

PULSE... 1

SIMMONS

No. 1
January 1985

Savaging Simmons In 84

by Bill Bruford

1984 was for me, one of those happy years when new ideas, new technology and the place to use them all became available at the same time.

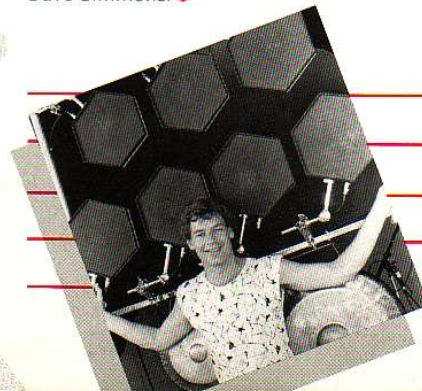
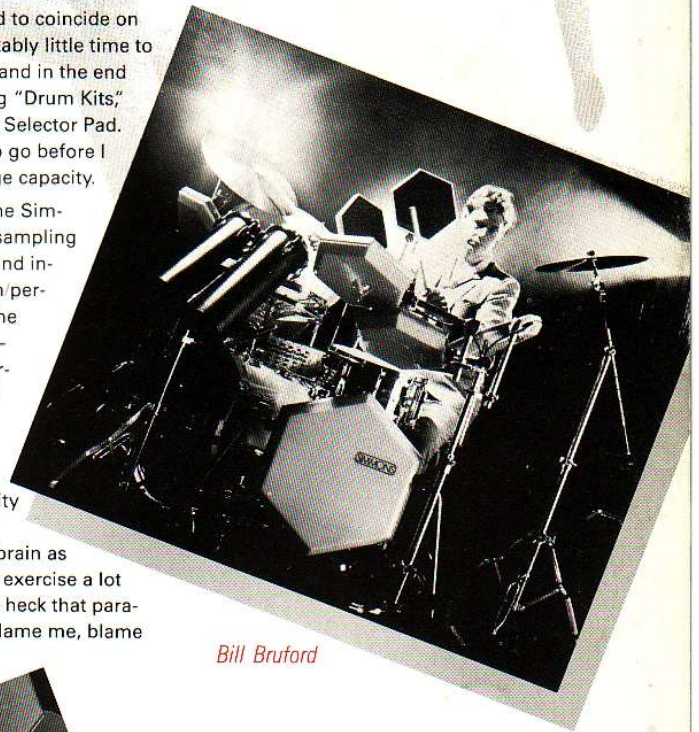
I'd recently been struck by the fact that playing in larger venues (2-8,000) it is very difficult to preserve any sense of shared community between drummer and audience. In many ways electronic and automated percussion had helped to increase the distance between the two, and accentuate the antiseptic cold cleanliness of the modern high tech rock stage. I think drummers should sweat, and more important, be seen to sweat. My work with the Simmons SDS7 and King Crimson in '84 stemmed from a desire to reverse their trend towards mechanization and automation.

Since the SDS7 allows the drummer the use of 12 pads simultaneously I decided to split them into 5, which would be positioned as for a normal drum set, and 7 which would be racked vertically behind me. Played standing with the drummers back to the audience, these 7 would be raised deliberately high up so there should be no mistake when viewed from 200 yards away as to which pad was being struck and so the listener should be able to connect that strike with a particular sound. This worked particularly well in *Indiscipline* and *Industry* and several other of the more impressionistic/descriptive King Crimson efforts.

The Selector Pad was, of course, a God-send because the start of King Crimson's touring and the arrival of the SDS7 on the market seemed to be timed to coincide on the same day, I had remarkably little time to sort out the programming and in the end settled for 8 widely-ranging "Drum Kits," and accessed these via the Selector Pad. Gee, only another 91 kits to go before I run out of computer storage capacity.

