

**THE ROLLING STONES.** In 1964 - when I was seventeen years old - my parents sent me on a study tour to London; my school-English was so bad, my teacher used to yell at me, "Burmeister, you'll never in your life speak a word of English!" So off I went; and I had a task: I was playing in a school band and we covered hit parade songs - my task was to bring back the latest Beatles record. That day the guy in the record shop did something to me: "The Beatles, sure - but listen to this..." He put on the first Rolling Stones album - and *Route 66*, *Carol*, *Can I get a Witness*, *Now I've got a Witness*, *Walking the Dog* were the first songs of what would come to be the soundtrack to my life; though I soon traded my drum kit for a camera. The Stones: The blues, the rock, the country, the soul, the thrill. That honky-tonk voice; those biting, insane guitar riffs; the cool, inspired drum beats. Mick, Keith 'n Ronnie (& Brian, Bill, Mick), inimitable Charlie; only Bob, Jimi, Miles, Ludwig v. compare ... *but they're dead.*

*"Charlie's always there, but he doesn't want to let everybody know. There's very few drummers like that. Everybody thinks Mick and Keith are the Rolling Stones. If Charlie wasn't doing what he's doing on drums ... you'd find out that Charlie Watts IS the Stones."* Keith Richards, 1979

*"Charlie is incredibly honest, brutally honest. Lying bores him. He just sees right through you to start with. And he's not even that interested in knowing, he just does. That's Charlie Watts. He just knows you immediately. If he likes you, he'll tell you things, give you things, and you'll leave feeling like you've been talking to Jesus Christ. They say he's a dying breed, but with people like Charlie, they must have always been rare. Genuinely eccentric in the sense of having his own way of doing things. Just to put it on a very physical plane: At the end of the show, we'll leave the stage, and the sirens will be going, limousines waiting,*

*but Charlie will walk back to his drum kit and change the position of his drum sticks by two millimetres. He has this preoccupation with aesthetics, this vision of how things should be that nobody will ever know about, except Charlie. The drums are about to be stripped down and put in the back of a truck, and he CANNOT leave if he's got it in his mind that he's left his sticks in a displeasing way. It's so Zen. So you see what I mean about who the hell can I possibly play with after this guy with such a sense of space and touch. The only word for Charlie is ... DEEP."* Keith Richards, 1988  
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*Once, while on tour, a drunk Jagger phoned Watts in the middle of the night and asked, "where's my drummer?" Charlie got up, shaved, dressed in a suit, put on a tie and freshly shined shoes, descended down the stairs and punched Mick in the face, saying: "Don't you ever call me 'my drummer' again; you're my fucking singer!"*