

TAKING CENTER STAGE

a lifetime of live performance

NEIL PEART

by Joe Bergamini



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CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| Foreword | 5 |
| Introduction | 6 |
| About This Book | 8 |
| The Making of <i>Taking Center Stage</i> | 14 |
| Drum Key | 30 |

| | | |
|-------------------|---|-----------|
| CHAPTER 1: | 2112 and All the World's a Stage Tours (1976-77) | 33 |
| | Drum Setup | 35 |

| | | |
|-------------------|--|-----------|
| CHAPTER 2: | A Farewell to Kings Tour (1977) | 36 |
| | Drum Setup | 39 |

| | | |
|-------------------|---|-----------|
| CHAPTER 3: | Hemispheres Tour (1978-79) | 40 |
| | Drum Setup | 42 |
| | "The Trees" 43 ■ Analysis 43 ■ Drum Transcription 45 | |
| | "La Villa Strangiato" 49 ■ Analysis 49 ■ Drum Transcription 51 | |

| | | |
|-------------------|---|-----------|
| CHAPTER 4: | Permanent Waves Tour (1979-80) | 58 |
| | Drum Setup | 60 |
| | "The Spirit of Radio" 61 ■ Analysis 61 ■ Drum Transcription 62 | |
| | "Free Will" 66 ■ Analysis 66 ■ Drum Transcription 68 | |
| | "Natural Science" 73 ■ Analysis 73 ■ Drum Transcription 75 | |

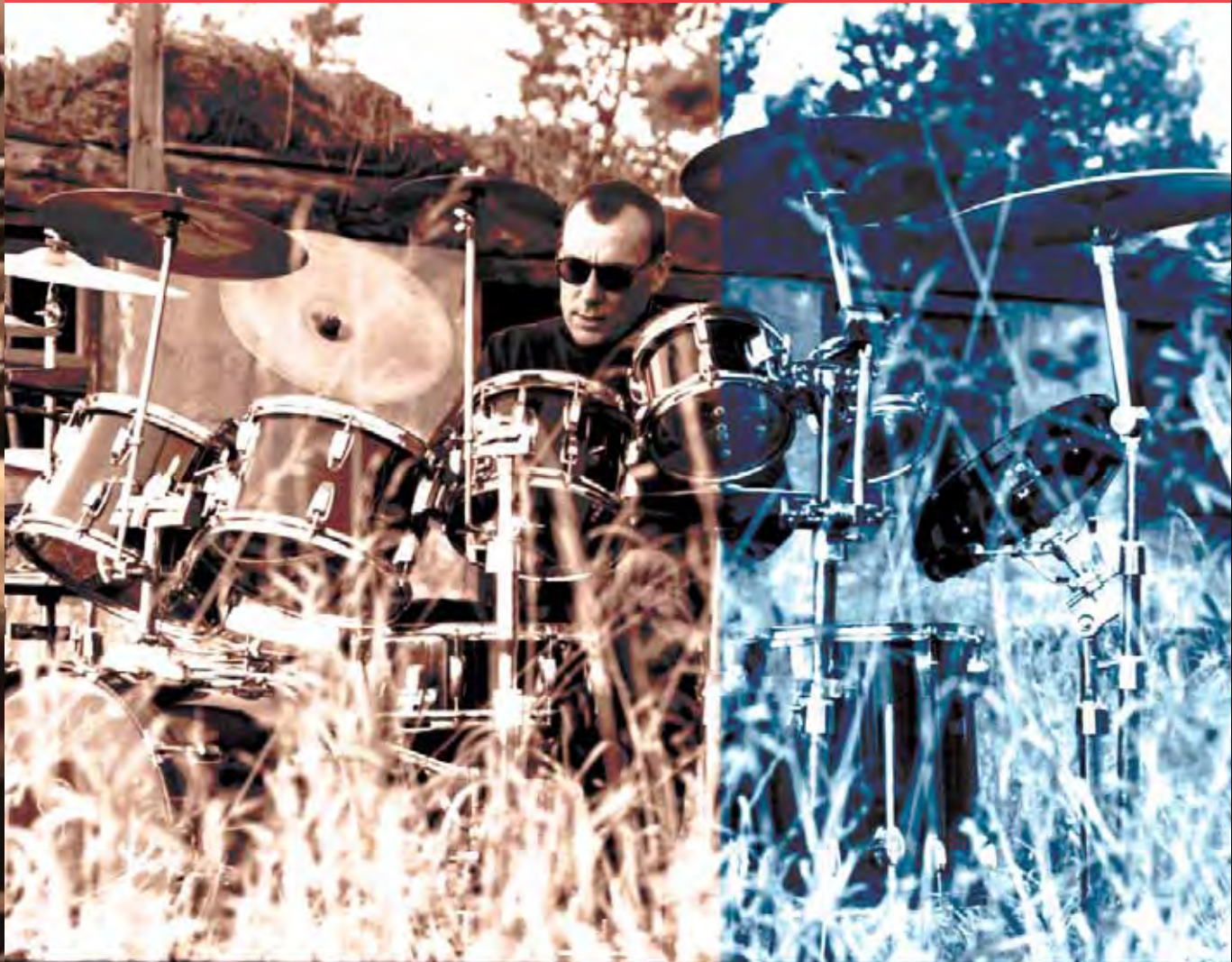
| | | |
|-------------------|--|-----------|
| CHAPTER 5: | Moving Pictures Tour (1980-81) | 81 |
| | Drum Setup | 84 |
| | "Tom Sawyer" 85 ■ Analysis 85 ■ Drum Transcription 87 | |
| | "YYZ" 91 ■ Analysis 91 ■ Drum Transcription 93 | |

