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\$6.99 US | \$7.99 CAN

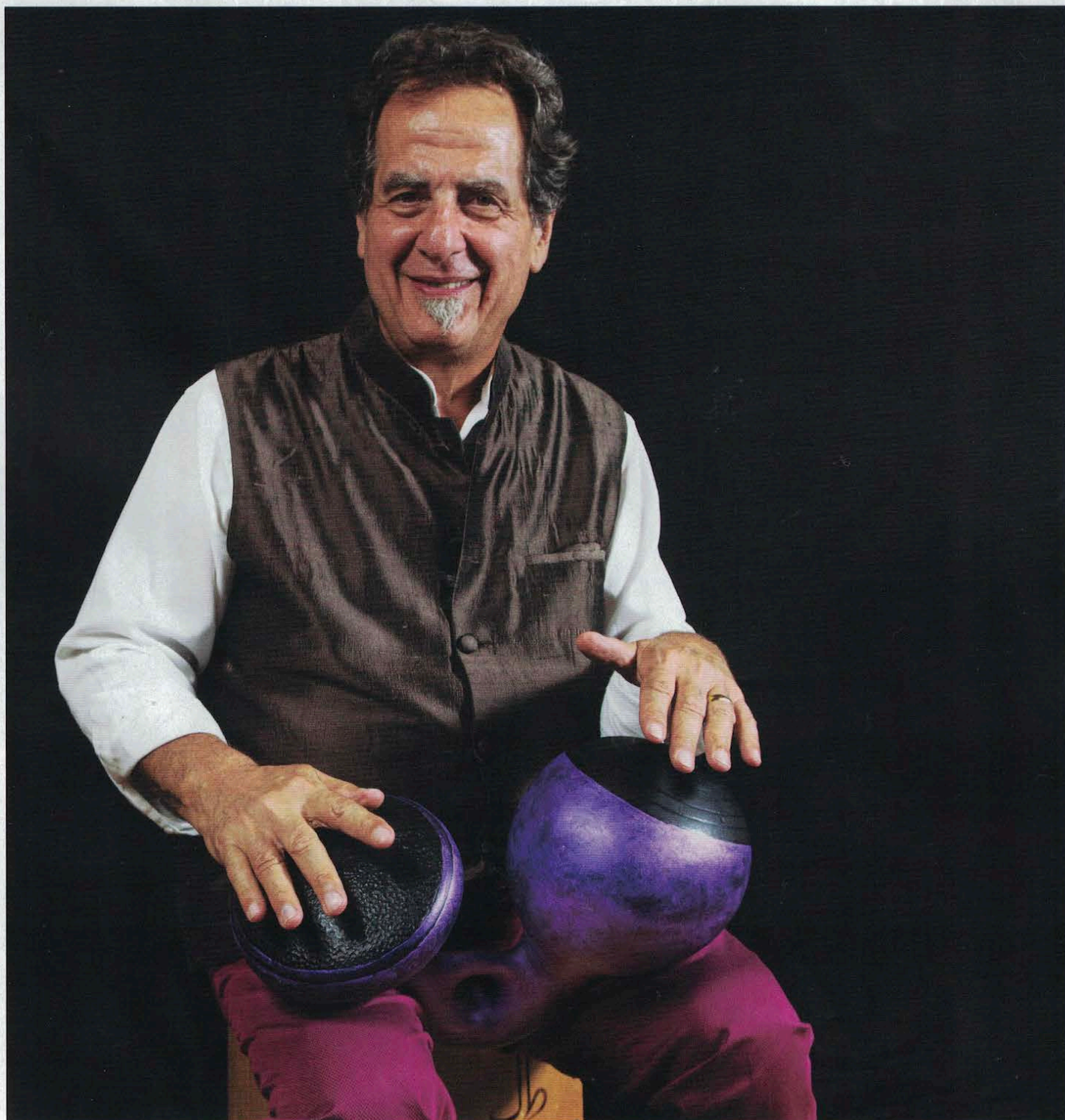


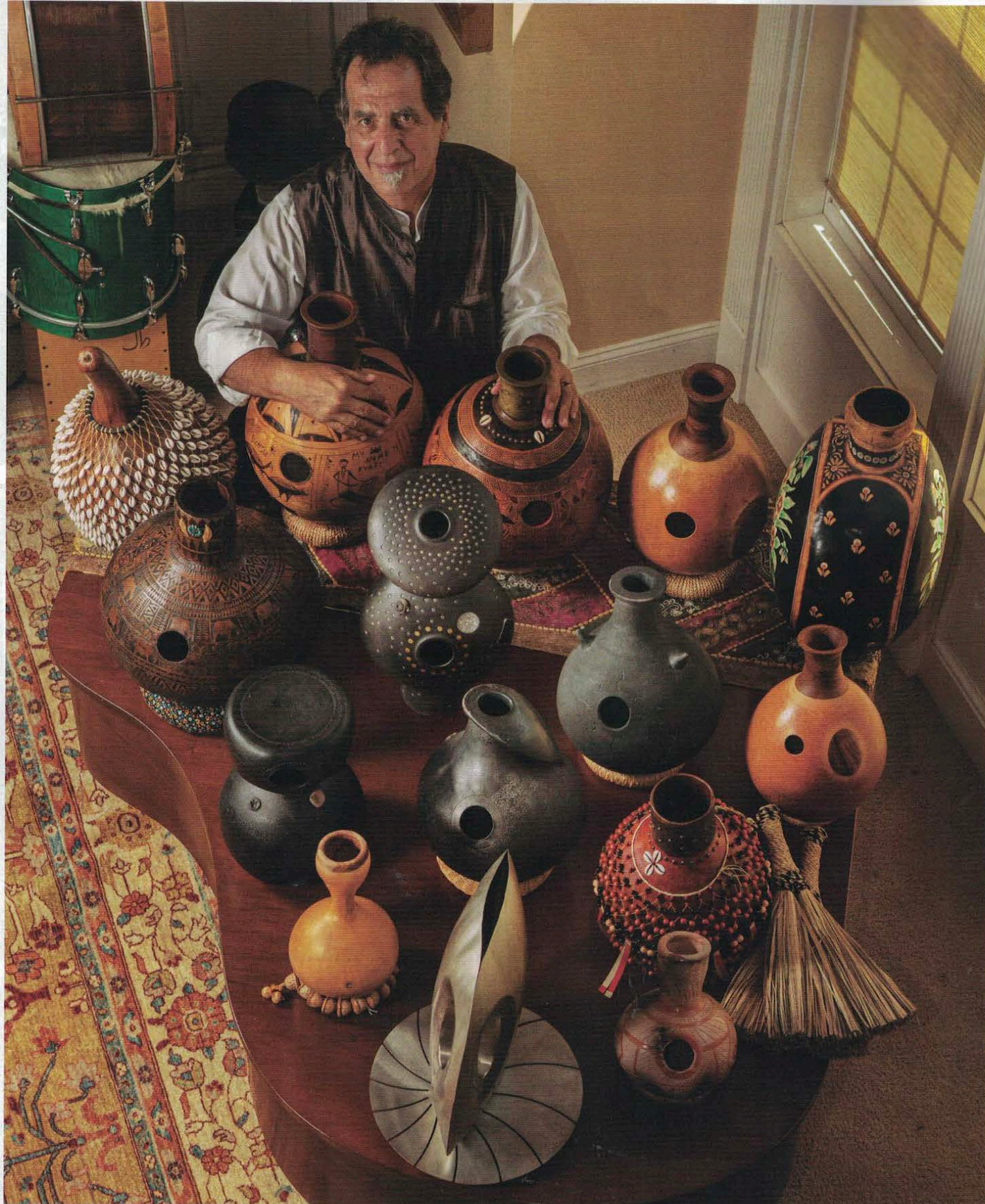
ISSUE 076 • NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2019

010 JAMEY HADDAD

A Life In Rhythm & Harmony

BY GREG BAUMAN





This is a large assortment of Lucedale drums either made from ceramic, metal or gourd organic material. The black one with the flat top is a work in progress by the great percussionist living in NY, Rich Stein. The black one just in front, between my hands, is called an Uwatu; commissioned by me and made by Carl Peverall. This drum has a skin head at the very bottom. Carl lives in the Asheville, North Carolina area.

JAMEY HADDAD

A LIFE IN RHYTHM AND HARMONY

INTERVIEW: GREG BAUMAN PHOTOS: JEFF FORMAN

Jamey Haddad is one of those names that maybe you've heard of, or maybe not. His name doesn't ring out like a Vinnie or a Ringo or a Buddy, but Jamey Haddad has "been there and done that" as much or more than many of the drummers and percussionists those of us in our chosen profession or avocation know as household names. I would go to the point of calling him one of the backbones of World Percussion. He's worked with more big names and important musicians than probably eighty percent of all working drummers/percussionists. His musical associations have included: Paul Simon, Esperanza Spaulding, Sting, Danilo Perez, Fred Hersch, Meryl Streep, Yo-Yo Ma, Dawn Upshaw, Herbie Hancock, Paul Winter, Dave Liebman, Simon & Garfunkel, Nancy Wilson, Carly Simon, Joe Lovano, Joanne Brackeen, Betty Buckley, Glenn Velez, and The New York Voices to name a few. The friends he knows on a first name basis are amongst the musical elite.

