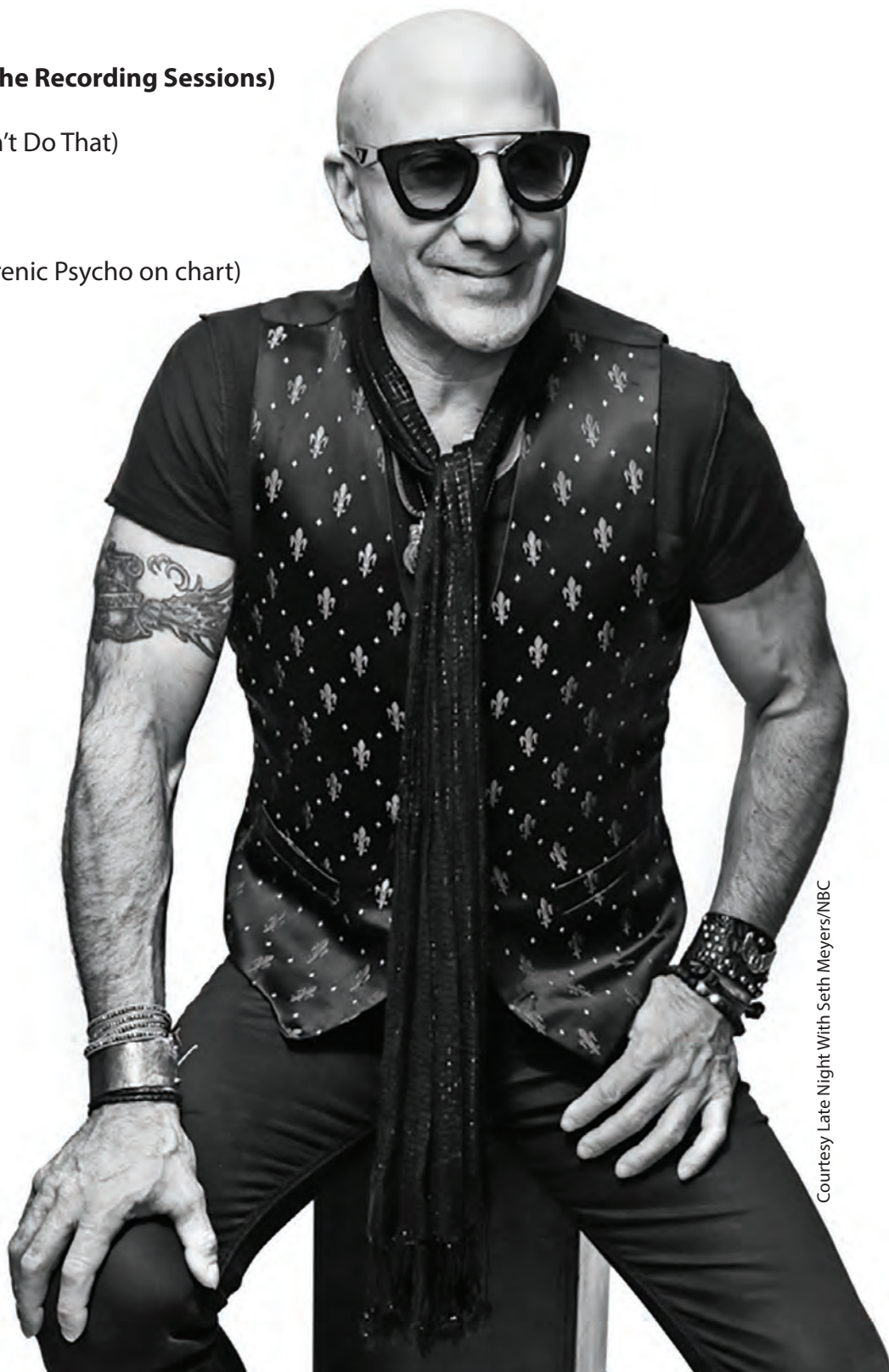


- CONTENTS -

3	Introduction
6	Kenny Aronoff It's Not About You
20	Equipment
24	Violin Concerto Marimba Performance Introduction & Rondo Capriccioso; OP 28 (1870) by Camille Saint Saëns
26	Looking Back
26	1983: Up and Coming
30	1986: <i>Modern Drummer</i> Cover Story
32	1991: The Passion of Kenny Aronoff
52	1997: Mr. Less is More is Everywhere
60	2017: <i>Modern Drummer</i> Cover Story
70	Kenny Aronoff's Steps for Success
72	Photo Gallery: Kenny and Friends
78	Kenny and Family
80	Kenny's Charts (Handwritten Original Charts from the Recording Sessions)
81	Straight No Chaser
82	I'd Do Anything for Love (But I Won't Do That)
83	Paper in Fire
85	Blaze of Glory
86	Relative
87	Psycho (originally called Schizophrenic Psycho on chart)
88	Try to Forget You
89	Fooled Around and Fell in Love
90	Part of Me, Part of You
91	You've Got to Love Someone
92	David Letterman Theme
93	I Could Have Been You
95	That Thing You Do
96	The Songs
98	Transcriptions
98	Kenny's Thoughts On...
99	Jack & Diane
101	Paper In Fire
104	Hurts So Good
106	Authority Song
108	Justice and Independence '85
110	I Could Have Been You
113	Blaze of Glory
115	I'd Do Anything for Love (But I Won't Do That)
117	Everywhere
120	Rattlesnake Highway
122	What You're Living For
124	Shake Your Bon Bon
125	My Happy Ending
127	Relative
129	Freewheelin'
131	Psycho
133	Sister Sara
135	Shapeshifting
137	Straight No Chaser
144	Kenny Aronoff Photo Gallery



- INTRODUCTION -

Hard work, self-discipline, perseverance, preparation, power, passion, excitement, energy, commitment. Those words come up quite often when you talk with Kenny Aronoff. Whether it's touring, recording, authoring books, teaching, or lecturing. Kenny only knows one gear. He is always in fifth gear going full speed ahead. The list of notable and legendary musicians that he has worked with is almost endless. But it's not just the A-list stars who get the Aronoff drum treatment, he also records drum tracks for a good deal of lesser-known musicians as well in his own Uncommon Studios in LA.

Kenny's career and past is covered quite thoroughly in his many past Modern Drummer feature interviews. It is there that you'll find details about how his career has evolved, who he has played with, and how he has adapted to the ever-changing music business. We have included them all here in his Legends book.

But for his brand new Legends interview, we asked Kenny to put it all together and look back on his career as a whole. He connected the dots on his evolution of becoming the hardest working man in the drum business. We not only get the answers to the "how" and the "who." But more importantly, we get Kenny's answers to the "what" and the "why."

