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WORLD PERCUSSION & RHYTHM

On the pulse of the Global Drum Community

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Editor’s Welcome

World Percussion and Rhythm magazine brings you the best of the vibrant and richly varied global drum scene. It’s the only magazine of its kind. "WPR’s coverage is authoritative, to the point and is of the authentic rhythms, questions, instruments and issues." WPR gets into the hands of drummers, percussionists and champions of rhythm in more than 30 states from New York to California, from Florida to Wisconsin and from more than 19 countries from France, Canada, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Brazil, Africa, and beyond. WPR continues to attract dynamic contributors and top quality advertisers representing the global drum community. Become part of the WPR Team! World Percussion and Rhythm magazine is accepting submissions for articles in all areas. We also accept submissions of artwork, photography and poetry related to percussion. Call (773) 348-0966.

This issue is dedicated to the late great Ray Barretto. All of us at WPR magazine wish to express our sincere condolences to his family and friends and to honor him. We will never forget the great legacy he left us. We also wish to express our great thanks to David Wallin and Joan Erenberg for their amazing work as Art Directors/Publication Managers over these many years. They are moving on to exciting new projects! INTERESTED? PLEASE CONTACT US TO APPLY FOR THE JOB OF ART DIRECTOR/PUBLICATION MANAGER! (773) 348-0966.

—Terry Reimer, WPR Editor/Publisher
Ray Barretto passed this year at 76 years old. Born April 29, 1929 in Brooklyn, New York, Ray Barretto (known as “Mr. Hardhands”) grew up in the Bronx and Harlem. He listened to the big band sounds of Duke Ellington, Glen Miller and Tommy Dorsey and discovered bebop in the army through a recording of Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie’s “Shaw ‘Nuff”. But it was the B-side (“Manteca” featuring Chano Pozo) that piqued Barretto’s curiosity. Since the 1940’s, Barretto played percussion with the likes of the Latin Jazz Combo at the Savoy Ballroom, with Tito Puente, Oscar Hernandez, Max Roach, Sonny Stitt, Freddie Hubbard, Red Garland and he became a house musician for Blue Note, Prestige and Riverside. His solo debut, “Barretto Para Bailar” was recorded with Riverside in 1961. Another LP, “Charanga Moderna”, contained the mega-hit “El Watusi”. Barretto became the music director for the Fania All-Stars and stayed with them for nearly 30 years. He also wasn’t afraid to venture into the worlds of R&B, funk or fusion and of course, jazz.

For nearly 40 years, Ray Barretto had been one of the leading forces in Latin jazz. He had a hard, compelling playing style. He refined the integration of Afro-Caribbean rhythms with the improvisational elements of jazz. Few artists have been as successful over the years at fusing these two genres as Barretto, an undisputed master of this style. NEA Chairman Dana Gioia released the following statement. “Ray Barretto was a pioneer, a legend and a leader and we are proud to have added “NEA Jazz Master” to that list of superlatives. All of us at the NEA are deeply saddened at Ray’s untimely death and offer our condolences and prayers to his family. Ray Barretto will always have our respect and admiration for all that he accomplished and all that he gave to jazz.” Barretto, the most widely recorded conguero in jazz, received the NEA Jazz Master award on January 13, 2006 in New York City.

The last time Ray actually performed was on Feb. 12th at Makor where the Manhattan School of Music Afro-Cuban Jazz Orchestra performed in an event put together by Richie Blondet. Bobby Sanabria pulled Ray onto the stage but Ray didn’t want to play congas, so Sanabria grabbed a pair of timbale sticks. Sanabria writes that Ray took a beautiful tipico solo that spoke volumes as to his sensibility. He says that Ray was not a Santero, but he definitely always paid respect to the roots of our rhythms in West Africa and would discuss the topic at length if given the opportunity.

He was part of a select group of NYC based Puerto Rican percussionists which included Tommy Lopez, and ’Lil Ray Romero who were allowed to attend rumbas at Arsenio Rodriguez’s apartment in the Bronx. Ray was very politically active and always supported the work of the Young Lords as well as any cause he felt needed to be championed.

Barretto is featured on 250 available recordings! The release of the late Ray Barretto’s very last recording, “Standards Rican-ditioned” (Zoho Music L.L.C.) is straight-ahead jazz reminiscent of the ’50’s Blue Note. The CD features two alto saxophone solos by Barretto’s 20-year-old son Chris. He also plays congas on the number “Strange Music”, behind his father scat singing (as a marker for the percussion part). All at WPR offer our sincere condolences to his family. He left us a huge legacy and he will be greatly missed.
Hey brother Ray
What do you got to say
Heard your coming down to jam with us
Going to be my lucky day

We'll be down there by the beach
We won't be hard for you to reach
Just let your feet follow the beat
It's the best way to sweat off the heat

Hey brother B
We got them sounds you want to hear
100 drums already pounding away
And sounding crystal clear

We'll be by the rocks down by the shore
The crowd want to see some more
So pull up a rock and do your stuff
The guys and the girls—we can't get enough

We'll have some fun in the sun
As you thunder away on those drums
So let's take advantage of the light
Cause we're going to be jamming all through the night

As the sun begins it's setting
And those waves keep coming in
This jam is just getting started
So brother Ray “tear up those skins”

Let's hear some fast firecracking fingers
On that shiny chrome plated rim
And with that snap—crack—pop
We all can cheer yeah!!! it's really him

Don't take too long to think about it
And brother Ray listen to what we say
Don't forget to bring your special drums
Cause we're going to make some magic on this day

Hey brother Ray
Just heard your on your way
Thanks—Charlie Rosario

Poem by: Charlie Rosario (2-14-06) Red Monday PR. out “What Do You Got To Say”
Dedicated to El Rey De Las Manos Duras – Ray Barretto
India’s musical heritage has a rich, fantastic array of drums and percussion instruments unlike any other culture on the globe. One such drum is called the “Pakhawaj”, and one of the foremost Pakhawaj players alive today is Pandit Durga Prasad Majumdar of Mumbai (Bombay) India.

Durga’s stellar live performances throughout India, the U.S., and Europe, along with numerous recordings for Hindi films, classical soloists and collaborations, have earned him the United Nation’s Excellence Award.

Pt. Durga Majumdar is on the Board of Directors for Chicago’s Sadhana Schoel of Indian Music, through which he holds annual workshops and private lessons on pakhawaj and tablas. The following interview precedes his return to Chicago in May/June 2006.

For workshop and class information, contact Nirmita Dholakia, Sadhana Schoel of Indian Music at 768.428.1248 or email at: sadhana_nirmita@yahoo.com.

WPR: The Pakhawaj is common in India, but it’s still an obscure instrument to many westerners. Can you tell us a bit about the Pakhawaj?

Durgaji: First of all, the original basic name is “mridang”. That name “mrida”, you can say is an ancient instrument of Asia. 800 years ago, during the Mughal Empire, they changed the name to pakhawaj. Pakhawaj is basically a Persian name, is not Indian. Mridang is the mother instrument. All others, like the dholak and tablas, came out of mridang. If you compare newer instruments like them, you will find they have something similar to mridang and pakhawaj. But, pakhawaj is very long and is Pandit Durga Prasad Majumdar playing the Pakhawaj. Very complicated. It takes a lot of strength to play.

WPR: It looks like a big, two-headed drum, lying horizontal in front of you. You have to be able to spread your arms apart in order to reach and play both ends.

Durgaji: Yes. The minimum size is 28-inches. But, it could be 33 or 34 inches. Weight is a factor. If you lift my pakhawaj right here, weight is 35-40 pounds.

WPR: How is the modern-day pakhawaj related to the mridangam drum?

Durgaji: Yes, yes. There is the mridangam drum played in South India. Both drums are similar. In the north, it is “pakhawaj”, and in south, it is “mridangam”. The difference is, sound-wise, mridangam has “tang-tung, tang-tung, tang-tung”, like that..., whereas the pakhawaj sound is more majestic, “DUN-DHA-KA-DHIN”, that sort of sound.

WPR: What accounts for that sound? Is it the method of playing or is it also the construction of the instrument?

Durgaji: Construction. Because inside, the Pakhawaj is hollowed out to the maximum amount. And, pakhawaj, like tabla, both use the iron part, the black dot on the head. On the left-hand side of pakhawaj, we apply wheat paste. Also, when applying wheat paste, sometimes you must apply water. Depending on the sound you need. If I’m playing a particular composition and I need more bass, then I apply some water.

WPR: To soften the head a bit more, to mute it?

Durgaji: Yes. And, if the next composition does not need that much bass, I apply some powder to dry it.

WPR: So, you can actually put water on the head during a performance and take it back out with the powder?

Durgaji: Yes, always. It’s constant.

WPR: The pakhawaj has guttas (tuning blocks) where the mridangam doesn’t. Can you tell us about that?

Durgaji: You see, reason is, the mridangam has limited notes. For example, if one has their mridangam tuned to C, he can stretch it only from Bb to C♯, bring it down a maximum of half-note or up a maximum of half-note. With pakhawaj, I have a tuning range of 3 to 4 notes. If my pakhawaj is on C♯, I can go up to E. If I try I can go up to F sometimes. And, down I can go to B♭ or B.

WPR: That’s a big range. Originally then, was the pakhawaj used for different types of music?

Durgaji: Dhrupad. Dhrupad.
Was the range of the drum created to match the range of the vocalists that it accompanied?

Yes.

At what point did the pakhawaj begin to accompany instrumentalists?

Well, it's a very beautiful question. First of all, we have in India two different styles of music. One is Dhrupad, that's the oldest style, oldest singing or playing style. After Dhrupad, what came in fashion is called, "khayal" or "thumri". Semi-classical. But you see, everything came out from the Dhrupad because it's the oldest singing. And, as I say, the pakhawaj is old. It accompanies Dhrupad styles whether it is singing or playing on an instrument. Pt. Ravi Shankar started long ago using pakhawaj. If you listen to some of his old recordings, you will hear pakhawaj along with tabla sometimes.

Is this style of pakhawaj playing similar to mridangam, the ancient style of drumming?

Yes, it is. See, I'll tell you. In India, in old times, music was usually in the temples. Vedic times. Imagine some Vedic chanting is going on and someone is playing tabla. This you cannot digest, cannot visualize this is happening because tabla is not that old. But, think the other way. Mridangam (pakhawaj) is going with the chanting. Now, you really have devotion, that feeling, that spiritual feeling comes.

Is this style of pakhawaj playing similar to mridangam, the ancient style of drumming?

Yes, it is. See, I'll tell you. In India, in old times, music was usually in the temples. Vedic times. Imagine some Vedic chanting is going on and someone is playing tabla. This you cannot digest, cannot visualize this is happening because tabla is not that old. But, think the other way. Mridangam (pakhawaj) is going with the chanting. Now, you really have devotion, that feeling, that spiritual feeling comes.

So the pakhawaj is a very old spiritually oriented classical instrument for accompanying vocalists and instrumentalists....

Also, solo. It is a solo instrument too. If you hear pakhawaj solo, oh my God, you'll feel elephants walking!

But, what inspired you to take up pakhawaj? It seeming to be a bit of a niche or dying instrument?

I can't say that it's a dying instrument, but it was restricted to a particular corner, like in devotional singing. It's a limited area. I started learning music about age 12 or 13. My interest was to play all Indian percussion. I play most, like khol, Bengali folk instruments, tabla and pakhawaj. Rhythm, you can say, is my passion, in my blood, my bread and butter, my everything. I started learning tabla, but after quite a few years, I wanted to learn, also, the older style. Nowadays, I'm trying my best to introduce such a beautiful old instrument to the outside of India. I'm trying to popularize the pakhawaj all over the world.

As you tour around the world and do more recordings, are you finding that there is a growing interest in the pakhawaj?

In India, it's growing like anything!

What do you think about those who self-train themselves on tabla and pakhawaj? Is it possible for anybody to approach authenticity learning on their own?

It's self-entertainment. Proper learning is a must. One thing I should say. I've been learning the last 20 to 30 years and still I go to my teacher's house. We call teachers "guruji" back home.

