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Jeff backstage at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum during Toto's 1979 U.S. tour. (Courtesy of Barney Hurley).



Jeff, Paul Jamieson, manager Larry Fitzgerald, and Steve Lukather, Japan, 1980. (Courtesy of Andrew Leeds)



Toto, Japanese garden, May, 1982. (Courtesy of Andrew Leeds)



Jeff, with fans, waiting for the Bullet Train, Japan, 1980. (Courtesy of Andrew Leeds)

ABRAHAM LABORIEL, SR.

“Did you ever hear about the time Jeff broke up a fight in the studio?” **ABRAHAM LABORIEL, SR.** asks me.

No, that’s one I never heard. He proceeds to tell me the story, choosing to leave out incriminating names, but wanting to share it to demonstrate the kind of person Jeff was.

The argument was between a notable artist and notable engineer. The artist was nervous, and the artist asked the engineer if he was recording digitally or analog? The engineer said it was analog, direct to disc. “The artist said, ‘You are a liar. You’re a liar because I only prepared my voice to record digitally,’” recalls Laboriel. “We had been recording most of the day and everyone was tired. The engineer said, ‘Don’t call me a liar, and especially not in front of all these people; you cannot do that.’ And the artist said, ‘Man, I am not prepared to sing analog today.’ Then they were about to come to blows. Jeff got off the drums and ran and stood in the middle of them and said, ‘Guys, guys, guys, we are here to make music. This is ridiculous. Let’s everybody play the music; let’s everybody get the take and then everybody go home.’ I was very impressed because he just ran and stood in front of these people that were about to hurt each other.”

Laboriel moved to Los Angeles on July 4, 1976, and met Jeff shortly after that. It was on a session produced by (then Elektra staff producer) Greg Prestopino for Gabe Kaplan (“Welcome Back Kotter”) that resulted in a single called “Up Your Nose.” Laboriel knew Prestopino from Boston. The session had Jeff on drums, Fred Tackett on guitar, Bill Payne on keyboards, Doug Livingston on pedal steel and

Little Feat percussionist Sam Clayton. “We had the time of our lives,” Laboriel recalls. “And it was an instant love affair with Jeff.”

Abraham says he was blown away that Porcaro knew who he was from the get-go. Laboriel had played several songs on Boston artist Andy Pratt’s self-titled debut album, which contained a minor hit, “Avenging Annie.” It was his very first recording session in the United States while going to school at Berklee. “When I met Jeff, he immediately said, “Avenging Annie!” That’s my favorite recording in the whole world,” Abraham recounts. “That was the encounter. He made it clear from the beginning that he knew who I was and that he already loved me.” (Although I can’t find confirmation of this, apparently Jeff told Laboriel that the record was in violation of the RIAA for being too loud, but he had been able to get one of the few copies before they re-mastered it to conform with RIAA regulations.)

“To make a long story short, I was brand new in town, and Jeff started to recommend me,” says the bassist, who would go on to be a first-call session player, recording with the likes of George Benson, Al Jarreau, Barbra Streisand, Elton John, Herbie Hancock, Dolly Parton, Michael Jackson, Madonna, Stevie Wonder, Paul Simon, Quincy Jones, Billy Cobham, Larry Carlton and Donald Fagen. “It took about two years before I started to be trusted in Los Angeles by people. But what happened as a result of that encounter with all of those musicians when we were recording for that Kaplan session, Greg asked me if I wanted to do a demo for Elektra as a solo artist.” Laboriel re-assembled all those musicians for that demo, which he says was incredible. “Jeff was a ringleader, and for the first three months in town and on every session they had for other people that I was a part of, he would ask everybody to please jam and rehearse my charts so that when the time came to

record, everybody would be prepared,” Abraham recalls. “That’s how it started. We didn’t know each other from anybody.”

One of the surprising conversations Laboriel had with Jeff was how Jeff really didn’t care about playing drums as much as he did about being an artist. “He said, ‘The best hands in the Porcaro family belong to my brother Mike,’” Laboriel recalls. “‘And he also didn’t care about the drums.’ I said, ‘Come on Jeff, you must be putting me on,’ and he said, ‘No, it’s true.’ So I asked Mike and Mike said, ‘Yes, I have the best hands of the whole family, but I don’t want to play drums.’”

Laboriel got choked up a couple of times during our talk. Once, as he told me about conversations with Jeff’s father Joe: “Joe said, ‘Because Jeff became so successful at such a young age, his bones were still developing when he was performing every day at the top of his ability. Because of that, he was chronically in pain.’ The idea that all the enjoyment that we drew from hearing him every day, he was giving it to us while ignoring some pain,” Laboriel says tearfully, “Joe said he believes that was the reason he was chain-smoking marijuana: to manage the pain to the best of his ability.”

