



JJ Wheeler

JJ performs regularly around London, the UK and abroad with many artists and bands alongside having a strong reputation as a reliable 'deputy' for most genres and contexts due to a wide stylistic knowledge, expert sight-reading skills and ability to improvise. Recent tours have seen him work in five different continents as well as appearances at venues including Wembley Stadium, The Royal Albert Hall, Birmingham Hippodrome and Pizza Express Jazz Club (London), international festivals including London Jazz Festival, Trondheim Jazz Festival (Norway), World Jazz Day (Tunisia) and many UK festivals. He has appeared on recordings and live broadcasts played on BBC Radio 3, Radio 2 plus prime-time BBC 1, ITV, and MTV (UK, Europe and USA) television networks.

Specialising in Jazz, Pop, Rock, Funk and Soul, JJ started playing drums at the age of 8, inspired by local session drummer, teacher and now close friend Mark Claydon (Liberty-X, The Getup, Gizelle Smith, Rhoda Dakar). Taking every opportunity to perform in all manner of contexts from Symphony Orchestras to Prog-Rock bands and musical theatre to church worship groups a wide range of experience was quickly gained, picking up many 'musician of the year' and similar awards along the way.

Aged 18 JJ bridged the gap between school and full-time music making by gaining a First-Class BMus (Hons) Degree in Jazz from Birmingham Conservatoire before receiving multiple scholarships and bursaries to attend the Royal Academy of Music in London, graduating with DipRAM Distinction Honours from the Master of Arts course plus a Teaching Diploma. During this time he studied with (among others); Paul Clarvis, Tony Levin, Ian Thomas, Barak Schmool, Martin France, Andrew Bain, Clark Tracey and Jeff Williams. He was fortunate to perform alongside and work with world-class musicians including Dave Holland, John Hollenbeck, Mark Turner, Jean Toussaint, Iain Ballamy, Django Bates and Phil Turner.

Credits include performing with Celine Dion, NYJO (National Youth Jazz Orchestra), English Pocket Opera Company, the Gene Drayton Unit, Motown legend Sir Joe Quarterman, Tom Green Septet and Polish singer Agata Kubiak. Alongside this he has played in the house band for various clubs including Pizza Express Jazz Club (Soho) and been musical director for west end show 'Ring Around The World; an Olympics Musical' in 2012.

Fast becoming a globally-renowned educator, JJ has over fifteen years of teaching experience, has delivered workshops and masterclasses around the world and sits on the International Panel of Examiners for Trinity College London.

Focussing teaching content toward stylistic awareness with a fun, 'music first' approach, JJ's select group of students regularly receive high marks in exams (currently proud to have achieved 100% 'Distinction' for all students at Grade 8) and have gone on to study music at university, perform in various bands and even forge their own careers in the industry. He has held teaching posts at several state and private schools as well as being appointed Head of the Drum Kit department at Windsor Piano School in 2013, with the student roster growing 400% by the time he left in 2016.

JJ has given masterclasses, workshops and clinics in the UK, Tunisia, Singapore, Thailand, South Africa and Australia.

Sitting on the International Panel of Examiners for Trinity College London since 2014, JJ has had the pleasure of listening to candidates across the UK and the rest of the world including tours to Australia, South Africa, India, Spain, New Zealand, Malaysia, Brunei, Thailand, Italy and Singapore. He also contributes syllabus support material for the 'Rock & Pop' syllabus and has had academic papers, essays, CD reviews and gig reviews published in several leading music publications.

JJ is a Royal Academy of Music trained and accredited educator, gaining a 'Licentiate of the Royal Academy of Music' teaching diploma alongside his Master of Arts studies in 2012. He has had the honour of working with talented students from the Royal Academy of Music Junior department, as well as travelling to Tunisia with the Tom Green Quintet in 2014 to perform to, give workshops and coach bands comprised of some of North Africa's most talented musicians as part of World Jazz Day celebrations.

Having been a contributor to two PhD research projects in improvisation, collaboration and performance by Dr Noyale Colin (Senior Lecturer in Choreography at Winchester University) and Steve Tromans (Improvising Pianist), JJ is occasionally invited to lecture and give workshops at University and Academic Conference level.