Further developments in the Simmons camp involving the sampling of any sound whatsoever and injecting that into the rhythm percussion line—the idea of the SDS7 as 'Sound Camera'—will give the drummer enormous control and freedom over the actual sounds he may care to offer the composition, with of course, a lot of responsibility as well. In other words he has now to start using his brain as well as his paradiddle, and exercise a lot of discretion over what the heck that paradiddle sounds like. Don't blame me, blame Dave Simmons. ●

Bill Bruford



Simmons rated number 1,
hottest drums by music dealers
and musicians. See *PRODUCT
UPDATE* (page 4) for details.

An Awesome Balancing Act

by Sandy Gennaro, drummer with rock star Cyndi Lauper

In my opinion, electronic drums are here to stay.

That's because they offer the drummer a wide range of sound possibilities. With electronic drums, it's possible to make a sound fit the mood and feel of any song—and that goes for in the studio or in concert.

Besides the different color (sound) options, they go "direct" into any mixing console, alleviating common open miking problems like leakage. Besides, the mikes themselves all respond differently to acoustic drums. Going direct also adds dramatically to the presence of the sound. This is especially true with live sound. Taking into account the natural ambience of the arena and the addition of the effects of the mixing console, the sound can be devastating!

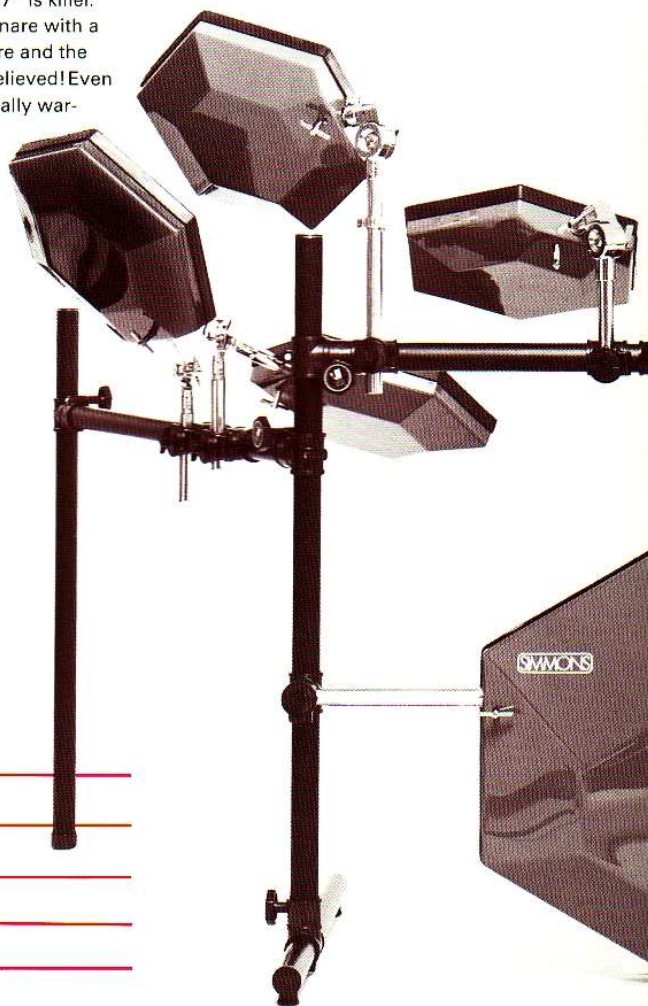
When I'm playing with Cyndi Lauper, I use a mixture of Simmons SDS7 electronic and Ludwig acoustic drums. My current set-up consists of acoustic bass drum on my right and Simmons bass drum on my left. The acoustic snare is in its normal position with the Simmons snare and 3 tom-tom pads mounted above the acoustic bass drum. On my right is a 16 x 16 acoustic floor tom. Mounted above it is my 9 x 13 acoustic rack tom. I also use a 26" timpani as a second floor tom.

