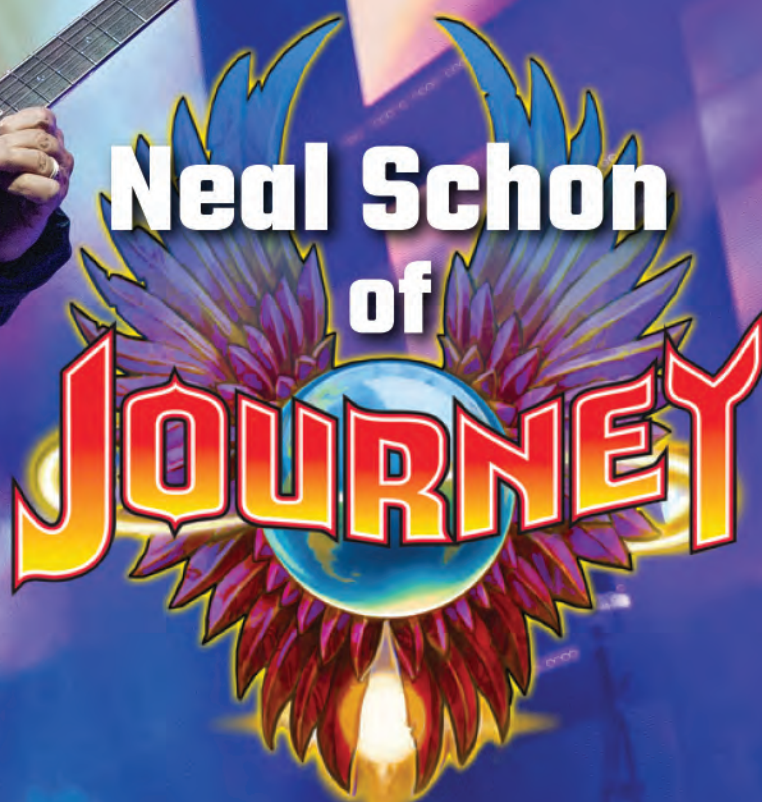


ROCKOn

MAGAZINE



Neal Schon
of

FOREIGNER

JOE SATRIANI

Issue 65

September - October 2022

www.RockOnMagazine.com

Local Reno Musician

DALE POUNE



Neal Schon/Journey
Main Cover/Article

ROCKOn MAGAZINE

September - October 2022 Issue 65



Gina Adams
CEO/Publisher/
New Business

Mr. Neal Schon of Journey. Thank you very much for talking with Rock On Magazine. It is an absolute honor to have you in our magazine. Thank you for your time and your story. Your interview is so informative. You've never given up on what you believe in, music. We can't wait to see you perform in Reno, NV! See you backstage!

-Gina Adams

Joe Satriani - It was a pleasure meeting you through your interview. Thank you for the time to talk with Bill and Rock On. Your guitar playing is impressive and tells many stories; your fans adore you. We can't wait to see you perform here in Reno. Thank you again!

-Gina Adams

Michael Bluestein of Foreigner - Thank you for accepting our request for your interview. We have watched and listened to Foreigner for many moons. I still hear Foreigner on the radio and sing to all the words. Feels like the first time, always. See you soon in Reno, NV

-Gina Adams



Dave McCraw
CEO/Publisher

Mr. Dale Pounce: Thank you for your time and consideration in talking with Rock On Magazine. I admire all you have done in your lifetime, and your business plan is attainable. Such heartfelt words from teaching at the High Desert prison. Thank you for helping inmates have something to look forward to.

We can't wait to hear about your new CD. Thank you, Dale.

-Gina Adams.

And thank you so much to everyone who helped create this beautiful issue and to all our advertisers.



JOE SATRIANI

FOREIGNER

**Local Reno Musician
DALE POUNE**



Rob Williams/RKW Designs
Graphic Design/Layout

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Jay Luster, Bill Kopp

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS
Shanda Golden, Jason Kincade, Erik Kabik, Jim Welch, Karsten Staiger

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Gina Adams - CEO/Publisher/New Business | 949.337.0246 | gina@rockonmagazine.com
Dave McCraw - CEO/Publisher | dave@renotahoemagazine.com

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Joe Satriani: Telling his stories, with and without words

By Bill Kopp



Joe Satriani is the most popular instrumental rock guitarist in the history of music. Though he has yet to win a Grammy Award for his work, Satriani is one of the most often-nominated artists (15 to date). His albums and live performances meet with near universal critical acclaim, and his total record sales to date exceed 10 million units.

