

THE POLICE SYNCHRONICITY



SYNCHRONICITY

The final Police album was released in June 1983, and was a worldwide hit, selling over eight million copies, reaching #1 on the charts in the U.S. and U.K., and winning three Grammy awards. As with *Ghost in the Machine*, Hugh Padgham co-produced and engineered the album and it was recorded at AIR Studios in Montserrat, with Stewart in a separate room from the other band members. The rhythms on the album are a crystallization of the Arabian, reggae, punk and rock influences from the earlier albums with hints of other styles added to the mix. World music influences are present in “Tea in the Sahara” and “Walking in Your Footsteps,” while the two “Synchronicity” tracks rock hard while employing a buoyancy created by Stewart’s use of syncopation and the internal dynamics of his drumming. “Every Breath You Take” and “King of Pain” are master classes in pop songwriting, and “Murder by Numbers” has a 12/8 feel that has elements of jazz and blues.

Although the drums were recorded in the same room with the same method as *Ghost in the Machine*, the final tracks sound slightly different in tone. “After we finished *Synchronicity*, we went to mix it in Montreal,” says Stewart. “The guys there said, ‘There’s this new technology... check this out!’ and they ran our mix through PCM technology, which had just been invented, digitizing it. We thought, ‘Wow, you can hear the space in between everything!’ But what we now know is that it lost a lot of wave form. It created space but lost texture. (At the time) my buddy

Jeff Lynne was the lone voice raging against digitization.”

The only Police songs recorded to an external tempo, according to Stewart, were “Synchronicity I” (which uses a sequenced keyboard part) and “Every Breath You Take,” which was done to a click and had all the drums overdubbed. For that track, according to Jeff Seitz, the bass drum is an Oberheim drum machine kick, the backbeats are overdubbed with snare and gong drum together, and then the hi-hat and crash cymbals were also overdubbed separately. “‘Every Breath You Take’ was one of the songs that was very different in the process from everything else,” says Stewart. “We tried a lot of different versions. The demo tape was a Hammond organ and vocals, which is obviously not much fun for Andy, so he worked out that arpeggiated guitar pattern from the Hammond. That’s something Andy was very good at: achieving harmony, and his voicing is a big part of our sound. All the drums were recorded disparately. We started with an Oberheim drum box, and the part was so solid and fit perfectly—I would never have had the discipline to play that; it’s hard enough live. We fought over the hi-hat: Sting wanted to use the Oberheim, but I had recorded my own (acoustic) hi-hat. I came back the next day and Sting had erased it and put the Oberheim back. On the record, Sting might think it’s the Oberheim, but I have the multi-track. It’s my hi-hat! The backbeat was a gong drum and a snare drum, with a gong drum crescendo into the chorus and a cymbal roll. I think

there was also an overdubbed ride cymbal bell. It was one of the few times I got to play with overdubs like everyone else!”

Regarding the function of Hugh Padgham and Nigel Gray, Stewart relates that neither producer had any input as to the actual parts that were being played; their focus as producers for The Police was to capture the sounds and performances, and to have (as Stewart put it) a good “bedside manner” to keep the band members working together with a minimum of tension.

By the time of the *Synchronicity* tour, The Police were the biggest band in the world. Jeff Seitz has fond memories. “It was a buzz, like a rocket ride. There was non-stop action, setting up, getting the show running, and then 25,000 or 30,000 people in an arena or stadium. We were self-contained, there were three crew members plus the monitor guy, front of house guy, and lighting guy.” Did Stewart feel more pressure as the band played for bigger and bigger audiences? “No, it got easier and easier,” he says. “Playing an arena or stadium is easier than playing your best friend’s wedding. When you walk into an arena or Shea Stadium and there are thousands of people there cheering, they already love you. They’re there to drink in the godhead. At the wedding, every one of your human imperfections is there on display, and the worship of the godhead is not there to protect you. That small-level occasion is much more stressful than a huge concert.”

