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MD Talks With **CARL PALMER**

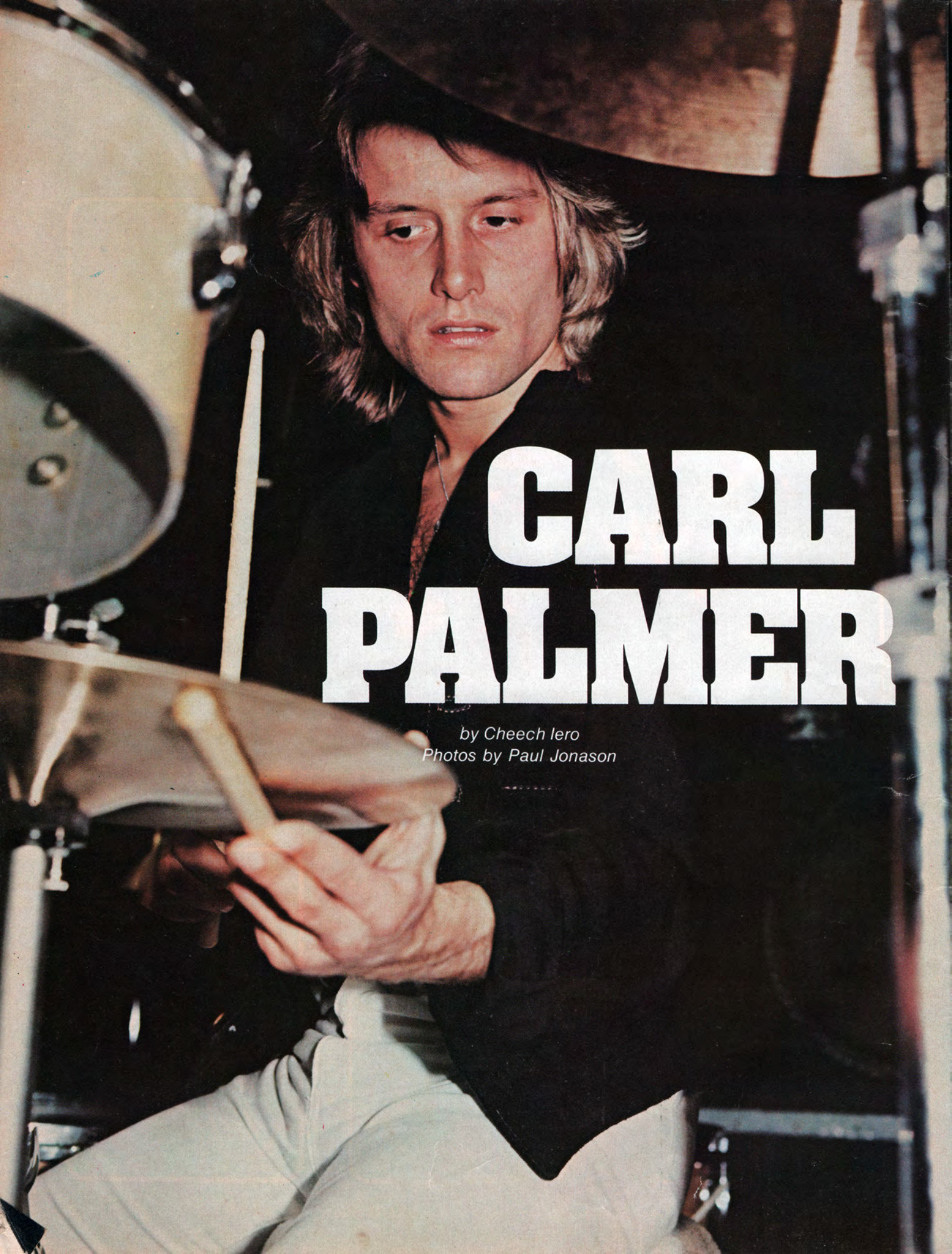
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CARL PALMER

*by Cheech Iero
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CI: What is your date of birth?

CP: I was born on March 20, 1950 in Birmingham, England.

CI: Did you grow up there?

CP: I grew up there and at the age of 15, I left and moved out to London, about 100 miles away from my home town. I joined a soul group called Chris Farlowe and the Thunder Birds. Chris Farlowe at the time was being produced by Mick Jagger.

CI: How long did you work with Chris?

CP: I was with Chris for a two year period, and then I moved on to a group called the Crazy World of Arthur Brown.

CI: I certainly remember that.

