

Q & A With Stephen Tarkanish

Q: How long have you been in the music business?

A: I started with my first gig in 1966.

Q: What change in trends have you noticed over the years?

A: Entertainment has proven to be one of life's essentials - perhaps just behind food, shelter, and clothing in its importance to many people. Indeed, once a society develops to the point that there is what economists call discretionary income, a substantial portion of such discretionary income can be expected to be spent on entertainment products and services. As we have also seen, technological development has been the driving force behind the growth of the entertainment industries. Development of technology leads indirectly to an increase in leisure time availability through economic productivity enhancements, and leads directly to qualitative improvements and reductions in the costs of manufacturing and distribution. Current Trends suggests that the entertainment industries will in the aggregate grow at faster than average rates, and that they will continue in the process of integrating vertically and globally. But no matter how large or widespread the corporate entities become, entertainment industries will remain dependant on the vitality and the creativity of individuals. In this respect they will not have changed at all.

Q: What do you miss about the old days?

A: I miss my parents who died when I was very young. The culture of the 60's where our fathers in government let us down. Touring through the 70's and early 80's where I didn't have enough time to sop and think. Playing the drums and not playing with the drums. The old Las Vegas, Lou Pero in Puerto Rico, being different and now being the same. EST, Monday nights at the Improve in NYC, Gary Burton, Sonny Rollins at the Clifton Tap Room, Tony Bennett at the Playboy Clubs, playing in a band with Andy Wallace, feeling the fear and doing it anyway. When a deal was done with a handshake. Swimming with the sharks. Sun Tzu. King Crimson and Tiger. All the fun at Columbia, Atlantic, RCA Records. Not knowing Mousey earlier. School. Europe with the Clifton High School Band. Fandango & The Gashouse Gang. The Fillmore East. I could go on forever, but. . . in life there is one thing that no one can take away from you . . . fond memories. I thank God for all my fond memories!

Q: Do you play instruments yourself?

A: Yes. I attended Julliard Prep School and was a music and percussion performance major at Manhattan School of Music and Rutgers University, and completed my studies at Harvard. I was also one of the original players in the NJ Percussion Ensemble, based out of William Patterson College. After all that, I played and taught drums full time.