WRAPPED AROUND YOUR FINGER

This song had a music video that was in constant rotation on MTV in 1983-84, exposing thousands of drummers to Stewart's playing and his octoban-accessorized kit. The song has an interesting approach to the groove, where for most of the song, there is only a backbeat on 4 (with 2 omitted). In the verses, this backbeat is a cross-stick, and the 1 is omitted on the bass drum. When coupled with Stewart's hi-hat artistry, this groove references the one-drop while putting it more in the realm of rock drumming. For the choruses, the backbeat on 4 moves to the open snare drum, and the 1 is played on the kick. While this groove isn't a baladi rhythm per se, the melody of the song and the choice of drum part does have hints of Arabic music.

Along with the basic groove construction, there are lots of interesting little embellishments all throughout the track. Stewart incorporates his splash cymbals, icebell, and motifs on the toms in various places. The fill leading back to the verse (measure 59) ascends the toms and ends on a splash, with the bass drum downbeat omitted. This approach appears in reggae and Arabic music, where embellishments end before the downbeat of the next bar, and Stewart's personal amalgamation of these styles uses this concept freely. Halfway through the fourth verse (measure 110), Stewart raises the energy and drive by shifting to a full 2-and-4 backbeat, which is maintained until the outro of the song. The incredibly crisp and clear recording and mixing of this track enable us to enjoy the depth of detail in the drumming.

"This was (a song) that in the take, I didn't really know what I was doing. I hadn't really grasped the rhythm of the track; I didn't really understand where the changes were; I didn't like the lyrics. I love all the songs, but this one would be at the bottom of my list—I just didn't get it. I enjoyed it live because I had my whole percussion rig with timpani and everything; it was glorious. You can go on YouTube and see the 'Stew cam' from the reunion tour, and it's just all my shit for the whole song. I had the timpani going, the xylophone, the crotales, and all this cool shit happening. The other guys had no idea what was going on behind them."

WRAPPED AROUND YOUR FINGER

♩ = 126-130

Cup Chime

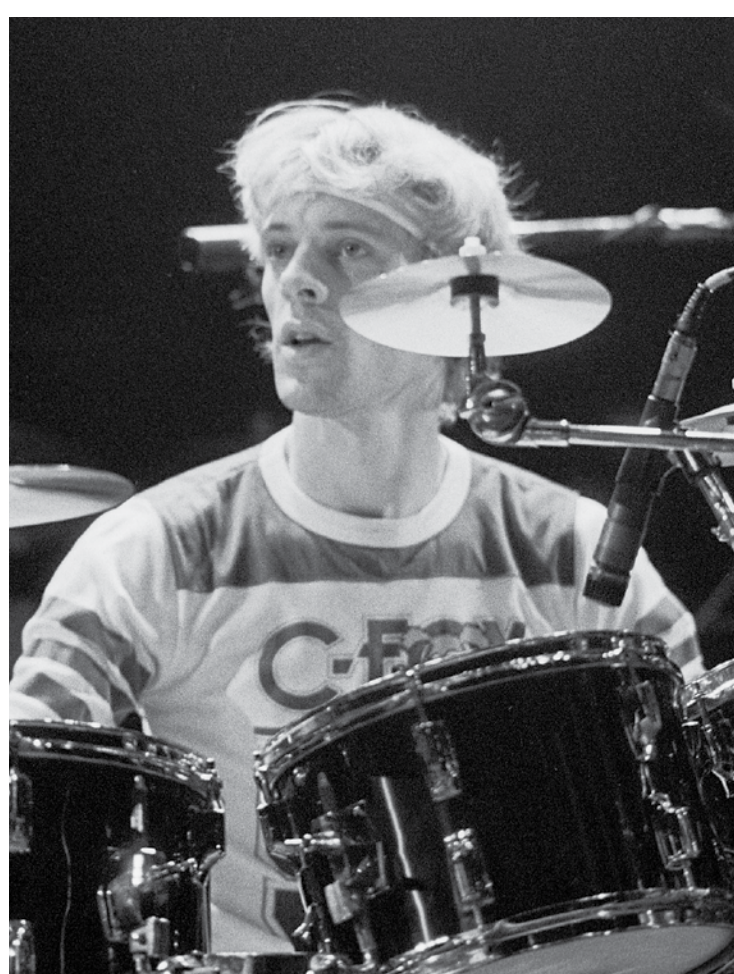
Musical notation for the 'Cup Chime' section, measures 1 through 14. The notation is written on a single staff in 4/4 time. It features a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, with various articulations including accents (>), slurs, and dynamic markings like *mp*. Measure 1 starts with a half rest followed by a quarter note. Measures 2-4 contain complex rhythmic patterns with many beamed notes. Measure 5 has a double bar line. Measures 6-14 continue the rhythmic patterns with various articulations and a final double bar line at the end.

