

# 'Tonight' star comes to area

## 'Gimme a little drum roll, Ed'

By CRAIG PIECHURA

You've all heard the "Tonight Show" drummer punctuate an obvious punch line with a rim shot or a rap on the cow bell, right?

Or, a dizzy startlet with only two visible attributes might stroll across the stage to a "boom-chukka-boom, chukka-boom-boom-boom" assessment of her talents.

The man responsible for that rude rhythm is Ed Shaughnessy, staff drummer on Johnny Carson's late-night talk show for the past 14 years. And what does he get for it? Fruits from Don Rickles and a comfortable home in Woodland Hills, Calif.

Shaughnessy brought his drumsticks to Canton Township Friday afternoon for a free drum clinic at Arnold Williams' Music.

Although he's proudest of his work with the likes of Count Basie, Tony Bennett, Peggy Lee and Duke Ellington, Shaughnessy is more familiar to viewers for adding a "cha-chink-boom" to Johnny's one-liners.

"The funniest incidents usually happen when Don Rickles is on the show," Shaughnessy explains.

"He'll make a comment about the Irish and do a little jig and we'll join in. Of course, that brings a barrage of insults to the band."

"RICKLES MIGHT turn to me and say 'That's Abe Lincoln's son over

there—Abe let him out of the log cabin tonight"—referring to my sideburns.

"Or the other night I added a little 'cha-chink-boom' during Johnny's monologue and he turned to me and said, 'Where does it say in the script, 'Drummer makes funny noise'?"

"So I hold up a blank piece of paper and say, 'Right here.'"

But Ed Shaughnessy isn't in the music business for laughs or the occasional on-air appearances.

He's there because he knows how to play any type of music and is considered one of the best big-band drummers in the business.

He made a Michigan tour last week as representative for a drum company. John Williams, vice-president of the music store, contacted the musician's union and the local studios to let drummers know Shaughnessy was coming.

And there was a good turnout Friday afternoon among members of the percussion fraternity. Shaughnessy didn't dazzle the crowd with a 20-minute drum solo, he taught the drummers technique and style.

"I try to answer specific questions from drummers," he said. "Let's say a person is having a problem with a weak left hand; that's a common problem because your right hand is stronger and quicker, I'd tell them to practice one right and three lefts (raps once, then three times) a thousand times each day. It works wonders."

SHAUGHNESSY DIDN'T audition for the Tonight Show, he was asked to join. First he declined, figuring studio work was a good living and all he could handle. He gave it a try, though, 14 years ago, and has been at it since—undoubtedly appearing on the Tonight Show more than its often-absent host.

He still manages to do some recording—with artists such as jazz singer Tony Bennett and soft-rock Steven Bishop. This May, Shaughnessy will release a record of his own under the moniker, "Ed Shaughnessy's Energy Force."

The big band record will be cut live in the studio using a process called "direct-to-disc." In this process, records are cut as they're being recorded. Sound quality is improved because the records are "original" recordings, not a duplication from a master disc. There is no dubbing over or "layering" of tracks.

"Some of the guys in the band are a little intimidated by the process," Shaughnessy said. "They asked, 'What if I make a clam (sour note)'?"

"It all goes down on the disc, just like a concert. I told 'em. It's your ass."

THIS METHOD of recording, Shaughnessy feels, captures the impact and spark of a full band because everyone is playing off each

other and with each other.

"For a musician, it is no fun to do a layered recording where I go in first and lay down the rhythm section. They get that finished and the next day they bring in a bass part and the guys have to listen to our tracks on headphones. Maybe the third day they bring in the saxophone and strings. It never has the impact of a band playing together. It doesn't have the same spark. But it's a producer's dream."

More musicians are getting away from this sterile-technological type of production, Shaughnessy says.

Asked what kind of music he plays at home, Shaughnessy said that, for professional reasons he tries to keep up with Top 40 because, undoubtedly, artists will do current numbers when they appear on the show. A case in point is the innumerable versions of "I'm a Rhinestone Cowboy" performed on the Tonight Show.

But, aside from the time-tested pros like Peggy Lee, Duke Ellington, Tony Bennett and Count Basie, Shaughnessy said he listens to progressive jazz artists such as Chick Corea and Herbie Hancock at home.

"But I don't like to narrow down my taste. I listen to everything, Indian music (tabla and sitar) is a personal favorite of mine."

With that comment, Shaughnessy took a brown Sherman's cigarette out of his brown leather jacket and went back to the drums to play some blues.



Drummer in the NBC "Tonight Show" orchestra, Ed Shaughnessy showed his licks in Canton Friday afternoon. (Staff photo by Gary Caskey)

### Two sing with Albion

Two Farmington voices will be heard among the 72-voice Albion College Choir during its six-week sixth annual spring tour.

Catherine Bennett, soprano, daughter of the Rev. and Mrs. Gerald L. Bennett, 21205 Robinwood, Farmington, and Mark Ziemba, bass, son of Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Ziemba, 20036 Ravenscroft, Farmington Hills will participate in the tour.

The choir, under the direction of music department chairman

Melvin S. Larimer, will be touring Chicago, Cleveland and around the Detroit area.

### All for mom

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