| | | |
|-------------------|---|------------|
| CHAPTER 6: | Signals Tour (1982-83) | 97 |
| | Drum Setup | 101 |
| | "Subdivisions" 102 ■ Analysis 102 ■ Drum Transcription 104 | |

| | | |
|-------------------|---|------------|
| CHAPTER 7: | Grace Under Pressure and Power Windows Tours (1984-86) | 108 |
| | Drum Setup | 113 |
| | "Marathon" 114 ■ Analysis 115 ■ Drum Transcription 116 | |

| | | |
|--------------------|--|------------|
| CHAPTER 8: | Hold Your Fire Tour (1987-88) _____ | 122 |
| | Drum Setup 126 | |
| | "Time Stand Still" 128 ■ Analysis 128 ■ Drum Transcription 129 | |
| CHAPTER 9: | Presto Tour (1990) _____ | 134 |
| | Drum Setup 136 | |
| | "Presto" 138 ■ Analysis 138 ■ Drum Transcription 140 | |
| CHAPTER 10: | Roll the Bones and Counterparts Tours (1991-92, 1994) _____ | 144 |
| | Drum Setup 147 | |
| | "Bravado" 149 ■ Analysis 149 ■ Drum Transcription 150 | |
| | "Leave That Thing Alone!" 153 ■ Analysis 153 ■ Drum Transcription 155 | |
| CHAPTER 11: | Test for Echo Tour (1996-97) _____ | 159 |
| | Drum Setup 162 | |
| CHAPTER 12: | Vapor Trails Tour (2002) _____ | 164 |
| | Drum Setup 168 | |
| CHAPTER 13: | R30 Tour (2004) _____ | 169 |
| | Drum Setup 174 | |
| CHAPTER 14: | Snakes & Arrows Tour (2007-08) _____ | 175 |
| | Drum Setup 178 | |
| | "Workin' Them Angels" 179 ■ Analysis 179 ■ Drum Transcription 180 | |
| | "Far Cry" 184 ■ Analysis 184 ■ Drum Transcription 186 | |
| CHAPTER 15: | Time Machine Tour (2011) _____ | 190 |
| | Drum Setup 192 | |
| | "BU2B " 193 ■ Analysis 193 ■ Drum Transcription 194 | |
| | "Caravan" 198 ■ Analysis 198 ■ Drum Transcription 199 | |
| | Source List _____ | 204 |
| | About the Author _____ | 206 |

