually building

into a slow, deep pocket, switching to sticks as Terry's solo builds. "Heritage" is especially appealing for Thigpen's use of the variable-pitch drum in conjunction with his vocalizations. At one point he engages in a brief call & response with himself, singing and playing his ideas.

Altogether, this is an excellent and eye-opening album by a master jazz drummer.

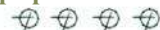
Martin Patmos

BOOKS

Fresh Perspectives For The Modern Drumline

by Jim Casella and Murray Gusseck

(Tap Space Publications)



level: intermediate to advanced

\$30

Jim Casella is the percussion caption head and arranger, and Murray Gusseck is the head percussion instructor, for the five-time world champion Santa Clara Vanguard Drum & Bugle Corps from Santa Clara, California. *Fresh Perspectives* features ensemble exercises and music from the corps' past three competitive seasons (1996-98).

In the first thirty-nine pages of the book, Gusseck explains five techniques (legato strokes, accents & taps, flams, paradiddles, and rolls) accompanied by exercises in each area. Each of the exercises is scored for snare, tenor, and bass, which makes it useful for any member of a drumline.

The last fifty pages, written by Casella, are excerpts from the Vanguard's "battery" book (scored for snare, tenor, bass, and cymbals; the "pit" or melodic keyboard parts are not included). Prior to each example is a brief written description about the music, how it fits into the overall score, and special highlights to look for in the battery.

Dynamics and stickings are marked throughout the book. In fact, the authors utilize a unique approach to stickings, marking "R" and "L" for accented right- and left-hand notes and "r" and "l" for unaccented ones. Unfortunately, sometimes the lower-case letters are hard to read.

If you are a fan of the Vanguard, or want a more "behind the scenes" look at a Top-12 DCI corps, this book gives you a peek at what one needs to do to achieve the precision and technique seen on the field. Scattered throughout the book are pictures of the Vanguard's drumline over the years, both at rehearsals and in uniformed performance. Rudimentally minded drumset players would probably be able to steal quite a few licks to incorporate into their practice or performance, too.

Cody Alvin Cassidy



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Dean Giles

After studying and gigging in Boston throughout his youth, Dean Giles moved to California to enroll at Musicians Institute in Hollywood.

After graduating with honors, Dean returned to teach at the school, while at the same time he plunged into the LA music scene.

And what a plunge it has been. Dean has played with such artists as Jean-Michel Bryon (Toto), Jeff Elliot (Les McCann, Little River Band), the Tom Buckner and Jim Adle jazz quartets, and Lee Seung Chul (Korean platinum artist). He's also performed at the Mel Brooks Musical Theater, and has recorded music for NBC TV's *Men Behaving Badly*.

That's what Dean *has* done. What he's doing *now* is working with a variety of acts, including bluesman Ashford Gordon, a jazz fusion band called Five Guys Named Moe, a soft-jazz recording project called Images Of, and especially The Swing Kings. A jump band in the current trendy spirit of the '40s, the group has two CDs to its credit (*No Ordinary Thing* and *Swing Kings Live*, Casino Records) and is recording a third. In addition to a busy schedule of dates throughout Southern California, the band recently completed tours of Hawaii and the Northwest. (Check out the Swing Kings' Web site at www.swingkings.com.)

Dean's playing on both of the Swing Kings CDs is energetic and driving (in keeping with the spirit of the music), with a rock-solid feel. He plays and endorses DW drums, Sabian cymbals, and Vic Firth sticks.

In his "spare time" Dean works on film songs, teaches privately, and takes a special percussion-education program he created into local schools. He also finds time to freelance with LA-area bands in a variety of musical styles.



Sergio Bellotti

Born in Bari, Italy in 1968, Sergio Bellotti began drumming at the age of fifteen. Soon after, he was playing with various bands in the city's funk/rock scene. In 1990 he moved to Torino, where he began a career in nightclubs, discos, and cruise ships (on which he backed several notable European performers).

In 1995 Sergio moved to Boston to attend the Berklee College of Music, where he studied with John Ramsay, Jon Hazilla, Bob Moses, Jamey Haddad, Skip Haden, Lenny Nelson, and Kenwood Dennard. Upon graduating in 1997, he began performing and recording with a number of Boston's jazz and fusion bands. December of that year saw the release of Sergio's first solo CD, *7:77*, featuring Jim Kelly and Bruce Gertz. A tour



of Italy and Switzerland with the Jim Kelly trio followed in March of '98.

Sergio's most recent accomplishment is the release of *Spajazzy*, a funk/fusion album produced in collaboration with bassist Tino D'Agostino and featuring guests Jim Kelly and Mike Stern on guitars. On it, Sergio alternates some blaz-

ing fusion patterns with some *serious* in-the-pocket funk. (It's a CD worth having; check the internet at spajazzy@yahoo.com for information.)

Sergio plays an Italian brand of custom drums called Daila, along with Zildjian cymbals and Regal Tip sticks. His immediate goal is to increase his visibility as a drummer within the jazz/fusion recording community.

Rick Miller

Hagaman, New York's Rick Miller began his drumming career at the age of twelve. Over the next several years he played along to bands like Iron Maiden, Triumph, Boston, and Whitesnake. At nineteen he joined his first band, playing mostly 1980s rock/metal cover tunes. After drumming in several bands, Rick's interest shifted toward writing original material, so with former bandmates and a few new individuals he formed Sidewinder. The group played mostly original music, influenced by such bands as Dream Theater and Queensryche.

In 1994 the band recorded their first demo tape. At the same time, trademark conflicts required a change of the group's name to Aztec Jade. Following the release of a six-song CD-EP recorded in 1995, the band was signed to CMG Records. Their first full-scale CD, *Frame Of Mind*, was released in 1997. Since then Rick has done additional recording projects for CMG, as well as playing on two Aztec Jade singles.

Rick tours various clubs in the Northeast with Aztec Jade, playing a combination of



powerful grooves and challenging prog-rock patterns on Pearl drums and Zildjian cymbals. His goal is to increase the visibility of the band. "*Frame Of Mind* has been receiving rave reviews in international publications and on the internet," says Rick. "We're known almost everywhere in the world—except the States. I want to see us on a major label, where—with the proper promotion—I feel our music could be a frontrunner in progressive rock today." (For further information, surf to www.klink.net/~aztecweb.)

If you'd like to appear in *On The Move*, send us an audio or video cassette of your best work (preferably both solo and with a band) on three or four songs, along with a brief bio sketch and a high-quality color or black & white close-up photo. (Polaroids are not acceptable. Photos will not be paid for or credited.) The bio sketch

should include your full name and age, along with your playing style(s), influences, current playing situation (band, recording project, freelance artist, etc.), how often and where you are playing, and what your goals are (recording artist, session player, local career player, etc.). Include any special items of interest pertaining to what

you do and how you do it, and a list of the equipment you use regularly. Send your material to On The Move, Modern Drummer Publications, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Material cannot be returned, so please **do not** send original tapes or photos.



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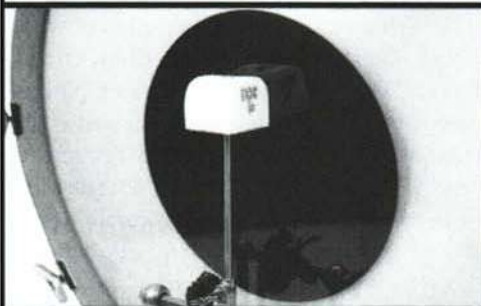
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Accompanying Dance Classes

by Jay D. Metz and John Carbone

In an article from his *Club Scene* column titled "Between Engagements," Rick Van Horn noted that "Unfortunately, as drummers we're faced with one major limitation placed on us by our choice of instrument: We *have* to find a band to work with. A drummer just isn't going to cut it as a single." This is true, of course. At a recent drum clinic in Los Angeles, Afro-Cuban jazz master Ignacio Berroa wowed the audience with a fiery display of technique, then quipped: "Okay, now that I've got your attention, forget all that stuff I just played. It doesn't matter. People want to hear a band playing melodies, playing tunes. The day somebody calls you to play solo drums at Universal Amphitheater, I want you to call me, and I'll buy out the entire front row to watch you perform!"

Doesn't sound too likely. There is, however, another option. Accompanying dance classes, as we both do on a regular basis, is a unique area of *solo* work that calls on all of our skills as drummers, percussionists, and collaborative artists. We get to improvise in diverse, creative situations, playing abstract musical soundscapes, funky Latin street beats, ancient African rhythms, and everything in between. For a flexible, sensitive player, this work can pay a lot of bills. On top of all that, it's a daytime job; nights are free for band gigs. If you have an open mind, hand percussion chops, and some holes in your daily schedule, playing for dance could be just the ticket.

Playing for a dance class is not exactly a "prestige gig" in the minds of some drummers. But first consider that it can pay pretty well. In large metropolitan areas, an accompanist can make \$13 to \$30 hourly, and more for master classes or special programs. No, it's not enough to retire on, but it's more than you get for sitting around watching MTV.

