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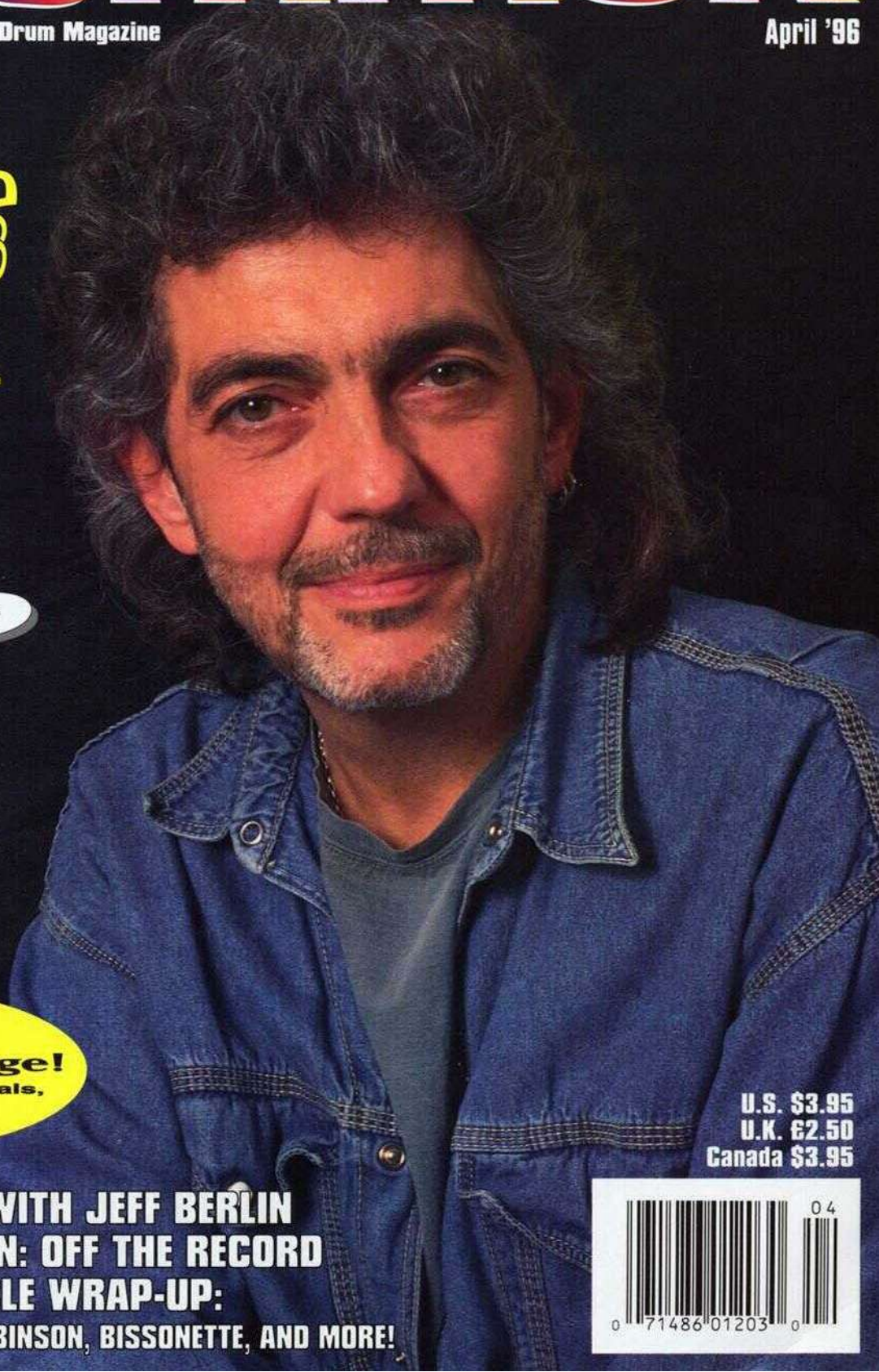
April '96



Steve Gadd

The Drummers of HHip Hop

Brendan Hill
OF BLUES TRAVELER

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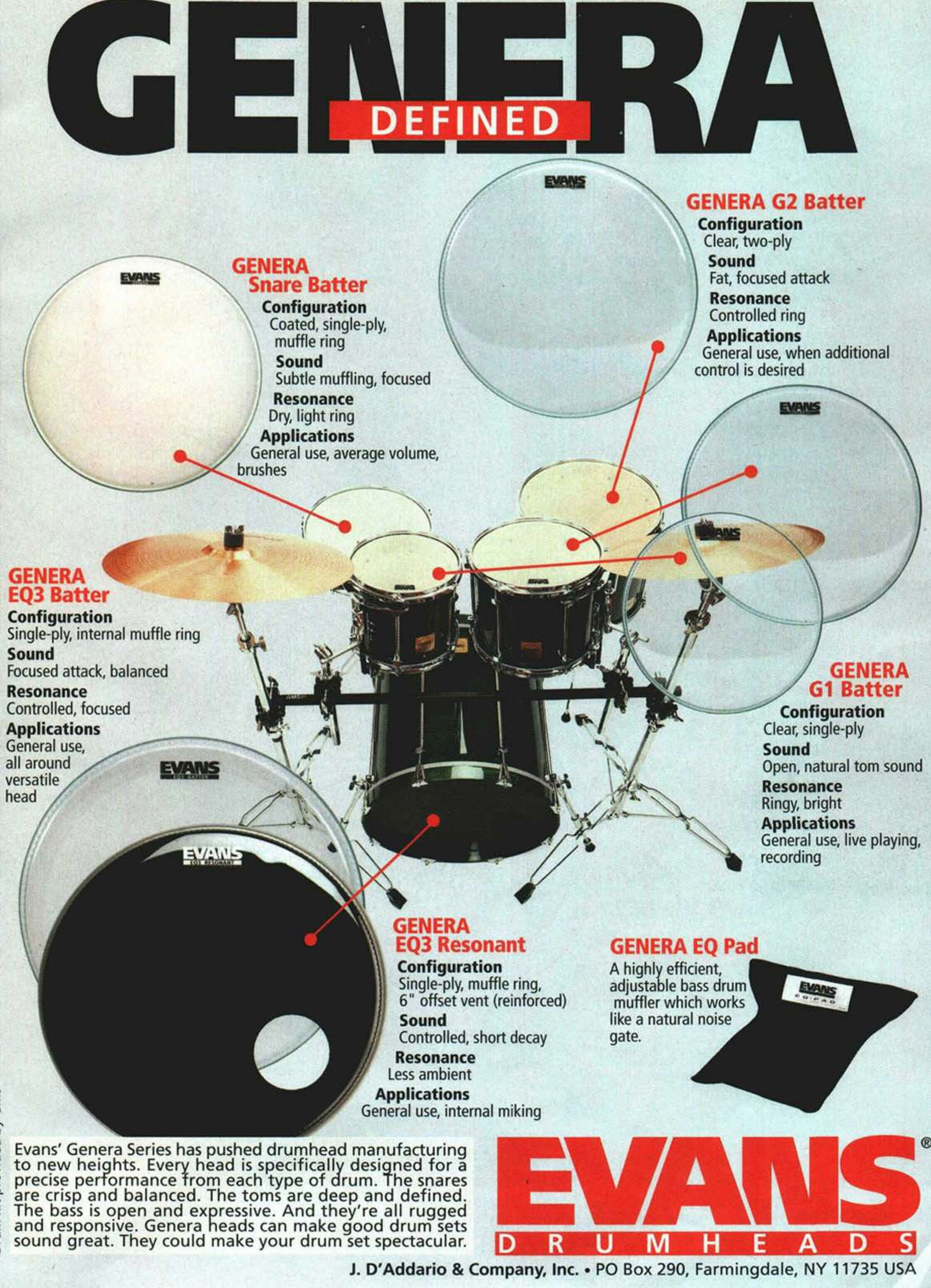
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The streets could have been a more dangerous Place in the '70s and '80s; after all, that's when thousands of drummers holed themselves up in practice rooms with the singular goal of playing just like Steve Gadd. But we all know there can only be one Gadd, and on the eve of a tour with Eric Clapton, MD and Steve sat down to talk about the cuts that inspired legions to practice, practice, practice.

by Rick Mattingly

The Drummers Of Hip-Hop
62

No. this isn't an oxymoronic drummer joke, it's the real thing. As rap grows up, it's biggest acts are learning that a monster groove is better achieved with hands and feet than with buttons and chips. Drummers with the Beastie Boys, Cypress Hill, Digable Planets, Arrested Development, and others tell the tales.

by Eric Deggans

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The first image that comes to mind when you hear the name "Premier" might be Keith Moon kicking his drumkit into the crowd at the end of a Who concert. But this drum maker is by no means an anachronism. Innovative, high-quality percussion products are being pumped out of Premier's British factory every day, giving Japanese drum makers - and drummers in general - good reason to take notice.

by Teri Saccone

Photo by Ebet Roberts

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MD's Instructors Directory

I think we would all agree that taking time to study with a qualified instructor is one of the most important things you can do to enhance your musical growth. A knowledegable, supportive teacher can supply the information and skills you need, and motivate you to achieve the goals you've set for yourself. An experienced instructor can also play an important role in how far and how *quickly* you advance as a player.

For the past several months, we've included an instructor's questionnaire in *MD,* in an effort to gather information for our upcoming *International Drum Instructors Directory.* Available soon as a separate *MD* publication, the *Directory* offers a comprehensive listing of drum teachers from around the world. Along with the standard contact information, every profile also includes details on how long each instructor has been playing and teaching, and how much instruction they've had themselves. A synopsis of their formal music education and professional playing experience are also an essential aspect of every profile. We also thought it would be helpful to supply specifics on each instructor's teaching practice. So you'll also find the student level each teacher specializes in, the styles of drumming that are emphasized, whether instruction on other percussion instruments is offered, whether teaching aids like electronics or video are used, and other relevant information that can help you make the right decision.

Obviously, making a final choice on who to study with should be given a great deal of thought. It's always essential to meet with a potential instructor first to discuss your needs, the methods used, and the means by which you both plan to achieve your goals. Three articles on the subject of selecting the right instructor, written by Roy Burns, Peter Magadini, and Rob Wallis, are also included in the *Directory.* Each of these gentlemen have had extensive teaching experience, and their advice is invaluable.

Whether you're at the beginner, intermediate, or advanced stage as a player, devoting some serious time with a reputable, qualified teacher can certainly make a difference. Hopefully, MD's *International Drum Instructors Directory* will aid you in narrowing down the selection process. Look for it advertised in an upcoming issue of the magazine.

RS

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THE • WORLD'S • PREMIER • DRUMMERS

Profile: Doane Perry
of Jethro Tull

Drumwear by Geddit Drumwear.

PERSONAL DATA:

Doane Perry

BORN: New York City, USA

CURRENT & RECENT PROJECTS:

- Completed 18 month World Tour with Jethro Tull, celebrating the band's 25th Anniversary, and accompanying Boxed Set and Anniversary Video.
- Recorded and performed with Ian Anderson on *"Divinities"* Tour, playing orchestral and tuned percussion, as well as drumset.
- World Tour with Jethro Tull from 1995-1996 to promote new album entitled "Roots to Branches."
- Recorded my own project entitled *"Thread"* due out this year.

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20TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

I'd like to congratulate you—not only for twenty years of information and inspiration to the drumming community, but for a fantastic 20th Anniversary Issue as well. I have subscribed to your magazine for years, and I don't think I have ever enjoyed a single issue as much as this one. From your interesting "Evolution Of The Drumset" article and your feature tribute to John Bonham to your notable quotes from some of the best drummers of all time, your Anniversary Issue kept me engrossed until the wee hours of the morning. Thanks again for all of the education and inspiration you have provided me over the years.

Danny Williams
Key West, FL

Congratulations, you've done it! The 20th Anniversary Issue is one of the best, if not *the* best, issue you guys have ever published! I speak as a long-time subscriber, and the nostalgia of the writing, the photos, et al is a complete thing of beauty. I couldn't put this issue down before reading it cover to cover. It's especially good for the younger drummers, to show them where they came from. What a learning experience!

Marv Gordon
North Miami Beach, FL

OF COURSE, YOU CAN'T PLEASE EVERYONE

Okay, okay...so you've been around for twenty years. That's great, really. But why did your 20th Anniversary Issue have to reinforce the fact that after twenty years you're *still* not living up to your title? I mean, look at the features in that issue: a retrospective of quotations from *past articles,* a look at the *history* of the drumkit, and a cover story on a drummer who's been *dead* for fifteen years. What's modern there? Then look at the inside profiles: a lady drummer whose heyday was in the swing era, a teacher who's *working* with today's drummers but who *never* really was a major player himself, and *another* dead drummer from the early days of jazz. (I'll admit that Akira Jimbo is a contemporary drummer—but how many American drummers have heard enough about or from him to really be interested in him?)

Your *Update* section was filled with older drummers like Simon Kirke (you mean Bad Company is still *alive*!) and Jeff Hamilton, your *Ask A Pro* department featured Simon Phillips (along with only slightly less "veteran" players Dave Abbruzzese and Mark Zonder), and the *Drum Soloist* transcription was from—lord help us—yet *another* drummer who died years ago.

There's nothing wrong with covering veterans or historic players. But let's see some *really* modern guys in the magazine to balance the established (or *dead)* drummers. Where's Carter Beauford, for crying out loud? Where's Brendan Hill of Blues Traveler? What about the drummers from Hootie & the Blowfish, Live, Smashing Pumpkins, or even more obscure bands that are generating interest *right now*? How about getting *modern, Modern Drummer*?

Vince Williams
Chicago, IL

A FITNESS REGIMEN

I liked the editorial by Ron Spagnardi in the December '95 issue titled "A Fitness Regimen." Congrats on your routine, Ron! I've been training with weights, martial arts, and cardio-vascular exercises like yours for years. To your recommendations about C/V exercises and weightlifting, I'd like to add the importance of proper rest, diet, plenty of vitamin C, and other vitamin and mineral supplementation.

I also suggest that drummers consume a "sports drink" to replace what their bodies lose while playing in poorly ventilated, smoke-filled rooms. (Thousands of people die each year from the effects of second-hand smoke alone.) I drink Twinlabs brand *Ultra-Fuel* after my workouts in the gym and my performances with my band. *Ultra-Fuel* adds complex carbohydrates (glucose polymers) and rehydrates and rebuilds the body—helping it to reach and maintain peak efficiency. I hope we'll hear more about fitness and drumming in future issues of *MD.*

David Rodway
Albuquerque, NM

MD ON THE NET

I'm sure I'm not the first one to suggest this, but how about creating a *Modern Drummer* magazine on-line? One of the obvious advantages would be the ability to listen to the exercises in your various departments, possibly even played by the artists who created them. This would be an enormous benefit to drummers who don't read music. Another possibility would be sound clips from your feature story. Maybe your reporters could start taking videos of their interviews, and selected parts could be available for downloading and viewing at the customer's leisure.

Links could be created to advertisers and service providers. Three-dimensional views and sound clips could really showcase a product, and customers could connect to get as much information as they wanted. Of course the manufacturers would need to create this type of advertising, but wouldn't it be worth it?

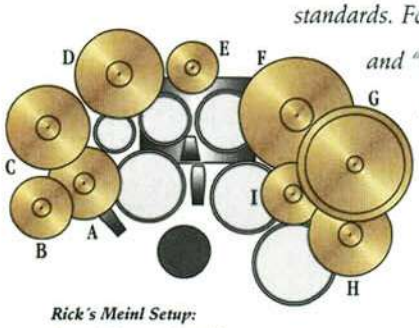
Of course, not all of your current readers have daily access to the internet, and there may be some production obstacles. But the idea of an on-line publication like this excites me so much that I thought it was worth writing to you about.

Tom Singer
via Internet

Editor's note: Tom, you've been reading our minds. We are currently developing a World Wide Web site for MD, *and we've been discussing many of the possibilities you've suggested. You're right—there are some production obstacles we have to*

RICK'S ADVANCED CYMBAL STUDIES

Here you can see how Rick Latham picks out his cymbals by their sound - just like any other drummer would do. Never happy with the ordinary, Rick has always set new standards. For example with his two book and video classics "Advanced Funk Studies" and "Contemporary Drumset Techniques" which every serious drummer has made his homework. Today Rick is an absolute institution in terms of drum clinics and travels worldwide from workshop to workshop. As an in demand studio and live player he has performed with artists such as Quincy Jones, B.B.King, Neal Schon, Bill Watrous, Larry Carlton and R&B bass legend Chuck Rainey. Even with his busy schedule Rick always manages to find time for his new hobby: "Advanced Cymbal Studies"!



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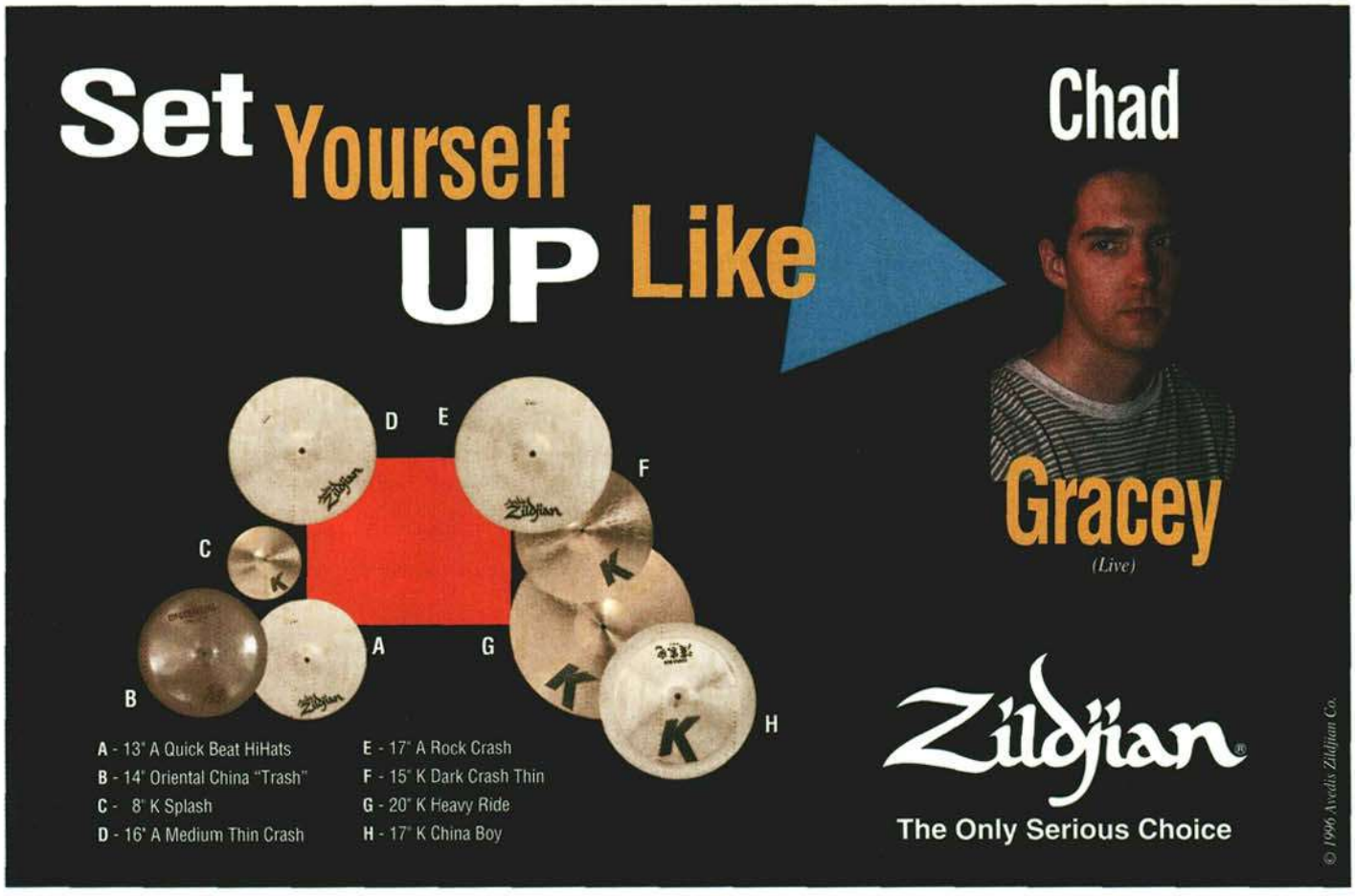
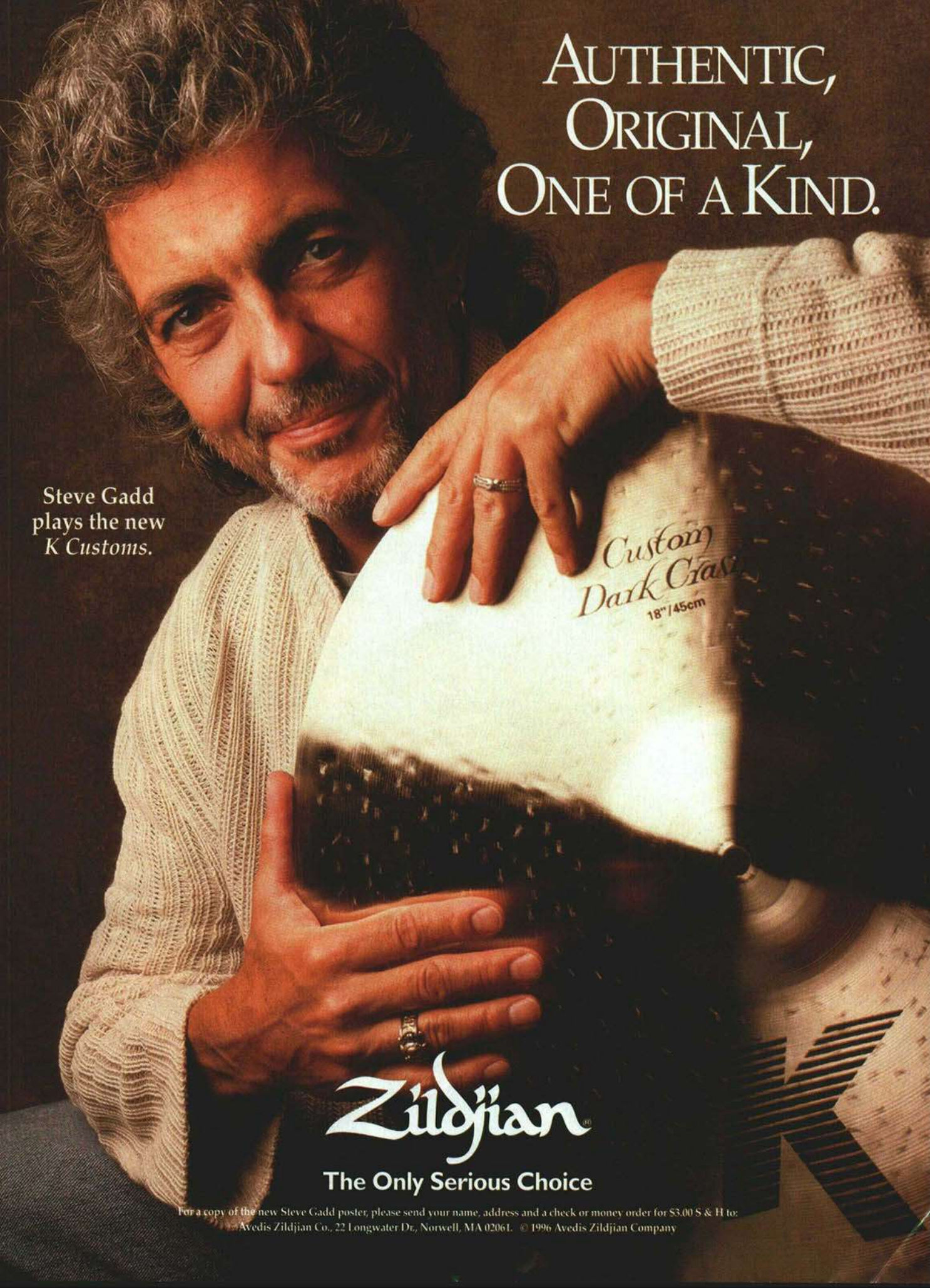
overcome. But you can look forward to seeing a comprehensive on-line package from MD *in the very near future.*

SPANISH CONNECTION SOUGHT

I'm a Spanish *MD* subscriber, and I'm really interested in buying records, method books—absolutely anything to do with the world of drumming. My problem is that not an awful lot of that kind of stuff reaches Spain. I'm looking for an honest and honorable person who would be able to get a hold of *Double Bass Drumming* by Joe Franco, the last Mojo Bros. album, the *Burning For Buddy* album, the Dixie Dregs' *Full* Circle, and Will Calhoun's *Housework* for me. Of course, I will look after all the costs involved (by check). Anyone interested in giving me a hand may contact me at:

Antonio F. Cobo
Avenida de Villava 20 A 3-Dcha
31015 Pamplona (Navarra)
Spain

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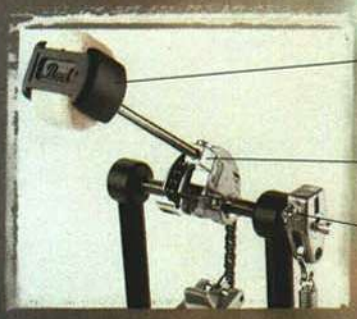

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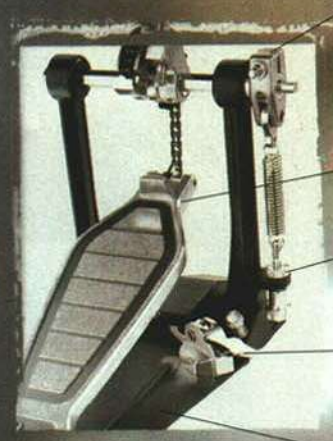

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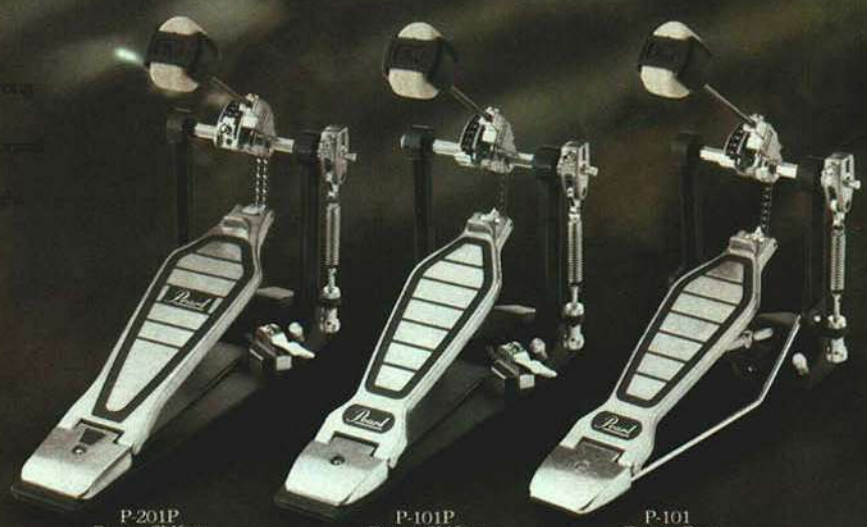

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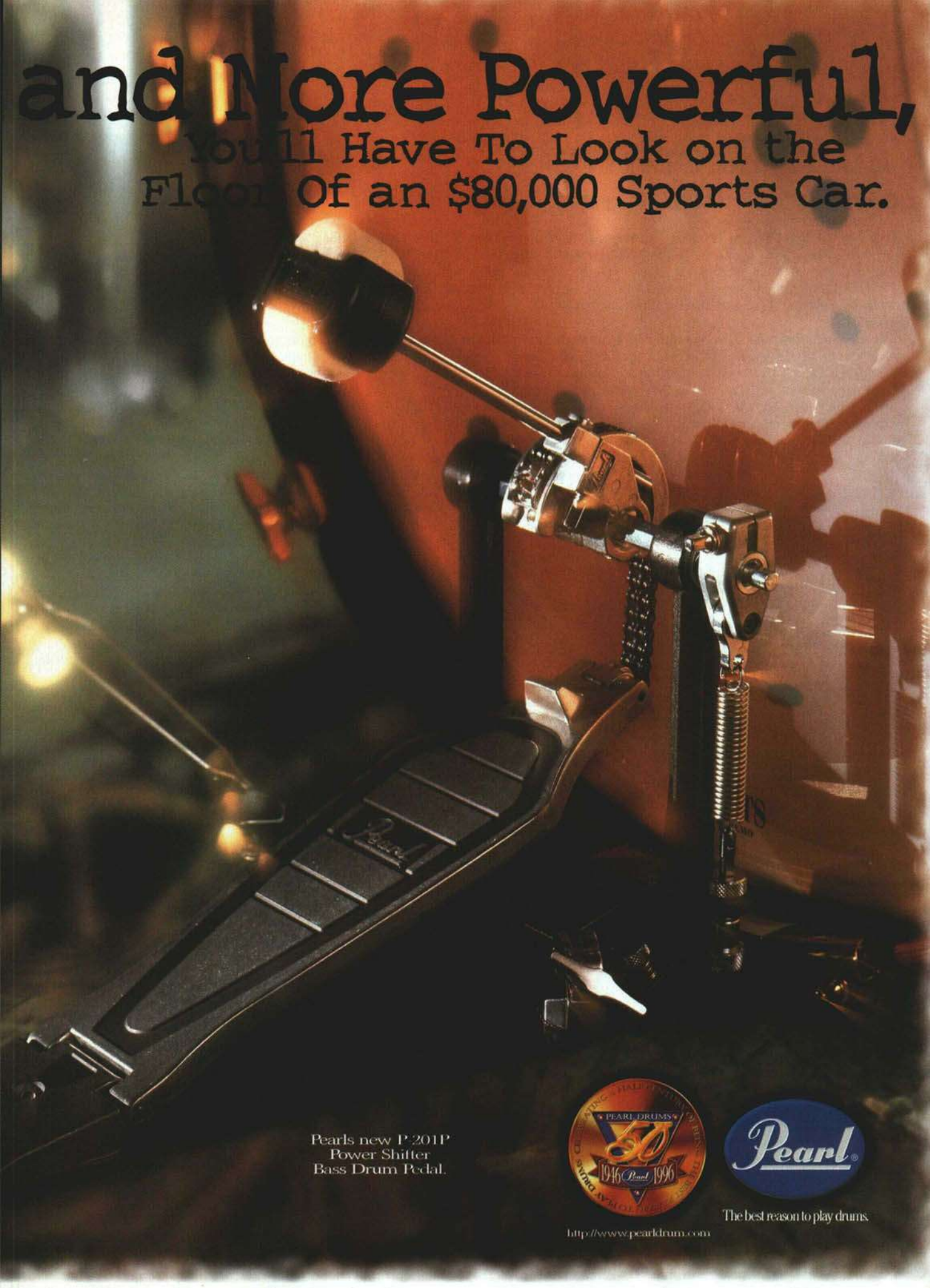
Double Pedal versions are also available.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Tom Brechtlein

Drivin' Tlie Blue Ford

Recording *Handful Of Blues* was a new experience for Robben Ford and The Blue Line, according to Tom Brechtlein. The difference on this, their third GRP release, was the presence of producer Danny Kortchmar. "We produced the last two records ourselves," says the drummer, "and if you're consciously aware of it or not, it's another responsibility that's in the back of your mind. This time we could be the *band,* just a bunch of guys in the room playing. Taking that hat off allowed us to just play. We did twelve tracks in about four days and had a blast."

One event in particular stands out in Tom's memory about the benefits of having a producer. "I remember when we played 'Rugged Road,'" he says. "I walked into the control room and said, 'Well, do you think we should do it again?' and Danny said, 'What, are you nuts? Listen to that. If there's something wrong with that then I'm going home.' So he saved us from ourselves in a lot of ways."

Handful Of Blues features a subtly wrenching Ford remake of the Animals' "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood," with a heavy half-time verse. "Danny suggested we rock it up a little bit, and I went, 'Boom-boom.. .baaap, boom-boom.. .baaap.' After the half-time in the front we agreed to play regular time, then go back to the half-time on the verse. It was a short discussion and then we tracked it."

Tom is amused by how quickly grooves and tunes solidify for the group after their six years together. "Runnin Out On Me" has a toneful groove that Brechtlein claims was partially Al Green-inspired. "It's the tom-toms out front," he says, "just taking a mambo-type idea and smoothing it out. Then Robben suggested a drum lick from the Beatles' 'I Feel Fine' to play at the beginning. I knew the exact Ringo Starr lick that he meant. Other people would think we were talking in riddles, but no. Sometimes all he has to do is mention a record. 'Do that Bernard Purdie-Aretha Franklin thing.' 'Do the Muscle Shoals thing.' 'Okay.'"

Brechtlein wasn't raised in the thick of the Austin blues scene as was Blue Line bassist Roscoe Beck. Tom learned *his* double shuffle from a Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Big Band album when he was in high school. He created a Latin-blues hybrid on 1992's "I'm A Real Man," and expounded on it this year on "Strong Will To Live," what he calls a "mixed-salad blues rumba." "I remember asking Roscoe what I should play on 'Real Man,' and he said, 'Play a rumba.' I said, 'You've got to be kidding me.' So I switched the groove up and tailored a rumba according to what everybody else was playing. I found out that was how to play a blues rumba, going to the bell of the cymbal on the chorus."

Brechtlein shares his six years of experience with The Blue Line on DCI Video's *Blues One* and *Blues Two. "I* want to get the younger drummers learning how to play grooves," he says. "I was an offender when I was a kid—you become a chopsmeister and forget about the groove. The videos are also for the players who don't have aspirations to become pros but still like playing their weekend gig. It's geared towards that too, just so you can play and have fun."

Robin Tolleson

Sepultura's Igor Cavalera

Back To His Roots

Igor Cavalera is very pleased with the recording of Sepultura's new album, Roots. "On every record before," the drummer states, "I would get my drum sound the way I would want it and then I would fight to get that sound on tape. It was nuts. I would be feeling something and when I walked into the room to listen to it, it was something totally different. If you want to hear the drums sound like an explosion, you have to make it; you can't expect your soundman to push the reverb every time you touch the drums so everybody will be scared. If you want to hear it powerful, it has to come from you."

Kevin Estrada

Igor admits the room at L.A.'s Indigo Studios scared him at first. "We're used to recording our albums in huge rooms, but the room at Indigo was small. I played very tiny 20" kick drums, but it was sounding really big inside this little room."

For this album Cavalera and company wanted to bring in some other influences besides their trademark aggeres sion and double bass blaze. So they recorded percussion jams in a canyon with Brazilian percussionist Carlinhos Brown. Producer Ross Robinson climbed down into the canyon to place microphones two hundred feet down. Then they placed mic's three hundred feet back, recording the reflection off the mountain and the canyon.

"There were all sorts of Brazilian instruments," Cavalera explains. "And we would swap a lot. Carlinhos would get on the djembe, I would go to the surdos. Sometimes we'd play with sticks, sometimes with hands. It started out as just jamming *a* little, then suddenly we were on the same page. We'd all drop to a level and then come back strong. It was communication through our hands."

Robyn Flans

BOBBY ROCK
Clinic King

After seven months, 35,000-plus miles, and 110 Peavey-sponsored "Rock Across America" drum clinics, Bobby Rock is ready for a break. He and his two drum techs recently wrapped up one of the most aggressive clinic tours in the industry.

In mid-March, Rock jumped on the road with the tour in the United States and Canada. The three-man outfit set out in a motor home loaded with Bobby's sixteen-piece, quadruple bass, maple-finished drumkit, making appearances in thirty-six states and four Canadian provinces. Midway through the tour, drum customizer John Douglas put the final touches on Bobby's "Renaissance kit," allowing him to finish up the tour with the style and finesse of a *true* Renaissance Man (the nickname Bobby picked up along the tour).

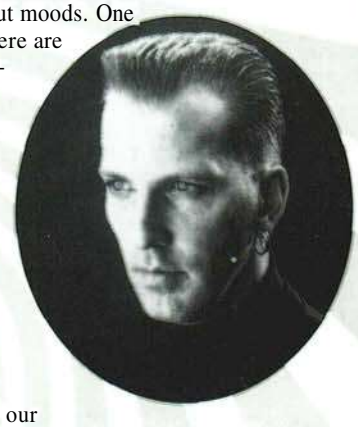
Due to popular demand, the number of performances grew as the tour progressed. According to Bobby, "If they'd told me before the tour started that I would do over one hundred dates, I wouldn't have believed them!" On September 25, Leitz Music in Panama City, Florida hosted the landmark 100th clinic. According to Phillip Leitz, owner of the store, "Bobby was a real hit. The drums were beautiful, the sound was good, and it was *as* educational as it was impressive."

Most of the clinics were sponsored by and held at the stores of Peavey dealers. However, Bobby states, "This tour was remarkable. Not only did the dealers sponsor the clinics at their stores, but some even booked ballrooms, theaters, sound stages, and clubs for the performance. We were also able to play at a few high schools, colleges, and music conservatories—places ordinarily overlooked by events such as this."

THE MAVERICKS' PAUL DEAKIN

As Paul Deakin puts it—with a laugh—what a terrible situation it was when *What A Crying Shame* was selling so much that the Mavericks had to delay the release of their new album *Music For All Occasions.*

"This album is a lot mellower than some of our others," says Deakin, who admits the album was inspired by listening to Ray Coniff. "This album is more about moods. One song we did with Flaco Jimenez is a Tex-Mex rave-up tune, and there are a couple of rockabilly shuffle things, but there's a lot of almost standard-sounding stuff. This one seemed to go back more to what I learned in jazz school than the other records, which was fun."



Deakin says the press's description of the record as "cocktail country" is apt, although it is not indicative of a future direction. "The band was derived on the concept of our love for the late '50s, early '60s country," he says, "which had so many influences then. The King of rock 'n' roll had more country in him than just about anybody, and Johnny Cash had a lot of rock 'n' roll in him. What was Buddy Holly? Rockabilly, country, rock, or pop? People say, 'You know, you're not exactly country.' but we are. That's exactly what country is. It's all American roots music.

"One thing we've always strived for is getting more into what this band is live on stage," the drummer asserts. "When we first recorded our independent album, it was drums and bass, and then we added stuff on top. On every record since we've tried to overdub less and less. This record is still not quite what we are live, but it's getting closer."

For Deakin, the Lynyrd Skynyrd tribute album the band contributed to was even closer, as was the cut of "Matchbox" they did with Carl Perkins and Duane Eddy for *Red Hot & Country.* "Nothing has topped being in the studio with Carl Perkins—not winning these awards, not selling a million and a half records," Paul states. "It was such a thrill to look in the booth next to me and see Carl! We only did two takes of the song, which was the only disappointing aspect. There was not one overdub—all the solos were live. But that track was a little bit closer to what we do live."

Robyn Flans

News...

Carlos Vega cutting tracks with Vince Gill.

Jimmy DeGrasso on Dave Mustaine's recent release. He has also been doing live dates with Y&T.

Adam Kary on the road, supporting God Lives Underwater's debut LP, *Empty.*

Eddie Bayers cutting tracks with Lorrie Morgan, Doug Stone, Etta James, the Beach Boys, David Ball, Sammy Kershaw, Billy Dean, and Hank Williams, Jr.

Rocco Bidlovski on 1000 Mona Lisas' debut EP and forthcoming album, *New Disease.*

Steve Ferrone on self-titled debut from a band called BFD.

Deen Castronovo working with Geezer Butler in a configuration called G/Z/R. Their album *Plastic Planet* was recently released.

Kenny Aronoff currently on the road with Bob Seger.

Bruce Gary is featured on *Drum Vocabulary,* a CD library of looped rock beats.

Gary Mallaber is on Bruce Springsteen's newest, *The Ghost Of Tom Jode.*

Congratulations to Cheryl and **Joe Franco** on the birth of their daughter, Sarah Nicole.

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Bobby Rock *(Nelson, Clinic Specialist)*

"Good cymbal sounds for percussionists are hard to find. That's what makes AA so great. There are Mini Chinese, China Splashes, Rocktagon Splashes, and this great Latin-flavored El Sabor."
Richie 'Gajate' Garcia
(Latin Specialist, Hiroshima)

"I mix AA, AAX, and HH... but for laying down a groove, AA really does the job, because it plays easy and cuts so well. Monsterous!"
Chad Smith
(Red Hot Chili Peppers)

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China Splash
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Dan Barker
(V.P., Manufacturing)

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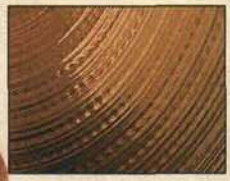

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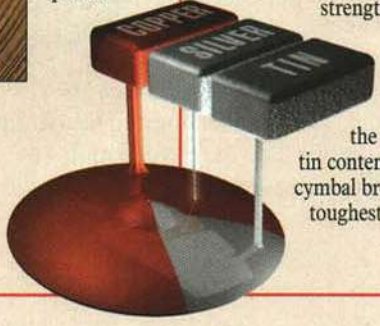

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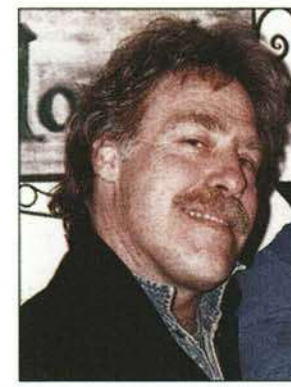


Q *MD's* January cover story on John Bonham got me wondering about his live miking setup. Since you teched for Bonzo, can you tell me if he had his drumkit mic's gated when playing live? If so, in what year did Bonham start gating? Was it with the advent of close-miking his drumkit? And were the mic's EQ'd separately? Also, it sounds like his kit has been tuned with the bottom heads tighter—is this correct?

Steve Parsons
Mt. Pearl, Newfoundland, Canada

A John never used gates; they didn't appear on the scene until the late '70s. He did believe in close-miking for live performances. He also believed in tuning, and in hitting the drums in their "sweet spots" to get the best possible acoustic sound out of them before the mic's were even involved. We used ShowCo Sound Co. on tours; here's a list of the mic's they used:

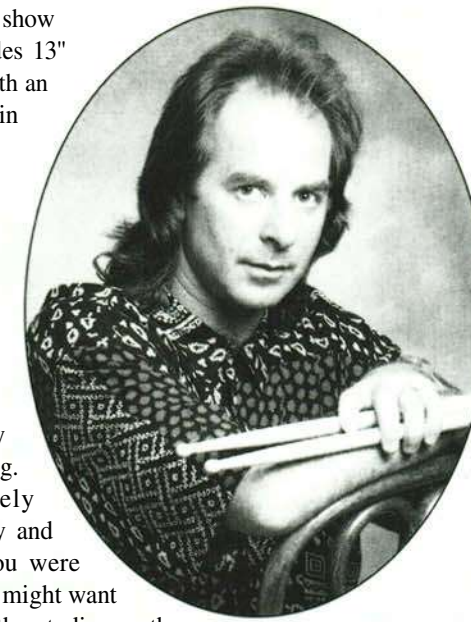
snare drum: a Shure *SM-57* on the bottom and a *PE-545* on the top
kick drum: an *SM-57* and a *PE-545* "Y-ed" together out of phase, in the center of the front head
toms: *PE-545s*
timpani: one *PE-545* between the two
overheads: AKG mic's (I'm afraid I don't know the model number)
(Note: Shure *SM-77s* were sometimes used in place of the *PE-545s,* but the latter were the ones used predominantly.)

I believe that all of the mic's were separately EQ'd, but that was not the secret to John's sound. Again, he believed in *tuning.* Much attention was put on bottom-head tuning, for example, and here's why: With big drums it takes longer for the air to travel to the bottom of the drum upon impact. In order to get a whole-drum sound we tuned the bottom head up to a lot higher pitch than normal. John would sometimes check my bottom-head tuning before shows—especially in humid areas.

Anton Fig

Q I watch *The Late Show With David Letterman* almost every night because I enjoy listening to you. I think you're a great player. But as hard as I try to see what you're playing, they don't give us enough viewing time of the band. I really like the way your cymbals sound, and I'm very curious to know what they are.

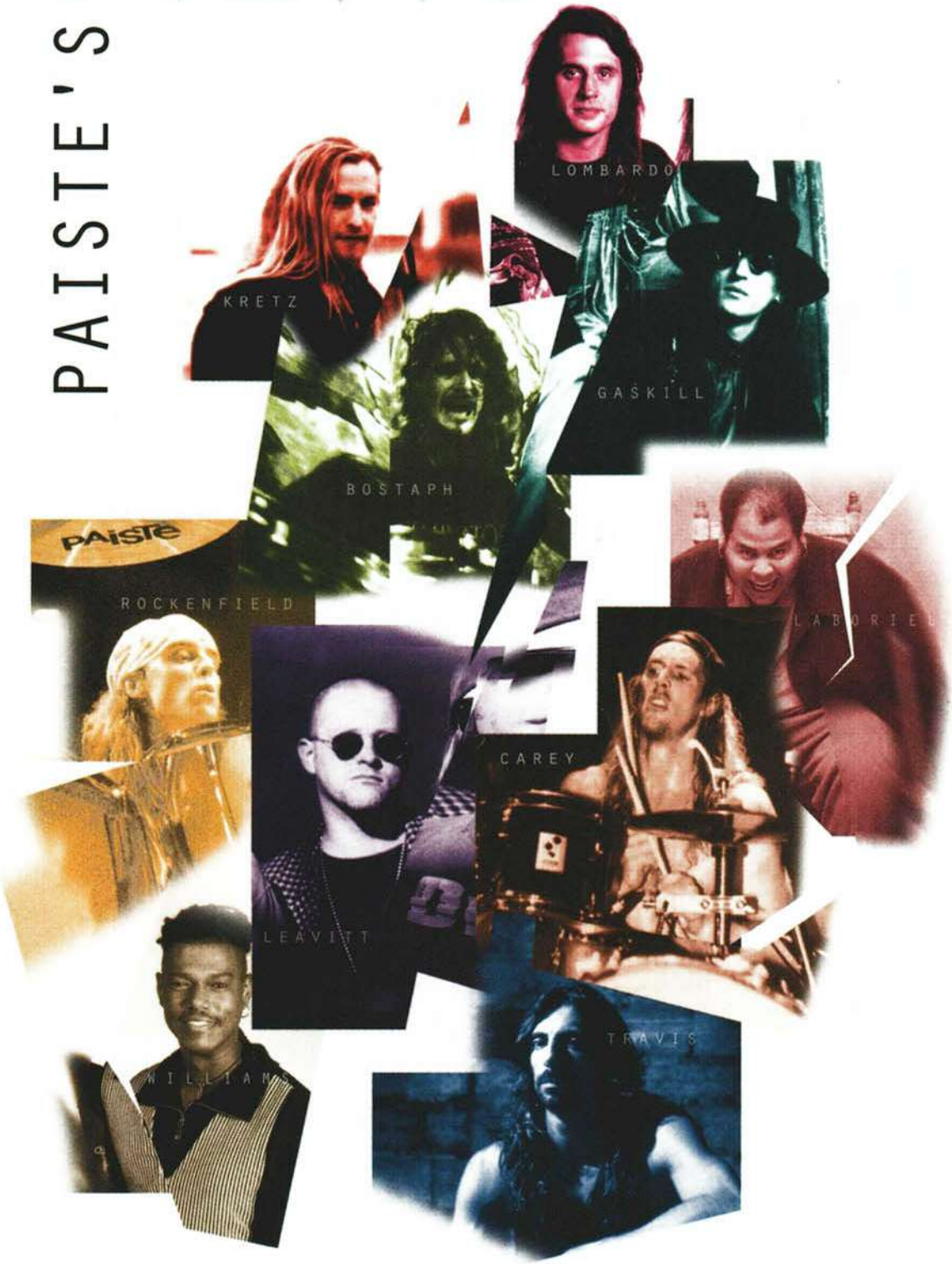
Andy McMichael
West Hartford, CT



A Thanks for your support. On the Letterman show I use a setup of Zildjian cymbals that includes 13" K/Z hi-hats, a 14" *Oriental China Trash* with an 8" K splash mounted on top, an 18" K medium-thin *Dark Crash,* a 16" K thin *Dark Crash,* a 20" K *Custom* ride, a 22" *China Boy High,* a remote hi-hat with a 12" *Oriental China Trash* top and a 14" *Oriental China Trash* bottom, and 10" and 12" K splashes. It sounds like a lot, but it's basically hi-hats, ride, two crashes, and a China—with some extra colors thrown in. I need to cover a wide variety of styles, so I have the varied sounds in there.

The particular sizes and thicknesses of my cymbals work well in *that* theater for *that* gig. The cymbals *you* should pick are largely dependent on the type of music you play and where you play it. For example, if you were playing bashing rock in a stadium you might want to use big, heavy 20" crashes. In the studio, on the other hand, you might want something bright that disappears quickly, so you might choose a paper-thin 16". It all depends on your situation.

PAISTE'S NEXT GENERATION . . .



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Packing Drum Lugs

Q In "The Drummer's Studio Survival Guide: Part 9, Equipment Selection And Preparation" [December '95 *MD*], the "Drum Doctor" mentioned packing the bass drum lugs with cotton to minimize non-musical sounds. Could you please explain this procedure?

Curtis Cude
Portland, OR

A The procedure for packing hollow drum lugs (on bass drums or any other drums) is quite simple.

1. Remove at least one head from the drum.
2. Remove each of the lugs from the drumshell
3. Fill the hollow cavity within the lug with cotton, packed fairly tightly.
4. Replace the lugs on the shells.
5. Replace the drumhead(s).

The reason for doing this procedure is that many lugs contain springs that hold the swivel nuts in place. Others have specially cast "shelves" to hold the swivel nuts without the need for such springs. In either case the swivel nuts themselves can vibrate sympathetically when the drum is struck—causing annoying rattles or buzzes. Packing the lugs deadens the vibrations and prevents these problem noises.

Cymbals And Temperature

Q I'm concerned about whether the effects of temperature variations will harm a cymbal. During a gig my cymbals are at or above room temperature. As colder weather approaches, my cymbals are exposed to cold temperatures from the drive to the next gig. Does this change in temperature have any effect on the metal molecules within a cymbal—one that might cause a weakness within the cymbal?

