

## AC/DC'S DICK JONES & PHIL RUDD ...ON THE ROAD FOR 30 YEARS

by Rich Mangicaro

For many of us, it's hard to imagine doing one job for 30 years. Imagine if that job kept you on the road, all the time and each night, you were tested. If your job performance wasn't perfect, the consequences could be huge. That's the job of a professional, Big Arena Rock drum tech. There's no foolin' around with this gig. You gotta be on, 100% of the time and to do it right, you really have to love your work. Thus is the case with Dick Jones. For the past 30 years, Dick has been Phil Rudd's right-hand man. As the drum tech for Mega-Rock's superstars AC/DC, you just have to wonder what it's like? We decided to find out and ask the man himself. And for this long tenure with one of Rock's greatest bands, Paiste has been along for the ride all the way.

**Rich Mangicaro:** Dick, the last time you & worked together for Phil's needs, he was using Signatures, I believe. He's now gone back to using 2002's, like the old days. Tell me about this change?

**Dick Jones:** When we did the new recording, he had cymbals sent out and he specified that he wanted to try 2002 again. They worked out so well for what they were doing that he decided to stay with them for the tour. Phil feels he's identifiable with the 2002 sound, just as much as he is with his Sonor drums. He's always open to trying new things but feels comfortable with these sounds for what he's doing now.

**RM:** What difference, if any, have you noticed or has Phil noticed when you made the change back to the familiar cymbals of his past?

**DJ:** It's difficult to say really...I think he thinks the other lines are great but as soon as he put the 2002's back up, we've never gone back. Phil uses all 19" and 20" crashes with 14" hats and since we've gone back to the 2002s, everyone's happy. They just work so well for this music, they're durable and just do the job. We did a photo shoot before the tour and there's a nice overhead shot of his kit, up on Paiste's website that shows the cymbals really well.

**RM:** Dick, how and when did you and Phil meet?

**DJ:** I got the job in 1980. I just finished working with Jethro Tull as the assistant to the monitor engineer, funny enough. I was looking for a drum tech job and



bumped into Jake Berry who was the Production Manager for AC/DC. He told me they were looking for a drum tech and I was one of 3 guys they considered. I ended up getting the job and they told me they would try me out for 3 months and if I worked out all right, we would then talk about more work. That was 30 years ago.

**RM: That's got to be a record, working with one band for that long!**

DJ: Rich, I consider myself very lucky and it's been a dream for me, really. The guys in the band are such gentlemen...every one of them. I can't remember how many shows I've done with them, but with every show, they have always put in 100% - every show. They truly love what they do and considering their consistent success, there's the proof.

**RM: What would you say are the most important factors about your job?**

DJ: You have to have a real passion for what you do. You have to greatly respect the artist you're working for. I have a set routine that I follow every day and by maintaining that routine, I cover all the areas I need to cover. I make sure when Phil sits down on the kit, that it's exactly the same every night, so he's immediately comfortable. I try to learn something new every day, to keep it fresh, but the thing that keeps me going is the passion...I truly love what I do.

**RM: What's the most difficult aspect of your work?**

DJ: The nerves. Every evening before the show, we do a line check, about 15 minutes before the boys come up on stage. You see, the Band don't do sound checks very often. The back line crew do a simulated sound check in the afternoon for our sound and monitor engineers. So, during that 15 minutes, my stomach quivers a bit and my heart rate increases... just because I want it to be right. It's been this way for every single show I've done with them. That's the hardest thing I have to deal with. All of us in the crew take this very seriously and we all find our place in our heads before a show, to get prepared. And, it gets heightened when we play the bigger cities. After a great show, the sense of relief we feel when nothing's gone wrong and everyone's happy is just fantastic.

**RM: What's the strangest, funniest or scariest thing that has ever happened, during a show, that you had to fix/correct?**

DJ: I've been thinking about that. You know, I sit right behind Cliff's bass cabinet and it's like sitting on the



tarmac next to a jet engine, so it's sometimes difficult to communicate with Phil. I end up lip-reading when he tries to tell me something and that's difficult because he's quite often smoking a cigarette! Regarding something scary, the one thing as a tech we all dread is if the bass drum head goes, but luckily that's never happened to me, with Phil. I did happen once, with another drummer I was working with, but I managed to change it within a minute or two, with the help of the monitor guy.

**RM: Do you have any secrets or tips that you could share with other drummers?**



DJ: You gotta be confident and you gotta enjoy what you're doing. At the end of the day, you're there to entertain people so you gotta be prepared and know what you're doing. One other thing I guess I would say is don't eat any Indian food before a show! That in itself could lead to a few problems, least of which would be changing a bass drum head. Most importantly, have a passion for what you're doing.

### **Phil Rudd's „Black Iced“ Touring Cymbal Set:** (from left to right)

14" 2002 Medium Hi-Hat  
 20" 2002 Crash  
 19" 2002 Crash  
 20" 2002 Crash  
 20" 2002 Crash  
 19" 2002 Crash  
 19" 2002 Crash  
 19" 2002 Crash