



Artistic Musings

Leonard W. Baldwin

Drums are powerful, and master percussionist Bones used that power to rock the Jones Theater last Thursday evening.

Performing alone on a stage filled by percussion instruments, Bones created a sound so big it was hard to believe just one guy produced it all.

Each piece began with a rhythm played on a single instrument, perhaps the congas, or maybe the drum set, or even just a couple of cowbells.

The beats were drawn from African, Caribbean or Latin cultures or had roots in American jazz or contemporary techno-rock.

Then, by tapping on one of several foot pedals located around the stage, Bones activated mysterious high tech gadgetry that digitally recorded the rhythm as he played it.

Once recorded, the beat played back in a constant loop through the P.A. system.

Next the real fun started, as he moved from instrument to instrument playing new rhythms and adding them into the growing arrangement.

He even looped his own voice into the mix, as well as a didgeridoo, an aboriginal wind instrument.

The result was an intricate polyrhythmic

sound that had heads bobbing and hands clapping throughout the theater.

Bones took his audience on a musical trip around the world with his songs inspired by the first rain of the season on Africa's vast Serengeti plains or by the blazing tropical sun in Belize.

The growling voice of the didgeridoo, formed a deep vibrating background, to add the flavor of ancient Tibetan monastic traditions to a song called "Himalaya."

Amid all the high energy music there was also a social consciousness, as he sang of the forgotten and downtrodden people of the world.

A song called "Balance," which called for people of different backgrounds to work together to find peace, was inspired by the book *Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee*.

But it wasn't all serious, "Bag Me" sung to the tune of Bob Seger's classic "Turn the Page," recounted life as a river guide, complete with jealous husbands and unexpected flights over the bow of the raft and into the river.

"Gaper" took a tongue in cheek look at newcomers to Colorado.

But, whether the piece was funny or serious, Bones' talent as a musician and songwriter was obvious.

His mastery of a full palette of percussion instruments was apparent as he moved from an incredible extended riff on the drum set to the sweet sound of the steel drum.

He bills himself as Bones Solo Ensemble, and truly that is what he is, one guy making a whole lot of really cool music.