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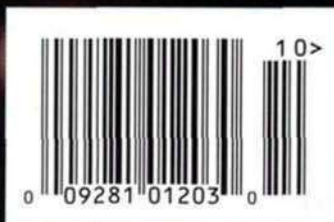
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Drum Festival '96



I think everyone in attendance at MD's Drum Festival '96 might agree that, in terms of overall balance and educational value, this show will be hard to beat.

We began on Saturday with Omnicussion, who offered everything from Latin ensemble stylings to the cool strains of Clifford Brown's "Joy Spring." Tim Alexander's casual approach followed with a display of some truly inventive drumming, and Walfredo Reyes, Jr. gave us an amazing display of Afro-Cuban, Latin, and world percussion. Narada Michael Walden raised the energy level a notch with his marvelous performance. Now a leading producer, Narada remains one of the most dynamic drummers around. We ended the day with the leg-

endary Elvin Jones in a concert setting. As expected, Elvin performed with the same fire and intensity that influenced an entire generation of jazz drummers.

Sunday kicked off with Bob Gatzen's extremely educational clinic on drum tuning, followed by Dave Lombardo, whose remarkable double bass technique blew everyone out of their seats. Next, the dynamic duo of Sheila E and Peter Michael Escovedo came on with a performance that Festival-goers won't soon forget. Incredibly entertaining, Sheila and Peter performed on congas, timbales, and drumset for a totally captivated audience. Omar Hakim proceeded to demonstrate just what solid groove drumming is all about, and the always exciting Trilok Gurtu brought the weekend to a rousing conclusion. The sheer complexity of Trilok's music, combined with his mind-boggling technical facility, was nothing short of amazing.

As always, thousands of dollars in door prizes were given away and hundreds of

autographs were signed. Latin Percussion's Martin Cohen accepted his MD Editor's Achievement Award, industry personnel were on hand all weekend, and the backstage hang this year saw the likes of Kenwood Dennard, Danny Gottlieb, Mike Portnoy, Akira Tana, John Riley, Ignacio Berroa, Max Weinberg, and Will Calhoun, among others.

Our sincere thanks to everyone at DCI, Drum Workshop, Evans, Istanbul, LP, Noble & Cooley, Paiste, Pearl, Pro-Mark, Regal Tip, Remo, Sabian, Sonor, Starclassic, Tama, Toca, Vic Firth, Yamaha, and Zildjian for their kind support. Special thanks must also go out to MD staffers, volunteers, and festival coordinator Rick Van Horn for another outstanding job. Drum Festival '97 will be our tenth consecutive show, and it promises to be extra special. True, it may be difficult to beat this year's event, but rest assured, we'll be going all out to do just that. We look forward to seeing you there.

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RESPONSE TO NED



In response to Ned Ingberman's letter in your July Readers' Platform, I do agree with Mr. Ingberman to a degree. However, I don't think MD is the place to view opinions on morals and values.

MD is a magazine for drummers to learn and read about other drummers, regardless of the music they play or whether you like it or not. I admit that there is a lot of music out there that gives a negative message. But I also believe that—love it or hate it—it is not going to go away.

Brent Combes
Salt Lake City, UT

MD FESTIVAL WEEKEND '96

Wow! What a weekend at MD's Festival '96. Let's see...Saturday morning standing in line early listening to talk about drums, drummers, and chops. Hooking up with a friend with whom I had drum lessons in the Republic of Suriname some twenty years ago! Doors open up...run inside to get a good seat. First the joyous sound of Omnicussion, followed by Tim's time. Next Wally Jr. cooked up some spicy food in his kitchen, and Sanabria represented the cause. Touched by Narada spreading the love vibe, and I win his gold-plated snare drum! (If this is a dream, please don't let me wake up!) Concluding the day, Mr. Jones and his Machine shower us with their spirit.

Sunday started off with some science from Drumdoctor Bob to improve your art, then a peek into Dave's world (and open mind). In between sets, observing Rick Van Horn bouncing around and conducting the Fest like an orchestra. The Escovedo family throws a party and everybody is invited. Next, just try to climb out of the groove that Omar and Victor dug. Then the grand finale: Board the spaceship and visit the planet of Trilok & His Crazy Saints. Thank you, MD, for an unforgettable

weekend. Now can somebody stop these sounds in my head? I can't get any sleep (snap your fingers, stomp your feet, Sheila E!, 'scuse me while I kiss the sky, ticket 197, ta ki da dum ta ki da da dum).

Kaseko
via Internet

Congrats and a big thanks on behalf of all attendees of the MDFestival Weekend '96 to Ron & Isabel Spagnardi, Rick Van Horn, and all of the Modern Drummer staff for ONE MORE YEAR of a most amazing drum show. Your hard work to make the MD weekend special was an overwhelming success.

To those drummers who have never attended the Festival: You have no idea what you are missing. You owe it to yourself, no matter where you live, to get to next year's show!

Chet Doboe
Union City, NY

AL JACKSON'S AWARD

I'd like to express my great pleasure at seeing a Modern Drummer Editors' Achievement Award bestowed on the late Al Jackson, Jr. [July '96 MD]. Al was a very big influence on me personally. In my early development as a player, no other drummer had as great an impact on my own approach to the drums.

As you correctly point out in your announcement of his award, Al Jackson was a master of simplicity and groove. The hundreds of songs he recorded for Stax/Volt on artists like Otis Redding, Sam & Dave, Booker T and the MG's, Carla Thomas, and Albert King provide ample evidence of this. What I've come to appreciate even more over the years, however, is the infinite subtlety and swing in his playing. Each performance was beautifully shaped to fit the song.

A very significant segment of Al's work is given on the briefest mention in your piece: his incredible playing with Al Green for Hi Records. Green's records (prior to Jackson's death) bear the credit: Drums—Al Jackson, Jr. and Howard Grimes. On

careful listening, it's fairly easy to distinguish between Grimes' great (though not especially subtle) greasy grooves and Jackson's beautifully orchestrated, phenomenally creative playing. Listen, for instance, to "I'm So Glad You're Mine" from the Simply Beautiful LP for an example of Al Jackson at his best.

Once again, I'm thankful for the fact that MD is giving recognition to Al Jackson. Thank you, also, for this opportunity to shed some light on a drummer who I consider to have been one of the greatest R&B players of all time.

Paul Siegel
Co-president, DCI Music Video
Co-director, Drummers Collective
New York, NY

LETTER FROM THE FRONT



The drumline of the First Armored Division Band prepare for a morning "gig."

We are the percussionists of the First Armored Division Band, based in Bad Kreuznach, Germany but currently deployed in Tuzla, Bosnia. We are writing because we feel that our job may be somewhat interesting to the drummers of the world.

We were deployed on January 3, 1996. We traveled to Hungary in a convoy of trucks, tanks, and buses, stayed for a few days, then proceeded to the Sava River. We were then flown by helicopter to Tuzla, to begin preparation for the arrival ceremony for president Clinton.

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The first month on the base was as close to hell as you can get. We stayed in a cold, unsanitary warehouse for a few weeks. We also pulled guard duty at the main gate of the air base and the headquarters building. Things were looking bad for our supposedly musical mission. But by the second month here the purely military duties started to diminish and our musical activities picked up. Our living conditions also improved, and things were looking up.

Our days start at 8:00 A.M. with a gathering, followed by rehearsals until 4:30 P.M. (with a lunch break). The rest of the day is left for individual practice, sectionals, or administrative duties. Our total band of forty musicians is capable of providing a woodwind quintet, a brass quintet, a Latin jazz band, a variety combo, a stage band, a concert band, and a marching band. Out of all of these, the variety combo and the quintets are doing the most work.

Collectively, our favorite group is the variety combo called the Mo Better Blues Band. James Alescio is the drummer, Paul Baker plays percussion and sings, and Robert Habib (one of those "I play every-

thing" people and the percussion section leader) plays keyboards and sings. The band is a ten-piece group consisting of a full rhythm section, four horns, and a couple of vocalists. We play a variety of music including jazz, funk, R&B, and C&W. We like to stay as high-energy as possible, and to play something for everybody. We also include a "live karaoke" set in which the soldiers we play for get to participate. Most of the soldiers in Bosnia have it a lot worse than we do, and the shows we perform give them a chance to unwind and have a great time. Our main mission is to support troop morale, and the Mo Better Blues Band is the most-requested group within our organization. We also recently toured northern Bosnia, where we did one show for the Russian troops here as part of the peace-keeping force. They really love American music and were extremely pleased with our performance.

We hope that our current situation allows all musicians to realize that music brings happiness to everyone, no matter where they are in the world. And regardless of where we are in the world, what we

are doing, or the sacrifices we have to make as service members, we still love what we do. Our shows have had a tremendous impact on thousands of soldiers. As we see our impact on this peace-keeping mission, we will continue to bring music and happiness into everyone's lives.

James Alescio, Specialist, USA

Robert Habib, Sergeant, USA

Paul Baker, Sergeant, USA

Tuzla, Bosnia



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(Dave Matthews Band)

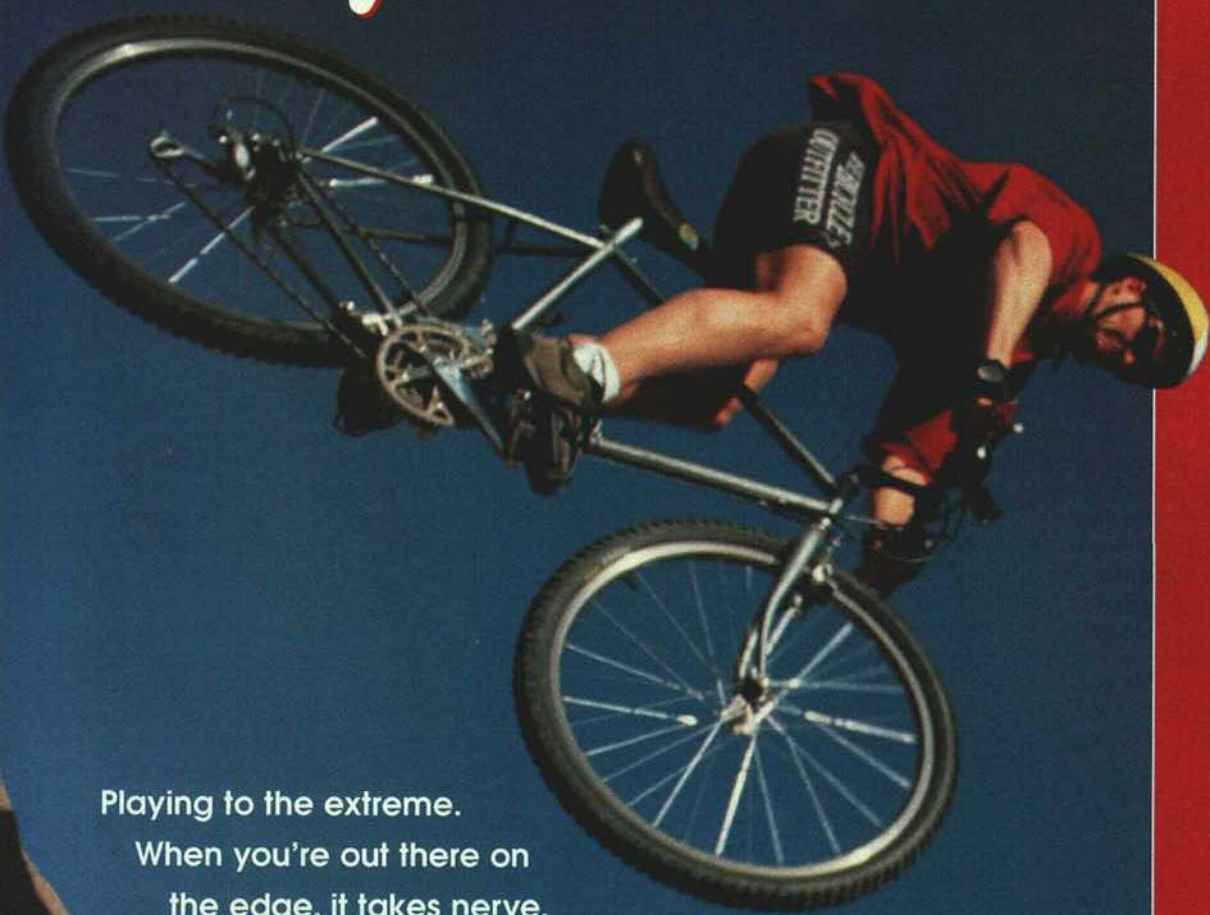


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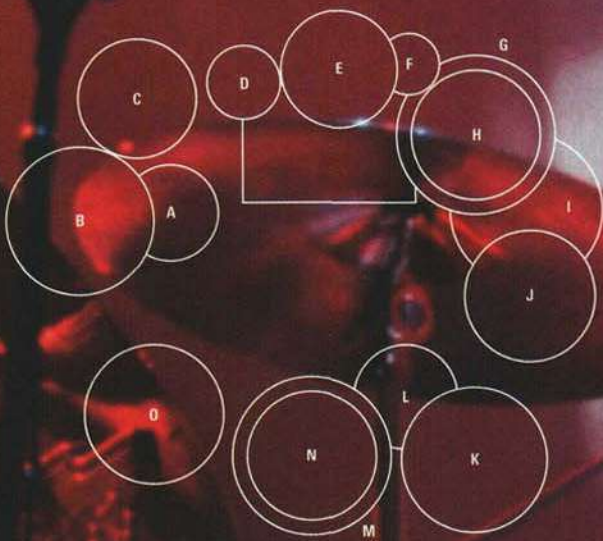
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P E A R T

TALKING CYMBALS

ART IS THE TELLING OF STORIES, and drumming is one of the earliest forms of that art. Just as spoken languages have adapted and changed over time, so too has the language of the drums. For the contemporary drummer, the drums themselves are the nouns and verbs, the voices of character and action, while cymbals are the punctuation marks, the modifiers, the shades of narrative and meaning, of mood and texture.

For this particular drummer (okay, this *very* particular drummer), the Avedis Zildjian "A" cymbals have been my "punctuation marks" of choice since the time I could first afford a choice. My 22" ride, for example, has been with me since I joined Rush, and has appeared on every record and every concert I've done for over twenty years. I couldn't imagine playing without its strong clear bell and articulate bow. For many drummers, the ride cymbal is an artful part of the story- it represents the running dialog, the linked phrases, and the accented syllables of rhythmic speech.

The 16" crash is just the sort of quick punctuation I like- effective without being intrusive- and it represents the comma, the semi-colon, the dash. The 18" crash makes an exclamation mark, or the definitive full-stop at the end of a sentence, while the 20" crash is a warm swell, like the cresting of a wave. The 8" and 10" splashes offer their subtle comments and accents, and the China Boy ranges from a soft whoosh to an attention-getting smash. The 13" hi-hats seem almost able to *speak*, and they sure can dance.

Like all of my Zildjians, they not only talk-
They sing.



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The Band's Levon Helm & Randy Ciarlante

As Levon Helm explains the Band's decision to record a version of En Vogue's "Free Your Mind" for their latest CD, *High On The Hog*, the idea actually begins to make perfect sense. "It's a patriotic song—and besides, it really lends itself to two sets of drums." But what about the video image most people have of the song: four sexy black women strutting down a runway, belting it out behind a hip-hop beat. "We changed the lyrics a little to come from a less pretty place than En Vogue comes from," Levon concedes with a chuckle. "We had to rough it up a little to fit our style."

"I give Levon big-time credit," says Randy Ciarlante, a Band member since 1990. "He talked about doing that song since our *Jericho* record in 1993. We went nuts in the studio; we actually had to take some drums off the mix. But Levon's got amazing instincts; he's my musical inspiration."

A terrible fire in 1991 left Helm's Woodstock, New York RCO Studio a pile of ashes. ("I wouldn't wish that on anybody," Levon whispers.) Soon, though, a new and improved RCO spawned *Jericho*, the Band's first release in fifteen years. A cover of Bruce Springsteen's "Atlantic City" announced a return to FM radio, and widespread interest in the group grew. First came two biographies, including Helm's personal account, then a box-set retrospective and the release of their famous 1973 Watkins Glen Festival performance.

A set at Woodstock '94 brought it all back home.

More recently, Levon extended his big-screen resume by acting in *Feelin' Minnesota*, featuring

MUSIC FROM BIG PIG

ing Keanu Reeves and Carmen Diaz. "Keanu is hitchhiking through the Nevada desert," Levon reports, "and I'm a Bible salesman who picks him up...can you believe that?! He's a good guy, and he plays bass, so we talked about being in a band." Levon also hosted a segment of the PBS series *Great Drives*, for which the Band recorded the theme song. "Highway 61 is 'The Blues Highway,'" Levon explains. "It goes from New Orleans, past Memphis, all the way to the Canadian border. They asked me to take the wheel going down from Memphis to New Orleans, so it was a lot of fun."

Fittingly, the Band recorded Bob Dylan's "Highway 61 Revisited" for the episode. And "just for luck," Levon adds, they cut the beautiful Dylan ballad "Forever Young" for *High On The Hog*. The song has actually appeared on previous Dylan/Band albums, but this is the first time Randy Ciarlante has put his stamp on it. Ciarlante explains that being a factor in the unique Band formula requires taste and restraint: "There are tricky lyrics that I don't want to get in the way of," he says, "and I don't want to jump on Levon's trademark fills on songs like 'The Weight.' Sometimes what I'll do is play the same pulse as Levon, but voice it differently—maybe on cowbells or a tambourine. I'm really looking forward to making even better use of the double-drum situation the next time we track."

That may prove to be sooner than later. The House of Blues has released a laser disc of the Band's 1994 performance at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, the group played on the recent Buddy Holly tribute CD *Not Fade Away* (performing the "title track" with the original Crickets), and an Arts & Entertainment special, *The Band: A Biography*, aired in May. All this coverage is sure to further spread the Band's music to a generation that saw them at Woodstock '94, but was born after their appearance at the original event.

"*Jericho* proved that there is still a market for our music," Levon figures, "so we're just looking at *High On The Hog* as another document of what the Band sounds like in the '90s."

Adam Budofsky

YUVAL GABAY of Soul Coughing Transglobal Pop

New York band Soul Coughing spurn conventional rock formats, creating a quirky style that defies simple definitions. In spite (or because) of that, the group have begun to crack the mainstream with their recent contribution to the X-F/7es-inspired album *Songs In The Key Of X*, and with their newest release, *Irresistible Bliss*, which encompasses rock, hip-hop, funk, and, as the band puts it, "blissful pop."

Drummer Yuval Gabay deserves much of the credit for Soul Coughing's uniqueness, given his own exotic background (both musically and culturally), and his penchant for mixing heavy groove playing with everything but the kitchen sink—phat funk, acid jazz, cool jazz, rap, metal.... "I've played in so many different bands before and I've heard so many kinds of music," is Yuval's explanation for his "transglobal" style.



Yuval moved to New York's diverse music scene from Jerusalem because he found the music scene there limiting. "It was a little restricting for me in Israel at the time, because you either play jazz or rock, or maybe you do some gigs backing up a Middle Eastern pop singer. It was not very experimental. Because of all the different types of people living there, you hear all kinds of great music—Yemenite, Moroccan, Egyptian, plus all the R&B and rock music on the radio—but I needed to move on in order to play other styles."

Over the twelve years that he's been in New York, Yuval has done a fair share of session playing, largely on hip-hop recordings. He's also been part of a live house band for many years, participated in an exotic percussion trio called *Bosho*, and played with a Moroccan-rock outfit.

Four years ago Gabay hooked up with Soul Coughing, which now gives him an outlet to display a range of influences. "I can't play every style with this band," he explains, "and you can't really expect to do that in only one musical situation. But we've been together four years and the language between us has become clear. After doing a hundred eighty gigs last year [in support of the *Ruby Vroom* album], our sound has really gelled."

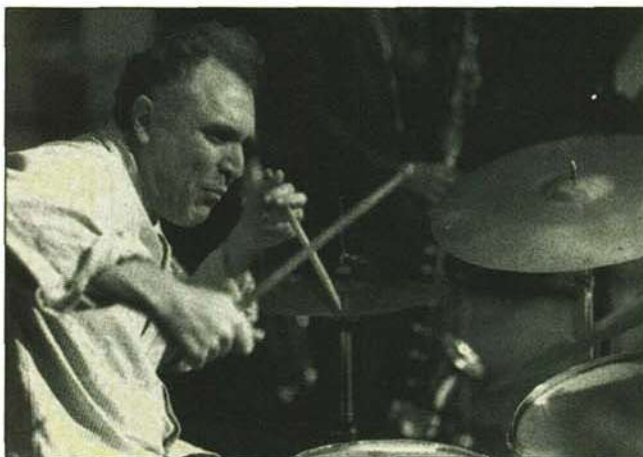
Teri Saccone

Billy Mintz

A Different Jazz Drummer

Billy Mintz loves jazz drummers, a fact that was reflected in his book *Different Drummers*, a compilation of jazz-oriented exercises and transcriptions of drum solos by drumming greats. It's been twenty years since the publication of *Different Drummers*, and Mintz, a "different drummer" himself, has since been busy touring and recording adventurous jazz with such diverse artists as Vinnie Golia, Lee Konitz, Charles Lloyd, Mike Garson, Allan Broadbent, and Eddie Daniels. Nowadays Billy is working with a group called the Two Trumpet Quartet.

"One of the reasons I like playing in this group is that there is hardly any piano," Mintz explains. "Dave Scott, one of the trumpet players, plays some piano, but most of the material is for two trumpets. I like not having a piano because the piano dictates so much harmony; sometimes it kind of forces the players into a musical area, narrowing the



Warren Berman

scope.

The Two Trumpet Quartet plans a cross-country tour of the United States this fall, as well as the release of a coinciding CD. Much of the music the quartet records and performs is written by Mintz. One tune is a standout called "Dut-Da-Duddadut." The title reflects the song's quirky melody line. It starts with the group playing the simple melody in unison, but then the soloists break into different keys and really free up before returning to the

melody on the way out. This composition is representative of many of Mintz's compositions in that it leaves a lot of room for improvising.

If you get a chance to catch Mintz on tour this year, you will hear a very creative and exceptionally loose drummer—even if he's sitting silently at times. "I'm trying to enhance the music in some way—even if that means not playing," he explains. "I'm going for stuff, but I'm trying by not trying."

Stephen Flinn

NEWS

Charlie Watts has been doing a series of high-profile gigs on his *In A Sentimental Mood* tour.

Mark Posegay is on tour with Magnapop in support of their album *Rubbing Doesn't Help*.

Abe Cunningham is on the road with the Deftones.

Steve Ferrone and **Curt Bisquera** have recorded Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers' new album. **Ringo Starr** is also on one track, "Hung Up And Overdue."

Matt Sorum is involved in a new project called the *Neurotic Outsiders*, featuring Steve Jones (Sex Pistols) and John Taylor (Duran Duran).

James Payfer is on 29 *Died's* debut album, *Steam*.

Mike Bordin is now touring with *Ozzy Osbourne*.

Johnny Friday is working with Tom Scott.

Andy Kamman is on Phil Cody's *The Sons Of Intemperance Offering*.

Doug Hitchcock has been recording with the *Don Juans* (featuring *Freedy Johnston*), *Bite The Wax*, *Godhead*, and *Trio Of Doom*.

Frank Derrick has been performing recently with *Maureen McGovern* and the *Louis Armstrong Legacy Band*.

Pete Thomas is on new albums by *Sheryl Crow* and *Suzanne Vega*.

Chet McCracken Ex-Doobie Finds Jazz

After spending 1995 playing double drums with Michael Hossack in the Doobie Brothers, Chet McCracken began working with former Three Dog Night singer

Chuck Negron. Chet had to leave that gig, however, when it was time to promote his fourth solo album, *Tequila, Featuring Sam Riney*.

"It was not easy to leave that job, because I had to stop getting paid," McCracken laughs. "But I am totally committed to my project, so I had to be available to promote it. This record is very exciting for me because I have Sam Riney doing ninety percent of the saxophone work. Sam goes back to my very first band at the Baked Potato. He went his way and I went mine, and then he came up with a couple of number-ones on Spindletop Records. It's exciting for me to be working with him again."

On Chet's record, which the drummer describes as an extension of the melodic jazz he's been pursuing since 1988, he does a cover of the Doobies' "Takin' It To The Streets." "I've always wanted to do that song, and I think I pulled it off," he says. "I changed the groove a little and tweaked it slightly, and then I had Chuck Negron do the vocals, which don't come in until the chorus."

McCracken is already laying the groundwork for his next record. "While one album is being released, you start planning the next one," he advises. "My next record will feature guitarist Chris Pinnick, and I think I'm going to do a lot more vibraphone work."

"I'm totally convinced you can make a living playing jazz," McCracken insists. "I see people every day doing what I want to do, and they're maintaining a life. It can be done! And I'll go down with that dream," he laughs.

Robyn Flans



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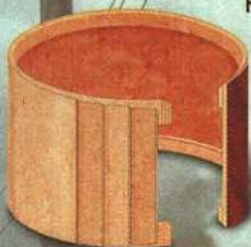
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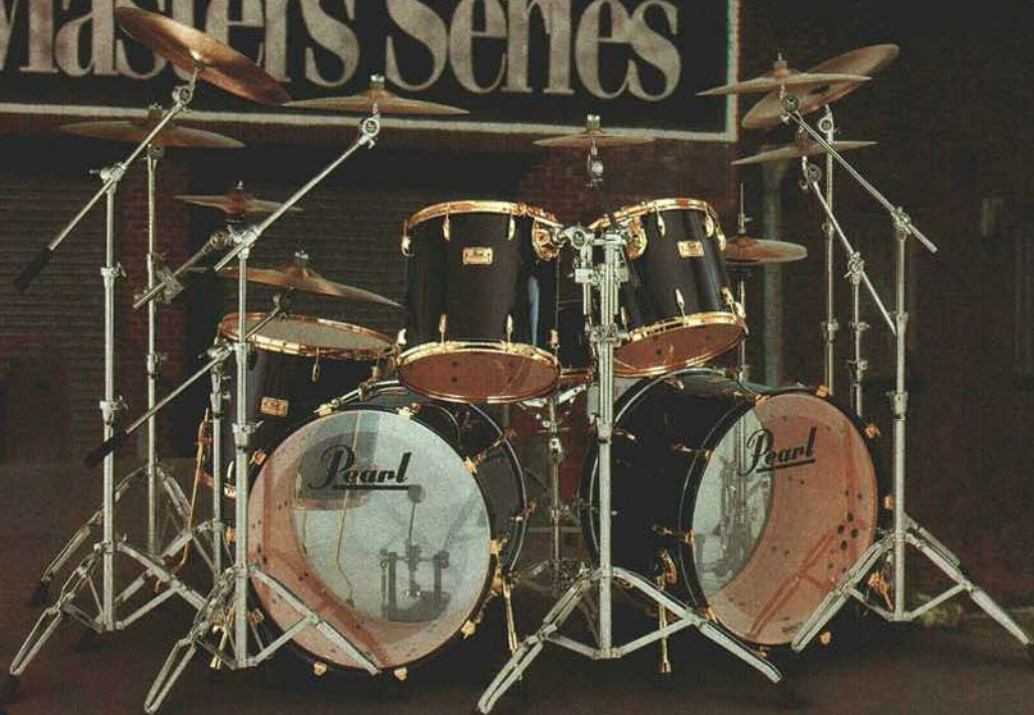
fine tune the action and feel to suit your personal playing style. Faster, Smoother and More Powerful were the motivating factors behind its design, and after hearing players like Vinnie give them a workout, it's safe to say they're in a class by themselves.

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Vinnie plays Pearl's P-201 Single and double Power Shifter Pedals.

The Masters Series



Eddie Bayers

Q I was thrilled to read in the June '96 issue of *MD* that you did not start playing the drums until you were twenty-five years old—yet you have become one of the most respected drummers in Nashville. Being an extremely late starter myself (I started two years ago at the age of twenty-nine), I am continuously looking for inspiration from drummers and other musicians who also got a late start. I fully realize that there are no "shortcuts" to success, but any information you can pass on to us late-bloomers would be very helpful. Any tips on getting more out of practice sessions, increasing the efficiency of time spent, etc. would be great. Also, based on your experience, do you think there are any advantages to getting a later start?

Joe McAdams, Jr.
Sun City, CA

A Thanks for writing, Joe. It's always a pleasure to hear from other musicians. (And as always, thanks to *Modern Drummer*.) The inspiration I can pass on to you is that age is not a factor in playing music. The desire and love of it is your motivation toward finding a way to further yourself. Obviously, you have to use common sense in a professional arena. You may not immediately be able to make a living in music. In the beginning I worked several different jobs to sustain myself until I had the opportunity first to *augment* my income by playing, and later

the blessing of making music my primary business.

Always get to know those in your area who are in music. And gather as much information about drumming as you can. There are many sources available—especially the one you're reading now. You can call this an advertising endorsement from me if you like, but *Modern Drummer* magazine is the most in-depth information guide for you (and me) for learning shortcuts toward furthering ourselves in the music business. The interviews on all the great players and the stories of their lives provide lots of insight and guidance. (*MD* is probably where you learned about me.) Then there is information on instructional videos, as well as on the newest equipment available.

To answer your question about any advantages in getting a later start, I would say it's 50/50. There have been situations where people I've known through the years and who were raised in music screwed things up for themselves because of their ignorance of money, drugs, attitudes, etc. But I also know the same about people who started later.

My hope is for the best of everything for you, Joe. Send me a tape of your playing. (It doesn't matter what style.) I make this same offer to all who would like to take the time to do it. If there is a way for me to help, I'll be glad to! Send your materials to: Eddie Bayers c/o The Money Pit Recording Studio, 622 Hamilton Ave., Nashville, TN 37203.

Max Weinberg

Q I find your playing on *Late Night With Conan O'Brien* to be a continuous inspiration. Not only is your drumming tasteful, but your on-screen exuberance reveals the pure joy you must feel when playing. I was wondering how playing each night in a small venue (like the show's studio) compares to playing in large stadiums (as you did with Bruce Springsteen). Additionally, I was curious about how you approached your drum and cymbal size choices, knowing you'd be playing a different style of music for a different audience.

Josh Klein
Chicago, IL

A Thanks for your letter and support of the show. My basic approach to playing in any venue—stadium, studio, or club—is the same. I don't think of anything other than what I'm doing while I'm playing. It all takes place around the drums. Concentration is the key to avoid being distracted.

My equipment remains the same regardless of where I'm performing. The only difference is stick size: With Bruce and the E Street Band I used 5Bs; on the show I use 3As. They just seem to work for me. I've always used the following drum and cymbal sizes: a 14x24 bass drum, 9x13 and 16x16 toms, a 5 1/2x14 snare, 14" hi-hats, a 20" ride, a 17" thin crash, and an 18" medium-thin crash.



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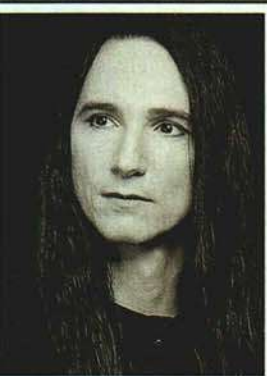
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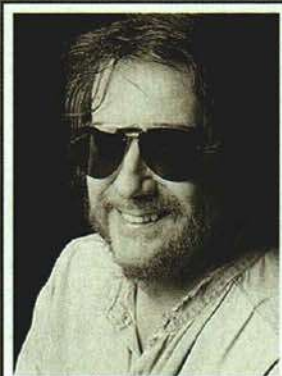
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Simon Phillips

Q Although I think you are a great drummer, my question is not about your drumming skills. It's about whether there was any red tape to go through when you moved from England to the States. How were you able to start working in the studios there right away? What do you have to do to move to the States and start working as a drummer?

Jim Kent
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

A Jim, I can tell you that there are BIG problems moving from another country to the States. If you are to reside and work in the U.S. and you are not a citizen, you must either have a Work Permit (which means you are a non-resident alien) or a Green Card (which means you are a resident alien). I would advise you to start with a Work Permit. Unfortunately, in order to do so you need to have work first (the "chicken or the egg" situation). You can travel to the U.S. on business to conjure up some work without a permit, but you should not be seen to be earning income in the U.S. (You will also need an immigration lawyer.)

Unless you have a good reputation as a drummer in the U.S., I would suggest going to one of the schools here, like Berklee or Musicians Institute. That way you will meet other musicians and (hopefully) be offered work—so you can then apply for a Work Permit. I had been coming to the U.S. since 1974 with English bands, and I have a long history of work here—and it still took two and a half years to get my Green Card. If you are really serious, though, you will manage it. Best of luck!



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Insecure Drum Throne

Q I have a Gibraltar throne that I bought two years ago. Though I tighten the lock to securely fasten the seat to the throne shaft, the tightening bolt always loosens as I'm playing. My body moves too much as I play and this movement disrupts my playing. Is there anything I can do about this?

Jeremy Stern
Los Angeles, CA

A To begin with, it should be mentioned that almost any drum throne that tightens its seat to its shaft by means of a threaded bolt can—and often does—have the same problem. Four *MD* editors have experienced difficulties similar to yours, and each sits on a different brand of drum throne. However, since your throne is a Gibraltar (manufactured by Kaman Music Corp.), we went to Kaman's director of marketing for percussion products, John Roderick, to get his response.

"I regret that we have no 'easy fix' for this problem. I've personally lived with my drum seat loosening and moving right or left since I began playing (many moons ago). The force exerted on a throne makes it almost impossible for a screw-in type fastener to keep a seat from rotating. In 1997 Gibraltar will introduce a new type of seat-fastening mechanism based on the Super Lock height-adjustment system used on our cymbal stands. This new system should address the seat-loosening problem (for most players).

"In the meantime, you could try drilling and tapping a second hole and installing a second tightening bolt in the seat's base assembly. It could be placed 1) at the opposite side of the current bolt, or 2) as a locking bolt to the original bolt."

Drum Music Source

Q I am interested in purchasing drum and other percussion instrument solo CDs or

cassette tapes. These are for listening pleasure, not teaching. Could you point me in the right direction to find this material?

Leroy Lamis
Terre Haute, IN

A Visit your local record store and ask to browse their "New Age" catalog. That seems to be the category under which a lot of percussion-oriented material (especially what we call "world percussion") has been filed by the record industry. There is also a company advertising in *MD*'s classified section that specializes in percussion music CDs. It is Drum Specialist, 1740 MacLean, Glenview, IL 60025, tel: (847) 724-3937, fax: (847) 724-3880.

Alternate Rudiments

Q In the April '96 issue there were two references to additional rudiments that complement the standard twenty-six. One reference was in the *Teachers' Forum* piece on



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Richard Wilson; the other was in Chet Doboe's *Rudimental Symposium* article. I've never heard of these other rudiments, but I'd very much like to get copies of them. Could you provide addresses for me to contact?

Tim Sutherland
Priest River, ID

We called on our rudimental guru, Chet Doboe, to give us the lowdown on the "new" rudiments. Here's his response. "The Standard 26 American Drum Rudiments were compiled in the 1930s by a group of prominent drummers from all over the U.S. These snare drum rudiments served as a vocabulary to allow rudimental drummers the means to create and perform repertoire. And for all drummers, the rudiments served as 'tools' to develop proper mechanics, control, speed, and endurance.

"Through the creative process, drummers developed variations of these original rudiments—and often created totally new ones. As a world-wide phenomenon, there were people in other countries (notably Switzerland and France) who developed their own sets of unique rudiments.

"In 1988, drawing on all the above sources, the Percussive Arts Society Rudiment Committee formulated what are now known as the 'Percussive Arts Society International Drum Rudiments.' This list of forty snare drum rudiments is the accepted standard for snare drum rudiments internationally.

In the '90s, a new generation of drum rudiments has evolved, primarily through the efforts of drum & bugle corps percussion arrangers, as well as the talented corps drummers themselves. These new concepts are known as the 'Hybrid Rudiments.' Until recently these rudiments circulated by word of mouth (and demonstration) throughout the drum corps activity. Thanks to the efforts of the PAS, as well as those of drum corps percussion authorities Jim Campbell and Jeff Moore, most of these hybrid rudiments are now compiled and published in list form.

"If you contact the Percussive Arts Society, Box 25, Lawton, OK 73502, (405) 353-1455, you can request the following articles, which represent the bulk of the rudiments that complement the Standard 26. There is a nominal copying fee for each article."

Percussive Notes Vol. 30, No. 5, June 1992—"A Survey Of Contemporary

Drum Rudiments" by James Campbell, pages 42-44

Percussive Notes Vol. 31, No. 6, Aug. 1993—"Contemporary Flam Variations" by Jeff Moore, pages 34-35

Percussive Notes Vol. 34, No. 2, Apr. 1996—"Invert Rolls" by Chet Doboe, pages 37-40

Percussive Arts Society International Drum Rudiment List—a free list of 40 rudiments

Pearl DLX Drums

I have a somewhat old set of Pearl Pro DLX drums in a dark wood finish. I know this line has been discontinued. I can't seem to find out the specific wood type of the shells, the years that Pearl manufactured the series, and the drums' approximate value. I hope you can shed some light on the subject.

Charles Jenkins
Honolulu, HI

According to Pearl's Gene Okamoto: "The DLX series was produced from 1983 to 1986. The shells were 7-ply (from



Dave Weckl

Dave Weckl

Snare Ambassador Coated/Ambassador Snare
Bass Emperor Coated/Ebony
Toms Ambassador Coated/Ambassador Clear

Sheila E.

Sheila E.

Ambassador Coated/Ambassador Snare
Pinstripe/Ambassador Smooth White
Pinstripe/Ambassador Clear

Simon Phillips

Simon Phillips

CS Coated w/Black Dot/Ambassador Snare
Pinstripe/Ebony
Emperor Clear/Ambassador Clear

the outside to the inside): 1 ply birch, 5 plies mahogany, and 1 ply lamin. DLXdrums were offered with the following finishes: #100 wine red lacquer, #101 walnut lacquer, #103 piano black, #108 charcoal gray, and #112 natural birch. Your kit sounds like the walnut lacquer version.

"In 1983, prices for DLXkits ranged from a five-piece kit at \$1,650 to a nine-piece kit at \$3,010. Prices in 1986 ranged from \$1,990 to \$3,620. The value of your kit today would be based on a combination of original price, the condition of the kit, and buyer demand, so it's very hard to pinpoint."

Videos For Rent

Q There are so many great instructional drum videos out there to learn from. But at \$40 or more a pop, who can afford them all? Are there places where these videos may be rented?

Dave Falk
Oswego, NY

A Sorry, Dave, we don't know of any instructional video rental outlets—but we printed your question because we think it's

a terrific idea. The most likely candidates to operate such a business would be drum shops or music stores with substantial teaching practices, but virtually any dealer could build consumer goodwill (and make a few extra bucks) by establishing such a service. And to those of you out there who own or work in a video rental store: There are workout videos, home-improvement videos, even pet-grooming videos available for rent these days. Why not instructional music videos?

Anyone who establishes a video rental service is hereby invited to let us know about it. We'll be happy to spread the word.

Vintage Drum Information

Editor's note: One of the questions we receive most frequently in this department goes something like: "I have an old snare drum. It's finished in what looks like a light oyster pearl, and it has the original lugs and heads. I think it came from the '50s or '60s. Can you tell me its history and what it might be worth?"

No, we can't. The question, as written, doesn't provide enough information for our drum historians to go on. If you wish us to

research a vintage drum for you, here is the very minimum we must have in order to make the attempt:

1. Several high-quality color photos of the drum, showing all pertinent details (lugs, rims, snare strainers, tom mounts, bass drum T-rods, logo badges, and any other identifying marks). These photos will also help to establish the condition of the drum.
2. Any serial numbers, manufacturing dates, wording on badges, or other identifying data.
3. Details about the condition of the drum (like a partially discolored finish, a damaged shell—or the fact that the drum is in like-new condition and was only played by a little old lady on Sundays).
4. Anything that might be construed as unusual about the drum (such as the fact that it has one company's lugs, another's rims, and a third's snare throw-off).

This is the information that our researchers need in order to provide you with a meaningful answer to your vintage-drum inquiries. Owing to the number of such inquiries that we receive weekly, only those with this accompanying information can possibly be processed.

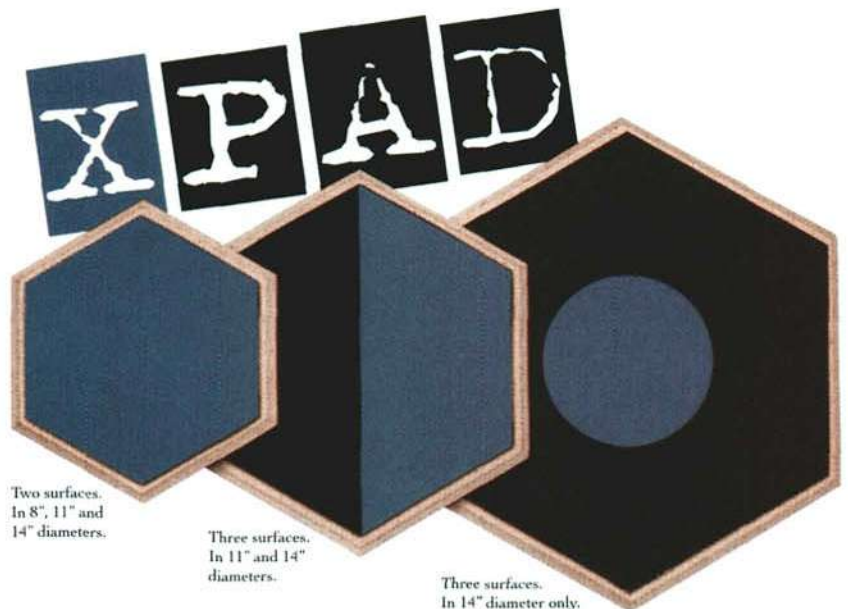


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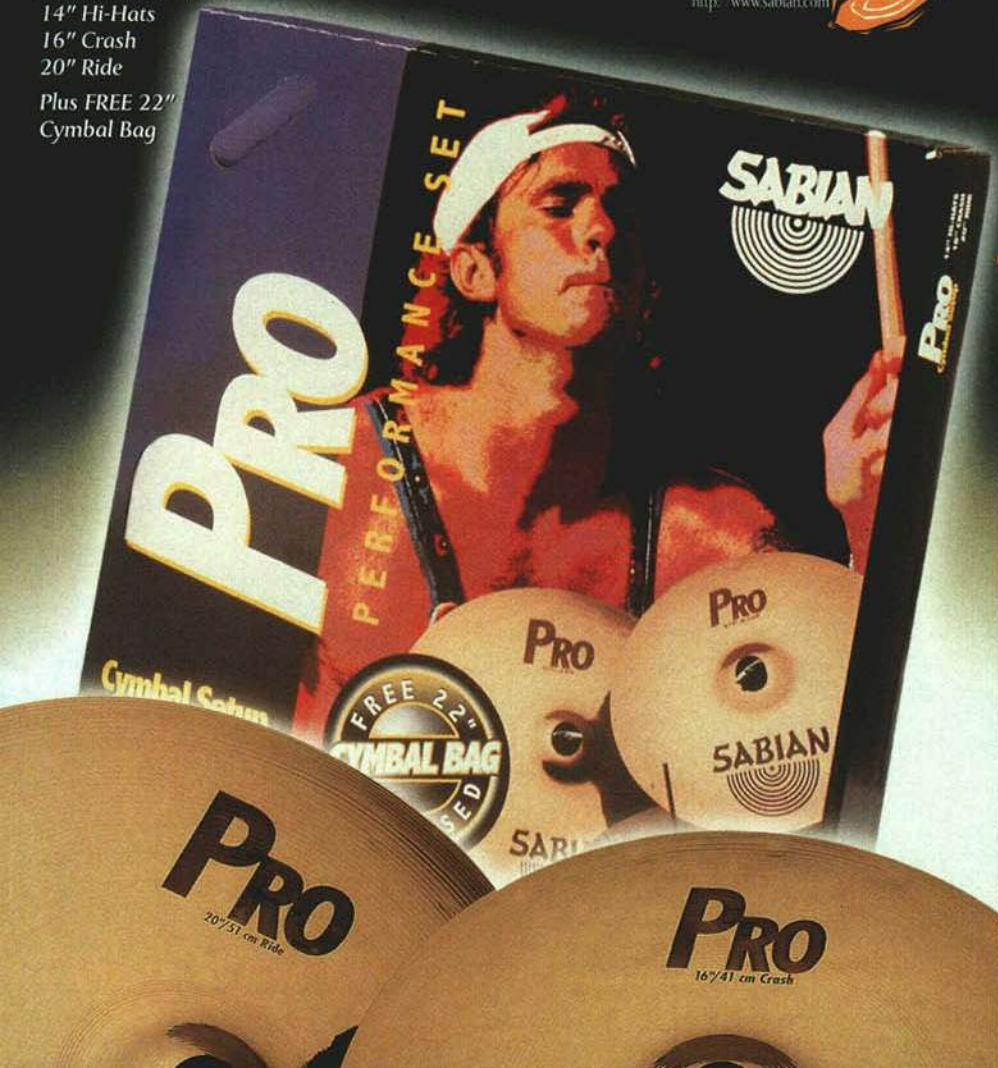
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HARVEY MASON, *Fourplay*
HERMAN MATTHEWS, *Tower of Power*
JOHN MOLO, *Bruce Hornsby*
RALPH SALMINS, *Van Morrison*
MICHAEL SHRIEVE, *Independent*
HARRY STINSON, *Nashville Sessions*
AKIRA TANA, *TanaReid*
ED THIGPEN, *Jazz Great*
CHESTER THOMPSON, *Independent*
DAN TOMLINSON, *Lyle Lovett*
JEFF WATTS, *Larry Coryell*
ALAN WHITE, *Oasis*
STEVE WHITE, *Paul Weller*

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Brand X Drums

Brand X is a British company specializing in custom-built, hand-crafted snare drums tailored to suit an individual drummer's needs. Shells are made from high-quality Finnish birch or bird's-eye maple and feature hand-lacquered finishes in a wide range of colors.



