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# CityMasala

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*A Lifestyle and Entertainment Magazine for Today's South Asian*

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**Ravi Drums**  
**Taking It To The Next Level**



By: Chhaya Sanghavi

# Ravi Drums - Taking It To The Next Level

A PR release says, "Two Black discs can make a crowd go wild, but add an explosive performer like DJ Ravidrums remixing live on the drums & percussion and you have the most powerful party element anyone has ever experienced. Whether you thrill for the sensual sounds that move your body, mind and soul and transport you to Nirvana ... or ... an orgasmic musical frenzy that sends your senses pulsing, DJ Ravidrums takes it to the next level and seals the deal"

All we have to add to that is, listen to Ravi's music and you will know what sets him apart. Hard working, upbeat and a very smart man, Ravi is all about music. Read on to find out how he truly lives and breathes music.

**CM:** Tell us a little bit about your background.

**RD:** I am a first generation Indian. I was born in upstate New York and moved to Houston, TX at the age of 7 and then to Tampa when I was 12. I finally made it to LA and live there with my wife, Jerusha, and my son, Soren.

**CM:** How did you get into music?

**RD:** One of my earliest memory is about drums – crying at a K-mart for a drum set. My parents would park me in front of the drums and I would just sit there and watch. By the time my parents returned, they would find that I had not moved at all. Watching the drums was the only way I could sit still.

I remember throwing many a tantrum when my parents would not buy me a drum set. I would cut out pictures of drum sets and put them up on the refrigerator every Christmas, consistently, year after year.

Finally, my dad made me a deal - he would double the money I earned or saved towards my drum set (he actually paid far more than double). At the age of 12, I got a job mowing lawns and delivering newspapers. While other kids were having sleepovers, I was working towards buying my drum set. I didn't spend a penny on candy or a stick of gum! I finally got a drum set when we moved to Tampa.

I started with the marching band in school but I really wanted to be a rock drummer. I was co-captain of the marching band in high school. I went to the music school at USF for two years, however, all the best players were out playing instead of being in school learning music.

My first paid gig was at an event organized by the Gujarati Samaj of Tampa Bay. I practiced for 10 hours a day in the living room at our home. My parents put up with it – at least they knew I was out of trouble while I played at home!

**CM:** How did you make a career out of playing drums?

**RD:** When I was in Tampa, I played with Crimson Glory, a recording band with Atlantic records. I won the title of

best drummer at *Thoroughbred Music*. I had 40 offers and had people calling me for gigs. Then I went to Key West and played there for a couple of months. I played jazz with the *Groove Nazi*. Playing with *Gumbi Ortiz* was the most valuable training I received. By the time I was 22 years old, I wanted to move to Hollywood. A friend told me about a band in LA. I did the drum-trekking with *Crimson Glory*. We finally made a real record with their former studio.

I packed up and moved to LA where I knew only two people. I had to hit the ground running when I got there and had nothing to back me up except for my ambition and will to suc-

ceed. I started with taking up all kinds of gigs that came my way and I found that work is never ending.

**CM:** What would you attribute your success to?

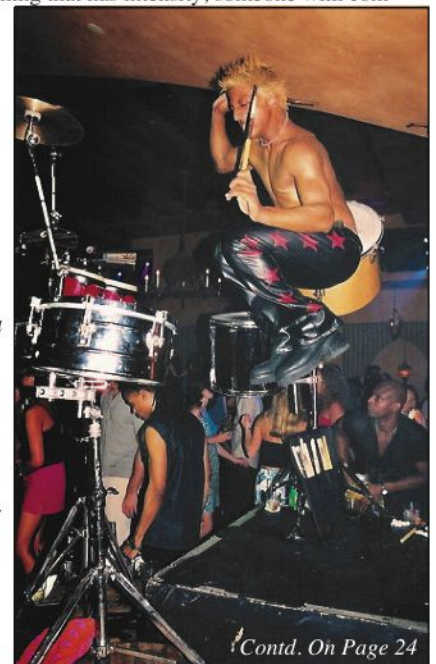
**RD:** The reason for my success is that no one does what I do. I really believe that the cutting edge is the bleeding edge. I have always had to do something to make myself stand out in the crowd, and here we are talking about at least 50,000 musicians. I developed my own style as I played drums with various DJs throughout LA.

**CM:** What's on your plate at this time?

**RD:** I am working on my own record with people like *Sade* and *Madonna*. The record will come out next year. My goal is to take DJing to the next level. People want to see something that has intensity, someone with commitment to do something and someone who does what they do with integrity. And when you do it, do it because it means the world to you. When all of these factors come together, it is easy for everyone to see that you truly enjoy doing what you do and it sets you apart.

**CM:** How did you land the Atlantis opening gig? Tell us a little more about it.

**RD:** I have a great agent and I have been able to perform with many acclaimed artists. I have opened shows for *Whitney Houston*, *Janet Jackson* and *Aerosmith*. I ended up performing with *Earth, Wind and Fire*, and *Natalie Cole*. It was great to watch *John Travolta*, *Bill Clinton* and *Sean Connery* bob their heads to my music.



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**CM:** What advice would you offer to someone who wants to choose making music as their career?

**RD:** Don't do it! (Laughs) It is like this - I can't do anything else but music. Do it because you love it and love to do it. You have to step up to the plate. Follow your dreams with reckless abandon. You need to make certain sacrifices and be aware that there will always be someone younger, faster and more on top of everything. Take *Madonna* for example, she keeps reinventing herself all the time and she is successful.

One important thing I would say is, while you are young and living at home, practice as much as you can before life and bills come into play. You need to build a solid foundation.

I have missed out on a lot in my life. I have missed friends' weddings, birthdays, family get-togethers and countless other family events. The passion for music is like a virus that you can't get rid of.

**CM:** What about financial rewards in your field?

**RD:** Well, there is a lot of glamour, glory and money. It comes and it goes. Money will come if you are true to your calling, the other rewards, however, outweigh the financial rewards. Accept what you are and push for as much as you can.

With music, the money isn't all that it used to be. There was a time when at least three major tours would come to Tampa and people used to spend money to go. Now, they are more interested in watching it on YouTube or the internet.

**CM:** Sex, drugs and rock roll - fact or fiction?

**RD:** It is real. There's plenty of it. The drugs, however, are worse in Tampa than in L.A. Success, depression and frustration make for resorting to these. It all depends on the scene you are in. There is plenty of everything if you want it and even more if you choose not to want it

**CM:** Any plans for Bollywood?

**RD:** I am working on something in India and I want to do more of it. I used to think that a lot of the pop stuff in Bollywood is cheesy but lately they have been producing great stuff. I think *A R Rahman* is a total genius. Part of music is to get people away from their thoughts. Another person I am in awe of is *Zakir Hussain*. He is just so beyond, so talented and so gifted!

I would like to go to India and start performing there. I also want to take my son with me so that he experiences life the way it is in India. I have a few contacts in India, but you can't have one foot here and the other there.

**CM:** Where do you see yourself in the near future?

**RD:** Living on the beach in Malibu, touring the world, performing, getting into films and TV and being in front of people.

**CM:** Finally, do you have a message for our readers?

**RD:** You need more *masala* in your life!

