



## On9

Via Email on July 4th 2005 with **Simon** of [On9](#).

**Simon** represents On9, **Azchael** represents [www.rockinchina.com](http://www.rockinchina.com)

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**Azchael:** Can you please first introduce yourself and your bands' members and tell me since when they are playing with the band?

**Simon:** J.C – Drums, founder member since 2 years. English. Also can play bass & guitar.  
Ken – Vocals, Guitar, founder member since 2 years. Canadian. Also can play drums & bass.  
Tony – Bass, 18 months. American. Also can play drums & guitar  
I am Simon – Guitar, Vocals – 1 year. English. Also can play drums & bass

**Azchael:** What kind of instruments are you using?

**Simon:** I (simon) play a **Gibson SG Guitar**. It's a fantastic instrument. I find the SG very easy to play, versatile & comfortable. It is worth paying for quality with a guitar – it always stays in tune, looks lovely & sounds like a dream. & it's a rock icon. I play through a **Laney TF300 amp**, which has a warm, solid tone & is very loud! I am a bit of an electro-acoustic-feedback-fan! I use less sound effects these days, but play through a **Yamaha MagicStomp multi effects pedal**. You get all the versatility of 100 stompboxes/amplifier simulations, but only one extra connection, so the guitar's tone carries through. I have played in bands in the past where there was a lot of effects use & I see this a lot in China. I think it is more important to focus on your playing style, the tone of the instrument & not get too distracted by different sonic effects. I often keep a **Epiphone Sheraton** behind me on stage in case I break a string on the SG....it's got more of a jazzy sound as it's a semi-acoustic, so I don't use it much with On9....I prefer the raw power of the SG. Recently we have been writing some songs in different tunings & with a capo, so I will use both Guitars in future on stage.

Ken plays a **Godin Copy guitar**. It's got a very distinctive, trebly tone. The guitar's layout is very unusual & basic...& red – just the way Ken likes it. He plays it through a Roland Cube amplifier. No effects, but the **Roland Cube** has some onboard effects that can change the sound a bit. It's good to have 2 very different sounds with the 2 guitars in the band. The playing style & sounds of both instruments are very different – but compliment each other well.

Tony plays a **MusicMan Sub Bass**. A really reliable instrument, that looks great with its matt black finish & its no-nonsense look. Tony plays into a **Carlsboro amp** & sometimes uses a **Line 6 Bass Pod effects module**.....but he can't work out how to use it so often plays with no effects.



J.C plays a **locally made drum kit**. It's manufactured in Tianjing. Once we replaced the drum skins, it has quite a nice sound...& good value for money! Drums are built to be bashed & the kit seems to be holding up well....all of us play drums & also, in the area where we rehearse, the local kids come & whack it...if it can survive this treatment, it should last forever!

**Azchael:** What kind of style are you playing and why are you playing this in genre?

**Simon:** It's difficult for us to say what style we play in. We never set out to replicate a certain type of music, it simply is what it is. I guess we are more rock,n,roll, than anything else. We have only played one cover version (Helter Skelter – but the way we play it gives it balls!), really, all our material is self written. There is a lot of variance in style & tempo in our material, so we'd hope our audience get to see lots of styles when they come to see us play!

**Azchael:** Do you consider yourself as a Chinese band, a Beijing band or a metal band? Please give reasons.

**Simon:** We consider ourselves a Shanghai Band. No one in the band is Chinese, but we have all lived in China for 5 or 6 years. So we consider it to be our home. We see Shanghai bands raising the quality of music in the city compared to recent years. Traditionally, Beijing has been the place for music. We reckon Shanghai is catching up! Its true there are some great bands from Beijing, such as the Verse, or Subs, but Shanghai has its own greats as well, such as Crystal Butterfly, Honeys etc. There is a huge scene developing & we are always really happy to see enthusiastic audiences in Shanghai.

We aren't a Metal band, although that genre is very popular in Shanghai. We are often called 'the foreigner-band of shanghai' – we don't really like that label!