You want more? You don't have to wear a tuxedo, you don't have to learn a book of tunes—or play a fifteen-minute "Macarena." You just arrive with your instruments, set up, and play your best in an artistic, creative environment. You're not breathing smoke. No one spills beer on you. And if you're playing well, supporting and inspiring the dancers, the whole room will be

moving to *your* groove. It's a good "day job." For a drummer, after all, what could be more satisfying than making money while you make people dance?

Getting The Gig

Dance classes are offered by private dance studios and most universities, as well as by many high schools and community centers. Many styles exist; the most common, such as ballet, tap, and jazz, favor piano accompaniment with occasional percussion, while others, including modern, Latin, African, and other ethnic genres, routinely utilize percussion. Some modern and Latin classes will pair up piano and percussion. Our culture is enjoying something of a percussion renaissance these days, as evidenced by the proliferation of world beat and ethnic new age music, drum circles, and so on. This is great for us working players, as more and more people get interested in the sounds and traditions of percussion instruments. On the whole, though, pianists do get more work in dance. If you have sharp drumming *and* keyboard skills, you may be in high demand. Still, we've both wound up playing solo percussion for ballet, so you never know what may happen!

As is often the case in our business, personal connections are the best route to employment. If you have contacts in the dance department at your local high school or college, mention your interest to them. They may help you get a foot in the door by inviting you to sit in with a regular accompanist, recommending you to the people who do the hiring, or including your name on the sub list. Once you are acquainted with some working accompanists who know your abilities, they might refer work to you.

You can also call dance department chairpersons in area schools and ask that your name be put on their sub list. (Some universities have a separate department of music for dance within the dance school; you'll want to find out who does the hiring and target your call there. Dance instructors themselves rarely make hiring decisions, although they can influence them.) We've found most department chairs to be very friendly people. As professional, salaried artists and educators, they remember the realities of freelancing and are generally receptive to cold calls. Of course, you'll enhance their impression of you by asking a few specific questions about their program, and by indicating your relevant musical expe-

**"Always beware
of overplaying.
People dance
to 'Funky
Drummer,' not
'Moby Dick.'"**



riences.

Community centers and private dance studios don't always have enough funding to hire accompanists, relying instead on recorded music. You might have to demonstrate expertise in a particular ethnic style, or even volunteer to play some classes for free, to prove yourself and generate some excitement in class before they offer regular work.

For information on the national dance/music scene, *Dance* magazine is a great reference guide. Its back pages give a complete contact list for schools, colleges, and private studios in all fifty states (and throughout Europe as well). Also investigate the International Guild of Musicians in Dance, which publishes a quarterly newsletter. As for the Internet, we have found it to be useful only when exploring information on schools or programs that we already knew about. A "cold search" will produce listings for ballroom studios or independent instructors, who generally employ CDs instead of musicians.

Instrumentation

Let only your imagination (and how far you'll have to schlep) limit your setup. In my experience, though, most dancers do prefer the color and idiosyncrasy of hand percussion to conventional snares and tom-toms. Bring a bass drum, if you can, to help anchor the beat, and layer on all the other percussion and toys you've been squirreling away. (And reread Rick Mattingly's "Hand Drumming And The Drumset Player," in the April '97 *MD*.) Depending on the genre of dance we're playing for, we'll use African, Cuban, and Arabic drums, cymbals, gongs, wind chimes, wood blocks, agogo bells, shakers, jingles, whistles, crashers, and so on—and of course play as many instruments at once as possible! Your setup must be durable and relatively lightweight, of course, but the more tones and textures it can provide, the better. Remember to stock up on

different grades of mallets and brushes to expand your sonic palette. You'll also win points by setting up on a rug or piece of carpet (bring your own) to protect the studio floor.

On The Job

Arrive early, set up, and chat with the teacher about how the class will be structured. (Classes generally run ninety minutes. Usually a teacher will start with slow movements to warm up, lying or sitting on the floor, leading to faster, more intense phrases moving across the floor.) Students will probably ask you some questions about your instruments—"Do you give private lessons?" is a common inquiry. Then the teacher will demonstrate a movement sequence, count off a tempo, and look at you, motioning at you to play. Well... what are you supposed to play?

Jay learned how to approach this situation from Tom Farrell, pianist/percussionist and director of the department of music for dance at Bennington College in Vermont. According to Farrell, the drummer's first priority in the dance studio is essentially the same as at a sub gig with a jazz group at a dinner club. The dancers know what *they* need to do—dance the phrase (as your sub gig bandmates know that they have to play their own parts). "What they want from you up front," says Farrell, "is to give them good, solid time. Once they see that they can rely on you for the time, they'll relax and start taking chances. And you, too, can start taking chances."

Start small, and build slowly. Resist the urge to use your favorite Santana beats right off the bat. And whatever you do, control your dynamic level! If you can't hear what the teacher is saying, chances are that no one else can either. The invitation here is to improvise, and interact with what's happening around you. Walk into class with a clear mind, but with your senses, technique, and musical instincts ready to go. Also, outside of class, do some homework.



For example, most drummers are familiar with the rhythms of cha-cha, or samba, or mambo; but do you know what the dances look like? Savvy dance teachers draw on traditional dances from around the world, and the more styles you can recognize and support, the more effective (and employable) an accompanist you'll be. Head to the video section at your public library. Look for the *JVC Video Anthology Of World Music And Dance*, a great series of more than thirty videos. While you're at the library anyway, you might pick up John M.

Chernoff's classic book on the relationship between music and dance in West Africa, *African Rhythm And African Sensibility*.

Modern dance, which is probably the most common type of dance in which percussionists can find steady work, blends all these influences and more. It features varying time structures and metric modulations, and is likely to bring out sides of your playing that normally don't surface in traditional casual or club date settings. In particular, John's approach to playing for modern dance is based on Bob Moses's concept of

"character playing" (fitting your mind-set to the mood of the music); and on Harvey Sorgen's "two-sound" concept (long and short sounds). This leads to the idea of matching the movements with the right sounds according to the emotional setting of the sequence.

Further Considerations

Always beware of overplaying. You're *one* part of what's going on in the room. And percussion instruments really do have the power to tell dancers what to do. Use that power sparingly! "Too many drummers dictate the movement by playing lots of notes," observes Don Bondi, chair of the dance department at the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts. "I like a drummer who leaves enough room for the dance to happen expressively. A sensitive accompanist opens himself to a dialog between music and movement that happens instantaneously, the way two people have a conversation." And remember, people dance to "Funky Drummer," not to "Moby Dick." This situation is all about clarity, nuance, and groove.

It's also all about counting, and thinking fast on your feet. Phrases are usually in even-numbered groups, but advanced classes will get into odd meters and groupings. Unless you are told otherwise, the phrase will be in a distinct, repeating form. When the going gets tough, the tough count out loud!

Another tip: You need to be aware of when to play it simple and solid, when to ease back, and when to push the tempo and mood. The key is to recognize the movement qualities that the dancers want to emphasize. Alan Terricciano, who directs the department of music for dance at the University of California at Irvine, puts it this way: "A good accompanist has a sharp kinesthetic sense; he or she has got to understand how rhythm can affect movement."

Stay open to trying a different feel if the teacher asks you to. Remember, you are there to make the teacher's job easier, and the students' experience richer. Be ready to experiment in order to satisfy the customer. Good dancers can *feel* what you play as well as a good musician can *hear* it. Because they experience drumming in a different way, we often find the dancers to have valuable insight into our playing.

