

I know you got SOUL!

Words: Sam Pert Images: Eckie

Brazilian drummer Eduardo Marques has found himself very much in demand since moving to England. He lets *Drummer* in on the secret of embracing the *Cultura Impura*...

Most drummers, at any level of expertise, will have come to a point where they have felt, in order to take their playing to the next level, it is time to study Latin rhythms. For many of us, this means hour upon exhausting hour of mind-boggling independence exercises, where we try to unlearn all of the straightforward 4/4 rock coordination that we have been churning out in our bedrooms for years. For the lucky ones out there, these rich, organic rhythms have been the soundtrack to an upbringing full of colourful carnivals and street parties. Eduardo Marques is such a drummer. Having grown up in Brazil, Marques now lives and works in London, with a gig diary that's bursting at the seams. Drummer caught up with the in-demand player before a marathon set with Tru Thoughts-signed Saravah Soul to talk about his approach to the Latin, funk and Afrobeat rhythms he fuses with taste, style and authenticity.

Eduardo's current appointments include live and session work for artists across the capital such as pianists John Crawford and Ivo Neame, singer Heidi Vogel of the Cinematic Orchestra, and Zeu Azevedo, whose band plays Brazilian *forró*.

"Everyone can play *forró* in Brazil because everybody listens to it; it's in our blood. I've been playing drums since I was 12; I was 35 in August. I've always listened to Brazilian music, carnival stuff, since I was five years old, going to clubs and listening to the bands. It's really normal for us in Brazil. But I'm always busy in London, more so than in Brazil. It's funny, I never expected this kind of love for Brazilian music and Brazilian drumming. I've learnt a lot here: London is a really cultured city. I came here because my cousin lives here - he's a guitar player and singer of Brazilian music, from bossa nova to samba and so on. I was thinking of staying for one year, and then, before I knew it, three years had passed."

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SARAVAH SOUL

Eduardo's main band, Saravah Soul, recently released their sophomore album, *Cultura Impura*, on Tru Thoughts recordings and have been leaving audiences wide-eyed and breathless across Britain and Europe with their high-energy performances and engaging stage presence. The album celebrates the oneness of the human condition, reminding us that all of life, music and culture are wholly interconnected. It literally joys in the 'impure culture' of the world. This, of course, is reflected in Eduardo's employment of West African, Caribbean, and South and North American rhythms - a result of years of study and experimentation?

"In Brazil we have lots of Afro music, like jongo and coco, so for me it's not really that difficult because we get used to these rhythms early on." Eduardo beatboxes the various rhythms and highlights the similarities between African and Brazilian. "That makes it easier for me to learn these rhythms. The question of authenticity is difficult, though; if I went to Africa, they would probably say I wasn't playing authentic Afrobeat. But I'm enjoying myself, I'm trying my best. If you think about authenticity too much, you might forget to enjoy yourself. I just try to play what I play."

"In Saravah Soul we all have separate influences. Kiris [Houston - guitar] has all



the English rock and funk influences. Otto [Nascarella - singer, guitarist, percussion] is a really good DJ; he has thousands of albums, so he really knows about the funk stuff. Jack [Yglesias - percussion, flute] is great to play with; I used to think he was messy and too busy until I played with another conga player and I was like, 'Bring Jack back.' Because when we play funk, he fills up the groove so well; he has all the jazz influences too. Matheus [Nova - bass] loves what all bass players love: Jaco Pastorius. So I think it's a nice mix of culture. Of course, we talked a lot about all of this and it wasn't easy to mix at the start, but now we know what Saravah Soul needs to sound like. We bring together all of these roots and rhythms, as well as the conception of the old recordings, like a big room with the drums in the middle and everybody in the same room, not like today. If you listen to the album it's a kind of mess, in that on the drum tracks you can hear



the percussion as well, and the guitar.”