John Spaine
Mt. Morris, IL

A In purely scientific terms, cold does have *an* effect on the molecules of metal within a cymbal—just as it does on the molecules of any material. It slows down their movement, and makes the material more solid. This causes a dramatic change in a substance like water, which is liquid to begin with and becomes solid when chilled. It's a less dramatic change in a material that is solid to begin with—like cymbal bronze.

Assuming that you're talking about the sort of low temperatures encountered in a normal winter environment—even in the Midwest—your cymbals should suffer no ill effects from being transported in the cold. However, as a matter of common sense you should handle them very carefully while they are cold, since it is possible for them to become slightly more brittle and prone to breakage if they are superchilled. You should also allow them to "warm up" to room temperature before playing them (a process that shouldn't take any longer than your normal set-up time).

Atlas Cymbals

Q I recently came across an old-looking set of hi-hat cymbals, called Atlas *2000s.* I've asked several percussionists in my area about who makes Atlas cymbals, but they just shrug their shoulders. I'd like to know who makes (or made) these cymbals, and what their value might be.

Adam Brown
Fairfield, OH

A Atlas was a brand name given to cymbals sold from the mid-1980s to the early '90s by Jim Atlas Sales, an importer and distributor based in Levittown, New York. The cymbals themselves were manufactured in Italy by UFIP. The Atlas name was dropped when UFIP changed U.S. distributors in 1992.

The Atlas 2000 series was a budget model offered from around 1988 through 1990. At that time a pair of 2000 hi-hat cymbals sold for $90. Since there is no particular collectible value attached to Atlas cymbals of any period, your hi-hats are probably worth between $30 and $50.

Playing With Larger Sticks

Q I used to play with *5B* model sticks, but after several weeks of practicing on a pad with a pair of *2Bs* (in an effort to improve my control and technique) I've grown to really prefer using the larger sticks. But I'm a little concerned about playing with them at the drums—especially in regards to damaging my cymbals. All of my crash cymbals are of medium and medium-thin weight; my ride is medium-heavy, and my hi-hats are 14" Zildjian *New Beats.* I'm not a real hard player, but I do play in a fairly loud modern rock, country, and blues band. What is your advice?

Vic Steeles
Parma, OH

Omar Hakim Recordings

Q I recently heard Sting's *Bring On The Night* album, which was great—mainly because of Omar Hakim's playing. Could you suggest any other recordings that Omar has played on? I'd like to hear more of him.

David Padgham
via Internet

A Here are some Omar Hakim recordings that Omar lists as his own favorites:

Album	Artist	Label/Cat. #
Procession	Weather Report	Columbia 35DP46
Domino Theory	Weather Report	Columbia 35DP140
Sportin' Life	Weather Report	Columbia CK 39908
Let's Dance	David Bowie	EMI CDP7 46002-2
Dream Of The Blue Turtles	Sting	A&M 32XB-30
Still Warm	John Scofield	Gramavision 18-8508
Rhythm Deep	Omar Hakim	GRP GRP-9585
Urban Knights	Urban Knights	GRP GRD-9815

In addition, a new solo effort from Omar is scheduled for release soon. Watch for it!

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DW Pedal Artists shown above (from left to right) are: Steve Smith (Vital Information), Russ McKinnon (independent), Walfredo Reyes, Jr. (LA studio), Chad Smith (Red Hot Chili Peppers and Jonathan Moffett (Janet Jackson).

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A Potential damage to your drums and cymbals has more to do with the force—and the technique—with which you strike them than the size of your drumstick. There are many very heavy players who use sticks smaller than *2Bs,* and there are many not-so-heavy players who use sticks as large as *2Bs.* Louie Bellson and Tony Williams, for example, both use signature model sticks based on a *2B* design. Obviously the *potential* for stick-related damage exists with a larger stick, but the cymbals you list should withstand the impact of *2B* sticks if you play on them properly.

Vintage Rogers Drum

Q I'd like some information on a snare drum I found in my neighborhood dump. It's a 5x14 Rogers, with six single screw lugs. The tension rods have claws at each end to hold the hoops—which have no holes to accommodate modern-style individual tension rods. The hoops are not flared. The shell is 3-ply with 3-ply reinforcing rings. They are stained mahogany

on the outside and painted flat gray on the inside. The drum was fitted with Rogers plastic heads and 12-strand Rogers wire snares. One of the tension rods has a little angled piece with a hole in it; my guess is that it's an attachment point for a marching strap. The badge is oval, features an eagle design, and reads: Rogers since 1849. The hardware is chrome-plated, rather than nickel. What can you tell me about this drum?

Sean Sylvain
Nashua, NH

A *MD*'s ace drum historian, Harry Cangany, replies: "I can hear the rallying cry now: 'Drummers, to your dumpsters!' What you have, Sean, is a Rogers *Banner* model snare from the 1950s. The eagle badge was the predecessor to the two Rogers script logos, and was still being used on lower-end drums when the first script logo was applied to the higher-end *Holiday* series in the late '50s. (The script logos were followed still later by the large "R" logo—which was followed by oblivion.) In 1959 your drum listed for $42.50; since it's not a highly collectible drum, its value today would not likely be higher than that."

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Pricing error in the ad appearing in the February 1996 issue.

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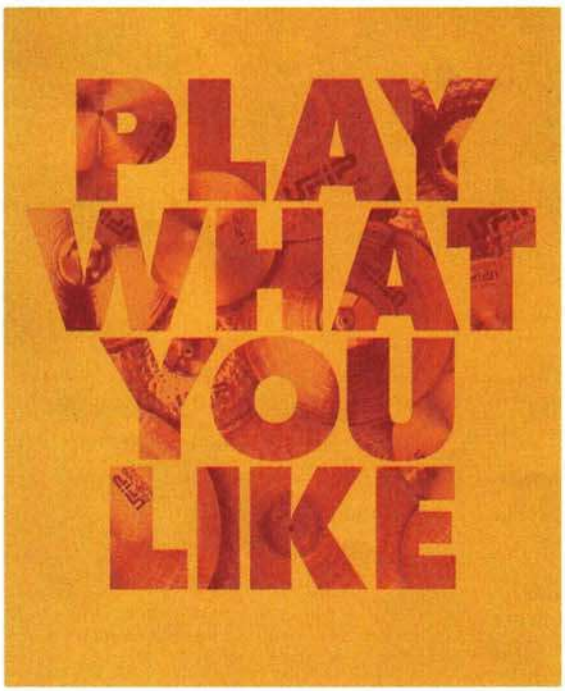

Splash cymbals... Historically a narrow selection of thin, mini-cymbals that sound, well, like a nice refreshing splash. However, at UFIP we realize that the music you play may require more than just a pleasant dip. Which is why we offer such a wide variety of splash cymbals and sounds.

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You see, we understand that just because a cymbal is small in size it doesn't have to be limited in sound. In fact, because they're so important in adding color and punctuation to modern drumming, our cymbalsmiths put just as much effort into "Earcreating" the sonic identities of these minature masterpieces as they do our larger, yet equally distinctive Rides, Crashes, Hi-Hats and other Specialty Cymbals.

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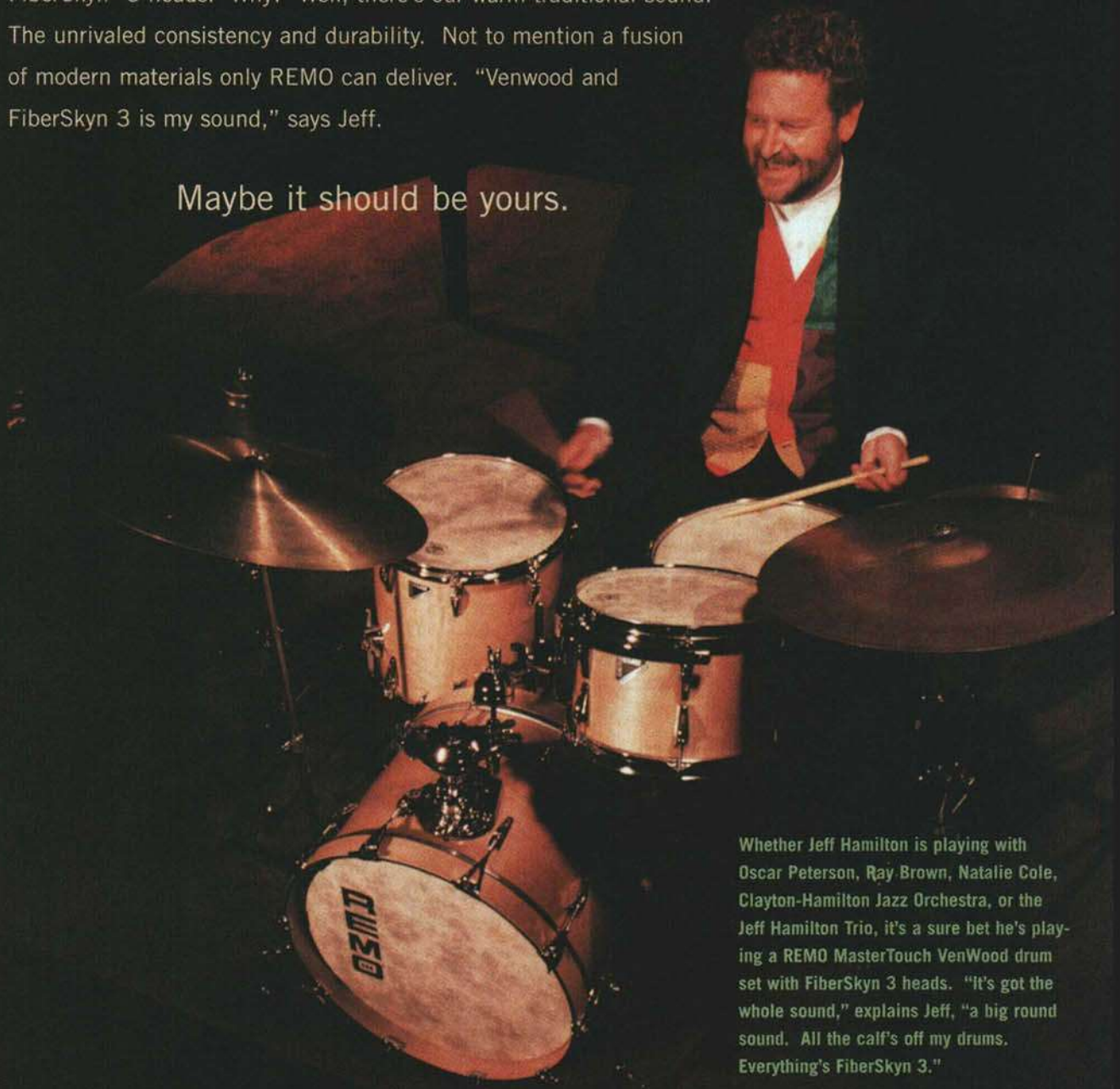

Whether Jeff Hamilton is playing with Oscar Peterson, Ray Brown, Natalie Cole, Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, or the Jeff Hamilton Trio, it's a sure bet he's playing a REMO MasterTouch VenWood drum set with FiberSkyn 3 heads. "It's got the whole sound," explains Jeff, "a big round sound. All the calf's off my drums. Everything's FiberSkyn 3."

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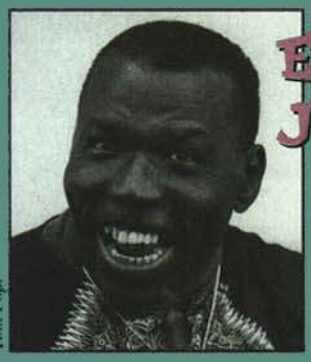
Modern Drummer magazine is pleased to present these outstanding artists at:

MD's Festival Weekend

SATURDAY, MAY 18



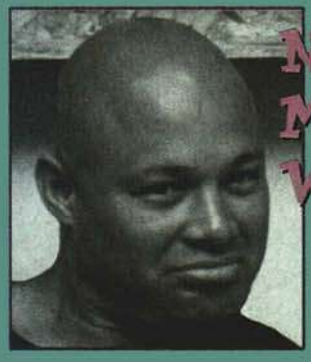
Tom Copi

Elvin Jones

One of the living legends of jazz drumming
and THE JAZZ MACHINE
(Courtesy of Pro-Mark Drumsticks and Istanbul Cymbals)

Sonny Emory

Funk and jazz master with Earth, Wind & Fire and David Sanborn
(Courtesy of Yamaha Drums, Sabian Cymbals, and Regal Tip Drumsticks)

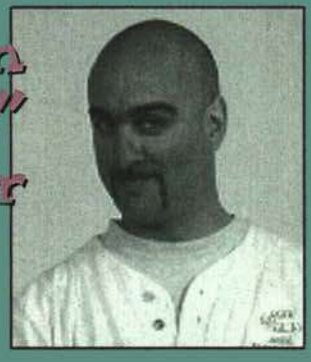


Narada Michael Walden

Fusion pioneer and top contemporary R&B drummer/producer
(Courtesy of Pearl Drums)

Tim "Herb" Alexander

Exciting drum innovator from Primus
(Courtesy of Starclassic Drums and Zildjian Cymbals)



Special Attraction: OMNICUSSION

A unique ensemble combining drumkit, mallets, electronics, and world percussion
(Courtesy of Paiste Cymbals and LP Music Group)

Seating is limited, and ticket orders must be handled on a first-come, first-served basis—so *send your order today!* Please use the form on the opposite page (or a photocopy) to order your tickets, and note that your order must be postmarked *no later than April 19, 1996.* Tickets will be accompanied by local directions and transportation information.

Attention long-distance travelers!

For the best available airline fares and reservations, along with hotel accommodations at discount rates, call MD's exclusive Festival Weekend '96 travel agency, Travel Ventures, at (800) 863-8484 [(201) 239-8900 in New Jersey], or fax them at (201) 239-8969. Identify yourself as a Festival-goer upon calling.

ENJOY THE FULL WEEKEND AT A DISCOUNT!

Order tickets for both days now, and receive a discount of $4.00 off the price of two daily tickets.

Saturday, May 18 & Sunday, May 19

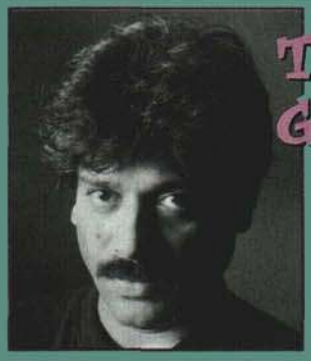
Memorial Auditorium, Montclair State University, Upper Montclair, New Jersey

(Located within convenient traveling distance by public or private transportation from anywhere in the New York City/North New Jersey area)

Doors open 12:30 P.M.—Show begins 1:00 P.M.

(Spring in New Jersey can be wet. We suggest you come prepared for rain.)

SUNDAY, MAY 19



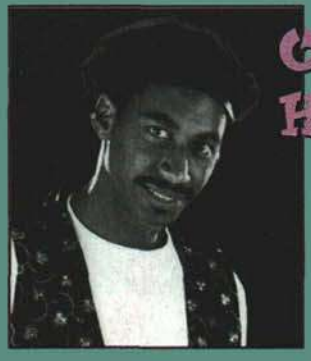
Trilok Gurtu

Renowned contemporary drummer/percussionist **and his CRAZY SAINTS**

Sheila E. & Peter Michael Escovedo

Dynamic drumset/percussion duo
(Courtesy of DW Drums and Toca Percussion)

M. Sean Vennett

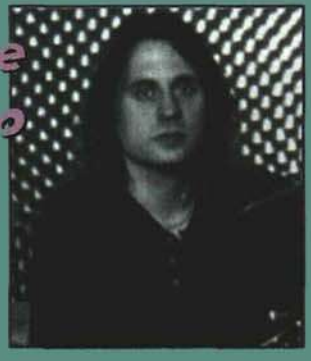


Omar Hakim

Versatile groove-meister for Weather Report, Sting, and Madonna
(Courtesy of Pearl Drums and Vic Firth Drumsticks)

Dave Lombardo

Grip, Inc.'s heavy-rock powerhouse
(Courtesy of Paiste Cymbals and Tama Drums)



Special Attraction:

Bob Gatzen

Drum designer and tuning specialist
(Courtesy of Noble & Cooley Drums, Evans Drumheads, and DCI Video/Warner Bros.)

MD'S FESTIVAL WEEKEND '96 TICKET ORDER

I understand that tickets are available on a first-come, first-served basis, and that my order must be received by MD postmarked no later than April 19, 1996. I also understand that if tickets are no longer available upon MD's receipt of my order, my money will be refunded.

Sat, May 18: _____ Tkts @ $25.00 each = $ _____

Sun, May 19: _____ Tkts @ $25.00 each = $ _____

Sat/Sun Tkt Pkg: _____ Pkgs @ $46.00 each = $ _____

All prices include New Jersey sales tax.

NAME (please print) _____

ADDRESS **CITY** **STATE** **ZIP** _____

(PERSONAL CHECKS OR MONEY ORDERS IN U.S. FUNDS ONLY; CASH CANNOT BE ACCEPTED)

Mail order form to: **MD FESTIVAL WEEKEND '96, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009**

(Note: Artists scheduled to appear are subject to change without notice.)

Legend Toms, Bass Drums, And Free-Floating Snares

The Legend brand of snare drums has now been expanded to include toms and bass drums. Nineteen sizes and six colors are available for the drums, which are manufactured by Kaman Percussion Products in Bloomfield, Connecticut and finished at Ovation Instruments in Hartford. (Both are divisions of Kaman Music Corp.) The drums are said to be "world-class, American-made, professional instruments," yet are priced competitively with mass-produced drums from the Orient. All toms and bass drums are sold as separate items, rather than as packaged kits, and are backed by a three-year warranty.

The Legend *Free Floating* snare drum line has been completely revised. The shells are now made completely of wood, giving the drums a sound different from other free-floating snares. (Phosphor bronze and carbon/fiber synthetic shell inserts are also available.) Legend 10" and 12" drums are 7" deep with 2.3mm rolled hoops; 13" and 14" models are either 5" or 7" deep and feature die-cast or rolled hoops. Wood drums come in natural stains and are priced between $599.00 and $799.50 retail.

Finally, "Victoria Rose" and "Aspen Blue" high-gloss stains are now available for all Legend snare drums; 13" and 14" drums can also be purchased with either rolled or die-cast hoops. **Kaman Music Corp., P.O. Box 507, Bloomfield, CT 06002-0507, tel: (203) 243-7941, fax: (203) 243-7102.**

Pearl Introductions

Pearl's *50th Anniversary Snare Drum* is hand-crafted from solid maple, with solid-maple glue rings. The shells are hand-polished in black mist see-through lacquer. The drums also feature tube lugs of solid brass and straight-flanged hoops with claw hooks (all plated in 24K gold), Remo *Fiberskyn 3* heads stamped with the 50th Anniversary logo, and specially cut snare beds. Each drum is numbered and signed by the members of the Yanagisawa family (founders and owners of Pearl).

Pearl's new *Export ELK* lacquered drumkit features 7-ply shells with high-density inner and outer plies for improved "cut" and projection. The kit is fitted with newly designed lugs and special hardware components, and is available in black mist, emerald mist, and new burgundy mist high-gloss lacquers. The *Export ELK* features a *5½x14* wood snare drum as standard; popular kit configurations and individual components are available.

A newly redesigned *Export* kit features 8-ply shells with a denser inner ply "for improved brightness and cut," transparent batter heads on the toms and bass drum, key rods on the bass drum for precision tuning and ease of transport, and newly designed lugs and hardware components. Available colors include jet black, pure white, silver flash, and red wine.

According to Pearl, the new *P-101 Power Pro* is "the fastest and smoothest basic pedal ever offered by Pearl." It incorporates Pearl's *Uni-Lock* infinitely adjustable beater angle system and is fitted with a *Quad Beater* that combines plastic and felt and features two shapes—point-contact and line-contact—to produce four sounds: slap with sharp attack, slap with fat attack, thump with sharp attack, and thump with fat attack. An "in-line" ball-bearing spring system minimizes "waggle," and the footboard features a traction-control surface that provides "slickness for speed, with tactile feedback for superior control." A silent-action, close-tolerance hinge integrated into the footboard is designed to assure straight-line tracking for precise and accurate playing.

Pearl's *Power Shifter* pedals feature the *Quad Beater, Power Plate* stabilizer, ball-bearing spring system, and close-tolerance hinges described above. They also feature three-position movable footboards and a side-mounted clamping system said to facilitate easy attachment and removal of the pedal (and to permit low footboard angles without "bottoming out"). Moving components on double pedals (such as the drive shaft, cams, and beater hubs) are crafted from aluminum to minimize weight.

The *S-985W* snare stand is fitted with double-braced legs, *Uni-Lock* basket angle adjustment, and reversible spike/rubber tips for slip prevention. Pearl has also upgraded its hi-hat line: The *H-985W Vari-Link* hi-hat features an adjustable linkage that allows precise angling of the footboard for comfort, speed, and ease of switching between multiple pedals. The new *CL-98P* clutch features conical rubber spacers that allow the top cymbal to vibrate freely; the bottom cymbal is suspended on curved rubber ridges to

cradle the cymbal and provide "greater tonal purity." Additional features include an easy-to-reach spring adjustment knob, rotatable double-braced legs for use with multiple pedals, and reversible spike/rubber tips for slip prevention.

H-885, H-855, and *H-850WN* hi-hats now feature the same footboard used on the *H-985W* and the *Power Shifter* bass pedals. The *CL-98* clutch, featuring a metal lock nut and direct contact wing bolt, is now standard. The optional *DCL-90* drop clutch features rubber spacers (instead of felts), for improved sustain and clarity of tone.

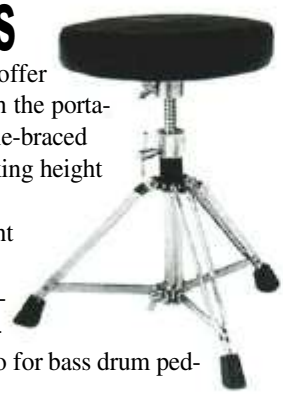
Pearl now offers two lines of cymbals. *Pearl Pro* cymbals (aimed at beginner or semi-pro player) are crafted from B-8 formulation (92% copper, 8% tin). Circular hammering is used to improve sensitivity and tone. *Pearl* cymbals (aimed at budget-conscious consumers) are crafted from brass and feature full lathing on both surfaces. Both lines are available in pre-packaged sets and as individual cymbals.

Finally, Pearl's new *TK-100* practice drumset features a height-adjustable bass pad and four fully tiltable and positionable upper pads on a newly designed stand. The *TK-200* practice set is a double-bass version of the *TK-100.* The *BD-10* practice bass drum pad features a hinged design for easy transport and a "super-quiet" rubber surface for silent practicing. It also features spiked anchors. **Pearl Corporation, 549 Metroplex Dr., Nashville,** TN **37211, tel:** (615) 833-4477, **fax:** (615) 833-6242.

New Sabian HH Cymbals

Sabian has added several new models to its Hand Hammered line (recently re-designated from the previous HH name), including a 20" *Bounce* ride ($309 retail), 21" *Raw-Bell Dry* ride ($336 retail), 8" and 10" *China Kangs($ll4and$l23* retail), 14" *Dark* hi-hats ($378 retail), 16" and 18" *Dark* crashes ($228 and $267 retail), and a 20" *Dark* Chinese ($309 retail). Each of the cymbals is stamped with a new, highly visible "Hand Hammered" logo. **Sabian Ltd., Meductic, New Brunswick, Canada EOH 1LO, tel: (506) 272-2019, fax: (506) 272-2081.**

New DW Products



The 9700 Throne ($189) is said to offer "the stability of a barrel throne with the portability of a tripod." It features double-braced legs, a contoured seat top, and locking height adjustment.

DW's *Balancer* bass drum weight ($16 retail) fits on any 1/4" beater shaft. It's adjustable vertically, horizontally, eccentrically, and laterally, and is drumkey-controlled. Also for bass drum pedals is a new *Maple Bass Drum Beater* ($18 retail), which is designed to have the same mass as DW's 707 two-way and 702 felt beaters to make switching from one to another easier. The beater's compact size and increased curvature is said to provide a sharper, more pointed attack sound and more rebound.

DW has also announced the introduction of their *True Pitch* drum tuning system as standard on all DW snare drums and tom-toms. The system incorporates tension rods and receivers redesigned with a finer thread pitch, which DW claims results in increased tuning accuracy and more dependable tuning due to increased metal-to-metal contact. *True Pitch* retrofit packages are available. The company has also made the May *Internal Miking System* a factory-installed option available on all DW drums. **Drum Workshop, Inc., 101 Bernoulli Circle, Oxnard, CA 93030, tel: (805) 484-6999, fax: (805) 485-1334, e-mail: DWDrums1@aol.com.**

Kart-A-Bag Super 600 and Tri-Kart800

Kart-A-Bag has recently introduced two new musical equipment transport devices, both designed for heavy equipment. The *Super 600* ($148.50) weighs less than 6 kilograms, carries up to 136 kilograms of weight, and features a single-motion open-and-close mechanism, a trolley that extends to 121cm and collapses to 60cm, and a 31x40cm base. The *Tri-Kart 800* ($191) weighs less than 8 kilograms, carries up to 136 kilograms of weight, features a three-step open-and-close mechanism, moves on either two or four wheels, and has a 12x31x40cm base. **Kart-A-Bag, 510 Manhattan Road, Joliet, IL 60433, tel: (815) 723-1940, fax: (815) 723-2495.**

SKB Cases

SKB offers drum, cymbal, and hardware cases made from "ultra-high molecular-weight polyethylene." Construction features include rigid aluminum valences, moisture-proof neoprene O-ring gaskets, high-density foam where rims and hardware rub, riveted heavy-duty rubber feet on larger models, and heavy-duty locking hardware. Cymbal and drum cases start at $99.95. Hardware cases (36x11, 48x12, and 48x16, starting at $219.95) feature strong polyfabric interior straps and heavy-duty wheels; the largest model has a domed top for more room. Also available is the *Cymbal Vault* ($119.95), which clamps cymbals

together for safe transport. All cases are guaranteed for life. **Freed International, 2751 S.E. Monroe St., Stuart, FL 34997, tel: (407) 288-7200, fax: (407) 288-7299.**

Remo Pad, Heads, And Percussion

Remo's new *Ed Thigpen Brushup* practice pad is a 14" *Fiberskyn 3* head mounted on a rim with foam backing. It's designed to provide an authentic drumhead surface for practicing, and fits on top of a snare drum or on any other surface. It sells for $29.95 retail.

New heads available from Remo include *Mondo* conga and bongo heads. The heads are created by mounting Remo's *FiberSkyn 3* head film on a flesh hoop, are sized for Afro, Toca, LP, and other instruments, and are priced from $49 to $59. Also new are *Powerstroke 77* marching snare drum heads in 13" ($26), 14" ($27), and 15" ($30) sizes. The 2-ply, 7mm (with 7mm built-in underlay) heads are designed to offer a more traditional sound and to allow the snares to vibrate more freely than *Falam II* heads.

From Remo's percussion line comes a 48"-tall *Standing Ngoma* hand drum (with *FiberSkyn 3* head and West African *FabriFinish,* $395 retail) and a 28"-tall *Asonga* (said to be similar to an Ashiko drum and resemble "the classic sound of Cuban congas"). Drums are available in 10", 12", and 14" shell sizes with medium-weight *FiberSkyn 3* heads and "Ceramic," "Earth," and "Tropical Leaf *FabriFinish,* and are priced from $225 to $305.

Remo has also introduced their *VenWood* finish on *Mastertouch* drums. *VenWood* offers a hand-crafted maple appearance on *Acousticon R* shells. **Remo, Inc., 12804 Raymer St., N. Hollywood, CA 91605, tel: (818) 983-2600, fax: (818) 503-0198.**

Mapex Saturn Pro Series

The *Saturn Pro* series from Mapex offers 6-ply (7.8mm) North American maple and mahogany shells with 45° bearing edges, minimum-contact Gladstone-style chrome lugs, omni-directional telescoping tom holders, double-braced stands, and either high-gloss lacquer or natural wax finishes available in several colors. A five-piece kit with 500 series hardware carries a list price of $2,099.90.

Mapex, c/o Washburn Int'l, 255 Corporate Woods Pkwy, Vernon Hills, IL 60061-3109.

Amati Cymbals

Amati is a new brand of cymbals priced for the first-time buyer. The cymbals are made by Europe's largest manufacturer of brasswind instruments. Sizes available include 12", 14", 16", and 18" crashes, a 20" ride, and 14" hi-hats. A 2-pack set (14" hi-hats and 20" ride) is list priced at $130; a 3-pack set (14" hi-hat, 16" crash, and 20" ride) is priced at $177. **Geneva International Corporation c/o Gregory T. Schoeneck, 29 East Hintz Road, Wheeling, IL 60090, (800) 533-2388.**

Diamond Tip Wood-Tip Models

JoPo Music now offers seven wood-tip models in their Diamond Tip drumstick line. JoPo's Joe Porcaro says, "The new *5A, Super 5A, 7A, 8A, 2B, 5B,* and *Rock* models offer more mainstream sound and feel with the advantages of our uniquely shaped tip." The sticks are list priced at $10.25 (hickory) and $10.50 (maple) per pair. **JoPo Music, Inc., P.O. Box 4416, North Hollywood, CA 91617, tel: (818) 995-6208, fax: (818) 981-2487.**

Toca Additions

Toca has introduced several additions to its line of percussion. In the *Limited Edition* series of congas ($499.50-$609.50) and bongos ($359.50), a deep purple custom finish is now available. New items include the *Traditional* series *3800* conga set ($739.50) and single quinto and conga drums ($349 and $369.50)—based on Afro-Cuban designs with a sharply tapered lower bowl for strong bass tone. Also new are 13" *Custom Deluxe* wood ($559.50) and 14" *Premiere* fiberglass ($469.50) djembe drums, and *Player's Series* bongos ($189.50) and congas ($599.50/set). **Kaman Music Corp., P.O. Box 507, Bloomfield, CT 06002-0507, tel: (203) 243-7941, fax: (203) 243-7102.**

Beato Attitude Drum, Cymbal, And Hardware Bags

Attitude bags are a new series from Beato available in sixteen different "African," "Caribbean," "Splatter," and "Paisley" prints. The bags are fully lined and padded for reliable protection in professional situations. They are priced between $68 and $182 retail. **Drum Workshop, 101 Bernoulli Circle, Oxnard, CA 93030, tel: (805) 485-6999, fax: (805) 485-1334, e-mail: DWDrumsl@aol.com.**

Porcaro Ethnic Percussion Covers

A new line of ethnic drum covers in an exclusive "World" cordura print is available from Porcaro Covers. The green-and-black-patterned bags feature 3/4" foam padding, fleece-lined black interiors, and double-stitched seams, handles, straps, and zippers. **Porcaro Covers, P.O. Box 4416, North Hollywood, CA 91617, tel: (310) 532-2671, fax: (310) 532-4253.**

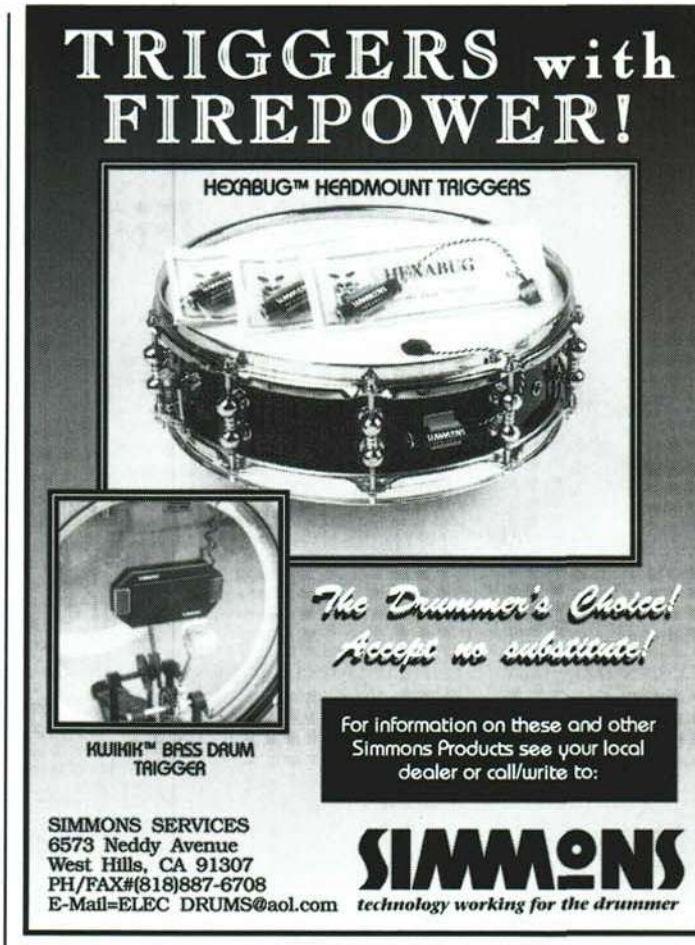
Noble & Cooley SP Snare Drum

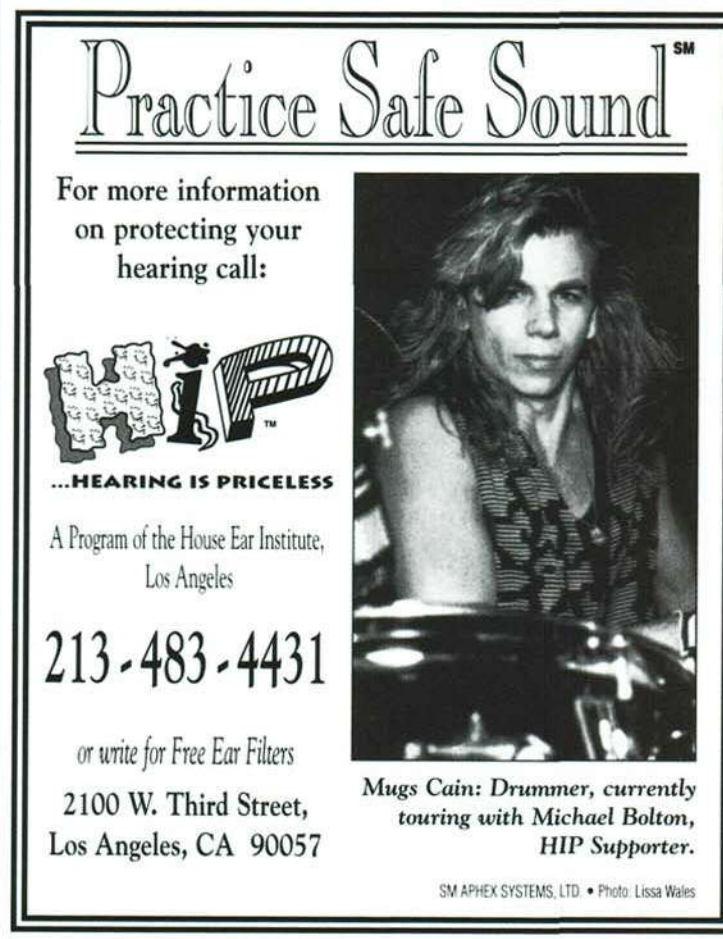
The *SP* snare drum is Noble & Cooley's effort to design a drum with qualities in sound and feel reminiscent of some of the vintage snares so popular today. The feel is said to be "soft and spongy" as a result of flanged hoops. The sound is claimed to be warm, with rich overtones in the lower tuning ranges and a dense, "notey" tone in the upper ranges. The drums utilize Noble & Cooley's patented nodal-mount technology, making this snare line "extremely versatile by being able to create a 'classic' or a 'modern' sound, depending on the tuning" (according to the company).

SP drums are available in 12" (6-lug), 13", and 14" (both 8-lug) diameters (all 5 3/4" depth), as well as in a 7x14 (10-lug) model. The drums are offered in ten color finishes, and feature solid-brass tube lugs in either chrome or black powder coat. **Noble & Cooley Co., 42 Water St., Granville, MA 01034-0131, tel: (413) 357-6321, fax: (413) 357-6314.**

Wincent Correction

Wincent drumstick rods (introduced in January *'96's New And Notable)* are not available in the U.S. due to patent restrictions. The rods are available in all other countries.





Goetz Purple Heart Snare Drum

by Rick Mattingly

Besides sounding great, this drum offers tropical beauty.

Add the name C.W. Goetz to the list of those who consider snare-drum making to be an art, and who are applying principles of quality woodworking to the shells of their drums—resulting in instruments that are distinctive in both looks and sound. For this review, *MD* received a 4x14 drum made of purple heart, which is one of ten tropical hardwoods used by Goetz in the construction of his drums. A hand-rubbed shellac finish allowed the natural grain to show through, and the drum had a dark purple tint that was beautifully offset by 24k gold-plated hardware.

Goetz shells are constructed with a "radial stack" design, which employs strips of wood that are stacked and staggered. The drum we received had five "layers" from top to bottom, each made of several strips. The strips are glued together, and hardwood dowels are inserted vertically to further strengthen the bonds. Our test drum had twelve such dowels. According to the manufacturer, the radial-stack design ensures rigidity and shape retention.

The shell was thick (about 3/8") and featured 45° bearing edges that were very smooth. It had one air vent centered in a rather large nameplate, which contained a serial number along with the Goetz logo.

The tuning lugs come from Rhythm Tech and feature the *iT* system, which stands for "index Tension." Each lug has its own ball bearing, and the collar around it is notched so that as you make one full revolution with a drumkey, you can feel sixteen "steps" as the balls settle in the notches. This is designed to prevent the lugs from slipping and to allow more precise tuning. A special washer with a right-angled tongue holds the bottom ball-bearing collar in place.

Each head had ten tuning lugs that threaded into machined brass, tube-style tension casings. The casings were mounted onto the shell with two brass screws each. The drum's die-cast hoops resembled Gretsch hoops—with large "ears" for the tuning lugs. The drum was fitted with a Remo white coated *Ambassador* batter head and an *Ambassador* snare head.

The snare throw-off and butt plate were also die-cast, with the snare-release mechanism being a standard lever action that was smooth and quiet. Snares were standard 20-strand steel, held by plastic-coated steel cable.

Thick, heavy shells generally favor higher overtones, and that was the case here. The drum was at its best when cranked up pretty high. With tight heads and its narrow depth, the drum could sound choked when overplayed. But between the high pitch and the drum's natural ring, it cut though a pretty loud band without having to be struck too hard. (Rimshots were especially penetrating.) The 4" depth also gave the drum a reasonable amount of body. Tuned high, it would be excellent for funk playing, for an auxiliary snare in a loud rock setting, or in a recording studio.

With the heads loosened up somewhat and the snares relaxed a bit, the drum worked well in low- to medium-volume acoustic situations—although it did need an O-ring muffler to cut out some of the ring. The drum was extremely sensitive, with good snare response to the very edge of the head. Tuned

WHAT'S HOT
- versatile tuning range
- excellent snare sensitivity
- unique and beautiful aesthetic appearance

down, the drum would sound great in jazz settings, in low-volume pop settings, or (again) in a recording studio.

The 4x14 Goetz purple heart snare drum with 24k gold-plated hardware, as reviewed above, sells for $815. Goetz snare drums are also available with Brazilwood, bubinga, cocobolo, African ebony, Brazilian ebony, jacaranda pardo, kingwood, Honduras rosewood, and Indian rosewood shells, and with all-chrome, all-brass, and combination chrome/brass hardware. Shells are available in 12", 13", and 14" diameters in depths ranging from 3 1/2"to 8". Prices range from $755 to $1,030.

A final note: C.W. Goetz says that two of the woods he has been offering—African ebony and Honduras rosewood—have recently been added to the endangered species list, and once his current supply is used up he will no longer offer those woods. He is, however, currently investigating other non-endangered tropical hardwoods and plans to add one or more in the near future. He assured *MD* that he will not be using woods that contribute to the destruction of the rainforests. For further information, contact C.W. Goetz at Midwest Custom Drum Repair, R.R. #1 Box 53, Arlington, IL 61312, tel: (815) 643-2514, fax: (815) 643-2101.

UFIP Splash Cymbals

by William F. Miller

Feeling a bit Copeland-esque, Katche-ish. or Abbruzzese-y? Well then. UFIP has some hand-crafted beauties you might get excited about.

WHAT'S HOT
- almost all models are very "splashy," with lots of sibilance and few annoying overtones
- top-quality, hand-crafted construction
- large selection

WHAT'S NOT
- You may end up loving a few of these models, which will force you to buy more cymbal stands!

The nice thing about cymbals—splash cymbals in particular—is that they can bring a fresh change to your kit without your having to spend a lot of money. There's something about having the "color" of a new cymbal to experiment with that can make a tired old drumset seem like new.

If you've got the bug to add a new cymbal to your kit, you may want to check out a cymbal company that has been around for a long time in Europe but that isn't very well-known here (due mainly to inconsistent distribution). Now, with Drum Workshop acting as its U.S. distributor, UFIP cymbals are beginning to create a bit of a stir in the States. Quite frankly, these fine Italian instruments are on a par with anything being produced today by the "majors."

The Italian Connection

The UFIP (Unione Fabricanti Italiani Piatti) cymbal company came into existence over sixty years ago in the small town of Pistoia, not far from the city of Florence in the Tuscany region of Italy. The three founders of the company—Mssrs. Biasei, Tronci, and Zanchi—combined their talents and experience in hand-crafting cymbals, coming up with what they felt was the best way to manufacture cymbals.

Today, descendants of these men reportedly make cymbals in much the same way their forefathers did: a small group of artisans handling each individual cymbal from start to finish—nothing mass-produced. Working this way produces cymbals that are very "individual" in nature, and this was borne out when UFIP sent twenty-one of their splash cymbals to *Modern Drummer* for review. While there were similarities among models within certain lines, each cymbal had a unique, individual sound. The sheer quality of the cymbals, though, was undeniable.

Rough Series

Experience Brilliant Splashes

Experience Samba Splashes

Rough Series

UFIP offers cymbals in four different series—*Class, Experience, Natural,* and *Rough.* The *Rough* series is essentially designed for louder applications, and the actual finish of the cymbals from this line is quite shiny. UFIP designed a different way of shaving cymbals for the *Rough* series—something they call "micro-cutting"—that shaves a micro-fine groove into the cymbal. It supposedly helps in creating a brighter tone and "splashier" sound.

Well, the splash cymbals from the *Rough* series were very bright—both in tone and finish. They are beautiful-looking cymbals, the finish being *very* glossy and the hammer marks rather distinctive. More importantly, though, the cymbals sounded even better than they looked. The 10" was very "splashy," with no annoying overtones and plenty of cut. And unlike some splashes, it didn't produce an overly loud, painful sound. The 12" splash was similar to the 10" (in that it was very splashy), but was a bit more full-bodied. These two cymbals seemed the most versatile among our test group, and were my personal favorites. The 10" retails for $120, the 12" for $140.

Experience Series

Experience is UFIP's more "open-ended" series, meaning their more experimental models come from this line. Splashes in the *Experience* series come in two basic lines: *Brilliant* and *Samba.*

As the name implies, the *Experience Brilliant* splashes have a brilliant finish, the cymbals having been (according to the company) hand-polished to a point where the finish is almost reflective. While this causes the cymbal to *look* more brilliant, it actually does just the opposite to the cymbal in terms of sound. It mellows the cymbal, warming the sound. The 8" *Experience Brilliant* splash had less high-end than you would expect, and there were more overtones to the sound. It's a more controlled sound than that of the *Rough* series. The 10" and 12" sizes were very similar, although the general pitches of the cymbals were a bit deeper. These would be more appropriate for a mellower type of musical setting. The 8" retails for $123, the 10" for $135, and the 12" for $164.

UFIP's other splash-type from their *Experience* series is what they call their *Samba* splash. It comes in 10", 12", and 14" sizes, with the 12" and 14" looking a bit like small China cymbals. They have an upturned edge, are very thin, and produce a loud, extremely short, and somewhat abrasive *crack*—excellent for loud, short punctuations in the music.

The 10" *Samba* splash is paper-thin and sounds similar to the others, although it's even higher-pitched and has shorter sustain! (I actually had the most fun with this series by mounting the cymbals on top of larger Chinas or crashes, a la Terry Bozzio; that, in fact, might be the best application for them.) The 10" *Samba* retails for $154, the 12" for $188, and the 14" for $245.

Natural Series

I was looking forward to checking out the *Natural* series splashes, as I own a ride cymbal from this series and it's one of the best 18" rides I've heard. In case you're not familiar with them, the *Natural* series have the look of an older, weather-beaten cymbal. The tops of these cymbals are exposed to a special tempering process (i.e., heat) that darkens the appearance as well as the tone of the cymbal. (The underside of the cymbal looks clean and unaffected.) As I mentioned, this process on a ride cymbal is very interesting.

As for splashes, I expected the sound of the *Naturals* to be mel-

Natural Series

Class Series Splashes

Class China Splashes

low and maybe a little flat. Wrong! The two cymbals from this series were actually among the "splashiest" of the bunch. The 10" had good cut and was fairly quick. There was just a hint of that K-like trash to the sound, which really made it unique. The 12" was cool as well, and it wasn't clunky like I thought it might be. It had plenty of sibilance—that "sss" sound. Both of these splashes would be perfect for someone looking for a quick crash effect that is just a bit different than your normal splash sound. The 10" *Natural* lists for $128, the 12" for $156.

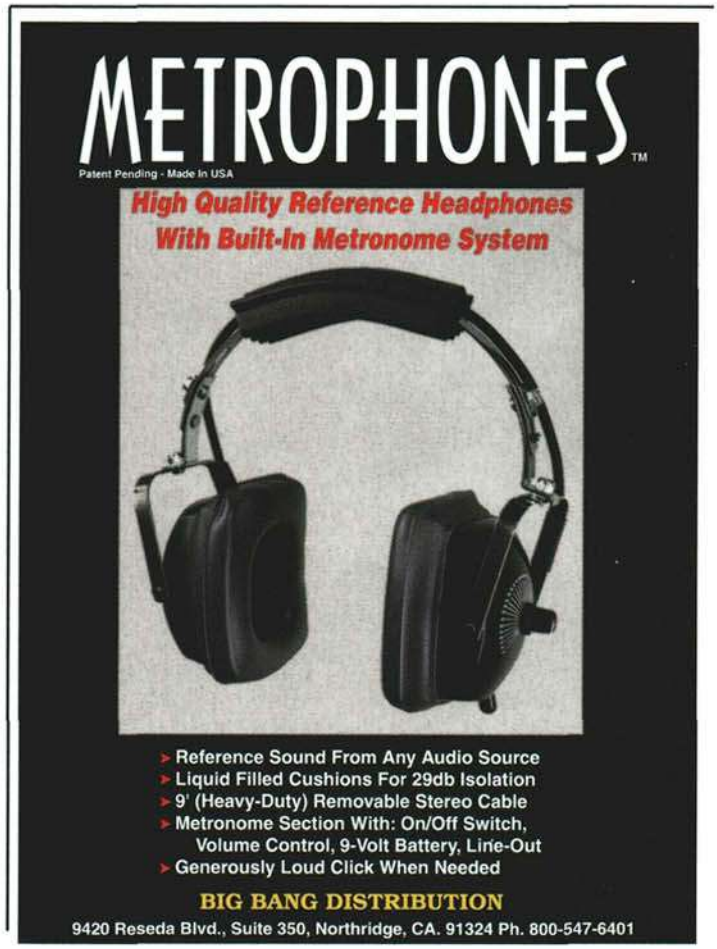
Class Series

UFIP's *Class* series is designed to be a "universally applicable line," meaning it's their general-purpose series. Sound-wise, the splashes from this series fall somewhere between the *Rough* and *Experience* series. *Class* cymbals feature a lot of good high-end cut and splash, similar to the *Rough* models, but also have a bit more tone, similar to the *Experience* cymbals. The *Class* 8" to 11" models were all basic, good-sounding splash cymbals with plenty of sibilance and tone. (Each size is available in different weights, which affects the tone a bit.) The larger sizes (12", 13", and 14") were particularly nice, with good splash sounds without too many annoying overtones. They actually had enough presence to make them excellent small crashes. The 8" retails for $116, the 9" (yes, an odd size!) for $121, the 10" for $128, the 11" for $144, the 12" for $156, the 13" for $188, and the 14" for $203.

Also available in the *Class* series is something UFIP calls their *China Splash.* To be honest, the name is a bit confusing because they don't have the traditional China shape (the up-turned edge). They do, however, have a unique bell shape: It comes away from the body of the cymbal and then flattens out.

Not only is the *shape* of these cymbals distinctly *un*-China-like, the sound isn't the traditional China effect either. The *China Splash* has a very clean, almost "airy" sound that is nice and polite but not too cutting. It's a very pretty sound that might work well in softer, more exotic settings. The 10" *China Splash* lists for $128, the 12" for $156.

So there you go—a whole lot of splashes to check out. If you're looking for an alternative to some of the other cymbals available on the market, give UFIP a listen. They're the real deal. For more information on UFIP cymbals contact Drum Workshop, 101 Bernoulli Circle, Oxnard, CA 93030.



