

MODERN DRUMMER®

The World's First International Magazine For Drummers



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Rick Allen

**RICHIE
HAYWARD**

THE GRACELAND DRUMMERS

STRYPER'S ROBERT SWEET



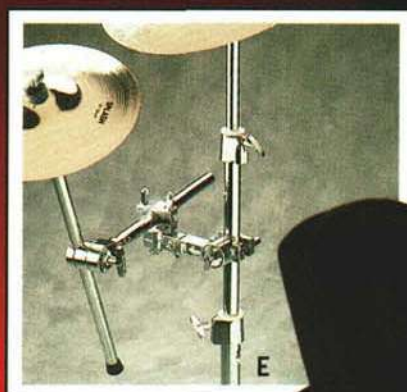
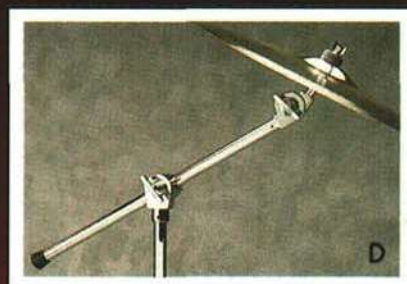
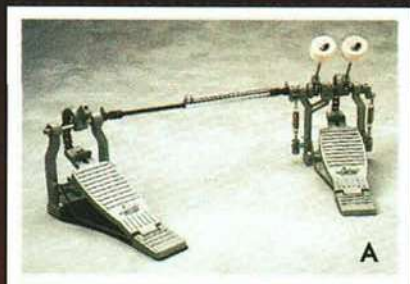
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RICK ALLEN

When Def Leppard drummer Rick Allen lost his left arm in a car accident three years ago, most people assumed that his career was finished. But Allen had no intention of giving up drumming, and through hard work and determination he has made a remarkable comeback.

by Teri Saccone 16

RICHIE HAYWARD

Known for his drumming with the innovative group Little Feat, Richie Hayward went on to play with Joan Armatrading and Robert Plant. Now, as Little Feat prepares to regroup, Richie looks back on his life and career.

by Robyn Flans 22

THE GRACELAND DRUMMERS

When Paul Simon recorded his *Graceland* album, he featured a number of South African musicians, including drummers **Isaac Mtshali, Francis Fuster, and Okyerema Asante**, who also did the *Graceland* tour. Here, they speak of their upbringings as musicians, and discuss the differences between African and American music.

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BEATING DRUMS, BEATING DISABILITIES

It is more difficult to play drums with a physical disability, but it's not impossible. We speak with drummers who have various disabilities to learn how they cope with the physical demands of drumming.

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EDITOR'S OVERVIEW



Advertising: Past And Present

I recently had the opportunity to look through a collection of music magazines from about 20 years ago. As I browsed through this assortment of publications, my attention was quickly drawn to the drum advertisements, and I was astounded at just how much drum advertising has *improved* over the years.

It was interesting to once again see such young faces behind the older equipment. For example, there were Buddy and Barrett Deems on Slingerland drums, Louie on Rogers, Shelly on Leedy, Sonny Payne on Sonor, Mel Lewis and Elvin on Gretsch. Product-wise, I spotted items like the Rogers *Piccolo* snare drum, Remo *Sparkitone* heads, and the infamous *Hollywood Tronic Drums*, forerunners to so much of what we're witnessing today in electronics.

Even more absorbing than the artists and products was the overall quality of the advertisements themselves. Though some were a full page, the vast majority ran one-quarter to one-half page in size. And there was a noticeably limited amount of copy written for these ads. Any kind of product description was evidently something you had to go to the catalog to find.

The use of color was practically non-existent; most of the full-page ads were presented in a basic black-and-white format. In some cases, the ad consisted of nothing more than a rough illustration of artist and equipment—rather dreary by today's standards. Even the photos were somewhat bland. A popular photographic concept was to position an endorser at his set, and to have the artist with whom he was performing standing at his side looking most pleased with his selection

of drummer and drum gear.

My, how things have changed. Look at an issue of *MD* and you'll find an industry that's literally *come of age*. Dramatic advertisements in blazing color capture the drumset from the top, the side, even from the bottom looking upward. Two-page spreads highlight equipment clear across the magazine. Many of the ads look as good as the color pages of the catalogs themselves.

There's also a lot more descriptive copy to read and detail photography to look at. Today's advertisers *want* you to know what their products are all about, and they're doing it in a highly creative fashion. You're apt to find equipment in every possible setting, from inside a bare recording studio and amidst odd rock formations, to layouts complete with depth perspective or eerie outer-space effects.

You'll also find a more contemporary use of endorsers in advertising today. We've progressed from the conservative, rather drab studio poses of the '50s and '60s, to the realism of high-energy performance on the brightly-lit, smoke-filled concert stage. Even sound plays an important role in advertising. Certain manufacturers have actually let you *hear* what their products sound like on the back of *MD's Sound Supplements*. All this was quite unheard of 20 years ago. Perhaps *MD* had a little bit to do with it.

Regardless, we've seen quite a revolution in drum-industry advertising throughout the '80s. Where it will go from here is anyone's guess, but it certainly will be interesting to observe what the people who conceptualize and create this material can come up with next.

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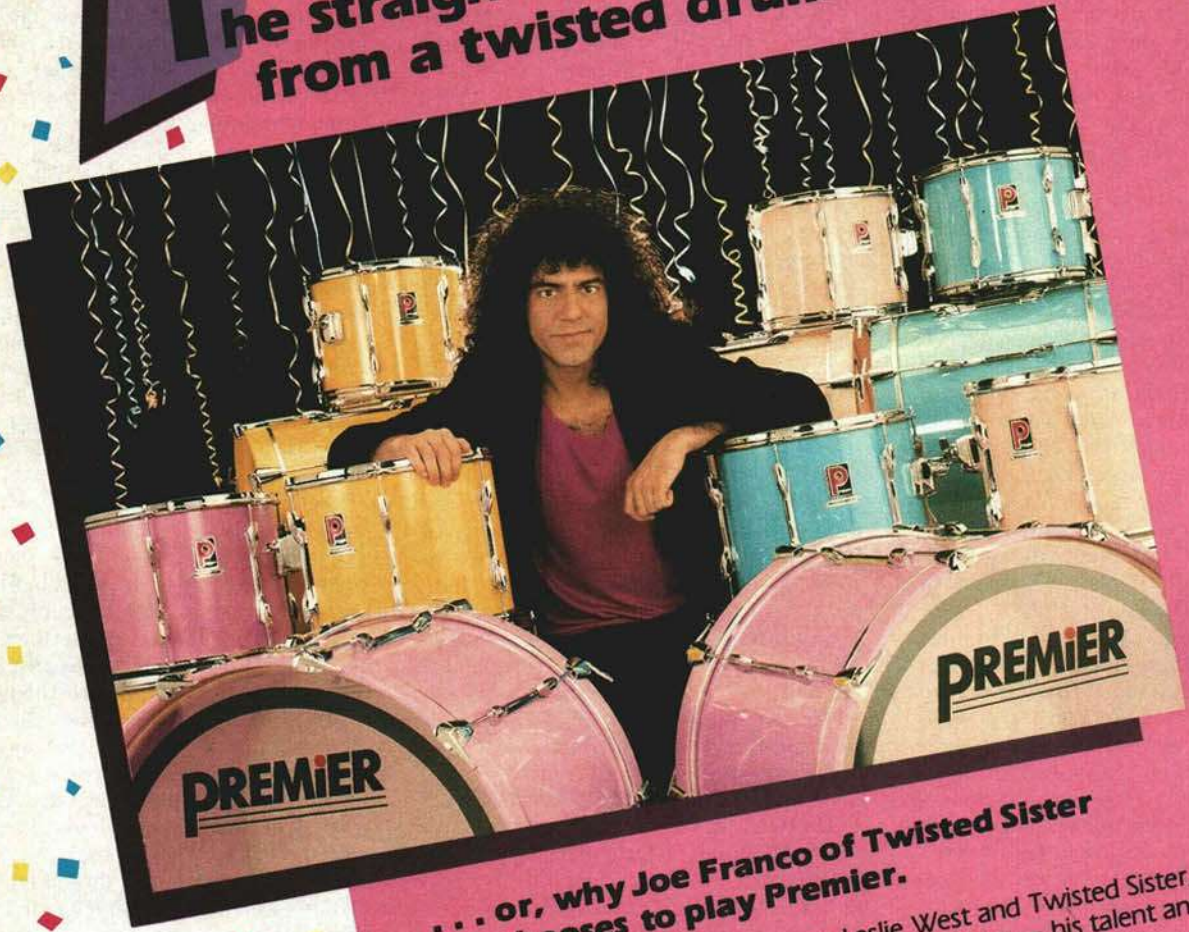
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ISSUE DATE: MARCH 1988

The straight story
from a twisted drummer . . .



. . . or, why Joe Franco of Twisted Sister chooses to play Premier.

From The Good Rats and Fiona to Leslie West and Twisted Sister, Joe Franco has always had two things going for him — his talent and his Premier Drums.

"The key to getting the most out of your natural talent is to have as much fun as you can every time you sit down to play. Fun and creativity go hand in hand — when the band's having a good time playing, there's more energy and more ideas flowing. Also, let's face it, as drummers, the fun begins when we hit something."

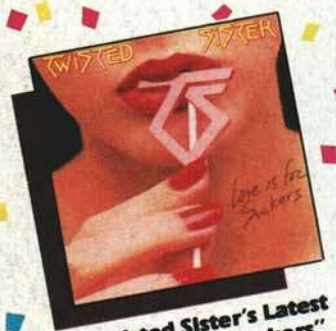
"Obviously, making good sounds is more fun than making mediocre sounds. At some point, you begin to find a direct link between the quality of sound of your drums and your progress as a drummer. I've been playing Premier drums for over 10 years now, and their sound has never disappointed me."

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Twisted Sister's Latest
"Love Is for Suckers"

READERS' PLATFORM

CHRISTIAN DRUMMERS

I am not entirely clear as to why *Modern Drummer* decided to run a two-part feature on contemporary Christian drummers [November and December 1987]. Why not feature an article on great Jewish drummers? You could include the late, great Buddy Rich, Dan Gottlieb, Rod Morgenstein, or Max Weinberg. Better still, to be fair, you also could present an article on drummers who play music that is openly anti-religious. Some of the music played by Frank Zappa and Jethro Tull might fall in this category. Clearly this approach to editorial policy would be disastrous.

By giving special preference to Christian music and Christian drummers you have implied that it may, perhaps, be preferable. I am not in any way suggesting that the drummers covered in this article should not have appeared. However, they could have been included either as full features, or in your *Portraits* or *Up And Coming* columns. I think it is unfair and bad editorial practice to present articles with a religious or political bias in a magazine such as *Modern Drummer*.

The spiritual side and approach to music of musicians such as Narada Michael Walden, Manu Kathe, and George Marsh was reflected beautifully in their interviews. They were not, however, presented as the opinion of *Modern Drummer* or of the musical community in general. As with all matters of a spiritual nature, the choices and interpretations are left to the reader.

You have always done an excellent job of presenting the philosophical and musical approaches of the various musicians that you have interviewed over the years, while being careful not to over-editorialize. The only consistent editorial bias I have detected since you first began publishing has been to emphasize the positive aspects of music (a good thing, I

might add). I would hate to see *Modern Drummer* lose sight of its objectives and discard such a sound editorial policy.

Janok Bhattacharya
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

Editor's note: The reason that the drummers included in the features you mention were covered had nothing to do with the fact that they, themselves, are Christians. It had to do with the fact that they are notable drummers in a very viable and active part of the contemporary music scene. The feature was created to give coverage to the drummers of Contemporary Christian Music as a commercial entity—much as past MD features such as "Broadway Roundtable," "Drummers Of Atlantic City: A Roundtable," "Rock Drummers Of The '80s," or "Blues Drummers: Parts 1 And 2" have served to present other groups of drummers performing in specialized fields.

Modern Drummer appreciates your recognition of our policy to allow each artist we cover to express his or her own position—be it religious, philosophical, political, or musical—without undue editorializing on our part. We intend to continue this policy. We also reserve the right to recognize significant trends within the musical industry, and to cover the drummers and percussionists taking an active part in those trends.

CRITICAL EVALUATION

I am writing this letter to thank you for an intelligently written, thoughtfully produced, and artfully packaged magazine. *Modern Drummer* appears to place substance ahead of glamour, respect for its readership ahead of the greedy pursuit of ever-increasing sales figures, and professionalism ahead of ego.

Prior to my exposure to *MD*, rhythm was a pleasant, but entirely foreign, lan-

guage to me. Due to your careful editorial practices I, as a neophyte, was able to assimilate a great deal of technical information about drumming. I was also able to get a real flavor for the look and feel of life through the eyes and the soul of a drummer. Somehow your writers are able to talk extensively about drum mechanics without omitting the drummer from the picture.

Allow me to mention, as well, that a number of publications show an alarming propensity toward demeaning advertising featuring female models. I have seen an admirable absence of trashy, sexist ads for drum equipment in the pages of *MD*. I believe that says something, not only about the staff of *Modern Drummer*, but about its readership. Drummers obviously won't subsidize bullshit! If they did, the proof would have been in your copy by now.

I believe I've learned the answer to your success from the drummers themselves. The few I have known have shown me what a broad range of personalities are attracted to this complex, deeply subconscious musical form. Despite their differences, they all seem to possess, in one way or another, a kind of fundamental rootedness that distinguishes them from other musicians. I believe that rootedness has created a magazine and a readership focused on real priorities, dedicated to what is central and essential, and able to give motion to what is stagnant and lifeless. That motion is the language of rhythm, a movement through which I have come alive between the leaves of your lively creation. And creation is the very substance of life. Thank you for the privilege of inclusion in your community.

Adrian Jones
Syracuse NY

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HOLD ON! THIS IS ~~IT~~
 INSTEAD OF ALL THIS ~~STUFF~~ THEY ARE TELLING YOU, YOU SHOULD KNOW I'M NOT PLAYING THESE DRUMS 'COS I GET THEM FOR FREE OR SOMETHING! I PLAY 'EM 'COS I LIKE THE WAY THEY ~~SOUND~~ SOUND AND I'VE ALWAYS PLAYED 'EM EVEN WAY LONG BEFORE I STARTED ENDORSING THEM! AND THEN THERE'S THE WARWARE..... WELL, IT JUST NEVER HAS TO BE ~~WITH~~ WITH MEAN, I'VE GOT ~~THE~~ MOLD GROWING ON THE INSIDE OF MY TOM -

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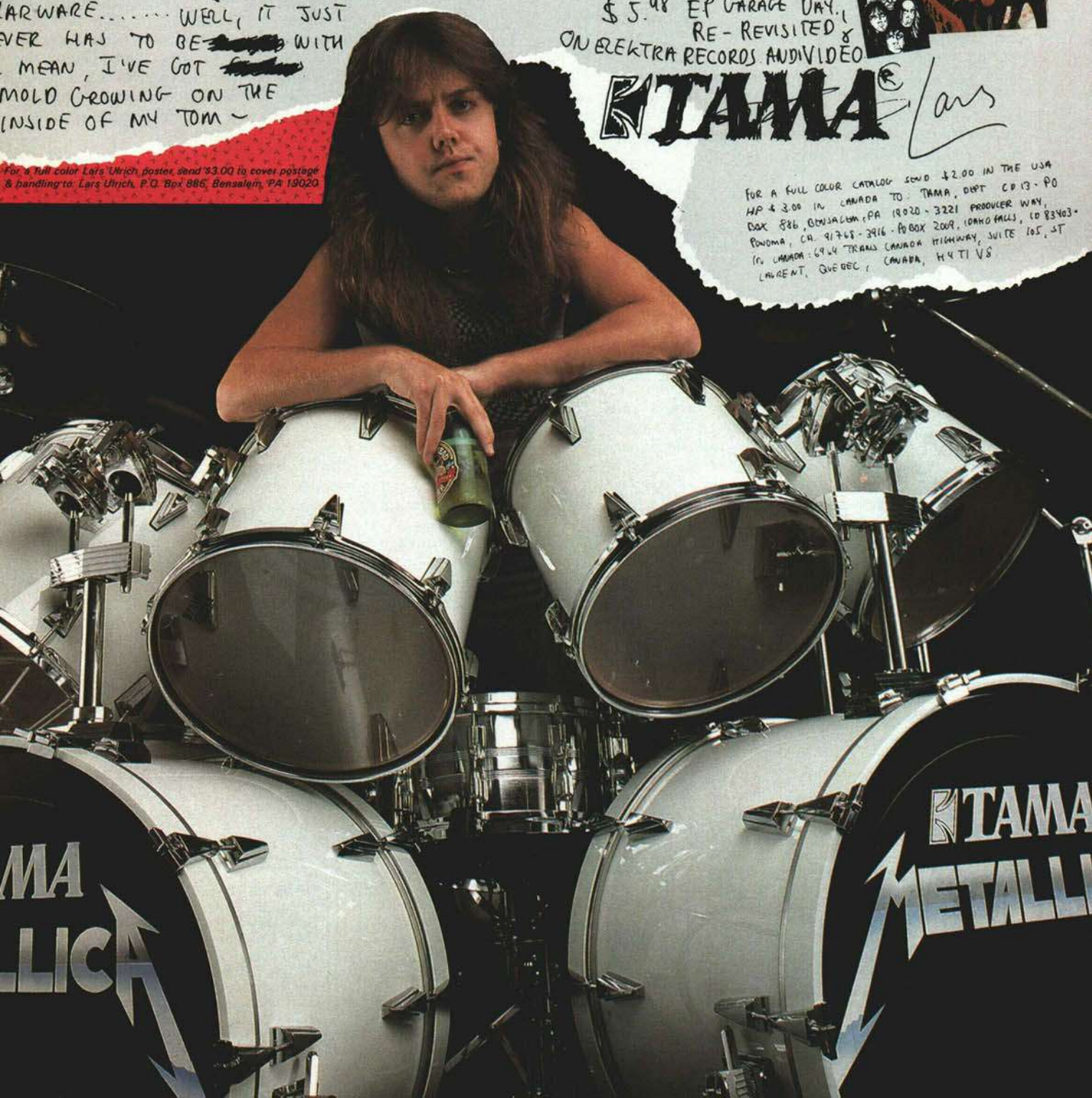


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METALLICA

TAMA METALLICA

From December 1985 through 1986, **Paul Garisto** worked on the Psychedelic Furs album *Midnight to Midnight*. "It took us a pretty long time because we had a problem with producers at one point. One guy said we weren't ready, and he was right at the time. Then we had to wait for Chris Kimsey, who was great," says Garisto, who has been with the band four years. "We get more work done in the studio. We go in with some ideas, but with a minimal amount of preparation, and it usually comes together in the studio real quick."

"I was involved for maybe four months of the actual recording time, which was in Berlin and Switzerland. It was

an interesting experience. The studio was right on the Berlin Wall, and it was three stories up. There was a ledge that you could walk out on and look over the wall, and the guards were looking at you. It was pretty strange. The album itself was great to make. Nobody told me what to play; I just went in and did my parts. There were one or two songs where the drums went down first to a click track, and the songs were built around that. There was one song called 'All Of The Law' that came about with me and the guitarist late one night just jamming around. He came up with the riff, I came up with the drum part, and the next day it went down real quick. I love that track."

Paul says the band is not very technically oriented. "We're more into imagination," he says. "I'm a real simple, straight-ahead player, and I just try to come up with a creative part. I try to be there for our vocalist, Richard Butler, as much as possible by being solid and not doing anything too out of the ordinary that he can't lay his vocal on top of."

Last October, the band got together in Woodstock, New York to write for a new album, which they should be starting to record about now. "We're just going to go in and do it, and not get caught up like we did on the last one. I think it will come together a lot quicker because we're all think-



Photo by Gene Shaw

ing along the same lines this time. We don't care about being too commercial on this next record. We'll just do what we do best, and hopefully that will be commercial if enough people like it."

—Robyn Flans

The brass veers from avant-honking to golden-throated purring in the same breath. Repetitive piano figures swirl in the undertow of a pedaling left hand. And there's a pulsing bass that is solid as an anchor in the music's shifting currents. Harmonically speaking, *Pushing The Envelope* (Gramavision), the new LP from the **Robert Previte** Quintet, sounds a little like Mingus and Miles jamming on a Steve Reich riff.

The drumming, on the other hand, is pure Robert Previte—a spattery crash here, a shadowy tom roll there, a daub of snare, a splash of ride. Previte is a composer who drums, and on *Pushing The Envelope's* six cuts—all of them Previte compositions—he *orchestrates* his kit, adding highlights to the album's sombre landscapes.

"I tend not to think of the drums as individual instruments," says the lean, dark-haired player. "I'm interested in orchestration. I'm trying to think of rhythm *and* melody, not just rhythm. Obviously,

the drums have no pitch, but sometimes it's like you have a spotlight. You can throw light on different parts of the harmony and thus make that harmony more important. It's all in the way that you shine that light."

On *Pushing The Envelope*—as on the Quintet's first LP, *Bump The Renaissance* (Sound Aspects)—Previte's "one rack tom, one floor tom, one bass drum Gretsch kit," with a little help from some Zildjian cymbals, shines in all the right spots. In his able hands, a "very old *Radio King* snare from the '30s" and a favorite cymbal "that got run over by a car when I was 14" become painter's tools, adding colorful smears and dramatic accents. And although you won't hear any extended drum solos on this drummer's album, Previte is definitely in the driver's seat.

"The drummer is the conductor of the band," he says. "You have to really *listen* to the harmonic structure and the emotional content of the music

that you're playing, and try to play accordingly. It's not just a question of getting a nice rhythm that works, and maybe changing it at the bridge. My teacher, Billy Hart, once told me, 'You have to hear the music as if you're standing in front of the band and looking at the drummer. You can't hear it from your drumkit.' It's a good lesson because drummers get so involved in this hip rhythm and that hip rhythm that they forget sometimes that they're playing with other people."

Not that he skimps on rhythm. Previte's inner metronome is the rock-steady result of classical percussion studies with Jan Williams, drum classes with Billy Hart, and theory and harmony courses at the University of Buffalo, New York. And he's had ample opportunities to iron out any kinks in his time-keeping, drumming on Tom Waits' *Rain Dogs*, John Zorn's *The Big Gundown*, and Elliott Sharp's *Fractal* and *Virtual Stance* LPs.

Even so, *Pushing The Enve-*



Photo by Aldo Mauro

lope isn't about meltdown fusion fills or tricky stickwork. It's about glowing silences and jazzy clatter. Metaphors aside, maybe Previte sums it up best: "My music has an emotional quality to it, but it's like medieval music. I like the austerity of that kind of music—the way that it won't try to ingratiate itself with you. It's just *there*."

—Mark Dery


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PAT MASTELOTTO (Mr. Mister)

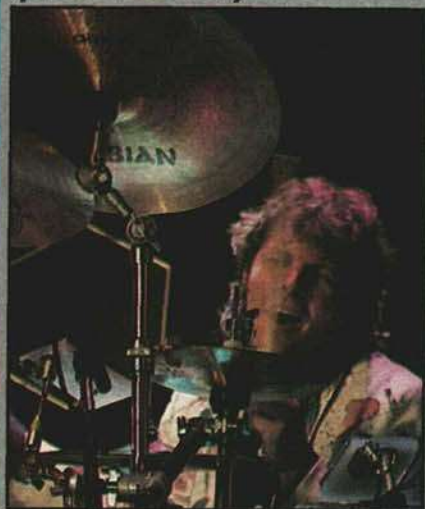
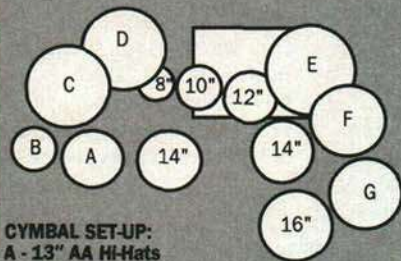


Photo: Pat Rodgers

Mr. Mister's albums 'Welcome to the Real World' and 'Go On' have not only introduced the music world to a great new band, they have also highlighted the tasteful, inventive programming and playing of L.A. drummer, Pat Mastelotto.

Raised on such disparate influences as The Dave Clark Five and Jimi Hendrix, Pat's powerful technique and great pop sensibility have added a degree of real excitement and credibility to the concept of drummers combining both acoustic and electronic percussion in their performance.

Such foresight has not only made him one of a unique new breed, but has also kept him busy on the session front with the likes of Kenny Loggins, Pointer Sisters, The Truth, Scandal and Cock Robin.



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- C - 18" AA Chinese
- D - 18" AA Sound Control Crash
- E - 20" HH Leopard Ride
- F - 16" AA Sound Control Crash
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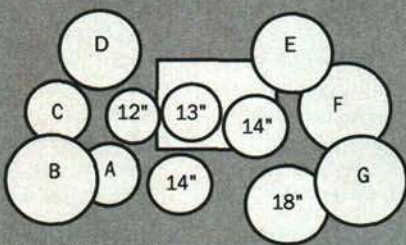
DONNY BALDWIN (Starship)



Photo: Pat Johnson

Donny spent several successful years on tour and recording with the likes of Elvin Bishop (that's him on the soulful classic, 'Fooled Around And Fell In Love'), Pablo Cruise ('A Place In The Sun') and former Doobie Brother, Tom Johnson, before taking up his present spot as drummer and backing vocalist in the ever-popular Starship.

Since joining, Donny's solid R'n'B leanings and no-nonsense rock grooves have integrated with the band's ever-evolving sound, adding, up to some of the best contemporary music of the decade. Songs like 'We Built This City', 'Nothing's Gonna Stop Us Now', and the pulsating punch of 'It's Not Over' have not only re-established the band Stateside, but have topped the charts around the world.



CYMBAL SET-UP

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- B - 20" AA Chinese
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- E - 18" AA Medium Thin Crash
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RICHIE HAYWARD (Little Feat, Warren Zevon)

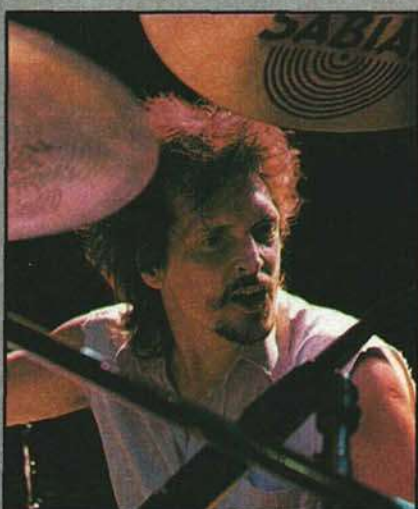
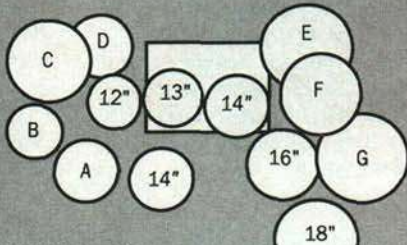


Photo: Pat Rodgers

The percolating funk and blistering rock grooves of Richie Hayward have delighted musicians for years. As a member of Little Feat, one of L.A.'s finest bands, his drumming propelled such great records as 'Feats Don't Fail Me Now', 'Time Loves A Hero' and 'The Last Record Album' into the hearts of listeners the world over.

Along the way he added his indelible style to Robert Palmer's debut LP, 'Sneakin' Sally Through the Alley', and later, 'Steppin' Out', with the eclectic Joan Armatrading. Recording and touring Robert Plant's album, 'Shakin' and Stirred' not only put Richie back into the spot-light with an excellent band, but led to more sessions and, most recently, the drummer's seat on Warren Zevon's 'Sentimental Hygiene' tour.



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Moyes Lucas, Jr. has enjoyed a varied year, dividing his time between live dates with Dionne Warwick and Jeffrey Osborne, and making *The Other Side* with the Fents, an instrumental fusion group. Desiring to have more musical control of his playing is a prime reason for his work with the Fents.

"Ultimately, I want to be playing in a situation where my input is important," Moyes says. "When you're not a sideman, but an equal member, your strong points, weak points, or whatever makes up your constitution are a viable part of what makes that band's

sound. The Fents is a situation like that.

"They had a bad reputation as not being very good time players when I first joined a little over a year ago. They were young and wild, and into really fast fusion. When I got into the band, I saw a lot of potential, though. Since then it's changed.

"This is a much more chops gig. With Jeffrey Osborne's gig, I'm just playing a groove and laying it down for everyone else in the band. The Fents requires that I really be at my best with my dynamics and the different grooves, because it really makes or breaks instru-

mental music that's basically cerebral. I do my best to really enhance whatever we're doing. These days, there seems to be a prevalence of drum machines playing grooves with no dynamics. But it's getting back to the idea of interaction among players, which, when I grew up, was the norm. It's getting back to that spontaneity, and I'm actually the glue in that situation. I'm holding a lot of things together, but I'm also trying to build solos and come up with little ideas that people can work off of."

Dionne Warwick's gig is similar to Osborne's gig, "except at a much lower vol-

ume level," Moyes says.

"Dionne's gig is a tuxedo gig and a heavy reading gig. In Jeffrey's band, I've maybe seen a chart two or three times in the whole three years I've been with them. With Dionne, every day is a different place with a different orchestra. It's really good to play that kind of style because I have a lot of big band in my background."

In the coming months, Moyes hopes to be recording with Osborne, spending more time writing songs, working with a local pop group called the Newks, doing a record with harpist Stephanie Bennett, and doing the Fents' next record.

—Robyn Flans

Photo by Beverly Hamilton



Ala Berry and Terry Hall are the same person. "The first show I did with Arlo Guthrie, he asked my name so he could introduce me. When I said Terry Hall, he said, 'That's boring. You're more of an Ala Berry.' At that point, I was about 70 pounds heavier, and it stuck," laughs the drummer.

It's been 12 years since Arlo gave him that name, which appears on the albums and is the one he generally goes by.

"I suppose I go through the ups and downs that you would expect in 12 years, but it really doesn't get tiring. As a matter of fact, I'm having more fun now than in years past. I'm not sure why, but I think I've adapted better to being on the road for long periods. Our tours are geared for the longevity of it. We travel real comfortably by bus. There isn't a lot of partying. The shows are the thing we're interested in,"

Berry explains.

"Arlo is an unusual person to work for in that we never really know what we're going to play when we go out. He has such a catalog of songs in his mind because we cover the whole folk spectrum, and he's been working for so many years. So he'll pull stuff out of nowhere. We can never relax at a show because we never know when somebody in the audience might request something that we've never heard before, and he'll decide to do it. Sometimes he'll stop in the middle of a song and change to a completely different song. He'll pick up his guitar, and we'll try to judge by where he capos it as to what song he's going to do. Then, maybe at the last minute, he'll take the capo off and start something completely different, so I'll be throwing down my sticks and grabbing my brushes. Also, he doesn't rehearse. We'll work up things occasionally in soundcheck or talk about them on the bus, so we always have to get it with the first shot. That's what makes it exciting.

Flexibility is the biggest requirement, because he plays everything from jazz to folk to Gospel to New Orleans-style Dixieland, and you always have to try to adapt to a different form. But that's what keeps it fun."

This season they revived "Alice's Restaurant" because it is the 20th anniversary of that song's release. Berry explains that they normally perform a three-hour show when they're alone on the bill. When they share a bill, they play an hour and a half, but Guthrie's band is often used for the other artist as well. Recently Berry has gotten the chance to play with such people as Donovan, David Bromberg, and John Prine.

Next month the band goes to Europe, but currently they're in the studio with Arlo. "He allows us to be completely creative. We generally have the first shot at something, and then he'll say, 'I'd like to hear this or that.' Our input is pretty much total, though, and he'll listen to any suggestion."

—Robyn Flans

Tommy Wells working with Ray Stevens, Frank Burgess, Don McLean, and Hege V. **Peter Bunetta** produced and played on Smokey Robinson's *One Heartbeat*, the Temptations' *Together Again*, and projects by Darlene Love and Syreeta Wright. **Bill Ward** is recording his first solo effort, called *Ward One*. In addition to playing and singing, Ward is responsible for all lyrics and

90% of the music on the album. In recent months, **Carl Allen** has been working with John Lee, George Coleman, the Carl Allen Quintet, the Blanchard/Harrison Quintet, the Freddie Hubbard Quintet, and with Steve Turre. He can be heard on Freddie Hubbard's *Life Flight* and Blanchard/Harrison's *Crystal Stair*. **Tris Imboden** played on some tracks for Al Jarreau's upcom-

ing album. **Walfredo Reyes** recording with David Lindley. He can be heard on the *Sweethearts Dance* soundtrack with Lindley, and is also doing gigs with Lindley as well as with Alfonso Johnson. **Jim Blair** on Howard Hewitt's new album, and doing live dates with In Vitro and the Williams Brothers. **Eddie Bayers** playing on albums for Ricky Van Shelton, Ricky Skaggs,

Loretta Lynn, Conway Twitty, Rodney Crowell, Dan Seals, Troy Seals, Sweethearts Of The Rodeo, Keith Whitley, Judy Rodman, Emmylou Harris, Earl Thomas Conley, Janie Fricke, and a soundtrack song with Lee Greenwood. **Warren Benbow** is working on a new album with his group, Power Plug. **Ian Wallace** recently on USO tour for American military personnel with Steven Stills.



Ed Mann

“Things have changed for me since Simmons produced the Silicon Mallet”

“Xylophone, vibe, marimba, bells, log drum, chimes, squeeze drum, tabla, bell tree—the Silicon Mallet provides easy access to tuned and accessory percussion sounds and enough programming flexibility to design a wide range of user created voices, all playable from a single 36 note (expandable to 60 note) mallet keyboard.

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Having this extended range of sounds available chromatically from a single playing source has allowed me to condense my set up and provide orchestration that would be unthinkable in terms of acoustic instruments.

The Silicon Mallet is a musical breakthrough and a valuable sound and control source for all percussionists.”

Simmons Mallet

Ed Mann is an LA based percussionist and composer. He teaches percussion at CalArts, is a founding member of The Repercussion Unit, and is probably best known for his work with Frank Zappa.

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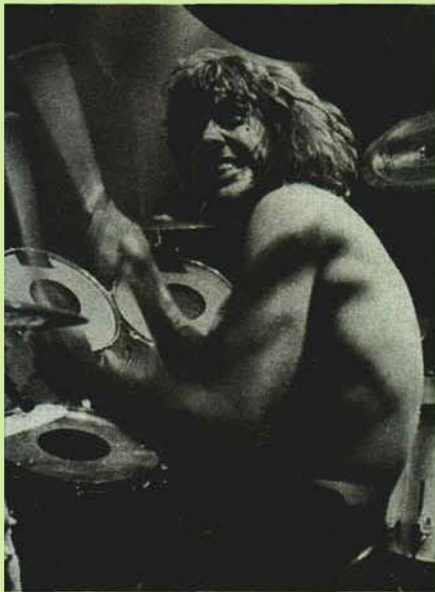


Photo by Ross Halfin

LARS ULRICH

Q. I've seen you in concert with Metallica twice, and I think you're a great drummer. Here are some questions I'd like to ask: First, how do you practice double-bass playing? Do you think of 16th notes when you play double bass? And what about resistance—how can you keep beating

the drums without slowing down? I know you must get tired. How did you develop the speed that you have?

Julio Aponte
San Juan, Puerto Rico

A. There are different approaches to doing different things on double bass drums. When it comes to developing the basic double-bass 16th-note ride, there's not really a drum-practicing technique involved; it's just a matter of building up stamina. The main way I work on it is by doing a lot of running. When it comes to playing triplets or other patterns on the double bass, you need to figure out what you want to play, practice the patterns slowly at first, and then build up the speed to wherever you want to take it.

The next part of your question—asking if I think about 16th notes—sounds like you're asking how I come up with what to play—the patterns themselves. For me, 16th notes are the natural thing that comes out when we're playing something that's uptempo and I kick into a double-bass pattern—four kick drum hits per snare hit. It's not really something that I think about too much. I try not to over-analyze what I do when I play it. That's the way that the whole band approaches the songs that we play. It's just a matter of going for it—launching into it and hoping I don't fall off the chair.

Talking about how I developed the speed that I have gets back to the first part of this answer, which involves simply staying in shape. Once you get out on tour and play for an hour and 45 minutes every night for several months, the stamina is just there. That kind of work either builds you up or kills you. If I don't do any running or playing for two weeks or so—which doesn't happen often—I do have to work my feet and legs a bit before I can get back up to my normal form. I have an athletic upbringing; I played a lot of tennis and did a lot of running before I started playing drums.

You ask how I can keep beating the drums without slowing down. On a lot of the fast songs we do, I play open, which means that I have an X-Hat on my right-hand side where a ride cymbal would normally be. It's easier for me to play the faster stuff when I don't have to cross my hands to play the hi-hat on my left side. For the last two years I haven't been too keen on the overall sound of ride cymbals anyway; I prefer the thicker sound produced by a hi-hat. With the X-Hat, I not only can play faster with my right hand, but I can also retract my left hand higher and get a harder backbeat without the right hand crossing over and being in the way.

I should mention warming up, since we're talking about developing speed—which takes a lot of physical effort. My band opens a show at a higher energy level than a lot of other bands close theirs. The number that we opened up with on our last world tour was one of the fastest tunes we do, so I had to be ready for that in the first three minutes of the show! Consequently, we have a warm-up ritual that begins about half an hour before showtime. I go through various exercises that I got from my tennis playing—basically warming up all the muscles in my legs and arms. I also do a lot of running in place. If space allows, I'll run up and down the backstage corridors a bit—which sometimes freaks the security people a little. They're not used to seeing a guy running up and down the halls backstage at a rock show. Just before we go on—while the intro tape is running—I have another little ritual that I do right behind my kit. It's usually completely dark at that point, so my roadie flashes a light on the floor, and I do about 20 seconds or so of running in place as fast as I possibly can. That gets the legs moving.

After saying all this about developing speed, I'd really like to stress that I feel speed is secondary to feel in music. You can practice in your garage for hours on end, working up speed until you just can't play any faster. But unless you have an understanding of how—and when—to work that into the music that the band is playing, so what? You have to develop the knowledge of when to play fast and when to slow things down—when to over-play and when to underplay. In the style of music my band plays, the feel happens at fast tempos. But that won't be the case for everybody. So just remember that no matter how fast you are able to play, at the end of the day it won't matter unless you have the right feel for what you're doing at those speeds.

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Q. I would like to order some replacement parts for my Caroline/ASBA bass drum pedal. Can you give me the address of the company that makes it?

B.B.

San Diego CA

A. The Caroline/ASBA pedal is distributed in the U.S. exclusively by Paul Real Sales. You may contact that company with your request for spare parts. The address is 1507 Mission Street, South Pasadena, California 91030, or call (818) 441-2484.

Q. I am the owner of a 1983 Tama Imperialstar drumkit with a very fine placer gold finish. I have been wanting to add pieces to the kit, but not only has the finish been discontinued—so has the entire line! I have talked to the Tama dealers near me and have even called Hoshino in Pennsylvania, and no one can even begin to locate the pieces I am looking for. I realize that a simple solution to this problem would be to buy a new drumkit with a finish that is available, but I love the sound of my drums and I just couldn't sell them. The pieces I am looking for are a 14x22 bass drum, a 16x18 floor tom, and a 12x15 rack tom. I've read your column for a long time; I hope you can answer my problem with the same ease that you answer other people's problems.

J.M.

Richmond VA

A. We spoke to Joe Hibbs, Tama's National Sales Manager. He told us that the placer gold finish is, indeed, no longer available. He also confirmed that the Imperialstar line has been discontinued as far as complete kits go. However, individual add-on drums will continue to be available as long as supplies of drums and covering material last. In your particular case, the sizes you desire are available. Joe suggests that, instead of buying a whole new kit, you consider buying the new pieces you desire in a finish that is available, and then having Tama recover the rest of your drums in that finish. He informed us that Tama will be happy to provide

this service for the price of shipping and the covering material; you will not be charged for the labor. Although the actual transaction must be handled through an authorized Tama retailer, you may call Joe for further details and to make the necessary arrangements. His number at Hoshino, USA is (215) 638-8670.

Q. Why do we continue to mike our drums from the batter heads when the real sound of the drums comes off the bottom?

J.C.

East Freetown MA

A. The answer depends on what you define as the "real sound." The "attack" sound of the stick on the batter head is what most readily cuts through other amplified sound—and therefore is of primary concern to most sound reinforcement technicians. Resonance and tone do, indeed, come primarily from the bottom head and the shell. But these elements contribute to a drum's natural volume and projection—which may not be a necessary consideration if mic's are being used in the first place. Additionally,^ certain amount of tone, depth, etc., can be artificially created or altered by the use of equalization at the sound board, while attack cannot.

Remember, too, that in many cases—especially in studio situations where setup time and number of mic's is not a major factor—drums are miked from both top and bottom. And for onstage concert situations, an increasing number of drums, whether single- or double-headed, are being miked from the inside! But as a matter of convenience, and often economy, when only one mic' can be used per drum, top-miking is still the standard because it captures that part of a drum's sound that cannot be done without (or created by other means).

Q. I presently play a 6 1/2X14 Ludwig Super Sensitive snare drum. My dream come true would be the same drum in an 8" depth. I've written to Ludwig, but they have no plans to make such a drum. Can you tell me of any other manufacturers that make any metal snare drums in 8" or 10" depths?

H.G.

Edgewater Park NJ

A. Deep snare drums, with shells of either steel or brass, are available from Pearl, Yamaha, Drum Workshop, Premier, and Sonor. Sonor also offers its new limited-edition Signature series snares in cast bronze.

Q. I'm a fairly young drummer with a very old and very small kit. When I practice or play a gig with my band, I play a friend's newer and larger kit. But my friend is getting tired of this arrangement, and my band members and I believe it's time for me to get a new set. I already have a set in mind, but my problem is getting my dad to help me out financially. I believe it's important to get a decent-quality, name-brand set. How can I go about convincing my dad that spending an extra couple of hundred dollars will ultimately pay off?

D.P.

Kerrville TX

A. If you've already established in your dad's mind that you are a dedicated player, it might be important at this stage to show him that your playing can prove financially remunerative. If you are gigging with your band, you could show your dad the profits you are making. Show him where and how your present equipment is wearing out or proving inadequate, and explain to him that the sound of a quality drumkit is an important part of the overall sound—and marketability—of your band. Speak in businesslike terms, since you are asking him to help finance a business investment. Finally, you might suggest that you could sell your present drumset to help pay for the new one, and pay your dad back the difference out of your band income on a prearranged schedule. In that way, you can prove to him that the investment did pay off.



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Being one of today's most respected drummers, Omar has compiled a list of credits that reads like a Who's Who in the music business. Equally at home in either the studio or on the road, it's easy to see why he is considered one of the very best, a true player's player that will settle for nothing less than excellence, from himself and his drums. So what kind of drums does Omar play? The answer is obvious . . .



RICK ALLEN

"Perseverance... I guess that would be the biggest thing I learned about myself. But I suppose that had a lot to do with the strength of those around me. They really didn't give me a choice; I had to stick around and deal with it."