CP: Well in 1968 we had a hit single here in America called "Fire." The album was also number one at the same time. That was the first taste of success. After that, I formed my own group called The Atomic Rooster which basically was a rock band and that lasted another year. Then, I put together the band Emerson, Lake and Palmer.

CI: How did you first meet Keith Emerson and Greg Lake?

CP: It just so happened at the time in London when Emerson and Lake were getting together I was kind of the only guy in town who was doing all the work. Doing quite a few sessions with various people in London. Keith's manager called me and asked what I was doing. I was pretty busy.

CI: What kind of a musical experience was E.L.P. for you?

CP: For me, it was fantastic. As far as the group was concerned it was just what I needed at the time. I managed to put into practice most of the knowledge that I had gained. I studied at the Royal Academy under James Blades for about 18 months. I was with Gilbert Webster from the Guild Hall for another year. Most of the information obtained from these people was on classical percussion. I managed to apply quite a lot of this information into the group ELP.

CI: Did you have a one on one situation with these teachers?

CP: Yes, that's the way I did it. I had private lessons at the Academy and the Guild Hall. Prior to that, I started playing at age of 11. I had private tutoring by a local teacher in my hometown.

CI: Why the drums?

CP: Well, it was going to be violin at the very beginning because my grandfather was a violinist. Anyway, I tried the violin and really didn't like it. My father asked, "Would you like to have a go at something else?" I said, "Yes." Anyway, a couple of months went by and I really hadn't made up my mind. During this time my eldest brother had started playing guitar. I thought maybe I'd play guitar with him. Anyway that didn't hap-

pen and one day I was walking past a music shop and I saw some drums in the window. I said to my dad, "I'll give those a go. I'll try it." And it was natural for me to be quite honest.

CI: Do you think there's any such thing as a natural?

CP: Well, for me it was natural to play time with the brushes or just play time on the cymbal. I kind of sat down and did practically straight away. And this encouraged me obviously to stay with the instrument.

CI: What kind of things did you work on with your first teacher?

CP: At the age of 13, I was playing in an orchestra which would be similar to the Lawrence Welk Orchestra you have in this country. One night, I could play the top of the pops; another night, old time music; another night, Latin American. So I covered a lot of ground and basically that's what I was being schooled in by my teacher at the early stage.

CI: That was great experience being exposed to all those different styles of music at that formative age.

CP: My family was pretty straight and they weren't too keen on rock and roll. This was the only way for me to start. But at 13 going on 14, it was experience that I needed. I was reading every night. I was playing five nights a week and was still going to school. Everything fitted in very well.

CI: How did you get into that band?

CP: My father, who was my inspiration to play, realized immediately that a drummer has to get lots of experience playing different types of music. And being in this orchestra allowed me to do just that. So I had a wide range of experience given to me very quickly, which enabled me to find out exactly what I wanted to do as an individual. That's my father's planning. He's very organized like that. My father was a comedian/singer/tap dancer and used to play around the clubs in Birmingham. He knew quite a few people within the business and could ask favors from them.

CI: What type of music did you prefer to listen to when you were beginning to play?

CP: Basically, it's changed a little bit today, but I was really very keen on being a jazz drummer. Not a lot of people know that, but my initial aim was to be a jazz drummer and I played in a 15 piece orchestra. One night, we were allowed to play slightly jazzier arrangements for a half hour. That's why I did the job.

CI: You really waited for that opportunity.

CP: Yes. I played quite a few gigs with people for nothing just because I liked to play the jazz. By the time I turned 15, I was getting ready to leave school. I

started to get the bug. I started to see the Rolling Stones, and the Beatles on television. I answered a local ad in the paper for a drummer. So I called them up and they were then called King Bees, and they were a rhythm and blues group. I went to the audition and played. They were all very happy and asked if I would like to join the band. I said yes, and then went back home and told my father. He was amazed that I wanted to do that. The money they were going to pay me was half the amount I was making with the orchestra. I liked the music because it was loud and it was something completely different. That was my start playing in groups. I'd say the first four years of my playing career was playing strict tempos, a little bit of jazz, Latin American, and a wide variety.

CI: What was your very first drum set like?

CP: The drum manufacturer Premier makes a cheaper drum line called Olympic. It's made at the same factory. This is the very first drum set I ever had. It was a 20" bass drum, a snare drum and stand, hi hat, and cymbal. No tom toms. I had that drum set for about 6 months and during that time my parents saved up money and I saved money myself. I went out and bought myself a bigger drum set with all the tom toms and more cymbals, and I was off to the races at that stage.

CI: Do you still practice?