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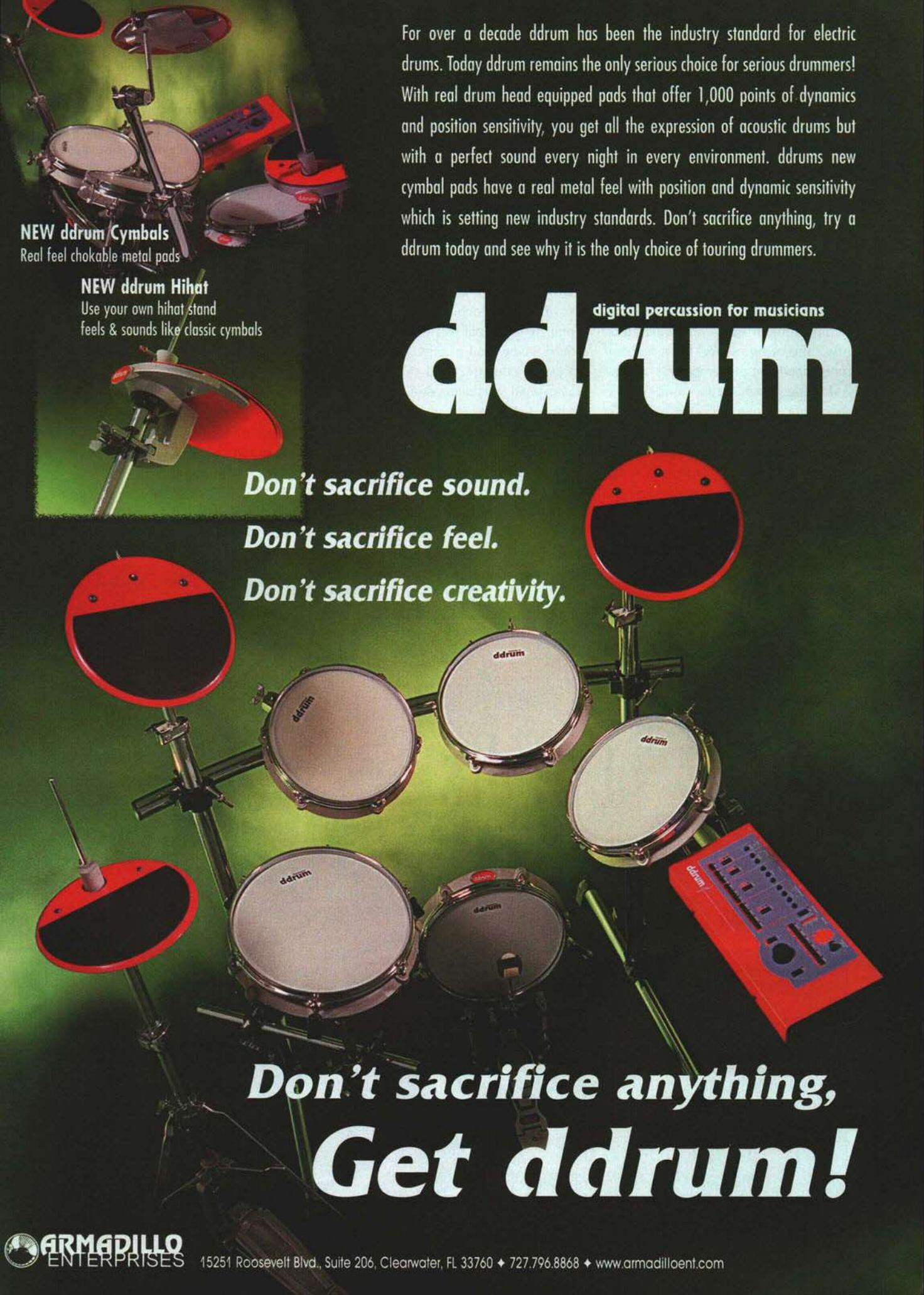
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However, just like on the bandstand, sometimes personalities don't click. For example, you might encounter a teacher who insists that you're *always* too laid back, or too on top. You should be friendly and professional, and genuinely try to play what the teacher wants. (We know of individuals who, in spite of their abilities, have lost work because of their condescending and antagonistic demeanors with teachers and students.)

If your attempts to solve a problem don't get you anywhere, there may be a different underlying problem—miscommunication. Recently, one of us played for a teacher who complained that the tempo was consistently slowing down. After some furtive tape recording, which revealed generally solid tempos, and even playing along with a small metronome in class, the teacher persisted in her complaints. Discussing the problem with her one day after class (which is always the best time to deal with such issues), it turned out that her conception of "good time" involved gradually building the tempo over the duration of an exercise in order to make the students work a little

harder. To a drummer, this was not "good time," but speeding up! Still, anything else was "bad time" to the teacher, until we found a way to talk objectively about the issue.

This sort of misunderstanding can arise because many dancers are not musically trained, and do not talk about music concepts in the same way that musicians do. When a dancer asks you to play a "three," that might mean a waltz (3/4), or a shuffle (12/8), or an Afro-Cuban 6/8, or something else. When in doubt, demonstrate the different rhythms and ask which is preferred. You're being paid to play, but also, sometimes, to educate. And this works both ways: Most musicians don't know what a *tendu*, a *degage*, or a *pile* are. (Hint—they're basic dance "rudiments.")

Similarly, you don't have to be a dancer yourself to play for dance (luckily, or we'd get no work at all), but you need to be aware of how sensitive dancers are to your music. Through experience, you'll develop the ability to translate movement ideas that you see into musical ideas that you hear. What you see will suggest what to play.

This can lead to many new creative dimensions in your playing.

Playing for dancers can be very gratifying on two levels: You see the immediate effect that your playing has on a roomful of people. And, more broadly, you place yourself within the vibrant traditions of drumming and dancing that define the history of our instrument. Actually, there's a third gratification: Effective dance accompaniment is a skill that more and more schools and organizations are willing to pay good money for. As a working drummer, playing dance classes is a great way to put some money in your pocket while you expand your creative repertoire.

Suggested Readings

- Marvin Dahlgren: *4 Way Coordination*
Maria Martinez: *Progressive Steps To Coordination*
Ted Reed: *Latin Rhythms For Drums And Timbales*
Ed Uribe: *The Essence Of Afro-Cuban Percussion & Drumset*



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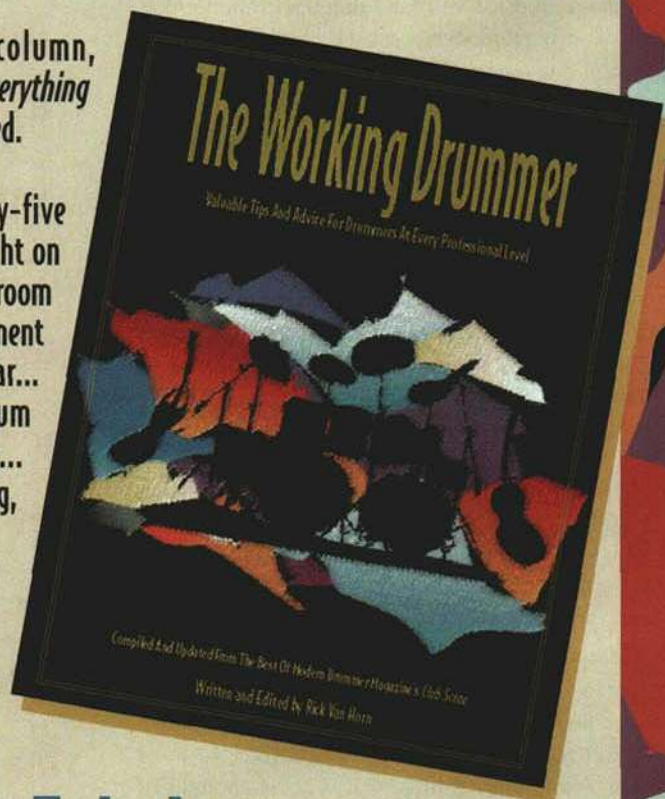
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MOD4

Working With A Percussionist

by Jeff Kersh

As a veteran garage-band and local recording percussionist, I have worked with a lot of drummers. I've found that the drummer/percussionist relationship can be a rewarding, nurturing one—or a nightmare of epic musical proportions. We are all part of the same family, after all. But the "sibling rivalry" between a drummer and percussionist who have never worked together or who have little experience working with any of the "other" kind of drummer is very real, and can be damaging to all the musicians involved. The key to not only surviving but thriving within such a relationship lies in the same area vital to any relationship: communication.

Finding A Role

In the '80s, when "hair metal" bands were all the rage, a friend asked me to rehearse with a local band to add some color to their sound. I was thrilled, and I went to the small studio, dragging brake drums and the biggest cowbells and cymbals I could beg or borrow. Shortly after I set up, the band's drummer walked in. To say he hated my guts is putting it mildly. He glared, coughed, mumbled, and eventually told me I was "violating his turf." I had never thought of music as a gang war, and I had gotten along with drummers up to that point, so I laughed. This enraged him even more.

In contrast, one of the greatest drummer/percussionist relationships I have ever experienced came with a friend who essentially got me interested in drums in the first place. As our town had more than enough drummers, I got more and more into percussion. We did a number of church youth musicals together—a demanding gig if there ever was one—and never failed to sit down and talk out our roles in each song before a stick or hand struck a drumhead or cymbal. I believe that when I'm working with a drummer (and not soloing), my primary purpose is to provide color and support.

When a drummer plays a groove, my shakers, tambourines, and/or cowbells should support it, augmenting an 8th- or 16th-note-based hi-hat part, for instance, or helping the drummer push or hold back the tempo. When the drummer lays back in the pocket,

“Once you get used to ‘the weird stuff,’ you’ll really enjoy the extra dimension that the blending of instruments gives the whole rhythm section. You might even prefer it.”

et, I follow. When he or she ups the ante with fills and change-ups, I alter my part to allow him or her to shine through. The overall effect, in a rock setting at least, should be the impression of one person playing everything—drummer and percussionist each comprising half of the rhythmic whole.

Color can come from congas, cymbals, chimes, or other instruments "dripping" notes around the drummer's groove, or shifting time. Maybe by holding back the groove a while the drummer moves forward in the pocket, we can provide the illusion of a big percussion section filling the entire bottom of a track. It all depends on the situation.

