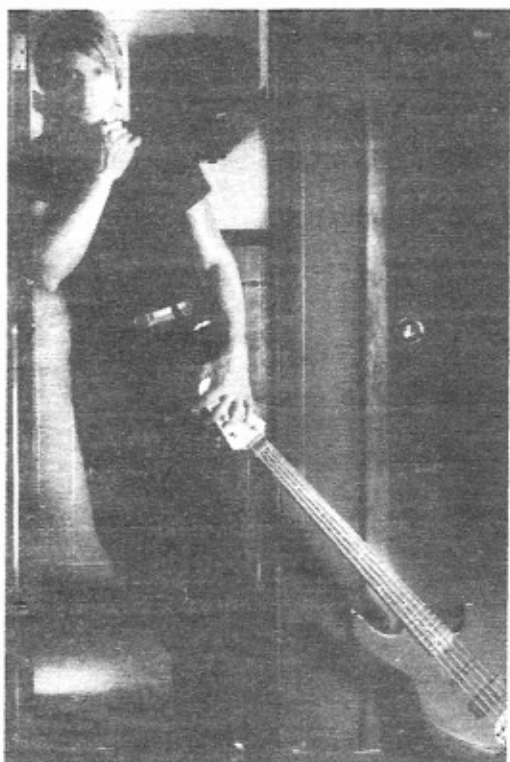


# “St. Paul” Makes Friends with Funk

Paul Peterson of Local 30-73 (St. Paul-Minneapolis, MN) never really worried about what he would be when he grew up since music provided deep roots for his family tree.

His father, Willie, was a jingle writer and his mother, Jeanne, is a life member of Local 30-73 and an accomplished jazz pianist, who still gets regular gigs at age 84. “I was born into music. I really didn’t have much choice!” jokes Peterson.

At age two, Peterson started banging away on a set of drums, though he wasn’t the only young member of the Peterson household with musical talent. In fact, the Petersons are known as Minnesota’s First Family of Jazz. Paul, along with his four older siblings—Billy, Linda, Patty, and Ricky—all followed in their parents’ footsteps and developed careers in music.



Paul Peterson of Local 30-73 (St. Paul-Minneapolis, MN) takes his experience and message of becoming a well-rounded musician to students at the Institute of Production and Recording in Minnesota.

“We would tend to get bored at my house, so we wanted to try different things,” Peterson recalls. Because of this mix of boredom and curiosity, Peterson and his siblings experimented with all kinds of instruments and genres. “It was encouraged. I was raised in a manner that taught me that versatility wasn’t a liability, but an asset.”

Peterson became skilled, not only as a drummer, but as a keyboardist, guitarist, and bassist, though he does have a favorite. “I like the bass,” he says. “It’s the instrument I communicate with the best.” Peterson joined the union at 15 when his mother started finding him gigs around town. He performed at area bars up to six nights a week.

Today, Peterson’s bass communicates with a funky sound, one that he says is highly stylized, and he believes that is what his audience responds to. “I’ve been told by people that I should never learn how to play the guitar the ‘right’ way because they like how it sounds this way,” he says.

In fact, Peterson’s sound was so well-liked that he was selected to audition for The Time, the critically acclaimed funk group. He got the job and was also featured in the film *Purple Rain*. After playing with The Time for a year, Peterson was recruited by Prince, also of Local 30-73, to front The Family.

In 1986, Peterson, now called St. Paul—a moniker bestowed on him by Prince—released a self-titled solo album with MCA Records and started working in all areas of the music industry. He wore the hat of producer, song writer, and conductor and worked with a wide range of talent, including George Benson of Local 802 (New York City) and Joe Sample and Al Jarreau, both of Local 47 (Los Angeles).

Now Peterson also calls himself teacher, as he is on the faculty of the Institute of Production and Recording in Minnesota. “I hope that young musicians take advantage of different types of music and become well rounded in their experiences,” Peterson says. “I survived by being versatile, and the ability to do different genres made my career more fun.”

For Peterson, the true highlight of his life comes from getting together with his family at his mother’s house. “We’re crazy with our own lives,” he says of his siblings, “but family is important to us. We’re still a tight knit group. We like sharing our love of music and the gifts God gave us.”