

• INSIDE PAISTE • SEQUENCING: FRIEND OR FOE? •

RAMMAGE  
CREW

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JUNE '92  
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## SLAUGHTER'S BLAS ELIAS

- VICTOR LEWIS
- A TRIBUTE TO BOBBY CHRISTIAN

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# On Consumer Input



Ever since the early days of *Modern Drummer*, I've encouraged readers to offer their input on any aspect of the magazine. Over the years, hundreds of readers have written to tell me what they like or dislike about *MD*. Hundreds more have written with suggestions for feature stories and column

topics, among many other ideas. Rest assured that *all* your letters are read, and those with valuable ideas are thoroughly discussed at monthly editorial meetings. The point is, this continual flow of input helps *MD* to be the best it can be in addressing the needs and wants of you, the reader.

Another important form of input is geared towards *MD's* advertisers. A good example is when we ask you to take a moment to respond to the *MD* Consumer Poll on page 120 of this issue. The Poll is presented every three years or so, and it's your opportunity to let the drum industry know *how you* feel about their products, quality, service—even their advertising. Similar to prior Consumer Polls, the major categories are most innovative company, best quality and craftsmanship, most service-oriented, most interesting ad campaign, and the most valuable product to appear on the market over the past three years. Winners will be announced in the November issue of *MD*, and will be presented with handsomely designed awards for their particular categories.

Naturally, we're hopeful that the manufacturers in our industry will learn something from our Poll, even if it's merely to gain a better grasp on what you're *really* thinking. Interestingly, past *MD* Consumer Polls have even become sort of a status symbol for some companies, with several using the award in their promotional and advertising campaigns—a clear indication that your opinion certainly *does* count.

To my knowledge, *MD* is the only major music publication offering its readers a chance to express their opinions in this area, so don't miss out on the opportunity. Hopefully, we'll all once again benefit from your valuable input.

## MODERN DRUMMER

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## Harvey Mason

Your article on Harvey Mason in the March '92 issue was excellent! I'm an aspiring studio drummer, and your questions (and Harvey's answers) gave me a lot of insight as to what being a session drummer is all about. The information contained in the interview is exactly what I was waiting for!

Skip Reeves  
Denver CO

## Fred Young

I truly enjoyed your March issue because my two favorite drummers were featured: Hunt Sales and Fred Young. They're favorites because of the simplicity of their playing.

I had the pleasure of attending a Kentucky Headhunters concert recently. I also got to meet the group prior to the show. It's refreshing to see talent that doesn't look down at you. It's also nice to see a real star, like Fred, who's willing to fall to earth and do human things. (And every drummer I know wants a kit just like Fred's!) Keep up the good work, Fred, and don't ever sell out. Now that you've proven Nashville wrong, you can be yourselves and still put out music that even a die-hard rocker like me will eagerly buy!

Daniel Biesheuver  
Bismarck ND

## Farewell To Roy

I recently received my March issue, and was surprised by the absence of Roy Burns' *Concepts* column. I've always enjoyed *Concepts*; what's the story?

Tommy Fletling  
Akron OH

*Editor's note: After more than 13 years as a regular columnist for MD, Roy is leav-*

*ing the magazine to devote more time to his business, Aquarian Accessories Corporation. In a recent letter, Roy offered this message to his readers and fans: "It has been a great ride and a thrill to be involved with MD since the beginning. I feel that I was a small part of a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Thanks for the opportunity to be involved. This was not an easy decision, but my energy and time are required by Aquarian."*

*The Concepts department will continue on a periodic basis, with articles submitted by a variety of authors.*

## Don't Forget PureCussion

In the *It's Questionable* section of your March issue, Joseph Dobkin requested information on companies offering single-headed drums. I do believe that PureCussion drums would qualify as being single-headed! I also feel that PureCussion is as major a drum company as at least two of the four drum companies mentioned. Wouldn't you agree that Mr. Dobkin and the rest of your readers deserve a more complete answer to the question?

Walt Johnston  
Vice President/General Manager  
PureCussion, Inc.  
Minneapolis MN

*Editor's note: PureCussion offers drums created by mounting single drumheads on RIMS mounts, employing special hardware that allows the heads to be tuned. No drumshells are used.*

## Rebuttal To Dmytriw

I am writing in response to the letter written by Mr. Mike Dmytriw in your March issue. Mr. Dmytriw speaks clearly and truthfully about Jim Keltner—the

man is an excellent drummer, to say the least. But saying that "putting the very tasteless article on thrash and speed-metal drummers in the same issue is just unforgivable" is a real slap in the face to us drummers in the speed/heavy metal category.

Believe it or not, Mr. Dmytriw, drummers like Lars Ulrich and Scott Rockenfield are *talented*. They can do things that I can only try in vain to do—even if my set is as big as theirs. (And that's taking nothing away from drummers like Jim Keltner; many of them play *small* kits and do things that I can only dream of doing.) If a speed/heavy metal drummer deserves to grace the pages of *MD*, then he or she should be allowed to do so—no matter what other drummers are featured in that issue.

Your narrow-mindedness about other styles of drumming surprises me, Mr. Dmytriw. The drummers that I have been fortunate enough to converse with tend to be an open-minded and agreeable lot, no matter what style they play. I'm glad you're not the editor of *MD*, for I fear that if you were, it would be a very biased publication.

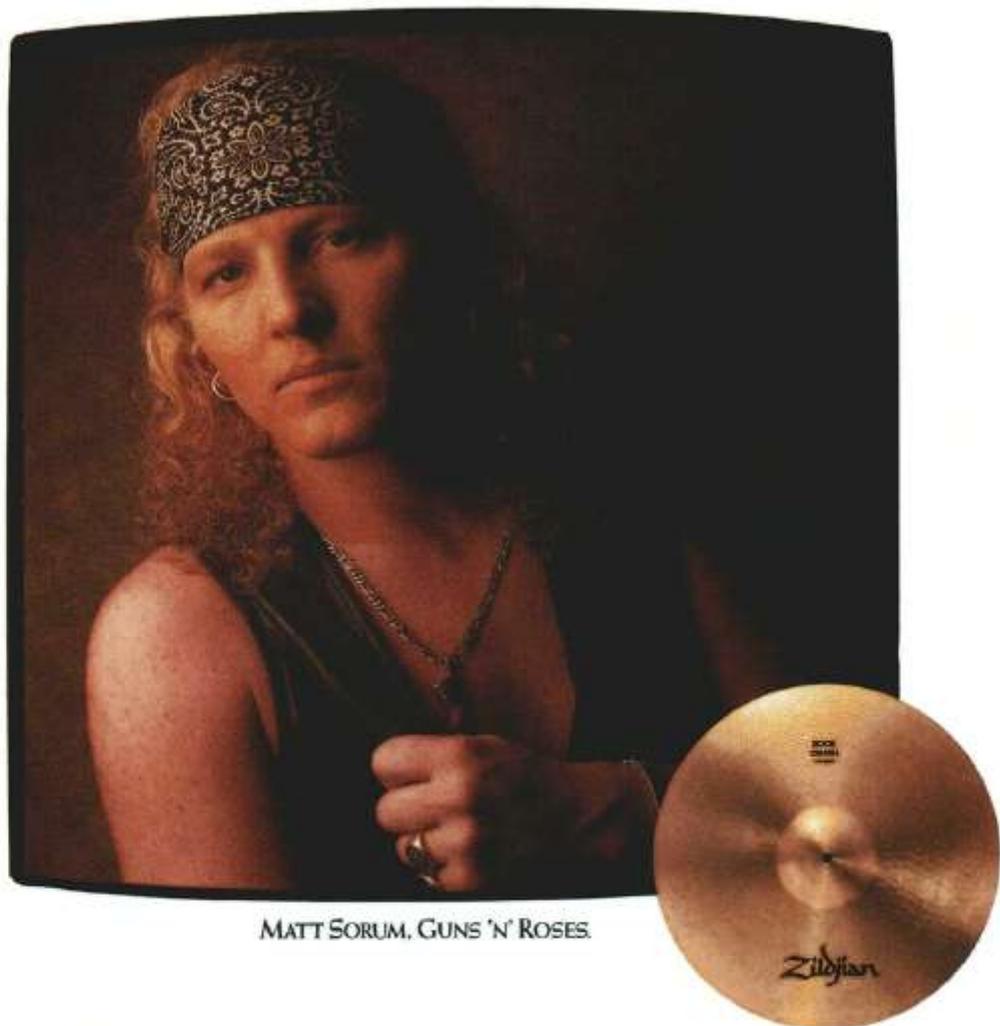
Russ Anderson  
Ironwood MI

## Thanks For The Country Coverage

Glad to see that you are featuring some of the top country drummers more often now (Fred Young, Milton Sledge, as well as some of the Nashville studio guys). As a country drummer, I appreciate this immensely! How about an interview with Steve Duncan of the Desert Rose Band and *Hot Country Nights*?

Ray Heath  
New London NH





MATT SORUM, GUNS 'N' ROSES.

"I LIKE ZILDJIAN CYMBALS ALMOST AS MUCH  
AS MY NEIGHBORS HATE 'EM."

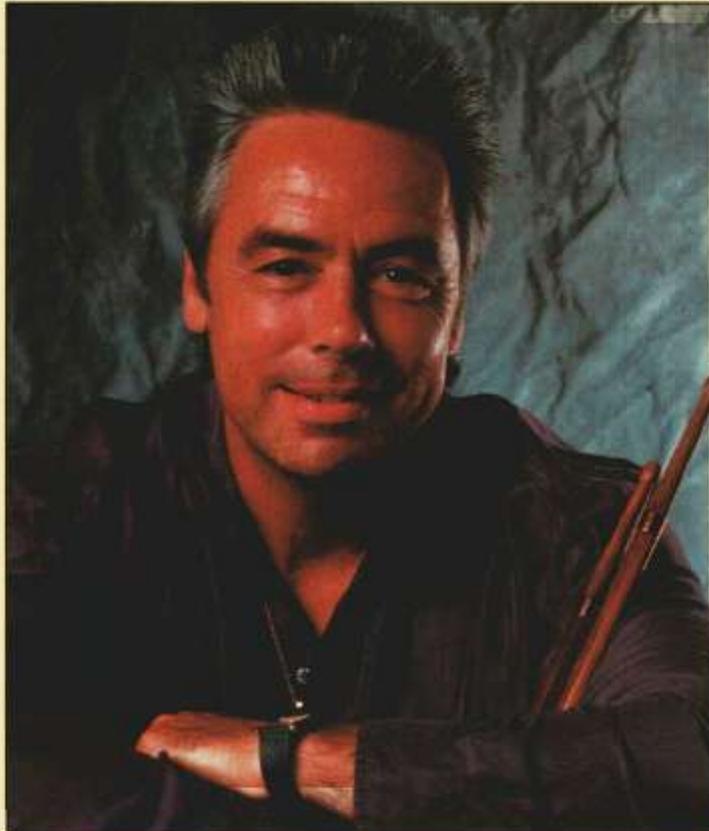


## Nigel Olsson

When we talked to Nigel Olsson a couple months back, he had high hopes for his new band, Warpipes, which took him out of semi-retirement. "The last Elton John tour I was on in 1986 lasted two years," Nigel recalls. "When I got off tour, I wanted to slow down. Then Elton changed the band again, anyway."

For the past five years, Nigel's been living in Nashville, about which he says, "I fell in love with Nashville because it's very much like England. The people are really nice, it's green, and it's a great place. I've lived in the south for a long time—I lived in Atlanta and North Carolina before I moved here."

According to Olsson, Warpipes came about "when Davey Johnstone had come off the road with Elton—Elton retired again, which he does every two years," Nigel laughs. "We'd been wanting to put



something together for a long time, and Davey had a few songs he had written. He and [keyboardist] Guy Babalon put them down in Guy's studio, and they were turning out so well that he called and said, 'I'm going to send you a tape of a few songs. See how you feel about putting a band together behind all this.' I listened to the tape and called him back and said, 'Yes, let's go ahead and do it.'"

Nigel says that when he's free, he does some sessions for his father-in-law, producer Larry Butler, who uses him on tracks that aren't "down and out country."

• **Robyn Flans**

## Ted Parsons

Prong isn't exactly the typical crossover band. But drummer Ted Parsons hopes long-time followers of the New York trio's brand of industrial metal go for what he calls a "more open, musical, and accessible" record.

With *Prove You Wrong*, Prong surrounds the militant, start-stop rhythms found on its previous efforts with more varied and interesting melodic turns. But the most notable changes stem from Parsons, who toned down the gated snare, which hindered 1990's *Beg To Differ*, and went to a smaller kit for what he feels is his most musical recorded performance.

Parsons credits it all to doing a lot of

homework between recording sessions, and getting to know his instrument better. "I think I've made a tremendous leap in my playing," Parsons says. "In the past, I was content to just play things I already knew how to do. Now I'm getting more into what rhythm is all about, challenging myself, and almost being obsessive about drumming."

Parsons' growth as a player includes more dynamic tom work, better use of double-bass, and riding the hi-hat with his left hand. On "Get A Grip," off the new record, Parsons goes so far as to use his left foot for his main bass drum. "I'm just trying to achieve a more ambidextrous

approach," he says.

Prong recorded the new album in an old Smith & Wesson firearms factory, where Parsons used five snare drums—from a piccolo to a marching model—in stark contrast to the somewhat droning snare sound on *Beg To Differ*.

"We really didn't have a good game plan with the last record. But I felt really comfortable doing this one," says Parsons, who previously played with the Swans. "I've always been a big arm player, and I went for more concise fills this time. But I think we convey more energy on this record, too."

• **Matt Peiken**

## Dan Tomlinson

For the past couple of years, Dan Tomlinson has been juggling his time between Lyle Lovett and Acoustic Alchemy. Both gigs present different challenges for the drummer, but Dan says he particularly enjoys working in Lovett's large-band context, which includes cello, three horns, and three saxes.

"In playing with the large band," Dan says, "I get to actually be more of a drummer, whereas in Lyle's small band, it's basically playing very quietly. In the large band, I get to play a lot of different styles—country, rock, and a couple of funk tunes with kind of a gospel feel—and I have to play like a big band drummer."

The situation with Acoustic Alchemy has been interesting, too, because Tomlinson started with them as a percussionist, a role he had never played before. "I locked myself up in my room for about two weeks learning percussion parts," he explains. "I really enjoyed doing that with them. There was a lot of freedom to add colors, and I wasn't quite as restricted to the timekeeping posi-

tion. I had a large percussion table, plus congas, bongos, timbales, wood chimes, and six different kinds of cymbals. I was right up front with the two guitar players, and that was a lot of fun, too.

"Now I've actually replaced myself," he explains. "They didn't want to have a percussionist last year, but they still wanted to have the percussion parts. So now I have a large drum kit that includes bongos and timbales, and I'm doing both drums and percussion."

Dan can be heard on Alchemy's last LP, *Back On The Case*. "It was a little odd doing that record because of the way it was produced," Dan explains. "They had each individual player do his part by himself. I had to come in and do the drums to just two scratch acoustic guitar parts, which was a bit lonely. But the album turned out really well."

• Robyn Flans

## Dave Abbruzzese

This past summer, Dave Abbruzzese was about as far away from the vibrant Seattle rock music scene as you could get. But when Matt Chamberlain, previously known for his work with Edie Brickell & New Bohemians, left the fledgling group Pearl Jam to take over the drum slot in the *Saturday Night Live* band, the door opened for the 23-year-old Texan.

"I had been playing with this band in Dallas called Dr. Tongue, and Matt had just done a three-week tour with Pearl Jam," Abbruzzese recalls. "But we've known each other for a while, and when the *Saturday Night* thing came up, he recommended me to the guys in Pearl Jam."

Suddenly, with Pearl Jam's debut, *Ten*, receiving heavy critical acclaim, Abbruzzese has a new home and life. "There's a pretty good music scene in Dallas, but it's not anything like Seattle, and I had a little culture shock when I first moved," he says. "I come from the school of playing music for music's sake, and I

was a little leery at first about stepping into a major-label situation. But Pearl Jam is just a good band making good music without anybody worrying about trends—and that's exactly where I'm at, too."

Abbruzzese says he immediately hit it off with his new bandmates and that, with Pearl Jam on tour supporting the Red Hot Chili Peppers, he's already had a profound effect on the music. "The drum parts have changed considerably," he says. "In some ways, it's hard to play somebody else's parts [Dave Krusen played on the record], but my whole style is groove-oriented, so I fit right in. The song structures are still the same, but I think I've made the groove bigger."

Abbruzzese, though, is already looking forward to recording new material with the group. In the meantime, fans can hear his playing on a Pearl Jam single for the movie *Singles*.

• Matt Peiken

## News...

**Ed Shaughnessy** has been working with his big band on scattered dates. If you find yourself in L.A., Ed is now available for lessons. You can reach him at (818) 769-4144.

**Michael Barsimanto** can be heard on albums by Steve Bach, Dianna Eve, and Jimmy Lawrence.

**Vic Mastrianni** is on the road with Ricky Van Shelton.

**Moyes Lucas** is on the road with Dianna Ross. **Ron Powell** is on percussion.

**Tommy Wells** can be heard on records by Juice

Newton, Gerry House, Cumberland Boys, Jerry Reed, Roger Springer, Michael Twitty, Cathedrals, Jay Patten, and Don McLean. He's also been doing a lot of jingles, as well as some live dates with Jay Patten and Jimmy Hall & the Prisoners of Love.

**Louie Weaver** on Petra's new LP, *Unseen Power*.

**Steve Riley** has left L.A. Guns. **Bones** has replaced him.

**Paul Leim** on new releases by Lorrie Morgan, Paul Overstreet, Bruce Carroll,

Pam Tillis, Lee Greenwood, Michael W. Smith, Mac MacAnally, and Kurt Howell.

**Tal Bergman** working on new Billy Idol release. Tal can also be heard on new releases by Chaka Khan, Boo Yaa Tribe, and Jane Child.

**Frank Derrick** has recently completed a drum book entitled *Drum Loops For Live Drums*. The book compiles 40 pages of exercises and drum machine beats geared toward coordination and discipline development. Frank has also been touring with Cab Callo-

way.

**Richie Morales** on Dave Valentin's recent release, *It's My Life*.

**Michael Hodges** is currently on tour with Adrian Belew.

**Ron Wikso** has left his gig with Cher to play in the Storm. The band recently opened for Bryan Adams on several dates.

**John Tempesta** on recent Exodus release, *Force Of Habit*.



Send quick, proven tips that have saved you time, money, or effort to *Drumline*, c/o *Modern Drummer*, 870 Pompton Avenue, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Items can range from equipment maintenance, repair, or design tips to practice and playing ideas. Please keep tips to 150 words or less, and be sure to include your name and address. We will pay \$15 for every tip we publish.

### Support For Lower Back

Here's a tip for drummers who tend to slouch and feel lower back pain as a result. Very essential to weightlifters, a lower back belt is used to support the lifter's back and keep the back muscles from straining. The belt is perfect as a practicing tool because it gets you used to having good posture. You can find the belt at most sporting goods or fitness stores.

Kelly Benson  
McMurray PA

### Home-Made Shakers

A variety of shakers can be made out of easily obtainable household objects. For example, cut the tops off two aluminum soft drink cans, put in half a cup of rice, then tape the cut ends together. (You can tape together an entire six-pack for more volume!) Tape or glue two empty 35mm film containers together at their bottoms. Put a teaspoon of BBs in each container, pop their lids back on, and shake away! You can use two plastic vitamin or pill bottles in the same manner.

Bill Rudy  
Kissimmee FL

### Multi-Use Rubber Washers

While having a flat tire fixed at a local gas station recently, I noticed dozens of little rubber "doughnuts" littering the floor. They were the bottom ends of the valve stems, which are ripped off while repairing tires. I've used these "doughnuts" on my kit in several ways: isolating cymbal cup washers from stands, glueing them to the bottom of my floor tom legs, even covering up unsightly holes drilled into drumshells. Another tip is to glue three or four "doughnuts" to the sides of your

drum cases in order to avoid scratching them. Their uses are limited only by your imagination—and they're free!

Eliot Pietri  
Yauco PR

### Evaluating Drumheads

Have you ever bought a new drumhead and tried to tune it up—only to find out that your old head sounded better than the new one? I've had this experience many times, and have had to put the new head away for use only in an emergency. What a waste!

My solution is to remove a new head from its package and test it *before* I buy it. I hold it by the rim, close to my ear, and simply tap it in the center to hear how it sounds. If it rings nicely and has a good character, chances are it'll tune up and sound that way on the drum, too. However, if it just gives a lifeless "thud," I put it back in its box and try another one. I sometimes need to try three or four heads before I find one that "sings," but it's well worth it to beat the frustration (and expense) of a "dead head."

Ron Hageganz  
Vancouver WA

### Packing Your Stands

I obtained an old moving/packing blanket, folded it in half, and had it stitched into several separate compartments. Into these I insert my cymbal stands. Then I roll it up and tie it with a couple of old belts. This system holds my stands conveniently, while preventing them from scratching each other. When empty, it provides a carpet large enough for a five-piece setup!

Mike Kosacek  
Austin TX

### Improving Snare Drum Resonance

With all the talk about "freely vibrating drumshells," the use of rubber insulators between shell and lug casings, and the use

of RIMS and other isolation mounts, I'm surprised at the number of drummers I see tightening their snare baskets to the point where the "claws" holding the drum restrict shell vibration. Try this simple test: Place your drum in the snare stand basket and tighten the claws tightly. Now, play the drum with one hand, slowly loosening the claws until they no longer bear down on the drum. *Hear* the difference. Some drums will sound 30%-50% louder. Even *more* volume and resonance can be achieved by placing foam under the rim at each point of contact with the snare stand claws.

Mike Binet  
Lafayette LA

### Bass Drum Hoop Protection

Those of you who own bass drums with all-wooden hoops are faced with the problem of having pedal clamps chew unsightly dents into the hoops. I've found that cutting an old T-shirt into small squares, doubling the fabric over once (to provide two layers of material), and placing this between the hoop and the pedal clamp eliminates the chewing problem and makes the dents from the clamp (which seem unavoidable—at least with some pedals) hardly visible.

Daniel Hughes  
Conley GA

I have noticed wooden bass drum hoops marred or scratched after clamping on hoop-mount cowbell holders. To protect them, I purchased an inexpensive sheet of adhesive-backed felt at a local discount store, cut it to fit the inside of the clamp, and solved the problem. It works great!

Jim Murray  
Jonesboro AR

*Note: The tips presented in Drumline are suggestions based on the personal experience of individual drummers, and are not necessarily endorsed or recommended by Modern Drummer magazine. Modern Drummer cannot guarantee that any problem will be solved by any Drumline suggestion, and cannot be responsible for any damage to equipment or personal injury resulting from the utilization of any such suggestion. Readers are encouraged to consider each suggestion carefully before attempting to utilize any Drumline tip.*

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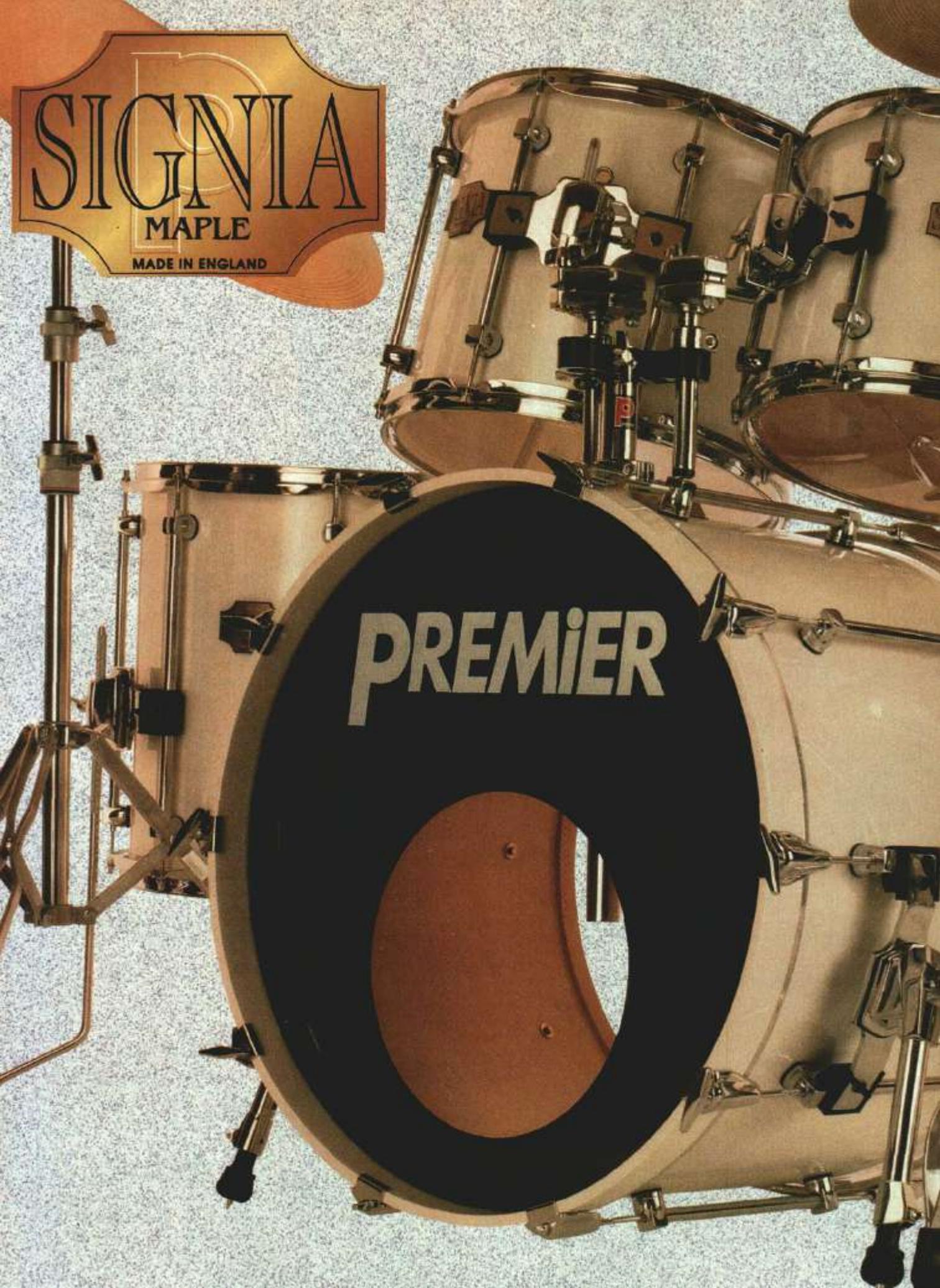
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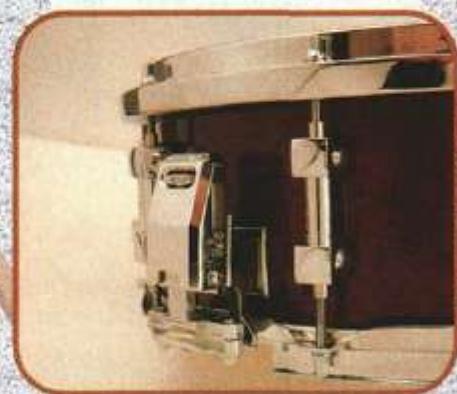
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## ASK A PRO



### Neil Peart

**Q** I started drumming on a left-handed kit because I didn't know any better. Later, I changed the kit around because I'm right-handed. I didn't see any problem until I realized I was limited to what I could do depending on what hand I was leading with. I'd start going off beat, and it would become confusing. You're my favorite drummer, and I would greatly value your opinion and/or any advice. Will I be able to work it out in time, or should I lead only with one hand?

Kyle Rice  
Landisburg PA



**A** Kyle, I can't think of a single thing wrong with learning how to lead with either hand. By nature, nearly every drummer favors one hand or the other to lead with, and most of us spend our lives trying to train the other one to lead as easily. Once again, I have to recount the great story about Gene Krupa—apparently he used to shake hands with his left hand, because it was "underdeveloped." So by all means lead with either hand if you can; it can't do you a bit of harm, and it will make it possible for you to do some interesting ride patterns and also permit some unusual fills. It might be a little more difficult at first, but I'm sure it will be worth it. Maybe we should *all* start on opposite-hand kits!

### Steve Smith

**Q** I got the Buddy Rich Memorial Scholarship Concert tapes for Christmas. I'm very impressed with your fluency in drumming techniques, and I commend you on your very successful drum duet with Marvin "Smitty" Smith. I was wondering, though, what exactly that splash-like combination of cymbals to your left was. It appeared to be a splash mounted on an inverted China. Please let me know what it was and if any special mounting system was employed to give the cymbals the amount of contact they had.

Kristen Joseph Isaac  
Sumter SC

**A** I'm glad you enjoyed the tape, Kristen. It was very exciting for me to take part in that event—and also a bit nerve-racking, because we only had one chance to "get it right."

The combination of cymbals you refer to is a 12" Zildjian *EFX Piggyback* (a small China cymbal) with an 8" A Zildjian splash on top of it. The 12" is mounted the right way up, not inverted, and there is no special mounting system; the splash is simply placed on top of the *EFX* cymbal. I think the sound is very interesting, and I've used this combination on many recordings. Thanks for listening!

### Bill Gibson

**Q** I recently saw you perform with Huey Lewis in Atlantic City. The band was extremely tight, and your drumming was musically tasteful, with a great sound and very solid time. But I thought I saw you wearing headphones. If so, what was the reason for that?

Bobby Sabella  
Hartsdale NY

**A** Yes, Bobby, you did, see me wearing headphones in Atlantic City—because the slot machines were too loud! Seriously, on that tour the band decided to sequence certain keyboard parts—such as horn lines—hence the use of a click track on certain songs. Thanks for the complimentary words. 



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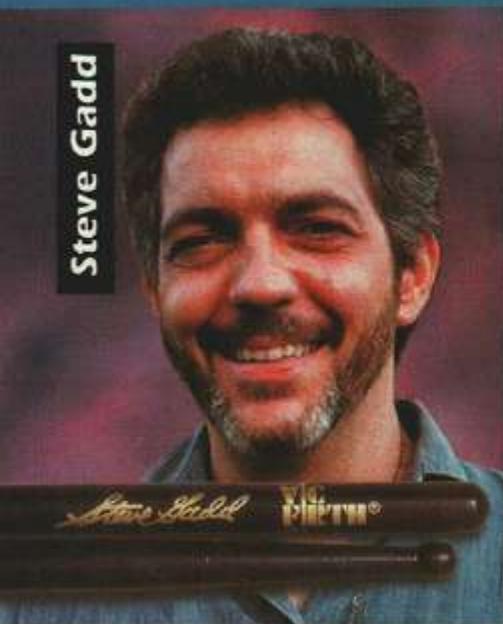
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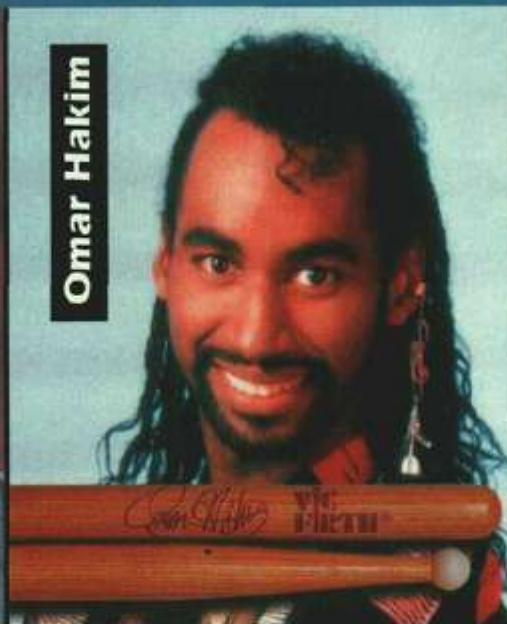
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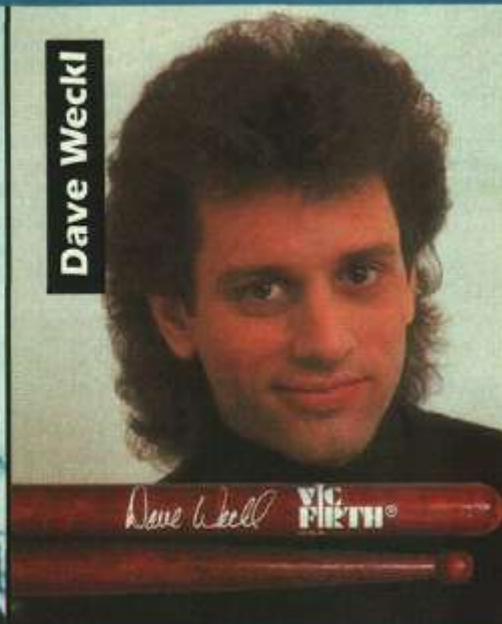
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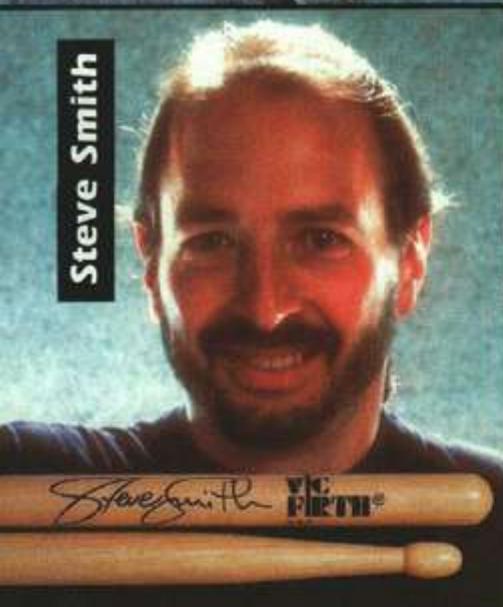
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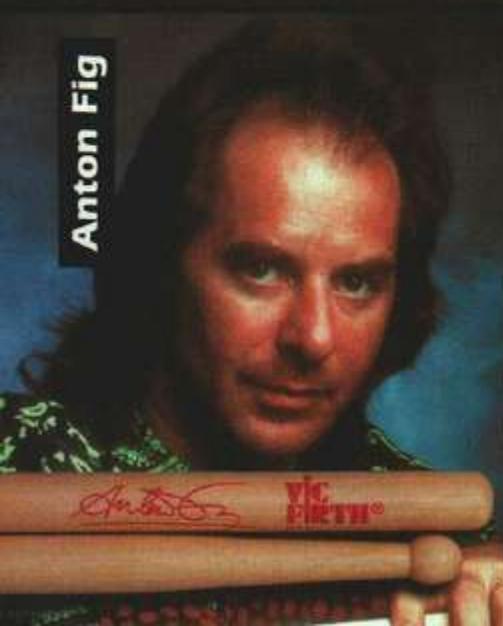


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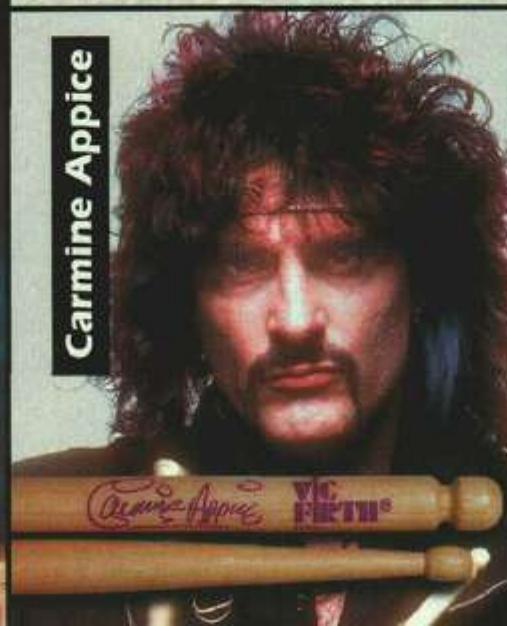


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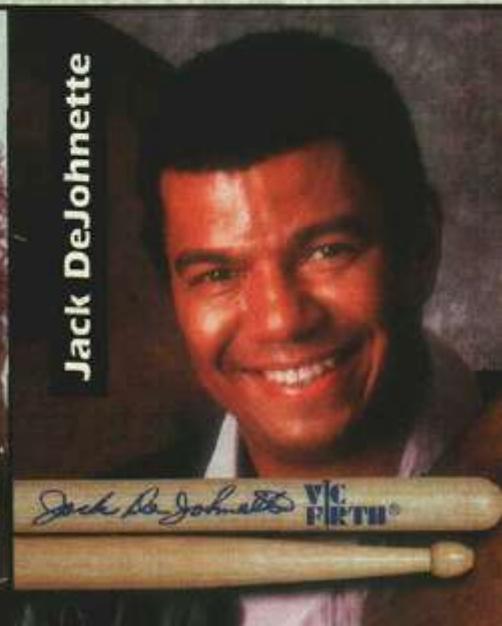
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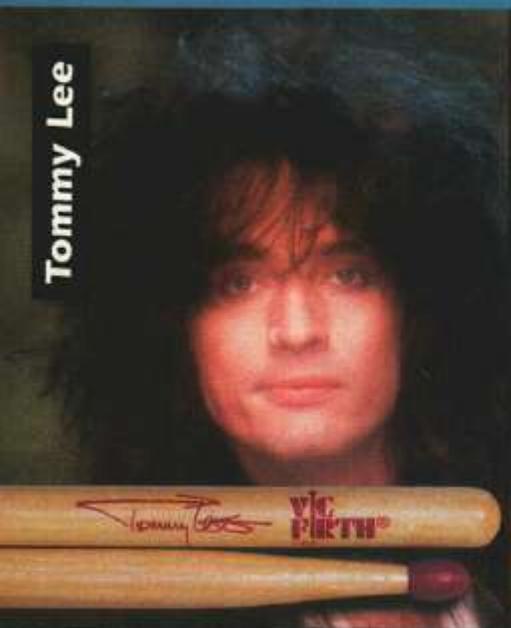


