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Joey Kramer

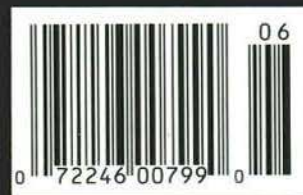
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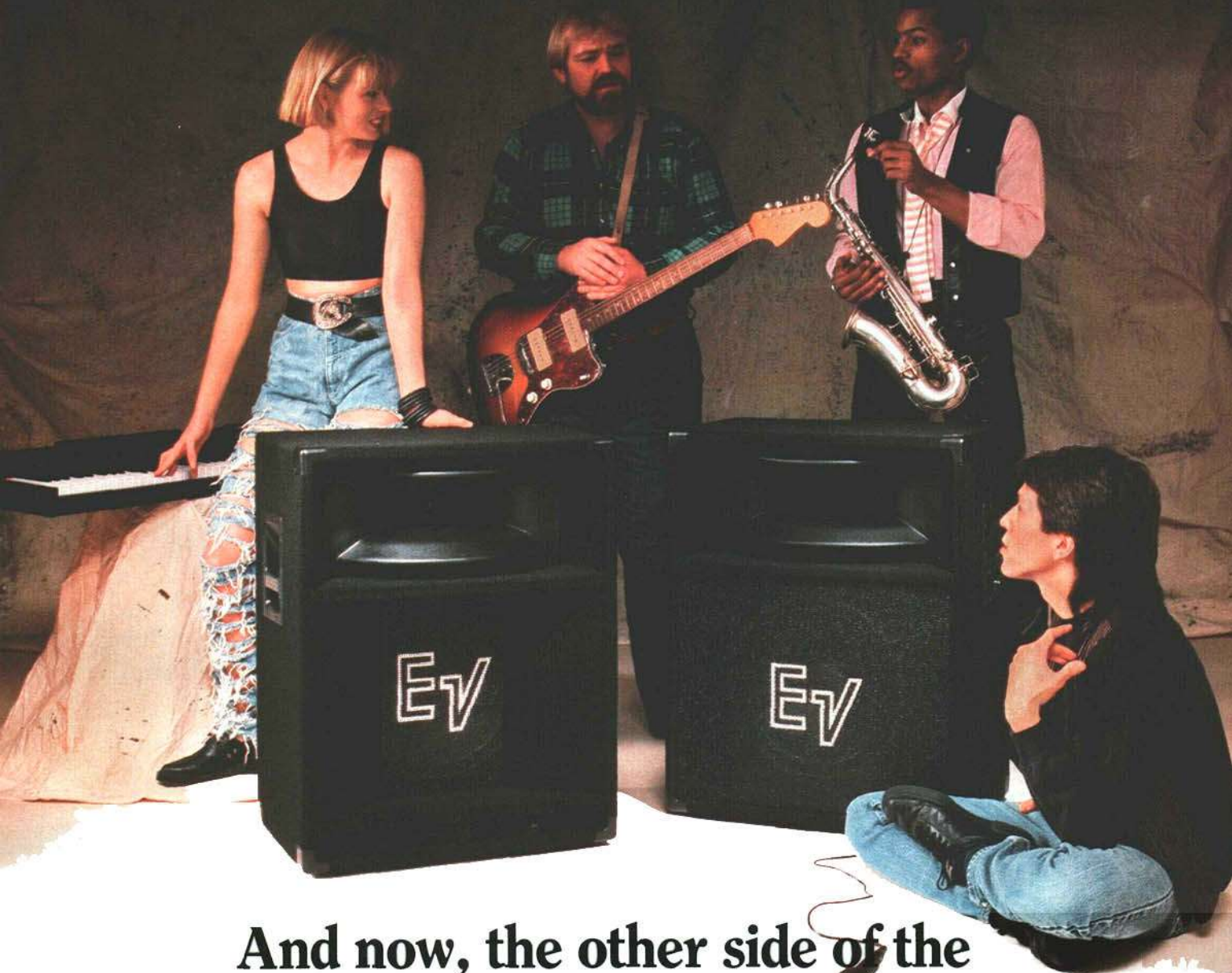
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Cover photo by Gene Kirkland

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His background includes everything from classical music to hard rock, and his current gig with Suzanne Vega is enabling him to make use of all his training and experience.

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With an education from North Texas State and a background in jazz drumming, Restless Heart's John Dittrich is not your ordinary country drummer.

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Putting a drum corps on the road for a summer of competition takes months of practice and preparation. We talked to a number of people who are involved in the activity to find out what happens on and off the field.

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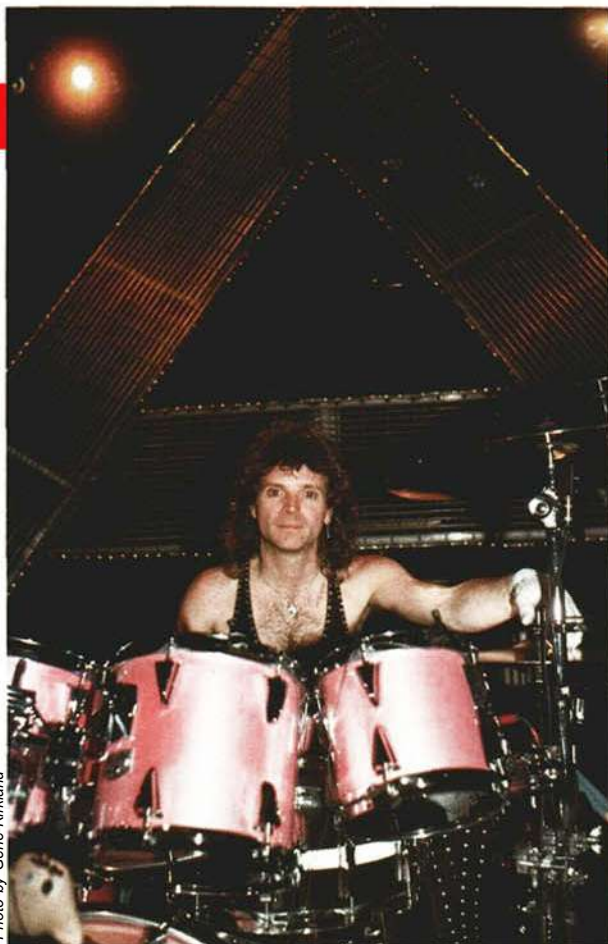


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Articles for MD

Over the years, we've had a variety of leading players who've written articles for *Modern Drummer*. Artists like Neil Peart, Rod Morgenstein, Kenny Aronoff, Ed Shaughnessy, Peter Erskine, Emil Richards, Joe Morello, Ed Mann, Vic Firth, Roy Burns, David Garibaldi, Larrie Londin, and Ed Thigpen are a few who've supplied *MD* with a wide range of enlightening column material.

But I should point out that a good portion of every issue is also made up of articles submitted by average *MD* readers with valuable musical ideas. While it's true that a number of regular columns are periodically assigned to name players, an equal number are always open to drummer/readers who wish to submit material. For example, we're always on the lookout for good articles geared towards *MDs Shop Talk*, *Teachers' Forum*, *Strictly Technique*, *Taking Care of Business*, *The Jobbing Drummer*, *Electronic Insights*, *Show Drummers' Seminar*, *Drum Soloist*, *Health and Science*, and *Basics* columns, among others.

Before you sit down to write, you should be aware of some items that could greatly increase the chances of your article being published. Most of these are dealt with in our Writer's Guidelines, which we'll gladly send you if you request a copy. For those who've never reviewed the Guidelines, keep the following basic thoughts in mind.

First, familiarize yourself with the subject matter discussed within each department, and submit accordingly. You can easily gather that by reading *MD* and obtaining a solid feel for what's discussed where. Total familiarity with the magazine is an obvious prerequisite to writing for it.

Second, be conscious of those things *MD's* column editors will undoubtedly be searching for. For instance, does your article enlighten a large enough audience of drummers on a particular phase of drumming? Will it improve their playing? Will it potentially save someone time, money, or effort? Does it present a fresh approach to an old subject? Will it help a working drummer perform better on the job? Will it help drummers arrive at a decision or draw a conclusion? Is your article accurately slanted towards drummers, as opposed to some other special-interest group? Is it a well-constructed article that makes a valid point, without requiring massive rewriting to do so? Obviously, don't expect your article to do *everything* here. But if it fails to do at least one of the above, chances are strong that it won't make it to print.

Also, try to keep the material arranged in logical order, stay with one topic and cover it thoroughly, and please have it typewritten (double-spaced), with artwork or musical examples on separate sheets. Neatness also helps. Handwritten articles in multi-colors, with barely legible musical examples rarely get a second glance from a busy editor. Assuming you do an adequate job, we'll let you know promptly if we plan to publish your material. And you'll get a check for your efforts shortly after the article appears in *MD*.

If you have something important to offer, by all means, keep all the above in mind and send it in. And write for our Writer's Guidelines if you're unsure about anything. We're always interested in good ideas for *MD* columns, and we encourage you to continue to bring your ideas to our attention.

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READERS' PLATFORM

PRODUCT REVIEWS

Editor's note: Reviews of various products in recent issues of MD have prompted a number of responses, both from readers and from the manufacturers of several of the products. Since equipment coverage always rates highly in terms of reader interest (according to our periodic demographic surveys), we feel it important to give our readers the chance to share their views regarding our product evaluations. In addition, we feel it only fair to extend to the manufacturer of a given product the opportunity to comment upon our review, if that manufacturer deems it appropriate to do so. With that in mind, this month's Readers' Platform is dedicated to review-related correspondence.

Thanks for the increasingly critical and straightforward product reviews, particularly by Rick Van Horn and Rick Mattingly. For that matter, thanks for everything those two guys write! It's nice to see a willingness to complain a little in the new reviews when it seems called for, and get beyond the "Gee, whiz!" attitude of some of the earlier ones. It's a lot easier to check something out in a store with a good critique in mind.

With electronics most of all, the reviews need to be really searching, because it's impossible to find all potential problems when demoing something so sophisticated in a store. On the one hand, the review of the Korg ODD-/ [Nov. '87] seemed really fair. However, the review of the E-mu SP-1200 [May '88] was completely positive ("a magical machine..."), when, from what I've gathered from other commentary, there were some definite limitations to the SP-12 that have not been completely resolved in the SP-1200. Any instrument is a tool that

will probably be great for a particular job, but nothing is perfect—and this is something we poor readers need clear information on.

Michael Palmieri
East Hartford CT

First of all, many thanks for your excellent and most favorable *Product Close-Up* of our *Seven-Piece Fusion (Factory Custom)* drumkit in your April '88 issue. Unsolicited kind words are always appreciated.

Second, we hope your many readers who are "cymbal freaks" will read between the lines of your Istanbul Cymbals review in the May issue, and give Istanbul a "listen to" at their favorite authorized Gretsch dealership. "Old K," "young K," or just "a sound like no other," Istanbul should certainly be considered by serious percussionists as part of their bag of sounds.

The selection sent you was limited by the scarcity of product. We only know what the pro shops tell us: that Istanbul cymbals are "...the closest thing to the old K's" they've heard! And they should be! They are still made in Turkey using the original materials, are *hand* hammered as was the tradition "way back when," and the cymbalsmiths are true artisans from the old school. At this point in time, no one really knows what a recently hand-hammered cast cymbal will sound like after years of use. An old K is an old K, and some of today's or yesterday's drummers would kill for a good one! To say that today's Istanbul is not yesterday's K is probably accurate...but give it time!

Fred Gretsch
President
Fred Gretsch Enterprises
Ridgeland SC

Rick Mattingly's review of the Istanbul line of cymbals was inaccurate, misleading, and extremely unfortunate, because of the fact that it was based on erroneous presumptions. Throughout the review, these cymbals are compared to what is Mr. Mattingly's perception of "old K's." He claims that he knows about old K's because he owns a few, and has heard Mel Lewis and Elvin Jones play. This is absurd! His assumptions about the sound and feel of old K's proves that his perception of them is extremely limited, and, in actuality, he knows very little about them—and is therefore not qualified to make comparisons.

First of all, a large part of Mr. Mattingly's judgment of the Istanbul cymbal is based on how much so-called "trash" each one does or does not possess. This is ridiculous! Not all old K's were trashy! Some were absolutely beautiful. Some were very pretty and clear, with just a hint of so-called "trash" (and strangely similar to Mr. Mattingly's description of a 20" Istanbul ride). He seems to be familiar with only one type of old K, and complains about some of the cymbals he reviewed not having enough overtones (and "trash"). Only on the real thin old K's was there a whole lot of spread and overtones. As they got heavier, there was more ping, less spread, and less "trash" (if any). The bells got brighter and sharper, and, of course, higher-pitched. The medium to heavy old K did not sound anything at all like what Mr. Mattingly perceives an old K to sound like.

Another example of Mr. Mattingly's ignorance of old K's is his description of their bells (their sound, shape, and size). He says that they were not known for their bells, and that they should have a "clunky"

continued on page 71

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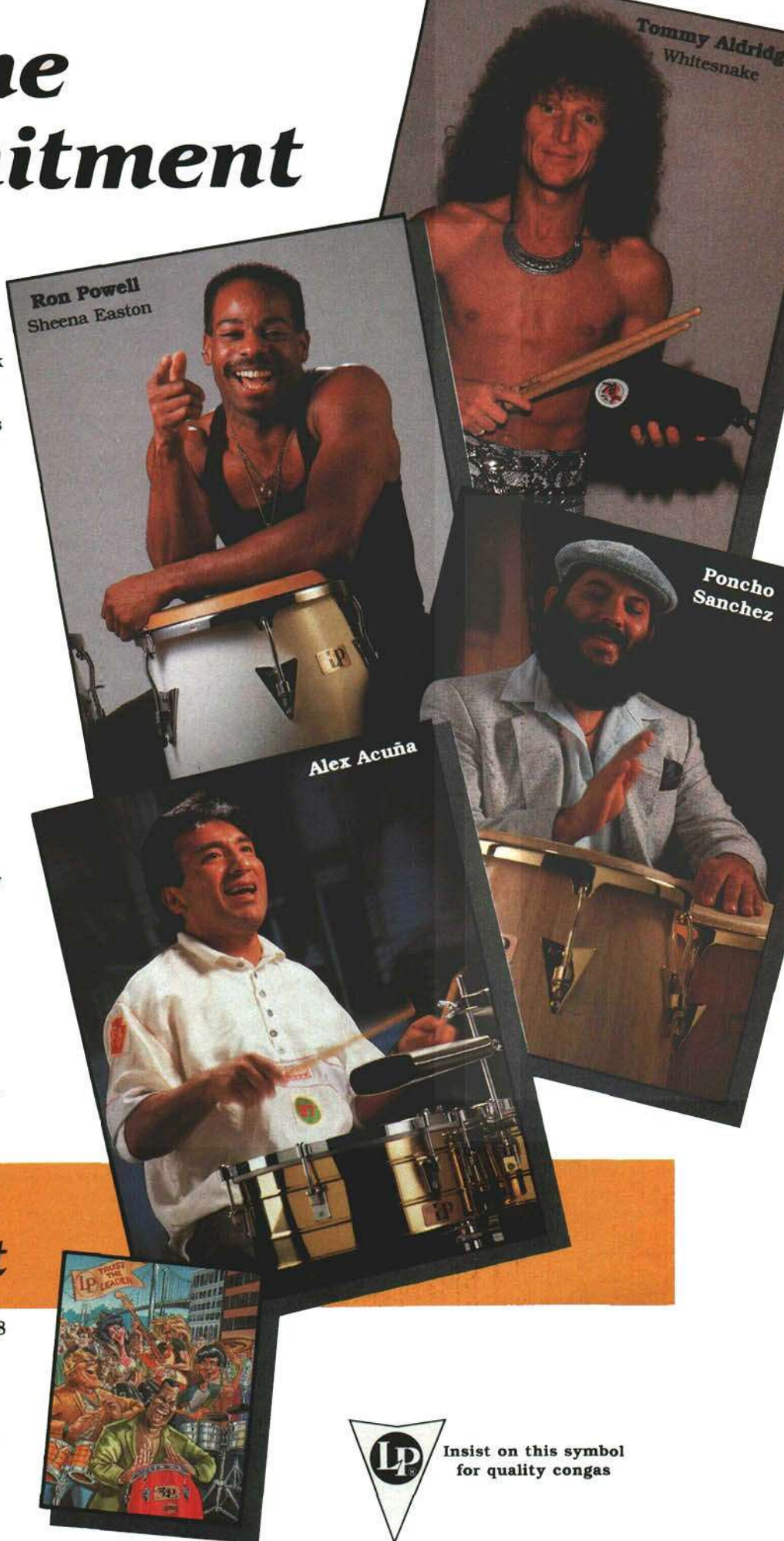
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Michael Hanson



Success certainly agrees with Glass Tiger's Michael Hanson. "When we were climbing up the ladder, I began to be envious of bands that were gaining success that I thought we deserved as much," recalls Hanson. "I was constantly on edge, extremely intense about my career. Now that we've had some success—we've been around the world and back on one album—our career looks so bright that I'm extremely relaxed and happy."

Another thing that Hanson is quite pleased about with his current position is not having to sing lead vocals while playing intricate drum parts. Before Glass Tiger existed, Hanson sang and drummed in a local cover band in Toronto, playing songs by acts like AC/DC and Rush. "I was always nailed with singing lead. Trying to play 'Tom Sawyer' and singing at the same time—it got to the point where I would virtually crawl off the stage after a gig. I knew eventually that had to end. So now I'm singing backup to Alan [Frew]. It's become a rather meticulous approach to harmony because Alan and I are both lead singers with completely different styles and sounds."

Besides being the only backup singer in Glass Tiger, Hanson also writes music and lyrics, and plays guitar and keyboards, skills he finds necessary in order to be a creative force in the band. "It's easy to say that everyone in a band is equal," he says, "but

drummers get stepped on an awful lot. If you want to write songs and melody, you don't get heard very much during rehearsals, because you're back there keeping the beat. I prefer the method of writing alone or in pairs within the band, where I can walk into a room with a guitar and write a song using a drum loop. But I wouldn't want to lose the spontaneity of writing as a band, so I think we'll do a combination of both for the next record."

And Hanson definitely has some songs he wants people to hear. He co-wrote five songs on Glass Tiger's new album, *Diamond Sun*, including the first single, "I'm Still Searching." "People in the entertainment industry with a little success have a medium to translate their opinions in a stronger way than most people," Hanson asserts. "As I write more lyrics, I definitely try to write things that have more depth and something to say. I'd like to use some of the power that music has given me, while Glass Tiger is at its peak."

After a six-month lull, Glass Tiger has taken to the road again, playing America, Canada, and Europe. "Last year on tour I had this monitor clanking out a click track. This time I think I'm just going to use a flashing light as my meter improves with touring." From his Pearl drums, Hanson triggers an Akai sampler that is MIDled into a Macintosh computer, which automatically changes the settings for the entire kit after each song. "It's great," is Hanson's reaction. "I don't have to do anything. The entire drumkit changes by itself."

Hanson's enthusiasm for the gifts that success has brought is tempered by his own down-to-earth outlook. "The attention that goes along with success is not something I take that seriously," he states. "Two areas are important to a successful career: your character and your creativity. If you concentrate on those areas, I think everything else falls into place."

—Adam Budofsky

Michael Blair



A lot of players would give their fondest possessions to have the opportunity to play the music that drummer/percussionist Michael Blair gets called on to play. After working with Tom Waits' theatrical production of *Franks Wild Years* with Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre Group (the music became the record, released in '86), Michael chose to stay in Chicago for a while. During that time, he played with Victor DeLorenzo (drummer for the Violent Femmes), who went on to use Michael on Claudia Schmidt's *Big Earful*, which DeLorenzo coproduced with Schmidt. He also recorded Femmes bassist Brian Ritchie's solo record, *The Blend*, before returning to New York, where he did some recording with the likes of John Zorn and Arto Lindsay, whose *Ambitious Lovers* Michael also plays live with. Recently he did an album with Fernando Saunders called *Kashmir Dreams*, as well as an album with poet Alan Ginsberg.

Blair also played percussion on a record of Disney music, with artists such as Harry Nilsson, Suzanne Vega, Al Green, and Ringo Starr. He is supposed to play percussion on Keith Richards' solo album, and this summer he's doing Elvis Costello's LP in L.A. Blair did Costello's *King Of America* record (marimba on "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood") and was the percussionist for Costello's *Confederate tour*. He will also be recording in London with Dagmar Krause, as well as doing the next Tom Waits album.

"Tom needs a drumset player who never plays the expected kind of stuff," says Blair. "From tune to tune, you can sort of ferret out what style he's in—whether it's New Orleans

gutbucket funky rock, or sort of German/French cabaret expressionist theater stuff, which sounds almost more like a little band from the old movies. Then there's some straight-ahead avant-garde rockers, where it's just laying down a scary backbeat with a lot of clanks and crunches in it. He really goes for a lot of different kinds of textures, almost building little movies of every piece. He's very serious about his acting career these days, and he changes characters on stage and in the studio quite a bit, so we have to do pretty much the same thing. On the *Franks Wild Years* album there's stuff that sounds like crazy North African Moroccan rock, like Frank Sinatra on acid, and everything in between. Even if I just hit one instrument one time through a whole tune, if that's exactly what it needs, that's what I do. Luckily, I think that way anyway because I write a lot, so I'm always thinking compositionally. It's sort of like painting, instead of being a rock band."

—Robyn Flans

Audie Desbrow



Since the '87 release of *Once Bitten*, L.A. rockers Great White have finally hit paydirt, now that their fifth LP has achieved platinum-selling status. Add to that their long-running tour as openers for Whitesnake, and what you've got is a highly visible and widely popular band. Great White's affable skinsman, Audie Desbrow, has been a member of the group for a few years now, and he can really



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appreciate the current success of the band, given that he's gone through a lot to achieve it. "I've worked a long time to get to this point, and it feels really good," he comments.

Desbrow admits that there were times over the past four years when things seemed kind of bleak (before '86's *Shot In The Dark*), although the band stuck together throughout the hardships. "It got pretty tough for a year or so," he says. "Before Great White, I had been in a bunch of different bands, but when I first got involved with this group, the future was looking pretty good. These guys already had a record deal, so I thought, 'Ahh, this is great. I'm finally in a band that's going to be recording.' Three weeks after I joined, we lost the record deal, and it was kind of downhill for a while. We tried to get another deal, but nothing happened, we ran out of money, then we got unemployment but that ran out, too. We had T-shirts made up that said 'Survive '85.' And that's basically all we wanted to do—just get through that year!

"We were starting to think about what would happen if we didn't find a deal soon, because if that wasn't going to happen, we didn't want to have to start all over again with a new band, a new situation. When you start with a new band in L.A., you have to play the clubs on off nights, you have to hand out fliers—that kind of thing. You get to a point where you think, 'How long do I have to go through this?'"

The determination evidently paid off, because the band finally found a wide audience. However, for all the disappointments he's had, Audie has always hung in there when things got tough, which might be partially due to having several musicians in his family. (Audie's mom was a jazz drummer.) "I've never put any kind of time limits on my career. Not once did I ever think along those lines," he states. "I've always felt that if you give yourself a time limit, you're already doubting yourself to begin with. I think the

minute you *actually* fail is when you give up. If you hang in there and keep at it, you're bound to win."

—Teri Saccone

Marvin Kanarek

Marvin Kanarek keeps very busy between touring, record and jingle sessions, and work with original projects. He explains how his work runs the gamut: "On the road, I've gone from rock 'n' roll guys like Burton Cummings to really introspective artists like Janis Ian, and in the studios, I've gone from jingles to movies to record dates. All those things have basic parameters in which you have to work, and once you've learned them, it's very regimented and very strict, which is part of the professional process. I enjoy learning a piece of music and playing it the same way every time. But lately I've been working with a keyboardist and guitarist, and we just jam in the true sense of the word. We go under the name of the Vibe Pigs," Kanarek laughs, "because we play off of vibes and we become musical gluttons. It's the coolest thing and a whole other spectrum that we don't often get a chance to do."

Marvin has also been involved with the Bonedaddys for the past four years, and Chameleon Records recently released their record, *A-Koo-De-A!* "The Bonedaddys is an interesting challenge because it's a large band," says Marvin. "The nucleus consists of eight players, but on any given night we can have upwards of 14 or 15 people on stage, depending on guest percussionists and soloists. Since it's a large band and very percussion-oriented, it creates a whole other area of rhythmic and musical responsibility for me because, first of all, it's African/island/rock 'n' roll/R & B-based, for want of a better description. And there's so much going on harmonically, melodically, and rhythmically that the immediate response would be to become very busy. Once we started

getting into more of a groove with time, I realized the old adage of less is more' applied to this situation. I sit back there and average out all this musical information—all the percussion, horn shots, the two guitars, bass, vocals—and it's all funneled through the drums, and the simplest is the best. If I do become more complex, I lose the audience."

A second Bonedaddys album is currently in the works, and as always, Kanarek is enjoying the variety of his work. "The first Bonedaddys record was a lot of fun," he says. "It was very quick and painless, which is very strange because of the size of that band and the number of songs we have. It's incredible how quickly we record. That's a perfect testimonial to being well-rehearsed, also. Recording with the Vibe Pigs is a real joy, too. It's very passionate, romantic music, and what started out as a musical release may actually become something else. I enjoy all my sessions, whether they be the jingles or working with Janis Ian. I still haven't lost that excitement about doing sessions. I may complain about doing a lot at once, but once I'm in that room, I'll stay there for hours. I love the stuff. I do a lot of programming on my Linn 9000, and as of late, I've been programming parts and then replacing my programming with real drums, or using a combination. It's always interesting."

—Robyn Flans

News...

In recent months, **Ian Wallace** did a European tour with Warren Zevon (when **Richie Hayward** left to resume Little Feat) and he has been recording with Don Henley, Jackson Browne, Roy Orbison, and Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young (as well as having a song on the album that he co-wrote with Stephen Stills). He also did a George Harrison record that included Tom Petty, Bob Dylan, and Roy Orbison. **Dave Samuels** recently released his first solo album, *Living Colors*, on MCA. The record features

drummers **Tom Brechtlein** and **Terry Clarke** along with percussionist **Roger Squitiero** and steel drummer **Andy Narell**. **Ed Shaughnessy** will be teaching at the Skidmore College Jazz Institute in Saratoga Springs, New York from June 26 - July 8. Ed will also be doing the SS Norway Jazz Cruise this coming October. Congratulations to **Peter Erskine**, whose score to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* won the 1987 Los Angeles Drama Critics Award for Best Original Score. **Lynn Coulter** has been in the studio with Carole King. **Nelson Estes** working with Eric Carmen. **Kenny Malone** working on Johnny Cash's duet LP. **Stix Hooper** on a track on Grover Washington, Jr.'s newest LP. **Eddie Bayers** on a Hank Williams, Jr./Reba McEntire duet, as well as LPs by Lane Brody, Carl Perkins, the Whites, the McCarter Sisters, the Judds, Susan Boggus, Lori Morgan, Rosie Flores, Ronnie Milsap, Charley McClain, Terri Gibbs, Lyle Cartwright, Patty Loveless, and Mark O'Connor. Eddie also played keyboards and percussion with John Jarvis for TV's *The Wild Kingdom*. Currently he is in the studio with Dolly Parton. **Denny Fongheiser** on projects by Boy Meets Girl, Marti Jones, E.G. Dailey, doing TV shows with Laura Brannigan and Joe Cocker, and played on camera for *The Cheech Show*. **Russ McKinnon** back from touring with Meri D., opening shows for Russia's Avtograf. **Tommy Wells** in the studio with Ray Stevens and George Hamilton V. **Charlie Morgan** on Elton John's recently-released *Reg Strikes Back*. **Danny Gayol** playing percussion and **Matthew Letley** playing drums on A-ha world tour. **Pekka** is the drummer on the debut LP from the Finnish four-piece group Stone, who are currently on the road. **Malcolm Travis** is in the studio with the Zulus, currently recording their Slash Records debut. **Sascha** has graduated from drum tech to drummer in Platinum Blonde. Soundwings Records has signed drummer **Roland Vazquez** as an artist. His Soundwings debut, *Tides Of*

continued on page 71



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DAVE WECKL



Photo by Jaeger Katos

Q. I have a problem with reading. It seems that every time I sit down to practice reading, my mind wanders and I always end up practicing something else. I know I have a discipline problem, but I was wondering if you have any pointers or suggestions for focusing my concentration. I'd also appreciate your thoughts about schooling, and any suggestions you might have about good schools to attend. Did you attend a music school, and if so, where?

M.J. Freda
San Francisco CA

A. A possible solution might be to try to combine your "reading" and "playing" practice. If you've already got the basic knowledge of how to read rhythms, two methods of this "combined practice" would be: (1) Gary Chester's book *New Breed* (which really helped my concentration) and (2) my book and tape combination, *Contemporary Drummer + One*. That method allows you to work on chart interpretation and is fun to play along with (so your concentration level stays up).

As far as schools go, you first must decide if you want to study all aspects of music (including arranging, composing, etc.) or mainly just drums. For drums alone, I would recommend P.I.T. in Los Angeles or Drummers Collective in New York City. I wish I could be of more help concerning music schools. I know that Berklee (in Boston) and North Texas State University have good programs, but I just don't know about the many other choices that I'm sure there are.

I attended Bridgeport University in Connecticut for about two years, when Neal Slater headed the jazz department. (Neal is now at North Texas State.) A lot of my decision to attend that school was based on its locality (close to New York City) and also on the fact that two excellent teachers—Randy Jones and Ed Soph—were on the staff there.

I hope some of my suggestions prove useful to you. Whatever you decide to do...good luck!

ERIC CARR

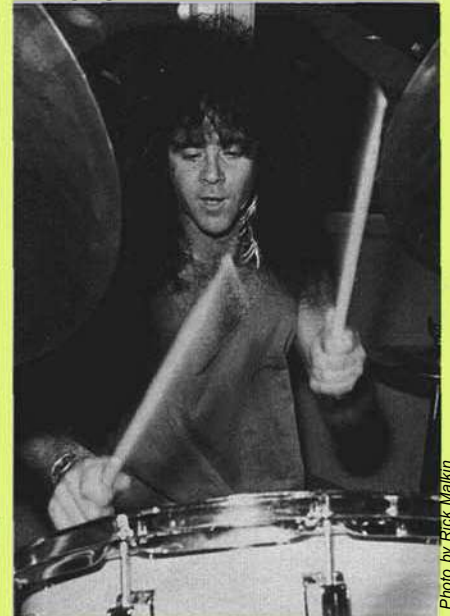


Photo by Rick Malkin

Q. I recently had the great pleasure of watching you and Kiss perform in Medford, Oregon. Both your energy and your overall performance were incredible, and I thoroughly enjoyed watching you! My question deals with your fantastic solo. You used electronic drums to trigger a cool-sounding bass riff. I was wondering if you could tell me what kind of electronic drums those were, and how many you have.

Mark Narmore
Central Point OR

A. First of all, thanks very much for your comments on my solo! I'm very proud of the way it's turned out.

I'm using six Simmons pads that are MIDled into a Roland Super Jupiter. I have a custom-designed sound in it that was built up from my original concept. Each drumpad has a different key assigned to it, using the sound from the Jupiter. I wind up with six different chords (not bass riffs) that I can play in any order I want. Basically, I can write a song on the spot! It's cool! Thanks for asking.



Photo by Laura Friedman

MARVIN "SMITTY" SMITH

Q. I was greatly impressed by your playing on the *Breaking Out* album with George Shearing. What was it like playing with George? Also, what hi-hats were you using? They really sizzled.

Neil Humphreys
London, England

A. Thanks for the compliment. I had a wonderful time playing with George, and also Ray Brown. They're both well-respected and accomplished musicians with a great wealth of experience. I enjoyed playing standards, ballads, and blues tunes with them. It was very easy to play with

George; we hooked up instantly because we understood the musical language of "swing." I played less in order to get more groove and swing from the music.

The hi-hats I used were 14" A Zildjians. The other cymbals included a 22" K Zildjian ride with rivets, a 20" K ride on the left, and 15" and 16" A Zildjian crashes. I use Pearl drums, and the sizes on the album were 12" and 13" rack toms, a 14x14 floor tom, and an 18" bass drum. In addition, I used a Ludwig 6 1/2" Supraphonic bronze-shell snare.



DW ELECTRONIC PEDALS



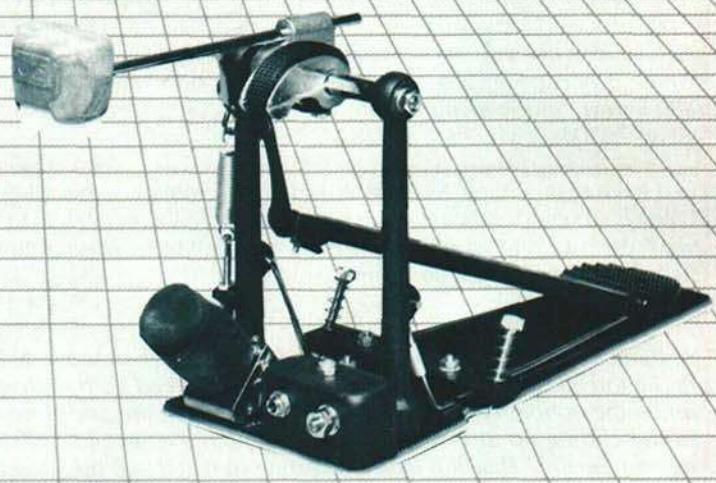
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ADJUSTMENT CONTROLS: Sensitivity and Stroke / Trigger Point

OUTPUT: Single 1/4" jack.
(Also available: 5002TEC Double Bass Drum / Trigger Pedal.)



EPIN Nylon Strap Electronic Trigger Pedal

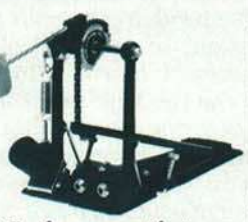
APPLICATIONS: Recommended for triggering situations where the speed, control and feel of an acoustic bass drum pedal are required.

TRIGGERING SYSTEM: Spring mounted piezo-electronic element with voltage output calibrated to dynamically trigger non-MIDI drum controllers and drum machines as well as most drum-to-MIDI converters.

ADJUSTMENT CONTROL: Sensitivity

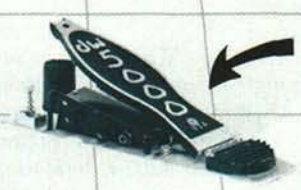
OUTPUT: Single 1/4" jack.
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EPR Electronic Trigger Pedal Plate



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IT'S QUESTIONABLE

Q. I have been trying to find out the name and address of the music school up in North Texas. Could you help me?

T.W.
LinvilleTX

A. It sounds like you are referring to North Texas State University, which is not specifically a music school, but does have a nationally-known music department. The address is simply Denton, Texas 76203, or you may call (817) 788-2530.

Q. I have a set of three Remo RotoToms. My problem is that when I play on them, they always turn back down to a lower pitch than I want them to. I'm wondering if there is a device to prevent this from happening, and if so, where I might find it.

J. L.
Cato WI

A. Remo's Rick Drumm suggests that you obtain two nuts that will fit the threaded center rod of each RotoTom. Thread both nuts up under the bottom casting of the RotoTom. Tighten the one closest to the casting up against it, and then tighten the second nut up against the first. This will lock the casting so that it will not loosen any further.

Q. I bought a Maxwin (by Pearl) five-piece set about five years ago. I am looking for another bass drum, but I've been told that the model has been discontinued. Is there any possible way of obtaining one? If not, what other Pearl model is similar to the Maxwin?

M.R.
E. Farmingdale NY

A. We contacted Ken Austin, Director of Sales and Marketing at Pearl, who gave us the following information: "Pearl still makes the Maxwin series, but in extremely limited quantities. The series is not available through Pearl International. If someone desires to purchase any 'Maxwin by Pearl' merchandise, they must contact the sole U.S. distributor, Westheimer Corporation, 3451 W. Commercial Avenue, Northbrook, Illinois 60062. A similar model in the Pearl line would be the International series; however, this set is only available as a complete five-piece kit. My suggestion is: Since you have had the Maxwin set for five years and are looking to play double bass, it is probably time for you to step up to a kit such as the Pearl Export series seven-piece Hard Rocker model. This is an affordably priced double bass kit greatly superior to the Maxwin, and should help you reach the goal you've set your sights on."

Q. For a long time now, I've been searching for a copy of Anthony J. Cirone's *Portraits In Rhythm*. You publish excerpts from that book regularly in your magazine. I know that the book is not distributed in France; can you help me with an address where I can get it?

B.F.
Chamonix, France

A. Anthony J. Cirone was kind enough to provide us with the following information: "Portraits In Rhythm is available to music dealers and wholesalers from Belwin-Mills/Columbia Pictures Publications, P.O. Box 4340, Hialeah, Florida 33014. Individuals in the U.S. may order through any music store or mail-order house. The book is distributed in Europe by International Music Publishers, South End Road, Woodford Green, Essex, 1G8 8HN, England. If you contact them, they should be able to tell you how and where you may obtain a copy."

Q. I am a young drummer and have just recently bought a second bass drum. I have always listened to such accomplished double bass artists as Tommy Aldridge, Tommy Lee, Mikkey Dee (of King Diamond), and Joe Franco. I know what I have to do before sitting down to play, but when the time comes, my feet will speed up, slow down, or stop altogether! Other players seem to have no trouble at all, but all I have is endless frustration. I try playing both

with my heels off and on the pedals. Which, in your opinion, is easier? And could you recommend any tips or outstanding books, videos, etc?

J.M.
New Cumberland PA

A. Developing double bass drum technique is the same as developing any other new aspect of drumming: It takes practice and time. There are no shortcuts. You have to overcome an inherent "weakness" of the foot that has been used only for the hi-hat up until now, and you have to achieve evenness in your playing between the two bass drums. You also have to consider balance, control, and power. As far as whether to use a heel-up or heel-down technique, many drummers (whether single or double bass players) use both, depending on the situation. Heel-down generally gives greater control, while heel-up generally affords more power. Most rock drummers, who require power above all from their bass drums, rely almost exclusively on the heel-up method.

You mention Tommy Aldridge and Joe Franco as influences. Joe has both an excellent book and video out. His book, *Double Bass Drumming*, is available from D.C. Publications, 2204 Jerusalem Avenue, N. Merrick, New York 11566. The video, entitled *Joe Franco: Double Bass Drumming*, is based on the material in the book. It was made by Axis Video, P.O. Box 21322, Baltimore, Maryland 21208, and is distributed by Casino Percussion Products, Box 372, Plainview, New York 11803. Contact these companies for price and ordering information.

Tommy Aldridge also has an excellent video out, entitled *Rock Drum Soloing & Double Bass Workout*. It is reviewed in this month's On Tape department.

Q. I have been playing drums for four years now, and I think that I am starting to do some serious damage to my ears. They ring all the time and have become very sensitive to loud noises. At certain frequencies my ears make a scratching sound. I've tried earplugs, but can't hear myself to do vocals. Help!

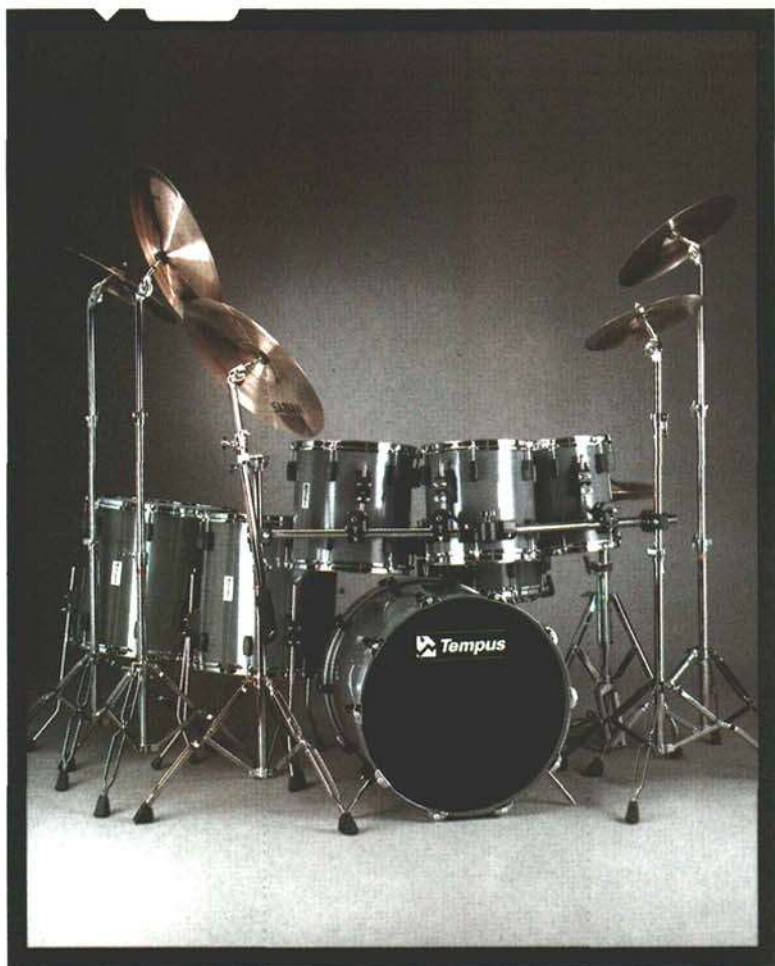
C.B.
Mission Viejo CA

A. The first thing to do is to have your hearing tested and your ears examined by a specialist, to make sure that there is nothing organically wrong. It may be that there is some condition that your drumming is aggravating, but not necessarily causing. If this is the case, you may require medical treatment. Even if it is not, such an examination will establish a base of reference to which other, future examinations can be compared.

Since you mention the need to hear yourself sing, it sounds as if your problem is not strictly with the volume of your drums, but with the volume of the music you are exposed to when performing with a band. It is obvious that you are performing in a fairly loud situation, so take a look at this month's Health & Science department, in which Brian Alpert offers some advice. You mention that you have tried earplugs, but found that you couldn't hear yourself sing. This is unusual, since most earplugs—if fitted correctly—actually make it easier to hear one's own voice through a process known as "bone conduction." In essence, you hear the sound of your voice as it vibrates within your own head; it doesn't have to leave your throat and come back into your ears in order to be heard. Since earplugs block out outside sounds that overpower this bone conduction, they generally maximize its effect. You might consider trying a different type of earplug. Plugs designed for shooters are available in any sporting goods store. Plugs designed for musicians include high-tech models called Sonic 11s (fitted with internal diaphragms to allow a certain level of sound in but block high-level peaks) and self-fitting foam plugs called Noise Hushers (inexpensive, comfortable to wear, and disposable).

