

MD: How did you get introduced to music?

Claudio: Through my parents. My father was the concertmaster for the São Paulo Philharmonic for about thirty years, and my mother was a classical ballet dancer/choreographer. I grew up with my parents always practicing and rehearsing. We listened to classical music all the time. Later on I started listening to jazz. When I told my parents that I wanted to be a jazz drummer, they almost died. They said that, at the very least, I should be a classical percussionist.

So I studied for about two years learning how to read and play classical music. I played with the Philharmonic orchestra for about a year and a half. My father was very happy. But then I said, "Are you happy now? Okay, then that's it, I quit." I then became a nightclub jazz drummer.

MD: Do you feel that your classical background helps you musically?

Claudio: It does, because when I would play in a symphony environment, I would learn so much from the conductors about music. One time a conductor stopped the orchestra during a rehearsal and told the flute player that if he wasn't carrying the melody and couldn't hear the melody, then he was playing too loudly. Without my noticing it at the time, that served to develop my style of playing. Even today, without thinking, if I can't hear someone who's taking a solo, I immediately play softer. It doesn't matter if it's a problem with the PA or whatever. I adjust accordingly. You also learn by watching a conductor—how he mixes the orchestra in a live performance, which parts to bring out, and which parts to shade.

MD: Was your first introduction to the drumset in the form of jazz or Brazilian music?

Claudio: Jazz. It was much later that I was introduced to Brazilian music. I started playing in a big band. I was forced to play Brazilian with a big band, which is much harder than a small group. I really had to learn how to play it in a hurry.

When I first started doing that gig, the leader, the bass player, and I would play jazz when the big band would take a break. He had another drummer at the time who played the Brazilian music with the big band. When the big band would play I would watch and listen to the drummer to

see what he was doing. When he left, I took over.

Years ago, all of the Brazilian drummers would criticize me, saying, "He's not a Brazilian drummer, he's just a jazz drummer." And the jazz drummers would say, "What are you doing playing Brazilian? There are millions of guys who can play Brazilian." So I got it from both sides. After that, most of the jobs that I was called for were Brazilian.

MD: Who were some of your influences growing up?

Claudio: I started with the obvious ones—Buddy Rich and Gene Krupa. Then I listened to Joe Morello, Shelly Manne, Elvin Jones, and Jack DeJohnette. And of course, I loved all of the big band drummers, like Don Lamond, Irv Cottler, Mel Lewis, and Sonny Payne. I really admired how they would carry a band.

MD: I always loved the recordings you made with Walter Wanderley. How did that association come about?

Claudio: Walter had a manager who recommended me. Walter was a typical nightclub musician, the type of guy who would play in very obscure places even if his records were selling well. His manager told

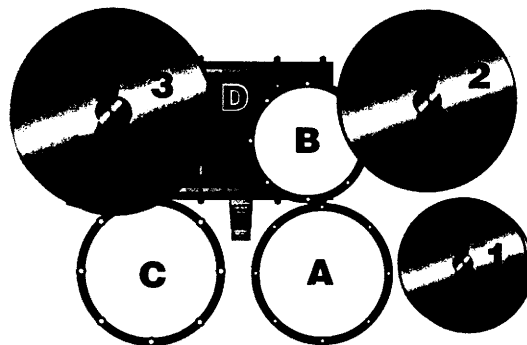
him that he needed to play with younger people, and he told him about me. Walter knew of me only as a jazz drummer, but he said he'd check me out.

I went to the nightclub where he was playing and sat in. The funny thing is that it clicked. It wasn't necessarily because I was a good samba drummer, but somehow the way he played clicked with my way of playing. He liked it, and I started doing gigs and recording with him.

One day in 1967 Walter told me that he had a person who wanted to take us to New York to record for the legendary jazz producer Creed Taylor. Walter was worried that, because I was married and had a daughter, it might be a problem for me to go. I told him my family completely understood that I had to follow my career. So off to New York we went. I was thrilled, as any jazz drummer was at that time, to come to New York.

We recorded for Creed Taylor on the Verve label. For me it was a dream because I had all of the records that he produced. I got there and he was a very nice, simple guy. On the third day in New York a limo came to pick us up and drove us to New Jersey to record at Rudy Van Gelder's stu-

Claudio's Kit



This is the setup that he uses on small jazz gigs.

Drums: Remo

- A. 3x13 snare
- B. 8x10 tom
- C. 14x14 floor tom
- D. 14x18 bass drum

Cymbals: Paiste Traditionals Series

- 1. 13" medium-light hi-hats
- 2. 17" thin crash
- 3. 20" medium heavy ride

Others: A long-time Paiste endorser, Claudio will occasionally use other cymbals from various Paiste lines, including 13" Heavy hats, an 18" flat ride, and a 20" Dry Heavy ride (from their Signature series), 14" Medium hats, a 20" flat ride, and a 20" Medium ride (from their 602 line), and an 18" Short crash and a 20" Dark ride (from the Sound Creation line).

Heads: various Evans models

Sticks: various Regal Tip and Pro-Mark models

Percussion: Toca, Contemporanea (Brazilian company)