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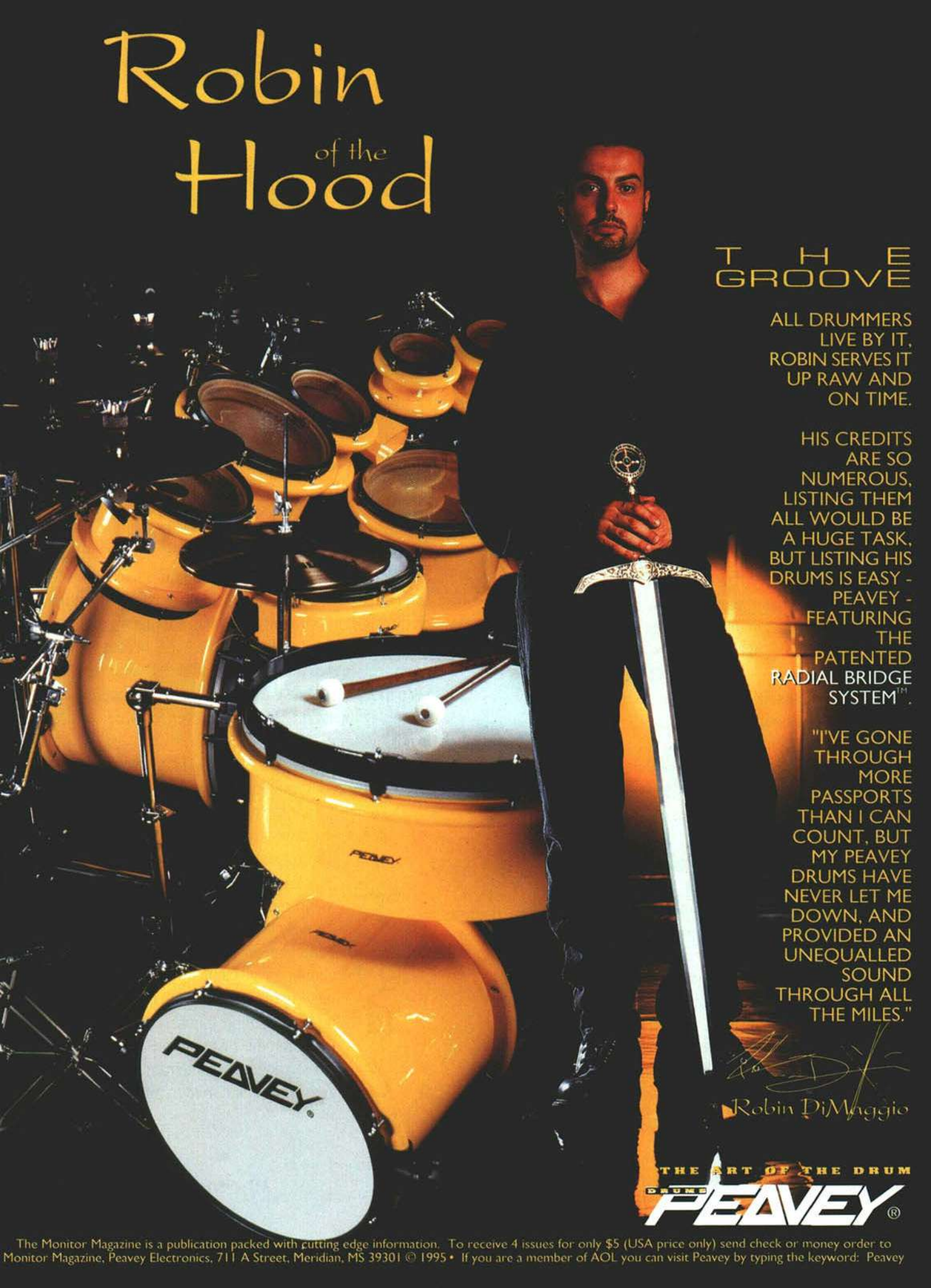

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Steve Gadd

Track by Track

In the midst of listening to over a dozen tracks he had played on throughout his career, Steve Gadd remarks, "It's amazing that after all the albums I've done, when I hear something I played on, I can really remember the way things went down."

The music must have meant a lot to him when it was being made.

"Yeah, it did," he says.

Gadd may not be the most-recorded drummer in history, but he's certainly near the top of the list. More significant, though, is the fact that he has made so many truly memorable—and downright legendary—recordings over the past two decades. Gadd certainly did his share of routine studio work such as jingle sessions, but he also participated in projects that brought him high visibility and offered him opportunities for creativity and self-expression.

Gadd also crossed stylistic barriers. Although his first exposure came within the jazz world, Gadd could also play high-energy funk and fusion or supply simple, fat R&B backbeats. And just for good measure he could throw in some military-sounding licks on a pop tune and make that work.

In the '50s and '60s, there was no particular mystique associated with leading studio players such as Hal Blaine, Earl Palmer, and Gary Chester. Most of their work was anonymous and their names seldom appeared on album credits. For most young drummers coming up in those years, the goal was to be part of a band, because it was the drummers in the bands that got all the attention and fame—even though in some cases it was actually people like Blaine, Palmer, and Chester who were playing on those bands' albums.

But largely because of Steve Gadd, a lot of drummers in the '70s aspired to careers as studio musicians. Who wouldn't want to do what Gadd was doing, getting to play on so many great albums and coming up with those great parts and grooves?

Ask Gadd himself about his accomplishments and he'll tell you how lucky he feels to have been given so many opportunities to participate in great music. He never brags about how he came up with some great lick or pattern; his overall approach can be summed up in one simple comment that he's been heard to utter on numerous occasions when asked about a particular track: "I just listened to the music and tried to play something that fit."

By Rick Mattingly

Photos by Ebet Roberts

Easy to say—not so easy to do with the level of creativity that has been a hallmark of Gadd's musicianship throughout his career.

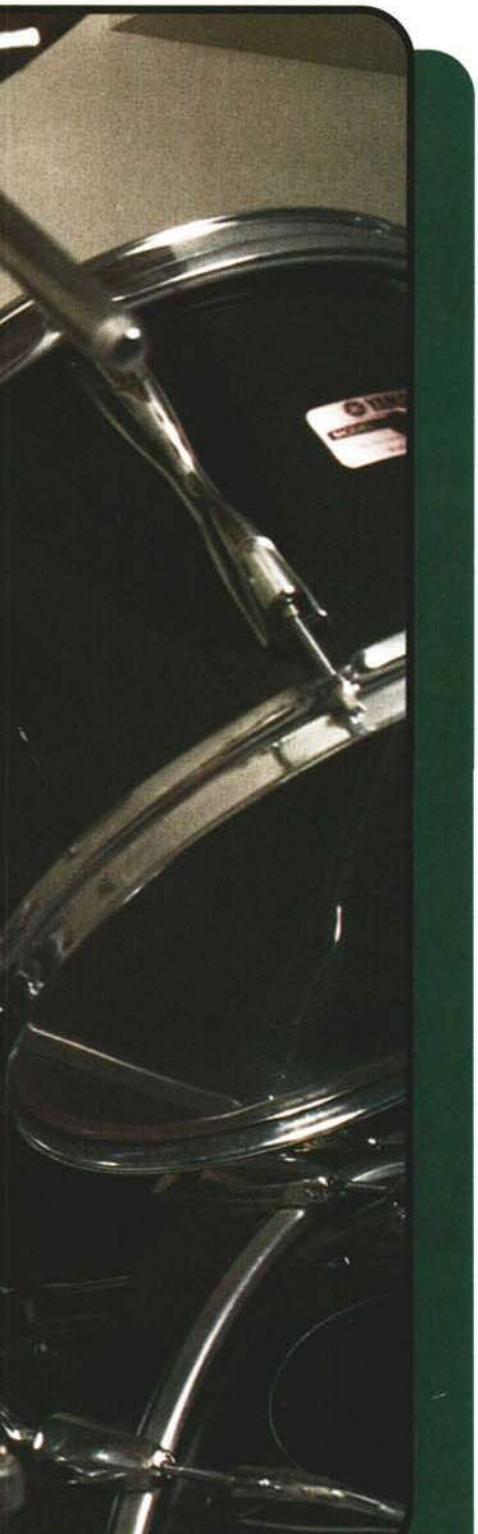
In recent years Gadd hasn't been as active on the recording scene, both because there is less studio work these days and because he chose to leave the pressures of living and working in New York City to return to his boyhood home of Rochester, New York, and thereby provide a better lifestyle for his family.

But he is still very involved with the music business, and besides doing several recordings each year he has also been part of successful tours with Paul Simon, Al Jarreau, and Eric Clapton—with whom he will be touring again early in '96.

Gadd seems more relaxed these days, and there is a light in his eyes and an enthusiasm in his voice that wasn't always evident in the early '80s, when he was rushing from one studio date to another, maintaining an insane schedule. He has always enjoyed variety, and continues to seek new experiences. "Have you seen the show *Stomp* ?" he asks. "We took the kids to see that before the holidays, and I loved it. I highly recommend that people go see that. If I ever had the opportunity to do that show I would do it in a

minute."

For this article, Gadd and I listened together to a variety of tracks he had played on. Obviously, we only scratched the surface of his entire recorded output, but the tracks we discussed cover a wide variety of styles and situations, and provide a good overview of a remarkable career—one that certainly isn't over yet.



"St. Thomas"

Chuck Mangione Quartet: Alive!

(Mercury; recorded 1972)

The back of the album shows a clean-shaven drummer with a mane of curly hair hunched over behind a four-piece drumkit, and most of the music bears witness to this heretofore unknown drummer's jazz chops. But Steve Gadd doesn't play the Sonny Rollins' standard "St. Thomas" with the typical ride cymbal-based approach that characterizes the Latin-jazz style of so many jazz drummers. Rather, he takes a very "drumistic" approach to the tune, sounding like a one-man Cuban percussion section as he plays deft but aggressive patterns on his toms and a muted snare drum, pulsing quarter notes with his hi-hat.

When it's time for the drum solo, Gadd gradually becomes more rhythmically complex. He stays very metric for his first three choruses, but then begins building tension by playing phrases over barlines. The tension is released as his final sixteen bars return to the feel of the original groove, setting up the band for the final statement of the "head."

"That's just the way I always played that song," Gadd recalls. "I'd heard other guys do it similar ways. With other Latin songs we did, sometimes they would go into straight-ahead time after a couple of choruses of the Latin feel.

"That brings back good memories," Gadd says. "That band played the Montreaux Jazz Festival. Stan Getz, Chick Corea, Tony Williams, and Stanley Clarke played together at that same festival, and Tony Williams played my drums! I had a little set of Gretsch drums then with an 18" bass drum and 8x12 and 14x14 toms. I still have that set.

"After we played Montreux we went to London, where we played at Ronnie Scott's club for a couple of weeks. I remember they had good Chicken Kiev at Ronnie Scott's, and I remember Tony Levin and I would play Foosball during the breaks. I also remember meeting Peter Sellers when he came in one night; he said he liked the band."

Alive! is a good documentation of some of Gadd's musical roots, not only in terms of his command of both jazz and rock, but also in terms of two prominent musicians that Steve played with during his formative years: Mangione and bassist Tony Levin. "Chucky and I are both from Rochester, so I had played with him off and on since I was a kid," Gadd explains. "Tony and I went to school together at the Eastman School of Music, and we were in most of the school ensembles together. We also played in Gap Mangione's trio while we were at Eastman, and besides the *Alive!* album we played on Chuck's *Friends And Love* and *Main Squeeze* albums. We made a lot of good music together."

"You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To"

Jim Hall: Concierto

(CTI, reissued on CBS; recorded 1975)

At the time this album was recorded at the studio of legendary jazz-record engineer Rudy Van Gelder, almost everyone on it was an established jazz heavyweight: guitarist Jim Hall, pianist Roland Hanna, bassist Ron Carter, trumpet player Chet Baker, and alto saxophonist Paul Desmond. The only member of the group who was still unfamiliar to many listeners was drummer Steve Gadd. But if anyone doubted this drummer's worthiness to be in such company, those doubts disappeared with the very first track, the standard "You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To," on which Gadd displayed a confident, aggressive straight-ahead approach that was firmly rooted in the mainstream jazz tradition. It was a

clean style, without much "broken-up" time on the ride cymbal. Rather, Gadd played a lot of straight quarter notes on the ride, supplying "swung" 8ths on his snare drum.

As the tape played, Gadd stretched out on the hotel-room sofa. "It's nice to hear that music again," he says as the piece ends. "I haven't heard that in a long time and had forgotten that we played that song. That was a nice ride cymbal; it was an old K that I bought at Frank Ippolito's Professional Percussion Center when it was on Eighth Avenue around 50th Street. I played it so much it cracked and I couldn't use it any more, but that was a nice-sounding cymbal.

> "I just try to be part of the foundation. Everyone in the band can play; all you have to do is give them something strong to play over and it'll be fine."

"The thing I'll always remember about this album is that after it was done, I got a note in the mail from Jim Hall saying thank you. Not many people take the time to do something like that. A lot of people say thank you in the studio, but he went out of his way to send a note afterwards saying how much he appreciated the music. I thought that was real nice and I'll never forget it."

I remarked that all those quarter notes on the ride cymbal reminded me of Jimmy Cobb. "I'll tell you, I like the way Jimmy Cobb plays," Gadd replys. "I liked those Miles Davis albums *Friday* and *Saturday Night At The Blackhawk*. Jimmy Cobb played on that stuff with [pianist] Wynton Kelly and [bassist] Paul Chambers. I love that groove, and anything I've heard that I liked comes out, whether it's conscious or subconscious. So I can understand why it reminds you of Jimmy Cobb because I sure love the way he plays."

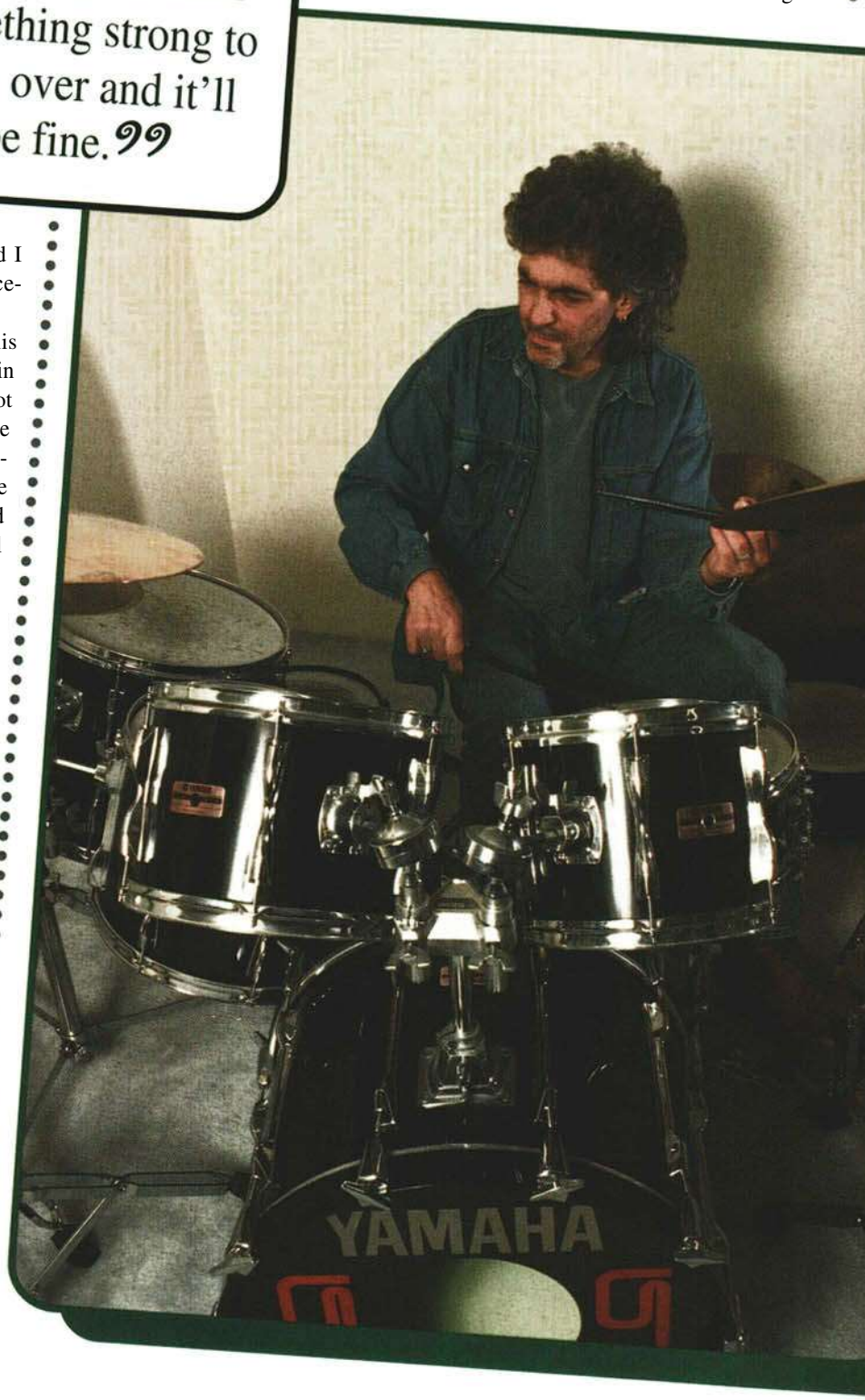
Given Gadd's obvious expertise with jazz and the people he was recording with, was he envisioning a career as a jazz drummer at that point in his life?

"I was thankful to have a chance to play straight-ahead, because I love playing that way, but I don't know that I would have been happy only doing that," he says. "I really like variety, and I was so excited about the calls I was getting from all these different people playing all these different types of music, from straight-ahead to pop to R&B. I love it all."

"Silly Putty"

Stanley Clarke: Journey To Love (Epic; recorded 1975)

They called music like this "jazz-rock fusion" in the mid-'70s, but today it would be labeled pure funk. Some of the synthesizer sounds are a bit dated now, but Clarke's popping bass groove sounds very contemporary twenty years after it was recorded. Likewise the drum groove is very spacious and linear, combining fat



snare hits, open hi-hat barks, cymbal bell colors, and syncopated bass drum accents.

"We did that at Electric Ladyland Studios in New York," Gadd recalls. "We spent a lot of time on tracks. Nowadays, the state-of-the-art of recording has gotten so that everyone can go in and do their part separately, but back in those days, if one person made a mistake, everyone would have to go back out and do the track again. So I remember playing the stuff a lot."

There is a lot of space in Gadd's playing on this track. Was there a click track going, or was he thinking about 16th-note subdivisions in his mind as he played?

"No, we weren't using click tracks," he says. "We were just going in and playing. I don't remember specifically what I was thinking about, but usually I'm concentrating on the quarter notes. That's where my focus has to be to keep the tempo locked. Whatever subdivisions I play in those spaces, I make sure they're locked in with the quarter note so that I don't rush them."

"50 Ways To Leave Your Lover"

Paul Simon: Still Crazy After All These Years (Columbia; recorded 1975)

If there is a single most famous Steve Gadd recorded performance, this is it. The tune's signature drum groove was absolutely unique in popular music, combining a military-type beat with a funky, linear feel. As with much of Gadd's drumming, the secret was as much in the feel as in the actual licks, and while the pattern was easy to transcribe and notate, making it feel right was another matter.

Often, when musicians have a big success early in their careers with a particular piece of music, they gradually grow to resent the constant requests to play the song or talk about it. But although Gadd has discussed "50 Ways..." at clinics, in interviews, and on his *Steve Gadd Up Close* video, he never seems to resent demonstrating or answering questions about the part he created, and expresses gratitude to Paul Simon for giving him the opportunity to be creative.

"It's a challenge to work with him," Gadd says. "Paul is an inspiring musician and person. He always seems to be growing. He's always looking for something different and doesn't settle for cliches. With some of his songs, you could have played them like you played other songs, but he kept going for something different.

"At the time, I was doing a lot of sessions and would try many different things. And I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to do that, because there were other players who did a lot of sessions who didn't have the chance to get that much variety.

"Paul always let me come up with different things, like using two sticks in each hand on 'Late In The Evening' [from *One Trick Pony,* recorded 1978]. Sometimes I did parts using a rubber pad on the snare drum with the snares off and using rubber mallets, just to get a different sound. On 'Stranded In A Limousine' [1977] I did knee slaps and they miked my feet stomping on a wooden floor.

"I can't say enough about the work I've done with Paul. It's been heard by a lot of people and I feel thankful and lucky. When '50 Ways...' first came out they played it all the time on the radio."

Where did that "50 Ways..." drum part come from?

"I used to practice that kind of stuff in the studio; if the mic's were off I could warm up by noodling around with stuff like that. I don't remember if I suggested it or if Paul heard me do it and suggested we try it. We would usually spend a day on a

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song and try it a lot of different ways. We'd try something, then go in and listen to it, talk about it, and try something else. We'd get it to where one guy's part was working, then work on another guy's part, and then work on the performance. Every artist worked at a different pace. After working with someone for a while you got familiar with the pace, so you didn't go in there thinking that you were going to get anything sooner than you were going to get it.

"Paul was constantly putting the tunes under the microscope, so you had the opportunity to try them different ways. I always enjoy working with him. It's always a challenge, and it's always *worth* the challenge."

"Nile Sprite"

Chick Corea: The Leprechaun (Polydor; recorded 1976)

As much airplay as "50 Ways..." received, a lot of drummers cite Chick Corea's *The Leprechaun* as the album that first made them sit up and take notice of Steve Gadd—and, in many cases, that sent them running to the practice room. For starters, it was the first solo album Corea had made since a string of successful albums with his band Return To Forever, and so the album received a lot of attention from the moment it was released. In fact, Gadd had been a member of RTF for a while, but never recorded with the band, so the record-buying public wasn't aware of the musical chemistry that existed between Gadd and Corea.

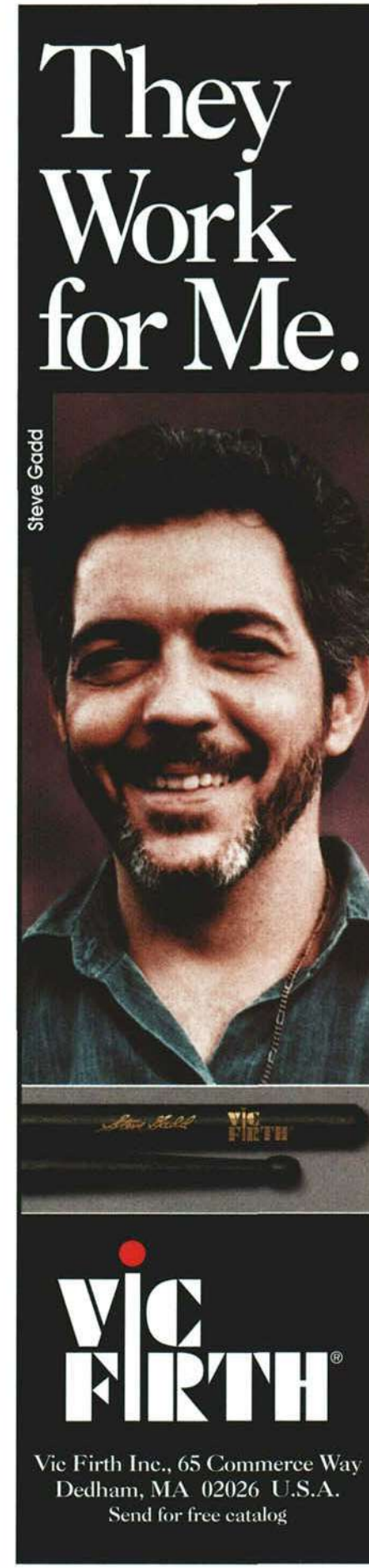
When *The Leprechaun* was released, even listeners who had grown accustomed to the percussive excesses of drummers like Billy Cobham with the Mahavishnu Orchestra, Lenny White with RTF, and Alphonse Mouzon with Larry Coryell's Eleventh House had never heard so many notes played with such precision, feel, and finesse as what they heard Gadd play on tracks such as "Nile Sprite." Forget "less is more." Notes were everywhere, creating an incredible drive that was all the more remarkable in light of the complexity of the arrangement. But for all its intensity, the drumming also had a lightness of touch that was lacking in much of the heavy-handed fusion drumming of the '70s. Every one of Gadd's million-some-odd drum notes moved the music forward.

"Chick's music was always so great to play," Gadd says. "The parts were so long that I had to devise ways so that I wouldn't have to turn pages. I'd have the first page taped to the wall on my left, and then it would go across the front of my drums and around. I'd tape it up between a couple of mic' stands or have it hanging from cymbal stands. The music was all over the place."

Were these parts that Corea wrote or was Steve writing out his own drum parts?

"None of the drum parts were written," Gadd replys. "I always read Chick's piano scores, which had everything on them. I would always know what he was playing and then I could pick and choose what accents I would play. That was *my* contribution to the composition.

"But his music just brought that stuff out of me because it was such good writing. As hard as his music is, the rhythms he played just flowed, so it was good for drums. It was challenging music in an inspiring way—not just because it was difficult. The music just played *me.*"



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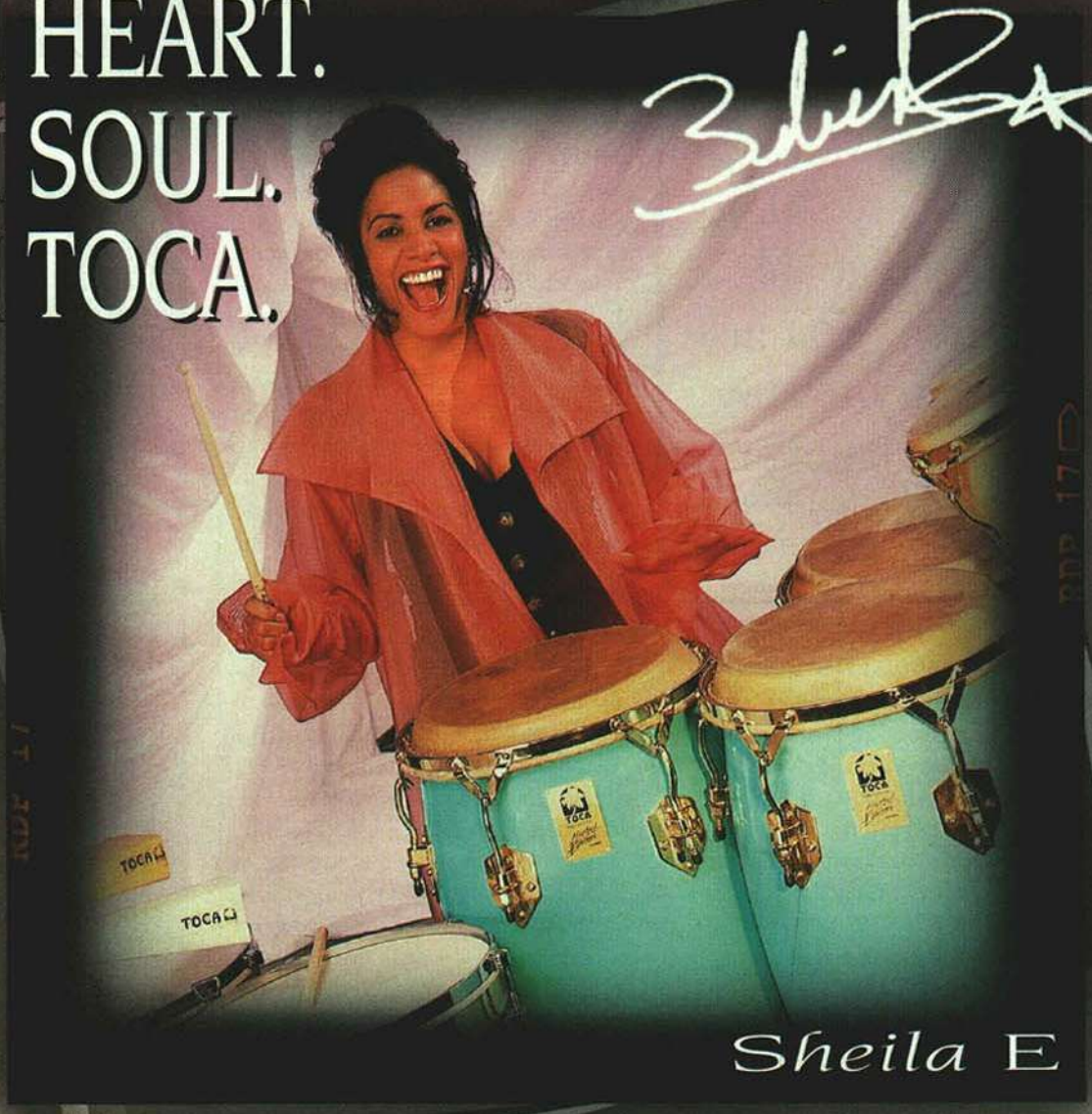

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"Foots"

Stuff

(Warner Bros.; recorded 1976)

Featuring both Gadd and Chris Parker on drums, Stuff was primarily a New York club band made up of prominent session players including guitarists Cornell Dupree and Eric Gale, bassist Gordon Edwards, and keyboardist Richard Tee. With any music they played, the groove was undeniable as Gadd and Parker reinforced and complemented each other's parts. On "Foots," which is credited to the whole band (although Gadd remembers it being mainly Eric Gale's composition), you can hear one drummer playing straight 8th-note time while the other plays 16ths on the hi-hat, or one playing ride cymbal while the other plays hi-hats, or one doing fills while the other keeps straight time.

"I *loved* that band," Gadd says when the tune ends. "I played with them for years and just loved the music and the grooves. I don't think the real magic of that band was ever captured on record. Some nights, man, were so intense and exciting that they felt spiritual. That album was recorded at a time when there was a lot of turmoil in my life, and I think the joy of the music in that band helped me get through some of the things I went through in the '70s."

Why two drummers?

"Stuff started out as just a club band, and Chris Parker was the drummer," Gadd explains. "Everyone was doing a lot of work in the studios, and you'd start out at ten in the morning. If you played the club that night you'd go until four the next morning. So I told Chris, 'Man, if you ever need a sub with this band, I'd love to do it.' So he started calling me. It didn't start out with us playing together; we would alternate jobs and tours.

"But when we did the album, they wanted to include everyone, so after that we would use both drummers whenever we could. It was nice. We'd come up with different things and try not to get in each other's way. It was good with two drummers, but it also sounded great when Chris played alone and it was fun when I played alone. It was a simple band, but the music got real intense and exciting. Towards the end there were some business problems involving the group, and the band just finally ran its course. But I don't think of the rough times; I just remember how much fun it was."

"Aja"

Steely Dan: Aja

(MCA; recorded 1977)

"That's nice music," Gadd says as the track faded out. "I was in L.A. to do something, and sometimes in those days if people heard that I was in town they would call me to do something else. I remember hearing that Becker and Fagen had been going back and forth trying to get these tracks, and they weren't satisfied for one reason or another. A lot of the musicians weren't very optimistic that they were ever going to get these things done. But that day we just sort of sailed through everything, and Becker and Fagen seemed to go for it."

Reportedly, Steely Dan's Walter Becker and Donald Fagen had brought in a succession of rhythm sections; the album's seven tracks feature six different drummers: Gadd, Paul Humphrey, Bernard Purdie, Rick Marotta, Ed Greene, and Jim Keltner. Even on the most straightforward tracks Becker and Fagen were known for doing endless takes, so more than a few jaws dropped at the rumour that the "Aja" track was a first take—especially considering the nature of the composition.

The challenge of the title track had more to do with the complexity of the arrangement than in its technical demands—although there are spots in which Gadd rips off licks that would challenge just about any drummer's chops. Much of the piece has a relaxed groove, but there are frequent (and subtle) tempo and feel changes requiring absolute precision as well as a solid groove in every measure. Sometimes the drums keep a pulse, sometimes Gadd supplies mostly cymbal colors, and here and there the drums contribute aggressive accents and fills.

"That was another session with music all over the place," Gadd recalls. "I don't remember exactly what the parts looked like—probably some kind of lead sheet that everyone was using so we would know the form of the song. Sometimes I would make notes. It was real important to get something together that I could use as a piece of music so I knew where we were, because we just went right through it. That

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was so different from other things I had done with them; I remember going in alone on other occasions and just hitting a snare drum over and over. But this time we did a bunch of tracks live."

What kind of parts does Gadd write for himself if he's not given any music at a session?

"It depends on how complicated it is," he says. "Sometimes you don't really need any music and you can keep it in your head. Other times the stuff changes a lot and you need something. I read a lot in those years and my reading got real good. Reading is a funny thing. If you don't do it all the time, you don't forget it but you're not as sharp at it. But when you do it every day, it's like you've got a system. So I remember that kind of flow in those years; I was reading so much that I was fast."

"Samba Song"

Chick Corea: Friends (Polydor; recorded 1978)

Compared to most of the albums Corea made during the '70s, *Friends* was more straight-ahead jazz than fusion, featuring a quartet composed of Corea, Gadd, bassist Eddie Gomez, and saxophonist Joe Farrell. But it was still a far cry from the standard head-solos-head arrangements of the bop era. Tunes such as "Samba Song" mixed composed and improvised sections freely, and required the musicians to blend rock, jazz, funk, and Latin styles into a seamless whole while maintaining an improvisational attitude and sense of adventure.

Gadd's drumming isn't as constantly dense as on "Nite Sprite"; here he alternates between busy, aggressive playing and simpler drumming, sometimes driving the music forward with just his hi-hats. Near the end he solos over a piano vamp, displaying mucho chops, but also taking advantage of the opportunity to leave space between some of his phrases, thanks to the rhythmic continuum supplied by the piano vamp.

"That was a nice album, and when we did it, I thought it was going to make some noise," Gadd says. "I hadn't done any straight-ahead stuff for a while, so I was

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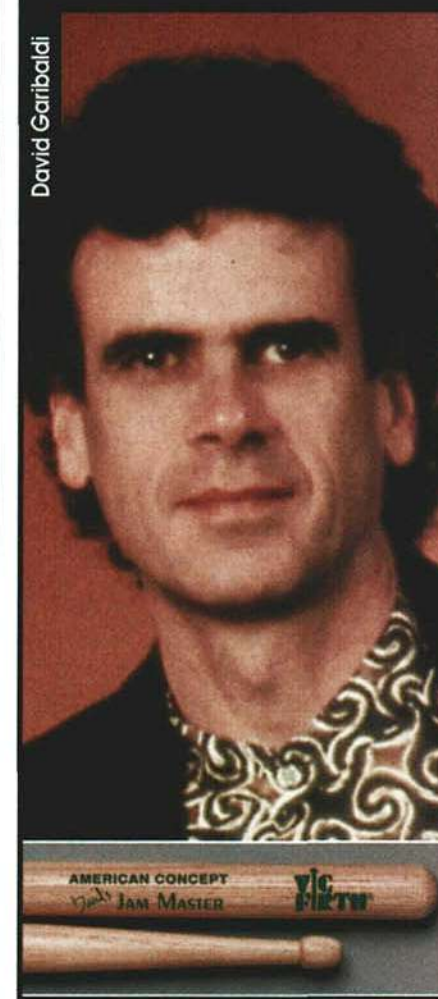

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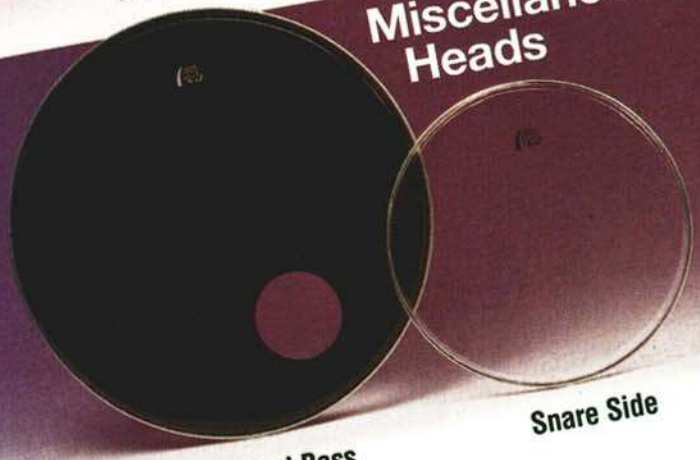

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excited about that album coming out; I had the feeling that people were going to like it. Those years were good for me because I was doing a lot of different things—not just a lot of sessions, but a lot of *good* sessions."

Whose idea was it to have the drum solo occur over a piano vamp? "I think it was Chick's idea," Gadd replys. "He was the first person I worked with who played a vamp while I soloed. I had done solos that way on songs like 'Spain' when I was playing live with Return To Forever years before the *Friends* album. So it was his idea, but I really enjoyed soloing that way."

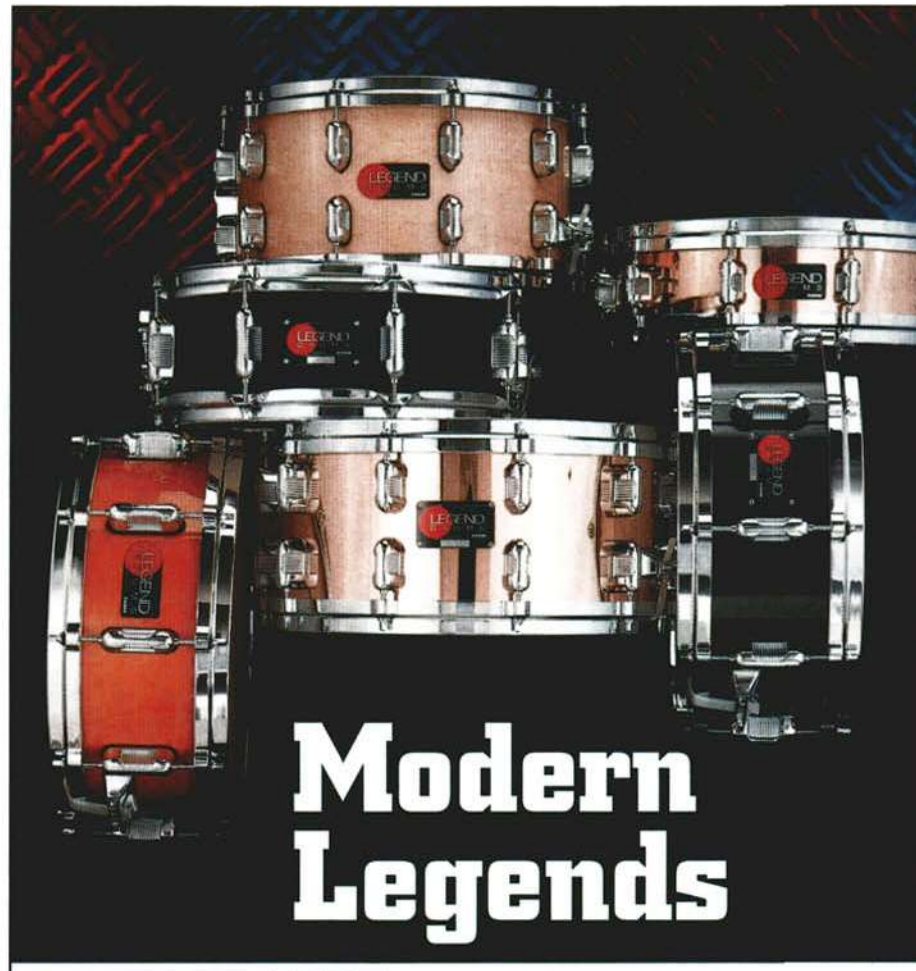
"Unchained Melody"

George Benson: Livin' Inside Your Love (Warner Bros.; recorded 1979)

Not many drummers would likely name this track as one of their favorite Steve Gadd recordings, as the drumming is extremely simple. The drums don't even play until well into the track, and even then, at first you can only hear a soft hi-hat on backbeats. Very gradually the drums become more prominent, but still stay very simple, with minimum fills that never get faster than 8th notes. It's the kind of track one would associate more with someone like Jim Keltner than Steve Gadd—minimum chops but great feel. One drummer who does, however, consider this one of his favorite tracks is Steve Gadd himself.

"I had listened to George Benson as a kid," Gadd remembers. "He used to come through Rochester with organ trios and I would sit in with him. So I felt very proud to have gone from that to being asked to play on an album with him."

Some jazz "purists" criticized Benson for making albums that were too slick and commercial-sounding, with vocals and lush string arrangements. Some wondered how a musician like Gadd could enjoy playing music like Benson's, which seemed to demand very little creativity and offered minimal opportunity for self-expression compared to music such as Chick Corea's. But Gadd has always maintained that he enjoys meeting the challenge of any type of



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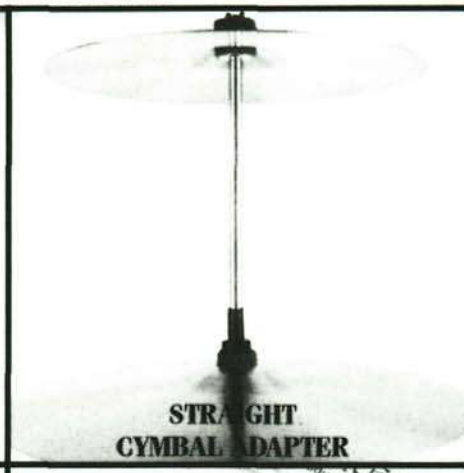

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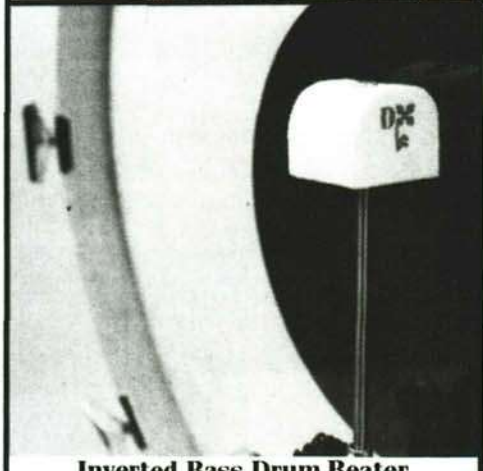

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"I thought 'Unchained Melody' was a real nice track," he says. "It grooved very nicely. That's a good example of making something grow and grow but changing what you are doing very minimally—not getting real busy, but just letting it build. I really liked it and thought it was a great piece of music."

"Quartet No. 2, Part 2"

Chick Corea: Three Quartets (Warner Bros., reissued GRP/Stretch; recorded 1981)

Even if the album sleeve didn't identify this track as being "dedicated to John Coltrane," the influence is obvious in the music, as Corea, Gadd, bassist Eddie Gomez, and saxophonist Michael Brecker achieve a classic Coltrane Quartet sound. Gadd in particular attacks the music with a vengeance, bashing and crashing his cymbals very much in the style of Elvin Jones. One hearing this track back-to-back with the Jim Hall track would be hard pressed to identify the drummers as being the same person, except for the fact that they both have strong drive and swing.

"I think that was one of the first sessions done at Chick's Mad Hatter studios in L.A.," Gadd says. "We went out and did a little bit of touring after that. When I hear that, I think the music and the writing are really good. And people have referred to that album a lot; it touched a lot of people. That was one of the last albums I did with Chick."

Did the very strong Elvin Jones influence evident in Gadd's drumming on this track assert itself simply because the composition is so much in the style of John Coltrane?

"I don't know if that brought it out of me or if it's just that I've listened to Elvin so much that it comes out second nature. If I'm playing straight-ahead stuff, I think there's always a little bit of Elvin and Tony [Williams] there subconsciously, because I like the way they play so much. But I don't remember particularly trying to mimic Elvin when I was playing that. I was just trying to play what was right for the music."

"Woody And Dutch"

Rickie Lee Jones: Pirates (Warner Bros.; recorded 1981)

This track has a real street feel, with Chuck Rainey's hip bass line and Jones' vocal supported by finger snaps, handclaps, and some very funky brushwork from Gadd, who is credited with playing "boxes and thighs."

"That was the second record I did with Rickie," Gadd says. "I was getting out to L.A. quite a bit, doing a lot of different things. And her stuff was good; I got to do some interesting things on Rickie's albums. On that track I thought it might sound good to play brushes on a tape box, and then I overdubbed playing on my thighs."

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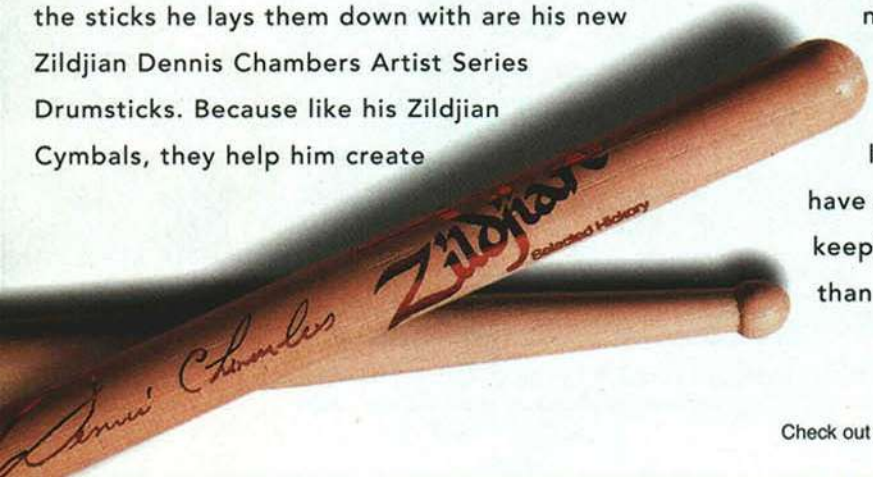

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convincing evidence that it's the musician who brings the instruments to life, not the other way around. These days, many studio drummers talk of the importance of bringing a dozen different snare drums and scores of cymbals to sessions. Did Gadd's cartage company ever have to haul that much stuff around to the sessions he was playing?

"No. I had a few different cymbals and a couple of snare drums, but in those days I didn't have to do that. Maybe now they want more choices, but back then, if the one you had didn't work they might ask you to try a different one, or they might have one in the studio they would ask you to try. But it was never like ten snare drums; I've never done that."

"Honky Tonk/I Can't Stop Loving You"

The Gadd Gang

(Sony/Epic; recorded 1986)

Featuring former Stuff members Cornell Dupree and Richard Tee along with Eddie Gomez, the Gadd Gang was devoted to pure groove, and nowhere was that more evident than on this shuffle-driven track that combined the Bill Doggett '50s instrumental hit with one of Ray Charles' classic tunes. Gadd delivers an uncluttered, driving shuffle feel that steadily builds throughout the track. It's *a* perfect example of *how* something is played being more important than *what* is being playing.

"I've always loved that track," Gadd says. "And I love that kind of groove. That version of 'I Can't Stop Loving You' that we did at the end is a tribute to both Ray Charles and Count Basie, because I asked [arranger] Dave Matthews to cop the way Basie did it. It was fun to do music of people that I had always listened to and liked.

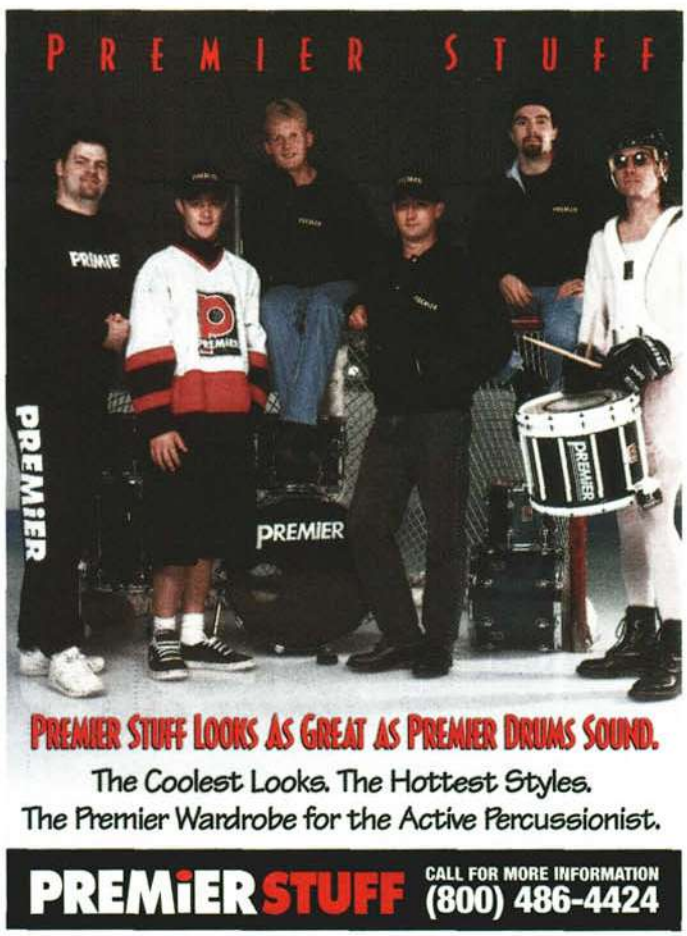
"I like 'Duke's Lullaby' on that album too. Duke is my son and I wrote him a drum lullaby," Gadd says, laughing. "It was nice. I like doing percussion stuff and playing different grooves, so I just overdubbed a bunch of times and did a few grooves and soloed over some of them.

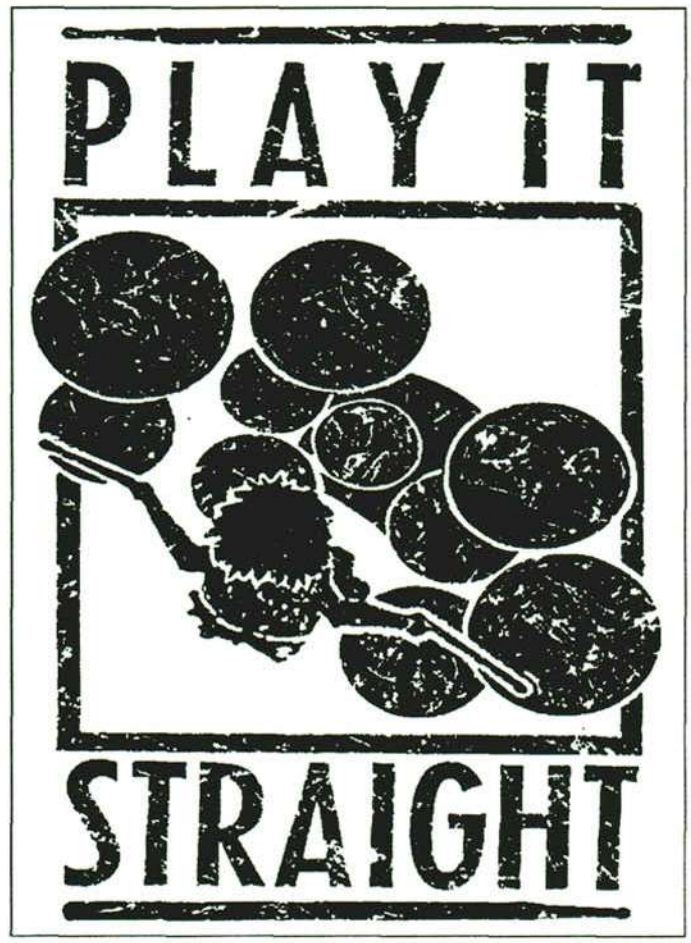
"That was the first Gadd Gang album, and it's my favorite one. We had a lot of fun doing it, and I like everything on it. I'm sometimes sorry that I didn't stretch out more on that album; some of the stuff was really burning and I could have gone on longer. I wish that I had, but who knew? I still love the album. People come up a lot and ask about it."

Gadd said that some of his affinity for shuffles probably came from sitting in with a lot of organ trios when he was growing up in Rochester. "I'm sure it came from a combination of organ stuff, straight-ahead things, and just liking those grooves. They can get very intense when you lock them in. They feel great."

