

## UNION FAMILIES SERIES: Father And Son Standing Proud

Chris Bogios is a proud father—proud of his three children, proud of his grandson. Jim Bogios is proud of his dad.

They are both successful musicians. Chris recently retired from the San Francisco Symphony, where he played trumpet for 48 years. Jim continues to play drums for top rock bands, including Counting Crows. “I thought I had a legit drummer on my hands,” says Chris with a smile, “because I heard him play the Brahms 4<sup>th</sup> on timpani.”

Jim was born in 1968. As a kid he would set up his mother’s pots and pans and play for hours. The Bogios family lived in Oakland, where Jim was able to study music in school. By the time he reached the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, his father acknowledged Jim’s commitment and told him, “If you love it, and are willing to learn all these different styles, and study your butt off, and after all that—MAYBE you can make a living—then you’re in the right field.”



*Jim & Chris Bogios*

After high school, Jim went to the University of North Texas, the top school in the nation for drums. He did well, but soon playing in bands began interfering with his school work. In 1992, during a summer break from school, he got the gig in a Bay Area band called Papa’s Culture, which had just been signed to a major label. He decided to quit school. Papa’s Culture became a successful local band, and they were able to make a living from gigs. “I was the guy dealing with the club owners, which the other guys didn’t want to do,” says Jim. “My father always told me to take care of business. He would say, ‘The Oakland A’s love

*playing baseball, but you don’t see them out there without a contract.’”*

Chris was involved in the first major contract negotiations with the SF Symphony. “In 1968, we created a major contract. We had an 8-week strike that was successful. Not every strike is successful, but we went from nothing to a major contract, with auditions and tenure. Besides playing well, you have to have a good contract.”

“The Papa’s Culture years were an amazing time,” says Jim. “That band formed who I am musically, and personally, more than any other experience in my life.” But Papa’s Culture proved hard to market at the time because they were stylistically all over the place. Some stores would stock them in the rap section, others in the reggae, or pop sections. By 1996, as the group began to lose momentum, Jim got a call to audition for Sheryl Crow, who was about to release her second record. They sent him four songs to prepare, but Jim bought her first album and learned that as well, just in case.

“I was totally nervous,” he remembers. “I saw famous drummers coming out of the room, and I’m this unknown kid from the Bay Area. But once I got in the room, it was just a couple of people playing music. After we did those four songs, Sheryl said, ‘I know you don’t know these songs, but we’re going to play some from the first record.’ So I’m like yeah, ok. And I did them—boom boom boom. Some people’s



*Jim at La Honda music camp.*

Jim couldn’t see himself doing anything else, so his father set him up with private teachers, including Greg Sudmeier, and pushed him to audition for the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra, which he passed. He then studied with Jack Van Geem to audition for the snare part for Peter & The Wolf—and lost. Stunned, Jim vowed to never lose another audition. “I would live the part,” he recalls, “Every spare moment, I would be listening and rehearsing. I remember my Dad saying, ‘If you’re not practicing, somebody else is.’”

When he was a teenager, the Bogios family moved to Moraga, and Jim would rehearse with his rock bands in his living room. This did not sit well with the neighbors. “I could hear them rehearsing a mile away,” recalls Chris. “I got some nasty letters, but we always tried to keep it during the day. They didn’t rehearse past 7:00.”



*Chris & Jim teaching at Cornell Elementary in Albany.*

attitude is, 'I'll do the work after I get the gig.' The same thing happened again with Counting Crows. One thing they said was that I was more prepared than the rest of the guys."

Jim worked for Sheryl Crow for eight years, which opened many doors for him. When not on tour with Sheryl, he was an in-demand session drummer. Jim has also shared the stage with many legendary artists such as Eric Clapton, Keith Richards, and Prince. His ability to play many styles kept him working, and his classical training, especially the ability to read music, really helped. "They usually call me at the last minute, and it's almost impossible to learn 15 or 20 songs in a night, so having the ability to write a cheat sheet with the basic groove, breaks, and the ending, is essential."

In 2000, he did an arena tour with the Dixie Chicks at the height of their fame. "Growing up in rock bands and attending huge arena shows, I always wanted to play on a massive tour with a very theatrical production. The closest I came to it was the Dixie Chicks. Big stage—one song it would snow, another the moon would come up." In 2001, Jim toured and recorded with Ben Folds, one of his most satisfying musical experiences.

Jim joined Counting Crows as a band member in 2003. Currently, they tour and release their own records. "Back in the day, you would tour to support the record," says Jim. "Now you make a record so you can tour."

He says that the audiences keep coming back because the songs are amazing, they change the set list every night, and they constantly improvise. He never knows what Adam (lead singer) is going to do. "As a drummer, you're the wave that everybody rides. You really have to be keyed into the singer to take the ship where they want to go."

"He never has to follow a conductor, you know," says Chris. "When the Symphony played with Metallica, we were really following the drummer."

"A conductor's just a drummer that dropped one of his sticks," laughs Jim.

Over the years, Jim has asked his father to sit in and improvise with his groups, something his audiences have always appreciated, especially after Chris steals the show. "The last time, I played at the Greek theater with Counting Crows," says Chris. "To see this old guy coming up there with a trumpet, it's like, what is he going to do? But when I actually played, they gave me a bigger ovation than I've ever gotten in the Symphony. People asking me for autographs—it was one of the highlights of my performing career, and it had nothing to do with a symphony orchestra."

"It's always been that way," says Jim. "I have to remind him that the rock and roll crowd really gives up the love."

Visit [www.jimbogios.com](http://www.jimbogios.com) for more info on Jim's musical endeavors.



*Onstage with Counting Crows at the Greek Theater in 2009.*

*From left: David Immergluck, Jim Bogios, Chris Bogios, and David Bryson.*