

TALES FROM THE CYMBAL BAG

Historical and Hysterical Memoirs of Lennie DiMuzio
by Lennie DiMuzio with Jim Coffin

AS DRUMMERS AND PERCUSSIONISTS WE START AT AN EARLY AGE TO VALUE OUR CRAFT. WE PRACTISE, HAVE LESSONS WITH A GOOD TEACHER, JOIN BANDS AND DREAM!

NOW, LET'S TALK ABOUT THE DREAMING PART.

Like most drummers, I grew up checking out the drummers in Downbeat, Percussive Notes, Modern Drummer and of course DRUMscene! I was inspired by the "cool cats" that were featured in advertisements, the great players who had the endorsements, performed the clinics, masterclasses and major events like Zildjian Days, Percussive Arts International Conventions and Ultimate Drummers Weekends.

Have you ever wondered how the whole endorsement thing works? Who are the "main players," "decision makers," the Gods who make the dreams come true? These are the 'AR' people: that's short for, 'Artist Relations'. These are the people who are the go-between for the manufacturer and the artist. These people must possess special traits:

- They often have a background in music
- They have a good grasp of how "the business" works
- They know how to listen (no, I mean really listen!)

- They are born with a respect for all of the people that they come into contact with, and after you spend a few minutes with them you genuinely feel like they understand you, share your dream, and are a friend for life!

Tales from the Cymbal Bag contains the collected memories of one of the undisputed Gods of the drumming world, a man who set the bar for what it is to be an 'Artist Relations Executive' - Lennie DiMuzio.

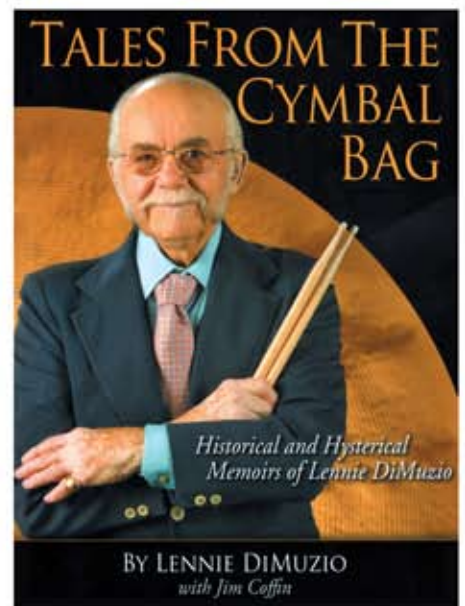
A drummer from a very young age, DiMuzio performed as a distinguished member of the U.S. Army Band before continuing with formal studies at the New England Conservatory of Music and Schillinger House (now Berklee College of Music).

I first met Lennie in 1978 at the second P.A.S.I.C. (Percussive Arts Society International Convention) in Tempe, Arizona. It was the year the "Nose" (you will have to read the book to find out) appeared at the Halloween party to end all parties, and the year I was introduced to the 3 men, who would become the legendary JEWOPs (Junior Executives Without Power, also in the book): Lennie DiMuzio, Jim Coffin and Lloyd McCausland.

Tales From the Cymbal Bag is full of amazing stories and anecdotes about our industry. It introduces us to the drummers and percussionists from all types of music that have achieved the legendary status of, "Product Endorser." Lennie's 'friends' read like a complete history of drumming. Names like: Big Sid Catlett, Papa Joe Jones, Ray McKinley, Zutty Singleton, Joe Morello, Louis Bellson, Billy Gladstone, Mel Lewis, Philly Joe Jones, Baby Dodds, Chick Webb, Dave Tough, Ray Bauduc, Cozy Cole, Max Roach, Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, Barrett Deems, Roy Burns, Sol Gubin, Henry Adler, Joe Cusatis, Jimmy Cobb, John Riley, Ed Soph, Peter Erskine, Dave Weckl, Steve Smith, Steve Gadd, Tony Williams, James Blades, Tony

Thompson, Kenny Clare, Gregg Bissonette, Bill Stewart, Irv Cottler, Harvey Mason, Vinnie Colaiuta, Billy Cobham, Joey Kramer, Chad Smith, Jeff Hamilton, Alex Acuna, Mickey Hart, Harold Jones, Steve Houghton, Jim Campbell, Jim Petercsak, Fred Sanford, John Beck, Duffy Jackson, Simon Phillips, Larrie London, Bernard Purdie, Tommy Aldridge, Liberty DeVito, Kenny Aronoff, Mike Mangini, Neil Peart, Ginger Baker, Elvin Jones, Frank Epstein, Sam Denov, Anthony Cirone and the list goes on and on. If you are not familiar with some of these people, consider this a list of drummers worth checking out!