You may wish to consider another alternative combining ambient sound blockage with controlled access to selected sound. That's a fancy way of describing headphone monitors. Many arena-

continued on page 70



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Photo by Neil Zlozower

Gregg Bissonette and Pearl

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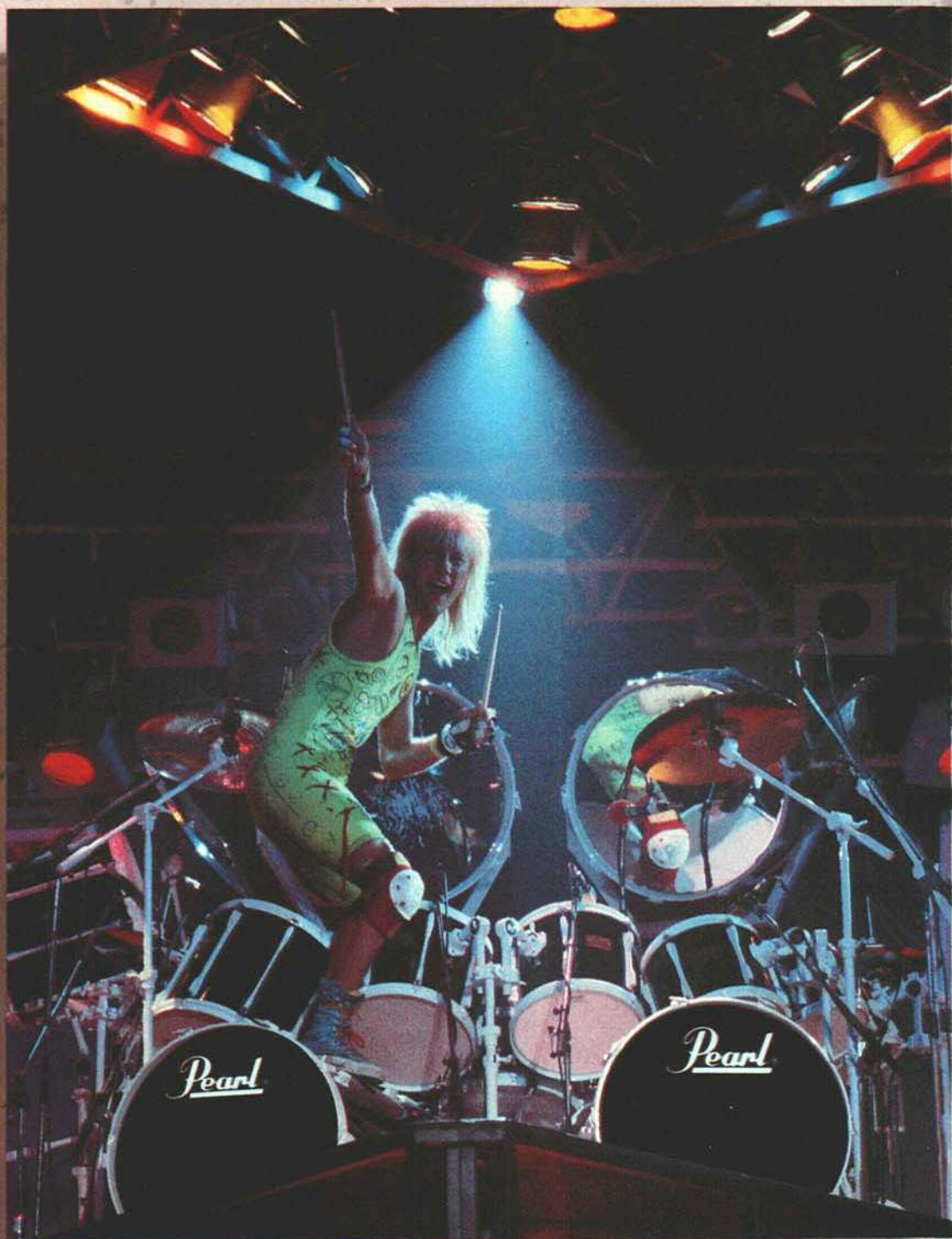


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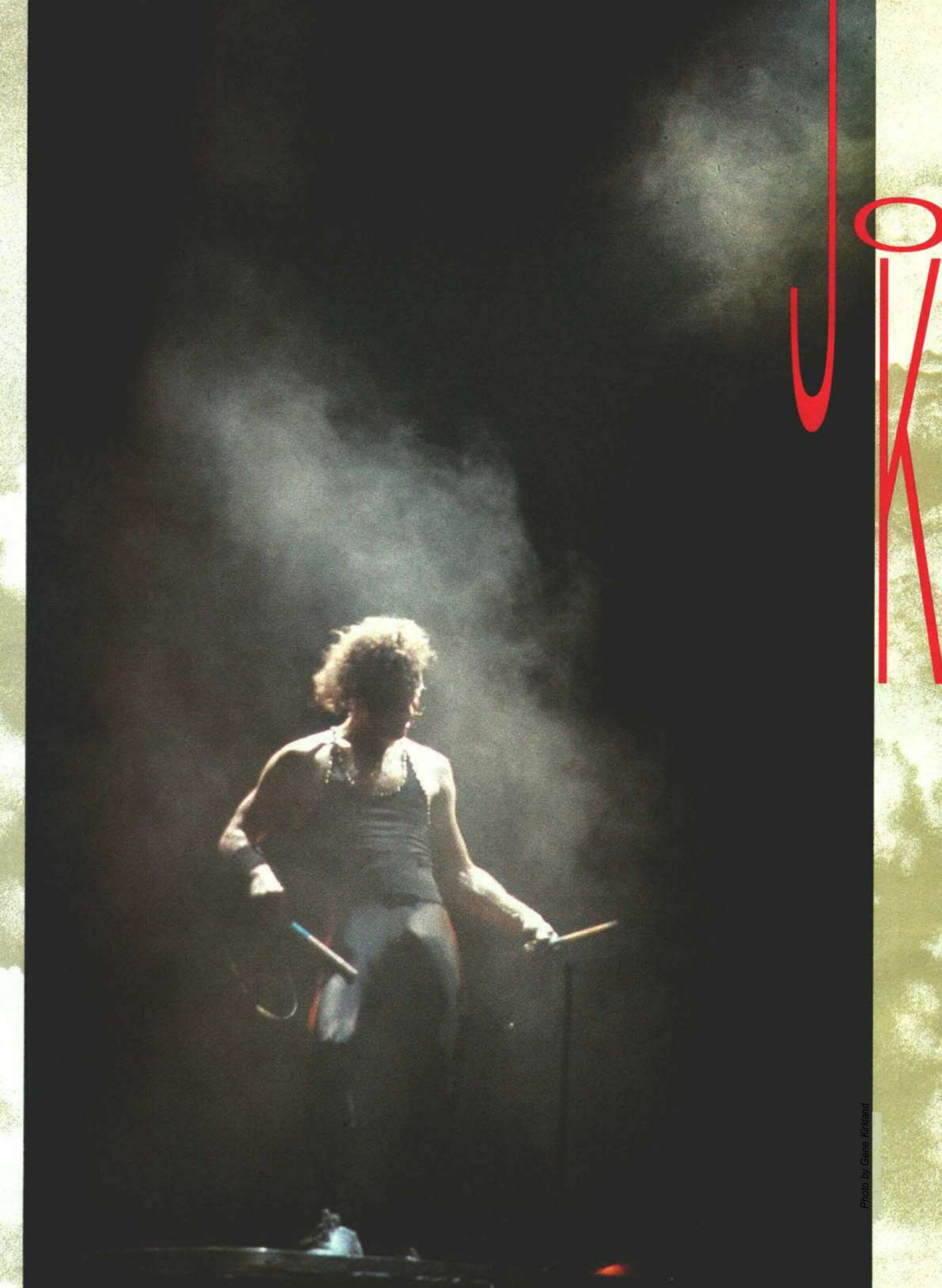


Photo by Gene Kirkland

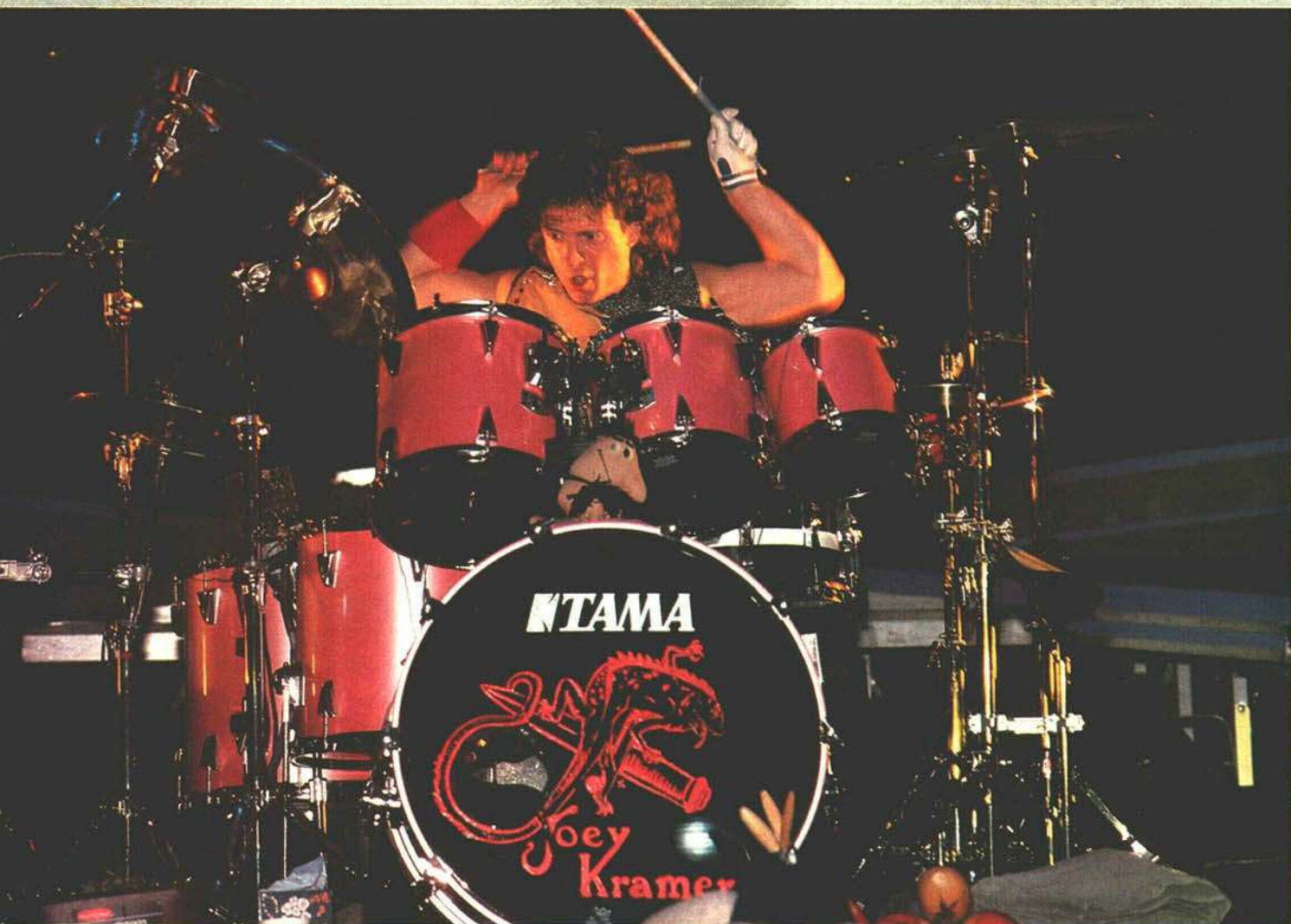
Joey Kramer

Joey Kramer is a man of simple desires. Just give him a set of 'skins, a brood of suitably skillful musos to cavort amongst, and a tune that he can really sink the old chops into, and the guy's in paradise!

Of course, first impressions are known to be deceiving, and perhaps that's why someone like Kramer might get tagged initially as being a complex, somewhat unapproachable character. Sure, he takes himself and his career seriously; and yes, he does, on occasion, wax philosophical. But, basically, he's just an intense guy who knows what he wants and is unafraid to verbalize his strong viewpoints. (I learned quickly that he's never noncommittal; he's got an opinion on just about everything!) Underneath the veneer, Joey thoroughly relishes playing the drums, and that was probably the foremost impression I came away with after spending the better part of a day with him.

Kramer has had a sprawling musical background from which to draw his experiences: He co-founded the band that has been an active part of his life for the past 18 years (that archetypal American rock institution known as Aerosmith), and whose escapades on and off stage have been blown out to near mythical proportions. When the group emerged on the scene in the progressive rock/fusion-laden '70s, they were quickly proclaimed one of the baddest bands in the land. Usually rude, always crude, 'Smith is unsurpassed in their innate ability to crossbreed R & B with heavy-handed raunch 'n' roll. And just as their very distinctive sound seduced hordes of devotees, so did their equally famous attitude: These dudes are and always were the very personification of raw, unadulterated rock 'n' roll. They practically ooze of it! And to further substantiate their irrevocable stronghold on rock 'n' roll, many of today's more successful groups are decidedly derivative of Aerosmith—both in sound, appearance, and attitude—as these new bands freely cite Aerosmith as their main source of inspiration.

The past two years have been a period of resurrection for Aerosmith. After reigning supreme throughout the '70s, the band found themselves in a slump around '82. Personnel altered slightly when the unit's guitarists left for a spell, and Aerosmith's future seemed to be in jeopardy. But these days, the band is experiencing a resurgence of huge popularity, fueled by last year's Permanent Vacation. The LP is their ninth studio release, and is considered as one of their best. Kramer's drumming is at its fiercest on this collection, and he says that he's finally satisfied with the manner in which his playing is conveyed on vinyl. And besides looking remarkably fit, his live performance gives credence to his skill of propelling the band with the same feistiness that he's been conjuring up for the past 18 years (and maybe for 18 more to come).



TS: Aerosmith has weathered various setbacks, comebacks, and ups and downs, yet have remained intact. Surely, the future must have been dubious at times. Was there ever a point where you began to consider "packing it in"?

JK: I don't know that I ever entertained that thought. There were a lot of really thin times, like the four-year period between '80 and '84, until we got back together. There were times when I was wondering what I was doing, and whether or not I should continue along the same lines as far as putting another project together on the side. But as far as quitting, I've never been a quitter and I never will be.

TS: But the band was at a virtual standstill for a while. You didn't think it was over?

JK: It was never really over for me because Steven, Tom, and I tried to continue, and we really felt we were putting our best feet forward, recruiting as we did two guitar players. It wasn't until a little further down the line that I realized it wasn't going to work. I enjoyed playing with Jimmy [Crespo]; he was a great guitar player. But it took a long time for it to dawn on me about the old pie syndrome: If you cut an apple pie into five slices, you can't take two out and replace them with two pieces of blueberry pie. That's essentially what we tried to do, and it didn't work; it wasn't a whole pie. We really tried to make it work: Both Tom and I moved back to New York, we did a tour, and we did an album. But it just wasn't working. Finally,

after those years—the thin years, as we call them—the original band obviously got back together. But it still took a long time to get to where we are now. We've been back together since '84; it's now 1988, and we finally have a hit record again.

We've been through a lot of shit together—a lot of rough times—but also a lot of good times. And during the course of time between '80 and '84, I was very involved with alcohol and drugs, and just being a rock 'n' roll star, which I wasn't anymore. Things were getting a little scary. Aerosmith wasn't the Aerosmith that everybody knew. I also had no manager or agent to help me go forward into other musical projects. As a matter of fact, at times I felt as if I was being kept away from it because nobody wanted to have anything to do with anyone from Aerosmith because of the drug rumors. People just didn't want to be bothered because of what they heard. I suffered a lot by not having someone who was personally taking care of my career, even though I presumably had what was called a "personal manager."

Things got pretty scary for a while, and I would think things like, "What am I doing? Where am I going? What direction is my career heading towards?" It was pretty obvious where it was heading at the time, but I don't know that I really had it together enough at the time to do something about it. I knew what I *wanted* to do, and I needed someone to help me get it.

So I just kind of played along, and we did what we could to keep Aerosmith together. We weren't really successful, though.

TS: You had become accustomed to playing arenas, but you were playing smaller venues during that period. That must have been quite a drop.

JK: We were still playing some arenas; we just weren't playing to what you would call sold-out crowds.

TS: And to either magnify the problems or ease them—depending upon how you look at things—that period was further affected by some heavy booze and drug abuse.

JK: Well, that played its part, but we were all naive to it at the time. Everyone that was involved in the whole big picture didn't really know what was going on, including the business people, who were supposed to know what was going on. So it was a very elusive period of time where things were being kept from me, and nobody knew what was going to happen as far as the future of the band was concerned—not just day-to-day, but hour-to-hour, minute-to-minute. For all I knew, I could have gotten a phone call at any time saying, "Somebody just OD'd. The band is over with because this guy's dead." Nothing would have surprised me at that point.

Meanwhile, I was thinking about what I was doing with my career, but I was still out driving my Ferraris, getting high, and having a good time. I had all that to revert to, so I didn't have to think about what I should have been thinking about. Then, when it all hit bottom, it was really a bitch.

TS: That must have been a difficult position to be in. Aerosmith had hit the big time when you were all fairly young, and then things really began to slip for a while. Maybe that first wave of phenomenal success had a lot to do with that later decline.

JK: Inside of two years, we went from making about \$150 a week to making half a million a year. I was 23 years old at the time, but the simple fact of it was that we really didn't have any guidance as far as finances went. The thing was that the band didn't really give a shit about the money. We were happy just having a good time. And the management didn't bother to tell us how to handle our money because they figured that we were happy, and what we didn't know wouldn't hurt us. That works up until the point when one Ferrarri isn't enough, and you want three. And you want a summer house. Plus you want a million dollars in the bank, and stocks, and this and that. There was no one to take care of that, so it began to cause a lot of havoc. And when the people who were supposed to be taking care of business weren't, that's when the whole thing began to slide.

TS: What was the point where you really hit rock bottom and decided to take control of your life?

JK: I don't think I hit bottom until the band was back together again. I had gotten myself straight by virtue of just not taking chemicals; I did that for three months on my own, and I thought I had that under control. What really was bottom for me was that I knew I had to take it a step further. I mean, I had it under control, but I knew there was something missing—that there was more to it. I also knew that Steven and Joe [Perry] had gone through a rehab, and that Brad [Whitford] had been going to A.A. for a year. So these three guys were on one side of the fence, and they thought Tom and I were still conducting ourselves as if we were still using chemicals. One day we were all sitting in a room, and they were talking to me about it. All of a sudden it dawned on me that they wanted me to go to one of those rehab places. I was flabbergasted. I didn't know what to say, where to look, I was just... overwhelmed. And yet I knew in the back of my mind, in my heart of hearts, that they were right. I had been searching for the next step, and that was it. But initially, my ego would not let me accept that, and I

couldn't say, "You guys are right. I'm gonna go." When I finally committed to going, it was July of '87. My house had burned down the Christmas before—which was a really traumatic experience—and I had spent the entire winter dealing with the insurance companies and rebuilding it. So we had been scheduled to finally move back in on July 3, which we did. On July 4, I went away to this rehab place.

It was a hard thing to do, because I wanted to go, but on the other hand, I really didn't. But after I was up there, I knew I made the right decision. I'm grateful to the guys because they really pushed me to do it, and it turned out to be the most positive experience I ever had. I made a lot of friends up there, I got to learn a lot about Joey, and I got rid of a lot of garbage—a lot of the excess baggage I'd been carrying around for years. I got to look at it and decide what I wanted to keep and what I wanted to throw away, and I ended up throwing most of it away. It was just so enlightening. And when it came time for me to leave, I wasn't in any real hurry because it was a nice, safe place, and it was a nice, therapeutic community.

So I guess that's when I hit rock bottom—when they confronted me to go to the rehab place. This was after the *Done With Mirrors* album, when everybody began to realize that it wasn't the big album it was supposed to be.

After we helped each other get through rehab, there was the change in attitude in the band that made it brand new. And all of a sudden after being up at the rehab place, all I could think about was playing! I was beginning to feel good about myself. I was thinking, "Wow! I can't wait to get back to rehearsal so I can play my drums," because I had this whole new fresh attitude, and I couldn't wait to apply it. So when I went home and started playing, it was the greatest thing in the

**"I'M
A TEAM
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AND I PLAY
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EXTENT
POSSIBLE."**



Photo by Mike Jachties

world. When the band started playing together as we went into pre-production, it felt even better. Being up on stage now, I have the time of my life. I thought I was having fun for the past 12 or 13 years, but now it's a whole lot better.

I even do things now on stage that I would have never done in the past. To be totally honest, to me, drum solos are boring, *period*. If you've seen one, you've seen 'em all; I just needed to either stop doing them or come up with something that was really different. I'm not going to say my soloing is the best or the worst. At the same time, that's not what my forte is. My forte is playing with the band. I know there are drummers out there who may be a whole lot better than me solo-wise, but I'm not really concerned with all that stuff. I'm a team player, and I play my position on the team to the fullest extent possible.

On the other hand, I felt so good about playing that I wanted to do something else, and that's what I've tried to do with my solo. In fact, what I do in my solo is really out of character for me. *[Note: Kramer's solo starts out with him playing behind his kit, then he leaves his drums and begins playing*

the stage by using transistorized sticks. Depending upon which surfaces he hits, the drum sounds he gets vary because it's all hooked up to the outfront desk. He then returns to his kit and winds up his solo with a brief hand-playing segment.] What I do is kind of a novelty thing, but I did it initially just to experiment, and the reaction to it was so great from the audience. I wasn't sure if I should use it after trying it out the first time, but the guys in the band were saying, "There's no way you can stop doing it now," because the reaction had been so positive.

So, like I said, it's good for me because it's out of character to a certain degree. But it's not too far out, because I'm not up there spinning around in a cage or something. It encompasses another step in the new program of life that I'm involved in, and that is to accept another challenge. I don't think it's fair to say to yourself, "I can't do that because that's not what's expected from me." I'm doing this because—aside from the entertainment value—it's not something I would normally do, and it just propels me a little bit more forward. Maybe at some time I'll get tired of doing it, and I'll come up with something else.

But the most important thing for me right now is to maintain the level of playing that I set for myself. I very rarely let myself be content with what I'm doing. Through the years of drugs and alcohol, I always managed to maintain a level of consistency in my playing. Now, that level is a lot higher.

**"ANYBODY
CAN PLAY
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Photo by Gene KimMand

TS: Then you'd say that there has been an improvement?

JK: I think so. I was letting my ego get in the way of striving to go beyond what I thought was good. I never really allowed myself that much space to get better, because in the context of my band, there's not a whole lot of room to stretch out. At the same time, what I do in the context of my band I really enjoy. I like the way it feels, and that's the most important thing. I think the biggest part of what someone's playing—whether it's drums, guitar, or whatever—is feeling. I'm appreciative of how technical some players can be, but I really don't find it too interesting. I like to keep everything—my playing, my life—real simple, solid, dependable, responsible...right on the money all the time. It's a real good feeling. I get the desire to stretch out once in a while, though.

TS: I get the feeling that you like being in control—of your playing and of your life.

JK: Well, yeah. But the only thing that you can really be in control of is yourself. Of course, sometimes control can be a dangerous thing. I had so much control before that I stifled myself, because the control didn't let me progress. It was a safe place to be, so deep down inside, I didn't want to progress.

Now I have the confidence to stretch out and do some other projects, whether they be on the production end or the playing end. When an opportunity comes at a certain point, it'll come at that time for a reason, and that will be the point in time when it's right. And if it's a challenge, then all the better. Now I'm a lot more willing to challenge myself than before, because before I was locked up in that safe little place of having my little spot in the band.

For me, playing is the time when the little kid comes out from inside, and I'm off and running. When I'm sitting behind the drums, I'm not thinking about the bills that have to be paid, or the leak in the roof of my house, or this or that.

When I sit behind my drums, everything is behind me. That hour and a half on stage is time that I'm entitled to. I've worked hard for that. But when it's over, it's back to real life. That's the way it works for me.

But I have to stress that the feeling is not just the finesse with which you play physically. It's the feeling that you put across from being a whole person within—if you are in fact a whole person to begin with. And that's the mark that I'm leaving behind—my expression. I'm maybe a little more fortunate than the next guy, in that my playing will be left on records. I think a lot of people take that opportunity for granted, but it's a very fortunate situation to be in. I've just become more aware and more grateful for all the stuff that I do have, as opposed to being negative and moaning and groaning about all the stuff that I think I don't have—which are things that you more or less have if you really look. So, feeling and emotion are a big part of my playing, and that's where the consistency and the solidity of my playing evolve from.

TS: There are probably times when you have emotional low points. Therefore, do you allow your emotions to affect your playing?

JK: I rely on the drums to convey my expressions, but when I'm feeling low, that's when I often play the best.

TS: Well, since we're on the subject of feelings and how they correlate to playing, I wanted to discuss something that's kind of interesting: For all the years you've said that you used chemicals, you never mixed them with playing. Perhaps the playing was the one thing, outside of the drugs, that was giving



Photo by Gene Kirkland

you what you needed. At the very least, you had the good sense to be aware that partying before a show was totally detrimental to your drumming.

JK: That's true to an extent, but you also have to take into account that you can be living inside an active addiction even without taking drugs at that time. So even though I wasn't physically taking a drink or drugs before going on stage, I was still living in that world and thinking those negative thoughts. So being an addictive person—as I am—doesn't necessitate putting the chemical into the body. That's why I went into rehab after giving up chemicals. For the first three months I was straight; I wasn't physically putting anything into my body, and that was the first good step. But I was still completely out of touch with spirituality, and that's what the whole thing is about—being a nice person, a good person.

So in answer to your question, I was straight when I was going on stage all those times, but I was living in that drug-induced atmosphere.

TS: *Permanent Vacation* displays an array of musical styles. There's a Motown-inspired soul track, a traditional Delta-blues number, and the classic Aerosmith fare of rockers and ballads. It's a good musical resume that illustrates that the band is experimenting.

JK: To me, this album is similar to the kind of stuff

continued on page 48



STEVE



The Right Thing At The Right Time

by Rick Mattingly

It was October, 1980. I had only been living in New York City for a few months, and I had finally been hired for a playing gig. It was for an opera at a local college, and the job consisted of one rehearsal and one performance. I was hired to play timpani, and there was also a percussionist. His name was Steve Ferrera, and from the way he handled the job, I assumed that classical percussion was his specialty. After the performance we shook hands and said that we hoped we'd work together again sometime. But with all of the free-lance percussionists in New York, the odds were that we'd never run into each other again.

Three years or so later, I was working full-time at MD. I got a call one day from someone who was connected with a soap opera called All My Children. She told me that the show featured a guy who played the part of a rock drummer, and that he actually was a drummer, so she thought that our magazine might be interested. She gave me his phone number and his name. It was Steve Ferrera.

I called him, and he said that someone from the TV show had seen him playing in a club somewhere and felt that Steve would be right for the role of the rock drummer they were trying to cast. So he auditioned for the part and got it. He told me a couple of dates that his character would appear on the show so that I could watch it. I didn't actually see him play drums on the show, however. If I hadn't known who he was, I would have assumed that he was just another actor.

Before we could get around to doing any kind of article, the rock band was written out of the show. I didn't hear anything about Steve for a while, and I wondered if he was perhaps pursuing an acting career. Then, a year or so ago, I got a copy of the second Suzanne Vega album, Solitude Standing. I was surprised to see that Vega had a new drummer. It was Steve Ferrera. He was playing drumset on the record, and he was handling it as though that was the only thing he had ever done in his life.

FERRERA



Photo by Ebet Roberts

RM: When I saw you play live with Suzanne Vega, the thing that most impressed me was the range of dynamics. You went from hard, driving drumset playing to the most delicate triangle parts in the course of a single show.

SF: That really sums up the gig. I mean, how many gigs are there where you can groove on the drumset and also play a triangle part—not just hit the triangle, but actually play a triangle *part*. The way that Suzanne sees her music—and the way that we as a band try to approach it every night—is like classical music. Although she always wants the spontaneity of letting whatever happens happen, the nature of her music is very sparse and very "less is more." And so it's classical in the sense that...see, this is something that's hard for people who have never played classical music to understand. Most people think that, because it's written down, it's the same every night. But of course it's not. You can buy 20 different recordings of the same Beethoven symphony, and each one is different. And so we're trying to maintain the basic essence of the music every night. We don't go off into long, self-indulgent solos, so in that sense her music is very concise and specific. But it's the subtleties—like the dynamics—that give it spontaneity and keep it fresh.

It's really cool to be able to play really loud and then play really, really soft. There's something about being able to take it down to the most minimal volume level and still keep the energy. We talk about that a lot: playing the groove really soft but with an intense energy level. That's one of the things about somebody like Elvin Jones or Steve Gadd. They can play a groove with just the tip of the stick on the ride cymbal, but it's so intense. It's so soft that you're leaning forward to hear it, but it's burning. Then they'll snap in something that's really explosive, and immediately go back down.

RM: I remember hearing Bernard Purdie do that. He was playing along with a radio, and he was playing so softly that I didn't even

realize he was playing until I got right in front of the drums. But the groove was incredible.

SF: Yeah, he's another guy. On some of those Aretha records he keeps this burn happening that has the intensity of any heavy metal drummer you've ever heard, but the decibel level is really low.

That's something that I try to be sensitive to. Suzanne's whole sound is based on her acoustic guitar, which is very dynamic. So I try to be sensitive to that, keep the time solid, and keep it interesting. It's a challenge, definitely, which is why I enjoy it. But then, I also enjoy playing burning grooves for hours at a time with an R&B group.

RM: You've obviously got skills in a variety of areas. Let's talk about the background that prepared you for so many different things.

SF: My dad got me into this. He was a jazz drummer who played in big bands in the '40s and '50s, and he was in the army band. I was born on a military base, and my parents have pictures of me sitting behind a snare drum in the band room at age two. I don't ever remember making a conscious decision to be a drummer. It just seems that I always was one.

I remember wanting to take drum lessons when I was about six, but my father wanted me to study piano. So we made a deal that he would let me take drum lessons if I would also take piano. Ultimately, that was the best thing that could have happened, because in my early teens I was able to move into mallet percussion. So he was right, as dads always seem to be.

When I was in high school, I was playing in various community orchestras, but I also played in rock 'n' roll bands. The thing that turned me around was when I went to Tanglewood during the summer between my junior and senior years in high school. I studied with the guys from the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and that was a really great experience. When I went back for my

senior year of high school, I decided that I wanted to do both things: classical and rock 'n' roll. That's when I made my decision to go to the New England Conservatory for college. That was another great experience, because the president of the conservatory, Gunther Schuller, wanted students to have a completely rounded education in music. His idea was that you'd start out in the morning playing Beethoven in the orchestra, and then two hours later you'd play Basie and Ellington charts in big band. In the afternoon you'd play some sort of third-stream music that incorporated jazz and classical elements, and at night you'd play ragtime. So I was doing all of that, and in the meantime, to make a living, I was playing clubs around Boston with a rock band. So by the end of a typical day, I probably covered the entire gamut of music. It was a great education, because I had to be able to play each style authentically.

One of the benefits I got from doing that was learning how music has developed from point A to point B. Each type of music is contingent on what came before it, and it's important to know how we got to where we are. Gunther really stressed that, for instance, to know what Wayne Shorter is doing you have to know what Coltrane was doing, and to know what he was doing you have to know what Dexter [Gordon] and Sidney Bechet did, and so on. It's like that with drumming. A lot of drummers will be really influenced by someone when they start out. Let's say they hear Steve Gadd, and are totally influenced by him. That's great, but they should also know that he's coming from Tony Williams, who is coming from Elvin Jones, who is coming from Max Roach, and so on back to Chick Webb. You have to go back to the earliest guys and see how one guy took it to this point, and then the next guy picked it up and took it to *this* point, and see how it evolved. You can do that in all areas. Look at what John Bonham did, and then see how drummers have taken that to the next level.

So besides all of that, my teachers during my time in Boston—Vic Firth, Gary Burton, and Alan Dawson—were bringing all kinds of other things into my education. Vic Firth, in particular, has had a humongous influence on my playing and my life. Here's a guy who is one of the greatest timpanists in the world, and we'd be studying Mahler timpani parts or whatever, and he'd say, "It's important that you learn this, but you should also go out and play rock 'n' roll and jazz." I've run into a lot of classical players who feel that classical music is the real stuff, and nothing else has any real credibility. But Vic's belief is that you should do everything. He cares so much about making sure that his sticks for heavy metal drummers are as perfect as his classical timpani sticks. He takes that much pride, and I think that's why he's so respected by drummers as a whole.

One of the things that Vic instilled in me was the constant searching to serve the music. Whatever it is—a jazz piece, a rock piece, a Brahms symphony—always be searching for ways to serve the music and make it be right. And to this day, I can call him up for advice. He's a busy guy, but he's never too busy to have a piece of advice.

That's one of the wonderful things about this business: So many of the really great players are so open about sharing things that might have taken them a long time to figure out. Steve Gadd is another guy you can go up to and ask about something; I know because I've spent a lot of time picking his brain. And there are no pretensions or ego involved. He'll say something like, "It's a par-diddle thing that I break up with a couple of tom-tom notes, except that I lead with the left, and that's why it comes out like

that." Some people are so guarded about everything, but a lot of the really great players, like Steve and Vic, are so open.

RM: That's really great that you had people around you who encouraged you to take rock as seriously as classical music. That kind of attitude seems to be the exception rather than the rule.

SF: Oh yeah. In fact, I have a great story about that. I guess it was about '79 or '80. I was in college, and I had gone to Tanglewood again for the summer. I became friends with another percussionist there, and his name was Kenny Aronoff. In all the time we spent together, neither of us mentioned to the other that we played

anything other than classical music, because the vibe of Tanglewood is very classical, you know? I remember the last concert we played together was something like a Mahler symphony with a lot of percussion. After that we shook hands and said goodbye.

We went our separate ways, and I really hadn't heard anything about him until a few years later when I was touring with Christine McVie. I was sitting in a hotel lounge in Amsterdam and I looked up and saw Kenny sitting there. He saw me at the same time, and both of our mouths dropped open. We ran over, gave each other a hug, and at the same time we both said, "What the hell are you

doing here?" I told him I was touring with Christine, he told me he was with John Cougar Mellencamp, and we both started laughing so hard we couldn't speak, because the last time we'd seen each other we were playing Mahler, and now we were both touring with rock 'n' roll bands. But we agreed that playing classical music had been great training, and we were both glad that we had done it.

RM: Specifically, how do you feel that playing in orchestras affected

"IT'S FINE FOR DRUMMERS TO SHOW OFF SOME THINGS WHEN THEY GET THEIR LITTLE SPOTS, BUT THEY SHOULD BE SHOWING THAT THEY'RE GREAT ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT BY FITTING INTO THE WHOLE THING."

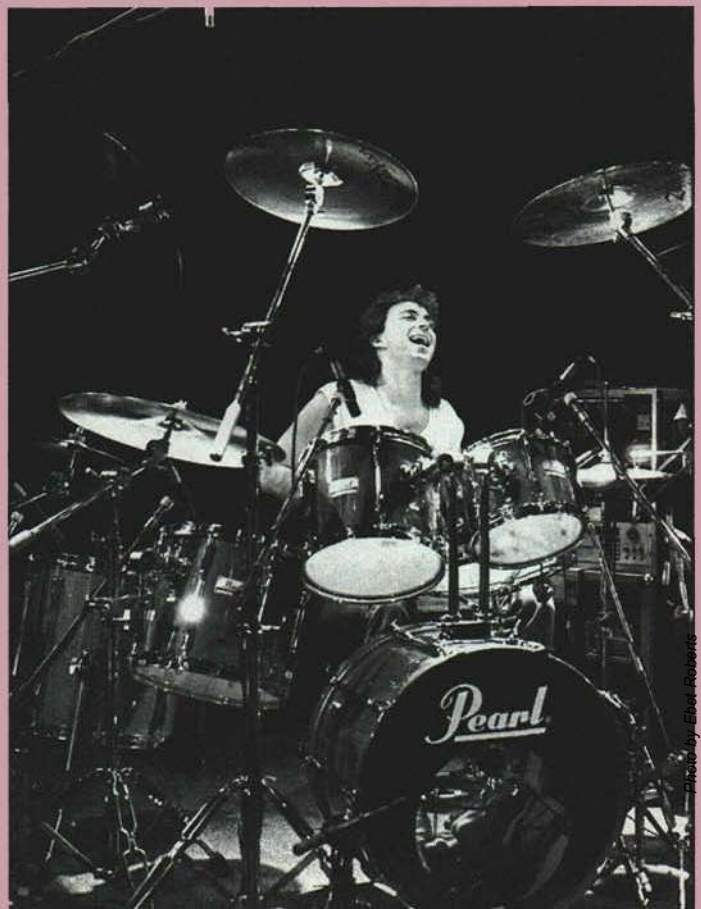


Photo by Ebel Roberts

Restless Heart's John Ditttrich

by Robyn Flans

Country music has done a good deal of changing in the past few years. It still has its traditional artists like George Jones and newcomers to that style like Randy Travis, but currently there is a very large portion of country that, had it been released in the '70s, would have been considered rock music. Today, for example, the Eagles'pre-*Hotel California* work would probably fit most comfortably on country radio. Perhaps the most exciting group of that kind to stir the country airwaves is Restless Heart. In fact, while their country rock music can be heard on country radio and their second album, *Wheels*, rose to number one on the country charts, a few of their songs crossed over and became A/C (adult contemporary) hits.

Ironically, Restless Heart's drummer, John Ditttrich, started out playing neither rock nor country music; he started as a jazz drummer. John's dad had enjoyed playing drums as a youngster, and while the senior Mr. Ditttrich became a surgeon, his son followed in his musical footsteps. The difference was that John took music very seriously. It came naturally to him, and became all he wanted to do. He studied with Ed Shaughnessy while attending a community college, and went on to North Texas State, where he admits to having less than wonderful experiences. He regrets having turned down the drum seat in Woody Herman's band in 1979, but he had already planned a move to Los Angeles. Seeking to conquer his musical dreams of playing in a successful band, John finally landed in Nashville. His dedication paid off. The dream is finally coming true.

JD: I'll tell you exactly when I got serious about being a drummer: I had never heard a drummer who really excited me until I got to high school. All this time I had dabbled with violin and trumpet on the side, and at one point in school, I was actually playing timpani in the percussion section and running to the trumpet section to play third trumpet parts. I remember the high school band director asking me who my favorite drummer was. I was brought up with the Beatles and Rolling Stones, but Ringo and Charlie Watts, although excellent at what they do, didn't excite me. He asked me if I had ever heard of Buddy Rich, and I said, "Buddy who?" And he said, "Come with me." He took me to the listening room of the school, and he played Buddy's *Swingin' New Big Band*, where he did the "West Side Story" medley. I was sitting there, dumbfounded, listening to his solo and saying, "That's impossible; nobody

can do that." Then I was on a quest. I went out and got that album, and started dissecting his style. Over a period of years and many, many hours in my basement, I learned to play by analyzing his style, and an incredible respect for the way the man played with a band developed. A lot of times, it was just as exciting to hear him play with a band or behind a soloist as it was to hear him do a drum solo. To this day, I listen to those recordings, and it still blows me away that he could do what he did. But that's what lit the fire.

RF: What did you do after you got that fire lit under you?

JD: I started practicing like a demon.

RF: Did your father encourage you?

JD: Yes and no. He was encouraging from the standpoint that at least it was keeping me off the streets. He felt I was learning discipline, how to plan my time, and how to study, which he was extremely happy about. He was not really keen on the idea of my going into music as a full-time vocation, however, because it is such a difficult business. And although he knew very, very few people who had ever done that for a living, he had heard all the horror stories of the music business. I think the turning point with Dad was when I took him to New York when I was studying with Ed Shaughnessy, and he saw the level of professionalism in the whole organization of the *Tonight Show* band. He liked Ed a lot, and he saw how things worked. I think he began to realize I was serious about it.

RF: Let's talk about the training you had leading up to Ed.

JD: I had never studied drumset, per se, until I studied with Ed, because when I was going to high school and I really started playing seriously, there weren't any drumset teachers. I was forced, more or less, to learn on my own.

RF: How did you go about it?

JD: By listening to records and sitting down behind a set and analyzing what a drummer was doing, how a drummer achieved a certain pattern, the sticking, how many different ways there are to play the same lick on a set of drums, etc.

RF: What material were you dissecting?

JD: I was listening mostly to big band jazz at the time—a lot of Buddy Rich. I had also gotten into some small band jazz and some drummers like Tony Williams, who, at the time, I didn't understand at all. What Tony Williams was doing was so far over my head—and I'm talking about the early stuff with Miles. I would sit down behind my drums after I had listened to a certain track

on an album three, four, or five times, and had gotten the basic feel. I would isolate the trouble spots and play those spots over and over again, until I actually had most of them memorized. Then I would sit behind the drums with a set of headphones on, and play through the track until I had memorized and was able to play almost the exact figures that the drummer on that particular track was playing. I had a great deal of difficulty with solos. They took me the longest to figure out, and some of them I could never do. There was a live Oscar Peterson album on which I believe Paul Motian was the drummer. He did this incredible drum solo in 3/4 time, which I sat down and copied almost lick for lick. But there were certain sections of it that I didn't have any idea of what he was doing. But by not having a teacher, I had such a natural curiosity about how things were put together, that I was off in my own world and not stuck with a preconceived notion of how to play a ride cymbal, or the proper technique of the left hand. All I knew was, "This is what I hear, this is what I want to play, and how can I play it?" This is where my technique actually grew from, and it grew mostly from the common sense approach of "What is the fastest way to get from a snare drum to a cymbal?"

RF: These are the advantages of teaching yourself, yet you knew you needed to have the formal education, too. How did you know that?

JD: I was fairly good in high school with reading concert-band snare drum material, but when the high school dance band put a chart in front of me, that could have been hieroglyphics. It was an entirely new set of rules. You cannot look at a drum chart and strictly interpret what is written, because it's not a concert piece. A lot of times they will notate a ride cymbal pattern as a dotted 8th note followed by a 16th note. If you literally interpret that, you're not going to swing with the band, because you're going to sound like a concert snare drummer interpreting a jazz chart.

RF: How do you integrate that?

JD: I saw what was on the page and tried to play it correctly the way it was notated. But that didn't work. I wasn't playing what the band was playing, so my band director pointed out to me that he realized it was written that way, but the way it was played was more of a triplet feel. They literally



Photo by Rick Malkin

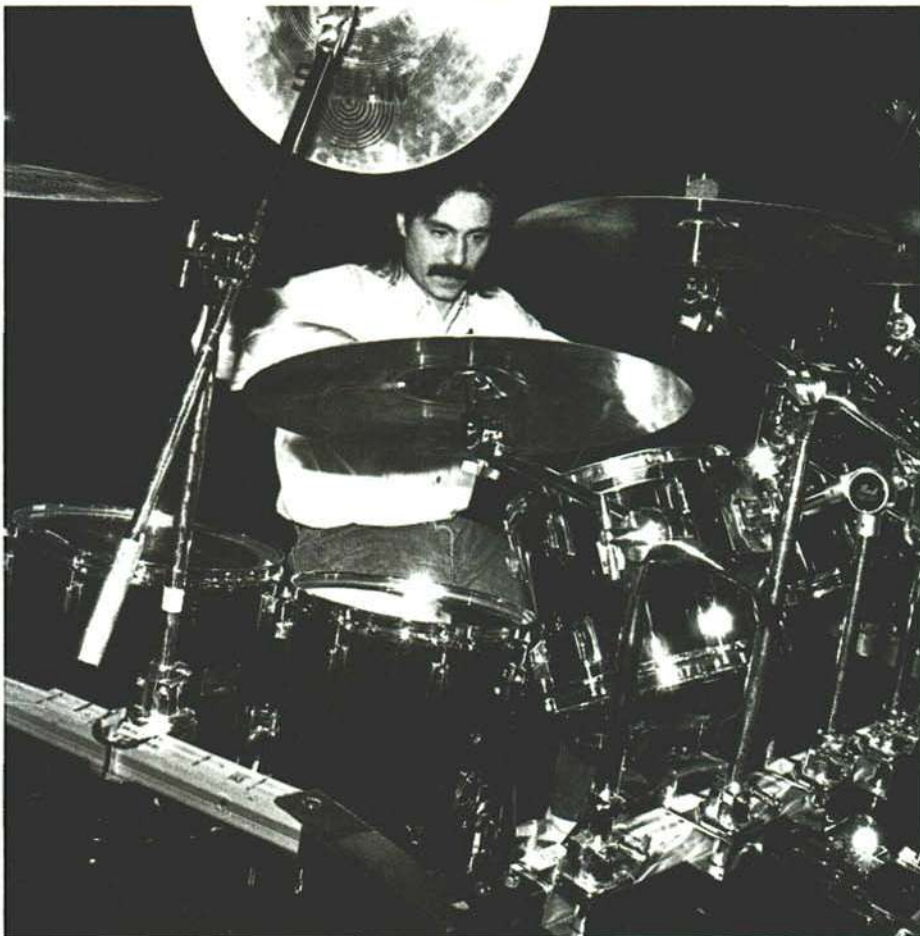


Photo by Rick Malkin

had to walk me through all these different ways of interpreting the different things you see on a piece of music. I was trying to play it all. There were four beats on the bass drum and I saw 2 and 4 on the snare drum written and the "ding, dinga, ding, dinga, ding" on the cymbal...I was playing all this, but it didn't swing. Over a period of time, I gradually came to realize that it's a road map that tells you where you are in the chart. It tells you major changes in tempo and gives you major ensemble figures to accent with the band. It took probably a year for me to make heads or tails out of the drum chart.

RF: At one time, you related a story to me about when you were in junior college in a progressive rock band that played a lot of Mahavishnu stuff, and when the audience wanted to hear the Rolling Stones, you realized you didn't know how to play a simple 2 and 4 groove.