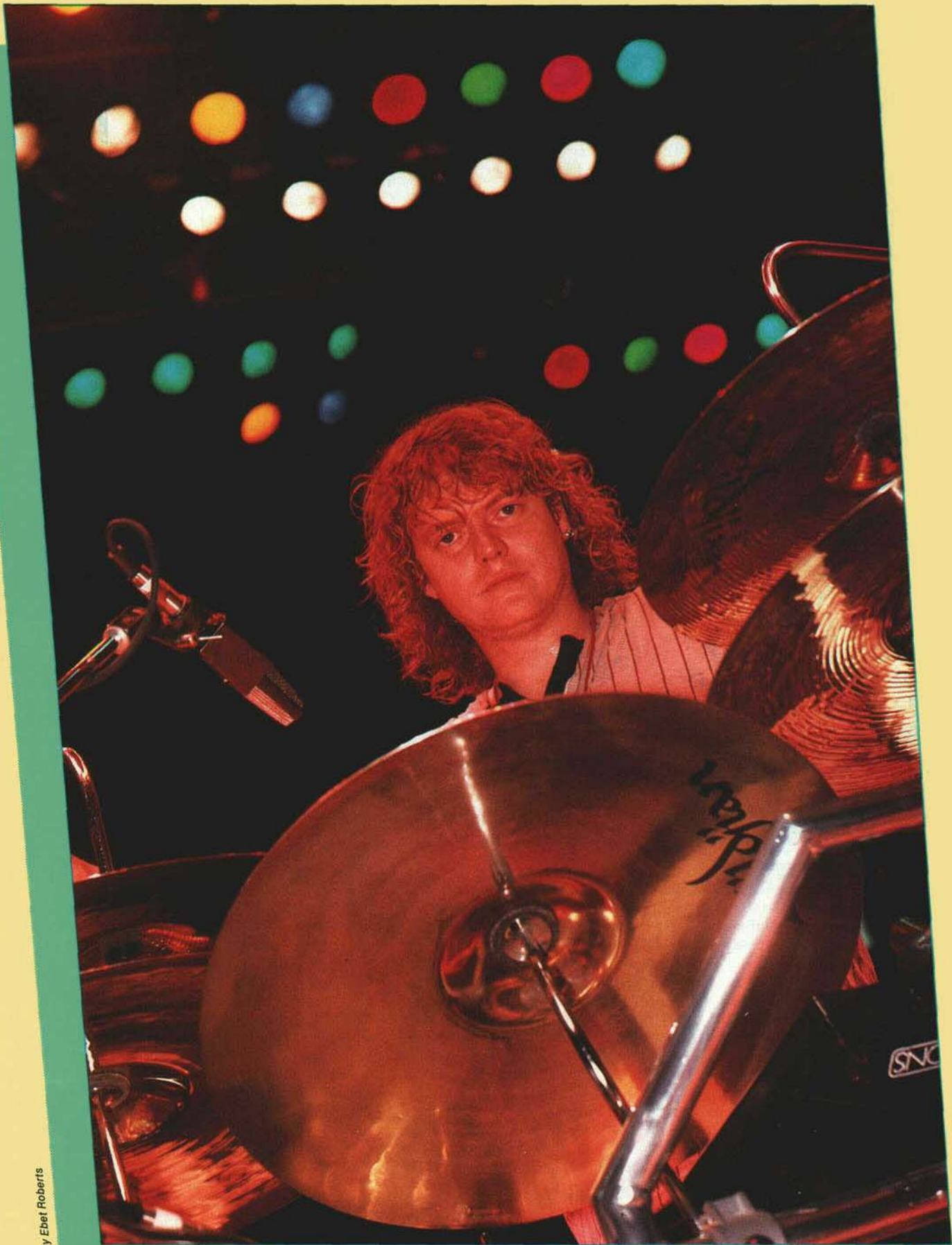
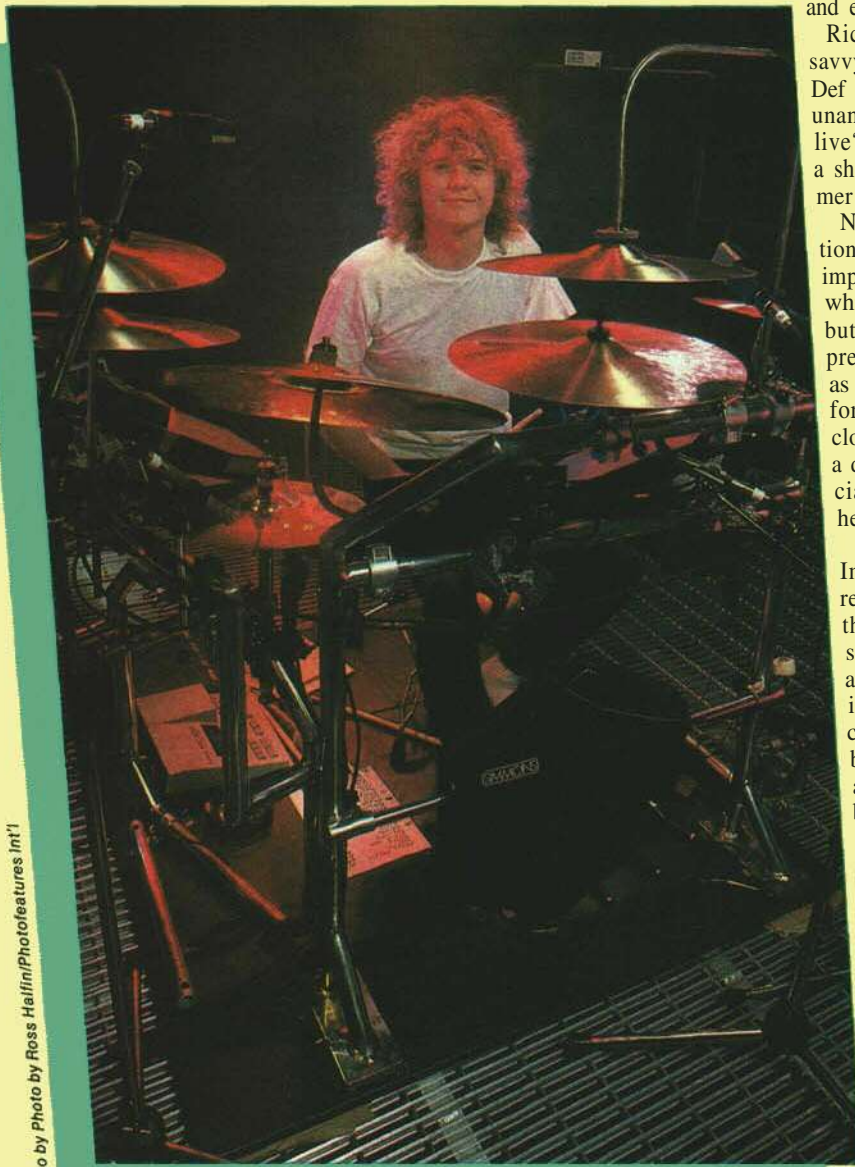


Photo by Ebet Roberts

Photo by Photo by Ross Hallin/Photofeatures Int'l



The thoughts are those of Rick Allen, drummer with Def Leppard. The topic concerns the aftermath of a tragic car accident in the winter of 1984 that cost him his left arm, but ultimately provided those who watched and waited throughout the ordeal with a remarkable example of the resilience of the human spirit. The loss of an extremity would be traumatic for anyone, but for a drummer, it's an event of nightmarish proportions. Rick emerges as the sort of person who plays down what has come to pass over the last three years, diminishing what has and probably will always be the greatest challenge of his life. "In a sense," he says, "When I lost my arm, it wasn't such a big thing for me to deal with. I just confronted it, went through it, and sort of came out on the other side."

One of the positives that surfaced directly because of the incident was the resurgent passion Rick discovered for drumming, realizing that, while he could cope with the ramifications of the injury, he was unwilling to sacrifice his involvement with the drums. He set out to reprise his role in Def Leppard, and has done so with incredible results.

Last summer, after a four-year absence, the band released its most ambitious effort to date: *Hysteria*. In true Def Leppard form, the songs feature the group's trademark mellifluous vocals and visceral guitar leads, and imparts what is perhaps the most robust

and effective percussion of any of their albums.

Rick had proven that he still had the technical savvy to more than sufficiently resume his role as Def Leppard's drummer, but there were still many unanswered questions. Would he be able to play live? Would he have to fall back on using tapes for a show? What kind of kit would a one-armed drummer play?

Naturally, trepidation was high while expectations for his future ran low. Most people thought it impossible for a one-armed drummer to cut it live, while others thought it, at best, a well-intentioned but scarcely plausible long shot. But what now prevails is that Rick Allen is as whole a drummer as he is a person. If you attend a Def Leppard performance, close your eyes for a moment. Listen closely to the drumming. What you'll hear is not a drummer minus an appendage, but rather a musician playing his heart out. The Thundergod—as he's referred to—has returned.

But getting back had its share of problems. Immediately after the accident, doctors tried to re-attach the arm, but because of complications, the attempt proved futile. "I was still unconscious at the time, so I didn't know anything about it," Rick recalls. "They wanted to re-attach it, but an infection set in, and because it was so close to my heart, they didn't risk it. Looking back, the doctor told me that if the re-attachment had been successful, I would have been going back for operation after operation. I wouldn't have wanted to go through that. I suffered enough pain, both physically and mentally."

When he was informed of the extent of his injuries, Rick was pretty overwhelmed by it all, and he admits that he was a little confused about the incident at first. But as he rapidly began recuperating, he accepted his fate and began dealing with the inherent problems that lay ahead. For Rick, the most crucial matter was how he would resume the one activity that meant more to him than ever before: drumming.

"When they first told me what happened, I don't think I fully understood the situation," he explains. "I don't think the permanence of my condition sank into my head until maybe two or three weeks later. But to be honest, prior to the accident, I hadn't actually played my drums for about a month or six weeks. I was getting very blasé about playing, but when I was in the hospital, one of the first thoughts I had when I came to was that all I wanted to do was play my drums again. That seems a bit strange, seeing that I had been so lazy about my playing."

His energies were quickly channeled into coming up with a revised way to play drums. Ideas that were devised right in his hospital bed became the genesis for his pedal-oriented, all electronic drumkit. "The hospital staff put this big piece of foam rubber at the foot of the bed to stop me from sliding down," he recalls with a broad grin. "I could push myself against it to hold myself up, and as I sat there, I eventually started tapping away on it, thinking, 'Yeah, that could come in handy....' I was working ideas out with my feet. I got my brother to bring down my stereo system, and I started playing all my favorite albums again, as I sort of tapped along to them. There were a few things that were a bit difficult because I had only

played a single bass drum, so it took a lot of concentration to get my feet working right.

"Anyway, about three weeks after the accident, I took it a stage further and approached a friend with my idea of using pedals to operate my kit, and he actually built me a prototype pedal. I started trying it out, and I figured, 'This is going to work. There's no reason why it can't.'

"Cosmetically, the look of the kit hasn't really changed all that much," he continues. "But obviously, technology-wise, I'm exploring other paths. I'm getting into different kinds of equipment, but basically, it's down to the sound now. And my playing is getting better month by month, the more I do it."

It is quickly obvious that Rick has an exceedingly optimistic nature when it comes to achieving his objectives. But it is still rather startling to discover that he never once pondered, "Could this be the end of my career?"

"I didn't really give myself a chance to do that," he explains. "They told me that I was going to be in the hospital for six months, but I was so determined to get out of there that I left after about only three-and-a-half weeks. All I wanted to do was to go back and be with the band again, you know? And they were saying, 'We don't see any reason why you can't play again.' So I said, 'If you feel that way, then I'll give it a go.' So I just fit back in and worked around it.

"But not being able to play again never really crossed my mind. I was never going to be a brain surgeon or anything, so I figured that playing drums was the only thing I could do. But it's like anything: When you're thrown in at the deep end, you really have to swim, and this was a classic case of *having* to do that. I don't think I ever doubted that I could do it. I was just being as positive as I could.

"Going through what I did made me a stronger person," he comments, when asked if he's always been so determined. "But if you knew the rest of the guys, you would understand why. Def Leppard is a very close-knit unit—not just the band, but everybody concerned with it. Everybody was just saying, 'Come on now, Rick. You can do it.' And literally thousands of letters from people all over the world came in.

"So six weeks after the accident, I was back in Holland working with the band again. And they were a helluva lot happier about things because I was there. They weren't worrying, thinking, 'What's going on in Rick's head?' In fact, I felt more at home being with the boys than I would have been sitting around on my ass, doing nothing. I just felt 'This is where I belong.' Obviously, there *were* moments when people got really emotional about things. It wasn't all smooth sailing, and sometimes it got quite difficult.

"It was frustrating for me, as it still is, in that I can't play what I think in my head anymore. I have to be more thoughtful about what I do. It used to be that I could pretty much play whatever came into my head. But now, it's slightly different. I have to think ahead a lot more about what I'm doing."

But because his drumming now requires a more pre-meditated approach, does he feel that his overall play-

"I NEED PEOPLE TO GIVE ME CONSTRUCTIVE ADVICE ABOUT MY PLAYING. I DON'T NEED SYMPATHY."

ing is actually better? "I think there's a lot of truth in that," he replies. "I've consciously worked to improve things that I was a little bit inadequate in. My timing, for instance, has never been better. I used to be a very speedy player, and when I played live, the songs were twice the speed that they should have been," Rick laughs. "I was under the impression that if I played it faster, it would sound more powerful. Obviously, that isn't the case at all. The singer can't fit his words in, and everybody's yelling, 'What the hell are you

doing, Rick?' [laughs] But now, I've got the ability to actually relax while I'm playing, and I play with a lot more thought and a lot more feeling.

"Joe and Sav [singer Joe Elliot and bass player Rick Savage] said something in an interview yesterday that we would never say to one another. I mean, we'll never say, 'I really like your bass playing,' or 'I really like your singing.' But at this interview they said, 'We actually think Rick's a better player than he was before.' What can I say?

"There was a time," Rick adds, "when there was some doubt about my ability to use my right arm. The doctor said, 'You're not going to be able to wave again, Rick.' So when I came back to the hospital one day, I went, 'How ya doing, Doc?' [waving wildly] Hypothetically, if I hadn't been able to use the arm, I would have taken it upon myself to have found someone suitable for the band. Yesterday, I said that very thing, and Sav turned to me and said, 'We never really thought about replacing you. It never came up.' The thoughts that were going through their minds weren't selfish in any way. They were concerned with

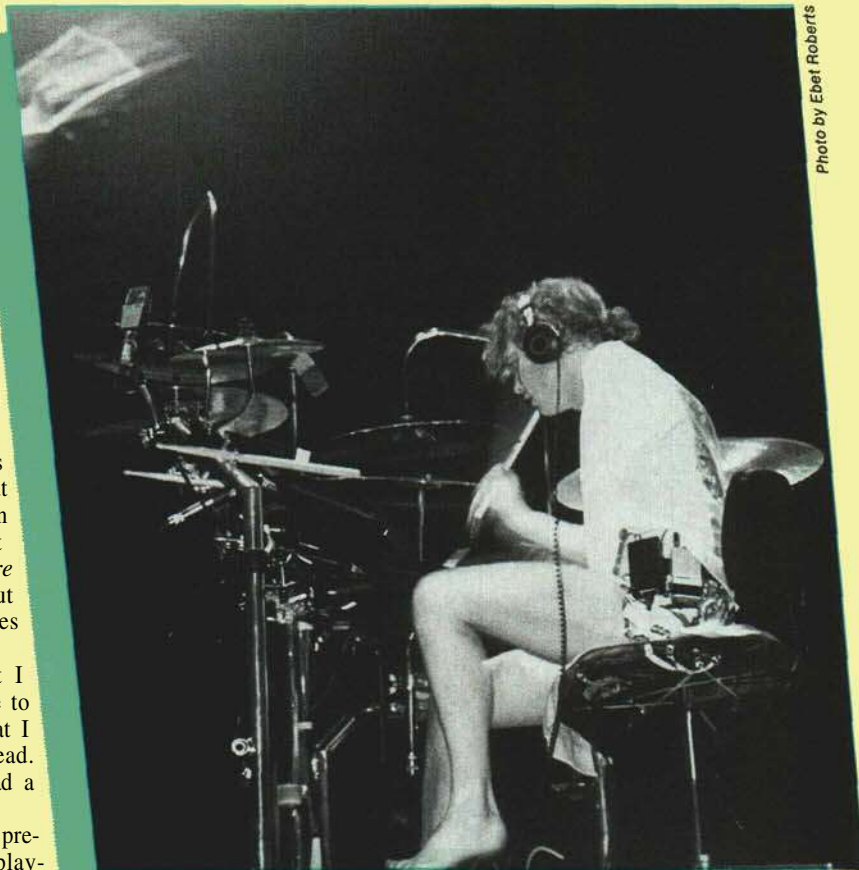


Photo by Eber Roberts

whether I was okay. They figured, 'He's alive, so that's the big thing. And whatever he can play on drums is a bonus. If he can sit there and just knock out a beat, then great!'

If there were any lingering doubts concerning Rick's abilities, all skepticism was buried when the band's summer '86 mini tour got underway. Playing the major festivals on the continent and in Britain, as well as at some obscure pubs in remote areas of Ireland, Rick proved that his presence was not perfunctory—that he was *not* merely sitting there, knocking out a beat. Although there was a backup drummer employed to help out for the first few dates, it quickly became apparent that Rick could excel without assistance. "We had done a few warm-up dates in Ireland," he explains, "with a few dates in a place called Ballybunion lined up. Jeff Rich, who plays with Status Quo, had been sitting in with me, banging away at an acoustic kit, while I was playing my electronic kit. If I made a mistake, I knew that I could rest on him, so that was really helpful for my confidence in the beginning.

"Jeff had to do some dates with Status Quo, and missed his flight back to Ballybunion for the night of the show. I used to play the first two songs by myself anyway, so that people knew from the start that *I* was actually playing, so I just went ahead without him. But halfway through that show he came *bursting* through the door, jumped behind his kit, and we were off again. I didn't play the whole show by myself, but I did play half of it on my own, so it was a nice progression.

"The night after that," Rick continues, "we were playing in this pub in Waterford. The stage was so tiny that we couldn't fit two drumkits on it, so we thought 'Hmmm. What do we do, hang Jeff from the ceiling?' We finally decided that I'd do the whole gig on my own. So Jeff stood out at the front desk and I just did what I do best—basically kept time and didn't get too clever. Jeff came over to me at the end of the show, shook my hand, and said 'Well, I guess I'm going home tomorrow, then?' And that was really the first step."

Later, at that summer's Castle Donington Festival in England, Rick experienced an emotional and professional turning point that, he says, will loom forever in his memory. "Donington was the first big show that we'd done," he says. "At the beginning of the set, we do a song by Creedence Clearwater Revival called 'Travelin' Band,' which we've been doing for years. In the middle of it, Joe announced to the audience, 'Rick Allen on the drums!' And all the people in the field started cheering and waving their arms in the air! I've never

seen anything like it—something like 75,000 people acknowledging me!

"My mom and dad were on the left side of the stage, plus there were all these people in the wings going absolutely apeshit, and I was sitting there *crying* all over my pads! I was thinking, 'Hell, I'm going to get an electric shock or something!' [laughs] But I felt a lot of respect at that moment, not just from the audience, but from everyone connected with the band, because they were all watching me—checking me out. That day was unbelievable. For me, that confirmed that people were really behind me and wanted me to succeed. It was so exciting—a brilliant high point for me. I'll *never* forget that show!"

There are those who would be satisfied just to hear Rick in the capacity of timekeeper. Therefore, does he ever feel added pressure to exceed simple expectations? "Let's take it from this angle," he replies. "At first, the rest of the band would listen to me play and say, 'It sounds good to us.' But I always got the tiny impression that it was really, 'Well, he's only got one arm.' But *now*, if I do something wrong, somebody will turn around and say, 'You're doing it *wrong*.' Or they'll tell me that I'm playing too fast or too slow. That's what I need now. I need people to give me constructive advice about my playing, rather than [in a wimpy voice] 'Whatever Rick can play is fine with us.' I don't need that kind of sympathy. Not at all.

"Getting back to the Donington gig," Rick continues, "There was this one guy who approached [guitarist] Phil Collen and said, 'Why is Rick using tapes?' And Phil told him, 'He's not using any tapes; he's playing *everything*!' There's no reason why I should lie about it. If I want to use a drum machine or *whatever* live because I'm having a few problems playing something the way I'd like it to sound, then I'll *do it* and I'll admit it! I'm not afraid to do what needs to be done to get the right sound. I just have the attitude that it's going to take more time to get it all where I want it to be. It's only been a couple of years since the accident. I realize that I can't physically play everything I could before. But at some point, it's going to get really nice for me, and I will become more satisfied with my playing. I just want to squelch the rumor that I'm using drum machines or tapes; I am *not*. I'm having a bit of trouble with the odd song here or there that would be easier with programming, but I don't think anyone would condemn me for not being able to play all of the parts."

One of the tracks from *Hysteria* that features layered African rhythms is "Rocket." Rick describes it as sounding like "the whole of the jungle playing all at once," and because of the intricacy of the programming, he has not attempted to simulate the song in a live situation because it would require tapes. But given Rick's enthusiasm for new technology *and* further playing proficiency, it would be no surprise if he masters the tune, as he's done with the bulk of the live material. "That song really needs a lot of production treatment to carry it," he comments. "Now we'll have to figure out a way to do it live, but I suppose even a two-armed drummer would have trouble playing it! Since I'm learning something new about playing the kit every time I sit behind it, who knows? Maybe in six months or so I might be able to do it. But right now, I'd



Photo by Ross Halfin/Photofeatures Int'l

have to use quite a complicated program. I would rather just play what I have to play, and not rely on too much technology to pull me through."

Where do the ideas originate for what Rick will program? "Sometimes," he answers, "suggestions for what I'll be playing will come from the rest of the guys. Sav might have some great idea about a particular piece of a song in regards to drums, and I'll usually listen to it and say, 'Yeah, this could work.'"

The two Ricks are definitely a taut rhythm section, and the closeness that they've built up over years of playing side by side is evident. "There is quite a lot of interaction between us," Allen says. "But a lot of it just comes down to being familiar with the way Sav plays the bass, so I might naturally fall into a particular thing in a given song. Over a period of time, things change from the way they were done for the album, and usually for the better."

"But there are quite a few drummers in the organization," he comments. "Joe used to be a drummer before he became a singer; he considers himself a failed drummer. And the guy who does the lights is a drummer, so we have fun working out all kinds of lighting cues and effects that directly highlight the drums. I think it's really important in a show situation to have a real good sense of drums and rhythm, because the pacing and the feeling go back to the rhythmic content of the music."

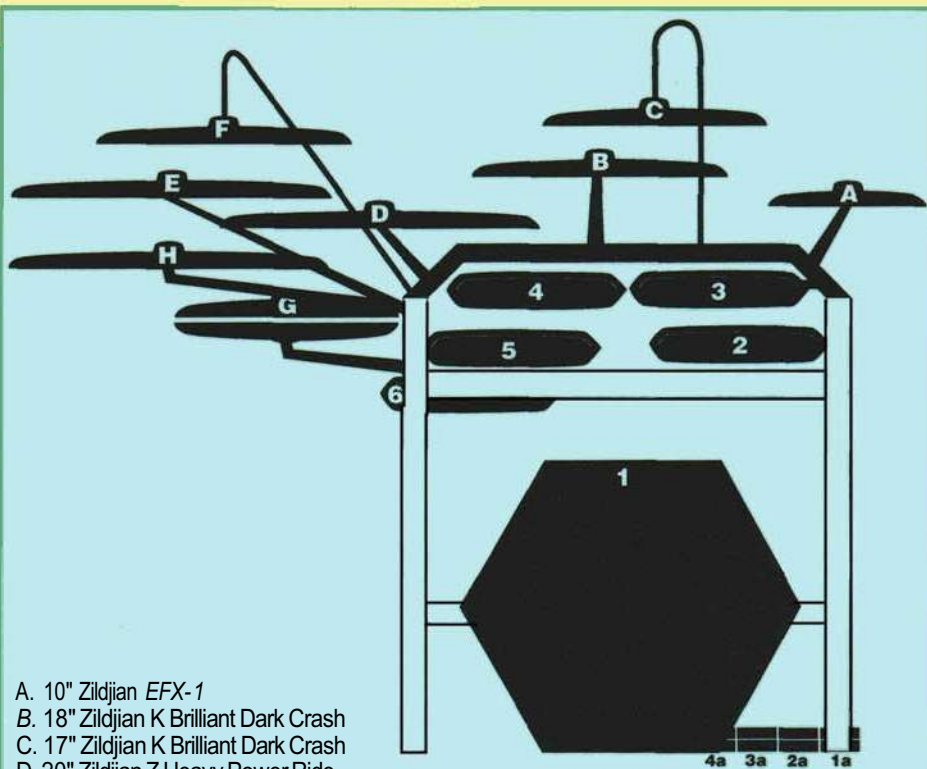
In the months following Rick's accident, various rumors surfaced concerning a special drumset that was being designed for him. Along the way, he received a number of suggestions from other drummers who were partially disabled.

Although he was appreciative of their response, Rick admits that these drummers couldn't offer him the solution he was searching for. "All these people—one-armed drummers, no-armed drummers, one-legged drummers...it got kind of bizarre," he laughs, "were sending me letters of great encouragement. But their advice really wasn't what I was looking for. You see, there was *no way* I could use an acoustic drumkit, which is what they were relating to. I mean, it would've been great to be able to use an acoustic kit. I had been playing one for about ten years of my life, so I was used to the feel of a real drumkit. But after this happened, there was no way for me to use one."

Rick's drumkit evolved gradually, and will undoubtedly continue to change. But during the first couple of months of the *Hysteria* tour, it consisted of six Simmons SDS9 pads, four Shark electronic pedals, an Akai S900 sampler, and a selection of Zildjian cymbals.

Rick's cymbals are mostly located to his right, and the biggest change that he

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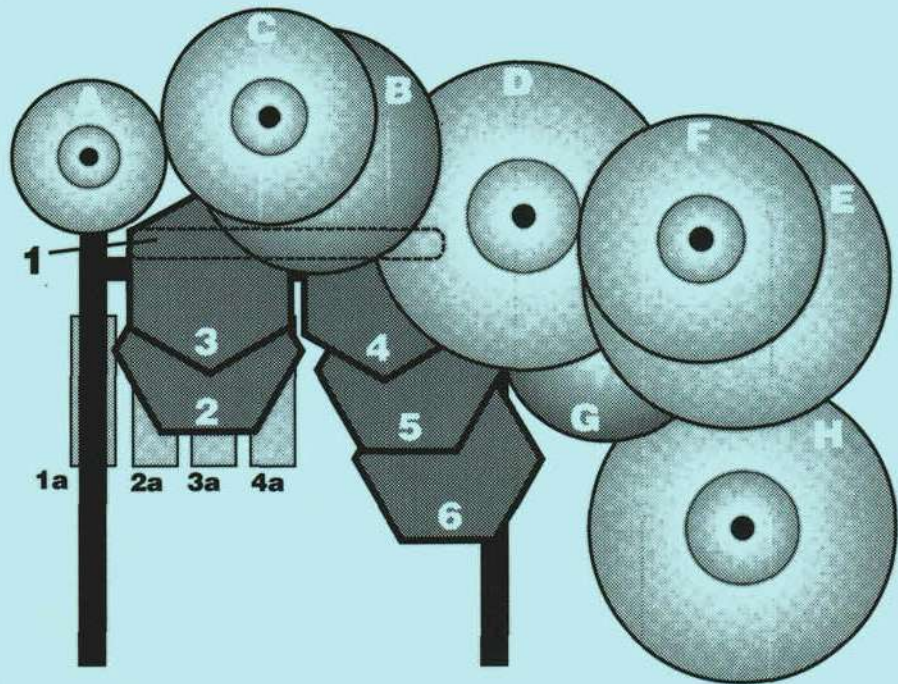


- A. 10" Zildjian EFX-1
- B. 18" Zildjian K Brilliant Dark Crash
- C. 17" Zildjian K Brilliant Dark Crash
- D. 20" Zildjian Z Heavy Power Ride
- E. 20" Zildjian K Brilliant Crash/Ride
- F. 18" Zildjian K Brilliant Crash/Ride
- G. 14" Zildjian Z Dyno-Beat Hi-hats
- H. 20" Zildjian Brilliant China SoyLow

- 1. Simmons SDS9 (bass)
- 2. Simmons SDS9 (snare)
- 3. Simmons SDS9 (tom 1)
- 4. Simmons SDS9 (tom 2)
- 5. Simmons SDS9 (tom 3)
- 6. Simmons SDS9 (bass)

- 1a. Shark pedal (effects snare)
- 2a. Shark pedal (snare)
- 3a. Shark pedal (tom 2)
- 4a. Shark pedal (tom 3)

Shark pedals and Simmons pads are sent through a Simmons MTM MIDI interface, and from there to an Akai S900 Sampler, which generates the sounds.



LOOKING

Some musicians are not talkers; rather, they speak through their music. Along with pianist Bill Payne, bassist Ken Gradney, guitarist Paul Barrere, percussionist Sam Clayton, and guitarist/singer Lowell George, Richie Hayward did just that. The southern-flavored, jazz-sprinkled Little Feat gave him the optimum musical situation in which to express himself for many years after his move to LA. from Ames, Iowa.

He says he's clumsy with words, but it's obvious when talking to him that Hayward has been through an abundance of experiences, both good and bad, constructive and destructive. Right now he is trying to focus on the positive elements in his life. Little Feat is getting back together, and he has great hopes for the band. It's evident that Lowell George's death in 1979 was a paramount experience in Hayward's life. He alludes to drugs, and somehow it isn't comfortable to delve into that part of his life; you just know he's gone through it and doesn't want to dwell on the past. He wants to get on with his life, be productive, and make strides in rediscovering himself.

RF: What got you into music?

RH: I was in Ames, which was a college town, and there were a few "musos" hanging around. I just kind of gravitated to them, and they taught me a few things. It was the time of the folk thing, and, through that, I discovered the blues. Anything was better than what was going on at the time. I heard Ray Charles on the radio, so I ordered all his old stuff, like records from 1949 on RCA. I really liked it so I went from there.

RF: What actually made you start playing music?

RH: When I was about three, my folks took me to a parade. The bass drum came by, and I felt it in my chest—in my guts. That got me going. Then there was no stopping me; it was all I wanted to do.

RF: From what I read, your parents weren't really crazy about the fact that you were into the drums.

RH: They weren't *terribly* discouraging, but they did find it annoying to have me

pounding things in the basement all the time, while I neglected my studies and was turning into a young hooligan before their very eyes. They thought there were many more acceptable ways for me to fill my hours, but that was all I wanted to do.

RF: How did you get a drumset?

RH: I mowed lawns and shoveled rocks until I saved enough money to buy this Montgomery Ward drumset for \$150. I remember waiting for months for that thing to come in. I was 11.

RF: How did you learn to play?

RH: I started pounding on the set while listening to records. I joined the band at school, although I never really liked the discipline part of it. The teacher wasn't terribly inspiring. An insurance salesman named Jerry Malone, who gave drum lessons, taught me a couple of basic things, like how to set them up and what each foot was supposed to do, and he put me onto some records. That was it as far as lessons. I would hear something and try to figure out how it was done.

RF: Were there particular drummers you dug?

RH: A drummer named Jack Sperling really knocked me out; he still does. He did some stuff that was just unbelievable. He was one of the first people who used two bass drums and more than two tomtoms, and he played really aggressively. I really liked the way drums just seemed to make everything have its identity.

RF: Were you into double bass?

RH: No, I never was, but I admired the idea, and Sperling was a pioneer. I never got into double basses myself because I've always had such an affinity for the sounds and inuendos you can play with the hi-hat, that I never wanted to take my foot off it and play something else. But I tried to figure out how to do something like double bass with just one.

RF: Can you explain that?

RH: I don't really do it well, but I try to do a lot of double kicks and put them in odd places. I do exchanges between the left hand and the right foot instead of between two feet, so if I need a flurry of notes, it's there, but it's not necessarily



RICHIE

AHEAD

by Robyn Flans

Photo by Lissa Wales



HAYWARD

**"I LEARN MORE
DON'T TRY TO
ABOUT IT. I JUST
REACT."**

Photo by Lissa Wales



all from the bass drum. The bass drum plays what the second bass drum would be playing, and the right hand plays what the right bass drum would be playing.

RF: Where did your affinity for the hi-hat come from?

RH: It's the easiest of the cymbal techniques to control. It seemed like it was necessary to keep that going no matter what else you were playing.

RF: What type of music were you playing along with?

RH: At the time I was in Iowa, there wasn't much to choose from. I played my first gig when I was 12, to a bunch of middle-aged shriners. We played old standards at their lodge's New Year's Eve party. I was younger than most of their children. A couple of years later, as we were starting high school, a couple of friends and I started a rock 'n' roll band, and we played at fraternities and roller rinks. I just sought out gigs wherever I could find them.

RF: An article I read about you said you

knew you would have to leave Iowa.

RH: The ceiling isn't very high there for music.

RF: But you could have played in a bar band. What did you aspire to? What was your goal?

RH: To get as far as I could, and to play with the best people I could find.

RF: How old were you when you moved from Iowa?

RH: I was 19 or 20. I knew one person in L.A. very, very vaguely, and I stayed with him for a couple of weeks until I got a gig. Then I moved to a little place in Hollywood.

RF: Who was the gig with?

RH: A band called The Rebels, who were playing in bars. Then I saw an article in the *Free Press* that said, "Drummer wanted. Must be freaky." I thought that was weird. Oddly enough, it turned out to be Lowell, who, at that time, was in a group called The Factory. That was in '66.

RF: "Must be freaky"? What does that mean?

RH: I wasn't sure. I'm still not.

RF: So what was that all about?

RH: It was a '60s L.A. band—bell bottoms, big buckles, and sandals. That band had Martin Kibbee [aka Fred Martin], who co-wrote a lot of Little Feat songs, on bass. Lowell and I stayed in contact, and Little Feat happened a couple of years later.

RF: You and Lowell just hit it off?

RH: It was a love/hate thing, but yeah, we pretty much hit it off.

RF: What do you mean by "love/hate"?

RH: At that time, one of Lowell's short suits was tact, so if he wanted you to change something you were doing, his suggestion came in the form of near abusive delivery. The fact that he was usually right made me take it. After a while, it turned into a procedure.

RF: It was obviously musical.

RH: Yes. It wasn't personal.

RF: Can you be specific about the exchange that would go on?

RH: He wanted me to stay more in the groove; he didn't want me to depart from it to do fills. That's another way I started to expand this cheating I was explaining earlier. By using my left hand and my right foot to do a fill and staying on the hi-hat, I would try to incorporate a fill without breaking the rhythm and the hi-hat figure.

RF: What kind of music were you playing at that time?

RH: At that stage, we were really big Howlin' Wolf fans. The very first Canned Heat band was better than later versions, and we watched them a lot. Frank Zappa was a big influence on us at that time. Lowell was in the Mothers Of Invention for a while.

RF: How did you develop your own playing style? Where did the second-line stuff come from?

RH: I always loved the Meters, Clifton Chenier, and Professor Longhair.

RF: When did you start getting into that type of music?

RH: It was back in the '60s. I had heard it before then, but I didn't understand what it was. It moves something in me that other

Photo by Lissa Wales



ABOUT MUSIC IF I FORM AN OPINION ALLOW MYSELF TO

music doesn't quite touch. Lowell helped in figuring it out a lot, too, and vice versa. I just kind of naturally played in that style, anyway. We both liked it and wanted to play with that influence. So, the songs he wrote began to require that sound, which naturally developed in my style of playing with him for so many years. That influenced his writing, and it snowballed from there.

RF: You were finished with the Factory?

RH: It finished itself, and then I joined a band called The Fraternity Of Man, which I don't talk about very often. That was my first and last dabble in political music.

RF: Why?

RH: Because it was bullshit. Of all things to be called, that band was definitely not a "fraternity." There was a lot of dissension, to be quite nice about it. We didn't get along at all, and we didn't play terribly well, either. During the time that band was around, Lowell did a stint with the Standells, and then a stint with the Mothers, and then they were both over with by the time the Fraternity Of Man disbanded. Lowell was back in the picture because he was coming on to the sister of my wife at that time. He married her, and we were hanging out together a lot, so we started Little Feat.

RF: Who came up with the name?

RH: When Lowell was in the Mothers, Jimmy Carl Black used to point at Lowell's feet, laugh, and say, "Look at those little feet," so Lowell decided to name the band Little Feet. Then we came up with the idea of putting the "a" in it. When Lowell was in high school, they called him Triangular Earth Pads or just Earth Pads George because his feet were as wide as they were long.

RF: How did the band evolve from there?

RH: Zappa's manager, Herbie Cohen, was helping us financially at that time, and Billy Payne had sent a cassette of himself on piano, wanting to get into the Mothers. Frank already had enough keyboard players, so he turned us onto Billy. We heard him once and said, "This kid is monstrous." He joined up, and then we got Roy Estrada [later replaced by Ken Grad-



Photo by Lissa Wales

ney], who Lowell had worked with in the Mothers, to play bass. We were old friends; he was there the day I auditioned for the Factory.

RF: Did you primarily play Lowell's material?

RH: Yes, and some of it was Billy's, too.

RF: You have said that the tension in the band provided the creative surge.

RH: It helped. It kept us from getting too comfortable.

RF: Was it tension between the individuals' personalities or musical styles?

RH: It was both, but mainly musical, like little things that one of us would play that some member of the band wouldn't give him a break about. That player would end up changing and growing as a result of compromising, and after a while of that, we grew together into a thing that was greater than the sum of its parts. We grew into a style that was just built around that group of people. Then the music started to become intuitive; we could almost read each other's minds while we were playing, and sometimes great things happened.

RF: Can you remember specific things that band members were doing that other members wouldn't give them a break about?

RH: [laughs] It was mainly all of them coming down on me. I tend to play too much. I always used to, and still do a little, because I like to hear the drums go crazy. They wanted me to restrain myself a little.

RF: You said great things happened. Like what?

RH: More often than not they would occur on stage. Some of the strange turnarounds we did were a result of that. Some were mistakes that everybody would cover for. Then we'd hear it back on a cassette of a gig, and it would be better than the real arrangement, so it would get changed to that.

RF: You have also said that the records never came easy. Why?

RH: There was a drug problem in the band, and it was making a lot of people uptight. Things weren't quite as smooth as they should have been, so people were getting upset about it, and there were powerplays and undermining of credibility as a result of that.

RF: You said *Feats Don't Fail Me Now* was an easier album to make. Why?

RH: That was kind of a reunion. They had actually fired me; they thought I was the reason a lot of things weren't happening, and that another drummer would be more steady or something.

RF: When was that?

RH: It was in '74, during *Dixie Chicken*. They tried a bunch of other drummers and then called me back. They almost abandoned the band altogether. Then we rehearsed and recorded real fast, where we didn't have time to nitpick the songs to death. "When The Shit Hits the Fan" and "Tripe Face Boogie" are songs we had

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Photo by Lissa Wales

GRACE

DRUM

"These are the roots of rhythm/And the roots of rhythm remain," sings Paul Simon in the refrain from "Under African Skies," a haunting and joyful song from Graceland, his 1986 Grammy-winning *Album Of The Year*.

The six-month Graceland world tour of 1986-87 was a traveling celebration fueled by the blending of Western pop with South African "township jive" (or mbaqanga music) and other African musical influences. The tour came to represent a freedom train carrying an anti-apartheid message to all its whistle stops.

Simon graciously shared the spotlight with other African artists, who presented their own material as well as contributed to his Graceland numbers. The ensemble, which featured up to 24 musicians performing at one time, included such greats as the Zulu-Swazi a cappella group, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, trumpeter Hugh Masekela, and vocalist Miriam Makeba. Much of the tour itinerary was filled with benefit concerts, from which the proceeds were

donated to several causes here and in South Africa. These causes varied from major anti-apartheid aid programs to domestic municipal human-service charities.

The African National Congress opposed Simon's recording ventures in South Africa, saying that he was in violation of the United Nations' cultural boycott of the country (the boycott, however, was originally aimed at performances, not recordings). Others, including exiled artists Makeba and Masekela, who have personally felt apartheid's sting, strongly disagree. They believe Simon and the Graceland musicians have helped give a voice to anti-apartheid causes and African music in general. United Negro College Fund President Christopher F. Edley agreed, speaking out in support of the tour.

Simon refused offers to perform at Sun City, South Africa's whites-only pleasure dome. Instead, the group performed in Harare, Zimbabwe, to an emotional mixed-race crowd that opened their arms

to the show's universal appeal—simply, the positive human spirit. These responses were the true measure of the Graceland tour's public support. As the tour rolled on and benefit concerts increased, many skeptical voices were drowned out. More importantly, the world was being turned on to the music of South Africa. The Madison Square Garden concert concluded with a surprise appearance by South African anti-apartheid leader Reverend Allan Boesak, who delivered a message of hope for freedom from repression in South Africa and around the world. Boesak also extended congratulations to Simon and the Graceland musicians for generating a positive message worldwide, and thanked them for their successful fundraising efforts.

Despite all the political issues revolving around the tour, the music was what delivered the proof positive of the beautiful possibilities for cross-cultural musical collaborations. In fact, Graceland's lyrics are not specifically political at all. As

Simon simply and wisely stated at the opening of the Madison Square Garden show, "This concert is about the music of South Africa and the songs on the Graceland album."

These are the roots of rhythm. And these roots remain in Graceland's songs through the special feel—powerful yet always graceful—provided by the union of three talented drummers who were raised under African skies and surrounded by the language and lure of Afri-

Isaac Mtshali, Francis Fuster, and Okyerema Asante

GRACELAND

by Jeff Potter

DRUMMERS:

can drums. Isaac Mtshali, 32, played drum-set on the tour with a power and touch that settled the music into a relaxed backbeat, while never cluttering the large ensemble. Offstage, one may be surprised to find that he is quiet and very soft-spoken. Isaac was involved with the Graceland project from its inception, having played on the album cuts "Under African Skies," "Diamonds On The Soles Of Her Shoes," "Crazy Love, Vol. II," and the hit "You Can Call Me Al."

Francis Fuster, 43, primarily handled congas on the tour. Francis is a multi-instrumentalist who speaks with rapid enthusiasm and verve when discussing drums. Providing the traditional African drum backbone for the trio is Okyerema Asante, better known as just "Asante." Asante, 38, played talking drums on the tour, and when he speaks of the traditional African drums, he does so with a contented smile that reflects the appreciation he has for the deep heritage of drum wisdom that has been passed down to him.

Graceland's concert presentation featured a well-rounded evening of music flavored by colorful pageantry. The ten-piece Ladysmith Black Mambazo snaked on and off stage with the high-stepping, outward-flailing dance steps native to their country's joyfully extroverted dance style. Hugh Masekela and his three female backup singers sang his song "Bring Him Back Home," kindling the uplifting call of solidarity with the refrain, "Bring back Nelson Mandela/Bring him back home to Soweto/Tomorrow!" Miriam Makeba sang her own features, then later joined Simon on the Graceland numbers, undaunted by the wheelchair she was confined to because of a backstage fall several days earlier. As in any African social festivity, this flow of music, movement, and color was all carried by the spirit of the drums—

the essential ingredient. With Isaac behind his raised kit at center stage, and Francis and Asante standing side by side high above stage left, the three loomed above the large group, generating unflinching, ecstatic energy like guardian angels guiding all below.

Madison Square Garden had been planned as the finale to the tour. Due to ticket demands, however, one final show was added at Jones Beach, Long Island. As a result, the globe-hopping musicians were waylaid for a few days in New York between shows. Wasting no time, the individual African units hooked New York club engagements. Isaac, Francis, and Asante made good use of the time, performing with Hugh Masekela and his band, Kalahari, at the Limelight club. It was there, just one day before the final show of their six-month world journey, that the three drummers gathered together for a roundtable discussion about the Graceland tour, their roots, and their rhythms.

