

Van Merwijk's
Music Machine



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Wondering how an Afro-Cuban, foot-tapping Latin number can fit into your regular jazz bill? Then a good dose of Van Merwijk's Music Machine is what you need to see just how. With the legendary Lucas van Merwijk at its head, the quartet is all set to perform at Indigo Live Music Bar, Bengaluru on April 5.

At the vanguard of the European Jazz, Latin and percussion scene for over 25 years now, this drummer has created an alcove of sounds - a blend of Cuban, Brazilian and North American world rhythms that are a class apart. "But it all started with the drum parades in my hometown, De Bilt in Netherlands, where I was always following them on the street. I was one of those kids who liked to hit things all the time and I made my mother's

pots and pans my drum set," he recalls. Studying both at the Amsterdam and Rotterdam Conservatory Lucas didn't finish his formal music education at either owing to his busy gig schedule. "Eventually, I became a teacher at both of these schools by the time I was 25," he recalls, always asking his students to practice and get it all together when they still have time and reminding them that music and music business are two different things. "And to be successful as a musician, you have to be good at both," says the teacher who believes that learning is a never-ending process.

Inspired by the likes of Tony

Williams, Steve Gadd, Vinnie Colaiuta, Lucas is now the initiator and bandleader of four ensembles including the world-percussion ensemble Drums United, Van Merwijk's Music Machine, Drumix! with master percussionist Aly N'Diaye Rose, and the 20-piece salsa and Latin Jazz formation, The Cubop City Big Band with whom he never gets tired of whipping up his signature number, *Que Sensacion*. All set to play in the city, the 54-year-old drummer, dishes out some less known facts about his Music Machine. "None of them can ever make to the hotel lobby on time and we are four musicians who use three different languages to communicate," he says about the global flavour in the quartet. So, what does he think of the top electronic DJs in the world today being from his homeland? "They are the new rockstars," he smiles. "Although I have worked with DJs to create bass loops and soundscapes, I'm not very connected to the world of huge dance parties," says Lucas, adding that if he had to collaborate with someone, it would have to be Afrojack. As he celebrates two decades with his Cubop City Big Band, releasing a couple of new albums and writing *WorldBeat*, his drum book with rhythms form all over the world, Lucas still finds time to unwind. "I have a beautiful family with four kids, a dog and two cats who I love spending time with. I also swim, bike or watch films," he says. Otherwise, it's usually some cognac, cigars and Cuban rum for him.

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Lucas Van Merwijk

JAZZIN' IT UP

A NOTCH

Ahead of his show in the city, we catch up with Dutch jazz drummer, Lucas Van Merwijk