Verse 1

Musical notation for Verse 1, measures 18 through 33. The notation continues on a single staff in 4/4 time. It features similar rhythmic patterns to the 'Cup Chime' section, with beamed eighth and sixteenth notes, accents, and slurs. Measure 18 starts with a double bar line and a *mp* marking. Measures 19-33 contain complex rhythmic patterns with various articulations and a final double bar line at the end.

Verse 2

Musical notation for Verse 2, measures 34 through 37. The notation continues on a single staff in 4/4 time. It features similar rhythmic patterns to the previous sections, with beamed eighth and sixteenth notes, accents, and slurs. Measure 34 starts with a double bar line. Measures 35-37 contain complex rhythmic patterns with various articulations and a final double bar line at the end.



Clockwise from top: July 23, 1983: *Synchronicity* tour, Comiskey Park, Chicago, Illinois (Photo by Paul Natkin). February 19, 1984: Rosemont Horizon, Rosemont, Illinois (Photo by Paul Natkin). 1983: *Synchronicity* tour (Photo by Danny Quatrochi).



Stewart's setup March 23, 1982: *Ghost in the Machine* tour. Courtesy of Jeff Seitz.

out. It's unclear when exactly he added them to his kit, but it was certainly sometime during the recording of *Reggatta de Blanc*. Tama sent Stewart a set of 8 octobans, which can be seen in photos of a gig at the London Lyceum on June 17, 1979, and in the "Message in a Bottle" video, but soon he settled on using four of them in his trademark "straight line" arrangement above his hi-hat. Stewart also made use of another Tama original instrument, the gong bass drum, but only as an overdub in the studio, never in his main kit. (The backbeats of "Every Breath You Take" were overdubbed with Stewart playing one hand on his snare and one on the gong drum, according to Seitz.) For live shows, the gong drum is incorporated into his percussion setup, separate from the kit.

The iconic snare drum that produced the classic sound that became Stewart's sonic fingerprint was a Pearl. Stewart isn't sure when he acquired the drum. "It is unknown when that drum came into my kit. Why would I have had a Pearl snare drum?" Jeff Seitz, after doing some research, has concluded it was acquired in the summer of 1979. There were actually two Pearl drums: one chrome over brass, and one chrome over steel. At first the drums were used interchangeably. It wasn't until the *Synchronicity* tour that the sound engineer picked the chrome-over-brass as "the one" with a brighter crack and larger decibel range. On the album recordings, Seitz believes both drums are heard on different tracks. Stewart cracked the original flanged batter hoops on the drums, so Jeff replaced them with die-cast Tama hoops.



Top: Pearl catalog photo showing snare drum model used by Stewart (Courtesy of Jeff Seitz).

Bottom: "The Snare": Stewart's Pearl snare, photographed at Sacred Grove by Dietmar Clös.

