



February 1, 2012

## Yardbirds Drummer Talks New Tour, Discusses Longtime Band Mate's Health Issues



TheYardbirds.com

**The Yardbirds** kick off a brief U.S. tour Wednesday in Buffalo, New York. The legendary British blues-rock band will be joined by **Vanilla Fudge** on the trek, which will visit seven East Coast cities -- including a stop at New York City's Irving Plaza on Friday. Unfortunately, Yardbirds rhythm guitarist **Chris Dreja** -- one of the two original members in the group's current lineup -- won't be able to join the band on the outing.

"He got quite ill on the last tour in September and he had a stroke and ended up in UCLA [medical center] of all places," founding drummer **Jim McCarty** told ABC News Radio on Friday. "He was in there for about a week and then they finally let him go home...And he's just recuperating at

the moment, so he won't be on this tour."

McCarty revealed that, rather than hiring a replacement for Dreja, the band will hit the road as a four piece.

"We haven't done very much without Chris. [W]e'll see how it goes," explained the stick man. "You know, it's a bit odd to play without him, really, but it's a bit of an experiment."

Making up the rest of the Yardbirds lineup are three younger musicians -- guitarist **Ben King**, bass player **Dave Smale** and singer **Andy Mitchell**. King, of course, has had some very big shoes to fill -- with **Eric Clapton**, **Jeff Beck** and **Jimmy Page** all serving as The Yardbirds' lead guitarist during the 1960s -- but McCarty says the 20-something rocker has been up to the challenge.

"He certainly can cut it, very much the same as some of the original guitar players when they were that age," he insists. "And he follows very much in that style."

Of course, fans coming out to see the band will get hear plenty of the songs that have been thrilling audiences for decades. McCarty lists his favorites to perform as "Over, Under, Sideways, Down," "Happenings Ten Years Time Ago" and, especially, "Shapes of Things." Of the latter tune, the drummer says, "It...had all the best ingredients of the band. [It] had good lyrics, great guitar solo and a great sound -- and very much represented that time of the '60s."

Asked whether he keeps in touch with any of his former band mates, McCarty says, "Occasionally we see them. They turn up at shows or we see them at weddings and funerals and things like that. I think the last appearance was Jimmy Page. He came to see us on a tour about two or three years ago."

And while no plans have been made yet, the beat keeper notes that, with a major milestone for the group taking place next year, perhaps a special reunion show could be in the offing.

"It's always a thought that we might one day perhaps all get together and have a big bash for a one-nighter -- perhaps on the 50th anniversary," he says.

Here are all of The Yardbirds' upcoming [tour dates](#): 2/1 -- Buffalo, NY, The Tralf Music Hall 2/2 -- Nichols, NY, Tioga Downs 2/3 -- New York, NY, Irving Plaza Powered by Klipsch 2/4 -- Glenside, PA, Keswick Theatre 2/6 -- Alexandria, VA, Birchmere 2/8 -- Tarrytown, NY, The Tarrytown Music Hall 2/9 -- New Brunswick, NJ, State Theatre

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