

DrumScene Article by Dom Famularo 2006

“To Inspire to Aspire”

I am so grateful to have the opportunity to have a voice in DrumScene. I travel the globe like most people travel around their town. It amazes me how no matter where I go I feel the same warm, intense, fun, passionate feeling from every drummer on this planet! That same insatiable desire to always learn about this art form is shared by drummers everywhere! 2005 was my most traveled year to date! More countries, more clinics, drum festivals, band performances, radio and TV interviews, magazine articles, lessons, master classes....you name it! I have enjoyed every single moment of each adventure.

There are lessons to learn everyday. I believe in fate...things happen for a reason! I feel none of us chose to play the drums...the drums chose us! This is fate! You see, all of us, no matter where you are from or what age you are, at some point in time said the same thing! “I want to play the drums!” This alone is what has brought us all together as a drumming family. I feel fate speaks everyday. It talks to us in every moment. If you go to bed this evening and put your head on your pillow and say to yourself that you did not hear fate today....it is not because fate did not speak...it is because you did not listen!

Music is very powerful! It reaches us in the most deepest and spiritual way! It takes us on a journey of every emotion from the lowest point to the highest peak! I have been a professional for over 40 years. Doing nothing else but playing the drums! I have performed with some of the greatest musicians and have enjoyed a fun, exciting, educational roller coaster ride of emotions. I would not change a day!

In all my experiences, it took me years to come to the conclusion of finding the message and purpose of my musical journey. It is this...**“To inspire people to aspire!”** This is everything! A mentor of mine, Roy Burns (a great drummer, tremendous musician, dedicated educator, and deep philosopher) once said to me, “Be careful to give information to the student only when they are ready for it!” Too much information at the wrong time can confuse, and divert a person’s focus. Roy is very wise. I feel everyone at any age or experience, is ready to understand that their talent is also about the message you have to offer to the world!

To *inspire* means: to affect someone or guide them by divine influence. To touch and fill with enlivening or exalting emotion. To stimulate to action; motivate, heighten or intensify. What a powerful word! Significant results can come from this action! Your musical talent is a gift! I believe this musical talent is not given to everyone. I also believe every human on this planet has talent in some form. Maybe working with computers, knowing mathematics, doing things with their hands like a fine craftsman...whatever. But, not everyone has the desire to dedicate themselves to music! With this passion, evoked by fate, there comes great responsibility. First, you must nurture this gift, take lessons, ask questions, check out books and DVD’s...research everything about it! Second, you must share it. You must give it away to anyone who will listen! If you are playing your drums alone in your room, I believe you are sharing your

gift with the universe! If someone walks into the room, then you are sharing it with that person and the universe! To play is the first step you take to share your message and start the journey of inspiring people. The results are so powerful! You will affect, guide, influence, touch and motivate the listener to the highest level! The more you study the instrument, the higher you can take your audience! This is why I say “You have a huge responsibility!” Imagine, the more you practice the deeper you will touch people through your instrument! To inspire...What a great path!

To *aspire* means: To have a great personal ambition or ultimate goal; desire strongly to achieve something. To strive toward an end; to soar; to have an ambitious plan or a lofty goal. To put inspiration into action! This is where you take your own dreams and put the effort into making it *your* reality!

When I was seventeen and starting to prepare for college, my father asked me “What will you do for a living?” I had already been playing drums for six years and was performing with a few bands and teaching some drum students. I said I wanted to continue with music and attend school and learn business. But, it was music I wanted to focus on. I wanted to play the drums and experience the power of music! Keep learning about jazz, rock, funk, latin, independence, technique, rudiments, every aspect of drumming! I knew college was important and I was willing to take from it whatever could assist me for succeeding in the music business! My hard working dad, who had his own auto mechanic repair station, then said, “That is not reality!” I then asked the question... “What is reality?” “Well,” he said... “Sit down!” I knew I was about to be hammered with his words, so I sat down. He said, “First, most people hate their jobs. Second, most people do not make enough money!” When I thought about people I knew, this made perfect sense! They were not happy and constantly complained about having no money!

I then said to my father, “Ok, I heard what you said and have decided to continue to play the drums!” He then asked me “Did you hear a word I said?” I said “Perfectly!” I then told him this... “I love to play music, and drumming is my voice. If I play drums with deep passion and aspire to a higher place in this world, and if I enjoy everyday and make no money, I am already ahead of everyone else! If I am not going to make money, let me at least love what I do! Then, if I work hard to be the best I can be, persevere everyday and begin to make money...Then, I am way ahead of everyone else!” My dad thought I was crazy!

Well, it has been many years since that conversation. I stayed true to my desire. I travel the world playing drums and when I hear people react to my performance it makes all of my efforts from the past worth while.

You see, it is all about the adventure of inspiring to aspire! I was inspired to aspire by hearing so many great drummers, Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, Elvin Jones, Louie Bellson, Max Roach, Tony Williams, Papa Jo Jones, Chick Webb, Roy Burns, Joe Morello, Sonny Payne, Steve Gadd, Shelly Manne, Jeff Porcaro, Joe Porcaro, Al Miller, Jim Chapin, Charlie Perry, Rufus Jones, Mel Lewis, Art Blakey, Ray Baduc, Davey Tough, Philly Jo Jones, Kenny Clare, Kenny Clarke, John Bonham, Keith Moon, Bill Ward, David Garibaldi, Carmine Appice, Chester Thompson, Larrie Londin, Graham Morgan, Ed Shaughnessy, Colin Bailey, John Guerin, Bernard Purdie, Virgil Donati, Vinnie Coliauta the list goes on! I suggest you have at least two recordings of each of these great drummers. Do a search, download, research, share, do whatever you need to

do to hear and be moved by the passion and dedication that you will feel in each note they have played! You will be inspired to aspire!

Now with this feeling you go and learn everything you can to fine tune your ability, to nurture your gift. Then, play for anyone you can! Share this gift...that is what you are supposed to do with gifts! Not hide them in the closet....show it to the universe!

Now, imagine this...you are playing your drums and someone in the audience comes to you and says, "Wow, watching and hearing you play really makes me feel I want to be better at what I do. I can see all the hard work you put in and that has reached me at a higher level, a divine level, it propels me...thank you for sharing your talent!" When you hear that, look up, smile, remember this article and then rejoice in the moment. Because you just inspired someone to aspire! Now your purpose is complete, but not over! It will be fate speaking to you, loud and clear, that you are on the right path and you must keep traveling. Your journey has only begun...no matter how old you are or where you live!

And all this began when you said, "I want to play the drums!" Enjoy the journey because the adventure continues...

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