

The Impact of Falling Stars

Percussion has been with me in one way or another for most of my life. It came to me as natural as breathing. When I'm asked why I ever took up drums, my response is "I just had to." Unlike some people who can point out something, like seeing the Beatles on Ed Sullivan, or some other sign post, I just one day decided to take up drumming. Since then, there have been many signposts along the way, and there will be many more up ahead.

The music contained in this recording came about through various explorations. One was that I had become tired of just "playing drums in a band." Often there is not a lot of room for self-expression when you have to deal with many other people also trying to express themselves. There is also not a lot of room for the subtle, quiet, and beautiful sounds that percussion can make, to be heard above the din of amplifiers and other instruments filling all the frequencies. I've always loved practicing and just playing in my own rehearsal space. The sounds vibrate and fill the room. It's a very warm and intimate type of sound. But when playing with others, these sounds are so often lost. So a big catalyst was that I just wanted to have these sounds be heard by others.

Percussion sounds can be loud and piercing, but they can also be extremely quiet and soft. I like to work with the whole dynamic range available. Not having any true Western tuned instruments, I also like to work with the implied melodic possibilities of my instruments. I tune my drums to form a melodic scale, and have chosen my Gongs & cymbals to also work in melodic sets. This allows me to play *pitched* percussion with both melodic & harmonic content. Thus I'm able to play single notes and 2 or 3-note *chords*.

The other idea is that of *texture*. I work with my instruments to get varied textures from them, either by using different beaters/implements, or by treating them with something external to alter the sound/timbre. I can muffle instruments, add additional sounds (like rattling), or create combinations to give me an endless variety of sounds & textures.

The idea of *melody* is very important to me. Rather than just creating random noises, I try to structure my music to have some sort of melodic direction. So while I do some improvisation, most of what I play is composed.

~ Michael Bettine

Digitally recorded May 2004, live at 3030, Chicago, IL. All music composed, performed, and produced, by Michael Bettine for *Intuitive Arts Media (IAM)*.

Michael plays: Gongs, cymbals, *Gamelan* drumkit, frame drums, *Kulintang*, percussion.

Editions Intuitive Arts 105

Tracks:

- 1 - Invocation**
 - Primordial Realm**
 - Trois Rivières**
 - Gamelan Arcana**
 - A Sense Of Tension**
 - Shaken, Not Stirred**
 - Kalimba Song**
 - Shadow Dance**
- 2 - Chaos Theory**
 - Dream Nebula**
 - Aurora Borealis**
 - Stars Show The Way (for Mari Boine)**
- 3 - Entropy**
- 4 - Schättenwelt (for Karen Stackpole)**
 - Ritual – Ascension**
 - Spiritual Resonance (for Alex Cline & Pierre Favre)**
- 5 - Medicine Wheel/Mandala**
- 6 - Fragmentos (for Andrea Centazzo)**
- 7 - The Way of the Pilgrim**
- 8 - Flow of Water (for Fredy Studer)**
 - Broken Sky**
 - Cascade**
 - Labyrinth**

Special thanks to:

Paiste cymbals/sounds/gongs
King Kase Company
Mike Balter Mallets

Points of contact:

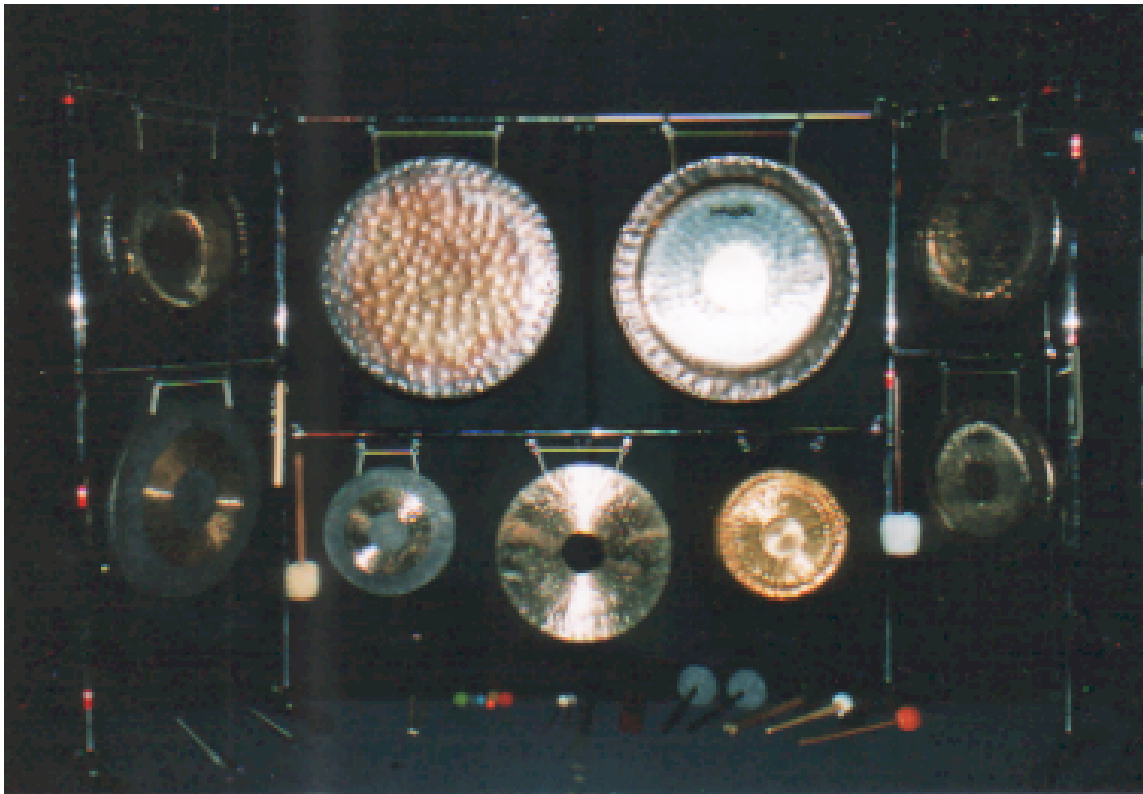
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Full concert set up for Impact recording



Main Gong rack



Multi-level stage



Drums rack in waiting

Addendum: The music here represents a certain point in time, a time when I was working to merge jazz & improvised music with classical & composed music. Certain songs were completely composed and played the same way every time. Others were partly composed, with room for experimentation and improvisation as the spirit moved me. And still others were completely improvised, based on my mood, the venue, and the people in attendance.

The multi-level stage of the 3030 was a challenge at times—I remember almost falling off the riser holding the main Gong rack when I backed up and forgot there was a step down. But that added to the *danger* aspect of the gig (it kept me on my toes and aware of where I was at all times).

Sadly, this was the last time I performed at the 3030. Before I had a chance to play there again, it closed down. Things shifted and reopened elsewhere, but it's not the same. Perhaps the fact that it was an old church added to the sacred, spiritual vibe of the place. Even then, it was still a church, a church celebrating contemporary music and the musicians who created it.

~ Michael Bettine

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