Lennie shares with us a personal history of the Zildjian Cymbal company. We learn how all of these artists chose their cymbals and how new lines of speciality cymbals were created. Lennie shares insightful moments, the "behind the scenes" action during the hundreds, if not thousands, of evenings





Lennie & Buddy

he spent entertaining the artists and entourages. Lennie and Jim Coffin lovingly introduce us to some of the great "Drummer" moments in the 20th century. Naturally, there are amazing stories about Avedis Zildjian, Bob Zildjian and Lennie's life-long buddy, Armand Zildjian. Lennie was instrumental in supporting the entire percussionist community through the development of programs that supported not only Rock and Jazz drummers but also Classical contemporary percussionists as well as key educators and influential mentors through his work with various international organisations such as the Percussive Arts Society (PAS) and the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM).

"After retiring from the Avedis Zildjian Company in January of 2003, I realized, after six months, that taking my pail and shovel to the beach was not exactly what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I had happily spent my entire adult life in the mainstream of the drumming world hanging with the cats, and after 4 or 5 months, I missed it terribly. (Plus I was only 72 years old and just getting started!) ... In the summer of 2003 I got a call to join Sabian as a consultant. When the call came in I said "Jump Back Baby" - let the good times roll."

During P.A.S.I.C. 2011, in Indianapolis USA, I had a chance to reconnect with Lennie and his daughter Thérèse DiMuzio over a coffee and a chat. I fondly remembered the day some 30 years previously when I had toured the factory with Lennie and Leon Chapinni, picking out some pies and hanging! Lots of stories were passed back and forth, lots of jokes and once again I was "in the zone" with the master! During our meeting I was able to record some of our conversations that I will share with you here:

Can you tell me about the role of the Artist Relations Executive.

Well, it all started out with the growth of the

Artist Relations department. The AR person was someone to facilitate drummers getting active in the educational world by supporting them with access to the best possible equipment as well as promoting the product. So, if the artist is comparable, focused, in demand and has a great reputation he would be a perfect ambassador. I was interested in supporting many up and coming



Armand, Joe Morello & Lennie

drummers by lending a helping hand, giving them a chance to grow within our ever-expanding profession. Of course, that could be a great help to the company ... It's sort of two-edged, (not a sword), but it works both ways; someone who will help boost the company's image and also introduce other drummers and their students to the best possible products by having the sound physically available so that people can hear the signatures cymbals. ... Also, over the years, we have actually developed new products which were

actually contrived by the artist. They would come up with all kinds of ideas... they would be looking for something that was unique, something that matched their personality, how they play, how they feel about sound and give them the benefit of having things personally customized.

Who are some of the artists that you have enjoyed working with in creating customized cymbals and products?

Well, there's quite a few ... going way back ... at the beginning, cymbals made were sold in three or four weights, tops!: a light-weight, a medium, a medium heavy and a heavy. They didn't have names like Ping or Flat Ride or KRide or Dark Ride or a Swish Knocker. Those names were not discovered until later on as the whole core line developed and more cymbals came onto the market. These cymbals were also developed along with the drummer's wishes, so of course one thing led to another. For example, Joe Morello: when Joe was in his heyday he always thought that a 20" ride cymbal was a little too strong, a little too powerful. Joe was unique player, a very sensitive type you know, and an incredible technician... he wanted something that was not overpowering yet had the delicate sound and sensitivity he required as a player. The sizes went by the edge, we did not have half sizes. The 20" or 22" were the most popular, but Joe wanted something unique. So, we ended up cutting down a 20" ride cymbal to a 19" ride. At the time you could take off a quarter-inch, a half an inch, or a full inch by turning the cymbal down on the lathing machine. We brought it down to a 19" and Joe said "that's it! that's the sound". Joe was sort of the catalyst, he gave us the 19 inch ride.