"Improving," Not "Fixing"

Back to "Mister Hateful Hair": I asked him if we could talk outside, and told him he should bring a pair of sticks. I brought brushes, and hoped he wouldn't take the invitation as a chance to beat me to death with a pair of 2Bs. I explained that I was there to play *with* him, and if possible to give what he was doing a little more presence in the mix. Then I asked him to play a four-beat groove there on the sidewalk. I jumped into the groove with him, showing him how much more powerful his part sounded with me supporting it. Then I threw in some triplets and flams to highlight his straight-ahead playing. A sly smile escaped before he could stop it, and our impromptu sidewalk jam lasted a good several minutes.

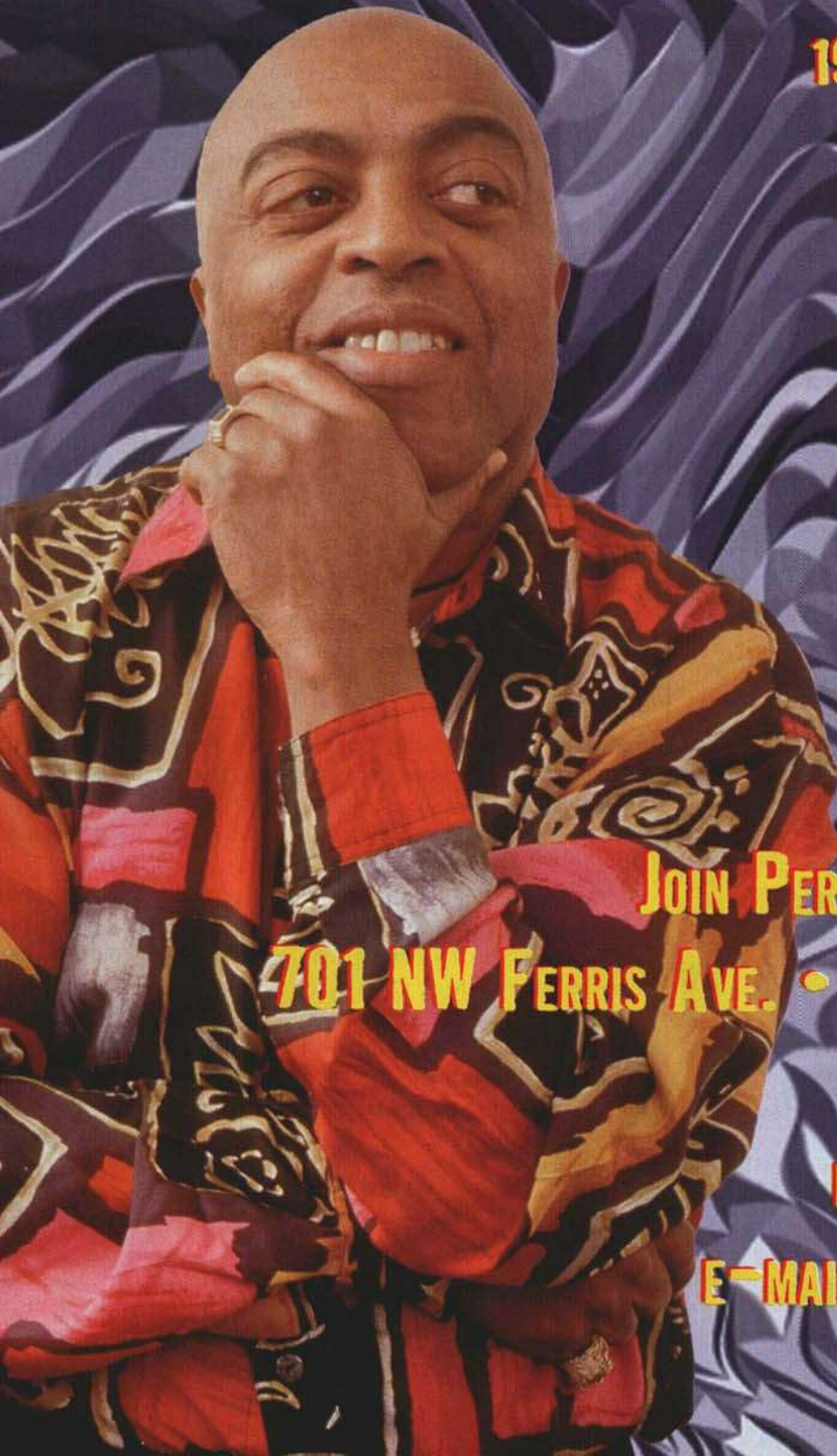
If you are a kit player who is asked to work with a percussionist, remember that he or she is there to make you sound better, not necessarily to "fix" anything that's wrong with your playing. My church-gig friend and I often switched roles, permitting him to embellish a bit with cymbals and ethnic-sounding tom fills while I kept time on toys or congas. He was elated at the opening for some improv in what was a pretty straight performance, and many members of the audience complimented us on our smooth backing of the singers.

Playing with a percussionist expands your creative possibilities: A country shuffle on snare can be augmented by a percussionist using brushes on another snare; a "stereo" effect can be added to

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good advantage by having one drummer playing downbeats while the other plays offbeats. Fills can be brightened by adding other instruments in unexpected places. With a little communication and practice, the drummer/percussionist combination can sparkle in performance, making both players sound better, bigger, and more in control.

As rock percussion becomes a bigger enterprise and more players emerge, the drummer/percussionist relationship will become less of an oddity. Until then, rock bands who want a little extra "color" in their songs should remember that the right percussionist is not only willing and able to add that color, but deserves the same respect and support as any other member of the musical family. In the long run, all of us will benefit from the new musical connection.

The Weird Stuff

The common image of a "percussionist" is of a horn player or keyboardist (or, God forbid, a backup singer) shaking a tambourine or a couple of shakers and occasionally playing time on a cowbell. But the percussion family is incredibly wide-ranging, and many of us who've actually worked on the craft gravitate toward more non-traditional instruments.

When a percussionist walks into a jam or writing session with a frame drum, most musicians (including the drummer) tend to say, "What are you going to do with that?" Even after I show them what I can do with a frame drum (which has quite a history as a

solo instrument), they still seem perplexed.

Dealing with a player using ethnic instruments boils down to nuance. On a drumkit, all the sounds are easily distinguishable: A snare drum sounds very different from a kick, and toms and cymbals carry sharply different pitches and tonalities. On a frame drum, you're actually listening more for "shades" of sound.

Try this: Take your favorite snare drum (with the snares off) or a rack tom off its hardware and place it on its side on your knee. Doing this may be more comfortable sitting cross-legged on the floor, but if that's too "new agey" for you, it's not necessary. Strike boldly with your thumb, just off-center. This produces a low tone, or "dom" in frame-drum lingo. Now try a light (those rims can hurt!) rimshot with your middle or third finger. This is similar to a "tak." A "slap" involves striking the center with your fingers together, muffling the drum as you strike.

Most of the sounds a frame drummer gets are based on these three basic tones. Note how subtle the difference is between them. A careful listener learns to discern the strokes. Think of the "dom" as your kick sound, the "slap" as the snare, and the "tak" as hi-hat or other ride-oriented sounds. Try some simple drum patterns using these sounds. Awkward? It will be; playing these instruments takes a lot of concentration and subtlety, plus some muscles you may not use when playing with sticks.

I've "re-arranged" drumkit transcriptions for frame drum and other instruments, and I discovered new sonic possibilities through the exercise. As a former kit drummer, I found the transition to subtler sounds hard at first. But with practice I was able to bring out the individuality of each stroke, making each more discernible to other listeners as well.

Working with a percussionist who prefers the more exotic percussion sounds requires some extra listening skills on your part and, most importantly, mutual trust. You have to trust the percussionist to be creative and play what the song needs without getting in your way, and the percussionist has to trust you to engage with him or her as seriously and attentively as you would any other member of the band. Try playing some patterns and grooves together, with you on tom-toms. Weave in and out of each other's lines as an African ensemble might do. Let the percussionist work as you accompany him or her on cymbals, then let him or her play a static groove as you improvise on the kit.

The beauty of any "ethnic" drum is its smooth tonal presence and its ability to blend with the instruments in a drumkit. Some say drums were meant to play together, to complement each other. You can hear why when you and an "ethnic" drummer are really cooking on a groove. Each instrument brings out valuable qualities in the others. Once you get used to "the weird stuff," you'll really enjoy the extra dimension that the blending of instruments gives the whole rhythm section. You might even *prefer* it. Your interaction harkens back to ancient drumming choirs, placing you and the percussionist further forward in the mix than either of you might be individually. Both of you will grow from the experience.