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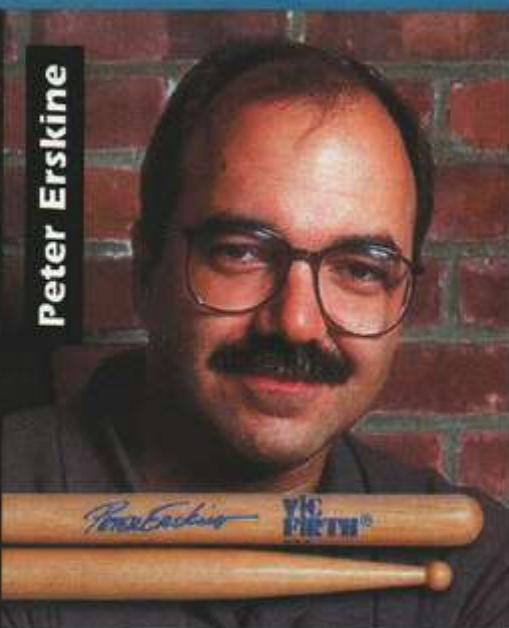


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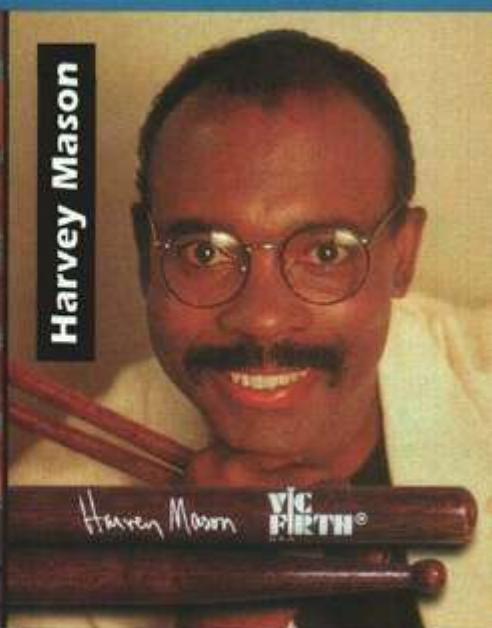
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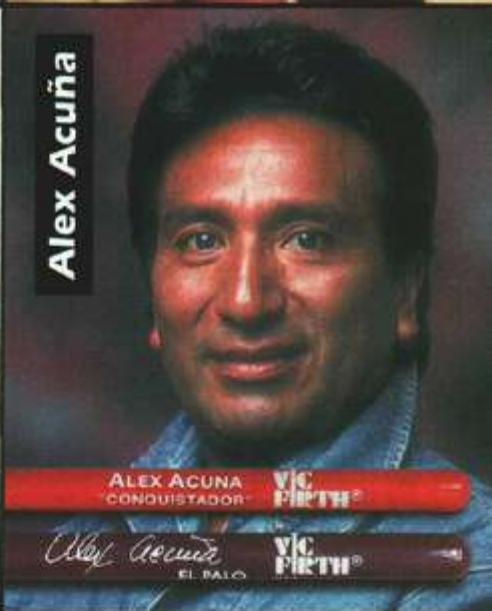


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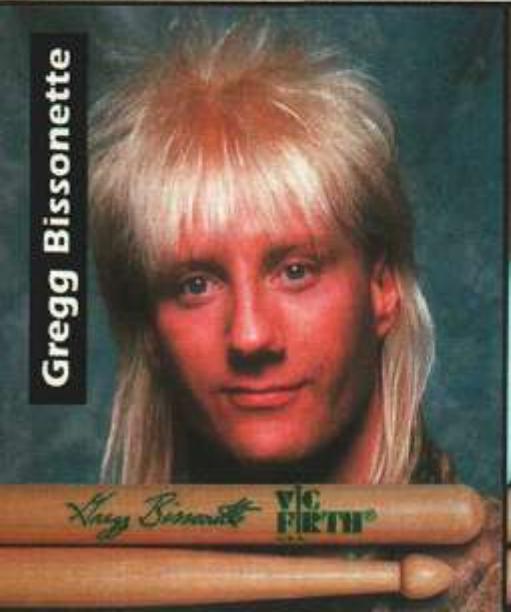
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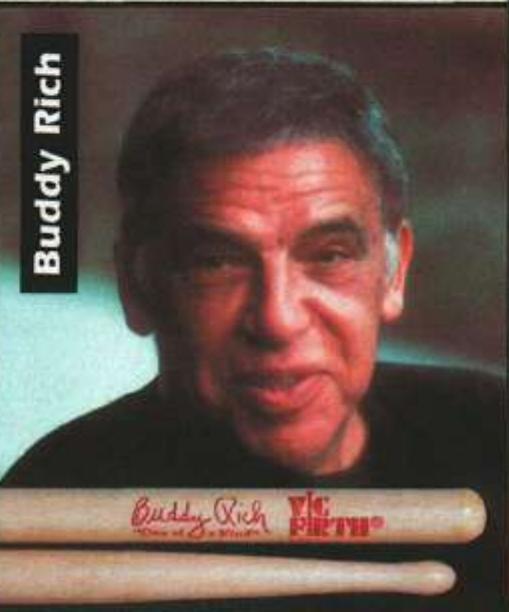
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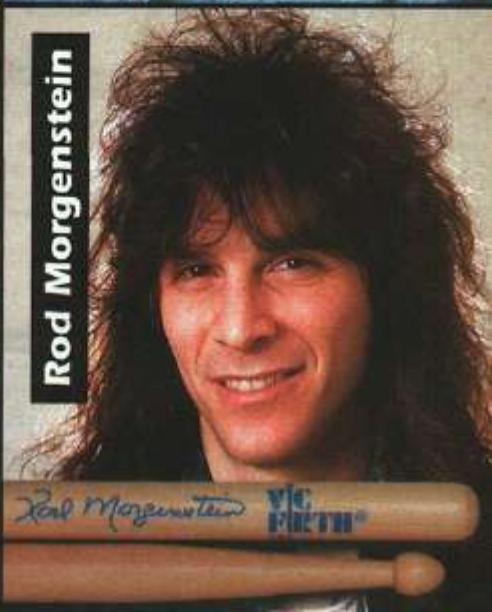
Gregg Bissonette



Buddy Rich



Rod Morgenstein



## IT'S QUESTIONABLE



### **Q** What's Up With Pearl Snare Drums?

I'm interested in purchasing a Pearl brass piccolo snare drum. Pearl offers model number *B-914P*, a *Free Floating Series* drum. A drum salesman said he could sell me the new model *B-9114D*, with some specification changes and improvements. Are you aware of any changes to the *B-914P* or of a new *B-9114D* model piccolo snare drum?

Tom Tabern  
Warner Robins GA

**A** Pearl's Ken Austin offers this clarification: "There have been some recent changes to the entire *Free Floating Series* line—including the piccolo. We have introduced a more compact and concise throw-off and butt that protrude less from the chassis. Also, the *Free Floating Series* lug posts are no longer hex-shaped. They have been re-designed in a cylindrical fashion.

"These changes are both functional and cosmetic. The new lug posts offer easier tensioning of the heads, and the new butt and throw-off afford the player no interference in set-up."

### **Q** Why Do Bands Use Two Drummers?

I have a question that has been hounding me for quite some time. Why do bands like .38 Special and the Doobie Brothers incorporate two drummers and two drumkits? I enjoy their music, but I could never figure out what two different drummers could do for a band.

Joseph Giacalone  
Gloucester MA

**A** There are several reasons why a band might choose to use two drummers. In some cases, the drummers play very different parts, giving the music a more complex percussion sound than one drummer could achieve. In other cases, the two-drummer lineup simply adds power and intensity to the music. From a visual standpoint, having two

drummers sets the band apart from most others, and creates a special image for the group. And finally, in some cases bands are formed from the members of two or more previous bands—including their drummers. Rather than eliminate one or the other, both drummers are included in the new group.

### **Q** What's The History Of The Leedy Black Elite Snare?

I recently purchased an original Leedy *Black Beauty* snare drum. The rims are clearly stamped with the inscription "Leedy Indianapolis Ind." After taking the drum completely apart and inspecting it thoroughly, I noticed the letter E stamped into the shell, where it would be covered by one of the lug mounts. I know this isn't much to go on, but could you tell me anything about the history of this drum? Is it to my advantage to polish it, or should I leave it just like it is? Do you have any suggestions for finding parts for this drum—specifically the strainer? Finally, what is a drum like this worth?

Kit Autry  
Lakewood CO

**A** We tapped vintage drum expert Ned Ingberman's research abilities for this one. His reply is: "The correct name for the drum you've described as a '*Leedy Black Beauty*' is the *Leedy Black Elite*. During its production history (1921 to mid-1930s), the drum was first called the *Multi-Model Classic*, then the *Elite Professional*, and finally the *Black Elite*.

"The rim-enscribed Leedy logo was used on their snare drums only until 1930, when the company was sold to Conn and moved from Indianapolis to Elkhart, Indiana. This dates your drum between 1921 and 1929. To further pinpoint its age, more details or a photo would be needed. The letter 'E' stamped into the shell is most likely a symbol used on the assembly line to earmark a drum for fancy finishing as an *Elite* model. (I inspected another model Leedy drum of the same period, identical to the *Elite* except for the finish,

and found no such marking.)

"Leedy produced two *Elite* models. One was the *Black Elite*, the other was the *White Elite*, which featured a glossy white enamel finish. For a time, both drums were offered in a creative variety of plating, engraving, and enamel combinations.

"Finding original replacement strainers for vintage drums is no easy task. If your strainer is broken, try to have it repaired by a qualified drum or machine shop. If it is missing completely, a machine shop could possibly fabricate a look-alike replacement. You might also consider placing a want ad in the classified section of *Modern Drummer* or in the *Not So Modern Drummer* vintage-drum newsletter published by John Aldridge (4989 Eisenhower Dr. #B, Boulder, CO 80303).

"Owning a vintage drum with a disabled or missing strainer is a predicament that tempts some drummers to drill extra holes in the shell of their drum to accommodate a new or substitute strainer. A far better approach is to utilize an adaptor plate between the snare strainer and the drumshell. This method of installation allows a strainer and drum with unmatched bolt-hole patterns to be connected together without drilling any extra holes in the drumshell. This way, the integrity and beauty of the shell are preserved. For more information on how to fabricate and install an adaptor plate, contact *Not So Modern Drummer*.

"To clean your *Black Elite*, I recommend gentle rubbing with a mild, non-abrasive cleaner such as *Windex*. Avoid strong chemical cleaners and polishing compounds, as they could actually remove the finish!

"Concerning the drum's value: The regal beauty of its engraved black nickel finish shell and brass-plated ('Nobby Gold') hardware, plus the exceptional tone of its seamless 20-gauge rolled-brass shell, make this drum a highly desirable collectible worth \$1,300 to \$1,800—depending on its overall integrity and condition."



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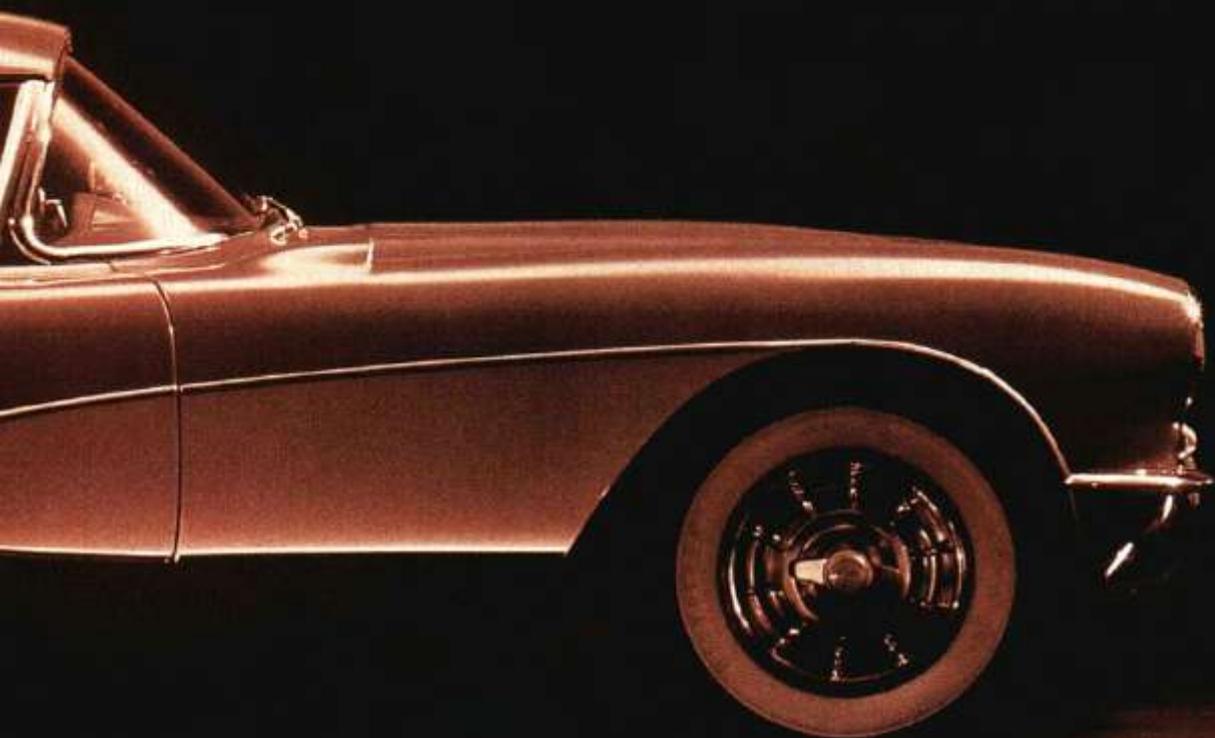
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1966 Corvette. Photo courtesy of General Motors.

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Beatles. The list goes on and on.

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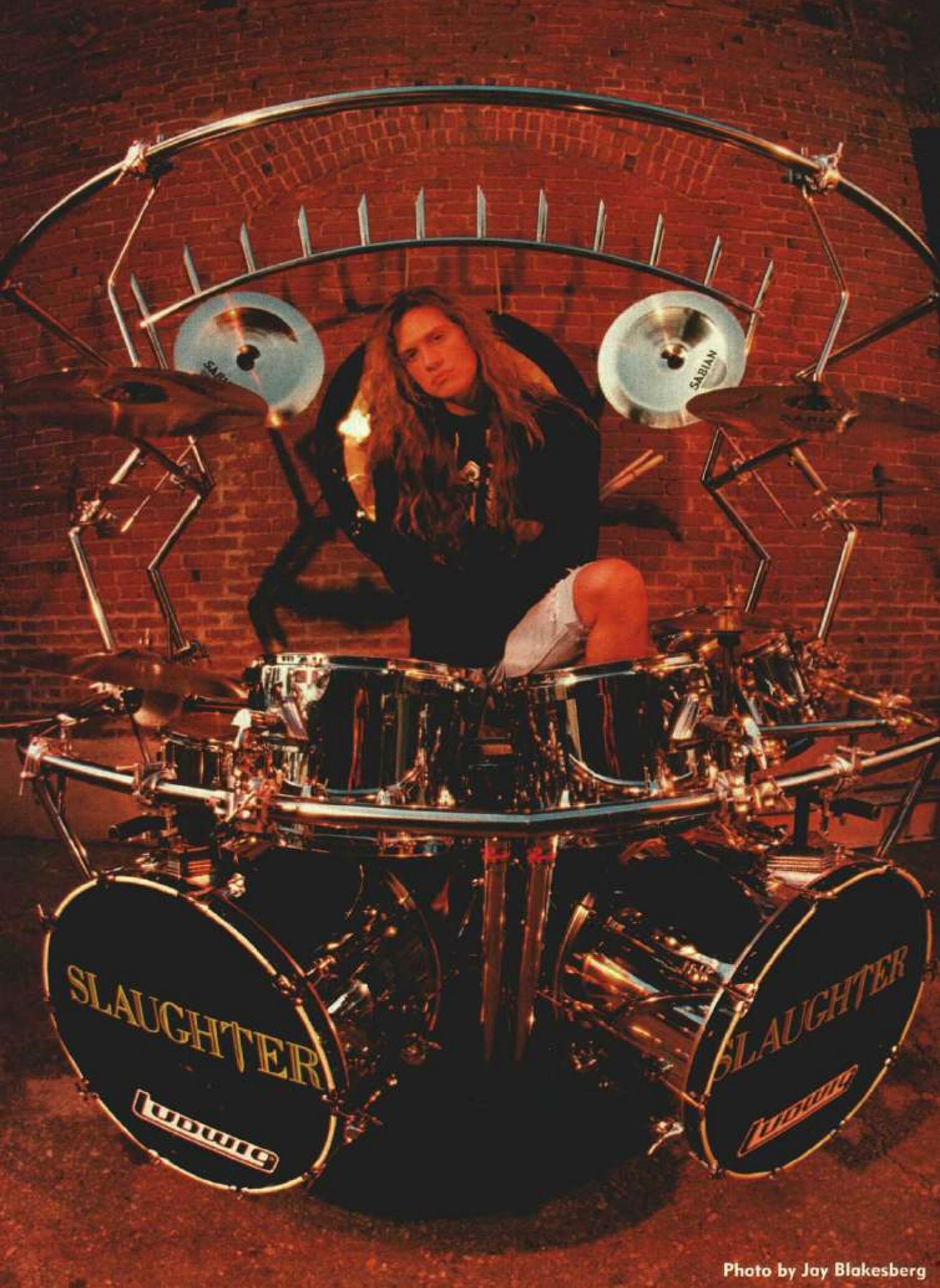


Photo by Jay Blakesberg

Slaughter's

# Blas Elias

During the making of Slaughter's second and latest album, *The Wild Life*, Blas Elias kept thinking back to the recording of their debut release, *Stick It To Ya*. Here they were, back at Pasha studio, leaky ceiling and all, recording the drums the way they had the first time, and Blas couldn't help but recall wondering what would happen with that record. Would they sell 100,000 records and be over? Where were their lives headed?

Who would have predicted that 24-year old Blas Elias (née Blas Elias Gomez), born in Kennedy, Texas, would end up in an L.A. band whose first album would sell over two million copies? Little did he or anyone else know that his life was headed toward stardom, that he'd soon own his own house and have a couple of nice cars, and that anyone at Star Licks video productions would make an instructional video with him. As Slaughter made their second album, Blas couldn't help but reflect how his life certainly had changed.

By Robyn Flans

**RF:** According to your publicity bio, you "just appeared out of nowhere from the Lone Star state."

**BE:** As far as the Hollywood clique of musicians, I appeared somewhat out of nowhere. I never intended to come to LA. to become successful as a drummer. After growing up wanting to be a musician and playing in bands, I decided I would try something else. I got interested in school and tried college for a while—not for music—and then I started playing on the road with a band in Texas and in the Midwest. I met up with a guitar player who played in a band with Bobby Rock, who was the drummer for the Vinnie Vincent Invasion at the time. Bobby had gone to the same high school as me. This guitarist had sent an audition tape to [Slaughter bassist and singer/guitarist] Dana Strum and Mark Slaughter when their band, the Vinnie Vincent Invasion, was breaking up. I didn't really bother with it at first because I was involved with another band. He didn't end up getting the audition for it, but at the time my band broke up, I decided, what the hell, I'd send in a tape. I didn't hear anything back for a while, but they finally called me and said to send in a videotape because they couldn't afford to fly me out there. But I figured that if I sent a video tape, I wouldn't really have a shot at it—without talking, meeting the guys, and getting a personal rap going, like the LA. drummers could. So I bor-

rowed some money and got a one-way ticket. Ever since then, I really haven't been back. I think the guys in the band were really impressed that I came. I don't think they took me seriously at first, being from Texas, but they were frustrated with everyone else they had seen.

**RF:** What was the audition like?

**BE:** I was playing a kit that was really uncomfortable, but I thought, "I'm not going to have a mental block," and I just went for it as best I could. They would sing out rhythms to me; it was like "stump the drummer" time. They would have me imitate what they were singing, and they made it as hard as they could just to throw me off. They wanted to know who they could push the furthest. That's how Dana works in the studio, too.

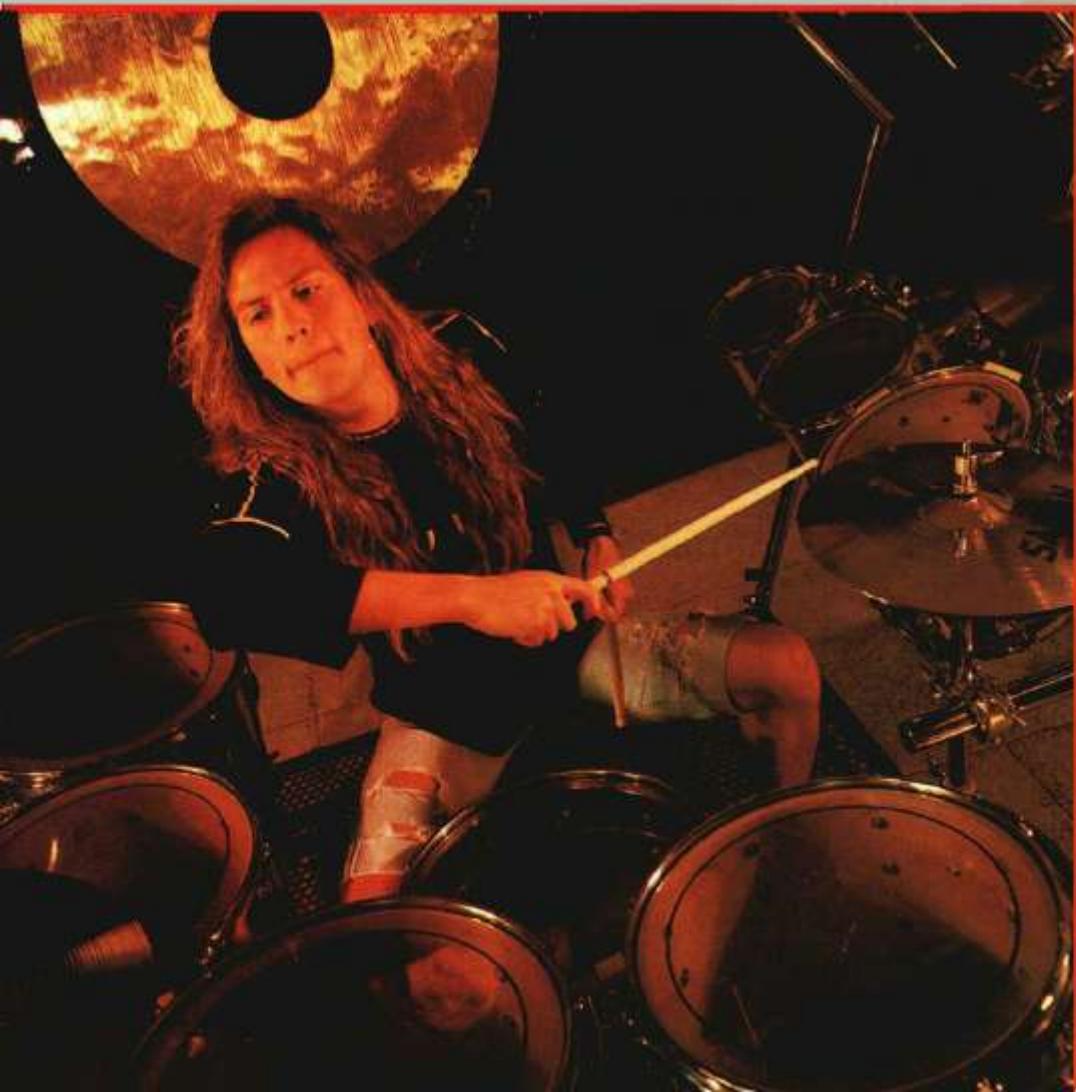
**RF:** How so?

**BE:** On a particular part in the song, he'll want to hear a lot of different types of rhythms. A lot of times they may sound kind of off-the-wall, but he wants to hear a lot of different combinations. It may sound stupid when we talk about it, but it may end up fitting the song really well. I feel it's a drummer's job—no matter what—to be able to play pretty much anything without having to sit there for hours and waste everybody's time. When I was learning drums, I made sure to learn a multitude of rhythms so thoroughly that that would never happen. I was really good at that part of the audition.

**RF:** How did you learn that?

**BE:** When I got to high school and was in the drum section, we would get the music, but throw it away and make up our own parts. I didn't have a teacher to learn by, and actually, I feel fortunate that I decided to learn by myself. I think I learned a lot more thoroughly that way than I would have with a teacher. I just bought a lot of books and got some music paper and started writing down different rhythms. I would write down every possible combination I could think of, and I'd spend hours every day learning to play every possible accent pattern with 8th notes, 16th notes, and triplets. Then I'd do every possible sticking pattern. I'd do the same thing with my hands and feet, and then I'd do different independence exercises. I'd also do polyrhythmic figures so that I

Photo by Jay Blakesberg



could play any rhythm at any time. There are some songs on our records—especially the new one—that have complex rhythms, even percussion parts, that are a little out of the ordinary. If you look at it from the outside, it seems really simple, but it's not.

I just always loved rhythm, and no matter what, I've always been banging on something—ever since I was a kid. I learned the solo to "Moby Dick" in my high school algebra class. I failed my final exam because I was playing drums on my desk after I finished my test. The teacher didn't grade it; she just came up to me and said, "That was a very good solo," and she wrote a big "F" on my paper, and I failed the whole course. But I lived rhythm, no matter where I was. You don't have to have a drumset, as long as you have your feet and your hands.

**RF:** How was the first album recorded?

**BE:** We all lived in this little apartment, and we worked with a drum machine and a four-track on the living room floor or the dining room table. Then we went into the Record Plant to do the demos, which was a great place for me to work my first time in a real studio.

**RF:** What did it feel like that first time?

**BE:** It's scarier *before* you go in somewhere. We were so busy before we went in that we didn't have time to feel that kind of anticipation. It was just another progression of what we were doing. It was really natural. Dana is really good in the studio. He knows how to bring out the best in people.

**RF:** How does he bring out the best in you?

**BE:** That's hard to answer. He makes you feel very at ease, he jokes with you. Everything is very lighthearted. It's not like, "Okay, you're on the grill." There was never any pressure. We did the demos in the studio as preparation for the record so that we wouldn't have that problem. Being self-produced, there wasn't anyone there intimidating us.

**RF:** How was it cut?

**BE:** Everybody at first doing scratch tracks together. Everything was pieced together after the fact.

**RF:** What were some of the more challenging, hard-to-get, or fun tracks on the first album for you?

**BE:** I can't name one favorite, because they're all so different. "Flight Of The Angels" has always been one of



my favorites as a song, not necessarily drumming-wise. It's very laid back and influenced by John Bonham, in one of his slower feels. It's really simple, but the parts were very well thought out. Doing that record, I learned a lot about playing for the song and laying back where the vocal should be. I can't say there's anything on the first album that was technically really great, but it was pretty much playing for the songs and playing for radio and the concert arena. We had definite goals in mind of what we wanted to achieve, and you can't overplay when you're trying to get airplay and MTV. But we're glad that on the new record we decided to take more liberties.

**RF:** Aside from playing for the song, what was your role on the first album?

**BE:** I had to keep the parts interesting enough to make a difference and to make the song interesting and different from anything else you'd hear. My drum hooks didn't have to be hard to play—just good, well-written parts that a listener is going to remember. When you see someone listening to your song on their car stereo and they're air-drumming along, you know you've accomplished something. There are a lot of classic songs that have these great drum parts that aren't the hardest things in the world to play. Most arrogant drummers would say, "That's just full-of-shit, AC/DC 2/4," but they're still good parts. I think it's harder to come up with parts like that than to just throw in a lot of notes and bullshit your way through something.

**RF:** Any other songs on the first album that you want to talk about?

**BE:** Like I said, there are a lot of different feels. There is a song that was never on the radio called "She Wants More" that had a really good shuffle feel to it. It was something you wouldn't expect a rock band to play. The

intro to "So Mad About You" is done in 6/8 and has a lot of polyrhythms, which nobody would expect, but it really doesn't come across because you can barely hear it. I do a lot of things with the hi-hat that add a different feel to it, like on the song "Up All Night." Even though it's a very straight-forward 2/4 groove, I interpreted that a different way than maybe a lot of people would have. I put in some 16th notes combined with the 8th-note feel on the hi-hat, and that gave it a bit more of an upbeat, dance-type feel to it. It gives me a little bit of my own style, I hope. I do that in quite a few of our songs. I expanded the whole style of my hi-hat work on the new record. I get a lot of that from my drum corps days.

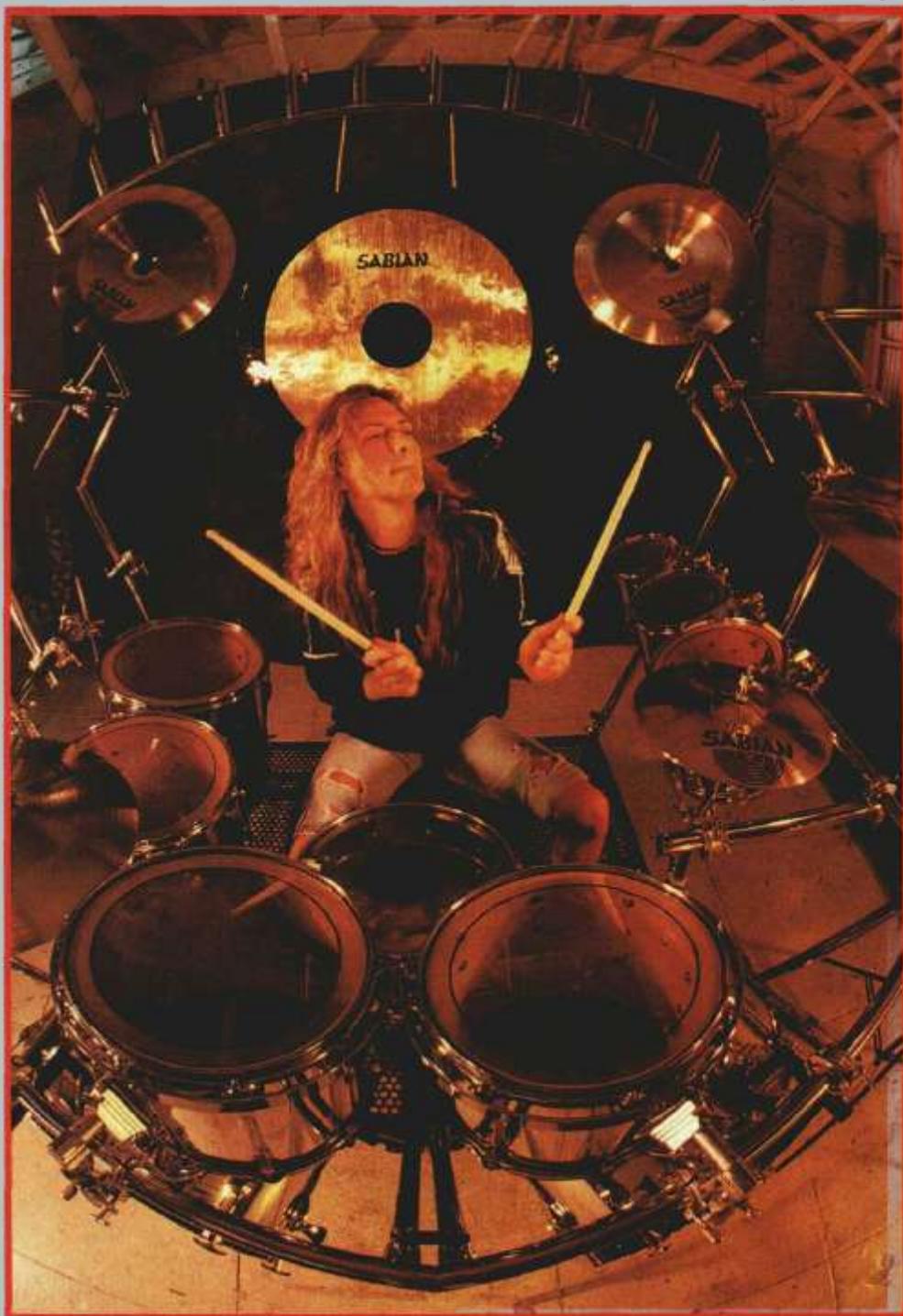
**RF:** Dana and Mark gave you free rein to do what you wanted?

**BE:** It's free rein for ideas, but then everybody has their input on what's cool and what's not. It's not like any one person says, "Absolutely not, you can't even try that." In fact, Dana will ask me to take more liberties and come up with more ideas, because the more ideas you throw out, the more chances there are of hitting something good. That's a really good attitude to have, because we'll come up with some cool stuff by accident sometimes.

Also on the first album was the song "Eye To Eye," which is really cool as far as the parts go. It's in 6/8 in the intro and changes into 4/4. I think it was probably two different songs that got fused together. A lot of times we'll do that. There's also some really good hi-hat work in there that combines some 8th notes with triplet 16ths, kind of with a shuffle feel in the bass drum. It all works in a weird way with the cowbell rhythm, which is more of a straight-forward, almost Latin type of thing.

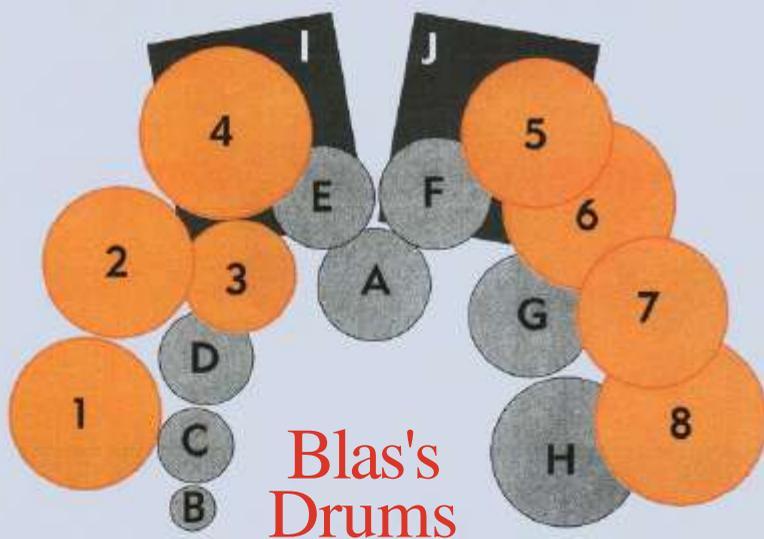
**RF:** What did you learn from making the first album?

**BE:** As far as the instruments are concerned, I found that smaller drums tuned lower and played not as hard



work best. We went through all these snare drums to find which had the biggest sound, and the one that ended up sounding the biggest was a piccolo that was tuned lower and hit softer! I even used a 20" kick drum. The microphone doesn't hear the volume, it just hears the sound. The bigger the drum, the harder you have to hit it to get the same sound out of it. With cymbals it's the same thing. I do play hard, especially live, but in the studio I had to lighten up a little.

One of the biggest things I learned was to relax. Even faster and harder parts came a lot easier when I was



**Drumset:** Ludwig Super Classic in chrome finish

- A. 6 1/2 x 14 Black Beauty snare drum
- B. 9 x 8 tom
- C. 9 x 10 tom
- D. 11 x 12 tom
- E. 12 x 13 tom
- F. 13 x 14 tom
- G. 16 x 16 tom
- H. 16 x 18 tom
- I. 24 x 22 bass drum
- J. 24 x 22 bass drum

**Sticks:** Pro\*Mark 2S Hickory model (unfinished), with wood tip

**Electronics:** E-Mu Pro-cussion, LP Spike triggers, and a drumKAT.

**Cymbals:** Sabian

- 1. 19" China
- 2. 17" AA medium-thin crash
- 3. 14" AA Fusion hi-hats
- 4. 19" AA medium-thin crash
- 5. 19" AA medium-thin crash
- 6. 22" AA Rock ride
- 7. 18" AA medium-thin crash
- 8. 20" China

**Hardware:** RIMS mounts, Falicon custom rack, DW Turbo 5000 bass drum pedals with wood beaters

**Heads:** Remo C.S. Black Dot on snare, Pinstripes on tops of toms with clear Ambassadors on bottoms, Pinstripes on bass drum batters with Remo Muffl's, Ambassadors on front of bass drum

people who play different instruments is really valuable. What a bass player thinks a rhythm should be is a lot different than what a drummer might think. But if you listen to his ideas, you might realize something. I'm learning that it's really valuable to listen to other people's points of view.

**RF:** Do you record with both bass drums?

**BE:** No, with one bass drum. I don't think you'd ever want to record with two bass drums. Things you use live oftentimes never make it into the studio, like the sizes of drums and setups. I could never play the kit I play live in the studio.

**RF:** What's different?

**BE:** Live, I play for the audience. My philosophy is that kids are paying money to come see a show. If they wanted to listen to something perfect without seeing a show, they'd put their CD in their players and listen at home. They're coming out to see something—the aggression, the raw energy, the feeling, the vibe—the whole picture. If you go see a jazz band, of course you're going to listen a lot more carefully. But a rock concert is not just the music, it's the feeling, it's the other people in the audience banging their heads, waving their arms in the air, and the guys on stage jumping up and down. I always felt I had to put on the best show I could.

