

THE WHOLE DRUM TRUTH

Albert “Tootie” Heath • Billy Hart • Louis Hayes • Charli Persip
Ben Riley • Ed Thigpen • Jackie Williams • Leroy Williams

JAZZ LEGENDS IN HISTORIC PERCUSSION PERFORMANCE

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Press Kit

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The Whole Drum Truth Story

The Whole Drum Truth brings together the greatest veteran jazz drummers in an all-percussion quartet. Our ensemble is unique on the contemporary music scene. The artists are principal creators of the rhythm and sound of modern jazz.

We debuted in September 2004 at **Yale University's** 650 seat chamber music hall, where the drummers were awarded Yale's Duke Ellington Fellowship Medals. The quartet was:

- **Tootie Heath, program leader** – drummer for John Coltrane, the Modern Jazz Quartet and currently The Heath Brothers.
- **Ben Riley** – drummer for Thelonious Monk and Sonny Rollins, co-founder of Sphere and currently leader of the Monk Legacy Band.
- **Ed Thigpen** – drummer for the Oscar Peterson Trio and Ella Fitzgerald and currently leader of the Scantet.
- **Jackie Williams** – drummer for Doc Cheatham, Alberta Hunter and currently the Junior Mance Trio.

In March 2005, The Whole Drum Truth played the **Cape Town International Jazz Festival** in a 1,400 seat auditorium. Substituting for Ed in South Africa was:

- **Leroy Williams**, drummer for NEA Jazz Master pianist Barry Harris for more than 30 years, and former member of bands led by Stan Getz, Hank Mobley, Sonny Stitt and Teddy Wilson.

The **Rotterdam International Jazz Festival** has invited us to perform on September 23, 2005 at De Doelen cultural complex, the home of the Rotterdam philharmonic. Joining Leroy Williams in Holland will be:

- **Billy Hart** – drummer for Miles Davis (*Big Fun* and *On The Corner*), Wes Montgomery, Herbie Hancock and McCoy Tyner.
- **Louis Hayes** – drummer for Cannonball Adderley, John Coltrane (*Lush Life* and *Last Trane*), Horace Silver, Freddie Hubbard and currently leader of the Cannonball Legacy band.
- **Charli Persip** – drummer for Dizzy Gillespie (*Sonny Side Up*), Gil Evans, Zoot Sims, Dinah Washington and currently leader of Superband.

The Whole Drum Truth moves the drums from the “back line” into the spotlight. The music is all-percussion, but melodies shine through in such compositions as *Salt Peanuts* and *A Night in Tunisia*. Our concerts are historic opportunities to hear the riches of jazz drumming, played by those who inherited the craft from the swing musicians of the 1930's and 40's, reached maturity and prominence in the bebop and hard bop eras of the 1950's and 60's, and remain in the full flower of creativity and strength today.

The group was founded and is produced by **Jonathan Sanoff** and **Tootie Heath**.

Critical Praise for The Whole Drum Truth

“A stellar gathering of jazz drumming talent . . . sheer joy and percussive intensity.”

RICK VAN HORN, Senior Editor
Modern Drummer, February 2005

“Elegant, entertaining and technically amazing.”

GWEN ANSELL
South Africa Business Day, March 31, 2005

“incredible set . . . Four drum masters . . . have enchanted and taken the instrument to the next level. Intellectual and effective. Who knew a tambourine had THAT much to say?”

DEBORAH RATH, DJ
CD101.9-FM radio station website

“Four drumming legends – rhythm masters who can take the stick and drive the car with control at top speed or brush a sibilant, sensitive canvas for a ballad – and handle everything in between. Each man is a force in his own right. In their presence the subject of jazz drumming is clearly articulated and demonstrated with the utmost authority. Together they are a prodigious Power of Four.”

IRA GITLER, Former editor *Downbeat*, co-author *Biographical Encyclopedia of Jazz* and author of *Swing to Bop* and *The Masters of Bebop*

“The drum set is one of the truly new instruments that arrived in the 20th century, and some of the most demanding styles since 1945 have been mastered by these four men. Anything they get together and do is more than highly recommended; it is essential learning.”

