

# ***NEED someone to play DRUMS today? It's best you ask TONY J!***

**By CP Christopher Peppas**

Whenever and wherever there's a discussion about needing someone to play percussion, the name of Tony Jefferson is sure to be bandied about.

The tricky part will be having him be available. That's because, in all likelihood, someone has already tabbed Tony J to fill their dance card.

Ah, the price one pays for being so talented. And the flip side, you don't get to see your friends play out or sit in with them as "I'm already gigging at..."

Tony has had a flair for the snare, a commitment to the Cajon, a talent for timbales and a communion with the congas ever since switching from alto saxophone to all things drums and percussion as a nine year old.

You might say he acquired a fever for it. Or, perhaps this is more descriptive. "I was listening to Clyde Stubblefield, James Brown's drummer on "Cold Sweat" and I was blown away by that funky beat," Tony said in a recent interview. "It was then I decided to play the drums and my whole life changed.

Sorry about the laundry list of current bands that Tony Jefferson plays in, but it saves time and space. Here goes: **Vivo The Warren Wiegratz 4-tet Scotch & Soda Drive w/Horns Mini-Drive Q-tet The Falcons Floor It**



He has joined the Donna Woodall groups and countless others for a one-time thing, here and there and that often leads to morphing into other bands and so on and so forth.

We would be remiss if we didn't mention Tony's studio Prog (progressive) Rock band, Lyndenthal, which has been working on the release of its opus which is set for later this year or earlier next year. And The Beltempest, which is a group specifically set up to play at jams.

Like much of young America in the early 1960s, Jefferson was glued to the black & white Philco, Motorola or DuMont television on Sunday nights to watch The Ed Sullivan Show.

The quirky but herky-jerky oft-imitated Sullivan made it his life's work to grab the best of the up and comers for his variety show.

There were all the seminal moments of Elvis being photographed from the waist up so as not to stir up feelings inside the female viewers. Of course there was The Beatles debut, The Rolling Stones, The Doors (who, it turns out, could get you much higher) and many more.

"I saw Ringo Starr with The Beatles and Keith Moon and The Stones on Ed Sullivan," Tony said. "Around 1969-70 I formed a band with some neighborhood friends and played a bit here and there."

That's most definitely where his appetite was whetted. The sampling of the different genres and incorporating them into his live performances was borne out of attending concerts like Santana in 1974 for the Latin sphere of influence and "Yes," "Genesis," and "Earth Wind & Fire" in 1975.

"Then, there's Chicago for harmonies and War for a more urban sound." Jefferson said.

Tony J had to navigate the tough career of being a professional musician while simultaneously dealing with a very difficult health hurdle. Jefferson was suffering from severe chronic renal shutdown (kidney disease).

For five and a half years, Tony went through dialysis (blood filtering) three days a week just to survive while he waded through the tedious and equally difficult process of getting a kidney transplant.



There were days following dialysis that Tony simply didn't have the oomph needed to pack up his kit, set it up and play. Yet, he managed to be quite busy despite all that difficulty and its Sisyphean nature.

His Faith in humanity was restored when his R&B/Soul Band "Faith, Hope, Love" hosted a fund raiser for his operation at the late "88 Keys" in West Allis. Although he was tired from having his blood filtered, he managed to rally and play as a way of saying thanks to those who donated to the cause.

Tony got his kidney and a new lease on life in February of 2019. After a long recovery to build up strength and stamina, he hit the ground running...er...drumming and has never looked back.

And Tony has been honing his skills as a jazz vocalist at the Jazz Unlimited Jams and other venues. It is there that his idolatry of Nat King Cole comes to the fore to the audience's delight.

So, you now know where (or with at least with whom) Tony Jefferson is playing.

Well, we're waiting...