My favorite concerts I saw were with the drummers who were very visual. One of the first concerts I saw was KISS, and I remember seeing this huge drumset and the drummer playing in a somewhat flashy manner for that time. Peter Criss was one

relaxed. I remember the last night we were at Pasha, I had two more songs to do, and I had been up for twenty hours recording, with no breaks. We thought we had to be finished in the morning, and it was already 6:00 in the morning—we had been recording since 7:00 the morning before. We were working on the end of "Reach For The Sky." It's not that hard of a part, but I was trying so hard to get the end down that for two hours, I couldn't get it. When I was doing the demos and there was no pressure, I breezed through it in one take. That performance blew away anything that I tried when we were doing the record. We decided we'd just quit and beg for more time. We came back in, and I nailed it right away.

Another thing I learned is that drummers have these ideas of how things should be "drumming-wise." Sometimes somebody sings out a rhythm to you and you think, "It's stupid, I don't want to try that," but if you play it and listen back to it *with the song*, it might sound really good. Listening to drumming ideas from other

of my biggest early influences. Bun E. Carlos, also, because he wasn't just an average drummer. The drummers who have set themselves apart in one way or another have been the ones who have been remembered. Keith Moon is one of my favorites because he did everything he could to be noticed.

I create these really weird-looking monstrosities of a drumset, and I set everything up so I can be seen. I have my toms relatively low and flat, the cymbals really high, and the drums all spread far apart so there's a good view. I use a cage to give a very open effect, both for my perspective of the audience and theirs of me.

In the studio, everything is a lot closer, the drum sizes are smaller. I would never use a 24" kick in the studio. Cymbals in the studio are also smaller and thinner. I would never touch the hi-hats I use on records live because I'm playing ten times harder live than in the studio.

**RF:** You went to Florida to design your drumset, right?

**BE:** I started using a rack when I was playing clubs because

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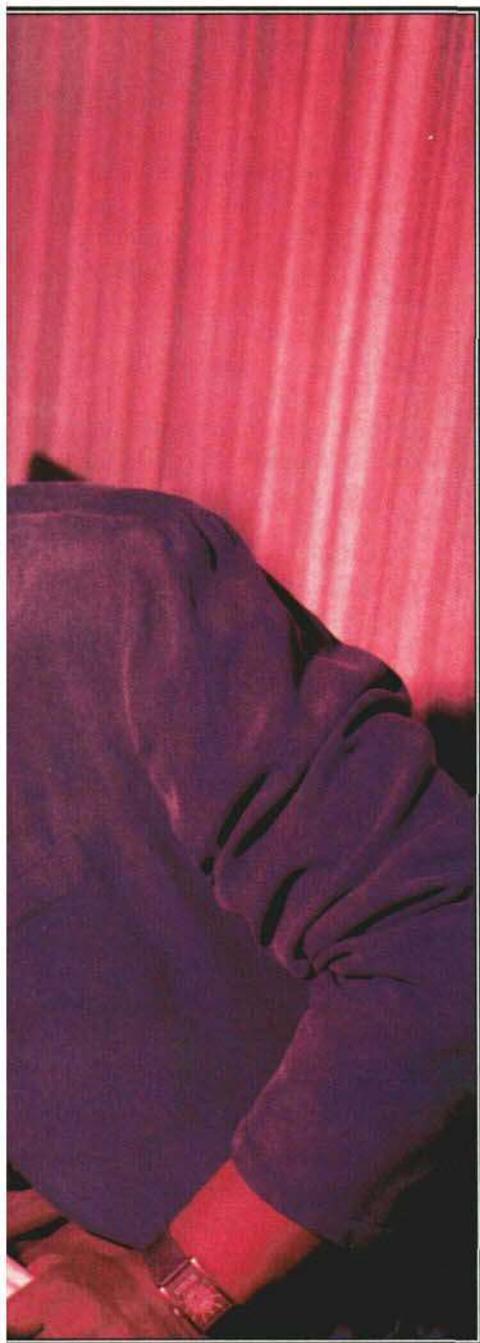
# VICTOR LEWIS



By Ken Micallef

Photos By Ebet Roberts

# JAZZ CHAMELEON



When organizing the "New York Jazz Drummers Round Table" article for MD last year, each drummer, to a man, insisted that Victor Lewis be on the panel. He made the round table, albeit out of a sickbed. That in itself helps to explain why so many musicians hold Victor in high regard: He always puts the music first. Whether playing with Horizon, the hard bop/R&B quintet he co-leads with alto saxophonist Bobby Watson, or tending to his busy schedule of live gigs and recording work, Lewis's witty, empathetic drumming consistently says the right thing at the right time.

An easygoing manner—backed with a serious attitude towards the music—has allowed him to breakthrough the stereotyping common among New York musicians. Victor Lewis works with everybody, from David Sanborn's funk to the serene sounds of the late Stan Getz, from Carlo Bley's avant-garde to the mainstream bop of Kenny Barron and John Stubblefield. Not to mention records with Woody Shaw, Mingus Epitaph, Julius Hemphill, Dexter Gordon, Benny Green, Geoff Keezer, Oliver Lake, Clark Terry, Ralph Moore, John Hicks...well...you get the idea.

On a recent evening at the Blue Note with vibist Bobby Hutcherson, Victor's drumming was a study in musicality. Seemingly in a trance, he manipulated the music through dynamics, articulate technique, and rhythmic conversation. Intensity and attentiveness were matched by driving, concise patterns and Victor's trademark shimmering cymbal work.

The month leading up to our chat at a noisy Greenwich Village restaurant, Victor's manager kept me informed of his changing whereabouts: a week in Moscow with Mingus Epitaph, the premiere of the Smithsonian Repertory Orchestra in New York, a concert in Frankfurt with the New York Jazz Quintet, a record with Gary Bartz, a short tour with Horizon, and finally the Blue Note gig with Hutcherson.

And as if all this weren't enough, the guy's recognized as a fine composer, having had his work recorded by many different artists. It's obvious that Victor has something *special*.

**KM:** How does attitude figure into one's career?

**VL:** It may have something to do with being successful. When people work with you, being somebody who they *know* will try to do their best is important. It's definitely important not to do anything that will screw up the vibe. That doesn't help.

**KM:** Does your being a recognized composer as well as a drummer cause the leaders to treat you differently?

**VL:** It's not something that affects them directly, but it may be why I'm chosen for gigs. One of the reasons I play the way I do is that I'm a composer.

**KM:** You play drums more as a musician than as a drummer. You play parts, as opposed to being flashy.

**VL:** One of the reasons I like to play different styles of music is that you learn different disciplines. When you're playing different bags, there are things that are more important to stress in the drum part, at the expense of other things. I always felt that if I could gain

that kind of experience, it would help my overall focus within jazz. I learned a lot from my funk record dates—David Sanborn, Phyllis Hyman, Earl Klugh. From playing that style, you end up having to look at everything as highly sectionalized. You think in terms of sections and setting up those sections.

**KM:** It seems you approach straight-ahead drumming the same way.

**VL:** Yes, I think the same way during improvisation. Improvisation is really spontaneous composing—and spontaneous arranging.

**KM:** How does that relate to the term "Post Motown Bop," the way you and Bobby Watson describe the music of Horizon?

**VL:** With Motown stuff, they would find the death groove for a particular bass line, for that feeling—the right lick. With jazz and improvisation, from each sec-

tion of the tune I not only try to do what's written in the head, but I also try to think of what each section represents, compiling a whole set of sub-sections within each section. Also, I play a lot to the sounds of chords. Different chords have different moods. If it's an ethereal kind of section, maybe I won't play any time at all. I'll just do swells on the cymbals, and then come down to be ready for the next section.

**KM:** You've said you don't think in

vous about recommending someone?

**VL:** You want it to be right. And if it's not right...it ain't right! [laughs] If that happens it reflects poorly on me.

**KM:** Does your mind go into overdrive when you have a limited amount of time to rehearse a band?

**VL:** Then, and when I get cats who think a certain way. A unifying concept or vision can help to get you there faster. If you have a concept, all the things that aren't on the paper—which are the

important things—start to come faster. I love to use dynamics. When you have cats that think Compositionally and dynamically, then you can go through the hills and valleys. You can shift gears and go through different moods.

**KM:** Sometimes in Manhattan, you may hear "name" players on a gig, and it's just not happening, they're not together. Was the gig at The Blue Note a particularly good gig for you?

**VL:** It was a challenge, since I shared the house drumset with the drummer from Arturo Sandoval's band. You couldn't depend on the setup from set to set.

I'll never forget the time I was playing in Italy and Ed Blackwell was playing with Don Cherry. He didn't have his drums or cymbals.

The cymbal company was supposed to have furnished them, but there was some problem. So I said, "Ed Blackwell needs some cymbals? Here man, take mine!" I took them out and spread them around, but he only looked at them. He said, "I like the way that one looks, and that one...." I was stunned. So he took the cymbals, set them up, and on the downbeat it was Ed Blackwell to *the max!* When your musicality and your personality are that strong, they can transcend the equipment.

**KM:** What are the hardest situations for you to overcome as a sideman?

**VL:** Bad acoustics. If you can't hear things right it's hard to go for the nuances. You end up just trying to hear each other. And out-of-tune pianos affect the whole band's equilibrium. It makes all the tonalities blurred.

**KM:** You mentioned in the round table

## Victor's Spoils

<b>Drumset:</b> Premier	<b>Cymbals:</b> Zildjian
A. 7 1/2 x 14 wood-shell snare	1. 14" hi-hats
B. 8 x 12 tom	2. 18" A sizzle
C. 14 x 14 floor tom	3. 22" A ride
D. 14 x 18 bass drum	4. 20" K ride

terms of chops but in more abstract terms.

**VL:** I'm more into music than I'm into playing drums. Drums are my chosen instrument, but I compose on piano. I took classical piano lessons for three years as a kid. It's a great vehicle to work on. Some say it's the mother of all instruments.

**KM:** When I saw you at The Blue Note with Bobby Hutcherson, it was very tight, after only a month of gigging. How do you, as a player, contribute to that?

**VL:** Bobby asked me to recommend a piano player. I told him to call Ed Simon, since Ed works with me in Horizon. If you're familiar with the way someone plays, it does help to make the group sound tight. Bobby hired Ed, which caused me to be nervous. "What if Bobby doesn't like him?" I thought.

**KM:** So even on your level you get ner-

article that you think the engineers in the '60s had the jazz drum sound down. What are some of the records that you feel had a good sound?

**VL:** I like the sound they got with Tony Williams on the Miles Davis records of the '60s. Great cymbal sounds. Great piano sound too. Back then they were still listening mostly with their ears, as opposed to relying on the meters all the time. The state of the art now—digital—is a very good, but artless, *cold-blooded* means of picking up the music. It has no mercy. Digital clips the sound. Cymbals may sound cleaner, but the full spectrum—the attack, warmth, and decay of the cymbal—gets clipped off.

**KM:** I'd like to change subjects and talk about how popular traditional jazz has become. You play a lot of those types of gigs, but you're also very forward thinking. Care to elaborate?

**VL:** You know what? This is the truth: About three or four years ago I stopped listening to music. For years I was a listening son of a gun. You study all the masters, but at some point you want to try and get past that. What prompted it for me was seeing an interview with Miles Davis where he said, "Back when Bird and Diz were doing their thing, there were only two or three records you could cop to check their stuff out. The rest was all being created."

I used to listen to music for an hour before a gig. That would impress a certain drummer's identity on me. Now, by *not* listening, I show up at the gig with just *me*. I used to find myself thinking,

"What would so and so do in this case?" Now I find my own ideas.

**KM:** So you think this entire retro/trad movement is unhealthy for the growth of the music?

seriously listening to the music. We were part of the evolution of jazz in the '60s and '70s. The cats born in the '70s are just now checking all that out. The Princes of the time—Tony Williams,

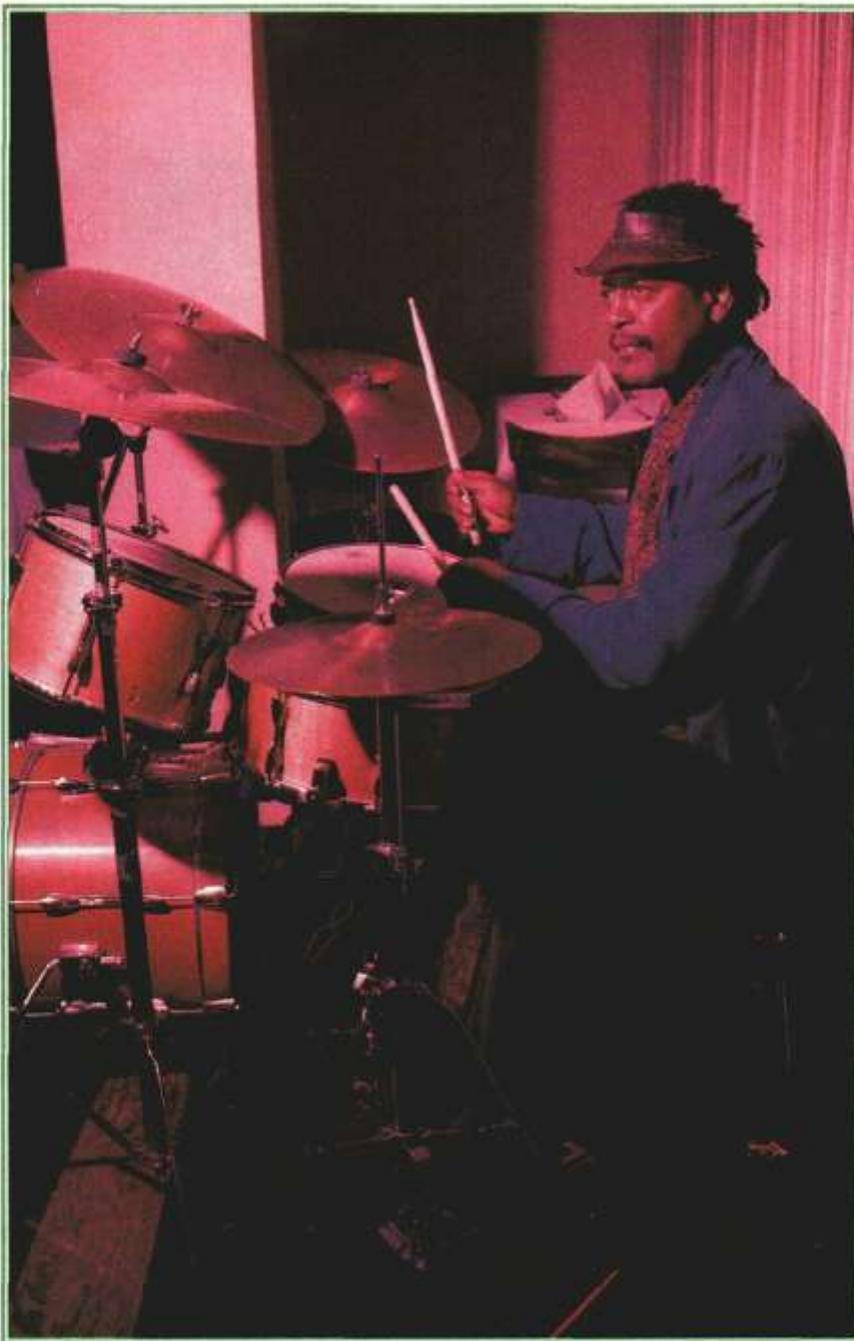
Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter—they went into a fusion thing and the industry followed. But people were still buying *Kind Of Blue*. When the industry was ready to invest into straight-ahead again, you had all these young cats who were into it, since they never lived it. In a way, it's nostalgia. Those early cats—Diz, Miles, Bird—they were rebels! These young guys now are not rebels...they're right wing. They're conservative. The early guys were into taking chances. Cats now are wearing suits and playing the music very traditionally. These cats are not putting their own rebellion into it, they're playing nostalgia. It's a memorial, like *Beatlemania*.

**KM:** The group you co-lead with Bobby Watson, Horizon, seeks to incorporate the past but not ignore the future.

**VL:** What we're trying to do is to incorporate the rhythms of the past—the

Motown melodies and structures—and put a jazz thing under it. What we're doing is similar to what the old cats used to do by adapting Broadway songs to jazz.

**KM:** You've become known as a composer in your own right. How does it happen that on many of your recording dates the



**VL:** Dig this: There are three things from the '60s that I hope never resurface: platform shoes, the disco beat, and bell bottoms. To the kids, platform shoes are fresh, and they're making a comeback. To me, they're played out! It's like that with the music. I was born in 1950—by the time I was 11 or 12, I was

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# Bobby Ch



by Lauren Vogel  
photos by Lissa Wales

# ristian "Mr. Percussion"

"The Dean of Percussion," "the World's Greatest Percussionist," "a living legend in his own time," "Mr. Percussion." These are some of the ways that people around the world know Bobby Christian. Anyone who was lucky enough to have seen him perform saw his passion for music. His unexpected passing on December 31, 1991, at the age of 80, saddened not only Bobby's family, but percussionists and musicians everywhere who had been touched by his special musical talents and engaging personality.

In what turned out to be his final interview, at PASIC '91 in Anaheim, California last November, Bobby laughed and reminisced about his life and career. Since then, many others have contributed their thoughts on this special man. This story will try to capture Bobby's own way of communicating—both verbally and musically.



How did Bobby Christian become interested in percussion? "One morning when I was about six years old," remembered Mr. Christian, "I woke up at about 5:30 and got two pieces of peanuts and I started playing fast beats. [*Bobby demonstrated an intricate pattern of accented 16th notes by drumming with his hands on his lap.*] My brother woke up and asked me what I was doing, so I did that again. When he saw me drumming like that, he went out that day and bought me a set of drums."

This was also the same brother who was responsible for his younger sibling's first lesson in show business. "My real name is Sylvester," laughed Christian, "but my brother Bob decided that it was not a good stage name. So he called me Bobby!" And so did everyone else.

Christian began his drum studies with a teacher named George Petrone, who was himself a student of Roy Knapp. "George told my mother that he couldn't teach me anything else, and asked if it was alright to send me to his teacher. So, lo and behold, I went to study with Roy Knapp, which I continued to do for about twenty years.

## Memories

All you have to do is mention the name Bobby Christian to anyone who has ever known him, and their eyes light up. Each musician who knows him well has a favorite story to tell about an impossible chart that Bobby sightread perfectly, a lesson they took with him, a conversation they had with him at a NAMM or PAS show, how much they learned from playing in his band, how big his family is.... "As one of my friends once said, 'It must be great to have a family so big that you never play without an audience.'" These words were written by Bobby's eldest grandchild, John Nasshan, Jr., and read at his funeral on January 4, 1992. Here are but a few comments from those who knew "Mr. Percussion."

**John Nasshan, Jr.** (professional drummer/percussionist in Las Vegas, Nevada)

"If I were to be asked why I play drums and percussion, my answer would be simple: my grandfather, Bobby Christian. I grew up surrounded by percussion. When the time came for me to have real teachers, Gramps told me who to study with: Roy Knapp, Bob Tilles, Al Payson, Kathleen Kastner, Joe Morello, Henry Adler—nothing but the best. I attribute having good musical instincts to being part of Bobby Christian's life. Gramps always said that the fact that we play percussion and drums means nothing; it's whether or not we elevate the craft and all the art that goes with it to a better level. That's what really matters.

"Gramps and I shared a special kind of love that bonded us together, centering around music and percussion. I remember sitting right in front of Gramps when he conducted his Sunday big band rehearsals at home, and wanting to be the drummer more than anything in the world. I remember going on numerous recording sessions with him and watching him do whatever they asked him to do on the first take! He never missed. I remember how proud I was to finally play drums with his big band; one of my dreams had come true. My youth is so full of experiences like these that I honestly feel special to be Bobby Christian's grandson."

**William F. Ludwig, Jr.** (retired president of the Ludwig Drum Company)

"It was the fourth of January, 1992. At the wake, we passed out music—a recessionally written by Bobby himself. Under the direction of Dick Schory, twenty drummers (including myself and my son, William F. Ludwig, III) performed the retreat from the cathedral on muffled drums in Bobby Christian's honor.

"Following the service, two others and I performed Harvey Firestone's drum trio *Drummer's Farewell* at the graveside. I was proud to have participated in this last earthly salute."

**Herb Brochstein** (president of Pro-Mark Corporation)

"I always kidded Bobby that an army band

should consist of 28 musicians and two drummers! But Bobby Christian was an all-around musician and true percussionist.

"In 1947, I had heard Bobby's name and knew his reputation. I had much to learn, so I went to work for Bobby, helping him run the studio and school of percussion. Bobby gave me so many opportunities. He was a giving person, not a taking person.

"Bobby's talents were overwhelming. He would always do the work of two and a half to three players! He was kind of a shy person, except when it came to music. Did you know he was writing music on December 24th for a record date he was planning in April? Amazing."

**Jim Catalano** (marketing manager for Ludwig)

"You don't appreciate what someone like Bobby Christian has to teach you until you really need it. For me, it came to fruition during some of my Pops concerts. Knowing all about claves was more important than the intricacies of an Elliot Carter timpani solo. He 'saw beyond the trees' to teach you things that you could use in a real musical career. No one was more professional to deal with than Bobby Christian."

**Michael Balter** (Chicago drummer/percussionist and president of Mike Balter Mallets)

"One evening, Bobby gave me a call and asked if I would play a rehearsal the next

"When I was 14," Bobby continued, "I graduated from grade school and I went into high school. But I started to make money so fast that I went to the school of hard knocks instead, if you know what I mean! A bandleader by the name of Louie Panico heard me play and invited me to join his band. So I played with him for five years at the Canton Tea Gardens in Chicago.

"After that I joined Sophie Tucker's band for about two years. Then I decided that was enough road work, so I went back to Chicago and jobbed around a little bit. But by now it was 1932 and I had gotten married, so I needed to get a steady job someplace."

Bobby continued, "I got a call from Eddie Varzo, a gypsy fiddle player, who asked me to join his band. I said, 'What do I want to join a gypsy band for?' I kept refusing, he kept calling...kept refusing...kept calling. Finally, I took the job, and it was a very nice job.

"I was playing at the Bismarck Hotel in downtown Chicago when I joined him, and Paul Whiteman was playing at the Palace Theatre. Every night he was play-

ing the Theatre, Paul came to the Hotel for supper. The day after he heard me play, Paul sent me a telegram asking me to join his band. Did I want to join Paul Whiteman? Absolutely!

"I joined Paul Whiteman's band in 1938, and he said to me, 'Kid, all I can give you is 250 bucks a week.' Man, that was a lot of money then! Besides that, I

charged him 150 bucks for every arrangement I was doing. I ended up making 450 to 500 bucks a week—a big salary."

Shortly after Bobby Christian joined the Paul Whiteman Band, they spent almost four months playing the

Casa Mariana Theatre in Fort Worth, Texas, followed by another five months on the road. Then they returned for a week at the Drake Hotel in Chicago, where Bobby was reunited with his family after a nine-month absence. Vernyle, one of his young daughters, asked Bobby's wife, Josephine, "Mommy, who's that man?"

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*A scholarship fund in the name of Bobby Christian has been established. Checks and charitable donations are welcomed. For information about the scholarship(s), please contact The Bobby Christian Memorial Scholarship Fund, P.O. Box 2098, Oak Park, IL 60303, or call (708) 848-3250.*

## of Bobby

morning for him, since he had a double recording session. The rehearsal was for the Chicago Emmy Show, which was to be on local TV. Bobby instructed me to mark the parts clearly so he could just walk in and play the telecast. This was not an unusual request, because Bobby had done it numerous times before.

"I was there for the 10:00 A.M. rehearsal and introduced myself to the conductor. Bobby said that he would show up around 2:00 P.M.—plenty of time before the 8:00 P.M. telecast. The parts were passed out and the theme for the show appeared to be written for five timpani. I only had two drums, 29" and 26" Ludwig *Universal* models. I questioned the conductor about our being three drums short. I was told that we were not, because the part was written for Bobby Christian!

"It wasn't until 5:30 P.M. when Bobby came running in. I explained the run-down and talked over the show with him. Marty Rubenstein, the conductor, said, 'Bob, we have a problem.' Bobby said, 'What happened? Didn't the kid play the parts?' Marty said, 'That's just it. He *did* play the parts and played them perfectly. The acts want him to play the show.'

"Bobby became outraged, and I didn't know what to do. The shouting match began between the conductor and Bobby. Then Bobby stormed out of the hall, stopped at the doorway, turned around, and said with a huge smile on his face, 'Hey Marty, I hope you know

that only a student of Bobby Christian's would be able to play this show!'

"The next day I called Bobby and tried to explain that it was not my idea to play the show. I didn't want him to think that I was taking away his gig. Bobby said to me, 'Michael, you gave me the greatest compliment a student can ever give a teacher. You have done me proud.' So I said, 'Hey, Bobby, now will you tell me how you played the bass drum on beat four?' His reply: 'Hell, no!'

"This funny side of Bobby Christian is not one that many people knew. Having had the good fortune of knowing him, I am proud of the fact that I was able to call him a friend. Bobby, we all will miss you."

**Joe Calato** (founder and president of J.D. Calato Manufacturing Co., Inc.)

"When I think of Bobby Christian, I remember a man of great warmth, energy, and talent. This, of course, was reflected in his playing. I remember Bobby running from one side of the stage to the other to play percussion parts in Dick Schory's Percussion Pops Orchestra. He was the perfect musician and showman for the job.

"But most of all I remember Bobby as a great family man. His family was the most important thing in his life. It's a very close family, and every Sunday they would all gather—children and grandchildren—at Bobby and Jo's home for dinner. They're really going

to miss him. We're all going to miss Bobby."

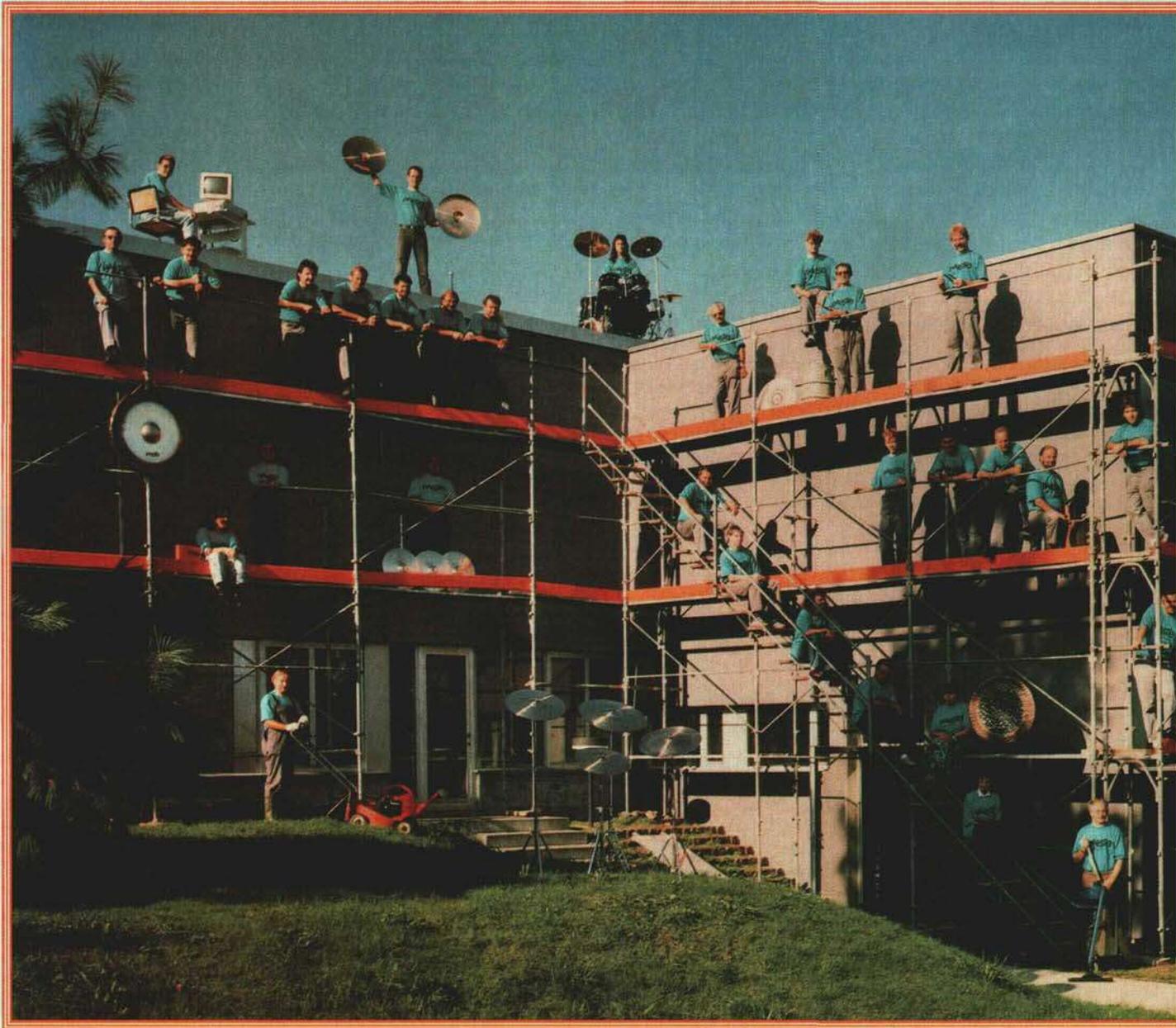
**Maurie Lishon** (former proprietor of Frank's Drum Shop)

"Bobby Christian, a living legend in his own time, has now taken his rightful place in the Hall of Eternal Legends. I had a wonderful brotherly relationship with him for almost half a century, and I have seen him perform percussion gymnastics beyond description.

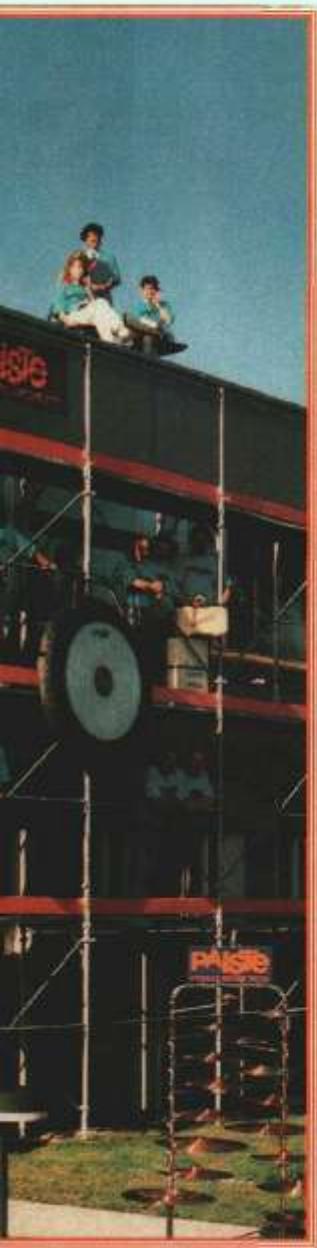
"For a couple of years, Bob and I were on the CBS staff at the same time. There are many funny stories of happenings, but there is one that always comes up, still, after thirty years. It was about the time Bobby had a solo finger cymbal cue. In those days, the individual had to go up to the front mic'. In this studio, the control booth was about eight feet above the stage. Bobby had plenty of time, so he gracefully approached the mic and proceeded to do an 'Oscar-winning' pose—eyes riveted on the booth. When the cue came, Bobby made one grandiose sweep with the finger cymbals—and missed!

"They also talk about the time he was doing a multiple date and was running from one studio to another with no time. He had an immediate vibrate cue, and as he charged in, there was a cover on the instrument. So he played the part—cover and all—and no clinkers! That was Bobby Christian."

# Inside Paiste



By Rick Van Horn



Ah, Switzerland—land of alpine lakes, majestic peaks, infallible watches, and delectable chocolate. You can add one more item to that list: Paiste cymbals. The combination of high technology and hand crafting that has made other Swiss products famous is eminently present in the Paiste operation.

The Paiste family is originally from Estonia. This Baltic state declared its independence from Russia in 1918, and the resulting political chaos—along with World War II—caused the family to move from one place to another in Europe over the next two decades. Operations were shifted to Germany in 1945, and the company still maintains that German factory for the manufacture of gongs and several lines of cymbals. But in 1957 the family relocated to the tiny Swiss village of Nottwil, a picturesque farming community about a half-hour's drive outside Lucerne. Along with its manufacturing function, the Nottwil facility is Paiste's "corporate headquarters." I put that phrase in quotes because—although it is modern in every sense of the word—with its emphasis on craftsmanship and meticulous detail, the Paiste operation just doesn't seem very...well...*corporate*.

A visit to the Paiste plant in Nottwil means a visit with Robert Paiste, who is the guiding force behind the company's cymbal development, and his brother Toomas, who directs sales and marketing efforts. Robert opens our discussion by describing Paiste's process for...

## Developing A Sound

"At Paiste," begins Robert, "we consider that our business is making sounds. The heart of a cymbal is a sound. Sound is vibration, so the metal has to be worked in such a way that it produces a vibration that develops into a sound—which requires a lot of practice and understanding. Out of one piece of metal, we could make endless variations of sounds. So our main task is to find out—from listening to music and talking with drummers—what sound is needed. What purpose should the cymbal have? What kind of sound should it produce to fit the total sound of the music—and give the drummer the right feeling to play on, so it's functional for him or her.

"Over the years, music has been changing. New trends are coming up, so new sounds are needed to go with the music. On top of this, drummers themselves have new and different ideas about how they would like a cymbal to sound and function. We have to find all of these things out. To do that, we spend a lot of time talking with creative drummers all over the world.

"Let's suppose that an idea comes up for a totally different sound than has ever been available. Drummers talk about it, and then they tell us about it. They try to describe the sound—which is not easy. Every drummer might use different words for the same sounds. But drummers have a kind of understanding that goes beyond words, and somehow the

message starts to come over.

"Sometimes communication can be helped through existing cymbal sounds, which may be similar to what is wanted. A drummer might say, 'It's almost like this, but higher'...or 'more dense'...or 'livelier'...or 'drier....' So then we start to get an understanding of the sound that is desired.

"Now, through our experience at working with metal, we generally have a pretty good idea of how a new cymbal should be made to get this certain kind of sound. So we start with a first prototype. From that point, we take many steps—always correcting—until we come to the point where we listen to the cymbal and say, 'This is the sound it should be.' Then we go back to the drummers and ask, 'Is this what you thought of?' Sometimes we are right, and sometimes the drummers say, 'Yes, but....' We correct it again until we reach the point where we have a final prototype for the sound.

"By then, we know all the different working steps that went into the manufacture of this one cymbal. At that point it's handed over to production, and they start to make cymbals in exactly the same manner as the prototype was made. This is the process we use to find and develop a sound. Sometimes it's a long process, but it's the one that we feel works the best."

In order to gain a true appreciation for Paiste's developmental skills, it's important to realize that the mathematical permutations of the variables of cymbal design are staggering. If you wish to produce a cymbal of an arbitrary size—and vary only six out of ten possible parameters (bell size, bow shape, cymbal thickness, hammering pattern, lathing, etc.)—there are some *sixty million* potential varieties of that cymbal that could be created.

"Just consider trying to develop a



This overhead view illustrates how cymbals are hand-guided by the operator on the hammering machine.



Following machine hammering, every cymbal gets "fine-tuned" by hand.



Each cymbal is frequently checked during the hammering process to ensure the proper profile.



A lathe operator carefully shaves minute amounts of metal off a cymbal until the proper thickness is achieved.



Toomas Paiste (left) heads the company's marketing efforts; brother Robert directs cymbal development.

heretofore-nonexistent sound," suggests Robert, "using just imagination and random chance. Where would you start? *You* could never do it that way. That is why developing a cymbal takes a lot of know-how and tradition, as well as intuition. One has to have a goal first, and then know what it takes to try to get there."

### The Paiste "Signature" Series

In 1989 Paiste realized a major goal with the introduction of what has become known as the "Signature" series (officially known as the *Paiste* series).

The line featured a totally new cymbal alloy. Why did the company develop this new base material? Why not stay with the alloys that had been fine for all of their many lines up to that point?

According to Robert, "We did it to find new dimensions. Each alloy has a certain sound potential, and we wanted to expand on our potentials. The oldest known cymbal alloy is bronze, which is 80% copper and 20% tin—referred to in the industry as B20. It started in the Far East, and was used for gongs and cymbals for thousands of years. We got the

feeling that since—from those times up to now—all the different companies that made cymbals made them out of this same alloy, any conceivable possibility of sound was already done; it would only be possible to repeat.

"We came to this understanding a long time ago," Robert continues. "So in the late '60s we found a different alloy. It was 8% tin—and is referred to as B8. We made our 2002 line out of it then; later we made the 3000 line from it as well. Eventually, after twenty years, we felt that

continued on page 102

# The Sounds Of Paiste

Paiste's cymbal lines are extensive, and have undergone a number of changes in recent years. As a result, some drummers may be a bit uncertain as to what each particular Paiste model is designed to do. We asked the company to give us a breakdown of the various lines currently available, along with brief descriptions of the cymbals in each one. They also provided information on what each cymbal line is made of, and the time each was created (since the musical trends of a given period have a great deal of influence on cymbal sound development).