JD: We started a group when I was in junior college called Mad Hatter that played very progressive fusion-type music. We did some Mahavishnu Orchestra and Elvin Jones and things like that. We didn't really care whether we made any money at it; we did it for fun and to expand our own knowledge and abilities to play what we wanted to play. We were so different from anyone else at the time that we had trouble getting bookings. Our agent was telling us that the club owners were saying how unbelievable we were, but that the dance floor was

empty. They wanted us to throw in a little contemporary rock 'n' roll, and of course our reaction was, "Hey, we're players." But it did become an economic fact of life. The harsh reality hit me when I tried to learn a song called "Brown Sugar," which I am sure most of us are familiar with. It's just straight-ahead 2 and 4 garage rock, but I had no earthly idea how to play it. I was playing 2 and 4, but the groove wasn't there because none of us in that band had really tuned in to a good bass groove or rhythm guitar, and a drummer has to lock into that.

RF: So all along you had been learning your individual instrument, and now you had to learn how to function within a group.

JD: Exactly. We were a group of soloists who all of a sudden found themselves having to become a band.

RF: So what did you do?

JD: I took the records home of the material we were learning and really analyzed them. I had to listen quite a bit, and not just to the drums, because that had been a big mistake of mine up to that point. I hadn't listened to other things; I had listened only to the drums. Then one day it dawned on me: "That's really interesting what the bass player did with the drummer." And that's the key: what the bass player did *with* the drummer, what the rhythm guitar is doing *with* the keyboards. Then I realized I had been listening to myself play and not anyone else, and I couldn't play 2 and 4,

because I didn't know what anybody else was doing. I started to listen to other people in the band, and I began to play off of them rather than having the attitude of, "I am the drummer; you follow me." That was a big attitude adjustment.

RF: When did you get into the orchestral approach?

JD: When I went to college. I had made the decision in high school that I wanted to go to North Texas State University, because I wanted to play big band. I went to Onondaga Community College in Syracuse, New York because I realized I was way behind in my musical education, and that I was not going to be able to compete at a good four-year school. The music programs at the community colleges in New York State allowed me to get in at the college entrance level, and they gave me the opportunity to learn and to prove myself.

It was a requirement as a percussion major to study orchestral snare drum, mallets, and timpani. I remember my first formal lesson in college. I walked in, and the teacher wanted to see how advanced I was on snare drum. My reading wasn't great because I hadn't really had anybody show me reading at the college level. But he didn't think that was a problem. Timpani wasn't something that was difficult for me, but mallets were a whole different set of circumstances. He said, "Have you played mallets before?" I said, "No, I haven't." "Okay, next week I want you to come in here and know all your major and minor scales, ascending and descending, three octaves," and I looked at him and said, "What's a major scale?" He pointed to a marimba and said, "Show me where middle C is," and I said, "I don't know." He said, "How did you ever get in this school?" I explained that I had auditioned with two snare drum pieces. He showed me where middle C is and a major scale. I had to work like a dog to get it all done, and he gave me two weeks, instead of one. But I did it. I had such a strong desire to succeed. The idea of flunking out of school scared me more than death itself. I worked very, very hard, and I was very successful at that level. I really came alive my last semester there, and I was making straight A's on all my lessons.

RF: How did you come in contact with Ed Shaughnessy?

JD: When I was in high school, our lab band director, Neil Hartwick, was very impressed with my desire to learn. There were several of us in that band with a burning desire to learn about music, but I was a senior at that time while the others

were juniors and sophomores. I believe he decided to bring Ed Shaughnessy in because I had only one more year to go. I had never seen a true professional play in a one-on-one situation.

Ed impressed me so much with his knowledge and the way he could read things so quickly and play with a band so well. The whole time he was there, I was on his heels like a puppy, bugging him constantly: "Can I play some time for you?" I was so hungry to find out how to be a good player. Finally he said, "Okay, play some time for me." He had all his drums set off to the side of the stage, so I started dragging his entire set out. He said, "Do you need all that to play time?" I said, "Gee, I don't know." He said, "Just get a cymbal." So I got the ride cymbal and a pair of sticks, and he said, "Okay, play me some time," and I think I said, "What tempo?" He said, "It doesn't matter; just play some time." So I started on the cymbal, and all of a sudden, I couldn't move my arm; the stick wouldn't come down. I looked up, and he had the end of the drumstick in his hand over my head. He had grabbed it in midair. He said, "What are you doing way up here?" I said, "I don't know." I was totally stunned. He said, "You play time on a cymbal. You can't keep good time up in the air away from the cymbal." He showed me how to do it accurately.

RF: What did you learn from watching a professional in that kind of situation?

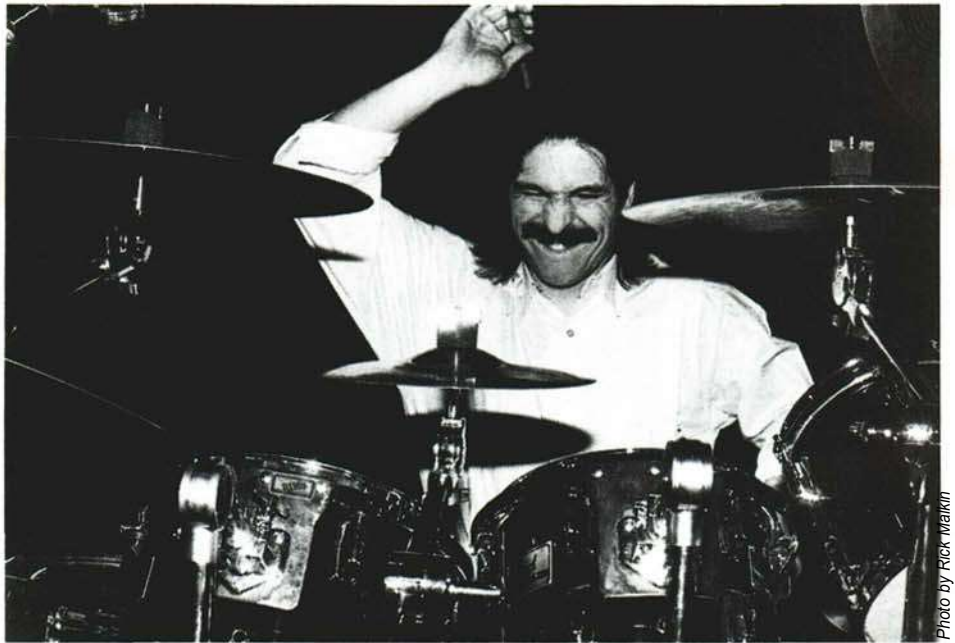
JD: That I had a long, long way to go.

RF: When did you ask him if you could study with him?

JD: When I moved to Syracuse after high school, I decided I needed a good teacher. I had heard Buddy Rich on the *Tonight Show* say that Ed was the best there was.

RF: How far away is Syracuse from New York City?

JD: About 290 miles. I called Ed, he said he remembered me, and asked how I was planning to get to New York to take lessons once a month. Thinking very quickly, I said, "I'm going to fly." He said okay, and that if I were going to drive or take a bus, he wouldn't consider it because it would be too difficult; I'd never make it. The reality was that I couldn't take a plane; I didn't have enough money. I was working weekends learning how to play country & western music in these little bars to make enough money to go down to New York. It took me a month to earn the money for the



bus, the lesson, and my meals, and pay for my lunches and gas to school. The only bus that would get me to Manhattan by 11:00 a.m. was a bus that left Syracuse somewhere between 1:00 and 3:00 in the morning. This was not an express bus; it stopped at every stop, and I had a change to make in Albany, which was somewhere around 7:00 in the morning. I'd get in to New York City around 10:00.

RF: You once described Ed to me as "nonsense."

JD: I learned that very early in my lessons with Ed. I once waited outside the room

bother going at all. The entire time I studied with him, I believe I only made one real serious error on something we were working on. I had practiced it the wrong way. It was a series of four 8th notes in a rather fast pattern, and it was a swing tempo. I had practiced it playing all four 8th notes with my left hand, so here I was at a tempo somewhere along the lines of 114, but of course it was uneven. Ed explained that when you have three or more 8th notes on the snare drum, come off the cymbal and play them hand-to-hand so they're even and precise. I had practiced it wrong for a month, and it was so ingrained that I couldn't break it even after he corrected me. But right off, he instilled into me what it was going to take for me to be able to compete on a professional level.

RF: Why did you choose North Texas State?

JD: I chose it basically because of the lab band program. My high school band director had a copy of the *Lab '67* album, when Ed Soph was in the band and they did a Buddy chart called "Norwegian Wood." It was a killer band, and I was so impressed with the level of playing that I knew that was where I wanted to go.

RF: You have indicated to me that you had both good and bad experiences there. Can you be specific?

JD: Looking back on the situation, I can see where a lot of the fault lay in my attitude. I guess I had this very idealistic attitude that a school was a place for academic learning, and not a place for politics. What I found at North Texas State University was a mixture of both. I guess I was a little spoiled, because in my high school lab band I was the only drummer

**"IF YOU CAN'T PLAY TIME,
AND YOU CAN'T PLAY A
GROOVE, AND YOU CAN'T
PLAY WITH PEOPLE, THEN
YOU CAN THROW
TECHNIQUE OUT THE
WINDOW."**

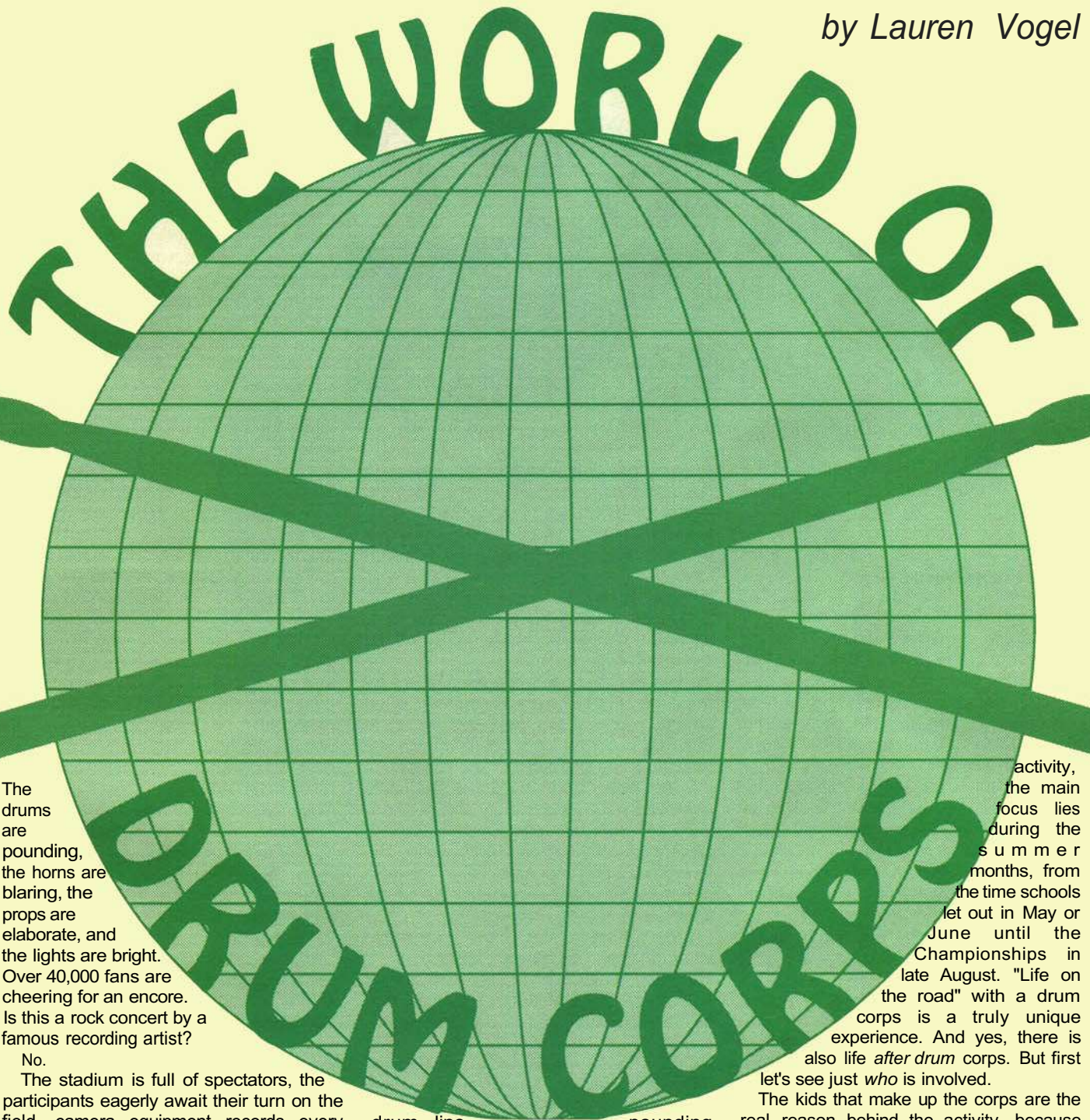
and listened to Ed with a student who was having a lot of trouble. I overheard Ed say, "Look, I'm going to send you back to your other teacher." The man only had so much time that he could teach, and there were so many people who wanted to study with him. He didn't have time to coddle you along, so you either did the work and grasped it or you didn't. I made a mental note right then and there that when you show up for a lesson with Mr. Shaughnessy, you either come prepared or don't

continued on page 80



Photo by Rick Mattingly

THE WORLD OF DRUM CORPS



The drums are pounding, the horns are blaring, the props are elaborate, and the lights are bright. Over 40,000 fans are cheering for an encore. Is this a rock concert by a famous recording artist?

No.

The stadium is full of spectators, the participants eagerly await their turn on the field, camera equipment records every movement, and the judges tally their scores to determine a winner. Is this an international sporting event?

No.

"This" is drum corps: a combination of music and motion in a competitive setting; a learning experience on many levels; a way of life.

Anyone who has ever been to a football game is familiar with a marching band. A drum & bugle corps is a distant cousin to the marching band, one that features brass bugles (no woodwind instruments) in addition to the color guard (flags and rifles) and, of course, the drums. Nothing can quite create the excitement of a marching

drum line, pounding out a rhythmical cadence as they move down the street in a parade.

Competitive drum & bugle corps takes the traditional parade units and moves them onto a football field for a well-rehearsed musical performance combined with an intricate pattern of drill movement. Drum Corps International (DCI) oversees the junior drum & bugle corps—those whose members have not yet reached the ripe old age of 22. (There is also a senior corps division, which is open to people of all ages.) The size limit for a drum corps is 128 members, of which approximately 30 are members of the drum line.

Although drum corps is a year-round

activity, the main focus lies during the summer months, from the time schools let out in May or June until the Championships in late August. "Life on the road" with a drum corps is a truly unique experience. And yes, there is also life *after* drum corps. But first let's see just *who* is involved.

The kids that make up the corps are the real reason behind the activity, because drum corps is for them. While some corps are all-male or all-female, the majority are co-ed. And while drum lines tend to remain male-dominated, there are plenty of female percussionists around, too. There are high school students and college students, music majors and non-majors, percussionists and drummers. In fact, drum corps is a melting pot of all types of performers.

The youngest members are usually high school students, although some may be even younger. Interest can develop through a school music program that concentrates on a corps style of performance, or through friends already involved with the corps. Once involved with a drum corps, many



The Phantom Regiment from Rockford, Illinois, unloading their equipment truck.

students continue their participation in the activity until they "age out" on their 22nd birthday.

Other percussionists do not become exposed to the competitive world of drum corps until they attend college. The main reason for their late interest is a lack of drum corps in their local area. Although many people in the East and Midwest are familiar with corps sponsored by the VFW or CYO, that is not the case with those in the western or southern parts of the country.

A college student may decide to join a drum corps for several reasons: a chance to drum all summer long with his or her friends, an opportunity to tour all over the country, the thrill of performing in front of thousands of people, a chance to further his or her total percussion education by being exposed to all aspects of the marching world, or maybe even just to participate in this "musical sport."

For example, Corey Nygaard is a 17-year-old percussionist who plays in the "pit" for the Spartans Drum & Bugle Corps from Vancouver, Washington. He had been playing in his high school stage band, but was not exposed to drum corps until his senior year, when a representative from the corps came to recruit at his school. What makes Corey even more unique is that, due to a physical impairment, he does not have hands on the ends of his arms. Yet he is so busy performing on numerous instruments on the field that it is difficult to even keep up with him.

How has drum corps affected Corey? "My attitude has changed a *lot*," he replies. "I'm more disciplined. I've learned to take things and finish them instead of starting something and then not finishing it. You can't start drum corps and not finish it. It's a way of life!"

Troy Breaux is an example of a college student (majoring in music education at Louisiana State University) who didn't join a corps until he was 19. He started playing drums in the fifth grade and soon began

studying privately with John Wooton, who is currently on the staff of the Phantom Regiment Drum & Bugle Corps from Rockford, Illinois. Did drum corps meet all of Troy's expectations? "Yes, it did. I'd heard so many horror stories, I thought it was going to be rougher than it really was.

"I think a lot of people who are more into orchestral or jazz music don't appreciate drum corps as much as we do," he elaborates. "I get that impression from a lot of people. But I also play in the LSU Wind Ensemble as well as a lot of jazz, and I still love drum corps. It can help you in the long run. I've learned the mental part of playing from corps. I have definitely improved on concentration and performance. My practice habits come from having to concentrate hour after hour during the long days of practice. And I believe being a rudimental drummer is definitely a part of a percussionist's total aspect."

Larry Cohen combines two traits found in drum corps' members. Although he is interested in music, he is a pre-med student at Northeastern University in Boston. And he has been involved in the drum corps activity since he was 13 years old—first with his hometown corps, the Bridgemen (from Bayonne, New Jersey), and now with the Star of Indiana. Larry has never studied percussion formally outside of the corps, so while he knows some drumset and a little keyboard percussion, he calls himself "pretty much a snare drummer."

What has he learned from drum corps? "With sacrifice comes reward," replies Larry. "You have to give up a lot to become great. More than anything else, I've learned how to work hard for a goal. With my major being what it is, I can apply that idea and realize that it might take 11 years, but there's going to be a big reward at the end of the road."

Not only do the drummers give up a lot, but so do the instructional staffs—the creative, guiding forces behind the corps. Most drum & bugle corps maintain large staffs,

ranging from a dozen to more than three times that number (depending on the size and budget of the corps). Members of the staff specialize in certain areas—percussion, horns, marching and maneuvering (M & M), visual, etc. A drum staff is usually supervised by the caption head, who oversees the program and writes the "book" (the drum parts) for the musical program. The other members of the staff may consist of a snare specialist, someone to work with the tenor drums, another to spend time with the bass drums and cymbals, yet another percussionist to coach the grounded performers in the pit, and maybe even a special repair technician to take care of the equipment on a daily basis. Most staff members are part-time, holding down jobs in the "real world," a majority of which are in the field of music education. These careers allow for summers off—ideal for a corps' touring schedule.

A typical yearly cycle begins in early September, following the Championships a few weeks before. (The first week after "finals" is spent readjusting to normal hours and sleeping in a real bed again. More on that later.) At this time, the staff gets together to brainstorm for next summer's 11 1/2-minute show. The music is selected and writing is begun on the horn and drum parts, as well as the drill. Auditions usually take place in October or November, with final cuts being made by December. Newcomers to the corps must prove their playing abilities, while "veterans" who marched previously are usually assured their place in the line.

An average drum line consists of seven to ten snare drummers, four or five multiple-tom (or tenor) players, four to six bass drummers, and several cymbal players. This group, nicknamed the "battery," both plays and marches during the performance. The balance of the drum line is grounded in the "pit"—an area marked off in front of the field between the 35-yard lines. This area is literally a total percussion ensemble, consisting of bells, xylophones, marimbas, vibes, timpani, toms, cymbals, gongs, and even drumsets.

One corps that had a unique approach to instrumentation last summer was the Knights from the Quad Cities in Illinois. Percussion instructor Pat Petrillo, himself a former member of the Bayonne Bridgemen and current free-lance artist in New York City, explains: "We didn't get enough people to fill out the line as I wanted to. We had 11 people, and I decided to put them all on the front sideline. Since our music was a rock 'n' roll idiom [Emerson, Lake & Palmer's *Brain Salad Surgery*], I felt it was too difficult to write this kind of music for marching drums. I wanted to do something authentic, as well as teach the kids some drumset." Their final instrumentation included two six-piece drumsets, five keyboard instruments, tonal bass drums mounted on a special rack,

concert timpani, numerous accessories, and even a large ten-piece drumset on the backfield to complete their all-rock show.

"I wanted to do more textural things," continues Pat. "For example, we use brake drums and vibes together to create a steel drum effect, and a set of six RotoToms, which adds a whole new texture. Plus we use lots of different cymbals—China-types, ice bells, you name it."

With a section of five rotating drumset players, did most of the kids have a drumset background? "Some of them did," Pat answers. "We did a lot of work over the wintertime on their drumset technique, emphasizing independence exercises—very much like a regular drum line would do on marching drums. We also did a lot of style studies, from authentic Brazilian sambas, to various rock grooves, to even teaching double bass technique. We tried to separate their limbs a little bit because the parts were really spread out."

Focusing on a more traditional type of approach to the drum line is the Star of Indiana. Their huge success and seventh place finish (high for a corps that is just three years old) bring over 150 interested young drummers to their auditions in the fall. Their "weed-out weekend" in early November narrows the number of applicants down to near 50, and by December their ratio of players to staff is back to normal. During the winter months they teach basic playing techniques like strokes, taps, singles, rolls, etc. By January or February they start teaching the actual show, which is finished by May—just in time for the start of the competitive season.

Mark Wessels, percussion instructor for the Sky Ryders Drum & Bugle Corps from Hutchinson, Kansas, another "Top Twelve" corps, explains their year-round program: "We generally start designing the show in October, start recruiting at our first camp in late November, and try to have the drum line set by January. During the first few months, we recruit as many people to audition for us as we can and try to teach them our style to see how many people will work in our line. Some corps try to just get the best players, but we also consider a player's potential ability to improve. Sometimes the 'good' players don't want to really put in the work that you have to during the summertime, and a few of them wind up being some of the worst players, while some of the weaker players who really work hard tend to be the best players by the end of the summer.

"After the line is set in January," Mark continues, "we have a camp in Hutchinson once a month. In our corps' case, since so many of our drummers are from Texas, we have at least one camp in the Dallas area, too." For students involved in a busy spring semester, there is little extra time for out-of-state trips, not to mention the increased expense.

The Sky Ryders' drum line consists of



The Spartans Drum & Bugle Corps from Vancouver, Washington, performing at the DO prelims.

seven snares, four quints, five bass drums, and nine people in the pit. Although many members of the drum line do have prior drumset experience, they do not have an actual set on the field. "We have a psuedo-drumset in the pit," laughs Mark. "The setup has concert toms, a hi-hat, several ride and crash cymbals—just no bass drum."

As winter turns to spring and warmer weather moves across the country, the drum corps slowly move their music rehearsals outdoors to begin incorporating the drill and movement into their programs. By the time schools let out in late May or early June, most of the kids that had commuted to their off-season corps' camps move to their "summer hometowns." (While some corps allow the wintertime commutes of their out-of-state members, other corps—like the Blue Devils of Concord, California and the Vanguard of Santa Clara, California—require all members to move in by the first of the year to attend weekly, not monthly, rehearsals. Just as all corps have their own unique style and music, they also have various approaches to their year-round program.)

The month of June usually begins with many rehearsals and a few local shows on weekends. Each performance brings a small amount of progress to the show, and the judges' scores and criticisms are carefully analyzed and applied. In 1987, the corps'

total score (out of 100 points) allowed three judges (out of nine) to carefully assess the drum line's performance: ten points for "Field" (how the drummers play); ten points for "Ensemble" (how they perform and react with each other); and ten points for "General Effect" (which includes sub-captions for Repertoire, Showmanship, and Coordination). A good drum line can definitely improve a corps' score and placement, so all the countless hours of practice and rehearsal *do* pay off in the performance. (Note: DCI revised their rules for 1988, reducing the judging panel from nine to six, utilizing only two percussion judges awarding 15 points each.)

The summer is usually divided into two tours—the first one being centered around the corps' hometown and the second tour traveling across the country for a culmination in the city hosting the DCI Championships. Over the past few years, "finals" have been in cities as diverse as Madison, Wisconsin, Miami, and Montreal. Kansas City, Missouri is the site of the 1988 Championships on August 20.

Being "on tour" is definitely the dream of many performers, including drummers—performing in a different city every night, staying in luxurious hotels, eating in fancy restaurants, traveling by chartered jet. Right? Wrong! (Well, the corps usually *do* perform in a different city every night.)

Photo by Lauren Vogel

continued on page 93



The Sky Ryders from Hutchinson, Kansas, rehearsing indoors on a rainy day.

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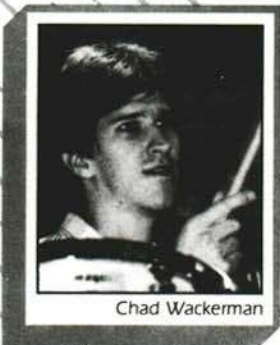
Before he played double drums with Phil Collins in Genesis, Chester Thompson played double drums in Frank Zappa's band. Who was the other drummer?

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- 1) Submit postcards only; be sure to include your name, address, and telephone number.
- 2) Your entry must be postmarked by September 1, 1988.
- 3) You may enter as many times as you wish. All entries must be mailed individually.
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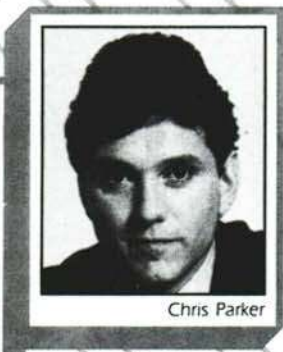
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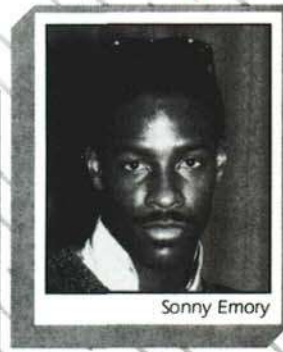
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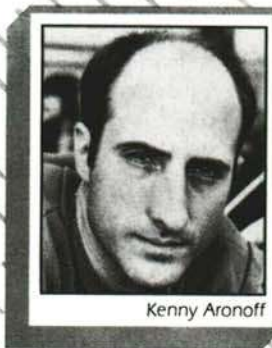
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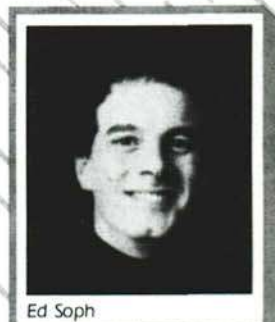
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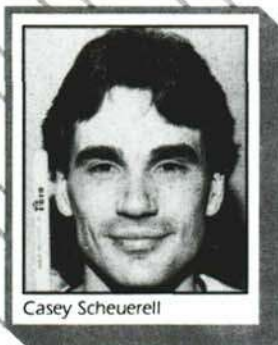
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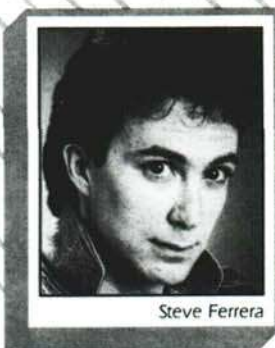
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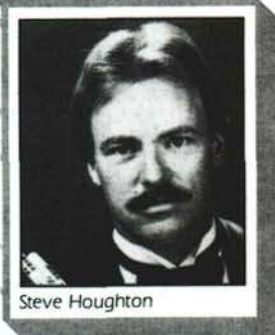
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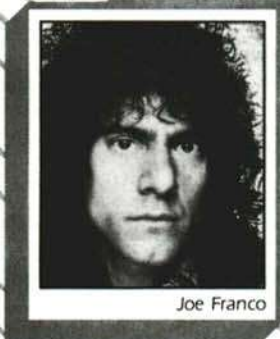
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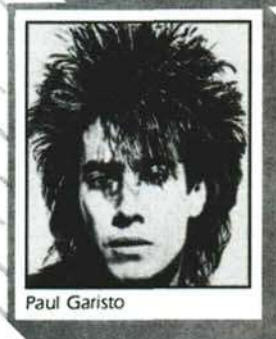
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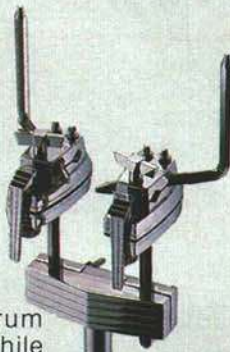
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two, lead with the right foot.

The following examples are all based on the previous two exercises. Begin practicing these examples by playing the fills alone. Once you are comfortable with the fills, precede each

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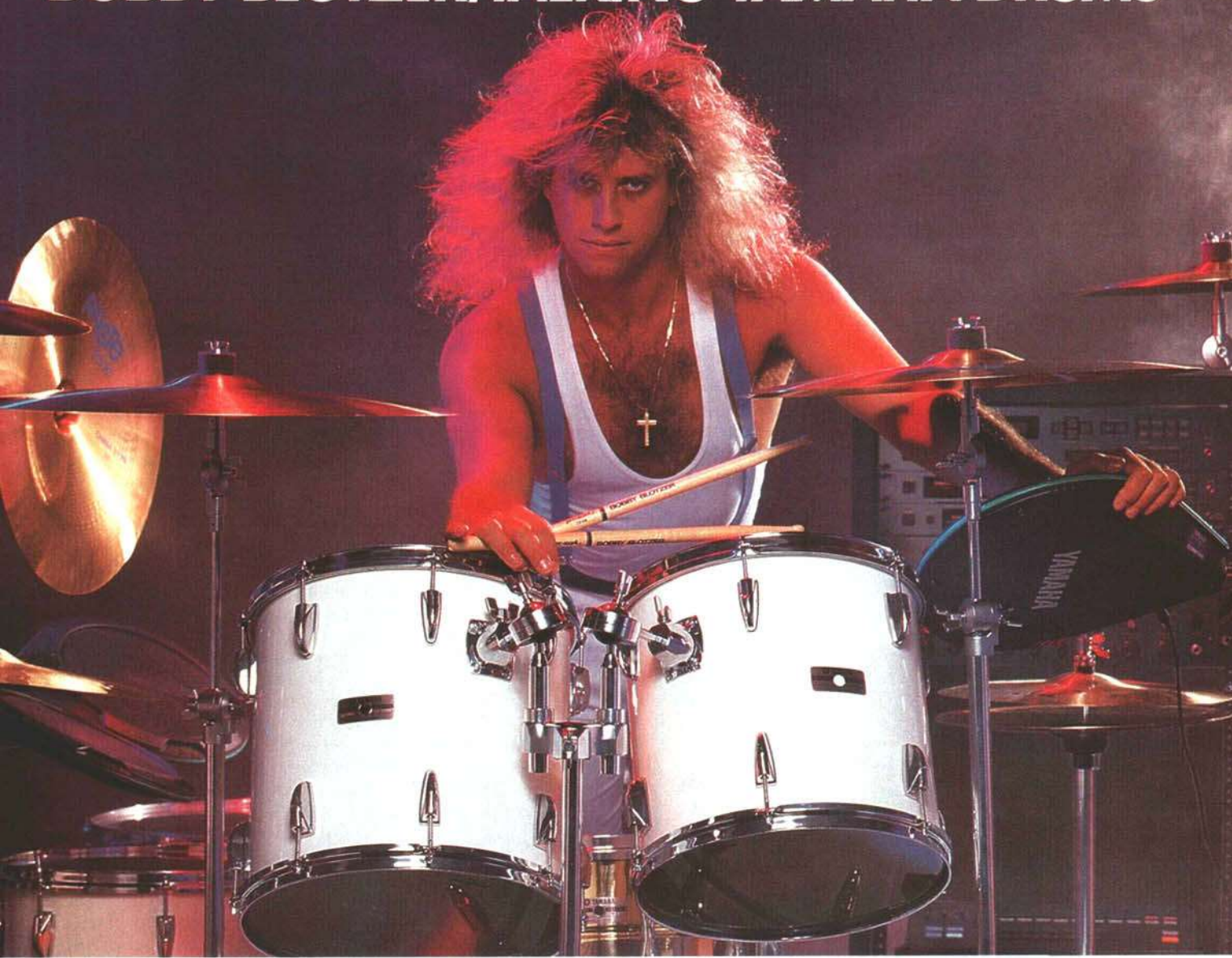
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by Brian Alpert

Playing Loud And Staying Healthy

When drummers pursue high-volume technique (due to the style of music and/or the nature of the venues in which they perform), they are exposed to a range of potentially debilitating physical problems. All are serious, and none should be taken lightly.

Minor injuries (like strains or blisters) tend to occur when drummers "cheat" in order to compensate for a special situation or condition—like having to play louder than they are accustomed to doing. The best means of prevention for these minor injuries is to increase the strength in the hands—especially in the critical fulcrum area. With more strength, "cheating" is unnecessary, and these ailments will be less likely. Note, however, that developing a strong fulcrum is not the same as squeezing the stick in a stressful fashion. It is quite possible for drummers to possess a powerful fulcrum, and yet play in a relaxed manner. It's very important to avoid stress, and here's why:

Drummers who make an improper attempt to play loudly are setting themselves up as potential targets for tendinitis. This is an inflammation of the tendons in response to stress occurring over an extended period of time. It is a debilitating, slow-healing condition, and can be very serious. In order to avoid tendinitis and other muscular-type injuries as you develop your ability to play at loud volumes, follow these guidelines:

1. Work up to new volume levels. Like any other technique, volume and power are acquired a bit at a time.

2. Maintain a good overall physical condition. Given the athletic nature of high-volume technique, it behooves us to be in the best possible shape.

3. Stretching is a *must!* Drummers should include a good bit of stretching in their warm-up routines. Stretching out the entire body is desirable, but pay particular attention to the hands, wrists, elbows, and shoulders. These are the most vulnerable spots. (Don't forget about the knees, ankles, calves, and thigh muscles, either. These get quite a workout in power playing, especially if you play double bass.)

4. Be sensitive to pain. It is your body's way of indicating a problem. Allow any strained or tender spots to heal *completely* before continuing. The constant re-injuring of tendons can lead to tendinitis.

5. Above all, *play relaxed*. This is a primary goal and a key to avoiding injury.

Unfortunately, no amount of relaxation can eliminate the most troubling element of today's high-volume environment. Anyone who works with or is exposed to loud noise over a period of time is threatened with potential hearing loss. There are a few ways of addressing this problem:

1. *Avoid playing music that you determine to be too loud.* This may be unrealistic for some, but it is certainly an option. I know a number of fine players who refuse to play in any situation that could possibly result in permanent damage to their hearing. After all, our ears are our most vital asset; we spend years developing them. Once damaged, *ears do not heal!*

2. *Employ some kind of hearing protection.* Earplugs are the most common, and perhaps the most realistic choice. I strongly recommend this option. There are many kinds of earplugs, of varying effectiveness and quality. I prefer the foam plugs that are designed to be compressed and then allowed to expand to fill the ear.

They are disposable and may be purchased in quantity. (Naturally, one must take care to follow the manufacturer's instructions when employing any of these devices.) Initially, foam plugs blocked out *too much* sound for my taste, so I started reducing them in size to suit my needs. Now I have gotten quite used to them. In fact, when I play in loud situations *without* them, it is shocking how painful the volume is. I don't need them to play jazz (as that is generally quieter), and I find that they are a bit of a bother when a gig requires a lot of onstage *verbal* communication. But in a comfortable, familiar situation I *always* wear them, and suffer no hindrance in my ability to play and hear what is going on around me. Some may consider earplugs undesirable, but again, we're talking about preserving one's hearing; a certain amount of compromise is in order.

3. *Do nothing and hope for the best.* I cannot recommend this option. If one is involved in a loud music situation for any length of time, and does nothing to protect his/her hearing, some amount of hearing loss will invariably occur.

So far I have treated the drumset as a purely acoustic instrument. In the age of sophisticated electronic instruments, this is less and less the case. The presence of synthesized or digitally encoded percussion relates directly to the issue of playing at high volume.

With one's own amplification, or a direct line into a P.A., there is no problem producing a lot of sound. Again, it is a matter of choosing various options. Volume is easily produced with electronic drums, but they may not provide the desired sound or level of expression—the art of drawing sound from a drum. Most likely, drummers will use a combination of acoustic drums and electronics. In this case, they must remember that it is unnecessary to strike an electronic pad with the same velocity as an acoustic drum, and act accordingly.

Obviously, not all popular music is played at extremely high volumes, and any first-rate musical group utilizes dynamics. But the aggressive, powerful, and ultimately *loud* approach has become dominant in popular music. Drummers must learn to play this way if they are to be accepted in that context. In learning how to perform at these extreme volumes efficiently and safely, we are adapting to inevitable changes of style and technology.



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Drumset Options

It was only after the completion of my last article on snare drum options [*MD*, October '87] that I fully realized the confusion of choices when looking at the rest of a drum outfit—choices that may be a major consideration when you're in the buying market. The purpose of this article is to offer a concise overview on choices, options, and what to look (and look out) for in top-of-the-line merchandise or budget-priced kits.

THE TOP OF THE LINE

Let's start by assuming that shells are made in either birch, maple, or some other high-quality tone wood, and formed in either the traditional, thin wall with reinforcing hoop, or thicker, non-reinforced method. Every drum company has its own construction ideas, and as one would expect, each has the "perfect" way of making a drum shell. Only you can decide which maker has the winning words to capture your approval. Suffice to say, I've found very few top-range drums that are either poor in materials or finish. Let's take a 13" tom-tom in two variations to illustrate a couple of basic principles.

The traditional way of making such a drum is by having three or four thin plies that are butt-jointed, and then fitted with strong reinforcing hoops top and bottom. Due to its thin and lightweight cylinder, the hoops give essential support and keep the drum in round. Making drums in this method produces a very bright and live sound with good tonal properties.

The second system employs, if not a lot more plies, certainly a much thicker wall that does not need strengthening hoops. In manufacturing terms, it would seem a lot easier to make a drum in this way (being less labor-intensive), but I doubt many would admit to this being a reason for their making them in this fashion. Sound-wise, you get a much heavier, thicker tone from this type of drum, which has enjoyed universal acceptance from rock players, to whom not only volume, but a full, deep, powerful character is required.

A general trend with the heavier shells has been to extend the depth from what was a standard 9", to 11", giving them the "power size" tag. By stretching the shell in this way, a deeper fundamental pitch is achieved, once again fitting with today's music. However, not all players seek this particular sound, and standard sizes are still popular. Really, it comes down to

personal taste. If you're working in a jazz trio, or go for higher, more melodic sounds, then you could well find a thin-shelled 9 x 13 more suitable than an 11 x 13 eight-ply maple.

The same principle applies to bass drums, but your main decision could well be on diameter rather than those extra 2" of depth. In extremes, you can go from 18" to 26", but I'll stick my neck out and guess that a worldwide census would reveal 22" as the most common. For many years an 18" bass drum was the sole property of the small jazz combo drummer, with 26" being the territory of heavy rock power-players. Generally, 22" and 24" have become standard and pretty useable for a wide range of music.

Floor toms have not been subjected to the "power" application in the same way as every other drum in an outfit. Being very low-pitched, some floor toms can be too close in interval to the bass drum, so most companies have widened their range of tom-toms between the 16" and the smallest drum, in order to create greater choice in sizing.

There are, of course, drums that could be viewed as a compromise between the two mentioned. Ludwig makes a fairly light four-ply, and Sonor has a line of medium weights to complement some of their really heavy drums. D.W. also seems pretty medium-weight. Although these may not completely suit drummers at either end of the spectrum, such outfits are worth looking into if you play in a wide variety of styles and have to rely upon one outfit to fulfill all that you ask of it.

Hardware

Once the purchase decision on the drums has been made, and you're ready to part with your funds, you'll usually be confronted with a confusing array of stands, holders, and pedals. Don't panic, and keep hold of your wallet. With most quality outfits, the drummer has thankfully been released from the once compulsory buying of hardware that he or she didn't particularly like.

A first decision in this direction will most likely be whether you want to mount your small toms on the bass drum or on floor stands. Obviously, a lot depends on the number of drums and on your style. Some people are totally against having any hardware protruding inside their drums, believing this has an adverse effect upon performance, as air

movement and resonance are affected. If you're of this persuasion, it's worth thinking about fitting RIMS to your toms. RIMS (Resonance Isolation Mounting System) are basically strips of steel that follow the contour of a counterhoop, with cushioned lugs that allow tension bolts to pass through, thus suspending a drum by its counterhoop. The steel strip has a mounting plate for fitting on a drum.

Taking this a step further, by using this product and utilizing either floor stands or multi-clamps off cymbal stands, it's quite possible to avoid drilling into either toms or bass drums. In the case of tom-tom holders, you'll no doubt have noticed a simple choice between single or twin-post bass drum mounts. Also, you may have noticed an amazing similarity between different brands, almost as if they had been made in the same factory! Anyhow, once you've selected the one- or two-post style, it becomes a quality issue rather than one of design, as they all function very well nowadays. Just look for rough castings and that "misty" chrome plating that suggests a cheap product. Virtually all bass and tom-tom mounts have now overcome metal-to-metal contact on the clamping mechanism, so there's no need to buy a holder that could rattle, slip, or wear in a short time. Memory collars are to be considered standard on tubular fittings, with other styles having their version of memory locks.

There's a simple maxim when it comes to cymbal stands: If you play hard and use large or heavy cymbals, go for stands that are at least double-braced. Also, look for a wide spread that offers the stability you'll need. Foot pedals are a different matter, being more individual than stands and clamps. Playing style once more should be a factor in what you look for in a pedal. With the heavy player, this component is certainly going to take some punishment. So along with speed and comfort comes the necessity for strength and durability. Tama, Premier, and Pearl make some very strong, single-post pedals that are designed with such use in mind. If you don't make such demands on a pedal, why carry around that extra beef? Loads of drummers have found the Ludwig *Speed King* or Camco chain-drive pedals ideal, and they will certainly stand a quota of hard work without a problem. Buy for your needs rather than for the "biggest" of something. Hi-hat pedals should be evaluated in the same way.

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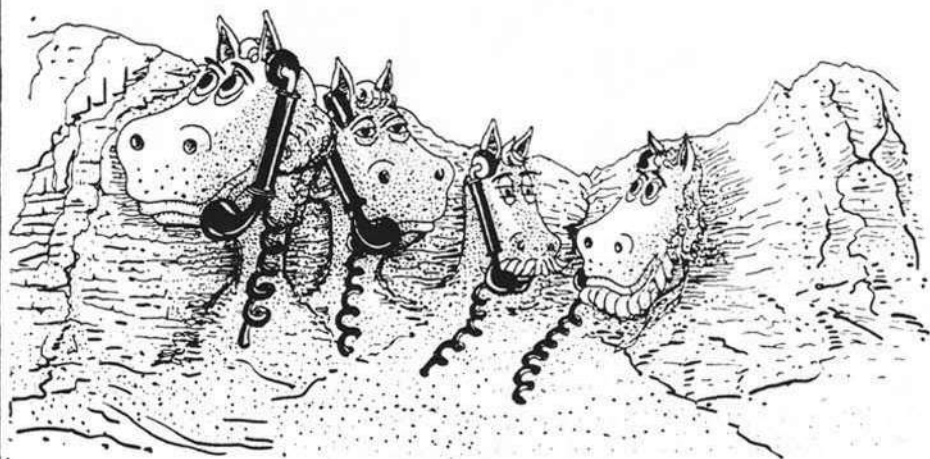
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THE BUDGET-PRICED KIT

How many different brand names can you think of in lower-priced drumsets? Don't bother to overheat your brain on this one. By the time you've compiled the list, I'm sure a few names would have disappeared, only to be replaced by a few more. Obviously, many outfits are simply a case of the same product under different badges. In more recent times, even the more prestigious makers have found it necessary to join this battle for sales in the semi-pro market. Add to this the confusion of names pinned to shells by other makers, importers, and even stores, and we have a situation where there'll soon be more brands than drummers!

Should you be concerned how different these drums are? Or should you simply pick a set in your favorite color with any name on it? Truthfully, no. Although you may lose in areas such as shell quality within this sphere, there are certain areas in which you should delve more deeply.

Drumshells in budget-line sets will most likely be sprayed with some form of colored material, which has been applied to seal the shell and enhance the overall sound. Okay, so the shells may not be high-grade maple in this price-range, but with a little time and patience, it is possible to elicit an acceptable sound and get reasonable life from a budget-priced drum. Since these sets are usually supplied with a 5" or 6 1/2" snare drum, you'll again need to experiment with what you'll find to be a relatively lightweight drum. Given patience and luck, a sharp and responsive snare sound may result, but don't expect it to keep you awake at night with excitement.

