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June '98

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## JACK IRONS

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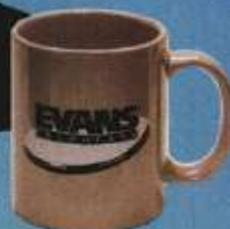
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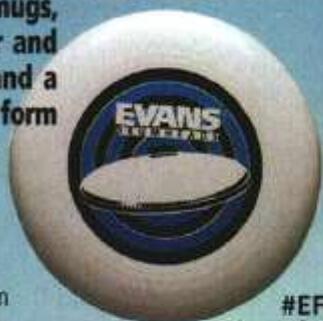
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## JACK IRONS

Dealing with personal demons is tough enough without the added pressure of joining the most analyzed band of recent times. With a new Pearl Jam album and tour, Jack Irons has discovered that zeroing in on the music can provide a well of strength.

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**60**

## ALBERT "TOOTIE" HEATH

Yeah, the cats with all the crazy chops grabbed the headlines. But Tootie Heath has held his own in this business for over forty years with John Coltrane, Herbie Hancock, Dexter Gordon, Yusef Lateef, and his equally gifted brothers, Percy and Jimmy, by laying down tasteful, timeless slow burn. Right on.

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## PREPARING TO TOUR

Whether you're talking 5-star hotels and first-class seats, or *Jiffy-Pop* and *Power Bars* in the back of a Ford *Econoline*, Ricky Lawson, Adrian Young, Steve Smith, Mike Palmer, Danny Gottlieb, Mario Calire, and Ken Tondre have learned the lessons of surviving the touring experience. Skip this feature at your peril.

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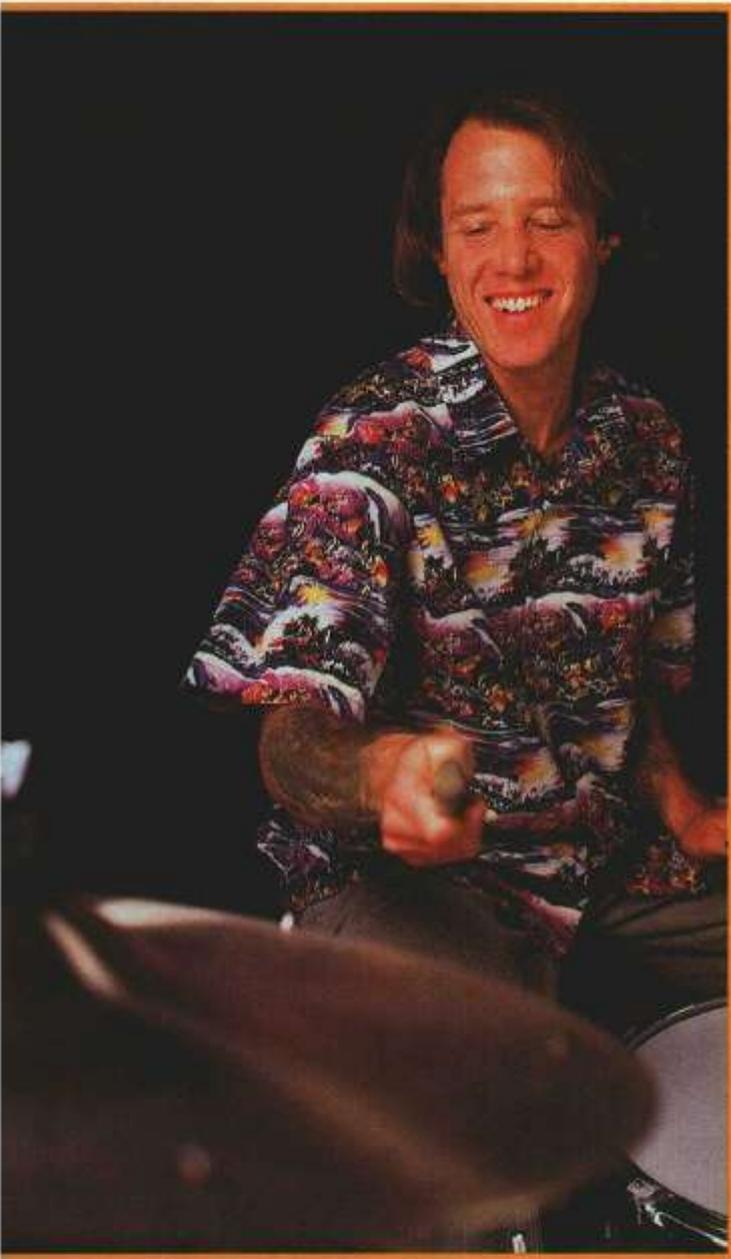


photo by Lance Mercer

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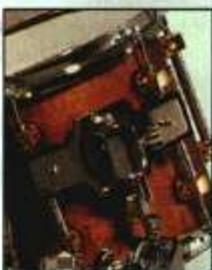
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# MD's Hot Trax

Around a year or so ago, *Modern Drummer* conducted its regular Reader Survey, which I reported on in this column. One of the requests we received from readers was to release a publication with a CD containing the playing of an assortment of leading artists. Never one to shy from a challenge, I brought the suggestion up at an editorial department meeting, where *MD* editors immediately began to formulate a plan for the production of the product.

Under the primary supervision of features editor Bill Miller, a dream list of artists' was assembled and calls were made to determine those artists interest in participating in the project. Along with the gathering of tracks for the CD, we also wanted this to be a full-color magazine that would include interviews with the artists, great color photos, diagrams of drum setups, and interesting musical examples. After months of work by *MD's* in-house editorial and art staff, and by several freelance writers, I'm proud to announce the release of the first *Modern Drummer Hot Trax*.

One of our primary concerns was that the *Hot Trax* project include drummers who would represent a variety of musical styles, from progressive rock and fusion to jazz and big band

drumming. We believe we've achieved that goal with the performances of eleven of the most exciting players on the scene today: Terry Bozzio, Gary Husband, Vinnie Colaiuta, Adam Nussbaum, Mike Portnoy, Terri Lyne Carrington, Dave Lombardo, Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez, Paul Wertico, Richie Hayward, and Virgil Donati.

My thanks to everyone who devoted so much time and energy to the *Hot Trax* project, from the *MD* team to our freelancers and photographers. This was a most ambitious undertaking for us and a true labor of love for all the creative people involved. Thanks also to the eleven artists who helped make this exciting publication a reality.

*MD Hot Trax* is now available on newsstands and at many of the leading drum shops and music stores across the country. If you can't find it in your area, you can order it direct from *Modern Drummer*. See page 134 of this issue for more information. We think this is one special issue of *MD* you'll savor and learn from for years to come. Enjoy!

*Ron Spagnardi*

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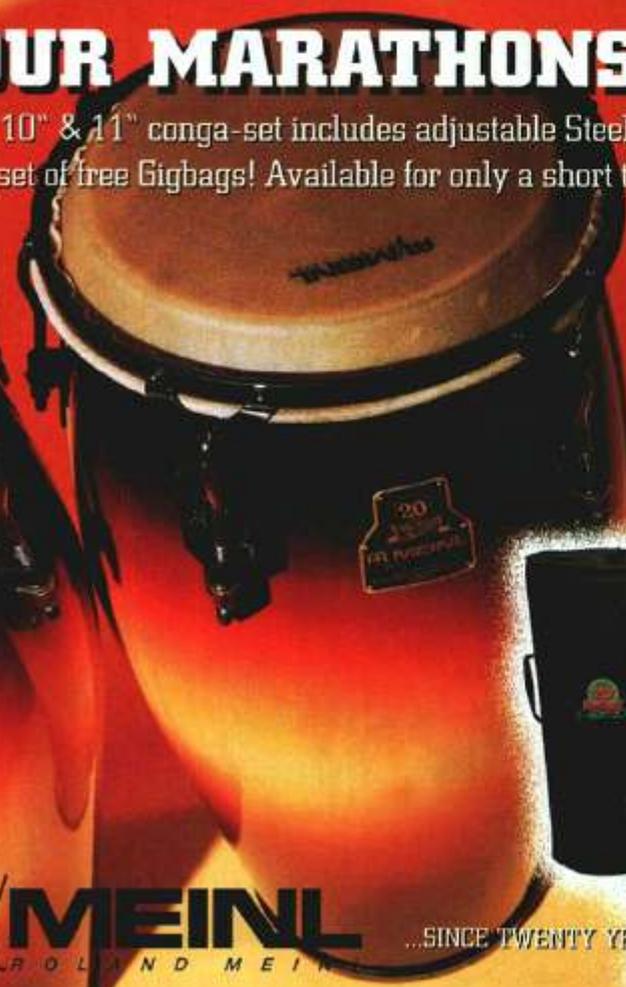
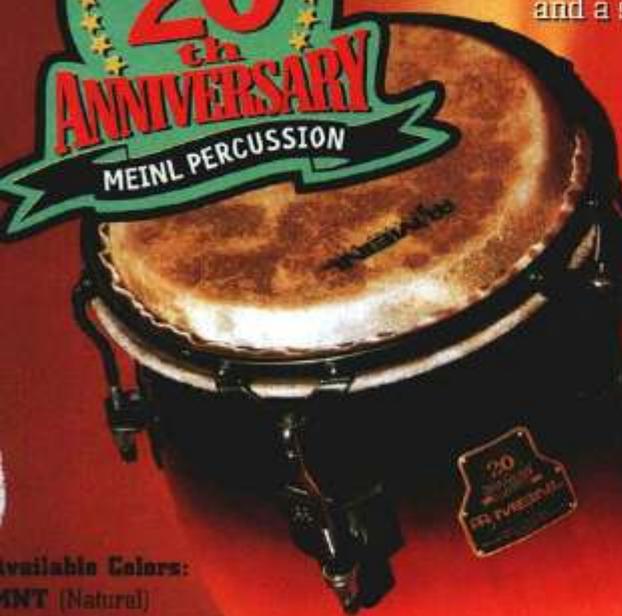
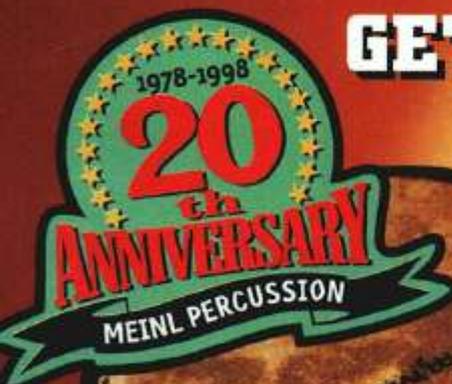
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## MORGENSTEIN, MASON, AND MORE



Rod Morgenstein's admission of tinnitus and hearing loss in your March '98 cover story was so honest! Please find a way to convey the dangers of overly loud music to your readers before they

to lose the gift of hearing. I recently attended a Jason Bonham show at Guitar Center, and the amps in that small room were cranked up to pain level. I feel that

the public needs to be educated to this danger, and that the changes should start with the artists themselves. There are those out there who are brave enough to turn the volume down, if they only will.

Two other quick comments: First, your interview with Billy Mason was excellent. He comes across as a very level-headed guy who loves his music. Second, thanks for the "Jazz Drummers Timeline." Those guys were my reason for becoming a drummer.

You have an outstanding magazine. Keep your open mind toward all types of music; it helps us all to grow and to "see the other side"—whatever that may be for each of us. I can think of no other publication where so many different lifestyles are represented in such a fair and unbiased manner, all because of a common interest that quietly blurs those boundaries.

Joseph Pilliod  
Piano, TX

Thanks for the great March cover story on Rod Morgenstein. It's good to see one of drumming's most creative minds immersed in a new and exciting project.

It's unfortunate that "mainstream" music and its fans have somehow dismissed "progressive rock" (and many of its greatest players) as somehow "dated" or "obsolete." Creativity knows no time boundaries, and challenging music is challenging music, no matter what decade it's being played in. It never was for *everybody*, and it never will be, but people who deliberately shut themselves off from it are only denying themselves a potentially enlightening musical experience.

Bravo to Rod Morgenstein, Jordan Rudess, and those like them who continue to blaze new musical trails—whether or not the masses choose to follow.

Allan Whiteside  
San Francisco, CA

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## VERNEL FOURNIER

Bravo on your feature in the March issue on the great Vernel Fournier. Vernel is truly one of the unsung heroes of jazz. His unmistakable brush technique, his instinctive knowledge of New Orleans parade beats, and his effortless, infectious ability to swing a band make him required listening for any serious student of bop drumming.

I had the singular privilege of studying with Vernel this past spring and summer. It was an incredible experience, and the following anecdote neatly encapsulates Vernel's wit and philosophy. At one of my earlier lessons I lamented my inability to play supersonic paradiddles. Vernel told me to play one for him. I did, and his response was simple: "Why you wanna go any faster than that?"

Paul Corio  
via Internet



## READERS POLL COMPLAINT

I just received my March issue of *MD* and noticed that once again it's time for the

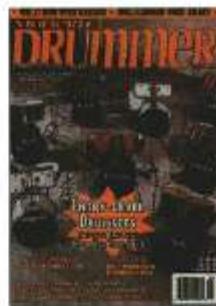
Readers Poll. Great...except for one thing. A major part of the drum community has been neglected once again. These are drummers who have contributed immensely to modern music, and who you, *MD*, have done articles on.

How many more Readers Polls will there be without an opportunity for us Afro-Cuban/Latin drummers to vote for our favorite artist? How can we ever vote for the likes of Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez, Ignacio Berroa, Robbie Ameen, Steve Berrios, or many other Afro-Cuban/Latin drummers when you won't even include this extremely important category? No, "Latin Percussionist" just doesn't cut it (with all due respect to our percussionist friends).

Please make this the last *MD* Readers Poll without this long-omitted category. Afro-Cuban/Latin drummers support *Modern Drummer*. Please support us in this annual poll.

L.J.C.  
Aurora, CO

## TIME IN TIME



I just want to let you know that the exercise "5 In 6" by David Garibaldi in the February issue has opened a whole new world of drumming up to me. In the past I would skip over

many of the exercises that I thought were over my head. But this time I spent the practice time on this concept, and much to my surprise I found myself playing the pattern and laughing to myself because I was having such a great time feeling this new rhythm. Thanks for an excellent article, and I am looking forward to more lessons from David!

Mark Richards  
via Internet



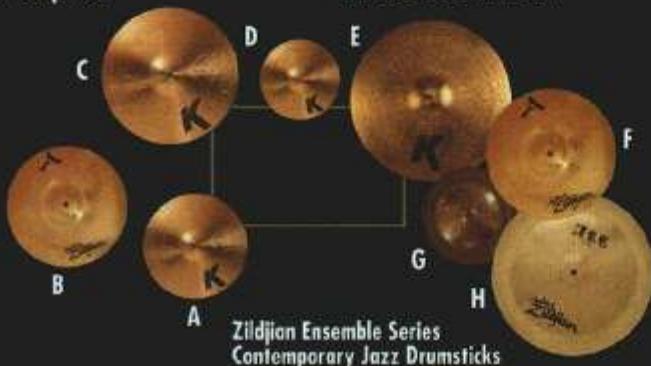
## THANKS FROM THE WASTE-LAND

I'd like to thank Matt Peiken for his review

# Set Yourself up Like Tommy Igoe

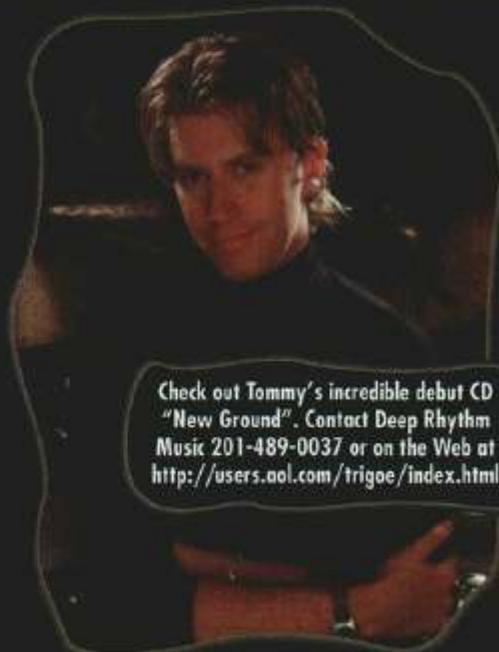
### Tommy's Set-up:

- A. 13" K HiHats
- B. 15" A Custom Crash
- C. 17" K Dark Crash Thin Brilliant
- D. 10" K Splash
- E. 20" K Custom Dark Ride
- F. 16" A Custom Crash
- G. 10/12" Oriental Trash Hats
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of my CD in your February '98 issue. I was blown away to have something like that happen to me. I worked on that one forever! When I found out about the review, I was in the UK. I heard it was a "four-drum" review, but that was all. I thought, "Cool...four drums. But he probably picked on me a little." I got home, ran out and bought the magazine, and was terrifically happy for Matt's respect and comparisons, and the fact that he dug the sounds and what I was doing as a drummer. So I just wanted to respond and say *thanks*.

Scott Ellis  
Human Waste Project  
via Internet

## LOVES LUDWIG

I want to publicly thank Ludwig's marketing manager, Jim Catalano, for going way beyond the call of duty in making sure that I was satisfied with the *Vintage Brass* snare drum that I received as a Christmas present from my wife. When the snare-side head

pulled out of its collar, Jim not only made good on the warranty on the head by replacing it, but also went way beyond that. His prompt, courteous, and timely response—along with general dealings that I have had with Ludwig in the past (finding out information, catalogs, etc.)—reinforce to me that they are a company of the highest quality. I am proud to say that I play Ludwig drums.

Jason M. Vanderpool  
Swansea, MA

## BACK IN THE SADDLE AGAIN

I'm from a small town in North Carolina that doesn't have drum instructors or clinics. I played in the high school band and knocked around with a few rock bands until I was about twenty-five. Then the drumming kinda fizzled away. Now I'm forty, and after starting drumming again about three years ago, I'm playing in a country band and having the time of my life. (Country music is a little more excit-

ing now than it was at one time.)

I've always played for the fun of it, without really realizing the magnitude of what there is to learn about drumming. I always just...*did it*. Shoot, I didn't even know that drummers used clicks until I started reading your magazine. But since reading *MD* every month for the past year, I've seen that there is a lot more to learn. Because of *MD* I spend time every night with some sticks and a pillow or pad. The exercises in your magazine present a constant challenge, which I enjoy.

I just wanted you to know that *MD* provides a valuable service—at least to a reborn drummer from a small town who got sucked into "normal life" and then was rescued by a bunch of nuts who wanted to spend their weekends riding to and from smoky bars in the middle of the night for gas money. I love it. Keep up the good work.

Dean Caulder  
via Internet

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# "One of the great Rock drummers of all time."

Dennis Chambers  
on Joey Kramer



"Joey is one of the great Rock drummers of all time. So many drummers grew up listening to Aerosmith and have imitated his grooves... not enough people appreciate how influential he has been. One of the few Rock drummers that can really groove and today his playing is fresher and hipper than ever."



#### Joey's Aerosmith Set-up:

- A. 14" A Rock HiHats Brilliant
- B. 20" A Medium Crash Brilliant
- C. 20" A Medium Crash Brilliant
- D. 20" A Medium Thin Crash Brilliant
- E. 21" Z Custom Mega Bell Ride
- F. 13" Z Custom HiHats
- G. 18" A China High Brilliant

#### Joey Kramer on Zildjian:

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### DESPERATELY SEEKING ELVIN & PHILLY JOE

I am trying to track down a copy of an out-of-print record, and I hope that someone reading this can help me. The record is Elvin Jones and Philly Joe Jones, *Together*, on Atlantic, from the early 1960s. It's a virtual tour of bop drumming (and other good things, too).

I have tried catalogs, used record shops, and radio stations, all to no avail. If anyone knows how I might obtain a copy of this classic work, I'd appreciate their getting in touch with me.

Channing Bartlett

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Steve Smith and Vital Information have a new album out called *Where We Come From*, which, as the title implies, is inspired by the players' heavy influences. In this case, it's the instrumental groove music of the '60s and 70s, such as Booker T. & the MG's, the Meters, Miles Davis, and the Tony Williams Lifetime.

The band wrote the new material the same way as they had in the past: Smith came up with grooves, the group jammed, and then they recorded live at Steve's home studio. The result this time is a lengthy record of ten compositions and five improvised pieces, which they used as segues in between every other track. All the pieces are originals, with the exception of Ornette Coleman's "Happy House," a jazz version of Led Zeppelin's "Moby Dick," and "Blowfish Blues," a previously unrecorded Jaco Pastorius composition that the late, great bassist personally had given to Vital's Jeff Andrews.

And if that isn't enough music for you, "After the

last song, there's a minute of silence followed by two extended jams," Smith explains. "We just got loose and decided to express ourselves in a way we've never done before. Live, we really play out, and this is close to what we do in concert.

"I tried to use a lot of the ideas I've been working on," Smith adds, "like implied metric modulation and soloing over a form. Sometimes on Vital records in the past I tended to be a little conservative—but not on this one."

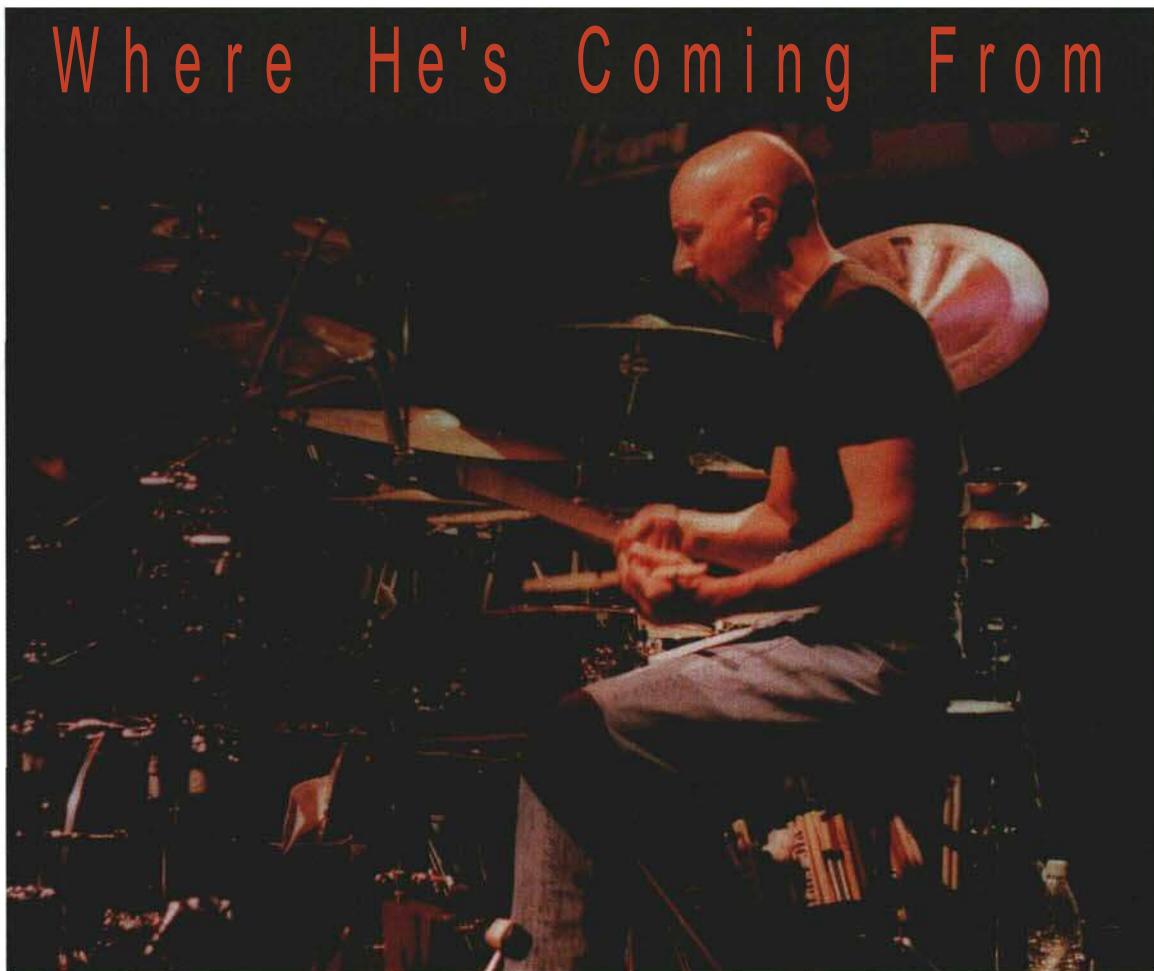
Other recent projects Smith has been involved in include a week with the Buddy Rich Big Band last December, which he split with Dave Weckl, new recordings by France's Johnny Halliday and Italy's Elisa, and Zuccheri's greatest-hits release.

Steve also recently recorded with Victor Wooten and Scott Henderson for a trio project signed to Magna Carta Records. And it's rumored that Columbia will soon release a recording of a live 1983 Journey concert.

**Robyn Flans**

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Joy Blakesburg

# SCOTT AMENDOLA ON THE HUNT

Last year Scott Amendola was heard lighting it up on the Charlie Hunter Quartet's *Natty Dread*, and also with Hunter and guitarists Will Bernard and John Schott on T.J. Kirk's *If Four Was One*. He and Hunter also played a sizzling

"Too High" on guitarist Pat Martino's *All Sides Now* (Blue Note). And he recorded another album with Hunter in September, though with Charlie's move to New York, Amendola won't be part of the touring group, "It's been a big change for me," Scott says. "After two and a half years with Charlie, I'm focusing on things I really want to do, and I'm fortunate because the musicians who call me are people who I want to play with. I'm part of a community here that I really love."

In fact, Amendola is already involved in several ongoing projects in the San Francisco area. Recently he played three tracks on guitarist Joel Harrison's avant-garde album *3 + 3 = 7* (Nine Winds); he's performing with an eclectic group including acoustic bassist Trevor Dunn, koto player Miya Masaoka, and DJ Mariko; and he's in a band with Jenny Scheinman, John Evans, and Adam Levy, which performs the music of Django Reinhardt. "Once again I'm in a band that covers somebody else's music," Amendola laughs. "I love doing that. There's so much great music

written already that we're just as well off playing it as we are making our own thing up."

Scott's latest project is the Will Bernard 4-Tet's *Medicine Hat* (Verve), with Rob Burger on 8-3 organ and accordion and John Shifflett on bass. "Will writes great tunes, and there's a lock between the four of us," the drummer says. "It's a real good combination, and the music can go anywhere. Everybody can instigate something to get it going in some crazy direction. The groove thing is so fat, too. Hopefully we'll be doing some roadwork with that."

Robin Tolleson

## Carl Allen

### ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING

You can see it in Carl Allen's face: the poise, the confidence, the love for drumming. His motions are fluid, and there's no wasted energy. Allen's had a remarkable career working with the best of the jazz world, like Freddie Hubbard, the Marsalis brothers, and Jackie McLean, and while some musicians find it hard to fill their schedules, he has always had work. Carl credits this success to his two mentors, Mel Lewis and Art Blakey, and recounts one gig where Blakey communicated a particularly strong lesson: "I was bored, and after the gig Blakey came up to me backstage and pushed me against the wall. 'What are you doing?' he says. 'You were bored up there.'" The elder drummer then informed Carl that he was part of the fraternity of jazz drummers now, and that he had a legacy to uphold. It was a privilege to

play drums, he said, and Carl needed to respect that privilege.

According to Allen, another important lesson he learned is, "It's not about ego, but about how good you can make it feel for the other guys in the band. You're there to support them." That sort of support has been Carl's calling card. A good example is a call he got to do a rehearsal with singer Lena Home. "I got there and we played two tunes before Lena showed up," the drummer recalls. "She came in, and she likes to rehearse without a microphone. So we played a few more songs, and all the guys were looking around. We stopped after about seven tunes, and I asked the music director, 'What's going on?' He said, 'We're doing a recording session tomorrow. Can you make it?' I said, 'Sure.' It seems they had gone through seventeen drummers, and some of them were big names. But they just didn't play for the music, and Lena couldn't hear herself."

Lately Carl has been providing equally sensitive support to Benny Golson and Eric Reed, as well as doing clinics and producing records. He may be recording a new CD of his own this spring, but says he isn't in a hurry to deal with the hassles of getting a new record deal. "I'm at a point in my career where I just want to enjoy myself. Someone could offer me a gig in Japan, but why should I be away from my family if I'm not having a good time? Drumming should be fun."

Michael Bettine



## News

**Adrian Young** is working on a new album with No Doubt.

**Pete Sandoval** is on Morbid Angel's latest, *Formulas Fatal To The Flesh*.

**Tre Cool** just returned from an overseas jaunt with Green Day. They're now on the US leg of their tour.

**Shawn Pelton** is working with Curt Smith, formerly with Tears For Fears, in his new band, Mayfield.

**Paul Deakin** is on the Mavericks' latest release, *Trampoline*.

**Bart Van Der Zeeuw** is on K's Choice's new album (due out in April).

**Paul Doucette** is back on tour with Matchbox 20.

While Heart is on hiatus, Ann and Nancy Wilson have put together another unit, called Lovemongers, with **Ben Smith** playing drums and percussion.

**Mark Zonder** is on a new live video and album from Fates Warning. Mark is also on former Dream Theater keyboardist Kevin Moore's solo release, *Chromakey*.

**Robby Ameen** is on Paul Simon's new album, *Songs From The Capeman*.

**Sean Kinney** is on Alice In Chains singer Jerry Cantrell's solo album, *Boggy Depot*, and will be touring behind the record.



# Jerry Marotta

## Cave Drumming

It's not what you play; it's what you leave out. Just ask Jerry Marotta. He is *still* answering for the crime he committed fifteen years ago during his tenure with Peter Gabriel—namely, leaving out the cymbals on the singer's third album.

At a recent press conference in Montreal, Jerry denied any aesthetic agenda. He and Gabriel simply exercised a recording prerogative common in the '80s. They decided to record drums first, then overdub cymbals. But they paused mid-stream: "It sounded really good without the cymbals," Jerry recalls. "It created a space so some other instrument could make the effect that a cymbal crash normally would. It wasn't my idea, like,

'Let's make a record without cymbals!' I don't remember anyone saying. This is what you've gotta do'—because I wouldn't have listened anyway! I've kind of got an attitude."

Recently Jerry has forged ahead—sort of—on the CD *From The Caves Of The Iron Mountain*. Performing with Tony Levin and Steve Corn, his drumset is—you guessed it—barren of cymbals. Affectionately termed "The Flintstones Kit," due to its cartoon proportions. Marotta's Taos drums first breathed life on Suzanne Vega's 1992 album, *99.9F*.

Part of the charm—and the irony—of that record is that the *New Mexican* native drums, with skin heads, were used as the source for haunting industrial sounds. Whatever the outcome, though, Jerry is a convert: "I always bring the Taos drums and employ a mixture of percussion and drums." But does the anachronistic kit really work in a modern session setting? "Definitely," enthuses Marotta. "I just produced an album by Jenny Bird, from New Mexico, and I only used Taos drums on it—and it turned out great."

Since his 1986 *MD* interview, Jerry has played on albums with Paul McCartney, Robbie Robertson, and Jewel, and has produced albums by Canadians Larry Gowan and Ron Sexsmith. And over the past seven years you may have seen him on the road with the Indigo Girls, "My style has changed drastically to suit them," says the drummer. "When I started working with them they weren't used to having a drummer. It wasn't easy. Now we're getting to that point where we could do something major, like when Peter Gabriel did *Security*."

Ironically, Jerry says that one of the Girls thinks he's too good of a musician. "She wants somebody who almost doesn't know how to play," Marotta explains matter-of-factly. "So I've learned how to sit at the drums and play like that."

T. Bruce Wittet

# DANNY GOTTLIEB

Danny Gottlieb is living many a drummer's dream: performing concerts and club dates in New York City, recording albums and jingles in the studio, and traveling around the world playing with some of the greatest musicians. "I'm basically just a combination freelance, studio, and performing jazz musician for hire," Gottlieb explains.

During 1997, Danny was on the road 140 days, including eight trips to Europe. "I did three tours with Knut Varnes, a Norwegian guitarist, and participated in a Norwegian jazz workshop last August, which was fantastic. I also did several European tours, plus one in Canada with Nguyen Le, a Vietnamese-French guitarist."

Gottlieb has performed on

several records with Le (all are available in the States), including his most recent one, which also features Peter Erskine and percussionist Mino Cinelu. "I still sub with the Manhattan Transfer when Cliff Almond can't do it," he adds. "And last year I went to Cancun and to Florida with TMT." Gottlieb also played several gigs with the Blues Brothers band, including a big concert in Newport, Rhode Island last summer, and he can be seen as a walk-on in their new movie, *Blues Brothers 2000*. (Yes, that's Danny staring at Dan Akroyd after he gets thrown down the stairs!)

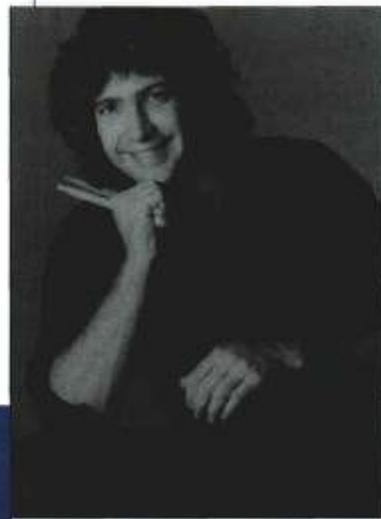
All told, Gottlieb was featured on eight recordings in 1997, among them: *The Blues Brothers Live At The House Of Blues In*

*Chicago* with Dan Akroyd and *Blues Tribute To The Rolling Stones* with Bobby Womack. Danny also recorded with the Andy Laverne Group, Ali Ryerson, Anita Gravine, Nguyen Le, Knut Varnes, and Elements (*Untold Stories*). Of special note is a recording with singer Nnenah Freelon and piano legend Herbie Hancock, which features a version of Herbie's classic composition "Maiden Voyage."

"I'm looking forward to doing a new Elements recording [with bassist Mark Egan], a solo recording, and more multi-media performances," Gottlieb says. "I'm mounting a show called 'Drummers Fantasy '98,' a performance-art multi-media piece featur-

ing percussion instruments triggering video graphics from KAT pads." Danny says he plans to perform this program at universities across the country and around the world, along with his educational clinics.

Lauren Vogel Weiss



## Swingin' The Blues

# **B**rad **H**argreaves

by T. Bruce Wittet

OF

THIRD EYE BLIND  
THIRD EYE BLIND



**Brad Hargreaves is bearing down on two suspended floor toms. Everything is coming up roses—except for a couple of things that are oddly out of sync. For one, Hargreaves' relaxed movements seem disproportionate to the deep tones blossoming from the stadium PA. Then there are Stephan Jenkins' lyrics: intimate expressions of longing and despair, all but lost in the arena.**

Occasionally, when Jenkins decides to stay put and deliver a vocal, he straps on an acoustic guitar. Otherwise it is an impediment to the way he races around the stage. Even without the extra instrument, the sound is remarkably plentiful from the trio of Hargreaves, Arion Salazar on bass, and Kevin Cadogan on electric guitar.

For his part, Brad balances those deep toms with plenty of crisp snare and clean cymbal work. He doesn't favor bottom-end resources any more than top. This ensures that if something goes wrong in the mix there is no hole. Take, for example, the raw video footage of the band opening for the Rolling Stones in Seattle. Something, or somebody, had knocked the first tom mic' aside. Who knows, maybe it was Jenkins, constantly en route in the manner of headliner Mick Jagger. When Brad goes to that tom, it barely registers. Meanwhile, the mic' is still open and gated; when Brad hits the hi-hat or snare drum, the gate swallows up some hat—and some of the other cymbals, too.

Despite a distinct loss of hi-fi, the song ("Narcolepsy") holds its own. A few choruses later, it leaps out of slumber into a punk-laced refrain: *'There's a demon in my head!'* The group breezes through the test only an opening act can appreciate: delivering a track every bit as convincing as the recording, under adverse circumstances. This, after all, is the heart of rock 'n' roll, and Brad Hargreaves is a prime exponent of the form, right?

Here it gets interesting. People who knew Hargreaves in his life before 3EB

will tell of a shocking *non sequiter*. They remember a man who had groomed himself for a career outside the pop realm. He was packing his bags, ready to move east to a *real jazz* town. Brad admits the contradiction: "It was ironic because I was really focusing on playing jazz in the Bay Area, and I was convinced that I would try to get things together here, and then move to New York to see what happens. At the time, a friend of mine, who I only played jazz with in college, recommended me to the guitarist of Third Eye Blind, because they were looking for a drummer to play live shows. After playing five or ten shows it seemed to work out somehow."

The reason for the emphasis on *live* shows was that Michael Urbano had already recorded some respectable drum tracks with the group, but he was getting increasingly busy with Sheryl Crow and other projects. For a while his tenure overlapped with Brad's, and both drummers cut tracks destined for an indie CD. In a stroke of luck, Elektra Records signed the band and commissioned new work for the self-titled debut recording. The band figured that nothing would be gained by recutting Urbano tracks, such as "Losing A Whole Year" and "Motorcycle Drive By."

Instant acclaim followed the single "Semi-Charmed Life," with its rollicking

vocal chorus. Charmed life, indeed! Brad Hargreaves, barely in his mid-twenties, had leaped to success beyond his expectations. Fate had dealt him creative latitude rivaling that of his jazz peers. "I don't feel that it's totally mandatory that I play 2 and 4 all the time," Brad confesses. "The conventions of rock drumming are less important to me. On the outside, the band's music may appear simplistic, but if you listen carefully there are some interesting things going on. Because our songs are 'radio friendly,' I think there's a tendency to dismiss us as a pop band, but the critical listener will find more quite easily."

Brad takes us back down his crooked trail: "I'm from a place just north of San Francisco—Marin County, across the Golden Gate Bridge. I lived there until I was about twenty. I moved out of my house to go to junior college, and transferred to the University of California at Berkeley. At that time, I moved to the Berkeley/Oakland area, and lived there for five years, studying history."

Hedging his bets at U Cal, Brad took music as a minor, absorbing requisite theory and piano lessons. But suddenly there came a realization: "I was getting an education playing four or five nights a week in the Bay Area—mostly jazz. There was no reason to go to school to study what I

**"I don't feel that it's totally mandatory that I play 2 and 4 all the time. The conventions of rock drumming are less important to me."**

wanted to do, which was live performance."

Brad kept up with drum lessons, though. "I had studied privately starting from seventh or eighth grade with one teacher," he recalls. "Then I ended up with the teacher who taught *him*, Chuck Brown. A lot of people in the Bay Area studied with Chuck. He's got a lot of cool ideas about minimalistic movements. Some of that doesn't apply to rock drumming, because you play with so much volume, but it's really good for developing a foundation."

Responding to an observation that he manages to maintain a relaxed grip despite those serious sound pressure levels, Brad replies, "It depends. I studied traditional grip with Chuck for four years. When it came to playing rock, it was apparent that to get the volume I wanted, I would have to switch to matched grip. But my matched grip was really undeveloped, at least in my left hand. I had to go about training it, and I kind of modified it. In the right hand there is more of a tension going on between the thumb and index finger. The left hand is sort of the Tony Williams grip, where the fulcrum's back in the hand. I definitely was attuned to learning a form of proper technique—at least, the form that Chuck taught."

"I also studied with George Marsh," Brad continues. "He has a book called *Inner Drumming*, talking about energy flow from limb to limb. When I studied with Chuck it was an intellectual approach to drums; with George it was more of an emotional approach. It shifted the focus away from *thinking* about what I was doing."

In terms of influences, "Steve Gadd was one of the first drummers my first teacher told me about," says Brad. "I got Chick Corea's *My Spanish Heart*, and on one song there's this cool cow-

bell thing—one of Gadd's signatures. That record led me to John Coltrane, Miles, and other people. Fluidity comes from playing jazz, which is very relaxed and subtle. All my favorite drummers play like that, including Steve Gadd, Elvin Jones, Roy Haynes, Jack DeJohnette, and Marvin 'Smitty' Smith, who I actually got to hang out with the other day."

Still, none of these stories advances a credible explanation for the power behind Hargreaves' backbeat. It doesn't add up, unless...maybe it wasn't *all* jazz. Maybe if we were to rummage around in Hargreaves' closet, we might find a crate of rock records....

Okay, okay, he admits it! Brad likes Phil Rudd. He has a healthy respect for the way AC/DC's drummer works within simple frameworks. "Then it would be John Bonham. From the R&B side of things, the guy from the Ohio Players, 'Diamond,' did some super killing drumming. Clyde Stubblefield on James Brown albums. Dennis Chambers on the *P-Funk All Stars Live* record. They fired their percussionist, and he put the percussion on his left side and played both. There are so many horn hits; it's like playing big band jazz."

Before Third Eye Blind, Brad played on a number of sessions. He cautions that fans weaned on 3EB might not be ready for some of them: "They might be shocked, it's so different," he admits, describing the music on a couple of CDs available on the Web. "They were based in the history of jazz, but were also very modern, like Steve Coleman's stuff. There were two recordings with Vijay Iyer, *Memorophilia* and *Architecture*. Vijay toured with Steve

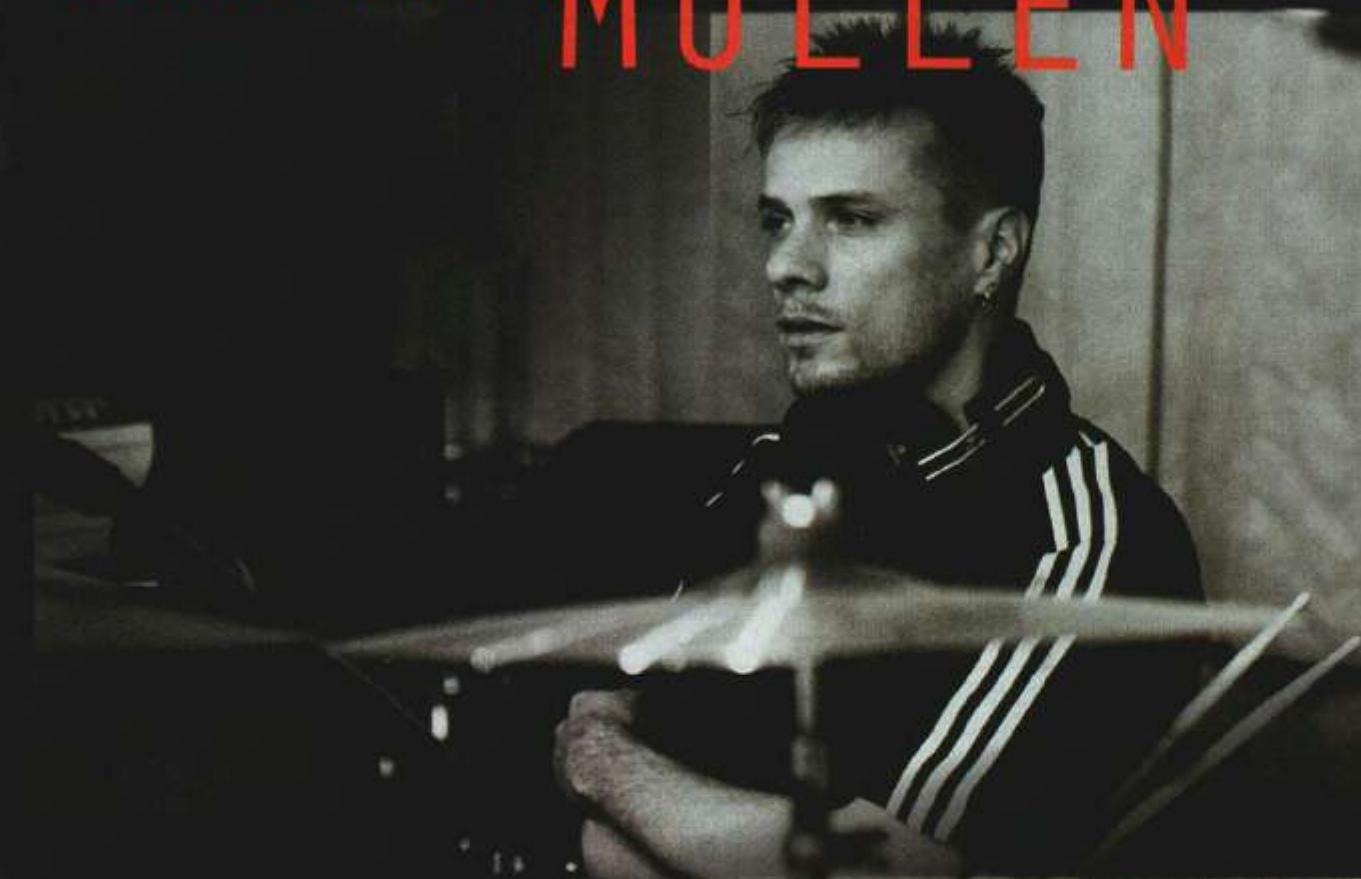
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Coleman. He's Indian and into very subtle rhythmical frameworks. Also Liberty Ellman: His record is called *Orthodoxy* on Red Giant Records. The tracks I played on are with a quartet: guitar, horn or piano, bass, and drums. I'm playing a four-piece '70s Gretsch kit, with different cymbals. About 90% of it is in odd time, although I have a hard time saying that word. There's nothing odd about it! It's all about improvising and developing themes."

All this accounts for the seamlessness of those occasional 3EB excursions outside of common time. "With time signatures, it depends on how intricate it is," explains Brad. "If it's five or seven, it's natural. I'm not counting it. There's some sort of rhythmic basis that comes out to seven or five, and I lock onto that and improvise off the rhythm just like a soloist improvises. When you do it that way, it's a natural thing."

Brad says the majority of the drum parts on the album were his call. An example of a modest but effective touch is the reversal of roles on "Semi-Charmed Life." "There's a breakdown section before the third verse," he explains. "I played 2 on the snare, then 4 on the bass drum."

Then there is that propensity to go to the large toms. Recording floor toms is difficult for two reasons. First, the multiple overtones from large heads seem to "confuse" mic's. Second, the low frequencies often are lost in the mix. Not on "Jumper," though. "When we recorded the song, they wanted to go for a Ringo/Beatles sound," says Brad. "So I ended up using a vintage orange sparkle Ludwig kit instead of my usual D'Amico drums. To achieve that 'airy' sound, they wanted me to play really light on the drums. It didn't

get down exactly as I wanted, but it was close. It was a 16" floor tom, and I was just *touching* it, in the lightest possible way. It was muffled fairly heavily with *Moon Gels*, and there might have been toilet paper with tape, too. We recorded 'Jumper' in the middle of the soundstage at Skywalker Ranch, George Lucas's sound studio. It's the size of a gymnasium; you can set up a symphony and have the huge screen come down and do soundtracks. We put the drumset in the middle of this studio. The other drum sounds were done in an isolation booth with the door open.

"At the end of 'Jumper,'" Brad continues, "they faded from close mic's to the overheads, then to distant mic's. And sometimes they would put cheap mic's in plastic bags under water and have them on the left and right sides of the kit. You can hear it on verses: these weird, reverb-y sounds in the background."

Hargreaves' ride sound is less aggressive than Michael Urbano's on the album. "I use *K Zildjians*," he says. "From what I've heard, Michael likes to use a really bright cymbal. And his is cool and it sounds great. I've never been totally satisfied with ride sounds. I have a sound in my brain I'd like to achieve, but it's difficult when you're playing really loud drums. The kind of cymbal sound I like is a little more airy and has a little less attack. But the search for the perfect ride cymbal is never-ending."