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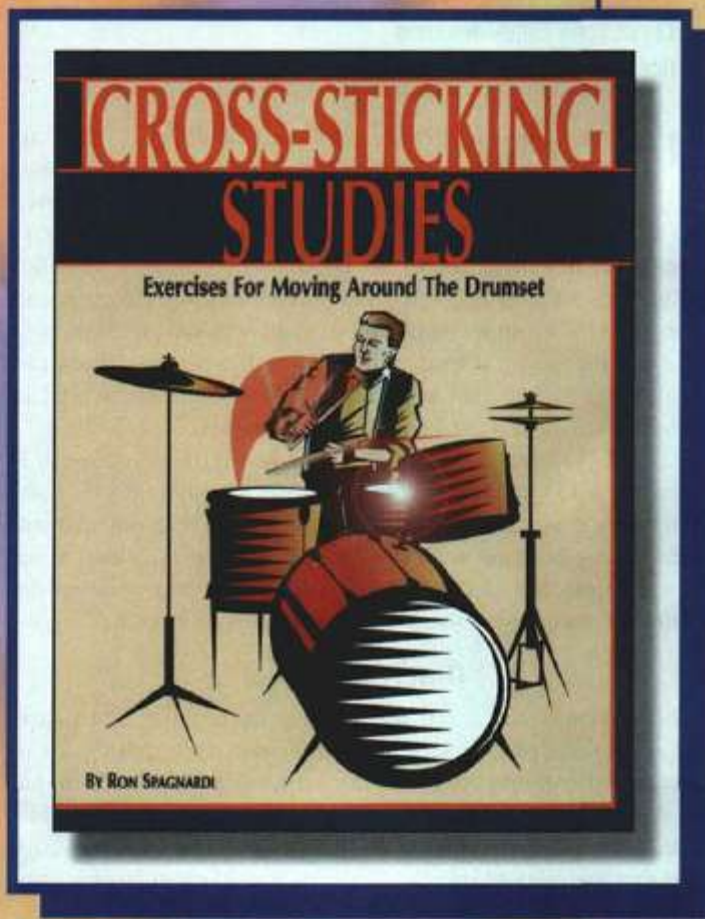
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Efficient Drumming

Part 2: Applying Proper Movement To The Drumset

Text by Dr. Darin "Dutch" Workman

Photos by Ernest Loera and Darin Workman

"Set the drums up to you, not you to the drums." That's the first thing I tell students when they get behind the kit, since many players just sit down at a kit and play it as is. By failing to arrange your kit to fit your needs, you subject yourself to playing in an unnatural position. This not only inhibits your full playing potential, it might result in restricted movement, pain, and even injury. The same can be said of playing technique: Your posture and the way you hold your sticks and move your limbs can work for or against your immediate musical objectives, as well as your physical health and longevity as a drummer.

In Part 1 we looked at how the body is designed to move. If it moves in a way that causes resistance to its natural limits, the body will suffer abnormal wear, often causing injury. With this in mind, we will now examine ways you can position your body and drums to utilize the "efficient range of function" located between the extreme points of your joints' maximum range of motion.

Different Strokes

Many factors play a role in setting up the drumset. The first is the drummer's playing style. Few drummers approach the kit in the same way. Some lead with the left hand, some like the hi-hat on their right, some like to crash cymbals with their left hand, etc. Although this might sound rather obvious, not all drummers recognize that they should set up their drums according to the way they use them.

Another factor is physiognomy. Drummers who are tall, short, long-legged, or short-legged all require the drums to be set up in different ways.

And of course, there is the aesthetic aspect. Some drummers set up the drums so they look cool, even though they are more difficult to play. However, as we gain experience, we learn that playing cool is much more important than looking cool. Fortunately, more drummers have become aware of this in recent years, and as a result many are adopting a more functional setup.

The standard kit configuration is convenient for playing the majority of popular music, not surprisingly because it's the way most drummers performing and recording pop music set up their kits. But many drummers have begun taking the goal of functionality very literally, and are experimenting with non-traditional setups. For example, some put the hi-hat in the center so that both hands can reach it easily. Others put a large tom on the left, next to

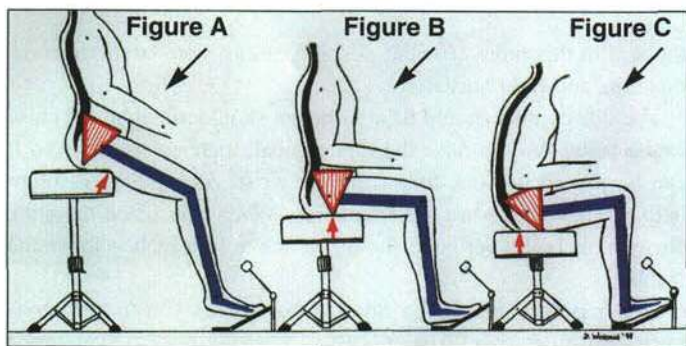
the snare. They are merely putting instruments that are most often played by the right hand on the right, left-hand instruments on the left, and the ones played commonly by both hands in the center, where both hands can readily reach them. Think about the particular drumming needs of the music you play, and set up accordingly. If a traditional setup doesn't suit you, experiment with a setup that does.

Throne And Back Position

A prominent drum teacher once told me that one of his students was having problems doing intricate patterns with his feet. Then he noticed that the student had a beautiful kit, with no expense spared—except for the throne. The wobbly, uncomfortable throne was obviously contributing to the student's poor foot performance. Don't expect to be relaxed and concentrated when you are spending energy and focus trying to balance on your throne. When selecting the throne, pick one that has sturdy cushioning. Some are too soft to give support for the sitting bones (ischial tuberosities). There is one of these in each buttock that the body sits on.

Throne selection and positioning are the most vital steps to an ergonomic drum setup. Just as branches of a tree are dependent on the trunk for stability, the arms and legs are dependent on the back for their support. The back is "anchored" to the throne, and if the throne is not stable, the body will have to use energy to stay in balance—energy that should be reserved for playing. Choose a stable, adjustable, firmly cushioned throne made of breathable material. The throne should be positioned at a height that allows the legs to be parallel to the floor. Sitting too low or too high causes the body to work harder to perform, leading to fatigue and eventually to injury. Sitting too high also places weight on the hamstrings, which will limit and irritate them over time. Let the weight sit where it belongs—on the sitting bones.

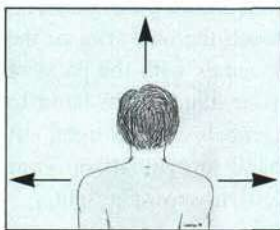
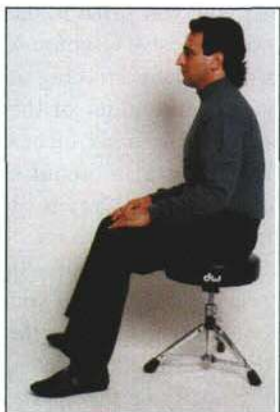
In the following illustration, notice how the throne height affects the posture (spine in black and legs in blue) and how the body rests on the sitting bones (bottom point of red triangle). The red arrows represent where the majority of the body weight rests. Figure A shows the throne too high, causing increased low back arch, and unnecessary pressure on the hamstrings. Figure B shows the proper posture with natural curving of the spine and correct positioning of the arms and legs. Figure C shows the throne at an extremely low height, causing loss of the lower back curve and rolling of the shoulders and upper back. This can result in neck strain (caused by looking up from that hunched posture) and unnecessary pressure on the tailbone, possibly causing cramping in the legs.



Once you have a good throne and have its height adjusted properly, you should focus on your sitting posture, which can make all the difference in the world when it comes to comfort, endurance, pain prevention, and ability to get around the kit. In order to sit on the proper bones you must rock the pelvis forward just a bit. To illustrate this, sit on a hard counter and notice where the sitting bones are and just how you need to sit in order to be on them. Sit upright, with your pelvis slightly rocked forward. The photo below shows leg angle and back posture.

Hunching your shoulders forward makes the upper back sore and restricts breathing. Conversely, arching the back will cause tightness in the upper back, stretching of the chest muscles, and restricted breathing. The upper body should be relatively upright.

However, as the limbs move during playing, the torso will naturally move in various ways to maintain its center of gravity. Position your shoulders and head in the middle of your body. This balances your arms and head most efficiently on your spine, using less energy. This way, your muscles aren't working just to hold things in position. The best way to achieve the proper sitting position is to imagine that someone has strings attached to the top of your head and at each shoulder. Picture them pulling the head directly up, and the shoulders directly out. Think: "up with the head, and out with the shoulders," as illustrated below. This posture requires very little muscle energy to maintain, so it will make you feel lighter and more energetic.

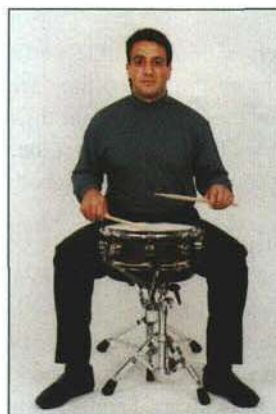


Throughout this "experiment," it is very important that you *relax*. Proper posture gets a bad rap as being "stiff." Not so. In fact, using proper posture allows your body to rotate, tilt, bend, and reach more freely and naturally—all of which will help you get around your kit better.

Snare Drum Position

Pop music requires that the snare is played with a great deal of power and intricacy. For this reason, it should be positioned directly in front of the body, with the batter head at about the height of the tops of the thighs if you play matched grip.

