

# SAMBA SQUAD

**Media Contact:** Josée Duranleau • Duranleau Media Relations • 416.652.7672 • josee@duranleau.com

**Bookings:** Rick Shadrach Lazar • 416.593.9746 • ricklazar@sympatico.ca • www.sambasquad.com

**SAMBA SQUAD** is one of the most dynamic acts on the Canadian world music scene.

Inspired by the Escola de Sambas of Rio de Janeiro... the Afro Blocos of Salvador Bahia.... and the Maracatu nations of Recife, Pernambuco... Hand to Hand, Skin to Skin.... we mix these influences with Global Grooves of the African Diaspora.

The beats....the grooves....the flavours....all come together in a seething cauldron of original compositions to produce the sound of Samba Squad.

***"The joyful Samba Squad deliver souped-up rhythms.  
You'll hear them coming!"***

*Geoff Chapman, The Toronto Star*

Led by award-winning percussionist **Rick Shadrach Lazar**, SAMBA SQUAD has thrilled audiences across the country and abroad. From Jazz to Roots to International Drumming this energetic and joy-instilling groove machine has performed over 200 festivals:

Samba Squad, along with with Jade's HipHop Academy, opened WE DAY at the Air Canada Centre for 20,000 young people, Toronto Downtown Jazz Festival, Montreal International Jazz Festival, Roots & Blues Festival in Salmon Arms B.C., London's Sun Fest, Ottawa Jazz Festival and Muhtadi's International

Drum Fest in Tobago, W.I., special guest concert appearances with Jesse Cook and Sarah McLaughlin, benefits, special events, sporting events (Toronto Raptors, Toronto Argos and Blue Jays half-time shows) and television appearances (Governor General Awards, CBC Television Easter Telethon, The Toronto Show Toronto 1, Breakfast Television CITY TV, Open Mike with Mike Bullard, CTV).

**SAMBA SQUAD** was awarded the **UMAC (Urban Music Association of Canada) Award for Best World Recording of 2001** for their self-titled debut release.



## Discography

**Samba Squad** *Que Beleza*, 2013

**Samba Squad** *Batuque*, 2006

**Samba Squad** *Self-Titled debut*, 2000

**Jesse Cook** *Montreal*, 2004

**Vito Rezza and 5 After 4** *Drums of Avila*, 2004

**Jesse Cook** *Fall at Your Feet*, 2000

**QUE BELEZA (2013)** - This collection of songs also tells our story: how the music of the Diaspora has touched us, inspiring us to write about our own experiences and make our contribution to the circle of cultures across the seas.



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## SAMBA SQUAD Bio

Samba Squad recently celebrated their third CD *Que Beleza* with a blow-out release party at the Lula Lounge.

Founded by award-winning percussionist Rick Shadrach Lazar, SAMBA SQUAD is an innovative group that is forging new directions by mixing world rhythms with the sound-power and street-feel of the **drums of the Afro- Brazilian Samba tradition**.

The SQUAD's 20-plus-member *percussion posse* busts out in energy and excitement. Samba Squad embodies the joy of embracing different cultures, and is the personification of change and exchange.

The musical roots of Afro-Brazil, Afro-Cuba, North and West Africa, as well as elements of Urban Funk and Hip- hop, are dropped into a seething cauldron to produce a dance-till-you-drop tour of global grooves.

Featuring members of all ages and backgrounds, The SQUAD is a microcosm of cosmopolitan Toronto. We respect traditions while adding original influences to create one of the most exhilarating musical experiences in Canada.

Versatile and flexible Samba Squad has done everything from street festivals to stage shows, TV shows, TV commercials, and has appeared in independent films, folk and jazz festivals, corporate functions, weddings, bar mitzvahs, funerals and hands-on workshops, both on the corporate team-building and school levels.

## Highlights

- WE DAY 2012 at the Air Canada Centre (ACC), Toronto
- Montreal Jazz Fest 2011 with Jesse Cook
- OLYMPIC HEROS PARADE 2012 Toronto
- CITY TV 2008 New Year's Eve Live TV Gala, Toronto
- Toronto Downtown Jazz Festival
- Roots & Blues Festival at Salmon Arms, B.C.
- London's Sun Fest
- Ottawa Jazz Festival
- Muhtadi's International DrumFest, Tobago
- Half-time shows for the Toronto Raptors, Toronto Argos and Blue Jays
- Governor-General Awards CBC TV.
- Samba Squad 10th anniversary show at the Phoenix Concert Theatre Toronto
- Cree Fest in Kashechewan (James Bay) for the town's 50th anniversary



## Rick Shadrach Lazar Artistic Director

Rick Shadrach Lazar has been voted **Percussionist of the Year** five times by Canada's Jazz Report magazine. A uniquely versatile musician, Lazar is involved in a wide variety of innovative projects.

In addition to leading the Juno-nominated global jazz ensemble **Montuno Police**, he is the creator and artistic director of **Samba Squad**, an award-winning percussion ensemble charting new directions in Brazilian "batucada." Rick has worked and recorded with a wide variety of Canadian and international artists, including **Loreena McKennitt**, **Bruce Cockburn**, the **Blues Brothers**, and **Jesse Cook**.

