

TIMBAFUNK

BY

TALKING DRUMS

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photo by John Lucich

TALKING DRUMS

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photo by Rob Wallis

David Garibaldi, Forest Hills, NY. Summer 1997

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INTRODUCTION

TimbaFunk is a combination of two very diverse but related musical styles. Timba, which is the name of the '90s style of dance music played in Cuba today, and Funk, a popular and highly influential American Rhythm and Blues-based style. Also included in this mix are many of the folkloric styles that exist in Cuba today. These traditional forms came from Africa during the era of slavery, were reinvented in Cuba as they came into contact with the Europeans, and have a continuing influence on all popular Afro-Cuban music. TimbaFunk is a blend of the old and the new, combining tradition, invention, rhythm, and melody. In recent years, American and Cuban musicians have discovered each other in a very unique way, which has resulted in a style of music that is rhythmic, highly creative, and extremely flexible. The goal of this book is to further define this concept, elaborate upon it, and give you the tools to personalize your musical experience.

In order to accomplish this, we have re-recorded the three compositions we performed in our video (Talking Drums WB#VH0189) and then made play-along tracks of the component grooves, consisting of percussion only. We hope this will give the drumset player the experience of playing along with percussionists, something not normally done in American musical culture. We then transcribed not only our Talking Drums grooves but also the traditional parts that were the inspiration for those grooves. We have included as much historical and background information as possible to inform and enlighten you about these centuries-old traditions. It is our firm belief that you will have a much deeper musical experience as you learn more about the cultural context within which the music takes place. This is no different from studying the history of jazz, funk, or classical music and learning of the individuals who brought those styles of music to us.

Things to pay attention to as you work through TimbaFunk:

1. Clave and its relation to what's being played. (Clave and its direction are written into each exercise.)
2. Sound levels—for both drumset and hand drum parts.
3. The way in which melody is interwoven into the rhythmic structure.
4. Tradition plus invention.

On a more personal note:

Talking Drums continues to be one of the most exciting musical events of our lives. The excitement, of course, comes from the music but also from the fact that we're a group. For us, group endeavors are the best because within this setting, the music takes on the characteristics of the group members and the whole experience becomes highly personalized. We

want to be a part of something that gives us a chance to express ourselves creatively; to do this, we must first enjoy the music and personalities involved. We have something we can call our own, which has taken several years to develop.

For any group to have longevity, everyone has to be willing to agree on things that they may personally see differently. Also, everyone has to be comfortable with their own abilities so as to not be offended by the other members' opinions when the music is being put together and evolving. We are a "work in progress"... the evolution of a concept takes a long time and requires the individual commitment of each person to see it through.



photo by Andy Schloss

Danzón player from eastern Cuba, 1997.
These drums are from the post-timpani,
pre-timbale era (circa 1900).

Please refer to the individual exercises for complete hand motions and stickings.



MASTER RHYTHM

OCHOSI
FOR PERCUSSION TRIO

PERCUSSION AND DRUM SET
FREELY IMPROVISE BEHIND VOCAL . . .

"OCHOSI" . . . VOCAL SETS TEMPO . . .

1

PERCUSSION 1

VOCAL

PERCUSSION 2

DRUM SET

19 X'S . . . 70 BARS

5

PERC. 1

CONGAS

CHÉKERE

PERC. 2

DR. SET

9

PERC. 1

BELLS . . . SAME FIGURE ON CONGAS AT D.S.

PERC. 2

CONGAS

DR. SET