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'Go Baby': Little drummer boy snares a slice of fame

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When he was just a baby, Julian Pavone reached for his father's drumsticks.

Now, a full-blown toddler, the Bloomfield Township boy has outmatched his dad on the skins. The 21-month-old will soon release a two-track CD, *Go Baby*.

"I could not play the beats he's playing," said Bernie Pavone. He replaced the drum throne behind his DW Collector Series set with his son's highchair.

Julian's dad isn't the only one bragging.

"I was totally floored," said William Winfield III, drum coordinator for the Cleveland Cavaliers basketball team. Julian played to a large crowd at their Feb. 24 game.

"He just lit it up. He played so hard and fast," Bernie Pavone said. "To hear the roar at the arena, you would think that someone just scored the winning goal at the World Cup."

Julian was invited back.

At an age when most kids bang wooden spoons against pots and pans, Julian makes his own sound, which his dad describes as jazz fusion. He knows drum rolls and other techniques that take teenage drummers six months to learn, Winfield said. "You don't just pick up the sticks and do it."

At this point, "he's playing with the skills that he has in different tempos," said Winfield, who met Julian's dad on a business trip. "He's consistent with a couple of beats. After five minutes, it's time for milk."

Julian can't say the word drum. When he wants to play, he trills his tongue.

"I can't believe what this little kid can do," said jazz bassist Ralphie Armstrong who jams with Julian sometimes and wrote a song for his CD. He calls Julian "an old soul," reminiscent of Tony Williams and Buddy Rich, some of the legendary drummers he's played alongside.

Bernie always knew his boy would be a musician. Julian was named after John Lennon's son.

"When my wife was pregnant, I told her that Julian was going to be a drummer and then he could pick up other instruments after that."

"He was a very active child in the womb," said his mom, Lisa Pavone. "He kicked me regularly. It was weird."

Eventually, Julian may go on tour or talk shows.

"I think the world needs to see what Julian has the ability to do. He would inspire a lot of people and interest people," dad said.

"But only if he stays happy with it," said mom.

Julian's cousin, Gianna Borrello, plays the tambourine and dances. Month-old baby sister Annalisa sleeps though the noise.

"It'll be interesting to see. Maybe she'll play the piano like me," Lisa Pavone said.

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Julian Pavone -- with pacifier firmly in place -- plays his dad's drums with the skill of a seasoned pro.

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