Do you follow the Indian tradition (guru-shishya paraparam) by doing errands and assisting your guru?

Absolutely. We don't mind cleaning guru's house or cleaning their clothes. That's how we have learned many things. Not only music. I have more than one guru. I have two gurus. I've learned tabla from guruji Giridhar Prasad. Also, from Pandit Kishan Maharaj who is 82-years old and a living legend in India. He's also a tabla player, but he plays mridangam style. So, I've learned from both gurus.

What sort of projects are you working on?

I do a lot of Bollywood work. Compositions for the movies. Production. Giving lectures. Keeping the music alive by doing music-related jobs. I have a recording studio in India. It's all music-related. I cannot go and sell vegetables and I cannot open a gas station or wine shop. Whatever I do, I have to do within the world of music.

Are there any particular projects you want to mention?

Yes, I'd love to. The name of the project is "The Sound". The recording is not completed, but I don't mind sharing. It will be just one instrument, only Pakhawaj. The other sounds will be from nature. The ocean, early in the morning, the ebb of the tide. The temple, where randomly someone plays bells. Gradually, that will all start and then end with a classical pakhawaj solo.

Rhythm, Meditation?

Yes.

Like ancient times.

In today.

Clar Monaco is a founding member of Chicago's Sandalwood Sitar Music Ensemble and imports musical instruments from India at Sitar Emporium. Clar also teaches private sitar lessons. For more information, call 708.754.7026 or email clar@sitaremporium.com or sandalwoodmusic@yahoo.com or Website: www.sitaremporium.com.
Dave Stanoch

Interview by Mark Powers

What do Herb Ellis, Butch Vig, New Kids On The Block, Bob Newhart and Timbuk 3 have in common with Stanley Jordan, Shari Lewis & Lambchop, Hiram Bullock, Martin Short and Scott Henderson?

They have all had the distinguished pleasure of working with drummer Dave Stanoch. Hailing from Minnesota’s Twin Cities, Dave tops the call lists of many local, national and international entertainers—likely due to his ability to fit into any situation that arises. He has been the perfectly-timed ‘buh-DUM-dum-CHING’ behind comedians Don Rickles and Joan Rivers; the rock-solid ‘2 & 4’ driving Freedy Johnston, Sometimes Y and Col. Bruce Hampton; and now continues to stretch traditional and modern boundaries with his improvisational jazz trio, Tripplicate.

A student of the masters, Dave has studied his craft with Max Roach, Elliot Fine, Alan Dawson, Jeff Hamilton, Ignacio Berroa and Chad Wackerman. Now a master himself, he is fulfilling his dharma, passing on his vast knowledge, as an instructor at the acclaimed McNally Smith College of Music.

As a former—and probably life-long pupil of his, I have seen and heard the passion and level of well-rounded musicianship that Dave infuses into his playing. Those characteristics followed him into our private lessons, where he drove home points that were not only technical in nature, but also personal and professional, maybe occasionally reaching meta-physical. I learned that performing and sharing music was not about merely the aesthetic entertainment value. To Dave, the world is his instrument and his instrument is his world. He approaches both with deep respect and undeterred conviction.

Catching up to Dave in February gave me the opportunity to find out more than I could have imagined about the diverse influences and experiences that have shaped his playing and his life.

WPR: Dave, I have spent a lot of time studying from you, watching you perform and hearing about your approach to the instrument, but I’ve realized that I knew very little about what has brought you to where you are right now. How and why do you do what you do. Although I’ve always enjoyed my lessons on the most recent polyrhythm or Latin groove that has you geared up, I want to focus instead on the rhythms inside Dave Stanoch—what makes him tick. If you could, bring us up to speed on your musical background. Any influential teachers along the way? And why the drums in the first place?

Stanoch: My parents, Lois and Bruno, gave my brother John and I the opportunity to take guitar lessons when he was 10 and I was 7. I basically took the lessons because my brother wanted to and I suppose I wanted to be like him. We did enjoy music quite a bit. We would listen to my folk’s records’ Louis Armstrong, Pete Fountain, Jim Reeves, and the like, and soon we had our own suitcase record player and started collecting 45’s. We had Beatles, Temptations, and O’Jay’s records, I can recall’ anything that was a good song, in our opinion, from the mid-1960’s to the mid-70’s. I wasn’t naturally talented on the guitar at 7, but I did learn the basic laws of music and how to read it. Playing guitar, my reaction time was slow and I had trouble holding the rhythm of things, so my teacher, Wally Bramburg, suggested I pay more attention to the drums and the beat on the records I was listening to.

Around that time my brother put together a garage band with a drummer named Matt Barber. I’d listen to them practice in our basement and watch what Matt was doing. When they’d take a break and go upstairs I’d try things I saw Matt do on his drums. I remember a great feeling of satisfaction and excitement when I easily executed the first couple things I tried. I was hooked! I was around 10 by then, and my mother entered me into our school band program on the drums. My first lessons were from my band director, John Wegner, and a professional Dixieland drummer named Bob Byrnes. They gave me a foundation. It turned out I had an aptitude for it, so my folks hooked me up with a more progressive teacher, Elliot Fine, a member of the Minnesota Orchestra, and co-author (with Marv Dahlgren) of 4-Way Coordination’ a bible among drummers of my era. Elliot was a Godsend for me. He helped me get a handle on many rhythmic styles and soloing concepts on the drumset. He instilled a sense of imagination in me and the ability to analyze my playing through abstract thinking. It really opened up my ability to incorporate themes and variations in my playing and have a foundation to improvise from.

At that time, Elliot’s partner in writing and section-mate in the Orchestra, Marv Dahlgren, ran the only drum shop in the Twin Cities and it was THE place to hang. It was there that I met a drummer named Phil Hey, who would become another life-long mentor and friend to me. Phil turned me on to a lot of music, and also helped me understand important things like how to tune my drums, what to listen for in selecting cymbals, and things like that. He would often let me sit in at his gigs and always gave honest criticism, which helped me so much and gave me confidence. By example, he interested me in the history of jazz and contemporary music in general, which I have found adds dimension to my approach in any situation I play in. I met a lot of great players at Marv’s shop, including Gordy Knudson, who plays a major role in my recent past and present, and the legendary Eric Gravatt, whom I even got an impromptu hand drum lesson from one afternoon when he was hanging out there too. My high school band director, Dan Geldert was a driving force as well. You had to be on top of your stuff to please him and he wanted a lot of passion and feeling in the music. I got a lot of big band ensemble experience with Dan and, thanks to him, even got to play with Ed Shaughnessy and open for Woody Herman at school concerts. When I was 16, I toured Europe with America’s Youth in Concert, as principal percussionist in a symphony orchestra made up of high school and college kids from all over our country. We rehearsed, recorded an album and played Carnegie Hall in New York City before leaving on a European tour through five countries. It was an incredible experience and after that, I knew the path I wanted to follow in life.

My college years were an extremely developmental stage of my growth. I attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison, specifically to study with the great jazz and studio bassist Richard Davis. I had records with Richard playing with like... ALL of my favorite drummers. I knew how important the drummer/bassist relationship was in a band and had a feeling that UW-M would be a good move— it was, and then some! I learned a ton about playing music and carrying one’s self as a musician from Richard. There was no B.S. about him and, like Elliot Fine, he had an infectious enthusiasm that I was drawn to. I had some friends in school I played with and learned a lot from, most are still active and VERY happening players. Outside of school I encountered another legendary drummer, Clyde Stubblefield, a resident of Madison, renowned for his extremely original and funky drumming for James Brown. Befriending Clyde was great luck for me, he’s a natural at what he does and just a fun-loving guy. Watching Clyde play taught me how...
to project a superior balance of sound and how important the inner dynamics of a groove are in relation to the overall dynamic level you’re playing at. Thanks to my gifted percussion professor Jim Latimer, I was initially enlightened to this ‘inner dynamics’ concept by the great Max Roach, who came to UW-Madison as an Artist-in-Residence. Lessons with Max never went where I thought they would, which always reminded me how much I had to learn. That something happened with the great Alan Dawson, who was also coming through as an Artist-in-Residence the same year. Alan loved Elliot and Marc’s concepts of 4-Way Coordination and used Ted Reed’s Syncopation text as a palatte to apply the concepts for developing a very musical sense of phrasing in my grooving and soloing. In those years I had the opportunity to work and play with an amazingly diverse reservoir of talent centered in Madison including Richard, Clyde, pianist Ben Sidran, Timbuk 3’s Pat MacDonald, Nirvana producer and Garbage drummer Butch Vig, and even a jam with saxophonist Roscoe Mitchell from one of my favorite groups, the Art Ensemble of Chicago.

After that, I moved to Los Angeles, California and tried my hand at gigging around there and studied with Jeff Hamilton and Chad Wackerman. Jeff has remained a true friend. He really helped open up my mind by getting a looser feel with more rebound in my motion and his school of brush playing is as deep as it gets. Chad helped me with advanced concepts like playing through mixed meters and using odd groupings in my phrasing. Heady stuff, but he made it seem easy. I gigged around L.A. and found myself in the Gulf Coast after awhile, living in Houston for a minute, where at least I was close to Austin and New Orleans. From there I ended up doing a cruise ship gig out of Port Canaveral, across from the Cape, in Florida. The Bahamas, Mexico and Jamaica were the places we’d sail to. I had a very professional experience there in a showband with some terrific players from New York, New Orleans and L.A. I closed a lot of gaps between what I could simply comprehend as a player vs. really deliver on a bandstand, in a believable way, by playing and reading anything that came up, every night of the week, for almost three years. I eventually went from sideman to bandleader and got a lot of things together on the business side of playing in the process, like rehearsing a band, organizing a set, hiring and firing, M.C.’ing a show, etc. I saved a lot of money, too!

In 1990, Gordy Knudtson, a truly innovative and inspiring player/educator, offered me a position on the percussion faculty at Music Tech of Minneapolis (now known as the McNally Smith College of Music). I returned to Minnesota and haven’t looked back. My family is here and I’ve since started my own. I’m amazingly (and thankfully) very active playing all kind of things that interest me, for and with a lot of talented people (folks can find my resume for more name-dropping!) and the future continues to look bright. I work hard at my craft and I know I’m one of the lucky ones- the world may not know my name but my validation comes in seeing my wife and son happy in my home, a busy calendar on the wall, and knowing I make it all happen with a pair of sticks in my hand.

**WPR:** Don’t think that I didn’t catch the Timbuk 3 lyric reference there! But seriously, that’s not a shabby list of a teachers- Hamilton, Roach, Dawson, Stubblefield and Wackerman? Definitely a solid foundation there! And you are right, Elliot and Marc are both incredibly talented and giving individuals. In addition to them, who else would you consider to be major influences on your playing?

**Stanoch:** Wow. Well, certainly everybody I mentioned in the last question, as well as the various groups that Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Charlie Parker, Thelonious Monk, Miles Davis, Sonny Rollins, Ornette Coleman and John Coltrane had. (takes a deep breath) The Beatles, Stones, Who, Clash, Police & Led Zeppelin, Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Muddy Waters, The Band, The Meters, Little Feat, Frank Zappa, The Mahavishnu Orchestra, Herbie Hancock, Weather Report, Earth, Wind & Fire, Sun Ra, Bob Marley, Bob Dylan, Paul Simon, Steely Dan, the Astral Project, Dr. John, Baaba Maal...

on and on- it’s endless, really. (another deep breath)! Naturally, ALL of the drummers in all of those groups, as well as Art Blakey, Buddy Rich, Sly Dunbar, Jim Kelimer, Billy Higgins, Ignacio Berroa, Bill Bruford, Steve Jordan, Doudou N’Diaye Rose, the cats in Los Munequitos de Matanzas... anyone who brings their own thing to the table and catches my attention.