While Jeff never really spoke of the pain, it was common knowledge that he didn’t like to do a lot of takes. He was outspoken when he believed the take had been gotten. Laboriel recalls a story where they had played a song once in a session with producer Tommy LiPuma and artist Randy Crawford when Jeff spoke out to preserve his energy. “We started to play, and Jeff says, ‘Hey Tommy, we are going to do a whole album, right?’ And Tommy says, ‘Yes.’ And Jeff says, ‘You have other songs, right?’ And Tommy says, ‘Yes.’ And Jeff says, ‘Well, why don’t we put this song off until some other time,’” Laboriel

recalls. “Tommy says, ‘This is going to be one of the singles; I really want to do it now.’ And Jeff says, ‘Tommy, this song doesn’t want to be played right now.’ That’s a quote I remembered my whole life. I never heard anybody say the song does not want to be played. Isn’t that amazing? Give us another song and then we will come back to that. I don’t know if it had to do with his pain or a special wisdom of his that we were going to do a whole album of ten or twelve songs. Eventually we recorded the song, and everything went fine.”

Laboriel says on another session he heard Porcaro say, “Catch me in another space. Right now, I cannot play this. I need to be in another space to play this.”

Playing live with Porcaro at the Baked Potato in Greg Mathieson’s band was “out of this world,” says Laboriel. “Greg and Jeff really loved each other a lot, and it was because of Jeff we ended up doing Larry Carlton’s *Room 335* album.” He describes Porcaro’s playing at the Baked Potato as effusive. “He would just stand up and play with his drumsticks against the wall behind him,” Laboriel recalls. “He would say to Greg, ‘I don’t want any solos, I want to play the music, I want to play the song,’ but he would stand up and play the wall and then sit down and continue to play the groove.”

The main difference between playing with Jeff in the studio and live, says Laboriel, was that in the studio Jeff never lost track that the purpose of being there was to create a record environment; the music needed to sound like a record—as opposed to sounding spontaneous. “That’s the reason everyone wanted to hire Jeff,” Laboriel asserts. “Because as disciplined as he was, he’d also sound spontaneous, so each time you’d listen to the take it would put a smile on your face.”

When Laboriel talks about playing with Porcaro, he says he created a cushion. “Every beat felt huge, like you had all the room in the world to find where you were going to put your personal attacks. Jeff had a way of making it seem just huge, whether it was fast or slow, because each beat was enormous. That was something he coined and owned. It defies explanation how he discovered the way he played like that, giving everyone so much room.”

On an Al Jarreau session with Jay Graydon producing, Laboriel overheard Graydon ask Jeff about playing with the click: He said, ‘Jeff, I wanted to ask you, sometimes you are right perfectly with the click and sometimes you are behind the click and then you go back to the click and then you go ahead of the click and then you go back to the click. How can you do that?’ Jeff looked at me and rolled his eyes,” Laboriel remembers. “He said, ‘Jay, if you want me to play with the click, hire anybody else. The moment you hire anybody else, you’ll know I will prefer the music over the click.’”

One of the high-profile Jarreau tunes on which Jeff and Laboriel played together was “Mornin’,” released in 1983. “That song was composed by David Foster to fulfill a publishing commitment he had in Japan. We were all really excited to play it. It was really hard to believe it was something that David wrote to fulfill an obligation. At the most we played it three times,” Laboriel remembers. “The moment we started to play it, it had a lope and a strength and commitment that was undeniable. One of the things Jeff would always do was he would see if they had demos and listen to the demo. If they did not have a demo, he would start playing and creating a feel, and the minute the producer would approve, he would say, ‘Start rolling tape.’ He had a

lot of authority because, in retrospect, we now know he was in a lot of pain. And on the breaks, Jeff was very astute. He would say, 'Let me hear it and when I tell you, punch, but I don't want to do the whole song again.' He was a tremendous asset to recording because he was constantly resolving problems."

One time, Jeff was so pleased about getting Abraham a particular gig that he wasn't even on, that he insisted on picking the bass player up and taking him to it, staying and taking him home. It was for Donald Fagen's song "New Frontier" on *The Nightfly*. "He called me and said, 'I recommended you and they said yes, so I'm going to pick you up, I'm going to drive you and stay.' After four hours Donald and Gary Katz were happy, and they said they were done. Jeff said to me, 'I've never seen them do anything that fast, ever,'" Laboriel recalls. "That is another song in my memory of my very special relationship with Jeff."

Jeff also had a special relationship with Abraham's children. Laboriel fights tears again as he relays first, how Jeffrey treated his youngest son, making the point that it was even before Jeffrey had his own children and really knew that kind of connection. Then again, I remark to Abraham that Al Schmitt told a similar story in my first book, and all you had to read about was Jeff's relationship with his younger sister Joleen to know that he had an affinity for children way before having his own. "He treated him like his own child," Abraham says of his youngest, Mateo. "Mateo would be hanging with us in the studio. Mateo was young, maybe six or seven years old, and Jeff would say to him, 'I have an amazing collection of toy soldiers and I like to reenact wars, so you and I will get together, and we'll do that together.' And Mateo no longer felt like he was my son, but he felt like he was Jeff's friend, and that was so important to him, that people would

acknowledge his existence. Jeff was sensitive to that.”

Through the years, Jeffrey was there for Abe Laboriel, Jr. “He and Abe, Jr. really hit it off, and when it came time for Abe to go to Berklee in Boston, Jeff called his father and said, ‘Dad, I want you to give my drum set to Abe Jr. to bring to Boston.’ Joe said, ‘I cannot do that because it is the drum set I use to teach.’ Jeff said, ‘No, no, no, I want you to give that drum set to him. I will order you another kit and I will have it sent to your studio,’” Abraham recounts. “Jeff sent my son to Boston with the set he had learned to play on. He said to Abe, Jr., ‘Day or night, no matter when, anytime you want to talk about anything, I am here for you.’”

