

**Scott Amendola:**  
**drummer, percussionist, composer, bandleader, electronic sound mover**

**“Amendola has complete mastery of every piece of his drumset and the ability to create a plethora of sounds using sticks, brushes, mallets, and even his hands.”**

—Steven Raphael, *Modern Drummer* magazine.

**"If Scott Amendola didn't exist, the San Francisco music scene would have to invent him." - Derk Richardson, *San Francisco Bay Guardian***

**For Scott Amendola, the drum kit isn't so much an instrument as a musical portal. As an ambitious composer, savvy bandleader and capaciously creative foil for some of the world's most inventive musicians, Amendola applies his wide-ranging rhythmic virtuosity to a vast array of settings. His closest musical associates include guitarists Jeff Parker, Nels Cline and Charlie Hunter, Hammond B-3 Organist Wil Blades, violinist Jenny Scheinman, saxophonist Larry Ochs, and clarinetist Ben Goldberg, players who have each forged a singular path within and beyond the realm of jazz.**

**While rooted in the Bay Area scene, Amendola has woven a dense and far-reaching web of bandstand relationships that tie him to influential artists in jazz, blues, rock and new music. A potent creative catalyst, he's become the nexus for a community of musicians stretching from Los Angeles and Seattle to Chicago and New York. Whatever the context, Amendola possesses a gift for twisting musical genres in unexpected directions. By employing custom designed electronics, including looping machines, pedals and ring modulators, he's continually expanding his sonic palette, exploring textures and rhythms with an improvisational sensibility.**

**“The electronics are an extension of my voice as a drummer and musician,” Amendola says. “People know me as a drummer, and as a growing musician it makes sense to do new things. It's all about capturing sound. The loops are all improvised, and I start each performance with a blank slate.”**

**Electronics play an increasingly important role in his volatile trio featuring the protean Chicago guitarist Jeff Parker (Tortoise, Isotope 217, Chicago Underground Trio) and veteran South Bay bass master John Shifflett. Renegade Los Angeles guitarist Nels Cline has also encouraged Amendola's electronic explorations in the Nels Cline Singers, an instrumental trio with a series of dense, invigorating recordings for Cryptogramophone, though organizing gigs has become much more complicated since Cline joined Wilco.**

**“The first time I heard Scott I was really blown away,” Cline says. “There aren't too many drummers on the West Coast who had his wide ranging ability. Scott's got**

**some funk in him, a looser, sexy thing going on, and the flexibility to play free and different styles. He plays behind singer/songwriters and he rocks too.”**

**The Oakland East Bay Symphony Orchestra recently recognized Amendola’s growing stature as a composer with a prestigious New Visions/New Vistas commission funded by the James Irvine Foundation, a piece that will be performed and recorded by the Symphony at Oakland’s Paramount Theatre in April 2011.**

**Some of Amendola’s most innovative work takes place in a much more intimate context. His prodigious duo with Hammond B-3 organist Wil Blades, Amendola vs. Blades, centers on their thrilling investigation of Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn’s “Far East Suite,” an interpretation that has grown in grandeur over the past few years.**

**Amendola also brings fresh insight to the jazz canon in the collective trio Plays Monk with bassist Devin Hoff and clarinetist Ben Goldberg, a project that delves deeply into the ingenious compositions of Thelonious Monk. The group’s self-named debut CD was named one of the best releases of 2007 by the San Jose Mercury News and other publications.**

**Goldberg, jazz’s most incisive clarinetist, unleashes Amendola’s earthy side in Go Home, a new quartet featuring seven-string guitar ace Charlie Hunter and cornetist Ron Miles (or trombonist Curtis Fowlkes). And his elemental power is on display with saxophonist Larry Ochs’ Sax & Drumming Core, a rough and tumble trio with drummer Donald Robinson that recently expanded to include the keyboardist Satako Fujii and trumpeter Natsuki Tamura.**

**Ochs, a galvanizing force in jazz and new music for the past four decades, is also the organizer of a spaciouly textured improvisational ensemble Kinhoua, featuring Korean vocalist Dohee Lee, cellist Joan Jeanrenaud, and Amendola on drums and electronics.**

**It might seem that Amendola is spreading himself thin in so many talent-laden bands, but he’s carved out a separate identity as a composer with an expansive vision and a gift for memorable themes. He established his reputation as a bandleader in 1999 with the release of the acclaimed album “Scott Amendola Band” featuring the unusual instrumentation of Eric Crystal on saxophones, Todd Sickafoose on acoustic bass, Jenny Scheinman on violin, Dave MacNab on electric guitar.**

**By the time the band returned to the studio in 2003, Cline had replaced MacNab, contributing to the quintet’s combustible chemistry on the Cryptogramophone album “Cry.” Cline was also a crucial contributor on Amendola’s 2005 Cryptogramophone album “Believe,” which also features Jeff Parker, Jenny Scheinman and John Shifflett.**

As a sideman, Amendola has performed and recorded with a vast, stylistically varied roster of artists, including Bill Frisell, John Zorn, Dave Liebman, Wadada Leo Smith, Madeleine Peyroux, Jacky Terrasson, Shweta Jhaveri, Larry Goldings, Will Bernard, Sex Mob, Kelly Joe Phelps, Larry Klein, Darryl Johnson, Carla Bozulich, Robin Holcomb, Wayne Horvitz, Johnny Griffin, Viktor Krauss, Tony Furtado, Julian Priester, Jessica Lurie, Sonny Simmons, ROVA Saxophone Quartet, Pat Martino, Peter Apfelbaum, Jim Campilongo, Bobby Black, Paul McCandless, Noe Venable, Mark Turner, and the Joe Goode Dance Group.

Born and raised in the New Jersey suburb of Tenafly, just a stone's throw from New York City, Amendola displayed an aptitude for rhythm almost from the moment he could walk. His grandfather Tony Gottuso, was a highly respected guitarist who performed with jazz luminaries such as Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong, Frank Sinatra, and Nat "King" Cole. A member of the original Tonight Show Band under Steve Allen, he offered plenty of support when Amendola began to get interested in jazz.

"We used to play together a lot when I was a teenager," Amendola says. "It had a huge impact on me to play with someone who was around when a lot of the standards that musicians like Miles Davis, John Coltrane, and Keith Jarrett play were written."

His passion for music only deepened during his four years at Boston's Berklee College of Music, where it wasn't unusual for him to practice for 12 hours a day. Drawing inspiration from fellow students such as Jorge Rossi, Jim Black, Kurt Rosenwinkel, and Mark Turner, and studying with the likes of Joe Hunt and Tommy Campbell, Amendola decided he had to find his own voice rather than modeling himself after established drummers.

After graduating in 1992, he decided to move to San Francisco, where he quickly hooked up with Charlie Hunter. They went on to play together with John Schott and Will Bernard in the three-guitar-and-drums funk/jazz ensemble T.J. Kirk which earned a Grammy nomination for its eponymous 1996 debut album. Though intermittent, the musical relationship with Hunter is one of the strongest threads running through Amendola's career.

"From the first gig we played together Charlie and I had a really great hook-up," he says. "Ever since I played with my grandfather I've just really loved the guitar and I wanted to meet a young guitar player who was doing something different. And you can't get more different than what Charlie's doing."

While Hunter and many of the other Northern California players Amendola has forged deep ties with have moved to New York in recent years, the drummer feels he's found the perfect environment in the San Francisco Bay Area. With creative relationships spreading out across the country, and the world, he's never more than one degree away from a powerful musical hook-up.