CHUCK RAINNEY &
JOHN ANTHONY MARTINEZ
Rock Nashville with Rhythm Intensive Bass Camp
by Jack Beal & Kevin McGurk

This article was featured in Bass Frontiers Magazine, August 27, 2015
Rhythm Intensive® continues to be committed to the arts. Rhythm Intensive® events, workshops, and seminars are made possible by our sponsors and their generous contributions. Some of our sponsors are:

MUSIC PRODUCTIONS

**CHUCK RAINEY AND JOHN ANTHONY MARTINEZ ROCK NASHVILLE WITH RHYTHM INTENSIVE BASS CAMP**

by Jack Beal & Kevin McGurk
*Bass Frontiers Magazine*
August 28, 2015

THIS MONTH legendary bassist Chuck Rainey, veteran drummer John Anthony Martinez and a host of other musical wizards came to Nashville with their three-day Rhythm Intensive Bass Camp. Those of us in attendance at this unique school of groove fell completely under their spell as they dazzled us with musical possibilities, wisdom, experience and personal attention. We left the camp inspired and empowered. The camp was hosted at SIR Nashville who provided excellent studio facilities and technical support. The schedule included daily master class rotations, instructor performances and ensemble participation for all the attendees. The lessons included fingering technique, rhythm studies, developing bass lines, time and groove, ear training, improvisation, creative thinking and philosophy. The overarching theme of the camp was the all-important relationship between bassist and drummer.
The vibe at the camp was much more like a family reunion than a clinic.
For three incredible days Chuck and his friends shared their experiences without reservation. No topic was off limits. We talked about the good, the bad and the weird of the music business. Thoughts were shared about gig etiquette, relationships, ego and branding. We were able to spend quality one-on-one time not only with Chuck and John but with all of the master class musicians including Bobby Vega, Ed Friedland, Victor Wooten, Foley, Doug Johns, Jordan Simmons, (aka JSimms) and Vail Johnson. All attendees were encouraged to keep in touch and we were given the personal contact information for each instructor if we needed help in the future.
Chuck and John surrounded themselves with a wonderful team of professionals who insured the success of the Nashville Bass Camp. The staff included Shueh-li Ong, (who by the way gave a masterful demonstration of the theremin synthesizer) along with a host of other fine people who worked tirelessly to make the experience meaningful for the campers.

If you missed this amazing camp designed for aspiring young artists, college students, serious amateurs, and professional bassists, drummers, guitarists and keyboard players, fear not! Chuck and John have other events planned. Rhythm Intensive is a continuing collaboration between the two whose mission it is to transfer and preserve what they have learned as rhythm section players to future generations via camps, videos, play along audio, books and performances. Check out their website at www.rhythmintensive.com.

What makes Rhythm Intensive so extraordinary is the level of musical talent involved. Chuck and John are joined by some of the most successful players on the planet who all share a common goal....to freely share what they have learned with others. They love to teach and it shows. Consider this faculty:
Chuck Rainey

GODFATHER OF GROOVE
Chuck Rainey has been called the Godfather of Groove. Without argument, he is one of the most recorded bass players in the history of recorded music. The number of albums and songs in his discography is mind boggling. He has played or recorded with King Curtis, Sam Cooke, Etta James, The original Coasters, Jackie Wilson, Harry Bellefonte, Al Kooper, The Supremes, Labelle, Aretha Franklin, Roberta Flack, Quincy Jones, Marvin Gaye, The Jackson 5, The Rascals, Steely Dan, Jackson Browne, Joe Walsh and a ton of other folks.

PASSION
For Chuck, November 4, 2011 was the day the music died…..almost. Most people in music circles know that Chuck suffered a cruel stroke that left him paralyzed on his left side and mute. It appeared that the damage might prevent Chuck from ever playing again…..but Chuck is a passionate guy. He is passionate about life and passionate about music. He wouldn’t quit. With a white-hot desire to heal, he pushed himself to recover. Over a period of months he learned to speak again. He willed his left hand to strengthen and again play those wonderful grooves we all love.

CHUCK’S BACK!
The good news is that Chuck is BACK! He looks fantastic and his playing is “Rock Steady”! Nowadays in addition to recording and touring, Chuck is teaching…..and we are blessed because of it. If ever there was a living, breathing example of an epic comeback story, look no further than the remarkable Chuck Rainey. We all love his music, and now having spent a few days with him, you learn to love the man behind the music as well. A living legend indeed!

John Anthony Martinez

VETERAN DRUMMER
John Anthony Martinez is the managing partner for Rhythm Intensive. His work ethic and organizational skills keep the machine clicking like a metronome. John and Chuck bring different talents to the table, but like any tight bassist/drummer duo, they compliment each other.

John is an alumnus The High School of Music and Art, Berklee College of Music and Oxford University. He is currently an MBA candidate in the world’s first MBA program for Music and the Creative Industries at the Henley Business School in the UK. John is an in-demand drummer, songwriter and producer.

