

KEEPING IT IN SYNCH

Sometimes the click-click-click of the car's turn signal matches the rhythm of the music playing on the radio or CD. My ears perk up and I find myself tapping out the beat...and wondering when the two will part ways (or tempos, to be exact). I don't understand why it happens but it always does. One minute the music's pulsing to the car's internal metronome; the next, it's ahead or behind the beat of the signal.

All this got me thinking about the metronome. An essential for musicians at every level, the history of this piece of equipment is quite fascinating.

Back in 1581 Galileo Galilei discovered that pendulums vibrate in the same time - regardless of their length. It took another century, give or take a few years, before that principle was applied to clocks. Now things started to speed up and in 1696, about forty years later, Etienne Loulie made the first recorded attempt to apply the pendulum to a metronome. Fast forward to 1812 when Johann Nepomuk Maelzel "through some questionable practice" adapted earlier work done by Dietrich Nikolaus Winkel and started manufacturing "Maelzel's Metronome". Within the past century even more refinements and adaptations have taken place: pocket metronomes and metronomes which mark beats with a flash of light are two of them.

I treasure my metronome – without my German made Wittner I'd never have come close to completing my musical studies. Thinking about all those Royal Conservatory of Music exams as well as the "turn signal vs the radio" phenomenon, I am reminded of the importance of keeping our spiritual, family, social and business relationships "in synch".

"God... sent Christ to make peace between himself and us, and he has given us the work of making peace between himself and others." (2 Corinthians 5:18)

People, like signals, function best when in synch