Fuster: The three of us got phone calls,

and we went to the rehearsal studios in London. I live in London, Asante lives in Washington, D.C., and Isaac lives in Johannesburg, South Africa. I've been playing for years, and I've always been better at playing drums than talking about them. [laughs] I came from playing trap drums many years ago and later changed to percussion. It just happened naturally. I was born in Sierra Leone in West Africa. In terms of bridging African drums and the songs on the Graceland tour, it was very easy and necessary to bring the drums in. The music was developed right in the studio. We didn't know exactly what was expected with the drums at first—especially for Asante's drums. In some ways, it was not very easy to put them in. In fact, in the beginning, the drums sounded really strange—especially to Paul. Sometimes he would say, "I can't hear that; don't do that," and we would stop. After a while, we would play it again and it would sound right. So from there we liked to add the things we thought really worked, and gradually the percussion

Francis Fuster



Photo by Rhonda Pillere

became heavier. I did more every day with the music.

From my point of view, it was strange at first, but it was more strange for the Westerners in the band than it was for us because we are used to listening to Western music. I've recorded with a lot of Western musicians, including Simply Red, who had hits. I also recorded with Hugh Masekela through the years, and the experience in the studio helped. The communication we have between Western producers and African drummers has developed over the last few years to a point where they now can produce the drums almost right.

JP: Could each of you tell me about your musical beginnings in Africa?

Asante: I was born in a little village in Ghana called Koforidua. I grew up in the King's palace, where all the drums are kept. My uncle was the master drummer for the palace. I used to hang around the kitchen a lot when I was about two. I would put the cooking pots together and use the spoons and knives as sticks. I'd beat the pots and pans until I dug holes in them. I used to get into trouble for that, though, [laughs] When I was four years old I got my first drum, which was a miniature marching snare drum. When my uncle saw my interest in the drum at that early age, he started to teach me all about it. He began by teaching me the drum language. In the old days in Africa, before the telephone arrived, drums were used for sending

messages from village to village. So he taught me that language and a whole lot about African music.

JP: Is it unusual to start with sticks on a snare in Ghana, as opposed to hand percussion?

Asante: No. In the tribe I come from, it is common. At the age of ten, I was a master drummer. My uncle would play with his group at a big function at the palace, and you could see this little tiny boy among them. From there on, I took it further because I believed that the traditional instruments that I was playing could be used for more. People had it in their minds that these drums were only traditional and should be kept for the palace. But I believed they were for more than sending messages from village to village; they could be used for all kinds of music—African, Chinese, *any* kind of music. But in the beginning, it was difficult. That was during a period when Western pop—the Beatles, James Brown—was all over the continent. It was very popular. I started taking the traditional drums into the dance halls. I also learned to play the trap drums and used them with some groups in Ghana. But after a while, I decided to stop playing the traps because I felt, "I'm a master traditional drummer; why should I leave that for the traps?" Plus, I believed that the traditional drums can do just as much as the traps can do.

After college, my parents wanted me to continue studying, because my father was

a magistrate. I said, "Oh, the law books are too big for my head. I'll read about two or three pages and go to sleep." [laughs] I asked them to buy a talking drum for me. That ticked them off a little bit. They said, "Look, we spent money to send you to school; now you finish and you want to buy a drum? Are you going to stay in the palace and play the talking drum? Is that *all* you want to do?" I said, "No, I want to take *it further*." So, I had to leave home for Togoland to do what I wanted to do.

I had struggled for acceptance in my country; the dance halls were not used to the traditional talking drums. But I used them and I even did a one-man show. When the audiences first saw my traditional drums for the one-man show, they would say, "Soul! Soul! We want soul music. Take those things back to the palace!" And I said, "Man, no! I'm going to give this to you!" I just said to myself, "I'll keep playing," and pretty soon they started to get quiet and listen to what I was doing. I thought, "Wow! I'm *getting* them." As I kept on playing, the whole place got even quieter, and then they clapped. From doing that, I was invited to join a group called Hedzolleh Sounds. With this group, I had my first chance to record. Since then, I've done a lot of albums, including *Chain Reaction* with The Crusaders and an album with Lonnie Liston Smith.

Hugh Masekela saw Hedzolleh Sounds in Ghana, and he brought us here on a tour in 1974. Since then, I've been going back and forth between here and Africa. I played with Hugh Masekela between 1974 and 1979, decided to go solo again, and have been doing my solo act ever since. In that act, I perform on about 46 percussion instruments. I was touring here in the United States when I got a call to join the *Graceland* tour. Francis had been playing with Hugh after I left. We had also done a project together in Lagos [Nigeria] with Hugh, so it was a nice thing coming together again for this project.

Mtshali: I'm now living in Johannesburg, but I was born in Nelspruit. My mother is a witch doctor. I started playing at home, where we played drums that are like small congas and which in Zulu are called *ngomane*. While I was at school I went to listen to the bands, and liked to watch them playing drums. When a drummer went to the loo, I just jumped to that

Okyerema Asante

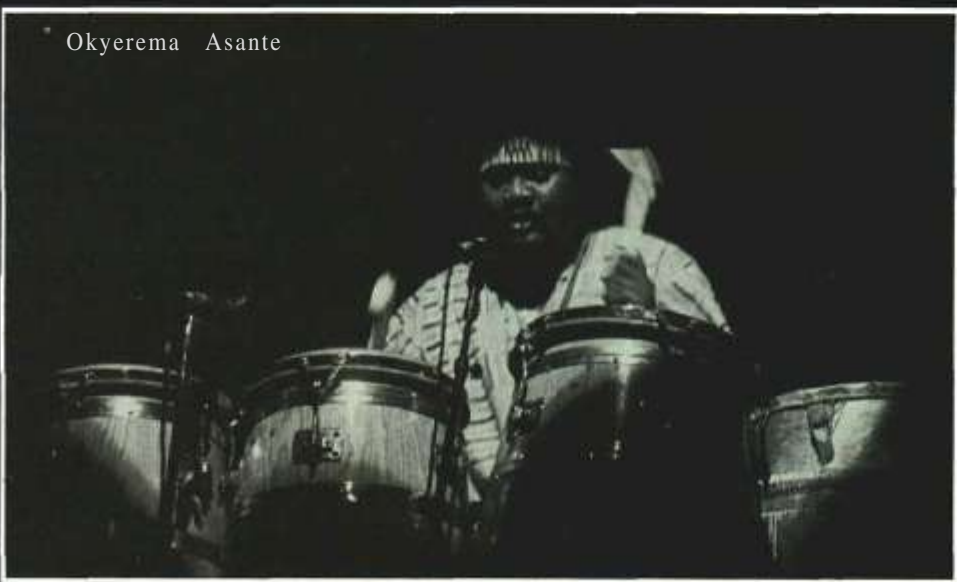


Photo by William White

Isaac Mtshali



Photo by William White

person's drum and played until the drummer came back, and then I sat back down to watch. [laughs] Time and again, I would go there. Then someone would become lazy; the musicians always liked to go to the loo, and that was my chance. I jumped to the drums. This one time, when the drummer came back and found me playing, he just relaxed and let me continue because he saw I was playing okay. That's the way I learned.

When I was older, I played with groups and with studio musicians until I met Mpanyane. I did recordings with him, and we made some hits. He died and I kept on playing with the band. The music changed slightly, and the name was changed to Stimela. Phil Collins came to South Africa, and the band recorded some stuff with him. By that time, we were busy in the studio with other people, rather than doing any gigs as a band. Paul Simon heard the band from our record. He traced us, we got together, and he asked us to play some grooves for him. He had many bands; it was sort of an audition.

JP: With the large number of musicians on stage—and especially with three drummers—is it sometimes hard to avoid interfering with each other's playing?

Fuster: That has always been the reason most drummers can't play together. It's difficult to work things out so that everybody gets their best shot. When we first started playing together, this problem was worked out quickly because we had known each other's playing for years, and had a respect for each other. If our styles were too close to each other's, it wouldn't have worked out as well because we would have played almost the same things. My style is Sierra Leonian. It's West African but not from Ghana, and it's different from Asante's style. The differences have helped us to create the unique tempos and rhythms that we can play together in the same time signatures. And Isaac is the most reliable drummer that I have played with in terms of drummer/percussionist relationships. In most cases, it is hard for a percussion player to find a good drummer to work with, and vice versa.

JP: Is it a matter of differences in feel?

Fuster: It's a matter of creating space.

Asante: And also discipline. I often wish that some other drummers would not over-play.

Fuster: It's easier to play than to make

spaces. But I find it very easy to do with these two guys. Everybody makes space for each other. It was never a problem.

JP: Let's see how that theory works in practice. Let's say you're rehearsing "Under African Skies" with Paul Simon. That tune has that rolling African 6/8 triplet feel that is rarely heard in American pop. Now, Paul's music is not African...

Fuster: Not at all.

JP: Then how did you inject that feel into it? Did Simon ask for a specific groove, or did he leave it open for you three to create the grooves?

Mtshali: When we play a song like that, I just play laid back and simple parts, and I let them find their space.

Asante: In all the songs we play, we all have our unique styles of playing. Francis and I both have congas. But my congas are different. I use the traditional drums that have lower sounds, and Francis has the higher sounds. I use mine to lay down the rhythm.

Fuster: The bottom.

Asante: I'm not in a hurry to play, and Francis does all the slaps and all the highs.

Fuster: And Isaac keeps the Western part of the tune going.

Asante: Yes, that's the Western part.

JP: But there's an African feel that comes through, which is more than the separate parts.

Fuster: Absolutely.

Asante: Yes! Yes!

Fuster: But what characterizes that beat? We need that beat to play on. Asante does that. He plays a bottom section that everything sits on.

Asante: This keeps the feel.

Fuster: Yes, this gives me room to play mostly "tops." I played kit drums professionally for 12 years, and I also ran my own band for a period. So, I am used to opening up spaces for others to play in because I had to learn to create those spaces myself. When I came here to play, I thought I would have a hard time doing it. But everybody knew how to do it anyway, [laughs] When we played together, we played naturally, almost as if we had

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Photo by William White

Beating Drum

Disability. It's a frightening word, especially for musicians. The ability to play drums is so dependent on good physical condition, high energy levels, and exercise that the thought of being unable to maintain health is terrifying to many drummers.

But there are many drummers who are disabled. Disabilities take two forms: disabilities that you are born with, and ones that happen to you later on. I spoke to drummers with disabilities in both categories, and what I learned from them was surprising, unexpected, and inspiring.

I have played drums for eight years, starting in my last year of high school. My disability is Tourette Syndrome, a relatively uncommon neurological disorder that, in my case, causes me to twitch my neck and left arm, have constant facial tics including blinking, make involuntary noises, and spit uncontrollably.

With all this you might wonder why I began drumming. A friend of mine with Tourette Syndrome, David Aldrige, who played with Arthur Brown on the album *Requiem*, felt it would be a great therapy for me as a way of learning to control my body movements. After I started drumming, I found that I was good at it, and that my Tourette Syndrome followed certain rhythmic patterns that I could express on the drumset.

Multipercussionist Julius Wechter, who led the Baha Marimba Band and played with Herb Alpert, also has Tourette Syndrome. He developed the disorder at age six and went undiagnosed until he was in his 40's. In *The Sudden Intruder*, a documentary on Tourette Syndrome, Wechter explains that during a gig his symptoms were easy to mask, but in the recording studio he had to learn to suppress symptoms while tape was rolling. I asked Julius for his outlook on being a drummer with a disability. "Disabilities don't have to get in the way if you have the courage to keep going, and try to work around them," he said. "Working with people who are big enough to accept you and look beyond the disability is the most important thing."

The Baha Marimba Band recently got together for a reunion and are considering a return to playing live. Wechter has spent the last few years writing, and in 1986 had a play run for eight weeks at the Westwood Playhouse in Los Angeles. Wechter took medication briefly after his diagnosis, but he has spent the past ten years living with Tourette Syndrome and without the debilitating side effects he experienced while being treated.

I have run into constant fear and discrimination at auditions when it was noticed that I was disabled. Rock musicians especially were so image-conscious that having an obviously disabled drummer was impossible for them to consider. Several times I wasn't even asked to play; it was just assumed I couldn't fit in. Last year I had my first professional gig, playing drums in a play at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles. The play, *Crowing Pains*, featured an all-disabled cast, and in a review in the Los Angeles Times, the band was singled out for its professionalism. Recently I have been sitting in at jazz clubs and have started working with an electronic drumset in my apartment.

A musician who is known more for his songwriting than his drumming is Robert Wyatt, who was the original drummer with the progressive rock group Soft Machine. He became a paraplegic after a serious fall. Over the past few years he has gained a following in England due to his unique songwriting and singing, and has had several songs on the English charts. Two of his albums are available in the United States on Gramavision Records. *Old Rotenhat* features Wyatt on vocals, keyboards, hand percussion, and snare drum on electronic folk songs that evoke King Crimson combined with Woody Guthrie. A compilation of his English hits, *Nothing Can Stop Us*, features Wyatt's hit version of Elvis Costello's "Shipbuilding." The band Tears For Fears recently dedicated the song "I Believe" to him.

One of the better known drummers with a disability is Joe Morello, who has recorded over 60 records with the Dave Brubeck Quartet, one of the most popular jazz bands of the '50s and '60s. Morello was born with severe visual impairments and is nearly blind today, yet his contribution to drumming is immeasurable. Along with Max Roach, Morello was one of the first drummers to experiment with odd times and polyrhythms.

Morello has gone to India several times to explore Indian rhythmic theory, and his incredible technique, creativity, and flare for the exotic make him one of the great jazz drummers of all time. When I saw Morello play with Dave Brubeck at the Hollywood Bowl, he had to be led to his drumset. On "Take Five" he played a 15-minute solo that at first left the thousands of fans speechless, then highly excited as they gave him a standing ovation, which he was unaware of until the next day when I mentioned it to him.

When he isn't leading his own group, the Joe Morello Quintet, which plays in New Jersey and New York occasionally, he teaches drumming. His students include Danny Gottlieb, who once described a teaching session with Joe Morello to me: "He will say, 'Why are you holding the stick so tightly? Why is your finger on the drumstick? Why are you so tense?' He won't even be looking at me; he'll just be listening."

I remember standing in the Professional Drum Shop in Hollywood while Morello demonstrated various exercises on a practice pad. As one drummer began to play, Joe suggested that she use a lighter stick. His uncanny ear and great knowledge of the drums make him one of the great music educators today.

Photo by Michael Jachies

Beating Disco

ROLAND VAZQUEZ



Roland made the decision to become a drummer when he was 12 years old, after seeing Mongo Santamaria play. Pursuing his dream he started drumming, and in junior college began to study composition and theory. "It was at that time that the freeway accident occurred," he recalls. "A driver hit my motorcycle from behind doing about 60 or 70 mph. I suffered a pretty serious skull fracture."

Vazquez was severely injured, and for several days it was not clear whether he would live. "But somehow," says Vazquez, "with the love I received from my family and the people that were around me, I was able to not do what the doctors expected. I do think there is an incalculable thing that happens with people's will because of the amount of love they are able to receive and that they have inside themselves. The experience allowed me to come to terms with the things I really love the most in this life.

"I was unable to practice between 1969 and 1977. I went through a lot of pain, and I still have some weakness in my left arm. But that stuff is not really the point. What we have to think about is that, when you have a disability, it isn't what's wrong with you that matters, but what you can accomplish with what you *do* have. That's where each one of us who has a problem has to start. I always think of Rick Allen and what he has done, and that's amazing. The fear of his situation

would stop most of us from moving forward.

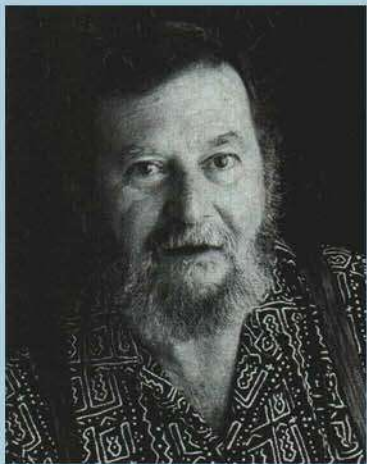
"The thing about being a drummer is that so much is based on technique, and there is sort of a macho sense of what the drums are about. So many people say, 'You're no good if you don't practice eight hours a day or play paradiddles at 220 beats a minute.' That's not the truth.

"When musicians face rather obvious obstacles that have to be overcome in order to achieve their goals, they have to find a way to put themselves into their work. Then the obstacles might even wind up being advantages. They work like a fuel to feed you—but only if you can find the way to put yourself into the work. If you can't do that, then obviously all you're going to be aware of are the circumstances. But if you can find an internal resource, the spirit that you have about what you're doing, then you have a way to overcome anything. Of course, now we're starting to sound religious.

"An author whose work I've just read is M. Scott Peck, who says that every man, whether he admits to belonging to a church or not, has a religion. His religion is how he relates to himself in the world. We might take that a little further and say that it's how you relate to yourself and the limits of your condition, whether it's the environment that you live in, or the environment of your body. That is each person's religion. The amount of respect you have for your life is what allows you to achieve."

At a recent recording session led by percussionist Luis Conte, Roland Vazquez contributed several songs and played drums with a fire and passion unlike any I have ever seen in the studio. While playing, he demonstrated such joy and delight that it was a revelation. After the session he told me, "I feel very grateful to be here today." Part of that gratitude was from flying in from New York to Los Angeles to do the session, while another was the joy from being able to play drums at all.

HOWARD BROMBERG



When Howard Bromberg was growing up in New York, he would sit in with Big Sid Catlett's band while they backed up Billie Holiday. A self-taught drummer at first, Bromberg later studied with Henry Adler. When his parents moved to Arizona, Bromberg had to follow, because he was still a minor. At about that time, the clubs he played in New York had realized that he was underage and stopped letting him in.

Bromberg played a lot in Tucson, living in a room at Jimmy's Chicken Shack, where he was also house drummer for the popular after-hours club. But after joining the Air Force and falling in love, he

decided that being a professional drummer was not for him. He continued to play casuals, though, and at times would back up Charlie Parker, Thelonius Monk, Dexter Gordon, and other jazz greats. His reading skills made him one of the hottest drummers in Tucson, and even in his 40's he was playing with a big band on a regular basis.

Then, at the age of 49, he had a heart attack. After open-heart surgery, he suffered a stroke that paralyzed the left side of his body. His career appeared to be over, and his days as a musician stopped, for he could no longer even hold a drumstick.

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MIKE BIXBY

that I was playing to "Wipeout" and Benny Goodman records on potato-chip cans. In the sixth grade I got a small set of Apollos and started playing in neighborhood groups doing music by Jimi Hendrix, B.B. King, and Blood, Sweat & Tears. In 1970, when I was 14, I was in a band that was good enough to play clubs.

"All through high school I played in the school band and jazz ensemble, and in clubs and hotels. In 1976 I moved to Texas from Kentucky. Three years, three bands, and many jam sessions later I hooked up with some local musicians and worked with them for seven years. During that period we won awards for favorite Central Texas band for two years until they stopped giving the award.

"We opened for Lacy J. Dalton, Brenda Lee, Eddy Raven, the Bellamy Brothers, Johnny Lee, George Strait, and Southern Pacific. Working with Keith Knudsen [drummer for Southern Pacific] was a real treat. Not only have I admired his playing for years, but I also found him to be extremely affable. He was very receptive to my questions, and even showed me some nice grooves."

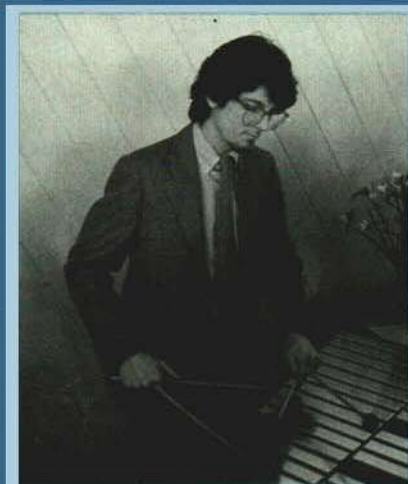
The association with Farm Aid II came through some friends of the band who work with Willie Nelson's organization. "We were playing a street dance in Malone, and Willie Nelson got up on stage with us and invited us to Farm Aid. We were the house band, and, starting at 7:00 A.M., backed up about eight acts throughout the day. We had to learn all these songs about ten minutes before show time. We heard some good responses from Nelson's organization, and got to play one of our original songs."

In talking about his limitations, Bixby chuckles, "About the only thing I can't do is climb a rope worth a darn. I get a kick out of articles that argue about traditional grip versus matched. I just hold the sticks somewhere in between. If I'm doing a lot of quick snare drum stuff, it's better for me to play matched grip, but for anything beyond a single-stroke roll I've got to go traditional."



Twenty-five-year-old Bob Seifried plays in the popular new wave/dance band The Touch, who are on the club circuit on Long Island. "I lost my right leg below the knee, and I almost lost my left arm," says Seifried. "The nerves and the muscle in that arm are still messed up, and it's hard for me to hold a drumstick. I have a lot of other injuries, but none of them affect my playing."

Seifried relates the story of his accident:



If you were watching the first hour of Farm Aid II in 1986, then you heard Willie Nelson and other artists like Ray Wylie Hubbard, Boxcar Willie, Steve Fromholtz, Gary P. Nunn, Danny Cooksey, the Geezenslaw Brothers, and Bill & Bonnie Hearn. What you probably didn't notice was that the drummer in the house band, Mike Bixby, was disabled.

"I was born with only a thumb and two fingers on my left hand, and only a thumb and a pinky finger on my right," Mike explains. "I have close to the same problem with my feet. I have to use extra padding in my shoes. Along with a prosthetic arch support on my right foot, playing in tennis shoes is a must!"

"When I was in school, I used to mess around in the band room on drums, and I started taking lessons. My hands are such that I can play using a somewhat modified traditional grip, so that is how I was instructed in the beginning. However, now I basically use matched grip. Neither grip is what you would call textbook, and I switch depending on the style of music.

"I've been playing 21 years. I got a snare drum in the fifth grade, but before

BOB SEIFRIED

"We were coming home one night from playing a show, and we saw a house on fire. So we stopped, and I ran inside to try to help the people living there. I learned later that the people inside the house were suspected Nazi war criminals, and a radical group that was trying to kill them had planted a bomb in front of the house.

"I really wasn't heroic at all; it was 4:30 in the morning, and I had to do what I had to do. When I first reached the house, a man inside came to the door, but he knew he was being set up, so he ran back into the house. I felt like an idiot, thinking, 'Why did this guy run back in?' So I ran in after him. I had actually been standing over the bomb the whole time; I thought it was a mailbox. On my way out, the people in the house followed me to the front door, and as I opened the door they jumped back and the bomb went off."

After the accident, Seifried relates, "When they told me that I was going to lose my leg, I thought I'd never be able to play again. I used to practice with my right foot, and I took a lot of pride in it, but when I lost the ankle I thought, 'Well, that's that.' But when I got out of the hospital, I went right back on stage. For a few songs I closed the hi-hat and played the bass drum with my left leg."

Seifried compensates for his disability

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DAVID ALDRIDGE



When David Aldridge was growing up, he didn't know he had Tourette Syndrome. The involuntary jerking movements of his arms and legs began after a bicycle accident he had at the age of six. He was a great dashboard drummer, and started to sing rhythmic patterns out loud. Like Mike Bixby, "Wipeout" was an early favorite, as well as the Beatles. "It was such an intense way to release and focus tension," says Aldridge. "It served a few purposes: It released tension, it provided order, and it felt great. It was okay to

it, and just felt so good to have a socially acceptable form of movement.

"I think one of the reasons I developed on the drumset, more than any other instrument, is because I used to mask my symptoms when I was a kid. If my arms or legs started moving, I could make it look like I was drumming, and that was acceptable."

When David plays, his Tourette Syndrome symptoms disappear. He says they have never interrupted his performing at

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JOHN FITZGERALD

While over 35 million Americans are disabled in some way, not all are permanently so. Temporary disabilities can take many forms and present different problems. Common temporary disabilities for drummers are hand and foot injuries. How do drummers cope when their playing and livelihood are interfered with?

John Fitzgerald knows these issues well, having gone through a period of temporary disability in 1985. Fitzgerald is a free-lance drummer in Los Angeles who plays both drumset and percussion, specializing in vibes. "A bunch of percussionists got together for a baseball game

at a park," he says, "and I slipped and fell on my right wrist, bending it far back. I tore some ligaments, but didn't know how severely I had injured myself, so I kept on playing. By the end of the day it had swollen to the size of a softball and was very painful. I thought it was just another sprained wrist and that, if I kept off it for a couple of days, it would get better. It didn't.

"I began to realize that it was more severely injured than I had thought. Needless to say, I couldn't practice. I went to a sports doctor who suggested that I immobilize it, and he wrapped it in an ace bandage.

He wanted to adjust the wrist, to move the bones back into place. That was probably a mistake. It still hurt, so I stopped seeing that doctor. I had it X-rayed, and while nothing was broken, there were tom ligaments. Ligament tears are worse than a break. A break will heal in six weeks, whereas a ligament tear can take up to four or five months to heal. I stayed off it as best I could."

Fitzgerald tried to practice and perform sporadically over the next few weeks, but it was next to impossible. He became worried that it would never heal. He consulted a hand specialist, who told him to completely stop using the hand. He began physical therapy and had his wrist put into

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10th ANNUAL READERS POLL

The purpose of *MD's* annual poll is to recognize drummers and percussionists in all fields of music who have been especially active during the past year—either through recordings, live performances, or educational activities. It is in no way to suggest that one musician is "better" than another but, rather, to call attention to those performers who, through their musicianship, have been inspirational to us all.

Instructions

1. You must use the official *MD* ballot—no photocopies.
2. Please print or type your selection in the corresponding box.
3. Make only one selection in each category. (It is not necessary to vote in every category. Leave blank any category for which you do not have a firm opinion.)
4. Mail the entire ballot to: Modern Drummer Readers Poll, 670 Pompton Avenue, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Ballots must be postmarked no later than April 1, 1988. Results will be announced in the July '88 issue of *MD*.

Hall Of Fame

Vote for the artist, living or dead, who you feel has made an historic contribution to the art of drumming. Previous winners (Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, John Bonham, Keith Moon, Neil Peart, Steve Gadd, Louie Bellson, Tony Williams, and Billy Cobham) are not eligible for this category.

MD's Honor Roll

Artists who have been selected by the *MD* readership as winners in any one category of the Readers Poll for a total of five years are placed on *MD's* Honor Roll. This is our way of recognizing the unique talent and lasting popularity of those special artists. Artists placed on the Honor Roll in any given category are subsequently ineligible in that category, although they remain eligible in other categories. (The exception to this is the "Recorded Performance" category, which will remain open to all artists.) Artists who have achieved Honor Roll status (and are now ineligible in the category shown) are listed below.

Airto: Latin American/Latin Brazilian Percussionist
 Gary Burton: Mallet Percussionist
 Vic Firth: Classical Percussionist
 Steve Gadd: All-Around Drummer and Studio Drummer
 David Garibaldi: R&B/Funk Drummer
 Neil Peart: Rock Drummer and Multi-Percussionist
 Buddy Rich: Big Band Drummer

Big Band Drummer

All-Around Drummer

This category is not intended to indicate the "overall best" drummer. Rather, it is to recognize drummers noted for performing in a variety of musical styles and applications, instead of one specific band, act, or style. Please limit your voting to drummers who fit that definition.

Studio Drummer

This category is restricted to drummers primarily known as multi-session players who record with a variety of artists, or who are involved in such projects as jingles, TV and film scores, etc. (Not included in this category are recording artists who may spend much time in the studio, but only as a member of one group or act.)

Pop/Mainstream Rock Drummer

Latin/Brazilian Percussionist

Country Drummer

Hard Rock/Metal Drummer

Mainstream Jazz Drummer

Please restrict this category to drummers known primarily for their work in small-group, acoustic jazz.

Funk Drummer

Progressive Rock Drummer

Electric Jazz Drummer

This category is reserved for drummers who generally perform in fusion or jazz-rock situations.

Recorded Performance

Vote for your favorite recording by a drummer as a leader or as a member of a group. Limit your selection to recordings made within the past 12 months. Please include the artist's name, the complete title of the song, and the name of the album from which it came.

Multi-Percussionist

Classical Percussionist

This category is limited to artists performing with symphony orchestras, operas, percussion ensembles, etc.

Artist's Name

Song Title

Up-And-Coming Drummer

This category is reserved for the most promising artist brought to the public's attention within the past 12 months.

Mallet Percussionist

Please limit this to performers who specialize in vibes, marimba, and/or xylophone.

Album Title



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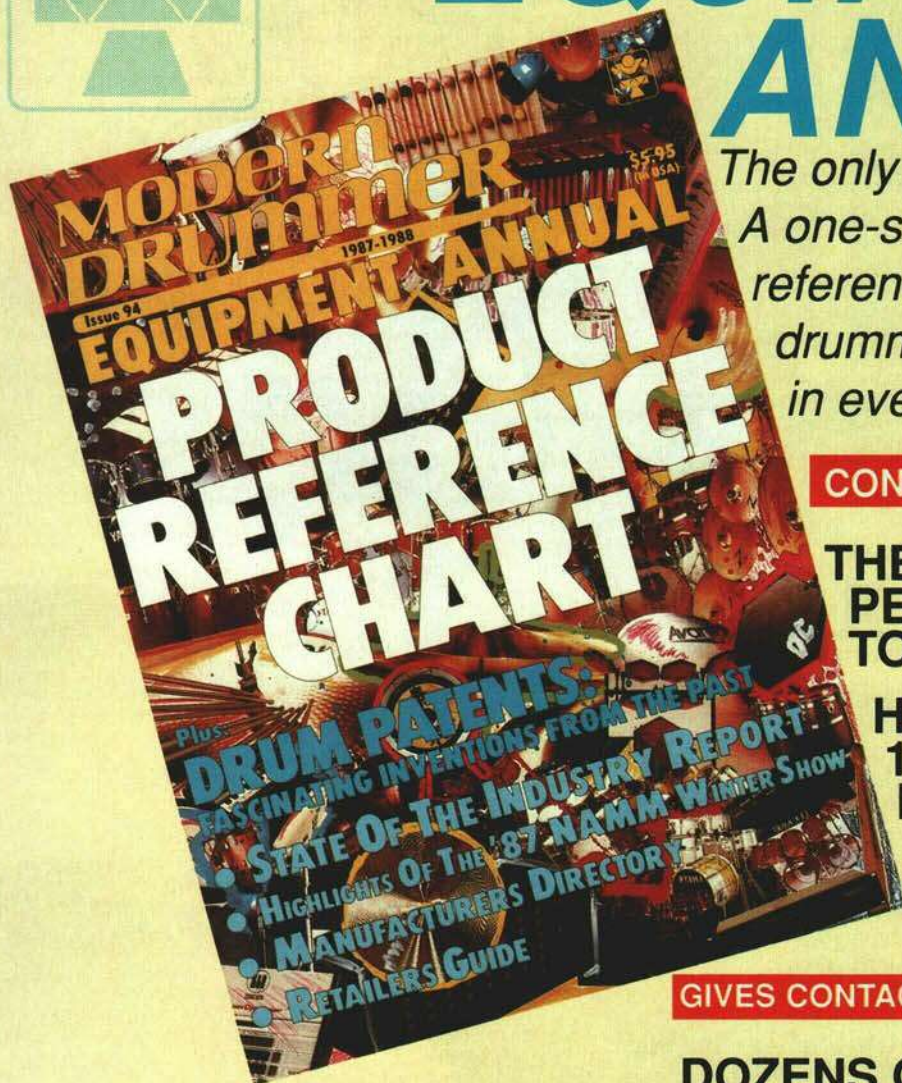
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The Drumkit Timp

by Paul Schmidt



As a multi-percussionist and composer, I've always been interested in various acoustic tone colors. The idea of a timpani sound from a smaller drum was something I often thought about.

Since I couldn't afford a custom drum maker to experiment with different sizes of shells, I simply obtained some old 12x15 parade drums (two old WFLs from the '50s and two old Leedy drums of similar vintage), and borrowed the idea Fred Hinger used for his "space-tone" snare drums. I first had the drums re-covered, mounted lugs on them, and then repainted the rims. Holes were drilled for the leg holders, and three spacers, consisting of a rectangular piece of threaded steel on the inside of the shell, were secured with hexagon-head screws from the outside. This arrangement enabled me to place the

shells almost flush, 1 1/2" to 2 1/2" apart. The further apart, the drier the tone. I then put clear *Diplomats* on the drum, and the resulting sound was good and quite resonant.

The entire project was very inexpensive. The drums themselves were collecting dust in a basement and attic, and were there for the asking. The legs are merely steel rods, bent as traditional tom-tom legs and then painted black. They were purchased and painted for less than \$10. Each pair of drumshells that make up one drum costs less than \$60, which is rather inexpensive for an attractive, *good sounding* percussion tool. The cost could be less if one were to eliminate the re-covering process. Most importantly, it was fun to see my idea come to fruition.

Rooting Out The Noises

by John Clarke

There can be few greater annoyances than those unwanted rattles and squeaks produced by drums that have not been prepared for either recording or use with a sound system in a live situation. Eliminating such problems is first a case of detecting their origins, and that's not always a simple task.

One main source of ring and spring rattle has always been the tension lugs of a drum, even though there seems to be a return to springless tension systems. But those still fitted with springs under the inserts can rattle and will need to be silenced. This is an easy, if laborious, task that entails removal of the lugs from the shell and packing them with foam, felt, or cotton. Don't *overfill*, or you might easily distort the spring and make it difficult to tune the drum, as the tension bolt can get all tied up in the surplus packing material. Even springless tension lugs can benefit from this treatment, as it will

also reduce any metallic ring hollow casings can produce.

If your toms are fitted with internal dampers, as most still are, these will certainly figure in the battle some time during their lives. Why not remove the brutes, and fit chrome-headed studs and bolts to fill the holes, thus retaining a good appearance? If you ever want to sell the drums, these can be refitted to restore originality. When in use, dampers in contact with the drumhead create less worries. The trouble arises when they're *not* in use, but still on the drum, with the ideal being to tape the moving parts together in the hope that this will stop the little devils from causing trouble. Incidentally, while you're messing around inside the drum, this is a good opportunity to make sure that all nuts and bolts are tight. There's nothing like a loose bolt or washer for kicking up a veritable shindig in a drum.

Next in the offenders manual are the pedals. Lots of moving parts also means lots of areas that can issue forth sounds of unbelievable obscenity. Squeaking springs and axles are what we're looking for down here. A small amount of graphite powder on all hinge pins will help, but a fine oil will also do nicely. Users of chain-drive pedals could do worse than give the chain a very fine smear of grease to keep it smooth and silent. The rule of thumb is: If it moves and isn't nylon, lubricate, within moderation, of course.

Going to the other extremity of a drumset, we find ourselves at the top of cymbal stands, that graveyard of many a good cymbal that never enjoyed even the basic

protection of synthetic materials to prevent metal-to-metal contact. The stem of any cymbal mount *must* have a nylon sleeve to stop damage to the cymbal center hole. Also, the cymbal must sit on a leather or felt washer on top of the usual metal one found at the base of the thread. The noise given off by a cymbal mounted in any other way is literally horrendous! If this seems to be commonsense information, I offer no apologies for raising it, in view of the number of drummers who still place an expensive cymbal on a stand with little regard for such essential commonsense requirements.

On the same basic thinking, the drum throne has long been responsible for many unwanted noises. Usually, this comes from a dry joint between the seat and the stem. That dry spot can issue a loud squeal of protest when you swivel around to execute a fill on your multi-drum setup. Again, lubrication is the simple answer.

Surprisingly, it's still not uncommon to find a snare drum stand with one or more of the cradle arms minus its protective sleeve. Whether this is simple neglect or lack of thought, I don't know, but it's sad to see. And besides playing hell with a drum hoop, it sure makes for some pretty unusual snare drum sounds!

In the final analysis, most unwanted noises are quite easy to eliminate, and once done, need little if any further attention. It's one of those jobs that a lot of players just never seem to get around to. Perhaps it falls into the same category as cymbal cleaning—a necessary pain!




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Hand And Foot Exercises: Part 2

by Kenny Aronoff

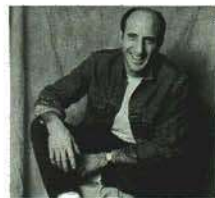


Photo by Rick Malkin

MUSIC KEY



In sports, an offense or defense is only as good as its weakest player. At that weak point, the stronger parts will be slowed down considerably. This same concept applies to the hands and feet of a drummer: You can only play as good as your weakest limb. For example, if you have very fast and developed hands, but slow, undeveloped feet, your abilities on the drumset will be limited

because of your feet. The object is to develop your feet to match your hands, and coordinate your abilities between them.

In my last column, I wrote out an exercise to help you develop this relationship. The exercise dealt with practicing single strokes between your hands and feet, utilizing all four limbs. I want to continue that concept with a few more ideas.

The basic concept of this exercise is alternating single strokes (16th notes) between your right hand (playing the floor tom) and your right foot (playing the bass drum). This creates a double bass drum effect. In the following example, beats 2 and 4 are played on the snare drum with your right hand, and steady quarter notes are played with your left foot (on the hi-hat).

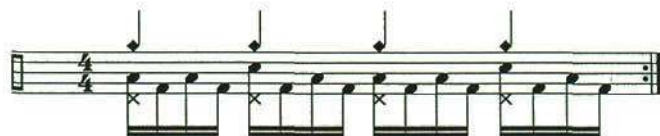


Practice this basic concept over and over with a metronome or a drum machine. Once you are comfortable playing it with your right hand, try it with your left hand. You should be able to alternate between the two without losing the groove.

Once you can play the previous example correctly, add the following cymbal pattern to it.



When you add that to the original beat, it looks like this:



The following examples combine the original pattern with a different ride-cymbal pattern. Each of these cymbal patterns begins one 16th note later than the previous one.



After you have learned each of the cymbal patterns individually, practice going from one to the other without stopping. Also, try playing two bars of one pattern and then changing to another. The idea is to develop single strokes between your hands and feet, and also to develop some independence among your four limbs. When you play the drums, you generally use all four limbs. Therefore, when I teach and practice, I strongly support using all four limbs whenever possible.

If you feel motivated, go back to my last article ("Hand And Foot Exercises: Part 1"), and practice that. Try playing the exercises in that article without stopping, and then continue right into the exercises in this article. That will give you a powerful workout for your coordination, ambidexterity, and strength.



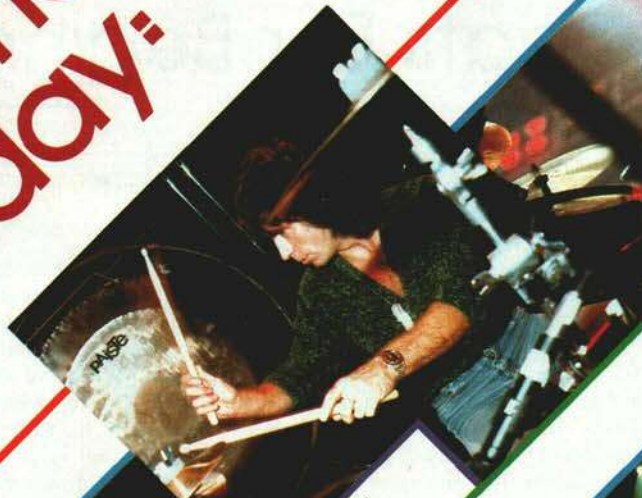
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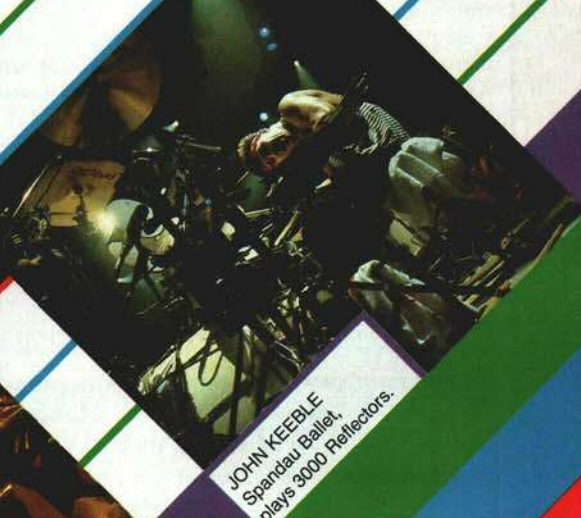
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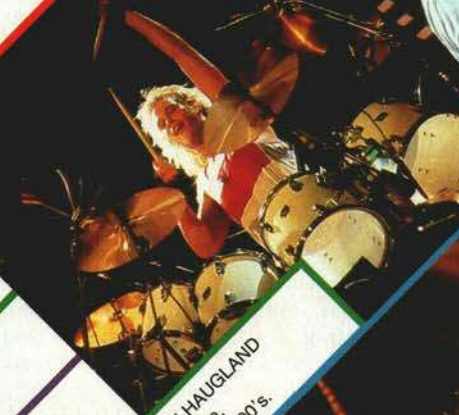
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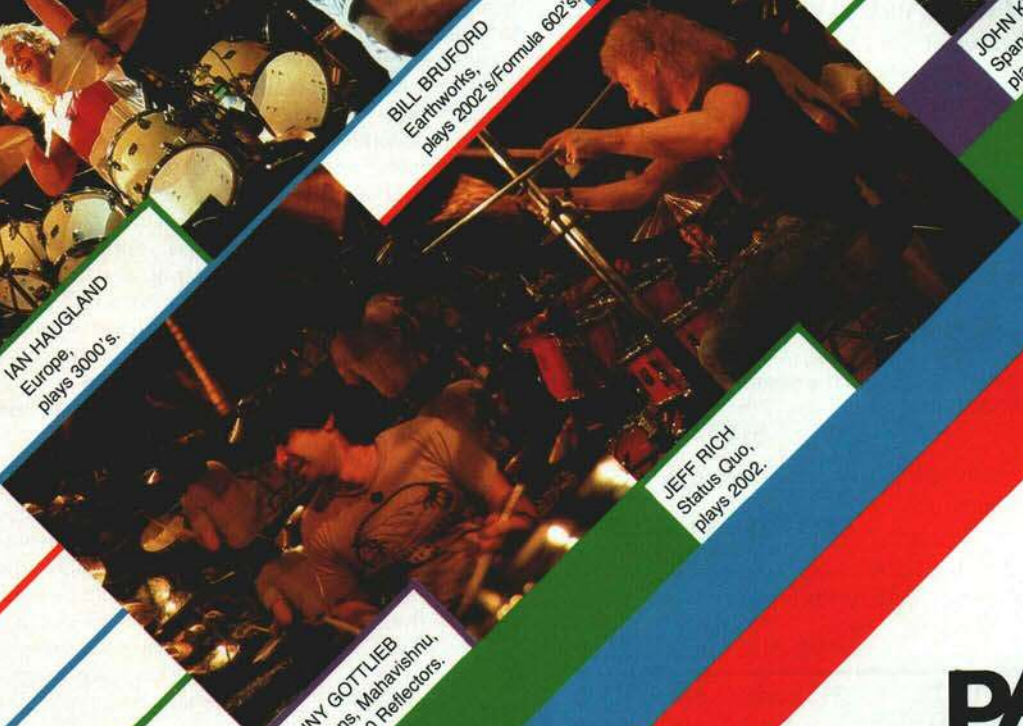
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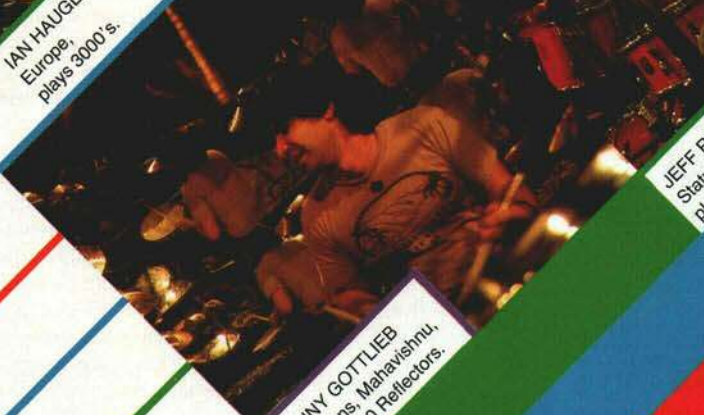
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by Jim Pfeifer

Power Beats For Beginners: Part 1

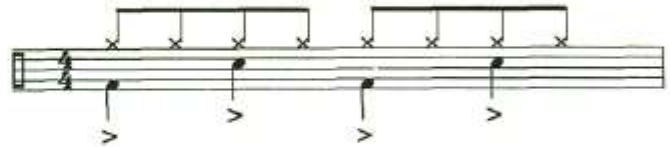


This article contains information every drummer *must* have in order to play pop and rock music. Our primary focus is on the beginning drumset player, but drummers at all levels can benefit. Though power beats have been used continuously and *very* successfully for many years by the world's top drummers, most beginners can learn them very quickly. No tricks or gimmicks are needed—just a basic knowledge of music reading and an inexpensive metronome.