Diameters of 12", 13", and 14" are available; shell thickness and depth are determined by the buyer according to his or her needs.

The drums feature solid brass lug casings (custom made by Marvey Engineering UK Ltd.). Matched drum hardware is also available. Die-cast, brass, or steel hoops are fitted to the drums, and are complemented by a choice of simple, traditional snare strainers.

According to the company, "The care and attention to detail afforded to Brand X drums creates a warm, beautiful, responsive sound that still has a high level of audibility and projection."

Brand X Custom Drum Co. Ltd., 64 Fairfield Gardens, Stockton Heath, Warrington, Cheshire, WA4 2BX, England, tel/fax: 01925-860695.

Genesis Plus Portable Trigger System

The *Genesis Plus* trigger system is designed to address the problems of affordability and portability that are inherent in some other trigger-pad systems. The suggested retail price of \$750 includes



Genesis system in playing configuration

the stand, wiring harness, hi-hat pedal, and twelve trigger surfaces. (The cost of a sound module is extra.) The set was designed so that drummers will have little trouble adapting their existing playing technique. The unit features real drumheads for "proper" stick



Genesis system shown folded and disassembled for travel

rebound and for low stress on the user's wrists. ABS plastic cymbal trigger surfaces are utilized to closely mimic the look and feel of real cymbals.

For enhanced portability, the *Genesis Plus* trigger kit folds flat to a dimension of only 7 1/2" thick and requires very little disassembly. The wiring harness, along with the user's sound module, stays on the unit during travel. The only thing that must be done in order to begin playing the unit is to plug in the two assembled side cymbal arms, plug in the included hi-hat pedal, attach the user's bass pedal (an angled beater is included), and mount a single-rack-space drum module of the user's choice. (An Alesis *D4* is recommended.) Assembly time is said to be two minutes (after the initial installation of the sound module), and travel weight is under 30 pounds. **Genesis Portable Drum Trigger Systems, 2406 West Chester Pike, Broomall, PA 19008, (610) 353-0314.**

New Zildjian Ensemble Series Sticks

Zildjian has introduced two new models of drumsticks to their Ensemble series. The sticks were developed in conjunction with two of today's top drumset educators: Gary Chaffee and Ed Soph.

Chaffee designed the *Contemporary Jazz* model, which utilizes a small bead for cymbal articulation and a 5A-style shaft for durability during aggressive playing. The stick is 16 3/8" long and .575" in diameter, and is constructed from select U.S. hickory.

The *Acoustic Combo* model was designed by Soph. Also similar to a 5A, the stick is made of select U.S. maple for a lighter feel. It is 16 1/8" long and .545" in diameter, and was designed to meet the



wide variety of acoustical ensemble situations faced by today's drum students. **Avedis Zildjian Co., 22 Longwater Dr., Norwell, MA 02061, tel: (617) 871-2200, fax: (617) 871-3984.**

Grover Performance Series Accessories

Grover Pro Percussion has added several accessory items to its *Performance Series* product line. *Nylon Coated Snare Cable* offers a package containing four pieces of black, 90-pound test snare attachment cable that will conform to any snare bed to properly seat snare wires. *Dacron Snare Cord* includes two pieces of durable, non-stretch dacron, said to be "a great alternative to nylon cable." *Nylon Washers* are sold at twenty per package, and can be used on any drums to minimize rattling from metal to metal contact between tension rods and hoops. Each accessory package sells for \$3. **Grover Pro Percussion, 22 Prospect St., Unit #7, Woburn, MA 01801, tel: (617) 935-6200, fax: (617) 935-5522.**

African American Linn Lug

An unusual low-mass lug cast in the shape of a lion's head is now being offered by African American Drum Company. The highly detailed image is available in cast bronze, gold, or silver. It measures 1" high and 1/2" wide at its base. List price for the bronze version is \$20; prices for the gold and silver versions will be quoted on special order.

African American Drum Co., P.O. Box 4385, Arcata, CA 95521, (707) 668-4173.

Airheads Pneumatic Tuning System

The *Airheads Drum Tuning System* is claimed to be the only pneumatic, repeatable, economic drum tuning system of its kind. The system consists of a black control block that mounts on a tuning lug and has two air inlet valves and two air outlet tubes. The outlet tubes run to a point on each drum rim and form a bladder that runs completely around the drum between the head and the rim. When the system is inflated, the bladder displaces and tensions the head. The operation can be completed with both top and bottom heads in a matter of minutes. According to the company, most drummers should be able to tune their entire kit within five to ten minutes once they become familiar with the system.

The *Airheads* system allows repeatable tunings by using a pump with an attached pressure gauge. An additional benefit claimed for

the system is the ability to harmonically balance each drum not only within itself, but also within the entire kit.

Suggested retail price for an Airheads system (not including pump) for a five-piece kit is \$199.95; individual units are available for drums from 6" to 26" in diameter. A pump is available for \$34.95.

For further information, contact P.S.I., P.O. Box 1312, Crestline, CA 92325, (888) 247-8863 or (909) 338-3419.



Mapleworks Drums

Mapleworks U.S.A. is a new company offering custom-crafted



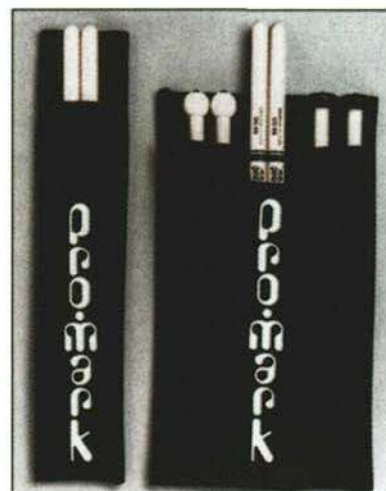
drums in 100% North American hard-rock maple. The drums are fitted with Aquarian heads and feature a variety of lacquer finishes. They can be seen and heard as played by Elwarren "Spoon" Witherspoon, currently on tour with LTD.

Mapleworks U.S.A., 4985 Brampton Pkwy., Ellicott City, MD 21043, (410) 203-0292.

Pro-Mark Drum Corps Stick/Mallet Caddies

Pro-Mark has introduced two new drumstick/mallet caddies designed especially for drum & bugle corps.

The *PMQ-1* holds one spare pair of drumsticks, Rods, mallets, or other specialty sticks that might be needed during a performance. Suggested retail price is \$23.95. The *PMQ-3* holds up to three pairs of sticks and/or mallets, and is priced at \$29.95. Both caddies are made with a rugged cordura-type material and



incorporate extra-heavy-duty stitching to withstand the rigors of drum corps. Installation is said to be quick and easy using sturdy, permanently attached Velcro straps. Pro-Mark Corporation, 10707 Craighead Dr., Houston, TX 77025, tel: (800) 233-5250, fax: (713) 669-8000, e-mail: promark@cis.compuserve.com, Web: <http://www.promark-stix.com>.

Garwood Micro Monitor

Garwood Communications has debuted *Micro Monitors*, a new line of custom-molded in-ear monitors that will work in conjunction with all Garwood in-ear monitoring systems (and with other sound sources as well).



Micro Monitors place high-fidelity miniature speakers in ergonomically molded custom earpieces that allow audio professionals to control their own volume and frequency response while experiencing little or no ambient sounds. The monitors are available in a variety of matte finishes to match the user's skin tone, reduce reflections, and help

the monitors remain visually inconspicuous. The canal portion of the monitors is extremely flexible and extends into the shell portion of the ear for improved comfort.

The sound output of the *Micro Monitors* provides up to 25-26 dB of attenuation, while dual sound ports and a resonator extend the high and low frequency responses "beyond the industry norm." Six selectable bass ports allow added flexibility for individual preferences to be set. The *Micro Monitor* is said to improve the quality of the perceived sound due to a closer fit in the ear canal, while the improved rejection of ambient sounds is claimed to increase the safe listening time because the user will require less volume for the same perceived "loudness." Garwood Communications, Inc. USA, 4 Terry Dr., Suite 10H, Newtown, PA 18940, tel: (215) 860-6866, fax: (215) 968-2430.

Premier 5000 Series Hardware

Premier Percussion has introduced its new 5000 series hardware, replacing the previous 4000 series. This hardware includes a double-braced straight leg, new leg geometry for improved stability, a hi-hat swivel footplate, heavy-duty molded feet, and new "user-friendly" wing screws and wing nuts throughout. Catalog items affected by these changes are snare, straight cymbal, hi-hat cymbal, boom arm cymbal, weighted boom cymbal, and twin floor tom stands. The Premier line now also sports a new badging in gold on black. Premier Percussion USA, Inc., 1263 Glen Ave., Suite 250, Moorestown, NJ 08057, tel: (609) 231-8825, fax: (609) 231-8829.

Remo Modular Practice Pad Kit



Remo, Inc. has created a *Modular Practice Pad System*. Designed for use in a limited space environment, the *Modular Practice Pad System* provides a "responsive full-kit practice setup." Each *System* consists of two 8" "rack toms," one 10" "floor tom," one 10" "snare drum," and one 6" "bass drum." The snare pad features an Ambassador head; all other pads use Ebony heads. To recreate the feel and positioning of a full

kit, all the pads are mounted to a lightweight, "sturdy yet flexible" modular rack-style frame. Suggested list price for the five-piece configuration is \$255; a six-piece expansion pack is available for double-bass configurations. Remo, Inc., 12804 Raymer St., North Hollywood, CA 91605, tel: (818) 983-2600, fax: (818) 503-0198.

Rhythms Ethnic Percussion

Rhythms is a company that specializes in the manufacture of exotic ethnic percussion instruments. The instruments are reengineered in accordance with traditional methods used by tribal instrument makers among various ethnic groups in Africa. According to company owner Joseph Agu, "By maintaining our strong ties with Africa's village communities, Rhythms seeks to provide not only cultural understanding through education but also a revival of lost' tribal instruments never seen in the music industry today." The Rhythms catalog includes udu drums, bells, shakers, xylophones, special effects, whistles, mallets, and additional items. Rhythms, P.O. Box 70883, Sunnyvale, CA 94086, tel: (408) 246-1002, fax: (408) 246-8310, e-mail: joeagu@ix.netcom.com.

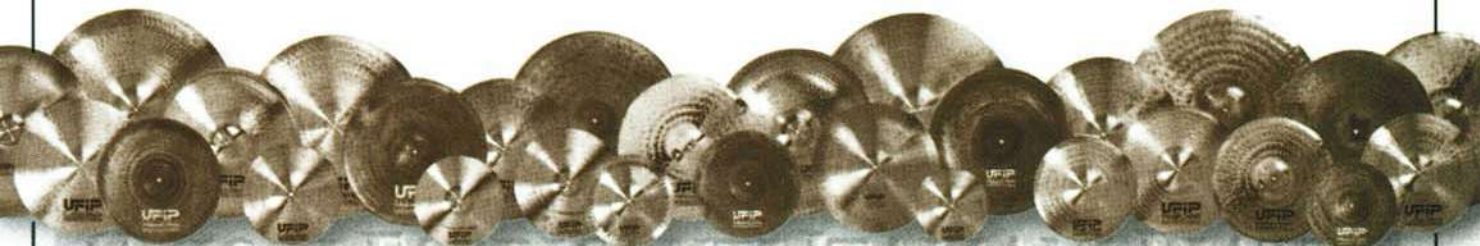


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New Yamaha Drums

by Rick Van Horn

Three drumkit series and a signature snare drum attest to Yamaha's industrious nature.

It's been a while since we reviewed any Yamaha products, and the company has been busy in the interim. So here are reviews of three drumkits and a new snare drum to make up for lost time.

Custom Series

Yamaha's new Custom drum series is not so much a new batch of drums as it is a new way of selling drums. The concept is to offer customers the opportunity to create their own custom-created drumkits from a "menu" of options.

Here's a quick rundown of the options available. Shell choices include maple or birch, and individual drums within the same kit may have different shells if desired. Drum sizes include ten bass drum sizes (with or without tom mounts), three floor tom sizes, thirteen tom-tom sizes, and three snare sizes. (All toms are fitted with Yamaha's *YESS* mounting system). Lugs may be Yamaha's familiar high-tension, chrome-plated models, or the small, low-mass Maple Custom model (in either chrome or gold plating). Rim choices include standard 1.6mm or heavier *DynaHoop* 2.3mm triple-flanged steel.

Then we come to finishes. Twelve new col-

ors are offered in the Custom series, and the buyer may select either a monotone lacquer finish or a custom-created "fade" finish that moves from one shade to another. How the colors move from top to bottom of the drum is also up to the buyer.

Add all the options together and you come up with something like 6,612 possible choices for a kit. As I said, many of these choices have been drawn from some previously existing Yamaha features. However, a few are distinctly new to the Custom series, so let's take a look at those.

We were sent a birch-shelled kit with small lugs (a totally new combination). It included a 16x22 bass drum, 9x10, 10x12, and 11x13 rack toms, a 16x16 floor tom, and a 6 1/2x14 snare—all fitted with the new, heavy-duty 2.3mm steel rims. The drums were finished in a combination color scheme that faded from a deep blue to a marine green. It was beautifully done, and the look was set off by the gold plating on the lugs. (All other drum hardware, like claw hooks, tension rods, and tom mounts were in chrome.) Overall, the construction quality—including bearing edges and all other machining elements of the drums—was top-notch.



WHAT'S HOT

- tremendous range of options available
- proven, high-quality components
- new color/finish combinations

WHAT'S NOT

- limited dealer availability
- five-month delivery period

Birch-shelled drums are nothing new for Yamaha; the classic *Recording Custom* series has had them for years. However, the shells on *Custom* series drums (whether maple or birch) receive the same interior finish given to the *Maple Custom Vintage* series (described in the review of that kit below). This treatment gives the *Custom* series drums a distinctly livelier, more reflective sound than that of the *Recording Custom* drums I've played. The fact that the drums were fitted with clear *Ambassador* heads added to this quality.

Birch drums are, to me, the chameleons of the drum world. I've found that they respond more dramatically to drumhead changes—creating a totally different character with each head swap—than do maple drums, which seem to keep at least some of their tonal character no matter what the head choice. Even though the addition of the *Maple Custom Vintage* interior finish modified this characteristic somewhat, I still found that changing to heavier heads on the *Custom* kit resulted in a very distinct change in response and tonality. I count this as an asset, because it means that one kit can be easily "converted" to adapt to a variety of situations. (And if you prefer the consistency of maple to the adaptability of birch, remember that you have that option in the *Custom* series.)

The 2.3mm steel hoops on the drums are claimed by Yamaha to "center the tone, add bottom, and tune cleanly." I can't say much about adding bottom, because I didn't have the standard hoops to put on the drums and compare. But I did notice that the drums were very sensitive to tuning changes—a little went a long way—and they did produce clear, distinct tones when tuned evenly. On the snare drum, the rims provided sharp, cutting rimshots.

Conclusions

One could say that in creating the *Custom* series Yamaha has just re-invented the wheel. However, in today's era of "custom" everything, it seems as though consumers each want their own wheels, so perhaps Yamaha's move is a savvy one. The new series offers top-level quality, time-tested components, distinctively new appearance options, and a couple of new acoustic features as well. With all those possibilities available, I'd figure just about any drummer could "build" his or her dream kit.

Now, dreams aren't always easy to attain, and they don't come cheap. The *Custom* kit program is only available through Yamaha ProDrum Network dealers (which are generally the larger retailers who deal in significant volume). Additionally, custom orders through this program will take approximately five months from ordering to shipment. Finally, here's a representative look at pricing, based on our test kit: 16x22 bass drum—\$1,630; 9x10 tom—\$605; 10x12 tom—\$615; 11x13 tom—\$630; 16x16 tom—\$925;

6 1/2x14 snare drum—\$800. The kit was shipped with an *HW-830* hardware package (cymbal stand, cymbal boom stand, snare stand, hi-hat, and bass drum pedal) priced at \$725, along with a double tom mount and some other goodies that would cost a few dollars more.

Stage Custom Series

For many years Yamaha has enjoyed substantial popularity at the high end of the drumkit market—first with the amazingly successful *Recording Custom* series and more recently with the *Maple Custom* series. But they've never really been a player at the entry level. However, with the introduction of the *Stage Custom* series, that situation may very well change. This new series, made in Yamaha's Indonesian facilities, offers substantial value and performance at an extremely competitive price point. Our test kit (slightly different than the one shown in the photo) was a five-piece *SC2F5* package set consisting of a 16x22 bass drum, 10x12 and 11x13 rack toms, and a 16x16 floor tom (with legs). A 6 1/2x14 steel-shelled snare drum completed the kit, which was outfitted with Yamaha's recently introduced *600* series hardware and priced at \$1,130. (Other configurations are available.)

Appearance And Construction

Things that immediately identify a drumset as an "entry level" (read: beginner) kit include generic-looking lugs and fittings and/or a generic-looking covered finish. The *Stage Custom* has neither. The lugs are long, one-piece, high-tension models, the T-rods on the bass drum and the wing bolts on the floor tom and cymbal stands are "borrowed" from Yamaha's *Maple Custom* art-deco design, and the drums are finished in a very attractive, deep cranberry red lacquer over a birch outer ply. (The bass drum features matching wood hoops, which is an additional bonus.) The finish itself is quite nice: shiny, but not a mirror gloss with loads of depth. It's more like a polished natural wood look, which "reads" more expensive than it is. (Green, black, and brown finishes are also available.)

The overall construction quality of the drums was impressive. The bearing edges were cut beautifully, and were sanded smooth (though not polished). The interiors of the shells were also sanded—so well, in fact, that the ply seams were virtually undetectable. The interior ply is falkata (a very pale wood with quite a noticeable grain structure), so any imperfections would have been readily apparent. I found none.

Hardware

The *600* series hardware included with the kit is lightweight, single-braced stuff that makes perfect sense with a kit of this nature. It's small and light enough for a young player to handle, yet it's well-made, contemporary in design, and completely practical for virtually any kind of playing. (I could gig with it quite comfortably.) The hardware package includes a snare stand, a bass drum pedal, a hi-hat, and one straight cymbal stand.

I do have a gripe about this package, and that is that it only includes the one cymbal stand. Yamaha isn't the only company doing this, and I understand that it's a policy intended to keep the package price of the kit down. But as I've said before, it's a false

economy. For any student to learn proper drumset technique (and certainly for any semi-pro who might consider gigging with the kit), a hi-hat, a ride cymbal, and at least one crash cymbal are the absolute minimum requirements. So after buying this kit (or any of several others), the consumer must immediately turn around and buy an additional stand. This is not only an additional expense, it's an inconvenience that's liable to generate ill will in the consumer. Considering the low overall cost of the kit, the few dollars more that it would cost with the additional stand necessary to make it really complete (and it certainly should not be more than a few dollars) should not deter potential buyers.

In addition to the 600 series package, Yamaha has wisely fitted the Stage Custom kit with the excellent TH840 double tom mount used on some of their higher-priced kits. It features twin ball-and-socket mounting arms that provide extremely flexible positioning (and can be completely rotated to allow bottom-head tuning without taking the drum off the mount). The inclusion of this mount adds additional value to the Stage Custom kit. The inclusion of drumkey-operated tension rods at the bottom of the bass drum is also a nice touch.

Sound

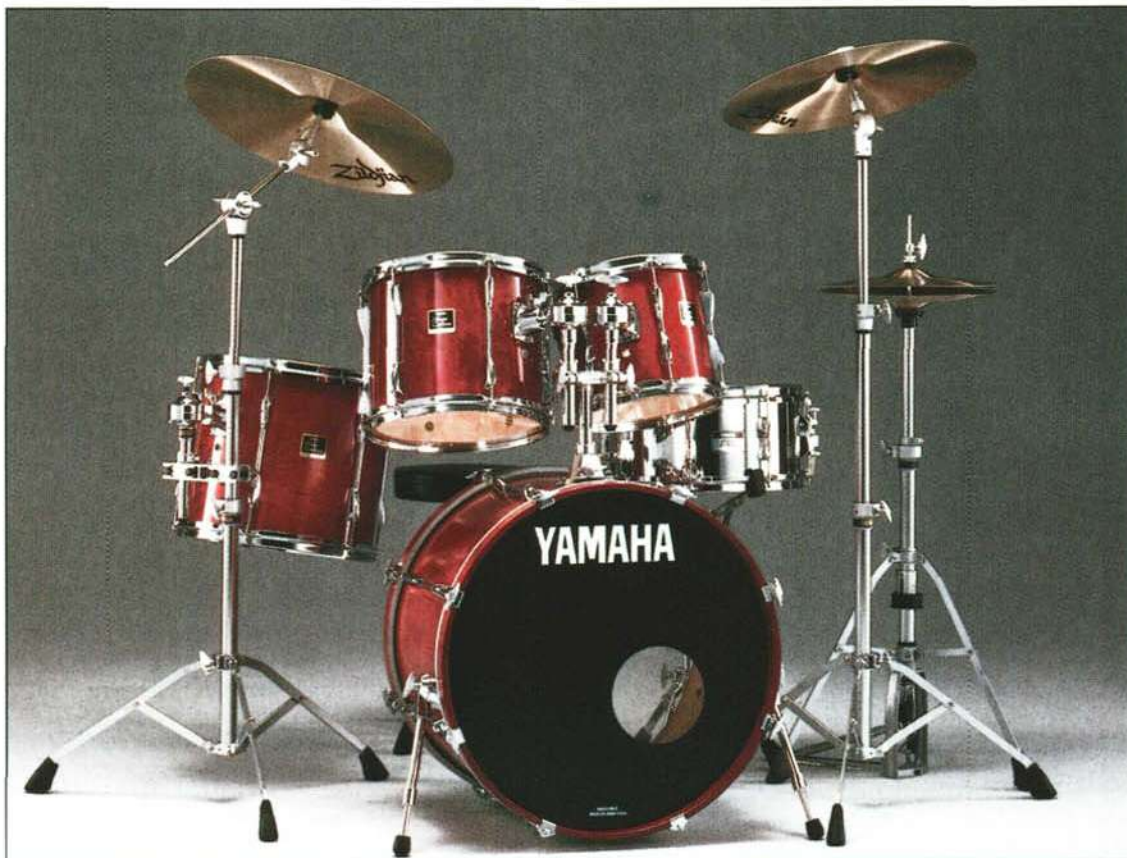
Out of the box, the toms and bass drum sounded bright and sharp, with lots of attack, volume, and sustain. On the other hand,

WHAT'S HOT

- excellent value for price in terms of construction and appearance
- 600 series hardware is light and functional
- sound quality is good, and can be improved with head selection

WHAT'S NOT

- original-equipment, single-ply heads project less low end than drums are capable of producing
- hardware package needs a second cymbal stand



they didn't produce much depth or roundness of tone—which was a bit surprising, considering the depths of the shells. Of course, the shells themselves were primarily of mahogany plies, and mahogany tends to favor the higher end of the sonic spectrum.

The bass drum and toms came fitted with heads labeled "Remo Unicorn," with clear Ambassador-weight batters and clear Diplomat-weight bottom heads. I was confident that these heads had a lot to do with the exaggerated high end produced by the drums, so I swapped them for some twin-ply batter heads (Remo Emperors and Evans G2s) and Ambassador bottom heads to test my theory. Sure enough, the thicker heads reduced the high-end output enough to let a deeper, fuller drum sound come through. And this occurred with no substantial loss of attack.

I've said it before and I'll say it again: Single-ply heads are great on higher-end kits made of woods that provide their own depth and tone. But they can contribute to a certain "cheapness" in the sound produced by less-expensive drums, and they can also create difficulties for drummers with less experience at head selection and drum tuning.

The obvious solution to this problem is to outfit entry-level kits with twin-ply batter heads. This couldn't possibly add a significant amount to the cost of the kit, since most of the major head companies price their "standard model" single- and twin-ply heads identically. Additionally, since entry-level kits tend to be targeted at younger players (who are likely into rock), outfitting the drums with the most durable heads possible would be a service to both the player and his or her parents.

Conclusions

As it is, the Stage Custom series offers excellent construction

quality, outstanding appearance, totally functional hardware, and a very competitive price. I think Yamaha has a real contender in the entry-level arena. (And if the company could toss in a second cymbal stand and reconsider the head selection, they might have a champ!)

Maple Custom Vintage Series

Yamaha's *Maple Custom* series has been out for over five years now, and has been a very successful line for them. A couple of years back, however, they introduced a sub-series called the *Maple Custom Vintage*, which featured a special finish and acoustic characteristics. Yamaha's Steve Anzivino sent us a kit that included a 14x20 bass drum, 8x10 and 8x12 rack toms, a 13x15 suspended "floor" tom, and a 5 1/2x14 snare drum. (The photo is of a much more elaborate kit, but you get the idea.) Steve's cover letter mentioned that the kit had been in their showroom and featured some used heads that were "worn in just right." Those included Remo clear *Ambassadors* on the toms and a coated *Ambassador* on the snare, an Evans *EQ-2* batter head on the bass drum (with nothing in the drum), and an *Ebony* logo head with a small hole on the front of the bass drum.

I was prepared to change to new heads, but when I played these drums I had to agree with Steve: They were worn in "just right"—even though they seemed a slightly unusual choice for a kit with a jazz orientation. Regardless, the drums sounded just super: warm, fat, round, and mellow—yet with just enough attack from the single-ply heads to give them some authority and cut. Here was a perfect example of how maple shells contribute a specific characteris-

WHAT'S HOT

- drums sound warm and full, yet are also bright and responsive
- special finish gives distinctive, classy look

WHAT'S NOT

- suspended "floor" tom seems out of keeping with "vintage" concept and takes up a lot of floor space

tic to a drum's sound. I was actually able to achieve a deeper, fuller sound on the 8x10 and 8x12 *Vintage* toms than with the 9x10 and 10x12 *Custom* toms (with their birch shells) when all the drums were fitted with the same single-ply heads. (Understand that I'm not denigrating the birch drums here; I mention this to illustrate the difference in acoustic contributions made by the two shell materials.)

I found some specific features of this kit a little surprising. The shells, for instance, are fairly thick (7-ply, 7mm toms and snare; 10-ply, 10mm floor tom and kick drum), with no reinforcing rings. The 20" bass drum seemed especially heavy—despite the fact that the kit featured Yamaha's small *Maple Custom* series brass-finished lugs. A classic kit from the "vintage" era (say, pre-1965) would most likely have had a very thin, lightweight shell with reinforcement hoops for strength. (The *EQ-2* batter head and the hole in the front head also seemed odd. But the combination made the wide-open drum sound great, so I left it alone.)

Another unusual feature was die-cast rims on the snare drum,

which gave it a very contemporary (and somewhat massive) appearance. The drum sounded fine—crisp, clean, and sensitive, with solid rimshots—but it looked a little anachronistic against the others in the kit.

I don't care for suspended floor toms, for several reasons. One is that suspended drums this large tend to wobble when struck, no matter how effective the mounting system is. Additionally, suspended drums usually increase the amount of overall floor space the kit takes up, by virtue of the tripod stand from which they must be suspended. (You may not always want or need a cymbal in



that position, but you're forced to put a stand there anyway to suspend the drum.) Legs on a floor tom create a much more compact setup. Finally, again the classic or "vintage" look of the kit is compromised by this very contemporary method of mounting the tom. However, having said all that, I have to admit that the drum sounded great when suspended. It produced a very respectable "floor tom" sound that belied its size. (Of course, it might have sounded equally good with legs; I had no way of testing that. Legs are available in this series for traditional floor toms.)

Vintage series shells are hand-stained in multiple stages with a special resin originally developed by Yamaha for their high-quality clarinets. The look it produces is rich and classy, rather than high-gloss glamorous. The interiors of the shells are finished with the same material, and are incredibly smooth and reflective. This treatment might be considered an improvement or a liability, depending on your personal taste. A flatter, less reflective interior generally adds more warmth to the drum's sound, along with more control. A more reflective surface helps shoot the sound out with more life and projection.

Essentially, the *Maple Custom Vintage* kit is a hybrid between classic style and contemporary acoustics. The drum sizes are small, yet their sound is big. The look says "vintage," but the performance and features are state-of-the-art. It appears that Yamaha decided to offer the best of both worlds. The drums in our kit are priced individually, at \$1,425 for the bass drum, \$510 for the 8x10 tom, \$530 for the 8x12 tom, \$650 for the 13x15 tom, and \$800 for the snare drum. The *HW-830* hardware package that accompanied the kit is priced at \$725.

Ndugu Chancler Snare Drum

The 5 1/2 x 14 *Ndugu Chancler* snare drum is noteworthy for its simplicity (in an age of some pretty radical and complicated snare drum designs). It's a straightforward drum with ten lugs, an inverted-bead metal shell, and an efficient (but fairly standard) throw-off. So what makes this drum "different" enough that Ndugu would have his name attached to it?

To begin with, the drum doesn't look like a metal-shelled snare, because the shell has a white coating. Beyond the classy cosmetic appearance this creates, the coating has a slightly mellowing effect



on the metallic nature of the drum's sound. Not a lot, mind you—just enough to take the edge off and make the drum sound "aggressive" without being "obnoxious." The drum is left with plenty of projection, bite, and ring. (Yamaha provides a fairly thick plastic O-ring that flattens the ring right down. I'd probably go with something a little less drastic to take advantage of the drum's natural presence.)

Another new feature of this drum is the presence of "snare diverters" as part of the throw-off assembly. These are small, L-shaped brackets fitted on the bottom of the throw-off (and on the second snare-tension adjustment fitted on the opposite side of the drum where a butt plate would normally be). These brackets apply pressure (between the bottom of the throw-off and the edge of the drumhead) to the strings holding the snare wires. This, in turn, helps to prevent those strings from going slack and maintains a more consistent tension as the tension knob is adjusted. It's a nice little touch.

The *Ndugu* snare also features Yamaha's new 2.3mm steel rims, which are thicker and heavier than the company's standard 1.6mm rims. These rims seemed to be a very nice compromise between "standard" steel rims and die-cast rims in terms of rimshot sound

WHAT'S HOT

- white coating on metal shell gives drum a bit mellower sound than other steel-shelled drums
- heavy 2.3mm steel rims are a nice compromise between standard steel and die-cast

WHAT'S NOT

- drum does not perform well in low to medium pitch range

and tuning facility.

As is the case with most steel-shelled snare drums, this drum tended to sound best when tightened up a bit. (It didn't work too well in the low- to mid-range, "fatback" department.) As a matter of fact, I liked it best when I had the snare-side head really cranked up, with the top head moderately tight. With this tuning the drum was especially sensitive, with lots of snare response and crisp, cutting clarity. When both heads were torqued up into pistol-shot range the mellowing effect of the coating was effectively

lost—but when you're talking about this kind of crack from a snare, mellowness is generally not an issue. At this tuning, by the way, rimshots were absolutely devastating.

The *Ndugu* snare should appeal most to those who want a clean, simple, and powerful snare-drum sound with plenty of resonance but a tiny bit less edge than "traditional" chrome snares. It carries a list price of \$650.

Istanbul Mel Lewis Series Cymbals

by William R Miller

The sound of these gorgeous cymbals is so rooted in jazz that it's next to impossible to play straight 8ths on them!

Mel Lewis passed away on February 2, 1990, leaving behind a lot of wonderful memories for drummers who appreciated his small-group approach to big band. Mel's sound, feel, and playing style were all pretty much unique—understated yet always swinging, playing only for the band but with that dark, percolating bounce.

His recorded performances revealed a lot about his sound and



-style. But even better was catching Mel's "soft intensity" in action with his big band at the Village Vanguard, the New York club where he performed almost every Monday night for over twenty years. Yes, he left us with a lot of great memories. He also left us his cymbals.

And just what were Mel's cymbals? Istanbul. Mel was a long-time endorser; the veteran drummer loved Istanbul's classic "old K" sound. Since Istanbul cymbals are all handmade and thus "individual" in nature, Mel's cymbals were uniquely his, reflecting his taste in cymbal sounds. Those cymbals stayed with Mel's drums after his death, and are used whenever the Vanguard (Mel Lewis) Jazz Orchestra performs with any of its "sub" drummers: Lewis aficionados like Danny Gottlieb and John Riley.

When Istanbul decided to create a new series of cymbals based on Mel's sound, they tracked down his cymbals and actually shipped them off to Turkey, where they could be analyzed. (This story is not manufacturer hype; it was corroborated by a "name" drummer who told me he was present when the cymbals were crated up for shipment.) The craftsmen at Istanbul's small factory measured, weighed, felt, and, most importantly, listened to Mel's cymbals. They then set about the task of trying to duplicate the general design and sound characteristics of Mel's cymbals. These artisans even went so far as to match the "custom" contours (i.e., imperfections) of Mel's cymbals.

The result of all this painstaking work? Some of the nicest-sounding jazz cymbals being manufactured today.

Before getting to the sound of the various Mel Lewis models, there's a side benefit that U.S. drummers should be aware of with regard to these cymbals. Istanbul cymbals are distributed in the U.S. by the Daito Corporation, and Daito takes an extra step to ensure the quality of the cymbals they distribute here. They periodically send Pitti Hecht, a German percussionist and cymbal expert, to Turkey to select the best-sounding models from the factory. Hecht picks out the "cherries" from the total batch, and those are the ones sent to the States. So those cymbals that do make it here are reportedly the best of the best.

The *Mel Lewis* series features three models: 14" hi-hats, a 19" crash/ride, and a 21" ride. Some of the general characteristics that these models share include low pitch, thin weight, and a relatively flat profile. Also, cosmetically, these cymbals are all simply beautiful to look at, the hammer marks and makeup of the metal being quite striking. It's obvious just from looking at them that these are high-quality musical instruments.

One other common trait these cymbals share is that, as with fingerprints, no two cymbals are alike. Daito sent us three rides, three crash/rides, and two sets of hi-hats to make the point that, yes, these cymbals do have general similarities that can be traced to Mel's cymbals, but they are also quite individual in nature. (More on this later.) When Istanbul makes cymbals it's not a science, it's an art.

The Hats

The *Mel Lewis* hi-hats, 14" in size, would certainly be perfect for use in a jazz context—large or small band. Both sets we reviewed had a husky, low pitch, yet they still had a cutting chick sound. The splash sound, especially on the lowest-pitch combination of hats, was very delicate and musical—almost like low-

WHAT'S HOT

- 14" hi-hats have a dark, musical flavor and a snappy chick sound
- 19" crash/ride has a deep ride character, a full crash effect, and a "brassy" (and usable) bell
- 21" ride has a sound so sweet that jazz drummers will happily take wedding gigs to get the money to pay for one!

WHAT'S NOT

- bottom hi-hat cymbal hole is just a bit too small for some stands

pitched finger cymbals.

Riding on either pair with the cymbals held loosely together was a pleasure, and you could clearly hear a certain "Mel-ness" coming through. Although thin, these hats were just a little bit sloppy for quick barks and other short accents. But their positive attributes far outweigh this minor complaint.

One concern, though, which was apparent from the get-go, was the inability of the bottom hi-hat cymbal to fit on my DW hi-hat stand. The hole in the cymbal was simply too small to fit around the nylon sleeve of the stand. I then tried both bottom cymbals on a standard Pearl stand and I was just able to get them on. (I had to force one a bit, and thus it had no "play.") I fixed the problem by sanding the sleeve on the stand.

When informed of the problem, George Rose, Daito's CEO, said that he would immediately contact Istanbul and have the holes slightly enlarged. (Hopefully that won't change the sound of future ML hats.) As I mentioned, it's a relatively minor problem to fix and one that may not even be a factor on other brands of stands.

The Crash/Ride

Mel was known to say that a drummer should be able to ride on a crash cymbal and crash on a ride cymbal. Well, the *Mel Lewis* crash/ride, 19" in diameter, is one cymbal that works perfectly in either case. All three of the crash/rides sent for review had a low pitch, a controllable amount of ring when ridden on, and a dark crash sound. Two of the three cymbals had downright usable bells; one in particular had a bell sound that just about any drummer would love.

Yes, there was a little bit of "spread" when riding on this model, but that wasn't really a problem when it was played with a band. (I did get to play all of these cymbals on a number of different gigs.) As for crashing, the crash/ride sounded best when not played overly loud. These cymbals are not meant to be bashed.

The Ride

How often does this happen: You're playing with a group on stage, you strike one of your instruments, and the whole band turns around and smiles at you? Well, the first time I merely touched the *Mel Lewis* ride I got that response. (Okay, it was only a trio, so only two guys turned; but it still surprised me.) This 21" beauty has two rivets placed about 2" in from the edge and about 5" apart, and the combination of the sizzling rivets and the low pitch of the cymbal is simply one of the most beautiful sounds

you'll ever hear.

One interesting thing to note about this cymbal is that, when you're riding on it, you don't really hear the rivets. They're almost imperceptible. You can hear the stick sound speak out just above a warm, trashy spread—very nice. And the sustain from the rivets (once you've stopped riding on it) is a beautiful effect—perfect for ballads when you want that sustained effect. It's not that I simply love cymbals with rivets—more often than not I find them to be annoying—but somehow on this cymbal all of the factors are right. And this was true on all three of the rides Istanbul sent. (The only real difference between the three was their pitches.)

As for the bells of the cymbals, well, they're not great. One of the three had a bell sound you might be able to get away with. But who cares? You want a bell sound? Move to another cymbal, like the crash/ride. The *Mel Lewis* ride is a fine musical instrument that I can confidently say any jazz drummer would be inspired by. (How's that for a "ringing" endorsement?)

Warranty And Price

Daito makes these cymbals even more inviting by offering a three-year warranty that covers cracking and any type of manufacturing defect. According to Daito, their warranty is three times longer than any other cymbal maker's. Regardless, if you owned one of these cymbals and it developed a crack, it would be a sad day. (At least you could get it replaced.)

In terms of price, the *Mel Lewis* series ranges a little bit higher than other similar-size cymbals on the market. The 14" hi-hats list for \$425 per pair, the 19" crash/ride for \$350, and the 21" ride for \$450. Yes, it's a high price, but these cymbals are of a quality that makes the price seem...well...reasonable. And on a positive note, with the sale of each *Mel Lewis* series cymbal Istanbul pays a royalty to Mel's widow.

After having lived with these cymbals for a couple of months, it's going to be hard to send them back. Did they help me sound better? Yes. Did they help me swing harder? Possibly. Did I sound like Mel? Well, no, but just for a moment I heard that sound and got a little deeper into the music. I think Mel would approve.



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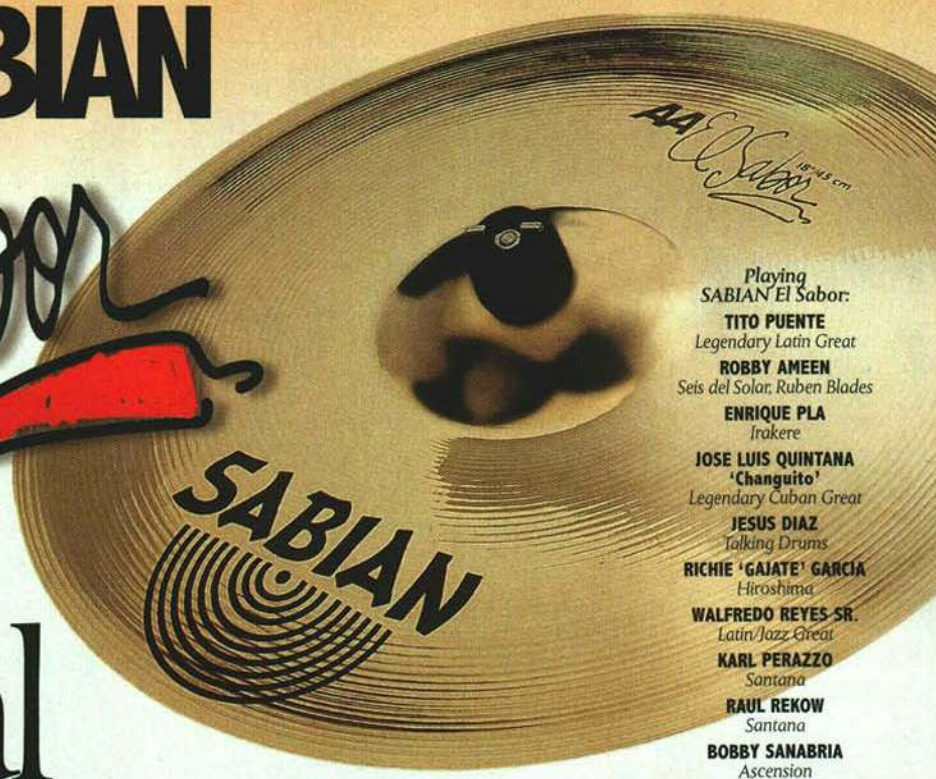
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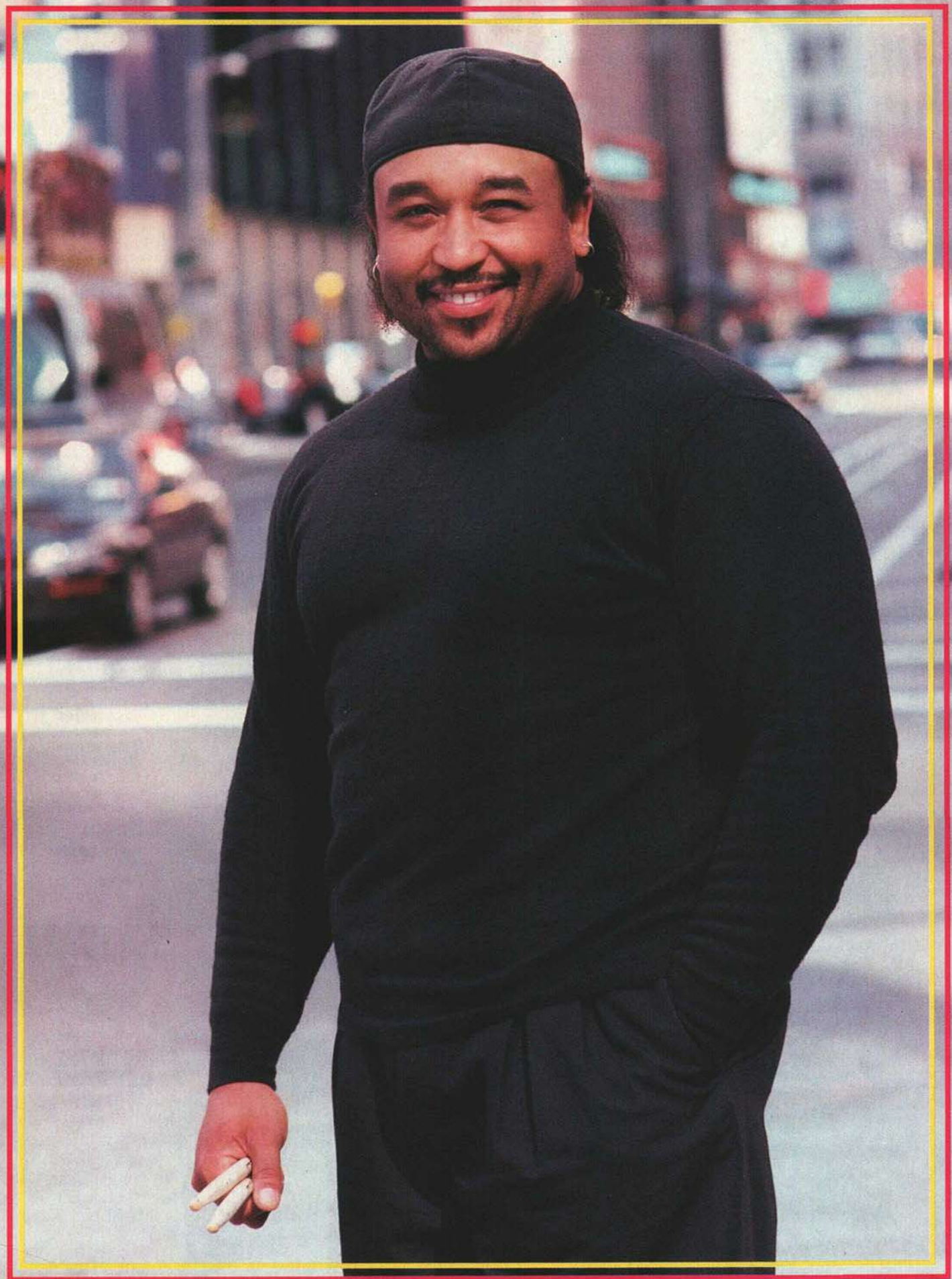
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Carter Beauford Of The Dave Matthews Band

By William F. Miller

The torch continues to be passed: Gene lit the fire, focusing the attention, then Buddy dominated, Max thoughtfully emerged, then passed it to Tony and Elvin, Billy raised the ante and Steve refined it. Next up was Neil, followed by Vinnie, who went left with it, Dave honed it to a sharp point, and now Dennis is guiding the way.

