

PERCUSScene

AUSTRALIA'S PERCUSSION MAGAZINE

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Joe Locke

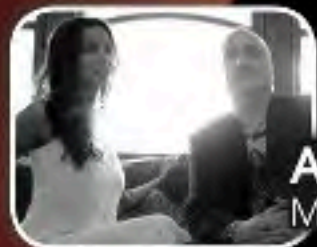
All Things Vibraphone



Giraldo Piloto
Live From Cuba - Part 1



Dave Black



Alex Pertout
Moments in Time with Alex & Nilusha



PAS Australia
Australia Chapter Update

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Dave Black boasts a distinguished musical career. He has studied with notable teachers and performers such as Louie Bellson, Joel Leach, Ed Shaughnessy, Steve Schaeffer, Jerry Steinholtz and Nick Caroli. He has travelled around the world with a variety of entertainers and shows, performing and recording with such artists as Alan King, Robert Merrill, June Allyson, Anita O'Day, Pete Jolly, Frankie Capp, Gordon Brisker, Kim Richmond, Victor Lewis, Jerry Hey and Steve Huffsteter.

A prolific composer and arranger, more than 60 of his compositions and arrangements have been published by Alfred Music Publishing, Barnhouse, CPP/Belwin, TRN, Highland/Etling and Warner Brothers, and many of them have been recorded.

Dave has written with - and for - the bands of Louie Bellson, Sammy Nestico, Bill Watrous, Bobby Shew, Ed Shaughnessy, Gordon Brisker and the C.S.U., Northridge Jazz Ensemble. He has been the recipient of many awards and commissions, including 26 consecutive ASCAP Popular Composer Awards (for his contributions to the symphonic and concert repertoires) and 2 Grammy participation/nomination certificates - one for his performance contribution on Anita O'Day's Grammy-nominated album 'In a Mellow Tone', and the other for his contribution as album-track composer on Louie Bellson's Grammy-nominated album 'Airmail Special'.

In addition, many of his compositions have been used as source/background music on numerous TV shows including 'All My Children', 'Coach', 'The Drew Carey Show', 'General Hospital', 'Ellen', 'Grace Under Fire', 'Nightline', 'Roseanne' and 'Good Morning America'. And he also co-wrote the "Final Rudimental Solo" (from Alfred's Drum Method, Book 2) that was featured in the 20th-Century Fox hit movie, 'Drumline'.

Dave is the author or co-author of several best-selling books published by Alfred Music Publishing Company: 'Alfred's Drum Method', Books 1 & 2 (the world's current best seller); 'Alfred's Beginning Drumset Method'; 'Contemporary Brush Techniques'; 'Alfred's Beginning Snare Drum Duets'; 'Cymbals: A Crash Course'; 'A Jazz Diary'; 'Drumset Independence & Syncopation'; 'The Essential Dictionary of Orchestration'; the award-winning 'Alfred's Kid's Drum Course', Books 1 & 2; 'Alfred's Kid's Drumset Course'; 'Bass Drum Essentials for the

Drummer, Percussionist, Author, Editor, Composer, Arranger.

DAVE BLACK

By Ray Deegan

Drumset'; 'Alfred's Max Drumset Method'; 'The Drummer's Toolkit'; 'How to Tune Your Drums (Handy Guide)'; 'How to Set Up Your Drumset (Handy Guide)' and 'Sound Innovations for Concert Band' (the world's first customisable method).

As an active member of the Percussive Arts Society (PAS), Dave served on the National Board of Directors for 6 years, was a member of the Sustaining Members Advisory Council, and was selected to host the 1991 Percussive Arts Society International Convention in Anaheim, California. He presently serves as Vice President and Editor-in-Chief, School and Church Publications, for the Alfred Music Publishing Company.

Dave, can you talk about your background growing up as a kid, and when you discovered music?

