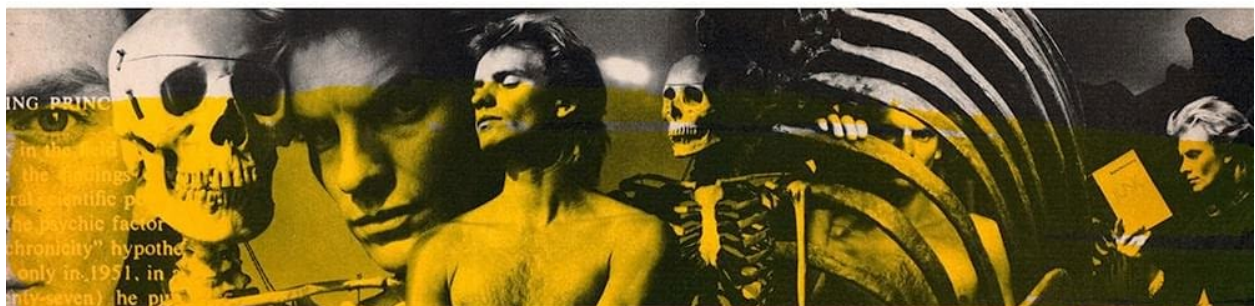


**The Police**  
**Album Review**  
**By Nicholas Herbert**

**Synchronicity**

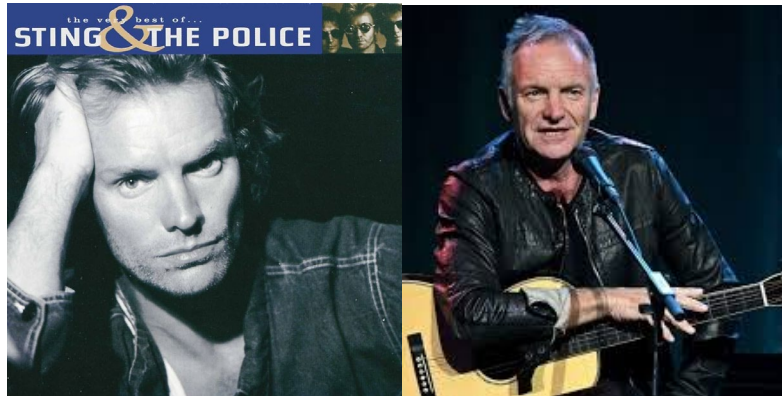
*THE POLICE*

*SYNCHRONICITY*



# The Band Members

## Sting: Vocals, Bass Guitar



Gordon Matthew Thomas Sumner, known as Sting, was born on October 2, 1951, in Wallsend, Northumberland, England, at Sir G.B. Hunter Memorial Hospital. He was the youngest of four siblings and grew up near Wallsend's shipyards, which left a lasting impression on him. At 10 years old, he became fascinated with an old Spanish guitar given to him by his dad's friend. This instrument sparked his interest in music, and he learned how to play it.

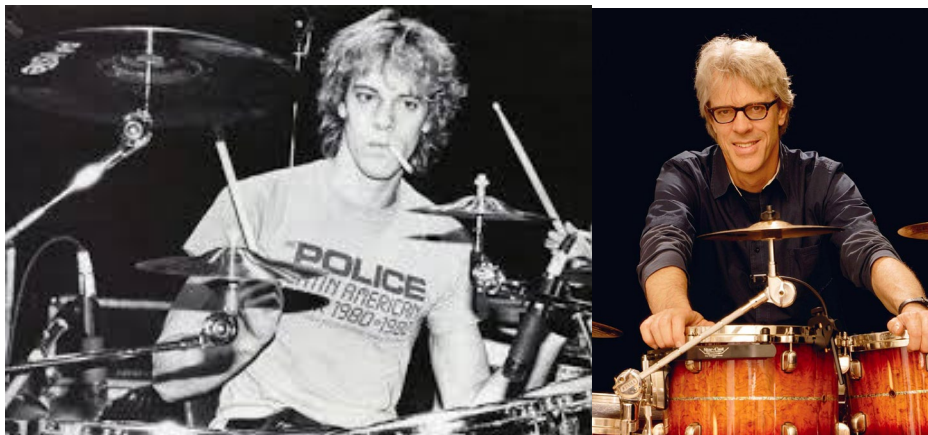
Sting attended St. Cuthbert's Grammar School and during that time, he went to nightclubs to watch bands such as Cream and Manfred Mann, who inspired him to eventually pursue music. Though, before fully committing to music, he attended different colleges, became a teacher, and taught for about two years. He then decided music was his future and played with bands such as The Phoenix Jazzmen, Newcastle Big Band, and Last Exit. He earned his nickname because he frequently wore a black and yellow striped sweater, and a fellow bandmate thought he looked like a bee.