**WPR:** Any non-musician influences?

**Stanoch:** Oh yeah... I often get into another frame of mind when I play, attempting to project through the perspective of artists from other mediums that I admire from my youth. Painters, sculptors, and filmmakers figure in there- the vividness of a Michelangelo or Stanley Kubrick, the slightly out of focus smear of Monet, the abstraction of a Picasso or Eicher, the snap and grit of Spike Lee. Comedians, too- the humor & timing of cats like Richard Pryor, George Carlin and Johnny Carson. Johnny Carson was influential just because of his love for jazz, which he exploited on his television show. When I was growing up you didn’t have cable & satellite and all these outlets; it was Johnny Carson, Ed Sullivan, or later ‘The Midnight Special’ or ‘ABC-In Concert.’ That’s where I was first exposed to anything I didn’t hear on the radio.

**WPR:** The nature of our business certainly tends to create some unexpected, memorable moments. Can you recall any such unforgettable, almost unreal, experiences?

**Stanoch:** A few favorite recollections... jamming with Ed Shaughnessy in High School and feeling the power of his drumming; Richard Davis helping me groove like I was rocking in a cradle with the authority of his playing, and inspiring me to play above myself on the bandstand; having Clyde Stubblefield ask me to drum for HIS band so he could step out front and sing; opening for Buddy Rich and learning that he dug hearing the group; and playing opposite Ringo Starr, with Freedy Johnston, at the State Capitol in St. Paul, when hecklers drove Freedy to dive into the crowd and fight! There was pandemonium as a result, and that remains my true Rock ‘n Roll moment!

**WPR:** One of your most recent projects is your jazz trio, Triplicate. Tell us about this ensemble.

**Stanoch:** Triplicate is an instrumental collective made up of Joel Shapira on guitars, Bruce ‘Pooch’ Heine on basses, and myself. We write our own material and also adapt classics in the literature of jazz repertoire to our liking. The sound is a reflection of the chemistry of our musical personalities and there are no rules guiding what we’ll try. We’re a true band and have been at it for nine years now, which is rare in the jazz world. We’ve just released our second CD, Day & Age, and, I believe, could hold your attention in our live performances.

**WPR:** Aside from supporting many artists through the years, you have also had many opportunities to take on a leadership position. When handling such duties, how do you approach your role as bandleader?

**Stanoch:** Triplicate is, as I mentioned, a collective, but I can apply everything I’ve learned about bandleading to it, it just has to fly with the other members. In situations where I truly am in charge, I basically attempt to function as a facilitator- get the right cats for the gig, let them do their thing and get out of the way. I chart and maintain the course; they can look to me for direction; and I write the check at the end of the gig.

**WPR:** What other projects do you currently have in the works?

**Stanoch:** I’m playing again with some old Madison friends, Dave & Sue Reiss, around the Twin Cities in the reunited Sometimes Y. It is a complete 180 turn from my jazz bag. We did an album last year and are starting a new one. The Y features Dave’s great songwriting and can really rock in a

Continued on page 15
happy sort of way. It has 80’s rock & reggae roots- the first Y LP was produced in Madison by Butch Vig, in his early period. I still do lots of shows and casual gigs around town; I’ve done a few fun recording projects recently and I’m busy promoting the new Triplicate CD with my wife Katy. We run Rhythmelodic Records, the independent label that it was released on. I’m also still busy on the faculty of the McNally Smith College of Music and am trying to finish a percussion method book that I’ve been writing and refining for eight years now! My son Louis just turned two and Katy and I are unabashedly proud!

WPR: Can you create a parallel between your role as a drummer and your role as a parent?

Stanoch: Hmm... first thing that comes to mind, with my schedule, is that as a father, I keep pretty much the same hours as a drummer/educator- up late, up early!

WPR: Is Louis drumming yet?

Stanoch: He likes to bang around on my drums, of course- he sees it around the house with Daddy and because I’m a drummer people give him toy percussion presents, but it’s nothing we’re pushing on him. What’s freaky is that he’s got really steady time when he dances or bangs around! He also loves to sing, which he gets from his Mama, and he also enjoys the piano and xylophone!

WPR: You mentioned teaching at McNally Smith College of Music, which used to be called Music Tech. How long have you taught there?

Stanoch: I’m in my fifteenth year on the faculty there.

WPR: What have you taken and/or learned from that experience?

Stanoch: One thing is that, to be really effective in that environment, you need to be very clear on how to break down your playing concepts into clean ideas that can translate well to the students and be useful to them. In turn, this makes my own playing easier to express.

WPR: I’m sure that you have worked with players of every ability level. Can you sum up, in one sentence, the most important thing(s) that an aspiring musician needs to develop?

Stanoch: The ability to be honest and truthful to one’s self, exercise discipline, and not take it all TOO seriously.

WPR: What is the most crucial life lesson that music has taught you?

Stanoch: If you suck, nobody wants to play with you!

WPR: Alright, no Buddy jokes from you. Quickly- choose one and explain why: Prince or Lenny Kravitz?

Stanoch: Well, you know I’m from Minnesota, so there’s no contest there! They’re both admirable artists, anyway. Weird coincidence: I watched those two jam with Prince’s band out at Paisley Park Studio one night some years back, which was surprisingly dull until all of a sudden, they kicked into ‘Jailhouse Rock!’ Nobody expected THAT!

WPR: Rock on. Okay- Sting or Peter Gabriel?

Stanoch: That’s one I’d like to ask Manu Katche!

WPR: Cage or Schenck?

Stanoch: Well, John and Arnold were kind of a mutual admiration club of sorts, weren’t they? Cage became more rhythmically-driven than tonally-driven in his work as it progressed, so . . . maybe James Brown copped his famous ‘Give the drummer some’ phrase from John Cage?!

WPR: To wrap things up, it’s shameless plug time! How can the readers find out more about you, Triplicate and your other doings?

Stanoch: Visit my Web site at: www.rhythmelodic.com. There’s info on Triplicate, my wife Katy Tessman and myself. I’ll also be ramping up an area there, focused on my work outside of Triplicate, as a performer and educator, very soon.

Selected Dave Stanoch discography:

"Day and Age" Triplicate (Rhythmelodic, 2005)
"Distant Borders" (reissue) Axis Mundi (Worldview, 2005)
"Be Happy" Sometimes Y (JaneBear, 2003)
"Mississippi Suite" John Ahern Big Band (Sweka, 2003)
"Live, Cookin’ at the Dakota" Larry McDonough & Offbeat (LM Jazz, ’02)
"Fall" Katy Tessman (Rhythmelodic, 2000)
"One Fell Swoop" Sometimes Y (JaneBear, 1984)
"Mad City Jazz" Leo Maibeuger, Ben Sidran, Richard Davis, David Stanoch (Interplay, 1983)
Gahu (pronounced gah-HOO) is a recreational dance of the Ewe people residing in the south-eastern region of Ghana and southern Togo and Benin. Its name meaning 'money drum,' Gahu is a descendent of Koko-sawa, a style from the Yorubans of Nigeria. I had an opportunity to study this and several other Ewe pieces during a 2003 stay in Kopeyia, Ghana. There I worked with members of Sankofa Root 2, under the direction of Emmanuel and Rubben Agbeli, sons of the late master drummer and teacher Godwin Agbeli.

This is traditional music, having been passed down through many generations only in an oral manner. Village youth absorb the rhythms, dances and vocals of these songs at an early age, hearing them throughout their lives at parties, funerals and other celebrations. I have chosen to notate the rhythms for each instrument in two ways: a 'standard' method, using a single-line staff containing stemmed and barred rhythmic notation; and a 'boxed' system of notation, utilizing a grid inside which bullets (○) and letters correspond to specific strokes or techniques to be played. Be aware that while I am, for teaching purposes, writing the rhythms in 'common (4/4) time' and counting four beats per measure, rarely (if ever) do Ewe musicians think of their music in these limiting terms. Rather than basing patterns within the framework of any particular 'time signature,' a repeated bell part is most often the time reference point on top of which the drummers, dancers and singers can build their parts. This article will focus on introducing all of the 'supporting instruments' typically played in a Gahu performance. Unfortunately, space does not allow delving into the roles and rhythms of the boba master drum here—these will be addressed in Part Two of this series.

**Gakogui**

As is commonly the case in Ewe performances, several drums of different sizes and pitches are accompanied by bell and rattle. Arguably the most important instrument is the gakogui, or iron double bell. The gakogui is comprised of two connected bells, one higher and one lower pitch, both sharing one long handle and played with a stick. During Gahu, the gakogui plays a continuous, ostinato pattern made up of three notes, phrased as two long tones followed by one short tone. My experience was that the lower bell would often be played on the first note of a song; subsequent notes would be played on the higher bell, with a low tone occasionally substituted on the first note of the three-note phrase. Our boxed notation will show a bullet (○) when the bell is to be played and a dash (-) when the bell player is to rest. Our standard notation will show the low bell below the staff line, while the high bell will appear above the line.

**Axatse**

Helping the gakogui to lay down the foundation is the axatse, or rattle. The axatse is a gourd onto which many small seeds, beads or seashells are tied. The performer holds the narrow, long end of the rattle in one hand and plays the larger, bead covered, end against his/her leg and free hand. The rhythm of the pa strokes exactly matches the rhythm of the gakogui bell. A single ti stroke is inserted immediately after the second pa. I have often seen axatse
Performers have a lot of fun with this repetitive phrase by improvising the placement of these strokes on different parts of their bodies. It is not uncommon to see the rattle bouncing off of players’ fists, feet and chests! In our boxed notation, pa will be written as simply the letter P and ti will be the letter T. Our standard notation will show pa below the line, because the rattle is moving downward. The ti stroke will be above the line, as the rattle is moving upward.

Ewe drums can be found in solid-shell form—each drum carved from one solid tree trunk—or in stave-construction—several curved slats of wood held together by metal bands wrapped around the instrument, similar to a cooper’s barrel. Played with two sticks (or occasionally one stick and one bare hand), the heads of the drums are most commonly made of antelope skin.

Kagan
The highest-pitched of the drums used in Gahu is the kagan, an open-bottom drum that is held between the legs, either fully off the ground or tipped away from the performer. Either method gets the bottom of the drum up off the ground, allowing air to escape from the inside and allowing the instrument to project its full tone. Played with two thin sticks, the kagan contributes another ostinato rhythm, consisting of two notes that fall opposite the primary pulse (or beat) of the groove. Resting ‘on the beat,’ its rhythm essentially speaks its own name: “(rest) ka-gan, (rest) ka-gan”

Kidi
Lower than kagan in pitch is kidi. Unlike the kagan, the kidi is a solid-bottom drum, so it is unnecessary to tip or lift it off the ground. Doing so does not noticeably affect the drum’s voice. Kidi is the first instrument we have discussed that plays several rhythmic variations throughout a Gahu performance. We will look at the ‘free movement,’ or basic pattern that the drum plays. During the ‘free movement’ kidi utilizes two different types of strokes. The first is a normal ‘open’ stroke, allowing the sticks to freely bounce away from the skin of the drum, producing a full, unrestricted tone. The second stroke is created by not allowing the stick(s) to leave the skin after contact. Keeping the stick pressed against the head choke the sound of the instrument, getting a short, sometimes slightly higher-pitched, muted tone. Kidi’s basic pattern is comprised of three ‘open’ tones followed by two muted strokes. The boxed notation will use a bullet (●) for the open tones and the letter M for the muted strokes. The regular noteheads in the standard notation show placement of the open tones. The muted strokes are written as Xs. Notice that to be correctly phrased, the pattern begins an 8th-note before the ‘downbeat’ of the 4/4 measure.

Sogo
The largest and lowest of the Gahu supporting drums is the sogo. Like kidi, sogo is a solid-bottom drum that sits flat on the ground. Also like kidi, it is played using the same open and muted strokes. The sogo plays many variations in Gahu and, at certain points during a performance, takes a leading role. Its ‘free movement’ pattern consists of two muted strokes and a single open tone. The sogo’s boxed and standard notation methods are identical to those for the kidi.

