

Mark Buchwald Moves on to Regional Competition in the Guitar Center National Drum Off

By Helen Marketti



Cleveland native, Mark Buchwald has won the 2014 Guitar Center National Drum Off Competition for his hometown. He is now gearing up for the Northeast Regional Competition, which will take place at the Guitar Center in North Olmsted at 7:00 pm on October 21.



Mark has quite an extensive family history of musicians as well as his own achievements and experiences. "First and foremost, I have to give my family credit for my beginning experiences in music. My mom (Polly Zaremba-Dudek) was the singer for the *Cleveland Band* who were together for twenty-five years! She, along with my stepfather, Ken Dudek and my uncles (Mike and Peter) have given me the opportunity to grow up

loving music. The stage was my playground," said Mark. "I used to go on the road with them. They were my first teachers, my first experiences for loving music. I really loved the drumming of Tom Cantwell who was also in the *Cleveland Band*. He was very influential. My Uncle Peter was the leader of the band and one of my biggest mentors. He is now teaching music at the high school level. My Uncle Mike does sound for Channel 3. My mom gives vocal lessons out of her home and my stepfather consults and advises regarding the music business."

"On my mom's side of the family, my grandfather played the trombone and was a band leader. My grandmother was a Broadway singer. As a little kid, I remember going to my grandfather's house and playing on a drum kit that was set up," said Mark. "We really have a strong family unit. My brother, Matthew is a talented guitar player. He makes his own guitars out of exotic wood. I would also like to share that my family was instrumental in bringing the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame to Cleveland. My mom played for five days straight to bring attention to Cleveland. There is a plaque with her name on it at the Rock Hall."

"I have to say that I really like the drumming of Stewart Copeland (The Police), Neil Peart (RUSH) and my ultimate influence on the drums today is Danny Carey from the band, Tool. I think when you are a drummer for a band it's about driving that band and being a leader. I have worked with many bands and have done studio session work. I enjoy the art of drumming and taking myself to the next level. I like to perform with bands and I also like doing solo work."

Mark continues, "I would consider my drumming interests a groove metal style and what I mean by that is I am very influenced by progressive music such as Tool and 311. I like



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rock and jazz fusion but at the core for me even in my original compositions, it's the groove metal."

After graduating from high school, Mark moved to Los Angeles with hopes of breaking into the music scene. "I moved out west with some friends from Akron which included Janie Lane (Warrant). Through a friend, I met drummer, Greg Bissonette. Greg is mostly known for getting the David Lee Roth band together right after David left Van Halen. I took drum lessons from him and in exchange, my friend and I would set up and tear down his drum kits when he did gigs in LA. I learned many valuable lessons from Greg. He was influential in showing me dynamics. He showed me how to be a professional. He is an amazing musician and person. I really learned my chops during my time in LA. The music scene I was involved with was more underground such as Jane's Addiction, Red Hot Chili Peppers and Nine Inch Nails."

"I definitely moved out to LA for the music scene. I did not have any interest in becoming an actor although by luck and networking I was able to secure a few small roles." Mark appeared in several movies and television shows including 90210 (1992), Babylon 5 (1993), Next Door (1994, starring James Wood and Randy Quaid) and several others.

Today, Mark is keeping his foot in the music scene in Cleveland. He is looking forward to the drum competition later this month at Guitar Center. "This is the farthest I have gone with this drum competition. I am representing Cleveland and very excited. What is great about this is that Cleveland was chosen to be the hub for the competition. I will be competing with other store winners from Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Youngstown, Toledo and Cincinnati. There will be twelve of us competing and the top winner will then advance to the semi finals in New York City. The winner gets \$25,000 and product endorsements. Everyone who has won in the past has been able to network and move on to bigger and better opportunities. This competition has been going on every year since 1988."

Mark continues, "I have excellent support around me and home field advantage. I have a 3-minute solo that is planned months in advance. It's time to show what I can do, demonstrate showmanship, creativity, originality and the wow factor."

"I have already won some prizes for winning the competition here which included money and gear. I am going to donate some of what I have won to Save the Music Project, which was started by VH1. People can donate money or gear to help underprivileged kids to learn music and play instruments. It's a great cause and helps kids who normally might not have a chance to be involved with music."

In addition to preparing for the upcoming competition, Mark has plenty of other projects. "Right now my Uncle Mike (Mike Zaremba) and I are working on a studio project with a fantastic singer/songwriter whose name is Amy Jo Scott. We are now putting together the finishing touches on an album that has been recorded and produced by Uncle Mike."

"I am in a cover band that has been together for eleven years called, Binge Red. I have also done a few shows with Billy Morris who is from Cleveland and played guitar for Warrant. It's all about branching out and gaining more experiences."

Music holds a special place in Mark's heart and life. "I have worked with computers for fourteen years. I am now a manager and chief developer. I became interested in computers through my interest in music. The formatting and everything that is now done on computers for music, I have used that to my advantage to work in the computer industry. Music can definitely lead you to another career. I consider where I am today because of music."



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