But who will be the next guy, the player who will capture our imagination? Carter Beauford is a pretty good bet.

Placing Beauford's name (pronounced BO-ford) next on that list really isn't too much of a stretch. Check out his playing with the genre-crossing Dave Matthews Band—creative ideas combined with tremendous technique, over-the-top flailing executed with pinpoint control, all rolled up in the groove of *death*. It's simply an awesome combination that has drummers smiling as they race to the woodshed.

Carter's landslide victory in the Up & Coming category of this year's *MD Readers Poll* along with an avalanche of reader mail demanding an immediate cover story (some letters downright threatening), further demonstrate his dominance. Drummers are loving this guy, and with good reason. Why? Maybe it's because he's expanding the limits of drumming in a pop context. Fusion-type beats, round-house fills, and double pedal being played on multi-million-selling records? How shocking.

Next In Line

Photos by Ebet Roberts

Carter Beauford

The Dave Matthews Band's rise to prominence—and Carter Beauford's—began six years ago in Charlottesville, Virginia. It was a fairly slow climb, as the musicians—Beauford, along with Dave Matthews on vocals and acoustic guitar, Stefan Lessard on bass, Boyd Tinsley on violin, and Leroi Moore on sax—learned how to blend their disparate musical backgrounds together. Rock, pop, bluegrass, R&B, country, and jazz could all be found on these bandmembers' resumes. With Beauford as its fusion/funk foundation, the Matthews Band grew into a solid, style-hopping quintet that eventually wowed audiences on a local level.

In 1993 the band released a live disk called *Remember Two*

Things, and once it began to sell in the thousands regionally, the major labels came knocking. RCA signed the band and put them in the studio with veteran producer Steve Lillywhite to record *Under The Table And Dreaming*. That album was released in September of 1994, and on the strength of several singles, including the monster hit "What Would You Say," sold more than four million copies. And apparently quite a few of those four million disks made their way into the hands of drummers, because the Beauford buzz exploded at that point.

As you might expect, Carter Beauford didn't just start playing. (He's proud to say he's been at it for nearly thirty years.) Carter actually racked up some decent local credits before joining the Matthews band. In fact, tremors were coming out of the Richmond, Virginia area ten years ago about some *heavy* cat who was playing in a fusion band called Secrets. That gig led to other work for Beauford, including a Washington, D.C.-based television show for the BET network led by jazz great Ramsey Lewis. For the four years he did that show, Carter got to play with some top-name performers, including Michel Camilo, Roy Hargrove, and Maceo Parker. Carter kept very busy doing the show and the Matthews Band at the same time, but as the band began to take off, he ended his TV career. Obviously, the right decision.

Now the Matthews Band is on tour in support of *Crash*, their follow-up record. You'd think they might have tried to duplicate the sales success of *Under The Table* by coming up with a "What Would You Say, Part 2," but to their credit they didn't. *Crash* shows the band exploring styles and pushing the limits of pop even further. And Carter Beauford is right in the middle of it all, giving outstanding performances on track after track.

All of this success—both musical and financial—hasn't affected the bandmembers. At a day-long photo shoot in New York City recently, the camaraderie was obvious. No ego problems here, just musicians happy to be making their own music on their own terms.

Sitting across from me in an exclusive midtown Manhattan hotel a few hours after the photo shoot, Carter's infectious, Cheshire-cat smile lit up the room. His down-to-earth, affable style reveals a man at ease with himself, although his conversation shows a deep devotion to developing his craft. (He doesn't yet realize the impact he's already made on the drumming community.) But it's that warm, genial personality—along with all of those terrific chops—that makes Carter Beauford the next in line.



WFM: Watching the band today at the photo shoot was very interesting, because everybody got along and there were no "star" trips. And it seemed like there was no real "leader," per se.

CB: As a matter of fact, that's one of the things about this band that everybody likes: There isn't a leader. Each one of us can express ourselves musically without being choked by a leader. Everybody can offer what they feel is gonna enhance the music. So, yeah, that's the main thing that all the guys—especially me—feel make this band happen. It's the freedom that we have to speak with our instruments.

WFM: You've got to feel great about this band. It's a unique situation in the music industry.

CB: Yeah, I do feel great about it. There has only been one other band that I've played in where I was able to do what I wanted—and that was a fusion band. Here I'm in a situation where I can play what I think will be right for the music. And I do appreciate it because I've played in a lot of bands over the years where I felt I couldn't contribute. So yeah, I've only been in two bands that allowed me the freedom

to create. And I probably have more freedom in the Matthews band than I did with that fusion band!

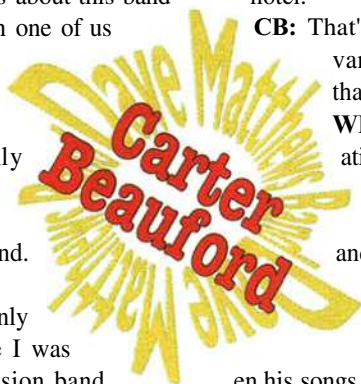
WFM: I don't imagine the fusion band was staying in this swank hotel.

CB: That's true! [laughs] We were living in a beat-up 1974 van. It was a nightmare. But that's behind me now, thank God.

WFM: Since the Matthews band is a "total group situation," how does the material get written?

CB: Most of the material used to be written by Dave. He wrote the melodies, the chord structures, and the lyrics. Dave would bring in a song and say, "Look, this is how it goes, but I want you to do your thing and take it to another level." So each one of us added our own parts and ideas to strengthen his songs.

But now we're writing as a group. In fact, a lot of the songs on *Crash* were written by everybody. We all went into the studio, started jamming, and came up with the ideas. We didn't have any songs that were pre-written, yet everything was like "boom"





comes from. We have a jazz thing happening here, we have a rock thing happening there, we even have a classical thing happening with our fiddle player, Boyd. All this stuff somehow comes together and creates our sound.

WFM: You talked about not being reined in by a leader. But when everybody was sitting around the studio coming up with ideas, did the group have comments about what you played? The reason I ask is because you have the chops to go out if you want to. I would think it might have happened.

CB: Well, maybe just once or twice! [laughs] As a matter of fact, that's another good thing about the band. We can all give and receive constructive criticism. I think we trust each other and realize that we're all trying to make the best music we can, so we're willing to listen to each other. But that's a totally different situation from being told by a leader what you can and cannot play. The reason we're able to do it is because there aren't any ego problems in this band.

when we got in the studio, just idea after idea. We created the stuff right on the spot.

WFM: That must have been fun—and gratifying.

CB: Oh, it felt great. And this is the reason we feel *Crash* is the best work we've done so far—it's the shit. We are so psyched about it because we were able to go in and create something from the ground up and see it develop. And at the end of the day to have songs that really work is just so satisfying.

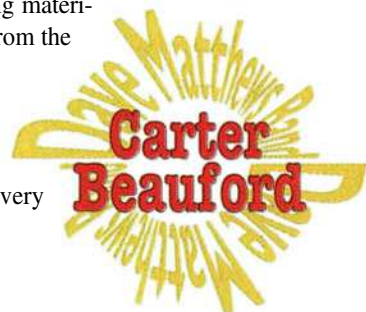
WFM: And the band has its own sound that, by what you're saying, is really a product of everybody's contribution.

CB: Oh yeah. We're five individuals coming together, but coming from different musical backgrounds. That's where our sound

We've had some rough times together. We've been on the road for a long time—six years now—and we really started from the bottom. We scratched and clawed our way up, and I think we all remember what it was like when we didn't have anything. So everybody is chilled out on the whole ego thing.

WFM: When the band is writing material together, what is your input from the drums?

CB: I come from a jazz background—well, that's what I listened to and what my dad listened to when I was a kid—every



single day. So that's pretty much the way I *think* about music—it's just deep down inside of me. When I listen to anything that somebody brings me—any kind of idea someone might have—I'm going to think jazz. How can I add my little jazz attitude to this bluegrass song? How do I add a jazz thing to this funk tune? That's the challenge for me: trying to incorporate that jazz background into something that really doesn't have anything to do with jazz. But it seems to work itself out every time.

WFM: That's one of the beauties of the band; there are all these styles creeping into the songs here and there. But have you ever had a problem where you were using your jazz head to play a country feel, for instance, and somebody complained that the feel wasn't right?

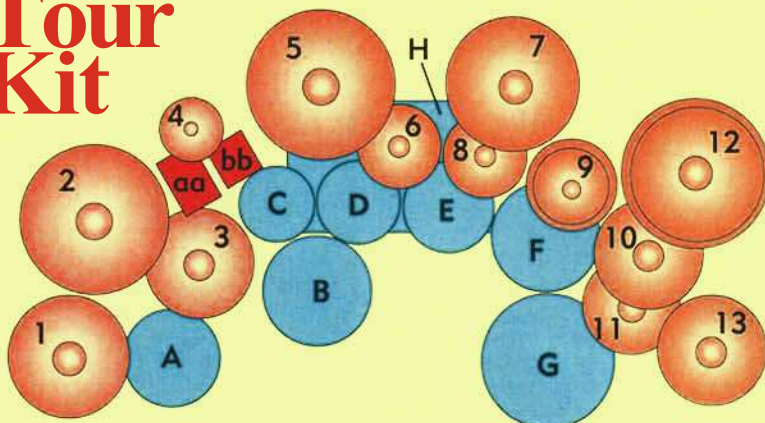
CB: Never in this band, although it used to happen to me quite a bit in other situations. If there's an idea that Dave or someone brings to the band and they have something in mind for the feel, then I'm gonna get into whatever they're thinking. If they're thinking polka, I'm not going to think jazz. But after listening to jazz so much—and playing it quite a bit—I think it's just a part of me. It seems to seep through the cracks. [laughs]

WFM: But that's probably one of the reasons the Matthews band has its own sound. When the band plays these different styles, somehow you're able to make it your own. It isn't a straight country thing, a straight rock thing, or even a straight fusion thing.

CB: Yeah, but it isn't something we think a lot about; it just comes out that way. Again, for me, it comes back to the jazz thing. And Leroi, our sax player, has that jazz background. Stefan, our bassist, has a new wave kind of thing going on, because he's a bit younger than the rest of us. And like I said, Boyd brings a touch of classical and bluegrass to the band. It's just a big stew of influences.

WFM: I heard your new single on the radio recently and afterwards the DJ raved about it, saying the band had bro-

Carter's Tour Kit



Drumset: Yamaha Recording Custom

- A. 11 x 13 tom
- B. 4 1/2 x 14 Dangerous Oceltree snare drum
- C. 8x8 tom
- D. 10 x 10 tom
- E. 10 x 12 tom
- F. 12 x 14 tom
- G. 16 x 18 floor tom
- H. 16 x 22 bass drum

Percussion: LP

- aa. Ridge Rider cowbell
- bb. Jam Block

Hardware: Yamaha, including their rack system, DW 5000AH double pedal with Tama Iron Cobra felt beaters

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- 12. 18" and 20" *Oriental China Trashes* (piggybacked with felt washers separating cymbals)
- 13. 14" China crash

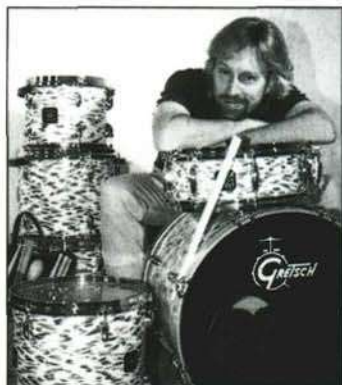
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ken new ground. Do you feel that you've broken new ground with *Crash*?

CB: Definitely, and the reason for it is that the band has this attitude that we never want to play the same song the same way twice. We've done so many shows and we're always changing the tunes. I'm beginning to wonder if it's a problem, because there are some nights when I want to do some things exactly the same. There are those nights when everything is kicking butt, and I'm like, "Man, I want to relive that!"

I think that is the key to your question—we're constantly changing things and challenging things, and I think that's what keeps our audiences coming back. People tell us that all the time. It's like, "I like the way you guys did 'Tripping Billies' last night. I've never heard it that way before." As a matter of fact, I've never heard it

played that way before either! But I think going for that has helped the band progress.

WFM: Well, why is it that, when you're trying to progress and expand in so many new directions, the band would choose the same producer and studio for *Crash* as you had on the last record?

CB: That was because we wanted to get everything we could out of Bearsville. When we went in there for *Under The Table*, it was the first time working with Steve Lillywhite, it was the first time for us doing a major label record, and there were a lot of other "first times" for us. We felt as though there was more for us to get out of Bearsville, that we didn't do everything we wanted to the first time. And the reason for using Steve again was simple: He's a great producer. I think the guy is incredible.

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WFM: How did you decide on Lillywhite in the first place?

CB: When we started juggling producers' names around, we had a few guys in mind, like Hugh Padgham and T-Bone Burnett. But eventually our manager told us about Steve: "He's worked with the Rolling Stones, U2, Peter Gabriel, Aretha Franklin, INXS," and we were like, "Whoa. This guy has done some serious stuff. Let's rap with him." When we did meet with him he was totally open-arms. He told us, "Look guys, I'm not here to change you or your music. I'm not going to put my concept on your band. I'm just going to make your album sound good. And I guarantee you the record will go platinum." I think we all got excited by everything he said, but even better was the sense we got from him that he was sincere. So we went with him, and he lived up to everything he said.

WFM: Lillywhite's known for getting killer drum sounds. Do you think he "captured" your sound?

CB: Oh God, yes. As a matter of fact, he enhanced it more than I thought could be done. The first time we went into the studio for *Under The Table*, though, I had the biggest problem with my drum sound. I had the drums set up in a booth, but it was so dead that the drums just didn't sing. Steve said, "Look, let's take the drums out of the booth and hear how they sound in different spots around the studio." I was like, "Okay, let's try it." We moved them around the room and played them in every nook and cranny that we could find, but we didn't find any spot that we liked. But then it occurred to Steve to carry the drums up to a loft above the studio, so we dragged them upstairs and got one of the best sounds that I've ever heard in my life! He took the time to experiment and got a killer drum sound.

For *Crash* we deliberately didn't use the loft just so the sound would be a bit different. We went for a slightly more controlled thing, but with a different personality. I'm happy with it. But that attitude of doing

Crash Symbols

These are the albums Carter lists as most representative of his drumming...

Artist	Album
Dave Matthews Band	Remember Two Things
Dave Matthews Band	Recently
The Vertical Horizon	Running On Ice
Dave Matthews Band	Under The Table And Dreaming
Dave Matthews Band	Crash
Secrets	Secrets

...and these are the artists (not necessarily drummers) most inspiring to him.
 Elvin Jones, Will Kennedy of the Yellowjackets, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, Giovanni Hidalgo, Bobby McFerrin, David Garibaldi, and Ray Obeido.

things differently than we have in the past influenced the drum sound this time.

WFM: One of the things that stands out on *Crashover Under The Table* was the sound of the cymbals.

CB: Well, thanks to Zildjian.

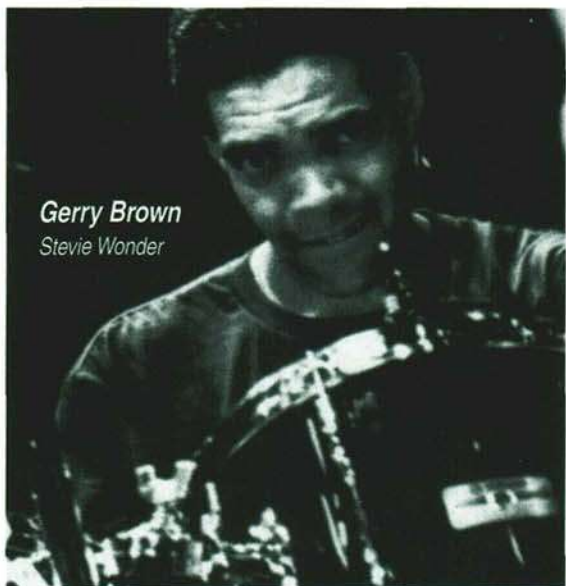
WFM: Oh, so that's why you called the record *Crash*.

CB: Ha! [laughs] Why didn't I think of that?! But the guys at Zildjian really know their stuff. I used Zildjians on the last record and was very happy with how they

sounded. But before we recorded *Crash* I actually went to the Zildjian factory and picked out exactly what I wanted. They let me sit in a room and try anything I wanted to.

WFM: You lucky guy.

CB: Oh, man! I was like, "I want that, and that, and that, and that." [laughs] But I was able to get the cymbal sound that I've been hearing in my head for years and years. In fact, I think I've gotten pretty close to my ideal drum sound as well.



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WFM: So what's the ideal "Carter Beauford drum sound"?

CB: I've been trying to get a certain sound for many years. And then a few years back I heard someone who had a sound that was very close to what I thought of as ideal, Dave Weckl. Dave's sound was, and is, amazing.

WFM: That's funny, because you don't play anything like Dave.

CB: Nothing like Dave. But his sound was what I wanted. Like I said, that was a few years ago. Now I'd add to that Marvin "Smitty" Smith's sound, Dennis Chambers' sound, and Vinnie Colaiuta's sound. Add a little David Garibaldi in there as well and that's the sound I'm going for. Those cats all have different sounds, but to me there is something in between all of them that I'm trying to get.

I feel I'm very close with my snare drum and cymbals. I like kind of a washy sound from my cymbals, but not an overbearing wash. It's a wash that is there but doesn't drown out everything.

WFM: Can you describe your sound a little bit more in detail? For instance, go into the way the snare drum is tuned, the way the bass drum is dampened, that kind of thing.

CB: Well, starting with the snare drum, I'll tell you who comes closest to the snare drum sound that I like—Will Kennedy of the Yellowjackets. He gets a jazz kit kind of snare drum sound, yet he also gets a great funk/pop 2 and 4 kind of thing. I love it. My sound is close to that, but tuned a bit higher and a tad drier.

As for the kick, I'm looking for something a bit more open. My kick drum sound right now is a little too muffled. I've been working on that and working with different pads, trying to get the sound to be just as direct but with a wider spread.

WFM: I suppose that with all of the double pedal stuff you play you need the kick to be defined.

CB: Yeah, defined, but still with presence. As for the toms, I think my tom sound is right where I want it. I've never really had any problems with the Yamaha [Recording Custom] toms, because the sound is defined and controlled, but there's still body. Overall I feel like I'm very close to having my ideal sound. And I thought we got a mind-blowing drum sound on Crash.

WFM: Let's talk about the recording of

Crash. Take me through the process.

CB: We did record three songs individually—building up parts—but we also did a lot of group stuff. For those, we went in, set up, and just hit it: "We're going to do this song. Okay, let's think about an arrangement. What about sounds? Let's run it." We just went for it. We started jamming and Steve would start recording without telling us. And that's how a lot of the stuff was recorded. We'd take a break and he'd say, "Guys, come in here," and we'd be like, "What are you doing?" And he'd play the stuff for us and it would be amazing—good performances, great sounds, everything.

WFM: Are you saying that you guys didn't use a click on this record?

CB: We did use a click on some of the songs, but I'm not exactly sure on which performances. We would do something like fifteen takes of one song, and on some takes we would use a click and on others we wouldn't. I'm not sure which takes were the ones used for the record.

WFM: On the songs that you did use a click, did you have a certain type of click that you liked to use? I've heard that

Lillywhite is pretty creative with the click.

CB: Steve does have a certain pattern and sound that he uses, which is like a multi-tone cowbell thing with a pretty cool rhythm. We used it a lot on Under The Table. We all liked the sound of it so much that we wanted him to actually mix it into some of the tunes, because it blended so well with what we were doing. But he wouldn't do it.

WFM: Talking specifically about your playing on Crash, you progressed from the last album in that you played some wackier, even more creative beats. Things like the bridge to "So Much To Say" is somewhat "Latin," "Two Step" has you playing double pedal 16ths under a country feel, and "Drive In Drive Out" is sort of a fusion-inspired pattern. Where are these types of things coming from?

CB: Well, believe it or not, I was really inspired by percussionists. Miguel Pomier used to be the percussionist in our band, but he passed away about three years ago. He was phenomenal. He gave me all sorts of ideas for patterns and different ways to look at rhythm. The other cat who inspired me—and continues to do so—is Giovanni

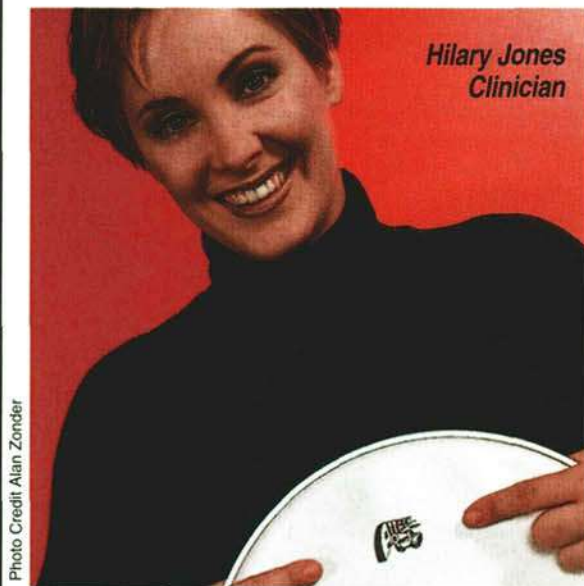


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Hidalgo. He's a mind-blowing percussionist. I can't believe some of the rhythms that come out of him. But those rhythms just totally inspire me, and I guess I sort of translate that stuff into drumset parts.

WFM: What about some of the other people who have inspired or influenced you over the years?

CB: First of all, there was my dad. I have to give credit to him. He was a trumpet player, and like I said before, his thing was jazz. He turned me on to all the heavy-weights. At the time I didn't want to hear those cats; I wanted to hear about the Dave Clark Five, the Beatles, and all the pop guys. But in the same breath, I was still listening on the sly to the jazz cats: Max Roach, Buddy Rich, Gene Krupa, Cozy Cole, Louie Bellson—all of them. My father said to me, "If you want to play drums, these are the cats."

WFM: It sounds like your dad was really into the idea of your playing drums.

CB: He was. Well, he was into the idea of my playing anything, whether it be harmonica, drums, or even cello. He thought that was something that kids should get into and learn about. I feel the same way: Kids should get into the arts. It's a happening thing.

But Buddy Rich, Gene Krupa, and Louie Bellson were the first cats for me. And then, once I really got into them, I got hungry for the drums and wanted to learn more. I just fell in love with it and I haven't stopped.

I can remember wanting to take the drumming thing further and not just play somebody else's licks. I wanted to play things that I had in my head, ideas that I had even as a kid. I just wanted to go further with the drums and go into areas that other drummers hadn't. That was a goal even at a real young age.

The cat who really turned it around for me was Tony Williams. Tony and his first Lifetime band really moved me, because I was thinking about somehow trying to combine jazz with rock. He did it with that first group. Tony opened up a whole new world for me. I can remember thinking that Tony showed what could be done, and it was just a matter of practicing until I got it together. Well, to this day I still can't play half of the stuff he was doing! [laughs]

WFM: It's obvious you did a lot of practicing, but did you take lessons?

CB: No, I didn't have any formal training at all. I was pretty much self-taught until I got to college. When I got to college I became friends with a drummer by the name of Billy Drummond, and he showed me a lot of things.

WFM: Is that the Billy Drummond, the New York jazz drummer?

CB: Yeah, and he's a monster. Billy's one of my best friends. He and I went to the Shenandoah Conservatory together. We used to practice together every day, and I would study the way he played. Billy turned me on to some of the other heavy cats, like Elvin Jones and Philly Joe Jones.

WFM: Did you study music in college?

CB: No, I studied occupational therapy. And the reason I wasn't studying music was because I didn't have any formal training. I couldn't read music at that point. So I took up the occupational therapy thing and got my degree in it, and actually taught high school for a while. My mother was happy about that, but I knew I wanted to play. When I quit the teaching gig to play full-time she wasn't happy, but my dad told her that I had to do the music thing. He knew that down deep I was a musician.

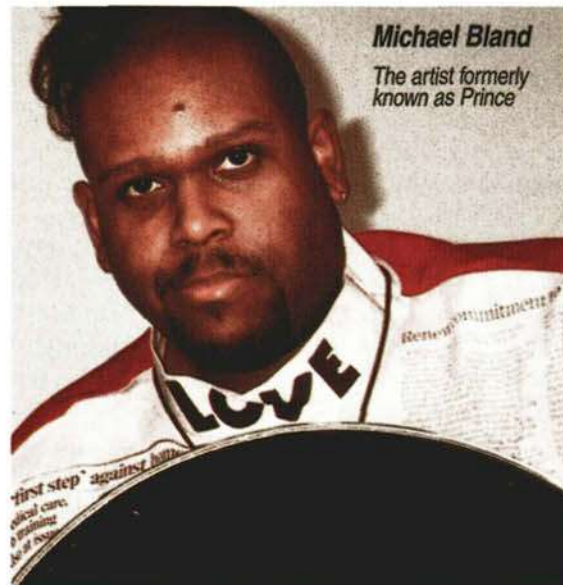
WFM: Since you didn't have any "formal" lessons you must have had a lot of playing experience.

CB: Oh yeah. I played my first gig when I was nine years old. I started playing with these cats who were in their twenties and thirties. I think they hired me because I was a bit of an attraction—the "kid drummer who could play" kind of thing. We would play a lot of Herbie Hancock, Miles Davis, and a lot of standards. I heard that music every day at home, so it was nothing to me.

When I went to audition for that group they put on a record and said, "Okay, play along." I think the tune was "Autumn Leaves," and I played it almost note-for-note, and they were tripping. So I got the job and stayed with them for years, all through junior high and into high school. But I played for a lot of other bands too. I did a lot of country bands, and even some bluegrass stuff.

WFM: All of that experience at such a young age is fantastic. That was your education.

CB: Exactly. There is nothing like hands-on experience. You can go to any college in the world and they can sit you down and



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write out everything that you should know, but you'll never really know it until you can play it on stage with other musicians.

WFM: I still find it hard to believe that you didn't have any lessons or any music education. You slip in some fairly advanced concepts with the Matthews band, like on the live version of "Tripping Billies" [originally on the Matthews band's self-released album *Remember Two Things*, and now available on the *Columbia Records Radio Hour, Volume 2* disk]. During the violin solo, you phrase in five over the double bass roll. I can't imagine just picking that sort of thing up.

CB: I got most of that from listening and checking out the cats. It's all out there, you just have to be open to it.

WFM: What types of things did you work on with Drummond?

CB: I had worked on a lot of technical things on my own—almost rudimental types of things—although I didn't know exactly what I was playing in terms of what they're called. When I got with Billy, he would play things and I'd ask him to explain them to me, and he could relate some of them to rudiments. So I learned

from both sides.

I also learned just from watching Billy's approach to the drums. He has perfect posture and he looks very relaxed when he plays. I really wanted to have my playing go in that direction, so I actually set up a mirror so I could watch myself play. It really helped me because I could see when my posture was good, or how I was holding the sticks when I would play a certain pattern, or just how relaxed I looked at the kit. It really helped my confidence, and I would recommend it. I practiced in front of a mirror for months.

As for technique, I always watched my hands and tried to find the best way for them to move. I think I found the best way for me to play, and I've worked on different exercises to keep building my chops.

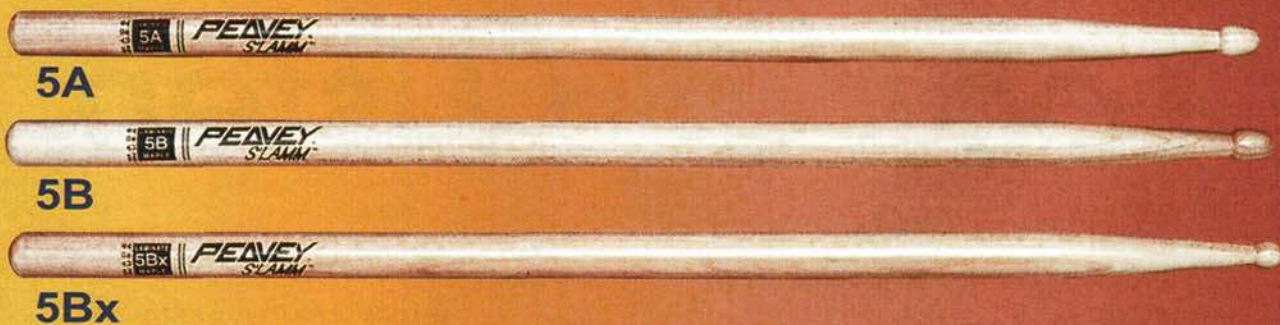
WFM: Are there specific rudimental exercises that you still work on?

CB: I practice my double and triple strokes with each hand, and a few other basic rudimental things, every time I sit down at the kit. But what I do on stage is basically nothing but single strokes, because that's what works best for the types of things I play with the band.

Speaking of singles, I'm completely blown away by what Buddy Rich did with the single-stroke thing. How the hell did he make his single-stroke rolls sound like press rolls? Buddy has been a big inspiration to me for that, so you'll hear me do a lot of that type of thing with the band. But when I'm practicing, I always have to go back to the basics—you know, the doubles, triples, paradiddles, and those things. While I play a lot of singles with the band, it's all of the other stuff that puts a certain amount of finesse in your playing. It would be crazy to study single strokes and nothing else.

WFM: On the song "Say Goodbye," from *Crash*, you play a very tasty single-stroke fill around the kit in the intro of the tune—and you're playing the roll with some type of multi-rod. It's fast, yet it sounds relaxed. I've noticed that you play with a thumbs-up type of grip—sort of a classic French-grip style. Does that grip help you play fast singles around the kit, like on "Say Goodbye"?

CB: Yeah, it does. I call it an African grip, because the thumbs are up but I'm using a combination of wrist and fingers. To me,



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it's a power grip. When I'm playing a straight-ahead gig I'll use traditional grip, because I don't need that power or that kind of speed. When I'm playing anything else, though, it's a matched, thumbs-up grip.

WFM: I've seen a lot of guys use that type of grip, but you look very relaxed with it. Your form looks excellent, with your thumbs up and your elbows out slightly, very similar to Cobham's stroke.

CB: Well, I think using a mirror really helped me to improve my form. When you actually watch yourself play you can learn a lot.

WFM: Besides just watching your hands, what types of things have you worked on to get your singles together?

CB: Practicing on a pillow for me is the best thing for singles, and it's something that I've been doing for years. I've also been working on each hand individually, concentrating on each hand by itself. Then when you put the two together, man, you can fly.

I've also used the pillow idea to get my bass drum chops together. I have a setup at home where there's a pillow in front of my

double pedal. I hit the pillow, but I try to have control of the beaters so they don't sink into the pillow. They just touch the edge of the pillow. I do that because I'm trying to gain control so that when I get on the drums I'll have control of the beaters and not just bury them into the head.

WFM: And you play with your heels up?

CB: Yeah, so it takes a lot of work to really develop control playing that way. I've found that the pillow thing really works, as long as I stay focused on not just burying the beaters into the pillow.

WFM: So your goal is not just to play faster and louder singles with your hands and feet?

CB: No, that shouldn't be the only goal. *Control* is what I want. I don't want to overpower my kit; I want to play musically with a good sound. When I was talking about the sound I want to get, the control you have when you play is as important to the sound as the kind of drums or cymbals you use.

WFM: Another somewhat unique approach you have is leading and playing ride rhythms with your left hand.

CB: I actually switched from the normal

way of playing to my left because I found it was much easier for me to play certain things that way. I hated playing with my hands crossed in front of me. I was always having sticking problems, and those just went away when I started leading with my left.

I realized after a while that I could play either way, from my right or left side. My mom actually told me that when I was young I would eat dinner with my left hand and she would go, [slap] "Don't do that." As a kid I didn't understand, because it felt natural for me to eat with either hand. But that slap on the wrist never changed anything! I guess I'm naturally ambidextrous.

WFM: But when you switched from right-hand to left-hand lead, did you give up on the right side?

CB: No, not at all. What's happening is, now I have two China cymbals on my right side. They are piggybacked and set up so I can ride on them with my right hand, playing the kind of things you'd hear Billy Cobham play—the upbeat 8ths. So I've used that a lot and it feels just as comfortable.

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play my kit leading with the left hand, just in terms of how the kit is set up. I don't have to cross over like I would if I rode with my right.

WFM: And you sing background vocals while you play. I would think that leading with your left would allow you to play with a more open stance, which probably helps with your singing.

CB: Right. When you're crossed up—leading with your right—it's harder to sing. You have that mic' in front of you, your sticks are crossed underneath, and your body is turned a little bit. That's uncomfortable. It's so much easier when you play open-handed.

WFM: Another Carter Beauford trademark—and one that a lot of drummers are talking about—is your rhythmic concepts for the hi-hat. Most drummers will play a repeated figure within a tune, but you vary up the hi-hat rhythms—it's kind of free-form in a way.

CB: I really can't take credit for that because that whole hi-hat thing came from Tony Williams. Tony is not a timekeeper; he plays melodically, theme and variation. He took the whole timekeeper thing and

threw it out the window. Drummers are musicians too. We are not just timekeepers. So, with that in mind, I feel I can lay down the groove and still be creative with what I'm playing on the hi-hat, or drop little splash hits into a pattern. I love playing that stuff.

I've been inspired by people like Steve Gadd and Stewart Copeland. Those cats have done some very creative things with the hi-hat. Dennis Chambers has done some amazing things too, so the information is out there.

WFM: Yeah, but you go wayleft with it.

CB: Well, I've always played like that, I guess, varying up the hi-hat and really playing off the beat. A lot of people call that beat displacement, but I call it playing around the groove, but at the same time keeping the groove happening. I just think it's another way of expressing yourself on your instrument instead of only keeping that 2 and 4 happening.

I find the beat displacement thing fascinating to play with. I feel as though it's a part of the magic of music. There are no set rules with music. You take a 4/4 groove and you can just play anything you want

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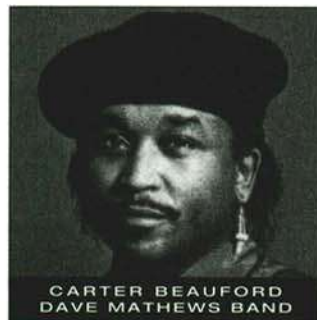
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inside of that 4/4, as long as when you come back to that 1 you're on the 1. Besides, the displacement stuff and the hi-hat stuff is just so much fun!

WFM: You mentioned Stewart Copeland. When I interviewed him years ago he said that he'd always played that way—in his style and with that way he had of playing the hi-hat. He said he kept getting fired from bands because nobody wanted to hear that stuff. Then he formed the Police....

CB: Yeah, I've been fired a lot, too. [laughs] It's happened a few times! I'm glad you said that. Some bands I worked with wanted a timekeeper, but to me that's just boring. I'd do it if they were willing to pay some bucks, but that's the only way I'd play a disco tune all night. I don't want to do that.

I like excitement when it comes to music. And that goes for ballads, too. There are ballads that, if the feel is right, take off and go places. I love playing ballads. It's a challenge to me. But a disco tune? Nah! And I've been fired from a couple of disco bands. "Carter, you're not keeping the time. This is Donna Summers' 'Heaven Knows.' You've got to play it like

the record." But I wanted to add so many different things because I was hearing so many different things. I felt as though it would make the music say something. But they didn't want to hear that so they got rid of me.

WFM: Another fairly unique thing about your playing is the choices you make when playing fills—they're hardly ever standard-type fills. Take, for instance, the fill on "What Would You Say," the one with the odd-placed splash hits. It's just a little bit out.

CB: A lot of the stuff that I do I don't really think about. Nothing is planned. When I'm on stage or in the studio I play what I'm feeling. I'll play off of what the sax player is doing or what the bass player is doing. It's all about the moment and the interaction between the musicians, the audience, whatever.

WFM: So you don't play that break in "What Would You Say" the same way every time?

CB: You know, there have been a couple of times when I felt the urge to do that, because maybe the audience wants to hear it—like it's a signature thing. But no, I

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Matthews On Beauford: So Much To Say

"I'd like to say that Carter is the most natural musician I've ever met," insists Dave Matthews, the namesake and frontman of one of today's most popular bands. "But that would belittle all of the work he's put into becoming the great player that he is. Let's say that [Beauford's musical abilities] are a combination of talent and a devotion to his craft."

After six years of playing with Beauford, Dave Matthews is in a unique position to know something about Carter's drumming. "He's like a magnet for new ideas," Matthews contends. "I've seen him incorporate new ideas and licks into his playing in a

way that seemed almost effortless, because when he plays, those ideas just flow out so naturally. But I know the work he puts in. I've heard him practice a lick over and over until he mastered it. He's constantly working, constantly improving, and always trying to reinvent himself."

While the two have been playing together for six years, Dave points out that he'd actually been a fan of Carter's dating back almost ten years. "I used to go see Carter play in a fusion band in Virginia called Secrets," Dave says. "He would *sail* with that band, and audiences would just be awed by his playing. I can honestly say that I was overwhelmed. At that point I knew I wanted to be in a band with him."

But what specifically does Beauford bring to the Matthews band? "He's like a clock—impeccable time," Dave enthuses. "And I know that I can throw some skeleton of an idea at him and it will come back with bells and streamers on it. And people don't talk much about Carter's singing, but he's good. If I could get everyone else in the band to sing like him we could be like the Bee Gees."

Drummers around the globe are excited about Carter Beauford's over-the-top playing style, but there are a few musicians around who feel that he can be a bit too busy. "I know musicians who have said that," Dave snarls, "but to me that's a part of Carter's sound. To my ear it perfectly complements what we're doing. And everything he plays feels so good. It's his ability to slice up the silence in such an explosive way that makes us all feel fortunate he's a part of this band."

William F. Miller

don't want to do that. [laughs] I'll do something that is fairly close, sometimes, but most times it's nowhere near what's on the record. I've done that, that moment was there, now let that moment rest. If you want to hear it again, listen to the record.

WFM: Even though there's a lot of "improvising" going on in your playing, at the core of it all is just a deep-felt groove. Your time feel is beautiful.

CB: Thanks, man. I guess that just comes from listening to a lot of the George Clinton stuff. The pocket that brother laid down was some of the most amazing pocket I've ever heard. George Clinton, Sly Stone, James Brown—those cats laid down some serious pocket. And pocket has always been, from day one, a major focus for me. If that feel is not there the tune says nothing, it goes nowhere. The only thing I can recommend for someone to get that together is to listen to music that feels good

and try to get inside what's going on.

WFM: Speaking of the pocket thing, a lot of people talk about the importance of the bass player/drummer relationship. And I hear a similarity in how you play with Stefan with how Billy Cobham worked with Rick Laird in the Mahavishnu Orchestra. In fact, Billy once told me that, since Laird played very simply, it left room for Billy to stretch. I hear that relationship in the Matthews band.

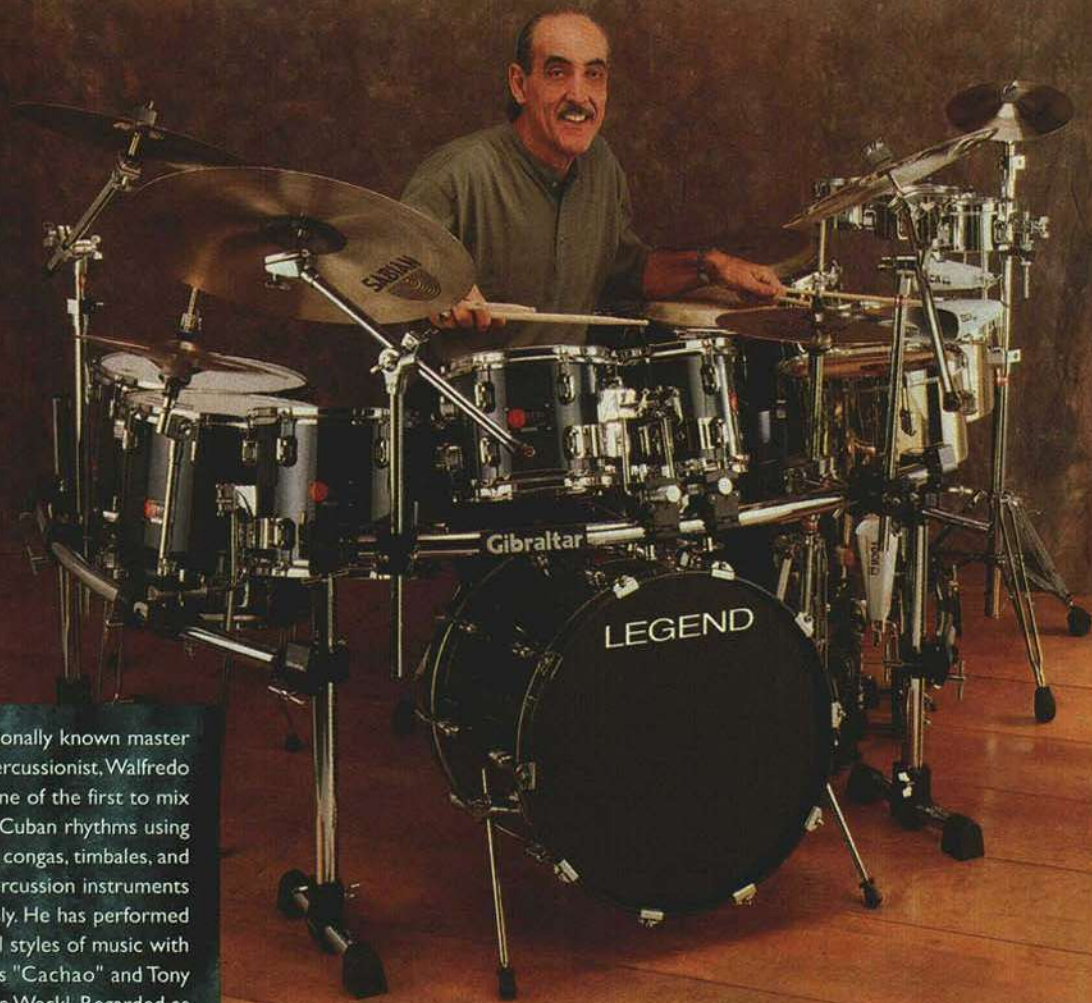
CB: Very much so. I agree with what Billy was saying. Stefan doesn't overplay at all. He lays down a serious groove and does it in a way that doesn't step on anyone's toes. As for me, I'm guilty of overplaying, but I think I'm getting better at picking my spots. But, you're right, when you've got a bass player like Stefan, he makes it easy for me to fly. He's like, "Carter, man, it's yours. Just take it. Do your thing." And a lot of times, like a fool, I do. [laughs]



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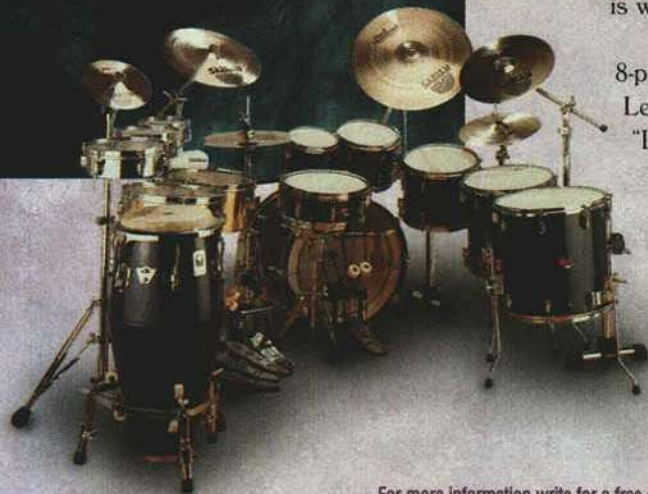


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WFM: When you do lay down a groove, it's so heavy, and a lot of it seems to come from the bass drum. You seem to play with a heavy foot. Does that help the feel?

