

Eric Kalb Deep Banana Blackout

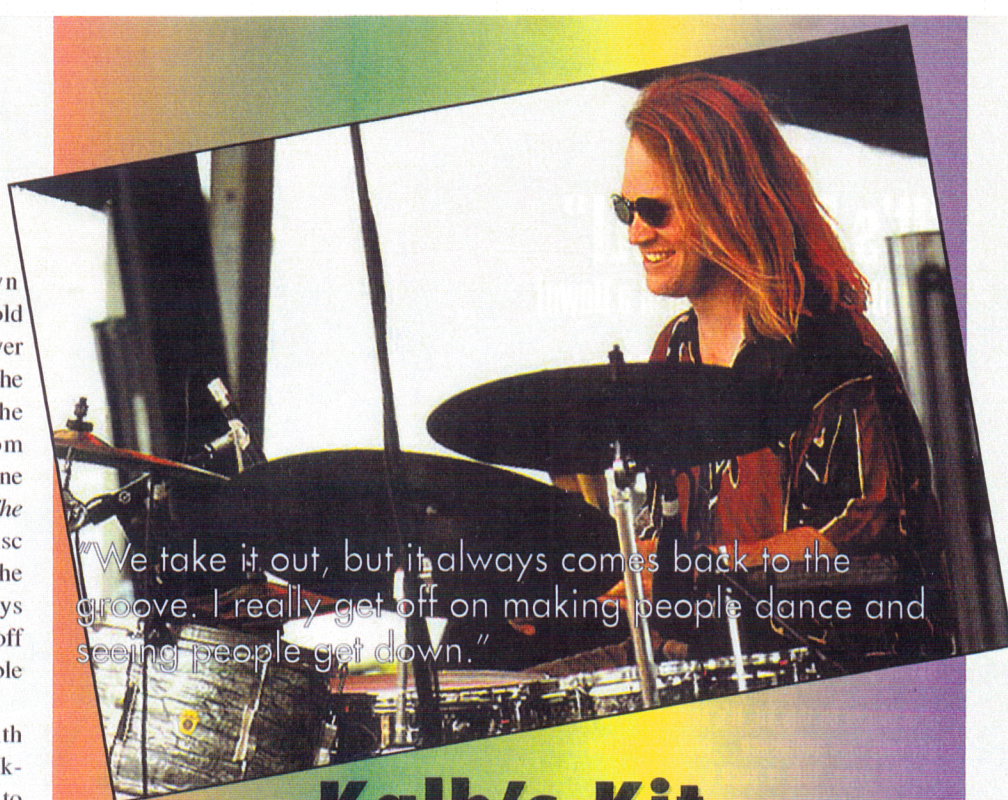
Thirty-year-old Eric Kalb lays down slinky funk beats like they did in the old days, causing an outbreak of boogie fever at Deep Banana Blackout shows across the US. "We're primarily a funk band," he says of the eight-piece unit from Bridgeport, Connecticut, which to anyone who's heard even one note of *Live In The Thousand Islands* (1997) or the two-disc *Rowdy Duty* (1998) is simply stating the obvious. "We take it out, but it always comes back to the groove. I really get off on making people dance and seeing people get down."

Eric's path to groovyness started with rock 'n' roll and worked its way backwards: "Years ago, when I was listening to Zeppelin, I was thinking, 'There's more to this music. These guys are getting this from someplace.' So you keep digging deeper and deeper and you find this great wealth of American music—the blues and R&B—that you can dig into. The main source of my education has been listening to those records."

So it was later, after high school and a stint at Berklee (where he studied Latin music with Ed Uribe), that Eric's interest in the groove really kicked into overdrive. Along with it came an immersion into the playing of pocket-masters like Bernard Purdie, Al Jackson, Zigaboo Modeliste, and Funkadelic's Tiki Fulwood. "It's all about the feel," says Kalb, "moving away from the technical aspect."

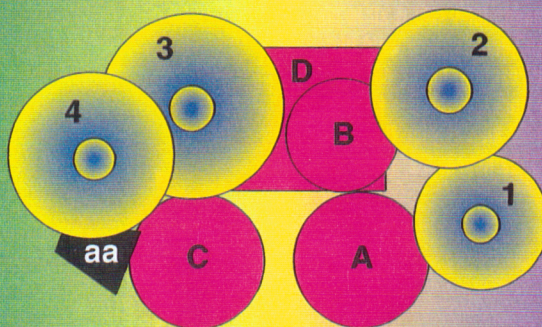
Now, as Deep Banana Blackout roves the country preaching the funk gospel, the openness of the jam-band scene has allowed Eric to collaborate with some of his heroes. At a show at New York's Wetlands Preserve, DBB set up a second kit, only to have it consecrated by none other than Clyde Stubblefield. Eric was blown away by how special the former James Brown timekeeper was, both as a player and a person. "He's the nicest guy," Kalb says warmly. "We did a lot of the old James Brown tunes that he played on. I let him take it, he let me take it, and we played together. It was great."

Then, at a Gathering Of The Vibes festival, Kalb met guitarist John Scofield, whom he'd also listened to obsessively



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Kalb's Kit



Drums: Drum Workshop in stained glass finish

- A. 5x14 wood snare
- B. 8x12 tom
- C. 14x14 floor tom
- D. 14x20 bass drum

Cymbals: various

- 1. 14" Zildjian K hi-hats
- 2. 17" Zildjian K Dark crash
- 3. 20" Zildjian K Constantinople ride (or Sabian DeJohnette Encore)
- 4. 18" Zildjian K crash

Percussion: LP

- aa. Mambo bell

Hardware: DW pedals, tight tension

Heads: Remo coated Ambassador for snare, toms, and bass drum front head, Powerstroke 3 for bass drum batter (all drums tuned tight, no muffling)

Sticks: various Vic Firth models (hickory, wood tip)

over the years. Soon after sitting in with DBB the next day ("It was amazing," raves Eric), Scofield invited Kalb, along with friends bassist Dave Livolsi and DBB percussionist Johnny Durkin, over to his house for a jam. Tape rolled, and several of the sessions wound up on Sco's latest LP, *Bump*, a percolating array of funk-jazz romps. "It's ironic that I ended up playing with Sco, because he's been one of my favorite artists over the years. It rolled off real easy. He's such a beautiful cat."

The ultimate nod of respect came when Scofield wove the rhythm of a DBB fan chant ("Deep Ba-na-na Black-out") into a

burning track on *Bump*. He even titled the tune "Blackout." Eric explains: "We got the chant from Maceo Parker. When we opened for him, during his show he said, 'Wanna give it up for Deep Banana Blackout!' Then he thought about it for a minute and started doing that little chant off the top of his head. We incorporated it into our show, and then our fans took it. Now it's the call to bring us back to the stage. [Curious listeners can clearly hear the audience refrain at the beginning of *Rowdy Duty*'s second disc.] It's funny, that little line is making its way around."

In addition to touring with Sco last

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