As I see it, if acoustic drums are the cake, my Simmons drums are the icing. In other words, sometimes I double the acoustic snare with the Simmons snare. Or maybe I'll double the acoustic bass drum part with the Simmons bass drum. When this doubling is done in certain parts of a tune—such as the chorus or the tag—it gives a nice uplifting effect. With some songs I play the acoustic bass and acoustic snare on "2" and "4" doubled with the Simmons bass and tom. With four drums accenting "2" and "4" at the same time, the sound is awesome.

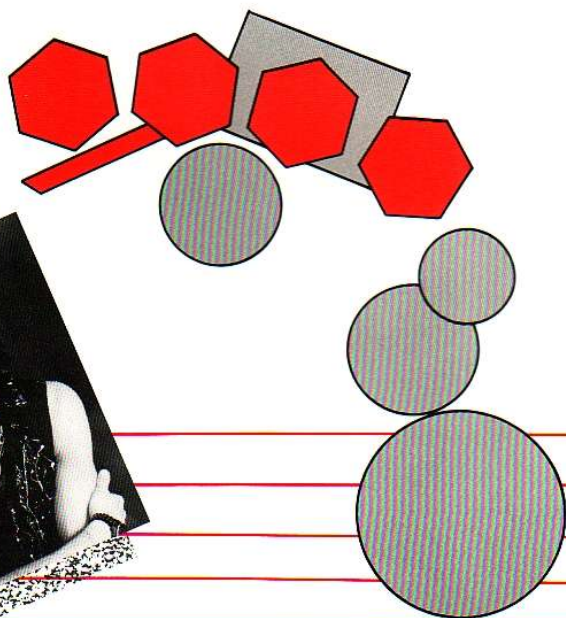
The Simmons SDS7 has limitless program possibilities. Usually I prefer a sound that's mostly digital with a little noise, a slight downward bend and a touch of analog. For the most part, I like the decay to be longer than that of an acoustic drum. I've found that the snare module in the "7" is killer. Play a fat sounding acoustic snare with a great sounding Simmons snare and the result has to be heard to be believed! Even though Cyndi's songs don't really warrant the use of the sound effects the SDS7

can produce, I programmed a real nice woodblock sound into one. I even adjusted the pitch to be in tune with the song!

Simmons drums are miles ahead of any other electronic drum kits I've experienced. And because Simmons is a real pioneer in electronic drums, they'll undoubtedly have a lot of new and exciting surprises for drummers in the months and years ahead. That's alright with me because, believe it, when you're on the road with a band like Cyndi's, being able to come up with something new and exciting is always part of the gig. ●



Sandy Gennaro



Drum Synthesizer Programming

by Tim Root, Simmons staff artist and product specialist

Simmons has brought the drummer into the world of programmable synthesizers!

Now, like other electronic musicians, once a drummer learns the basics of sound synthesis and programming he has access to the limitless sound variations of electronic instruments. This percussive step forward has been created by the Simmons SDS7; the most advanced drum synthesizer available today.

Each of the SDS7's voice modules has two distinct electronic sound capabilities: analog (synthesized sounds electronically produced) and digital (acoustic sounds electronically reproduced). Along with these 2 parts each module also has a series of programmable functions and a memory that allows storage of up to 99 different sounds. All the functions—or parameters—

work on a scale of 0 (none) to 255 (maximum).

The LEVEL function controls the amount of analog or digital sound in the overall sound. For pure digital sound set the digital LEVEL at 255 and the analog LEVEL at 0. Accordingly, for full analog sound, adjust the analog LEVEL to 255 and the digital LEVEL to 0. By mixing the LEVELS of both sounds together you can come up with some really cool sounds, too!

The analog and digital sides of the SDS7 each have separate controls for PITCH, BEND and MODULATION. PITCH adjusts the pitch level of the sound higher or lower. BEND bends the sound up or down. MODULATION programs pitch changes so that every time you hit the drum pad the pitch automatically changes. MODULATION SPEED controls how fast your modulation effect is modulating.

All the other functions adjust a filter that effects both the analog and digital parts of the sound at the same time. CLICK controls the amount of attack or stick sound. NOISE is the amount of white noise in the sound. DECAY sets the durations or length of the sound. BEND either brightens or muffles the sound as it decays. FREQUENCY adds brightness and RESONANCE adds more frequencies and resonance to the sound.