The snare drum batter head was tuned extremely tightly, with the bottom head tuned “normal tight,” according to Seitz. The tom tom-heads were rarely changed, says Seitz. “For one thing, Stewart wasn’t a big tom-tom player. And the heads sounded good. They were Remo Emperors, and they took the beating. I probably would have gotten more attack out of them if I had changed them more, but they sounded good.”

On The Police reunion tour, Stewart used a brand new Tama Starclassic Maple kit with his Tama Signature Palette snare drum. The snare was matched by Tama’s designers to sound like his original Pearl drum. Live recordings from that tour reveal the signature drum to sound nearly exactly like the original. Stewart reports it to feel the same as well, with the same snare response at all dynamic levels.

Stewart has also used all Tama hardware for many years. After seeing Slipknot in concert in 2000, he began using a double pedal. Interestingly, he places the slave pedal on the outside of the hi-hat pedal.

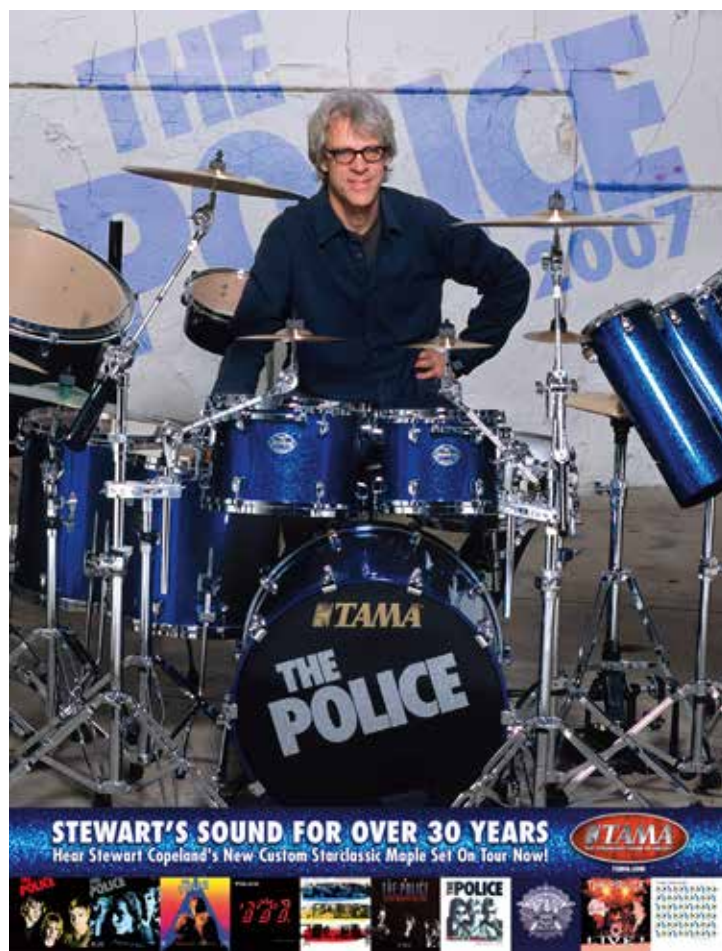
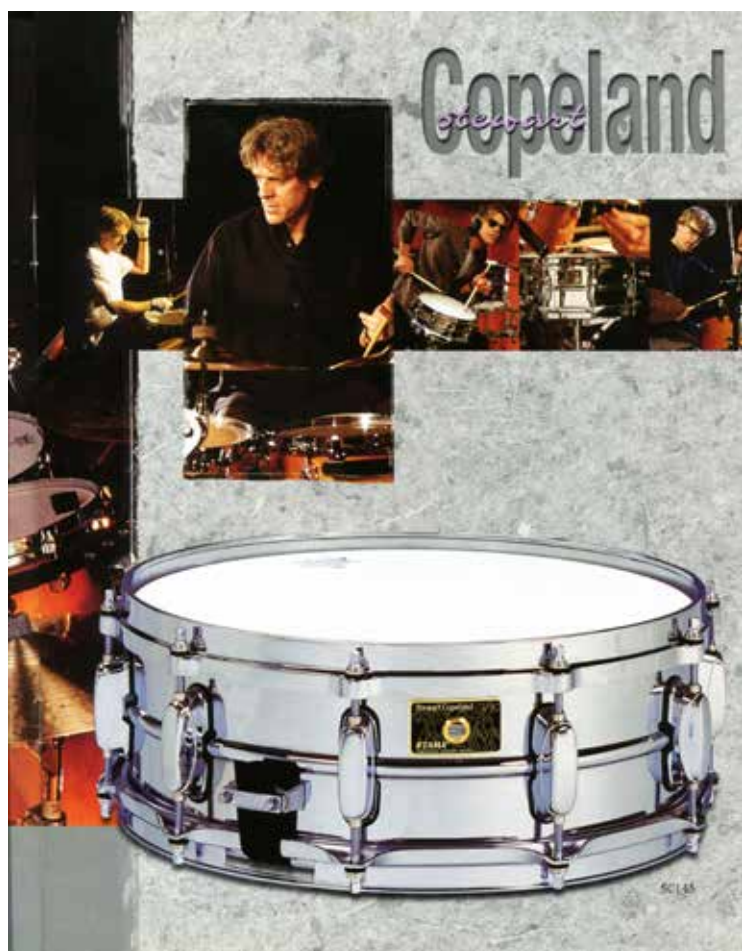
CYMBALS