For Jamey, music isn't solely about performing. He's known as a premier educator with much of his teaching time spent at the New England Conservatory of Music, The Cleveland Music Institute and Berklee College of Music. For the past many years, Jamey has been Professor of World Percussion at the legendary Oberlin Conservatory where he and faculty partner Jay Ashby, in addition to their regular teaching activities, have created and run the PI program [Performance and Improvisation], an innovative approach to integrating jazz and classical student

musicians into each other's realms. Jamey is also the recipient of a Fulbright Scholarship as well as three Performance Grants from the National Endowment For The Arts.

Jamey Haddad is deep; he's spiritual. When talking with him, one gets the feeling of actually communicating with a kind of Guru of Percussion. For Jamey, it's almost less about the physics of percussion, like metronomic time, independence and technique, and more about finding a more earthy, culturally correct, from-the-heart, feel-it place to dwell in musically. He is what I might describe as a human version of a very fine, well-worn old K Zildjian cymbal; the sound coming from them both is so filled with heart, soul and emotion.

Jamey and I have been friends for a number of years, I think due to my own drum set and percussion obsession and my close proximity to Oberlin. We just seemed to hit it off from the very beginning. While he is all business when it comes to all things percussion, he's also just one of the nicest guys I have ever known. He's always got a smile and a good word for everyone he interacts with.

In kicking around some ideas of who I might next interview for *Drumhead*, Jamey seemed an obvious choice. While this is indeed an interview meant to show the many sides of Jamey Haddad, it's really more of just a conversation between a couple of friends talking about the musical things dear to us.

So, get ready to explore the brain of one of the leading percussionists of our time.

GB: Jamey, you're an absolutely amazing percussionist. You and I have been friends for years now and I have to tell you, every time I hear you play, I hear the perfect percussion parts coming from you. You are a master at fitting percussion into the rhythm section while not trampling on or getting in the way of the other players. You don't monopolize things or show off; you just play the perfect part. Where did it all come from?

JH: I think probably from being old enough to have made enough mistakes and being dissatisfied with my own playing. Also, from observing other percussionists and what they did. I was busy figuring out what I thought was great and not so great and learning from everybody along the way. More importantly is that the more I understood that I was in the service of the music, I looked for partners to be able to create a dialog in the musical language.

I think it's better to be able to play with other drummers or percussionists, because there are different mentalities that really work well together. Having great independence is one thing, but actually being able to have another kind of functionality with another player who is of like mind, but has another approach, is something I appreciate; I think that is better than being able to play some wild independence.

GB: Two brains are better than one?

JH: I think so. I first got involved doing this type of thing with Glen Velez where I was both a drum-set player and percussion too. Glen usually played percussion and he, for the most part, played drums with a very light touch. With him, the drum set could just totally swap in and out with the percussion. I have so much respect for Glen and how he played that I never developed a style of playing that just was a wall of sound that he had to fit into. That kind of relationship playing with Glen helped develop my touch and style, how I would tune my drums and even the types of cymbals I would use and the implements I would use to play the drums. I developed a lot of different kinds of brushes and stick

configurations to help me orchestrate what I was going to play and I started to use alternate non-standard setups which would also be useful in the kinds of settings we performed in.

After that, I started playing with Steve Shehan who is in Paris now. I owe a lot to Steve as well because Steve is one of the greatest percussionists on the planet and he is a great composer as well. He has impeccable taste in what he plays and he has great technique. His records are fantastic and the guy is a triple threat in several different areas. He understands North African music, West African music and Indonesian music and has spent time studying and playing in those places. He understands the canon of the jazz tradition even though he didn't make a career out of it. I spent a long time playing with him.

GB: When was that period?

JH: Probably starting in 1982. Then when I got the chance to play with Paul Simon, Paul asked me my thoughts on having two percussion players. I told him I thought it would be better to have another percussionist as well and suggested Steve Shehan. Paul invited Steve to play, so it was Steve, Steve Gadd and I for about eight years with Paul's group. That was a great band because Steve [Shehan] did things better than I could with a bunch of instruments. As for me, I have a voice on many instruments that were not Steve's forte. We complemented each other well. Paul wasn't quite sure who the drummer was going to be originally but, in the end, he chose Steve Gadd. Steve Gadd called me up and we spoke for a while. I told Paul I had a concern that whatever music he chose, I didn't want the percussion players to be treated like the drum-set player. I didn't want to see percussion treated like the illegitimate son that got the crumbs from the table of the bully pulpit of the drum set. Most of the American drummers were not in the habit of playing *with* the percussionist in a collaborative way. Also, many drum-set players kind of pretend to play the shaker, but I was looking forward actually to

develop the complete language of the texture of the tracks and neither percussion or drum set having the lead role, but working together.

Steve Gadd was unbelievably cool about all of it. He threw himself at it and was playing with unusual brushes, clusters of sticks, his hands or a unique tuning. Paul contributed to this discussion as well saying, "Remember, I actually have to tell my story through this, too."

MAKE IT MUSICAL

GB: That's some interesting insight. Can we switch gears a little bit? I have played with a lot of percussionists over the years and more times than not, they just pick up something and make some noise with it in time with the music. I don't believe they look at song form and don't consider what the drum set player is doing. To me, it has the musical effect of when people try to out talk each other. It's like they've never learned the language yet seem to have this idea anyone can play percussion. Obviously, that's a very poor amateurish approach. When I watch and listen to you play, you just seem to fit things in, in a musically respectful way. You and the drum-set player complement each other versus over talking each other. The musicality is just so far beyond the typical person you see out there playing percussion in the band.

JH: Most percussionists have like fifty instruments in their arsenal with each one requiring a different technique and musical application. For some reason, many of them seem to believe they have to hit or shake most of them on every tune. A great percussionist could maybe play a whole tune on one particular instrument. That's one of the differences. You have to set yourself up for what's about to happen in the music, but for me, I let the instruments talk to me so I know what to use at any given time. I develop instruments and I build instruments. Probably three quarters of the instruments I have are instruments that I have developed or modified to be to my liking so that when I hear a sound, I hear those instruments. It is not like I am looking for it or searching for it



This drum was carved from one solid piece of black walnut and was made for me over 25 years ago by a fantastic artisan and sculptor named William Kooianga who was living off the grid with his family in the Asheville area of North Carolina. I was looking for a way to incorporate the technique I had from playing the South Indian Mridangam. It definitely is a collaborative design utilizing the design lines and the techniques from Bata, Djembe, and split finger Indian playing. To my knowledge there are only four of these in existence, I had three of them and gave one to the great percussionist Keita Ogawa and the amazing Ron Snider from the Dallas Symphony has the fourth.

in a particular way. I know what my instruments sound like so I know the sound that is being requested from the music.

GB: You probably don't consciously think about what you're going to pick up; it's just one of those things that you're able to allow to happen in the moment due to the confidence you have developed in really knowing your instruments and really knowing the music. Would that be an accurate

statement?

JH: Yeah; I am much better in the moment than I am premeditating anything.

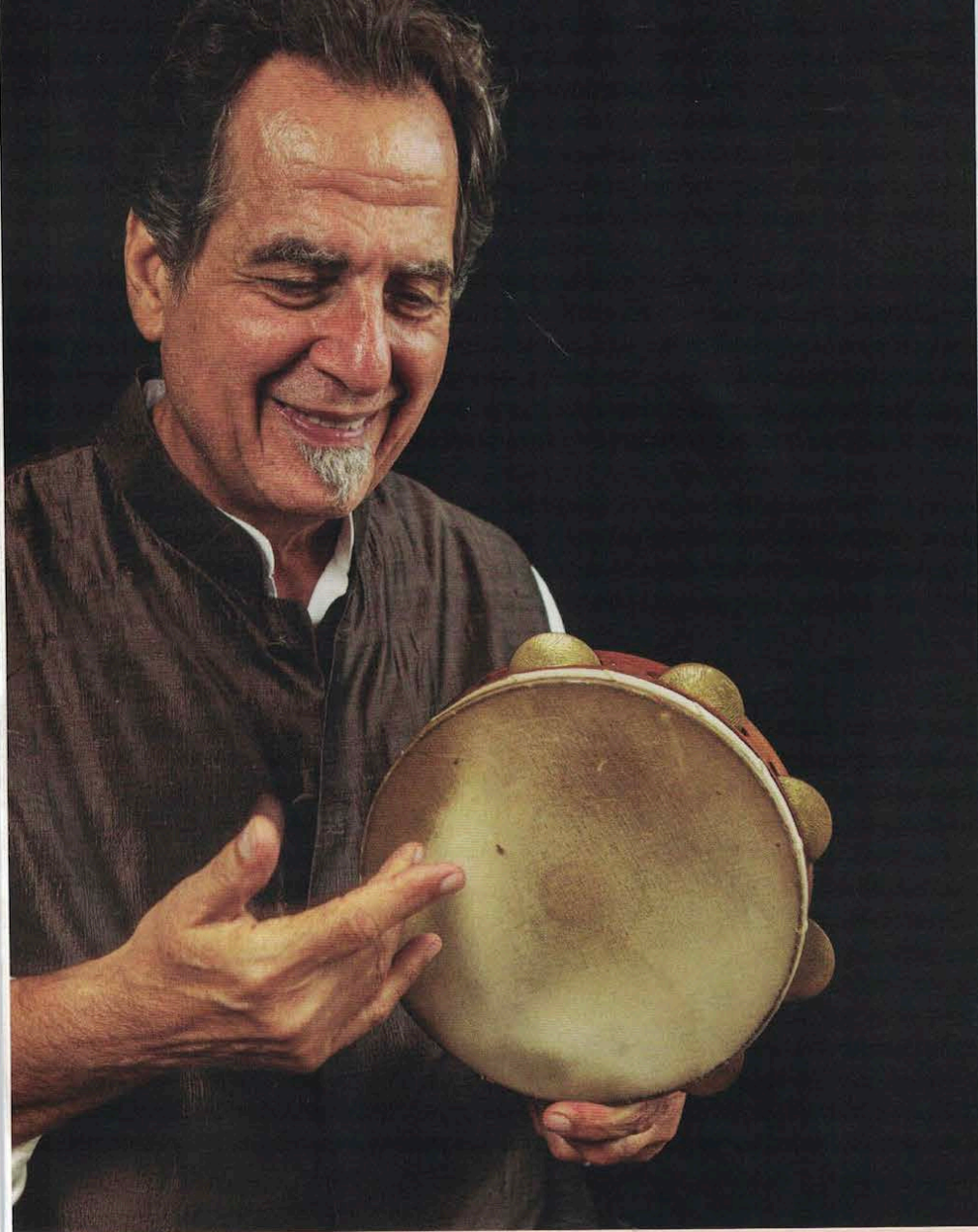
GB: Let's start a Jamey Haddad timeline here. Tell me where all this began. Where did you grow up and when did you start getting interested in drums and percussion? What got you inspired?