Lazar became a musical educator in 1996, joining the faculty at Toronto's **Humber College of Music** as an instructor. In 2002 he began teaching at **York University** where he is course director for Escola de Samba and Cuban music courses. With passionate energy and an instinctive affinity for the rhythms of the world, Lazar is a pivotal force in contemporary fusion and world music in Canada.

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## Performance Options

### The Drum Group

- **Mobile and powerful.** Drums, chant vocals and high energy performance.
- Featuring members of all ages and backgrounds, The SQUAD is a microcosm of cosmopolitan Toronto.
- **Versatile and flexible,** Samba Squad has done everything from street festivals to stage shows, TV shows, TV commercials, and has appeared in independent films, folk and jazz festivals, corporate functions, weddings, bar mitzvahs, funerals and hands-on workshops, both on the corporate team-building and school levels.
- The drum group comes in two basic configurations: 10 or 16 members is the norm for **indoor appearances**, depending on budget and size of the performance area. For **outdoor street festivals**, in the greater Toronto area we could be 20 to 30 plus members.



- We offer flexibility in performance options as we are mobile, each member carries their own instrument and we don't require an elaborate set up.
- Our shows consist of a vibrant collection of pulsating global rhythms, chant vocals and audience interaction.
- Our corporate work often involves the pied-piper idea of making a spectacular entrance, marching in, performing and marching out or leading people from one area to another.
- Our flexibility gives the event planner many options.

### The Show Band

- All the attributes of the Drum Group plus the vibrant addition of singers and musicians. Pulsating rhythms, engaging lead vocals and wonderful harmonies combine with instrumental interplay to produce an audience-mesmerizing world class show.
- The traveling festival package comes in two basic configurations:
  - Luxurious: 16 members : 3 vocalists, 3 musicians, e.g. guitar, cavaca, bass or keys, and 10 drummers.
  - Compact: 2 vocalists, 2 musicians, e.g. guitar, cavaca, bass or keys, and 8 drummers.

**Note:** We also network with different **dance companies** if the client wants dancers, whose costumes can be either Rio Carnival outfits or the more modest Salvador Bahia-style outfits. Dance Companies with whom we've performed include: **Dance Migration** ([www.thedancemigration.com](http://www.thedancemigration.com)) and **RS Divas Entertainment** ([www.rsdivas.com](http://www.rsdivas.com)).



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## Workshops

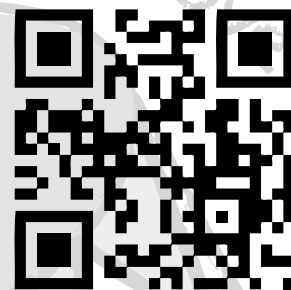
**Have you ever wanted to feel the joy of being part of a big drumming group?**

You can do that with Samba Squad's **hands-on workshops** based on Brazilian Carnival drumming. Instruments range from big bass drums to snare drums to high-pitched frame drums, shakers and bells. Each drummer carries his/her own drum. All drums are played with sticks so people can get a decent sound immediately.

Participants play rhythms together, do call-and-answers, sing chants, do simple dance steps, sounding like a unified force. Invariably it's **a totally positive experience** that's **a lot of fun** and gives people a **sense of accomplishment**.

Workshops can be structured for most any group, from public schools to the corporate world. We can come to your facility or you can use our 5000 sq ft sound stage studio in the Lansdowne-Dupont area.

We have conducted highly successful hands-on workshops for a variety of Corporate, Public Sector and Educational groups: BMO, Ontario Lottery Group, M&M Meats, Lifestyle Software Designers, Sheridan College, CMHA Peel, the University of Toronto, public and private schools.



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1VVyAAPGck>

The goal of our workshops is to get everybody playing as "one" in the time allotted, from 60-120 minutes. **Instruments are provided** for the number of people involved, e.g. from 20- 100 instruments, laid out in a big circle. They range from big bass drums to small drums to shakers and bells. Most drums are played with sticks so people can get a decent sound immediately. Everything is conducted with whistle calls. First, people stand behind the instruments and get their bodies moving to a pulse. Next, the leader gets them to clap and sing the phrases they'll be soon playing, then directs them to the appropriate instruments.

A central concept is that of "One Heart-One Mind-One Groove": how all these simple parts interact to make one big rhythm, how the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

**Workshops can include 3 to 6 facilitators** from the group, who take care of a section, e.g. bells, while the leader focuses on the whole, which is made up of 5 sections: surdos (big bass drums), caixas (snare drums), tamborims (high pitched frame drums), agogo bells and shakers.

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**CD, DVD demo reel, and photos  
available on request**



QR Code Mobile Links  
for Samba Squad Videos

## VIDEO LINKS for SAMBA SQUAD

Samba Squad 2013 Video EPK

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5YUM0UHAo0M>

Show Band Promo 2012

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZkTQNap2\\_M](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZkTQNap2_M)

10th Anniversary Show, Phoenix Club Toronto 2009

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJ0W1aI7GQ4>

New Year's Eve City TV Broadcast Live

[http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x4jx5z\\_new-year-s-eve-with-the-world-renow\\_music#from=embed](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x4jx5z_new-year-s-eve-with-the-world-renow_music#from=embed)

The Toronto Show

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nV337kasJ1U>

The Concert Show Band

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZkTQNap2\\_M](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZkTQNap2_M)

New Year's Eve, Salsa on St. Clair and Lula

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m\\_jSNzRU4Hg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_jSNzRU4Hg)