Can you improve on the set as it's been purchased? I'm pleased to say, yes, but it *will* cost you a little more. As a general rule, drums in this range are supplied with pretty terrible heads (a way of cost cutting). By changing at least the batter heads to a better product, a near miracle may be witnessed. Couple these new heads with a little judicious tuning, and although you'll never have a tonal powerhouse, you'll achieve a decent drum sound of which you won't be ashamed.

One final note on the drums: Judging by the number of sets still to be found with the finish wrinkled to an unacceptable degree, it would seem that some drummers are under the impression that this is alright on a set that doesn't cost an arm and a leg. This is just not so! With today's methods and materials, even the cheapest drum shouldn't have such a defect. It's very simple: *Don't buy 'em!*

Hardware

We again arrive at those items in which you can either gain or lose out. Even though some sets use modern designs for their hardware, albeit cheapened

down versions of well-respected designs, others fit parts that never worked well when used on high quality sets. Starting with bass drum spurs, there are really only two styles around. The familiar foldback/dial ratchet type, or the 1/4" rod that protrudes into the drum. Go for the foldback design every time, as the other idea will not provide either long-term service, or be as efficient at preventing bass drum creep.

Tom-tom mounts have much improved since the days when copies of the Rogers *Swivomatic* were fitted to cheaper sets. Today, the majority are of the Pearl twin-tube variety, which seems to have been adopted as the industry standard. Little problem should be experienced with these, but don't expect the castings to be perfectly smooth, or the chrome as good as on the professional models. Before leaving the bass drum, just a word on hoops. It seemed a trend, and perhaps still is, to use metal alloy as opposed to wood. There's a widely-held belief that such hoops do little for the sound of any bass drum. Just another point to evaluate in the overall picture.

Tom-toms offer little to mess around with. Nevertheless, take a look at the bearing edges to ensure that they don't have chunks missing, and that they're reasonably smooth without sharp points piercing the drumhead.

The snare drum is where real bad news can be lurking to upset the unwary drummer. Some really diabolical snare strainers can still be found adorning these drums, so give this item some attention. A number of brands now fit quite acceptable cast strainers and good butts. However, it's not uncommon to discover flimsy, pressed-steel imitations of respected strainers, along with others that can only be described as lid fasteners from a metal lunch box. Sadly, of all the budget-line parallel-action snare strainers I've tried over the years, I've yet to find one that could be termed smooth and strong, or that gave me the confidence to rely upon its performance on the road. They've either been stiff and awkward, or too lightweight to withstand much punishment. Maybe I've just been unlucky, and you may find one that's a dream. All I can say is that I doubt you will.

The area of stands and pedals brings us to a point of great cost reduction in the assembly of a budget-line set. Cymbal stands will usually be single-braced, and maybe with a leg spread that's not overly wide. If you play hard and use heavy cymbals, you may need a heavier model. Nowadays, even the cheapest stands have nylon sleeves on the tube locking sections, and some even provide memory collars.

A similar decision on upgrading could apply to the hi-hat. Besides its durability, any spring tension adjustment must be

regarded as a bonus, as most won't offer it. Naturally, any such additional expenditure would depend upon the type of player you are and the amount of extra funds at your disposal. As for snare drum stands, few will fail to do what they're intended for, and unless you play exceptionally hard or change to a heavier drum, I doubt you'll suffer problems with what's supplied.

Bass drum pedals have really come a long way. The pedal will usually be a twin-post, single-spring design, with a cast footplate and nylon or steel linkage. At the risk of stating the obvious, it may be uninspiring compared to professional pedals, yet with correct tension and a setting that suits you, it should be functional and reliable. However, I must warn of one terrible example I came across recently. Instead of simple bearings at either end of the beater cam, I was surprised to find nylon bushings. Now these would work for a time, but what happens when they start to wear? And I doubt that would take too long to occur. This was yet another instance of cost cutting *beyond* good taste or decent value.

Regardless of the potential drawbacks, many players get decent sound and service from these lower-cost drums. Perhaps the finish will not withstand critical close-up scrutiny, and the drums may not project the powerful tones of outfits costing three times as much. But this doesn't mean these drums fail to deliver the goods—provided you appreciate their limitations.

THE MOST FOR YOUR MONEY

I don't claim to have found any way of getting more for your money. I just look at those things that may give you *less*. A lot of drummers go to their local music shop expecting to buy a budget outfit with all the features of a top-line set. When looking at a budget drum alongside the top pro range, it's essential to compare the two price tags in order to appreciate that, when spending less, you're still able to get good value for your money. As outfits such as these are mostly sold complete, you may not be able to avoid *all* of the negative items, but at least you can look for the set with the fewest number of them.

Selecting equipment in either range is primarily a matter of analyzing what's available and choosing the right equipment for your needs, before making that enjoyable, but expensive, visit to the music shop. Having decided on the type, sizes, and format of the outfit best for you, a lot of unsuitable items can be discarded. This will save you time, and more important, the heartaches of a wrong decision, which is so easy to make.



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Kramer continued from page 23

we used to do on *Toys In The Attic* and *Rocks*, where there used to be the same spread of diversity as this. But our playing and maturity at the time weren't up to par to meet those ideas. Now the playing, songwriting, and lyrics are up to par, and we've finally worked with a super producer who could take what Aerosmith was doing and transfer it to vinyl. Before, the only way people could hear what kind of a band we were was to see us live. I mean, this is the first record that I've ever made where I'm happy with my drum

sounds and my playing.

Our producer, Bruce Fairbairn, spent six weeks with us in pre-production, learning all the material, taking part in putting it all together, giving us direction, having a handle on what the sound of the band was, and trying to bring it up-to-date and getting it to sound a little newer. I mean, the guy really had a handle on what was going on; he knew all the arrangements and everybody's parts. He runs a really tight ship and knows his way around the board, and I just loved working with him.

TS: Did your ability to play with different musical personalities feel especially satisfying?

JK: Within the context of that album, people have said that my playing runs the gamut of styles. That's true, but within the confines of what we do. What I would call a challenge is playing something I've never played before, within totally unfamiliar confines. But for me to play the stuff that I played on this album is no big deal. I've been doing that for the past 15 years. All those musical styles are in the context of Aerosmith. No one would think to call me for something radically different from this, anyway.

TS: The old stereotyping thing.

JK: Yeah, and we don't make ourselves too available, either. Plus, there's a circle of people who have all the session things sewn up. I'm not concerned with getting called to do session work; I'm concerned with finding another project. There was a point in time when we weren't working that much and I put another band together.

TS: What was that all about?

JK: It was too closely related to this, although I had a female lead singer and a piano player. Aerosmith touches on the stuff that I really like to do, like "Girl Keeps Comin' Apart." That's real rhythm & blues.

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others say that we're a blues band. Most of these people don't know blues from a hole in the wall. I started playing blues and rhythm & blues as a teenager, and I spent a lot of time on it.

TS: Do you still listen to a lot of it?

JK: Yeah, I do. I love that new James Brown album, *Gravity*. I turned the guys in the band on to James Brown way back when. I used to love Earth, Wind & Fire, and when that Power Station album came out—it was just a flash in the pan, but it was a great one. What I loved was the combination of what they were doing behind that really heavy but simple drumming, plus that horn section.

TS: Getting back to your playing on this album, would you assess it as being some of your best drumming to date?

JK: I'm happy with it as far as the sounds that I got on it and as far as the way it's mixed. Looking at it as an overall picture, I guess it's some of the best.

TS: *Permanent Vacation* and the preceding album, *Done With Mirrors*, are often compared by members of the band because of the contrast between the two. From a sound quality standpoint, *Mirrors* was great; it had the trademark power and gusto that the band's known for, and it had tracks like "Sheila" and "Let The Music Do The Talking." Yet I get the feeling that the band didn't particularly like the LP. Could you compare the two?

JK: With this one, we were much better prepared in that we took a lot more time in pre-production, and we spent a lot more time on the album in general. Plus, I think everybody was happier with the producer and with the songs.

To me, *Mirrors* just wasn't complete; it didn't have all the finishing touches of an Aerosmith album. And, like I said, we weren't prepared enough. But also, it wasn't as "up" an album as *Vacation* is.

TS: One characteristic of your style is your use of the hi-hat. It's become somewhat of a trademark sound of yours over the years, and you often open a song with a very distinctive flair.

JK: That's kind of a little dance that I do. It's a very natural thing, and it's just the way my foot happens to dance on the hi-hat pedal. I can get a lot of sounds out of it because I can give the impression of playing one thing when I'm really playing another. It gets a little tricky at times, but mostly I'm playing a simple figure. The way my foot is moving makes it sound like something else. I've used it on a lot of things, but this is the first time it's been brought to my attention as being a trademark.

TS: It's just that it sounds very fluid; it moves. Don't you agree?

JK: A lot of people have commented to me on that aspect of it, and I do like the fluidity of it. I like things that are solid—like a wall—and consistent. Not something that's there, then lets you down eight bars down the line. Keeping something

strong and consistent throughout a song—keeping the flow—is what drumming is really all about. Unfortunately, a lot of drummers don't understand that.

TS: You've always been known for keeping things pretty straightforward playing-wise. Was your ability to avoid superfluous drumming always a characteristic, or was it something you learned to master when Aerosmith was created?

JK: Anyone's immediate tendency when sitting behind the drums is to just hit all the drums—just play everything. So to actually play them is to really not play them. That kind of discipline is real hard, but you should approach it as playing what is necessary for a particular song, while realizing that what you are doing is making the song *happen*. Sitting back and *listening* to what I've done really helps me maintain the discipline, because I'm not playing for me, I'm playing for the whole picture. We tape our shows every night, and if I listen to the playbacks and hear myself doing something that's too busy, I'm sweating, because something like that just pulls away from what's going on.

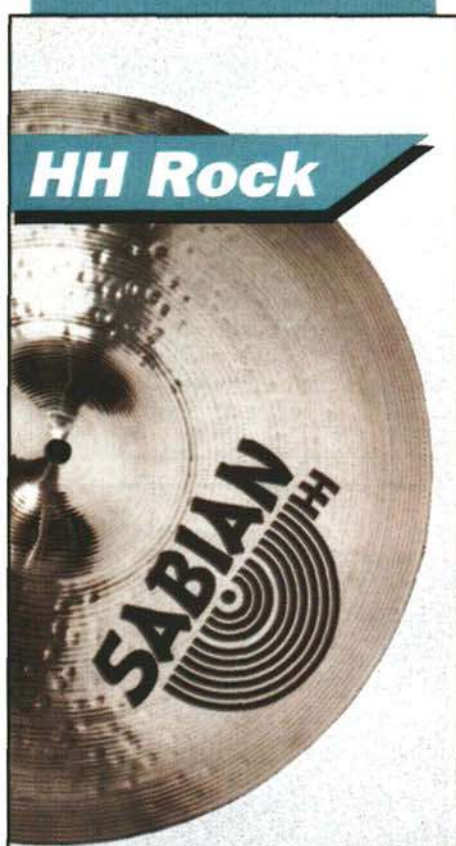
TS: No one could ever accuse you of over-playing.

JK: I wouldn't want to. But I think you have to go around that cycle. You start off playing so much just to learn everything, and then once you've got all those great things down, you have to take everything that you know and put it where it's supposed to be. So if you put something great in a song just once *and* in the right place, then it makes more sense and it's more memorable.

It's the same kind of thing with Jeff Beck—one of my favorite guitar players. That guy has the ability to make one note say more than a hundred could. To me, that's what it's all about. Anybody can play fills, but to lock into that groove and really make it say something is the secret.

TS: The changes that you play in most of the songs are a bit more complicated than a lot of standard rock tunes. The drumming itself may not be technical, but the changes are tricky.

JK: I might go through three or four different changes in one song. I was in the hospital a few years ago when the band did a tour, and another drummer was brought in as a replacement for a while. He called me up in the hospital and said, "Man, I'm going crazy with these songs. You've got six or seven different things happening in one song." I said, "I give you my blessing, because you've got your work cut out for you." Take "Walk This Way" for instance: There's a figure that introduces the song, and as soon as that's over, I fall into the groove of the song, which is yet another figure. So by the second bar of the song, I'm already into another figure. Then a third part comes up where I'm playing a straight-ahead figure with just fours on the kick drum. Then the song comes back to the intro part again,



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then when it comes to the end of the song, I'm playing yet another part. Same thing with "Sweet Emotion." You start off with one thing, then you have all these changes. But you have to make those changes smooth enough so that all the figures fit together. In other words, what that drummer was saying was that I'm not playing the same throughout a song, but I really am because I'm making it all fit together.

That's why I really admire a guy like Dave Garibaldi, who has the ability to play really busy, but his busyness is within a group. That's a real difficult thing to do. Essentially, there's a lot of different figures contained within each Aerosmith song. They're tricky because they sound really

simple to play, but when you actually sit down to play them, you realize just where it's all going.

My playing basically enhances guitar parts. This has always been a guitar-oriented band. When I play one part of a song, it usually introduces a guitar part. The parts that I play fit in with and between the guitar parts so well that you're not listening so much to the drums, you're listening to the melody. But in order to learn all those changes really quickly in a replacement situation like that—it just can't be done. It took me years to acquire that stuff, and I'm very picky when it comes to using parts in certain places.

I don't like to get into anything real

intricate, because intricacies only compound the complex things. In this band, that area is for the melodic instruments to cover. There are times I step out in front, but for the most part, I find that the simpler things go over better in this band. And just because something is simple, that doesn't necessarily mean it has to be boring. You can take the simplest figure in the world and turn it into the heaviest thing. It's up to you. It's not the drums, it's not the cymbals, it's the person who's playing them. That's where imagination, feel, and finesse enter the picture. I'm much more a feel player than a technical one, and I have very little interest in the technical aspect of what I do. I can only think of maybe one guy who can play with feeling and have all the technical things nailed down, and that's Steve Gadd. But as far as I'm concerned, I'm on a constant quest for making simplicity more and more interesting, which is a hard thing to do.

TS: One consistency that you've maintained throughout the past 13 albums is the way your drums sound. They seem to jump out and grab the listener by the throat. Even on the less than spectacular LPs, your sound has always been impeccable and potent.

JK: Thanks. But to tell you the truth, there's a lot of stuff on our records that, had they been mixed differently, would have been even better.

TS: You mentioned previously that what the other guys play can have an effect on what you'll do.

JK: The guitar players are the same way, and so is the bass player, and sometimes, so is Steven. We have a rule: If you don't like what someone is playing, that's fine. But until you can come up with something better, keep a lid on it. So if Steven comes up to me and says, "I don't like what you're playing. Try this," then I'll go for it. I'll try anything, because the only way you can learn is to have an open mind. If his suggestion doesn't work, that's no big problem, because his idea might



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TS: Like you said, Aerosmith is most certainly a guitar-oriented band. Yet Joe Perry has been quoted as saying that he's always listening to what you're doing.

JK: The person that I interact with the most on stage is Joe. Without begrudging anything else that's going on, I think that he and I are the nucleus of the energy. I listen to his guitar, but it's not the only thing that I'm listening to. Because there's so much happening, I don't listen to just one thing. I try to listen to the band as a whole, which sometimes is hard to do. I always have Joe's guitars coming through the loudest in my monitors because I have to hear his leads for changes. Joe's leads will key into changes to different parts of the songs. And Joe sparks a certain kind of energy in me when we're on stage that helps to feed my playing, and I'd like to think I do the same for him. So the interaction is between all of us on stage, but he and I probably have the most contact besides him and Steven. He and I keep things pumping—we're pretty much the heartbeat of the band—and if one of us is off, then it totally affects the pace of the song.

Insofar as creativity goes, there's a lot of things that Brad comes up with that are akin to my personal taste in music. We listen to a lot of the same music, like Joe Satriani and Gary Moore—real guitar-oriented stuff from guys who can really talk with their guitars. He and Joe work well together because their styles are so opposite yet complementary. Brad is more schooled and more refined, where Joe has such incredible imagination that he just

blows me away sometimes. He's come up with licks that I can't immediately come up with figures for, and that's the kind of situation I like to work with. Sometimes he'll do a lick where there will be some extra notes in it, so that it doesn't come out evenly—which is why I can't play to it—and we'll go back and forth and try to straighten it out. Eventually, it becomes amazing stuff.

TS: The group's first album back in '73—*Aerosmith*—was your introduction to recording. It wouldn't be practical to ask you how much you've learned since then, but can you tell me about your basic approach to recording these days with respect to *Permanent Vacation*?

JK: I like to apply the same attitude in the studio as I do live. When we do a record, I don't like to record things that I won't be able to reproduce live. That's why all the drum sounds you hear on *Permanent Vacation* are acoustic sounds; we got everything from miking drums, except the snare sound on "Rag Doll." That's the only sampled sound we used.

TS: The end product on all the albums has always been a very live sound.

JK: We record live in the studio all the time. If there's a real problem with anything, Tom and I will go in and lay it down ourselves, and the other guys will build it from there. But nine out of ten times, that's the band you're hearing playing in the studio. There's no real difference in what we do live versus what we do in the studio as far as the way we put things across.

TS: Aside from the addition of a new producer, were there any new experiences in the studio this last time out?

JK: After all the years I've been recording, this album was the first time I ever used a click track. Bruce wanted me to use one, and he couldn't believe I had never used one before. Once you get it down, a click is fine: It's easy to use, great to lean on, and makes putting takes together and doing splicing a lot easier. But the first couple of times I used one, it was a bitch, because I



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had played all these years without one. I had never had problems with my time in the studio. Then when I started playing with the click track, I'd say, "Yeah, it's real solid, but there's no flair to the playing," or "It's not breathing enough." So this album was another discipline lesson as far as that goes. I don't know if that subject is a point of interest, because *everybody* uses click tracks in the studio. I had been under the impression that a lot of studio musicians use them, but until Bruce told me that *everybody* uses them, I wasn't aware as to how commonplace they really are. It was like he was giving away a secret to me or something, but I still said, "I can do it without a click track, man." [laughs] But he still didn't want to do it that way.

TS: You gave in to him and checked it out.

JK: I checked it out because it was something that I had never done, so I thought I should try it. But I also thought, "It's gotta be a piece of cake. Now I have something to lean on." But it's not a piece of cake; suddenly, I had to learn to adapt my feeling and my emotion to the machine. Learning how to do that correctly is an art in itself. Now I can tell when a click track is used on other records. And with my own playing, I've compared songs that I did before that were solid with ones that I did with a click, and I can hear a little bit of difference in the life of the track in my playing.

TS: And what's the verdict? Do you have a preference?

JK: I like them equally; I'm just stating the fact that I can hear a difference.

TS: Earlier, you spoke about your solo on the current tour. How did you develop it and where did that idea originate?

JK: I had seen something similar to it, but it wasn't as close to what I wanted to do with it at that point. I had been thinking along the same lines when I saw it. There was a company that made sticks that were touch-sensitive, with mercury switches in them; they were very delicate. I had to come up with something that was very durable and dependable. The ones I'm using are not always dependable, although I've been real lucky with them and they are being developed even further.

So I got together with our sound man, Toby Francis, and my drum tech, Andy Gilman. I told them what I wanted, and Toby said he would see what he could rig up. Toby is one of those guys who, if you give him an idea, there's really nothing he can't come up with. And with Andy, if I tell him what I want, I turn around a minute later and he's got it in his hand. Anyway, it's hard to get into the details of the sticks at the moment because I'm in the process of putting a patent on them. What I can tell you is that Toby came up with the electrical part of them, Andy physically dissected the sticks and inserted all the electronics, and he also came up with and constructed the belt that I wear with

it. I like the look of that because it's real crude, real funky. And the belt pack is where the radios are installed.

What the audience doesn't see is that, when I'm into the height of my solo, they smoke the drumkit so that I can't be seen getting off the back of the riser. As I get off the back, Andy hands me the sticks, and then I appear at the top back of the stage in a spotlight. Toby is out on the board and is in control of different samples that I use when I'm in different spots on the stage. When I'm over on the top spots of the stage, he'll give me snare drum; when I'm in another spot, he'll give me just toms. In another place he might make one stick a snare sound and one stick a tom. We have it worked out so that a certain spot on the stage signifies a certain sound that I want, so that if I go back and forth to certain spots, he knows that he should go back and forth to the respective sounds, switching the samples.

What I like, and what's out of character for me, is that I don't have to be sitting behind the drums. I like to run around the stage. A lot of drummers would look at it and say, "That's just novelty jive," and, to an extent, it is. But I have such a good time with it that I don't care. I know that I could sit there and play a drum solo for ten minutes; that's no big stunt to me. Any drummer who's halfway decent can sit there and solo for ten minutes.

It took us a long time to get it together, because we had to iron out a lot of bugs. I had these hookups for a while that allowed me to play with my feet. Those radios are very undependable; they can just skitz out on you at any time—and they have. I'll be up there in the middle of the thing, and one stick will break and I'll be left there with one. [laughs] But if you're going to try to pull something like that off, then you've got to take a shot.

TS: You mentioned that drum solos usually bore you. Were you bored by your own solos in the past?

JK: Well, when they get to the point of boring me, that's when I go out and put together something like this. I was getting bored for a while, and I went to the guys in the band and said, "Look, I've been doing the same drum solo every night for ten years, and I don't want to do it anymore." They told me to come up with something new, but I still didn't want to do one. But the reaction I get from the audience [laughs]—you saw it tonight—they make me have such a great time doing it because they enjoy themselves. But I have to admit that there are some nights when I may not feel like doing it.

TS: Like anything else, a routine of any kind can get tedious.

JK: Yeah, and it's hard enough to play the same songs every night for ten years. We do change the set around often, but imagine how many times I've played "Dream On" and "Walk This Way"?

TS: What goes on in your mind while you're playing songs that you know so intimately and have played for so long?

JK: Nothing, man. I'm on automatic pilot. When I get on stage, that's the little kid running around up there for two hours. And if I couldn't do it that way, I'd be so crazy and so obsessed—such a madman. When I'm up there and letting it all out, somehow within all that madness, I find peace.

TS: When you're playing live, what's your setup?

JK: I've got a Tama *Artstar II* kit with a 24" kick drum, three mounted toms—8", 10", and 12"—15" and 16" floor toms, and a 6 1/2 x 14 snare. It's all Tama hardware.

All my cymbals are Zildjians. I've got a 20" Brilliant Rock Ride, my main hi-hat is a 14" Brilliant Rock mounted on an *X-hat*, and there's a 19" Brilliant K China. I've got five crashes—all 20" and picked in different combinations, depending on my particular preference—including 20" crash rides with a Platinum finish, 20" medium crashes with a Brilliant finish, and 20" medium crashes with a Platinum finish.

TS: Judging by what you've said, I assume that your studio gear is similar.

JK: Right, except we used a *Granstar* kit to record *Permanent Vacation* because I hadn't gotten the *Artstar* kit at that point. But all the drums are the same sizes.

TS: What kind of miking system are you using these days?

JK: I've got Countryman mic's. They're about an inch and a half wide and an inch and a half high. They can't be seen from the audience because they're so small, and they attach directly to the rim of the drum. All the wires run into a pedal near my feet, so all that you see are the drums and the cymbals. I like a nice clean look.

TS: What's the extent of your triggering, if any?

JK: I don't need triggering with these mic's, although I do use it on "Rag Doll."

TS: Why do you use it for that particular song?

JK: Because we used triggering in the studio on that one. But those Countryman mic's don't require separate triggers. You can trigger with the mic's themselves, so they serve a dual function. I use them on everything but the snare. On the kick drum, there are three mic's—one for each different sound. Through my monitors, I have a separate cabinet just for kick drums.

TS: You don't have your drums in your monitors?

JK: The rest of the band is in my monitors, but I don't need monitors for the drums because I can hear what I'm playing. I'm wearing special ear protectors because it's so loud back there. They're flat and they fit inside my ear, and they block out a lot of the sound that gets too loud. I wear them because I have trouble with my ears, and these help to preserve my hearing.

TS: There's a misconception that we should

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Kenny Aronoff

clear up once and for all, that Steven Tyler was the original drummer and you replaced him.

JK: Someone, somewhere along the line, was misinformed, and that's still put in magazines once in a while. There is and always was only one original drummer in Aerosmith, and that's moi. The misconception probably got started because Steven used to play the drums. Before we put this band together, Steven and I knew each other in high school and we were both drummers. When we put this band together, he stopped playing the drums and became a singer. He did, to some extent, have an influence on my playing in the beginning, but he never ever played the drums in Aerosmith.

TS: Since we're on the subject of setting the record straight, I don't think many people realize that you are responsible for conjuring up the name "Aerosmith."

JK: It's funny you should ask that, because until recently, I had forgotten about how I came up with that. Not too long ago I spoke to the girl who was my best friend in high school—we're still in touch—and she reminded me how that came about. When we were in high school, one of our favorite albums at the time was Nilsson's *Aerial Ballet*, and I used to love all the songs on it. At the time, I had all my fantasies about being in a rock 'n' roll band and having everything that goes with it. And I liked the word "aerial," which eventually turned into "aereo," then "aero" and somehow I came up with the "smith" part. I was always glued to music that blended really sweet harmonies like Nilsson did, but I didn't like the music underneath it so much. When I got turned on to the Nazz, I heard the kind of thing that I was really into, because it had the sweet harmonies and vocals that I loved, and underneath it was this raunchy rock 'n' roll that I loved. So I used to zero in on listening to that first Nazz album, while I looked at the pictures on the cover of that *Aerial Ballet* album. Somehow, the name was inspired by the combination of both those things.

It's funny, because that friend who remembered this told me that she still has an old high school English book of mine where I used to write "Aerosmith" in the margins. People would ask me what it meant, and I would say, "That's gonna be the name of my band someday." And they'd say, "Right, Kramer. We know exactly where you're going. You're just gonna be a bum." So when she told me that story, it was kind of amusing.

TS: Is there anything else you would like to clear up that we haven't discussed?

JK: I'd really like to dispel the fallacies that people have about drummers in general. People on the outside often think that drummers have this certain aura about them that signifies that we are all the same kind of people, that we all have the same kind of characteristics—that kind of stuff. I

guess that can be true to a certain extent about all musicians: Guitarists have somewhat similar qualities, singers, etc. But drummers really get lumped into one big category a lot of the time, yet we are individuals in so many ways. Just because we all don't stand out in every situation doesn't mean we are not unique.

Being a drummer is a very difficult job because, when you think about it, there's really very little room for change. It seems that so many things have already been done in so many variables. And if you get too creative with the drums, you run the risk of defeating the original purpose of the instrument. You can take an instrument like the guitar out in space if you want to, because its purpose as a melodic instrument is almost limitless. Drums are drums, and you really have to be into them for what they are. Sometimes it can be a real disadvantage.

But drums are one of the few things I have in my life that I really love. And there's something to be said for both the physical and mental gratification one gets from playing. I've come to appreciate it all even more these days. I have to admit that, before, it sometimes became a chore. When I'd get through playing, in a way I'd feel even more gratification, because I had to work so hard at it. And now, due to my state of mind and to the amount of time I spend taking care of myself and not destroying myself, the playing seems to come a whole lot easier from a physical standpoint. In a way, now I have more time to enjoy it. I still work hard at it, but it's more enjoyable now, because I'm not having to overcome obstacles as I'm doing it.

I do what I do because of the way I feel about it, the way I get off on it, and the band I'm in. If people happen to enjoy what I do, that's the greatest thing in the world, and if they don't, then that's okay, too. I basically do this for me, not for anybody else. These days, I live my life for me and for the people I love, especially my family. But as a result of changing my habits and attitudes, I discovered that I have a much better time in general, and that I get along with people a whole lot better. It took me a long time to realize that it's easier to be a nice guy than to go out of your way to be nasty.

The bottom line is that I've learned to enjoy what I have, especially with this band. I may get out there and do a solo that's not technically as perfect as the next guy, but the degree of technicality doesn't make any difference in the world to the kids in the audience. It's bullshit to obsess yourself and say, "Well, I didn't get this absolutely perfect." Hey, I'm human and I do make mistakes once in a while. I've really been making a conscious effort to get away from making everything black or white, or even gray for that matter. I let everything *just be*. That way, I don't rob myself of the pleasures that are there.



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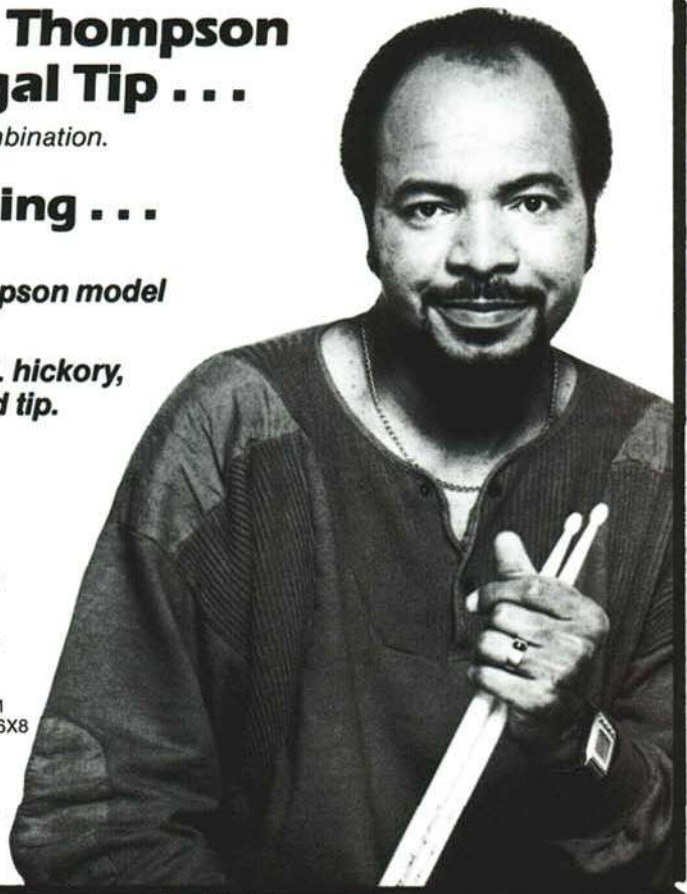
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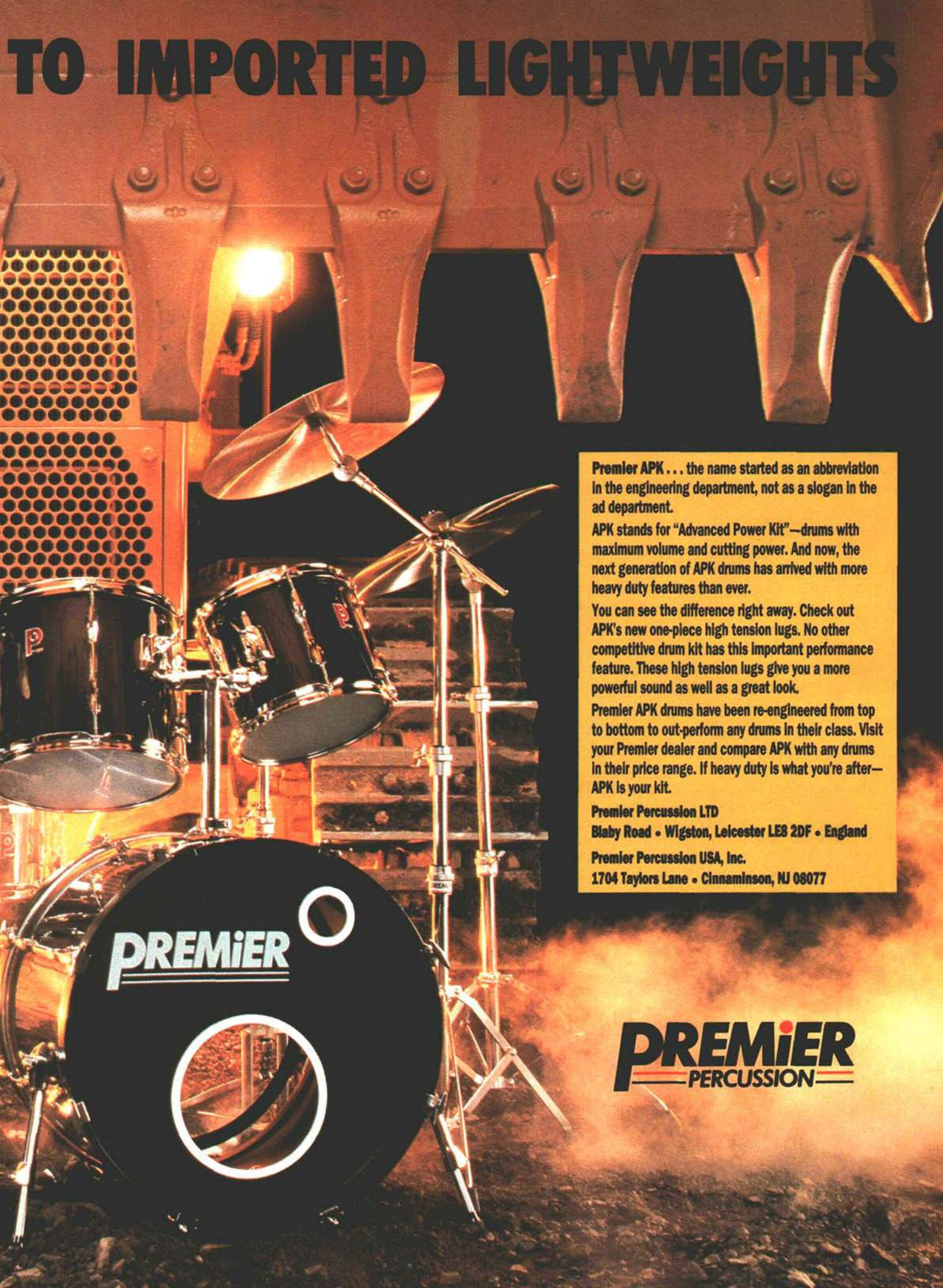
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PERCUSSION

by Phil Philcox

How To Buy A Used Drumset...Cheap!

If you're in the market for a good set of used drums, there are some excellent deals out there—if you know how to buy used stuff. There are millions of different used items for sale at any given moment. They range from \$4.5 million houses with indoor swimming pools to \$1 pairs of size 11 sneakers. Somewhere in that giant pile of used stuff are a million or so really neat, used drumsets. What you'll pay will depend on the set's age and condition, what accessories are included, etc. What it usually comes down to is a nose-to-nose, buying-selling contest between the buyer (you) and the seller (them). You're the winner when you get what you want at a price you can afford.

Playing music is like eating raw fish or cutting your own hair: It ain't for everybody. Those who have tried it and have decided that they'd rather play tennis, bowl, or join the army (among many other things) are good sources of used drumsets. Once they've made up their minds to go elsewhere for something to do, they're anxious to sell so that they can reinvest their money in something else...like a bowling shirt, perhaps. The other sellers you're likely to run into are drummers who are selling so that they can upgrade to newer and better equipment.

I bought my last two drumsets used (and I'm a legend in music circles for winding up with fantastic stuff at rock-bottom prices). I use what I call the "Psychological Buying System" (PBS), which is based on the fact that once sellers decide to sell, they're *really* eager to get that money in hand. If you'd like to give the system a try, here's how it works:

First, figure out how much you have to spend. If it's \$1,000 or under, add \$30 per every \$100 (give-or-take; this isn't an exact science). This is called your "dealing edge," and enables you to consider drums you *think* you can't afford but that you probably can—using this system. As an example, if you have \$800 to spend, you can consider drumsets being offered for around \$1,000-\$1,100 or more. If you have \$3,000 or so to invest in drums and other equipment (amps, mic's, etc.), you can consider equipment being offered for up to \$3,450-\$3,600 or even more.

We'll limit our search to private sellers who advertise in the classified sections of your local newspapers. If private sellers are anxious enough to sell that they will invest

in advertising costs, then they're likely to be flexible in pricing. Even if they can't get their original asking price, their patience level generally dwindles the longer the item is on the market. They have to compete with other drumset sellers and wait for the right buyer to come along. Obviously, the larger the city, the more competition they have (bad news for them) and the more selections you have (good news for you). So if you live in a small town, check the newspapers from nearby large cities.

Start keeping a daily list of drumsets being offered for sale that meet your criteria and fall within your dealing edge figures. Check the newspaper every day and write down the date, the asking price, the telephone number of the seller, and a brief description of what's being offered. Mark your entries with a big X if a set was listed in yesterday's paper but is not listed in today's. What happened? Was it sold, or is it still available but no longer being advertised? If it's the latter—a dropout—only you (because you kept your list) and the seller know if that drumset is for sale.

Let's pause momentarily to look at the mechanics of selling a used set of drums through the classified ads. In my nearest large city (population 100,000), it costs about \$30 to run a ten-word ad for ten days. If the item doesn't sell during the first ten-day ad run, out comes another \$30, and the ad goes back in the paper. During these ad runs, the seller deals with an assortment of callers: lookers, testers, people with insultingly low offers, deadbeats, and people who just want to talk about the music business and for one reason or another never buy anything. I know, I've been there. At some time the seller wonders if he's ever going to sell his drums.

According to the advertising manager of my local, big-city paper, about 70% of advertisers who don't sell on the first ten-day ad run renew their ads for another ten days. The remaining 30% are dropouts, no longer interested in investing \$30 in the selling process. After the second ten-day ad run, only 40% renew. This means that at the end of the first ten-day ad run, three out of ten advertisers still own the drums but are not actively advertising. At the end of the second ten-day run, only 2.8 people of the original ten are actively advertising. Scratch a lot of the buying competition—other buyers looking for good used drums.

Also keep your eyes open for drums that

were advertised last week for "\$1,500 firm," but have dropped to "\$1,250 or best offer" this week. The indication here is that the seller is getting restless.

When you have a good list of possibilities, it's time to make your move. Start with the first entry on your list (the longest advertised or the earliest dropout). Call and ask if the drums are still for sale. If the set has been sold, say "Thank you," hang up, and move on to the next number. If it's still for sale, ask the seller the standard questions (condition, age, etc.), and if you're still interested, arrange for a personal visit to check the kit out. If it's a dropout entry you're talking to and the kit fits your requirements, make sure you check it out.

If I were in the seller's shoes (and I have been), I'd start getting excited. I would have spent \$30, \$60, \$90, or more on advertising, dealt with an assortment of potential buyers and screwballs—and still owned those drums. The telephone hasn't rung in days, and suddenly you appear out of nowhere sounding like you're interested.

If the kit is what you want, make an offer somewhere within your dealing edge figures. I find it advantageous to offer the seller a cash sale right on the spot. Cash looks good (it's bright green) and has a Pavlovian effect on desperate sellers. If you're hesitant about walking around with big bucks in your pocket, take along a friend (a big one), or make the cash offer, leave a deposit, and arrange to have the seller meet you at the bank. If financing is required, make all the arrangements in advance. Offer the seller some respect and make an offer that can be seriously considered rather than a ridiculously low offer he or she will have to refuse. I've found that sellers often start out asking a high price because they overvalue their stuff and/or hope to pick up some reimbursement for their advertising expenses. As time passes and the sellers become more impatient, everything becomes negotiable.

Even if the seller isn't interested in your offer, leave your telephone number (and thanks for his or her time). If you've picked the right seller with the right set of drums at the right time, don't be surprised if your telephone rings later that night and someone says meekly, "I've been thinking it over. My final offer is \$1,250, and I'll throw in my sequined bow tie, my 10" hi-hats, and my lifetime subscription to *Modern Drummer Magazine*."



How to make a living playing drums.

Never before has the music industry demanded so much from drummers and percussionists. Only through years of trial and error did today's top players become versatile and confident enough to handle any style and any playing situation.

If you're serious about joining the select group of musicians who make their living playing drums or percussion, the knowledge and experience you need is now available under one roof—at the acclaimed Grove School of Music in Los Angeles. Grove's exceptional Percussion Program is an intensive one-year course of study to give drummers/percussionists an efficient path to artistic and commercial success. Students from more than 30 countries have found the Grove School to be the most *practical* place to launch their music careers. All Grove instructors are working professionals based here in the entertainment capital of the world, where opportunities in the contemporary music scene are at your doorstep.

1. Learn from the best.

In the Grove program, you'll learn studio and performance technique from some of



Dave Garibaldi, Peter Donald

the most respected names in the business. You'll study a variety of styles and drumset applications with Program Director Peter Donald, and you'll concentrate on rock, funk and fusion with groove master Dave Garibaldi. From the Latin percussion classes of Luis Conte to Dan Greco's studio percussion class, you'll benefit from a teaching staff that's literally played thousands of major gigs in every aspect of the entertainment industry.

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and funk, rock and other styles with small contemporary units. Throughout the program, you'll improve your coordination and develop your sightreading skills. And since the Grove School is one of the premier places in the world to study music theory, you'll finish the program as a *complete* musician with a new freedom in your playing.

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MD8/88

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New Master Class
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Harvey Mason

by Chad Rager

Creative Practicing

After one has become a "professional" player, much of the time previously devoted to practicing gets taken up with traveling, band rehearsals, and basic necessities like eating and sleeping. More creative techniques need to be developed in order to maintain the inspiration—and the desire—to continue practicing.

Everything a person does involves movement (a form of rhythm), and therefore drumming; you can actually practice 24 hours a day without really trying. For example, when I'm traveling, I think about the drums and can "see" and "hear" them in my mind. I imagine playing a certain pattern that I might not otherwise be able to play. I visualize each part of the set and can "hear" where the problem areas might be. After reviewing the pattern in my mind, I can usually sit down at the set and recreate the pattern on the drums.

When walking, use yourself as a metronome, playing patterns against the tempo of your walk. Watch other people

walking, and imagine the many different patterns that can be created from their body movements. Also, listen to all the sounds around you: the rhythm of a bus engine, the sounds of conversations, and so on. Begin to imagine the drum patterns and sounds that could be played. As an example, I once owned an old car. The engine ran rather poorly and unevenly. I noticed that the engine actually sounded "funky." I recorded the engine sound and figured out how to play its funky rhythms on the drums.

To improve single strokes, double strokes, or any rhythmic pattern, put on an album and play along with each tune, changing the tempo with each song. Or, maintain the same tempo throughout the album. This keeps the practice from being boring and helps you "feel" the accents, mood changes, and rhythmic changes, while helping to build confidence.

There are also some non-drumming practice techniques that really help. I studied tap dancing with Steve Condos, who suggested that we practice in water up to our necks. The method was to improve our fluidity of movement, since it is impossible to make "jerky" or "stiff" movements under the water, then, when practicing on the drumset, the movements of the limbs become smoother. Steve also suggested practicing with the feet while sitting in a chair. Play single and double strokes, paradiddles, etc. while watching TV, or whenever your feet aren't otherwise engaged.

Instead of playing on the drums, try playing on a pillow. Just turn on the tape

player and use the bed for the drums and the floor for the bass drum. Your cymbal substitute could be glasses filled with water. Use your imagination, and you'll hear great "sounds" everywhere.

To play more melodically, start copying keyboard and horn solos. Put on a record and play along with one of the players in the band. As an example, on a big band album, play all the sax ensemble figures, then the trumpet figures, and so on. Really try to simulate their sounds; you'll be amazed at what you can create. Be sure to select pieces from all styles of music in order to broaden your range.

To better understand how the hands and feet depend on each other, set the drums up backwards, so that your feet are reversed from their normal "pedal positions," and your "ride" and "back-beat" hands are also reversed. Play along with some simple songs, playing backwards. (This technique really shows how the brain is the computer command post.) By putting away the "licks" that you've learned, some really different and unique patterns can be discovered.

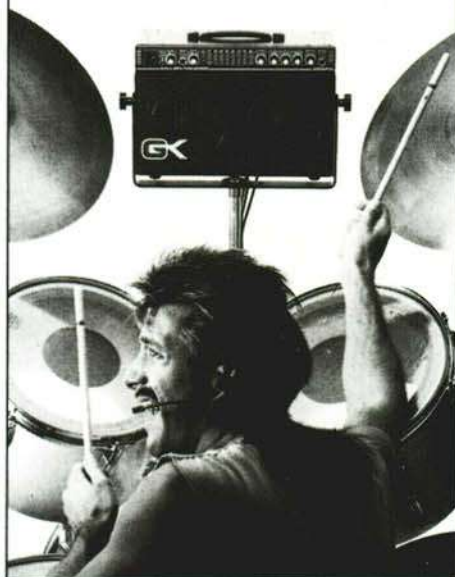
In finding "your" sound, always remember that each person is different. All the experiences in a drummer's life determine how he or she feels about playing. So many drummers try to sound like someone else. Look inward, because it's *you* that everyone wants to hear. By all means, listen to and appreciate the great players' sounds. But then, use what appeals to you, and develop your *own* sound. Try "talking" or "expressing your feelings" on your drums. Don't think of technique; just think of feelings. How would you play happiness, sadness, arguments, a baby's laughter, etc? Each person's ideas are very different, and that makes them unique.