At his PASIC '95 clinic, Gadd demonstrated a shuffle beat at the request of an audience member. You could hear the whole shuffle rhythm on the hi-hat, but Gadd's right hand was maintaining straight quarters; the third note of each triplet was being played by his left foot on the hi-hat pedal. Once again, it was a quarter-note pulse that provided the framework for everything else he was doing.

"If you start out that simply, making minor changes in what you're doing can





really lift the music. One way would be to keep the hi-hat on the third note of the triplet but move the right-hand quarter notes to the ride cymbal. Then at some point you can change the hi-hat to quarter notes and leave it open a little bit. That's one of the things I like about this track—the way it subtly changes gears and keeps building. That track really puts a smile on my face."

"Love For Sale"

Burning For Buddy (Atlantic; recorded 1994)

Gadd has performed at several of the Buddy Rich tribute concerts over the past few years, but unlike some of the drummers involved who used the occasion to display every bit of chops they possessed (and some they didn't), Gadd always chose to honor Rich's memory by giving the band a solid foundation—a facet of Rich's talent that was often overshadowed by his phenomenal soloing abilities. On the Neil Peart-produced *Burning For Buddy* album, Gadd displays his formidable big band chops, setting up ensemble figures with solid, simple fills and driving the time with quarter notes on the ride cymbal.

"That arrangement Buddy did of 'Love For Sale' is one of my favorites that he did," Gadd says. "I wish I could have played it better. With any music situation, if you can go out on the road for a week or two the stuff really starts to burn, and that's the stuff you wish you could get on tape.

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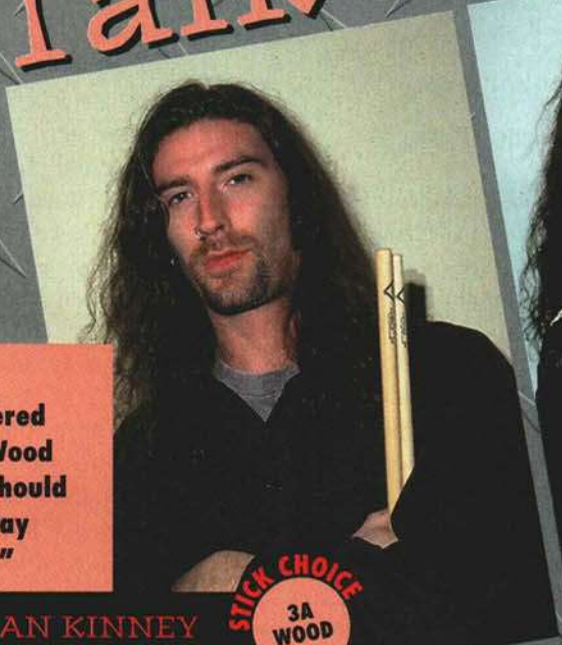

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That's what Buddy's version sounded like to me—like the band was on fire. Buddy played the shit out of it. But they were out there playing live for hundreds of nights in a row. For the last two years I was in the army I was playing in a band like Buddy's, sight-reading charts every day and touring. So having done it in the army, I have something to compare it to, and I just wish we could have been out on the road for a while playing that music before we recorded it.

"But it was a great experience and it was an honor to be part of that tribute. I'm grateful that they allowed me to play the piece I wanted to play, because it was something I listened to as a young drummer and was inspired by. I would fantasize about playing *that* song with a band like that. And I finally got to do it. That was great."

After one of the Buddy Rich tribute concerts, Louie Bellson spoke to trumpet player Bobby Shew, who told him, "When Steve Gadd plays, the rhythm section locks in so great that the rest of the band knows right away that *there's* the authority. It makes it so much easier for us."

"That was really nice of him to say that," Gadd says when told of Shew's comment. "I don't know—I just try and be part of the foundation. Everyone in the band can play; all you have to do is give them something strong to play over and it'll be fine."

"Mas Que Nada"

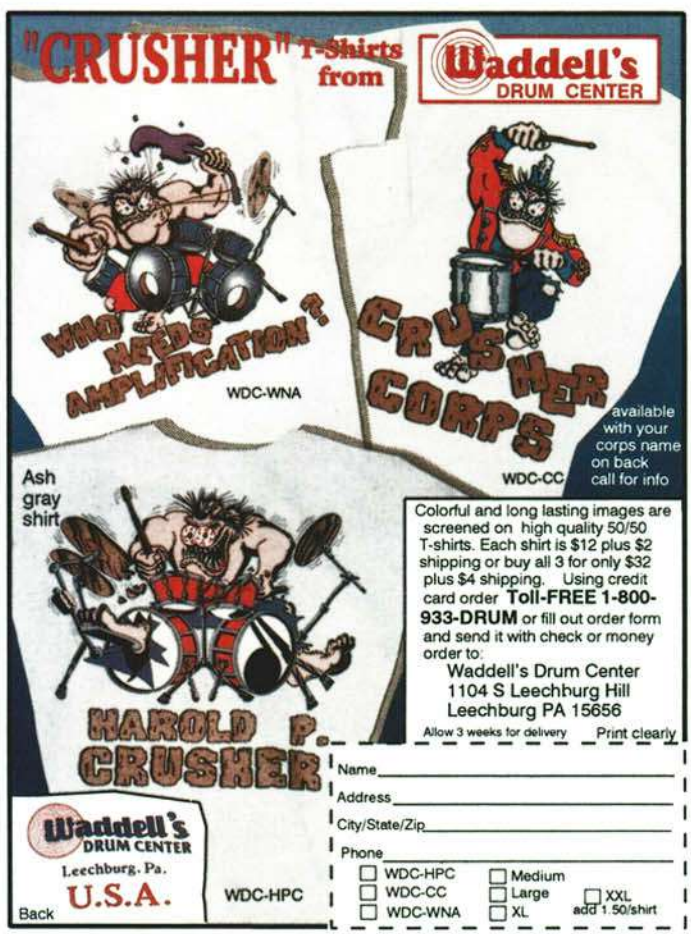
Al Jarreau: Tenderness (Reprise; recorded 1994)

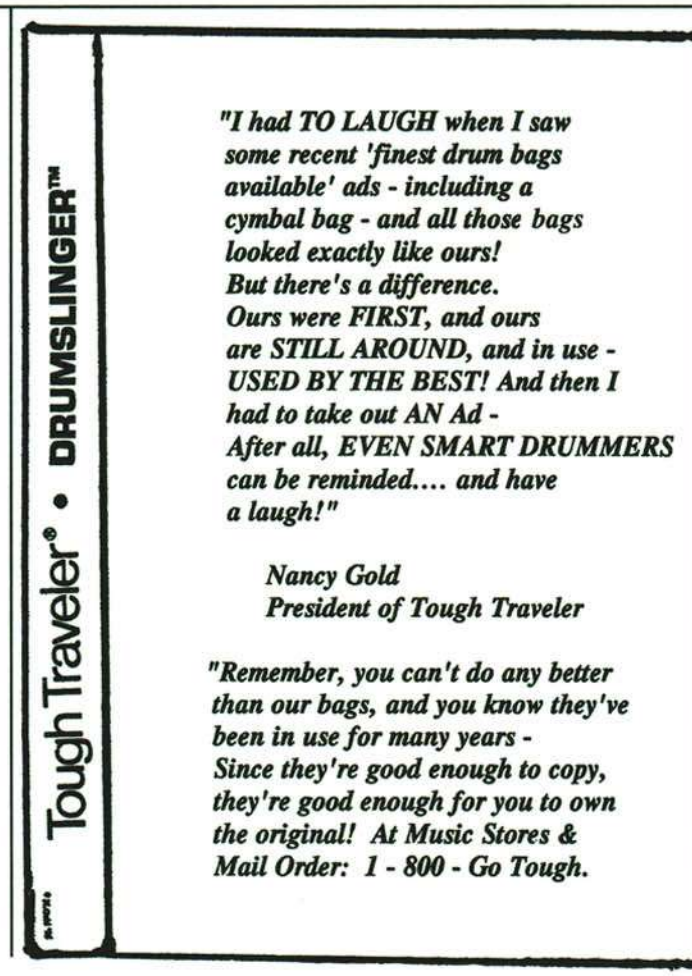
During most of the '90s Gadd has spent more time on the road than in the studios, and this album recorded live on an L.A. soundstage in front of an audience is a good representation of his gig with Al Jarreau, whom Gadd toured with on and off for over a year. Having become the only singer to win Grammy awards in three different vocal categories—pop, jazz, and R&B—Jarreau wanted to make an album that combined all three genres, and Gadd was the ideal drummer for such a project. Like the George Benson album, much of the music required a minimum of chops, but all the tracks are strong on feel, as is especially evident throughout the strong samba groove on the opening track, "Mas Que Nada."

One wonders, though, how live work compares to studio sessions. For so many years Gadd was experiencing the stimulation of recording new music practically every day. Why would someone give that up to go on the road and play virtually the same show night after night?

"The recording business isn't what it used to be," Gadd explains. "What was happening in the '70s and '80s in terms of recording and free-lance work has changed immensely. There are a lot more self-contained bands, and with state-of-the-art electronic instruments one guy can do a lot of stuff. So there's not as much work. Also, I don't live in New York anymore. With studio work, a lot of it is not only that you can play, but that you're available—sometimes on pretty short notice.

"Right now, living in Rochester, I can go into New York to do a project for a few





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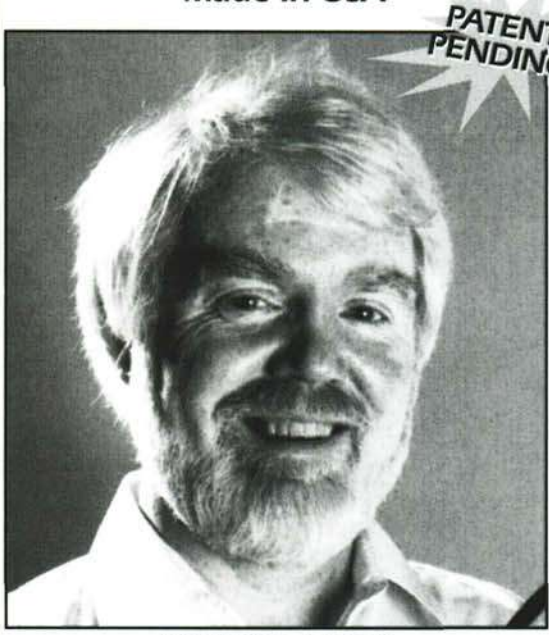

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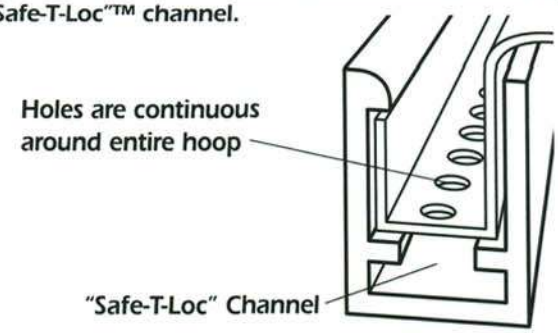

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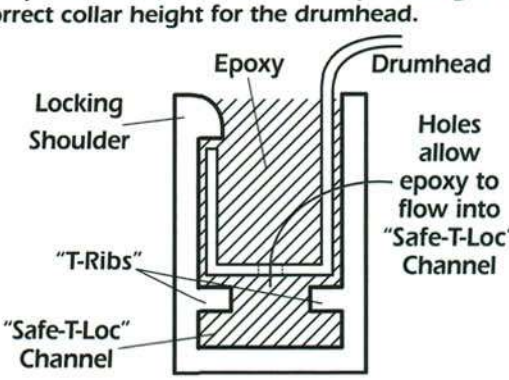
3) The "Locking Shoulder" acts as an additional "lock" to hold the epoxy firmly in place while at the same time providing a "stop" to ensure the correct collar height for the drumhead.



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days and then come back home. But then I'm always running back and forth. It's kind of nice if I can line up a tour that lasts a couple of months, and then I come back home and have a little bit of time off to spend with my family."

Gadd said he enjoys any situation in which he can be part of making good music, and doesn't necessarily prefer the studio to a road gig.

"A good road job is something to cherish," he insists. "Some road gigs are run better than others, and some of them can be pretty painful. But I've been lucky enough to be involved in some that have been really nice. Working with Al Jarreau has always been great—very professional, very organized, good people, good music. I spent most of a year on the road with Paul Simon about four years ago, and that was good. And the touring I've been doing with Eric Clapton has been really nice.

"Some road things are rough, but there are studio things that are rough, too. You just have to try to stay up for whatever you're doing. One of the challenges when you're playing live and doing the same show every night is to stay inspired to go out there and do the show the best you can. That's part of the gig, and it's a challenge that has to be met. The thing you like about any situation you play in is the camaraderie between the people you're playing with and the energy that everybody puts into the music to make it happen.

"I'm a professional musician. I do freelance things in the studio and I do touring, and I've always done that. I have to maintain a certain level of professionalism to do either one, and one way to do that is to not let my head get into thinking that one is better than the other. I try to be challenged by whatever I'm doing, and be thankful that I'm working and making a living playing music. That's what I do."

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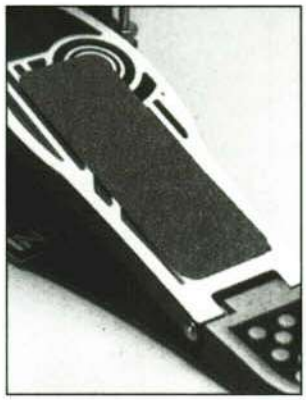

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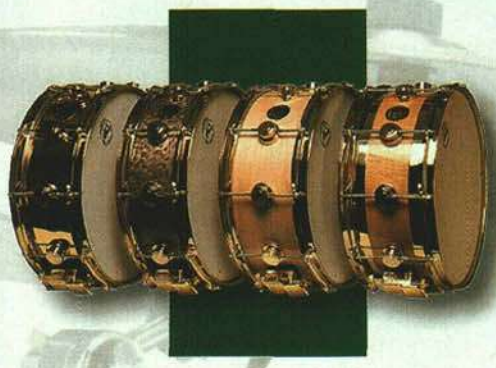

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A 6x14" "Collector's" (10-6 maple) and a 5x14" "Edge" (brass/maple) from DW's Custom Snare Drum collection. Also shown above: "Vintage" (brass) and "Craviotto" (solid maple).

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The Drummers of Hip-Hop

Pop a slamming rap jam into your CD player, and it's the first sound you'll hear blasting from your speakers—at once muscular and propulsive, forming the backbone of the song that soon follows. It doesn't take long to discover that drums and percussion are at once the heart and soul of rap music, providing a meaty framework for artists ranging from Kool Moe Dee to the Notorious B.I.G.

So it seems ironic to note that a style of music that values drums so much should have so few drummers actually playing the beats. As a test, try to name a few famous rap drummers. Stumped? If so, you're not the only one; of the six drummers interviewed for this article, only one or two could name more than one *other* drummer who worked with a successful rap artist. None could name more than two. Ask the drummers themselves and they'll tell you that gigs for live drummers in the world of hip-hop—a percussive universe ruled by sound-sampling sequencers like Akai's *MPC-60*—are few and far between.

"It's a total money thing," says Andy "Funky Drummer" Kravitz, a Philadelphia-based drummer who looks like he should be headbanging for a band like Stone Temple Pilots, but has played on and produced cuts for artists like Kris Kross, Cypress Hill, Buju Banton, and Spearhead. "Why pay a drummer between $400 and $800 when you can just loop some drum tracks for nothing?" says Kravitz, referring to a technique where producers sample short sections of a drumbeat from a record or CD and endlessly repeat (or "loop") the part—building a song around it. "And there's hysteria about copying what's already successful on the radio...they think, 'I don't hear TLC using a drummer, why should I?' They don't realize that if they got me to come in, they'd have a lot more options."

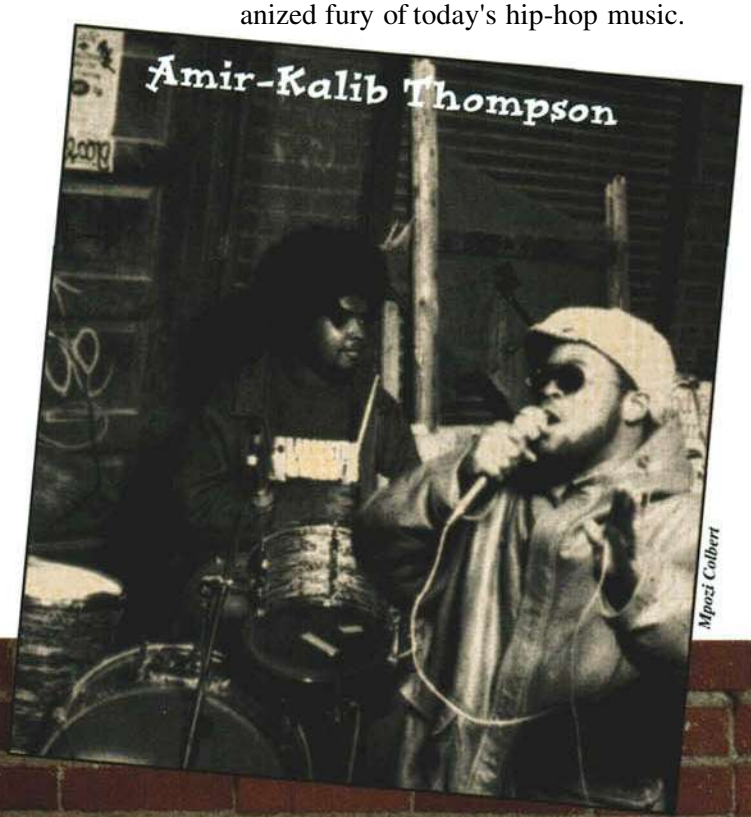
Because so many successful rap songs are built on samples of older R&B and soul tunes, often the study of rap drumming involves going back to the source of those sampled parts, suggests Cheron Moore, one of several drummers for mega-successful gangsta rap producer Dr. Dre, rapper Snoop Doggy Dogg, and Ore's record label, Death Row Records.

"One of the best sources is James Brown. The stuff they call new jack swing today, he was doing in the '50s and '60s," says Moore, noting that dozens of rap producers have used the singer's famous tune "Funky Drummer" as the rhythm track for hit songs. "It's all built on ghost notes. I use a piccolo snare on the left side, hitting the 2 and 4 on the big snare and playing ghost notes on the piccolo. The bass drum doesn't need to be busy, because the ghost notes make it sound busy. The bass drum drives it, and the 2 and 4 pounds it."

For Moore, the biggest mistake an aspiring drummer can make is to only listen to contemporary rap artists for inspiration. "You're not going to learn hip-hop drumming from Brandy or Da Brat. Listen to (Da Brat's hit) 'Funkified'...that's a bit of Sly & the Family Stone there. You've got to know the roots."

Unfortunately, many drummers working in rap are relegated to fairly obscure roles, playing only behind an artist's live performances or acting as a human sampler—going into the studio for marathon sessions to recreate drum parts from classic albums, allowing the producer to use the newly-recorded tracks without paying fees to those who originally performed the song.

But six of hip-hop's leading drummers agreed to talk about their unique status as players in a style that often doesn't value musicians—or drummers, in particular. Though each musician found a different road to their current gigs and use drastically different means to execute them, they shared a deep respect for and love of the form—while remaining determined to prove there's room for a human touch amid the mechanized fury of today's hip-hop music.



BY ERIC DEGGANS

The Drummers of Hip Hop

Steve Williams

Digable Planets, Vanilla Ice, P.M. Dawn

When Steve Williams was studying the moves of master jazz drummers at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, and later at the prestigious Berklee College of Music—rubbing shoulders with fellow students like Will Calhoun, Jeff Watts, Cindy Blackman, and Terri Lyne Carrington—the last thing he thought he'd wind up playing was rap music.

Ten years later, from early gigs with artists like the Family Stand and Zhane to his latest position as musical director for New York-based Digable Planets, Williams has found a home in hip-hop—a rare feat for a drummer.

Ask the thirty-two-year-old sticksman how he carved a career in a genre where most artists would rather just plug in a drum machine, and he'll tell you a trade secret. The key, according to Williams, is in his approach towards the gig.

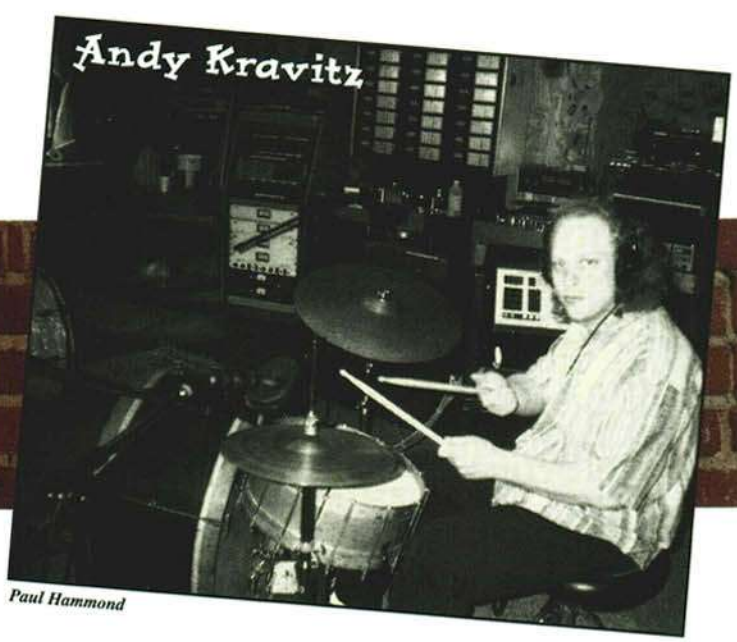
"Especially playing with Digable, the music is a lot more versatile than just playing break beats," says the energetic drummer. "It's a matter of feel as opposed to technique. Most rappers use the same break beats over and over... they're from the same '60s and '70s records. But most of the people who come to our shows are musically literate, so they expect us to do stuff that's better."

Anyone who's heard Williams' playing on Vanilla Ice's often-underrated *Extremely Live!* record knows his talent for adding a supple, sinewy jazz/funk groove to music traditionally considered a hip-hop confection. For him, there's a simple trick to Grafting an effective part for a live concert, based on the artist's recording—which often involves numerous samples and sequenced tracks.

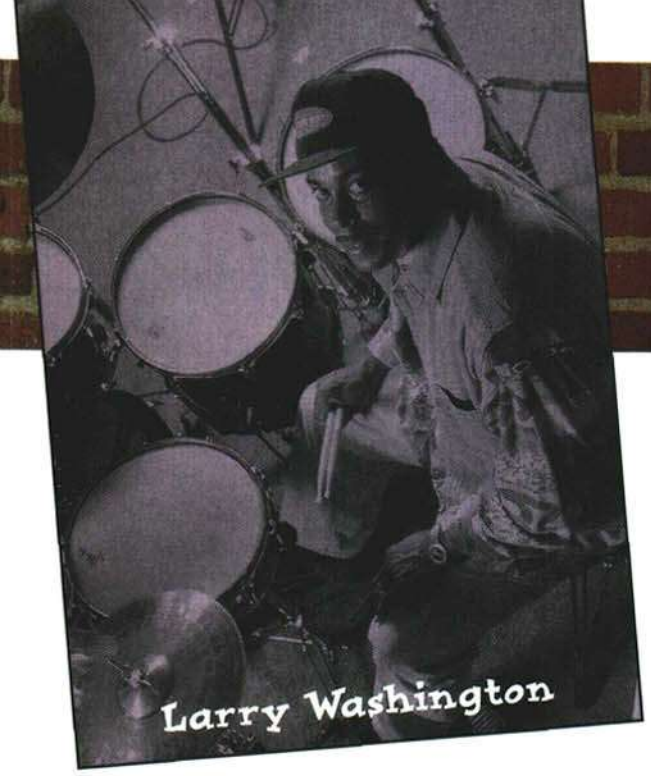
"When you listen to hip-hop, the tracks are very simple, but those tracks will contain four, five, or six drum loops that are running together," he says. "To make it swing, you have to be able to hear what's going on and pick out the parts that work. After a while, you can hear—'Oh, that's the 'Impeach The President' beat or the 'Funky Drummer' beat. I may put a little twist on it—change a snare beat here or there—just to make it all work better live."

"You have to learn how to play on the beat, behind the beat, and ahead of the beat. I sat down and practiced with a metronome and a click track for two years, which really helped." - Steve Williams

Much of Williams' rap work has involved helping artists



Paul Hammond



recreate their records on the concert stage. With one-hit wonder Vanilla Ice, that meant playing behind a Digital Audio Tape containing the rest of the music—from bass lines and guitar parts to record scratching and beat box stuff—adding live flavor and power to canned tracks.

With Digable, the drummers' role fits a more traditional space. Here, Williams is part of a real band—including an upright bass player, a two-man brass section, a keyboardist, and a DJ—hoping to bring the muscular feel of a spot-on jazz combo to the hip-hop arena.

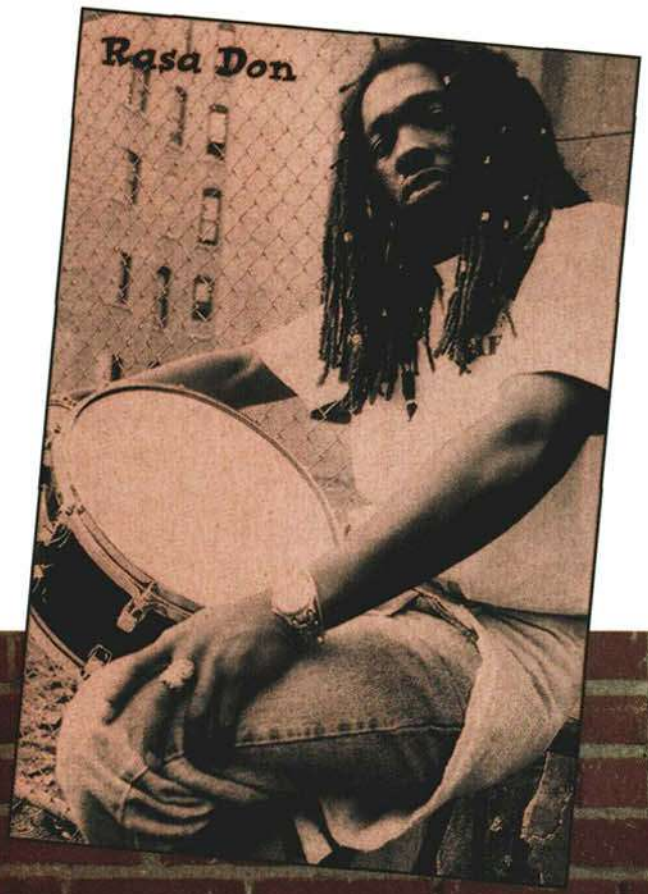
"Last year, we had drums, turntables, and an upright bass player—we used wax on the turntables instead of DATs, so there was still a live element there—but we had organ parts, tenor sax parts, a Roland *808* [drum machine] kick sound, and some additional ride cymbal patterns there," he explains.

"Now, everything is live...they [Digable's core trio of rappers] want it to sound like a band, with things coming out in spontaneous ways," Williams says. "I've heard a lot of different hip-hop acts that get a band together to occupy space. But the Planets feed off the live music. It's like playing jazz.. .the two of you are communicating."

Beyond live concerts, hip-hop drummers often help artists recreate drum parts from their favorite records—allowing DJs and producers to use the newly recorded tracks for their own records without paying the original artist hefty licensing fees.

Williams' many duties with Digable included one such session. "They took the dirtiest set of drums they could find and put one mic' on it, just like all the old albums were recorded," he says. "I played everything from Partridge Family beats to the Modern Jazz Quartet...almost every pop act from the '60s, like they pulled out every record in their collection. These kids have huge ears, so you just have to figure out how to give them what they want to hear."

When it comes to the communicating he does onstage, Williams' gear isn't much different than what he used when backing R&B and jazz acts like Mica Paris and Will Downing. At its heart is a six-piece Pearl *MLX* drumkit with a 16x22 kick drum and 8x8, 10x10, 10x12, and 14x14 toms. He cracks the beat on a Pearl 7x12 maple piccolo snare, though he's thinking of switching to brass "because the wood is too warm." To his left



sits a 3x14 piccolo used mostly for triggering.

To recreate many of the traditional hip-hop percussion sounds—including wide, fuzzy kick drum sounds, thin handclaps, fingersnaps, and similar synthetic percussion—Williams has a variety of sound samples loaded into a Roland *TD-7* tone generator, with kick and snare drum triggers on his acoustic drums.

"You can't do any kind of hip-hop project without those sounds," he says emphatically. "Part of the reason Digable became so successful in combining the two sounds [jazz and rap] is because they knew the history of both musics. A lot of jazz artists are jumping on the bandwagon to do something like this, but something's missing because they don't know what instruments are indicative of the style."

And when hopeful young drummers ask about the most important skill needed to get and keep a gig in the rap world, Williams has an equally direct answer: good time.

"You have to learn how to play on the beat, behind the beat, and ahead of the beat," he says. "I learned the hard way—I used to play with the Family Stand, but my time was inconsistent and as a result, I lost that gig. After that, I sat down and practiced with a metronome and a click track for two years, which really helped."

Often Williams' work backing rap artists in concert involves acting as a traffic cop of sorts, playing grooves that would unite live players with sequenced material, often culled from samples of records twenty or thirty years old—a tough task, if your timing isn't razor sharp.

"When you're playing hip-hop music, nine times out of ten you're going to be playing with a loop, and certain parts may be out of time," he says. "You have to know where to play on the beat, behind it, and in front of it. A lot of those records were recorded in the '60s, so when DJs sample them the first bar may be fine and the next two will be out of time. You have to play something that brings it all together."

Ahmir - Khalib Thompson

TEE ROOTS

Named by *Rolling Stone* magazine as one of the nation's best cutting-edge rap groups, the Roots have bum-rushed the hip-hop nation with a funky, jazzified sound that combines drumset and acoustic bass sounds with turntable scratching and amazingly complex rhymes.

Still, drummer Ahmir-Khalib Thompson has found that the band's painstaking effort to maintain an authentic feel on record has left some wondering if he actually played on the album at all.

"I've gotten into arguments with journalists who couldn't believe it was me behind the kit," says Thompson, citing relatively restrained cuts from their debut album *Do You Want More?!!??!* like the percolating, bass-drum-powered groove "Distortion To Static." "But I've been playing drums since I was two years old," he asserts, "and I'm a student of hip-hop drums. All the break beats that are turning up on records now

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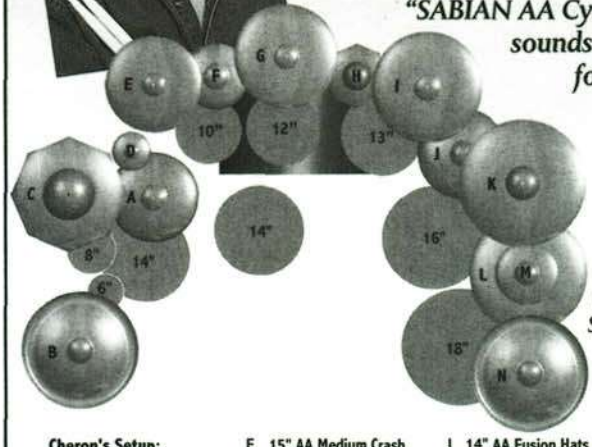
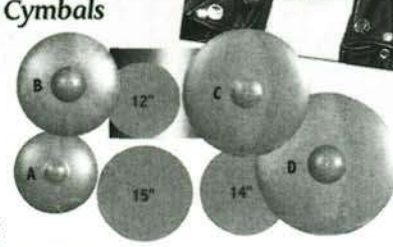
"SABIAN AA Cymbals have the cut and power that let me focus on the music."

ANDY KRAVITZ
(Sessions: Billy Joel, Sting, Joan Osborne, Spearhead)





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F 10" AA Splash
G 16" AA Medium Crash
H 10" AA Rocktagon
I 17" AA Medium Crash
J 14" AA Fusion Hats
K 20" AA Medium Ride
L 18" AA Medium Crash
M 10" PRO Splash
N 18" AA Chinese

Andy's Setup:
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B 16" AA Thin Crash (w/sizzles)
C 20" AA Medium Thin Crash (w/sizzles)
D 22" AA Medium Ride

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are things I was shedding when I was eight years old."

Listen to *Do You Want More?!!??!* and the evidence of Thompson's mastery is readily apparent. On tunes like "Mellow My Man," where his insistent bass drum licks add power to rapper Malik B.'s lyrics, the drummer's spot-on snare licks and flawless time bring an inspired groove to the party.

In "Datskat," Thompson stretches a bit, offering some sinewy fills and James Brown-style accents to match the rappers' singsongy delivery. So it's more than a little surprising to hear the twenty-something sticksman admit that the loose, complex groove on that song no longer represents his current playing style.

"That was me creating a drum break kind of beat," he says. "Sometimes when I practiced, I would play to a click track and try to make myself sound like an *SP-1200* [drum machine]...and now I'm taking that to the hilt. Every other drummer is trying to hit fills every twelve seconds. But we're trying to get the best sounds out of our instruments, and I know I can do more with less."

In accordance with his new vision, the kit Thompson has taken on the road is equally streamlined, featuring a 26" Ludwig bass drum, a 13" piccolo snare, 10" Zildjian hi-hats, and a 24" Zildjian ride.

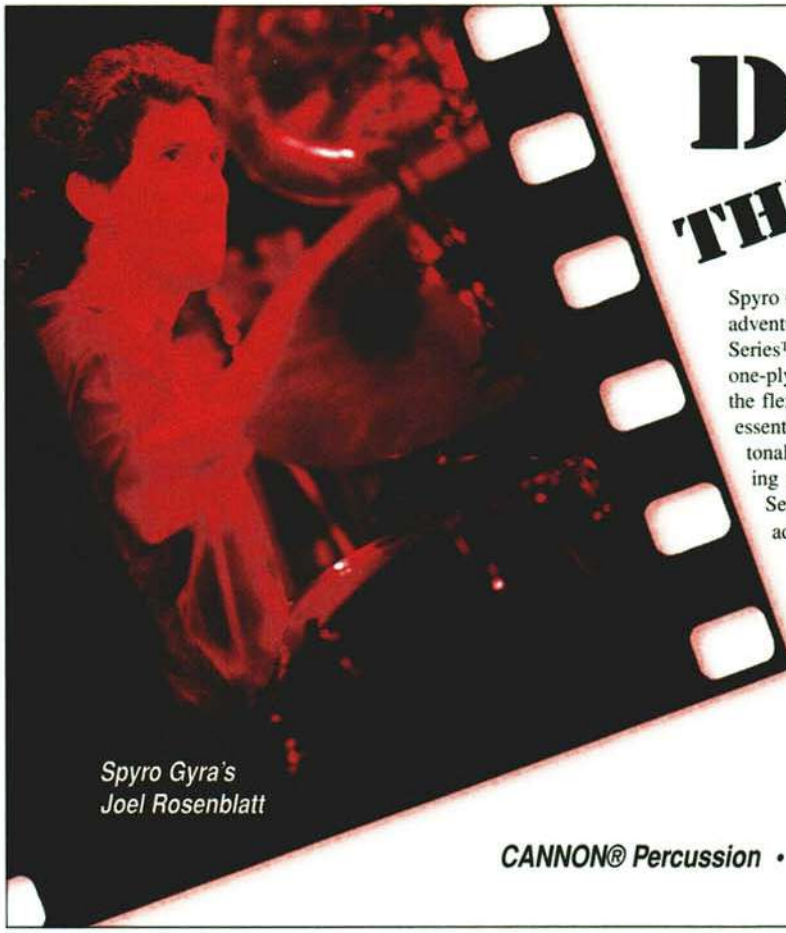
"We did a show with Buckshot LeFonque in Europe, and their drummer couldn't believe I was gigging on a two-piece kit," he says, calling from a pay telephone in Italy, where the band is appearing with Gil Scott-Heron. "It helps me stay focused on simple playing...but it could also be that I'm too lazy to carry the set at the end of the day."

Ever the student of hip-hop and drum sounds, Thompson offers his own unofficial history of drums and drum sounds in rap. "From '79 to '83, there was the live band sound. From 1983 to '85, that was the Roland *808* period—big, boomy bass drum sounds and chintzy percussion. From '85 to '87 the *SP-1200* took over. And '88 to '90 was the overuse of the *MPC-60* and the use of breaks like 'Funky Drummer.'"

And now? "A lot of producers have stopped using breaks—they just take snares and kicks from different things and program their own patterns. On Jeru's 'The Sun Rises,' DJ Premier used every break beat that was considered wack in the industry—stuff like Michael Jackson's 'Billie Jean' and the Funk Family's 'Cool Is Back.' But he reconstructed everything and disguised it so heavily, you wouldn't know."

Growing up in Philadelphia, Thompson wound up backing his father's doo-wop band, Lee Andrews & the Hearts, at age seven. Later at the fabled High School for the Performing Arts, his inspiration came from funk master drummers like Steve Ferrone of Average White Band.

"Early on, I mastered Steve Ferrone's sound," he says. "My dad would make me shed for five hours a day, so I played with Donny Hathaway's second album, any Average White Band stuff, and Keith LeBlanc and all the Sugarhill Gang stuff. Bernard Purdie once told my dad, 'The only way I keep food on the table is the 2 and 4,' so that's what my father asked for. But I didn't realize how true that was until



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Hooking up with rappers Malik B. and Black Thought, joined by bassist Leonard Nelson Hubbard, Thompson worked on developing the Roots' distinctive brand of jazz/funk-flavored hip-hop—watching as friends like bassist Christian McBride and the members of Boyz II Men made a huge impact on the industry.

By early 1993, the Roots were performing on the streets of Philadelphia's cosmopolitan party neighborhood, South Street—entertaining shoppers and nightclubbers while honing their unique approach.

"We were a wolf in sheep's clothing," Thompson adds. "We got to play establishments that wouldn't let the usual hip-hop act in. It wasn't until our last week on South Street that [jazz bass virtuoso] Jamaaladeen Tacuma took us to Germany and helped us make a record."

That CD, called *Orgcmics,* caught the ear of executives at Geffen Records, and before long the band had a major-label deal. But as Thompson looks back on the recording of Do *You Want More?!!??!,* he notes that the drum production could have been more focused.

"For the first month of recording, I wasn't really knowledgeable about what my signature sound would be," he says. "I was using brass snares and getting a lot of ring from my drums. I didn't cover up my kick drum...I definitely didn't do my homework on how to get sounds. Back then, the type of hip-hop drums you heard were lots of loops from old records, so that explains some of it. But when I hear it now, I just cringe.. .I can't believe I played that loose."

But Thompson knows he's not alone in his ignorance. Because there are so few drummers working in hip-hop, young percussionists who may want to enter the field may find precious little room for inspiration.

"I really wish I had more peers," he says, ruefully. "You can hear Max Roach or Dave Grohl or Stewart Copeland if you're into jazz or rock. But for good funk or rap drumming, where can you go?"

Eric Correa, a.k.a. Bobo

CYPRESS HILL, BEASTIE BOYS

If the name of Cypress Hill's percussionist sounds familiar, there's a good reason. Using the stage name Bobo, Eric Correa pays a silent tribute at every performance to his now-deceased father, legendary Latin percussionist Willie Bobo.

Now twenty-six, Correa learned the basics of percussion at his father's feet, trudging to gigs across Los Angeles. But his current job is taking him to places his father never imagined, stepping on stage as one of the first percussionists to perform with a hardcore, true-to-the-roots hip-hop outfit.

"At first [Cypress Hill member] DJ Muggs wasn't really into the live percussion and musicians onstage—he thought it would take away from the traditional hip-hop feel," Correa says. "It's like one-on-one combat. The DJ is doing his thing and we're listening to each other, but you have to help the foundation. If the bass line is

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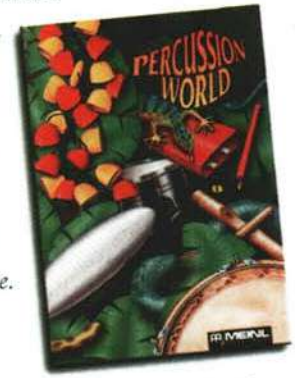

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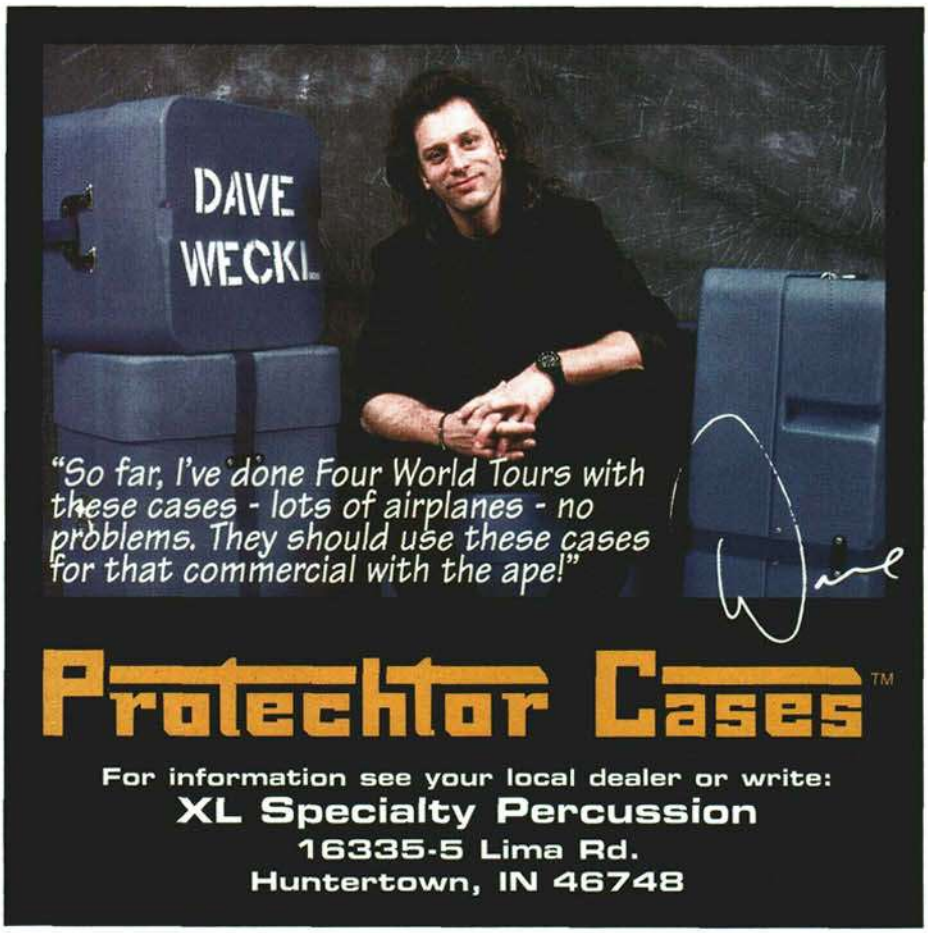


swinging and the drum loop is swinging, you have to go with that, because none of that will change for you."

With Cypress Hill, Correa is often the only musician onstage, working with turntable scratches, drum loops, and sequenced bits of music offered by the DJ. It's a bit of a change from his earlier work with the Beastie Boys on the *Check Yo' Head* tour and the recording and tour behind their latest record, *Ill Communication.*

For the Beasties—which often played as a band, with the three rappers jumping on bass, guitar, and drums—Correa found the leeway that comes from working with a flesh-and-blood band.

"They hired four different percussionists at different times and couldn't click with any of them," he says. "In part, it was personality conflicts and part of it was them playing all over the place and not settling into the groove. I'd always been a fan, even though my background is Latin jazz, so I thought I could add some flavor."

For examples, check out the instrumental groove "Sabrosa" from *Ill Communication.* There, Correa sets up the jazz/funk groove laid down by the Beasties with tasty bursts of bongos and shaker parts. Or spin through "Ricky's Theme"—a groove powered by Correa's trapset playing.

"With my training in jazz, I learned that style—I learned how to put the flavor in without playing too hard," he adds. "Sometimes drummers just want to put that heavy backbeat in there with the snare. With old drummers, especially, that's the first beat they'll play behind a rapper. But if you listen to the rappers, they have a rhythmic flow of their own...stopping and starting just like bebop horn players."

With both groups, Correa has found his stage setup constantly changing and growing. These days, he uses 13" and 14" wood congas, *Generation II* bongos, and *Tito Puente* model timbales, all by Latin Percussion. Cymbal-wise, he holds forth on a 12" K splash, a *Custom* thin crash, and a *China Boy,* all Zildjian.

Correa also finds time to throw in a curve ball or two, using a djembe to approximate the booming sound of a Roland *808* kick drum, or sneaking in a bit of talking drum on a track. The percussionist has found, in general, that traditional Latin rhythms like meringues and songos

work well with traditional hip-hop grooves, along with certain 6/8 fills and triplet feels—for instance, figures phrased between the congas and bongos.

"On a song like 'We Ain't Goin' Out Like That,' I play timbale and cowbell—closest to the role of an actual drumset," he explains. "A song like 'Liquor Shot' has room for more of a traditional Latin feel, and on a song like 'I Wanna Get High' I can turn around and play a traditional rhythm, too. Being a fan of the music makes a difference...that's what tells you when to play and when to lay back."

Correa's training started at age five, stepping onto a stool to play his father's timbale at a show in North Hollywood. After that, the young percussionist-to-be became a fixture at his legendary papa's shows, watching as William "Willie Bobo" Correa helped put Latin jazz on the map, performing with Tito Puente, Mongo Santamaria, Machito, and George Shearing.

But when the younger Correa was just fifteen, his father died, and the percussionist faced a tough choice: find his own musical path or follow his father's legacy.

"I took over his group and went to California State University and the University of Southern California, majoring in jazz studies," Correa says. "I played the jazz clubs to empty houses...paid my dues, knowing that music was always what I wanted to do. But I hadn't established my own thing."

Then fate intervened in 1992 through the Beasties' MC, Adam Horovitz (a.k.a. Adrock). Horovitz was a fan of the elder Bobo and hired the son's band to play his wedding. After hearing of the Beasties' trouble retaining percussionists, Correa offered to come along on the last leg of their *Check Yo' Head* tour—for which Cypress Hill served as an opening act.

Within the space of a few weeks, Correa had made professional connections that would keep him working for nearly three years straight.

Now, with sessions for David Was, the Black Crowes, and Proper Dos also under his belt, Correa is poised to enter the kind of playing situations even his legendary father might never have contemplated.

"My dad would definitely approve of this," he adds without hesitation. "He always told me I should get with people my own age and do something. He'd be happy with the fact that I stuck with music and made something of it. I was fortunate enough to go places where people know him, but he was never able to go...I feel like I can represent him now."

Andy "Funky Drummer" Kravitz

KRISS KROSS, BUJU BANTON, SPEARHEAD, SCHOOLLY D

Sure, there are a few drummers lucky enough to make a living in hip-hop, but how many are so accomplished they've even had a rap song written about them?

Drop the needle on Steady B's mid-'80s jam "Funky Drummer," and learn the answer. Written about Philadelphia-based Andy Kravitz, the song stands as a lasting tribute to one of the unlikeliest names in rap drumming.

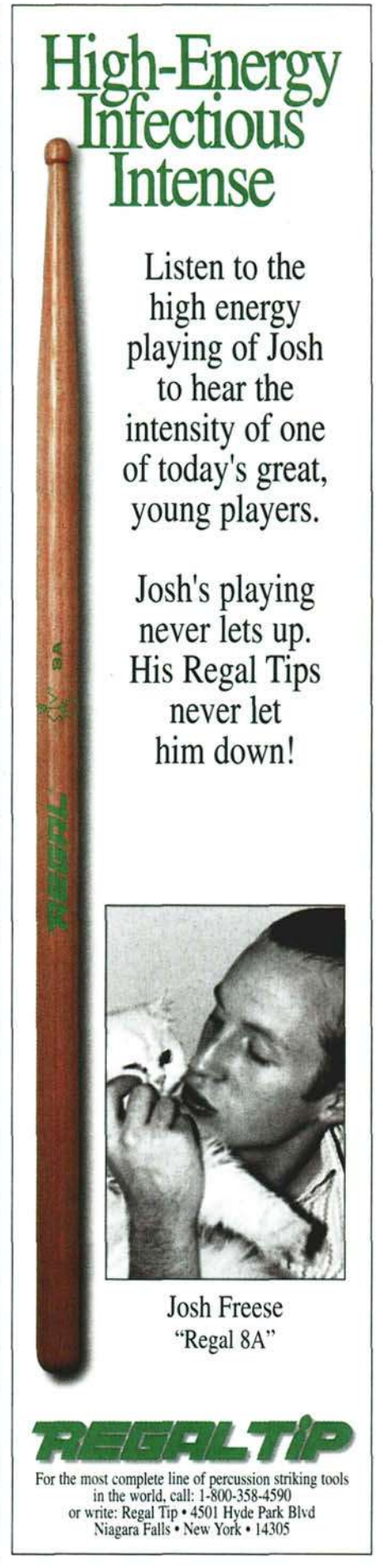
"He actually wrote lyrics like: 'Can you believe that he's white?'" Kravitz says, laughing at the memory. "But I really owe those guys a lot. They gave me a shot when nobody else would."

Take one look at Kravitz, with his long brownish-blonde hair and dress-down demeanor, and you'd swear he was a player with some up-and-coming modern rock band. And while Kravitz has done his share of those gigs—including uncredited sessions as a stand-in for Urge Overkill's Blackie Onassis on 1993's *Saturation*—many of his most remarkable moments have come while backing rappers.

As a friend of legendary Philadelphia producer Jon "The Butcher" Nicolo, Kravitz got his first crack at session work in 1984, providing funky backbeats for songs by area artists like DJ Jazzy Jeff & the Fresh Prince, Three Times Dope, and the Hilltop Hustler Crew.

"It was mostly early funk beats, mixed up with Led Zeppelin beats and a very ambient sound—basically a Bernard Purdie thing mixed with Zeppelin," he says. "You'd listen to James Brown and go in and play stuff they [the rappers] had grown up with. I basically taught myself by listening to records."

