

## ORAL HISTORY OF LONDON SESSION MUSICIANS

Interviewee Jody Linscott

Instrument Percussionist

Parents Occupations. Father was a writer and mother was a photographer

Location of interview. City of Westminster Archive Centre

Interviewer Maya Gottlieb Date 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023

Jody is a working session musician combining sessions with live touring. She talks about her early musical interest being stimulated by her parents love of music and how, growing up she listened to everything from Mahalia Jackson to whale music.

Jody was studying in 1971 to become a bookbinder when she saw a sign in Covent Garden advertising a performance by the prominent Ghanaian drummer Mustapha Tete Ade. She describes how after attending the concert she became fascinated by conga playing and having managed to have three lessons by Mustapha became transfixed by the rhythms that the instruments could produce. She went on to make her first set of congas which she stored at Dingwalls (a live music venue in London)

She explains how she started as session musician almost by accident as an American folk singer Tim Hardin was a friend and asked her to add some percussion on an album. Jodie talks about her first experience of a recording studio including the sights and smells and goes on to describe what the studios were like at that time. She explains that in the mid 80's studios like Air and RAK had a number of studios and musicians would always be bumping into each other during sessions. It was a very collaborative environment and a great way to build up contacts.

Jody also talks about how she got into playing live with her first band Kokomo. A tale of homemade congas, waitressing at Dingwalls and eventually getting up on stage!

She explains the role of a percussionist in sessions in terms of filling out and adding layers to a track and likens it to a doctor being on call and 'being asked to fix something'. Jody also talks about the logistics of transporting kit and illustrates this with an amusing story of transporting her instruments in her Mini. There are also contrasts between session work in London compared with other locations and Jodie illustrates this with an example of recording with Robert Palmer in his mobile studio.

There are examples in the interview of where a session musician sometimes has to think laterally and this is illustrated by Jody with a story of how she was asked to create a specific effect by George Martin when working on the Paul McCartney musical Say Goodbye to Broadway.

Jody discusses the differences in session work as a result of new technology. There is an interesting section where she discusses the development of the first drum machine (the

LinnDrum) and her role in providing congas and handclaps for this iconic piece of technology which has featured on so many records since its invention.

As one of the few woman percussionists when she started in the music business Jody is very frank discussing the difficulties of raising two daughters as a single parent whilst still trying to meet the demands of an in-demand musician. She also reflects on the difficulties of being a woman in what is still a male dominated business and the coping strategies that she had to put into place. Jody concludes that whilst the role of women has improved to some extent some of the old prejudices remain.

The interview concludes with Jody talking about the differences in recording today when compared with the 70's and 80's. One of the most significant changes is that these days it is relatively rare that all of the musicians concerned in a recording are in the studio at the same time. It is not uncommon for her to receive electronically the track she is to contribute to, add her part and send it back to the studio/producer. This makes the recording process more sterile and although the outcome might be technically superb the lack of face-to-face collaboration between musicians tends to reduce the opportunity for creativity and can be less satisfying for the musicians involved.

Notwithstanding this Jody is still interested to see how recording evolves as more artists are starting to consider again the benefits of working less remotely.