

Who are we?

The Sambassadors of Groove started out as Kaboomba, or the Leamington School of Samba, way back in 1998 as an offshoot of the Rugby School of Samba, with ex-musical director Russ Hinks as the original founding member. The band has been practising and performing music, welcoming and saying goodbye to many people, and bringing a taste of something distinctly non-British to Warwickshire over its 13 or so years.

What is samba?

As the Portuguese settled in South America in the 19th century with their African slaves in tow, naturally some cultural cross-over occurred. The Portuguese brought their singing, militaristic drill and small guitars, and the Africans had millennia of percussive and folkloric history behind them.

As it is now, samba varies depending on where in Brazil you hear it. Southern Brazil, Rio de Janeiro in particular, hosts the famous Carnival, with 100-strong baterias and troupes of glittering dancers. This driving, fast and highly stylised music is the most popular form of samba, generally speaking, but in the midlands/North of the country, samba reggae, maracatu and its more funky siblings are heard in the streets with their batteries of wide surdo drums. Refer to the 'Styles of Samba' area of our website for demonstrations of all the popular styles.

What we play

The Sambassadors play a mixture of aforementioned styles but mainly focus on the samba reggae or Cuban form, along with occasional maracatu, Rio-style batucada and more traditional African arrangements. Notation for our grooves is available on the website. You are welcome to print these off and practise at home, taking home any instrument you need to practise on, (asking permission first!) Our grooves all have a basic pattern that we teach, and complexities are added on top.

Performance Band & Gigs

We will require a certain level of competence on at least one instrument to be able to play in a performance, but by far the most important aspect is being able to 'hear the pulse' – the 1, 2, 3, 4 that underlies each groove and to play along with that. You will also need.

Costumes

Our colours for the moment are green and blue. They're to evoke oceanic and natural emotions. The shades of blue and green are quite particular. We have some swatches with sample colours on for shopping needs – however, as long as the colours are bold and bright, the type of clothing isn't important.

Any other fascinators to add a touch of personality, assuming they're family-appropriate, are more than welcome, but again make sure they match the colour scheme.

Special costumes. We occasionally get out our fancy black & silver jackets which we made ourselves. We can also arrange to print the SoG logo onto any plain t-shirt you provide. Dancers have their own costumes.

Communication

Currently, we use Google groups to keep in contact over email. It's dead easy. Details will be provided by the Tree-meister below.

Roles & Responsibilities

There are various roles members of the band fulfil. There is a committee that meets monthly-or-thereabouts to help steer the band. The members are voted in for a year at the AGM, usually held in February. In addition, there are some other important roles which may or may not be held by committee members.

Tutor: Teaches grooves and playing techniques. May be an external teacher on occasion.

Musical director: Works on arranging the overall sound/look/feel/(smell?) of the band.

Dance director: Teaches and organises the dancers.

Leaders: Can conduct the band during performances in the absence of the main conductor(s).

Chairperson: Chairs committee meetings and is the main point of contact for band members wishing to bring something to attention.

Secretary: Works with the chairperson to affirm and distribute the agenda and take minutes.

Treasurer: Deals with subs and expenses. Talk to the treasurer to sort out how to pay.

Gigmeister: Promotes and books public or private performances, payments & players!

Newbie meister: Looks after newcomers to the band.

Marketing / PR meister: Promotes the band; wears the Press hat.

Social secretary: Drags us out of misery on occasion.

Tree-meister: Organises the email system.

Costume meister (plus costume monkeys): Decides with the gigmeister about costumes and arranges for make-up / extras.

Website meister: Choreographs spiders.

Additional help comes in the form of the committee members, instrument upkeep meister, fundraisers, milkman/biscuitboy, van/minibus drivers, CD salespersons, flag-bearers and the 'Samba Widows' (roadies). Lots to do! **Please refer to the display board in the Band Factory to see who the current job holders are.**

The committee members act as servants to the band membership's will so please talk to us with any comments you have! Our constitution is available on the website for all to peruse and we strongly suggest all new members take a look.

<http://www.sambassadorsofgroove.org.uk>

There's a password for the members only area – just ask someone for the current password.

In the meantime, say hello and have fun!



Dance

Dancing is led by Dawn Stephenson, one of the original members of the band. She is an experienced drummer, dancer and teacher and the dancers tend to focus on traditional movements inspired by the gods and goddesses of the Afro-Brazilian 'candomblé' religion/culture.

All are welcome to the classes. An ability to dance to the various grooves – choreographed individually – will be a prerequisite to performing with the band. The dancers rehearse on a Sunday at 11 AM until 12.30 and usually pop over the road for lunch afterwards. They also join in with the main band's Thursday rehearsal. The class costs £6, paid directly to Dawn.



When do you rehearse?

Thursdays: 8.00 PM – 10.30

Most members come on a Thursday for a whole-band play and socialise, along with some tuition on technique and usually a visit to the pub afterwards.

Sundays: 3.00 PM – 6.00

An opportunity to focus on new grooves and specific instruments – do request an area to focus on! Also functions as a more relaxed 'playtime' and workshop.

How good do you have to be to join?

There is no audition and no experience is necessary.

We welcome all abilities and ages. We're a community band, not a professional band, but we do try to appear professional during gigs. Once you have learnt the relevant parts you'll be invited to join the performance band. If you've played an instrument before then you will find it easier to learn, but everything is taught in-house and we try to include everybody. Drumming is a very physical art form so ease of movement helps too.

How much will it cost me?

We suggest that you set up a standing order. This will cost £20 a month. The money covers our rehearsal space hire, instrument upkeep and various other bits, but we're non-profit so that's about it. If you are unable to set up a standing order, are unable to attend frequently due to other commitments, or are eligible for a concessionary rate, please refer to our pricing policy. Non-members, i.e. those without a standing order, pay £6 a session (first three sessions are free of charge).

WELCOME TO



WELCOME & INFORMATION LEAFLET 2012