This position allows the snare to be played by both hands equally, and with the most power. It also puts your shoulders where



Natural snare drum/
matched-grip hand position



Natural snare drum/
traditional-grip hand position

they should be, your elbows in a nice, resting position near your sides so they don't require the muscles to suspend them in mid-air, and your wrists in their neutral position, allowing them the advantage of optimal mobility. (Some of us need all the advantages we can get.)

If you are a traditional-grip player, the snare should be tilted toward the right knee (for right-handed players) so that the left shoulder doesn't need to drop in order to get a powerful stroke or rimshot. This also allows the stick to strike the head straight on instead of at a severe angle. Keep in mind that the traditional grip was used to conform to the old-style marching snares that hung from the shoulder at an angle. As with the matched grip, your elbows should be resting near your sides, and your wrists should be in a relaxed neutral position.

Drummers commonly position the snare too low. This forces the arm to extend beyond its efficient range of function before hitting the drum. On the other hand, positioning the snare too high doesn't allow the arm to get to its powerful range before striking the drum. The wrists, too, are put in a suboptimal position when the snare is either too high or too low. This can limit your playing and damage the wrist.

Bass Drum And Hi-Hat Pedal Position

The bass drum and the hi-hat pedals should be placed to allow the knee to extend just beyond 90°. Both pedals should be the same distance from the throne. When looking at the drummer from overhead, the thighs and hips should form a "V" shape with the snare drum in the middle. This position allows the hips, knees, and feet to be in their efficient range of function, facilitating the greatest control of the pedals.

Adjust the pedals (as shown in the photos below) to strike at a moderate angle so the foot can rest on them at



an angle just over 90°. This keeps them within the ankle's efficient range of function. The feet should be resting when they are not playing. Depress the pedal, then allow the foot to rest on the footboard to conserve energy and "reload." This also takes a load off of the back muscles, because the feet can help balance the body.

Tom Position

Position your toms close to you and close to each other to avoid needless reaching. The highest tom should be below chest level, and the lowest tom no lower than the snare to avoid over-extending your arms. They should be tilted enough to allow a comfortable rimshot—and obviously to avoid awkward hand movement. At a few inches above the snare drum, they are low enough to be reached easily, so that when you play them your elbows are relaxed and near your sides with your wrists in a neutral position.

Downward sloping of the toms as they go from directly in front of you to either side is beneficial because the body naturally bends down and to the side as it turns to the right or left. If you play with a large number of toms, consider centering them over the bass drum (starting with the highest to the left of the kick in a right-handed setup). This way,



you can reach them with the left hand more readily and avoid turning excessively to the right to reach the largest ones. Too much of this movement can result in back-muscle spasms.

Depending on your body structure, you might find that your bass drum is too large to lower the toms to where you want them. This is especially true for drummers who play deep toms. It may be necessary to raise and tilt your toms more to get the best striking angle on the head. Alternatively, you can get a smaller bass drum to make room for the toms to be lower. I have selected a 20" bass drum to allow better positioning when using deep toms. (To compensate for a smaller-diameter bass drum and produce a low-pitched sound, choose a bass drum with a *deeper* shell. Also consider a looser tuning and use of "control ring"-damped heads, which reduce some overtones, thus emphasizing the lower fundamental.)

Cymbal Position

Another reason to slope the toms downward in a standard setup is to allow the ride cymbal to be placed lower the farther it sits to the right. The higher you raise your arm to play an instrument, the more difficult it becomes to fight gravity. Also, your shoulder leaves its efficient range of function, making it more difficult for your muscles to work. A lower ride cymbal means less reaching and a lower, more comfortable shoulder/arm/hand position. With

the arm in this more efficient position, it has more strength, coordination, and endurance.

The ride cymbal should be at or below shoulder height and close to the body. As you raise the ride cymbal, increase its angle so it can be played without contorting the wrist. As a guide, it might help to angle it toward your belt line. When you place the stick close to the bell, your hand should be one to four inches above the cymbal.

Proper positioning of the ride cymbal allows you to get maximum bounce from the stick because it strikes and leaves the cymbal more freely. In addition, it produces a louder, clearer sound, and the shock from the vibration goes into the air instead of your body. (This principle holds true when striking any part of the kit.)



Crash cymbals are usually struck at a different angle than the ride. Although there are a variety of sounds you can get from a crash depending on where and how you strike it, the most explosive response is produced by striking it with the shoulder of the stick (three to six inches from the tip) at about a 30° angle, as shown at right.



To make that positioning accurate and easily accessible, angle crash cymbals toward your chest, no matter what their height. To confirm that they are the correct distance from you, sit properly on the throne, and make sure you can touch the outer rim of the cymbals with the palm of your hand (right hand to cymbals on your right, left hand to cymbals on your left), as shown at right.



Music Stand Position

Although not technically part of the drumkit, the music stand is no less important to its overall ergonomics. I have noticed drummers' tendency to place the music stand too far off to the side. The most immediate complication from this is the need to keep your head turned to see the music. This imbalances the muscles of your neck, shoulder, and upper back, causing irritation to those areas. It also interferes with blood flow to the head, which can affect your alertness. On a more practical note, it is also often difficult to see the music director or the act you're supporting when the placement of the music forces you to look drastically away from it.

Keep the music stand between you and the conductor so that

you can see his or her baton just above the music. This way, you face the correct direction, keep the conductor in your central focus, and have the drums within your peripheral vision.

Conclusion

Playing the drums is complex enough without the extra challenge of playing in an unnatural position. If you set up your kit in a way that allows you to play without physical restrictions, you will play smoother and longer with less fatigue and injury. Try the suggestions discussed in this article and note the way your playing improves. Keep in mind that the changes may seem awkward at first. Just as you had frustrations when you first learned to play, you will have them with each technique change. But don't be discouraged. If you stick with them for a month or two, you will be a healthier and better drummer for the effort.



Adrian Young
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1998 Hollywood Custom & Vintage Drum Show

by Harry Cangany

I've always thought that sometime in the 1940s the world tilted a little, causing a lot of vintage drums to slide toward the West Coast. (It also helped that the movies, live radio, and the recording industry were all in California at that time.) With all of the vintage gems available out in the land of fruits and nuts, it's not surprising that eventually someone would get the bright idea of displaying them at a show.

Two years ago, player/collector Kerry Crutchfield decided to jump in with both feet and create the Hollywood Custom & Vintage Drum Show. While there are now a number of similar shows in the country (each of them growing in popularity), none can match the glitz and glamour of the Hollywood show. The 1998 event was held over the Labor Day weekend at the famous Hollywood Park Racetrack/Casino. It attracted two dozen dealers from a number of states, and customers from as far away as Italy.

With the sound of live music from blues bands playing in the huge VIP tent overlooking the racetrack, attendees bantered, bartered, and bought various drum treasures. These included such beauties as Leedy *Elites*, Slingerland *Radio Kings*, moire-covered Camcos, Ludwig *Universal* nickel tube-luggers, and even a very rare, near-mint-condition Rogers *Mardi Gras* set. Several happy people were able to find the missing parts for their strainers—and even whole throw-offs—making their treasured snare drums ready to play again.

Ludwig personnel were on hand selling vintage reproduction parts, old-style logo heads, and brand-new custom tube-lug drums. DW, Ludwig, and Remo all donated custom snare drums that were raffled off to lucky winners throughout the show, as were vintage cymbals, calfskin heads, sticks, videos, jackets, and T-shirts. And on the educational side, Grammy award-winning drummer Zoro took time out of a hectic touring schedule



A classic Rogers *Mardi Gras* kit was one of the rarer items at the show.

to give a two-day clinic on the history of R&B drumming.

In the area of new drums, a new line of custom snare drums called Drum Solo (made by Greg Gaylord) was introduced to great acclaim. The popular vote went to a solid cherry-wood model. Another hit of the show was a new set built by the Fever Drum Company of West Covina, California. The bass drum was an 18" model, but its sound was enormous and gathered lots of attention.

On the vintage scene, perhaps the most indicative event of the show was the very first sale: Kerry Crutchfield's personal white marine pearl Rogers set. The collecting world has seen a tremendous interest in Rogers drums of late. And with that interest has come an increase in value. The last recorded sale price I have of a wooden *Dyna-Sonic* snare is \$1,200!

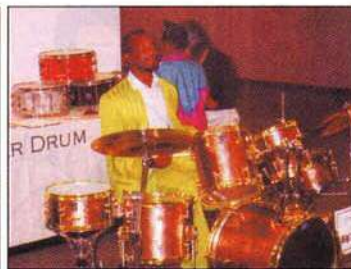
Vintage drum shows are still in their formative years. While Kerry Crutchfield knows a two-day program works well, the challenge is to find a time that doesn't overlap with other major events. As it turned out, the 1998 Hollywood show had to compete with a giant NASCAR race in Los Angeles that pulled in over 100,000 people, as well as a blues festival in neighboring Long Beach that attracted over 20,000. Despite these and other Labor Day distractions, however, the Vintage & Custom Drum Show was still a well-attended event.

