

Robert Marshall (Bobby) Rosengarden Biography



Robert Marshall (Bobby) Rosengarden - Class of 1942 - b. April 23, 1924 d. February 27, 2007.
From the EHS Yearbook, The Maroon: "Rosy":
Entered from Chicago, Ill.;
Band

He was a jazz drummer and bandleader. Born in Elgin, Illinois, he played on many recordings and in television orchestras and

talk show bands.

Rosengarden began playing drums when he was 12, and later studied at the University of Michigan. After playing drums in Army bands in World War II, he moved to New York City, working in several groups between 1945 and 1948 before becoming a busy studio musician. He played at NBC-TV (1949–1968) and ABC (1969–1974) on *The Steve Allen show*, *The Ernie Kovacs Show*, *Sing along With Mitch*, *The Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson, and led the band for *The Dick Cavitt Show*.

Through the years, Rosengarden was an active studio musician, recording with **Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, Skitch Henderson, Quincy Jones. Peter Nero, Gil Evans, Miles Davis, Gerry Mulligan, Benny Goodman, Moondog, Dick Hyman, Arlo Guthrie, Carmen McRae, Ben E. King, Harry Belafonte, Barbra Streisand, Jimi Hendrix and Tony Bennett.**

In later years, Rosengarden was most often heard as the drummer with a variety of all-star, swing-oriented groups, including Soprano Summit. He died of Alzheimer's disease in Sarasota, Florida, at the age of 82 (other sources say of kidney failure).

Along with Phil Kraus, Bobby Rosengarden formed the core of the percussion section in the New York City studio system of the late 1950s and 1960s. An early prodigy on drums, Rosengarden won a scholarship to study music at the University of Michigan. Drafted in World War Two, Rosengarden played in an Army Air Corps band. While with this band, he was noticed by sweet band leader Henry Busse and given a job in Busse's band after separation.

After a year or so on the road with Busse, however, Rosengarden dedicated to settle in New York City, where he quickly became one of the popular session men in the studio system. He also won a slot in the NBC Orchestra, which ensured a flow of work to supplement the studio gigs. He remained with the orchestra until the late 1960s, when he switched to ABC in order to appear on-screen as the studio ensemble leader on ABC's *The Dick Cavett Show*. Rosengarden occasionally did some touring work, mostly short dates with groups like Benny Goodman's late 1950s incarnation of his combo.

Rosengarden and Kraus recorded several albums as a duo, for RCA Victor and, later, Command. Rosengarden also performed as part of the Walter Wanderley Trio when the Brazilian organist's

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“Summer Samba (So Nice)” became a big instrumental hit in the 1960s. He also recorded as one of the combo backing bossa nova vocalist **Astrud Gilberto** on her album, *A Certain Smile*. Rosengarden led the on-stage orchestra for **Jerry Lewis'** Muscular Dystrophy telethon from over a decade, into the early 1990s.

Rosengarden was once asked how he was able to play with such a wide variety of artists and in so many different styles. “I just stayed out of the way, baby,” he answered. “Stayed out of the way.”