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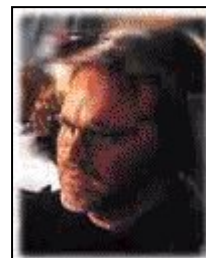
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Q&A Feature

Paul Wertico

Who are some of your musical influences and why?

I have a such huge amount of influences, in all types of musical genres, that it's hard to know where to start. To me, it never mattered so much where my influences came from or who they were. As a human being and a musician, if something or someone "touched" my inner being emotionally, as well as intellectually, then I've always felt that there was something special about it, at least to me....and we are what we listen to.



What state do you think jazz is in (1996 - 1997)?

I think that it may be in a "re-grouping" stage. There's has been so much talk about what jazz really is and who's really playing it, that lines have been drawn. Some people think that true jazz only comes from musicians playing retro, and others think that any instrumental music with a sax in it qualifies as jazz. To me, jazz has to have a sense of adventure in it. The jazz records that I love always had a feeling that new territory was being charted and that the players were pushing the music and themselves to the limit. Now a days, it seems that a player's image, technique, and marketability are what's focused on. But then again, art music does reflect the outside world, so maybe that will have to change first!

Who do you try and reach as an artist?

I try to reach everyone! I want to inspire both the musicians on the bandstand and in the audience. I want to uplift the lay person to feel the sense that they're hearing something special and vital...something that will make them glad to be part of the experience. Remember, music is a gift, and like with any gift, its better when you can share it with others.

If you had to perform in one place where would it be and why?

I guess I have to say planet Earth, cause I haven't been to Mars yet!

What first turned your ears to jazz?

I don't remember exactly, but probably my mother.

Who are some of your favorite drummers & why?

This is by no means a complete list, but all these drummers have a real "human" quality, in addition to that sense of adventure and daring that I previously mentioned; plus they have their own particular qualities: Roy Haynes for his attitude and his angular logic (plus he makes me laugh and feel so good; Elvin Jones for his sense of swing and waterfall-like phrasing; Tony Williams for his beautiful sound and compositional-like playing; Jack DeJohnette for his endless creativity, and for the

Background

One of the most versatile and musical drummers in music today, Paul Wertico became a member of the world renowned Pat Metheny Group in 1983. Since that time, he has won 5 Grammy Awards with the PMG. In addition, Paul has always been in great demand as a session/touring musician. Paul has played with such jazz greats as Larry Coryell, Eddie Harris, Lee Konitz, Dave Liebman, Sam Rivers, Bob Mintzer, Terry Gibbs, Buddy DeFranco, Roscoe Mitchell, Evan Parker, Jay McShann, Herbie Mann, Jerry Goodman, and many others.

When Paul is not touring with the Pat Metheny Group, he divides his time between studio work, producing, session playing, and leading his own groups. Paul's debut CD as a leader, entitled *The Yin And The Yout*, received 4 stars in *Downbeat* magazine. He also played drums on Paul Winter's 1990 Grammy nominated release, *Earth: Voices of A Planet*. Recently, Paul played on and produced a number of albums for various artists, including vocalist Kurt Elling's 1995 Grammy nominated release, *Close Your Eyes*, and Elling's latest CD, *The Messenger*. He's also recently released four co-op recording projects: his band *Earwax Control's* CD entitled *2 Live*; a drums/percussion duo CD with Gregg Bendian entitled "*Bang!*"; a trio recording with Laurence Hobgood & Brian Torff entitled "*Union*" and a 2 guitars/2 drums CD with Derek Bailey, Metheny, and Gregg Bendian entitled "*The Sign of 4.*"

He also just released a new CD of the Paul Wertico Trio (featuring guitarist John Moulder and bassist Eric Hochberg) entitled "*Live in Warsaw!*" which is available @ [CDnow](#) and is currently working on a CD-ROM disk featuring his unique sounds and grooves.

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way he can really whip things up; Art Blakey for his relentless drive and spiritual presence; Max Roach for his melodic sense and up-tempo mastery; Buddy Rich for his technique, the way he could underpin a band, and the way he could make it all look so effortless; John Bohnam for his wide groove and great parts; Keith Moon for his way of flying in and around the music, and for being so fun to watch; Ginger Baker for his earthy sound and grounded playing; Mitch Mitchell for his way of filling in the spaces, and for his over the bar line approach to rock; Plus: Ed Blackwell, Andrew Cyrille, Philly Joe Jones, Baby Dodds, Milford Graves, Jo Jones, Paul Motian, Sunny Murray, Bob Moses, Rashied Ali, Alphonse Mouzon, Han Bennick, Eddie Marshall, Bob Morin, J.C. Moses, Jimmy Hopps, John "Drumbo" French, Robert Wyatt, Michael Giles, Clive Bunker, Paul Whaley, Thom Mooney, etc., etc.! The other thing that all these drummers had going for them, as far as I was concerned, was that I also liked the music of the bands they played in. I can't really listen to drumming, no matter how great it might be, if I don't like the rest of the music.

Who are some of your favorite artists (jazz or otherwise)?

John Coltrane, Miles Davis, The Beatles, Jimi Hendrix, Stevie Wonder, Charles Ives, Maurice Ravel, to name a few.

What 5 or 10 recordings would you recommend to a new jazz fan?

Again a tough one, but these all have a special place in my heart:

"Ballads", "Crescent", & "A Love Supreme" - John Coltrane
 "Milestones", "Kind Of Blue", & "Filles De Kilimanjaro" - Miles Davis
 "Free For All" - Art Blakey
 "My Song" - Keith Jarrett
 "Red Clay" - Freddie Hubbard
 "Sweet Rain" - Stan Getz

Aside from jazz, what do you listen to?

Everything, and alot of times nothing! Sometimes the sounds around your life can broaden your horizons, especially the sounds your child makes.

Other than something of your own, what is the last recording you listened to?

Dvorak's "New World Symphony", played by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and conducted by Fritz Reiner

What was the last movie you viewed?

"The Net" It was on cable TV one night, and although it's hardly a deep movie, I found it entertaining since I was working on the computer alot at that time.

What was the last book you read?

"Science Matters" by Robert M. Hazen & James Trefil. It deals with achieving scientific literacy in all the different sciences. It changed the way I view the world.

Paul serves on the percussion faculty of Northwestern University. He has written for various drum magazines and performs drum seminars around the world. In addition, he released an instructional video entitled Sound Work of Drumming. Paul has been featured on the cover of numerous magazines, including the cover of the January '95 issue of Modern Drummer magazine. He was also one of the featured performers at the '94 Percussive Arts Society International Convention and the '97 Modern Drummer Drum Festival (parts of each of his performances are included in the "Highlight" videos of both events available through Warner Bros. Publications). He also performed at the '96 and '97 International Association of Jazz Educators' National Conferences.

Recently, Paul was voted "Fusion Drummer Of The Year" in the DRUM! magazine's 1997 Reader's Poll, and he places in the top five in the "Electric Jazz Category" in Modern Drummer magazine's 1997 Reader's Poll. In reviews, his playing has been compared to that of an "Impressionist Painter", while Paul has also been described as "an inspired madman" and "a restless innovator."

Be sure to visit [Paul's web site](#).



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