My first hope is that these regional shows will continue to grow. Kerry says he is committed to that goal, and that he's already planning his 1999 event. My second hope is that all vintage drum enthusiasts and collectors out there will support such shows. By

bringing vintage drums into the spotlight, we will also unearth some of the treasures that we know are out there hiding in attics and closets. So watch *Modern Drummer* for news of upcoming vintage drum shows—and remember to take your checkbook!



Drum Solo is a new brand of custom snare drums.



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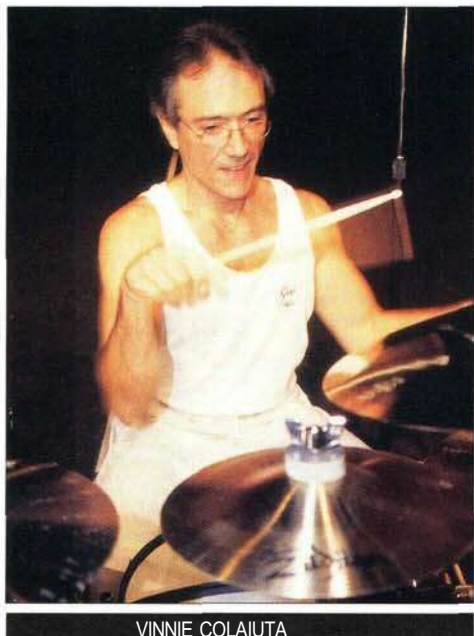
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SONIC BOOMS AND SILENT AUCTIONS:



VINNIE COLAIUTA

photos by Rick Malkin and Lissa Wales

Who created the biggest bang at the Percussive Arts Society's convention last November? Nope, it wasn't the powerful Virgil Donati, the mighty Terry Bozzio, or the buffed Mike Mangini (although they each had their own personal kabooms). What really rocked PAS's world was an actual sonic boom that occurred on the final day of the event, Saturday, November 7, 1998, at 12:07 P.M. As John Glenn and the space shuttle Discovery rapidly descended through Earth's atmosphere (for landing at Cape Canaveral), a sonic anomaly was created that was heard (and felt!) all over the Orlando, Florida area. No muffling on that bad boy!

While witnessing the boom of a historic shuttle flight is cool, there probably isn't anything more exciting for a drummer or percussionist than attending a PAS show. The annual four-day event features literally hundreds of master classes, clinics, and concerts given by some of the finest players on this planet.

It would be hard to imagine a percussion-related topic that wasn't covered at last November's PASIC—world, legit, marching, electronics, and, of course, drumset were all presented. Add to that other fun things like silent auctions, impromptu jams, and an exhibit area that allowed drummers to check out new products from most of the manufacturers in the industry, and you have one stellar event.

This year's PASIC drumset coverage (*our* favorite area) was noteworthy for the star-studded lineup: Haynes, Bozzio, Colaiuta, Smith, Morello, Donati, and several others were on hand to play, inspire, and give advice. Here's a rundown of some of the highlights:

The talented **Tommy Igoe** flew in from a session in Japan just in time for his clinic performance, which featured the young phenom soloing in different styles, playing along to tracks from his solo disc, *New Ground*, and rapping about breaking down mental barriers. Tommy is developing into an impressive player, and his excellent technique and beautiful touch will undoubtedly propel him to drum-hero status very soon.

Next up was Mr. Personality, **Adam Nussbaum**, who delighted the audience with his witty playing and chat. Nobody has a more flow-



ADAM NUSSBAUM



ED SHAUGHNESSY

PASIC '98 In Review



ing style than Nussbaum, who makes everything he plays just sound seamless. His opening solo *absolutely* flowed from brushes to mallets to sticks (where he pulled out the tricks like dead strokes, flammed rimshots, and hi-hat fanning), and which eventually digressed to hand farts! On the serious side, Adam's rap was very informative, covering topics like "Don't be a clone—nobody can be you better than you," "Practice, but be sure to get out and play," and "Don't come to the gig with an agenda—be open to the music."

Author/educator/player **Gary Chaffee** dazzled the audience at his clinic not with any display of physical dexterity, but with his brilliant mind. Gary discussed taking simple sticking patterns and, by voicing them in different ways around the kit, creating some very complex-sounding patterns.

Veteran drummer **Ed Shaughnessy** gave a solid clinic discussing the Moeller technique and using Indian-inspired syllables for playing patterns on the kit. Ed also performed along to the track he recorded on Neil Peart's *Burning For Buddy* disc ("Shawnee"). And as an added treat, Ed showed a rare taped performance of him dueting with Buddy Rich on the *Tonight Show*. Fabulous stuff.

A huge crowd (1,500 plus) turned up to see soft-spoken drum-god **Terry Bozzio**, who simply amazed the audience with his ostinato drum



TERRY BOZZIO



TOMMY IGOE



JOE MORELLO



BOBBY THOMAS JR.



RUSS MCKINNON



ROY HAYNES



RICK LATHAM



STEVE SMITH

compositions, which he performed on his immense DW drumkit.

An even bigger audience (the largest of the event) turned up to honor the great **Roy Haynes**, who was inducted into the PAS Hall Of Fame at this year's show. Mr. Haynes was greeted with a standing ovation, and from there he *ripped* into a fabulous set with his trio—slick, witty, and grooving. Roy defies the aging process, as the seventy-something drummer played with the heart and ferocity of a much younger man. And no one plays with more panache than Roy Haynes.

LA workhorse **Russ McKinnon** gave what was without question the most educational clinic of the event. His well-spoken, practical discussion of what a drummer really needs to know to be a *working* musician was tremendously valuable. Russ ran down a laundry list of tips that would help any player's chances of succeeding in the music business.

It's simply incredible that master drummer **Steve Smith** continues to improve at the instrument. How can he possibly get any better? Smith astounded the audience on two different setups, his regular large Sonor kit and a tiny four-piece *Jungle Set*. He burned in both settings, playing solo pieces that displayed his confident, musical approach and his tremendous technique. Steve seems to be sitting even higher now, with his snare drum angled away from him even more, and his posture at the kit is perfect. Total inspiration here.

The legendary **Joe Morello** gave a master class, where he brought students up to play with a trio and then evaluated their performances. The playing level of the students was pretty good, which seemed to inspire Joe. He sat down and played beautifully himself, the old master offering up some of the flash that made him a household name back in the '60s. Joe then cajoled *Percussive Notes* editor/MZ) writer Rick Mattingly to play "Take Five." (Nice to see an educator get a chance to perform as well.)

Young firebrand **Mike Mangini** (Steve Vai, Extreme) gave an impressive performance at his clinic. Mike has an interesting concept—a symmetrical approach to the kit, both in terms of his ability to play ride rhythms equally from either side and his unique setup. Mangini's flamboyant style also makes him an intriguing performer.

Former Weather Report percussionist **Bobby Thomas Jr.** gave a solid performance with his group, Bermuda Triangle (featuring Jaco Pastorius's son Felix on bass). Bobby has a unique ability to blend hand drumming and kit playing, and some of the intense grooves he laid down really blurred the lines between drumset

and percussion.

Virgil Donati's total commitment to the drums is obvious. He very well may be the most technically advanced drummer playing today. (Not surprising since his average daily practice regimen lasts eight hours!) But his dedication has paid off: A twenty-five-minute drum solo brought the audience to its feet. Virgil's hand chops are blistering. And when he adds the flashier elements to the mix—cross-sticking, twirls, back-sticking, stick solos—it almost becomes sensory overload for the audience. And of course, Donati's double pedal chops are unbelievable. A legend in the making.

One of the most highly anticipated clinics at PASIC '98 was given by **Vinnie Colaiuta**, who had been away from the educational side of things for the last few years due to his hectic schedule with Sting. Maybe it was the large crowd, the huge auditorium, or simply the fact that he hadn't given a clinic in a while, but Colaiuta seemed a bit nervous at first. Once he got into his opening solo, though, his excellent technique and playful personality kicked in, and Vinnie blew the



VIRGIL DONATI

audience away. And when the master drummer launched into a groove, be it up-swing, a half-time shuffle, or a reggae thing, he made it feel oh so good. Vinnie ended the clinic by attempting a happy birthday cell phone call to a friend in Europe. Vintage Vinnie!

Another highlight at PASIC '98 was the clinic given by **Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez**. The Latin master can seemingly play anything he likes over left-foot clave. Negro went even further, displaying his ver-

satility by opening with some traditional-grip bop on a small set. He then moved to a Latin-hybrid kit (similar to the one he used with Michel Camilo) for some serious ethnic-sounding grooves. And then he switched to a large fusion kit for a bit of all-out soloing (with his left foot dancing between hi-hat, cowbell, and double pedal). Negro then surprised everybody by inviting up two star drummers from the audience—Robbie Ameen and Joel Rosenblatt—to play on the two vacant kits onstage. Negro also brought up experimental percussion maker Bill Saragosa. And then the four *men jammed*.

Other great drumset performances were given by David Garibaldi & Talking Drums, Walfredo Reyes Jr., Ed Uribe, and Rick Latham.