When Kenny Aronoff talks about the history of crafting, creating, and recording drum parts for hit pop songs; It is akin to talking to Bill Gates about computer software or Tiger Woods talking about the history of golf. In Legends, Kenny breaks down his approach, and he walks you through some of the drumming details in the hit songs that he has recorded. And if that

isn't enough, we see the *actual charts* that he wrote for himself at the sessions, while he explains his own musical and drumming reference points that have helped him create these parts.

In the past, many articles have gotten inside Kenny's hands, but it's about more than just playing "the beats." We got inside Kenny's ears, mind, and heart. That is where you'll find the passion and the keys to what makes Kenny Aronoff tick, and what makes those beats become grooves.

In this book Kenny talks about his years as a student, his career as a sideman, creating a career as a session drummer, his role as "Kenny Kissinger" on sessions, his equipment, and the job of crafting drum parts for hit songs. You have the opportunity to read Kenny's own charts from the sessions, then you can compare them to the transcriptions of his parts, while following his tune-by-tune commentary of 19 tunes that span his entire career.

We have also included pictures from Kenny's own collection, and a download of a rare recording of Kenny playing a Marimba Concerto when he was in college. This performance completes the picture of this special musician.

There has never been such a complete examination into Kenny Aronoff's evolution as a drummer as the one that you are holding in your hands. His drumming has been an important part of modern pop music history. Now you can find out why!

Mark Griffith
Director of Content

A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER



Kenny Aronoff has a body of recorded and live playing that is second to none. He is one of the hardest working and most accomplished drummer/percussionist in the world having played with more world-class artists than we have space to list here. However, that alone, is only part of the reason that makes Kenny a Legend. The fact is that Kenny's contributions to education, his never-ending quest for learning and improving his approach to playing is truly unbelievable. There is so much to learn from Kenny's career and playing that all of us at Modern Drummer cannot wait for you to dive into this Legends book!