STANLEY CROUCH, *New York Daily News* columnist, cultural critic and featured commentator in Ken Burns' *Jazz* PBS Documentary

“The trap set is an American invention and the core of virtually every kind of urban American music. To learn the different components, the variety of ways in which they can be played, and the mastery of tone and style that identifies every great drummer is to achieve a closer understanding of percussion and time itself. What makes "The Whole Drum Truth" so remarkable is that it brings together the greatest players of the past 40 years – the heartbeat musicians who helped bring alive the music of Thelonious Monk, the Modern Jazz Quartet, Cannonball Adderley, and many others.”

GARY GIDDINS, *Village Voice* jazz critic, winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award and featured commentator in Ken Burns' *Jazz* PBS Documentary

The Drummers' Biographies

Albert "Tootie" Heath, Program Leader Born 1935, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Resides in Southern California. Youngest of the three musical Heath brothers. The first of Tootie's several hundred records was John Coltrane's first as a leader (*Coltrane* on Prestige). John Lewis and Milt Jackson chose Tootie to be the last drummer for the Modern Jazz Quartet (1995-96) following the death of Connie Kay. Tootie was a regular member of bands led by Don Cherry, Kenny Drew, Harry "Sweets" Edison, Art Farmer/Benny Golson, Frederic Gulda (in a trio with Ron Carter), Tommy Flanagan, Dexter Gordon, Herbie Hancock, Freddie Hubbard, Milt Jackson, J.J. Johnson, Yusef Lateef, Sonny Rollins, Bobbie Timmons, Lester Young, Cedar Walton, Ben Webster, and he currently performs with his brother Jimmy in the Heath Brothers band.

Billy Hart Born 1940, Washington D.C. Resides in New Jersey. Billy began his career playing for Shirley Horn. He was the regular drummer for the Montgomery brothers (1961), organist Jimmy Smith (1964-66) and Wes Montgomery (1966-68). He then joined Herbie Hancock's sextet (1969-73), McCoy Tyner (1973-74) and Stan Getz (1974-77). Among his more than 600 recordings are two for Miles Davis, *Big Fun* (1969) and *On the Corner* (1972). Billy has also played and recorded with Chick Corea, Andrew Hill, Joao Gilberto, Pharaoh Sanders, Wayne Shorter and Cecil Taylor. He was a founding member of both the Mingus Dynasty and Quest ensembles. As a leader, his groups have included Bill Frisell, Kevin Eubanks, Buster Williams and John Stubblefield. His innovative percussion performances include duets with Andrew Cyrille. Billy is a member of the music faculty at Oberlin, Western Michigan University, The New England Conservatory of Music, among other leading institutions.

Louis Hayes Born 1937, Detroit Michigan. Resides in New York City. Louis began his professional career at age 18 when he joined Yusef Lateef's band. He was the prime drummer for Cannonball Adderley (with whom he made 34 records), and propelled groups led by Horace Silver, Freddie Hubbard, Oscar Peterson and John Coltrane (including the albums *Lush Life* and *Last Trane*). Louis has also provided the rhythm for Nat Adderly (*Work Song*), George Benson, Duke Ellington, Curtis Fuller, Stan Getz, Dexter Gordon, Joe Henderson, J.J. Johnson, Jackie McLean, Wes Montgomery, Sonny Rollins, Woody Shaw, McCoy Tyner and Cedar Walton. His work with vocalists includes Ella Fitzgerald, Betty Carter and Nancy Wilson. Louis has recorded with musical geniuses as varied as John Lee Hooker and Ravi Shankar. Louis' recent quintets have included young stars such as Javon Jackson, Abraham Burton and Riley Mullins. He is currently the leader of the Cannonball Legacy Band. Please see www.louishayes.com.