On the anthemish "God Of Wine," a natural tendency would have been to *plunder*, a la Dave Grohl or Keith Moon. But instead of jumping on the building refrain, Brad exercises admirable restraint—or so it seems. "I don't consciously hold back," he says. "Some nights I hit harder, but I'm never holding back; I'm playing

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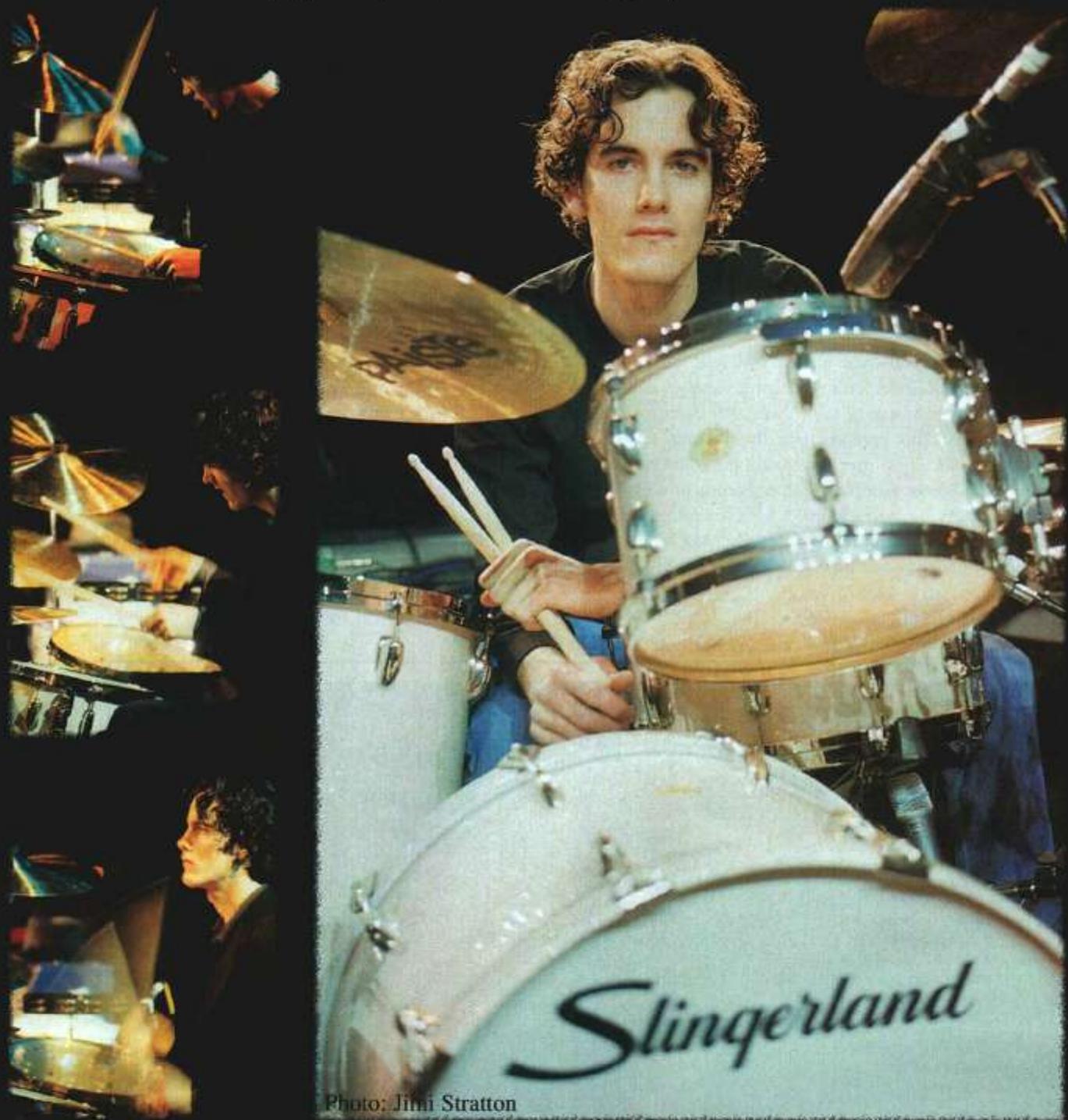


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as loud as I can!

"On a bad night, I might feel tense, but I always strive to be relaxed. When you are, then you're playing the tempos right, and it's comfortable. I see myself on tape and I look relaxed, but I'm not even sure how it came about. Chuck Brown used to say that tension is the one thing that kills drummers; it builds and builds and builds, and then causes injuries.

"There are different sounds related to the way you hold the sticks and how much pressure is in your hand when you hit the drum," Brad goes on. "If you're digging your arm into the drum, instead of focusing on releasing your hand, then the shock goes up your arm. I play rimshots on every backbeat and release the hand after each hit."

Hargreaves works out his beats on the aforementioned D'Amico kit. Why would a man who could get any drum he desires choose a brand lodged in the shadows of mainstream manufacturing and marketing? "I just wanted to play what I wanted to play," Brad says flatly. "We had a big advance, and we could get whatever we wanted. I had played D'Amico drums at various studios around the Bay Area, and I just fell in love with them. Some custom drums are made to such exacting specifications that there is a lack of depth and a lack of *soul*. These drums maintain the character. You're hitting a piece of *wood*: I'm making a reference to a cave man! All top-of-the-line drums are really good, but then you get into the extra *something* that makes a drum exciting. Gene D'Amico is the guy who actually made my kit, and I like that. It's nice to get in early with a company.

"I have a 19x22 bass, a 9x12 rack tom, a 12x14 first floor, a 14x16 second floor—both suspended—and a 6 1/2 x14 snare drum. I

use a DW double pedal and DW hardware. I'm also using 14" Zildjian *A Custom* hats, a 17" *K Dark Crash* on my left, and a 20" *K* ride cymbal. I was using an 18" *A Custom* on my right, but now I'm checking out an 18" or 19" *K Dark Crash*. Also, I have a 16" *Oriental China*.

"I have all coated *Ambassadors* on top and clear *Ambassadors* on the bottom," Brad adds, "although the snare might be a clear *Diplomat* on the bottom. With these drums, they sound by far the best. And I use Zildjian *Rock* sticks."

Brad never fancied himself part of the pop scene. "I did want to be in a successful group," he clarifies. "I just didn't think it would be a rock band. As much as I like playing in this band, I would like to do my own thing. Besides jazz, I'm really interested in electronics, and hip-hop, and R&B. Keyboard music in the '80s turned me off of rock, and I went over to the R&B side. Combining drums with electronics is something that has been touched upon, but hasn't been dealt with in the way I want to do it. That's something that we'll do a lot more of on the next Third Eye Blind record."

For the key to Brad's ethic, turn to the 3EB track "Burning Man." "It comes directly out of Jack Kerouac's *On The Road*," says Brad. "It's about people who burn to live, who want to experience everything. It's the kind of thing that reflects itself in music, as well. Right now, our band is doing very well. Many people would kill to be in the position we're in, and yet we're totally unsatisfied. We're dying to get to the next level, to create more, and to make a better show. It's really just about reaching as many people as we can, being worthy of being listened to, and having something to say."



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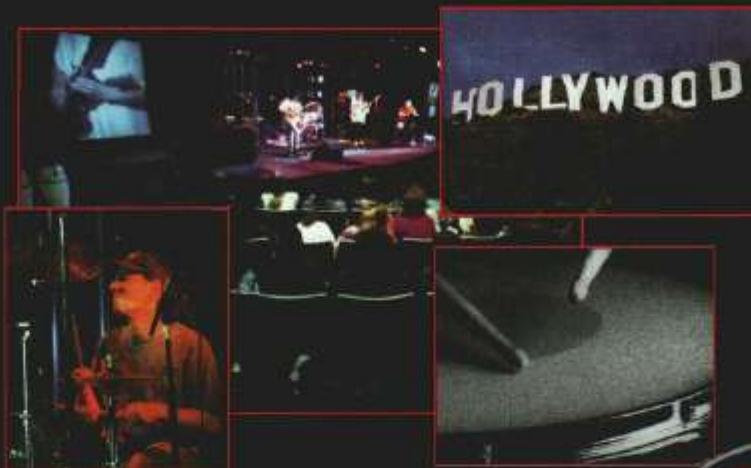
Today, there are so many labels that styles seem to run together. But once in a while, someone comes along and blows everybody's mind (you know who they are), and a new style is born. Well, you can bet that player, singer, or producer knew there was only one way to go - and that's to play straight from the heart. He or she knew that the music was already inside...

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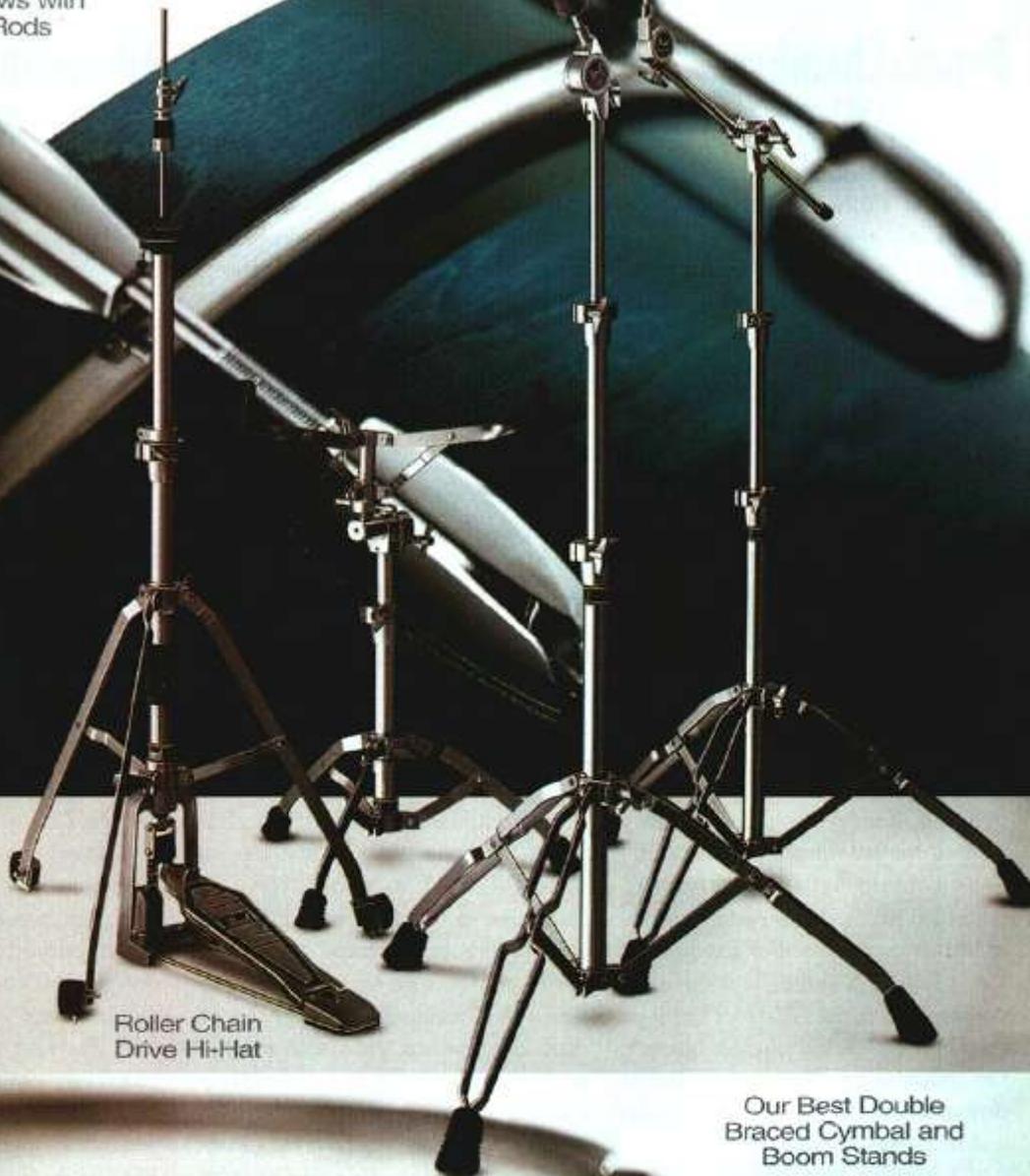
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## Dennis Chambers

**Q** I saw you in Israel, in a clinic you gave at the Hard Rock Cafe. Before the clinic, a video of your playing at a different show was presented. At one amazing point you were playing single strokes on the double pedal and on the snare at the same time. I noticed that while you were doing triplets on the double pedal, you were also playing the hi-hat on either quarter notes or 8th notes. How do you do that? Also, where was that video taken, and how may I get a copy? Thanks for being such an inspiration.

Asaf Dagan  
Israel  
via Internet

**A** My hi-hat is positioned directly to the left side of the left (or "slave") footboard of the double bass drum pedal. I sometimes play with my heel on the bass drum pedal and my toe on the hi-hat (or vice-versa). Often I'll play the two pedals together at the same time. For example, if I'm playing a three-beat (triplet) double-bass figure, it's two beats on the right pedal and one on the left. On that third beat my foot comes down on the left bass drum pedal and the hi-hat at the same time.

If I want to get fancy and play an open/closed hi-hat effect while playing the double bass drum pedal, then I'll play two beats on the right pedal, play a third beat on the left bass drum pedal with my heel, come

down on the hi-hat with my toe, and then come back on the hi-hat with my heel.

Having the hi-hat that close to the left bass drum pedal allows you to play either of the pedals—or both—according to what you can come up with out of your own imagination. I'm basically just "dancing" with my left foot, using combinations of my heel and/or toe on the two pedals. You just have to experiment with that technique to come up with your own combinations.

As far as the video that was shown before the Israel show, I think it was probably from the Zildjian Day in London, or a promotional tape that Zildjian had made from various other Zildjian Days around the world. I think these videos are available from Zildjian; you should contact a Zildjian dealer to check on how you can obtain a copy.

However, even though I'm flattered that you want to see me on video, I want to stress that it's important to use your own imagination to create the parts you play. Don't get stuck on what you see and hear other drummers doing. A lot of drummers watch videos, cop what they see, and leave it at that. They don't develop anything of their own beyond that. The really great drummers are the ones who come up with totally original things that take drumming in a new direction. Those are the people who other drummers really respect and admire—because they're so *different*.

## John "JR" Robinson

**Q** I'm attempting to change from playing the bass drum with my wheel up to keeping it down. What tips can you share on how you have your pedal adjusted? I've watched your video and made adjustments to my pedal so that it responds as yours does. I'm just not sure I've made the correct changes.

Tom Hall  
Etiwanda, CA

**A** There are several variables when dealing with bass drum pedal technique. Set your pedal up so it's not depending on the spring action. The pedal should flow effortlessly back and forth many

times. In my case, I use a Danmar *JR* bass drum beater, which has a greater weight distribution toward the top because of its square wood design and shaft length.

No matter what kind of pedal you use, align the beater rod according to your body height. I'm 6' 4" tall, so I keep the beater all the way towards the end of the rod in the pedal. But even if you're shorter, don't choke the rod length too much. Also, don't sit too low. A 90° angle between your thigh and your lower leg is good.

The main thing when playing flat-footed is to relax. This technique takes time to develop, but with exercise you will develop power, control, and speed. You'll also notice an increase in your confidence regarding time concepts.

## Adrian Young

**Q** I'm a seventeen-year-old drummer from Washington state. You're my favorite drummer. I really like your music, along with the sound of your Orange County Drums & Percussion drumkit. I have several questions.

1. What heads do you use for studio and live playing?
2. Do *Emperor* heads sound better than *Ambassadors*!
3. Do you use the RIMS system for your toms?
4. How do you tune your kit?
5. Who should I talk to about having an OCDP drumkit made?

Mike Duncan  
Okanogan, WA

**A** Thanks very much for your complimentary words and all your questions. To answer those questions in order:

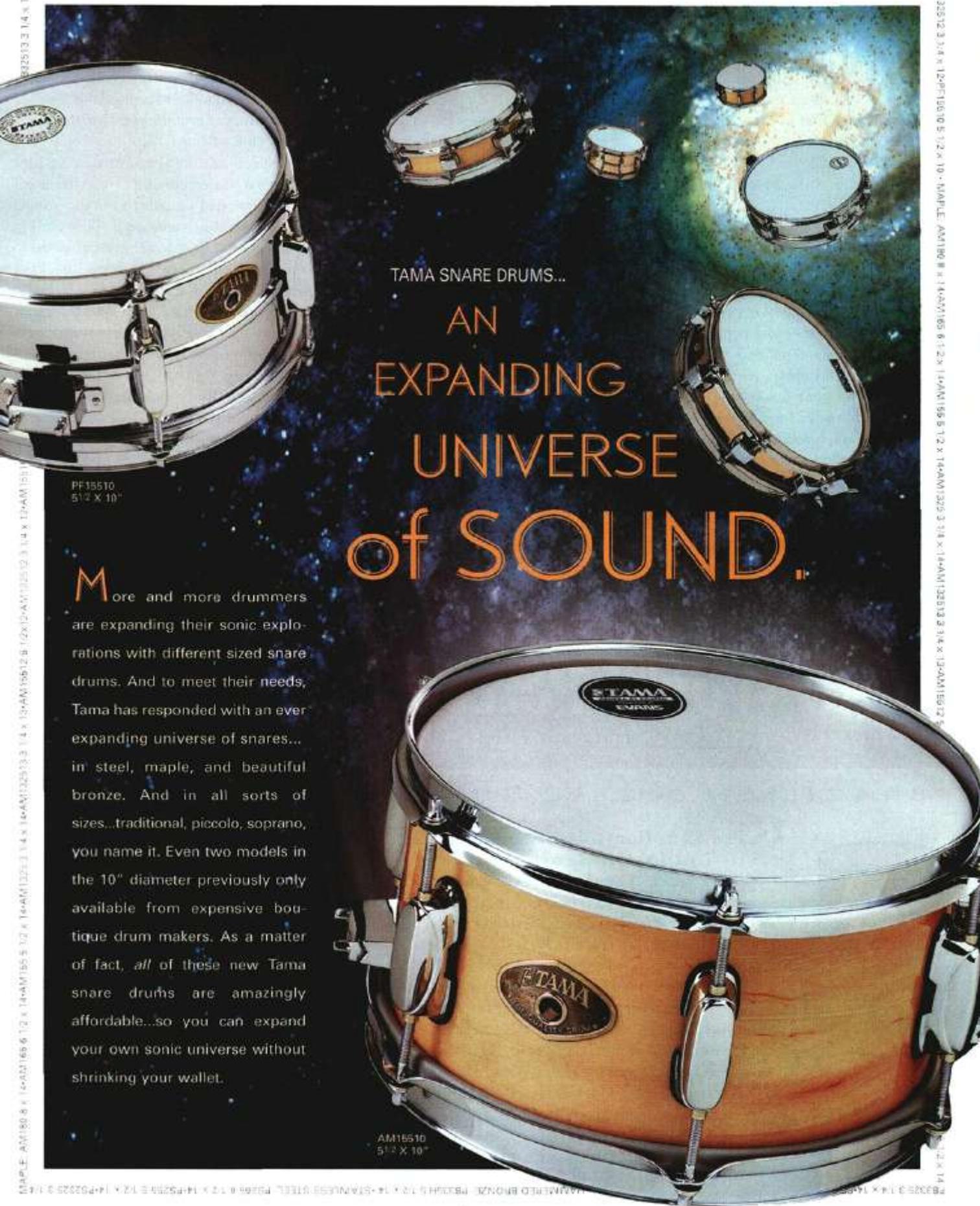
1. In the studio I use coated *Emperors* on all the drums; for live playing I use clear *Emperors* on everything but the snare, which always gets a coated head.
2. "Better" or "worse" are relative terms. *Emperors* sound thicker and deeper than *Ambassadors*, and they last longer.
3. Yes, I do use RIMS on my toms, for the extra resonance they provide.
4. In non-technical terms, I always tune the bottom head one step higher than the top head. I'm going for as much tone as possible. I use no tape; I don't want the drums muffled. On the snare drum I like to get ring as well as crack.

In the past I've had sound people tell me that my snare drum rang too much. I told them that they obviously hadn't listened to too many ska records, and that I prefer the ring. It's the characteristic sound of the music I'm playing, so please deal with it. Besides, as most people playing in a live situation discover, most of that snare drum ring goes away when the rest of the band comes in.

5. To get information about Orange County drums, call Daniel Jensen at the company's offices, (714) 589-7308.



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### Odd-Size Cymbals

**Q** How does one obtain those cymbals that you can't ever find in catalogs, but that you hear of drummers using—like 21" crashes or 16" rides?

David Bransford  
via Internet

**A** Most cymbal companies maintain the ability to produce those odd-size cymbals, but they don't include them in their catalogs for space reasons. (They must devote that space to the more popular models that sell in greater numbers.)

You can generally obtain the cymbal you want by having your dealer contact the manufacturer directly for a special order. There may be some waiting time involved, but the wait should be worth it if you finally obtain that "special" cymbal.

### Containing Drum Sound

**Q** I'm playing in the worship team at my church. Unfortunately not everybody

likes how loud I want to play. My sound production manager likes the way the drums sound at that volume, he just doesn't have the amps and congregation to match.

I was thinking of putting up a higher and more surrounding drum shield. Also, it is a concrete building with concrete floors (except for the stage), so I was also thinking of constructing something for behind the shield against the wall—something like an insulator to suck up sound. Any solutions you know of?

Fireside Mike  
via Internet

**A** Your own suggestion of a "higher and more surrounding drum shield" sounds like a good plan. If the shield you are using now is of the clear acrylic variety, you can either obtain taller panels for it, or build a low wooden base/wall to put *under* it. This might offer an additional advantage, since you can attach additional absorbent acoustic foam panels on the inside of this base/wall. This "absorbent wall" could extend up from the floor to a point 6" or so

below your eye level. This should help to contain the sound of the bass drum, snare, and toms, without obscuring your view of the musicians around you—or the audience's view of you.

If space and budget allow, consider putting a "false ceiling" over the area, either supported on poles from the ground or suspended in some way. This ceiling should consist of acoustic foam attached to some kind of lightweight solid backing (heavy cardboard, masonite, etc.). It should be suspended over the kit at a height slightly above the top of your shield walls, leaving a little open space. That way it will help absorb some of the cymbal sound without completely enclosing the drumkit's sound within the shield. (You don't want to create an "isolation booth" unless you intend to mike the drums and project them through a sound system.)

Adding some absorbent material to the walls near your drumkit could have a beneficial effect, but you'll probably need to discuss that option with the folks concerned with the aesthetics of your church

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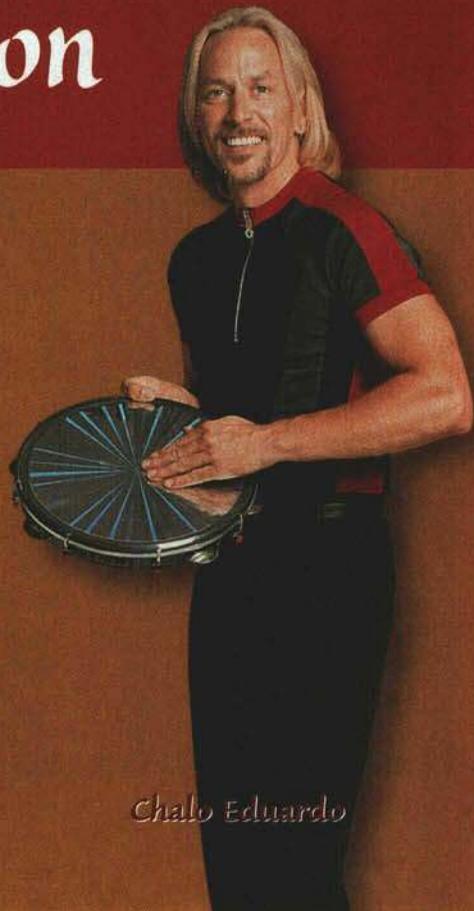
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Chalo Eduardo

structure. It may be that a plush wallcovering or even a layer of carpeting in a complementary color would be okay, while a two-inch layer of industrial-grade acoustic foam might be considered unsightly. If a permanent treatment is out of the question, you can create portable "baffles" using sheets of plywood covered with acoustic foam or carpeting. These can be leaned against the walls, or made free-standing with their own legs.

## Louie Weaver Video

**Q** In his interview in the November '97 *MD*, Louie Weaver mentioned a video he had just completed. He said it was different from the usual educational video. How is it different, and where can it be obtained?

Jeffery Mylett  
Longview, TX

**A** Louie's video—called *Back To The Basics*—is different in that it doesn't focus on drum technique. Instead, it focuses on the drum itself, and how it relates to one's playing. The video takes Louie into the Drum Workshop factory, where infor-

mation is given on how a drum's size, construction, and materials can affect the way it reacts to the drummer's playing—and to the rest of the kit. This information is provided to make the viewer more comfortable with the overall selection and tuning of his or her drums.

The next section is a "cymbal shopping" trip with Louie, on which he explains what he looks for and how he pieces together a completely matched set. This is followed by a "day with Petra," first at a sound-check, then at a concert, where Louie ends the video with a drum solo.

You can obtain the video directly from Louie, by contacting Weaver & Associates at PO Box 171037, Nashville, TN 37217-1037.

## Pearl BLX History

**Q** I recently purchased a used set of black Pearl *BLX* drums that includes a 22" bass, 12" and 13" rack toms, and a 16" floor tom. It included no snare drum or hardware—but it was only \$600. I'd like to know more about its history, including when it was made, what it was made of, and when Pearl stopped making *BLX*

drums. I'd also like to know what the drums might be worth.

Rob Stansel  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

**A** Pearl's product specialist, Gene Okamoto, provides the following information: "The *BLX (Prestige Session)* series was introduced in 1987. The drums featured 6-ply, 7.5 mm, 100% birch shells, high-tension lugs, and super-high-gloss lacquer finishes. Thanks to their 'naturally equalized' sound—accentuated 'lows' and 'highs' and slightly reduced mid-range—the *BLXs* were (and still are) considered by many as some of the finest recording drums ever produced.

"The *BLX* series was replaced by the *Masters Studio (MBX)* series in 1996. In 1995, the retail price for components like those you purchased (bass, floor tom, and two rack toms) was \$2,732. As you can see, you got an excellent deal! I hope you enjoy them for many years to come."

## Sabian Plus Vs. Pro

**Q** I just bought a 16" Sabian *B8 Plus* Chinese cymbal from a second-hand

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# Regal Tip

Hernando "El Negro" Hernandez

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music store. I am familiar with all the different cymbal lines offered by Sabian, yet I cannot find the *Plus* line in any of my Sabian catalogs. Could anyone tell me what the *Plus* means, and why Sabian stopped manufacturing this line?

Tyler McMillan  
Brandon, Manitoba, Canada

**A**Wayne Blanchard, Sabian's marketing communications manager, responds: "The *B8 Plus* series was one of two 'unrolled' or 'sheet metal' cymbal series launched by Sabian in the late 1980s—the other series being the *B8*. Both were created to offer Sabian quality at reduced price points, and both provided players with an alternative to our then lineup of professional 'cast' bronze (80% copper, 20% tin) AA and *HH* series (since expanded to include *AAX* and *Signature* series).

"Precision-formed from *B8* bronze (92% copper, 8% tin), *B8 Plus* cymbals were lathed for tone, then hammered with a unique 'open O' pattern before being buffed to a *Brilliant* finish and (like the *B8*) coated with a surface-protecting clear lacquer. The high-pressure/high-heat buffing

process not only influenced the appearance of the cymbal, it enhanced its sound by giving it a brighter, fuller response. The 'Plus' designation referred to the added value of this *Brilliant* finish and improved sound. If treated with care, your *B8 Plus* cymbal should satisfy you for many years.

"Although the *B8 Plus* series was very popular, it was superseded by the *B8 Pro* series once new technology became available to Sabian. The newer line features enhanced lathing and hammering for an even more musical sound, yet still retains the bright, *Brilliant* look of the original *Plus* series. The original *B8* has also recently been modified and reintroduced. Although it retains the same name, it offers superior design quality and sound at very favorable prices."

## Noise Reduction Rating

**Q**Mark Parsons' "Watch Your Ears" series a few issues back mentioned the term "noise reduction rating" (abbreviated *NRR*). Does this refer to a certain number of decibels reduced? I'm wondering, because an *NRR* of 12 (or 12 decibels) doesn't seem too impressive when ambient noise levels of rock music can get up to 120 decibels or more. I'd appreciate some clarification.

Bill Anderson  
Salt Lake City, UT

**A**Mark Parsons replies: "Yes, the *NRR* refers to decibels. If the ambient noise level is 100 dB and your hearing protection has an *NRR* of 12, then the level reaching your ears is theoretically 88 dB. That 12 dB reduction *is* significant, because the decibel scale is logarithmic rather than linear. That is, every 6 dB increase represents a double of the sound pressure level. So 88 dB is not 12% quieter than 100 dB, but *four times* quieter.

"If that's not enough reduction (and sometimes it isn't), hearing protection is commonly available with *NRRs* in the 25-30 dB range. The only drawback is that most high-level hearing protectors (with the exception of custom items like the Westone *ER-25s* mentioned in the article) have a non-linear acoustic response. But this is a small price to pay for saving your ears."

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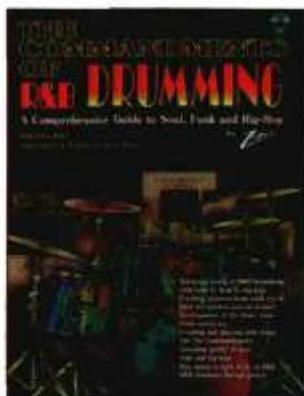
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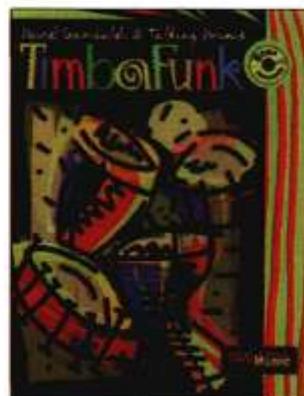
When one thinks of Gary Husband's drumming style, the first word that comes to mind is "versatile." Through his many years of performing and recording, Husband has managed to play with a wide range of artists in many varied circumstances. From his electric improvisations with Allan Holdsworth (seven records to date), through recording gold and platinum records for acts such as Level 42, to touring with legendary musicians such as Jack Bruce and Gary Moore, Husband manages to offer each situation his rare expertise, combining interplay and improvisation to achieve dazzling effects. That's why he's the best drummer in the business to demonstrate these skills, as he does on this remarkable video.



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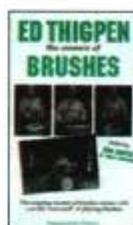
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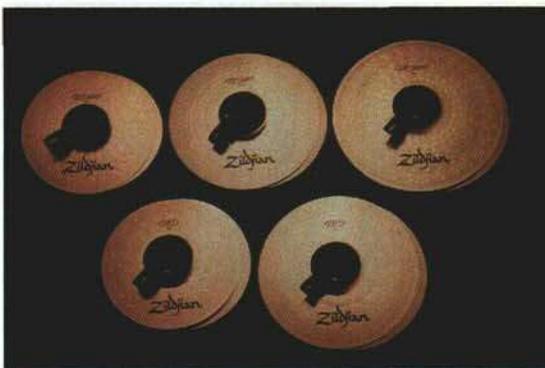
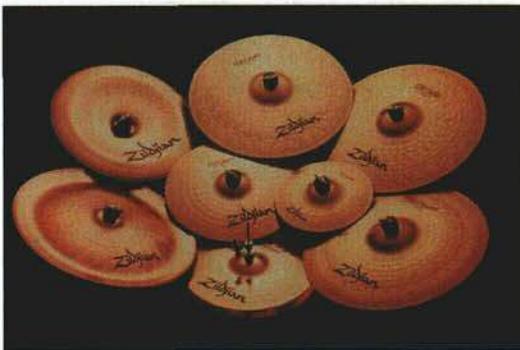
## Zildjian Celebrates The Old And The New

375th Anniversary Cymbal, New ZBT And ZBT-Plus Models, Gongs, Super Cymbal Bag, And Cymbal Cleaners

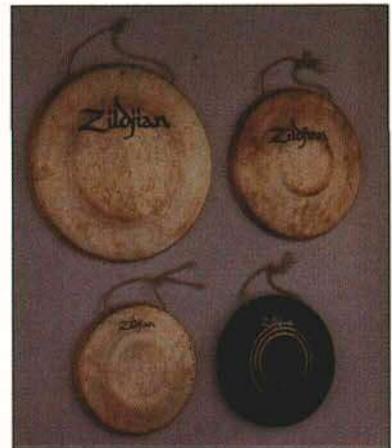


Every time you turn around these days, some percussion company is celebrating an anniversary. But none can hold a candle (no pun intended) to Zildjian's 375th anniversary this year. To mark this occasion, Zildjian will issue a commemorative 16" A Zildjian medium-thin crash with a specially engraved logo. Only 1,623 pieces will be run for world-wide consumption (in recognition of the year 1623, when the company was established). Each piece will have a serial number engraved beneath the logo.

On the new side of things, Zildjian has added several models to its *ZBT-Plus* range of sheet-bronze cymbals. They include an 18" crash-ride, a 10" splash, 14" and 18" medium-thin crashes, an 18" Rock crash, 13" medium hi-hats, and 16" and 18" Chinas.



Band models have also been added to both the *ZBT* and *ZBT-Plus* ranges. The new models are said to be ideal for all marching, drum corps, and concert band activities. Both *ZBT* and *ZBT-Plus* models will be offered in 14" and 16" pairs; 18" *ZBT-Plus* pairs will also be available.



Additions to Zildjian's line of imported Chinese gongs include a 10" tam tam (with a fully lathed front and rear for a classic gong sound and clear tone), a 10" boa (dark and funky, capable of many tones), a 12" jing descending (partially lathed in front, with a bright tone that descends in pitch as it decays), and a 15" fuyin descending (fully lathed front and back, with a "surprisingly full sound for a relatively small instrument").



Zildjian's new *Super Cymbal Carrying Bag* holds cymbals up to 24" in diameter in the main section, and up to 16" in the centered side pocket. The main compartment also features three dividers. On the other side of the bag is a large pocket for drumstick bags or other items (such as sheet music or accessories). The bag also features an oversized padded shoulder strap, two top carrying handles, thick padding, and three tough skid plates.



Finally, Zildjian now offers two new cymbal cleaners. *ZBT Cymbal Cleaner* is intended for sheet bronze cymbals (including *ZBT*, *ZBT-Plus*, and *Edge* cymbals) that come from the factory with protective coatings. The cleaner is formulated to maintain the coating as much as possible and to be gentle on logos. *Zildjian Liquid Cymbal Cleaner* is formulated to clean light to moderately soiled cast cymbals—specifically *Brilliant-finish As*, *KS*, *A Customs*, *K Customs*, *Z Customs*, etc.



## Orchestral Percussion Without A Concert Hall

### De Mowbray Enterprises Tour Timps

For pop, symphonic, or marching percussionists who've longed for the dramatic sound of timpani—but couldn't handle the problems created by the sheer size of the instrument—here's a radical new solution. English percussionist/inventor Marcus de Mowbray's *Tour Timps* portable timpani feature an open shell design on a folding stand with a pedal mechanism. They do away with the large copper bowl, making carrying and setup a breeze. (A two-piece unit—kettle and stand—takes about thirty seconds to erect.) The drums use conventional plastic heads, and are available in four sizes: 23", 26", 29", and 32". Suggested retail price is \$1,500 for drums in powder-coated stove enamel black; special colors can be made to order.

## Tama Strikes Again

### Second Generation Iron Cobra Pedals, New Iron Cobra Hi-Hat, And Air-Ride Snare Stand For Triple-Flanged Hoops

Tama's *Iron Cobra* line of bass drum pedals has been totally redesigned with new and improved features, including the addition of the *Flexi-Glide* strap-drive model.

The company has also added a line of *Iron Cobra* hi-hats, featuring an easy-to-position two-legged design. The hi-hats are available in both traditional-pull and *Lever-Glide* versions.

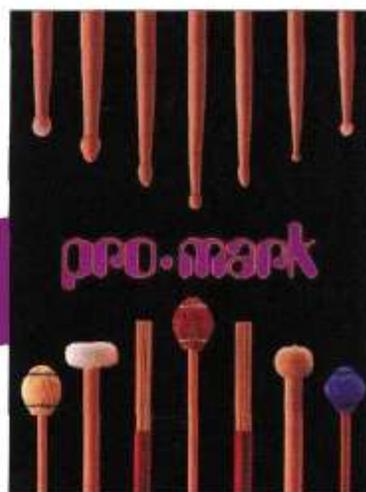
Finally, the *Air-Ride* snare-suspension stand originally created for use with snare drums fitted with die-cast hoops has now been adapted for use with drums fitted with triple-flanged hoops.



## Read It Here!

### Pro-Mark Issues 1998 Catalog

According to Pro-Mark, their new 1998 catalog is "the most ambitious catalog in the company's history." It contains "an unprecedented number of new products, along with lots of helpful technical information, such as stick-selection hints." Drummers may obtain a free copy simply by contacting Pro-Mark directly.



## Go To The Source Monolith Drums Available Directly

Canada's Monolith carbon fiber drums are now available direct from the manufacturer. The high-tech materials and unique design of the drums are said to offer more control, clarity, and consistency than can be found with traditional wood drums. Monolith drums are also significantly lighter than almost any other type of drum, size for size. Interested parties are requested to contact the company directly for more details and ordering information.



## Restore Or Replace... The Choice Is Up To You J&J Drum Restoration/Custom Drums

Got a kit that you love the sound of, but that needs a facelift? J&J Restoration specializes in re-covering drums, currently doing an average of twenty kits per month. Drums are stripped of their hardware and original finish, and new covering material is hand-fitted and glued to the entire shell surface. The edges of the covering material are cut to match the era of the drum: 45° for contemporary drums, rounded edges for vintage drums. All

hardware is cleaned and buffed before being re-installed. The result is a "like new" drumkit.

J&J also offers refinishing, using the *Accuspray High Volume/Low Pressure* system for an even, near-factory finish and a virtually unlimited choice of stain colors. They can also re-cut bearing edges and snare beds, and will attempt re-threading of stripped parts and other minor repairs.

For those who'd prefer an all-new custom-made kit, J&J Custom Drums states that they differ from other custom drum makers in the areas of choice and price. They use 5-, 6-, 8-, and 10-ply Keller shells, with or without reinforcing rings, and do all edge-cutting, hardware drilling, and every other aspect of the kit design according to the buyer's specifications. Prices vary according to size, finish, and specifics, but a six-piece kit with a lacquer or covered finish and chrome hardware could be expected to cost around \$1,500.



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distributed by E-MU Systems, Inc.

## Clank And Clack To Your Heart's Content

### LP Improved Prestige Cowbell And Blast Blocks



LP has reintroduced their *Prestige* cowbell with a new, more attractive finish. The bell is known for its "rich, deep sound and carefully balanced overtones," dating back to the sounds of bells used on horsedrawn wagons on dairy farms of the 19th century. But the construction has been updated to meet contemporary playing demands.

LP's new *Blast Blocks* are made of *Bellastic* plastic, offering a fuller sound, a sharper "pop," and more durability than traditional wood blocks. Engineered to withstand even the most aggressive playing, the blocks are available in two sizes: a large, green model with a deep sound (\$28), and a smaller, yellow model that's higher-pitched (\$26). Each is fitted with a steel eyebolt clamp for secure placement on any 3/8" rod.



## And What's More

After over two years of developmental research, **Aquarian Accessories** is now making an of its drumheads out of *X-W*(Extra Warm) drumhead film, which they say has a "more natural, resonant, and musical sound," making drums sound "fuller, more powerful, and more responsive than ever before." The company has also introduced a new *Dura-Coat* formula for all their coated heads, which they say produces "a better attack, a fuller sound, and unparalleled durability." In order to facilitate all this development and their recent sales growth, the company has expanded with a new 18,000-square-foot manufacturing facility.

Known for their custom-crafted drums, **Kenner** is now offering totally custom-made hickory, maple, and white oak sticks, with options including twenty-three tips, two taper sizes, an array of diameters, and custom-cut lengths. All sticks are individually made, without the use of any automated machinery. Prices range from \$5 to \$9 per pair (four- to six-pair minimum, depending on style) for standard woods; sticks are also available in exotic woods at additional charge.



## Making Contact

### Aquarian Accessories

1140 N. Tustin Ave.  
Anaheim, CA 92801  
tel: (714) 632-0230  
fax: (714) 632-3905  
aquarian98@aol.com

### Monolith

1379 Centre Road  
Carlisle, ON LOR 1H0  
Canada  
(888) 858-3786  
www.monolith.la

### De Mowbray Enterprises

c/o Orpheus Music  
13814 Lookout Rd.  
San Antonio, TX 78233  
tel: (800) 821-9448  
fax: (210) 637-0232  
OrpheusMus@aol.com

### Pro-Mark

10707 Craighead Dr.  
Houston, TX 77025-5899  
tel: (800) 233-5250  
fax: (713) 669-8000  
info@promark-stix.com  
www.promark-stix.com

### J&J Drum Restoration Custom Drums

881 Beechmeadow Lane  
Cincinnati, OH 45238  
(513)347-3786

### Tama

Hoshino USA  
1726 Winchester Road  
Bensalem, PA 19020  
tel: (215) 638-8670  
fax: (215) 245-8583  
hoshino@aol.com

### Kenner Custom Sticks

Rt. #1 Box 150  
California, KY 41007  
(606) 635-5218

### Zildjian

22 Longwater Dr.  
Norwell, MA 02061  
tel: (617) 871-2200  
fax: (617) 871-3984

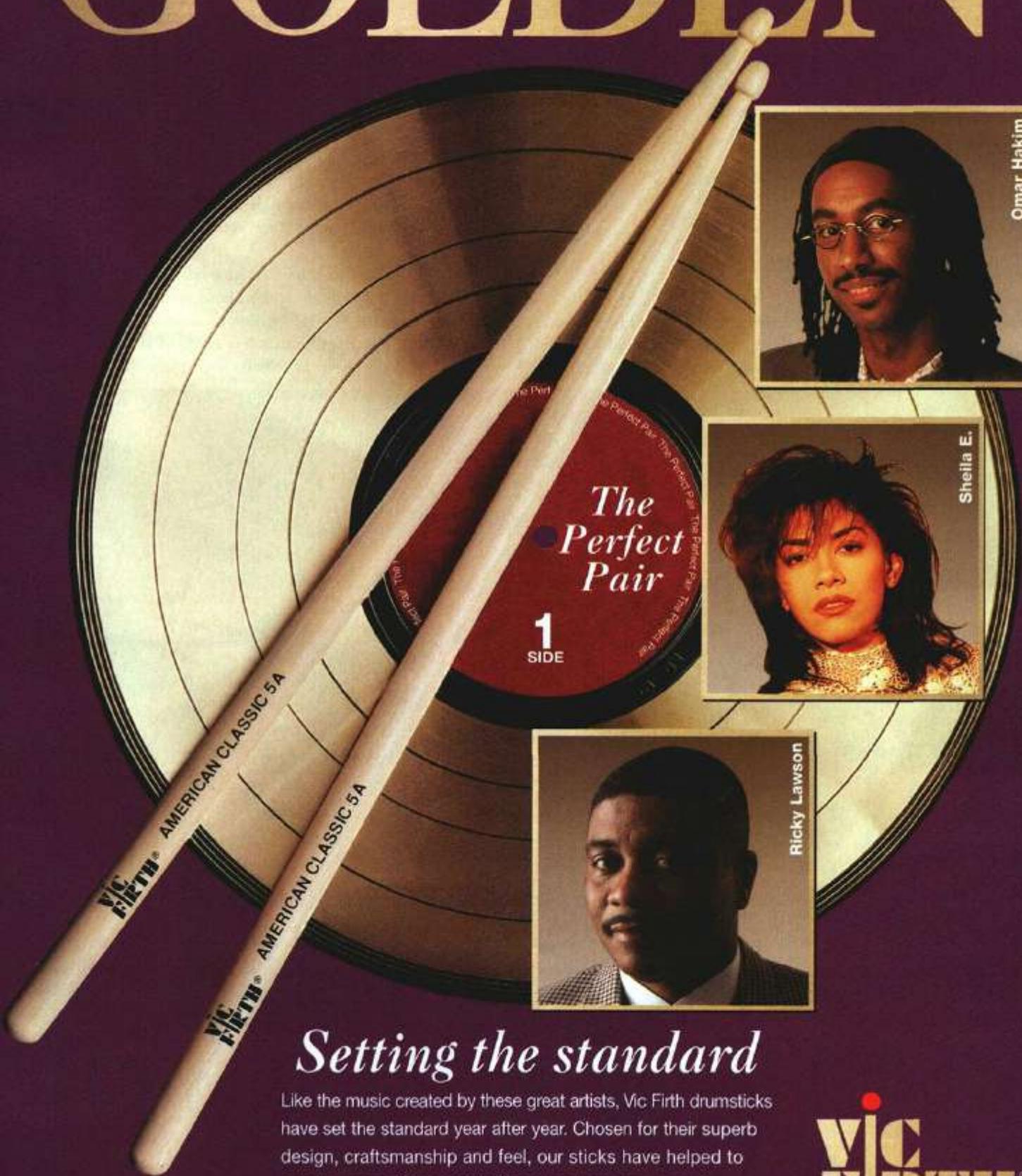
### LP Music Group

160 Belmont Ave.  
Garfield, NJ 07026  
tel: (973) 478-6903  
fax: (973) 772-3568  
www.lpmusic.com

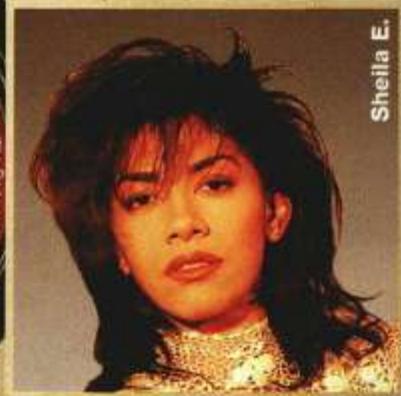
### CORRECTION

Previous mentions of Australia's **Sleishman Drums** in *MD* have noted their address in error. The correct address is: Unit 11, 127-129, Newbridge Road, Chipping Norton, NSW 2170, Australia, tel: 011-61-02-9600-9472, fax: 011-61-02-9600-9485

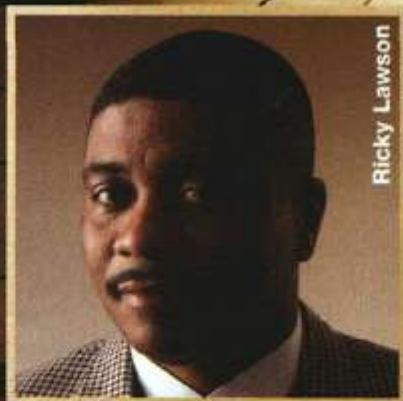
# GOLDEN



Omar Hakim



Sheila E.



Ricky Lawson

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# Rocket Shells Road Series Drumkit

by Rick Van Horn

## Drum sounds from the space age

When it comes to the design of drums, certain laws of physics dictate things like the basic shape, the combination of rigid shell and vibrating membrane, the requirement for some method of tension-

ing that membrane, etc. Variations of these items do occur, but they can only be minimal before you lose the initial concept of what a drum is.

So, when it comes to achieving innovation, drum makers have to look to what they can do *within* those established design parameters. A drum pretty much needs to have a cylindrical shell. That's a given. But what that shell is *made* of is subject to variation. And the folks at Rocket Shells have made that variation the



Jim Esposito

focus of their drum design. Instead of wood, metal, or even fiber-glass, they've chosen to go with carbon fiber—a material that came out of space-travel technology.

Carbon fiber is an excellent material for drum construction. It can be shaped and molded, it's exceptionally strong relative to its weight, and it's dense and reflective. (And it has its own unique aesthetic appearance, too.)

Owing to the benefits carbon fiber has to offer toward drum construction, it's not surprising that there are other carbon fiber drumkits on the market. One brand offers extremely thin shells and a specially designed tensioning system that eliminates traditional tension lugs. Rocket Shells, on the other hand, has chosen to offer their *Road Series* drums in a more traditional form: shells just under 1/4" thick, fitted with fairly traditional tension lugs. Granted, those lugs are custom-molded of yet another space-age composite material, but they are affixed to the drumshells with bolts and nuts, and they do receive standard tension rods.

So the basic difference between Rocket Shells *Road Series* drums and most other drums on the market is the shells themselves. And it's a significant difference.

### General Description

Our test kit was a package strictly of drums; Rocket Shells leaves the choice of hardware up to the buyer. But the toms were unusual in their size configurations: 6x8, 6x10, 8x12, 9x14, and 12x16—all suspended. The bass drum was a 16x22 model, while the snare measured 5 1/2 x14. All of the toms were fitted with RIMS mounts, utilizing the RIMS universal mounting plate to accommodate whatever tom mount the buyer chooses. In our case the mounts were Gibraltar clamps designed to receive L-rod mounts.

The bass drum was equipped with generic rotating spurs and black wooden hoops. No tom mount was installed. Small, rectangular "claw hooks" and drumkey-operated tension rods provided the tuning.

All of the toms were fitted with triple-flanged steel hoops; the snare drum came equipped with die-cast hoops. While the composite tuning lugs on all the drums, as well as the throw-off and butt on the snare drum, were all finished in black, the hoops were chrome-plated.

The toms had clear Remo *Emperor* batters and *Ambassador* bottom heads. The bass drum had a clear *Powerstroke 3* batter and a single-ply black logo head with a 6" hole at around the 10:00 position. The snare drum featured a coated *Ambassador* batter and an *Ambassador* snare-side head.

### The Sound

Carbon fiber is a dense, reflective material. As such, it tends to promote attack, resonance, and sustain. Not surprisingly, those were the acoustic characteristics that impressed us the most about the Rocket Shells drums. The depth of pitch produced by the toms—aided by the wise choice of clear *Emperor* batters—was fairly impressive, considering the shallowness of their shells. But they weren't what I'd call "thunderous." Instead, they tended to project a round, powerful, lively sound that would cut through well in just about any situation.

The bass drum went along with the same acoustic program.

### WHAT'S HOT

- distinctive, lively sound from toms and bass drum
- outstanding projection and sensitivity from snare drum
- unique 3-D appearance to drumshells

### WHAT'S NOT

- oversize logos and nuts holding tension casings detract from drums' appearance

Right out of the box it sounded big, with a controlled sound that we liked (without any additional muffling). It stressed attack and punch over mine-shaft depth, but its pitch was plenty low in relation to the pitch range of the toms. Cut and projection were excellent, without having to over-stomp on the pedal.

The one thing that I found lacking in the acoustic character of this kit was warmth—at least as it came out of the box. This isn't surprising, considering that "warmth" is a characteristic almost exclusively attributed to wood shells. But in an experiment to see how I could alter this situation, I fitted the 12" tom with a Remo *Fiberskyn 3 FA* batter head. This thicker, mellower head served to reduce the attack and brightness somewhat, while not sacrificing anything in the way of projection. It certainly wasn't *as* warm a sound as a maple kit might provide, but it was much warmer than I expected. So the potential for acoustic variety is there, given a little experimentation with head selection.

The snare drum was the gem of this collection. Fitted with die-cast hoops, it came out of the box ready to take on the world. The pitch range of a snare drum is where all of the acoustic characteristics of carbon fiber really shine. The Rocket Shells snare had an *intense* level of crispness, crack, projection, and resonance—and rimshots that would simply take your head off. The drum had a certain amount of metallic ring, but if one didn't want that ring (and the added cut it would provide) it could be removed: Just the slightest amount of muffling resulted in a dry, clean, powerful snare sound.

Rocket Shells attaches little tags to each drum, on which they say that the drums are "more sensitive than wood drums" and "LOUDER." More sensitive? Well, the reflectivity of the shells creates a brightness that can be heard even at low impact, so that could be interpreted as sensitivity. Louder than a wood drum? Without a decibel meter and a mechanical device with which to hit both drums with exactly the same amount of force, I wouldn't want to stake my life on that particular claim. But again, the bright, attack-y sound certainly had plenty of projection and power. And I must admit that I didn't have to hit the drums with maximum effort in order to gain that excellent projection.

### The Looks

Our test kit was finished in the "natural" black color of the carbon fiber material. The woven-fabric nature of that material and the deep-gloss clear-coat that Rocket Shells applies *over* the fabric combine to create a very 3-D effect. It's almost like looking into a hologram. Of course, the effect diminishes as you get further away from the kit, and depending on the lighting angle, eventually it just looks like a very rich, glossy black. (Not that there's anything



this the instant they saw the kit. A smaller logo was used on the snare drum and looked fine, so I heartily suggest that Rocket Shells employ similar logo decals proportionate in size to each individual drum.

My other problem is with the hardware used to attach the composite lugs to the shells. The lugs are diminutive in size, but the nuts used to attach them are quite large. Again, when you're talking about shallow-depth drums (fitted with clear heads), you're talking about a lot of nuts visible in a fairly small area. The snare drum seems especially crowded.

Given my favorable comments about the sound of the drums, it may be that the size of the lug-casing nuts has little or no acoustic effect on that sound. On the other hand, I *have* to think that reducing the size of the nuts would reduce the overall mass of the shells somewhat, which usually contributes to added low end—something that could only benefit the overall performance of the kit. Smaller nuts might also reduce the weight of each drum slightly, which is always nice. They would certainly reduce the crowded look inside each shell.

### Conclusions And Pricing

Rocket Shells' little tags also state that their drums are "light and strong." I'll give them "strong": Carbon fiber was developed for use in high-test aircraft and space vehicles, and it's one of the strongest materials currently known. So it's no surprise that the company can offer a guarantee "for the life of the original owner." Properly maintained, a Rocket Shells kit will probably outlive *several* owners.

"Light" is another matter. It may be that if the drums were stripped to their bare shells, those shells would be lighter than comparably sized wood shells. But with the addition of the rims, the lugs (and their oversized nuts), and the RIMS mounts and Gibraltar brackets, I didn't notice much difference between the Rocket Shells drums and several other drums of similar size.

If you're looking for drums that can put out a powerful, lively sound with minimal effort on your part, that look very different from anyone else's, and that are likely to be the last drumkit you'd ever need to buy, you should definitely consider the Rocket Shells *Road Series* kit. Be prepared for the fact that high-tech materials don't come cheap, however. The company offers an extensive range of drum sizes both smaller and larger than those we reviewed, but to give you a point of reference, the toms on our test kit are priced as follows: 6x8-\$369; 6x10-\$486; 8x12-\$602; 9x14-\$788; and 12x16-\$998. (All of these prices are with steel rims; die-cast rims are available on all but the 6x8 at additional charge. Tom prices also include black or chrome RIMS mounts.) The 16x22 bass drum lists for \$1,349, while the 5 1/2x14 snare drum (with die-cast hoops) goes for \$732. All of these prices are based on the "natural" black finish; custom colors are available at additional charge.

Rocket Shells drums aren't carried in too many retail stores yet, so if your dealer doesn't have any information on them, contact the company directly at 5431 Auburn Blvd., #346, Sacramento, CA 95841, tel: (916) 334-2234, fax: (916) 334-4310, e-mail: [rocket@cwia.com](mailto:rocket@cwia.com).

wrong with that!)

The black composite lugs tend to disappear into the shells when viewed from a distance, where chrome lugs often stand out from a drum's finish. This gives the kit a very clean, streamlined overall look. Regrettably, the large universal RIMS brackets interfere with this somewhat, but I understand the need to use them in order to accommodate the various hardware systems that buyers might select.

The black hoops on the bass drum gave it a nice consistent look, which led me to wonder how black rims (and RIMS mounts) on *all* of the drums might look. They might provide a really sharp, thematic appearance—or they might make the kit look pretty sinister. I suppose it would depend on your aesthetic point of view.

If black isn't to your taste, take heart: Rocket Shells offers their drums in a variety of transparent colors (which still allow the 3-D effect of the carbon fiber weave to show through), and in a batch of opaques and sparkles. All of the finishes are still covered by the company's high-gloss clear-coat to create depth and luster.

I did have two problems when it came to the look of the kit. The first is the size of the logos. Rocket shells uses a black-and-white decal logo actually placed within the clear coat of the finish, rather than a badge attached to the shell. Unfortunately, they only use one size on all the toms and the bass drum, and it's pretty big: about 5" high and almost as wide. This is no problem on the front bass drum head, and I didn't really mind it too much on the floor toms. But when it came to the rack toms—especially the two 6"-deep drums—the logo virtually filled the space between the top and bottom rims. Two other editors in my office commented on

# Sabian Signature Cymbals

by Rich Watson

Sabian releases a torrent of signature cymbals as distinctive as the drummers behind them.

Gear-heads rejoice: Cymbal manufacturers have been churning out tons of new products to tempt and delight, and it seems that Sabian has been busier than most. Formerly considered specialty items within their other lines, Sabian's *Signature* cymbals were recently "promoted" to full-series status, right alongside their *HHs*, *AAs*, *AAXs*, etc. This perhaps reflects a mainstreaming of the peculiar—and I use this term in a purely positive sense—and answers the drumming public's demand for dramatically different sounds with which to express themselves. Some of Sabian's creative endorsers have joined up with the creative folks at Sabian to design instruments that have their names *and* sonic identities all over them—cymbals like you've never heard before.

## Terry Bozzio Radia

Terry Bozzio's intricate, melodic, multi-textured solo compositions have expanded our view of the drumset's role—and certainly its musical capabilities—to near-orchestral dimensions. It should come as no surprise then that the *Radia* cymbals Terry helped develop occupy new sonic territory as well. This diverse range of instruments was designed to support Terry's melodic approach to drumming, but its component cymbals could individually complement a more conventional cymbal setup as well.

*Radia* refers to the scoring that "radiates" perpendicular to the dark, unlathed bells and outer "rings" on each cymbal's surface. Made of Sabian's B20 bronze, all are deeply hand-hammered and fairly heavy. (Note that cymbal box sets such as the melodic crash sets can be purchased at lower cost than the total price of individual cymbals.)

**Crashes:** Available as the "Low Melodic Crash Set" (\$937) or individually, the 16" *Radia* light crash (\$279), plus the 18" (\$330), and 20" (\$378) *Radia* crashes are harmonically complex, yet dry and tonally focused so as to interact in a quasi-melodic way. They feature a strong, full attack, but their highs dissipate rapidly, facilitating quick, non-conflicting interplay among the different notes.

The 8" (\$141), 10" (\$150), and 12" (\$180) splashes, plus the 14" crash (\$254) are available as the "High Melodic Crash Set" (\$669) or individually. Although their pitch is proportionately higher, it's low for cymbals of this size. The line's characteristic

dryness is even more apparent in these little guys, making them particularly effective as punctuators, especially for hard, inter-measure punches with a kick drum.

You may be wondering, "Would I have to 'go the melodic route' and replace my entire cymbal setup to make these things work?" The answer is no. Although not all the *Radias* flattered my current cymbal setup, some broadened it more than they "stood out," much in the way that an auxiliary piccolo snare drum or pair of timbales expands the sonic capabilities of a "standard" drumkit. (And others mixed-and-matched acceptably with "cymbals in residence" here at *MD*.) In particular, the 10" and 12" crashes blended well individually, and were dynamite when used as a pair, especially in fast alternated succession, and in conjunction with double-kick fills.

**Chinese:** Used alone, the 10" (\$150) and 12" (\$180) *Radia* Chinese models have a pitch that is more commensurate with their thickness than others in the series, and surprisingly high for a Chinese-style cymbal. The result is a tonal quality that is paradoxically both trashy and bright. One of *MD*'s editors preferred the



sound of these smaller Chinese cymbals when they were firmly "clamped" between felt washers. While this practice is not recommended for preservation of your cymbal investment, it did produce yet another *Radio* sonic option you might care to explore.

Terry nests an 8" *HH Leopard* splash (\$125) in the 10" *Radia* Chinese, and a 10" *Leopard* splash (\$135) in the 12" Chinese, both turned upside down. These combinations created a harsh, dissonant rasp—somewhat like synthesized white noise—but with a nice, guttural opening note. (Played alone, the *Leopard* splashes—which are not part of the *Terry Bozzio Radia* series—were loud and clangy.)

The 18" (\$330) and 20" (\$378) *Radia* Chinese produced markedly different pitches and tonalities depending on how hard and which part of them you struck, availing abundant expressive possibilities to the creative drummer. When played on the scored middle section of the underside, they produced a fairly light, medium-pitched, trashy ride sound. When played on the edge with the shoulder of the stick, they were dark, warm, and ominous when struck lightly, and explosive when bashed. The voice of the 20" model in particular was wonderfully gong-like, especially when played with mallets.

Sabian also suggests nesting the 16" *Radia* heavy crash (\$279) inside the 18" *Radia* Chinese in an upside-down configuration, but hung nearly vertically. Called the "Low Stacked Crash-Chinese Combination" (\$578), they produce a "white-noise" effect as described above, but lower in pitch and much, much bigger.

Flat Ride: Used alone, the *Radia* flat ride is arguably the most "normal" of the series, although it too has a distinctive voice. As you'd expect from a flat ride, it was dry and clear, with absolutely no buildup, but less "pingy" than most, with a balanced midrange that would blend well with any lower-volume ensemble. Sabian suggests trying the flat ride with the 18" *Radia* Chinese stacked on top. (Terry uses a 20" Chinese.) This combination was noisy, rattly, and aggressive—one I wouldn't recommend for the piano solo on "Tenderly"—but for louder, nastier settings...? It lists for \$378.

Mini Hats: Comprising a brilliant-finished 8" *HH Leopard* splash top (which, unlike the 10" used in combination with the Chinese above, wasn't the least bit clangy) and a bell-less 8" *Radia* Bell Disc bottom, these little guys are too small for use as a main hi-hat. But they would be swell when used as remotes, since their sound would contrast that of any standard-size pairs. Predictably, their chick sound was fast and crisp, as was their "bark." Terry uses these as auxiliary hats, clamped shut, placed to the immediate right of his snare drum, where many drummers would place a bass drum-mounted cowbell. The *Mini Hats* list for \$266.

Cup Chimes: These odd little gems will remind urbane percussionists of the hypnotic melodies of gamelan. The rest of us may associate their clear, sustaining, "hollow" tones with *Kung Fu* soundtracks or harbor bells. In any case, each chime can produce three usable notes: one on the deep "bell," one on the narrow flange, and one by striking the flange with the stick shaft perpen-

dicular to it, drawing a musical upper harmonic. (This technique is possible with almost any cymbal, but due to the cup chimes' extremely thick bronze and deep bell, the sound they produce is sweeter and more audible than usual.) *Radia* cup chimes are available in three sizes: 7" (\$135), 8" (\$141), and 9" (\$144).

## Evelyn Glennie "Glennie's Garbage"

Noted solo percussionist Evelyn Glennie teamed up with Sabian to augment her diverse setup with accent cymbals that would deliver a harsh, dark, and tonally focused sound. Sabian affectionately named the fruits of their labor "*Glennie's Garbage*." It's an apt moniker, conjuring up trashiness, a term pretty much redefined by the way these cymbals sound.

Sabian and Evelyn chose a nickel/silver alloy for its compressed tonal qualities and "raw" metallic sound. The *Glennies* are also distinguished by heavy hammering and high, almost conical profiles. The nickel/silver alloy also gives them an unusual gray color, which is protected by a clear lacquer surface coating.

*Glennie's Garbage* crashes are available in 10" (\$129), 12" (\$147), and 16" (\$213) sizes. To my ear, the smallest of the three produced a kind of *bong* sound that didn't exactly turn my musical crank. I preferred the two larger models, which opened up a little more into their lower *cawhh* sound.

Though pleasantly exotic and mysterious-sounding when played lightly, like the *Radias* these cymbals pretty much beg to be bashed. Even then (and this is one area where I differ with Sabian's description of their sound), their sound is not particularly cutting. For this reason, they work best for inter-pattern punctuation and accents (versus standard post-fill crash functions). I found them to be equally effective when supported with snare drum or kick, and because of their low pitch, fast response, and nearly instant decay, they provide great "voice leading" and timbral contrast when played on pickups to other, brighter-sounding crashes.

## David Garibaldi Jam Master

The least outlandish of this batch of *Signatures*, *Jam Masters* would adapt to a variety of drumming situations. A lighter, small-group jazz band is probably the only application for which I wouldn't recommend them, since their fundamental sound is quite bright, focused, and fairly high-pitched. Made of hand-hammered B20 bronze, *Jam Masters* are identified by a lathed bottom and unlathed top. The cymbals sent for review had a brilliant finish, which, due to the unlathed top, creates an attractive "brilliant-over-dark" look. The line is also available in natural finish.

The moderately dry 22" *Jam Master* ride (\$447) has a defined stick sound that is bolstered by an open, medium-pitched wash and controlled spread. Its strong, clear bell sound would be great for rock, funk, and even Latin music.

Many crash/rides tend to compromise the effectiveness of one or both functions. I was impressed by how well the 18" *Jam Master* crash/ride (\$327) fulfilled both. Sabian described Garibaldi's crash/ride as having a powerful crash response and a



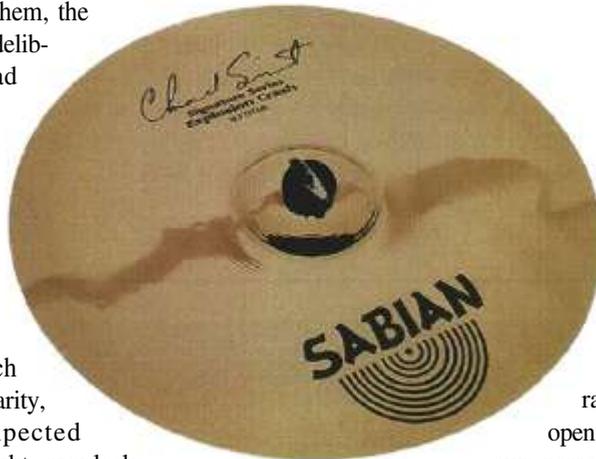
ride sound of moderate definition and maximum spread. I agree with the part about the crash, which was indeed powerful, and quick for an 18" cymbal. However, the cymbal sent for review had excellent definition, and almost no spread. Its high, pingy stick sound remained remarkably clear and cutting even through hard riding. The puzzle:

How'd Sabian get it to do all these mutually exclusive things? Especially if, due to limited finances and/or space in your setup, you need a good multi-functional workhorse of a cymbal, don't miss checking out the *Jam Master* crash/ride.

### Chad Smith Explosion Crashes

"Explosion" is right! Like the Red Hot Chili Peppers bad boy who helped design them, the *Explosion* crashes speak with brash deliberateness and red-hot muscle. Chad reportedly went to Sabian in quest of "a cymbal that would take my face off at fifty paces." After much experimentation, Chad's "de-fac-ing" weapons of choice were the *Explosion* crashes, which (as should surprise no one) come in odd sizes—18 1/2" and 20 1/2".

Made of Sabian's B8 bronze, which is known for high pitch and tonal clarity, Chad's *Explosions* deliver the expected bite—and then some. They have light, regularly spaced hammering marks and are fully lathed. Both models were relatively fast, with focused fundamentals. Like most larger, heavier cymbals, both required a pretty good whack to get the sound moving. The smaller model produced a lingering, edgy upper harmonic like a band saw in Hell's wood shop. The larger one had a



broader tonal spectrum, and a lower, though no less powerful dominant pitch.

One of MD's editors who has an insatiable appetite for high frequencies loved the 20 1/2" *Explosion* crash—as a ride!—and the folks at Sabian have confirmed that he is not alone.

Surprising for a crash, the stick sound on both models is sufficiently piercing to be heard even amidst crashes.

If your crashes have been getting buried by your guitarist's Marshalls, Chad might have devised the means to reopen your lines of communication with the audience. They come in brilliant finish, with a lacquer protective coating. Prices for the 18 1/2" and 20 1/2" cymbals are \$189 and \$225 respectively.

### Conclusions

With their latest batch of signature cymbal lines, no one can accuse Sabian of playing it safe. These cymbals are not for everybody, and they weren't designed to be. While Dave Garibaldi's *Jam Masters* and Chad Smith's *Explosions* could slip comfortably into numerous musical situations, the overtly unconventional *Bozzio Radia* and *Glennie's Garbage* ranges will appeal to drummers with an open mind, willing to change not only their own perception of cymbals' musical function, but,

to a degree, that of their bandmates and the audience as well. But make no mistake, despite the fact that Terry and Evelyn are known primarily as soloists, the cymbals bearing their names will serve drummers who play in bands, and may even help them define their own "signature" sound.

## Sabian Manhattan Rides

by William F. Miller

The "buzz" at Sabian's NAMM show booth last January wasn't emanating from some strange piece of metal. It was actually the palpable excitement of players and music dealers going a bit gaga over the cymbal manufacturer's latest creation, the *Hand Hammered Manhattan* ride.

Available in both 20" and 22" sizes, Sabian's goal with these

new rides was "to create a cymbal that truly recreates the sound and feel of the classic cymbals of the '50s and '60s." Yes, the *Manhattans* are very thin and have a high profile, thus producing sounds with many of the characteristics of vintage-era rides. However, they also have enough contemporary spice to appeal to drummers other than the expected jazz aficionados. Let's listen.

Starting with the 20", if you like a dark, warm ride with an abundance of wash, you'll love this cymbal. Sabian describes the

sound as a "tah," that breathy, middle-eastern effect that immediately follows the stick impact. It's not as pronounced as on some "classic" cymbals, but nevertheless that character here is a beautiful thing. The sustain of the 20" is considerable, and it takes very little effort to get this cymbal to ring—even a brash stroke gets it moving. As for the plentiful wash, it can get in the way of stick definition at fast tempos or louder volumes. And like the classic cymbals after which this one is modeled, the bell doesn't offer much, but the crash is *happening*. Laying the shoulder of the stick into the bow produces a pleasingly trashy effect that, again, suggests that old Turkish tone. Yes, jazzers will like this cymbal, but drummers playing heavier styles might also enjoy its complex wash-ride personality and deep-crash sound. The 20" *Hand Hammered Manhattan* ride lists for \$340.

As for the 22" *Manhattan*, all of the elements are in sync: It features a perfect combination of spread and wash along with good articulation. The stick sound speaks just above a warm-and-fuzzy wash, even at fast tempos. You can get subtle crash accents on it, and the bell sound is usable. Plus, the cymbal is thin and delicate enough to allow you to get ultra soft .stick- and even brush-strokes



from it. As for the tone of the 22", surprisingly enough it wasn't as deep and sultry as the 20"—in fact, it wasn't as dark as many vintage-era rides (or other recent "classic" entries). But again, all of the elements combined—pitch, spread, definition, character—make the 22" a winner. And while your first inclination is to "spang-a-lang" on the *Manhattan*, drummers in almost any style would find the sound of this cymbal inspiring. Check this one out. It lists for \$403.



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*Jac*

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# SABIAN Innovation

New Sounds.

*Jack DelJohnette*

## Jack DelJohnette

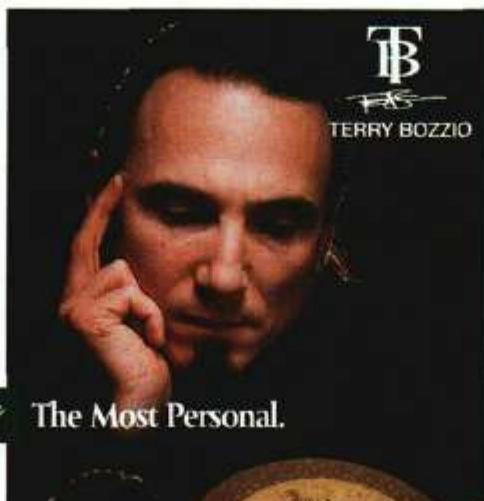
### Mini-Bell Ride

Simmering, semi-dry hot tone with musically definite stick response is Jack's latest Encore addition. 22"



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Terry Bozzio

## RADIA

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### RADIA Crash

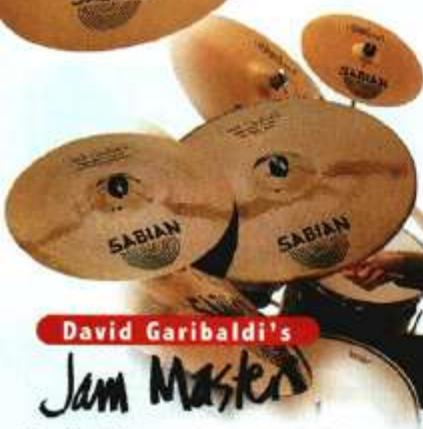
Quick, semi-dry response is impactful and penetrating, punchy and pure. 16", 18"

### RADIA Chinese

Potent white-noise bite powers raw, aggressive attack for a great new effect. 18", 20"

### RADIA Cup Chimes

Small raw-bell, flat-flange discs respond with mystic, melodic voicings. 7", 8", 9"



David Garibaldi's

*Jam Master*

Raw Hand Hammered topside and lathed bottom add up to stick articulation with semi-dry tonal shimmer.

### David Garibaldi Jam Master Ride

Definitely funky solid bell and stroke-defining ride area cut with warm clarity. 22"

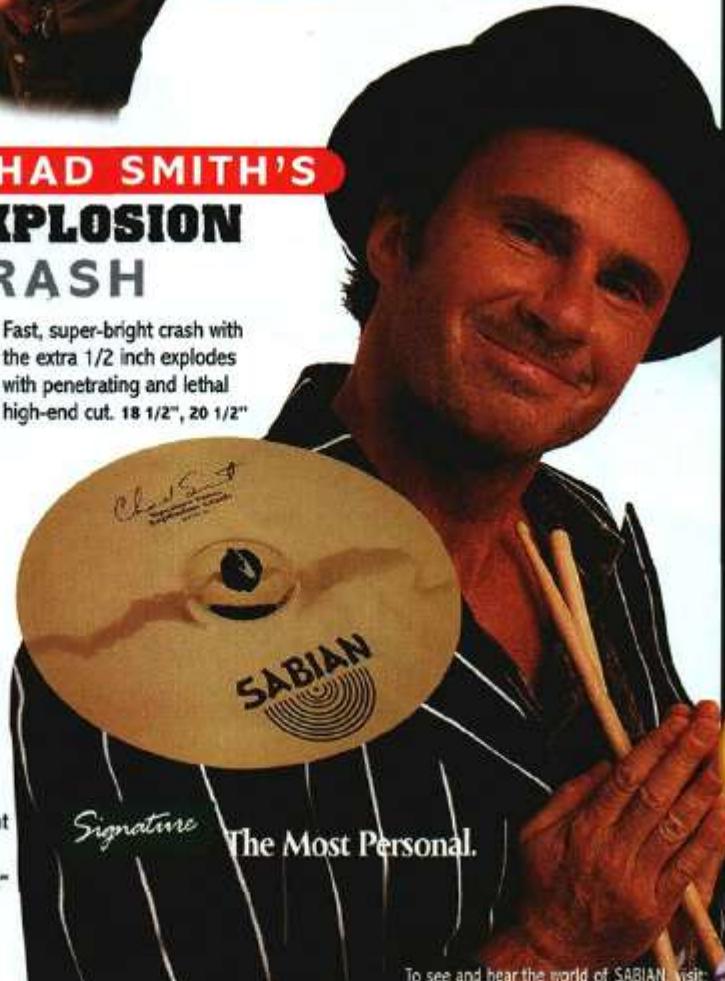
### David Garibaldi Jam Master Crash Ride

Quick crash and full-tone ride combine in punchy dual-purpose model. 18"

CHAD SMITH'S

## EXPLOSION CRASH

Fast, super-bright crash with the extra 1/2 inch explodes with penetrating and lethal high-end cut. 18 1/2", 20 1/2"



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### PRO Rock Ride

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### PRO Rock Crash

Fast, bright, powerful and punchy, a perfect high-volume crash. 16", 18"

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# Roland V-Drums

by Rich Watson

Roland redefines electronic drumming's state-of-the-art with killer functionality and compassion for the technologically challenged.

"Electronic drums are a pain in the butt to work with." For years this perception has built a wall between many drummers and electronic percussion. Some products justified the apprehension more than others, but in general, simple-to-use products didn't do much, and the ones with lots of bells and whistles required an engineering degree—or at least a lot of futzing around with time-consuming programming.

While several manufacturers have made strides to erase that

**WHAT'S HOT**

- many powerful yet intuitive acoustic-type sound control parameters
- excellent sound quality and selection
- super-sensitive *PD-100* and *PD-120* pads respond naturally to brushes
- ultra-hip play-along sequences
- superb hi-hat controller feel and function

**WHAT'S NOT**

- cymbal pad rims require consistently good "aim"

ugly convention, Roland has turned it on its head with their new *V-Drums*, in effect proclaiming, "Let's adapt the instrument to the drummer, not the drummer to the instrument." Hallelujah. But the biggest surprise is that in making their product easier to use, the magicians over at Roland also made it *more* natural-feeling, *more* flexible, *more* customizable—and in general more able to pull a rabbit out of your chosen musical hat. Let's see how "V" (as in "virtual" drums) stands for the victory of music over technology.

## A Drummer's Brain

*V-Drums* are so plug-and-play easy, you'll likely sit down and jam for a long while before you're tempted to pick their "brain." But once you decide to explore a bit, it only takes a couple of minutes to realize how much the *TD-10 Percussion Sound Module* "thinks like a drummer."

First and foremost, drumming requires us to think about a lot of things at once, and respond to all of it *fast*. The *TD-10's* 56-voice polyphony means there's virtually *no* chance that even your fastest, busiest playing over the most



"dense" sequence will cause notes to disappear. And its trigger response time and dynamic tracking are excellent.

Another way the *TD-10* thinks like a drummer is the manner in which many of its 600 main instrument sounds can be selected and modified to suit your taste and the music you're playing. (Remember, getting precisely the right sounds for every song is one of the best reasons for "going electric.") Rather than requiring you to learn tons of second-nature concepts in



unfamiliar, counter-intuitive terminology (usually measured in abstract and arbitrary numerical values), Roland has adopted acoustic-realm terms that make its *extensive* control possibilities as easy to grasp as your trusty *5Bs*.

But it's not only the terminology they've revolutionized, it's the very essence of how drum sounds are modified. Roland's proprietary Composite Object Sound Modeling (COSM) technology very convincingly simulates how drum sounds are affected by real-life factors such as the size and material of the shell, type and location of microphone, sonic reflectiveness and tone of the surrounding environment, etc. But instead of describing this wizardry, let's (as Nike might say) just do it. Starting with a snare drum, here's a crash course in *V-Drum* sound editing:

Pick one of the acoustic snare drums. Pick a shell material (wood, steel, or brass). Pick a shell depth (1" to 50"). Pick a head type (clear, coated, or *Pinstripe*). Pick a tuning (sorry, this one's in numbers: -480 to +480 [which means -4 to +4 octaves]). Pick your muffling (none, tape 1 [which means one piece of tape], tape 2, doughnuts 1, doughnuts 2). Pick a snare tension (off, loose, medium, tight). And if all that isn't already familiar enough, a large, backlit LCD display depicts every choice with a cute little icon of the different shell or head types, one or two pieces of tape or doughnuts, etc. (My favorite: When modifying tuning, a little drumkey twirls clockwise as you raise the pitch, and counter-clockwise as you lower it!)

Now let's fine-tune the entire kit's ambience with the "Studio" settings: Pick an "environment" (beach [whose graphics include palm trees and a sail boat!], living room, bathroom, studio, garage, locker room, theater, cave, gymnasium, dome stadium). Pick the room size (tiny, small, medium, large, huge). Pick the wall material (wood, plaster, glass). Pick an ambient microphone location (low, high). Pick the amount of ambience sent to the master output and to each of three direct outputs (depicted with four virtual volume knobs). And now pick the individual ambience level (separate for each instrument), the mic' type (condenser, dynamic, lo-fi) and mic' placement (outside, standard, inside).

And finally, make "Control Room" settings (again, separate for each instrument): Set volume, stereo pan, effect level send, output assignment, compression, and three types of equalization (in addi-

tion to a three-band master equalizer), plus thirty different effects and effect combinations, including reverbs, delays, choruses, phases, and flanges. (Among the more intriguing effects are Beat Delay, which synchronizes the delay sound with specified note values at the sequencer's tempo; 3D Delay; and Flying 3D Delay, which makes the delay sound seem to rotate front to rear and left to right.) All of these effects have more control options than we have space to explore here. Suffice it to say that if you *want* to per-

sonalize your sound, the *TD-10* gives you plenty of ways to do so—all presented in a language (and pictures!) that studio-savvy drummers already know—and that drummers without recording experience can beneficially apply to future drumming endeavors both electronic and acoustic.

While the *TD-10*'s Control Room parameters are assigned numerical values, on the LCD screen most are illustrated with a row of twelve mixing board faders or several rotary knobs, just as you'd see them in a recording studio. Beyond the cleverness of the virtual controls, this provides a quick, efficient overview of a parameter's effect on the entire kit, rather than a single pad. Thanks to the *V-Drums*, we can finally look at the "big picture."

The sound-editing parameters described in the example above are for the 26 "V-Edit" snares among 100 snare drum-family sounds. V-Edit sounds utilize COSM's extensive Variable Drum Modeling capabilities. Non-V-Edit snares, like all the cymbal and percussion sounds, can only be edited with pitch and decay parameters. Most of the bass drums and toms are V-Edit sounds, although their parameters are slightly different; for instance, they have no shell material selection (nor snare tension adjustment, obviously); kick drum muffling choices include options such as "blanket" and "weight" (blanket with a weight on it); tom muffling includes two external felt mufflers, and so on. A few synth-style electronic drum sounds also have special editing options peculiar to their instrument type. In all cases, Roland's choices for the degree and nature of adjustability are adequate, appropriate, and drummer-relevant.

They're also easy to get to. Roland overcame the sophisticated-versus-simple *Catch-22*, serving up a control freak's dream without convoluted menus or complex "tree" programming structures. A number of ultra-obvious, single-purpose buttons head you in the right direction, and four direct-access function buttons eliminate the need to cursor through numerous options to get to the one you want. A time-saver, to be sure.

Depending on which operation is active, one to four functions at the bottom of the LCD screen can be selected by pressing the corresponding function button below it. For example, from the main Kit display page, the F1 button activates the lighted "List" option. Pressing it brings up the *TD-10*'s list of drumkits. From the

Instrument display page (which comes up when you press the Instrument button), FI still aligns with the word "List," but pressing it here will bring up a list of all the TD-70's instruments.

Sounds are grouped and sub-grouped by type; for example, all snares are together—separate from the kicks, percussion, etc.—and within the snares, all the cross-sticks are together, as are most (but strangely not all) of the snare rimshots, and so on. The LCD screen lists not one, but *ten* sounds at once on "pages" with two five-sound columns per page. Searching through a list of, for example, eighty-three kick drum sounds is much quicker and easier when you can browse ten of them with a single glance.

Although striking any pad will play the sound assigned to it and "activate" it for editing, Roland included two buttons that will step up or down through the triggers, and one to "Preview" the sounds, all without having to play on the pads. This can be helpful if you want to work with the TD-10 when the whole kit isn't set up. All three of these buttons are oversized and covered with rubber so while you *are* playing, they can be pressed (but not struck, please) with a drumstick. A four-direction cursor pad expedites maneuvering through parameters on the screen, and a "Value" wheel burns through parameter values, the long lists of instruments, etc.

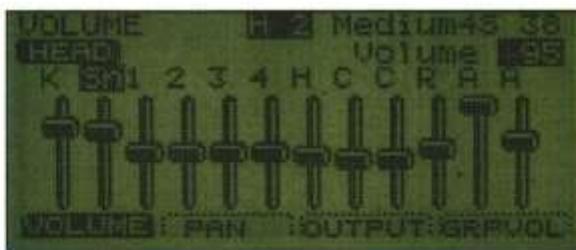
Not to insult your intelligence, but the TD-10 features a number of handy tools to make electronic drumming life *even easier*. The copy function allows you to copy kits, instruments, mixer, and effect settings, etc. to the destination of your choice, saving you the time of rebuilding them from scratch. Kits can be named and saved in any order in up to 16 different Chains, with up to 32 kits per Chain. Another user-friendliness gem: The chain construction utility includes the ability to insert kits within an existing Chain, eliminating the need to start over if you change your mind. While modifications to sounds, kits, etc. are automatically saved, if you screw up (and realize it before moving the cursor or striking another pad), you can "Undo" your mistake.

If despite all of Roland's efforts you still get lost or forget how to do something, they included a help function that allows you to select from a list of reminder key words, and then, with the push of a button, be instantly transported to the one you selected. (Dang, even a guitar player could use this thing!)

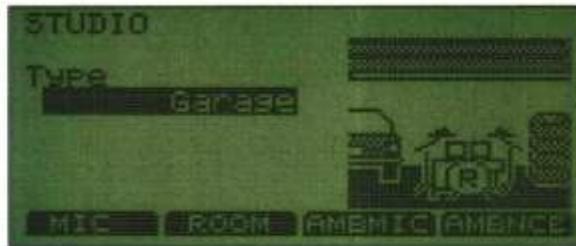
Although the *V-Drums* work very well as a self-contained instrument, they are also "fluent" in MIDI, allowing them to communicate with other MIDI devices, including other sound modules, interfaces, sequencers, drum machines, etc. In addition to the standard MIDI data, note that positional sensing data can optionally be transmitted and received, but brush "sweep" data cannot.

### When All Else Fails...

I witnessed several drummers who have very little experience



Control room settings (volume selected) on virtual faders shows all trigger settings at a glance.



You say you want that "garage band" drum sound? Garage-type ambience setting, depicted with car, will get you there.

with electronics moving around basic TD-10 functions in a couple of minutes—all without looking at the manual. As easy as the TD-10 is to use, it's ironic that its manual is the clearest, best-organized I've seen for electronic percussion. I've been frustrated by some sound modules whose manuals define their product's functions, but don't explain why and how to adjust them. In particular the TD-10 manual's "Quick Start" leads the user through illustrated, step-by-step, project-oriented lessons on many of the TD-10's features. By describing why they had chosen certain preset kit sounds, and then walking the user through changes he or she might want to make, Roland fosters a deeper understanding of the *V-Drums'* capabilities. This is the kind of documenta-

tion that is of meaningful practical value in day-to-day use of the module. The smart-aleck axiom, "When all else fails, read the manual," may not be necessary with the TD-10, but even if it is, at least you won't end up more confused than before you picked it up.

### Ins, Outs, And More Controls

In addition to the individual sounds' level controls, the TD-10 has six front-panel volume faders to independently adjust the volume of kick, snare, hi-hat, others (cymbals and toms), backing (sequence patterns), and click "on-the-fly," i.e., quickly, while you're playing. This is very valuable during live gigs, where it's not always convenient to start pushing buttons. A couple of us here at MD found it strange that cymbals and toms would both be controlled with the same fader, because independent control of these instruments would seem more helpful than front-panel independent control of the click and sequence "backing" instruments.

Next to the LCD screen, a trigger indicator lights when a trigger signal from any of the pads has been received by the module. This lets you know when the pads are properly connected. A large, three-digit LED display indicates the number of the currently selected kit.

The TD-10 has twelve stereo 1/4" inputs for trigger pads, an input for a hi-hat controller (*FD-7* recommended), and a footswitch input (footswitch not included) for advancing kits, starting and stopping the sequencer, and so on. In addition to a pair of master outputs and a stereo headphone jack, both with their own volume controls, the TD-10 has three pairs of direct outs to send user-designated sounds to specified channels in a mixer, external processing devices, etc. A stereo Mix In jack (again, with its own volume control—thank you, Roland) facilitates plugging in and playing along with a CD or cassette player. Audio from this input can be routed to the master outputs or to the headphones alone. (By the way, the headphone signal is plenty hot, so with the right headphones you'll be able to hear yourself over your band.) MIDI In and Out/Thru jacks facilitate MIDI data transmission, and a memory card slot provides drumkit and sequencer data backup and

"upload" capabilities by way of an optional *M-512E* memory card (available for \$129). A normal, grounded AC inlet means there's no "wall wart." (Yea!)

### Sounds Real

I confess a long-standing appreciation for Roland's take on how percussion instruments are supposed to sound, and on which ones they include in their percussion sound modules. But with the *775-10*, they've outdone themselves, stuffing it with 600 drum sounds—most of which are warm, full, and authentic—as well as 54 "backing" instruments, including pianos, keyboard percussion, basses, guitars, brass, woodwinds, etc. Yes, Roland has included some great wacky effects and cartoon sounds that for me would be more amusing than useful, as well as some synth and heavily processed drums, but the focus is on natural-sounding drumset, ethnic, and orchestral percussion sounds that can fit effortlessly into real-life drumming situations. Some of the snare and kick sounds are unbelievably good—you hear not only attack and resonance, but the "air" as well—suggesting that Roland took enormous pains in their sampling process.

For years I complained about sound modules lacking gong sounds. The *TD-10* has *three* different gongs. But because I *must* whine about something, how come Roland included five different tabla technique/sounds (*na*, *tin*, *tun*, *te*, and *ti*)—but no tabla "gulp" (*ghe*) sound. (I guess I can't get rid of my sampler quite yet.)

There are tons of different cymbal sounds, including numerous splashes, Chinas, sizzle rides, and piggybacked rides and crashes. Initially I wasn't thrilled with some of the rides, but with some minor adjustments—mostly in the direction of lowering their pitch a bit—I "created" cymbal setups to suit my personal preferences and style-specific kits. Unlike some other sound modules, the *TD-10*'s open, closed, and chick hi-hat sounds cannot be mixed and matched; they are instead components of twenty-four indivisible hi-hat "groups." But while this prevents pairing, say, a closed "Bright Hi-Hat" with an open "Dark Hi-Hat," the component sounds complement each other quite musically, and further variety can be achieved by assigning a different hi-hat group to the pad trigger from the group on the rim trigger (for example, a dark, mushy, shoulder-of-the-stick sound on the rim, and a bright, tight, tip-of-the-stick sound on the main pad). Chick and splash sounds are determined by the open/closed sounds on the main pad trigger.

Unlike Roland's *TD-7* and some other modules, the *TD-10* doesn't allow sounds to be stacked so that multiple sounds can be created with a single hit on a pad. I've always found this feature handy for creating more personalized sounds, and for, in effect, grafting velocity-sensitive harmonics onto otherwise dull or static sounds. But for a couple of reasons, I hardly miss the stacking feature with the *V-Drums*. First, the *TD-10* provides exceptionally comprehensive sound-editing capabilities. Second, many of its sounds have harmonic cross-fades "built in," whereby, for instance, upper overtones become more noticeable as you play harder on a snare drum. Also, some of its ride cymbals have dedicated cross-fades that blend into analogous cymbal bells. The one area I do miss sound stacking is for switching between some percussion sounds, such as open and closed triangle, tambourine and shaker, or short and long whistle, with varied dynamics, thereby

saving precious playing surfaces and sound module inputs.

### Feels Real

The 10", single-trigger *PD-100* and 12", dual-trigger *PD-120* represent a revolutionary new design in pad triggers. Not only do "*V-Pads*" size provide nice big targets, their white plastic, 4"-deep shells and fine-mesh heads (manufactured by Remo) make them look more like drums than many pads—and feel unlike any I've ever tried. For the obvious reason, they are not as bouncy as rubber pads. But neither are they as stiff-feeling as some other pads with real plastic drumheads, because they are not packed with foam or other insulating materials to eliminate false triggering. Except for their unique trigger mechanism lightly touching the underside of the head's center, there is "nothing but air" inhibiting the movement of the head—exactly like acoustic drums. The resilience of the mesh head material resembles that of a loose to moderately tuned drumhead. And speaking of tuning, they can be "tuned" (tensioned, really) with a slightly modified drum key (included) to approximate the head tension you prefer. More than any pads I've played on, the 700 and 720 make you feel like you're playing *into* a real head. Add to this a moderately hard, raised rubber rim, and you have a good ergonomic facsimile of an acoustic drum.

Their design also makes them extremely sensitive. One of the other *MD* editors quipped, "I can play a better buzz roll on [the *PD-120* pad] than on a real snare." Either out of the box, or after I experimented with (screwed up) tom pad velocity and threshold settings, I noticed a tiny bit of cross-talk between the toms and cymbal pads, transmitted through the stand. I corrected this quickly and easily by raising the threshold one notch on the toms. Drummers playing small-group jazz or other lighter-touch styles who thought their paths would never cross with electronics should note: With the *TD-10* set properly, I *could not play* ghost notes too soft or too fast for these pads to track perfectly.

Speaking of jazz drummers, Roland has blasted away another of the age-old stumbling blocks along that path to electronics by making the *V-Pads* respond to normal brush technique. (Take another bow, Roland!) Yes, this includes stirs, sweeps, and rolls with real plastic brushes. (Roland warns that use of metal brushes will damage the mesh material.) Special *TD-10* trigger settings that yield this extreme responsiveness are programmed into two preset kits, but it's a simple three-button procedure to transform any kit into a "brush" kit. Response to sweeping and stirring is only available through input 2, the designated snare drum trigger input.

The *V-Pro* kit also comes with three 10" dual-trigger *PD-9* pads for cymbals and one 7 9/16" dual-trigger *PD-7* for hi-hat. The bouncier feel of these pads' older-style rubber surface is actually a plus on cymbals, especially the ride. As with the *V-Pads*, their sensitivity is superb, noticeably improved since the early *PD-5s* and *7s*. An eye-bolt in their plastic housing allows them to be clamped onto standard cymbal stand posts. A polarity switch adapts the trigger signal of the *PD-7* and *PD-9* to other manufacturers' controllers.

Like the *V-Pads*, the *PD-7* and *9* are most responsive in the center of the pad, and their sensitivity overall is excellent. The sound assigned to the main pad is completely discrete from the one

assigned to the rim, and the sensitivity of all pad's rim triggers is independently adjustable. By squeezing the rim of the 7 or 9 between thumb and finger(s), the rim will "choke" any sound from either source that is still "ringing." Obviously this acoustic drum technique is most commonly used to choke a cymbal, but it can also be used for open and muted triangle, vibes, or other sustaining percussion.

My only significant gripe about the pads—and the *V-Drums* in general—is the operation of the *PD-7* and *PD-9* rim triggers. To access the rim sound assigned to these pads, you must strike the rim and the main pad surface simultaneously in true rimshot fashion. For some quite normal applications it requires a degree of consistent accuracy that some players may find unreasonable, especially for playing two unrelated sounds assigned to the main and rim triggers on the same pad.

Here's an example: Assigning a cymbal bell to the rim of a pad with a ride cymbal sound works pretty well even for fast, busy patterns, because it's usually no big deal if you happen to "miss" the bell every now and then and play the ride instead. But inadvertently activating a ride cymbal in the middle of a cowbell or shaker pattern—or worse, a cowbell—or even a ride cymbal—instead of a crash cymbal at the end of a big "stadium" fill could prove embarrassing. Depending on your accuracy (and sobriety) and the complexity of the fill, such a mistake is probably not all that unlikely. (Remember that I'm not referring to accuracy of the stick tip contact, but of stick *angle*, such as when playing rimshots.)

In defense of Roland, this pad design has been adopted by other major companies as well, presumably because it facilitates access of two sounds, but uses only one input, *and* eliminates the age-old problem of cross-talk between the pad and rim. There are a couple of work-arounds: 1) Plan ahead: Don't assign "critical" or potentially unforgiving/embarrassing sounds to rim triggers. 2) Buy additional pads and use the *TD-10's*, two auxiliary inputs for sounds requiring reliable, carefree access, such as the big cymbal crash you absolutely can't afford to miss.

The *PD-120*, *100*, *7*, and *9* can take advantage the *TD-10's* positional sensing feature, which affects many of its cymbal and snare drum sounds on inputs 2 and 3. The effect is subtle, but extremely cool and acoustic-authentic. With cymbal sounds, playing toward the center of the pad brings out the cymbal's ping sound; playing near the edge reduces the high-end attack, bringing out more spread or wash. With snare drum sounds, playing near the edge produces a thinner, more metallic sound; playing toward the center creates sharper articulation and a fuller, beefier sound.

### Feets Don't Fail Me

The *KD-7* kick drum trigger employs a reverse-angle beater. While some electronic neophytes find this design strange, most become quickly comfortable with it, and most appreciate the compactness that it affords. The trigger's height can be adjusted for optimum contact with various bass drum pedals. Spring-secured anchor bolts (spurs) at the front of the unit help prevent pedal creep. The trigger surface is large enough for just one beater; unfortunately, double pedal players will have to buy another *KD-7*. On the upside, a Mix In jack is provided to "chain" a second *KD-7* with the first, thus avoiding the need to occupy an additional input in the brain.

The *KD-7* playing surface is moderately soft and quite authentic. Since I last played an older version through a *TD-7*, Roland has tweaked both its feel and sensitivity. It responded to my very softest playing, and tracked dynamics flawlessly. Like the *PD-7* and *9*, the *KD-7* has a polarity switch for matching its polarity with non-Roland controllers.

Hi-hat controllers have been the perennial fly in the ointment of electronic drumming authenticity, always falling short of duplicating the feel, and especially the many expressive capabilities of a real hi-hat. When it was introduced in 1992, Roland's *FD-7* controller pretty much blew the doors off the industry. It might be my imagination, but through the *TD-10*, it seems even better now.

Front and back sections on the *FD-7's* bottom are cushioned with rubber, and it comes with anchor bolts like on the *KD-7* and two hook/loop-type tapes to prevent creep on various floor surfaces. Tension and stroke length can be adjusted for personal preference. Unlike controllers that "bottom out" hard, a slight sponginess at the bottom of the *FD's* stroke simulates the closure and "compression" of real hi-hat cymbals. Although its half-open middle region (again, programmed into the *TD-10* software) is narrower than that of its acoustic counterpart, the *FD-7* provides a good emulation of real hi-hat expression. Like some other manufacturers' controllers and modules, the *FD-7* facilitates realistic hi-hat splashes, but it's the only one I've tried that will accurately interpret alternating closed and splashed hat as fast as I can play it. While it isn't perfect—you won't confuse it with your old "manual" model—for both feel and function it is far and away the best hi-hat controller currently available.

### Have Band, Will Travel

The *TD-10's* powerful onboard sequencer is a knockout too. Its fifty pre-recorded accompaniment patterns consist of looped phrases from two to twelve bars long, drum fills, or melodic instrument breaks and intros. The loops cover a wide range of styles, from jungle, hip-hop, and gangsta rap to funk, fusion, reggae, swing, blues, bossa, salsa, samba, and songo—and plenty of other stuff in between. With only a couple of exceptions, the sequenced patterns are hip, interesting, and stylistically authentic. They're *so* cool, in fact, that a couple of us here at *MD* spent a lot of time working on our groove playing. (We told the boss we were conducting research for this review.) In my case, the quest for the holy groove might be futile, but for you, the *V-Drums* could be one of the best tools you can own for developing good time and feel.

Many of the patterns are made up of four independently adjustable parts (like recording tracks), consisting of drums, bass, melodic/harmonic backing instruments, and percussion. Parts can be accentuated, de-emphasized, or "taken out of the mix" entirely. While the preset patterns can't be erased or permanently changed, they can be copied into the fifty available user patterns, where they can be edited. User-selected measures from within the patterns can be "cut and pasted" together and even connected to create longer user patterns of up to ninety-nine measures. These can be used for practicing to more complex and varied tracks than provided by the preset patterns alone, including changes in feel, style, meter, and tempo. Alternately they can be used as "templates" for developing, editing, and recording your own musical compositions.

The sequencer can also record (in real time) what you play on the pads (although brush sweeping and cymbal choking functions cannot be recorded) as well as data received through the MIDI In jack, such as from a MIDI keyboard or another sequencer, making it possible to record your own demo recordings. During recording, your playing can be quantized (metrically "corrected") to the nearest 8th note, 8th triplet, 16th, etc., all the way up to a 64th note.

Like most of the rest of the *TD-10*, use of the sequencer is easy as pie, with tape recorder-like transport functions. One extra-slick feature is the rehearsal function, which allows you to switch between recording mode and rehearsal mode with the push of one button without stopping the sequencer playback. This facilitates fast, smooth transitions between practicing a "take" and actually recording it.

The sequencer section also includes the click function. In addition to a normal click sound, the click can be set to human voice, which counts out the meter for you, or any of fourteen different percussion instruments, which more subtly just accent downbeats with a slightly different tone. (My favorite is a high, "bent up" talking drum on 1 and lower talking drum hits on subsequent beats.) The voice option is nice for keeping track of where you are while filling or soloing in longer odd meters.

And speaking of long odd meters, by handling time signature numerators up to 13 (as in 13/4, 13/8, and 13/16), the *TD-10's* click can help you work out a lot of odd meters that most metronomes can't touch. The click interval can be set too, so that rather than play on every beat, it plays every half note, dotted quarter note, quarter note, 8th note, dotted 8th note, or 16th note. (Likely intended for use with compound meters such as 3/8, 6/8, 9/8, and 12/8, the dotted-note intervals result in some freaky subdivisions when used with simple meters!) You can add effects such as reverb to any of the click sounds to make them less "harsh" and adjust their pan position in the master output stereo image. You can also set the click to play through the master outputs, or just the headphones, the latter being useful in live performance or recording. The *TD-10's* tempo range is 20-260 beats per minute.

### Rack 'Em

The *MDS-10 V-Pro Stand* has an attractive crinkle-textured purple-blue finish. All three sections are slightly curved for more natural pad location. The pads' sturdy eye-bolt mounts and L-arm brackets, as well as the cymbal pad booms facilitate flexible placement. Positioning the *TD-10* brain was a bit tricky, since it lacks one of the angle axes of the pads, but I eventually came up with a workable angle. Shorter players who need the tom pads low but don't want them to be severely angled could conceivably mount them on the stand's lower "wrungs."

Possessing the spatial analysis aptitude and mechanical skills of a lower primate, I was delighted that the rack arrived almost assembled, "folded" in a box; I merely had to attach one side section, swing open both sides, tighten them down, and position the tom mounts and cymbal arms. Always in favor of a speedy setup, I would be inclined to leave the stand in this assembled/folded state, which is surprisingly compact, and at just thirty pounds (or thirty-five with the three boom cymbal arms), easily portable. Roland has recently released a carrying bag expressly to facilitate this.

I was a bit surprised that none of the pad clamps have memory

lock devices, but I had no problem with pad slippage even when playing them quite hard. The one exception to this stability was the snare pad. Because it lacks the weight of a real snare drum, it caused MD's own lightweight snare drum stand (none is included with the kit) to vibrate across the floor toward me as I played. This could be solved by using a heavier-based stand, or by weighing it down or otherwise securing it to the floor.

Ten cable clips and six loop/hook-type ties are provided to snug pad cables to the stand, thus eliminating the unsightly dangling cables, and perhaps protecting the *TD-10* inputs from the shock of a clumsy guitarist tripping over the cables. These amenities amount to a tiny "extra," but provide further evidence of Roland's attention to minute detail and desire to make owning their products an all-around positive experience.

### The Long Haul

Another of the big obstacles to buying electronic drums has been the fear of investing in technology that's on the fast track to obsolescence. Drummers keep their acoustic drums in service for years or even decades, often treasuring them for their antiquity. In contrast, owning yesterday's electronic percussion technology (much like owning yesterday's computer technology) engenders only a longing for the latest model and resentment for having "taken the bait" too soon. In this respect, electronics' physical durability has been less relevant than their technological vitality, since most are forced into retirement long before they actually die.

Perhaps taking a cue from Alternate Mode's "War On Obsolescence"—or recognizing that more people would take the plunge into electronics if they didn't foresee a frequent major re-investment requirement—Roland has made the *TD-10* upgradable via flash ROM and 8-megabyte user-installable wave expansion boards. (Roland percussion products manager Steve Fisher points out that you can fit a boatload of percussion sounds into 8 megabytes.) Cost of the boards hasn't been determined yet, but if they're anything like similar boards for Roland's synths, expect them to be about \$395—and a country mile less than starting over from the ground floor. Roland earns more applause by making the sophisticated *TD-10* backward-compatible with its earlier trigger-pad models. The *PD-7* and *PD-9* can even exploit its positional sensing for snare drum and ride cymbal.

All this upgradability may mean that *V-Drums'* physical durability *is* relevant. While hardly conclusive, I point to my *TD-7* and venerable old *R8-M*—both Roland products, and both still "tickling" after many years of service.

### Price And Conclusions

(Well, now I've gone and done it: I've made something that's very easy to use sound very difficult. Believe me, using *V-Drums* is a lot simpler than *describing* them.)

And now for the bad news you just *knew* was coming: The cost of living in the state-of-the-art is high: The *V-Pro* kit lists for \$4,995. The *TD-10* sound module alone is \$1,895. Feeling like the folks who spend hours wistfully perusing Mercedes Benz and Lexus literature, I find the hardest part about not being able to afford the *V-Drums* is knowing just how good they are.



# DW 9000

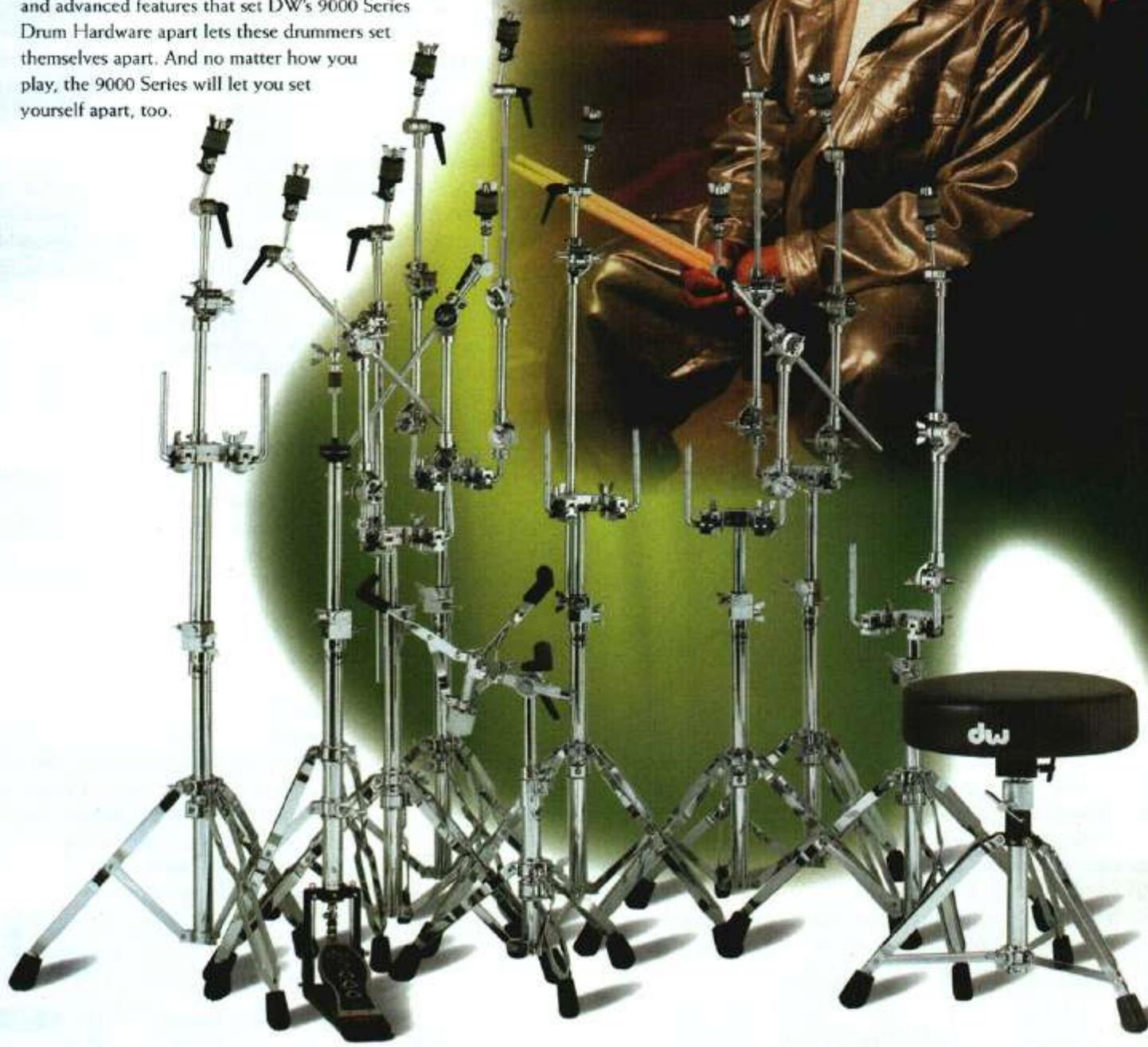
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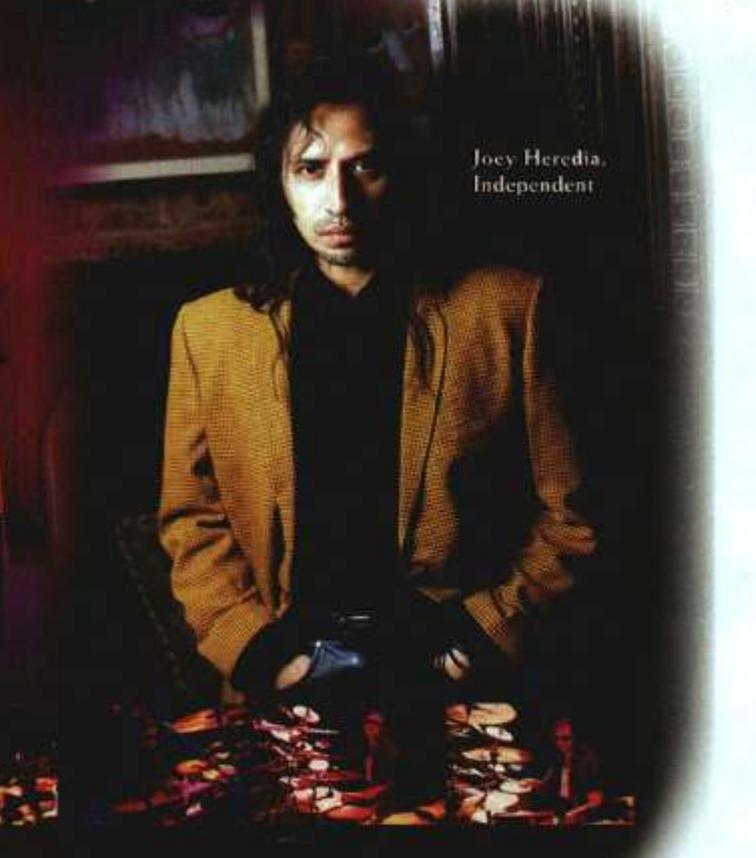


*Stephen Perkins' DW Hardware set-up includes: 9934 (x2) double tom and cymbal, 9999 (x3) single tom and cymbal, 9500 snare drum and 5500TH bi-bat stands, 9100 throne and 906 6" cymbal stacker.*

*Joey Heredia's DW hardware set-up includes: 9700 (x7) cymbal, 9900 (x2) double tom, 9934 double tom and cymbal, 5500TH bi-bat and 5502LB remote bi-bat stands, 9100 throne, 9212 (x2) closed-bihat and 799 cymbal arms, 991 single arm clamp and 906 6" cymbal stacker.*



**Stephen Perkins,  
Jane's Addiction**



**Joey Heredia,  
Independent**



*Gerald Heyward's DW Hardware set-up includes: 9799 (x3) double cymbal, 9934 (x4) double tom and cymbal, 9500 snare drum and 5500TH bi-bat stands, 9100 throne and 934 accessory cymbal arm.*

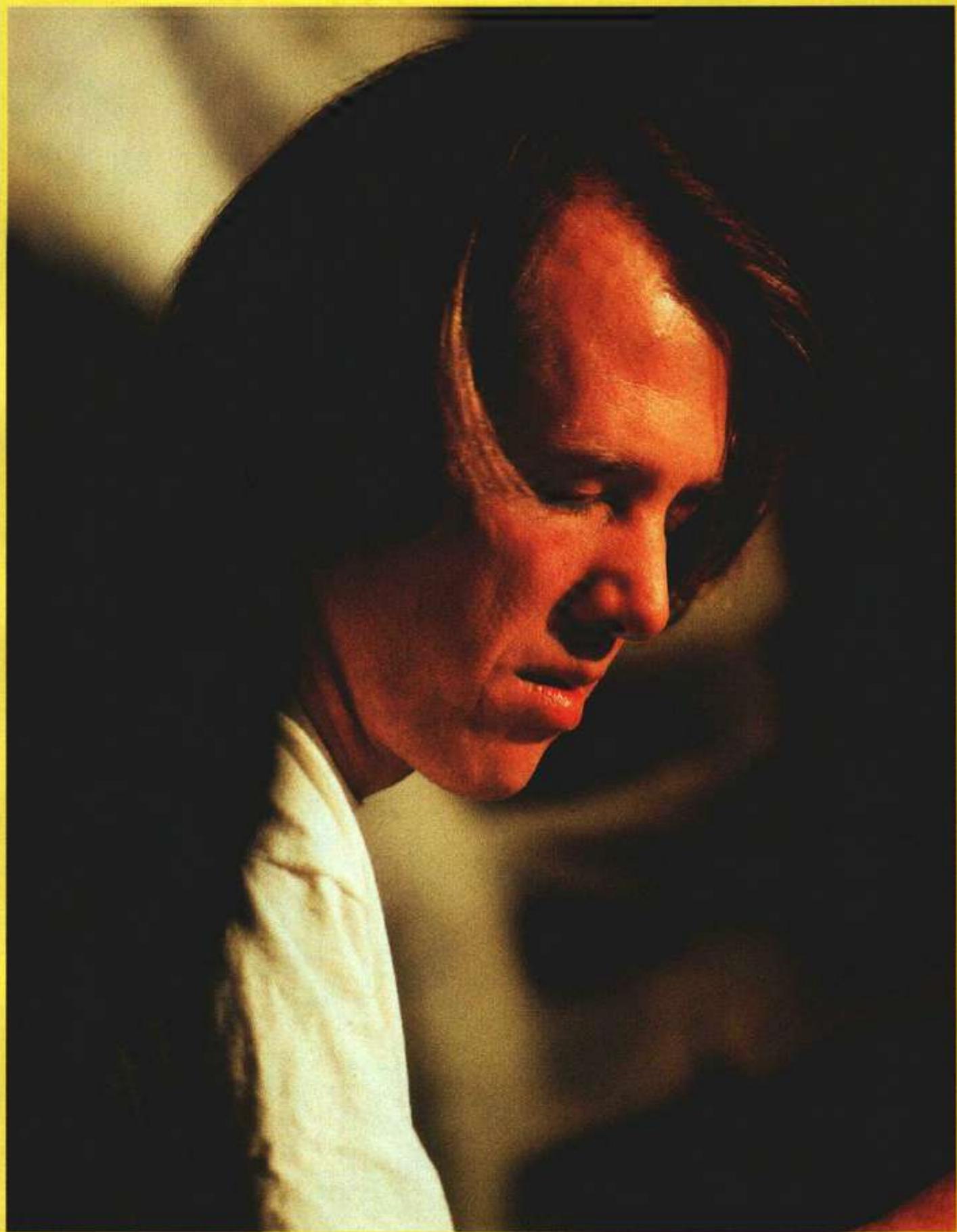


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# Pearl Jam's

# Jack Irons

When Jack Irons was twenty-five, he didn't think he'd make it to thirty-five. But here he is, at thirty-five years old, with a wife, two young children, and a renewed lease on his musical career as the drummer for Pearl Jam. "I've got a grip on my sanity now," he says, "And that makes everything else possible."

Irons isn't exaggerating to illustrate a point. He's suffered anxiety attacks so severe that, over the past decade, he was forced to leave two emerging bands and enter a psychiatric hospital for bipolar manic depression. He often found the business of music overwhelming, and at times the world has seemed to close so tightly around him that only prescription drugs or complete mental retreats could temporarily curb his descent into a private abyss.

Along the way, though, Jack never really stopped making music. He was the Red Hot Chili Peppers' first drummer of record, making what many consider the band's best album, *The Uplift Mofo Party Plan*, before leaving in 1988 to heal his mind. Soon after, though, he toured with Joe Strummer and Red Kross, then formed Eleven with two friends in Los Angeles. That band made three records and appeared on the brink of mainstream acceptance when Irons' personal demons again preyed on his mind. He moved his family to a quiet, rural town, geographically and psychologically distancing himself from Eleven, and had prepared to leave the music business behind altogether when fate pulled him back in.

In 1990, Seattle musicians Stone Gossard and Jeff Ament

had asked Irons if he was interested in forming a new band. He wasn't. Instead, Jack hooked them up with Eddie Vedder, a singer he became friends with in San Diego. Considering Pearl Jam's success in retrospect, Irons never lamented passing on the opportunity to join the band. As it is, he merely watched from a distance as Pearl Jam went through a succession of drummers. And, in 1994, Irons was too steeped in depression to pay much notice when Pearl Jam fired its latest drummer, Dave Abbruzzese.

"I was just starting to put my life back together at that point," Jack remembers, "and I wasn't ready for anything big. I certainly couldn't have gone on and lived with what Pearl Jam had to endure early on. When I joined, they wanted to still be out there, but they wanted to get off that super-fast pace, which really suited me then-and now."

Today, Irons credits a spiritual guru for making his life livable and, ultimately, enjoyable. For the tangible results, you don't have to go further than his music. The

frantic funk of the Chili Peppers and heavy-fisted beats of Eleven have given way to a more relaxed and soulfully arresting approach to rhythm with Pearl Jam. On *Yield*, the band's new disc, Irons' drums at times evoke a musical quality, as if the drummer, himself, is singing for the first time,

In a conversation on the eve of *Yield's* release, Jack talked about his personal struggles, his tenuous salvation, and, in ways he's just beginning to understand, how music has served as the connecting thread.

## This Inner Life

by Matt Peiken

photos by Lance Mercer

"I was friends with Eddie and we both knew we wanted to play together. From my perspective, it couldn't have been just any band. It had to work musically."

**MP:** With everything going on in the Pearl Jam world at the time you joined—the revolving door of drummers, the fight with Ticketmaster—did you have second thoughts about joining?

**JJ:** I didn't exactly know what I was stepping into because I had no preparation for it. But I liked the idea of making records and taking time off, and then touring and taking time off. I could raise a family and be there for them without trying to work that around everything else. It seemed like a good lifestyle for me. It gave me the opportunity to assume the responsibilities of a working musician and a family man at the same time.

**MP:** You could have stayed with Eleven. The band wasn't big in the Pearl Jam sense, but you were touring, selling records.

**JJ:** We stayed together for three records and we toured a lot. But after doing that tour with Soundgarden, my wife and I had decided to move out of Los Angeles. We were done with LA

because we'd decided we just couldn't raise a family there. We needed more space, but Eleven was LA-based. That was in July, and I didn't hear until August that Pearl Jam was gonna be looking for another drummer.

Meanwhile, I spent a couple months wondering just how it was going to work with Eleven. At that point, I was getting a little bit tired of the touring, and I just didn't know if I should continue pushing and persisting in this business. It had become important for me to live in a slower-paced environment, because I had been living with an anxiety disorder.

**MP:** What would you have done for money outside of music?

**JJ:** I didn't have anything planned. I was very idealistic. But people survive. That's what I told myself at the time, and I didn't know the changes that were about to occur. All I was really thinking about was preserving my sanity.

**MP:** Was it really on the edge at that point?

**JJ:** Yes. It had been since I was twenty-five. At the time, I was diagnosed with a bipolar manic depression disorder. I took medication daily as a form of treatment, only recently being able to stop. The disorder included intense periods of anxiety. Those



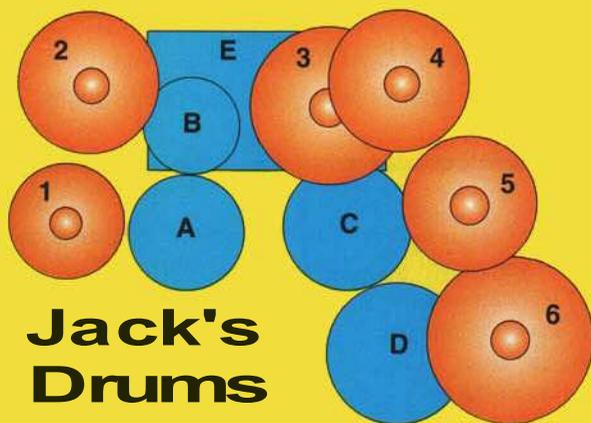
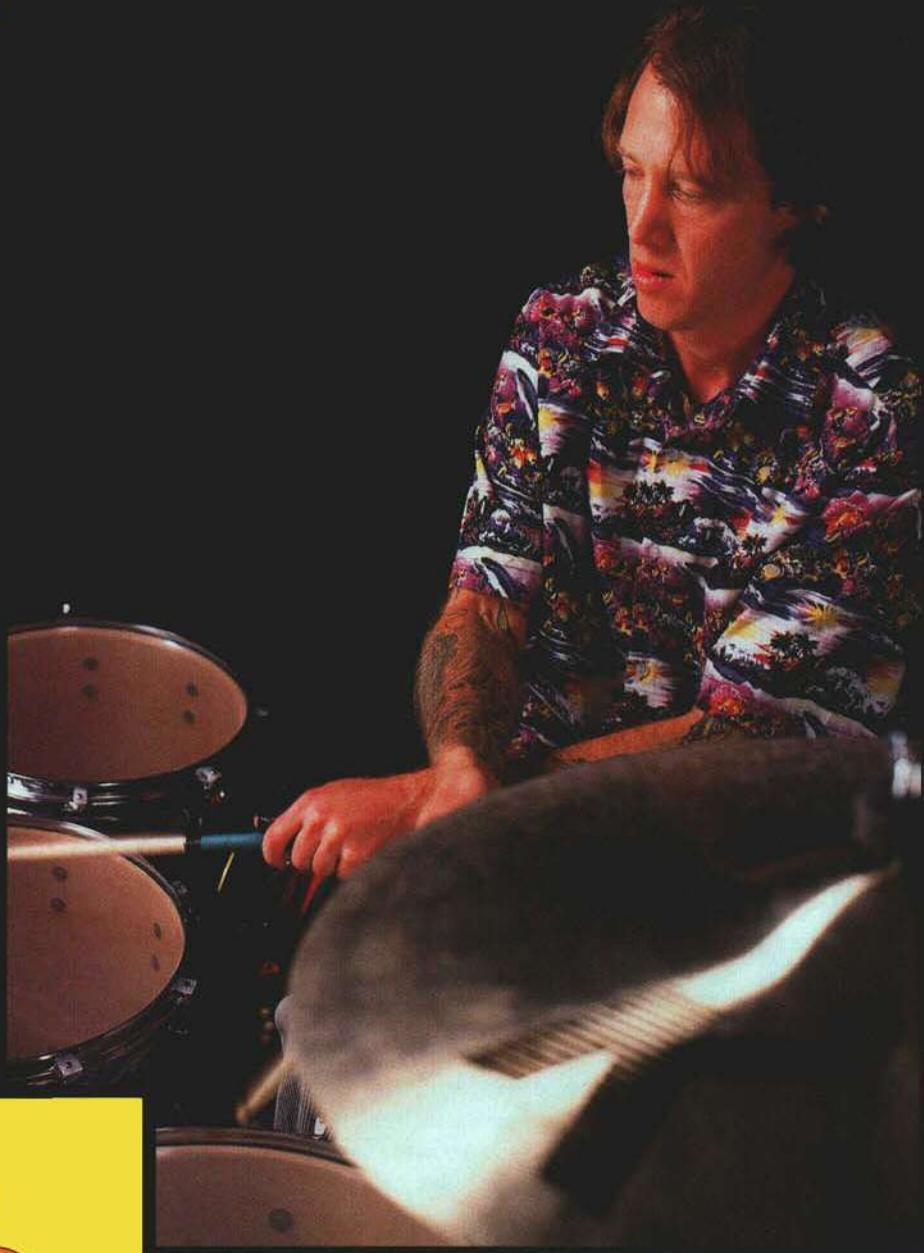
periods influenced how I adapted to living in most circumstances. I would try to avoid any situation that might trigger this condition. The music business seemed to be one of those situations. I thought if I freed myself from the hustle of the business, I might live in a little more peace. So, we moved away. My moving away affected my role in Eleven. We were happy as friends and musical partners, but my future with Eleven became unstable. I didn't know how much juice I had to persist. It felt like I had just enough to raise my family.

**MP:** So when you talk about your future, you're not just talking about a career, you're talking about life.

**JJ:** Absolutely. It wasn't a situation of going on tour and having these problems and then going home and being fine. Though when I was home, everything was more subdued. I was in familiar surroundings and there wasn't as much action, as much stimuli, to stress me out.

**MP:** When did you feel the manic depressive experiences were behind you?

**JJ:** Gradually over time, I figured out activities and strategies to help get me through. I used alternative means, such as acupuncture



## Jack's Drums

**Drumset:** Drum Workshop  
 A. 5x14 Ludwig *Supra-Phonic* 400 snare  
 B. 8x12 tom  
 C. 16x16 floor tom  
 D. 16x18 floor tom  
 E. 16x24 bass drum

**Sticks:** Pro-Mark 737 model

**Cymbals:** Zildjian  
 1. 14" hi-hats (*K Dark* crash top, *K Custom Dark* bottom)  
 2. 18" *K Custom Dark* crash  
 3. 20" *Z Custom* ride  
 4. 18" *K Custom Dark* crash with rivets  
 5. 17" *K Custom Dark* crash  
 6. 21" *Oriental China* Trash

and holistic medicine in conjunction with the medications. And in May, I stopped taking medication.

**MP:** When did you make contact again with Pearl Jam?

**JJ:** It was strange, because I'd just moved out of LA, just gotten my family settled, and I was prepared to let go of my music career. So it was just about two months later, and I had no idea this was coming. But when it did, I realized I wanted to see if I could succeed in this business on that level. These guys were friends, I liked the music, they knew my playing. But don't get me wrong, there were auditions. There were four or five other guys they were talking to. Each guy in the band had someone they were interested in. To some degree, I was the favorite, but there was no guarantee.

I was friends with Eddie, and we both knew we wanted to play together, but I had to fit in with everybody. So when I first joined, they were like, "Let's do this first tour together and see

how it goes over three or four months." And we spent about that much time just feeling each other out and getting through things. But they welcomed me from the start and treated me like a bandmember throughout. Like any relationship, I just kind of dived in. From my perspective, it couldn't have been just any band. It had to work musically. But I also figured if I didn't have to struggle in the music business anymore, if I could just play and have some sense of balance, that would be the thing I needed.

**MP:** Did they tell you why they didn't want Dave Abbruzzese in the band anymore?

**JJ:** It just wasn't working out. It was just personal stuff, and it wasn't something I got involved in. Whatever was going on, it was going on for whatever number of years they were together. They went through with what they had to go through before I ever got involved.

**MP:** How was the transition for you from Eleven to Pearl Jam?

**JJ:** It was hard work. I mean, it was just like a relationship. Everyone wanted to do it, but we all had places we were coming from and it was work on everybody's part to adjust to new styles, a new feel, a new person. For me, just coming up to Seattle and moving the whole family was difficult. And on a musical level, things were different. Songs were faster, and faster in a different way than I was used to. As much as I've listened to rock and have been influenced by it, I've always played more quirky, funky stuff. It was a whole different feel, and the music came from a different place from where I had come from.

I think I got used to playing very hard and aggressive, just laying into the drums and pounding out these slower grooves. In Eleven, everything was sort of low and dirty. The hi-hats were always open to some degree and I'd hit them really hard. I'd put my whole body into that, which really represented my personality and my emotional state at the time. That bashing wasn't just something I thought would be a good idea. It sounds kind of dramatic, but it represented my whole struggle. That's what it really was for me, a form of expression and a release at the same time. I could just get it out on the drums. That goes back to the whole thing about being twenty-five and not being sure if I'd make it to thirty-five.

Then, suddenly, I had to totally change gears with Pearl Jam. Their music is very different and comes from a completely different head space. Everything was a lot faster, the music moved along more, and it needed finesse. And because

the shows were longer, I needed to pace myself and conserve my energy. Also, if I'd played as hard as I did in Eleven, with music that's twice as fast, I wouldn't have lasted four or five songs.

When you play a club, you're not so reliant on monitors, and even subtle differences in how hard you hit make a big difference in the sound. But when you play bigger rooms, it doesn't matter in terms of what the audience can hear. It took me a while to adapt my playing, and I started having some problems with my body.

When we did the tour with Neil Young, I blew out something in my elbow. Then I had this thing going on in my right wrist—it wasn't carpal tunnel, it was more like tendinitis. And that just stemmed from my previous approach of wanting to pound it out.

## Jack's Playalongs

Here are the albums that Jack says he not only listens to for inspiration, but that he loves playing along to.

*Reggatta De Blanc* by the Police, with Stewart Copeland

*All Things Must Pass* by George Harrison, with Ringo Starr, Jim Keltner, and Alan White

*In The Jungle Groove* by James Brown, with Clyde Stubblefield

*Quadrophenia* by the Who, with Keith Moon

*Songs In The Key Of Life* and *Hotter Than July* by Stevie Wonder, with Stevie Wonder on drums

So I started compensating by using my arm differently. I can't even tell you exactly what I did, but I guess it's just like limping. You don't intentionally do it, you just do because that's how your body compensates. Nothing was too threatening in a permanent sense, but it just was a nagging problem that happened over time.

**MP:** Did the other guys in the band talk to you about not playing so hard?

**JJ:** Oh yeah, but just in a joking-around way, and I think it's something we all went through, in some way. We learned that instead of just playing the music, there's a way to let the music play *you*. Rocking isn't just pounding it out. It's a real feel of people playing together, and you get to that point where the song moves you through it. It's not just your performance.

If you look at great players like Jack DeJohnette, Stewart Copeland, and Keith Moon, they were able to just let it flow.

Those are the recordings that end up being classics. That was a big realization for me as a drummer and a musician. Before that, from my point of view, I was only seeing what I was doing.

**MP:** How did joining Pearl Jam affect your mental state?

**JJ:** On my first big tour with Pearl Jam, we went to Australia,

Southeast Asia, Japan, and New Zealand. Before we left, I think I was running on this excitement and adrenaline of going to these great places and playing for a lot of people. We did fine musically and I think I played well, but the internal problems I'd experienced before, this inner life, still existed. It didn't go

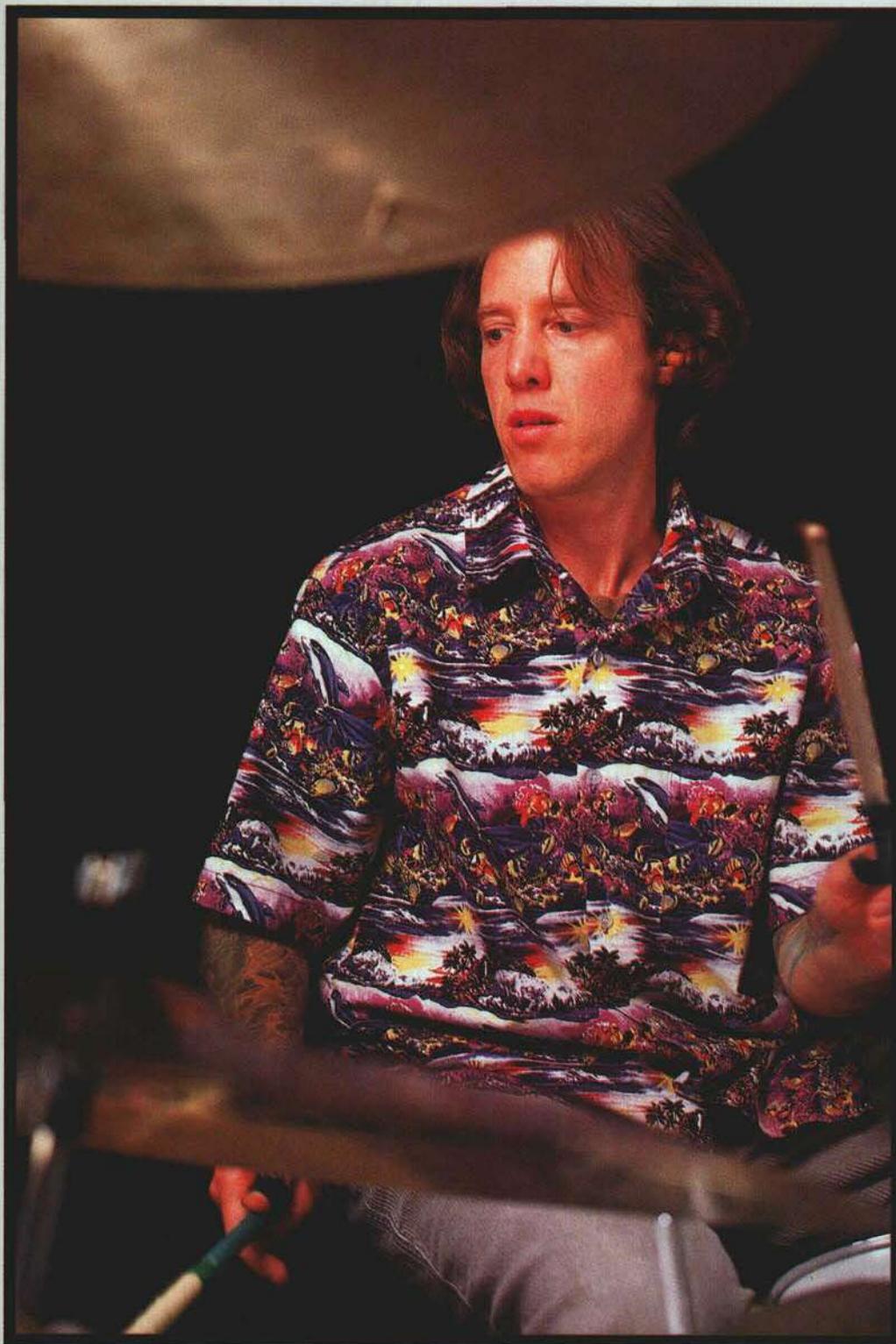
away; it doesn't go away with success. And when we came back from the tour, I was at my old point again, just mentally collapsed and exhausted.

What it taught me was that these problems didn't have anything to do with my career or any of the other things I thought were causing them. But there was another difference that did have a big effect on me. On one hand, it was great to be in a situation where I didn't have to struggle anymore. But we weren't rehearsing every day. We weren't playing music nearly as often as I was used to with Eleven, and I missed that. I needed that kind of therapy.

**MP:** How did you regain that balance you seemed to need?

**JJ:** Don't get me wrong. Even though we weren't playing a lot, from my point of view, we've played plenty in the first two years together. We didn't do a ton of stuff, but we were on the road two or three months out of the year and I was gone for a while making a record. Considering that I'm raising a family, that's a lot of time away from home. For me, it was the right amount of time.

When things started rolling again this past year, I was the one who needed some time before I hit the road again. I was the one going through the changes and problems, and I was the one who had to work some things out, coming to some conclusions about myself. They were really supportive and patient with me, but we also wanted to make a



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record. So we just decided to do some recording without putting any pressure or time limit on it.

**MP:** You mentioned to me that you also started doing your own drum music.

**JJ:** Right. I'd set up a home demo kit in my basement in Seattle and I would come up with these tribal rhythms, just stuff I'd developed through my playing over the years. Then I'd take my four-track to a rehearsal studio somewhere and just start recording drums. I'd play very spontaneously, and if something sounded like an organized idea, I'd record it. Then I'd go back to my basement studio and add percussion on top of it.

**MP:** You were doing that sort of thing when you were in Eleven, weren't you?

**JJ:** I'm sure I'd started then, but I never had the time to really see where it could go. And actually, I recorded one piece of music about a month before I heard Pearl Jam was looking for a drummer. I did it at Flea's house, and we've used that tape to open up almost every Pearl Jam show. But being in Pearl Jam has opened up more

time and opportunity to explore that side of me. I'd like to eventually put a lot of these rhythms together and make a record of them.

**MP:** Have any of those rhythms wound up on a Pearl Jam record or inspired a part you played on any given song?

**JJ:** To turn my drum music into a song is pretty challenging, but the guys have been really supportive of me doing it, and we've worked some things into a few songs. On *No Code*, "Who You Are" and the beginning of "In My Tree" are drum-based, and there are other little parts here and there that I would call "drum music"—not just playing a regular beat.

But in our music, there usually isn't room for that kind of stuff. And when there is, I have to be a lot more delicate with it. Like on "Given To Fly," I play a beat that's based around the toms, but it's pretty soft. I'm not sure I would have been comfortable playing that way a few years ago.

**MP:** That really comes through in your drum sounds. There are distinct tonal personalities, like the airy kick drum on

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"Faithful" and the looseness of your snare on "No Way." And your toms also sound like they were tuned to specific pitches.

**JJ:** The kick drum you're talking about was an old, stainless-steel, 24" Ludwig. It belongs to my friend Nickey Alexander, who used to be the drummer of the Weirdos. He and I are in this together. He's been my tech since I joined Pearl Jam. We had a lot of different drums, but we used

that bass drum a lot. That open, bigger sound at the beginning of the song is the room sound. We used some DWs, some modern-day Slingerlands, the stainless-steel Ludwigs. And you'd be surprised what duct tape can do. There was duct tape all over *No Code*.

But ultimately, for *Yield*, there was nothing fancy about the drum sounds. It was just using the right mic', finding the right

position for it in the room, and getting the right take. The engineer and producer had more to do with that than I did. I was only particular to the point of it sounding right. If it sounded right and felt right to me and everyone else, that's all we could ask for.

I think that was also an inherent condition of taking our time with the record. We didn't put any time limit on it. It was like, "When this record's done, we'll call it a record." We took our time to come up with the ideal sounds and feel for every song, so that each had its own identity. We would cut a track and go back and listen to it and openly discuss it. If one of us thought something could be done differently or better, we'd just try it again. That was a privilege, and doing a record like that felt like a luxury, rather than having to rush to get something done.

**MP:** Did that time also go into developing and playing the right drum part for a given song?

**JJ:** There was nothing totally worked out for this session. It goes back to the song playing *me*. It seems really simple. But my perspective in the past was pounding the groove and trying to nail the right fill for a specific part. I was definitely a drummer who thought about that kind of stuff. But what seemed to work for everything this time, overall, was *not* thinking or paying attention too much to the details.

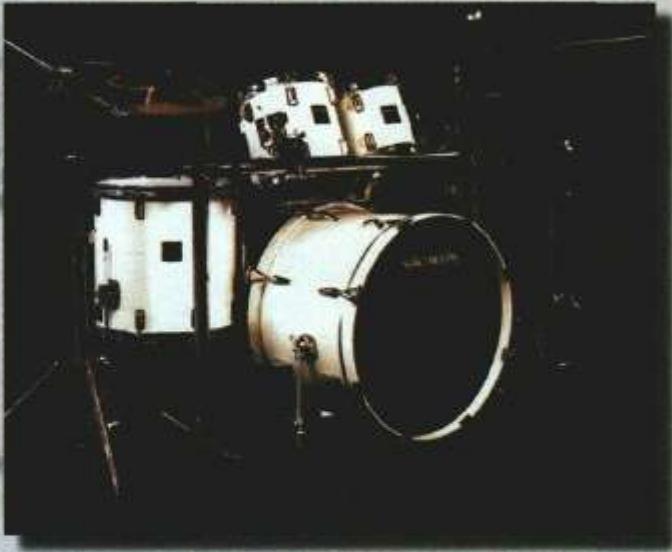
I wasn't worrying about how hard I was hitting. I was just relaxing and listening to the song. I've learned over the years that if you just relax and let the music happen, it sounds better. That never dawned on me until a year or so ago.

**MP:** How did the processes differ between making *No Code* and *Yield*!

**JJ:** With *No Code*, we made time while we were on tour to stop into studios in different parts of the country. I think the original idea for "In My Tree" was recorded in Chicago. We were more on-the-fly during the making of *No Code*, and some good things happened out of that, but we were also really tired. It was difficult to tour and play these shows that were two or three hours long and then force ourselves to produce something in a studio. Still, a lot of my drumming ideas got embraced and everybody was real supportive of each other.

**MP:** Has your setup or gear changed much

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between Eleven and Pearl Jam?

**JJ:** I'm using a much lighter stick, and that's an adjustment that came from the injuries to my wrist and elbow. I'd been using those sticks that were butted on both ends, but now I'm using the Pro-Mark 737. It's a lot lighter and it's a bit more where I'm at right now. It just fits me better.

When I was young, I'd look at a guy like John Bonham and think, "Wow, that guy's an animal. I want to play like that." But I grew to realize he wasn't *trying* to be like that. That's just who he was. So when I finally brought that realization back to my own playing, I asked myself, "Why try to play heavy when, by nature and my body size, it feels better to just play?"

**MP:** Let's talk about how your role as a drummer has changed. In Eleven, you were way up front in the mix. But you don't have to be that kind of engine in Pearl Jam. The drums often serve to color the music.

**JJ:** You know, I hadn't really noticed that. I haven't spent a lot of time listening to all the stuff I've done or thought about comparing it. You hear this a lot from musicians, but it's true: You try to do whatever's required for that particular song or situation.

**MP:** I'm not talking about style as much as I am the feel of what you're playing.

**JJ:** Oh, I see what you're saying. I've never really talked about these things with another drummer before, so I may not express this very well. But I suppose it's just the changes I've gone through in life. In music and all of art, you reflect where you're at in life. If a person's more angry and aggressive, they tend to play faster and harder. If a person's in a more mellow space, they probably are more open to going with the flow—when it's time to rock, you rock, but when it's time to lay back a little bit, it just happens.

**MP:** Do you think going off your medications made a difference in your playing?

**JJ:** Certainly. I don't think making music is too far removed from someone's mental state. I think it's very indicative. When a person feels more free and happy, they play more free and happy.

**MP:** What made you decide to go off the meds last May?

**JJ:** I ended up becoming a student of a spiritual teacher, a guru. A friend of mine in Seattle was a devotee of this guru, and

he asked me one day if I'd like to see him. And this teacher has made such a difference. My relationship with him has been life-transforming and his teachings have made it possible to live life without medication. For me, it's a miracle.

**MP:** How has that affected your outlook on a day-to-day and long-term basis?

**JJ:** I'm just happier. Life is a lot more manageable. I'm grateful to have an oppor-

tunity to live with my friends and family with this new point of view.

Pearl Jam is going to Hawaii, Australia, and New Zealand in a few weeks and we're doing over forty shows this summer. I definitely have great, new feelings about music and being a part of that musical family. Now I can appreciate it on a level I never could before.



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# Albert "Tootie" Heath

by T. Bruce Wittet

photos by Alex Solca

The dark clouds arrived late in a day of sweltering heat. Rain began to fall on South Philadelphia. Up and down the row houses on Federal Street, kids pressed their noses against the window panes, eager to resume play. Although there were no parks, there was always something to do—jacks, marbles, and jump-rope in the street, or basketball in the school yard.

This was a vibrant, black neighborhood after the Second World War. To be sure, it was no Levittown, and *Life* wasn't doing any photoessays, but somehow, railroad tracks and all, it was a healthy place in 1948. Decades later it would succumb to urban decay, following a familiar pattern. The Heath Brothers, one of America's great musical families, would look back and depict it in a song, "South Filthy."

Percy Heath Senior took a mortgage on his family's residence on the 1900 block of Federal Street, a quieter spot sandwiched between the north and south streetcar lines. Out their front door to the left were all the amenities: candy store, dry cleaner, pawn shop, beauty parlor, and undertaker. At the opposite end of Federal, where it met Point Breeze Avenue, was Al Brown's Club (featuring live entertainment) and, near it, the firehouse. When the bells rang, Junior, the little Dalmatian, would go crazy



**"Every person has his or her own technique. Some say one of my attributes is being sensitive or quiet on the snare drum, so that's my technique."**

## Drum Brother



barking, and would leap onto the truck, delighting the children.

Mr. Heath was an automobile mechanic. Since he could fix any engine, the Heaths were never without a vehicle. On a day such as this, after work he would pull up to the curb, turn off the wipers, and pause a moment. His eldest son and namesake, Percy, would be playing the upright bass in the living room, accompanied by brother Jimmy on saxophone, and selected musical guests. These might include no less than Clifford Jordan, John Coltrane, Benny Golson, or Philly Joe Jones. Their sheet music would be spread over the dining room table. Mr. Heath, who was a hobby clarinetist, had knocked down a dividing wall to make space.

Mr. Heath's youngest son, Albert, or "Tootie," as his grandfather affectionately called him, might be honking away on the trombone in his bedroom, too young to join the others. Mr. Heath would wince: The boy was no Curtis Fuller.

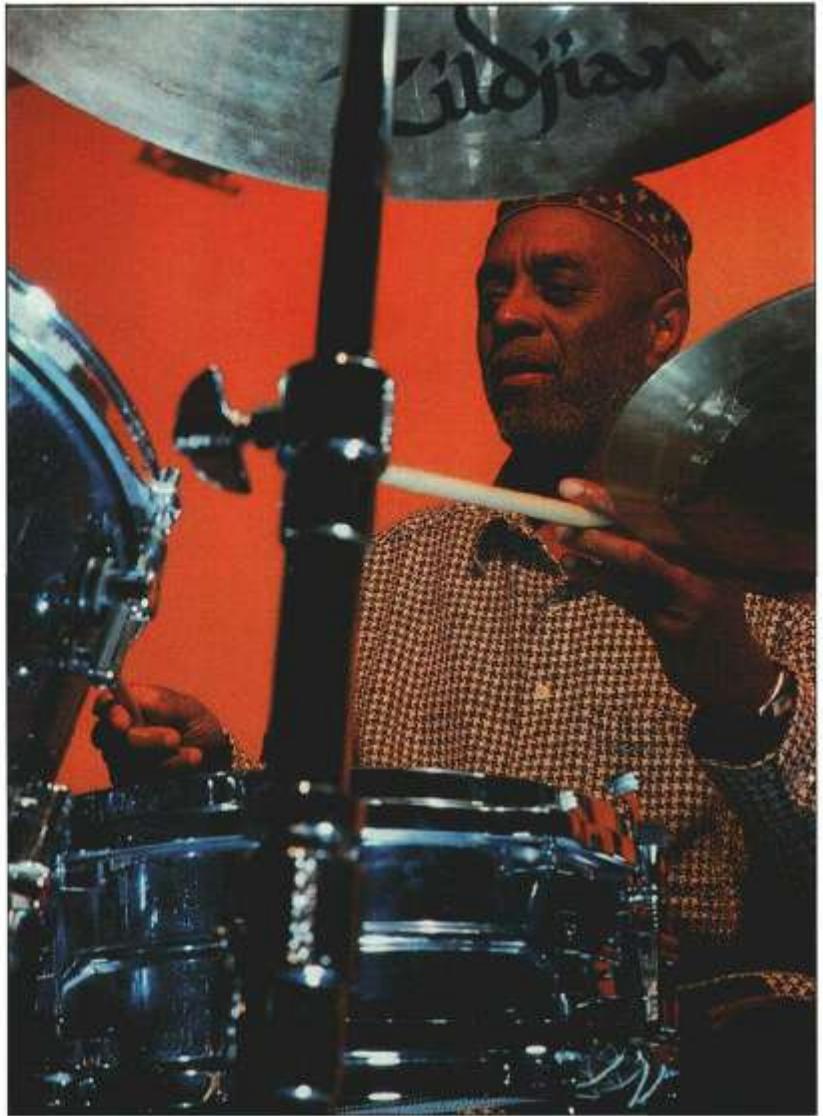
It was a blessed day when Tootie rushed home from school band class and announced that the drum chair was finally his. Ordinarily, a community welcomes a drummer like it welcomes a tracking firm, but Tootie could practice for hours without bothering a soul. Thanks were due largely to his teacher, Specs Wright, who had sat patiently in a little room extolling the virtues of intensity over volume. Tootie's light touch became his hallmark.

Today, at sixty-three, Albert "Tootie" Heath continues his special relationship with drums and cymbals. His strolling press rolls and rimshots summon images of street bands from the past, and his ride cymbal beat falls in a special place between church and bop. Count in some tune in seven, and Tootie will make you think it's in four, just by refusing to stamp out the time with the hi-hat. Rather, he spins a glassy web across the surfaces of several flat ride cymbals. At once he evokes the elegance of a concert hall and the corner tavern. If Albert Heath were a record label, he would be part ECM, part Impulse.

Tootie will tell you that his ability to walk the line is not so unique. Quickly, he will point to drummers like Billy Higgins, for whom he subs in pianist Cedar Walton's band. All the same, it was not purely a call from family that led him into the Modern Jazz Quartet when Connie Kay passed on. It was a matter of credibly carrying the essence of the black American experience into the European-influenced chamber ensemble.

Listen closely to the drumming on the Heath Brothers album *As We Were Saying*—and you need to listen with Tootie, because he's not one to proclaim anything—and you'll hear an impeccable continuum of styles and eras. When drummers sit around talking about some "magic zone" between feels, they are talking about Albert Heath. The problem is getting Tootie to toot his own horn.

Still, Albert was keen to do this interview. He saw it as an opportunity to reflect on fifty years in the evolution of drumming, rather than to promote his role in the numerous bands with which he has played and recorded. His affection for South Philadelphia is obvious in his anecdotes and in his playing. Today, when he is not touring or composing, he tries to bring a similar sense of community to groups of disadvantaged children in greater Los Angeles. He takes this "day job" as seriously as his drumming.



**BW:** Your traditional left hand grip is immaculate—correct and strong. I'm assuming you had a marching background.

**AH:** Kind of, but the marching background is very unorthodox. I grew up across the street from an American Legion drum & bugle corps and became interested in that genre. That was my military influence, and that's also where I got the New Orleans influence. I didn't know what it was at the time, but the music that was played in the South Philadelphia Lincoln Post was different from anything else in the city.

**BW:** You're telling me there wasn't a lot of John Philip Sousa?

**AH:** Absolutely not. The piston bugle came in much later. The bugles were very limited. They couldn't play any John Philip Sousa, but they came up with their own music. There were little melodies developed right there. There was nothing written.

There were black women from the Salvation Army who used to visit our neighborhood. They had a bass drum and played a cymbal with a coat hanger. The bass drum beater was a stick with fifteen or twenty pairs of old, stinking socks wrapped around it. They had a trombone, a euphonium, and another woman playing a tambourine. On Saturday they would play on the street corner, and we used to run to see them. They had this groove with the bass drum. It was very much like New Orleans stuff, except they played a constant four—"bump,

bump, bump, bump." You could hear it for blocks away. Kids would come from all over South Philadelphia to watch them.

**BW:** I'm curious how the New Orleans influence manifested itself as far north as Philadelphia.

**AH:** There was a pipeline in the black community. If something went on in another city that had to do with art, it worked its way around the country. Somebody would travel somewhere and tell us what was happening over there. It was a system based on the communication system of the slaves.

**BW:** An underground railroad.

**AH:** Exactly. And it still exists in the black community. But now, with television and the motion picture industry, nothing is much of a secret anymore. With this pipeline we were able to communicate with musicians and artists. So, in that sense, New Orleans was not that far away.

**BW:** You obviously cared deeply about drumming: I can see it in your grip and touch.

**AH:** I was influenced by some pretty powerful drummers who were around: Philly Joe Jones, Specs Wright, Butch Ballard, Coachville Harris, and old guys like Sid Catlett and Chick Webb, and a drummer

named Al Jones, who played with Dizzy. These guys didn't really record; they stayed in Philadelphia and played around town.

**BW:** Specs Wright is a legendary figure, but most of us know very little about him. What was he like?

**AH:** He was one of my primary teachers. I was close to Specs Wright. He was trying to show me the way to get to a lot of advanced stuff that technically I wasn't ready for. Probably one of my strongest influences was Specs Wright because of his patient method of teaching—making me feel that something *he* was doing was

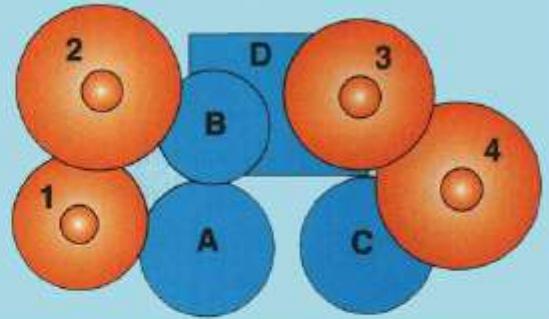
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## As He Was Saying

### Tootie's Listeners' Guide

Here are the albums that Tootie says best represent his playing...

*Coltrane*, by John Coltrane (1957, Prestige)

*The Incredible Guitar Of Wes Montgomery* (1960, Riverside)

*In Person*, by the Bobby Timmons Trio (1961, Original Jazz Classics)

*The Prisoner*, by Herbie Hancock (1969, Blue Note)

*As We Were Saying*, by the Heath Brothers (1997, Concord Jazz)

...and here are the albums he listens to most for inspiration.

*Blue Haze*, by Miles Davis, with Art Blakey and Kenny Clarke on drums (Prestige)

various Art Blakey & the Jazz Messengers

*Milestones*, by Miles Davis, with Philly Joe Jones (Columbia)

*Sidewinder*, by Lee Morgan, with Billy Higgins (Blue Note)

*Coleman Hawkins With The Red Garland Trio*, with Specs Wright (OJC)

something I could do. He would break it right down so that I could see how to do it. He was a serious advocate of practice, and he practiced everything very slow. It was kind of frustrating when you were a kid, because you wanted to do everything fast.

Specs' touch was the main thing, and he was ambidextrous. He was actually a left-handed person who taught himself to play right-handed. He could do things either way; it didn't matter.

**BW:** You've got one of the lightest left hands in the business—almost delicate. That must be Specs' influence.

**AH:** I find the more I play, the easier I play. I was watching Jeff "Tain" Watts. He holds the sticks way back near the end, no bounce, no anything, but he has some incredible technique—very powerful and strong. Basically, he played hard; the dynamics didn't change. As a drummer, I need to hear some quiet stuff and some strong stuff, too.

This is just to say that I probably play, as you say, more sensitively. I've gotten compliments on that, on my touch. I think I got this from Specs Wright. I like when I do something loud for it to be a surprise. In order for there to be loud, there has to be soft.

I'm very sensitive to the other instruments I'm playing with. There is an old saying that when you can't hear the bass, you are playing too loud. When I was coming up, there was no amplification. The bass might have been miked through the house system, but there was no amp on stage. Same with the piano. You couldn't drown out the piano player.

**BW:** When you get too many mic's, it leaves the control in the hands of the engi-

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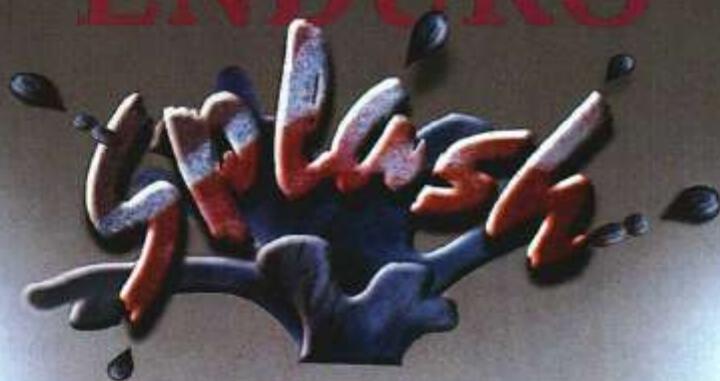
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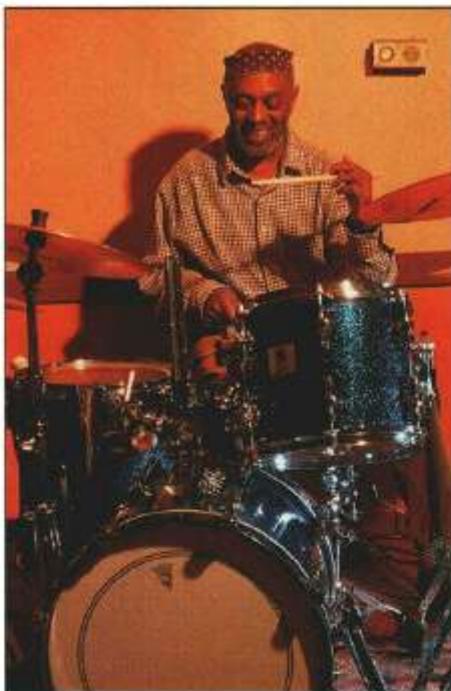
neer.

**AH:** Yeah, and those guys are rock 'n' roll kids! They don't know anything about jazz. I was influenced by Art Blakey, who was a master of dynamics. He could play one of those huge rolls and then drop down so quiet at the end of the chorus that you would think he quit playing! And then it would start to build up from there. It was always a voyage with Art that would carry you from one dynamic to another.

**BW:** He'd grab the cymbal...

**AH:** ...and quiet everything down, and then start all over again. That's the kind of drumming I like. Max Roach was also very dynamic, but he went about it differently—from cymbal business to drum business. To play those incredible melodic solos at different volumes and speeds was his thing. Kenny Clarke was also a very sensitive drummer. Philly Joe was not. He played harder. Buddy Rich was one of his influences; he loved Buddy Rich. He loved Sid Catlett and Jo Jones too—all that twirling of the brushes.

Philly would kind of imitate Buddy but, of course, he didn't have the technique that Buddy had. Buddy was a technician; he



wasn't musical. Speed and power; that's what I got from him.

**BW:** I saw Buddy just before his death on those *Radio Kings*. Maybe because he was slowing down, he played simply, and it was nice *not* to hear a long drum solo.

**AH:** People pressured him into all that, just like Elvin. He has to go nuts every time. Philly Joe wanted to play with that kind of power and control, and he developed something of his own out of that, quite unique. Take that thing with one hand on the snare drum, going at a ridiculous speed—that's Buddy's stuff. Buddy would do that for ten minutes and take his other hand and do all kinds of accents. Philly couldn't do that like Buddy, so he came up with his own stuff.

Technique is different for all of us. I'm not saying that one is better than the other. Every person has his or her own technique. You just have to develop it. Some say one of my attributes is being sensitive or quiet on the snare drum, so that's *my* technique.

**BW:** Was Kenny Clarke, as the literature claims, the one who transferred timekeeping to the ride cymbal from the bass drum, or were other people doing that?

**AH:** He was the one who had the reputation, but things don't just fall from the sky. Kenny Clarke is known for that, more so than Max Roach, but Max Roach had the opportunity to record and get out there first. Max will tell you himself that Kenny

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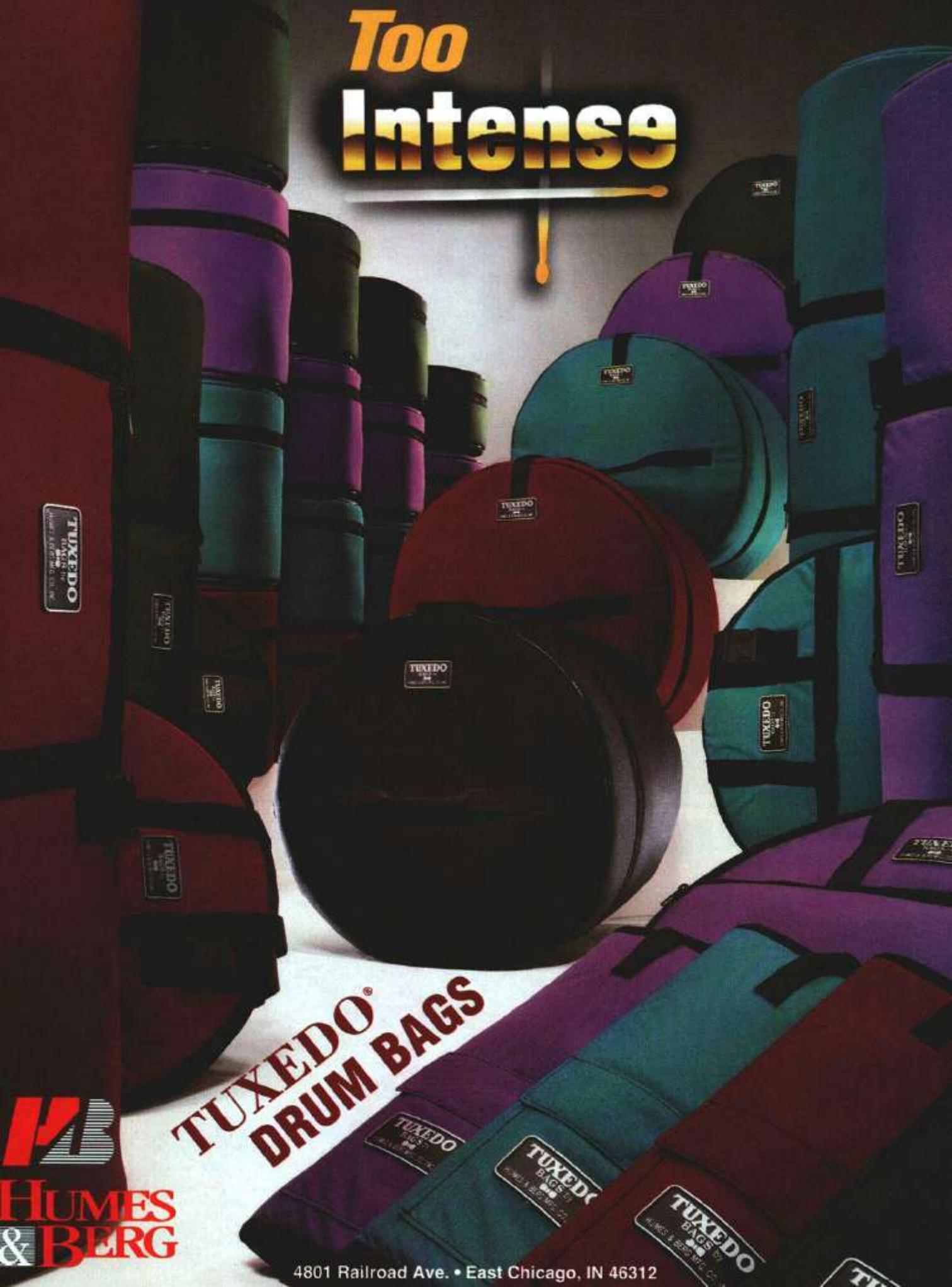
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Clarke was one of his main influences. It was out there and it went around in that same grapevine. We would hear something, enhance it, and carry it further.

**BW:** You were subbing for Specs Wright in Philadelphia before you were nineteen.

**AH:** At the Showboat and the Blue Note, too. He was in house bands with Ray

Bryant and a bass player named Jimmy Mobley. They were a trio in several clubs around town. He could only be in one place at any one time, so sometimes I would go in and play.

**BW:** Did you have to adjust your style to cover his gig?

**AH:** I was so much into Specs Wright I was probably sounding just like him! They didn't even notice he was gone.

**BW:** You were quite young when you moved to New York. That must have been a thrill, trading places with some established drummers.

**AH:** I was nineteen years old and was on my way to whatever adventure New York had to offer. I had a gig with J.J. Johnson in 1958. I took Elvin's place. Man, I was definitely intimidated by Elvin. He was unique. That's why it was so difficult for me to play after him, and play the arrangements he had recorded. I had to try to invent my own way, because I couldn't play like Elvin if I wanted to. It was extra difficult because I was influenced by Max Roach, Specs Wright, and Philly Joe. Elvin's stuff was not connected to any of that—at least, it didn't seem like it to me. His approach to J.J.'s music was wonderful. Elvin was established and recording with people, and I was not. I didn't consider myself to be anywhere near that level of professionalism.

I traveled for a couple of years with J.J. Johnson. Clifford Jordan and lots of musicians came through. In fact, I was there for two different bands with J.J. First it was

Nat Adderley or Freddie Hubbard, then Clifford Jordan took Bobby Jasper's place. Cedar Walton took Tommy Flanagan's place.

**BW:** Tommy Flanagan played on a favorite album of mine, *The Incredible Guitar Of Wes Montgomery*. Your sound and straight-ahead playing on that knocks me out. You've seen your share of changes in the thirty-some years since that was recorded.

**AH:** Everything has changed. Nowadays all the sensitive recording equipment has led to basic changes in the instrument itself. We went from calf to plastic heads that are tunable and hold the tone and are more durable. The tuning of drums has changed. There are more drums now in a kit, more cymbals. Rock 'n' roll drummers have influenced jazz, and, also, drummers are *percussionists* now.

**BW:** That goes back to Connie Kay.

**AH:** It goes back further than Connie Kay. It goes back to the old guys: Baby Dodds—washboards and whistles. Herlin Riley is a perfect example of a young man doing the old traditions. He has a book describing Baby Dodds and second-line styles. He's a wonderful young musician.

**BW:** You were a member of the Bebop Trio in Philadelphia along with Ted Curson—piano, sax, and drums. Was there a conscious decision not to have a bass player?

**AH:** We were just learning how to play. A bass was a luxury we didn't have. There was nobody around who was willing or



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able to play what we were trying to play—bebop. That's never been the most popular music and it never will be. We didn't have a bass player till Jimmy Garrison came along. He was from Florida, and he went to my high school. He was originally a singer in the style of the Orioles—quartet singing. We started to hang out and he saw my brother Percy playing, grabbed a bass, and started studying. We were just trying to imitate Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, and Max Roach.

**BW:** Playing with a bass player was a real art, right down to the sound of your bass drum not interfering with the acoustic bass sound.

**AH:** Not just the bass drum. You can't be banging on your snare drum or cymbals either. That's how I learned: playing in very small places—in people's basements, practicing at home without knocking down the whole house! That's how you develop your sensitivity.

**BW:** You talk about your love for Art Blakey, but you didn't really take to his cymbal sound, did you?

**AH:** Yeah I did, and I still do. The sizzle cymbal is Art Blakey's trademark, and I've

always had a sizzle cymbal—I've never been without one.

**BW:** But he had that crusty, ocean-like K sound. You went in a different direction.

**AH:** I don't have that *sound*, which was his choice of cymbals, but he made me aware of how to play that ride cymbal. And I may not have a *beat* like Art Blakey's, but I'm always applying Art Blakey's *dynamics* to an arrangement.

**BW:** Were there distinct camps at the time? For example, Art had this dark K sound, whereas, say, Connie Kay had a lighter, more "A Zildjian" sound.

**AH:** Those sounds were the *identities* of those drummers. Everybody was trying to find their own identity and their own sounds. You didn't go out and try to buy cymbals like Art Blakey. You may have played everything he played, but you wanted to have your own cymbal sound!

I used *KS* and *As* and I still do. When I joined the MJQ—and brothers Percy and Jimmy—John Lewis, who is very particular about cymbals, was trying to get Connie's cymbals for me because he wanted that sound. Although I wouldn't have a ride rhythm like Connie's, at least the

*sound* would be there.

I have a cymbal I use with the MJQ that I call my "piano cymbal." It's not a rivet cymbal. It's just an open, flat, dull-sounding cymbal, but it records well. It's a flat ride. I have three flat rides. I only have one cymbal with a bell, and I use that as a crash.

**BW:** You're bringing out some overtones I don't usually hear from flat rides.

**AH:** I don't know; the engineers fool around with cymbal sounds. I play differently when I record because I can go in and hear, and tailor it, and see where my beat is relative to the bass player. I may need, for example, to get more *top* and not dig in to the cymbal—bounce more. With all of this new high-tech equipment you can get another chance to do something, and can try to fit better with the composition and the dynamics.

Speaking of flat rides, I think it was Ben Riley who told me, "Man, I don't play with no cymbals without breasts." [laughs] He wouldn't play a flat *nothing*. And he hates the sizzle. I like a sizzle cymbal.

**BW:** Let's talk about the new Heath Brothers CD. The track "The Newest One"

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has a unique feel—almost straight 8ths but with a hint of swing. Billy Higgins has a similar "ding" on the ride. Are you conscious of this lilt to your ride beat?

**AH:** Oh yeah, I make a conscious effort to make it the main source of cushion and continuity throughout the music. The bass drum, snare drum, and hi-hat are accompanying, but the main thing is the ride rhythm. It is exactly what it says: a "ride"; it gives the soloist something to ride on.

Billy is another influence on me, real strong. We played together in Los Angeles

and we're really close. He influences me quite a bit and I think I influence him too.

**BW:** You could have swung "The Newest One" more. Don't get me wrong, I mean it *swings*—but the cymbal beat is almost squared-off, as if it's straight 8ths.

**AH:** I was just trying to keep it in the pocket—keep it from going all over the place—and not playing too much. There's enough happening with the soloist, the bass, and the piano. I made a decision to make this rhythm *constant*, and allow them to depend on that, rather than use it as a

separate, conflicting voice.

I was just trying to hold it back. It's more *church*, more *tambourine*: That's what I'm thinking of. That's the gospel feel. That feel is gone from jazz. It became *this* [sings conventional triplet, then quick ride pattern], because of the speed. Everybody wanted to play fast. Tony Williams led everybody away from that church feel with his way of playing.

Connie Kay was a serious example of the church thing, which he brought round through rhythm & blues. That and the gospel were closely related, but separated when the European influence came to jazz. The Europeans have dominated jazz.

**BW:** You have your Dave Brubecks and your Joe Morellos—it's a totally different thing.

**AH:** They have a different feel. You bring a different experience to the drums depending on what your life experience is. I grew up listening to the parades and the gospel, and my influences were African, Cuban, and Caribbean.

**BW:** All of which are coming back.

**AH:** Not in *those* days. We were busy trying to get *away* from that.

**BW:** In the hopes of a better life?

**AH:** Sure. It's like avoiding saying "ain't" because it's not proper.

**BW:** I talked to Milt Hinton about all those photographs he took across America: about the "colored only" hotels and restaurants.

**AH:** All of that was in the music. I grew up like that in South Philadelphia. It was not integrated. My junior high school was one of the first to integrate. My brother-in-law was the first black firefighter in our district. I didn't know about a lot of outside influences, other than my community, which was basically the African diaspora. It produced the Specs Wrights, the Philly Joe Jones, the Kenny Clarkes, and the Max Roaches.

I'm not saying that you can go back. It's natural that it expands and changes; it can't go on forever. But I'm from *that* generation, and that's why my cymbal rhythm sounds so strange to you. Nobody is trying to play that way anymore.

**BW:** I guess I'm trying to discover why it's attractive to me. My dad used to work in tobacco and he used to imitate the way the migrant farm workers used to sing. Something in your playing reminds me of that.

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**AH:** It's the old gospel rhythm. The gospel came from slaves, slaves came from Africa, and that's the link. This country became what it is because of all these elements and ingredients put in by black and white—and Asian, and everyone else. That's the whole thing about the United States of America: It's a microcosm of the whole world. The older this country gets, the more we influence each other, and the more eclectic music, art, and language becomes. We have white kids rapping....

**BW:** Is this a good thing or a bad thing? Talk to an older Cuban. They say that this new Latin/world music is bogus; there's no clave anymore.

**AH:** They're afraid of it; they're afraid of change. Change is frightening when you're a purist. I welcome change. Sure, we're going to lose things, but who knows what we're going to gain?

**BW:** What about the whole thing about South Philly? Are you going to lose that sense of community?

**AH:** I'm not going to lose *anything*, because I'm going to do what I do; do you know what I'm saying? There's change all around me, but I'm going to use what I can

use, and what I can't use I won't. I'm very secure in the way I want to play the drums, and it's a luxury I can play this way and make a living—not a fabulous living, but I can still pay my rent, eat, and have a little insurance. All the normal stuff. I also have a computer and a drum machine and all the stuff I need. But I'm not going to throw away anything—that's what I'm trying to say.

**BW:** But we haven't talked about your compositions.

**AH:** The drums are my main source of music. I can pick out melodies and sometimes I come up with things other people like. I do this for myself. I've got tons of music that lies around because I did not have the confidence as a composer.

**BW:** Come on. "For Heavens Sake," from the new CD, is a great song, it could be a standard!

**AH:** All I know is that it came from inside of me, and that's that.

**BW:** How did it get out?

**AH:** I sat down at the piano and figured out the chords. Usually, when I get a melody, I call my brother Jimmy and ask him for some chords to fit it. This time I

did it myself. Whether the harmony is dense or complex, it's what it is, and it turned out to sound more like something I would do.

**BW:** Nice and dreamy. I like the way that when it moves away from the 7/4 section, you don't resort to the usual devices to set up the change.

**AH:** I'd have to listen to it. Maybe it's because I had played it more than any of those guys and had opportunities to experiment. They jumped right on it in the studio. That's a frame drum you're hearing—I overdubbed it—and a whistle, too. Stanley Cowell overdubbed the kalimba.

**BW:** When I saw you play with George Cables, Andy Simpkins, and Frank Morgan, your solo on "Night In Tunisia" had references to your old street corner marches.

**AH:** Sometimes I try to play more modern, Elvin Jones stuff, but I love that old stuff and I'll do it till I'm out of here. I think it's very important to bring that to the table with all the other influences that are out there. This is a part of American history, and if your music doesn't have any history, then it doesn't have any *depth*.



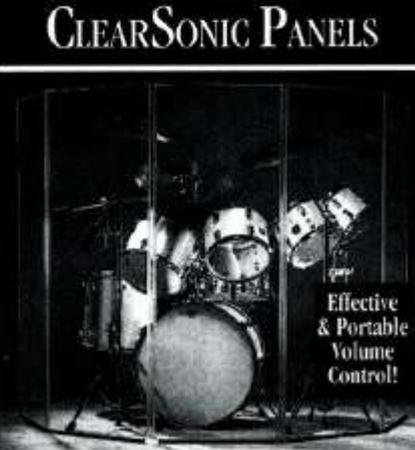
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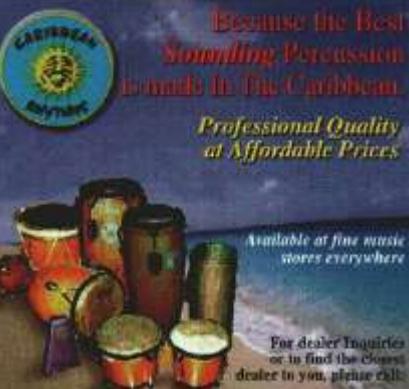
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So influences are okay. They are the way we learn about each other. Maybe one day, we can live next door to each other. When our kids come home from school, they will see those same people they went to school with. The parents will know each other. That's how you build a world community. But if you are going to remain "Cuban" or "African," that's the end of it. You only go through here one time, so you might as well take *a full* ride.

Part of that, for me, is giving something back to the community. I have a three-year grant from the California Arts Council, which includes a grant from the Pasadena Cultural Planning Division. I am able to utilize the Children's Institute in Los Angeles to do percussion classes. I have a budget to have guest artists. I had the LA Philharmonic come and play. We've had African drummers with dancers and costumes performing for the kids. We've had Indian music, too. We make drums out of oatmeal boxes and do class projects.

There are little kids, aged four to eleven. I have a "magic drawing board" and I draw a face, some eyes, a mouth; I can move

these around with a lever. I can make the face of Elvin Jones, and say he is a famous jazz musician and drummer who played with the John Coltrane Quartet, and so on. I take African drums and I let the kids play them. The talking drum is a very funny drum because you can make it say their names; they love that! Then I take a snare drum, strap it on, and we have a parade, and we all march around the facility.

In Pasadena I have another grant with the Cultural Planning Division of the city. I have thirteen students that I teach on Saturdays. We're learning out of the *Stick Control* book. I also have a frame drum class on Saturdays. I am also contracted with an organization called DaCamera Society, which is a classical music society with a jazz component. This is my second year of doing clinics and workshops in penal institutions as well as schools.

Finally, for more than ten years I've been on the faculty of Stanford University Jazz Workshop. I'm an instructor and I also lead combos.

**BW:** What's your secret, Tootie? You're sixty-three, and you sound as if you're

forty.

**AH:** Keeping busy, I guess. I did a solo project, too, with all of the instruments I play: flute, frame drum, the trapset, some whistles, and several percussive instruments. It hasn't been released, but it will be called *The Offering*. This is keeping me active, and I'm enjoying my life. I'm grateful to have gone through all those experiments you go through when you're young, and I survived. As long as I am here, I'm going to continue the work that I'm doing.

I've been trying to get my brother Jimmy to consider a trio project, consisting of Jimmy with the soprano and tenor, Percy with the bass and cello, and me with the drums, washboard, and flute. We have enough music right there to make a great CD. Jimmy has worked with a chordal instrument—guitar, piano, or both—all of his life. I *know* he could perform without one. He says yes when I talk to him—but he's stroking me. If we made a recording, we could all *play* as much as we need to play! I'd like to make a CD for whoever wants to listen to it. Put it out there and just see.



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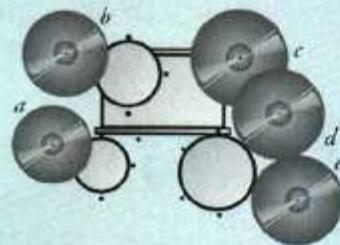
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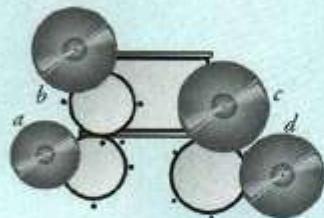
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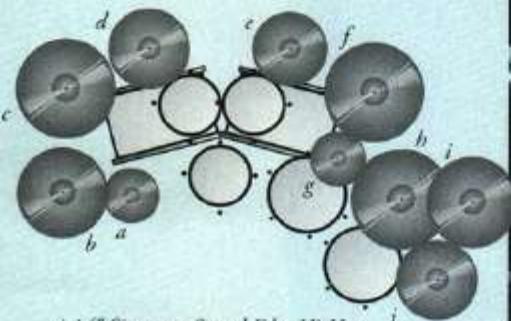
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# PREPARING TO TOUR:



BY ROBYN FLANS

**Y**ou finally get the call you've been working towards: You nailed the audition and you're going on tour! But then it suddenly hits you. There's a whole lot more to think about besides just learning the music. Well, grab your *Modern Drummer* and make it easy on yourselves. This month, drummers Ricky Lawson, Steve Smith, Danny Gottlieb, Adrian Young, Mike Palmer, Mario Calire, and Ken Tondre are going to give you the benefit of their experience. In one easy read you'll learn all the knowledge on the subject that it took them *years* to accumulate.



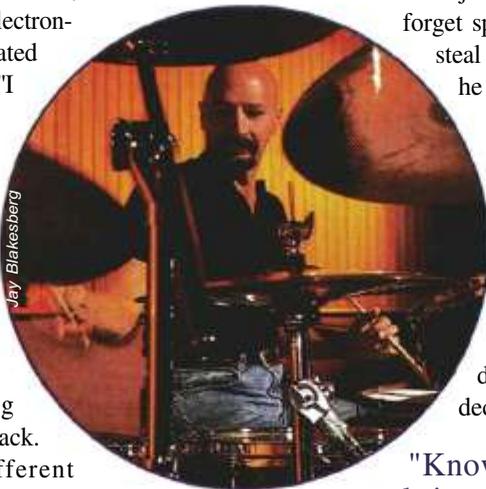


# A DRUMMER'S HANDBOOK



## WHAT DO I TAKE IN THE WAY OF EQUIPMENT?

Ricky Lawson, who has toured with a list of stellar artists that includes Michael Jackson, Phil Collins, and Steely Dan, and who is currently with Eric Clapton, knows a bit about touring—especially on the top professional level. Ricky's first rule of thumb about equipment is to take a good technician. "They can make you look and sound better," Lawson says simply, adding that *his* tech of the last few years, Joe Wolfe, has been especially helpful in the electronics department. "After I've created the drum sounds," Joe says, "I get with Ricky and make sure he's cool with them. Then I have to assign them to programs in the samplers. I'm assigning one sample to a specific location so that when he hits that drum, that sample will come up in that spot. If it's a new tour, there would be a process of putting together the right electronics rack. Each tour may require different things."



"Back in the early days," recalls Garth Brooks' drummer, Mike Palmer, "we were doing county and state fairs, two shows a day, with as many as eleven shows a week." Palmer actually continues to do his *own* teching on the road, and says he knows exactly how much equipment to bring on the road

to get him through a tour. "Sticks and heads were a different story back then. I wasn't really throwing sticks out in the crowd. Now I look at how many dates I have and count on going through two to three pairs of sticks per show. A box of sticks—sixty pair—is not that big of a box, and I have storage on the road. Head-wise, it's a different story. Luckily I have enough storage to keep spare pedals, a spare stool, spare snares, a spare hat—just about spare everything, except drums. And let's not forget spare cymbals—especially on the tours where Garth will steal cymbals from me and throw them out in the audience," he laughs. "Fortunately Zildjian gives Garth a good price."

Danny Gottlieb says he is currently doing mostly jazz tours, where he must carry his own bags and where some of the equipment is provided. "These days, you can get a fairly decent set of drums almost anywhere," Gottlieb says. "I recently got back from Russia, where most of the sets were okay; you just can't be picky about the brand. In a case like that I will bring cymbals, sticks, brushes, and a drumkey. I used to bring a snare drum, but I found that most places in the world have decent snare drums with the kits, so I opted to just carry fewer items. This, of course, depends on the mode of travel. If you have a tour bus, carrying things is not such an issue. I tend to do a lot of one-nighters, either flying or by train. Sometimes a van or truck carries the equipment, but most times I have to travel with my own stuff, so I take as little as possible."

"Knowing how to pack is so important. Even with all of the experience I've had, I still find myself overpacking. I always say the next time I'm not going to do it, but I always do."—**STEVE SMITH**





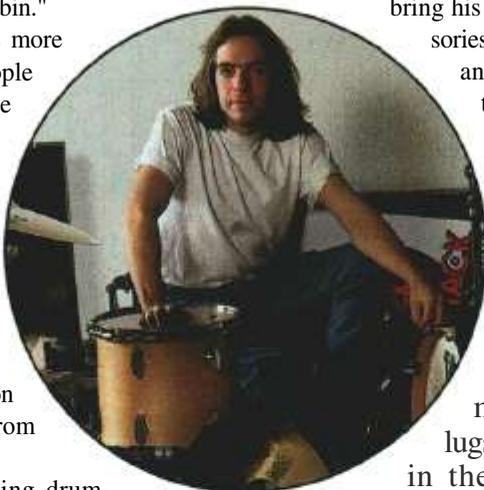
"I used to carry my cymbals onto flights," Gottlieb adds, "but now I check them, which may not be so wise. They can break or be stolen, both of which I've had happen. But the reason I check them now is that these days I give my back priority over carrying cymbals. I don't take my most prized cymbals very often, since they can be lost, broken, or stolen. When I do need my favorite cymbals, I carry them in the cabin."

Traveling in a bus, Ken Tondre has more leeway with Sonic Joyride. "Some people have their specific kit," he says. "I have a lot of different pieces, and for each individual tour I try to pick out the best for that situation. I'm usually using a four- or five-piece kit. I bring an extra snare drum, extra lugs, extra snares, extra cymbal felts—every little accessory that you can think of, because they get lost. Also, bring an extra hi-hat clutch. I've lost several on tour. Things get jolted and beat up from being in a bus."

Ken has a good suggestion regarding drumsticks: "A lot of kids want your sticks. I have an endorsement with Vic Firth, but it's still expensive to give sticks away. I'll save the sticks I use at rehearsal that get a bit beat-up, put them in a separate bag, and bring that bag on the road to give out. As far as how many good sticks to bring on the road, I bring twice as many

pairs as we have gigs. That normally gets me through. As for cymbals, bring extra ones if you can afford it. I just got a Sabian endorsement, which helps a lot. Also, one thing I'm never without is an electric screwdriver with a hex head attachment that fits my lugs. Changing a head in the middle of a set takes way too long with a drumkey. The electric screwdriver is much faster."

Wallflowers drummer Mario Calire made the same point: "You have to have a drill with a bit for changing heads. That is *the* tool to have. It cuts the time by more than half. If you're a heavy hitter, it's good to bring an extra snare



rim or two, because you bend those after a while. Even if they're die-cast hoops, they'll get dented."

Steve Smith, who has experienced all levels of touring—from major events with Journey to small club tours with Vital Information—doesn't generally take his drums to Europe or Japan, especially when touring with his own group. But he does bring his DW double bass pedal and a few essential accessories. "I have an *X-Hat* that I'll bring, plus a cowbell and a few things like that. Sometimes I can put those in my suitcase, but other times I'll need a third case. That becomes a drag because those bags can get pretty heavy. The first time I went

"One thing I'm never without is an electric screwdriver with a hex head attachment that fits my lugs. Changing a head in the middle of a set takes way too long with a drumkey."—KEN TONDRE

to a chiropractor was after a long tour where I was carrying cymbals and an extra bag of accessories, which hurt my back. You've got to be careful with that. I generally like to use a new pair of sticks every gig or two. I don't break them often, but I like the feel of a new pair of sticks, so I'll bring a good supply."

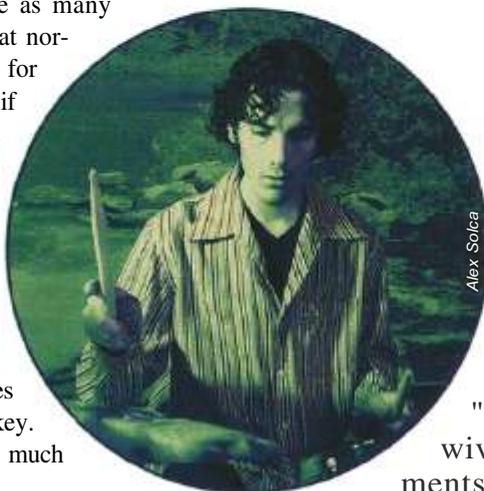
#### HOW DO I PREPARE PHYSICALLY FOR A WORLD TOUR?

"I guess I've been preparing for this since the eighth grade without knowing it," asserts Mike Palmer. "My stepfather loaded up some benches and got some weights back then, and I got interested in weight lifting. It's a hobby of mine now, and I try to do it whenever I can. I've always been into the physical fitness thing. I've always liked jogging, too. It makes you feel good about yourself. And even though you're touring, you still have to work toward goals. A few of the bandmembers and our road manager like to

"Guys who have wives and attachments have a harder time because they're leaving families behind. I'm single so it's not an issue for me. Besides, I love to travel."—MARIO CALIRE

lift, too, so when we get into a city, if the hotel doesn't have good equipment, we'll find a place to go.

"During the fair days when we were starting out, we were doing a lot of two-show days," Mike continues, "so we'd have to deal with playing in the heat of the afternoon and maybe a chilly night. I always slept



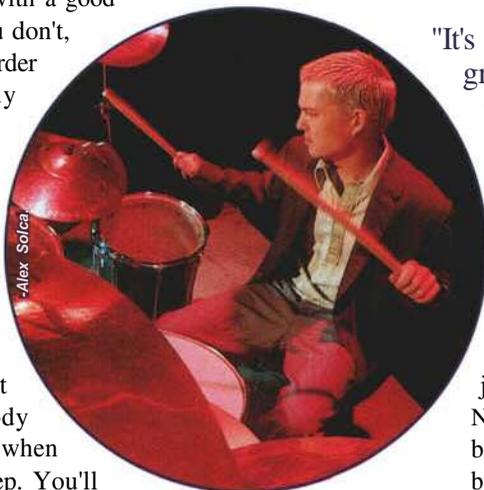


when I could back then because we never knew what was going to happen. We had to eat, too, and we couldn't be particular about what was available. It may be something you don't like, but you have to eat a little bit of it anyway. And then you have to be 'up' for the shows you do, whether it's two or three in one day, hot as hell or cold in the middle of winter. You have to go in with a good attitude and do it. If you don't, it's only going to be harder on you and everybody else, and you're going to end up having to find new employment."

Sonic Joyride's Ken Tondre has lived the extreme, traveling on a 1983 school bus. "I believe in keeping physically fit," he says. "First and foremost, your body takes such a pounding when you don't get proper sleep. You'll play late gigs, and then have to get up early to do things like *Good Morning San Francisco* at 7:30. I start preparing for a tour early, maybe six weeks prior. I'll do a mixture of endurance and weight training. I'll do the *Stairmaster* one day and a treadmill the next. I'm an overdoer, but when we get on the road I feel great and prepared, which also alleviates the emotional stress of *not feeling* prepared. I do that year-round when I'm off tour, but I do more endurance training four to six weeks before a tour.

"While I'm on the bus," Ken continues, "I try to schedule at least two days in a gym, which is difficult. I bring a jump rope, too. On this tour coming up, we're definitely going to stop every four days for a real gym break. When I play in front of an audience, I play very physically, so I need it.

"Before a tour I do what I call 'practicing beyond the set,'" Tondre explains. "We have an ADAT in our rehearsal space, and we tape the basic show that we'll be playing on tour. I listen to the tape and pick out the weaknesses in my performance. Then I play through the song, working out the problems so that I feel very confident. But I don't necessarily play through that song a thousand times, because I'm going to be going through it so many times on tour and



"It's the overall daily grind of doing nothing that gets to me. I started to get really burned out, and after a year and a half, I folded."  
—ADRIAN YOUNG

I don't want to get sick of it. I like to practice things that have to do with what needs work, but not necessarily that specific song. So if we're doing a shuffle-type groove and it's not happening, I might go in and play some hip-hop grooves or some Texas swing or blues, anything that relates to it. Also, if we're going to be playing a forty-five-minute set on the road, I'll practice two forty-five-minute sets back to back, so I'll know that my endurance is really up and I won't have to worry if the lights are really hot or something like that. It's a lot of work, but there is a payoff.

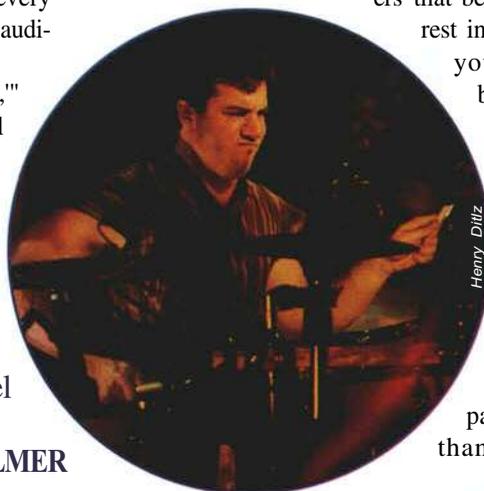
"I also take food supplements on the road," Tondre adds. "I take your basic multi-vitamin, and a lot of *Power Bars* and *Slim Fast* shakes, which are canned, just in case we can't stop. One time we broke down in the Nevada desert without any food except eight *Power Bars*. We bring a lot of water, too. We all bring our favorite cold remedies, but I find that if we stay physically fit, we rarely get sick on the road."

For Sonic Joyride, not getting sick on the road is an incredible feat, considering that the band really must battle the elements, sleeping on the bus with no air conditioning or heat. "We're not stupid, though," Ken asserts. "If we desperately need it, we take a break. You have to know your limitations on the road. New bands especially have to prove themselves above and beyond. You're getting up at 6:00 A.M. to do a morning radio show, driving ten hours from there to do a gig, then after the show doing interviews, getting four hours of sleep, and having to do the whole thing over again. Sometimes you just have to tell the powers

that be that you need six hours of rest instead of four. You feel like you can't miss anything because everything is so important, but people get angry when you're sick, so your health is really most important."

Mario Calire had never been on the road before this past two-year tour with the Wallflowers, nor was there much time to prepare before they left. Rather than *physical* preparations,

"Dealing with days off can be difficult. You don't want to find yourself sitting in a hotel room."  
—MIKE PALMER



though, the young drummer learned very quickly about how to play shows. According to Mario, "I had to simplify and serve the songs. It wasn't about me or my chops, and I had to learn that real quick. When you're on the road there's very little time to practice on your drumset. Usually at soundcheck there's so much to deal with—guitars, monitors, the sound of the room—and there isn't time, nor is it appropriate for you to be banging away. It's definitely good to have your chops together before you go on the road—and don't expect to be able to practice. Still, I bring a practice pad just to get my hands loose before the gig, as well as a metronome."

No Doubt's Adrian Young plays the set list down on a daily basis for about a week before No Doubt leaves on tour. "I either play the songs to a click track or I play to the record," he says, "although I don't play to the record as often, because the songs are generally faster live."

Since Vital Information is *his* band, Steve Smith's preparation for a tour encompasses every aspect, beginning with working with the travel agent and the itinerary to talking with club owners. With Journey and Steps Ahead, Smith only had to concentrate on the music. "I would work on the tunes, the time feels, and the tempos, and get familiar with everything so that once I started playing, I could get loose with the music pretty quickly."

"If I were getting ready for a Journey tour, I'd probably do some serious aerobics," Smith continues. "It's more of a stamina gig when you're playing a rock arena."

When I'm playing jazz, there are a lot of dynamics and ups and downs. I put out a lot of energy, but it's not at that same intense level for two hours."

### COPING EMOTIONALLY

Ken Tondre says that touring can cause a feeling of isolation. "So we usually pick up a *USA Today* in the morning and pass it around to keep up with the everyday events. It's a mental thing, because after a month of touring you really lose touch with what's going on in the world; you even forget what day it is. It also gives us something else to talk about. We don't have a TV or radio like some of the fancy buses, so our choices are reading, talking, or sleeping. We're also big on postcards and staying in touch with friends and family. Everyone wants to know what you're doing, and it helps keep reality in the touring situation."

"Garth is a good enough guy that he knows that after about five or six weeks people start getting goofy and are ready to go home," Mike Palmer explains. "So when we go overseas, he lines it up so it's six weeks, max. After two weeks it begins to get hard to deal with, so you start looking for different ways to keep occupied. The everyday grind on the road and being away from home gets tough, especially if you have family. I'm married and have two kids, and I get to wondering what they're doing and missing them a lot."

"In the beginning it was very tough," Mike continues. "The band toured in vans and old buses. In the summer of '90, we

did fifty-two days straight. We stopped home for three hours, where the bus parked at the office downtown and the wives and girlfriends came down and visited with us. Right now we'll be in one city from two to six nights. When you do that at least you're in one place. We know where the laundromats are.

"Dealing with days off can be difficult," he says, "especially when you're just starting out and you don't have a lot of money to go out. When you have that kind of time off and you don't do anything productive with it, it can really drag you down. You don't want to find yourself sitting in a hotel room most of the day. In the beginning I helped Garth with the merchandise, so that gave me something to occupy my time with during the days on the job, and on days off I could count merchandise or get out my drums and mess around with them. I'd try to find things to occupy my time. When the merchandise became too big and he had to give it to someone else, I started finding other things to do. I became a relief driver on the bus, because it's much more interesting for me to drive and listen to music up front than be bored in back."

Despite the long stretches, Mario Calire says that life on the road is not difficult for him. "Guys who have wives and attachments have a harder time because they're leaving families behind. I'm single so it's not an issue for me. Besides, I love to travel. I find that as long as I feel good physically, my spirits are going to be high. If you start to get worn out—which is inevitable with the lack of sleep, being

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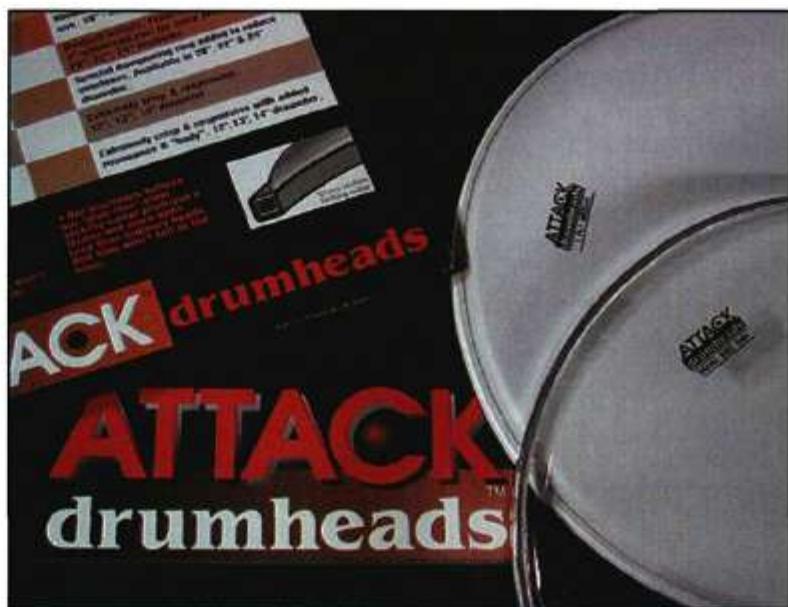
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overworked, changing time zones, bad food, and airplanes—that's when you start to feel it, and that's when you can get bummed out. You just have to really take it easy.

"I try to find a mellow place to be, both mentally and physically, so I can save my energy for the gigs," says Mario, who also mentions that stretching, yoga, and reading are a few of the activities that relax him on the road. "I try to take a nap in the middle of the day if I need it, because it's really hard to get the sleep that you need during the night, especially if you're doing an all-night drive. It's bumpy and it makes it hard to sleep. I try to conserve my energy. If you're playing an hour-and-a-half show, it takes a lot of energy. Exploring the city, though, can help get rid of some of the tedium of the road. Get out and go to a museum, go to a bookstore, walk around. You can get stuck in some weird places, and in the winter you can get snowed in, which can get brutal. But usually it works out that you get a day or two off in a cool place. Obviously if you're in New York on a day off you're going to have a good time. As for other places, you just have to explore, and that can be part of the fun of

being on the road."

Everybody has a different temperament and threshold. No Doubt's Adrian Young admits that the emotional difficulty of being on the road was the roughest part for him. The band toured for twenty-seven months behind their hit record, and he got into some very bad habits.

"This is not the everyday scenario, because one does not generally tour for that length of time," Young says. "But I would say during the last eight months of it I was drinking every single day. It was more or less just a daily glaze. I got through it, and then when I got home I was basically fine—I didn't need to drink at all."

Adrian started out feeling productive with his time off on the road, but the long haul created a downward spiral for him. "It's the overall daily grind of doing nothing that gets to me," he says. "The show part of it is great, but the routine of trying to find ways to entertain yourself gets old. I brought my golf clubs on the road and did that a lot at first, which was good. And I started off by working out on the road, but once I started to get really burned out, I could barely function. In retrospect, I'm glad we did it because we did well and we

were able to continue to sell so many records internationally. We just had to go for it, though—we were exploding all over the world and we couldn't let the ball drop. Some people manage better than I did. They get on the computer and do things, but after a year and a half, I folded.

"A lot of people also have troubled personal relationships when they're on the road over long periods of time," Young says. "I recommend, through experience, that if you have a girlfriend, bring her out on the road every so often. I suggest going no longer than three weeks at a stretch without seeing that person."

Camaraderie is also very important on the road, Young says. "The bands we tour with have a lot to do with how much fun we're having. It's good to have that escape, too, because from time to time we're going to get sick of each other and we'll need to go somewhere else."

Garth Brooks' band still shares rooms on the road. "I have to give Garth a lot of credit for putting a family together instead of the hottest pickers he could find," Palmer says, "because the hottest pickers might have attitudes that don't mesh, and pretty soon you're losing this player and that player. He wanted to have people on the road he could have forever. It was very smart of him to think that far ahead. That many days on a bus in confining spaces can be tough.

"Garth can afford the best things on our bus," Mike says, "and the idea came up that we could have individual TVs in our bunks, which a lot of groups have today. But we didn't do it because Garth said it would create individual time instead of group time. So instead we'll play games. We put a coat-hanger rim up and play 'basketball,' our version of basketball. We'll invent games like that and sit around and laugh and have that kind of camaraderie, instead of being isolated in our bunks, watching a videotape."

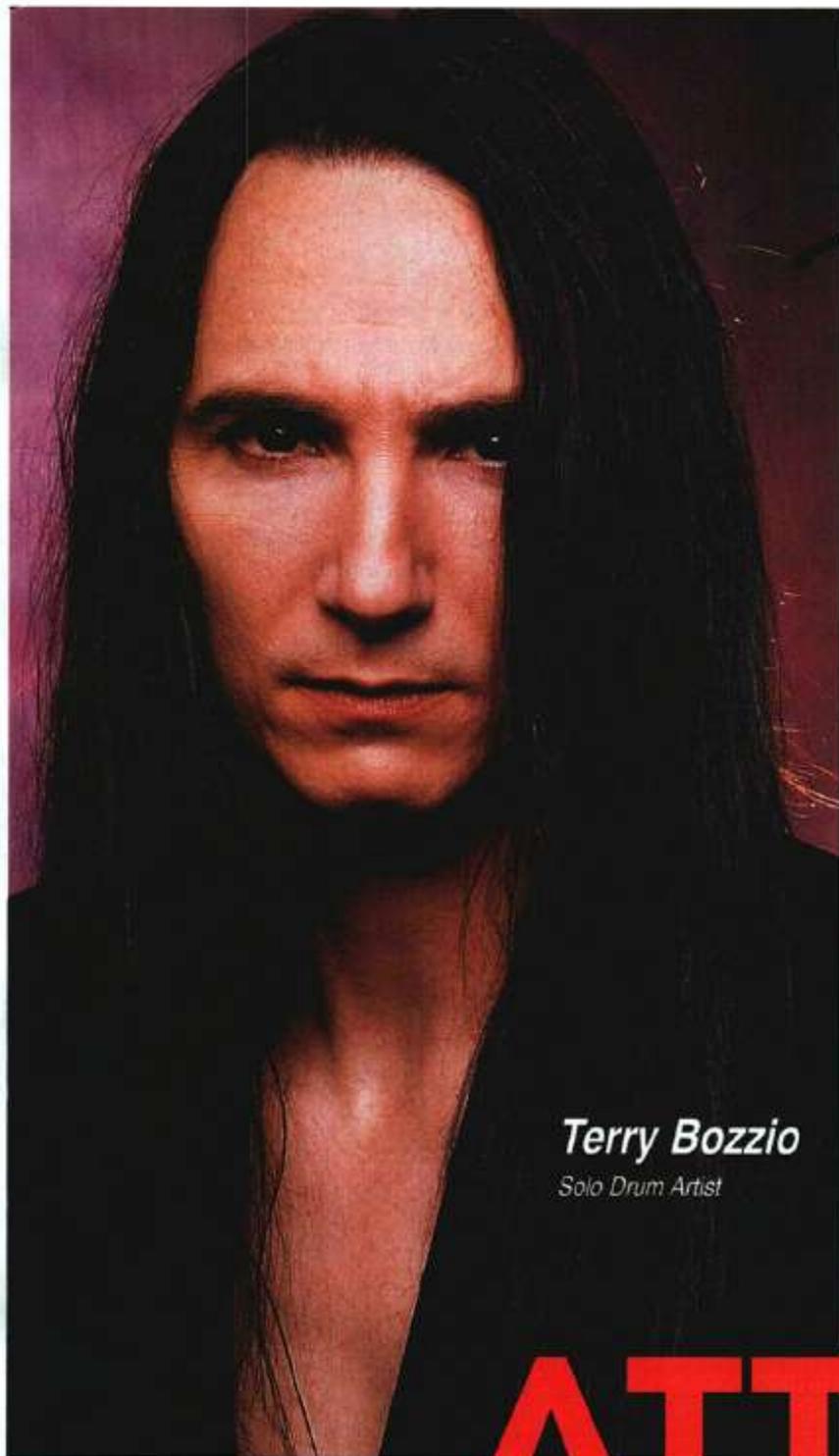
Hand in hand with camaraderie is learning to live together in close quarters. "I always go back to the adage, 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,'" Palmer says. "I know how I feel, and I can usually focus in on somebody and tell if they don't want to be alone and want to talk to somebody. I offer friendship, but if I see they want to be alone, I leave them alone."

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## WHAT DO I PACK?

Needless to say, the consensus is that you should pack as light as possible and bring plenty of socks and underwear. "You can never have too many T-shirts, socks, and underwear," says Mario Calire. "The number of times you want to do your laundry determines how much stuff you should bring. Space is always a factor, so you have to find that balance. For the longest time, we were carrying our own equipment on the bus, so you find out that space is definitely at a premium. I'm a little bit of a health nut, so I make sure I pack the vitamins I want to take, plus supplements and herbs and things like that."

"Thanks to my mother-in-law and wife, I have enough socks and underwear to get me through a couple of weeks," Palmer laughs. "I'll take two weeks' worth if that's what it takes. I'll look at the schedule and figure how much clothes I need to pack and when I can do wash."

"On some of the first trips we took to Europe," Palmer says, "there were people dragging two and three cases of luggage unnecessarily through the airport. When we got to Heathrow Airport, we had to walk for

like two miles and we were carrying our luggage because they didn't transfer it for us.

"And don't fly with soft-side luggage," Palmer adds. "Those things get so smashed. I know people who work at the airlines, and they say the hard shells are the only way to go."

"I mostly take a small case that will fit under the seat of planes," Danny Gottlieb says. "Airlines don't often insure or repair the handles on cases, and I've had at least three broken by airline mishandling. So I usually take a rolling suitcase on as cabin baggage. Sometimes I will check it, though, and that is a risk. If I need an extra item of clothing on the road, I usually just buy it," Gottlieb says. "That way I start off light and add as I go along. It's nice to have the room in your suitcase for T-shirts and hats that people give you along the way, too."

"I also suggest that if you have room in your carry-on bag, you should pack an extra toothbrush, toothpaste, underwear, and other essentials," Gottlieb recommends. "I had an experience in Russia last month where we were diverted to a different airport, and after thirteen hours of being

detained in a transit lounge, I was taken to a hotel with only my carry-on bag. The hotel had shampoo, but no toothbrush or toothpaste. I had no clean underwear for two days. It was a nightmare."

"Don't pack the day before you're supposed to leave," suggests road warrior Ricky Lawson. "I used to pack two hours before the car was coming. Don't do that. I'm away for varying periods, from two and a half to four and a half months. With Michael Jackson, it was four and a half months, and that's a killer. Through the years I've learned how to pack. I have these little bags that I put everything in. I have a bag for my underwear and socks, and another bag with all my T-shirts, and another bag with all my pants in it, and then all of that is placed in a duffel bag and a suitcase. If I need a pair of pants, I can just grab this one bag and all my pants are in there."

"I always take an alarm clock," Lawson insists, "because a lot of times you can't get a wake-up call and you do not want to miss a lobby call. As a drummer, your job is to be on time. Get a wake-up call *and* set the alarm."

"When you go on tour with a jazz group

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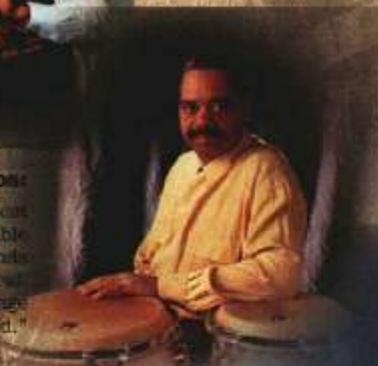


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WHEN YOU'RE READY TO GROW YOUR TALENT

in Europe, there aren't a lot of extra people," explains Steve Smith, "so whatever you take you've got to carry. I have to keep a check on my cymbals because if I take too much, I've got to pay for the added weight, which is brutal in Europe. I take eight to ten cymbals, and some of them are pretty small. I can stick those in a bag. I carry my cymbals and one Samsonite suitcase with—hopefully—not too much stuff in it. You've got to leave some space because you end up getting a bunch of free T-shirts. I take my toiletries and my contact lens kit, and I like to carry a candle and incense so I can get a little vibe happening in my room. I also take some essential oils for the bathtub, sometimes a CD player and some CDs—and a lot of underwear and socks.

"I don't bring any electrical stuff to Europe with me," Steve adds. "If I need an iron, I'll borrow it from the hotel. My CD player just uses batteries. I used to bring stuff to convert the electricity, but I've simplified things. The rule of thumb is to bring enough garments for a week. Knowing how to pack is so important. Even with all of the experience I've had, I still find myself

over-packing. I'll pack stuff that I won't look at the entire month I'm gone. I always say the next time I'm not going to do it, but I always do."

#### FINAL POINTERS

Regarding international travel, Ricky Lawson suggests that you shouldn't drink the water if you don't have to. "Drink bottled water," he urges. "Also, take your vitamins and keep your passport with you at all times. You may look like somebody else, and they will snatch you up in a minute and you'll end up in a jail cell where nobody will be able to find you."

Danny Gottlieb suggests, "Always have a credit card; you never know when you will need it. Always have extra drumsticks and keys. Have a good relationship with a travel agent. And have a number ready to call in case of an emergency."

Mike Palmer says to make productive use of your time on the bus. "On the way home from a tour I'll make a list of the things I'll need to do before I have to leave again," Mike says. "I may only have two or three days to take care of things, so I have to be

organized."

Palmer also had a wise comment about the telephone: "Europe is definitely costly. One thing I learned—not from first-hand experience, luckily, but from other people—is that you do not argue with your spouse over the phone. As soon as an argument starts you either say, 'Listen, I'm not going to do it,' and hang up, or just say, 'It's coming out of your paycheck, not mine.' Because before you know it, you can be in the middle of something real long and real deep."

Mario Calire's advice is to just roll with the punches. "Touring is day-to-day and you have to get everything while the getting is good—food, gyms. If it's there, take advantage of it. If the food is good, eat your fill. You never know what it will be like the next time. Even after we had sold millions of records, we found ourselves in the funk-iest of places—dressing rooms that were trailers with no bathrooms, with horrible food. Being in rock 'n' roll is about being flexible. It's part of the fun of it, too, really—it's a challenge, but it *can* be fun."



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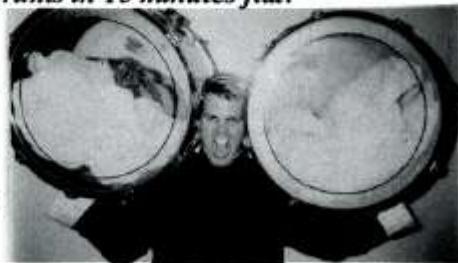
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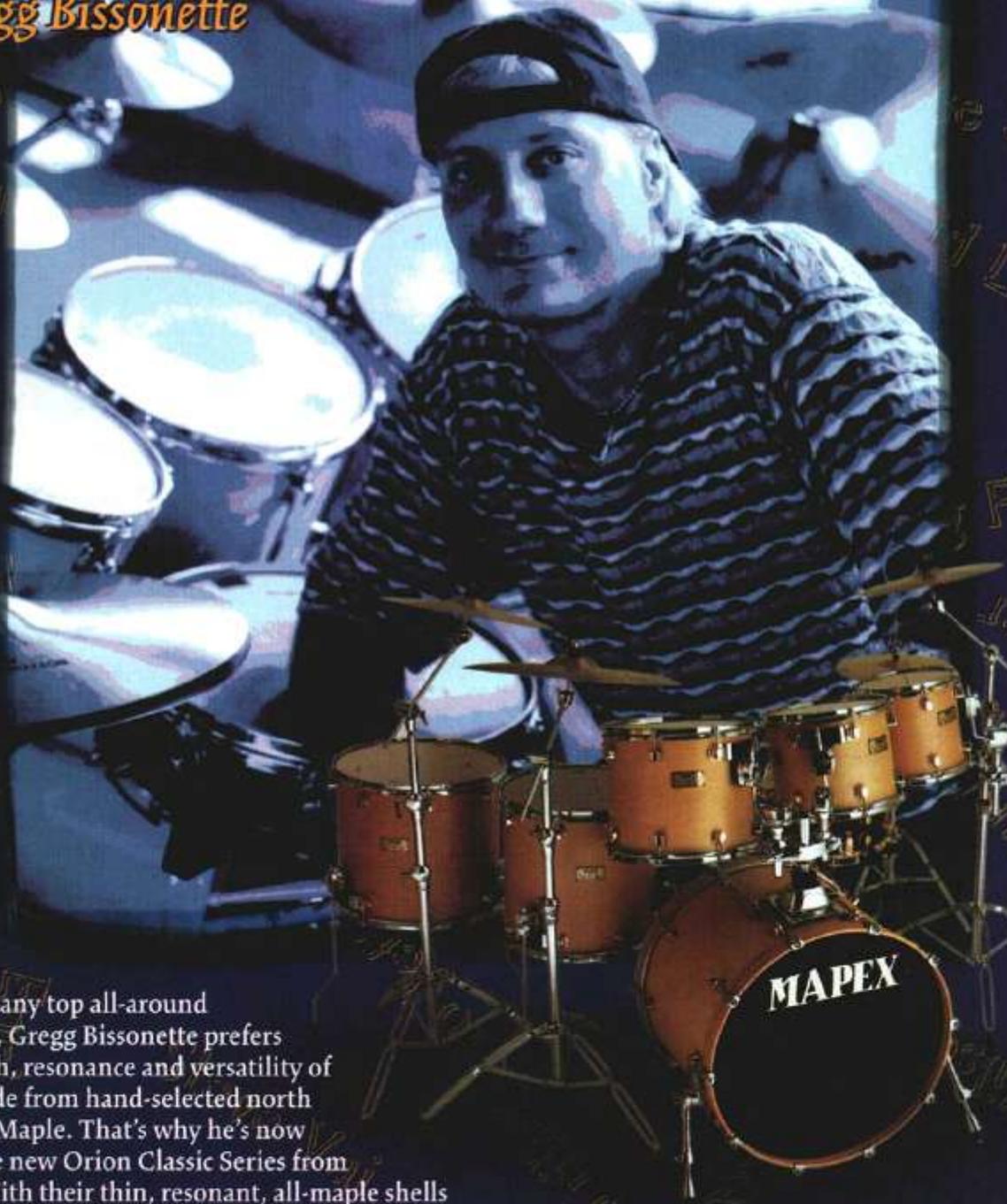
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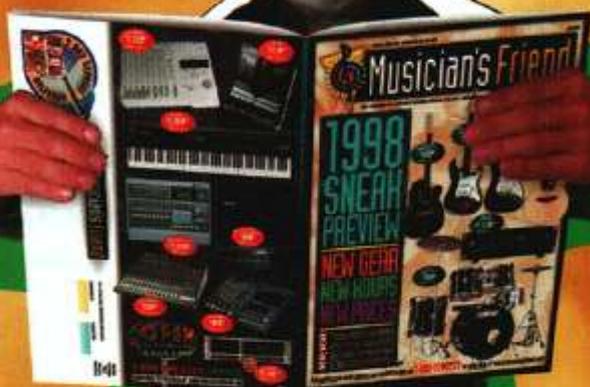
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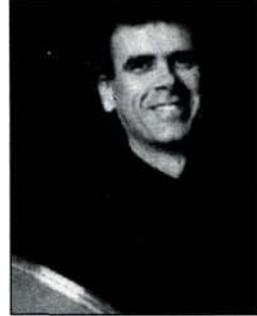
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# Time In Time

## Part 2: "7 In 6"

by David Garibaldi

**MUSIC KEY**

|             |   |      |
|-------------|---|------|
| H.H.        | X | Bell |
| S.D.        | ● |      |
| B.D.        | ● |      |
| H.H. w/foot | X |      |

In my last article, "5 In 6" (February '98), we explored the idea of playing in two meters simultaneously. In that column, "5" referred to 5/8 and "6" referred to 6/8. The basic meter was 6/8 with a 5/8 rhythm being played within it.

In this study, I would like to take this concept a step further. Here, "7 In 6" of course refers to 7/8 being played within 6/8. In the previous article the rhythmic concept was applied in an Afro-Cuban context. This month's exercise is very similar, but takes more of a funk approach, using the cowbell, hi-hat, snare drum, and bass drum. Included in this approach is the application of a basic snare drum rudiment, the seven-stroke roll.

Keep in mind that we're only scratching the surface of what is available using the time-within-time concept. Things will really open up for you when you apply this to your own way of playing.

Example 1 shows what the basic idea looks like:

The top rhythm represents the 7/8 meter and the bottom rhythm represents the 6/8 meter. The 8th notes in both meters are played at the same rate. This example shows how both meters line up with each other.

The 6/8 meter is written as 8th notes with an accent on the first beat, *one accent every six beats*. The 7/8 meter is also written as 8th notes with an accent on the first beat, *one accent every seven beats*.

This creates a rhythm cycle that resolves after seven measures of 6/8, which amounts to forty-two 8th notes. The groups of seven notes are bracketed to show the 7/8 subdivisions.

Example 2 shows the same cycle, but the only notes written in the top line are the first beats of each 7/8 segment. Perhaps this is a good time to stress that counting is a very important step. It gives you greater precision by synchronizing your mind and body: You say what you play.

The bottom line, which is the basic 6/8 meter, is written as dotted quarter notes. This is felt and counted in the same way as triplets in 2/4. The dotted quarters are the basic pulse. Thinking of this as a shuffle helps to line up all the 8ths.

Count Aloud: 1 & A 2 & A etc.

Example 3 doubles the length of the 7 In 6 cycle, and each two-bar segment can be thought of as 12/8 (two bars of 6/8=12/8) or as 4/4. Play the top line on the snare drum and play the dotted quarters on the bass drum. Again, counting aloud is very important.

1 & A 2 & A 3 & A 4 & A 1 & A 2 & A 3 & A 4 & A 1 & A 2 & A 3 & A 4 & A 1 & A 2 & A

3 & A 4 & A 1 & A 2 & A 3 & A 4 & A 1 & A 2 & A 3 & A 4 & A 1 & A 2 & A 3 & A 4 & A

Example 4 translates the fourteen bars of 6/8 to seven bars of 12/8. Begin practicing this by playing the top line as single strokes on the snare drum, and then play the sticking that is indicated. Play the dotted quarter notes with the bass drum.

4

R L L R R L L etc.

1 & A 2 & A 3 & A 4 & A etc.

Examples 3 and 4 should be repeated *many* times until the basic pulse can be felt while "hearing" and playing the seven. Once that is done, begin applying the seven-stroke-roll sticking. Maintaining the discipline of counting aloud while you practice this will do amazing things to your "ears." This is very challenging at first, but after a while, your mind and body will synchronize.

Example 5 applies the seven-stroke-roll sticking to the hi-hat and snare drum. The snare drum notes in the left hand are ghosted strokes. The bass drum continues to play the basic pulse. The twist here is that the first note of every other "7" is played on the snare drum. This means that the hi-hat hand simply reaches over and hits the snare drum. Look at the sticking under example 5, and keep counting aloud.

5

R L L R R L L etc.

Example 6 keeps the seven-stroke-roll sticking, but the right-hand hi-hat now becomes a bell. The bass drum now occurs on the first beat of every other seven, beginning with the first one. The basic pulse is now played with the left-foot hi-hat. Note the sticking above the exercise.

6

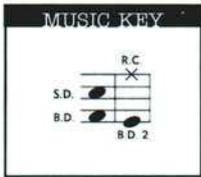
R L L R R L L etc.

Learning to do this took me quite a long time. In fact, I had the idea long before I could actually do it. Then, once I had the concept working, there was another process involved—getting it to be musical. The reward is there, if you're patient. Enjoy!



# Shifting Gears On Double Bass

by Ken Vogel



A good double bass drummer is able to play a variety of rhythms on the bass drums smoothly, without disrupting the flow. The exercises presented in this article are designed to help you develop that kind of control. Regular practice of these exercises should aid in speed development, endurance, and most importantly, a more consistent double bass technique. They also work well as warm-up exercises.

In order to perform these exercises with a steady tempo, play along to a timekeeping device such as a drum machine or metronome. (Use headphones in order to clearly hear the beat.) Begin working at a slow tempo. Keep in mind that control is more important than speed.

Practice the following foot exercises by using hand variations A through D as well as playing them only with your feet.

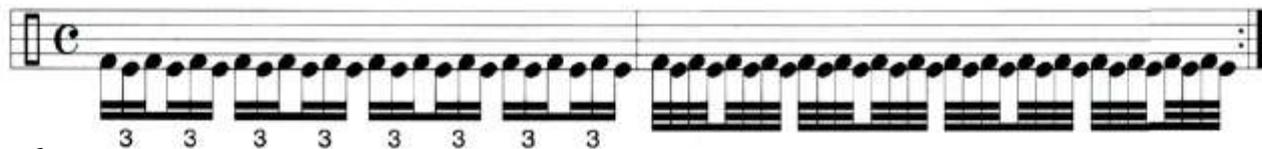
## Hand Variations

A B C D

## Bass Drum Patterns

1 2 3 4

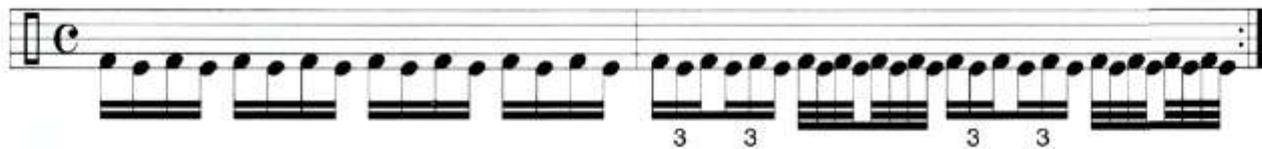
5



6



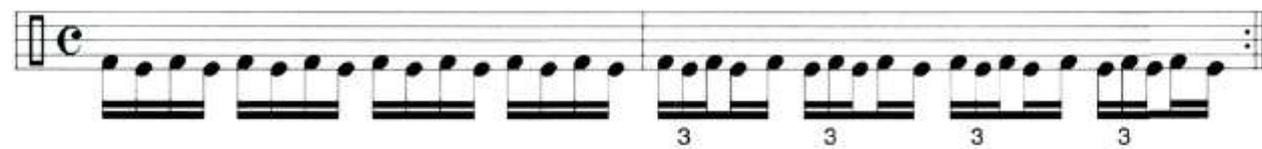
7



8



9



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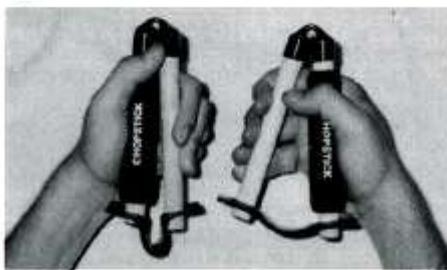
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# Holding The Groove

by John Riley

**MUSIC KEY**

In my last article (March '98), we discussed ways of finding the groove. Now we'll take the next step and work on *maintaining* the groove once you have established it.

Hooking up with the rest of the band, for an entire song or an entire tour, is critical in order for a band to groove and for a drummer to keep the gig. Once the rhythm section is "locked," the other players will play their best. Maintaining the "lock" is essential, but it can be just as elusive as generating one.

There are only two reasons why musicians lose the groove. First, they attempt to play things that they don't have control over. This leads to coordination problems and results in the groove fluctuating. Second, they lose their concentration, which also causes the groove to fluctuate.

To deal with these problems, I've found that practicing progressively more complex coordination exercises, while maintaining solid time and a clear, focused pattern on the ride cymbal, helps to reduce incidents of "groove busting." This type of practicing simultaneously addresses control and concentration issues. The concept is to gradually increase the density of what you can play

comfortably and fluidly in order to strengthen both your reflexes and your mind. Playing complex stuff *in time* automatically improves your coordination while simultaneously requiring sustained deep concentration.

Below are some coordination/concentration exercises to work on. These are three-beat motifs that are designed to challenge your control of your limbs and test your ability to keep your place in a four-measure phrase. The patterns start out fairly simply, but when orchestrated, become quite complex. These are just a small sampling of the types of things you could practice in order to create your own catalog of "puzzles" to master.

First, practice each three-beat motif while playing quarter notes on the ride cymbal. Once you are comfortable with that, go on to the four-measure phrases while playing the ride pattern. Work through this material slowly while counting out loud: "1234, 2234, 3234, 4234." The phrases must flow underneath your unvarying ride cymbal pattern. The numbered example in each group, i.e., 1, 2, and 3, is the basic pattern. Following each numbered exercise are orchestrations of the original motif designated 1A, 1B, and 1C.

## Three-Beat Motifs

## Four-Measure Applications

1C

2

2A

2B

2C

3

3A

3B

3C

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After mastering a substantial amount of physically and mentally difficult material, you will gain a level of coordination and concentration that will allow you to play the most common grooves with greater ease and a deeper pocket. In other words, this added strength will give you the ability to "take care of business" while tapping a smaller portion of your resources. The end result will be that more of your brain power is available for you to check out and contribute to the bigger picture—the intensity of the groove, group dynamics, and group interplay.

An analogy: You buy a sports car that is capable of going 150 mph, but the maximum speed that you are allowed to drive is 65 mph. Car manufacturers describe the car's easy ability to exceed 65 mph as "headroom." The power available from 65 mph to 150 mph, which you will very rarely need to use, nonetheless translates to effortless functioning under normal conditions. Please keep in mind that additional drumming horsepower is useless, and perhaps even dangerous, in the hands of an unskilled (read: unmusical) driver—I mean drummer!

In my next article (September '98 issue) I'll be discussing an unusual yet highly effective practice philosophy called "cross training." See you then.

*John Riley's career includes work with such artists as John Scofield, Mike Stem, Woody Herman, and Stan Getz. He has also written two critically acclaimed books, The Art Of Bop Drumming and Beyond Bop Drumming, published by Manhattan Music.*



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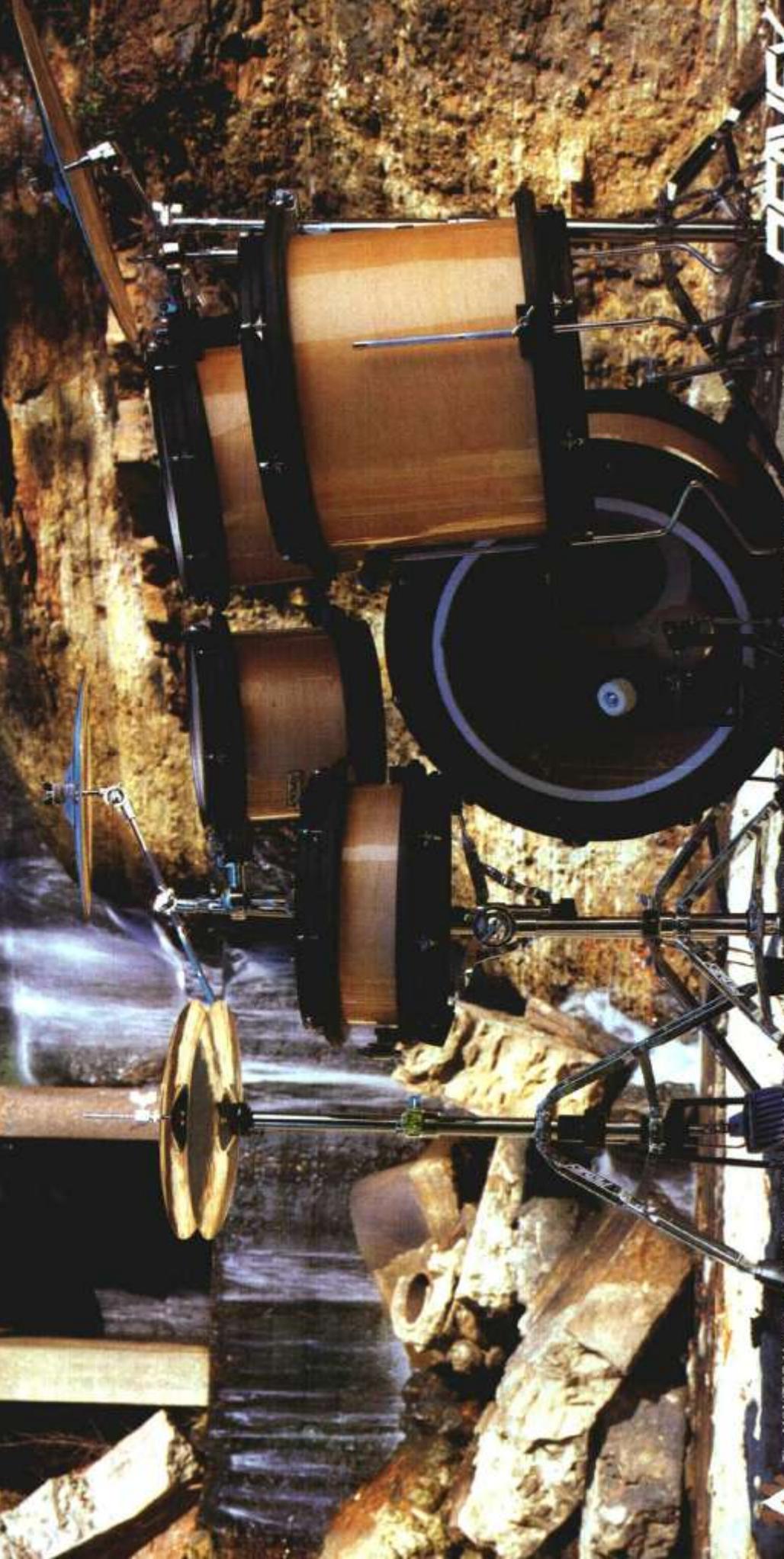
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# Creative Sextuplets

by Frank Michael

**MUSIC KEY**

Sextuplets offer numerous possibilities for creative sticking combinations and orchestrations around the drumset. All of the patterns below utilize sextuplets with various stickings. Let's begin by starting slowly with exercises 1-12, gradually increasing the tempo as each sticking pattern is mastered.

1 **6** **6** 2 **6** **6**  
 R L R L R L R L R L R L R R L L R R L L R R L L

3 **6** **6** 4 **6** **6**  
 R L R R L L R L R R L L R R L L R L R R L L R L

5 **6** **6** 6 **6** **6**  
 R L R L R R L R L R L L R R L R L R L L R L R L

7 **6** **6** 8 **6** **6**  
 R L R R L R L R L L R L R L L R R L R L L R R L L R R L L R

9 **6** **6** 10 **6** **6**  
 R R L R L L R R L R L L L R L R L L R L R L R R L L R R L L R

11 **6** **6** 12 **6** **6**  
 R L R R L R L L R L R L R L L R R L R R L R L L

The next group of exercises incorporates snare, bass, and tom-toms within the sextuplet framework. Be sure to pay careful attention to the stickings for each pattern.

13 14

15 16

17 18

19 20

This last group uses closed hi-hat, snare drum, and bass drum.

21 22

23 24

25 26

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## RECORDINGS

## Simon Phillips

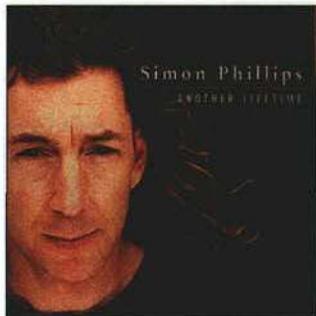
Another Lifetime (Lipstick)



drummer: Simon Phillips

with Andy Timmons, Ray Russell (gtr), Anthony Jackson (bs), Jeff Babko (kybd), Wendell Brooks (sx), Peter Michael Escovedo (perc)

The great soloists of our instrument—artists such as Rich, Williams, and Cobham—could always be counted on to astound us with their tremendous technique. But they could also play amazingly deep-felt grooves when they wanted to. On *Another Lifetime*, Simon Phillips, certainly one of today's most technically gifted drummers, shows that *he* can focus on the groove—and serve the song.



Up to this point in his solo career, Phillips has mostly written tunes that were married to very impressive drum parts and patterns. *Another Lifetime* shows Simon taking a different tack: Rather than being spotlighted by the compositions, the drums act to support them. In fact, overall the drumming here is simpler, more driving, a bit heavier, and in many ways more satisfying than on his previous efforts. Certainly, there are moments that feature Simon's aggressive side—some unique grooves, extended fills, and a couple of breathtaking solos—but the emphasis here, drumming-wise, is on the song.

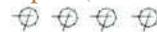
Phillips' move to LA and his Toto experience could be offered as causes for this focused drumming style. More likely it's Simon's maturing songwriting that is the major factor. Check out the long melodic lines of "Jungleyes," "Kumi Na Moja"'s jabbing parts and twisting 11/8 pulse, and the beautiful ballad "Mountain High." There's a depth and quality to these compositions that lifts this album above a lot of the instrumental fusion coming out these days.

Don't worry, you chops-hungry fans; there's still *plenty* to chew on, especially the title track. Here the swaggering style of the late Tony Williams (whose seminal group this album is titled after) comes through. Actually, Tony's influence may have motivated more on this album than just the drumming; it's a case of one great drummer/composer inspiring another.

William F. Miller

## The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra

Lickety Split (New World)

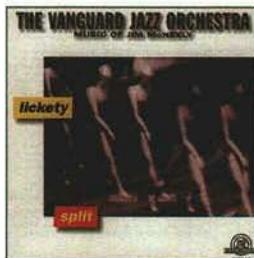


drummer: «Toto Eiley

with Jim Mcleely (pno), Earl Gardner (trp, flghn), John Mosca, Sd Neumeister (trb), Billy Drewes (sx, fl), Dennis Irwin (bs), others

More than thirty years after its inception as the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra, the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra swings on. Inspired to continue the tradition established by its forefathers (Jones moved to Denmark in 1979, Lewis remained until his death in 1990), the VJO still plays New York's Village Vanguard every Monday night. Now, with the release of *Lickety Split*, a collection of tunes penned by resident composer Jim McNeely, it seems likely they'll be packing themselves onto that stage for many Mondays to come.

Much of the music on this CD is lush yet restrained, giving John Riley the opportunity to display his smooth, relaxed time feel and elegant touch with brushes. Of course, the drummer digs in a bit, too, adding some strong backbeat here and there, right in the pocket. The title track finds Riley getting funky with a syncopated ride pattern, while he graces the beautiful "Absolution" with a slow, hypnotic, almost Purdie shuffle-type rhythm. The final cut, "Mel" (there's also a tune called "Thad," each cleverly incorporating licks and characteristics of the group's former leaders) is the hardest-swinging of the bunch and features the drummer trading some mean "fours" and executing wicked tom-tom rolls.



## SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

China Drum have a few more tricks up their sleeves than most young bands with loud guitars. You know drummer **JAN ALKEMA** has the goods right from *Self Made Maniac's* (Beggars Banquet) opening bars, as his energetic and precise marching-style intro signals an album that neatly covers ground from Bad Religion to Blur.

The Jim Cifelli New York Nonet kicks out a swinging, robust sound on their debut, *Bullet Train* (Short Notice). The modern (small) big band sounds twice its size due to the engaging, skillful arrangements of composer/trumpeter Cifelli and the vital, commanding swing of drummer **TIM HORNER**, (*North Country Distributors, Cadence Building, Redwood, NJ 13679*)

Hard as it is to believe, none of the three albums **TERRY BOZZIO** has recorded with the searching and severe Lonely Bears have been available in the States. But now Pelican Sound Recordings has released *The Best Of The Lonely Bears*, thus taking away any excuse you may have had to remain ignorant of this unique band. (208 East 51st St., #1820, New York, NY 10022, tel: (716) 381-5224, [www.magnacarta.net/pelican.html](http://www.magnacarta.net/pelican.html))

Sounding something like a less guarded Stone Temple Pilots from the metal side of the tracks, Union's self-titled debut (Mayhem), which features ex-KISS guitarist Bruce Kulick and ex-Motley Crue vocalist John Corabi, also benefits from the drumming of **BRENT FITZ**. Fitz obviously knows a thing or two about laying down that heavy, heavy mid-tempo thing, but also thinks hard about distinguishing one pulse from the next.

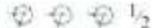
## Rating Scale

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

Like predecessor Lewis, John Riley stresses tight ensemble interplay and feel over flash, hence proving (to paraphrase the liner notes) the leader of the VJO really is "the music." (701 Seventh Ave., New York, NY 10036-1596, [212] 302-0460)

**Michael Parillo**

## Pat Dinizio Songs And Sounds (Velvet)



drummer: Tony "Thunder" Smith

with Dinizio (gtr, vcl), J.J. Burnel (bs), Sonny Fortune (sx, fl)

Ex-Smithereens guitarist/vocalist Dinizio has invited an interesting group of cohorts out for *Songs And Sounds*, including jazz saxman Sonny Fortune, Stranglers bassist J.J. Burnel, and versatile drummer Tony Smith, whose credits include Lou Reed, Santana, Jeff Beck, Jan Hammer, and John McLaughlin. Smith plays a big, wide-open groove on "Nobody But Me," making like Ginger Baker. He gets great mileage out of the crash cymbals on "124 MPH," subtly getting the hi-hats breathing halfway through. And "Running, Jumping, Standing Still" is a pretty simple tune played with a swagger and an efficient in-the-pocket maturity.

This is a solid alternative-pop offering, though on the last twelve bars of "You Should Know" the band does begin to show more of the sonic and musical possibilities within their reach. But most importantly for this date, Smith plays rock right, and even his simplest, most repetitious grooves are never disappointing. (740 Broadway, New York, NY 10003, [212] 353-8800)

**Robin Tolleson**

## Ray Barretto And New World Spirit

Contact! (Blue Note)



drummer: Vince Cherico

percussion: Ray Barretto (also conga), Ray Vega

with Adam Kolker (tn, sp sx), Michael Phillip Mossman (trp, tbn), John DiMartino (pno). Jairo Moreno, Hans Glawishnig (bs)

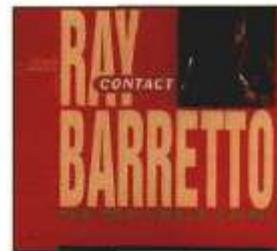
In new Latin/jazz/world music trends, many percussionists proudly claim to avoid the dictates of traditional Latin rhythm patterns; know the rules, they argue, but let style-mixing guide the ears where it will. It's a healthy, progressive attitude. For some, it may be a "new" direction, but Ray Barretto has

approached music this way for *decades*.

A conga great, Barretto swung with jazz legends and was equally successful in salsa. Oddly enough for a conguero, he first learned to swing before acquiring traditional Latin patterns. That background has culminated in a band that blurs the distinction between what's "jazz" and what's "Latin." This edition of the group showcases a stronger, more modern-edged unit than heard on previous Concord releases, partly due to the crisp, vibrant grooves of drummer Vince Cherico.

Cherico can be a commanding presence as well as a subtle, unobtrusive force that lays seamlessly with his conguero leader. It's a tough order creating the right space/flow in a traps/conga combination, especially when there's no safety net of typical duo patterns. And you've gotta love a drummer who convincingly changes hats between acts like Tito Puente and Steve Khan and the Mamas & the Papas. Great chops, feel, and touch aside, Cherico's performance is, most of all, a feat of big ears and knowledge of the old and new.

**Jeff Potter**



## Bob Berg Another Standard (Stretch)



drummer: Gary Novak

with Bob Berg (tn, sp sx), David Kikoski (pno), Ed Howard (bs), Randy Brecker (trp), Mike Stern (gtr)

The spirit of Chick Corea looms large in this standards set interpreted with the master pianist's sense of fusion interplay, nimble arrangements, and whirlwind soloing. Berg, ex-Corea/current Alanis Morissette drummer Gary Novak, and band cover these tunes with sumptuous LA sheen, but there are moments of hot improv that lift the record well above a typical West Coast outing.

Though "You And The Night..." is so fast as to sound frantic, especially on Novak's burly, scattershot solo, "Summer Wind" is more relaxed and grooving, with a serpentine Kikoski solo well supported by Novak's pliant jabs and explosive sparks. The gratuitous ballads "Michelle" and "All The Way" sound uninvolved,

## GOING UNDERGROUND

"Finding your own voice" might be considered downright sacrilegious among the experimental and mercurial Midwest "post-rock" scene. Yet several new releases reveal three related ensembles that have fully assimilated their diverse influences, resulting in startlingly original musical personalities.

The tree from which many interesting musical branches have recently grown, Tortoise enjoy quite a rep as everybody's favorite electronic/progressive/instrumental/dub group. But their new album, *TNT* (Thrill Jockey, ★★★★★) reveals a looser, warmer vibe than was evident on their previous release, *Millions Now Living Will Never Die*. Drummers **JOHN HERNDON, DAN**

**BITNEY, and JOHN MCINTIRE** set the tone right from the start with some groovalicious percussives on "Swing From The Gutters," later touching on the more drone-like kit and mallet work that initially caught ears, but never forsaking the human element.



The busy McIntire also adds welcome drumming to four tracks on Gastr Del Sol's new *Camoufleur* (Drag City, ★★★★★), a hard to categorize yet easy to digest collection that moves the band from the dark and obscure avant-garde of their earlier work into a gorgeous and optimistic direction. Though drumset might not be a central texture on this album, McIntire's stuttering drive and attention to tone are important ingredients in its success. (Drummers

should try Tortoise first, then dip into these deep waters.)

Isotope 217° are a new group of old pals intent on bridging the gap between jazz and rock without a whiff of "fusion" for miles around. Cut-and-paste editing, strange starts and stops, and highly musical sounds from unexpected sources define *The Unstable Molecule* (Thrill Jockey, ★★★★★); think even doses '65 Blue Note, '80s New York Downtown, and mission control. In this context, Tortoise drummers Herndon and Bitney deftly balance repetition and free-form, resulting in yet another unique island on the new music landscape.



**Adam Budofsky**

but are quickly dispelled by a clever reworking of "Just In Time," where Novak's brisk snare work and kinetic interplay lead to high-octane fours showing off his powerhouse chops. "No Trouble," a Berg original, sees Novak dropping snare accents like a blitzkrieg attack. And the album closer, a Latin-ish, Coltrane-ized "It Was A Very Good Year," find Novak playing blistering phrases throughout Kikoski's McCoy Tyner-ish piano solo.



While Berg, Kikoski, and Novak might not play the idiom with an *intense* historical accuracy, they tackle everything on *Another Standard* with creativity, muscle, and finesse.

Ken Micallef

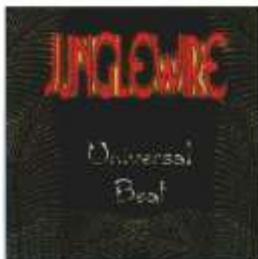
## Junglewire

Universal Beat (Alternate Mode)



drumKAT, malletKAT: Mario J, DeCiutiis, Andy Wasserman

On *Universal Beat*, Mario DeCiutiis and Andy Wasserman have created a collection of soundscapes that focus on the traditional musical styles and world-beat percussion sounds of exotic locations. Sounds such as tabla, clay pots, flutes, and berimbau, all digitally sampled from the authentic instruments and performed on the *drumKAT* and *malletKAT*, help paint a vivid picture of each geographical destination. DeCiutiis and Wasserman also apparently spent time carefully studying the performance techniques of the authentic instruments, focusing on original rhythmic concepts while adding their own contemporary slant to the compositions. Although the duo claim to have created a "whole new style" of music here, this material could safely be categorized



as ambient, new age, or world beat. And while different *vehicles* may have been used to produce the sampled sounds, the digital composition of such material has been going on for quite some time with MIDI keyboards.

Still, *Universal Beat* does open up a wider range of sound sources and new concepts for tuned percussionists and MIDI drummers to explore, with a larger catalog of sounds. This seems to be the strongest message heard from a distance. And it certainly is a great demo for the *drumKAT* and *malletKAT*, as well as the writing, arranging, and performing talents of DeCiutiis and Wasserman. (*Alternate Mode Inc.*, 53 First Ave., Chicopee, MA 01020)

Mike Haid

## Jon Hazilla & Saxabone

Form & Function (C.I.M.P.)



drummer: Jon Hazilla

with Jim Odgren (al sx), Greg Badolato (tn sx),  
Tim Mayer (bar sx), John Pierce (tbn)

This CD is the brainchild of drummer/percussionist Jon Hazilla, whose mission here is to give his drums a leading voice in a jazz setting. Hazilla splits the tracks fairly evenly between solo drum "tone poems" and tunes performed by a somewhat unorthodox lineup of drummer-led sax quartet. The tone poems are all quite unusual solos that have a distinct theme and that develop nicely without being overdone.

Hazilla certainly has considerable technique and his own voice on the drumset. He handles the brushes on the opening track, "Ranthrology," with aplomb, and his solo on "It's Not What You Think" is as challenging as a drummer could hope for. More interesting, however, are the Saxabone tracks, where Hazilla mostly treats the drums as a solo instrument,



rather than in the more traditional role of support. There is no bass player on the album, which allows some unique rhythms and textures to be fully explored.

The approach here is certainly valid, and the drumming is exemplary for the specific goals set. But after repeated listening, I didn't hear that there was much fun being had on this record; rather, it was almost like Hazilla was trying to prove something rather than simply make the best music possible. Of course, challenging music isn't always filled with smiles and happy grooves. But effective musical messages rarely leave the listener feeling brow-beaten, and there is definitely an element of that on *Form & Function*. This is music for drummers with something to prove, which can be both a blessing and a curse. (*Distributed by Cadence Jazz*)

Ted Bonar

## New Klezmer

Klezmer is definitely a buzz word these days. Describing an East European Jewish (Yiddish) music, klezmer has been around for hundreds of years. It has inspired many musicians to find their own voice (Jewish or otherwise), and although it is not clear if everyone involved in the klezmer "revival" was introduced to the music by way of the old 78 recordings, that music seems to have been a huge springboard of ideas.

The Mike Curtis Klezmer Quintet from Oregon has incorporated a classical and dreamy jazz approach with lots of solos on *Street Song* (☆☆☆). This is a very playful treatment of the music, performed by competent players. The musical drumming of **DAVE STORRS** at times refers to the two-beat Israeli rhythm, as opposed to the 1-2-3, 1-2-3, 1-2 East European bulgar, and his playing always sounds fluid, whether providing ethereal cymbal colors or busier jazz notions. (*Louie Records*, 644 SW 5th, Corvallis, OR 97333, (541) 752-7132)



The New Orleans Klezmer All-Stars come out swinging on *The Big Kibosh* (Shanachie, ☆☆☆), uniquely incorporating some rougher, more lively hometown grooves into their sound. But somehow this band, who featured the Neville Brothers' Willie Green on their last album, is actually closer in spirit to the earlier klezmer 78s than many other neo-klez outfits. Jazz and funk grooves, sound collages, and twisted solos abound—generally, this band is in your face! Some very fine original compositions carry you through to the final track, "Bweep Bweep," where drummers **STANTON MOORE** and **KEVIN O'DAY**, chops a-flyin', double-drum all night long.

David Licht

## BOOKS

### Shelly Manne

#### Sounds Of The Different Drummer

by Jack Brand and Bill Korst

photos by William Claxton

(Ferguson Express)



level: all

\$60

This coffee-table book takes you on a remarkable journey: the life and times of the great Shelly Manne. In a superb conglomeration of historical information, photos, transcriptions, a discography, and an exhaustive list of album personnel, the publishers successfully communicate what an incredible musician Manne was—so well, in fact, that as you read this book, you begin to feel bad if you didn't know Shelly personally.

Manne contributed in so many areas—dance bands, jazz ensembles of all sizes, TV and film scores, commercials—and *Sounds Of The Different Drummer* brilliantly puts you right in the middle of his busy schedule by following the entries in his date book. Interwoven within his busy schedule are events that occurred in the world at the same time, providing a historical perspective of Shelly's accomplishments.

I cannot recommend this book enough, and I can't help thinking, Wouldn't it be great to see a book like this done on all the greats?

Gary J. Spellissey

## VIDEOS

### Hip House Groove

featuring Johnny Rabb

(RPM)



level: beginner to advanced

\$29.95, 80 minutes

With a refreshingly laid-back, almost *Wayne's World-ish* style, Johnny Rabb lays out a sensible approach toward playing today's funk on *Hip House Groove*. Rabb knows the topic isn't exactly brain surgery, but be sure about it, he's serious about this stuff. If you're expecting to speed right through this tutorial, you may be surprised. Rabb explores some interesting sidelines, like left-hand (non-lead-hand) exercises that will open up hours of practice-time possibilities, as well as the use of an "accessory" snare and assorted cowbells to spread out the sound sources.

There aren't a lot of cameras whirring here—like...er...one. But this is really all Rabb needs for his presentation. He always starts from the very basis of the beat, discusses the concepts in plain language, and then clearly proceeds through the permutations. Included is an instructional booklet, which can easily double as a daily exercise aid.

With smart thinking like this, who knows, maybe someday "live" drummers will replace drum machines. (Interested parties can preview *Hip House Groove* on the Web at: [www.drumlogic.com](http://www.drumlogic.com).)

Robin Tolleson

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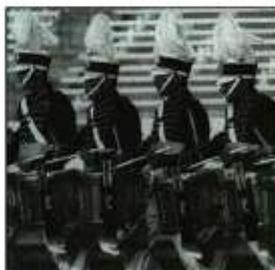
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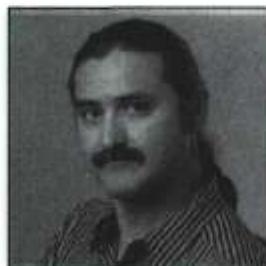
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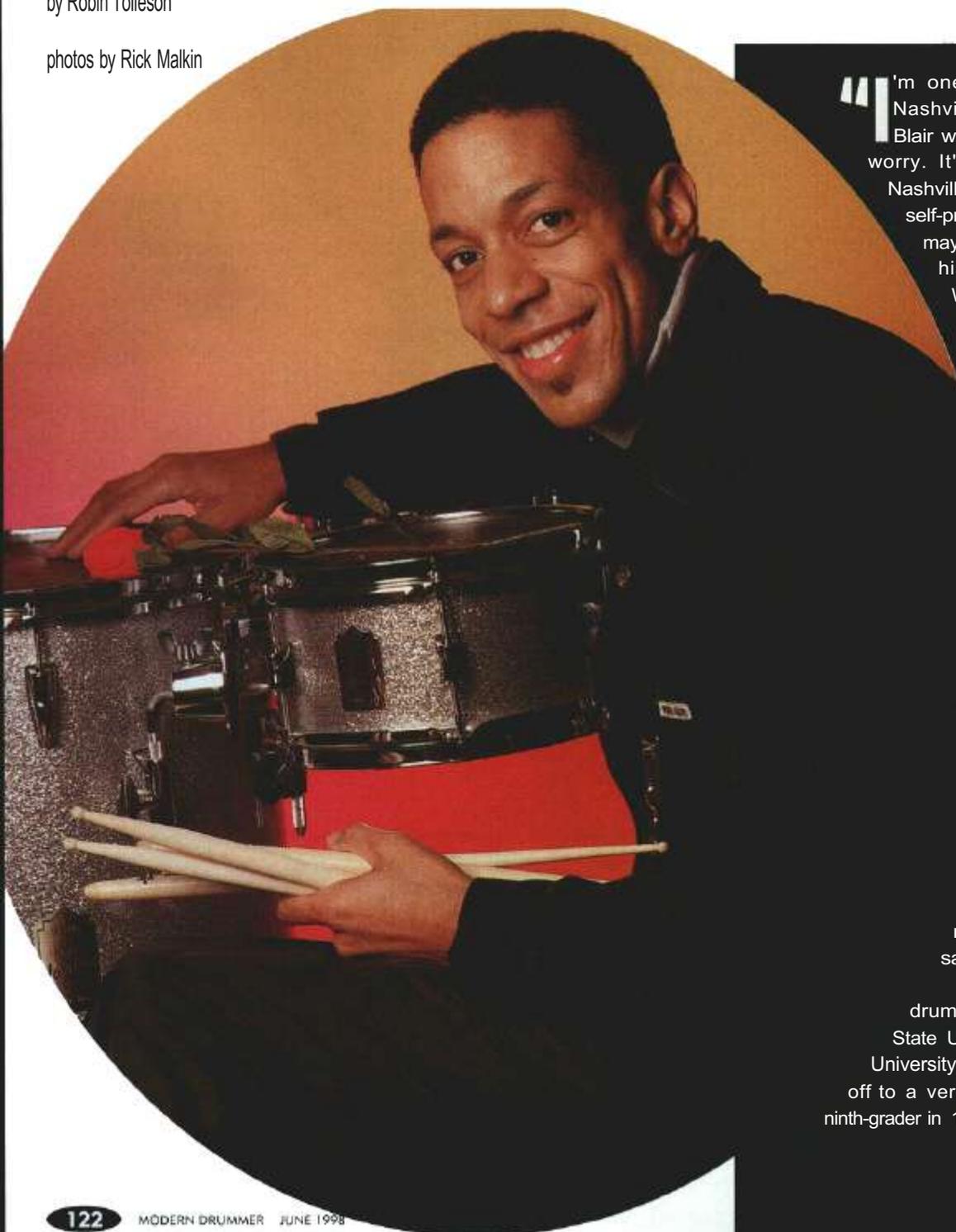
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# Victor Wooten's J.D. Blair

by Robin Tolleson

photos by Rick Malkin



"I'm one of the little secrets of Nashville," smiles drummer J.D. Blair without the slightest hint of worry. It's true that to many non-Nashvillians the thirty-six-year-old self-proclaimed "groove regulator" may be known exclusively for his work on bassist Victor Wooten's latest release, *What He Say?* But the drummer is part of that new breed of Nashville musician, versatile enough to work with Wooten one night and with young country vocalist Shelby Lynne the next. Blair stirs up the jazz-funk brew of trumpeter/vocalist Rod McGaha on the *Savant*, adds the perfect Russ Kunkel-ish touch on Heather Eatman's *Mascara Falls*, and lays down the righteous groove on urban funk singer Shanda Brash's *Good To Go*. J.D. has even put in some road time in Lyle Lovett's Large Band. His resume shouts loudly of versatility.

Blair's schooling includes drum corps training at Norfolk State University and Alabama A&M University, but his musical career got off to a very unconventional start. A ninth-grader in 1975, he and his cousin were

playing some "table-top drums" with their hands before math class started, and some band students noticed. "They were like, 'Man, our band director needs to see you guys,'" J.D. recalls. "So the next day we went down to the band room and met Mr. Backus, and he said, 'Well, do this thing that folks are talking about.' We went to the cafeteria and started playing on tables with our fingers and hands, and the next thing you knew we were recruited. I never thought it would lead to trying to make a career out of this thing, but it was a bunch of fun." Blair went from playing tabletops with his hands to learning the rudiments with sticks. "It was fun then and it's fun now. I call it my therapy."

Blair's high school marching band won honors, and the young drummer was exposed to more than just stick and step work. "I never saw Mr. Backus let up in competitions," he says. "We won pretty much everything we went out for, and that work ethic set the standard as I got older."

Next Blair was recruited by percussion instructor John Lindberg to Norfolk State. "That is a killer drum line. It mixes the drum corps style with the show style. I love drum & bugle corps, and that comes out in my playing when it's time for that."

Still, Blair had his moments of indecision at college. "One day I went to the band director, Dr. Emory Fears, and said, 'Mr. Fears, I don't think this is for me. I'm ready to turn in my drums and go home.' He was writing, and he never looked up. He just said, 'Are you finished?' I said, 'Yes sir.' And he said, 'Well, get your butt back out there on that field and get to rehearsing.' And I was like, 'So I guess this means I can't quit?' And he never said anything. That answered my question."



"One of my goals was to be able to make a room groove without playing *anything*, and I've done that."

"Man, we marched in the elements and the cold," J.D. remembers. "It was a fun experience, and it helped develop character and the team thing where you work together. The stronger players help out the players on the way up. It's always been teamwork, and that's the way I look at things nowadays. Work as a team and try to make the music as good as possible."

Arriving at Norfolk State with a desire to learn about drumset, Blair was taken by a friend to a practice room, where he peered in a small window at a massive-armed drummer named Kelly Gravley letting fly. "I thought it was Billy Cobham when I heard him," says J.D. "He became a mentor of mine. I went to hear Kelly play with a band called Quiet Fire, and then he turned me on to the Wooten Brothers. "Norfolk State was where I really grew as a

musician," Blair states. "I was introduced to Weather Report, and that's where the ball got rolling. Being able to go hear those great players live in the Tidewater area just influenced the way I was coming up."

When Blair's scholarship money dried up, he moved back home to Huntsville, Alabama. He got a job as a DJ, bought a drumset, enrolled at Alabama A&M, and got into the stage band. "And I started out playing in church, as I guess most folks do," he says. "I did a little bit of the Southern gospel circuit and the R&B gospel circuit. Some of those guys knew other people who were doing secular gigs, and I got a call. One thing led to another."

"The way it looks, I came into Nashville and went right to work. But I spent some time making connections *before* I moved up here," J.D. says. He got work with Take Six, and with a producer named Victor Caldwell. Then one night he sat in at a local nightclub, and the bass player happened to be Lyle



Lovett's bassist, Matt McKinsey. "He said, 'Man, I really like the way you play,' and I said, 'Well, back at'cha.'" They exchanged cards, and before long J.D. got a call from Lovett's manager.

"Lyle is an extremely talented songwriter," Blair says. "But the main experience with that group for me was that I found out about what 'behind the beat' meant: *way* behind the beat. My first week or so I didn't land right on the money with the rest of the band after pauses, because I'd still be counting that steady time. What I had to allow for was that Lyle sings behind the beat, and you follow his pulse. So I learned to watch the heel of his boot, and I would flow with his time. That was the trick, and from then on out it was great."

Following the Lovett gigs, Blair went on tour with Matthews, Wright & King. "That was an exciting moment for me," says J.D., "because some folks don't see a black person as being able to play country music. That's sad, because music is music."

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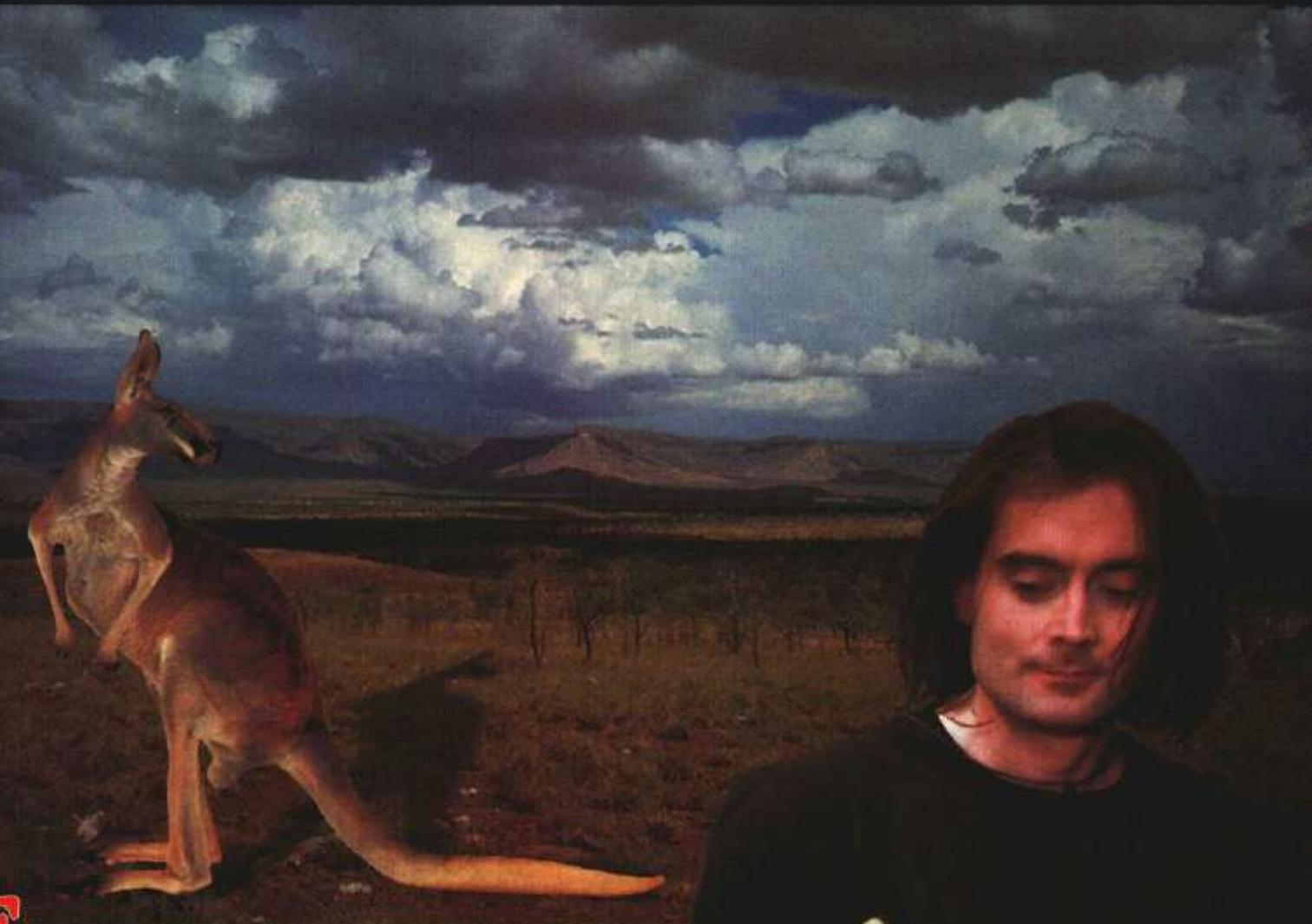


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J.D. recorded *The Gospel According To Jazz* with Kirk Whalum and George Duke, and *That's What Crime It Is* with Bootsy Collins and Victor Wooten, before going on the road with country singer Shelby Lynne. "She's a little dynamo package of a singer," he says.

Blair is clearly excited about his role in Victor Wooten's latest release, on which he's listed as co-producer. "Vic allowed us to come in and have some input, and that was real cool of him. He doesn't need anybody to play with, and that's why I cherish my role in that duo. To me it's a privilege."

The album was recorded in dressing rooms and tour buses, and most of the drum tracks were laid down in Victor's living room in Nashville. On some tracks they have a polished funk sound, on others they are wide open and raw. "The drums are live on the CD," says J.D. "Sometimes in the live show we'll loop the drumset and I'll play on top of it. We carry two drumsets: a sit-down kit and a cocktail kit. That just opens us up so much more to be able to do things. Sometimes I'll grab a bass and try to play a little bit while the drum loop is still going, and Vic might go to the

drums. It's just so fun, there's nothing we can't do."

The Wooten-Blair duo will be doing more live performances in the future, though the drummer claims it's not as gutsy a move as it seems. "It depends on who you've got playing. When you've got Victor Wooten playing...! guess I'm like the spice on the side. My tendency is to try to utilize as much space as possible. One of my goals was to be able to make a room groove without playing *anything*, and I've done that. That's my niche right there. If you're playing for the music and the time is right, then you can just stop playing on your solo, and you watch the heads and they're still bopping. I've just dropped out and sat there and felt the groove, then looked at the audience, and the room is still grooving."

Blair's biggest drumming influences are Steve Jordan, Charlie Drayton, Steve Ferrone, Stewart Copeland, Miles Overton (from Norfolk State), and the drummers of Parliament/Funkadelic and James Brown. "And cats like Negro [Horacio Hernandez], Akira Jimbo, Dennis Chambers, Peter Erskine, and Billy Cobham," he continues.

"Incredible is not even the word for them. Those are the cats I admire—whose stuff I can't cop. The space thing is where I'm at. I just stick to my thing of playing pocket, trying to be solid when I play, and that works."

Blair's composition "A Chance," a strong bass/drum duet from *What Did He Say?*, was originally written as a Christian vocal tune. "It's cool to hear how other musicians interpret stuff," he says. Their funky version of "Naima" also got a little rhythmic input from the leader. "I thought playing 8th notes on the sizzle cymbal was feasible. Vic suggested that I go to quarter notes, and that's what was needed for the music. Vic's just got big ears. I love playing simple pocket, so that's all there is to the drum track. Let the cats who are playing the melodic instruments do their thing."

A bit of Blair's drum-corps roots come out on "Sojourn Of Arjuna," a grand track also featuring drummers Roy "Future Man" Wooten, Jennie Hoeft, and Raymond Massey, and percussionist Jim Roberts. On "A Little Buzz" the drummer was given an odd request. "Vic was yelling at me from the top of the stairs, 'Do something like

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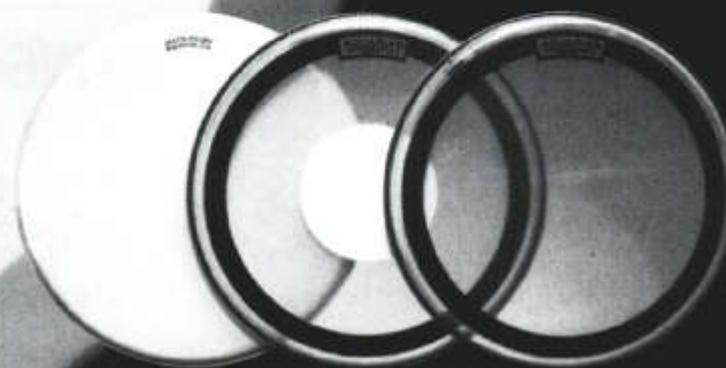
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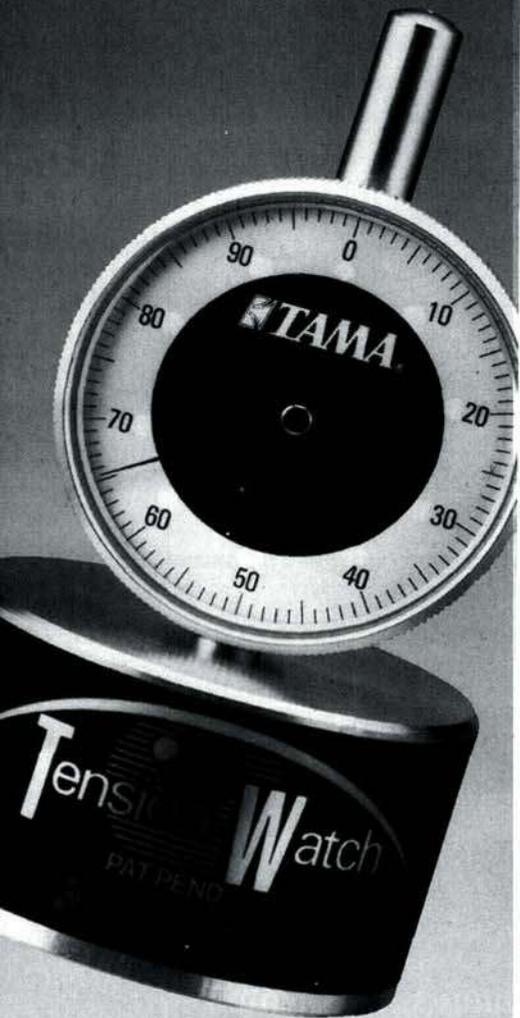
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7 - 7 - 9 - 11, and *don't* play it on the pocket. Don't hit the 1.' When he said that I almost ran out of the room. Man, I spent a lifetime trying to nail the 1. That track was the biggest challenge for me, because that's not what I would sit down and do if it was left up to me. Trying to piece a pattern together like that was something else. When I said, 'Can we do it again?' that was real. But we listened to it and decided it wasn't so bad after all."

The song "My Life" features some dynamic pocket playing with turnarounds. Says Blair, "In the chorus near the end of the track I break—stop time. We finished the track and Vic came over the headphones, 'J.D., that was cool except for one thing—you stopped playing and that was the only thing that bothered me.' I said, 'Vic, man, we need to listen to that.' So we rolled it back and played it over the big speakers, and Vic was like, 'Ooooh yeah, I see what you're saying now. We'll keep it.' That was the space thing. When you do it and folks aren't expecting it—and it works—that's a beautiful thing."

J.D. has written a not-so-subtle reminder to himself on the snare drum heads on his

regular Yamaha kit and *Club Jordan* cocktail kit. The inscriptions read, "Yo dude, ifn u don't do nuffin' else, *groove*." When he was complimented for his groovemaking after a jam with Victor at the January 1998 NAMM show in LA, Blair deflected the praise "upstairs" with a raised index finger, preferring to give the glory to God. "My whole thing is to play for the music, and I'm not out to impress anybody," he says.

Blair has recently been crossing over to play with some of the "old school" country greats of Nashville, like Russell Sims and Buddy Spiker. "They like the feel; that's all I care about," says J.D. "I'm doing bona fide country tracks, which a lot of folks would be shocked to know. But like I said before, it's just music. You just need to know the dos and don'ts. I do some jazz gigs in town with different people, and the funk thing—and I've been known to play a little bit of rock 'n' roll in my time. There's a salsa band in town that allows me to combine the salsa with the funk. I know the traditionalists wouldn't go for that, but here in Nashville we're able to pull it off.

"The simplicity factor comes in on the traditional country," J.D. concludes. "I know there was a time when they didn't allow any drums—kind of like in some of the churches in the earlier days. But barriers are being broken every day. I've been a part of that, and I'm grateful."



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## Ryan Hulbert

Thirty-two-year-old Ryan Hulbert is a native of Granada Hills, California. A drummer since the age of fourteen, he was inspired toward a rock 'n' roll career after listening to a KISS album. Influences as diverse as John Bonham, Neil Peart, Bill Stevenson of the Descendents, Stevie Wonder, and Steve Gadd have since shaped Ryan's style, which he describes modestly as having a "well-rounded edge."

That "edge" is displayed vividly in a demo tape from Ryan's current band, Frawl. Elements of punk, straight-ahead



hard rock, and a touch of R&B groove combine to give the band's music an interesting and original sound—and Ryan's drumming is a major contribution. As he puts it, "Our music definitely calls for locking in,

groove-wise. But it also affords me the space where I can really put it out there. I try to approach each song differently and really get into the mood of it. Even the lyrics can affect the drum part I play. I think it's important for drummers to discover a style and sound that expresses their own personality." The band has just completed a self-produced CD, and is touring extensively throughout Southern California.

Ryan expresses his personality on DW drums and hardware, Zildjian cymbals, and his "old faithful" Pearl aluminum-shell snare drum. His goals are to take Frawl as far as it can go. "It would be amazing to be in a situation where all I was paid to do was play drums and make music," he says. "I mean, *I still work a day job.*"

## Ryan Hoyle

"I'm currently performing with five original projects, teaching two days a week at a local music store, and freelancing demo sessions whenever the opportunity arises," says Ryan Hoyle of Denton, Texas. Sounds like a busy guy! But it's not surprising, because the talented young player is determined to be more than "just a drummer." Instead, he says his ultimate goal is to be "a groove guru who is able—and requested—to rock world-wide."

Ryan may not have hit the world stage quite yet, but he already has an impressive list of performing and recording credits. A drummer since the age of eight, he landed his first gig at thirteen, with Christian recording artist Gary Moreno. Over the next three years he was part of three recordings, a number of regional tours, and performances before audiences of 5,000 at the Yakima, Washington Sun Dome. Concurrently, he was busy performing and recording with other Christian artists including Kyle Rassmussen, Chris Hansler, Cory Knowland, and Gary Kahn. (And he was still a high-school student at the time!)



Ryan relocated to Denton at the age of eighteen, where he entered the prestigious music program at the University of North Texas. While at UNT, he toured with that school's keyboard lab band, the Zebras. Combining his musical education with influences such as Steve Gadd, Stewart Copeland, John Robinson, Carlton Barrett, and John Molo, he went on to record and perform with several Dallas area bands, and to establish his own teaching practice. His demo tape reveals a versatility and groove ability sure to make him a valuable asset to those several projects he cited earlier. He displays them on a Sonor *Force Maple* kit or a Ludwig 1965 vintage kit.

## Bea Gayle

Jacksonville, Florida's Bea Gayle is a veteran of that city's busy club scene. Over an eight-year period the versatile twenty-four-year-old has performed with blues bands, rock bands, a Jethro Tull tribute act, and a variety of other groups. She currently divides her time between the Westwoods (a rockabilly band with one CD to its credit) and an original R&B/soul band called Depth that maintains a hectic touring schedule throughout Florida and southern Georgia.

"My playing style is solid, yet aggressive and versatile," says Bea. "I'm not a showy drummer; I'm

a team player." Her demo tape reinforces this philosophy, displaying solid support of several different groups in a variety of styles. She lists her influences as "a melting pot of drummers from rock, pop, hip-hop, rap, R&B, and blues music, including John Bonham, Carter Beauford, Eric Carr, Steve Smith, Max Weinberg, Chad Gracey, Gigi Gonaway, and Kenny Aronoff."

Bea's equipment includes a Pearl *Export* kit, Zildjian and Paiste cymbals, and a "treasured collection of new and vintage snares from Ludwig, Pearl,



Slingerland, and Premier." She states her musical goal as "to tour and record around the world with great musical acts, help make their music sound great, and make a lot of people happy by doing so. And I would love to be in the position to one day help an up & coming artist myself."

"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, freelance artist, etc.), how often and where you are playing, and what your goals are (recording artist, session player, local career player, etc.). Include any special items of interest pertaining to what

you do and how you do it, and a list of the equipment you use regularly. Send your material to On The Move, Modern Drummer Publications, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Material **cannot** be returned, so please **do not** send original tapes or photos.



# Marcus Miller

by Michael Florio

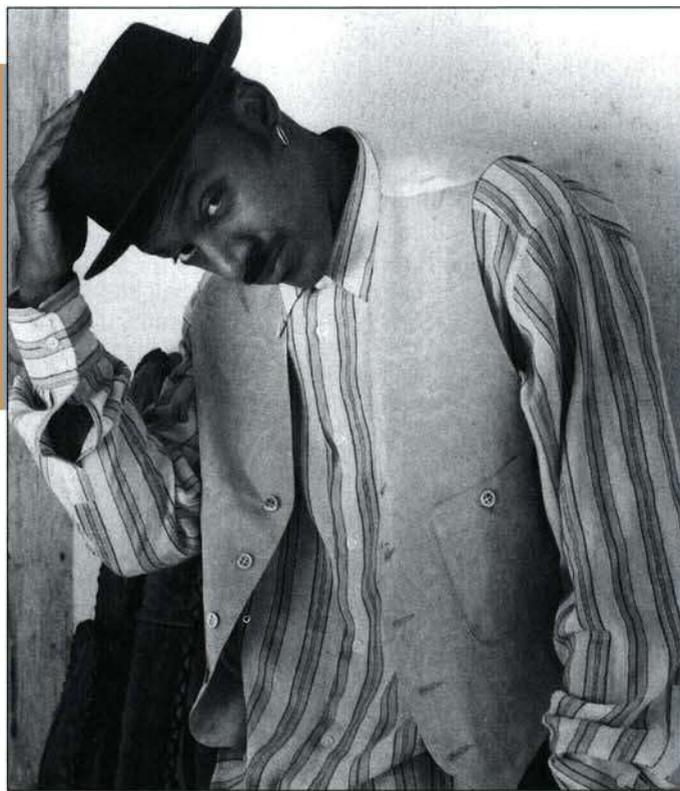
**W**ith credits ranging from Miles Davis to Mariah Carey and Luther Vandross to Jackie McLean, solo artist/producer/musical director/bandleader Marcus Miller's resume speaks for itself. Miller's tone, feel, groove, funk, and musicality make him a drummer's dream bassist, which is partly why he's had the opportunity to work with some of the legendary drummers of our time. When I asked him to come up with ten of his favorite drummers, he told me he would need some time to think about it. Two weeks later, I saw the list and thought, what was there to think about? Who could he have possibly left off?

## Lenny White

**MM:** Lenny was the first drummer I ever played with who was established. I first played with him when I was seventeen; he was just getting out of Chick Corea's Return To Forever band. I really looked up to him. You know, he played with Stanley Clarke, who was my man. I was really impressed by the fact that he could play any style—but it was less about being impressed and more about how much I learned from him. We did straight-ahead gigs, funk gigs—every kind of gig. When we played straight-ahead he was playing polyrhythms and stuff I'd never heard before. I'd get all turned around and end up on the wrong side of the beat. He'd give me a look like, "You got a long way to go young man." [laughs] But it was cool, because after the set we'd talk, and he'd say, "Go get Tony albums and Elvin albums and just sit with 'em and tap your foot." So, that's what I did, and it really helped. Plus, he introduced me to so many people in the business. I really can't put into words how much he influenced me.

**MF:** Do you get used to playing with a guy like Lenny White at such a young age, or does it remain surreal?

**MM:** You know, the first couple of months, I was looking over at him every bar. He was just so interesting; he had that ambidextrous style. You couldn't tell if he was right-handed or left-handed. It was the late '70s, so fusion was really big, and he was playing all these big-ass drum fills. He was the first drummer I knew who was really into his sound—you know, really meticulous about his tom-tom and snare drum sound. Now that I'm older and have played with a lot of other musicians—really great drummers—I can still appreciate how creative and spontaneous he is. You know, he doesn't read a note of music. Chick Corea and all those people had to give him tapes. If the music was complicated he'd take the



William Claxton

tape home. The next day he'd know it better than anybody. Sometimes not being able to read music forces you to listen better than other musicians who can read.

**MF:** Let's talk about that second Jamaica Boys record, *J Boys*, and how you and Lenny were able to out-hip, out-funk, and out-swing the other R&B records of that time.

**MM:** We had done one Jamaica Boys record that we were really proud of, but I think some of it was over the heads of a lot of people at the time. We were concentrating on making it real funky so that people could have something to hold on to, but also doing it live and giving it some depth. Drum machines were big then, and not a lot of bands were playing live. So what we did was really cool. Lenny's real experimental; if everybody else is ziggin', Lenny wants to zag. [laughs] He's really into Tony Williams, so after I'd played with Lennie, when I got a chance to play with Tony, I said, "Okay, I've been here before"—but in a different form.

# 'When I was young I couldn't figure out why all these cats were smilin', when all the drummer was playing was boom, boom, boom. Now I know.'

## Steve Ferrone

**MM:** My favorite Steve Ferrone project I didn't even play on. It was that Chaka Khan album with the clouds on it; Anthony Jackson played bass on it, and Steve threw down.

But the first time I played with Steve was also on a Chaka Khan album, *Naughty*. He's just the funkiest perfect drummer, especially if you want to play a bit busy. He was always there for me, and he buries the click track. Even when I was doing a lot of records with drum machines, sometimes I wanted to have drums to play along, and Steve's the one guy you can call who can go in there and play it perfectly, but with that feel, you know. And he's the funniest guy to be around. He's always cracking jokes, keeping you cool and loose.

Bass players just love Steve. He's played with Larry Graham, Louis Johnson, and all sorts of bass players. We played with the Brecker Brothers, playing *Skunk Funk* and all those tunes. That was a funky-ass Brecker Brothers band.

**MF:** Sum up Steve Ferrone's playing in two words.

**MM:** Funky. Correct, [laughs] Oh yeah, and playing crazy fills, and then always coming down on 1.

## Yogi Horton

**MF:** Gone but not forgotten....

**MM:** Yeah, man, Yogi. He reminded me of Ferrone in that he had that real military sense of time. Yogi was off-the-wall, though. He would play some crazy stuff, especially on the hi-hat. But he always played it in time, just like Ferrone. And he played really aggressive, too. Especially when we played live with Luther [Vandross], his hand would be coming down from over his head to hit the snare drum. We did all those Luther records, and those dates were really meticulous. There were some ballads, too, where the tempos were like ten beats per minute. The bass and the bass drum were out there by themselves, but playing exactly together. The heat was really on to make sure we were really locked; Luther and his musical director, Nat Adderley, wanted the bass and the bass drum to play as one instrument, so it was our job to make sure that it was tight—but also interesting. We didn't want to be tight and boring, and we worked together to avoid that.

**MF:** Much like Lenny White, there seemed to be a certain "magic" when you played with Yogi. Can you explain that kind of chemistry?

**MM:** I'm not sure. Yogi came from a military marching band background, but then we ended up doing gigs with Michael Urbaniak, playing weird time signatures. I was really impressed that he could shape his playing to fit those odd situations. He was like Lenny White and Steve Ferrone in that he didn't read music, but he had a goal to do more studio work, particularly jingles, which were big in the studio scene in the early '80s. So he actually buckled down and taught himself how to read. I remember being

with Yogi on a jingle. We were getting to a certain section that was a little complicated, so I'm thinking I'm going to have to direct Yogi through it. But he played that thing perfectly. I asked him, "What have you been doin'?" He said, "I *told* you I was going to do it." I was really impressed with that. I think that attitude was a big part of the magic of Yogi.

**MF:** Give me an essential Yogi Horton/Luther Vandross track.

**MM:** Let me think.... "It's Over Now." You have to *see* Yogi play, though, otherwise you're not getting the whole picture. I was producing a record a long time ago for Lonnie Listen Smith, probably around 1981. Lonnie is from the old school, so he was like, "Why don't we get together and rehearse for the next couple of weeks." I said, "Okay, but there's one track I'd like to get my man Yogi to play on, and he hasn't got time to come to rehearsal. We'll cut it to a drum machine and then Yogi can come in and we'll overdub him." Lonnie didn't think it would work, but I knew Yogi.

We had worked together so much that we had our own language. So I played the track for him and said, "Okay, I want you to tickle it right here, and then put a real hump on it right here, and then just flow right through to the end." Lonnie looked as if to say, "What the hell are they talking about?" But Yogi goes in there, and Lonnie's watching Yogi's hands flying over his head, playing all this bad stuff. Lonnie pulls his glasses down over his nose to get a better look. And Lonnie was a Yogi fan from that time on. [laughs]

## Jack DeJohnette

**MM:** Jack has always been one of my favorite drummers. He's like Lenny White in that he's always listening. He's very creative, and he's not afraid to experiment. A lot of guys get in the studio, where things are going to be documented, and they start to get careful. But Jack and I have really only played together a couple times. We always say that we have to get together again, but so far we haven't had the opportunity.

**MF:** Since Jack is also a piano player, do you hear any non-drumming influences in his playing?

**MM:** I've never considered that, but he's definitely more aware of the music and the song form than some drummers, and that probably comes from being a pianist. What's interesting for me is that when you hear Jack, it sounds like there's a lot going on, and as a bass player your first reaction is to stay up on top of it. But then I realized that although there *is* a lot going on, the beat doesn't move, it doesn't push forward like some drummers tend to do. When you're playing with Jack, you basically just lay it down there for him and it works out good.

## Al Foster

**MF:** You had the chance to play with Al Foster in Miles Davis's band in your early twenties. As with the Lenny White experience,

what does it feel like to be a young cat playing with these legends, and what did Al bring to the table?

**MM:** It was pretty unreal to be playing with Miles, but what was nice was that Al was there. Al is such a warm, nice cat, and he just made you feel at home. He was always looking at me, making sure the bass and drums were hooked up. Al had such a good relationship with Miles that he was the guy who made it cool for everybody. Miles was always yelling at the band, calling them names, [laughs] Al would say, "Don't worry about that, man. Play your ass off." So it was cool, man, and we would hook up. The guys who come from that straight-ahead background have that creativity and openness that's so nice.