There is no substitute for legitimate practicing to gain the techniques needed to play drums. But perhaps some of the ideas I've offered can help you to expand your "traditional" practicing techniques. And no matter *what* techniques you employ, when you're through practicing, just stop and *look* at your drums for a while. Remember when you'd go to the music store and look at the drums, trying to imagine that you were playing them? *Don't ever lose that feeling.* That's why drummers continue playing. Even though drumming is my "job," the 12-year-old who started playing in his mother's basement is always with me—and we're having a *big time*.

The 200MV Monitor Amp from Gallien-Krueger. As Rick Van Horn of *Modern Drummer* says, "... quite simply the greatest 'hearing aid' for club drummers I've ever seen." The 200MV features 100 watts of clean power, 4 inputs (1 mic level, 3 line level), 7-band graphic EQ, built-in reverb, and a host of outputs. Create your own individual monitor mix. Hear one at your Gallien-Krueger dealer or write GK at 1355 Dell Avenue, Dept D, Campbell, CA 95008 for info.



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First place winners: Gene Krupa (pictured) plus Steve Gadd, Tony Williams, Buddy Rich, Airtio, Ralph MacDonald



1980

First place winners: Tony Williams (pictured) plus Buddy Rich, Steve Gadd, Neil Peart, Airtio, Ralph MacDonald



1981

First place winners: Steve Gadd (pictured) plus Buddy Rich, Neil Peart, Airtio, Ralph MacDonald



1982

First place winners: Buddy Rich (pictured) plus Steve Gadd, Neil Peart, Airtio, Keith Moon



1983

First place winners: Neil Peart (pictured) plus Buddy Rich, Steve Gadd, Airtio



1984

First place winners: Airtio (pictured) plus Steve Gadd, Buddy Rich, Sly Dunbar, Neil Peart, Rick Allen



1985

First place winners: Louie Bellson (pictured) plus Buddy Rich, Alan Dawson, Steve Gadd, Neil Peart, Sly Dunbar, Omar Hakim, Airtio



1986

First place winners: Omar Hakim (pictured) plus Tony Williams, Ed Shaughnessy, Sly Dunbar, Mel Gaynor, Neil Peart, Anthony Cirone



1987

First place winners: Dave Weckl (pictured) plus Billy Cobham, Steve Smith, Simon Phillips, Louie Bellson, Dave Samuels, Alex Acuna, Anthony Cirone, Gregg Bissonette, Tony Williams

If it did, then this year's *Modern Drummer* Readers Poll will record the same old result as last year's.

And the year before. And the year before that. And every other year since the beginning of the Readers Poll:

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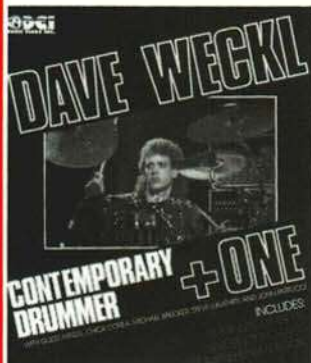
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1988?

AUDIO



**DAVE WECKL
CONTEMPORARY DRUMMER
+ ONE**

**DCI Music Video Inc.
541 Avenue of the Americas
New York NY 10011**

Time: 78 minutes

Price: \$26.95

I've waited in eager anticipation for this package ever since a preview soundsheet with accompanying chart appeared in *Modern Drummer* ("Spur Of The Moment," *MD Oct.*, '87). In short, "Spur" was a knockout and the now available complete package delivers no less. Well-conceived and handsomely packaged, the set includes a 78-minute audio cassette, nine studio charts, and a 39-page book.

The cassette features nine arrangements in various styles including electric jazz, jingle, funk, pop/rock, straight-ahead jazz, and film soundtrack. On side one, the cuts can be heard complete with Weckl's drumming. Side two contains the same cuts minus drums but with a click track or sequenced percussion, allowing a drummer to play along.

In the book, Weckl clearly and in great detail explains his interpretive decisions for each chart with the help of accurate transcriptions of key grooves and fills. Herein lies the beauty of the package: Weckl's teaching concept stresses the interpretation of the charts rather than the cold reading of complex notation. Listening to the tape is a joy in itself, especially the electric jazz selections. It's a high quality production of newly-recorded material that features such stellar guests as Chick Corea, Michael Brecker, John Patitucci, and Steve Lukather. Weckl's production partner—keyboardist/writer/programmer Jay Oliver—also deserves special praise for his outstanding contributions.

Although it has been advertised as a product for intermediate to advanced players, the package is primarily suited to advanced drummers. Living up to its "Contemporary" title, this package does offer some very challenging, up-to-date material, and any drummer who digests this substantial teaching system should be rewarded with sharpened reading, technique, and interpretational skills.

—Jeff Potter

exists in a private lesson. These two audio tapes by Danny Gottlieb, however, are the closest thing to private lessons that I have yet encountered.

A little bit of the credit goes to the cassette format itself, as that allows you to take advantage of this material just about anywhere—in your car, in your practice room, lying in bed, wherever. I listened to these tapes in the car, and it was like having a friend sitting next to me discussing drums. Most of the credit, though, must go to Gottlieb himself, first for the amount of information he shares, and second for the way in which he shares it.

Each of the four sides deals with a different topic. Side A is called "Drumming Overview," and on it Danny discusses general topics such as musicality, technique, and practice ideas. Side B, "Playing Loose And Keeping The Groove," deals with the way Danny approaches his "organic" style of drumming, and it contains good material on using emotions in drumming and in being musically appropriate. Side C deals with "Sensitivity Within The Drumset," in which Danny explores the many sounds that the drumset is capable of. The final side is devoted to cymbals, which are something of a specialty with Gottlieb.

The key word for Danny's delivery is "friendly." There are no pretensions or ego here. He's not trying to impress anyone with hot licks, but rather is just conveying his endless fascination with the many possibilities of drumming. There is a good balance between spoken word and playing; one of my favorite examples involves fills that are not in context with the rest of the music. These tapes are crammed with ideas and concepts, and therefore stand up well to repeated listenings.

—Richard Egart

VIDEO



**TOMMY ALDRIDGE
ROCK DRUM SOLOING &
DOUBLE BASS WORKOUT**
Hot Licks Productions Inc.
P.O. Box 337

Pound Ridge NY 10567

Time: 60 minutes

Price: \$49.95

Tommy Aldridge is recognized as one of the world's best hard rock drummers, and on this video he demonstrates the reasons why. Tommy's playing is excellent throughout, from the opening solo, through all of the techniques and exercises he demonstrates, to the closing solo. Drummers interested in learning how to play in this style could hardly ask for a better tutorial.

Tommy gets into a wide variety of subjects, covering just about every aspect of rock soloing and double bass playing. He stresses the need to achieve even dynamic control on both bass drums, and gives suggestions on how to achieve it (including a discussion of balance, seat height, etc.). He also stresses the importance of not overplaying on double bass, but using it tastefully for added power and effect. Drawing a bit on his own background, he points out that there is no substitute for dedicated practice when attempting to achieve endurance and control on two bass drums. Tommy also demonstrates a number of hand-to-foot combinations, emphasizing how a simple three-note grouping played with the feet can be incorporated with the hands to create patterns that sound much



**DANNY GOTTLIEB
DRUMMING CONCEPTS**

Bamo

P.O. Box 13

Plainview NY 11803

Time: 2 hours

Price: \$21.95

Taking a private lesson with a noted drummer can be both inspiring and educational. But since few of us ever have the opportunity to study with one of the greats, we have to settle for substitutes. Books and articles written by famous drummers have been around for years, and while many of them contain a wealth of good material, it's just not the same as a private lesson. Video tapes (and clinics, to a point) are a step closer, but there's not that feeling of intimacy that

more intricate than they really are.

In terms of soloing, Tommy goes into the importance of building a solo, using dynamics, and keeping visuals and showmanship in mind. He demonstrates the stick twirls and bare-hands playing for which he is famous, but stresses that a drummer's musicality must not come second to the visual element.

Speaking from a production standpoint, the camera work is generally excellent on the video. Tommy's head is often cut from the frame in an attempt to view both his hands and feet at close range, but since his hands and feet are what most drummers are interested in, this can be forgiven. Sound quality is good, and Tommy's drums are tuned so as not to overpower the microphones—a problem that often occurs on rock drum videos. Transcriptions of the various musical phrases Tommy demonstrates are flashed on the screen (albeit a bit briefly) at appropriate times, which is helpful for those able to grasp things better when seen as well as heard.

If there is any production flaw, it might be in the lack of "scripting." Tommy does hem and haw just a bit, and occasionally repeats himself more than necessary to emphasize a point. But the tone of his overall delivery is warm, honest, and matter-of-fact. You get the feeling that you are listening to good advice from a man who has the credentials and experience to support it. (He closes the video with a cautionary word about the business side of music, and how young performers should be aware of the need to protect themselves with good attorneys and accountants as they begin to achieve some financial success.)

Tommy's personal colloquialisms add flavor and character to his discussion, while at the same time he can be very eloquent in his descriptions and illustrations. This is one instructional video that covers its subject thoroughly and well, and offers the added bonus of presenting one of the top drummers in the rock field today. This one is highly recommended.

—Rick Van Horn

KENNY ARONOFF



KENNY ARONOFF LAYING IT DOWN

DCI Music Video Inc.
541 Avenue of the Americas
New York NY 10011

Time: 52 minutes

Price: \$39.95

If there's one thing Kenny Aronoff is known for, it's his ability to come up with a good rock 'n' roll drum pattern and make it groove. Throughout his work with John Cougar Mellencamp, Kenny has taken the "less is more" approach and developed his own style and sound. In this video, Kenny talks about what he does best: making a rock beat groove.

This video contains information for beginner and intermediate level players interested in rock drumming. Kenny covers the

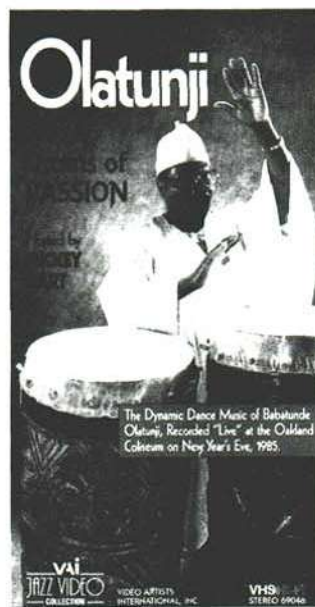
basics, and he does it in an interesting way. He covers topics such as *selecting the right beat*, *keeping steady time*, *making the beat groove*, and *being creative with the beat*. He demonstrates these concepts by discussing and playing beats from his work with John Cougar Mellencamp. Songs such as "Hurts So Good," "Jack And Diane," "Crumblin' Down," "Rain On The Scarecrow," "Between A Laugh And A Tear," and "Lonely Ol' Night" are all examined. Included with the video is a booklet that contains transcriptions of these tunes, plus printed exercises, which are discussed in the

video.

Kenny does plenty of playing on this tape. Besides playing beats by himself, Kenny also performs with a guitarist and keyboard player to show how he applies his concepts in an actual playing situation. There is also some live footage of Kenny with John Cougar Mellencamp. In addition to this group playing, Kenny demonstrates working with a click track, and gives a few pointers on the subject. Kenny also discusses proper hand and foot techniques, and gives several exercises for each.

This is the first video that I have seen that really covers basic rock drumming and gives several good tips on the subject. Kenny comes across well on camera, and his enthusiasm and positive attitude for the subject is obvious. Check this one out.

—William F. Miller



BABATUNDE OLATUNJI OLATUNJI AND HIS DRUMS OF PASSION

Video Artists International,
Inc.

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Time: 51 minutes

Price: \$29.95

For the uninitiated, *Olatunji And His Drums Of Passion* is a video from a group of drummers/singers/dancers who have roots in the Yoruba culture of West Africa. They are led by Babatunde Olatunji, whose joyous performances have inspired Westerners from Coltrane to Santana. This video is live footage from a concert in Oakland in 1985, where they opened for The Grateful Dead.

Drums Of Passion concentrates

on the visual and audio appreciation of this dynamic African art form rather than being a "how to" piece. It's a heartfelt and inspired performance of rhythm and vocalization, an earthy and sincere music. A variety of percussion instruments developed in the Yoruba culture because their instrumentation is based solely on drums and vocal sounds. Colorful dancers and expressive musicians playing handcrafted drums enhance the overall performance. A number of camera angles, from slow zooms on individual percussionists to medium and long shots of the entire group, combine with subtle lighting and backdrop changes to hold the viewer's interest. (Those fed up with the short attention span quick-edits of MTV will find the smoother editing here a welcome relief.)

Mickey Hart of the Grateful Dead gives an all too short introduction to only three of the percussion instruments used in the performance. From a drummer's point of view, it would have been useful to extend this introduction to demonstrate more of the instruments used and how to play them. The names of the percussion instruments could have been subtitled under the different drums as they were being demonstrated. The viewer would then have a deeper appreciation of the concert that follows. Perhaps a "highlights" version of this concert with a more in-depth introduction would have made this a more educational video for the serious drummer wanting to apply any of these techniques to his own playing. But for sheer inspiration, *Drums Of Passion* whets the appetite of the percussionist to look and listen further into this highly fascinating area of rhythm-making.

—Terry Kennedy

continued on next page

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Nashville vibist Jerry Tachoir presents this mini-clinic covering a variety of subjects along with two extended solo performances. The topics include grips, warm-ups, selecting mallets, motion/accuracy/speed, dampening, and chords and voicings, and are accompanied by musical examples.

VOLUME I

Color 60 minutes

This video's virtues are, at best, balanced with planning and production problems. The sound, accomplished by a mic' attached to the player and an overhead mic', is poorly engineered, and the view chosen by the camera operator occasionally restricts the viewer during crucial closeups.

Even more important, though, is a debatable choice of verbiage and terminology: Tachoir refers to black or white sets of bars as "registers," and calls the independent (or Musser) grip the "marimba" grip. And a couple of remarks are questionable, i.e., that some playing style exists where a two-mallet player picks up two more mallets, plays a chord, and then puts them back down to improvise melodies. And Tachoir's doubling of left or right stickings in linear patterns is in direct opposition to a majority of teachers, who expound the virtues of alternate sticking.

If one approaches this tape with a touch of skepticism and a purpose of gleaning out the good factors, there is always something to be learned, particularly for the beginners. Tachoir presents a good array of ideas, such as well-illustrated dampening techniques, but is inconsistent in aiming at one level of playing ability in his intended audience. Much of the matter is for beginning players, yet some of it will confuse or discourage them, including the above-mentioned problems, theory explanations, and his attempt at one summation of the numerous factors that a player must constantly keep in mind.

—Jany Sabins 

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your drumset playing?

SF: It's hard to answer that, because I really don't know what it would be like if I hadn't had that experience. I can just describe what I think, based on what I've seen from other players. It seems to me that what I learned from playing in orchestras was a sense of ensemble. As a drummer, 90% of the time you are just one part of a whole. In an orchestra, you learn to play what you have to play and make it fit in with what everybody else is playing. A lot of young players I hear have dazzling technique—they can play all the licks and play fast—but it sounds a bit self-indulgent within the band. When I go to hear a great drummer play, as a drummer I want to hear some great drumming, but as a *musician* I want to hear the *band* really burn. And I want to know that one of the reasons the band is burning is because the drummer is great. But I don't want the drummer's greatness to be shoved in my face. It's fine for drummers to show off some things when they get their little spots, but they should be showing that they're great all through the night by fitting into the whole thing. And I think I learned that from playing in an orchestra.

RM: What about studying vibes from Gary Burton? Could one argue that you would be a better drumset player if you hadn't split your time between different instruments?

SF: I think I've spent as much time playing the drumset as most people who *just* play the drumset. But studying vibes with Gary Burton opened my mind to the compositional aspects of music, which helped not only from a vibes standpoint but also from a drum standpoint. I learned about song structures, and that certain sections of a song need more support and certain sections need less. I learned that improvisation needs a beginning, a middle, and an end. I also learned how to practice correctly and make the most of my time. Gary also turned me on to Bill Evans, because Evans was one of Gary's biggest influences. I, in turn, became very influenced by the way that the Bill Evans Trio functioned as an entity.

So that was my time in Boston, and after that I still felt that there were things I wanted to learn, so I moved to New York, went to Juilliard, and got my master's in percussion and composition. When I got to New York, the only person I knew was a percussionist that I'd met at Tanglewood, so I looked him up. He had been doing Broadway shows at night, and going to NYU during the day to be a filmmaker. So when I arrived in town, he was in the pit of the show *Pippin*, but he was ready to make a career change so he asked me if I wanted his job. That was too good to be true, because *Pippin* was a hit show at the time. So that was how I broke into the Broadway scene. A few years later I was able to return the favor to that guy. I called him to replace me in *Little Shop Of Horrors*.

The greatest connection you can make is to be friends with other drummers. When I was doing that show, I would call another drummer to sub for me, and then he would recommend me a year later to do something, and that would lead to another connection in another area, and ultimately, all of the connections come full circle. The bottom line is, whenever you get a chance to play, always play the very best that you can. Even if it's a little dinky beer hall or something, always put your heart and soul into it because you never know who's going to be there and where it's going to lead. Sometimes the funkiest situations are the pivotal points that put you in situations you would have never dreamed they would put you in. That's how it has been for me.

RM: What did you do after *Pippin*?

SF: The same kinds of things I'd been doing in Boston—free-lance orchestra things, other shows, rock 'n' roll bands. The last show I played was *Little Shop Of Horrors*. That started off as a showcase thing; the composer came in with leadsheets, hired a band, and created the arrangements for a showcase, never thinking that anything much would come of it. Now, seven years later, it's still running. But getting involved with that show was very pivotal for me. First of all, the guy who wrote the music for that show also writes for films and jingles, so that spawned work for me in the studios. Then, when we made the original-cast album for *Little Shop*, they hired Phil Ramone to produce it. He liked my playing

and started hiring me for other projects he was working on. From doing his stuff I started meeting more people who were involved in bands, and I got so much work that I had to quit *Little Shop*. I started going on the road with singers, and doing stuff like that. I wrote a couple of songs for a movie that Phil worked on called *D.C. Cab*, and I also worked with him on the soundtracks for *Flashdance*, *Vision Quest*, and some other movies, and for some singers he produced. I worked with Peter Frampton after he did some guitar with an artist Phil was producing, and I worked with people like Gary U.S. Bonds, Melissa Manchester, Sheena Easton, and Sylvain Sylvain from the New York Dolls. Then I did the soap opera thing for a while, which I just kind of fell into. I've been really lucky.

RM: So how did you get the Suzanne Vega gig?

SF: I had been playing in a band with her keyboard player, and one day I said, "If Suzanne's gig ever opens up, I'd love to have a chance at it." But he said, "I doubt if that's going to happen, because she's been using the same drummer for a long time." So I just sort of forgot about it, but about six months later he called me up out of the blue and said, "Suzanne is looking for a drummer. Are you interested in auditioning?" I said that I would love to audition, so he told me that I would be getting a call from Suzanne's management with the details.

I didn't hear anything for a couple of days, and then finally I got a message on my answering machine to call her manager at 7:00 in the evening. I had a gig that night with this rock 'n' roll band on Long Island, and at 7:00 I was on the Long Island Expressway. I pulled into a Howard Johnson's and called from a pay phone. It was family night or something, and there were all of these screaming kids in the restaurant. I was trying to hear Suzanne's manager tell me that the audition was the next day, and that he was going to drop off a tape at my apartment that night.

So when I got home from the gig, there was a tape waiting for me. They said that they were giving me the tape so that I could understand what her songs were about, but they didn't want me to play what was on the tape. They wanted me to get the form, and then put whatever I could into it. That's a difficult thing, because you want the job, so you want to do the right thing. But what you think is the right thing might not be what *they* think is the right thing, and you don't find that out until you don't get the job.

So anyway, I did the audition, and I got three or four call-backs, because they kept narrowing it down. Each time I went back, Suzanne would bring out a new song that was in the developmental stages, and she would say, "This is an idea for a song. What do you think should happen here?" She was looking for someone who could bring his own creativity into the project.

After about three weeks, they said, "You've got the job. We start cutting an album in three days." We actually spent the first two weeks in a rehearsal barn, rehearsing the songs as a band. Then we went in the studio, and for about one-third of the songs we recorded drums and bass first, and layered everything else on top of that. But on the rest of the album we cut tracks live as a band, and then just went back and fixed things. There was never a point when I was sitting in the studio by myself with a click track. Suzanne didn't want a sterile situation; she definitely wanted a band feel. And both of her producers—Lenny Kaye, who's a great producer and was Patti Smith's guitarist, and Steve Addabbo—come from that same school of spontaneity and letting things go to see what happens.

RM: Once the songs were recorded, were they allowed to develop further on the road, or are they locked in to the recorded versions?

SF: The tunes definitely evolved on the road, but not structurally. For example, there's a tune on the record called "Wooden Horse." That song was recorded at the very end of the sessions. It was about 1:00 in the morning, everyone was ready to go home, and Suzanne suddenly decided that she wanted to record this song. She only had a very basic idea about how she wanted the song to go, so we put down the drum part and the bass part, and the rest of the song wasn't finished until about three weeks later. The song was pretty much built on the foundation of the drum pattern.

When we went out to play the song live, I realized that there

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were some things that I would have played differently if I had known what the other guys were going to be playing. So as we played it live, we were able to add a lot of dynamic rises and falls that weren't on the record. It's still the same structure and the same song, but I think that the live version is a lot more exciting than the recorded version.

RM: I agree that the record sounds a little flat to me ever since I heard the band live.

SF: Yeah. I mean, it's not the kind of thing where you're going to walk away saying, "Wow, that's really different from the record." But a lot of people have commented that there's a spirit when we play it live that's not on the record.

RM: I was surprised to see Simmons pads amidst your setup. I know that the record company is trying to avoid having Suzanne referred to as a folk singer...

SF: We call it "folk 'n' roll." [laughs]

RM: Nevertheless, there is an acoustic feel to her music, so it's interesting that you are incorporating electronics into that.

SF: Suzanne's music is all textural. It's like in layers: groove on the bottom, then the textural things, and on top is her voice and acoustic guitar. It's all a cushion for her lyrics and her expression. The electronics are there to let all of that textural stuff come into play. In my rack I have an Akai 5900, a Simmons SDS9, a Simmons SDE Percussion Module, a Simmons MTX9, a Yamaha SPX 90 processor, and a Simmons 8-channel mixer. I have five Simmons pads that trigger sounds, and my drums are also triggering sounds. I don't trigger any drum sounds, however, because I have acoustic drums there that are miked and processed to sound like real drums. So the electronics are there for percussion sounds, which I have a lot of: shakers, blocks, finger cymbals, chimes, bells, marimba, and all those kinds of things. On the record, I used all real stuff, and initially I tried playing live with actual hand-percussion instruments, but miking that stuff was really difficult. It was easier to sample all of those instruments and trigger the sounds from pads. That way, we could run the sound straight into the board without getting a lot of other room sounds mixed in.

RM: You say that your acoustic drums are triggering sounds, but that you are not triggering any drum sounds. What kind of sounds are you triggering, then, from your acoustic drums?

SF: It's just different sounds and effects things to give the drums a different sound. I don't know what the point would be of having different acoustic drum sounds. I'm doing it to enhance the sounds that I'm using, or to mutate them so that they sound different. For example, I can take a block sound, tune it down real low, change the velocity and frequency, and process it so that it doesn't sound anything like a block. It doesn't sound like anything that you could describe; it becomes a different instrument. It might sound lousy if I hit it by itself, but if I mix it with an acoustic tom-tom, it gives the tom-tom a new sound that might really be effective in a certain spot. So that's how the electronics fit in.


I'm really happy with the Simmons pads. I like the fact that they're bigger than a lot of the other pads, and the sensitivity feels like I'm hitting something real. For example, in "Solitude Standing" there's a cross-stick sound in the middle of the pattern I play. I have that coming from a Simmons pad, and it feels very natural to strike that pad in between the acoustic drums and cymbals. I don't feel like I'm hitting something awkward in the middle of the pattern.

RM: I thought I saw a real triangle hanging there.


SF: You did, but I also have a sampled triangle that I use in the course of the show. Triangle was the one instrument that just didn't sound right when we tried to sample it. It has to do with the sustain. Even though you don't think you can hear it after a certain point, you miss it if it's not there. So I've got a real triangle up there for two songs that are very quiet and sparse. I hit it with a couple of different beaters to get different textures.

RM: Using electronics in a group like, say, Weather Report would be no problem, because the group's sound is based around a synthesizer. But what about Suzanne's group, where the sound has to be a cushion, as you described it, for her acoustic guitar? Does that pose any special problems?

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SF: I think you just have to know where to use it, and more importantly, you have to know where not to use it. And you have to use the right sound for the right situation.

It's just like when you're playing an acoustic drumset and you know when to use a particular crash cymbal, or you know that the floor tom would sound better in a certain spot than a small rack tom. You have to know what sound will fit a particular space so that it doesn't suddenly sound like, "Oh, now he's using electronics."

It's like with drumming itself when you know what *not* to play. I've seen Steve Gadd sit for hours and play a simple groove, and then he'll play this two-bar thing that will knock your socks off. It's so effective because he does it in exactly the right place. So using electronics is like that. You have to be really patient to find the right sounds, and if you're not happy with them, you have to keep working on it until you get it right. But that's the advantage to working with electronics: You can keep modifying it until you get exactly what you are hearing in your head. If you have the right equipment and you know how to use it, the boundaries are endless with electronics.

RM: Let's run down the rest of your setup. You're using Pearl drums.

SF: Right. I've used Pearl for most of my career. We were out on tour for nine months, and wherever we were in the world—Japan, Europe, New Zealand, the States—the Pearl drums that were supplied sounded great. The consistency was perfect. I use a 16 x 22 bass drum, 8 x 10, 10 x 12, 12 x 14, and 14 x 16 toms, all rack mounted, and three *Free-Floating snare* drums that I alternate: a 5" maple, a 6 1/2" brass, and a 5" copper that I got in Japan, which they don't sell in the States. With the toms, I've tried all kinds of sizes, and I've found that having a two-inch difference between drums really makes a difference in terms of getting a good pitch differentiation between drums. I don't put any muffling at all on the toms, because I want them to ring. On the snare drum I use either a little piece of gaffer's tape with some tissue under it, or else I use a plastic ring. I have a blanket inside the bass drum and a pad where the beater hits.

I have *Detonator* triggers mounted on the inside of all the drumshells. I've tried various types of triggers, and these seem to outlast them all. With most of the others, the crystal cracks after about three weeks, but these seem to last a long time. I mike my kit with Beyer microphones. I have *M422s* on the snare and hi-hat, *M420s* on the small toms, an *M201* on the large tom, an *M380* on the kick, and *M201s* for overheads.

I've recently started using Evans heads. I did some recording with them and they really made the drums sing. I'm using glass *Rock* heads on the tops of the toms with red *Resonants* on the bottoms. The snare batter is a coated *UNO 58 1000* weight, and I have a red *Rock* on the batter side of my bass drum with a red *Resonant* on the front.

I've used Zildjian cymbals all of my life, since the first cymbal I ever had. Lennie DiMuzio is such a wonderful guy, and he'll always take time to help you pick out cymbals. In fact, I remember going up there once because I needed a crash cymbal. I was carrying my cymbal bag, and Lennie said, "So, you brought your cymbals with you?" I said, "Of course. How can I pick out a cymbal that will work with my setup if I don't have my other cymbals with me?" And Lennie started patting me on the shoulder, like "Good boy." He said that so many people never think of that, but it's really important if you want to have a cohesive setup.

So anyway, the basic setup I used on the tour was a 20" K *Custom* ride, an 18" *China Boy* low, a 16" K thin crash, a 17" A medium-thin crash, an 18" K dark crash, 13" hi-hats with a K top and a Z bottom, and a 6" *EFX-1* bell cymbal. That combination just blows me away. I mean, I've got some *serious* cymbals.

RM: I seem to remember seeing a 16" K *Custom* crash when I saw you live.

SF: You probably did. Within that setup I just described I might switch something around. I've got that K *Custom* you saw, and I've also got a 16" Z. I'm amazed at how each cymbal has a life of its own.

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I'm using a custom stick that Vic Firth makes for me. It has the same tip as the Steve Gadd stick, which is a medium ball, but it's thicker than a Gadd stick. I like to feel that I'm really holding on to something when I play, and the fatter stick also gives me a good cross-stick sound, which is important because there's a lot of cross-stick stuff in Suzanne's music. I use DW Turbo pedals.

RM: We can't forget your triangle.

SF: Right! [laughs] It's an Alan Abel.

RM: I'm not surprised, considering your background. Most classical percussionists use Alan Abel triangles. Do you anticipate ever doing any classical work again?

SF: Well, I haven't done any for years. But I did a concert with Suzanne in Salt Lake City recently, and it turns out that the assistant conductor of the Utah Symphony is a guy I went to the Conservatory with. He spoke to Suzanne about us possibly doing something with the orchestra, so who knows? It could go full circle for me.

RM: What's ahead for you in the foreseeable future?

SF: At the moment, Suzanne is writing material for her next album. So while she's been doing that, I've been spending a lot of time recording in London. I did a record with a group called Habit, then I worked on a record by a singer named Mica Paris, and I did some tracks for another singer named Roger Christian.

RM: Considering your varied background and influences, how would you describe your own playing?

SF: I don't think I could do that. I hear myself on records, and I'm always surprised in one way or another. When people hire me, hopefully they hire me because they feel that I have something unique to offer, but I don't necessarily want to know what that is. I think it might get in my way if I knew what it was about my approach that they liked. All I want to concentrate on when I play is making it right for the artist and the music. That's the one constant I have when I play, no matter who the artist is or what type of music I'm playing. I just want to serve the music and put everything I have into it.



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It's Questionable continued from page 14

act drummers employ headphones that completely enclose their ears, effectively blocking out most of the sound around them. Into those headphones is directed as much or as little of the monitor mix as they desire. What this might mean to you is that you could actually hear your monitor mix (your voice alone, the band, or whatever you normally hear in your monitor) at a lower volume than what you're hearing now, and yet with more clarity.

These suggestions are offered only as various means of protecting your ears from what is essentially an unavoidable ingredient of today's pop music. If none of them prove practical or acceptable to you, you may be faced with a dilemma that only you can solve: whether or not to continue performing in the manner in which you are performing now.

Q. Where can I get some information on the availability of parts for the discontinued Ludwig Ghost bass drum pedal?

W.F.

Tonawanda NY

A. According to Ludwig's Marketing Manager, Jim Catalano, the only source of parts would be individual dealers or repair shops that might have some old parts from "cannibalized" pedals. Other than that, the Ghost pedal is quite simply a piece of drumming history.

Q. I'm currently using a Tama remote hi-hat in conjunction with Tama's Power Tower rack system. I use the remote hats in the traditional setup (on the left of the snare drum) and enjoy the capability of putting the hats anywhere I want while having the most comfortable positioning of my pedal (also anywhere I want). I find that the hi-hat works great when the cable is stretched out to the maximum, while any bend in the cable causes friction in the cable housing, greatly reducing performance. Does Tama make custom cables (say, a 3' length) as compared to the 6' and 8'

lengths available? If not, does anyone out there know how to shorten a cable? I've tried cable manufacturers and cycle shops, but to no avail. Any suggestions would be appreciated.

D.S.

North Tewksbury MA

A. According to Tama's National Sales Manager, Joe Hibbs, the cables are available in two standard lengths: 4' and 8'. He suggests that you look into the 4' length to solve your problem. As far as cutting the cable goes, Joe recommends that you don't try it, since the linkage attaching the cable to either the pedal end or the hi-hat end of the complete assembly would have to be refitted. This is a ticklish operation requiring some tools and machinery unavailable in most machine or cycle shops.

Q. In the Shop Talk department of your April '88 issue, you had an article about Jay Bereck's Skin On Skin Percussion. Could you please print Jay's full business address?

X.G.

Lexington KY

A. You may contact Jay Bereck at Skin On Skin Percussion, 274 Smith Street, Brooklyn, New York 11231, (718) 643-0214.

Update continued from page 10

Time, was recently released with percussionist **Luis Conte** also on the project. **Carl Alien** has been working with Freddie Hubbard, Benny Powell, and recently with Harrison/Blanchard. **Jimmy De Grasso** has just gotten off the road from a six-month American tour with Y & T. The band is now in the process of writing and rehearsing material for their next studio album. **Tom Hambridge's** T.H. & The Wreckage recently released an album on Black Rose Records. Hambridge produced, co-wrote, or wrote on every cut on the album, and performed as the lead singer and drummer. The band is currently doing dates. Hambridge also did Rubber Rodeo's last tour, as well as working on their recent studio project, and he recently played with the Drifters, the Coasters, the Marvellets, Chuck Berry, the Shirrells, Del Shannon, Gary Puckett, Martha Reeves & the Vandellas, Brook Benton, Little Anthony & The Imperials, and the Diamonds. This month **Butch Miles** is performing at the Indianapolis Jazz Festival and the Elkhart Jazz Festival, and he is touring Europe with the Gerry Mulligan Big Band. Next month he will do clinics at Blue Lake Music Camp, Michigan, as well as performing with the Great American Swing Orchestra in Cape Cod. Congratulations to **Les DeMerle** on his recent marriage to the former Bonnie Eisele, vocalist with Les' group, Transfusion. Condolences to **Paul T. Riddle**, whose mother was recently killed in an automobile accident.

Readers' Platform continued from page 6

sound. Well, some of them did, but those were not exactly, shall we say, the pick of the litter. When the bells were good, they were beautiful, not clunky! He claims that the shape of the bell was much flatter than the bells of the cymbals coming out of Istanbul today. If Mr. Mattingly knew about old K's, he would know that only on the very old K's were the bells really flat. (At that time they were still molding the bells by hand. This eventually changed.) If he could purchase an old K made in the 1960's, for example, the bells would be almost the same, if not exactly the same, as the bells on the cymbals coming out of Istanbul today. I personally have compared an 18" Istanbul with an 18" old K, and the mold is exactly the same, bell and all. (You can also check the instructional videos of a few famous drummers, and you'll notice that the bells on their old K's look the same as the bells on the cymbals coming out of Istanbul today.) Another mistake is the statement that the bells are significantly bigger than the ones on corresponding Zildjian and Sabian models. Again, this is untrue. They are taller, but at the same time each bell on an Istanbul, in fact, is smaller in diameter than a corresponding Zildjian or Sabian. Also, I cannot speak for the cymbals reviewed, but all of the Istanbul models I have seen have actually been noticeably thinner than

corresponding Zildjian or Sabian models—especially the heavier weight cymbals.

Mr. Mattingly's statement that these cymbals don't sound like old K's is unfortunate because it is made totally without basis. Whether the cymbals reviewed did or did not actually remains unknown, since those involved with the review do not seem to be at all qualified to make the comparisons.

Lastly, it was interesting that Mr. Mattingly states that he has been able to play only a very few gigs where his old K's were appropriate, so he has had to enjoy them in the privacy of his own home. Well, many great and not-so-great drummers have played these cymbals in all kinds of musical situations. If they are good cymbals, they can be used!

Added to the list of "maybes" towards the end of the article should be: "Maybe this whole review is invalid, and should be done properly by those with the experience, knowledge, and expertise so as to make a just comparison."

R. Rosen

Kingston NY

Rick Mattingly replies: Anyone familiar at all with "old K's" (K. Zildjian cymbals that were made in Istanbul until about 1978) will be quick to admit that there was tremendous variety within the line. With that in mind, I suppose it was somewhat dangerous of me to compare another cymbal to an old K as though there was a single "old K sound" that could be considered standard. However, I based my comparison on the type of old K sound associated with drummers such as Mel Lewis and Elvin Jones, as that seems to be generally regarded as the "classic" old K sound. This was also what the Istanbuls that first came into this country sounded like, and that's why I felt the comparison valid.

As for which of the old K's were the "pick of the litter," it depends on who was doing the picking. Mel Lewis used to select old K's from the Gretsch factory in Brooklyn, and he told me that, yes, some of the old K's were heavier and had larger bells and less "trash." He also said that none of the drummers he knew liked those cymbals.

Regarding the comparison of the bell sizes, I have seen Istanbuls that had the same size of bell as my old K's (including a 20" ride I purchased new in 1977 that had a flatter bell). But the ones that were sent to MD for review had larger bells. Also, the bells on this batch of Istanbuls were definitely larger in both height and diameter than corresponding Zildjians and Sabians. I do not doubt that Mr. Rosen compared an individual Istanbul with an individual old K and found that they were identical. As I said in the review, I've seen and heard a lot of Istanbul cymbals that were identical to the old K's that I am familiar with. But the Istanbuls that we received for this review were different. Similarly, I have no trouble believing that the Istanbuls that Mr. Rosen has seen were thinner than corresponding Zildjians and Sabians. Mr. Rosen admits that he cannot speak for the cymbals that we reviewed, but I can, and they were heavier.

As for not using my old K's on a lot of gigs, I did not mean to imply that they were not good cymbals. I could have used them, and most non-drummers probably wouldn't have noticed the difference. But I usually chose to use brighter sounding A's or modern K's, as that sound was more commonly associated with the type of music I was playing.

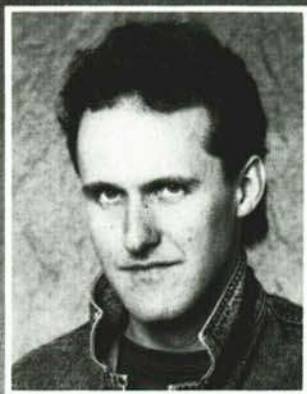
The point that I made in the review was that the first Istanbuls I heard sounded like my idea of a classic old K, and I described that sound as well as I could in terms of "trash," bell size, etc. I then described how this new batch of Istanbuls was different. I also pointed out that a lot of drummers would probably prefer these newer ones to the first ones I heard. There was obviously a lot of variety in the old K's, ranging from the thinner "trashy" cymbals I prefer to the heavier "pingy" ones that Mr. Rosen likes. The Istanbuls seem to have equal variety, and that's why I ended the review by suggesting that drummers check out Istanbuls individually and not take someone else's word that an Istanbul sounds like an old K. It might, or it might not. And, obviously, it will also depend on each drummer's idea of what an old K sounds like.

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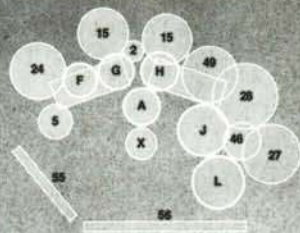


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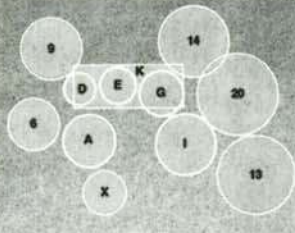
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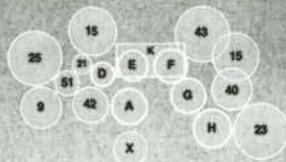
CARL PALMER

... (I choose to play Paiste) because of the variety of change that goes throughout the company... each year there seems to be something new that's happening from a sound point of view... I think (Paiste's) prime consideration is the actual tonal quality, the sound in other words, and from that point of view, I think that musicians will stay with the company...



CHARLIE MORGAN

...the 3000s, which I use are the ideal blend of clarity of sound and also cut... I think a lot of thought has gone into the new ranges of cymbals from drummer feedback... to sum up Paiste cymbals, I think they have a consistency of quality without compromising the nice aspect of the different variations from one cymbal to another...



JEFF PORCARO

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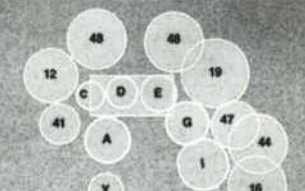
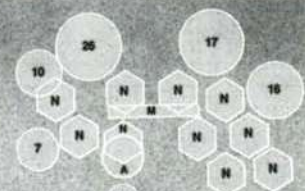
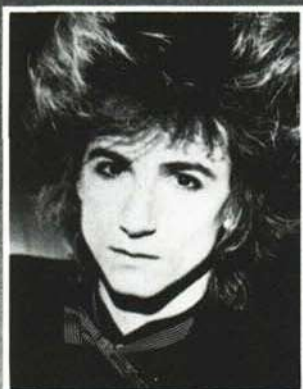
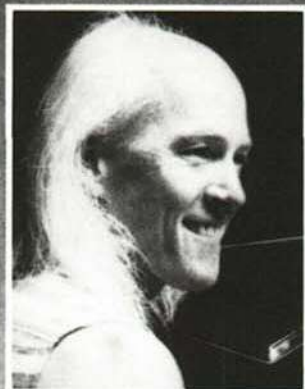
Chad Wackerman

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TERRY BOZZIO

...2000 Colorsounds have a lot of low end and I like that...I like that roar...I like my cymbals to obliterate everything else...I like the variety in the different sounds and sizes, the different colors and timbres, and the textures you can get with using all the different products, from gongs to bell cymbals...I mean, what other company makes as many different varieties as Paiste?...

BILL BRUFORD

...I do like the 3000s...I must admit, I think they are very lovely, really lovely...and I have always liked extremities of sound, rather than all-purpose sounds...Paiste doesn't just make cymbals, they also make very weird cymbals, and gongs and things...Paiste just has a much wider range of sound, and I am a sucker for all the weird stuff...

CHAD WACKERMAN

...one of the big reasons, why I like Paiste so much: the frequencies for each cymbal seem not to conflict as much...if you would have a 14" or 16" Crash, they would sound very different, the pitch is very specific, very defined...besides the endorsement, they are my favorite cymbals...having the choice, I would be playing Paiste anyway...I just like their whole catalog of sounds...

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The statements in this ad are based on interviews conducted with the artists on their playing, cymbals, sounds, and on Paiste. Write to us at Paiste America, 460 Atlas St., Brea, CA. 92621, and ask for the ones you'd like. Mention Dept. USA2. Please include \$3 for printing, postage and handling.

by Dave Samuels

Using The New Technology



Photo By Rick Wainwright

There are a number of ways of utilizing all the new technology that's available today to your benefit. Most of the time this new technology has been applied towards performance or writing, but it can also be used as a good practice tool. Here are some tips on how you can use some of this new equipment to improve your playing.

Drum machines have become commonplace these days and can be a very useful tool for practicing. You can program any rhythm pattern you wish; for the purposes here, choose some kind of rhythm feel that is difficult for you to play over. You can set the machine for endless repeats (or for as many repeats as it will make), and then start practicing on top of it. You can also change the tempo settings as you see fit. If there is a particular head that you're having a problem playing, you can set the machine to a slow enough tempo so that you can play it properly. As you feel more comfortable, you can slowly increase the tempo until you're playing it as fast as you wish.

Another useful way of using a drum machine is to set one rhythm pattern and practice playing a different time feel over it. One case might be where you're playing a double-time feel over a moderate or slow rhythm feel. You can also practice playing in odd time signatures by setting the rhythm pattern to repeat playing in, say, 5/4 or 7/4.

If you have a sequencer and a MIDI keyboard, you can help

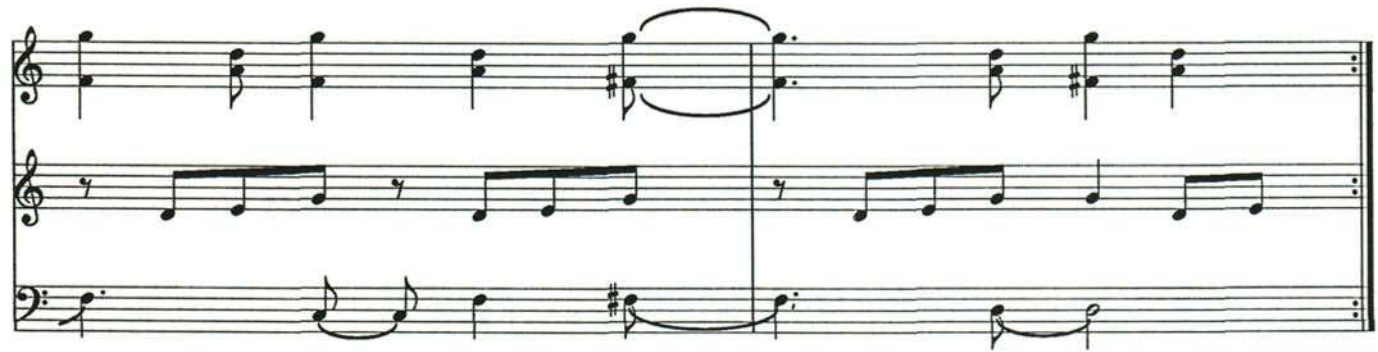
complete the rhythm section sound by adding a bass part. Most sequencers allow you to enter information by a step-in process, so that it isn't necessary for you to enter the sequence in time. Another option is to slow down the sequencer until you can play the bass part correctly, and then speed it up to the desired tempo.