Charli Persip Born 1929, Morristown, New Jersey. Resides in New York City. A drummer since the age of 4, Charli joined Tadd Dameron's band in 1953. He then formed a famous association with Dizzy Gillespie (1953-58) as Dizzy's drummer in both big band and small group settings, including on their landmark album *Sonny Side Up*, with Sonny Rollins and Sonny Stitt. He later joined Harry "Sweets" Edison's quintet and then the Harry James Orchestra before forming the Jazz Statesmen with Freddie Hubbard, Ron Carter and Roland Alexander in 1960. Charli has performed and recorded with Gene Ammons, Eric Dolphy, Kenny Dorham, Don Ellis, Gil Evans, Red Garland, Roland Kirk, Lee Morgan, Zoot Sims and Dinah Washington. From 1966-73, he toured as Billy Eckstine's drummer and conductor. In 1974, he became the principle drum instructor for Jazzmobile in New York. Since then, his primary musical focus has been as leader of his own bands, including his current hard-swinging ensemble Superband, which performs worldwide. Charli is a member of the jazz faculty at New School University, and has taught at the universities of Massachusetts, Ohio State, Howard and North Texas State. He is the author of *How Not To Play The Drums*. Please see www.charlipersip.com.

Ben Riley Born 1933, Savannah, Georgia. Resides on Long Island, New York. Drummer for Thelonious Monk (1964-67). Previously, band member with Ray Bryant, Stan Getz, Woody Herman, Ahmad Jamal and Sonny Rollins, among others. In the 1970's, Ben was the drummer for the Ron Carter Quartet, Milt Jackson, Sir Roland Hanna's New York Jazz Quartet, the New York Saxophone Quartet, Abdullah Ibrahim and Maria Muldaur. In the 1980's, Ben co-founded Sphere (with Charlie Rouse, Kenny Barron and Buster Williams) to pay musical tribute to Monk. Ben is currently the leader of the Monk Tribute Band.

Ed Thigpen Born 1930, Chicago, Illinois. Resides in Copenhagen, Denmark. Drummer for the Oscar Peterson Trio (1959-65) and Ella Fitzgerald (1966-72). Ed also had significant musical associations with Cootie Williams at the Savoy Ballroom, Johnny Hodges, Lennie Tristano, Gil Mellé and Bud Powell (1951-55) and The New Billy Taylor Trio (1956-58) (featured on the television series *The Subject is Jazz*). He is a prolific recording artist. He has lived in Copenhagen since 1972, where he founded the Action/Reaction group and his current band, the Scantet. Ed teaches, writes and performs worldwide. Recipient of the 2002 Humanitarian Award from the International Association for Jazz Education (IAJE), and member of the Percussive Arts Society Hall of Fame. He is the author of five books, including *Be Our Guest* (with Ray Brown), and the instructional video *The Essence of Brushes*. Please see www.edthigpen.com.

Jackie Williams Born 1933, a lifelong New Yorker. Jackie was Doc Cheatham's drummer for 18 years at Greenwich Village's Sweet Basil, now Sweet Rhythm, and has played and recorded with Buck Clayton (on a U.S. State Department tour of the Middle East and Africa), Bobby Hackett, Earl Hines, Milt Hinton, Alberta Hunter, Illinois Jacquet, Jay McShann, Bobby Short, Buddy Tate and Teddy Wilson. A veteran of jazz festivals throughout the world including Nice, Montreux and the North Sea, Jackie performs at many New York clubs, and currently is the drummer for the Junior Mance Trio.

Leroy Williams Born 1937, Chicago Illinois. Resides in New York City. Leroy is largely self-taught, having scrounged his first set of drums from the church where his grandfather was the pastor and his mother played piano. Growing up in Chicago, he played with bassist Wilbur Ware, saxophonist Eddie Harris and Miles Davis' drummer Jack DeJohnette, who was then playing piano. Leroy moved to New York in 1967. He is famous for his more than 30-year membership in the acclaimed trio of National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master pianist Barry Harris (with Earl May on bass). Leroy has played and recorded with a host of jazz legends, including Pepper Adams, Ray Bryant, Stan Getz, Dizzy Gillespie, Johnny Griffin, Clifford Jordan, Hank Mobley, Thelonious Monk, James Moody, Sonny Rollins, Jimmy Rowles, Sonny Stitt and Teddy Wilson.