

FreeDrumLessons.com Live

Drumming With a Band

Lesson #21



Featuring Yuca

With Jared Falk & Dave Atkinson

Overview by Hugo "Janado"

Drumming With a Band

In this live drum lesson, we bring in Dave Atkinson's own band Yuca, to help you get a further understanding on how to prepare yourself for an audition, how to play in a band, tips on playing with a bass player, and what can be expected from a drummer that wants to play with other musicians. You will also be given some insight on how to get gigs for your own band, so that you can start rocking out as soon as possible.

You also get the chance to see Yuca perform 7 of their songs: "It's About Something", "Ghosts", "Anthem of Need", "Gold on Your Soul", "Tomorrow", "Maybe We'll Riot" and "Touch".

Who are Yuca?

Born about 7 years ago, Yuca is a Canadian band based off of Langley, British Columbia, and is comprised of vocalist and rhythm guitarist Matt Bork, bassist Andy Boldt, lead guitarist Justin Havinga and drummer Dave Atkinson. Their name stems from a Japanese girl called Yuca, which lived with members of the band for a while. So the band's name has actually no deep meaning to it. This band saw its career jump start after winning a massive battle of the bands contest, against around 1000 other bands. Among their accomplishments is the once in a lifetime opportunity they had, to perform for the Vancouver Winter Olympics and Paralympics 2010.

If you are interested in getting to know more about Yuca or listening to their music, you can check them out at their [website](#), [twitter](#), [facebook](#), [YouTube](#) and [MySpace](#). You can also buy their music through their [online store](#), [iTunes](#) and [cdbaby](#).

Writing Drum Parts

The whole band trusts in Dave as a drummer. They rely on him to capture the essence of a song, to feel the song, in a way that when the drum parts are being written, they end up catering to the needs of the tune. For instance, they might have a slower song that Dave feels need a faster beat, if that happens, which is something that will take the song in a whole different direction, they will trust him.

One of the things the band loves about Dave is his willingness to hear them out when they approach him with an idea for a groove or fill that they have on their heads, but have a hard time explaining it. Dave will humor them, and tries playing something around the lines of what was requested.

Playing With a Bass Player

The drummer has to follow what the bass player is playing. So take the time to check what he's doing before pounding away on the drums, this will make your playing mold with what he's coming up with and the song will have a tighter groove because of it.

From a bass player's perspective, it's important for the kick drum and bass guitar to lock in, but even more important than that is locking with the entire kit. This way, if they are rhythmically together, they can create a stronger and groovy pulse instead of a "mash" of each playing whatever they want, when doing either a fill or a beat.

What Yuca Looks For in a Drummer?

The drummer has to connect with everything that is happening around him, he has to be able to open his ears to what the other musicians are playing, which will in turn help him play for the sake of the music. He has to hold the band together.

When auditioning for a drummer they expect him to play the songs properly, in time, and with a good feel. Once it is clear that the drummer is able to play the songs like requested, they let him add his character to the tunes to see where he can take them. This way, they get a feel for his personality on the drums, enabling them to understand if he comes out well with the rest of the band.

Drummers have showed up to auditions were they tried to impress Yuca with their spontaneity, which ended up backfiring them. By not learning the songs beforehand, it only showed the band that maybe the drummer wasn't willing to put in the practice needed to be in Yuca, and since they practice more than 3 times a week and take that time seriously, they did not take that very well. They assume that the drummers that show up for an audition are of a certain caliber already and know how to do fancy stuff. But that is not their main concern as stated, and also, playing fancy stuff doesn't mean that the drummer can play simpler stuff.

Auditioning For a Band

If you are planning on auditioning for a band, you definitely have to do your homework before showing up for the audition. When Dave decided to try his luck with Yuca, he first got their albums and listened to them non-stop, so he could acquaint himself with what the previous drummers were doing and how he could bring that familiarity to their music, when playing with them. He also watched videos of the band performing live, and taped the tempos of the songs with a metronome. He then programmed the tempos into a metronome and practiced the songs. The hardest thing in this whole process is memorizing the structure of the tunes, since you don't know them well at first.

When Dave showed up knowing all the songs, and made the band play better than ever before, it was clear to them that Dave was their guy.

Tips For Getting Gigs

Your first and main concern when starting a band, or even if you have one already, is in making it sound as good and tight as possible, and working a lot on your own music before trying to step into a stage. The next natural step would be to tape a quick, but good sounding demo, to show around pubs, bars, and clubs, for getting live gigs.

Another thing to consider is having your live show set up before facing a live audience. You can achieve this by approaching the way you practice with you band a bit differently. During the writing process Yuca's members face each other, to promote communication between them. However, when rehearsing for live gigs, they set up in the studio as they would in a stage, with the members facing an invisible audience and with their backs turned to the drummer.

Getting your band to be extremely solid and setting up your live show beforehand, will help you get farther in the music industry. This way, when people that hire you perceive that your band is actually better live that on the cd, word will spread.

Some last tips; to achieve success you have to work really hard; remember that you are your biggest promoter, believe in yourself and in your band, and promote it like crazy.