

Dave Sims

I have had a love of music for as long as I can remember. I was born in London during the 1950's and grew up in the 60's and 70's. So I had the privilege of being exposed to some of the greatest trail blazing music ever played and recorded.

My life with drums and drumming was sparked one day in 1965 when I picked up a LP sleeve whilst browsing in a record shop. The record was by Buddy Rich & his big band. I had no idea at that time who Buddy Rich was but I was spell bound by the picture of him sitting behind a set of white marine pearl Slingerland drums. From that moment I was hooked, my dream was to learn to play the drums!!!! From that moment I made it my mission to listen to as much music as I possibly could and concentrate on what the drummers were doing.

I started playing the drums at school aged about 12 years old. I am pretty much self-taught and I am still learning right now. It is a never ending journey as far as I am concerned.

My decision to become a Blues Drummer was made one day in about 1967 when I visited a friend's house. My friends elder Brother was an avid music fan and was always playing his albums when we were around there. On this particular occasion when we walked into the room my head was filled with the most incredible sound and an amazing primal rhythm. What is that record you are playing I asked? His brother replied that is Freddie King playing Hideaway, that's Blues. My journey had begun!!!! From that day on I have made it my mission to listen to all the Blues that I could and learn from the listening.

My drumming style is very simple and straight ahead. I prefer to concentrate on the groove and laying down a firm foundation for my fellow musicians to play on top of. I believe that in playing Blues the most important thing to do is to listen. To listen to what the rest of the band are playing and to become part of that overall sound, to pick up and to accent certain patterns and riffs , It's ensemble playing if you like. I believe it is that sound and togetherness that makes a band stand out from the crowd!

I recently listened to an interview with Sugar Ray & The Bluestone's guitarist Monster Mike Welch. During the interview Mike was asked why during a performance he very often walks over and stands right next to Ray and actually leans on him. It's because I want to hear Rays voice acoustically and not through the monitors he replied. Summed it up perfectly for me.

I also have a great passion for collecting and playing vintage drums. I have a large collection of American vintage drums made by Gretsch, Leedy, Ludwig, Slingerland and WFL. I have 4 different kits which I alternate according to the venue. My snare drum collection is now 14 strong!!

The kit that I tend to play the most is a set of Slingerland Radio King Drums from the 1940's. This set has a 22" bass drum with 13" & 16" tom toms. The snare drum for this set is a gorgeous 7" x 14" with a solid maple shell. I also play a 1960's Gretsch set which has a 20" bass drum and 12" & 14" toms. I choose this set for small venues where space is at a premium. I also own a beautiful 1930's WFL set which has a 26" bass drum and 13" & 16" toms. This is probably my favourite drum set of all time, it just has the most incredible big warm sound.

On the odd occasion where the size of room and stage permit I play a set of drums built around a 28" x 14" Leedy bass drum affectionately known as BIG MAMA LEEDY . Needless to say the sound of this kit is just awesome!!!

All of the above drum sets are White Marine pearl except for the Leedy set which is Gold sparkle.

I have been very fortunate during my drumming career to have played with some superb Blues bands and musicians including , Otis Grand , Big Joe Louis , Sonny Black , Buzz Brown , Harmonica ace Pete G Welland, Jason Manners, Johnny Mars, Bob Bowles, Bob Pearce and now Poplar Jake .

Playing with Jake and the band is a great experience. So nice to make music with likeminded and passionate musicians. I really love the unique sound that the band produces and I especially enjoy adding my touch to Jakes superbly crafted original songs.