By the time Abraham and I ended the conversation, we were both crying.

ANKA’S ACCOUNT

Porcaro played on three of **PAUL ANKA**’s albums, starting with *The Music Man* in 1977. Although Ed Greene is listed as another drummer on the album and the internet does not specify which players are on which tracks, Anka says Jeff recorded most of the album. In fact, Anka says he often scheduled his recording dates around Jeff’s availability. It was very admirable to hear an artist of Anka’s stature talk about how the whole team—the musicians and the engineers—is important to making a project.

Anka’s own success began at age sixteen with his hit “Diana,” and he swiftly became a teen idol with such songs as “Lonely Boy” and “Put Your Head on My Shoulder.” Not everyone realizes Anka

composed the “Theme for the Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson” as well as Frank Sinatra’s signature song “My Way.”

Anka does not recall how he first came to be in touch with Porcaro but explains that the good players were always on his radar; as soon as Jeff’s reputation as a drummer began to spread, he became aware of him. “And just to watch him come in at noon, and in most cases light up a joint...” Anka says, to which I interrupt, “Even on your sessions?” “Why not? Who am I to stop his creative process?” Anka responds. “I’m not angel-squeaky clean. As long as he played well, and he did, I was fine with that.”

In 1983, Porcaro cut three tracks on Anka’s *Walk a Fine Line*. Anka explains that he has always been hands-on in every aspect of his career, including the hiring for his projects. He says the producers would confer with him—after all, he was writing most of the songs and knew what he wanted the music to feel like. “Anytime we could get Jeff, we would want him for all the sessions for continuity, a vibe and sound, which he was amazing at,” Paul declares. “His time was incredible, and like all great drummers, he knew how to tune his drums. The criteria for me, even to this day, is to get the same drummer on the whole album if possible, so that’s what I did in meeting him and ultimately some of the rest of Toto who also played on my albums. They were on there, as was David Foster, who was a session player at the time. I brought him down on my plane from Vancouver and ultimately got him his green card.

“The drummer is key,” Anka continues. “Even live. The drummer and the bass player can really mess up a band. You want the best dynamic in terms of drums. We very carefully selected the band to

accomplish what we wanted.”

1989’s *Somebody Loves You* was only released in Germany, but Anka managed to get Porcaro on six tracks, including one called “You and I,” a duet with Dionne Warwick. Anka says he always cut basic tracks live with a rough vocal and in this instance brought Warwick in to overdub at the end. “In the case of Jeff, when you’re a great drummer as he is, Jeff’s time, his sound, his vibe, his passion in the way he played were paramount,” Anka states. “In the hands of the wrong drummer, time, sound, vibe and passion, you’re dead. It’s a technical thing to where, if you don’t have him on that session, any contribution from someone else just doesn’t work. He just got it. He was just exceptional. And what a sweet guy and a great disposition!”

Anka recalls that Jeff also offered creative input. He sat around the piano and listened and would say, “Here’s the way I hear it. Here’s the tempo, here’s the vibe.” “Nothing else works until you lay it down with your basics with your drummer and your bass player,” Anka reiterates. “You’re absolutely nowhere without your drummer and your bass player.”

BECOMING ROOMIES

Guitarist **DAN FERGUSON** came into the circle through David Paich. His father, Allyn Ferguson, was a jazz and film composer and had a close working relationship with Joe Porcaro and Marty Paich. Dan remembers going to sessions with his father at age twelve and seeing Joe and Emil Richards. Ferguson also remembers that the Paich Family lived right down the street, and they would get together for family dinners and such. He and David, who was a few years younger

than Dan, became friends.

“David and I played together and listened to records frequently and also recorded at the home studio of a French horn player named Bill Hinshaw, who even had built an echo chamber under his house!” Ferguson recounts. “David and I did our first recordings there. I was fifteen and Dave was twelve or thirteen. We listened to everything on the radio and the records our dads brought home from sessions. My dad arranged for Sarah Vaughan, Andy Williams, and conducted for Johnny Mathis, who is still a friend. Mathis gave me a one-hundred-dollar bill for my twelfth birthday and I bought a Schwinn ten-speed. When Johnny came over next, he rode the bike but didn’t know where the brakes were and crashed the bike. Nobody got hurt.”

On one of Dan’s breaks from college, David got him an audition for Sonny & Cher, who he was playing with (thanks to Jeff) when there was a sudden guitar vacancy. He auditioned with the band but didn’t meet Sonny or Cher until ten minutes before his first gig with them in Indianapolis in front of 20,000 people. Dan had met Jeff a couple of times prior to playing with him on that stage, but the Sonny & Cher gig is where they cemented their friendship. Ferguson says he and Jeff got along famously from the start. What that means to Dan is that they had a similar sense of humor, and he describes Jeff as welcoming, outgoing, positive, full of love and mischief.