	DESCRIPTION		DECADE	APPLICATION
PAISTE LINE ("Signature Series")	76 different models for situations ranging from delicate to powerful, including 13 different rides offering sounds from dark to bright to mellow. Applicable to both live and studio settings.	Paiste Sound Alloy	1990s	Top Professional
SOUND FORMULA	Also made from Sound Alloy, this line emphasizes bright shimmer, and features a range from bright to warm. Both Sound Formula lines apply to different musical styles.	Paiste Sound Alloy	1990s	Professional
SOUND FORMULA REFLECTOR	With the same process ("Reflector Technology") as in 3000 and 2000 Reflectors, these cymbals have the sound range of the regular Sound Formula, but, due to the finish, have more clarity and brilliance.	Paiste	1990s	Professional
"CLASSIC" 2002	Designed to better match and blend with the amplified music of the 70s and to be more bright and cutting.	SnBz8 Bronze	1970s	Professional
"CLASSIC " Formula 602	Reflects the music of its time, with little emphasis on amplification and more on acoustic music. Sounds possess fewer overtones, and are more controllable, dry, and full. From delicate to powerful.	SnBz20 Bronze	1960s	Professional
3000	With similar qualities to the 2002, the 3000s have a wider frequency range and more power and cutting brightness.	SnBz8 Bronze	1980s	Professional
3000 RUDE	An unlathed cymbal with a unique finish designed to produce a raw, aggressive quality.	SnBz8 Bronze	1980s	Professional
3000 REFLECTOR	A "mirror-like" finish giving the cymbal a unique visual effect and a more shiny, shimmering quality to the 3000 sound.	SnBz8 Bronze	1980s	Professional
ALPHA	Reminiscent of the 2002 or 3000, but with current musical qualities.	SnBz8 Bronze	1990s	Semi-Pro to Professional
2000	Almost a cross between the 3000 and 2002, but warmer than the 3000.	SnBz8 Bronze	1980s	Semi-Pro to Professional
2000 Colorsound	Offered in black, red, and turquoise, Colorsounds tend to have less sustain and are a bit dryer than standard 2000s.	SnBz8 Bronze	1980s	Semi-Pro to Professional
2000 Sound Reflections	The "mirror-like" finish gives this cymbal a shiny, shimmering quality. Designed to have a good range from highs to lows; warmer than standard 2000s.	SnBz8 Bronze	1980s	Semi-Pro to Professional

Finally, there is an entry-level cymbal line that is not the same in every country. At this point, in the U.S., these are Brass-Tones cymbals.

1 Patented original formula.

2 The first use of this alloy for the manufacturing of cymbals.

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**STEPHEN PERKINS**  
(JANE'S ADDICTION)



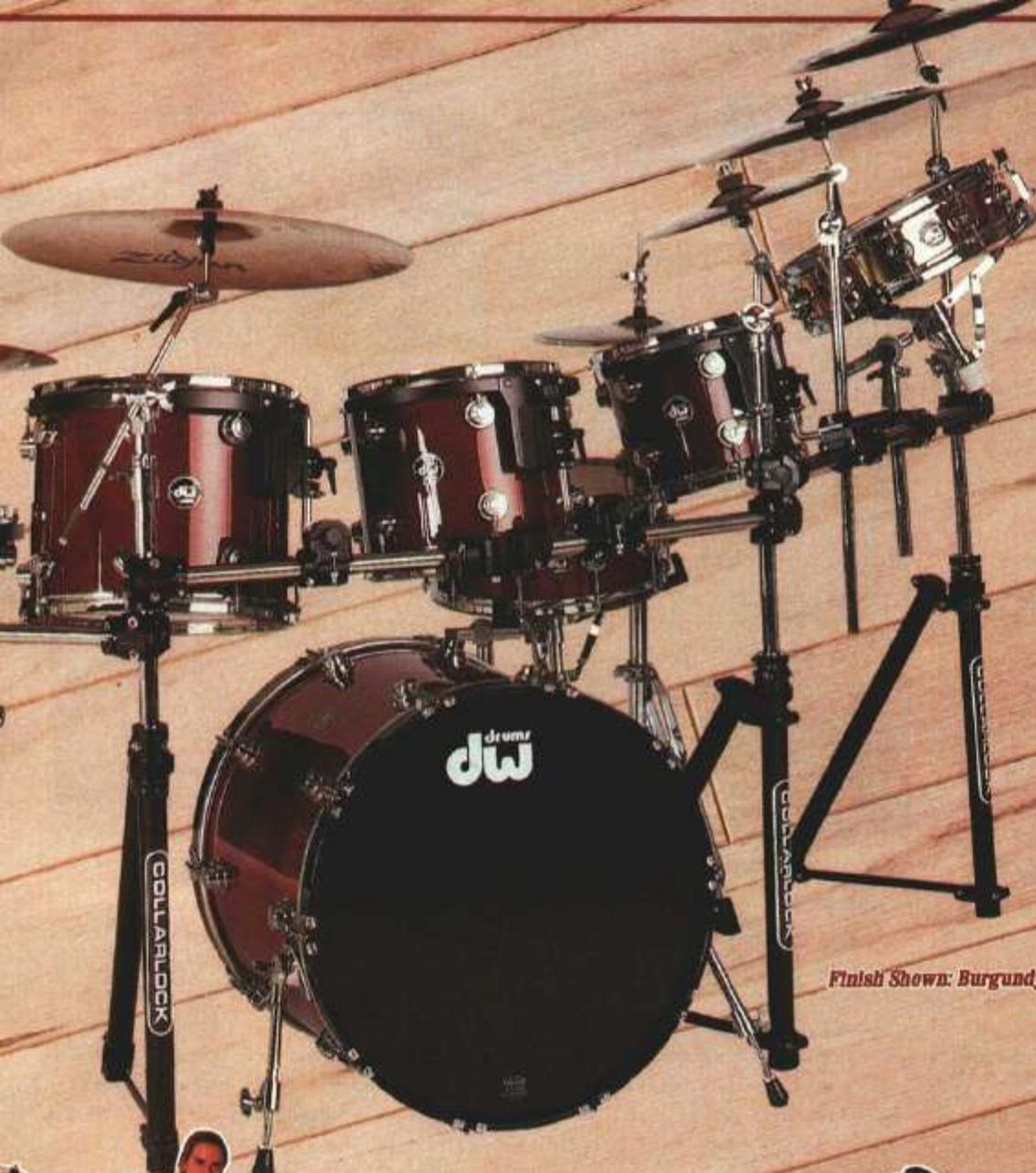
DRUM WORKSHOP DRUMS			
SNARE DRUM	BASS DRUM	TOM-TOMS	
6.5 x 16 Brass	18 x 20	8 x 8 (x2)	12 x 14
		9 x 10	14 x 18
		10 x 12	10, 13 Timbales
SABIAN CYMBALS			
RIDE	HI-HATS	CRASHES	SPECIALTY
22"	14"	16"	10" Splash
		17"	20" China
		18"	18" Germanic
DRUM WORKSHOP PEDALS			
BASS DRUM		HI-HAT	
5500T BD Pedal		5500T HH Stand	

**DRUM WORKSHOP**  
DRUMS • PEDALS • HARDWARE

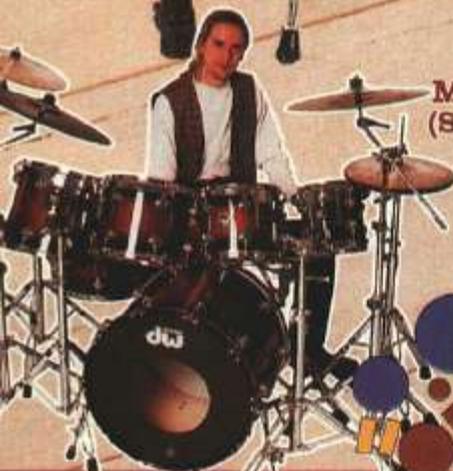
2697 Lavery Court #16, Newbury Park, CA 91320

Finish Shown: Black Oyster FinishPly™

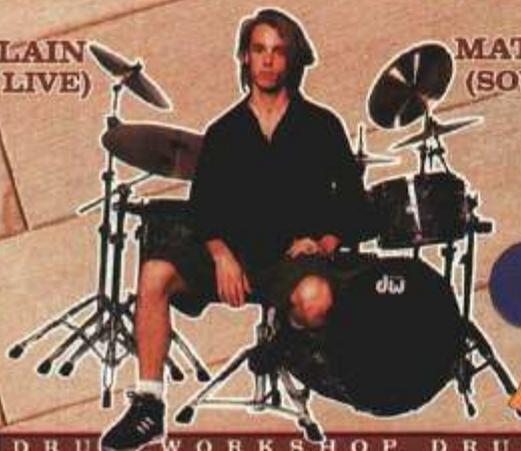
Finish



Finish Shown: Burgundy Transparent Lacquer (C-26)



**MATT CHAMBERLAIN**  
(SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE)



**MATT CAMERON**  
(SOUNDGARDEN)

WORKSHOP DRUMS		
<b>BASS DRUM</b>	<b>TOM-TOMS</b>	
16x22	7x8	13x15
	8x10	
	8x12	
ZILDJIAN CYMBALS		
<b>HI-HATS</b>	<b>CRASHES</b>	<b>SPECIALTY</b>
14"	17"	8" Splash
	18"	16" China
WORKSHOP PEDALS		
<b>BASS DRUM</b>	<b>HI-HAT</b>	
5500T BD Pedal	5500T HH Stand	

Tobacco Sunburst Lacquer

DRUM WORKSHOP DRUMS			
<b>SNARE DRUM</b>	<b>BASS DRUM</b>	<b>TOM-TOMS</b>	
6x14 Wood	18x22	8x12	13x15
		9x13	
ZILDJIAN CYMBALS			
<b>RIDE</b>	<b>HI-HATS</b>	<b>CRASHES</b>	<b>SPECIALTY</b>
22"	14"	16"	16" China
		17"	
DRUM WORKSHOP PEDALS			
<b>BASS DRUM</b>		<b>HI-HAT</b>	
5000T BD Pedal		5500T HH Stand	

Finish Shown: Gray Slate FinishPly™

# Cannon Mega V Drumkit

■ by Rick Mattingly

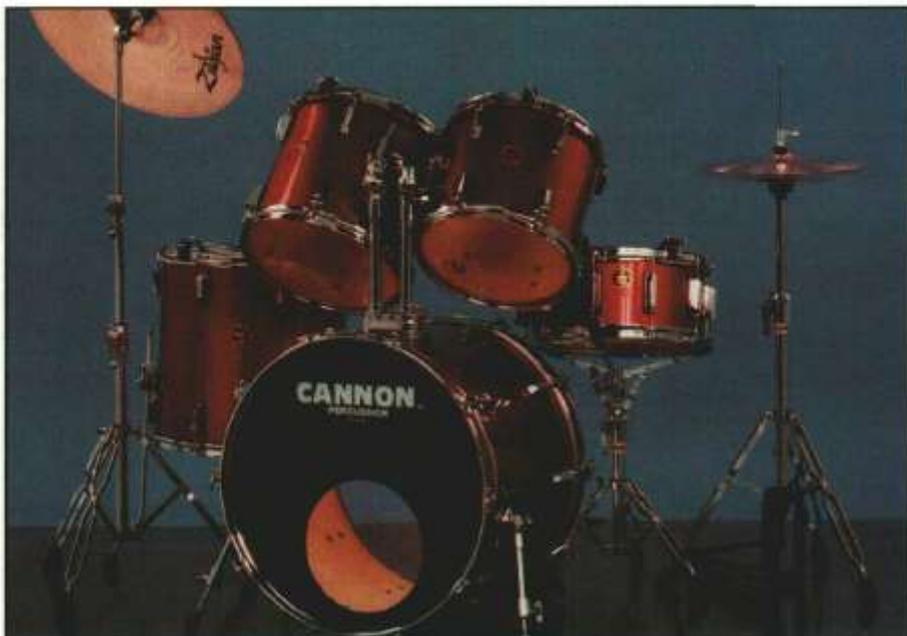
**This new line combines quality and affordability.**

Over the past few years, I've tested several drumkits that were aimed at the budget-conscious or student-level drummer. But you haven't seen the results of any of those tests in *Modern Drummer*. The drums were such absolute junk that there was no point in bringing them to your attention. Even going into those tests with the attitude that one has to expect lower quality with a kit that sells for a lower price, I couldn't bring myself to accept tom mounts and cymbal stands that slipped no matter how much you tightened them, rims that wouldn't fit over standard Remo heads without wrinkling them, tension rods that didn't thread properly into their casings, shell coverings with air pockets, pedals that squeaked and rattled, and so on.

So I was leery when we received a kit from Cannon Percussion, said to be aimed at the drummer on a budget. But as soon as I began removing the drums from their boxes, I could tell that they were better constructed than other low-cost kits I'd seen, and the more I checked out their features and sound, the more impressed I became. In short, I've finally found an economically priced kit that I can recommend.

## The Drums

I received the five-piece *Mega V* outfit, consisting of a 16x22 bass drum, 16x16 floor tom, 11x12 and 12x13 rack toms, and a 6 1/2 x 14 snare. All of the shells, including the snare drum, are 10-ply wood, using a combination of maple and



mahogany. The toms and snare drum are 6mm thick, while the bass drum is 7mm, which is said to enhance lower tones. The bearing edges were all sharp and smooth—a feature you don't find on typical budget drums.

It's normal for inexpensive kits to have fewer lugs per drum; that's one way of keeping costs down. But the Cannon drums do not skimp in this regard. The snare and bass drums each have ten per head, the floor tom has eight, and the rack toms have six. In addition, the lugs are isolated from the shells by rubber gaskets, as are the tom mounts and spurs. Another feature not usually found on budget kits involved the bass drum tension screws: Most of them were the typical T-handle design, but the two at the bottom of each head were drumkey-operated.

Budget drums are often fitted with cheap heads, but again Cannon has opted for better quality. Each drum's batter side was fitted with a Cannon *Dead Head*, which is similar to a Remo *Pinstripe*. These heads have an extremely dry sound that enhances the impact. On the bass drum, it was combined with a black front head with a hole in it. By simply inserting a small pillow, which I positioned against the batter, I was able to get a solid, meaty

thud. The toms had clear, thin-weight Cannon heads on their bottoms, and the overall sound was fairly dry, with just enough sustain and tone to sound full. The drums had no internal mufflers, and didn't need them. They might not project well on a live gig in a large room without being miked, but they would be great for practice at home or in moderate volume settings, and might not sound bad in a studio.

I have to question the use of the *Dead Head* on the snare drum, however. It was just too dry for that particular drum, making it sound overly muted and tubby, and not allowing it to produce a good "crack." The other problem with the snare drum was the strainer. The lever was not especially smooth, and when the adjustment screw was tightened just enough to avoid slapback and rattle from the snares, it prevented the snares from completely dropping away from the lower head when in the "off" position. Still, the drum seemed to be well-constructed, and I was able to get an acceptable sound out of it. With a different batter head and a better strainer, it could be a fine drum.

The kit I received had a white covering that was smooth and showed no defects. Drums are also available in red or black. Each drum has a round logo badge with a

stamped serial number, which can come in handy for insurance purposes.

### Hardware

The *Mega V* kit came equipped with Cannon *800 Series* hardware, which would be considered medium-weight by today's standards. The snare, hi-hat, and cymbal stands feature double-braced legs, nylon bushings at the joints, and drumkey-operated memory locks. Instead of traditional wing nuts, Cannon has levers that quickly release or secure the collars. The levers hold the various tubes in position reasonably well, but one must use the memory locks. Without the locks, a couple of the stands slipped a little bit when I pushed down on them.

With most budget kits, the single worst feature is the bass drum pedal, which is often virtually useless. Not so the Cannon pedal. It has a chain linkage, double springs, a solid, non-slip footboard, and spurs to hold it in place. It's smooth, fast, and quiet, and the action is adjustable. The hi-hat pedal was equally smooth and solid. I would have no problem using either of these pedals professionally.

The *Mega V* kit can also be ordered

with Cannon's *1000 Series* hardware, which I also received for review. This hardware is extremely heavy-duty, and the bass drum and hi-hat pedals both feature more sophisticated adjustment controls. This hardware would not be out of place with a much more expensive set of drums.

As for the hardware on the drums themselves, it is reasonably solid and sturdy. The tom holders feature an omni style ball-and-socket that offers great latitude in positioning. There is a large T-handle screw that locks it in place, but since it is on the same side of the holder as the mounting arm, adjustment can be awkward, depending on how the drum is positioned. But once it is adjusted, you shouldn't have to fool with it again, as the memory clamps will allow you to simply slide the toms into position and lock them in place with a single wing nut on the tom-mount casing.

Actually, maybe I shouldn't have said "simply." Inside the mounts on the toms, which are identical to the mounts for the floor tom legs, the metal collar that the tom arms (or floor tom legs) have to go through can swivel out of position when

loose, and it sometimes takes a bit of jiggling to get them lined up properly. Still, once you do that, the holders work well.

### Price

The Cannon *Mega V* drumkit, as reviewed here, with *800 Series* hardware (bass drum and hi-hat pedals, a snare drum stand, and one straight cymbal stand) lists for \$869. If you want the same kit with *1000 Series* hardware, add \$100. All Cannon drums and hardware have a one-year limited warranty, which will give any manufacturing defects plenty of time to assert themselves.

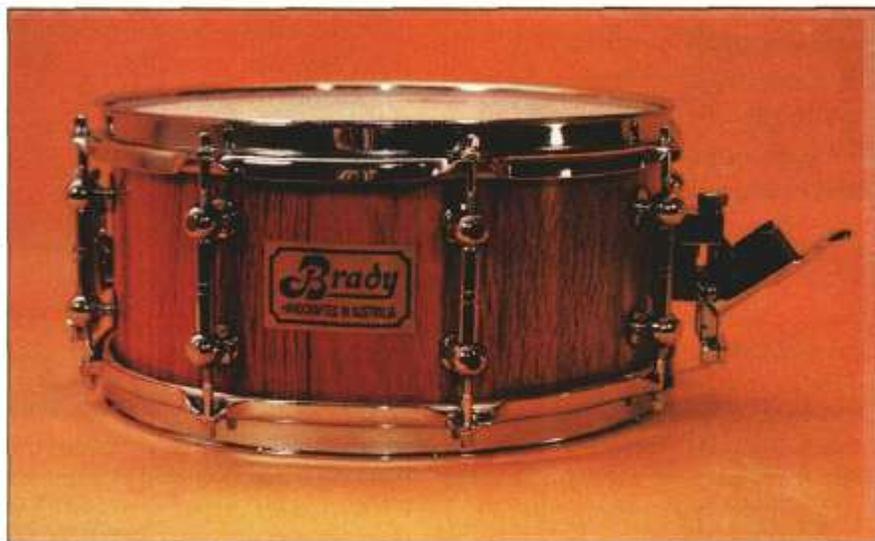
No, these are not the finest drums I've ever seen, and no, the Cannon logo might not carry as much prestige as some of the other names that are out there. But you could easily spend just as much money (or maybe more) and get a whole lot less. The drums sounded good and the construction was solid, with several features that you would only expect on a much more expensive set. With most low-priced kits, I would have trouble even saying that you get what you pay for. But with these drums, you'll get more than the cost would seem to imply.

## Brady 5x12 She-Oak Snare Drum

■ by Rick Van Horn

**This little package has a lot to offer.**

When I reviewed the Brady 7x12 jarrah block drum back in the September '90 issue of *MD*, I was impressed by its combination of projection and tonal range. Along with cutting highs, it had lows that were surprising—considering the 12" diameter. As a result, I stated that it was



versatile enough to be used as a primary snare. When I received the new Brady 5x12 she-oak block snare, I immediately wondered if I was going to develop the

same opinion. The answer is no—this is not a drum for all purposes. But taken on its own merits, what a sweet drum it is!

The 5x12 she-oak drum wouldn't work

for a primary snare because it really favors high frequencies. It just doesn't have the additional lows to make it an all-purpose drum. But it has some significant differences from other high-range drums I've evaluated—most of which were piccolos.

While some piccolos are 13" in diameter, most are 14", which is the same as the diameter of more "standard" snare drums. But their shells are shallow—usually 4" or less. As a result, the pitch is high, the snare sensitivity is extreme, the attack is enhanced, and the sound cuts. But the flip side of that is that most piccolos have a certain "thinness" in their tonality; there isn't much beneath that initial cut.

The 5x12 Brady, on the other hand, gets its high-end projection from the properties of she-oak, an Australian hardwood that is quite a bit harder than jarrah and many times harder than maple. The

thick, reflective, block-construction shell really enhances the high-mid to high-end range. The 12" diameter of the drum also helps to produce a high starting pitch. But the fact that the drum is wood, and that it has a 5" shell depth, gives its sound a little more body than you might expect. It isn't that the sound is lower in pitch; it's just that it's more complete—less thin—than that of a piccolo drum. As such, where you might consider using a piccolo—for funky accents or secondary snare beats combined with a deeper primary snare—this drum would give you the same amount of cut, but a little more support beneath it.

Like all Brady drums, the 5x12 she-oak snare is fitted with low-mass tubular lugs for maximum shell resonance. (And resonant it is; I found that a *Zero Ring* was called for to control the overring.) The snare throwoff is simple and efficient. When the snares are on, sensitivity is

excellent; I used the drum for brushwork and really enjoyed the sound—although the 12" head doesn't give much area to work with. When the snares are off, the hard, reflective shell gave the drum a very clean, warm timbale sound—woody, rather than brassy. This is another feature that would make it excellent as an accent drum.

Brady workmanship and finishing are excellent, and the drum is quite attractive in its natural finish. Its size is a plus for convenient placement on your kit, too. If you appreciate more than one snare voice in a drumset, you should check out the Brady 5x12 she-oak block snare drum. It's hand-made and imported from Australia, so it isn't cheap; it lists for \$837. Brady has just switched its U.S. distributor to Drum Partner USA, 2554 Lincoln Blvd., Suite 1072, Marina Del Rey, CA 90295, (213) 452-4472. You can contact them for information on sales locations.

## LP Jingle Things

**Well, what would you call a review of three different tambourine-like items when one looks absolutely nothing like a tambourine, and the other two only come close?**

### The Cyclops

The *Cyclops* gets its name from its squashed-circle shape (which looks like an eye...get it?), and comes in either hand-held or mountable versions. It's made of a durable synthetic material and has a nicely rounded edge that makes it more comfortable to play by hand and less damaging to drumsticks when played on a kit. (The material is much harder than wood; so don't worry about damaging the *Cyclops*.) The mounted version is equipped with an excellent

clamp that tightens a collar *around* the mounting rod, rather than pressing a bolt *against* it. It proved very secure under all playing circumstances. The sound of the jingles was crisp and clear, and projected well over my band's amps. I really enjoyed using it as an alternative ride-pattern sound source.

For input on the hand-held *Cyclops*, I consulted with Adrienne Ostrander, a very talented and busy show and classical percussionist in the New York area. She informed me that the shape of the *Cyclops* made it nicely balanced and quite comfortable to play. The fact that the grip was on the outside of the circumference gave added leverage, aiding in the performance of certain tricky tambourine parts in some classical material.



Adrienne also felt that the grip was "ergonomically designed, giving the player a more comfortable feel of the instrument." As far as the sound went, she mentioned that the plastic body and high-pitched jingles on the *Cyclops* created a sound that might be a bit *too* bright for some of the classical reper-

toire, but would work well for hand percussionists performing in pop concerts, some Broadway shows, and other stage applications.

Both versions of the *Cyclops* are available in black, red, or white. Each is priced at \$36.95.

• Rick Van Horn and Adrienne Ostrander

### Jingle Sticks

Here's a new twist on the tambourine theme: long, straight shafts holding six pairs of jingles at one end and fitted with sponge-rubber grips at the other. *Jingle Sticks* are intended to be handled as a drumstick would be, either singly or together, and either alone (in the air or against one's leg) or striking some other instrument (drum, cymbal, block, etc.) at the same time. They're made of the same synthetic material as the *Cyclops* is.

For the hand percussionist, Adrienne offers this evaluation: "The use of the *Jingle Sticks* allows one to execute fast passages and rolls more easily because both hands are involved in playing, instead of using one hand just to hold the instrument—as with a conventional tambourine. Rolls can also be played by shaking in either a horizontal or vertical fashion."

The *Jingle Sticks* might not be the optimum instrument for classical players, since, as Adrienne puts it, "Although the convenience of having a *Jingle Stick* in each hand is desirable in order to facilitate complex rhythmic patterns, the upstroke needed to begin such playing produces an unwanted sound that results in inaccuracy. And as with the *Cyclops*, the bright sound might be better suited to pop applications than to the classical repertoire." On the other hand, Adrienne felt that *Jingle Sticks* might be excellent as an educational tool, since "the hard plastic construction allows them to be passed among children during young people's concerts without concern."

My own testing determined that the *Jingle Sticks* offer a unique new sound for drumset applications (especially

solos). They're obviously a bit heavier and more cumbersome than a pair of sticks, but a bit of practice made them surprisingly easy to manage around the kit. I experimented with using both (as with sticks), and with using one at a time—switching hands for effect. I was able to get several interesting ride-pattern sounds going when using a *Jingle Stick* in my right hand, and a nifty in-between-the-backbeats pattern when using one in my left hand.

LP stresses that their method of securing the pins into the *Jingle Sticks* (as well as the *Cyclops*) ensures that they won't come out, thus preventing the loss of any of the jingles. They also stress the durability of the plastic "stick" portion. I must admit, the playing I did didn't leave a mark on 'em (and I walloped drums, drum rims, and cymbals), so I would tend to have faith in their longevity. Available only in black, *Jingle Sticks* list for \$27.95 per pair.

• Rick Van Horn and Adrienne Ostrander

### Jingle Ring

LP's *Jingle Ring* is designed solely for mounting on hi-hat pull rods. Since it isn't intended to be struck by a stick or hand, it is a smaller, lighter, and more delicate instrument than the *Cyclops* and other instruments of its ilk. Also of note is that the *Jingle Ring* features only one row of jingles (the *Cyclops* has two), and it mounts onto hi-hat pull rods from a central axle, rather than from a clamp jutting off its perimeter (like the *Cyclops*).

The prototype *Jingle Ring* LP sent us was a bit *too* delicate; the pins holding the jingles bent or snapped off easily. Happily, LP says they're aware of the problem, and the final version will have stronger, chrome-finished pins. Even with the new design, though, you might want to think about storing the *Jingle Ring* away from heavy hardware, or in the box it comes in, since its design makes it inherently susceptible to getting snagged and perhaps bent on other pieces.

The *Jingle Ring* basically does what it's supposed to, which is to allow a

drummer to "play" a tambourine with his or her foot within drumset patterns, freeing up both hands. Performance-wise, the *Ring's* single row of jingles seems to produce less unwanted "jingling" than double-row items do. I found that I could "chick" my hi-hat pedal at low dynamics without making the *Jingle Ring* sound, which was not the case with other mountable tambourines I've tried. The *Ring's* sound, though, still cut through the din of my band quite nicely when I wanted it to. Also, its light weight makes it appealing, since heavier items significantly change hi-hat action when mounted on pull rods. The list price of the *Jingle Ring* had not yet been established at press time, but should be in the neighborhood of \$20. Contact your local LP dealer for further information.

• Adam J. Budofsky



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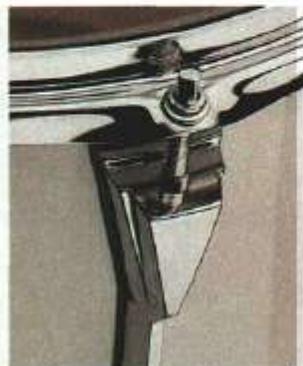
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shock mounted to isolate  
unwanted vibrations.*



*Simon's setup*

# Double Bass Ideas: Part 1



by Rod Morgenstein

**MUSIC KEY**

Attention double-bass players, and single-bass players thinking about converting: There are many applications for using two bass drums in beats and fills, songs and solos, and jazz/rock/fusion and hard rock/metal.

The most common use of double bass is probably as a constant barrage of 8th or 16th notes played foot-to-foot, with some kind of backbeat-oriented hand pattern on top. A straight-ahead 16th-note beat would look and sound as follows:

The following exercises take a slightly different approach to getting the hands acquainted with their foot counterparts, and can be used effectively to enhance beats and solos. Let's begin with the feet playing alternating single strokes (starting on the right foot), with the hands doing the same:

R L R L etc.

R L R L etc.

Assuming you are right-handed and lead with your right foot, all of the 8th notes will be played with the right hand and the right foot; all "e"s and "a"s will be played with the left hand and the left foot. Get in touch with which hand and foot play simultaneously, and make sure they play the bass drum and cymbal or bass drum and snare at precisely the same time. A flam sound is *not* the desired effect.

Play the following accented 16th-note pattern, with the accented cymbal note on the bell of the cymbal.

Now play only the accented rhythm:

Do the same with the following examples.

Next time we'll explore constant 16th-note beats in triplet and 6/8 patterns.





### TERRY BOZZIO

"I love the 'Dark Roar' of the black Colorsounds, and I'd be hard pressed to find another manufacturer that could offer me the sheer breadth of sounds Paiste offers...from the largest gongs to the smallest cup chimes and everything in between."

#### Cymbal Set Up

- All cymbals and gongs are black.  
2000's are all Colorsound.
- 1) 14" 2000 Crash/8" 2000 Splash
  - 2) 18" 2000 Crash/10" 2000 Splash
  - 3) 18" 2000 China/14" 404 Medium Hi-Hat Top - Stacked
  - 4) 20" 2000 China/14" 404 Medium Hi-Hat Top - Stacked
  - 5) 20" 2000 China with 20" Crash inside /14" 2000 Hi-Hat /Cup Chime
  - 6) 12" 2000 Splash/20" 2000 Crash
  - 7) 16" Prototype China with 13" 404 Medium Hi-Hat Top inside/20" 505 Ride with 20" 2002 Novo China on top
  - 8) 26" Sound Creation No. 3 Gong
  - 9) 10" 602 Heavy Bell/Cup Chime
  - 10) 8" 602 Heavy Bell/Cup Chime
  - 11) 15" Paiste Line Heavy Hi-Hat
  - 12) 13" 602 Heavy Bell/Cup Chime
  - 13) 8" Rude Splash(2), as Hi-Hat
  - 14) 12" 602 Heavy Bell/Cup Chime

#### Favorite Recordings:

*Jeff Beck's Guitar Shop*  
with Terry Bozzio and Tony Hymas  
*The Best of Missing Persons*  
*Heavy Metal BeBop*,  
The Brecker Brothers

### NDUGU CHANCLER

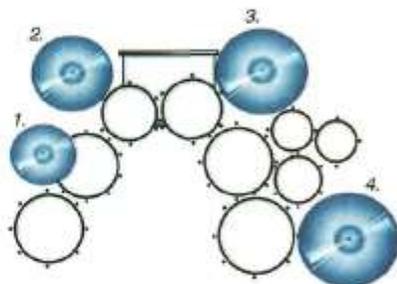
"After using Paiste for 21 years, I can rightfully say that a very vital part of my sound has been built around my cymbals. Over the years of music changes, Paiste has been right there to accommodate me, every step of the way."

#### Favorite Recordings:

*Thriller*  
Michael Jackson  
*Reach For It*  
George Duke  
*Tale Spinn*  
Weather Report

#### Cymbal Set Up

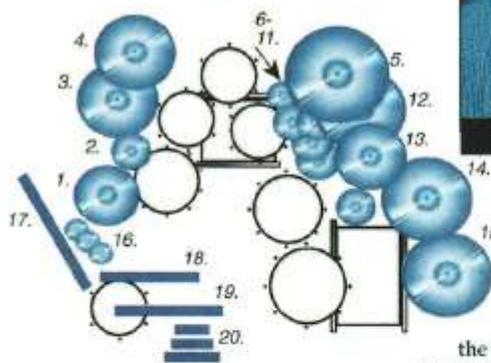
- 1) 14" Paiste Line Heavy Hi-Hat Top
- 2) Sound Edge Hi-Hat Bottom
- 3) 18" Paiste Line Full Crash
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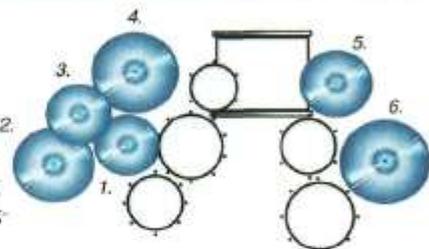
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- 2) 10" 2000 Bell
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- 5) 22" Sound Creation Dark Ride
- 6-11 refer to the front row on right side
- 6) 6" Accent Cymbal
- 7) 8" Paiste Line Bell
- 8) 8" 2002 Bell
- 9) 10" Paiste Line Bell
- 10) 12" Paiste Line Bell
- 11) 8" Accent Cymbal
- 12) 20" Sound Creation Dark Flatride
- 13) 16" Paiste Line Fast Crash
- 14) 20" Sound Creation "New Dimension" Dark China
- 15) 20" 602 Medium Flatride with Rivets
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# Frank Vilardi

## Songwriters' Choice

■ by Charles Levin

Ask Frank Vilardi what drummers he listens to, and he'll start listing bands and songwriters instead: Crowded House, XTC, Donald Fagen, Steely Dan, Richard Thompson, John Hiatt, Peter Gabriel, Sting. It's not a conscious reaction, and he does love talking drums. But great songwriting appeals to him more than pyrotechnical drumming displays.

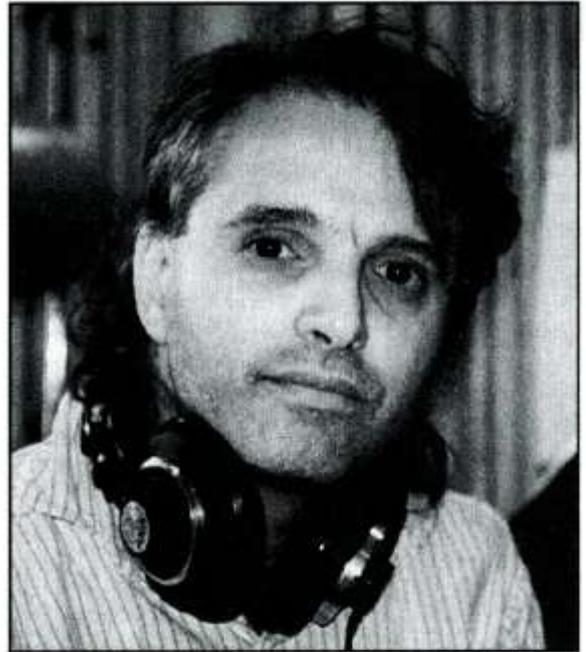
"A band—that's what I really like," says Frank. "I like Manu Katche, but it's more that I like the people he plays with. Manu just happens to play with Peter Gabriel, but I would like Peter Gabriel anyway. Manu plays with Sting too, but I would like Sting anyway. It's just an added attraction that they're using drummers who really enhance their music. I've already gone through my 'listening to the drummers for drummer's sake' period. Now I'm listening to the drummers to see what they do to make a good record."

Frank combines his passion for great songs with chops, taste, dynamics, and creativity to generate his own musical voice. His style is characterized by a deep groove, succinct, well-defined phrases, and the ability to stretch beyond a back-beat when called for.

New York bassist Mike Visceglia (Vilardi's rhythm-section partner in Suzanne Vega's band) describes Frank's playing as a reflection of his personality. "He's one of the most genuine, earthy, real people I know. He's a very spontaneous person and player. He'll go for different things each night. Frank's groove is deep, but he's not afraid to embellish it—especially in New York, where the groove is sacrosanct. With some players, some of the notes feel jumbled or rough. With Frank, everything fits fat."

Having climbed the ranks of the original music scene in New York for 15 years, Frank has lent his abilities to the likes of the Roches, Grace Pool, Curtis Stigers, Willie Nile, Joy Askew, Phoebe Snow, Judy Collins, Jane Barnett, and Buskin & Bateau. In 1989, he successfully auditioned for the drum chair in Vega's band. Although some may regard this as merely a prestigious road gig, Frank is more than an invisible sideman. In the past, Vega has recorded with the same ensemble she tours with. So in doing the *Days Of Open Hand* album, Frank became part of a real band experience. On the record, his playing runs the gamut from no-nonsense driving backbeats to unconventional, almost surrealistic ideas.

Frank Vilardi broke into the New York music scene in the late '70s when he started gigging regularly in local bands—and recording lots of demos for songwriters and singers. "This was when people were still using rhythm sections to do



demos, and you could actually make a living at it," says Frank. "We were doing demos and rehearsals by day and gigs at night."

More calls from city-based artists and groups in the demo scene—and the desire to do more recording work—prompted Frank to move to Manhattan in 1980. He soon began playing regularly at JP's, a Manhattan showcase for original groups. Drumming behind local New York songwriters like Joy Askew, Joe Salvo, and Jane Barnett eventually caught the ears of producers Elliot Scheiner (who used him on a Phoebe Snow album) and Phil Ramone (who called him for the *Body Rock* movie soundtrack), as well as those of songwriter Desmond Child.

Doors to the world of jingles opened for Vilardi with the onset of drum machines, Simmons pads, and MIDI. One of the first drummers in New York to embrace the new technology, Frank immediately picked up work renting out his Simmons kit to other players. But soon he was getting calls to play as well as program machines. Phil Ramone tapped him again to trigger samples on Billy Joel's "Keeping The Faith" single.

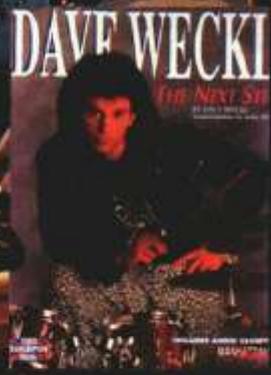
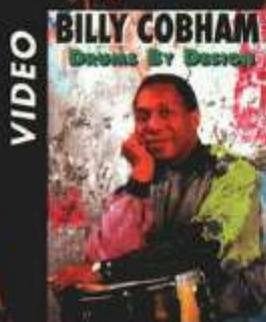
Soon Frank was working in twelve bands at one time. The creative demands were rigorous; he would have to learn and come up with parts for many new original songs each week. Steve Gadd became a big influence on Frank. "With Gadd, you were always aware of the drums, but they never detracted from what was going on in the music," he says. "It was the first time that you were hearing fine songwriting, like Steely Dan or Paul Simon, combined with creative drumming—as opposed to the Ringo/Charlie Watts thing, which is laying it down, very simple and straight-ahead. It was an approach that I was able to understand very well, because it came from the same rudimentary background that I came from."

