

**Subject:** TUNES WEEKLY - Part One: The Greatest Rock Drummers of all Time!

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## Tunes Weekly--Part One: The Greatest Rock Drummers of all Time!

What do you call a drummer that breaks up with his girlfriend? Homeless.

The drummer. He is the hyperactive kid of the band; the one that tap, tap, taps constantly; the one that just drove off with your girlfriend. Despite what the guitar player thinks, the drummer is the coolest guy in the band...

Since we love lists and love drums, we thought it would be fun to list our favorite rock drummers of all time! We're sticking mainly with the "band" guys, not the hired guns. We're also not looking solely at the technical abilities of the drummers, though technique is obviously important. We're looking for drummers that made the music feel good; the drummers who brought a musicality to their craft that vitally contributed to the sound as a whole. In no certain order, enjoy this list of Part One: The Greatest Rock Drummers Of All Time!



**Charlie Watts**

## The Rolling Stones

### **The Scoop-**

No one will ever mistake Charlie Watts for Buddy Rich, but within the context of the Stones' unique sound, he fits like a glove. Indeed, it's hard to imagine the Stones without him. Amid the spectacle of the Stones' stage show, he calmly sits back there holding it all together, looking like a slightly amused English professor, as he lays it down slightly behind the beat. He was trained as a graphic artist, has a jazz background, breeds horses and has been married to the same woman since 1964. I'm pretty sure he never threw a television set into the hotel pool. I did hear that he once forgot to return a library book though. That's rock and roll, Charlie Watts-style.

**Standout Tracks-** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5wCUIPNIQuA>  
"19th Nervous Breakdown," "Paint it Black," "Gimme Shelter."



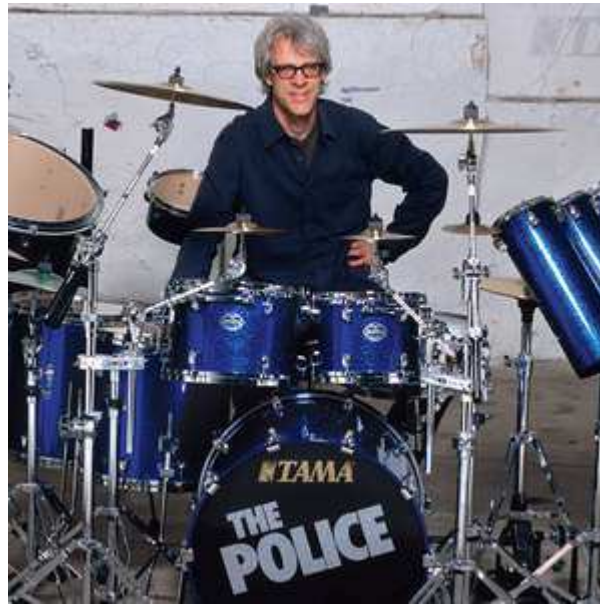
**Mitch Mitchell-**  
The Jimi Hendrix Experience

### **The Scoop-**

Mitch Mitchell was not just a timekeeper in Jimi Hendrix's monster power trio. He was the thermal engine that strengthened the musical cyclone that was The Jimi Hendrix Experience. Mitchell was a busy, exciting drummer that swung hard in a rock context; no doubt an influence from his jazz background. Check out his wild playing on "Fire" and you'll hear the controlled abandon. He really was the perfect drummer for Jimi Hendrix. Sadly, in 2008, the former session drummer died in his sleep in a hotel room at the age of 61.

**Standout Tracks** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XCbfAzOq9c>

- "Fire," "Stone Free," "Hey Joe."



**Stewart Copeland**  
The Police

**The Scoop-**

Stewart Copeland is one of the more influential drummers of the modern era. His unique style, with his dramatic rhythmic flourishes, tight, high-pitched snare drum, and reggae-influenced beats, is immediately recognizable. His aggressive groove-playing was a key to The Police's driving sound and his subtle cymbal work greatly enhanced the songs' dynamics. How did The Police get their name? His dad was a CIA officer! Copeland has gone on to a very successful career in his own right composing numerous soundtracks for television, movies, opera, and ballet.

**Standout Tracks-** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FMmCJ6-uu3M>

"Synchronicity I," "Message in a Bottle," "Driven to Tears."



**Jeff Porcaro**  
TOTO

**The Scoop-**

Yes, he is one of the greatest "hired guns" ever, but he makes our list because he was also the drummer for the wildly successful and respected band, Toto. When it came to laying down a groove, Porcaro had few peers. He elevated every track on which he played with his exquisite feel, time, and taste, and he played on hundreds of hit records. At age 17, he snagged his first professional gig in Sonny and Cher's touring band and never looked back. His untimely death in 1992 at the age of 38 created ripples in the music world that are still being felt.

**Standout Tracks-** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0QDB9FtnUM>

"Lowdown," "Rosanna," "Georgy Porgy," "I Keep Forgettin".



**Ringo Starr**  
The Beatles

**The Scoop-**

Can you imagine The Beatles without Ringo Starr? Ringo's legacy is the ultimate one for a drummer: He played for the song and always seemed to play the perfect parts. Ringo was a vital part of an amazing musical alchemy whose sum totaled greater than its parts. What made Ringo great? It wasn't just the cool nickname. For one thing, his time was impeccable. When you know your drummer is going to nail the tempos, you can concentrate on making great music. His fills were very musical and creative. Plus, he was a helluva nice guy and that is hugely important in a band with Beatle-sized egos. He was a peacemaker, providing the social lubricant that helped prevent friction between band members. Ringo is still touring with his "Ringo's All-Starr Band" and he's sounding better than ever.

**Standout Tracks-** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TN4f718EL74>

"Come Together," "Rain," "Ticket to Ride," "Tomorrow Never Knows."



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**Ian Paice**  
Deep Purple

### **The Scoop-**

Ian Paice is a very powerful, driving rock drummer with amazing hand technique, specifically his blistering single-stroke drum rolls. Indeed, if you've ever rocked out to Deep

Purple, it was Ian Paice providing the juice; he played on every track they ever recorded. After receiving his first drum set at age 15, he got his start playing in his father's dance band. He played a significant part in the birth of metal and progressive rock drumming. Today, he is still quite active playing drum clinics and making guest appearances.

**Standout Tracks-** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9wv1ij7KxWc>  
"Highway Star," "Burn," "Space Truckin".



**Bill Bruford**

- Yes, King Crimson, Earthworks

**The Scoop-**

Bill Bruford has been leading the progressive rock charge for years with his technical, driving, precise grooves and his seminal work with Yes broke new ground. "Roundabout" still gives me goose flesh. Bruford has always exhibited a restless spirit in his varied career, leading him on to other bands like King Crimson and his own projects like Earthworks. He is considered one of the more influential drummers in modern rock. He retired from public performances in 2009 and in 2016, earned a PhD in music at the University of Surrey.

**Standout Tracks-** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GWIEZQ63Nhl>  
"Roundabout," "Heart of the Sunrise," "Larks' Tongues in Aspic, Part Two."

D. Tillis writes "TUNES WEEKLY" exclusively for [www.tunescompany.com](http://www.tunescompany.com)

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