CP: For the last four months, I've been playing between six and seven hours a day. I've got a new band here in Los Angeles that I'm now rehearsing. The band is going to be called PM and we are going to record in Munich. I might practice an hour a day, if I'm not working at all. It's good for writing. I've also been taking some guitar lessons from a guy in my band.

CI: Where do you reside?

CP: I've been living in the Canary Islands which is off the coast of Africa. It's really nice. I come to America strictly to work. To rest, I go back there. When I do practice I must confess I really just like to practice the rudiments and stuff. I don't do that much reading today. I do read pretty well. I read as well as the average session player, although I don't think that is a very high standard. I'm really interested in my technique and a musical approach to the drum set. So I practice a lot on the drums when I can.

CI: What would your typical practice routine consist of?

CP: Well, when I was younger, it would be between three to five hours but I really don't need that length of time. I can condense that five hour period to 90 minutes at the most. Providing I program it the night before. To be honest with

you, more than an hour and a half, I get a bit bored playing the drum set. I can play the vibraphone a bit longer because there's more there.

CI: Do you do any specific things to keep yourself in shape?

CP: I do quite a lot of things actually. I've been involved in the martial arts for about six years now. Last October, I went to Japan and took a test at Tokyo University. I was certified as a first degree black belt. I've been doing that to get in shape. I haven't damaged my hands or my feet. Karate has been really good for my stamina. It has also helped my reflexes to a certain extent. It's made me think a lot quicker.

CI: You used quite an extensive percussion set up when you performed with Emerson, Lake and Palmer. Has that changed now that you have formed PM?

CP: It's a little bit different. I've started using two bass drums, which I didn't use before. My drum set consists of 8", 10", 12", and 14" hanging tom toms. On the floor, I have a 16" and an 18" tom tom and I have two, 28" bass drums. Also, I have an array of different cymbals which changes all the time. And I have two large Paiste gongs, one is 50 centimeters and one is 38 or 40 centimeters. I'm not too sure. They're gigantic anyway.

CI: Are all your cymbals Paiste?

CP: Yes.

CI: What are the sizes?

CP: I have a China type which is 24", a 24" ride, 20" crash, 16" crash, and a pair of 15" hi hats. That's what I've been using most of the time, but it does change.

CI: For what reason do you change your cymbal set up?

CP: Well I just have been changing recently. I've been designing this new group, and trying to find out exactly which kind of sounds I need myself. And that's why I started playing these two bass drums. The last time I played two bass drums was when I was 18. So it's a big thing for me and I'm trying to get that together.

CI: Let's talk about tuning the drums.

CP: I don't think there's any secret. There's no magic. I tune them to the way they sound pleasant to my ear. It is a personal thing. I'm sure that from one day to the next my drums might change in their actual sound. The tom toms will always change. They'll always be slightly different, the bass drum remains pretty much the same. I have a felt strip at the front and the back and I'm not sure how tight or how loose the heads are, I just get it right for me. I tune the snare drum in the classic way which is basically having the snare head a little tighter than the batter head. So I have a very crisp sounding snare drum opposed to a very deep sounding drum which a lot of guys

