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August '95

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ECM's

Jon Christensen

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Win one of three fabulous prizes from Premier—including a one-of-a-kind XPK drumkit!



Another Reader Service



Many *MD* readers tell us that they often purchase CDs—as well as instructional books and videos—based on reviews they've read in our *Critique* department. And recommending valuable drum-related material is certainly a service we've always been proud to provide to readers. But a funny thing sometimes happens

after a reader's interest is piqued—something I'm sure we can all relate to.

Though you may feel you absolutely *have* to get your hands on that new recording or book you just read about in *MD*, it's pretty easy to forget about it once you put the magazine down. This is human nature: Either we don't have the time to get to the record store or music shop, or when we finally do get around to it, the item is sold out—or the shop doesn't carry it at all. Regardless, the end result is that we miss out on a wealth of important drumming material.

We believe we may have come up with a way to solve the problem, though—starting with this issue. At the conclusion of this month's *Critique*, you'll see the "Books Now" company logo, along with a toll-free phone number, (800) 962-6651. Books Now is exactly what its name suggests: an opportunity to order materials reviewed in that issue through the mail, right then and there by phone—

before it becomes a forgotten issue. You can call the number any time of day or night. Operators are on duty 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. A special extension (8500) is reserved for *Modern Drummer* readers *only*—making your transaction that much faster and easier.

Books Now guarantees that most items will be shipped out in a matter of days. And though you'll need to have your credit card handy when you place an order, your account won't be charged until that order is filled and shipped. If for any reason items cannot be sent out promptly, you'll be advised. You can then choose to either put them on back order to be shipped as soon as they're available, or cancel the order entirely. Let me again emphasize that though the company is called Books Now, they can also obtain the CDs and videos reviewed in *MD*. Plus, you can order items for up to one year after they've been reviewed in the magazine.

The Books Now program is yet another special service for *Modern Drummer* readers. It offers toll-free convenience, time savings, and, *most* importantly, the chance to order those items you had every intention of investigating, but somehow never got around to purchasing. We hope you'll make good use of the program.

RS

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MODERN DRUMMER magazine (ISSN 0194-4533) is published monthly by **MODERN DRUMMER Publications, Inc.**, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Second-Class Postage paid at Cedar Grove, NJ 07009 and at additional mailing offices. Copyright 1995 by **MODERN DRUMMER Publications, Inc.** All rights reserved. Reproduction without the permission of the publisher is prohibited.

EDITORIAL/ADVERTISING/ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES: MODERN DRUMMER Publications, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Tel.: (201) 239-4140. E-mail, moddrummer@aol.com.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$29.95 per year; \$51.95, two years. Single copies \$3.95.

Printed in The United States

MODERN DRUMMER welcomes manuscripts and photographic material, however, cannot assume responsibility for them. Such items must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

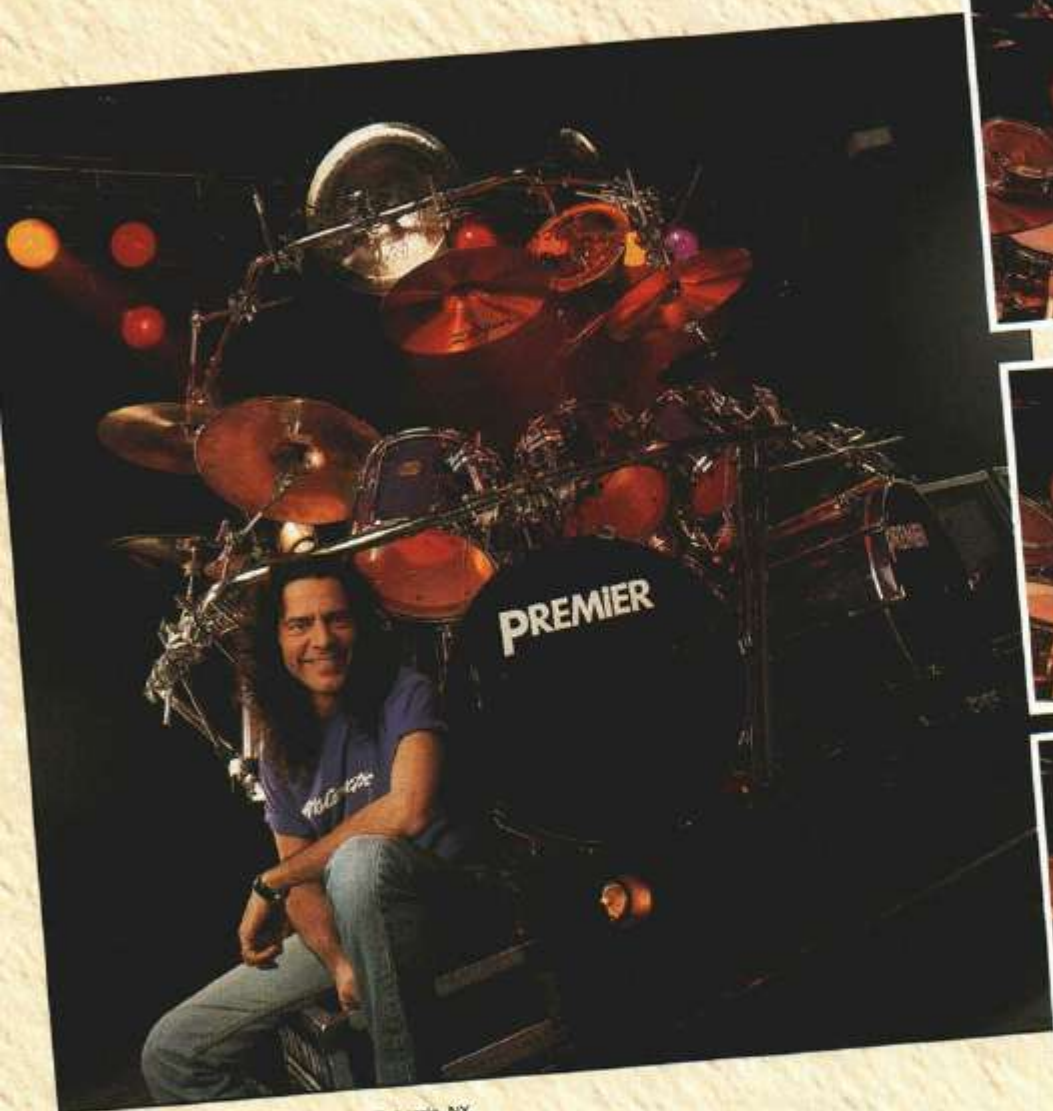
MUSIC DEALERS: Modern Drummer is available for resale at bulk rates. Direct correspondence to Modern Drummer, Dealer Service, P.O. Box 389, Mt. Morris, IL 61054. Tel: (800) 334-DRUM or (815) 734-1214.

SUBSCRIPTION CORRESPONDENCE: Modern Drummer, P.O. Box 480, Mt. Morris, IL 61054-0480. **Change of address:** Allow at least six weeks for a change. Please provide both old and new address. Toll Free Tel.: (800) 551-3786.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Modern Drummer, P.O. Box 480, Mt. Morris, IL 61054.

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American Music Conference
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Profile: Joe Franco



Studio Facilities courtesy of Designatronix/Bohemia, NY

PERSONAL DATA:

Joe Franco

BORN: New York City

CURRENT PROJECTS:

• Currently touring with "Widowmaker" in support of their second album "Standby for Pain".

- Played drums and wrote songs for a new instrumental album "Mojo Bros." with Al Pitrelli and TM Stevens.
- Writing, playing and producing music for various film and TV commercial projects.

EQUIPMENT CHOICE: SIGNIA

"I was looking forward to Premier coming up with a maple drum kit for a long time... The drums sound really warm with great definition.

The kick drums sound huge with plenty of attack and I love the undersized shell design... It increases the decay, and they're easy to tune.

The kit also looks as great as it sounds. What else can I say except that I'm one happy dude when I play my Signias."

PREMIER



STEVE FERRONE

Thanks for Bill Miller's article on Steve Ferrone in your May issue. Steve is one of my favorite drummers, who embraces and carries on the groove tradition that has been overlooked in the drumming community. A track where he really "wields" is Etta James' 1992 song "You've Taken Up Another Man's Place." This recording is equal to great groove-drumming songs like Aretha Franklin's "House That Jack Built" (Roger Hawkins on drums), Wilson Pickett's "In The Midnight Hour" (Al Jackson), and Elvis's "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On" (Ronnie Tutt). Drum tracks like these are deep!

Dave Peckenpaugh
Corona del Mar, CA

I have to tell you that I love my cover story. Bill Miller did a hell of a job. Even my girlfriend said that he made me sound intelligent. (Drummers' molls!) And I know that you have thrilled my mother, which puts me forever in your debt.

Steve Ferrone
New York, NY

COLIN BAILEY

Thanks for the fine interview with Colin Bailey in your May issue. His insights and experiences demonstrate clearly how important it is to persevere in one's chosen field of endeavor. The opportunities presented to him throughout his widely varied career are available to any drummer who sticks with it (pun intended). His acknowledgment of the fears he had to overcome and the challenges he met are an inspiration to anyone.

By the way, Mr. Bailey mentioned a tune he had recorded with Vince Guaraldi titled "Cast Your Fate To The Wind." This song is one of my all-time favorite instrumentals, and I'm unable to locate a copy of it. If Mr. Bailey or any *MD* reader can direct me to a source for this tune, I would be deeply grateful.

Ira Klein
2968 Bonnie Lane
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

RAYMOND LEVIER

I was greatly moved by your story about Raymond LeVier, the young drummer who was severely burned at the age of twelve and who overcame his unfortunate circumstances. [*Up And Coming*, May '95 *MD*]. I believe it is not only a credit to Raymond, but also to music—and drumming in particular—that he was able to overcome such an obstacle and work so diligently to become a successful drummer. All drummers should take from Ray's experience the lesson that with a goal, persistence, dedication, and a positive approach to life, any obstacle can be overcome.

I also feel that we need to appreciate the power of an instrument that can reach so deeply into someone and motivate them to achieve what Ray did. Drums are a powerful force, indeed, and we are fortunate to be able to use such a force to build on the generations of drummers who have come before us and to enjoy the community of drummers throughout the world who are willing to share the beauty of playing our instrument. The bottom line that I learn from Ray is that we should never take for granted the marvelous experience that we get from music and drumming.

Ray commented that he felt he was getting "a little deep" talking about his philosophy and about the spirit he has found in his music. I'm afraid it's probably impossible for you not to sound "deep," Ray. You are the essence of "deep."

Morry Shapiro
West Bloomfield, MI

OCHELTREE CORRECTION

This letter concerns your "Highlights Of The NAMM '95 Winter Market" in your May issue. Normally, a company would be thrilled to receive free press from a high-caliber magazine such as yours, but this time that is not the case. Dangerous Ocheltree Drums were misrepresented as being made of stainless steel on page 88 of your article. All handouts at the NAMM show clearly stated that our drums are made of *carbon steel*. We have spent a great deal of time and money to develop and introduce our seamless *carbon steel*

drums to the music industry. Stainless steel and carbon steel are very different materials with very different properties. Seamless carbon steel, machined to our specifications, is what makes our snare drums sound and perform the way they do. Their uniqueness has earned a U.S. patent.

We appreciate your intent to introduce new drum gear to your readers. However, we feel the write-up has done more harm than good for our company. Could you please correct this misrepresentation in the next possible issue? Our integrity, identity, and livelihood depend on it.

Tom Wilson, Owner
Jeff Ocheltree, Designer
Dangerous Ocheltree Drums
Albany, IL

Editor's note: MD apologizes for the error. As a matter of fact, MD has already made plans to review the Dangerous Ocheltree Drums in an upcoming issue, which will give us the opportunity to fully and accurately describe the true nature of the shells.

CRITIQUE KUDOS

I would like to commend *Modern Drummer* on the recent coverage of independent and "alternative" music in the *Critique* reviews. I was ecstatic to see your favorable reviews of Fugazi, Jawbox, and (one of my favorites) Heavy Vegetable. It's encouraging to see a musicians' magazine supporting the efforts of these independent artists.

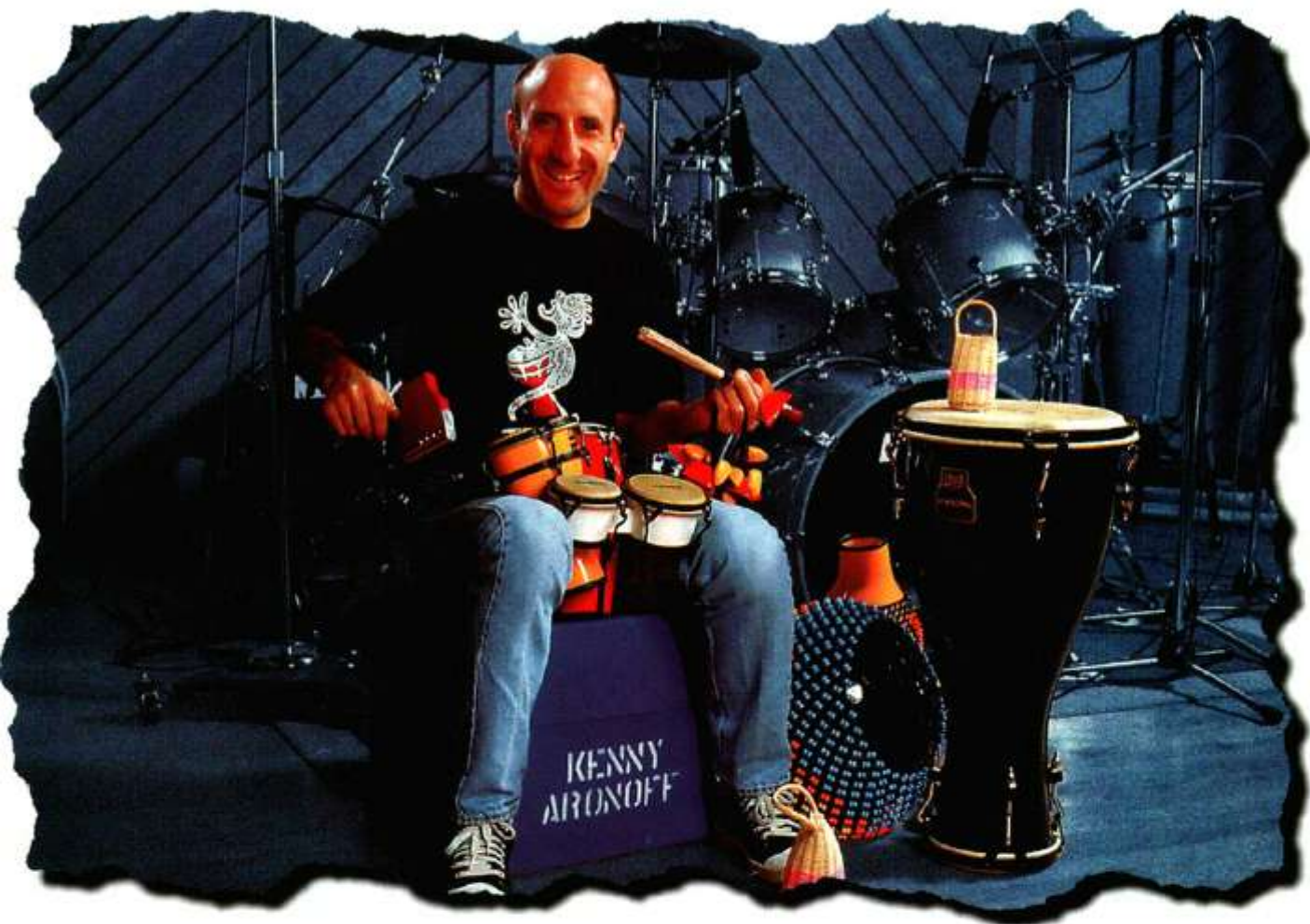
Jim Rizzuto
Chico, CA

BACK IN THE SADDLE AGAIN

Fifteen years ago I put my sticks down to continue a relationship with my (now-ex) wife. It was a "me or rock 'n' roll" decision. In retrospect, I should have chosen the latter.

I have since remarried, and my new wife heard me play a few years ago. Rusty as I was, she suggested that I begin to play again. I gave it a lot of thought (about ten minutes, actually) and decided to go out and buy some drums. Now, if someone had

DIDN'T WE JUST SAY SO?



Kenny Aronoff - talk about a studio drummer! This guy's been in the business since the eighties! Want names? He's recorded for John Mellencamp, Bob Dylan, John Bon Jovi, Elton John, Bob Seger, Meat Loaf, Chris Isaak, and many, many more. And he's toured with most of them, too. Kenny was also voted best Pop/Rock drummer by the readers of "Modern Drummer" magazine four times in a row. On top of it all, Kenny teaches at the University of Indiana where he passes his craft on to future pro's. Of course, a live wire like Kenny needs reliable equipment. Luckily for him, he can get anything he wants. Anything at all. But experience tells him to go for the best. Kenny chooses Meinl Percussion for his bag of tricks. You know what? So should you!



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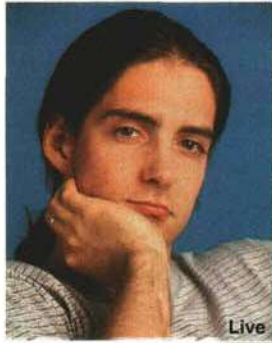
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taken a snapshot of the drum gear available in 1975 and compared it to one taken in 1995, the difference in the pictures would be distinctly clear. So many choices, so few dollars!

This is where your magazine comes in. After reading only a few issues (along with talking to drum salesmen and listening to and watching other drummers), I finally bought. And bought! In the past three years I have built my kit up to twelve pieces, with a complement of ten cymbals—a demonstration of total commitment (or re-commitment, in this case).

Thank you, *Modern Drummer*, for your commitment to providing both useful and interesting information, tips, insights, reviews, etc. You are certainly credited with making my second go-around much more enjoyable than I could have imagined.

Tom Pucciarello
Peterborough, NH



John Tempesta Iron Cobra

Scary. One of the first words that leaps to mind when attempting to describe drummer John Tempesta. Scary as in very intense. And scary as in the time John was called to try out for the White Zombie gig...and he sat down and played the heavy groove material like he was born to it.

Scary. A word which also applies to the frightening speed and power of John's choice of pedals...Tama's Iron Cobra.

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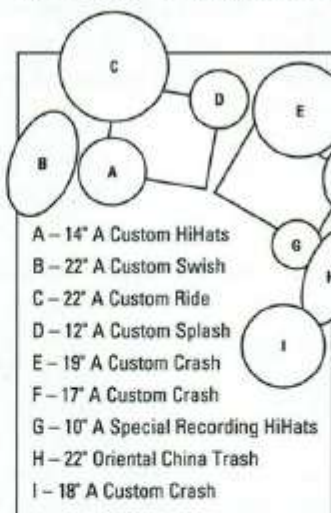
THOUT

YOURS.

IT IS A MOMENT which every drummer lives for: The spotlight shifts to the rear of the stage. The rest of the band takes a breather.

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Simon's trademark is his inventiveness. And to help keep his sound fresh, he relies upon **Zildjian's Oriental China Trash cymbals**. Because in addition to giving him an authentic "trashy" sound, they can stand up to the



kind of punishment he dishes out. So take it from Simon: the best way to get the crowd out of

their seats is to make them notice what you're doing in yours.

Zildjian

Albert "Tootie" Heath

Because of the untimely death of the Modern Jazz Quartet's Connie Kaye, Albert "Tootie" Heath has stepped in as the permanent replacement percussionist for this prolific institution. He has been welcomed into the MJQ with open arms by long-time members Percy Heath (Tootie's brother), John Lewis, and Milt Jackson. And to give Tootie a good introduction to the quartet, his premiere performance with them took place at The White House for President Bill Clinton and guests. Talk about coming into the group in high style!

At an age too young to travel, Tootie played with jazz great Lester Young when he performed in Tootie's home town of Philadelphia. As Heath matured personally and as a musician, he laid down the beat, set the pace, and passionately displayed his talent on over two hundred albums in the U.S. and abroad with JJ. Johnson, Coleman Hawkins, Thelonious Monk, brothers Percy and Jimmy Heath, and countless other greats.

How does Tootie feel about playing with the MJQ, whose music is somewhat different from what he's used to playing? "I'm really looking forward to the change," Tootie states, "especially the different type of audience the quartet plays to. They really have a built-in audience that specifically comes to hear and appreciate the music that's offered so meticulously."



Tootie, a consummate musician, has said of himself, "I am devoted to music and its infinite varieties of rhythms, because I have accepted the responsibility of my art: to see where there is no sight, to hear where there is no sound, to play when there is no instrument, and to sing where there is no song." Tootie and the MJQ are currently on an extensive tour of Europe, with a tour of the Far East to follow.

• *Beth Jackson*

Jack Giunta

What's a drummer to do when he's bored? If you're pipe drummer Jack Giunta, the answer is to find the most obscure, technically challenging style of drumming on this planet—and become a world-class champion at it.

Jack Giunta found himself in an unchallenging situation just one short year ago. Then he discovered pipe band drumming, the highly difficult, melodic style of snare drum playing that weaves methodically to traditional Scottish bagpipe music. Jack taught himself how to play by reading books written by world-class pipe drumming champion Alex Duthart.

"I played R&B, rock, jazz, funk, disco, classical, blues—you name it," explains the session/recording player, who lists

famed drummers Buddy Rich, Alan Dawson, and Roberto Petaccia as his influences. (Jack's professional credits include Matt "Guitar" Murphy and Boston Baked Blues, R&B bands like the Hypnotics and the Authentics, and tours of the East Coast with local career bands.) "At first I was totally intimidated by pipe band drumming's awesome technical requirements," Jack admits, "but it was that same challenge that turned me on."

Now Giunta is literally turning the pipe band drumming industry on its ear, according to Dan Mooney, a bagpipe player who accompanies Jack in competitions. "He not only taught himself the technique—which takes most others years to accomplish—but he's winning solo drumming champi-

onships. That's unheard of—and he's not even Scottish! That fact just blows people away."

These days, Giunta is finding that there's no time to be bored. He's busy practicing up to twelve hours per day for the 1995 competition season, and he's preparing to record for an all-original R&B project he's involved in now. "I've been working to incorporate the pipe drumming style into my own drumset playing, which I haven't to date heard anybody do. Believe it or not, I'm having more fun playing in front of competition judges with razor-sharp hearing than I've had in years," admits Jack with a grin. "There's no place to hide if you make a mistake!"

• *Betty Newberry*



Kim Zick

"I've worked in a lot of playing situations that were strictly in one style—bebop, funk, pop," says Kim Zick of the style-hopping Mrs. Fun. "I've had experience quite thoroughly studying and performing each individual style, and I think having this understanding has enabled me to blend them together with my original music.

"My style is eclectic," Zick exclaims. "I've studied bebop and jazz, but the music I perform with Mrs. Fun is a little more funk-oriented. It's an interesting combination." Truth be told, Mrs. Fun is *quite* eclectic; a listen to the duo's latest release, *no ennui*, reveals tunes ranging from the Thelonious Monk/Kenny Clarke composi-



tion "Epistrophy" and their jazz-influenced original "Lulu's Walk"—to the funky "Trinity" and the Latin-flavored "Ennui."

Zick believes that playing in Mrs. Fun, with only one other bandmate, keyboard/vocalist Connie Grauer, allows significant creative space. "With just one

other player," Kim explains, "my job as a drummer is more open, and I approach the drums quite melodically. I have a lot more room for soloing and melodic embellishment."

Zick's versatility is evident in her discography. Not only has she done three albums with Mrs. Fun, she's recorded with the Indigo Girls on their latest release, *Swamp Ophelia*, and with k.d. lang on "So In Love," her track on the Cole Porter tribute album *Red, Hot, And Blue*. Zick has received the most attention for her work with Mrs. Fun, though, most notably earning the Wisconsin Area Music Industry Best Percussionist award in 1994.

• *Harriet L. Schwartz*

Gerald Heyward

Gerald Heyward's relationship with producer/keyboardist Teddy Riley has resulted in a lot of gigs for the drummer, including Bobby Brown and Michael Jackson, two artists Riley has produced material for.

"On Bobby's last album," Heyward says, "we would make some snare samples and then loop them. But the business is run differently now. Let's say I'm doing a song and I take a loop from an old album. That means I have to pay a lot of money for it. Instead of paying that kind of fee, if I play it, they only have to pay what is called a mechanical fee, which is cheaper. So I'll play it over and we'll make a whole new loop. They'll stick it in the song, and it will be me playing it.

"That was what we did with Michael Jackson," Heyward explains. "Teddy wrote four songs that were all great. We did the

music for the tunes, he let Michael hear them, and then the two of them worked on them together. The main instrumental tracks—the drums and keyboards—were complete, and then they would write the words. We sent him finished tracks, and he loved them."

Gerald's been keeping very busy lately, working with bands such as SWV, Silk, Keith Sweat, and Mary J. Blige, with whom he still works live. He is also working with Blackstreet, in which Riley is the keyboardist.

While his career has been going well, Heyward feels that funk musicians aren't recognized enough for their abilities. "Funk players don't get acknowledged like rock or jazz players. It seems like my style of music gets overlooked, but I'm hoping that one day I will be considered one of the innovators."

• *Robyn Flans*

News...

"After six wonderful years," **Russ McKinnon** has left Tower Of Power to pursue various other musical interests.

In addition to the *Burnin' For Buddy* CD that we all know about by now, last year **Steve Smith** worked on Neal Schon's *Beyond The Thunder, Shaw/Blades* (Tommy Shaw and Jack Blades), Jonathan Cain's solo LP, and four records with Italian producer Carrado Rustici (Rustici's own solo LP,

plus albums by Malatesta, Tazenda, and Zucchero). Steve also did a local record with Mel Graves, as well as *Frankie Laine Sings The Jack Siegel Songbook*. In addition, Steve recently recorded a Sonor demonstration CD in Germany, and he's been gigging around the Bay Area with Narada Michael Walden in a unit they call *Been There Done That*.

Shane Evans on Collective Soul's self-titled second album.

They are doing dates to support the album.

Mike Bordin back on the road with Faith No More.

Tris Imboden on Chicago's big-band offering, *Night And Day*.

Jason Sutter is on the road with Juliana Hatfield, supporting her album *Only Everything*.

Duduka Da Fonseca recently played a week-long stint in Toronto with his group, Trio Da Paz. He's also been playing reg-

ularly with Joe Henderson and is currently recording with Claudio Roditi.

Congratulations to **Bill Detamore** (Pork Pie Percussion, frequent writer and authority for *MD*) and his new bride, Julie.

And finally, congratulations to *MD*'s features editor, **William F. Miller**, and his new wife, Sarah, who tied the knot this past May.



From a drummer's point of view, there are many ways to approach a song. Some more complicated than others. The most elusive talent to acquire is simply called "feel". When a drummer has it, everything he plays seems so effortless, and few players can make a song as effortless as Steve Ferrone. From his groundbreaking work with the Average White Band, to his work with Pat Metheny, Eric Clapton and Tom Petty, when you listen to him play it's the "feel" that sets him apart. For players like Steve, their drums become part of their signature sound. The Masters Series from Pearl...like nothing you've heard before.





Photography by Neil Zosser and John Walker

Steve Ferrone
(currently on tour with Tom Petty)

The Masters Series is now available in twelve beautiful semi-transparent and opaque lacquer finishes including Wine Red as shown here. For more information on the Masters Series visit your local authorized Pearl dealer.

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Willie Ornelas

Q In your feature article in the May '92 *MD*, you stated that when working with a metronome you try to "jump" or "walk" against the pulse, instead of simply playing time. Your reason for doing this was to get your whole body feeling the time/pulse. This concept has intrigued me; could you elaborate on it?

Jonah Santa-Barbara
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

A Jonah, your timing couldn't be more perfect. Since *Modern Drummer* did my story in May of '92, I received so many inquiries on my "whole body feel" concept for time and groove that I decided to write a book. It will include all the exercises I worked on to develop a good feel for time.

As working professionals we all should think about keeping as close to perfect time as possible. But ideally it should also be as close to second-nature as possible. If it isn't, we'll spend most of our energy concentrating on keeping time and very little on being creative. We don't want that. It was for that very reason that I came up with this way of practicing.

If you're lucky enough to have all your work be the kind that uses a click track in the headphones, then you don't have to worry so much. But if your work is with a Top-40 band, a show group, a

Broadway musical, or a garage band, you are the timekeeper, and you should be very secure with your ability to feel the time.

Most of my students are musicians who don't use a click track at all. Some had all the classic time problems: rushing fills, rushing or dragging quarter-note triplets, or simply not being able to make a groove have that flow that feels so good when we hear it. Also, if there was a strong timekeeper in the group they would always be at each other's throat. I assigned some of my exercises to them and got very good results. The best results came from those who were really aggressive about applying the technique.

The concept is "whole body feel" for time or groove, and it involves body movements—such as walking and jumping—done to drumming-style rhythm patterns. I'll warn you in advance that you might want to do some of these exercises when no one is looking. (You might even feel silly about doing some of them alone!) But once you've done them for a while you'll notice how much easier it is to feel the groove or perfect your time.



I got real good results by walking with and against a metronome. Examples #1 and #2 illustrate this method. Start at a tempo of quarter note equals 92 bpm. Build to 120 bpm or more, and alternate the starting leg. I would then try exercises that went around the time a little bit.

1

2

Example #3 is to be walked at quarter note equals 60 bpm. Then jump with both feet together, as if you were jumping rope, at 120 bpm. Then run in place at 160-176 bpm. The objective is to really hear and feel all four beats in bar 3 of this exercise.

3

Example #4 is one in a series of what I call the "hopscotch" exercises. You jump or hop on one leg while playing single notes; on the flams you do a hopscotch jump with both legs, as indicated. The starting tempo is quarter note equals 66 bpm; build it up to 100 bpm.

4A

4B

4C

4D

↑ R R R R R R R R
↓ L L L L L L L L



Some of these exercises can be physically demanding, and (even though we aren't trying to) we're getting a good aerobic workout and building strength in our legs and feet. All of these things are necessary. Keep in mind the fact that putting so much attention on the physical aspect of each exercise makes it difficult

to feel the time—at first. But with repeated use of these exercises, the feeling of perfect time will become second nature. If you're interested in finding out more about this concept, contact me at P.O. Box 981, Malibu, California 90265.

John "J.R." Robinson

Q First, let me thank you for your many inspired recording performances. Then I'd like to ask two questions. What are some of the different methods you've seen over the years for recording drums, and how have they changed? What type of electronics/trigger setup would you recommend for someone getting into studio work?

Brett Barnes
Ft. Johnson, NY

A Thanks for the kind words, Brett. To answer your first question, engineers have been taking more risks in miking drums in recent years. You hear a lot more high-end EQ on the drumset.

Since the advent of drum machines, engineers and drummers find themselves trying to duplicate the sounds of the machines with live drums. In the early '80s I tuned my snare drum very low and fat—because the music dictated that. However, in the past five years or so, I've been tuning the snare drum much higher. By using and controlling the room mic's you can still achieve fatness without sacrificing the "crack" of the snare drum. My bass drum remains tuned low and fat, with a point on it (a good attack sound). I use an Audio Technica *ATM-25* bass drum mic' in my drum. Sometimes I bring an 18" bebop kit to the studio for that new dance sound.

There are many triggers on the market. I

use a triggering system by Mystique Sound Solutions. The triggers mount inside the shell of each drum and work great. I also use a Forat *F-16* sampler, which triggers faster than anything. You can add any number of drum modules triggering through MIDI, but try to retain individual outs for maximum control. I also use a Samson mixer with my studio kit. One other addition to consider would be a separate controller, such as the Roland *TD-7* drumkit or any of the KAT controllers. You can add any of these pieces to your drumset to enhance your sound. However, always keep in mind that *it all starts with a great acoustic sound!*



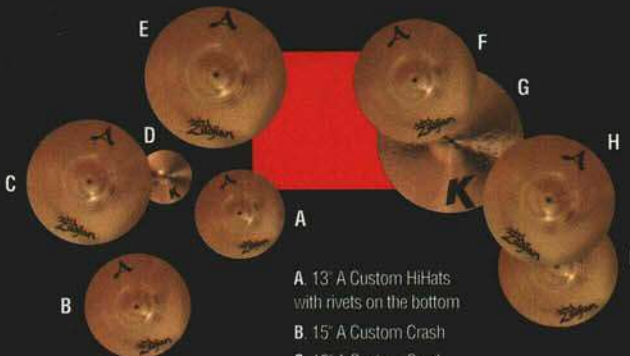
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Trixon Drums

Q The appearance of a Trixon drum set in your *Kit Of The Month* department recently piqued my interest about these unusually designed drums. Could you provide some information on them, including whether or not they are collector's items? Also, what would the approximate value of these drums be with original heads, snare drum, hardware, and everything else in good to excellent condition?

Peter Graceffa
Waltham, MA

A Our ace drum historian, Harry Cangany, provided us with the following background on Trixon drums: "Trixon drums were made in Hamburg, Germany and were first noticed here in the early '60s. The company built conventional-looking drums and sets under their own name and also for Vox, the English guitar/amplifier maker.

"Trixon also built very un-conventional-looking drums. There were tom-toms that had a one-inch difference between the top and bottom heads. (A 13" tom, for example, would have a 12" bottom head. Imagine an inverted cone with the tip cut off.) There was also a bass drum that looked like a peanut or—as some said—a flat tire. This model was called the *Speedfire*, and was intended to be played with two pedals. Since the batter head was asymmetrical—one side was "taller" than the other—two different sounds could be achieved from the single drum. The *Speedfire* often had five increasing-size concert toms positioned on a C-shaped bar attached to the top half of the bass drum.

"Trixon hardware was very well made—especially the hi-hats and snare stands. Their mallet instruments were also wonderful. Unfortunately, at that time the brand never made the jump to the 'big time' in the international market. However, today Trixon drums are very much in demand. I saw a listing recently for a four-piece set (two conventional toms, a snare, and a *Speedfire* bass drum) for sale at a cost of \$1,500. Give things a bit of time and that

will be the norm, rather than the exception."

Cleaning Drums

Q If the wrong cleaner is used on a lacquer finish I would think it could cause major problems. What cleaner would you suggest to use on a lacquer finish drum, and would you suggest waxing the finish after cleaning?

H.M. Stern
via Internet

A *Modern Drummer* has never conducted any sort of scientific study on this subject, relying instead on the advice of experts in the field. Unfortunately, the experts don't always agree on this particular question. As a matter of fact, this topic caused some controversy a few years back when a notable custom drum maker suggested the use of *Windex* on drums. That suggestion was heatedly disputed by other individuals within the industry, who stated that harsh detergents (such as are used in *Windex*) could be detrimental to a drum's finish.

Over the years a number of products have been recommended by experts and "working drummers" alike, based on their own personal experience. Most tended to be of the dusting-spray variety, some with and some without wax. These include products like *Pledge*, *Endust*, Johnson's *Jubilee*, and Fuller *Kitchen Cleaner & Wax*. As a general rule, window cleaners and other cleaning sprays (*409*, *Fantastik*, and so on) were not recommended.

There is also an excellent product from Trick Percussion called *Trick Drum, Cymbal, & Hardware Cleaner*. It's a non-abrasive, anti-static solution designed for use on any type of drumshell finish, coated cymbals, hardware, and even drumheads. You should be able to find it in any well-stocked drum shop.

Waxing a lacquered drum finish is a little like waxing a dining table that has a glass covering. You're applying wax to the covering, not to the actual wood. On lacquered drums the wax may certainly provide yet another microscopic layer of pro-

tection against fingerprints, but it may also tend to dull the shine provided by the clear coats of lacquer. If, however, you have a natural-finish kit with no lacquer covering, you may well wish to wax the shells for added protection. In this case a quality furniture wax should be applied—sparingly. Check with a cabinetmaker, furniture refinisher, or antique dealer for some advice on specific brands.

Snare Buzz And Bass Drum Mic's

Q My toms resonate my snare. I play my drums wide open, with *Ambassador* bottoms and *Pinstripe* tops. My 6-1/2x14 snare has an *LA Legacy* head on top. Can you give me some advice? Also, what kind of bass drum mic's do you recommend?

Phil Stearns
via Internet

A Snare buzz is something that most drummers have learned to live with to a certain extent, since it is inherent in the nature of the instrument we call a drumset. If you want to play your drums "wide open" because you enjoy that sound, be aware that sympathetic vibration comes with the territory.

If the buzz is simply too much of a problem, you can muffle or detune either the toms or the snare-side drumhead slightly in order to eliminate the exact frequency that is causing the snares to vibrate in sympathy with the toms. The most successful way we've found of first isolating and then eliminating sympathetic vibration is to lean down over the snare drum and hum. Raise and lower your pitch until you find the note that causes the most buzz. Then do the same over the toms, listening to see which tom resonates the most at that same note. (If humming doesn't work, tap the tom gently with a stick.) De-tune the tom (or toms) as necessary to eliminate that note from the drumkit's musical "scale."

Many studio drummers loosen the lugs on either side of the snare wires slightly in order to reduce snare sensitivity. Others actually tape the snare wires themselves. The effectiveness of these methods



depends on how hard you are hitting the drum, and on how much snare sensitivity you are willing to sacrifice in exchange for the reduction of the snare buzz.

As for miking bass drums, there are many fine mic's on the market. Check out the specs on each (and actually try them, if possible) in order to get an idea of which one will give you the type of response you seek. Some favor low end, some enhance the attack sound, and others blend the two. Excellent mic's specifically intended for use on kick drums include AKG's *D112*, Audio-Technica's *ATM25*, Audix's *D4*, Beyerdynamic's *TG-X 50*, and Shure's *SM91*. Mic's not specifically intended for kick drums but often used on them are Sennheiser's *427* and Shure's *SM57*.

Dr. Arlo Gordin

Q I was intrigued by Dr. Arlo Gordin's *Health And Science* article in the February '95 *MD*. I've followed

the suggestions given by Dr. Gordin and they are beginning to work wonders for me. How may I get in touch with Dr. Gordin for further information?

Dave Pelletier
via Internet

A You can contact Dr. Gordin at 3535 Cahuenga Blvd. W., Suite 206, Universal City, CA 90068, (213) 436-0303.

Recommended Instructional Materials

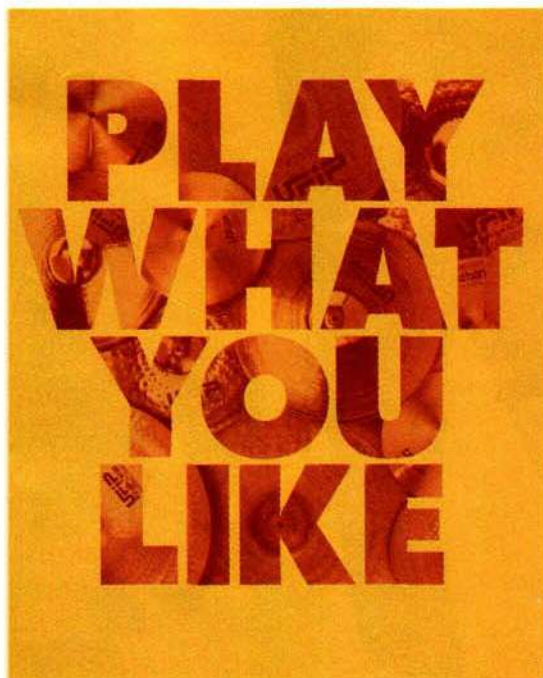
Q I'm seventeen years old and have been drumming for about a year and a half. My teacher has taken me through Stone's *Stick Control* and Carmine Appice's *Realistic Rock*, as well as the first two Haskell Harr method books. Can you recommend some educational materials that would help me with reading, technique, independence, bass drum control,

and some of the styles of rock and jazz?

