

SAMBA SQUAD

RICK SHADRACH LAZAR, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Short Bio

Rick was voted *Percussionist of the Year* five times by Jazz Report magazine and has produced and released 4 CDs with his Global Jazz group [Montuno Police](#): **Bang, Touch, The Call**, and **Nomads**.

Rick has toured/recorded with such artists as Bruce Cockburn, Barry White, and Paul Shaffer, and is a regular collaborator with Loreena McKennitt on her recordings and tours.

Rick is the creator and artistic director of [Samba Squad](#) and has written, produced and released 3 CDs with this group, "**Samba Squad**" (2001) "**Batuque**," (2006) and **Que Beleza** (2012.) He is also an educator at York University (ESCOLA DE SAMBA and CUBAN MUSIC courses). Lazar has also developed workshop techniques, which are being successfully used in the Samba Kidz and Samba Teens programs. Rick's knowledge of world drums and passion makes him a unique percussionist, who is first call for a diverse array of artists.

Long Bio

Canadian-born Lazar descends from the ancient Assyrian people & his Middle Eastern musical roots can be heard in his Afro-Brazilian-New World Fusions. His parents were immigrants from the Middle East who came to North America as children, met, married and settled in Canada. Rick received his first musical instruction in his hometown, Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada from his father who gave him lessons on piano and woodwinds. In high school Rick got seriously into drums and percussion and soon co-led the most popular band in town with his good friend Paul Shaffer of David Letterman fame. After getting his B.A. (History major) from Lakehead University, Rick studied percussion at Indiana University's famed school of music and soon found himself in I.U.'s renowned University Jazz Band, which included Peter Erskine on drums. After university, Rick played with innovative funk and fusion groups in the mid-west, as well as

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touring the U.S. as percussionist with Barry White's Love Unlimited Orchestra. Returning to Canada, Rick established himself in Toronto, performing with jazz fusion band, Manteca, and did a variety of record dates, film sessions and jingles. In the early 80's, Rick formed Coconut Groove, a high-energy dance band featuring ground-breaking "World Beat & Jazz Rick Shadrach Lazar Bio 2024 Rap". This exciting group was a pivotal force on the Toronto music scene and its creative influences can still be heard today. In 1987, Rick formed the Montuno Police, a six-piece instrumental band which combines strong original compositions, wicked grooves, and creative interplay that takes it to the edge. MP wowed audiences in appearances at the Du Maurier Toronto and Montreal International Jazz Festivals. Lazar has produced 4 CDs with this unique group: Bang, Touch, The Call and Nomads. In 1990, Lazar began his musical association with Loreena Mckennitt. Since then, he has become a regular collaborator, adding his musical talents to 6 of her C.D.'s (including Juno award winner The Visit), as well as being an integral part of the musical group that accompanies her on her World Tours. In 1999 Lazar formed Samba Squad, 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. SAMBA SQUAD has evolved from a community-based drumming group into one of the most dynamic and sought-after acts on the Canadian World Music scene. Lazar has produced 3 Cd's (**Samba Squad, Batuque, Que Beleza**) and a DVD **Drums We Love** with this group. Rick's knowledge of world drums and passion makes him a unique percussionist who is first call for a diverse array of artists He has toured/recorded with the likes of Loreena Mckennitt, Jesse Cook, Bruce Cockburn, Barry White, Paul Shaffer, Brian Hughes, Blues Brothers. Education History Lazar is also an educator, teaching World Music Courses at York University and is kept busy doing a variety of live and studio gigs. Lazar began his work as an educator in the 90's when he was hired by Humber College to teach private lessons, as well as run Latin Ensembles, In 2002 he was hired by York University. He is Course Director for the Cuban Music Ensembles and the Escola de Samba Ensembles, as well as creating and teaching the World Rhythms for Drum Set and the Hand Drums Various Traditions Courses. Lazar was involved with Samba Kidz since the initial pilot project at Rose Avenue Public School in 2005 initiated by teacher Janet

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McClelland, Andy Moro and Gabriella (Red Pepper Spectacle) Gili Zemer and Lazar. Rick Shadrach Lazar Bio 2024 The teaching techniques, concepts and rhythms he developed in the community group Samba Squad were used to run these workshops and have proven to be hugely successful. His work with Samba Squad also led to his work with the Samba Kidz and Teens program and Lazar works with the advanced students in both programs. He also has received recognition and a \$10,000.00 bursary from the Stephanie Ling Foundation at York University for his work with Community Outreach and Music Education. Rick Shadrach Lazar followed his heart to the path of the drum; his continuing journey in the world of music has been an uplifting, joyous and rewarding experience.