CB: I think I do play pretty heavy on the bass drum.

WFM: When you're playing a groove, are you thinking from the bass drum up?

CB: Actually, yeah. Bass drum is the first thing. I mean, that's what I lead off with in my head. Bass drum is the foundation. I think it's gotten to a point for the other guys in the band where the bass drum is the foundation too. When we kick off a tune, boom, that bass drum is like, "Here we are. This is the 1."

WFM: So you have a personal mix in your head of how your kit should work together?

CB: I've never really thought about it that way, but I guess you could say the bass drum and the snare drum are prominent, with the snare being maybe slightly less than the kick. The hi-hat and ghosted snare notes would be just under that. As for everything else, I'm not going to say that it doesn't matter, but everything else can be at whatever level, whatever volume.

WFM: Since you want to hear the bass drum up front, what do you do to get that kind of power from it?

CB: One thing that I try to do, like I mentioned earlier, is not lay the beater into the head. I think that dampens the tone of the drum. It's like taking a drumstick and hitting one of the toms and leaving the stick on the head. It's not going to resonate as much. Give the bass drum head a quick slap and then get the beater off the head.

WFM: Does the height of your seat help you to get power on the bass drum?

CB: One of the reasons that I sit up so high is because I have a big butt. [laughs] Actually, I don't sit that high at all. I try to sit with my thighs just above parallel to the

floor. I don't want any tension on my knees or on the rest of my joints, and I find sitting at that height the most comfortable. I try to focus on keeping my legs very relaxed.

WFM: What about when playing the double pedal? You have some fun ideas for double pedal work, like on the tune "Two Step" from Crash. And I was surprised at how much double pedal you play live. You stick it in all over the place.

CB: I like to use it, but I don't practice my double pedal stuff like I used to. I actually started playing double bass when I was about nine or ten, after my dad took me to see Louie Bellson play. I thought it was cool. Years later, I found Tony Williams and then just focused on the single kick, which really helped. I focused on my left-foot hi-hat stuff too.

WFM: When you decided to bring the double pedal back, how did you build up your chops?

CB: A few years back I was inspired by the way Dennis Chambers would play his left foot on both the hi-hat and left bass pedal. I started messing with that idea, and it grew from there.

WFM: Most drummers lead with their right hands, and when they start playing double bass they lead with their left foot because it moves over from the hi-hat. Since you lead with your left hand, which foot do you feel more comfortable leading with?

CB: To be honest, it depends on the pattern. A lot of times it depends on how I'm feeling at a particular moment. I play most

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patterns starting with my left, though.

WFM: How tight are your pedals tensioned?

CB: Fairly loose, actually. I've been told by most drummers who sit down at my kit that they're really loose. Again, I don't want too much tension in my legs.

WFM: I'd like to hear your thoughts on

practice. When you're not on the road with the band, do you work on things?

CB: Oh yeah. We were off for a few months earlier this year, for the first time in a long time, and I was practicing at least four times a week. And it was hard to find that time because I was working on a solo project. But I feel it's important to keep

developing.

WFM: What is this solo project you're working on?

CB: It's something that I've been thinking about for years, and I finally got some equipment that will help me put it together. I bought a computer and some software so I can write music. All you have to do is play your little dummy keyboard thing and the computer will print out the music on the screen and you can dub stuff on top of it.

I've been writing melodies and bass lines and putting songs together. I've been working on it for the past three and a half months, although I won't be able to finish it until the Matthews band finishes this tour, which may be a while.

WFM: Will this solo record be a more fusion-oriented project?

CB: Oh, yeah. I need to get the fusion bug out of my system. I've got some *playing* I want to do. Once I get it out of my system I'll move on to some other things I have in mind.

WFM: I hope when you say "get it out of your system" it doesn't mean that, when you come back to the next Matthews band record, you'll be cutting back on the drumming. There's nothing better than having a multi-platinum record with double pedal and big fills on it.

CB: [laughs] Hell no! Don't worry, the playing will be there. That's who I am.

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JIM "SONI" SONEFELD

OF HOOTIE & THE BLOWFISH

By Robyn Flans

It may be difficult to believe, but Jim "Soni" Sonfeld went from a frat band called Tootie into a band called Hootie. "Don't you feel sorry for me?" Soni teases. "Doesn't that make you want to give me money or something?"

Money isn't necessary! Hootie & the Blowfish's debut LP, *Cracked Rear View*, has sold thirteen million copies, stayed at Number 1 on the charts for several weeks, and won a multitude of awards. The band has proved that pop music is still alive and well. Their follow-up, *Fairweather Johnson*, released earlier this year, debuted at Number 1 on the charts, stayed there for two weeks, and was certified platinum in just four weeks' time.


How did Sonfeld come to join one of the most popular bands of our time? Jim had actually gone to South Carolina from Illinois, where he'd spent his formative years, to play soccer. As a boy, he went to a Catholic school where they didn't have a music program or a gym. He was never in any school bands, but he says drumming was innate to him. His parents paid for him to take some lessons, and Soni even won a regional contest. "I had to do a two-minute solo," he says, "and I was never more nervous in my life—I almost puked on the way there."

THE GROOVE OF SUCCESS

And while his other friends played in bands, Jim played soccer and shedded with headphones in his basement, playing to the Eagles, the Who, and Zeppelin. When the sports politics at the University of South Carolina at Columbia turned him off, however, Soni quit school and called his mother to tell her to send his drums.

Sonfeld then spent a year and a half in Bachelors Of Art, an alternative band that had some original material and gave Soni his first recording experience. He also worked at a state mental hospital, where he realized that he'd better go back and finish college. He learned to play guitar, took some piano in school, and became enthused about writing songs. Bachelors Of Art led to Tootie, which led to Hootie, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Today Soni splits his time between Chicago, where his fiancée lives, and his home in South Carolina, where success became a reality for bandmates Darius Rucker, Mark Bryan, Dean Felber, and Sonfeld. Jim points out that, while South Carolina may be an unlikely place to produce the next big thing, Hootie & the Blowfish made a living there before they ever had a record deal. That commitment to music is what it's all about.



RF: So after Bachelors Of Art came Tootie.

JS: That was a cover band called Tootie & the Jones. One of the guys was named Tootie after his father. I was actually playing in both Bachelors Of Art and Tootie for a seven-month period. Tootie had great musicians, they were great guys, and they were making real good money in town playing on the weekends, doing mostly classic rock covers and some new rock tunes. Eventually I had to decide—was I going to be in this cover band forever or try to get with some guys writing original music?

At that same time, Mark from Hootie was in a class of mine. I knew that those guys were losing their drummer and wanted to start to write originals.

RF: Had you seen them play?

JS: Yes. The two big fraternity cover bands in town were Tootie and Hootie. They'd come see us, we'd go see them. So I just jumped ship, basically.

RF: Did you have to audition for Hootie?

JS: They had gone through a couple of drummers at rehearsals who just didn't work out. I think for me it was one of those "meant to be's." The first practice we had together was great. They were good and they wrote originals and had 200% desire and motivation to pursue a music career. They had just graduated from college, as had I, so it was, "Are we getting jobs or are we writing music?" So we started writing and playing small gigs and parties.

RF: How did you start writing?

JS: On guitar mostly.

RF: Did you do it together?

JS: Actually the way we did it is the way we still do it. Somebody comes in with an idea, be it a riff, a whole song, or a chorus, and that may be on piano, guitar, or whatever. Then we run with it. That's still the way we write. We were never taught how to properly write a song, if there is such a thing as a proper way.

RF: You said they went through a couple of drummers before you. Why do you think—or did they tell you eventually—that you were the right player for the band?

JS: Nothing had to be said. It was very natural. I was probably different from the other guys who had auditioned, though. I was into the slower classic-rock thing—the Pink Floyds, the laid-back groove—and these guys were doing much newer rock influenced music, a little speedier and more aggressive. Somehow it meshed. Mark was writing fast stuff, but

"IT TOOK A COUPLE OF YEARS TO FIND OUT THAT A BIG SET OF DRUMS DIDN'T FIT WITH WHAT WE WERE DOING. HERE WE WERE WITH AN ACOUSTIC/ELECTRIC SONG WITH GOOD MELODIES. STUFF LIKE THAT NEEDS A FAT RHYTHM TRACK, NOT FIFTY-SIX TOM-TOMS."

maybe he needed to be slowed down a little bit. I was laid-back a lot further than their old drummer, which helped leave room for Darius's voice. He's got a soulful, "slower" voice, and my playing fits better with this kind of music. But it took years to find that feel together.

RF: And was that just trial and error?

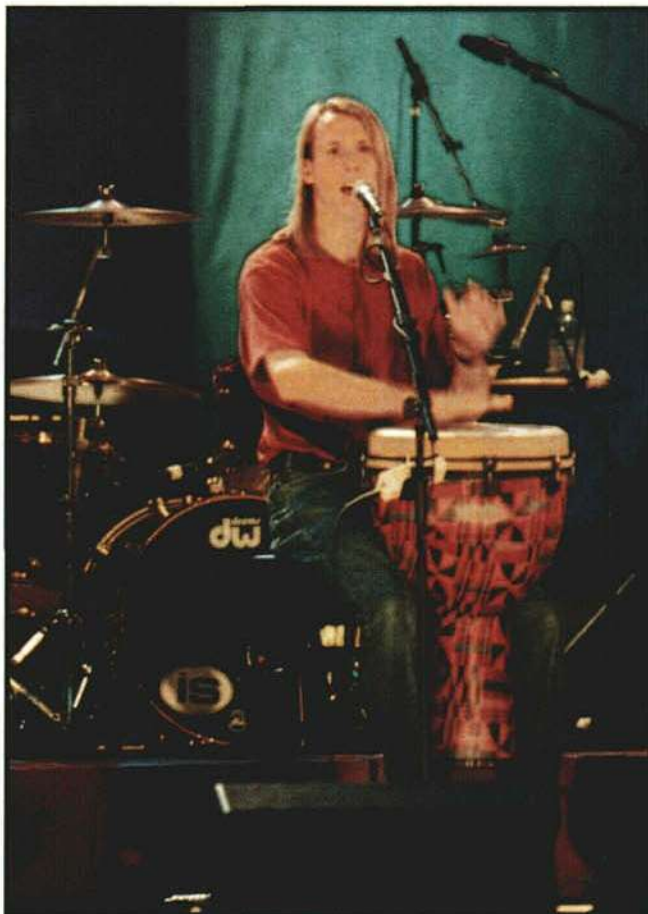
JS: Yes. This band is all about sacrifice. It's about saying, "Okay, the chorus sucks; let's try something else," and not getting mad at somebody telling you that. It's happened to all of us. Songs get lost and are never played again. That can hurt when it's your song, but it's all for the good of the band. There's just no room for ego when you're songwriting together. A lot of bands work off one man doing all the lyrics and music and ordering people around, but we were never like that and we never want to be like that.

RF: Mark said in an article that you have "cheesy" taste in music.

JS: Oh yeah?

RF: He used Barry Manilow as an example. Do you like him or was that an exaggeration?

JS: No, it's not at all. I don't know what happened to me. For a while I denied FM radio in my life; all I would listen to was AM. When everyone was listening to the Clash, the Jam, and Elvis Costello, I was still listening to Styx, REO Speedwagon, and Little River Band. I couldn't shake it, I guess because I've always loved singing simple songs with good melody and harmony. That's how my mom and dad taught me to listen. I love to experiment with different styles—reggae, jazz, metal, and all of it—but I love good pop music.



Jonathan Bove

RF: Were there drum influences when you were growing up?

JS: Definitely. There were the ones I loved, admired, and tried to mimic—people who I don't sound anything like today—like Neil Peart and John Bonham. You know, the heavies, wild and crazy, hitting fifty-seven drums a minute. Those were the people I admired, but when it came down to it, they were not the people who influenced my drumming style. I'm mostly influenced by people like Kenny Aronoff and even Don Henley. He's not the greatest drummer in the world, but when I found out he was writing songs, singing, and playing drums, it was a huge inspiration.

RF: Getting back to the band, you recorded a couple of indie projects early on.

JS: We did three EPs. We saved \$2,000 from playing a couple of frat parties and went into a studio in North Carolina with a producer named Dick Hodgen. We spent five days in there doing five songs, put them on cassette, created some simple artwork, and sold them out of the van for five bucks at our shows. A year and a half later we did another one the same way.

Then we signed a record deal that fell through, and we lost a year of moving forward. That was a big let-down, but instead of allowing it to get us down we took a loan out from the bank and started doing another low-quality demo. We put about eight grand into a five-song EP, which we had pressed on CD and tape and sold for \$10.

RF: How did you get a loan?

JS: I was the only one in the band with any source of credit. Our soundman was a loan officer and he was my room-

SONI'S SET

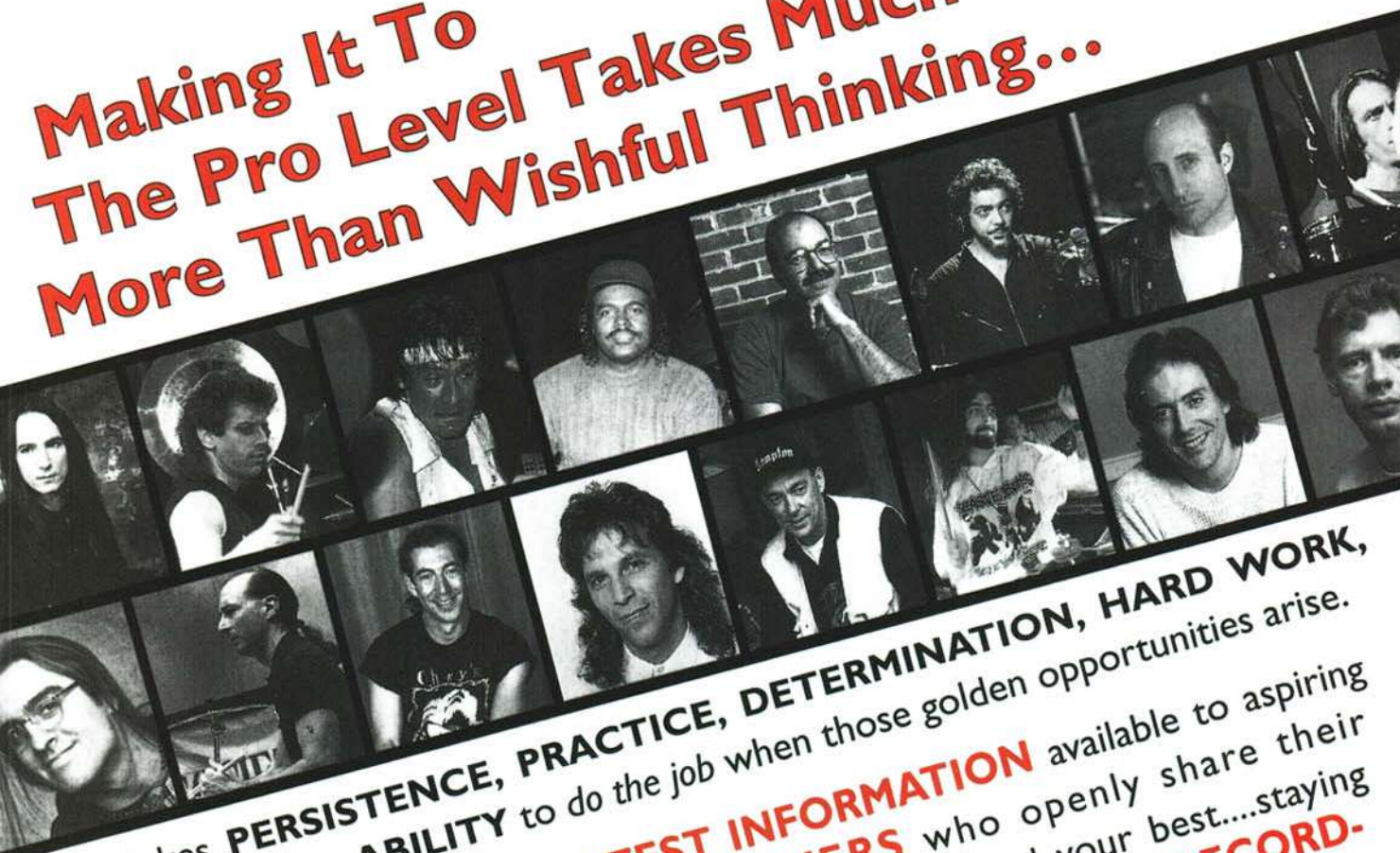
Drumset: Drum Workshop
A. 6 1/2 x 14 snare
B. 10 x 12 tom
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F. 16 x 22 bass drum

Hardware: DW, Roc-N-Soc throne

Cymbals
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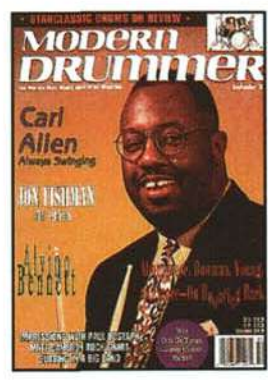
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mate, so we were lucky. Fortunately, the CD really started catching on and we ended up selling 40,000 of those without a label. That's what got us signed. The record was showing up on some charts and selling more than some signed acts' records. Our CD had previously been rejected many times by Atlantic, but once they saw those numbers and someone came out to see the band, they could tell that we were a little more developed than some other bands. We were making money, we were selling merchandise, we were producing our own CDs, and we weren't in trouble with the law.

RF: How long were you in the band before the deal happened?

JS: About three years. It was good that way. Although we weren't making a lot of money at any one point, we always felt like we were progressing. If we played a show to only twenty-five people, we'd sell five T-shirts and maybe six or seven CDs; and if we didn't sell anything we would give things away. We weren't afraid to go out and just promote—even if we lost money—because we felt we were still win-

ning fans. With that attitude we always felt like we were moving up. Then we saw the crowds increase and definitely knew we were moving in the right direction—and that was before we got signed.

RF: Were any of the indie cuts on the first Atlantic record?

JS: Probably about 60% of Cracked Rear View is those early songs re-recorded properly. We didn't feel like we were rehashing anything, because we liked the songs and were still getting better as musicians. One song that got nixed from the first album ended up being the first single on our new album—"Old Man And Me"—which was from our third EP.

RF: What was it like taking it to the next level and going into the studio for Cracked Rear View! Were you scared, excited, both?

JS: Scared and excited. We had only met Don [Gehman, producer] once, and here we were, going from South Carolina to L.A. into this big to-do studio. I wasn't even using my drums. Don asked if I would mind trying his DWs. I had heard really good things about them, but I wasn't

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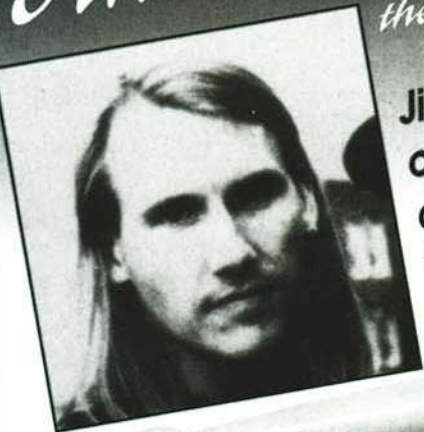
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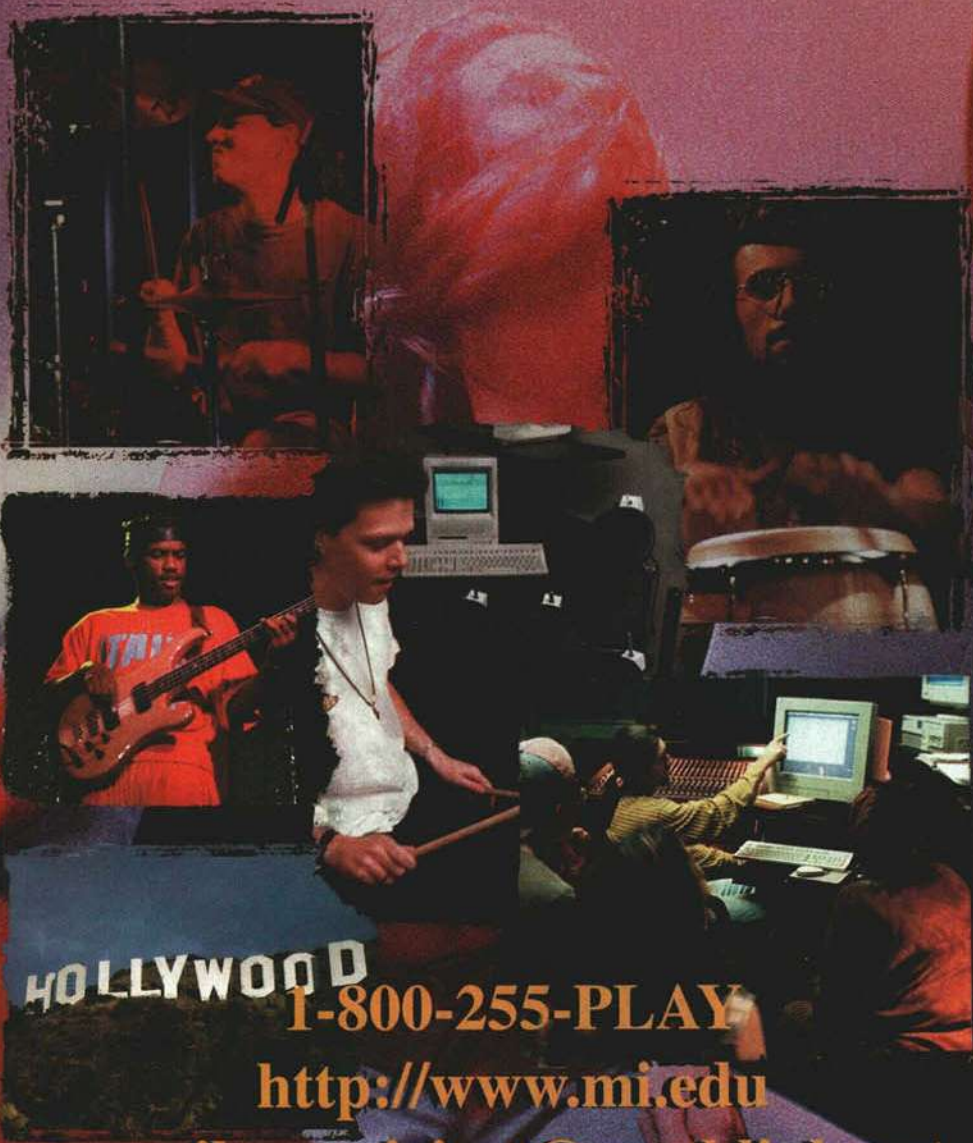
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sure I could play them. I came from the school of tuning your drums for the soundman in a two-hundred-seat bar—loads of duct tape. All of a sudden, I'm in a major studio with different drums. Don tuned them up and I said, "I don't know if I can play these." They sounded way different than anything I had ever hit before, with loose coated heads. I thought, "How are these ever going to sound good on an album when they sound really bad right here?" But Don knew exactly what he was doing. Here I was, doubting this producer who had so many Number-1 hits! Well, I've never played anything but DW since then.

RF: When you're playing drums that don't sound good in the room, doesn't that make the music difficult to play?

JS: It does, but you just learn to overcome it. When you lay down one track and you go out and listen to it and they sound fine, you realize it's just a matter of the feel of the stick hitting the drum and it's not as bad as you think. It's all about adapting.

RF: What did you learn in the studio that was new to you?

JS: I learned how to listen and how to be critical. When you get caught up in live shows and playing in bars, half of the time you're just looking at the chicks in the front row; you tend to get away from true, critical listening. In the studio, Don would say something like, "Dean is pushing you," or "You're pushing the song, you're speeding up," which I would never have heard before. It takes opening your ears to hear things like that.

RF: Were you cutting live?

JS: Mostly. We'd go for bass and drums on basic takes. I definitely did not do any overdubs. Dean might go in and do a fix or two per song, but not a whole new track.

RF: In Musician magazine, you said the toughest thing to learn was to respect each other's place in the song. Was that something you consciously went through?

JS: I don't think it was conscious at all. It's something you can learn by writing songs, or by listening to another band where the drummer is playing a huge fill at the end of every measure. Then you learn that it's true: Less is more. The less you do, the more exciting things are going to be

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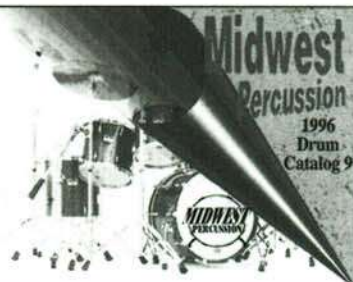
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when you do that little thing. For years and years, I would still listen to the guys who were doing a lot of extra stuff and who were really busy. It fit in great with what they were doing, but when it came to my style of music, those weren't the people I needed to be imitating.

RF: So your approach was simplicity.

JS: I had gone through the big drumset era and went back to the small. It took a couple of years to find out that a big set of drums didn't fit with what we were doing. Here we were with an acoustic/electric song with good melodies. Stuff like that needs a fat rhythm track, not fifty-six tom-toms.

RF: The concept of "time" was something you really had to concentrate on in the studio.

JS: I thought I was the most perfect drummer in the world. You have to learn, and, of course, there was more pressure because I knew that Don had worked with great drummers. He told me a story once that really made me want to try hard, about the first time Kenny Aronoff went into the studio with Mellencamp. He told me that after a couple of days, they let Kenny go. He wasn't keeping good enough time. They

brought in a session dude and Kenny sat and watched the drummer every day. Here he had just been let go from his first major session, and he went and watched—and got better.

RF: How did you get it together when you were in the studio?

JS: It was difficult because we had been a live band. Think about the live environment: You have a couple of vodka drinks and there are a thousand people out there screaming. That's a different energy than when you come in at 1:00 in the afternoon to this very sterile environment called a studio.

RF: So how do you adjust?

JS: I try to stay loose. We just say, "Hey, let's jam here." I stop worrying about whether or not I'm right on with a click track or if Don's going to tell me something I'm playing is wrong. I just have to get that feel back.

I learned after some sessions that I wanted to have eye contact with the other guys in the band; I wanted them to see some of my physical movements, because that's what we work off live. There are times when I'm lost as hell in a song and I'll look

at Mark's arm and see it's in a certain spot and I know he's about to end the song, not start another verse. I have to have that in the studio, too. On this new record, it was especially important because we had never played some of these songs before. Not only did I not know what I was doing, but I didn't know if the other guys knew what they were doing. It can really create problems.

RF: How much rehearsal went into that?

JS: Not much. During a summer tour we played three songs that made this album. The others were brand new. We had a ten-day writing session and then we went into the studio, demoed for about ten more days, and then started laying down tracks.

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

JS: I like certain songs for different reasons. I like rhythmic, layered stuff, like a song that has a good fat tambourine behind the hi-hat and a solid 2 and 4 on the snare. I like "Drowning" because of the energy. It's one of my favorite songs to play live, too, and we nailed it in a very short time. I was really proud of that.

"Time" was another one of my favorites.

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There's good energy all the way through. It felt really good. I like how the guitar and the vocals at the beginning take so long to build up. Like I said before, the less you do, and the longer you wait for that moment to take place, the bigger the impact. The song is going on for a minute and a half before the drums come in, so when they do come in, it makes an impression.

I was also happy with "Running From An Angel," although it wasn't one of my greatest-paced songs. I had some up and down moments in the recording, but I love the rhythm track—what Dean's playing, how I interact with that, and how the percussion just sits right in the middle of it.

RF: You have a live percussionist.

JS: Yes, Gary Greene. I do the album stuff and he plays the parts live.

RF: Do you enjoy doing the percussion on the albums?

JS: Percussion is fun for me, getting the thick sounds by layering the tambourine. We did "Forever" live in the bars, and I always imagined percussion being played on that song. I couldn't wait to get into the studio to make that happen. I also couldn't

wait to lay down a tambourine part on "Hold My Hand."

RF: You wrote "Hold My Hand."

JS: Yeah, I wrote it, but the song wouldn't be what it is today without the whole band. Darius brought the vocals to a whole new level; he sang it twenty times better than I could dream of. Mark added his guitar parts, and Dean put a bass line in there that's just right. We arranged the song together, although the basis of it was mine.

RF: Is there a song on the album that you feel was particularly tough for you, that maybe you feel you could have done better?

JS: I never look back and say, "I wish." Putting yourself through that is not worth the headache. There are songs where I was a little more motivated, and there were others where I was still working out parts while we were laying them down. But no one other than me will be critical of it, so why put myself through that?

Overall, I was pretty happy with everything. On "Be The One," something happened that put me in this really pisser mood right before we went in to record it. I was not at the highest level of motivation,

yet you probably would never know. That song has so much energy. But I was in a bad mood and I walked in there with this major attitude and we did it in two takes. It ended up being one of the most energized songs on the album. On others like "She Crawls Away" [from Fairweather Johnson], I thought about how to make it a little more exciting or how to spruce it up for a while, but I never came out satisfied. But it sounds fine. And there were some songs that were damn difficult, like "Old Man And Me." We used to play it really fast live, but Don wanted us to slow it down, groove it out, and give it a little more R&B feel. I took Dean and Mark out of my monitors. They were still wanting to play it the old way, too, but Don kept saying, "Slower, just one more notch slower." It was painful.

RF: There's a song on the new album called "Tootie." Is that about anyone we know?

JS: It's about my bandmate's father. I wrote that in the months after he passed away. He was a friend of mine, too. It's sort of a sad song, but it's one of my favorites on the new album because it has a

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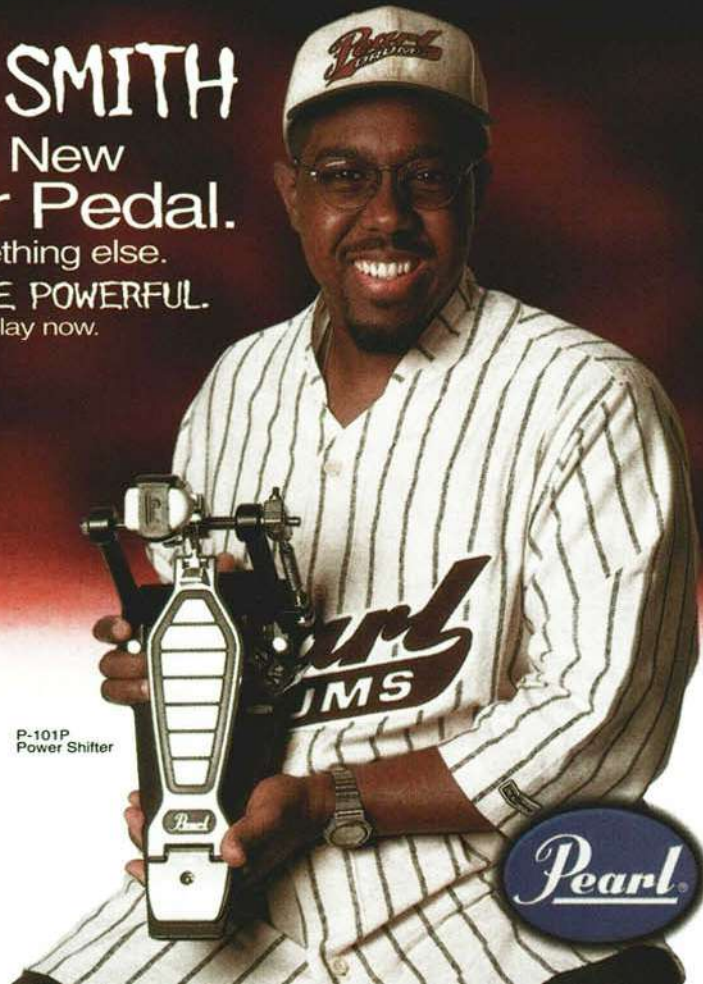
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Pearl

very different feel for us as a band, and Darius sang the hell out of it. It was another example of a song I wrote that wouldn't be what it is today without everybody putting in their parts.

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

JS: "She Crawls Away," because I'm a cheesy pop song addict. I wrote the music to that. I really like "Earth Stopped Cold At Dawn" because it's a different feel for us. It's the first song we've done without any drums. It has a little conga thing going on in the background, with mandolin, guitar, and a little piano too. I also like it because I thought it was a song that was lost forever. Mark used to play it a lot just by himself, and I always loved the song, but I didn't think we'd ever do it. We had something like thirty songs for this album. Anything that was a possibility we'd put up on the board, and that one surprised me because I didn't think it would ever happen as a Hootie song.

RF: Was there anything different about going in to record this album versus the first one, aside from the fact that most of these were much newer songs?

JS: The comfort level was much higher. It was a different studio, a different environment, and we were a little more at ease with the recording situation. We knew the producer and we knew the process. The environment is half the battle.

RF: What about the pressure of having come off this huge hit album?

JS: I don't know why, but we didn't feel pressure. I guess it was because we just came off the road, went in, and did it without a lot of sitting around and thinking about it too much. We had the attitude that we had a bunch of material we wanted to record. Had we waited, there would have been pressure.

RF: If this band ended tomorrow and you had to put together an audition tape, which tracks would you include as representative of who you are and what you like to sound like?

JS: The songs that I think are representative of me as a drummer are songs that are not my best drum songs, but rather it's the overall groove that was created, like on "Tucker's Town," "Old Man And Me," and "Time." They're not my best songs, but those are probably what I'm known for doing. As far as stuff that I enjoy playing

that's different, it would be "Drowning" or a song from the new album called "Honey Screw." On this album, we experienced the time signature known as 3/4.

RF: How was that?

JS: It came out fine. Once again, my only thought was to keep a solid tempo; you're not going to break any new ground playing 3/4, so keep it simple. But I did some things with the song "Honey Screw" because that's actually in two time signatures. It goes from 3/4 to 4/4, and I do some backwards sort of drumming.

RF: Can you elaborate on that?

JS: Instead of doing the standard 3/4 style, which would probably be kick, snare, snare, I would do like a polka feel—sort of a two feel. I don't know how to describe it other than that. I was hitting snare where you might normally hear kick, and kick where you would hear snare. I'm intrigued so much by some of the time stuff that Vinnie Colaiuta does. He'll be interacting with the other musicians and go off on a tangent and it's like, "Where the hell is he?" And all of a sudden he's back. To be able to do that is a dream of mine.

RF: How about the drums you use in the studio? Are they different from what you use live?

JS: The setup is the same, but I used Don Gehman's drums for both studio sessions and I use my own DWs for live work.

RF: How come?

JS: We recorded on the West Coast, so it was simpler to use his drums. Besides, he can tune his drums so well. They've only been used in the studio; they haven't been abused on the road. When you hear one DW drum, it's the same as hitting any other DW drum. The quality is so high that you don't have to worry.

RF: What about heads?

JS: We use all coated Ambassadors in the studio. In the past, we've tried Pinstripes live because they're a little sturdier, but this tour we're going to use a coated snare head and single-ply clear Ambassadors on the toms. I'm also going to be using two extra drums on this new tour.

RF: Why?

JS: There are a couple of sounds I haven't had in the past year or two. I want to go one tom-tom higher to have the flexibility to go there if I want to. I'm also going to add an extra floor tom. I do a lot of flam stuff for fills and I want to be able to have

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1 Corinthians 11:12

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a high flam with the smaller toms and a really low one with a 14" or 16" floor tom.

I also started using splash cymbals for the first time this past year for the same reason. There was a little extra sound I wanted—a lighter cymbal sound to accent some of the lighter songs. I really learned how to use them in the studio. You lose a lot of it live because there's so much noise on the stage, but in the studio you can definitely capture it.

RF: You also sing background vocals. Do you find it difficult to do that and play at

the same time?

JS: It used to be difficult. In Tootie, I was actually singing some lead stuff, too. I learned to do it. You have to be a bit more aware of your breathing. It's also a challenge for your coordination. The better you know the drum parts, the more relaxed you're going to be, which allows your brain to wander off and try something else.

RF: What advice would you give to younger players who are beating it out on the club circuit and don't know what to do next?

JS: Always give yourself some outlet. If you can't find a band to play in, you damn well better have a pair of headphones hooked up to your stereo so you can keep your chops up. That's how I learned a lot of what I do. It didn't matter if I had a band; I was going to be playing one way or another. But keep in mind that the more you interact with other musicians, the better and more comfortable you're going to be in a live band setting. The more live gigs you play, the more comfortable you're going to be. You can play forever in your basement, but until you get out there on a stage, it's hard to progress to the level you need to be at.

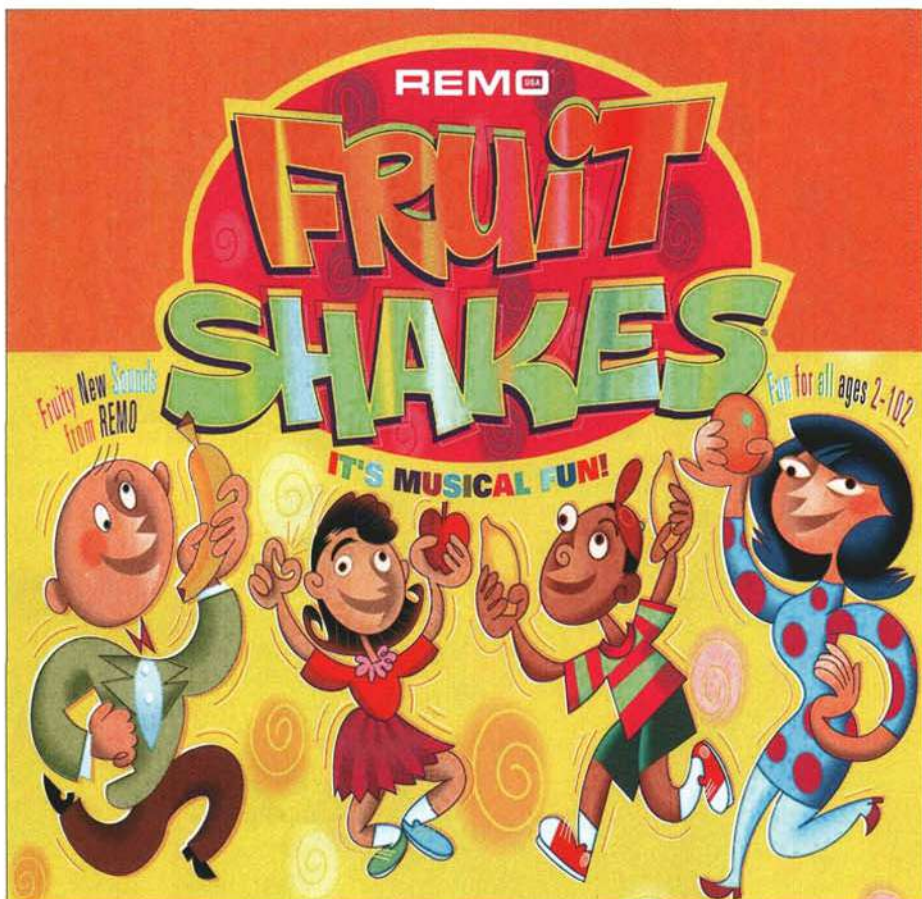
And don't ever let anybody tell you that you can't do something. Drummers also shouldn't be afraid of learning other instruments. You become a more well-rounded musician if you learn why your guitarist is doing certain things or why your bass player is doing certain things. The breakthrough in my career came when I could sit and follow the chords while we were learning a new song; when somebody went to a certain chord, I could say, "What about trying this?"

RF: Do you think being an athlete helped your playing at all?

JS: Oh yes. There are so many comparisons you can make between the two—the concept of teamwork, the discipline of practice.... Being athletic has also helped my stamina as a drummer. I still run four times a week, which helps me. When you're playing five nights a week, two hours a pop, it's good to be in shape.

RF: Where do you see yourself in ten years?

JS: I still want to be writing songs, whether I'm sitting behind a drumset, a guitar, or a piano. Right now, songwriting is my main goal, so that in ten years when I'm too old to be on the road or I have kids and want to dedicate more time to my family, songwriting will be able to get me some kind of paycheck. I still have a lot of room to grow in that category; I'm not ready for that right now, but I want to get there.



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Highlights of Modern Drummer's

Festival

Modern Drummer's Festival Weekend '96—held on Saturday, May 18 and Sunday, May 19—surpassed all previous Festivals in its level of enthusiasm and excitement. For the ninth time, Montclair State University in Upper Montclair, New Jersey saw travelers from across the U.S. and as far away as Norway and Australia gather together to enjoy the educational value and the camaraderie of this singular drumming event. Due to its stylistic variety, the show was the fastest sellout in Festival history—a testament to its appeal to drummers of all experience levels and musical interests.

Photos by Ébet Roberts

OMNICUSSION



Chris Stevens



Matt Johnson



Michael Carney



Chris Wabich

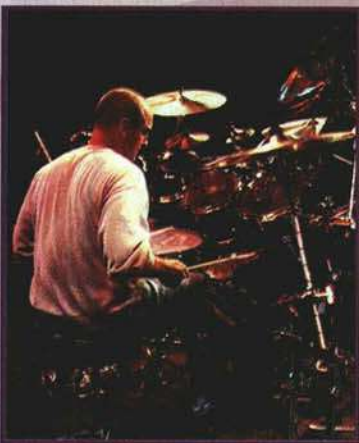
The show got off to a pan-ethnic musical start with the performance of **Omnicussion**. This unique quartet combined traditional drumkit playing with world percussion, Latin drumming, steel pan, and high-tech MIDI mallet instruments to create a captivating display of technique and creativity. Featuring multi-percussionists Chris Stevens, Matt Johnson, Michael

Carney, and Chris Wabich, Omnicussion amply demonstrated how technique and technology can be combined to create a totally original concept in drumming performance.

Omnicussion appeared through the courtesy of **Paiste Cymbals, Remo, Inc., and LP Music Group.**

Weekend '96

TIM "HERB" ALEXANDER



Tim "Herb" Alexander of Primus demonstrated how he creates the dynamic drum parts that are such a critical element of that innovative group's sound. Fielding questions about specific Primus tunes, Tim also explained his philosophy regarding double bass drumming, which calls for musical creativity over bombast.

Tim's performance was sponsored by **Starclassic Drums** and **Zildjian Cymbals**.

WALFREDO REYES

JR.