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In 1986, after years of countless demos, original bands, and jingles, Frank joined up with the band Grace Pool. According to Frank, "Grace Pool combined a lot of technology with live drums. On stage everything was live, but the bass, percussion, and some keyboards were in a box."

For Frank, playing live with a sequenced bass line was a challenge. "You have to try to make the time feel move a little bit," Frank says. "With a bass player, you can move together in front of or behind the beat to create a natural tension and release. With the sequencer in perfect time like that, you have to do it yourself without getting outrageously busy."

Between the band's 1986 Reprise debut *Grace Pool*, and their 1990 release, *Where We Live*, the audition for Suzanne Vega fell in Frank's lap. In auditioning for Suzanne, Frank says, social skills were every bit as important as playing skills. In fact, personnel problems had led to the opening of the drum chair in the first place.

"A group relies on chemistry," says bass player Visceglia, who has been with Vega for seven years. "Suzanne relies on getting a reaction about people on a visceral level as well as a cerebral level, especially when you spend as much time on the road as we do. The endearing thing about Frank is that he's very educated as a musician but maintains a street sense about him. That immediately cuts through the ice and establishes an informal relationship."

The audition itself was not a typical cattle-call. The band had been told to learn three or four of Suzanne's previous tunes, and then jammed for an hour. Frank's own personal attitude toward auditions paid off here. "You have to learn a bunch of new tunes, and you don't know what people are going to expect," he says. "The best thing to do when you're auditioning is to play it the way *you* would play it. Don't learn every lick. Don't pay that much attention to the exact tempo, counting it off like you're copying the record. Sometimes they don't *like* what the previous guy played on the record. Be yourself, and then you'll do your best."

"The audition went really well," recalls Vega. "But it wasn't until the first day of rehearsal that I knew we had gotten someone real good. Frank had a real instinct for what I was looking for; he wasn't just a studio musician with stock parts. He can play anything and never stops working on the approaches. We were on the road for eight or nine months, and Frank was trying new things six months into the tour."

The relaxed and informal feeling of the audition is typical of Vega's ensemble approach. "With Suzanne, it's more like a

band," says Frank. "She comes up with the basic songs, but she doesn't tell anybody what to play, so there's a lot of freedom. She sets up the mood more than anything else."

"We would sit in the rehearsal room and turn on the cassette deck," Frank continues, "and we'd jam on the verse of a tune for two hours and just record the whole thing. If we were having problems with it, we'd just play and I'd play every idea that came into my head. Sometimes, something that went by in five seconds would end up being the basis of a song."

"I write on the acoustic guitar, without the drums in mind," says Vega. "So the drummer is in the hot spot. I don't want him to play too hard and heavy, because he'll trample the subtleties. But he can't be too weak, because the strength of the music will be lost."

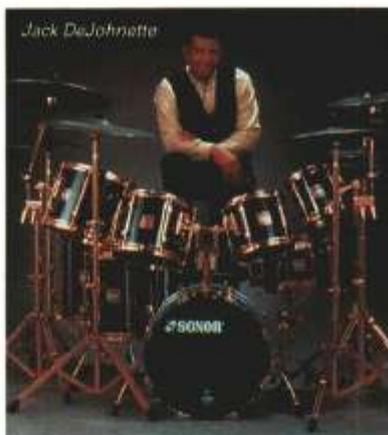
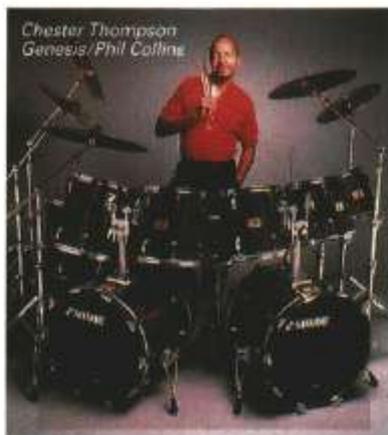
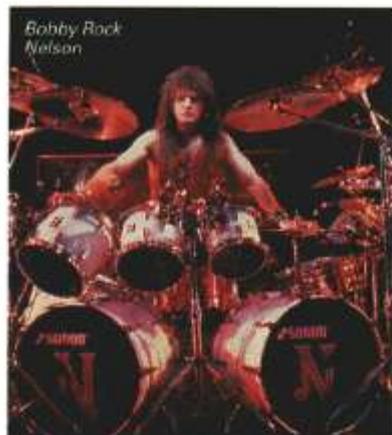
"When the vocal is happening, you have to be out of the way but still interesting," Frank adds. "The drumming is a lot more challenging than people think. She likes the band to rock, and she doesn't mind if we hit hard. But you really have to create a balance as to how far you can go and still keep it within the realm of the song."

Frank's approach differs on some of his other gigs. He and bassist Visceglia accompany saxophonist/singer/songwriter Curtis Stigers while on break from Suzanne. Here the job is to recreate John Robinson's and Jeff Porcaro's drum parts from Stigers' album. For this situation, Frank says he must adapt some of the parts. "Those guys are great players and they have great grooves, but a lot of it is pretty straight-ahead in terms of what's there. They've already come up with the parts and their own fills. I can't cop every one of their fills. It's not necessary, anyway, and every now and then I can come up with my own thing."

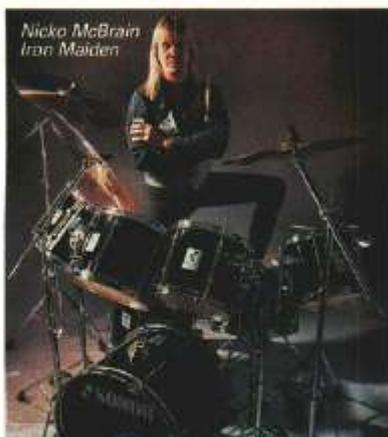
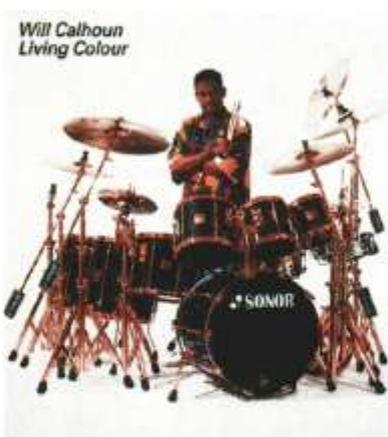
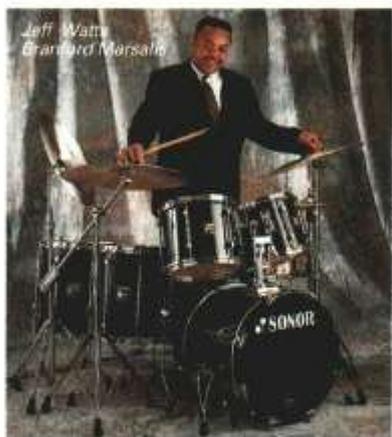
Besides being creative in a live setting, Frank enjoys the challenge of the studio. For most of the recording sessions he does, Frank brings about six snare drums. His main choices are a 5 1/2" Pearl *MLX*, a Noble & Cooley wood 3 1/2" piccolo, and a brass Ludwig 5 1/2" 1920s model. He augments these with an old 5" Slingerland, a 5 1/2" Gretsch for brush work, and a 6 1/2" Pearl brass *Free-Floating*. His stage kit is a Pearl *MLX*. Frank uses a 16x22 kick and either 6 1/2 x 10 and 8x12 or 8x12 and 11x14 rack toms. His floor tom is a 16x16. On all the drums he uses Evans heads: the *Genera EQ3* bass drum system, *Genera* tom heads, and *Genera HD* snare heads. Frank's Sabian cymbal setup is (left to right): 13" *Fusion Hats*, a 10" AA splash, a 17" or 18" AA crash, an 8" AA splash, a 16" AA crash, a 22" HH ride, 14" *Fusion Hats* on an x-hat, and an 18" HH China.

"Play it the way you would play it. Sometimes they don't like what the previous guy played on the record."

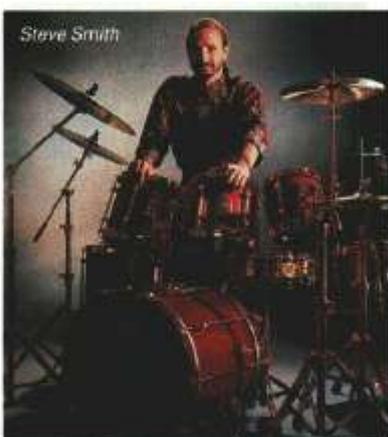
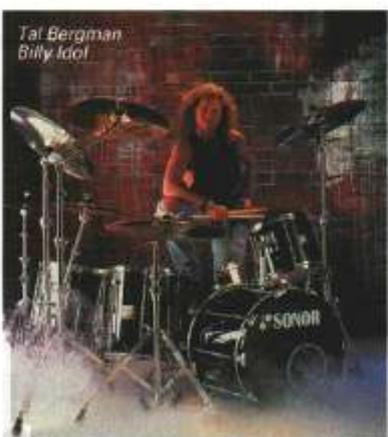
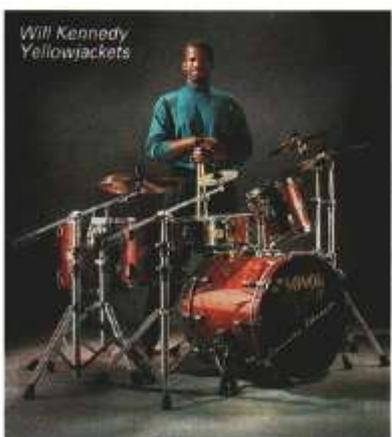




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# Developing Original Rock Beats

by Nick Forte



As a drumset instructor, perhaps two of the most often asked questions I get from students of rock drumming are: "How do I come up with original drum parts that would work well with a band?" and "How and where do the pros come up with those fantastic beats and licks?" The following

suggestions and musical examples will lead you through the steps that many top rock drummers follow when figuring out unique, workable parts.

Let's begin with a few basic concepts. First, if you want a rock beat to work well (musically), it is never a bad idea to include one or more of the rhythmic elements inherent in the tune. Second, in creating original beats, try (whenever possible) to limit the constant succession of quarter, 8th, and 16th notes on the ride or hi-hat cymbals. So many tunes have relied heavily on this type of cymbal work that varying it up can result in a fresh feel. Third, to help form new concepts, try to incorporate a tom or two in the construction of a beat. Very often those secondary snare-drum notes (ghost notes) can be moved to a small tom with surprising results. Finally, consider the axiom "form follows function." If you're looking for a beat that grooves with a flowing momentum, avoid anything that creates physical tension or unnatural movements.

Now let's put the concepts outlined above one at a time, in the order they appear.

## Inherent Musical Elements

Let's say that our tune has a real punchy electric bass line, like this:

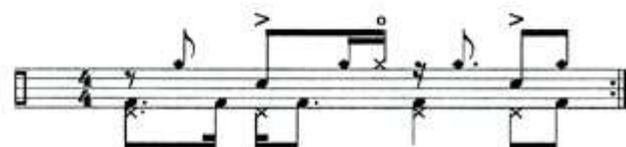


Let's add quarter notes on the hi-hat (played with the foot), bass drum, and a solid rimshot on the snare.



## Interesting Cymbal Work

This is where things start to get happening. I've decided on patterns using the bell of the ride cymbal and also an open hi-hat hit. Play the hi-hat hit with the left hand. (If you are playing quarters with the hi-hat foot, the open stick/hit sound should automatically dampen correctly on the third beat of the bar.)



## Ghost Notes And Toms

The next example shows some ghost notes on the snare, but don't forget that the backbeat hits are solid rimshots.

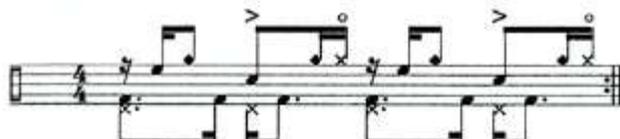


Next is an example of where toms could be utilized.



## Playing With A Flowing Physical Movement

This is where practicing the musical examples in this article comes in. Practice each example in the order they appear. Don't go to the next unless you can play the last one with the kind of freedom that indicates a certain mental and physical finesse.



With the guidelines mentioned, hopefully you'll be able to come up with your own interesting parts.



# HEADROOM!

Nobody pushes mixer headroom limits harder than drummers.

At the January '92 NAMM show, we were astounded at the number of drummers from major groups who sought us out to tell us that the CR-1604 is the first mixer they ever owned that didn't sound like a Buick hitting a row of garbage cans when fed a full barrage of acoustic and electronic drum inputs. According to Babe Pace of C+C Music Factory, "I use my CR-1604 from the studio to the stage. I'm sure other companies will TRY to imitate it." Or as Pat Mastelotto (Fornbrando, ex-Mr. Mister & top studio player) put it, "The CR-1604 handles HOT signals, big spikes, synth drums, samples, with lots of headroom for transient peaks. No crunch! I'm in beat box heaven!" For a short explanation of the facts behind the rave, please attend the illustrated lecture below. For complete info and the location of your nearest dealer, call our toll-free number or fill out the reader response card.



Babe Pace, C+C Music Factory, on stage with the CR-1604.

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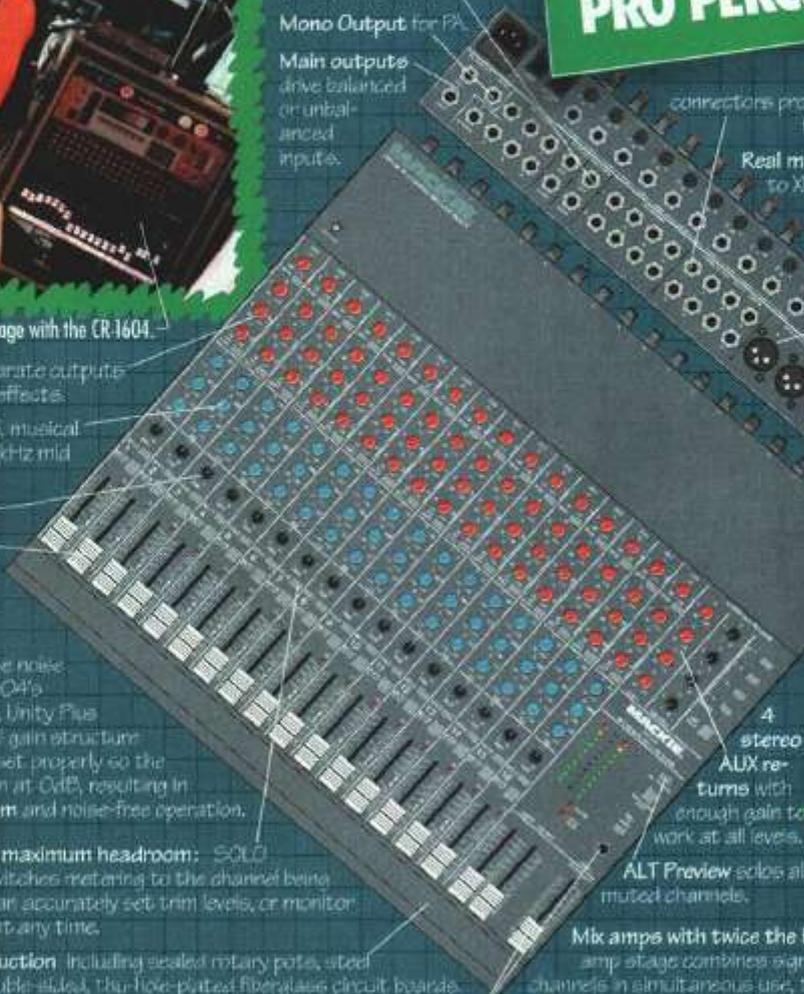
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A Polaroid of Pat Mastelotto in the studio with his CR-1604.

Mix amps with twice the headroom. In any mixer, the mix amp stage combines signals from all inputs. The more channels in simultaneous use, the higher the operating level until at some point, conventional mix amps give up and distort. Drummers seem to induce this (and hate it) in most mixers pretty fast. The sound somehow just sort of starts falling apart when things get cranking. The CR-1604 uses a proprietary mix amp architecture that eliminates this mix amp overload bottleneck. Crank it with 16 hot signals and it still has more headroom than a conventional mixer running just 8 inputs. Plus it just plain sounds good!

\*Each time the number of inputs is doubled, it adds 3dB to the non-correlated operating level. Thus 16 channels running all at once is 22dB hotter than the same mixer with just one channel operating.

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14" HH EQ Hats  
22" AA Extra Heavy Ride  
22" HH Thin Chinese  
18" AA Rock Crash

## Rod Morgenstein's set-up:

14" AA Rock Hats  
17" AA Medium Thin Crash  
2- 20" AA Chinese  
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# A Brief History Of Fibes Drums

by Bob Owen

The history of modern drum-making would not be complete without an account of a little-known company—in business from 1965 to 1977—known as Fibes. Although never an industry giant like Ludwig or Slingerland, Fibes was a well-respected and innovative company.

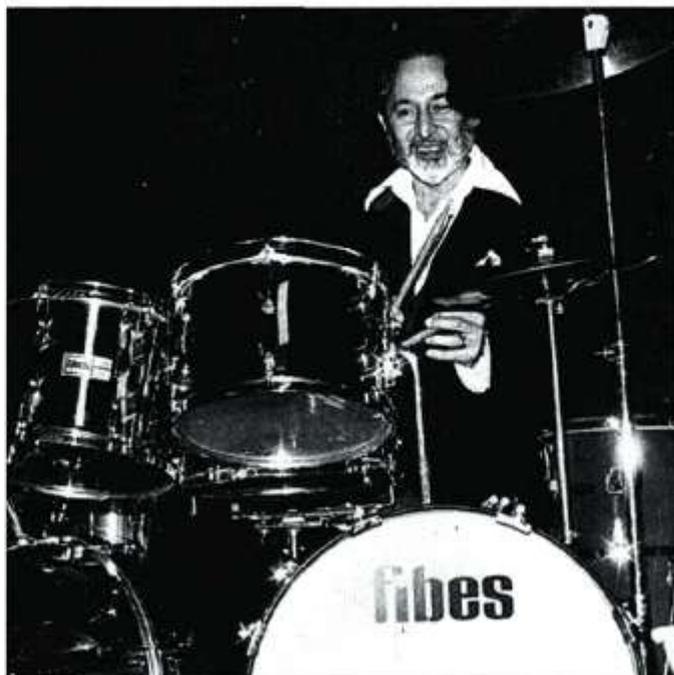
Fibes owes its history to an inventive drummer named Bob Grauso, who first became interested in the art of making drums in 1960. It all started when Bob's father, also a drummer, built a drumset for himself and a snare drum for Bob. This example inspired Bob to experiment on methods of improving the sound quality of existing drums. He discovered that filing the bearing edges of various snare drum shells resulted in increased resonance. In addition, he experimented with coating the wood interiors of the drums with different types and amounts of finishes. At that point, Bob was mainly concerned with investigating new ideas in order to gain more knowledge on the subject—and also to satisfy personal musical requirements. His work, which lasted from 1960 to 1963, was intended as a private endeavor only. But as friends began to take notice of what Bob had achieved, many insisted that he customize their snare drums.

Following the excellent results obtained by applying polyester resin to the interiors of wood drum shells, constructing an entire snare drum shell out of fiberglass seemed to be the next logical step. In 1963, a latex mold was created to construct Bob's first fiberglass drum. After much effort and research, this first snare drum was built entirely of solid resin. In other words, no reinforcement or cloth was used in the shell con-

struction whatsoever. However, this design presented some serious problems. The shell was extremely brittle, and had to be cut down from the intended size of 5x14 to 4x14 because of curing problems encountered with the resin process.

Following this first attempt, about a dozen snare drum shells were formed in the latex mold—all of which turned out well and to the intended size of 5x14. These drums, like the first, were made entirely of solid resin, and were outfitted with various brands of hardware. In 1963 and 1964, another process (which involved inserting a fiberglass screen into a mold and then applying resin into the mold) was explored, then abandoned. At that point in time, Bob's drum-making operation was still in the research and development phase—with Bob's friends being the only recipients of his drums. However, history was to change shortly. Between 1964 and 1965, Bob discovered a totally new process for constructing fiberglass drumshells, which was to become the "Fibes method."

The new method was based on the fact that a structural approach to building fiberglass drums did not produce a resonant drum tone. Bob discovered that the amount of resin content (versus the strand or cloth reinforcement) had a direct effect on the tone of a drum. Basically, two processes were employed for the construction of the drumshells. The first, known as Filament Winding, was used exclusively for snare drum construction. This method involved soaking fiberglass fibrils in resin and applying

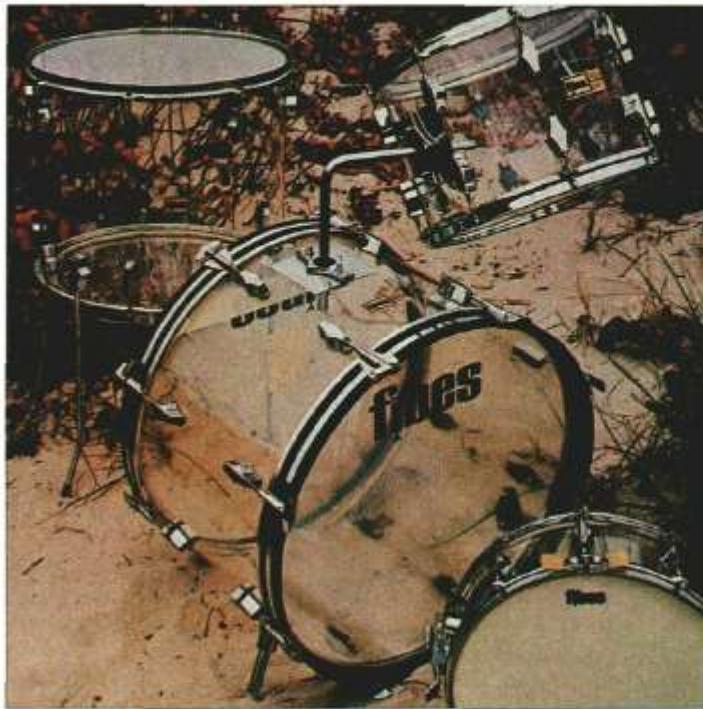


Bob Grauso, founder of the Fibes Drum Co.

them to the exterior of a spinning mold, which somewhat resembled a lathe. After applying the fibrils to the mold, an outer ring was clamped over the outside of the fibrils to compress and shape the fiberglass material. The shell was allowed to cure before removal of the clamp.

For the construction of bass drums and tom-toms, a different process was used. This method was known as The Spinning Centrifugal Mold Method. By applying fiberglass matt and resin to the interior of spinning aluminum molds, a shell was formed. The aluminum molds were of the same diameters as the desired drumshell diameters.

Bob Grauso began commercial production in 1965—in 25 square feet of rented floor space in a Long Island, New York building. Rapid expansion led to the utilization of over half of this original building. During this same year, the name of Fibes was chosen. The name actually began as a pun, when a family friend introduced it to Bob. This friend reasoned that the name possessed a "60s touch" that would appeal to the hip mood of the era. The official company name became The Fibes Drum Corporation. During the company's early peri-



od, drums were available in three covered finishes: chrome, antique brass, and antique copper. Outfitted with an inventive style of hardware, Fibes drums offered drummers a true alternative.

In 1970, The Fibes Drum Corporation was acquired by the C. F. Martin Company and moved into its own facility on Long Island. Bob Grauso became vice president of the Fibes Division. Drums were now available with more exotic color finishes in addition to the original three colors. In 1972, clear Plexiglas drumshells were offered in addition to the fiberglass shells; black and frosted Plexiglas shells were added to the line in 1973.

In 1975, the company moved to Easton, Pennsylvania. This move was to signify the beginning of the end for Fibes drums. Because of financial problems, the C. F. Martin Company decided to liquidate the Fibes Drum Division, leaving only a skeleton crew to maintain operations until a final solution could be worked out. Bob Grauso left this same year.

Twelve years seems like a short lifespan for a drum company as unusual and successful as Fibes. Fibes drums were played by many top drummers, including

Billy Cobham, Bobby Colomby (of Blood, Sweat & Tears), and Buddy Rich. (Although Buddy endorsed other drums, he often insisted on using a Fibes snare drum.) Many of the great drum sounds of the '60s and '70s owe a good deal to Bob Grauso and the Fibes Drum Company.

Although Fibes was liquidated in 1977, this story does have a happy ending. In 1978, Jim Corder purchased all of the dies, molds, and tooling equipment for Fibes drums. The Martin Company retained the Fibes name. In creating the Corder Drum Company, Jim and his family established a first-rate operation—but with some changes from the original Fibes concept. Corder no longer uses fiberglass and Plexiglas to manufacture drumshells, but instead uses maple wood. And although much of the original Fibes hardware design is still employed, Jim incorporated changes and added some of his own inventions to the design. Located in Huntsville, Alabama, the Corder Drum Company continues on in the unique tradition of Fibes.

*The author wishes to thank Bob Grauso and James Corder for their time and assistance.*

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Five-Stroke

3.

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

Alternate Sticking

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

Six-Stroke

4.

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

Seven-Stroke

5.

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

Eight-Stroke

6.

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

Nine-Stroke

7.

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

Ten-Stroke

8.

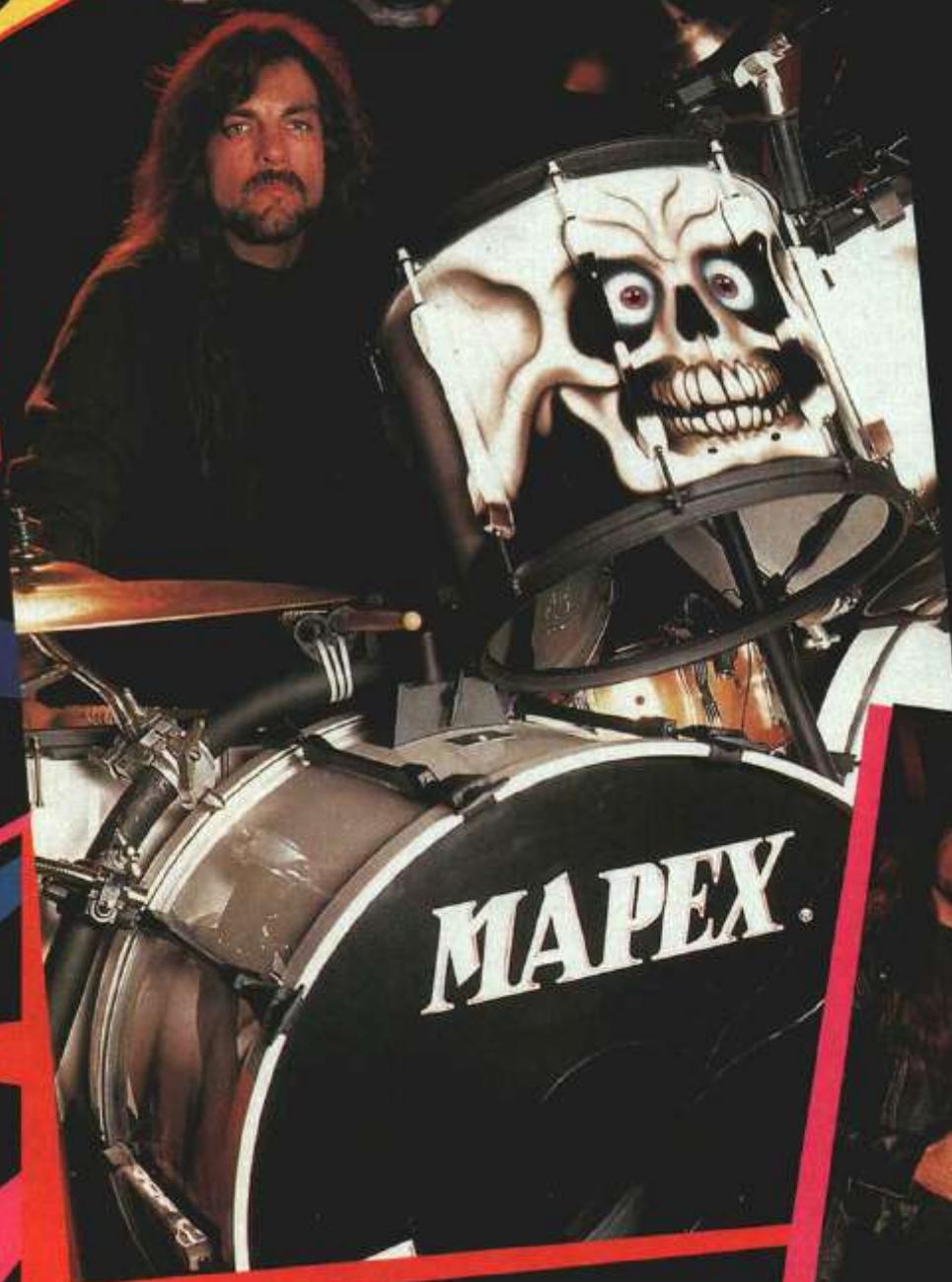
R L R L R L L R L R R L L R R L L R R L L R



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# Writing Drum Fills That Work

■ by Dean M. Gottschalk



At the point when my students have gained sufficient single-surface rhythmical skills and basic drumset coordination, I intentionally give them an open-ended assignment. This involves having them rework five or six groove-oriented, single-measure timekeeping patterns into four-measure phrases. (A good source for this type of material can be found in method books like Charles Dowd's *A Funky Primer*.) To outline these phrases, I instruct them to insert a rhythm at the point where the fourth repetition would actually have occurred. I give them no further instructions, other than telling them that they are free to use whatever sounds or rhythms they like in constructing their fills.

At our next session, I have the student demonstrate the fills they have written for each of the timekeeping patterns. More often than not, these initial attempts come off sounding a little haphazard and rudimentary. After playing through a few of the grooves myself and inserting fills of my own, the question usually arises: "Why do your fills seem to work, and how do you come up with them?" To help the student answer these questions, I backtrack to the original timekeeping rhythm that preceded the fill. I explain that a certain feel is set up by the timekeeping groove, and although a fill is a transitional device that usually breaks away from the groove, the rhythms and sound choices that make up the fill should somehow reflect the feel of that groove.

Let's see how this concept works. Begin by choosing a groove-oriented drumset pattern.



Play through it a number of times and try to internalize the feel that's set up by the pattern. Now let's analyze the important characteristics of the rhythm. The common quarter-note hi-hat rhythm coupled with the placing of the snare drum notes on counts 2 and 4 gives the sense of that familiar "four-on-the-floor" feel. Although a few of the bass drum notes are placed in syncopated positions within the measure, they all come off (or lean towards) the two strong, unsyncopated bass drum notes (the dotted 8th and the quarter) on 1 and 3. This also lends to the overall feel of that heavy rock "four-on-the-floor" feel.

To sum it up, the strong pivotal points of this rhythm are the snare drum backbeats on 2 and 4 and the solid bass drum notes on 1 and 3, which are flavored by the weaker placements of the remaining bass drum notes. Fills associated with this rhythm should reflect these characteristics.

First, try a fill that correctly fills up the measure rhythmically and might sound great standing alone, but when played following our timekeeping pattern, somehow doesn't quite fit.



Now try one that builds on the rhythm and sound patterns of the timekeeping groove. Notice that the fill is a variation of the groove itself.



This fill simulates the strong points of the timekeeping pattern quite nicely, using the lower tom and the bass drum on or near counts 1 and 3, while placing the higher-pitched tom where the snare drum backbeats had been. It also retains many features of the rhythmic structure of the groove while filling in some of the "holes" with additional 16th notes.

Now let's try one that's a bit more complicated.



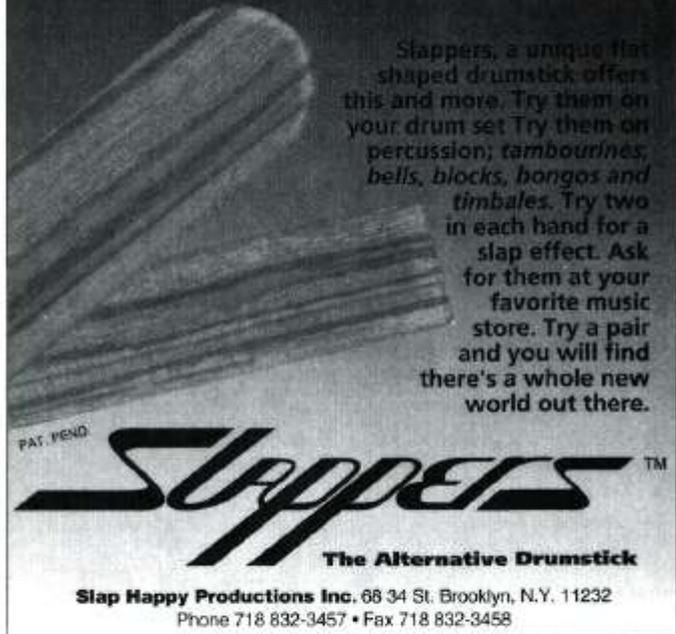
Again, play through it a few times to internalize the feel set up by the rhythm.

Now let's figure out those strong points that give this groove its character. The ride pattern has been placed on the upbeats and is emphasized by the bass drum notes that fall on the "&" of counts 2 and 3. The first snare drum note has been shifted from its usual position on beat 2 to the immediately preceding 16th note on the "ah" of count 1, contributing to the groove's upbeat, syncopated feel. The bass drum's overall rhythm also adds to the funk-like feel of the pattern.

Now let's look at a couple of different fills that incorporate various elements of this pattern. The first fill closely matches the sound and rhythm patterns of the groove, with the basis of its content easily determined. The second fill, however, reveals a more abstract association with the original groove.



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Hopefully, as you play through the timekeeping pattern, followed by either of the fills, you will begin to hear how the rhythms flow smoothly into each other, a result of the familiar content of the groove pattern and the fill. They all seem to "work" together because the fills are derived directly from the elements of the timekeeping pattern.

Although this is just one method for writing effective drum fills, it is an approach that gives students a foundation from which to build their skills and provides a great launching pad for further ideas.



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continued from page 27

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I hated setting up every night and not having the cymbals in exactly the same place. I play in a very visual way, and things have to be where I need them to be without my having to look for them. So I found this guy in Florida, Tom Fali-con, who has a shop that makes motorcycle crank shafts. He's famous for that, but he's also really talented at making custom drum racks. He's not just a welder, he's an artist.

So I went down with my drum tech, Glen Boster, and we all designed my rack together. If you look at the cage by itself, it almost looks like a piece of art. Tom inspired me personally as well. He has a great attitude about life and never says anything bad about anybody.

**RF:** Let's talk about the second album. What was different for you about this album?

**BE:** For this one we decided to use the same process as the first record. We came off the road, took about two weeks off, and went right back into the writing mode. It was done in the living room of Mark's house in pretty much the same way, with a drum machine and a four-track, a small guitar, and a bass. Everyone asked why we were doing demos, but we did three sessions of demos before we did the record because we wanted to keep that same vibe, making sure nobody was getting tensed up in the studio. We wanted to get used to the studio after being on the road, to be able to live with the songs and not come back after recording the record and say, "I wish I had done this...."

We went to the same studio, which surprised people. We recorded in the back room at the Red Zone. We actually did the drums at Pasha, which is where we did the drums for the first record. Dana grew up there. When he was starting out as an engineer, he was sweeping floors at Pasha and working for [owner] Spencer Proffer, so he knew the studio really well and liked the sound of it. And of course, when you have a good thing, you don't want to change it.

We were really proud of the drum sound we got on the first record, too. The studio had been closed down, though, and there had been leaks in the ceiling over the control board and in the drum room. But we called Spencer Proffer and asked if we could go back in. The

drumset was covered up with a plastic tarp, and if you listen really closely to "Shake This Place," right before the guitars come in you can hear some droplets.

**RF:** You do background vocals, too.

**BE:** Yes, on the albums. I want to do it live, too, but because of the way I play, it's hard to find a headset that stays on my head. I move around too much. But I think we're going to try again this year. I enjoy singing. In the studio it's a very different ball game, and you realize how hard the singer's job really is when you're in there singing background vocals.

I'm definitely going to have to get into shape for this tour, though. I've been relaxing too much. What I do is so physical, and it's going to be a lot longer set this year. If I'm even going to think about singing, I'm going to have to build up my wind.

**RF:** Do you warm up before a show?

**BE:** Most times. The times when I can't because we're doing some interview or something, I have to go on cold, and I really feel it. But I have a practice pad, and I go through a lot of rudiments and anything I can do that uses both hands evenly. I do a lot of things with my left hand first. I'm ambidextrous; anything that I do with my right hand and my right foot, I try with my left hand and left foot. Warming up for me is to get my blood pumping and my muscles warmed up.

**RF:** Let's go back to the second album. What are some of your favorite cuts, and how did you come up with your parts on them?

**BE:** There's a song called "Times They Change," which is a very adventurous song. I'm hoping that we release that as a single. It has a lot of different parts, feels, tempos, and instruments. It goes from a very mellow, almost '70s-sounding melody, to almost an Iron Maiden heavy metal section, and then into a kind of Rush-like technical part. It's a long song, and I'm very proud of the drums on that one. There's some percussion, too—some bongos—and I'm using concert toms now that I borrowed from Dana's old drummer, Steve Ward, who he played with in a band called Bad Axe. He has these old Slingerland concert toms that are just like Neil Peart's. I was always so impressed with his concert tom sound. I brought them down to the studio, and they sounded great. We put

them in as many places as we could.

**RF:** Other songs?

**BE:** "The Wild Life," which is the title track of the record, is a very straightforward, anthemic song like "Up All Night" was. It's that same feel, but a bit heavier and more mature musically. There is a lot of intricate hi-hat work in there, though, which I think is what sets my rhythms apart from the average.

