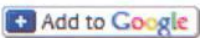




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Meet Your Neighbor: "Bongo Boy" Ed Gaus

By Susan Zingraf

Ever heard of a drum circle? The phenomena where random groups of people with no previous musical experience miraculously find rhythm together? It's a weekly occurrence at Bongo Boy Music School, along with a whole set of other things, where Ed Gaus is the leader of the band.



Drummer, percussionist, music teacher, songwriter, composer and business owner Ed Gaus, a Geist Woods resident, is living his dream with music. Gaus is an accomplished musician with much credit to his name, as a drummer having played with a host of famous names being just one, as a teacher and owner of Bongo Boy Music School as another.

Gaus and his drum set have traveled some miles playing with famous names including Bonnie Raitt, Eddie Money, The Subdudes, Dar Williams, Tom Waits and Bob & Tom to name a just few, as well as touring with John Prine in the mid 1990s.

Growing up in Northbrook, IL, Gaus started out playing piano at six years old, and soon progressed on to the sax, marimba and drums. He attended Indiana University to study music. It was here Gaus met John Mellencamp's drummer, Kenny Arnoff, at a drum clinic. "He floored me," Gaus remembered. Gaus had seen his share of drum clinics before, but seeing Arnoff perform at this one really changed him. "I knew I wanted to do that," he reflected.

Gaus later toured with various bands, including a band headed by Larry Crane, Mellencamp's former guitar player. Opening for national acts, playing gigs, songwriting and touring were Gaus' life after college, and he was doing exactly what he wanted to be doing. "I believed in the music," Gaus described with fondness of that time in his life. "But I never only want to be a drummer," he said. And he's certainly proven that.

In 1999, Gaus started Bongo Boy as a music production company, all the while researching music education and evaluating the need for a music school in Indianapolis. In 2003, he opened Bongo Boy Music School in its current location at 8481 Bash Street (off of 82nd Street, just west of I-465), to offer music instruction. By July 2005, the studio doubled in size to 5,000

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square feet and now has 16 instructors and over 300 students.

The studio has private instruction rooms with sliding glass doors lining the hallways, state-of-the-art recording equipment, a large back room where indoor drum circles (otherwise they're outside) and rock band classes are held and every drum and percussion instrument known to man—it's quite a site to see, and hear. Instruments taught at Bongo Boy include drums, percussion, guitar, bass, piano, violin, clarinet, and sax among many others. Weeknights come alive with the sounds of students striking, strumming and blowing away on various instruments, and having a blast.

"I love passing on my knowledge to students," said Gaus. "I wish I had known about the music business, production, what it takes to be a session player, make connections, etc., so it's neat to give all that back," he commented. "That's what makes it all worthwhile to me."

Also, Gaus produces music for jingles, commercials and corporations. His recording room is fully loaded with music software, sound boards and the like where he also teaches students the mechanics of music production.

To Gaus, he has the best of both worlds at his studio, "The merge of music production with music instruction," he said. "To our students I'm saying, 'Use all this to be the best person you can be, take all this knowledge and run with it.'"

And let's not forget about these drum circles...this concept that to the non-musical type may sound somewhat...scary? Gaus explained it's really about connecting with others, and yourself. "Everyone has inner rhythm," he claimed. "Drum circles are a great stress relief, they spark creativity and can be very relaxing." He finds it rewarding to see, and hear, people whether it's students, strangers, co-workers or whomever, find a rhythm. Bongo Boy holds public drum circles every Thursday night for those who may want to venture outside their usual bounds and try their hand on a conga. And these drum circles reach far beyond what you might think.

Drum circles are used in the fields of healthcare, social work, even corporate settings to help promote wellness and reduce stress. Called "health rhythms," they can be used with Alzheimer's and cancer patients as well as teens at risk and to help build team morale in the workplace. Gaus and other Bongo Boy instructors are trained health rhythms facilitators.

Another big beat on Gaus' drum is the relationship and partnership he forged with Remo, the world's leading drum company. Gaus thoroughly impressed the company heads with his professional operation and community connection gaining their support for his community drum circles. Remo supplies Bongo Boy with all the drum and percussion equipment for their drum circles and the fostering of "recreational music making." Gaus is very pleased with the partnership, "Remo saw the possibilities with us, so we all win here," he said.

Clearly Gaus, in a variety of ways, is all about the music. "It's fun to carve these niches. I love the business side just as much," he said of his ability to go outside the bounds of just being a musician.

"It's not about being a rock star, it's about doing what I love doing, and



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sharing it with others," he concluded. And with quite a music career already under his "skin," Gaus' passion for it ensures that beat will most certainly go on.

Learn more about Bongo Boy Music School at www.bongoboymusic.com or call 595-9065.

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