

Chris Parker

Biography

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Chris Parker grew up playing drums with wooden blocks attached to the hi-hat and bass drum pedals by his father, the artist/illustrator and a jazz drummer, Robert Andrew Parker. Listening to Monk, Miles, Mingus, Count Basie and Duke Ellington on the radio, Chris played along with his earliest influences; Philly Joe Jones and Jo Jones, Ben Riley, Jimmy Cobb, Danny Richmond, Max Roach and Tony Williams. By his early teens he was performing with friends and discovering the allure of rhythm and blues, through drummers such as Al Jackson, Roger Hawkins, D.J. Fontana, Earl Palmer, Smokey Johnson and James Black. By night, he put into practice what he heard backing up strippers and exotic dancers in clubs and cocktail lounges.

While studying painting at New York City's School of Visual Arts on scholarship, Parker answered a 'drummer wanted' ad in Rolling Stone. He moved to Woodstock, New York, where he joined the band, Holy Moses. Holy Moses was short lived but Parker recorded one album with them and stayed in Woodstock where he worked in the local scene with artists Paul Butterfield's Better Days, Bonnie Raitt, Maria Muldaur, Tim Hardin, Rick Danko, Mike Bloomfield and Merl Saunders.

After four years, Parker moved back to New York and began augmenting his experience with the emerging jazz-fusion/R&B scene. He was invited to play in a band then known as the Encyclopedias of Soul , later to become Stuff, which included bassist, Gordon Edwards, guitarists, Cornell Dupree and Eric Gale, and pianist Richard Tee .In the 70's,Stuff defined a soulful, laid back and distinctly New York sound that appealed not only to other musicians but also to singer/songwriters and producers. It was also in this band that Parker later began sharing the drum chair with friend and another emerging studio great, Steve Gadd.

During this formative period, Parker helped to co-found the Brecker Brothers band which featured Michael and Randy

Brecker, David Sanborn, Buzzy Feiten, Steve Khan, Ray Mantilla, Sammy Figueroa, Will Lee and Don Grolnick. With the Brecker Brothers, Parker toured the US and recorded 3 albums. His studio career flourished in the 70's, 80's and 90's with a wide range of artists and genres including James Brown, Miles Davis, Aretha Franklin, Ashford and Simpson, Patti Austin, Cher, Michael Bolton, Quincy Jones, Freddie Hubbard, and Salt 'n' Pepa.

In 1986, Parker was offered the house gig at Saturday Night Live which compounded his experience while backing artists like Eric Clapton, Paul Simon, Sting, Elvis Costello, Aaron Neville/Linda Ronstadt, Quincy Jones and Bryan Ferry over a 6 year period.

In 1988, Parker began touring with Bob Dylan, an association which lasted 3 1/2 years and covered the world.

In 1990, Parker added his touch to Donald Fagen's "Kamakiriad" produced by Walter Becker and featuring some great grooves and soloing in the songs, "On the Dunes" and "Countermoon," subsequently becoming a part of Steely Dan lore.

The next period up to the present, has been steeped in music education as Parker attended Juilliard, Mannes and Western Connecticut University obtaining his degree in music while staying closer to home. Continuing to record with artists Manhattan Transfer, Laura Nyro, Sinead O'Connor, Georgie Fame and an under appreciated series of albums with the great Lou Rawls, Chris participated on Grammy winning albums by Jon Secada, "Amor" and Tony Bennett's "Bennett on Holiday". He also found time to perform live with Bette Midler, Garth Brooks/Trisha Yearwood, Natalie Cole, Cheap Trick, Elvis Costello/Burt Bacharach, Deborah Cox, the Yamaha Groove All Stars and his own groups, Toph-e & the PussyCats, the Stuff Brothers and Funkasaurus Rex.

Representing diverse drumming skills, firmly rooted in R&B with a characteristic New York feel, Chris continues to listen, perform, record and learn more about the music.