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## What Is Hip? David Garibaldi: His Musical Life, His Influences, and His Contributions

Jeremy Tait Meronuck  
*University of Nevada, Las Vegas*

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**WHAT IS HIP? DAVID GARIBALDI: HIS MUSICAL LIFE, HIS INFLUENCES,  
AND HIS CONTRIBUTIONS**

By

Jeremy Tait Meronuck

Bachelor of Music  
University of Cincinnati-College Conservatory of Music  
1995

Master of Music  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
2009

A doctoral project submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the

Doctor of Musical Arts

Department of Music  
College of Fine Arts  
The Graduate College

University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
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## **Doctoral Project Approval**

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Jeremy Tait Meronuck

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School of Music

Dean Gronemeier, D.M.A., J.D.  
*Examination Committee Chair*

Kathryn Hausbeck Korgan, Ph.D.  
*Graduate College Interim Dean*

Timothy Jones, D.M.A.  
*Examination Committee Member*

David Loeb, M.M.  
*Examination Committee Member*

Janis McKay, D.M.A.  
*Examination Committee Member*

Michael Tylo, M.F.A.  
*Graduate College Faculty Representative*

## ABSTRACT

### What Is Hip?

David Garibaldi: His Musical Life, His Influences, and His Contributions

by

Jeremy Tait Meronuck

Dr. Dean Gronemeier, Examination Committee Chair

Professor of Music

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

This document presents the chronological development, evolution and activity of David Garibaldi, drummer with the Oakland, California-based band *Tower of Power*. Garibaldi created his signature drumming voice by continuous study, dedication to the instrument, and incorporating many influences into his performance. His work is known worldwide and is influential to many who play drum set. This document surveys information from past publications; interviews with band members; colleagues, and; David Garibaldi. Each section is divided into periods of time from early development to the present day. Chapters include detailed information on events and influences that led him into music as a performer in the Oakland area to enlisting with the 724<sup>th</sup> Air Force Band, and to the circumstances in joining Tower of Power. Later chapters elaborate on his departures from, and return to, Tower of Power, freelancing in the Los Angeles area, original projects, pedagogical publications and media, his published articles, and the philosophy that has defined his career. The purpose of this document is to present information that may be relevant to musicians and enthusiasts who are influenced by David Garibaldi's style, or want to know more about his development with Tower of Power and independent projects.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people I wish to thank for their support in helping me complete this part of my life. I am grateful for your contributions, support and patience. Specifically, I wish to thank Gina Lee and family, Lee and Yvonne Sorenson, Ramona DuBarry and family, Kurt Rasmussen, Gary Cook, Peter Erskine and committee members Dean Gronemeier, Timothy Jones, David Loeb, Janis McKay and Michael Tylo. Thank you David Garibaldi for your teachings, musical inspiration, and work ethic to always pursue excellence in whatever you do. As you've said many times, "Keep it going!"

## DEDICATION

This document is dedicated to my father and mother, Donald and Janet Meronuck, whose continuous support through the years has encouraged me to pursue what I love to do. You have led by example and have shown many, many times what unconditional love means. I am forever grateful.

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## CHAPTER ONE:

“The First 100 Years Are the Toughest!”<sup>1</sup>

There are few musicians that have a sound so distinct when they perform that it becomes as unique as a personality and their names are immediately identifiable. David Garibaldi is one of those musicians. Like drummers Baby Dodds, Buddy Rich, Art Blakey and Elvin Jones, Garibaldi created his signature voice by continuous study, dedication to the instrument, and incorporating many influences into his performance. His style was first recognized in the early 1970s with the Oakland-based band Tower of Power, while his sound and contributions became a staple of funk music. The purpose of this document is to present information that might be relevant to potential musicians and enthusiasts who are influenced by David Garibaldi’s style or want to know more about his development with Tower of Power and independent projects.

John David Garibaldi was born November 4, 1946 at Peralta Hospital in Oakland, California’s “Pill Hill” district, nicknamed for the large number of hospitals in the area.<sup>2</sup> Parents John and Marie, while not professional musicians, were creative people and encouraged their son to pursue his interests in music from a young age.<sup>3</sup> Throughout Garibaldi’s childhood, he often heard his mother, Marie Garibaldi, and her sister singing and playing piano.<sup>4</sup> It was Marie that arranged for Garibaldi to take piano lessons in the nearby town of Pleasanton during his elementary schooling years.<sup>5</sup> At age nine, Garibaldi wanted to play the trumpet in the school

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<sup>1</sup> David Garibaldi, e-mail message to the author, October 15, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> David Garibaldi, interview by the author, Livermore, CA, September 29, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Phat Drumloops website, “The Dave Garibaldi Interview,”

[http://www.mhat.com/phatdrumloops/interviews/dave\\_garibaldi.asp](http://www.mhat.com/phatdrumloops/interviews/dave_garibaldi.asp) (accessed October 14, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>5</sup> David Garibaldi, telephone interview by the author, October 15, 2015.

band but couldn't due to a lack of instruments.<sup>6</sup> In its place, music teacher Chan Henderson<sup>7</sup> gave him a violin, which he pursued only for one year.

Garibaldi switched to percussion at age ten, despite being scared of the instructor who used to frequently yell at the class.<sup>8</sup> His first memorable contact with a drum set came at his cousin Loretta's wedding in San Francisco at the Sons of Italy Hall.<sup>9</sup> The drummer for the band let Garibaldi carry the drums to the band member's car after the wedding, which he recalled as "a pretty big deal when you're twelve."<sup>10</sup>

One day at school, the then fifteen-year-old future Tower of Power member got his first opportunity to play a drum set. He was in the school band room watching an older student play rock 'n' roll beats and decided to stay. After a while, the older student left the room and Garibaldi sat down at the instrument and figured out how to play a beat performed by the previous drummer. He remembers the experience as an incredible moment because it awakened something in him that he realized was quite powerful.<sup>11</sup>

With no accessible media such as YouTube that many musicians use today, Garibaldi learned to play drum set by listening to records and audiotapes. While he was able to listen to great local artists and bands such as Jim Burgett, Joe Piazza and the Continentals, Bobby Freeman, and Sly Stone, who was also a Disc Jockey on radio station KSOL,<sup>12</sup> he had to use his imagination to determine how people on records were playing. It was rare that drummers he wanted to see would come through town, so he was left to his imagination to formulate how he

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<sup>6</sup> Jonathan Mover, "David Garibaldi: Bumpin' It Up," *Drumhead Magazine* (May/June 2009): 14.

<sup>7</sup> Phat Drumloops.

<sup>8</sup> Phat Drumloops.

<sup>9</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Vic Firth website, "Interview Series,"

[http://www.vicfirth.com/artists/video/garibaldi/david\\_garibaldi\\_int01HQ.html](http://www.vicfirth.com/artists/video/garibaldi/david_garibaldi_int01HQ.html)  
(accessed October 13, 2015).

<sup>12</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

thought they were playing.<sup>13</sup> The most effective learning method, he recalls, was to “watch the guys that we liked, and then we would hang out, we’d get together.”<sup>14</sup> With the mixture of these elements, Garibaldi was able to form a foundation on the instrument.<sup>15</sup>

Around the same time that his high school directors, James Campana and Tony Caviglia,<sup>16</sup> suggested he play in the school’s big band, the opportunity to practice after hours was aided by their mailman, Eddie Tinga.<sup>17</sup> Besides being a drummer and an employee of the US Postal Service, Tinga served in the Air Force reserve. When Tinga left Pleasanton to serve, he gave Garibaldi his drums, so that he could practice at home.<sup>18</sup>

At seventeen, Garibaldi’s parents bought him his first drum set.<sup>19</sup> It was a 1963 four-piece Slingerland drum set, with a twenty-inch bass drum, twelve and fourteen-inch toms, and a Ludwig “Super Sensitive” snare drum. Included were Zildjian cymbals and a Camco chain drive foot pedal from the Professional Percussion Center in New York City.<sup>20</sup> He recalls, “I had no idea of how to tune anything...it was all experimental and I used to take forever to get a decent sound.”<sup>21</sup> This would be the same drum set he would eventually use in the early Tower of Power years, including their first album, *East Bay Grease*.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> David Garibaldi, “JFS #131: The David Garibaldi Interview,” Interview by Jake Feinberg, December 8, 2013, <http://www.jakefeinbergshow.com/2013/12/jfs-131-the-david-garibaldi-interview> (accessed October 15, 2015).

<sup>14</sup> Garibaldi, “JFS #131.”

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> David Garibaldi, “NFTF with David Garibaldi,” Interview by Michael Shrieve, June 15, 2015, <http://www.jakefeinbergshow.com/2015/06/nftf-with-david-garibaldi> (accessed October 15, 2015).

<sup>17</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Phat Drumloops.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ken Micallef, “Tower Of Power’s David Garibaldi: Recounting The Evolution Of Funk Drumming,” *Modern Drummer* (April 2009): 102.

One of the first things Garibaldi pursued after receiving the drum set was to build jazz technique and repertoire. At the time, a musician earned credibility by having a background in jazz, whereas playing rock music was considered vulgar.<sup>23</sup> While taking piano lessons at the Sid Reis Music store in Livermore, CA, Reis asked Garibaldi if he wanted to play drums with his big band that performed selections from Glenn Miller and similar sounding bands. Being a senior in high school, Garibaldi readily accepted the opportunity to play with more experienced musicians. This involvement led to his first professional paying gig with this band.<sup>24</sup> His studies and experience with jazz were beneficial in later years, as ideas he incorporated into funk music were based in the jazz tradition of setting up a band for kicks, punches, and accents.<sup>25</sup>

**Figure 1. Rick Quintanal and David Garibaldi "Drum Battle," Chabot Junior College, 1965.<sup>26</sup>**



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<sup>23</sup> David Garibaldi, "Part II with David Garibaldi," Interview by Jake Feinberg, September 2, 2014, <http://www.jakefeinbergshow.com/2014/09/part-ii-with-david-garibaldi> (accessed October 15, 2015).

<sup>24</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>25</sup> Mark Griffith, "Hall of Fame: David Garibaldi," <http://www.pas.org/About/the-society/halloffame/DavidGaribaldi.aspx> (accessed October 13, 2015).

<sup>26</sup> David Garibaldi, personal photos, Livermore, California.

After graduating high school in 1964, Garibaldi enrolled for classes in the fall at Chabot Junior College in Hayward, California.<sup>27</sup> Majoring in music, he studied under Eugene Graves, who was a percussionist and director of ensembles.<sup>28</sup> Figure 1 shows one of the earliest photos of Garibaldi on a drum set with classmate Rick Quintanal. One course that he took was string methods, which led him to play cello in the department's string ensemble. "I wasn't Yo-Yo Ma or anything. I was learning how to play and it was a fun thing to do."<sup>29</sup> He also was recruited to play a double bass for one semester in the stage band as they had two drummers, but no bassist.<sup>30</sup>

The most significant event in Garibaldi's early development took place in 1965 when he saw James Brown perform at the San Jose Civic Auditorium.<sup>31</sup> Along with some friends, they were able to enter the auditorium and witness the afternoon rehearsal and sound check from the front of the stage.<sup>32</sup> The band was well rehearsed and organized, and some of the attributes that made an impression were the precision, rhythmic patterns, and professional discipline.<sup>33</sup> It was the first time he heard a band groove beyond the usual two-and-four backbeat pattern and have it "swing" in a funk context.<sup>34</sup> This experience influenced Garibaldi so much that it gave him a musical and personal vision of breaking from a standard approach of drumming:

"I decided that I didn't want to sound like anyone else.  
If I was to do this for a long time, I didn't want to copy anyone.  
A motivating principal of mine has always been to never copy  
anyone unless it's something that's so cool that you have to copy it...  
it can't be changed because it's so great."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Garibaldi, telephone interview.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ron White, "David Garibaldi: Funk Stylist," *Modern Drummer* (January 1978): 14.

<sup>31</sup> David Garibaldi, *Tower of Groove*, VHS, Produced by Rob Wallis, Paul Siegel, and Sandy Feldstein (Miami, FL: Warner Brothers Publications, Incorporated, 1994).

<sup>32</sup> David Garibaldi, "NFTF with David Garibaldi."

<sup>33</sup> Jerome Marcus, "Interview with David Garibaldi-Tower Of Power," Mikedolbear.com, <http://www.mikedolbear.com/story.asp?StoryID=3160> (accessed October 11, 2015).

<sup>34</sup> David Garibaldi, *Tower of Groove*.

<sup>35</sup> David Garibaldi, *Tower of Groove*.

Inspiration came from James Brown, but also from bands Garibaldi knew he did not want to emulate, like local band Peter Wheat and the Breadmen. Garibaldi recalls they wore demeaning uniforms and thought they were much better than they were.<sup>36</sup> This combination of events lead to the formation of his first rhythm and blues band called *The Disciples*, with whom he performed through 1966.<sup>37</sup>

In 1966, while pursuing his education at Chabot Junior College, Garibaldi was drafted into the Army. In lieu of being drafted into a specific branch, the law stated a person might join another service as long as the military requirement was fulfilled. Even though the draft commitment was two years and the enlistment commitment was four years, Garibaldi chose to enter the Air Force as a clerk rather than be a foot soldier on the front lines in Vietnam.<sup>38</sup> He enlisted in the Air Force August 28, 1966, one day before being drafted into the Army.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> David Garibaldi, interview.