Together, the gakogui, axatse, kagan, kidi and sogo supporting parts form a strong rhythmic and melodic foundation for the master drum, the dancers and the singers. Most important to remember is that this music is functional. Gahu is recreational music—created, and passed down through the years, for a purpose. That purpose is to have fun with others, celebrating life and enjoying all that we have been given. And that is the single most important thing for you to do—have fun with it! Next time we will explore the boba master drum rhythms... ▼

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Interview and transcription

by Melena

WPR: Jieu were born in Peru.

Gamboa: Lima Peru. In the most creole neighborhood, most musical possibly. It is the heart of creole music in general. There are other neighborhoods, like La Victoria where most high named people were born but they are also spread out through many areas. I was born in Lima, in El Barrios Altos. It’s a place of poor people, humble people, “solares”, music of the heart, food and carnival. During carnival, everyone comes out to get wet and throw powder on each other. It’s very nice. People there like to works towards a better life. My father did just that. He studied and made a better life for the family. He bought a house in another neighborhood a little better and to this day we have that house. It is located in De Jesus Maria in a very beautiful building. The place is called Residential San Felipe, fifteen blocks from the beach.

WPR: Did your parents play?

Gamboa: My grandmother danced and sung but she never did it professionally. Who I thought was my grandfather really wasn’t. Later, my mother told me of my biological grandfather whom I never met and that he was a musician. He was from Ecuador and came to Lima to perform with a circus. I never met him, but that’s the story. My grandmother on my mothers side was also a dancer and singer. She always sang for us before bedtime.

WPR: When did you begin to play Cajon?

Gamboa: Since a child I always had musical inclinations. I always tried to be wherever there was music. Sometimes there were great fiestas that were formed. We call them “garandas”. Of course, it was daytime because I could not be hanging out in “garandas” late as a young kid. “Garanda’s” are parties where everyone participates. Everyone sings and dances. As a child I was always observing these events. I liked other things but I gravitated towards music.

I had the luck to participate in a group of leaders. My specialty was recreation. There were talented musicians in these groups. Mario Renoso was one of them. He played guitar and danced. Mario reinforced my love for folklore. Anyone who played an instrument had an advantage over the others. You had more influence in being able to lead. Then, when I started at the University, each faculty had their own folklore group and they had competitions. That is when I met Ety Ardiles and with him we formed a group that was called Harmonia Criolla. They still play under the name, Los Hermanos Ardiles. The group consisted of Ety, Manuel, Jaime, Gigio and myself. It was the five of us. The group still remains and I want to bring them in October, God willing.

To really answer your question on how I began playing Cajon. Seriously, when I went to Bolivia. Time passed and we were growing professionally and personally. They offered me a job in Bolivia. I missed Peru terribly in Bolivia. I took my Cajon and that’s when I began to seriously study. My nostalgia made me take refuge in the Cajon and I grew rapidly. I had it from practising and watching for so many years. It’s just that I did not formally practise because there were others who played. When I began studying I learned fast and I returned to Lima and then went directly to the United States. My first job was in valet parking at the Beverly Center. I took my Cajon and I was always practicing. Then I quickly inclined to the music and I grew from there.

WPR: You play castanets.

Gamboa: Yes. When we started we were young and we were playing at peoples homes. We started playing at around sixteen or seventeen years old. So, when I was at someone’s home, I did not know what to do with my hands and I sung. I took the castanets and they gave me a sense of security and so I began to play them. Castanets is the percussion instrument that I have played the longest. Many more years than the others because there was always someone who could play Cajon like Gigio Parodi or Manuel who knew how to accompany very well. Many times, I would participate with hand percussion, cowbell and sometimes Cajon. We practiced a lot, every day.

WPR: What styles of Peruvian music are Castanets used in?

Gamboa: Castanets are used in Vals and in the Poca. Poca is the European influence.

WPR: You have developed your own instruments.

Gamboa: Yes. I have developed instruments for children as young as one and a half years old. A child that age already has the capacity to play percussion on a Cajon because of the equilibrium that he already has in his back. A year and a half old child is a good age to start playing a small, solid Cajon. There is not much bottom but the slaps sound really nice and the child gets enthused. I apply psychology to make them sit down and encourage them with applause. For example: If we are in class and there is a baby, every time that baby gets near the instrument and he merely places his hand on the Cajon touching it, we all applause him. We all stop what we are doing and we all applaud him and then we return to what we were doing. Every time that situation arises, we applause. So, the child rapidly sits on the Cajon and sometimes for long periods of time. Then, they get up and go play and come back. The technique is based on positive reinforcement. In this case, we use applause. My instruments range from sizes one to five. The fifth is at the adult level. I also make custom made sizes for larger people. Sometimes, they sit down and they don’t feel comfortable. I measure them from their knees to the floor and I construct their own special instrument. Of course to play a larger drum has a great bottom too.

WPR: You gave a clinic for Remo. Tell me about your experience.

Gamboa: Yes, thanks to God. I saw how the Cajon has been an international influence. That day at Remo’s clinic, there were people from many places of the world. There were Japanese, Germans, Americans. I was very happy to see the interest in our folklore. That has been my desire ever since I arrived here. Then I started my Cajon Competition Event at an international level. I’ve held it...
for three years now. I didn’t have it last year because I didn’t have the amount of time that it requires to see it through, but it will happen again. I’ve had the luck to be supported by some great people like Alex Acuña and Juan Morillo. They are very interested in the project and I have written to all of them. All of that has led me to work with Peru Negro and Eva Ayllon.

WPR: Did you meet Peru Negro here in the States?

Gamboa: No. In Lima Peru, with the group that I mentioned we would play every day. It was known that we would play every day. It was Peru Negro, Harmonia Criolla, El Ballet Folklorico and all the established musicians of the neighborhood. We were the foundation of the shows in the neighborhood. Rony and I saw each other everyday. Rony with Peru Negro and I with Harmonia Criolla. Later, for large international events, thanks to God again, we had the luck to always be the groups to be chosen to play. The most representative for many years of the Folklore groups were: Peru Negro, Eva Ayllon and Harmonia Criolla. When a President would visit or there was the Union of the Eight Presidents, we would be included in the show among others. We performed at the Olympic games in 1988.

WPR: Tell me about the new instrument you invented.

Gamboa: Yes, that was another product of my nostalgia. It’s proven that nostalgia has great fruition. Here in the states I had the luck to work with Peru Negro. It’s an extraordinary job working with Peru Negro. I love the job because I do everything. I work with production and well, really I am an “obrero”. I’m involved in the production, the musicians and dancers. When I arrive at the theatre, sometimes Juan is not there. I arrive first and I rapidly make myself aware of everyone and all of the surroundings. I speak with everyone and then we begin set-up. I tune the instruments in a very special way, special for Peru Negro. Then, I point out to the dancers certain marks within the dance that they should know on stage. I divide the stage according to the lighting of the place and the limits within where they could and could not dance. I help with choreography and I carry the instruments as well and take them out of their bags. I am very happy with my work. I construct a couple things for Peru Negro. The Cajones for Peru Negro are of Peruvian origin. During a tour here in the states the Cajones were broken by the second performance. Peru Negro play strong and in a performance you really give your all. The instruments have to be prepared to hold up and these weren’t, so I came in. Before every show during the tour, I check out all the drums, see what they have or don’t have and prepare them for the show. I change any tops that need to be changed and give it my sound. I give it my sound and construct the resistance it needs to last the whole tour. Sometimes we have twenty one shows in thirty days.

During that time, I developed some Batellas. The Batellas are made of wood and it was what people used long ago to wash clothes. There is a dance where the Batella is used and the girls come out dancing with them. I made the Batella for that dance. The Batella dance is very beautiful. I ask the girls in detail how the Batellas feel to them and their hands. They are very happy with the Batellas I have made for them. As a man, I was inspired to help my female friends in Peru Negro. The female dance is very special. Watching them dance with the Batellas, I conceived the Batella instrument. For me, I consider that instrument a Peruvian instrument. Although I live here, I created it thinking with my heart in Peru. I hope that one day, God willing, that it will become a part of Peru’s Folklore. That would make me very happy. The Batella does not exist in any part of the world. I created it thinking of Peru Negro and the dance. For the moment, it has been included in a small section of the show. The opening of the show begins with a Comparsa. We enter dancing and playing la Cajita and the Batella and all the instruments! That is the only place it is included, but you see the Batella!

I think there needs to be new music written for that instrument. We are very respectful of the tradition, how things are and how things are created. To introduce new things to what has already been established can be done. Simply, when you know what you are doing and that you are conscious of the fusion you are creating. The most interesting vision will be to create new music and dance for the Batella. I don’t know if it will be for the man or women or mixed but in a moment the vision will come to me. It will be new but with a traditional heart.

WPR: It must really fill your heart and help you with your nostalgia being with your people.

Gamboa: Also, I’m white but I have a black soul.

WPR: I think we all have black roots from somewhere, from some branch. Of the tree.

Gamboa: If you don’t have Inga, you have Mandinga! My grandmother was very black and yes I have identified with them all of my life. Now, I have the opportunity to work with them and travel to different places and pretty theatres. We’ve traveled a lot and also give clinics along the way. When we are in a city, we perform a show, a show for children, clinics, everything that we could possibly do while we are there. I work hard but Peru Negro is ready for anything and so am I.

With Eva (Juan also is a part of her group), we have had a relationship for years, since our younger years. She had her own restaurant a long time ago and Harmonia Criolla would open up the show for her. Every weekend we were her opening act at her restaurant. I have known Peru Negro and Eva for many, many years.

In Peru, they did not consider me too much as a percussionist because I’m basically a vocalist. Of course, if we talk about castanets then there is a respect for the manner in which I play them. Peru Negro and Eva have seen my progress in percussion, but in Peru they don’t recognize me as a percussionist. When they find out they will be surprised. It’s been fourteen years, and fourteen before that working.

WPR: In your clinics you talk about all the different rhythms including dance.

Gamboa: The biggest satisfaction that I have had in regards to those clinics was the last competition I had. There was a category named: Foreigners Playing Peruvian Rhythms. They performed playing Festejo, Poca, Marinera and that filled my heart very much. “TRANSMITIR NUESTRA CULTURA ES UN COMPROMISO Y UN PLACER.” “TRANSMITTING OUR CULTURE IS A COMMITMENT AND A PLEASURE.” That is my life philosophy in regards to my folklore. That is my goal and way of life.

WPR: You know and demonstrate the dances very well.

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Gamboa continued from page 13

Gamboa: Yes because you're at the parties and the girls ask you to dance and you have to ask them to dance. Everyone is asking each other out to dance and everyone is dancing. I am very confident that in order to understand these rhythms, whether it's Festejo or Folclor, we have to understand the dance. At least feel it, see it and attempt to try. That is what will help you to internalize the rhythm inside of you. Of course, those of us who are born Peruvian it comes easy. It's our maternal rhythm. Like all places, there are those who don't like their folklore. There are always those who prefer foreign music. Foreign music is pretty but Folklore is your identity. Sometimes, I find myself amongst great percussionists and I can't compete with them. I have to be original. So, I take out my Cajon and my Castanets and I'm content with myself.

WPR: You are doing so many amazing things. Clinics, working with Peru Negro and your new creation the Batella. What other things do you have in mind for the future?

Gamboa: I have one thing in mind but it has not come to fruition yet. I have many memories that I have put to songs and lyrics in regards to my experiences touring with Peru Negro. I have developed some nice stuff. I have written songs, some are just lyrics but they're songs. I have written some ideas for theatre plays. I wrote one for children that I achieved called El Ersayo General (Dress Rehearsal). I already performed it. It occurred to me during an audition that we had. We were to audition for an event. I thought "why are we going to present a number how everyone does?" I told myself we would do something different and at the same time present a play. I named it "El Ersayo General" because although it was an audition it appeared to be a rehearsal and a play at the same time. I dressed up as an elderly man, there was an elderly woman and an aunt. Histories, music, dance and the characters started to develop as though we were rehearsing for an audition. This was all happening at the time were really auditioning! The theme became just that, a rehearsal for an audition. A little crazy but interesting. I have another one I still have not done for Harmonia Criolla. A musical in a theatre as well. Same rehearsal theme with three scenes; a kitchen, living room and bathroom. Within circumstances and songs, a play develops.