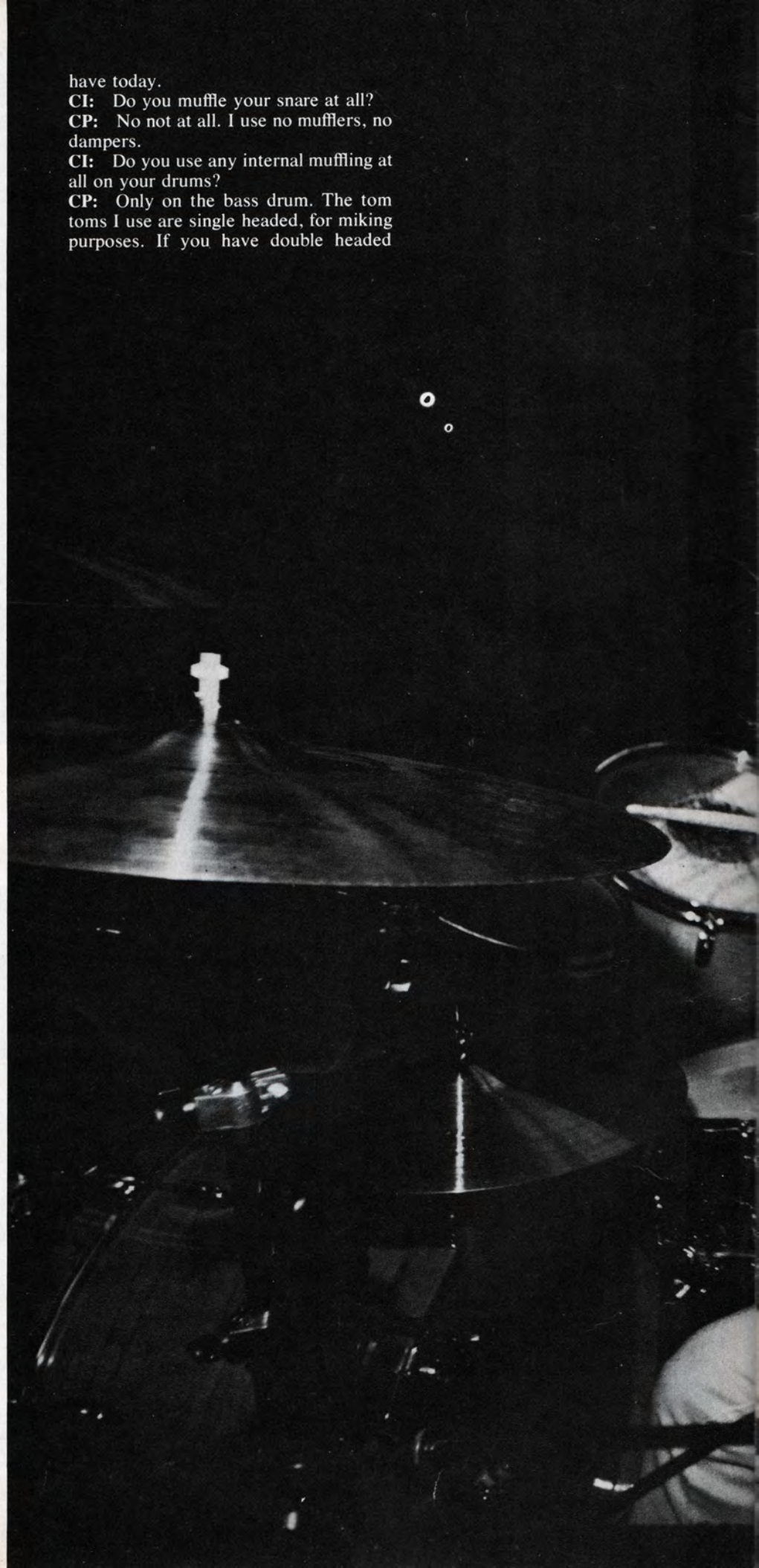
have today.

CI: Do you muffle your snare at all?

CP: No not at all. I use no mufflers, no dampers.

CI: Do you use any internal muffling at all on your drums?

CP: Only on the bass drum. The tom toms I use are single headed, for miking purposes. If you have double headed



tom toms I have found that when they are miked they ring too much. You get too much over hang. You don't get enough distinction between each drum. And with a single headed drum there's only one head to vibrate, you actually get more clarity when you mike the drum.



CI: Did you ever practice on pads or pillows to develop your technique?

CP: The pad I've used is the Remo pad, and the other pad that I sometimes carry around with me is the little brown Ludwig pad. It used to look like that old emblem they used. Basically, I can get a lot of use out of just practicing the single stroke roll, and the double stroke roll. And the next step for me would be practicing the paradiddles because it combines both of those elements and I would say the fourth stage would be to practice the paradiddles on the drums, splitting them up, crossing the hands, and all of that.

CI: What stickings of the paradiddles do you like to use?

CP: I use the regular sticking. Basically I try to distribute the various stickings around the drums to create as much of a musical sound as I can. I try to change the accents, moving up on the fourth beat. I use them that way. I find that a lot of flams have been useful to me over the years. Of the 26 rudiments, I find that the flams give me the most trouble. I personally think I play them better than a lot of guys, but they have given me a lot of trouble as far as getting them even hand to hand.

CI: So you incorporate the flams into some of the fills you do.

CP: Yes, I split things up you know. I will play a single paradiddle and make the transition into a double and into a triple. I'll put a flam in front of the single. And then I'll put two flams in front of the double. I'll break it up that way. It really depends on how I feel. And if I wake up one day and find that my single stroke roll seems to be better than the day before, I'll practice that for awhile. I won't move on because it's good. I will use the fact that it sounds good for encouragement to practice it more. I have one thing which is completely against anything that I have ever read, or seen before. A lot of people always tell guys to start off slow and build up their speed gradually. Well, if you really want things to be super even and you're not going after speed to start, that way is 100% correct. If you want to play things fast, my suggestion is to try to play the things as fast as you can straight away. I've often done that, just jumped in and tried to play it fast and even. And then, I completely reversed and played it slow. But I've encouraged myself by giving myself the inspiration. It might not have sounded great but there was a sense of urgency in my playing. Once I got the beats, I knew what it was going to be like once I got it fast. So I had a goal already in mind, and that's important. A lot of people don't establish it that way. Many drummers who are interviewed in the magazine tell the guys it's the other way around. It's

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perfectly correct, but you should recognize the human element, the adrenaline, and just direct it. It's worth while trying it that way. For me, it's been successful.

