

# Vibes / art • music • personalities

## Drummer Moves to a Different 'Beat'

By John W. Templeton  
Staff Writer

His music is complex with pulsating rhythms from six different instruments—the product of years of playing with some of the greatest musicians in soul and disco music—but Hamilton Bohannon has a very simple purpose in mind.

"I just like to be a different person," said the drummer and bandleader in his hotel room prior to last Saturday's show at the Winston-Salem Coliseum.

"I hear a lot of groups—the majority of the groups—which sound like everybody else," he added.

"I wouldn't be satisfied sounding like anybody else; there's so much music out there," Bohannon said with a shrug. "Mostly everybody is influenced by Sly (and the Family Stone); a

lot influenced by Earth, Wind and Fire and a lot try to be like the Ohio Players."

However, Bohannon has carved out a niche of his own in the crowded record world. His sound has been termed the "beat" for the rhythms he creates not only with his drums, but with such instruments as guitar and keyboard.

"My music is about being happy; most of my music is up-tempo, foot stomping, hand clapping. You won't hear anything negative in my music."

The roots of the Bohannon sound go back to the rural town of Newnan, Ga., where he was born. "I was into music before I started school. But I was also a pretty good baseball player. When I was 8 or 9, I played on a grown-up team. As I got older, I gave that

up because I felt I could become a professional musician."

By high school, Bohannon had started a dance band. He received a music scholarship to Clark College, where he received a B.A. in music education.

In Atlanta, his career began to take off. Bohannon began playing in the band of Gordon George, a musician who also emceed the major concerts in the city. Also playing in the band as George's valet and guitarist was Jimi Hendrix.

During 1965, George was emceeding a Jackie Wilson show, which included among others, B.B. King, Gladys Knight and the Pips, Moms Mabley and Stevie Wonder, who was to play a major role in Bohannon's career.

"He (Wonder) was inside the hall on the stage playing the piano," said



Bohannon

Bohannon. "I just walked up and started banging on top of the piano. That's what started our friendship."

"I joined him as his drummer, but he wanted me as much for a friend as anything else," added Bohannon. "He was different from everybody else on the tour, no drinking, no smoking habit. I didn't drink or smoke wither and we were both younger than everyone else."

That cross-country tour with Wilson and company still sticks out as the greatest thrill in Bohannon's mind. "We went all over the place," he recalled.

After two years with Stevie Wonder, Bohannon was made number one road band leader for Motown. For five years, he toured with Marvin Gaye, Diana Ross and the Supremes, the Four Tops, The Temptations, Smokey Robinson and the Spinners.

The time then came for Bohannon to leave Motown

as the company phased out its in-house band in favor of picking up musicians for limited periods. "I left Motown because there was nothing else I could do there," he said.

"It was quite different (being on my own). I had a big band before with 12 horns; then, I had none. It was a big thing to go from a big orchestra to an all rhythm group."

Bohannon has made his mark since the early 1970s with danceable tunes with simple lyrics. Some critics of disco music attack the repetition of Bohannon and other disco stars.

"If you hear my music, you don't hear anything simple with all the syncopation we do," he retorted. "It's never easy to get a hit record. After you record, there's no guarantee you'll get it played."

Production and distribution are areas Bohannon has to concern himself with. He writes and produces all his music and owns three music publishing companies, but he said

such a set up is not for everybody.

"You can hurt yourself if you try to write and can't write," he said. "So the best thing to do is to let someone else write and you just be the artist."

His newest venture is an upcoming album by Caroline Crawford, vocalist with his group. "My goals right now are to get her album cut and possibly go gold and to make my latest album, 'Summertime Groove' gold," he said.

Bohannon said he tried to keep his private life to himself, but he did reveal two things not generally associated with disco stars—he likes to listen to semi-classical music in his spare time and he likes to go to church every Sunday.

"I give 10 per cent of my life to the public, the other 90 per cent I keep to myself. That includes all the problems in my private life. I deal with that myself."

"What I hope to give in that 10 per cent is pure happiness with no stress and strain," he concluded.

## Sounds

By Joe Daniels



The already exciting football game got even more intense at the half as the teams departed and the marching band rivalry filled the air.

The A&T Marching Machine's Drum Majors cranked them up and they RAN onto the field. As well as they executed their precision drills, the sound power suffered greatly. One could tell that they worked very hard at learning the steps but neglected the music somewhat.

It's very hard for bands doing precision to contain the volume with different sections moving in different directions. There were signs of their growing into some of the strenuous techniques that other MEAC marching bands employ. Their selection and arrangements of songs was very good.

The Marching Rams took command of the field and opened to the fanfare of "Last Dance" and proceeded to do a precision drill to the tune which immediately won over the audience. They also clinched the crowd with the band's rendition of "Close The Door" by PENDERGRASS.

Finally, the band and audience joined together for a chorus of Foxy's "Get Off". Although the precision was a little weak, they sounded and looked their best of the night on this cut as the group divided, bounced, and danced across the field.