Sting later joined Stewart Copeland and Henry Padovani, who was later replaced by Andy Summers, to form The Police. After Sting left the band many years later, he embarked on a successful solo career and continues to perform today.

The following video link shows him talking about doing his first solo album.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uMfbgbbO8LE>

## Stewart Copeland: Drummer



Stewart Armstrong Copeland, born on July 16, 1952, in Alexandria, Virginia, is the only American member of The Police. Growing up, he moved frequently due to his father's work as a CIA officer. Stewart's interest in drumming began in his childhood. He lived in various countries, including Beirut, Lebanon, where he was exposed to different types of music. Following his older brother Ian, who played drums in a local band, Stewart picked up drumming and quickly became passionate about it.

Stewart started his career with the band Curved Air, initially as their road manager and later as their drummer. Despite initial challenges, the band eventually found success before breaking up. Stewart then co-founded The Police with Sting and Henry Padovani. While Stewart contributed some songs, Sting's songwriting eventually took center stage.



After The Police disbanded, Stewart enjoyed a successful solo career, composing music for movie and television shows like "The Equalizer," "Star Wars: Droids," "Taking Care of Business," and "Dead Like Me," as well as for video games, including the entire Spyro series. Later, he formed the group Animal Logic with Stanley Clarke and Deborah Holland. Their first album and tour were successful, but the second album did poorly, leading to the band's breakup.

The following is a video link to his own YouTube channel where he talks about his time in The Police and performs music.

<https://www.youtube.com/@StewartCopelandOfficial>

## Andy Summers: Guitar



Andrew James Summers, known as Andy Summers, was born on December 31, 1942, in Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire, England. His family later moved to Bournemouth in Hampshire. Although he initially learned to play the piano, Andy was drawn to the guitar. As a teenager, he attended a concert featuring Thelonious Monk and Dizzy Gillespie, which made a significant impression on him. At 16, he played in local clubs, and at 19, he

moved to London with his friend Zoot Money to form Zoot Money's Big Roll Band. During the hippie era, he met many famous musicians like Jimi Hendrix. He later joined the band Soft Machine for about three months and then The Animals.

A few years later, bassist Mike Howlett invited him to join a band called Strontium 90, where he was introduced to Sting and Stewart Copeland. Andy made quite an impression on the other members. After the breakup of the band, Sting and Copeland formed The Police with Henry Padovani. After a short time, Padovani left the band due to creative differences and a desire to pursue his own musical projects. By coincidence, Andy and Stewart ran into each other at a subway station and had coffee. From that meeting, Andy joined The Police as their newest guitarist. After the band ended, he enjoyed a successful solo career.

The following link is a video about Stewart Copeland meeting Andy Summers. I recommend watching this, it is very funny.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WnLgmvxsgo>

## **The lesser known band member - Henry Padovani: Guitar**



Henry Padovani was with The Police from January to August 1977. Born in France, he studied Economics at Aix-en-Provence and was inspired by Jimi Hendrix to start his own band. In December 1976, he moved to London and met Stewart Copeland after a Curved Air concert. Stewart introduced him to the punk scene, prompting Henry to shave his hair and beard. After auditioning for the band in London, Stewart invited him to join The Police. Unfortunately, Sting was not happy with his style so Henry left the group, to be later replaced by Andy Summers. Henry briefly played with other bands and then enjoyed a successful solo career.

## **The Police is Formed**

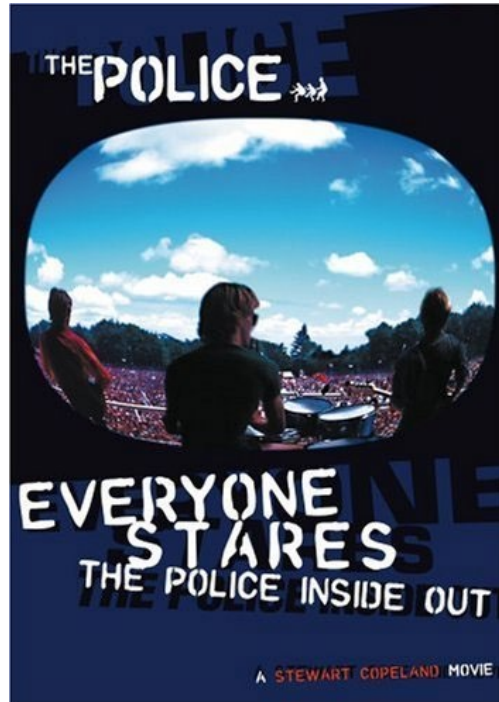


During their time together, The Police quickly became popular and were part of the second British wave. The band played new-wave, reggae, punk, and rock style music. They released five albums in total, including "Outlandos d'Amour" and "Ghost in the Machine." During their time together, they sold over 75 million records, making them one of the best-selling bands of all time.