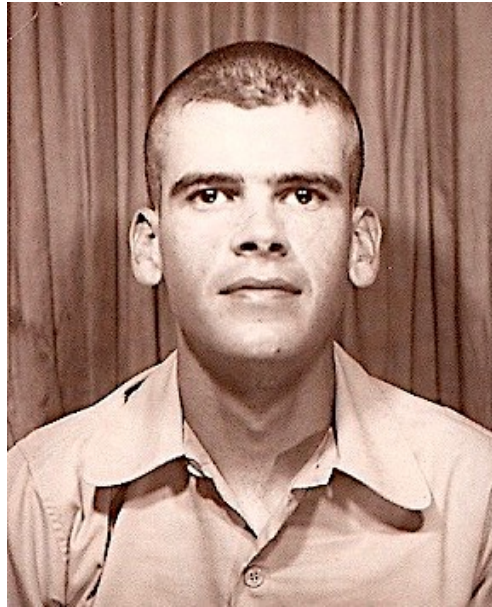
<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Vic Firth website, "Interview Series."

<sup>39</sup> Garibaldi, interview.



**Figure 2. David Garibaldi military photo, Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas, 1966.<sup>40</sup>**



While in basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas (represented in Figure 2), an inquiry was made to the enlisted men to audition for the Air Force band.<sup>41</sup>

Garibaldi went to the band barracks and auditioned, but didn't get a confirmation until after basic training was completed. "When I got my orders, they read '724<sup>th</sup> Air Force Band.' Cool!"<sup>42</sup>

Airman Garibaldi was stationed at McChord Air Force Base in Tacoma, Washington. There were a wide variety of ensembles with which he performed, including an excellent symphonic band.<sup>43</sup> In larger groups, he would play timpani, concert snare drum and all mallet percussion.

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<sup>40</sup> Garibaldi, personal photos.

<sup>41</sup> Vic Firth website, "Interview Series."

<sup>42</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>43</sup> Phat Drumloops.

**Figure 3. David Garibaldi with the 724th Air Force Band, McChord AFB, Tacoma, Washington, 1966.<sup>44</sup>**



While in Tacoma, Garibaldi was able to play drum set and get involved with the local music scene. Occasionally, friends and acquaintances with name bands would come through town on tour. Ralph Humphrey was a year ahead of Garibaldi in school and originally from Castro Valley, CA. Humphrey was playing with the Don Ellis Orchestra and they were touring the Northwest. Garibaldi went to the Tacoma show, where he met Humphrey afterwards and the two went to a jam session. Everybody there played and Garibaldi remembers he didn't do too well. "I wasn't even close to the level those guys were at."<sup>45</sup> That particular experience inspired Garibaldi to improve his playing. Years later, after Tower of Power's *Back to Oakland* was released, Garibaldi saw Humphrey who said, "You know, you surprised us." Garibaldi recalls, "Right then, he's telling me, 'You sucked, but now you don't.'"<sup>46</sup> It was nice retribution for the improvement he achieved.

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<sup>44</sup> Garibaldi, personal photos.

<sup>45</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

In the late 1960s, San Francisco was the center of the counter-culture, or “hippie” movement.<sup>47</sup> As a result, audiences tended to be much more accepting of original and experimental music.<sup>48</sup> Groups such as Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, and the Grateful Dead were examples of bands that were frequently performing in the area. Garibaldi came home on military leave during the summer of 1968 and went to San Francisco, specifically the Haight-Ashbury District.<sup>49</sup> He recalls music was everywhere. The people and the freedom were overwhelming.

Garibaldi was honorably discharged December 8, 1969, and again enrolled at Chabot Junior College to finish his studies.<sup>50</sup> When he got back to the Bay Area, he was amazed to find the talent of people creating their own musical voices. He was regularly hearing drummers such as Michael Shrieve (Santana), Greg Errico (Sly and the Family Stone), and another local drummer, Harvey Hughes.<sup>51</sup> Besides having a great rock scene, the Bay Area had Latin music and Rhythm and Blues.<sup>52</sup> Garibaldi frequented clubs such as The Matrix, and The Fillmore, and heard many bands in Oakland in the Jack London Square district.<sup>53</sup> He was always playing with somebody and taking gigs for whatever money he could make.

While he was studying percussion and gaining experience in the jazz ensemble at Chabot Junior College, there were no classes that taught him how to perform in a rock band, best practices for recording, or that taught the tools necessary to succeed in modern popular music.<sup>54</sup> Garibaldi realized to play funk in a sophisticated way required focused practice. It could be as creative as the jazz tradition, and he recognized that great funk drummers had the same depth of

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<sup>47</sup> *The History of Rock and Roll*, DVD (Time-Warner, 2004).

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>50</sup> Garibaldi, Telephone interview.

<sup>51</sup> Griffith, “Hall of Fame.”

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Stephen “Doc” Kupka, Telephone interview by the author, September 26, 2015.

<sup>54</sup> Jerome Marcus, “Interview with David Garibaldi-Tower Of Power,” Mikedolbear.com, <http://www.mikedolbear.com/story.asp?StoryID=3160> (accessed October 11, 2015).

knowledge of any great drummer, or percussionist.<sup>55</sup> In the late 1960s, everyone learned the music that emerged in Oakland and the San Francisco area by listening, watching and playing. Garibaldi eventually dropped out of Chabot Junior College because the desire and opportunity to play professionally was much greater than the desire to complete his academic study.<sup>56</sup>

Even though Oakland and San Francisco were both in the Bay Area, emerging differences became evident for music and musicians. San Francisco had the hippie movement, and was preceded by the poetry and Bohemian rebellion of the beatnik movement started by poet Jack Kerouac in the late 1940s and early 1950s.<sup>57</sup> San Francisco was big in counterculture and a place where people could express themselves. “What was weirdness everywhere else was a feature here.”<sup>58</sup> Musically, there were “jam” bands such as the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin, and Latin-rock bands like Santana.<sup>59</sup>

Both San Francisco and Oakland had their abundance of creative virtuosity, but music in Oakland and the East Bay areas were very integrated; they had always been that way during Garibaldi’s childhood. There were no racial issues that were evident in other areas of society, and music offered a safe haven for artists.<sup>60</sup> Original music and new material were heard any given night of the week.<sup>61</sup> Additionally, Oakland had a tradition of bands featuring horns (saxophones, trumpets and trombones) and soul music.<sup>62</sup> There were places to perform, and doing so provided a means of good income for many musicians.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> White, 14.

<sup>57</sup> *The History of Rock and Roll*.

<sup>58</sup> Garibaldi, Telephone interview.

<sup>59</sup> Rocco Prestia, interview by the author, Las Vegas, NV, October 2, 2015.

<sup>60</sup> David Garibaldi, “JFS #131.”

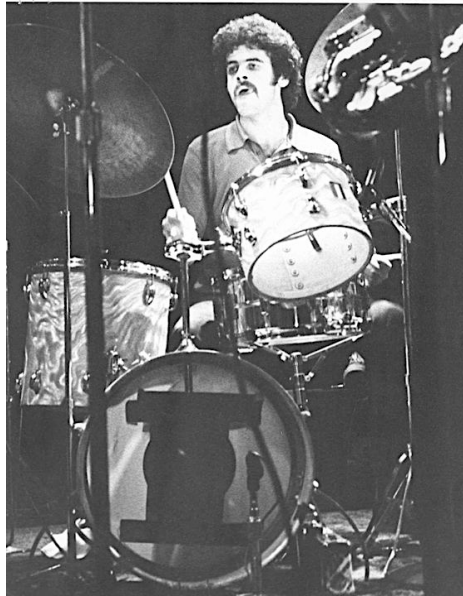
<sup>61</sup> Micallef, 102.

<sup>62</sup> Emilio Castillo, Telephone interview by the author, September 21, 2015.

<sup>63</sup> David Garibaldi, “JFS #131.”

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

**Figure 4. David Garibaldi's early drum set configuration, c.1970.<sup>64</sup>**



Garibaldi free-lanced and performed in various groups, using the drum set configuration found in Figure 4. Since there were not many touring opportunities, most gigs were local and regional.<sup>65</sup> Many bands with which he performed were for short stints, or were situations where he performed as a substitute for the regular drummer. These performance opportunities eventually led him to join the band Tower of Power in 1970.

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<sup>64</sup> Facebook Social Media, David Garibaldi Fan Page, <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=412327150786&set=o.119590882377&type=3&theater> (accessed October, 15, 2015).



## CHAPTER TWO:

### TOWER OF POWER

Garibaldi was playing in a club in Oakland called the On Broadway during the summer of 1970 where he and future Headhunters (band) drummer Mike Clark were substituting for another drummer.<sup>66</sup> The band's name was called the Reality Sandwich, and its personnel consisted of musicians, who were also drug dealers, playing cover songs.<sup>67</sup> Garibaldi would later recall about the band, "It was a place where guys would start out; it wasn't the place where you'd end up."<sup>68</sup> The Reality Sandwich was typical of a lot of bands in that they had work, but for Garibaldi, it wasn't musically fulfilling. He played with them because he was starting out and needed a job, but he was not interested in playing cover songs six nights a week. He was interested in playing original music and finding his own voice in music.<sup>69</sup>

Meanwhile, the band Tower of Power had just been signed to Bill Graham's San Francisco Records label, which had distribution nationwide through Atlantic Records.<sup>70</sup> The band got their record deal as a result of a Tuesday night contest called "Sounds of the City," a battle-of-the bands that took place at The Fillmore Auditorium in San Francisco.<sup>71</sup> A stipulation of producer David Rubinson was that they needed a new drummer to replace the then current drummer, Jack Castillo.<sup>72</sup>

Tower of Power members Mic Gillette and Skip Mesquite used to frequent the On Broadway and sit in with the Reality Sandwich. After a few nights of playing with Garibaldi,

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<sup>66</sup> Castillo, Emilio, "The Emilio Castillo Interview," Interview by Jake Feinberg, September 28, 2015, <http://www.jakefeinbergshow.com/2015/09/the-emilio-castillo-interview> (accessed October 15, 2015).

<sup>67</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>68</sup> Garibaldi, "Part II."

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Garibaldi, "JFS #131."

<sup>71</sup> Kupka, interview.

<sup>72</sup> Castillo, interview.

they suggested he hear their band perform as they were looking for a new drummer.<sup>73</sup> Garibaldi went to a club called the Keystone Corner in San Francisco to hear Tower of Power for the first time. After hearing them perform, he knew he was going to be in the band, even before meeting the other members.<sup>74</sup> "It had me written all over it. It was everything I wanted to do in music when I heard them."<sup>75</sup>

The band performed original songs that were soon to be recorded on their first album, *East Bay Grease*: "You're Still a Young Man," "Knock Yourself Out," "Social Lubrication," "The Price That I Pay," and "The Skunk, The Goose, and the Fly."<sup>76</sup> They also played obscure cover songs rarely heard, such as "Baby, I Love You" and "Stop" by Howard Tate, "B-A-B-Y" by Carla Thomas, and an instrumental version of James Brown's "Open the Door."<sup>77</sup> This music was typical of the bands Garibaldi grew up hearing, i.e., bands with horn sections playing funk, soul, and Latin influenced music.<sup>78</sup> Garibaldi adds that even then, they had a vibe, defined sound, and a concept of what they wanted to convey as a band.<sup>79</sup> It was much different than what was happening in San Francisco, like the Grateful Dead and the other psychedelic rock bands; it was "a complete funk influenced vibe."<sup>80</sup>

Emilio Castillo came to the On Broadway one night soon after to perform a few songs with the Reality Sandwich. It happened to be one of the nights where Garibaldi was substituting on drums.<sup>81</sup> Garibaldi recalls that Castillo was not in the best mood as he was contemplating

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<sup>73</sup> Garibaldi, "NFTF."

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Garibaldi, "JFS #131."

<sup>76</sup> Castillo, interview.

<sup>77</sup> Tower of Power, *What Is Hip? The Tower of Power Anthology*, CD Liner Notes, B00000JZAD (New York: Warner Brothers Records, 1999): 4.

<sup>78</sup> Garibaldi, "JFS #131."

<sup>79</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Castillo, interview.



options for starting a new group, due to the issues surrounding the recording contract they had recently received.<sup>82</sup> They started playing and Castillo seemed immediately impressed:

I sang a song called, “Good Time Charley.” The drummer that was playing, it just felt like he was kicking me in my bottom the whole time! Huge foot and a real locomotive sound. I turned around and, of course, it was David Garibaldi. He had that big afro hairdo, the black mustache, and those deep, dark eyes... a very intense looking cat with his tongue sticking out to the left as he played. I remember thinking, “This guy is ferocious!” He came up to me afterward and said that he heard what was going on with the band, and hoped that’d I’d stay with it.<sup>83</sup>

Around the same time, Emilio Castillo’s brother, Jack, decided to move back to Detroit to take care of their parents. Before Jack left, he told Emilio that he should stay with Tower of Power and pursue the recording contract with Bill Graham.<sup>84</sup> It was then when Castillo went back to the band and said there was a guy playing next door (at the On Broadway) that was really good and he was the one to replace his brother, Jack.<sup>85</sup>

During the initial rehearsal, many of the band members were still coping with the changes in the band. This included the departure of Jack Castillo, and guitar player Jody Lopez, who was replaced by Willie Fulton.<sup>86</sup> Garibaldi blocked all the other member’s emotions by focusing on the music, moving forward and proceeded with the rehearsal. It paid off, as the band agreed on the personnel changes within a few songs.<sup>87</sup>

Castillo recalls that Garibaldi thought in terms of the drums with the rest of the instruments and how he could integrate the drum set with the band; he wasn’t just playing a beat

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<sup>82</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>83</sup> Castillo, interview.

