

Michael Gray DRUMS & PERCUSSION

MIKE GRAY - talented, creative and energetic drummer. He drives the rhythm with an enthusiasm and ability that doesn't quit until everyone's moving.

At age 8, Mike's parents bought him a snare drum so he could join the school band. At 11, with the encouragement of musician stepfather, Warren Frank, they bought him a full drum kit for Christmas. He has been a professional recording, gigging and touring drummer for the past 8 yrs.

In 2004, in the midst of his early professional experience playing and recording albums with various local bands in Baltimore, Mike got the call from his pianist brother, Reese Gray (Squirrel Nut Zippers, Asylum Street Spankers) to come down to Asheville, NC to audition for the Firecracker Jazz Band. Having never played their music before, he learned the material on the drive down from Baltimore to Asheville, and joined them for their New Year's Eve gig at the Orange Peel that night.



Since moving from Baltimore to Asheville 5 years ago, Mike has become one of the most sought after drummers in Asheville. Though the Firecracker Jazz Band has been his main project, he has become an indispensable part of

the Asheville music scene, hired to perform with several of the best and most popular local bands - including Woody Pines, Snake Oil Medicine Show, Jen and the Juice, Screaming J's, Electric Blues, David Earl and the Plowshares, Grant DaSantos and Fatback and a live recording session with up and coming soul singer/songwriter, Clark King.

His unique style and charisma has won over audiences all over the country and have contributed to the Firecracker Jazz Band winning the (reader-picked) Mountain Xpress' Best of WNC-Favorite Blues/Jazz/Soul Band for six years in a row, winning Firecracker a place in their Hall of Fame.

Mike's musical influences include Buddy Rich, Mitch Mitchell, Dennis Chambers, Muddy Waters, Sonny Terry, Brownie McGhee, Professor Longhair, Blind Willie Johnson, Baby Dodds and Papa Joe Jones. He has played with a lot of groups with a lot of different styles - from jazz to rock to country to blues - and hasn't missed a beat.



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APPEARANCES

- » Bonnaroo Music Festival
Manchester, Tennessee
- » Sacramento Jazz Festival
Sacramento, California
- » Highline Ballroom
New York City
- » Seaside Jazz Festival
Seaside, Oregon
- » Rams Head Tavern
Annapolis, Maryland
- » The Birchmere
Alexandria, Virginia
- » The Continental
Austin, Texas
- » Festival Internationale
Lafayette, Louisiana
- » Stuart's Opera House
Nelsonville, Ohio
- » Redwood Coast Jazz Festival
Eureka, California
- » Nelsonville Music Festival
Nelsonville, Ohio
- » Lake Eden Arts Festival
Black Mountain, North Carolina
- » The Orange Peel
Asheville, North Carolina
- » Diana Wortham Theater
Asheville, North Carolina
- » The Knitting Factory
New York City



PROJECTS *As Seen With...*

- Firecracker Jazz Band
- Screaming Js
- Abe Reid and the Spikedrivers
- Jen and the Juice
- David Earl and the Plowshares
- Snake Oil Medicine Show
- Woody Pines
- Grant DaSantos and Fatback

BOOKING & INQUIRIES

www.mikegraymusic.com

E-mail Kether Abeles at booking@mikegraymusic.com

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PRESS

“Explosively hot jazz act Firecracker Jazz Band (best blues/jazz/soul Hall of Famer) brings its high energy New Orleans-inspired sound to the stage. Tubas, banjos, cornets, oh my! At the top of its game, Firecracker recently released the smokin’ album Red Hot Band; the groups Best of WNC party set promises to be ablaze.” - *Mountain Xpress (Best of WNC 2010)*

“Best Blues/Jazz/Soul: Better than a mere night of music, Firecracker Jazz Band also provides its listeners with a journey both to Dixieland and back in time to the Jelly Roll Morton/Bix Beiderbeck heyday of energetic, party-inducing jazz. With 15 years of playing under its belt and with Red Hot Band released this year, Firecracker’s as explosive as ever.” - *Mountain Xpress (Best of WNC 2009)*

“Firecracker Jazz Band helped the crowd revisit the days when Jelly Roll Morton and Louis Armstrong pimped both sound and hookers. Joyous in every way, the sextet wowed the small crowd with technical chops and humorous banter. Mike Gray went on drumming sprees that left the crowd’s mouths collectively agape.” - *Earful: Music Blog (by Hunter Pope)*

“According to the group’s MySpace page, “The Screaming Js boogie the night away.” In-person reports confirm this.

A super group of sorts, the Js include the Blue Rags’ Jake Hollifield, Mike Gray and Henry Westmoreland from Firecracker Jazz Band, Mad Tea Party’s Jason Krekel, and J.P. Hess of the Greenfields. The evening brings an interesting mix of deep cuts from ragtime and old blues to country and rockabilly, all given a Screaming Js spin. Wear your dancing shoes.” - *Mountain Xpress*

“Firecracker Jazz Band kicked off the night with a fantastic set of music from the ’20s and ’30s. While trumpeter Je Widenhouse is the frontman, drummer Mike Gray is fun to watch as he hammers away with smiles and eyebrow lifts.” - *Vibes: The Music Blog*

“New Years Eve was a night everyone looked forward to with great anticipation for the Firecracker Jazz Band was going to blare (as per the fire horn that joined them on stage) us into the New Year. I had heard their albums prior to seeing them in person and they easily surpassed my high expectations. While they played an older pre-swing jazz reminiscent of New Orleans hot jazz they kept it blazing or smoldering whether it was hot and fast or slow and sultry.” - *Lindy Focus VII Review (by Carl Nelson)*

“That ethereal dynamic was apparent also in the Firecracker

Jazz Band performance in the Bonna Rouge tent as Dixieland came to Tennessee with the proper velvety ambience including some old fashioned NAWlins humidity.” - *Jambands.com (Bonnaroo 2007 Review)*

“The most outstanding observation that the listener to this album gets, is the magnificent musicianship of the jazz artists expressed by their lively performance “Explodes” giving off, bucket loads of stimulus inspiration to the adrenal gland – they really are full of articulated fire, lovingly, enjoying every minute of their playing.” - *Kings Jazz Review*

“The Firecrackers are working the roots of jazz with a youthful vigor that breathes new life into an old genre. The Firecracker Jazz Band plays early “New Orleans” jazz and Dixieland as well as other 1920’s and 30’s period pop, paying homage to such greats as Jelly Roll Morton, Louis Armstrong and Bix Beiderbeck. These guys can rock out old school parlors and punk rock clubs alike.” - *Jazzandpoetry Blog*

“FJB is the real deal, authentic old-time hot jazz and swing. They played a blistering set, including one of my all-time favorite songs “Avalon.” Don’t miss this show!” - *Bop and Beyond Blog*

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NOTABLE RECORDINGS



Red Hot Band (2009)
Firecracker Jazz Band



Asheville Soul Sessions (2010)
Clark King



Explodes (2007)
Firecracker Jazz Band



Live at the LAB (2010)
Woody Pines



Screaming Js (TBA)
Screaming Js