JH: The truth is that my family is Lebanese and my parents, for

the most part, only socialized with the Christian Lebanese-American community. I grew up in the Cleveland, Ohio area.

I remember the day and place at a church picnic; my dad, my uncles and everybody was there. They would play and sing and people danced. My uncle, Dave Morad, played the darbuka, an Arabic drum. This is like 1956 and I am four years old.

After that, I asked my dad to get me a drum like Uncle Dave played



This is my favorite instrument of all, it is called a Hadjira. Patrick Cooperman from the Cooperman Fife And Drum company, who arguably make the best frame drums in the world, gave me the freedom over the years to modify this until we have this particular model. It is a combination of a Brazilian Pandeiro, and Arabic Riq, South Indian Kanjira. But at the end of the day it's its own thing and I treat it like it's its own thing. All the Zills can be interchanged, removed or muted thanks to a conical shaped set screw. The tuning is all done through the shell so there is no external hardware to weigh it down or be inconveniently placed. Like most of the instruments I've developed, the naming is some sort of word collage utilizing the names of the people involved and the instruments that inspired the work.

so I can play it. He laughed and said he'd get me one, and did. We danced at home. My dad made it a point to make sure we all knew how to dance. We played a dancing game which was really silly but we all learned how to dance. I've danced my whole life.

That Christmas, my grandfather bought me a drum set and my dad got me an Arabic darbuka. My Uncle Dave came over to teach me. I was dyslexic and stuttered as a kid, so when I looked and tried to understand different things, I wasn't up to speed like other kids. So, I invested wholeheartedly in the idea of being a drummer as I realized at my age, this was something I could do.

GB: So, this was something you grabbed on to.

JH: This was my get out of jail card. In early grade school when the teacher wanted to know what you wanted to be when you grew up, Sally wanted to be a nurse and Bobby wanted to be a fireman but I wanted to be a drummer. The nuns at the catholic school I attended would tell me, "No, you can't be a drummer, you must have a real job. So, what would you want to be?" I told them, "No, a drummer is what I want to be." They didn't like that at all but I started lessons when I was about six in first grade.

GB: Public school lessons?

JH: No. My teacher was a guy named Howard Brush who used to be the drummer for Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis.

GB: A Cleveland guy?

JH: Yeah, he was an awesome dude. He saw me struggle with the reading but he knew I had a feel for the music. Jimmy Fox of the James Gang also took lesson from him. Howard was a great guy and I never really had a chance to thank him after I had a career. But I did have a chance to thank my next teacher Bob McKee, who introduced me to modern drumming. Sadly, at 90, Bob passed away a couple years ago.

GB: So, influenced by your family, you realized at four years old, you were

serious about music?

JH: It was funny but I just knew. My dad had a heart attack and he and my mom went away to Jamaica for about a month to recuperate. When they came back, he brought back all these records and instruments. I would play them all day; anything I could get my hands on whether it was maracas or a rumba box or whatever. I would also play my Arabic drum and the drum set.

At an early age, I thought it would be fun to orchestrate percussion parts into the music but I didn't actually understand how to do it. I wasn't listening to music that combined percussion elements that much but I just knew that whatever percussion instrument I had my hands on, I felt a musical connection.

GB: It's interesting to me that most kids see the drum set and that's where it stops, but you were into percussion right away.

JH: It was my sister who did the Arabic dancing when we were kids and it is really folk traditional. I have since learned by playing with the great Palestinian udist, Simon Shaheen and touring with him, just how much I didn't know about Arabic music. There was an evolution to it just like on drum set. The whole idea of independence and finger technique came from the Turkish style of playing and finger rolls and the integration of the Iranian zarb. All of the different techniques, such as when playing the Arabic tambourine, are substantial. In fact, anyone from those traditions normally played only one instrument. Consequently, over the years, I've had my head handed to me by being a fan of somebody and going to take a lesson and realizing how profound their music traditions were.

A SENSATIONAL BREAK

GB: You were pretty young also when you decided this was your life.

JH: I would go with my older sister to hear all these Motown bands. I heard everybody from the Temptations to Marvin Gaye, Smokey Robinson, the Four Tops, the Spinners, the Imperials, Gladys Knight and the Pips, and Ray Charles. I heard

everybody as a kid. My dad had a bar in a predominantly black neighborhood in Cleveland, so after school I would go there and work and their juke box had nothing but black artists. Even Cannonball Adderly, Nancy Wilson and John Coltrane were on the juke box. My dad also brought those records home, so that was the only music we had in our house. It was way hipper than anything else around. That music was part of the language that I grew up understanding.

Back then, I was playing drums all day long and I don't know how my parents tolerated it. People would remark that they would be walking home from school and they would hear me and then they would come by late in the day and hear me again. I never needed to be reminded to practice. My practice wasn't pedagogically involved; I just wanted to play with the radio.

GB: I did the same thing when I was a kid, playing everything from Buddy Rich to Cream, Chicago to Coltrane. I don't know how my parents and the neighbors ever put up with me.

JH: It's a fun thing. I went with my sister one night to hear the Sensations, arguably the best blue-eyed soul band in Cleveland at that time and overhearing them talk, I found out they would be needing a drummer. Ronnie Herbert, their regular drummer, had to go to the reserves. I told them I could do it and they started laughing.

GB: And you were how old?

JH: I was 14. They were in their mid- to late-20's but they let me sit in the last set they played. I played "Get Ready" by the Temptations and they said I had the gig, so I played all summer with them. I had a lot to learn to be consistent with the tempo and how to play with other musicians. Since I was into dancing, I kept an eye on the dancers so I could see if they were getting off dancing. A year and half later, I heard John Coltrane which was a big turning point for me.

GB: The first time I heard John Coltrane it was a spiritual experience.

JH: Yeah, it was the same for me.

It just opened me up in a way. Something inside me got touched. I started to hang out with like-minded guys and the whole world started to come alive. When you're 15, that sure looks a whole lot better than Algebra class. At the same time in high school, I started a group that became extremely popular. We called it the North River Street Rock Collection and we played a number of the college circuits. By the time I was 16, I had a roadie and we would play for no less than a thousand people a night. I know we made a bunch of those club owners wealthy and we played three or four nights a week.

GB: And I suppose they made you wealthy too?

JH: They didn't pay us much of anything. I mean, for a kid in high school, I made more than most kids. I recently heard a recording of North River Street Rock Collection doing music by Ten Wheel Drive, Buddy Miles, The Electric Flag, Chicago and Blood Sweat and Tears. It was a horn band and it wasn't bad. I remember, though, wanting to be a jazz musician.

GB: So, high school is over; what about college?

JH: I went to Cuyahoga Community College for a year. At that time, I was listening to everything from Charlie Parker to Coltrane and Weather Report. Back then, many of us played at The Smiling Dog, a long-gone Cleveland jazz club. We played opposite to whoever came in. I was 18 years old at that time and playing with Joe Lovano, Ernie Krivda [Cleveland saxophonist], Kenny Davis, the trumpeter and drummers Skip Hadden and Val Kent. There was a team of people that played opposite whoever came in and I had played opposite 20 or 30 main groups; each one for a week. I learned so much doing that gig.

GB: Who are a few of the names that came through The Smiling Dog that you played opposite to?

JH: Herbie Hancock, Stan Getz, Sun Ra, Sonny Stitt, Tony Williams, Elvin Jones, The Bill Evans Trio, Keith

Jarrett, McCoy Tyner, Alphonse Mouzon and Weather Report with Eric Gravatt on drums.

GB: Did you have the chance to hang with some of them?

JH: To some extent. Some hung more than others. It was really a very special time.

GB: How did enrolling at Berklee come about?

JH: One night, my mom and dad came into my room and said they would support me if I wanted to make a career out of music. They thought I needed a better education in music though. I'd heard about Berklee up in Boston, so, I applied and got accepted there. A bunch of us from Cleveland went up to Berklee including people like Carman Castaldi and Joe Lovano, and we joined up with Kenny Werner, John Scofield, Billy Drewes, Ted Lo and Chip Jackson. We all played together and we were kind of inseparable; we hung out nonstop and played.

GB: How long were you at Berklee?

JH: Three years.

GB: Are you one of the people that graduated from there?

JH: No, but I taught there for 18 years.

GLOBAL RHYTHM

GB: Let's head in another direction. Your influences seem to come from all around the globe; not just Latin or North African or Lebanese. How did that happen because many of the percussionists I have met or played with over the years seem to be locked more into a certain musical ethnicity?

