

Interview with Ryo Okumoto of Spock's Beard, Code Red and Asia (GPS)

Contributed by Administrator
Thursday, 05 April 2007

Spock's Beard's keyboardist Ryo Okumoto started a new band to encourage his 14 year old son, Sage to follow in Dad's footsteps. Already an awesome drummer, Sage had appeared on stage with Spock's Beard as a guest and wowed the audience, but as Ryo built the new band around his son the band took on a life of its own and developed into a new project for Dad instead. The new band became Code Red, featuring a totally new line-up with Ryo out front on the keys.

Q. So, Code Red is an all-new band for you. I had heard that you started this band originally to showcase your son, Sage, who at 14 is already an awesome drummer. I was lucky enough to see him play with you during a Spock's Beard concert and he was great. But he has left the band, so what can you tell me about the new band? A. I was putting this band together for my son Sage, but Sage lost interest, so I kept some of the members. I had all these people at the right time and they became my friends and now this is my band. Some people we added from a recycler I ran. One by one we got together and they are really good. They are all so nice and I like it. They're like my children now. Q. For those Spock's Beard fans out there, how different is Code Red from Spock's Beard? Would they like this band as well? A. Well yeah, Of course, if they like me in Spock's Beard they should like this band too, because I am not doing that much different than Spock's Beard. I'm playing the exact same thing. The personnel is different. You know - it's a totally different band. Q. Are you planning to do a CD with Code Red? A. Not sure yet. We have to start working on it. I have to think how I'm going to do this because I need to do my solo CD pretty soon and I don't know this will be my solo unit 4. I am just not sure. I am involved with a different group right now and I don't want to be split too thin so I really need to think about it. Q. If you were to do a CD with Code Red would you write new material for that? A. Oh yeah, absolutely. Yeah, other band members would write also. They can write. Everybody writes in this band, it's good. Q. But right now when Code Red plays you are just playing material off your last solo album? A. Yeah, "Coming Through". Q. Is this the first time that that material has been performed live? A. No, what I did, is I did a world tour by myself a couple of years ago and that was a totally different band. I had this Japanese bass player from Japan and guitarist Alan Morse from Spock's Beard was playing. So I did a world tour. In the states I only played the one show, I did 9 shows in Japan and 7 shows in Europe. Q. If fans missed the B.B. King show when can they see you and Code Red again? Are you currently looking for other gigs for Code Red? A. We are looking right now, but there is nothing booked yet. It's probably going to be in August. We need to wait. But, there will be another time before the summer ends. Q. I understand you are currently in the middle of a tour with Teena Marie. So are you waiting til you finish that tour to schedule gigs for Code Red? A. The tour is a spot date. So basically I am in town and I don't go out of the country with Teena. So I am available to do this. I am recording right now with Spock's Beard. We need to finish by next month, that's our goal. So the new Spock's Beard CD is finished next month and it will come out in September and we will tour in October or November in Europe and the states. That's the whole idea. Q. What other projects do you have planned for the future? You have a solo album for yourself and a new CD with Spock's Beard anything else? A. Did you know about the Asia band? Anyway, they had some problems with the band name, so Asia is no longer the name, it is now GPS. You can see it on the Asia web site. The person who was continuing Asia - his name is John Paine, he was the bass player from Asia after John Wenten. He kept Asia going and now he is recording the new material for the past two months. Then the original keyboardist left, so they needed another keyboard player so I went in and played for all the songs and we finished the recording. It will be released August 23 by the same record company as Spock's Beard - Inside Out. They want to do a tour. They already have dates in September And October opening up for YNT (Yesterday and Tomorrow) in Europe and London. So that's another band that I am involved with. So I've got to do that tour and the Spock's Beard tour. And I have to keep Code Red and I'm doing Teen Marie. So that's enough. Q. You have worked with some awesome musicians. Are there any musicians with whom you would like to work, but haven't gotten to yet? A. Sting. Sting would be great. Q. What was the last CD you bought, and/or what have you been listening to lately? A. Pat Metheny the guitar player - He is my idol. Q. What was the last concert you attended as a fan? A. Judas Priest in Germany.