<sup>84</sup> Castillo, “Emilio Castillo Interview.”

<sup>85</sup> Kupka, interview.

<sup>86</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>87</sup> *Bass Day '98*, Rocco Prestia interview, DVD, Produced and directed by Rob Wallis and Paul Siegel (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 1998).

to keep time.<sup>88</sup> His bass drum foot, in particular, was more powerful than any other drummer with which Castillo had performed. Garibaldi utilized that power in combination with his hi-hat and snare drum to create a unique, clean and precise feel to drive the band in new directions.<sup>89</sup>

**Figure 5. Early Tower of Power Photo, c. 1970. (from left to right: David Garibaldi, Mic Gillette, Greg Adams, Brent Byars, “Doc” Kupka, Emilio Castillo, Willie Fulton, Skip Mesquite, Rocco Prestia, Rufus Miller)<sup>90</sup>**



Garibaldi officially joined the band July 23, 1970, with the personnel in Figure 5.<sup>91</sup> It was a situation where the 23-year-old wanted to express himself musically and wasn't interested in anything else; even with how he was going to make a living.<sup>92</sup>

Garibaldi's first gig with Tower of Power was in Lake Tahoe at a VFW on July 23, 1970 followed by an extended engagement at a little bar in North Lake Tahoe called The Stop.<sup>93</sup> At the time, he wasn't concerned about the living or travel conditions. He explained, "Tower was a way

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<sup>88</sup> Castillo, interview.

<sup>89</sup> Kupka, interview.

<sup>90</sup> Facebook Social Media, Official Tower of Power Page, <https://www.facebook.com/OfficialTowerOfPowerBand/photos/a.603737273072410.1073741832.281727431940064/603737279739076/?type=3&theater> (accessed October 15, 2015).

<sup>91</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>92</sup> Garibaldi, "JFS #131."

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Garibaldi, "Part II."

of life. Tower was my thing and for all of us. It's what we did."<sup>94</sup> They even slept on the floor of The Stop during that residency.<sup>95</sup>

The band rehearsed constantly. If they weren't rehearsing, they were writing, talking about the arrangements, or performing. It was seven days a week; every week. This period with Tower of Power set the standard for all other musical projects Garibaldi undertook in terms of commitment to achieve a certain level of excellence.<sup>96</sup>

During this period, members of Tower of Power frequently used mescaline.<sup>97</sup> The drug was used on nights when they were performing nine to twelve sets per day and wanted to stay relaxed. For example, Tower of Power would perform at The Warehouse in San Jose, pack the equipment and drive to Fremont to a place called Little Richards to play from two to six in the morning. Inevitably, the owner would request another set, and many times they would play till 8:30am.<sup>98</sup> The positive aspect of their schedule was they were growing musically as a band.

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<sup>94</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Castillo, interview.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER THREE:

### CASTILLO AS GARIBALDI'S ADVOCATE

Castillo emerged as T.O.P's undisputed bandleader.<sup>99</sup> This role involved the hiring and firing of band members, and helping them play together. He, along with bari saxophonist Stephen "Doc" Kupka, wrote most of the band's original material. While writing new material involved input from individual band members, Castillo had final say on what ideas worked, and what ideas didn't work.<sup>100</sup>

Castillo encouraged experimentation with the drum parts and gave Garibaldi the freedom to explore whatever he wanted to attempt, even at the expense of the other band member's complaints. For example, there was a period where Garibaldi would take traditional beats, and play the snare drum on "1" and "3" instead of "2" and "4." Garibaldi loved the effect, but many of the other band members did not, as they would frequently lose their place in the music. During these disputes, Castillo encouraged the band to concentrate more and let Garibaldi pursue experimenting with the drum parts. Garibaldi said of this time in the band's development: "There is quite a bit of freedom if you learn how to accept the structure and learn how to work within it."<sup>101</sup> As a result, they came together to eventually produce their signature sound.<sup>102</sup>

Garibaldi never wanted to play just an average groove. Especially at that time, "the wackier the better."<sup>103</sup> Many times, he would construct challenging beats, just to see how difficult he could make them, and to see what he could get away with to push the musical

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<sup>99</sup> Castillo, "Emilio Castillo Interview."

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Castillo, "Castillo Interview," David Garibaldi excerpt.

<sup>102</sup> Jonathan Mover, "David Garibaldi: Bumpin' It Up," *Drumhead Magazine* (May/June 2009):

<sup>103</sup> Castillo, interview.

envelope of the band.<sup>104</sup> Tower of Power was a part of an era when rebellion was the social theme. They were trying to break the rules and come up with their own way of doing things. Garibaldi recalls that it was the perfect place for him to find his musical voice, as he didn't have anybody telling him what he could or could not do, or if the music was rushing or dragging. It is a concept still used today. Garibaldi explains:

We just play. I think live music is supposed to be like the human experience. Up and down. That said, I have a natural tendency to rush. What I've learned is, the more distracted I am, the more the time is going to fluctuate. So staying focused is a key. If you want to play like the big boys, You have to have total focus.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Larry Braggs, Telephone interview by the author, September 11, 2015.

<sup>105</sup> William Miller, "Back on TOP," *Modern Drummer* (November 2003): 51.

CHAPTER FOUR:

THE DAVID GARIBALDI/ROCCO PRESTIA RELATIONSHIP

**Figure 6. David Garibaldi performing with Rocco Prestia.<sup>106</sup>**



In a funk band, the drummer and bassist have very important musical roles. These two individuals create the foundation of time and feel, in which additional rhythmic, harmonic and melodic material is added. This could not be truer in Tower of Power's example, as former singer Larry Braggs confirmed that the band would not have had the effect it did without the combination of David Garibaldi and Rocco Prestia.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Facebook Social Media, David Garibaldi Fan Page, <https://www.facebook.com/davegaribaldi/photos/pb.119590882377.2207520000.1445292691./10153591777102378/?type=3&theater> (accessed October 15, 2015).

<sup>107</sup> Braggs, interview.

The relationship that Garibaldi and Prestia have built over forty-five years is based on personalities that couldn't be any different.<sup>108</sup> Prestia, whom Garibaldi calls his “musical soulmate,”<sup>109</sup> is considered to be a “free spirit.”<sup>110</sup> He approaches ideas on a more intuitive, emotional level and admits that he doesn't know a lot about music, and was not schooled. He doesn't read music or practice much.<sup>111</sup> “It (practicing) bores me. If I have an idea, I might sit down and work it out for second, but I mean, five minutes and I'm done!”<sup>112</sup> With most bassist and drum relationships, there usually is an intellectual discussion about who should play what, which is absent with Prestia.<sup>113</sup> Despite that, Garibaldi is quick to add that Prestia intuitively plays great with a drummer, has excellent ears, and that Garibaldi wouldn't be the drummer he is today without Prestia.<sup>114</sup> Garibaldi further explains that Prestia has the ability to play music, which is what teachers are trying to get people to do when they're in school. “He doesn't have the part you can get in school. So it's completely reversed. He just has an ability to fit himself in with what's going on.”<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Kupka, interview.

<sup>109</sup> Tower of Power website, <http://www.towerofpower.com> (accessed October 12, 2015).

<sup>110</sup> Braggs, interview.

<sup>111</sup> Prestia, interview.

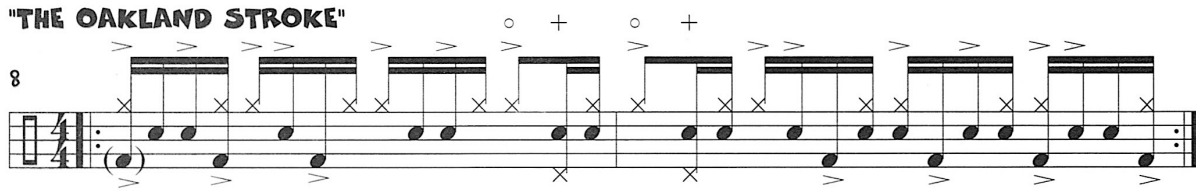
<sup>112</sup> Francis “Rocco” Prestia, “The Rocco Prestia Interview,” Interviewed by Jake Feinberg, May 17, 2015, <http://www.jakefeinbergshow.com/2015/05/the-rocco-prestia-interview> (accessed October 15, 2015).

<sup>113</sup> Andy, Doerschuk, “David Garibaldi On His Return To Tower Of Power,” *Drum! Magazine* (January 23, 2013) <http://www.drummagazine.com/features/post/david-garibaldi-return-to-tower-of-power> (accessed October 15, 2015).

<sup>114</sup> Mark Griffith, “Hall of Fame: David Garibaldi,” <http://www.pas.org/About/the-society/halloffame/DavidGaribaldi.aspx> (accessed October 13, 2015).

<sup>115</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

Figure 7. David Garibaldi's pattern on "The Oakland Stroke."<sup>116</sup>



One aspect that became clear about Prestia in the early days is that he didn't like to be told what to play. Castillo would suggest things to him and he never took any offense, but he took offense when other people were telling him how to play. Garibaldi learned how to work around that obstacle when he had specific ideas about the groove, such as with "The Oakland Stroke," in Figure 7.

Garibaldi suggested to Prestia to play "something in this part of the beat" (beats 1-3 in m.1 and beats 2-4 in m.2) and "on this part of the beat, don't do anything" (beat 4 of m.1 and beat 1 of m.2).<sup>117</sup> They played through it a couple times and it worked very well. Prestia described the groove in a clinic as "where it goes 'shhh-shhh,' that's where I know when to come in."<sup>118</sup> Years later, Prestia would confront Garibaldi about his tactics: "I know what you're doing...that psychology you're using!"<sup>119</sup> In contrast, Prestia describes Garibaldi as very well schooled and disciplined; always looking for perfection and a "neat freak."<sup>120</sup>

<sup>116</sup> David Garibaldi, *The Funky Beat* (Miami, FL: Warner Brothers Publications, 1996): 34.

<sup>117</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>118</sup> *Bass Day '98*.

<sup>119</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>120</sup> Prestia, interview.



## CHAPTER FIVE:

### DEVELOPMENT OF STYLE AND THE COMPOSITIONAL PROCESS

Garibaldi states in his *Percussive Arts Society* Hall of Fame interview that, at twenty-three years of age, he was not trying to create drum combinations that would change the world, rather he was just following his creative instinct. In his early years in Tower of Power, if somebody came up to him and said “You sounded like...,” he would view that as not doing his job; not to copy or remind anyone of anything other than what he was doing.<sup>121</sup>

While Garibaldi was concentrating on aspects of his playing, he had to consider that Prestia had no desire to become a ‘slap’ player,<sup>122</sup> a style that was made popular at the time by Sly and the Family Stone’s bassist, Larry Graham. Additionally, Prestia was not a soloist but considered his patterns within a song his solos.<sup>123</sup> Castillo remembers that when Garibaldi came in with his ideas, the band was able to go much further and it unleashed Prestia from where he had been before that. The bassist had started to develop his own syncopated style, but now he was free to start stretching and experiment with bass patterns without feeling he had to keep a basic feel. For example, Garibaldi’s rehearsal tapes revealed that Prestia would play very short and tight staccato notes when Garibaldi was on the hi-hat, and play more elongated notes during the chorus or when Garibaldi was on a ride cymbal to sonically match what the drums were doing.<sup>124</sup> “When you put those two styles together, the way that I play now is what came out of that. It wasn’t planned it just happened,” Prestia explained.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Garibaldi, “JFS #131.”

<sup>122</sup> *Bass Day* '98.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Garibaldi, “JFS #131.”

<sup>125</sup> Prestia, interview.

The compositional process would vary depending on who brought the ideas to rehearsal. Within that process, however, everyone had his individual job to contribute to the whole. Although it was not always the case, a general rule would be rhythm section developed first, horns second, and vocals last.<sup>126</sup>

When the idea would start with the drums, such as the song “What Is Hip,” Garibaldi would approach a beat like a composer might write a song.<sup>127</sup> The beat would develop and morph in different directions to add variety for different sections of the piece.<sup>128</sup> The process was similar when Castillo wrote a song and would share idea with Garibaldi, who may offer suggestions such as moving a particular note back a sixteenth, or suggest an entirely different direction.<sup>129</sup> In the latter example, Castillo and Garibaldi would go back and forth until they had an innovative and unique rhythm section part, or the A section of the piece. The B section would be something completely different, and the bridge, also unique, would somehow connect the two sections together. Prestia listened to the overall feel, and would eventually add his contributions. He admits that he has a good ear for playing music, but a terrible ear for hearing chords. Sometimes he would ask what the chords were, just to know what notes not to play.<sup>130</sup>

A lot of guys have to hit certain notes with the bass drum or with the snare, etc., and I don’t pick it apart quite like that. I look at what he plays and then I try to tuck myself into it. Nine times out of ten, I’m hitting with him in all the right places.<sup>131</sup>

This process would take hours, if not days, of rehearsal to ensure a high quality result.<sup>132</sup> “There was no blueprint for any of it, we just tried and it worked pretty well.”<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Garibaldi, interview

<sup>127</sup> Griffith, “Hall of Fame.”

<sup>128</sup> Miller, “Back on TOP.”