**RF:** Is that something you developed consciously through the years?

**BE:** During my years in high school, we didn't really have a good percussion pro-

gram, so I was pretty much on my own. I made myself learn these solos and entered contests on my own. I got to the Class I and won three gold medals, which is the highest rating you can get. I was first chair in the Houston All City Orchestra. I really enjoyed playing that kind of music and learning more about my instrument. I played in a jazz band as well from Royce University, which I had been turned onto by Bobby Rock.

It's funny; sometimes if you play rock, you don't get as much respect from the drumming community as you would



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playing different kinds of music, because so much seems to be based on image and all that. I'm part of a band now, I'm not just a drummer who is gigging and working. There's a difference playing for a band. We're sold as an *entertainment* group, not just a musical group. So it's hard—coming from as intense a musical background as I have—not feeling that everybody in the drum community is looking down on me. But I grew up reading *Modern Drummer*, listening to jazz records, playing in the drum corps, and reading music.

**RF:** But don't you think all of that combined helps make you a good rock drummer?

**BE:** Yes, it does. Like I said, some of the things I do on the new record that set me apart come from that background. On "She Wants More" on the first record, I would never have been able to come up with that part if I hadn't played in jazz bands, because that's a jazz shuffle feel. I wouldn't have come up with a lot of the hi-hat parts I do if I hadn't been in corps or in a funk band. My background has helped me a lot and definitely gives me a little extra spice.



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Castillo, the thundering pulse behind the Ozzy Osbourne band, has also performed with the Motels and the Lita Ford Band. He reveals tricks of the trade and personal insights appropriate for all levels of drumming. He also covers groove, dynamics, attitude, rudiments and visual tricks.  
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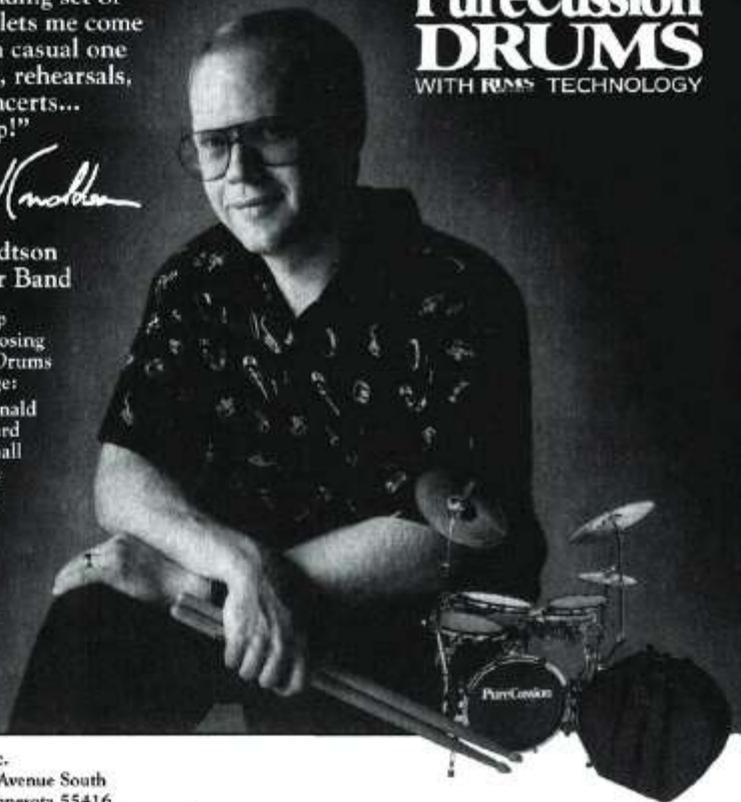
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I talked to Rod Morgenstein about this when we were on tour with Winger. He was one of my biggest influences; I'd always sneak in to see his shows when I was underage, and then I'd sneak backstage. I thought, "Someday I'm going to be up there with him." On the first date we did together, I said, "I don't know if you remember me, but I was that little punk kid who was always bugging you." We talked for a while, and I was saying that I started out being known as a guy who spins his sticks and plays 2 and 4, but I know I come from this musical background, and I feel weird about it. He told me he came from this really heavy musical background and was looked down upon for changing to the rock world. He said he himself had looked down on rock players before he started playing it, but then he realized there was a lot more to it than people think. It's hard to play for the song and keep that solid groove. The best drummers, to me, are able to play all different styles well. I never look down on *any* kind of music, no matter what the rock community may think of it.

**RF:** Back to the second album. What about "Street Of Broken Hearts?"

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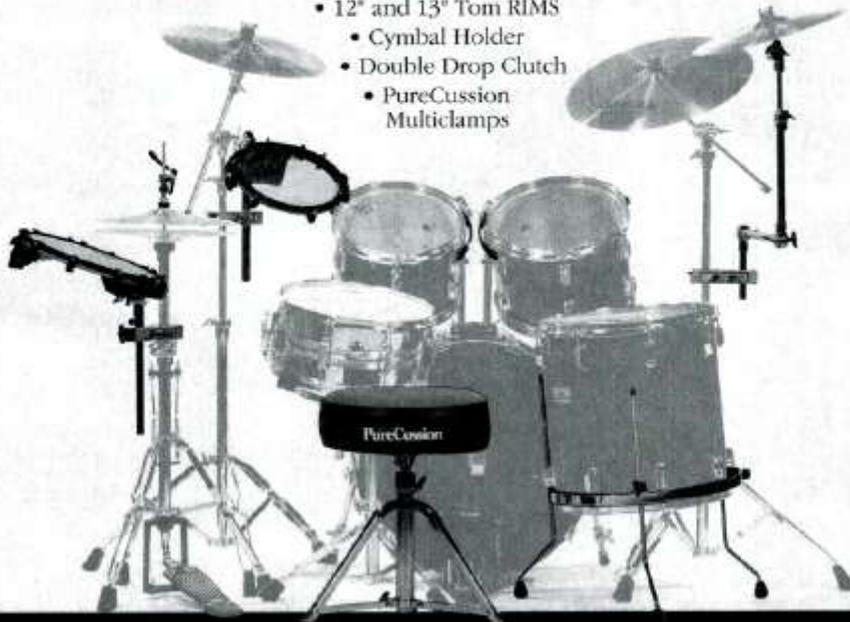


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**BE:** That's something you wouldn't expect to see written out in the pages of *Modern Drummer*, because it's a very basic song, but it's all playing for the song. Believe it or not, it's one of my favorite songs on the record because of the strong melodies, which remind me of the Beatles. Drumming-wise, it's simple, but I enjoy playing it.

"Real Love" is a very radio-oriented song. It's a great song, but as far as the drum parts, again, they were for the song. There's a staccato feel to the hi-hat. A lot of times I choose the hi-hat parts I play according to what the bass line is. If the bass is playing more of an open-ride feel to it, I'll play looser 8th notes with accents on the downbeat, whereas if it's more of a staccato feel, where every note is accented and cut short, I'll play all 8th notes accented. That's what I did for that one.

The parts to the music determine the kick and snare mainly, and your toms are for musical accents. But the hi-hat, the ride cymbal, and the cymbals are what make the feel. I take my parts from what the other instruments are playing. I go from the hi-hat playing very staccato,

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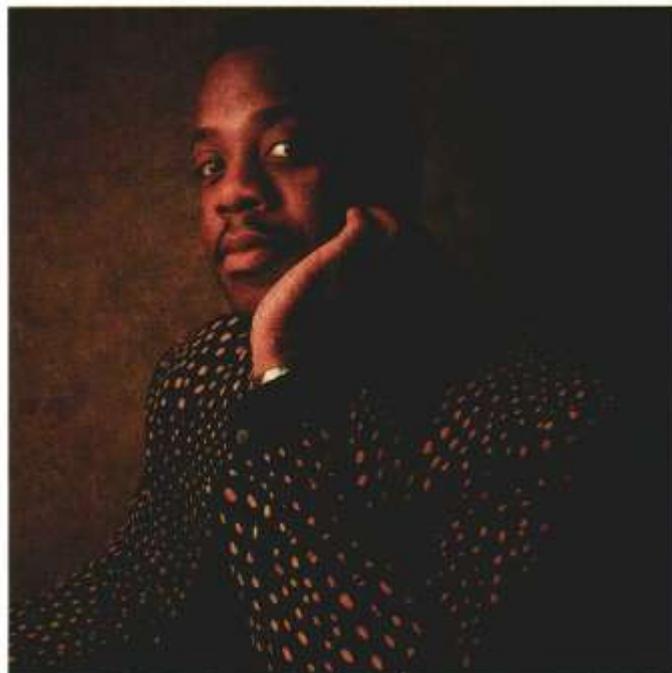
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dance-oriented on the verses, to the choruses, where I'll play a flat ride. It accents what the guitars are doing and gives a very open, airy feeling to it. On that song I couldn't find a ride cymbal with a bell on it that sounded like that, so I used a flat ride. But I wanted the bell sound, too, so on the songs that have a

ride cymbal, I played the flat ride and overdubbed a bell from a 22" rock ride.

**RF:** Dana mentioned to me that you used a variety of drum equipment on the tracks.

**BE:** Cymbal-wise, the flat ride was one of our favorites. It sounds amazing on the record. With the hi-hats, sometimes

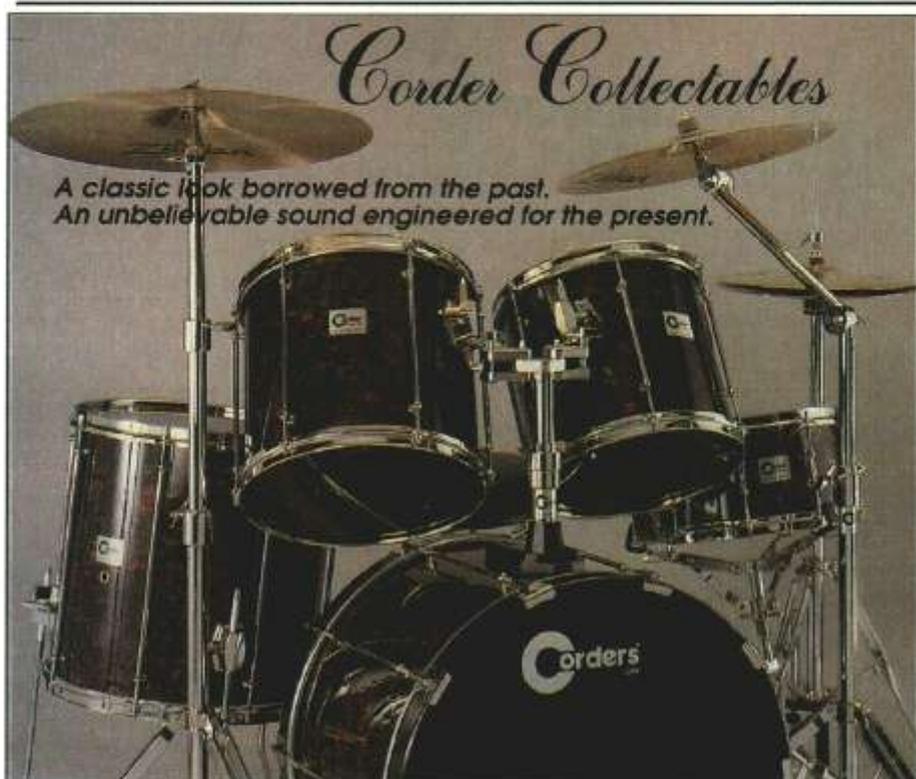
we'll speed up the tape to get a lower, meaner sound for some of the heavier-feeling songs. For some of the songs that are a lot tighter and upbeat, we'll slow the tape down and play along with it so the hi-hats come out crisper on the record. We always use the same hats.

A lot of times, you can't judge things by what you hear in the room; you have to listen to the tape. The Chinas I used sounded awful in person, but on tape they sounded great. I used this old 16" China-type. We tried a lot of different snare drums, which we sampled. We ended up using a Ludwig hammered brass *Black Beauty*, a piccolo, and some electronic sounds that we stole from somewhere.

**RF:** What about "Days Gone By"?

**BE:** That is one of my favorites off the new record. Great feel. It's Beatle-esque and it also reminds me of progressive bands like Queen, where there's a lot of different parts. That's one thing we weren't afraid of: putting different parts in the same song. There are tempo changes and lots of dynamics in that song. That was also recorded for the first record, but didn't make it stylistically. Originally it didn't have drums, just bongos, claves, a tambourine, and shakers. There are sections that still have that stuff, but we also put drums on this version.

"Reach For The Sky" has some great hi-hat work in it. The kick drum and snare drum are holding down the meat-



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and-potatoes groove, and the hi-hat is following what the guitar is doing. And the vocal is doing something entirely different. Lyrically, it's one of my favorites because it really reflects my attitude that, no matter what, you shouldn't be afraid to try new things and reach for your dreams. Don't be limited by your mind or what other people try to drill into your head. Do whatever it is you want. You just have to have the motivation to do it.

**RF:** So when did you set your mind to drums ?

**BE:** I guess I was in seventh grade when I started playing seriously. I had been playing guitar in a band, but when I got into junior high, they had free drum lessons if you joined the marching band. About the same time, I saw KISS in concert, and that's when I knew what I really wanted to do. Back in those days, drummers were really spotlighted with these huge kits and solos. I saw Black Sabbath, Blue Oyster Cult, and Alice Cooper, and I thought the drums were the most amazingly powerful thing.

I didn't come from a wealthy family, so I had to mow lawns all summer to get my first drumset, and I got ripped off on it. It was \$250 for this complete pile of trash. I made it into a good kit with some old concert toms my high school band had thrown out. I covered them with silver contact paper to make this chrome drumset out of them. I got some old tuba stands from the back equipment room and put some bass drums on them, and I made gong bass drums. I made this huge set.

That's where I got my idea for chrome drums. I love chrome drums. I remember being embarrassed to go to these contests where all the other drummers were coming in from other places with all these brand new Premier or Ludwig drums. I had this purple sparkle snare drum from 1950 that I covered with wall paper so it would look silver, and I hid it in the corner and covered it with a towel so nobody would see it. I made up for it in my playing, though, which is why, when I meet drummers who are starting out, I tell them they don't have to have a real set. I always tell them it doesn't matter what they're playing on, because as far as drums are concerned, it's rhythm that matters, not what you're playing on. When you get a real set, you'll be able to use more dynamics and things, but

learning your rhythms first is what is most important.

**RF:** Were you really pre-med?

**BE:** Yes. I went to college and I wanted to be a doctor. I got a scholarship and went to the University of Texas. My parents were really proud of me; I was the first in my family to graduate high school. But I finally decided that if I didn't try to do music for a living, I'd always wonder about it, so I decided to give it a shot.

**RF:** What did your parents think?

**BE:** They were behind me because they figured if I wasn't happy doing what I was doing and always wondered about something else, whether or not I was successful financially, I would always be unsuccessful mentally and personally. They're very much into being happy with yourself. My dad is a minister and a chaplain in a hospital. He's run drug rehabilitation programs for the underprivileged from the time I can remember, and their philosophy has always been not to live for the money, but to live for your beliefs.

**RF:** What does he think of the music, being a minister?

**BE:** He loves it because there's no negative message in our music. I've never touched drugs, alcohol, or cigarettes in my life, and I owe that in part to my dad, because I was exposed to it at such a young age. I remember seeing the people in my neighborhood sniffing glue and paint, and I just said, "That's not the life I want." From an early age I knew if I wanted to be successful, I couldn't do that. In high school people were going, "I can't believe you don't want to try it." And I was saying, "No way, I've got my drums; that's what I want to do." They'd be partying and I'd go home and practice.

**RF:** That's very refreshing about your band; you're not concerned with that kind of tough image.

**BE:** It's not that we don't have a good time, because we have a *great* time. There are so many other ways in life to have a good time, though. Music is our primary thing. To us, the great time is jamming together and playing on stage and in the studio. There are other things that I've gotten into to keep myself up in the down time. I go skydiving, snowboarding, mountain hiking, car racing. There are a lot of other ways to get high.

Read a book. I feel that's one of the reasons we're successful, because we had our minds clear enough to set goals and follow through with a plan to reach those goals.

**RF:** Does a hit album set you up for life?

**BE:** No. I've been very smart with my money, though. I can honestly say that if you're looking to play music to become an MTV star and rich, you're going into the wrong business. It's more the exception than the rule for someone to become rich. We sold a lot of albums, but we have a lot of promotion costs and video costs, and that gets taken out of our money. And after all the percentages are taken by the lawyers, accountants, and managers, by the time the money gets to us there isn't much left. Plus, you pay for the cost of the record, which can be really high if you're not careful. I'm not trying to tell anyone *not* to get into the business, but don't do it for the money. You have to be as happy starving in a one bedroom apartment or living on someone's living room floor as you would be as a billionaire. If you're going to play music, get into it because you love playing music.



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# Morton Sanders

## Taking The Craft One Step Further

■ by Adam J. Budofsky

The drum isn't what it used to be. Research and development in the areas of physics, acoustics, stress, plastics, wood density, lacquers, paints, and electronics have hurled the drum into the space age, truly making it an instrument of infinite sound possibilities.

Like the song says, though, what goes around comes around.

Largely due to the growing popularity of "world" musics, lately we've seen a rediscovery of hand percussion instruments. For every drummer triggering sampled sounds from an *Octapad*, it seems another one is integrating congas into his or her setup or overdubbing cuica parts on records.

Though comparatively large companies like LP and Rhythm Tech have gladly provided mass-marketed tools for this trend—often in the form of synthetic versions of the original, hand-made instruments—many individuals have taken it upon themselves to build their *own* drums. One particular person who has developed a unique interpretation of this craft is Morton Sanders.

Morton—or "Morty," as he likes to be known—has been building intricately designed, personalized shekeres, hand drums, and other ritual objects used in the Afro-Cuban religion known as Santeria for over thirty years. His creations are some of the most advanced and finely decorated instruments you'll run across. A percussionist with a world-renowned symphony orchestra, members of Earth, Wind & Fire, and even a Native American medicine man own his instruments. Yet Sanders has never advertised nor sold through music stores, and insists that he doesn't strive to solicit more business. "I'm up to my eyeballs in private commissions," he says, "and I've got a three- to four-month delivery. I do one drum or shekere at a time. I have nobody else working with me, and I don't run a store. I don't stock these things, I only make them on order."

Since Sanders clearly doesn't plan to turn his craft into a lucrative "business," one gets the sense (and becomes convinced upon conversation with the man) that the exquisite instruments that fill several shelves and corners of his New York City apartment are indeed the results of a labor of love. More than just a craftsman, Morty is a student, player, and aficionado of Afro-Cuban and other Afro-Latin cultures.



Morty, Jimmy Cruz, and Morty's son Mark jam with some of Sanders' shekeres in New York's Central Park.

More than just a craftsman, Morty is a student, player, and aficionado of Afro-Cuban and other Afro-Latin cultures.

The focus of his interest, though, is on the rituals, music, and instruments. Though he has made berimbau, shakers, and even specialty sticks, Sanders' primary pieces today are shekeres, which are made from calabashes or gourds, and large, ornate hand and bata drums made from tree trunk logs. These drums start as solid pieces of pine tree, which Sanders cuts and hand shapes into finished instruments. He fits skin heads on with a unique, hardware-less

system when they're wet, so that when they dry, they are surprisingly tight. "A dyed-in-the-wool percussionist will say that there's nothing like the Cuban *panza de mula*—from the belly," says Morty, "because the belly of the mule has an even thickness. But they're very hard to come by in recent years, so I use goat or antelope rawhide." Sanders uses long spaghetti-like remnants of the wet skins and wraps them around the overlapping heads to secure them to the drumshell. He also affixes concealed aluminum base rings to the bottoms of the drum's mouth because "solid wood shells are not stable in steam-heated or air-conditioned environments," he explains. "Wood is organic and highly subject to temperature change. So this controls potential cracking."

Sanders then finishes the curved exterior of the drum with acrylic paints. "I follow a technique used by the artisans of the Yoruba tribe in Nigeria, a process called polychrome—many colors. But I also have my own technique of aging or distress-

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ing it so it doesn't look like it was made yesterday."

Surprisingly, Morty crafts these instruments without the aid of power tools. (A drum like the one pictured here would take him an entire summer of long weekends to complete.) According to Sanders, "There is no power tool that can do this job right. If you do anything with a power tool, you obtain a high degree of symmetry, which is undesirable to my aesthetic sense. I'm trying, as a Western man—civilized, supposedly—to style my work after traditional West African craftsmen. The fact that it might be slightly asymmetrical gives it a vague look of authenticity. I'll start a design over here on this side of an instrument, and it's not exactly the same when it gets to the other side—and so what? But since I was trained in a rather rigid discipline—architectural design—I have to fight so that it *doesn't* match too evenly when it comes around the other side."

Sanders' instruments may not be perfectly symmetrical in shape, but he feels that they sound as good as, or better than any other instruments of this type. "I've taken something that was made in Africa and tried to improve on it—acoustically and hopefully aesthetically," he states. "I have a pretty good innate sense of design—coupled with my personal experience as a collector of authentic African sculpture." In fact, many of Sanders' commissions come from non-musicians simply attracted to his instruments' appeal as art objects.

Besides the great amount of time, research, and detail Morty puts into his work, several specific design characteristics set his instruments apart. His shekeres, which are what he primarily makes today, are made from hard-shelled gourds grown in the south, in California, and in Africa. These instruments take him 35 to 40 hours each to complete. Sanders cleans out the inside of the gourd, and then lightly coats the smoothed inside with a sealer to minimize the porosity of the gourd wall. "That enhances an optimum tone, which is prized by knowledgeable shekere players," he explains. Though some of the shekeres are quite large, the finished instruments are surprisingly light. "That's very important. I've played ritual ceremonies that started at 9:00 at night, and we wouldn't walk out until 8:00 the next morning, lightheaded with exhaustion."

Sanders also attaches a pre-fabricated neck onto the gourd, which improves strength and allows an area for him to emboss designs specific to the owner's requests. Many of Sanders' customers are involved in Santeria—an African religion that

was brought by slaves to the Americas and that is still practiced widely today in the Caribbean and in major urban centers. So he often portrays a stylized version of a player's personal deity, or "orisha," in his work. According to Sanders, "Each orisha has his or her own symbols, animals, colors, favorite foods, and the like." For instance, on one instrument for a client whose orisha is Yemaya—the guardian deity of the sea—Morty incised a mermaid character. These designs are embossed on a strip of pliable sheet brass, which is attached to the neck with an epoxy compound. "This gives me another opportunity to customize the shekere for you," Morty says. "It makes it something special, something you can't get from a catalog or music store."



This Sanders hand drum, which is 28" tall, was based on the Afro-Cuban Arara style.

Sanders also attaches a small flat leather ring to the bottom center of the shekere for better finger control, and weaves a network of beads around the instrument, which gives it its "slap" sound. The beads' colors can, if desired, correspond to the owner's particular orisha. And like most artists, Sanders "signs" each piece he completes, but not with the usual handwritten signature. "In Spanish it's called a 'firma,'" Morty says. "My trademark is an eye, which is meant to ward off evil—because I deal with a lot of clients who are involved in Afro-Cuban or Afro-Brazilian belief systems."

On one or two occasions, Sanders has gotten flack from individuals about his drums, since some—specifically the bata, for the orisha Chango—were originally used only in religious ceremonies. "They've by now escaped the confines of pure ritual music, though," Morty explains. "Someone questioned me about this once, and I simply told him that my drums are not what is known as 'fundamento,' meaning drums that have been blessed, that have gone through a sacramental ceremony. Bata drums are now being played in secular bands. Women and homosexuals were traditionally banned from playing bata drums, and even now this taboo has not been lifted entirely, particularly in orthodox settings."

Morty says that he used to be more involved in Santeria than he is today, yet he still keeps certain things, like the symbol for the orisha Elegua—the guardian of the crossroads—by his door. "This assures me that when I go out, I'll come back in one piece," Morty says. "When I come back in it casts off any kind of bad energy that I may have picked up on the outside. It was made for me by my 'godfather,' or 'padrino,' who was a well known Cuban 'italero,' or divinator, in the Bronx some years ago.

Sanders became deeply interested in the Afro-Cuban world



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after his first of many trips to pre-Batista Cuba, in the late '40s, unexpectedly turned into a cultural and musical epiphany. On the plane with his wife and young son, he met a Cubano who offered to show him around Havana—but *beyond* the hotels and casinos that tourists normally saw. Sanders experienced working-class hangouts, dance halls, and homes, and was privileged to attend a toque or bembé, a ritual ceremony of Santería, in the town of Regla, where the sacred bata drums were played. Without his mind-opening experience, Sanders says, "I probably would have gone back home thinking that Cuba was just Americans gambling in tuxedos and the country's black people working as waiters and chambermaids. But I discovered the black 'tinge,' which is an important part of African-rooted history."

Sanders wasn't completely naive to Latin culture before his early trips, though. "My first introductions were here in New York," he recalls. "My wife and I used to hang out at a famous ballroom on Broadway called the Palladium. The young Tito Puente played there, Arsenio Rodriguez, Tito Rodriguez—and dancers from the inner city used to come to mambo. I was an Anglo New York mambo dancer, and my wife was an accomplished ballet dancer—a New York girl who looked like a Latina and danced like one.

"After my first visit to Cuba," Morty recalls, "I came back with a \$35 conga drum. An Afro-American flute-playing friend

of mine who also drummed said, 'Let's go up to Central Park. They jam up there.' So we went, and they were ready to kick my butt out of there. But I was entranced with the scene and I kept coming back. I used to bring my first hand-made drum up there, and they'd fight to play it. It took a year or two for me to get accepted as a player. I didn't have to do any fighting, but there was a lot of bluffing. They didn't mean to cut you or anything, but it's quite the standard macho challenging scene. You split or stay. I stayed."

As Sanders suggests, being a non-Latino intrigued enough to become immersed in that culture can be—and has been, though rarely—a source of friction. "You can understand the attitude," says Morty. "A minority people are always resentful of those who wander into their scene that look like they might live on Park Avenue. I happen to have the type of face where I looked like a college professor, but I knew the New York street scene like the back of my hand, from my experiences in most of the Caribbean and Latin American barrios."

When a non-Latino *does* want to get involved in what Sanders describes as a "very closely knit society," he better have something to offer—if he wants to hang with good players. Sanders tells about the Central Park drumming scene where rumberos hang out and play every Sunday during the warm seasons. "Some people who are born to the sound of clave don't feel that outsiders—Anglos, shall we say—can have any ability at all in this bag," Morty says. "And the truth of the matter is, when you want to learn clave at the age of 20 or 30, it's not as easy as if you grew up hearing it. Even if you're a Latino, the business of learning to play Latin percussion has got to take you a minimum of ten years, I don't care how talented you are—unless your orisha touched you while you were still in diapers. But the Central Park scene was very important, because a lot of the guys who came out of there as teenagers now play with some of the big bands, like Puente and Palmieri, or they're doing lucrative studio work."

Sanders passed his interest in Afro-Latin music and culture on to his son Mark, who today is a professional percussionist playing with musicians like Dianne Reeves, Gato Barbieri, and Ahmad Jamal. "He picked up on it at a very early age," says Morty. "When he was 13, I used to take him wherever I went in New York City—up to Spanish Harlem, all the darkest basements and bars where people were playing rumba. He fell in love with it. No one hearing him today playing Latin jazz, Afro-Cuban, or Brazilian music believes he's an American."

Though Sanders is now 70 years old, he says building instruments still takes up most of his time, though "I sort of goof off in the summertime, because I've got fun things to do," he admits. And though he still sits in occasionally with various groups, Morty insists, "I never wanted to be a professional player. I reached that through my son in a way. I still hang out. My stress now is on craftsmanship—and the satisfaction I get from watching young percussionists burn up the joint playing my axes."

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continued from page 31

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leaders will record your compositions? Do you have to sell them on your tunes?

**VL:** What's funny is, I'm almost the opposite of that. I'm my own worst hustler. Sometimes it's drummer's paranoia. But it's nice that cats are using my stuff, because they have given my writing a lot of respect.

**KM:** Sanborn has recorded three of your tunes. Have you been writing long?

**VL:** Since high school. In college, I'd transcribe the melody and bass lines of, say, a Miles tune, then write my own thing from that framework. I do 90% of my writing at the piano. Occasionally I'll hear something when I'm on a flight. I'll hum the melody into a tape recorder until I can get to the piano. For example, "Big Girls," a song of mine, was the first tune I heard away from the piano.

A lot of times, people feel that even if a drummer is credited with composing a tune, someone else must have arranged it or something. To quote the old joke: "Who do drummers hang out with? Musicians." I am one of the many drummers who don't need a "musician" to

write his tune out. "The Legend Of Cheops," from Woody Shaw's *Rosewood* LP, was a piece I wrote for a large ensemble. I scored and arranged for two flutes, three saxophones, a harp, two trombones, two trumpets, and a rhythm section. Woody Shaw was always supportive and forthcoming concerning my writing. No matter what request I would make, Woody always trusted my judgement.

**KM:** Your writing style is understated, yet forceful and very connected, and supportive.

**VL:** Stan Getz recorded a tune of mine called "I Wanted To Say." He was a master of interpretive melody. He took my tune and embellished a couple of spots. It was so strong that the next time I gave it to someone I left in Stan's changes. But sometimes I'll have to say to someone, "Well, that's not *really* the way I hear it."

**KM:** How does being a composer alter your approach to other people's music?

**VL:** Often, people bring a tune to a date. They'll give you a part. It may be the right balance of information you need to

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have, or sometimes not. Usually they're kind of sketchy. Or they'll give you the wrong kind of sketches. I'll ask for the lead sheet from the horn players to get the proper information. Then I don't have to trust the writers solely to know what they think they want me to play. When the music starts, my ears make the final evaluation of what's happening. Then you decide on the variables you want to be hitting. You don't want the music to be running by, and you're just playing time.

**KM:** You've recorded both funk and straight-ahead. What do you see as the fundamental difference between the two types of drumming?

**VL:** In funk, you supposedly get your rocks off on a groove that's repetitive and relentless. In jazz, it's, "Okay, let's see if I'm ready for all the moves." You've got to be ready to pass the ball, to shoot the ball...it's interplay. A jazz drummer has to come in and out of the groove and back. In jazz, the ride cymbal is the focus. In funk, it's the bass and snare drum.

**KM:** With Sanborn, you were a high-

profile, well-paid funk drummer. If you had stayed that course, you'd be making a lot more money now.

**VL:** One thing about me is, the music is more important. Money *does* matter—especially now. But I've gotten to a point where, if I can make a living playing jazz, that's what I'll do.

**KM:** Your personality seems more suited to it.

**VL:** In terms of talking about music, I have good days and bad days. I'm actually a very eccentric artist. If I'm possessed, the first thing that goes out are my verbal skills.

**KM:** Why is it, when practicing for long periods of time, that tends to happen? We lose our ability to communicate verbally.

**VL:** If you lock yourself up in a room for ten days, you'll have a little trouble adjusting to society. The worst time for me to talk is right before or after a gig. After a gig, I'm still possessed. I play to become possessed. Basically, at that point I'm not a technical player. I play from feeling.

**KM:** In the round table, we talked about

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the nights when there seems to be perfect chemistry. You mentioned that you believe that "the spirits come down."

**VL:** Right. It's the same as the cycle of the tides, the full moon. Every day, every moment is changing. You can spend years trying to predict it. Everything that has happened in the day, or wherever the band's head is at, all contribute to whether you'll be able to transcend the situation. Sometimes, if a band has been on the road for three weeks, they'll feel like they can do anything. But they'll go into a club and get their asses kicked. You can't predict it.

**KM:** What about practicing before gigs? Miles said he never practiced so that he could keep a fresh approach.

**VL:** When I practice, I practice to learn. A cat may be playing at the drums for four hours, but that may be playing what he already knows. That's just a hell of a warm-up job, as opposed to real growth. I used to go through a lot of head trips. Back when I first started playing jazz at the University of Nebraska, I'd refrain from sex the day of the gig.

**KM:** Did that make any difference?

**VL:** Personally, I don't think so. Everything clicks in and out at different times. Some days, one beer will do me in. Other days, I can have six beers. I used to make sure I got eight hours of sleep, did all my stretches, did my transcendental meditation. Then I'd think, "Now I'm prepared for the gig."

New York is a different scene. The stress can get to you. I became a "non-purist purist." With my schedule, I have to keep my body from getting used to any particular pattern. I keep my body broken from routines. Maybe that's why we die young? When I play all the time, which is usually, I don't practice. To me, practicing can be upheaving. If you tell yourself you have to be practicing to play well and on a particular day you don't have time to practice, it might screw up your mind for the gig that night.

**KM:** Some drummers are maniacal about practicing. Perhaps they should relax and be more concerned about the music.

**VL:** Yes. I'm 41 years old now, I'm busy in the workforce. I don't really have time to accomplish things technically that

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would take five years to get to. I have found that you have to make the gig happen with what you have. That's also part of finding your own style. I used to show up at a gig bummed, like, "I haven't practiced, the gig will suck, why am I here?" I had to get a detached attitude about technique and the music.

**KM:** You're very involved with the rest of the band when you play—a lot of eye contact. With Horizon, you're the leader. Is it harder to be a leader or a sideman?

**VL:** It's harder to be a leader, which entails doing a lot of things that have nothing to do with the music. "Are we going to get paid?" Now I have to come out of my drumming trance and deal more directly with the people.

**KM:** Why, when seemingly equally qualified, do some drummers in New York work a lot, while others don't.

**VL:** A guy might think, "Why didn't they call me for that gig? I play better than that guy. In fact, I'm gonna call the leader up and ask him why." So he calls him and the leader will say something or another. One thing he knows after that, the leader will never, ever call him for a

gig, because he harassed him! There's always a reason why you're not called for a gig. There's a saying: "That cat's so hip, he's too hip to play with anybody." If what you bring to the music is valuable, you'll be called for the gig.

**KM:** Why do many drummers approach the music drumistically as opposed to being more musical?

**VL:** Their ego still lies with the drums as opposed to the music. They have to show something to other drummers. When you're able to direct your ego towards the right focus, you'll do the right musical thing at the right time.

**KM:** Even when you take a break, you're very succinct and to the point. You hit it and you get out.

**VL:** You don't want to be too hip to where you screw the band up. Art Blakey used to say, "Two hips make an ass." You're better off addressing the woman in the fifth row who's never heard of you than trying to impress some imagined drummer in the room!

**KM:** You said before that you're into meditation.

**VL:** Yes. I have what you'd call a delicate

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nervous system. I play best when my mind is settled, since I don't have "objective chops."

**KM:** What's that?

**VL:** My technique is affected by the spirits. Basically, I'm a low energy person. When my mind gets fatigued, my body goes next. I need things to freshen up my mind, then my body will follow. Transcendental meditation has been important for that. If I have a long record date and a gig that night, if I don't have time for a good nap, I'll meditate for an hour. It cleans the slate of my nervous system. From the time when I wake up in the morning, I think about being in the right space when it's time for me to play.

**KM:** I'd like to get some background information on you—and how you developed your own voice. Were your parents musicians?

**VL:** My mother played piano and my father played tenor sax and a myriad of instruments. I started out on bass. A real bass was too big for me, so they bought me a 3/4 size cello. I didn't dig that, so from the ages of seven to eleven I studied classical piano. I was attracted to the

drums after seeing the annual Fourth of July parade in Omaha. The following Christmas I got a drumset. It took me all day to figure out how to set it up! I studied with Luigi Watts, who is one of the pillars of the Omaha jazz community. He told me about Art Blakey, Elvin Jones, Max Roach, Sam Woodyard, Baby Dodds. An important thing he laid on me was about attitude and humility. Appearance and where you come from doesn't matter. You can find a great drummer on any corner of any street, in any town in America.

At that time, I wasn't practicing my lessons—I just wanted to sit down and get off. What rekindled practicing for me was checking out different cats playing live. All the big bands would come through Omaha: Basie, Ellington, Woody Herman, Buddy Rich. Those cats would blow me away. I knew if I wanted to get *there*, I had to practice.

A friend of mine told me about this young guy playing with Miles Davis, Tony Williams. He said he was bad! I said, "Is he better than Buddy Rich? How bad can he be?" Miles and Tony really turned me



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on to the sound of small ensembles. Three years later I got to see Miles in Omaha with Jack DeJohnette. He blew my mind, too. I had tears in my eyes, goosebumps from the music. It was a religious experience for me. It changed my whole life. I started transcribing tunes, working on small ensembles. In 1968 I went to the University of Nebraska and studied music. They didn't have a jazz department, so I studied classical percussion. The head of the department would consult me when they booked jazz groups to play on campus. I'd pick them up at the airport. I met Alphonse Mouzon with McCoy Tyner, and Herbie Hancock's quintet with Buster Williams and Billy Hart. Billy really helped me a lot when I came to New York. He let me sub on gigs and do rehearsals.

After Omaha, I moved to Minneapolis for a year. I had sort of a show biz gig at night, and in the daytime I'd rehearse with a band. We didn't have any gigs the whole year, but we rehearsed every day. That was a very formative period for me. After that I moved to New York with about \$200 in my pocket.

**KM:** During your heavy drum learning period, who were you into?

**VL:** Tony, Roy Haynes, Elvin, Jack. "Four" & More with Tony and Miles was one of my bibles. Tony's ride cymbal playing was incredible on that. Then there was DeJohnette on Charles Lloyd's *Live At Montreaux*, Elvin Jones on Coltrane's *A Love Supreme*. Also, Eric Gravatt floored me.

**KM:** A lot of drummers mention him as a heavy influence.

**VL:** I took a lot from his drumming. He was also into Tai Chi, which influenced his movements on the drums. I consider him to be one of the unsung, innovative heroes.