JH: I'm not authentic in a bunch of things. I have just spent a lot of time trying to understand and be a better musician in the different genres.

While I was still a student at Berklee, Claudio Roditti, the great Brazilian trumpet player recommended John Scofield, Kenny Werner, Rick Kilburn and myself to Airto Moreira and Flora Purim who were looking for a young band. Airto auditioned us and while with his band, he and I

hung out and he taught me a lot. I was always a fan of Brazilian music. There were a bunch of Brazilian musicians including Claudio who came to Berklee who were already professional. Several of them were drummers and percussionists and that was my first introduction to Brazilian music, Brazilian percussion and many of their exotic instruments. The Brazilian players had more of an atmospheric thing going on in how they approached the music. There was something mystical about it; the whole idea of the harmonic things and the cadence parts of the beat.

When I first visited Berklee to take a look around, I walked into the basement of the 1140 building, looked in one of the windows and there was Abraham Laboriel playing! I said, "I don't care what's happening here. If that cat's here, I want to go here." I had a very deep desire to be one of those kind of people with that spirit and as my luck would have it, he ended up moving to Cleveland. His wife was doing her internship as a medical doctor there at Case Western Reserve. Joe Lovano, Abe Laboriel and I had a trio for a number of years and we played at my dad's bar. I don't know if I've ever had as much fun doing anything. It just was really a great time for Joe and I because we had never played with anybody who understood as much about their music as Abe and he was our age. He brought a sense of the musical information and he was just a great human being.

GIGGING WITH GREATS

GB: You've played with so many musical greats like Paul Simon, Sting, Esperanza Spalding, Yo-Yo Ma, Herbie Hancock, Paul Winter, Carly Simon, Joe Lovano and you have friends like Steve Gadd and Vinnie Colaiuta. How did these gigs come about? I don't mean each individual gig but in general—why did they call Jamey Haddad over somebody else? What do you bring to it that would cause them to call you?

JH: For a while there, people would call me because they didn't know who to call. I played with Danilo Perez. He knew he wanted some hand drums

but he wanted another kind of sound and another type of sonic solution in addition to the Afro-Cuban approach. So, I'd say that type of mentality was repeated among many of the other artists I worked with. I did a record a couple years ago with Milton Nascimento and Ricardo Vogt, the guitarist who produced the record. I asked him why he'd want to use me when there's all these amazing Brazilian percussionists he could call. He said he knows what all those guys do and was looking for someone who brings another flavor to it. I think if you've done your homework and demonstrated understanding about where the artist is coming from, you can make a music that is not stylistically inhibiting to the artist. The artist may be actually looking to break out of a more traditional Latin or salsa thing and you can help them create some new language. I think that's what many of the artists I've worked with have thought about me; artists like Esperanza Spalding, Yo-Yo Ma, Dave Liebman and composer Osvaldo Golijov.

GB: Tell me about how you got the Paul Simon gig.

JH: After I lost my boyish charm, I didn't think I was a good fit for a pop band.

GB: Oh, you've lost it?

JH: Nice of you to notice. My wife and daughter and I were living in New York on 190th St., way uptown by The Cloisters. My neighbor, Jim Corona was a guitar tech for Paul Simon. I had been in the studio doing a bunch of multiple percussion things, mostly for myself and I had a CD of it which I gave to him. Paul was working on a play, *The Cape Man*, which was a Broadway musical that he wrote the music for. When that ended, he was looking to form a new band and they were trying out different people. Jim was setting up SIR [Studio Instrument Rentals] to rehearse and was playing my stuff there just to test the speakers out. Paul came in, took his guitar out and started playing along with my CD. He told Jim he could play the song he was working on better along with my CD than with the other musicians



I'm playing on the Hadgini drum that I developed over 30 years ago along with the master sculptor Frank Giorgini. I was looking for a way to utilize two different sounds and playing surfaces and have one affect the other and a simple Udu was not going to do that. I inserted two Countrymen internal mics through two small pencil-sized holes in each side. You can hear this drum very well at the start on Esperanza Spalding's recording of Milton Nascimento's "Ponta De Areia."

he had been playing with and asked who it was that was playing the percussion on that CD. Jim told Paul that I was his neighbor and Paul asked if Jim thought I would come down and play with him a little bit, so Paul called me. I was surprised. I was playing with Dave Liebman at the time. I saw Sarah Vaughn on TV the year she died and she won a lifetime achievement award on the Grammys. She sang the song "So Many Stars" and when that was over, I was in tears. She had so much soul and so much feel. I was thinking about who is going to be around that can share the history of our great music with young people in a way that they are going to get it or will ever hear it. All the other groups on the Grammys were kind of like a joke. I was so disappointed in it. My prayer was that I would have a chance to do that with some popular artist; that I could bring what I do and that they would actually let me

do it. I had a serious meditation on that. There were only a few people with whom I thought I could do that; someone like Paul Simon, Sting or Joni Mitchell.

So, when Paul called me up, I said "Hey man, I'd love to do it. What's the matter Paul, are you tired of the clave police?" When I met him, I figured he should really get to know who I was. I told him I didn't want to be in anybody's band who doesn't really appreciate me as a human being and wants to see me do well. When we met, I brought my Jam-Man down which is a looping device. He played me this song on his acoustic guitar and asked what I would do. I asked him to play it again and I did my best to learn the form of what he was doing. I used my Jam-Man to create the form and then I overdubbed about four or five different instruments and told him to try it with that. He thought it was good and worked well for him. He asked who I like to play with and

I mentioned Steve Shehan. I called Steve and a French pianist named Alain Mallet and my friend trombonist Jay Ashby for the gig. We were all together with Paul for about eight years and it was a killin' band. I'm the only one still in the band from that new crowd.

GB: For a gig with Paul or anybody of that stature, I assume there's a lot of rehearsal time before the tour?

JH: Paul loves to rehearse. He likes rehearsing as much as playing the gigs. He used to rehearse much more than he does now. This new band though, I think we rehearsed for a month. And now when we get together, we rehearse about a week.

GB: Several people have asked me about some of the logistical things one deals with while on tour, so I want to hit you with a few of those type of questions. How do you get paid for a gig like this? Is it a weekly salary? Do



The drum I am holding is from Ankara Turkey. It's part of the ubiquitous family of frame drums that can be found all over the planet. This particular drum has large very thin metal zills. I never take it on the road as it always seems too fragile. I'm sitting in my studio which is littered with percussion on every wall and every inch of floor space. There's a family of percussionists who I empathize with, it's kind of like a disease we've developed over the years. As I get a little older I'm looking for ways to be sure that the right people end up with some of these instruments.

you get a regular paycheck?

JH: Nowadays, it's like anything else; you get a direct deposit.

GB: All expenses are covered?

JH: Yeah, of course and a per diem for food and that kind of thing.

GB: When you're out on the tour, are you and the artist generally traveling together?

JH: Yeah, except for the intercontinental flights. Domestically, we pretty much fly in a private jet. We usually treat one city as a hub and go out and do the gig, then return back to the hub city.

GB: Not a lot of tour buses?

JH: There were more in the beginning. I think many of us long for those days because we could actually carry on on the bus like playing music and just hanging out.

GB: Do you have your own roadie?

JH: Yeah, the same amazing guy from New York, Jim Corona.

GB: Let's say so and so calls you tomorrow for a gig that's going to start in two months. Do you ship all your instruments ahead of time?

JH: No, Paul's gig is unique because, first of all, there's so much history there and I've played on a bunch of albums with him where these very unique instruments and sounds were used; so, I have to have them on the gig. I have my Paul Simon road cases and when we go out on tour, they come and pick them up with the truck. I also record at home where I can use those instruments. A lot of instruments that I use with Paul are ones that I would not necessarily use on another gig. If I was going to do an extensive tour with another artist,

it's doubtful that I would need all that I use with Paul.

GB: Considering the stature of many of the people you work with musically, do you find that in general, you develop relationships with them or is it more detached; not really being friends but just showing up and doing your job on the gig with little or no time spent with the artist?

JH: My interaction with the artists I work with occurs at varying degrees. At a certain point, you want the person who's hiring you to get a sense of who you are. You want to be able to talk to them about something meaningful about the music, your life or their life.

Hopefully, they're available to you in that way. Usually, if they're not available, they're probably not the kind of person I want to play with anyhow. If they're not interested in

me, I'm not going to force myself on them and probably if they weren't interested in me, they wouldn't have called me.

SHARING THE GOODS

GB: How does it work with your teaching gig at Oberlin Conservatory when you have the opportunity to go out on tour with a group or an artist?

JH: When I go on tour, I normally set up in advance an amazing cast of teachers to come and step in. It really works out great because the visiting artists really come in supercharged and I prepare the students for their arrival. It always culminates in a performance that generates a nice crowd of students that get to see this international cast of players and they start to develop an ear for a wide variety of music.

GB: You taught for many years at Berklee which, in my mind, is the premier jazz school of the world. How did that gig come about?

JH: Dean Anderson, who was the chairman of the Percussion Department, wanted someone who understood contemporary music along with the jazz and popular music traditions. It was nothing I applied for; there was not an opening. I actually think Dean had spoken with many different people and I ended up being the one that got the gig. I lived in New York, so I commuted to Boston for 18 years; nine from New York and nine from Cleveland. For 12 of those years, I also taught at the New England Conservatory of Music. New England Conservatory of Music made my class mandatory for all incoming students unless they were drummers. Billy Hart, who is also here at Oberlin, was a drum-set teacher there at the time.

