



5 questions with drummer Jack Mouse

BY JANE DONAHUE

For the Sun

Making music isn't something Jack Mouse does, it's part of who he is.

"I started playing drums when I was 4, so I don't have a lot of memories when I wasn't playing," said Mouse, a native of Emporia, Kan. "My parents were very supportive. My father always said, 'I don't care what you do, but do something you love.'"

Early on, Mouse realized percussion was his passion, and joined a local band while in high school. "By the time I was in college, I was going out with name bands and really working quite a bit on a high level," he said.

"When I graduated from college in 1969, I auditioned for the Air Force Academy jazz band and



Jack Mouse

IF YOU GO:

Mouse will be playing during "An Evening with Jazz Vocalist Janice Borla" at 8 p.m. May 17 at the Madden Theatre, 171 E. Chicago Ave. on the campus of North Central College in Naperville.

The show features Borla and Mouse (on drums), Art Davis (trumpet), Chris White (piano) and Jim Cox (bass).

Tickets (\$22 for adults/ \$17 for students and senior) are on sale now at <http://tickets.nocntrl.edu>.

ON THE WEB:

To learn more about Jack Mouse or to order his music, visit jackmouse.com.

spent four years doing that, traveling nine months out of a year."

Mouse's drum skills brought him to the Windy City in 1978 and he

never left. "I was planning to move to New York, but I stopped to play here and I stayed," he said. "In the 80s, Chicago was known as a place where a musician could make some money in a hurry. You could work every night and every day."

In 1984, he joined forces with jazz vocalist Janice Borla, both professionally and personally. "I think people should marry their best friend, and that is what I did," he said. "She is my favorite vocalist, and I don't just say that because she is my wife."

When he isn't performing with the Janice Borla Group, recording or presenting clinics and workshops,

Mouse is a faculty member of the North Central College jazz studies program.

"Jack brings a lifetime of real world 'jobbing' experience to his work with the students at North Central College," said Dr. Ramona Wis, professor of fine arts and music department chairperson.

Mouse was recently recognized with the Aquarian Award of Achievement for his contributions as a jazz educator and performer.

"Our company has only presented this award three times in our history," said Aquarian founder Roy Burns.

"In addition to being a highly regarded educator, Jack's new recording 'Range of Motion' demonstrates his prowess as a marvelous player and a true artist."

1. After all these years, do you still practice?

"I practice every day. I don't practice to get better any more, I practice to get different. When I don't practice, I am out of sorts."

2. What does the Aquarian Award mean to you?

"It's not the award as much as who it came from. Roy Burns has been in my life since I was 4 and has always been very supportive. He was the first live drummer I ever saw and he was my inspiration."

3. What do you enjoy most about

working with students at NCC?

"Jazz is really at its roots, a folk art form. One player passes on what they know to the next and I think that's important. The arts are a process; it's not a product and that's what people enjoy most about improvised music. Teaching those concepts gives me great gratification. Watching my students go out and spread the art form is pretty cool."

4. What do you like to do in your spare time?

"In the evenings, there is nothing I enjoy more than fixing dinner together (with Janice). That's our down time. In the summer we like working in the yard, we enjoy being outdoors. Other than that, we are dealing with music from the time we get up to the time we go to bed."

5. What's on your iPod?

"I don't have an iPod. I can't listen to music that way. If I'm going to listen to music, I am going to sit down and listen and focus on listening."