WPR: The Peruvian Cajon is popular in Spain because of Paco De Lucia.

Gamboa: Yes, he took it over there. You know, it gives me pleasure because it's as though your son triumphed in another land. People like to be controversial with the Cajon in regards to if it's Spanish or Peruvian. Of course it's Peruvian. There are those who like to argue for the sake of argument. The Spanish, important people, well-known names, older people let's say, they know the history and it's not a problem. It gives me pleasure that the Spanish incorporated their music to the Cajon. It's a reversed conquest. We play the castanets because of their influence but of course we play them differently.

WPR: Tell me about the Cuban influence. Makarito's grandfather was Cuban and one of the four founders of Peru Negro. You also include congas and Batá in Peruvian music.

Gamboa: There has always been a deep relationship between Cuba and Peru in regards to the Afro. What is Afro, what came from Africa to different parts of the world is all the same. For example: the Cajon appeared in Peru, Cuba and Dominican Republic (although it appears to be lost). All that happened at the same time and each one with its own distinct personality. That's proof for those who say that the Cajon is not Peruvian. It was born from the blacks who used wood, boxes and all sorts of things. That is the proof that it is not Spanish.

WPR: When I met Rony and he introduced your music to me, I fell in love with the music and culture instantly. Then, when I saw Peru Negro at UCLA, I immediately saw the connection and felt like I was back in Cuba. That experience has influenced me very much. African roots is so important to our identity. Also, the show was so tight, beautiful and very impressive of this generation.

Gamboa: Yes, and sometimes we are all found in events like Dance Africa where they unite many different groups from different parts of the world Afro influenced. We went to that event for the first time two years ago in Chicago. Marvelous! At those events we were practicing from six in the morning. Everybody shares steps with each other. Tremendous experience!

WPR: Who are your main influences and inspirations?

Gamboa: Ronaldo Campos de La Colina, Caitro Soto, Leonardo "Gigio" Padorri and Alex Acuña.

WPR: Advice for those who want to learn Peruvian music.

Gamboa: Peruvian culture is very rich. If you're going to immerse yourself in it you will not be able to avoid the food and the dance. It's going to be like entering a new world that will take time. Every place has its enchantment and Peru in not an exception. On the contrary, it is one of the most beautiful places in the world, and I have traveled a bit.

Peru has many influences. We have the Afro in but we also have the Andina influence, India, the roots of De La Sierra de Peru. It is a tremendous culture of music and dance. The music of Altiplano (high lands). For example: Peru for the region of Puno that is divided by the Titicaca Lake with Bolivia. According to the Indian paintings, everything was born there. As a musician, I'm a musician from the coast but I'm a dancer from the music of Altiplano. The Andina music has been the most promoted music. Now, thanks to the efforts of people like Juan Morillo, Javier Naciocoups and Michael Corbett, Afro Peruvian music has grown. Andina music has always been popular. Many foreigners in general have visited the ruins of Machu Pichu since it is one of the Wonders of the World, but they don't have the knowledge of African music in Peru. Now, Peru Negro is here and representing at an international level!

▼
Plena Libre
William “Tato” González
and Gadwin Vargas

Interview, transcription & photos by Mani Bances

González: I am a teacher at a store in Puerto Rico called Tambú Drum Shop. Somehow I see WPR magazine there and to this day I don’t know who brings them there. [Pedro Barriera from Ponce, thanks!] I have been reading them for about two and a half years. I have them at home.

WPR: What a pleasure to hear. We do it as a labor of love. We invite you to write an article or send in something plena related. Please tell us more about yourself.

González: Perfect. I can get something to you. My name is William González but everyone knows me as Tato. I teach percussion in Puerto Rico and I have four years of playing with Plena Libre. [William Tato González plays timbale.] I also play with other bands, Bobby Valentine, Tommy Oliviera. I accompanied Celia Cruz for a long time. I’ve played with Luisito Carrion, Lalo Rodriguez. I retired for a while, only teaching and freelancing. I came to Plena Libre as a substitute for four days and I stayed for four years. The emphasis is on the folklore.

WPR: Tell us more about the plena tradition and the concept behind Plena Libre. Are you going for more of a roots style?

González: The origins and roots of the music are purely Puerto Rican. It comes from Ponce, the plena is from La Joya del Castillo. The concept of the group is to take our culture internationally, which we’ve been doing. We have been nominated for a Grammy three times. We hope our latest LP which came out recently does well. The personnel are all new.

WPR: Tell us about Gary Nuñez.

González: Mr. Gary Nuñez is the director and bassist of the group. He has a vast working knowledge of Puerto Rican folklore. Also Victor Vele, one of the singers has investigated all of the folklore and knows all of the Bomba and Plena styles. He is a compadre to one of the great singers of Plena, Mr. Torruella who now lives in New York, and on this LP, numbers of his are included.

WPR: What does Plena Libre mean?

González: Plena Libre means we bring more of ourselves to this music while keeping to the concept. This characterizes us. We have various numbers from the very traditional to what we are playing now. If you noticed, the percussion is more complemented. The plena was played with panderos only, hand drums. But now we integrate tambadoras, timbales, campanas (bells) together with the other instruments. It’s a bigger sound and it’s liked, very liked. It’s very danceable. You can dance to just the percussion. Later the other instruments were integrated. We have a big band. Now we have three trombones, bass, piano and the percussion section. The percussion section includes timbales, snare drum, congas and the panderos. We have the seguidor, tambador and requinto, which is the pandero that improvises the whole time. The tambadoras do a complementary rhythm.

WPR: Arrangements start with the panderos first and then other parts?

González: It depends. It could be the reverse. The panderos are always there in all types of plena. If it’s bomba we use the barrels. They are made by our singer, Victor Vele. He is a percussionist and has a workshop for making panderos too. He makes all the instruments of the bomba and plena genres. He has a vast knowledge of both genres. Of all the ones I know, he has the widest knowledge from the beginning through today.

WPR: When did you start learning the plena?

González: I started to learn the rhythms when I lived in Carolina, Puerto Rico. I was a child. Later, I studied music and got more of an understanding and took it to a professional level. Later, I studied music at the University Interamericana in San German. I studied music and concentrated on plena with professor Lajau and David Forespiel who now lives in New York. I joined the group and was disciplined in the plena concept in an in depth way with knowledge of the instruments. We do workshops in the schools and universities. Tomorrow we leave to do a workshop with the people at the University of Indiana. Today we did a workshop at Segundo Ruiz Belvis Center here in Chicago.

WPR: Please tell us the name of the different panderttas and their functions.

González: We have the seguidor, the requinto and the bajo, which is the largest one and keeps a steady beat or is called the tambador. Later comes the middle one, the seguidor and has another rhythm that stays the same. Later comes the requinto which is the king and improvises from the beginning to the end of the song. Later the conga and timbae together with the guiro from Puerto Rico, which is different from the guira, to accompany them.

WPR: What is different about the Puerto Rican guiro?

González: In Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) it is made out of metal. In Cuba it is bigger and the notches are wider and spaced wider. In PR what is known as guiro, that’s the name of the palo, a type of high guira. The notches are thinner and very close to each other. El payero, which is made of a tambre (metal wire) is closer together. Each region has its own guiro and they sound different. It grows in PR and is a craft. It’s a tree known as arbol de guiro. The guira is another palo tree and is round but the material is the same. It grows in PR and the artisans make the instruments. It grows all over the Caribbean but as far as I know is only used in PR. I will send you some information about variations in the style and what each instrument plays in music notation. Our concept is different but we stay true to the tradition.

WPR: Tell us about some of the famous piñeros and other important people in the music.

González: From Puerto Rico comes El Canario, Mon Rivera, singers and pioneers of the genre, now deceased. From then comes Mr. Torruella. They are...
the pillars of plena in PR. The tradition and music of the homeland is what we bring to the world. We've had the opportunity to visit the US, South America and Central America. We are the best traditional group of this genre in the world.

WPR: Anything else you want to share?

González: I want to encourage the followers of WPR magazine to keep reading it. It is very interesting and educational. I use it personally in my classes. I keep them in my classes and use them for reference with my students.

WPR: Our editor will be pleased to hear that! Now we speak with Darwin Vargas, conga player with Plena Libre. Darwin, how do you mix the tambador with the pandaretas in the arrangements?

Vargas: We have a system. The tambadoras reinforce the panderos. We add little things, variations to give it another "toquicito" but mainly the job of the tambadoras in the plena is to reinforce the panderos. You have the orchestra, the band behind you to make it stronger.

WPR: What are the rhythms that you include?

Vargas: We use different rhythms, Afro Cuban, Brazilian, etc, even batá rhythms. That’s part of what we do, blending the variations with the plena to sound a little different.

WPR: So that’s part of the meaning of Plena Libre? Nothing political?

Vargas: Yes, the plena is “free” but there are no political connotations. Many people think that we play plena and use other rhythms and experiment so it’s “free”.

WPR: Do all the arrangements start with the panderos first?

Vargas: The arrangements are by Gary Nuñez, our director and composer of most of the material. He’s the head of the group. It depends on his ideas. Some songs don’t start with the panderos up front. In the new disc for example, we have a number called El Parúelito Colorao.

WPR: Do you have to tune the tambadoras differently?

Vargas: I tune them similar to the punteador and seguidor. The punteador is the second one. The bass is the seguidor (like the tambador in congás) and the requinto is the small one that solos.

WPR: Do you switch drums among yourselves?

Vargas: Usually I stay on the tambadoras. The requinto player, Charlie Pizano also plays quinto on the bomba and the guaguancos. Yes, we switch.

WPR: You play the different bomba styles?

Vargas: Yes, we use the xicá, quembe, bambu, etc.

WPR: Are the youth today in PR into the tradition?

Vargas: They are more into reggaeton. It is a matter of educating them. We are doing workshops on the island and outside the island. We are trying to interest the young people in bomba and plena, to study it in depth.

WPR: What is different about the new recording?

Vargas: To start, half the band is new. Each person comes with his own toque. Each one plays differently. Gary took the opportunity to do other things, perhaps some more aggressive arrangements. The arrangements are different from earlier records. You can hear the difference. There are other arrangements, rhythms, perhaps heavier.

WPR: Where are you off to from here?

Vargas: We go to Indiana, Bloomington, Lafayette, then Iowa and then back to PR. Then we're off on a tour to Texas, California and Florida I think also.

WPR: What's your message to the world about bomba and plena? What do they have that's special? What do you all bring?

Vargas: These are very sabroso rhythms. I invite everyone to listen. Buy the disc, Bomba and Plena, Plena Libre Style. Everyone has their corner. Joyous rhythms and sabroso. I know they’ll like it.

WPR: The roots of plena are African?

Vargas: Yes, they are African.

WPR: What's the role of the plena in the community?

Vargas: In the old days it was the newspaper. It was a form of relating information. [Sings part of a well-known plena called “Cortaron a Elena”] It is a way to enjoy yourself, pass the time, protest, various reasons. You have the chants, personal things, what happens to this or that person. You make a chorus. That’s where this comes from.
Chicago, 2006

Pancho Sanchez at Hot House.

Michael Zerang and Hamid Drake at Links Hall.

Ubaka Hill, Women’s World Drummers, Diamana Diya.

Gingarte Capoeira at Old Town School Benefit for Rebeca Babcock.

Lenny Marsh and his son Ajani (right) with Dayna Calderon and Mani Bances at Evanston Ethnic Arts Festival.

Joe Rendon and Mani Bances at the Green Mill.

Valroy Dawkins (right) with Meshach Silas’ son, Silas (left).

Evanston Ethnic Arts Festival (West African/Afro-Columbian)

Carlos Cornier, Pavitha Anand and Anin.