<sup>129</sup> Castillo, interview.

<sup>130</sup> Prestia, “The Rocco Prestia Interview.”

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

The horn section heard the rhythmic foundation develop, and would construct melodic material, hooks and various patterns to compliment the rhythmic foundation. Garibaldi would then incorporate aspects of everything he was hearing into the groove, many times avoiding the standard backbeat of “2” and “4” on the snare drum. While the standard backbeat was one type of feel, he wanted to create patterns that had a repetitive feeling similar to Latin or African music, where there was not a backbeat, but a pulse that regenerates itself every few measures.<sup>134</sup> Garibaldi would incorporate the horn parts, vocals, and rhythm section into a carefully thought out pattern for each section of a song. If there were different horn figures after a horn sectional, for example, he would overhaul his parts to adjust to the new arrangement.<sup>135</sup>

It would then be the skill of the composer and vocalist to fit lyrics in an often rhythmically complex “organized chaos.”<sup>136</sup> Sometimes it would be a challenge for the vocalist. Lenny Williams, for example, occasionally had trouble with songs that changed chords every measure, but excelled with songs that had one chord for many measures, or songs that had a blues chord progression. Kupka added, “but you would never know it.”<sup>137</sup>

Larry Braggs, vocalist with Tower of Power from 2000 to 2013, offers a different perspective performing with Garibaldi. He admits at first he had to learn how to sing with the rhythm section:

Singers will lock in with different instruments, some with the bass, some with the keyboard. I’m a guy that loves singing with the drums, so singing with David was a lot for me. I would just lock in with what

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<sup>132</sup> Castillo, interview.

<sup>133</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>134</sup> *Bass Day* '98.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Braggs, interview.

<sup>137</sup> Kupka, interview.

he was doing. Sometimes it would get so out, he would say, “Hey, don’t listen to me! If you listen to me, you’ll get lost!”<sup>138</sup>

Braggs adds that he was used to playing with drummers that played behind the beat, where Garibaldi plays on top. He had to figure out the places where he could best “fill the spaces.” He describes the whole experience as “going back to school to figure out the puzzle.”<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Braggs, interview.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER SIX:

### INFLUENCES AND CONCEPTS

As the general composition process was described in Chapter 6, Chapter 7 presents a chronology of Garibaldi's influences and how they helped shape specific albums and songs.

All I did was take what I liked from about six or seven of my favorite drummers, and then made one drummer out of all of that. My goal was never to be them, but to have my own sound and personality like they did. The individuality of my "heroes" is what I most admire about them.<sup>140</sup>

As described in Chapter 1, Garibaldi was greatly affected by the James Brown concert he saw at the San Jose Civic Auditorium in 1965. Starting in the early 1970s, Garibaldi focused on the fine details of what made the drum parts so memorable. The study of these patterns had a huge impact on Garibaldi's future groove compositions. Specifically, Clyde Stubblefield and Jabo Starks composed patterns that best demonstrate the fine details Garibaldi learned from the James Brown drummers. The essence of funk music was about learning how to play the patterns with the correct feel. The magic of the James Brown recordings for Garibaldi was that every song was beat specific, or where the pattern could work for just one song.<sup>141</sup>

**Figure 8. Clyde Stubblefield's pattern on "Mother Popcorn."<sup>142</sup>**



<sup>140</sup> Phat Drumloops.

<sup>141</sup> Miller, "Back on TOP."

<sup>142</sup> Clyde Stubblefield, "Mother Popcorn," transcription by David Garibaldi, handout from personal study with David Garibaldi, 2005.

When heard in context of the James Brown recording, Clyde Stubblefield's pattern on "Mother Popcorn" (Figure 8) compliments the horns on beat two of measure one, followed by a horn hit on the "and" of beat four.<sup>143</sup> In measure two, the horn pattern is repeated on beat two and then modified in beats three and four. The hi-hat plays simple quarter notes throughout, and it is this ostinato that gives the pattern forward motion. The unaccented snare drum notes, also known as "ghosted" notes, are very quiet, felt more than heard, and provide a shaker-like quality that gives it a sixteenth-note feel. The challenge in playing this pattern is keeping an accurate hi-hat while keeping the sound level of the unaccented ghost notes consistent and noticeably different than the accented notes.

**Figure 9. Jabo Stark's pattern on "Soul Power."<sup>144</sup>**



Figure 9 is different from Figure 8 in that Starks is playing a predictable two and four accent on the snare drum and the feel is swung rather than straight, but the challenges are very similar. The differences and consistency of accented and unaccented notes are paramount in the snare drum and hi-hat, especially when played at the same time, so as not to play the hi-hat accent on two and four louder than the accents on one and three. The sound-level concept described with Figures 8 and 9 would eventually be the fundamental exercises in Garibaldi's first major publication, *Future Sounds*.

<sup>143</sup> James Brown, *Star Time*, CD Anthology, B000001G1E (New York: Polydor, 1991).

<sup>144</sup> Jabo Starks, "Soul Power," transcription by David Garibaldi, handout from personal study with David Garibaldi, 2005.

Besides James Brown, Garibaldi was also listening to jazz drummers, such as Jake Hanna, Elvin Jones, Tony Williams, and Count Basie's drummer, Sonny Payne.<sup>145</sup> Payne's drumming had a particular effect on Garibaldi in how Payne would set up a band and the excitement that he brought to the ensemble. Payne's showmanship often masked his sense of drive, the beauty of how he would play under soloists, and his overall feel.<sup>146</sup> Garibaldi has even said that he could be a Sonny Payne playing sixteenth notes.<sup>147</sup>

Garibaldi was also listening to rock drummers Pete DePoe of Redbone, Rick Marotta with Howard Tate, and Greg Errico with Sly and the Family Stone. Garibaldi views Errico as an innovator who first took R&B drumming in the East Bay to another level.<sup>148</sup> When he and Garibaldi would get together to play patterns, Garibaldi was amazed at what Errico could play, but didn't use with Sly and the Family Stone.<sup>149</sup>

Latin music especially influenced Garibaldi. When Tower of Power would play in New York City, Garibaldi would frequent the Corso Ballroom, where some of the biggest names of the day would play, like Tito Puente, Carmelo Garcia, Victor Pantoja, and Ray Barretto.<sup>150</sup> Even though Garibaldi knew very little about the music, the feeling of it influenced him, as Latin music and funk were related rhythmically. He tried to incorporate the bell patterns into the patterns he did with Tower of Power.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Griffith, "Hall of Fame."

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Micallef, 104.

<sup>148</sup> Griffith, "Hall of Fame."

<sup>149</sup> Garibaldi, "NFTF."

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Garibaldi, *Tower of Groove*.

**Figure 10. Bernard "Pretty" Purdie at a recording session in an undated photo.**<sup>152</sup>



In the late 60s and into the 70s, one of the most in-demand session drummers out of New York was Aretha Franklin's drummer, Bernard "Pretty" Purdie (Figure 10). Purdie caught Garibaldi's attention as a drummer who was very clean, precise, and detailed. He had a high level sophistication in the way that he played.<sup>153</sup> Garibaldi would listen to Purdie's recordings and pick out a single component of his drum set, whether it was the snare drum, hi-hat, or bass drum. Also, Garibaldi spent much time trying to visualize what Purdie was playing. Garibaldi credits these examples as a major influence in his playing.<sup>154</sup>

During Tower of Power's Monday and Tuesday night gig at the On Broadway, many top musicians would come and sit in with the band. The musicians often included members from Sly and the Family Stone and Cold Blood. Castillo recalls one evening when Bernard Purdie came in the club to listen:

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<sup>152</sup> Drummerworld.com, Bernard Purdie,  
[http://www.drummerworld.com/drummers/Bernard\\_Purdie.html](http://www.drummerworld.com/drummers/Bernard_Purdie.html) (accessed October 15, 2015).

<sup>153</sup> Garibaldi, "NFTF."

<sup>154</sup> Vic Firth website.



Bernard Purdie, he came down, and at the time, David was doing these swooshes with his high hat. The next thing we knew, Rock Steady came out and those swooshes were all in the track. I'm absolutely certain David influenced all that...and drummers all over, not just funk drummers were being influenced because everybody heard about this guy playing this unique style that was very exciting and explosive.<sup>155</sup>

One of Garibaldi's most memorable early concerts with Tower of Power happened when they performed with Aretha Franklin at the Fillmore March 5, 1971. Tower of Power was the opening band and Garibaldi described it as "school on steroids."<sup>156</sup> He was in a room full of his influences and they accepted Tower of Power as great musicians.<sup>157</sup> During the opening night, Garibaldi felt somebody pinching his leg. He turned around and it was Purdie standing and laughing with Bill Graham as they were playing a joke.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Castillo, interview.

<sup>156</sup> Garibaldi, "NFTF."

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

## CHAPTER SEVEN:

### TOWER OF POWER RECORDINGS AND MUSICAL ASSOCIATIONS

One of the advantages of playing live was that by the time they entered the studio to record, many of the kinks and performance problems had been resolved.<sup>159</sup> *East Bay Grease* was recorded live in the studio in September of 1970 with few to little overdubs. It was released in November of the same year.<sup>160</sup> On *East Bay Grease*, Garibaldi admits that he tried to express everything he knew about drumming on the recording.<sup>161</sup> He absorbed as much as he could from his influences and expressed it immediately in his playing. In one version of “Knock Yourself Out,” for example, he played the introduction in a phrase of seven that looped around what the horn section was playing. Garibaldi remembers he was excited and told everybody. “You’re doing what? In our music?” was the reply from band members. From that he realized a hard rule, to never tell anybody what he was doing, rather just do it. He was able to execute many of his ideas in the band by playing and not intellectualizing.<sup>162</sup>

Garibaldi describes the making of *East Bay Grease* as “all hands on deck,”<sup>163</sup> meaning, each band member had to play anything he thought would benefit the recording. Garibaldi played some chords on vibraphone on one track and sang background vocals on another. As they continued making music, Garibaldi focused on his strengths, which did not include vibraphone and vocals. The band was still figuring out who they were, and eventually areas of expertise became the strengths of the band. For example, Castillo and Kupka may not of had the solo

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<sup>159</sup> Phat Drumloops.

<sup>160</sup> Garibaldi, “JFS #131.”

<sup>161</sup> Garibaldi, “NFTF.”

<sup>162</sup> Garibaldi, Telephone interview.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

abilities of other members, but they were the composers of most of the original material and could sing complex harmonies.<sup>164</sup>

At the time of the record's release, Doug Clifford, who was playing drums with Creedence Clearwater Revival, was taking lessons with Garibaldi. Eventually Clifford asked if Tower of Power was interested in going on the road, which led to their first national exposure in 1971. A second Tower of Power tour followed soon after with Santana.<sup>165</sup>

Besides signing Tower of Power to his record label, Bill Graham was also the band's manager.<sup>166</sup> In "the band's infinite wisdom,"<sup>167</sup> they decided a cocaine dealer would be a better option as manager to maximize their chance for success, because he had drugs and money.<sup>168</sup> When he found out about the other manager, Graham was very upset. Not that they were trying to get rid of him, but that they were turning their back on an opportunity to be successful through Graham's business connections. Castillo and Kupka went to Graham's office weekly, asking Graham to release them from their contractual obligations with him. Graham would say no, lecture Castillo and Kupka, and send them out of his office. This sequence happened for a long time.<sup>169</sup>

During the negotiations with Graham, Tower of Power went to Los Angeles to audition for Motown. The audition was organized by Pete Moore, who was one of *The Miracles* with Motown executive Smokey Robinson. Representing Motown at the audition were company founder Berry Gordy, Diana Ross, and Stevie Wonder. The audition went well and Berry Gordy was pleased. The band's manager, whose name is purposely not disclosed, met with Gordy

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>166</sup> Garibaldi, "Part II."

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>169</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

afterwards and ruined the band's opportunity to sign a contract by making outrageous demands. "Here was one little gangster talking to the biggest gangster of all, Berry Gordy, telling Gordy what he wanted and what he was going to do," recalls Garibaldi.<sup>170</sup> The contract was lost and the band went back up to the Bay Area to work.

The work schedule was relentless, and the manager was taking all the money. The band was broke and had nothing to show for their hard work. That changed one day at a recording session in San Mateo. Doug Sohn, a Korean from Hawaii, was the manager's enforcer. Sohn "was one of those guys where he knew everything that was going on but never looked at anybody. He knew exactly everything that was going on."<sup>171</sup>

Sohn started to sympathize with the band and called a band meeting during the recording session. He sat the manager in a chair in the center of the room and told the manager, by physical means, to admit what he was doing with the band's money and "encouraged" the manager to release the band from his services. Eventually, the band would end up with manager Ron Barnett and sign a six-record contract with Warner Brothers.<sup>172</sup> Doug Sohn was mentioned in the acknowledgements of the band's 1973 album, *Tower of Power*.

Tower of Power was featured on two compilation albums, one in 1970, *Fillmore: The Last Days* and 1972's *Lights Out San Francisco*. Also, in 1972, *Bump City* featured many Tower of Power classics, such as "You Got To Funkafize," "You Strike My Main Nerve," "Down To The Nightclub," and "You're Still A Young Man." As Garibaldi enjoyed recording and performing with the band, he felt he wasn't serious about studying drum set.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>173</sup> White, 14.

