

Recollections - Ten

David Tolley - Phil Treloar

ReUNION

While in Melbourne for the maiden voyage of Spaces and Streams, I was staying with Julien Wilson and his beautiful family. Julien's mobile phone rang and, handing it to me he said, "It's for you." Surprised, I took the phone and was rendered almost speechless. On the line was David Tolley whom I'd not seen for about eighteen years. I felt overwhelmed with joy as we spoke and not long into the conversation David suggested he come by Julien's, pick me up, and we go back to his home in Donvale. An hour or so later I was sitting in David's car and we were raving away as if it had only been yesterday. Eighteen years can see many changes in a person's life and indeed this certainly applied to us both. Our conversation was replete with the kind of positive spirit our relationship had thrived on in the past. David had suggested we take with us the drum-set I had on loan through the kind heart of Ronny Ferella, and this we did. Arriving at Donvale we unloaded ourselves and the drums and went inside.

Once in, it was just a short while before I found myself setting up the drums while David sat nearby at a table on which his laptop was located. All sorts of Tolley-type sounds began filling the space we were in – physical and emotional – while scratches and grunts began to emerge from Ronny's drums and cymbals. This was September 3, 2010.

David's and my relationship goes back to the early mid-1970s. We'd met ear-to-ear at the Basement in Sydney when Brian Brown's band and the Jazz Co-Op used to share nights of highly spirited, mostly original, jazz. Both bands never failed to revel in each other's musical explorations and escapades. These were wonderful days filled with the very best that music and its people are able to generate. And it had a particular sense of Australian identity about it too, that, being anything but nostalgia or emulation, spelt time and place, and more significantly, *emergence*. It was through this ethos that a particular incident welded David's and my friendship and simultaneously, my friendship with Dur-é Dara. Between then and the present, massive amounts of water passed beneath our bridge of friendship. So, that we were again to find ourselves making music together was not only a dream but a wonderful gift ...karmic benefits!

As long as I've known him and wherever he's lived, David has always had a place specific to music-making. He's also figured, I think, recording/documenting as intrinsic to the process of exploratory music-making. So to put it mildly, I was gratified when he handed me a CD copy of a concert the three of us had played at Sydney Conservatorium, March 1977.

And now, September 3, 2010, our profoundly felt *ReUNION* was being expressed through music-making and this, too, was being documented. After setting up and

tuning in we continued to play. It was always like this ... the conversation, the eating (and even this, recorded!), the endless cups of tea and the little breaks. These all flowed into each other as in one large-scale piece; which of course, is precisely what it was. After playing some we retired to the kitchen, a cup of tea, another long rave, and finally off to sleep. The following day, Saturday September 4, we played for hours. Our musical communication, as with our verbal communication too, showed absolutely no signs of having drifted apart over the intervening years, as many as these were.

And with neither of us imposing any creative expectations on the other we floated in and out of expressive phrases; arcs of sonic unfolding, strange rhythmic diversities; surprising points of coincidence; picking up on to develop, to explore or ignore, each others utterances; slipping, sliding, skating, falling, laughing, talking; two no-longer young blokes feeling not-so old and expressing it with verve; two voices traveling parallel paths ... even if tangential.

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