

WEAR THAT SHOE

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Bruce Wayne drums and percussion



I started playing drums at a young age theoretically because at the age of six I made a small drum set out of pots, pans, and some of my mom's furniture after I saw the Beatles on the Ed Sullivan Show. She let me do this, which is an example of the amazing support she and my dad would give me for years to come. Some of my friends, most of whom were older than me already owned drum sets and were getting into R & B, and Rock & Roll. Some of them were already even playing in bands, and that fascinated me. Some of the musical acquaintances I made at this time including Barry Bynum who I play with in Wear That Shoe are still very important to me to this day.

I started listening to the electric rock of the period like Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, and the Cream, Led Zeppelin, The Moody Blues, and Jethro Tull, and soon convinced my parents I needed a drum set. When I was in my early teens, they eventually bought me a complete drum set, but only after I learned how to play the snare drum. I think this was a good thing, and I still teach most of my students with the same approach and attitude.

My Dad was a professional musician, specifically an opera singer who had sung at the New York Metropolitan Opera with Toscanini among others so I think he knew what I needed. He had gone to the Julliard School of Music as well as The University of North Texas so he insisted that I study snare drum with a local percussionist at Southwest Texas State University where my dad was a professor. I learned all the rudiments and learned to read, and started in the school band where I was exposed to concert band music, and eventually marching percussion. I was not really serious at this time so although I took drum lessons and piano lessons I did not really practice that hard. I spent the majority of my time jamming to records pretending to be a rock star.

Unfortunately I also started getting into drugs and the whole rock and roll lifestyle at the same time. I was a bit of a rebel, and soon became a professional drug addict instead of a professional drummer. I continued to study and play, but I was still not very serious (and getting into a world of trouble I must add).

I think my connection to music is part of how God saved me because I was particularly into bands like Jethro Tull, Emerson, Lake, and Palmer, and Kansas. The drummers in all three of these bands were outstanding players and very imaginative. I specifically loved Barriemore Barlow's drumming with Jethro Tull, and I can actually credit him with a pivotal moment in my history. I went to see him play one night, and he completely blew me away. That night I decided I really wanted to be a professional drummer/percussionist. This was my epiphany. I went on a church canoe trip the week after the concert, and started to really clean myself up oddly enough. I tripped and fell a few times, figuratively speaking, over the years, but I was beginning to get on track at that moment in time. I had a goal, and it was a good one. Music became more important than drugs, which eventually led me to become a clean, sober musician.

I really got into jazz at this time, and that eventually led to a more eclectic approach to music and playing in general. I began to practice obsessively, earned a percussion scholarship, and eventually received my degree in percussion performance in 1984. This was also the year I married my wife Pat who was and is a devout Christian. I will be forever grateful to her because she has been such a positive influence in my life. I had turned away from God years before, but unbeknownst to me God was turning me toward him with out me realizing it myself. I began to go to church again with Pat, and eventually sat down and read the Bible cover to cover. I don't think I would have done this with anyone else but my wife is Catholic, and she just doesn't miss church. This was a good thing. I really experienced the four gospels on an emotional, personal level during this time. My mom and dad were Presbyterian, but my mom was and is really into an interdenominational approach to the faith. I would sit and talk with her about her faith at length, and because of her example in using a daily prayer book, this is now a part of my daily schedule.

This way of relating to God, and applying that to your life in a positive way every day is at the center of what I believe to this day. I also began to listen to Christian music more because of Pat, and I loved the message even if I didn't always like the music stylistically. Ironically, some of my favorite Christian music is by Kerry Livgren of Kansas with Barriemore Barlow of Jethro Tull playing drums. I guess some of my musical heroes from my past were on track after all. This is partly why I play drums. I love to play just to play, but music is really more than just fun. Music is a gift from God, and it is a gift that needs to be cherished and shared. I think music can spiritually heal if it is done well with a true heart cry. That is why I am doing what I do, and I thank God for the opportunity to play with this band. If I can help someone else like I was helped then I will I count that as one of my greatest success stories along with my two wonderful daughters who have helped give me every reason to be thankful to God.

Bruce's influences:

- Harry Wayne (my dad)
- Rod Morgenstein
- Steve Morse