Mani Bances, Bob Long and Rudy Membiela at the Green Mill.
Meshach Silas’ son Silas, with Ari Brown at Halsted St. Market Days.

photo by Mani Bances

more Chicago, 2006

Mani Bances, Abdul Hakeem and Rich Conti.

photo by Tsehay Reimeter

Slingerland! Kane County Vintage and Custom Drum Show.

photo by Terry Reimer

Carlos Equis Aguilla (far right) with bandmates at Hot House.

photo by Mani Bances

John Yost leads Taiko drumming for kids, Old Town School Folk and Roots Festival.

photo by Terry Reimer

Angel Melendez and the 911 Mambo Orchestra at the Old Town School Folk and Roots Festival.

photo by Terry Reimer

Joe Frost (center) leads a workshop at Link’s Hall.

photo by Lori Goh

Genesis at the Crossroads Festival (Mideast vibe).

photo by Mani Bances
The KoSA Academy launches its first edition of KoSA Montréal Drum and Percussion Workshops.

Montreal, June 7, 2006: The first edition of the KoSA Montréal Drums and Percussion Workshops was held this past June 3rd and 4th at the KoSA Academy in Montréal. The KoSA Academy founded and directed by Aldo Mazza of the internationally renown group “Répercussion” and his wife Dr. Jolán Kovács, opened its doors June 3rd and 4th for an electrifying immersion in drums and percussion.

The primary mission of the weekend was to provide students of all ages and all levels with not only the very best instruction by our top of the line faculty but also to surround the students with a motivating environment and world-class instruments. (The Academy boasts fully equipped drum and percussion studios with an intimate recital space. It also has individual practice rooms which are available for rental throughout the year). This year’s faculty was made-up of the finest instructors who are not only renowned performers in their field, but also share a true passion to teach. Featured at KoSA were Jerry Mercer (April Wine), Paul Picard (Céline Dion), Dom Famularo (int’l renown clinician), Camil Belisle (Montreal jazz great), Tony Albino (in-demand session artist) Aldo Mazza (Répercussion and KoSA director) Nasyr A. Al-Khabyr (Dizzie Gillespie), Pierre Cormier (Afro-Cuban specialist), Giampaolo Scatozza (hip-hop artist), and Allan Molnar (music technology specialist).

Participants had the chance to take in hands-on classes in drumset, conga, djembe, percussion accessories and world percussion instruments all day Saturday. The day ended with a live videoconference with music technology specialist Allan Molnar from his studio in New York City. On Sunday, participants returned for more and after a memorable session with the one-of-a-kind Dom Famularo, all participants proceeded to the Corona Theatre to meet and greet the legendary Steve Gadd. KoSA participants were treated to the Steve Gadd clinic that evening (produced by Steve’s Music store) as part of the registration price of attending KoSA. Needless to say, the clinic was the icing on the cake for all who experienced KoSA.
ZOLFO SPRINGS Florida- Primal Connection just finished a five-week Artist in Residence at Hardee County Association for Retarded Citizens that brought smiles to everyone’s faces.

“Some had a smile on their face all the time,” said Hardee ARC Director Dr. Michael McCoy, “It was incredible. They got to try various percussion instruments. Fred (Leavitt) encouraged them to try new things.”

Leavitt, founder, manager and player with Primal Connection, taught the music class at Hardee ARC every Thursday, for an hour for approximately 20 mentally challenged adults.

“They were very accepting of the program,” Dr. Michael McCoy said of his clients. “Some danced and some played the instruments,” Leavitt offered various drums and instruments to shake such as maracas and tambourines.

McCoy pointed out that the program even benefited those individuals he serves who are hearing impaired. “They can feel the vibrations.” McCoy was impressed with how his clients stayed on task.

“They were enthusiastic, no doubt,” he said. “They were constantly with it from the time the activity started to the end.” “The transition from the first session to the last was unbelievable”, McCoy said. At first his clients would not stop beating on the drums when Leavitt instructed them to stop. At the last session, McCoy noticed they learned rhythm, how to drum softer and louder and most importantly followed instructions from the leader.

The program was funded by a VSA grant. VSA Arts is an international organization that promotes the creative power in people with disabilities. VSA Arts of Florida is an affiliate headquartered at the University of South Florida.

Leavitt, who now lives in Sebring, introduced his program that uses percussion instruments to bring the joy of making music to people with disabilities last year for the profoundly handicapped at Wauchula Elementary School.

The program offers a natural and fun way for the participants to learn how to play a musical instrument. They learn to count, and structure rhythms start and stop together, music dynamics and word games. "The program has proven to be effective in reaching a broad range of mental disabilities, including Alzheimer’s and dementia, while lifting the spirit of participants," Leavitt said.

The Primal Connection is an ethnically diverse, world rhythm, percussion ensemble. It is also a not-for-profit organization dedicated to using the drum in health care and geriatrics, as well as a way of enhancing cross-disciplinary education. The organization also is dedicated to improving cultural relations by using the universal language of rhythm expressed through percussion to illustrate our oneness of origin and unity of spirit. To learn more about Primal Connection, visit their web site at www.primal-connection.org or call (863)402-8238.
Puerto Rico, 2006
By Leobadis "Piquin" Gonzalez

During the week of March 14th to 17th, Puerto Rico brought some rice and beans to the Columbia College School of Music in Chicago. This was part of a faculty exchange between Columbia College School of Music and the Puerto Rico Music Conservatory. The seminars, group workshops and performances included the PRMC Jazz Faculty with artist in residence Eddie Gomez, as well as performances with John Faddis and the Chicago Jazz Ensemble. The exchange offered a great opportunity to share music and culture, and in essence the student’s notable interest on learning the Afro-Caribbean music took a step further.

Professors:
Marco Pignataro - Sax
Luis "Perico" Ortiz - Trumpet
Luis Marin - Piano

Isaac Lausell - Guitar
Eddie Gomez - Bass
Andrew Lazaro - Percussion
Leobadis Gonzalez - Drum

Les escribo para traerle a manera de reporte lo que ha estado pasando en la primera semana de los talleres.

El Lunes: Tito de Gracia nos trajo un concepto centrado en la sección de percusión latina para aplicarlo a la bateria. Fue muchísima información y muy bien detallada.

El Martes: Estuve (Leobadis) hablando de ritmos de 6 y 4 compuestos, ejercicios para desarrollar vocabulario, independencia con la clave y un concepto de grupos de notas para dominar mejor la lectura y la improvisación.

El Miercoles y Jueves: Estuvo Henry Cole y nos trajo fundamento conceptual de la música, desarrollo de transcripciones, ideas para enriquecer la práctica diaria, desarrollo de solos (trading 4 s y de forma). Estuvo muy pero que muy intenso.

El Viernes: Etuvimos viendo con el grupo conceptos de superimposiciones rítmicas, "across the bar figures", desarrollo conceptual de solos y solos en formas de Blues y AABA. Este día en específico no pudimos ni tomar receso por lo interesante de los proyectos de cada participante.

Les cuento que ha sido una gran experiencia para todos y que nos ha llenado de mucha motivación y definitivamente mucha información para desarrollar en los próximos años.

Luego les traigo mas... se cuidan;

Leobadis
www.DrummersChoir.Org

Drummer’s Choir
By Leobadis "Piquin" Gonzalez

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www.DrummersChoir.Org
Eddie Palmieri
A Concert Review By Chris Williamson

Eddie Palmieri and the Afro-Caribbean All Stars
Hot House, Chicago, Illinois
March 29, 2006

The short-and-stout Palmieri ambled onto the stage from a phantom door at the rear followed by his other five bandmates. They all gave a unique feel to the performance, and no two were alike. The conguero, Giovanni Hidalgo, cast a similar silhouette as Palmieri; however, trombonist Conrad Herwig was quite the opposite: a tall and lanky Caucasian standing about six-foot-four, hunching over to meet the mic with the bell of his instrument. Brian Lynch, who proved to have deserved the opportunity to play with the likes of Palmieri, cast an intellectual glow on the performance with his cleanly shaved head, glasses, and trendy wardrobe. Alto saxophonist Donald Harrison appeared as the stereotypical jazz saxophonist, with curly brown hair, short and stocky, sporting a leather blazer and brushed golden sax, reminiscent of an antique instrument. Jose Santiago, the sixty-something professor on bass, made one more for Palmieri’s generation on stage. Finally, timbale player, Jose Claussell fit the Latin-inspired music bill perfectly with his off-white sweater and contrasting dark brown skin.

After the standard introduction and arsenal of announcements and greetings, an attention-getting chart spontaneously began-no soft intro or crescendo here. The popping of congas, rhythmic montuno, and deafening staff-defying trumpet lines began instantly. As a listener foot tapping was all but impossible as the Latin groove built toward an obvious climax, followed by a unison falloff into solos, the first of which was a bone solo. Typically, bone solos tend toward bland, middling soundings performances, but this was miles from an ordinary solo, utilizing shakes, dynamics, and instrumental range, often sounding similar to a bass bone or trumpet. Following, a trumpet solo, which was predictable loud and high, blew listeners ears off between the dynamic and tonal range to the excellence of the melody built within the performance. He was obviously conscious of the backgrounds and melody, too, because he seamlessly blended his solo into the backgrounds when they came in, dropping both his volume and pitch to be more fitting, but still stand out enough to distinguish it from the other players. Palmieri was on deck and made it impossible to not know that once he started soloing. Continuing the written Montuno, he soloed in his right hand, often playing huge (and hugely dissonant) chords in both hands, and then fading right back into the solo/montuno combination. Contrasting with the preceding piano solo, the conga solo was deafening and made viewers cringe at the apparent pain Hidalgo must have been experiencing to produce such volume from the drums. He often ventured out of time for a few bars, and then dropped right back into the rhythm, doing so impeccably. Also worth noting is the effectiveness and attention paid by the timbale player physically possible with the instrument. Oftentimes one had to look up and double check that the solo hadn’t been passed on to the trombonist because he was playing so low, yet effectively. However, his lows don’t hold a candle to his high notes, which must have been miles above the staff. And to be sure the audience could hear his playing, he nearly inserted he microphone into this instrument, a la Herwig. The chart ends rather abruptly four bars after the trumpet solo with four sixteenth notes (seemingly to establish a final pulse) followed by four sets of quarter-note triplets to finish the song in a very commercial fashion just as it began.

For a change of pace, the third piece was in a minor key, but still retained the
Latin feel of the previous ones. With a solo piano intro, soon to be joined by the horns, it was a definite (and pleasant) variation on the others. The audience was very involved too, as was apparent by them clapping a 2-3 clave beat on top of the performers. After the audience dropped out of it’s trance, Palmieri’s solo began, and it was easy to notice the similarity to his playing, in this particular piece, to that of Keith Jarrett. Palmieri played heavy, minor and diminished chords in his left hand while following the chords with a right hand melody, which was fantastic. He also began trading off melodic lines between hands, which added that much more variety, and complexity. Building off of Palmieri’s solo, Lynch played around with the minor key, hopping up to the relative major once in a while, again adding contrast to the performance. The subsequent sax solo, again, provided some contrast, this time dynamically, using a much softer tone, as is easier with the instrument than a trumpet. He played most of the melodic lines in the lower register of the instrument, but occasionally ran up to the higher pitches, which provided some very interesting phrases. Yet another bone solo followed, and he made sure to stay with the minor key of the song, and faded out of the solo by lifting the horn away from the mic while the others blasted the melody again. However, the next conga solo was very curious. He used rhythmic complexity instead of tonal complexity during his solo. Giovanni Hidalgo stayed on one drum, using just a pop sound (with little tone). Palmieri’s solo was next, and it proved to be yet another outstanding one. The most notable feature, though, is that after the meat of the solo he began playing a line which then, after changing slightly, turned out to be the ending phrase.

As if the crowd wasn’t awake enough already, this piece opens with a massive forte-piano crescendoing to a piercingly loud choral final, followed by a bone solo, which seemed to overuse a triplet phrase accenting the first of the three notes. After a few times around it got very repetitive since he repeated it about ten times or so. The backgrounds during the solo were the most effective all night, for they didn’t overshadow the solo, but blended well. The trumpet solo was confusing too. He jumped from octave to octave making it hard to follow and create a smooth line. One may have been asking “What about the bass?” throughout this, but the first bass solo of the night came. And just in time. He used the entire instrument and created a very comprehensible solo, which was actually very enjoyable, whereas bass solos typically become very monotonous, this was quite far from it.