Starting out on the drumset can be confusing. If you *are* a beginner it's only normal for you to be attracted to songs with incredibly complex beats and fills. But chances are you become frustrated when trying to immediately copy these complicated patterns, and find you can't play them. It's not your fault; you simply are not ready—yet.

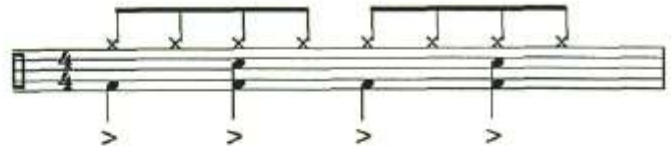
So far, nobody has invented any shortcuts to enable new drummers to play like Neil Peart or Billy Cobham in a few short weeks. I learned this the hard way, and it was a tough lesson. However, along the way I learned one of the best lessons any beginner can learn: As soon as a drummer accepts the fact that it will *take time* to play like the masters, the first step has been taken toward really mastering the drums.

Being a beginner isn't all that bad, actually. Yes, you *do* have to learn the simple beats first, but in the history of hit songs the heartbeat has always been supplied by simple drum parts. Here is a beat to get you started, but it is *not* to be taken lightly. This beat has been the foundation for countless pop and rock hits.



Now set your metronome so that a quarter note corresponds to 120, and you'll be playing the drum part for "Billie Jean," from Michael Jackson's 1982 album, *Thriller*. You don't need to be a Michael Jackson fan to hear this beat. Heavy metal lovers can hear it in "You've Got Another Thing Comin'" by Judas Priest, and Bill Gibson of Huey Lewis & The News powers "I Want A New Drug" with the same beat. You can hear it in Billy Idol's "Rebel Yell," as well as in "Slow Hand" by The Pointer Sisters.

The next power beat is closely related to the one in "Billie Jean." It's a heavier beat, and can be given the nickname "Billie Jean's Big Brother":



This is one of the most powerful pop and rock beats ever. The extra power is supplied by the bass drum, which provides a rock-solid anchor for all four beats in the measure. It's sometimes called the "four on the floor" beat because the bass drum part is so heavy. Now set your metronome at 120 and try the new beat.

There are many songs you can listen to if you want to hear the second power beat before you attempt to play it. Recordings driven by this beat include Madonna's first hit, "Holiday," the theme from the movie *Flashdance*, Bruce Springsteen's "Cover Me," and "Girls, Girls, Girls," by Motley Crue.

The metronome settings for both beats are quite accurate. Almost all of the songs used as examples fall into the 120 range. If you're new at working with a metronome, you'll need some practice guidelines to help you reach your goals. First of all, if this metronome setting is so fast that you can't keep up with it, don't try to. Playing at speeds faster than you are capable of will quickly turn you into a sloppy drummer. Instead, you must *start slowly* and then *gradually* increase your speed. Use a metronome setting of quarter note equals 60 as a starting point. When you master both beats at the 60 setting, bump up the speed to 72. As before, practice both beats *until mastered*. Continue to gradually increase the speed of the metronome, using the following settings: 80, 88, 96, 100, 104, 108, 112, and 116. Do *not* attempt faster speeds until you've mastered the slower ones—you have to learn to walk before you can run.

After you've mastered these two beats, listen to some of your favorite albums. You'll hear the beats in songs you may not have paid close attention to at first. It makes no difference whether your music collection is all pop or all heavy metal: you *will* hear these beats. You'll probably be able to play along with songs you previously thought you'd never be able to keep up with.

This will also be a good time to turn on the radio or MTV. As you listen, you'll almost certainly hear hit songs of the past and present driven by power beats. These are songs you can copy right now, and that's one of the reasons being a beginner can be a lot of fun.

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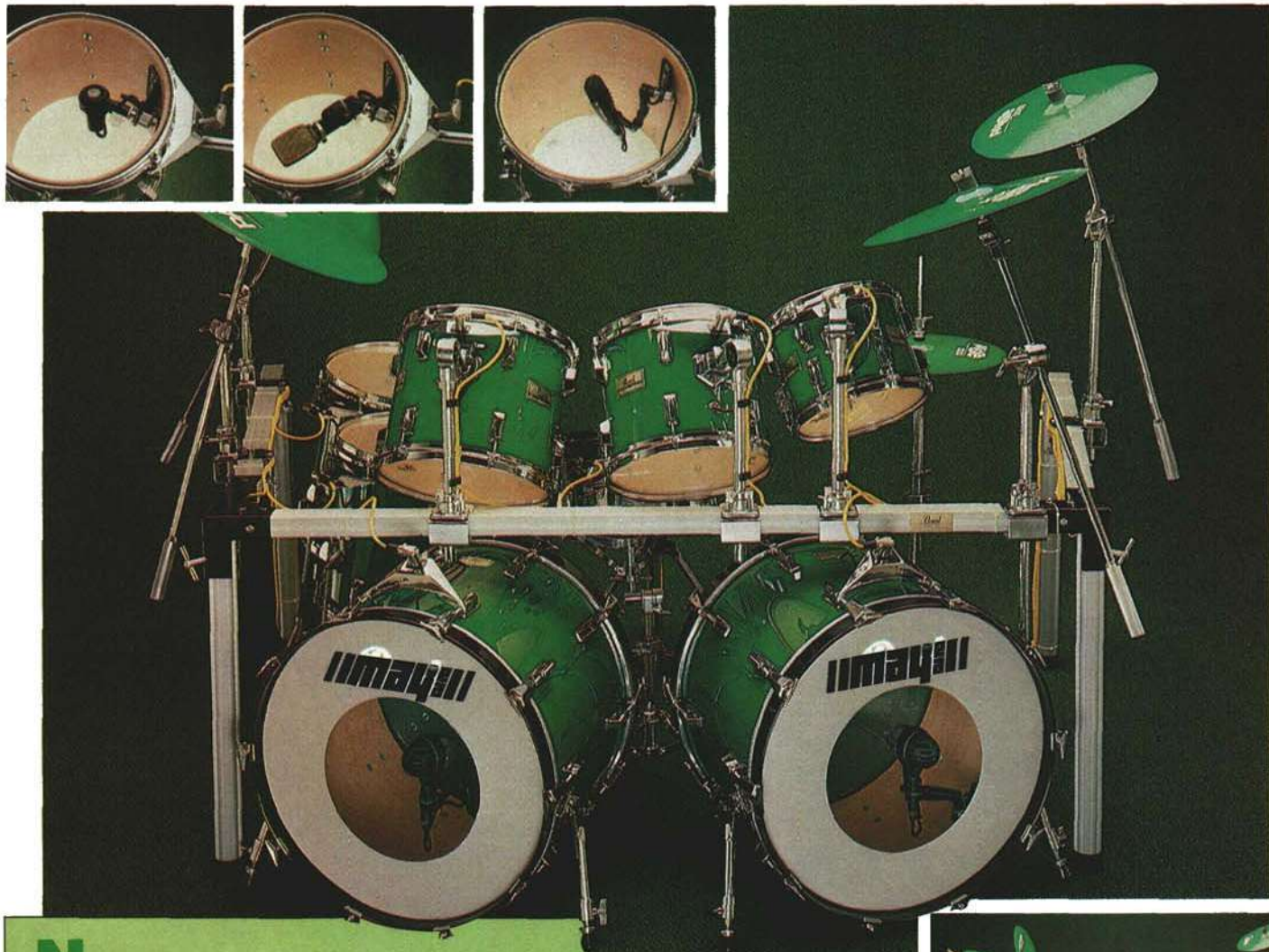
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by Roma Sachs Freedman

A Teacher's Test

Do you take a long, critical look at yourself, your studio, and your teaching methods at regular intervals? What might have been on the positive side when you first began to teach could easily be outmoded today.

Check your reactions to these questions. If you can answer positively to 32 or more, you deserve an A! If you fall in the 25-32 bracket, you probably rate a B! If 20-25 are good answers, your average is a C. Below that, you'd better make a fresh start, or maybe you weren't meant to be a teacher.

1. Is your studio neat, clean, and well-lighted?
2. Is your general appearance—posture, dress, and hair—good?
3. Is your speaking voice cheerful, and are the words crisply enunciated?
4. Do you have your studio and teaching materials ready *before* the first pupil arrives?
5. Do you begin and end lessons promptly?
6. Do you avoid *all* interruptions during

lessons—door bell, telephone, etc?

7. Do you make each student comfortable at his or her instrument?
8. Do you keep your daily records of lessons, payments, and attendance up to date?
9. Do you have music magazines on a table and short items on a bulletin board? Are they changed regularly?
10. Does your enrollment increase steadily?
11. Do you *really* enjoy your work?
12. Does the pupil's interest continue through the school year, or begin to lag after the novelty has worn off?
13. Do you feel a sense of responsibility toward your pupils and the parents' money that's being invested?
14. Do you encourage pupils to ask questions and make comments on the music during the lesson?
15. Do you remember to praise sincere efforts of any sort?
16. Do your pupils come to you voluntarily for advice and help?
17. Do you play for your students?

18. Are you really interested in your pupils?

19. Are you acquainted with the parents of your students, and do you occasionally visit their homes if they are strangers to you?

20. Do parents cooperate with you in supervising practice hours on a daily basis?

21. Are you *sympathetic* with your pupils, and do you try to see their viewpoint?

22. Do lesson periods pass quickly for you?

23. Do you have a positive approach to obstacles and difficult problems?

24. Do you continually watch for new teaching materials and methods?

25. Do you spend time every day on your *own* practice?

26. Do you take advantage of "Master Classes" when they come into your region?

27. Do you play publicly at every opportunity?

28. Do you work just as hard (or even *harder*) with less talented pupils?

29. Are you a member of an organization of teachers?

30. Do you constantly vary the teaching materials you use?

31. Do you tailor your students' work according to their individual needs and interests?

32. Is your teaching positive and informative?

33. When you criticize, do you point out the *good* features before mentioning the defects, and then show how these defects can be remedied?

34. Do you show your pupils how to practice?

35. Do you teach some musical fact or term at each lesson?

36. Does every lesson contain some purely technical work?

37. Do your pupils come to lessons *regularly* and on time?

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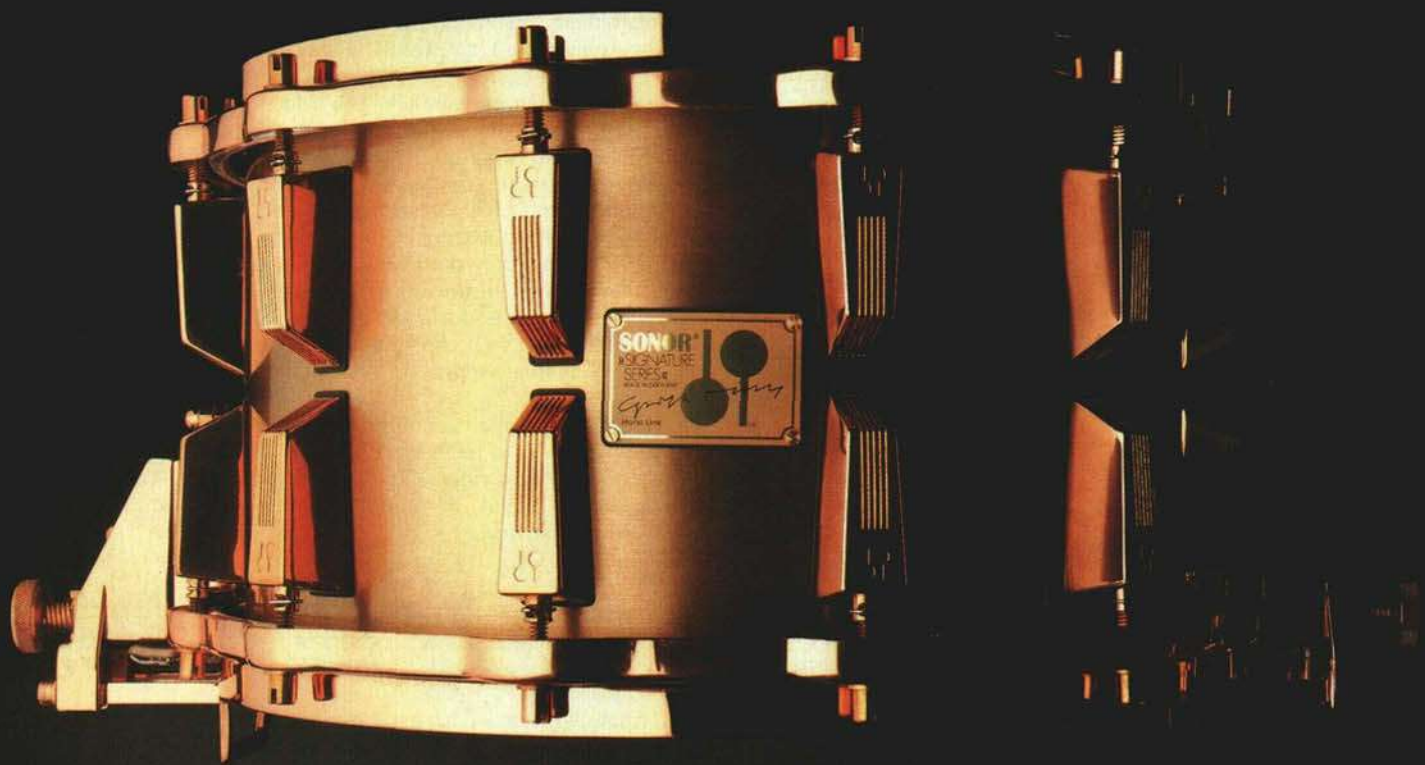
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Big Band Reading



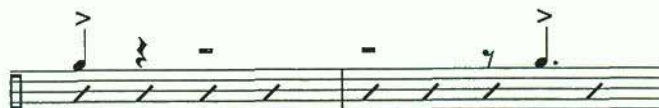
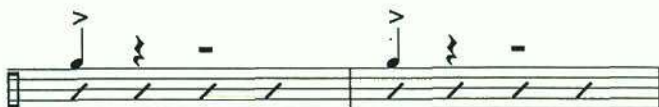
Photo by Rick Malkin

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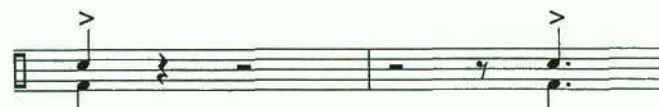
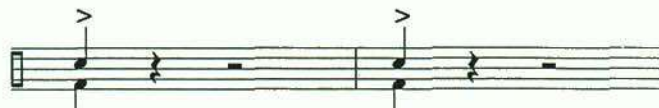


This piece was inspired by the many conversations I've had with drummers in college and high school big bands across the country. So many of them had problems with inconsistently written drum parts. Most of their questions were about how to interpret figures when they are written above and within the staff. I thought a column on the subject might help to clear the air.

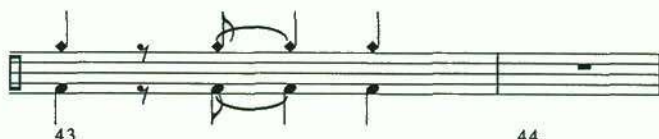
There are a few basic rules to follow when interpreting drum parts. The first involves figures written above the staff. These should be played while you *continue* playing rhythm.



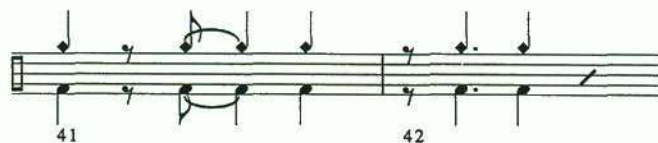
Our second rule has to do with figures written within the staff. These should be played "as is." What I mean by this is that the rhythms should be played as written. The writer/arranger usually wants the rests to be observed literally in this case.



Many times we will get a part with figures written within the staff, but when they are played as is, the arranger (or bandleader) says, "Hey, don't stop the rhythm in that part!" For an example of this type of situation, look at measures 42 and 44 in the following example.



Whenever this type of situation arises, I add slash lines over the rests to indicate that I should continue to play time over those sections.



The previous example is a good demonstration of a poorly written drum part. The important thing to realize is that these types of things *will* happen, and you have to know how to handle and correct them quickly. Believe me, they happen often, on everything from record dates and movie soundtrack sessions to the *Tonight Show* band!

As usual, your ear can help you a lot. One thing to listen for is the bass. Many times the bass player will be playing rhythm with you and resting at the same time as you. If there are inconsistencies between your parts, check with the bass player.

Another problem that can happen with a poorly written part is that there won't be enough information on it. Sparsely written parts that don't have the strong brass figures written out are trouble (and usually the result of a hastily copied arrangement). It pays to look at a lead trumpet part and copy the important figures above the staff, over the rhythm bars involved. Remember, this type of situation happens in rock, jazz, Latin, or any other kind of chart.

One other point to look out for involves busy, intricate parts. If the part is busy, as in the following example, it doesn't matter if the figures are written above or within the staff. This is because there are no "literal" or "non-literal" rests involved. You have to play what is written.



To sum up what we have discussed in this column, we will either play rhythm and *add* the figure (when the figure is written above the staff), or just play the rhythm of the figure observing the rests that are written (when the figure is written within the staff). Of course, we haven't touched on fill-ins or embellishments, but it's essential to first understand the correct interpretation of the written part. Since seeing three or four tons (at least) of music on the *Tonight Show* over many years, I've experienced all types of parts, both bad and good. By understanding the concepts we have discussed, I have been able to avoid some of the common problems with written drum parts. I hope this column helps take some of the "mystery" out of reading music for you.



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Mic's And Engineers

by Craig Krampf



Photo by Jayger Kotos

You've arrived at the studio early. You've made head changes and repairs that needed to be done, and tuned your drums carefully. You've hit the drums and taken notice of the acoustics of the room, and so—you're ready. Now you let the assistant engineer know that your drums are in place and it's okay to start placing the microphones.

Normally, the mic's are already out, placed on their proper stands, and wired into the wall inputs. The assistant engineer will place the mic's into close proximity, as he's been instructed to do. Most of the time, the assistant has worked with the head engineer a lot, and knows what type of microphones are appropriate for the job at hand.

You now have a chance to relax for a minute. I'll usually grab a cup of coffee and hang out near my drums. I like being close by in case anything needs to be moved slightly to facilitate mic' placement. Secondly, I like to observe every

stage of the recording process. I'm always curious about the choice and placement of mic's. Finally, assistant engineers can give you insight into the methods of the head engineer, and this can be very helpful when you're working with someone new. I usually strike up a conversation, listen to a few anecdotes, and generally relax while the assistant goes about his work.

Just a little aside here on assistant engineers: Normally, they're overworked and underpaid. But in many cases, they'll rise up from the ranks to become the top head engineers of tomorrow. A few of my friendships with great engineers began when they were in training as assistants.

Microphones are one of the most important variables in determining your "studio sound." They will be transmitting the sound of your drums into the control room, and they play a most important role in how the engineer and producer will hear your drums, perhaps for the first time. I recently did a project where it was standard practice for 19 mic's to pick up the drums. I couldn't help but think back to when two or three were the norm—and that was for the whole band!

When I worked with Little Richard, I'd always try to get Richard, or his producer, Bumps Blackwell, to talk about the old days of recording. Some of the very early Little Richard records were made with only two mic's: one for the band, and one for Richard's vocals and piano. Lee Allen, the tenor sax player, would lean into Richard's mic' for the sax solos. Well, as time went on, and things got more sophisticated, they added a special mic' for the sax solos. But this time they had trouble getting a good sax sound, so they had Allen lean back into Richard's mic' again. Suddenly, they realized that part of that original great sound was Allen's fantastic solos bouncing off of Richard's piano strings, thus creating a warm, ambient tone. As far as the drums went, if Bumps needed more snare drum, he'd simply tell Earl Palmer to "hit it harder."

I remember Hank Medress and Dave Appell, two great songwriters and producers, telling me that the concept of using a bass drum mic' was born during the period of the "Philly Sound" records. One important ingredient of that sound may have been that you could actually *hear and feel* more bass drum. I believe they said it was first used on a song Dave wrote called

"South Street" by the Orlons, around 1961-62.

About a year ago, I did a session at a good middle-class studio. I got there early as usual, and noticed there wasn't a microphone in sight, even though my set was ready to go. The engineer asked me if I'd like to pick out my drum mic's. I was flattered. I gave his stock a quick going over and gave him a rundown of the mic's that had a good batting average for getting a decent sound on my set. Here was an engineer who had been part of a few hit records, but had never recorded live, acoustic drums. Admittedly, this is a rare encounter, but it was still pretty scary and a reflection on where the industry has gone in this age of machines and computers.

Engineers and performers place a tremendous amount of emphasis on the *right* microphones. Studios and engineers have their individual techniques, and so the mic's you see on your drumset are most likely steeped in tradition. And the two areas that appear to be the most traditional are the right mic's for vocals and for drums. Your engineer is probably using the mic's he was taught were correct when he was in training as an assistant. Hopefully, he learned from the good engineers, so getting a good drum sound should be easy. And just maybe, if all the variables are properly aligned, you might get *that* drum sound which becomes a great one.

I don't think you can present a list of microphones and instantaneously capture the sound of a given engineer. It's just another piece of the puzzle—another variable. But certain mic's *do* sound better than others on a given drum. To gain some further insight on mic' choices, I've begun questioning some engineers, and I'll have a representative list for this column soon.

As a drummer, you're there to play for the *music*. You're part of a team that has to try to get along musically. The artist and the music are the key focus. The producer and engineer are also important parts of this team. It's their job to get it together and capture it on record. It's great when everyone's concept of the end result comes down on the same track. Oftentimes, it doesn't, and it's then when you must remember your place in the overall scheme of things. More about this special moment next month.



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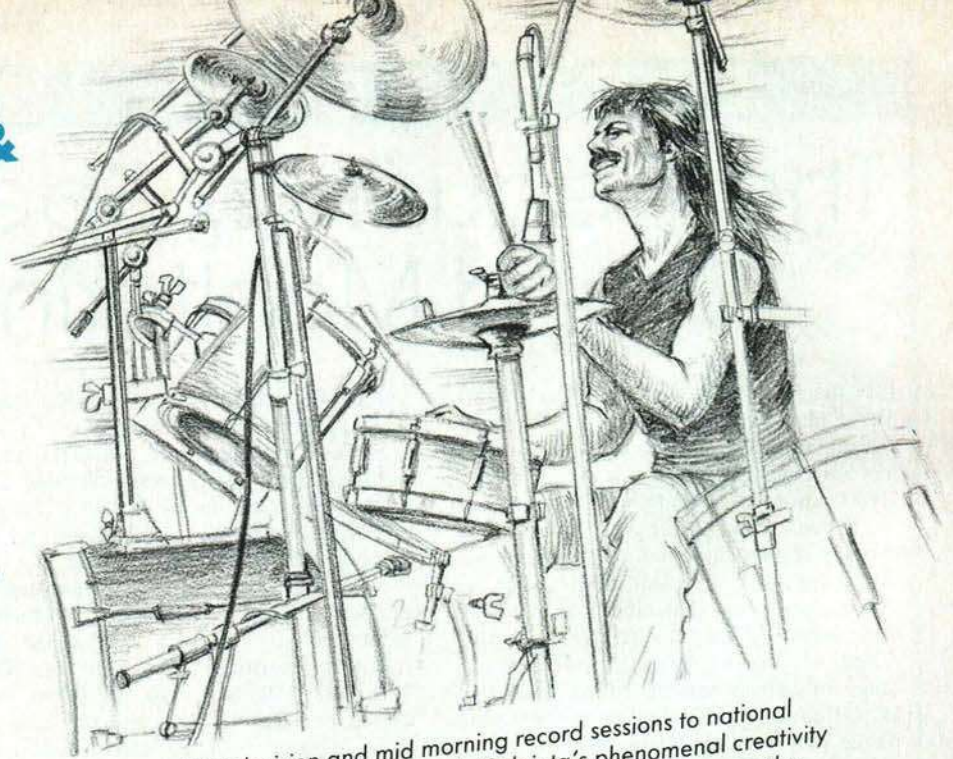
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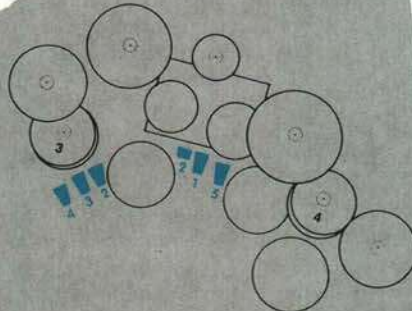
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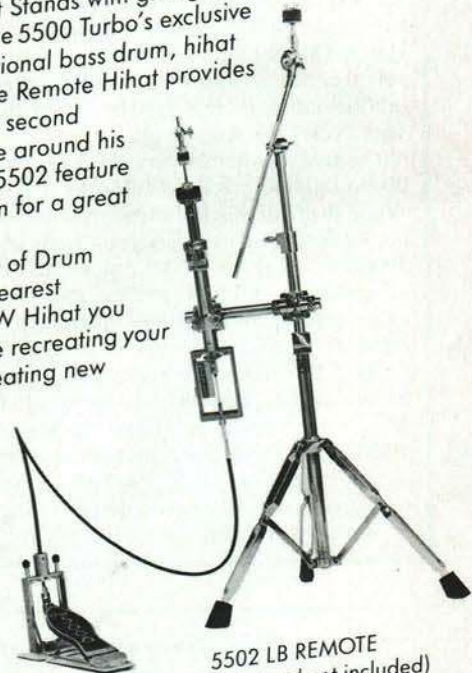
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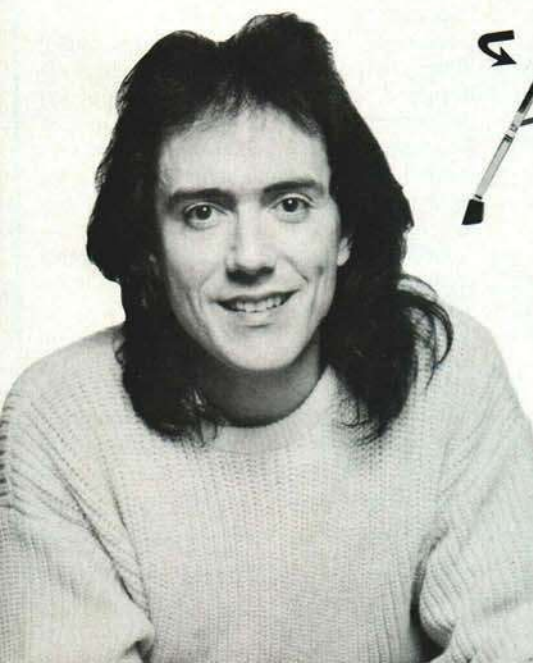
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The Frequency Spectrum and Monitoring



Photo by Jaeger-Kotos

It is the late 1980s, and things have definitely changed for the better. Synthesis, sampling, MIDI, and percussion controllers have changed the way in which we are able to (re)produce and control sound, and we're certainly better off for it. But enough of this futurist thought; there are important basics to consider, such as: cycles, frequency, and vibrations per second...why are they called *Hertz*?...the range of human hearing...overtones...range of human hearing before and after amplification and monitoring or xylophone playing with plastic mallets....

Pitch is characterized by the frequency (or number) of vibrations (*cycles*) that occur in a sound wave per second. These *cycles* are also known as *Hertz*, which is the last name of the physicist for whom the following system is named: *Hertz* represents the number of cycles or vibrations per second. The A above middle C is 440 Hertz. One thousand Hertz (1,000 cycles per second) is known as one Kilohertz (abbreviated 1kHz); 10kHz is ten thousand cycles per second; etc.

The range of human hearing is said to be 20 to 20,000 cycles (20Hz to 20kHz). While the *instrumental range of fundamental pitch* (first partial) extends from about 30 cycles to about 4,000 cycles (the range of a piano), pitch frequency mathematically extends into infinity. Although the upper threshold of human hearing is said to be 20,000 cycles per second, many people cannot hear all the way to 20kHz. Most can, however, hear at least to 10kHz, depending upon previous exposure to high-decibel electronic or acoustic music (i.e., attendance of or performance in a rock-type band, extensive playing of

xylophone with plastic mallets, or hammering cymbals for a living).

We hear pitches above the 4kHz range mostly as *upper partials* or overtones. The upper partials are not as distinct to the ear as the first partial (*or fundamental pitch*) because they aren't as loud, but they do exist and are, in fact, exact multiples of the fundamental pitch. So, if the fundamental pitch is 110 cycles per second, the resultant overtone series will be 220, 330, 440, 550, 660, 770, 880, 990, etc. cycles per second. It is the presence of these overtones *at various amplitudes* (loudness) that is responsible for the *tone color* or *timbre* of a sound. Many percussion sounds are diffuse in nature, presenting complex timbres that are not well defined in pitch and/or contain extremely varied combinations of overtones that quite often stretch to the upper reaches of our range of hearing. This, combined with the fact that drummers and percussionists usually deal with a wide variety of sounds at one time, makes it important for any drummer/percussionist dealing with electronic sounds to make use of an accurate amplification and monitoring system.

In order to hear an electronic instrument we must first amplify the electronic signal that it sends out. This is done primarily through a preamplifier/amplifier combination, which provides various stages of amplification for the signal. The preamplifier stage allows one to boost or cut the signal to a controllable level. Preamplifier designs range from simple single-channel signal attenuators to complex multi-channel mixers with EQ, etc. Many amplification units have preamplifiers built into them (anything offering a specific instrument along with volume does).

From the preamplifier the signal passes to the amplifier. The amplifier should preferably be of a professional or semi-professional level—one that is dedicated to the specific-need function, be it a studio or live application. Top-of-the-line power amps are usually designed for either use. Choose an amp that has enough power to serve your purpose without being overdriven. This results in less distortion and a cleaner sound.

The amplified signal is sent to a speaker or speaker system. Speakers are *transducers*. A transducer is something that (as Webster puts it), "in physics...transmits

power from one system to another system." In this case, the transducer (speaker) transmits the fluctuating electronic signal sent from the amplifier into physical sound waves, which we can hear. Individual speakers are designed to resonate (respond) within predetermined frequencies, usually somewhere within the 20Hz to 20kHz range.

To *accurately* reproduce a wide range of sound, use speaker systems that are designed for that purpose. This usually means a two- or three-way speaker cabinet that has a woofer, possibly a midrange speaker, and definitely a tweeter or a horn. Ideally, one wants to have *equal measurements of sound* throughout the audible frequency range; this is known as *flat* response. Flat response, of course, is a theoretical standard that is as much in the ear of the beholder as it is a technical specification. What is important is to try for an accurate, unbiased representation of the sound. This way, you can fine tune or otherwise manipulate the sound without having to compensate for inaccuracies in speaker response.

Example #1: Drummer programs sounds at home using a guitar amp to monitor progress. The guitar amp has one 10" speaker in it, and probably doesn't reproduce much above 11 kHz. To compensate for the monitoring system's shortcomings, Drummer programs excessive high end into the sounds. When sounds are run through a more accurate system, Drummer discovers that this excessive high end makes the sounds "tinny," with very little midrange or low-end warmth.

Example #2: Drummer programs sounds using home stereo system, which is designed to make consumers happy by delivering excessive high-end response. To compensate, Drummer doesn't add very much high end to the sound itself. In the recording studio, Drummer discovers that, due to the lack of high end, sounds are "muddy" and unclear. Studio calls another drummer.

Designing or programming sounds through an accurate monitoring system would have eliminated the problems encountered in the examples above. Your monitoring system is a constant point of reference when dealing with electronic sounds. Inaccurate monitoring will yield inaccurate results.

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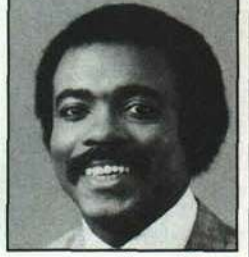
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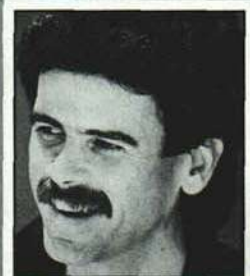
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Allen continued from page 21

cites in his playing ability is that he can't hit them as powerfully as before. "But basically, now that they're situated on my right, it's mostly just down to wrist action—just sweeping across the kit," he says.

"I'm using smaller cymbals than before," he adds. "Using the electronic drums, you don't get the spill into other mic's, so you can get a helluva lot more level coming off the cymbals, or down the mic'. And there aren't as many problems with EQ like you normally have when using acoustic drums. In that situation, you'll usually have a guy out on the desk, winding the top end on the drums to get the attack. But in doing so, you end up with a lot of cymbals going down drum mic's, and that can be a real nightmare. You end up using a lot of noise gates. With the electronic drums, I don't have to worry about that at all, and I can use smaller cymbals to get the same effect as larger cymbals."

"Another thing that I like about smaller cymbals is that they are more immediate. It's like a real high point when you hit these. The sound is there and it's gone. But with big cymbals—I used to have these huge crashes—they'd be ringing on for days] I really prefer short cymbal sounds."

In regard to sticks, he uses the Promuco SS model. "For a drummer with two arms, they may not be the right quality," Rick laughs. "The sticks are not consistent weight-wise. You get real light ones as well as real heavy ones. I sort of build up by using lighter ones in the beginning of a show, and I get progressively heavier as the show goes on. If I start a gig with a lighter stick, it feels a lot more comfortable and my muscles don't get tired."

What exactly was Rick looking for with his new kit? "The electronic kit had to be just as velocity-conscious as a real drum-kit," Rick stresses, "so that when I hit it softly it would trigger softly, and when I

hit it hard, it would trigger loudly. That goes for both the pedals and the pads. That was really the only development that I had to work on—the feel of the whole thing.

"I set out to re-create the dynamics of my acoustic kit," he elaborates. "I started working with Simmons, and through trial and error, they helped me quite a lot in the beginning. But I've advanced beyond that. I'm not even using a drum machine anymore. I'm using the sampler, which gives me a lot of the dynamics that I need.

"The thing that pisses me off a little bit is that I'm ahead of the equipment right now," he states emphatically. "I could express myself better than I do, but the equipment is holding me back a bit. I've got some dynamics, but I still need more control over that. It'll come, though. It's just a matter of going to another trade show and seeing what is now available. Electronic technology advances in leaps and bounds, so all I need to do is see what's out there. Then I can fine-tune what I've already got so that the kit will be on the same level as me.

"But developing the kit really wasn't that difficult," he emphasizes. "I mean, it's not as though it required really exclusive equipment; just about everything was straight off the shelf. I know this all sounds so matter-of-fact, but it really wasn't too involved a process."

Amazingly, no one has approached Rick or his drum tech, Derek Simpson, with suggestions about his equipment. Perhaps it has something to do with the notion that Rick's kit is extremely sophisticated and completely suitable. Whatever the reasons, he welcomes ideas that would pertain directly to the present concept of the kit. "I'm sure that in the future, someone is going to come along and say, 'Try this,' he adds, "and who knows where I'm going to end up a year from now?"

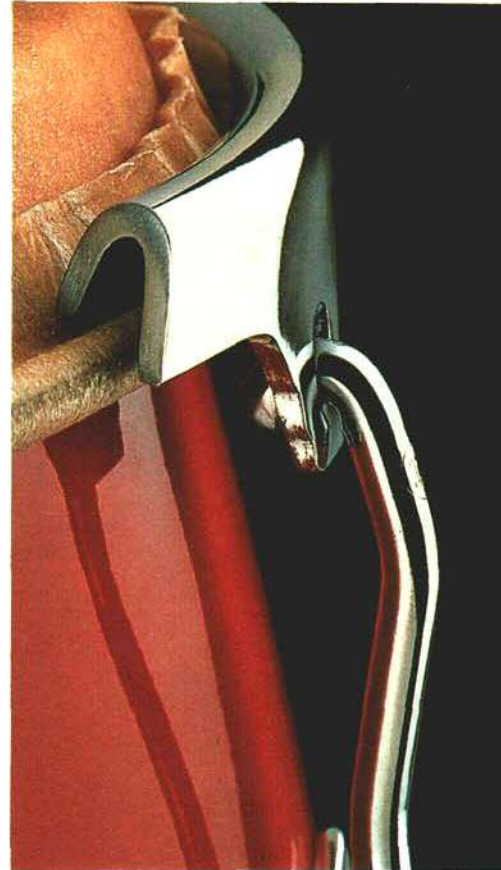
According to Derek, plans for certain changes in the kit have already been

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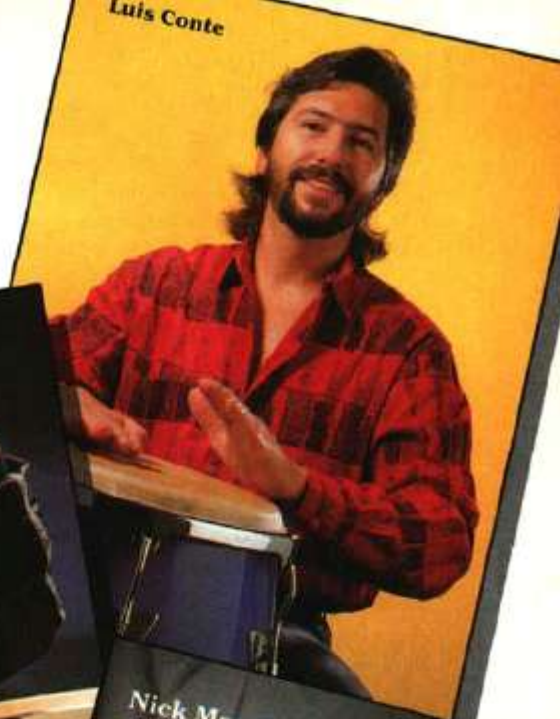
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delineated, with playing comfort and increased sound possibilities being top priorities. "One of the problems is that Rick complains of his wrist hurting him after the shows," Derek explains. "We took the bottom off one of the drums, and we couldn't believe how they were made—just a sheet of plywood, a crystal in the center, and a piece of rubber on top. So he's actually hitting a piece of wood, and he's not getting much response or stick bounce.

"Also," Derek continues, "Rick hits the drums dead center, and now and again, he's getting a spike. If he hits around the outside of the drum—which he doesn't want to do, but he's done for experiment's

sake—he can get a great program with a great sound. But if he hits right in the center, which is directly above the crystal, every other beat will glitch and he won't have the proper sound.

"With electronic drums, the pad is way too big. If they were built more reliably, so that they wouldn't glitch, they could be made smaller so that you could fit more drums in a kit, without changing the sound of the actual drums. Rick's kit has all the pads crammed over on the right side, so by removing the bottom of one of the drums, we had an extra 1 1/2" of space for another drum."

Derek maintains that if these idiosyncrasies are worked out, Rick's live play-

ing potential will be infinitely greater. "Rick is a drummer who will give you 100% of everything he can play, but because of the problems with his kit, he can only give 85%. He's also limited because he's had to adjust to the limitations of the *MTM* brain. He might not play certain things as fast as he'd want to because the program might miss the odd beat. He might want to use a certain fill, but will drop it because it could be ignored by the brain."

Derek says that the Shark pedals haven't been too much of a problem, except for the fact that they occasionally break, due to the tremendous left-foot technique that Rick developed during the tour. How exactly do these pedals function? Derek explains: "On the front of the pedal is a small bolt, and when you press the pedal there's a part that moves forward and pushes against the bolt. That bolt touches the crystal, which sets off a current. How hard or soft Rick hits it will determine how strong the current will be. The current then goes down to the *MTM*, which converts the signal to MIDI. The MIDI signal goes to the sampler and tells it to play whatever drum sound it is hooked up to."

Close up, the pedals resemble car accelerator pedals, except that they don't compress in a smooth up-and-down action like the ones in a car. "The pedal has springs on it, which take it to a specific position when the beater is about 1/4 away from the crystal," he remarks. "That's as far as it moves—only about a quarter of an inch. In fact, the crystal is so sensitive that if Rick drops a stick and it lands close to a pedal without even touching it, the shock will set the crystal off."

Since Derek works so closely with Rick on a daily basis, he's able to hear the transition in his playing technique, as well as witness a lot of impromptu drumming that displays Rick's skills. "You only hear him playing what fits the songs at a show," Derek comments. "He doesn't go overboard. But in the studio, he'd get there about a half hour before everyone else and would play some incredible things. Sometimes I'd have my back turned, and he'd be playing, and I'd think, 'How did he do that?' It's too bad the audience doesn't hear him improvise, because when he's just messing around, he's playing some great things. But he's improving constantly, and when we get the ultimate kit, *watch* oaf!"

Judging by Rick's aspirations for future progress with his playing, it's apparent that he is not satisfied with simply reflecting on the progress he's made over the last few years. Instead, he is striving to develop himself as a drummer of broader scope, not only through fortification of his kit, but also through studying.

"What I should do is get my head into studying more. If I'm going to play drums with one arm, then I've *got* to be really good at it," Rick says, taking a drag on a

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cigarette. "I met Danny Gottlieb a while ago, and he's done a lot of studying with Joe Morello. Danny showed me this technique that allowed him to play more with one arm than I could play with three," he laughs.

"As long as I can play drums with Def Leppard, I'm very happy. I can sit back there and get buried in the music, and have a really good time doing it. But at some point, I think I want to have the ability to go a little bit further than that, and I want to go back and study. You see, I've spent all my time since my 15th birthday playing with Leppard. And all my energies, concentration, and efforts drum-wise are purely for Def Leppard songs. It would be nice at some time to break out and study some different styles."

Rick did study briefly during his formative years with drummer Kenny Slade (Joe Cocker), but most of his skills have been self-taught. "Kenny only taught me the basics—like how to count to four," Rick chuckles. "But as soon as I started playing with bands, I began listening to other drummers and copying what they were doing. I'd sit with headphones on and play along with Ian Paice. That's pretty much how I learned to play—not much studying. But it would be nice to go back and try again."