While *Drummer* wouldn't go so far as to call the album a 'mess,' *Cultura Impura* certainly has those elements of spontaneous and vital energy that you would expect from a live recording. If you get the opportunity to see Saravah Soul live, you will witness for yourself just how much energy this group of musicians generates. The club was literally pulsating for three hours or more as Eduardo guided the band through funk, Afrobeat, jongo, coco and *Congo de ouro* tunes.

“We love all of the old funk stuff, like James Brown, as well as the Afrobeat, like Fela Kuti. At first I was like, ‘Oh my god, what is this?’ Because when I first listened I thought, ‘This is easy!’ But then, when I watched Tony Allen play, I realised how difficult it could be. The hi-hat work that he does is completely different: he doesn't keep the same pattern, he's constantly varying it to make the music fluid and organic. There is a lot of emphasis on the ‘off,’ the bass drum stays consistent, and then the snare drum breaks the beat. Its not ‘1, 2, 3, 4.’ You have to play Afrobeat, or even Brazilian music, quietly. Tony Allen has a huge band but he plays so quietly. Steve Gadd doesn't play loudly either, and he's very melodic.

“In one of our songs, ‘Se Da Dó,’ I play a David Garibaldi-type hi-hat pattern, but I keep that going and change the bass and snare. It's taking different influences from different drummers. In the beginning, Otto was saying, ‘Let's play this rare stuff ... Listen to this ... listen to that.’ He told me to listen to ‘Funky Drummer’ and I thought it sounded easy! But not for long. During working out how to play that, I developed lots of other grooves by displacing the backbeat and all of that stuff.”

EVOLUTION

While Eduardo's ideas on developing a groove are not necessarily new, often a simple-sounding rhythm can have hidden complexities that take considerable skill and technique to master, but the subject of the evolution of rhythm is an interesting one, particularly, as in this case, how Latin rhythms progressed from numerous players, parts and percussion instruments to one drummer incorporating all the voices on one kit.

“You have to play percussion a bit,” says Eduardo. “I play pandeiro, I play tambourine – not like a professional, but I know how they work so that when I go to the drums I know what will work around those rhythms. I think it's growing, this kind of thing: mixing the rhythms and traditional percussion parts. When you see Jojo Mayer doing all the drum 'n' bass stuff, he's amazing, man. He's developing a new way to play. This growth is not going to stop: new drummers will come and make new sounds. If you see El Negro playing the Afro, he mixes timbales and cowbells, and plays all the licks of a drummer, but the feeling is that of a percussionist.

“I was talking to a trombone player; he was asking me to show him some drum technique and I said, ‘When you play a rhythm, you have to



GEAR BOX

Drums: Sonor 1965

13" Rack tom
16" Floor tom
20" Bass drum
14" Ludwig Supraphonic Snare (1970)

Cymbals:

14" Zildjian New Beat Hi-hats
20" Zildjian K Constantinople Ride
16" Istanbul Agop

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know where to place the notes. When you play a samba, you listen to the bass drum mostly - that's the essence of the music. So the drummer has to play the bass drum louder in that instance.' This kind of conception is important. Again, when you hear Tony Allen playing Afrobeat, his bass drum is so well placed. And then he adds the hands; he doesn't play loudly, he equalises the sound of the drums, which I think is amazing. Drums are the best instrument, it's true. When you get that equalised sound between snare, hi-hat and bass drum, it's joy – Steve Gadd is a master of this. I see lots of drummers that don't understand this kind of thing; they play the right notes in the right places but it just doesn't quite sit right somehow.”

Eduardo's own education gave him a somewhat unique insight into how and where to place the notes to communicate the right feel. Learning with non-drummers at São Paulo's Groove School got him thinking like a musician at an early age.

