

# Marching to his own drummer

Anyone who thinks that Jeremy Hummel has been just sitting around idly twirling his drumsticks since he left Breaking Benjamin should think again. The talented musician who laid down the driving backbeat to Breaking Ben's first two nationally released albums has been a busy guy.

On his plate right now are:

- A new gig with the modern-rock band, Until We Rise, which just released a new EP.
- An eclectic jazz-fusion project, the Electric Volcano Experiment.
- A duo project with Bret Alexander, one of the most respected musicians in NEPA.
- Work as a contributing writer to Modern Drummer magazine, the largest drumming publication in the world.
- Plenty of additional work as a drum instructor and as a coveted studio session musician.

The Weekender recently caught up with Hummel to talk about all of it. And what we found is a guy who enjoys music as much as ever and whose reputation as an excellent drummer continues to grow.

Until We Rise was formed one year ago. In addition to Hummel, the band features Manian Van Hacker on lead vocals and guitar, "Torr" on lead guitar and vocals and Mick Lower on bass. The group's new EP, "Trois Chansons," is available now at Gallery of Sound stores.

"We've really got a good chemistry going on," says Hummel. "It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that, coming from a band as talented as Breaking Benjamin, it had to be people that had that 'thing.' I feel lucky. With this band, I find it really refreshing that everyone is open and receptive to everyone's ideas."

Hummel, who initially passed on several projects that he was offered, says that whatever rock band he joined after leaving Breaking Benjamin had to be a perfect fit and "a complete package." After getting to know the members of Until We Rise - who were formerly known as Condition K - he soon opted to get on board. Songs on the EP include "Only Human," "The Way You Like It" and "Find You Again."

As for his departure from Breaking Benjamin more than two years ago, Hummel says it was not his choice, and that the move was made when he briefly took some time

off from the group for the birth of his child. And though he chooses not to get into specifics or dwell on the past, he makes one thing clear: he has never lost his passion



Former Breaking Benjamin drummer Jeremy Hummel hasn't missed a beat since his departure from the band in 2004.

for drumming, or rock music, or playing live.

"There are a lot of people that have the perception that I wanted to stay home, and that I didn't want to tour anymore," says Hummel. "And that's not true whatsoever. That is completely false."

Even further demonstrating the point of how much Hummel still enjoys playing live is the fact that in addition to Until We Rise, he's also involved with two other musical projects. The Electric Volcano Experiment, his jazz-fusion outfit, is something he's always hoped to do.

"It's a project I'm really happy to be working with," he says. "It's all jazz-fusion stuff. There's no vocals. It's a lot of experimentation, live, yet it's done in a structured format. A lot of jam bands will go out and bore people to tears. They'll do something where, after a while, you're going 'OK, dude, let's move it along.' They'll stay on the same thing for far too long. We fall in the line of Miles Davis to Radiohead to Brian Eno to Black Sabbath. There's no rules."

Also, for the past year, Hummel's been performing as a duo with Bret Alexander. Hummel was always a big fan of Alexander's band, The Badlees, and got to know him personally when he produced the first Breaking Benjamin EP. On stage, Alexander plays guitar and sings while Hummel plays hand-percussion instruments, including the djembe.

"He's somebody that I certainly look up to and admire, and since we started playing together, he's become one of my best friends," says Hummel. "We just have a ball

with it and it's a lot of fun. We're doing some things from The Badlees catalog, some of Bret's stuff, and we're also doing Johnny Cash, The Beatles, U2 ... Bruce Springsteen. It's neat, because we do that 'Americana' sound that Bret's made a mark with, yet at the same time, with what I'm doing on the drums, the music can take on an earthy, tribal kind of vibe as well. It's really a nice compliment to one another."

Although some might say Hummel's last few years have been turbulent, at least professionally, he doesn't see it that way. Playing music, he says, is all that has ever mattered to him and he's now doing that more than ever.

"If you like to play, and if you're good, take an example from somebody like me, who has basically gone from being in a platinum-selling band, to in some ways, starting from square one again," he says. "You can still be a professional musician and thrive as a musician if you are resourceful and you have that motivation to do so. Now, I'm probably a better musician than I've ever been, and a better drummer, just because I'm able to play three very different styles of music with three different groups of people that I all really respect and enjoy playing with. In addition to that, I have my teaching, my session work, and my writing. All of those things really keep me fresh." **W**

**Go:**

- Until We Rise, with Panacea. Friday, April 20 @ Nightcaps, Edwardsville
- For other live dates and more info on Hummel, visit [www.jeremyhummel.com](http://www.jeremyhummel.com)



## music on the menu

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