Unfortunately, the band broke up due to Sting, who believed he could achieve more on his own without needing approval from the other band members for his songs. Additionally, there was tension as Stewart and Andy wanted more input on the songs, leading to arguments with Sting. They did some charity concerts a few times but officially broke up in 1986.

Many years later, in a surprise to most, they reunited for a very successful tour from 2007 to 2008. After it was all over, they once again went their own ways. In a way, it gave closure to fans of theirs who were devastated by their initial breakup. However, they remain on good terms to this day, saying that they consider each other as brothers.

If you want to learn more about The Police, I recommend watching the movie, "Everyone Stares: The Police Inside Out" which is about The Police from Stewart Copeland's perspective.



## Synchronicity Album

"Synchronicity" was the 5th and final studio album by The Police, released on June 17, 1983. It was considered a commercial success, outselling any of their previous albums. It included 10 songs on the vinyl LP, featuring hits like "Every Breath You Take", "King of Pain", "Wrapped Around Your Finger" and "Synchronicity 2". It was recorded in Montserrat and Canada.

Inspired by Arthur Koestler's book "The Roots of Coincidence," which Sting frequently read, the album reduced reggae influences in favor of production-heavy textures and synthesizers. It took over six weeks to record, with each instrument recorded in a separate room to achieve the best sound. The original album cover, created by Jeff Ayeroff and Norman



Moore, featured multiple photographs with red, yellow, and blue transparent overlays, resulting in 36 different variations.

After its release, the album was well-received and generated significant revenue. At the 1984 Grammy Awards, it was nominated for five awards and won three. It reached number one on both the US Billboard 200 and UK Albums Chart. Rolling Stone ranked it 17th on the 100 Best Albums of the Eighties and 159th on the 500 Greatest Albums of All Time.

The album was highly influential, inspiring other bands and being regarded as unique and fantastic. In 2009, it was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame, and in 2023, it was selected by the US National Recording Registry by the Library of Congress for preservation as "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant."

## Songs

*A review of some of the more notable songs on the album.*

**“Synchronicity 1”** - This song is the first on the album and was released as a Japan-only single. It was written by Sting and inspired by Carl Jung's theory of synchronicity. It shares the same name as another on the album, but both have the numbers "1" and "2" added consecutively.

When asked about the connection between the two songs, Stewart Copeland said, "I've had Sting up against the wall on this issue before, and he point blank refuses to explain the connection. None of us in the band can even remember which one's which. The only way I can keep them straight is that 'Synch I' has Sting's cool sequencer part, that 'dunga dunga dung' thing that I, to this day, get all the credit for. People think it's me playing some percussive instrument, and I have to put them right. It was a

real 'rama-lama' way of starting our set on tour, though it almost killed me to start with that kind of onslaught every night."

I think it was a good choice to start the album out with this song. It is energetic from beginning to end and prepares you for what's to come. Sting's vocals are familiar as from previous albums. Stewart's drumming is frantic once he gets going, and Andy has some catchy guitar riffs. I would rate it a solid 8 out of 10.



The link for the song:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Si5CSpUCDGY>

**“Walking In Your Footsteps”** - Sting wrote this song, and it only took him and the band half a day to finish. He didn't care to use sequencer sounds and instead used a factory setting he liked. The song is a reflection on humanity's tendency to repeat the mistakes of the past. The lyrics use the metaphor of walking in the footsteps of the dinosaurs to highlight the danger of repeating historical errors.

Another version of this song includes two extra verses, extending its length by an additional minute. I really enjoy it for its somewhat mellow pace. It has a steady, rhythmic beat and minimalist arrangement which gives it a fascinating primal vibe that draws you in. The serious lyrics make you reflect on their meaning. I would rate this a solid 9 out of 10.

The link for the song:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=svWINSRhQU0>

**“Wrapped Around Your Finger”** - Sting said this song is about a person "turning the tables on someone who had been in charge." The song includes references from books and myths like Scylla and Charybdis, monsters from Greek mythology. Sting mentioned, "This song is vaguely alchemical and probably about a friend of mine, a professional psychic and my tutor in tarot, with bits of Doctor Faustus and The Sorcerer's Apprentice thrown into the pot for good measure."

The music video features the band in a candle-lit room, with Andy playing his guitar and Stewart drumming, surrounded by a maze of candles. Sting gracefully dances throughout the candles while singing. Andy didn't like the music video, saying, "I never much liked the idea for 'Wrapped Around Your Finger.' No, I was kind of pissed off about that one. I've never been much of a fan of that song, actually. Sting got to shoot his part last in that video and made a meal of knocking all the candles out. F\*\*k him."