CI: You have sound men, of course, who mike your drums, but are there any mikes that you prefer for a particular reason?

CP: On the tom toms, I've been using a Sennheiser, and on the snare drum it changes because they develop microphones all the time. It changes consistently. It's usually a model from AKG because I usually find that they have the better microphones. For my bass drum, I use the very old fashioned radio mikes. They don't even make them anymore. I forget what they are called.

CI: Is the bass drum mike stuck inside the head?

CP: No. I have two heads on the bass drum, with a mike in front of the front head.

CI: No hole cut in the head?

CP: No holes. I know a lot of people get into the technical aspects of miking drums. I find that number one, the drum set has to be right. Single-headed tom toms give you the best tom tom sound. Single headed toms will give the best projection when miked properly. Once you start miking drums you are manufacturing a sound anyway. I find the more

sophisticated microphones pick up other sounds around the drum. I've found that slightly cheaper microphones have been better for drums than more expensive microphones.

CI: Is that because of leakage?

CP: Yes. Leakage is the big thing. The most expensive mike I have is on the snare drum. I may go through three or four until I get the right sound in the PA. For the last couple of years, I've used a system called Audio Analysts. They are based in Montreal and have provided me with the PA system for the Olympic Stadium. They really know what they're doing. I worked with them to try and get the cleanest and best representable drum sound possible. I find, to be truthful with you, that there are no rules as far as miking. Technology changes so fast today.

CI: Are you using any of the electronic percussion available?

CP: Years ago, on the album *Welcome Back My Friends* I had a synthesizer custom built. I had eight small synthesizers the size of cigar boxes wired to the concert tom toms. I had an octave switch on the floor to adjust the octaves lower or higher. I used them to record a piece called "Toccatà," which is by a composer called Ginastera. I recorded the piece with ELP and I had these small percussion synthesizers. And this would have been in 1974 or 75. That's the only

time, really. To tell you the truth, I think it's a gimmick. I had a 16 note sequencer. I bought everything you could have. And I worked closely with Bob Moog on the project. But at the end of the day, it's not a very musical thing. Some people use those *Syndrums*. I've had them given to me. You know, it really doesn't cut the cake for me. People use it because suddenly they hear the sound coming from a drummer and they think it's fresh. That attitude is wrong. That sound was created by the mini *Moog* years ago. The fact that a drummer plays it does not offer much musically. There are a few records on which I've heard the electronic drums used. I personally think you should consider playing melodies rather than atmospheric sounds.

CI: Like thunder and ocean waves, for instance?

CP: Yes. I would rather spend the time playing the vibraphone or an instrument that plays a tune. I'd rather get involved with that electronically than play another set of atmospheric sounds. Because that's all they are. That's my personal opinion. I figure that a lot of manufacturers make these things just to make money from the kids. Musically, they don't have a lot of validity. It's a little disturbing.

CI: What equipment did you use with ELP?

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CP: The drumset that I had at the time was a stainless steel drumset that I had made for me. Not by a drum manufacturer. My set up is almost the same now, as it was back then, except for the addition of another bass drum. Plus, then, I had two timpani—a 26" and a 28". I used the drumset for about five years and each one of the shells was hand engraved. Each shell had a hunting scene. On one drum, I had engraved a fox jumping over a fence. Another scene had a man on a horse. They were all hunting scenes that I got from rifles, because I also collect guns. The scenes were engraved in the stainless steel by using a dentist's drill. It took 12 months to complete it. The British Steel Corporation was involved in this project from the beginning. The drum set without a shadow of a doubt is a jewel, a work of art. The sound is incredible, a completely different sound. The only drawback was its weight. It was incredibly heavy. I used it for about five or six years. I got my money's worth. And it was a fabulous instrument. I changed to Gretsch drums because I wanted a more woody sound. I might donate the stainless steel drum set to the Victoria and Albert Museum in London so they can put it on display there. The museum has equipment that belonged to the Beatles, the Who and people like that. That drumset is one of a kind. It cost between 10 and 15 thousand dollars to complete. It didn't have any screws or any threads. Each drum was suspended by a rod that was angled at the exact position I wanted it angled at. I would make a template out of cardboard and take it to the steel manufacturers with my specifications. That's the way I put it together. Every night that I set those drums up they were in the same position. And my technique got really good because I became familiar with all the distances. Today, Rogers makes MemriLoc so when you set your drums up it will go to the same position everytime, and they won't move. But I was hip to that fact way back in 1973.