What areas would he seek to strengthen? "I would want to work on my right arm, obviously. If I drop a stick, it's like, 'Oh no! Get me another stick! Fast!'" he laughs. "Whereas before, when I had two arms, I could go across and start playing the hi-hat with the left hand. And it's the detail that I miss out on, which I get to add with the machines, but it's not the same as *playing* the detailed parts. I would like to be able to play the things that I program a lot cleaner, a lot more precisely. I'm super-critical of myself, and I tend to see the weaknesses, but I'm also realistic and know that I can strengthen my weaknesses. So to study with someone from a jazz point of view and then take that back and apply it to Def Leppard would be exciting. I've just got to get past the lazy attitude I have when it comes down to actually doing the studying."

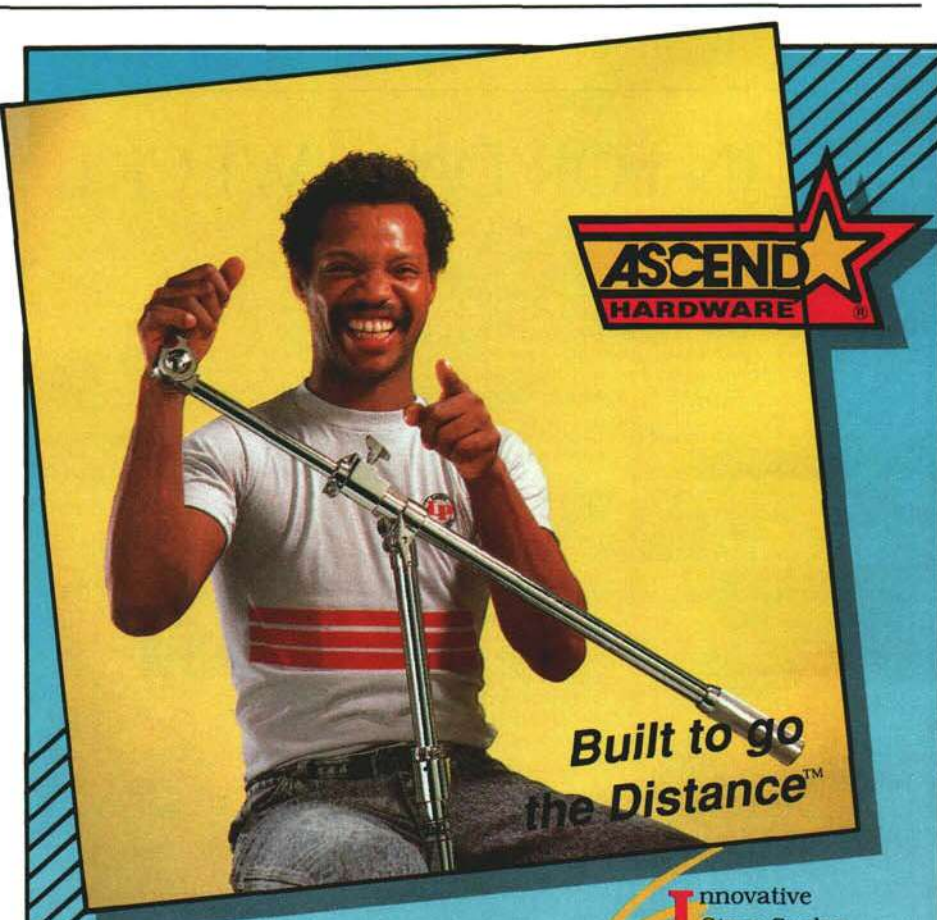
"Slowly but surely, I can feel it's starting to get a lot better," he continues. "It's not there yet, but the more I play with the band, the more confidence I'm going to have, and by the time the American tour is finished, I think there should be a big difference."

Born and bred in the northern industrial area of Sheffield, England, Rick spent most of his life in those environs until relocating to Amsterdam a few years back. He fondly recalls his earliest memories of playing. "I must have been ten or so," he explains, "and this friend of mine who got a guitar for Christmas needed a drummer to accompany him. So I started bashing away on a tambourine with a couple of drumsticks that were laying around the house; I

think my Dad must've played some type of marching drum. So I started using his sticks, driving everybody insane, and then I kind of hinted to Mom and Dad that I wanted a drumkit. Now my Dad, he didn't want me to get one at first—not at all. But my Mom, she was mad for it. Eventually they decided to make me go for drum lessons for six months before they would even consider buying a drumkit. But all through that period they helped me save my money, and I eventually got it. But because I had been going for drum lessons, I didn't lose interest, and I was able to play something the minute I sat behind the kit, which was an incentive. I picked it up quickly, although, as I said, I never

studied as much as I should have. But I think most everyone says that at one time or another. At least I have another chance to try again."

Young Richard's rites of passage into the professional level occurred at the age of 11 when he joined the ranks of a local band called Smokey Blue. Although Rick chuckles at the recollection of the name, he comments that the Smokey Blue period was a valuable experience, in that he got his first opportunity to play on stage in front of an audience. "That first group was a real club band," he reflects. "We played real down sort of songs, but it was fun. During my early teens, Deep Purple was probably the first rock band that I discov-



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ered. Prior to that I was in a dance band playing top-40 stuff, so that's what I was listening to.

"The best thing was getting up on stage and being part of a real unit," he continues. "Maybe that's why I like being with Def Leppard so much. They've never been a 'here today, gone tomorrow' type of band. We've stuck together for a long time, and I like that kind of security—being part of a unit like this. I think that stems from my being in a band at such a young age.

"I got into Def Leppard after seeing an ad in a newspaper that said, 'Leppard Loses Skins.' So I had my Dad call up because I was getting really disillusioned

with auditioning for bands where the personalities got in the way of the music. I went for an audition with Leppard, and I joined on my 15th birthday."

As luck would have it, Rick's alliance with Leppard proved beneficial for both band and drummer. The *Getcha Rocks Off* EP was released just prior to Rick joining the ranks, and subsequently captivated the attention of the music industry and public, securing the group a major record deal. At the same time, Allen's contribution marshaled the band into a tight, cohesive ensemble, with a debut album—*On Through The Night*—which helped to ignite a then-waning interest in hard rock music on the commercial level.

High And Dry was released in 1981, and is considered Def Leppard's American breakthrough effort (containing "Bringin' On The Heartbreak"). It was followed by the classic *Pyromania* LP of 1983 (spawning the hits "Rock Of Ages," "Feelin'," and "Photograph"), which went on to sell more than six-and-a-half million copies and brought the band worldwide notoriety and heavy airplay for the next couple of years.

The band has always spent long stretches of time out on the road, and the tour to support *Pyromania* was no exception, filling arenas worldwide for the better part of '83 and '84. The band reentered the studio in late '84 to record their next album, but that LP—*Hysteria*—didn't actually premiere until the summer of 1987.

In the years since recording *Pyromania*, various technological developments had an effect on Rick's explorations for the new release. "Messing around with drum machines and Fairlight computers caught my fancy," he admits. "We've utilized computers extensively since doing *Pyro*, so I like the idea of being able to create sounds and not just have, say, a snare drum sound. You can layer sounds—contrive a sound, if you like. That is the aspect of drums I really like these days: You can create larger-than-life drum sounds. And because I never regarded myself as a very good player, my attitude was, 'If my sound is good, then I'm halfway there.' In a way, using my electronic drums live these days, I'm actually closer to getting good sounds than I was when I was playing my acoustic kit."

One of the obvious advantages of Rick's playing an electronic kit live is that he can more easily duplicate what he formatted in the studio. "What I did in the studio was to hook up the pads to a Fairlight computer," he explains. "Then I'd play through the songs in real time. We would then quantize the beats I put in, then fit them all *perfectly* in time to the songs that I was programming for. Then we might go back and say, 'That's not really right,' and we'd change things to correct it. That's the nice thing about machines: You've got the opportunity to go back and change whatever you want. Some people don't like that approach; they like to be able to sit and play *with* the band. I like to be able to think things out a little more. I'm in a situation where I can live with something a couple of weeks and then change it all at will."

But perhaps that kind of freedom can be dangerous. After all, it took the band more than three years to finish the new album. Maybe they got a little too picky for their own good? Laughing heartily, Rick responds, "I think *so*, yeah. But we did actually start and scrap the album twice—once with Jim Steinman producing, and then with Mutt Lange. We had done all the pre-production with Mutt, getting about ten songs together, of which, I suppose,

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we really liked four or five. But the whole of it wasn't as strong as we would have liked. Anyway, we entered the studio with Jim Steinman, recorded the songs, and found that his standards were different than ours. Basically, he was wrong for our particular methods of recording. I'm not saying he isn't right for everyone; he was just wrong for us.

"Then," Rick continues, "we started working with Nigel Green, who's Mutt's studio engineer. We started working on guitar sounds—the area that we were lacking in—and we soon realized that we couldn't use any of the Steinman material, so we scrapped all of it. And then for whatever reason, Mutt decided to get involved, and we were really delighted. He had been overseeing everything we'd been doing in the studio with Nigel; we'd send a cassette off to Mutt, and he'd advise us on it. So when he decided to come in and start working with us, that's when the album *really* began. We basically started from scratch. Once Mutt came in, the prison sentence began," Rick jokes. "We eventually came to a point where we didn't know if we were going to see the end of this album, and we thought of keeping it for ourselves instead of releasing it."

"But with Mutt," he elaborates, "everybody is on call 24 hours a day whether you are recording or not. I'd usually be on the morning shift," he laughs. "But Mutt's unbelievable; he just never stops working."

Does Rick think that programming his tracks with the computer might be a curse later on when attempting to prepare for a live situation? "Using the Fairlight, you could get a bit too clever at times," he remarks. "But I always try to keep things in perspective when I'm programming, because I have to play the stuff when we do it live. I'm not saying I can play it *exactly* the same as I program, but I always play a good representation of the studio version.

"As musicians, we may not be the best in the world, but as a unit when we play live, it has a rougher edge to it and we sound pretty good. In the studio, we take a completely different approach. We take our time, and we take advantage of technology so that in ten year's time, when we put on one of the albums, we'll be able to say, 'That was a really good album.' I can't say that about the first album. On that one, everything I did in the studio was pretty much left up to me. Nobody was dictating what I played, and these days I have a hard time listening to that album.

"For the second album, *High And Dry*, we started working with Mutt, and the shit really hit the fan. We realized how bad we were," Rick laughs. "Even though *High And Dry* was an improvement, I spent so much time concentrating on my meter that sometimes I didn't play the things I wanted to play."

Pyromania drastically augmented Rick's

studio technique and marked the beginning of his present recording process: putting the drum tracks down *last*. "On that LP, I was suddenly given the opportunity to do the drums after everything else was down," he recalls. "So the band would play their parts to a drum machine, and then I would go in afterwards and redo everything. I'd think about what type of drum fills would fit with the way Joe phrased a particular part of the song, and I'd work it around the bass. If there was a certain section with really featured guitar parts, I'd program something that would work around the guitars. It makes a lot more sense for us to record that way. Because of the experimentation I was able

to do, the drums fit really well. I'll go so far as to say that if I had actually done *Pyromania* playing my standard kit, it would not have had the same impact that it did."

Rick maintains that the creative interaction in the studio has had a lot to do with the influence of Mutt Lange, who Rick refers to as sort of a sixth member of the band. "Mutt strives to make the perfect rock album," Rick laughs. "And I think working this way, it sounds a tiny bit contrived. When you start messing around with all the electronics, sometimes it can get a bit clinical. But the human element is there in the way the guitars and vocals are recorded.

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"But leaving the drums 'til the end is kind of a nice way of doing things, and we don't record digitally, so the sound quality of the drums is not diminished in any way. A lot of engineers utilize the actual sound that you get when you record in analog. It compresses the sound in a certain way, and I think the kind of tape that you use, digital or analog, is quite a large part of the sound when you're finished. We record with all these high-tech machines, but we record on analog tape, and it sort of roughens everything up a bit. I think it *would* sound clinical if it was too squeaky clean."

One of the advantages of being a member of such a successful group as Def Leopard is the accessibility of some of the finest, state-of-the-art technology available. Because Rick is afforded the opportunity to freely experiment with such sophisticated machines as the Fairlight and Synclavier, he has been able to absorb everything from the basics to the subtle nuances of drum programming. Of course, most drummers eager to develop and hone their programming techniques would find it impractical or impossible to spend months in a top-notch recording studio, learning through trial and error as Rick has. So what would he advise as the most pertinent aspects of programming to keep in mind when recording?

"Basically, just try to program the songs keeping in mind that you will later have to play them," he says. "I hear so many records these days where people go *completely* over the top with their programming, and it sounds totally unnatural—too contrived and formulated. When I sit down to program with Mutt, obviously I try a few things that are a little complicated, but that's basically to set some sort of goal for myself. But when it comes to actually putting stuff on tape, I don't get too crazy with it, and I always try to rearrange the intricately programmed parts so that they're playable later on. I'm always very aware that, at some point, I'm going to have to sit behind the drums and, at the very least, try to get across the basic idea of what I did on the record."

"But I don't think it's too smart to get really over-the-top with your programming," he adds, "unless you're a programmer rather than a drummer/programmer. If you're a drummer, you should program with your own style in mind; don't stray too far from it. If you don't program with regard to your own style, it only defeats the purpose of having a style of your own."

Although the development has been gradual, there is a striking difference between the last two albums, with Rick's programmable skills now at their zenith. But for all the strides over the last few years, Rick is one guy who you'll never hear utter, "I've advanced this far, but that's as far as I can take my playing." The overriding attitude to move forward is



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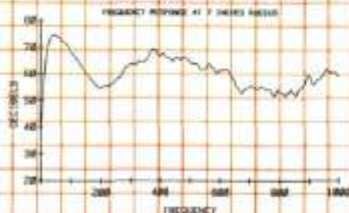
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indigenous to him personally as well as playing-wise. "I don't think I'd ever get too satisfied," he says, skillfully rolling a cigarette with one hand. "I wouldn't have any fun without the goals. Besides, I like making mistakes," he laughs. "I do and I don't, actually. Sometimes, when I try things and they don't come off, it's okay because I'll try it the next night or in soundcheck. Eventually, I'll get it. What's really nice is that we're gigging almost every night, and I've got myself into a routine. It's easier when you're in a routine to build on things, rather than doing a show here and a rehearsal there. The best rehearsal you can have is just jumping on stage and *playing*."

Rick was slightly apprehensive about the tour before it got underway, but throughout the ensuing months, his confidence grew as his playing became refined. He claims that pre-tour jitters have always been a symptomatic part of performing for him. "I would have been apprehensive about the tour even if I had two arms," he remarks. "Now I've just got a little more to think about. It's funny, but I still get this strange feeling inside right before we go on. But once I'm out there and people begin to respond to what I'm doing, I feel great."

Rick doesn't advocate drum solos, although he does submit to a short featured spot—sort of an abbreviated solo—for the opening of "Pour Some Sugar On Me." The

lighting during the spot serves to dramatize the effect, with the use of lasers creating the illusion of a surrounding capsule.

"It's definitely not your standard 20-minute drum solo, but it's nice to have a spot where I can play more than just for the songs," he says. "I'm down on any kind of self-indulgent soloing, not only for drummers, but from any musical point of view. I'd have to admit that from a musician's standpoint, a solo can be fun. But when you're trying to entertain a bunch of kids, I think they'd much prefer to hear the songs."

"The kind of drum solos that I really think are entertaining are the ones like Tommy Lee does. But that's different because it's a visual thing; it's more theatrical. Whereas, if someone's just hacking away behind the drums or just blitzing endlessly on a guitar, it doesn't appeal to me. Quite honestly, the intro is enough for me."

At just 24, Rick's done a lot of living by most people's standards, and he possesses a maturity far beyond his years. "I must admit, I do feel a bit lived in," he quips. "But I don't feel physically unfit at all." How does he stay in good physical condition? Among other activities, he prepares himself before shows with a series of warm-up exercises, which he says truly limbers him up. "Basically, I grab hold of about three sticks and I do this technique that I actually saw in *Modern*

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And what else does he do to keep in shape? "I like girls," he laughs, "And whenever it's possible, we try to get a game of soccer together, although we haven't really had the chance on this tour. Things are a bit hectic at the moment, but I'm sure we'll get a game going at some point. But getting on stage and playing is a workout in itself. My legs feel like two slabs of rock since we've been touring. In fact, I think my left leg is bigger than my right one these days."

And on the subject of staying healthy, has Rick altered his lifestyle over the last few years, in response to the accident? "I think I have a bit," he says. "I still have fun and I still take a drink, but I think I'm a lot more aware of what I do to myself these days. I'm not quite so irresponsible as I used to be. I guess all aspects of my personality have been strengthened somewhat."

One thing he's had to strengthen himself against is people who sometimes make more out of his injury than necessary. "I've gone through this thing and lived with it for a while now, and I actually watch for people's first reactions, because weirdness turns me off immediately," he says. "I don't get annoyed by the attention as long as people don't ask me really silly questions about the accident. When it comes to almost anything else, I've got all the time in the world for them. But I'm used to my situation, and I'm not a different person in my own head. I'm completely relaxed about it."

His bandmates certainly agree with that, and they treat him just like one of the guys. "The lads have begun to make fun of me a lot more now, which I don't mind," he laughs. "Like I'll be wearing my hat on stage, which I do occasionally, and one of the guys will steal it right off my head, and then he'll put it back on me in some stupid position so I'll look totally ridiculous. They do silly things like that for a laugh, which is nice because I like to make people laugh."

After a slight pause, Rick concludes, "If I can make someone happy with what I do, or if I can inspire people who have a problem in some aspect of their life, then I feel good. I'm sure if people who are having a rough time see me playing drums one night—no matter how bad their problems may seem—they're going to go home thinking, 'If he can do it, then I can *certainly* do it.' And that's basically where I'm coming from."



Art vs. Money.



Les Dudek
Songwriter,
guitarist,
recording artist



Bruce Shay
Recording
artist, all-
around
musician

“As a songwriter and artist, it's important to me not to limit myself to a narrow range of musical ideas. I'm usually working on four or five songs at a time, all with different attitudes and flavors. This has worked well for me when writing for other performers in their various markets. However, it's been a detriment when I've tried to release my own records. The things you hear about record companies "pigeonholing" artists is true in most cases. And I don't think their close-mindedness reflects the attitude of the record-buying public. Don't get me wrong – I don't mind compromising. And there are some record companies that will allow more artistic freedom than others. But there is a growing number of them who don't know enough about music to know when something fresh comes their way.”

“I've been to the very top of the charts and I've scraped the barrel, and in both cases I've had to make a lot of musical compromises. But I don't view compromise as a bad thing. There's a point in everyone's life when they must take control of their ego and put things into realistic perspective. I admit, money speaks louder to me than it used to. But money speaks loudly to everyone, and it's up to them to decide what other things they're willing to give up for it. I've adopted an attitude that has greatly simplified my life: one of the most important and enjoyable things to me is playing my instrument. I will play what I need to play to make sure this continues. I have no regrets.”

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Stryper's Rober



Photo by Limelight Productions

Among the rising stars in heavy metal, few shine in originality and concept as does Robert Sweet, the drummer for Stryper. Sweet doesn't even like to call himself a drummer. Rather, he refers to himself as a "visual timekeeper." With showmanship likened to Gene Krupa or Carmine Appice, Sweet combines technique, chops, and entertainment that, until this time, have mostly been associated with the rock guitarist. His energy and creative tom fills seem to unleash an authority that demands the viewers' attention. Although he has had no formal training, Sweet was playing on his first set by the age of eight, and in his first band by the time he was 15.

During concerts, Sweet gives the audience a whole new dimension of enjoyment. Sitting atop a four-foot riser, he seems enclosed in drums and an open, "cage-like" rack. He positions himself and the entire kit sideways so that he can more intimately interact with the audience. This highly visual approach to drumming includes four suspended cymbals that swing, sizzle, and sway above his head as he periodically crashes and slams them. Occasionally, Sweet says, it gets a little tricky trying to keep himself out of their path, and sometimes he feels the brunt of his visuals in the side of his head. This, he chuckles, "doesn't feel too good, but the fans love it."

Residing in Buena Park, California, the 27-year-old musician is the only member of the band who is, as yet, unmarried. He and his brother, lead singer/guitarist Michael Sweet, began Stryper in their garage in 1983. Long-time friend and crew member Joe Millard says that he never doubted for a minute that Stryper would

make it big. He recalls, "From the very first day that I walked into that garage and saw their setup—everything yellow and black, from the ceiling and walls to the drums—I just knew that they had something different. They weren't ever just your run-of-the-mill band." Millard has been taking care of Sweet's drums ever since that time.

Just a bit about the band: One of the most unusual aspects of Stryper is their unabashed Christian message. Until Stryper, Gospel-oriented rock 'n' roll hands were only received and welcomed by an evangelical Christian audience. Traditionally, what the Christian music industry produces is rarely, if ever, accepted by the secular market. However, with over 50% of concert-goers not considering themselves Christians, Stryper's impact is being felt by a whole new breed of fans. Although the band doesn't typically have an "altar call," or include "time-out" for a mini-sermon, the lyrics of the songs are all based on the band members' relationships with God, and the name of Jesus Christ is being lifted up in the music. When asked how important the message is at concerts, and what the standard procedure is for delivering it, Sweet says, "It's never really a standard thing. We prefer to let God's Spirit lead us, and at each concert it's in a different way. Sometimes we'll go out there and just play the songs, and that's enough. The entire crowd is out there singing 'Jesus is the Way' and that's where it's at. And again, there are those times when Mike speaks for several minutes about the Lord. We just pray before we go out there and say, 'God, you show us what to do, and what to say,' and He does."

If you're thinking that this type of approach is just a bit radical, you're not alone. In the past when the band has "come to town" they've often been picketed by some of the local churches. The show is authentic rock 'n' roll from the moment the band steps on stage to the last crash of the cymbal. Consequently, some Christians reject it because they don't know how to deal with the high volume or the image. Of this Sweet says, "It's really unfortunate for those with that attitude. I think eventually church people will realize that it is possible to use this music for the Lord if your priorities are right and your heart is pure." Sweet pointed to the music that Martin Luther and Charles Wesley wrote. Many of these very traditional hymns were popular bar tunes simply rewritten with new lyrics. He says, "These men used the music of their day and glorified God with it. Their songs are still being played in churches throughout the world."

In the midst of all this controversy, Stryper's popularity continues to zoom. Their first two albums, *Yellow And Black Attack* and *Soldiers Under Command*, both have sold over 400,000 copies. *To Hell With The Devil* is already tipping the 900,000 mark, and will probably have gone platinum by the time this article is in print. The first release from *To Hell With The Devil*, "Calling On You," went to number two on the MTV Viewer Call-in segment. The album's second and third releases, "Honestly" and "Free," both went to number one on that same feature.

So, with the pre-concert tuning process happening in our midst, and the sound of a tight snare ringing in the background, Robert Sweet and I talked drums.

SB: You're the kind of drummer who puts everything into your playing. It's quite evident in concert. Is technique important to you? Have you spent much time practicing rudiments and the like?

RS: Technique is important to me, but with the time schedule I keep there isn't much room for practicing anymore. When we get home from touring there's so much going on in the way of videos and interviews that I just don't get the time—but I'd like to. Before all this I used to play five or six days a week, for about seven or eight hours a day. But I didn't practice

Sweet

technique, per se; I'd just sit down and go for it.

SB: Your parents must have been musical if they had the patience to listen to two musicians in the same house practicing. Did they just grin and bear it, or did they encourage you and your brother?

RS: My parents are singer/songwriters, so yes, my family is pretty musical. I think they did more than just endure all the practice; they saw that we were really serious. Their attitude was, "If you're serious and you're going to keep at it, then we're behind you 100%. But if you don't really mean it, then go do something else." It was my grandmother, though, who bought me my first set. The night I came home with my very first official tom-tom, I took it into my bed and slept with it.

SB: Sounds like you loved those drums from the start.

RS: Oh definitely. Some guys get into drums because they think they'll get more girls or more drugs or whatever, but it was never that way for me. I got into playing because it was just a blast to do it. Since then, I've realized that I could've chosen another instrument that didn't involve such packing and toting. Drums involve a lot of repair—heads, hardware—and they're very heavy, but I'm glad I stuck with them.

SB: Who were you listening to while growing up?

RS: I liked Led Zeppelin a lot. I listened to John Bonham all the time. Also, there was Don Brewer from Grand Funk. He was great. Tommy Aldridge and Simon Phillips are two of my favorite drummers now.

SB: Since that first set, your drumset has really expanded. There have to be at least a dozen drums out there.

RS: Ten, to be exact—as well as two gongs, one timpani, two Akai samplers, a few Simmons pads, and 21 Paiste cymbals. My drums are half acoustic and half triggered. Right now I'm using a fantastic Sonor *Signature* series kit that I just love, but I'm considering having another company customize a new kit for me.

SB: Who customized your Sonor kit? All the intricate designs—triangles and striping—must have taken a lot of work.

RS: I did. And it was a lot of work. The timpani literally took hours. I ordered the

kit in black, and when I got it home I tore it apart. The guys and I put all the yellow stripes on it. We stayed up all night painting the triangles.

SB: When you get the kit set up in the studio, the engineer must have a field day miking it.

RS: Yeah. For the last album we used 20 mic's on the drums!

SB: Let's talk about those 21 cymbals.

RS: I'm using the Paiste 3000 *Reflector* series. They're excellent. I've also got a few yellow 2000 *Colorsound* cymbals. I'd love to get them striped with yellow and black so when I spin them they'd look like propellers.

SB: What heads and sticks do you use?

RS: I found a brand in Canada called Power Tips. The sticks are made of maple wood, and I use size *Triple C*. Right now I'm using Evans heads, and I'm hoping that they'll be able to make me some heads that look like bull's-eye targets.

SB: Is there a particular reason that you use Evans?

RS: They hold up really well.

SB: Do you use the *Hydraulic* or the *Rock*?

RS: Well, it really depends. The *Hydraulic* heads last longer but they're *real* dead. I use both, depending upon what's available.

SB: I'm really interested in your drum rack. I haven't seen anything like it in the drum shops.

RS: That took a long time to make. I used strong aluminum piping, which screws right into fittings that are set into the riser. It was a difficult project, but I had some help from my drum crew—Joe Millard, Donny Parker, and Dave Wolf. I came up with the idea, and we all frantically went to work with nuts and bolts, and massive amounts of yellow and black tape.

SB: Why do you set up sideways?

RS: I like sitting sideways because then the audience can see me from the bottom of the foot pedals up. In most concert acts, you don't even see the drummer. I feel that the audience wants to see more than the drumkit; I think they want to see more of the drummer. I decided back in 1979 to turn sideways.

SB: That brings us to the title below your name on the album cover. It says, "Robert Sweet, Visual Timekeeper." What's that

all about?

RS: That's just my 1980s version of what I think a drummer should be. So many times at concerts I'd see this lead singer or guitar player who really had a lot of flash, but the drummer would just sit there and keep the beat. I've always wanted to see a band where everyone in it blew you away so much that you wouldn't know who to look at first. That's the attitude I've taken with drumming. I feel it should be highly visual. I think you should put every bit of energy that you've got into it—to the point that you're ready to drop when you walk off the stage. I try my best to do just that and to be as different as possible. So, that's why I came up with the title "visual timekeeper."

SB: While most aspiring drummers seek to model themselves after some legendary player, you seem more intent in carving out a very individual niche for yourself. That's commendable, but it's taking quite a risk, isn't it?

RS: Yeah, it is, but I just can't stand being generic. Most drummers' claim to fame is that they open a rudiment book, take lessons, and go buy store-bought products. There's nothing wrong with that, but I feel it's better to take a risk and be an innovator rather than a follower. If there's always someone coming out with something new or just a little different, it makes the music world more exciting.

SB: I know that in rock 'n' roll, if you want to stay in the forefront in terms of success, you've got to stay right on the edge of what's happening. The aggressive approach you're talking about is important in heavy metal. But I'm sure you'll agree that there is a place out there for drummers to be laid back and *not* in the limelight.

RS: Oh, definitely, and usually those drummers are absolutely incredible. I don't think of myself as an incredible drummer. I look at myself as just a guy who's out there entertaining a lot of fans.

SB: I can tell. Your solos are incredible. The audience eats it up!

RS: That's because I really want to make it fun. Actually, my drumming technique is very simple. The way I think about playing is that I have two hammers in my hands, and I've got to hit everything 10,000 times before the night's over. I've

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got to swing those things as far back and as far around as I can, and make it all sound totally in time. I find that most people walk away and say, "How in the world did you do that?" You know, there are *tons* of great drummers out there who just put me to shame—very wonderful drummers who can do some very great things. But that doesn't mean they're *exciting*. I feel that in rock 'n' roll, you not only have to play well, you also have to look good, have energy, be exciting, and have a level of stage presence that makes people say, "Wow, I really got my money's worth!"

SB: So where does God fit into all of this?

RS: [laughs] Before I go into every solo I pray, "God, get me through this," and He does. Really.

SB: I guess by now this shouldn't surprise me, but you just don't fit into the expected mold of what is known as contemporary Christian music.

RS: I know. But I do feel that what I have, God has given me, so through our music we should especially thank Him.

SB: Sometimes you guys get a bad rap from people who say that heavy metal isn't the proper vehicle for conveying the Gospel message. Does that ever bother you?

RS: Sometimes, but actually I feel sad for the people who say those things. Most of them have never even been to one of our concerts, and it's basically a question of them not really understanding—or maybe not *wanting* to understand. Rock 'n' roll bands have a lot of power and influence over their audiences. Fans—especially the younger teenagers—really look up to us. So we're just taking the opportunity to do what we do best and at the same time tell them, "Hey, Christ is there, and He loves you." It's a real positive message. The Bible says that we should not condemn people, we should love them. We love our fans, and we want them to know the truth.

SB: It seems that you guys get it from both sides, though. I've heard others say that you're just making money off the Gospel.

RS: They're wrong. As I said before, I just want to do what I do best, and use it to tell people God's truth. I feel sorry for people who don't believe that there is a God and that He loves them, because they're losing out. They work real hard to get what perishes, and they turn away what's freely given to them and that lasts forever. It's backwards. Now, rock 'n' roll is a whole lot of fun; you can have a great time with it. But there's more to life than the next concert, and that's what we try to tell people. You know, it's there for them—the peace, the encouragement, the joy. They can have it all through Jesus Christ. Money can't give that to anyone.

SB: It sounds pretty unusual for a heavy metal drummer to be talking about faith in

God. What do the other bands you've toured with think of your commitment and your lifestyle?

RS: In the beginning, most of them just tried to steer clear of us, but lately there've been some real positive reactions. One of the drummers we toured with recently came up to me and said, "Man, there's something different about you guys, and I really wish our band had it too." I mean, we're not perfect. We make our fair share of mistakes, and we're not here to tell anyone we're great. But it's wonderful when people see that having Christ in your life really makes a difference.

SB: Is that why you throw Bibles out to the crowds at your concerts?

RS: Yes, that's why. It's classic to throw out guitar picks or drumsticks, but we just feel that the Bible is a great thing to give people. Some of them may never get another opportunity to read it.

SB: Do you see yourself as expanding the limits of contemporary Christian music?

RS: I never really thought about it that way. I just see it as music that makes a loud and joyful noise to the Lord—rock 'n' roll style.

SB: Well, there's definitely an impact being made. People are talking. The entire show is first-rate and sophisticated.

RS: Thank you. One of the things we really try to impress on other Christians

is the importance of being professional. If you're giving something to the Lord, it's got to be done with excellence. I get really frustrated when I see Christians doing anything that is second-rate. Less than the best is not what I want to give God. Also, we're trying to break down the image that being a Christian is boring. It's definitely not. It's a friendship with Christ. It's fun, it's good, it's joy, and it's true happiness.



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One of the simplest yet most productive ideas is to program a basic rock/funk groove, utilizing some of the drum sounds available on your machine. All of the patterns presented here can be programmed in *real time*, so set your machine accordingly. Look at Example 1 below. The time signature is 4/4, and the pattern length is four bars. Also, be sure to quantize to 16th notes for rhythmic accuracy. Set the click at a comfortable speed for programming.

The final step is to assign specific instruments to your pattern, assuming you have that option. In the example below, we've used hi-hat, snare drum, bass drum, tambourine, and hand claps. Of course, you can substitute whatever similar sounds your machine offers.

Be sure to program each individual part accurately, listening several times to each part as you enter it into the machine. Once your pattern has been programmed, set the tempo at slow to medium, crank up the volume, and you're ready to begin working out your solos above the groove.

Example 1

Another idea is to program a similar rock pattern, but this time only program three bars of rhythm, leaving the fourth bar open for a fill-in (see Example 2). This is an excellent way to practice keeping accurate time through a drum fill, *especially* if you can do it skillfully without the help of the click. (Note that the hi-hat from Example 1 has been changed to a cymbal bell sound.)

Example 2

The Samba Groove

Example 3 offers a more complex option utilizing a Latin/samba feel. Our pattern is only two bars long, in 4/4 time, and again quantized to 16th notes. Once again, you can use whatever Latin instruments your machine offers. We've layered nine parts for programming in real time mode: agogo, cowbell, clave, timbale, high bongo, low bongo, high conga, low conga, and bass drum. After you've carefully programmed the entire pattern, listen back at various tempos. Example 3 works nicely at M.M.=102. However, you should try soloing above it at different tempos.

Example 3

Musical score for Example 3, featuring ten staves for Agogo, Cowbell, Clave, Timbale, High Bongo, Low Bongo, High Conga, Low Conga, and B.D. (Bateria de Bateria).

This is a great opportunity to see how *creative* can you be within the framework of a groove that you've programmed. You'll probably be amazed at how interesting and inventive your solos become when you're working off the rhythmic vamp provided by the machine. Also be sure to experiment with your own drum-machine patterns. The possibilities are limitless. It's all part of the fun of using the new technology in a *productive* capacity.



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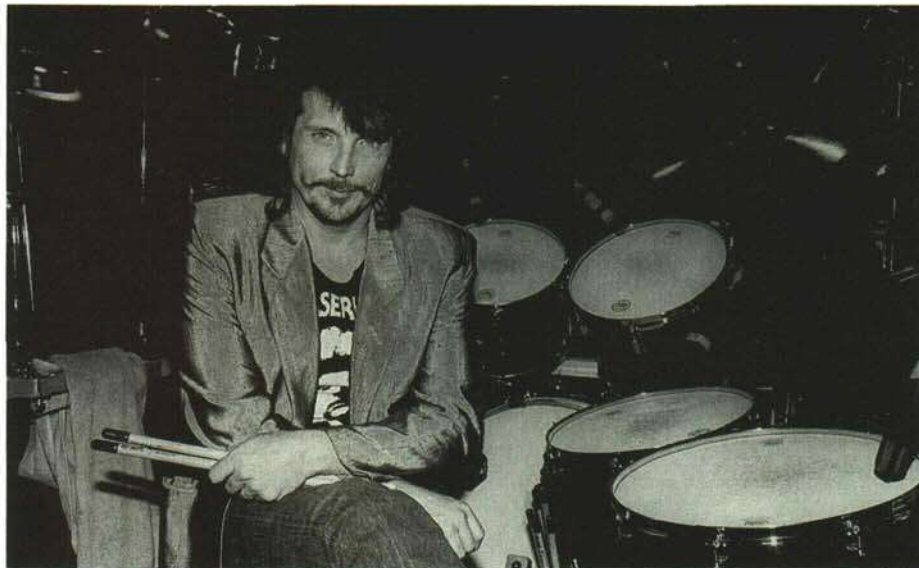
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Hayward continued from page 25

been doing live before, and "The Fan" was something we had tried to record two albums before, but couldn't get right because it's in a lot of very odd time signatures. We recorded that live in the studio, and it came off. It was really a relief.

RF: Usually, when someone has been fired from a situation and then comes back, there is even more pressure.

RH: This was the other way around. I think we all learned a little something

about it during the time I was away, and it just felt good.

RF: You weren't anxious about coming back?

RH: A little bit, but I was also eager. I really liked playing that stuff.

RF: What about that music made you love playing it?

RH: I loved the eccentricity of it—the fact that we had spent so much time on it that it was like a part of us. We never got tired of playing it because it was difficult

enough to keep us on our toes, and we never played it exactly the same twice. It was a new challenge every day, and it was fun. We're going to do it again. All of us recently got together to see how it felt.

RF: You guys can't seem to...

RH: ...leave it alone.

RF: So how did it feel?

RH: The spark is still there. I really think we're going to give it a shot. We're working on a new album, and there's a lot of record-company interest. There are ten new songs written by Billy and Paul, Craig Fuller, and Fred Tackett. It feels really great. We all get along much better now that we're clean and sober.

RF: What are you going to do without that tension in the group?

RH: There's an element that will still be there, I'm sure. It's just going to be more controlled.

RF: Let's go through some of the past albums and songs. You co-wrote a couple of tunes. How did they come about?

RH: They developed in different ways. "Mercenary Territory" happened when Bill and I were having similar marital problems, and a few of the lines in there came from the group joking in the bus or something. Then we got together and worked out that 10/4 bit in the middle, so he gave me partial writing on it. All the songs were little bits and pieces that we threw out of other songs, and later put together

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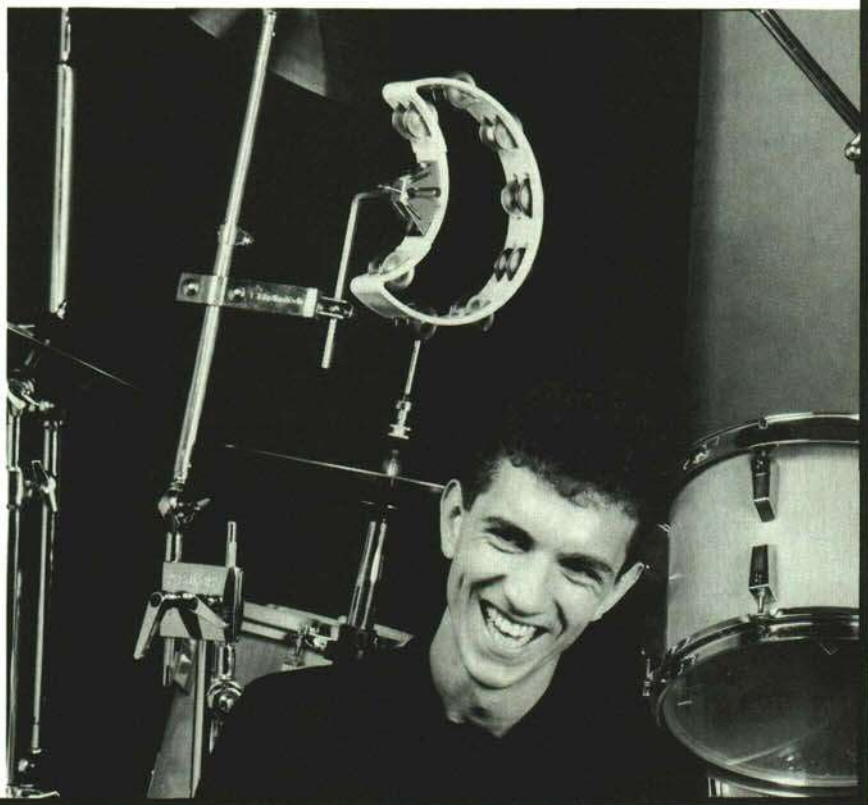
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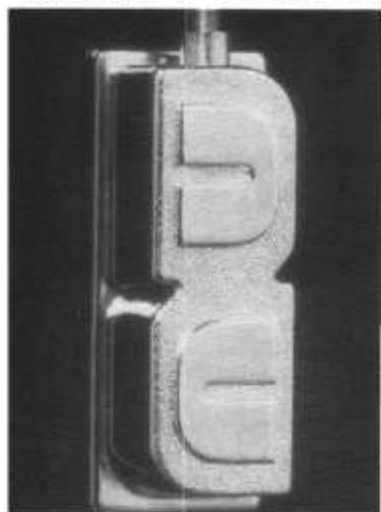
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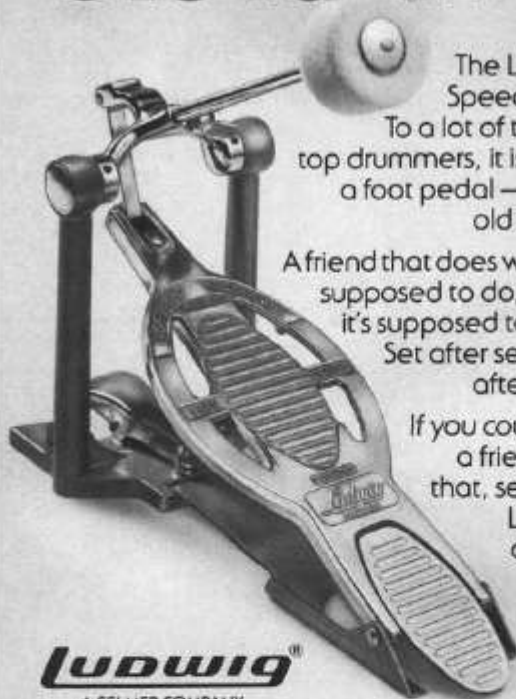
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in new contexts.

RF: How did "Day At The Dog Races" come about?

RH: It was a jam we used to warm up to a lot at soundchecks, in the studio, or at rehearsals. It just grew into the sections it did after we played it for a while. We all contributed to that song equally.

RF: Did the band write in the studio, or did Lowell or someone else just bring completed songs in?

RH: He didn't just bring them in; we definitely would have a lot of influence on them. Rather than arguing about who wrote what part, we shared the publishing evenly. The writer got his half, and the band split the publishing evenly. It was very democratic.

RF: Was the creative input democratic also?

RH: Pretty much. If it was a valid idea, we tried it. If it worked, we used it. There were very few egos in the way of that. It was real special that way.

RF: How did "Dixie Chicken" come to be?

RH: Lowell had that specific feel in mind, so there wasn't a whole lot of changing done, except that Billy came up with that great piano part. I enjoyed playing it. The basic feel was pretty much what Lowell had in mind, but the way it was done and the fills weren't.

RF: Are there songs you can think of

where something you played might have had more influence over how the song turned out? For instance, did the arrangement or a feel you were laying down dictate the way a particular song ended up being played?

RH: "Fat Man" was like that in a way. We used to just jam on that feel a lot, for about three years before we recorded it. The odd 2/4 bars in "Cold Cold Cold" came about in a strange way. Lowell had been playing with his drum machine at home. At that time, drum machines were very primitive. It was just a little red box with two knobs on it. He had the basic pattern repeated over and over again, and he played it with just himself and a little amplifier on a cassette at home. Somehow he edited the cassette, put it on to a 16-track tape, and had me overdub drums. It's funny because this drum part was turned around a couple of times due to the way he cut it together to fit. He wanted me to copy it and throw in fills. That's on *Sailin' Shoes*. On the first part you can hear the machine.

RF: On the *Little Feat* album there was a song, "Willin'," without drums.

RH: That was the publishing demo that Lowell did with Ry Cooder. Lowell was in one studio with Van Dyke Parks, and Ry was playing down the hall. They put it on the *Little Feat* record, but then we decided that, since the whole band played it live,

we would re-cut it on *Sailin' Shoes*.

RF: And also on the live album, *Waiting For Columbus*?

RH: That's my favorite because it shows what we did live with the stuff from the studio records. It's not even from a real good night. It's not a bad night, either, although there were some things that were done on other nights that I wish were on record. Some of Billy's solos were incredible.

RF: Was there one person you played off of more than the others?

