



Ask most people what they expect when they see a drummer and they will usually say that the drummer is usually in the back "going crazy" behind the drums. A lot of people really aren't sure what the drummer does except to keep the beat.

What Makes A Good Drummer

Most people don't realize the difference a good drummer can make in the song, overall performance and even the confidence of the band members. No one appreciates a good drummer until they have played with a bad one! So what makes a good drummer? I'm still figuring it out, but I'm a lot closer than I used to be.

Change in Direction

I have been playing the drums for over 35 years and I am embarrassed to say that at least half of that time, my goal was to "show off" how fast I could play or how awesome my fills were. Sure I kept a beat for the band, but I was only focusing on myself (or maybe the girls in the audience). As I got older and played with more seasoned musicians, I began to hear them talk about other drummers who "had a good feel," or were "solid" and "really locked in with the band." This began a change in my attitude towards my role as a drummer. The adjustment has helped me land a lot more drumming opportunities with quality musicians.

Immature Drummers Want To:

- Show off
- "Go crazy" behind the drums
- Show how fast they can play
- Use a lot of big and complicated fills
- Turn a simple, effective beat into a complex one just so people will see how "good" they are

Experienced Drummers Want To:

- Put the song first and play what is needed for the song, even if it might be boring.
- Provide a solid beat, so that other band members will sound good and be heard clearly.
- Pay attention to the other instruments, especially the bass, providing a strong rhythm section.
- Pay attention to the leader (if there is one) and guide the band through the song.
- Use fills to guide the song along, not to create distractions
- Have a "less is more" approach to playing fills and how often fills are played.

So what's the drummer's main job? To COMMUNICATE THE BEAT and keep the band on track.