**KM:** So you hit New York...

**VL:** I got a gig with Buster Williams and Woody Shaw at a club called Boomers. I'd been here about two months. Buster had heard me in Nebraska. The first night was a catastrophe; I couldn't play shit. I knew I hadn't played myself. The next night I went for it. That started a long association with Woody. In the early '70s, SoHo was cheap space for musicians to play and rehearse. The loft

scene became very popular. Through that I met Joe Farrell and Hiram Bullock, which began my funk playing period.

**KM:** You got some pretty lucky breaks rather soon.

**VL:** Yes, I did. Shortly after that I joined David Sanborn's permanent band, and we recorded two records [*Promise Me The Moon* and *Sanborn*]. I also worked with Hubert Laws, Carla Bley, Oliver Lake, Julius Hemphill...I kept pretty busy.

**KM:** How were you able to cover so many bases?

**VL:** I realized they were unique. They were their own entities. They come with a subculture with a certain attitude in the music. I learned early on that you can't show up on a funk gig with an 18" bass drum, and you can't make a real bebop gig with a 22" bass drum. I wanted to play the music right.

**KM:** How did you blend into the very rigid cliques that exist in the New York jazz community?

**VL:** A lot of cats didn't know I was into other things. I didn't bring any baggage in—no head trips. Whatever the music

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was, I was into it. Sometimes I did find myself trying to keep the funk out of my swing and the swing out of my funk, and both out of my avant-garde! All of this helped me to define what each style was all about.

**KM:** After Sanborn, you wanted to play

jazz exclusively?

**VL:** Yes. Straight-ahead jazz drumming isn't just about playing good time. There's an intangible element that makes cats say, "How can I get that?" Trying to find that magical thing really defies technique. Some guys like Grady

Tate can play very simply, no fancy stuff, and swing you to death!

**KM:** Woody Shaw was your major gig after Sanborn?

**VL:** Yes, then Stan Getz. I found my own unique things then. Like playing the edge of the cymbals or the shells of the drums. I worked with Stan through six or seven versions of his band, from fusion to straight-ahead.

**KM:** Now you only play jazz, swing—straight-ahead type music. Why?

**VL:** For different reasons. First, I'm too old for the kind of stress that comes from playing funk. Second, jazz represents longevity in my career. And finally, I want to be the loudest cat in the band. I want more control over dynamics. I don't want to play as hard as I can and not be able to hear myself.

**KM:** Upcoming gigs?

**VL:** I go on tour with Don Grolnick, with a band that includes Michael Brecker, Eddie Gomez, and Joe Henderson. After that I have a couple of record dates lined up. Horizon will be going to the Kansas City Jazz Festival, the Mt. Hood Jazz Festival, and a three-week workshop in Idaho with Gunther Schuller. I have more gigs with Mingus Eptaph lined up, too.

**KM:** Do you wear a tuxedo on these gigs?

**VL:** Who wants to sweat up good material? [laughs]

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# Sequencing: A Drummer's Friend?

by David Moore and Carl Henry



David Moore performs in a club as a single, through the use of a sequencer.

As a live drummer and vocalist, I've been able to sustain a living at my craft for twenty years through a combination of diligent networking, the ability to please a club owner, and plain hard work. Still, every time I would see an act working with a drum machine, I'd flinch. I knew it was only a matter of time until a microprocessor picked *my* pocket. Then one day, during a moment of career contemplation, a light bulb blinked on in my head. Instead of being the *replaced*, I would be the *replacer*! I would become, aided by the latest technology, a live *solo* drummer.

Why not sequence a solid bank of material, use my voice and drums, and take *total* control of my gigs? Self-reliance at last! With this setup, drummers like me could charge less money and keep more for ourselves, and open up a world of opportunities. And we wouldn't necessarily have to go it alone. The principle applies whether you want to be a solo drummer/vocalist, or if you intend to work with one or more musicians.

Perhaps you don't have any ambition of becoming a working drummer. Maybe all you desire is the enjoyment of playing with a full band during your home practice sessions. Again, live drums with the rest of the "band" sequenced fits the bill. You'll improve your timing and your ability to adhere to a professional

arrangement.

So how do you acquire these sequenced dreams-come-true? Well, you can buy them, or you can record them yourself. Anyone with access to a personal computer with an expansion port (IBM or compatible, Macintosh, Commodore 64), a MIDI interface, and appropriate music software (*Cakewalk*, *Cadenza*) can make it all happen by buying complete sequenced songs in standard MIDI file format from a variety of sources, at prices ranging from \$10 to \$20 per song. These sources can also supply sequences formatted for many of the dedicated sequencers of companies like Roland, Yamaha, Korg, and Brother. You can find these sources advertised in the classified section of magazines like *Keyboard* or *Electronic Musician*. I've used *Tan-tracs*, *Trycho Tunes*, and *Passport*, although there are many more to choose from.

These sequences offer handy advantages: They duplicate the original artist's arrangement; sound great; allow you to see exactly how parts have been orchestrated on your computer screen; and are good examples to emulate. These sequences, of course, contain only digital information, on separate tracks. The information must be channeled into a MIDI sound source. Some of these sound sources are multi-timbral, providing several sounds simultaneously. A visit to your local music store will give you hands- and ears-on access to the types of equipment available.

As far as recording your own sequences, some keyboard ability is required to input the musical parts of each instrument onto each track. If you own a MIDI drum machine, you have both a sound source *and* a means of adding percussive extras to your tracks. Handclaps, congas, and other rhythmic sweeteners will make you feel like you're jamming with Alex Acuna! (Remember to program a count-off click at the beginning of your sequence.)

Perhaps some of you are multi-instrumentalists. Leave the drums in your sequence, remove your instrument, and play along live. I play guitar, which adds variety and gives me a rare chance to wail on my axe and show off my drum programming ability.

A word of caution: Make a cassette back-up of your sequences taken directly from your MIDI sound source, and bring it and a tape deck to your gigs. This way you won't sweat out machine malfunctions.

On a personal level, I've been very gratified by the reception my solo drum act has received. My bookings have blossomed, my income has increased considerably, and audience reaction has been terrific. And I've been surprised by the number of people who have expressed their delight at hearing *real* drums again.



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## BOBBY CHRISTIAN

continued from page 35

"That was enough of that," Bobby recalled. "I went to work that night and said, 'Pops, I'm giving you notice.' When I told him why, Paul Whiteman started laughing and said, 'Well, at least finish this date with me and then play the Coconut Grove in California'. So I finished the dates with him, but before I left, he told me that any time I wanted a job, I'd have one." Twenty years passed before they would meet again, but Paul Whiteman would indeed live up to his word.

In the meantime, Christian was doing a lot of jingle work around Chicago—two to three jobs a day, sometimes fifteen in one week—and played in radio and television bands at both NBC and CBS. He played on Budweiser jingles for twenty years, Schlitz for ten years—and the list goes on and on. "I was playing percussion then—timpani, xylophone, vibes, and so forth. They usually hired an extra drummer to play all the set parts."

Due to his hectic jingle schedule, sometimes Bobby needed a sub to cover

a job. Maurie Lishon, former proprietor of the famous Frank's Drum Shop in Chicago and himself a professional percussionist, recalls, "The first time I was called to sub for Bobby at NBC in Chicago, there was one chart with a fairly simple bell part. But Bobby made a career of 'padding the part' by playing hundreds of notes to keep busy! I just played the original melody line. Remember, this was my *first* shot subbing at NBC. The conductor stopped the orchestra and said, 'Lishon, that's not what Bobby plays there.' My reply, knowing Bobby's playing approach, was that if he wanted what Bobby played, he'd better call Bobby!"

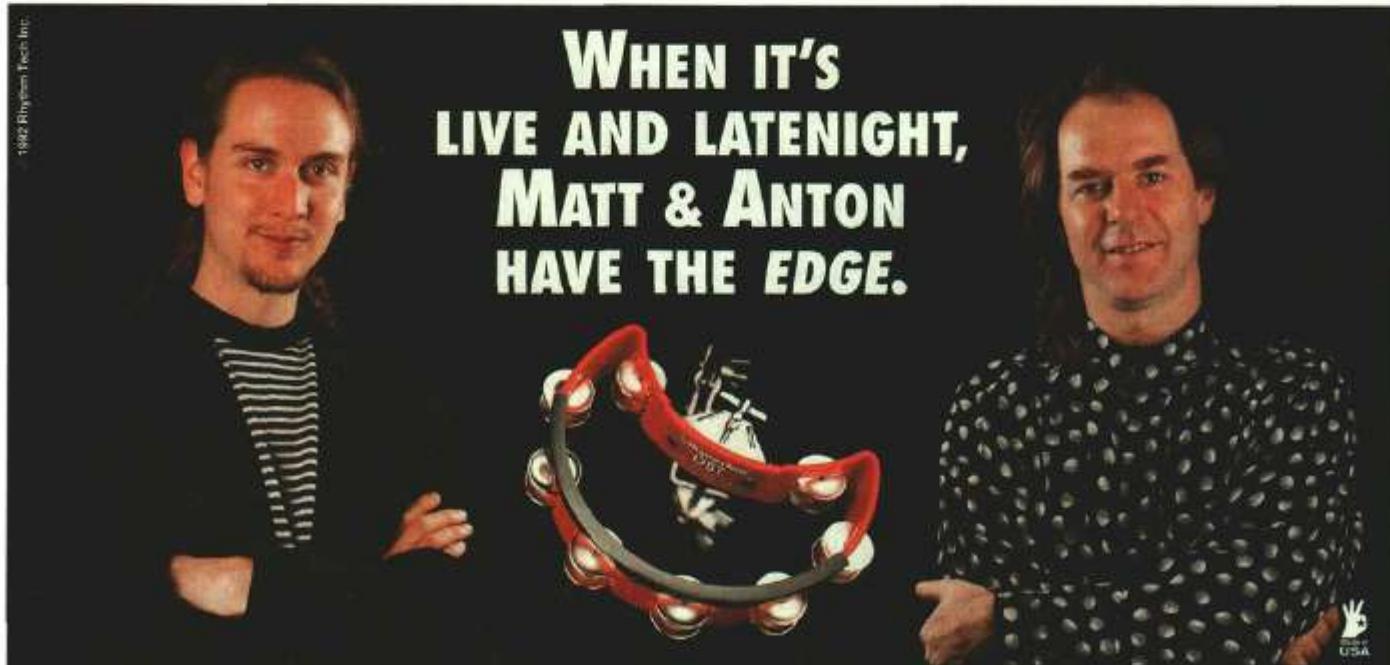
"When Bobby heard about it, he said, 'Mush'—he always called me Mush—I bet Joe left you alone after that!' He was right, and I did numerous subbing at NBC, which ultimately led to much radio and TV work and a nineteen-year stint on the CBS Chicago staff."

During the late 1930s, Bobby Christian also played with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. He recalled how one day conductor Fritz Reiner summoned him to his office. "I kept my appoint-

ment with him and he told me, 'Mr. Christian, you are going to be my snare drummer.' I replied, 'Dr. Reiner, I am *not* going to be your snare drummer!' In those days they were only paying \$90 - 95 per week for a percussion player. I told him I could make more money in one *day* than I could working a whole week with the Symphony. He got mad and chased me out, but I would still play extra man for him occasionally.

"One time I had a little tambourine roll to make in a Debussy piece. 'Brrrrrrp': That was it. Reiner was conducting and we got to my part and nothing came out! I went to Frank's Drum Shop and got a very light sandpaper to glue all around the head. So at the performance the next day, I went 'brrrrrp,' and it was there. Fritz Reiner, who used to be a percussionist—a bad one—before he became a great conductor, said, 'It sounded good. That's it!' [A *big grin spread across Bobby's face as he remembered.*]

"I decided I wanted to see if I could get a New York [Musicians Union] card, so I quit my jobs in Chicago and went to



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New York. It took me about a year to make it. Then I went to see my old boss from Chicago, Dr. Roy Shields, who had promised me a job in New York after I got my card. Unfortunately, what he was going to give me fell through, but he told me to go see Paul Whiteman, who was rehearsing over at ABC. So I went to see Paul.

"I was standing at the door there while he was conducting. He turned around, looked at me, stopped the band and said, 'By God! Bobby Christian!' He came up to me, hugged me, and said, 'You start tomorrow!' He kept his word!

"This was back in 1955," Bobby continued. "I had two radio shows in New York: *Tales Of Tomorrow* and *The Meredith Wilson Show*. I wrote the music for both of them for two years. But I didn't like New York—it was a real jungle, even though the people were nice. So I came back to Chicago and just took it easy for a year. Then I decided to do some calls and I got *all* my work back." Around this time, Bobby also toured the Far East with the Toscanini Symphony of the Air.

"Beginning around 1960, I started to do a lot of writing for Dick Schory and his Pops. We used about eight percussionists and a fifteen-piece orchestra and did most of our concerts for Ludwig. In those days, Dick Schory was one of the big guys at Ludwig, promoting their new 'total percussion' emphasis. We were fairly innovative at that time. We did arrangements of classical, jazz, bossa nova—it was really great. We used to do our own compositions and arrangements, where one of the guys would have to go from xylophone to timpani in eight bars and have to run like mad. Boy, did that look great! We could have used two or three sets of chimes around the stage, but no, we just had that one set!"

Michael Balter, a drummer/percussionist in Chicago and president of Mike Balter Mallets, recalls the first time he saw the Dick Schory Percussion Pops perform at the first Ludwig Symposium in the mid-1960s. "I was fourteen years old and studying drums with Roy Knapp, who recommended that I attend the week-long happening at Northwestern University. The highlight of the week was the Friday night concert featuring

the Percussion Pops with their drummer Joe Morello, and percussionists Tom Davis, Gary Burton, and Bobby Christian. How's that for a percussion/drum section?!

"The final number had a large 'boom' from the concert bass drum on the fourth beat of every eighth measure. Each of the three percussionists had to literally run to pick up the beater and play *aff* on the bass drum from the opposite end of the stage.

"The tune was coming to a climax, and Bobby Christian was doing most of the running on stage. The last percussionist to play the bass drum did not leave the beater on top of the drum, but took it to his next instrument instead. Now, Bobby went to the bass drum for the final note. He looked around for the beater and spotted it on the opposite side of the stage. He ran as fast as possible to get the beater. He had only five beats until the final solo bass drum boom. Bobby, without hesitation, wound up like a baseball pitcher and threw the beater across the stage!"

Bobby laughed as he remembered the outcome. "What do you think? It was right on the button! Ask Maurie Lishon, he'll tell you about it. We used to write these things on purpose!"

Maurie Lishon concurs. "I have seen Bobby perform percussion gymnastics beyond description. At times I even suggested that he try some of his lightning-like instrumental segues on roller skates!"

Mike Balter continues, "It was, indeed, a miracle that the beater landed right on beat 4. It brought the entire audience to its feet. After the concert I questioned Bobby, 'How did you know when to throw the beater?' He replied, in a typical Christianism, 'Well kid, if you want to know, you'll have to take lessons from me!' So, in turn, I did.

"Of course, my first question was, 'How did you do that?' Bobby replied, 'First we start with the quarter note...' and we proceeded to learn the basics. For almost twenty-five years I joked with him about hitting the bass drum right on beat 4. He always said the same thing—even the last time I saw him. 'You're not ready to know the answer yet!' and smiled that big smile of his."

It was during his years of performing with Dick Schory that people began to call Bobby "Mr. Percussion." He modestly elaborated, "I did all the writing, and they used to come to the concerts and watch me perform. There were some tough things we used to do then—really hard—but it was great!"

During the last twenty years, Bobby Christian had been doing one of the things he enjoyed the most—giving clinics for aspiring musicians throughout the country and even overseas. Besides teaching them to make a correct drum roll, how to tune timpani, and the right approach to playing bells and chimes, Bobby loved to show them some of his "tricks," among other things.

"Sometimes I would walk into the studio and the producer would ask me where my tenor drum was," related Christian. 'Oh, you want a tenor drum sound?' I'd ask. 'Yes. Where is it?' he'd persist. 'I've got it, don't worry,' I would say. Then I'd take a snare drum and put it directly on a small timpani, which I had tuned to a low pitch, maybe a D. Then I would play on the timpani head.

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"Another way to make a large snare drum sound if you don't have a snare drum with you is to take a triangle and put it right in the middle of a timpani. Then you play about three or four inches from the edge of the timpani with sticks, and you get a big field drum sound. It sounds like ten drummers! People always say, 'Why didn't I think of that?'"

"I'll tell you another triangle story. I take a triangle and set the bottom of it on the timp head. Then I move the pedal up and down while I strike the triangle—it sounds like a cuica! I have a million of these things!"

Bobby Christian proceeded to explain how he got a rattlesnake sound by stringing up a lot of beads, laying them on the timpani, and rolling on the head with drumsticks while moving the pedal up

and down. Or how he got a werewolf sound by holding a big bell about an inch over the timpani, striking it hard, and having the engineer bring up the sound while he moved the pedal. Or how he laid a cowbell on the timpani head and struck it while moving the pedal.

What about a gong? "There's a *lot* you can do with a gong. You can play it in the center and just get a bell-like sound. You can play it off the center and get a different tone. Play it on the edge and you get yet another sound. You don't have to buy three or four gongs—you only need one.

"Have you noticed that when gong players hit a *gong forte*, it goes [Bobby clapped his hands] 'bah,' and then it responds? But I've got a trick: use two gong beaters. Put one against the gong, and hit the mallet that's on the gong with the other one and pull it away real fast. Then it's right on the button and you get the full sound.

"Did you ever notice that most gong stands are made in the wrong shape, usually bent or round? It should be moon-shaped. For example, if the band's playing and you have a roll and everybody's going to stop, you've got to be able to get around it. Use your knees and your hands and you'll get a real *secco* stop without any extraneous sound.

"I have a friend in London," he added. "Nigel Shipway is his name, and he's had the *Cats* show for about ten years. He's using all my tricks and getting the work there!"

If Bobby Christian could give a clinic to all the young percussionists out there, what points would he have emphasized? "The first thing I want to get across—besides learning the first thirteen rudiments—is that they learn to read well and hold the sticks properly. Finger drumming is all right, but it's not natural. So I tell them to play authentically, with either the matched or traditional grip-

"Secondly, I would ask them to work on their drum rolls, because if they don't do that, they're out of business. The next thing I would ask of them is, if they're going to play timpani, they must know their chords first. Learn intervals and *sing* them. You have to know *solfege* in order to tune to minor thirds, major thirds, and so forth. That's my approach to this type of drumming with kids."

And he knew the "kids." In fact, even

up until the time of his death, Bobby was still giving lessons to nine students, ranging in age from 18 to 35. From beginners to intermediate, they still came to study with the Master himself.

One of his former students is Jim Catalano, currently the marketing manager for Ludwig. Jim remembers studying with Bobby from 1975 to '77 while he was attending Notre Dame. "I was preparing for my master's recital. Instead of working on the technicalities of the Carter timpani solo or the Creston, Bobby would work on the tonalities and the recording techniques of claves—practical things that would be really important in music, rather than just the recital pieces."

Another person who was greatly influenced by Bobby Christian was his own grandson, John Nasshan, Jr. "I will never forget when I was in the first grade and Gramps and I walked through the snow to my school so he could hear me play snare drum in the band concert," recalls John. "I don't know how we sounded, but having my grandfather in the audience made me feel like we were the New York Philharmonic."

Bobby Christian's long and distinguished career was recognized in 1989 when the Percussive Arts Society inducted him into their Hall of Fame. "I was thrilled," he enthused. "It was great to be able to speak at the banquet in front of so many of my peers. PAS is a great idea, and they've got the right people running it now, a bunch of young fellows like Vic Firth and John Beck." During that same year, PAS also inducted his long-time friend Maurie Lishon into the Hall of Fame.

Bobby Christian liked classical music and good jazz. Who were some of his favorite drummers? "Lou Bellson plays a nice, neat rock, and Ed Shaughnessy plays the whole thing," Bobby said. "Of course, the daddy of them all was Buddy Rich! This guy was great. It used to kill me when some drummers would nudge me and say, 'Bob, he's rushing.' And I'd say, 'What's the difference? He's just rushing about a half inch. That's a lift.'

"Good timpani players are Vic Firth and Solly Goodman. And there's a drummer from New York—Buster Bailey. This guy is something else. He's the only one who can play a real snare drum roll. In fact, Buster and myself were the only

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ones who had what we call a real 'American Roll.'

"I'll tell you a story about the roll: I went to do a jingle date and it opened up with a snare drum solo for two bars. I thought, 'Boy am I going to show this conductor what I can do! I'm really going to make a great roll.' So I started to play, and he interrupted me to ask me *what* I was doing. Then he started again, and I played the worst roll I could think of. And he said, 'That's it! I'd practiced all those years to make a good roll and, all of a sudden, my big chance comes and the conductor says, 'Give me the other roll.' Isn't that funny?"

When asked what his favorite percussion instrument was, Bobby hedged the question by telling a story about George Gaber (percussion instructor emeritus at Indiana University). "I told him once that if I just concentrated on one instrument, like timps, I'd cut him to pieces." Bobby held an imaginary cigar in one hand, and in a voice imitating that of Mr. Gaber, said, "We-e-e-ell, I don't know about that." Following a hearty chuckle, Bobby continued, "If you concentrate on one instrument, you're going to play it well. But don't forget that we have to play xylophones, bells, chimes, timps—all that just to make money.

"But I guess my favorite is vibes—jazz vibes," Bobby finally confessed. Bobby was a Ludwig/Musser clinician and endorser for many years during the 1960s and 1970s, and re-joined them as an active clinician again just a few years ago.

"I've been working on some new vibe mallets for almost ten years," Bobby confided. "If you have four sticks and they're medium/medium soft, and you hit the vibes, the sound goes 'bah-ong.' It's almost an afterthought. But when you play with these mallets, the sound is right there. Without divulging too many 'trade secrets,' they're not wrapped. The mallets are made of rubber. Nigel Shipway is having them made in England."

Mallets that *are* currently available (through Malcolm Publishers) are the Bobby Christian *Super Segue Timpani Mallets*. Bobby elaborated, "You can use them if you have a multiple drum piece. It's like a piano mallet—it's got a rubber piece on top so you can make one-handed rolls, and a felt hammer on the other side. You can go from a quick snare

drum roll to a suspended cymbal roll to the xylophone or vibes." Christian's demonstration of the mallet's capabilities was truly incredible.

"What I like to do is invent sounds," Bobby said. "I call that the 'natural' way of doing things. Instead of going to Hawaii and buying a Hawaiian drum, or going to China and buying a Chinese tom-tom, I invent sounds. There are certain things you've got to buy—like a bell tree or a gong. But then I stopped buying things. I just started creating the sounds out of the instruments I already owned."

Bobby Christian was very excited about an upcoming project he was work-

ing on. "I'm going to cut an album in January in Vegas," he explained. "I'm going to use the Vegas musicians, and It's going to feature yours truly throughout the recording on vibes. And I'm even going to play a drum solo!"

Bobby's unexpected death will leave an empty record slot on our shelves, but not in the souls of all those musicians that he touched. "Half the names I'm going to recall are names of musicians that the kids have forgotten about or don't even know," he lamented once. But Bobby Christian is one percussionist who will be remembered for a long time to come.



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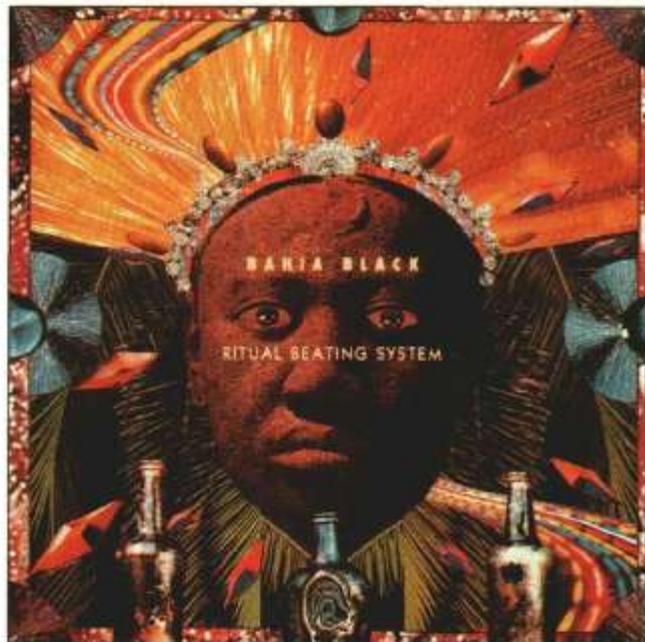


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DAVID CHAPMAN: buckets

TONY WALLS: dr

Retrato Calado; Capita0 Do Asfalto; The Seven Powers; Uma Viagem Del Baldes De Larry Wright; Olodum; Guia Pro Congal; Gwagwa 0 De; Follow Me; Nina In The Womb Of The Forest

This is yet another fine Axiom release featuring the cross-pollination of musicians from diverse backgrounds and cultures. Where else would you find Hancock and Shorter collaborating with Brazilian drum troupe Olodum, ex Paliament-Funkadelic organist Worrell, and street drummers Wright, Chapman, and Walls?

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*System* is rhythm. (Surprise!) Olodum sets up a pulse on most of the tracks, allowing the soloists to weave the melody through the music. Worrell's romantic organ work is particularly outstanding.

"Uma De Viagem..." features the three street drummers on what sounds like big overturned pickle buckets. One plays a single-stroke roll ostinato, while the second plays a neo-hip hop groove and the third bashes odd percussion. Some licks are traded, with the piece finally ending in a street-style, single-line drum cadence. The drummers really coalesce on "Follow Me," another funky piece of metal-meets-plastic boogie—inspired, soulful grooving.

Brazilian singing, jazz soloing, group drumming (both rural and urban), sci-fi movie sounds, and cool B-3 organ all contribute to the aural trance that is *Ritual Beating System*.

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Blues March; St. Louis Blues; Manhattan Blues; Sweet Basil Blues; Blues In The Night; Basin Street Blues; Bag's Groove



This selection of seven rather recognizable blues celebrates the reunion of the short-lived Manhattan Jazz Quintet, lead by pianist David Matthews, and with the addition here of guitarist John Scofield on three tracks. From Benny Golson's classic "Blues March," which includes Gadd's tasteful marching flavor at beginning and end, to Milt Jackson's (from the *other* MJQ) famous "Bag's Groove," what we have here is some aggressive, straight-ahead jazz convincingly performed by five guys well versed in bop.

Though every tune here is blues-oriented, *this* MJQ manages to draw you in with a variety of grooves that feel *so* good—from the painfully slow "Basin Street Blues," to Matthews' "Manhattan Blues," where the horns burn above the fire set by the Gadd/Gomez collaboration. As a matter of fact, this entire recording is

admirably anchored by a restrained Gadd, who nonetheless demonstrates his total command of the bop idiom, similar to some of his earlier work with Chick Corea.

There's some heavy-duty musicianship displayed here, by a group quite capable of pulling it off in the tradition of Blakey's early Messengers. This is one reunion certainly worthy of celebration. (*Sweet Basil Records, c/o PPI Entertainment Group, Newark, NJ 07105*)

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TIM CROSS: bs

VIN E.: dr

Faith Farm; Loudhouse; Super Soul Killer; TV. Babies; Neon Angels; Torpedo Factory; Punching Clown; Shy Animals; My Dad's Bigger Than Your Dad; King Among The Ruins; Smoke On The Water

With the dissolution of Jane's Addiction, it was only a matter of time before another band picked up the gauntlet. Loudhouse shares the same dissonant, guitar-driven spirit as J.A., Mugwump's echoing vocal style more than bows to Perry Farrell, and drummer Vin E. obviously comes from the same school as Stephen Perkins.

But bands could do a lot worse than sound like Jane's Addiction, and writing Loudhouse off as a clone would be an injustice. There's some serious rockin' here, and Vin E. lends a percussive propulsion most drummers in this genre either fail to match or don't even attempt.



A steady meter only enhances the energy, and Vin E. uses a snappy snare and tribal tom work to lift the band into Hendrix-like passages. The drumming is at its best when allowed to let loose under a funk foundation. Open here to more scrutiny because there's no rhythm guitar track to back the solo—just bass and drums—Loudhouse comes off deliciously raw.

Washed-out cymbal tones enhance the atmosphere in the close of "Torpedo Factory," while an energetic rhythm section beefs up "Punching Clown." Though "T.V. Babies" is too toned down musically for the band to handle effectively, it's just one flaw on a surprisingly effective record.

• **Matt Peiken**

#### THE DIRTY DOZEN BRASS BAND

*Open Up (Watcha Gonna Do For  
The Rest Of Your Life)*

Columbia CK 47383

GREGORY DAVIS, EFREM TOWNS: trp

ROGER LEWIS, KEVIN HARRIS: sx

CHARLES JOSEPH: tbn

KIRK JOSEPH: sous

LIONEL BATISTE, JENELL MARSHAL: sn

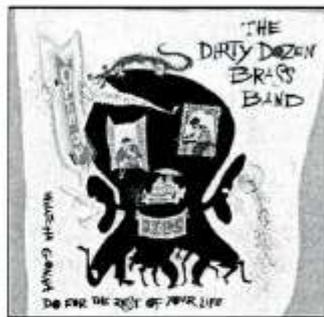
dr, bs dr, perc

RAYMOND WEBER: dr

KENNETH WILLIAMS: congas

*Use Your Brain; Open Up (Watcha  
Gonna Do For The Rest Of Your*

*Life); The Lost Souls (Of Southern  
Louisiana)—Cortege/Do I Have To  
Go/Mourning March/Memoirs/The  
Inquest/Shout; Deore Scedu (Dark  
Shadow); Dominique; Charlie Dozen;  
Song For Lady M; Remember When;  
Darker Shadows; Eyomzi*



Man, are these *guys fun*. The ambassadors of N'awlins eclecticism are at it again. Like the city that bred them, their sound can be simultaneously sacred and profane, and sometimes downright funny.

This time the Dozen (actually a core unit of eight) feature their own compositions more than ever before. The diverse, often surprising writing offers the best forum to date for the band's spicy gumbo of jazz, street march, R&B, hymns, funk, and island rhythms. Part of the disc features superb kit work by Raymond Weber on tunes like "Use Your Brain," a funky number that sounds like Tower of Power marching through a muggy swamp. The majority of the cuts, though, are driven by the Dozen's usual batterie of Batiste and Marshall trading duties between snare and bass drum. Although the duo create an early traditional texture, their drumming is no less "contemporary" than Weber's kit work. This is street drumming enriched by a world of modern influences.

From the reggae rhythms of "Dominique" to the quirky gangster swing of "Dark Shadows," the Dozen's fat sound and loping rhythmic feel lend personality to every style they tackle. Loopy, irresistible, and thoroughly hip.

• **Jeff Potter**

#### PETE MAGADINI QUINTET

*Night Dreamers*

Timeless SJP 317

PETER MAGADINI: dr

MIKE ALLEN: sx

ANDRE WHITE: pno

GEORGE MITCHELL: bs

JOHN RUDEL: perc.

A Friendly Imposition; Exchanging Love; Sunny Side; Giant Steps; Carolyn; Shutterbug; In A Sentimental Mood; Stablemates.

Being famous for something is not always a blessing. In Pete Magadini's case, because he is so well known for his books on polyrhythms, some have come to assume that polyrhythms are all he does. But as this album demonstrates, they are only one of the spices in his percussive stew.

Magadini's meat 'n' potatoes consists of solid timekeeping in the bop tradition. Not only does he not clutter up every measure with multiple rhythms, but he often plays very spaciouly, maintaining a strong sense of swing with little more than quarter notes on the ride cymbal. When he does throw in contrasting rhythms to produce a momentary tension, which Magadini then resolves with basic 4/4.

The album also demonstrates Magadini's full spectrum of colors and moods. He uses brushes for delicate shadows on ballads as well as to

propel a fast tempo, as he does on "Giant Steps." His Latin spices are also effective, and his solos are well constructed and downright memorable. (*Timeless Records, 157 Bleecker Street, New York, NY 10012, [212] 529-3655*)

• **Richard Egart**

#### BRANDON FIELDS

*Everybody's Business*

Nova 1940-2

BRANDON FIELDS: sx, fl

WALT FOWLER: trp, keys, flgl

DAVID GOLDBLATT: keys

KEVIN CHOKAN: gr

JOHN PENA: bs

Louis CONTE: perc

TOM BRECHTLEIN, SONNY EMORY,

GARY NOVAK: dr

B Sting; Painted Clouds; Earth Laws;

All Fa' Nuthin'; Phone Sax; Slop

Dippin'; Everybody's Business; Blue

Star; Guilt By Association; Larry's

World



As on his three previous releases, *The Traveler*, *Other Side Of The Story*, and *Other Places*, on *Everybody's Business* Brandon Fields again gathers the cream of the LA session elite and lets them kick some proverbial butt out of his slick yet challenging music. Good compositions and arrangements aimed for *your ears*, not just the local WAVE format station, **make** this a release that might give fusion a good name again.

While nothing here is quite as remarkable as "You Got It" from *Other Places*, these west-coast honchos do deliver. The ever-boyish Tom Brechtlein does his best Jimmy Connors impersonation on two tracks, working his tubs with pure sweat and soul, almost seeming to go over the edge come solo time, but inevitably landing smack dab in the groove when all's said and done. And Sonny Emory brings his kinetic, sharp pocket to a couple of tracks, sounding especially good on "B Sting."

The newcomer to this session is Chicagoan Gary Novak. Gary plays on some diverse material here, balancing musicality with tight, V8-charged chops. From the sensitive brush work on "Earth Laws" to the firecracker funk and gut-bucket time feel of "Slop Dippin'," Novak puts his money where his sticks are.

Fusion, tempered with a touch of fatback, make *Everybody's Business* an interesting release from the L.A. jazz hierarchy. (Nova Records, 1730 Olympic Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90404, [213] 392-7445)

• Ken Micallef

## VIDEO

BOBBY CHRISTIAN

Tricks Of The Trade

WIBC Publishing

c/o Malcolm Publishers

P.O. Box 2098

Oak Park, IL 60303

Time: Approx. 45 minutes

Price: \$35.00

This videotape shows Bobby Christian doing what he did best: sharing his "tricks of the trade." Recorded live during a clinic at the Western Inter-

national Band Clinic in November, 1989, here Bobby displays his technique on a variety of instruments. This is why they called him "Mr. Percussion."

Bobby himself explained, "These are not just gimmicks. They are practical things." His repertoire at this particular performance included: how to mimic the sound of a tenor drum or cuica if you don't have one with you; how to achieve a true *fortepiano* with two triangles; how to play claves and maracas at the same time; how to get two different sounds out of one guiro—the list goes on. Christian also covered his unique techniques on gong, castanets, cymbals, tambourine, vibraslap, chimes, cowbell, and slapsticks.

Mr. Christian's sense of humor is evident in all his demonstrations, as is his incredible technique. Although this video isn't exactly a slick studio production, there are still many lessons to be learned here.

For those readers who never saw Bobby Christian work his magic in person, this would be an invaluable glimpse into his vast experience and talent. And for those who knew Bobby, *Tricks Of The Trade* would also be a great video memory of one of our true percussion greats.

• Lauren Vogel

## EMIL RICHARDS

The Essence of Playing Mallets

Interworld Music

67 Main Street

Brattleboro VT 05301

Time: 60 minutes

Price: \$39.95

Because the notes on a vibra-

phone (as well as marimba) are so spread out, aspiring mallet players must spend quite a bit of time developing speed and accuracy. Towards that end, Emil Richards has put together this video consisting primarily of technical exercises.

This video is subtitled "for the Drummer and Percussionist." Richards explains at the beginning that there are good reasons for these players to learn mallet instruments—not only to supplement their incomes, but also to learn more about such things as song forms. Throughout the presentation, Richards often draws parallels between mallet technique and drumstick or timpani technique. All of the exercises involve two mallets only.

Obviously, one will not completely learn to play mallets from watching this video. It won't teach you to read, and while Richards demonstrates many of the exercises in several keys, there is no material included to teach scales per se. But used in conjunction with a method book, or with Richards' own book, *Mallet Exercises For The Drummer And Percussionist*, the exercises presented here will help one gain the physical dexterity required for mallet playing. Two segments in which Richards performs with a band (with Joe Porcaro on drums) offer inspiration to do so.

• Rick Mattingly

## BOOKS

OCEANUS

For Drumset and Prepared Tape

by Wendell J. Yuponce and Steve

Houghton

Studio 4 Productions

Distributed by Alfred Publishing Co.

16380 Roscoe Blvd.

Van Nuys CA 91410

Price: \$14.00 (score and cassette)

Designed to showcase a performer who is adept at both drumset and marimba, *Oceanus* would serve equally well as a performance piece or as an educational aid. The package includes the drumset/marimba part and a cassette with a recorded accompaniment. One side of the tape has a complete performance of the piece (by Steve Houghton) on one stereo channel, with the accompaniment on the other. Flip the cassette over, and you have the same accompaniment, but this time there's a click track on the other channel.

The percussion part combines specific figures that must be played with improvised sections. The chart is written in the style of a percussion part used on a film score, and the fact that you have prerecorded music to sync to, as well as a click track, makes this a very realistic practice tool for players aspiring to do studio work.

But it's an excellent piece in its own right, and would work well as recital material for a percussion major. Complete instructions for making sure that the audience hears only the accompaniment while the performer also hears the click are provided. This is a very worthwhile addition to percussion literature, and here's hoping there is more to come.

• Rick Mattingly



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continued from page 39

the potential of *that* alloy had also been achieved.

"B20 bronze has been around for centuries. People simply found that it gave a good sound for cymbals and gongs, so they used it. The same is true of the B8 alloy; it was already available on the market before anyone decided to use it for cymbals. But we got really curious: What should an alloy be to give the optimum potential *specifically* for cymbal sounds? So in 1980, we started to search for an alloy with a big, rich sound potential. It took seven years to develop that alloy."