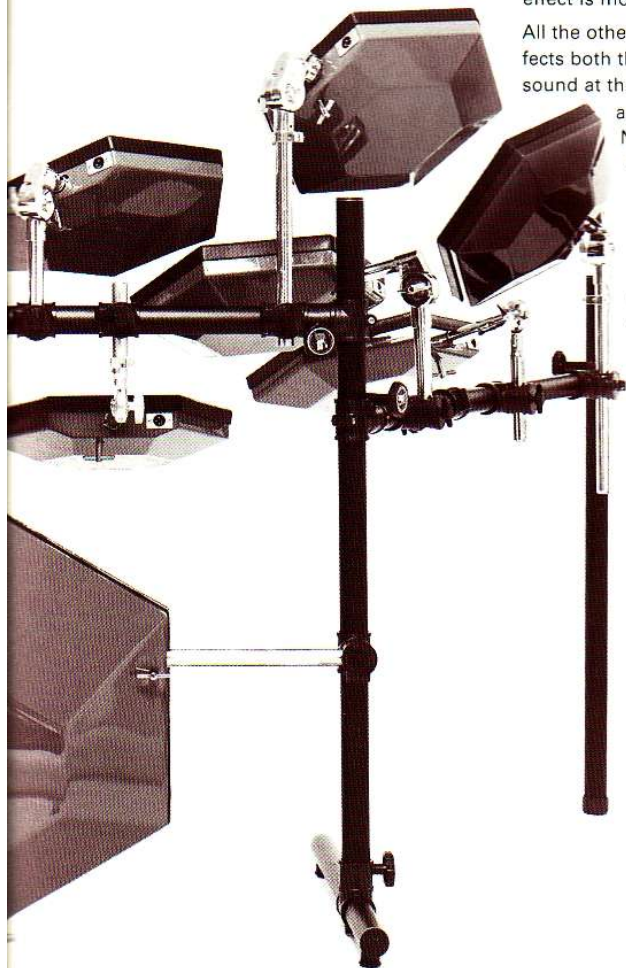
Tim Root

Once all the parameters are adjusted and you're getting the sounds you want, you can either store the sounds in one of the 99 SDS7 memories or enter them into a "RAM" pack and store 40 of them externally.

SDS7 even has a special function that helps speed up programming. Instead of programming a whole new sound, you can transfer sounds from one memory to another by using the JIGSAW function. Let's say your favorite snare drum is in kit 10, your favorite bass drum in kit 1 and your favorite toms in kit 50. When you use JIGSAW you can transfer every one of those sounds into a new kit number and then fine tune them to get a new sound.

The Simmons SDS7 programmable drum synthesizer gives you unlimited sound possibilities. It's up to you to learn where and when to musically use them. For best results, keep these simple tricks in mind, and remember: the more you use them, the easier they get!

- 1) Develop your ear to the point where you can clearly recognize the differences between analog and digital sounds.
- 2) Develop your understanding of how each parameter effects the sound.
- 3) Develop your skill in getting the exact sound you want. ●



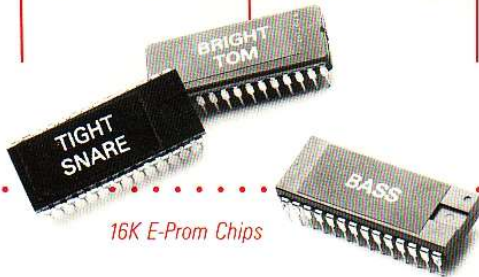
Product Update

According to Music & Sound's "Retailer," the Simmons SDS8 is still far and away the hottest selling electronic drumset on the market. In fact, readers of "International Musician & Recording World" recently voted the SDS8 the most popular drumset of any kind. Be sure to see the new SDS8 at your local Simmons dealer.