MASTER PARTNER
He has often served as guest lecturer for colleges and secondary schools. John frequently serves as a consultant providing songwriting, music and audio services to the music and media industries.

He has recorded or performed with Neal McCoy, Kacey Musgraves, Bailey Brown, Ronnie Laws, Tom Browne, Jesse Powell, Bill Tillman, Bernard Wright, Dennis Edwards & the Temptations, Larry Blockman, Yarbrough & Peoples, Shelly Carroll, Russ Taft, Phil Driscoll, Cindy Cruise-Ratcliff, Kim Waters, Andy Timmons, Tim Ishii, Dallas Jazz Orchestra, Don Johnson, Bobby Sparks, Alvin Slaughter, Buddy Miles, and the Johnnie High Country Music Revue TV show. He is currently music director for Main Street LIVE, (aka the Grapevine Opry), drummer for the Texas Country Music Hall of Fame, and drummer for the Chuck Rainey Coalition.

John has authored instructional works including The Essence of Drumming, a field guide for aspiring or professional drummers reflecting experience gained in over 30 years of drumming professionally, and Foundations in Rhythm.

When John talks, we listen. He can get as deep as you want to go with complicated rhythmic theory; cross rhythms, polyrhythms, half-time, cut-time, etc., but he has the ability to make the complex simple to understand. It’s all about playing well with others and John is a master partner.
WHAT A TALENT

Bobby Vega began his professional career at age 16 with Sly and the Family Stone. He knows how to play funky...... and any other way for that matter. His discography includes over 100 albums. Bobby has toured or recorded with Billy Preston, Paul Butterfield, Baba Olantunji, Joan Baez, Bob Weir, Kitaro, Tower of Power, Etta James, Mickey Hart, Jefferson Starship, Santana and Jerry Garcia among others. His unique rich driving sound is achieved with a combination of pick, finger, thumb or all of the above. Bobby’s picking/muting technique blends ghost notes tastefully laid between powerful chord tones producing a driving groove that is uniquely his. Bobby captivates audiences with the raw power he brings to the instrument. He feels the groove from his feet, (which are in constant motion), through his soul and finally to his fingers. His talent is amazing, but Bobby will be the first to say that practice is the key. “The sound is in your hands....you learn the instrument by spending time with it.” Chuck Rainey and Bobby obviously share a close friendship. Their respect for each other is likewise abundantly apparent. Bobby talked of growing up listening to Chuck’s music. "Those songs were the soundtrack of my life!” So when Chuck called about the Rhythm Intensive gig in Nashville, Bobby was all in......and we are so glad he came. His insights and humor gave the event extra spice. What a talent!

THE BASS WHISPERER

Ed Friedland is known as the Bass Whisperer. He knows the instrument and knows how to use it. He also knows how to communicate. As a lecturer, he is one of those guys who can “turn on the light bulb” and make you understand a concept. Ed advises, “Groove the rests as hard as you groove the notes!” Sometimes it’s the space between the notes that makes all the difference. Ed grew up in New York and attended the High School of Music and Art in Manhattan. He picked up the bass while attending the Berklee College of Music and hasn’t looked back. He has a Masters Degree in education and is a prolific author. Ed wrote “Building Walking Bass Lines”, a Hal Leonard publication which has been studied by generations of bassists. He has written countless instructional articles for Bass Player magazine, Bass Guitar magazine and Guitar World. Ed is still writing books for Hal Leonard and doing gear reviews for Guitar World and Bass Gear magazines. After living in Austin for 10 years, Ed is moving to Nashville. His latest project is an upcoming tour with The Mavericks as their bassist.

SUPERFUNKY

The dynamic duo of Doug Johns and Jordan Simmons, aka JSimms, is the perfect example of what is possible when a great bassist and a great drummer play together. Who needs guitars and keyboards? Armed only with a drum kit, a Pedulla bass and a handful of effects, these two masters create a sizziling superfunky sound to rival a 7 piece band! Their educational message was delivered loud and clear: “Listen to each other!” “Help each other!” and when mistakes happen, “Cover for each other!” Jordan hails from Lorain, Ohio where he works as a full-time drummer, teacher and music director for Grace Covenant Church and Living Word Church. He plays Cold Mountain Drums and Amedia Cymbals. Doug has worked with Victor Wooten, Buddy Miles, The LA Mass Choir, Aaron Lindsey, Chuck Rainey and many others. His albums include, Doug Johns (2006), Pocket Fulla Nasty (2008), Stank (2010) and Blomp (2012). Doug plays Pedulla Basses and uses DR strings.
Foley

LEAD BASSIST WITH MILES DAVIS
Foley may be best known for his time as “lead bassist” with Miles Davis. However he has also shared the stage with Sly Stone, George Clinton, Santana, Herbie Hancock, Prince, Chaka Khan, Patrice Rushen, El DeBarge, Al Jarreau, Alice in Chains, Foreigner, Bootsy Collins, Fishbone, Arrested Development, David Sanborn, Jungle Bros., Macy Gray, Mint Condition, Monica, Davina, Larry Dunn, Lenny White, Marcus Miller, Chris Dave and Primus.