CHAPTER 10



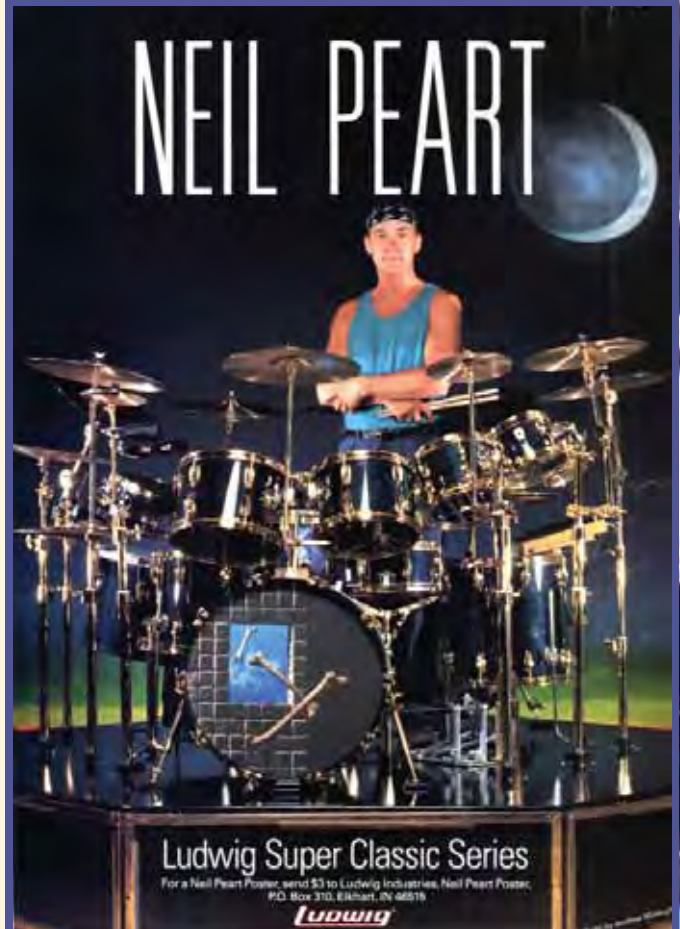
ROLL THE BONES AND COUNTERPARTS TOURS

(1991-92, 1994)

For *Roll the Bones*, Neil rethought his drum setup for the first time since he had joined Rush. He had always made changes to his setup, but this never involved the arrangement of the basic pieces of his set; in the past it had usually involved adding new pieces, or swapping out various percussion instruments and accessories. This time, major changes were made. First, Neil decided to go from using two bass drums to a single bass drum with a double pedal. Second, he put a floor tom on the left. Finally, he switched to smaller tomtom sizes. This made for a much more compact basic drumset (although as you can see from the diagram, it was still a pretty huge kit).

Neil used the same setup for both the *Roll the Bones* and *Counterparts* tours; the only real change was having the drums refinished from “Blue Shadow” to “Dark Cherry.” Otherwise, all the drums, cymbals, and electronics stayed the same, the only exceptions being the addition of a Dautz pad—placed at the rear, under the wind chimes—and a tambourine for the *Counterparts* tour. The diagram shows the *Roll the Bones* tour kit.

Through all the various equipment changes of the previous eighteen years, Neil’s cymbal setup had changed very little. He kept the same 22-inch Ping Ride until he left Zildjian. The other sizes and models also stayed remarkably consistent. It is interesting to note that Zildjian catalogs of the time listed all of Neil’s crashes as “Medium Thin,” however his current Sabian Paragon line is more of a “Medium” weight.



From the *Roll the Bones* tour book, Neil writes:

On the day we began setting up for the writing stage of *Roll the Bones*, I stood in the little studio and watched Larry putting my drums together. It occurred to me that I’d been using the same basic setup for years now, and maybe it was time for a rethink—time to make some changes, take some chances. Just putting the drums in different places might alter my approach to them, push me in some new directions.

So we started moving the toms around, putting the floor tom under my left hand, and shifting the others down one position, placing the 15" where the floor tom used to be, the 13" where the 15" used to be, and like that. This gave me some new rhythmic possibilities, new ways to construct fills, and even familiar patterns would sound different.

Also, I wanted to try using a single bass drum, with two pedals—to eliminate a big resonating chamber (the other bass drum) which I hardly ever used. I also decided to try a different size: 22" rather than 24".

So we did all that, and it was good...

My first set of Ludwigs had survived five years of hard labor: recording *Hold Your Fire*, *Presto*, and *Roll the Bones*, as well as two long tours which included the recording of *A Show of Hands*. They'd gone from pretty-in-pink to plum-crazy, and still sounded good, but maybe it was time to give them a rest. Time for a new kit.

And here it is: Ludwigs once again, in their "Blue Shadow" finish, with the brass-plating and "vibra-fibing" coordinated by The Percussion Center in Fort Wayne. Other than the above-named changes, the setup remains the same; Zildjian cymbals (but for the two Chinese Wuhan), Slingerland snare, assorted cowbells, and Tama gong bass drum. In the "back forty," we find the Ludwig 13" piccolo snare, 18" bass drum, plus ddrum pads, Shark pedals, and KAT MIDI-marimba triggering Akai samplers. Remo heads are punished by Pro-Mark "Signature" sticks. And that's what's new in the toy box—I mean *tool* box!



