

## Swing with the beats

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<http://www.punemirror.in/entertainment/unwind/Swing-with-the-beats/articleshow/46840524.cms>

Drumming patterns from around the world are intrinsically connected, says master drummer Lucas van Merwijk.

Jazz drummer Lucas van Merwijk from the Netherlands plays the drums with consummate skill. Particularly when he is playing with his quartet, Van Merwijk's Music Machine, he's the one who stokes the jazz swing. Merwijk is also a genius when it comes to drumming in a polyrhythmic pattern, and can smoothly switch to beating the drums with explosive speed and precision just like a rock musician would. Merwijk is indeed versatile and is arguably one of the best drummers from Europe.

But what sets him apart? "Hours and hours of practising the drums — I wish there was a shortcut to success, but there isn't," smiles Merwijk, who's in the city to conduct two drumming workshops and perform with his quartet today. As a teenager growing up in Amsterdam, Merwijk quit school to concentrate on drumming. "I was absolutely sure that I wanted to pursue playing the drums apart from doing anything else in life," he laughs. In his younger days, he would sit behind his drum kit for hours dreaming to become the best one day.

His dedication towards music is tempered with a zeal to explore and experiment with drumming patterns from around the world. Amsterdam being a cosmopolitan city, Merwijk soon found himself in the company of Latin American musicians, who introduced him to polyrhythmic beats. "Latin music is based on polyrhythmic patterns. Polyrythm literally means the reoccurrence of a beat played in two different time signatures," explains Merwijk.

"In those days there was no Internet, so a musician would tell me what to play, and I would follow his instructions," recalls Merwijk. He progressed steadily to become one of the best crossover drummers in the genre. His passion for experimenting also led him to play the drums with renowned Latin bands such as Nueva Manteca and the Cubop City Big Band. "I have always believed in pushing boundaries in music, otherwise you don't learn anything new," states Merwijk.

His experimentation didn't stop with Latin music. He would go on to travel the world to learn and understand different drumming patterns. "I have even played with a tabla player," he smiles. However, instead of finding structural differences in various types of beats, he was surprised to observe that every groove shared a common universal vocabulary. "As you begin to comprehend drum patterns you invariably notice a commonality in the beats," he says.

As for the concert today, Van Merwijk's Music Machine is ready to swing with Cuban Golden Classics. The quartet features Cuban master pianist Ramon Valle, Bert Boeren on trombone and a talented bassist from Venezuela, Samuel Albert Ruiz. "We give our best when we perform. Music, I feel, should make the audience feel good about themselves, and they should ideally experience a catharsis of sorts," signs off Merwijk.

WHERE: blueFROG, Ishanya Mall, Yerwada (entry is free)

WHEN: April 8, 9 pm