In 1972, Garibaldi's friend, Steve Bowman, was studying with Chuck Brown in Oakland.<sup>174</sup> Over time, Bowman made considerable progress and Garibaldi took notice. Garibaldi eventually called Brown and studied privately for the next 14 months.<sup>175</sup>

Brown was Garibaldi's first private drum teacher, was younger, had old-school values, and taught the Tower of Power drummer the value of discipline.<sup>176</sup> Brown taught Garibaldi about playing jazz, hand technique, and how proper form could take the rough edges off of his playing and enhance his sound on the drum set.<sup>177</sup> "He was the first guy that really explained to me in a way I could understand the whole thing of what concept was and how it related to style."<sup>178</sup>

Brown had a routine for all the limbs, including the bass drum, which Garibaldi practiced between five and fourteen hours a day.<sup>179</sup> Garibaldi built his practice pad from a block of wood and glued a piece of rubber, the size of a \$.50 piece, to the top. Every exercise was played for five minutes without stopping, and included excerpts from George Lawrence Stone's *Stick Control* at extreme fast and slow tempi. The goal was to develop strength, endurance, concentration, and discipline so that the groove wouldn't waver.<sup>180</sup> Garibaldi's playing changed dramatically from 1971-73 and he owes much of his progress to Brown.<sup>181</sup>

During the completion of his studies, Garibaldi expanded his drum set configuration by purchasing a new 5-piece Ludwig drum set and changed his technique from traditional to matched grip to help accommodate the larger set. The tom sizes were twelve, thirteen, and

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<sup>174</sup> Griffith, "Hall of Fame."

<sup>175</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>176</sup> Tower of Power website, David Garibaldi Bio, [http://www.towerofpower.com/david\\_bio/index.html](http://www.towerofpower.com/david_bio/index.html) (accessed October 15, 2015).

<sup>177</sup> Flans, *Modern Drummer* (February 1991): 20.

<sup>178</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>179</sup> Flans, *Modern Drummer* February 1991): 20.

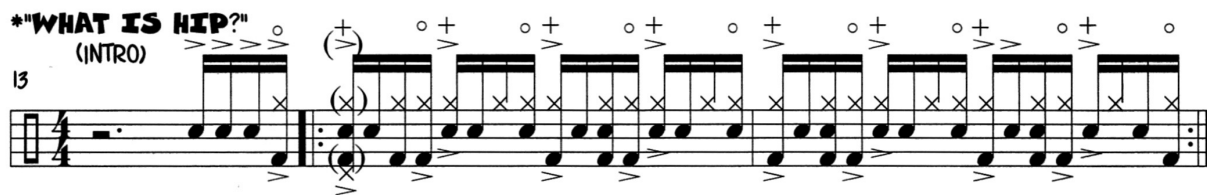
<sup>180</sup> Garibaldi, *Tower of Groove*.

<sup>181</sup> Marcus, "Interview."

sixteen inches with a twenty-four inch bass drum. After one tom was stolen at the Fillmore West, Garibaldi kept the set as a three piece, which he still has today.<sup>182</sup>

The back cover of *Tower of Power*, released in 1973, features a photo of a rehearsal hall shared with a fellow Oakland band, the Loading Zone. Prestia notes that the difference in quality between *East Bay Grease* and *Tower of Power* was quite substantial and much more refined.<sup>183</sup> The album features two compositions that are some of Tower of Power's most recognizable songs, "What Is Hip?" and "Soul Vaccination."

Figure 11. David Garibaldi's pattern on "What Is Hip?"<sup>184</sup>



"What Is Hip?" transcribed in Figure 11, is based on the Freddie King song "Going Down,"<sup>185</sup> and features a steady, pulsing sixteenth-note bass line. Garibaldi frequently played the song with Santana's bass player, Doug Rauch, at Tower of Power's rehearsal studio in San Francisco.<sup>186</sup> At one rehearsal, Garibaldi wanted to try the groove, add a bass line with horn figures on top. "Everybody thought I was nuts," Garibaldi explained. The groove was so simple, yet with the drum pattern's syncopation and accented horn hits (written by Kupka and Castillo), the song developed into one of Tower of Power's biggest hits.<sup>187</sup>

<sup>182</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>183</sup> *Bass Day '98*.

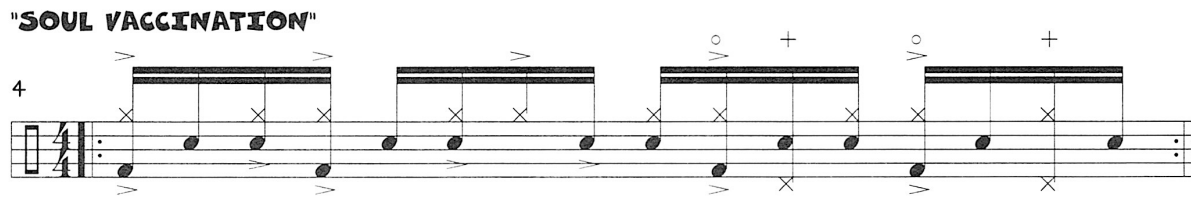
<sup>184</sup> Garibaldi, *The Funky Beat*, 35.

<sup>185</sup> Garibaldi, NFTF."

<sup>186</sup> Castillo, interview.

<sup>187</sup> Garibaldi, "NFTF."

Figure 12. David Garibaldi's pattern on "Soul Vaccination."<sup>188</sup>



The pattern for “Soul Vaccination” (Figure 12) came from listening to Latin music, especially Eddie Palmieri’s *The Sun of Latin Music*.<sup>189</sup> That was the first drum part where there was no two and four backbeat on the snare drum, and no traditional funk drumming on any part of the song.<sup>190</sup> The groove is constructed of combinations and variations of a Swiss Army triplet rudiment, shown below in Figure 13:

Figure 13. Swiss Army Triplet.<sup>191</sup>



Rather than make it a repeating three-measure beat, due to the three-note rhythm and sixteenth-note pattern, Garibaldi looped the pattern and put some extra notes at the end to make it a repeating one-bar phrase. Once Tower of Power heard the playback in the studio, they were

<sup>188</sup> Garibaldi, *The Funky Drummer*, 32.

<sup>189</sup> Micallef, 103.

<sup>190</sup> Garibaldi, “NFTF.”

<sup>191</sup> Vic Firth Website, Swiss Army Triplet,

<http://www.vicfirth.com/education/rudiments/28swissarmytriplet.php> (accessed October 15, 2015).

inspired and realized nontraditional ways of applying rhythm to funk music could work effectively.<sup>192</sup>

**Figure 14. Gary Chaffee linear exercise pattern.<sup>193</sup>**



In 1973, Tower of Power recorded live at Katie's nightclub in Boston, which would later be released as *East Bay Archive* in 2008. During that tour, Garibaldi met Alan Dawson and Chaffee through two Berklee College of Music students.<sup>194</sup> Chaffee, Berklee's percussion instructor, invited Garibaldi to play with the Berklee faculty ensemble, comprised of Dave Samuels and Pat Metheny, during a master class.<sup>195</sup> Afterwards, Chaffee and Garibaldi spent some time together and talked about different approaches to playing the drum set. Chaffee began to develop his own concept based on some of the ideas he and Garibaldi had discussed. Most rhythms shift back-and-forth between moments of thin and dense sound, when voices overlap or are stacked on top of each other. Chaffee felt he had more control over his sound when he was playing in a linear, or single-voiced manner, demonstrated in Figure 14. While many scholars talk about Garibaldi's style also as linear, Garibaldi states his concept is based on sound layering with different combinations of notes in the hands and feet.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Garibaldi, "NFTF."

<sup>193</sup> Drummerworld.com. Gary Chaffee.

<http://www.drummerworld.com/Videos/garychaffeelineartime1214.html> (accessed October 15, 2015).

<sup>194</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

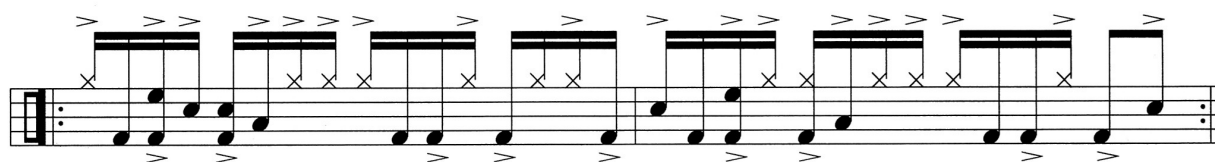
<sup>196</sup> Marcus, "Interview."



When Tower of Power was rehearsing to go in the studio with *Back to Oakland* in 1974, Garibaldi began experimenting with a concept he termed “orchestrating fills and parts.”<sup>197</sup> Figure 11 and 12 illustrate different examples of Garibaldi’s drum patterns, but he was constructing patterns and transitions to different sections the way an orchestral composer would write a thorough-composed work.<sup>198</sup> Sometimes he orchestrated drum fills as well. Garibaldi felt that if there was a section of the song where it was building in intensity and he wanted the fill to match the mood, then orchestrating the fill was beneficial. He felt it made good musical sense to orchestrate a phrase as opposed to just trying to play an improvised solo. There was always room for variation within a song, but in orchestrating his fills and parts within a song, there was a foundation that would ensure a consistent performance.<sup>199</sup>

It’s still an evolving concept and something I continue to refine today. When you’re younger, you try to make it as difficult as you can. When you’re older, you get tired of that and don’t want to do that just because you can. Although there are many things I do the same, I still reinvent parts.<sup>200</sup>

**Figure 15. David Garibaldi's pattern on "Man From the Past."<sup>201</sup>**



<sup>197</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>198</sup> David Garibaldi, *Tower of Groove: Part 2*, VHS, Produced by Rob Wallis, Paul Siegel, and Sandy Feldstein (Miami, FL: Warner Brothers Publications, Incorporated, 1994).

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>201</sup> Garibaldi, *The Funky Beat*, 30.

When Tower of Power went into the studio to record *Back to Oakland* in 1974, Garibaldi was prepared. He and local drummer Harvey Hughes had been constructing patterns at Garibaldi's house. Hughes and Garibaldi traded ideas where one person was sitting at the drum set, while the other would sit on a chair next to the drums. They would play something, make suggestions, switch drummers and add to the previous configuration. Figure 15, "Man From the Past," was a result of the meetings between Hughes and Garibaldi.<sup>202</sup>

Figure 7, "The Oakland Stroke," was constructed on a practice pad set-up and rehearsed at Castillo's house in different variations for over a year before recorded.<sup>203</sup> When another song was needed for *Back to Oakland*, it was composed in the studio, with a hook and horn arrangement.<sup>204</sup> The song was built around the drums. The pattern in Figure 7 is featured at the beginning and the end of the recording.

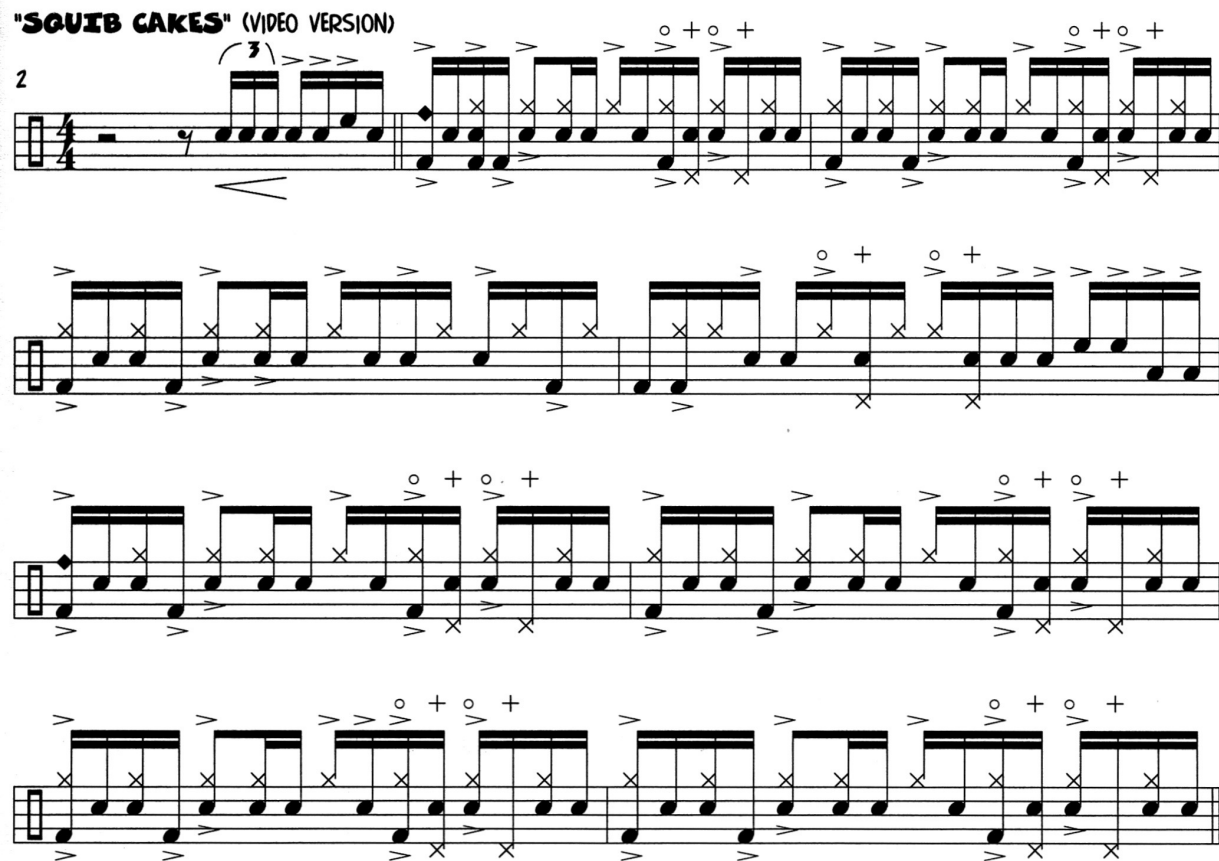
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<sup>202</sup> Garibaldi, "NFTF."