The effervescent **Walfredo Reyes, Jr.** astounded Festival-goers with his ability to divide his limbs among drums and Latin percussion instruments at the same time. Igniting the audience with his sheer enthusiasm, Walfredo created a wide variety of contemporary grooves with a distinctly musical content. And when surprise guest **Bobby Sanabria** (and his son

Roberto-Jose) came on stage for a spontaneous percussion jam, the energy kicked up even higher.

Walfredo appeared through the courtesy of **Sabian Cymbals, Regal Tip Drumsticks, and LP Music Group.**

NARADA MICHAEL WALDEN



Narada Michael Walden came on stage to a rousing ovation—a testimony to the reputation that preceded him despite several years out of the drumming limelight. Accompanied by T.M. Stevens (bass), Ray Gomez (guitar), and Frank Martin (keyboards), Narada treated the audience to everything from classic Mahavishnu Orchestra to Jimi Hendrix, all the while demonstrating the blazing fills and powerful technique that made him—and unquestionably re-affirm him—a drumming phenomenon.

Narada's appearance was sponsored by **Pearl Drums**.



ELVIN JONES' And The

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Saturday's show came to a tasteful conclusion with a highly anticipated personal appearance by jazz great **Elvin Jones** and his band **The Jazz Machine** (Victor Atkins, piano; Neal Caine, bass; Ari Brown, saxes; and Delfeayo Marsalis, trombone). After the briefest of introductions, Elvin quickly demonstrated why he is so revered among drummers. Blending creativity and musicality with his own inimitable style around the

kit, Elvin alternately supported the group and drove it to ever-increasing heights. When the group concluded its dynamic set, the audience rose as one to display their admiration and respect for this drumming legend.

Elvin and his band were sponsored by **Yamaha Drums**, **Pro-Mark Sticks**, and **Istanbul Cymbals**.

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Sunday's show opened with drumming's renaissance man, **Bob Gatzen**. Following a brief but impressive solo, Bob delivered a valuable lesson on the art and science of drum tuning, the focus of which was Bob's philosophy that a well-tuned—and consequently good-

sounding—kit can inspire the person playing it.

Bob's presentation was sponsored by **Noble & Cooley Drums, Evans Drumheads, Regal Tip Drumsticks, and DCI Video/Warner Bros.**

DAVE LOMBARDO



Opening with a surprising performance on congas (unexpected from a "speed metal drummer"), **Dave Lombardo** proceeded to impress the audience with both his power-drumming technique and his unabashed enthusiasm. Dave's program included a discussion of seat height, a demonstration of his legendary double bass technique (on a specially provided backwards

setup), and drumming to tracks from his recent GRIP Inc. album. He left the audience screaming for more.

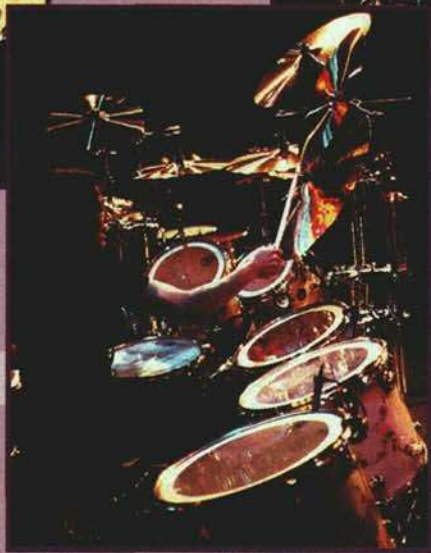
Dave appeared through the courtesy of **Tama Drums** and **Paiste Cymbals**.

SHEILA E & P

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MICHAEL E

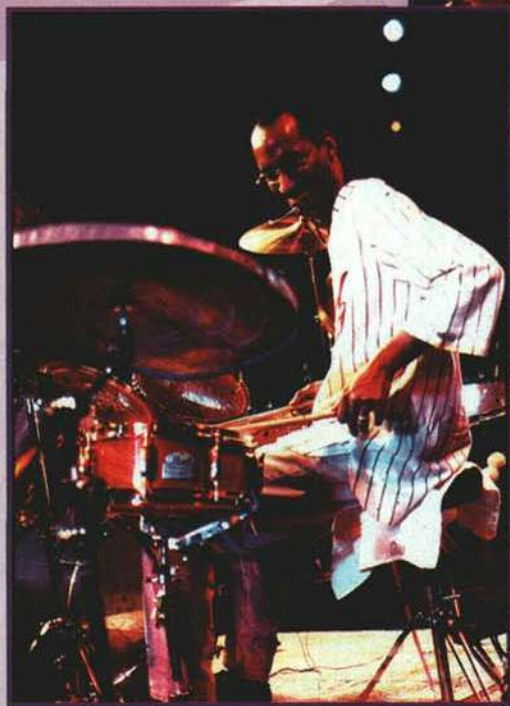
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Fiercy Latin drumming, dynamic drumset playing, interplay between musicians, and a lively sense of humor characterized the performance of **Sheila E and Peter Michael Escovedo**. This sister and brother act captured the audience's hearts and minds with their talent and enthusiasm. At the conclusion of their set, Sheila (the first woman to perform at an MD Festival) was presented with a plaque commemorating her "Best Percussionist" award in the 1995 Modern Drummer Readers Poll by MD associate publisher Isabel Spagnardi.

Sheila and Peter Michael were presented by **Drum Workshop** and **Toca Percussion**.

OMAR HAKIM



Contemporary funk drumming was well-represented by **Omar Hakim**. Working alone and with top studio/tour bassist Victor Bailey, Omar explained his concept of playing musically while maintaining an unshakable groove. The duo's concluding version of Weather Report's "Birdland" proved to be

one of the high points of an already stellar show.

Omar's performance was sponsored by **Pearl Drums, Vic Firth Drumsticks, and Remo, Inc.**

TRILOK GURTU & HIS



HIS CRAZY SAINTS. The Festival concluded with a stunning performance by **Trilok Gurtu & His Crazy Saints.** In addition to its Indian leader, the group's international lineup included American guitarist David Gilmore, Danish bassist Chris Minh Doky, French keyboardist Andy Emler, and Scottish saxophonist Tommy Smith. From the moment the band kicked off, the Festival audience was enthralled by Trilok's amazing facility on his unique collection of specially designed drums, ethnic percussion, and electronics. His playing drove the group through a set of challenging and creative compositions that provided the perfect close to the weekend's performances.

Trilok and His Crazy Saints were sponsored by **Zildjian Drumsticks and Sonor Drums.**

Y SAINTS



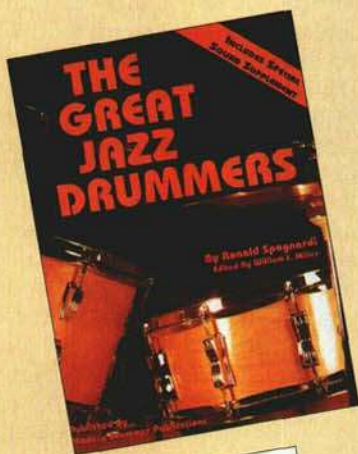
Over the course of the Festival, audience members were given the opportunity to win thousands of dollars' worth of door prizes, including snare drums, cymbals, hardware, microphones, videos, and a wide variety of accessory items. MD also continued its tradition of recognizing drummers who traveled the farthest distances to reach the Festival by presenting them with "Duron Johnson Commemorative Long-Distance Traveler Awards" (named in honor of the Anchorage, Alaska drummer who has never missed a Festival). And on Saturday the editors of MD were honored to present a 1996 Editors'

Achievement Award personally to Martin Cohen, founder of LP Music Group (Latin Percussion).

Many of the Festival performers—as well as a host of visiting drum stars including Festival alumni Mike Portnoy, Kenwood Dennard, Danny Gottlieb, and Will Calhoun—spent time with the audience signing autographs, offering tips, and sharing the good feelings that are always a part of this annual get-together of the drumming community. A good time was had by audience and performers alike.



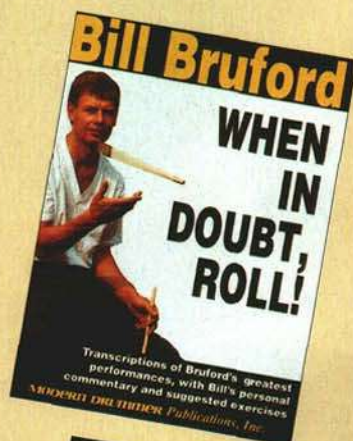
The Modern



The Great Jazz Drummers

by Ron Spagnardi

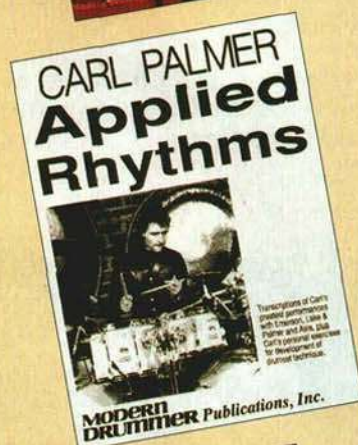
A true collector's item, this text takes a look at nearly a century of drumming. Fascinating reading, this book tells the stories of over 60 legendary drumming greats. Sound Supplement included.



When In Doubt, Roll!

by Bill Bruford

Transcriptions of 18 of Bruford's greatest recorded performances, his personal commentary about each piece, and Bill's exercises to develop facility, flexibility, and creativity at the drumset.



Applied Rhythms

by Carl Palmer

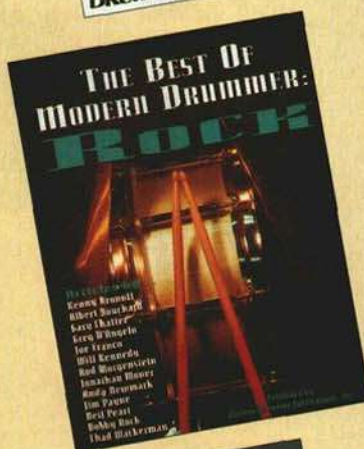
This book contains transcriptions of ten of Carl Palmer's most famous recordings, and also includes Carl's personal exercises for drumset technique.



The New Breed

by Gary Chester

This is not just another drum book, but rather a system that will help you develop the skills needed to master today's studio requirements.



Best Of MD: Rock

Everything from linear drumming, playing in odd time signatures, and double bass techniques to hot shuffle beats, effective fills, and Neil Peart's advice on creating a drum solo.



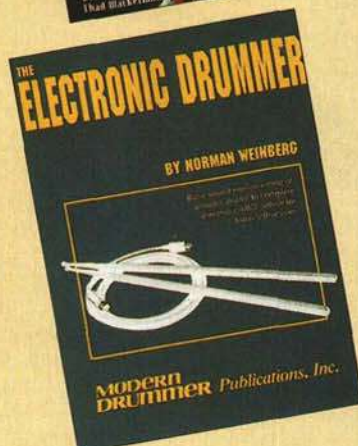
Best Of MD, Volume 2

The Best Of Modern Drummer is jam-packed with advice, concepts, and tons of musical examples. If you've missed any of MD, The Best Of Modern Drummer brings it all back home—in one valuable reference book.

The Electronic Drummer

by Norman Weinberg

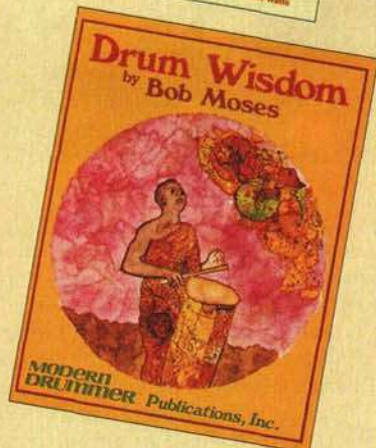
From simple uses of electronics to complex setups, this book will tell you what you need to know in straightforward, "user-friendly" language.



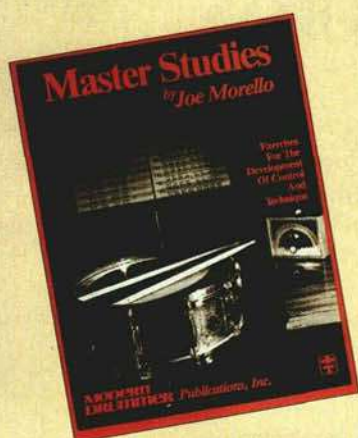
Drum Wisdom

by Bob Moses

Here is a clear presentation of the unique and refreshing concepts of one of the most exceptional drummers of our time.



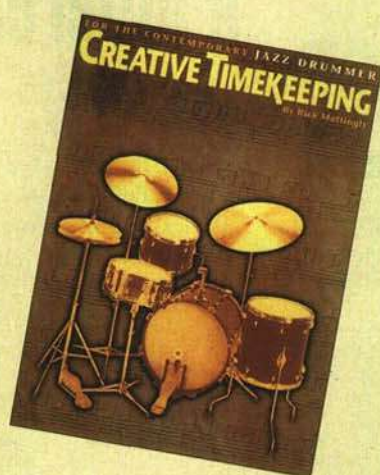
Drummer Library



Master Studies

by Joe Morello

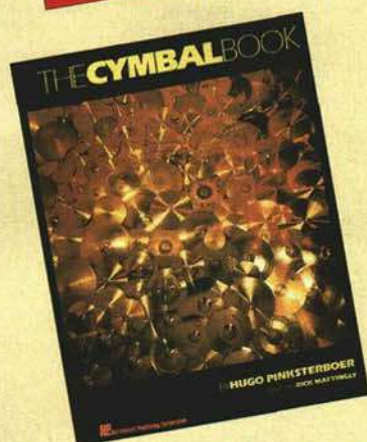
The book on hand development and drumstick control. *Master Studies* focuses on important aspects of drumming technique.



Creative Timekeeping

by Rick Mattingly

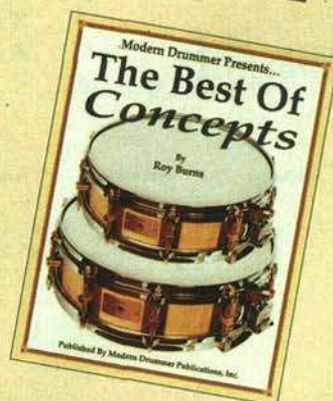
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The Best Of Concepts

by Roy Burns

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	The Great Jazz Drummers (06621755)	\$19.95	
	Drum Wisdom (06630510)	\$ 7.95	
	Master Studies (06631474)	\$ 9.95	
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	When In Doubt, Roll! (06630298)	\$13.95	
	Creative Timekeeping (06621764)	\$ 8.95	
	The Cymbal Book (06621763)	\$24.95	
	The Best Of Concepts (06621766)	\$ 9.95	

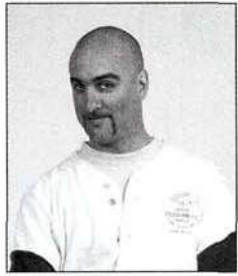
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MOD12

A Different Approach To Double Bass



by Tim "Herb" Alexander

MUSIC KEY

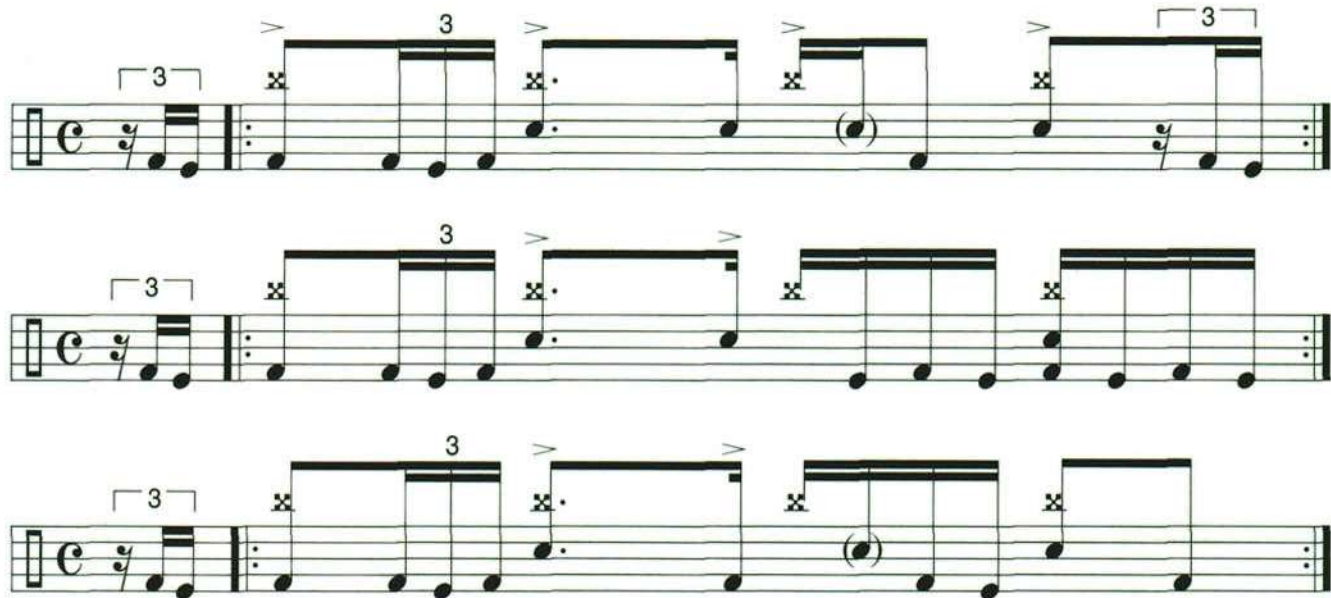
This lesson has been designed to offer you a different approach to playing two bass drums (or double pedal). Instead of using the bass drum in the role of a timekeeper (i.e., playing a repetitive pattern, or playing running 16th notes), we'll incorporate all four limbs and play things with the feet that would typically be played with the hands. We'll reverse the normal roles by keeping the hands consistent and using the bass drum to spice things up. This is the type of thing I try to do in Primus.

The pattern I played on "American Life" (*Sailing The Seas Of Cheese*) is one of my favorites. It's a good example of the use of space. Notice that, on the recording, I vary the bass drum in the fourth bar.

Next up is a sample of the groove I played on the verse of "Mr. Know It All" (*Frizzle Fry*). It's straight quarter notes on a wide-open hi-hat, with the snare on 2 and 4. The bass drum part is the same as the bass guitar's pattern.

Here is an example of the bridge groove on the same song. It's a good pattern for developing both strength and control, especially with the left foot. This is another groove where I tend to vary the fourth bar of the phrase. Use the written example to get started, then see what variations you can develop on your own.

One of my favorite bass drum patterns is a quick three-note rhythm I picked up from Neil Peart. The following examples are from "Jerry Was A Race Car Driver" (*Sailing The Seas Of Cheese*).



This article is excerpted from John Xepoleas's excellent book *Drum Lessons With The Greats 2*, © copyright Manhattan Music Inc., available from Warner Bros. Publications. Used with permission.



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3 ♩ = 90-144

RL RLRLRLRL RLRLRL RL RRLLLR RL RRLLL

RL RRLLRRRL LLRRLL RL RRLLLR RL RRLLL

The challenge here is to maintain relaxation and to control all non-accents at the same volume.

4 ♩ = 80-160

RRRLRRRLRRRLRRRL RLLLRLLLRLLLRLLL

RRRLLLRRRLLLRRRL RLLLRRLLLRRRLLL

RRRLRRRLRLLLRLLL RRRLRLLLRRLRLLL

RRRLLLRRRLLLR L RLLLRRLLLRRRLLL

The foundation of this exercise is 8th notes.

5 ♩ = 80-136

RLRLRRLLRRLLRRLRLRL RRLLLRRLLRLLL

RLRL RLLLRLL... RLRLRRLLLRRLLRLLL

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



Carter Beauford: "Satellite"

Transcribed by Paul R. Thompson

MUSIC KEY

Open	O	R	C	C	C
H.H.	X	X	X	X	X
T.T.					
S.D.					
F.T.					
B.D.					

Add'l Toms

This month's Rock Charts features our cover artist, Carter Beauford, from the Dave Matthews Band. "Satellite" is from the band's *Under the Table and Dreaming* disk, and has a few classic Carter characteristics. You'll notice Beauford's unique way of playing the hi-hat; he never plays a simple repeating pattern. Carter also plays a few off-beat fills here and there that are fun to listen to (and that really spice up the track). And although the tune is primarily in 6/8, Carter makes it feel so funky.



Eber Roberts

$\text{♩} = 125$ **15**

This page contains ten staves of musical notation for a drum set. The notation is written on a single-line staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 6/8. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, accents, and dynamic markings. The first staff begins with a double bar line and a key signature change to one flat. The notation consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, often grouped in beams. Many notes are marked with an accent (>) and some with a cross (x). There are also dynamic markings such as *mf* and *mfz*. The notation is organized into measures, with some measures containing multiple notes. The final staff ends with a double bar line and a key signature change to one flat.



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Contemplations On Getting My Butt Kicked

by D.C. Beemon

Jazz musicians like to discuss the idea of getting their butts kicked, saying it's the fastest way to learn something. Because you talk about it so much, you think you're ready for it actually happening—until it does, to you. When it does, it's devastating, like a karate chop to the heart. Chances are that it'll happen in a public place, and you'll be humiliated. After all, you thought you were a pretty hot drummer, but suddenly you know you have a problem. Get out the safety net for the falling ego!

People deal with this experience in three ways. They either don't believe it, they give up, or they wake up and start really listening. Here's what I did:

Butt Kicking #1

I got my butt kicked the first time I sat in with a jazz band. It was jam night. I was in the right place at the wrong time. These were world-class musicians, and I was still learning. In fact I'd never played jazz with anybody before. That's why I went to the jam in the first place.

Just from watching their first set I knew I was in trouble. The band played fast—real fast—and my chops weren't up to it. I hadn't developed my right hand to ride at 350 beats per minute for ten or fifteen minutes. But part of me said that maybe I could do it. Maybe I could rise to the occasion. Once we started playing, though, I felt like an insect trapped in an electronic zapping machine, whacking the cymbal for dear life. Thankful when the tune ended, and ready to crawl into a hole, as I'm slinking off the stage, the bass player says, "You were playing behind the beat." Wake-up call: I wasn't just behind the beat, I was off it completely. I obviously had to work on my time and my speed. Forget the fills and fancy stuff. Forget about independence. Forget about sounding like Elvin Jones. Get up to speed first and then worry about decorating the cake.

I never would have known this if I hadn't jumped up there totally unprepared, like a duck wandering onto a shooting range. Until you get your butt kicked, you never quite decide to proceed to the next level of development. The wall of defense has already been built around your brain, and you're constantly thinking of ways to avoid anything that might make your body uncomfortable.

Butt Kicking #2

A year later, after I'd improved enough to form my own band, I got my butt kicked again, this time by my own band. After a lot of subtle hints had failed to penetrate the deep armor around my skull, my bass player said at a session where I'd drowned out his playing, "The only way to teach a rock drummer jazz is to make him play brushes." Wake-up call!

I'd been noticing on our practice tapes that my drums always seemed too loud, but I'd attributed that to the miking and the basement acoustics—in other words, to everything but my playing. Every now and then I'd executed what I considered to be a bitchin' fill, only to notice that the other players were wincing. I just figured that on occasion I got a little carried away, and heck, I'd seen Elvin do that; I'd seen him pop a cymbal right off the stand. Nothing wrong with showing some emotion, playing jazz with some spirit and not getting too intellectual about it. But after playing the remainder of the session with brushes, my alto player

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The Jam Session

by William Griffith

How important is it for aspiring professional drummers to attend open jam sessions? Very important, according to Ed Shaughnessy. "The biggest advantage," he emphasizes, "is to get people to *hear* you and *know* you."

It's very easy to come home from work, click on the Sony *Walkman*, lock yourself in your room, and be a "practicing hermit." But once you develop enough confidence and chops, this is no substitute for performing with a group of musicians.

Interacting with other players is one of the most rewarding aspects of playing. Going to jams provides the chance to learn from other drummers. In addition, meeting new people can create new opportunities and possibly lead to a *regular gig*.

Overcoming the fear of strangers staring at you and maintaining your composure on stage are skills required by all performers. Novice drummers attending jam sessions for the first time may find it a nerve-racking yet satisfying experience. When you get up in front of people, you expose a part of yourself through verbal/nonverbal communication, which an attentive audience readily picks up on.

If they like what they see and hear, the gratification of receiving hearty applause makes it all worthwhile. The value of this feedback to the "woodshedding" drummer cannot be overestimated.

Etiquette is the key element of attending open jams. Be sure to ask for the sign-up sheet and indicate that you're a drummer. It's best to sign up as early as possible to ensure that you get to play, hopefully before 2 A.M. Get to know the session leaders. Once they recognize you, your chances of playing are greatly improved. A courteous "thank you," along with a handshake after you play, never hurts. And if for some reason you don't get to play, don't flash an evil glare at the band-leader and storm out of the club. Going to jams requires patiently waiting for your name to be called, which unfortunately sometimes doesn't happen. Also, if you drink, watch the booze. If you're sitting around for hours drinking beer and suddenly you get called to the stage.... Well, timekeeping is everything, right?

Another essential aspect of going to jams is familiarity with the songs. If you're going to a blues jam, you should know songs like "Stormy Monday," "The Thrill Is Gone," and other staples of the blues repertoire. Despite your preparation, though, you'll often end up playing songs

you've never played before. This, too, will help you quickly learn to "drive a band."

Before beginning a tune, go over the tempo and any breaks with your fellow jammers to make sure everyone is playing the same version of the same song. Once you've started the tune, open your ears. It's your job to hold the whole thing together. Above all, play for the *song*, not yourself!

While other instrumentalists have to bring their own instruments to jams, you have it easy when it comes to equipment. Just bring your favorite pair of sticks and respect the "host" drummer's gear. Often the setup will feel foreign at first, so ask if it's okay to make minor adjustments like seat height and cymbal placement. And be sure to thank the host drummer after your set!

Before embarking on your musical adventure, check your local arts/entertainment paper for clubs and bars that host open jams. It's best to call prior to heading out the door, since jams tend to change days and times frequently.

The bottom line is that jam sessions are social occasions that allow you to practice and improve your craft. So grab your sticks, sign your name, and keep your groove steady and strong.

forbade me to ever hold sticks again. Not only had I been playing too loud, but I'd been keeping lousy time, which is the kiss of death for a drummer. This "kicking" made me realize that my jazz drumming still wasn't cutting it.

Playing with brushes, it was like I became a new drummer. I could feel the time locking in—probably because I wasn't trying to play as much—and my volume was compatible with the rest of the music. Also, because the brush slides across the whole beat, I had to decide where to put the emphasis, and so was made conscious of the beat's center and "essence." But was I doomed to playing brushes for the rest of my life, or was there an adjustment I could make in my overall approach to the drumset?

I should have already known the answer. A few years earlier Gary Chaffee had told me that most drummers found it impossible to play both rock and jazz, because the styles are so different that playing one screws up the other. That applies to everybody but me, I'd thought. No reason I can't switch back and forth. Having my butt kicked made Gary's words sink in, and made me aware that the rock approach I'd been using in all my warm-up exercises and independence drills was carrying over into my jazz playing.

Suddenly, it dawned on me: The trick to playing jazz with energy and with a good pulse—but without drowning out everybody else—requires developing a light touch. You need as much energy

as a rock drummer, if not more, but something has to diffuse that energy before it gets to the end of your sticks. Supported by this "new" knowledge, I developed a concept I could use:

Playing with brushes transforms a lot of energy into a little sound due to the construction of the brush; the sound gets diffused among the strands of metal. The only way to diffuse your sound with a pair of sticks is to hit lighter. One way to achieve this is to hold your sticks less tightly. Try playing with only the fulcrum between the forefinger and thumb. (I had already "learned" this technique, but I'd never understood it until now.) This makes it much easier to play with a light touch. Also, instead of winding up and swinging the sticks like golf clubs or fly swatters, just let them drop onto the heads on their own: gravity. Oh yeah, that's what Erskine was talking about in his video on timekeeping!

It also helped me to think of my whole body as this massive, pulse-keeping bear through which a tremendous energy surges and careens wildly down my arms toward the fulcrum. The trick is to keep that energy under control and distill it, so that what reaches the sticks is a powerful, underlying force, an iceberg under the water that nobody sees. After playing this way for a while, I began to hear the open, woody sound of my drums, and I vowed to never slam, bash, or crash again.

Butt Kicking #3

A couple of weeks later the same guys kicked my butt again. Using brushes almost exclusively, my time was slipping and I had lost my swing. After one of our gigs my bass player told me that I'd been dragging the beat. I knew the music hadn't sounded right, that it wasn't clicking, but I wasn't sure what the problem was. He suggested that I practice with a metronome, but I'd already been doing that for years.

At the next practice session, someone else suggested that I chant out loud to

myself, "Swing-dinga-ling," as I played. The effect was immediate and magical—I just started swinging! Everything clicked into place, and I was in the pocket.

What had happened? I had somehow strayed from the rounded, triplet feel. As I got more and more into the idea of using brushes, I'd made the rookie mistake of concentrating on the accents, the form, and the melody line—on being creative—meanwhile neglecting the very essence of drumming: time and swing. When the other guys are off flying into outer space, it's the

drummer's job to stay home and keep a pot on the stove. When you have the essence down, the rest doesn't matter because it's going to sound good no matter what you play. People don't care what you do as long as it swings. The other players feed off your swing.

At our next gig, I sat down on my stool and smelled something sweet burning. One of the guys had lighted a piece of incense and placed it by my kit to remind me of the higher duty that called, and to encourage me to continue in the ways of "Swing-dinga-ling." I did just that throughout the night, even during my solos, and our performance rose a level, to the highest place we'd been as a band.

Afterwards, my bassist said, "You sounded great, but you don't have to 'swing-dinga-ling' during your solos too!" He had a smart-ass look on his face. "Go to hell," I said, as I got into my car. Sometimes you can get your butt kicked one too manytimes!



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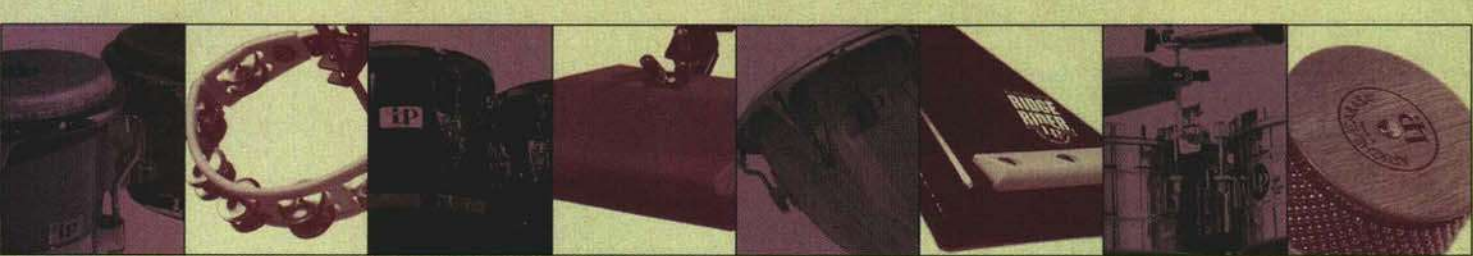
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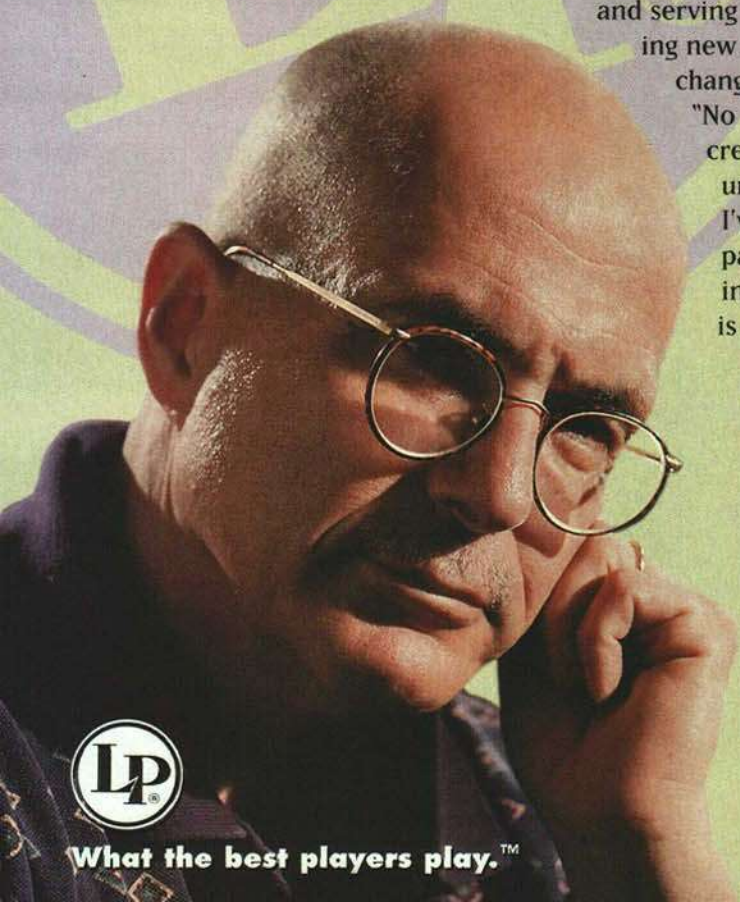
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Spacehog's Jonny Cragg

by Ken Micallef

When Jonny Cragg migrated from England to the U.S. in 1992, the only work he could find involved coffeebeans, a shovel, and prescription drugs. "I came to New York City with \$30 in my pocket, ran out of that pretty quick, and had to get a job," says Cragg on a deserved break from touring. "I found a one-day job killing rats in an espresso bar on Second Ave. and 6th Street. The owner told me he was clearing out the basement and I could help. Well, the bar shared their basement with a drugstore and the place was loaded with expired tranquilizers. There I was, surrounded by rats on downers running around me while I was trying to smash them with a shovel. I'll never forget that one."

Rodents aside, Cragg's U.S. future looked up when he met fellow Brit and guitarist Antony Langston in that very same coffee bar. Along with Antony's brother Royston and Richard Steel, the foursome quickly founded Spacehog—and glorious, retro glam rock was back in style. Spacehog's vibrant, quirky debut, *Resident Alien*, produced the hit single "In The Meantime," a whirling bit of space-noise-drenched pop swung with a soulful groove and a Bowie-ish vocal. Stardom beckoned, Letterman and Leno called, and Jonny was suddenly free of deadly day jobs.

A twenty-nine-year-old drummer versed in blues, techno, and funk, Cragg hails from Kent—the "garden of England." A former psychology student, Cragg's agile drumming shines on Spacehog's hit—as it does on the opening boogaloo thump of their self-titled theme song. His

deeply tuned toms and solid snare drum touch recalls the Andy Newmark school, where taste and groove are the concerns over flashy chops and mechanical perfection. Loose and spunky, Cragg cranks hard on "Cruel To Be Kind," creates a sharp techno-funk groove for "Only A Few," and pummels a stadium-filled crowd on "Never Coming Down." From killing rats to *Resident Alien* status, Jonny Cragg has found America the land of dreams fulfilled.

JC: I am so pleased to be doing this interview. I can't tell you how good this makes me feel to be in *Modern Drummer*. I've made it, man. I'm going to give up now!

KM: Before you do, tell us how you hooked up with Spacehog.

JC: I had come to New York from England, and I was working in an espresso bar. That's where I met Antony. He was just hanging out, working as a photography assistant. His brother came over and we met for a cup of tea, and then we jammed. It was the most natural, inspiring, and beautiful musical experience I'd ever had. Amazing. I'd come to New York to get away from playing the drums—just to have a break—because I felt a bit jaded. Everything in England required too much energy and I had too many expectations.

KM: What kind of music were you playing there?

JC: I played in a band called the Hollowmen. They were a Leeds band, playing kind of psychedelic, Manchester-styled pop music. It's a very frustrating experience to get as far as a record deal, get a sizable amount of money to record an album, and then see the whole thing crumble. When things don't go as well as you'd like, people start pecking at one another. It all fell apart. We set up another band called Buzz



Aldrin with a different singer, but by then the bottom had fallen out of the market, and the whole world was in a deep recession.

In Leeds there was only one bar to play a show in, so I started playing in a blues band in Europe. They had a cheesy name—the Sensational King Biscuit Blues Band—but it was good pay. I later did sessions for a techno pop band, the Utah Saints. I toured Europe with them also, then I moved to New York.

KM: What tunes did you play in the blues band?

JC: I really can't remember. I was called to do it in the last week of June, which is traditionally a beautiful time of year in England. My friend in the band said all my bills would be paid, and I'd be laying in the sun in the south of France for starters. So I figured, "Am I going to sit around and spend thirty quid on drugs and food and alcohol, or earn a grand and go to Europe?" So off I went. But I was coming from an indie rock, funky direction trying to play these jazz-blues standards.

KM: Did it feel natural to you?

JC: In a Keith Moon-y sort of way, it did. I remember thinking that I was definitely a stop-gap for this guy. We did a four-hour rehearsal for a two-hour set. At one point we were in Antwerp, Belgium in the red light district, driving around the streets looking for the venue. The bandleader said it was no big deal, but it was a big show. I was deeply entrenched in my role of learning the material as we were driving. Suddenly I looked up, and there was this huge-breasted black woman looking at me very lasciviously. I blushed momentarily and carried on with my tapes and notes and paradiddles.

Once I got on stage, I realized I had two choices: either shrink into the scenery and try to play a passive role or do the full Keith Moon and go bollock crazy. The singer was a funny, forty-something blues man, and at the end of the show he told me what he probably told all his drummers: [adopts old British geezer voice] "You know Jonny, in all my years I been playing the blues, I worked with Ginger, I worked with Ringo, I worked with Keith—but you've got a feel for the blues, my boy! Why don't you stay in the band for a while. We're going to make a lot money." It was fun for six weeks, but I had to get back to

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reality.

KM: From blues to techno to Spacehog is a broad leap. But you're a pretty soulful drummer with a great groove, so you must have cut it.

JC: Well, thank you. I'm a bit of an '80s guy. I came out of the whole hip-hop thing. I went from being completely enamored of Neil Peart, Stewart Copeland, and John Bonham to discovering drum machines, Keith LeBlanc, and Tony Thompson. I got totally immersed in the funk in the '80s. I came out the other end in Spacehog. I'd just gotten all my funk chops down. I always loved to make a rock song groove, rather than for it to be really leaden and kind of Teutonic. I wanted it to be sexy and funky.

KM: Your tuning reflects that as well. You get a fat sound on your toms.

JC: Definitely something really fat. We went for a real live performance on the record, but with a fairly dry sound. We recorded at this barn in Bearsville studios in Woodstock. We just went for something really intimate, to get that feeling that there is a band playing in the room. But simultaneously we didn't want it to be too grunge or too alternative, with too big a live drum sound or a ringy snare drum that goes on forever. We went for control with fat powerful sounds. Carl Plaster, my drum tech, helped me out with the kit, which was very new to me. He made the DW kit really happen.

KM: Is that the set you use on stage?

JC: Yes it is. I also use a Yamaha Manu Katche snare, with Zildjian sticks and cymbals. The Super 5A sticks are really good now, though I broke a lot of them early on. I used to play a Yamaha 9000 series set in England. I do have a fondness for Yamaha drums. Factually, I did play DWs on the record.

KM: Did you study drums growing up?

JC: I studied with the local jazz whiz, Richard Newby. He did sessions with a lot of jazz artists. After the initial musical bonding, we went straight on to notation. But I've always learned the most valuable lessons from just playing records as loud as I can and playing along with them. To me, drums are always about playing with something. It's not really about playing on your own. I can't do that for longer than an hour. I get really bored.

KM: You mentioned jamming. Some

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Spacehog songs sound like they come from jamming.

JC: On some songs we went in with arrangements, textures, and production ideas in advance. Examples of that are "Candyman," "Zeroes," and "In The Meantime." But on some songs we maintained a real carte blanche attitude. We went in and just played. "The Horror" (from the soundtrack of The Craft) was completely jammed. It was just a question of getting the vibe right.

KM: When the band presents you with a song, do you build your part piece-by-piece, or do you improvise every time you play the song?

JC: I deal with the first thing that comes into my head...then the second thing...whatever the best fit is. Beneath that, I listen to how the bass guitar part is evolving, and how the phrasing of the vocal is going. Roy is the pivotal figure for me. I'm feeding off his bass and vocal.

KM: Do you take suggestions?

JC: Well, there's nothing worse than being in a band where the singer thinks he can play the drums. But we all feel comfortable suggesting things to each other. Having written a song, Roy will often have something specifically in mind for the drum part. I'll

"Let's face it, the '80s was all about playing to the drum machine, about quantizing your head and being super precise. With Spacehog, I had to unlearn all that stuff."

either like it or say it doesn't make sense. It's a negotiation. We're all pretty polite and we respect each other, so things get hammered out as we go along. The other guys have decent ideas for the drums, so I'll give their thoughts a listen. I'm a bit flamboyant and I like to go nuts, but I am a team player. I approach the drums with that in mind. It's not about "Hey, look at me."

KM: You have strong single-stroke rolls and a lot of power. Did you practice becoming fluid around the kit?

JC: I've been playing for seventeen years. I remember the first time I played a drumset in a teacher-pupil environment. I was very timid. My teacher said, "Don't be shy. You should hit the drums; attack them and be confident." That stuck in my head. As I gained studio experience I realized that engineers liked it when the drums were struck really hard.

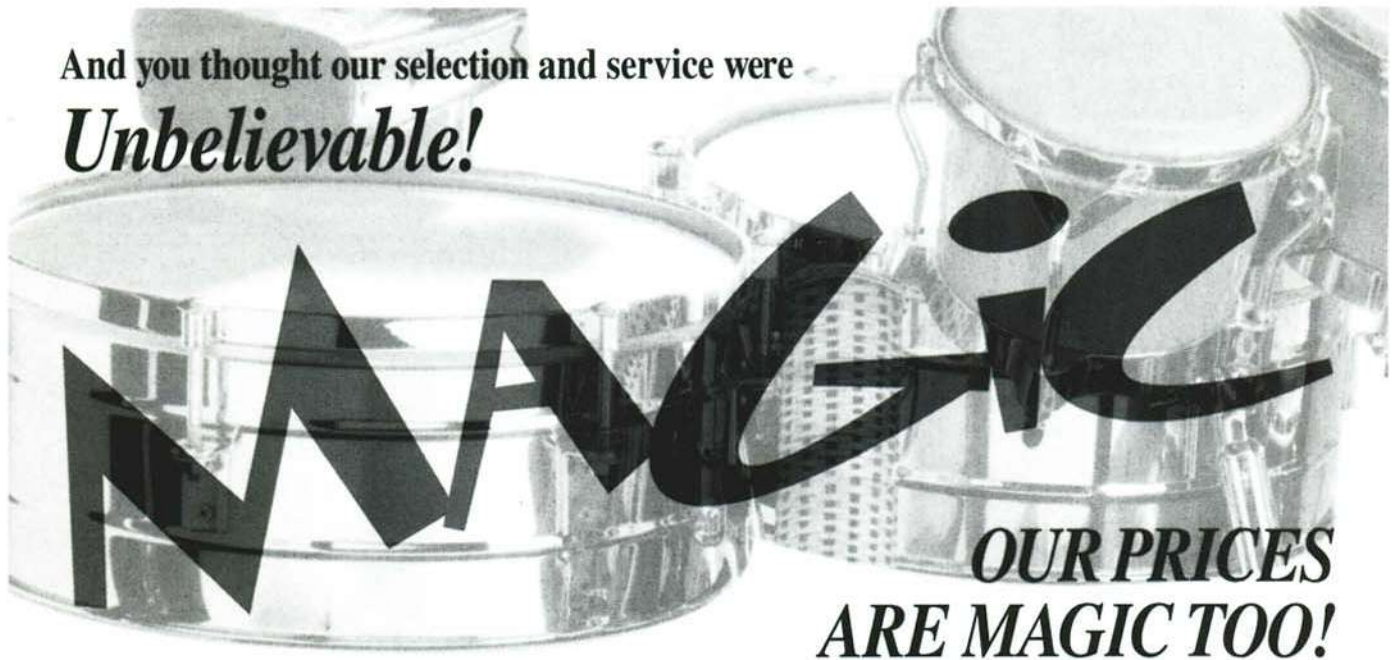
I came out of many studio sessions bruised and bloody. Some engineers wanted me to play as hard as I could. That made me a stronger player. It needs to be hard for any combo with distorted guitars and heavy amplification.