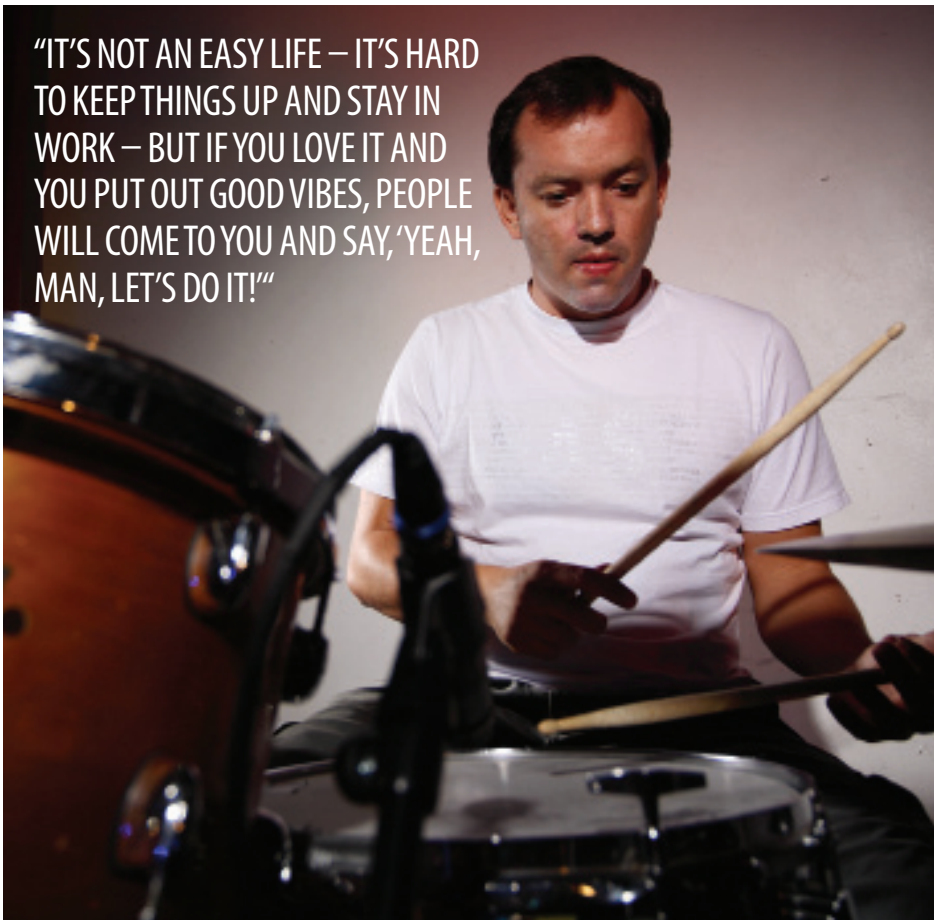
“There was an amazing bass player there, Luiz Cavalcante, who I had lessons with. He was a real roots guy – didn't want a computer, just practised all day. He's not a drummer but he would teach me how to groove with a bassist. I would go in and try to play like Dennis Chambers and he'd shout at me, ‘Just keep the groove.’ Then after a while, I understood. With Saravah Soul I'm never going to play those big rolling fills, never. I tried to in the beginning and

all the guys said, ‘No, no! No toms, just groove!’ So now I know I'm just going to keep the groove.

“My second teacher wasn't a drummer either; he was a guitar player – Leive Miranda. When I started there I used to play rock, like Iron Maiden. He said to me, ‘No, no, no. Stop. Play quiet.’ So I tried again and he shouted, ‘No, man, quietly!’ One day I started crying, I thought he was crazy. But I wanted to learn what he had to teach. Then I learnt a lot of brush technique. And I realise when I play gigs now, trio gigs in particular – piano, double bass and drums - the guys love the sound because I play together with them; I don't play loudly. Even the singers appreciate it because I'm listening to the song and the sound, not just playing the drums. To learn a harmonic instrument is really important as well; I play piano and guitar. It helps you to be more creative and understand the sections and where to go and what to play.”

“I then had lessons with Cuca Teixeira, who was an amazing drummer from São Paulo. And then Eduardo Ribeiro, who I think is now the best Brazilian drummer in São Paulo, even in Brazil – he is recording a lot, all the new records have his name on them. The guy has a really good vibe; he opened my mind to using rudiments around the kit and making music with them. It's really important to practise rudiments in a musical way. So play your

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paradiddles with an interesting foot pattern or something. I love to practise drums, so it's always fun for me."

