

Bret Sher

Professional Teacher & Performer

Hi, my Name is Bret Sher. I am 55 years old. I am married to Betsy and we have two wonderful children named Melissa, age 24, and Brian, age 20. All of my students have come to me either through a recommendation of a prior/current student or through a school referral. I believe I can help you achieve any musical goals you have. I would like to take this opportunity to tell you of my qualifications.

I started playing the drums and taking lessons in 1969. I have participated in all school musical opportunities since the fifth grade. This means I have played in the many styles of music presented by participating in Concert Band, Orchestra, Musicals, Big Band, Jazz Combo, Dixieland, Swing choir, Marching Band, and Percussion Ensemble. I have been able to achieve the section leader spot in any organization that I have played in for three or more years. I have been playing in Rock, Jazz, Ethnic, and professional jobbing bands since 1971. As of this fall I have taught over 67,803 lessons, directed over 4,888 rehearsals, given over 125 clinics, and have played in at least 2,064 live performances.

Educational History

1970-1973	Old Orchard Jr. High
1974-1977	Niles North High School
1976	Northwestern Summer Cherub Music Program
1978-1982	Illinois State University B.A. in Music Performance with a Minor in Music Education
1977-1997	Illinois Air National Guard – The 566 th Air Force Band
1998	Vandercook College – Afro-Cuban drumming – Reuben Alvarez
1999	Vandercook College – Brazilian drumming – Dede Sampio

The Air Force

The Illinois Air National Guard is a branch of the U.S. Air Force. It is Illinois's State Militia and thus the Governor is the Commander. I was a member of the 566th A.F. Band for twenty years. All the standards and auditions are the same as for the U.S. Air Force. The Guard meets one weekend a month and at least two weeks a year of active duty. In my twenty-year association I had many wonderful and life altering experiences. I went through Air Force basic training and played with an active duty band. I was put into many leadership roles and was given excellent training in leadership and management. I have played in seventeen states; At Mount Rushmore, Disney World, Epcot Center, Disneyland, at World and State fairs, for Presidents, Governors, The Pentagon, Heads of State, on aircraft Carriers, as a State Department representative in The Bahamas and Jamaica. I was in charge of all percussion performance, equipment purchasing, and maintenance in each of the six ensembles. I was also responsible for the bands Loading Crew, Social Actions Program, and Total Quality Management Program. Through an audition process I was placed as co-section leader for an "All Guard Honor Band," comprised from the members of the Twelve Guard Bands in the Nation, which performed for a national conference in Atlanta.

Professional Experience

I have been involved at some level in most facets of the music business. I have appeared in a motion picture, "My Best Friends Wedding" and an international television spot during the World Cup Tournament, "Rockers Sock the Globe". I have been with a jazz group signed to Southport Records and have recorded on a jazz vocalist's C.D. I have been on over fifteen demo tapes. I have participated in rock bands that have been signed to record labels and have opened for Bill Cosby, Jerry Goodman, Gill Scott Heron, and many others. We had won contest to play showcase performances at Grant Park, Taste of Chicago, State Street Festivals, and toured colleges in a Five State region. I have played in dance bands of all styles from the late 1920's to today, as well as many specialty ethnic bands.

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Teaching Experience

I have been teaching private lessons, rehearsing marching band sections, giving clinics, directing percussion ensembles, and sectionals since 1980. I am currently teaching at several locations. I have been the head of percussion studies at Oakton Community College since 1995. I have been teaching at New Trier High School since 1991 at Wheeling High School since 1992, Jack London Middle School sectionals since 1999, and Vernon Hills High School since 2008. I also teach at my house in Vernon Hills. In the past thirty-four years I have worked for over 40 schools and over 68 band directors. A full listing of schools, districts, and directors is available upon request. I also direct the New Trier High School Percussion Ensemble. I have previously directed the Pep Band for three Basketball seasons and one football season. I was section leader with the Palatine Concert Band for three years. I am currently playing with the Northwest Suburban Wind Ensemble.

Over the years I have been able to help many students achieve their goals. Over 91 of my students have been selected through an audition process to either District or State Honor Ensembles as well as being accepted to college music schools throughout the nation including, Northwestern, Michigan, USC, Belmont, and many more. At least four of my past students are in professional orchestras, as well as several touring pop drummers. I am sure I can help you achieve your goals also!

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