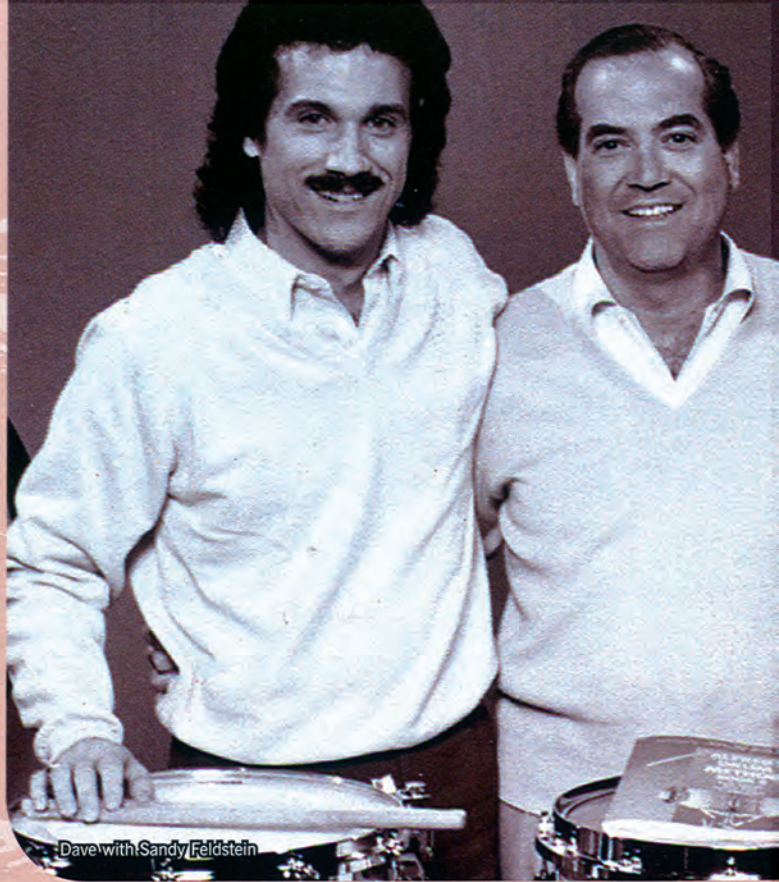
I knew I wanted to be a musician when I was about 7 years old (second grade). And, there was no question I wanted to be a drummer. I can remember as a small child going to the local parades. When the drum line of those marching bands passed by, it was the most exciting thing in the world to me. At the time, we couldn't afford a drum and so in the second grade I purchased an inexpensive guitar with my First Holy Communion funds. I studied guitar for a couple of years but always knew I would switch instruments once we could afford a snare drum. That moment came in the fifth grade when I was able to obtain a used snare drum for \$15, and a camera I owned as a trade. That same year, I joined the elementary school band. Though I had to compromise and study guitar for a couple of years, in retrospect it was one of the best things that ever happened, as it gave me a good foundation in melody, harmony and theory ... skills I've continued to put to good use as a composer.

What course of study did you pursue once you realised that drums and percussion was your first love?

After switching to drums in the fifth grade, I continued studying privately through Junior High and High School. I practised up to 4 hours a day and played in all the school, community and all state Jazz bands, Concert bands, and Orchestras. As I entered High School, there was no doubt I would be going to college and majoring in music. In my junior year of High School, Louie Bellson was the guest artist with our High School Jazz Band. He stayed at our house for 2 nights, and that weekend changed my life forever, as it was the start of a life-long personal and professional relationship for both of us. In my senior year of High School, I had already been accepted to North Texas State and the University of Miami. As a result of having met and played with Louie Bellson in my junior year of High School, he suggested I head out to the West coast to attend California State University, Northridge and study with him (since he lived in Northridge as well). So, in January 1977 (6 months before graduating High School), I completely changed directions and headed to California after graduation. I attended Cal State Northridge and received my Bachelor of Music degree in Percussion Performance with a minor in composition.

How did you initially become so involved with Alfred Publishing?

My first involvement with Alfred was in 1980; 5 years before I ever knew I would be working there. I was writing Jazz Band charts and travelling at the time, and Louie Bellson had been playing a Big Band chart I had written for a member of his band. He liked the chart and approached Sandy Feldstein at Alfred about the possibility of publishing it. Fortunately, it was accepted for publication in 1980 and became my very first publication in 1981. When I began working at Alfred in 1985, it was not supposed to be a long-term gig. As I mentioned, I had been travelling around the world for a few years, playing with a few well-known



entertainers and Broadway-type shows, but was tired of being on the road, and was looking for something to keep me in town while I recharged my batteries. I was told by a close friend that an opportunity had opened up at Alfred, and that it was something I should consider applying for. It was a job in the music industry working with other musicians, and so I thought it would be a good place to settle down for a few months. My first opportunity at Alfred was in the Marketing department. Though it wasn't an area that really interested me, it was a foot in the door and an opportunity to see what else might be of interest to me within the company. While working in Marketing, I saw there were opportunities to work not only as an Editor, but to also contribute as an Author/Composer. Those 2 things were of real interest to me as it would not only give me the opportunity to use the creative skills I gained in College and on the road, but also offer an opportunity to generate an additional income stream. Around 1987, there was an editorial position that opened up and I moved into that position as a 'Music Editor.' At that time, Sandy Feldstein would not only ask my opinion regarding drum book submissions, but would also seek out my comments and/or suggestions regarding these publications. This is how my first book came about. Because of my relationship with Louie Bellson, one day Sandy showed me a brush book that Louie and Hank Bellson had submitted for publication consideration. They were on the fence as to whether to publish the book because they couldn't find a way in which to clearly show and/or explain the motion of the brush strokes. He gave me a copy of the manuscript and asked me to look it over. Not only was I able to come up with the concept of using the face of a clock to illustrate the motion and direction of the brushes, but I added an additional chapter on playing Latin brushes as well. Both Louie and Hank really liked the ideas and so I became the co-author of that book. As a result of working on the brush book, Sandy asked me to co-author Alfred's Drum Method with him. After Sandy left Alfred in 1989, I became the Instrumental Music Editor and Director of Percussion Acquisitions. Over the years, my title and role changed to Director of Instrumental Music and then to my current position as Vice President/Editor-in-Chief of School and Church Publications (which still includes all percussion acquisitions). I'm so grateful to Sandy, Alfred and the Manus family for the many opportunities I've been given over the last 27 years.