Scott Cummings
via Internet

A What, no stick twirling? Seriously, you're asking for recommendations on materials covering just about all the important aspects of drumming. That's a tall order. We suggest you refer to *MD's 25 Greatest Drum Books* feature, which appeared in our August 1993 issue. Our picks for the top twenty-five books of all time are presented, along with brief descriptions of what they contain. You should be able to find materials covering every subject you're interested in. If neither you nor your teacher has that issue, contact our back-issue department at (201) 239-4140 to obtain a copy.

Editor's note: For those who would like to submit an inquiry to It's Questionable via the Internet, our e-mail address is: moddrummer@aol.com.



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1995 Frankfurt Music Fair Report

The 1995 International Music Fair, held March 8-12 in Frankfurt, Germany, was bigger than ever, with exhibitors from forty-six countries. Especially noteworthy was the number of new drum and percussion introductions. Here are twenty of the most interesting on display.

Le-Soprano introduced drums with an original brass mounting system. The system is also affordable, and complements the look of the kit. The drums feature hardwood shells hand-made in Italy. **S.T.E.D. di Gambirasio: via Donizetti, 70 BREMBATE SOPRA-BG, Italy, tel and fax: 035-621894.**



The Swiss manufacturer Agner presented a 3-1/2x13 piccolo snare drum made out of selected wooden parts. The drum completed Agner's model range and sounded as good as it looks. **Agner, Axenstr. 65, CH-6554 Fluelen, Switzerland, tel: 0041-44-20005, fax: 0041-44-21640.**

Mapex displayed many good-looking drums at their booth—all stocked with superb new features. The *Orion* line has a wonderful wax finish, while the *Saturn* line offers a new mounting system that works exceptionally well. **Jupiter Band Instruments, P.O. Box 90249, Austin, TX 78709-0249, tel: (512) 288-7400, fax: (512) 288-6445 or Mapex Musix Co., Ltd, Taipei Hsien, Taiwan, tel: 886-2-2825151.**



Worldmax, a new company on the market, displayed an attractive maple drumkit with excellent features—and in a superb price range for the European market. **PureCussion, Inc., 3611 Wooddale Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55416, tel: (612) 927-2330, fax: (612) 927-2333 or Drums & More, Hauptstr. 64, 57319 Bad Berleburg, Germany, tel: 0049-2759-861, fax: 0049-2759-877.**

Bavarian drum manufacturer Troyan showed a compact kit with shallow toms (5x10, 6x12, 8x14) and a bass drum only 8" deep. The kit had a great sound with excellent sustain. Troyan also displayed interesting—but very expensive—snare drums



with combination carbon fiber/wood shells. **Troyan Zachow Drums, Burgmaierstr. 20 a, 85521 Ottobrunn, Germany, tel: 0049-89-6098211, fax: 0049-89-6083687.**

Magnum Classic is a drum brand made under license for the biggest music shop in Europe. They feature Keller shells, their own hardware, lacquer finishes in different qualities, a drop lock system to be used with PureCussion RIMS, Remo heads, and a new rack system. **Musik Produktiv, Fuggerstr. 6, 49479 Ibbenburen, Germany, tel: 0049-5451-9090.**



Simmons showed a new combo amplifier especially made for electronic drums. It includes a six-channel board, 300-watt output power, and a three-way speaker cabinet designed for maximum projection. Simmons also announced that their first sampler will be introduced later this year. **Simmons, 6573 Neddy Ave, West Hills, CA 91307, tel and fax: (818) 887-6708.**

Stringdrum is a new triggering product on which a drummer hits a tunable string connected to a pickup system. It is useful for practicing or as a real kit on stage. The rebound feels great and the accompanying bass drum triggers worked superbly. Of course, rimshots could be a problem.... **Skylark Pickups, Bucheon P.O. Box 84, Kyunggi-Do, Korea, tel: 0032-675-9722.**



Meinl expanded their percussion line with three new wooden djembes. These instruments sound very good and are available in very interesting finishes. Meinl also showed some new bongos and a complete line of wooden mini bongos, congas, and djembes. **Hoshino USA, 1726 Winchester Rd., Bensalem, PA 19020, tel: (215) 638-8670, fax: (215) 245-8583 or Chesbro, P.O. Box 2009, Idaho Falls, ID 83402-2009, tel: (208) 552-8691, fax: (208) 552-8712 or Meinl Percussion, An den Herrenbergen, 91413 Neustadt a.d.Aisch, Germany, tel: 0049-9161-7880, fax: 0049-9161-5802.**



Drum Research displayed the first totally free-floating drum system made by a German company. Sound and sustain are great and the whole system looks quite nice. At the



moment it is available for toms and bass drums; snare versions are being developed. **Drum Research, Musik Jellinghaus, Martener Hellweg 40,44379 Dortmund, Germany, tel: 0049-231-171921.**

Ddrum introduced their conga pad. It works with two triggers: one for the head and one for the die-cast rim. The playing feel is great, and the unit works wonderfully with the *ddrum 3* brain. **Armadillo Enterprises, 5115 W. Knox St., Tampa, FL 33634, tel: (813) 881-0597, fax: (813) 881-0964 or Clavia AB, P.O. Box 4214, Alogatan 142,10265 Stockholm, Sweden, tel: 0046-864-33480, fax: 0046-864-42650.**



Pro Orca—from France—introduced a new line of sticks, including *Manu Katche* signature sticks with a great grip. **Pro Orca, Avenue Paul Langevin, B.P.409,01204 Bellegarde, France, tel: 0033-35444534, fax: 0033-50560221.**



UFIP's cymbals—including *Naturals* and *Bionics*—offer a range of unique sounds. They are all made by hand in Italy, giving each cymbal its own individual characteristics. **Drum Workshop, 101 Bernoulli Circle, Oxnard CA 93030, tel: (805) 485-6999, fax: (805)485-1334.**



French drum manufacturer Capelle introduced its own mounting system. Unique airbrushed shells like those shown here are a new option. **Eurodim, 4 place des Federes 400 b, 93160 Noisy/Paris, France, tel: 0033-1-43055627.**



Raul Percussion offers an instrument called a *Timbal*. It's a combination of a conga and timbale, with a unique sound and look. **Midco International, 908 W. Fayette Ave, P.O. Box 748 Effingham, IL 62401, tel: (217) 342-9211, fax: (217) 347-0316.**

Premier displayed a redesigned *XPK* drumset, with shells made from a combination of birch and eucalyptus, new die-cast low-mass tension lugs, and several new colors. A wood *XPK* snare has also replaced the steel version. **Premier Percussion USA, 1263 Glen Ave., Suite 250, Moorestown, NJ 08057, tel: (609) 231-8825, fax: (609) 231-8829 or Premier Percussion Ltd., Blaby Road, Wigston, Leicestershire, LE18 4DF, England, tel: 0044-0116-2-773121, fax: 0044-0116-2-776627.**



Handschin snare drums from Switzerland use a free-floating concept and ceramic drum shells in various sizes and colors. The sound of these drums is unbelievable—but they are expensive. **Handschin drums, Schollstr. 43,2504 Biel, Switzerland, tel: 0032-237276 or 0032-420959.**



The Morgana *E-Drum* kit utilized a concept similar to the Stringdrums, but offered a whole kit with bass drums, toms, snare, cymbals, and hi-hat. It looks different, offers a new feeling for the player—and triggers excellently. They called it "the silent revolution." **Morgana, P.O. Box 210426,72027 Tubingen, Germany.**



• Text and photos by Heinz Kronberger



Pro-Mark offered a new non-slip tape for bass drum pedals called *Slip-Not*. You tape it on the footboard to promote secure contact between the pedal and the sole of your shoe. **Pro-Mark, 10707 Craighead, Houston Texas 77025-5899, tel: (713) 666-2525, fax: (713) 669-8000.**

Newsound showed their new high-end maple drums. The hardware looks a little bit "Yamaha-ish," but Newsound is using their own heads and offering a lot of attractive finishes. **Newsound, 21-8 Chun-Kung Rd., Pei-Tun District, Taichung 406, Taiwan, tel: 04-2394-531, fax: 04-2395-865.**



Master Beat Gripped Drumsticks



Designed by Don Mester, a twenty-five-year veteran drummer, Master Beat sticks are the first in the industry to be fitted with a permanent textured grip. The sticks are made of high-quality white hickory, to which the patented grip is applied. A

variety of wood- and nylon-tipped stick models are available, with grips in several different colors. **Master Beat, Inc., 729 S. Grant St., South Bend, IN 46619, tel: (800) 908-4377, fax: (219) 232-8257.**

Boombah's Hi-Hat Cap



Boombah's has recently introduced the *Hi-Hat Cap*. The *Cap* is designed to mount on most hi-hat stands having a 1" diameter stand shaft. The addition of the *Cap* allows a second pair of cymbals to function with the first pair on the same hi-hat stand—thus allowing the drummer additional playing options and enriched sound.

The *Cap* is said to be easy to attach, strong, lightweight, and durable, and adjusts to a variety of cymbal sizes. It is available for \$59.95 plus a \$7.99 shipping and handling fee. For more information, contact **Boombah's, 20410 Doolittle Cove, Lago Vista, TX 78645, (512) 267-2293.**

Camber Limited Edition 25th Anniversary Cymbals



Camber is now offering Limited Edition 25th Anniversary cymbals in three series of pre-packs. The *C-9001x* pre-pack consists of a pair of 14" hi-hats, a 16" crash, and an 18" crash/ride, at a list price of \$495. The *C9002x* pre-pack offers a pair of 14" hi-hats, an 18" crash/ride, and a 20" ride, at \$520. The *C9003x* pre-pack is comprised of 14" hi-hats, a

16" crash, and a 20" ride, at \$510. Each pre-pack is packaged in a special-edition silver Kaces cymbal bag. The mid-price cymbals are manufactured in Canada, and are said to produce "bright yet consistent tones." **Camber division of Ace Products, 1334C Ross St., Petaluma, CA 94954, tel: (707) 765-6597, fax: (707) 765-6682.**

King Kong Kases



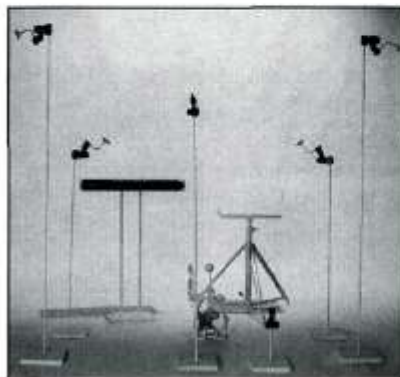
King Kong Kases now offers a complete line of custom-built ATA-style road cases for drummers and percussionists. All cases are constructed from 3/8" AC grade plywood/laminant, assembled with aluminum extrusions and riveted with the highest-quality fittings available. King Kong specializes in custom snare drum cases, drumset cases, and symphonic percussion cases—all designed for the "ultimate interior protection" using various-density foam, carpet, and dividers. Virtually any percussion instrument or other fragile piece of equipment can be cased for transport while being protected from the elements. Several stock colors are available; custom colors are optional at extra charge.

King Kong Kases, 300 S. Richardson Rd., Ashland, VA 23005, tel: (800) 776-1525, fax: (804) 560-4840.

Drumbrella

The *Drumbrella* is a fabric covering designed to fit over a drumkit when set up. The covering is intended to protect the kit from dust, scratches, fingerprints, grease and smoke film, and uninvited guests. It is said to mount "in seconds" to cymbal stands, and collapses to fit into its own case. Custom sizes and fabrics are available. **Drum Tech's Friend, P.O. Box 2117, Danville, IL 61834, tel: (217) 442-6548, fax: (217) 442-6547.**

B.C. Mini Drum Mic' System



The D.C. Mini Drum Mic' System is a complete system comprised of six *T1000* mini-microphones, six clips (one specialized for the bass drum), a single-rack-space mixer with six ins and two outs, and a power supply. The mini-mic's weigh less than an ounce but are said to provide a

"clean, natural" reproduction of any drum or cymbal sound. The system is sold only as a set (although replacement mic's, clips, and power supply units are available) at a list price of \$595. **D.C. Mini Drum Mic' Systems, P.O. Box 41001, Nashville, TN 37204.**

UDU Udongo II

The *Udongo II*, from UDU Drum, is designer Frank Giorgini's newest addition to his *Claytone* line. This all-clay drum retains the same double-chambered, side-by-side configuration as the original *Udongo* drum, but provides a larger left chamber for a deeper low-end, and a broader playing surface on the right side. The interval between the two chambers is greater, thus providing a wider tonal range. With its wide, slightly domed, and textured playing surfaces in a horizontal position, the *Udongo* drum is adaptable to all hand-playing techniques. **UDU Drum, Rt. 67, Box 126, Freehold, NY 12431, tel: (800) 838-3786, fax: (518) 634-2488.**



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Brady Drums

by Rick Van Horn

The sound and appearance of these Aussie drums are as rare as the exotic woods they're made from.

Brady drums have an interesting image in the drumming community. They're made on the other side of the world (Australia), out of wood that nobody's ever heard of (outside Australia, anyway),

and they aren't readily visible in every drum shop around. (In fact, they're darned rare in *any* drum shop.) They're generally accepted to be of high quality (both acoustically and physically), and they're known to be pretty expensive. It's kind of like a Rolls-Royce: You know about it, even if you've rarely seen one and have *never* driven one.

Well, it recently came to pass that Woody Compton, Brady's one-man distribution force in the U.S., contacted us about doing a review on a Brady kit. The company changed ownership a few years ago, and several changes were made in their manufacturing operations. Woody thought it would be good if the drumming pub-



lic could get an idea of how the drums being turned out of the "new" factory compared to others we've reviewed in the past.

Now, generally, when a manufacturer ships us a kit for review, it is absolutely "cherry"—right off the production line. It has also been inspected carefully to make sure that everything is in tip-top shape for our examination. (This is completely understandable, since any manufacturer would want his or her product to put on its best possible performance for an *MD* review.)

Well, this simply wasn't possible for Brady. They're a small company that only makes kits to order and can't afford to build up any sort of inventory stock. So although they were eager for us to review one of their kits, the only one available in the States at the time we needed it was Woody Compton's *personal* kit. And since Woody is a busy professional who plays frequently in the north Florida area, the kit we received was not only *not* brand new, it was, in fact, well-used. It was a measure of Brady's confidence in their product that they were not only willing, but eager for us to try Woody's kit—warts and all. (Actually, Woody spent a good deal of effort cleaning and polishing the kit to make it as photogenic as possible, so there really weren't any warts.)

Woody equipped the kit with new Remo *Pinstripe* heads (which are what the drums ship with) and explained what aspects of the drums were his own touches rather than factory standards. After that, he left it to me to evaluate the drums on their own merits.

Kit Description And Construction

The kit consisted of 8x8, 8x10, and 10x12 rack toms, 14x14 and 16x16 floor toms, and a 16x22 bass drum. Two snare drums accompanied the kit: a 7x12 in an exotic leopard wood finish (identical to the rest of the kit) and a 5-1/2x14 finished in wandoo burl. All of the drumshells were constructed of nine plies of jarrah wood, which is a hard, heavy, close-grained wood indigenous to the southwestern corner of Western Australia. The wood used to finish the exterior of the drum forms a tenth ply.

A point worth mentioning about Brady shells is that they are created in Brady's own factory, from jarrah veneers that are cut by hand before being placed into high-pressure shell molds. Brady is one of only a few drum companies in the world who fabricate their own shells in this manner rather than purchasing them ready-made from outside vendors. Once the shells are completed they are given hand-cut bearing edges and snare beds.

Brady drums are fitted with long, tube-style chromed lugs attached to the shells at two points via small posts. All of the rack toms were mounted on RIMS, using Tama mounts. (These were



Woody's personal choice; mounts for other brands are available at the customer's option.) Brady will not put tom mounts directly on the shells.

Appearance

Absolutely no one who saw these drums could resist making some kind of comment about their unique appearance. The most common of these was that they looked like finely made furniture. Their distinct swirling wood grain was rich, deep, and mesmerizing. One drummer I know (who dotes on flashy sparkle finishes) commented that the exaggerated "woody-ness" of the drums somehow made them look more solid and powerful than drums with more "glitzy" finishes.

The look of the drums was enhanced by a special buffing technique that Brady uses to achieve a lustrous gloss while keeping the finish looking like natural timber. All of the buffing and polishing is done by hand, and the result is absolutely exquisite.

An aspect of the drums' appearance that also bears significantly on their acoustic quality is the fact that the interiors of the shells and the bearing edges are smoothed and polished as finely as the exteriors of the shells. In fact, were it not for the lack of a gloss coating, the insides of the shells could very easily *be* the outsides.

Sound

Hard, reflective shells like those on Brady drums tend to offer tremendous projection and liveliness, but can sometimes also add undesirable high-end overtones or brightness. With that in mind the company is wise to fit their tom-toms with *Pinstripe* heads, which reduce those bright overtones while promoting round, powerful tones. These heads complement the drums wonderfully, resulting in solid, punchy, and powerful tom sounds that have an abundance of resonance without being "ringy." The fact that the

shells, though hard, are relatively thin helps to produce exceptionally deep fundamental tones as well. As a result, these are absolutely *super* rock 'n' roll tom-toms, with power to spare and plenty of size to their sound.

Not wanting to ignore the other side of the acoustic spectrum, I tried the 10" rack tom and the 14" floor tom with coated *Ambassador* heads to see how they might sound as part of a jazz kit. They were sensitive and responsive at low to medium dynamic levels—although they did favor the higher frequency ranges. (This is, however, consistent with a classic "jazz" drum sound.) When the drums were really whacked, the reflective nature of the shells—along with the acoustic qualities inherent in the thinner drumheads—produced a very "bouncy" sound, with what I would consider an overabundance of attack and a pronounced reduction in the roundness of their tone.

The snare drums were extremely nice. They were both fitted with Remo *Ambassador* batter heads, and each featured twin snare-tension adjustments (one on the throw-off, the other on the butt). The 7x12 drum combined a small diameter with extra depth, and produced a surprisingly big sound. Snare sensitivity was very good—especially considering the shortness of the snare wires and the distance between the heads. I found that I could use this drum quite satisfactorily as a primary snare when the batter head was at a medium tension. If I cranked that head up a bit, the drum seemed better-suited for use as a secondary snare—cracking with authority (while still maintaining the underlying body that its deep shell provided). The only thing that this drum could not produce adequately was a cross-stick sound, and that was simply because its rim was too small in diameter to play a cross-stick on properly.

The 5-1/2x14 snare was my favorite of the two. Its shallower shell provided extra-crisp snare response, while the hard, reflective shell promoted the attack and projection that are so desirable in a snare drum. Yet it wasn't all high end; it had a very solid, woody sound that gave it a lot of character. And when I deliberately loosened the batter head, I found that despite its relatively shallow shell, the 5-1/2x14 drum could get down into "fatback" territory quite nicely!

I saved the best for last: the bass drum. Woody Compton cautioned me that the bass drum was tuned more or less to his liking, and was fitted with a Remo *Muffle* against the *Pinstripe* batter head. The front logo head had a small hole in it, and was also muffled somewhat by the application of foam strips. There was nothing inside the drum itself. Since this was quite a bit different from the way I normally set up a bass drum, I was curious as to how it might sound to my ear. I was all set to swap the heads around, change the muffling, and do all the other things I'd normally do to a drum whose sound I wasn't satisfied with.

I never changed a thing! In over ten years of doing product reviews, I've never experienced such a sound from a drum "right out of the box." It was enormous—like an amplified kick drum coming out of some *serious* sub-woofers. I made a point to listen to the drum from the throne and also from out front (while someone else played it), since many kick drums have very different characteristics from behind and in front. The Brady was as big and powerful from twenty feet in front of it as it was from immediately

behind it. The hard, reflective shell (and the emptiness inside it) gave the drum lots of round, full tone, while Woody's muffling treatment on the heads killed any slappy, ringing head overtones. The drum offered depth, punch, tonality, and a sheer *bigness* that left me smiling anytime I touched the bass drum pedal.

Reservations

What? After all this gushing praise, there's something negative to say about the Brady kit? Well, sort of. There are some features that I found troublesome, even though another drummer might not. One was the sheer weight of the drums. Jarrah wood is heavy, and while the drumshells are not thick, they do weigh a good deal. And though the hardware on the drums is termed "low-mass," there's still quite a bit of metal involved in long tube lugs, and when that's added to the heavy shells, you get a pretty hefty drum. I had particular difficulty in lifting and carrying the bass drum around. (Of course, I'm not a big guy—or as young as I used to be.)

I also have certain reservations about the tube lugs themselves—which apply to lugs of this type on any brand of drums. Even though they are made of perfectly strong steel, the tubes are spanned over a significant distance between short posts at the top and bottom of the drumshell. One good bang against a hard object and the tube can easily be bent. Drum bags would offer no protection against this type of injury, and even fiber cases are subject to dents. So if I were considering Brady drums (or any others with such long tube lugs) I'd also want to budget for some serious hard-shell cases. And considering the starting price of the drums themselves, this could make for a major investment overall.

Conclusions And Prices

Reservations notwithstanding, the current-edition Brady drumkit is about as impressive an instrument as you're likely to find anywhere. It's made with loving care and old-world hand-craftsmanship, and finished with an eye toward unique and lasting beauty. All of the drums sound great; the bass drum sounds incredible. And on top of it all, it's definitely a kit that every other drummer in town is not going to be playing. In today's cookie-cutter world, a little uniqueness is a definite asset.

Not surprisingly, the premium quality of these drums—and the fact that they are imported from Australia—combine to place them in a pretty stratospheric price range. (In fairness, however, I should point out that some other well-known high-end brands are as expensive, if not more so. So at least the Bradys are competitive in this area.) Brady makes no hardware (the stands on our test kit were an amalgam of Woody Compton's and MD's own), and sells their drums individually. Here's the pricing for the drums on our review kit: 8x8 tom—\$500; 8x10 tom—\$575; 10x12 tom—\$750; 14x14 tom—\$1,000; 16x16 tom—\$1,350; 16x22 bass drum—\$2,300; 7x12 snare—\$800; 5-1/2x14 snare—\$825. If you can't find Brady drums in your local drumshop, contact Woody Compton, 1325 Sharon Rd., Tallahassee, FL 32303-4529, tel and fax: (904) 386-2388.

New Zildjian Flatride And Splashes

by Rick Mattingly

In the eternal quest to satisfy drummers' seemingly insatiable hunger for different sounds, Zildjian has added a 20" flatride and a 6" splash to its A Custom line and a 12" splash to its Z Custom series.

A Custom Flatride

I've occasionally heard people describe a cymbal as "glassy" when its sound features shimmering overtones, but it's not a term I've ever used myself—until now. Playing Zildjian's new 20" A Custom flatride evoked images of playing on glass—in that the sound has a delicate character and the overtones suggest transparency. Played in the context of an acoustic band, the cymbal's overtones filter through the sounds of the other instruments like light pouring through a tinted window—coloring the sound without obscuring it.

That's not to say that one must strike the cymbal with care; on the contrary, it sounds best when laid into with conviction. But the sound never builds out of control, and the overtones—which stop just short of sounding as though there's a rivet or two in the cymbal—never cover up the definition from the click of the stick.

For all its shimmering brilliance, the overall sound of the A Custom flatride is somewhat contained, and would probably get lost in extremely loud settings. But for acoustic jazz settings in which you want the cymbal to be present without being obtrusive, this cymbal would be ideal. (It sounds especially good behind a guitar.) List price is \$297.

A Custom And Z Custom Splashes

With the addition of the 6" A Custom splash at one end of the spectrum and a 12" Z Custom splash at the other end, it's tempting to say that Zildjian now has splashes covered from A to Z. But that would be too obvious a pun, so I won't say it.

When you first see the 6" A Custom, you might expect it to produce more clang than splash, since most of its surface consists of a bell. There are enough overtones to qualify this as a splash cymbal, however—even though they are very thin and decay almost instantly. It's probably the fastest, thinnest splash I've ever heard, and one would have to choose the setting carefully in order for it to be effective. I suspect it will be most popular with players who use more than one splash, and it would certainly work well as the soprano voice in a choir of splash cymbals. It could also be very effective in a controlled environment such as a recording studio.

Seeing that large bell in front of me, I couldn't resist trying some Latin-type bell patterns on it. Because the cymbal is so



small, the sound wouldn't cut through a loud band, but for a subtle metallic color in an acoustic setting, the cymbal worked quite well. List price is \$91.

The 12" Z Custom splash falls right on the boundary between a large splash and a small crash, and could serve as either depending on the setting. Since I once described Zildjian's 14" K Dark Thin crash as sounding somewhat like a large splash, I compared it side by side with the 12" Z Custom splash. The Z was definitely "splashier," in that the overtones have a much faster decay than those of the K, which fade out more slowly and evenly. The Z also has a higher pitch, adding to its splash character.

What sets the Z apart from most splashes, however, is its considerable body. In a loud setting you can really lay into it and get a quick, explosive splash that won't sound wimpy. In a sense, Zildjian could be shooting themselves in the foot with this one, because drummers who have been breaking splash cymbals by overplaying them and regularly buying new ones can now buy one of these and probably never have to replace it. List price is \$144.

Vic Firth Kickers

by Rick Mattingly

If the shoe fits...drum in it!

A few years back, when surveying several prominent drummers about their preferences in bass drum pedals, I asked them, as a joke, "...and what shoes do you like to wear when you play the bass drum?" To my surprise, several of them were quite particular about their footwear. Generally, they wanted something light and flexible, with non-skid soles. Wrestling shoes were popular with several of the drummers.

Dave Weckl is one of those drummers with very specific requirements for a shoe in which to play drums, so he teamed up with Vic Firth to design *Kickers*—shoes made specifically for drumming. They are extremely lightweight, so you won't be battling the weight of a normal shoe on those fast bass drum licks. They are also very flexible—for combination heel up/heel down playing.

The front part of the shoe is made from nylon mesh, which not only helps keep the shoe light but also provides ventilation. If you have a problem with sweaty feet when you play, these could be what you've been looking for. The back of the shoe is leather, and the soles are rubber with a ribbed surface that will not slip on the pedals.

Firth strongly advises against using *Kickers* for street wear, because they have no arch support and the soles are too thin to withstand much walking over sidewalks. But that's not to say that the shoes are flimsy. They are made by the same manufacturer that makes Capezio dance shoes, which is what professional dancers have used for years. As the father of a daughter who takes dancing lessons, I can vouch for Capezio quality: Other ballet slippers, jazz boots, and tap shoes have worn out, but Capezios last long enough for her to outgrow them. *MD* didn't want to wait a year before reviewing the *Kickers* to see how they would hold up over a long period of time, but they appear to be very well made, and if they have the typical Capezio quality, they should last through many a gig.

I should mention something that relates to the fact that *Kickers* are manufactured by the maker of dance shoes. Dancers tend to wear their shoes over bare feet or nylon tights, so dance shoes fit very snugly. So do *Kickers*. Accordingly, if you like to wear thick cotton socks when you play drums, you might want your *Kickers* a half-size larger than you usually wear.

The design of the shoe strikes a nice balance between casual and elegant. The mesh gives them a relaxed look that is not out of



place with jeans, and yet because they are black and have a stylish design you could wear them with a tux just as easily. (Of course, unless you have transparent bass drum heads, who's going to see your feet when you're playing anyway?)

Still not convinced? Check this out: Each shoe has Dave Weckl's autograph (or a facsimile thereof) on the inside heel. Need I say more? (This could be the dawn of a new era of signature clothing for drummers. The possibilities are endless: Rod Morgenstein signature tie-dyed T-shirts, Vinnie Colaiuta signature eyeglasses, Kenny Aronoff signature suspenders....)

Over the years I've played drums in everything from high-heeled "Beatle boots" to sandals, tennis shoes, and patent-leather formal shoes. I didn't really think shoes mattered all that much, but I must admit that *Kickers* felt very good when I played in them—and I sensed that I had a bit more control over my bass drum and hi-hat pedals. No shoe is going to increase your technique, but I'm now convinced that a shoe such as this can at least maximize the foot technique you have by providing a non-slip surface, eliminating extra weight, and increasing your comfort by allowing good ventilation. Drummers who simply stomp on their pedals are probably fine wearing combat boots (the weight might even be an advantage), but if your footwork requires finesse, then your footwear might be more crucial.

Kickers are available in sizes from 7 to 13 (half sizes included) in both medium and wide widths. List price is \$59.95 per pair.



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KAT trapKAT MIDI Controller/Electronic Pad Kit

by Rich Watson

This baby combines the best features of a pad kit with those of a compact integrated controller—and goes beyond both.

MIDI percussion manufacturers would probably be relieved if drummers asked them only for the moon and stars. Instead, we demand more authentic (read: "acoustic") feel and response with ever-more-powerful electronic features and functions—all the while crying for simpler setup and operation. We want roomier playing surfaces—and *lots* of them—yet insist that the gear be portable. To their credit, the industry has responded: Electronic drums have evolved at a break-neck pace. But when KAT, the undisputed pacesetter in MIDI percussion controller technology, makes a stride toward satisfying the insatiable, you can bet it will be a "BIG" one.

Basics

Okay, you may be tired of hearing the *trapKAT* described as "big," but it really does dwarf all other integrated pad set/controllers. This is true not only of the size of the pads, but also of their number. With electronics, access to a wide variety of drum-sound nuances and percussion-instrument samples is facilitated by lots of discrete playing surfaces. The *trapKAT* has *two dozen* pads—more than any other MIDI percussion device. Each pad is four-note polyphonic, which means that four notes can simultaneously sustain; the fifth will "cut off the first, etc.

Because of the *trapKAT's* peculiar shape (a halved decahedron) the individual pads are of several different shapes and sizes. The ten "primary" pads range from roughly 6 1/2"x5" to 5"x9 1/2". Fourteen raised "rim" pads around the *trapKAT's* perimeter, ranging from 3 1/2" to 5 1/2" long, are intentionally narrow so as to be played with a drumstick's shoulder. The wrinkle-finish black steel chassis is 41 1/2" wide, 18" back-to-front, and 3" deep.

The back panel houses one MIDI In jack and a pair of MIDI



Outs, as well as standard 1/4" inputs for a bass drum trigger, a hi-hat controller, and four footswitches (only one of which is included) that allow access to the *trapKAT's* kit selection and editing functions. A miniature input on the side of the unit facing the player allows the use of an optional breath controller. Next to the on/off switch is a locking jack for a 9-volt AC adapter. Considering the unit's size, the need for an external transformer (a pet peeve of mine even on much smaller gear) seemed inexcusable. However, KAT's Rod Squier explained that a "lump in the

middle"-style adapter is available from KAT that will take up only one outlet in a multiple-outlet strip.

A separate input bay that was taped over on the test kit will contain jacks for features planned for the *trapKAT PRO*, due later this year (and which KAT founder/president Bill Katoski tells me will be endowed with the formidable powers of the *drumKAT*, still the standard against which all electronic percussion devices are judged). Mode status and feature parameters appear on a backlit liquid crystal display screen that allows up to sixteen characters on each of its two lines. Its view angle is adjustable.

The optional *trapKAT Studio Stand* shipped with the test kit is aptly named; its bulk and relative lack of portability and its partial obstruction of the drummer-audience sight line are okay for studio work, but not especially suited to the needs of most gigging drummers. Other mounting options are being developed.

Features And Functions

The *trapKAT* stores pad-assignment configurations in two distinct areas called "FactoryKits" and "UserKits." The twenty-four FactoryKits, which cannot be permanently altered, are intended to help beginners use the *trapKAT* almost instantly with many popular sound modules—bypassing the often tedious programming process. These kit layouts, which thoughtfully include one for left-handers, also serve well as foundations for player-defined con-

figurations, which can then be stored in up to twenty-four UserKits. (I would like to have more kits to define, but then I may be the charter member of that feature-gluttonous group I described earlier.) Kits can be selected by depressing the Kit Select footswitch and striking the corresponding pad. (Striking pad 13 accesses *kit 13*, and so on.)

Editable parameters on each *trapKAT* pad and for each kit include MIDI Channel, Note Number, and Gate Time, which is the maximum duration of a note (for sound modules that accept Note Off information). Program Change selects the sound module's active bank of sounds and the channel on which that message will be received. Minimum and Maximum Velocity determine a sound's dynamic range, and Velocity Curve determines the *gradualness* with which playing force affects volume. The Volume parameter adjusts the output volume of the entire sound source program.

These changes are accomplished by striking a designated pad while stepping on the Kit Edit footswitch, then repeatedly hitting the pad you want to affect until the desired value is reached. Parameter value change can be reversed by quickly releasing the footswitch and then repressing it. This method is fairly quick and direct and provides a clear advantage over knobs and buttons in that all editing is achieved *without putting down your sticks*. It does, however, require memorizing which pad accesses which

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Marvin "Smitty" Smith

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function. (The small, raised, gray-on-gray letters supposed to identify edit functions are all but invisible, even in full light.) My only real complaint, though, is that advancing through note numbers on a pad actually *plays* them through the sound system. This pretty much rules out all on-stage and some rehearsal editing without first having to turn off some component in the P.A. system.

Global settings, changed similarly, are those that affect all kits. Prominent among them is the setting for the *trapKATs* responsiveness. This can be tailored to an individual's playing style by "training" each pad to properly interpret his or her normal dynamic range and transmit appropriate velocity information to the sound module. This automatic training process is very quick and easy, but Low Dynamic and High Dynamic (the two parameters "trained") can also be set or fine-tuned manually. Threshold, the parameter that defines the lightest hit for which *trapKAT* will transmit a Note On signal—in short, its low-dynamic sensitivity—can also be adjusted for each pad. Bass Input Gain determines the sensitivity of the trigger plugged into the kick trigger input.

Other Global settings do the following: select either FactoryKits or UserKits and the channel on which external program (Kit Select) messages are received; enable or disable memory protection, the Cymbal Choke and Groove features (described below), and the beeper; allow or prevent the "merging" of incoming MIDI

data through the MIDI Out jacks; and engage outgoing data dumps (transmissions) of all memory, a single kit, or Global memory. The Re-initialize feature clears *all* user-defined kits and settings. MIDI implementation includes the following functions: Note On, Off, Number, and Velocity; Pitch Bend and Control Change; Program Change; Sequence Start and Stop; All Notes Off; and System Exclusive Send and Receive.

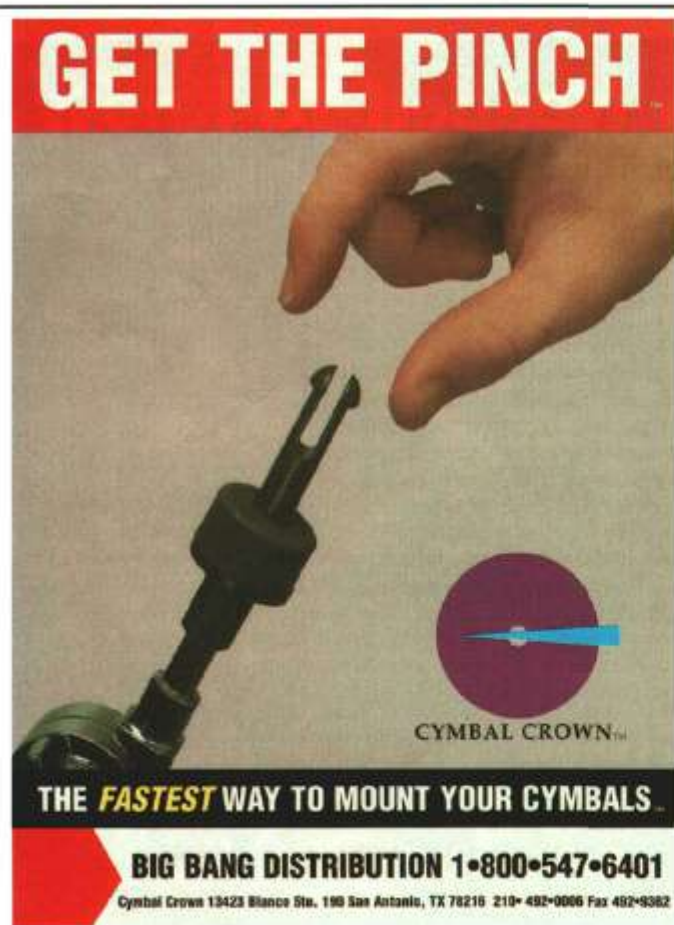
The *trapKAT* allows four hi-hats per kit, but because it produces only one note per closed hi-hat, any velocity switching between, say, crisp and mushy hi-hat sounds must be achieved by way of note stacking on the sound module. On the other hand, it does send continuous controller information. By producing a gradual series of changes (versus either sound *A* or sound *B*), this function provides extremely realistic foot control over hi-hat sounds. Chick and foot splash have the same programmable parameters as the other pads, and the hi-hat motion/effect curve can be trained to suit the player's hi-hat stroke-length preference. Together, these features create an expressive, realistic hi-hat. (Note that neither kick nor hi-hat pedals are included with the *trapKAT*.)

Cymbal Choke automatically silences any sustained sound when the pad to which it is assigned is "grabbed"—much as one would choke a cymbal. This amazingly "smart" feature is not engaged by pressing sticks into the pad, but rather responds quickly and reliably when the pad is grabbed by hand.

The *trapKAT's* Groove feature plays pre-programmed sequences of percussion and melodic instrument patterns that range from a sparse Cabasa and triangle ostinatos, to a rock shuffle, to a dense and active 5/4 latin beat. Melodic Groove adds chord changes with marimba, organ, brass, etc., when used with any general MIDI sound source (such as Roland's *Sound Canvas*, Korg's *05RW*, and Kawai's *GMEGA*). Enabling these features takes four of the rim pads out of service as instrument pads, dedicating them instead to Groove's control functions: Percussion Groove, Melodic Groove, Groove Start/Stop, and Groove Tap Tempo. (Disabling Groove returns them to normal playable status.) Tap Tempo allows the player to reset the Groove tempo simply by striking that pad twice. Unlike the other three Groove operator pads, the Tap Tempo pad produces a sound when struck, and that sound can be selected by the user. With my *TD-7* in the Standard MIDI Interface Mode, the Grooves caused some annoying delays of the notes I played. (I know my time isn't *that* bad!) Switching the *TD-7* to MIDI Sound Module Mode corrected this situation, so the problem lies with the *TD7*, not the *trapKAT*. Although Groove could be used to provide accompaniment in live or recording situations, it is primarily intended to be a musical timekeeper. As such, it's a real kick to use, as well as an excellent practical practice tool.

Considering its outstanding functionality, the *trapKAT* is exceptionally easy to use. For the acutely impatient, *KAT* provides a "1-Page Manual." (Actually, it's *two* pages, counting front and back sides.) But even the regular manual is brief, concise, and extremely user-friendly.

At 32 lbs. and bigger than *several* bread boxes, the *trapKAT* is



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quite a handful, but it *is* portable. (Considering the weight and amount of space that would be occupied by attempting to duplicate its functionality with a controller and separate pads, mounts, and stands, the *trapKAT* is actually packaged very efficiently.)

Sensitivity

Instead of piezo transducers, the *trapKAT*, like the *drumKAT*, employs force-sensitive resistors, or "FSRs." Compared to Piezos, I've found that FSRs provide better sensitivity and far superior freedom from double triggering (multiple sounds from only one hit) and false triggering (sounds produced from interaction with other pads, analogous to snare buzz or sympathetic vibration between acoustic drums). At the *trapKAT*'s lowest Threshold settings, the larger, primary pads picked up even my lightest ghost strokes and perfectly tracked a press roll (impossible feats for all but a couple of piezo-based pads I've played). What is even more remarkable, though, is that even when programmed to be this sensitive, they weren't triggered when I played adjacent pads. This combination of ultra-sensitivity and inter-pad isolation is, to my knowledge, unparalleled.

Intended to be played with the shoulder of the stick, the smaller rim pads are not as sensitive even at their lowest Threshold settings. For me, this makes them best suited for triggering crash

cymbals or incidental percussion sounds for which delicate stick technique generally isn't required.