DRUM SETUP

Drums:

Ludwig Super Classic in Blue Shadow finish, with the inside of shells vibrafibed; brass-plated hardware

1. 14x24 bass drum
2. 5.5x14 "Old Faithful" Slingerland Artist snare drum
3. 5.5x6 tom
4. 5.5x8 tom
5. 8x10 tom
6. 8x12 tom
7. 9x13 tom
8. 16x16 floor tom
9. 14x22 Tama gong bass drum
10. 5x13 Ludwig piccolo snare drum
11. 14x18 bass drum
12. 12x15 floor tom
13. 3x14 Remo Legato piccolo snare

Cymbals:

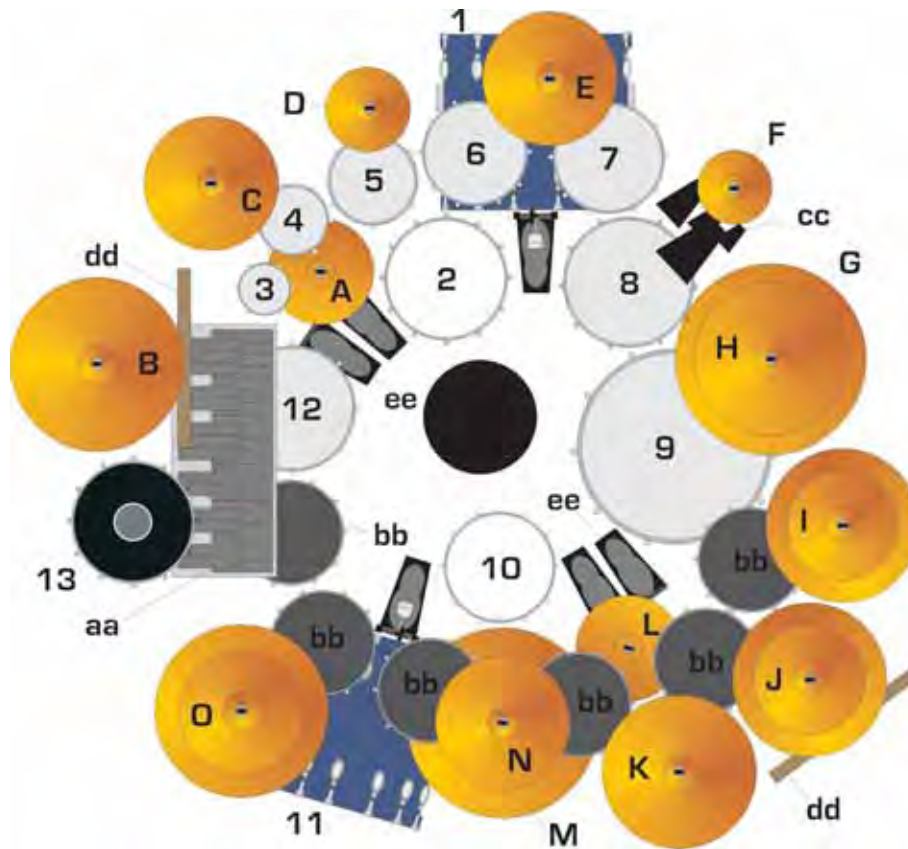
Zildjian (except Wuhan)

- A. 13" New Beat Hi-Hats
- B. 20" Medium Thin Crash
- C. 16" Medium Thin Crash
- D. 10" Splash
- E. 16" Medium Thin Crash
- F. 8" Splash
- G. 22" Ping Ride
- H. 18" Medium Thin Crash
- I. 18" Wuhan Chinese
- J. 18" Pang
- K. 18" Medium Thin Crash
- L. 13" New Beat Hi-Hats
- M. 22" Ping Ride
- N. 16" Medium Thin Crash
- O. 20" Wuhan Chinese

Percussion & Electronics:

- aa. MalletKAT electronic percussion controller
- bb. ddrum pad
- cc. cowbells
- dd. wind chimes/bar chimes
- ee. Shark pedals (trigger for electronics)

Additional Electronics:
Yamaha KX-76 MIDI controller
Akai 900 samplers





In terms of Rush's sound, *Roll the Bones*, released in 1992, picked up where *Presto* (1989) left off. On this record Neil's parts seemed to be chosen above all to fit the songs, and without much regard for flash, although there are some challenging parts on the album. The instrumental "Where's My Thing?" employed bombastic fills yet hinted at Neil's future fascination with jazz, and "Heresy" took rhythms Neil heard in West Africa and crafted them into an amazingly creative, musical, and fun drum part (one of my favorites, actually). *Roll the Bones* also contained three songs that would become staples of Rush's concert performances in the coming years: "Dreamline," "Roll the Bones," and "Bravado." In addition, "Ghost of a Chance" was a deep cut that was brought back for the second half of the *Snakes & Arrows* tour in 2008.