CI: So, no part of the drum set was made by a drum company?

CP: The only thing off the shelf were the hoops. Most of the hoops were Gretsch. It was one of the things that attracted me to them. Not only the shell construction, which is one of the better constructions, but the die cast hoops were a big draw for me. They enable the tuning to be more consistent and the rim shot sound is better. It's a much better product than those hoops that everybody uses.

CI: What arrangement did you make with Gretsch to endorse their drums?

CP: I'll tell you the story. I originally

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endorsed Ludwig drums in 1970. I stayed with them for two years and I really enjoyed the company. They're fantastic people. That was just a straight endorsement deal. With Gretsch, when I was a kid it was the only drum set I ever bought. I actually paid money for two Gretsch drum sets. I got caught up in that thing of a lot of the early jazz drummers, such as Art Blakey, Elvin Jones, Philly Joe Jones, they all used these drums. You remember I told you I was really into being a jazz drummer. As the years went by, I sort of studied their equipment. Their hardware is absolute rubbish, and I'd like you to print that. Their shell construction and the hoops are far superior. As far as Gretsch is concerned, it isn't a company that's organized. They are probably one of the most unorganized drum companies that one could ever belong to. And I don't feel bad in saying this because it is the truth.

CI: Why do you feel they are unorganized?

CP: Well, I'll tell you something. I could call up Gretsch and ask them to send me something. I know that even though I must be one of the more important drummers they sponsor, when the equipment arrives, I will find something wrong with it. The shop floor is not controlled properly. There is no quality con-

trol. There was never a financial thing there. It was basically that I had access to whatever instrument Baldwin and Gretsch make. Gretsch would never give anybody any money anyway, they're not that type of company. You play Gretsch drums because you like the product. You don't play Gretsch drums for money.

CI: They just give you a set of drums?

CP: Well, I can take whatever I want. If I wanted their pianos, guitars, or organs, I could take them. They will give me whatever merchandise I want. As far as money is concerned, there was nothing like that involved.

CI: I'm sure you could go to any manufacturer for a large amount of money to endorse their instruments.

CP: I have really been tempted to do that. And there are certain companies who have approached me to do just that. My attitude is, unless the product is really good, I don't need the extra money. I was very happy with the advertising that Gretsch did. I thought that was pretty good. I went with Gretsch out of pure love. I really liked the product. People have approached me and asked if I would like to change and there would be money involved. But I can't take the \$25,000 they offer and use their equipment, knowing it's bullshit. Knowing it's going to fall apart on me. Number one, I'm a player. Number two, I'm a busi-

nessman. I don't need the pressure of equipment that's going to let me down in front of the public.

CI: Do you use Gretsch hardware?

CP: I do not use any Gretsch hardware at all. All my hardware is Rogers and Tama. It's the heavy duty stuff but it's still not exactly what I want.

CI: Are you now using any customized equipment?

CP: At the moment, I'm not using any customized equipment at all. I was using two Rogers bass drum pedals which were joined together so I could have two beaters on one bass drum. That was put together for me by John Burcin at the Professional Percussion Center in New York. I used it for a little while, but in the end, I decided to add another bass drum. It worked, everything worked with the system John made for me but I wanted the challenge of two bass drums.

CI: Did both beaters strike at the same time?

CP: No, they were independent so I could play one bass drum and get the sound of two. It was two Rogers bass drum pedals joined together with a series of rods and springs very much like the Sonor. But the Sonor was a cheap version of what I had. The Rogers pedal was completely updated with heavier gauged material, good steel and good joints. It was built with the best material. I don't



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use it anymore, but it's good if you want that kind of thing.

CI: How much visual staging will be involved with PM?

CP: I'm going to be as visual as I was before. My drums revolve and painted on the back of the gongs I've got huge dragons. To tell you the truth, I'm into being a theatrical drummer as much as a well schooled technical player. I personally think that drums are so visual, you might as well make as much of that as you can.

CI: Why did ELP break up?