GB: What did you teach at Berklee?

JH: At Berklee, I taught five sections of a rhythm class along with percussion and drum set and then I started a mixed world ensemble, which was before the global jazz initiative that Berklee has now. Danilo Perez headed that up. That was open to the people at Berklee that played indigenous instruments that Berklee didn't teach. I had people

come playing Scottish harp and shamisham, kodo, accordion, ud, qanun and all kinds of other ethnic instruments. Those people also played western style instruments and that's how they got into Berklee.

GB: Oberlin Conservatory has been known as a mecca for classical music for over 100 years, however, in the past 35 years, they have developed incredible programs in contemporary music and jazz culminating with actually building a complete jazz school onto the east side of the conservatory. Their jazz program, founded by the late Wendell Logan, utilizes many musicians from the highest level; people like Gary Bartz, Billy Hart and the aforementioned Jay Ashby to name a few. How did your teaching gig at Oberlin come about?

JH: I'd moved back to Cleveland around 2003 to be with my family and help out with my mother. My wife, Mary Kay Gray, was the Associate Dean of Admissions at the Juilliard School in New York but she said she'd be happy to live back in the Cleveland area.

GB: Was the position at Oberlin an opening to fill or a newly created position?

JH: My wife was kind of known as a conservatory admissions expert. The Dean of Oberlin Conservatory knew her and brought her in to work there. I had been on tour with Yo-Yo Ma and I was seeing this whole classical music world as being full of people who wanted to participate in something outside of the canon of classical music but they just didn't have any skill set at it. From teaching at New England Conservatory and doing master classes for percussion departments, I thought that I really understood that there was a lot that could be done with classical musicians so they could feel more comfortable participating in other types of musical situations and that they could actually play the music of their own life rather than music of a Eurocentric life. But, there's a lot to learn. There's a lot to learn from that canon or about jazz music and

jazz musicians. I thought it would be wonderful at Oberlin if the classical musicians could understand how to integrate classical and jazz by a series of classes and ensembles. I wanted to see jazz musicians taught more about how to write and participate in classical music environments. I also wanted to help the classical musicians take, which was actually a larger step, to learn how to play in rhythm sections and improvise and make real-time decisions based on how they felt about what they might play. That's no small thing. Where classical musicians don't like to sound bad doing something beyond the written music; a jazz player will take a chance.

GB: The classical world and the jazz world are, in many ways, on totally different planets other than sharing the same pitches and notation; two completely different worlds.

JH: Yeah, that's really the case. Classical musicians kind of have a brain freeze when it comes to taking responsibility for what they want to play unless they were doodlers when they were younger and fooled around with improvisation. Some of them may have played in their high school big band and have done some improvisation-related things already, but some of them haven't. At Oberlin, that was the job—we taught improvisation classes to classical students.

GB: Is that the primary reason they brought you in?

JH: Yeah. It was a program I talked extensively about with David Stull, the then-Dean of the Conservatory, and it has been embraced by the deans who have followed Stull. I suggested to David that it would be good if we could team teach it like I did at Berklee with some of my ensembles. Jay Ashby came to Oberlin too and shared in the responsibility of teaching those classes with me along with bassist Peter Dominguez. We did it through a series of bringing in world music artists and jazz musicians that were kind of outside the box; less traditional and more contemporary. We brought in a lot of musicians

Praise Where It's Due...

DAVE LIEBMAN

Jamey is a double threat!! This is exactly why I hired him in the early '90s which lasted for ten years before the pop world took him elsewhere. Being a drummer who was familiar with "world music" was not as common in that time as it is now, when drum students are required to learn at least the basics of the hand drum language. For me, after years with the group Quest, which was a real jazz quartet, I was ready to learn what was going on in this language besides the nod I had given to Indian music in the '70s with tablaist Badal Roy in both the Miles Davis group and my own Lookout Farm. In sum, being comfortable in odd meters was the main challenge... very basic!

Jamey was the perfect guy for what I was interested in. He really knew this way of playing, even co-inventing the Hagini drum which played a big role in the Dave Liebman Group of the '90s, Jamey leading the way. From the jazz standpoint, he comes right out of the Elvin Jones approach, which for me was ground zero as far as rhythmic feel and texture that I felt most comfortable in, stemming from my "school days" with Emperor Jones in the early '70s. Jamey had a rolling, cascade approach which was perfect for me. For that decade we played a lot of styles, celebrating the notion of eclecticism. As a teacher, Jamey was and still is extremely popular, inspiring drum students worldwide as a result of his generous spirit and musical abilities. One thing I learned from Jamey was that you have to "own the groove" as he would say in clinics. I like that way of describing the obvious... rhythm is all in the final result. Jamey Haddad was one of my main influences and I will always be grateful for what I learned from him.

TERRI LYNE CARRINGTON

Jamey Haddad is the musician's musician and the musician of and for the people. His humanity is captured with every beat, and transferred effortlessly to the listener and players. His playing is organic, but with deep roots, connected to tradition and the modern. His sound is universal and his "river of time" flows freely and graciously, supporting whatever style of music at hand. He is a master musician that contributes greatly to everything he touches. Jamey makes rhythm a living, breathing thing, which we are grateful for.

ANTONIO SANCHEZ

Jamey played one of the most integral and ethereal roles in my musical education while at Berklee. His approach was very free flowing. Sometimes I wasn't even sure when the class had already started or when it had ended because it was a combination of music, life lessons, philosophy and drumming. All encompassed by great conversation with a very loose, free and beautiful approach to his whole method.

One of the things that I enjoyed the most during our lessons was just hanging with Jamey and getting inspired thought his unassuming and cool personality, demeanor and energy. We wouldn't talk much about technique, rudiments or very drum-oriented subjects because we

would be approaching music and drumming in a very philosophical and conceptual way which was one of the best learning experiences during my formative years.

Another thing I loved was going to hear Jamey performing live whenever he would be playing with Dave Liebman or other musicians around town because he had the goods to back up all the deep conceptual stuff we would talk about during our lessons. I carry a lot of those words and ideas with me through this day.

ABRAHAM LABORIEL

I am very proud to say that Jamey Haddad is my friend and a musician I respect and admire. Jamey plays each percussion instrument only as the music itself tells him to and immediately thrusts any musical experience into a beautiful life transforming energy that makes both audiences and musicians fall in love with sound all over again.

PAUL SIMON

Jamey Haddad and I have been making music together for nearly 20 years. As a percussionist with a constellation of instruments from different cultures and continents, he fits into my band and provides the glue that makes it hang together rhythmically.

ESPERANZA SPALDING

Listening, hanging, playing with Jamey is an expansive sound journey. Like, your heartbeat changes around him, you become more grooving and fluid in step and articulation. He's really absorbed countless worlds of rhythm into his spirit-body, so the rhythms that move through him feel timeless, ancestral and rooted, while always driving the music toward the future.

JOE LOVANO

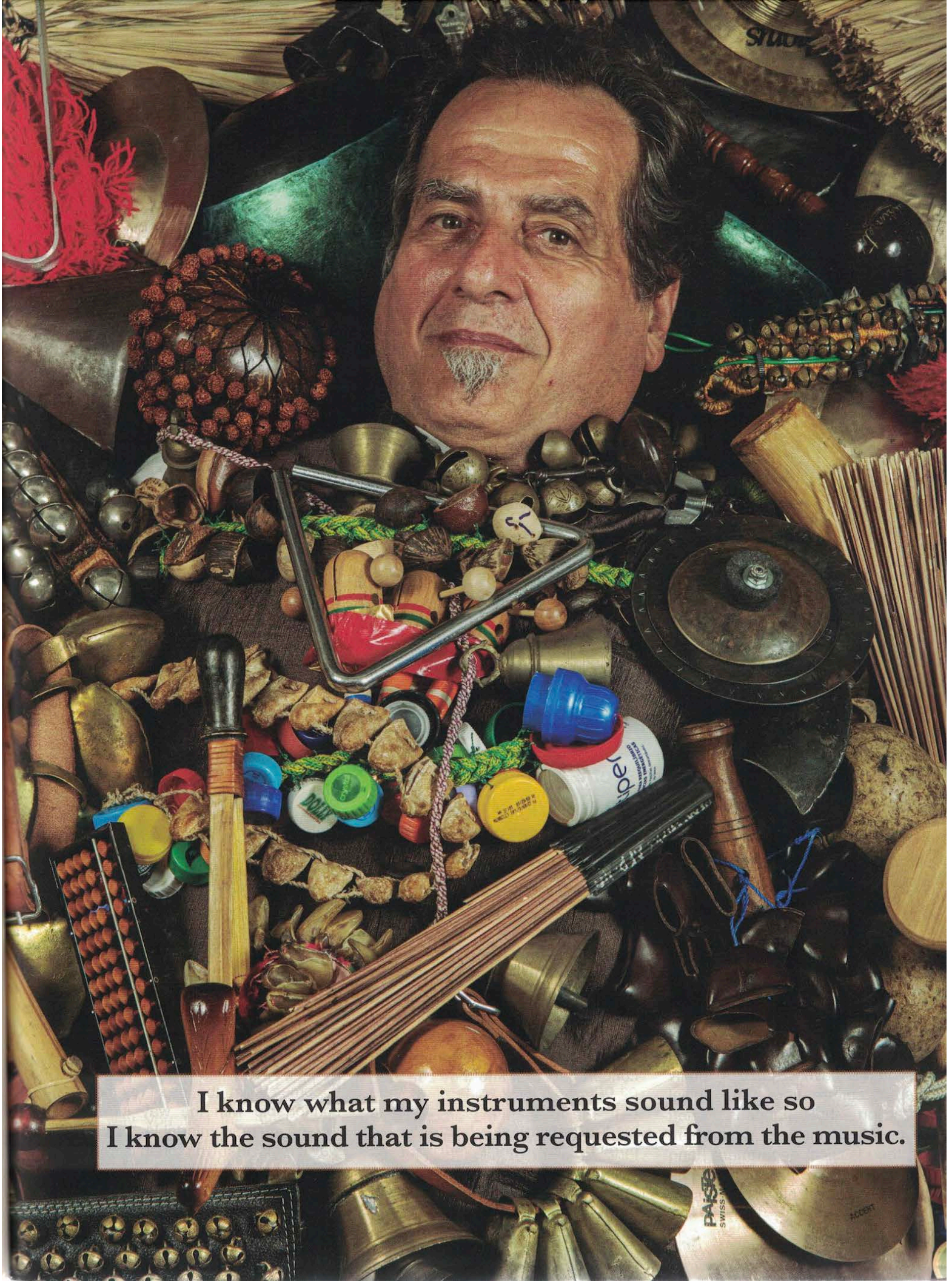
As far as I'm concerned Jamey Haddad is one of the few innovative drummers, percussionist, educators and musicians on the current scene today. We go back to our teenage years together and have emerged and developed our ways of playing side by side within the world of music. He's always been and continues to be an inspiration in life and in the music.

