

# Feature: Timpani

## Introduction by Rich Holly

At the past five or six PASIC's I have found myself in the same conversation each year with other performers and teachers: complaining about how very few of our students want to play timpani. Personally, I find a successful timpani performance to be one of the most gratifying musical experiences possible. Yet that same excitement unfortunately does not exist in many younger percussionists today. If you are one such student, I (and your teacher!) hope you will give some serious thought to practicing and performing more timpani.

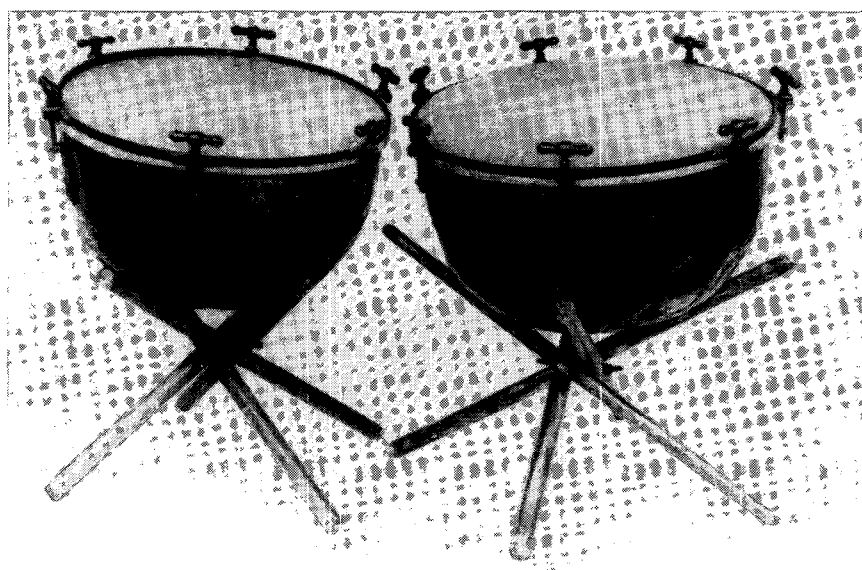
Consequently, it was a thrill for me to work on the timpani feature for this issue, because our authors all share this excitement about their drums. As most readers are aware, the professional timpanist must al-

ways be concerned with *sound*, both from what their technique enables them to do as well as what their instruments deliver. Timpani may be the only percussion instruments that can be compared to the wind and string instruments they so often support. Without precise tuning and intonation, coupled with a good sound, all the technique in the world means nothing.

In this issue, Michael Bayard's article on Gustav Holst's *The Planets* supplies us with not only his approach to the important excerpts of the work, but also a concept on how to musically and technically approach all your orchestral and band timpani performances. Gary Cook shares his fascinating experiences of traveling through Europe

searching for the premier calf-skin heads in his article. In addition to his escapades overseas, Gary brings home the point that purchasing top-quality calf heads is a serious problem. Unfortunately, because of prices and limited availability, this problem will most likely only get worse.

Our final article concerns a timpani recording that should be available as you read this. I remember the first time I heard Jonathan Haas perform - it was obvious he was a very fine timpanist. I then began to hear and read that he was pursuing a career as a *solo* timpanist. *A what?* Knowing the limitations of the solo literature, I could not imagine such a thing! But fortunately for us all, Jonathan's diligence and persistence are paying off in a renewed interest in some very interesting timpani works. His article includes some amusing stories surrounding his first solo recording. Yet more importantly it discusses some of the logistics involved in such an endeavor, and also gives us hope that these newly *rediscovered* works and others he is working on will also renew an interest in timpani performance.



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