KM: On Letterman you didn't seem to be killing them.

JC: I was pretty restrained for that. "In The Meantime" is not like a "kick ass, let's go mental" drum beat. It's more of a gentle, sexy,

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groovy vibe. For TV there has to be an element of playing to the audience as well as to the camera. Anyway, I've developed a heavier, more precise style as I've gotten some studio experience. That's the nature of the beast in the studio. Very assertive, positive strokes are what's required.

Let's face it, the '80s was all about playing to the drum machine, about quantizing your head and being super precise. With Spacehog, I had to unlearn all that stuff. I needed to get loose and get funky and make it a little bit messy and a little bit Ringo. Having come up through the '80s with triggered sounds and drum machines and programming, I was then introduced to the concept where the acoustic drum was celebrated and real time was the way to go. I thought I'd gone to heaven.

KM: You didn't enjoy programming?

JC: With the Hollowmen, we'd do all the programming, then record the drums last. That put me under a lot of pressure. You've listened to digital drum machine sounds all the way through the playback for the last three days, then suddenly you're in front of this real drumkit that farts and squeaks and makes weird noises and isn't perfectly in time. Often I was putting down drum tracks against quite a bit of resistance. The environment was unwelcoming for the drummer in the '80s. On the other hand, I did learn a lot from programming drums. I gained a sensibility of moving beats. It's not so much what you play, it's the psychology of how you put it together that changes once you become familiar with digital programming technology.

KM: When did you start playing drums?

JC: When I was twelve. Like I said earlier, I was into Peart,



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Bonham, and Stewart Copeland. But no sooner had I delved into my brother's Pink Floyd collection than the '80s arrived, and things in Britain became very anti-rock. Echo & the Bunnymen, Joy Division, the Smiths, and the Manchester sound came into effect. I had to hide all my Deep Purple records and get on the indie ghetto trip. Keith DeFreitas from Echo & the Bunnymen was a great player, though—very simple but very chunky, and a great team player. Budgie from Siouxsie & the Banshees is great, also. Then I got into the whole funky thing: Sly Dunbar, Tony Thompson, and Keith LeBlanc from the Sugar Hill Gang.

KM: So you came to New York and joined Spacehog—and then came overnight success?

JC: To be honest, the longest time we took to do anything was to play the first show. We just rehearsed and worked at bad jobs, and by July we had our first show. After six shows we were getting major labels down who wanted to sign us. Once we were up the whole thing moved really fast.

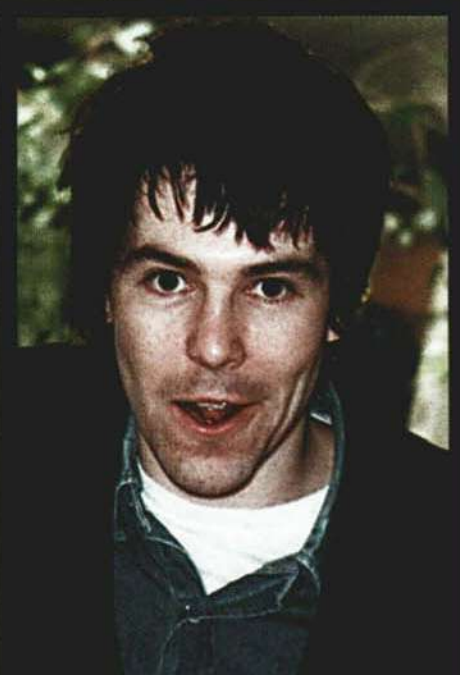
KM: How has life changed since the group has taken off?

JC: It's like a dream come true. We move to America, get a rock band together, sign a huge deal, go on tour, and become relatively successful. It's fantastic. Now I'm never in New York. We've been on tour for seven months. We're just discovering how big this land mass of yours really is. It's a big one. And we appreciate how well it's going for us.




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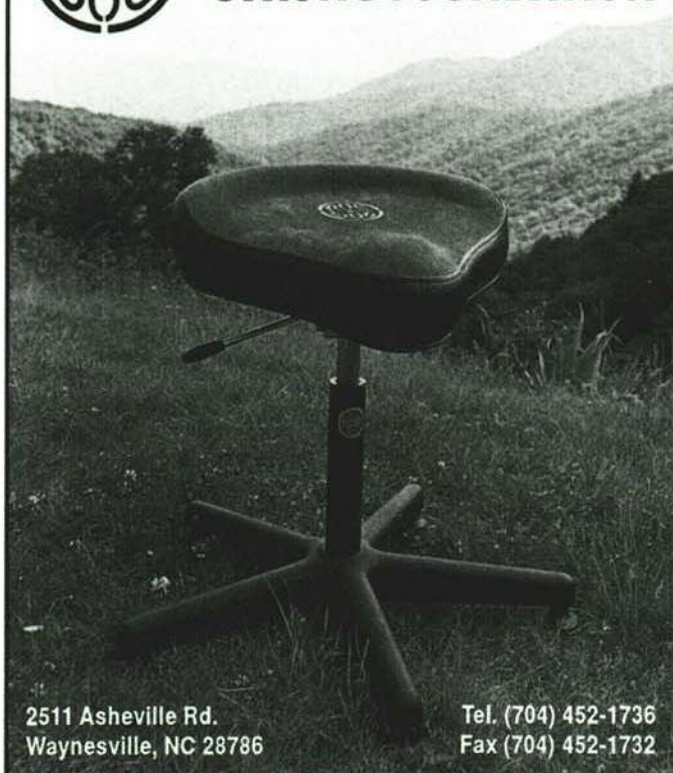
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Eric Kamau Gravatt: Interview With A Legend

by Michael Baker

Editor's Note: Drummer Michael Baker approached MD with the idea of interviewing Eric Kamau Gravatt, a man who essentially disappeared from the music scene some twenty years ago after having made an impact with McCoy Tyner and Weather Report.

Michael was particularly interested in doing the interview because both he and Gravatt have worked for Joe Zawinul—Eric in Weather Report and Michael (just a few years ago) in the Zawinul Syndicate. (By the way, Michael just got off the road with Wayne Shorter as well!) And while Michael has moved on to other gigs, including his current tour with Whitney Houston, he was eager to sit down with one of his heroes.

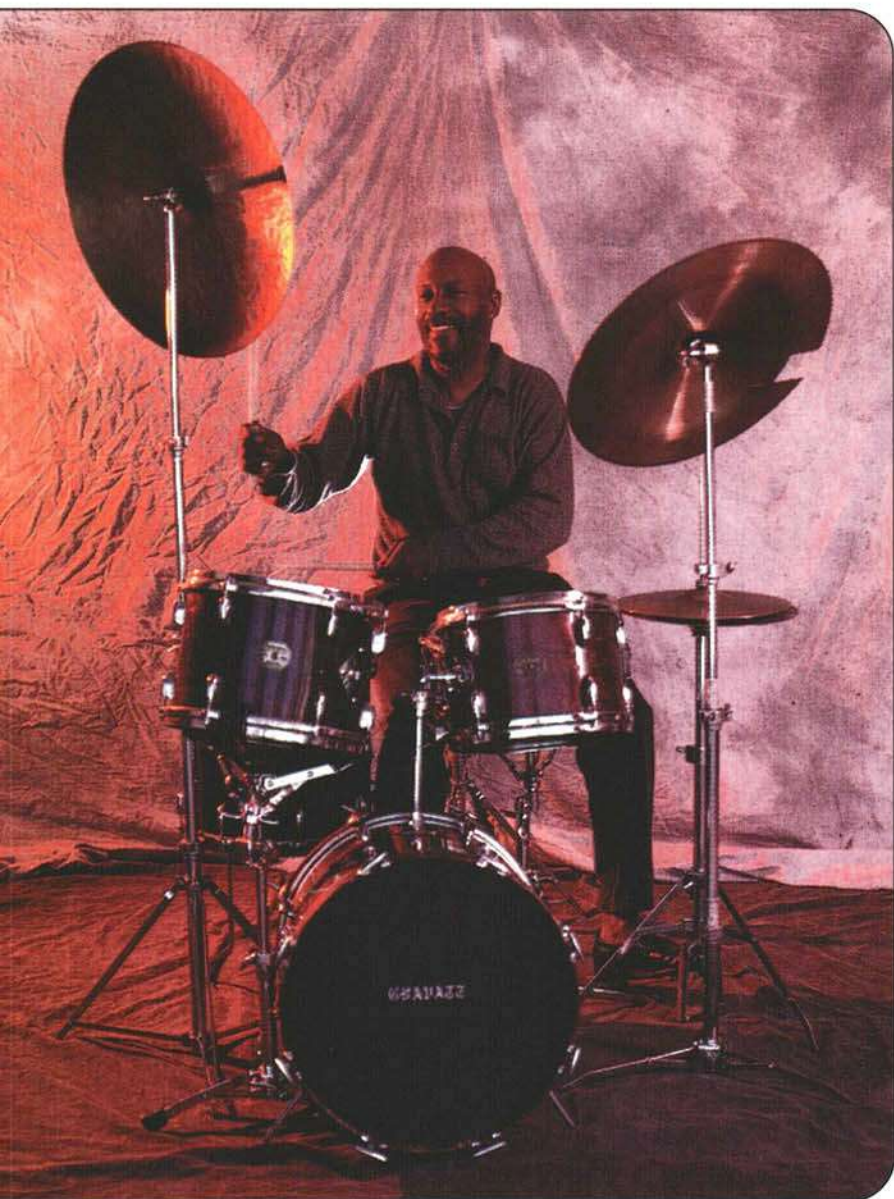
There's a kind of fraternity among the drummers who have worked with the many incarnations of Joe Zawinul's creative genius, whether it be Weather Report, Weather Update, or the Zawinul Syndicate. Zawinul, along with saxophonist Wayne Shorter, created one of the most envied gigs in modern music—especially for drummers. If you were a drummer with Weather Report, you were considered to have "arrived" as a player, and just the mention of your name in the same company with these two giants was enough to make you call home and say, "Mom, I've finally made it."

One of the first pioneers of the drum chair for Weather Report—and therefore one of the important early fusion drummers—was Eric Kamau Gravatt. Eric did some brilliant work with McCoy Tyner around the same time as well, which was also inspiring to a lot of players. At one point, though, he decided to give up the jazz lifestyle, opting for a more "normal" life. While Gravatt did get away from the high-profile gigs, he continued to play.

I remember as a kid hearing about Eric playing in my hometown in Duluth, Minnesota, years after he had left Weather Report. He used to play a lot at the college there. I would never go to hear him, though, because I thought that I was the best drummer in the world. Well, I'm a lot older and wiser now.

I recently found out that Eric lives in the same city as I do, Minneapolis, and because he is definitely one of the unsung drum pioneers of our time, I asked him for an interview. This is what he had to say.

MB: When did you meet Joe Zawinul?



Andrea & Robert Smith/Elle Photo

EG: I met him back when I was in school at Howard University. It was the year before Dr. King was shot, so that was 1967. I worked down at Constitution Hall with a flute player named Lloyd McNeil. We opened for "Ball" [Cannonball Adderley] and Ramsey Lewis. Zawinul was with Cannonball, so that's when he first heard me play.

MB: Zawinul wrote me about you.

EG: He talked about me?

MB: [handing a letter to Gravatt] He faxed me this the other day!

EG: What's up, Zawinul! He still can't spell my name right. [laughs] Oh my goodness!

MB: He loved you, man. Didn't he recommend you to Miles around that time?

EG: Yeah. This was around the time Tony was leaving Miles.

MB: Miles gave you a call?

EG: Yes. [Eric whispers, doing a Miles impression] "Who's your favorite drummer?" I said, "Rashied Ali," then Miles said, "Who?" [laughs] I said, "Miles, don't mess with me. You know who Rashied Ali is. He plays with Coltrane." Miles said, "Oh, he plays that wild shit. You think you can cut it with us? You know how we play?" I said, "Yeah, I can cut it."

After I had spoken with Miles on a couple of occasions he asked if I would come down and sit in on a particular Saturday night. I was actually working in a play on the night I was told to sit in, and I was going to go down after I got off from the play. Well, that night I got a message from the stage manager at the theater saying

Steve Smith On Gravatt

"I loved the way Eric moved around the drumset. Talk about being ambidextrous! He was a very symmetrical player. And his uptempo swing was amazing. Some of my favorite work of Eric's is the live playing on Weather Report's *I Sing The Body Electric*."

Terry Bozzio On Gravatt

"The first time I saw Eric play was at the Keystone Corner in San Francisco, and seeing him play changed my life. There isn't—and maybe never *will* be—anyone who plays drums with that much intensity.

"I never fail to mention Eric at my clinics. I was greatly drawn to his aura behind the kit. And I tried to learn everything that Eric played. His approach comes through in my playing to this day—more than anyone else's."

that the woman I was married to at the time had been rushed to the hospital, so I didn't get to sit in that night.

On another occasion, I had a gig over at Columbia University with a friend of mine, and after the gig I was supposed to audition for Miles at the Club Baron. I remember that I needed a case for my snare drum, so I went to downtown D.C. to pick one up, and

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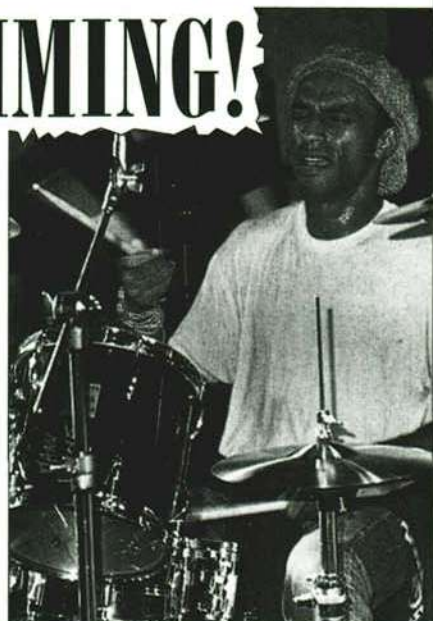
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the only one they had was this gold lame plastic case! [laughs] So I walked into the audition with this case and the band said, "Boy, you better be able to play!" As it turned out, I never got to audition for Miles because he said he didn't feel like hearing anybody play that night. So I sat and talked with Tony Williams awhile. Tony was waiting for John McLaughlin to come by, and he was asking me about Larry Young, because I had played with him on a few occasions. This was just before Tony's Lifetime group.

MB: Miles obviously had a deep respect for your playing. I read his autobiography and I think he mentioned you in it.

EG: Well, I'm flattered. What's really amazing is that the next time I saw Miles I was playing with Weather Report at the Beacon Theater in New York. We got through playing and I went around to the back of the theater to the vending machines, and there was this little dude standing there wearing a big fur coat and great big glasses—it was Miles! He said [whispers], "Eric! Eric! You sound good, ya mufucka. The rest of the band sounds like shit." [laughs] I loved it!

The next time I saw Miles he was playing in San Francisco at the Keystone Corner; I was living in San Francisco at the time. I didn't think he would remember me after all that time because we had really only spoken in passing. But I'm sitting there with a friend of mine and I hear this, "Eric! Eric! Is that you?" and I said, "Yeah, it's me," and he sat on the edge of the stage and spoke with me while the band finished packing up. We talked all night. But we never got the chance to play together.

MB: How long were you with McCoy Tyner?

EG: I did two tours of duty. The first time was for about a year and a half, but that gig grew old real fast. It was tough, a lot of traveling. But the band was great. The first band had Woody Shaw and Sam Rivers, and sometimes it was Sonny Fortune as well. And the music was challenging, because at that time McCoy would play from 10:00 P.M. to 4:00 A.M., and that would be only three sets—you know McCoy and those ninety-minute tunes of his!

MB: So who was in the first Weather Report group?

EG: It was Airtio on percussion, Alphonse Mouzon on drums, and the other three: Joe, Wayne, and [bassist] Miroslav Vitous.

MB: I didn't realize that Alphonse was before you.

EG: Yeah, that was the funny thing about it. When I worked with McCoy, Alphonse was with Weather Report, and then we criss-crossed: I went with Weather Report and he went with McCoy.

MB: How did you approach the music in Weather Report in terms of learning it?

EG: Basically Joe, Wayne, and Miroslav would look at the manuscript because nobody expected Dom [Um Romao, percussionist] or me to read. They'd say, "You'll hear it." [laughs] Oftentimes Wayne would have these melodic lines—he was always thinking about music. Wayne would come into a hotel room, turn on the TV, pull out the soprano, spread manuscript all over the bed, and sit there and write music—fully drafted parts! So he would often bring in that stuff. But for the most part there wasn't much reading to be done on our end.

MB: Would you say your playing style helped shape their writing style?

EG: That may in fact be the case. I can't say that it was a conscious effort on their part, but it may have been an accidental by-

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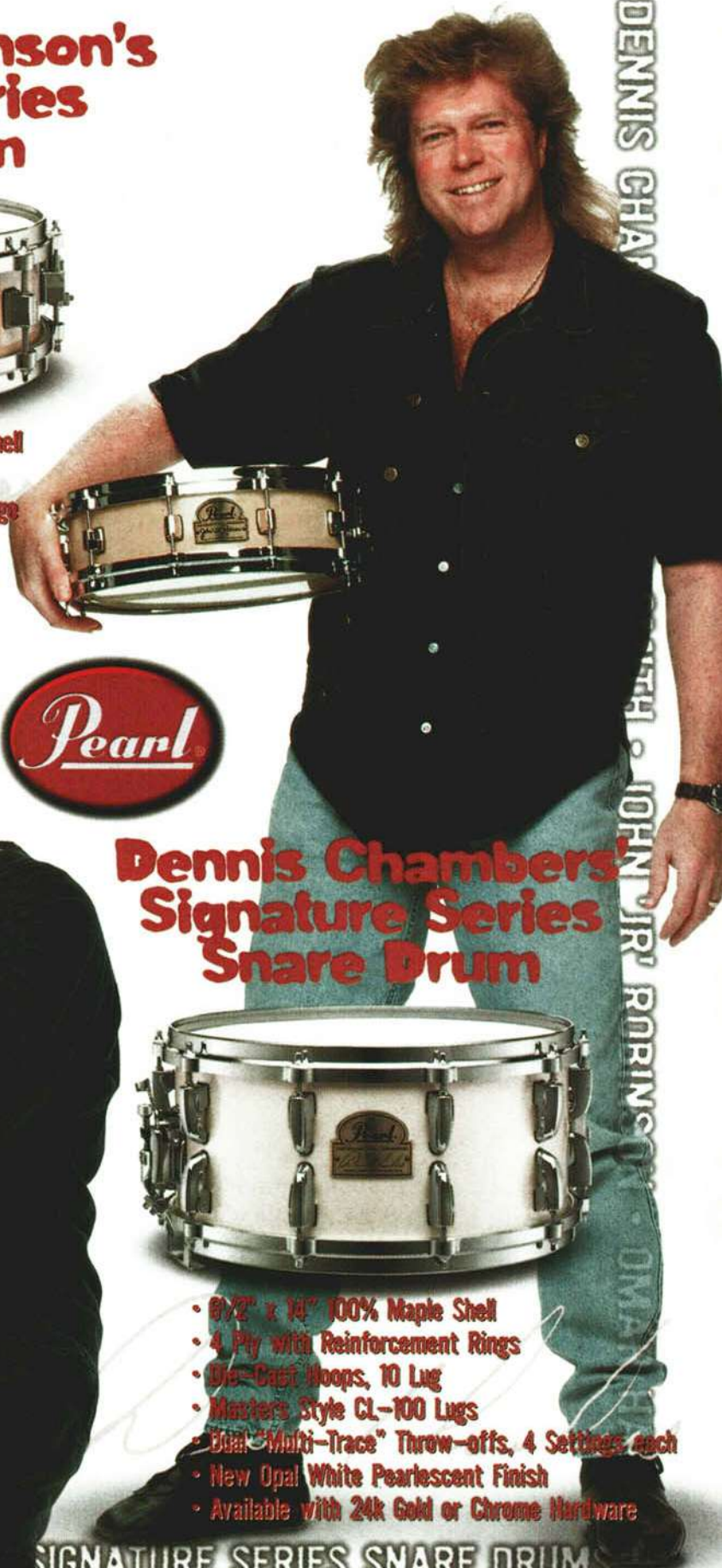
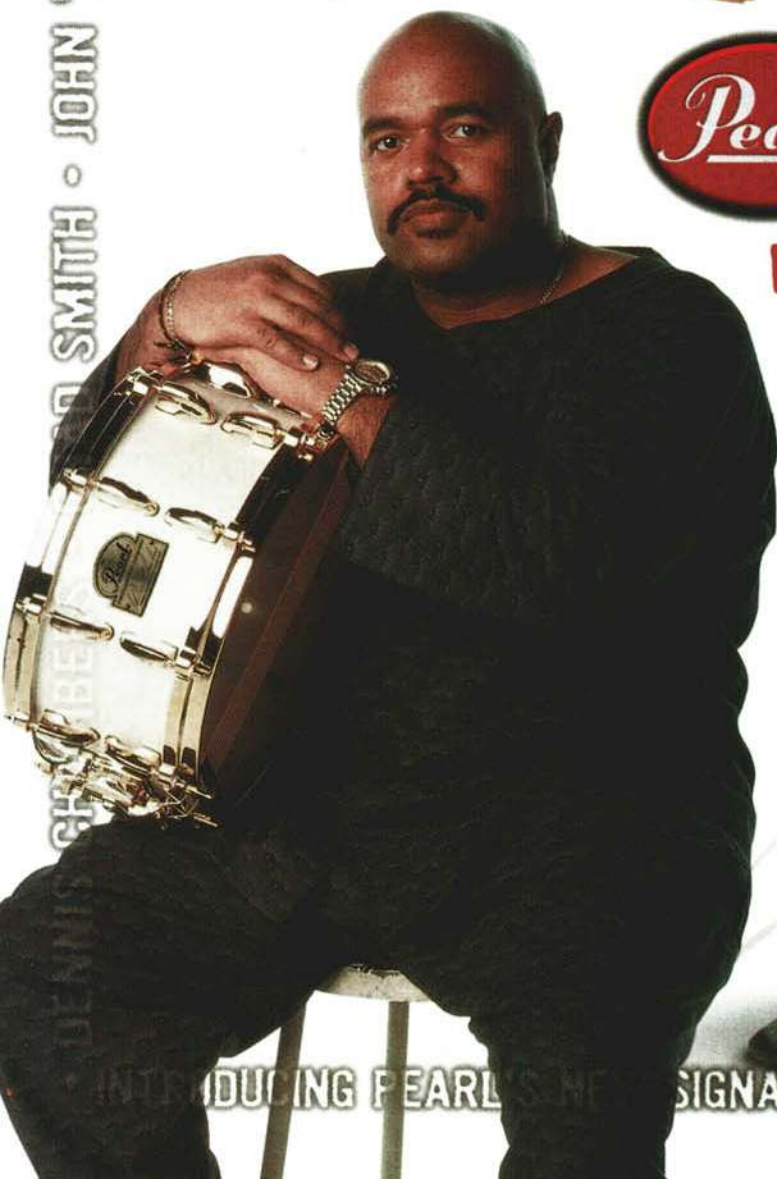
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product. I remember Miroslav saying to me that he was happy I was in the band because I could play fast. I think that Alphonse could play as quickly as anybody, but maybe my approach to playing fast was a little more aggressive, maybe a little less cerebral. I'm essentially 75%

physical and 25% cerebral; I like the physical act of playing.

MB: When I was working with Joe he'd speak about you in very positive terms. He would say, "Eric Gravatt was the baddest drummer that ever lived!" The reason you two split must have been because of per-

sonality things, not musical.

EG: [laughs] Yeah, it was a personality thing. Dom Um was my mentor in that band. He always "knew what time it was." He saved my butt a couple of times. And I feel Dom never got the proper recognition for what he could do. I was really drawn to his playing style.

MB: I think what Joe particularly liked about you was that you played so melodically. I remember thinking of you as a cross between Billy Cobham and Elvin Jones.

EG: I'll take that! [laughs]

MB: I'm serious! You were very aggressive, and the most physical-sounding stuff was what you were doing with McCoy.

EG: Well, if you're talking about his Focal Point album, I had just buried my father, so I had spent about six months crying at the drop of a hat, and I had to get that out.

MB: It seems you took that way of playing over to Weather Report. Joe seemed to love it—and he expected that from everyone else. I got some of the tail end of that, and so did a few other drummers before me. [laughs] But what kind of drummers did you grow up listening to?

EG: The first cat I was interested in was Joe Morello. Then it was Art Blakey, Max Roach, and Elvin. Then I started going backwards in time to Kenny Clarke, and then back further to Chick Webb and Sid Catlett. Lately I've been listening to guys from New Orleans.

MB: I remember back when I was at North

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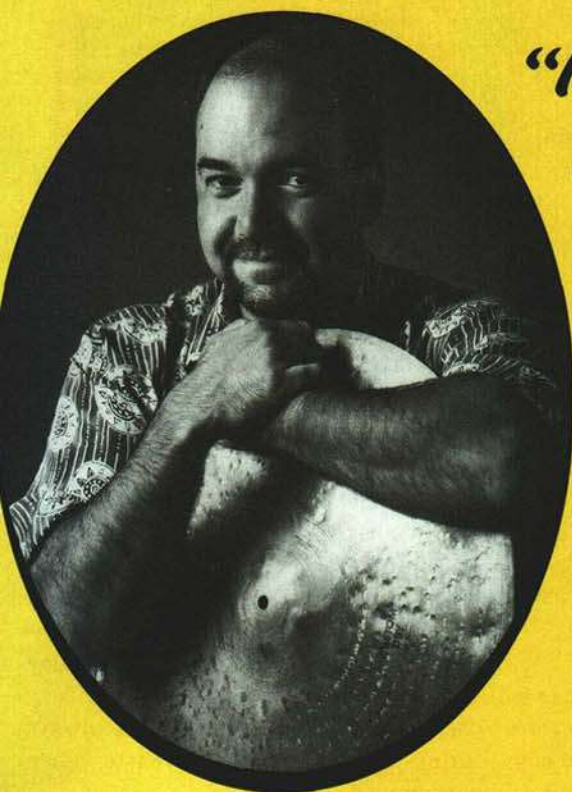
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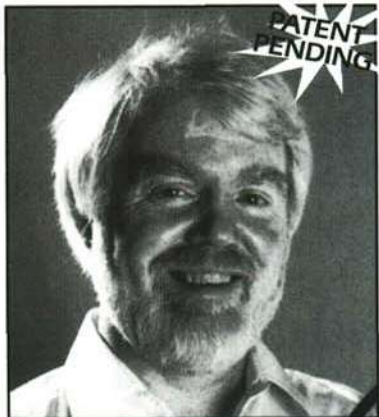
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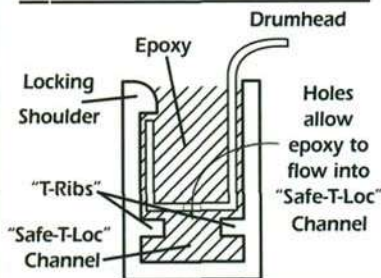
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Texas State University, I used to listen to what you were doing with Weather Report and with McCoy. I had this big love for McCoy's music. Your drums sounded real hard on those records, and the cymbals were kind of dry, too, but that stuff was rolling, man.

EG: [laughing] Yeah!

MB: How did you get such a bombastic sound, and what sticks were you using during those days?

EG: Just a minute.... [Eric leaves the room and comes back with a pair of sticks.] Here they are.

MB: What? Get outta here, you were using these? [laughs] You used these on McCoy's Focal Point album?

EG: Yeah.

MB: Man, these are huge marching drumsticks, longer than 2Bs. These were the sticks I would only use to practice on a pad with. And you would actually use these with McCoy?

EG: Oh, yeah man, he didn't have any problem with it.

MB: Man, between you and Tony Williams you guys are gonna kill me!

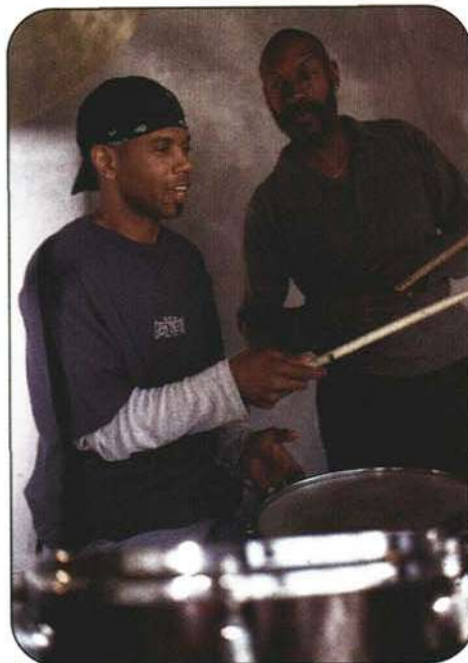
EG: What sticks is Tony using?

MB: Tony's got a stick out now made by Zildjian. It's a pretty long stick, maybe a little bigger than a 2B. How do you guys use such big sticks?

EG: [laughs] I was using 2Bs with Weather Report. In the case of McCoy, it was mainly so he could hear the cymbal definition. A lot of times I would have to make sure that he could hear what I was doing rhythmically because there was so much music being played. A lot of the musical information coming out was polyrhythmic, so I had to be heard.

MB: When I was coming up back in Duluth people used to tell me, "Man, you've got to go see Eric Gravatt play." They said that you had all your cymbals way up high and that you sat down real low. I've always wanted to ask you if you were the first cat to play with the cymbals up at an angle like that.

EG: No. I got that from Frankie Dunlop, who played with Thelonious Monk. I just had my cymbals higher because I had stands that could go higher. I had the old Rogers Memriloc stuff. I had the cymbals up high because I had a couple of film and theater dates where the conductor thought I



Michael plays while Mr. Gravatt keeps a watchful eye.

Andrea & Robert Smith/Elite Photo

was hiding behind the cymbals, so I just raised them up higher so I could see everything. I turned the cymbal flat because in most of the places I played there wasn't enough room on the stage and the drums would be right on top of me. With the cymbals angled that way they would occupy less space.

MB: That's funny, because you always think it's for some other reason when drummers do that.

EG: Yeah, people always think it's some abstract shit, [laughs]

MB: It's like when Elvin was asked about why he used an 18" bass drum, and he said he could fit it in a cab. That ended up creating a whole sound, style, and concept for drums. So what drums did you play?

EG: The set I was using at that time was a set of Rogers, with a 20" bass drum, a 14" floor tom, an 8x12 tom, and a 14" snare. Everything was geared to fit on top of the car or in the trunk.

MB: I'd like to change the subject and talk about why you got out of music. What I've noticed about great fighters like Ali and Frazier is that they didn't retire with their belts. They kept fighting until someone took it away from them. When you left the business at the height of your career, you retired with your belt, so to speak. I want to know why.

EG: I got tired of it, and the money I was making wasn't adding up to the amount of time that I was putting into it.

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MB: But you've played music with some of the greatest musicians in the world—and you were partly responsible for some real groundbreaking concepts in drumming. Do you ever long for that high level again? How do you just say, "I quit, I'm through with it"?

EG: I can't say that I was aware of any groundbreaking drumming on my part at that time, but I can say that the feeling I get from playing now is the same as it was when I was with Weather Report. That hasn't changed. Whenever I play I still get that same stimulation, that same aesthetic feeling. But I looked at my days with Weather Report as a business, just as I did with the other groups I played with.

MB: Besides the money, I know you had some differences with Joe.

EG: I remember coming to the studio during the end of my days with Weather Report, and there were three new musicians in the studio ready to record—Andrew White on bass, Hershall Dwellingham on drums, and a percussionist. They played on the SweetNights album.

MB: I guess that's what Joe is talking

about in this fax he sent me. It says something about how he feels your playing style influenced the '90s hip-hop style, but that on the Sweet Nights album he wanted your bass drum to have more sustain. So he wanted you to play the top, which you could do so well, and Hershall would play the bottom.

EG: I was pretty upset about that, to say the least. Joe was saying to me, "Eric, what's the matter with you? Don't you know we love you? Why are you acting so funny?" Yeah, it was a personality thing.

MB: What eventually happened?

EG: Most of the problems we had were off of the bandstand. I think that when people work with you they try to get inside your head, and sometimes they find out they don't like what's in there. Then they go through a process of trying to change you, which is the worst thing they can do. That was one of the things that baffled me when I got the call saying I was no longer in Weather Report. I wasn't playing any differently. If anything I was playing more confidently.

MB: You make your living now working

with prison inmates. How did you get into this line of work?

EG: I needed a job and a cat I knew had an opening. He asked me if I would mind working with inmates, one thing led to another, and fifteen years later here I am—a lieutenant, a duty officer/watch commander in a medium-security prison.

MB: Well, it doesn't look like you're doing so badly. I know cats who have been playing music for a lot of years, and they don't always land on their feet—especially coming from the jazz world.

EG: You can make it in jazz as long as you hook up with the right people. There are a lot of people out there playing jazz, and you may never know their names, but they are doing "okay." But for me there were just too many inconsistencies in the business.

MB: When was the last time you played?

EG: I worked last summer at a club called McKenzies, filling in for Gordy Knudtson. Gordy was out with Steve Miller. He always looks out for me when he can't take certain gigs.

MB: You must have some amazing memories from all of the big gigs you did with Weather Report.

EG: There was one year when we just lit up the planet, man. That year we did Japan, we were second only to Miles in popularity. I wasn't quite prepared for the adulation that the Japanese had for us—limousines, roses and stuff waiting for the band.... I said, "What is the deal here?" And as I said, I wouldn't trade that whole experience with Weather Report for anything. In retrospect, I guess I have mellowed with age. I can look back at the head-butting I did with Zawinul with fondness now because I can recognize it for what it was—two rams amongst the sheep.



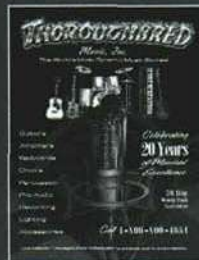
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Arthur Taylor, Jimmy Cobb, Philly Joe Jones, Tony Williams: dr
 Willie Bobo, Elvin Jones, Jose Manguel, Warren Smith: perc
 Miles Davis: trp
 Gil Evans: arranger
 the big bands of Gil Evans, et al

Starting with his association with Charlie Parker, Miles Davis showed a particular affinity for the arrangements of Gil Evans. When Davis's nonet that recorded *The Birth Of The Cool* sessions featured two songs arranged by Evans, jazz turned cool after its obsession with bop. The four pivotal albums captured on this box set, *Miles Ahead*, *Porgy And Bess*, *Sketches Of Spain*, and the ill-conceived *Quiet Nights*, showcase some of the most inspired playing of Davis's career—and of the groundbreaking drummers who accompanied him.

Enough has been said about the basic four recordings to fill many a jazz history book. But there's much more here. The rehearsal tracks for *Miles Ahead* for instance, uniquely reveal the building of Davis's style, and focus on how Gil Evans approached arranging as a living, band-oriented process. The out-takes of "Concerto De Aran juez" show that even more power lurked in that arrangement than was previously known. And some unreleased tracks of Miles' '60s group with Tony Williams show that fusion was no accident, but rather carefully plotted out by Davis and Evans with all of the thoroughness of their '50s work.

Drumming-wise, the alternate takes of "Gone" with Philly Joe Jones' proto-fusion soloing—technical as well as swinging—add a

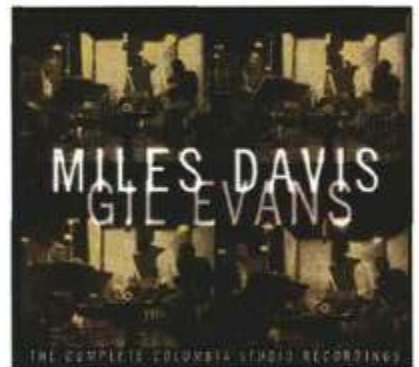
new understanding of what a great player he was and how his voice with Miles Davis was an integral part of his 1950s sound. Likewise, Jimmy Cobb's playing on *Sketches Of Spain*

reveals an understanding of unusual song forms years before Latin music had taken hold of jazz.

The real power of this box set is in the previously unreleased Tony Williams material. The four versions of the "unknown" piece "Falling Water" show Miles experimenting with electric and Hawaiian guitar years before *In A Silent Way*. The musical suite consisting of sound cues of the play "Time Of The Barracudas" features some of the classic '60s group's most powerful playing, with Williams exploding underneath modal and early fusion structures. Even the two strange vocal tracks by cult singer Bob Dorough seem like new discoveries here. Finally, the unused piece from *Sketches Of Spain*, "Song Of Our Country," sounds as important as anything included on that key recording.

And while the importance of the arrangements, soloing, and group interplay revealed here could hardly be overstated, the documentation of the close to 100-page booklet adds even more to the historical power of this piece of jazz history.

Adam Seligman



AT THE GATES
Slaughter Of The Soul
 (Earache MOSH143CD)



Adrian Erlandsson: dr
 Tomas Lindberg: vcl
 Anders Bjorier, Martin Larsson: gtr
 Jonas Bjorier: bs

On *Slaughter Of The Soul*, At The Gates delivers a half hour of some of the most inspired, cre-

atively aggressive metal to hit the pavement in ages. It's a cross between death and thrash, with a lot of the muscle coming from Adrian Erlandsson, whose crisp, brutal attack is pure pummeling pleasure.

Erlandsson is a double-kick wizard, delivering lightning triplets and radical ruffs at one turn and mind-bending polyrhythms the next—all of it delivered with skilled authority. None of it's gratuitous, though, and the drummer exhibits the same tasteful approach as Gene Hoglan of Death.

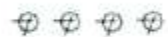
Still, Erlandsson's far from all feet and no hands. His single-stroke rolls and ride hand (the intro to "Need" in particular) are

blistering, and he comes up with some interesting hand-foot combinations. Through it all, Erlandsson manages a genuine groove, a talent that often eludes other drummers who try to bridge muscle and musicality. The record's only notable shortcoming is its length, a scant thirty-three minutes.

At The Gates, a Swedish band, has a much stronger following overseas than it does in the United States, which isn't surprising, considering European ferocity for this style of metal. Then again, At The Gates is better than—and an ideal role model for—most of its American contemporaries.

Matt Peiken

NIELS-HENNING ORSTED PEDERSEN & The Danish Radio Big Band
Ambiance
 (Dacapo 9417)

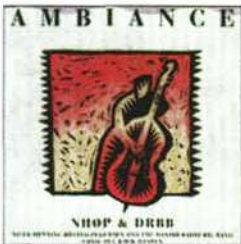


Jonas Johansen: dr
 Niels-Henning Orsted Pedersen, Thomas Oversen: bs
 Ethan Weisgard: perc
 Nikolaj Bentzon: pno
 Anders "Chico" Lindvall: gtr
 Danish Radio Big Band

Niels-Henning Orsted Pedersen sounds right at home on this date with the Danish Radio Big Band—as he should. Pedersen was the regular bassist for the DRBB from 1964 to 1982, before leaving to play with

the likes of Oscar Peterson and Joe Pass.

Pedersen composed five of the eight selections on *Ambiance*, yet this CD is a great collective effort, with the bassist's wonderfully resonant stand-up featured tastefully in the mixes and arrangements. Not only is this band dynamically appealing during crescendos and whippers played in loving sync, they are also a rhythmically frisky bunch. Drummer Jonas Johanson plays with polish and punch, and kicks the DRBB without sounding like he's waiting on the horns to catch up. He's light-handed on the Metheny-esque "Dancing With The Foxes," sounds like he's playing an intimate club gig on the more traditional big band swing of "The Puzzle," and leads



a percussion charge on "Dancing On The Tables." His ensemble work on "Donna Lee" matches and pushes the band—at times raucous, at times subtle—before he lets fly on some solo space.

The rhythm arrangements on *Ambiance* have elegance and daring, and in more than one place bring to mind the fresh take on big band of another great bassist, the late Jaco Pastorius. Well done.

Robin Tolleson

ELFFERICH FOUR

Electricity
(ARP 73046)



Jeroen Elfferich: dr
Eloy Wigman: sx, fl
Rik Fennis: gtr
Bert van der Mullen: bs

Among the new wave of drummers accepting the manifold joys and responsibilities of composer and drummer, Netherlander Jeroen Elfferich wears both hats smartly. His original instrumentals are occasionally wry and consistently engaging and accessible—if not constantly as galvanizing as the release's title might suggest.

Electricity steers clear of contemporary jazz's new age freeway, opting for the trad-fusion path less traveled. Elfferich yields a broad lane for blowing, and most of the solos are over-structured, full-form changes (vs. open modal jams). But Rik Fennis's dirty tone/clean edge lead sound betrays an affinity for overdrive, and Elfferich's drumming delivers jazz-borne ideas with atypical mass and intensity. His only extended solo, the African-flavored "Rhythm & Rhyme," played over a double-tracked ostinato, holds more contextual than technical interest. However, he does display ample chops on

the up 6/4 "Be-Was-Been" and the blistering opening section of "Superswing-Bonaparte."

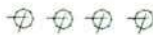
Writing the tunes affords Elfferich the opportunity to traverse many styles, and he takes full advantage with the martial "Chivalry," the Caribbean-Brazilian "Triple Nipple," and the suitably ominous "Miss Dracula." Some pieces even sport odd stylistic bedfellows within the same tune, such as the bop, heavy march, and train beat sections of "Superswing" and the skittering, double-ride jazz and funky boogaloo of "Pet."

A couple of guitar/bass/soprano sax intonation struggles abrade, but never fully snuff *Electricity's* spark. The disc's compositional variety and especially Elfferich's aggressive playing and the up-front recording of his kit should charge drummers' listening and play-along batteries nicely.

Rich Watson

MY HEAD

Endless Bummer
(Capitol CDP 7245 8 35572 2 6)



Greg Saenz: dr
Adam Siegel: vd, gtr
Dave Silva: bs

Catchy, edgy, fun rock 'n' roll wasn't in vogue when My Head

first recorded the songs that would end up on its debut. But with two years' passing, an escape from Imago Records, and the popularity of groups like label-mate Everclear, the timing couldn't be better for this Los Angeles trio.

There's good songs aplenty here, just waiting for astute modern rock programmers to grab onto. But beyond the pop, My Head flaunt a musical credibility here that few other modern rock darlings can match. And the rhythmic feel rolled out by drummer Greg Saenz is one of the undeniable joys of this record.

From the upbeat "I Don't Want Nothing" to the hypnotic "Fall," Saenz brings a smooth, rolling rhythm to every song. In the vein of Jimmy Chamberlin, his snare hand is his stylistic signature, rarely settling for simply the 2 and 4, always moving the music forward with grace notes and lighter strokes that set up the slam. He and Silva also have a knack for keeping the rhythms interesting yet unobtrusive while Siegel takes off on an extended guitar lead, another refreshing aspect of My Head's music in a radio-minded age where time is of the essence.

Though My Head re-recorded many of the guitar and vocal tracks between the pre-release I first heard and the record that hit stores two years later, there's an intoxicatingly live feel throughout the disc. And it's a testament to Saenz' performance that, on the whole, his parts were largely unchanged.

Matt Peiken

SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

BOB SMITH of Thirsty Alley backs up pretentious, angry, frequently obscene, and quite possibly drug-induced poetry with Zappa-esque instrumental brilliance on this Utah (!) band's *American Studies* (Dick Dark). **BUDDY RICH's** *Playtime* has recently been re-released by Charly Records, capturing history's most brilliant drumming enigma in a small combo environment. Those into visiting the outskirts of modern music will appreciate the brave playing of **SUNNY MURRAY** on *Illuminators*, a wide-open duo date with pianist/saxman Charles Gayle (Caroline). Frame drummer **RANDY CRAFTON** builds healing grooves that please the heart and keep the head entertained too on *Inner Rhythms* (The Relaxation Company). Drummer **RUSSELL SCARBOROUGH** leads two fine Virginia-based quintets into hard bop waters on *Polio Grande* (RS).