KENNY WERNER

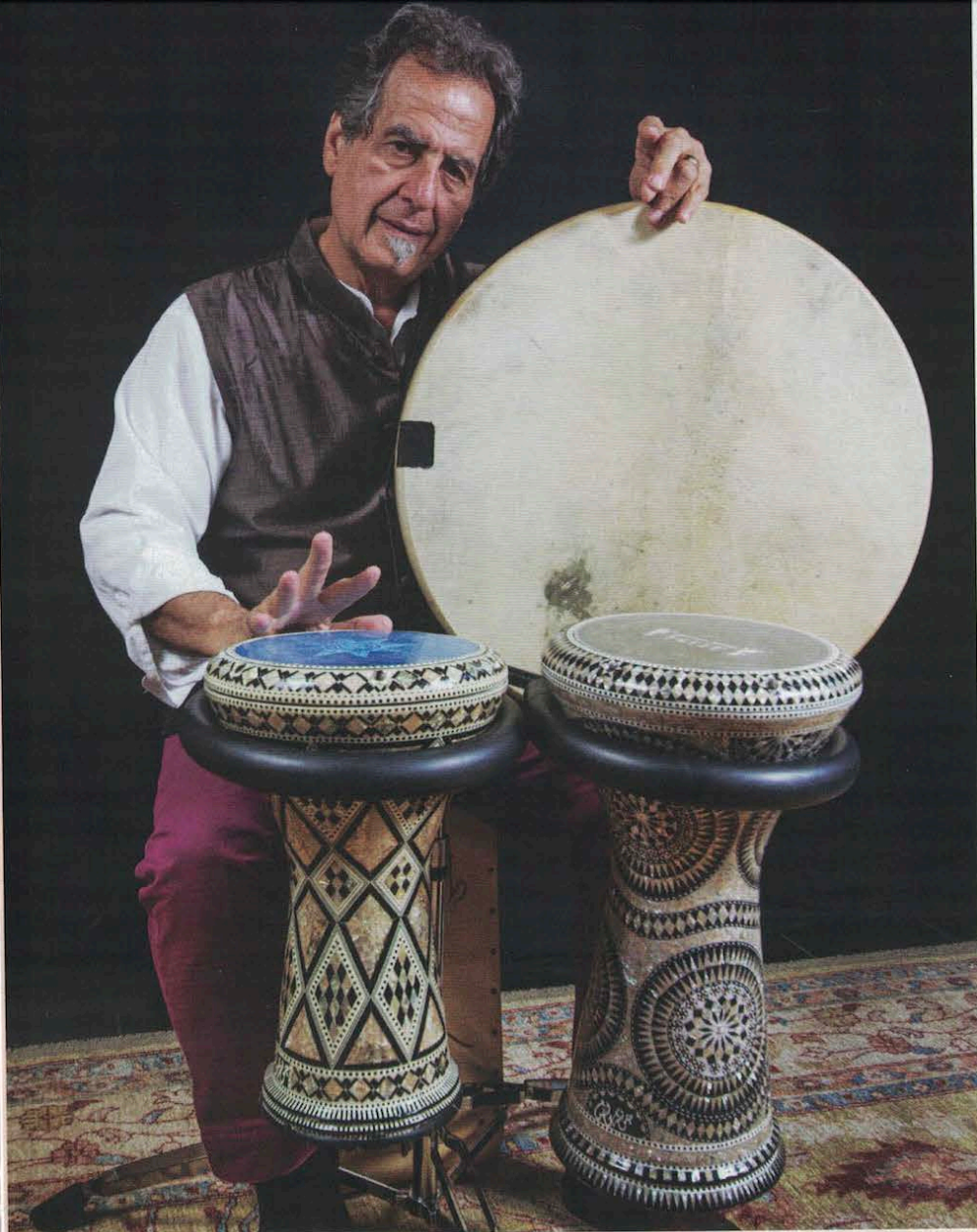
Jamey Haddad's playing and career have been unique. I've known him a long time and from the very beginning he's always blazed his own trail. Jamey gives the very meaning to the words, 'world musician' before such a term existed.

GLEN VELEZ

I have known Jamey since the '80s; he wrote some insightful and positive reviews for my early CDs and even produced one of my albums in those years. He has a rare combination of musical intuition, percussive chops and perhaps most importantly, a good-natured desire to help his students and colleagues to a more uplifting music. His gospel has manifested in many inspired musicians, countless cd's projects and a profound contribution to the American renaissance in percussion in our time.



I know what my instruments sound like so
I know the sound that is being requested from the music.



The large framed drum is from Iran and the two smaller darbuka drums are from Egypt. All three of those instruments have internal tuning mechanisms. The larger of the two darbuka drums was a gift from Gilbert Mansour who is a tremendous young Lebanese percussionist who is now living in Boston.

from other countries too because they came about the jazz world and the classical world by a different route. They had to think outside of the box to approach it. It's been a real evolution for sure but I can tell you we have created a totally different culture here. The social interaction that happens when the people of the jazz department and the classical department hang out together is that people just start to like each other. They start

attending each other's concerts and become more invested in each other as people. Not much of that was happening before, but now, it's pervasive. Anyone who comes to a PI [Performance and Improvisation] concert gets that and they see that.

GB: You've seen me around at a number of the PI concerts and that, for sure, is one of the things I notice; the interaction and the friendship between the jazz and classical

students. There's a real camaraderie there both socially and musically. The musical programming is so diverse as well, and in many ways, resembles the musical choices of your own group *Under One Sun* which I want to talk about later.

JH: It's really taking off and I think it's a prestigious thing to be a part of here at school, but also, it's difficult. For a classical percussionist to be a percussionist in a group like that, there's a lot to learn.

GB: The student is really sticking his neck out musically so to speak of.

JH: Definitely. Tim Weiss, on the Oberlin faculty and who runs the Contemporary Music Ensemble, is a great conductor and knows so much about music. If you go to a Contemporary Music Ensemble concert a few weeks after the semester starts, they're playing incredibly difficult music and playing the hell out of it, yet those same kids in my ensembles initially can't do anything in a jazz or improvisational thing. They were taught to play in ensembles, follow a conductor and to read music with great interpretation.

Now, they are responsible to read the notes but they don't necessarily know how to interpret it because it's coming from the genre they don't know. They don't know how to play in a rhythm section, in time with the rhythm section, pace their improvisation, what sounds good and what notes sound good. It's even amazing if you play something that's modal; they may know the notes to play but they can't decide on the rhythms to put with it. There's a question they have of what is it that allows someone to be able to do that. They discover that rhythms aren't just rhythms. Rhythms are something that, in a traditional sense, sit in a feel of the way music goes, whether it's Balkan music, Arabic music or Brazilian music. It's not just a rhythm; it's a rhythm that is born out of a feel of how the music goes. It comes from the heart by being comfortable with the way it feels. When you're comfortable with the way it feels, then your brain is free to actually express itself.

TEACHING METHODS

GB: You're also teaching percussion and drum set at Oberlin, is that right?

JH: I see most of the students at one time or another for PI, drum set or percussion.

GB: Do you have a set curriculum or do you tailor to the individual student needs and wants?

JH: I never want to teach anybody until they've been here a year and a half because I don't want to be the culprit of introducing many things that are not their main focus at the school until they really sign on to the canon of the tradition of what it means to be in orchestra, Contemporary Music Ensemble, Jazz Ensemble and big band and they really know the routine. The crisis for drummers and any of the other musicians isn't that they don't play the instrument well, I think it's just a matter of understanding that you have to have something to say. They understand maybe how the beat goes in some way but for all of us, it's all generational.

Usually, younger people don't play swing with the feel that older people did and they might not get that they don't. Older people will hear it right away. In any event, you just have to know how the music goes and how it should feel. You have to know something about the heroes of the music and it's like that for everybody.