Breaking into the business in 1984,



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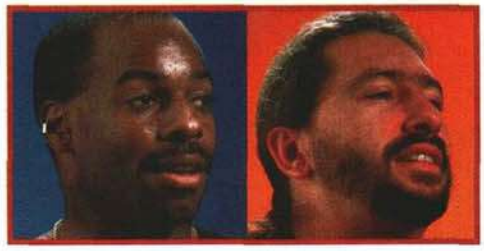

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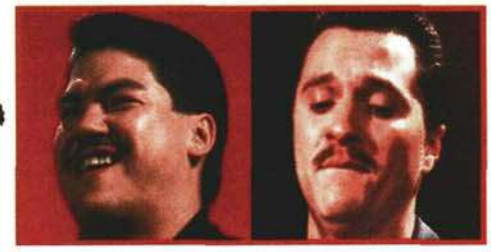

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Kravitz found Nicolo was one of the few well-known producers still using live musicians. "We were the only people doing this. I asked him, 'Why are you letting us play on the records like this?' He would say, 'This stuff needs a live feel.' And before long, people were coming up to us and asking 'How did you do that?'"

For Kravitz, nailing the playing style required listening to a lot of early funk drummers, like James Brown's Clyde Stubblefield and the Meters' Zigaboo Modeliste. Often, the drummer would find himself trying to fit those funky, syncopated drum parts over sequenced keyboards and sound samples provided by the artist—with landmark tracks like Schoolly D's "Smoke Some Kill" as the chart-busting result.

"It took a while to get used to playing against loops while really trying to mesh with them," he says. "You want to bridge the gap between the machines and the live musicians. If it's not meshing, you might want to play a shaker separately, recorded along with the live drums, to help blend it all together."

Considering his background in such a hi-tech style of music, Kravitz's approach to playing, producing, and engineering is remarkably low-tech. While other drummers pose in magazine ads with sleek-looking, modernized drumkits, he relies on equipment from the 1930s and 1940s to provide a unique recording sound.

"I've actually got a collection of thirty-five snares and old kick drums ranging from the 1840s to the 1960s, and I play some of them on records," he says. "On Joan Osborne's record *(Relish),* I used an old Leedy 5 1/2xl5 snare, and I used an old calfskin kick drum regularly until it broke. Some people look at my stuff and think it'll be tough to record, but I'll sometimes put up a squeaky bass drum pedal just to hear the squeak. If you're playing a great sound on a great song, it doesn't matter—and sometimes, the weirder the sound, the better."

Kravitz's retro philosophy extends to tracking sessions, where he often prefers to record the rhythm section on a song live—a habit fostered during his early years in Nicolo's studio. "On the Spearhead record, there's a song called 'Of Course You Can,' where Chuck Treece was on bass, I was on drums, and Michael Franti [Spearhead leader] was on the mic'," Kravitz says. "All of a sudden, we looked at each other and decided to put it on tape together. It was a first-take, live feel, with one mic' on my drumset. I was using a 20" *Radio King* kick, a 6 1/2xl4 Leedy *Broadway Standard* snare, a Zildjian K cymbal with rivets, and a beat-up set of hi-hats. Everybody else uses machines, so when they hear something like that, they wonder how we did it."

But how do you get a quality drum sound with just one microphone on an entire kit? For Kravitz, it's all about the player taking control of his own instrument.

"When someone walks into a club or a room and listens to you play, their ear isn't right on top of your kit—they're hearing the whole thing from one source," he adds. "You have to mix the kit as you play. If the cymbals are too loud, play lighter. If you can't hear the ruffs on the snare drum, lighten up on the backbeat. It's something you have to do anyway, because if you're using separate close mikes and the drummer's leaning too hard on the cymbals, it still won't sound right."

After several years with Nicolo, Kravitz began developing his own production skills, first learning how to program an Akai *MPC-60* drum machine/sequencer and later assembling his own recording studio. True to form, most of the gear that fills his space is from an older time, when superstars like James Brown were recording on two- and four-track machines.

Over the years, Kravitz's playing and production credits have multiplied—including work on remixes for superstars like Sting and the Rolling Stones, sessions for the Goats, Boo-Yaa T.R.I.B.E., and Skatemaster Tate, along with work fixing tracks for bands like Urge Overkill and Dandelion.

While he sees studio work opening up a little more for live musicians—even in the hip-hop nation—Kravitz says rap producers still routinely dismiss the option of using flesh-and-blood players, hoping to save a little money while crafting records to sound just like the last smash hit or sonic fad. "Drummers in particular are always getting the short end of the stick...with people saying, 'It's just a drumbeat.' We did sessions back in the days when we didn't know about publishing, where we wrote all kinds of stuff as a band for these

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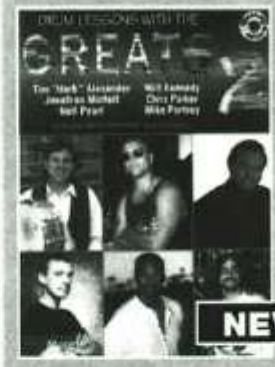

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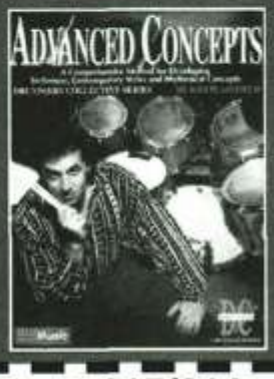

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Larry Washington

WARREN G

At age thirty-nine, you might think drummer/producer/actor Larry Washington is a little long in the tooth for a gig backing one of the hottest young rappers in pop music.

You'd be wrong.

As proof, consider this: When Warren G hired the California-based drummer to back his live gig, Washington not only learned the entire show from behind the kit, he constructed all of the DAT tapes, sound samples, and sequenced synthesizer sounds that form the backbone of the conceit performance. Clearly, this old dog had a few new tricks for the youngbloods.

"Live, I played on top of everything, putting *me* in control instead of the sequencer," he adds, laughing. "We had thirteen songs for the tour and I sequenced everything on eight of them. One time, we had a section of the show where everybody walked off stage, and the bass player had trouble getting back—I pressed a button, and there were all the bass parts, playing until he could get back on stage."

For Washington, backing rappers like Warren G—stepbrother to superstar producer Dr. Dre—is as easy as his earliest gigs backing R&B singers like Laura Lee, David Peaston, and James Ingram. Mostly it's because the music at the root of these young rappers' sampled compositions is the very stuff Williams was knocking out in smoky clubs twenty years ago.

"I came up playing shows opening for the people they're sampling now—the Isley Brothers and Sly & the Family Stone," he says. "I'm working with a lot of young rappers right now, and what bothers me is that they don't even know how to count bars. With all the new people coming up, you need to go back to the book—the old school, you know? That's what I like about Warren. He'll ask, 'How did they do this?' or 'Why does that work here?'"

Washington's equipment matches his playing outlook: plenty of old-school vibe, with a touch of the new. A Remo endorser, he uses 10", 12", 14", and 16" toms, along with a 3x14 piccolo snare and a 6x13 snare by Orange County Percussion. "With that drum I get the pop of a piccolo, but the depth of a regular drum," he adds. "It's a tight little snare drum."

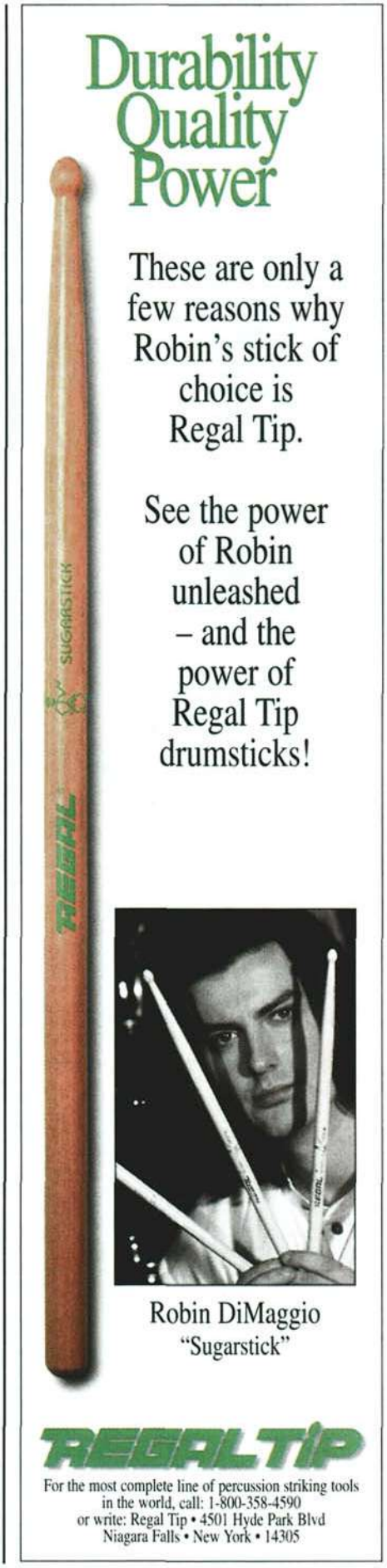
In the cymbal department, he uses Paiste's *Signature* series, with 13" hi-hats, 14" and 16" *Fast* crashes, a 16" *Full* crash, a 14" *Sound Formula* crash, a 16" China, and a 21" ride cymbal. For electronics, he uses a *drumKAT* and Latin Percussion's *Spike* triggers hooked into an Alesis *D-4,* while also using an *MFC 3000* and Tascam *DA-30* DAT players to recreate the sound samples and pre-taped parts.

"Most of Warren's kick and snare sounds come from the D-4...it's got some fat sounds," explains Washington, who places a high premium on finding the right sound for his rap artists. "Sometimes I've used eight different snare drums to get a sound. One time, I threw a bunch of loose keys on the snare and sampled that, and I recorded my brother-in-law chopping potatoes for another sound. With sampling, even the drop of a bag of cans can become a snare drum."

Ask Washington for the rules he follows in assembling parts for Warren G, and you'll hear a surprising answer. In his mind, there aren't any. "Rap varies so much—every day it changes," he says. "The tempo everyone's using could be at 98 beats per minute one week and 106 the next. I basically put my beat down and then add the drama—lots of major and minor chords combined. If it's a smooth hip-hop thing, like Warren's 'Regulate,' then I might just have the beat and a few chords. I might even use the bass drum as the bass, too; tuning it to pitches to make simple bass lines."

To help other drummers find the right groove, Washington has created a CD filled with loops and pre-recorded beats called—what else?—*Larry Washington's Big Fat Beats And Loops.* "What makes a great loop is the feel, and all my stuff is created by me [to avoid licensing problems] and very close to the original feel. I'm from Detroit, so I've got stuff going back to the P-Funk years, Clyde Stubblefield, Max Roach, Tony Williams, Billy Cobham—all these influences."

The technique for creating the samples is



fairly simple. "I'll use an *MPC-60* or a *3000* to put voices and different rap sounds into the sequencer and create my own loops," Washington says. "It's all original, even though it's influenced by all those guys.

"I just like to keep up with what's going on technology-wise," the drummer adds. "If you don't keep up, you can get left out. There are drummers who can go out and play—and that's cool—but if you find somebody who can put it all together and finish it—that's great."

Still, as much as he enjoys fiddling with drum machines and sequencers—he says the next CD of sounds will feature old drum machines like the Linn Drum and Sequential Circuits units—Washington is encouraging young rappers to forego machines for a live sound with flesh-and-blood musicians. "I say throw all the machines away and get a live band. I went to a promotional party featuring Warren, Mokenstuf, and Montell Jordan, and everybody was singing to DAT tapes. But something was missing. A lot of these young artists don't even know how to work with a live band. But if you incorporate a live band with the DAT...then you've *really* got something."

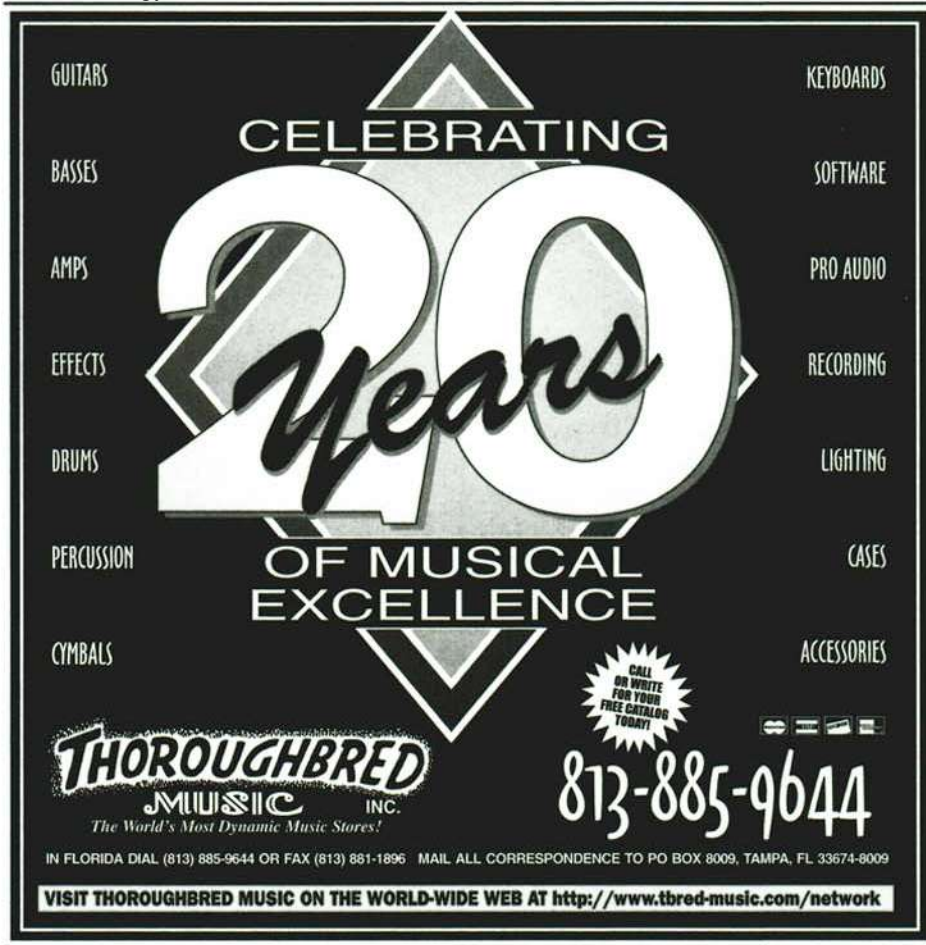
Donald Jones, a.k.a. Rasa Don

ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT, DIVINE FRUIT

When Donald Jones first moved from his New Jersey home to Atlanta, he was planning to study art and tag along with his fiancee, Dionne Farris—who had just joined some bohemian rap group called Arrested Development.

But before long, the band realized it needed a drummer. And Jones, who had played since age six for his evangelist father's Trenton, New Jersey churches, offered to tackle the job.

"I told [rapper] Speech and [DJ] Headliner I could play, and they laughed at



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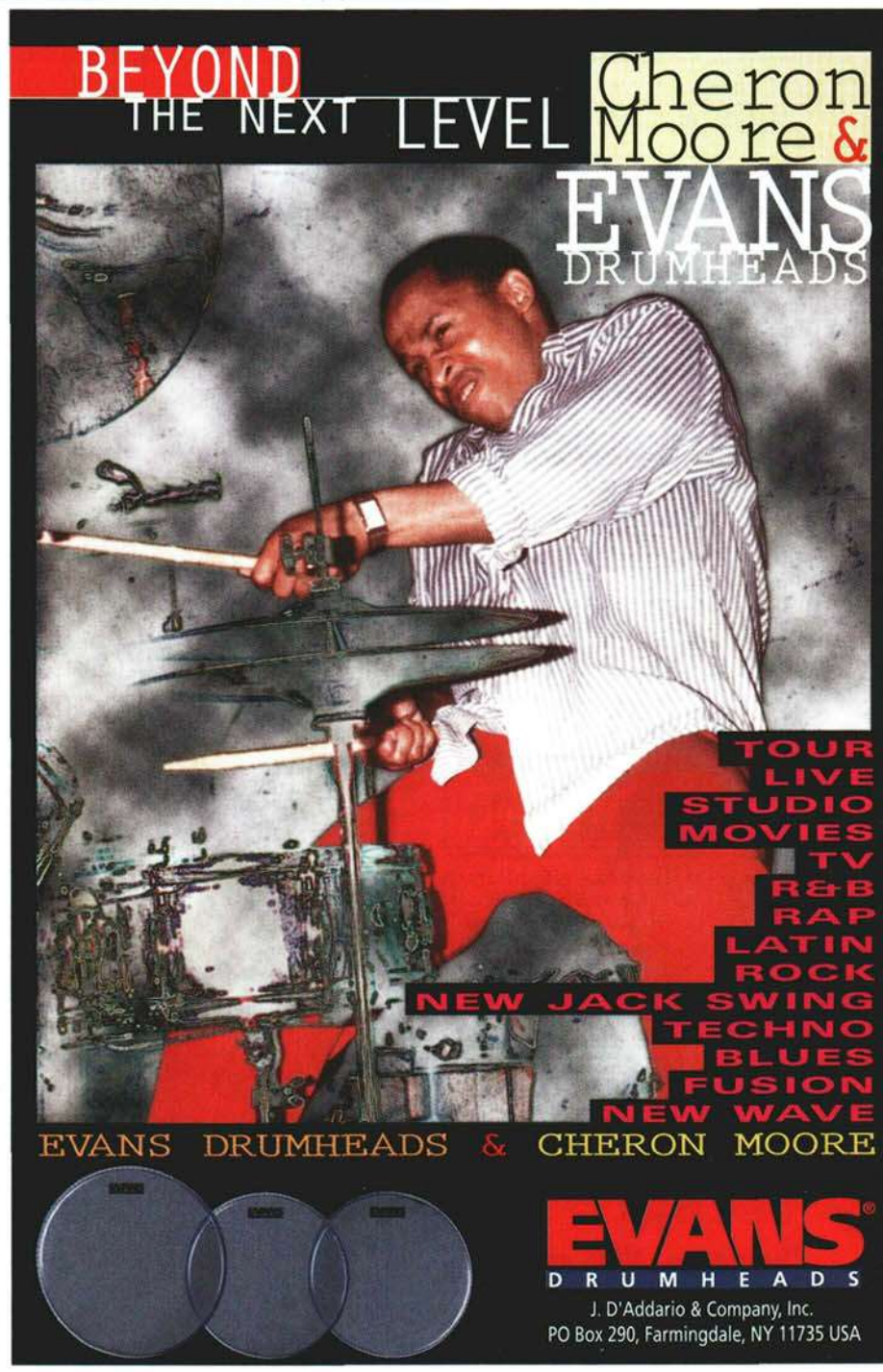

me," recalls the drummer, now twenty-six, who was then working as a dancer for the group. "I told them I used to play in my dad's church and they laughed some more. But we drove around and found a kit and I played some stuff for them. Suddenly, they weren't laughing any more."

At the end of that day, it was official: Jones—who began calling himself Rasa Don, in honor of his love for reggae—was Arrested Development's first drummer.

It was an unusual move for a rap band to hire a live musician, but Arrested Development was always an unconventional group. With a revolving door of personalities and performers, A.D. pushed its infectious blend of R&B and rap like a religion of hippie-tinged equanimity, at times sounding more like a contemporary soul group than a hip-hop collective.

So it comes as no surprise that Jones based his playing style on the funky approach of his favorite R&B and jazz-fusion drummers, blended with his gospel roots.

"Most church drummers have a fast foot, and they know how to keep the momentum of a song going constantly," he says. "But Arrested helped me become the Metronome Man, learning how to keep that pocket, too. Being the only instrument on stage, sometimes I could get too wild, and this gig helped me calm down a little."

From the beginning, Jones looked to add as many tones and colors as possible to his drum setup. Following the success of the group's 1992 debut, *Three Years, Five Months & Two Days In The Life Of...*, Jones nabbed an endorsement with Yamaha drums—allowing him to piece together the kind of drum setup he'd always wanted.

Using a Yamaha *Recording Custom* kit, Jones used mounted toms sized 8", 10", 12", and 14", with no floor toms. The snare was a 13" piccolo and his cymbals included 13" hi-hats, one heavy ride, two 12" *China Boy* highs, a 16" *China Boy* high, and two 18" crashes, all Zildjian.

"I wasn't a hard hitter, so I would play really light and they would have to mike the drums really well," he says. "When we first started out, I just had a five-piece kit, but I eventually added a lot of drums. Speech couldn't understand why I did it—my kit was set up more like an R&B drummer—but when we did Lollapalooza and I began giving them the full flavor, they saw what I was doing."

Most amazingly, Jones used no electronic percussion equipment on stage, though Headliner ran sound loops, sequenced keyboards, and pre-taped backing parts from his perch in the DJ booth. "We didn't even have any drum triggers," Jones adds. "We were going to try it once, but people just got used to the acoustic sound—especially as we moved into bigger and better venues."

Though Jones never played on any of A.D.'s studio records—he does appear on the band's 1993 *Unplugged* album—he pressed bandleader Speech to bring in more live musicians for the group's concerts, resulting in a brief stint working with bassist Me'Shell Ndege Ocello, later replaced by former Miles Davis sideman Foley.

"We wanted to add a little more flavor... and I might have complained about being the only musician," Jones says of the

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Photo Requirements

1. Photos must be in color, and of high quality. (35mm slides are preferred; color prints will be considered. Polaroids cannot be accepted.)
2. You may send more than one view of the kit.
3. Photos should be of drums only; no people should be in the shot(s).
4. Drums should be photographed against a neutral background (a sheet, drape, blank wall, ect.). Avoid "busy" backgrounds such as in your basement, garage, or bedroom.
5. Be sure that those attributes of your kit that make it special are clearly visible in the photo(s).

Send your photo(s) to Drumkit Of The Month, Modern Drummer Publications, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Please note that photos cannot be returned, so don't send any originals you can't bear to part with.

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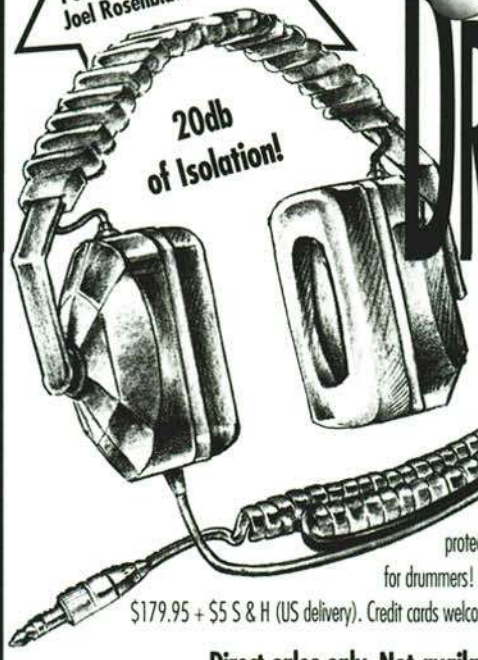

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additions, which came when the band performed on NBC-TV's *Saturday Night Live* and before 1993's Lollapalooza tour. "With Arrested, adding people was a given. Every time you saw us, we had somebody different in the band."

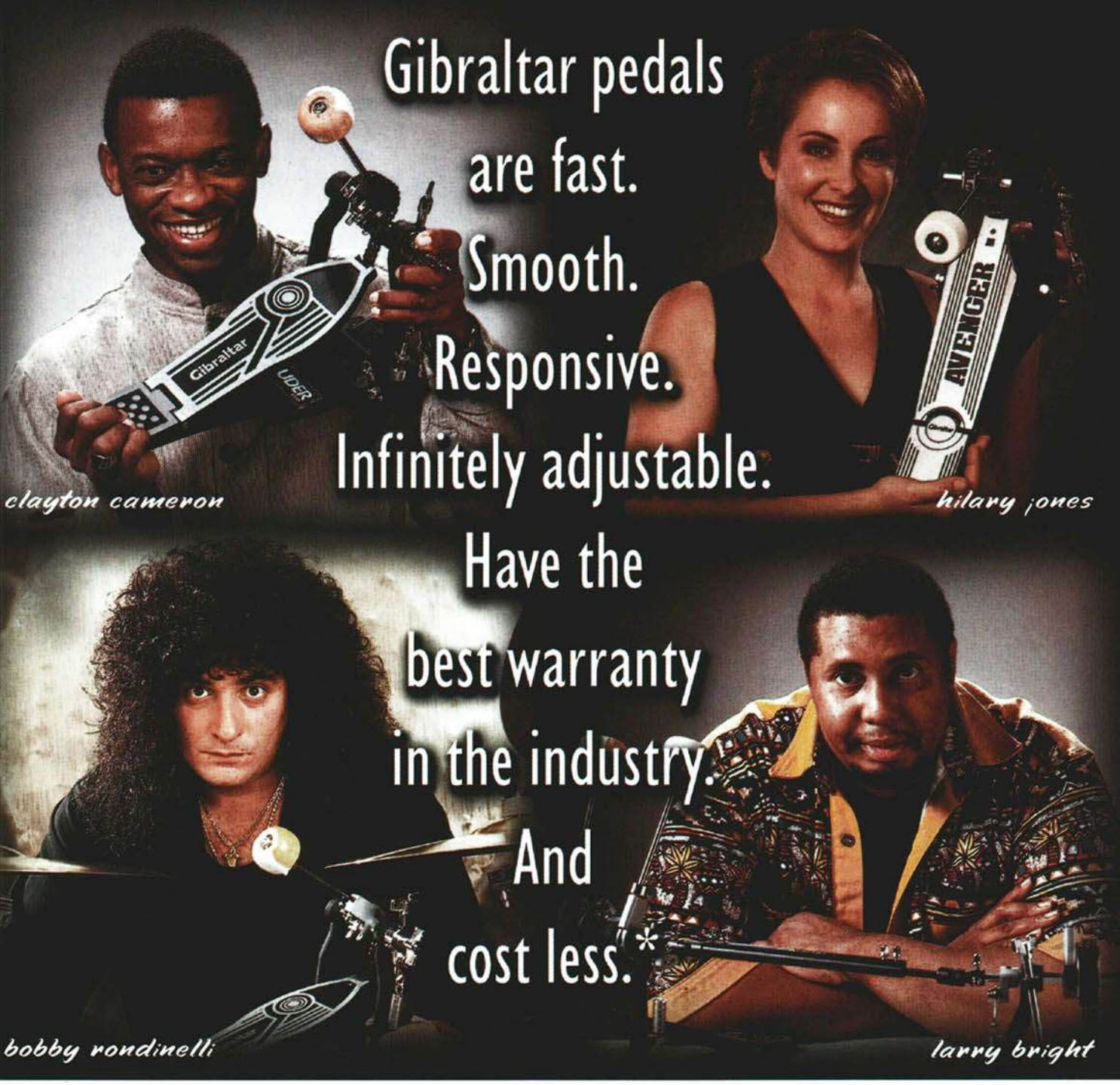
For Jones, the secret to success as a hip-hop drummer is simple: Find the pocket. "Hip-hop is a pocket, a groove, where the drummer doesn't do a whole lot or get fancy," he says. "After a while, when you've been playing with tracks for a long time, you get to the point where you've always got that pocket. I've got the ability to switch up now—I can go off and play a lot of showy stuff or just sound like a drum machine, depending on the situation."

Following the disappointing sales of the group's sophomore studio release, *Zingalamaduni,* bandleader Speech opted for a solo career—putting an effective end to the band, at least for now.

"Speech is the kind of person who knows what he wants to hear and do, which can be a problem when you're working with five or six other people," Jones says, explaining rumors that the bandleader's headstrong tactics prompted Farris's early departure and eventually tore the group apart. "It's one of those things that was brewing from the very beginning."

Now Jones is back in his native New Jersey, with a new band called Divine Fruit and a new attitude about performing. Taking the mic' as a singer and rapper in front of the group, he hopes his experiences as Arrested Development's musical backbone will prove adequate preparation for this new venture into the music industry's murky waters.

"When you think of Atlanta, you know there's a music scene there already, but not many people know about this part of New Jersey," he says. "The area I grew up in was no fantasy land, but we always knew we could work hard and get what we wanted. Now I'm hoping to make things happen in my own hometown."



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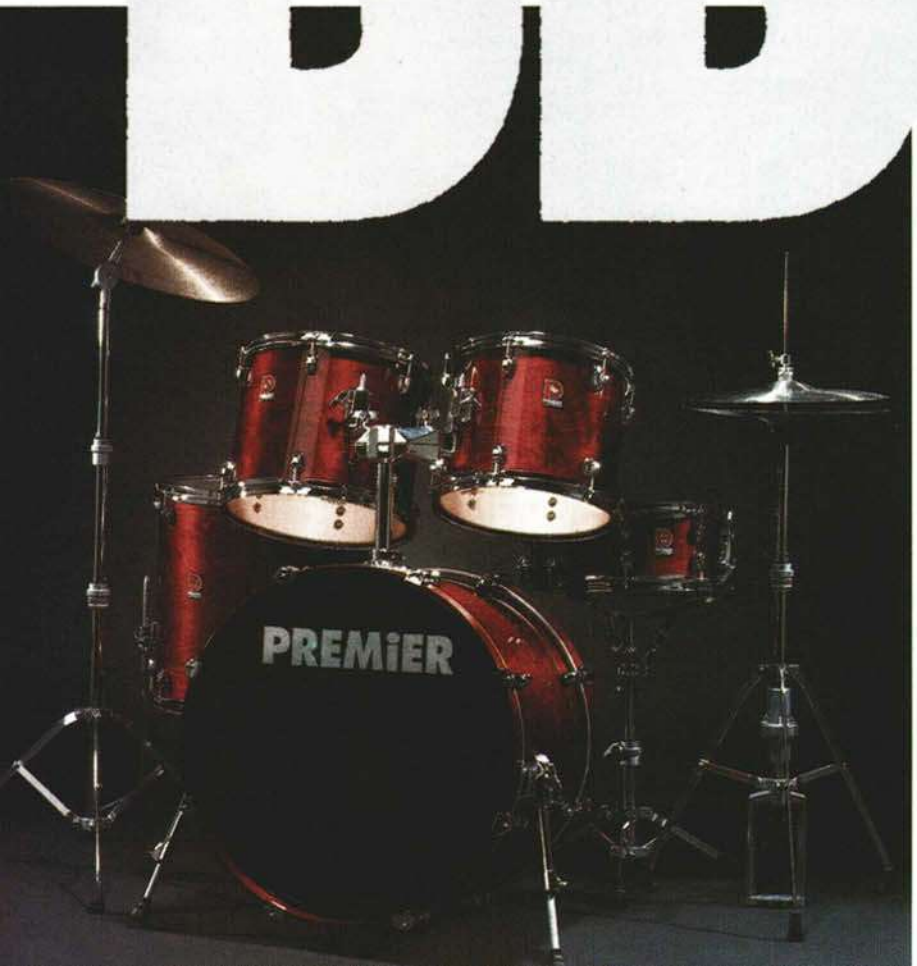


British Beat On The Upswing

By Teri Saccone

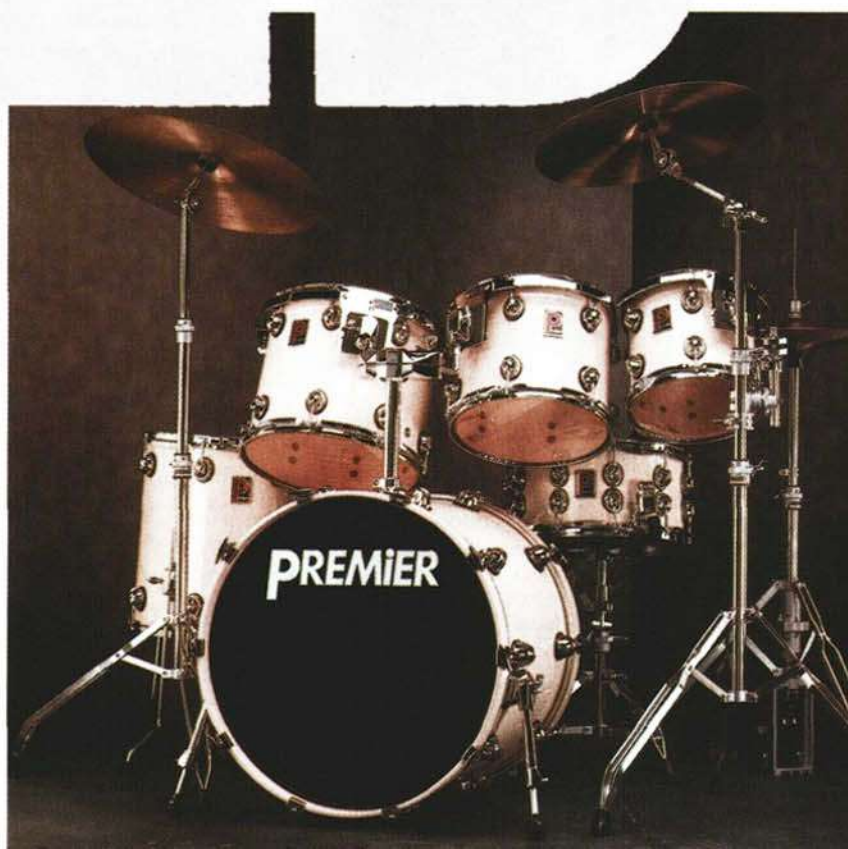
Everyone has heard of London, one of the world's most celebrated cities and the capital of England. Most people are also familiar with the British city of Bath (aptly named for its underground Roman baths) and Liverpool (birthplace of the Beatles and once a thriving maritime center). But Leicester, located in the industrial north of England, is not so well-known. On closer inspection, however, one finds that Leicester has earned a modest measure of notoriety (albeit for some rather dubious claims to fame).

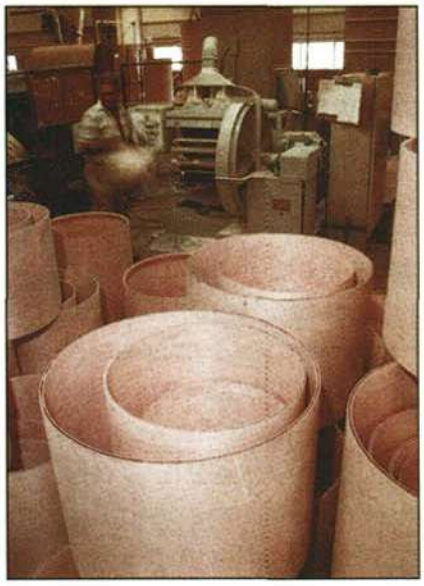
Leicester is the underwear capital of the United Kingdom—and, somewhat ironically, is also the hometown of singer Engelbert Humperdinck. Leicester even has something for hard-core history buffs: It boasts the site of the only unmarked grave to contain the body of an English king—Richard III—purportedly resting under the local Holiday Inn.

All of this, charming as it may be, carries little relevance for drummers. However, Leicester does have a legitimate attraction for drummers in that the Premier Percussion Limited factory and headquarters are located there. To be precise, Premier Percussion Limited is located in Wigston, an area immediately *adjacent to* the underwear capital. The entire operation—management, sales, marketing departments, and the 100,000-square-foot factory—is housed within this one complex.

Every instrument that Premier Percussion Limited manufactures—drumkits, marching drums, marimba, timpani, vibraphones, xylophones, tubular bells, glockenspiels, chimes, drumheads, and hardware—is skillfully constructed, with quality and consistency a top priority.

But what's truly unique to Premier Percussion Limited is that nearly all of the 11,000 components that comprise the entire line of instruments are manufactured at the expansive factory. On-site production also includes wood machining, press work, general metal machining, metal polishing, metal spraying, assembly and electronic tuning of pedal timpani and mallet instruments, drumhead manufacture, military and orchestral drum assembly, and drumset assembly.





Premier drumshells are made to a wide range of different specifications best suited to their type and to their ultimate uses.

The high standard of Premier's lacquered finishes is due to the amount of work and care that goes into their preparation. Each coat of lacquer is cut-back and smoothed before the next coat is applied.

HiSTORY

Premier was founded in 1922, when drummer-turned-entrepreneur Albert Delia Porta decided to start a small drum-making business in London. He promptly called it The Premier Drum Company Limited, and soon recruited the services of his younger brother, Fred. The two began making drums for the burgeoning London music scene.

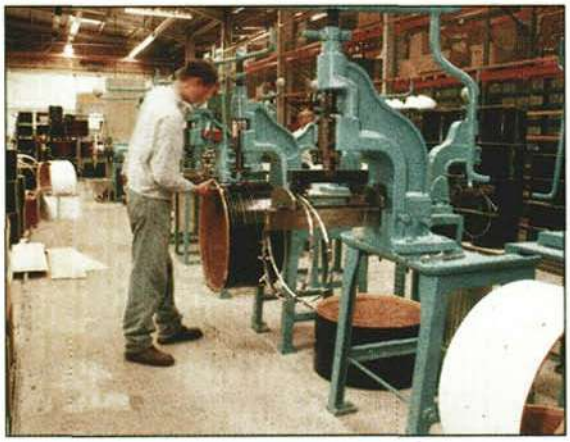
The '20s was the era of the Jazz Age, and suddenly more and more amateur drummers began to turn professional as clubs sprung up all over London. Premier drums were in demand, and the small business began to expand its reputation and sales.

In 1941 the company made a move north to Leicester due to war-time bombing damage. Over the next thirty years, Premier's reputation grew as its classically designed, precision-crafted drums swelled in popularity internationally.

During the '60s, Premier's standing within the industry languished to a degree. The first wave of the so-called 'British Invasion' (the exportation of English rock groups such as the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, the Kinks, the Yardbirds, and the Animals) encouraged American drum companies to export their products to Europe, especially to the growing British drum market. Premier drums were considered to be slightly antiquated, and many of the up-and-coming drummers of the '60s desired the prestige factor of an American drumkit. With trends being predictably of a cyclical nature, Premier eventually fell back into favor.

In 1983, the company—managed by three sons of founder Albert Delia Porta—was under stringent economic pressures, and unfortunately went into receivership. Premier management bought out the company, and things progressed smoothly for nearly four years, until Yamaha Corporation purchased the business in 1987. By this

A great deal of work goes into the construction and finishing of each drumshell to ensure that its appearance will be immaculate both inside and out, and that the bearing edges will be set and cut precisely.



Before assembly of the drum hardware (tension lugs, snares, tom holders, etc.) each shell has the appropriate holes cut into it.

factory photos by Neville Chadwick

time, the company had become known as Premier Percussion Limited.

Yamaha invested a considerable amount of capital into the company, which helped Premier enormously on a financial level. At the same time, Yamaha didn't interfere with the company's direction or identity, which remains intact to this day—and *utterly* British.

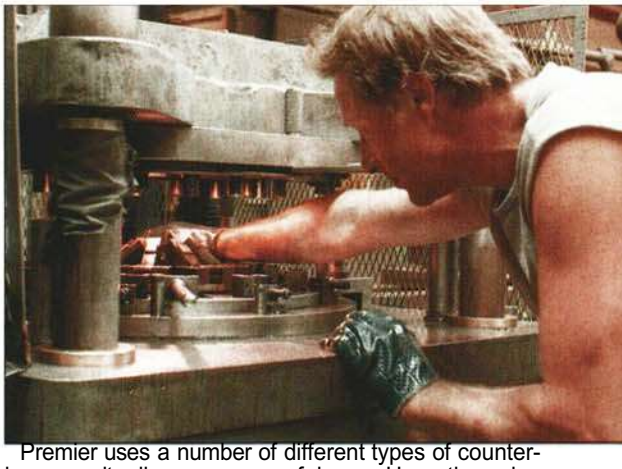
In 1993, Yamaha, which was experiencing internal problems (the company had sudden changes on their board of directors, with a new chairman heading up the corporation, plus trouble with the Japanese labor unions), decided to pull out of all their European operations. Premier Percussion Limited was then purchased by former director Tony Doughty in a management buyout.

Next, with the financial backing of a larger corporation being a more desirable condition for Premier, Doughty decided to sell the company. So in 1995, The Verity Group, a British-based hi-fi equipment manufacturer, purchased Premier.

The entire Premier line is constructed and assembled in the U.K., and except for a brief spell in the late '60s and early '70s, when the company encountered some problems with quality control, all Premier Percussion products have remained consistent in quality and status. In Britain, Premier is the number-one-selling drum and percussion manufacturer. Due to its huge marching drum output, it is also the main supplier to the government's Ministry of Defense (serving the Royal Airforce, Royal Marines, British Army, and guards at Buckingham Palace). Premier is also the world's biggest manufacturer of pipe drums.

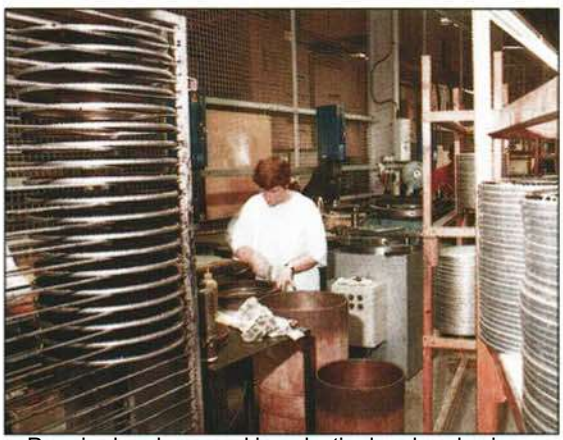
In addition to its U.K. stronghold, Premier Percussion is a top name throughout Europe, South America, Japan, Australia, the Middle East, the fast-growing U.S. market, and Russia. (The former Red Army, the Moscow Conservatory, and the Bolshoi Ballet Company are long-time customers of Premier drums and percussion.)

It seems that Premier is doing better than ever. Over the last year the company has experienced the most prosperous period in its seventy-three-year history.



Premier uses a number of different types of counterhoops on its diverse ranges of drums. Here, the universal-style triple-flange steel hoops are being part-formed in a specially designed press. By making and designing all its own components, Premier is able to ensure that every part of their products is optimized for the best function, sound, response, and overall performance.

Each drum is assembled individually and completely checked before being boxed for shipment.



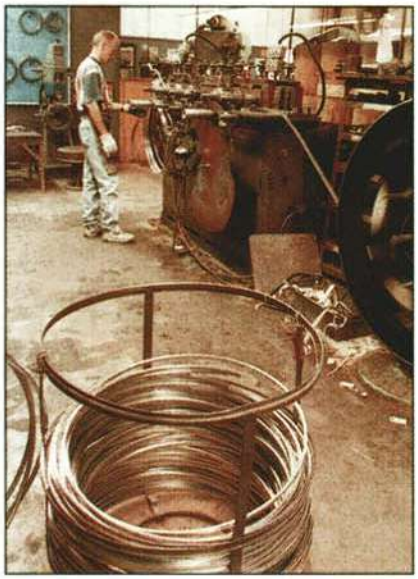
Premier has been making plastic drumheads since their introduction (in place of calf skins) in the '50s. Some of their model designs—particularly in the timpani, drum corps, and pipe-band markets—are unique to Premier.

PERSPECTIVE

"The company was started over seventy years ago on the basis of building high-quality, relatively expensive drums and percussion," says Paul Gould, commercial manager with Premier Percussion Limited. "Worldwide, Premier still has the reputation of handcrafted quality and the British-made standards that are so unlike the Japanese mass-produced equipment," adds Karen Whiteland, Premier Percussion's export manager.

Both Gould and Whiteland concede that the tide has turned away from mass-marketed drums to the skillfully produced, individually crafted drum. "I think it has come around again," comments Whiteland, "especially with companies like ourselves and DW, who are proving that there are companies who are not Japanese making really fine drums with modern methods. It's made a big difference in the perception of acoustic drums.

"The excitement over electronic drums in the mid-'80s—the short phenomenon that it ultimately was—died pretty quickly in the U.K., and today only exists



Here, the channel that forms the metal "flesh hoop" of each head is being rolled into shape. This will be combined with the plastic head material and a solid insert hoop to form one of the strongest and most stable head designs available.

as add-ons for most players," she continues. "So when people came back to acoustics, they began to insist on good acoustic kits rather than all the bells, widgets, and electronic stuff. Making really fine-quality acoustic drumkits is obviously our strength."

"Value for money is also appreciated hugely by Premier," remarks Gould. "For what you get, the quality is excellent and the product lasts a long time. So it's a wise investment. There is nothing garish or flashy about Premier drums. The emphasis is on subtlety, and although the perceived image of the company is changing from one that is a bit old-fashioned, there is still a way to go."

All the company's hardware and accessories are designed, engineered, manufactured, and assembled in England, with, each item put together by hand.

Until the late '80s, Premier never seemed particularly adroit at self-promotion. They have recently begun to take a more aggressive approach to marketing. "We used to be very backward in terms of promotion," Gould explains, "and that is very British—that parochial approach that's a colonial legacy of the past and a national trait that we tend to have."

"We tend to apologize for what we do rather than promote it," adds Whiteland. "But that's all been swept away, and over the last ten years the attitude here has changed dramatically. We've had to become more competitive marketing-wise."

The largest market of drummers Premier wishes to target consists of those in the U.S. (which also happens to be the

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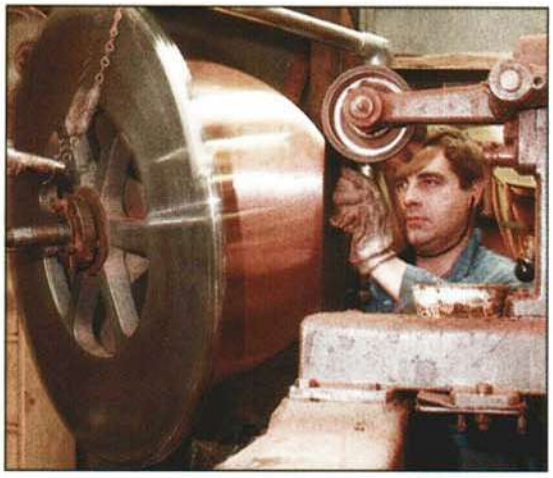

Timpani bowls are spun in copper in one piece, and then finished and polished to a high-gloss finish.

company's fastest-growing market). Two of the latest enticements offered by Premier that have sold well in the U.S. (as well as internationally) are the *Signia* and *Genista* series.

"Those two lines came after the end of our relationship with Yamaha," cites Gould. "They demonstrated that we could design and produce very high-quality drumkits at the top and middle points of the market. It sort of reinforced that the company was going in a forward direction. We sell an awful lot of *Signia* and *Genista* kits in the U.S."

Whiteland contends that the boom in U.S. sales of the *Signia* and *Genista* series can be attributed to the well-informed nature of American drummers. "The impression we get from our American colleagues is that American drummers are very discerning—more so than British ones," she asserts. "They tend to look for real quality, and they will actually disassemble a drum to check the quality of the shell before buying it. That also happens in Germany, but it is quite unusual everywhere else. People will often say, 'I took the head off and I checked the bearing edge.' Most drummers in France or England will just look at the bearing edge through the head. The Americans take the drums and break them down to pieces, going through them carefully when they buy them."

The popularity of Premier's orchestral chimes/bells can be seen by this small selection of bells waiting to be hung on their frames. As with all Premier's orchestral tuned percussion, there's a customer choice of tuning to suit player, orchestra, or local needs.

The *Signia* and *Genista* series were developed collaboratively between the U.K. and U.S. Premier staffs. Additionally,

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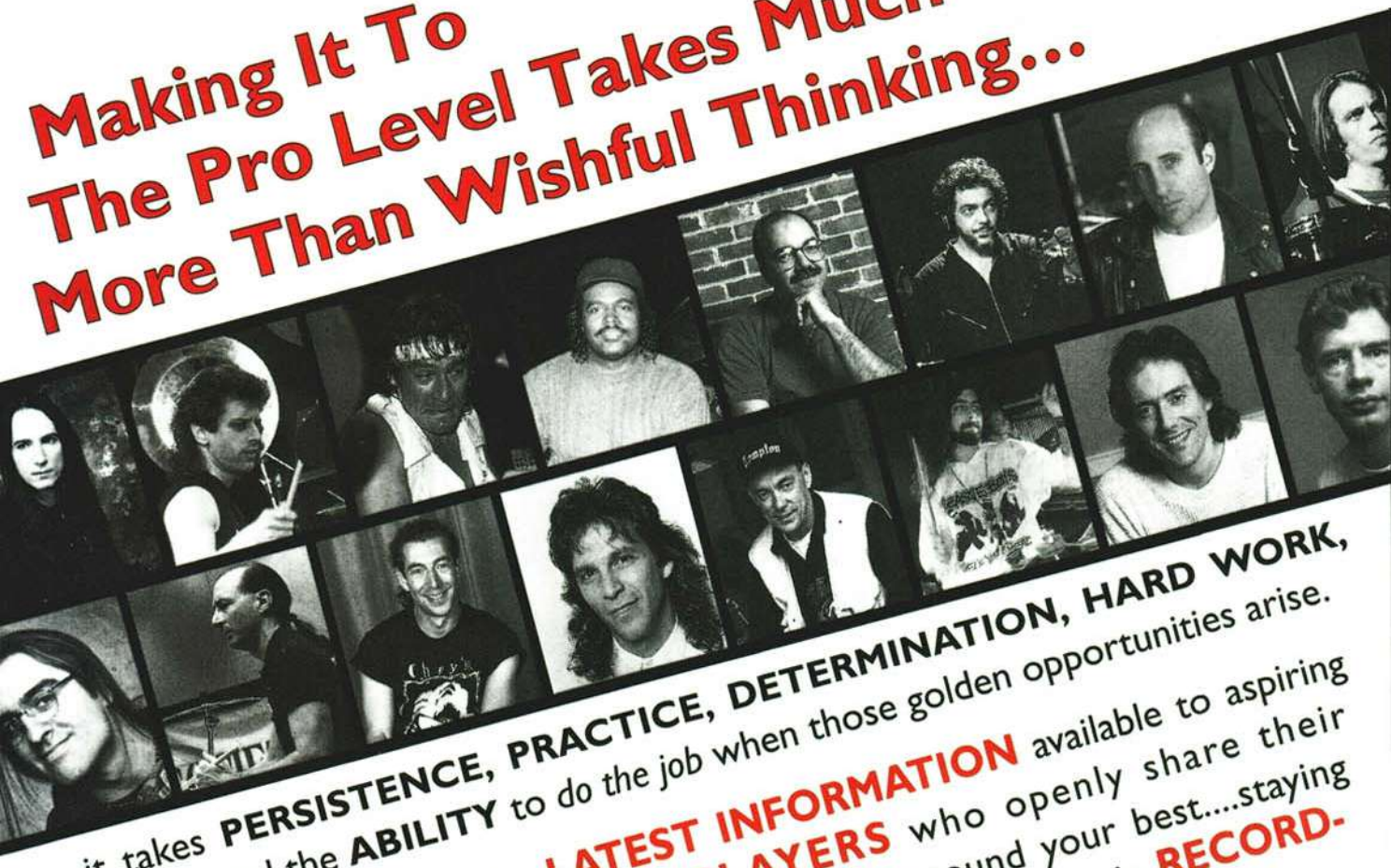

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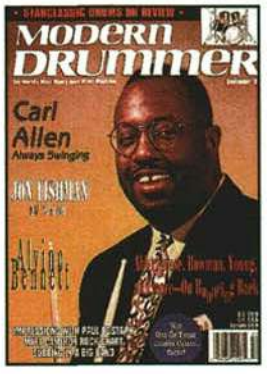

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there was a considerable amount of input from various drummers such as Rod Morgenstein, Nicko McBrain, and David Beal.

