

# THE DAILY RECORD

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## My secret fantasy

I dreamt about it for years.

I thought there was at least a possibility, but I always doubted it, leaving it in the gray abyss of my subconscious wishes. It was possible, even if it wasn't likely.

For years I thought about the fact that it could really happen, and then my common sense would take over, overwhelming my own desires and replacing them with hard facts and reality. Psychologists might say that the fantasy was driven by the Id, the doubt merely a by-product of the ego, and both were then overwhelmingly meshed into reality by the Super Ego. And then it happened.

Somewhere, somehow, I knew there was at least a chance that a great musician would stand up on stage and say, "My drummer couldn't make it. Is there anyone out there who would be willing to come up here and play with us?"

Of course, I would stand up and humbly say I would, after which I would explain that I was horribly out of shape, horribly out of practice, as if I could ever really play well in the first place, even when I was playing full-time.

Branford Marsalis is an amazingly talented musician with impeccable credentials. His brain is filled with such musical brilliance that he easily traverses throughout the music spectrum. Years ago, he played on many of Sting's earlier albums and he travels across the musical world, playing not only with his brother, but with the other greats of our time. He easily handles illusory jazz, something I never really was capable of. His soprano sax solos are nothing short of astonishing and, although we've never met, his extremely likable personality seems to come through in almost everything he does. In short, I'm in awe of him.

So for years I've had this fantasy. Somewhere, somehow, I would be in an amazing world-class venue with a world-class musician onstage, minus the one thing I so fervently wanted him to be missing — a drummer. I didn't start playing drums until I was 12. I'm really not a jazz drummer, but I can play different types of music. I even played around with fusion. Sure I did.

Sometimes though, at some gigs, I was proud of the way I played, and others were gracious with their comments.

So here, in my own community, in one of the greatest venues

in the world, stood Branford Marsalis on stage and my fantasy came to life: He was without a drummer. Then, he actually turned to the audience — presumably reading a script that only the thought police could have stolen from my brain, without a warrant or probable cause — and he asked whether anyone would be willing to volunteer to play drums with his group.

Usually, at this point, I would wake up in a cold sweat, having been violently shaken into consciousness by my terrified wife, who first had been awakened in terror by my screams, "Over here, Branford! I'm over here, Sting! I'm over here, Eric!"

But this was reality, and it was happening. This was amazing. This was unbelievable.

And I wasn't there.

After no one volunteered, Marsalis sat down and played the drums himself. (I keep tearing up as I write this column — I swear, I really do.) Eventually, someone far more talented than I ever could hope to be went onstage, sat down at the drums and finished the gig, with Marsalis back on sax.

I read the second newspaper article about this event yesterday and started to cry. My wife started laughing, and then I started laughing.

"I really can't believe this," I said.

"I know, I know," she said.

And she does know.

I don't have to say the obvious to anyone still reading this. It finally happened and I missed my own #@#%^^\*\* fantasy. I still can't figure out why I didn't get tickets to that show. I think when I first saw the ad I thought it was on the same night of my high school reunion. But it wasn't. It was the night after.

The truth that really bothers me is, in addition to the obvious fact that only a few miles from my own home my fantasy happened without me, given the way the statistics are running I'll have to wait another 57 years for it to happen again.

I think that sucks.

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