

# Five Questions to...

## Paul Wertico



Paul Wertico is a seven-time Grammy award and poll winning drummer/percussionist. In addition to being a former member of the Pat Metheny Group for 18 years, he is a current member of the Lanny Coryell Trio, the Jeff Berlin Trio and the legendary Eastern European rock band, SEB. His own group, the Paul Wertico Trio, recently released a new CD entitled *Another Side* on the NAIM Label. Paul performs drum clinics and master classes around the world and he is on the music faculty of both Northwestern University and the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University. He teaches privately as well. For more info, please visit his website at [www.paulwertico.com](http://www.paulwertico.com).

**JazzGram:** What was the first jazz record you bought?

Paul Wertico: I can't be 100% sure because it was quite a long time ago, and also because I bought such a huge amount of records back then it's difficult to recall which one was actually the first. However, I believe it possibly might have been an LP entitled *Buddy Rich Swingin' New Big Band*. I remember one day when my Mom and I were driving around in her car and a great track from that LP entitled *Up Tight* came on the radio and it completely blew me away. It made me want to take up the drum set. Anyway, that's my best guess.

**JG:** What is the latest jazz record you have enjoyed?

P W: I'm not really hung up on any particular jazz recording at the moment. My students frequently turn me on to a lot of new artists and CD releases, which is great, but I also find myself often reverting back to listening to classic recordings by Miles, Coltrane, etc. because they're so dis-

tinctive and timeless and also because they're a big part of my life. If I had to pick one that I've listened to most recently, I'd say I've really been into a late 1960s Max Roach recording now out on CD entitled *Members, Don't Get Weary*.

**JG:** How do you keep yourself busy when you are not playing music?

P W: First, and absolutely foremost in importance, is time spent with my family. I try to be with them as much as possible when I'm home and I miss them madly when I'm gone. Coming in a distant second are some little hobbies that I enjoy such as O gauge model trains, as well as a love of railroading in general. I also like to read a lot and I spend a great deal of time on my computer, doing things such as maintaining my website and, of course, e-mailing people from around the world and answering questions such as these.

**JG:** What is the most gratifying aspect of being a jazz musician?

P W: To begin with, I have to say that I really consider myself an all-around musician first, rather than any particular type of musician. Calling someone a jazz musician or a rock musician, etc., seems to be a way of categorizing people, which in turn limits other people's view of you. I'd rather think that the term jazz and all that it represents (freedom of thought, improvisational skill, serious study of one's instrument, constantly searching for new ways of expression, etc.) is the way I approach playing in general, regardless of the genre. In fact, it's pretty much the way I like to approach life in general.

**JG:** What would you do if you were not a musician?

P W: Obviously, since I am what I am, I can only guess, but I think I'd probably be in the field of science, most likely as a chemist. I always loved chemistry as a kid, especially research chemistry, since I like to constantly look for solutions and discover new things.