When Dan’s roommate moved from the Wonderland Avenue rental house in Laurel Canyon in 1975, Jeff suggested he move in. He lived there for close to a year. “It was a wild house,” Ferguson says, remembering the interesting multi-level layout of the house. “Jeff had the downstairs room, the lowest point in the house. It was really an

odd-shaped house. There were a couple of steps up to the living room, which had a little alcove and the kitchen off of it. Then there was a whole flight of stairs to an upper level that was my bedroom; it was like a turret at the top of the house with a little balcony. It was almost like going to the basement to go to Jeff's room, which was a big room. It was like making a voyage going down to his room, or him coming up to my room would be special. We'd go out on the balcony."

Ferguson says Porcaro was particular about making his room nice and beautiful. "What I knew about him from being on the road and in the next hotel room was he always set up his room in a really nice way so he could groove," Dan recalls. "He either had a little lamp or something so he could make the light special, and he had little rock collections and his art placed around the room. So he made this downstairs bedroom very special. Jeff loved beautiful things, and he made environments for himself wherever he was," Ferguson says, comparing it to the way Jeff also dressed intentionally with statement every day. "It wasn't that he was particularly stylish, but he had a style," Dan remarks. "He looked up to Jim Keltner and you can see it in the way he dressed, with the leather vest and white shirt. And he always had that giant shit-eating grin on his face; that cat who ate the canary."

Dan says as roommates they weren't too domestic. Cooking? Well, Jeff might have brought some food from home and Dan might have done the same. He doesn't recall them being very tidy in the kitchen. In fact, he says it became such a disaster that his sister came over and cleaned it, which took a whole day.

The only time he ever saw Jeff in a crabby mood, Ferguson says, was after a shitty session or a relationship went awry. He said mostly

he was very even-keeled and upbeat. He also mentions his talent for making people he liked feel so welcomed and vital. “Some people call it charm, but if he didn’t like you, he didn’t bother,” says Dan. “I loved his excitement at playing music, and he knew how to enjoy people. He made you feel so special. He wanted to be with special people.”

Later, after they lived together and Dan was buying a house in Sherman Oaks where he and his girlfriend (and wife-to-be) Adrienne Andros (who performed under the name Dede) were going to live, Jeff played on several projects in the studio Dan built. At Jeff’s Hesby home studio, Dede recorded the vocals to the 1986 mini-series “Master of the Game,” to which Dan’s father wrote the score.

KENJI SHOCK

Until I saw a Steely Dan forum mentioning the album *Kenji Shock* from the artist Kenji Omura, the record was just another in Porcaro’s huge discography. But someone on the forum touted his playing, so I dug deeper, listened, and sure enough, it was classic Jeff. Lo and behold, I discovered it was produced by none other than the wonderful drummer **HARVEY MASON, SR.!** Mason produced the album in Los Angeles in 1978 and decided he didn’t want to play on the entire record, as he wanted to focus on the production. He did play on two tracks but hired Porcaro to play on the remaining six. As soon as the record company sent him the music to listen to, he thought about what players he wanted. “I come from the Quincy Jones School,” Mason explains. “It’s like a movie: Who are you going to cast? Who is going to best handle this and have it be as painless as possible? Immediately I knew I wanted it to be Jeff, because I loved the way he played. He played so sensitively, he played with groove, and he didn’t

play any extraneous junk. He was really my only choice.”

Harvey says he knew Jeff pretty much from the time he moved to town in 1970. He knew Jeff’s father Joe and had heard Jeff’s playing. “I heard a couple of things he did and loved his groove,” Harvey recalls. “I loved the way he played, and I loved his spirit.”—so if Mason wasn’t going to play on Omura’s record, it was definitely going to be Jeffrey “because I could just hear what he would bring to the record.”

Mason says the songs were great, from a terrific artist who died far too young from a drug overdose. Jeff really cooks and gets to stretch out on the first track, “Left-Handed Woman.” Although it’s not something he did on every session, Mason sensed given the opportunity, Porcaro would thrive. “He just needed to be in the environment,” Harvey says. “People like to pigeonhole musicians, but great musicians have a wide scope; I knew he would love the chance to get to do that. There was no question in my mind that he could handle that—I didn’t have to say anything. He just heard the demo and went to his place.”

Mason says he never had to give any kind of direction to Jeff. “I hired Jeff because I didn’t have to say anything to him. I didn’t have to say like, ‘Maybe you want to do this,’ or ‘Maybe you want to do that.’ When you get great talent, you trust them to bring what they’re going to bring to it. That’s how you end up getting the best. That’s what works the best. Jeff was wonderful and easy to work with,” says Harvey, adding that Porcaro would have ideas and offer suggestions as well.

Mason says Porcaro was not in the least bit intimidated by the fact that Harvey, a notable drummer, was producing him. “Jeff was

very secure with who he was. Jeff was just a very cool guy, cool in the sense of being a very cool guy, so even if he was intimidated, you would never know it, because he was so cool,” Mason says with a laugh. “But he had been around a lot of great musicians and playing with a lot of great musicians. He wasn’t intimidated. I knew what he would bring to the project, and I certainly understood about leaving the playing to the musicians and that I could hire him and not have to say anything.”

Mason says Omura was very pleased to be in room with the talent Mason chose. “He was pretty quiet,” Mason says. “He didn’t speak a lot of English, but he was ecstatic about the record.”

