



Take Five With Mauricio de Souza

By [AAJ Staff](#)

Meet Mauricio de Souza:

Born in Brasilia, Brazil, Mauricio de Souza is a jazz drummer who easily performs in both traditional jazz and Brazilian jazz styles. His good taste and finesse have allowed him to play in numerous settings with various accomplished musicians. Mauricio studied with world renowned jazz drummer and master teacher [Joe Morello](#) for eight years. He also had a year of private studies with distinguished all-round percussion teacher Glenn Weber. Aside from Morello's inspiration, other influential performers include [Buddy Rich](#), [Airto Moreira](#), [Dave Weckl](#), [Roy Haynes](#), and [Bill Stewart](#).

Since settling in Northern New Jersey in 2004, de Souza has been very active in the NY/NJ metropolitan area, performing at some of the finest jazz venues mostly as a band leader (Maurício de Souza Group: straight-ahead jazz; and Bossa Brasilia: Brazilian jazz).

Instrument(s):

Drums.

Teachers and/or influences?

Teacher: Joe Morello Influences: Joe Morello, Buddy Rich, Airto Moreira, Bill Stewart, Roy Haynes, and Dave Weckl.

I knew I wanted to be a musician when...

playing drums became the most important activity in my life.

Your sound and approach to music:

I strive to play my instrument as melodic and as well as possible. I approach the music I play with a lot of respect. I listen to and study many aspects of it, and I focus on developing an appropriate yet unique style of playing. I'm always pushing myself forward; music is a lifelong learning experience.

Your teaching approach:

Before anything, I do my best to make my students as comfortable as possible during their lessons. I think one can learn a lot more in a friendly environment. I think it is important for musicians to be well-rounded and, at least, be familiar with and be able to play (to a certain degree) most styles of music. At the same time, I believe that eventually it is important to work with the student on his/her chosen genre.

Your dream band:

Man, if I could put together [Chick Corea](#), [Paul Desmond](#), [Freddie Hubbard](#), [Mike Stern](#), and [Ron Carter](#) I would be in heaven. I've had the great pleasure to work with Mike Stern recently; that was an unforgettable experience.

Road story: Your best or worst experience:

A vocalist didn't show up for one of my gigs. The pianist and I began playing duo until I could try to figure out what to do. After playing a couple of tunes with just drums and piano, in walked a bassist I had worked with before. He had the night off and was taking his wife out for dinner...that is, until he went home (which happened to be 10 mins away) to pick up his bass and play the rest of the gig with us. Was that luck or what?!

Favorite venue:

I actually have two: Garage, in New York, and Chico's, in New Jersey.

Your favorite recording in your discography and why?

I'll have to say our version of "Firm Roots" in my latest CD, Here. There... I just remember having so much fun recording it.

The first Jazz album I bought was:

Technically it was a fusion album: Dave Weckl's *Master Plan*.

What do you think is the most important thing you are contributing musically?

I'm trying to give jazz and Brazilian jazz a unique and exciting direction.

Did you know...

I actually started out as a rock drummer, playing songs by [The Beatles](#), and played most styles of rock, from Rush and Dire Straits, to [Pearl Jam](#) to Metallica, Pantera and Slayer.

CDs you are listening to now:

Classical, jazz, some rock.

Desert Island picks:

Shostakovich's 11th;
[Dave Brubeck](#), *Live at Carnegie Hall*;
[Buddy Rich](#), *Europe 77*;<
 Mike Stern, *These Times*;<
 Dave Weckl, *Live (and Very Plugged In)*.

How would you describe the state of jazz today?

Well, but I would like to see it do better and reach more people.

What are some of the essential requirements to keep jazz alive and growing?

Give young artists a chance!

What is in the near future?

Continue to promote my new record (*Here. There...*); working on booking festivals for 2011; looking for an agency/agent.

If I weren't a jazz musician, I would be a:

Lost person in this big, wide world.

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