

## **Dave Smith - Biography**

Dave Smith is best known for his work with Robert Plant and the Sensational Space Shifters, Fofoulah, and Afro-Blues group Juju. He has recorded drums for Rachid Taha, Bassekou Kouyate and Robert Plant and has performed with Patty Griffin, Donny McCaslin, Chrisse Hynde and Eddie Henderson. As co-founder of the Loop Collective, Dave is part of some of the most adventurous musical projects in the UK, which include Strokes, Cloudmakers Trio, Outhouse, MA and Splice. As co-leader of Outhouse Ruhabi and Fofoulah, he is the man behind the most fruitful collision of West African drum music and European jazz yet to surface.

Born in Norwich, Dave began playing drums at the age of nine and was immersed in musical groups playing in orchestras, big bands, and jazz combos. At sixteen Dave was awarded a scholarship to become a specialist musician at Wells Cathedral School where he attended 1997 to 1999. He then went on to study Jazz Performance at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where he graduated in 2003.

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Since graduating, Dave has been heavily involved in the London and UK jazz scene playing with bands such as Arnie Somogyi's Ambulance, Pete King Quartet, Paul Booth Quintet, the Sam Crowe Group and Mark Lockheart's 'In Deep' as well as performing with artists such as Donny McCaslin, Jeanne Added, Hilmar Jensson, Eddie Henderson, Ingrid Jenson, Lukas Kranzlbinder and Ralph Alessi.

Through the shared desire to write and perform original and improvised music with other musicians within London's creative community, Dave co-founded the Loop Collective in 2005. The ethos of the collective is to create more exposure for its members through performance opportunities, exchanges with other music collectives, and its own record label, Loop Records. Loop projects include Splice, MA, Dan Nicholls' Mirror, Strokes, Cloudmakers Trio, Outhouse, Outhouse Ruhabi and Jim Hart's Gemini.

Dave began studying Sabar drumming with Wolof musicians in West Africa and the UK after an inspirational trip to The Gambia in 2002. Whilst in The Gambia Dave assisted on ECCO courses (Education through Communication and Culture Organisation) for Guildhall School students and led school workshops with ECCO and the Child Protection Alliance. Immersing himself in these complex West African rhythms has inspired Dave throughout his career. Supported by Arts Council England, PRS Foundation, and the BBC Performing Arts Fund, Dave led a project in The Gambia with Outhouse and five Sabar percussionists in 2007. The group Outhouse Ruhabi was formed and with the continued support of these funding bodies the group was able to record an album and tour in the UK in 2008, 2009, and 2011. Highlights included performances at Cheltenham Jazz Festival in 2008, Festival Africolor in Paris in 2009 and the London Jazz Festival in 2011.

Fofoulah was formed by Dave and Outhouse Ruhabi members Johnny Brierley, Kaw Secka, and Tom Challenger in 2011. With the addition of Phil Stevenson on guitar and Biram Seck on vocals the group experimented with writing grooves and music based on Sabar drumming, similar to Ruhabi, which lent more on dance floor influences and song form structures and led to the EP Bene Bop (released in 2013 on Loop Records). Fofoulah followed this up in 2014 with their debut self titled album on Glitterbeat Records featuring new front man Batch Gueye and guest vocalists Ghostpoet, Iness Mezel, and Juldeh Camara.

Dave was invited to join Justin Adams and Juldeh Camara in 2010 for a tour in Japan. They went on to record the following year at Real World Studios with Beak bassist Billy Fuller. From these sessions the album In Trance (Real World 2011) was released and the band Juju was formed. Juju toured Europe throughout 2011 and 2012, performed at the BT River of Music event alongside an array of African artists and were the rhythm section for Rachid Taha's album Zoom! as well as Iness Mezel's album Trance. Juju were taken on by Robert Plant in July 2012 to be part of his new band Robert Plant and the Sensational Space Shifters. Dave performed for 6 years with Robert Plant, touring the world twice over and recording two albums 'lullaby and the... Ceaseless Roar' in 2014 and 'Carry Fire' in 2017, both on the Nonesuch label. Performance highlights from these tours include playing at Glastonbury Festival , Austin City Limits, the Sydney Opera House, Lollapalooza in South America, The Royal Albert Hall and Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival. They also appeared on The One Show, Live with Jools Holland, The Colbert Report, The Late Late Show with James Corden and The Tonight Show featuring Jimmy Fallon. Dave left the band at the end of the summer in 2018 and at that point was able to put his energy towards Fofoulah and his other creative projects. Fofoulah's second album Daega Rek was released that November on Glitterbeat Records and set a new tone for the band's live performances with intense spoken word and electronics. Fofoulah continue to perform, write and record and in October 2019 they were invited to perform a showcase at Womex.

Other current bands include a new collaboration with Irish vocalist Lauren Kinsella which features Tom Challenger, a West Country based quartet with Sam Crockatt, Dan Moore and Riaan Vosloo, Nick Malcolm's Up Front featuring Jason Yard, an improv duo with George Crowley and a quartet with Mark Lockheart featuring Elliot Galvin and Tom Herbert.

Dave is also teaching Sabar drumming workshops, rhythm classes, and one-to-one drum kit privately, in schools and as a visiting teacher in universities and music colleges.

Dave's endorsements include Istanbul Agop, Ludwig Drums, Remo Percussion, Wincent Sticks, Protection Racket and Roland Drums & Percussion.