Playing Comfort And Feel

Since they were introduced, the portability and setup ease of integrated controller/pad sets extracted a dear price in terms of comfort. Many drummers—especially electronics neophytes—complained that the diminutive playing surface afforded by these sets inhibited their natural playing style. While the *trapKAT* doesn't duplicate the reach required by moderate-to-large acoustic drumkits, it does split the difference acceptably, and marks a dramatic improvement over other gear in its class. Most important, I found its pads to be large enough to allow me to concentrate on *playing* rather than sharpshooting for a runty target. The smallest of the rim pads positioned in pairs (numbers 11 and 12, 23 and 24) worked well for "natural pair" sounds, like muted and open triangle, high and low bongo, etc.

After my initial excitement about the *trapKAT*'s spacious playing surface, I became concerned that the hi-hat's sharing the same plane as the snare could impinge upon the traditional right-hand-over-left crossover. As it turned out, the left-most "primary" pad (pad 5) is located far enough back toward the player to avoid collisions at low and moderate dynamics. For heavier play-

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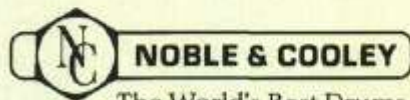


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ing requiring more arm movement, I simply assigned the hi-hat to a right side pad, or to two pads on opposite sides.

The *trapKAT's* playing surface is made of state-of-the-art Malaysian gum rubber. It's thicker and softer—and therefore more comfortable—than that on some other rubber pads, including the *drumKAT*. Drummers who play on tightly tuned acoustic drumheads tend to favor these bouncier rubber pads, whereas those who tune loose may prefer the stiffer, less resilient ones made of plastic drumheads over foam rubber. To me, the *trapKAT's* pads feel great.

Aesthetics

Except for the *drumKAT's* whimsical Mickey Mouse-shaped pad layout and the quirky fe-lines of the *kicKATbass* drum trigger, KAT has always been known for pushing "function over flash." With the flat, angular, black and gray *trapKAT*, they've even dropped the whimsy. The pads' marbled gray and white rubber finish, intended to hide stick marks, may not immediately appeal to some. But because no two pads, either on a single kit or among all manufactured, are identically marbled, each *trapKAT* possesses an individual identity that I can only liken to wood grain on acoustic drums, and which says "this one is distinctly *mine*." (The surface is available in plain gray as well.)

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The advertisement features a black and white photograph of Poncho Sanchez, a bearded man wearing a beret and a dark jacket, sitting behind a set of three trapKAT drums. The drums are arranged in a row, with the central one being the largest. The background is dark, and the text is white and black. A small logo for Gon Bops is visible in the upper right corner of the ad.

Quality And Durability

Like the other KAT products I own and all the others I've seen, the *trapKAT* is meticulously and solidly built. According to the *trapKAT* manual it is "warranted against defects due to materials or workmanship for ninety days on labor, six months on FSR and rubber, and one year on all other parts."

Customer Service And The Extra Mile

The only things more terrifying than laying down a lot of cash for MIDI equipment are laying down a lot of cash and then finding that your hard-earned purchase won't work with components made by other manufacturers, and/or six months later discovering that it is already considered "old technology." Well, unlike some other companies whose gear works optimally only with same-brand components, all KAT products are designed to work well with nearly every other brand. Additionally, KAT is unique in the industry for helping protect drummers from the aforementioned kicked-in-the-gut feeling with its "War On Obsolescence" policy, providing cheap software updates and reasonable upgrades that keep its products on the cutting edge of electronic percussion. (The *trapKAT* manual actually includes instructions for inserting upgrade software chips.) The *trapKAT* is already impressive; its potential and forthcoming refinements make me eager, not afraid, for what KAT has up its furry sleeve. I know that as Bill Katoski endows his creations with new magic, he won't require that I sell my soul to enjoy it.

Additionally, I know from experience that KAT has a patient, knowledgeable, and *accessible* staff who can solve problems if the manual fails me, or if my MIDI instrument seems to be having a bad hair day.

Conclusions

Put simply, the *trapKAT* is the state-of-the-art of MIDI percussion, giving even the greediest among us most of what we've asked for—and promising much more. While it's not cheap, inch-for-inch and function-for-function it's a bargain. And in the long view, it is an investment that won't be obsolete for years to come.

The *trapKAT* lists for \$1,199. A carry bag is \$139, or a padded case (recommended) is \$179. For more information contact KAT, Inc. at 53 First Ave., Chicopee, MA 01020, tel: (413) 594-7466, fax: (413) 592-7987, or E-mail at KAT1993@aol.com.





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**DAVE
LOMBARDO**



*Back
With A
Vengeance*

*BY MATT PEIKEN
PHOTOS BY ALEX SOIGA*

Dave Lombardo is scampering around Red Robbin restaurant with a balloon tied to the ring of his pacifier. At this point, with the lunch check arriving, mom and dad are content to let him run, figuring that as long as they can see the balloon, they can find Dave.

"Going out to eat with your kids is always an adventure," says Dave Lombardo, Sr., as little Dave's balloon clips a waitress in the head. "But in a way, it can be like eating out with your band. Only with kids, they have an excuse."

Actually, the Lombardos cut quite the picture of the American dream—a solid marriage of high school sweethearts, sons two-and-a-half and seven months old, a modest home with a pool and play area out back. Hardly the image you get when you think of one of heavy metal's most revered drummers. But that family picture has a lot to do with where Dave Lombardo is today.

Lombardo and Slayer parted after more than a decade of aggression together when the drummer refused to put the band ahead of his family. Now Dave is kick-starting his comeback with Grip Inc., a band that substitutes tight for fight and uses musicianship rather than image to get its point across.

"I didn't want to form another Slayer," Dave reflects, "because I never really felt that band was what I'm all about. I mean the satanic stuff and the attitude of hate... that just wasn't me. I wanted to have something that was still very aggressive musically, but that talked about more intelligent things and fit more with my personality."

On Grip Inc.'s debut, *Power Of Inner Strength*, Lombardo shows musical and creative qualities he says never had a chance to surface during his time in Slayer. And

Lombardo has used the change of scenery to revitalize his passion for drumming.

"It's funny," Dave points out, "suddenly I'm coming up with all these ideas for sounds and beats. I guess they were always inside me, but I suppressed them because I knew there was no place for them in Slayer. With this band, there's no limits to what I can try."

Back at his home in otherwise bland Victorville, California, Lombardo taps away on thick skin stretched over a ceramic drum—

one of the instruments he used to create the industrial-sounding intro to the new record. His eldest son, Dave junior, tries to join in.

"I'm originally from Cuba," Dave senior explains, "so I think rhythm was born into me. I see little Davey get around the drums sometimes and I think I must have passed rhythm down to him. You know, I'd really like to see him play, if that's what he wants to do. But whatever my kids do in life, I'll just tell them to listen to their hearts and keep their eyes wide open."

Dave's Setup

Drumset: Tama *Artstar Custom* in dark red finish

- A. 5 1/2 x 14 *Starclassic* maple snare
- B. 8x8 tom
- C. 8x10 tom
- D. 9x12 tom
- E. 10x13 tom
- F. 11x14 tom
- G. 12x15 tom
- H. 15x18 floor tom
- I. 14x20 gong drum
- J. 18x24 bass drum
- K. 18x24 bass drum

Hardware: All Tama, including their Camco design bass drum pedals (with felt beaters) and *Stilt* cymbal stands

Heads: Remo Falam K on snare drum, clear *Emperors* on tops of toms with clear *Ambassadors* on the bottoms, clear *Emperors* on bass drum batters

Cymbals: Paiste

- 1. 14" *Sound Formula* heavy hi-hats
- 2. 18" *Paiste* thin China
- 3. 12" *Sound Formula Reflector* splash
- 4. 16" *Paiste* power crash
- 5. 17" *Paiste* power crash
- 6. 18" *Paiste* power crash
- 7. 16" *Paiste* thin China
- 8. 22" *Paiste* power ride
- 9. 20" 2002 *Wow* China
- 10. 10" *Paiste* splash
- 11. 22" 2002 *China* with 8 rivets
- 12. 38" gong

XX. *KAT poleKAT* (for triggering samples)

Electronics: *Alesis D4* drum module (to enhance bass drum depth and definition) and an *Akai S2800* sampler

Sticks: Pro-Mark 2S hickory with nylon tip

“Metal bands shouldn’t feel threatened by other forms of music; they should soak up all these influences and apply whatever they want to their own music, to enhance it.”

MP: It must have been hard to divorce yourself from Slayer after spending eleven-plus years with the band.

DL: In the first three to four days after I was out of the band, I panicked. I didn’t know what I was going to do. Thoughts started coming into my head about losing the house and what not. I was a mess. But friends started calling me and saying I would get another band together and that everything would be all right. That got

me to put things in perspective and feel better.

With Slayer, we had something good for a long time. And when you have something good, you try as hard as you can to make it work. You deal with the garbage and move on. But it was so destined for me and Slayer to break up. Our personalities we’re just so different. Even in the best of times, there always seemed to be some kind of friction

between me and Kerry [King, guitarist]. But it really didn’t come to a head until I started developing a home life.

I’ve known Teresa since elementary school, and I was head over heels for her in high school. I’ve been with my high school sweetheart this entire time. She went to Slayer’s first club show and she’s always been there. I traveled with the guys by myself, we did tours of Europe by ourselves—I had always been



Dave behind the kit he keeps at his home rehearsal studio

“Frankly, after doing the blast beats for ten years with Slayer, two songs are enough on the new album. I’m not done with that style of music—the double-bass thrash stuff—but people need to know there’s more going on with me.”



devoted to the band. But there came a time when I wasn't satisfied with just hangin' with the guys. You know, it's not natural for four guys to eat, sleep, and play together twenty-four hours a day. Happy as I was playing with them, I needed more. I wanted to have Teresa with me.

They made a stink about it once before, in '86, and I left the band because of it. But Rick Rubin [Slayer's producer at the time] begged me to come back. I said all I wanted was to be able to take Teresa on the road with me. And there was no problem for the next two or three years, but I guess it burned the guys up inside. And then the fact that she was going to have a baby—that was too much for them to deal with. They started auditioning drummers, and I swore to get a new band together that would just blow everybody away, including Slayer.

MP: When you split from Slayer, was it more than just a personal freedom? It sounds like leaving the band was creatively and musically liberating, too. Did you already have ideas of forming your own band?

DL: Well, there were three months after

I left when I didn't know what was going on. I thought about maybe joining a Latin jazz band, maybe something like Gloria Estefan. I didn't know what I wanted. But I also felt a lot of relief. The main difference I felt right away was that I didn't have anybody telling me what to do. And once I figured out what I wanted to do, everything really fell into place. It was like somebody just dropped these musicians on my front door.

MP: That's kind of amazing, considering you live in the California desert. Did you already know what kind of band and musicians you wanted?

DL: The musicians, no—but the kind of band was really the only thing I *did* know. It had to be something heavy, because I felt that my fan base was in heavy music. I didn't feel jazz was an option because nobody knows who I am there. The kids who know me from Slayer expect heavy, aggressive stuff.

MP: But at that point, one would think you had the luxury of putting together any kind of band you wanted to, and pull your fans from Slayer over into whatever you'd be doing in the future.

DL: And I think this is the kind of band I wanted. I've listened to the new album

every day since December, and it still floors me.

MP: So how did you go about putting together the new band?

DL: It started with this guy named Leo Perez. He's taught me everything I know about percussion, and he told me about some singer in L.A. who just wasn't in the right band. It turns out the guy was a punk rock singer in England in the late '70s, which I thought was cool and kind of a different element. At the time, I didn't have any preconceived ideas about the kind of singer I wanted.

MP: Getting to the new record, what inspired "Toque de Muerto," the opening cut? That's not something I expected to hear from Dave Lombardo's new band.

DL: That was influenced by Tito Puente. I got this album of his in Germany, listened to all the percussion rhythms he did, and got this idea for crossing hand percussion with industrial sounds. So I experimented with these different rhythms and sounds and put them on tape at my home studio.

Industrial music has also had a huge influence on me over the past couple of years. When I was still with Slayer, somebody handed me a Ministry tape. I popped it in and thought to myself,



"What rock have I been under?" I'd never listened to industrial music before. At that moment, I thought what we were doing in Slayer was so '80s. So even back then, it occurred to me I needed to open my mind and do something different and exciting in music.

MP: For the intro, did you program or trigger all the sounds?

DL: The first drums you hear are bongos. I used sticks on them. Then I played congas over that: *oon-TA-TA oon-TA-TA*. Then I turned to the keyboards for the sampled sounds. We used the computer to make sure everything was on the right beat and synched up together. I'd never done anything like that before, and it was really inspiring.

MP: Coming from what you were used to playing in Slayer, it must have also been a little intimidating. Did you start questioning your own style of drumming?

DL: Oh, yeah. It forced me to take a step back and see what I'd done, figure out what I didn't want to do anymore, and look ahead to new challenges. I went through a period of self-evaluation, but when I was through and had brought in these new elements and ideas, I felt like I had much more to work with to validate myself as a musician.

Frankly, after doing the blast beats for

ten years with Slayer, two songs are enough on the new album. I'm not done with that style of music—the double-bass thrash stuff—but people need to know there's more going on with me. And people seem to really like what I'm doing now. They hear the polyrhythmic intro with the industrial feel, then it goes into this tribal pounding, and it catches

them off guard. But they think it's cool.

MP: That must make you feel pretty good, because I would think you'd have a lot of self-doubt about moving from such a successful band as Slayer to starting something totally new.

DL: If I had any doubts, it was just about me as a player. To this day, no matter how many people tell me I'm a good drummer, I don't think I'm that great. I

POWER PLAY

Here are the albums Dave Lombardo lists as the ones most representative of his drumming...

Artist	Album Title
Grip Inc.	Power Of Inner Strength
Slayer	Reign In Blood
Slayer	South Of Heaven
Slayer	Seasons In The Abyss
Voodoo Cult	Jesus Killing Machine

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

Artist	Album Title	Drummer
Ministry	The Mind Is A Terrible Thing To Taste	programmed
Pigface	Fook	Martin Atkins
Nine Inch Nails	The Downward Spiral	Chris Vrenna/ programmed
Killing Joke	Pandemonium	Youth
Tito Puente	Top Percussion/Dance Mania	Tito Puente
Irakere	The Best Of Irakere	various
Paquito D'Rivera	Why Not	various
Dead Can Dance	Toward The Within	various

know there are a lot of other guys who are way above me. And no matter how many fans I have, it's not going to be enough to make Grip a successful band. My name might pull a few fans over, but, really, how many drum groupies are there? So from that end, there were some doubts.

But as far as the music goes, I'm very confident. We're using my history in Slayer to try to sell the band, but I think it really stands on its own. The record sounds nothing like Slayer, and I'm proud of where I've taken myself personally and professionally. And if people give it a listen, they'll hear something totally heavy and different.

MP: You said you took a look at your own playing during your time between bands. Did that involve taking lessons or studying on your own to any degree?

DL: It was really just calling a friend of my brother-in-law and going over to his house in east L.A. for a barbecue. He came down and brought some percussion and started showing me little techniques and rudiments. I got into the different sounds and the attack of those instruments. But I

"I probably could have gotten to where I am a lot quicker if I'd taken lessons. Without them, you'll probably end up doing what I did, which was to learn by trial and error."

didn't do much in the way of playing drums. I spent a lot more time just listening to music and soaking up all these different influences that I'd deprived myself of for so long.

I've never been someone to get a lot out of sitting in a room and playing my drums for practice. I get more out of maybe playing the drums to mimic something on some piece of music or working something out that I hear in my head. The reason I play drums is because I like playing in a band context. That's where I can be most creative. I'm jamming with the guitar player or bass player, and something he'll play can trigger an entire beat for a song. That's exactly how we came up with the intro to "Savage Seas" on the new record. Waldemar [Sorychta, guitarist] played that

opening guitar run and kept repeating it, and it inspired me to put that heavy drum beat over it.

MP: Are there other things about your performance on *Power Of Inner Strength* that touch on techniques you never delved into with Slayer?

DL: I don't know about the drumming in particular, but people will notice things. For one, the drum sound is much cleaner and more powerful on the new record. There's a lot of attack, but the tones of the toms really come out. That's something I was never fully happy with on the Slayer records. When we went into the studio this last time, I wanted the toms to be a priority.

Another cool thing—and something maybe only drummers will notice—is that the kit is panned left to right from the

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drummer's perspective. Usually you hear the drums from the viewpoint of someone *looking* at the drummer. I wanted to re-create the sense of sitting in the drummer's seat. So when you hear a roll across the toms, you hear it from left to right instead of right to left.

MP: Did you find the creative process easier to come by with Grip Inc. than maybe it was in the later years of Slayer?

DL: Slayer became stifling in a way that I didn't realize until late in the game. But I was also feeling pressure that what I tried to give them wasn't good enough. I'd try something different and they'd say "No." Most of the time they'd program the drum parts they wanted to hear on a drum machine, and I had to stick to that basic idea. It wasn't a cool, fun vibe to create music under, and it didn't have much feeling to me. We didn't relate well to each other.

MP: But at least you all were in one location. With Grip, the bandmembers are spread out in L.A., Cincinnati, and Germany. How easy can creating be under those circumstances?

DL: Some of the record was a team project

and some of it was an individual process, on the part of Waldemar. To me, he was a godsend. For one, he's a producer as well as a guitar player, and he brought in his own songs. He'd send me these ninety-minute tapes just full of his music. Some of it was cheesy, but a lot of it was good. I'd call him back and tell him that I heard drum parts for certain songs.

I had certain guidelines that I wanted to stick to, things I did or didn't want the music to be. I wanted the music to be heavy, but I didn't want all of it to be fast and I didn't want the arrangements to be very complicated. I wanted to anchor the songs to one riff or idea and make them catchy, instead of forcing all sorts of weird changes. And I didn't want any satanic songs or songs denouncing anybody. I wanted songs that real people could relate to.

But in no way was I a dictator, saying I only wanted my songs on the record. I never wanted this to be "my band." I invited other ideas, and Waldemar and I clicked amazingly well. He understands my playing style and I understand where he's coming from—he plays guitar the way

I play drums.

MP: How did you come by hooking up with a guitar player from Germany?

DL: It was through this project I did in '93 called Voodoo Cult. I'd received a fax from this pop star in Germany who wanted me to do a metal project with him. I thought, "Wow! This is my chance to really explore things with different guys." I was really excited about it and I told them right away that I was into it.

That's where Waldemar came in. I have this left-handed guitar, and he picked it up, turned it around, and started jamming on it. That just blew me away. We finished eleven or twelve songs in the studio, and then they asked us to write a song right there on the spot. So we knocked ideas around for some riffs and some breaks, put them together, and two hours later Waldemar and I had put an entire song together.

That was the first time I'd ever done anything so spontaneously, and it was so contrary to the vibe Slayer had in the studio. It was relaxed and fun and not a chore. It was incredible. The whole record was great. We had Chuck Schuldiner from

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Death playing guitar, Billy Petroza from Kreator, and this guy named Philip Boa, a German pop singer who started the project. The record was only released in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria, so you can't get it in the U.S. except as an import. But I knew I wanted to work with Waldemar after that.

MP: In forming Grip Inc., what was it like going from a major arena band to a new one that fought for a record contract and will undoubtedly have to start out in the clubs?

DL: Voodoo Cult kind of prepared me for that transition because we toured a bit—a month of clubs—and I was accepting of that.

MP: In the sense that you said playing for Slayer was somewhat creatively stifling, did any of that have to do with the pressure on you to play such constant and fast double-bass parts?

DL: Absolutely, that was an intense pressure on me. In the early days, Gene Hoglan [of Death] coached me while we were in the studio. I had to push myself beyond the limits of what I thought I was capable of doing. But as Paul Bostaph said in his

Modern Drummer interview, pressure can be a real motivator. The extreme is always good for a musician, because when you come back down, everything else is easy.

I'd never played double-bass before Slayer, and my limitations then were strictly physical. My brain said I could do it, but my body was still reacting from playing a single kick for so long. The only way for me to get better and faster and build my endurance was to just do gigs—and it was also the excitement of playing live. I always played faster in the shows than I did in rehearsal.

MP: A lot of people look at your work in Slayer as setting the parameters of what could be achieved with two bass drums. Did you ever feel at any time during Slayer that you had to live up to those expectations and continually do faster work?

DL: No, because I isolated myself from other drummers and bands. I really don't focus on death metal music, and I've never listened to speed metal drummers.

MP: How has your kit changed since changing bands?

DL: I think I used two fewer toms and one less floor tom in the studio this time around

than when I was with Slayer. For live work, it's okay to have more drums. But in the studio it's better to have a smaller kit on top because you have a greater separation of notes among the toms. It's more dramatic. The same goes for the size of the drums. You can get away with the big toms live, but you get much better sound and control in the studio with smaller drums.

I don't know if this has anything to do with a smaller kit so much, but I'm really happy with the dynamic range of the drums on the new record. It's not just louder and loudest. There's a full range of volume and feel. "Guilty Of Innocence" goes in a lot of different places—the soft spots set up the heavy parts—and I like that in a lot of the new music I'm hearing.

You know, grunge took a real slamming from a lot of the metal bands. The guys in Slayer used to make fun of bands like Nirvana. But Nirvana, Soundgarden, and bands like that really brought songs and depth back into heavy music, and I found that totally inspiring. Metal bands shouldn't feel threatened by other forms of music; they should soak up all these influences and apply whatever they want to

their own music, to enhance it.

MP: Did you draw from a variety of influences when you first got into drumming?

DL: It wasn't any particular style of music that attracted me to the drums. In the real early days, my brother used to sit me in front of the stereo and put boxes in front of me. Then I remember having this little toy drum and hitting it with the toy cymbal that came with it—just stupid kid stuff. What's funny about that is just the other day, I saw little Davey in my drum room hitting one of the toms with a Paiste bell.

Anyway, when I got into school, I played in the marching bands. That's where speed came in, because we used to have to repeat these patterns in the cadences. Another drummer and I used to speed it up and blow away the teacher. I got my first drumset in sixth grade—I think it was Maxwin by Pearl. As I got older, I went out and found musicians to play with. And it was always heavy music—AC/DC, Deep Purple, even Foreigner. Slayer was the first original band I ever played in.

MP: You'd said you didn't have any formal training on the drums, that you didn't

take lessons. Did you just naturally develop in terms of your technique and speed?

DL: Yeah, but I'll tell you, I probably could have gotten to where I am a lot quicker if I'd taken lessons. Without them, you'll probably end up doing what I did, which was to learn by trial and error. And sometimes you don't learn because you don't know you're making mistakes. You might be doing something and getting by with it, but you'll never know that there's a more efficient way that could really improve your speed and endurance.

One of the big problems I had in my later days with Slayer was my double-bass playing. There came a time when I couldn't play anymore. I had to really strain to play the fast parts that I used to do with no problem. My mind said I could do it, but my body couldn't pull it off. I couldn't figure out what had happened. I'd been in an auto accident—nothing major—but I thought maybe it was from that. Still, the other guys in the band got pretty frustrated with me.

As it turned out, it was just a case of my seat getting higher and higher as I went

from drum tech to drum tech. You go on tour, you do different things, and you don't have the hands-on involvement with your kit. You don't get to know your drums by taking them apart and changing heads as you would at home. You may not notice an inch or two difference in the height of your seat. So eventually, my seat got higher, my drums got lower, and it stayed like that during the *South Of Heaven* tour when we went out with Judas Priest. It took my getting out of Slayer and familiarizing myself with my drums again to notice how my seat height had changed.

Another thing that helped me figure things out was a fax from a doctor who had written about proper drum and body positioning to get the most out of your movement. He said that your leg should be at a 90° angle for the most efficient movement. Any higher and you're straining. Any lower and you're not getting enough leverage. After learning all that, I'm back, good as new.

MP: I notice you keep your heels only about an inch off the ground and that your feet are really far back on your pedals. Has



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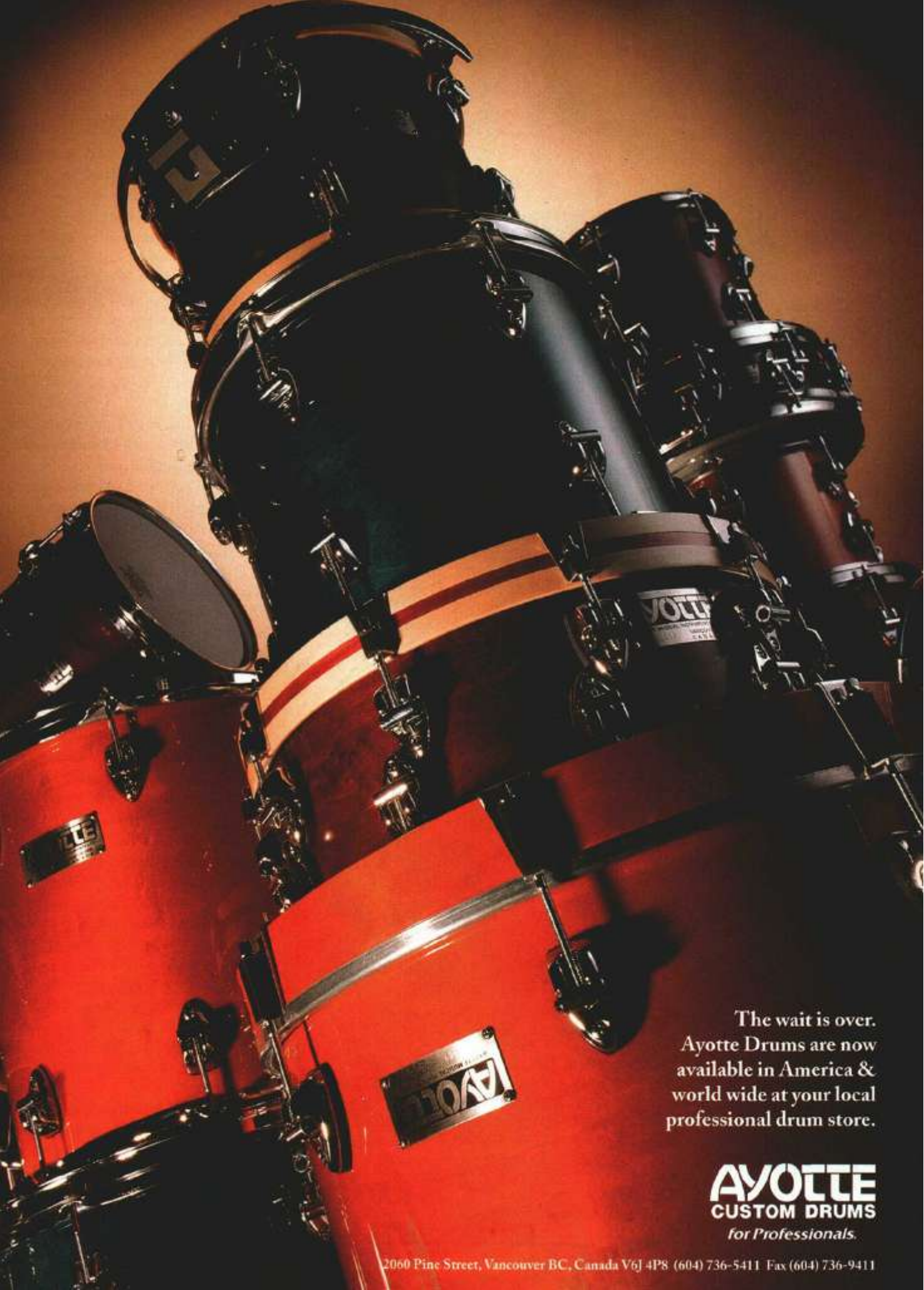
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it always been like that?

DL: I think so, although it's something I've never really thought much about. There's a place on the pedal that they call the sweet spot, but that sweet spot's going to be in different places for different people, and I believe every drummer has to find his or her own sweet spot just from playing and experimenting.

A lot of kids come up to me and ask how I get the double-bass flying so fast, but there's no secret to it. What works for me may not work for somebody else. So whenever my feet are on the pedal, that's just something that feels comfortable to me. In fact, until you pointed it out, I never thought about my feet being far back on the pedals.

One thing that has a lot to do with how fast you can play—and I found this out from first-hand experience—is how your drums are set up and how comfortable the setup is to play. If any part of your playing doesn't feel right, like if you're having to reach real far to get to a crash cymbal, there's probably something you can do to make the movement easier, more efficient.

MP: You're left-handed, but you play a kit set up for a righty. Have you ever experimented with moving your ride cymbal to the other side?

DL: No, it's always been like this. I started out holding the sticks like this [demonstrating a reversed traditional grip], but my drum teacher said, "No, you're going to learn the *right* way." In the end, I think that helped me because it forced my right hand to get as strong as my left.

There are some advantages to being left-handed on a right-handed kit. My snare hand is stronger, for one. But there's a downside, too. I can't play the Latin ride patterns very cleanly. I probably could ride

- with my left hand and get better speed and finesse if I worked at it.

MP: Was it ever a problem getting around the toms? I'd think you would naturally start a roll across the toms with your left hand, and that leading with your right would take some work to get it comfortable.

DL: I lead with my left hand and double the last beat on my left hand so that my right hand is free to hit the crash. It's not something I've ever thought about; I've just always done it. And that's probably another advantage: Since I double that last



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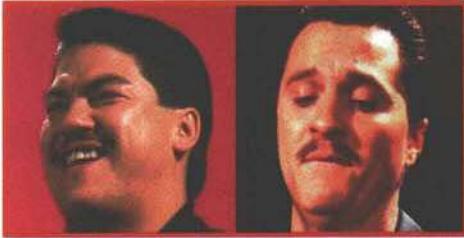
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tom stroke, my right hand doesn't have to whip up so fast to get to the crash. I can bring my arm back that much further and get more momentum going into the crash. I lead my double-kick patterns with my left foot, too.

MP: When you hit the road with Grip Inc., are you going to do some Slayer songs, too?

DL: We've been getting requests for them. To tell you the truth, I'd like to play some of those Slayer songs, especially the ones from *South Of Heaven*. I had trouble doing some of those consistently before, and now I could just explode on them. We played some of those songs in Voodoo Cult and they sounded great. Now I'd like to play all the fast, heavy double-bass songs—"War Ensemble," "Silent Scream," "Angel Of Death," a bunch of others—just to show Slayer, and anybody who doubts it, that Dave's back.



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Tension And Release

by Ken Micallef

In the history of jazz only a small handful of artists have had the talent and style to stamp their recordings with their own personal vision. We automatically think of *leaders* such as Coltrane, Monk, and Miles—but the sinew, the backbone of their work has been in their rhythm sections. Think of McCoy Tyner's propulsive chordal flourishes with Coltrane, Ben Riley's enthusiastic pulse with Monk, or Herbie Hancock's dizzying, architectural intensity with Miles, and you begin to see where the contributions between leader and sideman blur; where the rhythm section player's commentary is as important as the leader's composition.

With Keith Jarrett, Jan Garbarek, Miroslav Vitous, Terje Rypdal, and Charles Lloyd, among others, Jon Christensen has helped to forge a unique, original jazz imprint that has only deepened over his thirty years as a musician. In Norway and abroad, his sprawling, elastic time interpretation and remarkable cymbal style have been elemental in defining the ECM sound.

Founded in 1969, ECM (Editions of Contemporary Music) has been home to a revolutionary school of musicians (including at one time or another the likes of Chick Corea, Ralph Towner, Pat Metheny, John Abercrombie, Paul Motian, Steve Reich, Kenny Wheeler, and Gary Burton). They took the freedom of American jazz, then reshaped and infused it with European classical music, impressionistic thoughtfulness, and pastoral folk musics. Call it jazz born of the wide-open mountain ranges as well as the gritty urban environs.

Christensen developed his style as a young bop drummer at Oslo's premier jazz club, the Metropol. Backing Dexter Gordon, Stan Getz, Ben Webster, and Bud Powell, Christensen learned the art of swing. Later, with the core ECM rhythm section of pianist Bobo Stenson and bassist Palle Danielson (who became part of seminal groups led by Keith Jarrett and Jan Garbarek), the unschooled drummer began playing in "waves," similarly erasing bar lines and expected jazz rhythms as the soloist would stretch and unwind.

Along with his contemporaries Tony Williams and Jack DeJohnette, Christensen changed the drummer's role in jazz from timekeeper to rhythmic/melodic inventor, colorist, and commentator. His ability to deconstruct jazz rhythms over the entire kit, while still swinging with ferocious energy, is equaled only by his crystalline cymbal work and unusual melding of loose rock rhythms within freely interpreted jazz structures.

Christensen is as busy today as ever, occasionally gigging with his own group, Masquelero (three albums on ECM), while recording many, many albums as a sideman. The flowing, rolling, unleashed drumming that first appeared on Jan Garbarek's *Witchi-Tai-To* has only grown and become more majestic on releases such as Charles Lloyd's *Fish Out Of Water* and Knut Riisnaes' *Odin* recording with John Scofield.

Humble and scoffing at compliments, Jon Christensen nonetheless displays a trait that marks all great artists: the refinement of personal expression and vision within an unyielding search for the *core* of the music.

KM: You continually develop your style of independence and beautiful cymbal work, but I noticed on a Knut Riisnaes album with John Scofield and Palle Danielson that you've incorporated a lot of percussion into your set. That was surprising.

JC: I just wanted to add the percussion that I've bought over the years, almost trying to make it sound like two drummers. I played the drumset first and then overdubbed the percussion, which I've been doing on some other ECM records as well.

KM: Tracing your drumming back, you've always been very fluid with the ability to allude to different rhythms simultaneously. On Terje Rypdal's *Descendre* (1980), you play with such a sense of freedom while addressing the time. Has there been a constant in your approach?

JC: In the beginning I was influenced by the American drummers, of course, starting with Zutty Singleton, Buddy Rich, Gene Krupa, Jo Jones, and then later, Art



Blakey, Max Roach, and Elvin Jones. Later on in Norway, we started playing jazz that was not influenced by American musicians. It

got a little freer for me because I could interact with the guys in the band, not being only a timekeeper in the background. The tunes were not based on standards or the usual AABA changes. Instead we played in waves. That's when I began skipping a downbeat here and there, playing more loosely and with longer forms. Over the years I matured a little and I could leave bars out or change the pulse instead of playing literally all the time. It grows on you after a while.

KM: On *Descendre* you suspend the conventional roles of hi-hat, cymbal, and drums, moving the pulse from source to source. How does one develop that way of hearing and playing things?

JC: A drummer should talk to the musicians in the band, so if you start trying this on stage they won't be shocked! Instead of putting the ride pattern entirely on the ride cymbal, I've tried to break it up over the set, breaking down the rhythm on the snare, floor tom, cymbal, mounted tom...and also breaking it up between my hands.

KM: On Jan Garbarek's *Wichi-Tai-To* (1973), which was early in your career, your approach was raw, yet the same. On Charles Lloyd's *Fish Out Of Water* (1990), you developed it to an art. What were you thinking about?

JC: Working with great musicians is part of the process, listening to them and

Far Northern Releases

Here are the albums Jon says best represent his drumming...

Artist	Album (Label)
Jan Garbarek	Wichi-Tai-To (ECM)
Ralph Towner	Solstice (ECM)
Keith Jarrett	My Song (ECM)
Keith Jarrett	Belonging (ECM)
Charles Lloyd	Fish Out Of Water (ECM)
Masqualero	Bande A Part (ECM)
Masqualero	Aero (ECM)
Masqualero	Re-Enter (ECM)
Terje Rypdal	Descendre (ECM)
Dave Liebman	Far North (Curling Legs)
Knut Riisnaes	Knut Riisnaes (Odin)

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

Artist	Album	Drummer
Miles Davis	Milestones	Philly Joe Jones
The Jazz Messengers	Live At Birdland	Art Blakey
John Coltrane	Ballads	Elvin Jones
John Coltrane	Live At Birdland	Elvin Jones
Tony Williams Lifetime	Emergency	Tony Williams
Charles Lloyd	Forest Flower	Jack DeJohnette
Charles Lloyd	Live At Monterey	Jack DeJohnette

plus Zutty Singleton with Louis Armstrong, Jo Jones with Count Basie, and Buddy Rich with various artists

sometimes playing against what they're doing, sometimes playing with or against the bassist or pianist. You're keeping a flow in the rhythm section for the soloist to play over. Some players want the basic bebop style, but the guys I'm working with are very open. Tony Williams and Jack DeJohnette would often play things on the drums that didn't necessarily have anything to do with the tune or the soloist. You create a drum solo or commentary during the tune.

KM: Dave Liebman is a very strong and adventurous saxophonist. What did he bring out of you?

JC: He's very demanding, and playing with him is different from Scofield, for instance, who is more of a blues player. With Liebman it was much more free—"sheets of sound" are what we went for.

KM: What did you pull out of the bag for Scofield?

JC: All my old rock

'n' roll tricks. I began playing rock 'n' roll in the '50s when it *was* rock 'n' roll. Now it's just heavy hitting on 2 and 4. Then it was different, it was rolling.

I played bebop and blues with Scofield, too. He's a nice guy and I enjoy working with him. And he loves shuffles.

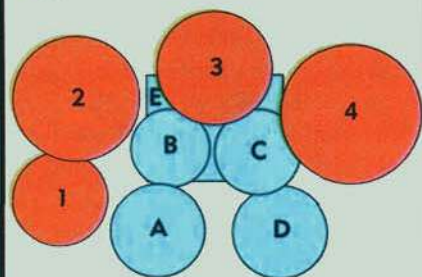
KM: Your cymbal work really helped define the ECM sound.

JC: Manfred Eicher [ECM label founder and producer] loves cymbals. A cymbal has a lot of overtones when it's ringing—deep, high, whatever. I think we tried to explore a lot of the different sounds available from a cymbal on record. We experimented with hitting a cymbal with different parts of a stick, or on different areas of the cymbal. That has been part of the music since ECM began in 1969.

And I've had the same cymbals now for thirty years.



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They're the old Turkish K Zildjians. They're almost green now, since I never polish them. I think I can start growing things on them now. [laughs]

KM: Have you developed your concept of cymbal playing consciously?

JC: I think so, although I'm not a trained drummer—I never studied. I can't play a proper roll and I have very little organized technique, like paradiddles and such. I just play what I feel. I never practice, I just go up on stage and play.

KM: You never practiced when you

were young?

JC: No, I lived in an apartment in Oslo where the neighbors weren't crazy about hearing a guy playing the drums. But I was performing a lot. I was the house drummer at the Metropoli club in Oslo, and I was fortunate to play with all the old masters, like Dexter Gordon, Ben Webster, Bud Powell, Kenny Dorham, and a lot of other guys. After that, I did a lot of tours. I think I did all of my practicing on stage.

KM: I'm still curious about your cymbal development. You get such a wealth of sounds out of them.

JC: I was not playing a lot of toms or snare, so I *had* to concentrate on the cymbals. I found that by hitting the cymbals hard, loose, or soft, I could get variations. And I always used heavy sticks with no plastic tips, because the ride cymbal is so thick and heavy that it needs a little bit of a beating before it starts to come alive.

My cymbals are angled in such a way that I can get a lot of sounds from them. If they're too steep or flat I can't get the right feel, either. I have them set so I feel like I'm "pushing" them instead of playing on top. Playing the cymbals just came out of the way I was listening to the music at that moment, and playing with all these different guys. It seemed to work for what we were doing.

KM: What prompted you all to play so loosely and over the bar lines in long waves?

JC: Instead of eight-bar phrases it was more like creating something all the way...the soloist would play a long line and I would develop from that, and not hit on beat 1. I would develop the rhythm of his line and continue it after his solo stopped. There was no reason to label beat 1 because we were going further.

KM: Drummers spend a lot of time developing metric modulation or the ability to play advanced polyrhythms. You often allude to other rhythms during the pulse. You learned all of that naturally?