<sup>203</sup> Flans, *Modern Drummer* (February 1991): 91-92.

<sup>204</sup> Micallef, 103.

Figure 16. David Garibaldi's opening solo and pattern on "Squib Cakes."<sup>205</sup>



The “Squib Cakes” pattern was influenced by the precision of Bernard Purdie and the unpredictability of Sly Stone’s drumming on Stone’s album *There’s a Riot Goin’ On*.<sup>206</sup> Garibaldi experimented with Purdie hi-hat variations and came up with the pattern in Figure 16. “Squib Cakes” took many days to complete as it was recorded straight to reel-to-reel tape and had to be a perfect take.<sup>207</sup>

<sup>205</sup> Garibaldi, *The Funky Beat*, 31.

<sup>206</sup> Micallef, 104.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

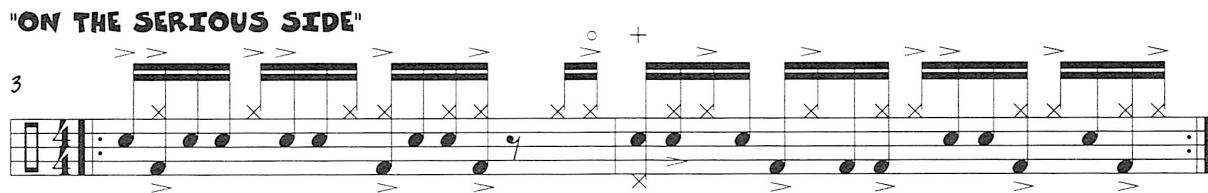
## CHAPTER EIGHT:

### DEPARTURES FROM TOWER OF POWER

When Tower of Power began to earn a good income in the mid 1970s, there was an increase in substance abuse within the band. There was considerable cocaine, heroin, and alcohol addiction. It went from occasional partying to a lifestyle choice. In that environment, the creative contributions started to disintegrate. The substance abuse was taking over the music as the most important stimulus. Under these conditions, Garibaldi left the band for a short time in 1974.<sup>208</sup>

The band reunited in 1975 for the recording of *In the Slot*, which featured “On the Serious Side” and “Vuela Por Noche.” The pattern in Figure 17 is based on an idea Castillo brought into the band and sang. Garibaldi’s first thought was that it sounded silly and goofy. “What are we, the Andrews Sisters?” he thought after hearing the idea.<sup>209</sup> To develop the hook, the band approached it in a similar way as “Soul Vaccination,” or very non-traditional and unpredictable. Although Prestia, who called this song “The Math,” wasn’t happy about the repeated bass line restrictions, the recording became one of the album’s most recognizable songs.<sup>210</sup>

Figure 17. David Garibaldi's pattern for "On the Serious Side."<sup>211</sup>



<sup>208</sup> Vic Firth website.

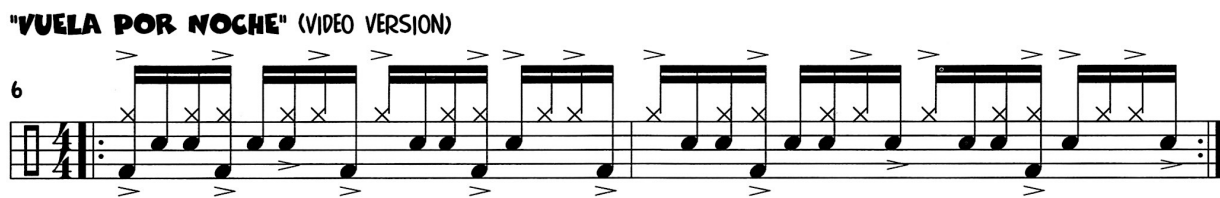
<sup>209</sup> Garibaldi, “NFTF.”

<sup>210</sup> Garibaldi, “NFTF.”

<sup>211</sup> Garibaldi, *The Funky Beat*, 32.

With “Vuela Por Noche,” in Figure 18, Garibaldi constructed a beat that expressed his fondness of Latin music, even though he knew very little about the structure of authentic Latin rhythms. The musical climate of the East Bay was not traditional, so Garibaldi made up his part based on what he thought the Latin musicians were doing, and these ideas were embraced by band members and colleagues.<sup>212</sup> Garibaldi’s continued interest in Latin music was the inspiration for his percussion group Talking Drums, which formed in the early 1990s.

Figure 18. David Garibaldi's pattern on "Vuela Por Noche."<sup>213</sup>



After another brief departure from the band in 1977 and relocating to Los Angeles, Garibaldi returned to Tower of Power to record *Back on the Streets* in 1979. The band was now with CBS records, and the album was recorded with two outside producers. For the first time with Tower of Power, Garibaldi recorded his tracks separated from the band. He had a click track and keyboardist Chester Thompson playing with him for reference. Most of the record was built in a similar way for the rest of the band. The end result was a commercially influenced album, which Garibaldi disliked.<sup>214</sup>

<sup>212</sup> Micallef, 103.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid, 33.

<sup>214</sup> Flans, *Modern Drummer* (February 1991): 96.

Garibaldi's final departure from Tower of Power occurred in 1980. By that time, substance abuse had escalated to intolerable levels.<sup>215</sup> It was difficult for Garibaldi to experience, since Tower of Power was the band with which he wanted to perform for the remainder of his career. Eventually, he left the band thinking he would never play with Tower of Power again.<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> Castillo, interview.

<sup>216</sup> Miller, 52.

## CHAPTER NINE:

### LOS ANGELES AND MUSICAL COLLABORATIONS FROM 1980-1998

In 1977, Garibaldi moved to Los Angeles to pursue studio work. The music scene in the Bay Area was diminishing, and with the on/off relationship with Tower of Power, he needed a change.<sup>217</sup> After searching for prospective projects, Garibaldi experienced some setbacks. He had called the top contractor who replied that “they” knew who he was, but that “you don’t get the blessing until somebody who’s doing the work gives you the blessing. Then you get in... otherwise, no.”<sup>218</sup> Also, after a gig one night, another person told him “nobody plays like that anymore.”<sup>219</sup> It was difficult for Garibaldi to hear, especially after the positive experiences in the recording studios with T.O.P.

After leaving Tower of Power in 1980, it was a challenge for Garibaldi to learn how to function in other musical situations. He was playing for TV and radio commercials, and other music that was very non-personal.<sup>220</sup> He found himself overplaying because of his experiences with Tower of Power, where he had no restrictions. The recording sessions in Los Angeles were very controlling and people were telling him what to do musically. It was a big adjustment and there was a lot of mental pressure for a long time. There were even instances where people did not want to hire him, because they thought all he could play were Tower of Power grooves.<sup>221</sup>

Garibaldi felt that he always had to prove himself and that he was not accepted in Southern California for his distinct, personal style. He had to change that style to make it more generic and it was frustrating and confusing.<sup>222</sup> For him, the situation was a lot different to

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<sup>217</sup> Flans, *Modern Drummer* (February 1991): 96-97.

<sup>218</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>219</sup> Garibaldi, “JFS #131.”

<sup>220</sup> Miller, 51.

<sup>221</sup> Robyn Flans, “David Garibaldi,” *Modern Drummer* (January 1986): 33.

<sup>222</sup> Flans, *Modern Drummer* (February 1991): 98

Oakland, because in Los Angeles everyone was trying to sound like everyone else. Individual effort and trying to have a signature approach to one's playing was frowned upon because everyone was trying to get the same generic gigs.<sup>223</sup> Castillo adds:

Look at what Dave has done outside of Tower. As good as he is, and as famous as he is, you'd think he'd be the session guy that would play with every star in the world. But he's not, and I'll tell you why: he doesn't sound like the okie-doke session drummer. He doesn't chop wood like other drummers do. He always has to be unique and that doesn't fit in with other people, who all they want is just a timekeeper. That's not what he is. He's a unique drummer.<sup>224</sup>

There were some positive breakthroughs, however, that led him to a series of collaborations, and at times, the situations even challenged Garibaldi. For example, while in the Christian band Takit, the band leader wanted to have extended drum solos for every performance. Since they had a full gigging schedule, he had to perform featured solos almost every day. It's something he had to practice, because solos were not frequent in Tower of Power and were challenging for him at the time.<sup>225</sup>

Equipment changes in 1978 helped augment Garibaldi's sound. He received an endorsement from the Rogers drum company, which included an additional endorsement from Paiste cymbals, since Rogers was the Paiste distributor.<sup>226</sup> He constructed a much larger drum set that included a series of eight, ten, twelve, fourteen, and sixteen inch toms, which had a special mounting system, partially shown in Figure 19. The configuration was an adjustment, as he was used to a four-piece drum set (as shown in Figure 4). He used this setup until he endorsed

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<sup>223</sup> Garibaldi, "JFS #131."

<sup>224</sup> Castillo, interview.

<sup>225</sup> Flans, *Modern Drummer* (January 1986): 109.

<sup>226</sup> Garibaldi, telephone interview.



Yamaha drums in 1982 and eventually standardizing his drumset as a five-piece set with ten, twelve, and fourteen inch toms.

**Figure 19. David Garibaldi with partial Rodgers drum set configuration, c. 1978.<sup>227</sup>**



Garibaldi also added a second hi-hat in 1978, located on his right side.<sup>228</sup> He explained that the common way of playing the hi-hat, with the right hand over the left, was limiting. The addition of the second enabled him to open up his playing concept to get more colors and ideas into the grooves. Also, the positioning of the second hi-hat created a stereo effect from the drum set. The different sizes, with the twelve-inch hi-hats on the right side and fourteen-inch hi-hats on the left, also gave two distinct pitches. When the different variations of high hat sounds with the tip and shoulder of the stick were added, it created a new level of sound possibilities.<sup>229</sup>

Musical collaborations during 1976-1998 were generally short, with a recorded album and/or tour. With the exception of *Wishful Thinking*, *Talking Drums*, and *Planet Drum*, these

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<sup>227</sup> Garibaldi, personal photos.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Garibaldi, *Tower of Groove: Part II.*”

artists included Patti Austin, Natalie Cole, Larry Carlton, Jermaine Jackson, Ray Obiedo, The Buddy Rich Orchestra, Boz Scaggs, Gino Vanelli, Deniece Williams, and the Yellowjackets.

Wishful Thinking (Figure 20) was a fusion group led by guitarist Tim Weston in the mid 1980s and based in Los Angeles. Weston approached Garibaldi about forming a group where the same people would play in the band and not have a rotating lineup, to which Garibaldi agreed.<sup>230</sup> The band also featured Chris Boardman on keyboards, Dave Shank on percussion, and Jerry Watts, Jr. on bass. The band released three recordings including *Disturbances* (1985), *Think Again* (1986) and *Way Down West* (1988). A compilation CD was released in 1990 entitled *What Was Then*.

**Figure 20. Wishful Thinking promotional photo, 1985. (from left to right: Dave Shank, Tim Weston, Chris Boardman, Jerry Watts, Jr., and David Garibaldi)<sup>231</sup>**



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<sup>230</sup> Flans, *Modern Drummer* (February 1991): 100.

<sup>231</sup> Peninsula.eu, Wishful Thinking, <http://www.penisula.eu/fusion2.htm> (accessed October 15, 2015).

Wishful Thinking had a good series of tours and performances. Garibaldi exposed a new generation of drummers to his style, including Jose “Pepe” Jimenez, who would become the future drummer for Santana.<sup>232</sup> For a time, they were one of the few bands comprised of studio session players in Los Angeles that had no substitute musicians, and would always play with their original personnel. The advantage was that the music was very personalized.<sup>233</sup> When Chris Broadman, one of the main writers as well as keyboardist, decided to pursue other interests in the late 1980s, Garibaldi also chose to leave.<sup>234</sup>

Before moving back to the Oakland area in 1989, Garibaldi briefly studied snare drum technique with Richard Wilson before studying with Murray Spivack from 1988-1989.<sup>235</sup> Garibaldi felt he had technical issues, such as applications and execution of rudiments, that needed improvement and Spivack helped him considerably. “He could tell by the sound of each stick if you were gripping the stick too tightly, and he always explained things perfectly.”<sup>236</sup> Spivack taught using the Wilcoxon books, George Lawrence Stone’s *Stick Control*, Podemski’s *Snare Drum Method*, Louis Bellson’s publications, as well as a variety of reading assignments. As a result, Garibaldi was much more relaxed in his technique.<sup>237</sup> He describes Spivack as a phenomenal teacher and his lessons a highlight of his musical life.<sup>238</sup>

Talking Drums formed in the early 1990s and was the most significant group musically for Garibaldi outside of Tower of Power. By 1992, he no longer wanted to play hybrid Latin and African beats, rather he wanted to study and learn authentic rhythms. He studied briefly with

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<sup>232</sup> Jose “Pepe” Jimenez, interview by the author, Las Vegas, NV, September 15, 2015.

