

SAMBA SQUAD

"The joyful Samba Squad is a fun bunch who deliver souped-up rhythms. You'll hear them coming!"
- Geoff Chapman, *The Toronto Star*

SAMBA SQUAD has risen from a community based drumming group into one of the most dynamic and sought after acts on the Canadian world and Latin music scenes.

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

The colourful thirty-plus member drum group performs a variety of samba-based West and North African, Caribbean and Afro-Cuban styles of Carnival rhythms on traditional Brazilian percussion instruments and has become one of the most exhilarating live music experiences in Canada.



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 (Toronto Downtown Jazz Festival, Montreal International Jazz Festival, Roots & Blues Festival in Salmon Arms B.C., London's Sun Fest, opening act for Ottawa Jazz Festival and Muhtadi's International Drum Fest in Tobago, W.I.) concerts, benefits, special events, sporting events (Toronto Raptors, Toronto Argos and Blue Jays half-time shows) and television appearances (Governor General Awards CBC Television, The Toronto Show Toronto 1, Breakfast Television CITY TV, Open Mike with Mike Bullard, CTV).

SAMBA SQUAD recently opened for Grammy and Juno award winning singer **Sarah McLaughlin** and is a regular guest performer for Canadian flamenco phenomenon **Jesse Cook**. The group has also performed with other international acts such as **Antibalas**.

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." Lazar also performs alternative Arabic music with **Mernie Orchestra**, **Medina** and **Levon Ichkhanian**, and Afro-Cuban bata and rumba with **Ire Omo** and **Sarita Leyva**.

Rick has worked and recorded with a wide variety of Canadian and international artists, including **Loreena McKennitt**, **Bruce Cockburn**, the **Blues Brothers**, **Moe Koffman**, **Jesse Cook**, **Jane Bunnett**, **Jeff Healy** and **Great Big Sea** to name a few.

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**.

A musical prodigy with a 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.



Discography

Jesse Cook *Fall at Your Feet*, 2000 | **Samba Squad** *Self-Titled* debut, 2000 | **Jesse Cook** *Montreal*, 2004
Vito Rezza and 5 After 4 *Drums of Avila*, 2004 | **Samba Squad** *Batuque*, 2006

Documentary

The music of this remarkable rhythmic collective is the subject of ***Samba Squad: Drums We Love***, a **Riddle Films** documentary directed by **Joel Goldberg**. An engaging portrait of the ensemble and its music, the film features interviews with Lazar's musical peers, including **Bruce Cockburn**, **Loreena McKennitt** and **Jesse Cook**, as well as lifelong friend and fellow Thunder Bay boy **Paul Shaffer**, now the musical director and bandleader for CBS's **Late Show with David Letterman**.

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CD, DVD demo reel, and photos available upon request