JC: I think so. And sometimes if I'm playing a 4/4 beat, I like to play triplets or other groupings in another tempo, or play completely free. But I always keep the pulse going. Somebody has to play some type of pulse or everything will be free. If a couple of guys are free and the others are keeping some time, then it will create a good tension. We always talk about it, and keep eye

"In Norway we started playing jazz that was not influenced by American musicians. It got a little freer...we played in waves. That's when I began skipping a downbeat here and there, playing more loosely and with longer forms."

contact in the freer sections.

KM: Your drumming with Charles Lloyd, Ralph Towner, or Miroslav Vitous is very liquid and elastic, going from 8th-note streams to triplet streams.

JC: Sometimes we call it the "rubber rhythm." You can stretch it any way you want to.

KM: I heard you went in and overdubbed all the drumming to John Abercrombie's *Animato* after he had recorded all the guitar synths and electronics.

JC: I also did some overdubbing with Zakir Hussain and L Shankar. Manfred Eicher will often call me if he wants me to improvise over someone's music.

KM: On Ralph Towner's *Solstice* you play a very linear funk groove on "Piscean Dance."

JC: It was just happening in the studio and I started to play that beat and he added his part—it wasn't rehearsed.

KM: But did you keep up with American drummers in the '80s, such as Steve Gadd, Billy Cobham? Your funk sounds a bit like them.

JC: I always listen to American drummers. I think every drummer has a special thing that sticks out, like Cobham and his enormous technique and the way he played. I *tried* to copy his ambidexterity, but it didn't work for me.

KM: Then there are times I've heard you

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play what are essentially rock beats, but you reinterpret them and make them your own.

JC: Well, I don't play rock. I dig what guys like Weckl and Chad Wackerman do, but when I approach it it's more loose.

KM: And your playing is similar to Paul

Motian.

JC: Yes. He can play one note on the cymbal, let it ring for a long time, and you can still feel the beat. It's hidden.

KM: You sound as if you play lightly. Is that a misconception?

JC: Sometimes in the studio you hear

yourself so clearly, there's no reason to bash. But when I'm playing clubs and concerts I play pretty loud, sometimes with the butt of the stick on the edge of the cymbals.

When I'm on tour I will normally bring my own drums from Oslo, but on the tour I'm currently on, the drums are provided, so I just bring the cymbals. That's a challenge too, to play drums that I'm not used to.

KM: So are we hearing the same cymbals on all your ECM records?

JC: I mainly use three cymbals now, two of which have been with me for thirty years.

KM: Do you like the new cymbals?

JC: Since I'm not crazy about going into the shop and testing cymbals, I stick with mine. I bought an Istanbul in Turkey and I have some old Paistes, but the old cymbals sound great, look nice, and don't have those big advertising stamps on them. They are made by the old craftsmen in the old Turkish tradition. The new cymbals try to copy those old cymbals. There are so many brands, like Jack DeJohnette's signature series—those hard, metal plates. Only he can play those.

KM: Your brushwork on some records seems similar to your stick concept.

JC: I play brushes in a traditional way, because when I started they were essential for ballads. You'd also use them during the melody of tunes and for some solos. Now I just might make sounds with them, floating

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around the snare drum or hitting some cymbals, but it really depends on the tune.

KM: Are the Norwegian musicians influenced by the folk music of your country?

JC: Sure, we heard it on the radio and we grew up with it. But now everyone is mixing styles as part of this ethnic thing, which

I think is bullshit in a way. But it was clear to us as kids that as we played we'd bring in elements of the folk music, although drums haven't been used that much in Norwegian folk music.

KM: The music you play with ECM is very different from the jazz that is publi-

cized here in the U.S. Your music is free and impressionistic, versus what's happening here with the adherence to the past that players like James Carter and Joshua Redman espouse. What's your take on that?

JC: I think there are a few different kinds of players in the U.S.—the young guys in suits playing neo-bebop, the older guys, the established stars, and then a few free players. There are so many styles. What I don't like is that the young guys are so adamant in their beliefs. If a guy is twenty-two you'd think he might have a little respect for the guys who came before him. I see these guys at festivals demanding limousines and everything.

First of all, they should learn how to play. Music comes from people before you. If it wasn't for Ben Webster, there wouldn't have been a Dexter Gordon or a John Coltrane. If you're going to be a serious musician, you have to check out what has come before.

KM: Kenny Washington says most of the young drummers just want to hear Tony Williams, Jack DeJohnette, or maybe Elvin, but not Kenny Clarke or Jo Jones.

JC: He's right! I went on tour with Kenny in Australia, we did some clinics together. There was one session in Melbourne with thirty drummers, and Kenny kept telling them, "Hey guys, you should really check out Max." But when you live in Melbourne you can't just go down to the Village Vanguard and hear Max Roach. It's easier



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KM: In the '80s you co-led a group with bassist Arild Andersen called Masqualero [the albums *Bande A Part*, *Re-Enter*, and *Aero*]. Was there a particular goal for the group?

JC: Arild and I had played in the old days with Jan Garbarek and Terje Rypdal. We also had Nils Molvaer on trumpet, Tore Brunborg on saxophones, and John Balke on piano and keyboards. The band was together for ten years. We did tours in the States and in Europe.

KM: With Keith Jarrett [*Belonging*, *Nude Ants*, *My Song*] you seem to play more in the pocket than with other artists.

JC: Keith has his tunes, and Palle Danielson and I supplied the bass and drums, but it was still loose. Sometimes we were totally free. On *My Song* it's basically one song after another, so there wasn't room to stretch out. We were presenting melodies. Also, it was not easy to play with Keith, because I had so much respect for him. I didn't think it was the right time to bash away. I wanted to check out what his ideas were, to try to find out how I could best fit in with that kind of playing.

KM: What do you listen to now?

JC: I don't buy as many records as I used to. In the old days if there was a new Miles Davis or Coltrane or Bill Evans record out I'd buy it right away. There are no new sounds like that anymore. My daughter is twenty-four and she's always playing her CDs. I listen to classical and some folk music.

KM: How has your playing changed through the years?

JC: I basically think I'm a simple drummer. I don't play too many things. I want to set up a groove and keep it going with all kinds of variations. I think my concept isn't that different now than from when I did my first record with Jan Garbarek [*Africapepperbird* with Arild Andersen and Terje Rypdal]. I haven't started any new way of playing, although maybe I've brought in some new elements.

KM: I think you've refined your style to a very fluid point, especially on *Fish Out Of Water*.

JC: I played so loosely with Scofield that he had some trouble with it. With Palle and I opening up, we had to have long discussions with John about how to approach the rhythm section.

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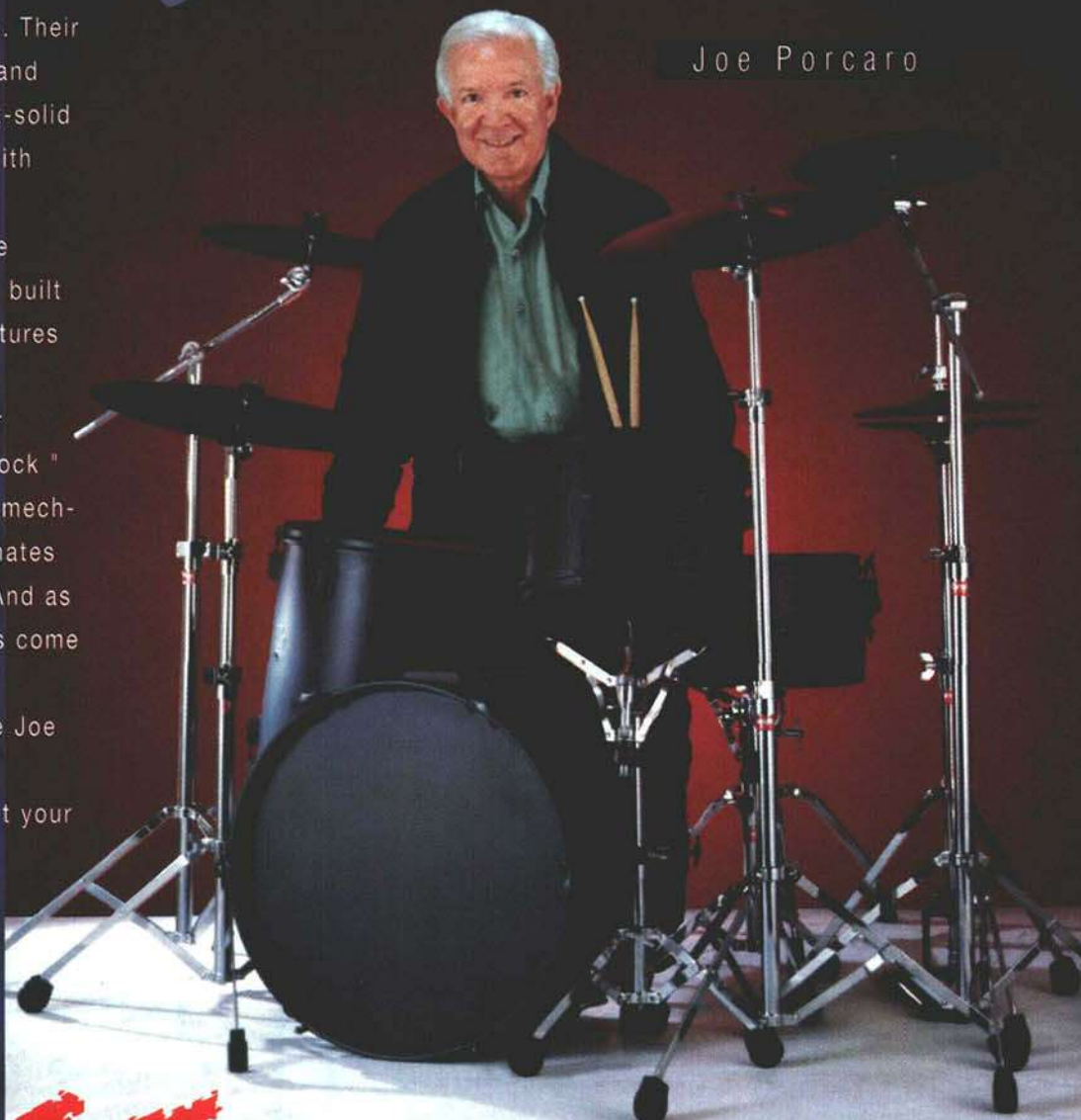
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KM: Your affinity with Bobo Stenson and Palle is so strong as a trio that I would imagine it would be tough for anyone to just walk in and play with you.

JC: No, no, everyone can play with us.

KM: Looking back to early in your career, when you were the house drummer at the Metropol in Oslo and you were playing with the likes of Dexter Gordon, Bud Powell, Stan Getz, and Ben Webster, that must have been a profound experience for you.

JC: I used to go to the different musicians'

hotels and pick them up and take them around. I got to know some heavy guys. At that time I was basically into Art Blakey and Max Roach, but Dexter Gordon said, "You're not black, you're not from Harlem, and you're twenty years old. Just play what *you* feel. That's okay with me." That was a big comfort to me. He gave me some very good advice, which I followed. I learned a lot from him.

I also played with Don Ellis at the Metropol, which was totally out. We would just stand around the piano holding it, and

nobody was playing anything. Then he passed around cards with numbers on them and we were supposed to play what was on the card.

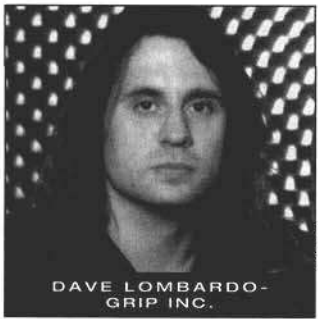
KM: You also played on a few George Russell albums.

JC: I played on and off with him for ten years and recorded three albums with him. Playing with his sextet and big band was a very important time in my life. It was my first big band experience and I had to read the music, because I had to play all those arrangements. That was a big challenge. I had to listen to the old records and learn by memory, too. It was a nice experience.

KM: What's coming out with you in the future?

JC: I recently did a record with Dave Liebman and Bobo Stenson on a Norwegian label [Curling Legs] called *Far North*. I'm also on a new ECM record with David Darling on cello, Terje Rypdal on guitar, and Ketyl Bjornstad on piano. It's funny, but I've been lucky enough to play with good players in Norway as well as the stars from around the world.


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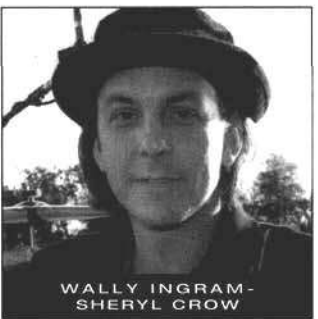
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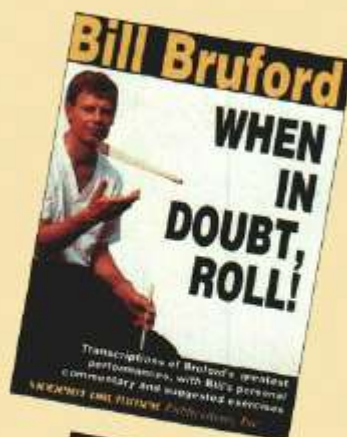
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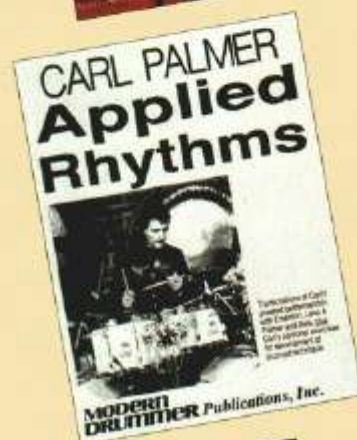
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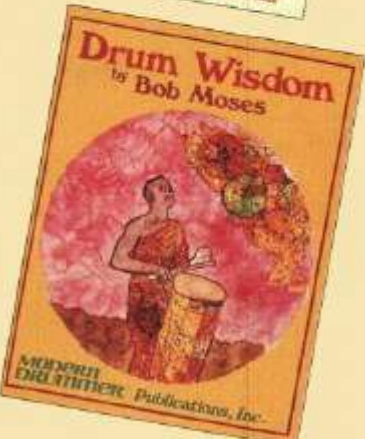
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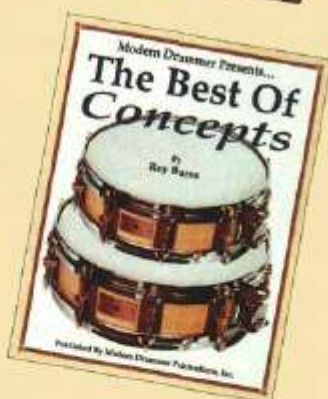
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MOD12

Moyes

Lucas

The Right Man For The Job

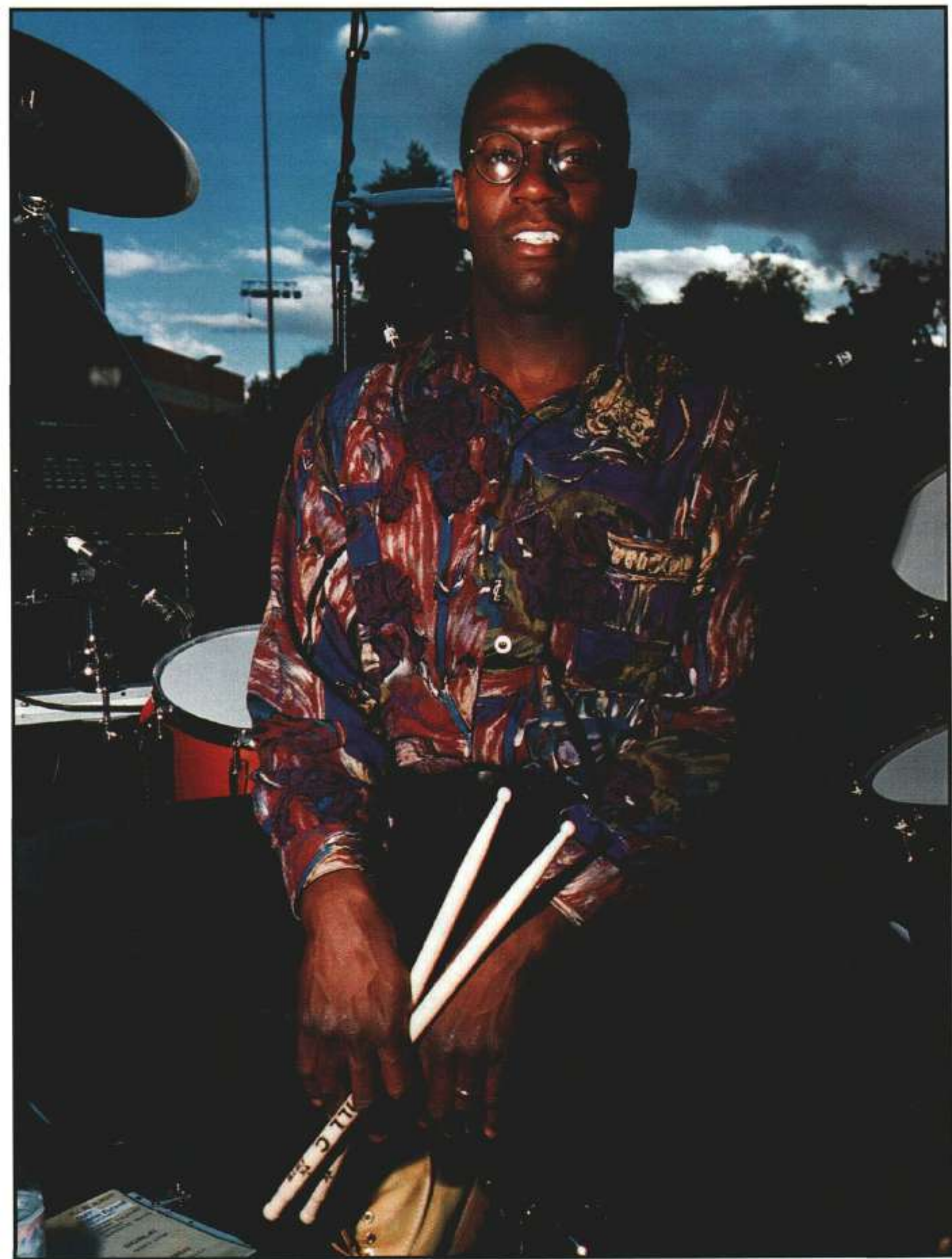
When Moyes Lucas was twenty-three years old, his father sat him down. He felt his son was directionless: Moyes hadn't committed himself to the family business, and he'd already gone through a divorce.

"My father told me a story about how he had always wanted to be involved in the automotive world," Moyes remembers, "how his mother only had enough money to put one child through school, and it wasn't him. So he joined the military, where they said he could do anything he wanted to do. When he said he wanted to be involved in the automotive world, they said, 'Sorry, we need electricians.' So he's been an electrician all his life, and he built his own business doing it. What he said to me was, 'Look, I took this and made this the best I possibly could for my family, because I had responsibilities.'"

Mr. Lucas's lecture backfired, though. Moyes gleaned a different message altogether. "I took it as, here's this guy who let his dream go and has regretted it his whole life. I had a girlfriend at the time who said, 'You're such a good drummer. You'll never know how far you can take it unless you pursue it.' So I started getting serious. I quit all the day jobs I had and did nothing but play drums. I started losing money, starving and scraping, but things eventually picked up."

Things have indeed "picked up" for Lucas. Over the past fifteen years he has gigged with some of the biggest names in the recording business, and he did it by learning how to audition and getting out there and playing for people. His tenacity has paid off, landing him extended gigs with artists such as Jeffrey Osborne, the Crusaders, Dionne Warwick, George Michael, and Dianna Ross, as well as his current ongoing gig with Steve Perry.

**By Robyn Flans
Photos By Lissa Wales**



The very first time Moyes Lucas "bucked" his dad was at age fourteen, when his father insisted on buying his drum-loving son a Sears kit. Moyes insisted on Ludwig. "My father said, 'If you want one, you're going to have to buy it yourself,'" Moyes recalls. "So I scrimped and saved and bought a drumset from a guy who, ironically, was working at the University of Washington on this new idea of electronic drums. I bought this guy's blue sparkle Ludwig drumkit for \$300, complete with Zildjian cymbals, and I used that kit through high school."

After having grown up in Spokane and Seattle with classical training, the sixteen-year-old turned to jazz and some private lessons. One of his early inspirations came from Herbie Hancock's classic recording "Chameleon," which he actually heard for the first time played on the sound system before a Chicago concert.

"When I heard Harvey Mason doing that little marching drum thing I thought, 'What's that?' Through the whole concert, I

remember thinking I had to find out who that was. I actually went to a record store and sang the song to the clerk, and he figured out which tune I was talking about. The funny thing about that tune is that everyone always plays just that first section, but there's a later section that goes through all these time changes, which is so cool."

'Playing with singers is about giving them what they need to be inspired to do their job every night. If I come off stage and people are going, 'Wow, man, you stole the show,' I did something wrong.'

While Lucas's parents preferred that their son go to a general college, Moyes insisted on going to Berklee School of Music in Boston. After one year, however, he left, though he still likes to tell the story of his brief stay there.

"When I saw the literature they sent, I had these dreams of getting to study with Alan Dawson and doing all these great things with all these great players. When I got there they were remodeling the dorms. They had a bad rodent problem, too. My first night at Berklee was like this: I met my roommate, and after a while we turned in, shutting off the lights. I was on the lower bunk and he was on the single bed. Well, we started to hear this scratching



noise. I flipped the lights on and the floor was *moving*—there were roaches like you wouldn't believe. I called downstairs and they said, 'Come down and get some *Raid*. And you'll have to sign up for the exterminator, who comes once a week.' So I put on some clothes and went downstairs, and there was a line of people waiting to sign up for the exterminator. I took the *Raid* up to the room and sprayed it, and then the room was too rank to stay in. That was my warm welcome to the Berklee College of Music.

"Then when I got to school it turned out that since I was a freshman I got the last choice of available classes. The seniors and juniors got first pick of Alan Dawson, so of course there was nothing left over. Alan Dawson was out of the picture."

Instead, Lucas hooked up with a teacher by the name of Fred Buda, who helped him with his left hand and his snare drum technique. "To strengthen your left hand, you put it in the lead position instead of the right hand, which I normally use. Everything I did with him, I had to lead with the left, and I played all of those exercises on the left side instead of the right, which was good for me."

But even the progress he was making with Buda couldn't hold Lucas at Berklee. "I ran out of money, and I didn't enjoy the school. I didn't want to believe it at the time, but the pressure of being in Boston during those times was intense. It was during the Boston riots and all the unrest, and racially the city was ready to go off. My roommate was white, and there were places around town where we couldn't walk together. I was used to prejudice, but not out-and-out bigotry.

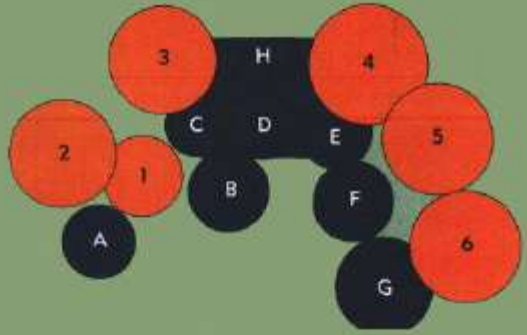
"When that plane was flying back to Washington state," Moyes continues, "I could feel the weight lifting off of me. I got back to Washington and ended up attending Western Washington State College, which was a dream come true. I was back with my high school buddies, there was a great jazz band director named Bill Cole, and we ate, slept, and drank music. There were a few bars in town where we could actually play jazz a couple of nights a week, and I worked almost every night playing music."

Moyes felt his playing was really coming along, but due to pressure from home to work with his father, he changed his major to electrical engineering. But as fate would have it, the calls soon began to come for Moyes. He started doing some sessions and working with artists who were coming to town without rhythm sections, such as Ernie Watts and Joe Henderson. That, coupled with his dad's lecture, lit a spark in Lucas.

For the next couple of years Moyes played with Dan Siegel, who also gave him the opportunity to record. Then Kenny G, with whom Lucas had played a few gigs, recommended him to Jeff Lorber. Lorber turned out to be Lucas's first big break, even though the leader wasn't knocked out by the drummer's audition.

"I don't think I was really sure about what you do when you audition," Moyes admits. "At that particular point in time I really didn't think I understood what 'playing a groove' meant. When he saw me live, he saw me in a situation that I was really comfortable in. I wasn't thinking about it, I was just playing for the music. He liked the energy and what was happening on stage. I think a lot of good players just don't audition well, and I think he took that into consideration.

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Electronics: KAT Controller, Akai S 950, Roland drum machine, and lots of miscellaneous stuff

Strong Medicine

Here are the albums Moyes lists as the ones most representative of his drumming.

Artist	Album Title
Steve Perry	For The Love Of Strange Medicine
Dan Siegel	Northern Nights
Dan Siegel	Dan Siegel
Dan Siegel	Birds Of A Feather
Dan Siegel	Going Home
Richard Smith	Rockin' The Boat
Richard Smith	Bella Firenze
Diana Ross	Live At Wembley

Moyes says he also listens to Toto, Earth, Wind & Fire, Miles Davis, Herbie Hancock, Rufus & Chaka Kahn, and anything with Dennis Chambers, Jeff Porcaro, Steve Ferrone, Max Roach, Philly Joe Jones, Tony Williams, Vinnie Colaiuta, Harvey Mason, and Billy Cobham.

"When I get called for an audition now, I study that artist's work so I know it like the back of my hand. I research the drummers who have played on the records, I analyze all their fills, and I study their work in the songs. If there are only two songs I have to learn for the audition, I still learn the whole record. I'll put headphones on and practice the whole thing. If I don't get a fill right, I'll stop and work it out so I learn the song just like the guy who played it. If you play the song with *that* feel, the artist is going to think, 'That guy took the time to really check out my record.'

"Auditioning for a band where there's a singer, where you're put in a situation in which you have to perform someone else's material, is not about walking in and showing all your stuff. Playing with singers is about giving them what they need to be inspired to do *their* job every night. You practice and get your chops up so you can handle any situation that comes at you, but nine times out of ten, the situation involves playing *music*, which is a completely different thing. If you go to see a band like Steps Ahead, the drummer has a role as strong as every member in the band, so he can be highlighted. But if you see someone like Steve Perry, the highlight of the show is Steve, and the band is in a supporting role. If I come off stage and people are going, 'Wow, man, you stole the show,' I did something wrong."

Lucas says that with Lorber, he learned how much he *didn't* know about drumming. "I had played in a lot of fusion and some



rock 'n' roll situations, and I had a good amount of chops, but I never really understood what it was to play a groove and make that a viable part of how to play. When you're playing a groove, the whole idea is that the accents fall in the right spot. I had the tendency when I was playing to sometimes forget what I was playing and

start throwing the accents in a bunch of different places. You end up losing the groove that way. I think I was more of a top player—cymbals and toms. I think most of the great groovers are more bottom players—bass drum and snare.

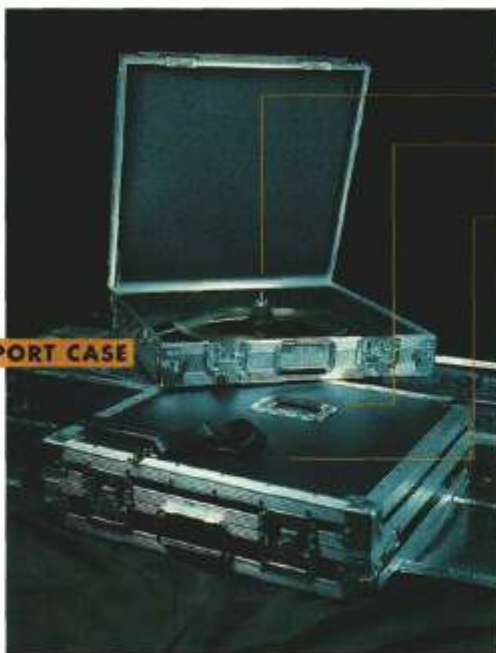
"When I was with Jeff Lorber," Moyes admits, "it was a constant struggle to cop



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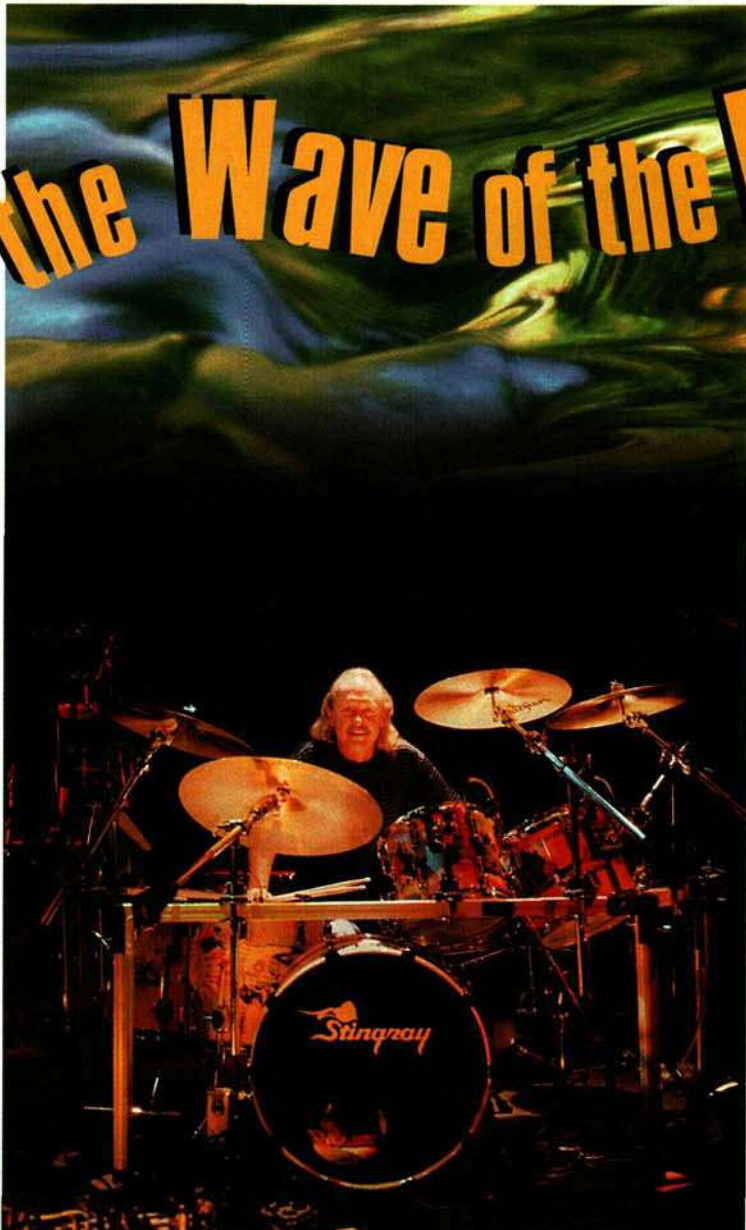
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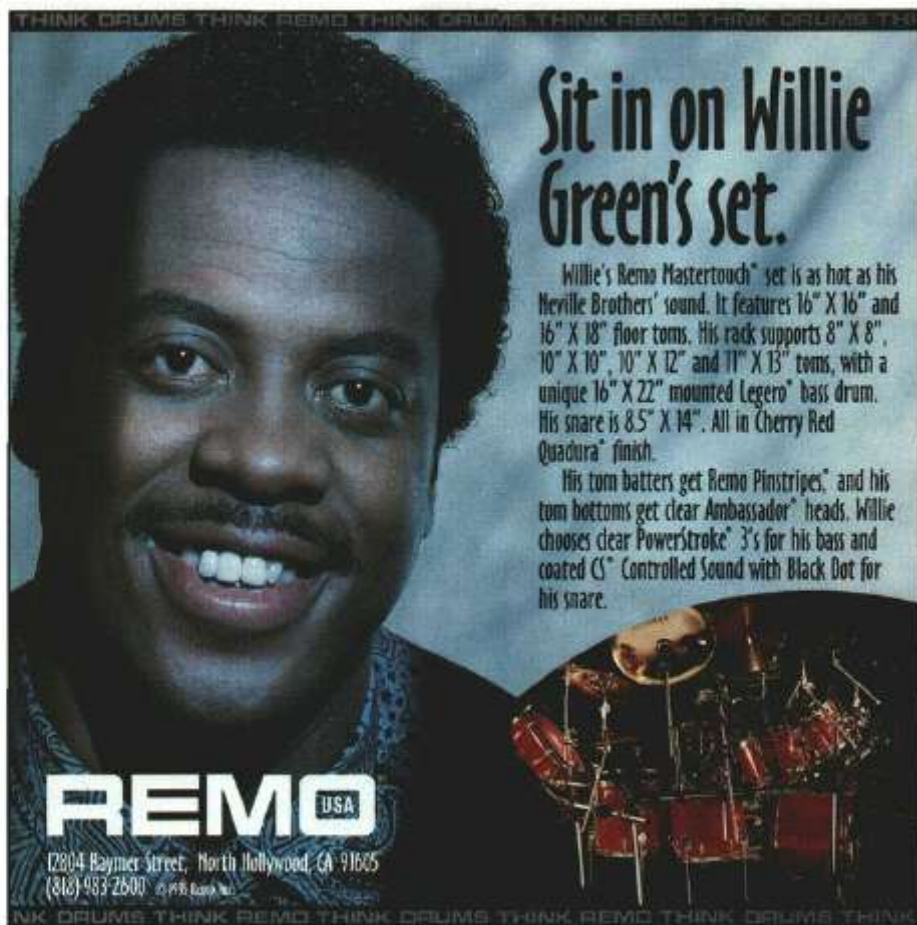
those grooves. I started listening to more groove-oriented drummers. I started playing on the side with Kenny G, who was also working with Lorber at the time, and as Kenny was splitting with Jeff, there was a row between those guys and I ended up losing Lorber's gig after three years."

In 1984, Lucas decided to throw himself in the deep end by moving to L.A. to see how he would "stack up." He began by working with the Rippingtons as they were forming, back in 1985. Lucas says their percussionist, Steve Reid, was instrumental in getting him known in town. Later that year, though, he auditioned for gigs with Jeffrey Osborne and the Crusaders, both of which he landed.

"When I auditioned for Jeffrey Osborne...what an awakening!" Lucas says, humbly. "I realized I had gotten to maybe stage two of my groove playing, and all of a sudden I got a stage-six gig. I had learned a lot more about playing grooves that applied to what Jeff Lorber was doing, and I felt pretty good about it. When I came to L.A., I was playing with a lot of players who were fusion-oriented, so it was fitting. But Jeffrey Osborne's gig was more from a funk drummer's point of view. I thought I had played funk before, but it was the tip of the iceberg."

Moyes explains that he probably got the Osborne gig because of a strong audition. "I called when I heard about the auditions, but I couldn't get one, so I went down and hung out. Jeffrey pulled up in a car and I introduced myself and told him what the deal was. He suggested I come back later on. I went home, practiced some more, and came back at 5:00. I stood there and watched drummers audition from 5:00 to 11:00. One thing I noticed about every drummer, especially on the ballads, was that they started out really good, but they'd always pull way back by the middle. I was thinking, 'These things are turning into dirges. When I get called for a ballad, that ballad has got to maintain its tempo!'

"At 11:00 the last guy hadn't shown up, so they said I could play if I wanted. Boom, I was there! I had five minutes to set up the kit, so I put my orange juice down and rearranged a couple of things. The musical director said, 'You know the tunes, right?' I said, 'Yeah.' He said we were going to do 'Stay With Me Tonight.' I said, 'Okay, one, two, three...' and I was playing and think-



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ing, 'This is *not* going to slow down!' We got done with the song, and the bass player and I just cracked up. We played another song that was a ballad, and I was thinking, 'This is *not* going to move!' We played three songs and the tour manager pulled me off to the side and wanted my number for a call back. That's how I got the gig.


"I just didn't understand how simply you have to play when you are playing funk. It's a completely different thing from playing fusion. I loved playing Jeffrey's music. He gave me an opportunity to really learn—on-the-job training. I had to learn how to tap into what feels good when you're playing and to be consistent with it."

During his three years with Osborne, the Crusaders offered an interesting challenge to Moyes as well. "Their audition was strange," he laughs. "We never got through a whole song. They would stop me every bar with, 'No, no, no, we're coming from *this* kind of thing....' They put me through so much stuff that I just assumed I didn't get the gig. I thought, 'Well, chalk this one up to experience.' If I got the feel right on a song, they stopped and said, 'Okay, that's the feel, so we don't have to do that.' But somehow I got the gig.

"The Crusaders were hard because it was like two leaders on stage, Joe Sample and Wilton Felder. Wilton was telling me to play at one tempo and Joe was telling me to play at another. I saw them ream bass players night after night, and I was sitting there thinking, 'Eventually it's going to be me they're going to do this to.' I grew up with their records and I loved playing the music, though. I tried to play like Stix Hooper for that gig, which is one of the things I think they liked about me, that I didn't try to be modern with it."

Lucas says that the most fun about that gig was getting to perform Joe Sample's solo project. "That was magical. Joe would never tell us what he was going to play; he never had a set list and we didn't even know what the first song of the night would be. We'd be on stage and he'd start playing, we'd listen, and all of a sudden we'd go, 'Oh, he's going to go into *this* song.' It was constant fear because if you played a great show, you couldn't repeat it. [laughs] You're thinking, 'How can we top what we did last night?' It was a situation where we were all in the same mindset and weren't even aware of the audience. We were total-

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ly immersed in the music. We had to be completely spontaneous. But the rewards were great. I loved playing that music."

Just as the Osborne gig was ending, Dionne Warwick spotted Lucas and asked him to join her fold. "That was a great gig. It was one of those situations where it was all rental gear. We'd get to the gig about noon and then set up the rental gear and make sure it sounded good. There would be a whole string section from the local city, so we'd rehearse with them for a while. Then she came in and we'd rehearse and do the show. I loved the music. I remember my mom listening to her when I was a kid. There's a funny rhythm to the way that Burt Bacharach stuff is played. It's very straight up. I tried to cop that when I played with her. Plus, she didn't like to be loud. We played at a whisper but tried to keep the intensity.

"The only down side of that gig was we only got to play forty-five minutes. We were usually finished by 9:00, so it was always, 'What are we going to do now?' We'd go to clubs and try to sit in, just to play more. And unfortunately, when I left her to go back with Jeffrey, there was a hard parting of the ways. I think she was mad at me when I left, but Jeffrey was doing his last big tour and there were some dates that conflicted."

When the Osborne tour ended, Lucas auditioned for everything he could, but he was without work until a friend recommended him for George Michael's gig. Naturally, a gig of that magnitude was a blessing in that it increased Lucas's profile tenfold, in addition to paying him the most money he had ever made. But in some aspects, it was a disappointment.

"We had started out in rehearsals with a Garfield *Time Commander*, which I could control myself," Lucas explains. "I was driving all these machines that had all the percussion and all the George Michael screams and a little bit of background vocals. When I counted songs off, I'd hit a pad and the *Time Commander* would come in with all that stuff. There was a mic' on the bass drum and on the snare drum, and it would just read the time. I could just play. Everyone was happy with that and thought that was how it was going to be, so it was a shock when it turned into playing with machines. After the early rehearsals, he said he didn't plan on having me play all

the songs, that the reason he had recorded the record with machines was because he wanted to be able to recreate that sound live. So we went off to order a bunch of percussion gear. I got a deal from LP, and the carpenters started to build another part of the stage behind the drumset for percussion.

"When the band started rehearsing with the machine, though, George's engineer asked me to go up and play a little hi-hat and kick to support it. By the time the stage got ready and the percussion stuff arrived, they didn't want me to play percussion; they wanted me to play drums again. So I played along with a Synclavier. I had woodshedded George Michael's material, so I knew every bass drum beat and every hi-hat lick in those songs. Then they said, 'Okay, you're going to have to put some 2 and 4 in.' Every day something else would be added, until finally it became me playing the entire kit along with a drum machine. That gig for me was about how tight I could play with a click. For me, a good night was when I nailed that sucker.