STRANGERS IN LAUREL CANYON

Sometime around 1975, a nicely-attired Jeff was driving up Laurel Canyon in his flashy car when he spotted a long-haired guy making his way up the hill on foot. He stopped to see if the stranger needed a ride. **STAN LYNCH**’s van was parked at the bottom of the street, at the Country Store, due to a broken transaxle. “I hear a car pull up behind me, and I figure it’s probably pulling into its driveway, but then it pulls up beside me and the window comes down—electric window, by the way. This is all like a miracle to me,” recounts Lynch. “It’s a black; pretty sure it’s a beemer—it’s just a different universe. I may as well have been abducted by aliens (laughs). I see this cool dude with a real shirt, and he’s got beautiful shades. There are cool tunes playing, and he says, ‘Yo, need a ride?’ And I say, ‘Well, yeah, I do.’ I’m thinking, ‘Whoa! What is this weird encounter I’m having that I’m not sure I should be having?’ Within two seconds he says the magic words: ‘Are you a musician?’ ‘Yeah!’ (The magic word in 1975.) ‘What do you play?’ ‘Drums.’ He says, ‘I’m a drummer. I play.’ I’m thinking,

‘Whatever he’s doing, it’s all working for him.’ I didn’t even understand the rules of the game. He’s about a year older than I am, but he’s in a whole different league—everything about him. I think I was working at Peaches Records on Hollywood Blvd., so everything was wrong.”

Leaving his Gainesville, Florida home at sixteen, Lynch moved into a house with the members of Tom Petty’s band. When they left for California, he was still in high school, so he couldn’t join them, but he eventually quit school and made his journey west in a van with his drum set and P.A. At the time of this odd meeting with Jeff, Lynch was living in a basement without running water and auditioning for bands through the then-popular Musician’s Contact Service.

Lynch recalls that Jeff lived right off the main drag of Laurel Canyon and Porcaro invited him to hang out. Lynch couldn’t believe it when they pulled into the driveway of an actual *house*—not an apartment. “It was beautiful; it was decorated, and it had style,” says Lynch. “It wasn’t Playboy magazines and an ashtray full of butts, which was closer to my reality. He had floor-to-ceiling electrostatic speakers; he basically had a reference playback system in his house, complete with a Revox two-track, I think MacIntosh power amps; everything out-of-the-catalog of cool. Now I’m taking stock of this guy and going, ‘So, yo, what are you working on?’ And he says, ‘I just did a session last night. You wanna hear it?’ I’m thinking, ‘A session? What?’ We were probably working on the first Petty album, and we didn’t know they were called sessions. We were just recording. I’m pretty sure he spun a rough of ‘Black Friday,’ and it sounded stunning. I remember we smoked a bunch of his weed and it was amazing, and I was smoking his Marlboros—real cigarettes—and we were sitting in his beautiful place and just listening to this.

“I probably could have asked him some questions, and he would have had all the right answers if I had only known the right questions. I wasn’t grown up enough to know the right questions. I was probably asking, ‘What kind of drums do you play? What kind of sticks do you use?’ I was greener than shit, and he took it like a champ. He asked where we were working, and I told him we were working at a little place called Shelter Records. He said, ‘I think I’ve heard of Shelter Records,’ probably because Leon Russell and Jimmie Lee (Keltner) and Jim Gordon were all into that Shelter camp. Maybe I dropped one breadcrumb that made me appear not to be a complete dildo. But he was so cool and so kind. I remember talking about my band and telling him we were from Florida, and then he took me back to my crib. I remember going upstairs and there was a singer living there who was a little further up the food chain in the music business, and he said, ‘Nice car you just got dropped off from.’ I said, ‘Yeah, it was a guy named Jeff Porcaro.’ He said, ‘Oh, wow!’ And then he gave me chapter and verse: ‘Here’s what you just left—you were swimming in the bigs.’”

Of course, one day Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers became huge, and there came a time when Stan and Lukather began writing together, and Lynch did sessions. Notable guitarist and songwriter Danny Kortchmar hired Stan, and Lukather was in that circle. “When I ran into Luke, one of my first questions was, ‘Tell me about Jeff Porcaro,’” Lynch recounts. “And Luke, as you can imagine, would almost fall to his knees when he would talk about Jeff. ‘He’s just the coolest guy in the world, the Porcaros are everything to me, I love them,’ and if anyone was dumb enough to ask what Jeff played like, all he’d say was, ‘Just the most amazing thing you’ll ever hear.’ Luke and I became friends, so he invited me to sessions that I think Toto was

doing, although they might have been his sessions and Jeff was there. And now we're meeting."

Then Lynch started working with Kortchmar, and Luke said he should be writing songs. One day Stan came into the studio with a lyric for "Kick Down the Walls." "Jeff was the arbiter of anything that went down on a Toto record. Everything went through Jeff," Stan explains. "So when I came in, Luke said, 'Give it to Jeff. He needs to read it.' Jeff knows who I am at this point, I sat on the couch, he read it and quoted a couple of lines. One in particular I remember was where I made reference to a 'big old human clock,' and he said, 'That's cool.' Then he looked at me and I said something like, 'You know, we've met and we have a few things in common. I've been in your orbit for a long time, all the way back to '70-something when you gave me a lift home.' He kinda gave me a look sideways and went something like, 'That was you?'"