The *Genista* is a birch-shell kit, which is a move up from the *APK/XPK* lines to a more professional kit. Says Steve Jordan, director of marketing at Premier, "With *Genista,* the idea was to look back at how the market had developed. There was a definite trend within the market that we could see, going back to single lugs instead of the one-piece, high-tension lug that we had pioneered some years ago. We also didn't want to have a lug that was reminiscent of anything we had done in the past, and therefore we wanted a look that would have symmetry with the drum itself, hence that rounded, oval shape. We also used under-sized shells for ease of tuning."

The *Signia* series marks Premier's first venture into using maple wood, targeted at the professional and semi-pro player. "To simply produce just another maple series wasn't our goal," offers Jordan. "Therefore, we looked at what we could do with the shells and went to undersize shells for ease of tuning, which was a technique that we use on our timpani. We also needed to try to come up with a mounting system that would let the drums resonate freely, so we came up with a design that mounts off the tubes."

As with all the Premier series, colors and finishes were an important consideration for the *Signia* and *Genista* lines. "The finishes for both those series feature hand-stained lacquer finishes," explains Jordan. Although most of Premier's competitors also offer lacquer finishes, hand-staining is a process that Premier specializes in.

Due to the success of the new lines, the older series—the *Projector* and *Resonator* lines—have been dropped. The *Resonator* series (which was unique within the industry in terms of its shell-within-a-shell design) proved to be rather expensive to produce. "The *Resonator* series wasn't always readily accepted, although a lot of people absolutely loved it," says Jordan. "Some people just had a lot of difficulty with it and couldn't come to terms with how to tune it and how to work with it. What we were trying to do was to move Premier forward and really make a break from the past."

Improvements have been made to the pre-existing *XPK* and *APK* lines. The new *XPK* series is, according to Jordan, "a kit that falls into the price point below *Genista,* but is a kit that is better than a learner's kit, and is designed for the player who is approaching a semi-pro level.

"The new *XPK* shell construction is a birch/eucalyptus/birch shell sandwich," Jordan explains, "plus it has new low-mass lugs." The smaller amount of metal used in these ultra-small lugs means there is little contact with the shell, allowing for better resonance. Also available within the *XPK* line is a matching wooden snare drum. "Normally, at that particular price point in the marketplace, there would only be a steel-shell snare drum," Jordan says.

"We've deleted the usual T-handle type bolt from our bass drum and replaced it with a conventional square-

Starr struck.

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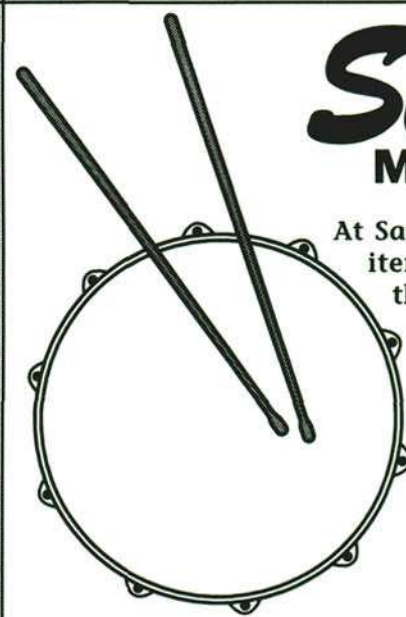
headed drum bolt," he continues. "A number of players have commented to us over the years that with drumkey-operated lug bolts, once you tune your bass drum you don't have to constantly keep changing it. T-handles can damage cases or covers, so by having the reduced bolt there's no protrusion over the edge of the bass drum rim and there's a cleaner line." The *XPK* series is, incidentally, available in a choice of six stained and lacquer finishes.

Officially launched in the autumn of '95, the new *APK* series has also undergone some modifications. "We have a merranti and eucalyptus shell combination," begins Jordan, "and the same low-mass lug as the *XPK,* but a steel-shell matching snare instead. Again, there are no T-bolts on the bass drum." The *APK* is available in three plastic-covered finishes.

"Both the *APK* and *XPK* lines have been very successful in all markets," continues Jordan, who mentions that the decision to make modifications was simply down to updating the equipment. "We felt that from a design and aesthetic standpoint we wanted to end up with a full range of kits that were modern in appearance. The *APK* and *XPK* had been around for a long time in that old design. It was also opportune for us to build in one or two improvements to those kits, such as the shell construction. So it was the ideal opportunity to basically relaunch those products."

As previously mentioned, Premier manufactures all of its hardware in-house, and there are two main ranges available: the *3000* series (single-braced) and the *4000* series (double-braced). "We describe it as functional hardware," says Jordan of the two lines. "It's not all bells and whistles, but it is good, sturdy hardware. The *3000* series is lighter in weight than the *4000* and is ideally suited to the club-gigging drummer who has to carry his own hardware. The *4000* series, being double-braced, is for the heavier type of player. It's also well-designed, sturdy hardware."

Premier Percussion Limited also manufactures heads, available in an extensive



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range of choices. Says Jordan, "We have everything from a single-laminate white-coated head up to the specialist heads for marching band players. One particular line we are proud of is the *Rod Morgenstein Signature Series* heads, which we developed with Rod himself and primarily with the *Signia* series drums in mind. They are fitted to *Signia* and work very well with them, although the heads work equally well with our other series and with other makes of drums. They are very good, reliable, responsive, and very durable heads made with a mechanical locking feature on the head, not resin-bonded."

Endorsees such as Rod Morgenstein, David Beal, Nicko McBrain, Charlie Morgan, Virgil Donati, Tommy Igoe, and Joe Franco have long been faithful to Premier, an exceptional achievement when you consider that the vast majority of professional players switch endorsements almost as often as they replace drumheads. Jordan—himself a thirteen-year employee at Premier—readily appreciates the loyalty of the endorsers. "It's interesting because, like a lot of us, they have stayed with Premier through its ups and downs and ownership changes. Those of us here at the head office really respect those drummers because it would be easy for them to say, 'I'm off to go to another drum company,' but they haven't. We have a long-standing relationship with them. They are a really great bunch of guys and we are very proud to be associated with them.

"We have a very family-type approach to everything," continues Jordan, "and that goes from the shop floor of the factory right through to the endorsers. I always say to endorsers when they come here for the first time, 'Welcome to the Premier family,' because it really is that kind of a company."

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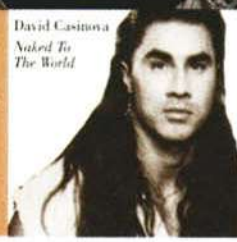

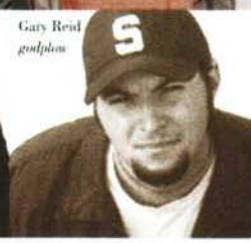

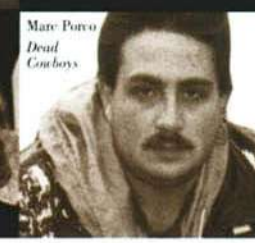

Metrophones

by Brad Schlueter

Here's a device that lets you play with music, play with a click—or just play—and keeps everything in the safety zone.

WHAT'S HOT
- convienent music/metronome audio combination
- good exclusion of outside noise

WHAT'S NOT
- built-in metronome is not accurate to specific tempos
- can be uncomfortable for lonq-term wear

Drumming can be a dangerous business. Carpal tunnel syndrome, tennis elbow, bone bruises, tinnitus, and deafness are among the occupational hazards of the professional player. Fortunately, as drummers have become educated about these dangers, manufacturers have begun to respond with products that are designed to minimize them. *Metrophones* are just such a product.

A pair of *Metrophones* is actually several products in one. First, they are stereo headphones designed for listening to music. Second, they are headphones with a built-in metronome for drummers to practice with. Finally, they are ear-protecting isolation phones that reduce outside cymbal and drum leakage. Of course, the big question is: "How well do they work?"

Operation

At first glance *Metrophones* look just like any over-the-ear-style headphone. However, in the center of the right ear cup is a knob used to control the tempo of the built-in metronome from 40 to 260 beats per minute. On the bottom of this ear cup is another knob that turns the metronome on and off and controls the volume of the click. Next to this is a 2.5mm audio jack to output the click to external speakers. On the other ear cup is a 3.5mm audio jack that allows you to input music. There is a detachable 8' stereo cable (3.5mm plug to 1/4" plug) included for just this purpose. The metronome runs off of a 9-volt battery that is included.

At its maximum setting the volume of the click is *very* loud, so the user must be sensible when adjusting it. Fortunately, the timbre of the click is short and sharp and is audible at low and moderate volumes.

In my tests, the metronome ran fast. When set at 40 bpm it actually played 42 bpm. At a setting of 120, the test unit played 144 bpm. At a setting of 260 it output 276 bpm. The tempo knob has no detents to indicate a precise setting.

The audio output jack is a thoughtful feature, but remember that when using it with external speakers you will need additional amplification. Powered monitors are the simplest solution. However, there is enough signal power to plug an additional set of headphones directly into this jack and hear the click clearly. Fortunately, the volume knob has no effect on the level of the click output from the jack, so you can change the volume in the phones and it will not affect what the rest of your band hears.

Sound Quality

The sound quality of these phones was very good. They are on a par with the Sony *MDR-V7* and AKG *141* phones in my recording stu-

dio. They reproduced both low and high frequencies well without any harshness. The *Metrophones* have two separate speaker systems (one each for the click and one for music) in each ear cup. This design obviously contributes to the sound quality. The manufacturer claims a frequency response of 15-25,000 Hz, which is greater than any drummer is capable of hearing.

Comfort And Isolation

Comfort is of prime importance to everyone who wears headphones. Isolation headphones are usually not as comfortable as regular headphones since they must make solid contact with one's head in order to exclude external noise. *Metrophones* are no exception to this. They fit firmly on your head, and you won't forget you have them on. (Think vise clamp.) However, since a sturdy steel band goes from one ear cup to the other, you might try, as I successfully did, to gently bend them upward to reduce clamping pressure. This made a big improvement to my comfort while not affecting how well they excluded noise. Water-filled rubber cushions on each ear cup further reduce noise while increasing comfort.

How well do *Metrophones* exclude noise? Very well. *Metrophones* are built into what are essentially shooter's hearing-protection earphones. And while the manufacturers of the *Metrophones* don't advertise them as hearing protection devices (but rather as practice-convenience tools), the original manufacturers of the shooter's phones claim 29 db of sound reduction. (This was before the phones were altered to accomodate the *Metrophones'* electronics, however.) The drum sound that does leak through is rich in bass frequencies, and sounds good. When practicing with the *Metrophones* I was able to play rimshots on my Trick 4x14 snare drum (a very loud drum) and a Premier *HTS 200* pipe band snare drum (if you haven't heard one, think gunshot!) with plenty of sound reduction. On drumset, nothing I played required turning the click volume into the danger zone. (For those drummers who don't think they need to protect their hearing, let me just mention that the alternative is sign language.)

Conclusion

Metrophones are a great idea. They exclude outside noise well, allowing drummers to practice and perform while protecting their hearing. Furthermore, they are good-sounding stereo headphones. In addition, they are very solidly made and feature a one-year warranty. (My hair did keep getting caught on the large lock nuts on the headband, though.)

Regrettably, *Metrophones* aren't comfortable enough to wear for hours on end. More significantly, the built-in metronome is not accurate. If you just want to work on patterns with a click for reference and you don't need to set a specific tempo, they work fine. Unfortunately, they are not trustworthy enough for situations where you need to accurately determine a specific tempo. Of course, you may run a digital metronome into the *Metrophones* through the audio input if you need a more reliable click.

Since *Metrophones* replace several products that, if purchased separately, would cost far more than their modest $114.95 list, I count them a bargain. If you don't find them in your music store, contact Big Bang Distribution, 9420 Reseda Blvd., Suite 350, Northridge, CA 91324, (800) 547-6401.

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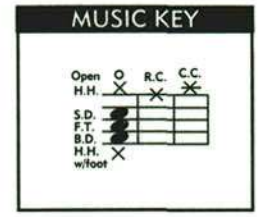
The Smashing Pumpkins'

Jimmy Chamberlin

Mellon Collie And The Infinite Sadness



Jimmy Chamberlin has garnered good reviews for his work with the Smashing Pumpkins in the past. But now with the release of *Mellon Collie,* Jimmy has proven his abilities as one of the best—and more importantly, most *original*—rock drummers playing today.

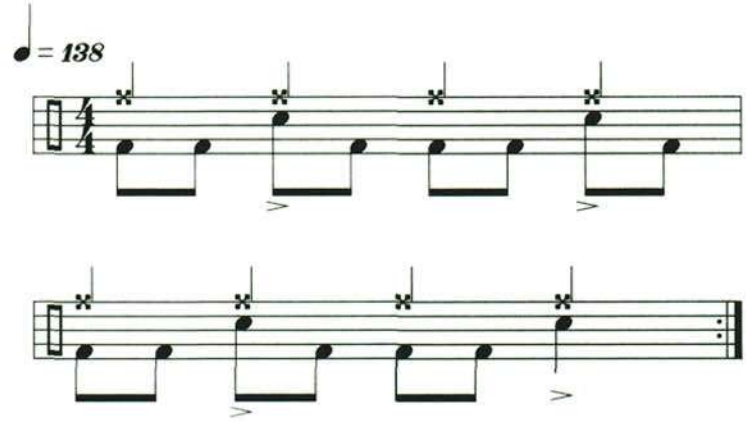
This two-disk, twenty-eight song epic requires Chamberlin to cover a broad spectrum of emotions, from ultra-sensitive ballads to over-the-top aggression. Throw in the Pumpkins' penchant for odd phrases and you've got some challenging drumming required. Jimmy covers it all with aplomb. The following excerpts give just a few examples of some of the cool beats he plays. (Pick up the record to hear them in context, along with the fills!)

"Jellybelly"

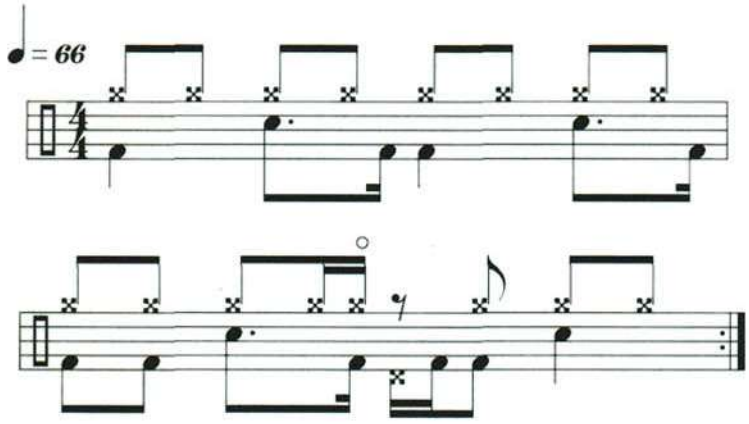
Check out the swaggering groove Chamberlin sets up with the following pattern from the intro/riff of the song. It's a drumming onslaught that Jimmy peppers with a lot of 32nd-note fills.

"Zero"

Here's a deceptively simple-looking, two-bar groove that Jimmy gives a "bouncy" sort of feel that lifts the song. (He gets away with some fun fills on this one as well.)

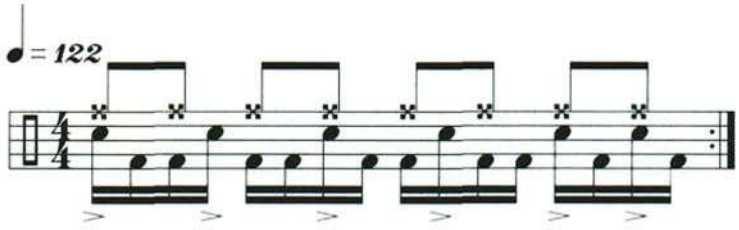


"To Forgive"
For this ballad Jimmy creates the right mood by using *Blasticks* on the following two-bar pattern. He gets just the right sound and feel.



"Cupid De Locke"
On this particularly hip tune Jimmy plays a simple, pulsing floor-tom groove that doesn't disturb the mood of the song. The accented notes—and how they're phrased—are key here.

"Tales Of A Scorched Earth"
This is the opening section of the song (it's repeated elsewhere in the tune), and it shows the aggressive side of the band. Jimmy displays some healthy single-kick chops by keeping this type of pattern up for the duration of the song.



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The Buzzle Family

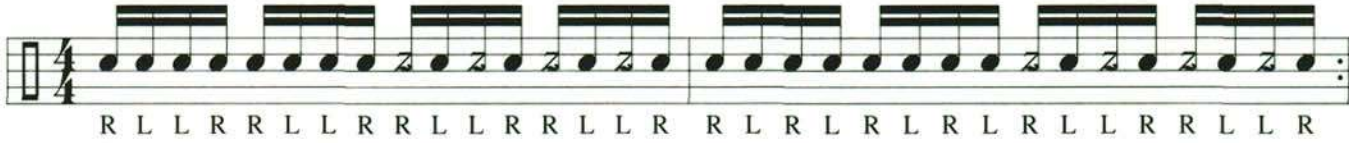
by Chet Doboe

It's always fun to expand our drum vocabulary and discover new drum worlds. An exciting contribution of the '90s generation of corps drummers is the development and expansion of the rudiment dictionary. The result is a stimulating new set of ideas known as "hybrid drum rudiments." The "buzzle" is one of these many exciting, new-generation concepts.

Simply put, the buzzle is a buzz played on the second note of a double or a diddle (indicated by a "z" replacing the notehead). The buzzle can be applied to a variety of rudiments and rhythms to create the buzzle family of rudiments. The following exercises showcase some of the buzzle rudiments.

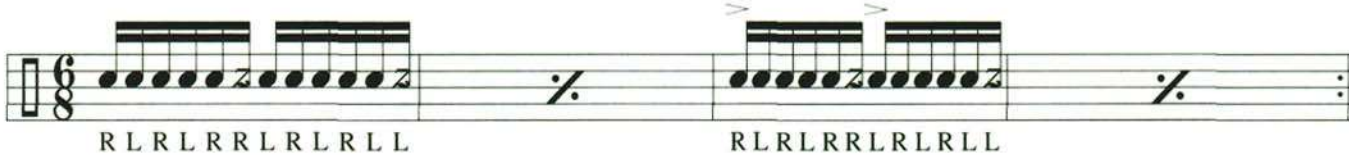
1. The Buzzle

2. Buzzle Invert

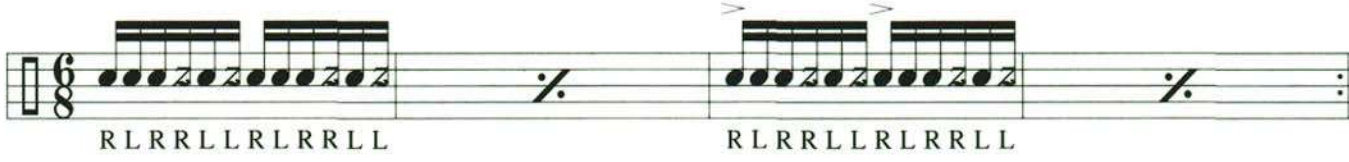


3. Parabuzzle (with and without accents)

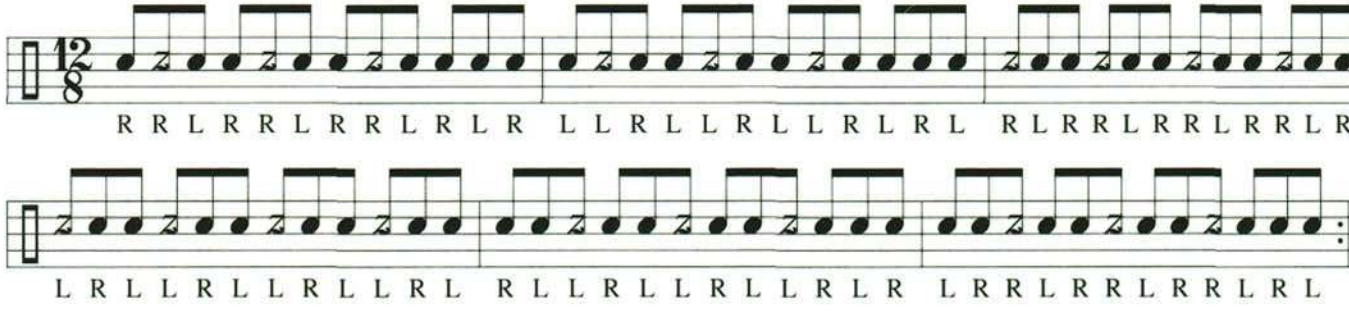
4. Double Parabuzzle (with and without accents)



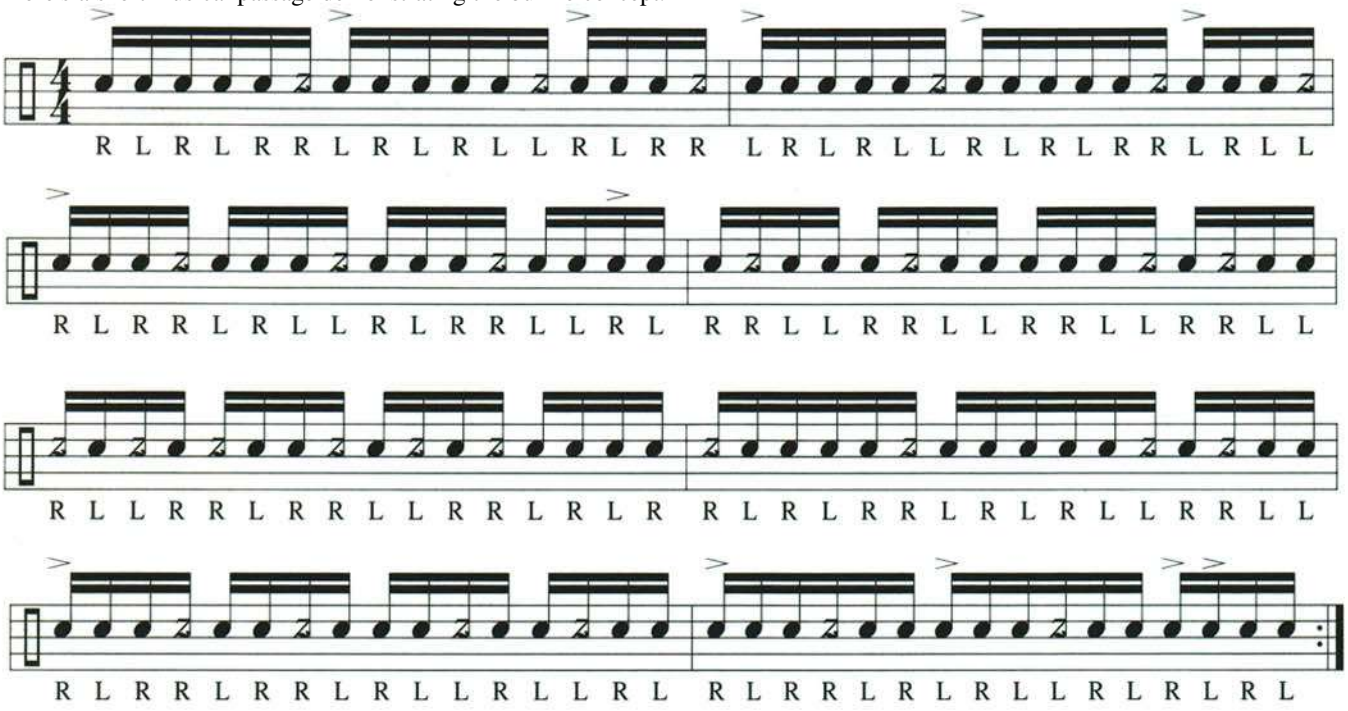
5. Parabuzzle-buzzle (with and without accents)



6. Buzzletap



Here's a short musical passage demonstrating the buzzle concept.



Chet Doboe is well-known to drum corps and rudimental drumming enthusiasts as the founder and leader of the innovative corps-style quartet Hip Pickles. He is also author of several drumset books.

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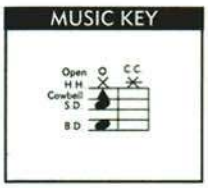
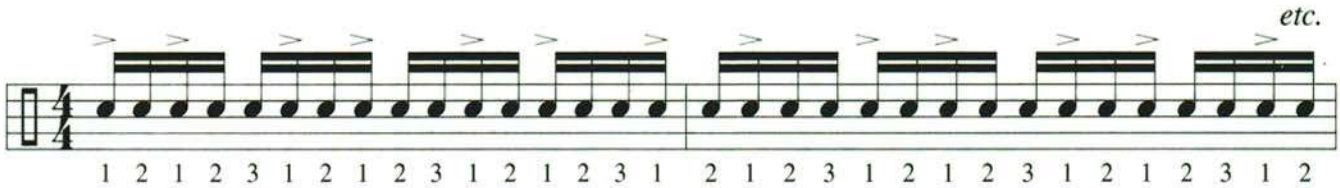
Phrasing With Broken Doubles: Part 2

by Paul DeLong



Last month we looked at a system for applying broken doubles to playing rhythmic phrases on the drumset. In this article we'll take it a step further by utilizing this broken-double concept to play some odd groupings in 16ths and triplets.

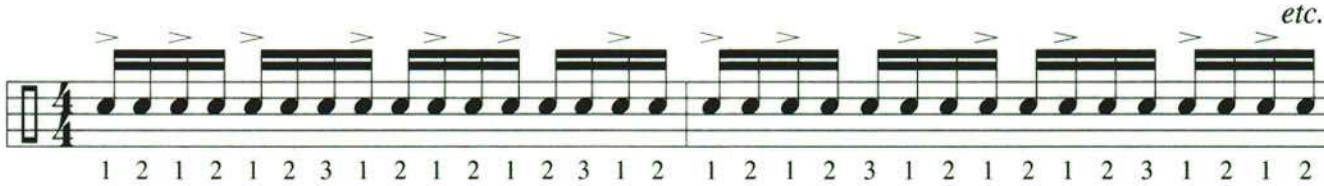
To play these groupings it is a prerequisite that you have a knowledge of how the odd phrasings work. If not, here's a bit of a review. A grouping of five—divided as two and three (with accents on the first and third note of the five)—superimposed over 16ths in 4/4 looks like this:



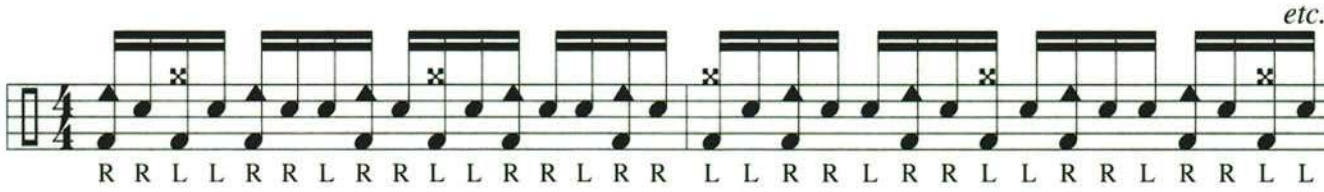
It is important for you to be able to count solid quarters through this and not get lost! (It takes five bars to resolve back to beat 1.)

Now we're ready to apply the broken-double system. Here's the five-note grouping played over two bars:

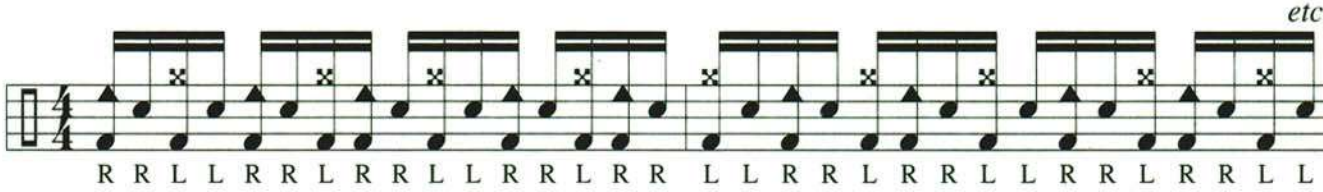
Next, we'll look at a seven-note grouping (divided as two, two, three) superimposed over 16ths in 4/4. Remember, you must be able to count the basic pulse underneath the rhythm.



Now here it is with broken doubles:



My favorite way to play this is with the turnaround on the bass drum instead of the snare:

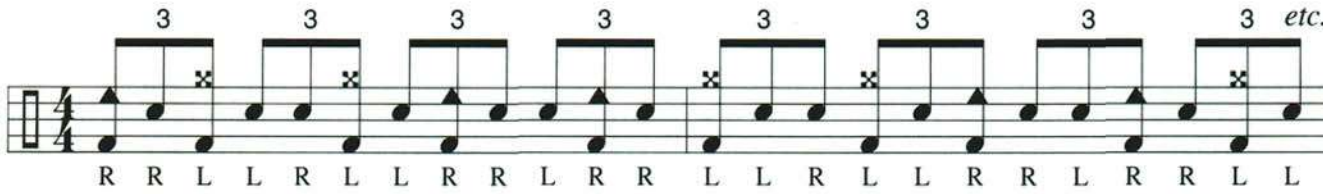


Now try combining the odd phrases at random to create a really interesting rhythmic motif. The following example has a group of

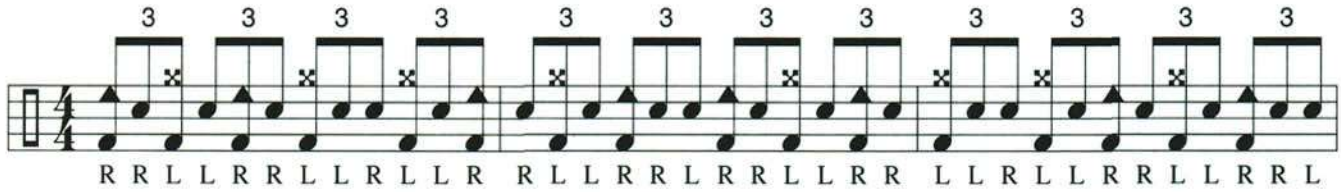
seven, followed by two groups of five, and then two groups of seven, with an extra 16th note at the end of the second measure.

Also try playing some of these phrasing ideas in time signatures other than 4/4. As mentioned in Part 1, you can also play all these broken-double phrases over continuous double bass 16ths, and remember to try different sound sources as well.

Now that some of the 16th-note possibilities have been examined, we can apply the same formula to triplets. For example, a five-note triplet grouping (phrased two-three) could be played:



Here's a nine-note triplet grouping (two, two, two, three). It resolves after three bars.



Again, try playing some of these hand patterns over continuous double bass triplets. And then the next step would be to try combining the triplets and 16ths.

As you work on these ideas remember not to get too caught up in the "math" of it all. Once you've learned how the phrases feel, forget the numbers and concentrate only on playing phrases that sound and feel good, letting the ideas flow naturally.

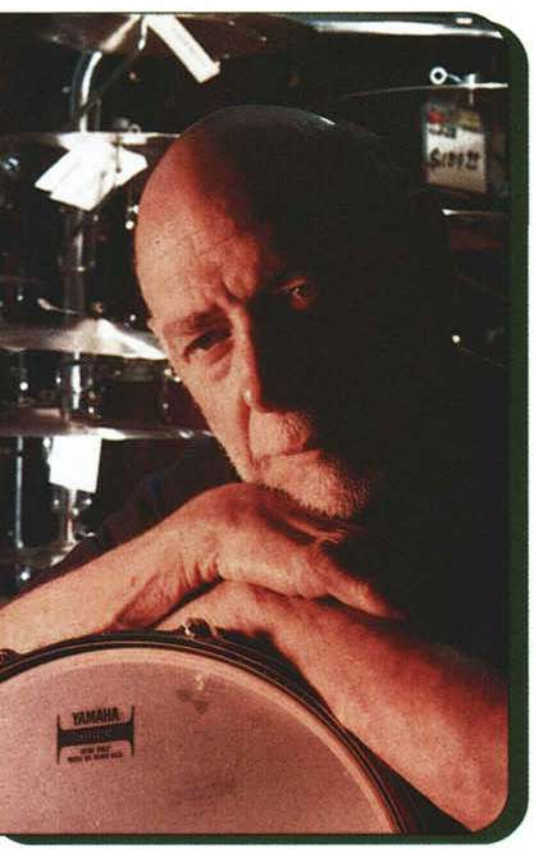
Richard Wilson
Broadening The Limits

by Robyn Flans

For drummer/composer/teacher Richard Wilson, the problem with most drummers is elemental: They don't know how to play their instrument.

"When someone comes to me," Wilson says, "I ask him to play a few fundamental strokes—simple things. Within five seconds I know just where they are. What drummers usually need to know—and it sounds really strange—is just how to hold the sticks. Because if they don't, they are forcing everything out in an inefficient way. Why was Buddy Rich faster than other people? It was because he was more efficient with his motions, which enabled him to get more speed. The whole idea is: half the effort with twice the speed."

Wilson began playing drums at age two, violin at age four, and concert piano at age six. He played violin at Carnegie Hall at nine. By age ten, Wilson had studied with two world-famous composers, Ernst Krenek and Eric Zeisl. But Harlem beckoned the young Wilson, because that's where he could watch the masters play drums, which stirred his soul. Since then, Wilson has played drums with such artists as Duke Ellington, Sarah Vaughan, Zoot Sims, Hampton Hawes, Dexter Gordon, Chet Baker, Don Ellis, Gary Peacock, Victor Feldman, Dave Mackay, Clare Fischer, Rosemary Clooney, Irene Kral, Shani Wallace, Buddy DeFranco, Warne Marsh, Frank Rosolino, Richie Kamuca, and Paul Moore's big experimental band. Wilson also led his own orchestra called the National Endowment, which used the latest development of twentieth-century music—harmonically and linearly—retaining ethnic rhythmic influences. (The group was so named because the National Endowment helped Wilson get the project started with the two Composition Fellowship Grants awarded him.) Aside from putting together a retrospective of his recorded catalog, though, today Richard says he attempts to give something back through teaching.



Alex Solca

"Technically, I teach from the standpoint of floors, balances, and fulcrums, observing the conclusions of Archimedes, Galileo, and Isaac Newton—using the acceleration of gravity and the theory of mass."

"Before you get into tricks or things professionals need to know to excel conceptually," Wilson says, "the first basic element to cover is the essential seventy-eight rudiments, because they're the scales and arpeggios of the instrument. Some teachers know thirteen rudiments, and some know the twenty-six, as the books show. There are small, uncomplicated strokes that I'll join together into longer, more complicated strokes as the students' hands develop and technique becomes apparent, and this happens without their even realizing it. Technically, I teach from the standpoint of floors, balances, and fulcrums, teaching dynamics, phrasing, and musical form, observing the conclusions of Archimedes, Galileo, and Isaac Newton—using the acceleration of gravity and the theory of mass."

Wilson talks in depth about specific grips: "There are four grips. Each grip will have a different fulcrum. The fulcrum is the point of support on which the lever changes direction, pivots, rocks, turns, or rotates. If we're talking about matched grip, the fulcrum is the first knuckle of the middle finger. That's the cradle over which the lever—or stick—turns. The crack of the first finger and the flat of the thumb guide the stick. If you need more leverage or volume, you'll use the fourth and fifth fingers as well. To build a grip, you establish a fulcrum and a guide, and the fulcrum leads the fourth and fifth fingers.

"Most everybody plays half turned over, which is slightly rotated out, which moves the fulcrum between the first and middle finger. When you go to French grip, which is thumbs up—the timpani grip—the stick rotates over the first finger, or index finger, which is the fulcrum. With traditional grip, the fulcrum is in the crotch of the thumb. The first finger lies over the stick."

Besides technique, Wilson has certain opinions about learning to improvise on one's instrument. "In North American history," the teacher explains, "drums and drumset playing was traditionally an ethnic experience created by the mother, who is instantly and outwardly emotional. To be a good improviser, it's essential to express your ideas immediately. The changing social mores of the '60s and '70s and the acceptance of indigenous musical forms, however, have allowed everyone the opportunity to relate emotionally on drums."

Wilson contends that technique should not be the premier concern. "Drums are a matter of feeling, so if you use intellect to learn first, you will not be as good an improviser. The student should learn how to intellectualize after.

"Drummers feel they don't need to know their instrument," he continues. "If they play the licks du jour—the licks of the day—and they have enough talent and good feel, they can be successful. They can be klutzy on their instrument—unlike with such instruments as the violin, oboe, piano, or trumpet, where, if you want to be on a virtuoso level or even competent enough to work in a symphony orchestra, it takes ten years to learn the fundamentals. When the periods end, only the drummers who have done something unusual with their talent are remembered.

"It's a good idea to learn your instrument, not so you can imitate other people, but to express yourself easily and see if your natural talent and originality emerge. Since the quill pen, writing hasn't gotten any better; it's probably gotten worse. Now that videotapes are available and drummers can watch their favorite star play their favorite licks—and get the recordings, too—it creates more copying and less individuality.

"Of all the names out there, who was the most influential drummer as far as playing his instrument? Buddy Rich. There's no new Buddy Rich coming along. Who out there can play the snare drum, the core of the whole discussion? Of course there's Louie Bellson, but I'm talking about young people coming up. Who will be the next person to play the instrument? I'm not talking about a particular playing style, because twenty years from now that style is going to be passe. If you can play your instrument, though, you can transcend styles, as Buddy did, through all the periods.

"It's important for students to know the difference between a motion up and an upstroke, or one or more strokes made on the motion up," Wilson says, "because then you're making strokes on the up as well as the down, resulting in half the effort with twice the speed. That's important if you're going to play one-handed series of singles, whether you pull your fingers or bounce the wrist on the upstroke. The final result of studying technique, besides one-handed playing, becomes crescendo strokes. Once the student has learned to play rolls, then he learns to play crescendo rolls and singles, raising approximately ten inches above the surface with no wrist, only arms and shoulders, with a flat stroke for ultimate power and speed. What I've described is the end of the fundamentals. The student has ultimate power, speed, endurance, and finesse to play whatever he or she wants."

The Pros On Wilson

Ten years before Murray Spivak died, the famed drum teacher took Richard Wilson aside and said, "I am going to die soon—you are the only one left with the knowledge. Don't let it die." Wilson undertook the responsibility, passing down the knowledge to his students, many of whom were top professionals eager for his wisdom. But what have these pros learned from Richard Wilson?

Carlos Vega: "Do you have a week? I feel very fortunate and honored to study with Richard. He is not only master of the drums, but he is also a composer.

"There was a student before me recently, asking whether or not he should be practicing groove playing as opposed to some really hard stuff for your hands. I was telling him it all relates. You have your stroke, your wrist turn, and your rebound, and it's a combination of those three things. If you're practicing one thing, it's only going to help the other. I find that my groove stuff feels more relaxed and snappier. The hi-hat will be nice and relaxed if I'm doing something like 16ths. My backbeat can be nice and tight because I've been practicing my rolls and getting that accent, like if I do a five-stroke roll, making sure that the four strokes before the accent are nice and even.

"He's a real knowledgeable cat about a lot of stuff. You can talk to him for an hour and a half about food. He's a very unique man."

Vinnie Colaiuta: "What I got out of it was a combination of things-understood the mechanics of body motion and efficiency on a physical level. It was a whole-handed kind of a thing—the body mechanics of how the fingers, wrists, and arms interact and how the strokes gradually blend into one another, depending on the velocity and volume you play. He also understands composition, so on a musical level, some of the exercises he wrote to utilize the techniques of body mechanics were pretty brilliant. Dick is coming from the perspective of someone who can write. It's a whole other world."

David Garibaldi: "I only studied with Richard for a very shot time, within the first couple of years of my living in Los Angeles. Richard was really great in that he kept asking me, 'What is it that you want to do? Why are you here?' which I thought was really important. It's something I now ask my students. He was very good at getting me to think about exactly what it was that I needed to focus on."

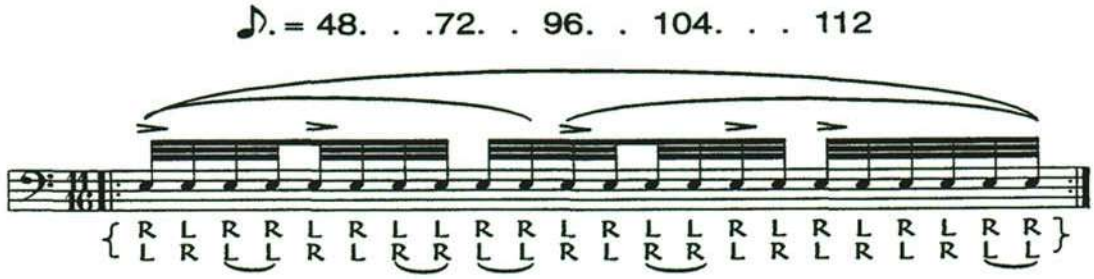
Michael Barsimanto: "Richard is an experience unlike various other ways of receiving knowledge. None have such a deep-rooted effect as plugging into the source. Richard's understanding of balance, fulcrum, economy of movemerit (half the effort, twice the speed) is astonishing. Most of his lesson are compositions that include such totality as far as drumming goes that you can't help but be positively influenced."

A Wilson Exercise

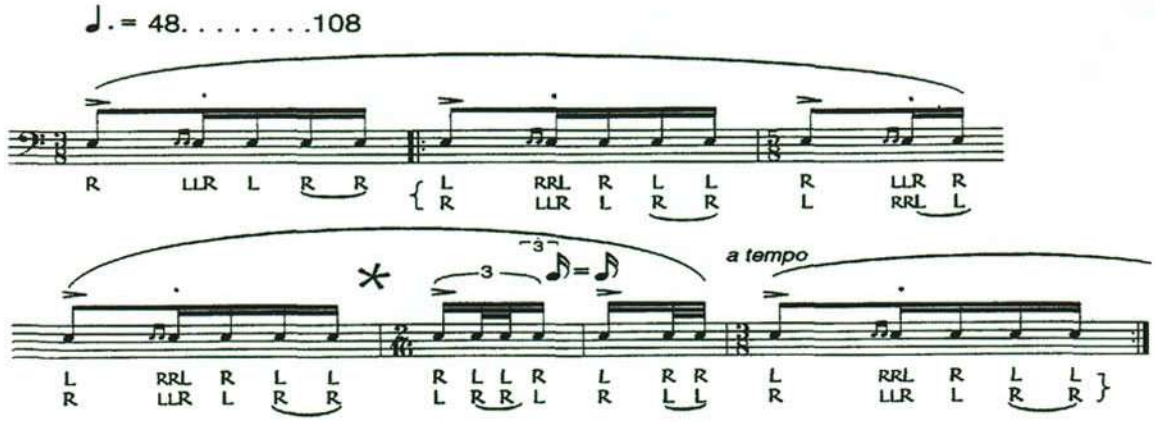
To give you an idea of some of the types of things Richard Wilson writes for his students, *MD* asked him to compose a few exercises. The examples that follow give a good indication of the creativity of this talented educator.

1. Here is a warm-up exercise that applies rebounds. The slurs notated under the sticking indicate which notes are to be played as rebounds. (Tap your feet with the pulse of the metronome.)

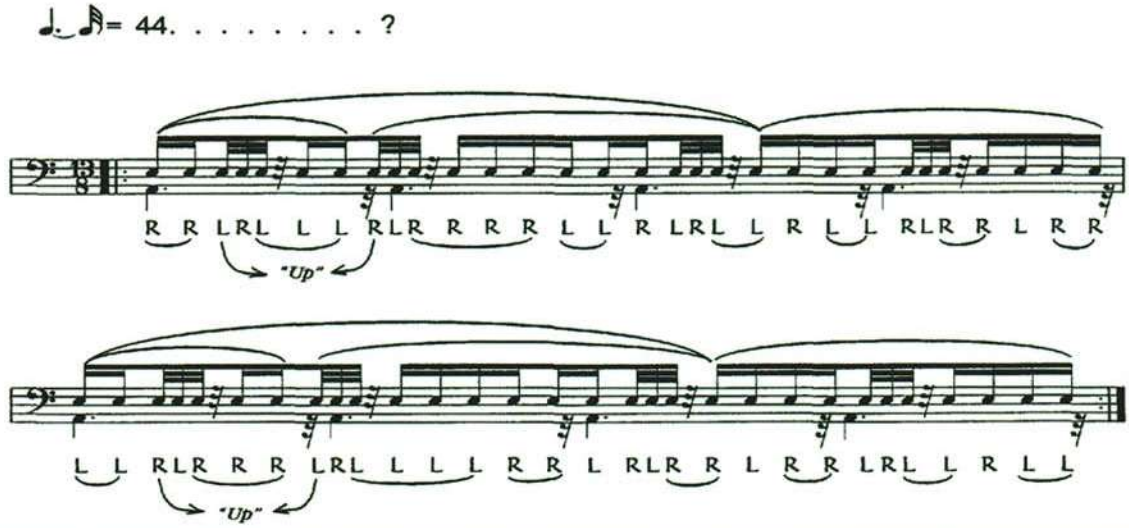
2. The following is a paradiddle exercise that utilizes accents to outline an ersatz clave.



3. Next is another good technical exercise. Note that the two 2/16 measures are in the speed of 16th-note triplets, in five motions. (Be sure to observe the following "a tempo.")



4. Finally, this exercise presents a poly-metric setting, utilizing throws and rebounds. The notes written on the "a" space in bass clef represent the part to be played by the feet (to be tapped in unison with a metronome). The term "up" written in this example refers to upstrokes. (An upstroke is a means of going from a low position to a high position while in the process of making a tap or rebound.)



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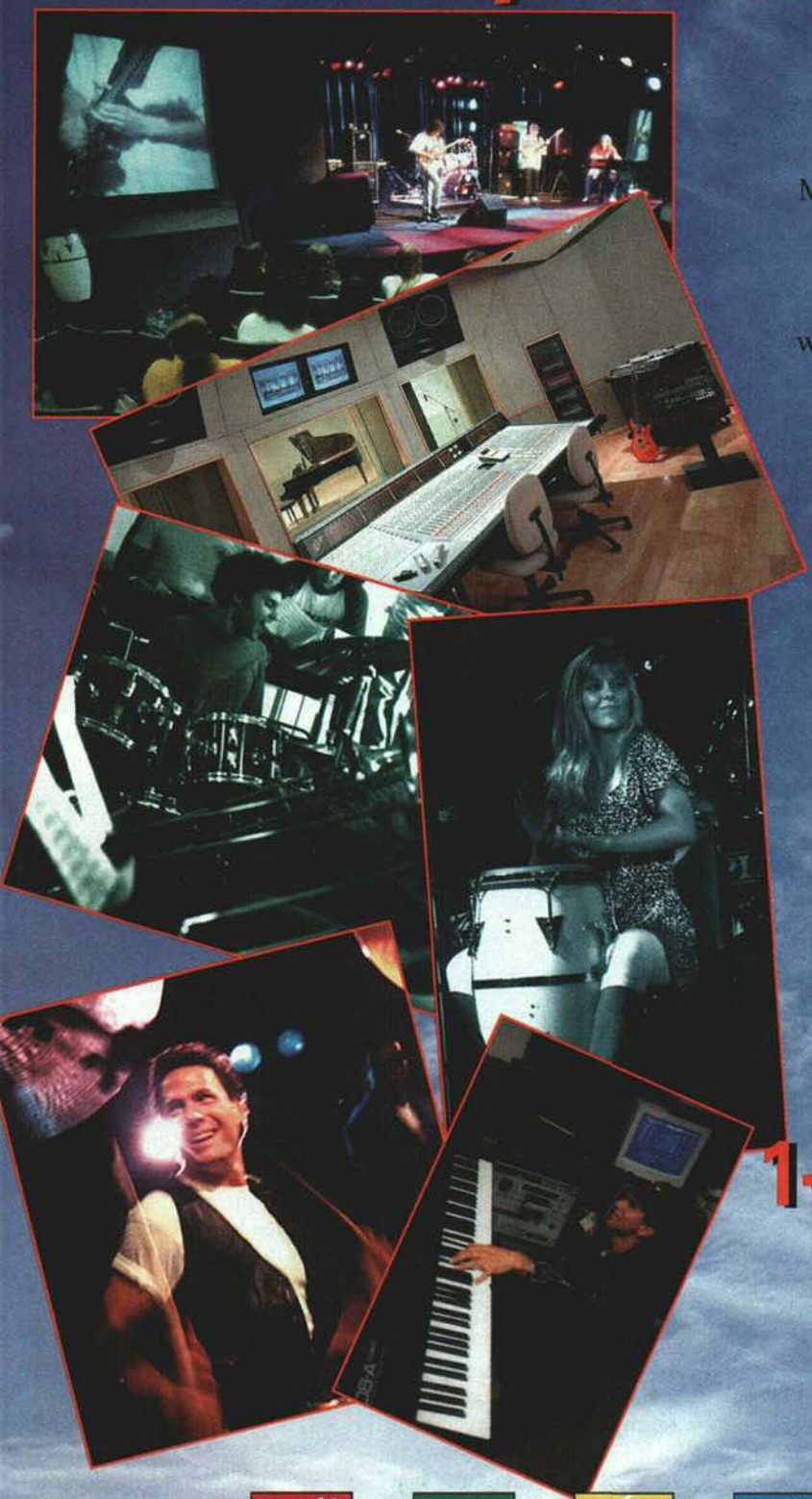

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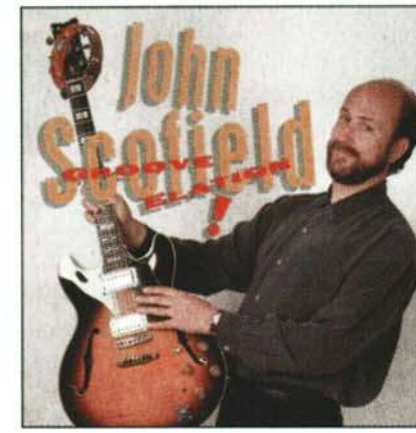

Idris Muhammad: dr
Don Alias: perc
John Scofield: gtr
Larry Goldings: kybd
Dennis Irwin: bs
Howard Johnson: tb, bs clr, sx
Steve Turre: tbn
Billy Drewes: sx, fl
Randy Brecker: trp, flghn

After a long association with Blue Note Records and a complete change of direction musically—first the funk band with Chambers, then the New Orleans band, and finally the four records with Joe Lovano (which set a whole new vocabulary for guitar music and brought us Bill Stewart)—Scofield leaves Blue Note with three bangs: his first writing for horn section, more New Orleans rhythms, and the genius playing of the great Idris Muhammad, with whom Scofield is presently touring.