In addition to his own thriving career – marked both by solo tours, his G3 concert tour series, his G4 Experience guitar camp and his 19th album, 2022's *Elephants of Mars* – Satriani has long been an in-demand musician, sought for his expertise playing live and/or in the studio with Blue Öyster Cult, Alice Cooper, Deep Purple, Mick Jagger, Spinal Tap, the Yardbirds and many others. In his spare time he's also guitarist for supergroup Chickenfoot.

While Satriani is a deeply technical player – in musician's parlance, a “shredder” – from the very beginning his work has been distinguished by a strong emphasis on melody and accessibility. And that's very much by design. “I try to keep a very strong melodic floor to even the craziest solo,” he says.

“When I sit down to turn some feeling – whether it's simple or very complex – into music, I'm trying to do two things,” Satriani explains. “One, I'm trying to get it right for myself. I'm trying to prove to myself that I'm translating this inspiration correctly into music.”

But that's only half of the equation. “I also want to see if I [communicate] get that story to my audience,” he says. And Satriani acknowledges that where instrumental music is concerned, much is left to the listener's imagination. “It has this great power of allowing the listener to reinterpret it,” he says. “And that goes back to a broader meaning of music.” Satriani believes that human beings need music.

“And when we put on a piece of music to help us celebrate or commiserate, we’re making the choice to use that music as we see fit,” he says And that might or might not line up with the composer’s original intent.

He provides an amusing example to illustrate his point. “I write a song about diving off a cliff into a beautiful mountain pool of crystal clear, freezing cold water. And someone may hear it and think, ‘This is the perfect song for when I need to write code for my software project!’” Satriani emphasizes that ultimately, the artist gives up control over the song’s meaning when it’s shared with the wider audience. “I write a love song, and they think it’s sad,” he says with a chuckle. “I write a sad song, and they use it as a love song!”

And Joe Satriani is okay with that. “That is the beauty of it,” he says. And that delightful disconnect is part of what separates instrumental music from songs with words. “If [a tune] has lyrics, of course, then you’re kind of forced to know what it was that the artist is trying to tell you,” he explains. “But when you hear ‘Moonlight Sonata,’ you can decide for yourself: ‘This song is about this, today.” And Satriani keeps this reality in mind when he writes music.

The acclaimed guitarist has a fertile mind when it comes to creating memorable melodic lines. One of his early breakthrough tunes was the soaring instrumental “Always With Me, Always With You,” an elegiac track from his second album, 1987’s *Surfing with the Alien*. The song combined lightning-fast fluid runs with a fetching, ballad-like melody. The track earned Satriani the first of those many Grammy nominations, in this case for Best Pop Instrumental Performance.

And though he’s written hundreds of songs since then, Satriani exercises strict quality control. Not everything he composes (or records) finds its way onto a Joe Satriani album. “I think every project has a couple of songs that leave you scratching your head,” he says. “Halfway through, you go, ‘I thought that was going to be great.’” In those cases, he puts the song off to the side and moves on to something else.

When he’s working on an album like *The Elephants of Mars*, Satriani says that he routinely brings a lot of material to the project. “I’ve always got 20-30 songs,” he says. “Sometimes 50.” As the project progresses, some inevitably fall by the wayside. Others are reworked, and the best ones make it to the finish line. And if the plan calls for the record to include ten tracks, he might decide to complete a few extras. “Some people on my team are saying, ‘Give 10; don’t give many more.’ And other people are saying, ‘You might as well work on 16, because you never know.’”



And in Satriani's case, you really don't know. "The last day in the studio, you might decide that four of them aren't quite ready yet," he admits. Satriani has a good sense of which among his songs are best suited for each album, but he listens to people he trusts, too. "Even the record company – filled with really talented people who do this all the time – can listen to an album and get surprised and say, 'You know that song we thought was [a deep album] track? I think it's the single!'"

