

Critical Writings: EAR Magazine , Feb 1989

Introduction to
LISTENER'S GUIDE TO ETHNIC PERCUSSION
(How rhythm got invented)

In the beginning, Lucy, the first hominid to walk upright without a bowlegged simian swagger, knew she was different. But she didn't regard her knock-knees as a significant evolutionary step. To communicate with her tribe when they 'casually' tried to lose her, she'd pick up two rocks and hit them against a hollowed out tree trunk that lightning had struck. Lucy played that trademark [recognizable] rhythm of her walk, when the knees would knock together. Across the valley would come a reluctant thump-thump-thump in response. Of course had she played the cick-click-thump indicating a marauding band of Neanderthals, her tribe would've hid in the nearest bush.

Five million years later, the "Lucy drop" remains with us as the tom-tom off beat after 2 and 4, vestigially present on Desi Arnaz' score for the "I Love Lucy" theme. As long as our hearts keep beating [and we have a pulse, as long as the sun keeps rising, the waves keep breaking, and the seasons change] we can't escape rhythm.

- David Simons