You briefly mentioned your book, DRUM METHOD BOOK 1. Can you talk us through how you and Sandy developed and conceptualised the book?

Back in 1987, the Haskell Harr Drum Method had been out for 50 years, and Elementary Drum Method, by Roy Burns, had been out for 25 years. Those two methods were widely used, but it had been 25 years since a major snare method had come out, and so we felt we could update those two books. Alfred's Drum Method, Book 1 was the first drum book to include full-length solos after each concept taught, so there's a total of 23 full-length solos suitable for contests. We also introduced rolls in a way that would be easier to understand (particularly



Dave With Louie Bellson



it more interesting and beneficial to use. Towards that end, we wrote to many of the teachers who had been using Book 1 and asked them what ideas or specific concepts they wanted to see included in Book 2. We received a lot of good feedback and ideas we were able to incorporate in Book 2. We included multiple-percussion techniques, ABA form, tonal properties of the snare drum, accessory instruments, changing meters, duets, and a special corps-style section by Jay Wanamaker. I think reaching out to those teachers for advice was one of the best ideas we ever had, as it not only gave us a clear direction on what to focus on in Book 2, but it also made these teachers feel they contributed to the method. As a result, the method developed a very loyal teacher following and support network. You're a guest artist at this year's Australia's Ultimate Drummers Weekend.

Have you been to Oz before? Are you looking forward to your visit down under? I was in Australia in 1999, but did not attend the Australia's Ultimate Drummer's Weekend. I'm very much looking forward to being there, and sharing my knowledge of both my own products and those of Alfred Publishing with the students and teachers who will be attending. I also look forward to judging Australia's Best Up & Coming Drummer competition.

Considering your many talents, Dave, and obviously busy schedule – what are some of the projects you're really looking forward to this year?

Well, with this year being the 25th anniversary of Alfred's Drum Method, Book 1, there has been a lot going on in terms of promotions, magazine interviews and travel related to the anniversary. So, I'm looking forward to the continued celebration for the rest of the year. One of the most exciting things that has happened is the release of Alfred's Drum Method Complete. We combined books 1 & 2 and included a Vic Firth PAS International Drum Rudiments poster with each book. In addition, the entire book is now available on SmartMusic. Of course, I'm very excited to be travelling to Australia for the Ultimate Drummers Weekend, and for the percussion workshops I will be presenting in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. I haven't been back to Australia since 1999, and so I'm way overdue for a trip Down Under.

www.daveblackmusic.com

the 7-stroke roll). Something else unique to the method was the fact that we incorporated actual drum parts from Sousa marches and well-known Concert Band pieces. It was the first book to show how rudiments, such as 5-stroke rolls and flams, were used in actual drum parts. A VHS video that correlated to the book was also made available, making it one of the first products to ever have that element. And, we actually taught a lesson live on camera. In keeping up with the changing times, the video was later released on DVD and is now available digitally for your iPad.

It must be amazing to be part of such an incredible accomplishment – 25 years of continued success and 500,000+ copies!!

It's really hard to believe that 25 years have passed since the release of Alfred's Drum Method, Book 1. At the time, Sandy and I were simply trying to write what we hoped would be a good, comprehensive method that would inspire young drummers to want to continue studying music. I hope we've been able to succeed on some level.

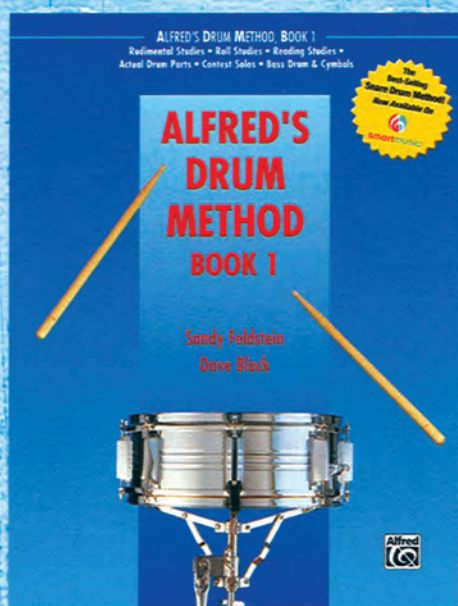
Can you talk a little about DRUM METHOD BOOK 2 – and its context following Book 1?

Writing Alfred's Drum Method, Book 2 was an interesting process. Because a Book 2 typically only sells about 25% of what a Book 1 sells, we wanted to try and make the book as unique as possible, so teachers and students would find

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25TH ANNIVERSARY!



MORE THAN
500,000
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ALFRED'S DRUM METHOD codifies what a book that teaches music should be: clear explanations, coupled with perfectly appropriate exercises that build the best possible foundation for any aspiring drummer. [This method] is timeless and it will continue to shine the brightest light on the path to drumming, most likely more than all other method books combined.

— Peter Erskine, Jazz & Studio Legend

Dave Black appearing at Australia's Ultimate Drummers Weekend 25 & 26 August

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