

For those of you don't know, T-Bone Wolk is that guy with "the hat" who, among other activities, has been playing bass guitar with Daryl Hall and John Oates since 1981.

He originally got the gig after playing bass on the first gold rap record, "These Are The Breaks", by Kurtis Blow in early 1981.

This gave him the chance to audition for the Hall and Oates band; now 23 years later he is the resident musical director and often times co-producer of their records.

During the same period, Bone was the on-camera bassist with the Saturday Night Live house band. (1986-1992) He got that job through his long standing friendship with G.E. Smith, who was lead guitarist with Hall and Oates throughout the "Big 80's".

In those years, Tommy Mottola, (former Sony Music CEO) was managing not only Hall and Oates, but Carly Simon as well, which led T-Bone to his first co-producing job working on the title track of her Epic cd "Tired of Being Blonde", as well as signing on as music director/co-music producer of her acclaimed HBO Special "Live from Martha's Vineyard" which will be re-released on DVD in 2004.

Along the way he has played with an eclectic list of artists working as a sideman or co-producer. A small sampling goes something like this : Hall and Oates, Carly Simon, Shawn Colvin, Elvis Costello, Roseanne Cash, Cyndi Lauper, Harry Nilsson, Amanda Marshall, Grey Eye Glances, Paul Carrack, Diane Ziegler, Charlie Musselwhite, Jewel, Ivo, Jellyfish, Avril Lavigne, Billy Joel, Joe Pesci, Leslie Miller, John Eddie, Chynna Phillips, Eileen Ivers; well....it goes on and on. Most recently he's worked on records by a number of new artists just getting their music out there : N.Y. based Marianne Marino, Norway's M2M, "Americana" icon Emory Joseph, NY Yankees centerfielder Bernie Williams, Robert Hazard (he wrote Cyndi Lauper's huge hit "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun").

T-Bone started out as Tommy Wolk from Yonkers, N.Y., growing up in a middle class neighborhood about 20 minutes north of New York City. After The Beatles' appearance on the Ed Sullivan show in February 1964, he along with a million other kids across America, convinced his Dad to get him an electric guitar and pretty soon the neighborhood garages housed teenage kids rehearsing instead of beautiful 60's Chevys and Fords. T-Bone was in good company at school, having graduated from Roosevelt High School in Yonkers, a year after Aerosmith's Steven Tyler, and playing in bands which featured none other than the late keyboardist/guitarist Bob Mayo (Peter Frampton's right hand man for close to 30 years. R.I.P) and Aerosmith drummer Joey Kramer.

T-Bone says that going into the music business isn't something you decide

on, but more likely it's decided for you. Although he did go on to Cooper Union Art School in NYC's East Village, it wasn't long before the aspiring painter turned full time musician, working the bars of the tri-state area in the early 70's with his Roosevelt High buddies Guy and Pipp Gillette and their band Big River as well as songwriter/musicologist extraordinaire Billy Vera. T-Bone got his first break in the "record business" filling in for the real "Mayor of New York" Will Lee (from David Letterman's World's Most Dangerous Band). Will had heard Bone on a demo and sent him in on his first real session with "American Pie " producer Ed Freeman. T-Bone says he was further nurtured and mentored by two jingle producers, Steve Loeb and Billy Arnell, as well as ace session drummer Chris Parker, whom he would later reunite with in the SNL House band.

Along the way in the 70's playing all kinds of gigs in the New York scene, T-Bone hooked up with Lonnie Mack, Rock and Roll guitar legend and an ubiquitous jingle producer Ed Labunski. He worked briefly with them on an ill-fated project called The South Band, but is happy to have shared the time with Lonnie, whom T-Bone regards as another profound musical mentor, someone who helped him realize his deep love for acoustic, organic, rootsy, bluesy, swampy, funky, soulful music!

But back to the present....while most often seen playing bass, T-Bone plays a plethora of other instruments on recordings: acoustic and electric guitar, accordion, mandolin, mandocello, hammered dulcimer and pump organ. T-Bone lives by the late session ace Tommy Tedesco's creed, that you don't have to be a virtuoso to play an instrument. If you can get it to make a noise, and get the basic sound of the instrument, you can get by. (T-Bone does more than just get by!!)

In discussing how some people see instruments as simply tools, while others see them as somewhat magical, T-Bone related how he thought they must have some magical properties to them. He said he will use a bass for a while and then set it down and it will go away for a period. Then at some later date, it seems to say, " it's time to use me..." He spoke of how he initially bought a Gibson Ripper bass because one of his heroes, Rick Danko of The Band played one. It then sat around for years, until he brought it to an SNL taping because it just seemed like the right bass for Studio 8H. Everyone fell in love with the deep Ripper sound and it has stayed active to this day, probably appearing on more records than any of Bone's other basses. T-Bone says he is not much of a collector, having somewhere between 50 and 60 pieces of gear. Those are pieces he likes to play, not just own and that's why they are in his possession. One of T-Bone's most treasured instruments is a 1964 Fender Telecaster signed by James Burton. It took a few minutes to find the right spot because James didn't want his name covered up by T-Bone's hand while he was pickin!!! In addition to some bajos and dulcimers, there are quite a few accordions around, having come himself from a family of accordionists and he ended up NY State accordion champion at age 12. The guitar T-Bone keeps lying around is an old Gibson J-45, like Woody

Guthrie had. He got it for \$25.00 in Louisiana while at a flea market with G.E. Smith. At the time the top was separated from the body, but G.E. said it was a real winner and he had to get it. Now repaired and restored, it is still his favorite "everyday" guitar.

His workhorse acoustic for sessions is a 96 Gibson Hummingbird which he says has seen as much action as the "Ripper". And what would be T-Bone's dream band ? First he would just be happy to be the fifth member of NRBQ. If he had to pick individual members for a band, they would be Nick Lowe and G.E. Smith on guitars, Terry Adams on keyboards and Levon Helm on drums. And what about the best bass line ? Two of them tied : "Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing" (Marvin Gaye and Tammy Terrell) performed by James Jamerson (God of the Fender Bass as per Bone) and "Silly Love Songs" by Paul McCartney, of which he says he has stolen from regularly and used as inspiration for some of his own bass lines. And what does a famous bass player do for a hobby? "Famous?" edited and re-used with kind permission from Feb 2003 issue of Guitar Digest by Marc Wayner.