When we're beating on the log, we're actually standing on the shoulders of the people that came before us. You can't wake up and think you're going to be Roy Haynes or Tony Williams or Eric Harland or anybody else. You can learn from them but what gives them power is that they accepted their own operating system and let that lead their way; who they were and the way that they function best. When you don't do that, it's like trying to say you are an older Macintosh computer but you want to run the newest software. You install it and the computer runs half as fast. You really don't want to be that. You want to fall in love with the way you feel the music. You can play options on your feelings. When you play options on your true feelings, you're really infallible as far as I'm concerned.

GB: Along these same lines, since we're talking completely different types of musicians, with jazz people, world music people and the classical people, what's your methodology of teaching time and feel?

JH: We pick some easy chord changes and we pick a feel. We sit in a circle and we all play the feel. We talk about stress points of the feel and what it takes to do that. For a lot of people, wherever they come from, the feels are foreign to them. You could be coming from a gospel church background or rock 'n' roll or you're coming from a Brazilian feel. We might just make up a feel and then try to come to some kind of a consensus about where the stress points are. Does it matter if the bass player or the bass drum have something special to say? We develop a whole vibe to hopefully get us to smile. We each take turns and if it's modal or shifting between two modes, we play something like a four-bar phrase; kind of like trading fours. I pepper the group in the circle with people that actually know how to do this as well as people that don't, so that every other person is not as good as the person next to them. It's the art of stealing ideas in a certain sense. Even if you mimic, at a certain point, you're getting an experience and you're allowed to sound bad. It's all laughable and it's all enjoyable. You throw yourself into it and no one is really being judged for it. We talk about that. We don't judge the people and we keep opening doors and windows for them to express themselves. When you do that more and more and more and more, you start to expand the knowledge of the criteria of the musical language that you want to pursue in life. A lot of the jazz players, like maybe a saxophone player, they don't really even play in time all the time; they get to experience what it's like being in a groove. Even if they play single-note instruments, they comp like they are in a groove. A lot of musicians don't really know what it's like to be in a groove so when they fall out of a groove, it doesn't matter to them because they were never in one in the first place.

GB: This whole group thing is really a very esoteric thing. It's spiritual in many ways, I think.

JH: Yes, it's very esoteric. Some of that's really cool too. I'm not saying that groove time is the only kind of music in the world. Sometimes I teach a classical string quartet and we work on improvisation as a group and then we turn the lights off and they just go at the music from all directions. There are so many amazing vehicles that we have.

ZONING IN

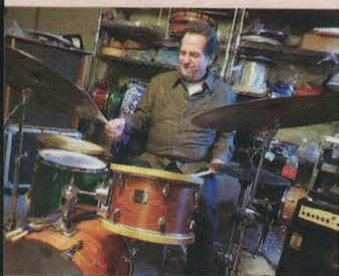
GB: One of the big things that I suppose is a part of being a musician, and especially a jazz musician, is finding your place in the zone. When I see you play, it's almost as though someone could set off a bomb right next to you and you may not even notice it. How do you talk to students about that?

JH: That's not necessarily true. I'm into it but it always bothers me when a crowd is noisy. I consider them to be part of the experience. I grew up playing in bars where if you're playing dance music, you're going to get whatever from the crowd. But once I got to the point where I was playing with musicians who took all the sounds into consideration, things changed. If I'm playing with Danilo Perez and I pick up a certain frame drum that has its own series of overtones and a pitch involved with it, what he plays immediately makes my instrument sound like it has a home and complements it. That sound in the air and the ability to recognize it does not happen when there's a lot of extraneous noise coming from the restaurant or the bar or the audience. Even when you play jazz festivals that are during the day, there is a lack of focus on the stage from the lighting and a lot of noise and commotion. Nighttime is always a better time to play an outdoor venue.

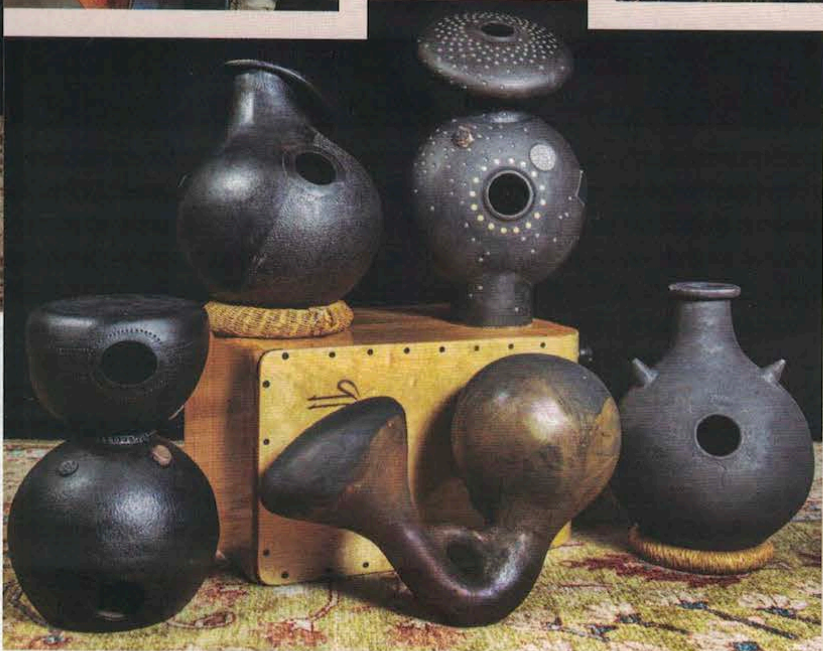
GB: I was lucky to see Elvin Jones live a number of times over the years and I remember Elvin placing himself behind the drums and getting himself into it. It appeared to be a very meditative Zen-like thing he had going on. What do you tell students



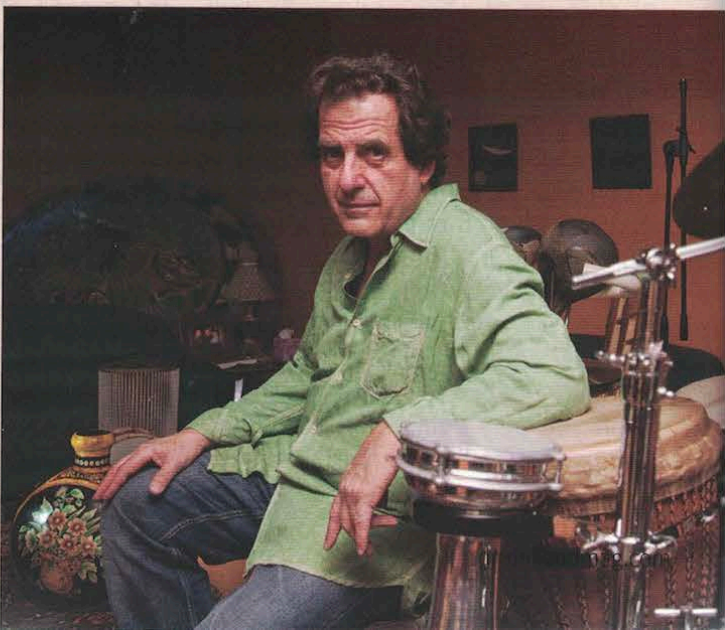
Each of these three drums was made from a single piece of black walnut. They were all handmade without power tools by William Kooianga. The two smaller Koohabata drums are from a family of four.