Although "Bravado" was ultimately struck from the setlist of the Time Machine tour, we had filmed a wonderful take of Neil rehearsing the song during our first shoot for *Taking Center Stage*, and felt that it should be included on the DVD, both because it is a favorite song of Neil's and because it has such an interesting drum part. It is included in the book for the same reasons, and because *Roll the Bones* is an important album that shouldn't be overlooked in any review of Rush and Neil's history.

"Bravado" builds dynamically from a simple and bare hi-hat groove to one of Neil's most complex multi-surface beats, using voices covering the entire lateral spread of the kit. This drum part is a wonderful example of how creative and active drumming can lift a song in an effective and musically appropriate way. One of the best things that can be said about Neil Peart's drumming is that his parts are inseparable from the songs they were written for. This is a high musical compliment.



ANALYSIS:

"Bravado" starts out innocently enough, using a straightforward two-hands-on-the-hi-hat rock groove, which breaks down into just hi-hat and bass drum at bar 17. Pay close attention to the dynamic shifts in this song; they are essential to getting the drum part to feel right and fit with the tune. At bar 19, Neil uses hi-hat accents and splash cymbal in a characteristically appropriate way to accent a vocal phrase.

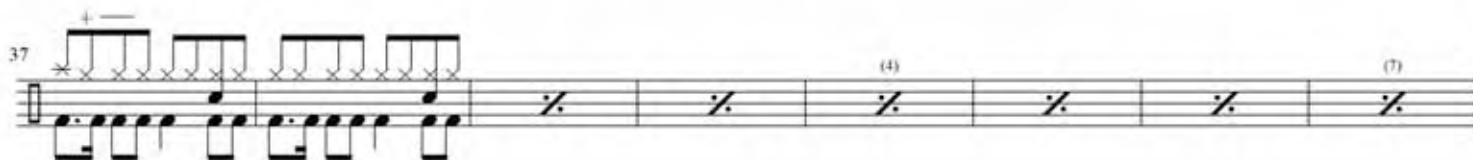
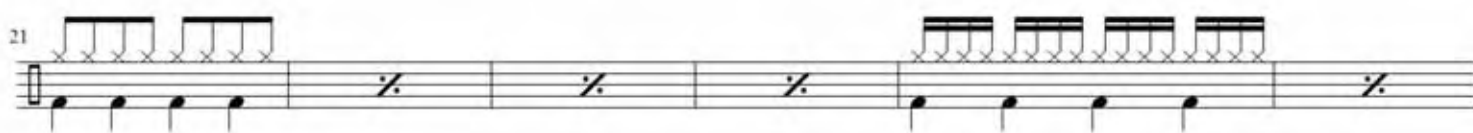
The groove at measure 37 is not terribly difficult to play, but is terrifically creative in its composition (try to think of another song that uses this beat!). This groove not only works perfectly for this section, but also sets up the introduction of the double floor toms at bar 45. In this groove, Neil's left hand plays the left floor tom and his right hand plays the right floor tom. This "bilateral tom" theme becomes a major feature of the drum part in this song, and is maintained even when Neil begins to introduce other voices and accents into the groove. Next, during the guitar solo (starting at bar 57), Neil places a simple yet memorable fill at the end of every two bars.

The climax of the drumming in "Bravado" occurs at measure 93, where Neil keeps the double floor tom theme going as his right hand moves to the ride-cymbal bell. The left hand continues to play the offbeats on the hi-hat, as well as the syncopated snare drum accents that occur in measures 95, 97, 102, and 104. The right hand plays between the ride bell and the snare drum (for the main backbeats), and this is all executed over a bass-drum pattern that essentially keeps the same figure from the previous section. The groove itself is very challenging, and the ability to be able to insert the fills and crash cymbal accents that occur throughout the part are even more difficult. When learning this groove, work it up to tempo and get comfortable with it before trying to add the fills and other details.

BRAVADO

♩ = 111

R L R L etc...

*f**mp**mf*

BRAVADO

45 *f*

52

56

60

64

68

72

80 *mp*

85

The musical score is written for piano and guitar. It consists of nine staves of music. The first staff (measures 45-49) begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and contains a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with 'x' marks above them, indicating a specific guitar technique. Measures 50-51 are marked with repeat signs. The second staff (measures 52-55) continues the rhythmic pattern. The third staff (measures 56-59) features a similar pattern with some accents. The fourth staff (measures 60-63) continues the pattern. The fifth staff (measures 64-67) includes a sixteenth-note triplet in measure 66. The sixth staff (measures 68-71) features accents and a tenuto mark. The seventh staff (measures 72-75) includes repeat signs and a dynamic change to mezzo-piano (*mp*). The eighth staff (measures 76-79) continues the pattern with accents. The ninth staff (measures 80-84) concludes the piece with a final rhythmic pattern and a decrescendo hairpin.