

Aynsley Dunbar

Aynsley Thomas Dunbar (born 10 January 1946) is an English drummer. He has worked with some of the top names in rock, including Nils Lofgren, Eric Burdon, John Mayall, Frank Zappa, Ian Hunter, Lou Reed, Jefferson Starship, Jeff Beck, David Bowie, Whitesnake, Sammy Hagar, Michael Schenker, UFO, Flo & Eddie and Journey.[1]

Aynsley Thomas Dunbar was born in Liverpool, England. He started his professional career in Derry Wilkie and the Pressmen in 1963. In December 1964 he joined Merseybeat group the Mojos, who were renamed Stu James & the Mojos, with original members vocalist Stu James and guitarist Nick Crouch and bass player Lewis Collins (later an actor in the Professionals). This line-up continued till 1966. Dunbar then auditioned for the Jimi Hendrix Experience and Hendrix had difficulty deciding between Dunbar and Mitch Mitchell – the latter won Hendrix's coin flip. Dunbar then joined John Mayall's Bluesbreakers replacing Hughie Flint in the summer of 1966. He stayed with Mayall until the spring of 1967 (playing on the *A Hard Road* album), being replaced by Mick Fleetwood.

After a short stint in the Jeff Beck Group Dunbar founded 'the Aynsley Dunbar Retaliation', so named to chide Mayall who fired him. They issued four albums during their existence. Dunbar co-wrote the song "Warning" (later recorded by Black Sabbath on their first album). The Dunbar single version was recorded in 1967 for the Blue Horizon label,[2] prior to his band's first album release *The Aynsley Dunbar Retaliation* (circa 1969[3]).

Subsequently, Dunbar founded a short-lived progressive rock band called Blue Whale, which debuted with a tour of Scandinavia in January 1970. Following the recent collapse of the original lineup of King Crimson, Dunbar unsuccessfully tried to recruit Robert Fripp as Blue Whale's guitarist. Fripp, in turn, unsuccessfully tried to recruit Dunbar as King Crimson's new drummer. Blue Whale recorded one album, which featured Paul Williams (vocals), Ivan Zagni (guitar), Roger Sutton (guitar), Tommy Eyre (from Retaliation, keys) and Peter Friedberg (bass).[4]

Dunbar was later the drummer for Frank Zappa's Mothers of Invention, featuring on albums such as *Waka/Jawaka*, and *The Grand Wazoo*, as well as the film *200 Motels*. In 1974 he played on the soundtrack of *Dirty Duck*, an adult animated film directed by Charles Swenson. In the mid-1970s Dunbar played drums for former Grin leader, Nils Lofgren, before joining Journey for their first four albums. He joined Jefferson Starship for three albums. On 28 December 1978, he played at Winterland in San Francisco with the Tubes. Dunbar joined Whitesnake in 1985 and drummed on their 1987 album, *Whitesnake*. He also spent some time working with Eric Burdon, Michael Schenker and the Animals.

More recently, in 2005, he drummed on Jake E. Lee's solo *Retraced* album. He has been the drummer for the World Classic Rockers since 2003.

In 2008 Dunbar recorded an album of material for Direct Music with Mickey Thomas of Starship, and musicians such as Jake E. Lee, former guitarist for Ozzy Osbourne. The complete recordings of Dunbar's drumming with Frank Zappa at Carnegie Hall in October 1971 were released exactly 40 years after the event in a four-CD set.