CP: We didn't really break up. We still have our publishing company and our offices in London and New York. We built up such an empire for ourselves but could be totally diverse if we wanted to. We decided that it was time to be that way. The music was still as strong as it had ever been. There were just various projects that were involved and personally, I needed to play with new people. I needed to get out there and actually perform. I doubt if the other two will perform in public again. Personally, I enjoy playing. I'm not doing it for the money or for financial reward. I have two houses; financially I'm really set. It's purely for the love of the business and the knowledge that I've gained over the years. I'm just executing it all again and basically still have the hunger to play. I've been

playing since I was 11 years old. I'm 29 now. What else am I going to do?

CI: That's in your blood.

CP: Right. I don't want to form a jazz group because that's not where it's at right now though I love that type of music. I like to go out and play to the kids. To me, it's a buzz. I get more feedback and learn more that way. A lot of people would say, "Why don't you just disappear gracefully? You've got a name and you've come from a big group." That's not where it's at. All my life I've taken chances and I'll take them again because I like that competition. That's why I'm in America, because I know there's a lot of competition here.

CI: With everyone talking about the business aspects of music, a musician must have a difficult time concentrating on his art.

CP: Yes, but today any guy who just wants to play his music and write his songs has got the wrong attitude. Today, a musician must protect his art from the word go. A manager is there to do all the business but personally one should take pride and an interest in it. I think to be totally involved with the business as well as the music gives you more security. You see, I know now the right way to come back with a new group. I know the right way to do it. I know what is right and I've learned from the business as

well as learning my craft as a musician. A modern musician thinks of the business of music as well as the actual creation. Because one leads the other and as you well know, management can ruin an artist very quickly. I've been fortunate to have the same manager for the last 7 or 8 years. Even with the right management, I still take an interest and participate as much as I can, mainly for my own well being. I'd feel a lot happier if a kid walked up to me in a music shop and said, "Mr. Palmer, I want to know what do you do about a record contract. How do you go about collecting your money?" These are things that people don't talk about but they're as related to the musician as well as playing the drum set. My family is comprised of musicians and businessmen, so I had been exposed to both worlds and feel grateful for that.

CI: What would you tell a musician who doesn't have a manager and has to do these things on his own? What would be the first step in the right direction?

CP: To find a manager, that's easy. But to find a manager who's prepared to manipulate and get people interested in you takes time. It's just as precious as finding a guy to play lead guitar or keyboard or bass. A lot of bands sign with an agency and because they are working, they think that's where it's at. They step into a record deal that's offered to them but don't

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know how much record royalty rates they will receive. They don't know anything like that.

The manager I have and who ELP had, Stewart Young, never managed a group before in his life. He went to the London School of Economics which is the highest form of education in England. He is a chartered accountant. My original manager was Robert Stigwood. I've always been keen on having good management.

CI: What styles of music do you listen to right now and who are some of the

drummers you particularly like? There must be many.

CP: I must confess, I'm still a Buddy Rich fan and always will be. Whatever records he's got out, you can bet your life I've got them. I enjoy listening to Elvin Jones. I must say there are not a lot of good drummers in bands today that I like. There are not very many at all. There are a lot of good cats. You know them as well as I do. Like Steve Gadd. Unfortunately, there are a lot of cats that are good in the studio but dead as door nails on stage. Some drummers are great on record but you listen to them live and

they don't have that power on stage. So there's nobody that particular I must admit.

CI: What qualities do you look for?

CP: It's very hard to say. Originality, because I don't think many of us are very original. There are certain aspects that are more original than others. I think imagination and spontaneity are important. I know that I play different every day. I play the number slightly different. I listen for that spark. Sometimes I go to a concert and listen to a drummer and look for that spark and they haven't got it.

CI: Would you credit any one particular drummer as being a major influence in the last 20 years or so?

CP: I've got two people who have been my inspiration. My number one inspiration to play was my father. He's dead now, but he was my inspiration. The man who really gave me direction was Buddy Rich. I met him when I was 15 and played in his band at a club in London. He asked me to get up and play in his band. We've shared a lot of good times together. We're friends. I personally think he has inspired a lot of people over the last 20 years. I'm sure the last 5 or 10 years he hasn't been much of an inspiration for the younger drummers because there has been other drummers like Billy Cobham and Steve Gadd. When you look to someone for inspiration, to look at the music they're playing is one thing. But you should really look at the essence because I know Buddy Rich can play absolutely everything. Just as I know certain rock drummers can't play much more than what they play. Basically, a drummer should learn to play as many different types of music as possible. Latin American, rock, jazz, dance band music. That's our trade. To be just a rock drummer or just a jazz drummer is very boring. It's like wearing the same jacket all of your life. I've never said to anyone I'm just a rock drummer. I always tell people I'm a percussionist because I play other instruments. A bit of vibraphone, timpani, bells. I like to branch out. So I call myself a percussionist because I'm into playing all types of music. I'm not into one thing really. Some people will say, that could be a drummer's downfall because when you're so diverse as a musician you'll never finalize any one particular style. I don't think that's right. One style helps the other. In other words, there are some things that I learned as a jazz drummer which definitely helped me in playing with Emerson Lake and Palmer.