<sup>233</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>234</sup> Flans, *Modern Drummer* (February 1991): 100.

<sup>235</sup> Garibaldi, telephone interview.

<sup>236</sup> Griffith, “Hall of Fame.”

<sup>237</sup> Flans, *Modern Drummer* (February 1991): 21.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

other teachers but was not happy with what he was learning.<sup>239</sup> Garibaldi heard about Michael Spiro and decided to go and hear him play at the Caribe Dance Hall.<sup>240</sup> Spiro recalls their first meeting:

So he showed up to a gig and stood off to the side of the stage for the whole set, which was kind of creepy! I didn't know who it was and there's a guy standing there staring at you the whole set. You're going, "Am I supposed to call the cops on you, or what?"<sup>241</sup>

Afterwards, Garibaldi approached Spiro about taking lessons and introduced himself as "David." Once Spiro realized it was Garibaldi requesting the lessons, he was reluctant to accept, but agreed after Garibaldi insisted.<sup>242</sup>

The lessons consisted of Spiro playing patterns on conga drums and Garibaldi improvising on drumset. It's not what a person would normally do in a lesson, but it was more of "here's this part, play this to it."<sup>243</sup> After a while, Spiro and Garibaldi had developed a repertoire and the lessons became more like rehearsals.

During these rehearsal sessions, Garibaldi gave a clinic at Skip's Music in Sacramento and asked if Spiro wanted to demonstrate some of the material they had created. Spiro agreed and came up with a program that featured Garibaldi for the first part and adding Spiro for the last part of the clinic. This process led to Garibaldi and Spiro presenting many subsequent clinics together.

After nine months, Spiro suggested adding another percussionist as a means to provide more foundation during solo sections. Spiro recommended Jesús Díaz, with whom he had played

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<sup>239</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> Michael Spiro, telephone interview by the author, September 12, 2015.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

many times before. With the three members in place, “we became Talking Drums.”<sup>244</sup> The group got together a few times a week to play. They mostly played their own instruments to construct ensemble parts and create material. Every once in a while, Diaz sat at the drum set and showed Garibaldi a pattern. Garibaldi would then “Garibald-ize” it and add a new level to the composition.<sup>245</sup>

During the early 1990s, many drum companies sponsored clinics for featured artists to promote products and educate listeners on a wide variety of subjects and techniques. Garibaldi was involved in many of those clinics and brought Talking Drums into that circuit.<sup>246</sup> They gave clinics, performed at the Monterey Jazz Festival, and were featured at festivals in Puerto Rico, Mexico, and Canada. They also performed at the *Modern Drummer*, IAJE, and PASIC conferences, and reunited after a brief absence at *The Big Bang* Drum Festival in January of 2000 (Figure 21). The group also produced two play-along publications and one instructional video. Talking Drums never officially disbanded, and the members are still close to this day. “It’s still unofficially together.”<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>244</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>245</sup> Spiro, interview.

<sup>246</sup> Spiro, interview.

<sup>247</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

**Figure 21. Talking Drums performing at The Big Bang Drum Festival, the Netherlands, January 2000. (left to right: David Garibaldi, Michael Spiro and Jesus Diaz)<sup>248</sup>**



David Garibaldi played in Mickey Hart's Planet Drum percussion ensemble from 1996 to 1997. The former Grateful Dead drummer Mickey Hart created the concept of this ensemble to incorporate the musical styles of some of the world's best percussionists. The ensemble has been described as a unified style made up of all of its parts. This group featured Hart, Giovanni Hidalgo, Zakir Hussain, Babatunde Olatunji, Airto Moreira, and others.<sup>249</sup>

Garibaldi's relationship with Mickey Hart goes back to 1972 when Tower of Power released *Bump City*, and had the record release party at the Grateful Dead Ranch.<sup>250</sup> Unbeknownst to everyone except the Grateful Dead, the food was laced with Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD), and they watched everybody's reaction to the drug from their porch.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> Jesús Diaz, David Garibaldi, and Michael Spiro., *Tiempo* (Miami, FL: Warner Brothers Publications, 2001): 2.

<sup>249</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>250</sup> Garibaldi, "Part II."

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

The experience of Planet Drum was a fulfilling one in that Garibaldi got to play with experts in their genre and learn from them. *Superlingua*, released in 1998, but recorded with Garibaldi in 1997, included “samples” and computer generated sounds with the Planet Drum ensemble and reached number four on *Billboard*’s “Top World Music Albums.”<sup>252</sup> They toured frequently, playing for thousands of fans at Grateful Dead hotbeds throughout the United States.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> Allmusic.com, Mickey Hart, *Superlingua*, <http://www.allmusic.com/artist/mickey-hart-mn0000890630/awards> (accessed October 15, 2015).

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER TEN:

### CLINICIAN, EDUCATOR, AND AUTHOR

In 1980, the Rodgers Drum Company and Paiste Cymbals organized a series of clinics with David Garibaldi and Roy Burns. Performing clinics was new for Garibaldi. However, Burns was one of the first major drum clinicians and it was a full-time job for him.<sup>254</sup> Besides being an excellent player, Burns was conscious about educational presentation, and explained what he was doing very well. He was entertaining, and told stories that related to his musical examples. Burns taught Garibaldi many facets on how to present himself and his ideas effectively.<sup>255</sup> Garibaldi presented clinics specifically for Yamaha starting in 1982, and then for Sabian Cymbals from 1995.<sup>256</sup>

Garibaldi was on the faculty at the Dick Grove School of Music from 1982 to 1989, where he taught master classes a few times a week in addition to private lessons. While improving his skills as an educator at Dick Grove, Garibaldi learned about changes in popular trends, upcoming artists, and electronics and their applications in popular music. All of these were integrated into his teaching so that he could better assist students. He applied this knowledge when programming drum patterns for Gino Vennelli and Wishful Thinking in the 1980s.<sup>257</sup> Garibaldi has also been an Artist-in-Residence at The Drummer's Collective in New York City since 1994, and at his brother-in-law's school in Milan, Italy, Accademia Musica Moderna, since 2000.

In addition to his popularity as a drummer, Garibaldi is also known for his numerous

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<sup>254</sup> Aquarian Drum Head website, Concept Articles by Roy Burns, <http://www.aquariandrumheads.com/concept-articles> (accessed October 15, 2015).

<sup>255</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

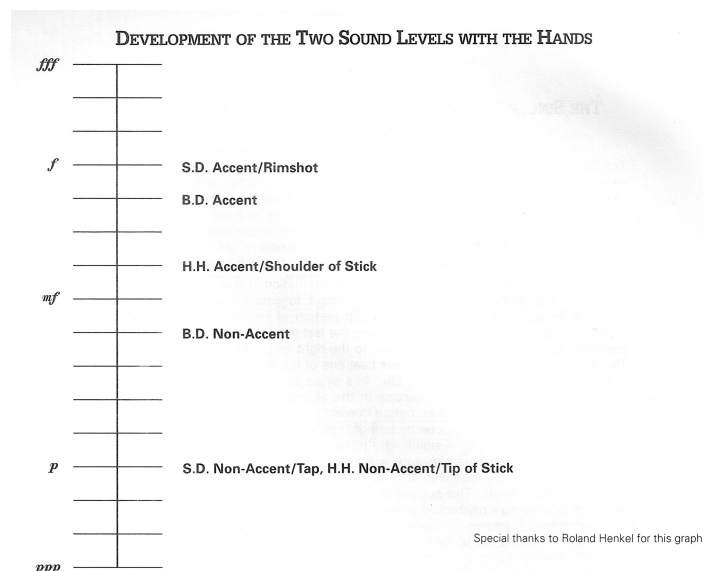


authored articles in drum magazines, most notably *Modern Drummer* and *Percussive Notes*.

Around the time of his first *Modern Drummer* feature in 1978, he had written a series of patterns and ideas and cataloged them. Eventually, he had notebooks filled with material that became the basis for his articles and publications.<sup>258</sup>

*Future Sounds* was Garibaldi's first major publication in 1990. The foundation for *Future Sounds* was the development and implementation of Garibaldi's sound level concept, shown in Figure 22. It is organized in three major sections: sound level introduction/exercises, permutation studies, and groove studies. Each subsection gives detailed instructions. The exercises are not meant as verbatim patterns for a performance situation, rather they are "a presentation of ideas that can be used as references for different ideas like sticking concepts, so that people can get ideas to build upon in their own playing."<sup>259</sup> In other words, "David Garibaldi 101."

**Figure 22. The Sound Level Concept in *Future Sounds*.**<sup>260</sup>



<sup>258</sup> Miller, "Back on TOP," 50.

<sup>259</sup> Griffith, "Hall of Fame."

<sup>260</sup> David Garibaldi, *Future Sounds* (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Company, 1990), 7.

For the sound level introduction and exercises in Section 1, Garibaldi created a series of variations on the paradiddle rudiment (RLRR, LRLl). Paradiddles are constructed in rhythmic subdivisions of eighth notes, triplets, and sixteenth notes. Accents are shifted to different parts of the paradiddle while playing a consistent quarter note bass drum pattern. The achieved result is greater hand independence and increased awareness of time, regardless of irregular accent patterns. The bass drum and hi-hat are the focus of the permutation studies in the beginning of Section 2. While the bass drum created the ostinato, or repeated pattern, in Section 1, the hands remain consistent in Section 2 while the bass drum and hi-hat shift a subdivision forward. Later exercises focus on complete independence of all four limbs. The result in Section 2 is similar in that greater independence is developed. Section 3, Groove Studies, combines the two previous sections and builds the concept of developing consistent time while performing a series of different hand and foot variations. Repetition of these patterns builds concentration, endurance, and technique. The goal combines techniques with musical ideas.

When Garibaldi first presented his ideas to Alfred Publishing's editor Sandy Feldstein, it was a comprehensive book based on everything Garibaldi knew about drumming. Feldstein, a former college professor at the State University of New York at Potsdam, took Garibaldi's book to his home, laid it out on his kitchen table, and graded it like a paper.<sup>261</sup> Feldstein encouraged Garibaldi to focus on a much smaller subject, which became the exercises for sound levels and basic components for making grooves and patterns. *Future Sounds* has since been a staple method book for leading educators<sup>262</sup> and university programs around the world, including distinguished programs such as at The University of North Texas in Denton.<sup>263</sup>

The original cover was going to be a picture of a snare drum or "some other corny

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<sup>261</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>262</sup> David P. Eyler, telephone interview by the author, September 26, 2015.

<sup>263</sup> Jim Yakas, "Rudiment Application on Drumset," *Percussive Notes*, April 2005.

BS.”<sup>264</sup> Garibaldi objected until they created a suitable artistic cover with uniqueness and expression. This design is still in use to date. The cover is an impressionistic picture of the three components Garibaldi talks about most: the snare drum, bass drum, and hi-hat. The colors were selected carefully due to the fact they are the ones to which people are most attracted.<sup>265</sup> Red is associated with energy and action; Yellow is associated with optimism and youth; Blue creates the sensation of trust and security; Green is associated with wealth and the easiest color for the eye to process; Black is powerful, sleek, and used to market many luxury products.<sup>266</sup> Garibaldi liked the concept so much that similar colors and designs are used in all of Garibaldi’s publications.

In the early 1990s Sandy Feldstein became the head of CPP Belwin, who produced instructional drum videos. Soon after, Garibaldi signed a three-video contract that involved two drum set videos (*Tower of Groove: Parts I and II*), and one video with Talking Drums. The materials were prepared for two years before filming.<sup>267</sup> All three videos were shot at the same time and featured Norbert Stachel on saxes and flute, Peter Horvath on keyboards, Ray Obiedo on guitar and keyboards, Benny Rietveld on bass, and Michael Spiro and Jesus Diaz on percussion.

On *Tower of Groove: Parts I and II*, compositions range from Tower of Power classics to new material. Norbert Stachel recollects:

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<sup>264</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>265</sup> Andalusia Media, “The Psychology of Color in Marketing and Branding,” <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/psychology-color-marketing-branding-andalusia-media> (accessed October 15, 2015).

<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>267</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

The songs I composed with keyboardist Peter Horvath on Dave's *Tower Of Groove* instructional video utilize very Garibaldi inspired grooves that I came up with because of his deep influence on me as a rhythmic composer and arranger. Those songs include "Escape From Oakland," "Lake Street Shuffle," and "4-N Matter."<sup>268</sup>

*Tower of Groove: Parts I and II* were welcomed by Garibaldi admirers as a way to visualize specific aspects of David's playing. The opening segment recaps the sound level concept of *Future Sounds*, but with Garibaldi performing the fundamental exercises. Garibaldi goes into more detail about building patterns, backed by musical examples with the band. Garibaldi also talks about his tuning techniques and reasons for selecting certain sizes of drums. On the video, he has ten, twelve, and fourteen-inch toms. Soon after the video filming, he would use the configuration he uses today of ten, thirteen, and sixteen-inch toms, as an easier way to get a full spread of pitches without straining the drum, as many drummers do with the standard twelve, thirteen and sixteen-inch toms that are sold with most drum sets.