RATING SCALE

- ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ Excellent
- ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ Very Good
- ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ Good
- ⊕ ⊕ Fair
- ⊕ Poor

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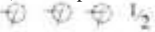
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BRIAN SETZER ORCHESTRA

Guitar Slinger

(Interscope Records INTD-90051)



Bernie Dresel: dr
Brian Setzer: gtr, vcl
others

After updating rockabilly with the Stray Cats, Brian Setzer probably felt at a loss about where to go next musically. While he could have continued to play rock 'n' roll—and make millions—his musical goals were loftier. After a chance jam session with some jazz musicians next door to his home in Los Angeles, he decided to re-create the big band sound, albeit with some very electric guitar and rock 'n' roll rhythms.

On *Guitar Slinger*, Setzer's second big band project, drummer Bernie Dresel (who co-leads the contemporary jazz group Porcupine and has played with Steve Bach, Brad Dutz, and other Los Angeles jazz types) shows a decidedly aggressive in-your-face style. While he can—and does—swing furiously on all tracks, the backbeat is given the chance to dominate despite the horn syncopations. On "(Everytime I Hear) That Mellow Saxophone," Dresel plays an intoxicating drum solo, and his grooves are tight and consistent throughout, with jazz-timed cymbal accents fighting against the furious 4/4 of Setzer's guitar stylings. And Dresel's sound beneath the grumbling of the horns and Setzer's baritone vocals is simply respectful.

Guitar Slinger shows the success of Setzer's cross-pollination attempts, and adds a couple of new songs to the standards. Like Joe Jackson's *Jumpin' Jive*, this band rocks its way through the songbook.

Adam Seligman

VIDEOS

LINCOLN GOINES AND ROBBY AMEEN

Funkifying The Clave

(Warner Bros./DCI)

\$39.95, 94 minutes



The esteemed Ameen and his bass-buddy Lincoln Goines have teamed up in many a band, resulting in an exciting simpatico sound that smartly mixes styles and grooves. The duo's video focuses on their very contemporary approach to applying Afro-Caribbean grooves to jazz/fusion/funk. Mostly, it features the two laying down bass/drums groove bits; other segments include pianist Bill O'Connell and the amazing pointillistic guitar work of Wayne Krantz.

If you're seeking an instructional video that analyzes technique and breaks down patterns, this is not it; you'd do better buying their book/CD of the same title (along with Bob Weiner and Frank Malabe's *Afro-Cuban Rhythms For Drumset* as a prelude). But if you want to kick back and get a close-up look at the fabulous Robby Ameen in full-bore, this video delivers tropics-hot high energy.



Jeff Potter

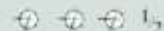
BOOKS

ROCKING INDEPENDENCE

by Jay Schellen

(Paragon Press)

\$21.95



At less than the cost of a Steely Dan ticket, Jay Schellen's *Rocking Independence* is a pretty good buy for the drummer looking to pick up some useful, eye-opening, and chops-building information. It's set up to be accessible to beginning drummers, yet appreciated by the intermediate and advanced players as well.

The title of the book refers to one of Schellen's main techniques—a specific rocking motion of the hi-hat foot from heel to ball. The technique might at first throw off your balance, but Schellen claims it will ultimately provide a solid grounding to your playing and free up the kick drum for other pursuits.

Cymbal and hi-hat patterns are written on transparencies ("Lamitex") that can be matched up easily with various kick and snare patterns. The transparencies stay on with plastic clips, which are provided. Schellen gives level-headed advice about practicing the snare drum workout and the snare & kick and triplet drills he includes ("Remember, speed kills..."), and makes the whole thing seem fun. It is.

Robin Tolleason

SELF-PUBLISHED DRUM BOOKS

The stated premise behind John G. Hvasta's *New Age Drumset Movement* (spiral-bound, \$19.95) is "to help drumset players all over the world to accomplish moving with either side of their body in any direction, using any limb, around the drumset." The author accomplishes this with a series of exercises that use numbers to represent "targets," angles, and motions. A "target" is one of the components of the drumset (e.g., 1 is the snare drum, 2 is the high tom, 5 is the hi-hats, etc.). There are three arm angles, which are difficult to explain in words but are represented by drawings in the book. There are also three motions—arm, hand, and finger—illustrated with drawings. (Despite the stated goal to develop the ability to move around the kit with "any limb," the exercises are obviously just for the two arms.) Once you've memorized the targets, angles, and motions, you can proceed to 85 pages of exercises written entirely with numbers, such as "2., 3., 1. move to 3., 2., 2.," which roughly translates to "hit the small tom with the third arm angle and an arm movement, and then move to the middle tom with the second arm angle and a hand movement." The last 12 pages of the book provide suggested rhythms and foot patterns that can be used with the movement exercises.

Private teachers will appreciate Frank Heye's *Schedule Book For Private Teachers* (spiral-bound, \$8.95). The book provides grids that can be used to keep track of students' lesson times by month and day of the week, with columns in which you can record payments, attendance, make-ups, or other relevant info of your choice. There is also a page on which you can keep track of quarterly income (so you can figure those income-tax estimates) and yearly income. The book also contains several pages on which you can record students' names, addresses, phone numbers, and parents' names. Since you write in all of the dates yourself, the book can easily be adapted to a fiscal year rather than a calendar year, if that is relevant to your situation.

Rick Mattingly



Neil Peart • Giovanni Hidalgo • Elvin Jones Art Blakey • Changuito • Dave Weckl

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José Luis Quintana, better known as Changuito, is one of Latin music's most innovative drummer/percussionists. For nearly 25 years, he was a member of the world-renowned Cuban group Los Van Van. In this video, Changuito explains and demonstrates his songo inventions on drumset, tumbadoras and timbales. In addition, Changuito demonstrates several other important Cuban rhythmic contributions

such as the conga, pilón, and mozambique.

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**NOTE
SERVICE MUSIC**

Impact Industries

by Rick Van Horn

If you say "Wisconsin" to most people, chances are they'll picture contented cows grazing on idyllic farms and tended by smiling herdsmen of Scandinavian descent whose greatest joy in life is to supply the world with extra-sharp cheddar. What would likely *not* come to their minds would be the concept of Wisconsin as a hotbed of drumming activity.



In one of the ways that Impact "breaks the rules of fibreglassing," they combine a lining material with the fibreglass fabric on their cylindrical molds. The material acts as a mold release, then forms the smooth interior of the drum shell.

Terry Thirion (left) and drum specialist Jon Kittel inspect drum shells prior to the drilling operation.



An extremely thin yet strong and resonant shell is the trademark of Impact drums.

Ah, but let's not forget that Wisconsin is located in the Midwest—the absolute bastion of drum corps. And drum corps participants tend to be a special breed: dedicated, talented, and creative. So it might not be all that surprising that a Wisconsin-born drum corps veteran might parlay those attributes into the creation of a business. Such is the case with Terry Thirion, whose Wausau, Wisconsin-based company, Impact Industries, currently offers drumkits, marching drums and carriers, percussion mallets, plastic cases, and bags.

Born and raised in Milwaukee, Terry was influenced by his older brother, who was extremely active in drum corps. Terry played in his high school marching band, in the national-champion Lake band, and in the Mariner Drum Corps from South Milwaukee. Following high school he played drumkit with a band touring the Midwest hotel circuit. But he tired of the road scene quickly, and entered the University of Wisconsin at La Crosse. A series of unexpected circumstances led him back into drum corps as an instructor—with the LaCrosse Blue Stars from 1967 through 1972, and later with the Wausau Story (both national champions).

It was Terry's concern for the young drummers he instructed that led him into busi-

ness. "I would lose one or two kids every year to back injuries or hernias," he recalls. "The drum companies knew how to make drums, but it seemed like they never really thought about how to carry them. When we first started using marching timpani, the companies equipped them with two shoulder carrying straps that probably put about two hundred pounds on the players' shoulders and lower back."

In conjunction with a design engineer, Terry created a carrier for the marching timpani used by the Blue Stars. The device distributed the weight of the drum more effectively, and was comfortable for the player to wear. Says Terry, "Finally my

kids could make it through a practice without dying."

Terry's initial manufacturing operation was exceptionally small-time. "We really had a grassroots start," says Terry. "And I mean that literally. My wife Carol—who's been a key participant in the business virtually from its inception—helped me paint the first batch of timpani carriers in our back yard on a nice calm day. By the end of the day it got windy and all the grass trimmings blew onto the carriers. We were picking grass out of the paint."

Things picked up when Larry McCormick—then owner of McCormick's Percussion Supply in Chicago—saw Terry's carriers and thought that they might be marketable. However, getting the carriers from Milwaukee to Chicago proved challenging. "We really didn't

was marching one drum or two. I figured out how the sticking would work and why you would put the small drum in the middle for weight distribution. We had the trio custom-made for us by Slingerland. But again, the drums came with no thoughts of a carrier—just two slings. We immediately saw that there had to be a carrier. So we created the first fiberglass vest carrier. It had quick disconnects for the drum, push-button height adjustment, and an easy-on, easy-off design, which we still use today. From the fiberglass vest carrier we then went into aluminum carriers."

From Marching Carriers To Marching Drums

As carriers became stronger, the drum companies started mounting four, and then five drums. "But they still gave no thought

every type of material we could find," he recalls, "including plastics, impregnated cardboard, and even varnished fabrics. It took us three years to end up with the fiberglass shell and the various patents that we now have.

"Our theory was based on the fact that drum corps play out of doors—often on wet, muggy nights, or even in the rain. Traditional wood marching drums wouldn't sound good unless we totally varnished the inside of the drum. So I thought, 'If we're going to plasticize the inside of the drum, why don't we just start with a plastic shell?' But we couldn't find plastic tubes that would work, so we started looking at fiberglass. We wound up with the fabric used for the most expensive fiberglass boats. That fabric is more expensive than other 'industrial' fiberglass, but it

Toms with cutaway designs and Impact's unique "sound holes" are used in marching limp-toms and on some drumkits.



This sizable machine vacuum-forms literally dozens of sizes of lids and bottoms for Impact's plastic cases.

Case sides begin life as flat sheets of plastic. Corners are carefully bent by hand, using a heating element rod.



understand shipping," says Terry. "So I would drive halfway to Chicago, to one of those oasis-style rest stops that go over the expressway. Larry would drive up from Chicago to the other side of the oasis—and we would walk the carriers through the restaurant from one side to the other."

Terry's business started to grow with the development of bass-drum and glockenspiel carriers. Then Terry turned his creativity to a new marching drum configuration. "Some people might argue with me," says Terry, "but I honestly believe that the limp-tom trio as we know it today was my idea. The LaCrosse Blue Stars were the first corps to have trios. Everybody else

to making those drums lighter," says Terry. "The drums were designed by adult engineers who could strap one on and say, 'Oh, this isn't bad.' They forgot that high school and junior high kids are much smaller. But they didn't want to hear about new tooling and all of that. They made wood drums—and always had. Besides, they didn't want shell breakage. Even in those early years of drum corps, we were blowing shells apart because of the tension we were putting on the drums—which was nowhere near today's tension."

When the major drum companies wouldn't make lighter drums, Terry decided to try making them himself. "We tried

gives us the strength, density, and other physical properties we need. It employs a tri-directional weave so that no matter which direction you lay the fabric, you always have the same strength.

"We use a hand-laying process that's very labor-intensive," Terry continues. "We lay the fabric over a cylinder to get our shape, and we come out with a shell that is just about 1/16" thick. I haven't researched this, but I think we probably make the thinnest fiberglass shell in the world. Making a shell that thin took some techniques in fiberglassing that had never been done before. For instance, our cylinder had to handle the heat that results from

the chemical reaction generated during the catalyzing process, as well as the cooling that happens later.

"We also had to figure out a way to make the inside and the outside of the shell look good at the same time," Terry adds, "because I didn't want to have to deal with extra operations of spraying inside or outside, or doing a lot of sanding or machining work like they do on wood shells. When our shell comes off the mandrel, it's ready to be a drum at that point—except for the color. And for that we use traditional plastic drum coverings. We could put color over the fiberglass if we wanted to. But when you add color or sparkle to fiberglass, it's actually not in the glass fabric. It's in an extra layer called a gel coat. That coating would add weight, cost, and manu-

is almost a quarter of an inch thick. We are not too concerned with weight on that drum because even if we matched everybody else we'd only be at seventeen pounds. That is easy for someone to carry, since it's only fourteen inches away from your body. We do offer a lightweight snare drum that weighs twelve pounds. That drum mainly goes into the junior-high market, where they don't put tons of tension on it.

"The major problem we had was in the bass drums, timp-tom trios, quads, and quints," Terry continues. "That's where most of the weight is. We do use the thin shell on bass drums—but we put aluminum reinforcement plates underneath the lugs to take care of the tension from the heads and the hardware. We are still reducing the

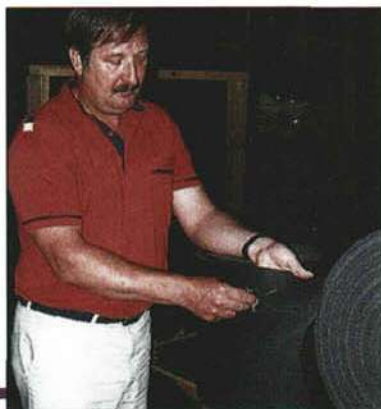
and colors different from everyone else's. We already had extremely loud single-headed drums on our marching timp-tom setups. And they featured our "sound hole" cut into the front of each shell—which gets the volume off that top head real quick. So after about two years in the marching market we tried putting the same type of toms on a drumkit. We were pleasantly surprised as to how they sounded—and we thought they looked pretty neat, too. We figured we'd add some red and blue prism finishes, display the drums at the NAMM show [America's largest music-products trade show], and just knock everybody out."

At that first NAMM show the Impact drumkit did attract a lot of attention—but not the kind that Terry expected. "There was a lot of curiosity—and some gig-



Assembly of all Impact cases—like this timp-tom model—is also done by hand.

Terry Thirion demonstrates how the nylon-covered polyfoam used to line many of Impact's cases resists snagging or ripping.



A look inside a finished tom-tom case

facturing time—and I'm not sure it would be as attractive as the drum finishes that are out there. If an accepted material and look is already available, what's the point?"

Earlier, Terry talked about the physical properties required of a marching drum, and described how wood shells up to 3/8" thick sometimes exploded under the high tension. How did Impact create a fiberglass shell that could withstand such pressures? "We had to look at the thickness of our shell and determine what we had to do to reinforce it for each drum application," replies Terry. "On our higher-end snare drum we double the thickness of the fiberglass and add another material, so the shell

weight of the drum by 50%.

"We have two different lines of timp-toms. One is thin-shelled and super-light. It uses Remo PTSheads, which takes a lot of the weight out of the head area because it eliminates counterhoops. For the higher-end drums we use a double thickness of fiberglass to accommodate conventional heads and hoops."

From Marching Drums To Drumkits

It's not surprising that Impact's success with marching drums would lead them into the area of drumkits. Says Terry, "We thought that drummers—especially rock 'n' rollers—might want kits with shapes

gling—about how our drums looked and why that hole was in the drum. One person put it on his head and thought it was a Darth Vader helmet. Other drummers just figured it was a handle. We came home from that show with only one sale. The hard lesson was that maybe people really didn't want drums that looked different. I found out that the bulk of the market tends to be in black or white drums in conventional sizes and with two heads—which is why most of the drum companies who came out with extreme models are no longer around. Fortunately, we are—because we quickly began offering both traditional-style drums and our original shapes. So drummers can either have what

they're used to or go for the single-headed drum with the cutouts. A lot of show bands do like the single-headed design because it draws attention to their drummer and to the band. We still tend to make about 25% of our sales in that design."

Part of the initial skepticism that Impact drums faced had to do with the thinness of their fiberglass shells, which some drummers perceived as being—to put it bluntly—cheap. But Terry is quick to correct this impression. "Our drums sound as good as they do because of that thin shell. Drummers who have played a lot of drums over the years will tell you that the best-sounding drums have been the thin-shelled ones—like a lot of the 3-ply shells that were out there originally. When heavy rock got started those drums were experiencing shell failure from being hit so hard. So some companies went to 8- or 9-ply shells. It was also something 'new' to sell. But the drums sure were heavy. And with that much weight and thickness, the shell couldn't work like it should, so everything came off choked all the time.

"Admittedly," Terry continues, "when

we started making marching drums, our goal was to take weight off of the kids' shoulders. But we wanted to have good-sounding drums at the same time. So after we made our first marching drums, we did a sound comparison between our snare drum and the top snare drums from Ludwig and Slingerland. The drum instructor for the Cavaliers tuned all three of them the same. We had professional judges—with their backs to the drums while they were played—trying to pick out which drum was the best. Ours consistently came in number one or number two—never number three. Basically, all three drums sounded good; you couldn't really tell the difference between them. But ours was half the weight—and quite a bit less money. That was a major day in our drum-making business."

Another "major day" for Impact came with their association with their first drumset endorser, Jon "Bermuda" Schwartz (drummer for "Weird Al" Yankovic). "Bermuda was one of the first believers in Impact," says Terry. "He has been just tremendous at keeping us confident. I know

we have a market in the marching drum business, but I'm not always sure we should be in the rock 'n' roll part of it. Bermuda's exposure—and all the gold records on which he's played our drums—really does help to keep me going.

"We break a lot of rules as far as the design of our products," Terry continues. "But the proof is in the pudding. When we make a sale, we get a one-on-one relationship going with the customer. I tell each one, 'After you've played your drums for a month, call me and tell me what you think.' Because I want to know. It's all been coming back: 'Amazing,' 'Incredible.' And I've heard some great stories. One guy's drum was stolen in New York and thrown over a fence during winter. He found it four months later and washed it off in the shower—and it sounded as good as new. Another guy had his drumset smashed between a grand piano and a brick wall on the stage. They pulled the piano off the wall and the drums just popped back to their original shape. We hear this stuff all the time."

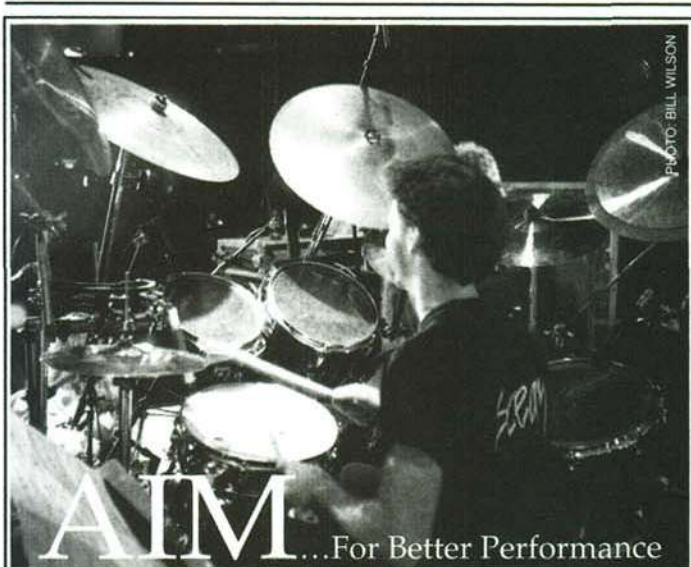


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—Bermuda Schwartz with "Weird Al" Yankovic

For a catalog on Impact's drums & cases, send \$2 to:
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Impact Cases

Impact went to its first NAMM shows with drums, carriers, and aluminum-handled marching percussion mallets (which still remain a major element of their line). But the unusual design of their drums presented potential buyers with a problem. "We had power toms before anyone else had power toms," laughs Terry. "Every rack tom was 13" deep and our floor tom was 20" deep. Drummers who were buying our drums couldn't find cases for them. So we began to think about making our own cases. We were already molding hats for marching bands out of plastic, so the process wasn't totally foreign to us. So in the late '80s we just bought bigger equipment in order to make cases for up to 30"

onto the side of the shell is that you end up with double wall thickness in the corner areas at the bottom of the case. When you put the lid on the top of the case you end up with double thickness there, too. If you happen to drop the case or ram it into a door, it is usually going to hit on that corner area. Our double thickness offers more protection than the single thickness you would get on a one-piece molded case."

What about the possibility of the case sections coming apart under high-stress use? "The aluminum rivets we use don't rust, don't change size, and don't pull out," says Terry. "So the bottom won't fall off when you pick the case up. We've never seen a bottom actually fall off a case due to rivet failure."

different types of foam linings. One is a high-density foam made of the same material used on golf balls. "It's very tough and impervious to water," says Terry. "We put that in all the marching cases because we know they'll be sitting outside a lot. We don't want to have a soft polyfoam that can become a sponge if the kids don't put the cover on and it rains. That moisture in the case would damage any of the wood drums that are out there. With our denser foam, kids can just turn the case over and dump the water out. No water is left in the case, because it cannot get through that foam."

"For the drumset market we use conventional polyfoam," Terry continues. "But we add a nylon covering—and I think we're the only ones in the industry doing that. It's

Special saws (costing \$1,000 apiece) are used to cut various fabrics into shapes that will become drum and cymbal bags.



Each bag is carefully sewn together.

A computer-controlled sewing machine attaches straps to cases—creating a box-shaped "X" with exactly the same number of stitches every time—in eight seconds.



bass drums. Since then we have redesigned our cases four times. They're three times as strong now as when they originally came out. We are almost at zero breakage and zero returns. And those we do get back aren't from drummers, in most instances. They usually are damaged by a shipping company. So we're confident that we make a very strong product."

While other plastic cases on the market generally combine a one-piece molded body with a lid, each Impact case is essentially a three-piece assembly: one "lid" that becomes the bottom of the case, another that is the actual lid, and a molded section that forms the "sides" of the case. Why make a case this way? Replies Terry, "The advantage of having the lower 'lid' riveted

Impact's method of case manufacture allows them to have an extremely large selection of models, and also to do custom cases. When an order for a case is received, they simply cut the sides to the right depth and bend them into the correct shape, select the appropriate lids, and assemble the case. Says Terry, "We can give drummers exactly what they need diameter- and height-wise—rather than putting a drum in a case designed to accommodate drums of two or three sizes. That is distinctly against our philosophy. We want that drum tight in the case. We don't want it to be able to go in any direction."

Preventing the drum from moving is only part of how Impact cases protect their contents. The company also employs two

the same material we use on the inside of all our drum bags. We've done all kinds of tests—rubbing the daylight out of the material with various sharp objects—and we can't rip it. We use that covered foam in drumset cases, stand cases, and also our keyboard and electronics cases, where we think the item needs a little more padding. A drum will ride softer on that than on the hard foam. Drumkit players usually don't have to worry about rain getting in their cases because the cases are usually only opened indoors."

Impact's concern with product performance extends even to the selection of adhesives used to attach the foam linings to the cases. "We might use three different kinds of adhesives on any one case,"

explains Terry. "The foam that goes in the bottom and the top of the case has to be held on a little bit stronger—especially in the lid, because that is a completely horizontal surface where the foam can drop off. For the body of the case, we use another adhesive that can be less expensive, because the foam tends to stay in there easier by itself. And then we also use various double-faced tapes to reinforce the edge of the case, where we know the drum can snag when it is being put inside. We want the foam lining to be as secure as the case is strong."

The lids on Impact cases feature chrome edging, which, according to Terry, is both cosmetic and functional. "It provides a nice smooth edge on the cover to grab onto," he says, "so we don't have to worry about someone cutting themselves on a sharp-edged piece of plastic. And it is definitely decorative. We feel real strong about the appearance of our products. We think we have cases that look as good as most peoples' drums."

Terry credits much of the success of Impact cases to his manufacturing force.

"With the bending, riveting, and assembly that we do," he says, "our case-making operation tends to be a little more labor-intensive than those of some other companies. Fortunately we have really good people. Many of our employees have been with us from day one in Wausau. They apply real craftsmanship, and we're fortunate to have people with that work ethic."

Impact Bags

After their cases were introduced, Impact started receiving requests from dealers for drum bags as well. By that time the company had a sporting-goods division, in which one of the products was a fabric-style archery target. "That target involved the same sort of cutting and sewing necessary for bags," says Terry, "so we were fairly well set up to make them. We started with our fleece-lined vinyl Impact line, then the Impact 2 line of padded Cordura bags, and finally the Signature line, which is made of rip-stop Tolex and is heavily padded. The case and bag business just continues to grow for us. Every year we have something new to

show—like the cart bag we recently introduced. And the nice thing about this part of our business is that we can make cases and bags for everyone—even for our drum competitors' drums. We are doing a lot of exporting right now, too. And we OEM cases and/or bags for four different companies."

Today, some twenty years after Impact's first foray into the percussion-equipment market, the company represents one of the most diversified operations in the industry. As Terry Thirion sums it up, "Probably half of our business is in hard-shell cases. That area continues to grow; we've had record leaps recently. Then we probably do 20% in bags, another 20% in drums, and 10% in mallets. And somewhere in there we make a lot of carriers. Not everybody knows our name—yet—but we're confident that that will change soon. In the meantime, we're continuing to expand our world market."



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Drum Triggering

Part 2: Special Triggers

by Mark Parsons

In last month's Electronic Insights we covered standard triggers. Now let's check out some of the more exotic ways to trigger sounds from your acoustic drumset, along with kick drum and cymbal scenarios.

Underneath, On Top, And Inside

A few different manufacturers have come up with ways to temporarily turn your drums into electronic pads. There are pros and cons to each system, as we'll see, but there are also certain attributes they share. First, when you play drums filled with such systems, they'll no longer sound like drums. Instead they'll sound pretty much like any other electronic pad, which is bad if you like hearing an acoustic drum sound when you trigger, but good if you want to practice without making noise (using headphones) or to play in low-volume situations. They will cost a bit more per drum than standard triggers (although not as much as an entire MIDI kit would run).



Concept One Trigger Pad

And, of course, everything will be in the same familiar location (ergonomically speaking) that it always was, and your kit will look the same to the audience.

Let's start with the Undercover series from Concept One Percussion. To install this device you remove the hoop and top head from your drum, place the pad on the shell, then replace the head and hoop, tensioning it to your liking. A short cable goes out the air vent hole to a 1/4" phone jack. Once installed, the whole unit is safely tucked inside the drum and packs up as easily as your kit always did. Of course, when installed the Undercover pad effectively kills all acoustic drum sound, so keep in mind that whenever you want to go back to acoustic drums you'll have to go through the head-removal and re-tuning procedure. But the advantage of these units is that even when you're triggering you'll be playing on real drumheads, tuned to the rebound you prefer. List price is \$139.95 per pad, and size must be specified when ordering.

Concept One also offers their Trigger Pads to sit on top of your drumheads. No mounting hardware is necessary; you simply place the full-diameter pads on your drums and they nestle inside the hoop, with the cable exiting from the edge of the pad (presumably rotated so it's out of your way). The nice thing about this concept (no pun intended) is that when you want to return to your acoustic drum sound all you have to do is unplug the cables, pull the pads off your drums—and voila, you're back



Concept One Undercover Series

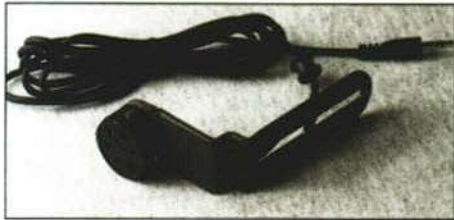
home again in no time.

Like the Undercover series, the Trigger Pads offer a marked reduction in volume when installed. However, unlike the Undercover series, the playing surface isn't a drumhead but a synthetic pad. You'll have to balance this against the quick-change capability and decide which is best for your situation. All Trigger Pads (from 6" to 16", with a 10" pad for kick drums) sell for \$99 each.

Simmons' Streamline Series Pads also sit atop your drumheads. They greatly reduce the actual playing volume (for practice), and they feature rapid conversion between acoustic and electronic drumming. Rather than offering a trigger pad for the kick drum, however, Simmons uses a smaller beater contact trigger that we'll examine shortly. Streamline Series Pads are available from 8" to 16", ranging in price from \$78 to \$99.

How about a triggering system that doesn't dampen the drum, is pretty much invisible in use, stays safely tucked out of the way, and once installed can be left installed with no detriment to the sound of

your drums? This pretty much describes the triggers available from Mystique Sound Solutions, which mount inside of your drums. For detailed info you can check out the review in the July '95 MD, but basic-



Mystique J-5000



Mystique J-7000

ly these devices mount inside the shell using the existing tension casing screws, and because the triggering element is positioned close to—but not touching—the underside of the head, they don't interfere with the sound of the drum. Mystique makes triggers for snares (the J-3000), toms (J-5000), and bass drums (J-7000), all listing for \$59 each, along with a snake assembly (the J-2000: \$129) that carries signals from up to eight triggers to your module in one convenient cable.

Bass Drums

A bass drum is really just a big tom, so why can't we just stick on a typical tom trigger and be done with it? Well, you can, but there are a few things to be aware of. Even though a kick drum may be constructed similarly to a tom, it's utilized in a different fashion. You have to take those differences into account when considering triggering from it.

First of all, a kick drum is typically tensioned much looser than any other drum—often to the point of being nearly "flopped out." Couple this with the fact that it usually receives a much harder impact than the other drums in your kit, and it's easy to see that the potential for "double triggering" exists. (This was mentioned last month in regards to large toms.)

Fortunately, some of the other attributes

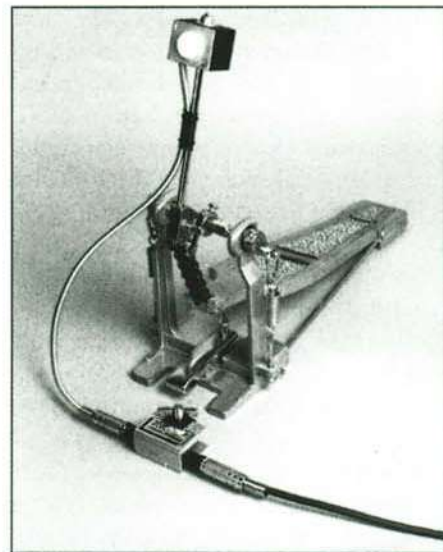
of kick drums can help mitigate this situation. For example, kick drums are usually muffled somewhat more than toms. If you're using a head-mounted trigger, you can take advantage of this by placing the trigger on the lower quadrant of the head (where the muffling usually resides). The dampening in this area will go a long way to help reduce the double-triggering problem.

Also, the bass drum is the only drum that gets hit in the exact same spot each time, and with a beater instead of a stick. This opens up two additional possibilities: You can mount a trigger on the beater contact spot, or you can mount it on the beater. And finally, because a bass drum utilizes a pedal, the option exists to incorporate a trigger in the pedal itself. Manufacturers have designed bass drum triggers around each of the above scenarios, so let's look at some representative samples.

From the folks at Trigger Perfect comes the 250 BD. This enclosed, hoop-mounted trigger is similar to their 270 AP trigger (described last month), except that it's designed specifically for bass drums. It slides onto the batter-side hoop and gets locked down at the correct distance to make contact with the head. As with the 210 AP, that contact area is very small. The trigger also features an onboard adjustable sensitivity control. List price is \$89.95.

K&K Sound Systems generally gives you a choice of different methods with which to tackle any given application, and their approach to kick triggering is no exception. Besides their Kick Star (a head-mounted bass drum trigger that lists for \$38) they also make the Kick Guard (\$108). This product is unique in that it consists of a complete beater assembly with the trigger built into the head of the beater. This should improve accuracy, since the only time the trigger can send a signal to the module is when it impacts the batter head, regardless of extraneous noises from the other drums in your set. On the other hand, a beater is like a drumstick in that its size, weight, sound, and response can have a major effect on the feel of playing the instrument. It has to feel comfortable from a playing point of view first, and this can only be ascertained through trying it for yourself.

Besides their internal triggers, Mystique Sound Solutions also offers the J-1000



K&K Kick Guard

bass drum trigger, which mounts in the center of the batter head and is supposed to be hit by the beater. This trigger is broad enough to work with double pedals and should track very well (meaning that a direct impact from a beater—even a soft



Mystique J-1000

hit—should register positively), but it will change the sound of your kick somewhat. Again, it's a matter of personal preference and you should check it out for yourself. The J-1000 sells for \$59.

Some manufacturers of MIDI kits offer small triggers that fit into the hoop clamp of conventional pedals, effectively turning them into electronic pedals. Notable among these is Roland's KD-5 and the ST7000 Stealth from S&S Industries. Drum Workshop's EP-1 pedal comes already



DW EP-1 Electronic Pedal

converted to this configuration. All of these units have a common drawback: In the electronic mode (trigger in clamp, beater reversed) they won't function as an acoustic pedal. One company—Engineered Percussion—has overcome this situation by creating a hybrid design known as the Axis-Epedal.

The Axis-E(\$379) is a conventional pedal that also incorporates a triggering element (protected in a case) that is struck by a spring-loaded "detonator" pin. The point of pin/trigger contact during pedal travel is "tunable," allowing you to adjust it so that the trigger sends a signal to the module at the same time the beater hits the head, providing very accurate timing. Additionally, this system is pretty much immune to false triggering and double triggering due to the fact that the sensing mechanism itself operates independently of any vibrations (i.e., sounds) caused by your acoustic drums. And, if you so desire, you can reconfigure it to operate as a purely electronic pedal. Yes, it's probably the most expensive triggering device mentioned here, but besides a spot-on trigger

you also get a world-class bass drum pedal. So if you're getting into triggering and you've been considering a pedal upgrade, you should investigate this product further.

Mic's As Triggers

I've seen people try to trigger from microphones, and I've even tried it myself once or twice. My short recommendation is: Don't bother. Yes, you can get it to work after a fashion, but it's generally so inaccurate and prone to false triggering as to be more bother than it's worth.

You might ask, "But I've already got mic's on all my drums. Can't I just route the signals to a drum module? It sounds logical enough, but consider this: When miking your kit, if a little snare sound leaks into a tom mic' (which almost inevitably happens), it's not a big deal. Also, unlike triggers, drum mic's are designed to get the best sound from each drum, not simply the most isolated signal possible. But to trigger with mic's you should subserve everything to isolation: Pull off the bottom head, wrap the mic' in foam and shove it up inside the drum, brutally gate it so only a hit on that

particular drum triggers the module, EQ the signal so it's all stick attack and no decay, heavily damp the drum to get rid of any excess resonance.... You get the picture. (It's true that engineers are sometimes required to replace recorded drum tracks with samples, but they have tools and techniques at their disposal that aren't available in a live situation. And even then the process is fraught with compromise and pain.)


What About Cymbals?

The main problem with triggering from real cymbals is the sustained vibration that continues after the cymbal is struck. The trigger sees this as a constant sound, and as a result it sends a stream of false trigger signals to the module. If you really wanted to trigger from a cymbal you could try dampening the cymbal heavily, placing a trigger on the underside of the bell, and then playing on the top of the bell. You'd also have to adjust your module to get a quick "cut-off time (similar to a gate) in an attempt to eliminate further over-ring. By this time you've effectively turned your cymbal into



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an electronic pad with no musical playing qualities of its own, so what's the point?

If you're simply set on triggering cymbal sounds, you can use any manufacturer's electronic drum pads. Or, for a somewhat more realistic look and feel, you can use electronic cymbals available from Electronic Percussion Systems (Visu-Lite), Abel Industries, Yamaha, and others. If, on the other hand, you wish to play your real cymbals along with your trigger-equipped acoustic drums, there are a few approaches you can take depending on the size of the venue. Here are some recommendations:

For smaller rooms, do nothing. In any room where you can use an unmiked acoustic drumset, you can use unmiked cymbals. Most cymbals have more than enough "cut" to keep up with triggered drum sounds in a small room—provided that the overall band volume isn't out of control. (Remember, we're talking about the type of gig where you could normally use an unmiked kit.)

In somewhat larger rooms, consider miking the hi-hats. As the volume increases and the room expands, the hats are usually the

first cymbals to get lost in the mix, and miking them is a simple endeavor requiring one microphone and one stand. Just be sure to balance your levels during the sound check.

For big rooms or outdoor gigs, run a mic' on the hats and one or two overhead. This is what most of the big acts who use drum triggering do on tour, and it's not very difficult. (For more detailed info on miking drums on stage see the Oct. '94 issue of MD.) Again, be sure to take a few minutes and balance the miked cymbals with the triggered drum sounds. The combination of these sounds will give you the great feeling of playing real drums and cymbals while letting you project whatever drum sound you wish to your audience.

Next month: modules. Till then, happy drumming!

Manufacturers Directory

Here's a contact list for companies mentioned in this article:

Abel Industries, P.O. Box 187, Evanston, WY 82931, (307) 789-6909

Concept One Percussion, P.O. Box 244, DeSoto, WI 54624, (800) 822-9602

Drum Workshop, 101 Bernoulli Circle, Oxnard, CA 93030, (805) 485-6999

Electronic Percussion Systems, 220 6th Ave. S., St. Cloud, MN 56301, (612) 259-1840

Engineered Percussion, 24416 S. Main St. #310, Carson, CA 90745, (310) 549-1171

K&K Sound Systems, 1260 Anderson Ave., Coos Bay, OR 97342, (503) 267-4285

Mystique Sound Solutions, 345 Atwater St. St. Paul, MN 55117, (612) 488-1560

RolandCorp US, 7200 Dominion Circle, Los Angeles, CA 90040-3647, (213) 685-5141

S&S Industries, 2909 Langford Rd., Bldg. B, Suite 900, Norcross, GA 30071-1546, (770) 300-0707

Simmons Services, 6573 Neddy Ave., West Hills, CA 91307, (818) 887-6708

Trigger Perfect, P.O. Box 295, Tualatin, OR 97062, (800) 487-9927

Yamaha Corp. of America, 6600 Orangethorpe Ave., Buena Park, CA (800) 322-4322



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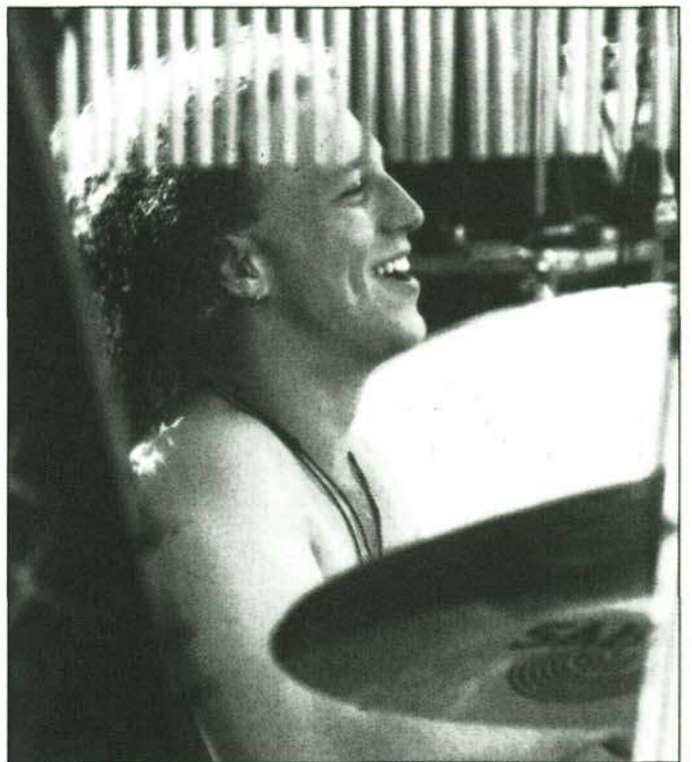


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Bringing Your Vintage Set Into The '90s

by Ron Hefner

There is no doubt that vintage drums have become big in the '90s. Not only are vintage retailers doing a brisk business, but manufacturers are jumping on the bandwagon too, touting new products that follow the classic designs of the past. It would seem that in the world of drums, "everything old is new again."

The reasons for this phenomenon are numerous. First and foremost, many drummers feel that older drums have a more pleasing timbre or tonality, which is a result of the aging process in the wood. Aesthetically, a lot of people like the vintage look, with its classic lines and simplicity. And there is a historical aspect to a vintage instrument that colors a musician's attitude when playing it.

I'm sure there are many *MD* readers who, like me, grew up playing on sets whose current "vintage" value actually exceeds their original retail price. A lot of us are now kicking ourselves for selling or trading those sets for something newer. We didn't have the foresight to realize that there would someday be a "retro" trend. In fact, when I was starting out as a player, old drumsets were practically valueless; everybody wanted the newest gear.

Those of us born before, let's say, 1960, have probably logged a lot of hours playing on those old sets, and we have a pretty clear view of their assets, as well as their limitations. Younger players interested in buying a vintage set, however, are likely to encounter some surprises. Today's modern drumkit is quite user-friendly, with strong molded shells designed for specific sound applications, fine bearing edges, and heavy-duty hardware and fittings with memory locks and nearly infinite adjustment capability. The vintage predecessors to the modern kit had virtually *none* of these features. Therefore, here are some tips for the uninitiated on how to update that vintage treasure for modern (read: higher volume and impact) applications.

Shells

The wooden shells on vintage drums were made quite differently from today's shells. Although some companies were using a molded shell by the 1960s, most older drums used a thin, steam-bent shell, usually made from mahogany or maple with a "filler" ply in the middle. The result was a drum with lots of resonance and overtones, but which would tend to "cancel" its own vibrations when struck hard.

While lighter-touch players don't have to worry about this too

much, drummers playing in heavily amplified situations are definitely going to notice this phenomenon of "shell shock," in which that nice vintage tone turns into a dead-sounding slap when the drum is struck hard. A couple of things can be done about this. First, it's probably a good idea to use heavier drumheads instead of the light- to medium-weight ones installed stock from the factory. A heavier head will bear more of the "burden" and will prevent the shell from having to absorb so much of the impact. Back in the '60s, "black dot" and, later, *Pinstripe* heads became popular for this exact reason.

Second, check out the bearing edges on your vintage set and you'll see that they are probably pretty rounded. This created a nice, mellow tone—and transferred a great deal of vibration into the shell. When a drum like this is hit hard, the shell is going to cringe in protest! The solution here, although it will entail some expense, is to have the edges "sharpened" by a drum technician. A sharper edge will increase vibratory response in the head, resulting in more resonance, and it will transmit less vibration into the shell itself, allowing the shell to act as more of a resonating chamber. As a bonus, a sharper edge will also increase the drum's sensitivity.

Another thing to remember about old-style shells is that they are fragile; good protective cases are a must. Also, an old shell doesn't like extreme temperature and humidity changes. That thin piece of plywood spends its whole life wanting to return to its original flat shape because of the bending technique used to make it. If it is exposed to the wrong kind of atmospheric elements, the wood will expand or contract and might go out of round. Try to keep the drums in an environment that is as climate-controlled as possible.

Fittings

The fittings on older drums were the bane of road drummers and one-night players. Most of the castings, which held "disappearing" spurs, tom arms, and floor tom legs, had the threads tapped directly into them to receive the wing screw. Since cast metal is soft, eventually the threads would become stripped. You could remedy this problem by installing up-to-date fittings but, as any collector will tell you, this will diminish the "vintage" value of the set.

Your neighborhood auto parts store has the solution: hose clamps. Put them on the spurs, tom legs, or tom holder L-arms, right beneath where they fit into the casting. This will take some of the strain off the fitting so you won't have to crank the screw down too tight. Your spurs will no longer "disappear" and you'll have to remove them from the drum when you pack up—but it's worth the trouble. Also, the hose clamps will serve as memory locks. Another helpful item is a hoop-mounted bass drum anchor,

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which takes the weight off the spurs (and keeps that lightweight, 3-ply bass drum from flying off the bandstand!).

Speaking of fittings, where are those annoying rattles coming from? Probably the lugs, which have springs in them to keep pressure on the tension screw. Remove them from the shells and pack them with cotton. The other likely culprits are the internal tone controls in the toms and snare. All of the companies used them—and they rattled when disengaged. If you don't want to remove them, which leaves nasty-looking holes in the shells, wrap them with rubber bands or tape.

Snare Drums

Many drummers will opt for a vintage snare drum to augment their set. Wooden snares, in particular, may need some improvement. They have a beautiful tone, but often their snare response leaves something to be desired. This is usually due to the aforementioned rounded edges, and to the very deep snare beds found on most older drums. The deep bed causes a "dip" in the snare head that precludes achieving a crisp snare response, no matter how much you tighten the snares (and tightening them too

much puts "strain" on old strainers). As with the edges, enlisting the aid of a good drum tech to reshape the snare beds can give a whole new life to an old drum.