CI: Do you have any particular approach to your soloing?

CP: The only approach that I have con-

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cerns the particular phrases in my head. When I'm in trouble, I immediately call on them, like most people when improvising. I don't rehearse it. The only part I rehearse is the theatrics. For the actual solo, I need exposure in front of an audience. I need five days to a week in the beginning of any tour experimenting during my solo. In front of the public, because to them it's still good. After that week, I've got a solo down that I can play. I have enough information to make it all fall together into one acceptable solo. And I have enough sections built into my solo so I can ad lib and get out of it nicely. I get up there and put my neck on the line. I think that's what being a soloist is all about. I'm not frightened of doing a drum solo. I've been doing them since I was 11.

CI: But you go out there with some type of format in your mind?

CP: Oh yes. But when crowds start applauding something I'm playing, the format means nothing. I have to say that American audiences have been most inspirational to play to from a solo point of view.

CI: I was going to ask you if there is a difference to you?

CP: In England, audiences are a little conservative. When I'm done playing, they'll clap politely and stand up and yell bravo and really enjoy it. Here in America, you have jazz and solos engraved into the blood, year after year, decade after decade. A kid 15 or 16 can hear something played by a drummer and he won't wait until the end of the solo to applaud. He'll choose that moment in time. I find there is no audience control. You can't control the audience and you shouldn't. An artist should learn to appreciate that. I really enjoy playing to an American audience because they are one of the finest audiences to play to.

CI: Do you have any unfulfilled musical goals?

CP: I do. I have recorded a concerto of percussion with the London Philharmonic Orchestra. I play a xylophone solo, vibraphone solo, two gongs, 2 octaves from middle C up. I play very little drums. I have a little cadenza, a small drum solo in classical music. The whole piece of music is twenty minutes long. The piece is very musical. I play most of the themes. I have a complete theatrical idea in my mind to incorporate myself playing all these instruments with the orchestra and using three females dancing in syncopation to what I'm playing. One of the things I would personally like to do is to make a film of my life story and I'd like to incorporate this particular concerto into it. There are a lot of things in this concerto that are fantastic. I've got this huge bucket full of chains that I

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pick up and throw at the gong which is suspended four inches above the ground. It makes a terrific sound. That's one of the things theatrically I would like to stage in such a way that it would be appealing to the audience. I'd like to do it at Radio City.


CI: Did you ever consider doing clinics?

CP: Everybody has asked me to do clinics and I've been to all the clinics, Joe Morello, Buddy Rich, Carmine Appice, etc. I'll tell you something, I would do a clinic at the right time but I'm such an honest guy, I couldn't give them any bullshit. Like 800 ways to play a funky cymbal rhythm. On the beat. Off the beat. Straight 8th's. Quarter notes. There are certain rock drummers that go all through that. Let me tell you, I walked out on one clinic. You see, the people who do clinics try to come across like they are numero uno. They put it across in such a sophisticated way. That's not where it's at.

CI: To confuse them?

CP: Yes. Their attitude is to send kids away baffled so they look like they're the greatest!

I saw Buddy Rich do a clinic and he said, "What do you want me to play? If you want me to play with the brushes, I'll play all the licks I know with the brushes. You want me to play the hi-hat? I'll play the hi-hat." Instead of getting into this in-depth complex thing which drives me up the wall.

I would go in there unprepared. I would just get up there and say, "What do you want to see?" I would use a blackboard so I could write down certain classical pieces of music by Stravinsky and certain snare drum parts that are really nice to play. I would do it that way. Gretsch wanted me to do one but it didn't fall in with my time schedule. But I would do one and it would be so bizarre compared to the way other people have done them. I'm fed up going to a clinic and hearing a guy say, "This is the way you hold your sticks." I would point to a kid and ask him to come up and play the snare drum with me. I think with drums, you have to show them the primitive value of it, being man's first instrument. Like what you naturally do with a drum. People do one with each hand first of all which happens to be called a single stroke roll and take it from there. I would even question the kids and ask them what problems they have and I would explain that it could be right as well as wrong. I don't want to baffle them, I don't want them to go out saying "Hey Carl is the best in the world." I want them to go out saying they learned something number one. You should not do a drum clinic to elevate yourself but to elevate the people around you. 

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