After an outstanding demonstration of “percussion bass” playing, (on an instrument borrowed on the spot from Bobby Vega), Foley talked of the “business of bass” and shared some gems he picked up from Miles Davis. Branding and originality have a place in a player’s success and Foley knows the ropes. He also knows how to work with various artists and give them what they want in a song. He recalled Miles Davis telling him, “Play one half of what you normally play.” Good advice for all.

Victor Wooten

KEEPING THE GROOVE ALIVE
The event included some unexpected treats. Although Victor Wooten was not listed as an instructor, he just came by during the camp to honor his friend Chuck Rainey and to share his insights. Chuck and Victor discussed the stamina and strength required to play well, reminding us that bassists seldom get a chance to rest during a song. The guitarist and keyboard players may get an occasional break, but the rhythm section is always keeping the groove alive. Strength training is a necessary part of the preparation to play well. You have to listen to a man like Victor. He has won 5 Grammy Awards; been named “Bass Player of the Year” three times in a row by Bass Player magazine. He has been bassist for Bela Fleck and the Flecktones since the group’s formation in 1988. Victor created “Victor Wooten’s Center for Music and Nature” located in Only, Tennessee, just outside of Nashville, where he holds classes in spring and summer.

Vail Johnson

BASS MONSTER
Another surprise for the attendees was a stellar performance by Vail Johnson, longtime bassist for Kenny G among others. As a solo artist, Vail has become the Bass Monster and JazzAmericana Crooner. His demonstration of bass as a lead/solo instrument was absolutely stunning! Again, who needs a guitar player? Vail has expanded the role of the bass guitar to the outer limits! He was also kind enough to bring along gifts of his latest CD, “flow”. It is an addictive instrumental work that showcases Vail’s superior talents and should be in everyone’s collection. You won’t stop listening to it.

After an outstanding demonstration of “percussion bass” playing, (on an instrument borrowed on the spot from Bobby Vega), Foley talked of the “business of bass” and shared some gems he picked up from Miles Davis. Branding and originality have a place in a player’s success and Foley knows the ropes. He also knows how to work with various artists and give them what they want in a song. He recalled Miles Davis telling him, “Play one half of what you normally play.” Good advice for all.
Imagine playing in an ensemble with Chester Thompson on the drumkit and Eric Struthers on guitar. Been there, done that! Chester and Eric were kind enough to offer their time and talent to the Camp and patiently worked with the campers on their improvisational skills. Chester made a name for himself as a session drummer before playing in Frank Zappa’s touring band. He has played with or recorded with Weather Report, Genesis, Phil Collins, Santana, Steve Hackett, Tony Banks, and is a founding member of the band Fire Merchants. He is an adjunct instructor at Belmont University’s School of Music in Nashville.

Eric is probably best known for his work with the Neville Brothers but has also worked with Michael McDonald, Francine Reed, Shane Theriot, Bill Deraime, Elvin Spencer, Smoky Greenwell, Victor Wooten and Jimmy Buffett.

Dr. Randall Kertz, a Chiropractic Physician and Acupuncturist, presented excellent advice on how to prevent injuries common to musicians, especially bass players. Dr. Kertz is the primary physician at Health Care Specialists, Ltd., and has been practicing chiropractic and acupuncture for over 15 years. He also holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Human Biology. His primary treatment center is located in Niles, Illinois, although he frequently performs services at other venues.

Dr. Kertz, a bass player himself, often treats musicians for various injuries they may sustain on the road or locally and is the on-call chiropractor for many Chicago area musicians. His clientele includes many local and national acts. He has written a book, The Bassists Guide to Injury Management, Prevention and Better Health which can be found on his website, www.drkertz.com.

To summarize, one could describe the Nashville Rhythm Intensive Bass Camp as a truly remarkable event, bringing together brilliant teachers and appreciative students in an environment conducive to intimate and informal interaction. The recipe works! Chuck told us, “A teacher does not teach you anything, you teach yourself. A teacher just shows you what is possible!” Mission accomplished. We learned what is possible, Chuck. Thank you.
2015 Nashville Bass Camp

1) Rhythm Intensive® drawstring backpack, 2) Vail Johnson, 3) Foley & John, 4) Bobby Vega, 5) Chuck & John, 6) Leah, Chuck, John with his custom made Laudo drum & Joe Christian, owner & patent owner of Laudo, 7) Chuck & Chester Thompson, 8) Ed Friedland
For more information regarding Rhythm Intensive® contact us at:

Rhythm Intensive®
P.O. Box 92972
Southlake, TX 76092.
(615) 274•9846
info@rhythmintensive.com

www.rhythmintensive.com

Managing Partners websites: