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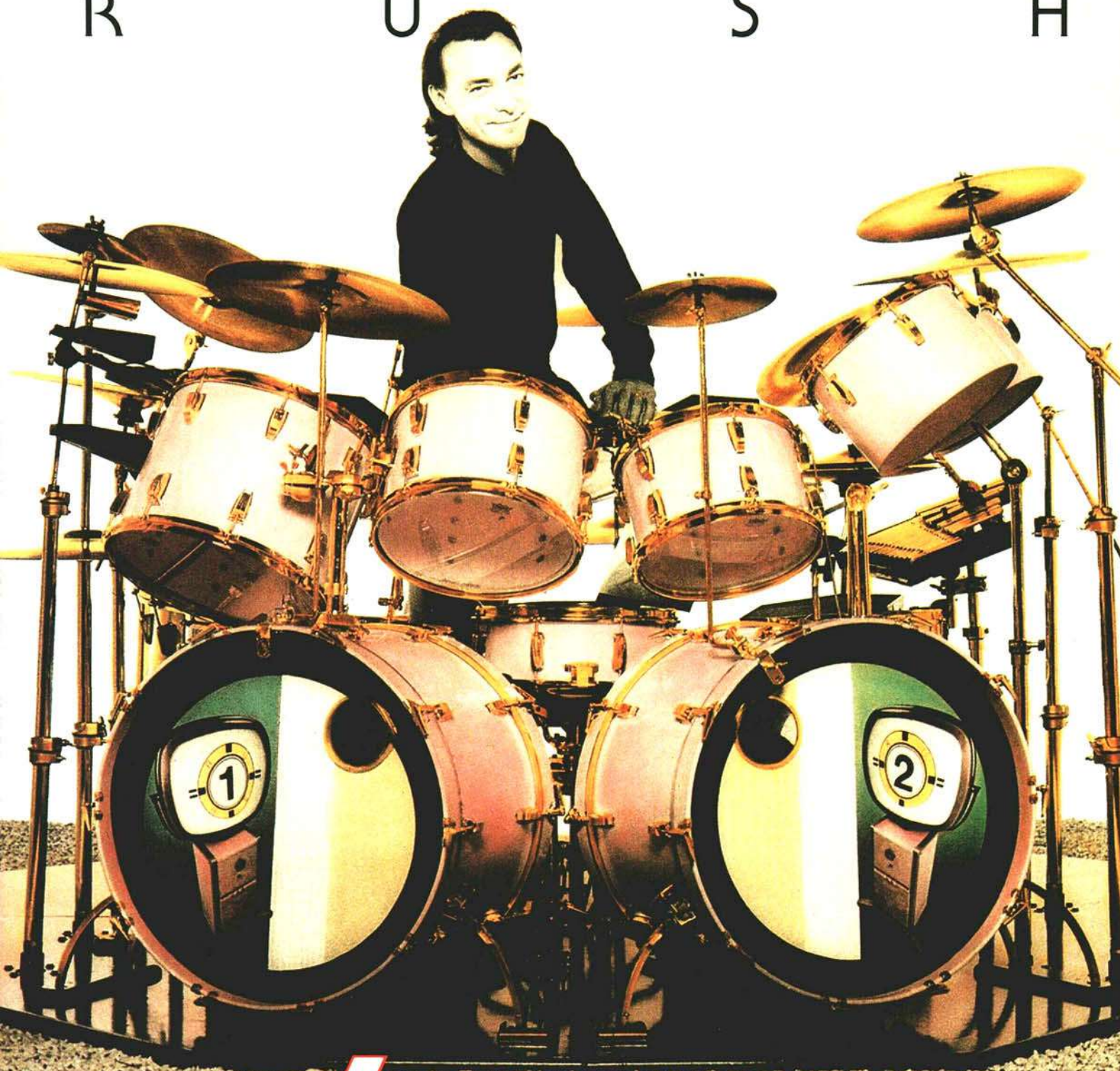
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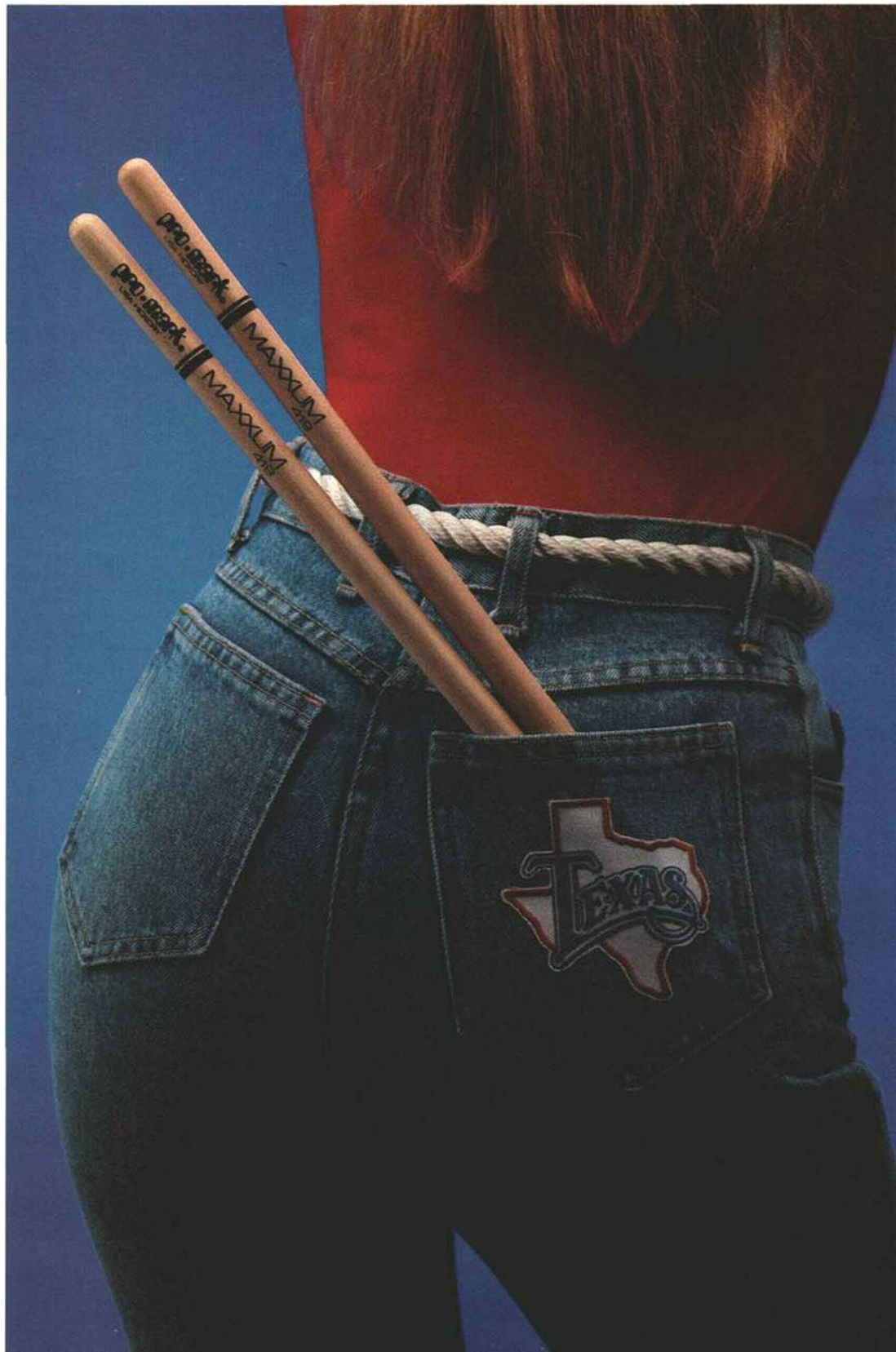
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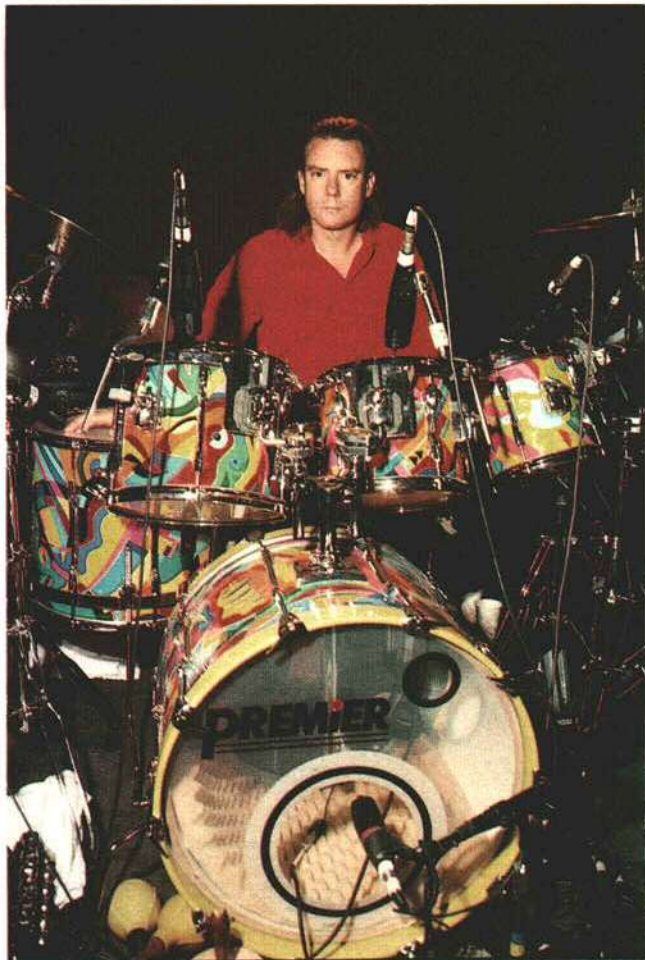


Photo by Lissa Wales

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After having kept a low profile over the past couple of years, Michael Shrieve has become very visible recently with the release of three albums and his participation in the Santana reunion tour. He discusses his involvement with electronics and tells why it has given him a renewed appreciation for acoustic drums and cymbals.

by Rick Mattingly

22 JAMES KOTTAK

When their first record shipped platinum, it seemed to many that Kingdom Come was an overnight success. But for drummer James Kottak, it was merely the payoff for many years of gigs and experience. He recalls the extensive study and dedication that prepared him for his big break.

by Robyn Flans

26 TREVOR TOMKINS

He might be described as a British Alan Dawson—respected as both a fine jazz drummer and a knowledgeable teacher. He shares his thoughts about the type of preparation a drummer needs in order to function as an equal member of a group.

by Simon Goodwin

30 INSIDE SELECT SNARE DRUMS

When Huey Lewis & The News drummer Bill Gibson met up with craftsman Johnny Craviotto, their goal was to produce the finest snare drums possible. *MD* visited the Select Snare Drum production shop for a behind-the-scenes look at these unique instruments.

by Rick Van Horn



Photo by Lissa Wales

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EDITOR'S OVERVIEW

A World Of Opportunity

Drum education in America has come a long way over the past 25 years or so. Today's drum student has so many wonderful opportunities to advance as a player. The college campus is one good case in point.

There was a time when drumset was pretty much frowned upon, and took a back seat to the standard percussion curriculum. Today, more and more colleges and universities across the country are recognizing contemporary drumming and awarding the instrument its rightful place in the curriculum. Serious drumset players can now devote more time to their primary interest, while at the same time obtaining a formal education.

The music trade school is another relatively new educational environment. Drummers are now fortunate to have places such as The Percussion Institute of Technology in L.A. and Drummers Collective in New York. At one time we could only *imagine* what it would be like to have schools such as these. Today it's a reality, offering us an opportunity to study all aspects of the instrument in a structured setting, under the guidance of professional players and teachers.

Years ago, the common format of the "drum clinic" wasn't nearly as accessible as it is today. Depending upon where one lived, a young student would be lucky to see a favorite player in a clinic setting *once* throughout his formative years. Today we're fortunate to be part of an industry that recognizes and emphasizes the importance of education. Hardly a month goes by when we don't report on some type of educational event sponsored by a major manufacturer. Several firms now sponsor clinic tours, where name artists may show up right in your area through an arrangement with your local music store. These progressive companies are continually providing us with opportunities to learn from the leading players in the world.

In other areas, we see master classes and summer workshops on university campuses across the country. And for those who simply cannot get to *any* of this, the VCR/ videotape revolution brings some of the finest artists performing today right into your own home. All of this was unheard of a mere 20 years ago.

Today's young drummer is extremely fortunate, and the effects of all these opportunities are beginning to show up in the level of performance and the quality of today's player. Quite simply, there are more fine young drummers around today than ever before, and many are developing outstanding abilities at an age considerably younger than we've ever seen. There's a world of opportunity out there for those who wish to seriously pursue their goals. Rest assured, the great players of *tomorrow* are those who are taking full advantage of these very opportunities *today*.

RS

EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Ronald Spagnardi

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

Isabel Spagnardi

SENIOR EDITOR

Rick Mattingly

MANAGING EDITOR

Rick Van Horn

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

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CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Susan Alexander, Robyn Flans, Simon Goodwin, Karen Ervin Pershing, Jeff Potter, Teri Saccone, Robert Santelli, Bob Saydowski, Jr., Robin Tolleson, Lauren Vogel, T. Bruce Wittet.

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DAVID BEAL MICHAEL SHRIEVE THE BIG PICTURE WITH PREMIER RESONATOR

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READERS' PLATFORM

DINO DANELLI

I was overjoyed when I saw that Dino Danelli was going to be featured as the cover story [March '89 MD]. It was long overdue.

Dino has influenced thousands of drummers with his clean technique and showmanship. Although my background has been mainly funk and fusion, I still love listening to Dino's playing. I caught the Rascals last June on their reunion tour, and Dino's feel is still impeccable. And I must say that, after 20 years, he still looks as youthful as ever. Keep up the good work, Dino!

Dave Ciacone
West Hempstead NY

Thanks for finally doing a cover story on the man who, I feel, was the greatest and classiest drummer from the mid-'60s. I really enjoyed the Dino Danelli interview. He looked and sounded great! Kudos to Robyn Flans for great work.

Mike Streeto
Branford CT

INSIDE EVANS

Congratulations on a great job! The "Inside Evans" story in the March issue was very informative. Bob Beals seems to take a great deal of pride in his work. I've been playing Evans heads for five years, and the product is extremely durable and sounds great. Thanks to Evans for a fantastic product, and thanks to MD for the greatest magazine in the world!

Greg Scott
Minneapolis MN

BRUFORD AND ELECTRONICS

Great interview with Bill Bruford in the February '89 MD! Well done and informative.

I've been a subscriber since 1985, and I inevitably find myself researching back-issues (most recently to put a comprehensive resume together). Over the years, MD has been an invaluable source of information in regards to products, developments, and innovative ideas—especially in the field of electronics. Many times a product review has influenced my decision for one brand over another. I just wish to express my gratitude and admiration for your dedication.

Joseph Napolitano
Hyde Park MA

MD: THE ORIGINAL

I'd like to express just how much *Modern Drummer* has meant to me as an aspiring pro. The hundreds of interviews and fine articles you've printed over the years have been very inspiring and have helped me become a better drummer.

I've noticed that several other drum publications are now available. I think I speak for many when I say that they all seem to be just blueprints of a format you guys established many years ago. They also seem to lack the substance MD manages to put into every single issue. Personally, I learn more about all the most important aspects of drumming from MD than I do from all the other magazines out there combined.

I guess the world will always have its originals and its copies in every field. But it seems that the originals always endure long

after others have come and gone. I would imagine your advertisers feel the same way. Judging by the amount of support you receive in comparison to others, it seems that the drum advertisers are well aware of which publications are reaching the most captive audience.

For what it's worth, you guys are first in my book, and I'll be reading as long as you continue to publish the best magazine we've got!

Paul J. Montrose
Tulsa OK

HELLO FROM HAL

Just a quickie note to let you know that I have returned to California in my semi-retirement stage. I have run into a problem though. The postmaster in Arizona has been forwarding mail to me, and of course whenever I receive any mail from drummers I notify them of my move. But I'm afraid that I'll be missing out as soon as the post office decides to cut me off.

It does an old man good to hear from the youngsters out there, and they all seem to read MD. So could you run this letter to let my friends in the drumming world know about my new address? I hate missing the mail.

I wish you continued success with *Modern Drummer*. I hope to meet all of you on my book tour this summer.

Hal Blaine
P.O. Box 4957
Palm Springs CA 92263



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Ron Pangborn



The beginning of 1988 found Detroit's Ron Pangborn in Los Angeles rehearsing with his steady gig, Was (Not Was). They toured Europe from February until July, promoting the album *What Up, Dog?*

"It's an 11-piece band, and the show is structured as a big soul revue on acid," Ron laughs. "It definitely has roots in soul music and Motown/R&B kind of stuff. That sound is very much on this last record, although on the first two records the style jumps around quite a bit. During the show everybody in the band is featured, and the lead vocalist changes from tune to tune. Plus, Don and David [Was] are really good at this satirical borscht-belt comedian sort of thing.

"This gig calls for a real solid backbeat kind of player, basically just laying down the groove. It's not a fancy fusion thing or a Tower Of Power funk thing. I've always been an R&B-oriented player, and I really enjoy a real backbeat gig. Because the band is so big and we put out so much sound, the energy level of what I do is not unlike playing with a metal band. Stylistically we cross a lot of different boundaries. We do anything from soul-type music to what some people consider disco, even though that's a dirty word sometimes. Don and David do these little songs that they call Dada poetry, which is really hard to describe if you haven't heard it. They have a song called 'Dad I'm In Jail' and one called 'Earth To Doris' that are sort of free jazz with a groove, and they recite this strange poetry over the top. We

cover everything from Art Ensemble Of Chicago, to free jazz, to something that wouldn't sound out of place on a Four Tops record."

In addition to doing shows at night, the 11-piece band has been playing 30-minute acoustic sets as a promotional tool at radio stations or record distributors. "The singers don't use any microphones, and they use an acoustic guitar and a little Casio synthesizer," Ron explains.

"I have been playing brushes on a cardboard box, or sometimes I'll use an upside-down tin garbage can. When I was in college I was really good at brushes, but then I didn't use them for a while. Now I've gotten back into it, though. The whole acoustic thing started out as a joke, but then we actually got quite good at it. Having to acoustically control the dynamics is great. You can't just blast out; you have to listen to what everybody's doing in order to gauge how loud you should play. That's something you don't get to do in a concert situation."

The band is currently preparing for their next album, on which the touring band supposedly will play. When he isn't working with the band, Ron spends a fair amount of time playing, programming, and sometimes writing and producing jingles in Detroit.

—Robyn Flans

Keith Cronin

When he landed the Pat Travers gig about a year and a half ago, Keith Cronin was one happy guy. "I had been playing in a band in Miami with Pat's original bass player, Mars, for three years. Through him I got to know Pat and jammed once or twice with him. Through Mars I heard of the opening when Pat's drummer left to join Ted Nugent, so I asked if I could audition.

"The audition was a blast. I asked him if there was anything specific he wanted me to learn for the audition, but he

said no, he had seen me play and knew I was technically ca-

pable of playing any of his music, so why didn't I go in and we'd wing it. Just in case, I went through what I thought were some of his more difficult tunes. He has some things in weird time signatures, so

I figured out what they were, although I didn't really learn the songs.

We started jamming, and I was there all night. He just kept throwing things at me; it was a real test of listening. We'd start playing, and he'd just sort of go left and see if I went there with him. I come from a jazz background, and I'm a real interactive player. I just go out and go for it, but I didn't know if that was what he was into or not. But I thought, 'I'm here to play like I play and see if that's what he wants in his band.'

"It was also a test of memorization. He played a tape of an unreleased original and then said, 'Let's play that.' It had a couple of starts and stops, and I caught them. I found we had a whole lot of shared musical influences, and we had a lot of fun. A couple of days later, he called and asked if I wanted to go on the road in four days."

Travers is constantly on the road, but Keith is not complaining. He loves working in this unit. "It's a real neat thing: I'm actually in a band that cares enough to warm up before we play. Then we jam before we go out on stage to get into the playing mode. Generally that's where the germs of songs come from. Pat has an amazing memory. We'll play something at a soundcheck in Boston, and three months later he'll say, 'Remember this?' He'll come up with the germ of the idea, and then we'll all hammer it out together."

The Pat Travers Band hopes to have an album out by the end of the year.

—Robyn Flans

Billy Cobham



Photo by Lissa Wales

It's been a while since Billy Cobham has been seen on America's shores, but he's been anything but inactive. In a phone conversation from Switzerland late last year, Billy outlined his recent activities and upcoming projects. "I did a television show in Germany called *Super Drumming*," Billy said. "The show was emceed by Pete York, and Bill Bruford, Nicko McBrain, Zak Starkey, Nippy Noya, and Trilok Gurtu were among the other percussionists involved. We talk about the origins of modern-day trap playing, and how it all came about. The show is a syndicated series, so it will show three or four times during '89."

Billy is also heavily into teaching. He appeared last summer at a music camp in France called the International Percussion Academy, giving lectures along with African percussionists. Following a series of clinics in Italy, Billy moved on to the Bumbershoot Festival in Seattle last September. Here he was the master of ceremonies for a Percussion Day that featured Tito Puente, some drummers from Ghana, and a "cast of thousands."

Next up was a return to Italy to record an album in Rome, followed by a Tama clinic tour. Appearances at the University of Pittsburgh with Sonny Rollins and Grover Washington, Jr. and dates in Canada with Randy Brecker filled November. Billy then returned to Europe for an unusual tour.

"Wolfgang Schmidt, who used to play bass with Passport, was turning 40, and he decided that he wanted to have a tour to celebrate his birthday. So he

A black and white photograph of Charlie Benante, the drummer of the band Anthrax. He has long, dark hair and is wearing a white t-shirt with the Anthrax logo and a red and white striped pattern. He is sitting behind a Tama RS Pro drum set, which features a skull pattern on the toms. The background is dark, and the lighting is dramatic, highlighting his face and the drums. The text "RS PRO" is written in a large, bold, white font with a red outline, and "CHARLIE BENANTE" is written in a similar style. The Anthrax logo is also visible on his shirt and in a blue box. The Tama logo is at the bottom right. The text "On RS PRO" is written in a red, handwritten style on the right side of the drums.

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called Joe Sample and me, and we just got together and had a good time playing. It's a shame that it's not possible to do those kinds of things in the States. But the U.S. is a big area to cover. You can't get from city to city except by plane, which, on a tour like this one, would just not be possible."

Billy ended 1988 with more clinics in France. As we went to press, his schedule for '89 was already looking busy. "As things look now, my band will open up a tour in Cuba. That's for Carnival time. From there, we play two months in Europe, hopefully showing up in the U.S. at the start of April. We'll be touring in support of an album called *Rhythmatics*, which I have coming out at the beginning of 1989 on my own label. We'll tour through about May.

"After that tour comes a very special situation for me that hopefully will develop into something permanent—something I would like to leave behind when I'm gone. It's called a Jazz Rhythm Section School. The way this is designed is that only complete rhythm sections will be able to subscribe to the school. In other words, three people would have to come as a group. The whole idea would be to *play*. We only have space right now for about 40 rhythm sections. We would take these individuals for a period during the early summer or late spring, and work with them in seminars that would last about three weeks. Each rhythm section would have to play together as a rhythm section. And each individual would also have to play as part of *another* rhythm section designed by the school. The idea is to analyze and discuss how to play as part of a rhythm section, and to help develop the talents of individuals *by way of* the rhythm section.

"We want to have visiting pros—such as people on the summer touring circuit—come to the camp. The professionals would discuss the pluses and minuses of the situation in the rhythm section: what they look for—what they like to see the drummer or the other players do."

And where is this school to be located? "Cagliari, Sardinia," says Billy. "There's a big

festival there, and jazz is growing and becoming more important. A lot of artists come through, so we would try to work out some kind of arrangement with them in advance to fit us into their schedules for a day or two—just to relax and talk to young players about what they do and what they like to have in a rhythm section. The camp is to be organized under the auspices of the Cultural Ministry in Sardinia. As soon as I get all the particulars together, I'll start passing the word."

Besides being an educator, Billy has been active as a composer, working on a symphonic work to be performed with the Birmingham Symphony for the 200th anniversary of the English city in 1989. And as if all this weren't enough to occupy his thoughts, Billy is looking forward to a unique project that he hopes to put together for 1990. "It's really just in the talking stage now, but we've all agreed verbally. Vic Firth, Harvey Mason, Jack DeJohnette, and I all want to go out as a purely acoustical contemporary jazz/classical percussion ensemble. It would bring Jack in to play some serious piano; Vic would play timpani. We'd only do it for about two months out of the year, but we'd play some real special places and it would be really fun. It's just a matter of finding the time to write the material and get it happening."

—Rick Van Horn

Jim McCarty



Around July of last year, Jim McCarty recorded Buck

Owens' *Hot Dog* album in Fresno, California. "We laid down about 15 cuts in two days," Jim says. "The way they like to do things was a little unusual for me, because I like to just lay down rhythm-section stuff—drums, bass, piano, and maybe guitar—and they like to have drums, bass, piano, two rhythm guitars, a fiddle, and the lead vocal going down all at once. Their whole idea is to get a live feel. Buck Owens has had 26 number-ones, so I wasn't about to argue with him.

"I come from a jazz background, although I've done a lot of country sessions. Before I did these sessions, I hadn't really listened to any Buck Owens records like *Tiger By The Tail*, and *'Act Naturally.'* After I did the sessions, they gave me a rehearsal tape so I could be ready to do some live shows. I started to listen to how the original drummers were playing the shuffles—how simple they were playing and how there were barely any fills.

"We're about to start another album, and I'm going to approach it a little differently this time. For example, pretty much all the stuff is shuffles, and my favorite way of playing a shuffle has been the Jeff Porcaro shuffle. To me, that's the hippest shuffle in the world, because he plays in between the triplets, bouncing the stick on the snare drum. I was approaching the first record like that. They didn't complain about it, but after doing a couple of shows, Buck told me he needed to hear it a little different. The shuffle he likes—as compared to the Jeff Porcaro shuffle, where he accents the downbeats a lot—is closer to the straight-8th feel, where I'm not accenting downbeats, but playing them at the same volume. A drummer named Archie Frances helped show me that, as did a drum-teacher friend of mine, Jim Ganduglia. Jim explained to me that in that kind of playing, it needs to be a looser feel, rather than an intense, driving kind of feel."

One of Jim's favorite tracks on the album is "A-11" because, "It starts out

with a half-time shuffle, gets into the groove after a couple of measures, and then does the half-time thing for only a measure. 'Hot Dog' is one of my favorite tracks because I started off playing sticks on this certain kind of groove, and then I re-did it with brushes on the snare drum—kind of like a train feel, between a shuffle and an 8th feel. That was the only one I overdubbed on. 'Memphis' is one of my favorites, too, because the way Buck sings it really sells the tune."

—Robyn Flans

News...

Stu Nevitt is currently recording with Shadowfax for an album that will be released late summer or early fall.

Tommy Aldridge on new Whitesnake LP.

Bob Harsen working with Richard Elliot.

Art Rodriguez playing drums on *The Pat Sajak Show*.

Cactus Moser on new Denise Moore album, and working on a new Highway 101 LP.

Max Weinberg, Steve Ferrone, and Omar Hakim recently recorded with Carole King.

Scott Kay working with the Commodores, currently touring in Europe and Japan.

Kenny Aronoff worked on albums by Marshall Crenshaw, Drive She Said, The Bodeans, Seth Marsh, and Mike Penn. On Penn's record he also played double drums with **Jim Keltner** on one track. Currently Kenny is working on a new John Mellencamp album and will be touring in the summer with him.

George Lawrence in the studio and on tour with The Williams Brothers.

George Honea on tour with the Judds.

Joe Smyth recently toured China with Sawyer Brown.

Ed Shaughnessy on new big band recording with Erich Kunzel and the Cincinnati Pops.

Jim Blair in videos by An-imotion and Peter Cetera, and recently returned from a trip in Africa for N'Daya Foundation (Starving Children Of Africa), where he backed various artists. Also, congratulations to

continued on page 92



SONOR

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IT'S QUESTIONABLE

Q. I own a really old set that used to belong to my father. I recovered it, and it looks great. The only problem is that the lugs are old and scratched up. Could you suggest any companies that would sell new lugs separately to me? The set is made up of a 22" bass drum, a 13" tom, and a 14" snare.

C.C.

Bohemia NY

A. Most drum companies will sell lugs as "spare parts" items; you need only order them through your local drum dealer. However, the key to your project is finding lugs that will fit the existing holes in your drumshells. You didn't mention what company made the drums originally, but if it is a company still in existence, you should probably start with them in your search for new lugs. You should send a sample of one of the old lugs with your order, to make sure the company knows exactly what is needed. Be aware, however, that drum companies change their lug designs over a period of years, and it may be that even the original manufacturer no longer has lugs to fit the existing holes in your shells. If the manufacturer is no longer in business, it will be even more difficult to find the exact lugs you need. You may be faced with drilling new holes in the drumshells in order to accommodate lugs you can purchase today.

Before you take such drastic steps as buying new lugs and/or drilling new holes in your shells, you might consider making an attempt to improve the appearance of the existing lugs. There are several products on the market designed to restore old metal work, such as buffing compounds, impregnated rubbing cloths, etc. Check with a hardware store, metal shop, or other knowledgeable source for exact name brands of products available in your area. The value of your kit as an antique will be maximized if the original hardware can be retained, and you might find it a great deal easier to spend some time polishing the old lugs than to spend the money and effort necessary to replace them.

Q. A few weeks ago I came across two albums, titled *Drum Drops*, by David Crippner. According to their numbers (#3 and #10), the albums seem to be part of a larger set. I am a drumming student and would like to purchase the entire set. Unfortunately, the publisher, Music Tree Corporation, of Atlanta, Georgia, cannot be found. Could you help?

T.R.

Sharon MA

A. The *Drum Drops* albums were on the market several years ago. Each album contained a selection of drum patterns of various styles, for use as backgrounds on demo recordings, or inspiration for composers, etc. Naturally, due to the physical limitations of vinyl records, none of the patterns could be very long, so the recordings' usefulness in demo work was limited.

The advent of drum machines and sequencers in the ensuing years made the *Drum Drops* records obsolete, and they rapidly disappeared from the market. Some are occasionally seen in cut-out bins in music stores, but they are no longer commercially produced.

Q. I am 45 years old and just starting to play the drums. I have a lot tied up in them, and I love music. I'd like to play in a band someday, but all I see out there are drummers in their 20's, or drummers who already have 20 years of experience. I don't fit into either category. It makes me wonder if I am too old to play in public at my limited level of ability. Should I play only in private at home, or should I aspire to public performance at my age?

R.C.

Pittsfield MA

A. First, read Roy Burns' column elsewhere in this issue. Then, realize that playing in public is not a matter of age, but of ability. Obviously, you'll need to develop a certain skill level before you audition for any band, but so would any beginning drummer at any age. It's true that many bands feature young players, but certainly not all bands in all styles. And while many other bands

are made up of veteran players, they all had to start somewhere. You may not feel comfortable auditioning for a rock band full of young players. Perhaps a "wedding" band that specializes in variety music for audiences of all ages would be a reasonable goal. It's more a question of what you'd be comfortable with as a person rather than as a drummer. Generally speaking, if you can cut the gig musically, there's no reason not to make the attempt.

Q. A few months ago, you ran an interview with Anthrax's Charlie Benante. In it, he said that he plays with his heels up on the bass pedals. And in the October '88 *Ask A Pro* department, Carmine Appice said that he also plays that way. I understand that most metal drummers play this way, so I decided to give it a try. I had no problem playing on the right bass drum alone, or on the left bass drum alone. I loved the power and volume I was able to produce. My problems started when I tried to play some simple double-bass patterns. I found that there was nothing to stabilize my body! What I mean is this: When I used to play on only one bass, I had my left foot as an anchor. When I have both feet off the floor, there is no "balance."

My other problem is a lack of speed. How is it possible to move the entire leg at the speed Charlie and others play at? This may be a difficult letter to answer, but any information will be very useful.

N.N.

Harrisburg PA

A. Tommy Aldridge, Joe Franco, and Dom Famularo have all put out excellent videos in which the subject of double bass drumming is covered. In each one, the noted drummer stresses the need to achieve balance in order to execute double-bass patterns. Like anything else in drumming, doing this takes practice. And if you are used to something else entirely (i.e., single-bass drumming), it takes a bit longer to "unlearn" the habits of the one style in order to develop the new habits necessary to play in the other.

In order to help achieve the balance you seek, experiment with seat height, drum and cymbal positions and angles, and any other factors that might lend themselves to your comfort. The idea is to find that one optimum position in which your body can be "anchored" without needing to have one foot planted on the floor (via the hi-hat pedal). Once that position is found, it's just a matter of working on the kit until the use of both feet on the bass drums becomes comfortable and natural.

When it comes to playing with speed, you need to develop the same basic qualities that a runner needs: strength, stamina, and flexibility in the legs. Try practicing "wind sprints" while seated in a chair or on your drum stool. Work without any drums or pedals to begin with, just to build up stamina. Then, take it to the pedals. Don't worry about the sound of your playing at this point; just treat this as calisthenics to develop strength and speed. Finally, little by little, incorporate musical patterns into your routine, and work on smoothness and control along with the speed. Ultimately, you'll find yourself able to accomplish the patterns you're attempting with both speed and musicality. One without the other will not gain you anything as a player, so keep them equally in mind.

Q. I'm interested in buying a set of Zildjian 14" Z Dyno Beat hi-hats, but there's something I'm confused about. I've seen them have the "pentagon" design on both cymbals, but I've also seen them have "stars" on the top cymbals and "pentagons" on the bottom cymbal. What I want to know is, which way do they normally come?

J.P.

Hedgesville WV

A. According to Zildjian's Colin Schofield, the standard Z Dyno Beat hi-hats feature one cymbal with the "Open Penta" pattern and one with the "Closed Hex" pattern. The cymbals are similar in weight and designed to be reversible; there is no particular "top" or "bottom" cymbal in this hi-hat set. The difference in sound between the two cymbals is a result of the imprinted pattern on

Continued on page 92

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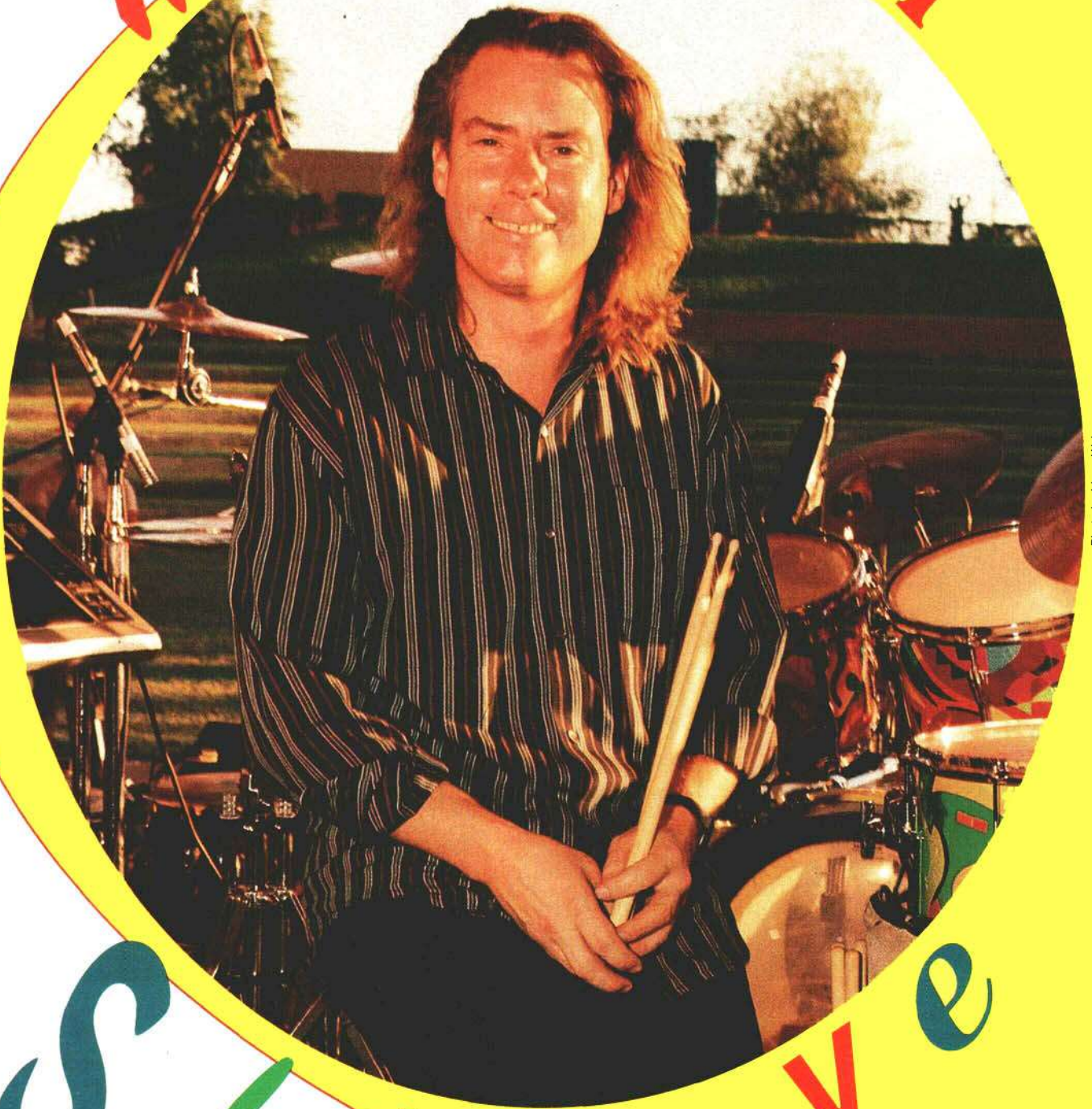


Photo by Lissa Wales

S h r i e v e

"I owe Michael a lot," Carlos Santana says. "He's the one who turned me on to Coltrane and Miles. I just wanted to play blues until Michael came and brought all those albums. Back when the band first started and musicians were always surrounded by dope and chicks, Michael and I would go into a room by ourselves and listen to all kinds of music. And that's what saved us, I think, and made us able to go the long distance. Michael opened my eyes and my ears and my heart to a lot of things."

Anyone who has ever spent any time at all with Michael Shrieve can attest to the fact that Michael is into "a lot of things." I know that I've run into him numerous times at concerts ranging from *Missing Persons to Steps Ahead*, at clinics such as the MD Drum Festival or Zildjian Day in New York, and at various NAMM shows. And other drummers are always telling me that they've run into Michael at some concert or club, checking out anything and everything.

His musical associations have certainly covered a wide range of styles. He was the original drummer with Santana, a group that emerged from the '60s San Francisco rock scene, but whose music was a blend of Latin, jazz, and blues. After leaving Santana in the mid-'70s, Michael joined forces with Japanese percussionist Stomu Yamashta and Steve Winwood in the group Co. That was followed by work with the German musician/composer Klaus Schulze, one of the early pioneers of synthesizer-based music.

Michael had his own projects, too, such as the groups Novo Combo and Automatic Man. He released a couple of solo albums in the early '80s, which made extensive use of electronic percussion. But his acoustic drumset playing was never abandoned. He played straight-ahead rock in the group HSAS, with Neil Schon, Sammy Hagar, and Kenny Aaronson, and he played jazz on an album with pianist Michael J. Smith and bassist Jonas Hellborg. I also remember him turning up on MTV one night as the drummer at a

concert showcasing a number of prominent guitarists, including Brian Setzer, Neil Schon, Steve Cropper, Johnny Winter, and Dickey Belts. He has also made percussive contributions to a couple of Rolling Stones albums and a Mick Jagger solo album.

Michael is also active as a composer. In 1983 he and Yamashta did the soundtrack for the Paul Mazursky film *The Tempest*. A couple of years later, Michael and Patrick Gleeson collaborated on the score to *The Bedroom Window*, and Michael has also done the music for an ABC-TV *Movie of the Week* called *Children Of Times Square*, as well as other projects.

The past year has been especially fruitful for Michael. Three albums have come out, featuring his playing in three different settings: *The Leaving Time*, with Steve Roach; *The Big Picture*, with David Beal; and a solo album called *Stiletto*. In addition, Michael spent the summer and fall of '88 touring with a reunion of the original Santana band, with Armando Peraza and Chepito Areas on percussion.

"Some drummers only have chops," Carlos Santana says, when asked about Michael, "but Michael Shrieve has vision. I don't like a drummer who only plays one thing, and that's all he's going to give you. He might be a supreme authority in that one area, but that's not what this band is about. We love all kinds of music, so I need a drummer like Michael who listens to everyone from Ringo Starr to Elvin Jones, and who can draw on everything from Carlos Jobim to the Grateful Dead and make it sound natural and organic. Michael is like a box of crayons: He has all the colors."

RM: I'd assume that doing a reunion tour with Santana would cause you to reflect on the past 20 years of your life and maybe put some things in perspective.

MS: This whole experience—being on the road with Santana, playing music that we

played some years ago, and approaching new music—has been nothing but a positive experience for me. And the timing was simply perfect. I had recently moved from New York City to California, although I didn't move because of the Santana reunion tour. If anything, I didn't believe it was going to happen, even though people kept talking about it. But I wasn't going to hold my breath waiting for it to happen, because I never wanted to be living in the past. I always saw the Santana band as a wonderful experience that I grew up with. If something happened, great, but if not, I'd just move forward.

So I moved to northern California with the idea of trying to initiate more of my own projects, rather than sitting around waiting for the phone to ring. I had been working on three albums of my own. Having that under my belt gave me a fresh perspective coming into the Santana band and playing that music again. So I felt that it had something to offer me, and I had something to offer it.

That was the reason I left the group originally, because I wanted to try some other things and experiment. I worked with people like Klaus Schulze and Stomu Yamashta, and I had groups like Automatic Man and Novo Combo. So it came to fruition that I had outlets for my own music. The difference in what I'm doing now is that I don't have a desire to put together any pop groups; I just want to make music and use more of my own writing, and I also want to explore the drums themselves. When I was living in New York, I had become disenchanting with a lot of aspects of the music business, including drumming.

by Rick Mattingly

So to answer the question, feel that this has brought back to me a sense of myself—not just the Santana reunion, but this time in my life. It definitely feels like full circle. I have a whole new interest in music, and I go out and buy CDs the way I used to go through the bins looking for good jazz records when I was a kid. So life feels good, and music seems exciting again.

RM: In preparing for the Santana tour, were there any aspects of your playing that you had to brush up on?

MS: There certainly were. I had just come out of the studio from doing a solo album, which was more jazz-based. It wasn't backbeat playing, it was looser, and I was using an open drumkit with an 18" bass drum. Then I started rehearsing with the Santana band, and with two percussionists, two keyboard players, bass, guitar, and a room full of amplifiers, I started working up

"Michael is like a box of crayons: He has all the colors."

—Carlos Santana



some calluses pretty quickly. I had to play a lot harder, and there was a different sort of technique and chops that I had to get together. Aside from the backbeat stuff, I had a lot of Latin stuff and 6/8 things to get together. The only way to really do that is to go out on the road and play for two and a half hours every night.

RM: Did you find yourself falling back into old habits, or did you approach everything from a fresh point of view?

MS: I started by going back to the way I used to play the songs, to see if it still worked. On one hand, it worked then, so it should work now. But on the other hand, it wasn't exactly the same band we had before, so some things had to be changed. Also,

Carlos wanted to update some of the things and make them more backbeat oriented—even some of the Latin and 6/8 things. So I started with

the original, played it the way I played it then, and took it from there. I didn't fix it if it didn't need fixing.

One thing I realized was that, back then, I didn't really approach the music like an authentic Latin drummer. It was a real hybrid. The percussionists were playing this authentic stuff, and I was playing more jazz-based stuff and fitting it in with the timbales and congas. When I moved to New York, I taught at Drummers Collective, and I took some lessons from Frankie Malabe. I saw that I wasn't playing the stuff authentically at all.

RM: On the Santana album *Caravanserai*, I've always thought that there was a lot of Elvin Jones in your drumming, even on the Latin tunes.

MS: Yeah, that's exactly right. I was definitely into Elvin. On that record especially, Carlos and I had taken a left turn and gone into more of a jazz flavor, much to the disappointment of the record company. But that was a tremendous time of growth for both of us. We tried to use everything that we were learning. And because the band was so popular, we realized that we

were in a position of power, and we could use it to learn. So we would bring out

doesn't lay down the rhythm in the traditional way either. His rhythms are sometimes reversed, and then Carlos is always asking for improvisation in the middle of the music from all the percussionists. But when I left Santana and moved to New York, I realized that there was a lot of stuff I could have learned from those guys that I should have. So the reunion tour gave me a second chance to see what they were doing.

RM: Did you find yourself playing more pattern-oriented on this tour?

MS: Yeah, trying to lock more with the percussionists. Before, we were locking, but we were like a jam band. This time I was trying to be more precise and pay more attention to what Armando and Chepito were doing, because they are so dynamic.

RM: One thing that was new on the reunion tour was your use of electronics.

MS: Right. I started triggering snare and tom sounds, just to add to the sounds we were getting acoustically. I also integrated electronics into the drum solo, where I was doing a melodic part of the solo. First I stood up and played the *Octapad* by itself, improvising a melody from two sets of eight notes each on the pads, and then I went to the drumset, triggering those same melodic sounds from the drums, as well as having regular drum sounds. It was a pretty simple thing, but

Weather

Report as our opening act, just so we could watch them every night. We were hungry to learn what the great instrumentalists were doing, and then we would try to put that into our own music.

As far as the Cuban rhythms, though, I never had to play them authentically. As long as it worked, it was okay. That's why it became such a hybrid sort of percussion section. And now I'm playing with Armando, who

it was effective in the sense that it brought melody into the solo, and gave people a chance to hear what they would normally think of as keyboard sounds played with drumsticks.

RM: Were the triggered sounds your own, or were they stock sounds?

MS: They were sampled sounds that David Beal and I used for an album we did together called *The Big Picture*. I had Barcus-Berry pickups on the drums that went into a Roland *Octapad*, and that went into an E-mu SP-12.

RM: Was your *Octapad* the new *Pad-80* or the original *Pad-8*?

MS: The original one. See, this is what I hate about electronics: You have to have the latest stuff. It reminds me of high school, when we would have bands, and we'd get the guy who had the best equipment—and a van. [laughs] So at any rate, I was using an Ensoniq *Mirage* and an Ensoniq *ESQ* with the *Octapad*. I also had a DW electronic trigger pedal.

The drums were Premier *Resonator* series, with a 16x22 bass drum. I've also got a 14x20 that I use for other things. I was using several different snare drums: a Premier 4x14 piccolo snare, an old 5x14 Ludwig chrome drum, a Premier 6 1/2 x 14 2002 birch snare, and a 5x14 Gretsch brass-shell drum. The toms were 9x8, 9x10, and 10x12, with a 16x16 floor tom. I've also got 12x14 and 14x14 toms that I use on occasion. I used a DW 5000 bass drum pedal, and a Premier hi-hat pedal. Recently, I've been trying out the DW double [remote] hi-hat, and I'm thinking about trying the double bass drum pedal. I had Remo *Ambassador* heads on all the toms, top and bottom, although sometimes I used a *Diplomat* on the bottom. I had a coated *Ambassador* on the snare. Recently I've been experimenting with some different heads, and I've decided to start using Evans heads.

Lately I've been feeling re-excited about drums. Maybe it's from having done so much electronic stuff. But whereas at NAMM shows I was always looking at the latest software,

the latest keyboards, the latest everything but drums, at this most recent NAMM show I was going around to all the drum manufacturers and looking at hardware, foot pedals, and all the things available for the drumkit. It reminded me of when I was a kid and I used to look through Ludwig and Slingerland catalogs and think, "Someday I'd like to have this, and one day I'd like to have that."

So I guess all this experimenting I'm doing is just because I'm excited about drums again, and I want to try a bunch of different combinations of things. I might not have a specific reason for, say, putting a *Diplomat* on a tom instead of an *Ambassador*, except that I want to try some new combinations.

RM: One thing that's new for you is the Premier drums. Why did you go with that particular company?

MS: I'm interested in working with a company that will work with the artists. Some musicians just want free equipment, or they just want to get their picture in a magazine ad, but other musicians like to work with a company, and some companies are interested in talking to musicians about possible improvements. This is something that Premier has been approaching their people about, and they are setting up a program to fly the people who make the drums over from England to meet us drummers. They want to sit down and talk with us to see what suggestions we have. So I'm excited to work with Premier because of that fact, and to feel that the drummers have a say in the direction of the company. Plus, what they already have is good. The Resonator drums are wonderful. Even though I like the sound, I'm going to try removing the inner shell to experiment with different ways to use those drums.

RM: The finish on your Premier kit looks pretty unique. Perhaps it deserves some discussion.

MS: Yes, it does. The drums were hand painted by a guy in San Francisco named Mike Rios. I first saw his work on a huge, bright, colorful mural on the side of a building in the Mission District, which is the

Spanish/Latin American area of San Francisco.

He had done some other things, and one of them was a big mural of Carlos, Armando, and several other people in the San Francisco Latin community.

Since I was going out on this Santana reunion tour, I wanted to do something special with the brand-new white Premier drums I'd just gotten. So I gave the drums to Mike and told him to paint them, something bright and colorful. I think he did a great job.

RM: What was your cymbal setup?

MS: During the tour, I was trying out a wide variety of

cymbals, so I can't give you a specific setup. I'm still experimenting, in fact. When I practice, I'll try three different ride cymbals over the course of a couple of hours. Recently, I've been playing some Sabian cymbals that I'm very, very impressed with.

RM: From all of your experimenting, did you come up with any general guidelines in respect to what worked well live?

MS: I needed cymbals that would cut through all the percussion, so I tended to use thicker cymbals than maybe what *felt* the best. But it was hard enough to get the toms to cut through the percussion, which was really frustrating the whole time. In fact, it was frustrating 18 years ago on the early Santana records. There was so much percussion that you would never hear the tom stuff. And that was one thing that had not changed. So trying to get triggered tom sounds in there instead of just using the acoustic toms was something worthwhile.

Getting back to cymbals, I tended to go to a thicker cymbal so that it would cut

through. The cymbals have to blend with the other instruments, but they have to be heard. So I'll use something heavier, even if it doesn't feel as good, just to make sure that it contributes to the total sound. In the studio, I also want something that will cut through, but it probably won't be as heavy as what I would use live. The same with the hi-hat; I prefer softer cymbals than thick, heavy ones.

RM: I've noticed that you play the ride cymbal a lot, whereas a lot of drummers use more hi-hat.

MS: Playing on the cymbal is what feels real good to me, and I like all the possibilities that are there. But part of the reason that I got the double hi-hat is because I like having my right hand on the right side of the drumkit. So I wanted to try playing hi-hat on the right side because it feels good, balance-wise.

RM: The tour was designed to promote the three-record *Viva Santana!*

greatest-hits album. Now that it's over, is there any possibility of a new record with the original group?

MS: It's still up in the air as to whether there will be any involvement as a whole band. It's difficult when you're away from a situation for ten years. Carlos has kept it going, and he's been through a lot of musicians. I think it was fun for him to come back to playing with me, Gregg Rolie, and Chepito again, but we've all been in so many situations, and Carlos has been in a situation where he's the boss. Whereas when we were all in originally, he wasn't the boss; it



Photo by Ebet Roberts



The Santana percussion section: Armando Peraza, Michael Shrieve, and Chepito Areas.

was a band. I think he's become very accustomed to calling the shots, and I don't blame him for wanting that. I don't think that this reunion is going to go forward into a new recording, but I think that Carlos and I will do some more things. We've always gotten along musically, so we'll see what happens—me contributing to some of the things Carlos is doing, or vice-versa.

RM: Let's discuss those three records of your own that you mentioned earlier. The first one to come out was the Michael Shrieve/Steve Roach album, *The Leaving Time*.

MS: That record came about from Steve calling me and wanting me to do some things on his album. I flew out to L.A. and

ended up staying about three weeks, because we started writing in the studio. It was an opportunity for me to work more in the vein that I had started with Klaus Schulze, because Steve has taken that synthesis and sequencer-based work somewhere else. I mean, if you walk into Steve's studio when he's working, it's like walking into another planet. It's so intense. This guy creates an atmosphere that permeates the whole place. He's very serious about his work, and he's very good at it.

When I work with another musician, I try to help bring the best out of that musician, and also take it to a new place for that person by adding my distinct personality to it. So it's not just what that person does all the time. I wanted this to have more of a band sound, rather than sounding like a record that we made in our house. I did a lot of that type of recording with Klaus, and I liked it a lot, but it was time to do something else. So after we had done all the electronic and synthesized stuff, we took the tapes to

Millbrook Sound, in upstate New York,

where I could overdub acoustic drums in a big, cement room, so that the whole record wouldn't have a light, airy quality. In certain places, those drums literally kick in, and it becomes something else. Paul Orofino was the engineer, and he did a great job. We also recorded David Tom's guitar at this point. We added Jonas Hellborg bass in Los Angeles when he was there with John McLaughlin.

RM: Could you discuss some specific tracks that you are especially happy with?

MS: Sure. "Tribes" was an attempt to have acoustic drums along with drum machines and sequencers, and to have a dancing melody on top of that, played with drumsticks on pads. Playing melody with sticks has a whole different quality that, I suppose, steel drum players or vibraphonists know about. But this aspect of melody played with sticks is a whole new world for a lot of us drummers, even though it's been here for some years now. So with "Tribes" we tried to get some kind of groove going, and then play a quick, upbeat melody with sticks on pads. I think we were real successful with it. David Tom's guitar helped give it a band sound, and

I think that this record has

some of David's best work in terms of a melodic, or lead guitar, style of playing.

On "Edge Runner" we purposefully went for the type of thing I did with Klaus Schulze, but we added acoustic drumkit to bring it to another place. We did it in different sections and layers. We'd each work at home putting things into sequencers, and then we'd take that into the studio and add guitar and acoustic drums to the stuff we'd done at home.

Another thing that Steve was good at was getting percussion sounds on an Oberheim *Xpander*, which is a non-keyboard synthesizer. He had two of them that we used for pad stuff, along with an E-mu *Emax*, an Oberheim *OB-8*, an Ensoniq *ESQ*, and even a Casio *CZ-101*. Steve also turned me on to a piece of Macintosh software called *M*, by Intelligent Music. It's great for creating rhythm patterns.

RM: You seem to enjoy working with people who are very knowledgeable about electronic technology. A few years ago, you and Patrick Gleeson did the score for *The Bedroom Window* together, and you worked with David Beal on the percussion for that score. In an article we ran about it, you indicated that David was much more into the sound-designing technology than you were.

MS: It's true. I thought that I was into electronics until I worked with David, which was about four years ago. He was so much further along with his knowledge and expertise, as well as his equipment and the amount of samples he had. He's still that way, in terms of having all the latest equipment, whereas I tend to buy the stuff that he gets rid of. [laughs] But he does a lot of studio work in New York, and so he has to stay on top and be state-of-the-art. But since I'm not really a studio drummer, I don't need to have the latest and greatest thing.

So David is much more into the sampling and all that, and I feel that I'm good at combining the use of technology with acoustic and melodic stuff. My mind works in a different way than a full-time studio musician's would, where they're looking for what the producer might like. I feel that I can break free of that sort of thing and say, "What would we like?" I'm not saying anything against studio work; there's a lot of integrity and dignity in that sort of work. I'm just saying that my interests lie more with using technology to create my own music and do something new.

RM: That brings us to the next recording, *The Big Picture*, with you and David Beal.

MS: David and I wanted to make an entire record playing everything on pads. It's that same experience I was talking about with "Tribes," where all the melodies and parts are played with sticks. Since we're both drummers, we relate to it the same way, and we think of it as being percussion music, although that might be stretching the term a little bit. But "percussion" means to strike, and with sampling technology we can strike a pad and have any sound. So to me it's like a percussion group.

I've always enjoyed percussion music. I used to study with Anthony Cirone, and I was a fan of his percussion ensembles. David went to North Texas State and played in the percussion ensemble there, and he also played with the Cleveland Symphony. So we wanted to do percussion stuff using the new technology. But in the middle of the

L I S T E N E R S ' G U I D E

For readers who would like to listen to albums that best represent your drumming, which ones would you recommend?

Album Title	Artist	Label/Catalog #
Stiletto	Michael Shrieve	RCA/Novus 3050-1-N
The Big Picture	Michael Shrieve, David Beal	Fortuna 17060
The Leaving Time	Michael Shrieve, Steve Roach	RCA/Novus 3032-1-N
In Suspect Terrain	Michael Shrieve	Relativity EMG 81 00
Transfer Station Blue	Michael Shrieve	Fortuna LC 8878
Welcome	Santana	CBS 32445
Go — Live In Paris	Go	Island J5A-10
Lotus	Santana	CBS/Sony (import)

Which recordings do you listen to most for inspiration?

Album Title	Artist	Drummer	Label/Catalog #
Bass Desires	Marc Johnson	Peter Erskine	ECM 827743-2
The Individualism of Gil Evans	Gil Evans	Elvin Jones	Verve 883-804-2
Loud Jazz	John Scofield	Dennis Chambers	Grammavision 18-88042
Still Life (Talking)	Pat Metheny	Paul Wertico	Geffin 24145
Time In Place	Mike Stern	Peter Erskine	Atlantic 781 840-2
Tango: Zero Hour	Astor Piazzolla	none	American Clave 1013
The Surgeon of the Night Sky...	Jon Hassell	J.A. Deane	CDP 566-7466880-2
Ecotopia	Oregon	Trilok Gurtu	ECM 1354-833-120-2

record—which was drawn out over almost two years—we both got tired of just playing on pads, and we both started moving towards acoustic drums—at the same time, on our own. Midway through the record we looked at each other and said, "Let's open it up now and not just have electronics." So we put double drumkit on every piece. In addition to his expertise with electronics and computers, David is an excellent drummer. On the last Joe Cocker record, he and [bassist] T.M. Stevens are killin' on that stuff.

RM: One would never guess that all of the sounds on that record came from pads. Was everything actually played on drumpads as such, or were you using something like a KAT or a Simmons *Silicon Mallet*?

MS: No, we had neither of those, although we've been looking at them. We only used *Octapads*, to answer your question. But I can see now that the way to go is with more pads, and I can see that what we're doing is being like vibes players. So I've started taking lessons to learn matched grip, because even though I've played matched from time to time, all my best playing is with traditional grip. I'm studying with a fellow named Chuck Brown, who has a very specific way of holding the sticks that gives you control and

speed and finesse and power. Bozzio and Garibaldi studied with Chuck. Changing grips is like starting over, but it's the pads that are making me see that I need to hold the sticks matched.

RM: I wouldn't think that very many people at your level would go to a teacher to learn something new. That says something about your dedication.

MS: Well, if I'm going to change grips, I want to do it right and go for the long run. I've been fortunate in my life to have some very good teachers. Besides Anthony Cirone and Chuck Brown, I've studied with Chuck Bernstein, Mike DeLuca—who I studied with at a store that was owned by Mickey Hart's father—Pete Magadini, and Michael Carvin. I like to give credit to these people, because some drummers forget where they came from.

RM: Getting back to your current work, you mentioned in a previous *MD* interview that you were interested in combining music with visual images. Since then, you and Patrick Gleeson did the soundtrack to *The Bedroom Window*, and I know you've done

a couple of soundtracks for TV movies. Do you hope to continue in that area, and does music video hold any interest for you?

MS: At the time of that interview in the late 70s, I was very much interested in computer graphics and video art. Now I'm more interested in visual art in terms of putting music to film images. I don't think of music video as art so much, but as more of a promotional tool. It's just a way to call attention to a record you've made, and to let people know what you're doing.

As far as doing more film music, we're already talking to people about doing the score for the next Mickey Rourke film. That's exciting, because a lot of the movie takes place in Brazil, so there will obviously be a lot of percussion. Besides that project,

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Pearl
DRUMS

Photo by Mark Weiss

JAMES KOTTAK

Being Prepared For Success

by Robyn Flans

James Kottak wanted to make sure I included in this story that he considers doing a Modern Drummer interview to be the greatest honor he could have, and that he has been getting the magazine since its inception. Since he's 26 now, this means that James has been getting the magazine nearly half his life. It was before then, though, when he was 10 years old, that he initially was turned onto drumming by the drummer in a band that played in the corner of a local department store in Louisville, Kentucky. Soon after that, a friend of his brother sold him a Slingerland set for \$50.00. He had already started to play trumpet, but once his brother's friend showed him "the basic #1 beat that everyone knows, " drums became the obsession.

Who would ever have thought that at 26, James would be living in L.A. and playing in a band like Kingdom Come?

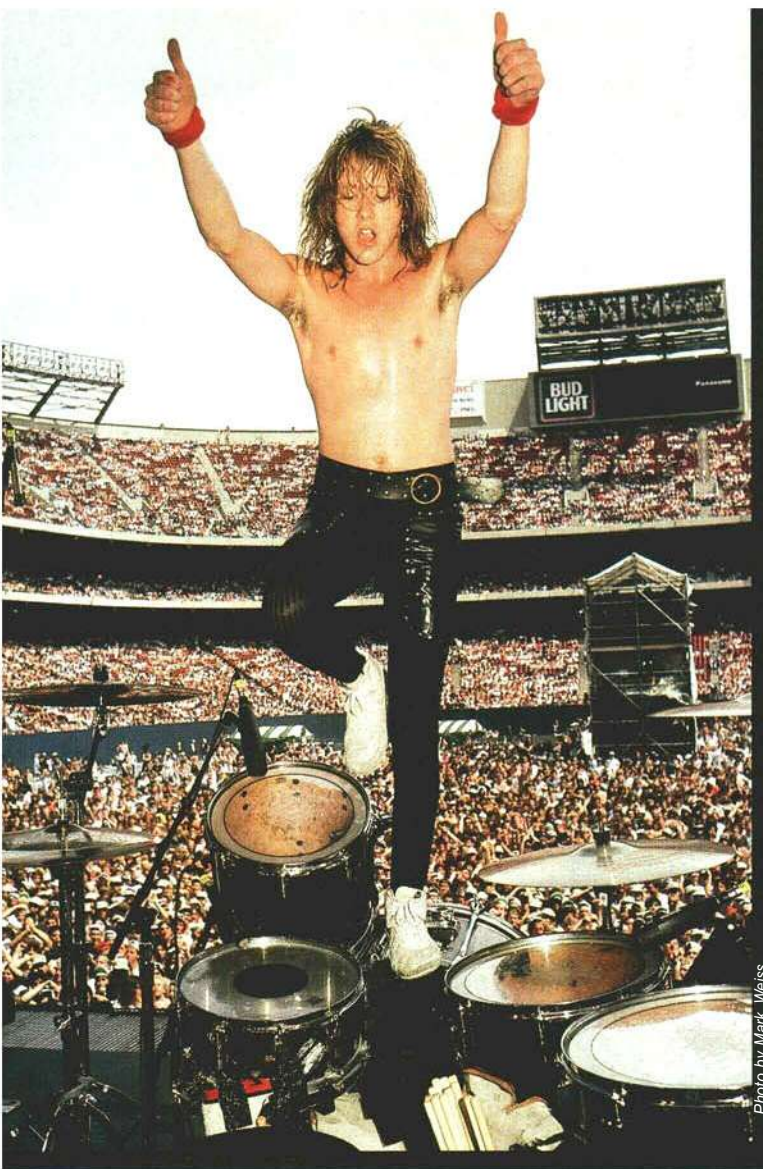


Photo by Mark Weiss

JK: When I was young, I used to play along with Guess Who records. I also had one of those "greatest Top-40 hits of all time" records, which had songs like "Kodachrome" by Paul Simon, and I had a Led Zeppelin tape that I used to play "Stairway To Heaven" to over and over again. I couldn't play the drum fills at the end for a longtime.

My dad plays organ; he's probably what got me into playing. When I was six or seven years old, he had his Hammond organ down in the basement, and he would play "Manhattan" or "New York, New York." I'd go down there and bang on the keys. I never played drums in school; I played trumpet, which really helped my playing drums later.

RF: Why?

JK: It made me understand the melodic parts of music, so I didn't just think rhythmically. I hear everything in terms of melody and harmony. If you have no idea of what playing a C on the piano is, it's like a foreign language to you. If you understand it, it opens up a whole new language to you. I apply the melodic part to the drums.

RF: How so?

JK: Instead of just playing a fill, like snare, tom, floor tom, you may play it backwards, starting on the floor tom and going up to the snare. Or, instead of just going snare, high tom, low tom, floor tom, you may go snare, floor tom, high tom, low tom, rather than just playing one-dimensional fills. The same concept also applies to cymbals.

RF: I understand you went on the road at any early age.

JK: One day when I was in tenth grade, I went over to a friend's house. He was playing in this rock band that was playing clubs. Everyone in the band was between 23 and 28 years old. My friend

was quitting the band, and they were auditioning drummers. Everyone was upstairs except for the keyboard player and me. We started jamming, and they came down and hired me on the spot. A couple of days later, they said, "We're going on the road in February." I was 14, and that was right in the middle of the school year, but I told my mother how important this was to me. So Mom—I can't believe it; thank you, Mom—withdrawed me from school, telling the school I was going to go to school in Florida, which was a total lie. I was home for about three weeks out of the next ten months.

It was a great experience. I realized that I absolutely had to do this forever, because there's no turning back after you get a taste of that kind of thing. Playing six nights a week, you learn a lot real quick. We were playing cover tunes of Ted Nugent, Bob Seger, REO Speedwagon, and Boston, as well as some originals.

I'll tell you what's interesting: Before I left to go on the road, I wasn't a very good student. I always got A's in band because I'd never miss a band rehearsal. I would skip school, but I was always there fourth period for band. After I came back from the tour, my last two years I got straight A's. School was just easier for some reason. I had learned a lot about business and just grew up real quick.

As soon as I got back, I joined another band because the other band ended. When I re-entered school, I stayed in marching band, and I appreciated it a whole lot more because of how much I had learned. I had an incredible band director. I didn't realize the importance of what he had taught until I quit school and went on the road. He just taught me so much about every aspect of music.

RF: Like what?

JK: He'd say, "You need to practice this and this, and do this exercise to do this..." and it was, "Yeah, great. Tell me something new." But when I got out there, everything he had told me—things I had blown off—were dead on. I'm not talking about rudiment #17 and how to play the C-major scale on the trumpet; I'm talking about my whole approach to everything. When I went back to 11th grade, for those next two years I was more intent than ever. I was learning how to play the saxophone and the clarinet, and I was still playing trumpet in the band.

RF: And you never played drums in marching band?

JK: I did play tri-toms in the ninth grade for about half the marching season, but I didn't like it. It just had one bass, one snare, tri-toms, cymbals, and bells, and nobody in the section took it seriously. So I joined the trumpet section, because the trumpet players were serious about their instrument.

RF: Who were some of your drumming inspirations?

JK: The usual, like John Bonham, but Neil Peart got me into the big drumset. I got his identical setup: two bass drums, toms everywhere. My number one influence would have to be Ed Soph. He taught me everything about attitude and technique, and he gave me stuff that I still apply daily. I think of him constantly. It's more of a philosophy than about drumming.

RF: Where did you come in contact with him?

JK: When I was in high school, my band director, Ernie Sanders, told me about the Jamey Aebersold jazz clinics. Ernie was a big influence as well. The jazz clinics would come to the University of Louisville once a year for a week. The first year, I played trumpet because I wanted to learn a lot more about it. But I'd also go to some of the drum master classes with Ed. The things he gave to me in one session, I worked on for the whole year. Up to then, I hadn't paid much attention to traditional jazz.

RF: At this point did you realize how cool it was to actually learn things about the instrument rather than just teach yourself?

JK: I had taken some lessons for about a year and a half when I was 12, and I went through the first two Haskell Harr books, but it was all just on drumpad and snare drum. I had never studied drumset with anybody up to that point. I had gone to some clinics, but I had never come face to face with a pro. I had always studied, though. I got the Carmine Appice book and just did it on my own.

RF: And you knew how to read?

JK: I knew how to read from playing trumpet.

RF: Did you feel that reading was important?

JK: Yes, I knew it was. Up until Ed, I just breezed through stuff like

James Kottak's Setup

Drumset: Pearl in piano black finish.

- A. 6 1/2 x 14 chrome *Free Floating* snare
- B. 12 x 14 rack tom
- C. 16 x 16 floor tom
- D. 16 x 18 floor tom
- E. 16 x 24 bass drum

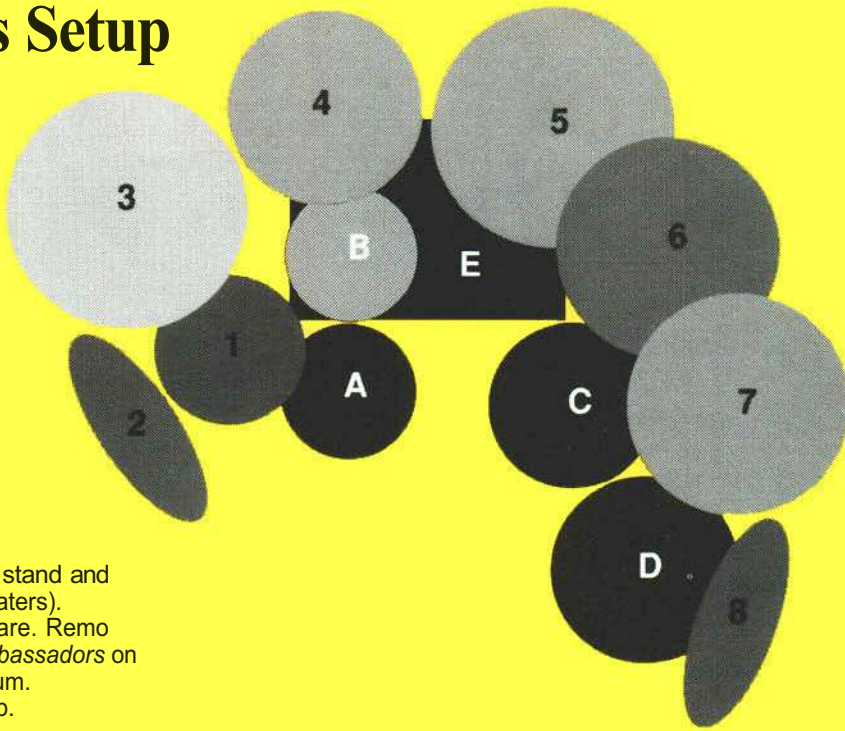
Cymbals: Paiste.

- 1. 15" 3000 heavy hi-hats
- 2. 20" 3000 China
- 3. 22" *Rude* crash
- 4. 19" *Rude* crash
- 5. 22" 3000 power ride
- 6. 20" 3000 power crash
- 7. 20" *Rude* crash
- 8. 20" 3000 China

Hardware: All Pearl, including hi-hat stand and double pedal (with Danmar wood beaters).

Heads: Remo clear C.S. head on snare. Remo *Pinstripes* on tops of toms, clear *Ambassadors* on bottoms. Remo *Pinstripe* on bass drum.

Sticks: Vater SS model with nylon tip.



Carmine's *Realistic Rock* and a couple of other drum books, because I learned how to read music by playing trumpet. The difference is, if you're a drummer, you just read one line, but when you play a melodic instrument, and you're used to reading the others, you learn rhythmically *and* melodically. So to read a drumset book wasn't that difficult—until Ed came along.

RF: And then what changed?

JK: *Advanced Techniques For The Modern Drummer*. He got me started on this whole four-way independence thing. I did that five summers. It was a great positive environment. I use his whole philosophy on a daily basis.

RF: Can you expound on that?

JK: It's just attitude. I think if I had to pinpoint my number-one characteristic, it's that I play every show as if it's the last show I'll ever get to play. It's hard to do, because sometimes I'm not up to it, but I have to just dig down deep. I might have had the worst day or be really tired, but I dig down deep and go, "Alright Ed, here I go," and I explode.

RF: You even felt that way in the clubs?

JK: Every night, six nights a week.

RF: Were you always playing music you loved to play?

JK: Not always. I played for a few months in country bands to make some cash.

RF: How did you feel about that?

JK: It was great. I got to do a local country album. It wasn't like you might think of a country gig. I was bashing out. We were playing stuff like Alabama, and it was fun; it was something different.

RF: Give us some of the highlights of your club career.

JK: My first big thing was a band called Home, which is the band that I first went on the road with. When I got back from doing that, I formed a band called Nuthouse, and it was jazz, rock, funk, and fusion all rolled into one. We had about 40 originals.

RF: What happened next?

JK: I got a full scholarship to the University of Louisville School of Music.

RF: How did you get the scholarship?

JK: Playing the trumpet. I played my snare drum etude and xylo-

phone, but it was my trumpet playing that they really thought was good. I wanted to really study percussion, though. I had messed with timpani and the whole percussion setup in band. At Louisville I started on serious percussion with a teacher named James Rago. He really helped me out a lot. It was a conservative school of music; all these people were uptight, but he kind of gave me a more relaxed attitude about symphonic and orchestral percussion.

RF: You wanted to be in a rock band, so why did you want to learn classical percussion?



Photo by Mark Weiss

JK: Because I wanted to be better than every other rock drummer on earth, and that's hard to do. The more you know, the better off you always are. When I first went to Ed Soph, there were several other drummers, and I was nowhere near those guys. There were some who were younger than I was, and it drove me crazy. I could blast them off the earth playing rock, but I couldn't play jazz, and it became very competitive.

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Trevor Tomkins

A Teacher's Perspective

The best way to introduce Trevor Tomkins to American readers is to say that he is an English Alan Dawson. Trevor is first and foremost a highly respected jazz drummer, but he has also become a highly regarded teacher. He is Associate Professor of Percussion at London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and he is also visiting Professor of Percussion at the Royal Academy of Music. In this area Trevor is breaking new ground, because he is the first professional jazz drummer ever to hold these posts in England.

For some years, Trevor Tomkins has been a name you couldn't ignore. The brilliant young player who appeared from nowhere to be a member of The Don Rendell/Ian Carr Quintet in the '60s (when that group was the number one modern "small" band in the country) always continued to expand his horizons and develop. Since I have been writing for Modern Drummer, I have found that every jazz drummer I have spoken to has cited Trevor Tomkins as one of England's best. When I was working on an article about the late Phil Seamen and wanted to find a jazz drummer who had known Phil and could talk intelligently about him, a fellow journalist put me onto Trevor. When an MD reader from Australia was visiting London and wanted to know whether any of the top jazz players give lessons, Trevor's name came up again. It reached a stage where I could call Trevor, without embarrassment, to ask advice about my own problems: "I've got this student who seems to have no aptitude...."

At a concert by Trevor's own band, my wife said (quite innocently, not thinking that this is what you ought to say), "You could just listen to the drums on their own, and you'd know what the rest of the band is doing." Of course, this didn't imply that Trevor was playing

everyone else's parts; the point is, he is such a sympathetic "team" player that when he plays, all the colors and nuances from the band as a whole are reflected in what he does. He is the epitome of the tasteful, controlled player, who doesn't let brilliant technique get in the way of musical cohesion and perfect feel.

There's a whole string of American jazz artists who you could ask about Trevor. He is a regular member of Lee Konitz's European quartet. Other Americans who have been pleased to use Trevor's talents include Harry Edison, Kai Winding, Cecil Payne, Sonny Stitt, Jimmy Witherspoon, Pepper Adams, James Moody, Blossom Dearie, Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, Art Farmer, Nat Adderley, Ben Webster, Joe Newman, and Jimmy Raney. When you consider the different styles of some of these people, it gives you an idea what a sympathetic and chameleon-like player this "Britjazz" is. There have also been plenty of British artists, like Barbara Thompson's Jubiaba, Nucleus, Mike Westbrook, Dick Morrissey, and the London Jazz Big Band. And over the years Trevor has done some varying commercial work, both live and in the studio. This ranges from Bing Crosby, The King Singers, and Sweet Substitute, to soul artists like Irma Franklin and Jack McDuff. Trevor has also played with rock superstar Greg Lake.

It's amazing that Trevor is able to balance his schedule. In addition to the playing and teaching commitments described, he does a series of outside workshops and summer schools. He also finds time to rebuild parts of his own house himself, and to "enjoy a second childhood" with his five-year-old daughter and two-year old son.

by Simon Goodwin

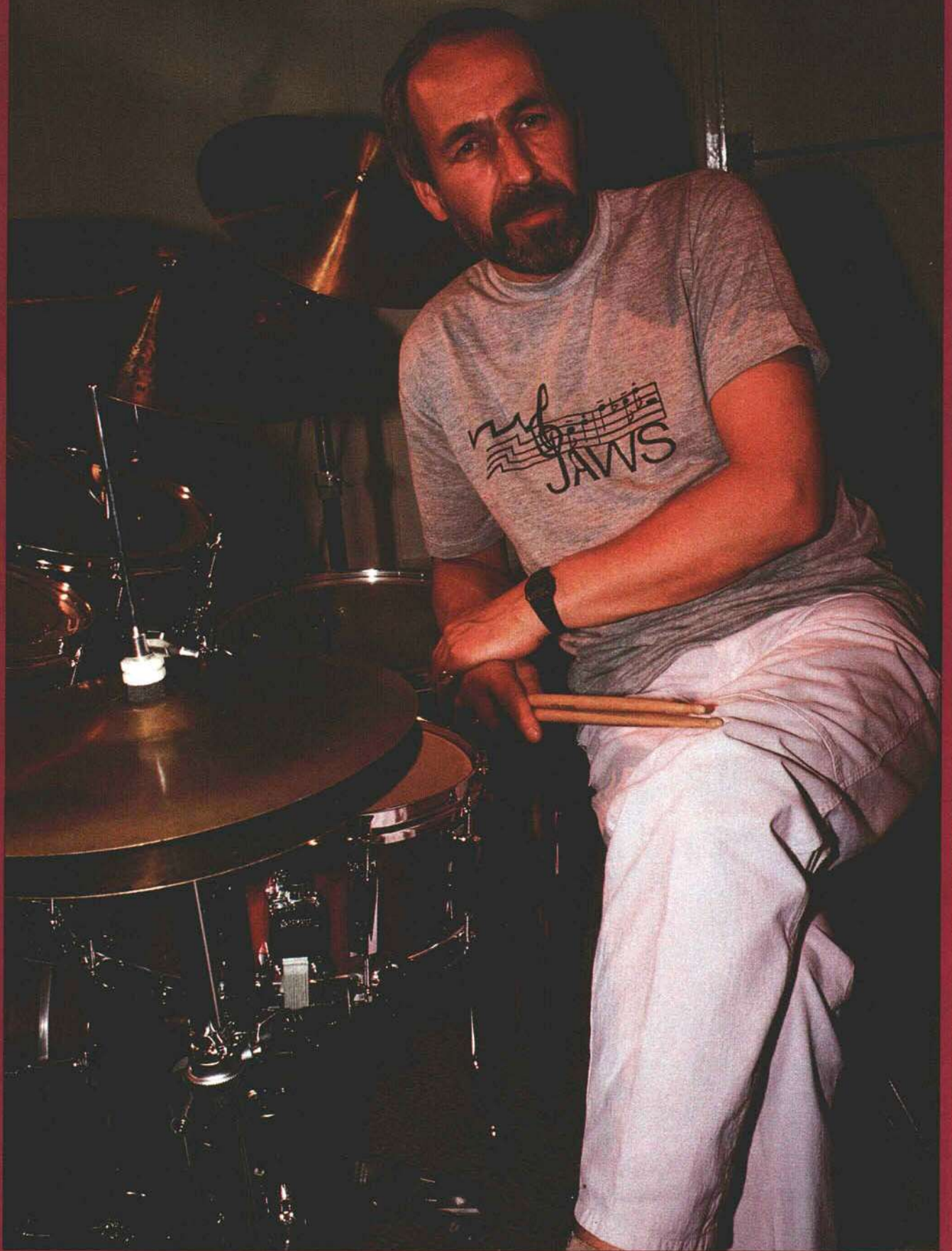


Photo by Derrick A. Thomas

SG: How did you first become involved in music?

TT: The first instrument I actually played was the trombone. I had a friend whose father had bought him a trombone, and I used to borrow it. There was a sextet I would play with; but this was only in a rehearsal room, and I only played the thing by ear. It was probably horrendous, but I used to enjoy it, even if nobody else did. I had sung in a choir before that, so I had developed some sort of musical ear. But what happened with the trombone was that my friend's dad discovered that *he* wasn't using it, and insisted that it go back to the shop. I couldn't afford to buy it, so that was the end of my trombone career.

Even then I was particularly interested in drums, so I managed to get hold of an ancient drumkit that was in a junk shop. Soon after that I managed to graduate to a secondhand Premier kit, which actually wasn't much better, but it was a start.

SG: How old were you at this time?

TT: I was about 16. I'd already been something of a musical outcast at school for a few years because I liked that *strange* music called jazz. I must have been about 13 when I was moving the dial along on the radio to see what I could find, and I suddenly heard this guy who sounded something like the chef from *The Muppets*, going "Hoe-aa da hoe-aa da hoe-aa da, Milt

Jackson. Hoe-aa da jazz, hoe-aa da." It turned out to be Radio Hilversum. Of course I couldn't understand a word—I didn't even know what jazz was—but the music floored me. I know it sounds like a storybook, but it had a magical effect on me. It made me go out and buy my first jazz album, *The Miles Davis All Star Sextet* with "Blue And Boogie" on it. There was Kenny Clarke on drums, Lucky Thompson, J. J. Johnson, Horace Silver, and Percy Heath. I remember when I first had *Kind Of Blue*, I played it so much that I wore it white; it was turning to dust, so I had to buy another copy.

The fact that I eventually became involved in music education might stem from the total frustration I experienced at school. The head of music looked like a cartoon of a "long-haired" classical musician; and as a teacher he did very little to inspire anybody. Just about the worst crime you could

commit was to actually *enjoy* music! To say that he was narrow-minded would be an understatement. I was always getting turfed out for messing around on the piano. I don't mean abusing it, just experimenting and trying to find out about it. I was very keen to have piano lessons, but to qualify for that you had to have a piano at home to practice on. There was no way my folks could have afforded one at the time, so I wasn't allowed to have lessons. I promised that I would do at least an hour's practice a day, at lunch time and staying after school, but it was no good.

So I became a musician in spite of him. In fact, in a perverse way it might have been because of him, because the barriers he threw up made me all the more determined. Strangely enough there were two other people in the school at the same time who were to become jazz drummers: Ed-

diately accessible than Charlie Parker. I don't know why that should have been, except that what was regarded as the epitome of bebop rhythm sections didn't move me on an emotional level. There were exceptions, like the Massey Hall concert with Max Roach, Charles Mingus, and Bud Powell; but generally I still prefer a looser, more flowing rhythm section.

SG: Who would you say were your greatest influences from a drumming point of view?

TT: Well, one of my all-time favorites is Kenny Clarke. Now, that might sound like a contradiction of what I just said about bebop rhythm sections. He is supposed to be the "father" of bebop drumming, but I find his style much too fluid and flowing for him to be the typical bebop player. When I discovered him, I didn't know anything about categories anyway. Ignorance

is bliss! I always loved his feel. But going back to that first album I bought, it wasn't just Kenny, it was the music in total.

There are too many other drumming influences to list, but particular ones have been Philly Joe Jones, Elvin Jones, Art Blakey, and Jack DeJohnette. One guy who really turned me around, and still does to this day, is Roy Haynes. He's got an amazing musical mind. Right from his early stuff to the relatively recent things he's done with Chick Corea, it's the ideas he brings to the music that I like. I don't play like him, but he's been a

great inspiration. There are two younger drummers whose playing I particularly enjoy, as well: Victor Lewis and Michael DePasqua.

SG: How did your career develop, once you'd established that you were going to be a drummer?

TT: I was always involved in jazz; I was in a band with some other young players, many of whom became professionals. But I would play anything and everything—Saturday-night dances, weddings, the lot—just to get experience. I didn't have specific ambitions to be a professional, it was just something I loved doing. My "big chance" came quite early on, though. We used to run a jazz club at a pub called *The Green Man* in Blackheath [London], and as well as playing with our own band we'd book in guest artists. We had a lot of the top British jazz players of the time, people like Shake Keene and Joe Harriott. One of these

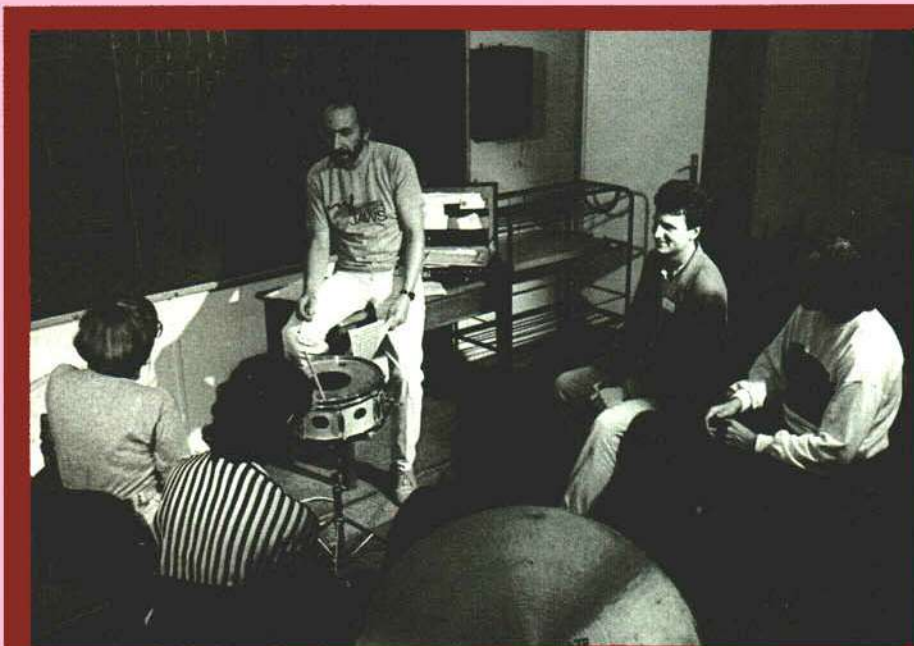


Photo by Derrick A. Thomas

die Prevost and Jon Hiseman. Eddie was a couple of years ahead of me, and Jon was a few years younger. It's odd that three people from that school became professional players in the jazz field.

SG: Were you self-taught?

TT: To begin with, very much so, but after a year or so I felt that some tuition would be beneficial. So I went to a very kind and encouraging player called Sammy Prager, who taught me basic rudiments and reading. Apart from that, it was a matter of listening to the music, which I still think is a crucial part of education. I suppose I came into it listening to "post bop." I don't always like labels, but there have been various distinct styles. I listened to these and discovered that jazz was an evolutionary music. I went back to the early recordings of Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington, and followed the evolution from there. Strangely enough I found John Coltrane more imme-

'I LOOK UPON THE KIT AS AN INSTRUMENT IN ITS OWN RIGHT; THEREFORE TO PRACTICE FOR

was the great sax player Don Rendell. He was in the process of putting together a band of his own, and he asked pianist Jon Mealing and me to join. That was the Don Rendell/Ian Carr quintet, in 1964.

I must admit that I was pretty terrified. I'd only been playing seriously for about four years at the time. In those days there wasn't the education that there is today. You could go up to players and ask them things, but some would avoid telling you. One actually said to me, "Piss off and go and find out for yourself." [laughs] There were no courses to take; the colleges didn't want to know about jazz. It was purely word of mouth and what you could pick up by listening. There weren't even the books that there are now.

Anyway, that first professional band was like going to school for me. I think I learned pretty fast. Plus, I was doing other gigs. I used to dep [sub] in Dick Morrissey's quartet when Phil Seamen wasn't available. I got more work through meeting more people, and things started to build up. I did some commercial work, so I made contacts in this area as well.

SC: You were a young professional drummer at the time when the '60s "rock boom" was happening in England. Did you get involved in that?

TT: I played in some rock bands, including a short spell in one of Manfred Mann's earlier groups. But I was not particularly interested in pop, because I'd discovered the

black R&B artists sometime earlier, and I found the "white" stuff in the '60s to be totally anesthetized. I found drummers like Ringo to be quite uninspiring.

SG: There are a lot of great players today who say they were influenced by him.

TT: To me he came across as being a very limited player. I don't want to knock all the good players who say they were influenced by him, but I don't think they're isolating the drumming. What they mean is that the *music* had an influence on them. Looked at another way, if Ringo hadn't happened to be with the Beatles, would we have heard of him?

SG: Would the Beatles have been so successful if they'd had another drummer, who made the music sound different?

TT: Possibly not, but I think that the whole phenomenon was more of a social thing; it was to do with the time and place. It wasn't necessarily anything to do with musical

merit. I'm British and I grew up in that era, but the Beatles were no influence on me at all. People talk about them being great songwriters, okay, they did write a few memorable commercial numbers, but there's an awful lot of old drivel in there as well. Some of their stuff has lasted and become standards, but not in the same way as music by Cole Porter and Irving Berlin has. After all these years *that* material is still retained by many jazz musicians because of its melodic content. They change it a lot, but the harmonic structures are there to work with. You don't find many jazz players using Beatles material to any great extent. It does happen, but not so much.

If you want to talk about drummers in the rock field, there were some who I admired and still admire: Bernard Purdie, for instance, or Al Jackson—great players. I think that the Beatles have been a bit of a

the keyboard. Then I went to Gilbert Webster, who was head of percussion at The Guildhall at the time. An interesting thing about Gilbert is that he loved jazz players. He had played kit, and back in the '30s he used to play with visiting Americans like Coleman Hawkins and Benny Carter. When I went to him, he wasn't playing drumkit anymore, and I could probably have run rings 'round him. But he was able to teach me a tremendous amount about orchestral percussion. At his suggestion I went on to study modern orchestral music at The Guildhall. The fantastic thing about Gilbert was his musical mind, the way he'd question things and turn them around. He'd say, "What if you approach it from *this* angle." He was so flexible, not trying to do things according to rigid patterns; and that in turn taught me a lot about teaching.

SG: Did you get involved in teaching as a result of studying at The Guildhall?

TT: Not directly, no. I drifted into it more or less by accident. I started teaching drums in a London school, and at about the same time I started doing workshops with Michael Garrick, a jazz pianist who is also a very experienced teacher. When I was doing my studies, the last thing I ever thought was that I might teach, so I didn't bother to take any of the teaching courses. I learned how to teach by actually doing it. I'm sorry if this sounds rather immodest,

but I seemed to have a flair for it, *and* I enjoyed it, which is very important. Not everybody does. My teaching education was similar to my playing education—self-taught, curiosity, and pestering people.

In many ways I'm glad I did it that way. I know some top orchestral players who have the ability to improvise, but somewhere along the line they've had the confidence to do it *trained* out of them. They actually believe that they can't play improvised music, because of their conditioning. That's why I'm glad that I was self-taught and got into the academic side of things later. This isn't putting down orchestral musicians; some are wonderful players. But if they've lost spontaneity, then there's an important dimension that they are missing—because we all have it to start with. Look at very young children; they improvise all the time. This is in all aspects—music, art, drama,

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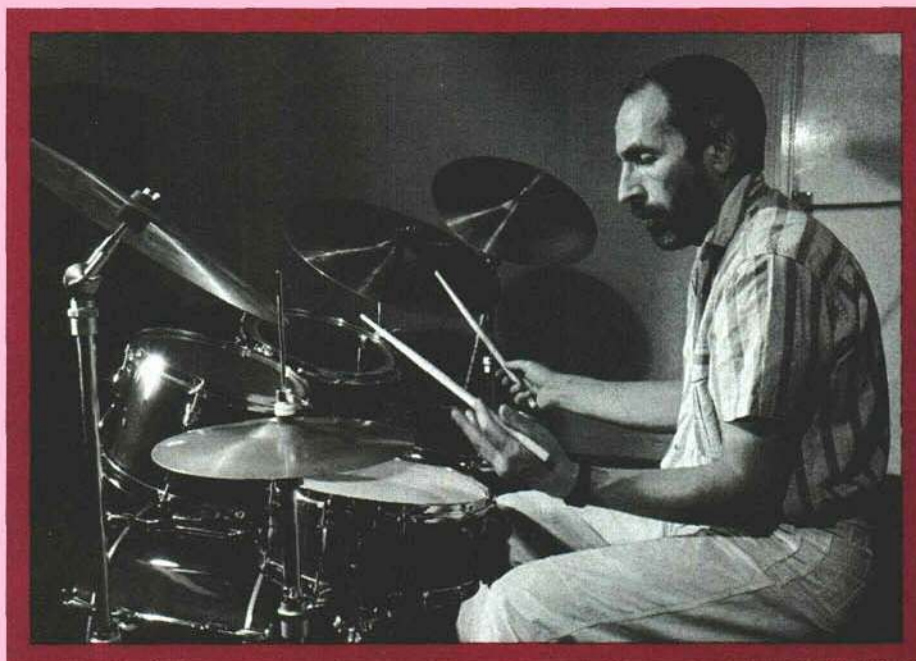


Photo by Derrick A. Thomas

blind spot for me. *Musically*, I've never understood what the big deal was. But then again, I didn't like Elvis Presley either [laughs]; I'd far rather listen to Ray Charles any day.

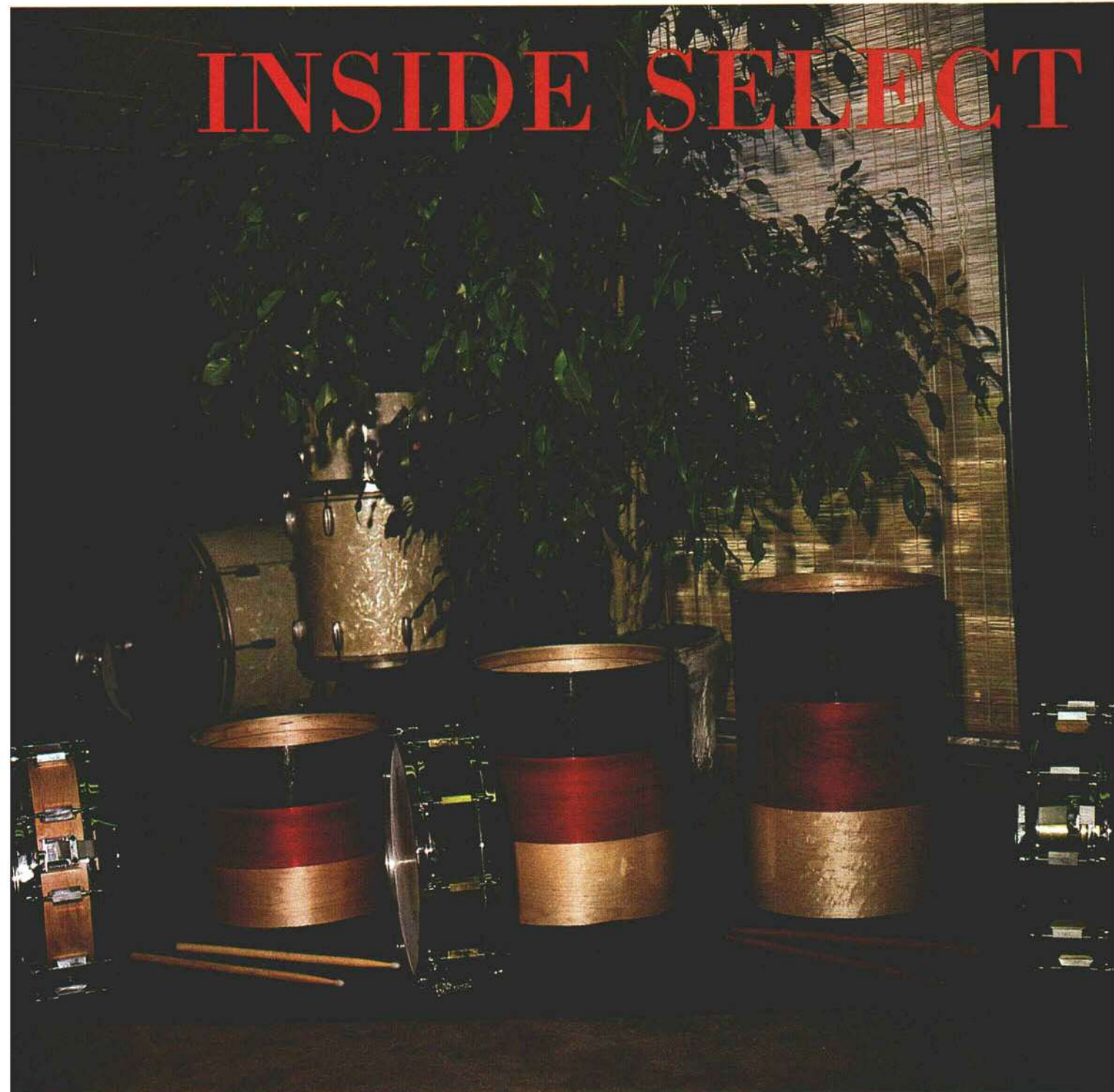
SG: As well as being a drumkit player, you have managed to become an all-around percussionist. How did that happen?

TT: It started with curiosity on my part. There was some classical music that I liked a lot. I didn't always understand it because of my lack of formal musical education. But when I heard Stravinsky for the first time, it had the same effect on me as when I first heard jazz. I didn't get involved in orchestral percussion because I particularly wanted to be an orchestral player, but just to find out more about it. I figured that there would be a lot there that would be of use to widen my musical scope.

I had some piano lessons at The Blackheath Conservatory just so I'd understand

THAT INSTRUMENT BY DOING RUDIMENTS ON THE SNARE DRUM IS THE WRONG APPROACH. "

INSIDE SELECT



IN TODAY'S MUSIC INDUSTRY, products based *entirely* on quality, with little regard to sales, are rare. But there are still craftsmen who believe in creating works of musical art and getting the word out to others who can appreciate these works for what they are.

Likewise, in the common-denominator recording industry, a musician interested in creating something other than saleable "product" on vinyl is also a rarity. Yet there are still a few artists who believe that being associated with something of lasting quality—either musical or material—is at least as important as the quick gratification of trendy hit records.

Fortuitously, a quality-oriented drum craftsman happened to get together with a quality-oriented drummer a few years ago. The craftsman was Johnny Craviotto, well-known in the San Francisco bay area for his work as a drum customizer, refinishes and collector. The drummer was Bill Gibson, even more well-known for his work with Huey Lewis & The News. The outcome was Select Snare Drums—a small company with the sole purpose of building the finest snare drums humanly possible.

Bill Gibson explains how he came to be involved in manufacturing drums as well as playing them: "I've always been a drummer, and I've always enjoyed good work

on drums; I've always appreciated quality equipment. Johnny was customizing drums for me. A couple of years ago we got to talking, and we said, 'Wouldn't it be nice if we could build a drum the way they used to build them—like the old Slingerland *Radio Kings*? We were just tossing the idea around, and I asked John what it would take to do it. He told me what he thought, and I said, 'Let's try it.'"

Sharon Gross, company vice president, takes up the story: "Bill and John were concerned that the snare drums they had seen up to that point were not what they wanted them to be. So they took it upon themselves to start something up. The operation

SNARE DRUMS

by Rick Van Horn

started in John's garage, but relocated to our present facility in Watsonville, California in February of '87. We had to set up the shop from nothing, and that took a month or so. Then we worked on our research and development, and had to create our own machines to do the different jobs. As we did more R&D, we had to develop more machines and refine the ones we had. And we're still developing machines even now."

John Craviotto and Bill Gibson worked together as partners until the close of 1988. At that point, John went back to his own drum customizing business full-time and Bill took over as president of Select. But owing to his activities with Huey Lewis & The News, Bill is unable to devote his full-time attention to the company. Consequently, day-to-day operations are conducted by a highly skilled and dedicated production team headed by Sharon Gross and Sales & Marketing Consultant Dave Patrick. The drums are actually made by a trio of multi-talented engineers/craftsmen: Paul Gabriel, Richard Malesheetz, and Michael Ward.

Design Philosophy

The aspect that sets Select drums apart from most production snare drums is the fact that they are made of single pieces of solid maple, as opposed to plywood. This is a difficult and costly way to make a drum, so why do it that way? Dave Patrick responds: "With a solid shell, you're going to get a more 'solid' sound—no pun intended. Tap a raw, unfinished ply drum-shell, then do the same to a solid wood shell, and you'll immediately notice the difference in resonance. With a ply drum, there's a lot of glue, which tends to deaden the sound. I hate to make general statements, because you end up eating some of them, but that seems to be the case."

Select is not unique in the manufacture of solid-wood shells. Several other companies have introduced similar drums in recent years. However, a major difference between what Select is doing and what those other manufacturers are doing is that Select steam-bends dry wood, while the others work with green wood. Dave explains the fundamental reason for that difference, based on marketing input: "The most common complaint we've heard about other steam-bent shells—vintage or contemporary—is with their stability, in terms of the drum staying round and keeping its integrity."

Paul Gabriel outlines the advantages of making drums from pre-dried wood: "Dry wood tends to be more stable than green wood. Green wood has more moisture in it to begin with than we end up putting in by

Founding partners Bill Gibson (l) and Johnny Craviotto.



steaming dry wood. The time we have to take to 'season' the wood after completing the bending process is reduced. As a result, we end up with a more stable finished shell. It's just like building a house or any other wood product. If you start with green wood, it can move around or warp later; it's not going to be as stable as a seasoned piece of wood."

Is it more difficult from a manufacturing standpoint to steam-bend dry lumber as opposed to green? Paul replies honestly: "I don't know. I've done a lot of research. First I had to find out how drums were made, because that's how the project was presented to me: 'We want to make drums.' But I also had to study the general wood-working industry: 'Does anybody still do this stuff, and what do they do?' There are probably at least a dozen different people who believe that they have *the* way, and some of them have radically different ideas about how it should be done. So I compiled the information and formed my own opinion about what would work for our particular operation. It's hard to say if our way is more difficult. Some of the variables have to be controlled more closely with dry wood. Those include times, temperatures, and dimensions. Dry wood is much harder to machine; it tends to chip out or crack during the bending process, while green wood holds together better. Maple borders on being brittle—especially if it's really dry. That's probably why most people stay away from dry wood for machining. There are a lot of different properties—strength, dryness, brittleness—that overlap and affect each other. By controlling the variables to as close to optimum as possible—and depending on who you talk to, there are differing ideas about what 'optimum' is—we have been able to do some stuff that I haven't seen before."

When a piece of dry wood is steamed, it actually expands with the heat and moisture, then contracts again during the drying

process after it is bent. That would seem to be a difficult "variable" to account for. Paul agrees, but adds: "That movement is a factor that has to be added into the overall equation. The wood expands a little with moisture and shrinks when it dries. But you get less of that with dry wood than with green. With green wood, not only is it shrinking from the moisture that's been added during the steaming process, it's also shrinking just from drying naturally."

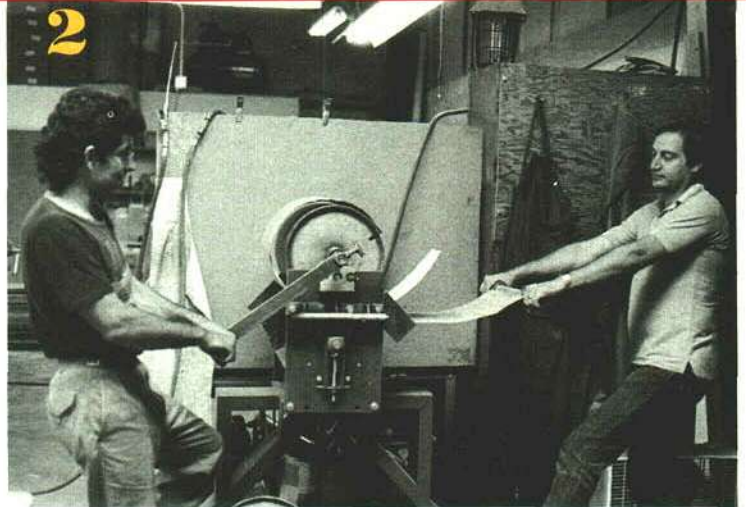
Select has taken a slow, calculated approach to the development of their design philosophy. As Dave Patrick explains, "By the time this article is in print there will have been over two years' history of Select Snare Drums, but only one or two drums out there in the real world—a couple of prototypes tested. Extensive homework and market research was done before any production started. Lots of drummers have been involved besides John and Bill."

"What amazes me about Select's attitude is that where other drum companies say, 'Oh, you can't do this, and you shouldn't do that,' this company says, 'Well, it's tough, but we can do it.' That is the critical difference between this company and other companies. We don't knock other people's drums or the way they make them, because they all have different sounds, and they're all tools. The whole goal here is to make that 'perfect tool' for the drummer. We just want to make solid drums the best that they can be made."

Bill Gibson comments, "From the get-go I said, 'I don't want to cut any corners; I want to make sure that the quality stays intact all the way through the process.' I think we've held to that. At every step of the way, we've taken the time to make sure it's right."

Construction Sequence

Maple boards await steam-bending.



Paul Gabriel (l) and Michael Ward roll a steamed board into a circular shape.

A Select snare drum starts life as a flat maple board. With the design philosophy maintained by Select, it's not surprising that the company is very picky about the quality of that board. Paul Gabriel elaborates on the wood selection process.

"It's been hard to find somebody who will really work with us and give us the quality of wood that we want. The grain and color are important. There are two different kinds of maple: the eastern hard rock maple, which grows in the eastern U.S. and Canada, and the western maple, which is only about half as hard. It's easier to work, but it doesn't have the same sound quality that hard rock maple has. We're *reasonably* happy with the people we're working with now, but I still have a bit of a touchy relationship with them. I do a lot of yelling, and they do a lot of apologizing.

"Like most maple that is readily available, our wood is 'kiln dried.' It's a little drier and harder to work with than air-dried, but we can dictate the moisture content that we want—within a certain range that the supplier can work in. That's one of the key things we look for: the right moisture content.

"The closer the wood can be to the size I

want it, the less rough work I have to do before we can actually bend it and make a drum out of it. The rub seems to come in getting the thickness and the surface finish, with no cracks. Maple this thin tends to chip out when it is being machined. A lot of wood that wouldn't make it for a shell can be used in hoops. Because we need smaller boards for hoops, we can work around knots and other flaws, in order to try to have a reasonable scrap rate. But the wood we select for the actual shells must be flawless.

"Once the boards have been selected, they're run through a planer and a sander to get them down to the thickness that we want. Next, we rough-cut the lengths on a radial-arm saw. We use shorter boards for the hoops, because they are a smaller circle than the drums. With a joiner, we put one straight edge on each board, then we table-saw the other side to get the exact width. Then we come back and finish-cut the length. Cutting the sides affects the square-ness of the ends, so we have to re-cut the lengths for accuracy. Once we finish-cut the lengths, we cut scarfs on a table saw, to create the flatted areas that will ultimately form the scarf joints. The mathematical function of the circumference of a circle being roughly three times the diameter (π), the length of the straight piece and the scarf joints is pretty critical to getting the correct size drum. We're able to control it within about a 16th of an inch. That kind of tolerance can be accounted for in the gluing and final machining.

"After the scarfs are cut, we put the boards in a large wooden box of our own design and steam them, using a standard steam cleaner as a steam source. When they have achieved the proper pliability, we bend the boards on a machine we call 'the rolls.' A

board is inserted, a metal strap helps to hold and guide it, and then the machine is hand-cranked to shape the wood into its initial curve. If we were using green wood we probably wouldn't need the roller machine; we could probably bend the wood by hand because it's much more pliable. But the dry wood is harder to work. If you over-bend it, or if it has a flaw in the grain, it can break easily. Our machine bends the board very evenly.

"After bending, the curved board is placed into a wooden mold. That's what really gives it its final shape. The board is placed between the outer section and an inner centerpiece secured with wedges. The shells stay in the mold until they're ready to glue up. The time period is probably less than half of what everybody else's is, since we're only curing out the moisture that we steamed into the wood. And when we take the curved shell out of the mold, it's almost in its final shape already; we only have around three quarters of an inch of 'spring-back' at that time.

"The shells, in the molds, are placed in a drying room, with very controlled temperature and humidity. After the shells have dried, we glue them, using the same molds."

What about the tendency of a steam-bent board—dry or green—to want to return to its original shape? Doesn't that put a particular stress on the glue joint of a drumshell?

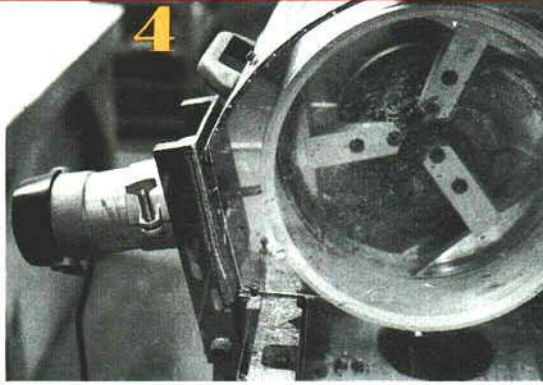
"When you bend something," Paul replies, "it's going to want to spring back to some degree, and there are a lot of ideas out there about what to do to prevent that 'spring-back.' As far as stresses at the glue joint go, we are able to control that as well as—or better than—anybody. Wood is only so strong, and glue is only so strong on the wood, if the whole drum is fighting itself trying to straighten back out, it's never going to tune quite right; it always will be under tension trying to go straight again. We've

(l to r)
Michael
Ward, Paul
Gabriel,
Dave
Patrick,
and
Sharon
Gross.

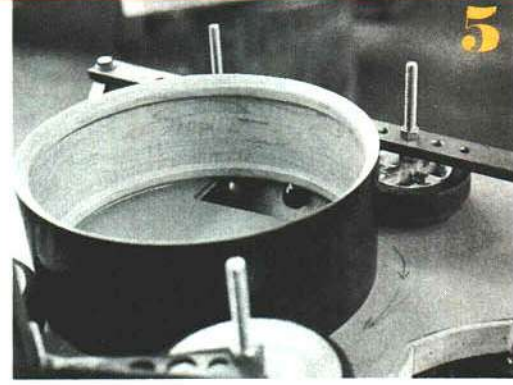




The rolled board is placed in a wooden mold.



A glued shell is "faced" for perfect roundness.



The bearing edge machine uses wagon wheels for guides.

done a lot of work with stress relief, so that the shell is not working like a rubber band.

"Once the glue is dry, we have a rough shell, with rough edges. It's very close to being the right diameter, but is slightly over-size. We put this shell on a machine router to get a flat edge, because after the shell is steamed and glued, the edges are way out. After one edge is trimmed flat, the shell goes to the router bench. Here we sand the inside of the shell, rough-cut the inside edge of the hoop, and trim out any excess glue from the scarf joint. We also trim the inner diameter of the hoop to make sure it's correct. This is all done according to gauges that we created here in the shop. The routing process is done by hand, so a lot of skill is involved."

Finishing specialist Michael Ward takes up the description at this point: "Before we cut the bearing edges, we face the outside of the shell, making sure the scarf area is cleaned up and the outside of the shell is totally round. We do this by putting the shell on the lathe and having a router go across the face to remove any irregularities.

"We get the shells as close to perfectly round as possible. Most of them are within about a sixteenth of an inch. Our tolerances are within an eighth; worse than that and the drum doesn't go out. That's better than most anything I've ever measured on other steam-bent drums; most of them are at least 3/16ths out of round, if not worse.

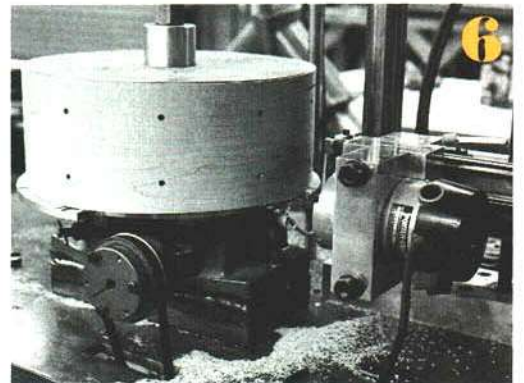
"Our bearing-edge cutting machine does the finished edges. So far, we have one 'standard' bearing edge that we are going to produce, but we definitely have the capability of cutting pretty much any profile anyone wants. The machine gets it as close to finished as can be done with a machine; but the final touches still have to be done by hand. There's no way to get around doing hand sanding and finishing."

MODERN DRUMMER

The bearing edge machine is unique in that it uses toy wagon tires as a guiding device. This looks humorous, but Paul Gabriel explains the reason for it.

"The key problem with a standard router-type bearing-edge cutter is that it's referencing off the *inside* of the drum, which you don't want. The wagon tires allow our machine to reference off the *outside* of the shell. The router's angle and depth can be set to cut about any way we want."

At this point the shells enter the final finishing stage, which is primarily Michael Ward's department. "After the bearing edges have been cut, the drum is hand-sanded to get both the inside and outside surfaces totally smooth. If the drum is to be stained,



A computer controls the drilling of lug holes and the cutting of the snare bed.



A finished drum.

we stain it first, then seal the stain. The next step is to drill the lug holes and cut the snare beds—which Paul and Dave will go more into in a bit. We decided to keep the insides of the shells natural maple, no matter what the outside finish. They are sealed with a clear lacquer; they aren't left raw. But we cut the holes and the snare bed before final finishing so that they get

some sort of finish put on them, rather than being just bare wood.

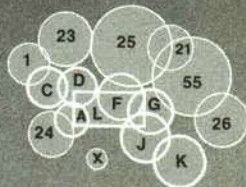
"I think that the products we're using to finish our drums are the best available on the market. If we paint a drum, we first use a catalytic hardening epoxy primer, then a catalytic hardening polyurethane paint, such as is used on new cars and aircraft.

continued on page 84

MEET OUR QUALITY

Danny Gottlieb

PLAYING PAISTE 12 YEARS



DANNY GOTTLIEB

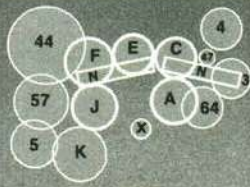
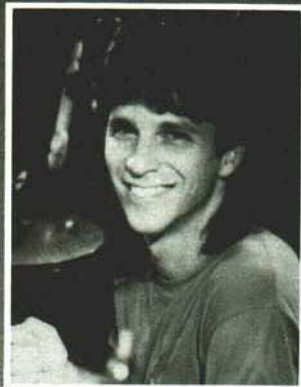
... In my case, the cymbals are probably the most important part of the drum kit and are probably the center of my individuality as a drum performer... I find that with the combination of the 3000 and the Formula 602 Flat Rides, I can come up with a total signature... Paiste cymbals have a sound that I identify with for my complete individuality...

CYMBALS

- 1 - 3000 10" splash
- 2 - 3000 14" thin crash
- 3 - 3000 17" thin crash
- 4 - 3000 18" thin crash
- 5 - 3000 19" thin crash
- 6 - 3000 16" crash
- 7 - 3000 17" crash
- 8 - 3000 18" crash
- 9 - 3000 20" crash
- 10 - 3000 18" power crash
- 11 - 3000 20" power crash
- 12 - 3000 14" medium hi-hat

Rod Morgenstein

PLAYING PAISTE 10 YEARS



ROD MORGENSTEIN

... I like the fact that there is always experimentation going on, not just coming up with one good thing and then it sort of becomes a dinosaur... there are always new things coming along... and there are so many new things that I haven't even seen... that's a good sign...

- 13 - 3000 14" heavy hi-hat
- 14 - 3000 15" heavy hi-hat
- 15 - 3000 15" sound edge hi-hat
- 16 - 3000 22" ride
- 17 - 3000 22" power ride
- 18 - 3000 22" china
- 19 - 3000 RUDE 17" crash/ride
- 20 - 3000 RUDE 14" heavy hi-hat
- 21 - 3000 REFLECTOR 17" thin crash
- 22 - 3000 REFLECTOR 18" thin crash
- 23 - 3000 REFLECTOR 18" crash
- 24 - 3000 REFLECTOR 14" medium hi-hat
- 25 - 3000 REFLECTOR 22" heavy ride

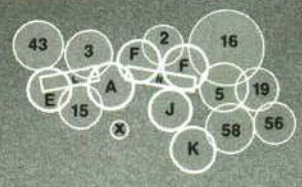
There are five quality control points at our factory. Yet, the final one is in the hands of the artist. These drummers and percussionists could play anything. But they have made their choice with Paiste. We'll let Danny, Doane, Jim, Paul, Rod, Ronald, and Will tell you in their own words.

Then, find out for yourself what it took for these fine artists to stick with Paiste. Visit your local dealer and play a Paiste cymbal—the best quality—and consistency—you can find... anywhere.

PAiSte
CYMBALS SOUNDS GONGS

Ronald Shannon Jackson

PLAYING PAISTE 16 YEARS



RONALD SHANNON JACKSON

... that's basically what they are to me: control, warmth and coloration... the cymbal sounds have to relate to the... degrees of intensity that the music requires... it seems that Paiste cymbals are in congruence with the electric magnetism that is in today's music...

- 26 - 3000 REFLECTOR 20" china
- 27 - 2002 16" crash
- 28 - 2002 17" crash
- 29 - 2000 10" splash
- 30 - 2000 12" splash
- 31 - 2000 14" crash
- 32 - 2000 15" crash
- 33 - 2000 16" crash
- 34 - 2000 18" mellow china
- 35 - 2000 18" china
- 36 - 2000 20" china
- 37 - 2000 14" medium hi-hat
- 38 - 2000 SOUND REFLECTIONS 8" splash
- 39 - 2000 SOUND REFLECTIONS 13" sound edge hi-hat
- 40 - 2000 SOUND REFLECTIONS 20" mellow china
- 41 - 2000 SOUND REFLECTIONS 20" power ride
- 42 - 1000 RUDE 10" splash
- 43 - RUDE 20" ride/crash
- 44 - RUDE 22" ride/crash
- 45 - RUDE 20" china
- 46 - 602 12" paperthin/12" heavy
- 47 - 602 11" splash
- 48 - 602 10" heavy bell

CONTROL TEAM

Jim Keltner

PLAYING PAISTE 6 YEARS

Paul Wertico

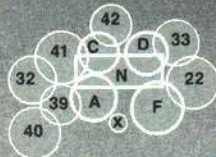
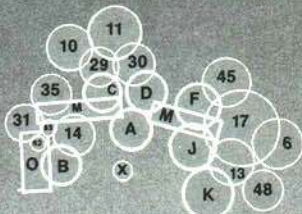
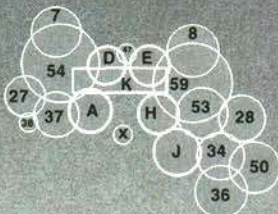
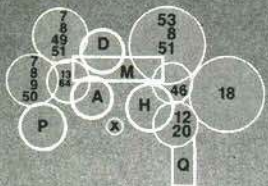
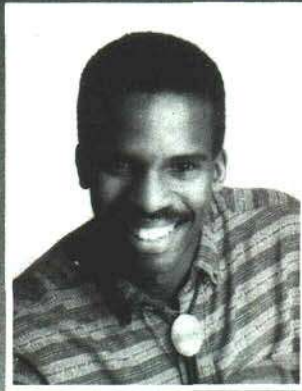
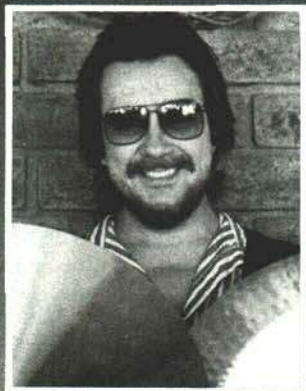
PLAYING PAISTE 21 YEARS

Doane Perry

PLAYING PAISTE 13 YEARS

Will Kennedy

PLAYING PAISTE 7 YEARS



JIM KELTNER

... since I have discovered Paiste cymbals in 1982, I have been free of the dreaded cymbal bondage — 'always looking for that special sound'... now Paiste does it for me... they just keep coming up with one special sounding cymbal after another... it's a terrific feeling to be able to go in the bag and pick out exactly the right cymbal every time...

PAUL WERTICO

... with Paiste cymbals I can find exactly what I need for each song, I am able to blend with the frequencies of the other instruments... playing with sequencers, I have to play accurately every night... Paiste cymbals project the rhythm clearly... I think, if you really know cymbals and know your playing, you will probably come to Paiste...

DOANE PERRY

... I like the fact that all the notes you hear are in tune with each other... I like to be able to hear the harmonics and the way cymbals can relate melodically to the music... I do favor the 2000 and the 3000 currently, but I am also a big fan of the 2002... every one of them speaks very clearly...

WILL KENNEDY

... there is a certain crispness that Paiste has captured... (it) allows me to express my emotional feeling in a particular song a little better, because I may not have to hit the cymbal as hard or I can caress the cymbal and get several different sounds out of one cymbal... Paiste cymbals for me allow me to express my feelings like I prefer to do it...

- 49—602 18" thin crash
- 50—602 19" thin crash w/rivets
- 51—602 18" medium
- 52—602 18" medium ride
- 53—602 21" heavy
- 54—602 22" thin flat ride
- 55—602 22" medium
- 56—SOUND CREATION 16" short crash
- 57—SOUND CREATION 18" dark china
- 58—SOUND CREATION 20" dark china
- 59—SOUND CREATION 22" dark flat ride
- 60—SYMPHONY GONG
- 61—PERCUSSION SET

- 62—CUP CHIMES—#4 & 2
- 63—CUP CHIMES—#1 & 3
- 64—602 14" heavy hi-hat

DRUMS

- A—5½ x 14" snare drum
- B—14" piccolo snare drum
- C—10" mounted tom
- D—12" mounted tom
- E—13" mounted tom
- F—14" mounted tom
- G—15" mounted tom
- H—14" floor tom

- I—15" floor tom
- J—16" floor tom
- K—18" floor tom
- L—20 bass tom
- M—22 bass tom
- N—24 bass tom
- O—electronic drum pads
- P—14" roto tom
- Q—electronic drum pads & sampler
- X—drum throne

The statements in this ad are based on interviews conducted with the artists on their playing, cymbals, sounds, and on Paiste. Write to: Paiste America, 460 Atlas St., Brea, CA 92621 and ask for the ones you'd like. Mention Dept. USA1. Please include \$3 for printing, postage and handling.

Consumers Poll

In this month's *Product Close-Up* we're reversing our usual procedure. Instead of giving our opinion regarding one or more products, we're presenting the opinions of *Modern Drummer's* readership regarding products that they use and the manufacturers of those products. These opinions were expressed in response to *MD's* second *Consumers Poll*, for which a ballot was included in the January '89 issue.

As a general overview, let me first say that the response was sizeable and enthusiastic. As might be expected, opinions were expressed strongly (drummers do tend to be a loyal bunch), with many insightful comments. Many who responded to our poll were very specific as to what they considered the criteria for quality percussion products to be. Comments on acoustic drums included references to shell construction, wood types, finishes, hardware construction, ease of setup and breakdown, portability, durability, and overall strength—not to mention tonality, projection, and general quality of sound. With cymbals, our readers cited variety of sounds and durability as primary concerns. Comments pertaining to electronic equipment stressed reliability, flexibility of programming, and quality of sounds. With accessories, usefulness and innovation seemed to be the keys.

One unexpected result of the poll was a strong indication of parity among the manufacturers and products in many categories. Often, the difference between the top three places (and in some cases several more) was a matter of one percentage point or less. Apparently, our poll respondents feel that quality, innovation, and concern for the customer run high within the industry as a whole. This would seem to indicate that the drum and percussion instrument manufacturing industry is expressing an attitude that generates an equally positive return in terms of customer satisfaction and loyalty. Sounds like a good situation for all concerned!

And now to the results. As I said earlier, some categories were extremely close. Others were complete runaways. Each winner's vote tally is expressed as a percentage of the total number of votes cast in that category. (Some categories received greater responses than others.)

Most Innovative Company

Acoustic Drum Company: This one went to Tama, with a 32.5% vote total (over twice that of runners-up Pearl and Yamaha). Comments included: "constantly introduces new products," "they're always adding to and refining what they've got," and "seems a lot of thought goes into their products." References were made to the *Artstar II* se-

ries, specialty snare drums, the *Power Tower/Cage Rack System*, and the *PMD600 Curved Rack*.

Cymbal Company: The Zildjian company took this category hands down, with 55.4% of the votes. Readers cited Zildjian for "their commitment to bring new ideas to reality," "new sounds, different price ranges, good ideas," and "variety of finishes, weights, and effects." Products noted included *EFX 1*, *Piggyback*, *K Custom*, and *Z Series* cymbals, along with the *ZMC-1 Miking System*.

Electronics Company: This was a category in which one company dominated, but in which the rest of the field was very evenly regarded by our poll respondents. Simmons Electronics won handily, with 37% of the total votes. But it is worthy of note that four other companies (Roland, Yamaha, ddrum, and Alesis) were grouped between 11% and 13%. Comments pertaining to Simmons included: "they have something for everyone, from beginner to beyond," "always something newer, better, faster," "constant upgrading of products," and "many different drumkits and lots of sound programmability." Special mention was made of Simmons' *SDX* system, *Zone Intelligent pads*, *Portakit*, and *Trixer*.

Accessory Company: In another area of parity, Drum Workshop won this category by a narrow margin (17% versus 15.5% each for Pro-Mark and Latin Percussion). The company was lauded for "continuously improving pedals that are already trouble-free," "uncomplicating the complicated when it comes to custom pedal setups," and "responding to the needs of drummers with new, quality products." DW's *Turbo* single and double pedals, *EP-1* electronic pedal, and cable remote hi-hat were all mentioned.

Best Quality And Craftsmanship

Acoustic Drum Company: This was an area in which the amount of parity was a pleasant surprise. The top five companies were all within three percentage points, and we wound up with a tie for first place! Yamaha and Tama share the top spot in this category with 17% of the votes each. (Sonor was second, with 15.8%, while Ludwig and Pearl tied for third with 14%.) Comments for Yamaha included: "quality materials and construction, great sound and colors," "strong and resonant shells, excellent hardware, a reliable name," "superb sound, rich textural shell tonality," and "consistency of sound quality, easy to tune." Tama received such accolades as: "great sound, looks, and hardware," "*Artstar IIs* are bulletproof and look great," "I find the equipment easy to set up, it stays put and is reliable," and

"excellent sound, first-class hardware."

Cymbal Company: This was one of our "runaways," with Zildjian garnering a whopping 66% of the total votes. Readers commented: "cymbals are very durable, each has a unique sound, high quality," "they don't break, nice finishes, great quality control," and "best tone quality." One reader evidently well-versed in the details of cymbal manufacture even noted "contours are geometrically consistent, lathe-marks are regular."

Electronics Company: Simmons came in first again in this category, totalling roughly twice as many votes (32.4%) as the two companies next in line (Roland and Yamaha), which received around 16% each. References to Simmons' quality included: "realistic-sounding gear," "nice pad feel, stimulating visual appearance," "sound quality and user-friendly software," and "reliability, simplicity of operation, all-around practicality for live use."

Accessory Company: In accessories, parity was again the rule. Drum Workshop and Pro-Mark share top honors with 17.6% of the votes, while LP (with 15.4%) and Remo (with 8%) were the leaders of a large group of runners-up. DW's products were cited as being "sturdy and trustworthy," "heavy-duty and long-lasting," and "simple, yet so playable." Pro-Mark was lauded as having "reliable and helpful items," "a variety of stick models that is fantastic," and "well-made sticks that last and last."

Most Consumer/Service Oriented Company

Acoustic Drum Company: Tama was the winner here by a respectable margin (26.9% of the total votes versus 19.8% for Ludwig and 17% for Pearl). But again, the pleasant surprise was how much regard our poll respondents showed for a *number* of companies. In all, 14 manufacturers were cited for excellence in this important area, indicating that customer service is a priority among many drum companies. Comments pertaining to Tama included: "replacement catalogs excellent, parts easily obtained," "personal letters giving information, friendly representatives," "I had problems with a snare strainer, and within 24 hours they had it fixed," and "orders never take more than a few days."

Cymbal Company: Zildjian won this category by a two-to-one margin over the rest of the field with a total of 54.5% of the votes. Zildjian supporters commented: "they answer all my letters," "they stand behind their products," "they replaced a cracked crash cymbal for me in two days, no questions asked," and "fast and friendly service."

Results

by Rick Van Horn

Electronics Company: Simmons was the winner here, but by a narrower margin than in earlier categories (33.7% of the votes, versus 20% each for Roland and Yamaha). This shows that the electronics companies are also concerned with customer satisfaction. Comments included: "free catalogs, personal letters, great information," "good repair service, quick and responsive," "you can call them any time if you have questions," and "very helpful and friendly staff."

Accessory Company: The vote was spread among a lot of companies here, but Pro-Mark won with a total of 19.4%. Readers commented: "their delivery service is quick and accurate," "they work with school bands and drum corps," "they listen to players' problems and do something about them," and "I haven't got one complaint about any Pro-Mark product I own."

Most Interesting Advertising/Marketing Campaign

This category proved surprising, because so many voters chose not to indicate a single ad or ad campaign, but instead chose to nominate a number of companies for all of their advertising. This represented a slight reinterpretation of the definitions applied to the category, but we cannot ignore such an overwhelming trend. With that in mind, 19.7% of the voters designated all of Tama's ads as being the most interesting and effective.

No fewer than 45 different ads, ad campaigns, or complete series of ads received votes in this category. As a general rule, ads featuring a variety of artists and explaining or diagramming their drum and/or cymbal setups were favored by our poll respondents. Following those came ads that went into descriptive detail—in photos and text—regarding new products. Tama's ads were cited as doing both consistently, while also being "the most eye-catching, colorful, powerful ads," "the best introduction to new products and incentive to buy them," and "the most consistently innovative." (Honorable mention for the single ad campaign that collected the most votes goes to Paiste's "Quality Control Team.")

Most Valuable Product

As might be expected in a category based almost entirely on personal preference, we got a lot of different nominees here. Over 50 different specific products were mentioned. As a consequence, even a small plurality of votes represented a significant majority in this particular area. But when it came down to the single product that stood out with the most votes, we had yet another tie! The Zildjian ZMC-1 Cymbal Miking System and Drum Workshop's 5002

Double Bass Drum Pedal share top honors in this category, with 6% of the total vote each.

Comments on the ZMC-1 included: "solves a long-time annoyance of cymbal balance and consistency in a miked situation," "brings out the true sounds of cymbals," and "allows me to use my cymbals to their full potential." The DW Double Bass Drum Pedal received such comments as "best for flexibility, speed, and price," "plays the full range of dynamics, doesn't break down, is very fast, and can adapt to any known job or setup," and "incredibly smooth, fast, and accurate."

Most Innovative And Influential Product

This category received the single largest number of nominations: 61. It also received the highest overall number of votes. Again, due to those facts, a small plurality decided the winning product. Perhaps somewhat of a surprise, due to its relatively short tenure on the market, was our winner: Zildjian's ZMC-1 again. Apparently a conspicuous need that drummers had heretofore seen unmet by this product,

because 8% of our voters singled out the ZMC-1 as the product they felt was the most innovative among all the new items that have come on the percussion market in the last few years.

An interesting—and perhaps significant—development of the poll was that among the 61 nominations for innovation and influence in a new product, only 14 were electronic in nature. And of those, several were microphones or other peripheral products. Electronic products worthy of Honorable Mention include the Roland Octapad and the Alesis HR-16 Drum Machine. Acoustic products also worthy of Honorable Mention include Tama's Power Tower Rack System, the RIMS mounting system by PureCussion, Remo's Spoxe, and DCI Music Videos.

Well, there you have it—the readers have spoken. *Modern Drummer* extends congratulations to the winners, and appreciation to all who took the time and effort to respond to the poll. We'll give the industry a few more years to come up with new and exciting products, and then do this again!



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Multi-Pads

For all of the electronic devices that have appeared over the past few years, only a handful will be remembered for having been significant. One that can be said to have made a contribution is Roland's original *Octapad*. The unit was simple to use, and it fit the bill remarkably well for a lot of drummers who wanted to get involved with electronics without spending a lot of money or having to devote more time to programming than to playing. It's been one of the most-mentioned pieces of equipment in *MD* interviews over the past couple of years, and has now spawned two significant competitors: the Simmons *Portakit* and the *drumKAT*. Meanwhile, Roland has updated the original *Octapad* (also known as the *Pad-8*) to the *Octapad II* (*Pad-80*).

At their most basic level, all three units serve the same function. Each one consists of a single unit housing several pads that can be used to trigger synthesized or sampled sounds; none of the devices contain onboard sounds. Each unit also has inputs on the back that can be used for additional pads, or for acoustic-drum triggers, allowing the unit to serve as a trigger-to-MIDI interface. Beyond that, they each offer different amounts of MIDI control, ranging from a little to a lot. So let's look at them one at a time to compare their features and ease of operation.

Roland Octapad II

Physically, the *PAD-80* looks almost identical to the original *PAD-8*. The eight pads themselves have not changed, but the controls are somewhat different and the unit is about an inch wider. The significant difference, of course, is in what the *Pad-80* will do that the *Pad-8* didn't.

The pads themselves are velocity sensitive, which means that they respond to different dynamic levels. The *PAD-8* let you set sensitivity and curve, and the new one has an additional trick: You can program a single pad to play up to three different notes, depending on the dynamic. It is called the Layer function, and it works two different ways. You can either play different notes one at a time as you change the dynamic, or you can "add" notes as you increase the velocity, forming a "chord."

Let's look at a couple of practical examples. You could program a single pad to play a ride cymbal at a soft or medium volume, and a crash cymbal at a loud volume. Using the Add function, you could trigger a snare drum sound at a soft volume, have the snare and a rim at medium dynamics, and have snare, rim, and hand-clap at the loud level. It's a nice feature

that adds to the versatility of the instrument, but we did have a complaint. The only control you have over the dynamic level of each sound is by setting the sensitivity of the pad itself. If you set the sensitivity so that you get a good range of dynamics, then you have to really hit the pad HARD to make that third level kick in. If you don't want to have to hit that hard to get all three levels, then you have to raise the sensitivity. That causes you to lose a lot of your dynamic range, so that the first two sounds trigger at almost full volume.

Another complaint we have with the *Octapad* is that the pads themselves are very hard. They just don't feel as good as those on the *Portakit* or *drumKAT*, and they are much noisier when struck. If used for live performance, that noise would never be heard, but if used in a home or studio setting (to enter patterns into a drum machine, say), that noise could be distracting. In terms of responsiveness, however, we had no major complaints. We were able to get some pretty clean buzz rolls.

On a more positive note, the *Octapad II* has a new feature that is very useful: a memory card that can be used to save your work or to double the unit's memory. The *PAD-80* already has quite a bit of memory, so we see the most benefit for the memory card as a way of backing up your programs. This is a significant advantage over the *Portakit* and *drumKAT*. With those units, the only way to back up your work is through the MIDI dump format, which involves buying an external disk drive. (Expect to spend about \$300 for it.) Having a memory card is a much "friendlier" feature of the *Octapad II*.

The *Octapad II*, like its predecessor, has six inputs on the back for extra pads or acoustic-drum triggers. Using this device as a trigger-to-MIDI interface for acoustic drums is adequate at best. If you simply want some sound reinforcement, and you are not playing a lot of fast, complicated patterns or using a very wide range of dynamics, then it may work fine for you. But of the three multi-pads currently available, it is the weakest when it comes to external triggering—with one notable exception. We tried both *DW EP-1* and *Shark* trigger pedals with the *Octapad II*, and they both performed beautifully. That was a definite improvement over the *Pad-8*, which did not respond well at all to pedals.

There were a few features that we would like to have seen. For example, there is only one MIDI-Out, so if you want to trigger more than one device, you have to patch everything together. Another MIDI-Out would be much simpler. Another fea-

ture we missed had to do with the control buttons. Most instruments these days have pressure-sensitive buttons, which means that the harder you press, the faster they go. The *PAD-80*, however, does not, and it seemed to take forever to change numbers if we were making a big change. Also, why doesn't an instrument in this price range have a simple AC cord that goes directly into the instrument, without having to go through a transformer first? Those heavy black boxes midway up the power cord can be quite a nuisance.

The *PAD-80* does have a kit-to-kit copy function, which is good. It does not, however, copy pad-to-pad, which would have been nice. The unit has a song mode that transmits control functions such as pitch bend and aftertouch, but it can only be implemented from a pedal, and it doesn't have start and stop controls so that you could use it to control another device (like a drum machine).

A very nice feature of the *PAD-80* that neither of the other units have is the ability to assign voices in stereo panning. Another nice feature is the ability to name patches and kits. Without that, you'd have to carry a list around telling you which one was which.

Although we've mentioned a number of things that we feel are lacking in this device, there is an important fact that must not be overlooked. The more features a device has, the more it costs and the more difficult it is to use. From the very beginning, a lot of the *Octapad's* appeal has been its simplicity, and the updated version has added features without making the unit significantly more complex. For drummers who want simple MIDI access to samplers and synths, this could be the perfect answer. List price is \$795.

Simmons Portakit

The *Portakit* is the largest of the three units, containing 12 pads: five full-size pads in the familiar Simmons shape, two half-pads, one long thin pad, and four very small ones. The arrangement of the pads has its pluses and minuses. Overall, we found that the layout made it easier to remember which sound was on which pad, especially when using standard drumset sounds. And having space between the large pads seemed to improve our aim. After all, we're used to playing on drumsets where everything is pretty spread out. Having some room between the main playing surfaces avoided a certain cramped feeling we sometimes got with the *Octapad* and *drumKAT*. The only problem is that those four smallest pads on the bottom are very small and

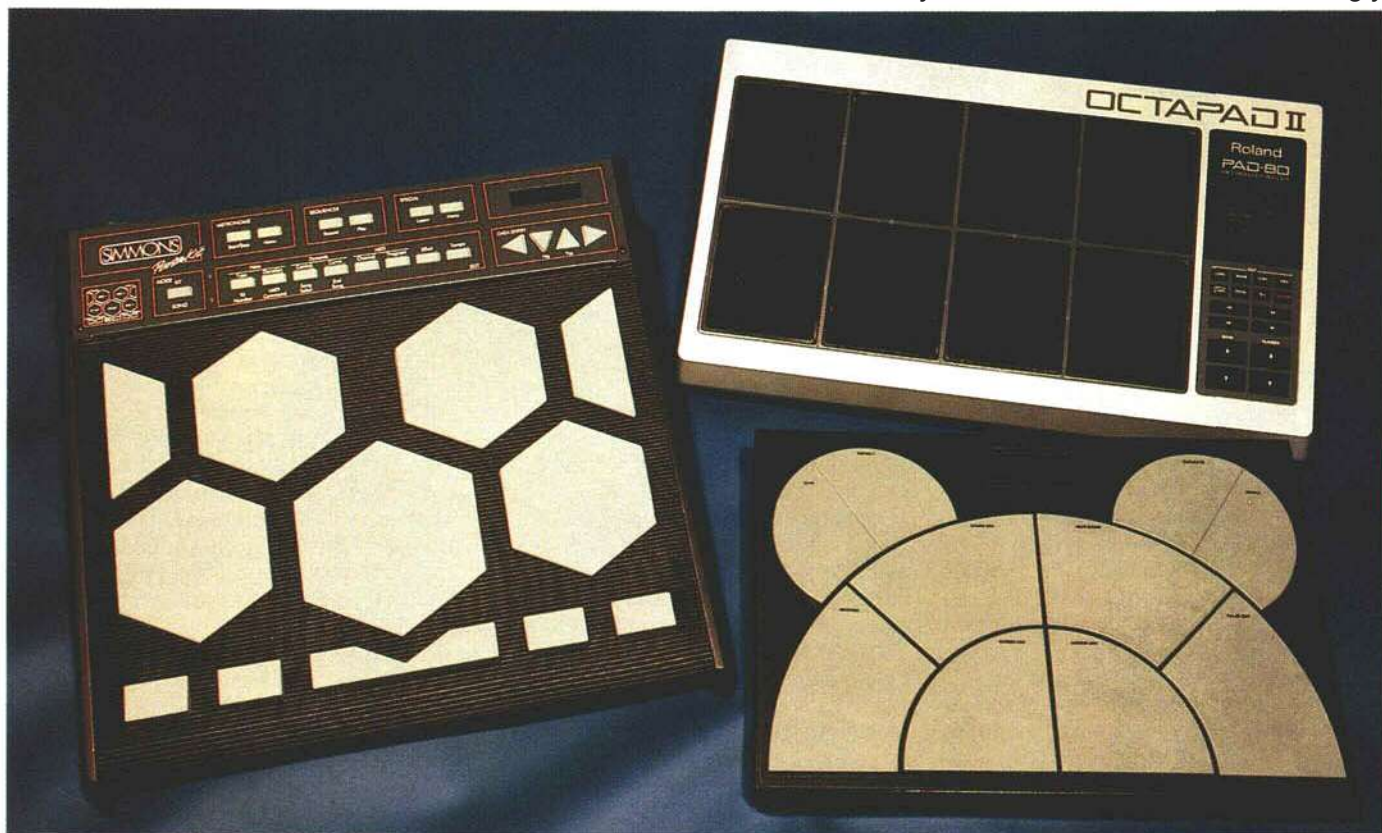


Photo by Rick Mattingly

require quite a bit of accuracy. But the feel of the *Portakit* pads is excellent, and they are much quieter than those on the *Octapad*.

Although it would seem that the *Portakit's* 12 pads would give you a lot more options than the *Octapad's* eight, there is an additional fact that should be taken into account. Each device has inputs on the back that will accept either additional pads or acoustic drum triggers. With the *Octapad*, you can add up to six externals, giving you a total of 14. But with the *Portakit*, plugging something into an external jack disables one of the small pads on the unit (with the exception of bass drum pedal and hi-hat pedal inputs). So the maximum capacity with the *Portakit* is also 14. We mention this only because we've seen *Portakit* ads aimed at the *Octapad* that say, "We don't think that eight is enough." That's fine, if you are only talking about the self-contained pads, but if you add on the external capabilities, the two units are equal.

There is a feature associated with the *Portakit's* external jacks, however, that qualify it as being truly innovative. It's called the Learn function, and it is the most revolutionary new thing in terms of MIDI triggering. Essentially, the problem with triggering is that every trigger sends out a different type of signal, so it's no easy task for a single device to handle everything from a drumpad to an acoustic-drum trigger. Simmons accomplishes this by having the machine analyze the waveform. Without

going into the technicalities of how it works, suffice to say that it allows you to use a variety of external triggers and get pretty good results.

By analyzing the waveform, the device avoids false triggers caused by vibrations. That's good, but we discovered an inherent problem with this system, particularly when used for external acoustic-drum triggering and (to a lesser degree) with external drumpads. If you hit a loud, accented note followed immediately by a very soft note, the soft note might not trigger because the waveform of the loud note does not allow the soft note to be recognized as a trigger. Granted, the notes have to be very close together, and there has to be a pretty big difference in the dynamics of the two notes. For a lot of people in a lot of situations, this would not be a problem at all. But we felt it was worth mentioning for those who are looking for the ultimate means of acoustic-drum triggering. This isn't it, and if your primary interest is in triggering, don't buy a multi-pad. Buy something like a *Trixer*. Still, although waveform learning might not be the ultimate answer, it's the best thing available on a multi-pad, and probably will be for quite a while. Once again, Simmons has broken new ground.

You also have a certain amount of control over the dynamic curve. The *Portakit* has ten preset curves that give you a reasonable amount of choice, and there is also a minimum velocity control that lets you tune those curves somewhat. When

minimum velocity is set low, you have good control over a wide range of dynamics.

The *Portakit* has a couple of features that the *Octapad II* doesn't. First, the Song mode has the ability to start and stop another device (such as a drum machine or sequencer). It is also supposed to be able to call up songs on another device, but we couldn't get that to work with our Yamaha RX5 drum machine. Perhaps there was a bug in our *Portakit*, or perhaps that particular feature only works with certain devices.

The *Portakit* also contains a sequencer that can hold up to 12, eight-voice polyphonic sequences with 10,000 events. The problem is that there is no editing capability whatsoever. If you make a mistake, you have to completely start over, which can be quite a drag if your sequence is over four bars long. Also, you have to press a lot of buttons to get it going. Just about any drum machine would serve the purpose better, and since so many drummers use drum machines as their sound source for multi-pads, the *Portakit's* sequencer doesn't have as much practical value as you might think. Still, given its limitations, it does work, and if you don't have a drum machine, this could be a useful feature.

One function of the *Portakit* that we found particularly user friendly had to do with assigning sounds to the pads. Like the *Octapad*, you can simply set the MIDI number of each pad to match the corresponding sound on your sound generator. The trouble is, drum sounds are not standard-

ized the way piano notes are, so you have to find out which MIDI number is assigned to which sound on your particular device. When we called up a sound on our *RX5*, it didn't give us a MIDI number, but rather a pitch designation such as F#3. Then we had to consult a chart to see which MIDI number that represented.

The *Portakit*, however, lets you avoid all that trouble. Taking advantage of MIDI'S ability to communicate in two directions (provided you use both In and Out ports), you can set a *Portakit*'s pad assignment by simply hitting the corresponding button on your drum machine. That saves a lot of time and trouble.

Another interesting feature of the *Portakit* is that the half-size pad on the upper left can be set to control MIDI effects such as pitch bend and aftertouch. You can simply press the pad with a drumstick, and the harder you press, the more dramatic the effect. (Remember that multi-pads are MIDI controllers only. They do not contain these effects themselves. If you want something like pitch bend, you have to be MIDLED into a device that implements it.)

As with the *Octapad*, there were a few things that we would have liked. First, although we were happy to see that the *Portakit* had pressure-sensitive controls, they were very hard to press. After programming for a while, our fingers got sore. The resistance from those buttons caused another problem as well, relating to the sequencer. If you want to create a loop, you have to turn it off at the very end of your last bar when you are recording, or else it automatically goes to the next bar. As mentioned before, there are no editing capabilities, so if you get an extra bar, you can't delete it. You have to erase your whole sequence and start over. That happened to us a couple of times because the button was so hard to push that we didn't get it turned off in time.

The *Portakit* does not have a Layer function so that you can get different notes from the same pad by changing dynamics. It does, however, have an automatic chord function, by which you can have a single note serve as the root of a major, minor, major 7, or minor 7 chord. There was a bug in ours, though. When we set it for a major 7 we got a minor 7, and vice versa.

Overall, we'd put the *Portakit* in between the *Octapad II* and the *drumKAT*. It has

several features that the *Octapad* doesn't, the external triggering is better, and the pads feel great. It doesn't have as much MIDI control as the *drumKAT*, but it's much easier to use. So for those who want more control than the *Octapad* offers, but who still want a device that's relatively simple to operate, the *Portakit* is the best bet. List price is \$999.

drumKAT

Physically, this is the unit that resembles Mickey Mouse. But there's nothing "Mickey Mouse" about its performance. It is definitely the most sophisticated of the three multi-pads.

For starters, there are ten pads built in, and outputs for nine more, giving a potential of 19 playing surfaces. We liked the arrangement of the built-in pads. Although they didn't have space between them, they were all large enough that we didn't have to worry much about aim. The unit can be zoned any way you want it. For example, if you don't need all ten sounds, you could make two (or more) adjoining pads have the same sound, thereby increasing the amount of surface area you have to aim at. The pads feel very good—very much like a Calato practice pad—and they are quiet.

The pads on the *drumKAT* serve the usual function of triggering sounds when struck, but they also serve as the control buttons when used in conjunction with a footswitch. This is nice for a couple of reasons: First, it keeps the size of the unit down, making the *drumKAT* the smallest of the three multi-pads, and thereby the easiest to position on a drumkit. Second, you never have to put the sticks down, which—for us, at least—made programming a lot more fun.

The drawback to these multi-function pads is that it takes quite a while to learn to use the *drumKAT*. The pads do have small stickers on them that give some of their basic functions, but those only apply to one specific editing mode. Each pad does a number of different things, depending on the situation, and you have to spend some time learning how each pad functions in the various programming modes. Once you learn all of the functions, however, you will find that you have a lot of control.

One nice thing is that when you step on the footswitch to enter Program mode, the screen shows you six parameters (velocity, curve, gate, etc.) at the same time. With the other units, you have to hit a button six times to step through those parameters.

In terms of sensitivity, the *drumKAT* has 16 dynamic curves, two of which are programmable in 64 steps of 127 increments each. You can get any kind of curve you want from that, including a curve that lets the sound get softer the harder you hit.

This ability to set any curve you want has a lot of practical value. In the *Octapad II* discussion, we complained about the lack of dynamic control over the Layer function. With the *drumKAT*, you have total and separate control over this function (called Multiple Mode). You can set a pad on the

drumKAT to trigger three different sounds depending on how hard you hit it, and within each of those *dynamic* ranges (how hard you strike the pad) you can have a *velocity* range (how loud the instrument actually sounds). For example, even though you are hitting the *drumKAT* hard to get the third sound, that sound could be set to play at a softer dynamic than the second sound. As with the *Octapad II*, the *drumKAT* lets you "stack" the three sounds into a chord, or it lets you play each one individually. But there is also a third option on the *drumKAT*; it's called Alternate Mode, and the three sounds alternate with each strike.

As mentioned above, the *drumKAT* has nine inputs for external pads and triggers. The *drumKAT* also has its own version of waveform analysis called Train. It operates along the same lines as the *Portakit*'s Learn function, and has the same problem if you immediately follow a loud note with a soft one. Also, this one involves entering a loud hit and a soft one, whereas the *Portakit* "learns" the waveform with one stroke. But it works just as well as the *Portakit*, and you have the extra dynamic curve and sensitivity control.

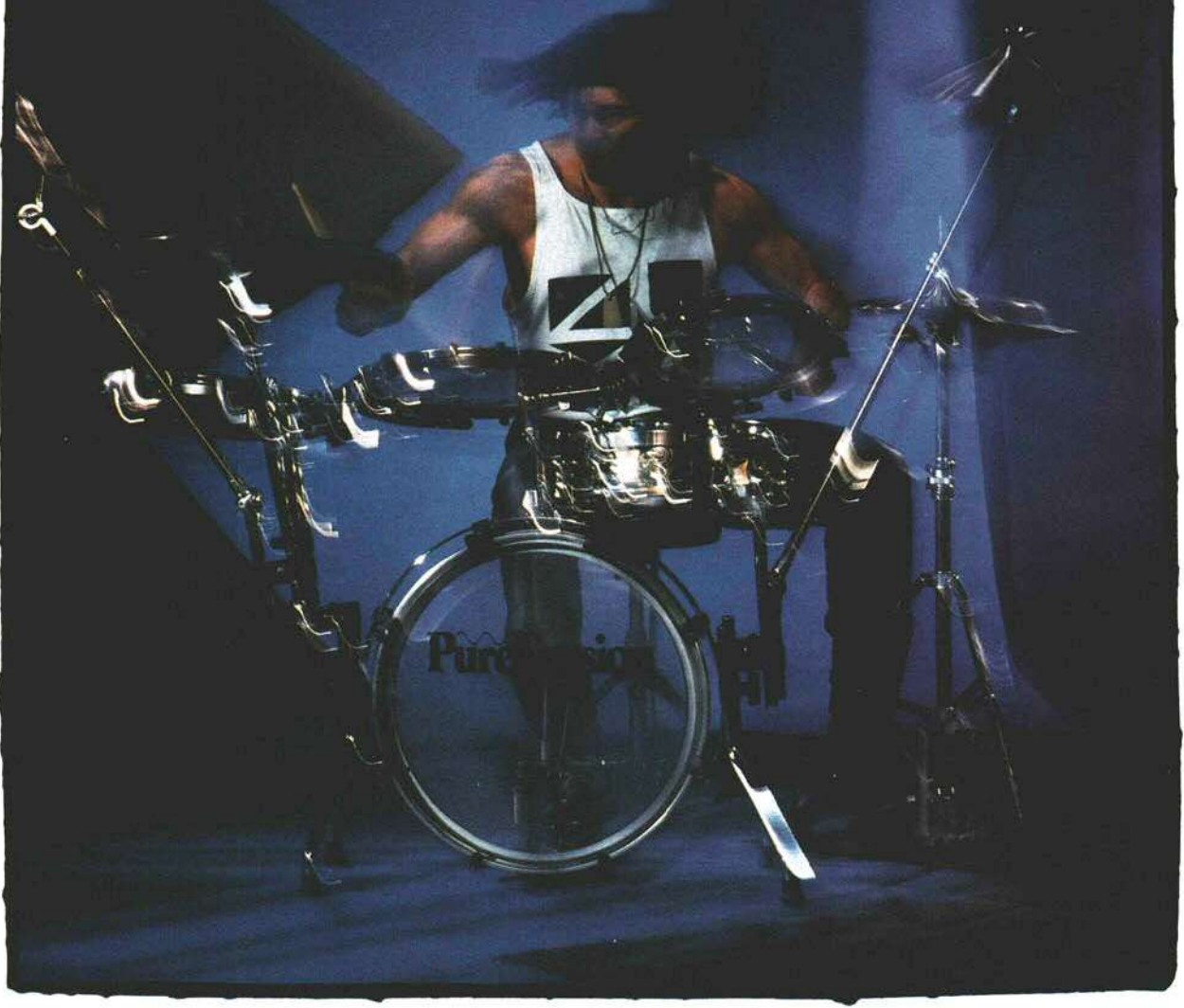
We did have a couple of complaints. For one thing, although you can't use this unit without having a footswitch, they do not include a footswitch with the unit. (According to a KAT spokesman, you can buy a good footswitch cheaper than they would have been able to provide one, so they are really saving you money in the long run. Just don't forget to pick one up when you buy your *drumKAT*.) Another thing that was missing was the ability to name a patch or kit. Yet another feature that would have been nice is cassette save. The *drumKAT* can involve some very time-consuming programming, and it would be nice to be able to back up your work in some way other than the MIDI-dump function.

There were a couple of features listed in the manual that have not been implemented yet, but are promised as software updates. Users of the KAT mallet controller tell us that the company is very good about sending updates, and so we tend to trust that these improvements will be turning up in the near future. The most recent of these updates that had been implemented on the unit that we received for review was a Tap-Tempo feature that lets you instantly change the tempo of a drum machine or sequencer you are controlling.

All in all, the *drumKAT* is the most advanced of the three units. It offers the most MIDI control, but you pay for that in terms of the *drumKAT* being difficult to use. Although the *drumKAT* has the best manual of the three multi-pads, we still would not recommend this as someone's first electronic device. And even if you've been using MIDI and electronics for a while, you'll have to spend some time with the *drumKAT* to be able to use it to its full advantage. But once you learn it, you'll be able to use MIDI control as a truly creative tool. List price is \$995.

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The Akai S950 Sampler

First the bad news: The cherished Akai S900 sampler is no longer being made. Now the good news: Akai has replaced it with the S950. If you are worried that the substantial disk library available for the S900 is now obsolete, it's not. The S950 is both upward and downward compatible. This means that it can use disks that were created for both the S900 and the newest top-of-the-line Akai sampler, the S1000.

Why would Akai replace a sampler that has been so successful in the marketplace? Because the S900 was a "closed-box" system. In other words, you had the internal memory and all the bells and whistles that were included with the sampler, but there was no way to expand. The S950 now offers that expandability.

Visually and functionally, the S900 and the S950 are very similar. The S950 sports improved analog-to-digital converters and a higher sampling rate than the S900. This increased sample rate expands the audio bandwidth to over 19,000 Hz. Another advance: the 2.0 software for the S900, previously available only on disk, has been built into the S950's operating system. This means that all the advanced features of the S900 are included, but without the tedious and time-consuming disk loading.

Let's back up a bit and cover some of the basic features of the S950. This eight-voice, 12-bit sampler has a range of six octaves (MIDI note numbers 24-96). Along with a set of stereo outputs, there is a mono output and eight individual audio cuts. The rear panel contains MIDI In, MIDI Out, and MIDI Thru, as well as a 13-pin voice output and an RS-232 computer port.

The front panel has a large, 40-character by two-line LCD with its own contrast dimmer control. There is also a MIDI Receive light that blinks whenever the S950 is receiving information over the MIDI cable. All the controls for user sampling are grouped together: two inputs (one for line level signals and another for mic' levels), a record or playback footswitch jack, record level controls, and a monitor volume knob. (This lets you hear your source sound at a different volume than the record level.) Having these controls and inputs on the front panel is very handy, especially for a rack-mounted unit.

There are eight function buttons on the front panel that navigate the user through all of the various features of the S950. The main modules are Play, Record, Edit Sample, Edit Program, MIDI, Utility, Disk, and Master Tune. Once you enter a module, the page up/down buttons move you through the various features. The left/right cursor buttons let you select different para-

eters that may be contained on the same page. Data values are entered into the S950 by using the 12-button keypad (the numbers 0-9 along with the yes/+ and no/- buttons) or a large control wheel.

Overall, the structure and commands for creating sounds on the S950 are just like those on the S900. Samples can be created using any sample rate between 7.5 kHz and 48 kHz (an audio bandwidth of 3,000 to 19,200 Hz). Once you've selected a sample to edit, you can copy it, delete it, rename it, change its loudness, change its nominal pitch (which note the original sample is located under), and fine-tune it up or down a half-step in one-cent increments (one hundredth of a half-step). Then you can determine if this sample is going to play one time only, loop in a forward direction, or loop in a forward/backward style. You can also force a sample to play backwards with one easy push of a button.

While in the sample edit mode, you can program a sample's start and end points. An automatic feature lets the computer inside the S950 determine the sample's start point. Since this feature works perfectly, it should be included on every sampler on the market. Once you have programmed the start and end points, a single command will return the unused samples to memory. Another memory-saving feature allows you to resample a sound at half its original bandwidth. Keep in mind that you don't actually have to *do* any of the resampling. It is resampled for you inside the S950.

As far as loops are concerned, the S950 only supports a single sustain loop. The loop's length is determined as a specific number of samples back from the sample's end point. There are controls for coarse and fine adjustment, along with an auto loop command. The auto loop worked well, producing reasonable-sounding loops with minimum hassle. There are controls for crossfade loopings, and even splicing two different samples together.

Perhaps the most intriguing feature on the S950 is called "time stretch." This function takes a sample and extends or shortens its length (anywhere from 1% to 999%) without altering the sample's pitch. Let's see how this might be a handy feature. Suppose you've got a great crash cymbal sample, but it's too short to get the type of decay you need. Just throw that sample into the time stretch machine, and presto—a longer sample. While this may sound like a great idea, it isn't quite that simple. You will have to experiment with the various time stretch parameters ("D time," mono or poly, and the percent of stretch) before you get the desired result. While it might take

several tries to get this feature under control, it is great for inventing new sounds! Believe it or not, I turned a snare drum sample into the hippest-sounding clavinet I've ever heard. I'm not sure how I did it, and I'm not sure that I could do it again, but it's a stunning sound so I saved it to disk. Experimentation would seem to be the essence of this feature.

Each sample can be assigned to a nominal key, and have a low-key limit and a high-key limit. In fact, you can lay two different samples (called soft and hard samples in the manual) under each MIDI note. Both the hard and soft samples can have their own loudness control, their own filter settings (a low pass filter that removes high frequencies), and their own course- and fine-tuning transposition. Of special note is the transposition range of up or down 50 half-steps (just over four octaves).

On this instrument, samples are assigned to one of 99 different keygroups. A keygroup can have one or several samples assigned to it, and can range from a single note to the entire six-octave range. Keygroups can be assigned their own four-stage ADSR amplitude envelope and another four-stage ADSR filter envelope. Each keygroup can have velocity assigned to four different parameters: the loudness of a sound, the cutoff frequency of the filter, the attack time of the amplitude envelope, and the release time of the amplitude envelope (used only when driving the sampler with an instrument that sends note-off velocity readings, i.e., no drum controllers). Velocity can also be used to control a feature called "warp." No, this won't send you reeling off into hyperspace, but it will act as a type of pitch-shift by starting a sample's attack slightly sharp or flat and then sliding up or down to the final pitch. If all that isn't enough, keygroups can be crossfaded by position, and hard and soft samples assigned to a keygroup can be crossfaded or switched by velocity.

In the MIDI department, the S950 comes fully equipped. There is a MIDI analyzer that reads incoming MIDI note data and displays the information on the LED. If you plan to use the S950 for sequencing, each keygroup can be assigned to a separate MIDI channel and still play in a polyphonic mode.

The disk button commands are fairly extensive, laying just about any type of sample and program disk management under your fingers. In addition to loading the entire contents of a disk into the S950's memory, there are options that let you load a single sample from a disk, load a single program (handy if you want to use a favorite pro-

Photo by Rick Mattingly



gram and assign new samples to it), or load a program along with all its samples. You can save the entire memory contents to disk, save a single sample, a single program, or a single program with all its samples. You also have the option of erasing a single sample or program from a disk.

There is one aspect about the S950 disk operation procedures that should be mentioned. Even though the advertisements say that the sampler can load new programs into memory while playing, you will need to have an expanded internal memory in order to make use of this feature.

Well, since the big news about the S950 is its expandability over the S900, let's see what options are available. The internal memory can be boosted with the addition of the EXM006 memory card. Each card holds 750 K (the same as the internal memory), and the S950 can access two expansion cards. With both cards mounted in place, there will be 2.25 megabytes inside the sampler.

The hard drive interface (IB105) serves two functions. Along with the ability to interface the hard disk to the S950, it doubles as a direct-from-digital sampling input. The S950 can use Atari or Supra hard disks. The Atari comes in a 20-megabyte size, and the Supra is available in 20-, 30-, and 60-megabyte flavors. I've heard that the Astra hard drives are also compatible, which may be a plus since the Astra drives are rack-mountable.

When using the hard disk, loading time for the full internal memory is reduced from around 40 seconds down to 8 seconds. If loading time is a critical factor for your sampler's applications (i.e., live performance), a hard disk is a real advantage. In addition, up to eight drives can be cascaded together.

The direct digital input is nothing short of fantastic. While I wasn't able to try this, the concept is very hip. If you own a CD

player or a DAT with a digital output, you can connect a cable directly from this output to the input of the IB105. The S950 supports both phono and fiberoptic cables for this purpose. Why is this a good idea? I'm glad you asked.

Several companies are producing compact discs for sampling. These discs contain high-quality recordings of just about any sound you may be looking for. When you use a CD sampling disc without this feature, the digital signal has to pass through one digital-to-analog converter to get out of the CD player, one analog-to-digital converter to get into the sampler, and one last D/A converter going from the sampler to your audio system. Each time the digital information makes its trip through a converter, there is a slight loss of quality. By using the digital output of a CD or DAT, you transfer the sound to the sampler entirely in the digital domain. Instead of three conversions, the sample is only converted to analog when passing through the audio jacks of the sampler.

In reality, when sampling from a CD or DAT into the S950, you are still going to lose a little quality. Remember that the S950 is a 12-bit sampler, while CD's and DAT machines are 16-bit devices. Internally, the S950 simply ignores the additional bits that are the least significant to the quality of the sample. But while there may be a slight loss when compared to the original source, the quality is still much higher than it would be if the CD or DAT audio outputs were simply plugged into the S950's sampling input jack. When you sample a CD using the special interface, a sample rate of 44.1 kHz is automatically selected for you. With DAT machines, the S950 can use either a 32 kHz or a 48 kHz sample rate.

The ME35T audio-to-MIDI trigger interface is a single-space rack-mounted converter with eight programmable inputs that use 1/4" phone jacks. Each of the inputs can

be programmed to send any MIDI note number over any of the 16 MIDI channels. Each input has its own controls for sensitivity, capture time (delaying the note-on message from 0-20 milliseconds), on time (from 10 ms. to one second in increments of 10 ms.), trigger threshold, recovery time ranging from 0-20 milliseconds (masking to prevent false or double triggers), and any one of eight velocity curves.

Since the S950 and the ME35T were "made for each other," you can edit the parameters of the interface through system-exclusive messages generated by the S950. In addition, configurations created for the interface can be saved on S950 disks! Very cool!

With all these wonderful options, a full-featured S950 won't come cheap. The ME35T trigger-to-MIDI interface lists for \$499.95. The EXM006 expansion memory cards list for \$449.95 (remember that the S950 can hold two of these), and the IB105 hard disk interface has a list price of \$169.95. Let's see now: Add the price of the sampler—\$2,499.95—and that comes to over \$4,000.00 without actually buying the hard disk. This is a substantial sum of money, but let's look at what you'll have: First, you'll have 2.25 megabytes of internal memory, which is enough for almost 190 seconds of samples at the lowest bandwidth and almost 30 seconds at full bandwidth. You'll also have an eight-channel trigger interface, and up to 26 full memory dumps on-line inside the hard disk (if you've got a 60-meg drive). If you've really got bucks burning a hole in your pocket, remember that you can cascade up to eight 60-meg hard drives to this baby. A little math will tell you that's 480 megabytes of storage! Enough for over 500 floppy disks on-line at once!

Could the S950's expandability be its biggest drawback as well as its biggest feature? Is anyone actually going to load this

gizmo up with all the memory and hard disks that can be supported? After all, it is "only" a 12-bit machine. For the kind of dough mentioned above, a musician might consider spending a couple thousand more and getting a 16-bit, 16-voice, stereo sampler that can support up to eight megabytes of internal memory, an optical disk drive (they are just being released), and a third-party trigger-to-MIDI interface.

Praises

The S950 sounds very good. In fact, at the highest sampling bandwidth, it sounds super! Since the S950 is expandable, it can be configured to fit your needs. You can buy the basic machine now and upgrade it with more memory or a hard disk when you get the funds. With the optional trig-

ger-to-MIDI interface, it's a drummer's dream. Just tell each sample to fire in its "one shot" style and you're home free. Since the S950 will read disks that were created on the S900, there are literally hundreds of usable disks available from Akai, third-party companies, user groups, and on-line services.

Gripes

The manual for the S950 isn't going to win any awards. If a manufacturer only gives you 25 pages of help for an instrument with this many features, those pages ought to be good. The manual should clearly explain all the functions and, at some point or another, it should be proof-read by someone who speaks English. Have you ever heard of the "Drum setting load/save assignment"? The manual is full of such typos, as well as totally erroneous information. For instance, other parts of the manual state that "The Disk Activity light in the lower right side of the drive will turn on" (the light is on the left side of the drive), and that you can begin sampling when you "press a footswitch plugged into the rear panel footswitch jack" (the jack is on the front panel). Other features of the S950 (such as the 13-pin voice output and the MIDI loudness control) aren't even *mentioned* in the manual.

I'm not sure that anyone—even musicians with a lot of electronic instrument experience—could go through this man-

ual, and come out feeling as though they know the instrument. If you're a novice with samplers, plan to get some help from your dealer, a user group, or a friend. Keep in mind that the sampler isn't difficult to operate, it's just that the manual is a dog. To be fair, there is a source you can tap for this missing information. If you have trouble, one phone call to the technical assistance line at Akai should help. My questions were answered quickly, correctly, and coherently.

It would be nice if the S950 supported a release loop, or if you could set loop points independently from the sample stop point. This won't pose a problem for anyone using the sampler as a sound source from drums, but when sequencing, release loops can give a dull and static sample more life.

All in all, the S950 is a worthy successor to the S900. It contains more features and flexibility than the S900 and sounds better. It also carries a list price that is \$500 less than the original S900. For those of you who are interested in getting a sampler that has a lot of disks, sounds clean, and is easy to use, the S950 may be just what the doctor ordered. The S950, along with a single hard drive, a single EXM006 memory expansion, and the ME35T interface would make a very hip, cost-effective rig. For more information, contact Akai Professional (International Music Corporation), 1316 East Lancaster, Fort Worth, Texas 76102, (317) 336-5114.



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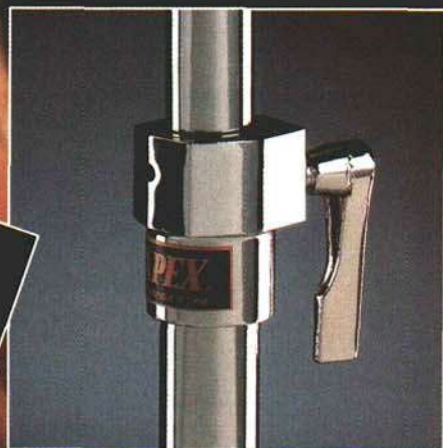
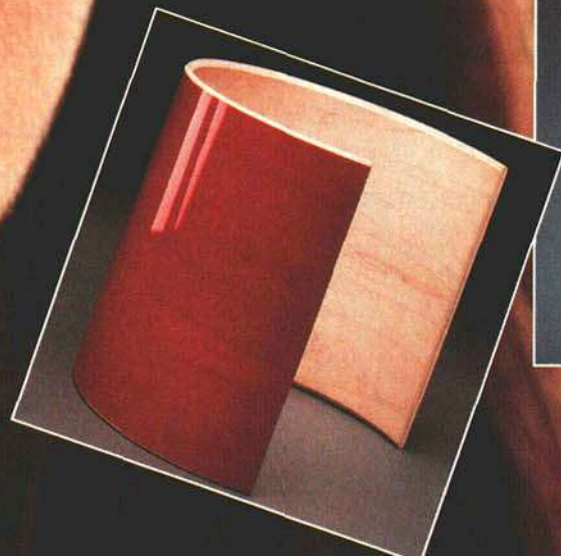
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Funkadiddles

MUSIC KEY



One of the most interesting aspects of funk/rock drumming is experimenting with basic rudimental stickings around the drumset to achieve complex-sounding patterns that groove. Possibly the most adaptable rudiment of all is the simple single paradiddle (RLRR LRL L).

The right hand should be played on the bell of the cymbal in all of the following examples, or on a muffled cowbell. For starters, the left hand plays on the snare drum only in patterns 1 through 5. Be sure to maintain a strong accent on 2 and 4, and keep all unaccented left-hand notes much softer. Note how the five bass drum variations give each beat a different character. Start slowly, building to top speed gradually.

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

1

2

3

4

5

In patterns 6 through 10, the left hand now plays an open hi-hat "bark" on the "e" of the first and third paradiddle. Get comfortable with the hand coordination first before attempting the bass drum variations.

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

6

7

8

9

10

Patterns 11 through 15 involve further left hand movement. In addition to the hi-hat bark, move back to a closed hi-hat for the last two notes of the second and fourth paradiddles. Don't lose sight of the importance of maintaining a strong snare drum accent on 2 and 4.

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

11

12

13

14

15

by Mark Hurley

The last set is another variation on the previous patterns. Here, the "&" and "ah" of the second and fourth paradiddles are played on a small tom. Note the counterclockwise motion of the left hand. Adding the bass drum can present a coordination challenge, so take your time. Avoid increasing the speed until you're comfortable with the coordination and can play each pattern with a solid and relaxed groove.

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

16

17

18

19

20

This is just a small sample of what can be done with a simple single paradiddle. Use this as a springboard to create your own ideas. For inspiration, listen to Steve Gadd, Dave Weckl, Steve Smith, and Vinnie Colaiuta—players who have mastered the creative use of rudimental stickings in contemporary drumming.



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"YOUR ONE STOP DRUM SHOP"

It's Never Too Late

by Roy Burns

Not too long ago, I received a phone call that went something like this: "Mr. Burns, I have a friend who's a very successful rock drummer, but doesn't read music. He's never taken lessons, but has decided to take the plunge. Can we set up an appointment?"

We set up the appointment. At the lesson, I was quite surprised to discover that the drummer in question was none other than Bill Ward, the original drummer with Black Sabbath. Bill explained to me that he has been doing a lot of studio work and some producing, and has run into situations where reading would have been a big help. He did not like the feeling of guessing how certain parts were supposed to be played. He wanted to be sure he understood what was necessary, since the studio work he was now doing was very different from touring with a group.

By the second lesson, Bill was actually sightreading quarter and 8th notes. His eyes lit up, and in a mildly British accent he said, "I feel as though the eagle has just landed." He was so relieved that it was not as difficult as he imagined it would be. He

even said, "I wish I had done this sooner."

I have a lot of respect for Bill and for what he is doing. People rarely go back and learn things they probably should have learned when they were younger. They tend to just keep putting things off, rationalizing that they really don't need to read right now. I read where a famous guitar player actually said that, with the advent of tape recorders, it was no longer *necessary* to read music. This is such a childish statement that I was sad to see it printed in a well-known magazine.

Many years ago, a young man by the name of Ron Carducci came to me and said, "I'm already 19 years old. Is it too late to begin playing the drums?" I told him that it was not too late if he really applied himself. Within 10 years, Ron was playing all the shows at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas in the house orchestra. He is a good example of what can happen when you apply yourself.

Learning to read music is a lot like going to the dentist: The fear of going is usually much worse than the experience. In Bill's case, it had been on his mind for years. On one studio date, the conductor and the rhythm section began to discuss what could be played in a certain part of the music. Bill felt very uneasy because he couldn't understand what they were talking about. Fortunately, after he was able to hear it, he realized it was not all that complicated. However, that feeling of not being sure is what made his decision for him. He said to himself, "I am finally going to learn to read."

As I explained to Bill, reading drum music is much easier than reading the newspaper. The English alphabet has 26 letters that can be combined endlessly. Drummers only have to learn six note values and six rests—only 12 symbols in all. Even when you add the various forms of triplets, they are still based on the same fundamental note values. At any rate, reading music is just simple mathematics.

At the present time, I have a very talented young student who is planning on attending Berklee College of Music next term. When he first began to study with me, his reading skills were quite poor. One day, when he was getting a little discouraged, I told him, "Look! As far as talent, feel, hearing, and ability go, you are a 'ten.' As far as reading and technique go, you are only a 'three.' However, that is no problem. I can't teach talent, but I *can* teach you how to read and how to play the instrument. It just takes a little time and some patience."

Today, his reading is excellent and his control has improved greatly. Because reading is no longer a problem, he has more confidence. That's one of the side benefits of learning to read: Proving to yourself that you can do it makes you feel good about yourself. It helps you face the next challenge with a more positive attitude. Each thing that you learn in life helps prepare you for the next learning experience. After a while, you develop confidence in your *ability* to learn! This, in itself, makes learning easier. And once you make it easier, you can make it fun!

Bill Ward and I have had a lot of fun at his lessons. Working with someone of Bill's age and experience is different from the usual teacher/student relationship. It's more a sharing of experience. We've had a lot of laughs as he has discovered that it really is easier than he thought.

Bill has also expressed a desire to learn the rudiments. He wants to cover the areas he missed by not studying sooner. He is smart enough to know that studying is not going to "mess up his style" or "make him less creative." He will simply know more about music and understand more about drumming. He already *has* a proven style. He wants to expand it.

I don't want to embarrass Bill, but I really do admire his spirit. I look forward to his lessons, because we have become friends. I want all of you to know about Bill in the hope that his experiences will encourage many of you to study and learn to read.

Those of you who might be putting off learning to read should make a decision. Decide to go back and learn. You will be glad you did. Remember, when you lack information, you have less to work with in your career. And it doesn't matter what your age happens to be. Bill is no youngster. By the same token, Ron Carducci thought it might be too late at the age of 19. Believe me, if you really want to learn, it's never too late!



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SIMMONS

by Jim Pfeifer

Multi-Tom Fills On A Five-Piece Set: Part 2

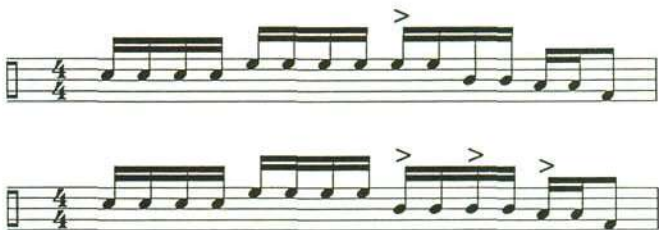
MUSIC KEY



This month, we'll continue where we left off with more examples of how to play a multi-tom fill on a five-piece set. Last time, we looked at several well-known drummers to get examples of multi-tom fills. Let's start this column out with a drummer known for his lengthy fills, Nicko McBrain of Iron Maiden, who powers out this multi-tom fill in the song "The Trooper":



You can express this fill idea on your five-piece set several ways. One way is by incorporating accents to imply movement to another tom; another is by using the snare as a substitute for a high-pitched tom. Here are two adaptations using these methods:



Drummers with lots of toms always seem to have one or two extra low-pitched toms that you don't have. What are they playing on—three floor toms and a gong bass drum? Not usually. The low sound they get is mostly the result of hard work by the sound engineer in the recording studio. An engineer can make a 12" tom sound like a cannon through the magic of recording studio electronics. This is something to keep in mind when trying to adapt fills.

With brain work and imagination, we can adapt fills that extend below the range of a normal five-piece set. Here's a fill that Tommy Lee of Motley Crue plays in "Home Sweet Home":



In the following adaptation, the solution is simple: Play the last three notes on your floor tom, and don't worry about moving to a bigger drum that you don't have, because you don't need to. This adaptation is still a great fill:



Here is another fill that Tommy plays in the same song:



To adapt this fill, your medium tom can function as a floor tom, leaving your floor tom open for the low notes in the original.



The next fill is played by Dave Holland of Judas Priest in the song "Take These Chains":



Each of the following two adaptations works just fine on a standard five-piece set. (Play the accents!)



Now you can get to work and adapt your favorite multi-tom fills on your own drums, and don't forget, use your imagination. In a few years, you might see *your* name mentioned in *Modern Drummer* as the next great up-and-coming fill artist!



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there are a few other things in the works. So I would hope to build *The Big Picture* into a business for doing music for film, and also for live performance, whereby we can explore the outer limits of percussion ensemble music. Again, we can strike a pad, and any sound can come out. But it all has to be judged as music; we're way past the point of simply being impressed with the ability to make a certain sound by striking a pad. It's got to be music.

RM: A few years ago, a drummer played drums, a guitar player played guitar, and so on. But with everyone having access to every sound through MIDI and electronics, perhaps someday we won't be classifying people according to a specific instrument. Perhaps we'll just call them...

MS: Musicians. Yeah. But the reality is that we are drummers, and we strike things with sticks. And when you make music that way, it comes out differently than if you sat at a piano. Even when we had simple melodies that we could play on the keyboard, we always went back to playing that simple melody on the pads, because our attack would be different. There are variations in the sound just because of that aspect.

But I'll tell you what all this stuff has done to me: It's brought me right back to acoustic drums, more than ever. That's why my solo album is all live acoustic drums. I went full circle—right back to my original love for just picking up sticks and playing the drums and the cymbals. I'm grateful to the electronics for sending me back to my original instrument with a renewed appreciation.

In the future, I think we are still going to have the great drummers who specialize. And it's those specialists that we are going to be so grateful for, rather than the people who do everything. I know that I get so involved doing whatever I'm doing, and going through whatever I'm going through, and then I put something on like Elvin Jones, and I'm just so grateful to people like



Photo by Pat Johnson

David Beal and Michael

that for doing what they do. I've come back to an admiration of the craft itself, and for the masters of the drumset and the lineage of that instrument. I bought the CD of *The Individualism Of Gil Evans* just to hear Elvin's cymbal better. It's such an identifiable sound; it's not just another synthesizer.

Everybody always gets so carried away with equipment. We often lose sight of why we are in it in the first place. It

might be incredible MIDI this and MIDI that, but so what? The most important thing still is that the music moves you. Our responsibility as musicians is to not be like everybody else, but to find an individual voice within ourselves. And oftentimes that means *not* having all the same equipment that everybody has.

So this whole electronics thing is like anything else. There are great people playing the stuff and making use of it. I feel that percussion is an area of it that is very untapped. So I'm excited to be a part of that with *The Big Picture*. There are classical percussion ensembles and avant-garde percussion ensembles, but there aren't any mainstream groups made up of a group of guys striking things. So if David and I can contribute to that, then I feel that it's something worthwhile.

RM: You were actually one of the first drummers to get involved with electronics.

MS: I've been into electronics since 1971 when I played the Impakt electronic drums. In fact, I invested in the company, and I think they were the first electronic drum. They were invented by a man named Steve Lammé, from

Portland, Oregon, who passed away last year. He was a visionary and an inventor. I worked closely with Steve and his son, Etienne. He never saw the commercial success that was due him. People who used to work for him went off and started their own companies—some of them quite well-known—and now electronic drums are a part of our daily life. *The Big Picture* is dedicated to Steve.

I first used electronic drums in public with Co, with Stomu Yamashta, Steve Winwood, and Klaus Schulze, in a performance at the Royal Albert Hall in 1976. I also used them on the first Automatic Man record that same year. I got disenchanted with electronic drums in the late '70s, and just said, "Forget about it." Then I got back into them on a solo album I did called *Transfer Station Blue*, and on *In Suspect Terrain*, which was almost exclusively done with Linn machine programming. And now I've used electronics on *The Leaving Time* and *The Big Picture*.

I think there's a place for acoustic drums and electronic drums, and that they can be integrated very naturally.

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One thing I always found a little difficult was that the electronics had a certain sound and a certain feel, and the acoustics had such a different sound and feel. The electronics could sound bigger, and when you came back to the acoustics, they sounded small. So it was sometimes difficult integrating them together. But electronics are like anything else: The more time you spend with them, the friendlier they become. It's like a computer; you spend a Sunday afternoon with one, and it gets nice because there's some sort of symbiotic relationship going on. Pretty soon your wife has to drag you away from it. It's no longer Monday-night football; it's the computer. I think it's getting a little dated for people to complain that electronics feel different. Everybody knows that now, so you just use it accordingly.

One of the interesting things about electronics is that sampling technology has created a renewed awareness of acoustic instruments. We can now play instruments on pads that we would never be able to play with our hands—things like African hand drums, bata drums, and tablas. We might not play them authentically, but we have access to the sounds, and we have a new awareness of the *organic* sound of these instruments. One thing I've come to appreciate is the concert bass drum. I wouldn't have come to that appreciation normally, because I don't play symphonic music. But a sample of one attracted me to the sound, and then when we were in Seattle I went to a music store and played a concert bass drum. It was the most incredible thing. It wasn't the same as playing the sample. It was like something brand new. I think it says something when state-of-the-art technology

brings us back to acoustic instruments.

RM: In keeping with what you said before about coming full-circle back to acoustic drums, that's what you play on your new solo album, *Stiletto*. How did that project come about?

MS: Well, I had spent the past couple of years doing a lot of synthesis and sampling stuff with Steve and David. So when it came time for me to put together the music and musicians for a solo project, I wanted to go completely acoustic. I also wanted to work in the vein of music that was one of my original sources for desiring to play music, which was more of a jazz, loose, improvised setting.

I put together a group of musicians that I respect and admire, with Mark Isham on trumpet, who I love as both a trumpet player and composer. I had David Torn and Andy Summers on guitar, because I wanted to get a very open sound with two guitars and no keyboard. I was listening a lot to Bass Desires at the time, with Peter Erskine, Bill Frisell, and John Scofield, and I loved that sound. I was really excited about getting David and Andy together. I've always loved Andy's playing with The Police, as well as his solo work. I first heard David Torn in a solo performance at the Bottom Line in New York. I watched him use delays and loops in a process where he would start one loop, add another, and then another, and begin soloing on top of it. It was one of the best things I'd heard in so long. At that point I said, "I really have to find someplace to work with David." Then I got Terje Gewelt from Boston on bass, who plays acoustic, fretless, and regular electric bass on the album.

I wrote the music by first thinking, "I would like to have a piece of music that I could play this way on." So I would play something on the drums, then I'd start to write music and put it into a sequencer, and then I'd go back and play drums to that. I wanted the music to have a feel

sort of like Miles in the late '60s—the *ESP* and *Sorcerer* period, with Tony and Herbie and Wayne. I hadn't been hearing a lot of music lately with that kind of melodic structure over a loose feel. I don't come from that school of drumming like Vinnie, Weckl, or Gadd. I respect and listen to those guys, but that's not really where I come from. So I wanted to go back to the music that was my original impulse for playing, and that's how I came up with the direction for this record. I look at it like a new beginning. Even though I've had several albums out, I look at this as my first solo album, and from here I can go wherever I want. I also hope to play this music live with this group of musicians.

So anyway, I made tapes of the music I had written, and I wrote everything out, and we went into the studio. I flew James Farber in from New York to engineer it, because he does so many of the records I like with guys like Erskine and Brecker, in addition to doing all the hot Nile Rodgers stuff. Everybody was just great and worked real hard. The studio was called The Site, in Marin County, just up the road from George Lucas's film studio. I had arranged a studio tour one day, because everybody in the band does film scores. But no one wanted to go; they just

"We're way past the point of simply being impressed with the ability to make a certain sound by striking a pad. It's got to be music."

wanted to keep working on the music. I was real moved by that, and I was really impressed by how focussed everybody was. We recorded the whole record in five days. I mean, that's no big deal; a lot of people do records in five days, but not in rock 'n' roll, and I had just finished doing *The Big Picture*, which took almost two years. So it was inspiring for me to write the music, get the musicians together, and go in there and do it.

So it's an important record for me, in the sense that musically I wanted to say something like this as a leader. I'm especially pleased with the title track, "Stiletto"—the improvising that went on and the way my playing came out. There's only one piece that uses some electronic stuff, where I'm playing some metal sounds, and that's a tune called "Gauguin's Regret." I also got the opportunity to do "Las Vegas Tango" by Gil Evans, which is from that album I mentioned earlier, *The Individualism Of Gil Evans*. I've wanted to do that piece for damn near 20 years.

RM: Although it's coming out as your solo album, it has very much of a band feeling. You didn't fill the album up with a bunch of drum solos.

MS: It might partly be that I had just finished *The Big Picture*, which I consider sort of a percussion album. But the main thing was, if I was going to put out an album as a leader, then I wanted to play the way that I wanted to play. So the pieces are very representative of how I play in an improvised context, and the album does end with a song that has a short solo. But I didn't feel the need to make a drum-solo type of record. I'd rather be playing within the music. Not that I'm opposed to putting a drum solo on a record—I certainly have a collection of records with great drum solos, and I'm sure that I'll play solos if we tour with this music. I'd like to do another drum solo on a record at some point—maybe the next one. Were you disappointed that there weren't more solos?

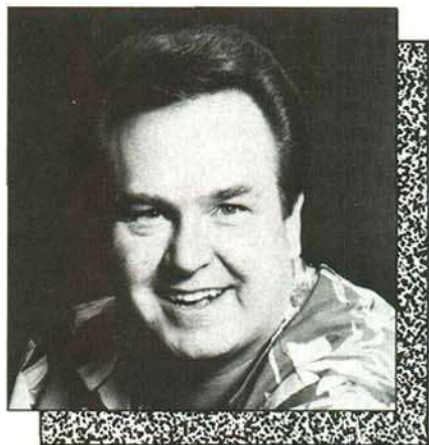
RM: Not at all. It only occurred to me later, when I was preparing for this interview. I was thinking about the fact that many people first became aware of you because of the

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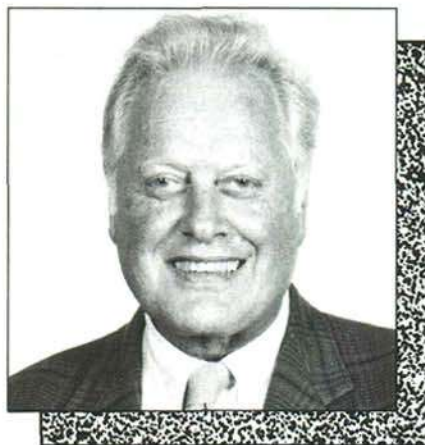
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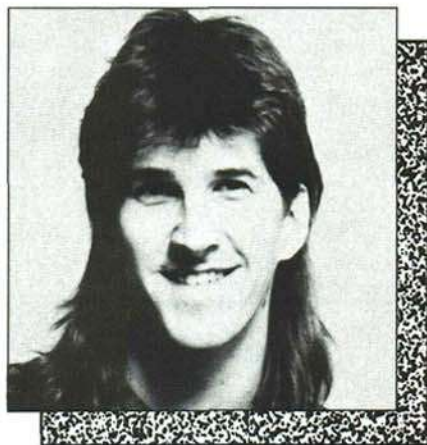
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drum solo you played in the *Woodstock* movie, and so maybe a lot of people would expect a big solo on your record.

MS: It's true, and it's something I don't forget. Just yesterday I got a letter from a guy in San Diego who was telling me that he learned that whole solo, and he was asking me if I used a double paradiddle at one point, and so on. I used to be sort of offended, because ten years later, people would come up to me and ask me about Woodstock. No matter how much work I do or how many different situations I get involved in...

RM: You're still the guy who played a drum solo at the Woodstock festival in 1969.

MS: Yeah, [laughs] But I've come full circle with that as well. I've realized that certain people have things happen at some point that they're going to be known for the rest of their life, and you can't spend the rest of your life trying to match or top it. It happened, and I'm fortunate that it happened. I was 19 years old, and I was playing a drum solo in front of that many people. People do still ask me about it but I've learned to accept it.

RM: You mentioned earlier that you have come back to an admiration for the lineage of the drumset and the masters of that instrument. Who are some of the contemporary drummers you like? You've mentioned Peter Erskine already.

MS: I've come to respect Peter Erskine so much. His career just seems so... honest. He's writing music, he's using the Mac to assist him in writing, he's using electronics, he's true to the art of drumming, he's making his own records, he's playing with great musicians. I look at him as someone who has a lot of integrity. I like what he's doing with his life.

I'm enjoying Paul Wertico's stuff with Pat Metheny. Coming from Santana and playing with other percussionists, I enjoy the combination of jazz and Brazilian percussion in the Metheny group, and I think the compositions are wonderful. So it's a real nice package of music, and Paul's playing in it is really great. Another drummer I respect is Gregg Bissonette, who's famous for the stuff he's done with David Lee Roth, but the guy can really play the drums. He sounds great on the Brandon Fields album.

I also like Trilok Gurtu. I first heard his playing on an Oregon record, and I really liked the sound of the drums. I was just getting ready to do my solo record, and I was trying to tune my bass drum to sound like Trilok's sounded on that record. Then he played locally, and I went to see him. Lo and behold, he had no bass drum! I really had to laugh at myself for trying to tune to a bass drum that didn't exist. He was using a floor tom. So I think he's doing some really nice stuff. I also saw him with John McLaughlin and Jonas Hellborg, and that was great because of all the Indian stuff that he and John did. And then his cymbal stuff is very much in the Elvin Jones area.

I've been enjoying Dennis Chambers' playing with the Scofield band. It's more in the funk vein, and boy, he's really hittin' it. It sounds like he might be coming from a lineage of, among other things, James Brown and David Garibaldi—another great drummer. I always keep an eye out for Terry Bozzio's work. I was a big fan of Missing Persons, I love his stuff with Mark Isham, and I can't wait to

hear what he's doing with Jeff Beck.

RM: There's one drummer I have to ask you about, and that's Bill Bruford. I've always thought that the two of you were very similar, in that you both seem to like to insert yourselves into different situations just to see what will happen and what you can learn.

MS: [laughs] I know exactly what you're talking about. I just read the recent interview with Bill in *Modern Drummer*, and there was one thing he said that I loved, which was something to the effect that his job is to explore the boundaries of these instruments and see what he can do. I have a lot of respect for the choices that Bill has made, and I oftentimes feel the same way he does. I feel that I'm not here just to play gigs, but to try to make my own way and do interesting things. And I look at him as someone who is doing interesting things.

It's nice to see people who seem to be aligning themselves with what they truly want to do. It's not easy. You oftentimes have to make less money, and you turn some things down because they just don't fit in with the schedule you've made

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of what's important to you. So it's a different path than to just go where the money is. Sometimes you stop and consider, "Well, maybe I should have done that," but that's not the reason you got into it in the first place. Sometimes I talk to younger drummers who say, "I want to get into jingles, because that's where the money is." Although a lot of great drummers do jingles, I don't think it's so good to *aspire* to that. Do whatever you have to in order to pay your bills, but at least have higher aspirations. Of course, I guess that's no different than seeing a greater percentage of college students going to business school, and less people going into the arts. In a lot of ways it's understandable, because it's harder and harder for people to make a living, or for young couples to afford a house. But geeze—if you're not aspiring to something else.... People should at least have dreams.

RM: You may find this interesting: We just heard that Bruford is doing a Yes reunion with Jon Anderson, Rick Wakeman, and Steve Howe. Again, the two of

you seem to be following similar paths, in that you just did a Santana reunion.

MS: It was actually good for me to play that music again and see where I came from. The thing is, if you know that you are still able to do the things you want to do, and you're not doing it at the cost of everything you've been working towards, then it can be a completely worthwhile experience. There's no reason to be rigid and stuck in your ways. So I hope he finds it to be a worthwhile experience.

RM: Looking at your recent projects side by side—Santana, *The Leaving Time*, *The Big Picture*, and *Stiletto*—each one could be a different drummer.

MS: Yeah, I'm acutely aware of that.

RM: Then what do you perceive your identity to be? Who are you, Michael?

MS: [laughs] Who am I? I know that I'm somebody who enjoys trying different things, and like you said earlier, I do enjoy putting myself in different musical situations to see what will happen. In some ways, that's hindered me career-wise, because people

don't have a handle on me. I'm not Tony Williams or Peter Erskine the jazz drummer; I'm not Gregg Bissonette the rock drummer; I'm not Dennis Chambers the funk drummer. But I'm interested in music, and I'm interested in all the different areas that I can fit my drums and percussion into.

I remember distinctly that after Woodstock I was obligated to play drum solos every night with Santana. So I did a lot of research on American kit drummers like Max Roach, Tony Williams, Philly Joe, Chico Hamilton, and everybody in between. Then I started looking outside of American kit drummers and found Stomu Yamashta, a Japanese classical percussionist. I started to become fascinated with people who were doing interesting things outside of their immediate area. And I still find that I'm interested in those people, although I've also regained respect for people who have an expertise in a specific area.

But for me, I'm curious to try different things and to work in different musical situations and collaborations with interesting

people. And I learned from people like Stomu Yamashta and Klaus Schulze that if you do interesting things, then interesting people will find it and hear it. So I don't worry so much about if I'm real popular with the rest of the American drummers or if my record is on the charts—the sort of things that you tend to be judged by in this country. I have to go where my ears and my heart lead me. If I hear something that moves me, then I'm interested in participating in that. And that's why I've moved in so many areas, because the music has pulled me in all those ways.

I see certain people who do things that make them more famous; I've been around long enough to know what those things are. But then I see people who are aligned with themselves, and they just do what they do and get recognition for that. I want something that's going to last for a while. So I'm interested in the long run—the longer rhythms and cycles of a musician's career.



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Thoughts On Playing Free: Part 1

It has been said that writing about music is as effective as dancing about architecture. It is especially thorny to try to demonstrate musical concepts about "free" or "open" styles of drumming through words alone. Talking this over with my trusted editor, Rick Mattingly, he recommended that I describe and display an open style of jazz drumming, "something in between chaos and playing 1 every bar." Hmmmm. Food for thought.

I started by setting pencil to paper, and came up with these two thoughts:

Listening To Other Musicians

§

Making Your Own Statement

Next, I drew this symbol:



And then I turned on the television.

While the Public Broadcasting System news was recapping the day's events, I stared at my piece of paper and considered my incomplete thesis. Playing "free" isn't exactly "listening to other musicians" vs. "making your own statement." Rather, it is a more interrelated concept, so that my drawing of the Tao, or the "yin-yang" symbol, seemed to make good sense graphically. You have to be acutely aware of everything else that the other musicians are playing, yet you must be able to make your own unique musical statement, without being merely imitative.

I then wrote down the notion that "Everything is timekeeping." This stems from my belief that any and all colors, sounds, or rhythms that I play on the drums function as timekeeping; not only do they bear witness to the velocity taking place, they are the heartbeat, pulse, and frame of reference for all forward movement in the music. In more basic terms, I don't approach drumming as "now I'll play three bars of time, now I'll play a fill, and now I'll play

some time again...." *Everything* is timekeeping, whether or not it's played on the ride cymbal.

Before I had the chance to scribble any more profundities onto paper, the PBS show *Nova* came on the air. I decided to watch, and a remarkable coincidence took place. The topic of *Nova* that evening was "The Order Of Chaos." The same word that Rick had used to orientate my thinking for describing "free" drumming, *chaos*, was what this show was about! So I watched, and I kept my pad of paper handy for taking notes. The next day, while browsing in an airport bookstore, I happened upon a copy of *Chaos: Making A New Science*, by James Gleick. Another coincidence!

Chaos is a new science that is mathematical in origin, but is manifested in everyday life. The study of chaos reveals patterns and a hidden order in nature and cyclic events. It has brought together many disciplines of science (mathematics, physics, biology, etc.). As you'll see, we may have fun with the language and include drumming and free music, too.

As Gleick explains in his book, "The first chaos theorists...shared certain sensibilities. They had an eye for pattern, especially pattern that appeared on different scales at the same time. They had a taste for randomness and complexity, for jagged edges and sudden leaps. Believers in chaos...speculate about determinism and free will, about evolution, about the nature of conscious intelligence...they are looking for the whole." Sounds like a job description for a free-jazz musician!

Predictability is a very important part of traditional science (as well as pop and mainstream music). But we can discover more about those things around us if we consider that seemingly random behavior does have its own order—some sort of structure or containment. A relatively simple mathematical equation can model a turbulent or violent phenomenon. The more open-ended result comes from the fact that tiny differences in input can quickly become overwhelming differences in output—a factor given the name "sensitive dependence on initial conditions." In other words, a chain of events can reach a point of crisis where small changes are magnified dramatically. Chaos would have us understand that such points are everywhere; i.e., they are pervasive.

In 1961, while attempting to produce complex behavior in a computer model, a

scientist named Edward Lorenz came up with a system of just three equations. Gleick elaborates: "They were nonlinear, meaning that they expressed relationships that were not strictly proportional. Linear relationships can be captured with a straight line on a graph. Linear relationships are easy to think about: *the more the merrier*. Linear equations are solvable, which makes them suitable for textbooks. Linear systems have an important modular virtue: you can take them apart, and put them together again—the pieces add up.

"Nonlinear systems generally cannot be solved and cannot be added together. In fluid systems and mechanical systems, the nonlinear terms tend to be the features that people want to leave out when they try to get a good, simple understanding. Friction, for example. Without friction a simple linear equation expresses the amount of energy you need to accelerate a hockey puck. With friction the relationship gets complicated, because the amount of energy changes depending on how fast the puck is already moving. Nonlinearity means that the act of playing the game has a way of changing the rules. You cannot assign a constant importance to friction, because its importance depends on speed. Speed, in turn, depends on friction. That twisted changeability makes nonlinearity hard to calculate, but it also creates rich kinds of behavior that never occur in linear systems."

You may have guessed that the ubiquitous appearance of the words "linear" and "nonlinear" in discussions of chaos further intrigued me. The so-called "linear" style of drumming represents, to me anyway, a rather calculated and controlled method of timekeeping and beat-making—relatively easy to present by way of transcription, tidy in execution, neat and not very messy. Nonlinear drumming is, for me, potentially a much more expressive approach to music making. The flow, torrent, and calm of such drummers as Ed Blackwell, Paul Motian, Jack DeJohnette, Andrew Cyrille, Roy Haynes, Rashied Ali, Bob Moses, Elvin Jones, et al, is rich in sound, color, and motion, and not very easy to notate on paper. Indeed, I would suggest that the student who listens to them for the purpose of transcribing their drumming may well be missing the point. Remember, we want to be able to see the forest as well as the trees. Our time is much better spent listening to

continued on page 90

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Brazil is well known for its myriad percussive instruments. The pandeiro stands out among them all as one of the most interesting and challenging. It is used in all types of musical contexts, both traditional and contemporary, due to its tremendous versatility. In the hands of an experienced player, the pandeiro can sound like a caixa (snare drum), a ganzá (shaker), and an atabaque (conga-like drum), all rolled into one. I also find it remarkable that the pandeiro is essentially played with one hand (while the other hand holds the instrument).

The Brazilians have truly developed the technique of playing the pandeiro into an art form. There are musicians who not only play the pandeiro with great speed and dexterity, but also dance and juggle several pandeiros with incredible acrobatic skill and grace, all simultaneously. These talented individuals are known as ritmistas, and several of the best ones are featured with the samba schools during Carnaval.

The Brazilian pandeiro is closest to what is known as the tambourine in the U.S. It is a round frame drum about 10" to 13" in diameter with jingles suspended in the frame and a skin or plastic head stretched over the top. The hardware is usually more heavy-duty than what is found on most tambourines. The frame is usually made of wood, but is sometimes made of metal or plastic. The thickness of the frame varies from approximately 1/8" to 1".

The technique of playing the pandeiro is unique. It is also awkward at first, but with a little persistence, you'll get the hang of it. The pandeiro provides excellent exercise to develop speed, strength, and coordination in the fingers, hands, and forearms, and is great fun to learn. The pandeiro is held at the frame with one hand in such a way that the index or middle finger can be used to muffle the head from underneath while it is struck on top with the other hand.

The following exercises demonstrate some of the fundamentals of the pandeiro as played in its most common environment: the samba. (Exercise 6 is a special type of samba known as partido alto.) Each measure of the six two-measure phrases should be learned and played separately. Then learn the phrases as written. These symbols relate to the following music examples.

O = open tone played with thumb using swivel action of the wrist similar to the way a funk bass player "pops" the bass strings.

F = tap with the fingers.

P = tap with the palm or "heel" of thumb.

S = slap with all fingers.

M = muffled tone played exactly like the open tone while "muffling" the head with one finger of the hand that is holding the pandeiro.

T = open tone played with fingertips.

All of these sounds are executed near the edge of the pandeiro with the exception of the slap, which can be played in or towards the center of the pandeiro. Notes in parenthesis are optional.

1

M F P F O F P F

M F P F (O) F P F

2

M F F M O F F O

3

M F P S O F F O

4

O S P S O F F O

5

O F P S O F P T

6

O S P F O O

S P S O O

For more exercises for the pandeiro, reverse the sequence of measures in each of the preceding phrases and learn them in this new order. This gives you 24 separate exercises so far. Then take the first measure of each exercise and match it with the second measure of each of the other five exercises. This gives you 30 more exercises. Last, reverse the order of measures on these 30 exercises, giving you yet 30 more two-measure phrases. You now have a total of 84 exercises for the pandeiro. Strive for a smooth, even stroke and sound, and above all, relax. Also, be aware of subtle differences in "feel" and dynamics that must be learned through experience. There are many variations of the techniques and rhythms noted here, but this will get you started.



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RF: Did you continue with jazz?

JK: Sure, I played in cocktail bands around town and a political function here and there, but I never really wanted to be in a jazz band. I really love to play loud.

RF: But you felt that jazz would help you in your rock playing?

JK: Oh, yes. It helped my ambidexterity. When I went to the University the same thing happened as when I was with Ed Soph. There were seven other percussionists who were all better than I was on snare, timpani, you name it. I was going, "God, I've got to get good quick." At the same time, I was

playing six nights a week in the clubs, so they couldn't touch me on that. But I still wanted to get better, and what I learned at the School of Music made me better.

RF: What did you learn?

JK: I learned the fine techniques of the whole percussion section, and I refined my technique on the timpani, mallet instruments, and orchestral snare drumming.

RF: Do you use any of that today?

JK: It comes to mind a lot. I haven't used it on this gig, but I have used things like timpani in the studio before. There may come a day when I use it again, but the whole point of it is that I know about it now and I can draw from it.

While I was going to the University, I joined a band called Mr. Charlie, and we played stuff like Gino Vannelli and Stevie Wonder, and then we'd turn around and play the Rolling Stones, Steely Dan, and Hall & Oates. I was drawing from all these influences—from jazz, from rock, even from classical. I was playing rock 'n' roll six nights a week. Then I'd go in at 12:00 the next day and play in the symphony band, at 3:00 that afternoon I'd play timpani in the orchestra, and then maybe I'd have brass ensemble that day, too.

RF: Was there any drumset playing at all in this program?

JK: No. It was just percussion. That's when I played drums in the marching band. I played second bass drum out of five. This was a corps-style band, so I finally got a taste of a real percussion section.

RF: How long did you attend the university?

JK: Three years. From the time I was 15 on, I was playing rock clubs, and that was the best education of all. There were hundreds of kids at the University of Louisville studying their instrument who had no idea of what the outside world was like—how to survive off their instruments. I have never had any other kind of job. All I've ever done is play drums.

RF: You actually did quite a bit of teaching.

JK: I started teaching when I was a junior in high school. I had about 14 students every week. I taught them anything they wanted to learn. I approached it sort of the way Ed showed me stuff. I taught out of books and just gave general help. I tried to cater to what each kid's strongest point was. If a kid wasn't in the high school band and had no interest in it, I wouldn't drive it down his throat that he should learn the rudiments. I'd show it to him, but I wouldn't force him.

RF: What happened when you left the university?

JK: I was playing in Mr. Charlie, and I quit to join a band called City Lights. The members owned a club in Louisville, and they were like the number-one band in town. This was a step up from Mr. Charlie, and I was constantly thinking about making uphill moves. But after I quit Mr. Charlie, City Lights decided to keep their drummer. Now, my attitude is that I don't hold grudges, because you never know. That was a really big blow to me, though. I had to quit school and join a road band to make money because I didn't get that gig. That was in '83. City Lights moved to L.A. in '86, and I ended up joining the band there when their drummer left. Then after I left their band, their guitar player joined Kingdom Come.

RF: Why did you come to L.A.?

JK: When their drummer quit, they said, "Why don't you come on out?" The point I'm really trying to make is the philosophy I learned from Ed Soph—this attitude thing. Most guys would have probably held a grudge, because it really did mess me up financially. But it ended up working great. From '83 until '85 I was in a band called Apex, which had some of the guys from Mr. Charlie. So I played Top-40 with the same guys for about four or five years. The whole time I was songwriting, too.

RF: What instrument were you writing on?

JK: Keyboard. Since my dad played keyboard, there was always one around. I got completely fed up with the Top-40 band, though, because they wouldn't do originals, and I quit, which I never do. Doing originals is the only way you're going to get anywhere.

This whole idea of moving to Los Angeles was in my head. I was playing with Apex at a club and Ratt was playing in town. Bobby Blotzer came in and sat in with us. He saw me play and he was like, "You're pretty good; have you ever thought about going to Los Angeles?" I talked to him for about an hour that night, so for about a year and a half I was going crazy. I

didn't have enough money to do it and I didn't know anybody out here, so it was like going to Mars to me. I ran into Bobby a year later and he was going, "Man, what are you still doing here? Get out there." He gave me some phone numbers, but I just could never get enough money together. It's funny, we played two gigs with Ratt in Japan on New Year's Eve, and I said, "Bobby, look what you did to me." We were playing the Tokyo Dome in front of 50,000 people.

But I finally quit the Top-40 band and I joined a jazz band, [laughs]. I played one gig with them and then a friend of mine from a heavy metal band called. And here comes influence number three. This was a band called Buster Brown, and we went on the road from New York down to Florida. I had known all these guys for years. The singer is a guy named Johnny Edwards, and when I joined that band, something hit me that I'll never forget: It was this professional attitude that was incredible. This guy would have a temperature of 150, and he'd still be great. He was #1 six nights a week, just smoking every night, and we were doing three or four sets a night. We played some originals, though, and we put out a couple of independent records. During the time with Buster Brown, I also did an album with Ronnie Montrose. This was in '86-'87.

RF: How did that come about?

JK: Buster Brown was a pretty big band on the East Coast, and Ronnie was doing a tour and putting a band together. We toured for

"It always amazes me to hear a band say, 'It took us 11 months to do the album.' What did you do for 11 months?"

a month with him and we really hit it off. He invited Johnny Edwards and me out to San Francisco to do his album. So we took a couple of weeks off from our band and did the record. It was another step up the staircase to wherever I was going.

RF: Where had you learned how to record?

JK: I had done a lot of jingles around town. Also, when I wrote songs, I'd go into the studio and take friends of mine in with me. I'd play drums and lay the keyboard down and have everybody play originals of mine. I did that quite a few times and learned a lot. With the Montrose thing, I also learned a lot. It was my first real recording.

RF: What did you learn?

JK: It was a real studio, and I learned things like the correct technique of hitting the cymbals. I was a rock drummer, but this was refining everything I knew about. Ronnie told me so many things about rock drumming from a guitarist's standpoint that no one had ever told me, like, when I hit the snare, making sure it's identical every time, and when I play the ride cymbal, trying to play on the bell to get a different sound. Also, when I hit the toms, I should hit them as hard as humanly possible and as even as possible, so that when I listen back, it sounds smooth and consistent. I had always thought of all that stuff, but this is when I first had to apply it to a real situation.

RF: Which record was it?

JK: It was called *Mean*. About that time, my band was calling it quits. This was January '86. The day we called it quits, I called Rick [Steier]. His band, City Lights, was out in L.A. playing the Red Onion Top-40 circuit. Two days later I flew out to check it out. I borrowed the money, and they helped me pay half of it. I went back home, and a week later my girlfriend and I moved out here. I joined City Lights playing Top-40, and as soon as I got out here, I started seeking out bands. City Lights was fine, but I had learned that you can't be a Top-40 and an original band. To be in an original band it takes full-time dedication.

RF: And unfortunately the trade-off is often financial.

JK: True. I came out here and made more



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money than I had ever made. But they were playing everything from the Bangles to Michael Jackson, and I really wanted to be in a rock band playing originals on a record label.

RF: So how did you pursue that?

JK: I put an ad in *Music Connection* saying, "Drummer, formerly of Montrose," [laughs] and I got all these calls. I probably got about 30 tapes, and out of them, I ended up actually serious about one of them. I stayed with City Lights and gave notice about two and a half months later because I heard about Lenny Wolf. I knew about his old band, Stone Fury. Now Lenny was looking for a new band, and I heard about the audition. He auditioned about 45 drummers, and I got it.

RF: What was the audition like?

JK: I got the tape of four of the band's songs from someone who was helping organize the auditions, and I just listened to the tape over and over. It was all drum machine except for one song, so I wrote simple charts out and timed it out with a metronome. I knew he wanted basic stuff, but every drummer came into his audition with double bass, ten toms, and 30 cymbals, and maybe they could play a million fills, but they didn't have any feel. If you listened to the tape, you could tell all he wanted was a good, solid drummer. So I went in there with a kick, a snare, one tom, two cymbals, and a hi-hat, and played exactly what the tape called for. He was blown away. I also knew he wanted a big sound. So I took all

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the muffling out of my kick drum—I never used a lot anyway—there was no muffling on the snare, and I went in there and played very loud. Also, the bottom heads are lower than the top heads. They resonate long because they're tuned low.

When I walked into the audition, Lenny said, "I want two things: I want a drummer who plays with a lot of feel but who can also play with a lot of flash when it comes time to." So we started playing the first song, and then he stopped it and said, "Jam." So I pulled out my best Graham Lear fills and Mark Craney fills and went for it, and he freaked out. The moral of this story is to be prepared. I could play straight, but then he also wanted someone who could play these real intricate fills, and I learned all that from the jazz stuff.

RF: I was going to ask you who you stole what from along the way.

JK: My main rip-offs were Graham Lear from *Cist Of The Gemini* by Gino Vannelli, and Mark Craney, who played on Gino's *Brother To Brother*. I learned every lick off both those albums and the live Genesis album, *Seconds Out*, where Chester Thompson and Phil Collins both played. There's every kind of drum fill you can think of on those records, plus great drumming. Gino Vannelli is just crazy about drums, and I was a huge fan. I got to meet Mark Craney once, which was a trip. Mr. Charlie played almost the entire *Brother To Brother* album.

RF: That's a far cry from hard rock. How

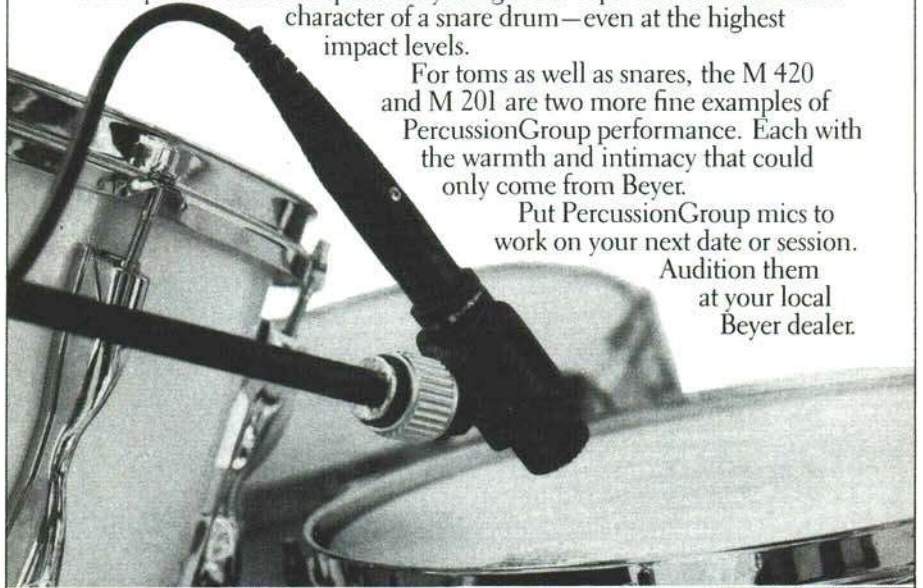
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did that prepare you for your gig today?

JK: In one way—I know this sounds funny—but I got it out of my system. When you're growing up drumming, there are all these different things out there that you want to do. In my band Nuthouse, I got to play all this weird jazz rock and got that out of my system. I kind of got tired of it. Then I wanted to play straight-ahead like Steely Dan, and then Gino Vannelli's *Brother To Brother* came along. Then I kind of got that out of my system. Then I got really happy just going "boom whack" and making that sound great. Kingdom Come is the best of both worlds. There's room for improvisation in heavy rock all over the place.

What really prepared me for this gig, though, was playing in Louisville. Every-

body reading this probably thinks, "What's in Louisville, Kentucky?" This is the honest truth: You can go to Louisville and walk into almost any club, and that drummer could be the drummer you need. I can't believe the stories I hear out here: "We had to audition 50 guys." When I go home, I'm aware of so many good drummers. There's my best friend, Mike McDowell, a guy named Jeff McAllister, Bill Miles, Brad Canaday. Also, I used to hang around the drum store, which is something I miss out here. I used to teach at a store called Far Out, and we'd just sit around and talk about drums. That's something I haven't discovered in L.A., and I've been here over two years.

RF: Did Kingdom Come tell you on the spot that you had the gig?

JK: It was just Lenny. Lenny was involved with PolyGram Records, and they were saying, "Why don't you put a band together and let us check it out," so when I auditioned, the bass player and the lead guitarist we have now played, and everybody just kind of went, "Yeahhhh!" Lenny said to me, "Unless John Bonham walks in here, you've got the gig."

During the day I'd practice with Lenny from about 2:00 until 8:00, and then at 9:00, I would play at the Red Onion with City Lights. That went on for about a month and a half. It was a very productive period, and I was really excited because we were going to try to get into the studio in mid-August. But Lenny's band needed a second guitarist, so I mentioned it to Rick Steier from City Lights. He came in, auditioned, and was hired on the spot. He's from Louisville as well. We got the band sorted out by about the first of July, and mid-August we did the record. We did it with a guy named Bob Rock and, once again, it was a real learning experience.

RF: How so?

JK: This was yet another step beyond the Montrose recording. The recording quality was even better, and I had to be more precise with my playing than ever. The drum sound we got is just monstrous.

RF: How did you get that sound?

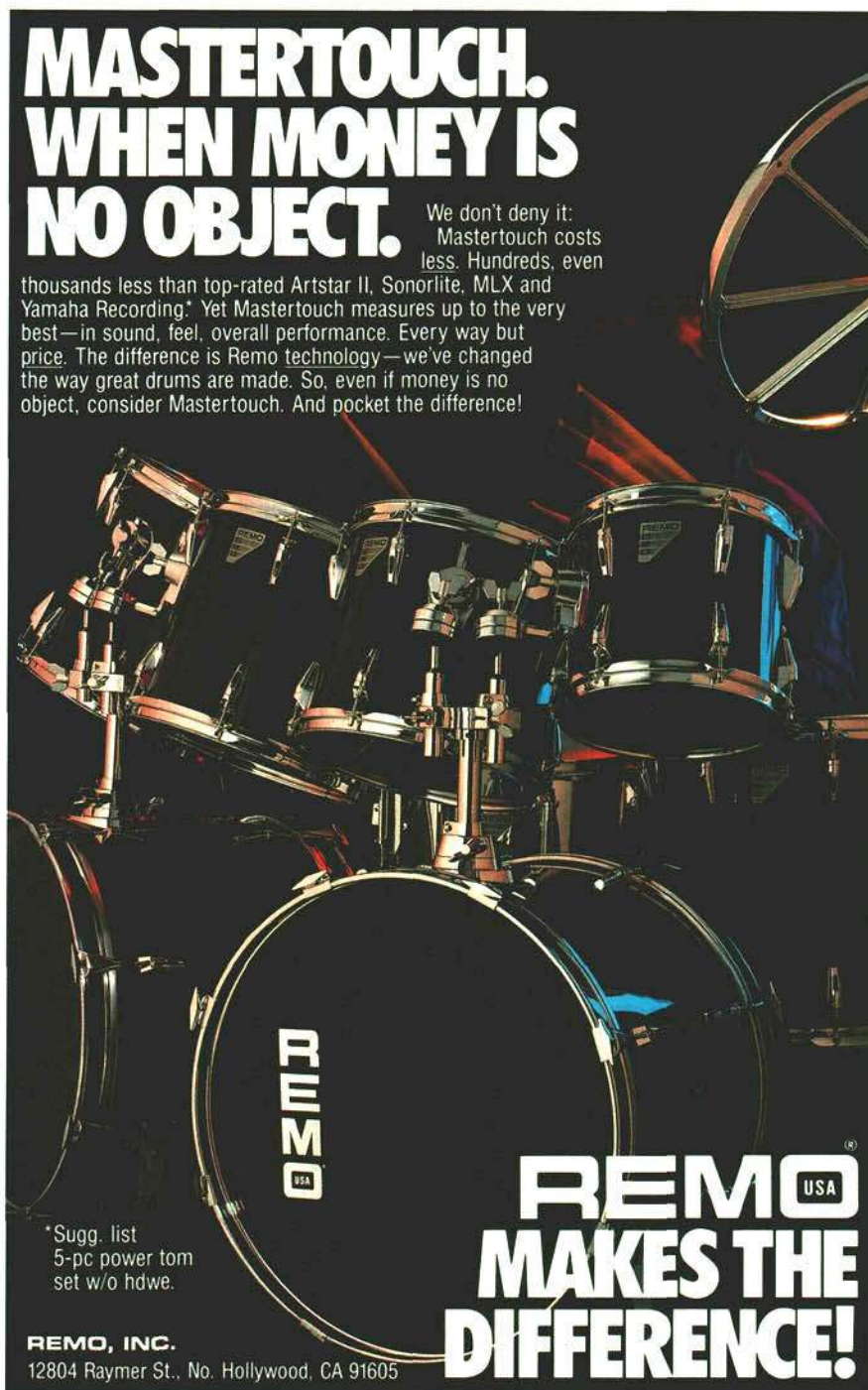
JK: I tune my drums with no muffling, and I hit them basically as hard as humanly possible, solid and real even. I use a lot of dynamics, but the room we recorded in was wood and it was large, maybe about 30x40, and we used a lot of ambient miking, which means using mic's off in the distance. We also used a lot of gated reverb.

RF: What are some of your favorite tracks on that album?

JK: I like "Pushin' Hard." That's one of those "best of both worlds," where you bash your face off and then you get to play a lot of cool fills. I'm really conscious of the sound of the overall band; I'm really conscious of overplaying. I like "Living Out Of Touch" the most because live I can twirl sticks a lot to that song. I'm an avid stick twirler. I had always done it in clubs, and I really thought I was onto something until I saw Tommy Lee, but then I had to do it twice as much and get my own thing going. I like "Get It On" because what's so neat about that from a drummer's standpoint is that it was a number-one hit for us on AOR radio, and at the end there's a drum solo. That was pretty neat for me. I do solos every night; I really got to work on my soloing a lot playing in clubs. I'm not into long solos, just real effective solos.

RF: What is a good solo for you?

JK: Short, entertaining, with a sense of humor in it. I like getting everyone involved. I get a question/answer thing going, where I play a lick, stand up and hold my hand to my ear, and point to a part of the crowd, and everyone screams. Then I do it again and point somewhere else and get everyone screaming. Lenny comes out during the climax of my solo and pours a jug of water over my



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head while I'm playing, and water is flying everywhere. Every minute of the solo has to be accounted for. I want to impress the drummers in the audience, but I have to remember that drummers are the minority in a crowd. There may be 10,000 people there and only 50 drummers. I like to keep it entertaining.

RF: You mentioned overplaying, and I wondered if that was a potential danger for you.

JK: In our situation I have to be conscious of that because we've got a great singer and a great guitarist, and any time they're singing or taking a solo, I don't want to step on them. The way our drum sound is and the way I play, it would be easy to walk on top of them.

RF: How did the recording of your new album differ from the first album?

JK: On the first album we did the rhythm tracks of all the songs first. This time we did it track by track, which means that first we recorded the drums, bass, and guitars, and as soon as we were done, we started putting all the parts down to that song, including the vocals, and then the next day we'd mix it. It's much better that way. You get to concentrate on one song at a time, rather than having to come back to it later and saying, "What were we going to do on this song?" We did the album at Goodnight L.A., with Keith Olsen producing.

RF: What kind of sound were you going for this time?

JK: Big. Huge. We don't trigger anything. It's just like a big acoustic rock 'n' roll drum sound, as big as a house. I did everything on the album on the first or second take. I would say, "Come on Keith, can't we try a third one?" and he'd say, "Yeah, sure, go ahead." He'd cut me off after about a quarter of the way through and say, "Your best one was your first or second performance." Because we had been on the road so much, the band was much tighter, and we worked faster. We did the Monsters of Rock tour and then we toured with the Scorpions until October. Then we took five days off and went directly into pre-production, which lasted 30 days, six days a week, for four or five hours a day. We wrote a lot of the material on the road. Lenny wrote the majority of the music, but I wrote lyrics on four tunes this time. It was more of a band thing this time, and we worked quicker. We started in the studio November 6 and finished with everything December 20. A big part of it is that everyone in the band is a competent musician, so it's real easy. We just fly through it. And we kind of like it raw. If there is a little thing kind of screwed up, we leave it; we want that raw edge. It always amazes me to hear a band say, "It took us 11 months to do the album." What did you do for 11 months? Buddy Rich, who was a big hero of mine, used to say that if it takes you that long, you need to take some lessons, and I have to agree. Go in there and just play the way you normally play.

RF: What are your favorite tracks on the new album?

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JK: "Perfect O" is my favorite song to play because the groove is one of the heaviest I've ever played. I like "Do You Like It," too—which is just an all-out rocker—"Who Do You Love," "Stargazer," and "Highway 6," which is a shuffle. I love shuffles. The theme of that song is anti teenage suicide. We deal with some heavier issues on this album. There's one called "I've Got To Go," which I wrote, about having to go to war and fight somebody you don't even know. And then we have our party songs, like "Do You Like It." It's a real diversified album. There's a downright blues tune on there, too.

RF: I think it was Lenny who said in an interview that the first Kingdom Come gigs weren't very good.

JK: It wasn't a band yet. We hadn't played gigs together and we were just starting to gel. Now the band has grown, and we're getting more confident than ever. Monsters of Rock was amazing.

RF: Some stories said you didn't play to much audience on that tour because you were the openers.

JK: It's really deceiving when you're in a big place, but we figured if 50,000 was a sell-out, then when we went on, there was a good 35-40 thousand. When there are holes, it just looks empty. How can you complain about playing to 35,000 people? I'll play to ten people in a dimly lit alley.

RF: How does one get across to 35,000 people? Doesn't your instrument lose something in the translation?

JK: You have to be really visual and really dynamic, but the way you play to a stadium of 50,000 people is no different from playing to a crowd of 1,000. I'm more nervous playing for a small group of people because it's like you're under a microscope. You can make eye contact with people in the fifth row and see every one of their faces. In a huge stadium, it's just people. No matter which way you turn, you can get a roar from the crowd. Response is a big thing. You really feed off the crowd.

RF: Do you pace yourself?

JK: Sure. I learned that in the clubs. I'm one of those guys who comes out and plays on 11 from the word go.

RF: How do you keep from running out of energy?

JK: I dig down deep. When I played clubs, I built up a tolerance, and I would never drink or take any drugs, ever.

RF: How did you feel about all the Led Zeppelin comparisons and your being compared to John Bonham?

JK: A new band always gets compared to something. It's getting pretty old. Just to be compared to John Bonham, though, thanks. I think it's funny that a lot of the journalists can't think of anything better to talk about. I think it's quite boring, really.

RF: Is it just coincidence that your setup is identical to Bonham's?

JK: It is the same, but that has nothing to do with it. The main reason for my setup is to get as much visual contact as possible. I've been at concerts where the drummer has so many drums you can't even see him. Everybody can see me.

RF: Do you use the same setup in the studio as you do live?

JK: It's identical. The only thing that might be different is that in the studio I might switch around some cymbals for some different sounds, because in the studio you can really tell the subtleties.

RF: What are your goals?

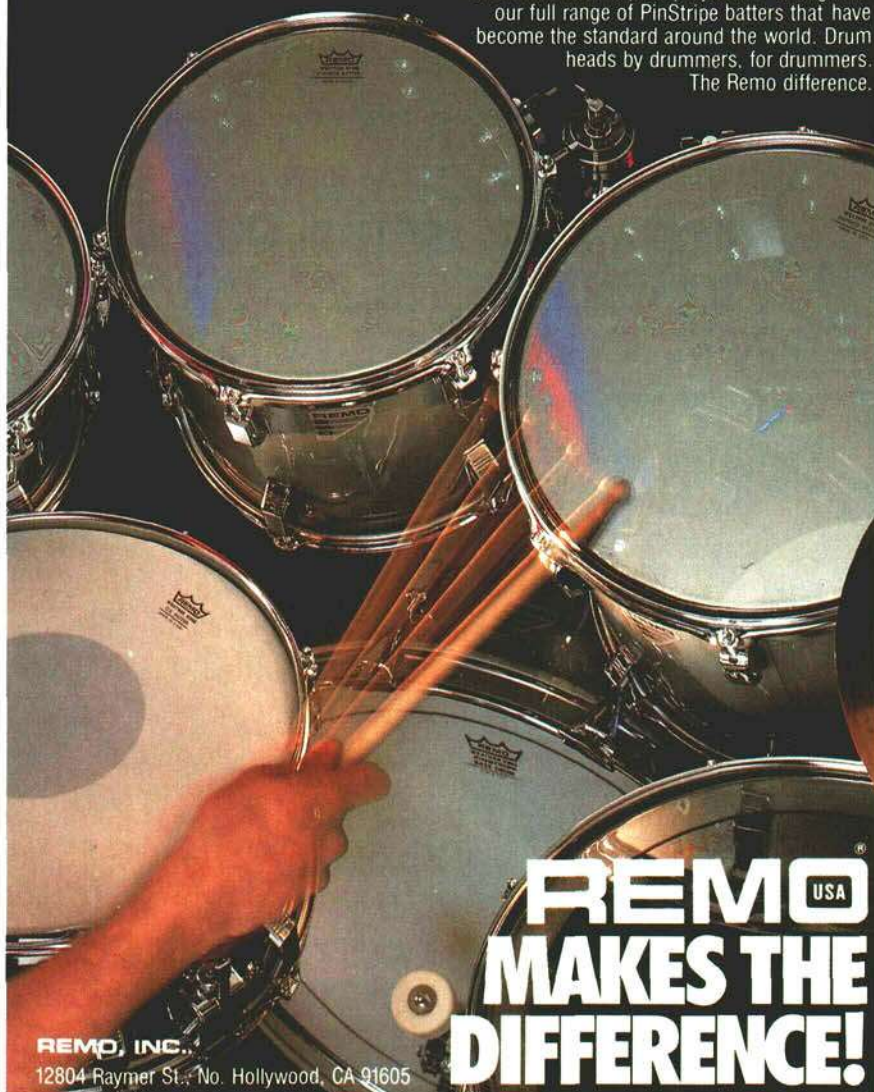
JK: I want Kingdom Come to continue. I want to do an album of my own and a project of my own. I want to teach some more, and I'd really like to get the clinic thing happening. I used to go to clinics, and it's really helpful to the kids. And I want to just keep improving. I feel like I've improved a lot since the last album, although I've said that every year since I've started playing.

RF: So what advice would you give to a kid growing up in a town other than a music-industry town like L.A. or New York?

JK: Move, [laughs] Eventually you're going to have to do that. The thing I would do is prepare as much as possible, which means playing in bands. I was fortunate enough that I was in a band six months after I started playing drums. It wasn't a great band, but it was a band, and that's what got me to learn. Just get real good and save a lot of money to move. First you have to want to. I went from being a big fish in a little pond in Louisville to an unknown in L.A., and you have to be prepared to do that.

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Getting Prepared To Sub

Being called in as a substitute and having to play unfamiliar music with a limited amount of preparation can be quite a challenge. Doing a good job as a sub is a key to opening doors in the music business. Your willingness to prepare and maintain a positive attitude will help you achieve success as a substitute musician.

Having accepted an opportunity to sub, try to see the group perform with its regular drummer as many times as you can. This is the best way to understand the context in which that player performs, and will present the clearest picture of what will be expected of you. Meeting the other musicians in advance will make things more comfortable, and it's a convenient time to acquire whatever preparatory materials may be available.

Recorded material is also very useful in helping to prepare. If the group gives you studio recordings or original versions of the songs they cover, be sure to compare them with the "live" versions; they may very well be different. If "live" tapes aren't available, you may want to take along a small cassette recorder and—with permission, of course—make your own. Recorded material is helpful *if you* listen to it extensively in the days or weeks prior to the gig. Playing along with it is also important and often reveals technical trouble spots that might have otherwise gone unnoticed.

Such in-depth preparation is necessary if you wish to automatically hear intros, figures, stops, and endings. "Automatically" is the key word. The act of listening to a tape to the point where things become automatic requires discipline, but there are good reasons to do so. First, your confidence: The more time spent preparing, the better you'll play. There's no substitute for the confidence you have when you *know* what's ahead. Second, your sense of obligation: Having been given advance notice and materials, you're obligated to learn some of the individual nuances of a group's arrangements. Third, your reputation: Being completely prepared will enhance your reputation as a player. The group won't know how much time you spent preparing, they just know you helped them out of a jam. Your efforts will be rewarded with good recommendations and more calls in the future.

If the group has charts, try to gain access to them in advance and use them when practicing with the tapes. They may not be drum charts, but a "rhythm chart" will cover the entire rhythm section. A rhythm chart may contain specific references to the drum part, but a *bona fide* drum chart is a rarity. The one thing to remember is that the charts

may not be completely accurate. This is more common than one might imagine. After a group learns a piece, the arrangement often undergoes changes that won't be reflected in the original chart. These changes might be pencilled in, or alluded to verbally, and the situation can quickly become very confusing. The best advice is to use *your ears!* Expect the unexpected, and avoid getting bogged down in deciphering charts to the point where you're no longer making music.

It may be to your advantage to write your own charts based on the tapes. These can be sketches indicating form, length, and important figures (beginnings and endings are particularly important), or, when the arrangements are complex, may be complete charts, accurate to the measure.

If there are no charts, you can take notes from the tapes. These can be short summaries, perhaps on 4" X 6" cards, that indicate details such as style, tempo, stops, and important figures. In order for notes to be useful, they must be clear, concise, legible onstage (a medium black magic marker will ensure this), and *arranged in order of performance*. The order is important. There simply isn't enough time between songs to find one unfamiliar title among randomly taken notes, and the other musicians must feel that you're paying attention, not fishing through notecards. If the sets are made up prior to going on, you can easily put your cards in order. If the songs are called on the spot, with no prearranged order, notes will be of some limited value, but there won't be time to refer to them on a song-by-song basis. Most bands prefer that you don't read onstage, but they'll probably allow it if you're bailing them out, and if you're discreet. Keep the charts as low to the stage as you can.

In discussing charts, we're assuming that you read music. If you're *not* a proficient reader and are called to sub a gig that requires good reading skills, it might be better to refuse the gig rather than go in over your head. Being honest about your limitations, rather than accepting jobs you aren't capable of fulfilling properly, will ultimately serve you better. If your lack of reading skills didn't become apparent until during a performance, chances are you'd never be hired by those people again, even if you worked at becoming a good reader later. First impressions *are* lasting ones.

In most groups, the drummer counts off the songs. When a substitute drummer is involved, another group member may take this duty over, but it *might* remain with the drummer. If this responsibility is handed to you, your preparation will be that much

more important. While preparing, note the way songs are counted, and use a metronome to determine tempos. List this information in your notes, using the metronome on stage to recall the tempos. Another trick is to relate the tempo of the unfamiliar song to that of a familiar one. Much Top-40 material is around 120 beats per minute, the same tempo as any Sousa march.

There are bound to be last-minute emergency calls in which you're needed to play with no preparation and—in many cases—without charts. Interestingly enough, these circumstances can serve to *lessen* your anxiety. Don't worry about making every obscure figure or ending because, given the circumstances, it's not reasonable to expect that of you. Instead, rely on your ears. The more experience you acquire, the more proficient you'll become at responding instantaneously to unfamiliar music—your "musician's intuition."

Upon arriving at a last-minute gig, expect to be inundated with information about songs, styles, stops, tempos...and about that, at first, it will seem like a blur of instructions. Relax! Try to remember what you can, and do your best. No one will expect more of you than that. The more experience you gain, the easier it'll be to sort through the overload of information and translate it into music. Playing "by the seat of your pants" is not only challenging, it's great fun and a rare chance to rely completely on your ears.

Clearly, any instructions given to the sub are intended to help the gig go smoothly. While some musicians are able to give accurate, specific instructions to a drummer, many are at a loss to explain what a drummer should play. If a bandleader says you should play an obviously ridiculous beat, don't be afraid to take those instructions with a grain of salt. It then becomes your job to interpret what the bandleader *meant*—what might be the right thing to play to fulfill the leader's wishes, and yet still make good music. There is a fine line involved in interpreting instructions. Regardless of how ludicrous they may seem, don't just ignore them. Consider their meaning, and incorporate it with your own experience and taste. Mastering the art of interpretation is a valuable skill, particularly in the recording studio. A master session drummer is almost always a master "interpreter."

Naturally, a drummer's versatility will play a role in his or her being a successful sub. The ability to come into an unfamiliar situation and tastefully play an unfamiliar style is one of the hallmarks of a professional. In

continued on page 90

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For the hundreds of struggling musicians coming to New York each year, only a handful have a shot at "making it" as full-time players. Twelve years ago a young North Texas State graduate came back to his East Coast roots and proceeded to make his mark in the world of jazz drumming.

Thirty-four-year-old John Riley currently holds the drum chair for the Bob Mintzer band, making his living with sticks, cymbals, and a metallic-plum drumkit, gigging throughout New York City and surrounding areas.

His days are filled teaching drumset at the Manhattan School of Music and at William Paterson College in New Jersey. He has several private students, does "a lot of jazz gigs" and some subbing and free-lance work, and occasionally does recording dates. Last year Riley traveled to Berlin, West Germany with the Mintzer band to play one set—that's right, an hour and a half, and then back to the States. That's how much the band enjoys playing together.

This past fall I had an opportunity to hear a bit of Riley's versatile and melodic playing at the Village Vanguard on a Monday night. Mel Lewis was performing in Europe, and he called upon Riley to fill in for him with his big band. John filled Lewis's chair with savvy, grace, and control. The rest of the 17-piece big band seemed completely at ease, flowing with a confidence that seemed to say, "Nothing's different." As far as John Riley is concerned, that would be his biggest compliment. His desire to make the band comfortable is foremost, and it comes across not only adequately, but with the finesse and flair of a fine player.

Photo by Aldo Mauro



SB: You've been called to play in many different musical situations, but I get the impression that you enjoy jazz more than rock.

JR: I *do* enjoy jazz more than rock, but I enjoy both. I find that playing jazz is more challenging because I have more responsibility for the outcome. But musical styles have merged, and the pop and rock styles have incorporated elements that used to be only a part of the past, jazz seems to have a little more meat to it. The drummer has more of an opportunity to shape the music of the band, whereas in rock, the function of the drummer is more as a timekeeper. In a jazz band the drummer has a profound effect on every measure of the song, because jazz musicians are always interacting with one another. In most rock situations, the drummer has more of a pedestrian role, but in jazz he has a chance to embellish each musical phrase as it develops.

SB: So the melodic thing is really where your heart beats.

JR: Yeah, I'm definitely into the melodic thing. When I solo I acknowledge the form, and I play off the melody.

SB: Jazz is always evolving, but many of its musicians tend to fight against that evolution. Are you happy about the places jazz is headed these days, or are you one of the jazzers who believe in "true jazz" only being bebop, and in the need to keep it pure?

JR: Bebop was just a phase of jazz, like swing and Dixieland before it. I was also influenced by popular music, so I like pop, too. Many jazz musicians are feeling a need to reach a wider audience. Jazz musicians have gradually gotten more sophisticated and able to conceive of ideas that are much more complex. If the music becomes too complex, though, they lose the audience. People who are concerned about making a living are trying to find a balance between satisfying the audience and stimulating their own creativity.

SB: Do you consider yourself solely a jazz drummer?

John Riley

JR: Most people consider me a jazz drummer, but I enjoy playing both jazz and pop, and I try to combine them. That doesn't mean that I have to impose my tendency on every musical situation. Often I have to be more of a role player. When I work with Michel LeGrande, I do pop concerts with a symphony orchestra. Although he considers himself a jazz musician, the music he is famous for is more in the pop genre, like "Windmills Of Your Mind" and "Summer of '42." When I play with him and a 70-piece orchestra, my role is one of conductor. In that situation I've got to play the pulse; embellishment is secondary. I've got to unify a large group of people. I really have to play simply and directly, and get to the essence of what they need in order for all of us to play the music well. Orchestras don't generally play in strict time because conductors play a lot with phrasing. They're not used to following a drummer, they're used to following a baton. So I have to thoroughly strip down my playing.

SB: Let's talk about what it's like when you're down at the Vanguard. You've been playing there on Monday nights on and off for a while.

JR: The first time I got called to sub for Mel, it was a challenge. I got a call at 10:00 PM on a Monday night; that's when they start. It seemed that Mel had a family emergency, and they wanted me to fill in *that night!* They said, "Can you come now?" So I jumped in my car and got there. One of the horn players covered the drums until I got there. Then, to top it off, after the first set I asked the trumpet player why there were mic's all around the drums, and he said the show was being broadcast for Japanese radio, [laughs] Sometimes you get thrown into situations that you're not prepared for, and you've just got to get in there and do it.

SB: Obviously you did well; they keep calling you back. What is the biggest challenge when you're subbing for Mel?

JR: Part of the challenge is to try to make the band comfortable. I don't play like Mel, so if the rest of the band is really comfortable, I'm happy. Also, his drums are set up so differently from my drums, and he uses calf heads, which makes them sound really different.

SB: Let's move on to another subject. There's been a lot of cross-pollination going on the past few years between jazz, pop, rock, and other musical styles. What do you think about it? Is it a natural evolution?

JR: Jazz musicians are becoming aware of the mass appeal of pop music, and pop musicians are trying to get into the more sophisticated stuff. And jazz musicians are

getting more exposure because of the trend. It results in some watered-down jazz, but if it encourages a person to go out and buy a John Coltrane record, that's great! It helps a lot of jazz musicians. We're definitely in one of these times where we're cross-pollinating. The trend you're talking about has the potential for something really wonderful to come out of it. You know, music is music. If it reaches people, that's the important thing.

SB: Who are the players who influenced your eclectic sort of philosophy?

JR: I heard the Beatles in fourth or fifth grade, and they really excited me. At the same time, the school was asking its students what instruments they'd like to take up. My father had been in a marching band, so I picked drums. After the Beatles, there were people like Philly Joe Jones, Roy Haynes, Tony Williams, David Garibaldi, Steve Gadd, and Jack DeJohnette. Max Roach continues to influence my playing. When I listen to these people, I like to listen to everything that's going on, and I do some transcribing.

The fragment I take from Gadd becomes the germ for my own vocabulary. I try not to copy it word for word. I mean, initially I do, but then I twist it, and it becomes my own.

Some of my own students have turned me on to Gary Chester's philosophy, which demands that you play with the click. As you're playing and listening, you're singing the click. For me, that helped instill a kind of inner pulse. It becomes a real time unifier once you're comfortable with it. Chester's system is definitely not the only way to learn the click, but it's a very sophisticated and thorough way of learning.

Getting back to influences, there was a Max Roach record called *Conversation*, and one tune on it, a solo drum piece, totally captivated me. He played a melody on the drums and then developed it. Even though I

didn't fully understand it at that point, I was truly captivated by it. Also, the Dave Clark Five records were a staple as I was learning. I also listened extensively to *The Gene Krupa Story*. It was sort of my introduction to jazz; I'd listen to it every day.

SB: Before you went to North Texas State, you were already very serious about drum studies. How did you get involved? Did you take private lessons?

JR: Throughout high school I studied with Tom Sicola. He was a great teacher. We covered classical snare drum techniques and went through the Cirone and Albright books. At the same time he was teaching me about rumbas and merengues and forms of tunes—AABA, etc. I became a part of the All-State and Jazz bands and of the orchestra. During the summer of my junior year I went to a Ludwig drum symposium in Miami. For one week I was exposed to drummers from all over the country. Joe Morello, Roy Haynes, Carmine Appice, Bobby Christian, and other Ludwig clinicians were there. I found out that Morello

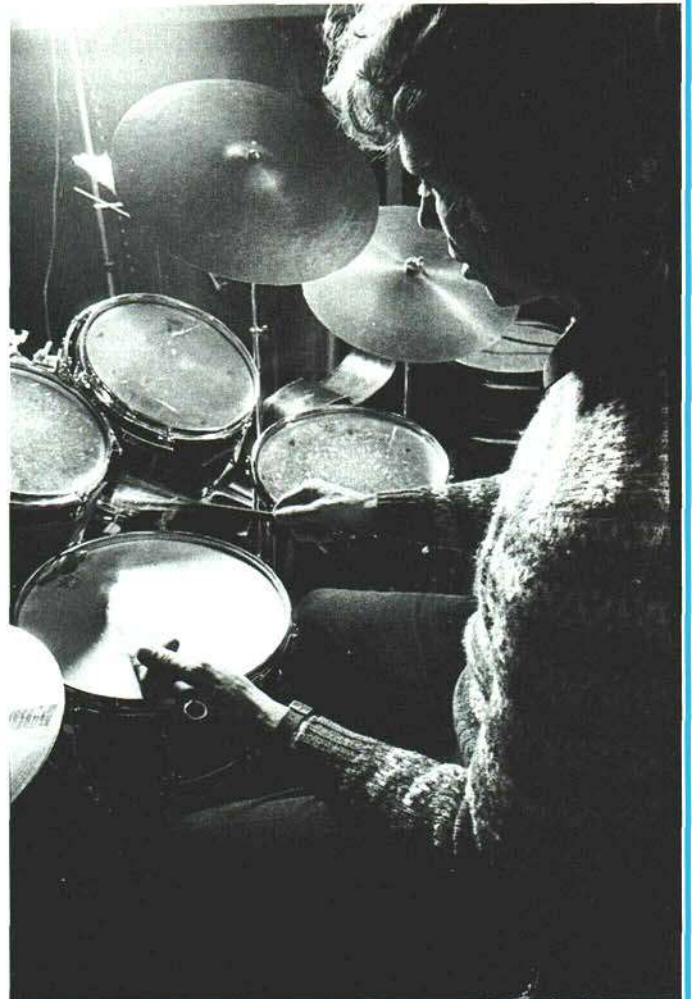


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lived a couple of towns away from me, so I took lessons from him for about six months.

SB: What did you learn from Joe, specifically?

JR: It was a real eye-opening experience. He has a way of getting you to play in the most relaxed manner. A lot of drummers seem to fight against the instrument—playing with too much tension. He taught me to get the most out of the drums with the least amount of effort. The basic concept is that a stick can rebound faster than you can pick it up. An example he gave is, if you bounce a basketball, it's going to come up and meet your hand quicker than if you bend down to pick it up. The same applies to the stick. You throw the stick down, and just before it hits the drum, you completely relax. The trick is not to pick the stick up; it'll rebound easier and faster.

SB: You had so much teaching and technique before college. What then prompted you to go to college, and specifically, North Texas State?

JR: Well, I had considered the University of Miami and Berklee, but my family moved from New Jersey to Texas just as I was thinking about college. North Texas was still 300 miles from where they moved, but it was nice knowing my family wasn't that far away. North Texas was great! It was the first college in America to offer a jazz degree. It attracted a lot of guys just coming out of the service, and teachers like Ron Fink, John Gates, and Paul Geurrero at-

tracted many other students.

There were 100 drumset players at North Texas when I went there. One of the things I liked best about it was the great practice situation. There were 25 rooms available, and everyone was assigned a room with two or three other guys. I could go from one room to another and hear all kinds of drummers. Everybody there could do *something* well. Equally beneficial was the opportunity to play and trade ideas with all those other students. It was somewhat competitive. There were ten or twelve big bands, and the lower the rank of the band, the more drummers it had. I was in one of the lowest bands the first semester, and I moved up through the years. Even though there was rivalry, it was a good setup.

SB: Getting the gig with Woody Herman shortly after college was a big break. How did it come about?

JR: When Jeff Hamilton left the band, Marc Johnson [bass] and Pat Coil [piano] recommended me for the job. We were students together at North Texas. Based on their recommendation, I got hired. I never even met Woody until my first night on the job with him. I didn't even get to check out his records until about two weeks beforehand.

SB: You must have been a bit nervous, no?

JR: I wasn't really *nervous*; I was confident. The difficulty came in interpreting what wasn't written on the music. When you have music that is 40 years old and that's yellowing or torn, you have to try and figure out all the changes, and it's a little difficult.

SB: How long did you play with Woody's band?

JR: At first I stayed about seven or eight months, then I left the band. They went through several drummers afterwards, but weren't satisfied. So I did a European tour with them and a record date. Woody was working about 50 weeks a year, and even though it was great musically, since I was married, it wasn't the life for me. The concerts were a lot of fun, though, and I made some great friends during that time. In the years since then I've gone back six or seven times, the latest being 1986, when they again were having difficulty finding a drummer.

SB: Even though 18 months is a relatively short time to wait after college to have something as big as Woody Herman happen to you, it still was a waiting period. What did you do during that time?

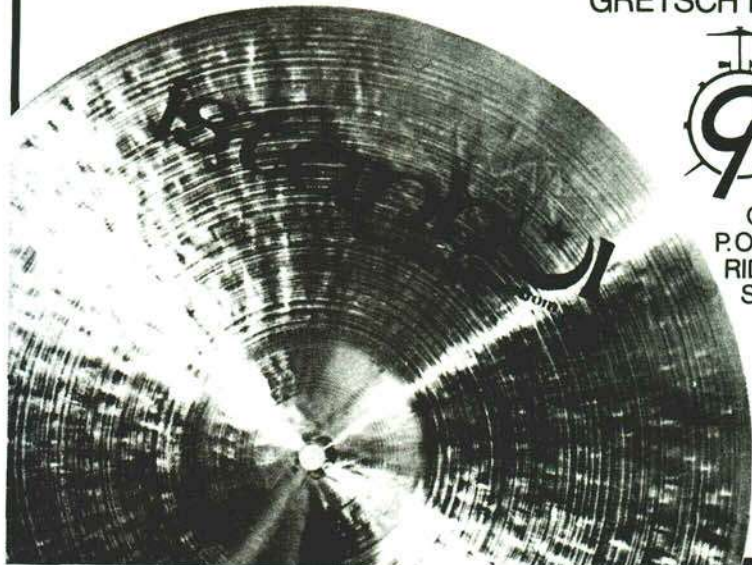
JR: After college I moved to New York City and played with anyone who would play—just to get exposure.

SB: How difficult was it to break into the New York music scene?

JR: It is difficult to break in. Before I moved here I spoke to everyone I knew in Texas, got some phone numbers, and made some calls when I got into town. One of them was a guy who had a wedding the next Saturday and still didn't have a drummer. He hired me, and it took off from there. Back in 1976/77, I'd go down to the Musicians Union on Wednesdays and meet

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people, talk, and get some work. Contractors would come down looking for musicians, calendar books in hand, and do a lot of booking. That opened some doors for me. I met a lot of people. It's still happening now, but less work is passed out on Wednesdays, and more and more is done over the phone. Also, I took a lesson from Jack DeJohnette. He liked my playing and started mentioning my name. I met Peter Erskine when I was on the road with Woody. He was on the road with Maynard Ferguson, and a couple of times we crossed paths. We got to know each other, and he started to recommend me.

SB: Is that how you and Bob Mintzer linked up?

JR: Kind of. We both knew Bob, and Marc Johnson was in Bob's band. Bob and I got along well as soon as we met, both musically and personally, and when Peter couldn't make it for a job, Bob asked me. This is when Peter was still living in New York, but it got to the point that Peter couldn't make any of the dates, and I became a part of the band.

SB: What do you like best about playing in the Mintzer band?

JR: Everybody in the band plays really well. The sections really listen to each other. It's so easy playing with them because everybody tries to enhance each other's performance. I also like the fact that there are so many different styles of music. We play everything from music that has Thad Jones and Count Basie as its basis, to some super-slick funk stuff, to Latin-based tunes. I've also learned more about the relationship between the percussionist and the drummer from Frank Malabe, Bob's percussionist. Frankie and I try to cover all the parts that a traditional four-piece Latin percussion ensemble should play. He's shown me how to get some of these percussion sounds from the drumset.

SB: Speaking of drumset, let's talk about yours. You endorse a new company, right?

JR: Yes, they're GMS drums, made in Long Island. I saw their drums in a shop and liked the way they looked. One of the guys who makes them was there that day, and I got to talking with him. He let me borrow them for a gig, and I really liked them. They tuned up easier than other drums I've played. Also, the sound seemed to reflect back towards me; I could hear the drums better when I was playing. The toms and floor toms all have the RIMS mounts, so they contribute to the warmth and the resonance of the sound, too. People who hear me give me good feedback about the sound, so I know they're sounding just as good to the audience as they do to me.

SB: What about your cymbal selection?

JR: I use a few old K's—a 20" ride, 13" hi-hats, a 16" crash, and a 17" thin fast crash. I use the new K/Z combo for hi-hats. The K on top gives the hat some dark sound, but the Z on the bottom gives it some bite. It's a very clear sound because it's so heavy. If you're playing with a lot of musicians and a lot of amplification, it really helps to cut

through.

SB: At this point in your career, what would be the ideal situation for you?

JR: There are so many musicians in New York City that it's difficult to say that I'd like to play with this one or that one. I'd like to find the right combinations where we can all express ourselves fully. I don't have a specific goal of, let's say, playing with Billy Joel by December 4, 1989. I'd like to continue to find myself in situations where I have a more responsible role in what I'm playing, where I can direct and shape the music, not always just accommodating other musicians. I'd also like to have a more active role in putting bands together as well as writing some music. The music itself

can be really varied. It doesn't necessarily have to be jazz, but it has to have an element of improvisation, because it's then that people take risks. Risks give music the potential to grow, breathe, and change. I don't like anything stifling. I always want to be a part of something that's growing.



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dance. It may often be rather chaotic and unstructured, but in *their* minds it is structured. It is a pity that this is often trained out of people, rather than retaining it, channelling it, and *then* adding the academic knowledge.

SG: Having a jazz drummer as an associate, professor at one of the two top music colleges in London and as a visiting professor at the other is quite revolutionary. Ten years ago it would have been unheard of. What has it been like for you to break new ground in this way?

TT: John Hosier, the principal of The Guildhall, has a very good attitude. I always get the impression that for him it's total musical education that's most important. That doesn't mean that you can't specialize, but there isn't an "establishment" attitude of "head in the sand." In some of the top educational establishments, as well as in some schools we visit with workshops, you can still sense a feeling—not actual hostility—but touchiness and concern that we might be treading on their toes. We have to say that this isn't *instead* of what has been going on, it's *as well as*.

There are huge areas that have been ignored up to now. On a practical level, I've sometimes come across superb string sections who just couldn't play with a rhythm section. Now, if you are in the business of preparing students for careers in music, just how many orchestral positions are there? There's never as much work around as we'd like; but there's work in studios, on tours,

and on general commercial things. All of this usually involves playing with a rhythm section. I think that should be part of the general musical education.

In the same way, I often say to my students that it would be good for them to experience playing in an orchestra. The structures and discipline are different, and I don't think that any musical experience is bad. I'm not saying that everybody ought to be a fantastic orchestral player *and* a fantastic jazz player *and* a fantastic rock player; people ought to be able to specialize in areas they are interested in and good at. But I think it's good to have exposure to different things. It "widens" your ears and can only be beneficial.

There's great satisfaction to be had playing in an orchestra, but for me personally it's too restricting. My musical love is jazz, where there's much more freedom and room. But in a strange way, the more freedom you've got, the more responsibility you've got. It doesn't only apply to music: What some people see as freedom can easily turn into anarchy. It's as if it's their freedom at everybody else's expense. In my mind the biggest "buzz" is when the group is working well as a unit. The greatest drum solo is of limited interest to me. Okay, a solo is fine, but what else is going on? If you listen to records of the classic lineups in jazz, what makes them great is that the group is great. It isn't that just Coltrane is great, or that just Elvin Jones is great; the whole *group* is great together.

SG: Do you teach tuned percussion?

TT: As part of general percussion studies, yes, but my specialty has always been drumkit. When it comes to things like jazz vibes, I've always wished I could be more into it. But it is so specialized these days, with all the four-mallet techniques they use. If somebody gets to that stage and wants to take it further, I recommend that they go to a mallet specialist.

SG: What about teaching improvisational skills, rather than strictly technique?

TT: Playing jazz is having the ability to improvise, and you can't really *teach* people to play jazz. You can teach them how to play their instruments and you can teach them about the music. The two things have to come together: their ability to play the instrument, and their *feel* for the music.

I often get drumkit players saying that they would like me to teach them to play jazz, and they look quite disillusioned when I tell them that I can't. This isn't to say that you can't steer someone in the right direction, but the only way you can learn a style is to listen and adapt it to your own needs. I say to people, "What do you play now?" "Rock." "How did you learn to play rock?" "Well, I went to a teacher." "Did your teacher teach you to *play rock*?" "Well, no. He taught me how to play the drums." "So how did you learn to play rock?" "By listening to it, I suppose." "That's it! If you want to learn to play jazz, you must listen to it."

Okay, there are various ways that you can help people who have grown up with one style to adapt to another. An obvious example for a drumkit player would be the touch on the kit, the balance between the different parts and textures of sound. Take a young rock drummer with little or no experience of jazz, and ask him to play some jazz time. You often find that the bass and snare drums are much too loud, but the cymbal rhythm lacks authority; which is of course all wrong because that cymbal rhythm is more prominent in jazz than it is in rock. It sometimes happens the other way 'round. Someone used to playing jazz who is trying to play rock won't be laying down a strong enough feel on the bass and snare, and the cymbal rhythm will be too loud.

Coming back to melodic instruments: It isn't a case of teaching somebody to play jazz *via* his or her instrument, it's *via* any instrument. I'm not going to start telling a saxophone player how to play the saxophone. But if I'm teaching a workshop and somebody is messing up, I can usually manage to put him right in terms he'll understand. There was a guy on one of these courses who was playing everything perfectly, except that over two particular bars he was *half a beat late*. I said, "Look, sorry, but all those notes you're playing are wrong." Obviously this made him a bit defensive, and he said, "How can they be wrong? It's what's written." Then I explained that the notes he was playing are only right if they are in the right place to blend harmonically with the chords that were being played underneath them. These chords were

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shifting the whole time, and if his notes were being played against the wrong chords, they were the wrong notes. He said, "Oh yeah! Right!" [laughs]

You see, it comes back to this thing I mentioned just now about string players not being able to play with a rhythm section. Believe it or not, you can find the same thing with some would-be front-line jazz players. The reason is that their lessons, and even their listening, is geared towards the melodic and harmonic side of things—and yet it is usually the rhythmic aspect that attracts them to the music to start with. I'm not saying that rhythm is completely ignored, but it's just something you are supposed to pick up along the way. It's a neglected area.

I think that I'm fortunate in that, although I'm first and foremost a drumkit player, I've always had an interest in melody and harmony. I studied harmony for 18 months and, if you ask my fellow players, I'm always asking about it and trying to find out more. Drummers who appeal to me are—I can't say more musical—but they are the ones who are not known just as great technicians, but more for their musical approach. That's why Mel Lewis is my favorite big band drummer. It's daft to say that he plays the drums melodically, but he gives off a melodic and harmonic feeling in relation to his marvellous rhythmic feel.

If I had to choose *one* musician who had the strongest individual influence on me, I'd say it was a pianist, the late Bill Evans. Melodically, harmonically, rhythmically as well, he was phenomenal! The original trio with Scott LaFaro and Paul Motian was a *real* trio; it wasn't just a piano with bass and drums accompanying. He brought in another concept for rhythm sections: There

was more looseness and interplay. As a drummer, I've been enormously influenced by him. Does that make sense to you?

SG: Yes. Doing interviews for *Modern Drummer* I often find that drummers cite non-drummers as their musical influences.

TT: Some years ago I did another interview, and the guy asked me the question: If I was able to wave a magic wand and play like any other musician, who would I choose? I said that I'd have the space and time of Miles Davis, the humor and writing of Bob Brookmeyer, the creativity of Sonny Rollins, the sound quality of Jim Hall, and the completeness and freedom of Bill Evans. He said, "Hang on. I can't print that! There isn't a drummer among them." [laughs] He wanted me to say which other drummer I'd choose to be a clone of, and I couldn't.

SG: Do you encourage drumkit players to practice rudiments?

TT: Well, for me there's just one basic rudiment: the stick hitting the surface. But we have to develop the various permutations in the most efficient way, with the minimum of effort and the maximum of control. I look upon the kit as an instrument in its own right, and therefore to practice for that instrument by doing rudiments on the snare drum is the wrong approach. I did it myself; I wasted a lot of time practicing rudiments. Actually, it *wasn't* totally wasted. I did get some value from it; it can help you physically with your technique. But *musically* it can restrict you. For instance, always smashing the accent in on the first stroke of a paradiddle—in rudimental terms that's what it's about. You're playing set pieces, trying to get them as accurate as possible, so you're conditioning yourself to play an accent in a certain place, whether you want to or not. If I want an accent somewhere, I'll put it

there by choice, not because I've sat there for hours practicing a certain routine.

Take the basic idea of a paradiddle: You can put the two notes on the same hand at the beginning rather than the end, or you can put them in the middle. Now, when you are playing on different surfaces of a drumkit, the paradiddle movement can be very relevant, providing you allow yourself the flexibility to play it any way 'round, with or without accents, according to the musical situation. In other words, get away from the snare drum rudiments thing, but apply the principles to rhythmic interplay on the kit. Let's face it, many rudiments come out as a series of straight notes with accents.

SG: Most drummers seem to learn a series of patterns, but a common philosophy among top professionals is that you must eventually free yourself from these patterns and just play. How do you think this freedom can be achieved?

TT: I try to show people the basic techniques—the physical thing. Then there's the musical application and awareness of sound *combinations*. That can often throw people. There's the movement of patterns and fluidity between hands and feet. This mustn't be dealt with on a purely physical level; you must always consider what it creates in terms of sound. There are the various combinations you can come up with by using a pattern in different ways, but these shouldn't be approached from the point of view of being clever and trying to come up with more and more combinations. They should always be usable sound patterns. You don't just get a blind accent, you get accents of different weights, and in different places. How do these affect your rhythmic feel? I think that freedom comes through discipline,

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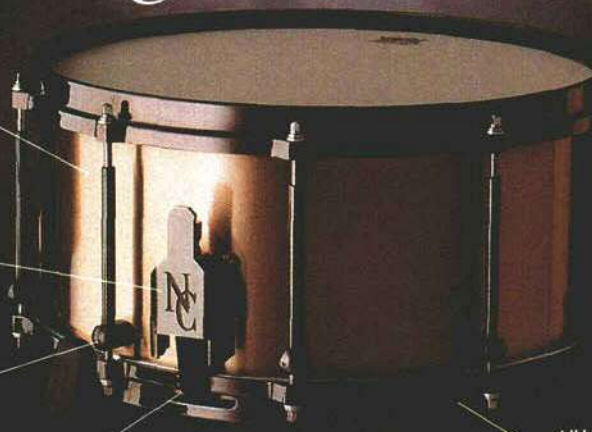
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in the sense of finding out about things in a structured way. What I say to students is, "These are your studies. Try to imagine them in musical environments within your own practice routines, but when you get on stage forget them; *just go and play.*" The drummer has got to be influenced by what is going on on that stage, at that particular time, with those particular musicians. You can't just approach it in a formulated manner; that's totally non-musical.

SG: You said that rhythm is a neglected area with people learning melodic instruments. Is the reverse also true? Should drummers learn about melody and harmony?

TT: Well, you certainly need to have an *understanding* of these things, in as much as they affect the structure of a piece of

music. Like the sax player who was playing all the wrong notes because they were late, the drummer who does something that is technically perfect but that doesn't fit the musical context is going to be wrong.

A young drummer came to me to study a couple of years ago, and he had a very good drum technique, a good sense of time; he played the drums *very well*. Now, as it turned out, he had been in and out of six or seven bands in as many months. I had to sit down and analyze his problem. After a lot of probing it seemed to be that he *never got beyond the drumkit*. You have to do that to understand what the other musicians, and therefore the band as a whole, is doing. So I went along to hear him play, and this is just one example: In the number "My Funny

Valentine," he never actually realized that it wasn't a standard 32-bar tune; there's another four bars on the end. What he did was play a tremendous fill into the next sequence, but it was always *four bars early*. For the next few lessons we didn't touch the drums; we just studied musical shape and form to develop his aural capabilities.

I say to my students, "Don't worry about other drummers. When do you work with other drummers? The people I worry about are bass players, keyboard players, sax players—the other people I am going to play with." A drummer can get up on stage with marvellous chops, but unless what he does is musical, the rest of the people aren't going to be too impressed.

SG: While we're on the subject of neglected areas, are there any other common ones?

TT: There are quite a few, but one very basic one is playing *unison* notes. We practice things like single-stroke rolls—getting different limbs playing notes in different places. But we hardly ever practice playing things in unison, so that two or more limbs are striking a surface or surfaces *together*. We use this a lot, but we never consciously practice making it accurate. If you play a basic rock rhythm, with four quarter notes on the closed hi-hat, the bass drum on 1 and 3, and the snare drum on 2 and 4, *all* those notes are in unison.

I teach patterns using unison strokes, between the hands first. I'll do something like 8th notes on the right and quarters on the left, then change over. Then the same pattern can be played between the feet, then between a hand and a foot, then between the other hand and the other foot, and so on. The idea is to get the unison notes struck accurately. It's when you change over from 8ths on the right and quarters on the left to 8ths on the left and quarters on the right, *without stopping*, that many people have problems. They get onto the new tack, and it sounds like a series of flams.

A problem I find is that two-, three-, and four-way independence is often taught as licks, but this doesn't show you where to use them and why. There's no musicality about it. Nevertheless, when it comes to balance between the limbs, I find that you have to start by dealing with the mechanics of it. Never lose sight of the time feel and the sound. Splitting things up between different surfaces, which creates different sounds, can be very confusing to start with—as we were saying about the rudiments. It's one thing to be able to play something with both hands on the same surface, getting the same sound and response from that surface; but it is another when you're dealing with different surfaces, sounds, and responses.

SG: You once told me that you thought that equipment manufacturers are not sufficiently aware of the importance of teachers when it comes to the influence they have on young players.

TT: Well, since I said that, Yamaha has been very helpful to me, so I don't think it anymore! [laughs] I suppose the thing is that these companies are in the business of sell-

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ing drums, and you have to give them a certain amount of credit for knowing what they are doing. However, I do think that having a kit being used by a one-hit-wonder band on TV isn't a particularly good form of exposure. For a start, the drummer in that band may be brilliant or he may be awful; it doesn't really matter. Also, the sound he is capable of getting from a kit in isolation isn't necessarily the sound you are hearing on the record, because it is likely to be heavily processed—if it even started out as that guy actually playing the kit. Most people who are going to buy a kit know this. The people who can afford to pick and choose their equipment might be influenced by what the likes of Steve Gadd use, but they are very unlikely to be influenced by a "pop" image of some passing fashion.

I have a tremendous connection with a great many up-and-coming young players in this country. They'll talk to me about types of drums and cymbals, and they don't normally start from the position of, "I've seen that, and it looks great. What do you think?" The primary consideration when choosing equipment *ought* to be to ask yourself what *you* need. It's reasonable that if you like a particular drummer and a particular sound, and you enjoy that area of music that he or she plays in, you'll be influenced by the choice of equipment as well as other related considerations. But in some ways, by trying to copy someone else's sound, you're setting up another barrier to your own development. You are working against what is natural to yourself.

When I was in New York once I went to a Sunday afternoon jam session at the Village Vanguard. I think it was Mel Lewis's kit that was set up on stage, but everybody else

played on it. There was Elvin Jones and a couple of other well-known jazz drummers, and they *all* got their own sound out of that kit. They didn't change anything; I'm not even sure whether they had their own sticks. But that kit sounded different for each player. It's all in the way they play.

SG: Do you think that musical ability is latent in everybody and just needs bringing out, or do you think it is a gift for "the few"?

TT: I believe that virtually everybody is good at *something*. Some people never develop it. This may be because they never even find out what it is. It can be because they never take the time to discover it, or it can be the circumstances they find themselves in. This talent isn't necessarily musical; and even if it is, it has to be for the right instrument. I have sometimes found students who have the talent but have chosen the wrong instrument. If you look into the history of a lot of good players, you'll find that they started on one instrument and changed to another. You might find that people *hear* things better in different ranges: So a trumpet player who hears things in a lower register might switch to trombone, a violinist might switch to double bass, or it might happen the other way 'round if it's higher things they are hearing. One reason for people not making it as drummers is lack of the ability to coordinate the limbs. Now, lack of coordination ability doesn't necessarily indicate lack of *musical* ability, does it? I had a young lad who came to me for drum lessons for a while, but ended up as the principal clarinetist in the L. S. S. O. (London Schools Symphony Orchestra); drums weren't for him. The danger in this situation is that you can find teachers who say, "Oh no. You've got no chance," and the

poor student thinks that he or she is hopeless where music is concerned. Sometimes you find people who have a great love of music but will never be able to play it themselves, but teachers must be careful not to make those sort of judgments too early.

SG: Do you find yourself influencing the tastes of students, and/or do you listen to what they like in order to understand their existing tastes?

TT: The advice I always give to people is, "Keep your ears and your mind open!" and I try to live by this myself. I know from my own experience that one's tastes change; if they don't actually change, they widen. There have been times when I've heard something and not been particularly enamored with it, but a couple of years later it's been my favorite album; I just wasn't ready for it at the time. And vice versa: Something that I have loved when I first heard it, a few months later I find that it doesn't have the lasting quality.

I'll listen to music that the students like. Sometimes I'll like it too, sometimes I won't. But I'll never say to them, "That's a load of rubbish; forget it and listen to this instead." If you do that you only build up hostility. You can also develop resentment against the music you'd like to steer them towards. There's a whole load of *listening pleasure* out there, and everybody should be encouraged to discover it and enjoy it. This still applies to teachers as much as to students; if we expect students to be open-minded and creative, we must be open-minded and creative ourselves. As my good friend and colleague Jeff Clyne, the bass player, says, "Through teaching we never stop learning."



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Learning Polyrhythms: Part 4

MUSIC KEY

S.D. 
 B.D. 
 H.H. 
 w/foot 

Last month, we learned how to subdivide polyrhythmic ratios. It is now time to combine subdivided polyrhythms into different beats. Learn the following exercises on the snare drum first, and then add the bass drum on all four beats and the hi-hat on beats 2 and 4 underneath these rhythms. Once you are comfortable with this, try to adapt these rhythms to the entire set, incorporating the tom-toms.

So far we have used polyrhythms in 4/4 time, starting on the first beat of the bar. The polyrhythm that has been most illustrated is the quarter-note triplet. If you have developed your quarter-note triplet patterns properly, you should have a good command of the 6 over 4/4 time feel. What you may not realize are all of the different possibilities that this has to offer. For example, an 8th-note pattern in 6 over 4 in half of a 4/4 bar can be thought of as 6 over 2:

However, if you change the bass drum pattern to 8th notes, you now have 6 over 4 in two beats:

Up until now I have started the polyrhythm on the first beat of the bar. However, let's make things a bit more challenging and move it back a beat. Try this one in 3/4:

This next exercise starts on the second 8th note of the bar:

The point of these examples is to show that polyrhythms can begin on any part of the measure. If you are going to use and apply polyrhythms in your playing, you have to learn polyrhythms to such a degree that they become natural to you, so you can apply them in different parts of the measure.

Polyrhythm Clusters

When different polyrhythms appear in random places, I identify them as "polyrhythm clusters." The following exercises are examples of polyrhythm clusters. These exercises are great for your polyrhythmic development. Play each of the measures individually before playing them as written.

The image displays musical notation for polyrhythm clusters in three time signatures: 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4. Each exercise is represented by a staff with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. The exercises are numbered 4 through 12. Exercises 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 are in 2/4 time. Exercises 9 and 10 are in 3/4 time. Exercises 11 and 12 are in 4/4 time. The notation shows various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests, often with beams connecting notes across measures. Some exercises have a repeat sign at the end.



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It's much harder than lacquer, which will crack and chip a lot easier. The clear finishes I use are the same type of materials."

Many of the machines used in the creation of the drums were themselves created in Select's shop. They are unique to Select's manufacturing process, and exist nowhere else in the world. Perhaps the most unusual of these is one that uses a computer to guide the device that both drills the lug holes and cuts the snare beds. It is basically the brainchild of Richard Malesheetz (who was not present during MD's visit to Select), and Paul Gabriel explains how it fits into Select's design philosophy.

"It's not unique from a 'computerized machine tool' standpoint; it rotates and goes up and down, and the drilling head goes in and out. So it's your basic robotic type of assembly machine. But as far as I know, there isn't anybody in the drum business using this kind of machine. For merely drilling holes, you can get by with just a mechanical fixturing, using a template. But we also wanted to use it for the snare beds. Snare beds are a big deal with drummers, and we didn't want to tool up with something we'd be stuck with if the market decided to go back to calfskin heads."

Dave Patrick has a long and varied background in drum customizing. To him, the computer-guided machine is indicative of the far-sighted attitude of Select's entire operation.

"I came in having done a lot of hand-

built, home-made stuff in retail, and what is real interesting to me about Select's operation is the ability to offer so many choices in drum design. The snare bed/drilling machine can be programmed to do anything you want, and the bearing-edge machine is the same way. A lot of forethought went into this; the ability to do custom work is obvious as you go through the manufacturing process.

"Because of the accuracy of the computer, we're able to change the ramp on the snare bed, the amount of flat area, the depth, the bite in the middle—we can do all that. We can store as many different variations as we want, and be able to recreate them on demand if we want to get more into custom work later on. Or we might offer several production lines with different types of sounds. You can take the same shell, add a different snare bed, and get a different sound.

"One of my pet peeves on drums is trashed lug holes. Many times, you'll pay a lot of money for a drumset, and it will look fine on the outside. But take the washers off the machine screws, and you'll see that the holes are trashed on the inside. One of the beauties of this machine is that the drilling pressure is so even. There's no difference due to who's running the drill press or doing the hand-drilling that day. We are able to control the pressure with the computer so that there are no trashed holes, and not even any cleaning up of the holes

required. It's doing things the hard way, but again, we're going for results.

"We've read several articles in *Modern Drummer* on how to correct or modify bearing edges, snare beds, and the like. Our process is intended to eliminate the need for such procedures, simply by making them right the first time—every time."

Paul Gabriel adds, "Our goal is to have a drum that you can walk out the door with, and it's great from then on. You'll change heads when necessary, but otherwise you don't worry about it. We're catering to the professional musician, and a professional's tools should be right when he gets them—and stay right."

A drum is not finished until the hardware is installed. Hardware was still under development when MD visited Select, but the attitude that applies to drumshells is obviously consistent when it comes to hardware. Dave Patrick elaborates: "The casting designs are completely our own, and there are still some slight modifications being made in design. But all our hardware is being made in the U.S. Everything on our drums is made in the USA with the same sort of quality control that goes on in our own shop. We spent a lot of time finding a company that would do what we wanted them to do. That's half the reason we're as far behind in our schedule as we are now. But the commitment has been to excellence, not to a calendar. That's frustrating for everyone here, because we

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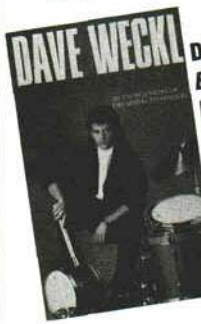
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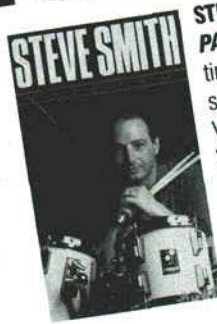


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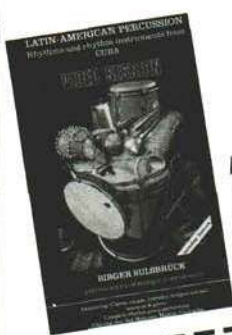
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wanted to go to a NAMM show before the '89 Winter Market. But things had to be right. Ultimately, the entire assembly process will take place here in the Watsonville shop; we'll be putting the production hardware on the finished drumshells."

In addition to maple, the Select production staff has experimented with a variety of exotic woods—including rosewood, purpleheart, and cocobolo—and several prototypes have been produced. Along with the capability for "custom" machining, will "custom" woods be a Select option? Paul Gabriel replies: "We tried a bunch of different woods; a lot of them worked and some of them didn't. The basic production steps are the same, but we have to cater to the different properties of different woods. The U.S. Forest Service has published a lot of literature about wood and its properties as a building material. They have some data about the bendability of wood. Our process seems to be able to do twice what their scale says we should be able to do. But some of the woods are just too far off the scale, even with all the factors optimized. We decided that our time would be better spent in actually making some production drums and getting them sold before we got any more carried away with seeing what else we could do."

Dave Patrick adds: "The drum consumer would also have to understand that a souped-up, candy-apple cocobolo drum would not carry the same price tag as our basic, workhorse, maple snare. There would be different levels of marketability. We have the capability to do a rainbow of really exotic things with woods, hardware, and finishes. We still see ourselves as a very custom-drum operation, able to do just about anything we want to do. But right now we're concentrating on getting a standard line established.

"Our 'standard' models will be 4", 5 1/2", and 7" deep by 14" diameter solid-maple snare drums, in Ruby, Black Sapphire, and Crystal Clear finishes. We'll also offer white, black, and red solid colored finishes as options. Our market research indicates that 8" drums are sort of fading from popularity, which is why we're offering a 7" as our deepest drum. With a solid shell, the 7" can be tuned to get the depth and projection that most 8" ply shells produce."

According to Sharon Gross, Select's goal is to "produce the perfect snare drum that everybody loves." She is also the first to admit that such a product will not be one that everybody can afford. But Sharon is confident that the appeal of quality will motivate potential buyers.

"I'll save money for a long time to buy something that I know is really good and will last, and there are lots of people out there who are like that. Even though they may not be our initial, target market, when they see and hear these drums, they may decide to wait an extra year so that they can buy one.

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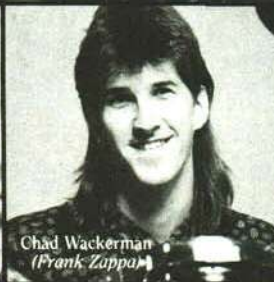
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if people have the money, they will buy that drum. Practically speaking, down the line—and probably not too far into the future—we're going to have to look at developing other products. For the moment, though, our minds are mainly focused on just getting out these drums."

What gives Bill Gibson the confidence to go ahead with a project that has already taken two years and many thousands of dollars, and is still barely off the ground? Bill is quick to respond.

"Well, I've been playing a prototype for about two years now, and people come up to me after the shows and rave about the snare drum sound. They say, 'What are you sampling? What are you triggering with your snare drum?' And when I say, 'I'm not triggering anything,' they can't believe it. I've shown the prototypes to a few select drummer pals of mine, and they've all loved them. That's pretty much what's kept me going. If I thought that it wasn't going to be the product I wanted it to be, I would have knocked it in the head a year ago."

Sharon Cross adds: "There has been tremendous response to the prototypes that have been field-tested. Our drums have been heard—and in some cases played—by top recording artists. Bill used a couple of our prototypes to record Huey Lewis' *Small World* album. Richie Hayward used a couple on Little Feat's comeback album, and one is on the latest John Hiatt album. The underground is begging for these drums! This phone rings a dozen times a day from drummers who have only heard about the drums and want to send us money for them. The biggest supporters are all the vintage drum collectors, drum techs, and professional artists out there who have seen how we've been working on the drums and their quality level. They're all out there giving us a 'thumbs-up.' Now it's up to our marketing team to get the word out to everybody else."

Dave Patrick, who heads that marketing team, adds, "When you have drum collectors—who criticize everything made in the last 40 years—going, 'Yeah...that's it,' you know you're on the right track. There have been some hellacious periods here—some very discouraging times—when comments like that have gotten everybody through. So there is support out there from people who have seen the quality level and have told us that the market is waiting. Of course, the subject of price comes up. But our commitment is always to make it the best it can be, not to make it fit within a price range. When the quality is where it should be, you never have to apologize for the price."

As we went to press, *Select Snare Drums* had undergone a name change, owing to trademark confusion with another manufacturer. The new name is *Solid Percussion, Inc.*





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the music—letting it enrich our lives—and then intuitively attempting to achieve the velocity, flow, or calm of these drumming masters' performances. I suggest listening to the music of such musicians as Ornette Coleman, Keith Jarrett, and Paul Bley.

I don't mean this to be an indictment of "linear" drumming studies (not too much, anyway). But all of this says to me: Trust your ears, your mind, and your heart to play this, or any other, kind of music. Listen to everything that the other musicians are playing, and respond appropriately, as your taste and experience can determine. Summon up patience and courage. Experiment. Discover the hidden architecture in spontaneously composed music. And if this has shed any light at all on how I approach listening to and playing free music, then I encourage you to broaden your scope of studies, too. There's a lot to be learned about drumming from life.

I also would like to recommend two recent recordings that I've made that (I like to think) exemplify some of these characteristics: a new ECM recording of the John Abercrombie trio live (with Marc Johnson on bass), and a Denon recording of the group Aurora, featuring Buell Neidlinger (the great bassist who has worked with Cecil Taylor, Frank Zappa, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra), Marty Krystall on sax, and Don Preston (ex-Mothers of Invention), synthesizer. Both of these recordings will be released during this Spring of 1989.

some of the more esoteric situations, it's unlikely that the other musicians will expect you to be an expert in their style, but they will expect you to emulate certain musical attitudes to allow their music to succeed. Listening to original recordings is a good way to learn about different styles, but copying these recordings by no means guarantees success. Ultimately, the best place to look for what works is the gig itself.

It's not necessary to abandon your individual style; indeed, you should not. But making an effort to stay close to the given style is a mature, musical approach, appreciated by those you're working with. Claiming that such adjustments compromise your individuality is a sign of inexperienced arrogance. A true professional can demonstrate confidence in his or her own style, without arrogantly clinging to a style that might cause the music to suffer. An unselfish attitude is especially important when coming into an unfamiliar situation.

The group may ask you to emulate the parts and style of their regular drummer. Do the best you can with this, but try to avoid playing anything with which you're truly uncomfortable. You may want to make certain changes, either because you're uncomfortable with the "normal" part, or because you just hear something different. If you need or want to make changes, ask the group in advance.

In mastering a variety of styles in subbing, and in all aspects of playing music, there's no replacement for experience. The subtle nuances involved in playing unfamiliar music can only be learned by doing. But this need not be discouraging to the drummer getting those first calls for help. A great deal of what makes for a successful engagement as a sub is based on attitude, and on the amount of time you're willing to prepare. Ultimately, your commitment to do the best job possible—on any gig, under any circumstances—will determine the amount of success you'll achieve as a sub.





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Jim, who recently tied the knot with Kathryn.

Alan White currently in the studio with Chris Squire, Tony Kaye, and Trevor Rabin. As reported last month, **Bill Bruford** has recorded with Jon Anderson, Rick Wakeman, and Steve Howe. It's not known at this time which band will retain rights to the name Yes.

Congratulations to Starship drummer **Donny Baldwin** on his recent marriage to Lisa Avila. Starship has recently been working on a new album.

Pat Mastelotto in the studio with Mr. Mister.

Gordon Gale recently on the road with Maxine Nightingale as well as doing various gigs with Edgar Winter.

Denny Fongheiser played on *Mickey's 60th Birthday*, a TV movie, as well as on records by Don Dixon, Danny Wilde, Latin Quarter, Andy Quinto, the Burn Sisters, and one cut on Trevor Rabin's upcoming project. Most recently he has been in the studio working on Tracy Chapman's second album.

Eddie Bayers in the studio with Carl Perkins, Michael Martin Murphy, Willie Nelson, Kenny Rogers, Eddy Raven, Reba McEntire, Conway Twitty, Dan Seals, Mac MacAnally, Scott McQuaig, Ricky Skaggs, David Slater, Mark O'Connor, Keith Whitley, and Ricky Van Shelton.

Clyde Brooks recently coproduced *The Headlights* with whom he played percussion while their drummer, **Kevin Todd**,

played set. Clyde also recently coproduced *Lois Lane*, featuring **Eugene Henrickson** on drums, Ronna Reeves, with **Tommy Wells** on drums, and *The Flying Flamingos*, with **Paul Griffith** on drums. Recent drum sessions include Jimmy Swaggart and Tim Malchek's *New Country* TV show.

Tico Torres on tour with Bon Jovi.

Hats off to many drummers who were recently involved in a benefit concert at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium in Los Angeles for Find The Children: **James Kottak**, **Frankie Banali**, **Carmine and Vinny Appice**, **Myron Grombacher**, and **Jay Schellen**.

Bruce Rutherford working with Keith Whitley.

Adam Nussbaum recently gigging with the Michael Brecker band.

Jonathan Mover on new recordings by Joe Satriani and Stu Hamm.

Richie Morales in the studio with Spyro Gyra for summer release. Richie has been performing live with Bill Evans, and he recorded a track for Victor Bailey's upcoming solo album.

For the filming of Eddie Money's video "The Love In Your Eyes," the director saw someone sitting in a cafe who looked perfect for a part, and offered him the job. It turned out to be ex-Cream drummer **Ginger Baker**.

Karl Latham working with Charlie Elgart.

Carl Allen recently gigging with Benny Powell.

each, and the player can choose which cymbal will be the top and which will be the bottom according to personal taste.

Q. I recently got a Paiste 2000 *Sound Reflection* Power Crash. I was wondering if Slobeat Cymbal Cleaner would harm the cymbal in any way. I have the same question about a Paiste 3000 ride.

D.O.

St. Peters MO

A. We contacted Mike Stobie, president of Slobeat Musical Products. He informed us that he wouldn't recommend his cleaner for use on any brand-new Paiste cymbal, because Paiste uses a wax coating on its cymbals to protect and preserve their lustre. He suggests that you use Paiste's own brand of cymbal polish, or just a soft cloth to wipe away dust and fingerprints. However, Mike suggests that after the coating has worn away—which happens naturally with the passage of time and the continued use of the cymbal—Slobeat Cymbal Cleaner would be an excellent product to clean and polish Paiste cymbals.

Q. After searching for four years for a North drumset, I finally found one and immediately purchased it. I then proceeded to have the set refinished. (The shells were in pretty poor shape aesthetically, although still very functional and powerful.) Upon finding someone to undertake the job, I left in that person's possession two toms—a 6" and an 8". A month later, I learned that my toms were missing from that person's possession.

In order to sue for my loss, I need an estimate for the cost of replacing my lost property (either by repurchase or fabrication). This is required in order to set the value of my lawsuit. Can you provide me with such an estimate, or suggest someone who could?

P.S.

Perth Amboy NJ

A. You are faced with a difficult situation. As you discovered yourself in your four-year search, North Drums have been off the market for several years, and are very hard to come by. There is no single source of pricing information, simply because they fall into the category of "rare items." In other words, a music store or individual could charge any figure that the traffic would bear for such a set.

We contacted Tom Meyers, who handled the distribution of North Drums in the U.S. several years ago, and though he had no exact original figures for your specific drums, he estimates that your 6" tom listed at approximately \$250 and the 8" at \$300. We do know that a complete set of six drums and a stand listed for \$1,495. If you're still interested in replacing your lost toms, we can only suggest to keep trying drum shops and the For Sale section of local papers and/or MD's Drum Market, and perhaps place an ad yourself in the Wanted section. Good luck.



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MD TRIVIA WINNERS

The five winners of MD's January Trivia Contest are **Mark Hagarty**, of St. Catharine, Ontario, Canada, **Mark Burdon**, of Brighton, Massachusetts, **Chris Rosen-crants**, of Flint, Michigan, **Steve Riether**, of Westminster, California, and **Kevin Gamble**, of Bradenville, Pennsylvania. Each will receive a set of Wuhan Chinese cymbals, compliments of U. S. distributor Paul Real Sales, for the correct answer to the January question, which was: "Although he played guitar in Moby Grape, he started out as the drummer in the Jefferson Airplane. Who is he?" The answer is: **Alex "Skip" Spence**. Congratulations to all our winners from Paul Real Sales and *Modern Drummer*!

SLOBEAT MOVES

Slobeat Music Products recently moved to a new location, in an expansion effort that now gives the company triple its former space and a shipping center at the confluence of three major freeways. The new 8,000-10,000-square-foot building makes Slobeat the largest full-line music wholesaler between Chicago and the West Coast. Mike Stobie, president of Slobeat, says,

"Our new facility will allow us to serve our customers even more efficiently than before. A state-of-the-art computer system and multilevel shipping makes it possible for us to guarantee that orders taken by 3:00 P.M. go out by 5:00 P.M. the same day."

Slobeat Music Products' new phone number is (303) 277-1017, with a toll-free number of 1-800-227-0730. The new mailing address is 15854 W. 6th Avenue, Golden, Colorado 80401.

SAM ASH MUSIC INSTITUTE

Sam Ash Music Stores recently established the Sam Ash Music Institute, a learning center devoted to bringing the best possible musical experience to the student. The Music Institute will be temporarily conducting classes in the Sam Ash Music store in Edison, New Jersey. Students will have the opportunity to gain hands-on experience with the latest musical equipment in demand by today's professional musicians. Faculty will have access to a completely stocked retail complex from which they can demonstrate equipment and instruments as soon as they appear on the market.

Classes currently offered include Basic

and Advanced MIDI Systems, FM Synthesis Techniques, Personal Multitrack Recording, Intro to Audio Engineering, LA. Synthesis, Digital Sampling, and MIDI Percussion & Programming. Interested persons can call Sam Ash Music in Edison at (201) 572-5221 or 572-5595 for updated class information and registration instructions. The location is 1831 Rt. 27 at Plainfield Avenue, Edison, New Jersey 08817.

PEARL ORIENT EXPRESS CONTEST

Pearl International recently announced the winners of its Orient Express dealer sales contest. The winners were those dealers who sold the greatest number of Pearl drumsets—within their respective sales account levels—in 1988. As a reward for this outstanding sales achievement, Pearl hosted these dealers from April 1 to 15 in Japan (where they were entertained at a corporate reception), Taiwan (where they toured Pearl production facilities), and Hong Kong (for a shopping spree).

The winning drum dealers were: Bill Findeison and Bob Gooden, Bringe Music Center, St. Petersburg, Florida; Doug Sheffield and Bob Bengston, ProSound Music, Boulder, Colorado; Albert Kreimer, Hermes Music, McAllen, Texas; Harvey Vogel,

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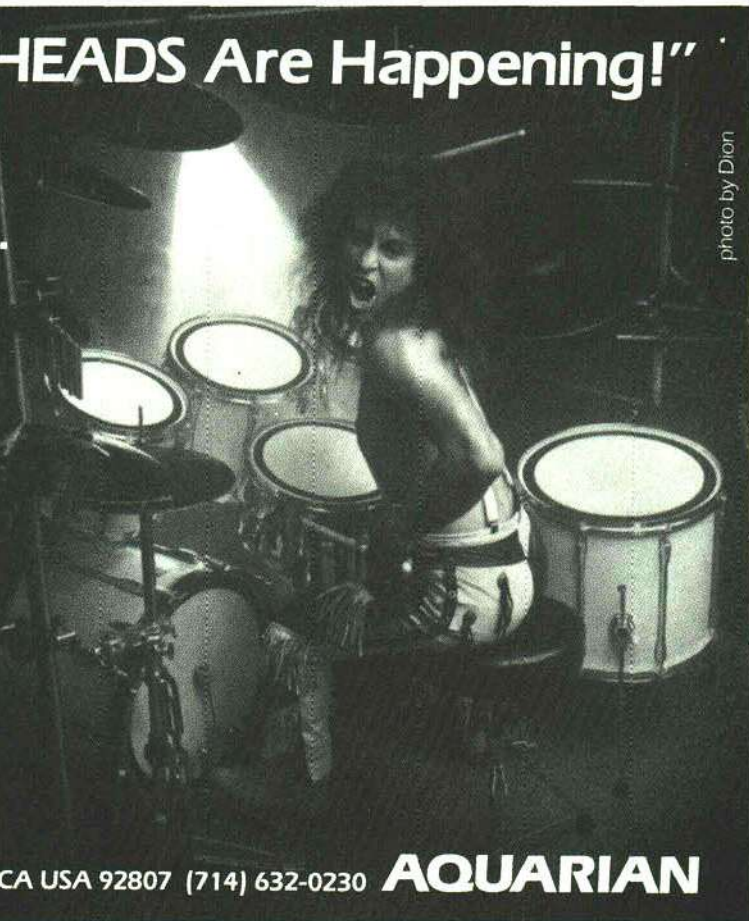


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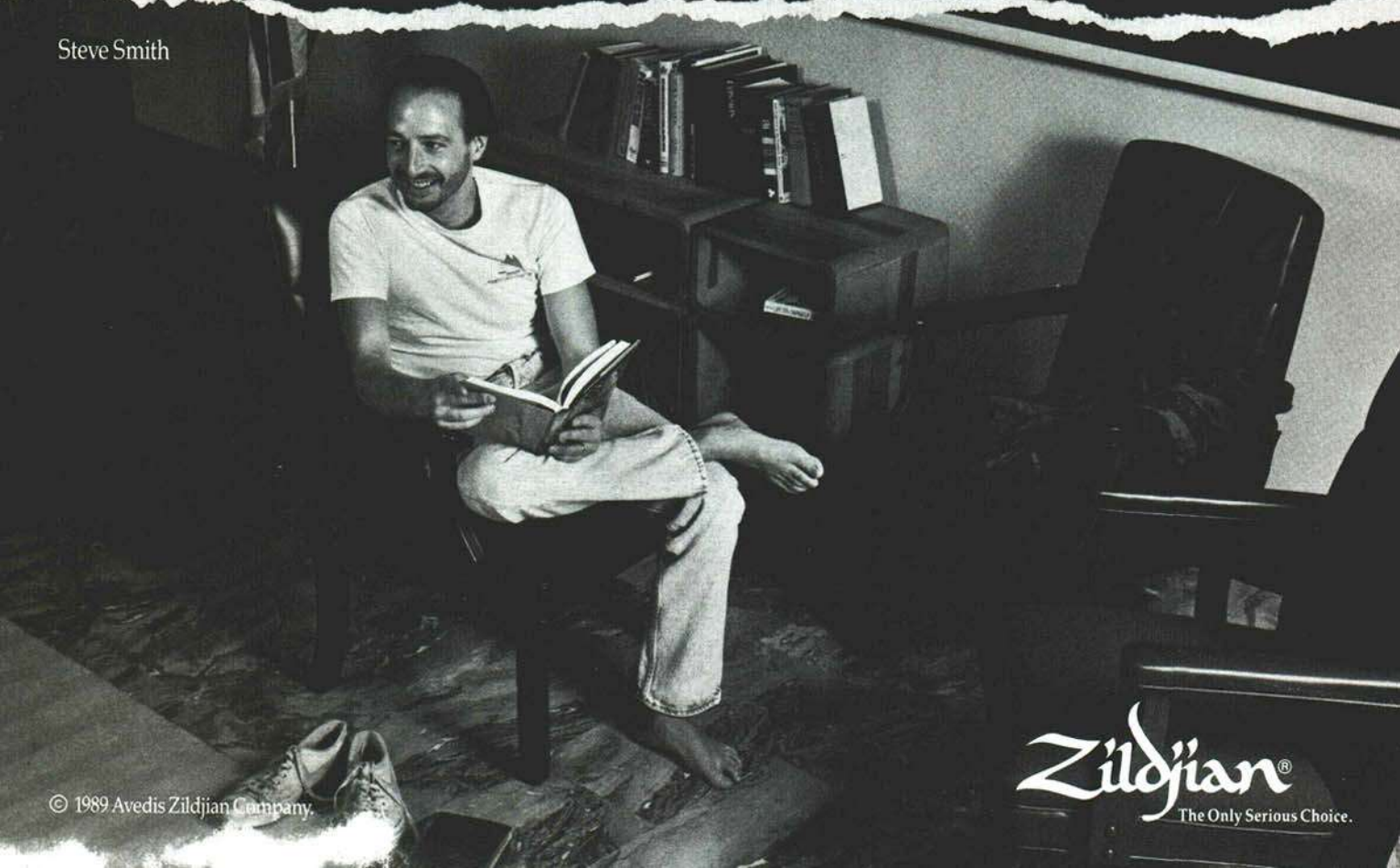
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Lone Star Percussion, Dallas, Texas; Dave Zabler, Cascio Music, New Berlin, Wisconsin; Don Svarzo, Drum World, San Francisco, California; George Luther, Rhythm City, Atlanta, Georgia; Dennis Bamber, Woodwind & Brasswind, South Bend, Indiana; Jerry Ash, Ash Music Co., Hempstead, New York; Koob Veneman and John Popielasz, Veneman Music, Rockville, Maryland; Keith Karnaky, The Drum Shop, Houston, Texas; Ray Shear, Guitar Center, Chatsworth, California; John Becker, Resurrection Drums, Pembroke Park, Florida; Elliot Rubinson and A. J. Altieri, Thoroughbred Music, Tampa, Florida; James Rittenhour, Rit Drums, Allegan, Michigan; Frederick J. Bramante, Daddy's Junky Music Store, Salem, New Hampshire; Charles Levin, Washington Music Center, Wheaton, Maryland; Bill Everitt Jr., Brook Mays Music, Dallas, Texas; and Henry Goldrich, Manny's Music, New York, New York.

CHESTER THOMPSON LONDON CLINIC

When Chester Thompson actually walked into Ronnie Scott's Club in London, it was five minutes after the clinic was due to

have started. Up to that time, the people from Sonor U.K. managed to maintain an amazing degree of cool self-possession; it was only after Chester had arrived that managing director Simon Gardner let on to the assembled drummers what had been going on. Sabian's Bob Zildjian came forward to say, "We were held up for two hours by fog at the airport in Paris, so you can blame the French—which the English always like to do!"


Chester took the stage, and after saying that he was about to warm up, made the point that the clinic should be about information—as opposed to just a demonstration of chops. His warm-up developed from snare drum rudiments into a solo that gave the English audience what they hope to hear from a top American player: an impressive technique, combined with a feel and use of ideas that can inspire other drummers to think more about the creative side of their playing. Chester talked about practicing and made the all-important point that one should always practice something that one can't already play. He discussed and demonstrated his approach to playing the drums, and he was always willing to take questions as he went along.

The six-piece Sonor *Hillite* kit (with double bass drum pedal), Sabian cymbals, and Sonor miking system was put through its paces in a variety of contexts: jazz,

funk, Latin, and rock. Chester was able to produce just the right sound in each case by touch, rather than by changing tuning or sticks. He demonstrated timekeeping by getting the audience to clap a slow back-beat for him, while he played across and around it. Chester later put his "clapping section" to further use by getting them to clap a 7/4 rhythm, while he soloed over it to show how natural an odd time signature can be made to feel.

After being asked the inevitable question about compromise of styles when he and Phil Collins play together, Chester said that they generally found it easy, but that there had been one number he had found very difficult to get the feel of in rehearsal. Phil had apparently said, "Chester, it's just like walking. Look!" Chester told the audience, "It was then that I understood the different cultures, because where I grew up, we used to *walk* differently."

Chester left the audience with these words: "Technique is a tool for expressing your ideas, so what you've got to do is to get in touch with your ideas. Whatever you're doing and however you feel, when you're playing you must give it all you've got. You never know who might be listening. And when anybody comes to listen to *you* play, that's your privilege."

—Simon Goodwin 



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AQUARIAN SIGNATURE SERIES DRUMHEADS

Aquarian Accessories recently introduced its *Signature Series* drumheads featuring Tommy Aldridge, Vinny Appice, Joe Franco, and Carmine Appice. Owner Roy Burns says, "These four great artists helped us test and develop heads for their particular style and sound. Durability was a big factor for these heavy hitters. The new *Signature Series* snare drum heads passed every test—so much so, that each artist's picture and personal signature will appear on the outside of the package of the snare drum head he uses. Tommy Aldridge plays the *Textured Super Dot*; Vinny Appice plays the *Classic Clear* with *Power Dot*; Joe Franco plays the *Textured Double Dot*; and Carmine Appice plays the *Classic Clear* with *Rock Dot*. The *Signature Series* is Aquarian's way of thanking these legendary players for their assistance and input." **Aquarian Accessories Corporation, 1140 North Tustin Avenue, Anaheim, California 92807.**

NEW YAMAHA PRODUCTS

Yamaha has recently introduced a number of new products in its concert and marching percussion lines, along with educational products and a new drum machine.

The new *Power-Tech* marching



snare drum (*MS 714*) is constructed with a 10x14 7-ply mahogany/birch shell, ten high-tension lugs, steel *DynaHoops*, and nylon and metal washers for easy, accurate tuning. There is also a two-point tension adjustment on the snare throwoff, along with ten independently tunable synthetic gut snares. Other features include an easily removable snare assembly unit and three protective feet. The lightweight (13 lb.) drum is directed at high school and junior high marching bands.

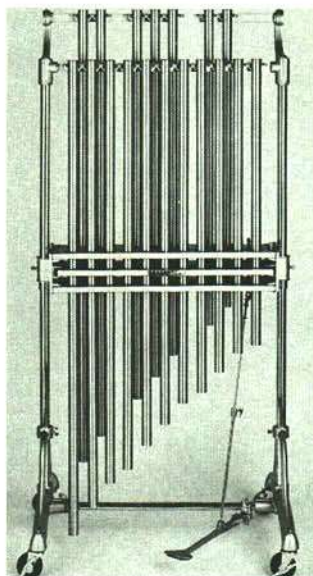
Also new is the *Corps-Master* snare carrier (*MSX 21*), which can be used for all Yamaha marching snare drums. The lightweight carrier connects to the Yamaha *ET* carrier clip, which is standard on all Yamaha marching snare drums.

Newly designed concert toms and a concert bass drum are targeted specifically for the school market. The concert toms, available in black, feature birch/mahogany shells said to produce a full and directional sound. A *Tour Custom* lug casing has been added for durability, and each set of toms comes with two heavy-duty *WS 820 tom* stands. Three sets are available, offering groups of four drums in varying sizes.



Along with the toms, Yamaha is offering a 14x28 concert bass drum, featuring 10-ply birch hoops for added strength and an 8-ply beech/mahogany shell. Yamaha's "Air-Seal" system guarantees that every bass drum shell is perfectly in round—a critical factor in producing a strong fundamental tone. Available in black, this drum is designed with key-rod tension rods instead of the traditional T-rods to allow greater mobility in performance situations.

Yamaha now offers Deagan *Cold Standard Chimes* (*DC 9150/4*). With a standard range of 1 1/2 octaves, this instrument is hand-assembled from start to finish. It uses 1 1/4" gold-finished tubes and a quick, positive pedal damper



system that has a fingertip lock to hold open the damper until it is easily released by touching the pedal. Two brakes are fit-



ted on the castors. A new Dave Samuels two-tape educational video entitled *Mallet Keyboard Musicianship* has been released as part of Yamaha's *Steps To Excellence* educational video series, available from Yamaha dealers. Additional educational material is available from Yamaha in the form of the *Yamaha Percussion Pak*, a comprehensive educational packet consisting of articles written by leading percussion artists including Dave Garibaldi, Steve Houghton, Ralph Humphrey, Jim Petercsak, Dave Samuels, Fred Sanford, Ed Soph, and Jay Wana-maker. The articles deal with all facets of percussion, including drumset, concert, and



Marching percussion. Topics include tuning tips, keyboard percussion, funk drumming, odd time signatures, corps-style warm-ups, big band drumming, and instrumentation suggestions. Also included is a copy of the Percussive Arts Society (PAS) International Drum Rudiments, along with a PAS and NAJE application. The packet is available free by writing to Yamaha.

Finally, Yamaha's Digital Musical Instrument division has released the *RX8 Digital Rhythm Programmer*, a 16-bit drum machine designed for both live performance and studio applications. Its sample library of 43 sounds includes five bass drums, eight toms, five cymbals, Latin percussion, marimba, orchestra, and two electric bass samples. This allows the *RX8* to provide a bass/keyboard track to accompany the drum program. For further specifications, contact Yamaha directly. **Drums and educational products: Yamaha Corporation of America, P.O. Box 7271, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49510. Electronics: Yamaha Corporation of America, Digital Musical Instruments, P.O. Box 6600, Buena Park, California 90622.**

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REUNION BLUES BACK-PACK BAGS



Reunion Blues has introduced a new back-pack strap system for their cymbal and hardware bags. Drummers can now carry their cymbals or hardware on their back, enhancing portability and ease of carrying. All the bags are heavily padded and made to last. Several models of bags are available in both leather and cordura. Reunion Blues also offers several models of stick bags and snare drum bags, also in both leather and cordura. **Reunion Blues,**

2525 16th Street, San Francisco, California 94103, (415) 861-7220.

SLINGERLAND REINTRODUCES SPIRIT KIT

The reintroduction of the Slingerland *Spirit* drum-kit has been announced by Slingerland, U.S.A., now owned and operated as part of Fred Gretsch

Enterprises, Ridgeland, South Carolina. The new *Spirit* set is made in the familiar Slingerland style, with special attention paid to upgrading the hardware for added strength and extra setup flexibility. The five-piece kit includes two double-headed toms, a double-headed floor tom, a bass drum

with spurs, and a chrome snare (not shown in photo). Hardware includes a hi-hat and two cymbal boom stands. According to Fred Gretsch, "This new *Spirit* kit will play just like the popular original *Spirit* kits, and at the same time allow many drummers the opportunity to play



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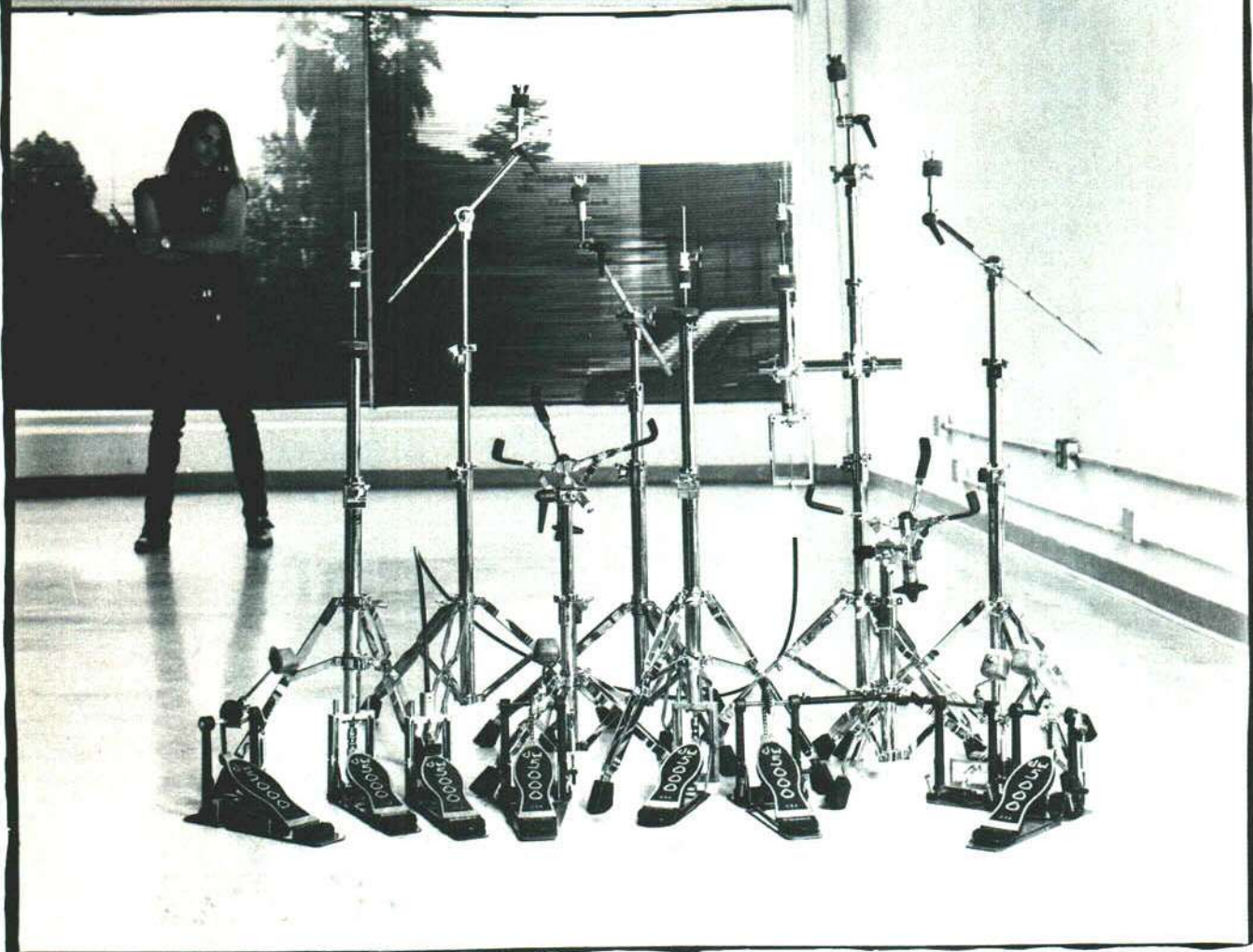
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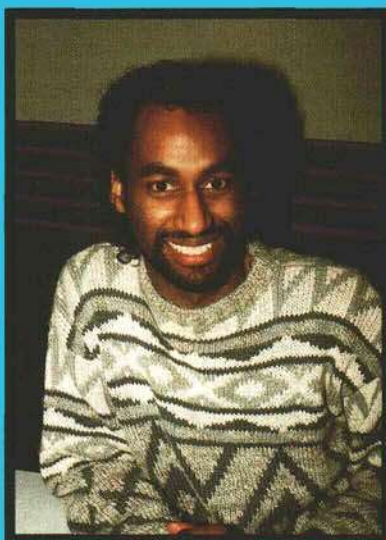
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