



World percussionist Jon Sterckx

Sterckx forges new 'planet of the drums'

PREVIEW: JON STERCKX
Planet Drum/The Forge

WORLD percussionist Jon Sterckx is visiting Camden on Saturday to play his wide range musical styles, mostly gathered through years of travelling in India and the Middle East.

He's got two engagements. At midday, he's giving a three-hour master-class at the Planet Drum percussion and drum-set education centre inside the Scar rehearsal studio complex in Castlehaven Road, Kentish Town.

In the evening he's giving a performance at The Forge restaurant complex in Delancey Street, Camden Town.

While Jon has become a leading tabla player in this country, he is a highly versatile player with a command of many other percussion instruments.

"I've spent a lot of time in India, Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries and I've got to know all kinds of different percussion instruments," he says.

"The tabla is widely used in Indian classical music and it's come to be widely known in this country.

"Other instruments I play include the udu which is a Nigerian claypot and the cajon, derived from Peru and now used in flamenco."

"Then there's the daff used in southern India which is a sort of drone drum like the Irish bodhran; the darbuka goblet drum played in Egypt; and the riq, which is an Egyptian tambourine.

"In performances, I record the different instruments as they are played so they can be digitally mixed to provide a 'drumscape'

"There's a structure to the multiple recordings, of course, but there's a lot of improvisation as well as I seek to layer one instrument after the other."

At the Planet Drum master-class, he'll explore the various elements comprising his "drumscape" work including an introduction to intricate North Indian rhythmic compositions and an exploration of different time signatures in north Indian and Middle Eastern drumming. His evening engagement at The Forge will involve a performance of all the instruments, recorded, sampled, mixed and processed.