"I'm pretty sure I was there when he cut 'New York Minute' because of Danny and Don, and I couldn't believe it. He was obviously, from my perspective, the finest musician I ever saw play live in the studio. I never got to see anybody of that level. That quick study of his was amazing," Lynch states. "I was in a band that would do sixty takes. We would literally play the same song for three days. We were that insane with crazy producers: 'Now we're going to try it with you standing on your head.' Jeff was the height of professional class. When you're in a room with cats like Luke and Kootch and Henley and Porcaro, you know the kindest thing you can say is, 'Anybody need coffee?' I would sit and watch Jeff's process. He would listen to a demo, and I didn't see him make a note on a piece of paper, ever. I'm sure he did, but on this stuff, he didn't. He just intuitively knew. He seemed

like he knew what he was going to play before he played it. He could pretty much play anything, so if he could think it, he didn't have any problem translating that into his hands. And it was all felt. Everybody talked about his groove, but the sound..." Stan pauses to find the words. "That's the thing that fucked my head up. I remember when he sat down to play, the sound of his drums, and it wasn't the sound of his drums, it was the sound of *him*. Anybody could have played Jeff's drums, but it wouldn't have sounded like *that*. It was *him*. It was a specific sound that came from his hands and his attitude and his pulse and the way he leaned into it and the way he talked to those drums. I mean he just pulled the sound right out of that kit."

When Toto actually was in the process of recording "Kick Down the Walls," Stan recalls the day Jeff overdubbed his part. (In *It's About Time*, Lukather recounted how Jeff nailed the song in one take, everyone was jumping up and down, and Stan was completely blown away.) "I remember feeling like, 'There's no way you can overdub to this,'" says Lynch. "That's what I was thinking as they were playing the demo. 'I don't know where you do this. I don't know where this is going to go.' And I just remember thinking Jeff had church bell balls. He listened to the track, he went out and on the first pass he was getting his headphones together. He'd play the groove for a couple of bars, and you'd see him point to the bass drum, his finger up or down, point his finger up or down to the overheads, talking through the glass in shorthand for about two minutes. Then Danny said, 'What do you think?' And I don't remember the exact quote, but Jeff said something like, 'Let's twist one,' some reference to burning a joint. It was something cool that Jeff would say like that. And there wasn't even a fuckin' count on the song. He just closed his eyes and played the motherfuckin' record top to bottom, four and half minutes of this deep groove and

there wasn't a missed..." Lynch stops with amazement. "I could have spent a week trying to edit a track like that together. I couldn't have done it. And he did it top to bottom with such panache. The place went fuckin' mental. He got up, walked in, ordered a sandwich, threw on his cool man bag, and walked out of the room saying he had to do something, and he'd be back to eat the sandwich. His voice, the physical beauty of him. If the motherfucker hadn't been the greatest drummer on earth, he would have been the coolest voiceover guy and the coolest actor or male model. You put it all together and lightning strikes and you get Jeff fucking Porcaro. Even shirts hung on him right. I always wondered, 'How can this motherfucker tuck in a beautiful shirt and not look like a geek?' And the smile."

When Lynch saw Porcaro in the Toto configuration, he says he never saw such admiration for a fellow band member. "They were literally cheering in the room while he was playing, they were screaming," Lynch remembers. "Like Jeff would take a corner at sixty miles an hour, he'd take this beautiful corner, rhythmically, and come right out just beautifully—picked a beautiful line through the curve—came out and when he'd stick the landing, the guys would sound like little girls going over in a rollercoaster. And Jeff never looked up. He just did it. And that freaked me out, too, because they were in a band and they were successful, they were obviously at the top of their game, and yet, they still loved each other—which was not what I was experiencing in my band at all. I was experiencing very bizarre behaviors; there was a lot of envy, posturing and false bravado—and I walk into a Toto session, and it was like boys in a sandbox playing with their trucks."

Lynch felt the love. While Lukather was playing a solo, he made Stan stand right next to him. "He didn't want me on the couch.

He wanted me hip-bumping with him,” Lynch says. “I dreamed that’s what it would be like when I was a little kid; that I’d be in a bar band and I would grow up and all these guys would love me and it would be wonderful and we’d play this great music—and they were actually doing it. They were doing everything at the pinnacle. They were still high-fiving and smiling, and they couldn’t wait to light each other’s cigarettes. It was extraordinary. It was beautiful. I don’t think I’ll ever see anything like that again. It was pretty much without guile, without ego. It was stunning.”

JEFF PORCARO DISCOGRAPHY

Provided by the website: Jeff Porcaro Session Tracks. Maintained by Mary Oxborrow. View the full discography with future updates at <http://www.frontiernet.net/~cybraria/>

10cc / *Meanwhile* (Polydor, 1992) 10 + 3 tracks Only drummer listed. Note: Three songs from the *Meanwhile* sessions which didn't make it onto the album were released as B-sides of singles: "Man with a Mission" (B-side of "Women in Love") and "Don't" and "Lost in Love" (both B-sides of "Welcome to Paradise").

