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 Bryan, Texas
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 (1) Students NEW to A&M, Thursdays, 3-4:30.
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 Call 845-4427 to reserve a place.

Drummer well-known now, but likes low-profile life

United Press International
 CHICAGO — In a business that regularly toots its own horn a lot more than the horn deserves tooting, Ralph MacDonald is a rare unsung hero.
 You probably don't recognize his name. But it's estimated that if you listen to popular music of any kind — on records, on radio, even on TV commercials — you'll hear MacDonald about once every two hours, all day long.

MacDonald, 32, has been called the "invisible man" behind the Grammy awards. He played on 16 of the recordings nominated for Grammys this year — and was on three of the winners, including George Benson's smash hit pop-jazz album, "Breezin'," which picked up three awards all by itself.
 MacDonald is a percussionist, perhaps the most versatile percussionist in the world today. He has

worked with pop singers and jazz artists of every stripe, from Paul Simon and Bette Midler to jazzman Yusef Lateef and soul queen Aretha Franklin. He spends a good deal of his time jetting from coast to coast for recording sessions and he recently released his own first solo album, "The Sound of a Drum."
 MacDonald is also a major songwriter, composer of many hit tunes, including "Where Is The Love," first recorded by Roberta Flack and since covered by more than 125 other artists in 19 languages. If he didn't work another day, MacDonald's successful music publishing company would guarantee him more than comfortable living.

Until recently, nobody outside the music business knew his name, but that is finally beginning to change. The soft-spoken MacDonald allows as how it doesn't matter much to him, either way.

"I'm used to being in the background," he said. "Now, slowly but surely, it's starting to come out, to be known to the public that I'm on all those recordings. But it never did bother me. I like a low-key, low-profile life anyway."

As a musical double-threat man in areas — percussion and songwriting — not ordinarily associated with one another, MacDonald has encountered the "invisible man" problem even among those inside the usually with-it music business.

The son of MacBeth the Great, a calypso bandleader from Trinidad, MacDonald grew up in Harlem and began playing congas and other drums (he doesn't use a trap set, the common snare and cymbal collection at all) at the proverbial early age. When he was just four, his father carried him to band dates all over Brooklyn and Queens, set him up behind his drums and let him pound away until he fell asleep.

"I came right into show business with a top act when I was just 17. I didn't have to go through the dive clubs and the sad hotels and all that. So I learned the business correctly, without people saying, 'You got to go out and do it all the hard way.' I paid all the dues — but at least I got a degree from it."

for Father's Day

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