"But that was disappointing for me because I came from a fusion/jazz background, where music is the ultimate thing. I

began to realize that in some people's minds, the music was not the most important part of the show. When I play with Steve Perry, there's not a whole lot of staging. His idea is to just go out there and kick some butt. When you're done and come off the stage, it's, 'Yes! The music was killing.' With George, as much as I liked the music, it was about putting on a show."

Lucas considers his next gig, a four-year job with Diana Ross, to have been a great gig and one in which he really learned how to support a vocalist. "I learned that a lot of vocalists really depend on the drummer," he explains. "Some vocalists listen to various other things, but I noticed with Diana, if I changed a fill, she would notice."

Moyes still does scattered dates with Ross, but he's very content to be working with former Journey frontman Steve Perry at the moment. "I was not a real Journey fan," Moyes recalls. "I had heard some of their stuff on the radio, and I knew who Steve Smith was, but more from Steps Ahead and his fusion-oriented things. Jeff Lorber was a big fan of Steve, so I had checked out his playing. Anyway, I was rehearsing with another band at Third

Encore [rehearsal studio] when I found out Steve Perry was auditioning drummers there. I went right over and asked if I could take a shot at it. The keyboard player asked me who I had played with. He said he would call Steve, who had already left, but that the best thing would be to show up at 9:00 the next morning. Now, I had never bought any Journey albums. Needless to say, I immediately woodshedded all the Journey stuff I could.

"So I showed up fifteen minutes before 9:00, and Steve pulled up. He said to set up and we'd play a little, although they had another audition at 11:00. So at 11:00 I had to tear down, but they asked me to come back at 5:00 P.M. that day. I came back and we ended up playing until all hours of the night. I started to tear down and Steve came over and said, 'I really love your playing. What are you doing tomorrow? Wanna play?' 'Sure.' So I left my stuff and I got there at 10:00 the next day, and we played the whole day, which went by fast. We did that every day. I still didn't know if I had the gig, though. I'd go home and my wife would ask, 'How did it go?' 'I guess it went great. We had a great time. I love those

guys.' 'Did you get the gig?' 'I don't know.' This went on for weeks."

The situation was a bit strange for Lucas, who was not even getting paid for rehearsals. Even the week he had to go to Las Vegas to play with Diana Ross, he flew to L.A. to rehearse with Perry during the days, often at his own expense. But just the fact that Perry wanted him back was a compliment, since Perry's been notorious for having difficulty finding the "right" drummer. "Steve is demanding," Moyes admits. "He is a drummer himself. In fact, he humbled me in rehearsal once when he was trying to explain something he wanted me to do. On the ride cymbal, he wanted me to play like an unschooled drummer—just trash, all over the place. But he said he wanted it to be like a funk drummer on the feet and the other hand, so that it was locked in there. I was trying to do it, but finally I said, 'Maybe you could show me what you're talking about.' He got up there and did it! He sounded really good.

"My attitude now is that I'll try anything Steve wants," Moyes says. "There are times you want to put your own ideas in, but there's always a way you can work that out.

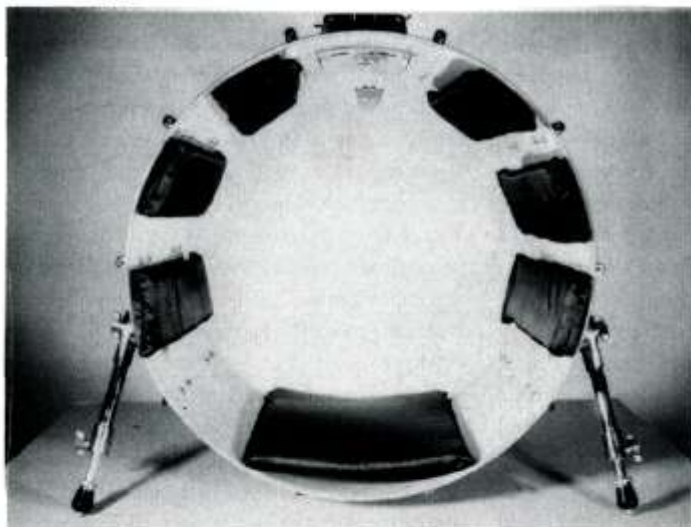
I think it's always better to be open to other people's advice. You can learn something that way. Steve's demanding in the sense that he's a drummer and he listens to what you play. If I play the same fill that's on the record for six shows, but on the seventh show I change that fill, he'll look back at me. Sometimes he'll say, 'That was a nice little fill you played,' and sometimes he won't. If he doesn't say anything, I probably won't be playing that one again."

The payoff for Moyes with Perry has been the creative atmosphere the drummer had never before experienced. Perry also shares points on *For The Love Of Strange Medicine* with Lucas, based on that creativity. "The day I auditioned, we started writing a song that ended up being on the record. It seemed like it was ordained by God. We'd have these long heart-wrenching conversations about life and love and spirituality and religion. The whole band would be there, and I loved those guys. I wanted to be in a band so much. And Steve was looking at it that way. He said, 'This is a band. I want you guys to be involved. I don't want a bunch of studio musicians doing the record and then have to audition



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guys to go on the road. So if you take the record, you take the tour."

In rehearsals, a new challenge presented itself. Perry didn't want to have to hire background singers, so he insisted all the bandmembers do the vocals. So they all took lessons for the year leading up to the tour. "I've always preferred to just play drums," Moyes admits. "I felt that if I tried to sing and play at the same time, something would have to take a back seat. But this was the gig, so we rehearsed every day, even when Steve was out on a little publicity tour." Moyes says that during those rehearsals, he sometimes sang Steve's part, which was really tough. "With drumming and singing, when you first start out you either want to sing with the drums or play with the singing. There are still some things I don't feel comfortable with, so Lincoln [Brewster, guitar] will cover a part for me. It might be towards the end of a song when it's more intense for me and I can't sing and play it at the same time. Or I'll finish a fill coming into a vocal line, and he'll start the line and I'll pick it up where I can."

Lucas says he is very proud of *For The Love Of Strange Medicine*. "We chose rooms specifically to get that room drum sound—a big tom sound. I was really happy with the drum sound in the room, but Steve wanted the drums to sound more like a '50s and '60s Motown thing. It was a disappointment that the drums didn't come out as big in the mix as I would have liked, but I like the record and I hope to have the opportunity to do more."

"Steve would look at the drum tracks with a microscope, and he would make me change stuff," Moyes continues. "We would track in the morning, usually before he got there, and he'd come in and

go over it with a fine-tooth comb. I don't think Steve likes anything that sounds too technical or drum-istic. If I had a fill in there that was a 'drummer's fill,' he'd throw it out."

"The second time we were recording the title track, I did this really nice fill and the producer was hugging me. Steve walked in and as soon as he heard that fill, he shook his head. That one hurt pretty bad when he made me go out and change it. [laughs] But you know, it's his record. If he doesn't feel comfortable with it, am I going to make it a better situation by fighting to keep a fill in there? I used to always think, 'Maybe Jeff Porcaro would have played something he would have loved.' I sit there with headphones and think, 'What would Jeff Porcaro play?' or 'What would Harvey Mason or Steve Gadd do?' Those are the guys I think are great in the studio. If you solo the drum pattern to 'Stand Up (Before It's Too Late),' it's the beat to 'Africa' but with 16ths on the top, because Steve wanted the 16ths in there. Jeff has been a great inspiration to me."

Lucas looks forward to a next record with Perry and hopes the situation remains ongoing. "I want to be in a band where all the guys are friends with each other, and where we're all writing music together—like it used to be in the old days. It doesn't have to be the best players in the world, because it's the *combination* of the players that really makes the music. I would love to be in a band like Toto was when Jeff was in it. That's what I felt this was when we first started getting together. I would like to see this go as far as it can. I told my wife that I want this to be the last thing I do, if that's possible. I know I could play with other people, but I would like this to be an expression of *me*."



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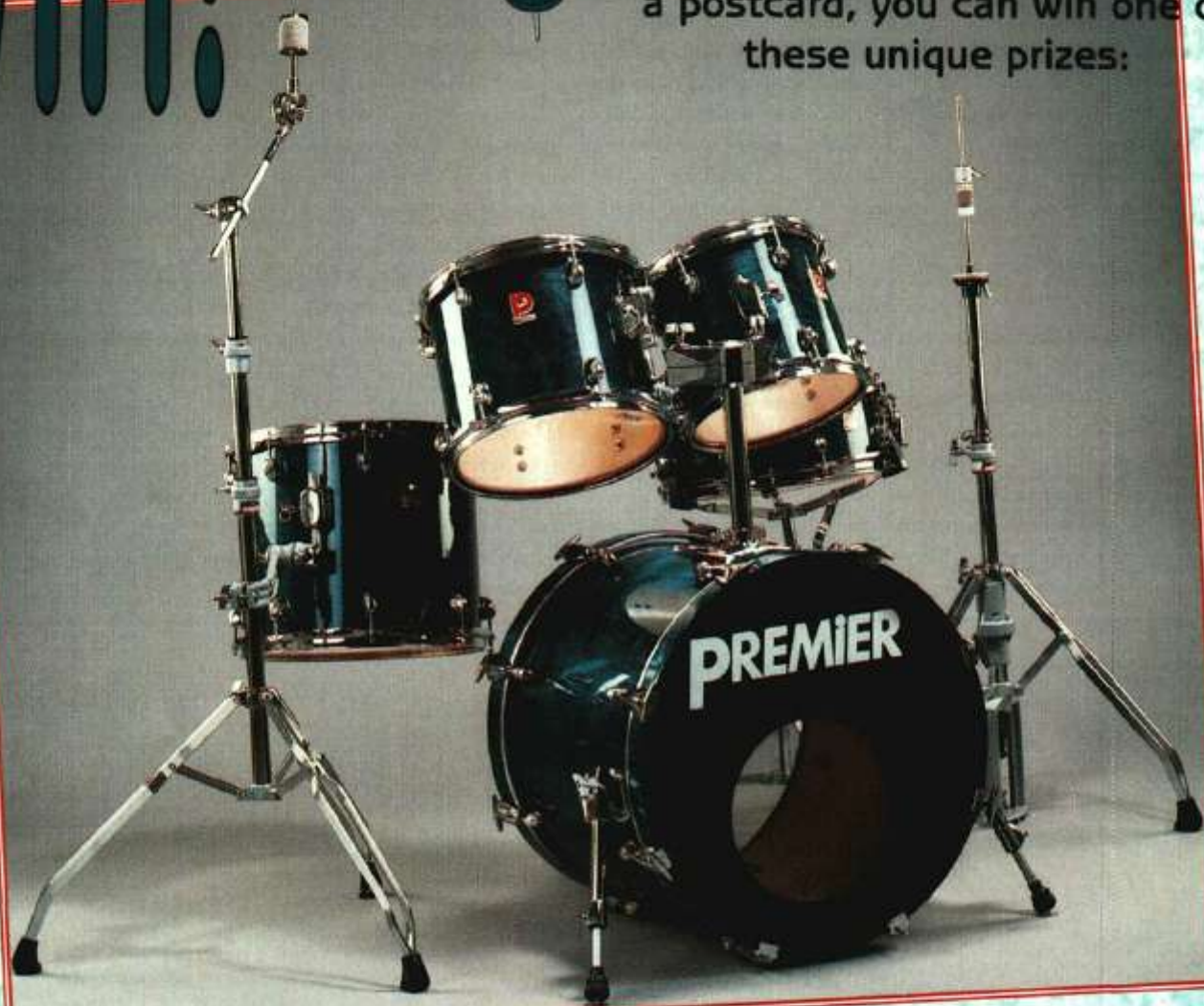
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INSIDE VATER

THE COUNTRY'S OLDEST "NEW" DRUMSTICK MAKER

by Adam Budofsky

"Everything we've ever done is from trial and error. Everything."

Brothers Alan and Ronnie Vater, vice presidents of Vater Percussion, are talking at a table in the conference room at Vater's headquarters in Holbrook, Massachusetts. The surroundings are modest by any standards, reflecting the work of people more concerned with results than appearances. T-shirts, jeans, and work-boots are the uniform, which makes sense considering that Alan, and especially Ronnie, spend a good deal of time on the factory floor in the thick of things.







The Vater staff, and Alan Vater (right) rolling sticks for straightness.

*Photos by W.J. Wolloff Assoc.
Historical photos courtesy of Alan Vater*



Then again, how else would this pair handle their business? After all, any success they've had is due in large part to the stubborn hands-on approach the family has taken in just about every project they've initiated.

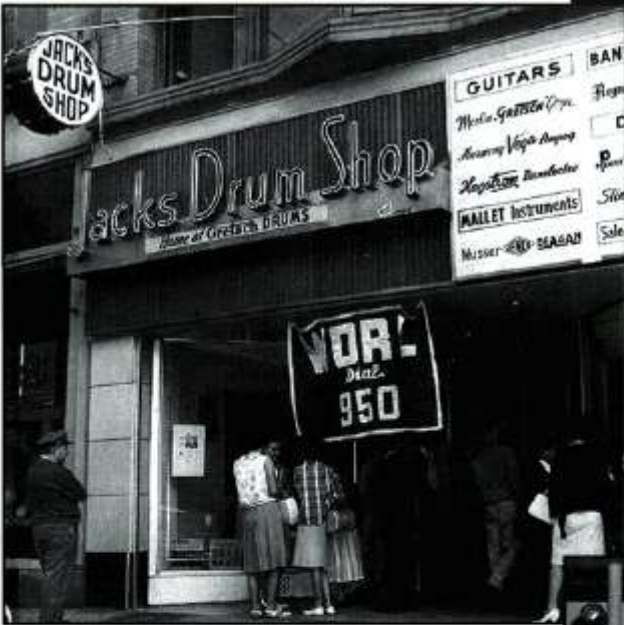
It seems it's in the blood: In the '50s, Alan and Ronnie's grandfather, Jack Adams, a well-known area drummer, opened Jack's Drumshop in Boston. In 1956, Alan's godfather, Fred Maichle, who was a carpenter and finisher, began hand-turning drumsticks for the shop. Maichle was able to turn twelve pairs of sticks a day (at twenty minutes a stick). Soon Jack found himself supplying sticks to top drummer friends passing through town, like Philly Joe

Jones, Louie Belson, and Buddy Rich. Alan recalls, "My father, Clarence, also worked at the shop, and every time my grandfather would bring a batch of these sticks in, my father would say, 'There's got to be an easier way to do this.'"

Needless to say, an easier way was found, and we'll get into the specifics of that mechanical evolution momentarily. But first let's get to the heart of the Vater philosophy. Alan

Vater: "We design our sticks with the working drummer in mind. When we started the Vater line, there were two goals that I had: First, I wanted these sticks to be designed to last longer; I wanted the drummer to look at them and say, 'Yeah, I'm not going to break these easily.' And two, even though they were designed to last, I still wanted them to be well-balanced."

This sort of no-bull attitude seems to have paid off for Vater. Though they only came out with their own line in 1990, for several years previous to that they had rolled sticks for other major manufacturers—as well as for hundreds of drumshops across the country, who sold Vater sticks as their own "private labels." Today the company can be counted among the top five drumstick manufacturers in the country. They produce over ten thousand sticks a day, which can be found in over a thousand drumshops in thirty-five countries. And whereas five years ago they had no major endorsers to speak of, today top drummers like Marvin "Smitty" Smith, the Red Hot



Opening day at Jack Adams' drumshop in Boston, where the concept of Vater sticks was born. At right, Jack with Louie Bellson.



Chili Peppers' Chad Smith, studio heavies Joey Heredia and Mike Baird, Michael Shrieve, Tal Bergman, Joel Rosenblatt, and Mark Zonder of Fates Warning are using their products exclusively.

Not surprisingly, the Vaters have some pretty strong opinions about what makes a quality stick. Let's look more closely at the elements this company feels are the most important.

"The number-one concern," Alan says without hesitation, "is the integrity of the wood—how it feels, how it rebounds. Hickory has a natural quality of being very rigid, so that when you hit it you get a good bounce back from it. It's very durable as well, and it sounds and looks nice."

"A hickory stick will absorb a lot of shock," Ronnie adds. "An oak stick tends to be less shock-absorbent. All your hand tools—shovels, hammer handles—are made out of hickory to absorb the shock so the tool won't hurt your hands."

"We started making sticks from oak at one time," Alan explains, "but we found out that making sticks out of American oak just didn't meet the standards, so we discontinued making them."

According to Alan, the color of hickory reflects its positive attributes. "You want to have a nice, white color on the wood," he insists. "That's partly a result of the region that it was grown in. In some areas of Tennessee and Kentucky there is a lot of lime in the soil, which creates a good, white hickory stick. We are using mainly shag bark and shell bark hickory as a species because it's been found that those are true hickory species. Some of the other ones start to get into a kind of a pecan family, which is not as sturdy as some of the other species.

"The whiteness is also somewhat dependent on how the wood is dried," Alan continues. "Wood has to be dried at a very slow rate and at a low temperature. We have several suppliers, four of which are exclusive to us. Initially these guys were very quali-



fied working with hickory, though not specifically with drumstick material. So I worked in conjunction with them, and we taught them how to dry wood properly. I did a lot of research on it—tested the strengths of wood, the different curves as it goes through the drying process, how the temperature should be, how it should be planed after it's dried, how it should be handled, how it should be graded, the different species that we are looking for, the certain areas of Tennessee and Kentucky where you want to pull the good hickory from.

"The drumstick material of a tree is the outer three to five inches, the live sap wood. We use just the butt, the round log of the tree, which is the best for drumsticks. Some makers that cut their own lumber are making products from the wood that cannot be used for drumsticks, such as rolling pins, pepper shakers, billy clubs.... Your focus can be taken away from making sticks that way. We've been able to control a good source of hickory that's mainly procured *just* for drumsticks, not for furniture parts. Plus, when you dry wood for furniture, you have to dry it at six to eight percent moisture content, whereas drumsticks need to be dried at ten to twelve percent. You take the moisture out for furniture parts because you don't want that wood to move at all. But that's also taking the integrity out of the wood, which gives you the durability factor.

"Some manufactures say, 'We own the mill, so we control everything.' But you can still have control even if you don't own the mill, as long as you have a good *and* exclusive relationship with your suppliers. It's worked out real nice for us this way. These mills that we work with can literally make their profit on all of the drumstick materials they sell us."

So how does all this talk of wood integrity and color affect your average drummer? What should he or she be looking for when faced with the dozens of choices at the local shop?

"First of all," Alan states, "we believe that, right off, the drummer should roll the stick. If the stick is warped it's always going to center to one side, so it will

Scenes from the factory floor, including hand-sanding of wood tips (top)

wear a wood tip down, and it just doesn't have a balanced feel. It's amazing how some pro drummers will play a stick and know that it's the slightest bit warped. So we want drummers to always roll the stick. A straight stick is also an indication that it is a good piece of wood.

"Next, you want to be able *to feel* the wood in the stick. You don't want the finish to be too heavy or too light. We want you to feel the wood, but we also want the stick to have what we call 'drag.' As you run your hands down the stick, it has kind of a pull. As you play the stick it warms up and gets a better grip. We've gone through a lot of trial and error trying to develop just the right finish, which is a two-step process: We cut the stick and, within an hour or two after the sanding process, we seal it so that there is no moisture that can be allowed in or out of the stick. That treatment process helps the stick to dent rather than chip away.

"You should also look for the growth ring of the stick," Alan continues. "A stick with a wide growth ring means that the tree had a healthy growing season and that it

had the minerals and the water that it needed. If the growth rings are really small, that means that tree was starving and doesn't have the strength it needs."

Obviously, how the wood is cut at the factory is as important a factor in the final product's quality as the wood's natural strength. Vater uses back-knife lathes, which they say requires a lot more handwork because the tip and the butt must be processed after the cut. According to Ronnie Vater, whose expertise is in this department, "We feel this hands-on approach results in higher quality. When we are making the sticks, the most important thing is the turning itself, which is where the back-knife lathe comes in. From the dies that we use for the initial draw of the stick—the initial cuts—we can find the center of the dowel, whether it's warped or not. On a lot of other machines, if the dowel is warped, it turns out a warped stick. This way, we can actually make a straight stick out of a warped dowel.

"After every twenty sticks that we turn we take a measurement," Ronnie continues. "The sticks are measured, rolled, and

counted, and then we take the percentage of sticks that we found that were warped in that run, and we keep a log of it. As soon as that percentage gets over, say, 15% warped sticks, we'll shut the machine off and find out if it's the alignment of the dowel that's the problem or if something has to be sharpened or honed. If we discover a problem later on, as the sticks are going through quality control, we can go back and find out if there is something wrong in another area. We are always able to back up and find out where the front-run came from. Also, when the sticks are being sanded, we put them through a stress test to see if they have integrity. By the way, all the wood tips are hand-sanded, which is actually the way that we used to do it way back in the drumshop.

"Speaking of tips," Ronnie goes on, "we don't believe in injection-molded nylon tips. They have to be turned on rods. We have outside sources, and we know what kind of machinery they have. Certain things are very important in terms of a nylon tip: the sound, the shape, the texture of it, the way it looks. It's important for us

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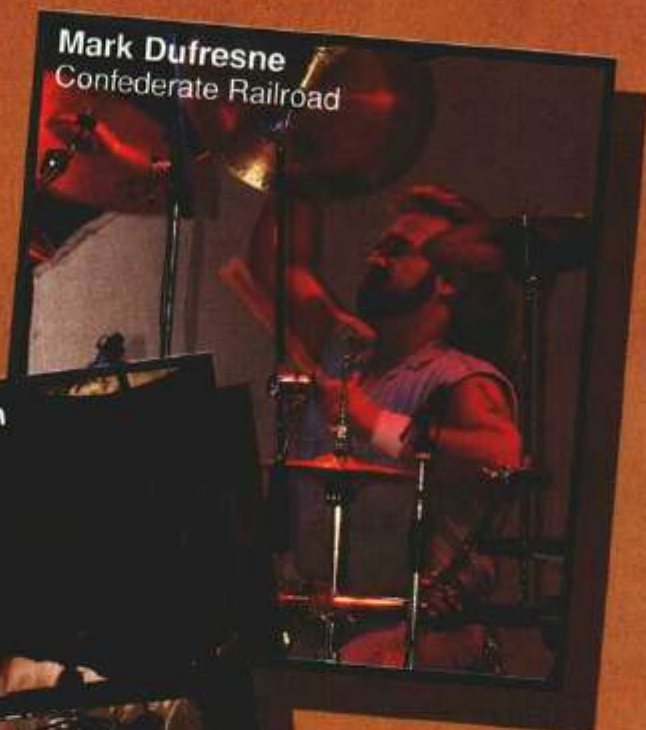
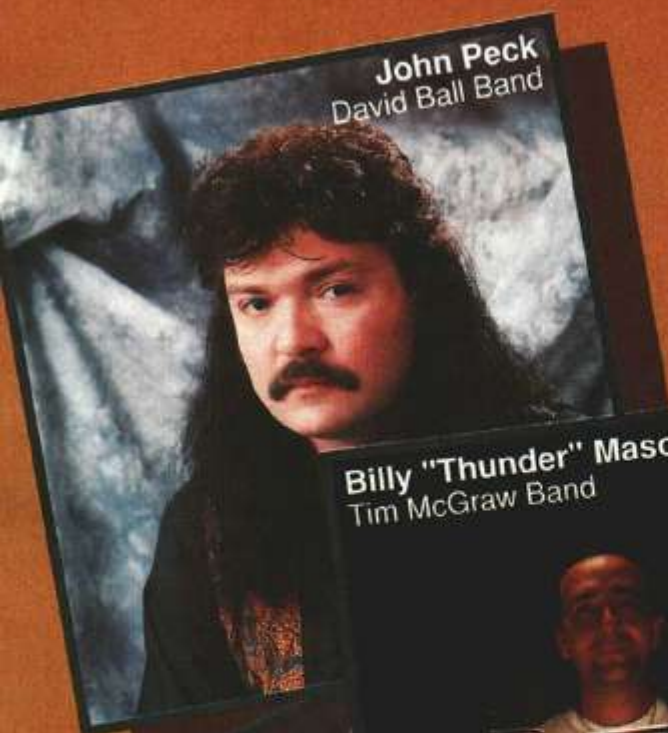
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According to Alan, "There's quality control along the entire process. At the end of the run, the sticks go through the quality control room, where each one is rolled on steel bars that are eight inches apart. This way we can actually see and handle every stick. After this first roll check, I personally roll every Vater stick again—which I feel very strongly about—after which each stick can be labeled. Then, in the final packaging process, our guys roll the sticks one last time for the final check. We're all drummers, and we tap the sticks on the

counter surface and match them for feel, weight, color, and tone. From the cutting to the final bagging process, there is always hands-on quality control—no machines, no computers.

"With the competitive environment that the drumstick market is in right now," Alan adds, "I think that drummers have become more aware of their sticks, and are seeking out quality. The thing with us is that we do not have any kind of bottom-line thinking. It's: Is this batch of sticks good enough to hold the Vater name? If we have to lose a higher percentage or not make any money on that run, we will do that just to make sure that the sticks will be the best."

This philosophy is a direct result of the work ethic instilled into Alan and Ronnie from their father and grandfather, back in the days of Jack's Drumshop. Eventually Jack Adams set up shop in the C. Vater Music Center, which Clarence Vater opened in the Norwood suburb of Boston after tiring of the city grind. Soon the Vater attention to detail would be tested on a larger scale. According to Alan, "In the late '70s, Regal Tip had a labor dispute. They were one of the largest manufacturers, and we found that the distributors didn't have any sticks. My father would yell at Ronnie, 'Didn't you order those drumsticks?' 'Dad, I ordered them.' 'Well, order them again.'"

"Meanwhile, my father had a background as a mechanical engineer, so one day he said, 'Why don't we try to make our own sticks?' We didn't have the money to buy the machinery, which is very expensive. So we would buy some wood in dowel form, which we had delivered to the music store. Ronnie would put it in the van and drive up to a company called Seavey, who we would rent lathe time from. And they taught Ronnie how to set up the lathe and sharpen the tooling.

"We did a lot of research, and we found that their type of machines were the best for doing turnings. They would turn the sticks the same way we turn them now. We would bring the sticks back to the shop, where we had set up a cutter and a shaper downstairs. We also bought a machine that we could turn our own nylon tips on. Then we would hand-sand each stick.

"We made some of the shapes that were popular at the time," Alan continues. "Back then the one adjustment you could do was to make the stick thicker or thinner.

So we were able to make a *Rock* model in 5B and 2B sizes out of the same knife."


At this time the shop was just selling to their own individual customers. "But it got to the point," Alan recalls, "where we felt we could only go so far that way. One day my father said to Ronnie, 'Do you want to make drumsticks? We'll sell the store and we'll make drumsticks.' So my father got a small business loan for \$63,000 at 3%, sold the store, and rented a building with the option to buy. Coincidentally it was the old Bunken stick factory. But my dad made a commitment to do this thing. Meanwhile, we didn't know anything about the marketing part of it, the customer base—it was still trial and error at this point. I was seventeen, and Ronnie was nineteen."

Soon Dick DiCenso, the general manager of Harris Fandell, a large musical instrument distribution company owned by the Onsite Group, approached Vater to make sticks for them. "That was like the crossover point," says Alan. "We started making sticks for them under a private label, Power Sonic Drumsticks. Then we started doing some turning for Vic Firth, and we landed an account overseas called SuperCussion, which we still do today. That year, 1980, a friend and I drove to the NAMM show in Chicago, and a dealer named Dave Beck said to me, 'I manage a music store called Far Out Music. Can you make sticks for my store?' I said, 'Yeah, I can do that for you.' I began to think, if I can do this for one drumshop, I can do it for *any* drumshop, *anywhere*."

"So when I got back from the show, I wrote out a marketing plan, got on the phone, and started calling dealers all around the country—mainly the big guys. I got a network going direct to drumshops, and that's really how we started to get some kind of reputation.

"It got to the point where we were doing five hundred pairs a day," Alan recalls. "We started a private label line and we started making sticks for Vic Firth. At this time he was mainly making sticks out of maple. We only made hickory for ourselves because from our research we found that *that* was the best wood for a drumstick application. At the same time I just kept pursuing stores for private-label business.

"In 1985 Zildjian entertained the idea of having their own drumstick line to go along with their cymbals. Ronnie and I and



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my father were invited to some of the initial planning meetings involving the different designs of the sticks. Later they hired us to do some of the actual manufacturing, and in 1986 they launched the line.

"Our business started to grow really fast. Zildjian and Vic Firth started going like gangbusters. The factory started getting really busy. We wanted to finally be able to control the distribution of these good sticks. I wanted to come out with the Vater line so bad, but I used to get a lot of resistance because it would be like, well, you can't really bite the hand that feeds you.

"As time went along, we started doing sticks for Tama and Pearl. And we were doing private label sticks for distributors in Holland, Denmark, France, Australia, and New Zealand. Every time someone wanted sticks I'd have to design the whole line, come up with the names for the sticks, get the packaging correct, get the labels right... I thought, 'This is crazy. We should just have our own line of sticks.' We could control the distribution, control the name, and really build something. We were always putting out good-quality

sticks, but in the end it wasn't for ourselves. That's when I said to my father, 'Look, we have to do this.' So in 1989 we made the decision.

"It took us a year and a half of saving to buy our own knives, which are the templates for the individual stick designs," Alan recalls. "Pearl, Tama, Zildjian, and Firth all owned all their own knives. And soon after expanding into our new facility, our business relationships with Zildjian and Firth ended. All this pressure came down on us. Our overhead tripled—that was pretty heavy...going up against all these big companies. But no one could take our base of dealers away from us, so it wasn't like we just walked into the marketplace as an unknown. People knew who Vater was. They knew that we had built sticks for some big-name companies and that our sticks were some of the best that they had been able to purchase."

After about three years, Vater began to assemble an endorser list. "Drummers started getting interested and calling because they discovered that it was a quality item," Alan explains. "They liked the idea that we are a complete operation here—from raw dowel to finished product, all under one roof, controlled by family members. Ronnie is fantastic at what we call 'tweaking' and working a back-knife lathe. So players are able to come to him with ideas. The endorsers saw that they could tap into us and found out that we were the makers ourselves. And we're able to relate to them maybe in a different way than some of our competitors, who are of a different generation."

One endorser who Vater is particularly proud of is Marvin "Smitty" Smith, who recently has stepped into a very bright spotlight with the *Tonight Show* band. "Could you find a better guy to represent and work with you?" enthuses Alan. "He's just so adamant on being the best and giving it his all and being true to what he does. On top of that, he's probably the nicest guy I know. This guy has worked so hard and now he's getting his due. And we're really happy about Chad Smith, too. Now the list is miles long and growing all the time. We've got quite a network of great players, and we appreciate all of their support, regardless of how big a 'name' they are.

"The whole thing is about quality," says Alan. "I always used to say to our

endorsers, 'You guys are some of the best at what you do in your craft. The last thing that you should have to worry about is if the sticks that you pick up are any good. Let us worry about that.' And they'd say, 'Hey, I really like these. Where do I sign the contract?' And we'd say, 'There *is* no contract. It's all done with a handshake.' We don't pay anybody. We give them support in advertising, we give them support with their drumsticks, and we give them clinic support if they do something on behalf of Vater. And they really like that."

A direct reflection—indeed, a proclamation—of Vater's attitude toward the endorser game so prevalent in the drum industry is their refusal to offer "signature" sticks, an attitude spelled out in their "No Signature Required" ad campaign. "Often a signature stick is the same as another model already in a company's line," Ronnie explains, "only it's got a big-time player's name on it—which sometimes makes it cost more." "We just don't feel it's necessary," adds Alan. "There are a couple of our endorsers who are using sticks that aren't in the line, and those sticks are prototypes for models we are going to come out with in the future. But we want to be able to do the job right with what we have right now. One of the nice things about our line is that it's concise. It doesn't have a zillion models or a zillion types of wood."

The popularity of one recent addition to the Vater line, the *Manhattan 7A* model, has actually caught the company by surprise. "That stick is a little bit beefier than most 7As; it's 16" long and has a round bead—and it's one of our most popular models. In fact, the 5A, the 7A, and the *Fusion*, which measures between a 5A and a 5B, are our top sellers. We're seeing a trend towards that kind of stick, and I think that's because more of the professional type of drummer is attracted to our line. They're really into what they are doing, and they're not just buying a stick because someone's name is on it. They are into quality and finesse. We also have a new stick, the *Universal*, which has a 5B grip with a heavy neck and an oval bead. We've tried to come up with some sticks that are fitting the needs of these guys who like the smaller sticks but want to be able to wail."

Also fairly new to the Vater line are a series of bass drum beaters and timpani

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mallets. "We're using maple for our beaters, which is not as heavy as hickory or oak," Alan explains. "The length of the shaft lets the drummer adjust to what his needs are. Also, we tried to match the felt hardness to the wood. So compared to other people's felt beaters, ours are much harder. We are also working on hammer-style beaters. We just want to provide drummers with some basic beaters, and then expand on it.

"We've also found that a lot of players are using our timp/drumset mallets. We make an awful lot of those, as well as timbale sticks. We are working on some other new products and getting input from production. But we don't want to rush anything, because we always want our new products to be as good as, if not better than, the standard. And I'll tell you, we've been busy just trying to maintain our growth."

As Alan just indicated, he and Ronnie often ask for input from their employees concerning the running of Vater. In fact, eight years ago, when I first visited the Vater factory, both were adamant about my mentioning that the company's success is

built on this input. For this interview, they were equally vocal on the subject. "There are two Vaters in here working with some very dedicated guys," Ronnie states. "We don't sit behind desks telling them what to do all the time, we're doing it *with* them."

"If I'm bagging drumsticks right next to the guys," Alan adds, "or if they see that the vice president of the company is rolling every single stick that his name goes on to make sure that it's done correctly, then they think, 'If he can work hard, then I can work hard.' Everyone has pride in the company. When we have advertising ideas, I share them and ask the guys what they think. And they really care.

"It's also worked out really well between me and Ronnie," Alan adds. "He's really great with his hands. If a machine breaks down, he'll speed off to get the part. He'll be here until 12:00 at night making sure that it's ready for production in the morning. His main purpose is to keep the machinery going and to try to figure out how we can develop it to work more efficiently.

"I'm in charge of sales, correspondence,

marketing—the whole other end of it. So we balance each other. And we really care about one another on a personal level and watch each other on a business level. And we're backed up by a great team of guys who have all their own talents. One guy, Phil, is really good at running the nylon tip machine. Brendan is good at setting up the sanders, Robbie is good at setting up the labeler, Mark is good at picking the orders and working on the computer. And then Billy is fantastic at scheduling production, and John is great as our AR guy. And the rest of the guys—Mike, Kevin, Al, Ron D, and Hugh—have found their own little niche, too. In the office, there's my mother, Joan, who is the president of the company and really a great positive force. On the financial end, there's my father, Clarry. He runs the books and does all the programming on the computer, which is his real talent. Everyone has their talent, so it's a really good team effort."

This particular combination of talent resulted in Vater's winning the Small Business Of The Year Award in Massachusetts in 1988, out of over 200,000

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businesses. The company met many of the criteria for the award, including excellence in manufacturing capability from raw material, increasing export sales, and continued employment growth. In fact, Alan and Joan continue to do speeches on the subject of export sales for the Massachusetts Economic Community as a result of the award. "We went to the White House," Alan proudly recalls, "and we met with Reagan and Bush, visited the Press Club, and walked through the rose garden. It was really something else—and it gave us confidence."

Confidence is something Alan and Ronnie Vater are certainly not lacking. In conversation, what may first seem like blatant self-promotion or, worse, arrogance, is soon clearly appreciated as an unshakable belief and pride in the products they produce. They also love what they do. When I was visiting their factory for this interview one recent Saturday morning (business has dictated that they operate half a day on Saturdays now), the subject of nylon tips came up. Ronnie could barely hide his enthusiasm about the Rube Goldberg-like

device they use to attach the tips, as I practically had to trot after him to see how it worked. This kind of enthusiasm proves infectious, and it's definitely an ingredient in the Vater recipe.

"Although our history of crafting drumsticks spans three generations," Alan states, "we have only been known as the Vater brand for five years—and look at the success we've achieved. Some people say to us, 'Well, can you keep the quality as you grow?' We *know* that we can for a fact, because not only do we make drumsticks for ourselves and for the private labels, but we still continue to manufacture sticks for two of the largest drum companies in the world. They have a quality standard that we maintain for them.

"Early on we knew that there was one thing that we had to do right, and that was to make a better-quality stick than everybody else—every stick straight, every tip hand-sanded, the labels done right, the best quality wood. Like I said before, the whole thing is about quality."



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6/8 Funk



by David Garibaldi

MUSIC KEY

The following grooves, which appear in a composition entitled "The Box," are based on a 6/8 pattern that I used in my video *Tower Of Groove, Pt. 2*. The idea for this pattern came from listening to Afro-Cuban 6/8 styles and then attempting to compose grooves based on conga, bell, stick, shekere, and occasionally bata parts.

Listening to folkloric recordings is a great way to hear the correct parts—and, more importantly, to hear the correct feel. Check out recordings of Los Munequitos de Matanzas, one of Cuba's best folkloric ensembles. An important thing to remember is that there is no drumset in traditional Afro-Cuban music; in fact, the drumset is a relatively recent addition to their music. Many innovations in Cuban drumset playing were developed in the late '60s and early '70s, when Americans were simultaneously doing the same with funk and jazz-rock.

Also check out recordings of Los Van Van, a great band featuring the truly innovative and original drumset playing of "Changuito" (Jose Luis Quintana). Changuito combined folkloric drumming traditions with funk. (That's right, it was already done many years ago—we're just hearing about it now!) Also important to note are the contributions of Ignacio Berroa, whose DCI video, *Mastering The Art Of Afro-Cuban Drumming*, is a must-have. Steve Berrios has also made an important contribution. Check him out on Papo Vasquez' *Breakout*, on the Timeless label.

Example 1 is the basis for all of the other exercises here. The right hand plays bell while all of the remaining voices are played with the left hand, including the hi-hat part. (Example 3 is the one exception, as the right hand plays the floor-tom note in the first measure.) Please note that the basic pulse is a dotted-quarter note and should be thought of as 8th-note triplets in 2/4. You should count these patterns like this: "1&a 2&a," etc.

6

7

8

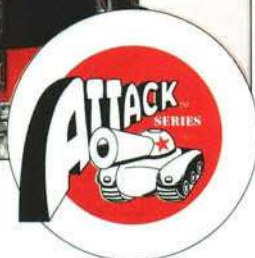
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Art Blakey: "It's Only A Paper Moon"

Transcribed by Joe LaBarbera

This month's *Drum Soloist* features the late Art Blakey, from his fine Blue Note release, *The Big Beat*. You can hear a few classic "Blakeyisms" on "Paper Moon," including his use of space (bars 1-3 and 5-7), his strong 2 and 4 hi-hat throughout, the over-the-barline feel (bars 17-18 and 25-26), and his use of repetitive rhythmic fragments (bars 25-26 and 29). More importantly, Art's ebullient spirit is all over this track. A solid performance by one of the greats.

MUSIC KEY

CC	X
TT	X
BD	X
HH	X
w/foot	X



Photo by Ebet Roberts

♩ = 120



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Baiao Patterns For The Drumset

by **Duduka Da Fonseca**
 Transcribed by **Michael Lauren**

MUSIC KEY

Baiao is a popular form of music and dance from northeastern Brazil. It actually may have its origins in Arabic culture, since Islam expanded from North Africa to the Iberian Peninsula in the seventh century. Portugal, which colonized Brazil, was extra-

ordinarily affected by Islamic culture.

Baiao, in its traditional form, is played on a zabumba drum (a wide, thin, double-headed drum), triangle, and accordion. Other percussion instruments such as pandeiro, caxixi (small shakers), agogo bells, and snare are also often used. The patterns played by these individual instruments within baiao adapt well to the drumset.

Baiao was introduced to Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo by Luiz Gonzaga in the 1940s. The infectious rhythm of baiao has had a big effect on many different types of music, and can be found in such styles as jazz, rock, fusion, and of course the samba hybrid "sambaiao."

The basic drumset pattern for Baiao is based on a paradiddle combination sticking (RLLR LLRL), and played on the snare drum. The bass drum and hi-hat play a basic baiao rhythmic ostinato.

Once this pattern is mastered, try the following orchestrations. In example 2, the right hand moves to the cymbal while the left hand stays on the snare.

Example 3 has the right hand moving between the ride cymbal, snare, and floor tom.

Example 4 has the right hand moving between the ride cymbal, snare, middle tom, and floor tom.

In example 5, the right hand is broken up between the ride cymbal, snare, and the three toms, ascending in pitch.

On examples 6 and 7, the left hand moves to the hi-hat. The right hand moves between the ride cymbal, snare, and floor tom. Make sure you open and close your hi-hat.

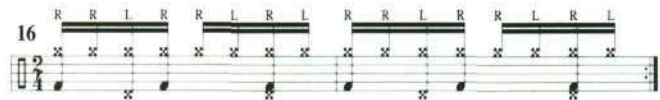
Examples 8 and 9 have the left hand moving around the drums. Example 8 alternates between the snare and high tom, while example 9 alternates between the snare, high tom, and floor tom.

Here are four more drumset patterns for Baiao. The left hand plays a cross-stick on the snare drum.

Example 14 mixes the right hand of example 12 with the left hand of example 1.

Now mix the right hand of example 10 with the left hand of example 1.

Here's another sticking pattern (RRLR RLRL) for baiao. Try it on the hi-hat first.



Now move your left hand onto the snare drum.



You can also keep the hi-hat closed in examples 16 and 17.

On example 18, the right hand moves from the hi-hat to the ride cymbal. (Both examples 17 and 18 can be played on the snare with a cross-stick.)



On examples 19 and 20 the sticking moves between the ride cymbal, snare, and three toms. Example 19 has a descending tom melody, while example 20 has an ascending tom melody. (Try combining the two into a four-bar phrase once you're comfortable with them individually.)



Be sure to experiment with dynamics with all of these examples: All accents can be played at a variety of dynamic levels, including not playing the accents at all.

These patterns are my personal interpretations of baiao. I encourage you to listen to Brazilian music and experiment with your own orchestrations.

Special thanks to Jose Barros for his historical insights.

Duduka Da Fonseca and Michael Lauren are both on the faculty of Drummers Collective, New York City. Duduka is the author of Brazilian Rhythms For The Drumset (Manhattan Music Publishing), and Michael is the author of Welcome To Odd Times (Why Not Music) and Understanding Rhythm (Manhattan Music Publishing).



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Keeping Time With The Six-Stroke Roll

by Rob Leytham

MUSIC KEY

I remember, when I was in grade school, how proud I felt after learning the six-stroke roll on the snare drum. Being young, I thought I was on my way to becoming the greatest drummer in the world. If anything should happen to Billy Cobham or Neil Peart, I thought I could step right in and impress the world with my six-stroke roll. As I look back now, I see that it was just another step in my development as a drummer and musician. Today I try to show my students how to incorporate rudiments into their set playing, and how, by using the six-stroke roll, we can create some interesting patterns.

The first thing is to learn the rudiment. The six-stroke roll is made up of two 16th notes followed by four 32nd notes. The sticking we will use is R-L-RR-LL. After mastering this pattern on the snare drum, try to use it around the drumkit.

Exercise 1 does not use the six-stroke roll, but it will prepare you for the arm motion that will be used on the next two exercises. This exercise should be counted "1e&a-2e&a-3e&a-4e&a." Beats 1 and 3 are identical in that the ride cymbal plays on the first 16th note, the hi-hat on the "e," the floor tom on the "&," and the high tom on the "ah." Beats 2 and 4 are alike, with the snare played on the beats, the hi-hat played on the "e's" and "ah's," and the ride cymbal on the "&'s."

Exercise 2 adds 32nd notes on the "&'s" and "ah's" of beats 1 and 3. Since these are going to be doubles played on the floor tom and high tom, which usually have looser heads, you won't be able to simply bounce the stick off the head. So you'll need to use a "drop/pull" method to make sure that your doubles are clean. Drop the stick down with the wrist on the first 32nd note and pull up with the fingers to get the second.

Exercise 3 is played the same way, except that doubles will be added on the "&'s" and "ah's" on beats 2 and 4. These doubles should be played the same on the cymbals as they are on the toms

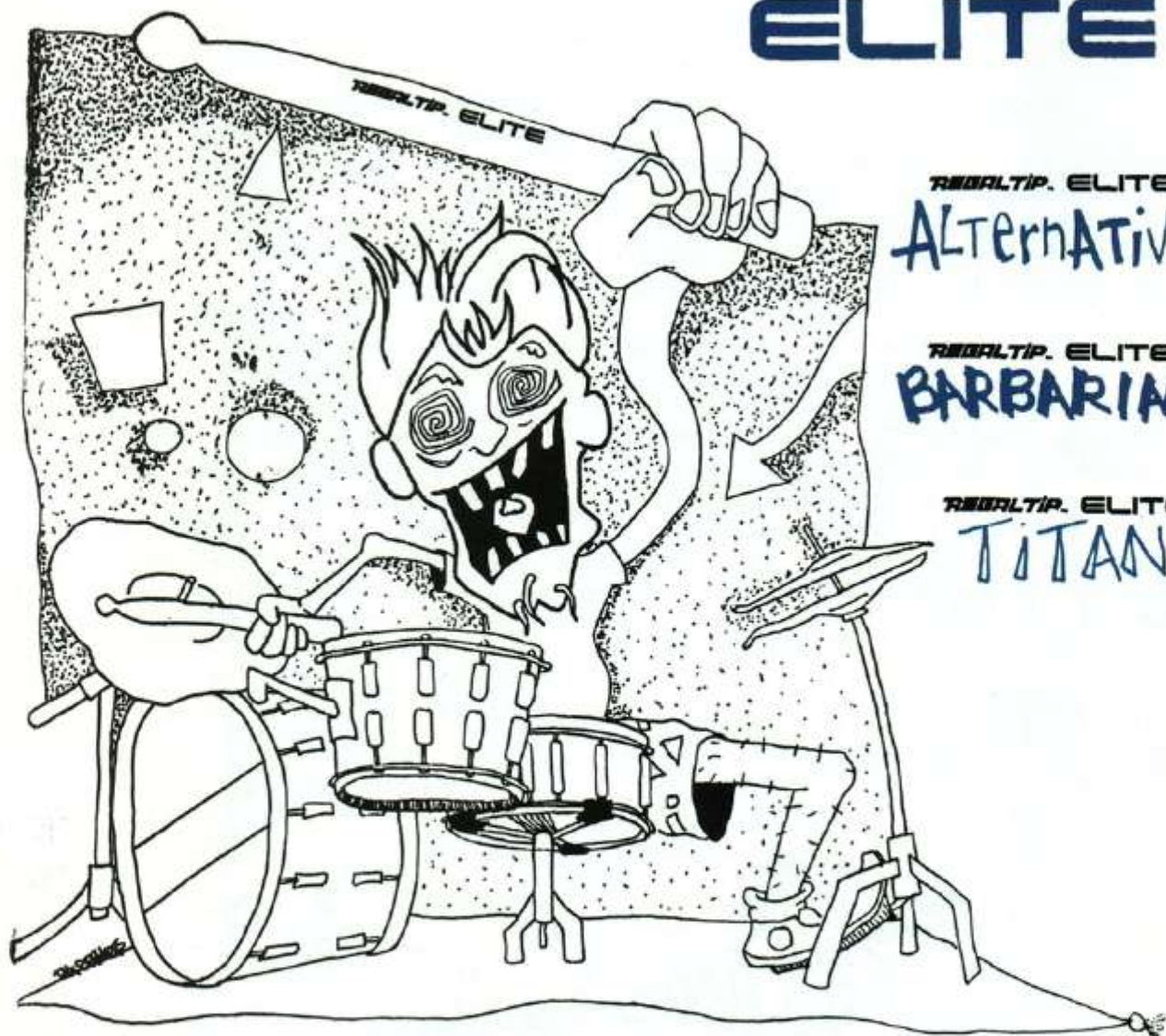
to ensure rhythmic consistency.

After you've become familiar with these exercises, add the bass drum solo below to each one. The solo is sixteen measures long, with each set of four measures becoming rhythmically more difficult. Start slowly and be patient; learn the solo four measures at a time if you need to. But most importantly, have fun with it.



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The Remote Kick Konzept

by Dave Indigo

Perhaps, like me, you are of "diminutive" stature. Or maybe your bandleader is *strongly* suggesting that you add some electronic pads for the show. Maybe you absolutely *need* a thunderous 26" bass drum and power toms, but you're concerned that you'll be forever lost from view. Well, maybe you should try the Remote Kick Konzept.

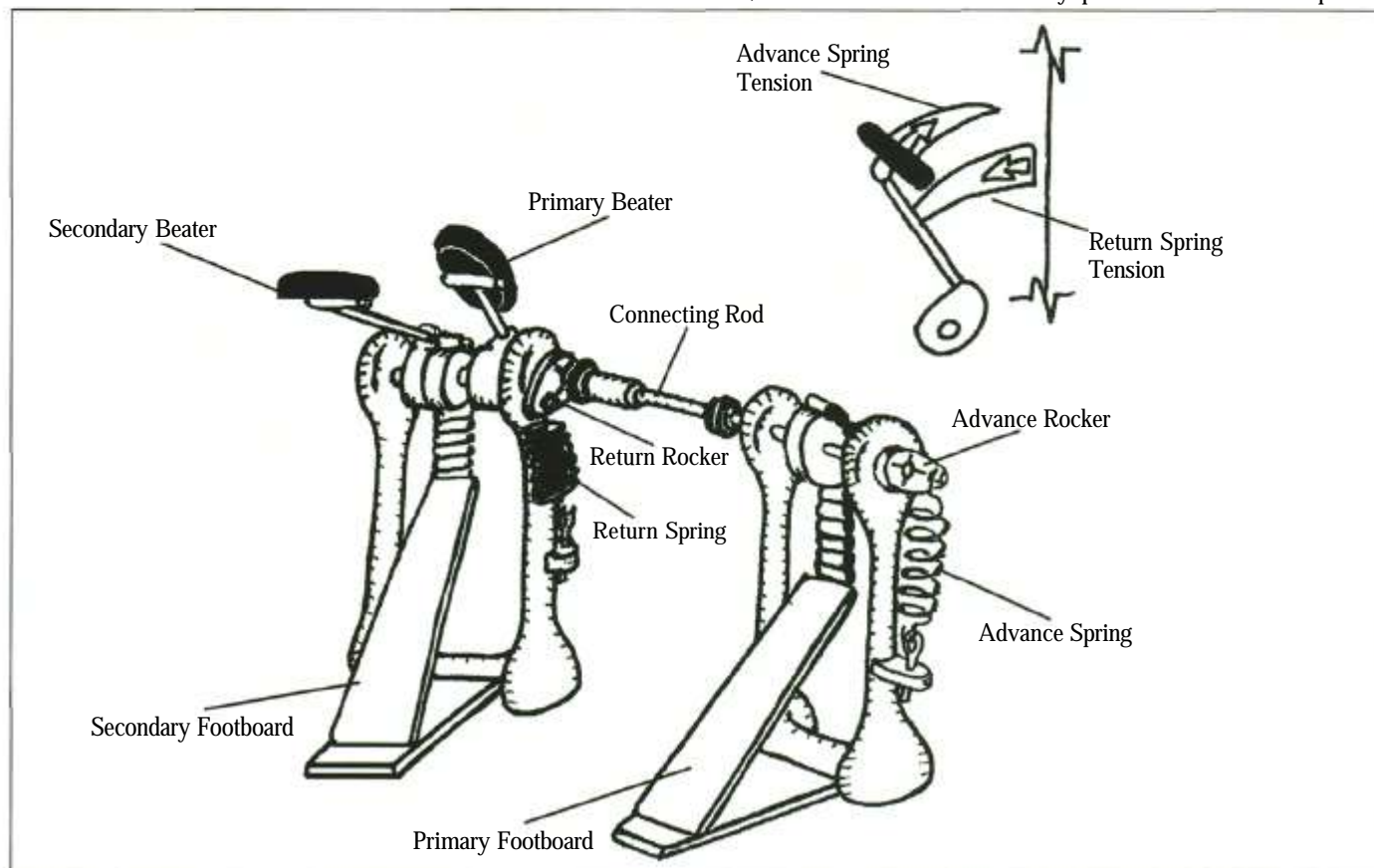
The RKK is a new way of thinking, not a rehash of the typical configuration we all know and love. The traditional drumkit layout of "strong foot near the bass drum and weak foot near the hi-hat" has been used by virtually every drummer for the past seventy years. For many of us, however, the traditional setup is inefficient—and is, in fact, an obstacle to reaching our full potential. With the modern engineering techniques available today, along with manufacturers who are willing to seek improvement, it makes less and less sense for drummers to stick with methods that hold them back.

The Theory

The Remote Kick Konzept is the idea that your hi-hat and bass drum *don't* have to gobble up one-third of the space in front of you. By attaching the hi-hat to the kick drum, placing them both in front of the weak foot, and then operating the bass drum remotely from a distance, the two combined items consume only half of the area they used to when separated. With the kick out of the way, all the toms and cymbals can be lowered and put where they need to be.

It seems to me that no one seriously considers playing their primary (single) bass drum remotely because they are afraid that the mass of the connecting rod and universal joints (plus the potential friction added by more sets of bearings) would render the results unacceptably slow and tiring. However, most, if not all, of these problems can be eliminated by the use of a quality double pedal and a few special adjustments.

Let me outline the Remote Kick Konzept for a right-handed player. (A left-handed player would simply reverse everything.) The kick drum and hi-hat are placed together on the drummer's left, where the hi-hat is normally positioned. The Konzept then



calls for the use of a left-handed double pedal—but reverses the purpose of the individual component pedals. That is, the pedal attached to the drum itself (normally the primary pedal) now becomes the *secondary* pedal—for the drummer's left foot. The remote (or slave) pedal becomes the *primary* pedal—for the drummer's right foot. The primary pedal is itself divided into two sections: the advance unit (with the footboard) and the return unit (with the beater). The RKK also requires that each of these sections has its own spring. (A drummer who normally does not play double pedal could either take this opportunity to learn how to use the secondary pedal, or simply remove its beater and forget about it.)

Since the beater needs about 80° of swing to produce good volume, and spring resistance builds very rapidly, adjusting the two spring rockers on the primary pedal the same would make pushing the beater that far very difficult. You *could* set the beater closer to the drum, but that would reduce your volume potential. You could also lower the spring tension or remove one spring entirely, but that would eliminate the quick rebound needed for rapid strokes. So the thing to do is to keep both springs and set the rockers at about 90° to each other.

In the diagram, I've tried to illustrate how the spring forces change throughout the beater's trip to the bass drum head. With the pedal at rest, the return rocker is nearly straight down, with the spring under slight tension. The footboard's power-assist spring, however, is at its maximum stretch point. As the pedal advances, the return spring stretches, storing energy that will be used later to pull the beater back. Simultaneously, the advance spring is releasing its stored energy to assist your foot, while it reduces the binding stress on the rod that keeps the beater from swinging freely when the pedal is at rest.

Setting The Primary Pedal

1. Adjust the return rocker to hold the beater shaft horizontally and install the connecting rod between the two footboards.
2. Adjust the advance rocker to allow slack in the chain, with the footboard lifting when the axle is rotated about 5°. Attaching the remaining rod end should raise the beater to 45° above horizontal. (Bring the beater back some more if you've got a heavy foot.)
3. Remove the T-bolt from the unused hoop clamp on the primary footboard and tape the clamp section to keep it from rattling. (An alternate method is to clamp a small piece of wood the thickness of a bass drum hoop tightly in the hoop clamp.)
4. Mount the secondary pedal/return unit to the bass drum hoop and be sure the primary footboard doesn't bottom out before its beater hits the head.
5. Study the primary pedal throughout its range of motion, and make sure that the springs are not rubbing on any other parts. Be sure you have easy access to all drumkey-operated bolts.

In Practice

Now it's time to play the pedal and adjust the tension of the various springs to get the pedal to feel right. You should begin with

the heavier return spring by placing the full weight of your leg (with heel up) upon the footboard and increasing tension until the beater head lifts 1/2" off the head. At this point the action will feel like a brake is on—very stiff. As you apply advance spring tension, however, that stiff sensation will reduce—to a point where the action will feel like a magnet is holding the beater against the bass drum head. Lower the tension with the thumb knob a couple of turns at a time until you say, "That's it!"

I have to admit that this system will never feel exactly like a single pedal. However, in exchange for the positioning flexibility it provides for toms and cymbals, I'll *gladly* live with a little stiffness. I recommend removing any weights from (and shortening) the beater shaft to lessen kinetic resistance. Also, since the springs oppose each other, putting all of the bearings under binding stress,



you should keep them all well-lubricated. And when you tear down, don't forget that the springs are sprung! (If you can only obtain a double pedal with a single spring for the remote footboard it won't be possible for you to fully implement the RKK. But you certainly still can benefit from the drum placement I've described.)

In Summary

After more than thirty performances using the Remote Kick Konzept, I'll never return to the traditional setup. With this pedal system I can do everything I could do with my old DW single. And besides, I think I have a killer-looking set that displays the last word in ergonomics. If you try the RKK and have any comments, please let me know, at 743 Santa Clara Avenue #3, Alameda, CA 94501.



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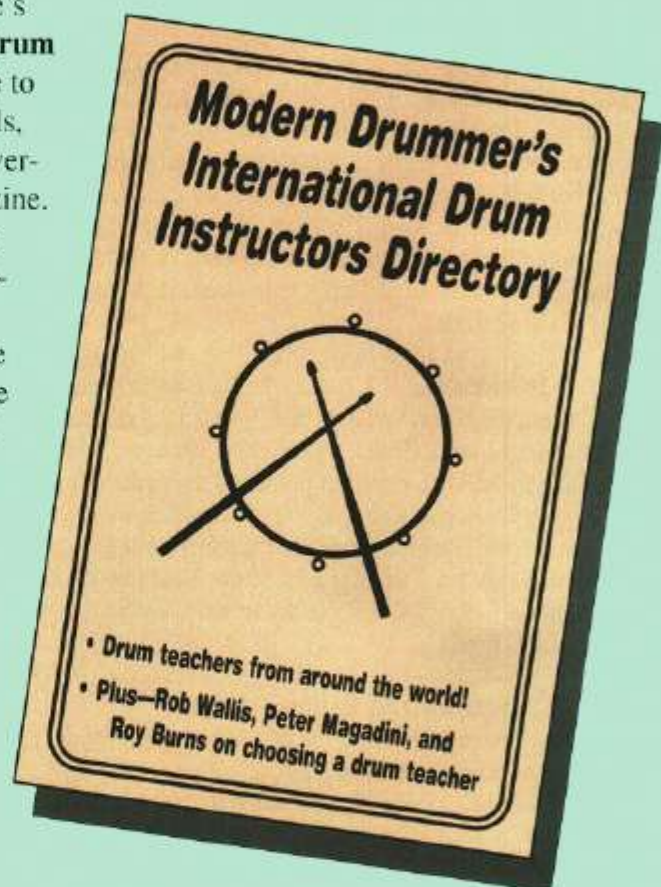
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Wally Ingram

From Timbuk 3 To Sheryl Crow

by Robyn Flans

Ten years ago, when Wally Ingram moved to L.A. from Wisconsin, life was pretty tough. While doubling as a physical education teacher's assistant, he was playing some gigs at night and getting home at 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning. He was showcasing with four or five struggling bands simultaneously, while living on macaroni & cheese.

Ingram had spent his formative years in Wisconsin, preparing for this move. Inspired by his mom and uncle (who were both drummers), Wally began playing drums at age five.

"I've always said that behind every great drummer, there is a great mother," Ingram says, smiling. "There is absolutely no way that anyone who is less than great can tolerate that kind of noise abuse. I had come upon a pair of drumsticks that were my mom's when I was three years old, and I got my first drumset when I was five. She threw a birthday party for me with a Monkees theme. I got the Monkees *Headquarters* album and she made all the kids Mike Nesmith stocking caps. She has been 100% supportive."

Ingram got involved with the normal school musical activities beginning in the sixth grade—school band, marching and jazz ensemble, and percussion ensemble. He loved jazz, but rock was the obsession. "Luckily I was from a very diverse community," says Wally. "I grew up with a lot of black kids and on the edge of a college campus. I was into a variety of music, from heavy metal to funk to big band jazz."

While Ingram wanted to go to a music school, his parents convinced him to go to a general education college. "I felt if you wanted to be a musician, you got in a band and worked your ass off until you made it," Wally laughs. "But their words of wisdom were that I should have something to fall back on. So rather than go to a school of music, I got into a communication arts program that dealt with radio, television, film, communication, human behavior, and conflict/resolution. I'm very glad I did. It's probably inherent in everything I do. Everything is communication—whether it's getting along with the people you play with or just communicating through music and getting through to the audience."

At the University of Wisconsin, Ingram hooked up with Professor Richard Davis, a jazz bassist from New York who taught black music studies and had a black music ensemble program. Davis became one of Wally's primary influences, also turning him on to Buddhism, which he says was a great grounding



Photo by Lissa Wales

influence at the time. Around that same time, he also met Butch Vig, a drummer/producer who remains a role model for Ingram.

"Butch is one of the greatest guys I know," says Wally. "He's a drummer and producer, and he's taught me a lot about being a *basic* drummer—playing what's right for the music and not being too flashy. He started a studio in Madison and began recording lots of alternative bands. Now he's probably the most sought-after alternative producer. He produced Nirvana's *Nevermind* album; he also produced Soul Asylum, Sonic Youth, and Smashing Pumpkins. I want to be like Butch someday." [laughs]

Ingram cites former James Brown drummer Clyde Stubblefield as grand influence number three. "The greatest compliment I ever got was when Clyde saw me play in the early '80s and said I reminded him of him!"

Wally graduated from college in 1984, hoping to "scratch out a living playing music and chase my dreams." He met up with Pat MacDonald & the Essentials, which ultimately became Timbuk 3, and played with them in '83 and '84. When they moved to Austin, Texas, deciding to play with taped bass and drums so as to be able to play anywhere without a band, Ingram had no idea their paths would cross again in a big way. What he did know was that he had to leave Wisconsin in order to reach the next career level.

Ingram hooked up with his only L.A. connection, Kevin O'Neal

(formerly of the Busboys), and relocated to California. In addition to working with O'Neal, Wally lined up work with a reggae unit. While it was enjoyable, traveling up and down the coast as they did was quite exhausting.

When Timbuk 3 called to ask Ingram to retrieve their gear at the L.A. airport for an IRS Records showcase, it was the forecast of a break. But it was another three years before they abandoned the boom box and asked Ingram to join the unit.

"They finally got burned out on the restrictions of always having to play the same way or having to rewind tapes," he explains. "They asked me to sit in on a gig right after they decided to abandon the boom box. They said, 'Just bring a kick and a snare. Don't bring any cymbals, and stand up to play.' They didn't have a bass player either. After that one gig, they said, 'You have to come on the road with us.' So we toured as a three-piece and I just played kick, snare, cowbell, and tambourine. I thought it was crazy at first, but when somebody takes something like a hi-hat or a cymbal away, it creates something completely different. At first it's like having one arm tied behind your back: You're fumbling for something to replace that instrument and that color. I made changes in the sticks I used. I'd be doing a light thing with the brush in my right hand and then a backbeat in the left. In essence, the right hand was doing what a hi-hat would, with those kind of textures. Then I'd play a more solid backbeat with a stick or *Blastick* or *Hot Rod* in my left hand." Ingram has since played scattered dates with Jackson Browne in a similar manner.

Wally has done four Timbuk 3 recordings—*Big Shot In The Dark*, 1991; *Espace Onrano Live From Paris*, 1993; *Looks Like Dark To Me*, 1994; and *A Hundred Lovers*, 1995. "Timbuk 3 is a unique situation," he says, "in the way they make records and the way they write songs. They'll quite often put me in a room and say, 'Just play,' with no song in mind. 'Play a groove, embellish it, play some fills, play some different ways.' They'll record it on digital tape, sample loops of it, and write songs to it. They also like to fool around with different technologies. I'll mess around in the studio sometimes with a Roland MIDI kit and plug it straight into a computer. Later we can have it trigger whatever sounds we want and then assemble a groove system by adding things to it, like little percussion parts and noises. We have a song called 'Shotgun Wedding' on the new Timbuk 3 album. It sounds like a snare drum, but the first snare drum hit is an actual gun shot. I had recorded my father shooting guns up in the mountains of Colorado. They gave my dad credit, too," he laughs.

"There's one Middle Eastern-sounding tune on *A Hundred Lovers* called 'Kitchen Fire,'" says Ingram, "where I'm playing a bastardization of tablas. We call it 'tambla and bangla.' I use a tom-tom and press my elbow up against it and play with my fingers, like you would on the low tabla, and I'll also push into it with my palm. I did one track of the tom creating variable pitches as well, and then I used a high-pitched bongo for the higher part of a tabla. Pat's using a thing called an Amusing Lute, which is like a dulcimer but sounds a little like a sitar.

"Sometimes when you're working with a big-name artist," says Wally, "you can be intimidated. You're always second-guessing what they want. With Timbuk 3, they want me to put my signature on it and create. Anything goes. That's quite a luxury and something I really appreciate."

In 1990 the Kevin O'Neal relationship spurred an audition for Tracy Chapman's *Crossroads* tour. "Kevin got called to put together a group to audition," Wally recalls. "Ironically, she had wanted an all-black band. So Kevin put together a band where everyone was black except for me. I was playing percussion at the time. The band that had auditioned before our group had a percussionist they really liked. He had an incredible setup, so the guy running the audition said, 'Don't even bother setting up. I think we got our percussion thing.' I wasn't sure if that was because I was white, but Kevin said, 'Just set yourself up, and when it comes time to play, just play.' It was just little triangle parts and a conga part here and there, and sure enough, we got the call and I got the gig."

In 1993, while doing a few months with Lowen & Navarro, Ingram was introduced to Sheryl Crow via bass player Tad Wadhams. Although she has since won three Grammys for her debut effort, at the time she was a relative unknown.

"They really liked Tad's playing," says Wally, "and they asked him if he had any favorite drummers he wanted to play with. He suggested me, and we all got together and played in a friend's living room. I don't know if she really had the intention of getting a new drummer, but the idea of a section that came together appealed to her. Before I knew it, I was in there."

At last Ingram was able to do what he considers he does best: sit down on the job with a full drumkit. "Getting to sit down was ecstasy," Ingram laughs. "Things come more naturally. The challenges in Sheryl's situation were more in translating the recorded material and making it a little different. She didn't really want it to

"I've always said that behind every great drummer, there is a great mother. There is absolutely no way that anyone who is less than great can tolerate that kind of noise abuse."



sound like the record. She said, 'Listen to the record and embellish it however you want, and develop a band sound.' Now we're actually getting back to the record a little more. I think it has a lot to do with the fact that the record has sold so much and people are familiar with the way it sounds. There's a little more pressure to recreate it. When she says to get back to the tempo on the record a little more, generally that means slowing things down a little or just listening to the way certain things were played and paying homage to them a bit more.

"When you're working with singers, you need to support them no matter what," Wally continues. "They need to be confident that you're in the pocket and supporting what they're doing dynamically. That means knowing when to fill and when not to fill, when to be a little more bombastic, when to rock out, and when to be real soft and minimalistic. In order to do that, the things I need in my monitor mix predominantly are Sheryl's acoustic guitars and her vocal. Of course I want a mix of the whole band, but I think it's very important to be able to hear the vocals and the pulse of the lead artist. Singers don't want to feel like they're chasing the band or that the band is running away from them. You have to be right behind them every step, shadowing them."

1994 offered Ingram some interesting challenges. First, while

Crow was supporting Crowded House, their drummer, Paul Hester, gave one night's notice. "They said, 'Would you mind playing a few songs with us tomorrow?'" Ingram recalls. "It ended up being the full show, which is close to two hours. We went to Nashville the next day and I spent the day listening to tapes. It went unbelievably well, even though I was flying by the seat of my pants. I did twelve shows with them. They were flying guys in every night to 'audition' on three or four songs. Then I'd do the rest of the show. As time went on, I learned the material and got better and better, which made me harder to replace. Finally, they got another guy who was in for two or three weeks. Then I got a phone call: 'Would you mind playing with us for the last few shows?' Sheryl was convinced that I was gone, but that's not the way I am. My loyalties were with her. But the tough thing was, when they asked me to come back, we were both going on tour in Europe the next week. Sheryl was doing a club tour and they were doing huge festivals. They were saying, 'We wish we could take you with us...' but I couldn't do that to Sheryl."

Ingram's loyalty was rewarded last summer when he was able to retain his gig with Sheryl Crow despite a broken foot. The thirty-two-year old drummer had been playing basketball at a party, when he came down on his ankle and heard it pop. "I went to a doctor who x-rayed it and said it wasn't broken, that it was just a bad sprain," recalls Ingram. "Then we did two shows at the Whiskey back to back. Bruce Springsteen was there, and in between shows he actually came up to the dressing room while I was icing my foot—which was a huge purple thing by then. Our bass player's brother, who is a podiatrist, said he thought it was broken and that I should go by his office. He x-rayed my foot and found a broken bone in there. I ended up playing Woodstock in a cast. Had it been my right foot, I wouldn't have been able to play at all, but it was on my left foot, so I managed to get a technique going where I could play with the cast on. The bottom of the cast was rounded off, so I could rock it back and forth to slightly open the hi-hat for a sloshy sound. I could roll my foot backwards and it would open it up a little bit, but to open and close the hat, I would literally have to lift up my whole leg. It was a little tough."

For Sheryl Crow, Ingram plays an all-acoustic DW set: a 20" kick, a 10" mounted tom, and 12" and 15" floor toms, along with a tambourine and some bongos for "Solidify." On the next tour he plans to use more hand drums for an "unplugged" segment. His cymbals are Sabian, his favorite ride being the *Ed Shaughnessy* model. "It has a very solid, big bell," Ingram says, "and it's lively enough that it can get a little washy if you hit it hard. But it doesn't get *too* washy; there's still definition. I'm also using an *El Sabor*, which is an 18" crash with a slight lip, almost like a China with a curve on the edge. I've been using two or three AAX *Studio* crashes, a little 8" splash, and some of the HH series that I interchange occasionally."

With *Timbuk 3*, Ingram incorporates some electronics with his setup. "We almost always have a trigger on the bass drum and send an electronic sound. I usually trigger something from an

Alesis D4, so the engineer has two kick drum sounds to work with—one electronic and one acoustic. Then I have a KAT controller with a variety of electronic sounds that you can't get from the acoustic drums—mainly the Roland 808 kick drum, snare drum, and cowbells. I'm triggering the 808 kick drum with my hand. I put it right over the hi-hat and use it to set up a subtle groove, like on 'Big Shot In The Dark.' I'm playing the 808 kick patterns with my hand and a second kick pattern around it with my foot, embellishing with a second, tight, rap-sounding snare, 808-style. With Timbuk 3, I generally use two small acoustic toms, so I'll have some bigger sounds available on the KAT. I always have had a cowbell, tambourine, and bongos. Then I always use a sizzler I've made. I pull one of the strands off a Cabasa and wrap some duct tape around the chain. Then I connect it to the top of the wing nut of one of my cymbals off to the right, so it hangs on there and sizzles or rattles. It's like having rivets. I use that for both Sheryl and Timbuk 3.

Both those gigs have provided some tracks of which Ingram is very proud. "'Sunshine Is Dangerous' [from Timbuk 3's *A Hundred Lovers*] is real funky, yet it's rock," he says. "Then the title track of *Big Shot In The Dark* is a combination of technology—the electronic sounds of the big 808 kick drum—and the acoustic elements. It's part sequenced and part real performance. There's also a song on that album that is not looped, with no samples, called 'The Border Crossing.' It's a cross between a New Orleans second-line and a soca beat, which is kind of calypso. That's sort of cool.

"The Derek & the Dominos tune, 'Keep On Growing,' which we cut with Sheryl for the new Whoopie Goldberg movie, is neat. Jim Gordon was the drummer on the original track, and I enjoy playing that one a lot. The other tune I recorded with Sheryl, 'I'm Gonna Be A Wheel Someday,' is pretty interesting as well, because it's sort of an unorthodox approach. I'm playing basically what the hi-hat pattern would be on the rim of a drum, and I'm playing a snare drum with no snares on. I overdubbed a djembe, so it's like a hand-drum thing happening over the top of it. It has a kind of slinky New Orleans-y feel, but with a slight hip-hop vibe to it, and with the earthiness of hand drums. That was recorded for a series of Showtime movies, and it's available on a soundtrack album called *Soundtrack To Nowhere*. Strangely enough, that tune was nominated for a Grammy for Best Female Vocal Performance. I just don't know where anyone heard it."

Ingram hopes to continue with Crow and Timbuk 3 as much as their schedules permit. "It's fun to play with your friends," he says. "I've met so many great people in music. I guess one of my goals is to get into producing so I'm actually able to put together combinations of people I think would be great. I want to become more of a writer, too. Right now I'm pretty much a road warrior, but I hope to eventually wean myself from it."



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Drumming Fallacies: Part I

by Gary Griswold

Every profession, it seems, has its own set of fallacies—incorrect notions about the profession that are commonly held to be true. Drumming is no exception. An example of such a fallacy, at least in the public's mindset, is the "animal" image: the drummer as a wild beast that just loves to hit things, and who possesses little if any musical talent. Such publicly held misconceptions are just something we drummers have to put up with and try our best to dispel whenever possible.

However, if we care about getting along with our musical colleagues and the success of our fellow drummers, we can't afford to ignore such false beliefs held *within* the musical field in general, and among drummers in particular. What follows, then, is a discussion of some of the more noticeable and potentially destructive beliefs that can lead astray fledgling drummers—and seasoned players as well.

Fallacy #1: Drums Are All A Drummer Needs To Know

It's hard enough trying to master a paradiddle or play consistent time. Being told that you should also learn about instruments other than drums can be very intimidating. Intimidating, yes—but true.

Even if you're certain all you'll ever want to play is the drumset and you have no interest in pursuing music in college or playing with an orchestra, it will be extremely beneficial to your success as a drummer to learn whatever you can about how other instruments are played, how music is arranged, and how other musicians think. This can happen either formally in lessons, or informally by careful observation.

No, you don't necessarily have to study mallet percussion to become a good set

player. But knowledge of orchestral playing *will* enhance your skill behind a kit. A year practicing marimba will do wonders for your single-stroke rolls. A bit of study

"The old 'the band is made up of twenty musicians and a drummer' attitude is still prevalent among many musicians—who should know better."



on timpani—even if you never actually play in a classical situation—will introduce you to all kinds of cross-sticking possibilities for use on your floor toms.

Years before I ever considered playing drums, I was forced by well-intentioned parents to take piano lessons. In college, I was likewise required to study piano. And at both levels I hated it. On no account did

these years of piano study leave me qualified to call myself any sort of keyboard player. But I have since come to value the experience because what I learned allows me to communicate better with other musicians. In the band I currently play with, I don't get charts (see Fallacy #4), so I often need to ask the bass or piano player what's going on at a certain point in a tune. Frequently, they can't really explain it to me, and/or the arranger doesn't know how to express what the drums should be doing. But I'm able to look at the other players' parts and figure where the accents and chord changes are.

Knowing more than just drums can go beyond musical training; a little psychology, sociology, and music history can help. Understanding why horn sections operate the way they do or why certain players lay back or play slightly ahead of the beat can help you groove with the whole band. It's also helpful to know how to ask the bass player—in a polite, non-threatening way—to turn down his amp a bit.

Fallacy #2: New And/Or More Equipment Makes A Better Drummer

It's easy to fall into the line of thinking that says, "If I only had that new drumset, snare drum, or cymbal, my playing would be so much better." The reality of the situation is that only practice and playing experience will help you to improve as a drummer. Buying new equipment won't enhance your skills one bit; you'll just be playing at the same level on something else. A poor player on a great kit will still sound lousy, but a skilled player will still sound good on less-than-ideal equipment.

A wonderful example of this is Gene Krupa. No matter what collectors of "vintage" drums will tell you, the drums used in Krupa's day were nothing like the quality and variety we have nowadays. Still, recordings of Krupa's playing, no matter

what sort of kit he was using (or even how crude the recording is when compared to today's high-fidelity CD standards) sound fabulous—because his playing is based on solid skill.

Now, I don't seek to offend any drum equipment manufacturers, but I do need to speak the truth. A novice drummer needs to understand that even though all the drum ads imply that you can't really play at your best or develop "your own sound" without buying a certain product, the only *real* way to become a better player is through practice. Buying more equipment only makes you a drummer with more stuff.

By the way, don't forget the truth in the adage "less is more." It's often especially true for drummers. In many playing situations—most notably "casual" gigs—having too much stuff is inappropriate and can actually make you look unprofessional, because you'll take up too much room and time setting up. If you're on a major tour and are lucky enough to have an army of roadies to set up and take down your kit, fine. If not, be a pro and only bring what you need.

Fallacy #3: To Develop A Unique Style, A Drummer Should Not Take Lessons, But Be Self-Taught

If you don't take lessons that lay a foundation of technique, you'll never get to the point of developing style. It's what you do with the basic skills *after* you master them that will let you develop your own style. Certainly there are self-taught drummers who are the exception, but you'll find that an overwhelming majority of the drummers who are truly talented—both in terms of technique and musicianship—have had many years of training with top-notch teachers.

Fallacy #4: The Drummer's Not An Equal Member Of The Band

This is the old "the band is made up of twenty musicians and a drummer" attitude, which is still prevalent among many musicians—who should know better. And unfortunately, folks who like to blame all the group's problems on one individual often target the drummer. If the whole

band isn't swinging, or certain dynamics aren't adhered to, such people will point to the drummer—whether or not the problem really lies there. I've noticed that these people are often insecure musicians who want to divert blame away from themselves. Sometimes they're leaders who just want to show off power or take out frustrations. Still, after being told or having it implied in many subtle ways that you're somehow a lesser musician (even though it's not true), it's easy to start losing confidence—particularly if you're just starting out.

What to do? If you're not being treated like an equal member of the band and/or are blamed unfairly for musical problems, first be sure to check out your own behavior and see if you are unwittingly *acting* like an inferior musician. Do you "zone out" when the others start talking about phrasing, chord changes, or dynamics? Are you paying attention to dynamics and tempo changes? Do the other musicians have to wait for you to set up at rehearsals and gigs? You have the right to be treated as a professional, but only if you act like one.

If, despite all your efforts, you're in a playing situation where the drummer is used as an all-purpose scapegoat, you need to give some serious thought to the matter. If it's just a one-night casual, be a professional. Hold your temper and your tongue, and then decide later if it's worth it to play with those people ever again. If you're in a more long-term band situation, staying will only be destructive to your skills and self-confidence. It's not worth it, even if it may take you a while to find others to play with. Believe me, I know how hard it is to find competent musicians with whom to get a band up and running. But if there's no mutual respect, the situation is worthless in the long run.

Fallacy #5: The Drummer Is Responsible For All The Timekeeping

I once read an interview with a famous drummer who quoted Count Basie as saying something like, "There is no separate 'rhythm section.' For a band to swing,

everyone plays time." This is a concept understood by the finest of musicians. Unfortunately, a great many other musicians don't realize it.