You may also find the strainer to be somewhat fiddly and temperamental, but you probably don't want to update it, for the reasons already mentioned. Instead, look for vintage dealers who carry original replacements. Also, some people are now making "reproduction" parts for old strainers—like the infamous lever on the old Gretsch Micro-Sensitive and parts for old Ludwig Super Sensitive. I predict that this kind of manufacturing will become more prevalent as more drummers jump on the vintage bandwagon.

Stands

Most old stands are simply too wimpy for modern applications. (Actually, this was the case in the old days, too. I saw stagehands for Keith Moon, Sonny Payne, and many other drummers nailing cymbal stands and hi-hat stands to wooden stages to steady them for the upcoming assault.) Still, old stands do have their appeal. They're light, easy to "schlepp," and do add to the authenticity of a vintage set. Peruse the inventory lists of vintage drum dealers and you'll see that old stands are in great demand.

Still, old stands had the same problem as drum fittings—the wing screws were threaded right into the metal, and it was just a matter of time until they stripped out. To avoid this, break out the hose clamps again and affix them to the rods and tubes so you don't have to rely on that wing screw to prevent slippage. For obvious reasons, hose clamps are an absolute must on old hi-hat stands.

As for the old drum stools, you will definitely relegate them to the practice room. Only a masochist would sit through a four-hour gig on one of those wobbly things, with their precarious height clamps and thin seat padding. (Premier used to make one with a wooden seat—ouch!)

A Labor Of Love

There is something undeniably cool about playing on a beautifully restored vintage drumset. To me, it's akin to driving a classic car. Thanks to the maintenance you've done on it, it performs beautifully and draws admiring glances from onlookers. Like those old car freaks who spend hours in their driveways waxing their '57 Chevys, you'll find yourself polishing the chrome and cleaning the shells more often than usual. And, unlike me, you won't be sitting around in later years pining for that old set you sold off. You'll still be playing it!

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Gregg Bissonette is a member of the
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"As a young kid I was really into being in different 'clubs' with my friends. As a big kid, what could be cooler than being a member of a 'club' or society of percussionists from all over the world! Whether you are a little kid or a big kid, I urge you to join PAS and to be forever a student of the drum."

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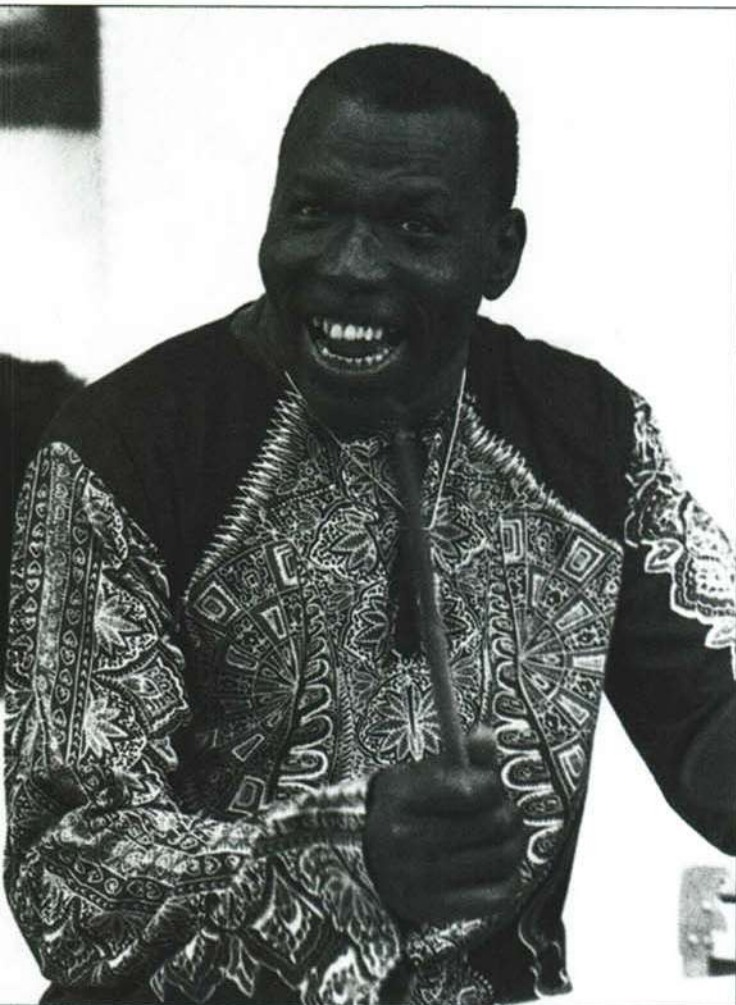
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Elvin Jones

Part 1: 1948 to 1964

by Mark Griffith

Elvin Jones didn't create jazz drumming. He didn't even define it. What he did was change it—drastically, and forever. Elvin has taken the polyrhythmic fire that Art Blakey introduced, and has stoked that fire continuously—to the point that it's now a raging inferno that burns brightly every time he sits behind a drumset. However, Elvin's contribution to jazz drumming goes far beyond "the typical Elvin stuff." His brash playing, his volcanic endings, his musicality, and his leadership have been just as influential. Let's examine the long career of Elvin Jones.

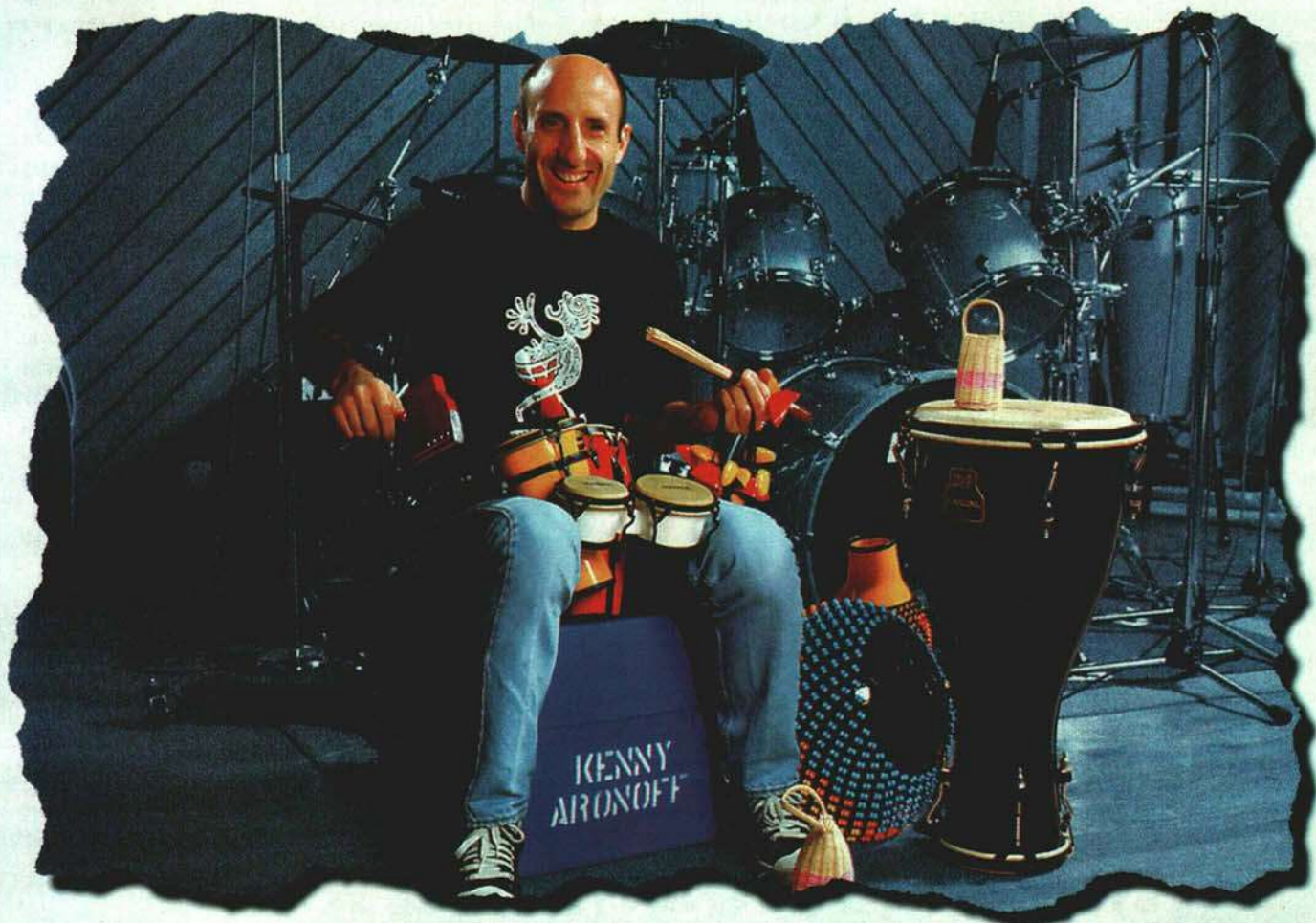


Elvin hit the jazz scene in the late 1940s. His first recordings were made in 1948 on a date co-led by his brother Thad Jones and saxophonist Billy Mitchell. These recordings lay in obscurity for a long time, but they are now available on a Savoy compilation called *Swing Not Spring*. While Elvin sounds vastly different on these cuts from how he would sound in the '60s, you can hear the distinct beginnings of his special drumming style. From the beginning of the first tune you can hear the Blakey influence, with Elvin playing a nasty shuffling backbeat. You later hear him stretching his triplets a bit in a short solo. Elvin plays brushes on the next two tunes, and even at this young age he gets a great sound with them. On the song "The Zec," Elvin sounds very bebop-ish, dropping lots of "bombs." Behind the tune's piano solo, Elvin rides his half-closed hi-hats a la Papa Jo Jones, while during his solo he incorporates many ideas that we now associate strictly with bebop and the great Max Roach. There are only four songs on this disc that feature Elvin's drumming. One of the other drummers is 1950s great Stan Levey, and it's quite interesting to compare Elvin's drumming to Stan's. Levey is a good representation of how many of the best drummers of that era sounded. When you compare Levey's drumming to Elvin's—especially on the tune "Compulsary"—you can really hear how different Elvin sounded, even in the late 1940s. This is a fascinating CD.

Elvin played in trombonist J.J. Johnson's band for a while, making one complete record (*Dial J.J. 5*), appearing on others, and touring extensively. But his first big gig was with Sonny Rollins. Together they made a masterful live recording (now released as two CDs) called *A Night At The Village Vanguard, Vols. 1 and 2*. The instrumentation that Rollins used (tenor sax, bass, and drums), as well as Rollins' own experimental attitude, afforded Elvin the space to stretch, take chances, and evolve. And Elvin took lots of chances. For example, many of the "fours" that Elvin took go a little long (resolving during the first bar of Rollins' four bars), giving their four-bar exchanges a unique, overlapping quality. During Elvin's extended solo on "What Is This Thing Called Love," Elvin approaches—yet falls a little short of—the rolling-triplet, freight-train feeling that he later achieved while playing with John Coltrane. Listen to Elvin's brush sound again (and his brash solo) on "Softly As A Morning Sunrise (take 2)." Notice the power and the thickness of the sound that Elvin gets with a pair of brushes. Elvin could also be very sensitive and subtle, as heard on "I Can't Get Started." Both volumes of *A Night At The Village Vanguard* are must-haves for any drummer.

It's interesting to compare the way that Elvin played with Sonny Rollins to the way that Philly Joe Jones played on Newk's Time,

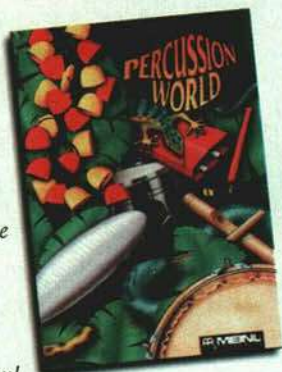
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recorded just two months earlier. When Elvin was first finding success in the '50s, Philly Joe was the standard in jazz drumming—and the most popular drummer on the jazz scene. For a more direct comparison between the two, listen to the recording they did together in 1964. On this recording, appropriately called *Together!*, Elvin and Philly Joe play together, trade, and complement each other. It's a unique listening experience.

Another chance to compare Elvin with other great drummers is on *Gretsch Drum Night At Birdland*, recorded in 1960. Elvin, Philly Joe, Art Blakey, and Charlie Persip play together, creating a late-'50s drumming sampler. The four drumming giants trade solos and ideas while playing with an all-star band. Also listen to the concept record recorded in 1957 called *The Jones Boys*. On this recording (on which all the musicians have the last name of Jones), Papa Jo and Elvin alternate cuts. It is an interesting record, considering the two vastly different styles.

In 1957 Elvin recorded a very important album. While on tour with J.J. Johnson, Johnson's rhythm section made a recording—and the Tommy Flanagan Trio was born. This recording has since resurfaced with many

Tracking Them Down

Here's a list of the albums mentioned in this month's column, including label and catalog information. Following the list are several sources you might want to check for hard-to-find releases.

Various Artists: *Swing Not Spring*, Savoy SV-0188. **Tommy Flanagan:** *In Stockholm 1957*, Dragon DRLP 87; *Eclipse*, Inner City IC3009; *Super Session With Red Mitchell And Elvin Jones*, Enja CD3059-2. **J.J. Johnson:** *Dial J.J. 5*, Sony SRCS 7130. **Philly Joe Jones & Elvin Jones:** *Together!*, Atlantic 1428. **Various Artists:** *Gretsch Drum Night At Birdland*, Roulette CDP 724382864127; *The Jones Boys*, Everest FS270. **Sonny Rollins:** *A Night At The Village Vanguard, Vol. 1*, Blue Note CDP7465172, and *Vol. 2*, Blue Note CDP 7465182. **Gil Evans:** *Great Jazz Standards*, Pacific Jazz CDP 7468562; *Out Of The Cool*, Impulse MCAD-5653; *Individualism Of Gil Evans*, Verve 833 804-2. **McCoy Tyner:** *Inception/Night Of Ballads And Blues*, Impulse MCAD-42000; *The Real McCoy*, Blue Note CDP7465122. **Freddie Hubbard:** *Ready For Freddie*, Blue Note TOCJ-4085; *Blue Spirits*, Blue Note CDP7841962. **Wayne Shorter:** *Juju*, Blue Note CDP7465142; *Night Dreamer*, Blue Note CDP7841732; *Speak No Evil*, Blue Note CDP7465092. **Joe Henderson:** *Inner Urge*, Blue Note CDP7841892; *In 'N Out*, Blue Note CDP724382915621. **Grant Green:** *Solid*, Blue Note CDP724383358021; *Matador*, Blue Note CDP7844422. **Stan Getz & Bill Evans:** *Stan Getz & Bill Evans*, Verve 833802-2.

Tower Records Mail Order, (800) 648-4844; J&R Music World Mail Order, (800) 221-8180; Audiophile Imports, (410) 628-7601; Third St. Jazz and Rock, (800) 486-8745; Rick Ballard Imports, P.O. Box 5063, Dept DB, Berkeley, CA 94705; Double Time Jazz, P.O. Box 1244, New Albany, IN 47151.

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titles, such as *In Stockholm 1957* (Dragon Records) and *Overseas* (Prestige). To my knowledge it has not appeared on CD, but it is a record that every drummer should own. It is simply one of the ultimate recordings of the brushes. Elvin plays brushes on every cut (including ballads, Latin tunes, fast and medium-fast tunes, and lots of solos), exploring their sound, their applications, and their beauty. This recording is required listening for any serious student of the brushes. Search your local used record stores for this one.

To avoid some confusion, you should know that the bassist on *In Stockholm/Overseas* was Wilbur Little. I mention this because Tommy Flanagan and Elvin recorded together a few times, with different bassists. In 1977, they recorded the quality *Eclypso* with bassist George Mraz. (Elvin plays mostly brushes on this one as well.) They also recorded *Super Session* in 1980, with Red Mitchell on bass, on Enja.

Between 1959 and 1964 Elvin participated in three unique jazz recordings with famed arranger Gil Evans. Evans was making recordings on his own (as well as his famous collaborations with Miles Davis), and he often called on Elvin's drive and energy. These recordings, *Great Jazz Standards*, *The Individualism Of Gil Evans*, and *Out Of The Cool*, did not feature the standard big band instrumentation, which is why Evans' groups were called orchestras, not big bands. These recordings show that Elvin was not only about bravado, volume, and bashing. Yes, Elvin can bash with enough volume to drown out a whole band. However, the Gil Evans recordings (as well as those of the Flanagan Trios) brought out Elvin's sensitivity and profound musicality.

In 1960, what was perhaps the greatest pairing ever of two

musicians took place. After going through many great drummers to complete his quartet, John Coltrane flew Elvin Jones to Denver, Colorado for their first gig. The rest, as they say, is history. The John Coltrane Quartet played, recorded, and evolved until mid-1965; Elvin played with Coltrane until the end of that year. Part two of this article will be devoted to the complete set of recordings that Elvin made while playing with Coltrane (as well as most of his post-Coltrane work).

In 1961 trumpeter Freddie Hubbard recorded for Blue Note Records, and two of his recordings employed the drumming fire of Elvin Jones. Elvin appears on all of *Ready For Freddie*, and on some of *Blue Spirits*. It takes a very intuitive drummer and a highly sensitive musician to support a trumpeter. (I recently found this out through a bad experience on the bandstand.) A jazz drummer cannot support a trumpeter in the same way he or she supports a saxophonist, a guitarist, or a pianist. The trumpet is a unique instrument. Because of its physical constraints and limitations, most trumpet players cannot play extended solos. However, if there ever was a trumpeter who could play extended solos, it's Freddie Hubbard. Combine this with the fact that no one provides a launching pad for a soloist over extended amounts of time like Elvin Jones, and you have the potential for a masterpiece or a monumental disaster. Elvin was required to listen and be ultra-sensitive to what Hubbard needed—and he responded superbly. These two recordings are prime examples of how to play with and support a trumpet player. Elvin combines strength with musical sensitivity, and he helps Hubbard shape his masterpiece recordings.

However well John Coltrane and Elvin Jones were matched,

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Elvin and pianist McCoy Tyner were equally compatible. Tyner knew this, so when it came time for him to record as a leader in 1961, he called Elvin. The recording was called *Inception*, and it has been combined on one CD with McCoy's third release, *Nights Of Ballads And Blues* (featuring the great drummer Lex Humphries). *Inception* was made while Tyner and Jones were in Coltrane's band, and it is a beautiful trio recording.

1964 was a busy year for modern jazz—and for Elvin Jones. He played on six legendary recordings besides his continuing work with the Coltrane quartet. In the span of eight months Elvin played on Wayne Shorter's *Night Dreamer*, *Speak No Evil*, and *Juju*, on Joe Henderson's *Inner Urge* and *In 'N Out*, and on Grant Green's *Solid*. These are all classic recordings. In *'N Out* is a little on the reserved side, while *Solid* has Jones supporting a wide range of soloists. *Juju* is a classic, and has a lot of highlights. The title track features the quasi-Latin, Elvin-ish swing that only he can do. This 6/8 groove can be felt in one, in two, and in six. It is much more of a feeling and a pulse than a beat. "Deluge" is another playground built especially for Elvin. It showcases the slow, loping, triplet-infused swing that is another of his trademarks. Again, the pulse is undeniable. And check out the ending of this song. One aspect of Elvin's drumming that doesn't receive as much attention as some of the others is the fact that the endings he puts on songs are fabulous. While everybody is holding notes, Elvin plays many of his "drumset resolutions" repeatedly. (This is also something he did, with great success, with Coltrane.) "House Of Jade" and "Majong" have Elvin double-timing the tempo, to keep everything swinging at a perfect pace. Wayne Shorter's *Night Dreamer*, *Speak No Evil*,

and *Juju* are three recordings that are closely related and equal in their respective greatness—like three movements of a symphony.

Joe Henderson's *Inner Urge* is also spectacular. It pairs Elvin with McCoy Tyner again, and they prove to be the most authoritative rhythm section in jazz. Tyner and Jones were paired on two more amazing recordings for Blue Note in the '60s: Tyner's *The Real McCoy* and Grant Green's *Matador*. The Real McCoy takes the triumvirate of Joe Henderson, McCoy Tyner, and Elvin Jones one step further. Compare the rolling effect that Elvin achieves on this recording to the recordings with Rollins ten years earlier. This is a truly masterful and timeless work. On *Matador* the rhythm section is just as strong and intense, but at half the volume. (This is a good lesson for young musicians: Intensity doesn't mean volume.) Grant Green's playing called for a different kind of support from that of Shorter, Henderson, Hubbard, or Rollins. Elvin responded to these needs and delivered a wonderfully musical and swinging performance.

Perhaps the most profound example of Elvin changing his approach to fit the music occurred when he recorded Stan Getz & Bill Evans. This self-titled recording paired Elvin with two of the most gentle—yet undeniably strong—musicians in jazz. Elvin's response is perfect, and the music flows effortlessly.

In part two of this article we'll examine the vast number of recordings that Elvin did with Coltrane, more of his late-'60s freelance work, his own recordings and more recent freelance work, and a surprise. There is much more to come.



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Mark Morse



Twenty-eight-year-old Mark Morse is one of the most "in-demand" drummer/percussionists in the Minneapolis, Minnesota area. A former student of Marv Dahlgren, Elliot Fine, Steve Houghton, Gordy Knudtson, and Ed Soph (and currently of Gary Chaffee), Mark is known for his diversity, time, and taste. And his demo tape reveals him to be no slouch in the creativity and technique departments, either.

Since receiving his percussion performance degree from Gustavus Adolphus College, Mark has performed with Tonight Show bandmembers Bruce Paulson and Tom Peterson, along with Dick Oatts of Flim & the BB's, L.A. vocalist Mike Campbell, and Columbia recording artist Tony Sandier (of Sandier & Young). He can currently be heard freelancing around Minneapolis with Wildlife, or with his own band Morse Code.

Besides being a dynamic and versatile player, Mark is also an active educator, having recently joined the faculties of Gustavus Adolphus College and Music Tech. He specializes in electronic drums & percussion, and in computers & music. His gear includes a Yamaha Recording Custom kit, Pearl and Gretsch snares, Zildjian and Sabian cymbals, a Roland Octapad, Yamaha triggers, and LP percussion.

Mark cites Tony Williams, Vinnie Colaiuta, Jeff Porcaro, Simon Phillips, Jack DeJohnette, Roy Haynes, and Elvin Jones as major influences. His goals, he says, are "to continue teaching at the collegiate level, to perform with national acts, to write and record original music, to build a session client base, and to make a living making music!"

If you'd like to appear in *On The Move*, send us an audio or video cassette of your best work (preferably both solo and with a band) on three or four songs, along with a brief bio sketch and a high-quality color or black & white close-up photo. (Polaroids are not acceptable. Photos will not be paid for nor credited.) The bio sketch

David Northrup

David Northrup has played drums since the fifth grade, but attending a concert by Pink Floyd guitarist David Gilmore at the age of sixteen is what motivated him towards a drumming career. "I was watching the drummer in particular," says David. "I decided right then and there that that was what I wanted to do." Following that concert David bought Gilmore's album *About Face*—with Jeff Porcaro on drums. Porcaro became a major influence on young David, who dreamed of someday sharing a record project with Jeff.

The native New York-born teenager studied for several years with performer/teacher/clinicians like Frank Briggs and Wilbey Fletcher. He moved to central Florida in 1990, where he played studio sessions and club dates in the Tampa Bay area. This led to recording and touring with entertainer



Dennis Lee, crossing the country on the club and fair circuit and opening for such artists as Hal Ketchum and Tanya Tucker.

In 1992 David was approached by blues guitarist (and fellow Floridian) Les Dudek to record the title track of Dudek's album

Deeper Shades Of Blue. Dudek had heard David's work on *Blues/R&B Funk* by James Peterson, and thought he might be the guy to complete the album. The other tracks had been recorded by Jeff Porcaro shortly before his passing that year. So, in an ironic way, David's dream came true.

A skilled and versatile player, David continues to do sessions and to play with Dennis Lee and Les Dudek,

employing a Yamaha Power Tour Custom kit, a variety of snare drums, and an arsenal of KAT and Roland electronic gear. "I want to continue to expand my skills as a drummer," he says. "I always keep an open door for any opportunity."

David Randels

David Randels hails from Little Rock, Arkansas, where he has spent the past several years as a first-call drummer with a variety of bands and studio projects. He's played funk with Tragically White, country/rock with Sweat, and alternative rock with Hazynation. He's the house drummer for Rocket Studios, and he's toured with recording artist Robin Lee (who had success with the country version of "Black Velvet"). Over the years he's opened for Sawyer Brown, Eddie Money, the Tubes, the Spin Doctors,

Echo & the Bunnymen, and the Meat Puppets. He lists his current activities as "playing approximately five nights a week in some of Little Rock's finer live

high school band and into the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. "You can't get enough education!" he says. "Drumming hasn't made me a millionaire, but it did pave the way to three college degrees. That's success in itself."

Playing on a Yamaha Recording Custom kit and a Noble & Cooley snare drum (all triggering an Alesis D4 via KAT triggers) and lots of Zildjian cymbals, David's goal is to "land a major tour with a contemporary Christian rock act such as Michael W. Smith, White Heart, Steven Curtis Chapman, or Margaret Becker."



music venues." He also teaches several students. Now thirty-one, David has been drumming since the age of thirteen. His studies took him through

should include your full name and age, along with your playing style(s), influences, current playing situation (band, recording project, free-lance artist, etc.), how often and where you are playing, and what your goals are (recording artist, session player, local career player, etc.). Include any special items of interest pertaining to what

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





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MD Giveaway Winners

Reed Chambers of North Stonington, Connecticut is the winner of a full one-year tuition scholarship (valued at \$11,000) to study at the newly opened Los Angeles Music Academy. Reed's card was drawn from among hundreds sent in response to the L.A.M.A. sweepstakes in the May '96 issue of MD.

Also in the May issue was a giveaway sponsored by Simmons electronic percussion products. First-prize winner **Jody Novak** of Carrollton, Texas won a five-piece Streamline electronic pad kit, two Simbalpads, one Hatmat hi-hat, and two Hexabug triggers (all valued at \$687). Second prize (a five-piece Streamline kit valued at \$450) went to **Edward Haas** of Elk Grove, California, while third prize (a Power Pack triggering system worth \$225) went to **Casey Cusick** of Wakefield, Massachusetts.

Congratulations to all the winners from L.A.M.A., Simmons, and Modern Drummer.

Sixth Annual International Drum Month Planned

November 1996 has been designated as the sixth annual International Drum Month. IDM is a special period in which manufacturers, distributors, and drum- and percussion-product retailers combine their efforts to promote the activity of drumming. It involves special incentives from manufacturers to dealers (which can be taken advantage of by knowledgeable consumers), clinics, giveaways, and other "added attractions." Pro-Mark director of marketing and IDM '96 chairman Pat Brown has announced that this year's International Drum Month activities will expand on the drum industry's five previous annual promotions. It will include tie-ins with major national radio networks, such as "Country Coast-To-Coast," "Z-Rock," and "The Album Network." Also featured will be a national "Meet The Drummer" contest, where individuals may enter a drawing to win an all-expenses-paid trip to attend a concert and meet one of the world's top drum artists merely by visiting their local participating IDM '96 music dealer. Consumers should ask their dealers if they are taking part in IDM. Dealers interested in doing so can contact IDM '96 c/o PMC, 38 West 21st Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10010, tel: (212) 924-9175, fax: (212) 675-3577, e-mail: assnhdq@aol.com.

Zildjian Supports Grammy High School Ensemble Program

As part of its ongoing commitment to music education, the Avedis Zildjian Company provided product support to the 1996 Grammy Ail-American Ensemble program. The program's producer, the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences, selected high school jazz ensemble members from fourteen regions across the

country and flew them to Los Angeles for Grammy-week activities. Those activities included performances at Disneyland's Carnation Gardens Plaza, USC's Bovard Auditorium for the National Grammy In The Schools program, and at the 38th Annual Grammy Awards Nominee reception, as well as the recording of a CD at A&M Recording Studios. Zildjian's contribution to the program included a complete Zildjian cymbal setup and a supply of select hickory drumsticks for each of the high schools represented in the Regional All-Star ensembles. Additionally, two of the All-American Ensemble percussionists were given the opportunity to select a set of cymbals at Zildjian's artist liaison office in Studio City, California.

Indy Quickies

D'Addario (Evans Drumheads) has a new phone number: (516) 439-3300, a new fax number: (516) 439-3333, a new World Wide Web site: www.daddario.com, and a new e-mail address: evans@daddario.com. Additionally, the company will now employ the **HSS division of Hohner** for the distribution of Evans drumheads.

Slug Percussion Products' new web site is: <http://websites.earthlink.net/~slug>; their e-mail address is: slug-percushn@earthlink.net.

Korg USA, Inc. has moved to 316 South Service Road, Melville, NY 11747-3201, tel: (516) 333-9100, fax: (516) 333-9108.

Ayotte Drums of Vancouver, B.C., Canada is expanding its manufacturing facilities with new space dedicated to woodwork-ing operations, finishing, and other aspects of drum building. This expansion is in response to increased demand for drums and drumsticks from Ayotte's rapidly growing worldwide dealer base. The larger factory will allow the company to maintain lead times of only eight weeks on their custom drums.

The **Sabian** cymbal company recently played host to over 300 dealers, drummers, and industry personnel as it celebrated the grand opening of its new 10,000-square-foot facility in Marshfield, Massachusetts. The new office will serve as Sabian's East Coast U.S. service point.

Pro-Mark president **Maury Brochstein** was among the more than 41,000 runners at the prestigious Boston Marathon held this past April 15. Brochstein finished the grueling 26.2 mile course in the top 15% of the field. He plans to run in the New York Marathon later this year.

Endorser News

Virgil Donati is now a Sabian cymbal artist and clinician.

New Aquarian drumhead endorsers include **Michael Palmer** (Garth Brooks), **Ted Parsons** (Prong), **Tyler Stewart** (Barenaked Ladies), **Oblin Burgus** (Gloria Estefan), **Ginger Fish** (Marilyn Manson), **Darren Fair** (Terri Clark), **Rick Ferrusi** (D.O.A.), and **Dave Snyder** (Trouble).

Jimmy DeGrasso (Alice Cooper, Suicidal Tendencies) has joined Pro-Mark's roster of artist endorsers.

Drummers now playing Pork Pie Percussion include **Brain** (Godflesh, Tom Waits), **Byron McMackin** (Pennywise), **Alistar Barden** (Frente!), **Walter Earl** (Sullen), **Aaron Zeidenberg** (April's Motel Room), **Pete Scaturro** (Mutron Studios), **Noah Levy** (Honeydogs, Golden Smog), and **Joey Shuffield** (Fastball).

The following percussion artist/educators are now endorsing Mike Balter Mallets: **Ndugu Chancier**, **Ron Brough** (BYU), **George Frock** (UT-Austin), **Lynn Glassock** (Univ. of No. Carolina), **Ron Keezer** (Univ. of Wisconsin), **Tele Lesbines** (Milwaukee Symphony), **Kristen Shiner-McGuire** (Nazareth College), **Ed Poremba** (Lyric Opera, Chicago), **J.B. Smith** (Arizona State Univ.), and **Larry Snider** (Univ. of Akron).

Drum Fest '96 In Montreal

Drum Fest '96, sponsored by Musician Quebecois (the French-Canadian music magazine) will be held on November 9 and 10, 1996, at the Pierre-Mercure Hall, 300 de Maissonneuve St. East, Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Artists currently confirmed include Dennis Chambers, Tim "Herb" Alexander, Virgil Donati, Ignacio Berroa, Horacio Hernandez, and Jo Jo Mayer, with many more to be added. Tickets for the two-day event are currently on sale at \$50. For ordering information contact Ralph Angelillo at Musician Quebecois, tel: (514) 928-1726, fax: (514) 670-8683.



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Computer Percussion

I work for a computer company that often winds up with outdated and/or defective equipment. In my ongoing quest for found percussion objects, I've discovered that the platters found in computer hard drives make wonderful chimes. Most drives can be disassembled to reveal anywhere from two to four platters per drive. Antique MFM and RLL drives yield large, 5"-diameter disks; more recent IDE and SCSI drives yield 3.5" disks. The disks are metal and can be mounted in traditional wind-chime fashion through their center hole. They produce pleasant, bell-like tones when struck on their edges.

Bill Engebretson
Minneapolis, MN

Bass Drum Impact Pad

Need an impact pad for your bass drum batter head that protects it from abrasion and denting while it adds a mellow, deeper sound? Pick up a roll of strapping tape (the kind with nylon threads woven in lengthwise). Lay short strips of it out on a work surface, crossing one over the other at right angles. You'll want five to seven layers. Cut away the ends, leaving a square of layered tape. Peel it off the table and it's ready to apply. It won't fall off the head, it won't abrade, and it won't wreck your sound!

J. Drago
Chandler, TX

Moderating Bass Drum Volume

I recently played a café gig where volume was a concern. I did without crashes, a ride, or any toms—but I just couldn't go without my kick (a drum I tune low, with very little muffling). Rather than trying to

reduce its volume, I reduced the attack. I attached strips of Velcro to the top and bottom edges of a thick, rectangular piece of cotton cloth, and stuck it to the head where the beater strikes. When the pad is removed, the beater strikes in between the two Velcro strips stuck to the bass drum head, and there is no noticeable damping of the bass drum sound. With the pad stuck on, the attack is removed, but a warm round tone remains—giving the impression of reduced volume. The whole system cost me about \$1!

Cary Dijkhuizen
Vancouver, BC, Canada

Casing The Joint...Er, Car

Thinking about purchasing a new vehicle? Not quite sure if your gear will fit into it? Try bringing along your empty hard-shell cases when you check out potential vehicle choices. Empty cases take up exactly the same space as full ones—but are much easier to arrange while trying to find that "perfect fit."

Brian Mikulich
Denver, CO

Protecting Bass Drum Hoops

Have you ever experienced the problem of your bass drum pedal sliding off the bass drum hoop? Or has your pedal's clamping mechanism damaged the hoop itself? Here's a simple solution.

Cut a small piece of an old rubber bicycle inner tube about 3"x2" in size. As you are about to clamp on your pedal, slide the piece of rubber between the clamp and the top part of the hoop to both secure the pedal's grip and prevent it from damaging the hoop. A larger piece of rubber may be necessary depending upon the space between the hoop and the pedal clamp. If space allows, you can also wrap the rubber around the hoop from top to bottom to protect it even more. This is especially good for metal hoops.

Sergio Uribe
Houston, TX

Simple Sizzle Cymbal System

If you're thinking about trying a "sizzle" sound on any of your cymbals, but you don't want rivets permanently installed and you don't want to invest in a store-bought sizzle accessory, try this: Ask a guitar- or bass-playing friend for their old strings the next time they change them. (I've found that middle guitar strings or lightweight bass strings work the best.) Cut the strings approximately in half. Keep the half with the small metal knob at the end and throw the remainder away. About 2" from the non-knob end bend the string and wrap it in tape to form a loop. Place the loop between the wingnut and top felt on your cymbal stand so that the knob is in contact with the cymbal and it can vibrate freely. Experiment with different lengths and on different cymbals. I've had success on all of my cymbals except small splashes and hi-hats.

Craig Watters
Pittsford, NY

Re-Surfacing A Snare Head

A while back, the coating on my snare drum head had worn smooth. Rather than buy a new head, I glued some fine sandpaper to the old one. I did this by cutting a 14"-diameter circle out of a large sheet. I cut an 8" hole in the center of the circle, then glued the resulting sandpaper "ring" to the old head. The surface was great for brushes, and the head—surprisingly—wasn't muffled too much.

Mike Hamm
Dayton, OH

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



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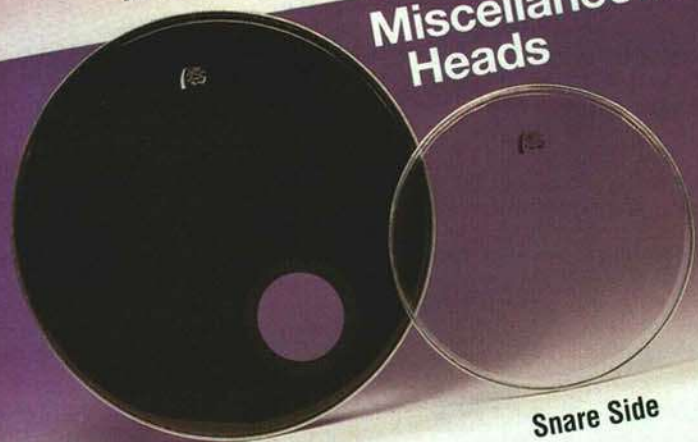


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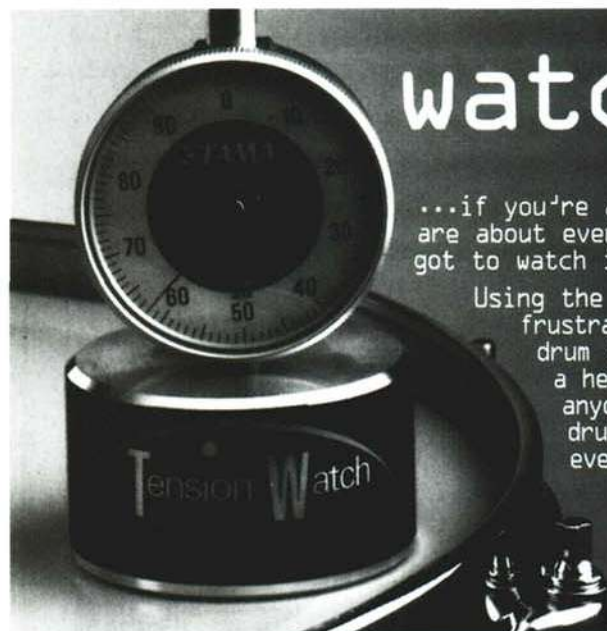
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Drumkit Of The Month



This month's kit is a vintage beauty belonging to Thomas Scopino of Pleasantville, New York. It's a 1920 Ludwig "trap set," consisting of a 12x28 bass drum (with a beautifully painted front head and a batter head that was formerly a front head advertising the Paramount Orchestra), a 5x15 10-lug snare, a 4x9 Chinese tom (with Chinese painting on the skin heads), a 10" Zildjian splash/crash, a 15" suspended ride cymbal, two wood blocks, a four-cowbell "tree," a triangle, a ratchet, and a Ludwig bass drum pedal. The kit even features an original stick holder containing a 1920s-era pair of drumsticks!



PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

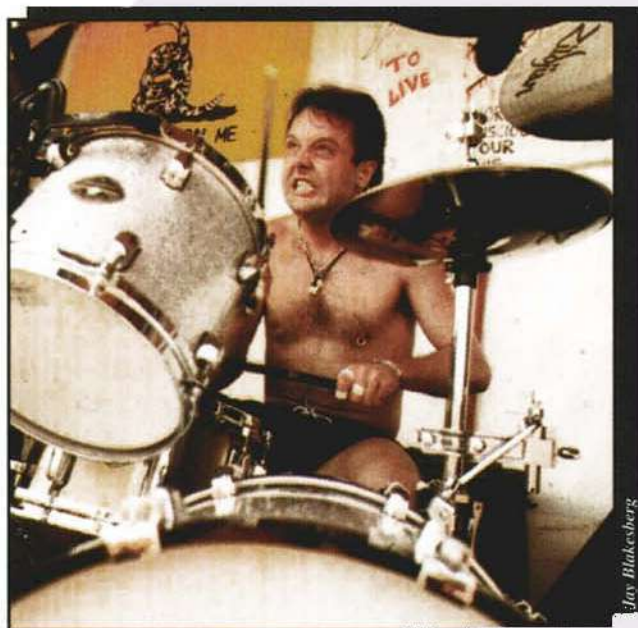
1. Photos must be high-quality and in color. 35mm slides are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted.
2. You may send more than one view of the kit.
3. Only show drums, no people.
4. Shoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds.
5. Clearly highlight special attributes of your kit.

Send photo(s) to: Drumkit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Photos cannot be returned.



Next Month

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KIRK COVINGTON

BRAD WILK OF
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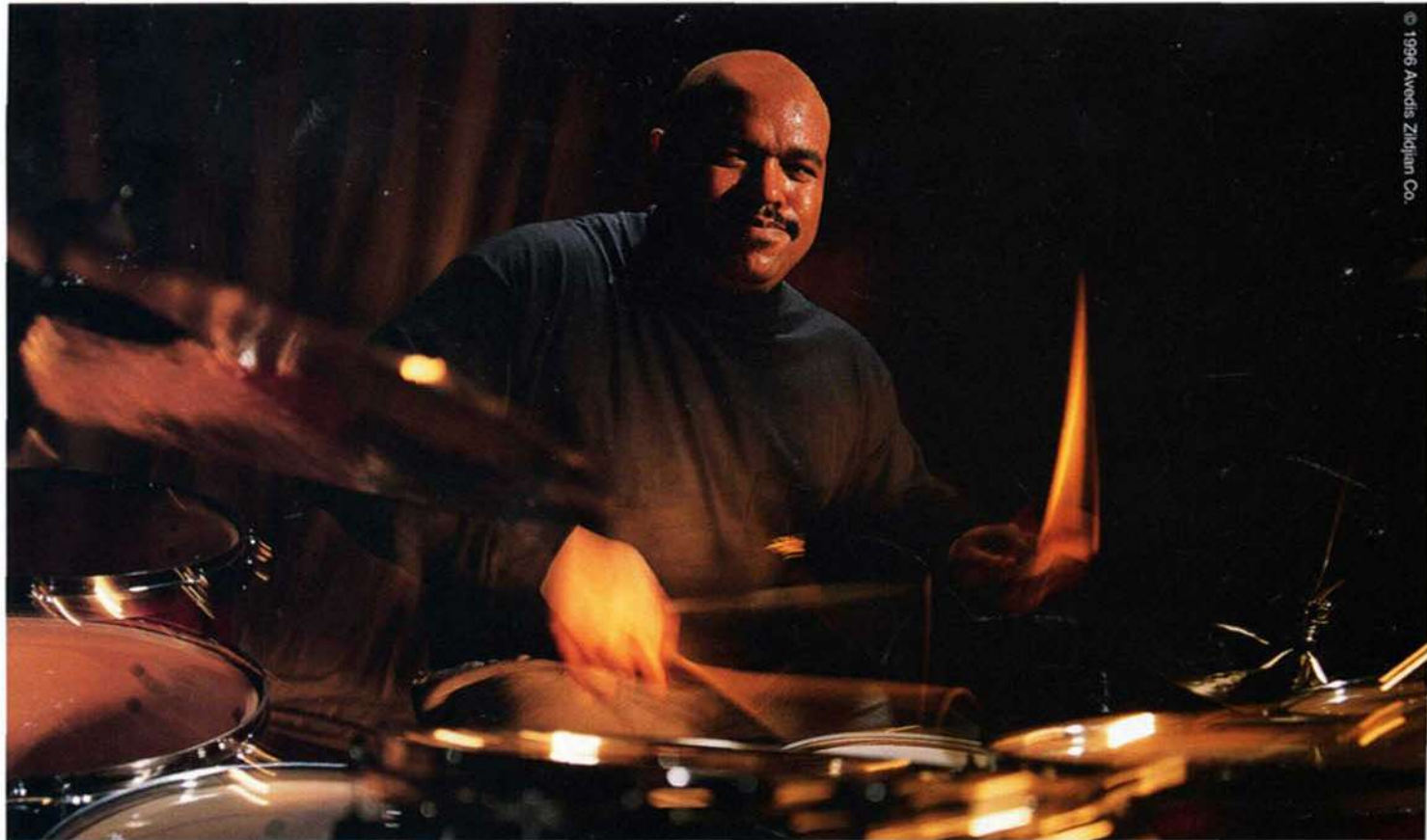


anniversary logo badge give this drum an unmistakable vintage look. Black powder coated flesh hoops, 24k gold plated hardware including our snare wires and vintage styled throw-off, a thirty-one step Black Mist exterior finish and antique felt under all hardware give you some idea of the attention to detail this drum has received. A hand signed document of authenticity from our founder and president, with recorded production numbers, will accompany each drum and help ensure an instrument that is destined to become one of the most exclusive snare drums ever produced.

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