RH: No, it changed from song to song and era to era. I imagine I was most interested in Lowell's vocals; he put things together in such an eccentric way.

RF: What do you mean by that?

RH: He didn't use any normal formula for writing, which I found really refreshing.

RF: The band never formally broke up, am I right?

RH: I guess you could say that. In 1979, we took a seven-year break, when Lowell died. I was in traction at the time from a motorcycle accident.

RF: Aside from the loss of a friend, did you feel like your musical identity was gone?

RH: I felt an awfully big change coming on, but I couldn't let it be the end of everything. It took a couple of years to pick the pieces up, but I feel great now.

RF: That kind of intuitive musical experi-

ence must be a tough act to follow.

RH: I think that's the main carrot we're chasing as we're getting it back together now: to get that feeling—that spontaneity—back and make it fun again. We might have fought like cats and dogs right before or just after a gig, but we were brothers while we were playing. We could give each other a real hard time, but if anybody *else* tried to give any one of us a hard time, he had to deal with six others, like Italian brothers.

RF: Weren't you guys in the middle of a record when Lowell died?

RH: Yes. That record [*Down On The Farm*] was put on ice for two reasons. First, Lowell was going on the road pro-

moting his solo album; second, I had my accident. I was six months in traction and five months in a body cast. They delayed finishing the album until I got out of the hospital, and Lowell was gone by then, so the rest of us finished up the background vocals. Seventy-nine was not my favorite year.

RF: Were your limbs in jeopardy?

RH: My right leg was. The doctors said they might have to take it, but I wouldn't let them. That's why I was laid up so long, to keep it. It was worth it. I don't want to take this interview into a dark corner, but that was the dark corner of my whole career.

RF: With a year away from the drums,

what did you do to get back into shape?

RH: I bluffed a lot. Right after I got out of the cast, I got a call from Glyn Johns wanting to know if I could do a tour with Joan Armatrading, and he asked if I could play. I said, "Sure, sure." I had just gotten the cast off, and I hadn't played yet. I went on the tour: six months on the road, 144 gigs, almost every night. So I got it back that way.

RF: You did an album with Joan Armatrading.

RH: Right. That was before the accident. I did one four-week tour with her, and they recorded it live. It's called *Steppin' Out*, and it came out in '79. It was interesting because I had to learn 20 songs in two weeks. I was running on fear, but it worked out okay. They recorded three nights of it, but I think only one night came out because of technical problems. That album didn't sell too well, but it has some moments on it.

RF: Do you remember what you enjoyed playing the most?

RH: A song called "Barefoot And Pregnant" was my favorite. It was fun to play because it was more jazz than I was used to. It wasn't a great time for me, though, because I was a very bitter guy then and I wasn't very nice.

RF: You had just come through an awful time.

RH: But I overreacted. Sorry guys.

RF: Were you angry about Lowell?

RH: Yes, I was angry about everything.

RF: How did you work through that?

RH: I guess I just lived through it and came out the other side. I feel completely different about things now than I did then. Things are much rosier.

RF: What happened after you finished playing with Armatrading?

RH: Not much; I was just doing little things here and there. Then Robert Plant called me out of the blue, I played on his album *Shaken 'n' Stirred*, and things got better.

RF: There are some interesting things on that record. Two songs in particular seemed like lots of fun, "Hip To Hoo" and "Kallalou Kallalou."

RH: To tell you the truth, Robert changed the names, so I don't remember which is which. On "Hip To Hoo" I was experimenting with Simmons. That album was the first time I used them.

RF: What did you think?

RH: They were a nice addition to the kit, but at that time technology wasn't what it is now. There was no way they were going to replace a kit. I hated electronics at first because they were replacing drummers. I felt threatened, and rightfully so.

RF: How do you feel about electronics now?

RH: Now I've learned to appreciate them for what they can do. I enjoy playing with them, like programming percussion parts and then playing real drums with them.

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RF: It's hard to imagine electronic drums in the Little Feat context. Maybe I'm thinking very narrowly.

RH: I'm equally narrow in that respect. Most of that stuff couldn't have been done the same on electronic drums.

RF: How would you do "Dixie Chicken" on Simmons?

RH: Well, gee, that's something I probably wouldn't do. But who's to say? Some of these new electronic drums sound like real drums. I think using pads *with* the real drums, as opposed to replacing them, is the answer. With Robert I used five Simmons pads and five real tom-toms, so it just gave me more stuff to use instead of an "instead of" situation.

RF: How did you feel about Robert's music? It definitely was more high-tech than you were used to.

RH: It was interesting. I loved it, and had a good time playing his songs. We wrote that music all together, working it up from nothing into what it was. We spent months in this barn called Talocher Farm—an old country inn that had been converted from a 16th-century stone farm. There was an old hollow oak tree that King George was reputed to have hidden in during the civil war. It was great. We went up there with an 8-track and a small board in a trailer porta-van. We just played with the ideas until we developed the arrangements.

RF: Plant called you up out of the blue, but had the other members been with him before?

RH: They had been together for about three years before that, and had done two albums with him already.

RF: You were the newcomer.

RH: Yes, and the only American. It was neat. I moved there and stayed for a few years.

RF: What about road work with Plant?

RH: I toured America, Canada, Australia, England, Japan, and Hong Kong.

RF: What was that like?

RH: I had a great time. We had the best sound guy I have ever worked with, Benji Lefevre. He had been with Robert since Zeppelin times.

RF: Having had Little Feat as such a large chunk of your life, was it hard to replace it?

RH: The way I dealt with that, and still do, is by saying to myself, "That was then." To try to replace that would mean ignoring the future. In order to handle what was to come, I had to be prepared for it. Now I'm really eager. That's why I'm taking an interest in electronics and in other styles of music. I have a wider taste in music than I used to. There are a lot of different things I enjoy doing. Maybe something different, but equally intense, is in store.

RF: That's a good attitude.

RH: It's the only one I can live with.

RF: I'm sure it took a while to get to that attitude, though.

RH: Oh yes, and it's a hard attitude to keep, but most of the time it prevails.

RF: You're doing some sessions. Are you mostly interested in playing live or in recording?

RH: I would have to say both, equally. I am very interested in recording, although that hasn't happened as much as I would like. I feel that's going to change, though.

RF: Do you feel there is a difference between recording and playing live?

RH: Yes. When you're recording, you have to concentrate on the details. You have to think about getting everything

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just right, just one time. It's not like live where you can try something new, and you get to play the song 60 times. After the recording, when you go on the road with it, you can expand it from there, but in the recording, you have to zero in on the concept of the tune, and accurately interpret it on the spot. There's much less room for error.

RF: You said before you're getting into other styles of music. You have such a definite style.

RH: I find that kind of hard to break, too. We tend to do what we know instead of trying something new. I'm trying to use this time to expand and grow, and to try

on new hats.

RF: How would you describe your style?

RH: It's real American with second-line and jazz overtones. As much as I like the subtleties of jazz, I also love to bash, too. So I try to combine all those things.

RF: Can you recall some of your favorite tunes to play on?

RH: "Gringo" is one of them. It's on the *Hoy Hoy* album. David Sanborn is playing on it, and it's more of a jazz thing.

RF: Did you actually woodshed jazz when you were a kid?

RH: Yes, and I really loved Steely Dan records. That's some of my favorite stuff. That's one gig I've always wanted to do.

RF: They make drummers crazy, though.

RH: Some things are worth going a little crazy for; some things are not. "The Fan" was really fun because it was difficult. So was "Fat Man," and most of the songs on the live record. "Dog Races" was fun because it's in six and it's unusual, and I kind of got to turn things inside out.

RF: Where did you learn to play odd times?

RH: I think it came from Lowell. He had this interest in Indian music and he took some lessons from Ravi Shankar back in the '60s. Shankar taught him that there is life outside of 4/4 time, so he brought that into the group. He taught me a lot about how to count it, and we played it until we got it right. I really grew to enjoy it a lot. It's fun to try to be free in seven time, and to play as naturally as if it were four.

RF: Was it difficult to learn?

RH: I really didn't find it that difficult. It was just more of what I was already doing, but just a little different approach. It's cut into twos and threes. You cut up a 4/4 measure that way anyway, so to add a couple of little groupings of one or two or three to the pattern is natural after a while.

RF: How does one expand one's style?

RH: I try not to close my mind to things that I haven't heard before. I find I learn most about music if I don't try to criticize it or form an opinion about it. I just allow myself to react. I've learned a little something from every drummer I've ever seen, good or bad. There's always something there to pick up—maybe something not to do.

RF: Could you give tips for playing a great second-line feel?

RH: I don't have any way to put that into words. Listen to Ziggy [Modeliste]. He's one of my all-time heroes. He's brilliant with that stuff.

RF: What are you listening to these days?

RH: I really like what people like Peter Gabriel are doing with different ways of playing rhythm and their use of electronics, which end up sounding like African drums. I find that really exciting. That's what I mean by ways of incorporating the old and new. Peter is really a leader in that. I hate to say it, but some of Phil Collins's music is like that, too.

RF: Why do you hate to say it?

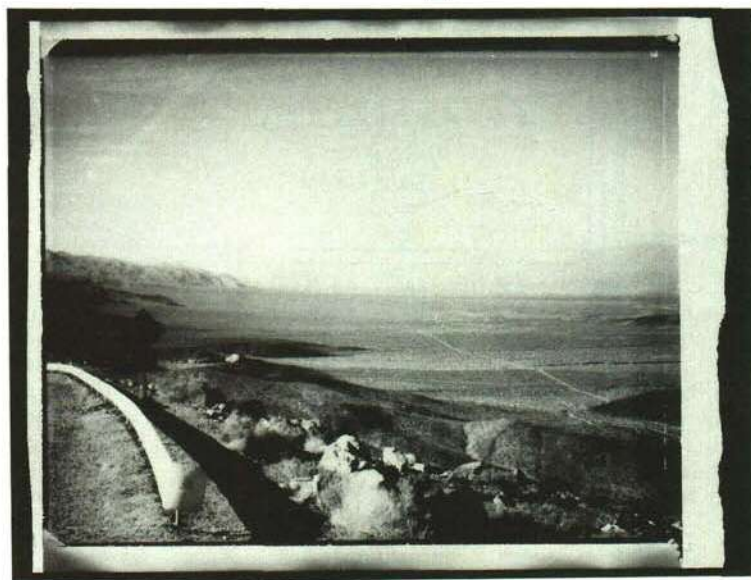
RH: [laughs] Because he's everywhere. I like a lot of stuff that's happening now. Bruce Hornsby is really good. To actually hear a piano again is great. I still listen to Steely Dan records a lot. The first Ricky Lee Jones album is great, too. I like what the Pretenders are doing, I like Eric Clapton, Dire Straits, and some of the old Police records.

RF: How did the recent Warren Zevon tour come about for you?

RH: Kenny Gradney had a line on that gig; we auditioned and got the gig.

RF: What did you have to do at the audi-

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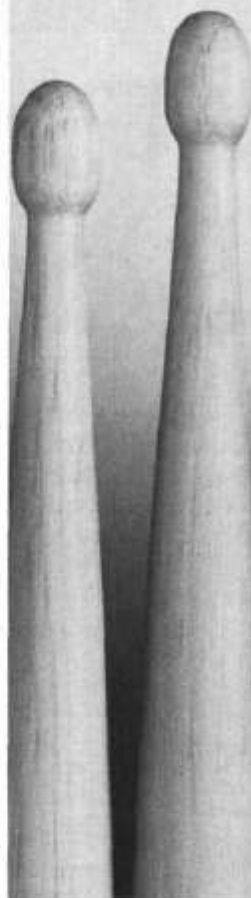
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tion?

RH: I just played a couple of songs.

RF: What is his music like to play?

RH: It is simple, but fun, and Warren is really a nice man to work with. I'm singing with him, too, so that's a lot of fun.

RF: You sang with Little Feat.

RH: Right. I sang all the high parts.

RF: What do you have to think about when you play and sing at the same time?

RH: You have to concentrate most on the singing because the drumming kind of takes care of itself. If it's a very difficult drum part, I can't sing, though.

RF: In Little Feat you were doing all this odd-time material and singing.

RH: But that stuff was well rehearsed. I had played it so much.

RF: Can it be difficult to sing and play at the same time?

RH: It can be, but I think the main thing is not to think about it too much, or else you get tangled up. It's just an extension of playing. It's just another appendage, so to speak, so it's just an added thing to the pattern. It's just one more additional requirement, and you think about it all equally. I'm not a virtuoso singer; I just have a voice that blends well in the background. It's fun to pull it out of mothballs with Zevon, because I haven't done that in seven or eight years. He and I are the only male singers in this tour, and there's a woman who plays keyboards and sings

background.

RF: So you're doing all the harmony parts?

RH: Yes, I'm doing all the Don Henley parts.

RF: Did you have to sing in the audition?

RH: No, he didn't know that I could sing until afterwards when I volunteered.

RF: What are your musical and personal goals?

RH: I just want to be as good as I possibly can and go as far with my drumming as I can. I would like to play a lot of different types of music.

RF: What's your favorite music to play?

RH: I like rock 'n' roll with a jazz kind of slant to it. But I like a variety of stuff. Little Feat was ideal for me because it was all kinds of different things, like cajun and the second line, jazz, country, and heavy rock.

RF: What's your expectation of the group getting back together?

RH: From what I've seen, the records are still in the stores, there are five or six CD's of the band now, and it's still holding up after nine years. It looks really good if we can get the chemistry cooking like it was, which I think we can.

RF: Ideally, would you like that to be the medium that takes you where you want to go?

RH: I would like that to be the center of it, but I'd like to be free to do other

things as well. There's no end to how far I want to go, and I feel like I'm just starting to discover myself again.



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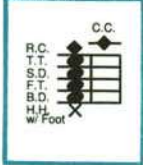
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Transcribed by Charles Burrows



Al Jackson: "Back Home"

MUSIC KEY



This month's *Rock Charts* features the master Memphis groove drummer, Al Jackson. This track, from the Booker T. & The MG's album *Melting Pot* (Stax, MPS-8521), showcases all of the signature Al Jackson parts. Jackson's excellent use of the bass drum, his ride cymbal "push-crashes," his use of dynamics, his great time-feel and use of space in the 12/8 section (using ride cymbal and hi-hat only), and his use of the cymbal bell are all on this recording.

This performance should be woodshedded by anyone wishing to develop good timekeeping. Pay careful attention to the nuances of Jackson's performance; they make all the difference in regard to the feel. The tempo of the 12/8 section is very challenging, and Jackson's control and musicality at the notated tempo exemplifies his great playing abilities.

♩ = 140

The musical notation consists of ten staves of drum notation in 12/8 time. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 140. The notation includes various drum symbols such as R.C. (Ride Cymbal), T.T. (Tom Tom), S.D. (Snare Drum), F.T. (Floor Tom), B.D. (Bass Drum), H.H. (Hi-Hat), W/Foot (Wood Block/Foot), and C.C. (Cymbal Bell). The notation shows a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and rests.

4-bar piano solo

$\text{♩} = 43$

4-bar piano solo to first tempo

fade out

The musical score consists of ten staves of music. The first staff begins with a 2/4 time signature and a key signature of one flat. It features a 4-bar piano solo with a tempo marking of quarter note = 43. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns such as eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and dynamic markings like accents and slurs. The piece concludes with a 4-bar piano solo to first tempo and a final section marked 'fade out'.

Sam Lay

Sam Lay says one of the reasons he has been able to make his living as a blues drummer for the past 30 years or so is because he's lived the blues. "It's got to surround you, be all over you," he explains from his home in Chicago. "That's the way it was, and still is, for me. The blues has got to be inside of you, too. That's when the feel of the blues makes its way into the music reeal good."

Sam Lay is part of the Chicago blues drummer legacy. Along with stalwarts such as S.P. Leary and Fred Below, Sam Lay has kept the beat for many of the greatest post-World War II bluesmen to blow through the Windy City: Hound Dog Taylor, Little Walter, Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters, Magic Sam, James Cotton, Sunnyland Slim, and Paul Butterfield. Lay even played behind a nervous Boh Dylan at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival, when Dylan stunned folkies by playing electric guitar and performing with an electric blues back-up band.

"I've seen a lot and I've done a lot" Lay continues. "But I like to think there's even more music inside me." At 52, there probably is. Sam Lay's Blues Revival plays the Chicago blues club circuit from time to time. But mostly the band plays in Canada—especially the Yukon Territories, where Lay is a legend and blues is king.

Lay isn't your typical bluesbeater. Unlike Below and Leary, two masters of the "less is more" concept, Lay is known for his double shuffle—an intriguing, rather busy approach to holding down the bottom of the blues. "It's my own style, my own contribution," Lay says proudly. "People who've never heard it before might be surprised at how good it works."

If you have heard Lay's double shuffle, it was probably on a mid-'60s album. The Paul Butterfield Blues Band. Released in 1965, the LP remains a genuine classic for two reasons. Most critics point to it as Butterfield's best recording effort. But it was also the first time an album was released by a racially integrated blues band. According to Lay, the early Butterfield Blues Band transcended color barriers and broke open a scene that for years had been closed.

"If we didn't do anything else, that was enough for us to make our mark," Lay says. "We were pioneers. After us, the whole country, and not just black folks, came to appreciate the blues."

RS: How and when did you begin playing the drums?

SL: I started playing the drums in Cleveland, Ohio in 1954 at a club called the Shack. It was a wine and beer joint I used to go to after work. I was a steelworker on the evening shift, so I'd get off at around midnight. I must have been 25 years old or so back then. One night I fooled around with the drums there. The next time I came in, I did it again. Before I knew it, I was picking out a beat or two.

RS: And prior to this you had never played the drums?

SL: Not at all. At school in Birmingham, Alabama—which is where I was born and raised—I was a track star. But I will say this: I was *interested* in the drums. I had always had a fascination for music. I used to sit and watch the school band practice. In fact, I remember being put out of class for tapping on my desk with my pencils when the band passed the classroom window. I did get some musical experience at school, too. I wanted to join the band, but didn't make it. My music teacher at school was W.C. Handy, Jr. [His father, W.C. Handy, is known as the "Father of the Blues."]

RS: You were raised in Alabama, and then worked in Ohio. When did you finally move to Chicago?

SL: I guess that was around 1960. I came to Chicago with Little Walter. I had hoped to work with him, but he had a drummer at the time. So I got a job with Hound Dog Taylor and stayed with him for about a year. That's when Little Walter asked me to play with him. I went on the road with him until I joined up with Howlin' Wolf, who I stayed with for about six years. They were good years, too.

RS: As a kid growing up in Birmingham in the 1940s, you must have been exposed to a lot of blues.

SL: That's only half true. I was really brought up on country music, bluegrass, and church music. In the '50s I heard a lot of rock 'n' roll, too. And I'll tell you what: I played the blues *and* rock and country music in those early days.

RS: Playing all three kinds of music when you were developing your drum style obviously affected the way you approached the drums. But what do you think makes a good blues drummer?

SL: A blues drummer has to hear sounds and needs to know what has to be put where. Today, young blues drummers sometimes forget that the blues is a traditional music. Too many of them approach the blues as if they were playing rock 'n'

roll or something. Even the masters do that. Buddy Rich was the greatest drummer I ever heard. Buddy Miles is another. But when it came down to them playing the blues, well, it was like me trying to play jazz.

RS: You're pretty popular in blues circles for developing a unique double shuffle. In fact, it's been your trademark for years.

SL: That's right, The Sam Lay Double Shuffle. Some people just call it the Sam Lay Shuffle, too. What I do is play five or six licks with my left hand into one beat, while my right hand is doing the same thing. It sounds like four or five drummers playing at the same time.

RS: How did this style of playing evolve?

SL: It came from being around sanctified churches in my younger days. If you attended those church services or listened to them on the radio, you'd notice that, when the saints clapped their hands, they did it double. They did the same thing when they hit the tambourine. Everytime they hit a lick, they hit a double lick. The way they did this had an effect on me, and it sank into my head. So when I began playing the drums later on, those double licks and those ideas for beats just came back to me. They became the basis of my drum style. On fast blues numbers you just can't beat it.

RS: In the early '60s, you experienced a setback to your career. You accidentally shot yourself in a Chicago blues bar. How did that happen?

SL: That was a sad day for me. Actually, it was in 1966, on Labor Day. I was playing with James Cotton at the time. We had played that afternoon 'cause it was a holiday. Later that night we were to play at Pepper's Lounge, a popular blues joint in town. We were getting our equipment over to Pepper's when Muddy Waters called to tell Cotton that some fella that had shot him before was out of jail and was looking to finish Cotton off. Well, Cotton didn't want to play that night. He was scared, but I told him that he shouldn't be, and should play the job. I told him nobody should be scared out of playing a gig, and that I would look after him. I had a 45 automatic at home that I brought back to the club, and stuck in my belt. I told Cotton not to worry, 'cause I was gonna sit by the front door. Well, as I bent over, to sit down, the gun went off. I got it right in the groin. That bullet totally paralyzed me for a while. It was a sad day.

by Robert Santelli

RS: And yet you recovered and resumed your career.

SL: Well, yes. I was laid up for months, but I wanted to come back and play. I was still bandaged up and would still bleed pretty good when I started to play again. The first night I played, I remember blood running down my shoes and into my socks. But I didn't stop. You know, I had to go to court because they placed me under arrest after I shot myself—even though I didn't hurt nobody. The guy who owned the club, Johnny Pepper, didn't press any charges against me. The judge felt as if I had had enough punishment, so all he did was take that 45—which was brand new—and have it destroyed. He knew that I was a drummer, and he asked me if I thought I'd ever be able to play again. I told him I was already playing! He couldn't believe it, so that Friday night he came down to a club called Mother Blues to check if I was telling the truth. I've been all right since.

RS: You said you played with Little Walter, Howlin' Wolf, and James Cotton; you also played with Magic Sam. Yet you received your greatest notoriety playing with the late Paul Butterfield. How did you team up with Butterfield?

SL: There was a club in Chicago called the Blue Flame, near Lake Michigan. I was playing there with Little Snooky Smothers. One night Snooky came up to the band and said, "Tonight we're gonna let this white harp player come up and play with us." Well, Butterfield played with the band, and I was amazed at how much he sounded like a *black* harmonica player. He sat in and blew everyone away. Then Elvin Bishop came down, and he couldn't play worth two pennies, [laughs] At least at the time he couldn't. He did get a lot better, though.

RS: When was this?

SL: Oh boy, this was back before President Kennedy got killed. As a matter of fact, we were supposed to play the night the president got shot. We played one song and all left the bandstand. We were just too sick to play. I mean, the news that he was dead just turned our guts; I was physically ill. I lost out on seven dollars that night. That's how much we earned back then.

RS: What did playing in the Paul Butterfield Band mean to you?

SL: It meant better jobs and better pay. It also meant getting a chance to travel and play places where blacks normally



wouldn't be hired or allowed to perform. That was a major step for me. Playing with Howlin' Wolf and Little Walter was great, but even they couldn't play some of the places Butterfield played. And the main reason—the *only* reason—was because Paul was white.

RS: What kind of drums did you play back then?

SL: The first set of drums I ever had were used drums. They didn't even have a name on them that I can remember. I had to pay 20 dollars up front for them. I didn't have a job then, so I had to use my mother's name to buy them. And when I couldn't make the payments on the drums, they were repossessed. Other than that set, I've only owned a couple of sets in my lifetime, and both were Slingerland.

RS: Tell me about your drumset. What's it comprised of?

SL: I have two bass drums. Sometimes I use both of them; sometimes I don't. That second bass drum is becoming more and more a showpiece drum than anything else. I can do more with one bass drum

than the average blues drummer can do with ten. [laughs] But mainly I use the bass drum, the floor tom, the two tomtoms that sit on top of the bass drums, and the snare. I've got a 22" ride cymbal, 15" hi-hats, and a small crash cymbal. I don't really know its size. Every cymbal I use is riveted, which I do myself. Rivets produce such a good cymbal sound, especially when you're playing the blues the way the blues are supposed to be played. No matter what song we play or who is taking a solo—be it guitar player, piano player, or harp player—I've got a part somewhere on a cymbal that sounds like it was made for that particular solo. Sometimes you can't tell the solo instrument from the cymbal sound, and that's the truth. I also use the riveted cymbals when I record with a band. I can get whatever sound I want.

RS: When you look back at some of the great blues drummers who came out of Chicago in the last 20 or 30 years, which do you admire the most?

SL: There were a lot of good drummers. Most of them were my friends, and still

are. But if I had to pick just one, I'd pick Fred Below. Below had something that a lot of guys didn't. Everything he played sounded the way it was supposed to sound; everything sounded *right*. And the man was steady. Few drummers around town were as good as Below was night after night.

RS: Unlike Below, you still play quite regularly, right?

SL: Oh yeah. I have my own band, and I still consider myself a full-time working drummer.

RS: What's the name of your band?

SL: We go by the name of the Sam Lay Blues Revival. The booking agent I used to have gave me that name. We're just a

hard-working, regular blues band, though. Sometimes we'll even play some early rock 'n' roll stuff. Blues and early rock 'n' roll are so closely tied together; it's no big thing for us to switch over and do some Chuck Berry or Bo Diddley material.

RS: How much does the Sam Lay Blues Revival work?

SL: As much as we can. Sometimes we get Hubert Sumlin to play guitar. I worked with Hubert when we were both in Howlin' Wolf's band, where he played for quite a long time. I also work with Lucille Spann, the late Otis Spann's wife, who is a great vocalist. She lives in Vicksburg, Mississippi, but when we go out on the road, she comes along. A.C. Reed, the sax player,

also plays with the group from time to time. Basically, we always have a guest or two show up and sit in.

RS: You played on *The Paul Butterfield Blues Band*, and you recorded a solo album, *Sam Lay Bluesland*. But those projects are well in your past. Have you done any recent recording?

SL: No, but I'd like to. I'd like to make up for that *Bluesland* record. I was nowhere near satisfied with that record. In fact, I was very displeased with it.

RS: Why was that?

SL: Because Mike Bloomfield and his crew had me doing songs that I wasn't familiar with. The songs on that album are songs that Bloomfield really liked. They weren't favorites of mine.

RS: What are your feelings on the latest blues revival presently going on in popular music? Do you feel connected with it?

SL: Yes and no. Robert Cray and Stevie Ray Vaughan, now those guys are great and so is their music, but they're Johnny-Come-Lately types. That's not taking anything away from them; they can't help when they were born. They're great at what they do, but what they do isn't the true blues.

RS: Muddy Waters once said something about the blues being a way of life even more than a style of music. Do you agree?

SL: Yes, I think I do. The blues tells a story. How many other popular musics of today can say that? A lot of blues players these days don't have the right feel going for them or their music. One of the reasons that I always liked country music was because, like the blues, country music tells a story. Nine times out of ten that stuff you hear from the best blues and country artists comes from real life experiences.

RS: How would you describe the contribution you've made to the bands you played with over the years?

SL: I always saw the drummer like the captain of a ship or the pilot of an airplane. The drummer has to make sure the music and the band are being steered in the right direction. I always felt that when I sat down to play the drums, the steering wheel was in my hands.

RS: How important, then, is your relationship with the bass player in the band?

SL: Very important. A drummer in a blues band can't have a good sound without a good bass player. With a good drummer and a good bass player, the rest of the band can all have heart attacks right up there on the stage, but the beat will still carry on.

RS: You've been involved in the blues and played the drums for over 30 years. What kind of advice would you offer to any up-and-coming blues drummer?

SL: To hang in there. But also listen as close as you possibly can to the music you're asked to play. Develop your ears and the rest will come naturally.

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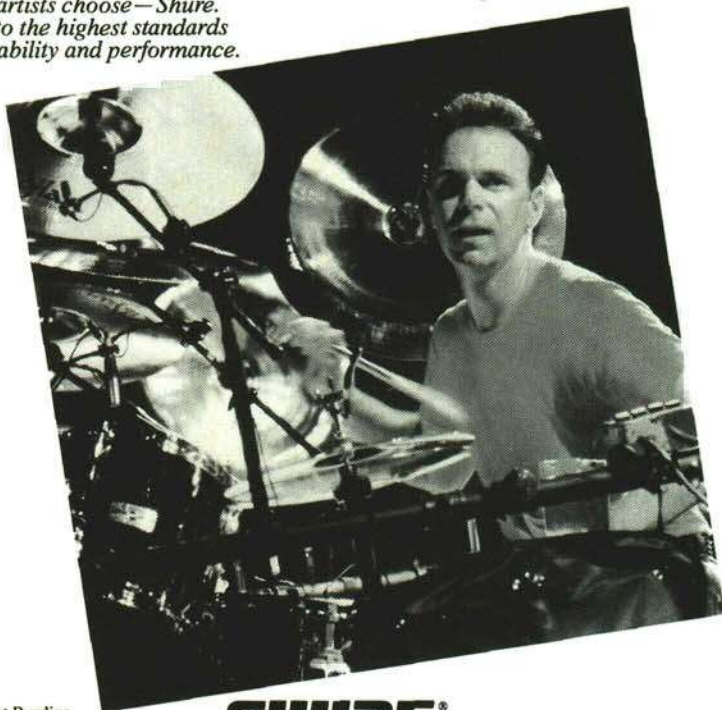
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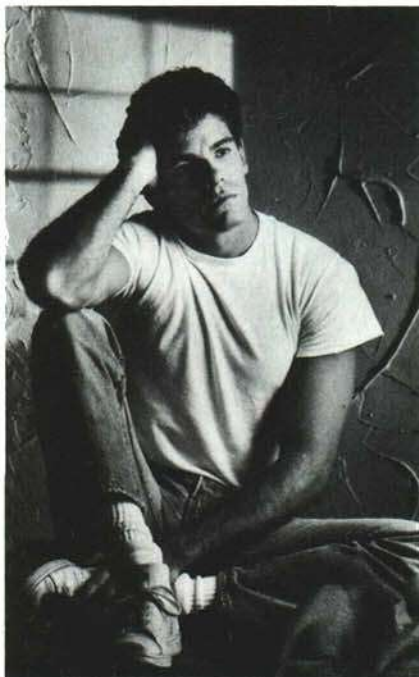


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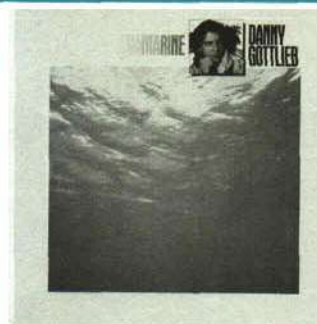
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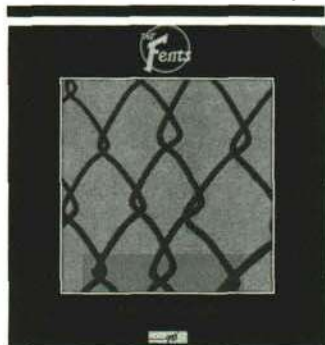
DANNY GOTTLIEB—*Aquamarine*. Atlantic Jazz 81806-1. Danny Gottlieb: dr, perc. M. Egan: bs. J. Abercrombie, grt, grt syn. J. McLaughlin, J. Satriani, J. Mironov, S. Khan: grt. D. Samuels: vbs. D. Hall: kybd, grt. Cafe: perc. B. Evans: sx. M. Forman: kybd. *Aquamarine / Monterey / The Aviary / Alaska / Waterfall / Being / Duet / Upon A Time / Peace Of Mind.*

While Danny Gottlieb is probably best known for his work with jazz-fusion guitarists Pat Metheny, John McLaughlin, and Al Di Meola, he has also proven himself to be a versatile drummer who can play modern big band jazz with Gil Evans, Brazilian-flavored music with Flora Purim and Airto, rock 'n' roll with Bobby Rydell, and fill in for Mel Lewis with Lewis's Jazz Orchestra. While such versatility helps keep Gottlieb employed on a regular basis, it also leaves a question about his true musical identity.

His first album as leader doesn't necessarily answer that question, if the answer you're looking for involves putting a specific label on Gottlieb. Rather, it further documents the fact that there are many sides to his playing. If the sequence of tunes were any different, the album might sound like a hodge-podge of styles. Instead, the listener is taken on a musical journey that progresses smoothly from relaxed, pop-like tunes to free improvisations. It's not a "drum" album by any means, but an opportunity for Gottlieb to bring together his choice of music and musicians, both of which he serves well throughout. Indeed, this is one of the most musical albums I've heard in a while, and if it doesn't serve to

pigeonhole Gottlieb's identity as a specific type of player, it does show that his common denominators are quality and taste.

Richard Egart



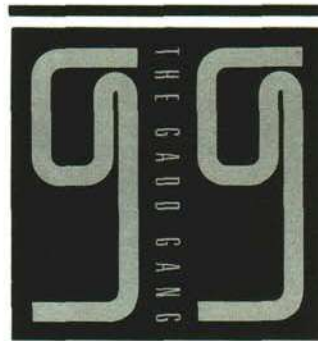
THE FENTS—*The Other Side*. Passport Jazz PJ 88031. A. Holzman: kybds. T. Hall: grt. L. Cottle, T. Tucciarone: bs. Moyes Lucas, Jr.: dr. *Where's My Producer / Back In The Saddle / Sixty Ways To Skin A Yak / My Body's A Temple / Four Sheets To The Wind / The Scenery Man / Rubber Discipline Helmet / I Don't Want My MTV.*

This electric jazz band has featured a long lineup of bass players and drummers in its eight-year history (eight names are thanked on the record jacket!), and the team of Laurence Cottle and Moyes Lucas, Jr. may well be the best so far. This rhythm section lays down some great grooves throughout the tracks on this record—including a kick-ass shuffle on "I Don't Want My MTV" and a very *different* 5/4 feel on "My Body's A Temple." The band plays very skillful and chops-oriented music, with first-rate blowing from all concerned. At times, though, some of the tunes seem to go on a bit past their prime.

Lucas's drumming is well up front, and he has an excellent grasp of this musical style and the importance of the drums in it. It's not the kind of music where a drummer needs to "lay it down"; that tends to be Cottle's responsibility on many cuts. (The two reverse roles to good advantage, however, on "Four Sheets To The Wind.") Lucas plays a good deal of over-the-bar fills and patterns that are impressive

and musical at the same time. This is a strong album, and Moyes Lucas, Jr., is a drummer to keep an eye (and ear) on.

Rick Van Horn



STEVE GADD—*The Gadd Gang*. Columbia 40864. Steve Gadd: dr. C. Dupree: grt. R. Tee: kybds. E. Gomez: bs. R. Cuber: sx. *Watching The River Flow / Strength / Way Back Home / Morning Love / Duke's Lullaby / Everything You Do / Honky Tonk / I Can't Stop Loving You.*

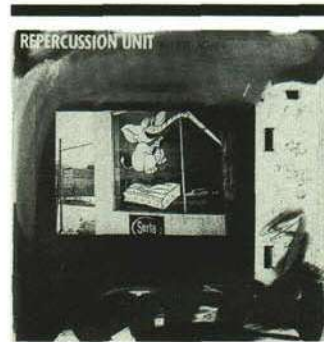
This release offers a competently executed set of tunes by Steve and his gang of New York studio aces. Though there's nothing earth-shattering here in terms of arrangements or solos, the group does work well together in what could only be described as a loose, informal setting.

This appears to be Steve getting back to where it all began, supplying that driving shuffle feel he once played behind organ trios in Rochester, prior to his becoming a household name among drummers. It's that solid backbeat shuffle feel, complemented by Tee's soulful B-3 comping, that comes through as the high point of this project. Check out "Watching The River Flow," a funky little tune called "Way Back Home," and the updated version of Bill Doggett's classic "Honky Tonk," which segues into a super-slow "I Can't Stop Loving You," complete with horns.

It's doubtful whether Gadd fans will be blown away by Steve's performance. The complexity of what we've heard him do with Chick Corea, for example, is missing here. And yet, it's always refreshing to hear Gadd in this more basic context on occasion. With the

exception of a four-minute drum corps/Latin-flavored solo on "Duke's Lullaby," *The Gadd Gang* presents a low profile Steve Gadd who's simply keeping good time and playing for the music in that classic, straight-ahead style.

-Mark Hurley



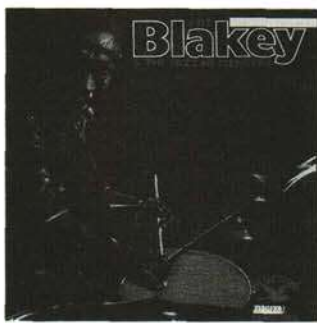
REPERCUSSION UNIT—*In Need Again*. CMP CD 31, 31ST. John Bergamo, Jim Hildebrandt, Gregg Johnson, Ed Mann, Lucky Mosko, Larry Stein: perc. *Dream Toon / The Plane Story / Square One / Lemon Sisters / It's Ridiculous / The Grand Ambulation Of The B Zombies / Orfacape (CD only) / Half The Distance To The Wall (CD only).*

The mating of the Repercussion Unit with CMP records is cause for celebration, as both represent the highest standards of their respective fields. While CMP is not exclusively a percussion label, recent releases by Glen Velez, Mark Nauseef, and John Bergamo have demonstrated the company's commitment to quality percussion recordings. And the Repercussion Unit is surely America's most vital percussion ensemble, whose members combine their virtuosic knowledge of traditional and ethnic instruments with a joyous exploration of state-of-the-art electronics. They also share a healthy sense of the absurd, which gives their music a sense of humor that is so often lacking in the "since we don't get any respect, let's be as deadly serious as possible about everything" percussion community.

Specifically, this recording is as good an example as you're likely to hear of what is possible with percussion instruments in the '80s—

which is quite a lot, if your sonic palette encompasses everything from primitive framedrums to the Simmons *Silicon Mallet*, as the Unit's does. Indeed, given the wide range of sounds here, one can easily forget that this is a percussion ensemble. The compositions are all by members of the group, and are notable for their variety as well as for their blending of planned occurrences and unplanned (improvised) ones. This is one *hel-luva* recording. Check it out.

Rick Mattingly



ART BLAKEY—*Theory Of Art*. RCA Bluebird 6286-2-RB (CD). Art Blakey: dr. J. McLean: sx. S. Shihab: sx. J. Griffin: sx. C. Payne: sx. B. Hardman: trp. L. Morgan: trp. M. Liston: trb. S. Dockery: pno. W. Kelly: pno. J. DeBrest: bs. *A Night In Tunisia / Off The Wall / Couldn't It Be You? / Theory Of Art / Evans / A Night At Tony's / Social Call*.

This project is a reissue of two sessions recorded in New York in April of 1957, but interestingly enough, it sounds as alive and robust today as it did back in '57. A drummer could have a ball analyzing all the Blakey trademarks that are present here: the relentless fire, the stomping hi-hat, the polyrhythmic rim clicks, the bass drum bombs. It's Blakey's almost primitive approach to the instrument that drives the soloists to some really fine performances.

On Gillespie's now classic "Night In Tunisia" (a staple of the Messenger repertoire) we hear Blakey laying down the Afro-Cuban/jazz feel he practically pioneered in a small band setting. And "Theory Of Art" is a fine example of how to main-

tain a blistering uptempo, and ignite the band in the process. The last two tunes (which were not previously released) offer an interesting contrast to the first five. Here we have Art in a more relaxed, almost "West Coast '50s" mood, in which we get to hear a not-often-heard side of the man's musicality. Nineteen-year-old trumpeter Lee Morgan is also a treat to listen to on the very last cut.

Art Blakey is now 67 years old, and his vital presence on the jazz scene for over three decades is well documented. *Theory Of Art* gives us a wonderful opportunity to hear the Blakey brand of hard bop in its formative stage. This gentleman has been influencing drummers for a lot of years, and as Pete Keepnews says in the liner notes: "Time has not dimmed the luster of these vintage Blakey sides, any more than it has sapped the strength or dampened the spirits of the man himself."

-Mark Hurley



LEIGH HOWARD STEVENS—*Bach On Marimba*. Musicmasters MMD 20124K (record), MMC40124H (cassette), MMD 60124F (CD). Leigh Howard Stevens: mar. *Prelude and Fugue in B Major / Two-Part Inventions: C major, D minor, B major, F major / Prelude in G minor / Chorale: Christ lag in Todesbanden / Sonata in A minor / Sonata in B minor*.

It is said that the best things are worth waiting for, and this is certainly the case with Leigh Howard Stevens' premiere recorded performance. (An earlier version of this recording was issued by the Musical Heritage Society, minus one piece.) The six works were transcribed (as opposed to arranged) for

marimba by Stevens from the original scores of J.S. Bach. The liner notes refer to a single missing note in one of the Inventions, which was purposely omitted to avoid having to take an entire passage up one octave. It is nearly impossible for the ear to detect that missing note, however.

From the first note of the recording, one notices the incredible fullness of the marimba's sound, the clarity of the individual lines (no mean feat with four mallets), and the excellent recording quality. No other tape or record I've heard has captured the true sound of the marimba as well as this one. The musical quality of this recording is superior, as is Stevens' own level of musicianship. In particular, the harmonies of the *Chorale* are well suited to the marimba's sonority and Stevens' roll technique.

This recording is a must for any percussionist, any fan of Bach, Leigh Howard Stevens, or the marimba, or any music lover at all. Bravo!

Andrea Byrd



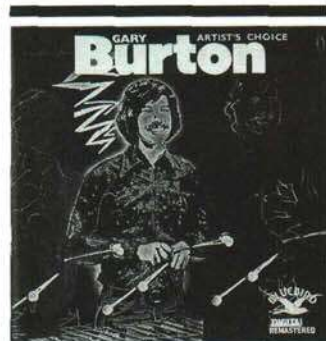
AEROSMITH — *Permanent Vacation*. Geffen Records GHS 24162. S. Tyler: vcl, pno, hmca. J. Perry: gtr, vcl. B. Whitford: gtr. T. Hamilton: bs. Joey Kramer: dr. *Heart's Done Time / Magic Touch / Rag Doll / Simoriah / Dude (Looks Like A Lady) / St. John / Hangman Jury / Girl Keeps Coming Apart / Angel / Permanent Vacation / I'm Down / The Movie*.

There's something refreshing about hearing hard rock from a group of veterans who helped to establish the genre. Aerosmith aren't a Johnny-come-lately fashion band; neither are they a '70s burnout on a last-ditch revival/survival attempt.

These guys are simply high-ranking pros that have been much imitated, but never equalled, in recent years. And Joey Kramer gives evidence on this album of why he is the epitome of the high-quality hard-rock drummer. Nobody will ever point to Joey as a flashy drum technician; all he does is lay down rock-solid, fundamental drum parts upon which the rest of the band can build their unique sound. And yet, although Joey's playing is never obtrusive or busy, the fills he does put in are exquisitely tasty and *meaningful*. An interesting facet of *Permanent Vacation* is its variety. Blues, jazz swing, *dynamite* horn funk, a ballad, and lots of straight-forward power rock are all represented, and Joey plays them all with equal confidence and skill.

This album is already gathering quite a bit of critical praise for its musical content. Based on the drumming he contributes, Joey Kramer might well be the definitive hard-rock drummer of the post-Bonham era—not because he plays so much harder, faster, or fancier than anyone else, but because what he plays is so *right*.