Probably the most valuable piece of equipment you could have is a multi-track tape recorder. This will enable you to hear what you sound like, so that you can learn to critique your playing and style, and to pinpoint the problem spots. If you have a vibe, marimba, multi-track recorder, and a drum machine, you're on your way to being able to create a musical environment that will most certainly improve your playing.

The following are a couple of examples of how you can arrange the mallet parts for a vamp that you can practice improvising over. There are three parts for each vamp. The bottom part should be played on marimba or synth bass, and the top two parts can be played on either vibe or marimba. Record these vamps enough times so that you can practice soloing over them. If you have a drum machine, program your own drum part and record that first. These vamps are only very simple examples of the kinds of things that you can do with a couple of mallet instruments and a multi-track tape recorder.

♩ = 104

The image shows two musical examples, each consisting of three staves. The top staff is in treble clef, the middle in alto clef, and the bottom in bass clef. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 104. The first vamp (top system) features a complex rhythmic pattern in the top staff, a steady accompaniment in the middle staff, and a walking bass line in the bottom staff. The second vamp (bottom system) features a different rhythmic pattern in the top staff, a steady accompaniment in the middle staff, and a walking bass line in the bottom staff. Both vamps end with a double bar line.



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Viktor Mikhailin

They say that music is an international language, and that musicians make great ambassadors of peace and good will. Viktor Mikhailin certainly thinks so. The drummer in Avtograf, Russia's most popular and critically acclaimed rock band, is busy explaining how music, especially pop music, can unite America and the Soviet Union. "Music tells us that communication is possible, and that Russians are really no different than Americans," says Mikhailin in surprisingly good English. "It is a great way to promote understanding between the Russian and American people."

Mikhailin and the rest of Avtograf were recently in the U.S. to introduce themselves to the American rock press and, hopefully, to secure an American record deal. Avtograf's first album sold six million copies in Russia. Because of their success, the group was invited to represent their country via satellite at the 1985 Live Aid concert. Last year, thanks to Glasnost, the band performed with the Doobie Brothers, Carlos Santana, James Taylor, and Bonnie Raitt at the historic July 4th concert in Moscow. And a few months ago, Avtograf recorded eight new songs with American producer Bob Parr at the prestigious Soviet State Studios in the Russian capital. "We think the songs are really good," continues Mikhailin. "Now we must wait to see if American record companies think so."

In the meantime, Mikhailin and the rest of Avtograf were busy meeting American musicians, doing interviews, and getting in a bit of sight-seeing. I caught up with Mikhailin when the band was in New York.

RS: I trust your trip to America has been a rewarding one for you and Avtograf.

VM: It has been just great. But, you know, I didn't expect it to be so good.

RS: Why is that?

VM: Because this is the first time a Soviet rock band has come to your country. We have been abroad to play before; we have been to many countries in Europe. But America is different. We know everything about your music and your music culture, and about the music business. But still, before we came to America, I had some sleepless nights. I was nervous and excited, too.

RS: I guess that's understandable. After all, you were responsible, in a way, for breaking new ground. America's first real impressions of Russian rock 'n' roll would come from you and your band.

VM: Yes, that's true. I was nervous, too, because as a drummer, I was influenced by your best drummers. I wanted to play good whenever we performed in concert. Plus,

the American music market is the largest in the world. It is very important for every musician in the world to do well here.

RS: You performed at a number of rock clubs here. You played the Roxy in Los Angeles and Drums in New York, for example. Do you think Avtograf made a favorable impression?

VM: Yes, I hope so. The tour went just great. Everyone around us took good care of us, and everywhere we played, we felt much support. American audiences are very open and friendly. Actually, I think American audiences are the best in the world.

RS: You mentioned that you were influenced by American drummers. Is there one drummer perhaps that you admire most?

VM: You have so many drummers here in America who are excellent. It is very difficult to pick one. But the American drummer I would most like to meet someday is Steve Gadd. He is a universal drummer. I started my career as a jazz musician. I was a member of the biggest recording orchestra in Moscow. For me, Steve Gadd is the best example of universal playing. He can play everything—rock, jazz, jazz/rock. This is very important to me. It means he has a universal culture, and his experience is very wide.

RS: From what I hear, you are a conservatory-trained musician. Is that right?

VM: Yes, that is true. I studied at a conservatory in Russia.

RS: Where and how did you learn about rock 'n' roll?

VM: A lot of things depend on your intellectual level. I studied at my college to be a choir conductor. I studied a lot of classical music. I love classical and chamber music. But I didn't expect to come into rock 'n' roll. One day Alexander Sitkovetskiy [Avtograf's guitar player] came to me. He, too, was trained at the conservatory. He asked me to play rock 'n' roll with him, but I said no. I told him I didn't believe in rock 'n' roll. But he left me a tape and asked me to play it and then decide. When I played it, I realized that rock 'n' roll can be a powerful music and have a powerful direction. Rock 'n' roll is a very total music. Not like jazz, which is, I think, very personal. It was difficult for me at first. I was used to jazz and classical music. The difference between playing jazz and playing rock is very big.

RS: I'm told that Avtograf spent 340 days on the road last year.

VM: Yes, that is right. We perform as much as we can. Sometimes we play two gigs each day. But we do not play as much as American groups. We play about 15 min-

utes each performance. So, if we play two gigs in a day, we only have 30 minutes on the stage.

RS: How do you view your role as the drummer in Avtograf? What do you believe are your responsibilities?

VM: I think the most important thing for me to do is to make the band comfortable. The others should look to me as the conductor. Everything should be completely clear. It takes a different energy. You don't always enjoy what you are doing. But you can enjoy what the rest of the band is doing because of you. You help them. You conduct them. But when you play solos, it is different; then you should be very creative. You should be an artist.

RS: How would you describe your style of drumming?

VM: It is very difficult to describe yourself. My style is based on me listening to what is going on around me. A drummer must have good ears. I also watch to see if the musicians I am playing with are comfortable. I like drummers who keep their listeners in the dark, so they don't know what to expect of them. Steve Gadd, I think, is like that. I think Omar Hakim is like that, too. Drummers should have personality in their playing. It doesn't matter what kind of technique they have. Their drumming must have personality.

RS: Did you get a chance to meet many American drummers during your stay here?

VM: Unfortunately, not as many as I would have liked to meet. But I met American drummers and other musicians in Moscow during the July 4th concert of last year. I also met James Taylor and his amazing bass player, Lee Sklar. It was very exciting.

RS: Do you think there is much difference between your approach to rock 'n' roll drumming and, say, the average American rock drummer?

VM: Yes, there are differences. For one thing, you have schools like Berklee. You shouldn't have to discover rock 'n' roll by yourself. In Russia, we listen to as much American music as we can in order to understand what is going on. But we don't have schools like Berklee. You can, however, now study jazz in the Soviet Union. I was a teacher of jazz. I had five pupils, but I gave it up. I didn't know how to tell my students that you must be good with your mind as well as your hands when you play the drums.

RS: How available is American music in Russia? Are you exposed to the latest sounds and the latest albums?

VM: We have the latest information from the United States. Some of the records we

by Robert Santelli

Photo by Jeffery Mayer

can buy in our stores. But some we cannot. For instance, I have in my luggage about 50 tapes and about ten videotapes to bring home with me. This is like a trade of information. We now have plenty of musicians who are traveling abroad. They bring information and albums back with them. It is very easy to buy jazz music in our stores, though. We also now have rock records from bands like the Beatles and Rolling Stones, to Whitney Houston. Things, as you know, have changed very much in our country.

RS: You're referring, I assume, to Glasnost and the lessening of tensions between the U.S. and the Soviet Union?

VM: I think so, yes. I think our two countries should cooperate more. There is no doubt that our two countries are the most powerful nations in the world. We should go together well. We can help each other a lot.

RS: What is the rock scene like in Russia?

VM: It is different than in the United States. We play in sports arenas that seat five- or ten-thousand people. Sometimes we play in clubs, too. But there is nothing to drink in them and no place to dance. It is just chairs. People sit down and listen to the music. Sometimes this is good, because then there is no problem. But sometimes you want to see a more warm reception. Whenever we play in university towns like Kiev and Leningrad, we always get a warm reception. A rock concert is a big event in Russia.

RS: Can you get *Modern Drummer* magazine back home? Have you ever seen a copy of it?

VM: Oh, I am familiar with it, yes. But I only get the magazine when someone sends me a copy, or when I travel abroad.

RS: Can you tell me a little bit about your drumset?

VM: Well, they are wooden drums, not electronic. I prefer the wooden drum sound to the electronic sound. In America, I am endorsed by Remo drums. They are extremely comfortable to play. I can change a drumhead in 30 seconds on the Remo set. I have Zildjian cymbals, which I really love. In the Soviet Union I have a Yamaha set, which I like, too. The government owns this set. It is not mine.

RS: Is it difficult for you to get spare parts for the drums that you play when you're in the Soviet Union?

VM: Fortunately for me, it is not something that I must worry about so much. Since I don't own the drumset, it is not for me to get parts or equipment for my drums. The government takes care of that, since they



own the set. And there is no problem. My Yamaha set is fantastic. I have two 24" kick drums, six toms, two floor toms, 11 cymbals, and a couple of hi-hats. It's a huge set. And my Remo set is very similar to the Yamaha set. But the Remo set was given to me. My government does not own that one.

RS: What is the Soviet government's view on rock 'n' roll? Here is a distinctively Western music that is creeping into Soviet culture and is certainly affecting its youth. Is the government worried that rock 'n' roll might become too powerful a cultural force in the Soviet Union?

VM: Things are changing in my country. When Gorbachev took power, he started to change things faster than before. And I think in the future it should get better and better for us. Rock 'n' roll has become a real force in the arts. It was never like that before. But rock 'n' roll is now established in our culture. Now, for instance, our underground bands have an opportunity to play everywhere. It is a good situation, because now there is competition among the Soviet rock bands. And sometimes, you know, we find out that the underground bands are better than the established bands. Some bands have been underground for 15 years. But now there is a wave of underground bands coming out and playing for young people.

RS: Avtograf is the first purely Russian band to play in America, right?

VM: Yes, that's true. We are the first band to come here to play, to try to get a record deal, and to show Americans that we, too, can play rock 'n' roll. A lot of young people in America don't even know about Soviet rock 'n' roll. Maybe while we are here we can teach them something. We want also to break down the wall that separates our

two countries and cultures. I didn't meet one person in America who had a negative view of Russia. I was so surprised. I don't know how to explain the feeling in English, but all I can say is that the people I met were very warm to me and the other members of the band. Suddenly, you understand that we are all human beings. We have nothing to fight about. Rock 'n' roll is a good way for young people to communicate feelings of friendship. I think its force is very strong.

RS: What happens if Avtograf signs a major recording contract with an American label? Will the group be permitted to return to the U.S. in the future?

VM: I think it's possible, because it means money. If it means real money for my country, then what's wrong with that?

RS: A lot of Americans have, perhaps, heard of Avtograf because of your current whirlwind tour of the U.S. and the media attention you received in the process. But I suspect few really know what Avtograf is about, musically. Can you define Avtograf's brand of rock?

VM: [laughs] That is a difficult question.

RS: Might you be able to, say, compare your band with a popular American or British band?

VM: Well, we got so many different opinions of how our music sounds. I think we did 20 different interviews with American newspapers and each of them said something different about how our music sounds: [laughs] Someone compared us to Rush. Another journalist compared us to Genesis. Another said we sounded like Yes, and another still said we were like Cutting Crew. **RS:** And which writer was most correct, in your opinion?

VM: Well, we used to play music that was, I think, very close to Genesis and Pink

continued on page 79

by Neil Peart

Creating The Drum Part

Recently, an *Ask A Pro* question crossed my desk that was not easily answerable in 25 words or less, so I thought: "Aha! Here's another excuse for an article." But here—you'll see what I mean:

"Your ability to play in odd times, play odd accents, and insert your fills in the most peculiar—yet proper—places is surpassed by none. To follow some of your more difficult music exactly seems (at my level) impossible! My question is: While you are playing, how do you think ahead to what you will play next? More specifically, do you 'think by numbers'? Do you 'hear' the upcoming riff in your mind? Do you see the 'hardcopy' of your music in your mind, or do you just let it flow? Can you give me any advice on a workable mental tract to use while playing?"

Matt Ancelin
Toms River NJ

Now, aside from adding to my wonder about why I get so many letters from Toms River, New Jersey, and making me blush with embarrassment, you can see that there's plenty of "food for thought" here. Many drummers' minds will start to whirl when they think about these things, and I think all of Matt's assertions are, or can be, true.

But let's start at the beginning: with the numbers. Of course, it's never too early to learn to count, a skill that you'll need forever. So it makes sense that when you first begin to dabble in odd times, or even learn to flow well in 4/4 or 6/8, counting will teach you the "program." As you become more fluent in different rhythmic foundations, you will be able to recall these "hard-wired programs," to set you into the right "cadence," or to let you pick up the "odd" beats at different times. I've written about this before, so I won't give it too much emphasis now, but you learn to subdivide the time signatures into their even-and-odd components, or to multiply them to make a series of odd bars add up to one long, even one. This is a trick I have used many times, playing 4/4 over 7/8, 5/4, or 6/8, and just holding the rhythm chugging along until all the bar lines add up again, and I can take off somewhere else!

There is another thing, too—a wordless mental "language" that I use to understand and remember parts. Certain phrases even have a kind of *picture* symbol; not notation, or the physical move, but an inner image of the *effect* of some little technique or rhythmic twist. So in that sense, I don't

hear the upcoming phrase in my mind so much as see it. This, by its very nature, is unfortunately not communicable to others. I guess that's why we have written music!

But let's get into the really deep waters of this question. All of the above will set you up for comfortable improvising, but what if you want to *arrange* a drum part, one that will stand forever as the definitive way of playing a song? (I know, I know...dream on!) Starting from ground zero, you have a blank slate—a new song—and a drum part to create for it. So you play detective, look for clues, put two and two together—and come up with seven. (Always a good answer!)

But the clues. Perhaps the songwriter will play you a rough tape. On it, there will be some indication of the *tempo*, whether it's from a drum machine or in the inherent "lilt" to the music as it's played. Then there will be *dynamic* hints: how the song builds, where you might want to make the strongest statement, where you can be subtle and supportive, and where you might add some rhythmic interest. What does the *song* need? Where are the vocal parts, the instrumental parts, the choruses, the bridges? These are all the building blocks, not only of the song, but also of *your* part in it.

So your mind starts to sift possibilities: perhaps a big backbeat on the 3 for the verses, maybe a quarter-note bass drum with 16ths on the hi-hat for the chorus. And those bridges: Let's try a driving 2 and 4 on the snare, with a quarter-note ride, to build *into* the chorus, and then plane out under the vocals. And I think we could do some clever stuff in that intro to the instrumental: Bring it down and play *across* the time, with lots of those "ghost notes" that Rod Morgenstein is always talking about.

Listen to the song another couple of times, mentally going over your "map" of the musical terrain and trying to cement the arrangement details in your head. Again, people use different ways to accomplish this, and *all* are good. It doesn't matter if you write out some notation (or use the kind of "shorthand" that many drummers do), or if you're able to rough it out in your head just from memory. In this case, if it *works*, it's *right*! Is the song dark and introverted, or is it light and airy? Do you want to be able to dance to it, or is it "just for the ears"? Does your band's common stylistic ground run to samba, ska, swing, or speed metal? What sorts of fills are appropriate, and *where* are they appropriate? And if



you're playing speed metal, can you introduce some ideas from ska, samba, or swing that might make it more interesting? This is where the fun starts.

Inevitably, it's going to be rough the first few times, especially if you and the rest of the band are all trying to learn the song at once. If you can do some experimenting with it at home, even if it's just on magazines to your *Walkman*, more to the good. But if you're diving right into it, again there are two approaches. Some people start as simply as possible. Then, if they feel compelled to add to that minimalist approach, they will. Other people start the opposite way—trying everything they can possibly think of in the first few run throughs, then gradually eliminating the ideas that *don't* work. There's much to be said for either approach. In the first case, you'll interfere with the rest of the band less, and you'll come up with a good, conservative part. In the second instance, however, you're more likely to stumble into something original and unexpected, and if you have the luxury of working by yourself, it's at no one else's expense. This is, I suppose, the ideal. (Sadly, our world doesn't tend toward the ideal, and if others are complaining about all the noise you're making, you may not make many friends. And let's face it: In this business, you need friends, and you should certainly *not* alienate the bass player! So be nice.)

The big word here: LISTEN. As you play the song, take time out from your explorations of outer space to listen to what your friend, the bass player, is getting at, and to see how the other instruments are responding to *your* rhythmic input. There may be something nice happening that will trigger other directions for you. One of the wonderful things about working with other musicians is coming up with something *together*. When the whole band gets excited about something, you just *know* it's going to work, because everybody will be happy, feel part of this holistic experience, and play their fingers off.

But there are still many options open to you. Much will depend upon your *own*


temperament as a player. What sort of situation makes you most comfortable? Do you like to have your part worked out as much as possible, so your only concern when you play or record the song is getting it *right*? Some wise editor once advised an agonizing writer: "Don't get it *right*, get it down!" There's something in that for musicians as well, though perhaps not what the literary advisor meant. If you find you fly best "by the seat of your pants"—again, if it works, it's right. Go wild.

I have told the story before about how I was a big Keith Moon fan as a beginning drummer. All I wanted to do was get in a band that would play some Who songs so I could wail like he did. But when I finally found a band that actually wanted to play these songs, I discovered to my chagrin that I didn't *like* playing like Keith Moon. It was too chaotic, and things just weren't placed rationally. I wanted to play in a more careful, deliberate way—to *think* about what I played where, and not just "let it happen." I am driven by a strong organizational, perfectionist demon. Of the two extremes, I must confess I probably prefer the dull and "correct" to the adventurous foray that doesn't *quite* come off.

Again, that's a personal thing, and I sure don't think I'm necessarily *right*. It's just the way I am. So I'll continue along in that vein for a while—as that's what comes naturally—and talk about *organizing* a song.

My personal approach is fairly linear. I'll often start simply at the beginning of the song and gradually build it—if not dynamically, then in terms of *activity*. A simple roll around the toms in chorus one might double up in chorus two, and then by chorus three become a rip-roaring, two-bar, triplet-feel flurry of 64th notes. Or a gentle backbeat in verse one can develop through a Latin feel on the ride cymbal in verse two, and be echoed by a double-time full-throttle "race to the finish" during the rideout. Then there are accents, pushes, hi-hat chokes, sudden pauses, feel-shifts, staccato punctuations, downbeats on the toms instead of the snare, leaving the downbeat *out*, or emphasizing the upbeats on the ride pattern. There's also something I hear Manu Katche doing with Peter Gabriel and Robbie Robertson: *insinuating* the rhythm—playing all around the beat without actually playing it, but it's absolutely there. This gets more complicated, but also more *fun*, and is very satis-

fying when you pull it off (not only for yourself, but for the song, the other musicians, and, hopefully, the audience).

People so often seem to forget that an audience doesn't have to *understand* the music to enjoy it. How many of the *millions* of people who loved Pink Floyd's song "Money" and bought the *Dark Side Of The Moon* album knew—or cared—that it was in 7/4? Peter Gabriel's "Solsbury Hill" again is in seven, and is one of the cleverest maskings of odd time—and just happened to be a big hit for him. The time signature just didn't matter; the musicians used skill and musicality to make it *feel* good, and *that's* what the audience responded to. That's what "accessibility" is really all about: *communicating* the thing properly. That's your ultimate responsibility, and your ultimate blame. Sure, there are no black-and-white absolutes in music, (or almost none), but it sometimes happens that a great song doesn't "click" with people because it just wasn't *put together* right. The listeners might not be able to articulate the flaw, and neither may the musicians. But if it doesn't *reach* the people you would have expected to like it, the song just didn't connect. So it's up to us to make the connections. 

Portraits continued from page 77

Floyd. We did play a lot of instrumental music with very little vocals. But now our music has changed. I think you could say we play melodic hard rock. It used to be progressive rock, but no more. All this is true, even though for me, my favorite musician has always been Chick Corea. And one of my personal favorite drummers has always been Lenny White. I always liked the idea of jazz/rock fusion, you see. That's why I like very much what Sting is doing these days. He has a wonderful group of musicians with him.

RS: Now that Avtograf has broken the ice, so to speak, do you think more Russian rock bands will be coming to America? Is that possible from your point of view?

VM: I think the possibility is pretty big. I know some Russian drummers who would like to come to America and study percussion. It's like basketball. Our big basketball teams come here all the time to practice and train with American teams. Sometimes they stay in America for three months or longer. And it helps everyone's ability to play the game. The same can be true for musicians. It would be great if Soviet rock musicians could come here to America and practice and jam with American players—maybe even record with them, who knows? I think it would be good for Soviet rock

musicians and for American musicians, too. Sharing ideas is always a good thing, don't you think so?

RS: Indeed. How many Avtograf albums are available in the Soviet Union?

VM: Just one, because that is all we have recorded so far. That one album has already sold six million copies. We are very proud of that. It is an accomplishment. We also have released two singles. No Soviet rock band has sold more records than Avtograf.

RS: What is it that you attribute to your band's huge success?

VM: We never compromise. I know, as the drummer in the band, I try to always play my best. I have high aspirations. Once a drummer compromises, then the whole band must also compromise. And that is no good. Drummers like Steve Gadd and Lenny White never compromise. That is why they have gone so far with their music. You have so many musicians in your country and so many drummers. You have a magazine just for drummers. I was surprised

to learn how many of them can find work and earn a living playing music. It is fantastic. In fact, this is one of the things that has surprised me the most about America. It is not that way in the Soviet Union.


RS: Did you attend any drum clinics during your visit here in the States?

VM: No. I do not know what you mean by a drum clinic.

RS: Very simply, it's an event in which drummers come together to share ideas, learn about new equipment and trends, and listen to some of our most prestigious players talk about technique and style and other concerns of drummers.

VM: Oh, wow. I would have liked very much to attend such a clinic. It would have been amazing for me to do that. One of my goals is to play with as many musicians as I can and to learn much about percussion—especially rock percussion.

RS: Perhaps next time.

VM: Yes, next time. I think there definitely will be a next time. 



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who was ever in it, because no one wanted to compete against me. I don't mean that egotistically, but no one wanted to compete against me because I worked my tail off. When I got to OCC, I auditioned against two or three other guys, and I was in that lab band for five semesters. They held auditions every semester and no one knocked me out of that band. I got to North Texas State never having known what it was like to lose. I went through all the preliminary auditions, and Steve Houghton and I were the only two to make it through the preliminaries to audition for the One O'clock Lab Band. The guy who auditioned us had been in that band for at least three semesters. His name was John Bryant, and he

was an incredibly good drummer. He sat Steve and me down and said, "Guys, flip a coin. You're neck 'n' neck." Looking back, I have to say that Steve's sight reading ability was better than mine. But the audition wasn't as based on sight reading as it was being able to play different styles and tempos, and fills within those styles and tempos. They were basically looking for a player with the ability to play different styles of music.

I ended up in the Nine O'clock Band because, by the time they got around to deciding who the drummer for the One O'clock was, there were no other openings. So here I was, 1,500 miles away from home, and I didn't have a band to play in.

The only reason I even got in the Nine O'clock Band was that one of the trumpet players in the One O' Clock was the director of the Nine O'clock. He already had four drummers, but I went to him and said, "Jack, I need to get in a band." He laughed and said, "Yeah, right. I heard you audition. What did you make, the Two O'clock?" I told him I didn't have a band, and he said he'd love to have me, although he already had four guys. So he said he'd split it up.

RF: What was the prerequisite for the Ed Shaughnessy scholarship?

JD: You needed a recommendation from the faculty; they wanted the drummers showing the most promise and improvement. I have a suspicion that one of the reasons I got it was the fact that I had studied with Ed Shaughnessy. But it was really based upon the fact that I fit the criteria for the scholarship. I got a lot of heat from other drummers around the school who thought Ed had something to do with it. I tried to explain that Ed had nothing to do with it. I guess they thought I called Ed on the phone and asked for the scholarship, and that he called the school and told them to give it to me. The next semester, I was called to audition for the Three O'clock, and I made the Five O'Clock. Then all of a sudden I was put back in the Three O'Clock, although I have no idea why. I didn't get along with the director of the Three O'Clock band at all, so we parted ways. I left school shortly thereafter. I'd had enough of it. I had been in school for four years, and I figured I had learned enough about what I wanted to do to be able to go out and pursue a career. Because for me, live playing was going to be my career. The degree program I was pursuing was only a Certificate of Performance. It wouldn't have allowed me to do anything else, so I figured it was time for me to go out in the real world and compete. I had some bad experiences at North Texas State, but I also had some good ones.

RF: You haven't gotten to any of those.

JD: I was playing in a fusion band there, where we did a lot of Mahavishnu Orchestra and Frank Zappa. That was a good experience.

RF: What did you do next?

JD: I stayed in Dallas and worked in a little show band that went on the road to the finer Holiday Inns everywhere. My wife, at the time, was the lead singer, and we fell victim to the typical show-biz marriage where we couldn't separate the marriage from the business. So that broke up. I was playing in a jazz fusion band that played country music for a month to make money, and did the fusion and original material under another name. We played around at clubs for the door. I have tapes of that band that still blow me away. It was very much like the Dixie Dregs, but even a step beyond in weirdness.

RF: What was your game plan at this point?

JD: I figured I had to get back on my feet,

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first of all. I had gone through a divorce, and there are good sides and bad sides to everything—depending on where you want to look. I had no desire to remain flat on my back for any length of time, and without the ties, I had the freedom to go anywhere I wanted. First I moved to Los Angeles and managed to survive for three months out there. I had no connections at all, so I ended up working in a record store, getting deeper and deeper in debt. I was so emotionally drained from the divorce that I wasn't thinking clearly. The friend I was staying with said, "You came out here for all the right reasons at the worst possible time in your life. You're not able to deal 100% with yourself at this time, let alone what you're going to have to go through in this town to be a success." He told me to go home and regroup, and those were very wise words.

I went home for a couple of months, when a friend of mine called from Florida and said his band needed a drummer. So I went down to Florida, and we played a nice little supper club circuit. They were good players in that band. I also made some money, and I was living on the beach, which was wonderful. At that point in time, I was just interested in getting back on my feet. That's where I met Nancy—my present and last wife—and we were married shortly thereafter. It was Nancy who could see the growing dissatisfaction and unhappiness in me. I wasn't getting any younger; I was approaching 30 and still playing supper clubs. She sat me down one day and said, "If you had your choice to do anything with your career that you wanted to do, and you didn't have to think about me and the kids, what would it be?" I said, "I really don't know if I've got what it takes to make it, and I'm surely not going to find out in Sarasota, Florida. I don't want to go to New York, and I've already been to L.A. There's only one place left—Nashville. I hear it's smaller and easier to make those connections. I think I'd really like to go there and give it a shot." She said, "You've got to find out for yourself. If you don't, sooner or later you are going to become so miserable that our marriage won't be worth having. And I'm not going to have that, so we're going to sell the house and everything we own and move to Nashville, and that's that." How many other guys have a wife who is willing to give up a brand new home and a steady income on both sides to take a giant leap off into the great unknown? She is the reason I was able to come to Nashville.

RF: There seem to be such preconceptions about Nashville and the quality of musicianship there that, in a way, it's surprising you settled there.

JD: When I first started thinking about coming to Nashville, I thought, "I guess I can always go there, because how hard can that be?" I had never listened to country much, and of course this was a few years ago, so I thought the level of musi-

icianship wouldn't be that great. When I moved here, I found that not only were country musicians extremely accomplished players, but there was a lot of jazz and rock 'n' roll—all kinds of music. I don't think the rest of the United States is aware just how much of a musical center this is.

RF: How did Restless Heart come about?

JD: When I moved to Nashville, I had the promise of one audition. It was for the Boys Band, who, at the time, were on Asylum Records. Two weeks later they called and said they wanted to hire me. The bass player in the Boys Band was Paul Gregg, and we developed a very close friendship and played well together. The Boys Band only lasted about nine months after that, so Paul and I went our separate ways professionally. I worked a lot of live dates around town—restaurant-type gigs—and Paul continued to work with the Nashville Network. One day he came over to my place and played me a work tape that he and some other guys were doing. He asked me if I was interested, and I said yes. It was country, but it was different. It sounded fresh, and I really liked it. I met the other guys who were involved, and I met Tim Dubois, who was putting together this little studio project. They wanted to audition me on Paul's recommendation, so I auditioned vocally in the harmony stack. The funny thing about auditioning for Restless Heart was that it wasn't a formal audition per se, but more of a feeling-out process. And they didn't audition me on drums; I kept saying, "Don't you want me to play?" And they would say, "Later. At this point we're more interested in the vocals. Paul says you can play, so probably you can play." For a couple of months, all we did were vocal work tapes. Everyone had other things going, and we'd get together when we could. Finally, two months later, we got down to doing a track in the studio, and I guess it was okay. They said, "Yeah, you can play 2 and 4 pretty good."

RF: How interested were you in 2 and 4, coming from your background?

JD: I had learned a great truth: If you can't play time, and you can't play a groove, and you can't play with people, then you can throw all the technique in the world out the window. The most important contribution a drummer can make to any situation is, firstly, the ability to keep good time and keep everything solid, and secondly, the ability to interact with the other musicians in the band—to play off of them, play around them, and play with them.

RF: Does Restless Heart utilize anything that you struggled all those many years to learn?

JD: Oh yes. I incorporate a lot of technique into what I do with Restless Heart. I have developed a lot of hi-hat work that I do within the framework of particular songs, like doing a straight 2 and 4 rock beat pattern, then coming to the hi-hat and utilizing a 16th-note open double-stroke roll.

RF: Is there a specific song you do that on?

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JD: Yes, on a song called "Heartbreak Kid." Although I didn't play it on the record, I do play it live. During the verses in that song, there's a section where I'm just keeping straight time—8th notes on the hi-hat, 2 and 4 on the snare, and basically 1 and 3 on the bass drum. Again, going along with what I said about listening to what the band is doing, you have to listen to what the vocalist is doing as well, to add a little flourish to what's happening. So I had a little 16th-note open roll to the hi-hat on 1, and then hit the snare drum on 2. There are just little nuances in my playing that have developed within this band. I currently do a little eight-bar drum solo in a bluegrass-feeling song called "Hummingbird." It's what they call in Nashville a "train feel." I play that particular beat hand-to-hand, which a lot of drummers don't do.

A lot of them will keep the first three 16th notes in their left hand or their right hand, and just play the accent in the other hand. When I say I do it hand-to-hand, I mean if the first accent falls on the right hand, the second will fall on the left hand. It's actually a paradiddle with the accent on the third beat of the paradiddle. That's how I'm able to slide in and out of that particular pattern into a subtle little buzz roll here and there. I'll double the accents a lot between the snare drum and the bass drum. I'll play the same accent on two different drums. In my eight-bar drum solo, I cover a lot of ground in a short period of time. I end with a military cadence type of ending, and then the old-timey New Orleans quarter-note triplets back into the tune.

RF: How do you coordinate your singing and your playing?

JD: When you are singing, you just have to trust your ability and the band's ability to keep good time. I have to think much more about the phrasing of the vocals and being in tune, because I've done 2 and 4 for so many years now, and I have the confidence in my ability to maintain that. We're very fortunate in the band that everyone's sense of time is so good, so we don't worry about it too much. You do have to split your thinking a little bit, and you have to be able to shift constantly back and forth between being a vocalist and being a drummer. When I come back out of a vocal

ensemble passage and I'm back to just being a drummer, during the first couple of bars I'll concentrate a little more on being steady with the tempo. That goes along with listening to what everybody else in the band is doing. If I'm locked with the bass player and with the guitar player, it's wonderful. But you can't consciously sit there and pick apart every little detail of what you're doing, because if you did, you wouldn't be able to do either one. You're trusting your instinct, your sense of time, and the people you're playing with.

RF: You didn't play on all of the first album.

JD: I used to feel very defensive about that, but I haven't for a long period of time. It was simply the fact that Tim Dubois, who produces us along with Scott Hendricks, put up his own money to go in and master seven songs, so that if we did get a record deal with a major label, the record company could already have those masters. Tim was spending about \$30,000 of his own money, and he came to me and said, "John, I have not worked with you in the studio enough to trust that we can get this done as quickly as we need to. I'm sorry if that hurts your feelings, but I've got a lot of money out." So he worked with a drummer by the name of Dennis Holt, who had a lot of very creative ideas.

RF: What did you know about the studio at that point?

JD: Not a lot. I had next to no experience in the studio, and that was extremely frustrating to me because how do you get experience in the studio? You do it. But how do you get in the studio if you have no experience?

RF: What was the answer to that?

JD: I asked a lot of questions. I had a couple of discussions with Larrie Londin, who is a wealth of information about the technical aspects of drums and tuning, but he can't tell somebody how to play or what to do. So I asked questions, until I realized that people couldn't really tell me what to do or how to do it; it was just an experimental process, and you pick up as many tips as you can from people, and you try different things.

RF: Did you end up doing the rest of the first album?

JD: Yes—when we were signed by RCA and had a recording budget to fill out the rest of the album.

RF: Tell me about your equipment and your method of tuning.

JD: A lot of people come up and compliment our drum sound—and I say our drum sound because it's a combination of the way I tune the drums, the way I actually

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ddrum

play them, and the way our sound man, Dan Spomer, mixes the drums. Dan is a drummer himself, so he pays a lot of attention to the drum sound. I find that, on 8-ply maple drums especially, a *Fiberskyn* thin on the resonating side and a coated *Ambassador* on the batter side work well in most instances, with the tuning on the bottom head approximately a major second higher than the top head, which gives me just a little bit of a dip sound.

You have to experiment. Every drum is different. When I get a new set of drums, I go through many different combinations on one drum, usually one of the middle tom-toms. Right now I'm using Pearl 8", 10", and 12" rack toms, and 14" and 16" floor toms, so usually I'll work with the 12" in the different head combinations. I've found that sometimes on a 10" tom, you have to use a little bit thinner head on the batter side to get the ring you want. If you use two real thick heads on a 10" tom, you're going to get a thud.

RF: Can you get a little more specific about the tuning?

JD: I like the toms to be open. I don't like to have to dampen them down too much, but of course for microphones, we have to do that. The only dampening I'll do is on the floor toms. I'll put two or three pieces of duct tape on one spot of the drum, or I may put it in a triangular pattern, depending on what it sounds like. Other times I might tape one longer piece near the rim, and I'll tape the rim as well. That seems to cut down on a lot of the overtones. I have also found that RIMS really open up the sound of the drum. I don't like tom-tom arms going into drums because they really cut down on the tone.

RF: What other equipment do you use?

JD: I use Dean Markley 5A sticks. That I use such small sticks in an amplified, big concert hall situation might surprise a lot of people, but Dean Markley makes a 5A stick that I really love. I use Racket Grip tape, which is a gauze tape that I wrap my sticks in, to keep a good grip under the hot lights. I also use Sabian cymbals.

RF: What is it that you want to achieve as a player?

JD: This right here is the mountain I've always wanted to conquer. This is a trip to the top for me, though making it to the top is all relative to the individual. We have been extremely successful, and a lot of people would think we've "made it," but I think there's always another step to take, even within Restless Heart. When you start to stand still, that's the day it's over. Musically, however small that step may be for

Restless Heart, there's always another step. As a player, there are always new things you run into that you want to learn about and explore. What's next immediately for the group is to make a great third album, keep on touring, and continue our upward mobility as recording artists. Like anything else, there will come a day when this ends. After that, I really don't know. Mark Herndon [of the band Alabama] and I had a discussion the other day, and I was telling him about my fascination with the stock market, and he said, "You know what? You're never going to be a stock broker. Buddy Rich played 'til the day he died. After Alabama and Restless Heart are over, you and I are going to go out every week, get on a bus, and go somewhere to play. This is what we do, and this is our life."

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Wooden

If you want something just a bit different in wooden sticks, check out Silver Fox. Prices range from \$7.20 for wood-tip maple to \$7.50 for Cinnamonstix with wood tip, \$7.50 for *Del-Tip* maple, and \$8.00 for *Del-Tip Cinnamonstix*.



Silver Fox

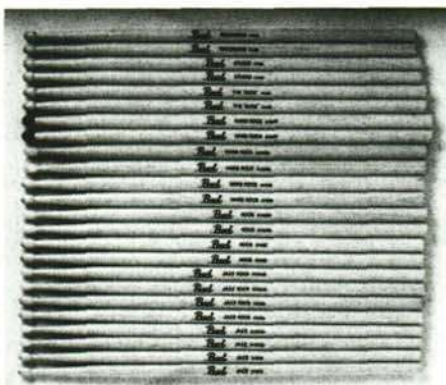
Silver Fox sticks are made of laminated rock maple, not hickory like 90% of the other drumsticks on the market. Al LeMert of Silver Fox told me that the company has spent five years researching laminating procedures to come up with a way to make their sticks as strong as (or stronger than) hickory, while having almost invisible glue lines.

Twenty different models are offered: 26, 58, 1A, 5A, 7A, *Jazz*, *L/R*, *M/R*, *J/R*, *H/R*, *5BX*, *R/1*, *R/2*, 1S, 2S, 3S, 4S, *M/B*, *M/S*, and *C/S*. All but the 3S and 4S marching sticks are available with a "*Del-Tip*," which is made of a black acetal material that does not mark cymbals or drumheads. The *Del-Tip* is a cousin of the nylon tip, but seems to bring out a fuller fundamental on cymbals. (All models are available with a wood tip.) Nine of the Silver Fox models can be had as *Cinnamonstix*, which are red-dyed laminated maple sticks. The difference between these and other colored sticks is that there is no paint to chip. Also, the *Cinnamonstix* will not mark cymbals.

Heavy rockers should note that several Silver Fox models are 17" long, and weights of the *Rock* models range from 62 to 70 grams. Various models have been designed with a thicker neck and shoulder, as well.

All Silver Fox sticks are shipped straight, are pitch-paired, and are balanced within two to three grams per pair. The difference in feel and response between laminated maple and standard hickory is negligible, in my opinion. These sticks seem to hold up well/and the available models should please almost everyone.

Silver Fox's brochure gives complete specs on every model as far as length, neck, bead, taper, diameter, and approximate weight—much better than I could do here, so I recommend inspecting it for yourself.

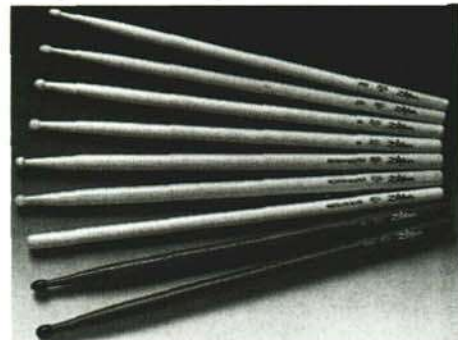


Pearl

The Pearl Drum Company has recently introduced drumsticks made in the USA. I had already seen their Japanese-made sticks (which I thought were great), and was curious to see what they're offering in the new American-made line.

Pearl's sticks are all made of hickory. Their butt ends are flattened out, exactly like the Zildjian sticks, which leads me to believe that they could be produced by the same drumstick firm. The specs for the Pearl models are a tiny bit different, though. Available models range from "standard" sizes 7A (*Jazz*), 5A (*Jazz/Rock*), 5B (*Rock*), and 26 (*Hard Rock*), up to "special" models named *Studio*, *Recording* (similar to their Japanese "Jeff Porcaro" model), and *The Dude*. The four standard models are available in either wood or nylon tip. (The nylon tips share the same basic shape; only the sizes are different.) The other three models come in wood tip only. An alternate *Hard Rock* stick is available with a large black nylon tip, a thicker neck and shorter taper, and 1/16" more in length.

The sticks have a light coat of varnish applied, but are still able to retain a "rough" feel—all the better for gripping. I found the Pearl drumsticks to hold up well to chipping and denting. The packaged pairs were fairly well matched in weight, and were all straight. In total, Pearl has a good quality pro line of wood sticks here. Wood tip models list for \$7.20; nylon tips list for \$7.35.



Zildjian

Already one of the world's leading cymbal manufacturers, Zildjian is also getting serious about drumsticks. They have nine models, all made of American hickory: 7A, *Jazz*, 5A, 3A, 28, 58, *Rock*, *Sessionmaster*, and *Absolute Rock*. All are available with either wood or nylon tips, except the *Absolute Rock* model, which has double butt ends. In addition to a natural finish, Zildjian also offers a choice of colors: red or black. These colors are not painted on, but are deep-penetrating stains. My testing proved the colored finishes to be quite durable.

Most of the models have a shorter taper than usual, and they all have flattened butt ends. Since Zildjian applies only a very thin coat of varnish, the sticks can be gripped better, because there is still a textured feel to them. I should mention that Zildjian's seamless nylon tips correspond pretty much to the shape of their wood tips, which is something some companies have only recently been doing. From what I've found, the tips are well-adhered and don't come off.

Zildjian employs a four-point check during manufacturing for mineral streaks, grain quality, imperfections, and straightness. All the models I tested were excellent, both physically and cosmetically. The "wear factor" of the sticks is quite low; they have good longevity. All in all, Zildjian drumsticks pass this review with flying colors. I hope they add more models in the near future. Retail price is \$7.25 for wood tip, \$7.35 for nylon tip.



Maxx Stix

Maxx Stix are made of American hickory, and most of their models are offered in three lengths: 16", 16 3/8", and 16 3/4". Avail-

by Bob Saydlowski, Jr.

Drumsticks

able models are: 5A, Rock, 56, and 28 (in either wood or nylon tip), plus TH, RK, RK-26, and STAR (in wood tip only).

Their RK stick has double butts, and is about the same diameter as a Rock model stick. The RK-2B is also double-butted, but is enlarged to a 2B diameter. Maxx Stixx's STAR model is for ultra-heavy rock or drum corps use, and is only available in the Super-Long size.

The company guarantees that their sticks will last longer than any other wooden drumstick. Not being one to simply take someone's word for it, I put Maxx Stixx to the test with hard rimshots on a die-cast hoop, as well as other means of punishment under normal playing conditions. Since I don't normally break sticks myself, I gave a few pairs to some heavy rock players I know. The verdict was unanimous: It takes a lot to break one of these sticks. I'm told by the company that in order to achieve this durability, Maxx Stixx have a lower moisture level than other sticks, and use a special turning process.

Having a choice of three lengths in any given size might be a benefit for some drummers. For example, a drummer who likes a standard 56's general specifications might like it even more with some extra length on the stick. Maxx Stixx are coded to distinguish between lengths: The logo is either brown (Regulars), blue (XXX-Tras), or red (Super Longs). The sticks are durable, and their pricing makes them extremely competitive. Depending on length, a pair of Maxx Stixx retails at \$6.50, \$6.95, or \$7.50.

Grover

Grover Enterprises offers only four models of wooden sticks, but the company is quite meticulous about their procedure in matching and packaging. The four Grover models are: the red hickory Model E/Ensemble, a hickory Model S/Symphonic, and Canadian maple models C/Concert and V2. The Model E is very thin with an extremely small tip, and would be ideal for extra-low-volume playing. Both the C and S models are good sizes for rock playing.

All Grover sticks have a catalytic varnish and are waxed. The company holds the belief that pitch-pairing alone does not achieve good mating of stick pairs, because the pitch of a stick is dependent on weight, mass, and density. So, it's quite possible that sticks paired only by pitch could have different weights. Grover eliminates this possibility by computer weighing each stick

within a one-gram tolerance. After the sticks are grouped by weight, they are then pitch-paired within one semi-tone. They are then rolled for straightness. Finally, each pair of sticks is packaged with a card, indicating its weight.