Muhammad is one of the underrecognized masters of the drumset, playing with a twisty feel and pulse similar to Elvin Jones, whom Scofield calls his favorite drummer to jam with. Well, these are more than jams; they are complex songs with funky harmonic changes, hummable leads, great solos and horn licks, and some of the best parade snare work ever heard outside of a New Orleans funeral!

Songs include the pulsating "Lazy" (it isn't!), the strangely grooved "Peculiar" (a highlight for Muhammad's technique), and the horn interplay of "Bigtop." All songs are by John Scofield, with arranging to make Peter Erskine and Gil Evans cry.

Looking forward to next year's Verve Records debut, Sco!

Adam Seligman

JACO PASTORIUS
The Birthday Concert
(Warner Bros. 9 45290-2)

Peter Erskine: dr
Don Alias, Bobby Thomas, Jr., Oscar Salas: perc
Othello Molineaux, Paul Hornmiiller: steel dr
Jaco Pastorius: bs
Michael Brecker, Bob Mintzer, Dan Bonsanti, Gary Lindsay, Neal Bonsanti, Randy Emerick: sx/wdwns
Brian O'Flaherty, Ken Faulk, Brett Murphy, Melton Mustafa: trp
Peter Gordon, Jerry Peel, Steve Roitstein: fr hn
Russ Freeland, Mike Katz, Peter Graves: tbn
Dave Bargeron: tbn, tb

Master Erskine is in top form here, but that's only half of the story. Acting also as a producer, remix supervisor, and liner-note writer, Erskine helped resurrect this historic live date as a labor of love. As he recalls, it was a night of music he will always cherish. The occasion was a 1981 club gig in Jaco's home town of Fort Lauderdale. In honor of his thirtieth birthday, Jaco assembled musicians from all phases of his career into a giant version of his Word Of Mouth band for an inspired two-show night that blazed into the wee hours.

The mammoth group took the stage with minimum rehearsal, lending a risky edge to the night. It paid off; every bar bristles with the sound of players having a blast. In one highlight Erskine, Alias, Mintzer, Brecker, and Jaco approach melt-down through eighteen high-tempo minutes of "Invitation." This joyous tribute captures the bassist's brilliant, untethered spirit perhaps better than any formal retrospective could.

Jeff Potter

JETHRO TULL
Roots To Branches
(Chrysalis/EMI 7243 8 35418 2 9)

Doane Perry: dr
Ian Anderson: vcl, fl, gtr
Martin Barre: gtr
Steve Bailey, Dave Pegg: bs
Andrew Giddings: kybd

Twenty years ago, Jethro Tull sang of being "Too old to rock and roll and too young to die," but they prove that the body is still warm with this new release. Leader Ian Anderson had his knees 'scoped in order to continue touring, and he seems to have hit his stride as a recording studio craftsman. Longtime sidekick Martin Barre displays no signs of energy loss either with typically brilliant guitar playing, while bass virtuoso Steve Bailey is brought in to share duties with former Fairport Conventioneer Dave Pegg.

On *Roots* Doane Perry's parts are often out front and kicking, and he's always fleet of foot and provocative. His slightly orchestral percussion take on the title track serves it well, and while Anderson plays romantic balladeer on "Beside Myself," Perry is succinct and light. When the mood changes, he's right there changing with it. "Dangerous Veils" further indicates the depth of his talent, as the band shows off the polyrhythmic chops that inspired legions of progressive rock heads in the '70s, when Barriemore Barlow was pounding the skins. And "Valley" unfolds like a good novel, with each section stylishly and separately punctuated by Perry.

The instrumental prowess of Doane Perry heartily shines throughout this CD, a smooth glue to a typical Tull melange.

Robin Tolleson

SUPER JUNKY MONKEY

Screw Up

(TriStar/Sony-Japan WK35015)

Matsudaa!!: dr
Mutsumi: vcl
Keiko: gtr
Kawaishinobu: bs

It would be easy to dismiss this all-girl Japanese band as a marketing gimmick. But beneath the cloak of kitsch are talented musicians who, by comparison, make the girls in L7 look like the Go-Go's.

Super Junky Monkey blends pieces of Primus, Helmet, and the Red Hot Chili Peppers on this schizophrenic record, made all the more helter-skelter with lyrics that jump from song to song between Japanese and English. It's not an easy listen, though it's at times entertaining—even humorous. And though Super Junky Monkey doesn't pave any new territory, the band deserves attention simply for its technical accomplishments.

Because the band insists on covering several musical styles—from shuffles and '70s soul to guttural metal—*Screw Up* affords drummer Matsudaa!! several chances to show off her versatility. Taking a fairly straight yet lively approach to rhythm, her ghost-filled funk groove on "We're The Mother" is a particular standout. And throughout the disc, a crisp, slammin' backbeat and subtle touches on the cymbals keep the Monkey jumping from tree to tree, always on the prowl for another stylistic limb.

Unlike Japanese female trio Shonen Knife, Super Junky Monkey doesn't yet have the pop sensibilities to become an American cult favorite. But the chops are there. And if the Monkey can be mistress of her own tree instead of trying to conquer the jungle, the songs will certainly follow.

Matt Peiken

JOE GALLIVAN/ BRIAN CUOMO

Night Vision

(No Budget Records)

Joe Gallivan: dr, perc
Brian Cuomo: pno, kybd

Those interested in free music played in a forceful, heartfelt way might find this live-to-DAT recording from Hawaii a real pleasure. Joe Gallivan, a former member of the Gil Evans Big Band and Larry Young's band, and sideman with the likes of Pepper Adams, Ira Sullivan, and Kenny Wheeler, plays with a trusting abandon, right in sync with his partner's inner clock. He's equally aggressive and dynamic on sticks or brushes, swelling to meet the musical situation head on, always playing with as much melody and shape as rhythmic drive.

The duo creates a wonderful tension on "Magic Mirror," and Gallivan is charting a course alongside the pianist, though somehow completely free of his expressive playing. On "Intensity," Cuomo lays groundwork, but leaves the space for Gallivan, who unleashes a frantic assault. Again, on "Internal Directions," Cuomo's part is almost a vamp over which the drummer hurls a magnificent phase-altering skins-and-cymbals barrage. Gallivan offers a free jazz cadence on "Evolution" between cymbals and bongos.

Gallivan builds up Cuomo with cymbal wash and enticing brushwork on "Round Midnight," tastefully mixing in hand drums in flourishes. "I've Got It Bad" is played straight and very slow, but as Cuomo offers a fine-fingered reading of "In A Sentimental Mood," Gallivan colors and shades the edges with soft humor and grace.

Joe Gallivan has obviously accumulated a wealth of experience; thankfully, he's developed an avant-bop style that's quite a kick to listen to.

Robin Tolleson

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Outernational Meltdown

(B+WBW076/7/8)

In September '94, Airto Moreira, guitarist Jose Neto, and British jazz trumpeter Byron Wallen set off on a quest to South Africa. Their mission: to jam, record, and share ideas with diverse South African musicians. They struck a motherlode; the tapes rolled for two weeks, resulting in a three-CD series. Over fifty musicians participated, contributing everything from ritualistic invocations to slick contemporary jazz solos. And it's a balanced *shared* effort rather than a leader's album.

Vol. II, *Healer's Brew,* has the most folkloric, raw feel of the series, with its twenty-minute ceremonial centerpiece featuring a troupe of spiritual healers. Vol. III, *Jazzin' Universally,* is a more polished, compositional set showcasing an exquisite mix of local jazz/pop sounds. Vol. I, *Free At Last,* bridges the other discs, adeptly mixing the modern and traditional.

There's inspiring drumming galore with Airto's brothers-in-rhythm, including percussionists Mabi Thobejane, Pops Mohamed, and Valerie Naranjo as well as ace kit players Sibongiseni Shange, Babes Ndamase, and British visitor Andrew Missingham. The drums and marimbas of the percussion group Amampondo are also a constant treat. This ambitious gathering miraculously succeeds in sounding like a lively open-air celebration rather than a "studio project."

Jeff Potter

SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

You say you've been waiting too long for **VINNIE COLAIUTA** to let loose some of his legendary chops on disc? Guitarist and Vinnie/Zappa cohort Warren Cuccurullo's Thanks To Frank (Imago) might be just the scratch for your itch. The Rolling Stones' Stripped (Virgin) might expose warts and all, but the golden moments this very cool, "unplugged"-style disc highlights—including that timeless **CHARLIE WATTS** feel—are well worth the inevitable flubs. **NDUGU CHANCLER** slyly slips and slides on some groovin' funk/jazz, as he re-joins early-'80s musical mates Patrice Rushen and Ernie Watts on the Meeting's *Update* (Hip Bop). And speaking of funky, **GERRY BROWN** does it up good on Stevie Wonder's new *Live In Concert* (Motown), featuring lots of his classic '70s cuts.

RATING SCALE

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

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RUSTED ROOT

Cruel Sun
(Rusted Root-777)

Jim Donovan: dr, perc
Liz Berlin: vcl, perc
John Buynak: wdwns, perc, vcl
Patrick Norman: bs, vcl, perc, sitar
Jenn Wertz: vcl, perc
Mike Glabicki: vcl, gtr

Blending styles of high-energy dance rock and strong, complex, ethnic hand percussion, Pittsburgh's Rusted Root is one of the most unusual bands to emerge on the popular music scene since the Talking Heads (a group to which they are often compared). Following the highly successful release of their major label debut, *When I Woke* (Mercury), the band has now re-released their self-produced first album, *Cruel Sun.*

"Primal Scream" kicks off the album with the strong rhythm/vocal combination that has become their trademark sound. "Tree" and "Scattered" both feature Root's pulsing uptempo sound, combined with slower, haunting sections that give the band's music depth and atmosphere.

Root's percussion line-up includes congas, djembe, talking drum, and drumset. While much of the album is driven by hand percussion, two tracks, "Won't Be Long" and "!@#*" are paced by the drumset. Rusted Root fans will also enjoy hearing earlier versions of "Send Me On My Way," "Cat Turned Blue," "Martyr," and "Back To The Earth" on *Cruel Sun,* which all appeared in slightly more developed forms on *When I Woke.*

Cruel Sun, which was first released in 1992, offers eleven tracks of aggressive, strongly rhythmic, and melodic music, and is a solid first effort by this energetic and creative young band.

Harriet L. Schwartz

SEVEN MARY THREE

American Standard
(Mammoth/Atlantic 92633-2)

Citi Khalsa: dr
J. Pollock: gtr, vcl
Casey Daniel: bs
J. Ross: vcl, gtr

There was a time when critics blasted Live as merely a knockoff of R.E.M. and U2. Sure enough, the band's own talent, voice, and infectious songs persevered to the point that, now, newer bands have to work their way out of Live's shadow. Seven Mary Three is among the crop, hoping to make it big on the modern rock wave of earnest, soulful songwriting.

They have a good start, at least from a commercial sense, reaching radio in late 1995 with the hook-friendly "Cumbersome." But musically, there's not a hint of the creativity and dexterity that propelled Live to commercial and critical success.

Khalsa's strengths are a solid snare hand and a feel for dynamics within the course of laying down simple rhythms. His tribal romp on "Punch In Punch Out" is a highlight. But on the whole, the drummer isn't nearly as inventive as the music allows, ignoring the subtle cymbal timbres or well-placed tom strokes that give Chad Gracey his signature with Live. Khalsa generally glues himself to the basic rhythm of a given song so strongly that he drives it into blandness.

Khalsa's shortcomings, though, are symbolic of those with *American Standard* as a whole. There's nothing here to set the band apart from its contemporaries. Sure, Seven Mary Three could potentially blaze its own fork in the road with future offerings. But the artistic growth had better come quickly—the door of opportunity in pop music doesn't stay open for long.

Matt Peiken

BOOKS

SELF-PUBLISHED DRUM BOOKS

Beyond The Standard Groove by Glenn W. Meyer (60 pages, $13.95) is written for players who already possess basic drumset technique and coordination and who wish to further refine their skills. The book is not focused on any one topic but deals with a variety of subjects such as paradiddle inversions around the set, rock and jazz fills, reggae and Latin beats and fills, shuffles, jazz brush playing, and 3/4 funk shuffle grooves. While many of the exercises take a *"Stick Control* for drumset" approach by applying a variety of hand-and-foot patterns to a single rhythmic idea, there are also a reasonable number of practical patterns that one could apply in actual playing situations. Some of the material is fairly easy, while sections such as the one on Latin/Jazz Rock Fills will take some time to master. The book doesn't follow any particular progression, so one could work on the material in any order.

Andrew Nucci's **Flexibility In Drumming** (64 pages, $9.95) is a snare drum reading text that begins with basic whole, half, and quarter notes and advances to intermediate-level etudes with 16th notes and triplets. The book moves somewhat slowly, but would be good for younger students who need a lot of repetition of basics. Every etude in the book is written in 4/4, but the author suggests also counting in cut time, 2/2, and 1/1—the latter of which doesn't come up often in the real world, but it makes for an interesting exercise in concentration when you try to count 8th notes "1-a-E-a-&-a-A-a" as Nucci suggests. The manuscript is hand-written and somewhat sloppy in spots, with irregular beaming of 8ths and 16ths. But students who have only studied from professionally engraved method books are often bewildered when they first encounter hand-written parts and charts on a job, so some early exposure to less-than-perfect manuscript could be justified.

Applied Variations For Drumset by Martin Vaquero ($11.99) devotes much of its 41 pages to explaining how to use fairly simple rhythms as the basis for more complex beats and patterns by superimposing doubles, accents, ghost notes, paradiddles, and other rhythmic ideas over the basic rhythm. There are also interesting sections on phrasing in threes and fives, and on half-time shuffles.The book has a generous amount of text and enough exercises to fully illustrate the principles, but its main value is in conveying an approach that can be applied to a variety of rhythms rather than in simply presenting a bunch of exercises to be played as is.

Book One of Chris Miller's **Contemporary African Drumset Styles** (book and cassette, $25) focuses on the Soukous rhythm, presenting a wealth of variations on the basic Soukous groove including funk-style patterns and fills. The book includes a cassette tape on which Miller demonstrates each of the patterns, which helps in terms of achieving proper balance between the different elements of the drumset and in understanding that unaccented hi-hat notes should be nearly inaudible. The book probably contains more variations of the Soukous beat than most drummers will need, but the end result is a very complete understanding of the Soukous feel that will enable one to play very freely and creatively within that style.

The Progressive Beat by Mark Cella (76 pages, $7) is a graduated method for learning rock drumming. Along with typical 8th-note, triplet, and 16th-note patterns in 4/4, the author includes studies in 6/8, 7/8, 9/8,11/8,15/16, and other time signatures, as well as a few "getting around the kit" studies with triplets, 16ths, quintuplets, 16th-note triplets, septuplets, and 32nd notes, written for snare, small tom, and floor tom. The various 4/4 patterns are nothing new, but they are all very practical, and the inclusion of relatively simple odd-time patterns early in the game could help contemporary drum students avoid the fear of odd times that seems to develop among drummers who spend their first several years playing nothing but 4/4.

Rick Mattingly

Enrique Pla
Irakere

Walfredo Reyes, Sr.
Latin Great

Orestes Vilato
Los Angeles Studios

Walfredo Reyes, Jr.
Santana, Robbie Robertson

Chalo Eduardo
Sergio Mendes

Jorge Bermudez
Bermudez Triangle

Memo Acevedo
Jazz Alliance

Martin Verdonk
Congarilla

Karl Perazzo
Santana

Robert Rodriguez
Miami Sound Machine

Rafael Padilla
Miami Sound Machine

Karl Vanden Bossche
Sade, Incognito

Miles Bould
Sting, Massive Attack

Kevin Ricard
Los Angeles Studios

Bashiri Johnson
Whitney Houston, Madonna

Bobby Sanabria
Ascension

Carol Steele
Sessions, Annie Lennox

Tito Puente
Latin Great

Robby Ameen
Reuben Blades, Seis del Solar

Vera Figueiredo
Banda Nuapaco

Luc Boivin
Montreal Studios

Steve Scales
Sessions, Michael Bolton

Mike Agular
La Mafia

Sola Akingbola
Jamiroquai, Ronny Jordan

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Reading Between The Lines Of Drum Book Publishing: Part 2

by Rich Watson

Last month we discussed the various aspects of creating a drum book. This time, we'll take the next logical step and discuss the different methods of turning that book from concept to reality—and getting it into the hands of potential consumers. Essentially, this falls under the heading of "getting published," and there are basically two ways to go: doing it yourself, or having it done by a major publishing house. Let's examine each method in detail.

Self-Publishing

Encouraged by his teachers at North Texas State University to write down his ideas, Rick Latham scribed every note *of Advanced Funk Studies* by hand with calligraphy pens and rulers. After having the text produced by a typesetter, he cut and pasted each exercise and paragraph of text. (He even glued the page numbers on the pages.) Then he had a printer make negatives of the pages. Years later, Latham replaced pens, rulers, scissors, and glue with a computer and *Finale* (a notoriously difficult sequencing/notation program) to produce *The Contemporary Drumset.* And this time he farmed out the layout to *Finale* users-group chairperson (and fellow percussionist) Bonnie Janofsky.

Making a music book look good is still painstaking work—even despite technological advances. But, as Russ Miller discovered with his *Drumset Crash Course,* writing and producing a book is probably the *easy* part of self-publishing. Because after the provocative, fresh idea, after the manuscript notation, after the music and text editing, the art, and the layout—*then* comes the hard-core business of sales, warehousing, shipping, billing, accounting, collecting royalty payments, etc.—skills that may not come naturally to folks who've spent most of their study time behind a kit.

"When I held the first published copy in my hands," Russ Miller exclaims, "I thought, *Wow, we finally did it; we're finished!* It turned out that that wasn't the end, it was the beginning!"

> "A celebrity's name on the cover will lead to some quick initial sales, but a good book by an unknown can do just as well over time."

If the self-publishing road from inspiration to remuneration is so long and bumpy, why does anyone choose it? Some fly solo because they are unable to interest a major publisher in their concept. An author should view rejections from numerous publishers as a red flag of warning that his or her proposal needs to be carefully and objectively re-evaluated. Then again, with the "big boys" being inundated with unsolicited books and book ideas, now and then even worthy ones can be turned down or "fall through the cracks."

Advanced Funk Studies was passed over by numerous major publishers when Rick Latham first unveiled it. After its sales went through the roof, however, many publishers approached Rick to handle his second book. This time, *he* declined—for two reasons: First, he was worried about losing control over the book's content. Second, he was dissatisfied with the cut the majors offered him—which also happens to be the second big reason many authors choose to self-publish. By self-publishing his books, Latham claims, "If the book costs $15, I make $10 instead of $2." (The industry standard royalty for authors working with major publishers, says Dave Black, is 10% of domestic retail sales and 5% of foreign retail sales.)

Of course per-book profit margin shouldn't be confused with overall profit. Because of their powerful marketing and distribution operations, major publishers will almost certainly sell many more books than can any individual. And then there are the substantial initial production expenses (including layout and printing), as well as the costs and considerable time required for advertisement and distribution. The financially motivated decision to self-publish, then, depends almost as much upon the author's marketing and business savvy as in his or her book's sales potential.

Russ Miller had faith in *The Drumset Crash Course.* Its concept and content were based on the drumset, music-theory, electronic-percussion, and hand-percussion curricula he designed for the Miami Percussion Institute (which Russ co-founded in 1992), as well as on years of performing and teaching experience. But even with such a promising foundation Miller was smart enough to seek the expert advice of some of the industry's

most talented individuals.

After receiving expert layout work from Gay Ann Gagliardi, Warner Bros.' Joe Testa gave Russ further tips on the book's design, and Warner's Sandy Feldstein helped him edit it as a favor. All this assistance was invaluable, but it was still up to Miller to put up all the money. And his biggest challenge was, and remains, promotion. "If nobody knows about your book, it's not going to sell," he explains. "Even getting it into the stores is no guarantee; if they don't move within a certain time, the stores will send them back to the distributor."

Sales of *Crash Course* in Florida have been strong due to Miller's exposure in various bands there, and the clinics he has done for Yamaha and Zildjian. He acknowledges the need for different marketing strategies out of state. "I try not to gauge the success of the book by what happens in Florida, because I have such a strong following as an artist here—whereas I don't in Idaho," Russ laughs. One plan is to point out to other dealers the book's strong sales in major retailer outlets such as Thoroughbred Music, Resurrection Drums, and Steve Weiss Music. Russ has also advertised in *Modern Drummer* and other magazines.

Latham agrees that promotion is especially important to self-publishing authors, saying, "I can't stress enough how much the ads in *Modern Drummer* helped." He also received some great recommendations and endorsements, which he had printed on his book's inside cover.

The Big Houses

Product promotion is also the name of the game with the major publishers. The easiest books to promote are the ones written by "star" drummers, both because of the attention those artists draw in music stores, and because of their frequent proximity to likely drum-book buyers. Dave Black calls David Garibaldi's *Future Sounds* a publisher's dream-come-true. "First of all, you have a book that has never been done before: linear funk." (It's a style that, Black reminds us, Garibaldi almost singlehandedly defined.) "Then you've got David Garibaldi's visibility, which means great sales right away. Then you've got somebody who does a fair amount of traveling and clinics. If drummers ask him, 'How do you do that?' he's obviously going to say, 'It's right here in my book.'" Black calls this "built-in promotion." He adds quickly, though, that sales of books that rely on name recognition *alone* depend upon the "star's" public visibility. "As soon as their star dims," he says, "the book's sales fall right off."

Hal Leonard's John Cerullo agrees. "A celebrity's name on the cover will lead to some quick initial sales," he says, "but a good book by an unknown can do just as well over time."

Even books that aren't written by celebrities should come from what Manhattan Music's Rob Wallis calls "a good valid source, including respected educators or players who have had a significant impact on drumming." Citing *West African Rhythms For The Drumset,* Wallis submits, "It's natural for Royal Hartigan, an educator whose lifelong study has been African rhythms, culture, and history, to have written this book." This "validity" not only pertains to an author's musical talent, but to that talent's appropriateness to the book's subject. Dave Black illustrates, saying, "If John Beck [Eastman School of Music percussion department director] and a big-name heavy-metal drummer both wrote timpani methods, which one would you buy?"

Regardless of who writes a book, promoting it is a complex, time-consuming process. Rob Wallis describes Manhattan Music's multi-pronged attack: "We try to create an interest through ads in magazines such as *Modern Drummer.* We also have a program where certain music stores sign on and get one or two copies of every drum product we come out with sight-unseen—and they get extra discounts. So we know from day one that X-number of shops are going to receive the product automatically. The sales team goes to work on the rest of them. We have over twenty salespersons calling on the phone ten hours a day."

Judging a book by its cover is an accepted reality in modern drum-book publishing, and each house has its own editorial policies for graphic and layout elements. Hal Leonard Corporation's John Cerullo says, "We don't use 'cookie-cutter' templates, because every book has unique concepts whose layout and design need to be equally unique."

This flexibility does not, however, include new notation systems. Some companies are pushing for the entire industry to adopt Norm Weinberg's guidelines for standardizing drumset notation. Rick Mattingly, also with Hal Leonard Corporation, remarks, "There is no way that the guy who buys the book wants to have to figure out which line the snare drum and the ride cymbal are on."

John Cerullo offers some tips on layout that should be considered by self-publishers as well. Design and copy should be eye-catching, he says, and the introductory pages hip—or at least in some way compelling. But whereas flash can be effective up

front, a book's page-by-page layout—right down to the typeface, kerning, line leading, and line length—should contribute to its readability. "Concepts should be presented in a progressive manner that doesn't suddenly overload the student," he warns, "and text should be broken up by musical examples or figures. Large, unbroken blocks of text can start to look scary and un-user-friendly."

Publishing deals vary from one house to the next, and in some cases, certain details can be dictated by the author. Although Rick Latham published his first book himself, CPP Belwin (now owned by Warner Bros.) produced and owns the rights to his instructional videos, and Warner Bros. Publications now distributes both of his books on a non-exclusive basis. This, he says, allows him to benefit from the power of their distribution network, but nets him a larger profit than if Warner Bros. published the books as well.

"When we enter into a contract," says Hal Leonard's John Cerullo, "the author's responsibility is to deliver to us an editable manuscript. [Rick Mattingly adds, "Defining what 'editable' means usually involves a long conversation with the author."] From that point on, everything else is optional. Some authors don't want to see that book again until it's been printed. Others want to be involved in the entire process: editing and proofreading with our editorial team, working with our layout team all the way until the book goes to press. Then we do all marketing, promotion, and distribution of the product. Authors might get involved on the tail end by doing clinics, workshops, and performances. We have a full-time clinic department, which—in addition to supplying the product—helps authors coordinate their tour or clinic schedules and 'pump up' the local market."

While most publishing houses have "standard" services, contracts don't normally stipulate a minimum expenditure for marketing, such as, "Publisher agrees to run four quarter-page advertisements in major music magazine." Instead, additional promotion is earned by a book's sales performance.

Publishers' substantial investment of resources in each book makes them *very* picky about which ones they select. The immutable bottom-line criterion is: Will it sell?

Rick Mattingly believes that the strongest-selling books are the ones that work for drum teachers. "If you sell an individual on your book, you've sold a book; if you sell a teacher on your book, the next ten years can bring fifty or a hundred sales. The teacher requires that his students buy the book, and makes sure that the music store where he works keeps it in stock. Also, the students talk among themselves, saying, 'This is a really good book, I've learned a lot from it.'"

Dave Black contends that books for beginners far out-sell intermediate or advanced ones. The reason is attrition. "Everybody starts off by studying from a beginning book," he explains. "But many never progress to an intermediate or advanced book. Some quit music altogether, some choose another instrument, some

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decide to continue playing but to quit studying out of books." But don't assume from this that beginning books are easier to write or to foist upon publishers. Their inherent lack of "new" ideas and their relative simplicity make them harder to distinguish from the hundreds of functionally similar books already on the market.

The big houses generate the vast majority of their own book ideas, and they seek out a suitable author for each project. (One publisher estimated that less than 1% of unsolicited material submitted is accepted.) They do, however, welcome the gems that occasionally surface from the oceans of unsolicited material they receive. With this in mind, both Hal Leonard Publishing Corporation and Alfred Publishing Company, Inc. offer these guidelines for aspiring drum book authors: Proposals should include a full presentation of the book's concept and a strong, solid outline or table of contents. One of the concepts should be fully "blown out" to represent the core teaching philosophy, presentation, and usefulness of the material. Keep in mind the critical *Three C's:* Clarity, Coherence, and Completeness.

Rick Mattingly recommends typing or word-processing the text, but doesn't expect authors to do the layout. If the proposal is accepted, he says, "We'll redo it anyway. We're judging content. But in order to judge content, we've got to *see* content. We have imaginations, and we have art departments, but for illustrations, at least provide a sketch. If the sample chapter will have a photograph, include at least a Polaroid. Don't just tell us there will be musical examples, write them out. Likely as not, I'm going to play them to check them out. And if a piece of audio helps illustrate the book's concept, that is recommended as well." In short, he pleads, *"Let us know what you're thinking."*

Publishers will suggest ways to develop promising ideas that still require more work. For example, Mattingly has on occasion asked an author to "talk him through" a proposed book, and then worked with the author in writing text that filled in the conceptual blanks. John Cerullo adds, "By doing this we also find out if an author is willing to collaborate and cooperate with us in making changes."

Whether dealing with a major house or publishing on their own, authors benefit from many such dialogs. Editors, layout artists, typesetters, printers, and the many people responsible for promoting, distributing, and selling books can provide invaluable perspectives on a book's concept and promotion strategy, its step-by-step execution, and its launch into the marketplace. The entire process is all about communicating—to the people who bring the book into being, and, ultimately, to all the drummers it may teach, influence, and inspire.

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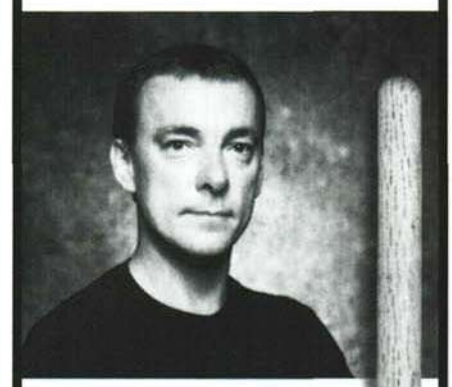

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Marcelo Petrelli

Twenty-six-year-old Marcello Petrelli has been a drummer since 1984, but feels that his career really began when he started studying seriously in 1990. Today, he devotes his talents to playing jazz and funk with a group called Trio Balayage in the clubs of his home town of Limeira, a suburb of Sao Paulo, Brazil. The high-energy band performs the music of artists like Wayne Shorter, Horace Silver, and Miles Davis, along with material of their own. They're in the process of expanding their scope to large cities like Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, and they hope to record their first CD shortly.

Marcelo has also performed with nationally famous Brazilian vocalists Moacyr Franco, Lady Zu, and Jairzinho. His diverse drumming influences (Weckl, Gadd, Colaiuta, Rich, Chambers, DeJohnette, and Brazilian percussionists such as Rubinho) have helped him develop a style that is a dynamic amalgam of modern jazz, funk, and South-American techniques. This style—along with an impressive technical expertise—has made Marcelo an in-demand teacher as well as a performer.

"It's a great pleasure for me to play this music style," says Marcelo, "because one must have technique and knowledge, and one must also keep informed and study a lot to play it well." Marcelo plays it well (as evidenced by his demo tape), and he does so on a Pearl *Export* kit fitted with Zildjian and Sabian cymbals.

Scott Christensen

Scott Christensen of Calgary, Alberta, Canada began studying music seriously at the age of six. Now twenty-five, he's backed such artists as Curtis Grambo and Lindia Scott (each Canadian Country Music Award nominees), and he's currently working with Canadian country recording artist Brett Barrow. Scott's drumming helped Barrow win the 1993 Big Valley/Jack Daniels Country Band Showdown (in front of 30,000 people). Since then, Barrow and his band have opened for such country stars as Tracy Lawrence, Travis Tritt, Holly Dunn, and Tracy Byrd, and have criss-crossed Canada headlining club shows and appearing on numerous TV and radio programs. Scott is also in Barrow's video for the single "Take This Love."

But Scott doesn't define himself as a "country drummer." "I love all styles of music," he says, "from country to fusion, rock, and R&B." This perspective explains influences from such diverse drummers as Kenny Aronoff, Eddie Bayers, Simon Phillips, and Buddy Rich. "The main thing I like in a drummer," says Scott, "is solid groove and musical playing that compliments the song." Scott's own style is creative and tasteful, with the power and conviction needed to make the music work.

Scott employs a *Masters Custom* kit, drum rack, and hardware from Pearl, a double bass drum pedal and a hi-hat from DW, Zildjian cymbals, a *drumKAT* trigger pad, a DW *EP1* trigger pedal, and an electronics rack fitted with a Roland *R8* drum module, an Alesis *HR16* drum machine, and a Mackie 16x4 mixer (among other goodies). In terms of goals, Scott hopes to continue furthering his drumming skills while learning more about the business of music—and hopefully making a positive contribution to the music industry.

Fats Gallon

Atlanta, Georgia's Fats Gallon is the drummer, writer, arranger, producer, and leader of the Sea Hunt band. The group specializes in a combination of hard funk and rock 'n' roll that includes both original material and covers of songs by Parliament/Funkadelic, Fishbone, Jimi Hendrix, Living Colour, Buddy Miles, Van Halen, Metallica, Soundgarden, and the Rolling Stones. The band has toured extensively throughout the U.S., the Caribbean Islands, Japan,

and Europe. In addition, Fats has toured and/or recorded with the Manhattans, Millie Jackson, the Dells, Regina Bell, and rapper Melle Mel. He recently completed a tour in Switzerland with blues artist Theodis Ealey. (A video from that tour attests to Fats' personal style: a blend of showmanship, intensity, and gritty groove.) Fats has also recorded for the T.K. label in Florida and for Sugar Hill Records in New Jersey.

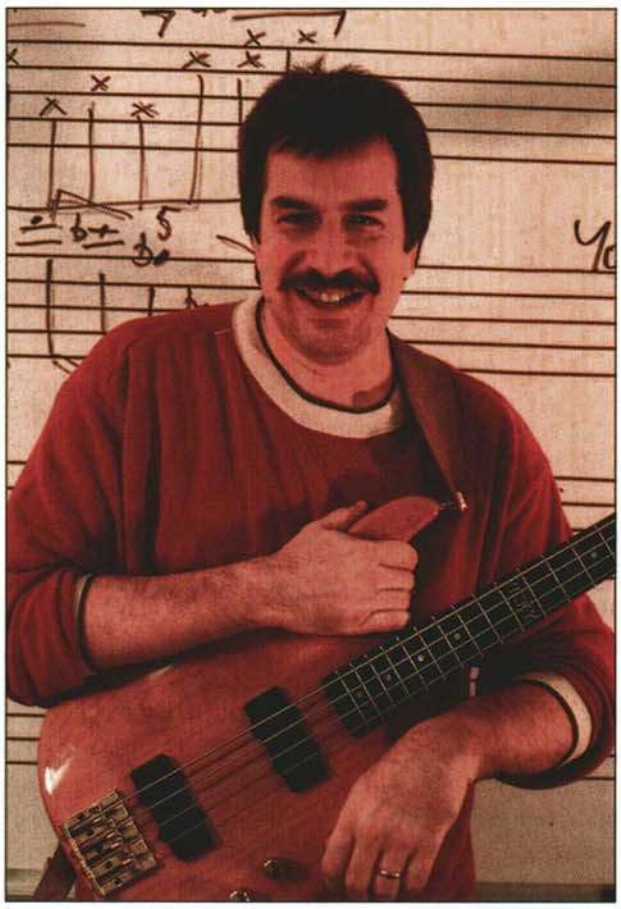
Fats' drumming arsenal features an 11-piece Tama kit (including three snare drums) with Zildjian cymbals. His goals are to take the Sea Hunt band to bigger and better places, and to further his own solo career with projects such as a recent funk/rock album he completed under the supervision of Anthony Lockett (formerly of Camco).

If you'd like to appear in *On The Move,* send us an audio or video cassette of your best work (preferably both solo and with a band) on three or four songs, along with a brief bio sketch and a high-quality color or black & white close-up photo. (Polaroids are not acceptable. Photos will not be paid for nor credited.) The bio sketch should include your full name and age, along with your playing style(s), influences, current playing situation (band, recording project, free-lance artist, etc.), how often and where you are playing, and what your goals are (recording artist, session player, local career player, etc.). Include any special items of interest pertaining to what you do and how you do it. and a list of the equipment you use regularly. Send your material to On The Move, Modern Drummer Publications, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Material **cannot** be returned, so please **do not** send original tapes or photos.

Jeff Berlin

by Bill Milkowski

Jeff Berlin is a virtuoso of the electric bass guitar. His work in the late '70s with Bill Bruford's high-powered fusion group (also featuring guitar god Allan Holdsworth) established his reputation as a chopsmeister of the highest order. Since then, Jeff has performed with a dizzying array of artists, from guitarists George Benson, Kazumi Watanabe, and John McLaughlin to pianists Bill Evans and Jerry Lee Lewis. He did one tour with rock supergroup Yes, played one gig with Isaac Hayes, and was once asked by Eddie Van Halen to join his band. He has played with some of the great drummers in rock and jazz and is one of the few bass players around who can deal in both worlds in convincing fashion. As drummer Neil Peart of Rush once said, "Jeff's reputation is mostly in jazz, but when we played together I was amazed at how hard he could rock. His bass playing was *heavy,* let me tell you."



Michael Havnea

Born in Queens, New York on January 17, 1953 Berlin began studying violin at age five, and by age thirteen he was chosen as one of the top five violinists at the Long Island String Festival. A couple of years later, he switched over to electric bass guitar and put the violin on the shelf forever. He attended Berklee College of Music, where he studied with Gary Burton and Michael Gibbs. In 1975, Jeff left Berklee to begin a fusion gig with drummer Carmine Appice. A few months later he played in a power trio with drummer Tony Williams and guitarist Holdsworth, and toward the end of that year he flew to Switzerland to record with another power trio, this one with drummer Alphonse Mouzon and keyboardist Patrick Moraz.

Upon returning to the States in 1976, Jeff joined a quartet led by jazz guitarist Pat Martino and featuring drummer Anton Fig (of *Late Night With David Letterman* fame). His other work through the '70s included gigs with big band leader Gil Evans, salsa star Ray Barretto, flutist Herbie Mann, and saxophonist Dave Liebman. And from 1977 through 1980 he was a member of the great fusion band Bruford, appearing on albums like *Feels Good To Me, One Of A Kind, Gradually Going Tornado,* and *The Bruford Tapes.*

Through the '80s, Berlin taught at the Bass Institute of Technology in Los Angeles and released two albums as a leader *(Champion* and *Pump It!,* both on Passport Jazz). During this period he also toured and recorded with the cooperative band Players, featuring keyboardist T Lavitz, guitarist Scott Henderson, and drummer Steve Smith. In recent years, Berlin has learned to temper his astonishing soloistic chops somewhat to better facilitate the music. This team-player approach landed him gigs with such unlikely artists as k.d. lang, Jerry Lee Lewis, Isaac Hayes, and Jermaine Jackson.

"I came out of '70s fusion, that busy bass-playing era," says Berlin. "But I began to find that a lot of people who needed a bass player didn't necessarily want someone playing lots of notes. So I began developing a sideman mentality: 'What does someone want when they hire me to play?' This led me to focus in on good solid time, good feeling, good tone, and good note choices. I began to get work in areas that before were not really available to me. And besides all of these sideman gigs I also managed to keep my own particular approach, to bass playing alive too. So I felt like I kind of grew up a little on the instrument."

Berlin recently settled in Clearwater, Florida, where he established the Players School Of Music. "I opened the school because I wanted to do a proper service for people who really wanted to

learn how to play," he explains. "It seems to me that a lot of the popular teaching concepts really didn't help people to learn their instruments the way that they thought they would through those teaching methods. I've been a student of music on and off for a long time, and I've found that there are certain principles of learning that are really successful; people who follow them can't help but get better on their instruments. I still travel and play with people, but my focus now is on the Players School."

> "I've always felt that the drummer is the leader of the band. Not the bass player, not the guitarist, not the singer, but the drummer."

Berlin spoke candidly about the art of rhythm-section playing and about some of the great drummers he has worked with in his twenty-year-career.

BM: Playing both rock and jazz must require a whole different set of circumstances for a bassist.

JB: Well, it's an interesting thing. I do have a weird diversity of players in my credits. I was asked to join Van Halen, but I also used to play with Bill Evans in New York—doing jazz standards like "Stella By Starlight" and "I Love You." But I *like* many different styles, and I found that I was comfortable playing them. And the styles came easier once I really knew my instrument.

BM: In terms of drummers, what are you listening to in a rock context as opposed to a jazz context?

JB: Very obviously I need good time from a drummer—just as a drummer would need it from me. When I play with great jazz drummers like Billy Hart or Tony Williams, it's the feel and the time that they will automatically present. These guys don't think about time anymore. It's not even an issue, it's just a feature of their great drumming. So for me, it's not an effort—it's just instantly one, two, three...go. We agree on what the time is. And I find that the drummers who make the greatest impact on me are drummers who I never have to work hard to learn how to play with. I usually know within four seconds if the drummer and I are going to relate well. And it's usually a drummer who doesn't listen to me for the time. Rather, I should listen to him, because I've always felt that the drummer is the leader of the band. Not the bass player, not the guitarist, not the singer, but the drummer.

BM: It seems that in general, jazz drummers *imply* the time, while rock drummers more or less state the "one" pretty solidly. Does that change what you're hearing and what you're cueing off of?

JB: No. I believe I know what the requirements are to be a jazz musician in a wide sort of sense. Rock drummers lay it down. That's the requirement of rock, so I just function within that requirement. I only played with Alex Van Halen a little bit, but he's one of the greatest rock drummers I *ever* played with because his time is so amazing. And all the great jazz drummers that I played with have fantastic time. It's something we just automatically agree on.

BM: So you don't tend to focus on specific parts of the kit—such as ride cymbal for jazz, or bass drum for rock.

JB: No, it's just the overall drumming. In the same way a drummer wouldn't just key in on my G string instead of my D string, I don't feel the need to listen to a bass drum rather than a hi-hat. It's the combination of four or five instruments that a drummer plays that creates the total representation of their time. And that time is essential to me. I can't play with someone who has bad time, and I'm sure they couldn't play with me if I gave them a bad bass feel. You know who taught me a lot about that? Narada Michael Walden. Years ago I played with him at his house—and he didn't like what I did. He felt that my time wasn't there and that I didn't play deep and hard. And I couldn't figure out why he didn't like me because...gosh...look how fast I can play! But later on I recognized exactly what Michael was talking about. Even though we only played that one time, I actually appreciate very much what he showed me about how to play good time.

BM: Who is one of the greatest groove drummers you ever played with?

JB: Billy Cobham, unquestionably. He's incredibly solid and deep. I played in a trio with Billy and T Lavitz. I remember one night when we played "Boogie On Reggae Woman"—the old Stevie Wonder tune—at a place called Catalina's. Billy's pocket was so heavy! People think of him as a soloist, which he is. But his pocket is unbelievable. It's the same with Alphonse Mouzon. He's one of the greatest jazz drummers I ever played with. We went to Europe a couple of years ago, and he was swinging incredibly.

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BM: What rock drummers have inspired you?

JB: Definitely Alex Van Halen. He probably has the greatest shuffle rock thing going, which you can hear on "Hot For Teacher." Alex is probably the heaviest rock drummer in the world—one of the top three guys—and it amazes me how underrated he is. Obviously the light's on Eddie, as it should be. But Alex flips me out. I'm a huge fan.

BM: Name some other drummers who were helpful to you in your developing years.

JB: To start with, there's Anton Fig, who plays in the house band on *David Letterman.* We played in Pat Martino's band together in the mid '70s. I had just come out of music school and he was one of the first drummers to show me that you have to have a good, strong quarter note and swing hard in jazz. When we were on the road he used to talk to me a lot about time and interaction.

Steve Smith used to sit me down when we went to school together at Berklee and put on tapes of Paul Chambers and some early Stanley Clarke. Then he'd say, "Listen to the time, listen to the time." I didn't understand until later on what he was talking about. So Smith taught me a lot.

Of course, I owe my entire career to Bill Bruford, because he's the guy who took me out of music school and put me in a situation that allowed me to grow. He really opened my head up about how to play music. He would want to do certain things and I would say, "Well, you can't do that because this note clashes with that one," thinking strictly in terms of theory. And he would say, "But I like the way they sound together, so I'm going to do it." That really made an impression on me. As a drummer, Bill has his signature style: a very British, King Crimson-y/Yes-y approach to the kit. But I'll tell you, when we played together in Yes [Berlin subbed for Chris Squire on one tour in 1989], he was swinging his ass off in a rock context. He's a fabulous drummer and my greatest teacher to date.

BM: Is there any one drummer that you've played with who you consider to have perfect time?

JB: The absolutely greatest metronomic-time drummer that I ever played with is Steve Ferrone. When we played with Jermaine Jackson, what he put down was the heaviest time gig I think I ever played. I could lay an air mattress on the guy's time and go to sleep on it. You get a great time drummer like Ferrone and you can do magic.

BM: Let's talk about some of the greatest funk drummers you've played with.

JB: I played with David Garibaldi once in Tower Of Power. Of course, he influenced a whole generation of players. And Mike Clark is simply amazing. He should've been more highly touted. Some of the stuff he did on Herbie Hancock's *Thrust...* I mean, the guy redefined the bass drum. People like to identify different instruments on drumset and give credit to innovations—like Bill Bruford and the snare drum sound he invented, or Ginger Baker's use of double bass drums. You have to give credit to Mike Clark for that single upbeat funk bass drum thing of his. The cat is just a great drummer. I met him on the road when I was in Bill Bruford's band and he was playing with Brand X, and we just hit it off. We finally got to play together in a quartet with Bill Frisell and Mike Stern. We used to play together in Boston quite a bit, and it was just the greatest. Mike and I were *very* funky together. He really brought that quality out in my playing—which is wild, because I'm probably the *least* funky person you'll ever meet. I walk like a goofy guy; I have no rhythm and no time at all as a person. I'm really kind of stiff and gawky—and more Caucasian in my body motions than most Caucasians are. But when I put a bass on I get smack dab in the middle of the groove and the punch of great funk and great rock. I really transform in those places. And with drummers with great time, like Mike Clark...it's bad, man! It's the greatest physical sensation to play with a drummer who is just hell-bent on creating a great time environment...softly, loudly, swinging, funk-wise, or rock-wise.

BM: What can you tell us about your gigs with Buddy Miles?

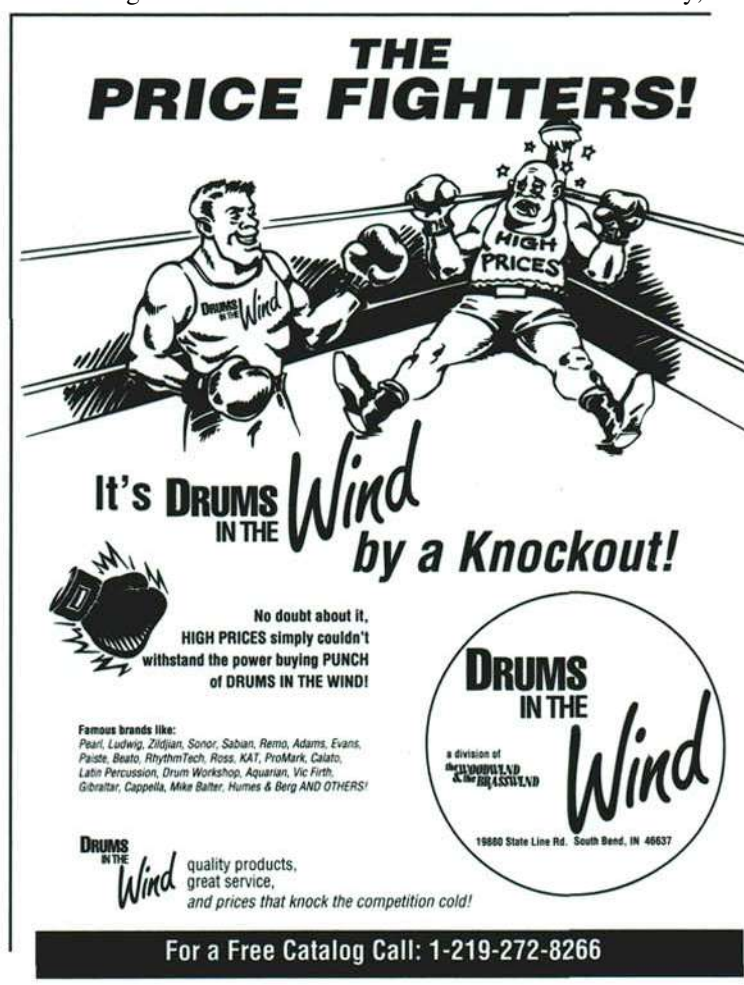
JB: The guy's heavy, man. We had a band together for a while, and he sang on my second record *[Pump It!].* Buddy's a legend. He's an early-James Brown/Bernard Purdie-kind of drummer. He just hit harder than Bernard.

BM: And you worked with the late, legendary Larrie Londin.

JB: Yes, we did some studio gigs together. He had that sort of right-in-the-center, simple, great feeling in the studio. I've done a lot of anonymous studio gigs with great drummers like Larrie...just playing songs behind singers or movie dates. Larrie was wonderful because the time was there. So the gigs were very satisfying in that regard.

BM: Some people might be surprised to learn that you also played with the great big band jazz drummer Louie Bellson.

JB: Louie and I played in L.A. with Tommy Tedesco, who's probably the most-recorded guitarist in history. We used to do NAMM shows together. Louie was fantastic because he would say,



"Here's the time right here...bang!" And whatever he did, we always agreed on the quarter note. So when we played it was just so swinging because his whole focus was on great time.

BM: Let's have your thoughts on some other players you have worked with, like Kenwood Dennard.

JB: He's really a slamming young fellow. I play very strong bass, and I realized early on that people don't necessarily want to have that kind of strength from a bass player. They'd rather have a more supportive role. So in the last couple of years I began to lay back. But when I played with Kenwood Dennard, he jumped on it so hard that I felt like I was permitted to jump on it too. We both started to lean heavily into it, and I realized that on certain gigs that's permitted. But we hit hard, man. Kenwood is heavy.

BM: What about Gary Husband?

JB: I played with him in Allan Holdsworth's band. We played some pubs in England. Gary's very aggressive and very prolific on the instrument. He understands polyrhythms and the variety of powerful events you can do on the drums. And he also obviously can play time, because Level 42 is a strong pop band with Mark King's great bass playing.

BM: Gary Novak?

JB: I played with Gary in L.A. with Mike Miller, who is probably the greatest guitarist I have ever played with in my life. Gary hit real hard, so that was a gig where it was permitted for me to turn up the jets. By the end of the night, Novak was just spent because I was hitting super hard. I wanted to push him over the cliff a little bit. And it was great because he hung. This cat's tough—physically tough. Strong, powerful...there's a banger, man. Novak should be one of the next great names in drums because he's phenomenal.

BM: Harvey Mason?