As significant as Kenny's musical contributions have been, Kenny is a true inspiration as a person and friend. His passion and energy are infectious! You are going to really enjoy reading Kenny Aronoff Legends as much as we did creating it!

David Frangioni
CEO/Publisher of Modern Drummer Publications, Inc.

KENNY ARONOFF

It's Not About You!

By Mark Griffith

If Kenny Aronoff wasn't a drummer he'd be either a hall of fame quarterback with a hand full of Super Bowl rings and setting records for later generations to break, or he'd be a CEO of a Fortune 500 company inspiring his employee's to run through walls for him, and working 20 hour days.

In reality, he is a first call session drummer making records and inspiring the musicians and producers around him to achieve their highest dreams and create hit records while working those same 20-hour days. To him it's all related. He's a workaholic and he has more energy than many small countries. His focus is laser-like, and his drive (like his musical

skills) knows no boundaries. His gigs, recordings, hits, awards, and tours are well known:

John Cougar Mellencamp, John Fogerty, Elton John, Mick Jagger, Jon Bon Jovi,

Sting, Rod Stewart, Melissa Etheridge, The Smashing Pumpkins, Johnny Cash, BB King. The list is endless, and they are well documented in the other parts of this book. And speaking of books, he is also the author of an outstanding book called *Sex, Drums, Rock and Roll: The Hardest Hitting Man in Show Business*. That book describes the details and evolution of his career and his unrelenting work ethic, and is one of the best musician autobiographies on the shelves today. My intention was to ask him about things that he has never been asked about, and didn't even talk about in his book.

With his book, and now with a full schedule of speaking engagements, Kenny's influence is starting to reach outside of the musical world. To anyone who knows Kenny, the world of inspirational speaking would seem like a logical next step. So today, at the end of 2020, when the world could really use some logic and inspiration, Kenny Aronoff offers just that.

MD: Have you always been this driven? It seems like you just never stop. You're on everybody's records from Iggy Pop to Celine Dion to Bob Dylan and everyone in between. You just wrote your first book, with another on the way, and I'm sure you have more frequent flyer miles than some world leaders.

Kenny: I have always put work first, I attack life like a Navy seal, if you want to win the game, you want me on your team. Period. In high school I was a jock, I was a good student, and

I was always rehearsing or performing with a band. So I learned what it meant to be a part of a team and I loved that. I also knew what it was to study hard, be self-disciplined, persevere, and be prepared. When I saw the Beatles on TV at age 10, I knew that was what I wanted to do with my life. It was at that very moment that I knew I wanted be a part of a team of musicians, a band that makes records and tours the world just like the Beatles.

MD: The Beatles are one of the (if not the) best *teams* ever.

Being a member of a band is a team sport that provides purpose and bliss.



Rick Malkin

Kenny: For me those three worlds have come together in my life, and that's how I have built my career. The drive and teamwork of an athlete, the hard work of a student, and the love and appreciation of ALL music. Being a member of a band is a team sport that provides purpose and bliss. Both purpose and bliss live in my heart; it's who I am. Playing music makes me feel good mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. At a very young age I realized my excitement and joyful energy made the guys in my bands feel great. When we performed we made the audience feel great, which made me feel even better. That's what drives me. So when I saw the Beatles perform on the Ed Sullivan Show, that was the exact moment that I realized my

building blocks in any successful career or life.

Work has always come before play. Many years ago, after I had finished the Smashing Pumpkins Adore tour, Billy Corgan asked me to record 2 songs on Tony Iommi's first solo record. The first day was a long 13-hour session and after the session Tony and me went to the Sunset Marquis hotel bar to have a few drinks. It was last call and as the bar was about to close. Meanwhile, an "A list" Hollywood actress began hitting on me. She threw her arms around me and sat on my lap, it seemed like she was on the prowl. *I knew what was happening.* However, I was scheduled to record the next morning with Billy and Tony at 10 am. Amazingly, and I know this is hard to believe, at the point where



Lou Countryman

purpose in life, before I even knew what those words meant.