I was sent two pairs of Model S sticks, one weighing 47 grams, the other weighing 60 grams. Even though the models were identical, there was a marked difference in their feel and rebound. No other manufacturer I know of goes to these lengths to assure a precisely matched pair of drumsticks, and for that alone I rate these sticks highly.

The sticks have a smooth feel and perfect balance. Don't be put off by the model names. Grover sticks are certainly not just for use in symphony playing, they are for all drummers. Those players who aren't too fussy about their sticks probably won't benefit from the care Grover takes during their pairing, but drummers who are picky about their tools will feel good knowing that Grover sticks are expertly matched for them. Retail price is \$7.90 per pair.

Shawstix

Unfortunately, as I write this, Shawstix does not have any U.S. distribution. But I was so impressed with their product that I just had to include a mention of them in this *Close-Up*.

Shawstix are produced in England, and are available in 44 models (21 of which offer wood or machine-turned nylon tips). They also come in seven different wood types: American hickory, Japanese oak, maple, hardwood, lancewood, standard laminate, and colored laminate. Each pair of Shawstix is individually turned and sanded by hand, and then finished with a special hard lacquer.

I was only sent samples of their SG model (the famous "Steve Gadd" stick), but their other models span the ranges of perhaps the Vic Firth and Pro-Mark companies' combined. The various woods have different weights and densities, and it's intriguing to see how that affects the feel and performance of identical models. All the sticks I played with were top quality—free of defects, weighted and balanced evenly, and straight.

My enthusiasm for Shawstix lies in the fact that the choice of what to play is left up to the drummer, not the company. With the range of models and wood types available, any drummer would be almost cer-

tain to find a stick he or she likes. I hope that some distributor in the States will pick up Shawstix soon, as the variety and quality are fantastic.

Since several of the stick lines mentioned in this review may not be widely available, I've included the following address list. Drummers interested in further information may contact the companies directly.

Avedis Zildjian Co., Longwater Drive, Norwell, MA 02061
Silver Fox Percussion, P.O. Box 06884, Fort Myers, FL 33906
Pearl International, P.O. Box 11240, Nashville, TN 37222
Maxx Stixx, P.O. Box 181, Wonder Lake, IL 60097
Grover Enterprises, 29 Bigelow St., Cambridge, MA 02139
Shawstix, William Shaw & Co. (Scholes) Ltd., 273 Whitechapel Road, Scholes, Cleckheaton, West Yorkshire, BD19 6HN, ENGLAND.

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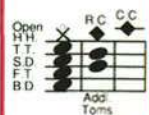
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Joey Kramer: "Dude (Looks Like A Lady)"

MUSIC KEY



This month's *Rock Charts* features the powerful drumming of Joey Kramer. "Dude (Looks Like A Lady)" is from Aerosmith's most recent album, *Permanent Vacation* (Geffen Records, GHS 24162), and is a good example of straightforward rock drumming. Even though the basic beat to this song is simple, Joey makes it groove, and he also adds a few tasty fills as well. It's easy to see why this tune was such a big hit. (Note: All ride cymbal notes are played on the bell of the cymbal.)

Like A Lady)"

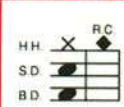
The musical score consists of ten staves of drum notation. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, dynamics, and articulation marks. The first staff begins with a series of eighth notes and sixteenth notes, followed by a double bar line and a repeat sign. The second staff features a series of eighth notes and sixteenth notes, with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The third staff continues with eighth notes and sixteenth notes, including a double bar line and a repeat sign. The fourth staff shows a series of eighth notes and sixteenth notes, with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The fifth staff features a series of eighth notes and sixteenth notes, with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The sixth staff continues with eighth notes and sixteenth notes, including a double bar line and a repeat sign. The seventh staff shows a series of eighth notes and sixteenth notes, with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The eighth staff features a series of eighth notes and sixteenth notes, with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The ninth staff continues with eighth notes and sixteenth notes, including a double bar line and a repeat sign. The tenth staff shows a series of eighth notes and sixteenth notes, with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The score includes various dynamics such as *f* (forte) and *E* (emphasis), and articulation marks like accents (>) and slurs. The notation is presented in a clear, professional layout.

Repeat and fade



Outside

MUSIC KEY

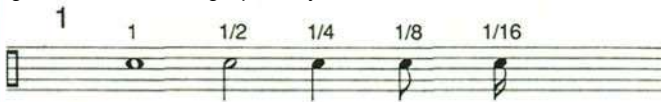


This month we begin a voyage into the strange and confusing world outside common time. Most modern drum machines are capable of functioning in multiples other than four beats per bar. In fact, some are so flexible that several different time signatures can be chained together within one piece. Unorthodox timing can be created with ease to rival the best jazz players.

Clearly such a voyage is a useful addition to the programmer's arsenal, serving to improve programming skills and essential music theory in one practical lesson.

Time Signatures—What Are They?

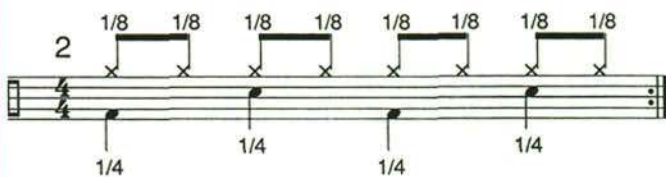
Some of the novices among you will perhaps be a little baffled by the term "time signature." It's not something that often comes into the day-to-day playing of drums, especially in rock. The following outline should answer most questions: Music, whether written for drums or a pitched instrument, is made up of a series of notes of varying length, divided into equal bars. Each note has its own individual value expressed as a fraction. Diagram 1 shows this graphically:



Music written in 4/4 time (the most common time signature—so common that it's often called common time) provides us with bars that have a sum total equivalent to four quarter notes—hence the term 4/4.

But bars can be built in different ways. One such construction method is to have three quarter beats per bar. This is called, unsurprisingly, 3/4 time. The top number in the time signature (3 in this case) indicates how many beats there are in the bar. The bottom number (4 in this case) indicates what note is acting as the basic measurement of time. Here, it's a quarter note.

Let's not get too lost in the realms of theory. After all, this is a practical, hands-on column. The 4/4 example in diagram 2 shows a rhythm broken down into fractions. The eight 8th notes played by the hi-hat equal 8/8 or 4/4, as do the four quarter notes (1/4) played by the snare drum and bass drum. This fractional method can be used to check the total value of the bar. For now, it's all you really need to know.

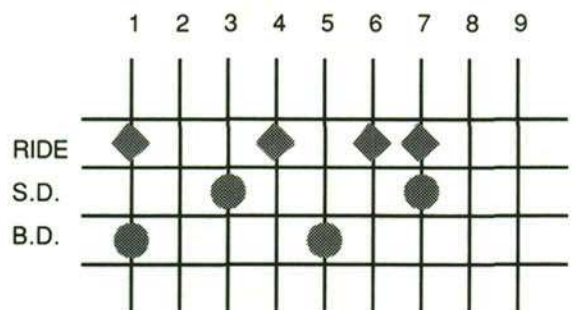
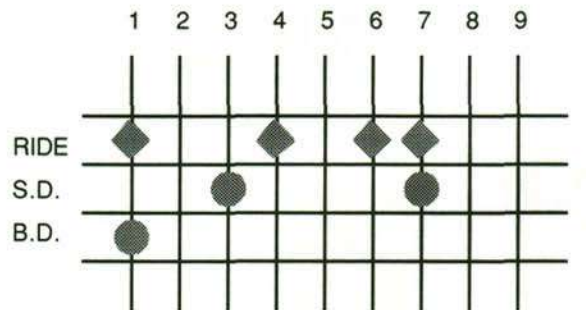
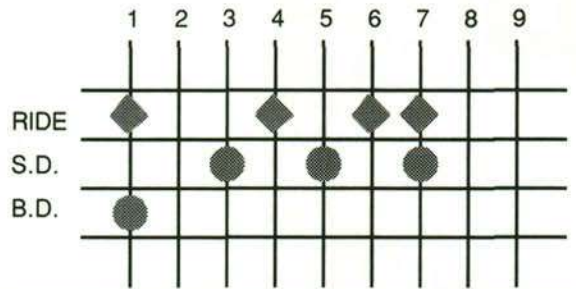


So, with a very basic explanation of a complex topic behind us, let's examine some different patterns from outside the cozy world of 4/4.

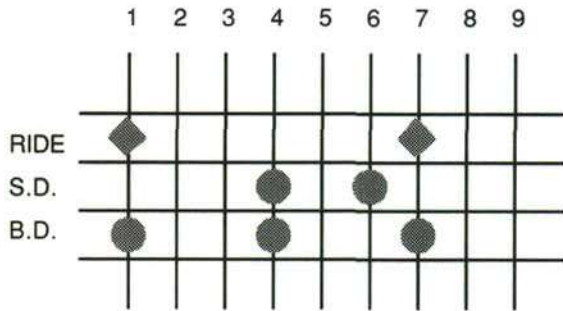
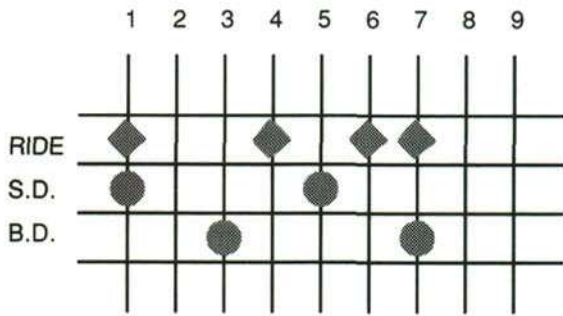
3/4 Time

If you've understood everything so far, then you'll know that 3/4 in its simplest form consists of three quarter notes or their equivalent per bar. (An equivalent could comprise six 8th notes per bar, for example.)

Set your plastic pal up to accept input in 3/4 time, quantize to three multiples of three (for a swing feel), and try inputting the following "jazz waltz"-derived rhythm patterns, using the ride cymbal sound instead of the hi-hat.



4/4



Once you've got them up and running, try chaining them together into song structures, such as the 12-bar sequences that I outlined earlier in the series.

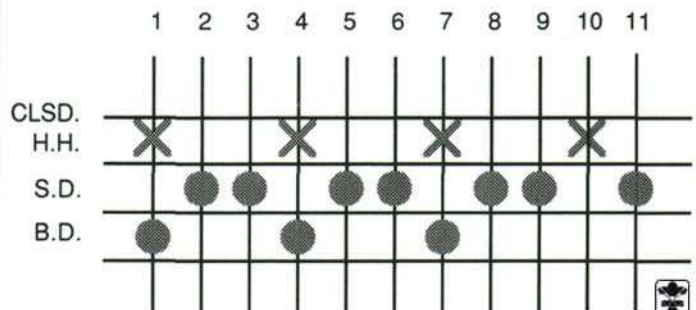
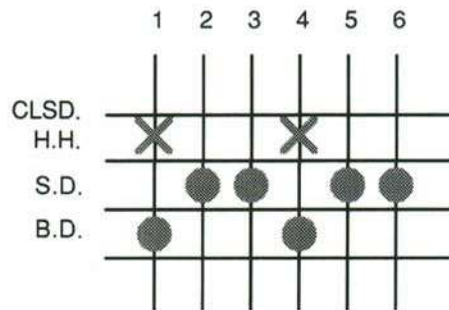
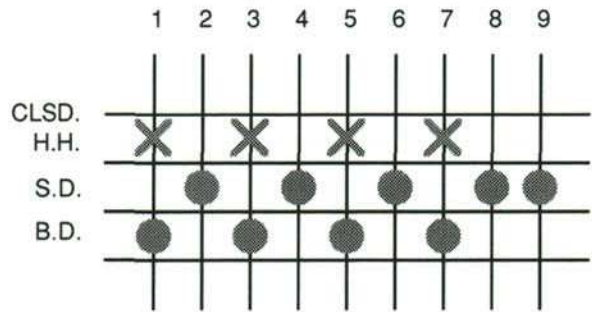
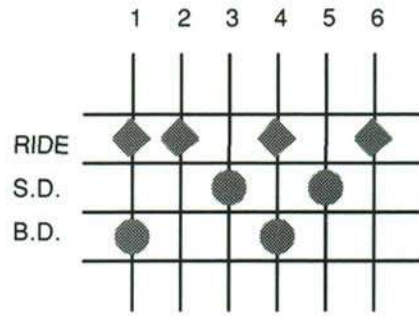
If you play a pitched instrument, then attempt to play along, remembering of course to count "1,2,3" per bar, instead of the more usual "1,2,3,4." You may find this a bit awkward at first, but keep at it. This form of rehearsal is of paramount importance in the development of coordination and timing. After all, what's the point in programming something that you can't play in time with?

Stranger Time Signatures

Taking things a step further, let's now examine some rather more outlandish time signatures. How about 6/8, 9/8, and 11/8 for starters? In actual fact, when you look closely and break down these patterns logically, they're not as difficult as they first appear. They can be successfully used in a wide variety of musical styles. If I told you that they were Rampi Greek, Naningo African, and Spanish Folk, then it could conceivably put you off, so I won't!

The relevant time signatures are given beside the diagrams. Use the patterns in association with your dedicated user's manual, and you will make smooth progress.

After you've programmed the following patterns, spend some time editing them; substitute one instrument sound for another, experiment with accents, etc. In this way, you'll still retain the overall concept of the given time signature, and develop your own ideas in the world outside 4/4, too.



Ray Driving



Photo by Rick Van Horn

Ray Marchica has been a successful Broadway drummer for almost nine years. He began his career with *A Chorus Line*, and then moved for a time to the Rockettes show at Radio City Music Hall. (On that job, he had the unusual experience of playing in an orchestra where the trumpet section was half a block—and the percussionist a full block—away, since the stage stretches from 50th to 51st Street. As Ray puts it, "I thank God for the click track; it was the only possible way we could stay together!") From there, Ray went on to play for *Woman Of The Year*, first featuring Lauren Bacall and later Raquel Welch, and then spent several years in the pit for *La Cage Aux Folles*.

Most recently, Ray has been the drummer for the mega-hit *Starlight Express* since it opened in New York over a year ago. In this unique show, where all the characters are train engines or cars and all the actors perform on roller skates, composer Andrew Lloyd Webber relied heavily on synthesizers and electronic instruments, including entirely electronic drums. While electronic percussion is not new to the Broadway theater, *Starlight* is the first show for which totally electronic drumming was stipulated from the very outset.

At the time the show was first created in London, "electronic drums" meant the Simmons SDS5, so that was the instrument used for the London production of *Starlight*. But by the time the show reached Broadway a few years later, electronic technology had exploded, and Ray had many other options to choose from. He decided to employ a Dynacord *ADD-one* brain and multiple-pad setup. But at that point, he was faced with creating all the drum sounds

necessary to perform the show. The score stipulated only a few specific sounds, and otherwise simply employed standard drum-set notation, giving very little information as to what actual sounds were desired. That left Ray to do some research.

"What I did," says Ray, "was buy the London cast album and get an idea of the sounds from that. All the sounds were basically Simmons. But when they recorded the album, there were a couple of acoustic drum sounds that they couldn't get from the Simmons. There's a country tune in the show that required an acoustic sound. So when rehearsal came, I dialed up a good acoustic country sound on the Dynacord. The arranger, David Cohen, asked me, 'Could you make the snare drum a little deeper? And we need the cross-stick in there.' So I dialed up a cross-stick. I knew the big-production race numbers were Simmons sounds on the album, so I had Simmons sounds already programmed. From there, I used my own tastes. I added some acoustic sounds: The snare drum is usually a combination of a Simmons and an acoustic snare sound synthesized by the *ADD-one*."

In addition to the purely musical considerations, Ray had to be concerned with how the sounds he created projected through the sound system and into the house. The show is presented at the Gershwin Theater in New York, and the orchestra is neither in a traditional pit, nor on stage, nor even hidden in the wings. They are playing in a band room several floors above the stage, with their sound being transmitted to the actors on stage and the audience in the house entirely via the sound system. Consequently, Ray needed to work

closely with the show's sound designer, Martin Levan.

"I had to be concerned with sounding good in the house, because I could be playing my ass off up there in the band room and still sound like a transistor radio out front. So I'd get my settings, and then run down and say, 'How does that sound? Is it deep enough? Do you have it EQed right?' Then Martin would say, 'No, we could put a little more acoustic snare drum in there,' or some other suggestion. I always make sure to be friends with the sound designer and the sound engineer. We're working toward the same goal: We want the show to sound as good as it possibly can."

Other people, such as the musical director, orchestrator, or arranger, are also involved with the show and its music, and have input into what Ray needs to do. That input is not restricted to the rehearsal period before the show opens; it is an ongoing process throughout the run.

"We'd do a number in rehearsal, and we'd think we had the sound fixed. Then they would tell me, 'No, we need more of the white noise from the Simmons in here.' There is a song in the show called 'Make Up My Heart.' I was playing it like a light ballad. A month ago—several months into the run—the musical director, David Cad-dock, told the conductor, Paul Bogaev, to have me approach it harder."

In addition to the live drumming Ray does on the electronic pads, he also uses a Korg *DDD-1* drum machine. This has a specific purpose, as he explains: "A lot of times during a show, the numbers 'give.' The performers are more tired on a Saturday night, so they'll sing a little slower, while a Friday night has more energy. But there are a couple of numbers in *Starlight* that are sequenced, like the Gospel finale. The tempo just has to be locked in for that, no matter what. So I asked the show's musical director, 'Do you need a sequencer, or can we just MIDI it into a drum machine? I'm not too familiar with programming sequencers, but I'm very familiar with drum machines.' He said, 'A drum machine's fine.' So I use the *DDD-1* to play the Dynacord.

"Besides the tempo lock I achieve that way, I also get some additional sounds. I use the cabasa, shaker, and cross-stick

Marchica: The *Starlight Express*

sounds from the *DDD-1* on certain tunes in the show where all eight of my Dynacord channels are already being used. The Korg has two separate channels dedicated to it on the sound board: right and left. I can use those two channels to add, say, what a percussionist would be playing on a shaker."

But if a show employs electronic drums and percussion, and much of the music is synthesized anyway, why not just put the whole score on tape and let the cast sing along to that? For that matter, why not just put the whole show on tape, singing and all?

"For one thing, you'd run into union problems. The local musicians union recently signed a new Broadway contract. It stipulates that all Broadway houses have to hire a minimum number of musicians. The minimum at the Gershwin Theater is 22. The contract sets that minimum, but it doesn't stipulate what instruments must be used. You could have 20 synthesizer players and two saxophone players if you wanted, but there have to be 22 musicians.

"However, the main reason a tape won't work in a Broadway theater is because the singers and dancers make mistakes. They jump bars or skip lines. And technical problems also occur. Suppose the scenery breaks and you need to vamp longer? You have to take these things into account on Broadway. So even on the drum machine numbers in the show, I have to be there. There have been times when I had to shut the machine off and take over."

Broadway music traditionally features a broad range of dynamics. One of the criticisms leveled at electronic drumkits has always been their lack of dynamic sensitivity. Even though the dynamics of *Starlight* might be described as loud, louder, and loudest, Ray still must be concerned with dynamic variety. How does he achieve that?

"With the Dynacord, there are different dynamic ranges, and I can actually program them. There are times when the capabilities of an electronic pad work to better advantage than an acoustic instrument. For example, if you hit an acoustic crash cymbal hard, you're going to get a loud 'crash.' If you hit the same cymbal softly, you don't really get the same crash at lower volume; it's going to be more like a 'ping.' But if you hit the crash cymbal *pad* softly, it's

going to produce the same crash sound, only softer. Since it isn't as loud, it becomes a 13" splash instead of an 18" crash.

"The Dynacord pads are touch sensitive, and the output volume is programmable on a scale from 0 to 99. Most of the volumes I use are in the 80's and 90's, but there are a couple of spots programmed in the 40's and 50's. That way, even if I *play* at full volume, the brain doesn't put out a high volume.

"As an additional dynamic control, the sound engineer has individual control of each one of my pads on a separate channel on the house board. In fact, we had a problem with that in the early stages of the show, because I used the two snare drum sounds on two different pads. The acoustic snare drum was on channel 4 on the Dynacord, and the regular snare drum was on channel 2. But sometimes I would change the arrangement of a particular kit, putting a crash cymbal on what had been the acoustic snare drum channel. The sound engineer had it EQed for a snare drum, so the sound wasn't too great. We rectified that problem by keeping my cymbal pads consistent no matter what kit I have programmed. I basically use two cymbal pads now: The right pad is either a crash or a ride; the left pad is the hi-hat. Those two pads are EQed downstairs strictly as cym-

bals."

How exactly does Ray go about arranging his sounds for the drumming he does on *Starlight Express*? Does he program a basic electronic kit and play through the show with it, or does he specifically program each number in the show with different sounds?

"There are about 40 songs in the show. I could have gotten away with maybe ten drumkits. But I like to think of myself as a creative musician. So I used the Dynacord to the max. While preparing each number, I thought, 'Why don't I make the snare drum just a little bit louder and a little higher in pitch, and why don't I tune the tom-toms down a little bit?' I basically changed sounds on every number. To make that practical during the show, I use a step program change switch—not only from song to song, but sometimes within a song. In that way, all my cues are linear. If I want to go back to a kit that I had two songs earlier, I don't have to dial or punch up a number to get back to that kit. It's just straight forward from cue to cue. For example, kit #5 is the same as kit #10, except that kit #10 has a crash cymbal in place of the ride. Everything else is the same.

"One important reason for doing that—and an important reason for my using the



Dynacord as opposed to, say, a sampler and a Simmons kit—is because on Broadway, if you know you're going to be doing a hit, you really have to cover yourself. You're probably going to get sick sometime, and you're definitely going to need a vacation at some point. You have to make it as simple as you can for the person subbing for you. That's one of the reasons why all the cues are moved forward on the drums.

"Speaking of simplification, I should mention score notation. Working with electronics can get complicated, so you should write everything down in the score. If song number one is kit number one, you write it down. Note when to change kits; don't leave anything up to chance. I usually do that in red pencil, so it really sticks out. Usually, you don't mark music in anything but lead pencil, but I use red pencil for electronics because it's very important."

For a young man who's spent most of his professional career playing Broadway shows, Ray has quite a bit of insight into the intricacies of electronic drumming. How did he gain these skills?

"Well, I don't just do Broadway. I think that's very important. Because of the repetition involved with a hit Broadway show, you *have* to take off. You have to have good subs to cover you, and you have to be willing to lose money. I take off and play gigs at the Bitter End, or the Bottom

Line, or I go out of town. I played with Roy Buchanan last year for \$100 a gig. I also played with the El Glamo big band, with Anthony Jackson on bass.

"I'm totally into popular music; I don't just go home and listen to Broadway cast albums. When Simmons first came out, I bought them for myself—not thinking that I'd use them on Broadway, but to stretch out more and do studio work, rock gigs, and whatever. So I learned about electronics on my own. Also, I worked with producer Dan Hartman, including playing on James Brown's 'Living In America' and most of the *Gravity* album. I did a couple of cuts from *Ruthless People* and also from *Down And Out In Beverly Hills*. I went on tour with Dan, and learned a lot about triggering. That all worked to my advantage when the musical directors of *Starlight* were looking for a drummer who knew the Broadway style and also knew about electronics. Paul Bogaev knew me, so he recommended me."

Expertise with electronics also means being prepared to deal with the unexpected. There is no question that electronic drums offer flexibility of sounds and programming that acoustic drums cannot hope to equal. On the other hand, acoustic drums don't go completely dead if a fuse blows. What would happen if Ray were faced with such a situation?

"So far, I've been fortunate enough not

to have experienced any equipment failure during the show. In a way, that's a testimonial for the Dynacord, and, in fact, its reputation for dependability was one of the reasons I went with it in the first place. That's important, because I'm probably not as fully covered as I should be in terms of backup equipment. I do have all my Dynacord and *DDD-1* programs stored on cassette, but there is no backup *ADD-one* brain or *DDD-1* machine. Fortunately, I live right across the street from the theater. I have my own Simmons *SDS5* at home, and if my regular equipment failed, I could probably get through a show with that. I also have an *Octapad*, and if worst came to worst, I could patch that into the Korg, use its drum sounds, and go that way. The show might have to stop for 15 minutes or so while I got that stuff hooked up, but we could continue. If we somehow lost all capability to use electronic sounds during a performance, the show would definitely have to stop—at least temporarily. The sound engineer would have to run up to the band room and rig up some mic's for me. There's an acoustic snare drum and acoustic cymbals in the band room, and the percussionist has a big concert bass drum. That's one situation where playing electronic drums is no different than doing anything else in a Broadway show. If something went drastically wrong, we'd just have to wing it.



Another Winning Combination!



Pictured at a recent MI graduation are (front row left to right) Yamaha Human Relations Award Winner, Bob Roach; Ovation Human Relations Award Winner, Chip Neault; Gibson Outstanding Guitar Player of the Year, Gawain Reifsnnyder; Sabian Most Improved, Lisa Romeo; Paul Farnen, VIT Outstanding Human Relations Award, Ron Fosnot; VIT Outstanding Student Award, Jami Lula; (standing) Ralph Humphrey, Bob Magnusson, Howard Roberts, Yamaha Outstanding Drummer of the Year Award Winner, Billy Miller; Zildjian Outstanding Drummer of the Year Award Winner, Jan Rohlfing; Fender Bass Human Relations Award Winner, Mike Freemole; Jim Lacefield, Pat Hicks, Tommy Tedesco, Joe Brancato, Jerome Stocco and Joe Porcaro.

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"Life on the road" consists of a great deal of bus travel, as the tour schedule criss-crosses the country. "Accommodations" means a school gymnasium with enough room to stretch out a sleeping bag for "horizontal" sleeping (compared to the form of "vertical" sleeping done on buses). Hot water in the locker room is considered a luxury—especially on sore muscles tired from a long day of practice. Meals come from the corps' "chuck wagon," which is staffed by volunteer parents and supporters of the organization. And while it is normal to complain about the food ("What—peanut butter again?"), somehow there is always enough to feed 150 people three times a day—and there are always enough liquids around to quench the thirst brought on by an eight-hour day of rehearsal under a hot summer sun. And after the days repeat themselves over and over again, there is a "free day" on the schedule, giving the entire corps a chance to relax, have fun, see the sights, and "re-charge" themselves for the rest of the tour.

A typical day begins around midnight,

immediately following a show. The Sky Ryders' Mark Wessels describes a common scenario: "You do a show, attend the judges' critique, and finish packing the truck, so you're on the road around 1:00 in the morning. We usually get to the next contest site about 6:00 and hopefully get three or four hours of sleep. We call this 'down time' which means you get to lay flat! Then we get up, take showers, eat breakfast—whatever you need to do to get ready for rehearsals.

"We rehearse approximately three hours in the morning, eat lunch, and then practice another three or four hours in the afternoon before we get ready for a show. We usually have about an hour and a half to polish the drums, take another shower, and put on our uniforms. Then we go to the contest site, which is usually around a 20-minute drive. Once we're there, the corps spends about an hour warming up for the show and getting the mental preparation needed to perform. We do the show, and then it starts all over again. It's just a vicious cycle!"

John Wooton, a member of the Phantom

Regiment's drum staff, adds his thoughts: "The first tour is more laid back than the second one, which is towards the end of the season, when things are getting a little intense. Basically, 'tour' means we're on the bus a lot—just about every night. We sleep on gym floors, and the smart ones have started to bring air mattresses to sleep on. If we traveled the night before, we sleep in a little bit to give the kids some rest, because you don't get much sleep on a bus. Then we divide the rehearsals into sectionals, ensemble time, and M & M time. We try to divide that up equally so no one gets jealous that one caption is getting more time. But if we need some more work in one area, we'll give them a little extra time.

"Assuming that we didn't travel the night before," he continues, "we'll get up at 7:00 and practice from 8:00 to noon, eat lunch, and practice again from 1:30 to 5:00. Then we'll eat dinner and get ready for the show." That "average" day includes almost eight hours of rehearsal. How much of that is devoted to the drum line? "We start off with sectionals," replies John, "which is

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time for the drum staff to decide what we need to do with the line. If we need to have the snare drummers off by themselves, marching back and forth in the parking lot and playing a certain passage, then we'll do that. If something in the drum solo isn't working out—like phasing from the front sideline to the back—then we'll use the time as ensemble time with the whole drum line. It just depends on what we need to do. We take notes and try to keep the rehearsals very organized."

Sometimes a typical day on tour needs to be examined as a group of days. Star of Indiana's Bob Dubinski explains, "Take a Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday for example. Monday night we'll have a show. Then we'll get on the buses and travel several hours to our next stop. By then it's

3:00 in the morning. We go to bed and try to let the kids stay on their backs until 10:00. Since we have a show Tuesday night, we know we can't work them too hard during rehearsals so they can still have enough energy at night. We'll start rehearsal at 11:00 and end at 4:00, with a break in the middle for lunch. After dinner we'll pack up, do the performance, and travel five hours to the next place. If we don't have a contest that night, we'll probably wake them up a little earlier and do three rehearsal sessions. Because of the heat last summer, when we were down South, we woke up at 7:00, practiced until 1:00, took the afternoon off, and then rehearsed from 6:00 P.M. to 1:00 A.M. again."

Everyone's rehearsal schedule is tailored to the corps' individual needs and performance schedule. For example, a "Top Twelve" corps that performs last at a show (around 10:00 P.M.) can rehearse later into the day before getting ready for a show. However, a small corps that performs at 7:30 P.M. must be at the stadium before 6:00, which could stop an afternoon rehearsal as early as 3:00. This corps has the extra time during the show, while the other corps perform. But unfortunately this cannot be utilized as constructive practice time. It's sort of a "catch-22" situation.

Remember the Knights, who grounded their entire drum line in the pit? Their rehearsal schedule is the exception rather

than the rule. "Since we didn't have much to march," relates Pat Petrillo, "we did nothing but music. No M & M rehearsals at all! It was good for me to come in once a month and not have to put on a 'drum corps head.' I would teach overall musicianship, drumset technique, and basically a percussion ensemble, instead of having to march around. It took us about a half hour to set up, and then we usually had a good four to five hours just to work music on our own, while the rest of the corps did drill. It was good because the kids could woodshed their drumset chops. Then we would have a full ensemble rehearsal in order to match the front ensemble to the brass ensemble on the field, which was very difficult to do."

The corps' free days can mean a lot of different things, depending on what part of the country they are in. Southern California could mean an exhibition at Disneyland followed by several hours off to explore the amusement park, or an afternoon on the beach. Being on the East Coast could mean a day to spend in New York City or Boston. Sometimes an afternoon with no rehearsal can even become "laundry day"—a chance to get clean clothes, maybe catch a movie that all the people back home have already seen at the local cinema, and even eat at a "real" restaurant.

Bob Dubinski's most memorable free day came in Dallas. The kids had gone to a

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shopping mall, and some of the staff went downtown to the West End's "Dallas Alley" where, for one cover charge, they got to hear several bands, and munch at an all-you-can-eat buffet—a real treat from drum corps food! Bob continues the story: "We heard this unbelievable band with a great horn section. It turned out that some of the people in the band had marched in drum corps. They played 'God Bless The Child/ which reminded us of the Madison Scouts, and 'So Very Hard To Go/ which reminded us of the Anaheim Kingsmen. They started playing all these songs that were affiliated with drum corps, and we just started clapping and jamming. It was cooking!"

On the opposite end of the spectrum, Bob's most memorable day on tour was when the Star of Indiana took sixth place in the preliminary competition at the 1987 Championships. "Working so hard and having the kids do a job like that and being rewarded for it—I think that was definitely quite memorable!" exclaims Bob. "And my wife and children were there, too, so that made it even *more* special, because they were standing with me when we heard the scores."

Pat Petrillo also remembers the prelim competition as his most memorable day of the summer—the day the Knights made the "Top 25" of DCI's elite corps. "I think our ensemble was accepted by the judging and drum corps community—even though we weren't using any marching equipment," Pat states proudly. "They said, 'You're making good music, and that's all that counts.' I've been involved in drum corps a long time, but from a teaching standpoint, that was my most satisfying achievement."

The Phantom Regiment's John Wooton remembers finals. "I always like to watch the drum show," he explains. "I like to be down on the field, right there with the rest of the drummers. I feel like I'm into the show with them because I spend so much time with those guys. After a show I have no idea how the rest of the corps did, but I *know* how the drum line did. And after finals, I was ecstatic! They were just incredible, and they made me very proud."

Unfortunately, memorable days are not always made up of good memories. Larry Cohen's most memorable day with Star last summer was in Birmingham, during DCI South prelims, when "I broke the top head and *two* bottom heads right before we went on," he recalls. "Somehow, I still had a great show." The Sky Ryders' most memorable "day" was more like a week! Due to some mechanical problems, the buses were impounded by the Colorado Highway Patrol following a performance in Boulder. "We made several newspapers, including *USA Today*, and television reports," explains Mark Wessels. "Unfortunately, we missed three shows due to a lack of transportation—and shows are where a corps makes a lot of their income.

On the bright side, we got in three full days of practice that we probably wouldn't have gotten otherwise.

"To tell you the truth," Mark continues, "most of the days on tour run into each other—'If it's Tuesday, this must be Toledo' kind of thing. A lot of the kids sometimes don't know what day it is, or even where they are. All the schools and stadiums start to look alike. Sometimes cities are judged by how hard the gym floor was or how cold the showers were. It takes some time after the summer is over to adjust to the real world and live a civilized life for a while. Then you begin to separate the days and figure out what has happened."

Although only one corps wins the title of "DCI World Champion," every member of every drum corps that competes is a true winner. Besides learning how to drum better technically, or how to interpret the music with more expression, or even how to get along with other people on a daily basis, these kids learn about life. The bad part about competitive junior drum & bugle corps is "aging out." So with a portion of a corps leaving each year, how do those people apply their experiences to other situations—at school, performing on their instruments, or even returning as a drum corps instructor?

John Wooton is a good example: He marched with the Imperial Guard from Evansville, Indiana for one year before

joining the Phantom Regiment in 1981. He then marched in the Regiment's snare line for four years, until he aged out in 1984. He took a few years off to finish his bachelor's degree in music performance from the University of Southwestern Louisiana and begin his master's degree at North Texas State University (which he recently completed). John returned to the world of drum corps last summer as an instructor for the Phantom Regiment.

How had marching in a drum corps helped John in his new teaching position? "You learn a lot of things from marching *in* the drum line that you wouldn't know unless you did it," he explains. "You learn execution matters: where to listen, how to listen, how to play to the person next to you—little things like that. You really need to experience it, because otherwise you have no idea how to relate to the kids in the line. I also try to keep my experiences going by putting on a drum whenever possible; I try to play as much as I can."

How did marching in drum corps help in other aspects of his musical career? "The discipline, more than anything else, helped me," John states. "I did a lot better on my grades in school after I marched in the corps, just because of the discipline involved. I started studying a lot more. I started practicing a lot more. From a musical standpoint, I learned a great deal about ensemble playing. As far as execution, I

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had no idea that things could be so perfected before I started drum corps. Now I consider myself a perfectionist, because it's in my blood."

"It's really tough to teach drum & bugle corps if you haven't marched, because it's such a different animal," relates the Sky Ryders' Mark Wessels. He marched in the summer of 1983 with the Madison Scouts, and that one summer made all the difference. "You have to deal with the elements and all that goes along with performing outside—situations of time delay on the field versus projection and things like that. We have some people on our staff who have never marched before, and they are adapting, but it's not quite the same.

"The biggest thing that I got out of drum

corps is not what I learned musically," Mark continues, "although you do learn a lot as far as how to play in an ensemble, how to relate your part to other parts, building chops, etc. The biggest thing I learned was more the 'mental' how-to-deal-with-problems thing, like how to blow off matters that don't concern you and that you have no control over. Drum corps is known for things happening that wouldn't ordinarily happen in everyday life. People who have marched in drum corps do the best they can under any situation. And that transfers to everyday life. If you go back into the real world, and for some reason things don't go right at work, you can either not worry about it or do your best possible job under the circumstances. Otherwise it can cause you a lot of grief.

"As far as whether or not to actually march in a drum corps or to encourage your students to march, I would say that it is definitely a good experience. There are people who have better experiences and people who have worse ones, depending on who you talk to. But more than learning

how to play, more than beating a drum for seven hours a day, it's the mental side—the concentration that you learn and the everyday life of how to deal with other people—that sets drum corps apart from staying home and watching TV all summer. It's quite a bit of work, and it definitely takes a special person. But at the same time, you have a staff who is willing to make you into that special person."

Bob Dubinski, who is also a band director in Indiana, applies his many years of drum corps experience to his job. "I try to keep the same morals, the same attitudes, and the same work ethics as I do in all my life," says Bob. "There are certain things that are right in life and there are certain things that are wrong. And there are certain ways to rehearse that are right and there are ways that are wrong. I try to make sure that everybody knows that. So it's just a good way of learning."

Troy Breaux, snare drummer for the Phantom Regiment, explains that drum corps will help him with his drumset playing. "I've got more hand and stick control.

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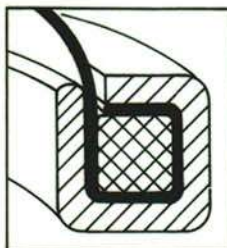
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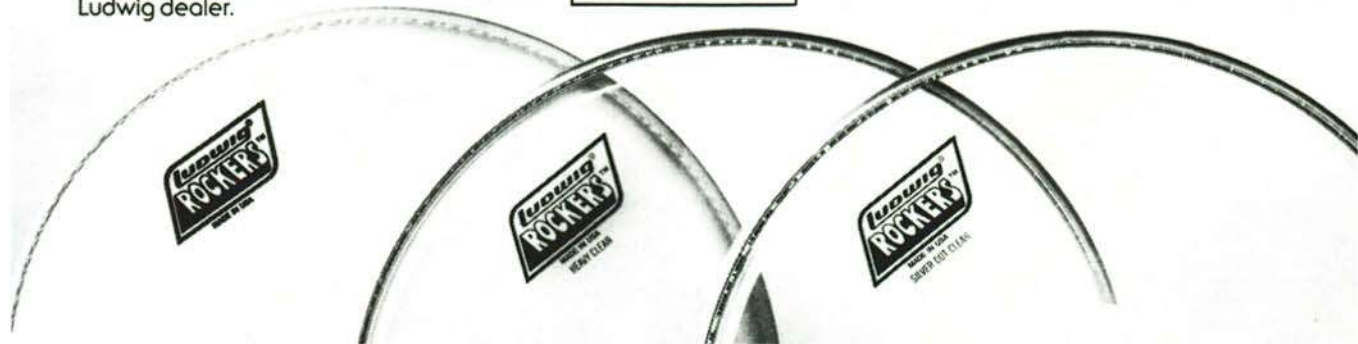
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I hate to see kids who start playing drumset and don't learn the rudiments; they end up not having much control on the set. I think the rudiments are very helpful."

His instructor, John Woonton, elaborates: "A lot of corps kids *do* have drumset experience, and they also take their drum corps experience and apply it to the drumset, as I do. Rudimentally speaking, it always helps to have good hands. You can take snare drum rudiments and apply them to the drumset."

John offers this advice. "If you're not already involved with drum corps, get involved, because it's the experience of a lifetime. I would recommend it to *anyone*. Even if you're a drumset player and you don't want to make a career out of drum corps like some people do, one year in corps can open your eyes as far as musical standpoints, execution, and getting your hands together. One year—just do it one year. You can only do it until you're 21! Once you're 22, you can't do it anymore. I always tell the kids in the line that they don't know how lucky they are to be able to march drum corps. I would *love* to do it again."

"Memorable days come back to you all winter long," recalls Mark Wessels. "When you're on tour in the worst possible situation and not having fun, those are the things that you remember as the funniest to talk about during the winter. You get a chance to step back a little bit and put everything in perspective."

"Drum corps has helped my coordination, chops, and endurance," Pat Petrillo states. "It's helped my mental frame of mind—how to concentrate through a big piece of music, a big chunk of time—and the internal discipline that allows you to do the best you can at whatever you do. The passion I have for drumming comes from my years in drum corps."

Drum corps is a difficult thing to describe. It can't be summed up in just one word. You need many:


Intense: "Constant intensity, constant focus on your playing at all times."

Work: "Hard work with a great reward."

Emotional: "There are 10,000 emotions. And every one of them exists in drum corps."

Incredible: "There are so many people and places and memories."

Addictive: "Some people live and die for drum corps."

Love: "You have to love the activity to put in that many hours, and you have to love the people because you are with them every minute of every day." 

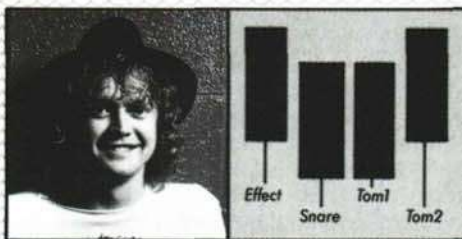
CORRECTION

Two of the photos that accompanied the Ralph Humphrey feature in the June issue of MD were taken at a Drum Workshop jam session, which was held at a recent NAMM show. Although the photos showed Ralph playing a DW drumset, he endorses Yamaha drums. We apologize for any confusion this may have caused.

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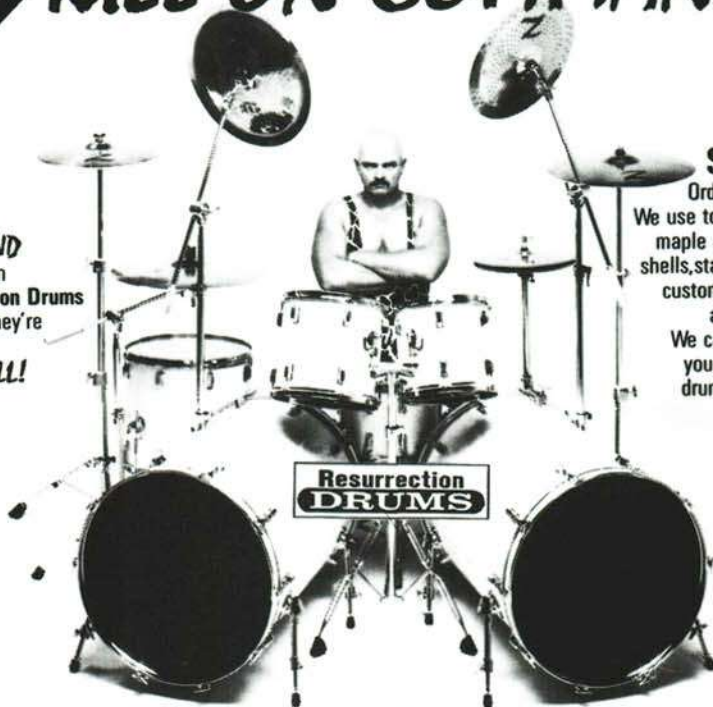


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Doing Your Best

by Roy Burns

Somerset Maugham, the great writer, once said, "It is a funny thing about life. If you refuse to accept anything but the best, you very often get it." This insightful comment covers a lot of areas. However, it seems to me that all attitudes begin with the individual. In order to expect "nothing but the best," you have to give "nothing but the best" that you have to offer.

For example, when I was on Benny Goodman's band, it was not a particularly friendly atmosphere. In many ways, Benny was a perfectionist. He didn't like mistakes and he let you know it. He played very well every night, and he expected everyone else to play well every night—no excuses. You had to be on time, ready to go, and ready to play your best, even though there was a lot of tension on the bandstand; you had to play your best no matter how you felt. It was tough, but now that I look back, it was great training. It helped me to understand that you must always make your best effort, regardless of the situation.

Anyone can play well when there is no pressure. To play with people who like you and for people who want to hear you is a

wonderful feeling. I can understand how groups can go on for years with the same people; it must be great to be in a band where everyone likes each other.

However, I have found that it doesn't always work that way. Studio work is a good example. I can remember feeling elated when I got to a big band recording session and saw that Milt Hinton was playing bass. Milt is one of the great bass players in the New York studio scene, and is active to this day. "All right," I thought, "this is going to be fun."

However, I have also had the opposite experience. I looked at the bass player on a particular session and wondered, "How in the world did they come to hire this guy? He can't keep time, and his feel leaves a lot to be desired." I knew that the date was going to be tough, but all I could do was my very best, under the circumstances. In a situation like that, you cannot go to the leader or the contractor and say, "I don't like the bass player!" (The response would probably be, "Who asked you?") All you can do is make an effort to do your very best.