JB: I went out with him, Bob James, and Earl Klugh—with Richard Tee on piano—around the time when Bob was having his success with the theme from *Taxi.* I was a little afraid of Harvey because of his reputation for being so perfect and so grooving and so heavy. Harvey is a consummate pocket player. What he and Paul Jackson laid down on Herbie Hancock's *Headhunters* was fantastic. This was among the gigs I've done where I thought, "Man, I'm in way over my head." But Harvey was awfully nice to me. And we hit hard, too. I was just an unknown then, coming on the gig and trying to do a good job.

BM: You also played some with Vinnie Colaiuta?

JB: Yeah, we had a band that was like a virtuoso group—everyone playing a million notes per minute. Vinnie is like the virtuoso of all time, but *inside* that guy has dead-center time. That's his real genius. Have you noticed that all the great drummers have that?

BM: Do you have any advice for aspiring players on how to practice?

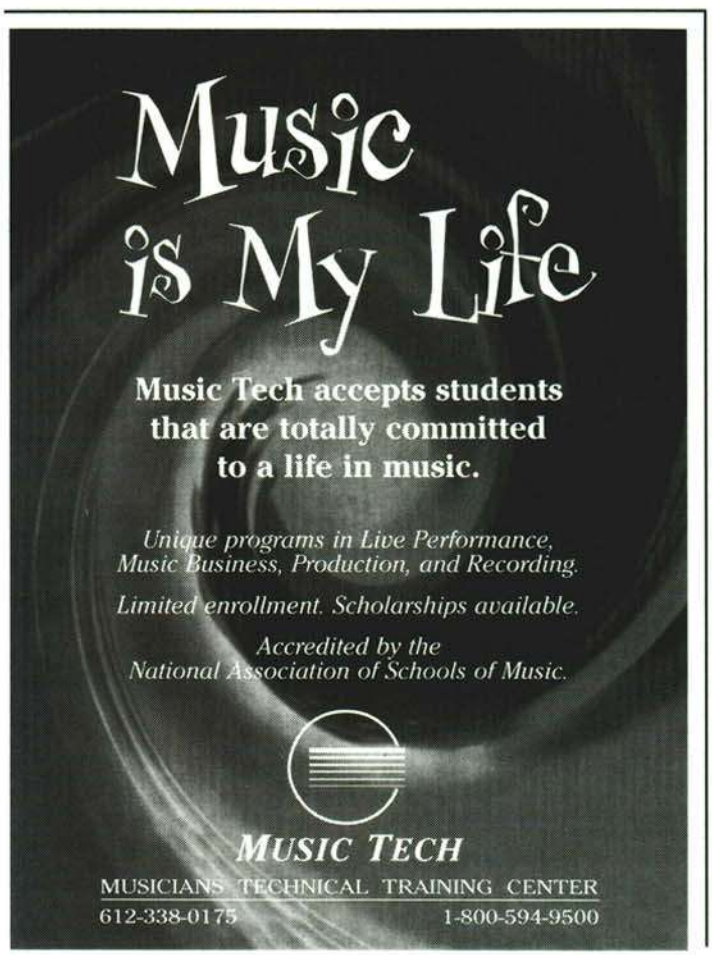
JB: I'm a real big believer in *not* using metronomes when you practice—especially on new music. Because when you're working really hard on learning your exercises, if you're playing with a metronome all you're doing is concentrating on good time; you're not trying to concentrate on the exercise for what it is. Besides, metronomes don't teach you good time. You know why? Because great musicians don't *play* metronomically. Some people say that to have good time is to play metronomically, but I disagree. If you need to have exactly 120 beats per minute, put a click in my headphones and I'll give it to you. I don't think Tony Williams ever sat on a quarter note in his whole career. He's shifted; he's moved. I don't think Alex Van Halen, Neil Peart, or Steve Smith ever sat on the quarter note without ever shifting somehow. Their playing is fluid—and at the center of it is great time. So it isn't *metronomic* time that drummers need to concentrate on, it's *great* time *in the flow of music.* Yes, in the studio they want exactitudes. But that's what the click track is for—because 99% of us don't have perfect, metronomic time.

BM: For the music that you're hearing now and the new stuff you're writing, who would be the best drummer?

JB: That's a great question. I have mulled that over and over, thinking of guys like Tom Brechtlein, Vinnie Colaiuta, and Gregg Bissonette. I want a drummer who can hit both hard and soft and can do a variety of styles, and these are the guys who can do these things. I also wanted to use Alex Van Halen on certain things and Neil Peart on others. I'd love to use Alphonse Mouzon on some stuff. I'd love to use Dave Grohl, who played in Nirvana. What a great rock drummer he is! I like Aaron Comess, who plays with the Spin Doctors. I also want to play with Ginger Baker.

BM: Is there any playing situation that you haven't had yet that you still dream about?

JB: If I ever got on stage where I could go through a whole bunch of Marshall stacks and rock out, I think it would be something really special to hear—especially with a great rock drummer. I never had a chance to do that because I'm sort of known as a technical bass player. But who knows? I'm still young.



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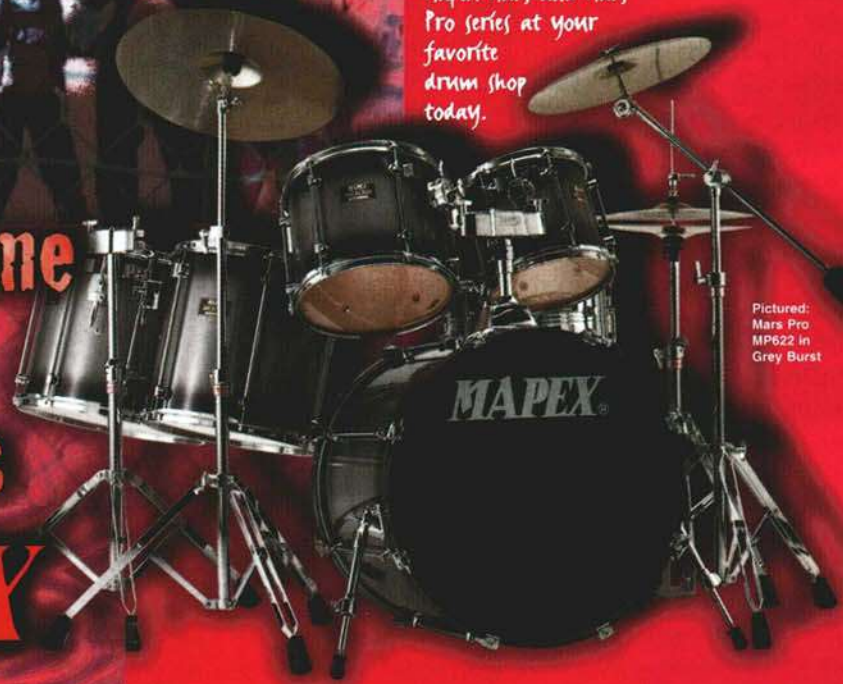

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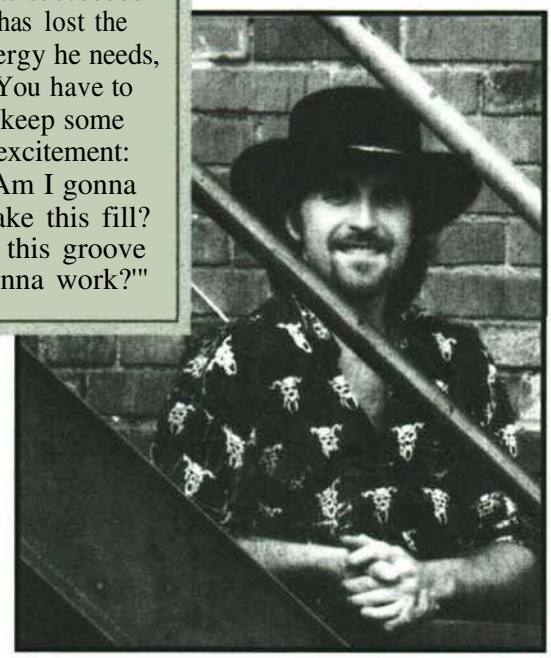
Blues Traveler's Brendan Hill

by Ken Micallef

Gathered in VH1 's Manhattan studios for an acoustic performance of their hit "Run Around," the members of Blues Traveler huddle in chairs as if on some Mississippi front porch. As the song's guitar strum cues front-man John Popper to begin his vocals, drummer Brendan Hill sits behind his kit, staring blindly into space. With his spine ramrod straight, his left hand snaps a determined yet subtle motif of rim clicks, slowly building the song's intensity. As his bass drum punches into place and the groove deepens, Brendan's expression remains dispassionate. Cracking the snare drum midway through the verse—suddenly exploding the song to life—Brendan narrows his gaze and bites his lip. With the volume rising through the ringing chorus, Brendan drives the band hard with the whip of his wrists and his pumping bass-drum rhythm. Stoic to the end, Brendan never flashes a grin or confirms any sentiment.

"Any musician who thinks he has succeeded has lost the energy he needs, You have to keep some excitement: 'Am I gonna make this fill? Is this groove gonna work?'"



Though he may not show it, Brendan Hill is passionate about making music. A native of Princeton, New Jersey, Hill has toured the country for over ten years, spreading Blues Traveler's pungent blues-rock to an ever-expanding audience. Opening for everyone from the Grateful Dead to the Allman Brothers, the scrappy quartet learned the value of persistence, even when success seemed a hopeless promise.

That persistence paid off when the band leapt to multi-platinum prominence with the release of Four *in September of 1994. Its twelve tracks run from simple, up-and-down blues to brain-rattling funk. Hill's drumming follows the legacy of the blues drummers of yesteryear, keeping the music alive and robust. Never flashy or voluble, he sustains a diamond-hard pulse that can gallop like a horse or simply clear a way through the thicket.*

KM: All of the members of Blues Traveler are originally from New Jersey. Has traveling around the country helped give you more of a blues feeling?

BH: Blues, with the harmonica as the lead instrument, is where the idea of Blues Traveler came from. We're really more of a rock 'n' roll band. Touring with other bands has given us the chance to hear a lot of music and absorb influences that way.

KM: Who were the biggest influences on your drumming?

BH: I grew up listening to the Police. I loved how Stewart Copeland would play polyrhythms over very simple guitar and bass lines. Then I got into the Who and how Keith Moon was nonstop fury all over the place. Then came Pink Floyd, which is completely different—very simple drumming, yet very memorable. Then I got into Zeppelin via a friend who had all these bootlegs that really intrigued me. On the records Zeppelin was very controlled, but *out* of the studio there was an excitement—things were distinctive every night. Then I got into jazz—which is when I went to the New School in New York. I listened to Art Blakey and Philly Joe Jones, and I studied with Bernard Purdie and Kenny Clarke. They gave me the view of playing with the soloist. In Blues Traveler I have John Popper to follow, so I tried to make that "play with the soloist" approach my own. I try to create an environment for him to explore in.

KM: You mentioned that you studied with Bernard Purdie. What did you learn from him?

BH: Well, one thing Purdie always stressed was knowing how to write and read music so you can express to other musicians your thoughts and goals within the music. Sometimes being a drummer is kind of lonely. It can be difficult to express what you want. But mainly what impressed me about Bernard was that when he sat at the drums he had a huge personality. He made the drums sound really sweet. That affected me a lot—how such a big man could make the drums sound so nice. Playing the drums tastefully is really what I learned with him.

KM: I asked because your drumming recalls Purdie's hard pocket—very deliberate and solid.

BH: Learning to play in the studio helps that. When you're out live you've got the energy of the crowd to play off; you can push tempos a little bit if the soloist is going for it. But when you're documenting something, you want to be able to listen to it in a year and still think it's a good track. I don't listen to a click track when we record. But a friend of mine, Danny Seratek, always sits in the room and listens to me and helps me with my performance. You can't always trust the producer. A friend who knows your style can give you some good feedback. The best album for me was the one we did in 1993, *Save His Soul.* It's got good songs and interesting drumming on it. We produced it ourselves, which gave us the opportunity to work on our own stuff without time constraints.

KM: The drum sound on *Four* is very flat and true. You can hear the stick definition—the brightness of the bead—clearly on the hi-hat. Was that intentional?

BH: Yeah. We recorded up in Bearsville. They have a really big room, with floating baffles in the ceiling. We got an open drum sound without too many effects. The drums came out really booming. I've always thought that less hi-hat on a record is better, but the airiness of the room let me play the hi-hat pretty hard.

KM: You play close to the song, very strictly, which works because you're very solid. When you do veer from the song structure, you play some interesting bell accents on the ride cymbal.

BH: I love the ride variations, and I think that the kick drum is my favorite part of the kit. A lot of people just play a solid kick—keeping it the same, measure after measure. But being able to accent with the ride and the kick, and doing some paradiddle-type alterations with the snare, ride, and kick makes it interesting. Pushing the bell figures—*gank, da-gank gank gank, da-gank gank*—doing that in a chorus or bridge is better than always following exactly what the bassist is doing.

KM: Is that something that also came from studying with Purdie?

BH: Maybe through osmosis, 'cause I didn't study with Purdie for that long. It was mainly from playing with this group. I've been with John Popper for ten years—since I was thirteen years old. Every night I've tried to challenge myself to find something new to play. That's how this group has stayed together for so long and gone from playing high schools to playing 4,000-seat theaters. We're always trying to improve ourselves. We're never satisfied or complacent, and that's brought us a long way. Any musician who thinks he has succeeded has lost the energy he needs. You have to keep some excitement: "Am I gonna make this fill? Is this groove gonna work?" As long as that energy, that nervousness, is within you, then the crowd will respond to it. Always changing and trying new things is the way to go. We really learned about that when we opened for the Allman Brothers. If you want to succeed in this business, one of the best things you can do is to open up for your idols. We learned how to bring a crowd to a peak and then dramatically bring it back down, so as to draw the whole crowd in. I think [guitarist] Warren Haynes has added a new dimension and new life to the Allman Brothers band. I'm proud to say I've sat in with them a few times. Playing with other musicians is one of the joys of *being* a musician. With the HORDE Festival we had up to six bands on different stages for six weeks. We heard everyone from Ziggy Marley to the Black Crowes to the Dave Matthews Band.

KM: Has the band outgrown the Deadhead tag you were pegged with early on?

BH: That tag came about because people didn't know how to pigeonhole us. We took certain elements from the Dead, but the music is entirely different. Bill Graham told us that you have to do everything to make the crowd happy so they'll want to come back. We learned a lot from the Dead and from Bill Graham.

KM: Like taking chances when playing live?

BH: Definitely. With songs like "Run Around" or "Hook" we'll stick pretty close to the record. But on "Failable," we take it way out there. We try to raise the excitement level. We like to get the crowd really up and yelling. It feels like an old New Orleans-brothel jam session. Everyone's just letting it loose, which so few people get to do today. It's such a conservative society; you have to look cool at a concert or wear the right clothes. At our shows we see some pretty straight college kids really let it all out.

And while we're talking about our shows, I want to say that a lot of the freedom we have to do things on stage relates to the efficiency of our crew—particularly my drum tech, Colin Speir. He was never a drummer but he really enjoys music. That's the best kind of tech you can find—a guy who enjoys music and is a team player and will really defend you to the teeth. Our crew is family. We can take criticism from them and we can give them criticism—but we know they're all going to be around for many years to come. That's what has enabled us to be out here for so long. Rich Vink, Dave Swanson, Chris Hinson, Bob Mahoney, Paul Morrill, Amy McCormick, and Jiggs Rogers—they're a great bunch.

KM: Do you warm up much or practice on the road?

BH: I'm not the best at practicing, but I always warm up during sound check. And as a band we warm up for about an hour. It lets us go over song ideas and assemble a different set for each night.

KM: A lot of drummers slump in their seats, but you have excellent posture. Is this something you consciously focus on?

BH: Purdie always said, "Sit up straight or you'll need a back operation." That's in the back of my head. But my posture is mainly due to the way I've laid the cymbals out to have everything in reach without having to lean forward. I've got 14" hats, with 16", 17", 18", 19", and 20" crashes, and a 22" ride, two 10" splashes, and an 8" splash in the middle. I keep the cymbals flat so I can come down hard on them without a lot of wrist motion.

KM: While we're on the subject of your kit, what drums do you use?

BH: I play a basic kit: 13", 14", 16", and 18" toms and a 24" kick—all Yamaha *Maple Customs.* And I generally use a 6" Zildjian snare drum with Noble & Cooley hardware. The snare sounds like a shotgun going off. It's on most of the records. Other times I use an Ayotte drum with wooden hoops.

KM: John Popper's harmonica is a focal point for the band's music. Is it hard to hear and follow? Do you boost the harmonica in your monitors?

BH: John goes through a Mesa Boogie cabinet and a trirectifier—which is unusual for a harmonica player. And his amp is really loud, with a lot of crazy effects. I don't need that much monitor, 'cause he's standing right in front of me, and *his* monitors are just blasting. At certain times I really need his cues for accents—like in "What's For Breakfast." We've got this upbeat accent thing that he cues. But monitor technology has come a long way. Feedback is a rare thing now, thank God. It used to be horrible.

KM: Do you wear earplugs when you play live?

BH: No, though my ears do ring like crazy after the show. If you do this a long time, your ear has its own self-defense mechanism where it builds up a lot of wax. The worst thing you can do is clean out your ears.

KM: I interview a lot of drummers who don't wear plugs who now have tinnitus.

BH: I haven't had a chance to play with or practice with earplugs, because we're always on the road. For the first gig that you try them on, they work—initially. But then you realize that you need to hear. You pull them out and never go back. We're coming up on a break and I think I'm going to start practicing with earplugs—learning the dynamics and trying to re-feel things. When you do a snare fill with the earplugs in you don't get the same feel or touch that comes when you play without them.

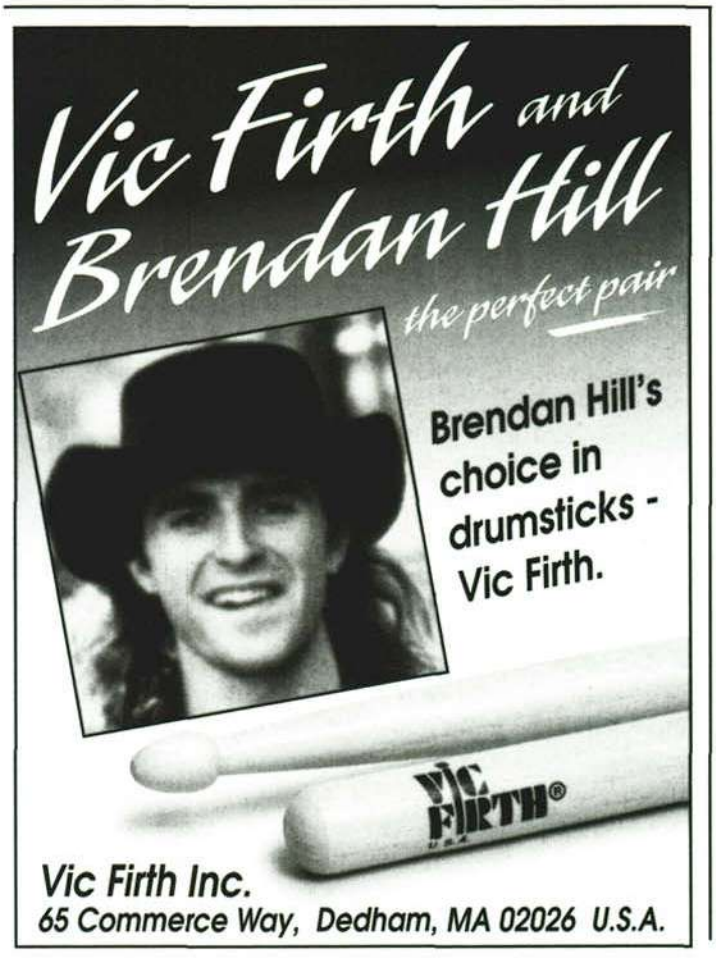
KM: What do you focus on when you practice?

BH: Well, Stone's *Stick Control* has been great for me on the road; I can just sit down and go through those wonderful exercises. And I recently took a six-week course at the Drummers Collective and a couple of lessons with Pete Zeldman. He's wonderful, but it was a little over my head. The best book I got at the Collective was *Advanced Concepts* by Kim Plainfield. That book is wonderful. I'd love to take some lessons with Kim the next time I'm in New York.

Generally, I just work on independence and on groove. One groove we do that I like is from a song called "Gina" off our first album. We do it a little bit differently now—we've improved as musicians since 1990. The groove leads to a lot of licks that are almost like what Carter Beauford from the Dave Matthews Band does. He's got those big Dennis Chambers fills.

Sometimes I'll start with a song that I know, maybe look at Kim Plainfield's book, and then incorporate the two and try to come up with something new. I also work on playing off-time things, and I think about new song ideas and improvements for old songs.

The best part about playing drums is always re-creating yourself. You never have to be stagnant or static. You can always improve things. You're in a part that you've always played straight four? One night you just double-time it, or play some paradiddles over it, just to try something out. All of a sudden the guys look around at you and think, "What the heck is he doing?" But the next night when you do it the guitar player might try something that complements it. Next thing you know, the bass player will claim he wrote the part! You get those kinds of moments in rock 'n' roll.



The Drummer's Studio Survival Guide: Part 13

More Studio Drumming Round Table

by Mark Parsons

Last Month's "Survival Guide" featured our panel discussion with Kenny Aronoff, Gregg Bissonette, Jim Keltner, Rod Morgenstein, Simon Phillips, and John Robinson. We covered topics such as microphones, effects, and the politics of dealing with engineers. This month the discussion continues, and we'll get opinions from two engineers, as well.

MP: Let's talk about your drums for a minute. Do you do anything to your kit to get it ready for the studio as opposed to the stage?

Aronoff: The first thing is the heads. I'll put white coated *Ambassadors* on top of the toms and the snare, and sometimes on the bass drum. Lately I've been using the Remo *Powerstroke 3* clear head both live and in the studio on the bass drum. Sometimes, if I'm playing rock 'n' roll, I'll use an *Ambassador* head with a black dot on the underside—just for a little more reinforcement. It muffles a little bit, but not enough to create a problem. Live, I'll use clear *Emperors* on the toms and a coated *Emperor* on the snare—only for the added endurance.

> "There's a point where you can overplay the room. You play too hard and oversaturate the room with sound, and the drums don't sound as good."
>
> Kenny Aronoff

Bissonette: I tune my drums about the same, whether live or in the studio: fat tones with lots of attack. Sometimes I might use a 16" floor tom instead of an 18", depending on the music. I use white coated *Ambassadors* on the tops and clear *Ambassadors* on the bottoms, and I tune them to the same pitch. That way the drums really resonate. I don't like a felt beater on my bass drum, so I use the hard-plastic side of a DW beater. If I'm hitting my bass drum with a piece of cotton or felt it's going to go *whoomp-whoomp.* I'd rather have the attack of the bass drum sound similar to the attack of the toms, which I'm hitting with a stick.

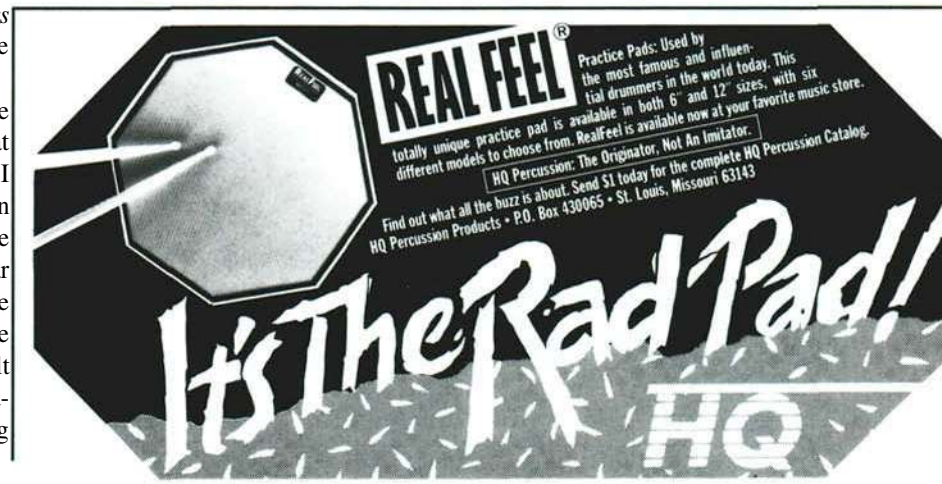
> "A drum is meant to go *boom* or *bang;* it's not meant to go *bap.* If you're going to do that you might as well use a cardboard box."
>
> Jim Keltner

Keltner: I don't play live that often. When I do I generally play the same drums I use in the studio. If it's a different set of drums, they're tuned the same way. I run my drums pretty wide open now—although it didn't always used to be that way. A drum is meant to go *boom* or *bang;* it's not meant to go *bap.* If you're going to do that you might as well use a cardboard box.

Morgenstein: One thing I definitely do differently in the studio is try to raise all of my cymbals higher. I can remember actually *lunging* for the crash cymbals on one session, because the engineer said, "The further you can get them away from the toms, the easier it's going to be for me to deal with making your kit sound real good." It's terrible if you listen back to a track and the cymbals are just too loud—but there's nothing you can do about it after the fact. A lot of people don't like to have to reach for things, so they keep their cymbals pretty low. But I'll play them a little bit higher than normal to help the recording process.

I've tried to lower the tuning of my toms to get deeper tones—but I've found that I kind of like it better pitching them higher. You can have a bunch of toms, but if there's not a big pitch difference in them you'll be listening back to this lick that you thought sounded really cool and it won't *sound* like all those different toms. I try to make a habit of tuning the lowest floor tom as *low* as it'll go without losing its tone, and tuning the highest rack tom up—not sounding like a bongo, but pretty damn high—to get as wide a pitch differentiation as possible. On the road, it might not be quite as drastic.

Sometimes you get these horrible rings and you have to do a little dampening. That happens much more in the studio than live. I hardly ever put anything on a tom-tom when I play live. The snare has a muffling ring of some sort on it. But in the studio there are definitely times where napkins



and duct tape or whatever are brought out and you start playing around with individual tom-toms just to get a little bit of that ring out of them.

"I tend to like natural ambience rather than reaching for the first digital effect you can lay your hands on."
Simon Phillips

Phillips: I have a range of snare drums, and in the studio I might pick up another snare drum and change it over if I don't think the first one sounded very good for that song. On the bass drum tuning, maybe I'll dampen the front head a little bit if there's too much sustain on the drum.

I also vary my playing for each song, which can change the way the drums sound. And as I change my playing the engineer should chase me. He should go, "Okay, he's hitting the snare drum quieter now. Let's turn the kick up, let's change the balance of everything"—which will make the kit appear to sound different. So, yeah, there are those changes.

There are also the changes where the producer may ask for a certain kind of sound. He'll say, "Listen, I've been checking the sound and it's really not what I'm thinking of. Can we try something like *this?'* and I'll say, "Okay, let's see how it goes."

Robinson: I don't do anything differently between playing live and recording. I remember when I first got to town in '78, the studio guys told me, "You have to tune the drums totally differently...use different heads..." and all this stuff. I'd been playing live for so many years that I said, "Wait a second here. I'm not buying that." It took me playing on the road *and* in the studio to see that when you put a mic' on a drum you should first tune that drum correctly. You can't get a great drum sound unless the drums are tuned correctly. Then when you bring the drum up in the mix it should sound like who you are.

"The studio guys told me, 'You have to tune the drums totally differently...use different heads...' and all this stuff. I'd been playing live for so many years that I said, 'Wait a second here. I'm not buying that.'"
John Robinson

I use Remo coated *Emperors* on the tops of the toms and clear *Ambassadors* on the bottoms. Lately on the kick I've been using the Remo *Powerstroke 3,* but normally I use an *Ambassador* coated or clear on the beater side. And I always use a front head on the bass drum, with a small hole to get the mic' in. If I'm using an *Ambassador,* I'll cut a packing blanket into fourths and just lay it flat into the bed of the bass drum so it touches maybe two inches up on either head. I also have an old Rufus sandbag about which I'm kind of sentimental. I don't know if it really makes a difference or not, but we set it in the middle of the bass drum. [laughs]

MP: What sort of room do you prefer to record in?

Aronoff: I used to be into "the bigger, the better," but now I definitely prefer a medium-sized room where you have a controlled type of ambience. If you're going for the room sound and the room is *too* big, the drums start to lose a little bit of definition. If you have a lot of musicians and a lot of instruments in a big room, that sound really takes up a lot of space on the tape. If it's a power trio, that's different: You *want* to have space in the music—otherwise it starts to clutter up everything.

Each room has a personality: Some are warmer, some are brighter, some are ambient. John Mellencamp's room, for example, is very bright. It's pretty tall but not very wide, and my type of snare drum sound really gets exemplified. Lately I've been trying to play for the room a little bit more. There's a point where you can overplay the room. You play too hard and oversaturate the room with sound, and the drums don't sound as good. I'll tell an engineer to let me know if I'm overplaying the room.

Bissonette: My favorite type of room is one where my drums sound good—where I go into the room and clap my hands and say, "Wow, this is a great room." My favorite room is probably Ocean Way, where we did Joe Satriani's album. I've also done a bunch of movie scores there. Another one of my favorite rooms is a place in Van Nuys called Sound City, where we did the *Siblings* album. Another one's called O'Henry's, in Burbank.

I like to at least have the option of using

the room. Reverb isn't really in style this year. [laughs] Right now a tighter drum sound is in style, so I like to get a nice, tight, close-miked sound and still have the option of using a room that sounds really good when you throw on the mic's that are thirty feet away. If the engineer knows the room and knows how to get what he wants out of it, then you're in business.

"One of my favorite things that engineers say is, 'Okay, I'm going to get up a headphone mix—and you guys can all bitch about it.'"

Gregg Bissonette

Keltner: I love big rooms, small rooms—all kinds of rooms. Sometimes you can get a bigger drum sound in a smaller room; that's something that was a revelation to me a few years ago. When people started putting the drums alone in the big room and having the artist and the other guys off in tiny little rooms, it was kind of the opposite of the way it used to be. I've noticed that a lot of times the sound of the drums is actually better when it's in a smaller, contained room.

Morgenstein: I wonder at this point how important the room actually is if you're dealing with someone who, when they close-mike the drums, can get them sounding pretty good. I'm sure you've talked to people who say the room is everything, but then when you stick all these effects on it, what difference does it make? I've heard qualified people argue both sides of that, so who knows?

It's nice when you can play in a room that has atmosphere. I'd rather not play in a lunch room that's all fluorescent lighting. The vibe is really important, because when you're under the gun you're the only person in whatever room you're in—whether it's a tiny room or a gigantic room. There are faces on the other side of the glass and you can't hear them—but you see their mouths moving. You can get really uptight thinking that they're talking about how *bad* that last performance was, because your mind'll play tricks. I prefer a room that is comfortable, and they can do that by having a soft kind of lighting.

"People spend small fortunes building recording studios and using the most sophisticated equipment—and then you find yourself going for an effect by putting a mic' in a bathroom."

Rod Morgenstein

I remember when the Dixie Dregs recorded the song "Take It Off The Top." To get a big room effect our producer/engineer Ken Scott put a microphone in the bathroom outside the studio and left the door to the studio open. The bathroom had a real snappy sound to it and everybody had to be really quiet. That's one of my favorite drum sounds. It's funny that people spend small fortunes building recording studios and using the most sophisticated equipment—and then you find yourself going for an effect by putting a mic' in a bathroom. [laughs]

Phillips: I like a room where the kit sounds good naturally. I tend to like natural ambience rather than reaching for the first digital effect you can lay your hands on. If you have a nice big room, then first of all you've got to be able to control the sound so every track doesn't sound like you're in the garage. But if you've got a good room

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you can put two or three sets of ambient mic's up at different distances from the kit—giving you different pre-delay times. By mixing around with those and playing with some serious compression you can create wonderful natural ambience. If you gate that you can do whatever you want with it, but it's still essentially a natural, pure sound.

As far as location, you've just got to walk around with the drumkit until you find the best place. Or you can do a couple of songs in one part of the room, then move to another part. Most studios, especially in the States, are pretty good about knowing where the drumkit sounds best. They've usually done a lot of experiments. If I didn't know the studio from my own experience, I would tend to go with what they recommend.

"If you mike the drums properly and the drummer plays with proper dynamics, there's really no need for gating. If you want all the drums to sound gated, you can bring out the drum machine."

Ed Thacker
engineer

It's a funny thing: I've taken a snare, walked around the room hitting it until I said, "This is a good place," and put the kit there. But though it sounded great where *I* was, when I heard it back in the control room it didn't sound as good as maybe it would have if I had used the place they recommended. One must be careful. If it's a good, well-known studio, then you've got to take the advice of the people who work there every day.

Robinson: I've been in all kinds of situations. I'll give you a couple of examples: I did Steve Winwood's records in New York City at a studio called Unique. The room was very small—no ambience. I was working with an engineer named Tom Lord-Alge, and just the combination of my drum sound and him bringing up the mic's on the console made the sound huge. When I work with Jeff Lorber he puts me in a tiny room in his house, and the drum sound on the records is *great.* Then again we did a Peter Frampton record at O'Henry in Hollywood, which is a big room, and Chris Lord-Alge was the engineer on that. Chris's whole thing is a lot of compression and getting great sounds off the direct mic's first—and *then* bringing in certain room mic's for certain songs. The combination creates this mammoth, beautifully clean drum sound.

"How the drums are tuned is really critical, because if the drum doesn't sound good, there's nothing an engineer can do."

Mike Fraser
engineer

I like it both ways. I'll go into the rooms at Ocean Way or over at Conway-C or O'Henry and insist upon using the room. It depends on what kind of music you're playing. Obviously the more room you use, the more distant your drums are. If you're doing a dance-oriented record they usually want the drums right up front in your face, and if you start adding room it tends to distance them out.

MP: What do you like to hear in your phones when you're tracking, and what about click tracks?

Aronoff: It depends on what I'm doing. If I'm tracking with the whole band I absolutely *have* to hear vocals, because I play off of them. I also want the click track if they have it, and then I like to have a good overall mix of everything else. If somebody has bad

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Eligibility Any student studying drums/percussion beyond high school may send an entry. (Graduating high school seniors planning to attend school full-time beyond high school may also participate.) PAS will confirm the student's status and eligibility with the student's teacher and school before the check is issued to the school.

Information Scholarship amount is $4,000 (Note: This is a one-time award, not an annual scholarship.) In addition, the scholarship winner will receive a free one-year membership from PAS, free PASIC '96 registration (Nashville—November 20-23) plus selected prizes from Pearl, Sabian, DCI Music Video and Vater Drumsticks.

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1. Contest open to any individual intending to be a full-time student enrolled in a tuition-based college/university, conservatory or music trade school for the purpose of studying drums/percussion during the fall of 1996.

2. Performance must be three minutes or less. Performance must include a drum solo, but may also include demonstration of time-keeping ability. Solo only also acceptable. Accompanying audio cassette, CD, DAT, sequencer or drum machine may be used to demonstrate time-playing ability or style. Real-time electronic drums/triggering okay. No live musicians other than the featured drummer may be used. No overdubbing allowed.

3. VHS video cassette tapes only. No audio cassettes, reel-to-reel, DAT, microcassettes, Beta, etc. Tape must contain only the performance (three minutes or less) with no speaking or other musical recordings.

4. Only one entry per student. Send only one copy of the video tape.

5. Mark tape with last name only. Complete and send entry form with tape in one package. Missing or incomplete forms or packages will disqualify the entry.

6. Entry must be postmarked no later than April 1, 1996 and must be received by PAS no later than April 10. PAS is not responsible for entries lost in the mail or delivery service.

7. Tapes become the property of PAS and will not be returned. Keep master copy for your records.

8. The PAS selection panel will determine the 10 finalists. Chad Smith will choose the final winner. All contestants will be notified by mail by July 15, 1996.

9. Void where prohibited.

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time then I start mixing that out. If it starts to be a very anal type of situation where you have to be like a drum machine, then that's where I start mixing everyone else out of the headphones. Lots of click and vocals and just enough of the band to hear what's going on. The safest thing with a click track is to play right in the middle; in most cases that's a good starting point.

Bissonette: I like to hear and *feel* the bass drum in my headphones. I don't really need that much snare drum because it's coming through so loud. I like a little bit of the toms and a really good mix of everyone in the room.

My favorite studios are all places where you have your own separate headphone mixer right there. You can dial up your *own* mix, and to me that's the best way to record. It also takes a lot of pressure off the engineer. One of my favorite things that engineers say is, "Okay, I'm going to get up a headphone mix—and you guys can all bitch about it." [laughs] The more you can simulate playing in a room with a band, the better off you are.

Morgenstein: The click is your friend; it's not supposed to be an enemy that embarrasses you and makes you realize how human you are. And like anything, you have to practice with it. If you have no experience with a click you're probably going to be very surprised at how difficult it is to play consistently with it. It's like most skills in life: You have to do them consistently to stay at a particular level or to get better at them. I can't emphasize enough to drummers who are really serious about a career in music and who hope to get into recording studios that you have to spend *some* of your practice time working with a click, because the odds are that once you get in the recording studio you're going to have to play with one. It's such a competitive business that if you don't do a good job the first time out you're not going to be called back again.

Playing with the click will build your confidence. I think there's a feeling sometimes that if you practice with a click you're going to then become dependent on it, but I don't feel that at all. When you've been practicing with one and then it's *not* there, you're going to take some of that influence with you—some of the consistency of it. It's going to help you start thinking more in time.

As to the *sound* of the click, it depends on the tempo of the song. If it's a fast song, it's nice to have *gonk-gonk-gonk-gonk.* [sings quarter note cowbell] I like a cowbell because it's a cutting sound. A hi-hat is not really good because you're *playing* the hi-hat, and the sounds might get in each other's way. For slower songs I like to have the cowbell and then maybe a stick on a rim—a different kind of sound: *gonk-click-gonk-click.* The other thing to remember is that the more space you have from pulse to pulse, the harder it is to keep it together. When you just have *gonk...gonk...gonk* you're going to have a much more difficult time than if you have *gonk-click-gonk-click-gonk-click.* Even though this can sound very annoying and it's sometimes hard to try to think musically, the more you do it the easier it gets.

Now it's time for a change in perspective. We're going to hear from a couple of engineers, each renowned for their drum sounds. Ed Thacker has worked with a number of top acts, including 10,000 Maniacs, XTC, Bruce Hornsby, Heart, and Sass Jordan. Mike Fraser lists among his credits such rock icons as Aerosmith, AC/DC, the Cult, Coverdale-Page, and Blue Murder.

MP: In order to make your job as an engineer easier, what should a drummer know when he goes into the studio besides how to play the drums?

Fraser: The first thing is the selection of drumheads, depending on what kind of sound is desired. Then how the drums are tuned is really critical, because if the drum doesn't sound good, there's nothing an engineer can do.

Thacker: It's good when drummers have a sense of tuning. In other words they know how to tune drums and it's *important* to them—not just "tighten it up and hit it." The other most important thing is understanding an inner sense of dynamics when they're playing. With some drummers, that right arm is a lot stronger than that left arm [laughs]—and that's the "bash" concept. It makes my job a lot easier when the drummer understands the relationship of the dynamics when he's hitting the cymbals as compared to the snare or the toms—hitting the drums so they *speak.*

MP: What's the best way that drummers coming into the studio to do their own projects can communicate to the engineer about the kind of sound they want?

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Rhythm and Reason

* Clinical studies have established a link between early music training and the development of the higher brain functions required for language, math and science. [Rauscher, Shaw, Levine, Ky and Wright (UC Irvine - 1994)]

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Fraser: A lot of guys come in and say things like, "I'd like to sound like Bonham." But the best way is to get their drums sounding good in the studio, and then tell the engineer, *"That's* what I'd like my drums to sound like in the control room."

Thacker: I suppose one obvious answer is giving examples of records you really love the drum sound on. You're limited, of course, by the kind of drums, the player, and the setting. Those things are impossible to duplicate. But if you can give an example of a record that you really like, that's probably the best thing. A picture is worth a thousand words.

MP: Let's play word association. I'll name a drum, you name your favorite mic' for it. Let's start with the kick.

Fraser: A Sennheiser *421* or an AKG *D-12.*

Thacker: An AKG *D-112* or a Sennheiser 427 for up close; a Neumann FET *U47* for back a ways.

MP: Snare?

Fraser: An AKG *414* or a Shure *SM57* on the top, or a combination thereof, and a *57* on the bottom.

Thacker: The ol' *57,* the AKG 452, or the Neumann *KM84.*

MP: Toms?

Fraser: Sometimes Neumann *U87s,* but a lot of studios don't have that many of them, so 575. For more attack, Sennheiser *421s.*

Thacker: Sennheiser *421s* top and bottom and out of phase with each other.

MP: Hats?

Fraser: If you need a brash sound, a Neumann *KM84.* If it needs a more expansive sound, an AKG *451.*

Thacker: Occasionally the Beyer 760, but usually the AKG 457.

MP: Overheads?

Fraser: Any great tube mic's that they've got around.

Thacker: AKG C-12s if the studio has them.

MP: Room?

Fraser: I usually just throw up a couple of Neumann *U87s.*

Thacker: It varies. Usually I'll use *U87s* in cardioid, facing away from the drums.

MP: When you're recording the drums, what are your preferences as far as EQ techniques?

Fraser: I like to get them as dry as I can, so that later I can go in and tweak them to get what I want. If you go for a real high-end snare and bring that to tape, and then later discover you need a little more body to it, you're stuck, [laughs] so I try and get them as flat as I can to tape.

Thacker: I might try to EQ the snare a bit to really bring out the tone of the drum.

MP: What about reverb?

Fraser: I like to use a lot of the room itself, but if I do need a little bit of reverb, I'll use a Lexicon *480* or something similar—short rooms, or maybe bigger halls.

MP: Let's talk about compression. What do you like to compress, and when?

Fraser: I don't compress when I track. I like to compress the kick and the snare when I mix. Sometimes I'll compress the toms, but it depends.

Thacker: I might compress various elements, depending on what we're doing. I don't like to compress during the recording phase because you just never know how hard a guy's going to hit. He might really kill it on one take, and on the next one *not* kill it, and you can't change the threshold on your compressor quick enough—so you can get stuck. On the mixing phase I might compress the snare and the bass drum a bit because a lot of times the right foot can be inconsistent.

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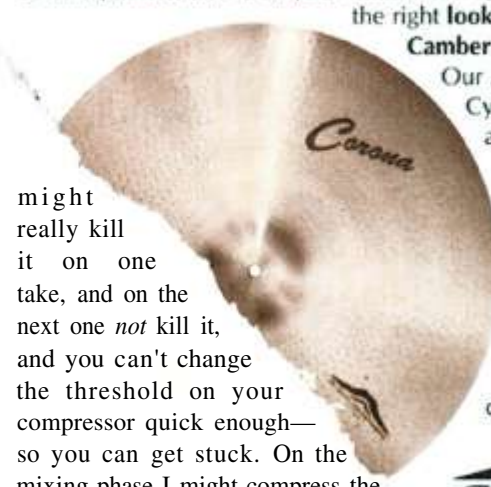

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MP: What about gates? How can you keep the bleed down and still not lose ghost strokes?

Fraser: Obviously you might want to clean up the snare a little bit—like to try and get the hi-hat out of it—but I try to do that without gating. I hate gating drums. I like all the natural rings and rattles.

Thacker: You know the way I feel? You're *paying* for the bleed. To me the bleed is what makes recording live drums magical. If you mike the drums properly and the drummer plays with proper dynamics, there's really no need for gating. If you want all the drums to sound gated, you can bring out the drum machine.

MP: What's one piece of advice you would give to drummers going into a professional studio for the first time, to help them get a good sound?

Thacker: Be aware of what we talked about at the beginning: The drums should be tuned well and the drummer should understand about playing with dynamics. He needs to understand about the bleed thing, and this is where "inside" dynamics really help. For example, that hi-hat's going to cut no matter what, but if it's all over the snare it makes it really hard to get a good snare sound.

Fraser: The best thing is for them to get *their* sound—don't worry about what the engineer's telling them to do. Get the sound that *you're* comfortable playing with, and then tell the engineer, "This is my sound, now get that in the control room." Too many drummers get all worried about sounding like somebody or other. They go out and buy heads that they've never played on before, and then they go into the studio and try too hard—and then their feel goes to shit.

Well folks, this wraps up the final installment of the "Drummer's Studio Survival Guide." It's been an enjoyable and educational experience for me, and I hope for you as well. If you missed any of the previous installments, or if any questions come up in your quest to capture your drums on tape, watch for a compiled and expanded version of the entire series to be released in book form by MD Publications in the near future. Until then...happy drumming!

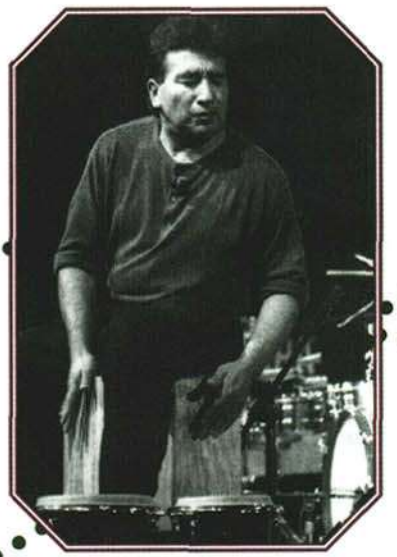
Highlights Of PASIC '95, Phoenix, AZ

Photos by Lissa Wales

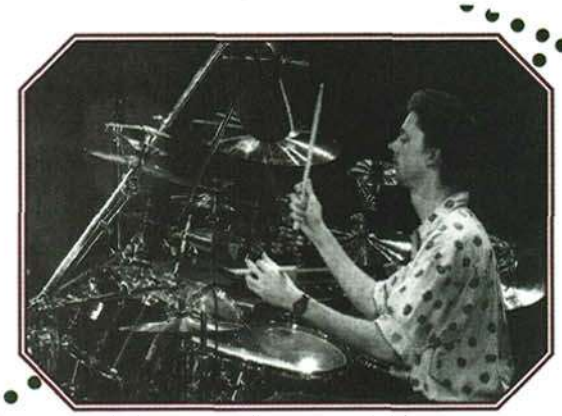
The motto for PASIC '95 could have been "So many drums, so little time." Why, you ask? (No, this is not a bad-drummer joke.) Last fall's Percussive Arts Society convention had a sizable and well-filled exhibit area, with both large and small manufacturers offering up their latest gear for "testing" by the 3,800 conventioneers who attended the three-day show. There was a lot of great equipment to check out (and clinics to attend) in a short period of time, from what seemed to be just about every area of percussion—drumset, legit, world music, marching, etc.

Speaking of clinics, the PAS should be commended for once again offering a wide array of interesting and informative clinics. Here's a brief list of just some of the topics covered: percussion and music therapy, electronic percussion, gamelan, Ragtime xylophone (with the great Bob Becker), four- and six-mallet marimba techniques, marching drums, hand drumming, injury prevention with percussion, concert cymbal techniques, vibes, and timpani. And the drumset enthusiast had plenty of opportunities for picking up pointers, including:

The highlight of this year's PASIC was the well-attended clinic given by Steve **Gadd.** His playing was in top form as he musically ran down a veritable shopping list of great licks and techniques he's claimed as his own over the years. (So nice to hear *him* play those licks.) Percussion session-ace Luis Conte joined Steve for a drums-and-percussion duet that was stunning. And then Steve invited old pal Alex Acuna on stage (he was sitting in the audience) for an impromptu percussion trio—a real moment.



Alex Acuna continues to amaze with his percussion and drumset techniques. He played a cajon (a wooden box), demonstrated his two-hand shaker technique (fantastic), and did some tasty drumset work, including soloing against a repeating left-foot clave pattern—nice.



Dutch phenom **Reno Creemers** traveled from Europe to give a clinic that was an impressive display of his techniques. He explained that his goal at the moment is to be able to combine drumset with percussion. With a kit consisting of traditional drumset and many other small percussive instruments (cowbells, tambourines, effects cymbals, etc.) he demonstrated some of these unique patterns.

PASIC welcomed home **Lewis Nash**, a Phoenix native who has gone on to be one of the hottest and most-recorded jazz drummers of the last several years. Lewis showed why he's so in-demand, playing with some very clean technique and pulling simply gorgeous sounds out of his drums and cymbals. He discussed small-group jazz drumming and covered what he felt is the essence of jazz—playing in the moment.

John Robinson offered a no-nonsense clinic on how to lay down a groove and make it feel great. He simply gets the biggest sound around, and he demonstrated it by playing to several tracks from his impressive recording career.

Sheila E and brother **Peter Michael Escovedo** gave a very entertaining clinic that demonstrated their abilities on both drumset and Latin percussion. They discussed the importance of playing from the heart, and invited their father, the great Pete Escovedo, and brother Juan to join them in a heartfelt jam.

Drummers got two chances to check out the talented **John Riley**—performing in clinic with the United States Air Force big band, and soloing in the more intimate setting of a master class. With the big band, John covered chart interpretation and how he goes about setting up kicks. In his master class John zeroed in on ride cymbal technique, offering some very practical tips on basic approaches and playing various tempos.

Bob Gatzen, the mad, marathon-running drum inventor (well maybe not mad) is recognized throughout the industry as an expert in many different areas. In a very informative clinic on how to tune drums, Bob explained that his goal is to help drummers learn to make their drums sound better, which he feels will inspire them to *play* better.

Jazz great **Carl Allen** covered many excellent topics in his clinic, focusing on such things as having a concept of what you want to play before you sit down, and playing with confidence. Carl played well, demonstrating his incredibly smooth touch on the drums and cymbals.

Great clinics were also given by Danny Gottlieb (multi-media electronic percussion), Jeff Hamilton (small-group jazz), Pete Magadini (polyrhythms), Ralph Humphrey (odd meters), Gary Chaffee (linear patterns), and Clayton Cameron (brushes). Terry Bozzio was also on hand, performing a solo recital that featured his drumset ostinato techniques as well as some impressionistic percussion sections.

Besides all of the educational activities that occur at PASIC, PAS takes the opportunity at the convention to recognize individuals who have made a lasting contribution to percussion. Congratulations go to Vic Firth, Jim Chapin, and George Gaber on their being inducted into the PAS Hall of Fame.

PASIC '96 will be held in Nashville, Tennessee, November 20-23. For further info contact the Percussive Arts Society, P.O. Box 25, Lawton, OK 73502, (405) 353-1455.

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