DIFFERENT STROKES

The question to which we all want to know the answer is: does it take a Brazilian drummer to play a Brazilian rhythm authentically?

"It's like me playing rock 'n' roll; when I go to the studios here in London, I see so many good rock bands playing proper, authentic rock music and I think, 'Man, I can't play like this.' It's an English blood thing, and it's a great thing; the best rock 'n' roll bands are from England, I think. Similarly, I know lots of English people who play Brazilian music very well, but to be honest, it's hard to get the right feel. I went to Brazil for a year and Saravah Soul tried up to 15 drummers to replace me. They could play funk well, they could play Afrobeat well, but when it came to Brazilian music, they would try to play samba but mistake it for salsa. Samba has no repetitive clave, it's more free than that. But if you go to Brazil, if you have the opportunity to go to São Paulo, you'll see so many amazing Brazilian drummers playing samba.

"It's funny, I don't like to compare musicians. Your hands are different from everybody else's. I remember I always used to try and play like David Garibaldi: I really like all the feeling and the funk that he brings. But when I recorded myself trying to play like that I listened back and thought, 'This is s***! It's just not the same.' I also

tried to play like Dave Weckl; it will never be the same! The sound of his sticks in his hands is unique, just as with you or me. So that's why I like to play original stuff, because then those amazing drummers could listen and say, 'Who's this drummer?' It's not copying somebody. It is important to listen to other drummers and hear what they do, but then adapt it into your own thing. Everyone has their own influences, but if you're in only one band, try to bring new things to the table so that you can grow and be more creative. Listen a lot and get your own sound sorted. Learn from the engineers and guys who work in the studio. Get the tips about mics, drums and cymbals. I love to think about the texture of drumming, changing the heads and the cymbals for the right sound for a particular gig, and knowing how to get the best sound out of those instruments. Cymbal sounds are very important, particularly for jazz. If you have a s*** cymbal at a jazz gig, the pianist will not call you back."

SOUL FOOD

Saravah Soul and Eduardo Marques, despite the drummer's modesty, create an authentic and uplifting blend of the rhythms displayed on *Cultura Impura*. It is reassuring to hear that Marques still takes so much inspiration from drummers the world over, not only South America or Africa. This genuine passion for learning constitutes just part of Eduardo's recipe for happiness.

EDUARDO'S CHOICE



'4am' – Herbie Hancock on *Mr. Hands* (Harvey Mason)



'Pedro Brasil' – Djavan on *Seduzir* (Téo Lima)

'Jogral' – Djavan on *Seduzir* (Téo Lima)



Zombie – Fela Kuti on *Zombie* (Tony Allen)



Aja – Steely Dan (Steve Gadd)

"Cuban music is really important - how they think in six and eight – as is Brazilian music... Indian music too; everything, man! I have just always listened to the drums in the music more than anything else. I just love them. I've had people say to me, 'Why do you play the drums? You have to carry all those heavy things around.' Those people don't even listen to the drums. One day I'm playing to 2,000 people, the next I'm in a little pub and it feels the same. I'm playing what I love to play. It's not an easy life – it's hard to keep things up and stay in work – but if you love it and you put out good vibes, people will come to you and say, 'Yeah, man, let's do it!'

"You have to be honest with yourself. The music scene is dangerous if you don't have your head straight. The problems are everywhere: drugs, alcohol... I try to be fit and healthy because I have to be able to play well. And in the end, it's love, isn't it? You have to dedicate yourself and keep up the practice. I can feel my sticks being slack after two days of not playing. Love what you do. You don't have to think about success, because what happens when you get there? You say, 'I'm successful... What now?' If you're looking for money and you get it, you'll still keep playing drums. There might be days when I say to myself, 'I don't want to play this.' But I don't want to be working in a bank: I want to be a drummer. So I'm going to sit on the drums and play. It's my job. My family have always supported me too; if I didn't have that, I don't know if I would be a drummer. I really have them to thank."