On a famous TV talk show rehearsal, the following incident took place: A well-known female singer had a reputation for blaming the band if and when she happened to make a mistake. Her reputation was also well-known among musicians, and, not surprisingly, many musicians did not like to play for her. At the rehearsal, she said, "Hey drummer! Follow me and swing like mad." The drummer in question (who told me the story) stood up and said, "Baby, I can either follow you, or I can swing like mad, but I can't do both at the same time." Naturally, the band collapsed in laughter. The famous singer walked off the set, and my friend, the drummer, was fired for the incident. Although the story is admittedly funny, it is a good example of what *not* to do. It is better to realize that you are in for a difficult day, and then just try to do the best you can.

John Bunch, a famous piano player, has worked with Tony Bennett, Woody Herman, Benny Goodman, and Buddy Rich. John once told me, "Buddy plays great every night. He makes you want to do your best. You'd better be ready to play when you come to the job." Buddy once commented on his band in the following way: "To lead a band you must be able to get players to give more of themselves than they know they have to give. You must inspire them to rise above what they think they can do, and get them to do it consistently." Buddy, Benny, and other great bandleaders

expected so much from themselves that it seemed natural for them to expect a lot from the musicians in their bands.

Another great thing about doing your best, even under less than ideal conditions, is that you control your own destiny to a great degree. You are not dependent on others for your attitude; you depend upon yourself to play your best. If you can only play well when everything is going your way, you will have problems. The world will not adjust to you; you have to adjust to the world, and you have to make the effort all the time.

Another important result of refusing to accept nothing but the best from yourself is confidence. Accepting nothing but your best will force you to prepare for success. You will "do your homework," so to speak. You will practice and be prepared for each job—because you know that's what is required if you are to achieve the best results. You will also be honest with yourself. You'll come to understand that you can't fake it when the red light is on. You must do your best, *under pressure*, to survive in the music business.

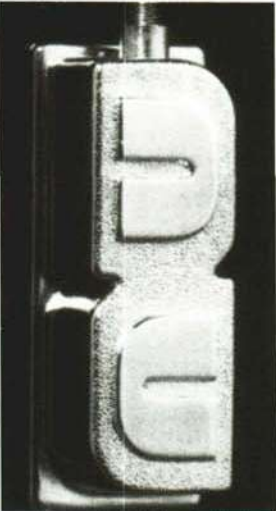


This attitude has a spillover effect. You begin to expect the best from your equipment. When you invest in an instrument, be it a drum, a foot pedal, or whatever, you expect it to work. You also expect other people to do their part. When they don't, you can then say, "I give *my* best, and I will accept nothing less than your best."

Groups break up all the time because one or two members get lazy or tired of making the effort. Group members show up for rehearsal late, unprepared, and often with a poor attitude. Sooner or later this situation takes its toll, as some members get discouraged with the lack of effort by the others.

There is no jealousy of other talented players when you know you have given your best. It helps you to respect others who also give their best, even though they may play better than you do. We don't have the opportunity to decide how much talent we are given. All we can do is adopt an attitude that enables us to get the most out of what we have. Once you know you have done your best, whatever that might be, you can rest easy. All you can do is, quite simply, all you can do.

When you refuse to accept anything but the best, you are the one who decides what is "best" from your point of view. The "best" could be what makes you happy. One thing is for sure: If you *don't* seek the best—in yourself, as well as outside yourself—you rarely find it.

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by Rick Van Horn

Regulars And Followers

A while back, I did a column entitled "Hecklers And Hasslers." In it, I described the kinds of people who can make a musician's life miserable, and yet who seem to be an unavoidable element of the music business. In this article, I'd like to talk about—and offer my gratitude for—the people who represent the opposite of that undesirable element: "regulars" and "followers." It is a fortunate circumstance that these people, too, seem to be an ever-present element of the music business. And in some cases, their presence can be the difference between a successful and enjoyable gig or an unsuccessful and tedious evening's ordeal.

Regulars

I define "regulars" as people who more or less "come with the territory." These are customers who frequent a particular club because they live nearby, or because they enjoy the particular atmosphere of the club, the style of music, the food, the management, the good-looking waitresses—whatever. In some cases, these individuals will patronize the club regardless of what band is performing there; in other cases, the presence of a particular band is an extra incentive to bring them in (or keep them away).

The benefit that "regulars" offer to you is that of a dependable, ready-made audience. When you go into a given room, you know that you can count on at least a certain number of people being there. If you work a group of rooms in rotation, there is also a psychological benefit to seeing familiar faces when you come in to play. Even if the regulars represent only a very small percentage of the entire crowd, they at least give you someone to relate to

at the beginning of the evening—someone to make eye contact with right away. Their presence can put you a bit more at ease, and allow you to expand your contact from them out to the rest of your audience.

Very often, regulars spend a great deal of time and money in a single club. This ingratiates them with the management, and can, in some cases, give them a certain amount of influence. With that in mind, it's to your advantage to cultivate their favor as much as is reasonably possible. Remember that they will get to know your repertoire fairly well if you play in "their" room frequently. To avoid comments from them about your "playing the same songs," try to make sure that a few of those songs are their favorites. This doesn't necessarily mean that you should go out of your way to learn new songs. Fortunately, it almost always happens that something in your repertoire *becomes* a particular favorite with the regulars. This may be because they like the song to begin with, or because something happens the first time you play it that involves them, making the song an "inside" joke between them and you.

We once played a club in which a group of regulars was celebrating the birthday of one of their "gang." His name happened to be Johnny, and his friends were joking about his reputation with the local ladies. When they asked if we could play a song in his honor, we immediately launched into Chuck Berry's "Johnny B. Goode," changing the lyric in the chorus to "Johnny is good." From that time forward, that entire group considered "Johnny B. Goode" as "their" song. Another example of this type of association occurred when we played Elvis Presley's "I Can't Help Falling In Love

With You" as an anniversary request. The couple who requested it enjoyed it so much that night that they have requested it ever since.

Why go to the trouble of playing particular songs for regulars? I mentioned before the influence they can have with club management. That influence can be a very real factor in your continued employment in a given club. Fortunately, that factor has always been positive for my bands. On more than one occasion, club managers were persuaded to re-book bands I've been in by regulars who enjoyed our performances. But I have known bands who were not re-hired for gigs, based on the poor reports given to the management by club regulars. You never want to alienate *any* member of your audience, but it is especially dangerous to alienate people whom the club management regards as favored customers.

The nice thing about paying attention to regulars is that you really only need to do so in a musical manner. Since they are regular patrons of the club, rather than of your band specifically, it is the club's job to cater to them as far as the occasional complimentary drink or other goodwill gesture is concerned. It's the club's responsibility to keep them coming in. But it's to your advantage to show them an *especially* good time when your band is performing there. Simply be friendly, acknowledge their presence as friends you're pleased to see again, and *be sure to play their song!*

Followers

"Followers" are those wonderful people who enjoy your band so much that they are willing to travel to different locations in



Every one of these babies

order to see you. In other words, instead of waiting until you come to their club to play for them, they take the time and trouble to go wherever you go.

There is a long list of advantages to having "followers," not the least of which is that they can help make a gig in a new room much more comfortable for you. There is a certain insecurity that every band feels when performing in a club for the first time. Even if you have confidence in your ability and in your material, there are many unknown variables you have to deal with. How will the sound system handle the room's acoustics? Will this audience relate to your material favorably? Are these people "dancers," "watcher/listeners," or "ignorers"? Should you rely on the music and move from song to song as quickly as possible, or should you try to inject a bit of between-song humor to establish a rapport?

The presence of a group of your followers in a first-night audience can relieve a lot of the anxiety that you're likely to feel. For one thing, they can once again give you someone to relate to—at least to begin with—when it comes to establishing communication with your audience. That's not to say that you should restrict your efforts to them entirely, but you can begin with them, get a bit of a "vibe" happening, and then expand that to include as much of the total audience as possible. More often than not, it will be your followers who will be first on the dance floor, and we all know what a joy it is to have someone break *that* barrier. Also, it's not uncommon for bands to rely on the input of followers in regards to volume levels, balances, etc. Your followers should have a pretty good idea of what your best sound is like; they can give you at least a layman's opinion regarding any differences they hear in this new venue.

Even in an established room, it's good to have the followers there, because they reaffirm to management that you are a

"draw." If you can demonstrate that employing your band automatically ensures the club an extra 10 or 20 guaranteed customers, that might carry significant weight when the management is planning its booking schedule.

How does a band go about acquiring followers? The first thing to do, obviously, is entertain people at every performance. When people find you entertaining, they will look forward to hearing you again. If they find you entertaining *enough*, they'll be willing to go out of their way to hear you again. They will be willing to become followers. At that point, it's up to you to make it as easy as possible for them to do that.

The best way to promote a following is to establish a mailing list. There are many ways to do that—some more expensive than others. The simplest way is just to let your audience know that they can see any band member on a break and leave their name and address to be placed on the list. Have a notebook, card file, or some other method of collecting names and addresses handy on the stage. I've known some bands to place table tents on every table in the club, with a form that could be filled out and placed in a special "mailbox" on stage. This can get a bit expensive, but does look classy. My band has employed two different methods. At one point, we had someone associated with the band in a non-musical capacity handling a notebook. We simply pointed that person out, and asked our audience to see him in order to be added to the list. More recently, in the absence of such an additional person, we have used a system involving business cards. We had a card printed up that is twice the size of a normal business card, and perforated at its midline. The top half is our business card; the bottom half is a name-and-address form. We ask the patron to fill out the bottom half and return it to us, and to keep the top half. In that way,

both of us get contact information at the same time.

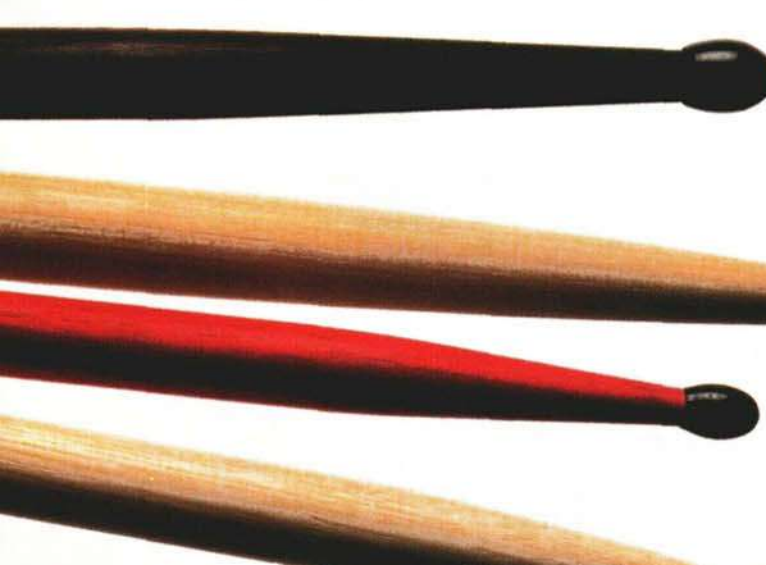
Once you've established a mailing list, be sure to keep the people on it posted as to your playing schedule. Some bands send a fancy newsletter, others use a simple calendar format. The main thing is not to let your followers lose track of you, or start to think that they are forgotten. Besides your playing schedule, use your mailing list to send holiday greetings and other goodwill correspondence. These people can very often serve as the "core" around which your audience will be built at gig after gig, so it's worth a little extra effort and expense to keep them interested in you.

Besides keeping your followers posted via the mailing list, you should definitely promote their goodwill when they attend your gigs. Naturally, you should play their favorite songs, in the same way as I described earlier for regulars. But you also need to remember that these individuals are *your* customers—not necessarily the club's. It might be a good idea to buy them a round once in a while. It's certainly important to socialize with them on breaks, and thank them personally for supporting you. You want them to feel that they are part of your musical "family," and that their presence is important to you. (This should be easy if you realize that their presence is important to you!)

Every band likes to have things go smoothly on a gig—to play comfortably and well for an enthusiastic and appreciative audience. Unfortunately, in the music business—and especially in the club scene—there are no guarantees that this will happen on any given night. But the contributions that regulars and followers can make towards making such gigs a reality cannot be overstated. Let's face it: We all feel better with friends on our side. I earnestly suggest that you make it a policy to win as many friends as possible!



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PEARL "AFTERNOON OF BRILLIANCE"



(Left to right): Chester Thompson, Omar Hakim, Larrie Londin, and Tico Torres playing together for the grand finale.

On Sunday, February 21, 1988, The Country Club in Reseda, California was the site of "An Afternoon Of Brilliance" sponsored by Pearl Drums. The featured Pearl artists were Omar Hakim, Larrie Londin, Chester Thompson, and Tico Torres.



Tico Torres

Over 1,100 people attended the sold-out show, with 300 more turned away at the box office on the day of the event. The diverse styles and techniques of all four players were displayed when each performed individual 20-minute sets; the show culminated in a grand finale where all four drummers



Omar Hakim



Larrie Londin

played together. The show ended with the enthusiastic audience calling for more.

According to Pearl's Artist



Chester Thompson

Relations/Promotions Manager, Pam Haynie, "Pearl has always been a leader among the percussion manufacturers in sponsoring educational seminars and clinics, in the belief that you must 'teach' the young, aspiring player. This event, however, was a first in the industry. It was not a clinic, it was a performance that featured four of today's finest musicians as musical soloists. The canvas was their drumset, and Pearl gave them a format in which to paint a glorious picture."

MD TRIVIA WINNER

Mark Sokowitz, of Houston, Texas, is the winner of a Korg DDD-5 Digital Dynamic Drum Machine for his answer to MD's April Trivia Contest question. Mark's card was the first with the correct answer drawn at random from among all cards submitted. The question was: "Name the drummer who has played in all of these groups: Jeff Beck Group, Mothers of Invention, Jefferson Starship." As Mark and many other entrants correctly responded, that drummer is **Aynsley Dunbar**. Congratulations from Korg and *Modern Drummer*.

KEIKO ABE 1988 MARIMBA MASTER CLASS

Keiko Abe, the Japanese marimba virtuoso, will travel to the United States this summer to conduct her biennial master class series. Classes will take place in New Harmony, Indiana from August 1-7. Activities include private lessons, master class sessions, and concerts. For application forms and additional information, contact Rebecca Kite, P.O. Box 1954, Bloomington, Indiana 47402, (812)876-7059.

AQUARIAN RECEIVES PATENTS

Aquarian Accessories has been granted a very comprehensive and precise patent on the company's line of synthetic drumsticks. According to Roy Burns, Aquarian owner, "We have the first patent on a drumstick that is hollow from end to end. It is a concept that we originated, developed, and pioneered. The tubular design adds strength and at the same time overcomes the weight problems of the past. Players such as Gil Moore (Triumph), Buddy Williams (Manhattan Transfer), Jim Keltner (studio free-lance), and Bill Berry (R.E.M.) have been a great help by testing each version and letting us know when the

weight, feel, balance, and durability were just right."

In addition to the sticks, Aquarian also has U.S. patents on its *Cymbal Springs* and *Hi-Performance Drumheads*, as well as foreign patents pending on their graphite drumsticks and new drumheads.

YAMAHA PERCUSSION SYMPOSIUM

Yamaha Music Corporation, USA, will conduct the Yamaha Percussion Symposium at the University of Kentucky, Lexington, on July 17, 18, and 19. Hosted by U of K Professor Jim Campbell, the Symposium will feature clinics on all facets of percussion, including drumset, electronic percussion, mallets, marching drums, Latin percussion, and concert percussion. Yamaha endorsers who will conduct clinics and also perform include Vinnie Colaiuta, Dave Samuels, Fred Sanford, Norbert Goldberg, Phil Bloch, and Dave Mancini.

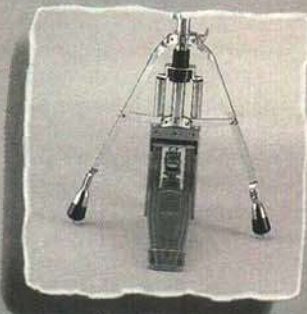
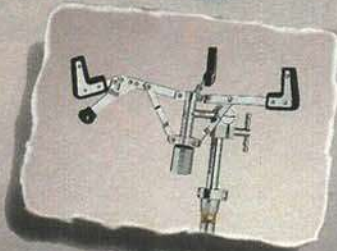
The Yamaha Percussion Symposium is open to high school and college students, professional percussionists, and band directors. Graduate college credit is available. For additional information, contact Jim Campbell, Symposium Coordinator, Yamaha Percussion Symposium, University of Kentucky, Signatory Center for the Arts, Rose & Euclid Street, Lexington, Kentucky 40506-0241.

MODERN JAZZ QUARTET AT MT. HOOD FESTIVAL OF JAZZ

The Modern Jazz Quartet, featuring drummer Connie Kay and vibist Milt Jackson, will be among the featured artists at the Mt. Hood Festival of Jazz. The event will be held August 5-7, at Mt. Hood Community College in Gresham, Oregon. Further information may be obtained by calling the Mt. Hood Festival of Jazz, (503) 666-3810.

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DRUMMERS ALLIANCE BRITISH FINAL

Photo by Derick A. Thomas



(Left to right): Pete Gill, Toni Cannelli, and Gary Mann.

Drummers Alliance is an organization formed by two English drummers, Toni Cannelli and Pete Gill, to promote interest in the art of drumming. Their first major venture has been to organize a national competition to find the best undiscovered drummers and percussionists in Britain. After a series of area semi-finals throughout most of the previous year, the final was held at London's Lewisham Theatre in March of '88.

The event was very well supported by the industry, who loaned equipment and donated some generous prizes. Pearl and Remo both supplied drumkits, while Premier took care of the marching drums and tuned percussion. Cymbals for the drumkit and the percussion sections of the competition came from Zildjian. The "star" prizes were a Remo *Discovery* kit with Zildjian cymbals for the winner of the over-15 drumkit section, and a Pearl *Export* kit with Zildjian cymbals for the winner of the under-15 drumkit section.

Competitors in each section played solos for up to 2 1/2 minutes; some of the individual percussion entries used piano accompaniment. They were judged by a panel that included Ian Croft of Zildjian, Gary Mann of Remo,

and drummers Steve White, Pete Gill, John Coughlin, Errol Kennedy, and Lloyd Ryan.

The over-15 drumkit section was won by Tony Peart, from Birmingham, with Marcus Lopez, of Sheffield, coming in second. James Keen, from London, was the winner of the under-15 drumkit section, while Nathan Curran (Norwich) and Kevin Lee-Miller (Edinburgh) shared second place. Worthy of mention in this section was the youngest finalist, Nicholas Bott, from Leicester, who (at 10 years old) proved himself to be worthy of inclusion. In the solo military snare drum section, the over-15 entries had Edinburgh's Bryn Butler as the winner and Paul Westfall, from Essex, as the runner-up. The pair for the under-15s were Colin Farrel, from Manchester, first, and Matthew Elquezabel, from Cardiff, second. The solo percussion (open) winner was xylophone player Ian McGillivray, from Liverpool, with Andy Mavin (vibes), of Newcastle, second. The winning percussion ensemble was Edinburgh's brilliant Craigmont High School Pipe Band, while the worthy runner-up was The Lincoln Street Band, with a nicely arranged Latin percussion performance that started the day's events.

Organizer Toni Cannelli said, "Since we've been doing this project, we've been on TV and radio all over the country, as well as in local and national newspapers. It has been creating a great deal of interest among people who've never seriously thought about drumming before. They come along and become inspired, and *hopefully* some of them take it up and get involved in playing—rather than buying a computer and just pressing buttons. There are some people who would disagree with the competitive element, but most people love competitions. Today, the atmosphere was *electric*; people were shouting encouragement to the competitors. The audience felt good; the competitors felt good...there was a great 'vibe' from the whole thing. A year ago, my ambition was to have a British final. Now that I've done that, I'm starting work on an American tour. The ultimate goal will be a *World Drumming Final*. Imagine that!"

—Simon Goodwin

BOLSHOI THEATRE PERCUSSIONISTS VISIT ZILDJIAN

Three percussionists from the legendary Bolshoi Theatre of

Russia were recently able to visit the Avedis Zildjian Company of Norwell, Massachusetts. The Bolshoi Theatre was in Boston as part of the American/Soviet festival exchange program. This series of major cultural exchanges had been planned in Boston by Sarah Caldwell, Artistic Director of the Opera Company of Boston, for many years before it finally came to fruition this year.

The company that visited Boston included 25 musicians, many of whom had never visited the United States before. For the percussionists, a trip to the Zildjian factory was high on their sightseeing list. Richard Flanagan, Principle Percussionist of the Opera Company of Boston, who arranged the visit, commented, "None of these musicians had ever had the opportunity to witness such a well-known percussion instrument actually being made. All such instruments are specially imported into Russia. It was great to see the looks on their faces!"

Lennie DiMuzio, Zildjian's Director of Artist Relations, said, "We were only too happy to show our Russian friends how we make these beautiful instruments. It's nice to have been able to do our own little bit for Glasnost."



(Left to right): Victor Grishin, Bolshoi timpanist; Edward Harrison, percussionist, Opera Company of Boston; Victor Ghoubinski, Bolshoi timpanist; Lennie DiMuzio, Zildjian Company; Nikolai Grishin, Bolshoi percussionist; Richard Flanagan, Principle Percussionist, Opera Company of Boston.

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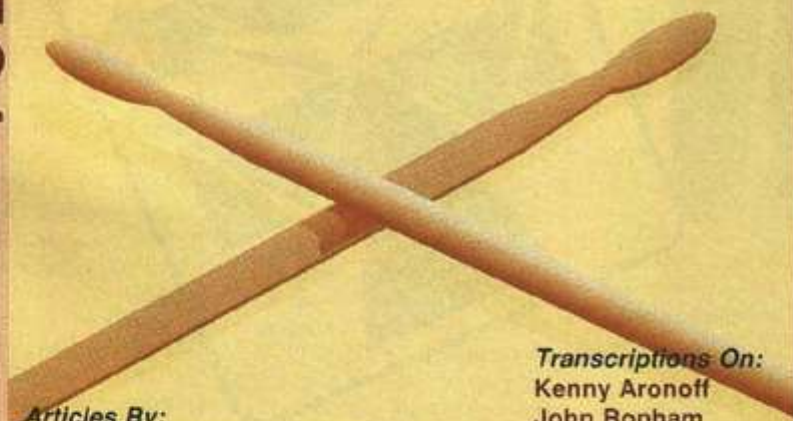
THE BEST OF MODERN DRUMMER:

Volume II

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VOLUME II

OVER 100
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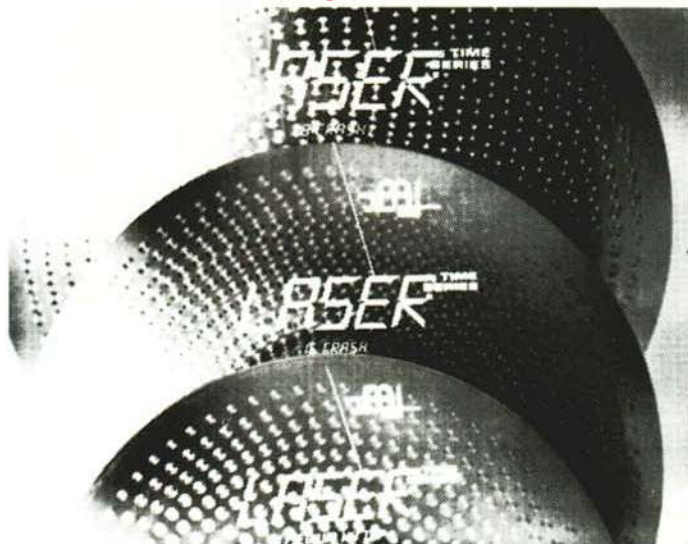
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MOD 5

MEINL EXPANDS LINE



Roland Meinl Musikinstrumente has expanded its product line in several areas, including congas, hand percussion, cymbals, and accessories. The company is now offering the *Livesound* series of congas, featuring newly designed hardware and sound pads under the side plates. Meinl's *Floatune* tuning system is available as an option on the new congas, which can be ordered in either wood or fiberglass.



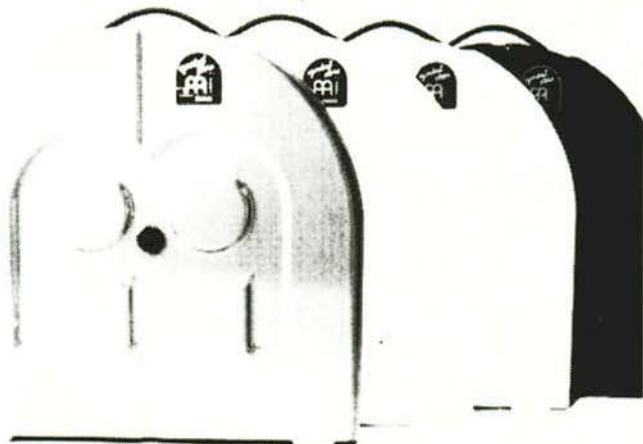
Also new from Meinl is an extensive line of hand percussion items, including

shekeres, berimbaus, maracas, guiros, and claves. Meinl is stressing the fact that the use of "new materials" in the



construction of many of these instruments makes them more durable and better sounding, without sacrificing the character of tradition.

Meinl's *Laser* cymbal series has been expanded by adding the *Laser Time* models: tuned sets of professional hammered cymbals. Each set is comprised of a 20" ride, 18" and 16" crashes, and 14" hi-hats, which the company states



"meet all requirements for stage use" and are "suitable for a wide range of musical styles." In addition, Meinl has added a China-type cymbal to its *Raker* series.

In the accessories area, Meinl is now offering Percussion Sticks (double-ended snare drum tip/mallet drumsticks) designed by noted European percussionist Nippy Noya, conga cases, bongo bags, drummers' gloves, and the *MCS1 Cymbal Store* hard-shell cymbal case. According to the company, the *Cymbal Store* is stronger and lighter than most "flight case" style cymbal cases, and more economical.

MUSSER GRAND SOLOIST MARIMBA "PLUS ONE"

Musser has recently introduced what the company considers to be "the ultimate soloist's marimba." Working closely with experienced Musser engineers, the *M450-LHS Grand Soloist Marimba "Plus One"* was designed under the direction of marimba virtuoso Leigh Howard Stevens.

Jim Catalano, Ludwig/Musser marketing manager, commented, "With musical styles now utilizing a 4 1/2-octave range, the Model *M450-LHS* provides an added feature. The addition of a low E enables the artist to perform numerous guitar transcriptions as well as contemporary percussion literature. The complete range of the instrument is from E-2 to C-7, and it is tuned to A=440. The bars, graduated in width, produce a resonant balance throughout the range, and oversized resonators enhance the bass in the low octave."

Other features include a unique height adjustment system, especially helpful for any studio marimba being utilized by a variety of performers. The instrument also features tunable resonators in the low range to customize and compensate for

temperature, humidity, and musical conditions. This "turn-and-tune" resonator cap adjustment enhances the player's ability to adjust the response of any low register notes.

Constructed with a rattle-free frame utilizing rubber isolation of potentially noisy part contacts, the *M450-LHS* features wooden endboards and rails in natural wood stain finished in the tradition of fine furniture. The resonators are finished with an attractive baked-on mar-resistant antique copper coating.

For further information, contact your local Ludwig/Musser or Selmer dealer, or write Ludwig Industries, Inc., A Selmer Company, P.O. Box 310, Elkhart, Indiana 46515-0313. Ask for booklet number AV8081, "An Introduction to the Features of the Musser *M450-LHS Grand Soloist Marimba "Plus One."*"

NEW KAT MIDI PERCUSSION CONTROLLER

KAT has begun shipment of a new version of the KAT MIDI Percussion Controller. The new version includes a software update, new manual, and an optional backlit display.

The KAT was first introduced at the NAMM show in June of 1986. Since then it has become the means for mallet players and percussionists around the globe to enter the world of MIDI. The 256 user-programmable setups of performance-oriented settings has allowed musicians to control samplers, synths, and drum machines through MIDI in a powerful and flexible way. The KAT is modular (up to four octaves), velocity-sensitive, and totally polyphonic.

Several new features have been added to the updated KAT. The unit now allows the user to play on 16 MIDI instruments at once, play three-note chords on each key, change programs on four MIDI instruments at the same time, or even play altered tunings. Settings include MIDI Channels, Minimum and

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You've been waiting for a break. This could be it.

On September 16, your band could play in the ultimate showcase—a concert at the Universal Amphitheatre in Los Angeles for an audience of music industry professionals.

You could win \$25,000 in cash or equipment, record a demo with a professional producer, consult with

music industry lawyers, managers, agents and public relations experts, and perform live at the Budokan in Japan.

SOUNDCHECK: The Yamaha International Rock Music Competition is open to unsigned bands. To enter, all you need is a tape of your band playing two original songs and an

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All Revenues From SOUNDCHECK: The Yamaha International Rock Music Competition Benefit The T.J. Martell Foundation For Leukemia, Cancer And AIDS Research

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For More Information And The Location Of Your Nearest Participating Authorized Yamaha Dealer, Call 1-800-451-ROCK

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The MIDI IN MERGE includes a Channel Shifter that will reroute MIDI IN data to a new Channel. System exclusive Datadumps are now possible for six types of KAT data. For more information, contact KAT, 43 Longmeadow Road, Longmeadow, Massachusetts 01106, (413) 567-1395.

VIDEO DRUM METHOD



Video Conservatory recently released *Video Drum Method Vol. 1*, an instructional video created for the beginning drummer. The 60-minute video teaches holding the sticks (matched grip), rudiments, drum setup, basic drumset techniques, and basic rock beats. The instructor is Dick Petrie, who holds a bachelors degree in music and free-iances in Los Angeles. Petrie's experience includes study with Alan Dawson and Mitch Peters, and performances with Linda Hopkins, Lola Falana, and other artists. For further information, contact Video Conservatory, P.O. Box 70125, Pasadena, California 91107, or call 1-800-PLAY MUS-ic (in California call 818-795-1712).

RACK BAG

Hybrid Cases now offers *Rack Bags*, soft bags especially



designed to accommodate rack-mounted electronic effects and processing gear. Each bag is constructed with a 1/4" plywood rackshell with tapped rails for mounting equipment, covered with waterproof, rip-proof nylon Cordura. The rackshell is surrounded by shock-absorbing foam. Bags are available in one-, two-, three-, or four-space units in depths of 11", 14", or 18". Each bag features an outside pocket and shoulder strap. Zippered openings at the front and rear of each bag allow the equipment to be used right in the bag. Hybrid Cases maintains that the bags provide durable and effective road protection, while being extremely lightweight and significantly less expensive than traditional equipment racks. For further information, contact Hybrid Cases, 1121-20 Lincoln Avenue, Holbrook, New York 11741, (516) 563-1181.

BASS BRAKES



Bass Brakes are designed to put an end to bass drum creep. A 3"x31/2" steel plate attaches to the heel plate of a DW5000 pedal. To this plate is attached

a chain that, in turn, is affixed to a leg of the drummer's stool. The designer's assertion is that even without a drum rug, the bass drum will "stay put," eliminating the need for weights in the bass drum or wood blocks nailed into stage floors. Models for other brands of bass drum pedals are forthcoming. For further information, contact Chris Cullo, 328 East 11th Street, Suite 15, New York, NY 10003, (212) 982-7829.

YAMAHA MARCHING DRUM MALLETS

Yamaha now offers marching drum mallets in two models, one for toms and one for bass drums. Tom mallets are available in one size with three different ball materials: high density (*MTM-200*), hard felt (*MTM-150*), and soft pile (*MTM-100*). Bass drum mallets are available with either hard felt (*MBM-100* through 400) or soft pile (*MBM-150* through 450) balls in four sizes. All mallets have alloy aluminum shafts and no-slip grips. For further information, contact Yamaha

Music Corporation, USA, Musical Instrument Division, P.O. Box 7271, Grand Rapids, MI 49510, or see your local authorized Yamaha dealer.

ENGINEERED PERCUSSION E-CLAMP

Engineered Percussion now offers *E-Clamps*. The clamps are designed to fasten to acoustic drum rims as well as tubular hardware, allowing the convenient placement of trigger pads anywhere on a drumset. The units also allow the mounting of other acoustic percussion accessories, such as cowbells, woodblocks, etc. The company maintains that *E-Clamps* will not damage rims, and that a built-in "repeatable set-up" feature provides maximum road convenience. *E-Clamps* were developed in conjunction with Daut Designs, maker of Daut Pads. For further information, contact Engineered Percussion, 23206 S. Normandie Avenue #7, Torrance, California 90502, (213) 530-7050.

COMPUTER MUSIC BOOK

Park Row Press has attempted to answer a major need in the emerging microcomputer market with the publication of a nontechnical introductory book, *Making Music With Personal Computers*. The book provides a complete introduction to the marriage of the personal computer and music, covering such topics as basic principles, what MIDI is and why it's so important, hardware and software, putting together a system, applications—from studio to live performances, musical techniques, and sources of further information.

Park Row feels that *Making Music With Personal Computers* will be useful to both amateur and professional musicians, as well as to music students and teachers. According to the company, this is *the* book for people who don't know anything about computers, but want to know how they can be used in musical applications. Contact Park Row Software, 1135-C Garnet, San Diego, California 92109, (619) 581-6778.



Modern Drummer is proud to announce that

STEVE SMITH and VITAL INFORMATION

will be appearing as the finale to MD's

DRUM FESTIVAL

Saturday
September 17, 1988
beginning at 1:00 P.M.

Memorial Auditorium
Montclair State College
Upper Montclair, New Jersey

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

Modern Drummer Magazine is extremely pleased to announce that **Steve Smith**, voted best all-around drummer in MD's 1988 Readers Poll, will be appearing at MD's Drum Festival '88. Steve will be performing with his exciting group **Vital Information**, providing the finale for what is sure to be an exhilarating day of drumming entertainment and education. The remaining artists scheduled to appear at this year's Festival will be announced in the September MD, and will include more of contemporary drumming's premier performers. We invite you to be among the hundreds of drummers who will enjoy the opportunity to listen, learn, and appreciate the talents of these fine artists.

Seating is limited, and ticket orders must be handled on a first-come, first served basis, so *send your order today!* Please use the form to order your tickets, and note that your order must be postmarked *not later than August 19, 1988*. Tickets will be accompanied by a flyer giving directions and transportation information.

SEE YOU THERE!

Please send me _____ tickets to MD's DRUM FESTIVAL '88 at \$18.00 each.

I have enclosed my check or money order in the amount of \$_____ to cover my order. I understand that tickets are available on a first-come, first-served basis, and that my order must be received by MD postmarked not later than August 19, 1988.

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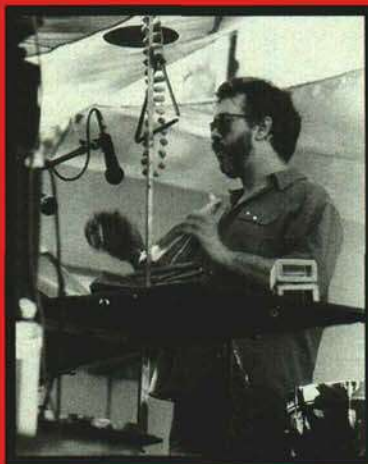


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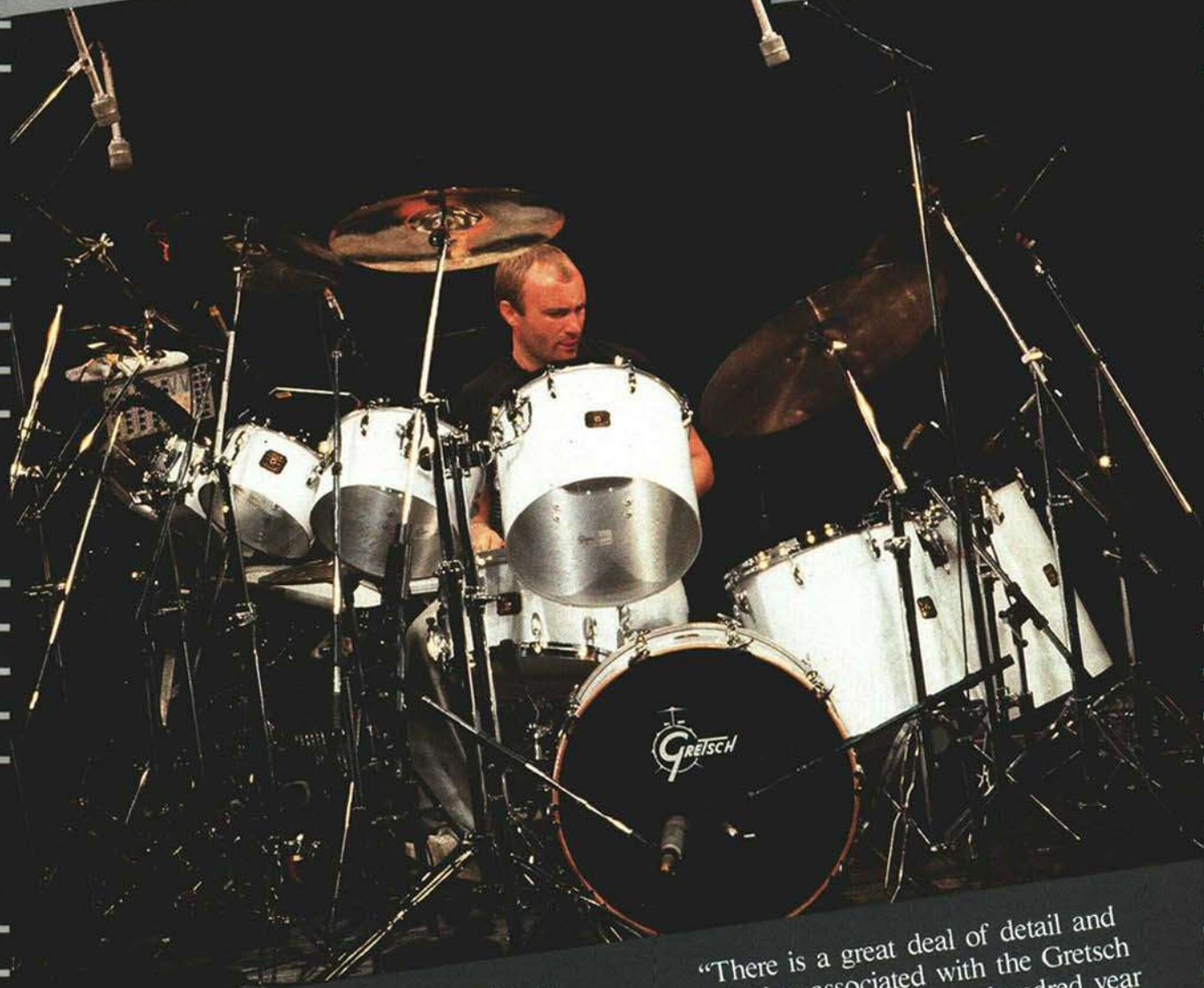
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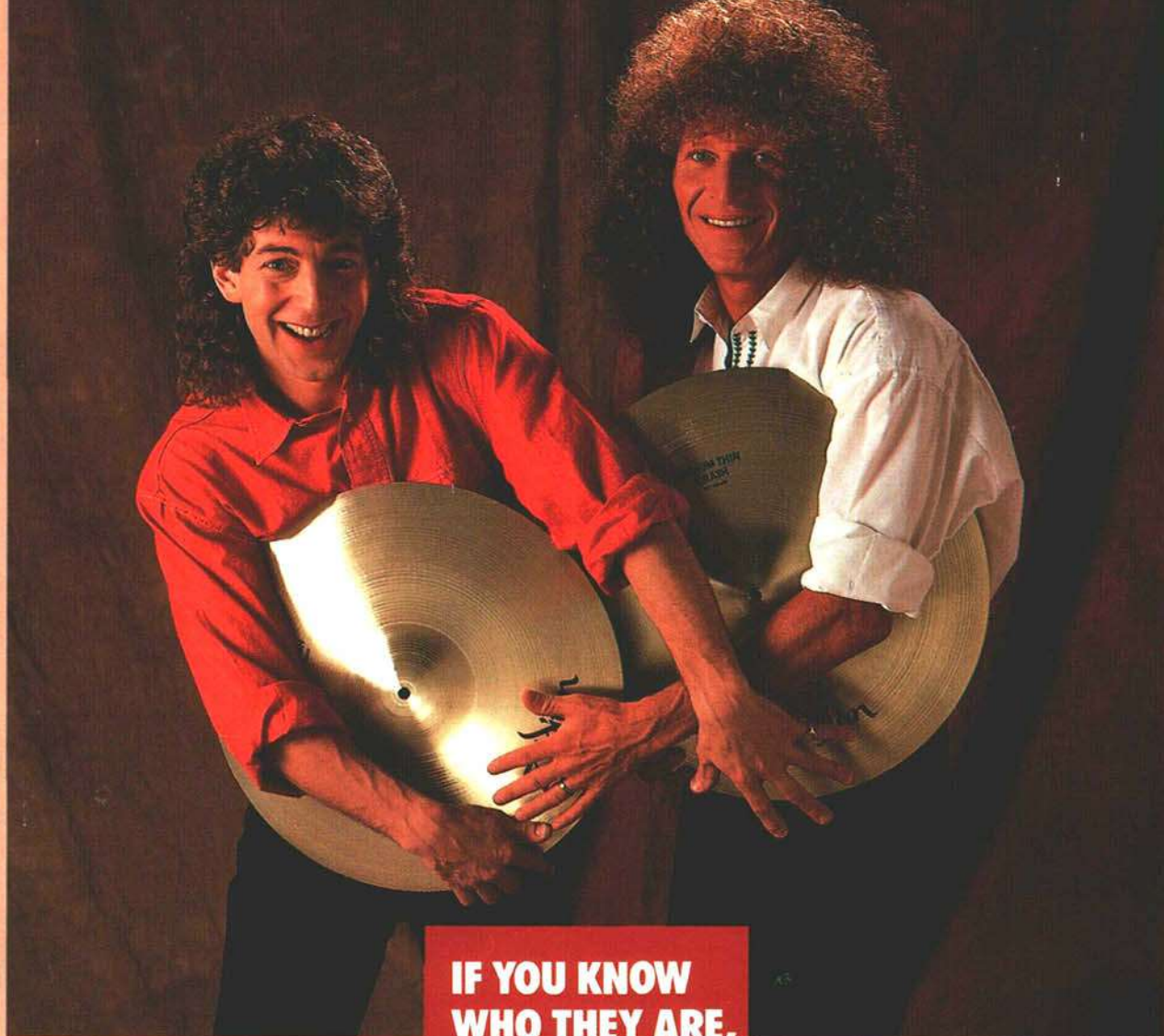
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THEY PLAY.**

It's no surprise that the greatest drummers in the world play Zildjian cymbals. They're the professionals who make drumming a fine art. They play Zildjian for the simple reason that it gives them the individual sound and style they're famous for.

Take Tommy Aldridge of Whitesnake, who's also known for his work with Ozzy Osborne. And Simon Phillips, who's played with Jeff Beck, Pete Townsend, and most recently with Mick Jagger. They're two of the most respected drummers in the business who've been playing for as long as they can remember.

Ask Tommy why he chose Zildjian and he'll tell you, "There was never a question. I've played them from the start."

"They're incredibly, unbelievably great sounding cymbals," he says excitedly. "Each one has its own character. They're really unique. And I can tell you, they're extraordinarily durable."

Tommy adds, "I've tried others, but I've stuck with Zildjian. They give me the personality my music has to have. Let's face it, you just can't beat their sound."

Tommy loves A Zildjian cymbals with a brilliant finish. "They look so cool, they're the greatest cymbals for Arena Rock."

Currently performing in the biggest stadiums around the world, Tommy uses the ZMC-1, Zildjian's unique miking system,

so that everyone in the audience can appreciate his cymbal sound. "The ZMC-1 system mics my cymbals individually so I can control the sound and volume of each of the cymbals in my set-up."

"You can recognize a drummer by the sound of his cymbals," says Simon Phillips.

"Growing up in England, all the really hot drummers were using Zildjians. Louie Bellson, Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, who's always been an inspiration, all played Zildjians. If you were seriously into your music, there's no question what cymbal you played."

Simon says he got his first Zildjian cymbal in 1969—a 20"K Ride. "It was something special to play Zildjian. It still is." Now one of his favorites is the Z Light Power Ride. "It gives me a ping I can't find in any other cymbal."

"Zildjian cymbals are the best thing around," says Tommy, who was initially inspired by Joe Morello of The Dave Brubeck Quartet before he became, as he calls himself, "A rock pig on pizza."

Both Tommy and Simon agree that Zildjian's sound is "undeniably unique."

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