**MF:** Tell me about Al's funk playing and that signature hi-hat sound on those Miles funk grooves.

**MM:** Miles had Al play a lot of that open hi-hat stuff—funk beats but with the hi-hats sizzlin'. Al got famous for that. Al was always trying to get Miles to swing, do some 4/4 stuff, but in the '80s Miles wasn't interested in doing that. When I was producing *Amandla*, which was around 1989, I had written a song for Jaco called "Mr. Pastorius." Miles and I were all alone in the studio one day and I said, "Miles, play this song." He played the melody and then looked at me and held up four fingers meaning play 4/4. I started playing four, and he played this long solo that was so beautiful and Swingin'. I ran to the phone to call Al. I said, "Al, get your drums and get down to the studio right away. Miles wants to play some 4/4." Also, Al is such a sensitive cat. If Miles played some beautiful stuff you'd look over at Al and he'd be crying. He just felt the music.

## Steve Gadd

**MF:** You've played with Steve in numerous situations through the years, most recently, Al Jarreau's *Tenderness* album and the new band, Legends, with Eric Clapton. When did you first hook up with Steve?

**MM:** My first time playing with Steve was when I was about seventeen. I was just starting to get into the studio scene, and at that time click tracks were coming into the picture, especially for editing purposes on jingles. I was just starting to learn how to play to a click. Steve was the first guy I met that really knew how to do it. It depended on how he felt the time, too. If he felt it right on the beat, you'd never even hear the click—he'd bury it, just like Ferrone does, which was cool, 'cause then you just had to play with him and not worry about the click.

**MF:** When you're tracking live with Steve Gadd and others of that caliber, why bother with a click track?

**MM:** The producer or artist sometimes feels more secure with it. But there were other times with Steve when the music was more emotional. The band would start creeping ahead of the click, then start getting nervous about what to do. Steve would just let the band go, and then at the end of a four- or eight-bar phrase he would play something that would bring the band so naturally back into the click that I didn't even feel where we slowed down. I'd ask him later, "How'd you do that?" and he'd say, "Do what?" [laughs]

Steve's a master, and just like all the other great drummers, he's such a *listener*. One of the things Steve taught me when I was

becoming a studio musician was to listen. So many studio musicians will get to a date, and while the producer's playing the track, they'll be playing their instruments, trying to learn the part. Steve wouldn't even touch his drums. He'd say, "Play me the song.. .Play it again.. .Again" seven or eight times. The whole time he never touches his drums. He's just listening and really understanding the song. When he finally picks up the sticks, he knows the song and always plays something absolutely appropriate, as opposed to some other drummers who would have to play the song a few times before they realize half the stuff they wanted to play *wasn't* appropriate. When I go into the studio now I don't even pick up the bass before learning the song. I credit Steve Gadd for that.

**MF:** Give us an essential Steve Gadd track and an essential Gadd-Miller track.

**MM:** Oh man. [laughs] "Just The Two Of Us"... "Aja"... "Fifty Ways"....

## Poogie Bell

**MF:** Currently with Eryka Badu, Poogie epitomizes the New York funk drummer—"the human loop."

**MM:** Poogie was like twelve or thirteen and was already a bad cat, like a prodigy. He started when he was two or three. When I was about seventeen, he was thirteen, and he was playing a lot of R&B. When I started doing my own thing, I needed a drummer who could play both jazz and R&B convincingly. You know it's hard to find cats that can play funk and jazz and sound authentic. With some, the swing thing can sound real stiff, and heavy jazz cats can't seem to bring themselves to play the same thing over and over again—they go into a trance or something, [laughs] Poogie understands both of those styles, and I would always gravitate towards him when I was doing my own thing. He's been playing with me on and off for about seven years.

## Buddy Williams

**MF:** Another one of the New York cats. An album that you did with Buddy that stands as a classic now is David Sanborn's *Straight From The Heart*.

**MM:** Buddy is another listener. He knows the song better than anyone else in the band. He's not a real technical guy. He's just a guy you call when you want the drums to be right. He plays in all different situations. I played with him every day in New York on all kinds of records: Sanborn, Dave Grusin, Michael Urbaniak.... Buddy's real tasteful, and he doesn't even consider himself a drummer; he thinks of himself as a musician who applies what's needed—and who happens to sit behind the drums. But Buddy Williams is a *great* drummer.

## Michael White

**MF:** Not a name on the tips of most drummers' tongues, but if we check our liner notes we see Michael's name on more than a few occasions.

**MM:** I gravitate towards guys like Michael, Ferrone, and Poogie. Michael came out of a hard R&B school, where a two-beat drum fill is a major event, [laughs] I had him play on my record, man, and the beat was fat—no problems. I decided to just have fun with

him on "The Sun Don't Lie." I told him I needed a whole bar-long fill, and that was like sacrilegious to him. Frankie Beverly or one of those cats would fire you for doing that. But I told him, "Come on Mike, just a whole-bar fill like Omar would do." And he did it! It took him a while to get with the concept. Michael's groove is so fat that it's probably not a thing that other drummers would gravitate towards, especially young ones, but that approach is real nice to play with for other musicians.

**MF:** Why is it that some drummers and musicians don't grasp that concept of groove and musicality?

**MM:** I don't know...maybe it's age or what you're into, but when another bass player is playing with Michael White or Steve Ferrone and you see that cat smiling, you shouldn't have to wonder why. When I was young I couldn't figure out why all these cats were smilin', when all the drummer was playing was boom, boom, boom. Now I know.

## Omar Hakim

**MF:** Madonna, Weather Report, Night Music. Talk about your friend Omar Hakim.

**MM:** I met Omar in high school, and the way he played at sixteen years old was exactly the way he plays now. No one could believe how bad this cat was. He had all these chops and played a real '70s R&B style. There's like a whole league of R&B bands that came out of the "James Brown school," like Dyke & the Blazers. Omar came out of those things. He was a kid, twelve or thirteen years old, pumping bands like that and a band called Mother Night—which was underground, but a very serious New York thing—and another called Jacksass that was bad. Omar was in all those bands, so he had to hit! He had that cord that went around the bass drum and back around to the drum seat so that the bass drum wouldn't fly away, 'cause he would pound on it so hard.

Anyway, Omar took a liking to me in high school, as did another drummer, Kenny Washington. They both took me under their wing. I couldn't figure out why, since I couldn't play worth jack—but I guess they saw some potential. Omar got me in his neighborhood band, Harlem River Drive. We didn't gig much, but we rehearsed a lot. Denzil Miller was the music director, and he would make Omar and me play the same groove for about two or three hours. He would give us a groove matching the bass and the bass drum, and he'd run errands and say, "Keep playing 'til I get back." As soon as he left we'd start playing some Chick Corea tunes, practicing our best Lenny White/St Stanley Clarke stuff. Fifteen minutes before Denzil was due back, we'd go back to what he gave us. [laughs] But we still had to make sure we had it tight. Through the years Omar drifted away from the R&B thing, and I think I got him a gig with David Sanborn when Buddy [Williams] couldn't make it. Mike Mainieri needed a drummer for a trip to Japan. I recommended Omar and we went over there together. Mainieri was so impressed. Then, [Joe] Zawinul got wind of it, and the next thing you know Omar was in Weather Report. Omar can play anything that comes to his head. He's got feel, technique—and showmanship. That was important, 'cause as kids in New York, half the people didn't feel like hearing jazz, so you had to sell it to them, and your body has a lot to do with that. Omar Hakim is just a great all-around drummer.

**MF:** Omar seems like such a great guy. How about an Omar Hakim personal anecdote.

**MM:** Oh man. There are so many, because we basically grew up together. But I remember when I first met Omar I had my own neighborhood band, playing Ohio Players and Earth, Wind & Fire stuff. I asked him to check out our rehearsal and sit in. Well, Omar played one fill that was so bad that the whole band stopped and walked over to him holding their hands out to give him a "pound." [laughs] I mean, this cat stopped an entire song with a fill, that's how bad he was. We had never heard anything like that, [laughs]

**MF:** Many of the drummers we've been talking about are from New York. There has been much discussion about the differences between the New York styles and the West Coast styles. Is there a difference? If so, what do you hear and do you have a preference?

**MM:** In terms of East Coast/West Coast, there probably is a difference. I think it has to do with aggressiveness and style; but I'm not sure it matters, because I've heard a lot of sad-ass drummers in New York and a lot of drummers in Los Angeles who can play. So, the thing is not about style. It's just how well you play and how tasteful you are. I mean, Jeff Porcaro was a bad cat, and I definitely think of the West Coast when I think of him.

**MF:** As a bassist, artist, and producer, what do you want to hear in a drummer?

**MM:** Time, groove, feel—that's it!





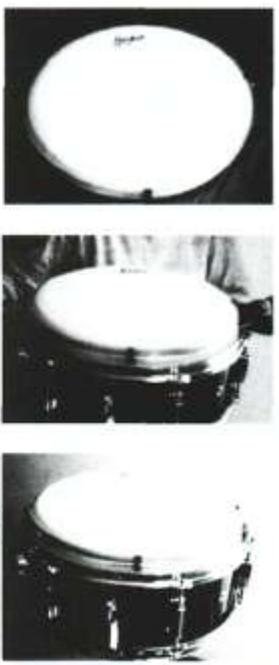
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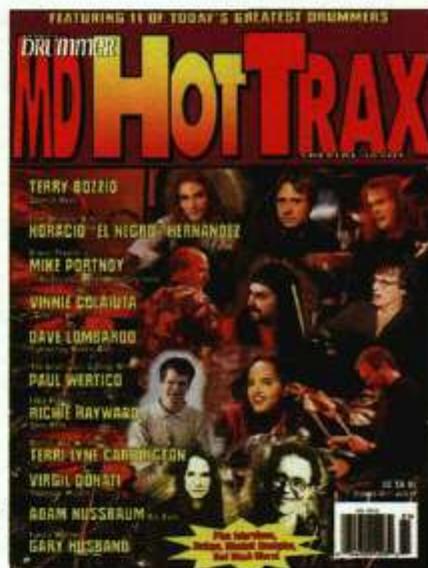
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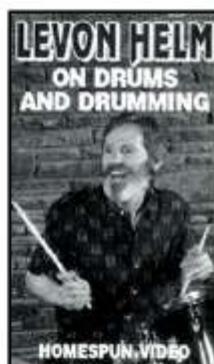
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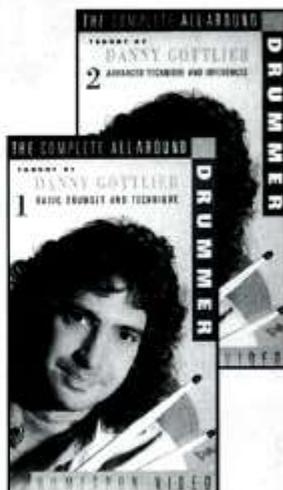
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# The Great Fusion Drummers

## A Timeline

### Part 2: 1975-Present

by Mark Griffith

In part one of this timeline we examined the roots of fusion drumming and players who helped establish the genre. Like those early contributors, the drummers featured below, by their individual talent, style, and artistic vision, changed the direction of modern music, and the way all drummers perceive the instrument.

#### Lenny White

Although Lenny White has been involved in the jazz scene since the early '70s, it was Return To Forever's 1976 *Romantic Warrior* that established his voice in the fusion drumming field. White's earlier jazz playing, as on Freddie Hubbard's *Red Clay* (1970), gave his fusion drumming added spontaneity and a unique looseness. A multi-dimensional musician who can play both jazz and funk, White's recorded work proves that he can leave space, as well as fill it up.



David Gahr



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#### Steve Gadd

The foundation of Steve Gadd's drumming lies in equal parts jazz and pop, making his playing a true blueprint for fusion drumming. Gadd's vast experience in the studio helped him develop his deep groove, control, and sense of simplicity. However, it is his Latin drumming influences that truly set him apart. All of these traits can be heard on any of his recordings with Chick Corea, but *The Leprechaun* (1975) is a true classic. Steve Gadd is one of the most influential fusion drummers ever.

#### Alex Acuna

Alex Acuna introduced the drum world to the rhythms and instruments of another foreign country. By bringing his creativity, musical heritage, and unfamiliar sounds to America from his native Peru, Acuna also brought a unique and influential approach to the drumset. And by fusing authentic South American drumming traditions and rhythms with jazz-rock, he widened the genre of fusion drumming. His playing on Weather Report's legendary *Heavy Weather* (1977) is amazing.



Nick Makina



Jonathan Bonheur/Rock

#### Terry Bozzio

In 1976, under the guidance of Frank Zappa, Terry Bozzio expanded the vocabulary of the drumset. Through Zappa's music, Bozzio consciously incorporated twentieth-century classical music's rhythmic language (odd note groupings, complex rhythmic structure, and polyrhythms) into his drumset playing. Bozzio's rhythmic contributions can be heard on Frank Zappa's *In New York*, (1978) and the Brecker Brothers' *Heavy Metal Be-Bop* (1978).



## Vinnie Colaiuta

With Frank Zappa, Vinnie's polymetric timekeeping and complete rhythmic freedom—combined with his reckless abandon and virtuosity behind the drumset—took the fusion world by storm. For evidence check out Zappa's *Joe's Garage* (1980) and the *Shut Up And Play Yer Guitar* (1986-89) collection. Colaiuta's ever-evolving style has gone through many phases. However, his creativity, musical commitment, relentless drive, and unbelievable drumming skills are legendary.

## Peter Erskine

Erskine's flexible timekeeping skills allowed him to apply his unique style of big band-influenced drumming to fusion. His highly focused drumming (and Jaco Pastorius's bass playing) on Weather Report's *8:30* (1979) gave the band a new drive. Later, on Marc Johnson's *Bass Desires* (1985), Erskine further defined the ECM style of fusion drumming. Successfully straddling the line between traditionalist and explorer, Erskine's versatility, focus, and musicality were essential to the evolution of fusion drumming.



## Dave Weckl

Dave Weckl was the first drummer to fully utilize electronic drums, drum machines, and triggering within an acoustic drumset. This, along with his focus on sound and time (both metronomic and manipulated) provide him with unparalleled control behind the drums, and within the music. Weckl's inspiring voice on the drumset can be heard on Chick Corea's *Elektric Band* (1986) and Bill Connors' *Step It* (1984).

## Dennis Chambers

Chambers brought the knowledge of modern funk (go-go and hip-hop) grooves to the ever-expanding style of fusion. His simplicity is often overlooked due to his amazing showmanship skills, but the clarity of his drumming is key to his success and popularity. Chambers' deliberate and funky playing is featured on John Scofield's *Blue Matter* (1986). More recently Chambers has continued the organ-trio fusion drumming role (described in Part 1) with John McLaughlin on *The Free Spirits: Tokyo Live* (1993).



## Marvin "Smitty" Smith

After a lot of experience playing straight-ahead jazz, Smitty's involvement in the New York "M-Base" community brought his drumming into the realm of fusion. Smitty's mastery of a complex rhythmic vocabulary, the fluidity of his odd-time playing, and his improvisational skills make his drumming a big part of the revolutionary M-Base formula. His sensitivity and musicality make any of his albums with Steve Coleman, as well as Smitty's own recordings, good examples of his stunning drumming, but Dave Holland's *Extensions* (1989) is a modern fusion masterpiece.

## Trilok Gurtu

Just when you thought that fusion had absorbed all of the different influences that it could, along came Trilok Gurtu, bringing the Indian rhythmic language, his native instruments, and a very new approach to the American drumset and fusion. His worldly musical approach was utilized in John McLaughlin's band and in Oregon. However, Gurtu's own band, Crazy Saints, and their recent recordings *Believe* (1993) and *Bad Habits Die Hard* (1995) have influenced the style even further, combining traditional Indian music with American funk and improvisation. At the core of Crazy Saints' challenging music is Gurtu's unique and innovative drumming.



# Reducing The Aches And Pains Of Drumming

by Larry T. Kennedy

**A**s we age, we become subject to more physical problems. My own aches and pains have been aggravated by the fact that I'm now playing with the loudest band I've ever been in. And because the bandmembers' day jobs are demanding, we book only an average of two weekends per month. Having to hit harder and play less frequently has forced me to come up with some ways to reduce the discomfort I began to feel on stage.

Whatever your age or playing situation, if you find it hard to finish some sets due to aches and pains, perhaps some of the tricks I've learned will help you concentrate more on your playing and less on your discomfort.

## Starting In The Practice Room

It should be obvious that there's little you can do in the middle of a tune when discomfort hits. So you need to devise activities that develop your flexibility and endurance in advance. One thing you can do is practice with heavier sticks than you'd normally use on stage. This helps increase the demands of playing for the shorter periods you can practice or rehearse. While nothing really prepares you for playing for four or five hours a night except *playing* four or five hours a night, using heavier sticks during practice does seem to help.

You can also try to play your hi-hat rides with your left hand during rehearsals, which helps build speed and endurance in your weaker hand. Though you may never be as smooth playing left-hand ride, it can definitely help build up your left hand.

I spend more time on building endurance in my hands and feet than on other aspects of my playing. Needless to say, practicing *more* will help, but don't overdo it. Some people prefer not to practice on a day they're performing, but the more time you spend on the practice kit, the better your hands and feet will respond when you're on stage.

## Exercise And Rest

I consulted with the staff at my local gym, and they recommended specific exercises to strengthen my shoulders and back. They suggested using workout machines with less weight and more repetitions (as opposed to fewer reps with heavier weights). I'm happy to say that the program has worked extremely well. If you don't already belong to a gym, consider joining one. Drumming is a highly physical endeavor, so the better shape you're in, the better you'll play.

Also, try to be sure to get enough rest during the day on the nights you play. Relaxing for an hour, or taking a short nap is very helpful. To unwind after the gig, take a shower, soak in the tub, watch some TV, read, or have a light snack.

## Setting Up

Always try to set up your drums *before* the rest of the band shows up. Being set up before the other musicians arrive gives you time to sit down, cool off, and relax. If you're tired, hot, and sweaty from the load-in and set-up, you're going to tire more quickly when you sit down to play. Give yourself as much time as possible to cool down and relax before you play.

Also give some thought to laying out your kit with an eye towards ergonomics, that is, placing drums and cymbals where they can most easily be reached. I initially pared my kit down to a four-piece, dropping the right mounted tom and bringing the ride cymbal down and in. After much experimenting, I now play a six-piece kit more comfortably than I used to play a five-piece. (See the sidebar for details on an ergonomic five-piece setup.)

Try raising your throne a few inches so that toms and cymbals can be set at less of an angle. Raising your seat also allows you to sit *closer* to your toms and cymbals so you don't have to reach as far. While these solutions may not be practical for your situation, spend some time experimenting with different approaches to make yourself as comfortable as possible behind the kit.

## Wise Investments

**A Better Throne:** I now use a larger, motorcycle-style seat with a backrest. I never would have believed the difference this throne could make in terms of comfort. The larger seat, with cut-outs for your legs, offers more flexibility than a round-seated throne. If you're playing a lot of hi-hat, you can shift your body weight to your left leg. If you're riding on the cymbal, you can shift towards the right. You also have enough room on the seat to sit forward on one tune, then slide back against the backrest on the next. Not having to sit in one position all night can be very helpful for your back.

**Mic's Or Triggers:** If you're playing in a high-volume band, you'll soon realize that you can hit your drums and cymbals only *so hard*. If you're hitting hard all night, you're going to tire easily, and still might not be loud enough to be heard. The answer is often mic's and a mixer, or triggers and a sound module.

I started by miking my bass drum, and now I use an overhead mic' to pick up the whole kit, running both through the PA.

Though my band doesn't play in huge clubs where I'd need elaborate sound reinforcement, this bit of extra volume prevents my having to pound all night to be heard.

**Bass Drum Beaters:** Try using a beater with a harder playing surface, or one that gives you the option of switching from one surface to another. Harder beaters generate more volume from your bass drum with less effort. Also try adding a weight that can be moved up and down the beater shaft. These simple devices allow you to customize the feel of your pedal. Some nights, if you begin to lose some control of your bass drum foot, you can move the weight up or down the shaft to get a more comfortable feel. This is much easier and more effective than adjusting the spring tension.

**Fans:** Another good investment is a small, clip-on fan. I've used the big box fans, but they can be noisy and harder to aim. Since the clip-on fan can be positioned closer, the fact that it moves less air is not a real problem. Mount the fan onto either your hi-hat or ride cymbal stand and point it towards your face. A bit of cooler, fresher air will help keep you from tiring prematurely. On those really hot gigs, try a pair of box fans, placing one on either side of you.

### Warming Up

Before the gig starts, try to warm up on a practice pad. I normally begin about fifteen minutes before show time, warming up for about five to ten minutes, and then letting my hands relax a bit before we start.

Do some simple stretches, leaning to one side and then the other, front to back, and twisting from side to side. This allows your back to relax a bit. Repeat these stretches throughout the night. Try stretching out your back once or twice per set between songs. Remain seated and lean forward until your head is almost touching your knees. Hold this for a few seconds before returning to an upright position. Also carefully and slowly bend your head from side to side and front to back to release tension in your neck and shoulders.

### Aspirin And Earplugs

Prior to playing, try taking an aspirin or two to prevent swelling and stiffness. I also use earplugs when I play. After trying several different types, I finally settled on the *Sonic II* plugs. These have small baffles, which filter out enough of the higher frequencies to prevent most of the ringing in the ears I would otherwise suffer after a few hours of hard playing. However, these plugs *do* allow me to hear everything almost as well as I normally would.

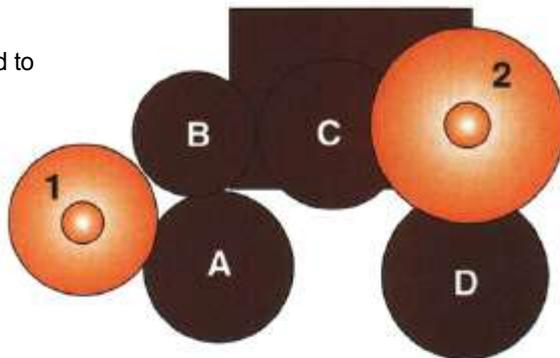
## A Five-Piece Ergonomic Layout

### Drums:

- A. snare drum
- B. 10" or 12" mounted tom clamped to crash cymbal stand
- C. 12" or 13" tom in left bass-drum mount
- D. 14" mounted tom attached to ride cymbal stand, or 16" floor tom

### Cymbals:

- 1. hi-hat
- 2. ride cymbal placed low and in close  
(crash cymbals placed around these most-often-used items)



To create a truly ergonomic layout, I placed everything I use repeatedly (snare drum, hi-hat, ride cymbal), where I can reach them most comfortably. Moving the mounted toms to the left allows me to drop the ride cymbal to where the right mounted tom would normally hang. This allows me to play the ride cymbal with my right arm bent at the elbow just above waist-high.

I can also turn my body more to the left when playing hi-hat rides without such a pronounced twist in my back. And since the mounted toms can be positioned lower—they no longer hang above the highest part of the bass drum—I can now place crash cymbals lower. All of these factors result in less work, and less wear and tear on my back, shoulders, and arms.

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## Staying Hydrated

The need for liquid intake is obvious when we get hot while playing. But you should always follow the athlete's rule of thumb: If you feel thirsty, it's too late! Always take in sufficient liquid to avoid thirst. And when I say liquids, I don't mean alcohol. Too much alcohol will actually cause dehydration in addition to preventing you from playing your best. Too much alcohol also increases the risk of injury as we become less mindful of what we're doing. Keep a travel cup full of ice water, diet soda, or iced tea handy, and take a sip or two between tunes.

## Stick Grips

I also find it helpful to switch grips occasionally. Since the matched and traditional grips use different muscles, switching back and forth can prevent soreness. Try to maintain a relaxed grip. Though you may drop a stick every now and then, it's better to deal with a dropped stick than risk tendinitis or some repetitive motion injury.

Experiment with slight adjustments in your grip. Sometimes with the matched grip, continual pressure between the thumb and index finger can tire the hand. When this happens, try curling the other fingers tightly around the stick and let your thumb move away from the stick. This allows the muscles that normally grip the stick to relax a bit.

## Between Sets And Songs

Try not to sit down before you're ready to begin your set. The extra minutes spent standing may provide the relief your back needs to make it through the night. Return to a comfortable position between songs and drop your hands to relax your shoulders and arms. If you have pain or soreness in your hands, lay down your sticks, drop your hands to your sides, allow your thumbs and fingers to hang loosely, and shake your hands back and forth in half circles. This helps improve blood flow and release tension. If the guitarist has to swap guitars or re-tune, take advantage of this lull and stand up to relax your back, rear, and arms.

I almost never sit down during breaks, preferring to spend as much time as possible standing and walking. I also remove my earplugs to let my ears "breathe," and I step outside for some air. If the smoke is particularly bad in the club, during your breaks try running cold water through your hands and over your face, and be sure to rinse your eyes. Many times when I think I'm tired, it turns out that it's my eyes that are really tired from the smoke and stage lights. Once my eyes relax a bit, I feel better all over.

## Song Selection And Set Length

Get involved in your band's selection of songs. I try to get the guys to mix things up so that we don't play two long, loud songs back-to-back. By having a bit of contrast between songs with regard to tempo and dynamics, you'll be less likely to develop problems moving from style to style.

I also remind the other guys in the band that I cannot play for much over an hour without a break. I've explained that on most nights I can play late *if* we take a short break. Spending just five minutes walking around, stretching, and opening my hands can help me to play well and with enthusiasm for another thirty to forty minutes, which I couldn't do without a short break.

## Simplify, Simplify, Simplify

Some nights, usually during the last set, none of these little tricks work sufficiently to allow me to play 100%. When you feel you're slipping a bit, cut back on what you play. Play fewer fills, eliminate cymbal crashes that aren't really vital to the song, and simplify your bass drum patterns. It's better to play simply and maintain good time than to keep all the bells and whistles and have the time suffer. No one in the band or audience is likely to notice or comment on your playing a song or two more simply, but *everyone* will notice a major screwup.

## Tearing Down And Loading Out

My advice here is simple: Start immediately after the last song has ended. Be friendly to fans and club employees, but never stop taking down cymbals and drums as you visit. If you stop to chat for a few minutes, your energy level drops and you have too much time to think about all the stuff you have to pack and load. You'll feel better if you keep moving and talk *after* you've got everything packed and loaded.

Here's hoping that these suggestions will make your next gig a little bit easier, and allow you to more fully enjoy making music.



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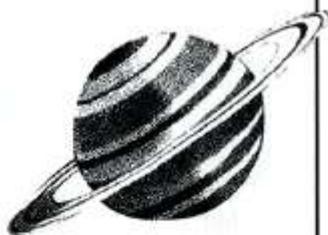


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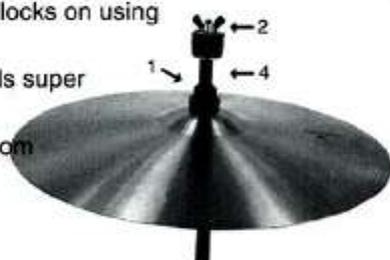
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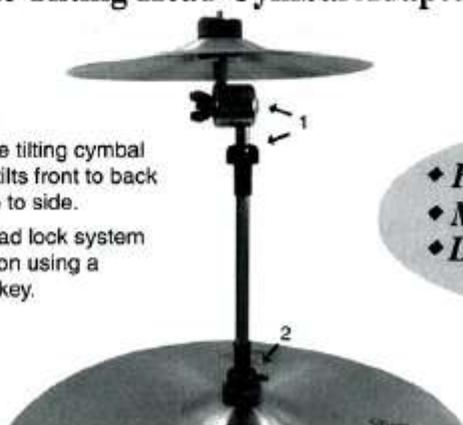
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# The Literate Drummer

by Ron Hefner

The dictionary definition of the word "literate," after "able to read and write," is "scholarly or educated." This term can describe many types of people, such as writers, teachers, students, and others. But how can it pertain to a drummer?

The question didn't occur to me until recently. In my day gig as a college professor, I've been hearing a lot lately about "cross-discipline" in teaching—that is, encouraging students to see the relationships between the different disciplines. *Modern Drummer* has even delved into this a bit: I've noticed "sports" ads in *MD* featuring athletes who play drums, as well as a recent reader-response article about drummers' hobbies and how they relate to the art of drumming. It seems that we can broaden our appreciation for *any* art or discipline by drawing such analogies.

One day, I got to thinking about the specific criteria that literary folks use to measure the worth of a writer. As I ticked off these criteria in my head, I began to realize that for each point, a drumming analogy could be drawn. In other words, the same criteria could apply to a *great drummer*.

Consider the connotations of "scholarly or educated." "Scholarly" means being serious about learning—throughout your lifetime, even after you've achieved success. All great drummers maintain their devotion to learning the craft, both by observing and listening and by hours of application on and off the bandstand. The late Tony Williams was a good example. Tony studied with Alan Dawson when he was younger, but even after fame and recognition came to him, he continued to study on his own. Peter Donald recalled in a recent *MD* article how Tony called him for some advice on how to use a particular method book. (A scary phone call, to be sure!) Donald said he really didn't have a handle on the book in question, but the next time he heard Tony, he had already absorbed the book's exercises into his playing! Tony also spent a great many of his later years studying composition. This kind of devotion and discipline made him an exceptionally aware drummer who could converse as intelligently about Stravinsky as he could about Elvin Jones. Truly, aside from being incontestably great as a player, Tony was also a scholar, and he set an example for all of us.

The second part of the definition says "educated"—which means you did your homework! A well-rounded writer is familiar with

Shakespeare, Milton, Hawthorne, and all the other canonized writers who defined the art. A well-rounded drummer must do the same with the icons of drum history. It's not enough to merely have a passing knowledge of Jo Jones or Sid Catlett; you must have a *working* knowledge of what they did. You must really understand the notes they played, the moves they made on the drums. No jazz drummer is considered complete without this knowledge, just as no hard rock drummer is complete without an understanding of John Bonham or Keith Moon and no R&B drummer is complete without a knowledge of Fred Below or Al Jackson.

In fact, the "educated" drummer can do the same thing educated writers do; quote the greats! When we are young, we all copy things we hear other drummers do. Later, after we have internalized some of this information, we are able to do an occasional

clever imitation of a famous lick in a specific musical context. Many drummers have drawn from Max Roach, for example—dropping in a quote from one of Max's famous compositions such as "The Drum Also Waltzes" or "For Big Sid." I heard Les DeMerle play these compositions at a clinic, and it struck me that, although he is stylistically quite different from Max, Les included these pieces in his clinic because he recognized their lasting value.

In addition, a well-versed drummer can quote melodic phrases, implying melody through rhythm. I once heard a drummer quote Dizzy Gillespie's "Salt Peanuts" during a four-bar break. He used the small tom and floor tom to play the alternating two-note motif, and the bass and snare for the octave-jump "Salt Peanuts" part. The quote was instantly recognizable and got an enthusiastic response from the listeners. The point was that both the drummer and his audience were educated in the tradition of jazz and had a mutual understanding of its "texts."

A short drum break, in fact, can often become "canonized," just like a written epigram. Late nineteenth-century writers like Mark Twain and Ambrose Bierce gained great reputations for their short, clever epigrams. Great drummers have done the same thing with short percussive phrases. Examples are Shadow Wilson's break on Count Basie's "Queer Street" (described by no less an authority than Buddy Rich as the coolest drum break of all time!), Bobby Colomby's famed "Spinning Wheel" break, and John Bonham's 16th-note-triplet bass drum figures on Led Zep's "Good Times, Bad Times." These are the musical equivalents of literary epigrams: short, memorable statements that become classics.

"As a great writer structures an essay with the use of thesis and support, a great drummer lays down a theme and then goes on to develop it."

In addition, there are famous introductions in the drum world, just like there are in the literary world. Readers smile at Dickens' "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times" or Melville's "Call me Ishmael." We drummers have favorite introductions, too: At a Joe Morello clinic, I once saw a room full of drummers go crazy when Joe began the 5/4 drum beat opening to "Take Five." These drummers, familiar with the "literature" of drumming, knew exactly what this beat introduced.

Another literary analogy to drumming is the understanding and use of structure. As a great writer structures an essay with the use of thesis and support, a great drummer lays down a theme and then goes on to develop it. Again, Morello's "Take Five" solo is a case in point. He begins by stating the essential 5/4 motif, then he goes on to expand and develop it. Buddy Rich always said a solo should have a theme and a definite structure, and Joe did just that. If you survey the great soloists of drumming, you will find that virtually all have a firm grasp of structure, and that they use the same strategies used in writing: theme and development.

Structure, of course, can be interpreted many ways. Modern writers like William Faulkner and postmoderns like Thomas Pynchon created new, freer structures in their writing. Likewise, drummers like Milford Graves and Paul Motian bring forth new concepts of structure in drumming, using a "stream of consciousness" approach rather than the traditional, linear method. Regardless of the concept, though, the greats always have a thorough grounding in the rudiments of the art. Graves and Motian, for example, both have backgrounds in traditional jazz and bebop.

As a result of his or her knowledge of language and tradition, a great writer has developed an extensive lexicon of words, skillfully combined to form memorable prose. In the drum world, we have a great canon of work to study for inspiration in this area. Think about Philly Joe Jones. This man had a thorough grasp of the rudiments (twenty-six of them, the "alphabet" of drumming), and he "wrote" some of the most memorable drum prose ever. I've heard people describe Philly Joe's playing as "witty," "colorful," and "descriptive"—all terms relevant to literature. And if Philly Joe wrote stories when he played, Buddy Rich wrote *epics*. In terms of prolific output, Buddy could perhaps be considered the John Milton of drumming, with the "West Side Story" solo his "Paradise Lost"! (Of course, if you're from the "less is more" school of drumming, you may take comfort in this line from Shakespeare's *Henry V*: "Men of few words are the best men.")

Clearly, being literate depends much on a knowledge of history and the foundations of one's art. Some drummers might say (as I did when I was younger), "Why should I go to the trouble of studying all this stuff, or listening to types of drummers I can't relate to?" My reply would be: How can you intellectually reject something if you are not familiar with it? If you're the iconoclastic type who wants to reject tradition and create something radically new, that's great. But you'd better have some knowledge of what you're rejecting. Otherwise, you're building castles in the air.

The bottom line for literacy never changes: The more you know, the better off you are. And, if you want to "know" about drumming, it's going to take some serious study. In the late sixteenth century, a very literate man, Francis Bacon, wrote, "I have taken all knowledge to be my province." We drummers need to embrace the same idea.



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## Are You On The Move?

*Modern Drummer's On The Move* department covers drummers whose activities and talent are worthy of recognition, but who are not yet figures on the national music scene.

If you'd like to appear in this section, 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.) The bio sketch should include your full name and age, along with your playing style(s), your influences, your current playing situation (band, recording project, freelance artist, ect.). Feel free to include any special items of interest pertaining to what you do and how you do it. We'd also like 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. Please note that **no** material can be returned, so please **do not** send original tapes or photos.

## MD Giveaway Winner

Englewood, Colorado drummer Fuad Saba was awarded the grand prize in the Really Big *Pearl/Modern Drummer* Giveaway (which appeared in the August/September/October '97 issues). An avid contest participant, Fuad's reward for mailing in many postcards was a *Pearl Masters Custom Extra* six-piece kit. Congratulations to Fuad from *Pearl* and *Modern Drummer*.

## Zildjian Grows Into Its 375th Year



At the groundbreaking for Zildjian's Norwell facility expansion, left to right: vice president of operations Paul Strubel, general manager, North America Craigie Zildjian, president Armand Zildjian, director of human resources Debbie Zildjian, and CEO Dave Bryan

Looking toward its 375th year as a cymbal maker, Zildjian has announced that it will expand its worldwide headquarters and cymbal manufacturing operation for the third time since moving to the

Norwell, Massachusetts area in 1973. The enlarged facility will total 71,000 square feet of additional office, manufacturing, and warehouse space. The expansion will be completed in time for Zildjian's 375th anniversary celebration in the fall of this year.

In related news, Zildjian has announced the acquisition of Malletech, a manufacturer of marimba and keyboard mallets founded by renowned classical marimbist Leigh Howard Stevens. Malletech will operate as a freestanding division of Zildjian from its existing headquarters in Asbury Park, New Jersey. Stevens will continue to be involved in the Malletech operation, providing marketing and product development consulting, as well as playing and promoting the products around the world.

## MARS Foundation Promotes Music Education

MARS (Music And Recording Superstore) founder, president, and CEO Mark Begelman and his wife recently donated a \$100,000 personal check to establish the MARS Foundation, whose mission is to fund music scholarships and other programs designed to pro-

mote music education.

"The Foundation is being formed to help champion the enhanced learning abilities and demonstrable improvements in both physical and emotional health that lifelong music study can bring," says Begelman. "We

intend to highlight these benefits and make music a part of more and more lives everywhere. We will be enlisting help from those in a position to influence legislation that supports music education, as well as the help of musical stars who want to give something back through education."



MARS founder Mark Begelman (right) presents \$100,000 check to MARS CFO Bob Zobel to launch the MARS Foundation.

## Evans Expands To Fit Demand

J. D'Addario & Company, parent company of Evans, has announced an expansion of their 110,000-square-foot facilities with the addition of 47,000 square feet of manufacturing space—largely necessitated by the addition of the Evans drumhead manufacturing operation. Vice president James D'Addario explains, "In 1996 we relocated Evans' production from Dodge City, Kansas to our present facility in order to better control quality and production efficiency. Since the acquisition, Evans' sales have increased more than 300%. We're bursting at the seams."

In addition to meeting already increased demand, the expansion will accommodate anticipated near-future growth. "We're currently producing over 3,000 heads per day," says D'Addario. "Our projections are to exceed 7,000 heads per day by 1999, and this new facility will allow us to do that comfortably."

## Sabian Invites Buyers To 'Hear The Difference'

Sabian recently released a new thirty-minute promotional video, as well as a CD "audio catalog." The video features performances and personal observations by Terry Bozzio, Rod Morgenstein, Mike Portnoy, Jeff "Tain" Watts, and others.

The two-disk "audio catalog" was created as a sound reference library to assist potential buyers in identifying the most suitable Sabian cymbal series and models for their intended applications. For optimum sound accuracy, the cymbals were digitally recorded with no enhancements. The CD contains audio demonstrations of Sabian's entire range of drumset, hand, and suspended cymbals.

Sabian has also recently upgraded their Web site ([www.sabian.com](http://www.sabian.com)) with enhanced navigational tools, new feature

pages, and colorful contemporary graphic treatments. Highlights include a new educational section, setup diagrams of their leading endorsers, a greater focus on new product news, monthly artist updates tracking player activities around the world, and information on where to buy Sabian products.

## Indy Quickies

**Meinl Percussion** has begun celebrating their twentieth year in operation. Based in Neustadt/Aisch, Franconia, Germany, the family-owned company is led by Roland and Reinhold Meinl. The company is planning a number of commemorative promotions, including a special-edition 20th-anniversary *Marathon* conga set with free gig bags.

In honor of the fifty-year reign of Tito Puente, "The King" of Latin Music, **LP Music Group** recently presented him with four sets of commemorative gold-plated LP *Tito Puente* timbales. Designed exclusively for Tito, the drums feature 24-karat gold-plated shells, rims, tuning screws, nuts, and washers. Each set was fitted with a special plaque that reads "Tito Puente, The King, Commemorating 50 Years of Musical Excellence."

**The 8th Annual Midwest Custom And Vintage Drum Show** is scheduled for May 16-17 at Kane County Fairgrounds, St. Charles, Illinois. For more information, contact Rob Cook, Rebeats Vintage Drum Products, PO Box 6, Alma, MI 48801, tel: (517) 463-4757, fax: (517) 463-6545, e-mail: rebeats@aol.com.

Barcelona's prestigious Museum of Art contacted **Premier's** Spanish distributor, Euromusica, requesting a drumset for the museum's permanent exhibition of musical instruments. Premier and Euromusica donated a *Genista Limited Edition 75th Anniversary* kit.

After serving for four years as Zildjian's artist relations manager—West Coast, **Brent Anderson** will be relocating to the company's Norwell, Massachusetts headquarters to assume the newly created position of artist relations manager—East Coast/communications manager. **Jair Neciosup** will take over the position vacated by Anderson. He will be responsible for maintaining and developing the company's West Coast artist relations activities. Meanwhile, **Bob Wiczling** is now Zildjian's international marketing and artist relations manager. He will operate out of the UK office.

**Mike Moravek** of Mike's Drum Rental in Atlanta has become the new US representative for Brady Drums, manufactured by Bill Flynn in Australia. Contact Mike for product information at mikedrum@bellsouth.net or (770) 784-5864.

**Ken Austin** has signed on as Ayotte's new director of sales, marketing, and artist relations for America. Austin has extensive experience in drums & percussion manufacturing and marketing, most recently as president of Mapex USA.

**Walt Johnston**, formerly of PureCussion, has joined the Slingerland team as product and development manager.



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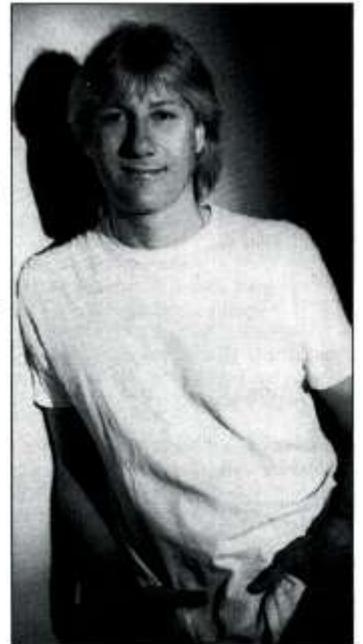
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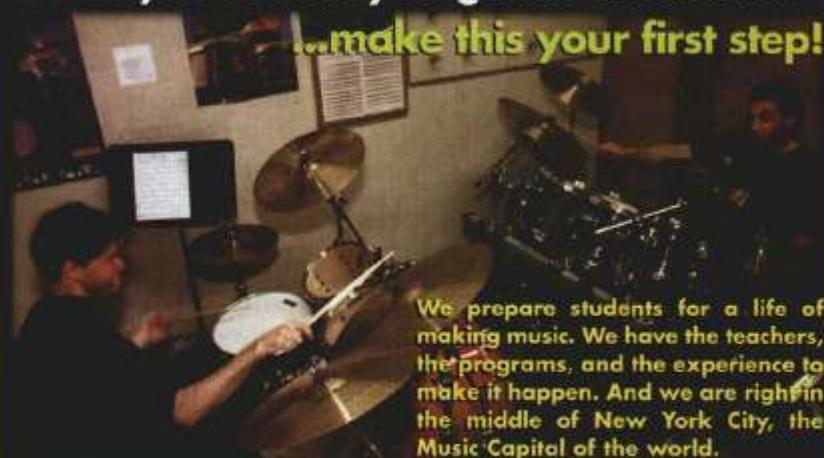
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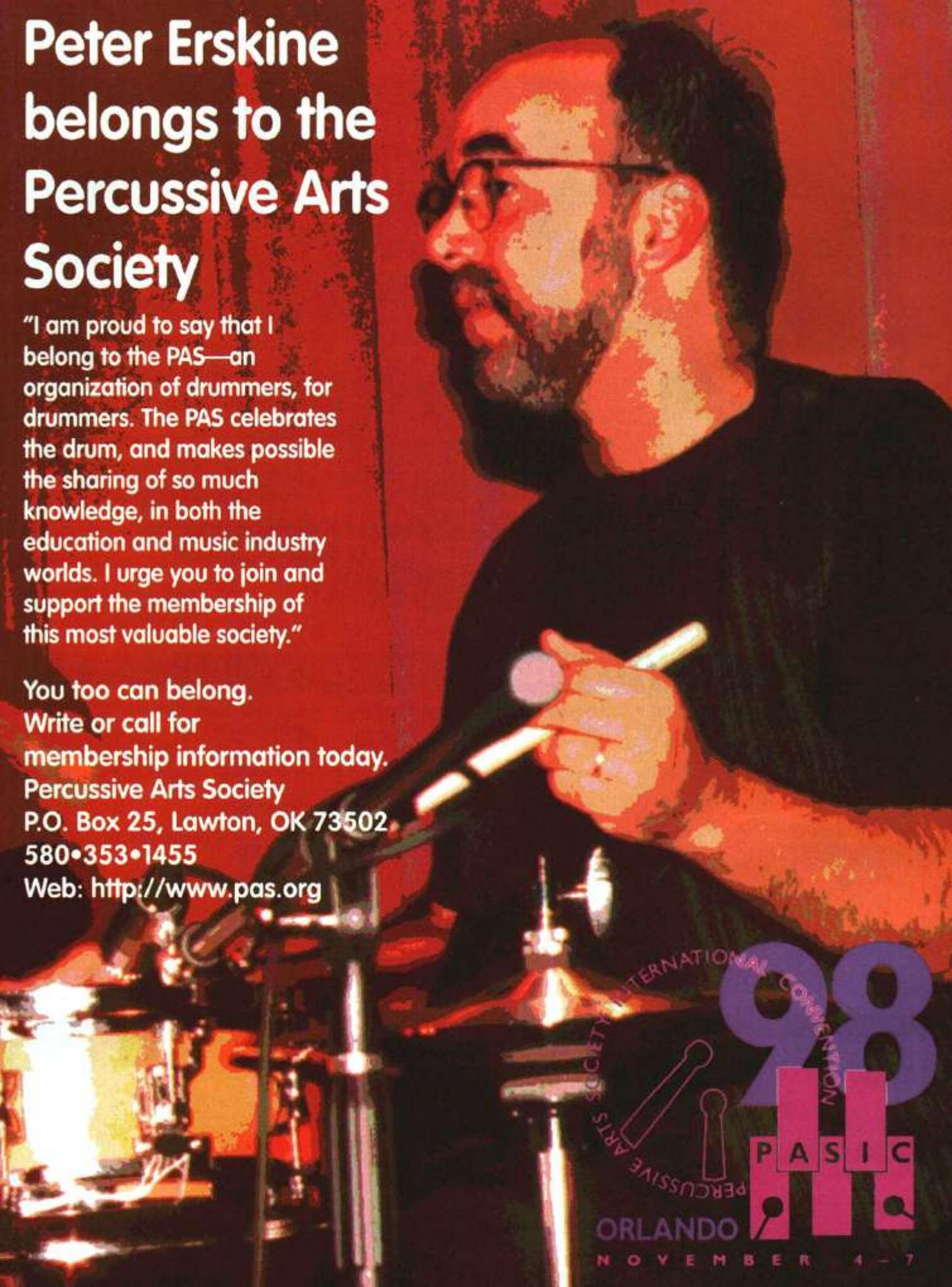
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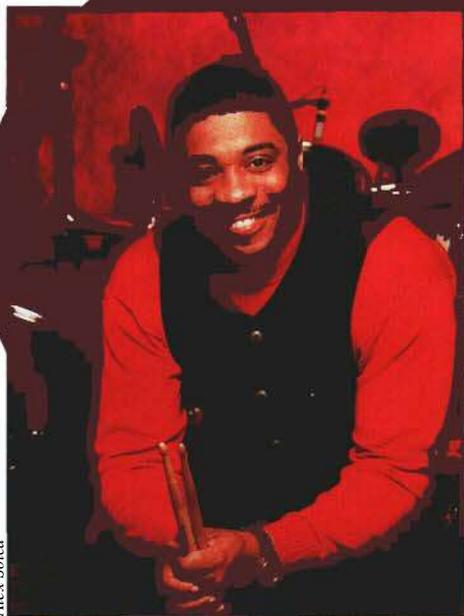
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1. Photos must be high-quality and in color. 35mm slides are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted.
2. You may send more than one view of the kit.
3. Only show drums, no people.
4. Shoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds.
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S-5513



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