The self-titled *Talking Drums* video presents a number of pieces the trio of Garibaldi, Spiro and Diaz were performing at clinics and festivals. Each number is broken into individual parts and demonstrated by each performer. Spiro often supplements the demonstration with historical background of the genres performed. Many of the pieces were chosen as a way to introduce a certain styles to students and to illustrate how Garibaldi takes authentic Latin and African rhythms and applies them to modern performance situations. Furthermore, the trio encouraged drummers to play together as a group:

Drummers in America are used to being the only drummer in a group. They don't get a chance to experience the joy and fun of playing parts with other drummers. There is something about guys sitting down to

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<sup>268</sup> Norbert Stachel, e-mail message to the author, September 24, 2015.

play drums together and dividing up parts that is really special.  
So I think this music is a great opportunity for people to experience  
a whole other side of rhythm and playing drums.<sup>269</sup>

Follow up publications to these videos, *The Funky Beat* (1996), *TimbaFunk* (1997), and *Tiempo* (1999) offer supplemental material, exercises, and history to pieces featured in the videos and also offer new patterns, concepts and compositions.

*The Code of Funk*, produced by Hudson music in 2006, features eight songs from Tower of Power's *Oakland Zone* album. Included is an audio CD and DVD-ROM for different learning options. The audio CD has music minus Garibaldi's drum parts so the student can play the songs with the band. The DVD-ROM contains video tutorial as well as audio stems that can be remixed in ProTools, Cakewalk, or Nuendo, that allow the student to isolate different members of Tower of Power, or even isolate specific sounds of Garibaldi's drum set.

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<sup>269</sup> Michael Spiro, *Talking Drums*, VHS, Directed by Mick Thompson (Miami, FL: Warner Brothers Publications, Incorporated, 1994).

## CHAPTER ELEVEN:

### RETURN TO TOWER OF POWER AND CONCLUSION

When David left the band, we were riddled with drug addiction and alcoholism. None of the drummers measured up to him. We adjusted and did the best we could. It was an adjustment. But we got through our drug addiction and alcohol problems. He came back and I couldn't be more grateful.<sup>270</sup>

Guitarist Jeff Tamelier was one of the first people Garibaldi met when he moved back to the Bay Area in 1989. They became good friends and played together frequently. As circumstances would show, Tamelier joined Tower of Power in 1997. Soon after joining, Kupka asked Tamelier to serve as musical director and co-producer on Kupka's Strokeland Superband project, "Kick It Up a Step!"<sup>271</sup> The project featured bassist Rocco Prestia and past members of Tower of Power, including Mic Gillette and Lenny Pickett.<sup>272</sup> Tamelier recommended Garibaldi to Kupka, to which both agreed. Garibaldi knew that the things about the band that bothered him in the past, such as the alcoholism and drug use, were reconciled.<sup>273</sup> All members got along very well and the recording was eventually released in 2000.

Garibaldi went in late 1997 to see Tower of Power at the Fillmore with Herman Matthews on drums.<sup>274</sup> Shortly after, the band went to Europe on a tour. Castillo and Tamelier called Garibaldi and asked him to join the band when Matthews decided to leave unexpectedly. Garibaldi had reservations about joining the band as he was doing a lot of clinics, teaching, and doing well with Mickey Hart's *Planet Drum* project. Other concerns were over the musicianship

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<sup>270</sup> Kupka, interview.

<sup>271</sup> Strokeland Records website, [http://www.strokeland.com/DocKupkaPresents/StrokelandSuperband/strokeland\\_superband.htm](http://www.strokeland.com/DocKupkaPresents/StrokelandSuperband/strokeland_superband.htm) (accessed October 15, 2015).

<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

<sup>273</sup> Kupka, interview.

<sup>274</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

of certain members. Mostly, he was not sure if they would get along based on past history.<sup>275</sup>

Castillo suggested they do the following tour of Japan: “See how it feels and see if we like each other.”<sup>276</sup>

They started rehearsing in February of 1998. The tour of Japan was postponed, so they started playing gigs together and Garibaldi never left.<sup>277</sup> Although their performances went well, there was an adjustment period. Garibaldi’s playing had changed due to his study of African and Latin rhythms, as well as his recent tenure with *Planet Drum*. He had not played Tower of Power music in quite a long time, and had even refused to play their songs at jam sessions. Ironically, it was because he wanted to be playing the songs with the band.<sup>278</sup>

During the summer of 1998, Tower of Power was in Europe playing at the North Sea Jazz Festival. It featured the Zawinul Syndicate, Buddy Guy, The Phil Collins Big Band, Earth Wind and Fire, and Tower of Power. There were over 12,000 people in the audience and the energy was overwhelming. Garibaldi had been in the band for about six months, but that night was the first time he thought they sounded as good as they did in the mid 1970s. “At that point, I thought to myself, ‘I’m home.’”<sup>279</sup>

In 2003, Tower of Power recorded *The Oakland Zone*, which was Garibaldi’s first album of new material with the band since 1979. Garibaldi’s concept for the album was that, even though Tower of Power was a 1970s band, he wanted to do things that were fresh and were representative of his evolution. One difference with *The Oakland Zone*, is that Garibaldi wasn’t going for perfect takes. Most tracks were done in two or three tries and, as long as the

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<sup>275</sup> Miller, “Back on TOP,” 52-53.

<sup>276</sup> Castillo, interview.

<sup>277</sup> Garibaldi, interview.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid.

energy was good, it was the track that made it on the album.<sup>280</sup> Castillo couldn't be happier with the reunion: "To me there's no other. I'd like to go to my grave with him as my drummer."<sup>281</sup>

Garibaldi had won many awards, such *Modern Drummer's* "Best R&B/Funk Drummer" from 1980-1985, and 2003. *Future Sounds* was rated one of the ten greatest drum books by *Modern Drummer* magazine in August of 1993.<sup>282</sup> But, in 2012, Garibaldi was inducted into the Percussive Arts Society Hall of Fame. It is one of the industry's highest honors,<sup>283</sup> and is based on peer nominations and an intensely selective approval process. Only two are inducted each year worldwide.

Garibaldi's individuality on the instrument has been seen and heard through his publications, articles, and performances. His influence is noted not only in funk, but has crossed many different musical genres. New Orleans drummer Stanton Moore has taken Garibaldi's patterns, such as "Soul Vaccination" and applied them to second-line feels.<sup>284</sup> Michael Spiro states that David Garibaldi almost revolutionized funk music from the eighth-note Bernard Purdie style to 16<sup>th</sup>-note displacement funk. But what stands out for Spiro is Garibaldi's thirst for knowledge and quest to push himself further. He leads by example. "From that standpoint, he's one of my heroes just because I think that's how you're supposed to be."<sup>285</sup> Larry Braggs adds, "Tower music is like playing Count Basie; it's part oriented. If all the parts are not there it doesn't sound right. That's why you have cover bands playing Tower songs and it's lacking in something. It's because they're not playing all the parts that David puts into the drums."<sup>286</sup>

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<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

<sup>281</sup> Casrtillo, interview.

<sup>282</sup> Yamaha Drums website, David Garibaldi Artist Page, <http://www.yamaha.com/artists/davidgaribaldi.html> (accessed October 15, 2015).

<sup>283</sup> Gary Cook, interview by the author, Las Vegas, NV, September 25, 2015.

<sup>284</sup> Stanton Moore, Skype interview by the author, September 16, 2015.

<sup>285</sup> Spiro, interview.

<sup>286</sup> Braggs, interview.



Peter Erskine first heard David Garibaldi in 1975 after getting off the road with the Stan Kenton Orchestra, and before joining the legendary group Weather Report:

(In addition to drummer Allyn Robinson), I submit that David (Garibaldi) and Francis Rocco Prestia's rhythmic synergy and excellence paved the way for whatever success I might have had playing with Jaco (Pastorius). While I never attempted to transcribe David's work — aside from the incredible intro he plays to "Can't You See You Doin' Me Wrong" — his attention to detail provided more than enough inspiration and information to help me see some of the drumming light. Pun intentional. David Garibaldi has secured his place in the small but mighty pantheon of Drummers Who Have Made A Difference. He is a musician who has helped make the world a better as well as funkier place!<sup>287</sup>

In his lifetime of study and application, David Garibaldi has created an individual voice that has influenced the genres of funk, Latin, world music, fusion, and jazz. He continues to perform, author articles, and inspire generations of drummers and musicians. As he has frequently said, his story is still being written. As history has proven, David Garibaldi's innovative drumming will be welcome in the artistic community.

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<sup>287</sup> Peter Erskine, e-mail message to the author, September 27, 2015.

## APPENDIX

### David Garibaldi Discography

<u>Album Year</u>	<u>Album Name</u>	<u>Album Band</u>
1970	<i>East Bay Grease</i>	Tower of Power
1972	<i>Bump City</i>	Tower of Power
1973	<i>Tower of Power</i>	Tower of Power
1974	<i>Back to Oakland</i>	Tower of Power
1975	<i>In the Slot</i>	Tower of Power
1975	<i>Urban Renewal</i>	Tower of Power
1976	<i>Live and in Living Color</i>	Tower of Power
1976	<i>Slippin' Away</i>	Chris Hillman
1977	<i>Loading Zone</i>	Roy Buchanan
1977	<i>Song Bird</i>	Deniece Williams
1978	<i>Motown Sounds: Space Dance</i>	Various Artists
1978	<i>This Night Won't Last Forever</i>	Bill LaBounty
1979	<i>Back on the Streets</i>	Tower of Power
1979	<i>Everything You've Heard Is True</i>	Tom Johnston
1985	<i>Black Cars</i>	Gino Vannelli
1985	<i>Wishful Thinking</i>	Wishful Thinking
1986	<i>Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home</i>	Leonard Rosenman
1986	<i>Think Again</i>	Wishful Thinking
1987	<i>Big Dreamers Never Sleep</i>	Gino Vannelli
1988	<i>Chronology</i>	David Meece
1990	<i>Inconsolable Man</i>	Gino Vannelli
1991	<i>Get a Grip on the Blues</i>	Garth Webber
1991	<i>Iguana</i>	Ray Obiedo
1993	<i>Guitar on Fire: The Atlantic Sessions</i>	Roy Buchanan
1993	<i>Sticks &amp; Stones</i>	Ray Obiedo
1993	<i>To the Bone</i>	Chris Lege
1994	<i>Put Me in a Box</i>	Karen Hart
1995	<i>Foreign Matter</i>	Peter Horvath
1995	<i>Steady Freddy Collective Cuts</i>	Fred Horn
1995	<i>Train of Thought: 1985-1990</i>	Wishful Thinking
1996	<i>Gonna Take a Miracle: The Best of Deniece Williams</i>	Deniece Williams
1996	<i>Wilderness</i>	Tony Williams
1997	<i>Burning for Buddy: A Tribute to the Music of Buddy Rich</i>	Various Artists
1997	<i>Down the Road</i>	Bobby Vega
1997	<i>Playing it Cool</i>	Joyce Cooling
1997	<i>World Blue</i>	John Lee Sanders
1998	<i>Just Good Stuff: 10 Years of Hypertension</i>	Various Artists
1998	<i>Slow Love</i>	Gino Vannelli
1998	<i>Superlingua</i>	Mickey Hart/Planet Drum
1999	<i>Everybody on the Bus</i>	Rocco Prestia

1999	<i>Jay Tee</i>	Jay Tee
1999	<i>Modern World</i>	Ray Obiedo
1999	<i>Soul Vaccination: Live</i>	Tower of Power
1999	<i>What Is Hip?: The Tower of Power Anthology</i>	Tower of Power
2000	<i>Kick It up a Step!</i>	Strokeland Superband
2001	<i>Expectations of Love</i>	David Lasley
2001	<i>Very Best of Tower of Power: The Warner Years</i>	Tower of Power
2002	<i>Best of Mickey Hart: Over the Edge and Back</i>	Mickey Hart
2002	<i>Best Smooth Jazz Ever</i>	Various Artists
2002	<i>Soul With a Capital "S": The Best of Tower of Power</i>	Tower of Power
2003	<i>Oakland Zone</i>	Tower of Power
2003	<i>Superstar Rock Festival</i>	Various Artists
2003	<i>Wilderness</i>	Tony Williams
2004	<i>Higher Plane</i>	Rad.
2004	<i>Live at the New Morning, Paris</i>	Rad.
2004	<i>Make Every Second Count</i>	Rad
2004	<i>Rosco's Place</i>	Jazz Rosco
2005	<i>Do It!</i>	Poncho Sanchez
2005	<i>Ear Candy</i>	Mic Gillette
2005	<i>Transfusion</i>	Cold Blood
2006	<i>...and Comrades: A Compilation of Urban R&amp;B, Rock, &amp; Jazz</i>	Sargent Tucker
2006	<i>Revolving Door</i>	Joyce Cooling
2007	<i>East Babe</i>	Rad
2009	<i>David Garibaldi/Mike Spiro/Jesus Diaz: Talking Drums</i>	Talking Drums
2010	<i>40th Anniversary</i>	Tower of Power
2013	<i>Hipper Than Hip</i>	Tower of Power

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## CURRICULUM VITAE

Graduate College  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Jeremy Tait Meronuck

### Home Address:

Post Office Box 70597  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89170

### Degrees:

Bachelor of Music in Jazz/Studio Music, 1995  
University of Cincinnati, College Conservatory of Music

Master of Music, 2009  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Document Title: What is Hip? David Garibaldi: His Musical Life, His Influences, and His Contributions.

### Examination Committee:

Chairperson, Dean Gronemeier, D.M.A., J.D.  
Committee Member, Timothy Jones, D.M.A.  
Committee Member, David Loeb, M.M.  
Committee Member, Janis McKay, D.M.A.  
Committee Member, Michael Tylo, M.F.A.