The Marching Rams lack the power of the earlier days. It's drop in membership has also taken its toll in sound elasticity. There is much talent strolling around the WSSU campus, but if you find out why the younger generation is happy doing nothing, call a Press Conference. You'll soon be getting a NOBEL PEACEPRIZE...

ISREAL, a new local group took the invitation to be the opening act at the BAR KAYS show this past Saturday night. The show was promoted and produced by an outside agent but was in conjunction with the WS State University Student Government Association (One wonders why Mr. Georgie Woods wasn't contacted...)

Clad in robes and wigs, ISREAL opened the show

doing one of their many original sets. Although the vocals were not strong at the beginning (due to PA problems), they made up for it by the end. The rhythm section is fat and meaty and John Hauser adds the right spices with his locally unparalleled lead.

The majority of the songs vamp (a little too long) and need musical ideas to continue to hold audience attention as long as they performed them.

This group is from Winston and has serious financial backing, a hard working team including musicians, staff and road crew (all the goodies it takes to get it on). They soon will be releasing one of their recently recorded cuts.

The BAR KAYS have made five Piedmont-Triad appearances in the past nine months. The same show was used on all five engagements. It was minus the smoke screen but still was tight, lively and exciting. They are presently working on their soon to be released LP\* LILIGHT OF LIFE on Mercury Records. Talking to LARRY DOBSON the lead vocalist, I discovered the new album is being remixed and should be pressed and packaged by the end of the month and released in October.

The show turned out a little after two AM and a very tired crowd turned their backs and went to the next gig (Probably the already congested La Terre XXI). It seems that only a few people can promote the W-S Coliseum for non-complicated engagements. If the support from WSSU Student Body Saturday was a preview of HOME-COMING '78, the Student Government had better direct their attention towards the "High School Jet Set" that really turned out for the affair...

BOHANNON, next up was a little upset because he wanted to headline the show. To make known his resentment, he left to go to the hotel thirty minutes before he was to go on. He showed up an hour later and still put on his entire act. Performing his old and new hits, Hamilton at one point was snouting repetitiously "We don't need no

sound check".

Clearly, his fans are hypnotized by his driving every letter of his name into each beat which is photo-

copied into the brain. His show was boring and was deficient in originality. Nevertheless, the fans ate him up.

### PROGRESSIVE LISTENING

#### THE BROTHERS JOHNSON-BLAM

The album blasts off with the opening cut "Ain't We Funky Now" that is thrusting the LP right up the charts. "Blam" is also getting good air-play and has the hook in the horns that was taken from the BROTHERS JOHNSON's Right On Time LP "Running For Your Loving". Also in the hook (With the horns pounding on all fours) is a synthesizer line churning thirty second note arpeggios ending on a falling synthesized rubber-band sound in fourths.

The entire album sounds

like West Coast material and with that sound comes much more reverb on the vocals than normal settings. Listening to the innovative horn arrangements raises the question as to how much of the BROTHERS are JOHNSON and how much are JONES.

Ride-O-Rocket opens with a suspended synthesized bass (Which immediately puts one in the mind of Star Wars) and has French Horns and other brass instruments that build into a fanfare.

Best Cuts: Blam, Ain't We Funky Now, Ride-O-Rocket, Mista-Cool.

# HAVE A PEPSI DAY



### abc Theatres Today!

7 10 9 05  
MON THRU THURS  
WALT DISNEY'S  
CAT FROM OUTER SPACE

Thruway 1-2  
7 00 9 15  
MON THRU THURS  
TATUM NEAL  
INTERNATIONAL VELVET

COMING SOON  
"THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW"

Winston  
RATED R  
3 TIMES THE TERROR  
IT'S ALIVE 2  
7 15 - 9 00

Thunderbird  
BOX OFFICE OPENS AT 8 00  
SHOW AT 8 30  
IT'S ALIVE 2  
RATED R - 2ND HIT  
IT'S ALIVE



There is more iron in three large eggs than in three ounces of tuna.

### EVERY TUESDAY ALL SEATS \$1.50

7:00  
9:00  
ROARING DOWN THE ROAD WITH SMOKEY  
ON THEIR TAIL  
J.D. AND THE SALT FLAT AND  
MADE SMOKEY TUPHUS LOF  
PG COLOR  
SMOKEY  
and the  
GOODTIME OUTLAWS  
PARKVIEW TWIN PARKVIEW CNTR 782 0220

7:20  
9:30  
It was the Deltas against the rules... the rules lost!  
NATIONAL LAMPOON'S  
ANIMAL HOUSE  
BY JOHN DELUSHI DONALD SUTHERLAND  
PARKVIEW TWIN PARKVIEW CNTR 782 0220

7:00  
9:15  
A new comedy thriller from the Goldie Hawn creators of "Silver Streak"  
Foul Play  
Chevy Chase  
PG COLOR  
PARKWAY PLAZA PARKWAY PLAZA CNTR 725 5881

**Disco With Shelly Bynum**

He Takes Over When the Others Take Off!

7PM - Midnight

**wtop 1380**