Why would it take so long?

"We started only with *ideas* of what the alloy should be like," Robert explains. "Then it had to be *produced*. The different ingredients had to be melted, poured, and rolled before we could make the first cymbals and listen to them to determine their sound potential. From there it was a matter of determining if they could be better. For the first two years, each change got a step better and more interesting. But in the third year, it somehow seemed that not only had we reached the peak of possibilities, but

that things were going backwards. That was a rather difficult time, because we felt that while the 'peak' that we had achieved was good, we hadn't reached our goal yet.

"There were a lot of discussions with the metallurgists. We were developing the production technology for the alloy as we were developing the alloy itself. Our metal is made by a Swiss melting and rolling company with very efficient laboratories and a team of metallurgists used to getting results. This team had to stay motivated to follow this whole process through, and we tried to do our part by maintaining good communication with them. But this was also difficult, because we were talking about sound and vibration, while they were talking about the chemistry of metal. To develop a mutual understanding, we always brought them the prototype cymbals to listen to. In that way, they got an understanding of how the alloy produced sounds in response to their changes.

"And then suddenly a new possibility was found, and the potential of the alloy developed rapidly—farther than we ever dared to hope. The first cymbals made out of this metal were *very* interesting.

But from that point, it took *more* time to get to full production, because the metal works now had to start producing the new alloy in quantity. So the development of the *Paiste* line took years and years. But from the beginning on, we believed that it was worthwhile to do it."

Despite their own belief in the new alloy, the company was faced with making the drumming public understand that this wasn't "just another new line" from Paiste—a company already famous for having many cymbal lines. As Robert explains, the company took a very pragmatic look at this problem.

"No matter what *we* think of a new cymbal, in the end the drummers do the deciding. Each sound speaks for itself, so the only thing we can do is present the sound on the market. Whether it took eight years of development or eighty years—if the sound is lousy, drummers won't be interested. So in the same way that we took a risk to develop the *Paiste* line, we also took a risk to put it out on the market and find out what the reaction would be. The reaction has been marvelous. So we feel great satisfaction now."

Paiste has since been able to capitalize

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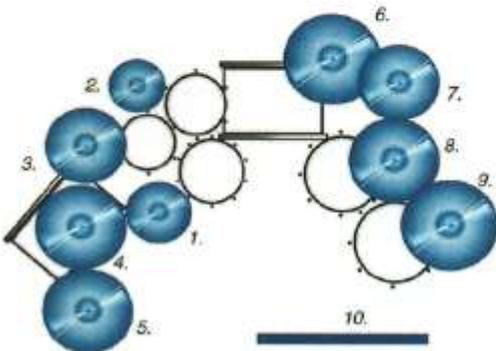
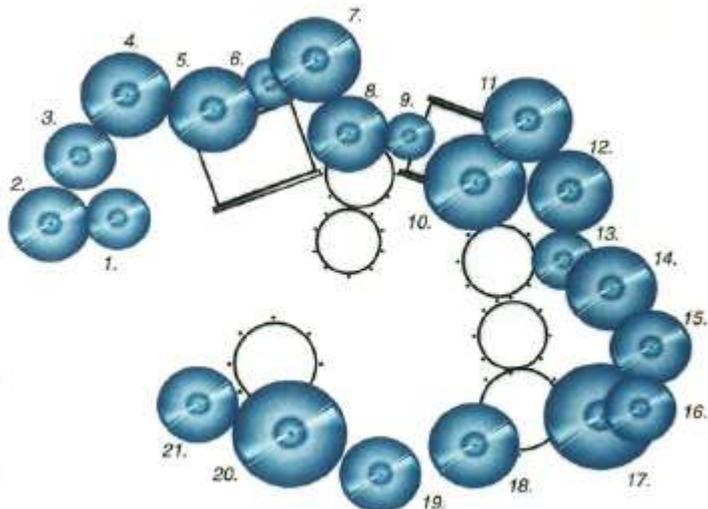
"When it comes to cymbals, there's only one number one, and that's Paiste!"

**Favorite Recordings**

- Rock the Hell Out of You*  
Against the Law/Stryper
- Not That Kind of Guy*  
Against the Law/Stryper
- Soldiers Under Control*  
Soldiers Under Control

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Greg, Robert and Mikkey

Los Angeles

**GREG D'ANGELO**

"To put it quite simply . . . Nothing compliments the sound of drums like Paiste cymbals. I've never been disappointed!"

**Favorite Recordings:**

- Farm Fiddlin*  
Zach Wylde
- Radar Love*  
Big Game/White Lion
- One Way Out*  
Lynrd Skinhayd

**Cymbal Set Up**

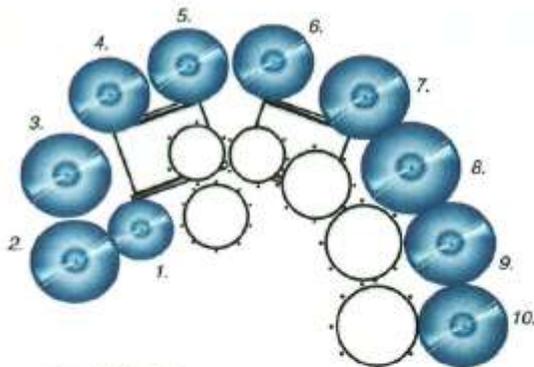
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**MIKKEY DEE**

"I feel lucky and proud to play and represent Paiste cymbals. To me, Paiste stands for the ultimate sound, I even think they sound good just to look at!"

**Favorite Recordings:**

- Abigail*  
King Diamond
- Them*  
King Diamond
- Up From the Ashes*  
Don Dokken



**Cymbal Set Up**

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For free Paiste literature, please write Paiste America, 460 Atlas Street, Brea, CA 92621 "Paiste Line" also known as "Signature Series"



on the development of the *Paiste* alloy by introducing the *Sound Formula* series. This line is made in the company's German factory, using production techniques that help to keep the costs down, yet offer professional quality. The line is also slightly more limited than the *Paiste* line in terms of models.

In 1991 the company introduced two new lines: the semi-pro *Alpha* (made of B8 alloy) and the entry-level *Brass Tones* (made of brass). At the same time, Paiste phased out some other lines such as the 200 and 400 series. But, in deference to "the market," these changes are being made slowly. Paiste is keenly aware of market response, because they experienced it in a dramatic way a few years ago.

"We were really expecting that the 2002 would sneak out of the market," Robert explains, "because of the success of the *Paiste* line and the 3000 series that we had introduced just before it. But when we tried to phase 2002s out, there was such a loud outcry from drummers that we had to reinstate the series. This is proof again that in our business, the

drummers always decide. If it were otherwise, it would have been very easy to forget the 2002. But it wasn't.

### Marketing

Marketing Paiste cymbals is the specialty of Toomas Paiste. While Robert is content to stay in Nottwil, supervising manufacturing operations, Toomas travels the world, representing the company to the international market. "The difference between Toomas and myself is amazing," comments Robert, with a smile. "He is born for marketing; I'm born for production. It gives an optimum combination of talents."

Toomas's talents are critical to the company's success. It's his responsibility to present Paiste products to the drum consumer in the most effective manner possible. It isn't an easy job. In the cymbal business—as with almost any type of contemporary musical instrument production—manufacturers have to offer something new and enticing every couple of years to keep consumer interest. But unless they discontinue something at the same time—and let their cus-

tomers know that it's been discontinued—eventually they wind up trying to market a vast, potentially confusing product line. A drummer might not know where to start.

At the retail level, the dealer has the problem of what to stock so that drummers have choices to listen to. He has to choose and buy it first—and he may not even be a drummer.

"Dealers have the biggest problem," says Toomas. "So this is an area where we've tried to help. For over 20 years, we've operated our Sound Centers, staffed with people who are experts about cymbals. We offer retailers information and advice. We also encourage them to have our competitors' cymbals available for testing too, because only this gives a drummer a real opportunity to make an educated decision. He has to hear all the different sound possibilities to find out what's good for him personally."

Paiste's recent advertising has underscored this "please try them all" approach—eliciting both positive and negative reactions from the market.

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Some feel it is an aggressive, confrontational approach. Toomas disagrees. "We're just taking a simple, direct, and honest approach, requesting that drummers make their decisions based on what they *hear*—not on what they read or what they are told. We don't say, 'Listen to these three brands, and you will find that ours is the best.' We say, 'Listen to these three brands. We *hope* you will find that ours is the best. But exercise your own opinion and make your own choice.'"

Paiste also recognizes that drummers choose cymbals for subtle reasons, as Robert describes. "Besides the sound, there are also definite vibrations that a drummer can *feel* as well as hear. For some drummers, this feeling—how they are getting the sound and vibration—is even more important than how the cymbal sounds out in the audience. Each model of cymbal from every different manufacturer has its own special character of sound and vibration. For some people, one kind of feeling or character is more comfortable than something else. This accounts a great deal for

brand loyalty—which is very strong with drummers when it comes to cymbals."

User loyalty can work against a manufacturer, though, when trying to convince drummers to try a new type of cymbal they have not played before. "In order for a drummer to consider changing to a new cymbal," says Robert, "he must first be really interested and excited. It's a whole new experience—a whole new process of finding out what the cymbal can do and how it feels. He may even need to adjust his technique in certain ways. So it must be really promising for him to do all of this. But again, sound and feeling can motivate this."

Other sources of motivation—such as fashion trends—can also influence drummers' tastes in cymbals—and manufacturers' responses. Such is the case with Paiste's *Color Sound* cymbals, which were introduced in 1985, when an emphasis on cosmetics was sweeping the percussion industry. As Robert puts it, "I'm sure that no cymbal maker would ever get the idea to make a cymbal and then put color on it. But there was an undeniable trend on the market. Bands

got more and more visual. First it was clothes and hair color, and then drums...and eventually people were asking for colored cymbals. When that trend faded, the demand for those cymbals also faded. Yet there was a certain *sound quality* in those cymbals that appealed to some drummers—regardless of the cymbals' color. Today there are people who actually favor the *Color Sounds*—especially the ride and the hi-hats—because they have a certain dryness. We still manufacture them in limited quantities."

### Cymbal Production

Paiste's cymbal-making facility looks more like a laboratory than a factory or manufacturing operation. The bright, airy work areas feature colorful walls, spotless linoleum floors, and large windows offering views of the scenic country just outside. Where else in the world might one look up from lathing a cymbal, glance out the window—and see cows grazing in a pasture across the street? And while each hammering station is built into a little sound-proofed alcove,

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each alcove has windows with a beautiful view across a lake—so there is still a feeling of spaciousness. This was a very conscious decision by Paiste, as Robert explains. "Everything is designed to create the right feeling—a pleasure in working—because the work itself requires a lot of concentration. It's not just pushing buttons."

Speaking of concentration, a lot of that goes into the creation of Paiste cymbals before any actual manufacturing is done. "We determine what each cymbal is going to be before the start of production," says Robert. "And every cymbal that's manufactured is compared along the way with original prototypes, for which every detail is recorded and specified. That way, we're always sure that the same process is followed again and again. Nothing is accidental."

This constant comparison to prototypes allows Paiste workmen to produce any given model of cymbal in a consistent manner. This consistency among models has been the hallmark of the Paiste brand. But Robert is quick to point out that, while a drummer would find consistency within a given series, each cymbal still will have its own character.

"The term 'consistency' shouldn't be misinterpreted. We think it's important that the sound *character* is consistent within a given model of cymbals. For example, if we have three different crash types in the same size, all cymbals made for each type are consistent in that they don't start to sound like one of the other

types. But within each individual model, there is still a difference. It's not exactly the same total sound, because our cymbals are the result of hand work—and that can't be totally the same. There will be infinite subtle varieties."

Cymbals begin life as disks of bronze alloy—cast, poured, rolled, and cut to Paiste's exacting specifications by a Swiss rolling mill. A mechanical press is used to press the bell, or cup, of the cymbal-to-be into each disk. "Each cymbal type has its own size of cup," says Robert. "The cup's diameter—in proportion to the diameter of the cymbal—influences the sound."

After the cup is pressed in, the disk goes to the only totally automatic machine in Paiste's entire manufacturing operation. It is used to trim each cymbal disk into absolute roundness and smooth its edge before it goes to be hammered. From that point on, each cymbal undergoes a series of meticulous operations performed by skilled craftsmen.

Hammering is the most critical aspect of Paiste's cymbal-making process, as Robert describes. "Aside from the bell, the entire shape of the cymbal is hammered out. Each operator must know the proper hammering combination for each model and line he's working on. And he must be able to achieve that combination with his own skill. There are no templates here—no guides to go by. The information is written down on the data cards for the cymbals, but must be realized physically by the skill of the work-

man."

Why is the hammering operation so critical to the creation of a Paiste cymbal? "I will answer that question rather carefully," says Robert, "because every manufacturer has his own system. But what is obvious is that through the hammering, the metal is compressed. The molecular structure of the cymbal at the hammer point gets denser than at unhammered points. This influences the vibrations within the cymbal that give the sound a certain character, color, or touch.

"Besides the hammering," adds Robert, "whether a cymbal sounds high or low is also determined by the shape of the bow, and by the cymbal's overall thickness to begin with. These three parameters are interchangeable, giving a wide variety of factors to use for determining a cymbal's sound."

Not every cymbal is hammered the same way, nor at the same time in its production sequence, nor even as many times. "With special sound types," says Robert, "there's a first hammering and then a first lathing. Then the cymbal comes back for re-hammering, and then it goes up again for the finish lathing. It depends on the kind of sound and whatever process is needed. Sometimes it's very complicated."

Initial hammering takes place on a hydraulic machine. The operator sits in a sort of bucket seat, controlling the hammer beat with his right foot on a pedal. "He's also telling the machine how hard to strike," says Robert. "As he presses the pedal down, the hammer beat gets stronger. He can change from very soft hammering to very hard hammering. In addition, he holds and rotates each cymbal in his hands. In that way, he controls the hammer pattern—making the hammer strikes distant from each other, or very close together. Each hammer operator has a master prototype to compare the cymbal he is hammering to. The shape and tension all around has to be the same so that you don't get different sounds from different places on the cymbal.

"When we were hammering all of our cymbals by hand only," Robert continues, "the hammering was much more diffi-

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cult in the afternoon than in the morning—simply because the hammerers became fatigued. Our system now provides the same effect as hand-hammering—but with much better control. And, as a matter of fact, after this process, each cymbal *is* hammered by hand. This helps to fine-tune the cymbal for evenness of pitch and tonality—and also makes sure that the edges are completely flat all the way around. That is important for the lathing operations to come."

The removal of metal from the cymbals is yet another hand-controlled process. The cymbals are mounted on a rotating disk—in order to add speed to the operation. But the operators hold the lathing blades in their hands. There is a horizontal track on which they can rest the blade, but they employ no mechanical guides, templates, or pressure monitors of any kind. How much metal they remove, and where they remove it, is entirely dependent on their skill with the blade. Each operator shaves a bit of metal off, then checks the cymbal with a micrometer. This operation is repeated until the correct thickness is achieved on all areas of the cymbal.

"Some people think that the bow, or profile, of the cymbal, is made by the lathing," comments Robert. "But as I've explained, the shape is hammered out. It's a very important difference. Lathing just takes metal off to certain thickness specifications for each cymbal type."

Even though the demands of manufacturing require a certain output level, Paiste's workers don't rush. They take care, working steadily and with concentration. "They have to concentrate," says Robert, "because the tolerance in thickness we require from the lathing is plus or minus one hundredth of a millimeter. And the tolerance in the shape from the hammering is plus or minus one tenth of a millimeter. So they really have to watch what they're doing." Wouldn't it be easier to use high-efficiency machines to achieve these tolerances? Robert doesn't think so. "We are concerned with craftsmanship, which requires the work of living craftsmen. We only use machines to help as long as the human factor is not disturbed. It's always a fine line."

Both economically and ecologically

prudent, Paiste collects the metal that is shaved off the cymbals and sells it back to the metal mill. Although it is not used again for cymbal manufacture, it can be used for other purposes.

Following the final lathing, each cymbal gets a protective wax coating, and the appropriate Paiste logo is stamped on. But the cymbal must undergo one more operation before it's ready to ship, which is... "the sound test," says Robert, with a smile. "We test every cymbal, without exception. We always do it in the morning, when our testers' ears are rested. Each cymbal is put on a stand and compared in sound to the prototypes. We check by ear, and by stick feeling."

According to Robert, three to five percent of the cymbals produced don't make the grade. But, as he puts it, "This happens because it's hand work. Somebody has a bad day, or had a long night before. Or there can be a flaw in the metal itself that only shows up after we've started to cut the metal off. Or sometimes we just hear it." Cymbals that pass the final test go to the warehouse, to be shipped to

customers all over the world.

It seems ironic that a product with a reputation among drummers for high-tech manufacture and cutting-edge innovation is actually created between pastured hillsides and a pristine lake in a sleepy Swiss village. Robert Paiste adds to this irony personally, because he lives in a house on the factory grounds— "Like a farmer on his land," as he puts it. "We could never have our production in a typical industrial area. We have a strong belief that our natural surroundings help this kind of work.

"All together, we are a very crazy company," comments Robert. "We are producing sounds, and the development of sounds is not a cut-and-dried science. Our production is still very primitive, by modern industrial terms. We could make more cymbals with less people if we used more 'modern' systems—but we don't want to. Perhaps that's old-generation thinking in this day and age, but that's where tradition has its roots."



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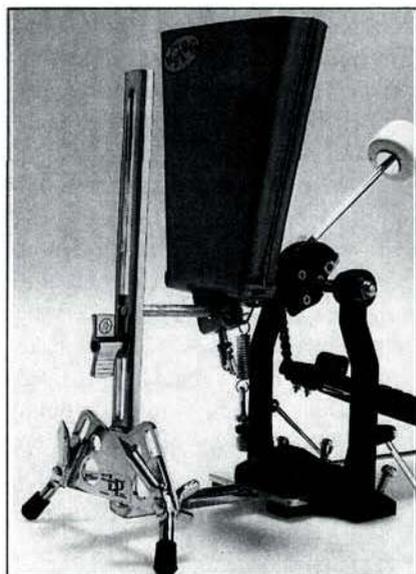
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## Innovative Drum Concepts Riser

Innovative Drum Concepts' new drum riser was specially created for drummers with racks or cages. The rack measures 4' x 4' x 1' and features heavy-duty corners, handles, latches, casters, and aluminum edging. Models are available that also include a mic' cable patch board and

snake, making setup even faster. Units fold in half for transport, and I.D.C. offers personal service for individual needs. **Innovative Drum Concepts, 2175 Pantages Circle, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670, (916) 631-0715.**

## New Firth Catalog

Vic Firth has introduced its new 12-page, full-color catalog, featuring all of the company's products. For a free catalog, contact **Vic Firth, Inc., 323 Whiting Ave., Unit B, Dedham, MA 02026, tel: (617) 326-3455, fax: (617) 326-1273.**

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## Mapex "World Beat" Catalog

The new, 36-page Mapex catalog features descriptions of all the company's drumsets in English, German, French, Italian, and Spanish. **Mapex Percussion, P.O. Box 748, Effingham, IL 62401.**

## Evans Genera G-2 Tom Heads

Evans' new *Genera G-2* clear, double-ply tom heads were designed primarily for general to heavy-duty playing situations. Evans claims the heads tune easily, are very consistent from head to head, and feature a deep, focused sound. **Evans Products, Inc., P.O. Box 58, 201 W.**

## Russian Dragon Lowers Price

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## Nomad Cases Offers Powertip Sticks

Nomad Cases, Inc. has acquired the assets of the PowerTip maple drumstick company and has moved the factory to Niagara Falls, Ontario. Nomad says it

plans to consolidate distribution of the sticks and expand its export position in North America, Europe, and the Far East. For more information, contact Nomad's president, Bill Filek, at **Nomad Cases, Inc., 108 Duncan St., Welland, Ontario, Canada L3B 2E2, tel: (416) 734-4414, fax: (416) 734-3313.**

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Also new from the company is their *717* wood-tip hickory stick, which they

describe as a long *5A* with a small, capsule-shaped tip like their *737* model's. The stick is 16 1/8" long, and its diameter is 9/16". Pro-Mark says the *717* is good for a variety of uses, from rock to jazz. **Pro-Mark Corp., 10707 Craighead Dr., Houston, TX 77025-5899, tel: (713) 666-2525, fax: (713) 669-8000.**



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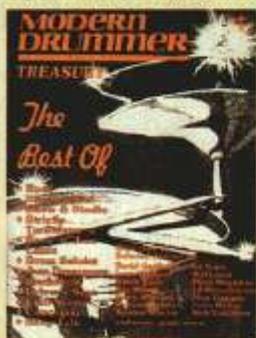
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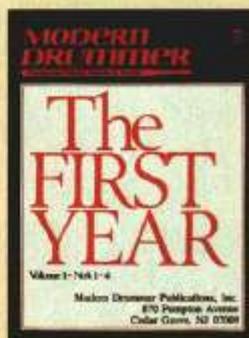
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## Coming Events

**Yamaha Sounds of Summer Music Camp Program '92** (Marching Percussion and Wind Camp, with Drumset Clinic. Contact Yamaha's Band & Orchestral Division at 3445 East Paris Ave., S.E., P.O. Box 899, Grand Rapids, MI 49512-0899.)

**United States Percussion Camp**, July 5-11, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, IL (Marching and Latin Percussion, plus Drumset Camp. Contact Joseph Martin, Director, Eastern Music Camp, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, IL 61920.)

**Thelonious Monk Jazz Drum Competition**, October 24 and 25, Washington, D.C. (International drumming competition open to young drummers. Scholarship prizes of \$10,000 for first place, \$5,000 for second, \$3,000 for third. Contact Shelby Fischer at [202] 895-1610.)

**Music West**, May 1-4, Vancouver Trade and Convention Center, B.C., Canada.

(Consumer Show, Conference, and Music Festival. Featuring Westex instrument and gear exhibit, Music West Conference [seminars and workshops for musicians, managers, publishers, etc.], and Music West Festival [showcasing unsigned talent]. Contact Bruce Charlat at [604] 684-9338.)

## Indy Quickies

The **Percussive Arts Society's** new international headquarters in Lawton, Oklahoma will house administrative offices and a museum. The museum will display instruments that have been donated to the society over the years, as well as recent donations by Emil Richards and Murray Spivak. Additional donations are also being sought. For more information, contact PAS at P.O. Box 25, Lawton, OK 73502, (405) 353-1455.

An all-star Latin jazz concert was held in New York on February 2 in tribute to **Antonio "El Cojito" Escollies** (pioneering drummer/timbalero in the '20s, '30s,

and '40s) and **Frankie Malabe** (master congero, author, and educator). Proceeds were dedicated to help Malabe with medical expenses related to a life-threatening illness. Individuals wishing to help may contact Frank Marino in care of the Long Island Drum Center, 80 Main St., Nyack, NY, (914) 358-5303.

The **Drummers Alliance** has opened a drum school in Sheffield, England offering individual and group tuition and workshops. For more info, contact Toni Cannelli at (0742) 684678, or write Drummers Alliance at 6, Toyne Street, Crookes, Sheffield, England S10 1HJ.

The **American Music Conference** has moved its office to 444 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611. New phone: (312) 644-8600, fax: (312) 644-6454.

**DCI Music Video** and its publishing arm, **Manhattan Music, Inc.**, along with **REH Publications, Inc.**, have merged with **CPP/Belwin, Inc.** to form a new division called the **CPP Media Group**.

**Musicians Institute** has awarded its

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first Outstanding Lifetime In Music award to the members of Rush—Alex Lifeson, Geddy Lee, and Neil Peart.

Recent Yamaha happenings include live performances at the Tokyo Music Fair by **Tony Verderosa**, **Peter Erskine**, **Ndugu Chancier**, and **Akira Jimbo**, and a double bill at PIT with Verderosa and **Tommy Aldridge**.

## Endorser News

Frederico Percussion endorser now include **Airto**, **Jim Brock**, **Ron Bushy**, **Doctor Gibbs**, **Gordon Gottlieb**, **Jamey Haddad**, **Mickey Hart**, **John "Vatos" Hernandez**, **Giovani Hidalgo**, **Joe Morello**, **Adam Nussbaum**, **Dave Samuels**, **Mongo Santamaria**, **Ricky Sebastian**, and **Michael Shapiro**.

**Paul Geary** of Extreme, **Mark Scott** of Trixter, **Mel Gaynor**, **Matt Sorum**, and **Bobby Rock** using LP equipment.

Miami Sound Machine's **Robert**

**Rodriguez** using Remo drums, Sabian cymbals, Beato bags, Gibraltar racks, Rhythm Tech tambourines, LP percussion, Vater sticks, and Ensoniq electronics.

**Cliff Almond** and **Frank Briggs** have joined Noble & Cooley's endorser list.

**Richie Mattalian** using Cappella sticks.

**Jorg Michael** of Axel Rudi Pell and **Michael Witzel** with Rupert Hine using Meinl cymbals.

**Matt Sorum** using DW pedals.

**Jeff Porcaro** and **Trilok Gurtu** using Brady snare drums.

**Russ Miller** using Yamaha drums and electronics.

1991's PAS drumset competition winner, **Ronnie Manaog**, playing DW drums.

**Liam Jason** of Rhino Bucket, gospel drummer and PIT instructor **Fred Dinkins**, and Dirty Looks' **James Harris** playing Slingerland drums.

**Tommy Igoe** using Premier drums.

**Peter Erskine** and **Tony Williams**

using Shure mic's.

**Steve Millington** using DW and Vic Firth products.

## VeriSonic Recycling Program

To mark its 30th anniversary in the aluminum drumstick and brush business, VeriSonic is sponsoring a "Save The Trees" recycling program throughout 1992. The promotion involves customers returning two pairs of their used VeriSonic sticks. In return, VeriSonic will underwrite the cost of having a tree planted in the customer's name by the National Forest Service. Send sticks to 3383-F Industrial Blvd, Bethel Park, PA 15102. Include your name and address, and you'll receive a certificate from the National Forest Service in recognition of your donation.



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*Anthrax*

"The minute I hit the crashes, I thought 'Wow!', these are really nice, they cut right through the band (I tried the cymbals with the band). It's great for young people starting out to be able to play these cymbals and not have to pay that much money."

#### **Chad Wackerman**

*Alan Holdsworth, Frank Zappa*

"This is an excellent line of cymbals. I particularly like the darker, trashier quality of the thin crashes. The hi-hats were first class and the ride cymbals were very impressive. I would recommend the Alpha line cymbals to anyone who wants the Paiste sound and consistency at a less expensive price."

#### **Leon Ndugu Chanler**

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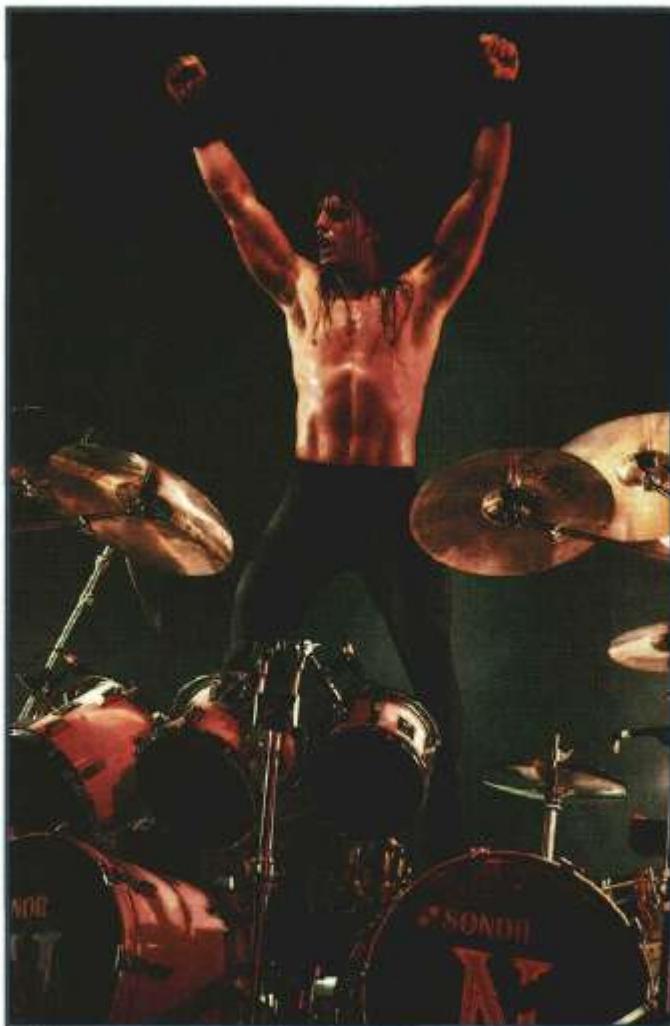
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## '92 READERS POLL RESULTS

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# MD's 1992 Drum Product Consumers Poll

In our January 1986 and January, 1989 issues, *MD* featured *Drum Product Consumer Polls*. These polls gave you the opportunity to express your opinions regarding drum-related products on the market and the manufacturers of those products. After three years of product development - along with the entry into the market of dozens of new and innovative manufacturers it's time once again to state your preferences regarding drum and percussion equipment and companies you deal with.

Please take a moment to read the following instructions before recording your opinions. Then submit the attached ballot and be sure to include your name and address where indicated. **All ballots must be postmarked no later than June 15, 1992.** Poll results will be published in our November 1992 issue.

## 1. Most Innovative Company

In the past three years, what company has consistently provided products demonstrating the best new ideas? What company produced products that were really both new *and* useful—as opposed to gimmicks or fads? Please include the company names *and* examples of their specific products that led you to vote for them.

## 2. Best Quality And Craftsmanship

Which companies do you think produce the most reliable and trouble-free products or equipment? Which companies demonstrate the greatest attention to quality control? Again, please cite specific reasons for your selections.

## 3. Most Consumer/Service Oriented

Which companies give the best warranty service, repairs, and replacements? Which have the quickest deliveries or turnaround time for servicing? Which offer the most information *before* the sale, in terms of easy-to-use catalogs, informative flyers,

or other consumer-oriented literature? Please give us examples from your own experience.

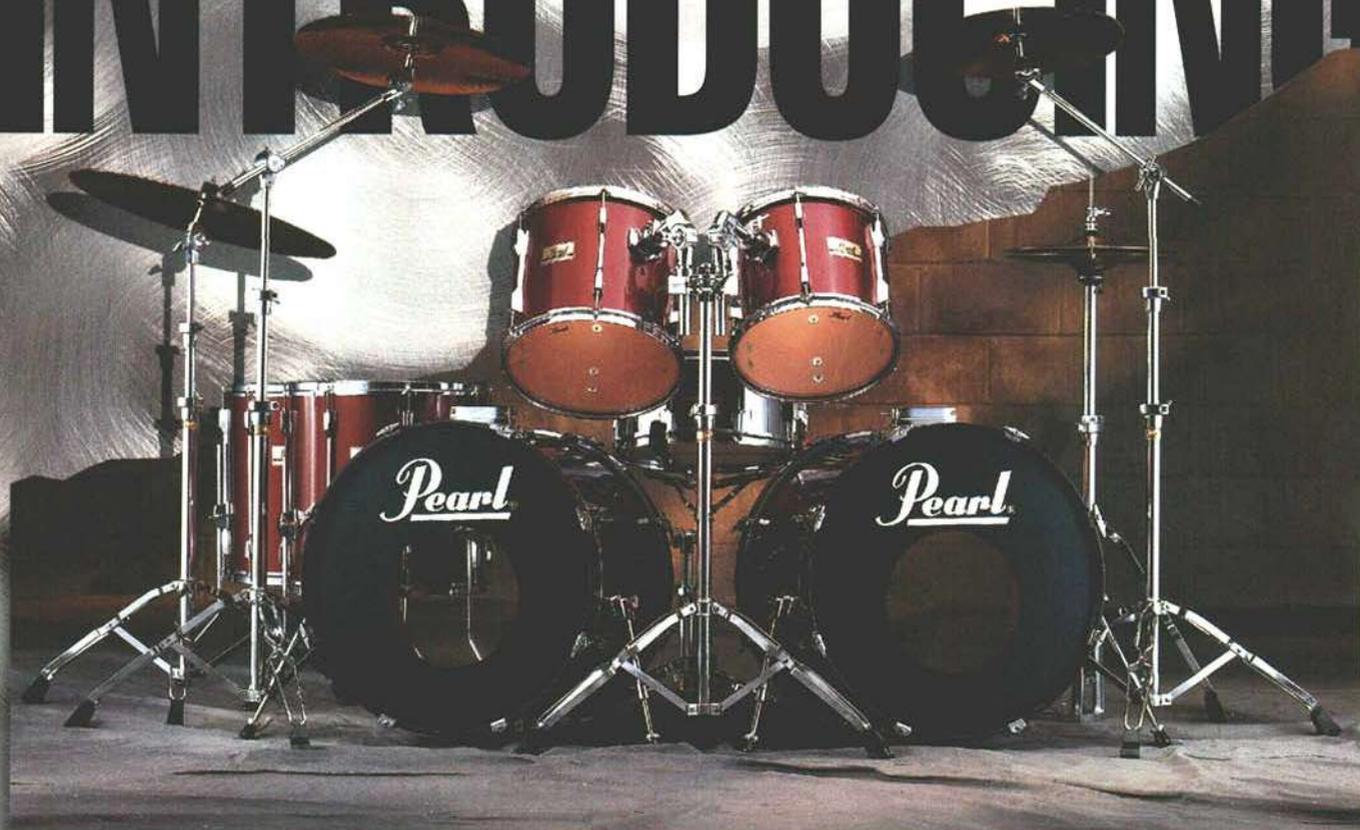
## 4. Most Interesting Ad/Marketing Campaign

Manufacturers devote a great deal of time and effort (and no small amount of money) to their advertising. We'd like to know which company presented the ad that you found the most intriguing, exciting, original, etc. Whose ad particularly caught your attention? Whose ad gave you the incentive to actually go out and examine a product more closely? Please describe the particular ad, and give your reasons for choosing it.

## 5. Most Valuable Product

What product, introduced since January of 1989, has made your playing life easier, offered you more musical creativity, or in some other way improved your situation more than any other? We're asking for the specific product, but please be sure to include the manufacturer's name and your reasons for choosing the product.

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The new Export Pro Series is loaded with features you would only expect to find on drum sets that cost twice the price. Features such as double braced 850W series hardware, (the same

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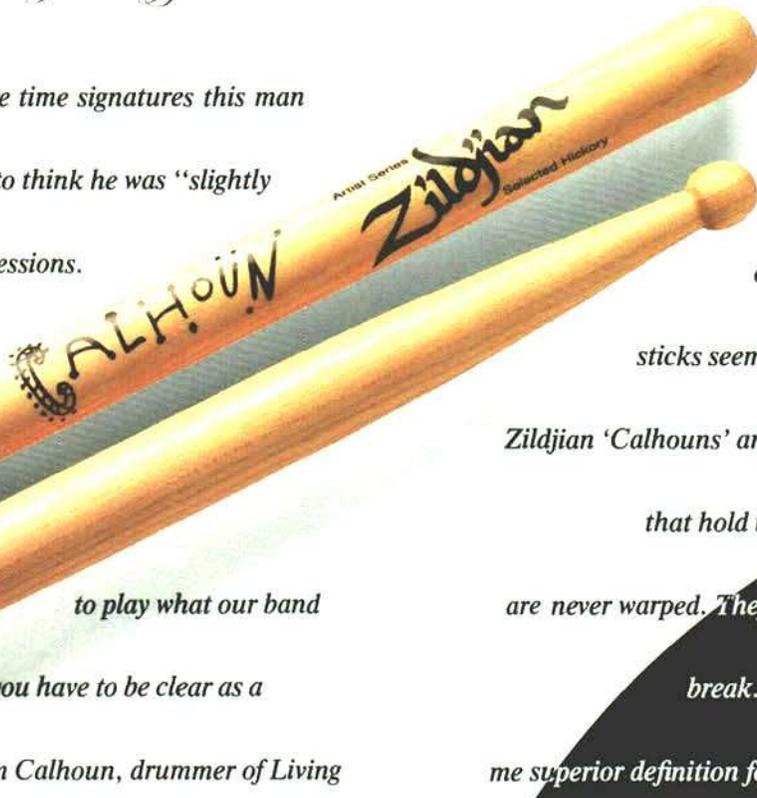
See the new Export Pro Series at your local authorized Pearl dealer or write for the 1992 catalog to: Pearl Corporation, Export Catalog Request, 549 Metroplex Dr., Nashville, TN 37211. Please enclose \$3 shipping/handling.



*William Calhoun, Living Colour.*

Some of the out-there time signatures this man plays could lead you to think he was "slightly altered" during the sessions.

"But, believe me,



to play what our band

plays, you have to be clear as a

bell." So says William Calhoun, drummer of Living

Colour, one of the most creatively rhythmic

bands going today. "I don't buy into that business of

needing stimulants to create. All you need

is dedication, a great drum kit, and a straight,

well-made pair of sticks." Sticks? "They're the most

underrated aspect of drumming. Sticks are

"DRUMSTICKS, LIKE  
PEOPLE, PLAY  
BETTER WHEN  
STRAIGHT."

your lifeline to the drums—they've got to

be tooled just right or you can't extract the sounds

you want out of the

kit." And why do Zildjian

sticks succeed where

others don't? "Some other

sticks seem okay in the store. But my

Zildjian 'Calhouns' are the only ones I've played

that hold up during a gig. The sticks

are never warped. They're virtually impossible to

break. And the round beads give

me superior definition for my ride cymbal patterns."

His advice to a player who's thinking

about buying another stick? "Just Say No."

**Zildjian**