If this chart didn’t take its inspiration from Chick Corea, nothing did. It had a typical 1-4-5 progression creating a very happy feel and used 2-6 to 1-5 tones. A rhythm-only breakdown was very pleasant and well placed, giving the listener a break from deafening horns. The sax solo that followed blended well with the melody and backgrounds, as seemed typical for the ensemble. An interesting lack of trading solos was apparent-until now. The trumpet and bone traded every 32 bars, then 16, then 8, all the way down until the solos literally blended together, which created a stunning effect.

Another very recognizable, almost commercial sounding, chart involved the ensemble singing Spanish lyrics. This is where the band really shined, grooved, and fed off of each other’s and the crowds energy: once the vocals began the audience created more noise than that of a March Madness game. The environment certainly helped, too, seeing as the Hot House is about the size of a large corner coffee shop. Palmieri’s band made it feel like Death Valley with this song too. There were so many bodies dancing people opposite the stage looked like they were trying to dodge bullets while trying to catch a glimpse of the band. It really was a dance party. The surprising thing is that the energy maintained its level-and even got higher-as the concert progressed, especially during this somewhat diminished sounding chart.

The next title began with a seriously rockin’ conga solo, which everyone, even band members, loved. This is when the real dancing started though. With the beat solid as a rock, one couldn’t help but nod with the beat or dance the night away, which is what seemed to appeal to about fifty club-goers. The beat really picked up and dancers were rightfully challenged, but everyone enjoyed the finale during which the whole band was sweating, jamming, and seeming to have the time of their lives.

Between the dancing, music, and atmosphere created by the people, lighting, and décor, it was one of the most enjoyable concerts. No listener ever checked his watch, dozed off, or became the least bit uninterested. The energy was very mutual, passing through the club like wildfire. All in all, a fantastic concert, and it’s a good thing there were four over the course of the two days, because there was absolutely no seats left, and very little standing room.
Plena Libre: Evolución (Times Square)
Eleven years and eleven CD’s ago, Plena Libre burst onto the musical scene in Puerto Rico, with a sound that’s rooted in the traditional 100-years old genre, the plena. Since then, Plena Libre has become ambassadors of the new sound, taking their updated blend of roots music to many parts of the world. Nominated three times for a Grammy and winning numerous awards in PR, Evolución marks a new level of maturity and quality with Gary Nuñez at the helm. Plena and bomba rhythms are enhanced by samba, 6/8, bata, rock, reggae and descarga rhythms along with a pumped up wind section and classical and electric guitars and vibes. “Young, talented and spicy.” Special guests include legends, Ángel Luis Torruellas, Andrés Jiménez and Quique Domenech.

Annette A. Aguilar & Stringbeans:
No Cheap Dates (Stringbeans)
Annette A. Aguilar has done it all in her two decades plus professional percussion career. She has played, recorded, shared stages and toured with the likes of Tito Puente, Stevie Wonder, Jefferson Airplane, The Grateful Dead, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, and many others. Selected as Latin Jazz Ambassadors of 2003 and 2005 for the US State Dept. and the Kennedy Center, they’ve toured Southern Africa and Rwanda, sharing their knowledge of the music of the Americas and the Caribbean. Stringbeans blends Afro-Cuban and Afro-Brazilian percussion rhythms with harp, guitar, violin, piano and bass to create a unique string and percussion sound, electrifying crowds with their dynamic style.

Mandara (SENJO Music, BMI)
Valerie Dee Naranjo, Barry Olsen, Bryan Carrott, Vince Cherico and Leo Traversa combine African and Pan-American songs and influences, voices and instruments on this self-titled CD that uses the lotus sutra metaphor to teach that life at its most fundamental level is impervious to suffering and death. Both physics and Buddhism agree that “harmonizing vibration” can create a powerful effect, having the potential to bridge cultural, linguistic and emotional barriers. Djembe, conga, gyil, marimba, vibes, ikharkhachin, gong, kit drum, Native American percussion, tambourine, kuar, cajombo, kombe, and kpanlogo drums combine with strings, horns, guitars, vocals and piano to create a beautiful, powerful music.

Valerie Dee Naranjo: Lewaa’s Dream (Mandara Music)
Drum! magazine’s reader’s poll #1 World Percussionist for 2005, Valerie Dee Naranjo performed on gyil in Ghana’s Kobine Festival of Traditional Music, leading to a declaration of a chiefly decree in the Dagora nation that women be allowed for the first time to play the instrument. In 1996, she and her husband and musical partner Barry Olsen took first place in that festival’s competition, currently the only non-West Africans to do so.

Studer, Drake and Zerang:
Drummin’ Chicago (FMR Records)
Fredy Studer, Hamid Drake and Michael Zerang are among the greatest drummers on the planet. The concept for Drummin’ Chicago was born at the Winter Solstice Percussion Concerts series in Chicago at Link’s Hall. These three adventurous percussionists stroked their drums, evoke hums, whines, mumbles and other voicings. Subtle manipulations make for a huge number of timbres. The Art Ensemble of Chicago and Sun Ra explored the possibilities of multiple percussion and Drummin’ Chicago continues this tradition. This CD covers an enormous range of stylistic concepts, from heavy textural improvising to deep and inventive grooves, disparate elements merged into a new kind of mythological beast.

Pigeons du Sable:
Gnawa Chants from Morocco (earthcds.com)
Lawrence Millard has done the huge honor of bringing us field recordings of traditional groups in their native settings. The Gnawa Boys are presented here. “We’re from Soudan. We were brought to Morocco through arabs as slaves doing several works. We speak berber. We play gnawa style. We have several music instruments such as el gumbri, el guanga and ikharkhachin.” Hard to find music is now accessible.

Durbar Procession in Cape Coast (earthcds.com)
Lawrence Millard again, brings us the profound music of a traditional Ghanaian group. His field recordings are of the highest quality and this one has a 9-minute video recorded live by Momoko Okada of the procession, accessible when you insert this CD in the CD-ROM drive of your computer. Durbar Procession is a parade and celebration of the Chiefs and Queen Mothers in the streets of Cape Coast, Ghana. Huge, skin drums are carried by members of the parade and are played with sticks by men following them. Costumes are bright and colorful. The sound is overwhelming!

Bronx Talk presents: Bronx Music, Vol. 1 (bronxnet.com)
This is the music of the Bronx, New York. It’s doo-wop. It’s hip-hop. It’s salsa. It’s jazz. It’s rock. It’s heavy. It’s light. It’s loud. It’s soft. It’s blues. It’s black. It’s white. It’s brown. It’s proud. It’s humble. It’s bold. Best of all, it’s made by us, the people of the Bronx. This CD is an extension of Bronx Talk AM and Bronxnet community TV. Here is a chance for the Bronx to sing, spin, dance and play so people from all over the world can experience the wonderful, sweet music of the Bronx. (Hello to Angel Rivera and Charlie Rosario)
Rhythm and Soul: Double Album (Rob On Bass)
Live in Times Square and Drums Buckets & Bass
are some of the funkiest, fastest grooves I’ve ever heard. Tracks 1-9 were recorded live on the corner of Broadway and 47th Street in NYC. Others were recorded in Tokyo, Japan and Stockholm, Sweden. R.O.B., Adam Power and Lock, playing bass, guitar, kit and three upside down plastic buckets, produced such a jam, that the largest crowd I’ve ever seen were out supporting them and dancing the night away. They cover such tunes as I Feel Good, Got To Be Real, Get Up Offa That Thing and New York at Night.

Jorge Martin:
Griffith Park Drum Circle (323-665-2338)
The Griffith Park Drum Circle was treated to jams with a seasoned, professional international musician. Ethnomusicologist, producer-songwriter and percussionist Jorge Martin uses an extensive background of musical influences, including indigenous music from Asia, Africa, South America and the Caribbean. He has performed and or recorded with the likes of George S. Clinton (film composer, conductor), Satí (India), Dr. Eva Jessye (Porgy and Bess), Ed Mann (Frank Zappa), Sheila E. (Grammy winner), Malang Bayo (National Dance Company of Senegal), Sundiata (Babatunde Olatunji) and Mimi Napes (John Cougar) among many others. A highly powerful recording! Go to LA now!

Baggage Claim: Binghamton High School Steel Drum Band (BHSsteelband.org)
Joel Smales directs this outstanding group of young steel drum players. Together, they produce some of the most traditional or original sounds. Leads, double seconds, percussion (conga, shekere), cello, drums and bass combine to take the traditional sound of a steel band to new heights. Some cuts are lilting, romantic island tunes, some are very danceable, others sound more classical and one cut, I swear, is Oye Como Va! A great effort and a pleasure to listen to, this group keeps the steel pan tradition alive. Joe Smales and the students’ dedication show in the high quality of their work.

Windy City Islanders: Hang Loose! (windycityislanders.com)
Eric “Baron” Behrenfeld on percussion joins George Klingelhofer on Ukulele and lead vocals, Chris Carlson on lead Ukulele and Craig Stenseth on bass to create Ukulele Hawaiian music from a Great Lakes perspective with passion for surf, sand and sun woven into every song. Their musical influences include the Ka’au Crater Boys, Israel Kamakawio’ole, IMU, Jimmy Buffett and the Beatles. Their debut CD includes some casual and relaxed Hawaiian favorites with a few of their own fresh originals. Behrenfeld plays congas, cowbell, ocean drum, claves, tambourine, wood “fish” scraper, vibra slap and cabasa and Klingelhofer plays Ipu Heke Hawaiian gourd drum.

Arthur Hull: Drum Circle Facilitation:
Building Community Through Rhythm
(Village Music Circles)
Drum Circle Facilitation is THE complete rhythm event facilitation handbook. Arthur Hull is widely recognized as The Father of the modern facilitated drum circle movement in our nation. “Hull captures the spirit of drumming and leads the way toward making rhythmic expression accessible for everyone.” “Arthur has extraordinary wisdom, captivating style, unsurpassed talent, [a] brilliant sense of humor and uncompromising com-

The Conga Drummers Guidebook
intermed/advanced (Sher Music Co.)
There’s a lot of Conga "How-To" books & videos out now, mostly geared toward beginners. This one is for the player who already is well on their way. Michael Spiro has played & studied with many of the masters including Changuito, Giovanni Hidalgo, Jesus Alfonso, Ignacio Berroa, Regino Jimenez, Mark Lamson & Dave Garibaldi. His precise knowledge of Clave is presented here in the most thorough way. This 115 page book/CD is geared to the intermediate & advanced player. It has 43 CD tracks of exercises & rhythms that go way further than other conga books. Spiro’s up to date information will definitely bring one’s conga playing level up a notch or two... but only if you PRACTICE. It’s available from shermusic.com or descarga.com. (By Isaac Gutiwik)

Michael Taylor: Remembering How To Drum
(holygoat.com)
This wonderful DVD, A Study of Traditional Djembe Technique, includes beginning to advanced skill levels, interactive ensembles, looping practice rhythms and informative interviews. Taylor is the founder of Holy Goat Percussion. He is a percussionist, educator, recording artist, performer, composer and Tam Tam Mandingue certified professor (a degree granted exclusively by Guinean Grand Master drummer Mamady Keita). Taylor recently released his third CD entitled “Silence in the Rhythmic Soup”, rhythmic environments for yoga and meditation. This DVD also includes basic yoga warm-ups chosen especially for djembe drummers. “We are all drummers. And our first jam sessions date back to a duet of heartbeats in the womb.” Listen and remember how to drum.