And then we had the same situation with Buddy Rich. Buddy had to have a 20" ride, that was what he wanted. He did not want anything bigger, that seemed to fit his style very appropriately and, you know, the sound was also very important

to Buddy. We used to go through a lot of cymbals when Buddy was in the factory. Buddy would say, "Not high enough, not high enough, no good, get rid of it!" I would bring in a stack (15 - 20) of 20" cymbals and Buddy would just listen - he never played. He would have someone else play and he would just sit and listen to it, and when he heard the sound, that was it!

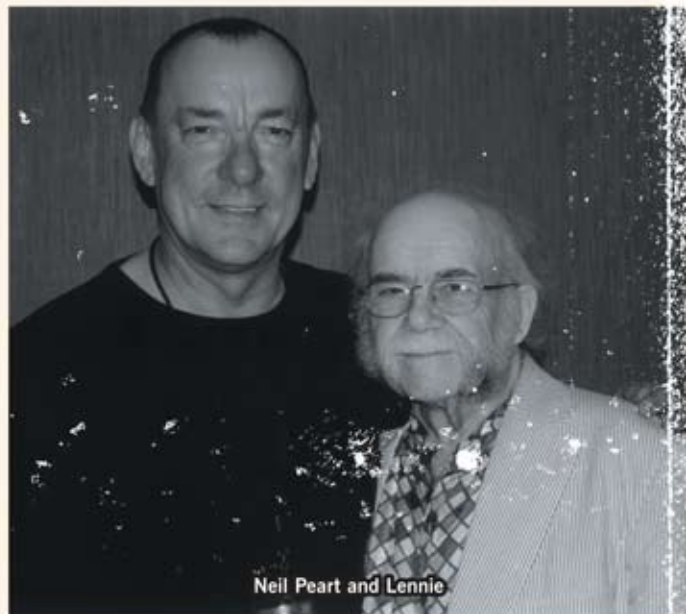
Buddy had a very unique personality and wit, he was a sort of standup comedian! When I first encountered Buddy (it's actually in the book), he came out to the factory. We were picking out some 20" rides, we had a bunch there and Buddy would say, "Not high enough, not high enough, ..." etc. After a while I had a bunch of cymbals on the stands, but he continued to say, "Nope, Not High Enough, Not High Enough"! So, I just loosened the wingnut, raised up the stand and said, "Is that high enough for ya?!" Buddy said, "Armand, what's going on with this kid? Who is this guy, a wiseguy?" Everyone got a big kick out of it and of course we became good friends...

Tales From the Cymbal Bag is chock full of delight. I feel I really must list a few of my favourite chapters as there are well over forty - including: 'Jump Back Baby', 'Ring-A-Ding', 'Splang', 'So... You Want a Cymbal Endorsement?', 'Hair Today Gone Tomorrow', 'Little Big Horn and a UFO', 'Tommy Thompson Crotales and the Tokyo Symphony', 'A Bunch of Thumpers', and lots more.

I had such a great time reading this book, it really reads like a history (who's who) of Jazz and



Lennie eating Cymbal Pie



Rock drummers and is just waiting to welcome you into Lennie's house with a big dish of home cookin'-main dish Cymbal Pie!

It would be unfair not to acknowledge the terrific contributions made by Jim Coffin (his marvellous anecdotes, interjections and memories), and editors Thérèse DiMuzio and Ed Uribe. Clearly a large dose of energy and affection have been well invested!

It was a privilege to have the opportunity to spend quality time with one of our living treasures. Just the other day I received a letter from Lennie advising that he had just returned from the new Jazz Educators' Conference (U.S.A), and to quote the man, "... music all day long, with all the heavy Jazz cats and many of the top college bands in the country"!

If you do not have a chance to meet the man, at

least read the book!

In the immortal words of Lennie DiMuzio, "JUMP BACK BABY!"

Tales From the Cymbal Bag

288 pages

published by Jump Back Baby Productions

<http://www.lennied.com/>