A

Ai To Lu Na No Motoni [TV soundtrack] (Alfa [Japan], 1992) No track information

Airplay / Airplay (RCA, 1980) 7 tracks "Stranded," "Cryin' All Night," "Nothin' You Can Do About It," "Should We Carry On," "Bix," "She Waits for Me," "After the Love has Gone"

Alessi Brothers / Alessi (A&M, 1977) No track-specific credits; 1 of 4 drummers (also Frank Ravioli, Hal Blaine, John Guerin)

Alessi Brothers / Long Time Friends (Qwest, 1982) 1 track "Still in Love"

Allan, Laura / *Laura Allan* (Elektra, 1978) 4 tracks "Come as You Are," "Hole in my Bucket," "One Way Ticket," "Yes I Do"

Allen, Peter / *Bi-Coastal* (A&M, 1980) 3 tracks "Hit in the Heart," "Pass this Time," "When this Love Affair is Over"

Allman, Gregg — see *Black Rain* [film soundtrack]

Alpert, Herb / *Keep Your Eyes On Me* (A&M, 1987) 2 tracks "Cat Man Do," "Rocket to the Moon"

Alston, Gerald / *Open Invitation* (Motown, 1990) 4 tracks "I'll Go Crazy," "Never Give Up," "Tell Me This Night Won't End," "Still in Love"

America / View From the Ground (Capitol, 1982) No track-specific credits; 1 of 2 drummers (also Willie Leacox)

Anderson, Jon / *In the City of Angels* (Columbia, 1988) 3 tracks "If It Wasn't for Love," "Is it Me," "Top of the World (The Glass Bead Game)"

Anka, Paul / *The Music Man* (United Artists, 1977) 1 of 2 drummers (also Ed Greene)

Anka, Paul / *Walk A Fine Line* (CBS, 1983) 3 tracks “Darlin’, Darlin’,” “This is the First Time,” “Golden Boy”

Anka, Paul / *Somebody Loves You* (Polydor [Germany], 1989) 6 tracks “Somebody Loves You,” “You and I,” “A Steel Guitar and a Glass of Wine,” “Can We,” “The Lady Was,” “Never Gonna Lose You”

Anri / *Circuit of Rainbow* (For Life, 1989) 4 tracks “Shoo-be Doo-be My Boy,” “Who Knows My Loneliness?,” “P.S. Kotoba ni Naranai,” “Sentimental o Suteta Hito”

Anri / *16th Summer Breeze* (1994) 1 track Disc 1, Track 14: “We Abandoned the Sentimental” (translation of Japanese)

Anri / *Opus 21* (For Life Records [Japan], 1995) 1 track Track 6: “A Thousand Words are Inexhaustible” (translation of Japanese)

Armand, Renée / *In Time* (Windsong, 1978) 4 tracks “Love on a Shoestring,” “(We’re) Dancin’ in the Dark,” “In Time,” “The Bitter Taste of Wild Things”

Arthur [film soundtrack] (Warner Bros., 1981) 7 tracks “Arthur’s Theme” (Christopher Cross), “It’s Only Love” (Stephen Bishop), “Touch (Instrumental),” “It’s Only Love (Instrumental),” “Money (Instrumental),” “Moving Pictures (Instrumental),” “Arthur’s Theme (Instrumental)” (Burt Bacharach)

Asakura, Miki / *Su Te Ki* (King [Japan], 1988) 3 tracks “Find a New Way,” “True Love,” “Fall in Love”

Atkins, Chet / *Stay Tuned* (CBS, 1985) 2 tracks “Please Stay Tuned,” “The Boot and the Stone”

Austin, Patti / *The Real Me* (Qwest, 1988) 2 tracks “Lazy Afternoon,” “True Love”

Austin, Patti / *Love Is Gonna Getcha* (GRP, 1990) 1 track “The Girl Who Used to be Me” (Note: This track did not appear on the original album and was added as a bonus track in later pressings. It was originally recorded for the soundtrack of the movie *Shirley Valentine*.)

Austin, Patti — see also *Shirley Valentine* [film soundtrack]

Axton, Hoyt / *Fearless* (A&M, 1976) 2 tracks “Lay Lady Lay,” “Beyond These Walls”

Axton, Hoyt / *Road Songs* (A&M, 1977) 1 track “Lay Lady Lay” (Previously appeared on *Fearless*, 1976)

B

B-52s / *Good Stuff* (A&M, 1992) 3 tracks “Hot Pants Explosion,” “Breezin’,” “Bad Influence”

Bachman, Randy / *Survivor* (Polydor, 1978) 8 tracks (entire album)