The SDS1 is Simmons latest hexagonal. It offers controls for pitch, bend, volume, sensitivity and a run generator on board. The self-contained digital drum pad uses player-changeable sound chips for snare, tom, hand claps and effects. This great way to plug into the new, electrifying world of electronic drumming is available in black, red and white.

SDS EPB. It stands for Simmons Digital Sampler and E-PROM Blower. The EPB lets you make your own sound chips for use in SDS7 modules or SDS1 digital pads. The 16K E-PROM chips come in a handy plastic 6-pack container. All you have to do is sample a sound, blow a chip and the sound is yours.

If you prefer using a pre-programmed Simmons memory chip, you'll want your own copy of the SIMMONS SOUND LIBRARY on cassette. This super tape contains a brief taste of every Simmons sound available. Just pick the ones you want!



16K E-Prom Chips

STATE OF THE ART ELECTRONIC DRUM ACCESSORIES FROM THE UNDISPUTED LEADER IN ELECTRONIC PERCUSSION...

Drum sticks by HOT STICKS in medium, heavy and extra heavy sizes and your choice of red, blue, black or white... EARS for rack mounting the SDS7 and SDS8 Controllers... LIMITED EDITION HEXAGONAL ELECTRONIC CYMBAL—choice of colors and a distinctive look mean that this one-of-a-kind cymbal/trigger is destined to become a collector's item... A totally new concept in drum hardware is the DRUM RACK, designed especially by Ultimate Support, the state-of-the-art synthesizer rack manufacturer... SUB SNAKES and CABLES are a neat and reliable way to make your setups and breakdowns faster. The snakes let you plug all your pads into one end of a multi-cable cluster. Then just plug the break-out end into your rack/controller. They're available for all Simmons drum kits! ●

FOR MORE PRODUCT INFORMATION, CONTACT SIMMONS GROUP CENTRE OR YOUR NEAREST AUTHORIZED SIMMONS DEALER.

Electalktrics



The world's top drummers are talking up a storm about electronic drums and the future. Here's what a few of them are saying:

"Drums are going electronic and I think every drummer should be learning about it!"
Hal Blaine, studio drumming legend.
Mix Magazine, December, 1984

"For me personally, electronic drums will be the way of the future,"

Terry Bozzio, drummer, Missing Persons
Musician Magazine, August, 1984

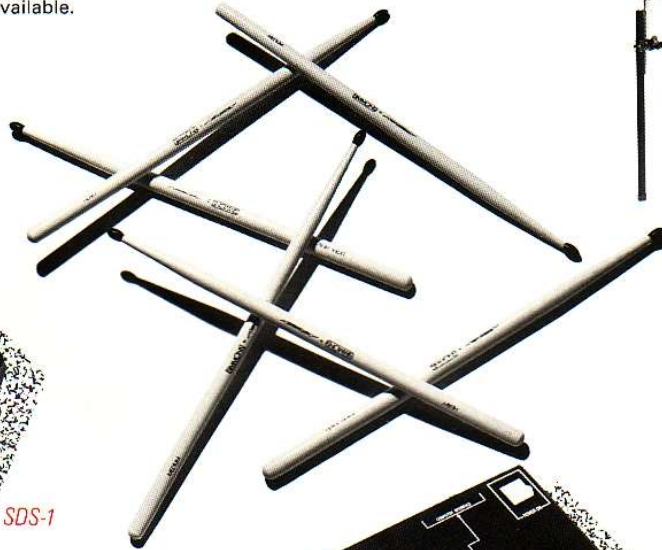
"... There are far greater possibilities within the electronic world than there is in just hitting a drum head, a whole new world..."

Stewart Copeland of the Police.
Downbeat, May, 1984

Thanks, guys! If you're a Simmons Electronic drummer, or if you have any questions or comments on the subject, WE WANT TO HEAR WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY. Write us at Simmons Group Centre, 23917 Craftsman Road, Calabasas, CA 91302. And watch for the next edition of "PULSE." It's coming real soon! ●



SDS-1



SDS-EPB



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