

## Max Weinberg Biography

Entering what F. Scott Fitzgerald might term the *third* act of an already celebrated career, Max Weinberg presents the Max Weinberg Big Band. Building upon his seventeen years as the leader of what Tom Shales, famed TV critic of the Washington Post called, “the best band in late night Television,” the Max Weinberg Big Band is a bold, swinging fifteen piece aggregation that continues the traditions established by Max’s musical heroes—among whom, Frank Sinatra, Count Basie, Buddy Rich, Gene Krupa, Doc Severinsen, and Maynard Ferguson lead the pack.

Judging by the crowd’s enthusiastic reaction to the Max Weinberg Big Band’s debut performance at the Fontainebleu Hotel in Miami Beach during Christmas Week of 2009 their approach to the hard-driving instrumental jazz that was a staple of television variety shows in the 1960’s and 1970’s has been sorely missed and fulfills a long held dream by Max to bring it back to the world’s stages.

“I’m old enough to remember when “a night on the town” included a great meal at a nightclub in New York City and a performance by entertainers like The Buddy Rich Orchestra, Duke Ellington, Bobby Darin’s Orchestra, Sammy Davis Jr. and so many others who created a

golden era of musical variety. I've been so fortunate to not only see so many of my favorite legendary performers but, with my work on both the Late Night and The Tonight Show programs, I've had the opportunity to perform with such greats as Tony Bennett, BB King, Isaac Hayes (performing a classic "Shaft" with a twenty-five piece orchestra of my own design), grow as a musician, and finally take *my* act on the road.

Speaking of the road—2010 brings another milestone to Max. His thirty-sixth year performing and recording with Bruce Springsteen and The E Street Band. Referred to by Robert Palmer of The New York Times as "the rhythmic backbone of The E Street Band, Max was featured with the band during the 2009 Super Bowl XLIII from Tampa, Florida which happened to be the largest TV audience in Super Bowl history (over 105,000,000). It was also a great game. Most recently Max was featured with Bruce and The E Street Band on the HBO Special, The Rock and Roll Hall Of Fame 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, which was recorded live at Madison Square garden in October of 2009 and repeatedly broadcast on the network during December of that year. There *will* be more concerts by Bruce Springsteen and The E Street Band in the future as their sold out 2008's Magic Tour and 2009's Working On A Dream Tour has shown-the group continues to build their audience worldwide. Performing on the classic album, Born In The USA, put Max and the rest of his E Street cohorts in the record books as having the biggest

selling rock album in history. Though citing his work through the years with Bruce and The E Street Band as, “the attainment of everything a twelve year old drummer from the suburbs of Jersey ever dared to dream,” Max has kept himself busy for nearly four decades performing with the likes of Paul McCartney, Sting, Tom Jones, Ringo Starr (on *Ringo’s* drums!), Bob Dylan, Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Bono of U2, Levon Helm and the Band. Of particular importance and one of Max’s biggest thrills was backing Tony Bennett on *television*, a venue where Mr. Bennett rarely performed without his own group.

“I think playing with Tony Bennett opened my eyes to what I might actually be able to do if I worked hard at my music to eventually step away from the rock genre. Tony was swingin’ and he told me and my band that we swung *him*. That was huge for me and I can directly link that first performance in 1997 with sparking my interest in creating my own Big Band.”

Along with a thousand concerts in arenas and stadiums all over the world as a member of The E Street Band, Max has performed in the East Room of the White House with the Navy Big Band (2006), the Grammy Awards (2003,2005), and the televised Presidential Inaugural Galas (1993, 1996). He served as the music director for 1998’s Comic Relief starring Robin Williams, Whoopi Goldberg, and Billy Crystal. During that performance Max had the unique opportunity of rim-shotting “Mr. Television”, Milton Berle. What a night!

Of his Tonight Show days Max is philosophic: “It was a great honor to see my name in the same sentence as Doc Severinsen. Any music I’ve played on TV with my own group and now the Big Band has links directly to the influence Doc, drummer Ed Shaunessy and the *best Tonight Show Band* in its 56 year history had on me.”

Through the years Max also worked as a session musician, enjoying particular success in connection with songwriter Jim Steinman. Weinberg drummed on the immensely popular Meatloaf album, Bat Out Of Hell. At one point in 1983 Max was featured on the number 1 and number 2 singles on the Billboard Hot 100, Bonnie Tyler’s “Total Eclipse Of The Heart” and Air Supply’s “Making Love Out Of Nothing At All.” Both written by Steinman.

Weinberg is also the author of The Big Beat: Conversations with Rock’s Great Drummers, a series of interviews Max conducted over two years with his favorite drummers from different eras including, Ringo Starr, Charlie Watts of The Rolling Stones, Levon Helm, and Elvis’ original, longtime drummer D.J. Fontana whom Max had the pleasure of inducting into the Rock and Roll Hall Of Fame in 2009. The book captured drummers revealing *why* they played drums not *how* to play the drums and is considered an important addition to rock literature.

Max has delivered over 300 speeches to colleges and business groups since 1986 in his unique multi-media show, “Growing Up On E Street”. During this presentation Max details the up and downs of his career,

exhibits behind-the-scenes footage of his days on the road and on TV, and takes questions from the audience for as long as they have them.

Weinberg is a past winner of Playboy's Pop and Jazz Music Poll as Best Drummer as well as Rolling Stone Magazine's Critics Poll as Best Drummer.

And as stated earlier, he continues that excellence today with the creation and presentation of his Big Band. His credo: "...show up, do a good job, and give the people more than their money's worth" has been a mission to which Max has committed himself throughout his career.

That commitment is revealed through his mandate to his band: "Look sharp—play sharp!"