- Bade, Lisa / *Suspicion*** (A&M, 1982) 1 track “Suspicion”
- Ballard, Russ / *At the Third Stroke*** (Epic, 1978) 6 tracks “Dancer,” “Helpless,” “Cast the Spirit,” “What Does it Take?,” “I’m a Scorpio,” “My Judgement Day”
- Bateman, Justine & the Mystery** — see *Satisfaction* [film soundtrack]
- Batteau, David / *Happy in Hollywood*** (A&M, 1976) 8 tracks “Happy in Hollywood,” “Festival of Fools,” “Oh, My Little Darling,” “Orphee,” “Walk in Love,” “Spaceship Earth,” “You Need Love,” “The Gates in Your Heart”
- Beck, Robin / *Human Instinct*** (DSB, 1992) 4 tracks “Love Yourself,” “Every Little Thing,” “Bad on Love,” “Changing with the Years”
- Bee Gees / *Living Eyes*** (RSO, 1981) 3 tracks “Living Eyes,” “Soldiers,” “Cryin’ Every Day”
- Bel-Air / *Turquoise Blue*** (1991) 1 track “Salvia Flower”
- Bell & James / *In Black and White*** (A&M, 1981) 5 tracks “Love Call My Name,” “You’ve Got the Power,” “Gimme the Gun,” “Runnin’ for Your Life,” “Don’t Take the Money”
- Benoit, David / *Shadows*** (GRP, 1991) 5 tracks “Shadows,” “Saudade,” “Already There,” “Castles,” “Have You Forgotten”
- Benoit, David / *Freedom At Midnight*** (GRP, 1987) 5 tracks “Freedom at Midnight,” “Along the Milky Way,” “The Man with the Panama Hat,” “Passion Walk”
- Benson, George / *The George Benson Collection*** (Warner Bros., 1981) 2 tracks “Turn Your Love Around” (Linn drum machine), “Love all the Hurt Away”
- Benson, George / *In Your Eyes*** (Warner Bros., 1983) 1 track “Lady Love Me (One More Time)”
- Berger, Michel / *Dreams in Stone*** (Atlantic, 1982) 6 tracks “JFK (Overture),” “American Island,” “Walking through the Big Apple,” “Apple Pie,” “Rooftops,” “Parade”
- Berglund, Kristin / *Long Distance Love*** (Talent Produksjon [Norway], 1979) No track-specific credits; 1 of 2 drummers (also Bruno Castellucci)
- Berlin, Jeff / *Pump It*** (Passport, 1986) 1 track “All the Greats”
- Big Blue Wrecking Crew** (Elektra, 1981) ” [single] 2 tracks “We are the Champions,” “New York, New York”
- Bim / *Thistles*** (Elektra, 1978) 7 tracks “Tender Lullaby,” “Right After My Heart,” “Waitin’ for You, Mama,” “Shell of a Life,” “Broke Down,” “Woh, Me,” “Thistles”
- Bishop & Gwinn / *This Is Our Night*** (Infinity, 1979) 5 tracks “This is our Night,” “Santa Monica Pier,” “Livin’ in Two Different Cities,” “Ancient Egypt,” “Delicate

Harmony”

Black Rain [film soundtrack] (Virgin, 1989) 1 track “I’ll Be Holding On” (Gregg Allman)

Blades, Ruben / *Nothing but the Truth* (Elektra, 1988) 3 tracks “I Can’t Say,” “The Miranda Syndrome,” “In Salvador”

Blakeley, Peter / *Harry’s Cafe De Wheels* (Capitol, 1989) No track-specific credits; 1 of 5 drummers (also Jim Keltner, Russ Kunkel, John Robinson, Carlos Vega)

Blessing, The / *Prince of the Deep Water* (MCA, 1991) 3 tracks “Highway 5,” “Let’s Make Love,” “Birdhouse”

Blunstone, Colin / *Never Even Thought* (Rocket, 1978) 9 tracks (entire album)

Bodine, Rita Jean / *Sitting on Top of My World* (20th century, 1974) 8 tracks “Pacified,” “Sitting on Top of My World,” “Wheels,” “Frying Pan Song,” “It Ain’t Easy,” “I was Mistaken,” “Sweet Inspiration,” “Knickerbocker Holiday”

Bolin, Tommy / *Teaser* (Atlantic, 1975) 4 tracks “The Grind,” “Homeward Strut,” “Dreamer,” “Teaser”

Bolton, Michael / *Time, Love & Tenderness* (Columbia, 1991) 1 track “When a Man Loves a Woman”

Bolton, Michael / *Greatest Hits 1985-1995* (Columbia, 1995) 1 track “When a Man Loves a Woman” (*from Time, Love & Tenderness, 1991*)

Boylan, Terence / *Terence Boylan* (Elektra, 1977) 2 tracks “The War was Over,” “Where are You Hiding?” (w/Boylan & Mickey McGee)

Brady, Paul / *Trick or Treat* (Fontana, 1991) Only drummer listed, but Brady listed for drum programming

Branigan, Laura / *Laura Branigan* (Atlantic, 1990) 1 track “Let Me In”

Brothers Johnson / *Winners* (A&M, 1981) 8 tracks “Dancin’ Free,” “Teaser,” “Caught Up,” “In the Way,” “I Want You,” “Do it for Love,” “Hot Mama,” “Daydreamer Dream”

Brothers Johnson / *Blast! The Latest and Greatest* (A&M, 1982) 1 track “I’m Giving You All My Love”

Browne, Jackson / *The Pretender* (Elektra, 1976) 4 tracks “The Only Child,” “Daddy’s Tune,” “Sleep’s Dark and Silent Gate,” “The Pretender”

Browne, Severin / *New Improved* (Motown, 1974) No track-specific credits; 1 of 2 drummers (also Russ Kunkel)

Bugatti & Musker / *The Dukes* (Atlantic, 1982; re-issued Warner Bros. [Japan], 1999)