Rick Van Horn



GARY BURTON—*Artist's Choice*. RCA Bluebird 6280-2-RB. Gary Burton: vb, mar, pno. M. Mantler: trp. J. Knepper: trb. H. Johnson: tuba. S. Lacy, S. Marcus, G. Barbieri: sx. C. Bley: pno. B. Spicher: vln. J. Hall, R. Edenton, T. Martin, B. Emmons, L. Coryell, J. Hahn: gtr. C. Israels, S. Swallow, H. Strzelecki: bs. Larry Bunker, Kenneth Buttrey, Roy Haynes, Bob Moses: dr. *Careful / Chega de Saudade / Norwegian Wood / I Want You / Faded Love / Ballet*

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This Compact Disc is an overview of Gary Burton's RCA recordings (1963-68), and clearly shows his development through his formative years as a solo artist. The first five tracks, recorded between '63 and '66 while he was serving apprenticeships with George Shearing and Stan Getz, find Burton establishing himself as a talented vibist who can function in a variety of areas, from mainstream jazz through Beatles and Dylan tunes to country music—complete with fiddle and pedal steel.

If Burton was searching for his own voice on his first few albums, he found it on *Duster*, recorded in 1967 and represented by two tracks on *Artist's Choice*. This is his classic group with guitarist Larry Coryell, bassist Steve Swallow, and drummer Roy Haynes, and

given Haynes and Swallow's backgrounds in jazz combined with Coryell's rock history, this was arguably the first fusion group. Haynes was soon replaced by Bob Moses, and the next several tracks are from three albums made with that lineup. The final three tracks are taken from *Country Roads & Other Places*, with Jerry Hahn replacing Coryell, and Roy Haynes returning to replace Moses.

From the *Duster* tracks on, the writing is dominated by Michael Gibbs, Steve Swallow, and Carla Bley—three composers who Burton continues to draw from. The tracks also show the development of Burton's guitar/vibes concept, which gave his groups a characteristic sound despite changing personnel. Although these tracks were cut 20 years (or more) ago, they sound remarkably modern, showing just how ahead of his time Burton was.

Rick Mattingly

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Getting back to "African Skies," it's a 2/4 tune that has a triplet feel. It has a "six" feeling. What I play is 6/8, but I play it *only* on a triangle. It's so effective because it makes all the parts around that triangle become...everything!

Mtshali: Yes, that's true.

Fuster: And Asante plays a reco reco with a regular wire hair comb. The effect is amazing. In the middle section of the song, it lifts up; we play all the bridges very lightly. I play timbales on that, and Asante uses African drums. That's only for about eight bars, and then we go back. And the song is beautiful because of that; we try to play as little as possible so that more can be heard.

Asante: My first group was made up of five percussionists, a guitar, bass, and flute. With that many percussionists in a group, you learn not to overplay.

JP: Until now, Paul Simon has used African musicians in order to get the needed sound. Let's suppose he took out American musicians on the next tour, and they played some of the *Graceland* tunes. What might change in the tunes because of that?

Fuster: The whole drum language would change.

Asante: Yes, that African feel wouldn't be there.

Fuster: It's something you can't put in words. There would be a different feel. "Under African Skies" might sound more like a usual ballad.

JP: Leaning more on the "two" pull of the feel?

Fuster: Yes. There wouldn't be criss-cross rhythms.

Mtshali: And it would also be too *clean*.

JP: When you listen to American pop, is there any specific thing in the drumming that turns you off?

Fuster: I think most American pop music that has rhythm owes something to Africa. Much of rock comes from black rhythms, but they have pasteurized the music a lot and taken out the fine points. They knew about the basic "four," but it was never utilized like it was in Africa; they never could *hear* it or apply it. On the other hand, in Africa those rhythms are impressed upon us. We *need* those rhythms to do anything else. When I was a young boy, I knew many drummers from America and Europe who came down to Africa just to live there. There were a few—people like Ginger Baker—who went there because they loved to play the African music. Even if they didn't spend many years there, when they went back home they just played too much drums to cover up for all that stuff. Basically, Africans play in large drum ensembles. If you go to an African music concert, you will find that there may be 15 drummers playing, so they are used to playing with so many drummers, but at the same time letting it

all be heard.

Asante: You hold on to your part and it all mixes nicely together.

Fuster: I am not skilled in explaining these things. A Western musician could break it all down.

Asante: But when it comes to *drumming*, Africa is very skilled. We do know that powerful drumming is Africa.

JP: Let's consider the opposite side of the coin. You have just completed the *Graceland* tour experience with Paul Simon, who is one of the all-time great songwriters in Western popular music. What have you drawn from *him* to bring back to your music?

Fuster: A lot. From applying African drums to Paul Simon's music, it has become clear to me that I can make hits now, because I also play other instruments. Now I can write anything and put these drums in it. Most Africans don't think about writing Western songs and using African drums—and making a hit of it across the world! Doing this tour with Paul has opened my eyes. And he is a great songwriter. These last six months have proven to me that not just any American can go down to Africa and come back with a hit album. It takes a special kind of person like Paul to do it because he's a *poet*. He writes everything down and he lets us *play* it. All he asks of the drummers and other musicians is to give him a

chance to say what he has to say.

JP: On Paul Simon's previous albums and tours, he has used Western drummers who are considered the cream of the crop here: people like Steve Gadd, Dave Weckl, and Airtio. Simon has access to such talent. Isaac, outside of the obvious African theme of the album, what is it that Simon heard in your record that made him choose you to contribute, above so many others?

Mtshali: I think it was the beat of that music that he wanted from South Africa. Some of the songs he took from South Africa really sound different—especially "I Know What I Know." The intro is so funny; I had a heavy time getting that. That one is from the Sotho tribe. They play in a different kind of time. Some of the songs work because of certain *simple* things that you play. Some people get bored playing one thing. They don't like that. They want to play a lot, only to find that, when it comes to African music, sometimes you've got to play straight.

Asante: That is the discipline when you start playing African percussion. You are started on the cowbell. If you want to learn, you start with *one* cowbell, and you play one beat until you're tired; but you have to keep playing it—for years.

Fuster: If you don't play it right, it will stop swinging the whole band. You hold that cowbell and play it with one stick for a long time.



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Asante: That holds the whole band together. If you go off, you throw *everybody* off. That's where you get your discipline from.

JP: Francis mentioned earlier about communication between Western producers and African drummers. There's a trend here for producers to control a great deal of a drummer's input, but that seems to go against the grain of the African approach.

Asante: If you let master drummers fill in their parts, like Paul did with us, you get the best from them.

Fuster: If you have African drummers, just let them be; just let them play. Give them a little while and they will have everything worked out just fine. That's what we're used to doing at home.

Asante: If you're going to tell an African drummer to "play this," then you might as well play it yourself, [all three laugh]

Fuster: At the finale of the concert, we all do drum solos at the end of "Diamonds On The Soles Of Her Shoes." In the beginning, they wouldn't accept these drum solos in the band.

JP: Who?

Fuster: Paul—and the management.

Mtshali: And we didn't have a chance to work out that part. [laughs]

Fuster: We didn't even practice it before we first did it. After the first couple of rehearsals, I decided, "This thing needs a drum structure." So, we had dinner together one night and worked out the solos on the table while we ate! It took less than five minutes and we had it.

Later, when they wanted to hear a solo, all they said was, "Okay you guys, let's hear it!"—like we were magicians! But we were ready, you see. When they wanted to hear it, we gave it to them. And they said, "Hey! Those drummers can pull off anything!" They tried to change it, though, in all kinds of ways. We kept telling them, "Leave it alone." They found out very fast that they couldn't touch it; it was what it was. That solo part goes into three time signatures. Isaac plays in 2/4, then we change into my solo and it drives into a faster 4/4, then the tempo gets faster and changes to 6/8. That is not easy to do—especially for Western drummers. All three of us have grown and improved together considerably from playing together over

these last six months. We've refreshed each other—*considerably*. There's always something to look forward to when we go up to play. It has never been boring, and there has never been a reason for one of us to say, "What are you *doing*, man?" And we've never had an argument—never!

Asante: When we're on stage and it comes to our attitude towards the drumming and everything else, I can say we are *bad mother!* [all laugh]

JP: Coming from different musical cultures than Paul, you must have each had your own ideas of how to merge African influences with Western pop. Once it came together, was there something that you *wished* you could have injected if you had it completely your way?

Fuster: No, I believe the whole concept was really put together correctly.

Asante: I agree.

Fuster: I think everything was looked into thoroughly, and everything was allowed. Very few things were taken out, and at practice, everybody had a say and significant changes to make.

Mtshali: Nothing would have to be changed if you wanted to do another *Graceland*. If you wanted to try something different for some new songs, you could just change the beat of the drumming—use the American drumming with the African drums and make use of the different African *guitar* lines with it. African guitarists play fast; they don't just play here and there.

Fuster: You see, the concept of African guitar is different from Western guitar. Along with drums, guitars are very popular in Africa. We don't have too many pianos. I didn't see one until I was 18 or 19, and we didn't have them at school. Most Sierra Leonians play drums or guitar because nobody can afford a piano. By the time I saw my first piano in college, it was too late for me to learn to play. But I had already played drums with my tribe, the Kru, since I was eight. In my tribe, very few people work in offices; they're outdoor people—seamen or musicians. Almost everybody plays drums or guitar. When I was a young lad, there were guitars and drums in my house already, and every evening my uncles would come down with the drums. We had a musical gathering called a *wleh*. It was a drum assembly. The people danced and sang every night—whether someone had died or someone was married or someone was sick. We would dance and sing to everything. I could very easily play hand drums before I was ten. That's why, when somebody says, "Explain this to me," I don't know how to do it. It was never *explained* to me; I didn't go to school to learn to play anything.

Mtshali: I never went to school for playing, either.

Asante: I got my schooling at home. That was the best school.

JP: Airtio feels that American drummers are sometimes too hung up on schooling and technique, so they have a problem with laying back.

Fuster: Since I have been traveling, I have watched some of these drummers, and their techniques are great. But I can't put these techniques into the drum patterns that I've learned. I never really had to bother to work hard on techniques; I was a natural technician before I even knew it.

JP: You three should be proud because, due to the impact of this tour, you may be opening new doors for African drummers and African music in general. It has opened the ears of a lot of Westerners. Have you returned home to find that musicians have felt your impact—that they realize new possibilities because of your contributions to this project?

All: Yes.

JP: What have they said to you?

Asante: The African musicians feel that it's an opportunity and that if they work hard, then maybe they can be heard, too. They all understand it.

JP: You all had a big responsibility in that way. You're aware that the record industry here believes that very limited types of music can sell. The music on *Graceland* didn't comply with the industry's formula for hits, yet it was a huge international success.

Fuster: I think it will open up American producers' attitudes towards African bands. I have always found, even during the *Graceland* tour, that most of my African friends who live here complain slightly about how the African drum sound tends to get mixed. They come backstage and say, "I liked it, but I wish I could have heard more drums; they could have come up a little bit more." American engineers are working with us, so there is still a difference between the way we would like to hear it and the way it actually gets mixed. We worked out so much stuff on that stage, and sometimes nobody heard it.

JP: Before *Graceland*, if anyone were to go into the better record shops here, they may have only found a few African records—perhaps a Fela or King Sunny Ade record. But now you find Ladysmith records imported and the availability of several other African discs.

Mtshali: That's great.

Asante: But I still wish that people would get a chance to be exposed more often to the drum ensemble—to read more about it in magazines and hear more records. Ensemble playing really shows the beauty of drums.

JP: So you think that's an element of African music that will take time to break through?

Asante: Yes. We will have to work on it. I believe the public appreciates good music, and they will like the drum ensemble because it *is* good music.

JP: How do you feel about all the politi-

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cal controversy surrounding this tour? Do you feel, "We're musicians first, and political concerns are secondary"?

Fuster: I feel good about what we're doing. We haven't been in a situation in which we've been boycotted.

Asante: I feel there's nothing wrong with musicians making music. God brought us here, and we say, "We are musicians; make music!" If somebody's going to say to a musician, "If you're going to make music, you have to go through me for permission," then something is wrong with the system.

JP: At the beginning of the tour some journalists criticized the tapping of South African music as exploitation. Did the press blow the political issue out of proportion?

Fuster: Yes. Paul went down there, heard the music, and *did* something for the musicians. He brought the music out and gave them money for it—money that they *earned*.

Asante: Everybody got proper credit and everything!

Fuster: Now, most performers go down, including a lot of the big shots; I can't stand them anymore.

Asante: They come down with tape recorders, play rock shows, and steal music.

Fuster: They *do* that! And then they come back and talk big about it. We know them! They're the ones who are wrong. Paul went down there and sang *with* the African musicians. He used his power and influence to project their music even further. That's *great*.

Asante: It's fantastic.

Fuster: Some guys come down, take four or five million dollars a gig, and leave. Paul didn't go down there for a quick gig. He recorded, brought the musicians out, and gave them a foreign exchange. The other people go down to play and take millions from the economy; they don't give it to the people. So what were they writing about? It's rubbish. Paul has done more in one shot for most African musicians than all of the others put together.

Asante: I agree with you. I think Paul should be given a Nobel Peace Prize. [all laugh]

JP: I mentioned earlier that you have opened doors, as is evident from the increase in imported African discs. On the other hand, Africans have been listening to our popular music for decades. Isn't it a shame, then, that it has taken Americans this long to listen to what Africa has to offer?

Fuster: It is a shame. There is much to say about that. This is true of more than just pop music. I was listening to Western classical music—Bach and Beethoven—when I was 18 or 19. I understood Western music very well, and we bought the records. But it's like the situation of Christianity and Islam: In the Christian

world, not many people know about Islam. They don't even investigate it; they just think it's taboo. But the average Islamic person probably knows more about the *Bible* than many Christians—and they also know the *Koran*. It's taken this long because Westerners wouldn't give us a chance and listen; they wouldn't *buy* it. But all of that is changing gradually, thanks to projects like *Graceland*.

JP: Because of *Graceland*, have you been approached with offers to do other recordings here?

Mtshali: Miles Davis was interested. But unfortunately, I couldn't make it because my father died on June 21, and I needed to rush back home.

Asante: Miles Davis' office called me, also, but we were on the road. I think the call was for a tour.


JP: As drummers, what do you hope you have accomplished or have brought to music with *Graceland*?

Fuster: Our union has opened up a few developments, and will not go in vain. In the future, the three of us will be working together a lot. This rhythm section is registered now with Night After Night [the touring production company for Simon and other major acts], and they're going to keep this unit. They might be sending us all over, but now we have our "office" here. They get calls always; we can't just let the whole thing go.

Some contacts have told me that Warner Bros. will be listening to tapes and looking into this drum ensemble. So we may be doing things all over the world very soon when the calls come. The possibilities are wide open; it's up to us.

Mtshali: I've really enjoyed working with these guys. As I said, I didn't go to school for drumming, but I've learned some new things with them—especially playing a certain way in 6/8.

Fuster: When I first met Isaac, he was playing well already. The 6/8 pattern he is talking about is very unique because it is really *West African*, and there are certain ways to play that. That's an example of how playing together has improved each of us in different ways. I know I play much better now than I did before working with Isaac and Asante. Working with Paul Simon, Hugh Masekela, and everyone on the tour, has been a pleasure. The communication was perfect.

Asante: As to what we've accomplished, we're just glad that we've been able to participate a little bit in this project. And we're glad that people have *listened* to our efforts. We really appreciate the chance Paul has given us. It gives us hope to help drum music. Just as we see Ladysmith doing a cappella concerts now, maybe someday we will see a whole drum ensemble out there doing it for a full house. 

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The conga drums are the backbone of the Mozambique, with several parts and variations that can be played either individually or in different combinations. The main "ride" is the four-bar phrase shown in Example 1. It is meant to be played on two drums by one player (the conga [high] part is written on the third space; the tumba [low] part is written on the second space). All of the examples in this article are written in 2-3 clave (two notes in the first measure and three notes in the second).

H = heel (full palm) T = toe or touch (fingers)
O = open tone S = slap

1

O O O T H T T S H S S O S O S
R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

O O O T S H S S O S O S
R L R L R L R L R L R L

Example 2 is an accompanying conga part to Example 1.

B = bass tone

2

B S O O O S S O O S S
R L R L R R L R L R L

Example 3 shows accompanying bombo parts; bombo A is written on the third space and bombo B on the first space. They are almost entirely inverse of each other. They should be played with a mallet in one hand, while the open hand is used to mute the head on the appropriate notes. Part A is preferred when only one bombo is used.

x = tap with left hand to mute the note that follows it

O = open M = muted

3

M O L M M M O L M
O L M O O L M M O

Examples 4, 5, and 6 are handbell parts. The low part (played on the mouth of the handbell) is written on the first space, and the high part (played on the heel of the handbell) is written on the third space.

4

The handbell part in Example 5 is the 2-3 clave pattern.

5

6

Shortly after the Mozambique debuted in Cuba, a modified version of it began to appear in New York with the Conjunto La Perfecta of Eddie Palmieri, this being the first established New York band to interpret it. We say it is a modified Mozambique because it was adapted to the smaller rhythm section of the dance hall band, which consisted of one conga drummer (usually with two drums), one timbales player (with one or more bells attached to the timbales), and a guiro player. With Julito Collazo on timbales, Tommy Lopez on congas, and Ismael Quintana (who also sang) on guiro, La Perfecta "smoked," and eventually carved a niche for themselves in the super-competitive arena of New York City. The great timbalero Manny Oquendo spent several years with La Perfecta and is identified by most people as being the timbalero with the band during its early stages, although the master drummer Julito Collazo actually preceded Manny in the band. Between the two of them, the Mozambique on timbales took root in New York.

Example 7 shows a common two-drum Mozambique pattern for congas as interpreted by dance bands.

7

H S S O O O S H S S O O O T S
L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R

Example 8 is a basic Mozambique on timbales. It should be played on a small, high-pitched bell (which is written on the third space) and the low-pitched timbal (written on the first space). Press into the head with the stick for the muted notes on the timbal (notated with an 'M').

8

M M O M

Example 9 is a common guiro part that can be used. The arrows indicate upstrokes and downstrokes.

9

The tempo for the Mozambique is usually bright, although it is often played slow and funky, as well as with lightning speed. The clave rhythms, which are the underlying basis for all of the examples, are extremely important as a reference. As mentioned earlier, these examples are all written in 2-3 clave. You *must* be able to understand and play them in 3-2 clave as well (by starting the rhythms with the second bar first). Understanding the clave is a fundamental part of Latin music. The instruments known as claves are not usually used in the Mozambique.

As usual, I must emphasize that the rhythms presented here are

by John Santos

only intended to give you a basis from which to work. There are many other variations and combinations of all of them which will work in these and other contexts. By the way, Mozambique is pronounced *mo-sahm-BEE-keh*.

Lastly, I would like to correct an oversight which I made in a previous column I wrote for *Modern Percussionist*. I mentioned a few names of outstanding timbaleros whose recordings are still available for study. Although it was not (and is not) intended to be an all-inclusive list, Ulpiano Diaz, Ubaldo Nieto, Walfredo de los Reyes III, and Jose Quintana (Chanquito) also are all great percussionists whose work has been of major importance in this field.

Diaz worked with the legendary Arcano y sus Maravillas during the 1940s in Cuba, and with Fajardo y sus Estrellas during the 1950s. Nieto was the drummer/timbalero with the innovative Machito orchestra during the '40s, '50s and '60s. Walfredo de los Reyes III performed with many heavy groups in Cuba from the late '40s through the early '60s, and is one of the premier innovators and creators of Latin/jazz drumset playing. As bandleader, he recorded the classic *Cuban Jazz* album on the Gema label in 1957. (It was later re-issued on the Rhumba label under *Sabor Cubano*.) Walfredo is still very active in the U.S. today. Chanquito is best known for his incredible work with the popular Cuban group Los Van de Juan Fermell.



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More

In my last *Modern Drummer* column (November '87), I presented a number of exercises to help you play better flams. This month I'd like to give you a piece involving flams that your entire drum line can play together. As always, try this slowly at first, striving for accuracy. Then challenge yourself with a variety of tempos and volume levels.

The musical score is organized into three systems, each with four staves: Snares, Quads, Bases, and Cymbals. The time signature is 4/4. The first system shows the initial rhythmic patterns. The second system introduces more complex rhythmic figures and stick patterns (R for right, L for left). The third system continues the patterns, including a triplet in the bass line. The score is designed for a full drum line to play together.

Flim-Flams

The first system of musical notation consists of two measures. The top staff features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents, with the sequence of letters 'R L R L R L R L R L' written below it. The second staff continues this pattern with 'R L R L R L R L R L'. The bottom two staves are empty.

The second system of musical notation consists of two measures. The top staff has a sequence of letters 'R R L L R R L L R L R L' below it. The second staff has 'R L R L R L R L' below it. The bottom two staves contain musical notation with accents and slurs.

The third system of musical notation consists of two measures. The top staff has a sequence of letters 'R L R L R L R L R L' below it. The second staff has 'R L R L R L R L' below it. The bottom two staves contain musical notation with accents and slurs.



by Anthony J. Cirone

Portraits in Rhythm: Etude #11

There are certain etudes that seem to work especially well for solo recitals or jury exams. Etude #11 is one of these. The fact that it is so thematic, and that the rhythms move quickly and with many dynamic changes, gives the performer a chance to show off his or her technique and musical ability.

The opening theme in measures one through four is never repeated exactly. However, it does return in line seven and ten with variation. Each time the theme returns, the performer should emphasize the opening rhythm as a climactic point of the work. This exaggeration helps the listener focus in on the form and adds an element of cohesiveness to the performance.

Observations

1. The metronome marking is listed as 8th note equals 132. This gives the performer a clue to the phrase emphasis. When the 8th note is listed as the primary pulse, be sure to exaggerate each 8th-note pulse and not the dotted quarter-note pulse.
2. The third line begins a series of rhythms at a *piano* dynamic. This is one of the most difficult snare drum techniques to perfect. That is, the ability to play rapid rhythms at a soft dynamic without unwanted accents or changes in dynamics. Choose a spot near the edge of the head to obtain a delicate quality to this section.
3. The measure which takes up the entire fifth line again pairs up the two very contrasting rhythms of dotted notes and triplets. In this case it is a dotted 32nd and 64th note against a 32nd-note triplet. As is usually the case when performing these rhythms, make the 64th note as short as possible to avoid any resemblance

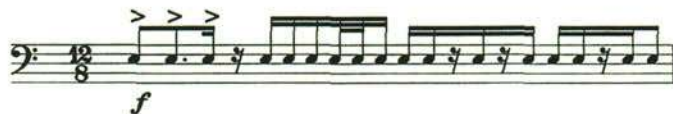
to a triplet feeling.

4. Line eight, measure one employs what is called "augmentation." This is a compositional device that repeats a rhythm twice as slow as previously heard. In this case it follows directly after the original rhythm, which is the last half of line seven.

5. The first measure of line nine presents a very interesting situation, where the performer must articulate a very soft closed roll and single strokes. Moving between these two techniques can be very challenging. The execution must be so that there are no distortions in the rhythm of the 32nd notes or in the beginning of the roll.

Interpretations

1. Treat the opening three notes of the theme (first measure) equally and with some emphasis (accents). The rest of the measure can be slightly phrased on the seventh and tenth beats. A more accurate notation for this interpretation is as follows:



2. In line five, notice the first three beats and last three beats have accented notes at a *forte* level. The danger here is to underplay the unaccented notes. There must be a contrast between the unaccented *forte* notes and the following *piano*.


3. When the theme returns in lines seven and ten, a roll is added. Do not tie the roll into the 16th note. By separating the roll from the note, the 16th note will be heard as a separate note and not as part of the roll. This will keep the character of the theme consistent with the opening measure.

4. I have indicated a possible sticking for the last half of line seven. This sticking is for a right-handed player, but can be reversed for a left-handed person. The reason I use a double stroke is to return to my strong hand for the accents. This way, both sets of accents are played identically, and hopefully equally.



5. The second line from the end is a series of 32nd notes with a *diminuendo* and *crescendo*. Part of the interpretative process is to determine how much dynamic change is appropriate during this measure. My personal feeling for solo works such as this is to exaggerate both levels of the dynamic changes, in order to add as much interest as possible to the music.

6. The final line has a series of quickly changing dynamics. Play the loud dynamic in the center of the drum and move closer to the edge for the soft notes.



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Adagio ma con spirito ♩ = 132

f

p

f *p* *f*

p *cresc.*

ff *dim.*

pp

f

f *dim.* *cresc.*

ff *p* *ff* *pp*

Music © 1968 Belwin Mills/Columbia, Hialeah, FL. Used with permission.



Bromberg *continued from page 31*

"They told me I would get 75% of my left side back, which I did, but you don't know what it's like to lose 25% unless you have gone through it. I can't use my left arm or hand like I used to, and I still can't hold a stick unless I put a glove on. My two sons came up with this idea one night: I put on a glove, wrap velcro around the stick and around the glove, and it holds the stick in place. I can play! My time is there, and my feel is there. Simple fills I have no trouble with, but drum solos I can't take. I play a lot of Latin music, which is extremely physical for me, especially for my left hand. I can only hold the stick matched-grip style, and there's no freedom for the stick. It has to be stuck to the glove, so there's no bounce. Everything has to come from my left hand, which is very difficult because I don't have too much control of it.

"But I get through the gig. I heard a tape of myself the other night, from a big band gig. I sounded pretty good. The most difficult part of my situation is lugging the equipment and setting up. I have to leave for a gig quite early in order to do it, and have to make a lot of small trips. I have been looking into a set of single-head drums. They're great for a small combo, but they can't handle the big band work."

Faced with the prospect of being disabled and losing a portion of their drum-

ming ability, a lot of people would give up or change their musical direction. I asked Howard Bromberg why he continued playing. "I can't do anything else. My profession was cutting hair, and I can't handle it anymore. Music was all I knew, so I decided to play again to give me something to look forward to.

"A lot of the other musicians were old friends of mine that I had played with before, and they were just thrilled to see me playing again. After the first gig, most of them came down and said, 'You know, I didn't even miss your left hand; that feel was so great. Your feel is what we've been missing.' I haven't run into any discrimination of any kind. People in the audience that I know comment because they know what I've been through. But strangers don't have any idea of what happened.

"It's very healthy for me to be drumming again. I play very hard, and the charts we play are very demanding. If you have a disability and if there is any way you can work it out, do it. It's good for you mentally and physically. I don't exercise regularly, but a night with the big band gives me plenty of exercise. I feel so good when I'm playing: I love it. I would play every night of the week if I could—especially now that I can't do anything else."

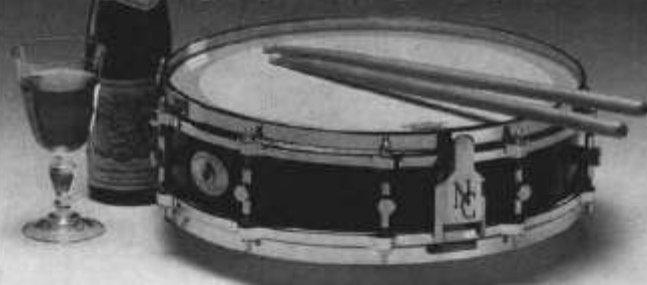
Seifried *continued from page 33*

in several ways. "I have two hi-hats, and I use Drum Workshop pedals, so on certain disco songs where I can't get the fast beats I just play double bass drums." Seifried had switched to Simmons drums just before his accident, and finds that their lack of rebound helps his bass drum playing. On acoustic drums his foot pops off the bass pedal, and he has to constantly readjust his legs and balance. Though it is easier for him to play on Simmons, he still has to keep an eye on his right leg.

Seifried has a permanent prosthesis for his leg, but is still adjusting to it. At this point he can't walk with it, and he is sending it back to be recast. He hasn't had to change his grip as a result of the accident, but does find that his playing is less aggressive now. "Not everybody can be a Terry Bozzio or a Neil Peart," Seifried says. "You just have to go as far as you can go and not ask for anything more out of life. If you have a disability but you really want to play, then you'll continue to play, no matter what level you're at. If you enjoy it, then you'll continue to do it.

"You can overcome any physical handicap. If you cop out or bail out, then it's your own fault. I lost my leg, but I'm still playing, and I'm no superman. Lots of people lose their legs or fingers—look at Rick Allen. I'd love to play with him.

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Nobody should ever give up. There's a drummer here on Long Island who I'm teaching to play, and he lost his left arm just below the elbow. I'll give him credit; he practices harder than a lot of kids who aren't disabled."

Aldridge continued from page 33

all, and that after he plays he feels more relaxed and has fewer tics.

During college Aldridge studied with Hank Levy, musical director at Towson State University. "I was a music major for one semester, but I couldn't stand not playing drumset in my music classes. I loved Hank's odd-meter stuff because it was as unpredictable as my body was, and I felt it was a real cool outlet. Hank and I were each into exploring, and we locked into each other. He had a real strong influence on my playing and my outlook.

"During this time I was still undiagnosed. From the time I was six until I was 20 I spent many waking moments wondering, 'Why can't Johnny sit still?' I explored all kinds of reasons: Was I hyperactive? Was it repressed psychological feelings? Was it my diet? What the hell was it? I became a psychology major because I thought I was hyperactive. I learned I wasn't, but I also learned a lot about the neurological aspects from looking through textbooks."

David relates the story of his diagnosis with a laugh. "I was watching Johnny Carson one night—it's ironic because he always talks about how therapeutic drumming is—and I saw a 30-second public-service announcement about Tourette Syndrome. Once I found out what it was, I began to understand how I could hear certain rhythmic patterns over and over again because of the obsessive-compulsive thoughts that went along with my tics."

In both his studies with Hank Levy and in his long search for answers to his involuntary movements and noises, the key word for David was "explore." His ability to look at problems 360 degrees at a time, whether musical or physical, allowed him to absorb many theories and to come up with answers.

David has also studied with Terry Bozzio and Peter Erskine. "From day one I wanted to explore what the drums could do, and I didn't want anyone to tell me what I *couldn't* do. In a way, that reflected my *body* telling me what I could or couldn't do. With Tourette Syndrome, you have to move whether you want to or not."

Aldridge is an intense drummer who likes to play reggae grooves in 7/4, or to explain in great detail how a rhythm works. At a time when I was losing faith in my ability to be a musician, David would cheerfully bully me by showing me some absurdly complicated fill, then breaking it down so systematically that I could play it. Then he would work it into a

musical context by humming a melody out loud while playing it.

In addition to recording with Arthur Brown, he recorded an EP with Los Angeles group The Touchables, whom he played with while living on the West Coast. Currently, David Aldridge lives in Maryland, and he is recording his odd-time compositions in his home studio. He plans to continue his intensive studies of rhythm theory and psycho-musicology, and to play whenever possible.

His advice to other drummers with disabilities: "Do whatever you can to forget that you have a disability. Just blow it out. Control your own fear, and challenge

it daily. Don't censor your possibilities. Think in 360 degrees and see what you can find, and get as far away from the limitations of your disability as you can."

Fitzgerald continued from page 33

a soft cast, six weeks after the initial injury. That seemed to help the most. He also tried to exercise it within his limits, and used hot and cold compresses. He tried to play before it completely healed, and feels that he may have re-injured it several times.

After three months, the cast was removed. Fitzgerald then re-injured his

continued on page 95

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Beating Disabilities continued from page 93

wrist very severely. He went to another sports therapist, and had sonic treatments and some minor adjustments. His range of painless motion had increased, and he was able to exercise his hand more.

"The interesting thing about being injured was that I couldn't work for several months, except for a show I played in called *Rap Master Ronnie*. The playing was very light, and it got me through money-wise. I became very resourceful in how I practiced. Everyone has limitations, regardless of injuries, and I learned to work within mine. I thought of all the things I could do with my left hand and with my feet. I worked on grooves involving one hand, and spent some time reading left-hand parts on vibes and marimba. I'm very glad it was my right hand that

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was injured, because it allowed me to work on my weaker hand. I also did a certain amount of transcribing, which was great. All in all, I found myself thinking in different ways about my left hand and about my feet. It made me focus on things I usually didn't use. When my right hand was better, I integrated it back into my playing.

"Currently my wrist is a little noisier than it was; it tends to crack and pop a great deal. I think it is a little stiffer than it used to be—maybe 90% as agile as it was before the injury. It did make me think about playing much more relaxed than I used to."

Eight months later, John Fitzgerald dropped by to report that his wrist was totally healed and that he couldn't sense any loss of ability.

Drum Triggers

Drum triggers are quickly becoming quite an attraction in our current world of electronic drum synths, drum machines, MIDI, and the whole hi-tech spectrum. The main function of a drum trigger is to convert a drumhit to a voltage pulse, in order to trigger an outboard sound source. In the case of MIDI, the drumhit can be converted into a MIDI signal to trigger any MIDI sound source. Drum triggers facilitate the blending of acoustic and electronic sounds, in addition to allowing electronic sounds to emanate from your acoustic kit. Drum triggers also give you the option of getting sounds from anything that's strikeable, be it a practice pad, a cowbell, a soda bottle, etc.

The degree of sophistication of your sound module, brain, or drum machine—in terms of factors that can or cannot be compensated for (like sensitivity, threshold, etc.)—will affect trigger placement on acoustic drums. Internal shell placement helps isolate triggers and reduce crosstalk. It's also the better option if you're the type that breaks or changes drumheads often. On the other hand, direct batter-head mounting is especially useful when dynamic control and maximum sensitivity are needed. Other places to mount drum triggers include the drum rim and the drumshell's exterior.

What follows is a review of several different drum triggering devices. For a wider overlook, refer to the December '86 *MD* for my reviews of DW, Shark, and Technics trigger pedals, and the January '87 review of Dynacord's *Rhythm Stick*.



BARCUS-BERRY 2050
Barcus-Berry's Model 2050 drum pickup/

trigger consists of a flat 1 1/2" transducer, joined by an 8" cable to a single 1/4" output jack box. The trigger uses foam tape to adhere itself to the drumhead, rim, or shell, while the output jack is *Velcroed*. Another piece of adhesive-backed *Velcro* allows you to mount the output jack box on the side of the drum or in any other convenient location. The 2050 trigger, like many others, also has the capability of performing as a drum mic' pickup for sound reinforcement, or as a sampling mic'.

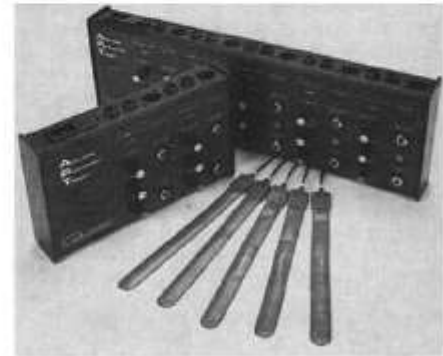
Because of its flat profile, the Barcus-Berry trigger stays out of the way easily. Sensitivity is not hindered at all by the foam tape mount, partly because only the ends of the pickup are adhered with the tape. In general, the 2050 is very "live" and performs excellently, while being quite unobtrusive. Retail price is \$42.50.

BARCUS-BERRY KRASH PAD

Besides making the 2050 trigger/pickup, Barcus-Berry also manufactures a drum trigger pad. The *Krash Pad* measures approximately 7 1/2" x 5 1/2", and has a very slim profile, being only 1" high. It has a rectangular, opaque acrylic base on which is mounted a slightly smaller rubber surface. The rubber pad actually consists of a hard top layer and a soft bottom layer, with an aluminum plate sandwiched in between. Unlike a lot of pads, the entire surface is "live." A 1/4" jack is on one end of the *Krash Pad*, and underneath is an aluminum bracket with nylon screws. The bracket will fit any L-arm type holder, or will allow the mounting of the *Krash Pad* on an acoustic drum rim.

The playing surface is exactly like a hard rubber practice pad: It has a lot of bounce, and is really not that uncomfortable. The pad is also dynamically sensitive. I'm not too keen on the mounting bracket. It works okay on a drum rim, but doesn't really stay too stable on an L-arm unless it's mounted perfectly flat.

In general, the *Krash Pad* does its job well, and is an alternative to using larger pads, due to its compact size. Barcus-Berry also says that smoke bombs and other pyrotechnics can be triggered via the *Krash Pad*. While I haven't exactly tried that, I'll take their word for it. The *Krash Pad* retails at \$83.50. For more information, write to Barcus-Berry at 5381 Production Drive, Huntington Beach, California 92649.



C-DUCER A.P.T.

My September '85 column reviewed C-T Audio Systems' *C-Ducer* tape transducer microphones for drums. *C-Ducer* also has a trigger system available utilizing the same concept of internally-mounted contact pickups.

The *A.P.T.* (*Acoustic Percussion Trigger*) is available in either a five-channel or a two-channel format. A separate control unit interfaces the tape mic's with drum brains, drum machines, and audio mixing boards. Each channel on the control box contains two 1/4" trigger output jacks, an XLR balanced audio output jack, a 1/4" unbalanced audio output jack, a 1/4" *C-Ducer* trigger input, a trigger LED indicator, A & B output level controls, and a Threshold Adjust knob. Underneath the unit are separate trimpots to adjust audio output levels for each channel (rather inconvenient placement, in my opinion).

Trigger Output A is designed to trigger drum brains usually triggered by pads. Trigger Output B is for triggering drum machines (which need pulsed inputs). Besides using the *A.P.T.* to trigger one or both of these types of electronic units, it can also be used for miking your acoustic drums simultaneously, by sending separate lines out to the mixing board. The various acoustic and electronic sounds can be combined and layered, giving some really big sounds, as well as making the *A.P.T.* an incredibly versatile system.

Flexible *C-Ducer* tape transducer mic's are included with the unit. Each mic' is a contact electret 8" long, 5/8" wide, and approximately a millimeter thick. The mic' is sandwiched between two layers of flexible plastic, enabling it to conform to the contours of a drum shell. (The mic' is designed for internal shell placement.) The entire length of the mic' is sensitive. (Many transducers have one single "hot

spot.)

There are two ways to mount the trigger mic's. For permanent mounting, each mic's strip has double-sided adhesive tape to affix it to the drum shell. For flexible mounting and experimentation, the mic can be suspended inside the shell by using rubber bands attached to the internal drum-lug mounting screws. If the *C-Ducer* is placed close to the batter head, there is a sharper attack. Placing it further down the shell gives more resonance (due to the air movement). When using the mic's as triggers, I found it best to have them as close to the playing head as possible, with the sensitivity set low. However, if you want to use *C-Ducers* as combination drum mic's/triggers, trial-and-error is the only way to find the optimum placement. You'll also need to experiment with trigger sensitivity in order to compensate for your playing force.

The low mass of the *C-Ducers* allows them to have a minimal effect on the acoustic tone of a drum. Also, since they're mounted internally, there's no danger of accidentally striking the pickup and damaging it. Besides triggering from an acoustic drumkit, the *A.P.T.* and *C-Ducers* will also work nicely on congas, bongos, timbales—whatever. I came away pretty impressed with the versatility and overall capabilities of the *A.P.T.* The trigger sound is clean, and the miked audio sound is superb. The five-channel version retails at \$699; the two-channel system retails at \$499. You can contact C-T Audio Systems at 3050 S.W. 14th Place, Suite 3, Boynton Beach, Florida 33435.



DAUZ DRUM PADS

Since the advent of electronic drumpads, many shapes and sizes have appeared on the market. Pad design is basically cosmetic, since the essential component—the pickup—is quite small. In fact, the size of the pad itself has nothing to do with its functionality.

Dan Daus is producing trigger pads that are only 6" in diameter and 2" high, allowing for a very compact setup. I've been testing the Daus pads for a while—

from their birth to their present design. What began as a flat-based, shellless pad with a thick rubber surface has now become a black, rounded-shell pad with a fitted rubber surface.

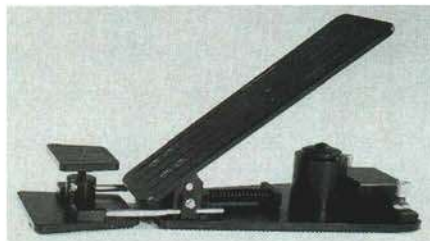
Daus pads utilize a three-point shock-mount spring system to afford some "give" to the playing surface. The pad is also isolated from external (false) triggering or crosstalk. The base of the pad has an adjustable dome-top clamp that will accept either L-arms or 7/8" tubing. A 1/4" output jack is on the side of the pad's shell. The base is detachable if you want to modify the pickup.

The pads are very compact, which is what I like most about them. Using various adapters and tom-tom arms, I was able to easily mount a four-pad cluster resembling a drumkit configuration on one stand. The total space taken up was approximately that of a floor tom. I used the "drumkit setup" of pads in a live situation to trigger a *SDS1000*, and in the studio to trigger a Linn 9000 and an E-Mu *SP12*. The pads were compatible with all those various systems, and everyone was raving about the portability and minimal space requirements needed. (Hmmm...I wonder if I could mount 'em on a marching harness for on-stage mobility....)

The acoustical impact sound is softer than that produced on a Simmons pad, and less likely to bleed into mic's when recording or playing live. The feel is quite natural, with good stick rebound. The pads are well constructed, and I like the "space-age" look.

If you don't want to use a full pad setup, the Daus pads will easily fit into the little nooks and crannies of your acoustic kit setup, where larger pads won't. The Daus pads were definitely an answer to some of my setup problems, and maybe they'll provide a solution for you, too. Retail price is \$89.95 each.

Dan Daus also manufactures a bass drum trigger, and custom-designs triggering setups and systems. Write him at Daus Designs, 4715 W. El Segundo Boulevard, #B., Hawthorne, California 90250.



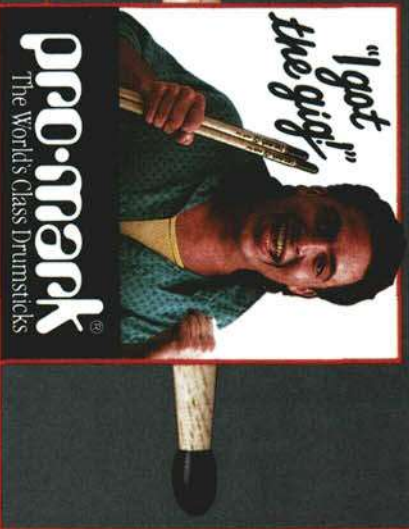
E-PEDAL

The Engineered Percussion *E-Pedal* is a bass drum trigger pedal that resembles a guitarist's volume pedal. It has a large, black, hinged footboard mounted on a 9 1/2" black anodized aluminum base plate. A single compression die spring is used for pedal tension. The spring slides along the

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base plate, and is tensionable at the back of the pedal via a drumkey. A 1/2" stainless steel rod is used as a "plunger" to activate the spring movement.

There is no beater or strap on the *E-Pedal*; the bottom of the footboard itself makes direct contact with a trigger housing that is also mounted onto the base plate. The housing is a 2 1/2" aluminum column, which is dust-proof and moisture-proof. Atop the column is a hard rubber cap, shaped like a tiny cymbal. This is what the footboard detonates. The trigger is adjustable for sensitivity via allen screws, and is supported inside by three springs to prevent double-triggering. In front of the housing is a small box with two 1/4" output jacks. (Two *E-Pedals* can be linked together if desired.) There are two knurled-knob spike spurs with locknuts on the base plate, and underneath the plate are strips of molded *Velcro* for superb gripping on a carpeted playing surface.

The *E-Pedal* also has a fully adjustable/detachable heel-support platform. It is a separate piece, connected to the pedal via sliding rods. The heel platform can be adjusted for height and distance, or can simply be removed altogether. The connecting rods adjust for forward/back distance, while the heel plate itself swivels like a piano stool to adjust height, and is then locked with a drumkey. In order to adjust the pedal's spring tension, the platform must be entirely removed. The heel plate is flat, while the footboard has a pre-set 45° angle (which can't be adjusted).

The *E-Pedal* is quick, light, smooth, and responsive—although its feel is slightly different than that of a conventional bass drum pedal and does take some getting used to. For more control, I personally found it better to play heel-down, but I found myself lifting my heel in order to play doubles.