As much as I like the song, I prefer to watch the video because it is mesmerizing with the simple use of all of the candles. The song has a soft, steady beat and dreamy synthesizers that make it feel magical. I'd give this song a 10 out of 10 and would consider it my favourite on the whole album.

The link for the song:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=svWINSRhQU0>

**“Mother”** - This song had some controversy and was seen as the worst on the album. Andy Summers wrote and sang it, saying, "We all have our family situations, and I had a pretty intense mother who was very focused on me." The lyrics suggest someone being pestered by their mother and wanting to be left alone.

This is also the one song my dad likes to sing the most, which almost drives me crazy. Despite that, I really enjoy it for some reason. It's definitely different and might not be for everyone. The lyrics feel deep and relatable because everyone has a mom. The song has a strange and slightly creepy feel, with a loud, jarring sound and intense, almost frantic singing. I rate this song a 7 out of 10.

Here is a link to the song.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d56MfuZAfwI>

**“Synchronicity 2”** - The second Synchronicity song on the album, despite sharing a name, has no connection to the first. It tells the story of a man struggling with life. His mother is going crazy and his boss is constantly harassing him. His struggles are so overwhelming that he feels like there's a monster growing inside him, symbolized by a reference to the Loch Ness monster in a Scottish lake.

Despite the serious nature of the song, it comes across to me as fun. It's one of those songs that you can really rock your head to. It has lively guitar playing, a strong bass, and Sting's passionate singing. It feels urgent and dramatic. The chorus is catchy, and the changes in speed and intensity make it one of the best tracks on the album.

This is one of my dad's favourites. I rate this a solid 9 out of 10. It's really a great song that you can listen to over and over.

The link for the song:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o5FPPoLqkCk>

**“Every Breath You Take”** - This song was their biggest hit, not only in the US but also in Canada, reaching the Billboard Hot 100 singles chart for around eight weeks in 1983. It was nominated for three Grammy Awards and won Song of the Year and Best Pop Performance by a Duo or Group



with Vocals. The song is about a man stalking his ex and constantly watching them, as shown in the lyrics:

"Every move you make"  
"And every vow you break"  
"Every smile you fake"  
"Every claim you stake"  
"I'll be watching you"  
"Every move you make"  
"Every step you take"  
"I'll be watching you."

I thoroughly enjoy every second of the song. The writing is very deep, and the darker tone of the instruments fits perfectly, enhancing the overall feel. The simple pace of the drums gives it a sad tone. My favorite part is when they slightly increase the tempo, with Sting singing louder and Stewart Copeland's drums growing more powerful, deviating from the original pacing. I give this song a 10 out of 10. It's probably one of the best Police songs available.

The link for the song:

<https://youtu.be/OMOGaugKpzs>

## Summary

"Synchronicity" was The Police's best and most successful album. It was a big improvement in songwriting and sound compared to their previous albums. They took a risk by trying something different, and it paid off. There was less reggae influence and more use of synthesizers and complex arrangements, showing how much the band had evolved. There was an

additional song, "Murder by Numbers", that was not included on the original vinyl LP but was later added to cassettes and CDs.

After the release of "Synchronicity" and the following tour, the band members went their separate ways to pursue solo projects. However, there were discussions about reuniting and recording a new album.

Unfortunately, these plans were derailed when Stewart Copeland injured himself playing polo, which delayed the process. Ultimately, the band did not regroup to create a new album, and they officially remained disbanded. I believe that's how Sting wanted it, as he preferred to remain a solo artist who could make all the decisions, without needing input from other band members. However, they did manage to update one of their older songs, "Don't Stand So Close to Me," with a fresh sound in 1986.

This year (2024), a limited super deluxe set of the "Synchronicity" album was released in celebration of its 40th anniversary. It includes the original songs remastered, previously unreleased tracks, alternate takes, live recordings, and demos. If you are a fan of The Police and the "Synchronicity" album, then this set is a must-have. It's almost like they released a whole new album. It's amazing to hear the various stages of the creation of each song, with some starting with one sound but eventually evolving into something completely different.

Overall, I would give this album a 9 out of 10. It isn't perfect, but it's close. Some songs are not as strong as others but are still interesting and fun to listen to. Whether you are a fan of The Police or not, I'm sure you'll find at least one song on the album that you will enjoy.

The Police is my dad's all-time favorite band, and he owns just about everything possible from the group. He is the one who started me listening to them, and I can see why he is hooked on them. Though, all of the opinions in this review are mine only and not his.