PASIC '99 will be held October 27-30 in Columbus, Ohio. No word yet on any space missions targeted for the area, so all large bangs will be PAS's responsibility. For more info call the Percussive Arts Society at (405) 353-1455.

William F. Miller

Upcoming Clinics

Alex Acuna

3/5 — University of Mary, Bismarck, ND, (701) 255-7500

Charlie Adams and Nancy Zeltsman

3/20, PAS New York Chapter Day of Percussion, Manilus, NY, (716) 389-2704 or (315) 682-1232

Berklee Percussion Week

3/30-4/3 — Artists tentatively scheduled include Bobby Sanabria and Victor Mendosa (in a tribute to Tito Puente), Jeff Hamilton, Chad Smith, Terri Lyne Carrington, Cindy Blackman, Kenwood Dennard, Rod Morgenstein, Skip Hadden, Casey Scheuerell, Mohammad Camara, Ed Uribe, Bob Gatzon, and others. Berklee College, Boston, MA, (617) 266-1400

Ignacio Berroa, Marvin Sparks, Johnny Lee Lane, and the Eastern Illinois Percussion Ensemble

3/6 — (also vintage drum show) PAS Missouri Chapter Day of Percussion, Ladue High School, St. Louis, MO, (314) 721-8748

Gregg Bissonette and Ed Uribe

3/13 — PAS Alabama Chapter Day of Percussion, University of

Alabama, Birmingham, AL, (256) 233-7717

Joe Bonadio

7/11 — Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, IL, (217) 581-3817

Brad Dutz

4/10 — PAS Minnesota/North Dakota Chapters Day of Percussion, Concordia College, Moorhead, MN, (218) 299-4414

Lionel Hampton

2/24-27 — Moscow Idaho Jazz Festival, Moscow, ID, (208) 885-6765

Steve Houghton

3/13 — (with Arthur Lipner) Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA, (225) 388-2455
5/1 — (with Michael Burritt) University of Central Arkansas, Conway, AR, (501) 450-5263
6/25 — Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA, (412) 396-6080
7/11 — Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, IL, (217) 581-3817

Kalani

2/19 — Jorgensen Music, Orem, UT, (801) 224-0466
2/20 — PAS Utah Chapter Day of Percussion, Weber State University, Ogden, UT, (801) 399-1418

2/23 — Congaerobics Hand Percussion Workout, Remo Percussion Center, North Hollywood, CA, (818) 982-0461
3/6 — with Pan Ramjay steel band and Andy Narell, University of Akron, Akron, OH, (330) 972-7590

Kodo

3/2-3 — (concert) Beacon Theater, New York, NY, (TicketMaster) (212) 307-7171

Rick Latham, Tom Freer, and Marimba Yajalon

3/27 — PAS North Carolina Chapter Day of Percussion, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC, (828) 227-7242

Jeff Moore

3/13 — PAS Alabama Chapter Day of Percussion, University of Alabama, Athens, AL, (256) 233-7717

Valerie Naranjo

4/11 — PAS Maryland Chapter Day of Percussion, Towson University, Towson, MD, (410) 821-7291

Ed Soph

4/17 — West Texas A&M University, Canyon, TX (806) 651-2838

Glen Velez, Ethos, Talujon Percussion Quartet, and Justin DiCoccio

5/18 — Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY, (718) 661-3334

Talking Drums

2/28 — Sam Ash Music, Margate, FL, (954) 975-3390
2/29 — Sam Ash Music, Burbank/Chicago, IL, (708) 499-3485
3/2 — Sam Ash Music, Hollywood, CA, (213) 654-4922
3/3 — Sam Ash Music, (714) 899-2122

Tony Verderosa

2/15 — Guitar Center, Hollywood, CA, (213) 969-9783
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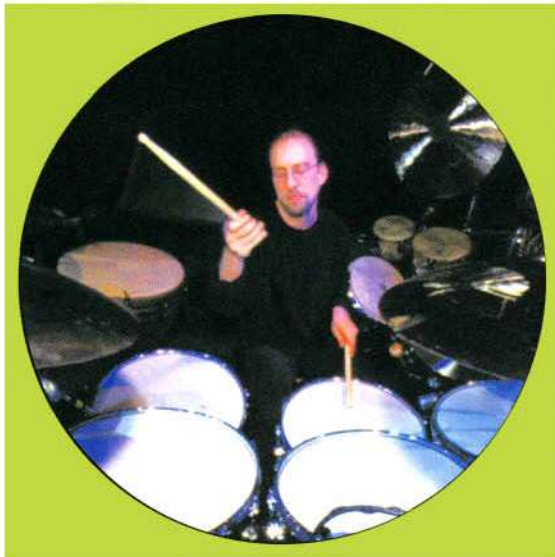
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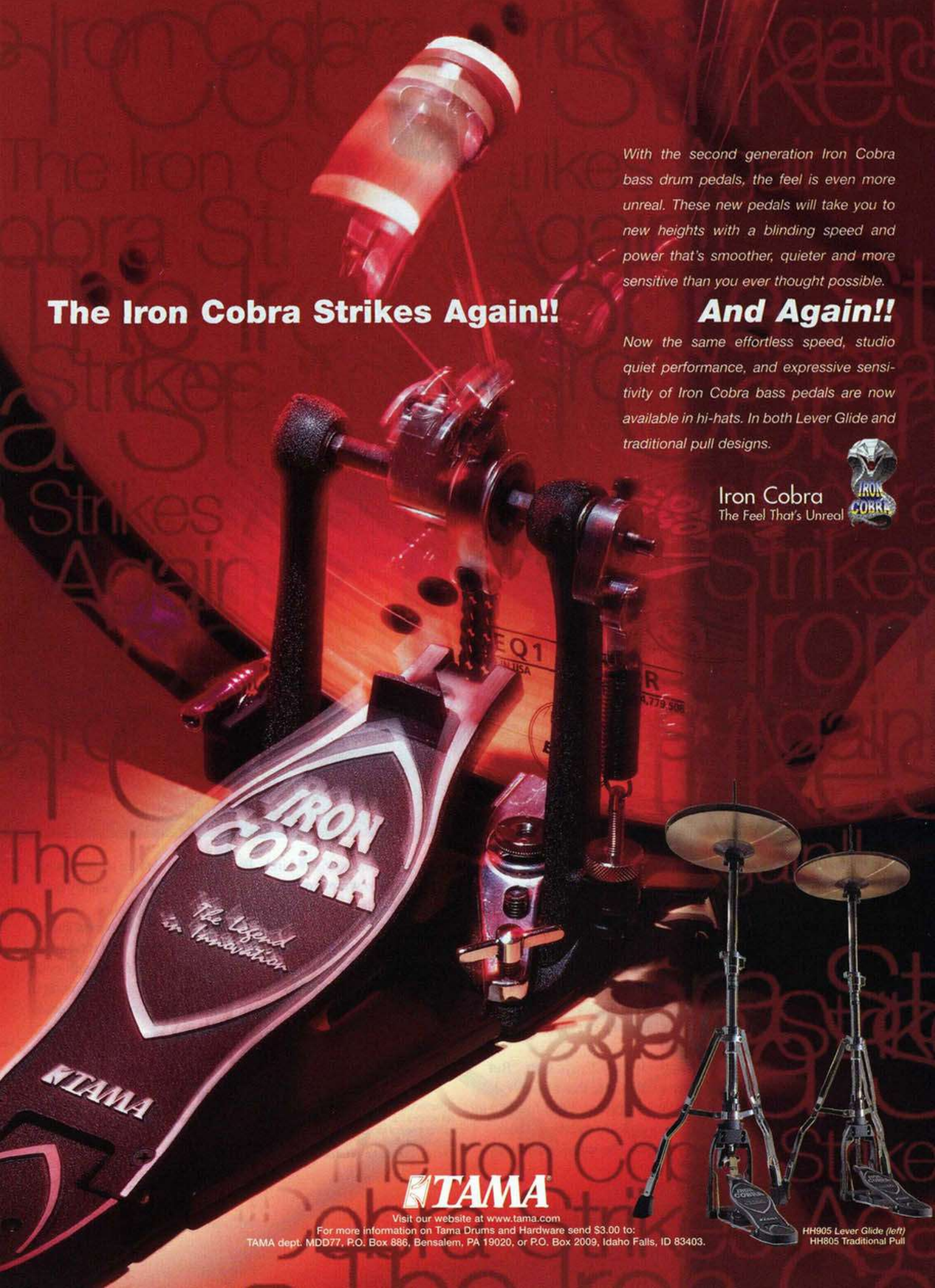
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HH905 Lever Glide (left)
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Don Loeffler is no "square," but his drumkit definitely is. The San Diego, California drummer/percussionist created this cubic symphonia after having already built his own marimba. "I figured that if I could build a marimba, I could also build a set of drums," says Don. "But they'd have to be different from my regular kit."

Different they definitely are. Using plywood for the tom and bass-drum shells, Don glued and screwed the pieces together, using 1" x 1" pine to reinforce all the corners. Then he cut and fitted sheets of *Mylar* to create drumheads.

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