

## EMIL RICHARDS BIOGRAPHY

Emil Richards, (born Emilio Radocchia) in 1932 in Hartford, Connecticut started playing the xylophone at age six. He is a graduate of Julius Hart School of Music, (now known as University of Connecticut) and Hillard College.

He joined the Hartford Symphony Orchestra while in tenth grade, working under Arthur Fiedler and Fritz Mahler. He began to work around New England with Bobby Hackett, Flip Phillips, and Chris Connor.

In 1954 and 1955 he was stationed in Japan, while serving in the First Cavalry Army Band as assistant band leader.

In 1956 Emil moved to New York where he played jazz gigs with Charlie Mingus, Ed Shaughnessy, Flip Phillips, and Ed Thigpen while doing studio recordings for artists such as Perry Como, Ray Charles, and Mitch Aires.

In 1957 Emil joined the George Shearing Quintet. He stayed with the group for over three years, playing 51 weeks a year.

In 1959 he moved to Los Angeles where he worked with the Paul Horn Quintet, Jimmy Witherspoon, the Shorty Rogers Big Band, Lennie Bruce, and Lord Buckley. He started recording for Frank Sinatra, Nelson Riddle, Judy Garland, Sarah Vaughan, and Doris Day.

In 1962, in response to a request from President John F. Kennedy, Emil and a small jazz combo joined Frank Sinatra on a tour around the world for the benefit of under privileged children. This group helped to found the first hospital in Israel for Jewish and Arab children. This was the beginning of Emil's interest in, and collection of ethnic percussion instruments.

After this world tour, Emil returned to L. A. to begin recording with such artists as the Beach Boys, Jan and Dean, Bing Crosby, Nat Cole, and Frank Sinatra. He also worked on film scores for Jerry Goldsmith, John Williams, Henry Mancini, Elmer Bernstein, Johnny Mandel, Quincy Jones, Oliver Nelson, Neal Heftly, Lalo Schifrin, Dave Grusin, Michel Legrand, Alex North, and Bill Conti, to name a few. Both he and Don Ellis were studying Indian rhythms at this time, and co-founded a group known as the Hindustani Jazz Sextet.

In 1963 he met American composer Harry Partch, and sponsored his move along with all his instruments to Los Angeles. Emil was connected with the composer and his music as a performer until the composer's death in 1974.

In 1965 he formed the Micro-Tonal Blues band along with his music grammar school buddies, Joe Porcaro and Dave Mackay.

In 1968 he joined Stan Kenton as a member of his Neo-Phonic Orchestra, and remained principal percussionist for the orchestra's entire existence.

In 1969 he made another trip to India, Bali, and Europe, studying, and collecting more ethnic percussion instruments.

Upon his return to L A that year he joined Roger Kelloway and the Cello Quartet.

In 1972 he made an extensive trip around the world collecting and studying percussion instruments with master players from all corners of the globe.

In January of 1974, Frank Sinatra came out of retirement and asked Emil to join him in a small group augmented by Count Basie and his orchestra. In mid 1974 he left this group to travel through central and south America to collect and study marimbas and music of Guatemala, Cuba, Peru, and Brazil.

In October of 1974 Emil joined George Harrison and Ravi Shankar for an extended concert tour of north America.

In 1976 he made a trip to Sicily to trace his roots, and to study the maranzano, – the jew's harp found in the region where his mother came from. He stopped in England to record with George Harrison, and befriended one of the world's greatest percussionists, Sir James Blades.

In 1977 he became a member of Frank Zappa's "Electric Symphony" and recorded several albums with this large orchestra. He was also on Zappa's first recorded album, "Lumpy Gravy."

In 1979 Emil became a founding member of The New American Orchestra, comprised of 85 of Hollywood's finest musicians. Emil has played in the film studios in between all of his other activities, and in the 1980's, he concentrated on sound track recording, and became Hollywood's most sought after percussionist, playing for some of his childhood heroes; Bernard Herman, Dave Rakson, Alex North, Max Steiner, Lionel Newman, Hugo Friedhoffer, Walter Scharf, and Ernest Gold.

He has won the National Academy of Arts and Sciences "Most Valuable Player Award" for six consecutive years since it's inception, until he was presented with the N A R A S Emeritus Award.

In 1987 Emil started traveling throughout the United States, giving clinics at colleges on the aspects of percussion playing.

In 1988 Emil formed a Jazz group, playing vibes with his old grammar school music buddies, Joe Porcaro, and Dave Mackay. He continues to perform with this jazz quartet known as Calamari.

In 1993 and 94, Emil donated his entire library of percussion books, along with a substantial number of his instrument collection to the Percussive Arts Society's Percussion Museum in Lawton, Oklahoma. He still possesses over 750 different percussion instruments in his current personal collection.

In 1993 he regrouped with the Roger Kelloway Cello (now Sextet), and completed an album for Angel records.

In 1994 Emil recorded a solo album utilizing an assortment of instruments from his vast ethnic percussion collection, overdubbing all the instruments himself. The album, released by Emil Richards

Music, is called Emil Richards, The Wonderful World of Percussion. He feels that there is a world of new and unusual sounds to be found and to be heard by marrying many of the percussion instruments together. This is a dedicated goal of Emil's future projects in his world of percussion.

In November of 1994, Emil was inducted into the Percussive Arts Society "Hall Of Fame," joining other noted recipients as Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, Lionel Hampton, and Red Norvo. Lalo Schifrin asked Emil to join the percussion section of the Glendale Symphony Orchestra for the 1994 - 95 season.

In 1996 Emil played at the San Francisco Jazz festival, in a tribute to Cal Tjader. As a result Emil released an Afro Cuban Jazz album called "Luntana" released by Emil Richards Music .This same year he was appointed as head of the percussion Department at L A M A, The Los Angeles Music Academy in Pasadena California.

Starting in 1997 Emil has taken summers to travel to Europe to do summer camps teaching percussion and performing with musicians from Italy, Sardinia, Austria, Sweden and Germany.

1998 marked sixty years that Emil has been playing mallet instruments. He has (to date) recorded on over 1750 film scores and counts over 750 artists that he has recorded and performed with.

In 1999 Emil holds the distinction of Hearing Officer at the Professional Musicians Union Local #47, Los Angeles. He also sits on the board of directors of the Percussive Arts Society and the Mister Holland's Opus Foundation. He continues to donate musical instruments to both of these non profit foundations.

In 2000, Emil released two more C D's. One entitled Calamari, Live at Rocco's. This is a jazz quartet CD featuring Joe Porcaro, Mike Lang, and Trey Henry. The other C D he recorded that year, features Emil on vibes with The Jazz Knights; West Point's prestigious 17 piece Jazz Band, playing mostly original compositions written by Emil.

In 2001, and 2002, in addition to his sound track recording work, and his jazz playing, Emil has been traveling throughout the U S, giving clinics and concerts on percussion. He has traveled to Germany to entertain the U S troops and to Taiwan to attend, and perform at the International Percussion convention.

In 2005, Emil recorded another album with his friends from Hawaii, and released the MAUI JAZZ QUARTET CD.

Emil lives in the Los Angeles area with his wife, Celeste and daughter Camille, and his grandchildren .At 86 he is still recording albums movies and performing live. This year marks 80 years that Emil has been playing music.