

M u r u m b a ' s

Michael Faue, Kevin Winard,
And Kalani

The Power Of Three

For percussionists Kalani, Michael Faue, and Kevin Winard, their musical unit, Murumba, is a true labor of love. What started out as an idea for a percussion ensemble to do clinics and a few gigs turned into a full project for the group. The trio, who individually have worked with artists like Yanni, Kenny Loggins, Quincy Jones, Mel Tormé, and Sergio Mendez, recently released their own critically acclaimed CD, *Origins*, recording it on their own and now publicizing it themselves as well.

"We used the resources we had," explains Kalani. "I have a studio, Mike brought an ADAT over from his house, and we begged, borrowed, and pleaded for whatever else we needed. And there were a lot of long nights."

Musically, the album came together easily. "We fell into our roles naturally," Winard says. "I did drumset, Kalani did most of the djembe and African kind of stuff, and Mike played a lot of the mallets. We went on a computer and mapped it out, sort of like, Do

you want a conga solo on this? Do you want a djembe solo on that? And we split it up. We came in with the conscious decision to not make it a 'Dig how many styles I can play and check out how long our solos can go' album. The songs came first."

"From the beginning we wanted to go after radio air-play," admits Kalani. "I remember having conversations about song length, arrangements, and grooves. We chopped things down to four and a half minutes or under because it's a fact of life that a tune over that length is not going to get radio air-play."

Kalani insists the pop format hasn't diminished the group's priorities, though. "There are a lot of percussion groups out there playing what they call 'world music,' but to me, this is *real* world music. It's as if this band was formed with members from different countries. We're using Brazilian instruments on quasi-Caribbean grooves and Cuban instruments on African grooves. I think we did a really good job of blending everything, but still keeping the flavors there." Some of the instruments used by the trio include djembe, udu, talking drum, bata, congas, timbales, bongos, repinique,

cuica, surdo, tamborim, shakers, vibes, marimba, and steel drums.

Because the individual members had amassed a lot of equipment over the years, the project cost them under \$6,000, including mixing, mastering, and album art. And the Los Angeles Musicians' Union has been helpful at getting the record out to the public. "They've recently started a

program to help all the members who put out their own CDs, so the dues are finally paying off," Faue says. "They're sending our record out to radio stations, and it's been received really well."

Everyone involved with Murumba is working hard to increase distribution. But the sure way to find the album is either through the internet, at [//members.aol.com/murumba](http://members.aol.com/murumba) (where you can actually download some of the music), or by writing to the group at 11862 Balboa Blvd., Suite 159, Granada Hills, CA 91344-8017.

Next summer Murumba will go out with a bass player and another drummer to play festivals, no doubt booking shows themselves. "All three of us have talked about how the older we get, the more we have to take control of our own careers and follow through in every possible way," Winard says. "This project means a lot to all of us. We all met through Cal State Northridge, so it's neat that, after all these years and having gone our separate ways and worked with different people, we're back together."

Robyn Flans

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Left to right: Kalani, Kevin Winard, and Michael Faue