

WE CAN DO IT, WE DID IT!

CAN-DO MUSOS NAMM 2019

By Jennifer Hewitt
Photos by Colin Barnes & Cat Quill



Andrew Hewitt

It was 10 am, Friday 25th January; a beautiful 71F (about 24C); the sun was shining and there wasn't a cloud in the sky. A group of musicians from Can-Do Musos featuring Aussie drummer Andrew Hewitt were about to take the stage at the Arena Plaza at the 2019 Winter NAMM Show in Anaheim, California.



Mario Valadez

This was Can-Do Musos' second stage performance at NAMM, and in true rock style, it didn't go off without a bit of unwanted stress and drama. Andrew's drum kit didn't arrive at the stage til 20 minutes before the gig. The original kit that was to have been delivered was unfortunately locked in the stage manager's office somewhere in the bowels of the Anaheim Convention Centre. Thankfully, John Farquharson, and Mike Wieland from Pearl came up with an alternate kit for Andrew to play.

Fellow Aussie drummer, and Andrew's mate, Colin Barnes quickly stepped in and helped Andrew get set up, borrowing from the next band's gear some hi-hats that were desperately needed. The running joke was that good help was hard to find in America, so we had to import from Australia. We were so grateful he could help out, and definitely owe him a few beers.

Can-Do Musos performed a 40-minute set to an enthusiastic crowd, which consisted of the who's who of the global music communities. Familiar faces in the crowd were one time KORN drummer, Michael Jochum, drummer Gábor Dörnyei from the UK, and Canadian drummer Doug Meola.

This was a very unique performance featuring musicians living with a disability and also featured 3 drummers on stage at the one time, an extraordinary feat on its own.

Performers were drummers Andrew Hewitt, David Segal, Joe Hardy, Homero Chavez, Tony Talmich, and Geno Oceano, and Kelly Kendall on keyboards. We also had

guest musicians Randy Dowdy on bass guitar, Stacey & Steve Sturgis did some vocals, and massive support from Los Angeles based metal band The Mendenhall Experiment featuring bass player Nate Stockton, guitarist Alex Zimmer, drummer Paul Zimmer and singer Mario Valadez. Mario, forever the front man, worked the crowd in his usual way, entertaining them with his dynamic enthusiasm, which is always contagious.

Unfortunately, Brandon Mendenhall was unable to join Can-Do Musos for the performance as he was doing an interview on KROQ radio with Munky Shaffer from Korn supporting his newly released documentary "Mind Over Matter", Brandon's story about being a guitarist with Cerebral Palsy.

Kicking off the performance, an introduction was made by drumming's global ambassador, Dom Famularo. During the set, Can-Do Musos ploughed through some good old pub staples such as Roadhouse Blues, Superstition, and a rather unique version of Kansas City done in true Can-Do Musos style with Tony Talmich taking on lead vocals using a Larax-X voice box. There were also a couple original songs from The Mendenhall Experiment. Can-Do Musos finished with a tribute to David Bowie with Heroes, which seemed quite fitting given the obstacles that Can-Do Musos had overcome to pull this all together.

On Sunday 27th January, Can-Do Musos held a panel discussion at NAMM where stories and ideas were shared. This was also a chance to meet other Can-Do Musos from various places. We got to spend time with Jason Barnes the robo-drummer from Atlanta, Georgia. He is an incredible drummer who lost an arm from being electrocuted who travels the world playing drums using a prosthetic robotic arm. We also spent some time with Juan "Dom" Dominguez who served in the US marines in Afghanistan, slipped down an embankment and landed on an explosive device, losing 2 legs and an arm. He is an amazing drummer and guitarist despite his disabilities.

Can-Do Musos isn't just about drummers; we support all musicians from all backgrounds. So far the website www.candomusos.com features 315 musicians from 34 countries living with a disability of some kind. Andrew Hewitt is an internationally endorsed artist for Pearl drums, Zildjian cymbals, Vic Firth drumsticks and Remo drum heads and percussion.

Check out www.drummerstix.com.au



L-R: Mario Valadez, Paul Zimmer, Alex Zimmer, Joe Hardy, Dom Famularo



L-R: Joe Hardy, David Segal, Kelly Kendall, Nate Stockton

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