I've been playing for nearly twenty years, and I *still* know of no way to win a fight with a twenty-piece horn section that comes in five to ten metronome beats slower or faster than the rhythm section. Yes, there are ways to urge along a sluggish horn section, and there are ways to subtly rein in those who rush. But by and large they must be somewhere in the ballpark when it comes to tempo.

The way to deal with such serious timekeeping problems is similar to what was discussed under Fallacy #4: First, determine whether *you* really are the problem. If not, you need to decide if it's worth it to stay around and be the scapegoat.

Next month, we'll examine several more drumming fallacies—and how you should approach them. Stay tuned!



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1. Photos must be in color, and of high quality. (35mm slides are preferred; color prints will be considered. Polaroids cannot be accepted.)
2. You may send more than one view of the kit, but only one photo will be published.
3. Photos should be of drums only; no people should be in the shot.
4. Drums should be photographed against a neutral background (a sheet, drape, blank wall, ect.). Avoid "busy" backgrounds such as in your basement, garage, or bedroom.
5. Be sure that those attributes of your kit that make it special are clearly visible in the photo.

Send your photo(s) to Drumkit Of The Month, Modern Drummer Publications, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Please note that photos cannot be returned, so don't send any originals you can't bear to part with.

The Drummer's Studio Survival Guide: Part 5

Noise Gates

by Mark Parsons

If any piece of processing gear can be said to be controversial, then the noise gate wins the title hands down. Nothing else that I can think of engenders such strong feelings among studio drummers (almost like drum machines did during the '80s). And yet some form of noise gate is used at almost every studio. Here are some quips from pros with whom we broached the subject:

Simon Phillips: "Absolutely no gates [while tracking]. Leave that for when you mix. And when I mix I'll only use gates on the echo sends to clean up certain things.

you're going to hear is the 2 and 4.

If gates are held in such low regard by many studio pros, why bother to learn about them? And why do so many engineers rely on them for getting drum sounds? Well, part of the answer to the first question actually lies in the second one: Since gates *are* used in many studios, you'd better have an understanding of them—at least so you can be aware of potential problems. (If someone's over-gating your snare and starting to lose ghost notes, for example, you'd want to immediately recognize it and possibly have some suggestions as to how to correct it.)

The rest of the answer is that noise gates

Noise gates are configured quite a bit like compressors (discussed in the previous installment). They even share some of the same parameters, such as *threshold*, *attack*, and *release*. Their operation is also similar, although the end results are almost opposite: A compressor reduces your dynamic range by lowering the loud parts, while a gate increases the dynamic range by lowering (or eliminating entirely) the quiet parts.

Let's suppose you have a signal containing sounds that you want (a close-miked snare, for example) and other sounds you *don't* want (other drums leaking into the track, or bleed from your guitarist's amp). We can send the signal through a gate and



Other than that, absolutely no gates."

J.R. Robinson: "I *hate* gates...gating is like playing without your feet and hands, just your arms down to your wrist."

Kenny Aronoff: "I tend to prefer stuff that's natural-sounding, but I have to say that I'll go with whatever it takes to make it sound good."

Gregg Bissonette: "I'm not a real big fan of gating the drums, because when you gate them the little grace notes and ghost strokes can get lost."

Jim Keltner: "I prefer no gates on my drums. I hate the *concept* of a gate...the shutting down of an instrument. It's stupid."

Rod Morgenstein: "I totally understand the importance of the gates, and I don't really mind them on the tom-toms. There can be absolutely no gate on the snare drum, though, because I'm a ghost-stroke player. When a gate is put on the snare, all

can be very beneficial under certain circumstances, when applied correctly. First, let's check out some basic theory on how they work.

Music In—Noise Out

Probably the best way to understand the function of a noise gate is to envision a *real* gate, like Mr. McGregor might use to keep Peter Rabbit out of his garden. Now imagine that this gate has a hefty spring on it, such that while Old Man McGregor could easily open it and go inside, there's no way little Peter could push it open and make a meal out of the carrot crop. If you consider Mr. McGregor (the desired element) to be *music* and Peter Rabbit (the undesired element) to be *noise*, with the spring-loaded garden gate (the determining factor as to who gets in or not) as the *noise gate*, then you've got a fair picture of the scenario.

adjust the threshold (the "spring strength," as it were) so that the gate opens up for the snare hits but not for the other noises, resulting in a processed track containing only the snare hits with no noise in between them. Obviously, for this to work the "music" must be louder than the "noise," because the gate doesn't really know what we want or don't want. It simply switches on (opens) when it detects a signal above a certain level (the threshold) and switches off (closes) when the signal drops below that level.

Besides the threshold, another important factor is how fast the gate opens once it's triggered. This is the attack time, and it may vary from *very* fast (on the order of 50 microseconds or less) to maybe 50 milliseconds or so. How quickly the gate closes is the release time, typically ranging from 50 milliseconds up to several seconds. For quick, percussive sounds you

usually want the fastest attack possible, to make sure you don't chop off the leading edge of the sound. (Such transients are an important part of a drum's character.) With slower sounds it may sound unnatural if the gate pops open all at once, so a slightly longer attack time may be in order. Release times are dependent not only on how quickly the note itself ends but on how much (if any) of the room decay you wish to include. Another important consideration here is how soon the desired note is followed by an undesired one. For instance, if you're gating a quarter-note hi-hat part out of a snare track you can afford quite a long release time.

Potential Problems

Sounds great so far, right? So why do some folks have a thing against gates? Well, in their quest for sonic perfection, certain producers and engineers have gotten overzealous and thrown out the baby with the bath water. They get so concerned

with eliminating *all* stray noise from a track that they end up also losing some of the subtle intricacies of the part, such as the snare ghost strokes already mentioned.

An opposite problem can also occur, where instead of losing parts, you can have the threshold too low and stray parts can leak in, with decidedly unmusical results. Let's say the engineer is gating your snare because he's sending it to a reverb, and he doesn't want reverb on the rest of the kit. So far so good, but if he doesn't take certain precautions (which we'll discuss later) there's a good chance that other loud parts—such as a strong tom stroke or cymbal crash—can exceed the threshold. These parts will then make it through the gate, resulting in a loud tom or cymbal unexpectedly popping into the mix...with reverb unintentionally splattered all over it!

Incorrect attack and release times can also cause trouble. We already mentioned the problem of having too fast or slow an *attack* time for the source material. But if

the *release* time is too quick, the natural decay of the note can get truncated, resulting in a "clipped" sound that most of us drummers would deem unpleasant. Too long a release, on the other hand, will let *any* sound in that happens to occur during that time, possibly resulting in a leakage problem similar to that described above.

So Why Gate?

That's a good question, especially in light of what our panel of pros had to say about it. One thing to keep in mind is that, as opposed to first-call session players, when most of *us* go into a studio, we're not going into Little Mountain or Ocean Way (two top studios known for having great drum rooms). These types of studios have meticulously designed rooms boasting absolutely gorgeous ambience—and usually a couple of AKG C-12 vintage tube mic's (at about twelve grand a pair) to hang over the drums and capture it with, and probably a pair of Neumann U-87s

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stuck way up in the corners, too! As recording engineer Ed Thacker says, "My feeling is that with these rooms you're actually paying for the bleed, so why fight it?"

That's understandable, but what about the rest of us? The odds are pretty great (at least early on in our recording careers) that we'll be using more modest facilities—possibly remodeled rooms rather than rooms designed from the ground up to have great acoustics. (We'll discuss room acoustics in detail next month.) The point is that many of these studios have mediocre (or worse) acoustics, and you may *not* wish to include the bleed in your drum sound, let alone pay for it. Eliminating bleed in these instances would be a legitimate use for a noise gate, and if you also decide to add digital reverb to make up for the lack of room ambience, you might find a gate handy (more about this in a minute).

Additionally, gates are occasionally used as an effect, or to process a digital effect

(hence the term "gated reverb"). And as we'll see, they can also be used to help lock in other instruments with the drums.

How & How Not To Gate

Rule number one: Try not to let anyone gate your drums (*especially* your snare) when you're tracking. (The exception is if you're simply a hired gun, in which case it's the producer's decision. But even then you can *suggest* waiting till the mix.) Once your drums are gated on tape you're stuck with the results, and if something got left off it's gone for good. Far better to wait until it's time to mix, and even then there are things that can be done to improve the situation.

One method is *frequency-dependent gating*. Most gates have a side chain input (sometimes called a trigger input) that allows you to use an external signal (other than the source) to trigger the gate. There are several benefits to this, and one of them is that you can split a drum signal and send

a "straight" version of it to the gate input and a heavily equalized version of it to the side chain input. (Don't worry—this won't affect the tone of the gated drum track.) The trick is to set the EQ so it *emphasizes* the instruments you want and *de-emphasizes* those you wish to eliminate. If you boosted the mids and cut the lows and highs on a snare side chain, for example, it would increase the gate's sensitivity to the snare and make it less sensitive to the kick drum and cymbals, yielding much more accurate gating. (Some of the more expensive noise gates have this frequency-dependent feature built into them.)

Also, you can place an electronic trigger on or in your drum and use this in the side chain. This will help keep the other drums from falsely triggering the gate, as the trigger will have more isolation than the drum mic'. You can (and should) EQ the trigger signal to further isolate the sounds you want from those you don't. If you absolutely *must* gate while tracking, then this is the

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setup to use, but even better is to print the trigger signal onto an open track for use during mixdown.

Applications

Any part of your drumset is a potential candidate for gating. (Although unless you're really looking for that over-processed "early eighties" sound, I certainly wouldn't recommend gating everything on your kit!) The main thing is to apply gates only so as to ensure you're not losing any notes. Part of this is using good judgment about which parts to gate (subtle, intricate parts do not lend themselves well to gating), and part is setting up the gate correctly.

We already discussed the importance of proper attack and release times, but the threshold setting is equally important. Wind the tape to the softest part of the track (drum-wise) and lower the threshold until the softest hits on the gated drum are just enough to open the gate. If this threshold setting allows undesirable sounds to get through, you have a few options: You can set up a frequency-dependent scheme to increase sensitivity, as discussed. You can keep the threshold where it is and live with the leakage. You can raise the threshold to eliminate the leakage and accept the loss of some of the softer notes. You can elect not to gate that particular drum on that particular track. Or, if the quiet hits are only in one specific section, you can manually "ride" the gate, lowering the threshold during the soft part, then bringing it back to where it belongs for the rest of the song.

As far as specifics go, some engineers like to gate the toms because they don't like having two or three (or more) open mic's around the kit that may actually be in use for only a small percentage of the total track. Successful tom gating depends on placing the mic's close to the toms and playing fairly solidly—otherwise the snare will overpower the toms and leak through the gate.

If you like a tight, dry kick sound a gate can help by eliminating some ring along with the bleed from the rest of the kit. Since kicks are frequently compressed, a

gate upstream of the compressor can help keep the noise level down as well.

When the snare is gated it's usually because it's going to have reverb added to it, and you (or the engineer) don't want that same reverb all over your hi-hats. If the snare part is simply a slamming backbeat on 2 and 4, you're in luck; you can usually just gate it, send it to the reverb, and it'll sound fine. But for most snare parts I'd encourage you to use an equalized side-chain signal or a trigger (or both) and carefully tweak the gate *during the mix* to ensure that the snare part remains intact. Something even less intrusive that I prefer is to send the dry, ungated snare off the multitrack straight to the mix, and gate only the reverb send. (Simon Phillips mentioned using a similar technique.) This will still keep your hi-hats out of the reverb, and if a light snare hit doesn't make it through the gate, all that will happen is that that particular note won't have any reverb on it, which is far superior to losing the note entirely. Additionally, the natural decay of the drum won't get truncated.

If you're recording in a very ambient room, you can gate the room mic's (perhaps triggered by the snare and/or tom signals) to create an authentic version of the original "gated reverb" sound popularized by Phil Collins fifteen years ago. And here's a final use for gates I'd like to mention: If the bass guitar track isn't really locked in with the kick drum, you can run the bass through a gate with the kick track plugged into the side chain. This can really tighten things up, since you'll only hear the bass when the kick drum is played (and for a pre-determined time afterward, depending on your chosen release time).

As we've seen, noise gates are simply tools, and as with all tools they are neither inherently good nor evil. It all depends on how they are used. Gates have gotten a bad reputation due to their abuse by some engineers and producers, and it's true that in the wrong hands they can suck the individuality out of your drum tracks. But used *correctly*, when circumstances call for it, they can help keep things quiet, clean, and tight without destroying the feel of your music.



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PRACTICE TIPS

Fold a hand towel back and forth in an "S" pattern so that you have four layers, then place it on the floor. While sitting, strike the towel as if it were a drumhead. Turn on your favorite music and play quarter notes to the beat. This will help you develop your sense of timing, sort of like a click track. Play 100 strokes with each hand, and watch the towel as you strike it. If it rolls one way or the other you need to practice a more strict straight-up-and-down stroke.

This exercise will not only improve your wrist strength, but will also give you greater stick control. After 1,000 strokes with each hand every day for a month you'll be surprised at how much smoother your rolls will be, and how much easier it will be to play paradiddles and other patterns. You'll also notice improvement in your "weaker" hand.

Kelly Bennett
Youngstown, OH

Practicing with a pad becomes more interesting and efficient when a tambourine is placed on the floor for the left foot to tap on ("hi-hat style"), and a bass drum pedal with an inverted beater is used for the right foot. With this arrangement it's possible to practice independence between all four limbs (on swing patterns in particular) with a good feel and minimum noise.

Andreas Moser
Sheffield, England

One of the main problems that drummers have is sticking to their practice routine. Beating out paradiddles on a snare drum can seem very redundant. Being a college student, I have to practice constantly. Perhaps a very diligent drummer can stand to play paradiddles all day, but for those who lose interest quickly, here is what I propose: Get a temple block, cowbell, or

anything else that makes a different—and interesting—sound. Set it next to your snare drum or practice pad so that you can hit it. When playing a single paradiddle, accent the first note of each figure and play it on the block or bell. Next play all the right-hand figures on the block, then all the left-hand figures. Find a copy of the forty P.A.S. International Rudiments, and practice mixing these up with this new technique. Besides adding more excitement to your practicing, it will also help you to understand Latin rhythms.

Lanny Gibson
Denton, TX

FLYING MUFFLE

Here's a fast and easy way to make a snare drum muffle that won't choke the drum. Cut a piece of T-shirt material 5" by 7-1/2", then fold it over three times so you have a pad that's 5" by 2-1/2". Cover the top of the pad with layers of duct tape. Then cut a 3-1/2" by 1-1/4" piece of tape and place it long-ways across the top of the pad. Half the tape should be on the pad and the other half should hang over the top. Use that tape to secure the pad to the inside of the rim at the top of the drum. When the drum is struck, the vibration lifts up the pad, letting the drum sing. When the pad comes down, it has a limiting or compression-type effect. For more dampening, add more material.

Buddy Balbi
Stockton, CA

CUSTOM ELECTRONIC DRUMKIT RACK

I like to dabble with electronic drumpads as well as with my acoustic kit. But I was getting tired of tearing down my regular kit (which is mounted on a Gibraltar rack) in order to set up my electronic pads. (Like most musicians my cash flow is limited, so I have only the one \$300-plus rack.) However, if you are lucky enough to have a good-sized flea market near you, you should be able to find at least one booth where they sell the pipes and custom-welded clamps used to create the booths and

tents used at that very market. You can design a drum cage out of these materials that should be more than strong enough to hold your electronic pads. Best of all, they're cheap! I built a complete cage for \$50. The pipes are smaller in diameter than Gibraltar or Tama rack pipes, but your local music store should carry multi-purpose clamps that will fit them.

Gary Barth
Redwood City, CA

MONITOR HEADPHONES

I do a lot of home studio recording. One of my biggest "beefs" is that I have a hard time laying my drum tracks over recorded music. Due to the leakage of my live drums into standard studio headphones, I can't hear the music—no matter how high the cue volume is.

My solution was to monitor the music through a pair of flight headphones, which are designed to keep out the ambient noise of aircraft engines while pilots are communicating by radio. These actually killed the sound of my drums so much that I had to cue them up from the board! Most flight phones come with two jacks: a 1/4" jack for incoming signals and a 3/16" jack for a talk-back mic'. Simply hook the incoming music signal up through the 1/4" jack, and you're ready to go. I'm using a Flitecom model *FDX*, which sells for about \$90.

Ted Stephens
Rocky River, OH

PATCHING HOLES IN COVERED DRUM SHELLS

Here's a way to fix holes in covered drum shells caused by drilling for tom mounts, cymbal arm holders, or spurs—without recovering the entire drum. I had several holes in my gold sparkle George Way bass drum that had been drilled by a previous owner. I was able to produce perfect 1/4" round patches for these holes using a standard paper punch (which can be purchased in any variety store).

Buy a small piece of covering material in the color you need. (You may also find

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enough if you have inlay strips on your bass drum hoops that overlap.) Punch out a few 1/4" round "holes" with your paper punch. Then use a little wood putty to fill the hole in the shell on the drum. While the putty is still fresh, glue in your round piece of covering material. They fit perfectly, and they rid your drums of those small drill holes.

Greg Ostroski
Rolling Prairie, IN



RECYCLING DRUMHEADS

When a Mylar drumhead no longer serves a musical purpose, it may still serve a functional one—as a water retainer. Placed under a planter, hoop side up, the head can stop water from running out of the planter and possibly damaging the surface it's on. Depending on the placement of the planter, even a punctured head might work.

David and Adina Troen-Krasnow
Needham, MA

Note: The tips presented in Drumline are suggestions based on the personal experience of individual drummers, and are not necessarily endorsed or recommended by Modern Drummer magazine. Modern Drummer cannot guarantee that any problem will be solved by any Drumline suggestion, and cannot be responsible for any damage to equipment or personal injury resulting from the utilization of any such suggestion. Readers are encouraged to consider each suggestion carefully before attempting to utilize any Drumline tip.



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RECORDINGS

JOHN SANTOS & THE MACHETE ENSEMBLE

Machete
(Xenophile/Green Linnet 4029)

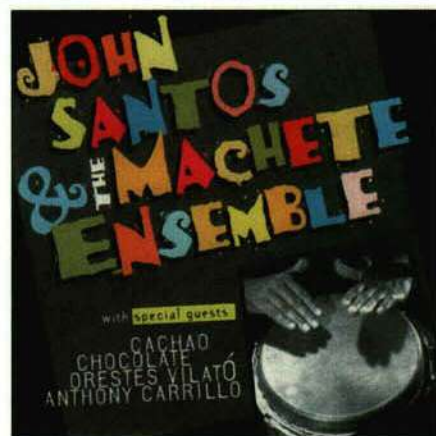
⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ 1/2

John Santos, Orestes Vilato, Anthony Carillo: perc
Paul Van Wageningen: dr
David Belove, Israel Lopez (Cachao): bs
Rebeca Mauleon: kybd, perc
Alfredo Armenteros, Bill Ortiz: trp, flghn
John Calloway: fl
Jeff Cressman: tbn
Wayne Wallace: tbn, kybd
Melecio Magdaluyo: sx, fl
other musicians

The spirited Afro-Latin jazz set from a renowned San Francisco Bay area group is packed with "masters." Bassist Cachao, who has shaped Cuban music since the 1940s, and Armenteros, a highly revered proponent of typical Cuban trumpet playing, particularly shine on several tradition-

al numbers, while timbalero Orestes Vilato and young hand drumming innovator Anthony Carillo weave their thrilling parts into the mix. The danzon-mambo "Media Luna" bounces with a pert string quartet, and the bembé-guaracha "El Mago Vilato" is a fitting tribute to its namesake, a bay area resident who has worked with Santana, among others.

Director Santos and drummer Van Wageningen shine on the densely orchestrated "Machete," as the horn section attacks their ensemble parts with a joyous precision. In fact, the drummer *really* lets fly here, ripping through some of his best recorded work yet. Meanwhile, Vilato and Carillo, along with guest bata and coro



players, pump the action to a fever pitch on the non-drumset tracks.

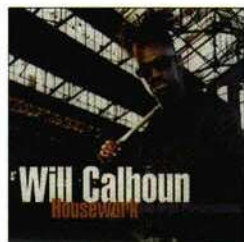
This one clicks from the folk to the fusion, from descarga to bata jazz, from the traditional to the experimental.

•Robin Tolleson

WILL CALHOUN

Housework
(Solo Drum Performances)
(Too Fly Prod., Inc.)

⊕ ⊕ ⊕ 1/2



Will Calhoun: dr, perc,
other instruments

Anyone who has seen Will Calhoun either in clinic or in concert with the late Living Color knows that he is a totally musical artist who never took the grandstand with LC, preferring to be a team player at all times. But LC didn't always take advantage of Will's skill at playing in many genres, or his prodigious chops.

Housework remedies this for listeners while giving Calhoun a chance to set his multifaceted talent to disc.

Recorded both in concert and in the studio, this collection of

drum solos shows a drummer who can burn, but one who also can construct impressive thematic pieces and evocative, sequencer-induced sound collages. "Tribute To Blakey" initiates the CD with a tasteful, well-conceived solo that is more a thoughtful homage than an attempt at sound-a-like drum riffs. The toms are full and resonant here, Will seemingly lost in a medium-tempo remembrance of a departed friend. "Miles Davis" picks up the Al Foster throne, with Will bashing out a caustic hi-hat groove as a distorted rock melody works the background. And "Jingle Brass Fantasy" recalls Billy Cobham's "Stratus" with its repetitive sequencer line and 16th-note snare drum workout, but then Will breaks into a flailing fury over the kit before abruptly ending.

What makes this music work is the diversity Will brings to each solo, whether the surroundings are African percussion, hard rock rave-ups, or impressionist hip-hop ("Jungle").

Will Calhoun should be proud of this effort. He's done more with eight drum solos than some drummers do with an entire band, a major label, and forty attendant lackeys. (Too Fly Prod., Inc., 1600 Broadway, Suite 906, New York, NY 10019)

•Ken Micallef

JAMES CARNEY

Tales From The Aqueduct
(Jacaranda 71001)

⊕ ⊕ ⊕ 1/2



James Carney: pno
Dan Morris: dr, perc
Darek "Oles" Oleszkiewicz: bs
Scott Mayo, Peter Epstein: al sx, sp sx
Ravi Coltrane, Chuck Manning,
Peter Epstein: tn sx
Ralph Alessi: flghn, trp

A nice surprise from a West Coast indie. Carney has a lucid

writing concept characterized by winding kinetic lines of surprising leaps, crafty ostinatos, and unexpected shadowy harmonic shifts. The effect is one of bright rhythmic energy underpinned by a looming tension of mystery. Even in its most angular complexity, the music remains seductive, never alienating.

Drummer Dan Morris handles the helm beautifully, wielding a knowledge of jazz, world folk music, and Gospel. Whether sprinkling colors or maneuvering a New Orleans march through shifting odd meters, his easy-breathing groove bristles with immediacy and avoids jazz clichés.

Too many pan-stylistic efforts of this sort come off as forced patchwork, but Carney and company unfold their music with personality and a clear compass heading. (Jacaranda Records, 8306 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 140, Beverly Hills, CA 90211)

•Jeff Potter

MACHINE HEAD

Burn My Eyes
(Roadrunner 9016-2)

⊕ ⊕ ⊕ 1/2



Robb Flynn: vcl, gtr
Logan Mader: gtr
Adam Duce: bs
Chris Kontos: dr

Comfortable tempos, meaty riffs, and a vocalist you can actually understand—Machine Head could be the world's first death metal groove band.

From the drums up, this Bay Area quartet boasts a clean engine of aggression. Chris Kontos delivers a sharp, punctuated attack to his rhythms and brings a sure-footed approach to his double-kick work. Though there aren't many moods to Machine Head's guitar tracks, Kontos ensures that each song has a unique foundation.

His tom-based groove in the intro of "Old" feeds into a Prong-like militaristic romp. Soft buzz rolls blend into mid-tempo riffing in "I'm Your God Now," and Kontos makes the 7/8 of "Block" flow like straight time. His sound, particularly with the cymbals, carries a lot of tone and clarity.

While much of the death metal world races to become

the fastest and heaviest, Machine Head has found a stylistic hybrid that works.

(Roadrunner Records, 536 Broadway, New York, NY 10012)

• Matt Peiken

TALUJON PERCUSSION QUARTET

Hum
(Talujon TCD 0010)

⊕ ⊕ ⊕



David Cossin, Dominic Donato, Paul Guerguerian, Michael Lipsey: perc

The young Talujon Percussion Quartet performs both the standard ensemble repertoire and the works of new composers. This disc, accordingly, places four unfamiliar pieces around two twentieth-century landmarks.

John Cage's *Third Construction* (1941) uses the visionary composer's "micro-macrocosmic rhythmic structure" (wherein the lengths of phrases of a single unit relate proportionately to the lengths of the larger parts of the piece) as well as a host of exotic and found instruments. A lion's roar and a bass drum roar impart a feeling of jungle danger quite apart from any intellectual considerations.

Part One of Steve Reich's *Drumming* (1971), played here on eight tuned bongos, brings the idea of structural evolution into our overpopulated age, requiring each drummer to enter separately, execute the complex pattern initiated by his predecessor, speed up so the two players are one beat apart, and maintain their new relationship; the result is a triumph on concentration.

The literary title *Dirty Ferdie* (1976) does little justice to Dean Drummond's haunting exploration of ringing metals. But three Talujon originals, *On The One* (four players on one marimba), *So She Shines* (with its eerie water-manipulated sounds), and the rousing finale *Their Four And Sow Three*, carry the tradition forward. (Talujon, 140 Riverside Dr., #9C, New York, NY 10024-2605)

• Hal Howland

JASON & THE SCORCHERS

A Blazing Grace
(Mammoth Records MR0101-4)

⊕ ⊕ ⊕

J. Ringenberg: vcl, hrm
W. Hodges: gtr, lap steel, vcl
J. Johnson: bs, cello
Perry Baggs: dr, vcl

The '90s will be remembered for several musical trends: alternative/grunge, a revitalization of '70s dance music, and the reunions of bands like the Eagles, Page-Plant, and Foreigner. Add to this list Jason & the Scorchers, who had dis-

solved in 1989 but who have come blazing back (original line-up intact) with *A Blazing Grace*.

If you are looking for flashy solos, new song formats, and ground-breaking technique, you'll have to look elsewhere. This album is the pure, unadulterated rockabilly/country rock that the Scorchers do so well. Perry Baggs handles the drumming duties with solid, percolating grooves that propel the band to new heights. Especially noteworthy is his favorite feel, somewhere between an 8th-note groove and a shuffle, a la Ringo Starr.

Baggs makes the group sound like they're picking up right where they left off—and that they're playing the music they enjoy. This is one reunion that is well worth the effort, and a must listen for younger players who need to learn the concept of how to support and drive a band. (Mammoth Records, Carr Mill, Fir. 2, Carrboro, NC 27510)

• George Sandier

VIDEOS

THE COMPLETE CYMBAL GUIDE FOR THE DRUMSET

Warner Bros. Publications
\$24.95, 65 minutes
accompanying book, \$9.95

⊕ ⊕ 1/2

The Complete Cymbal Guide is basically two videos in one: The first part, entitled "The Zildjian Story," covers the history of the world's most

SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

RICHARD GORDON, of the seriously funny funk band Rippopotamus, lays down some nice stuff on *Butter* (2 Funky International, P.O. Box 1660, Boston, MA 02130). **JASON LEWIS** anchors an elastic jazz rhythm section on *Ann Dyer & No Good Time Fairies* (Mr. Brown Records, P.O. Box 347275, San Francisco, CA 94134-0275). Amidst the great swing of **LOUIE BELLSON's** 7—*Live At The Concord Summer Festival* is "Roto Blues," a perfect platform for Louie's melodic instincts, played on an all RotoTom kit (Concord Jazz). Brothers Of The Baladi convincingly weave middle eastern and rock styles on *Eye On The World*, highlighted by some unusually deep grooves by **MICHAEL SHRIEVE**, **MICHAEL BEACH**, and **TARIK BANZI** (P.O. Box 14083, Portland, Oregon 97214).

RATING SCALE

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

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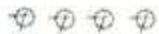
famous cymbal-makers, narrated by Peter Erskine and featuring some great early footage and photos. The second part is an explanation of cymbal sounds, designs, and playing techniques, ably demonstrated by the ubiquitous and talented Marvin "Smitty" Smith. Smitty clearly touches on all the major subjects—and even gets some hot licks in while making his points. Drummers will certainly have a good, basic grasp of what the various types of cymbals are capable of after sitting through this video. (The accompanying book offers some added performance and playing tips.)

Keep in mind, though, that we're not quite dealing with an objective view of drumming history here. The conspicuous absence of non-Zildjian endorsers like Bonham, Bozzio, Copeland, and Morgenstein in the historical section pretty much prevents this video from being "complete" in any sense. (A title change would certainly rid the funny taste from my mouth.) But, after all, Zildjian are the coproducers. And it would be hard not to agree that the vast majority of history's drumset innovators played Zildjian cymbals. In fact, many were instrumental in the modern cymbal's design and sound. So, taken with a grain of salt, *The Complete Cymbal Guide* is an interesting—if not final—word on cymbal history and concepts.

• **Adam Budofsky**

BOOKS THE DRUMSET CRASH COURSE

by Russ Miller
(R.M.I. Music Productions, Inc.)
\$16.95



By offering a very big, broad picture without sacrificing critical elements of the smaller ones, *The Drumset Crash*

Course succeeds where many basic drum methods fail.

Talk about soup to nuts. *Crash Course* covers concepts as elementary as kit and throne positioning, various stroke techniques, and fundamentals of counting, yet it doesn't drop a beat all the way through the 40 PAS rudiments, linear funk, and beat displacement. Swing and basic rock lessons are valid but lean, perhaps because materials on these styles are already so pervasive. Others are fuller; the section on brushes is the best I've seen, and the overview of Latin and world rhythms not only offers many basic drumset patterns, it relates them to the clave and the rhythms as played on traditional instruments.

As with most method books, some of *Crash Course's* concepts would be clarified by audio or video examples, but the material is intelligently organized. Each musical style lesson begins with underlying principles, a "drumset mix" for instruments' relative dynamic levels, a simple "basic groove," and hints to help the student assimilate the information. Combined with its well-detailed notation (lots of attention to accents) and a few photos and diagrams, it should be accessible to any drummer with fundamental reading skills. The style studies leave plenty of room for deeper exploration, which Miller encourages by suggesting books, videos, and CDs at the end of every section. Thus, in the very best teaching tradition, he establishes a solid technical and conceptual foundation and points the way to grow beyond the current lesson. *The Drumset Crash Course* is a model for all basic drum books to follow. (R.M.I. Music Productions, Inc., P.O. Box 25505, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33320-25505, tel/fax: (305) 345-6551)

• **Richard Watson**

STANDARD TIME

by Steve Davis
(Jamey Aebersold Jazz, Inc.)
\$15 (book and CD)



This play-along book and CD set is excellent for anyone working on jazz timekeeping. There are eleven tracks that feature a variety of tempos and styles, from slow ballads suitable for brush playing to uptempo bop tunes, as well as a couple of Latin charts and a jazz waltz. The compositions are based on standard forms including 12-bar blues and 32-bar AABA tunes. Several of the tunes alternate between Latin and swing feels, and there are examples of playing in two and four feels. Additionally, several tunes feature space for four- and eight-bar solos.

The CD is mixed so that piano and bass are on one stereo channel, with a drum track, played by Steve Davis, on the other. Much of what Davis plays is transcribed in the book, which provides ideas for basic timekeeping and soloing. But the most value can be obtained by turning off the drum track and playing along with the piano and bass to develop a feel for timekeeping and for adhering to the form of a tune. One could easily use this CD as backing when practicing from other jazz texts, which would put the exercises in the context of playing within a rhythm section.

The book also contains a discography of prominent drummers, which would be more useful if album titles had been included instead of just the leader's name and the album's catalog number. Also, the names of Philly Joe Jones and Thelonious Monk were misspelled. The publisher should pay more attention to details. (Jamey Aebersold Jazz, Inc., P.O. Box 1244, New Albany, IN 47151-1244)

• **Rick Mattingly**

CAPPIO SYSTEM OF RUDIMENTAL DRUMMING

by Art Cappio
(Pioneer Percussion)
\$20



The fifty-one-page spiral-bound *Cappio System* is a thorough approach to all the rudiments and more. The first section is devoted to the "fundamentals," including pictures and explanations of matched and traditional grips. The two left-hand grips detailed are the "Les Parks/Bobby Thompson grip" (popularized by Marty Hurley and the Phantom Regiment drum & bugle corps as well as by Steve Gadd) and the "Thumb Control Grip" devised by Mr. Cappio himself. The first section ends with a few warm-up control exercises.

The next section details the various rudiments, with musical notations and a few written explanations. The 84 rudiments listed are subdivided into "families" (single stroke, flam, roll, grace note, and compound) and also coded as to which type of rudiment each is (26 Standard American, New Variation and/or Innovation, Swiss, Original). The last portion of the book presents exercises from each of the rudiment families, a section on adapting the rudiments to the drumset, three short snare drum solos, and two etudes. The drumset portion is particularly useful and not often found in other snare drum or drumset books.

The material is clearly presented but does not go into great depth (as does John Wooton's *Drummer's Rudimental Reference Book*, for instance). However, if a drumset player is interested in becoming familiar with the rudiments, this book would be a good addition to his or her library. (Pioneer Percussion, Box 10833, Burke, VA 22009)

• **Lauren Vogel Weiss**



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Teaching The Left-Handed Student

by Brad Schlueter

One of the responsibilities often overlooked by drum teachers is the trust that students put in us to make the wisest decisions about their instruction. Decisions made during the first drum lesson can have far-reaching impact on the student's drumming life.

One choice all teachers make is whether to teach traditional or matched grip. If we choose traditional, and years later the student shows more interest in marimba and timpani than in snare drum, we've done this student a disservice: It would require hundreds of additional practice hours to attain the level he'd have if we'd originally chosen matched grip. Similarly, if we choose matched grip and the student eventually wants to march with a drum corps, his choices will be limited to the few corps who play with matched grip.

We often teach certain methods simply because we were taught that way. Unfortunately, the student's needs may be ignored. The primary issue that left-hand dominance raises is: Should we teach the student to play a *left-handed* drum setup or a *right-handed* one? While no one method will work with every student, examining the issue will help us make the best decisions for our students.

One reason this issue may cause long-term problems for the student is that many teachers don't view this as an issue *at all*. For many it's a cut-and-dried affair: If you're left-handed you should be taught on a left-handed kit; if you're right-handed you should learn on a right-handed kit. The idea of converting a "lefty" to a "righty" may suggest some form of hand-dominance bigotry on my part, but I assure you that's not the case. My motivation is that in many situations, left-handed drummers are

at a great disadvantage, and the only way to even this disadvantage is to teach them to play a right-handed drumset.

Imagine a left-handed drummer who wants to sit in with a band at a jam session but can't because the drums are backwards. Or the high school band director who refuses to reverse the drumset during a jazz band concert for a "lefty." Worse still, there might be band directors who choose

"We often teach certain methods simply because we were taught that way. Unfortunately, the student's needs may be ignored."



right-handed drummers over similarly skilled left-handed drummers for a chair in the jazz band for the same reason. How about a left-handed professional at a "cattle call" audition who has no time to adjust the kit before auditioning...or the drum teacher who decides to stress snare drum technique and ignore drumset instruction for his left-

handed students, simply because he doesn't want to switch the drumset around? In each of these scenarios being left-handed is *not* the problem. The problem is that the left-handed drummer plays on a left-handed drumset.

To level the playing field between "lefties" and "righties," I teach beginning left-handed drummers to play on a right-handed drumset. There are exceptions to this practice, which I'll detail later. Some teachers may feel this is innately more difficult for the student. After all, the stronger hand will be playing snare drum, and the weaker hand will be doing the majority of work on the hi-hat or ride cymbal. But this presupposes that the student will be crossing his dominant hand over his weaker hand to play the hi-hat.

My own teaching practice stresses evenhandedness. That is, the ability to lead with *either* hand. The late Gary Chester pioneered this method. I do this with both my right-handed and left-handed students to help them adapt to situations where things are set up differently from what they're used to. The goal is to further each student's level of interdependence and coordination, and to enable them to advance more quickly and further than their peers. I admit that learning to lead with both hands does take longer at first, but once they get the hang of it, most students can learn a new beat with their weaker hand quickly.

When my students work on new beats, I have them learn it with their dominant hand first, and immediately after with their weaker hand. I've noticed this helps students to progress more rapidly since they aren't dependent on leading with the same hand. Another advantage is that it's inevitable that the weaker hand will gain in strength and control, helping the student's drumset technique and snare drum technique as well.

Another objection some voice to teach-

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ing "lefties" this way is that the strong foot is on the hi-hat and the weak foot is on the bass drum. However, the fact that a great number of double bass drummers *don't* have trouble playing with speed and power seems to contradict this argument.

One of the exceptions to teaching left-handed students on right-handed kits is if the student has already developed a fair amount of proficiency on a left-handed setup. In this case, it would be unfair to require the student to change. By the same token, it would be unfair not to discuss the possible pitfalls that student may eventually face. The student should make the decision whether to continue as he or she has been playing, or to learn to play on a right-handed kit. The goal here is to *encourage* students, not discourage them by showing them that past efforts have been for naught. Regardless of their decision, I still direct students to play even-handedly.

One often has to give more leeway to adult students than to teenagers. With adult beginners, I explain the advantages and disadvantages and let the adult take responsibility for his or her choice. Most adults with drumset experience will not want to change, and it wouldn't be practical for them to do so.

It's our responsibility to take the long view for our students and decide what techniques will eventually benefit them the most. This is why I advocate teaching left-handed beginners to play on a right-handed kit, and why I teach all students to play even-handedly. It may be a little more difficult at first, but with a little encouragement and praise, our students will rise to the level expected of them.



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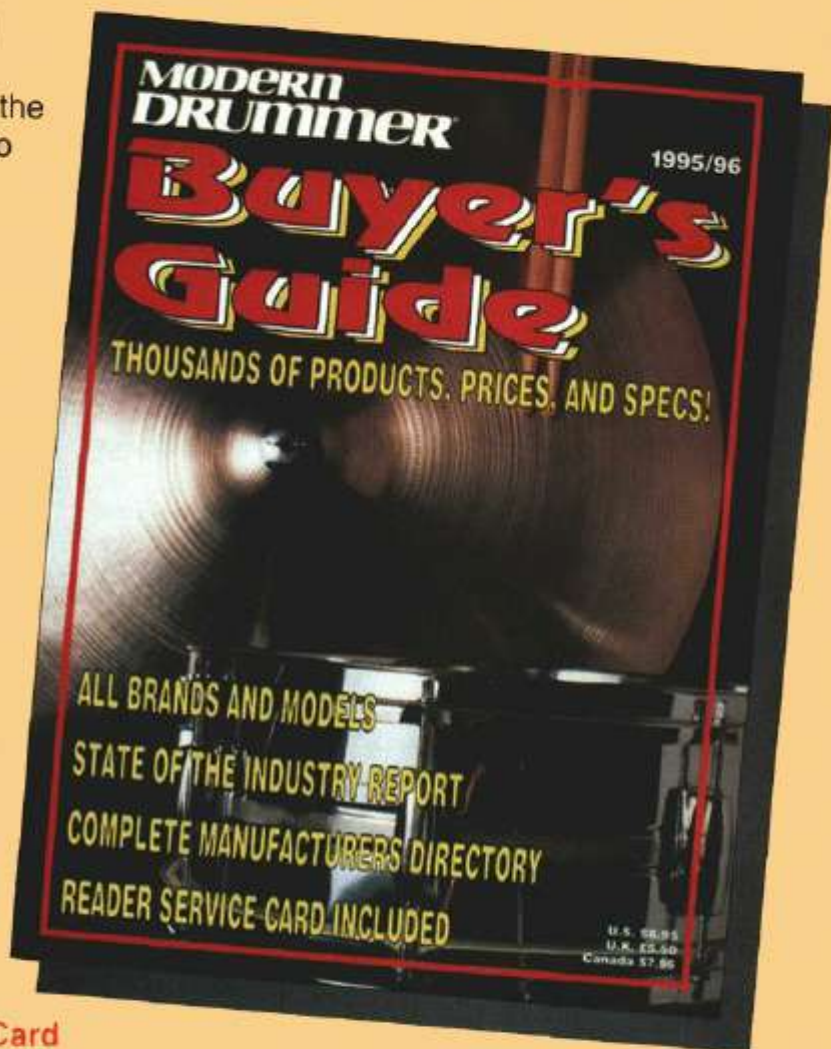
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T.M. Stevens

by Eric Deggans

Ask legendary bassist T.M. Stevens what makes a good drummer, and you'll get a simple, five-word answer: Groove, groove, and more groove.