When I was a kid, playing sports and playing the drums in a band made me feel good. It actually made me feel high. So I (like many kids) was drawn to that joy and that feeling. I still get that feeling from playing music, and I believe that sensation can get you through anything! The rewards of those feelings makes me committed to my life as a drummer. It's my foundation and having that foundation will help me (or anyone) get through any adversity that life can throw at you. That foundation is what helps us survive and persevere. These are the

this famous sex symbol was draped all over me, the only thing that I could think about was that I had a big session in the morning, and I didn't want to blow the session by staying up all night partying... So I split. I have always put my career first.

MD: Thinking about getting rest, and restraint in the music business, that's pretty uncommon. But the most extraordinary achievement in any career is to have longevity. Grammy's, gold, platinum and diamond records, chart success, that stuff comes and goes; but to stay in the game, and have long lasting success playing rock music... Not to mention in a business

that reinvents the rules every few years... That doesn't happen much at all, how have you done that?

Kenny: I have done that by working hard, being self-disciplined, and persevering every day; and by adapting, adjusting, and taking action, over and over again.

I got my big break in 1980 when I won an audition and joined the John Cougar (Mellencamp) band. I wasn't in his band from the very beginning, but as soon as he started making records that people liked, and that sold well, that's when I showed up. I spent 17 years recording and touring in that band. Everybody knows the story about the disappointment surrounding what was supposed to be my first recording session with John after only being in the band for five weeks. (It is explained extensively elsewhere in this book.) The crushing blow of being replaced on that record by two session drummers made me realize that it's not about me (the individual,) it's about we (the team,) and getting a song on the radio to become a #1 hit single. That experience helped me become who I am today. After being fired from that record I had to come up with a new plan (or business model), which was to be the best drummer and musician that I could be in the John Cougar Mellencamp Band. I had to learn how to serve John's style of music, the band, the producer, the engineer and most importantly... The song!! This experience helped me focus even harder to prepare for what the future might hold. So at the end of my 17 years with John I was prepared for my next step, which was to start doing sessions full time.

I am always looking forward. For the last few years of John's gig, I actually did both. I recorded on John's records and I did his tours, but I also started doing a lot of sessions on my days off. I eventually had drums in LA, Nashville, NYC, Germany, Japan and of course lots of drums in Bloomington, Indiana where I lived. When I left the Mellencamp Band, I had a reputation as John Cougar Mellencamp's drummer, but I was starting to build a reputation as a session drummer who could play all styles of music and someone who was available to join a band that tours. I became a free agent.

MD: There are many great drummers, who have had success playing in a band, and then the band breaks up, or their run of popularity ends, and you never hear from them again. The same can even be said about session musicians. Even session musicians can become a short

term "flavor of the year," and then someone else comes along, and you are pushed down the list. You have avoided both of those scenarios.

Kenny: In any career becoming successful is difficult but staying successful is even more difficult. "You can't set it and forget it". You have to continue to adapt, make adjustments and take action to stay successful in your life and career. That's one of the keys to longevity. The music business is one of the most difficult businesses in the world. I look at it like a math equation. $0 = 0$. If you do nothing, you get nothing. Adapt, adjust and take action.

In the blink of an eye the music business went from LP's to tapes to CD's to iPod's to downloads and now music is basically free. When record sales tanked, the budgets tanked as well. However, when there were budgets, record labels could afford to fly me all over the world to make records. It was fantastic! But the recording business went from big budgets, where bands could camp out in recording studios for weeks (and even months) at a time making their record. To now, where people are programming music, using drum loops, sequencing all the parts, using electronics and sampling, and doing it in smaller studios and world-class personal studios. The bottom line is I adapted and I took action every step along the way.

As a band member and a session drummer I make a living touring and recording records, and over the past four decades I recorded on over 300 million records sold. But when Covid appeared in early 2020, all the touring stopped. But thank God I had my own recording studio. I managed to continue doing sessions on a regular basis in my studio. I even did an episode of Sammy Hagar's *Rock 'n' Roll Road Trip* on AXS TV featuring badass guitarist Steve Lukather in my studio.

Then when all my corporate speaking events that my agent had booked for me got postponed or cancelled in 2020, I made adjustments and took action again. I created a set up in my studio which makes it possible for me to deliver my speeches live and virtually. I researched, made calls, asked questions, invested in equipment, studied, practiced and got better and better. Again, I made it happen.

MD: If you begin changing after the rules have changed you're too late.

In any career becoming successful is difficult but staying successful is even more difficult. "You can't set it and forget it". You have to continue to adapt, make adjustments and take action to stay successful in your life and career.