Obini Batá Cuba: Conjunto Feminino
(earthcds.com)
Recorded live in Havana, Cuba at the Yoruba Cultural Center in 2003, Obini Batá was the first group of females in Cuba, probably the whole world, to play the bata drums professionally. Several women who sung and danced in Conjunto Folklorico National De Cuba founded the group in 1993. This performance was given in the year of their tenth anniversary. The selections of songs on this DVD demonstrate the richness of Afro Cuban musical and dance traditions in contemporary Cuba. The show starts with a riveting Orishas suite and then delves into some innovative rumba interpretations of popular songs. Includes an interview with Eva Trujillo and commentary by renowned Cuban musicologist Enrique Zayas. Fascinating! ▼
In November of 1989, the Segundo Ruiz Belvis Cultural Center in Chicago established a son, dance and percussion workshop, which focused on the folkloric music indigenous to Puerto Rico, known as Bomba and Plena. This workshop, enriched with culture, developed a series of presentations within the community to promote cultural awareness. In 1990 the workshop was baptized with the name Grupo Yuba. Grupo Yuba is named after one of the bomba rhythms, as well as the hiding place where run-away slaves met. Yuba teaches interpersonal skills, actively promotes the value of education and the importance of volunteerism, while opposing involvement with gangs and drugs. The members of Yuba have become some of the most incredible performers and leading experts of Bomba and Plena, in all of the Midwest. Yuba has performed at many of the most prestigious institutions in Chicago and have shared the stage with some of the most renowned Afro-Antillean folkloric artists in Illinois and Puerto Rico. Eli Samuel Rodriguez is their Director.

BOMBA is the most important form of music and dance brought to Puerto Rico by the African slaves in the 1600’s. The African slaves were brought to the Caribbean and the Americas to work the gold and silver mines, and eventually to work on the sugar plantations. The artistic expression of Bomba was the only one permitted by the sugar plantation owners for the slaves to use. Bomba is comprised only of percussion instruments such as the barrel drum, maraca and two wooden sticks played against the main drum named the Cua. For years this artistic expression has continued to be played in the street, in rural areas, at churches and in formal and non-formal gatherings. Although communication between slaves was restricted by the plantation owners, they still found a way to communicate via Bomba. Bomba had several functions: reaffirmation from the ancestors and from the land they were taken away from, social ritual used to form community and family bonds between Africans from different nations, and as a celebration of the fact that they were surviving, physically and spiritually, regardless of being treated unfairly, being violated and assassinated by their slave owners. Bomba has a variety of rhythms such as bomba sica, bomba yuba, bomba holandes, bomba cuembe, bomba guembe and bomba seis corridor. Bomba has a variety of regions like bomba of Mayaguez, bomba of the south (Ponce, Salinas, Guayama) and bomba of Loiza.

PLENA, another form of Afro-Puerto Rican folkloric music, is the result of African rhythms with hints of European instrumental influence, particularly from Spain. It also has a Taíno Indian instrumental influence. Initially of African influence, the influence of Spain’s stringed instruments is evident. This is especially noticeable in melody, verse and instrument structures. A Plena is typically arranged with a guitar, cuatro, drums, pan drums and an accordion. Additional instruments can also be used such as a guiro and several pan drums named seguidores. The Plena began as street music otherwise known as “the island’s newspaper” and was later found in bars and nightclubs where it was played by as many people of white complexion as people of color. It is believed that music with similar characteristics to the Plena played in Puerto Rico was heard as early as the end of the 19th century and was seen as the basic inspiration for other forms of musical expression in Puerto Rican society and across the hemisphere. Bomba and Plena are Afro-Puerto Rican genres. They were developed predominantly in African communities around the island’s coastal areas where the economy was concentrated on cultivating and refining sugar. Four centuries later, bomba and plena have traveled with migrating Boricuas seeking work in cities like New York, Philadelphia, Chelsea in Boston, Cleveland, Orlando and Chicago. We continue to work with respect and admiration to promote this music and folklore.
Alright, no messing around here; no time for chit-chat; grab a djembe or ashiko or conga; it’s time to get to work! Better yet, grab a drum and a friend or two to learn along with. Drumming is even more fun in a group! Have a seat in a comfortable, armless chair. Get that drum up off the ground by hugging it (leaning away from you) between your knees and/or resting it on top of your feet.

Hit the center of the head with your right palm, keeping your hand flat and relaxed. This is our lowest pitched (bass) tone. Let’s call it GUN (pronounced ‘goon’). Play the same stroke with your left hand. We’ll call this DUN (pronounced ‘doon’). Make sure that both GUN and DUN sound exactly the same. And remember to stay relaxed.

Time to jam! Here is a simple rhythm that emulates the beating of our hearts. To make our reading easy, I will shorten GUN to simply G and DUN will be D. To help you internalize the rhythm, speak aloud each stroke as you play it. When you read G, speak the syllable ‘GUN” and simultaneously play the rhythm with your right hand. When you read D, speak the syllable ‘DUN’ and simultaneously play the bass stroke with your left hand. Don’t be shy. Speak loudly. Speaking (or singing?) the syllables and rhythms with your mouth will help your hands to learn them faster. Any time that you read a dash (-) just quietly say the word, ‘rest’ to yourself, and don’t play a stroke on your drum. Start slowly. It is much better to be slow and precise than to be fast and sloppy. Speed will come with controlled, accurate repetition. Take your time, repeat the rhythm over and over, until you feel comfortable with it and, above all else, have fun!

G - - D G - - D G - - - D (repeat many times)

Spoken, this rhythm is “GUN (rest) (rest) DUN GUN (rest) (rest) DUN”...etc. The hands you were using should have been; right (rest) (rest) left, etc. Excellent job! Now let’s try a new pattern.

G D G - G D G - G D G - G D G - (repeat many times)

“GUN DUN GUN (rest)”...etc.

You didn’t believe that it would be this easy did you? We can’t stop there. Now combine our first rhythm with our second rhythm. Take the first four notes of each, put them together, and voila!

G - - D G D G - - D G D G - (repeat)

By now, you have a fairly good grasp of the GUN and DUN (bass) strokes. Here are a few more patterns for you to play. Feel free to make up some of your own. Have fun with them and don’t forget to stay relaxed, sing and practice, practice, practice! In Lesson 2 we will add ‘Open’ tones to our ‘Bass’ tones to create more great sounding rhythms.

G D G D G - - G D G D G - - - (repeat)

G - - D G - D - G - - D G - D - (repeat)

G D - D G D G - G D - D G D G - (repeat)

Mark Powers has studied and performed throughout the United States, China, Thailand and West Africa. Mark is a freelance percussionist and educator, an adjudicator for the Wisconsin School of Music Association and a co-holder of the Guinness World Record for the longest drum roll by a group. He can be found online at www.powerspercussion.com.
Complete the form below (please print) and send it with $12.00 to:
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Do not send cash. Make checks or money orders payable to World

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Letters to the Editor

I’m really impressed with World Percussion and Rhythm magazine! All the
interviews are great. I’m sure the whole community agrees. It’s come a
long way. We definitely enjoy it. Keep up the good work.
Greg Penn, Chicago, IL

Aloha Terry. Thank you for inviting us into your magazine. You’ve done a
fine job covering hand percussion and percussionists. WPR is chock full of
valuable and inspiring information. Here is our business card to
include in your up and coming issue. I’ll take advantage of your offer to
include your magazine with every order shipped out of our drums. I’m
especially excited about sharing your info with the female percussionists
I’ve been making drums for recently. Tom and Rudy Mahaile, vulcanepercussion.com “Where Every Drum is an Original”.

Below is the last letter I recieved from “Bongo” Richard Schultz before he
passed away. “Bongo” would always send the nicest letters, keeping us up
on the latest drum stuff going on in the city of Harvey IL and beyond. He
was a great lover of the blues, jazz, rock and played in many situations
over the years. He built many very cool hand drum "kits" or "contrap-
tions"! A very creative person! I will miss you! Thank you for all your
inspiration! I know you were a freind and mentor to so many. And also
thank you for your great gift of some of your drum sets. Our special kids
at school will appreciate them and will carry on your legacy of rhythm,
fun and love! Much love and respect, Terry Reimer. WPR

Dear Terry, this issue of WPR is awesome! Especially with interviews of all of the stars.
And Gary Burton on the cover really does it!
I saw him with Chick Corea. I am adding two
aluminum dounemkes to my small set. It will
have bongos, a Remo fiberglass dounbeks
and the two new drums and a cowbell. My
cymbal and cowbell stand is made from a
hospital IV stand. It has three brass cow-
bells, three black cowbells along with
chimes, tambourine and three cymbals.
“Such pleasant noise!” I play Deagan marim-
bas. Hope you enjoy the CD. I play blues harp and you can hear my little
set off and on. Got to try out my newest drum set; three bongos, three
dounemkes, one hand drum mounted up front and two cowbells. Everyone
in the club loved the sounds as we were doing an acoustic jam. But the
highlight of the night was when Killer Ray Allison came in with his hot
blues hand band and did James Brown songs and other hot numbers.
Everyone said the drums sounded great with the blues band. “Bongo” Dick Schultz

Of Note

Compiled by Terry Reimer

Latin Beat magazine is up for sale. Rudy Manguel and his wife, Yvette are pion-
eer publishers and have been great inspirations to me and to countless others.
Thank you for all you’ve done!
The AACM (Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians) is turning 40!
Their first major benefit was held in Chicago featuring the godfather of the AACM,
pianist Muhal Richard Abrams and the group’s vice chair, flutist Nicole Mitchell.
Julian Pavone, now about two years old, from Detroit, Mich., played drum kit,
wowing 30,000 fans of the Cleveland Cavaliers recently. His father Bernie has a
recording company preparing a CD of the toddler playing!
Marc Quinones was voted Percussionist of the Year by DRUM! magazine’s Drums-
ries reader’s poll!
Bobby Sanabria, Bronx, NY born and bred Grammy nominated drummer, percus-
sionist, bandleader, composer and educator was inducted into the Bronx Walk of
Fame in June! Congratulations!
The Primal Connection has been awarded a $4,000 grant from the Highlands
County Florida Board of Commissioners and the Tourist Development Council!
Congratulations to Grammy Nominees: Angel Melendez, Chicago’s very own
bandleader, musical director and arranger, called the “Manbo Kings of the Mid-
west” and voted Chicago Magazine’s “Chicagoan of the Year, Omar Sosa for
“Mulas”, Ray Barretto for “Time Was, Time Is”, Dave Samuels and the Caribbean
Jazz Project for “Here and Now”, Sammy Figueroa and His Latin Jazz Explosion for
“And Sammy Walked In” and Eddie Palmieri for “Listen Here”!
Bobby Sanabria is wowing 30,000 fans of the Cleveland Cavaliers recently. His father Bernie has a
recording company preparing a CD of the toddler playing!

Classifieds

GO TO PERCUSSIONMUSIC.COM for a huge selection of drum and percussion
instructional materials. We carry instructional videos, DVD’s and CD’s for all drum
and percussion instruments, for congas, bongos, djembe, tabla, timbales and much
more! We also carry sheet music and books.

Jose Antonio Rodriguez, singer with Sierra Maestra, Ibrahim Ferrer, guitarist.
Arif Mardin, one of the greatest producers of all time.
Monguito el Unico, featured on africambiance.com.
“Bongo” Dick Schultz, beloved friend and percussionist, Local Hero.
Miguel Aurelio “Anga” Diaz, Born 1966, Nat. School of Art, Havana. Grammy win-
ing Cuban percussionist, composer,arranger, formed Opus B. and Irakere.

WPR wishes to honor the following important people who have passed:
Thomas Yost, local hero John Yost’s brother who contributed so much to the
musical heritage and friendship of Chicago percussionists and many more.
Malachi Thompson, brilliant trumpet player and composer, writer, historian-
Moacir Santos, legendary composer and arranger who expanded popular pre-
cedents of Brazilian music.
Hilton Ruiz, pianist, passed June 6th, New Orleans, at the age of 54.
Bob Weinstock, with over 1,000 albums on the Prestige Label.
Shiv Dayal Batish, genius Indian Punjabi, Urdu and Hindi singer.
Natalio Tirado Jr., master drum maker, singer and dancer.
Phil Elwood, San Francisco Examiner, Chronicle and KPFA radio jazz critic.
Genaro “Heny” Alvarez, author of the Opera Hommy, salsa,
Afrocaribbean protagonist.
Israel Kantor, Cuban singer, musician, composer and arranger.

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