Stewart began officially endorsing Paiste cymbals in March

1981 (according to the Paiste website), having begun playing them during the *Zenyatta Mondatta* tour. He can be seen using Zildjian cymbals in earlier photos. Stewart’s cymbal setup was fairly consistent in terms of placement, although he has used different models of cymbals over the years. Known for his use of splash cymbals, he has had two of them in his setup starting with *Reggatta de Blanc*. Stewart’s hi-hat work is the stuff of drum legend, and he favored Paiste 602 13" hi-hats once he signed with Paiste in 1981. His ride cymbal was a 24" Paiste RUDE Ride/Crash, and his crashes varied a little from tour to tour. In a 1982 *Modern Drummer* interview, Jeff Seitz cites the crashes as two 16" and two 18" RUDE Ride/Crashes, but Stewart would opt for thinner models in the studio (often 2002 or Formula 602 crashes). A Paiste 8" Bell and a UFIP Ictus 8" bell cymbal were also mainstays in his setup and appear prominently on several of the songs transcribed in this book.

A Paiste “Profiles” book of 1981, provided by Erik Paiste through Jeff Seitz, lists the following models as Stewart’s setup:

- 13" Formula 602 Medium Hi-Hat

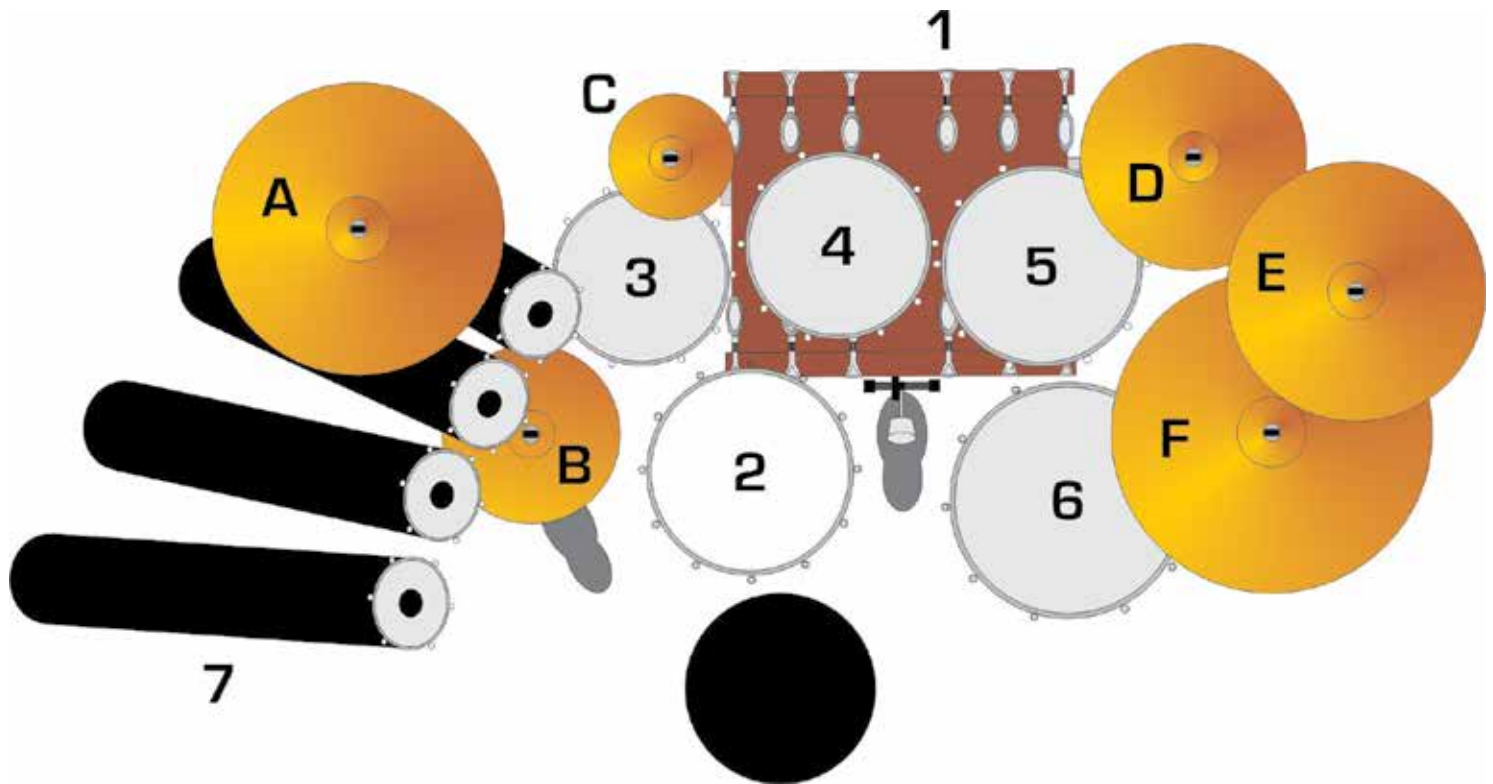


Left: Tama catalog image with Stewart Copeland Signature Snare (Courtesy of Tama Drums).

Right: Tama magazine ad featuring Tama Starclassic Maple kit made for The Police reunion tour (Courtesy Tama Drums).

ZENYATTA MONDATTA

RECORDING SETUP (1980)



DRUMS

Tama Superstar, mahogany finish

1. 14x22 bass drum
2. 5x14 Pearl snare (B4514 chrome over brass)
3. 8x10 tom
4. 8x12 tom
5. 9x13 tom
6. 16x16 floor tom
7. Octobans – low-pitched set of 4

CYMBALS

Zildjian (for recording of album)

- A. 18" Thin Crash
- B. 14" New Beat Hi-Hats
- C. 8" Splash
- D. 16" Thin Crash
- E. 18" Thin Crash
- F. 22" Ping Ride

NOTES

The Tama Superstar kit used for the recording of *Zenyatta Mondatta* was soon retired, as Tama sent a new Imperialstar kit that Stewart preferred. By the time of the *Zenyatta* tour, the Pearl snare had made its way into Stewart's setup, and the cymbal setup was expanded. It

was at this time that Stewart began to check out Paiste cymbals, soon to become an endorser. The bass drum and a Remo roto-tom were fitted with triggers that fed a Tama Snyder DS-200 drum synthesizer for live shows. This kit is now owned by Jeff Seitz.