**Azchael:** Which foreign bands would you like to jam with or with which musician?

**Simon:** We'd jam with anyone from anywhere at anytime! If I had a wish, it would be to play with the Who (before Keith Moon & John Entwistle died) Paul Weller or Bob Marley!

**Azchael:** What do you think about the domestic scene?

**Simon:** I am always delighted to see bands getting onstage & playing – even if they are not experienced. To play live is a great feeling & you can see that interest in rock music is increasing. From that comes a very exiting atmosphere. Personally, I am pleased to see less bands making sets completely of cover versions & writing their own music instead. I believe rock music sounds great sung in Chinese. The one problem we all have in Shanghai is – NOT ENOUGH VENUES!!!! Some bands need to make a little money from playing gigs – it is very tough to do this in Shanghai. ARK is technically very good, but expensive to play at & expensive to visit. Harley's Bar is fantastic – great people, an improved back-line & sound. I always feel at home playing at Harleys. TangHui is also a good place, with a nice atmosphere & although it's a bit small, it is a good place to play.....you can't jump around very much on that little stage, though! Most of the other places have established house bands that play covers & nothing else. It would be good to have some more outside festivals with local bands playing.



I really respect YuYinTang for getting bands together. We really need some good, dedicated promoters to drive the culture & to help the bands establish themselves.

**Azrael:** Which other domestic band do you like?

**Simon:** I really love Crystal Butterfly (水晶蝶). They have been around for nearly 10 years. I have known them for some time – Recently they have been producing some real quality music. I saw them at Harley's last Sunday & I bought everyone I knew their CD. I can't get it off my own sound system. They have a clearly defined sound now & extra confidence live. I love their guitar sound & the vocals are terrific. I saw Subs the other day too – Really crazy – they put their heart & soul into the performance....As a 1st generation punk, I always like to hear this sort of sound!

**Azrael:** What was the most important event for your band and what has changed? What was the impact?

**Simon:** For me personally, it was when we played at ARK. It was the YuYinTang Gig, the John Lennon tribute. We played Helter Skelter & Dear Prudence by the Beatles & a few of our own tracks. The sound was great & ARK's stage is an excellent place to play. I think our sound really came together on that gig. We really enjoyed ourselves – I've got a great picture with all of us in the air at once! We started with a slow number that goes BAM! on the first chorus. I remember the whole audience taking a step back when we hit that first power chord. It felt great – lots of energy flowed through us that day!

Another thing is our new rehearsal studio. It is in a very arty area, with painting studios all around. It gives us our own space to play in & although it's bloody hot in the summer & freezing in winter, we have been able to go to work on our music there. We often get visitors wandering into our rehearsal room, from the local kids to workers to people looking in the art galleries. The room is rather small, so most of our guests don't stay too long, as they get deafened pretty quick!

**Azrael:** How do you see the Chinese scene in the next ten years? What are your expectations?

**Simon:** The biggest problem for China is that no one can make any money from selling records & CDs. Currently live gigs are where the scene is. I expect China to develop this area. Radio could also develop as a medium for music. There are many times more cars on the roads & listenership is going up. So more rock based music formats may emerge. In 10 years, you may be able to dial up Rockinchina.com & see the latest On9 gig on your mobile phone!

**Azrael:** How about records? Do you want to release one? If yes, when and who is doing it?

**Simon:** We'd love to record. I have produced records before & know my way around a recording studio, so we will end up producing ourselves. Any opportunity to do this would be welcome.

It is possible that I will have a radio slot soon. As well as playing alternative music from all genres, I am hoping to record 'sessions' every 2 weeks featuring a local band. This way we can take some of the brilliant Chinese music to a wider audience & give the bands the exposure they deserve.



**Azrael:** What do you think about [www.rockinchina.com](http://www.rockinchina.com)?

**Simon:** It's very informative & well written. I think it's great that rockinchina is passionate about music. Anyone could visit the site & get an insight into the local scene, where to go see music & information about the bands.

The site is easy to navigate & has some good pictures. There is a lot of focus on punk & metal, but I guess that reflects the sort of bands there are in china. Music is all about community. I think rockinchina cements that community together, so all respect is due!

**Azrael:** Thanks for the interview.