

Drum Tracks

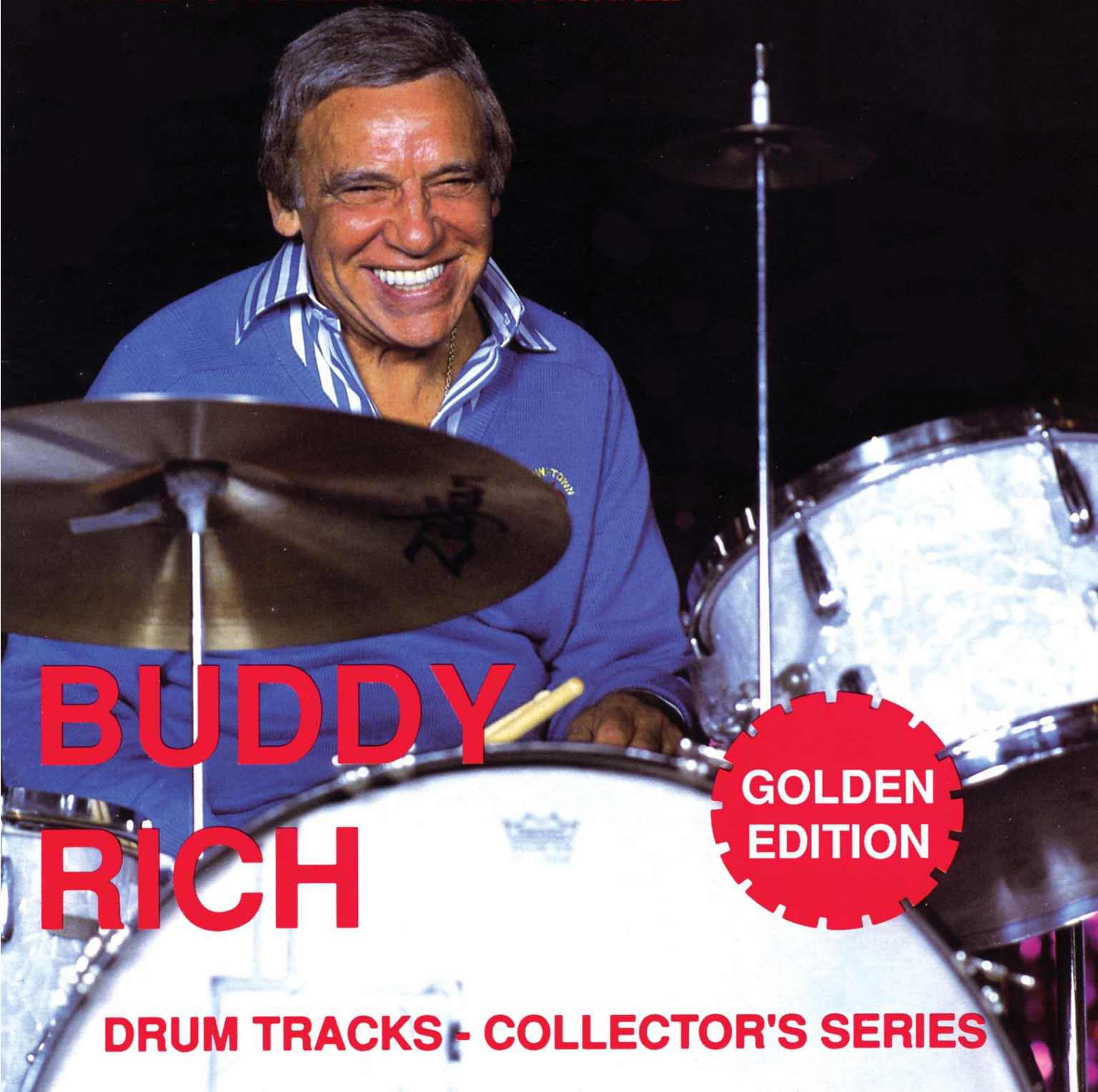
CONCEPTS FOR THE INNOVATIVE DRUMMER

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**BUDDY
RICH**

**GOLDEN
EDITION**

DRUM TRACKS - COLLECTOR'S SERIES

A Tribute To

Buddy Rich

From Louie Bellson



DB: How did you and Buddy Rich meet?

