

“The Heat Is On”...*Theme from ‘Beverly Hills Cop’ w/Eddie Murphy*

didn't make the 100 Greatest Hits of “The Heeey Baby Days of Beach Music” but was for it's time and place in music just as infectious as “I've Been Hurt” or even “Double Shot.” “The Heat Is On” is to aerobic workouts as “Double Shot” is to drinking beer and partying.

Besides the “Screamin' Yellin” & Whooping It Up”, (and passing out in her front yard) what sounds comes to your mind when you think of “Double Shot?” The correct answer is the up-tempo sound of John McElrath's Farfisa organ. Likewise, and besides the “heat” what sound do you think of when “The Heat Is On” plays in your mind? Well, from this perspective, it's the beat. That incessant beat that keeps you pumping.

And the man behind the “Heat” beat is drummer extraordinaire, Michael Huey a native of Bowdon, Georgia. Huey's career is indeed that one of a journey-man musician which began with the local teen club bands and got serious beginning with a national tour as drummer for Atlanta's king of pop rock, Tommy Roe (Dizzy 1969). His resume included stints and recording sessions with Joe South, Johnny Nash, The Winstons, Walter Egan, The Swingin' Medallions, Clarence Carter, Etta James, Johnny Lee, Michael Martin Murphy, The Classics IV, Albert Collins, Allen Toussaint, Sam Moore (Sam & Dave), Juice Newton, Sami-Jo, Chris Hillman (Byrds) and Gene Clark (Byrds), as well as Glenn Frey (Eagles), Joe Walsh (Eagles), Lindsey Buckingham (Fleetwood Mac). Soundtracks for Film/TV: ‘Miami Vice’, ‘Urban Cowboy’, ‘Back To The Future’, ‘Beverly Hills Cop’. A long drumming career that started smack in the middle of the Heeey Baby Days and ‘The Shag’, which continues even today as a producer and session musician in L.A. (the West Coast L.A.) Huey has played drums and percussion on 28 Gold/Platinum albums and countless Top 40 singles.

60s' music entrepreneur. Johnny Bee, got Michael his first gig playing drums for Tommy Roes tour band. Michael literally went from playing the teen clubs (The Pow-Wow Room at West Georgia College) with a local band, to traveling the country behind Roe as the king of bubble-gum music that amazed the world with a rapid fire of chart busters such as “Sweet Pea”, “Dizzy”, and “Sheila.” While some may look at “bubble-gum” music as being beneath their musical refinement, I defer you to a significant number of gold records sold by the Atlanta native whose music is still played all over the world. It really makes you dizzy when you hear “Sweet Pea” and “Sunshine of Your Love” played back to back on a classics oldies station. Some feel that when a song becomes a classic, its genre matters not.

While in Atlanta, Huey gets his first exposure with playing for a recording session and that was also arranged by Johnny Bee and that was with The Winstons, who had a huge hit “Color Him Father.”

When Roe came off the national tour, Huey again started looking at a place to land. Ability to adapt has served him well. One night while playing with a house band at a bar in Augusta, Georgia, word spread through the place that the Swingin' Medallions were in the audience. They had recently returned from an extended gig at the Dunes in Honolulu. During a break, Michael was approached by Grainger “Brother” Hines, one of the Medallions' saxophone players. Apparently, and unbeknown to Michael Huey, he had apparently already been identified as the man who would replace departing Ron Nobles on drums. “I was really taken off guard when Brother told me that I had a new gig playing for them”. Soon afterwards, Michael Huey became a resident of Greenwood, South Carolina the home base for the South's party band. Although the Grim Reaper was starting to make his presence at most events as the Heeey Baby Days were waning, “there was still a lot of hysteria at times when the Medallions came to town” according to Huey. (Myrtle Beach, Daytona Beach)

Was it just an impulse that Hines had when he invited Huey to join the band as a drummer? Did the Medallions (who were playing a gig also that night in Augusta) just happen by this Augusta road house? My guess is that Wilbur Walton who had heard Huey playing in the Augusta club came back to Atlanta and told the story about a drummer he had heard in Augusta that played with the rhythm and soul of a black man. For a band's whose play list always seemed to gravitate to the R&B side of the charts, the Medallions who were in the market for a replacement drummer heard the news and happened by that night club.

Wilbur Walton was not the only person who had the ear for Huey's soulful beat. In the early 1980's Sam Moore (as in "Sam & Dave") was enjoying a big resurgence following 'The Blues Brothers' movie and was recording a new solo album at the Record Plant in Los Angeles. During these sessions Moore asked his record producer to introduce him to that 'fat-back, mo-fo drummer'. Sam was really caught off guard when learning that the drummer he had heard while he was in the control room during these recording sessions was Huey, a white guy. "... No, man, that can't be. Then, I got to meet this guy!" With more than two dozen Gold & Platinum records under his belt playing for rock stars, Huey says that Sam Moore's reaction on that session was one of his all time best. "It just doesn't get any better than that ... it's like receiving a big PhD degree inscribed and handed to you from the Dean of 'Hey Baby, College of Soul'".

One of Huey's favorite stories is when dating his Los Angeles born and raised wife, Katy, he started reminiscing one night about 'Beach Music', and that he misses hearing the absolute greats like The Tams 'I Been Hurt' . . . Well, Katy not being familiar with beach music, says, "yea, I miss Jan & Dean and The Beach Boys too..." "NO!" That's not beach music says Huey, "not that young, pasty white boys' driving pink convertibles shit", I'm talkin' 'bout the Real Beach Music, ya know... Popin' 'The Gater' and doin' 'The Shag'. Big, sweaty, packed 'get-down' crowds in National Guard Armories, really big clubs on the pier in Myrtle & Daytona Beach, as well as The Pow-Wow Room, & The Moultrie Bowl. 'Hey Baby', you know . . . The Real Deal."