"I consider technique to be the house and groove to be the basement," says T.M. "A lot of young players want to have the house without building the foundation. So what happens? It all falls in."

When it comes to identifying The Groove, few musicians around can challenge T.M.'s credentials. Cutting his teeth on New York's jazz-fusion scene in the mid-'70s, the rainbow-haired bassist quickly blossomed into an in-demand session and live player, holding down the bottom on albums like the Pretenders' *Get Close*, James Brown's *Gravity*, Taylor Dayne's *Can't Fight Fate*, and Billy Joel's *River Of Dreams*. The list of hit songs powered by Stevens is equally impressive, including Joel's "Keeping The Faith," Joe Cocker's "Unchain My Heart," Gregory Abbott's "Shake You Down," and Little Richard's "Great Gosh Almighty." T.M.'s bone-breaking live sound has anchored tours for Al DiMeola, Angela Bofill, Miles Davis, and his own funk-metal outfit, Out Of Control.

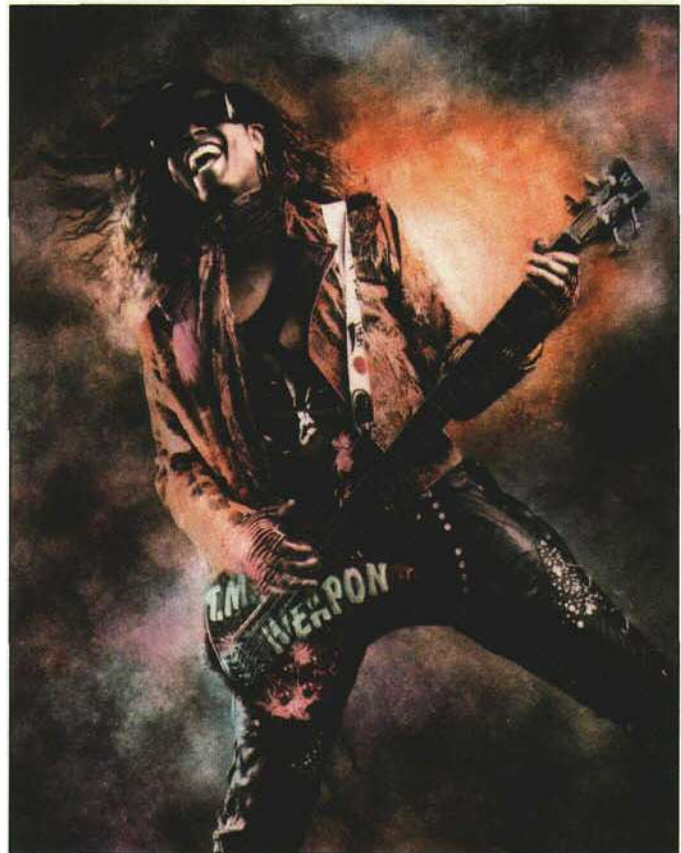
Through the years, Stevens has worked with a host of superstar drummers, from "old masters" like Al Foster, Steve Gadd, and Narada Michael Walden to younger "upstarts" like Terry Bozzio, Van Romaine, Steve Jordan, and Will Calhoun. But for Stevens, they all had one thing in common: The Groove.

"When people listen to players, they tend to be attracted to the flash," says T.M. "But I tend not to play that way—just technique for technique's sake. The groove is what makes everything work. It's an omnipresent momentum—this force that keeps moving forward. If I don't hear that pocket, I can't work with it. So I tend to be a little tough on drummers."

For Stevens, groove is about placing notes in a space that makes the music live—playing *for* the song instead of *through* it. His favorite rhythm section mates, whether they played jazz, funk, R&B, or rock, all had the ability to lock in with his playing to create a special space where the music lives.

"The most common mistake drummers make is to fill after every four or eight bars," Stevens adds. "Sometimes that causes train wrecks, because I might have something to say in there. If all you're doing is thinking about what you're going to play next or about the song arrangement, you won't catch it."

It all starts, Stevens says, with something Miles Davis told him during a short stint he played with the jazz trumpet legend in the '70s. "Miles said, 'You have to have eyes bigger than your head.



Listen first.' You should develop a mystic sense of when the bass player and keyboard player are going to do a fill—and don't put one there. I did Steve Vai's 1993 album *Sex And Religion* with Terry Bozzio. When he knew I was going to explode, he'd step aside, or we'd phrase something together."

If Stevens seems a stern taskmaster, it's likely due to his own early days in New York's fusion-era jazz scene. A Bronx native, he jumped from holding down the bottom in local bands to a gig with one of the best players around: saxophone master Pharaoh Sanders. His drummer was Norman Connors, who was enjoying a bit of his own success on the R&B charts with a tune called "You Are My Starship." Connors hired Stevens to replace Michael Henderson, who had left the Sanders band to play with Miles Davis. It was a sink-or-swim initiation into the world of straight-ahead jazz, putting the young player next to experienced hands like Sanders, Connors, and singer Phyllis Hyman.

"That was only my second gig ever," Stevens recalls. "They took me in like a little brother or son. I didn't have the training—I just had the bass in my hand and went for it."

Even though they were working out old-school jazz tunes,

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Connors offered an earthy feel that mixed well with Stevens' from-the-heart funk groove. "Norman went more for feel, playing more African rhythms as opposed to the jazz drummers who stay on the cymbals all night. Still, he had a swing that was pretty nasty."

From there, work led to a stint with guitarist John McLaughlin, touring to support the album *Shakti*. Featuring several East Indian musicians, the band also included one of the most unusual drummers Stevens would ever work with: a man named Transcending Sunship.

"He had played with McCoy Tyner," says T.M., "and he was one of the first drummers to have one of those huge drumkits—all set up on a Persian rug with the cymbals inverted. It was a little like what some drummers do when they switch their drums around—putting stuff in different places to bring out different things. When he played time on the cymbals, you didn't have a 'ping' but a 'shhh,' which made the bass player the timekeeper—especially since we were playing all those weird time signatures. Normally the drums state the 1, but with Sunship it was all up to me—which used to bother me, until I got used to it. The challenge was to play free and open, but keep my mind on where I was, so I could hit it every time."

Perhaps the apex of T.M.'s jazz work would come a few years later, backing legendary drummer Narada Michael Walden. Striking out as a solo artist after establishing a name with the Mahavishnu Orchestra, Walden hired Stevens for a band that opened shows for yet another renowned sticksman: Billy Cobham.

"They both had huge kits," says Stevens. "I remember that Narada had to go down to one bass drum in the middle of the tour because there wasn't enough room on the stage for both of them. That was when the double pedal was just happening, so we went to a music store and picked one up. It freaked people out, because they thought he was doing all that stuff with one foot."

More than any other drummer before or since, Walden laid down the kind of groove that scared Stevens. "He was one of the first really big drummers I played with," recalls T.M., "and I *never* heard anybody play that fast and precise. He had a huge pocket that I could fit right into, but it was a challenge keeping up with him. He was also the first drummer I played with who had such a well-developed focus on timekeeping."

Stevens cites a tune he crafted with Narada, "I Should Have Loved You," as a prime example of The Groove in action. "That was a very simple groove. But if you muted everything on that song but the bass and drums, the foundation would still be there. Narada laid such a nasty pocket, the house was just that sturdy."

As the fusion scene began to fade in the late '70s and early '80s,

more musicians used funk gigs to keep paying the rent. For Stevens, that meant joining singer Stacy Lattisaw's band just in time to hit the road opening for the Jacksons' *Victory* tour.

Rounding out the rhythm section was drummer Tony Smith, who came to Lattisaw's band from the Jeff Beck/Jan Hammer Group. "He and I mixed very well—he's a bashaholic," Stevens remembers. "Whatever we played, it was so tight it was like we had written it out. Whenever you have somebody who can play all that outside jazz stuff—but still just nail the 2 and 4—there's a whole different edge to it. It's incredibly solid because they know exactly where each note should go. But going from jazz clubs and mid-size halls to stadiums was like going from a hot shower to a cold shower. We had to make everything much simpler. We had to play for the guy in the back row."

Always available for sessions, Stevens returned from the 1983 *Victory* tour to hook up with former Edgar Winter sideman-turned-producer Dan Hartman, who needed a strong bassist to help with what turned out to be a landmark album: James Brown's comeback record, *Gravity*.

Featuring the powerhouse hit "Living In America," *Gravity* was one of the few latter-day records to update Brown's classic groove without losing his distinctive soul feel. But, according to Stevens, the band's empathy for Brown's legendary history was no accident. "[Drummer] Ray Marchica and I listened to hours and hours of James Brown grooves," he confides. "That stuff's not as simple as it sounds; there's a whole religion to it. It's almost like reggae—something that sounds simple until you try to play it. I listened to songs like 'Sex Machine'—the way the bass and drums wrapped around each other. It takes a while to get the real vibe. Bass and drums are a prominent part of James' sound, and after we copped the main groove, I would go back and stick in a little T.M. touch, with popping to bring a modern feel."

At the same time he was helping bring James Brown into the modern age, T.M. was also working to resuscitate a graying rocker's sound—joining P-Funk keyboard alumnus Bernie Worrell and former Haircut 100 drummer Blair Cunningham in sessions with Chrissie Hynde for the Pretenders album *Get Close*. "Blair has something like ten brothers, and they're all drummers who played with famous acts like Otis Redding and the Ohio Players, so the genes are there. When he speaks, he has a British accent, but he's from Memphis—so he has that gutbucket funk flavored with a lighter, European groove. His funk tended to be a happy thing—more precise. That's what technique will do for you."

Most recently, Stevens' long list of session credits led to work on Billy Joel's *River Of Dreams* album with former Keith Richards and *Late Night With David Letterman* drummer Steve

"The most common mistake drummers make is to fill after every four or eight bars. Sometimes that causes train wrecks, because I might have something to say in there."

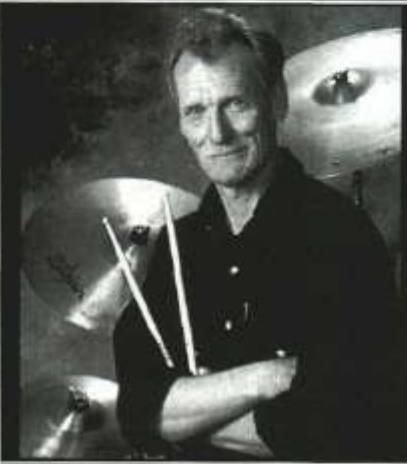


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Jordan—who T.M. calls "wonderfully eccentric."

"When you have two individuals who are proficient," says Stevens, "they can use the technique to lock in. I knew he and I would lock up in that way. He's very retro, much in the way Lenny Kravitz is, and he respects the groove like a religion. He even has the original tom from the recording of Al Green's 'Let's Stay Together.' And he has an unmistakable snare sound—so big,

it'll rip your face off. I have never heard a snare sound like that."

But for real words of praise, just ask T.M. about former P-Funk/John Scofield sticksman Dennis Chambers. "He never once plays the '1'—ever—but it's the funkier stuff you ever want to hear. He is probably one of the most proficient technicians on the scene, even though he's mostly self-taught. You can hear that in a lot of players who had to scuffle themselves up,

like Eddie Van Halen. He had to find a way to get the sound he heard in his head, so he came up with new stuff."

Stevens has special insight into several other top drummers he's worked with, including the Steve Morse Band's Van Romaine, fellow Steve Vai sideman Terry Bozzio, ex-Plasmatics drummer T.C. Tolliver, and jazz forward thinker Kenwood Dennard. "Van plays the funk thing with a lot of hi-hat and finesse. Terry's more symphonic. He's a big Stravinsky fan and tunes his drums to different pitches. T.C. is a hard hitter. He'll play anything from speed metal to funk. And Kenwood tends not to always play downbeats. He'll reverse things and play counter to me with a lighter touch—almost a straight-ahead feel."

According to T.M., it's important to learn where each particular drummer places the beat. "If you look at metronomic beats," explains T.M., "with a line leaning toward the right as a little ahead of the time and a line leaning left a little behind the time, I tend to play either dead on or a little to the right. Sometimes when you lay back a little against that, like Steve Gadd does, with me dead on, there's a funky feeling there. Someone like Bozzio will lean to the right a bit, so I'll stay dead on to create the tension. That's why all drummers should practice with a metronome, to learn those distinctions."

According to Stevens, the ultimate high for musicians should come when it all clicks together and every part works. "Sometimes you hit a groove where the guitar, bass, and drums are all in ostinato and nobody wants to add a note because it feels so good. It's like being in the zone; it can be hypnotic. And when somebody finally does move, it makes a profound difference—instead of filling so much during a song that nobody notices when you do something different."

So what's the most important characteristic for a young player to note about all these expert sticksman? Of course: The Groove. And one other thing, Stevens says: "I'm close to all the drummers I play with, friendship-wise. It helps with the groove. Like George Clinton says, a great show always starts in the dressing room, brother."

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Johnny Rabb

A drummer since his elementary school days, twenty-three-year-old Johnny Rabb came into his own in high school, where he was recognized with numerous city- and state-level awards for his drumming in the jazz band. He taught privately at Skip's music in Sacramento, California for four years, while taking lessons himself from Gerry Brown, David Garibaldi, and Joseph "Zigaboo" Modeliste.

After graduating from high school Johnny received a scholarship to Berklee College of Music, where he is now a senior. While attending Berklee, Johnny has been working with Robert Stanton, one of the nation's top



country/bluegrass guitarists. At the same time, he is a member of Six Drumsets, an ensemble led by Berklee drumset instructor Steve Wilkes. The group was featured at the 1994 PAS International

Convention, recently completed a promotional recording for KAT, and has a CD currently in production. Johnny has also been performing and recording with a folk/rock duo called Two by Sea and with singer/songwriter Scott Reams.

Johnny's demo tape reveals him to be an extremely creative player with highly developed technique—especially in funk, hip-hop, and pop styles. He exercises these talents on a Pearl *BLX* kit with Zildjian and Sabian cymbals. (For hip-hop he uses a 20" 1960s Gretsch bass drum with a Noble & Cooley piccolo primary snare and a 12" Remo *Junior Pro* PTS secondary snare.) Johnny's plans include moving to Nashville in hopes of becoming a sideman for major touring artists.

Dennis Cotton

New York-based Dennis Cotton keeps busy as a free-lance touring and studio drummer. A professional since his junior year in high school, Dennis is a self-taught drummer who believes that "talent shouldn't be judged by how fast your single-stroke roll is, but by how you make people feel when you play."

Apparently he makes a lot of people feel good, because he's constantly busy with regional recording artists Don Lewis and Charles Lyonhart, as well as recording a goodly number of TV and radio spots with guitarist Brian Tarquin and touring with country vocalist Gary Nichols. He's also a mainstay at Far & Away Studios in Chester, New York. On top of



this busy performing schedule Dennis maintains an active teaching practice.

Tapes of Dennis's work with the artists listed above demonstrate his tremendous versatility—on material ranging from straight rock to funk, and from country pop to blues. And no matter what style he plays, his focus is on the song. "I'm much happier to follow a groove than to do a solo," he comments. Dennis grooves on a Remo drumkit with Pro-Mark sticks (he's an endorser for both companies) and also uses Sabian cymbals and Gibraltar stands.

"Music is the most emotional and spiritual thing in my life," says Dennis. "If I wasn't a drummer I would cease to exist. I am forever a student to the cosmology of drumming and the effects it has on the environment we live in."

Dana Newcomer

Twenty years ago, Dana Newcomer was a seventh-grader who had just made the drum chair in his school's jazz ensemble.

Since that day, Dana's dream has been to make records and tour the world. "Of course, what I've *really* done is play gigs to pay the piper," says Dana. "But still, *some* day...."

Over the years Dana studied with such noted instructors as Guy Remonko, Bob Breithaupt, Ed Soph, and Alan Dawson—and with drum stars like Kenny Aronoff and Steve Wacholz. He also played every conceivable type of pop gig, from R&B vocal groups to organ trios to touring showbands. He finally settled in the Tampa Bay area, where he hooked up with



Steinhardt/Moon (a concert rock band featuring Robbie Steinhardt, former violinist/vocalist for Kansas). For the past two years the group has toured the Southeast, doing shows with many major acts. A CD is in the works, as is a tour of the Far East and Australia.

Dana's diverse background serves him well when it comes to creating strong yet tasty drum parts for Steinhardt/Moon's "artistic power pop." He performs on a six-piece Yamaha *RTC* kit mounted on a Pearl rack, with Sabian cymbals and Alesis *D4, HR-16, and HR-16B* sound modules. Dana's goals are "to achieve the point of 'mastering my instrument' the way Tony Williams and Elvin Jones have done, and to still be playing when I reach the age of players like Louie Bellson, Jim Chapin, and Ted Reed!"

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Choosing Your Second Drumset

by Steve Snodgrass

Most of us obtain our first drumkit largely as the result of various arbitrary or non-musical factors: what is affordable, what is available in our favorite color, what we can find used, or what brand our favorite drummer endorses. For a lucky few, this kit turns out to be great for a very long time. But as most of us gain experience, develop our musical goals, and refine our own drumming identity, eventually we reach the conclusion that our first kit—despite having a special place in our heart—is just not the perfect set of drums anymore.

No matter what brings you to the decision to buy a new set, you have a lot of questions to answer before you take the big step. What brand, series, and finish do you want? What about shell materials, sizes, and hardware? The list of options goes on and on, and as a player, teacher, and drum retailer it seems like I've wrestled with all of them at one time or another.

Out of my own experience and the shared experience of others, I've drawn one major conclusion about the decision process, which I'd like to share with you: Of all the choices you make in selecting your new kit, the most important one is the configuration you select—how many drums, in what sizes, and in what arrangement. Your choice in this area is likely to affect your satisfaction far more significantly than anything else in the long run. Yet this simple reality can easily be obscured by the glamour of advertisements and a showroom full of dazzling new kits, especially in the excitement and anticipation that usually accompany such a purchase.

Before I continue, let me make it clear that I do not discount the importance of the other decisions you need to make. For

example, the finish of your kit definitely affects the image you create in the eyes of an audience and other musicians. Shell materials and mounting hardware affect the quality of your drum sound. Your choice of brand can certainly affect things like avail-

first and foremost. There are two main reasons for this: musicality and ergonomics.

Let's look at musicality first. By this I refer to how successfully your drumset will serve (or more accurately, allow *you* to serve) the musical styles and situations in which you'll be using it. I have a friend who plays mostly bebop jazz, and his drumset reflects this role. He uses a four-piece setup consisting of an 18" bass drum, an 8x12 mounted tom, a 14x14 floor tom, and a 3-1/2x14 snare. These drums are small, high-pitched, and quick to respond—consistent with the musical role of drums in traditional jazz. Could my friend play bebop with more and larger drums? Certainly he could—but the higher, quicker, and more compact sound of his small set best satisfies his and his bandmates' notions of how the music should sound. In other words, his choice of configuration serves the music he plays.

Let's jump to the other end of the musical spectrum and say you're planning to start a heavy metal band. You'll undoubtedly rule out buying a small four-piece set like my friend's if you're going to be playing Metallica covers. But do you really need the same setup Lars Ulrich uses? Although you may find the idea appealing, it's probably not very economical. It's also probably unnecessary from a musical standpoint. How do you *sound* like Lars without *spending* like Lars? Ask yourself what it is that makes heavy metal drumming sound like heavy metal drumming. To my ear, it's the big sound, the use of double bass, a wide range of toms, and speed around the kit.

Let's address these key elements one at a time. Big sound is easier to get from big drums, so you'll probably be happiest with larger-than-average shells, such as 24" or larger bass drum(s) and deep "power toms." Double-bass patterns can be easily and economically produced on a single

"With the number of manufacturers in the drum market today, buying a new set can be a real adventure! Just be sure to take your time and consider the long-term significance of *all* the factors involved."



ability of replacement parts and warranty coverage—as well as overall quality and performance. *Every* choice you make has significance in some way. My point is that your focus should be on the configuration

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Speed, our last element, certainly requires ability, but also relates to ergonomics (my second big reason for careful configuration planning). "Ergonomics" refers to how your body interacts with and functions on your drumset in terms of comfort and ease of motion. A giant kit can be a giant pain if you have to get out of your seat to reach it all. And if you can't reach the drums easily, good luck with the speed! In light of the ergonomics factor, you may play metal *better* on a

four-tom kit than on an eight-tom kit. (And unless you have your own roadies, you'll have more energy left to play on it after you're set up, too.)

Your physical size, abilities, and limitations are critical factors when considering ergonomics and your new kit. Regardless of musical styles, you must be comfortable to play well. Height is usually the biggest issue here. The taller among us can usually adjust any kit to be reasonably comfortable to play, but those of us who are more "earthbound" can run into trouble. The most common problem I've seen is a young or shorter player who cannot position his or her toms low enough to reach easily due to their shell depth and/or the height of the bass drum on which the toms are mounted. Angling them downward can help, but many players (myself included) object to the extreme stick-contact angle this can cause. Before you buy or order any drumset, make sure you sit at it (or one of a similar configuration) and confirm that you

can reach everything to your satisfaction. If you have doubts, consider a different setup; don't compromise on a purchase this big.

Let's return to the musicality factor in the selection process. In my article from the November '94 issue of *Modern Drummer*, "Variations On A Five-Piece Kit," I discussed different ways that the common five-piece set (22" bass, 12", 13", and 16" toms) can be arranged to accommodate different musical needs and approaches. If you are uncertain about what the future may require from you and your drums, or if you expect to be playing in many different musical environments, there is much to be said for this well-established configuration. A well-made five-piece is usually quite versatile in its tuning ranges and can reasonably accommodate most musical styles. There are other practical advantages to its universality as well: Replacement heads and hoops are easiest to find in these sizes, and sometimes very good deals can be had when purchasing a

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As popular as the standard five-piece is, many players opt for variations of it—for some very good reasons. One common dissatisfaction lies with the pitch interval imbalance between 12", 13", and 16" toms. It has been suggested that drum manufacturers should begin producing sets with 10", 13", and 16" toms to even out the intervals. I think this idea makes sense, since it also addresses another common dissatisfaction with the standard kit: lack of a smaller, higher-pitched tom. More and more drummers are favoring a higher top end to their chorus of tom sounds. Thus 10" and even 8" drums are much more common today than they were in the past.

A very versatile configuration that addresses the call for wide tom pitch range and consistent intervals is available now from many manufacturers. It consists of a 22" bass with 10", 12", 14", and 16" toms. This setup is currently my all-around personal favorite. It's an excellent blend of

versatility and affordability.

The depths of the drum shells should also be considered when choosing your new kit's configuration. Most companies offer "traditional" and deeper "power" shells in most diameters. In my experience, shallower shells speak more quickly and with more clarity, while deeper shells offer a lower tone, slower response time, and longer sustain. In general, jazz drummers have favored the shallower depths and rock drummers the deeper ones, but let your own ears and taste guide you in your choice. Be aware that most preconfigured kits today use deeper shells, but you can probably order the same setup with shallower sizes either as a package or as individual components. (By the way, remember that deeper tom shells mean added height on the kit—ergonomics again!)

Bass drums are typically available today in 14", 16", or 18" shell depths, and they exhibit the same general depth-versus-sound relationships as toms. Bass drum depth variations are of little ergonomic

consequence in most cases, but just make sure the size you pick will fit in your car!

Related to the shell-depth issue is the question of traditional floor toms with legs versus large rack toms. The rack version of a given diameter drum is usually shallower than the floor version and therefore sounds and feels somewhat different. Ergonomically, rack toms can offer more flexibility of height and angle, but require more hardware as the tradeoff.

While we're on the subject of mounted toms, one current trend you may want to consider is freeing the bass drum(s) from any tom-holding duties by using a drum rack or floor stands instead. Many drummers claim that this improves the resonance of the bass drum, and I agree. It's up to you to weigh the factors of sound, convenience, and cost.

Snare drum design is a vast and highly debated subject, but it is safe to say that the same general principles of size-versus-response characteristics apply as for toms and bass drums. The current standard snare

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drum size in most preconfigured kits is 6-1/2x14. However, many interesting variations exist today—both larger and smaller (mostly smaller). You can even find snare drums 10" in diameter! Just be cautious of getting something too radical in size if you're going to use it for your only snare. An exotic-sounding drum that turns *you* on might become annoying very quickly to bandmates or your audience. It may not give you enough tuning flexibility either.

So far we've talked about size and sound, but not about materials, construction, or mounting methods. These elements can vary enormously from one drum to another, and they will certainly contribute to the sound characteristics of your kit. Still, since your choice of configuration so greatly affects both the sound of the instrument *and* your physical relationship with it, that should be your primary concern. Shell materials and construction should be given the next highest priority, in my opinion, but it is not my purpose to explore that realm with you here. (In addition to the relevant

articles that have appeared in *Modern Drummer* and other publications, Bob Gatzen's DCI *Drum Tuning* video is an excellent resource for learning about different woods and shell designs.)

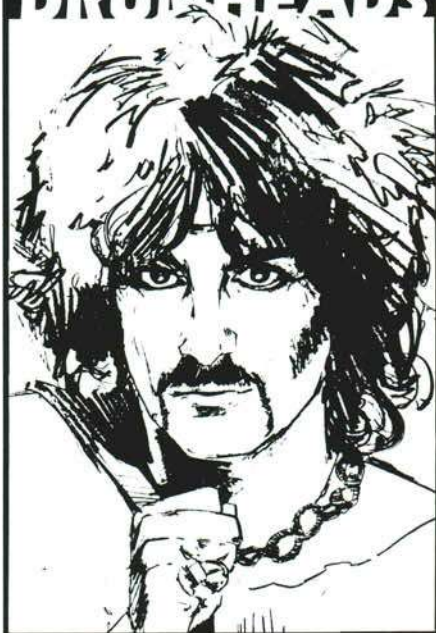
Once you determine what layout and shells are right for you and your musical needs, then by all means have some fun exploring the vast offerings of colors and styles out there. With the number of manufacturers in the drum market today, buying a new set can be a real adventure! Just be sure to take your time and consider the long-term significance of *all* the factors involved. Find a good drum shop with knowledgeable salespeople, and talk to as many other drummers as you can. Find out what they play and why, and what they would recommend for you and your needs. Do your homework, and remember that you're not just out to buy drums, you're out to buy satisfaction. Play it smart: Get both!



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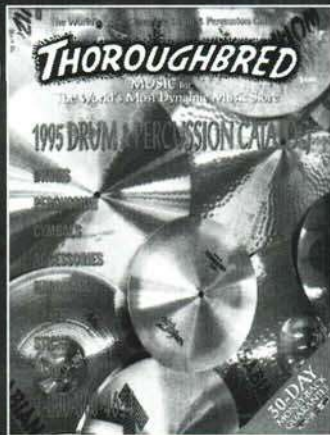
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NSM Deluxe Sweepstakes Winner

The winner of the *NSM Deluxe* snare drum offered in our April issue sweepstakes is Jerry Burdy of Bergenfield, New Jersey. The drum was created in homage to the Ludwig & Ludwig *Deluxe* snare drums manufactured in the 1910s and '20s and hand-engraved by John Aldridge of Not So Modern Drummer Publications And Engraving. Jerry's card was drawn from among several thousand entries. Congratulations from NSMD and *Modern Drummer!*

Kids On Drums



Kids On Drums is an interactive, educational program offered free to children six to sixteen years of age. The program combines percussion learning in a hands-on, entertaining approach. Kids are not mere spectators, but a part of the show, and no prior drum knowledge is necessary.

Kids On Drums was created by John La'Cella, a noted author, performer, and teacher from New York, and will run at retail stores and within public schools. Ongoing national sponsorship (currently including Pearl, Sabian, Pro-Mark, Sam Ash Music, and *Modern Drummer*) provides gifts, product raffles, and T-shirts for the participants. Each child in attendance receives learning materials and a completion certificate for the program. Drum teachers and/or performers interested in participating as Kids On Drums clinicians, along with anyone interested in either holding or attending a Kids On Drums program, are invited to call the Kids On Drums information hotline: (516) 678-0945.

PASIC Invitational Golf Tournament

For the first time ever, the Percussive Arts Society International Convention will feature a golf tournament in conjunction with its 1995 activities in Phoenix, Arizona. The tournament will be held October 31 at the Orange Tree Golf Course in Scottsdale. Shotgun start is slated for 1:00 P.M. A fee of \$80 covers greens fee, cart, and round-trip transportation to the course from the Phoenix Hyatt Regency. Rental equipment will be available at the course. Space is limited and early reservations are suggested. Contact Lissa Wales, tel and fax: (602) 838-3507.

Sonor/Zildjian European Drum Camp

The second Sonor/Zildjian European Drum Camp will be held on two successive weeks: August 7-12 in Otzenhausen, Germany (near Trier, close to France and Luxemburg), and August 13-18 in Bad Goisern, Austria (near Salzburg, in the Alps). Drummers invited as instructors include Steve Houghton, Ed Soph, Adam Nussbaum, Will Calhoun, Cindy Blackman, and the Modern Drum School Team. Instructors will teach the students on a daily basis in groups at different levels during each week. All instructors will be present for the entire duration of the program, including social events in the evenings. Concerts will be given by the instructors at the conclusion of each week's program. Accommodation will be booked by Modern Drum School; single and double rooms with full board are available. For registration or other information contact Modern Drum School, Postfach 122762, 55719 Idar-Oberstein, Germany, tel: 06781-900800, fax: 06781-900801.

Cash Available To Young Artists Through National Recognition Program

Cash awards of up to \$3,000 each and scholarship opportunities totaling approximately \$3 million are available to talented young artists through the Arts Recognition and Talent Search (ARTS) program. These opportunities are available to exceptional seven-teen- and eighteen-year-old artists nationwide in the categories of music/jazz, music/instrumental, and music/voice (along with dance, theater, photography, visual arts, and writing).

Interested students should contact their principal or college admissions advisor for ARTS '96 applications, or contact NFAA/ARTS, 800 Brickell Ave., Suite 500, Miami, FL 33131, (800) 970-ARTS. Registration is between June 2 and October 2, with a fee of \$35. Fee waivers are available for applicants who can document a financial need.

Indy Quickies

Ddrum electronic percussion products are now being distributed in the U.S. by **Armadillo Enterprises**, 5115 W. Knox St., Tampa, FL 33634, tel: (813) 881-0597, fax: (813) 881-0964.

Craigie Zildjian has been named as general manager, North America for the **Avedis Zildjian Cymbal Company**. She already holds the position of vice chairman of the board of directors.

Less than a year after **Sam Ash Music** opened a new main-floor location for its New York City drum department, they have expanded and moved it again—to a space formerly owned by another music shop on 48th street in Manhattan. This establishes direct street access to a "Music Row" drumshop for the first time in recent memory.

The BMI/New York Jazz Orchestra, a key adjunct to the BMI Jazz Composers Workshop, has been organized as a seventeen-piece modern repertory ensemble comprised of leading New York players. The orchestra rehearses material created in the Workshop the last Tuesday of every month at musicians union local 802. The drummer is **Terry Clarke**; MD contributing writer **Burt Korall** is one of the Workshop directors.

Remo, Inc. has joined forces with former Jefferson Starship guitarist **Craig Chaquico** to support the National Association For Music Therapy and spread the word on the importance of music therapy. Remo is donating a number of small hand drums and percussion items to music therapy facilities where Chaquico will visit, perform, and speak.

Endorser News

Myckale Thomas (Commodores), **Bobby Rondinelli** (Black Sabbath), **Joel Maituza** (24-7 Spyz), **Rodney Edmondson** (Ronny Milsap), **Larry Bright**, and the **Americanos Drum Corps** are playing Cannon Attack drumheads.

New Stingray drum endorsers include **Milo Sekulovich** (Lunar Chateau), **Mike Burke** (Fuzzy Bunny Slippers), Wes Star (Hal Ketchum), **John Mattox** (Young Dubliners), **Paul Gonzales**, **Rudy Salerno**, and **John Way**.

Fran Christina (Fabulous Thunderbirds) and **Joe Morris** are playing Rocket Shells snare drums live and in the studio.

Currently endorsing Aquarian drumheads are **Dale Grover** (Melvins), **James Kottak** (Warrant), **Mick Brown** (Dokken), **Chris Worley** (Jackyl), and **Johnny Kelly** (Type O Negative).

Crystal Taliefero (Billy Joel) and **Ray Cooper** (Elton John) are new Pro-Mark artists.



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Drumkit Of The Month



PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

1. Photos must be high-quality and in color. 35mm slides are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted. 2. You may send more than one view of the kit. 3. Only show drums, no people. 4. Shoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid

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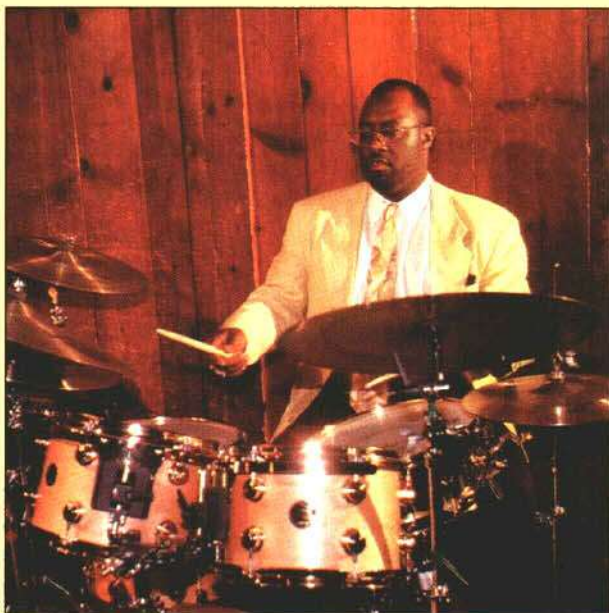
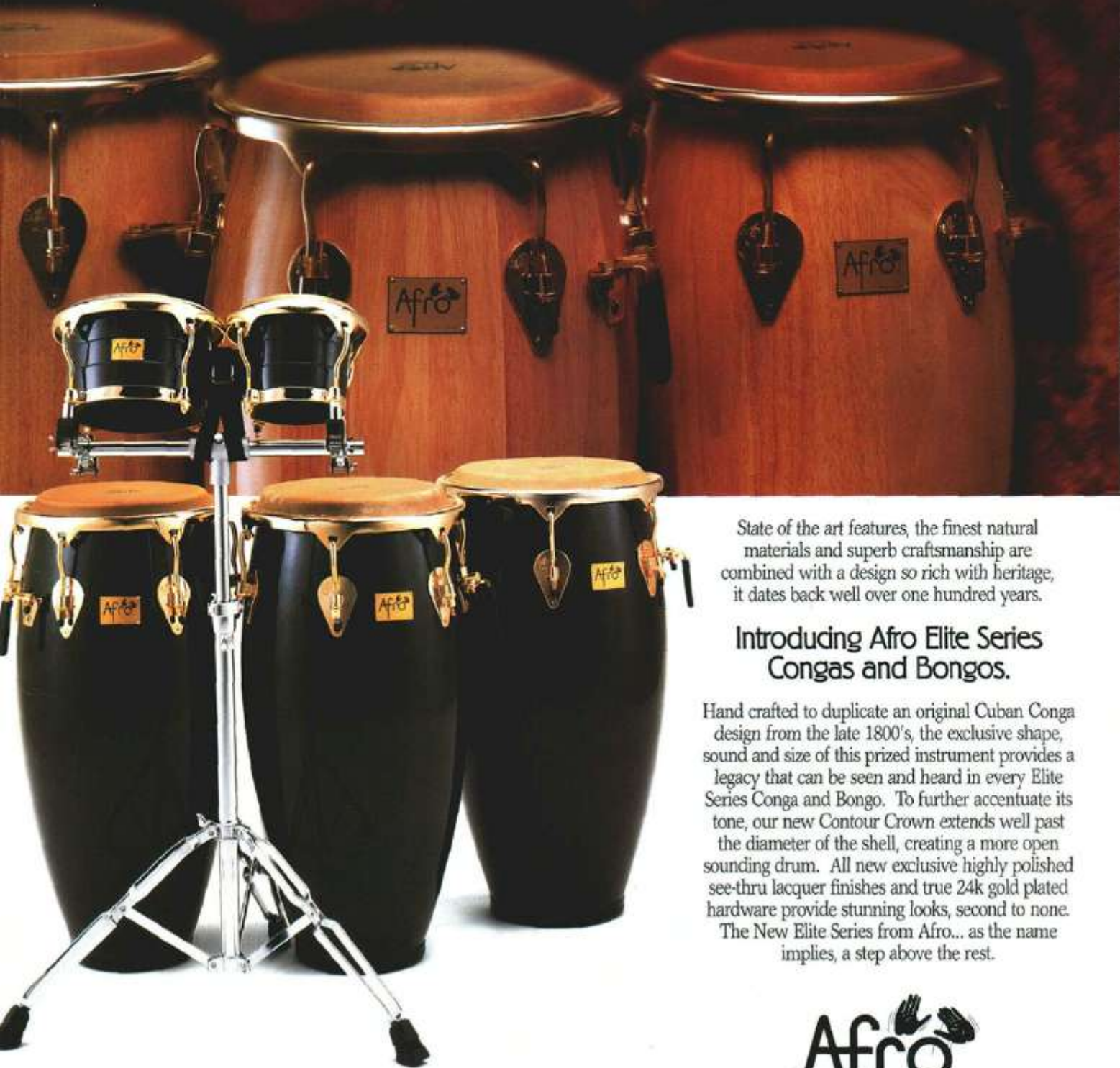


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Hand crafted to duplicate an original Cuban Conga design from the late 1800's, the exclusive shape, sound and size of this prized instrument provides a legacy that can be seen and heard in every Elite Series Conga and Bongo. To further accentuate its tone, our new Contour Crown extends well past the diameter of the shell, creating a more open sounding drum. All new exclusive highly polished see-thru lacquer finishes and true 24k gold plated hardware provide stunning looks, second to none. The New Elite Series from Afro... as the name implies, a step above the rest.

Afro Percussion Instruments are proudly distributed in the US exclusively by Pearl Corporation. For more information about any Afro Percussion product see your local Authorized Pearl / Afro dealer or write to: Pearl Corporation, Afro Product Info, 549 Metroplex Dr, Nashville, TN 37211.

Afro
Instruments from the Earth.

Zildjian drumsticks. The straightest things since well, your parents.



NICK MENZA Megadeth



SCOTT MERCADO
Candlebox



SHANE EVANS Collective Soul

Mom and Dad may seem rather rigid, but even they can't begin to compare to our drumsticks. Because we craft them to the same impossibly high standards as our cymbals. We start by controlling the entire process from lumber to finished stick (in fact, we're the only ones to go to such lengths). While others rely on lathes to shape their sticks, we use high tolerance stones. This allows us to apply pressure more evenly, for greater straightness and consistency. Finally, we check the sticks at four points during manufacture. Then, and only then, does the Zildjian name go on. Which explains why so many of the drummers your parents never heard of are playing them.

Zildjian
Drumsticks