LB: I first met Buddy in 1942 at a time when I had not yet gone on the road. I heard he would be performing with Tommy Dorsey in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, about 100 miles from where I lived in Moline, Illinois. It was just a casual meeting but proved to be the beginning of a long and enduring friendship.

After graduating from high school in 1942, I joined Benny Goodman's Band and got to meet him again, this time in New York. He was playing with Tommy Dorsey. At that time we became very close friends. In fact, we were really more like family members, as we both knew each others families.

DB: How did Buddy influence you and vice versa?

LB: I think we were both influenced by drummers such as Jo Jones, Sid Catlett, Chick Webb and Gene Krupa because we felt those guys were the innovators. Being almost the same age as Buddy, I was also influenced by him because I always admired the fact that he gave 100% on the bandstand. He played with that tremendous drive whether he was playing with a big band or as a soloist.

DB: What kind of friendship did you have? Was it business, personal or both?

LB: Everything! I think the best way to illustrate it would be to take a quote that was used in one of my brochures. I had asked several people to write quotes for this brochure and was interested in seeing what Buddy would say. He said, "Everybody knows that Louie Bellson's playing is great but the important thing is, that in a business that is so nuts, we've remained friends all these years. That's the real accomplishment!"

DB: Whenever you guys played together, was it a real battle or were you just having fun?

LB: Well, it was a real battle even though we were friends. You know, when you play in competition, like in a basketball game, you've got to play to win. And, even though you're friends, you're each up there to do your best. But underneath it all, we really had fun. In fact, he often told me it was a joy to hear me play, and I told him the same thing.

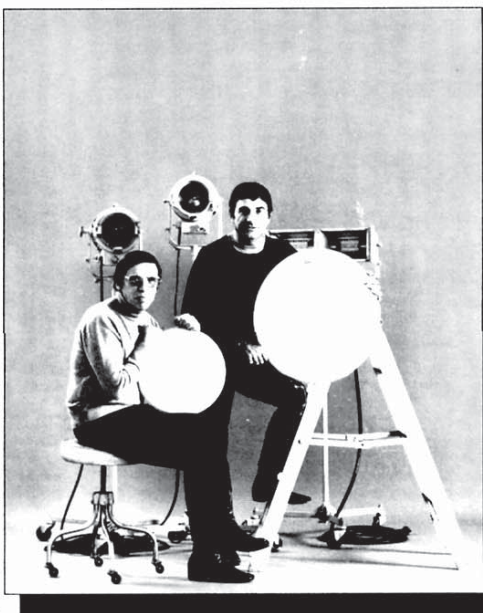
DB: In your opinion, what is the one thing that Buddy Rich will be remembered for the most?

LB: I think he'll be remembered for many things. Buddy was one of those people who had a lot of natural ability. In my mind, he was among that group of players including

Chick Webb, Baby Dodds, Jo Jones, Sid Catlett and Gene Krupa, who were all innovators but had a tremendous amount of natural ability. None of them ever took lessons, yet you'd put them in a band, they'd hear the arrangement once and own it! Players like that come around only every so often. As for Buddy, his ability was not only as a soloist, but he also had a great rhythmical sense and was a fine musician. He demanded the best and always held out for it.

In closing, I think that Johnny Carson and Alvin Stoller said it best. Johnny said, "The world has lost a genius and I lost a friend." Alvin said, "What that guy could do with a couple of pieces of wood was uncanny!" I think state-

ments like that really ring true for Buddy. And I know that 100 years from now, young drummers will see his videos and listen to his albums and be amazed. I'm sure he'll be remembered forever for his great contributions to drumming.



A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Louie Bellson".