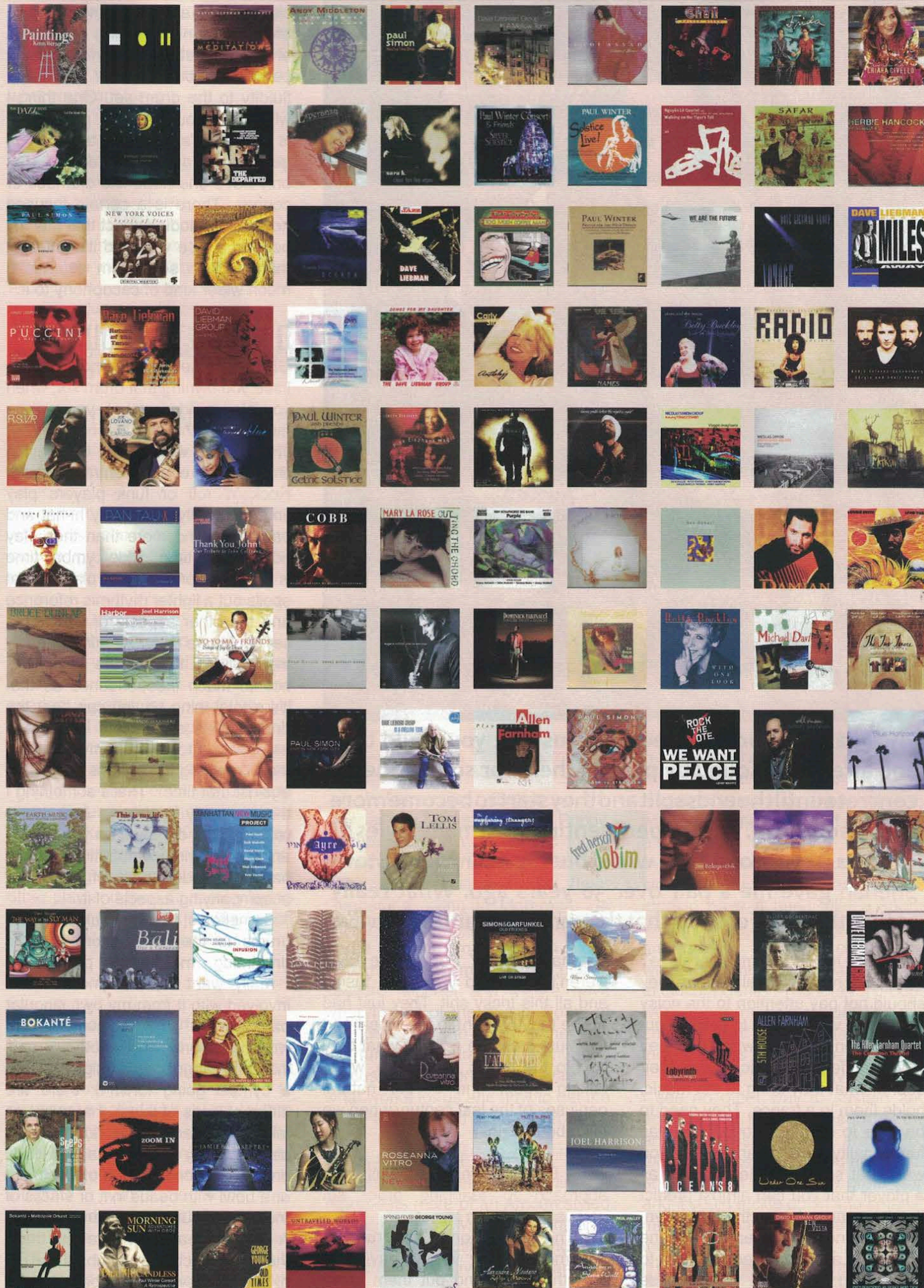


These three darbuka drums demonstrate three different sizes and two different manufacturers. The silver one was my very first drum given to me by my father James Haddad when I was four years old. That drum was probably made around 1950 if not earlier and it's all hand hammered silver plated from Syria. The two drums with the intricate inlay are made by Gawhareet El Fan in Egypt. The Cajon that those drums are sitting on was made in Madrid for me and it was a gift from the master Flamenco percussionist Sergio Martinez who now lives in Valencia Spain Teaching at Berklee's Masters program in Valencia.



Across the bottom from left to right. The first drum on the left was designed by the multi-talented, amazing percussionist Rich Stein, in collaboration with ceramicist Walter Heath. The next two drums are the doubleheader at Hadgini drum which is a collaboration between Frank Giorgini and myself in the African styled Udu drum made by Frank. Frank is considered the Godfather of ceramic drums and of hand-made ceramic tiles. You can see his work in many of the subway stops in New York City. On the top row from left to right is another of Frank's Udu drums and the one to the right is called an UWATU drum; it was commissioned by me and made by the sculptor Carl Peverall.







Those are Moroccan street brooms that you could trim and alter their sound by playing them for some time on concrete until the ends split and they start to become more subtle sounding. I was experimenting with many styles of brooms from around the world but my dear friend Steve Shehan gave me a pair over 30 years ago. What really makes these different is that they are grass and not straw.

about how to find that magical place?

JH: You don't want to tell anyone they should not pay attention to the noisy room. You want to talk to them about how to connect with what it is they have to offer the music so that their sound, what they bring to the music, holds them in a trance. They need to be able to create a sound that has functionality and meaning, so you want that sound so clear to you as a player that you can almost predict that it has an outcome that's positive.

Elvin Jones had been playing the same feel all along. People came to him saying, "We want you because

of what you do." People like Elvin weren't interested in playing fusion and all this tricky shit. They just had a vibe they brought to the music and they just drew the spirit of what they had to the music. Of course, we're talking about one of the natural geniuses of the last century when we talk about Elvin.

GB: Do you have a different approach to teaching drum set versus percussion?

JH: The contraption of the drum set has more fluidity versus having to pick things up and put them down

all the time as you would in much of percussion. I'm using my hands and feet together more now playing percussion but there is still more fluidity to the drum set. One thing I will say about playing percussion is that there's a certain texture you get from playing low drums that only have one head like djembes or congas. There is a certain focused note and melodic aspect that hits my body in a nice way and it's different than a drum set. Drum set has a much wider kind of cacophony to it.

OWNING THE SOUND

GB: When I see you playing drum set, I see you owning that drum set; when you play a ride cymbal, you pull so much out of that ride cymbal.

JH: Well, I work a lot on playing time. I think every drummer should. Rock 'n' roll or funk players play time differently. They play hi-hat and back-beat time more than they play ride-cymbal time. Ride-cymbal time is this traditional way of playing that spells out a lighter rhythmic reference and the other aspects of your drum set punctuate that. Over time, I really tried to work to integrate so that it's not so much independence as that it's a total thing so you can hear the drum set as a complete instrument, as opposed to, "Here's my time and then I'm going to play this other stuff against that time." That's something I think is really important. Jazz music really almost depends on you having an amazing ride-cymbal time without having to add much of the other accompanying aspects of it.

Sometimes, I wish I could integrate drums to the point where I heard drumming more like percussion. I really want to have more drums involved with it from my own singular participation. It's something I'm working at—bringing the other drums into this language. It might not be a cymbal going forward; there are different kinds of things that might be taking the place of the ride. It could be something entirely whacked like a drum with a certain kind of treatment or a bowl with beads in it or stacks of metal or a bunch of different things. A cymbal creates an aura and that's the one aspect of my cymbals and my hi-hats and everything about it that's

be able to create that bed of an aura of sound. A lot of cymbals create an aura and hopefully yours is doing what you want for you.

GB: Re-examining other surfaces to take the place of a ride cymbal has always been an intriguing thought to me. I remember seeing Bill Bruford playing with Earthworks and he was riding on a set of Octobans. It was a completely different sound and feel and I think really contributed to the totally unique sound that band had.

JH: I just think there are so many unexplored sonic possibilities left out there yet to discover.

UNDER ONE SUN

GB: Switching gears again, I've heard your group Under One Sun three times now and they just laid me out every time. What an incredible group with its own sound and with the totally diverse musical backgrounds of the players including a tabla player and an accordionist. What were the goals of that group musically?

JH: Over the years, I'd meet certain musicians who I would catalog, that if I ever wanted to do something and needed a particular sound, I would know who I could call to play in a band. Some of the members of Under One Sun, I had already known and others, I had just heard about. I saw our tabla player Salar Nader at a festival and he just rocked all 12,000 people using a single microphone on his drums. We managed to be able to see each other play and then do some playing together and found we just liked each other and like playing together.

GB: Does the group have goals that they are trying to accomplish?

JH: The goal, in a certain way, was that the tabla can do some things that other instruments can't do. What the filigree that the tabla can do to ornament a ballad with sound, texture and framing is totally unique to the tabla and something drum set, conga or djembe could never do. When you integrate it with some of the Afro-Cuban tradition, it's totally amazing and it's a natural fit. The players of Under One Sun just naturally understood the music. Everybody

More important to me was the celebration that people have watching other people play. Without question, that was a real moment for me; I had to make this a reality. It was a sound that I just fell in love with. It wasn't easy because people lived long distances away. It's costly to fly people and to come together to play music. The group wasn't known. No matter who I have played for, that doesn't bring this other band into focus. It was a long time coming but I was always grateful for people who understood that there was something about this band that was cool; they believed enough in me to help bring it together. It just got better and better and I was grateful to Oberlin Conservatory and the amazing recording studio that they have here and that they were interested in recording us. Since jazz groups really don't make money on records anyways, who is going to put it all together and record an eight-piece band and give us an opportunity to do this? Now, we are starting to play some festivals and are getting a few other things in the pipeline.

GB: Tell me everything I would want to know about your other big project, Bokante. What's the status of that group? More touring and recording plans? Who writes most of the music? How were the members selected?

JH: Bokante was started by the founder and leader of Snarky Puppy, Michael League who wanted to try something with no drum set and with vocalist Malika Tirolien [from Guadalupe, living in Montreal]. He asked Keita Ogawa from Japan and Andre Ferrarie from Sweden along with me to become the percussion section. Michael and Malika have written most of the music. Some of the ideas for the feels come with the tunes for sure, but then as a percussion section we get way into what works for us and how to get the most texture and snap from each feel.

When Michael and the other guitarists add their counter lines it represents more of an African styled gumbo of things. Malika has powerful lyrics and a beautiful voice and as a performer, she gives her heart and

to mention the lady can dance her ass off! The band has been signed to Peter Gabriel's Real World label. We've done a European tour and will be back on the road summer of 2019.

GB: What else is coming up?

JH: I'm working on composing music for a movie called *The Changing of the Gods*. It's an amazing documentary about how everything in the universe is connected. It's about how shapes recur all throughout the universe and how our own development on the planet happens in a way when the astrological placement of the planets fall within a certain configuration. As a part of this, I traveled to Tucson where I met with Alex Ferris who has constructed something like a hundred original instruments and every one of them would take a lifetime to master. We picked some of them that we thought we could make some inroads with and started recording motifs to use to tell the story about how everything in the universe is connected. I thought it would give us a good pallet of sounds to use.

GB: Any other musical projects you're currently working on, or being imagined?

JH: I would like to think that all across North America, cities would invest in a Creative Music Ensemble that represents their city in a unique way with an international cast of players, an agenda for touring in venues across the continent and with other cities that have also invested in the idea to have a band, like a sports team, be an international good-will ambassador for their cities. This would be similar to SF Jazz or Jazz at Lincoln Center. The touring groups would perform, give residencies and share a spirit of understanding and inclusiveness everywhere they went.

That is the dream I have because I see no other way to sustain and educate and provide gigs for all the amazing musicians that are joining the work force. This would not be the answer but it would be a great start and it could trickle down into smaller, more regional groups and venues too.✱

WEBFOOT jameyhaddad.com