After playing the pedal for a while, I

adapted to its nuances rather easily. The *E-Pedal* works well, and I like the "high-tech" appearance. One more plus is that since there is no beater to allow room for, the *E-Pedal* can be placed closer to your regular bass drum pedal, if you're using it in conjunction with an acoustic setup. Retail price is \$269.00 (with an unconditional guarantee). Engineered Percussion may be contacted at 23206 S. Normandie Avenue, #7, Torrance, California 90502.

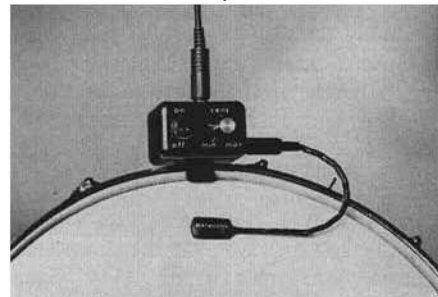


PHI-TRAC TRIGGERS

Phi Technologies offers *Phi-Trac* drum triggers utilizing piezo-electric transducers. The triggers have 3/4" round black anodized aluminum casings, and use a special butyl-rubber double-sided adhesive. Attached to the trigger cable is a 1/4" female connector with a small adhesive-backed plastic clip fitted around it, allowing the jack to be fixed to the drumshell, where it's out of the way. The *Phi-Trac* triggers can be mounted on either the drumhead or shell, and will work on any type of drum.

Being aluminum-encased, the triggers are pretty durable: One of them took a direct shot from a drumstick and suffered

no apparent damage. The *Phi-Tracs* have good sensitivity, while double-triggering is kept at a minimum. The neoprene adhesive has a high tack and really keeps the trigger on the head. (In fact, it's pretty permanent.) The adhesive squares are also available separately, as are the connector clamps. A set of six *Phi-Trac* triggers retails at \$199.50 (which works out to about \$33.50 each when purchased separately). I have no complaints with the *Phi-Tracs*; they are lightweight and reliable. Write Phi Technologies at 4605 North Stiles, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105.



TECHTONICS SDT BEATMASTER

Techtonics has two rim-mountable drum triggers available—one for standard rims (*SDT*), and one for bass drum hoops (*BDT*). The *Beatmaster SDT* is a two-piece unit: the pickup and a small control box. The control box measures 1 1/2" high by 2" long by 1 1/2" deep, and has a spring clip similar to the clip found on many external drum mufflers. The clip allows the box to attach right to the drum rim. The pickup is 1" in diameter, and plugs into the control box via a 3.5mm connector on the end of a 6" cable.

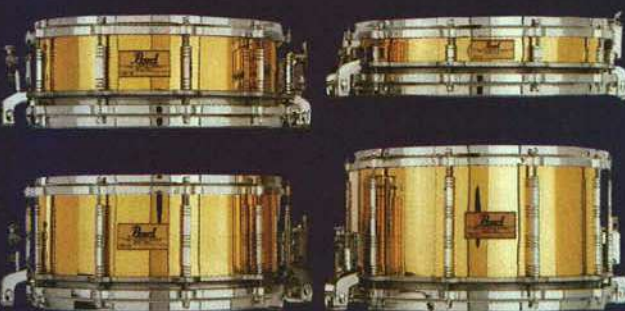
The *Beatmaster* triggers are unique in that velocity sensitivity is controllable at the drum, using a rotary knob on the rim-mounted control box. The box also contains a toggle switch that allows the user to turn the trigger on and off at will, while

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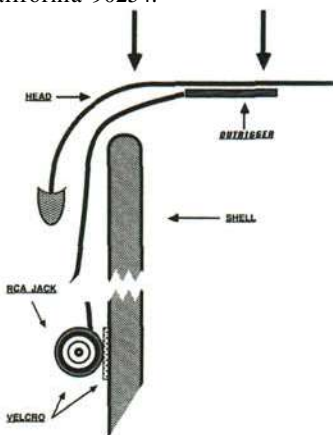
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playing. However, the control box does not *have* to be used. Adapting the jack on the pickup to a 1/4" jack will enable it to plug directly into any sound module.

There are several ways to mount the pickup onto the drum. Duct tape can be used; it's removable and won't damage the pickup. Other options (with more permanency) are silicone adhesive or hobbyist's glue. Most drummers will want to mount the pickup directly on the drumhead, but an alternative idea might be to fix it onto the rim. By using the trigger's sensitivity control, the rim can then become a separate triggering device. The possibility of double-triggering is nonexistent, as long as the sensitivity control is properly adjusted.

The only problem I found with the *SDT* trigger was that the control box sometimes got in the way of my playing (especially if mounted on 8" or 10" toms, or near where I play side-stick rimshots on the snare). I suppose the trigger cable could be lengthened so that the box is out of the way, but it would then be off of the drum rim as well—defeating the purpose of having the box there in the first place. I love the idea of being able to turn the trigger on and off while playing. This is an especially helpful feature if you're not using a sound technician out front who can insert or take away your triggered sounds as needed in songs. The onboard sensitivity also helped greatly for altering trigger dynamics from song to song. The *Techtonics* trigger may be a bit more fragile than some of the others, but the pickup can be replaced for about \$10, if the need ever arises. (I haven't had any problems yet.) The *BDT* is exactly the same as the *SDT* except for the different mount, and both retail for \$34.95. Contact *Techtonics* at 719 Longfellow Avenue, Hermosa Beach, California 90254.



LITTLE MISS MOFFAT OUTRIGGER

The Moffat *Outrigger* triggers are a bit different from the others in that they are primarily designed to be installed *underneath* the batter head. The pickup itself is extremely thin and is approximately the

size of a dime. Connected to it is a 1 1/2" long, flat, flexible conductor, which exits the drum between the head and shell. This is permanently connected to a short, standard cable that has a female RCA jack. Another longer cable mates with the RCA jack and has a 1/4" plug at its other end for hookup to the sound module. *Velcro* is used at various points to hold the cable and RCA jack to the drumshell, keeping those pieces out of the way and providing some degree of strain relief.

The *Outrigger* has to be installed as close to the shell as possible, for obvious reasons. This is a bit more of a hassle than the other trigger models, since it involves removing the bottom head first (for planning the position), then removing the top head for installation. (Single-headed drums aren't as difficult to rig.) In order to prevent double triggering, the *Outrigger* must be glued securely to the head. A silicone adhesive is recommended by the manufacturer. It bonds extremely well, yet the pickup can be removed, if necessary, with a razor blade. Drying time is the disadvantage here; it takes one to two hours for the silicone to fully cement itself. Thin foam tape also worked for me on certain drums.

The *Outrigger* is very small and lightweight, so it does not dampen the drum sound. Since it's inside the drum, the pickup is well protected and less prone to damage. The only problem I can foresee would be that if the glue hasn't cured properly, the trigger could fall off inside the drum during a gig. Also, if you're a constant drumhead-breaker, you may not want to go with internal head mounting.

Besides their application on acoustic drums, the *Outriggers'* compact size allows them to also be mounted inside removable-head practice pads, thus creating your own drum trigger pads. For those who insist on external mounting, Moffat also makes the *Outrigger-X*, which mounts onto the top of a drumhead. It is identical to the internal model, except that it has a longer flat conductor that will go right over the drum rim quite neatly.

Cosmetically, the *Outriggers* are appealing, since all wires are kept out of the way. Routing the cable out of the shell is done in an ingenious manner. Sonically, there are no wires to rattle inside the drum. Essentially, when the *Outriggers* are silicone-glued, they become "part of the drumhead." They're quite "hot" and, in fact, could be used in small sound reinforcement situations as well, for extra attack. If you don't mind taking a little time to install them, the *Outriggers* work out pretty well. Retail price is \$29.95. Little Miss Moffat Electronics can be contacted at P.O. Box 315, Antioch, Tennessee 37013.



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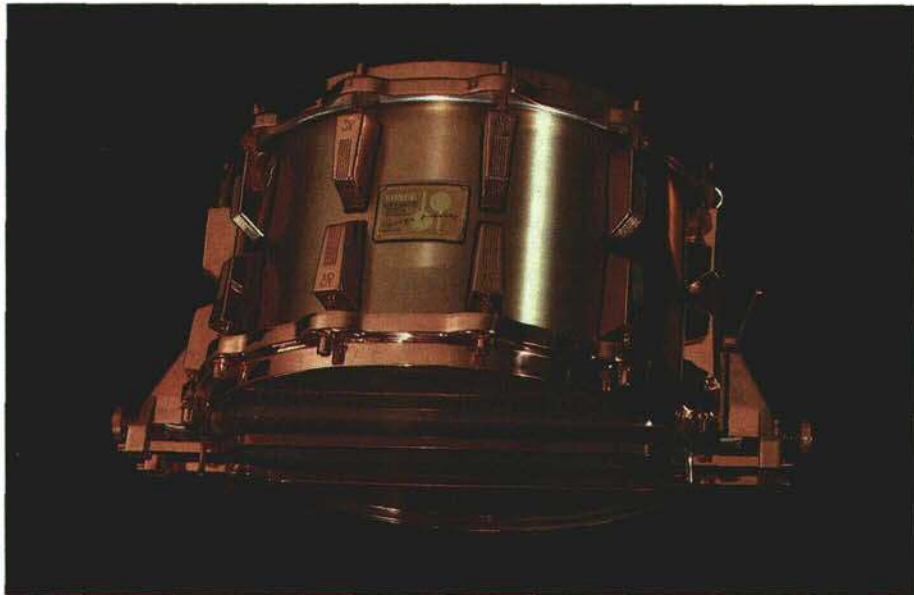
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Snare Drums

Premier Piccolo and Heavy Rock Nine Snare Drums

Midway through last year, Premier declared 1987 the "Year Of The Snare Drum." As focal points for this new campaign, the company introduced a new Piccolo snare, the Model 2024, and—at the other end of the scale—the Model 2029 *Heavy Rock Nine* deep-shelled snare. I tested each drum under isolated "laboratory" conditions and on gigs with my club band.

In general, I was impressed with the construction and workmanship on both drums. Premier is well-known for the quality of its plating, machining, and detail work, and that quality was well-represented here. From a design standpoint, the *Heavy Rock Nine* is the more innovative of the two drums, since piccolo snares are not particularly new, and the manner in which the deep-shelled drum has been created definitely *is* new. I'll talk more about that later. Another nice touch from Premier is the inclusion of user instructions and explanations with each



Sonor Signature HLD 590

Sonor drums have a reputation for being the finest mass-produced instruments made today. The *HLD 590* snare drum is a testament to Sonor's desire for producing high-quality products. Quite simply, this is the best-constructed snare drum available today.

The *HLD 590*'s shell is made from bell bronze that is cast from one piece. According to Sonor, this method of shell construction ensures a perfectly even structure of the shell material. Both the top and bottom rims are casted, and all mounted parts (including the clip-on external muffler) are copper plated. This gives the drum a very striking look. The size of the drum is 8x14.

The snare mechanism is another high-quality feature, which is currently available on all Sonor *Signature* snare drums. It is a parallel-action snare strainer, which means the snare bed is pulled up evenly from both sides. The snares themselves can be tensioned two ways: either across the bottom against themselves or against the head. This is the smoothest snare strainer that I have ever seen. When you turn the snares on, there is no sound of the snares hitting the head. The drum comes with two sets of snares: a 22- and a 24-strand stainless steel set.

Another excellent feature of this drum

(and all *Signature* drums) is the "Snap-lock" tension screws. The 24 screws (12 per side) are designed to not loosen after the drum is played a while. The "Snap-lock" screws have a flat edge that is held by a steel collar, keeping the screws from loosening. Also, the drum lugs are muffled with foam lug inserts that are "bedded" on springs, which keeps them from rattling.

How does the drum sound? Loud! This drum has amazing projection. Besides the projection, the drum has a very unique sound—a "throaty" sound, which was met with approval from the band I played it with. I found the drum very easy to tune (it was fitted with Remo *Ambassador* weight batter and snare heads), and it needed very little muffling to make it sound good. This drum is a real pleasure to play.

Okay, now that I've said what a completely awesome drum this is, I must point out two problems with it. The first is the actual weight of the drum: 33 pounds! That's about *three times* as much as a drum that size normally weighs. (Some cheaper snare stands can't hold that much weight!) The second problem with the drum is the price: It lists for \$1,900. That price can be prohibitive for most drummers. However, as I sit here looking at this incredible drum, I'm desperately trying to come up with ways to raise the money!

William F. Miller

Yamaha Brass Snare Drums

A recent entry in Yamaha's ever-expanding assortment of products is a series of brass-shell snare drums. There are four models, which we'll look at individually. But first, a couple of features that apply to the entire line: All of the drums feature ten tension lugs, and none of them have any sort of internal damper. (Each drum did come equipped with a clear plastic ring, however, which does a better job of muffling anyway.) Overall, the brass shells give a little more depth and warmth than steel or chrome shells, but are much brighter than wood-shell drums. Each drum was fitted with Yamaha/Remo batter (*Ambassador* weight) and snare heads. Each drum also had its own serial number, stamped onto the logo badge.

SD-496: Of the four models, this one could best be described as the "general purpose" brass snare drum. It measures 6 1/2 x 14, is fitted with Yamaha *Power Hoops* (aluminum with copper plating), and has Yamaha's "standard" snare strainer. This strainer is the basic lever type, with tension adjustment screws on both the release and butt ends, which can help when it comes to centering the snares against the bottom head. The drum came with standard 20-strand wire snares.

drum. When a drum offers new design innovations or unfamiliar means of construction, I think it's important that the consumer be informed as to the way in which the manufacturer intended those innovations to be employed. Obviously, so does Premier.

With all the innovation and quality going into the construction of these two drums, you'd think Premier would make sure that every detail measured up to that same standard. Unfortunately, that isn't the case in one important area: the snare throw-off. Both drums feature the same parallel-action snare mechanism, which—according to the company—affords "maximum surface area of wire snares." I'm not fond of this type of throw-off in general, but the Premier model presented me with one especially annoying problem: No matter how carefully I tried, I could not put the snares into the "on" position without creating a loud "snap." This might not be a problem for rock players using the *Heavy Rock Nine*, since they might never need to switch the snares from the "off" to the "on" position while playing. But for a Latin or jazz player—and especially for the orchestral/concert percussionist—this problem would be most aggravating. It was, however, the



only major flaw I could find in either of the drums. Now let's look at each individually.

Model 2024 Piccolo: This is, according to Premier's ads, a "special, hand-made limited edition drum." It's a 4x14 eight-

lug drum with an aluminum shell finished in gold lacquer. In terms of looks, I found the finish less appealing than some of Premier's others. At best, aluminum buffs up to a satin finish, and the color of the

continued on page 102

I had absolutely no complaint with this drum. The strainer is what I would call a "no-nonsense" design: It lets you move the snares against the head, release the snares from the head, and adjust the overall tension quietly and with a minimum of fuss. Snare response was good from the center of the drum to the edge. In a small room, the drum had a lot of ring, but the plastic muffler took care of that. In a large room, the drum projected nicely while retaining a good amount of depth. Again, it's a good general-purpose drum that could be used in a variety of situations.

SD-416: This drum has exactly the same shell and lugs as the above model, but it has the regular Yamaha die-cast aluminum hoops instead of the *Power Hoops*, and the snare assembly is very different. The strainer was "borrowed" from Yamaha's marching snare drums, and has a plastic-covered handle that drops in such a way as to move the snares away from the head without releasing the snare tension. It's not quite parallel action, as the snare unit doesn't drop at the butt end, but it's the same basic idea. (In the photo, this is the drum on the bottom right.) This type of strainer is used because, instead of the standard wire snares, the *416* is equipped with eight cable snares, each of which has its own tension adjustment. The snares extend past the head and can be adjusted both horizontally and vertically to get



them to "lay" right.

This drum also appears in Yamaha's concert percussion catalog. It has a rather military sound, as the cable snares give a similar sound to gut snares (but without the hassle of gut, which is greatly affected by weather). For average drumset playing, this drum would probably sound too dry.

But at loud volumes, it works quite well for fat backbeats with a lot of crack. Also, cable snares are not nearly as sensitive to sympathetic vibrations from tom-toms as regular wire snares. So while this drum might not be your "average" drummer's cup of tea, for a very loud rock setting it

continued on page 103

Premier continued from page 101

gold lacquer on top of that finish creates the look of an inexpensive imported drum. When contrasted with the absolutely flawless chrome plating on all of the drum's other components, the shell's finish comes in a poor second. The large rectangular Premier logo badge, and a second, even larger Limited Edition Series ID badge are made even more conspicuous by the drum's smaller size. It might have been a nice touch for Premier to reduce the size of these items to correspond to the scale of the drum.

When it comes to sound, however, I have nothing but good things to say about this drum. I'm particularly partial to crisp, bright, high-pitched snare drums, and this drum certainly is all of those things and more. The shallow depth of the shell means that the impact of the stick on the batter head is transmitted almost instantly to the snare side head, thus maximizing the snare sensitivity. The drum is, as Premier claims, "exceptionally sensitive from center to rim." It is also very controllable, which I believe is due to the aluminum shell. For all its faults in terms of appearance, aluminum is an excellent material when it comes to producing a dry, crisp drum sound. In order to get a perspective on this drum's sound, I compared it to the Yamaha piccolo model (reviewed elsewhere in this article). The brass-

shelled Yamaha model was *too* bright, *too* sharp, and *very* hard to control. I was using the drum in a drumset application on a low-volume gig, and my band was complaining that its sound was hurting their ears. The Premier's sound was drier, with less ring and overabundance of attack. And yet there was certainly no lack of projection. If I laid into the Premier snare, it gave out with a crisp bark that carried well to the back of the room. I should point out that I tested this drum with Premier's own *SD Extra Sensitive* white-coated batter head, which is roughly equivalent to a Remo *Diplomat*.

I found that the overall sound of this drum was much more dramatically affected by the tension of the snare side head than a deeper-shelled drum would likely be. I realize that there is no way to get a "deep" or "fat" sound out of a piccolo snare; it isn't designed to produce such a sound. But I did find it possible to get the drum into a moderately high, general-purpose depth range (as opposed to the *earache range*) useful in drumset applications by reducing the tension on the bottom head. I've already mentioned the drum's snare sensitivity; Premier's snare *adjustments* were quite sensitive too, with dials at both ends of the snare mechanism. A 24-strand wire snare came on the drum and provided plenty of crispness. (An external tone control for the batter head is also

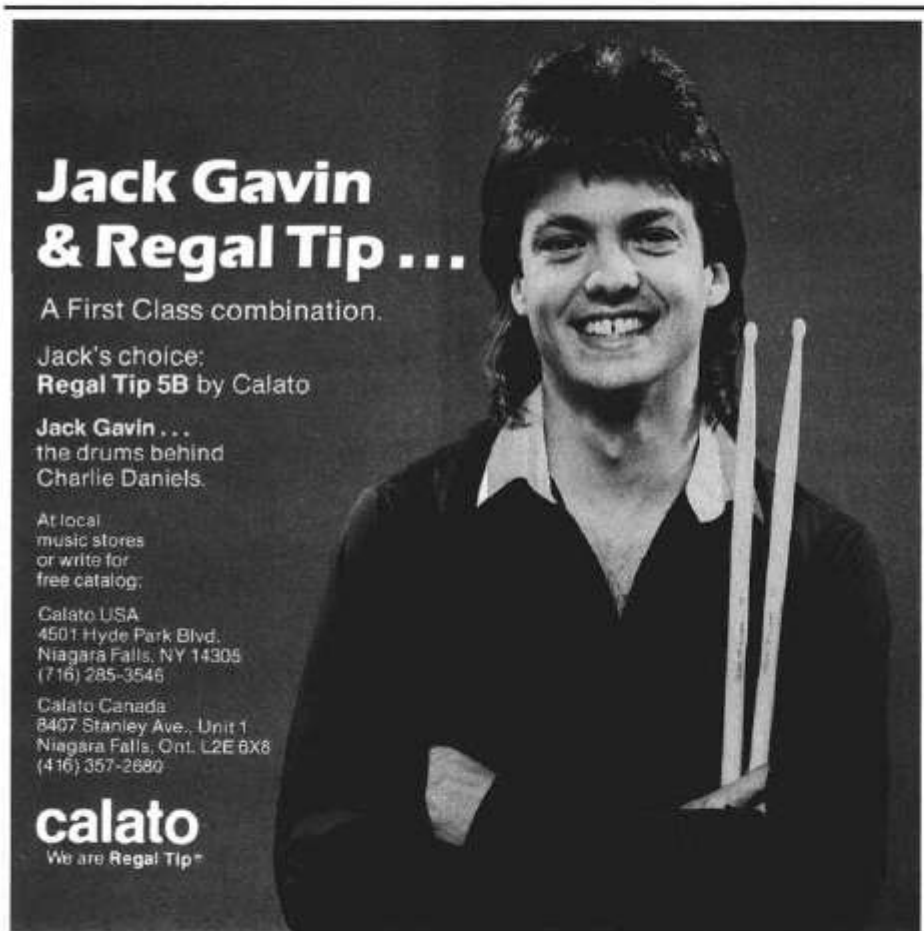
included.)

All in all, I liked the 2024 Piccolo quite a lot. I'd have to take issue with Premier's claim that the drum would be the "perfect orchestral/concert snare," based on the problem with the throw-off that I mentioned earlier. But I would certainly agree that it would be an "ideal second snare voice for rock drummers," and might well function as a *primary* snare for drumset players in any style who like a crisp, cutting backbeat and excellent sticking response. The drum's retail list price is \$390.00.

Model 2029 Heavy Rock Nine: This is Premier's heavy artillery in the snare drum department, and I must say it's like nothing I've ever seen or heard before. The 9" deep, double-beaded shell is made of brass, which generally offers a bright, ringing, high-projection tone. To this, Premier has added an inner layer of birchwood, in order to create warmth and "added color." And as if this weren't different enough, felt dampening rings have been added at the top and bottom of each shell to further control overtones. Just to add to the overall strength, completely circular marching-style rims have been fitted top and bottom. So what we have here, according to Premier, is a very powerful—yet very controllable—snare drum.

I have to go along with Premier on this one. This is a unique drum that measures up to all the claims made for it. It does produce a very fat, very *big* sound, as you would expect from a drum nine inches deep. Due to the distance between the top and bottom heads, the drum's snare sensitivity is not what you would find in shallower drums—although with proper snare and snare head tension it was acceptable at moderate impact and surprisingly good at heavy impact. But even with the maximum snare response achievable, I didn't find it possible to get a high, crisp sound *in addition* to the deep, powerful one. This might be addressable if it were possible to add a 42-strand power snare set onto the drum in place of the standard 24-strand model, but the parallel-action snare mechanism would not accommodate this modification.

I did find that there was a rather narrow margin for error in terms of head and snare tension: The drum "choked" quickly if tensioned too tightly, and became tubby equally quickly if tensioned too loosely. But in between those points, the drum created a sound that would fill most arenas and suit most power players, and yet remained controllable in terms of dynamics. The wood lining took just enough edge off of the brass shell to produce a sound falling firmly in between a deep-shell wood snare and a standard brass model—a sound that has not existed up till now. Premier supplies the drum with its own *Studio* batter head. I found that that head's muffling qualities were too much when combined with the wood lining of



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the drum and the felt dampening strips; the projection and "liveliness" of the drum were too greatly reduced. I tested the drum with Evans *Uno 58 1000* and *Rock* heads, and found that the thinner *Uno 58* (similar to a Remo *Ambassador*) produced a more cutting sound, while the twin-ply *Rock* head gave more depth. Both allowed the drum to project more clearly than did the Premier *Studio* head.

Things to know about the *Heavy Rock Nine* include the fact that not all stands will go low enough to accommodate such a deep drum. Also, the circular rim, with no cut-outs or "ears," calls for a wider spread from the "arms" of a snare stand than most other drums. I had to force mine apart just a bit in order to fit the drum into the stand. There is that annoying "snap" from the snare throw-off I mentioned earlier, but I doubt that that would present much of a problem to rock players. The drum features ten high-tension double lugs, and is finished very nicely in a clear lacquer over the brass shell. An external tone control is provided.

Premier has definitely come up with a unique entry into the field of "power" snare drums. If you're in the market for a drum that's as musical as it is powerful, you should take a close look at the *Heavy Rock Nine*. The drum lists for \$475.00.

—Rick Van Horn

Yamaha continued from page 101

might be just the thing.

SD-498: This drum is very similar to the 496, except that it has an 8" depth, and the lugs are of the type used on Yamaha's *Recording Custom* drums. It comes with *Power Hoops* and Yamaha's standard strainer. The drum has the fatter sound and extra ring that you would expect from a drum of that depth, but it is surprisingly responsive.

SD-493: At the opposite end of the spectrum is this drum, which might be the most interesting of the brass series. It's a piccolo snare drum, measuring 3 1/2 x 14. It comes equipped with *Power Hoops*, and the strainer is a slightly modified Yamaha standard model. However, the snares extend past the head, and there is an adjustable snare guide that helps you to get the snares right where you want them.

This drum has more body than I expected from a drum of that size, although I would still be careful about using it as a general-purpose snare drum. It could work well in a quiet setting (three-piece acoustic jazz trio, perhaps), or in a situation where the drums are miked. The drum is at its best when tuned fairly tight, and rimshots sound great. I've heard Dave Weckl and David Garibaldi use this drum (miked), and it was perfect for their tight, crisp styles. It could also be good as a second snare drum. The trend these days seems to be moving towards higher pitched snares, so I have a feeling that this drum is going to become very popu-

lar. Because the shallow depth emphasises the high overtones, the drum might be too bright for some tastes. But at one point I replaced the top head with a brush-coated Evans *Rock* head, and that eliminated some of the extra high end.

I mentioned above that this drum has an adjustable snare guide. That brings me to my only complaint. When I first took the drum out of the box, I was getting some snare buzz. I originally got rid of it by loosening the bottom head, but then the drum was not at its optimum pitch. It was only then that I noticed a couple of drum-key-operated screws at the bottom of the snare assembly. Upon investigation, I discovered the adjustable snare guide, and I was then able to return the drum to the pitch I wanted and also get rid of the buzz by adjusting the "lay" of the snares. Great. So what's my complaint? Well, I want to know why Yamaha doesn't include instructions, as this type of adjustment is not all that common. Maybe I'm just old fashioned, but I remember buying a Rogers *Dyna-sonic* snare drum in the '60s, and it had instructions with it. (Maybe I'm not so old fashioned after all; a few days after I checked out the Yamaha drums, we got in a couple of Premier snare drums to review. They came with detailed instructions on how to adjust the snares.) I don't mean to blow this out of proportion; obviously, the important thing is that the drum does

have this feature, and it's a useful one.

All in all, the Yamaha brass snare drums are well designed, and the four models cover a pretty wide range of applications. The list prices of the drums are: model *SD-496*, 6 1/2x14, \$475.00; model *SD-416*, 6 1/2x14 (with cable snares), \$545.00; model *SD-498*, 8x14, \$525.00; model *SD-493*, 3 1/2x14, \$505.00.

—Rick Mattingly



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Originality

by Roy Burns

On a clinic that I did recently, a young person made the following comment: "I don't want to study the rudiments because I want to develop an original style." My response was, "All rudiments are basically single strokes and double strokes. To learn the ones that can be applied to the drumset shouldn't take more than a few weeks. There is no need to 'study' them indefinitely."

A young woman told me that she had not taken drum lessons or learned to read music when she first started playing because she also wanted to be "original." After reading a number of articles in *Modern Drummer*, including some of mine, she had a change of heart. She said, "I'm studying, learning how to read music, and having more fun. I'm listening to a greater variety of music and learning a lot."

The dictionary defines "originality" as something "Fresh and unusual; not copied. The ability to produce new ideas in a creative and inventive way." The desire to be original or to have an original style of playing is a good thing. However, I would

suggest that you have to crawl before you can walk, and walk before you can run. It is more important to be "good" than it is to be "original," especially in the beginning.

Let's put it another way. In order to play a game well, you first must learn the rules. Once you have done this, your originality will come to the surface. Your style will grow out of your participation in the game—which is, in this case, music.

To me, originality is the way you react to other musicians and to musical problems. It is *not* something that you "con-tribute" while sitting at home and then "inflict" on every group you play with. For example, when I was in Benny Goodman's band, I had to play "Sing, Sing, Sing" every night. This was the number that made Gene Krupa famous, and it was mostly tom-tom rhythms throughout. I had to play the arrangement as it was written. But I didn't want to sound like an imitation of Gene Krupa (even though I had admired his playing for years). So I added a hi-hat pattern while playing the tom-tom rhythms. Gene didn't play the hi-hat on 2 and 4 on the original record. I added a "splash" accent every couple of measures on the hi-hat. The result was that I played the arrangement, but I added my own "originality" to it. Also, instead of playing the drum solo segment on just the toms, I used the whole kit, and especially the snare drum, to change the character of the solo. Fortunately, this was recorded and was a major step in my early career in terms of recognition.

The point I am trying to make is that my *originality* came about because I was *reacting* to the music. The late Buddy Rich once said that he used the bass drum for accents in big bands before anyone else

did, in order to give the ensembles a more "explosive" feeling and sound. That was only one way his originality showed itself by reacting to the music around him.

Originality is not based on ignorance. These misleading and self-serving drummers who proudly proclaim "I never took a lesson" give me a pain. Who cares? I know I don't. What's important is not *how* you learned but whether or not you *did* learn.

Today's great young drummers, such as Vinnie Colaiuta, Gregg Bissonette, Dave Weckl, and Steve Smith (to name some of my favorites), are all drummers who have studied both drumming and music. They also have "original" styles. Each one does things that are fresh and different. Each one spent a lot of time studying and practicing.

The late, great Count Basie was asked the following question during an interview: "When your band first started, it was very original and innovative. However, over the past number of years, your band has not changed too much. Why is that?" Count Basie responded, "The people you writers refer to as 'innovators' were just being themselves. I am still being myself." This is a heavy comment. Be yourself—but be *all* you can be while being yourself.

Practicing the rudiments won't necessarily make you a great drummer. Studying music and drumming is no guarantee, either. However, remember that there are probably 1,000 drummers for every job. Give your talent and originality the best possible chance. Learn all you can about drumming and about music while you are young.

Remember, before you can be "original," you first have to be good enough to play with good musicians. If you can do this, your creative talents will be encouraged and enhanced by the talents and abilities of those around you. For example, the great Joe Morello said that working with Dave Brubeck helped and encouraged him to be more creative. There are many examples of Joe's originality on records such as "Take Five," the first recorded drum solo in 5/4 time. "Take Five" is generally regarded by most drummers as a "classic." And yet, if Joe had not been good enough to get the job with Dave Brubeck, his "originality" would not be on records for us to enjoy.

So be yourself, be original, but do all you can to be good!



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Highlights Of The Percussive Arts Society International Convention

St, Louis

Photos by Lissa Wales



Evelyn Glennie's solo concert was one of the most inspiring of the convention.



Vic Firth chatting with Terri Lyne Carrington.



A panel discussion concerning women in percussion featured Linda Maxey, Carol Simon, Kathleen Kastner, Judith Murray, Lauren Vogel, and Terri Lyne Carrington.



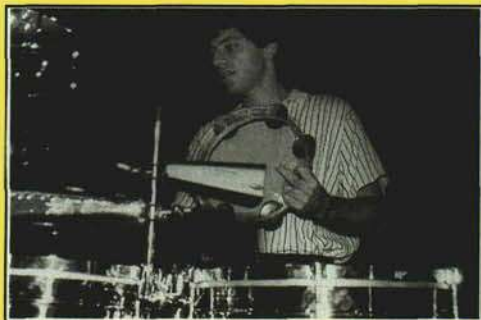
Steve Houghton and Emil Richards conducted an informative clinic on odd-time rhythms.



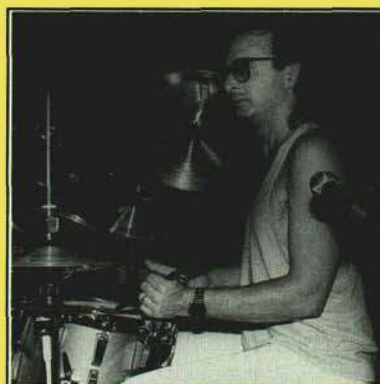
Terry Bozzio and Sonny Emory warming up together prior to their duo clinic.



Peter Donald, David Garibaldi, and Pete Magadini.



Norbert Goldberg presented a clinic on Latin percussion.



Steve Smith's clinic was inspiring as well as informative.



Jim Chapin could be found at the Drum Workshop exhibit.



Cymbal clinics were presented by the Chicago Symphony's Sam Denov and the New York Philharmonic's Chris Lamb.



One of the most talked about performances was by the State University of Sao Paulo (Brazil) Percussion Ensemble.



Chris Parker participated in a clinic dealing with drumset miking.



Efrain Toro explored the ever-growing world of electronics.



Bill Molenhof's performance combined traditional marimba with electronic percussion.



"Mr. Percussion" himself, Bobby Christian, gave an enjoyable performance.



Joe Franco, Jim Petercsak, and Premier's Tom Meyers.



Dave Friedman explored solo vibes playing, and was then joined by drummer Danny Gottlieb and a bassist for a final tune.



Gregg Bissonette drew one of the largest crowds for his clinic, which was notable for its positive energy.



Alan White proved himself to be a capable and articulate clinician.



Cosmo Barbara lectured on the teaching of rudiments.



PAS conventions bring a lot of different types of players together: left to right, Steve Houghton, Ed Thigpen, Gregg Bissonette, Bud Bissonette (Gregg's father), and Julie Spencer.



Tom Oldakowski discussed the ins and outs of drum machine programming.



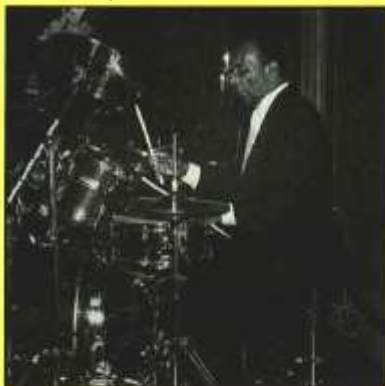
The keynote speaker at the Saturday night banquet was William F. Ludwig, Jr.



George Marsh presented a clinic on his concept of "inner drumming," and was a frequent participant in the after-hours jam sessions.



Ralph Humphrey's clinic explored the possibilities of the Yamaha Electronic Percussion System.



Ed Thigpen was the lead drummer for the jam sessions.



An unidentified drummer went berserk in the exhibit area after attending one too many drumset clinics.



The North Texas State University drum line took first place in the marching competition.

PASIC '88 will be held on November 17-20 in San Antonio, Texas. For information, contact the Percussive Arts Society, 214 West Main Street, Box 697, Urbana IL 61801-0697



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ble with specially-designed filters to maximize the efficiency of the mic' in specific drums. Mic's are available especially for snare drums, kick drums, and tom-toms; filtered mic's for use on conga drums are under development. For further information, contact P.A. Products, 1571 El Camino Real, Suite 39, Mountain View, California 94040, or call (415) 968-5999.

UDU HADGINI

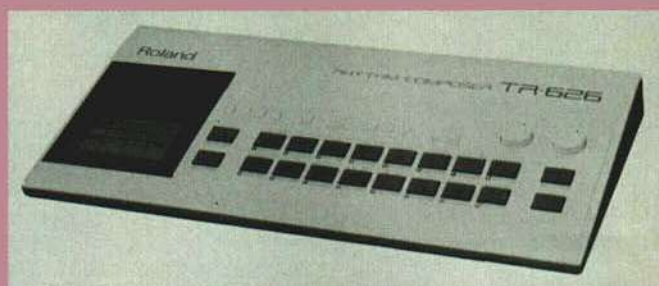


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The *Hadgini* was conceived by Frank Giorgini and Jamey Haddad, and designed by Giorgini. According to its creators, "The electronic possibilities of the *Hadgini* are limitless, and the experience of simply hold-

ing and playing this clay sculpture is sensuous and fulfilling. Its low, haunting vibrations are as pure and spiritual as a heartbeat. The higher register of pitches can be compared to bongo or tabla drums, and its liquid tone is similar to the African talking drum—yet has a quality of sound that cannot be attained by a skin-covered drum." Available accessories include a universal adaptable stand, the internal microphone system, and a protective travel case. For further information contact Udu Hadgini, Country Route 67, Box 126, Freehold, New York 12431, (518) 634-2559 [or (212) 307-1598 in New York City].

ROLAND TR-626 RHYTHM COMPOSER



Roland's *TR-626 Rhythm Composer* is a rhythm machine that features 30 built-in tuneable sound sources and eight individual outputs. Available sounds include a five-piece drumkit with two variations per drum, Latin percussion sounds, and cymbals. The *TR-626* features an internal memory of 96 rhythm patterns: 48 preset and 48 programmable. Patterns for up to six songs (up to 999 measures in length) may be created and stored by combining the 96 rhythm patterns.

The *TR-626* is equipped with eight individual outputs, extensive MIDI functions, Song Position Pointer, Tape Sync, and a programmable Trigger output for linking various

effects units. A large LCD display combined with numerous edit functions make programming and editing easy. A tape interface and an optional *M-128D Memory Card* (with double the capacity of the built-in memory) store performance data. Up to 144 patterns or 18 songs (up to 2,797 measures in length) may be stored in this manner. A built-in pitch control allows changes in tuning for each individual sound source. Along with level balance setting, tuning can be individually set for internal and card memory banks. For more information, contact RolandCorp US, 7200 Dominion Circle, Los Angeles, California 90040, (213) 685-5141.

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Four Designs Company recently introduced the offspring of its very successful *FX Rack*: the *Son of FX*. The new unit was designed to organize recording, computer, and rack-mountable equipment in an attractive mobile work station on wheels. *Son of FX* offers two adjustable shelves designed to hold multi-track recorders, drum machines, mixing consoles, MIDI sequencers, computer monitors, disk drives, etc. In addition, 10 units of rack space is provided for mounting outboard effects, digital samplers, keyboard expanders, power amps, cassette decks, MIDI controllers, and more. An optional *Rack-drawer*, a two-space, rack-mountable drawer, is also available to conveniently store patch cables, tools, and accessories.

Son of FX is manufactured on automated machinery using special wood/laminate materials. The all-wood design eliminates ground loop problems



encountered when audio equipment is rack mounted. The unit is compact, using just over two square feet of floor space. For information, contact Four Designs Company, 6531 Gross Ave., Canoga Park, California 91307, (818) 716-8540.

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Q. How do the HH and AA Sound Control cymbals differ?

A. Its low profile and the hand hammering create the warm, rich tonal characteristics of the HH Sound Control.
The AA Sound Control on the other hand is brighter and more cutting.

Q. Then what is a Hi-Bell Sound Control cymbal?

A. Unlike our other hand hammered cymbals, the Hi-Bell has the higher profile of the AA ... resulting in warm, rich tones, but with a drier sound, higher pitch and additional cut. It's a voice between the HH and AA ... very versatile for riding and accenting.

Q. Who can use Sound Control cymbals in their set-up? ... Can I?

A. These unique cymbals were created for the versatile and articulate drummer ... for both live and studio situations. Sound Control is a welcome new voice for any player's set-up ... be it rock, jazz, country, or beyond. Mix them in with your present set-up and you'll be amazed at the difference.

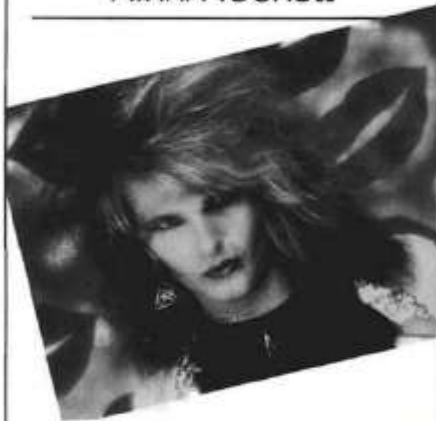
Such respected drummers as Larrie Londin (*Journey*, *Everly Brothers*), Jeff Watts (*Wynton Marsalis*), Richie Hayward (*Warren Zevon*, *Little Feat*) and Pat Mastelotto (*Mr. Mister*) added Sound Control cymbals to their set-ups ... instantly!

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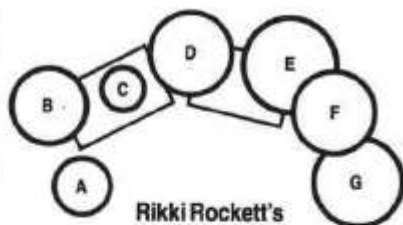
Rikki Rockett



Rikki Rockett is the driving force behind new metal sensation "Poison." "I didn't get this gig because I fit the image... I helped start the damn thing," says Rikki. "I help write, help do business, take part in designing the clothes and promote my butt off!"

Rikki describes the nucleus of Poison's attitude as an "Entertainment or Death" theory. "It's like a Broadway musical at an ice hockey level!" he says.

Since he first started playing, Rikki has been sold on Zildjian cymbals. "I bought my first set of Zildjians from my brother-in-law and my life has never been the same!! I've dragged my current set-up all around the country for over a year on tour, and they're still as sweet as ever."



Rikki Rockett's cymbal set-up.

- A. 14" Z. Dyno Beat Hi Hats
- B. 17" A. Rock Crash Platinum
- C. 12" A. Splash Platinum
- D. 18" Z. Power Crash
- E. 20" Z. Heavy Power Ride
- F. 18" A. Rock Crash Platinum
- G. 19" K. China Boy Brilliant

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**VINNIE
AND DAVE—
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ON THE VIRTUES
OF A ZILDJIAN
CYMBAL.**

How does a 360-year-old family of cymbal makers keep up with the demands of modern drummers and today's music?

At Zildjian, we listen to innovative artists like Vinnie Colaiuta and Dave Weckl. And turn their ideas into new sounds and new cymbals.

"Zildjian is really tuned in to the needs of the drummer. Their people are out in the field listening and doing research, asking drummers what they want in cymbals," says Vinnie Colaiuta, L.A. studio drummer who's played with Frank Zappa, Joni Mitchell, Gino Vannelli, Tom Scott, Chaka Khan and The Commodores.

Dave Weckl, currently with Chick Corea, explains. "I told Zildjian I wanted the perfect ride cymbal for all occasions. One that had just the right amounts of brilliance and attack, but not too pingy. Sort of a dry definition that would allow me to carry out the emotion of the music."

"So I actually worked in the Zildjian factory, experimenting with new designs. We combined "A" machine hammering and "K" hand hammering, no buffing and buffing. The result is what is now the K Custom."

"The K Custom is a nice, warm, musical ride cymbal with a clean bell sound, yet it's not too clanky. I can turn

around and crash on it without having to worry about too many uncontrolled overtones. It blends perfectly," says Colaiuta.

Zildjian continues to play an instrumental role in shaping the sound of modern music—by working closely with leading-edge drummers like Vinnie and Dave.

"I'm always looking for new sounds and so is Zildjian. In fact, that's how we came up with the idea of mixing a Z bottom and K top in my Hi Hats. The K gives me the quick, thin splash characteristic I like. And the Z provides that certain edge. They really cut through," says Weckl. "Which is important because of all the electronics that I use."

"Zildjian's really hit upon a winning combination in terms of delivering new concepts. They're creating cymbals that have a musical place and make a lasting impression," claims Colaiuta.

"Zildjian is as sensitive to the needs of drummers as the drummers are towards their instruments," concludes Weckl.

If you'd like to learn more about Zildjian A, K or Z cymbals, stop by your Zildjian dealer. And discover the virtue of listening.

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