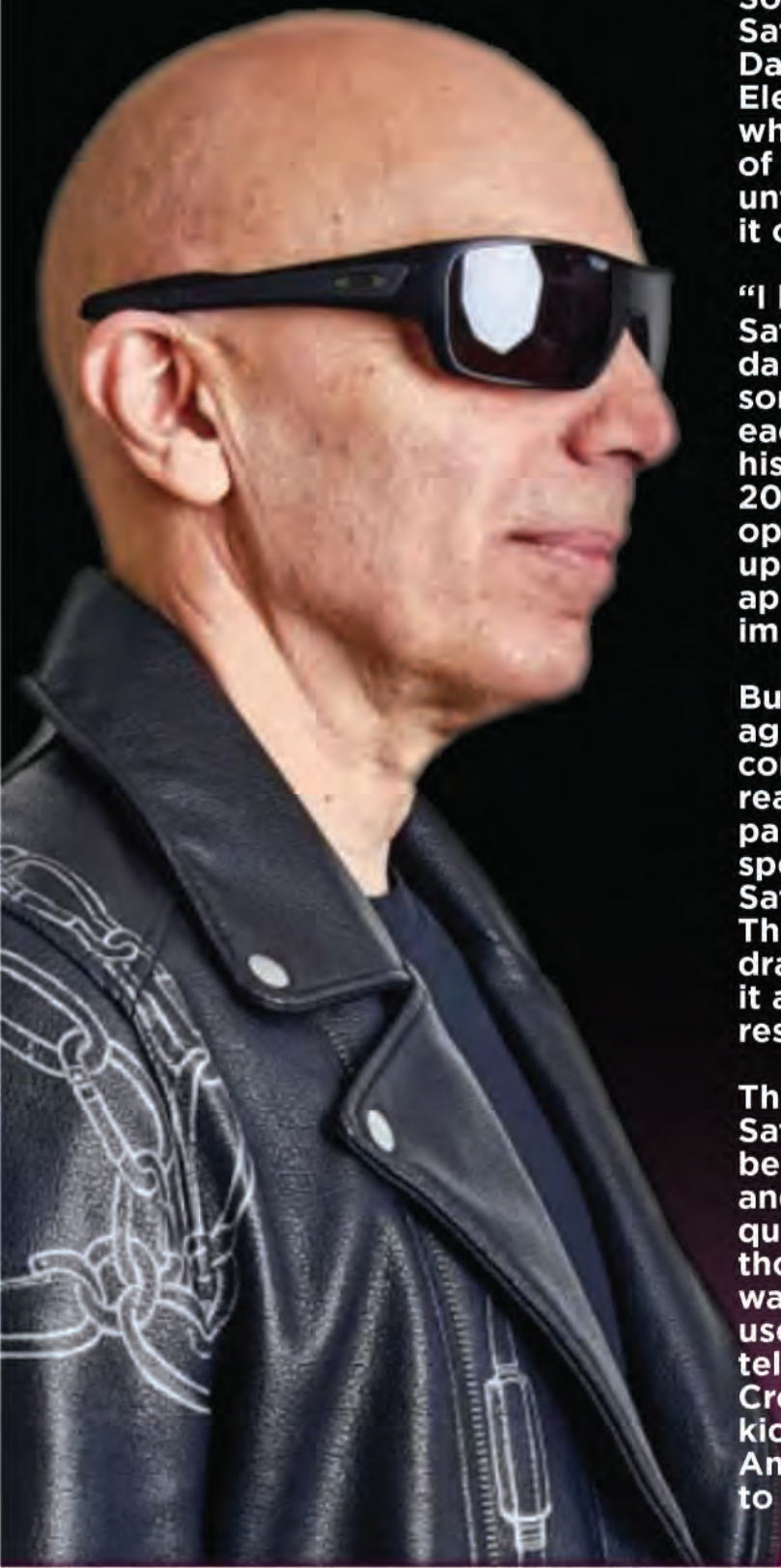
But even if a song ultimately doesn't make the cut, Satriani holds onto it. "I do a record just about every two years," he explains. "Sometimes I do a song, and I don't quite know how to finish it. And then two years later, 'Now, I get it. This is what I was trying to do, and I've gotten better, so I can finish it now.'"

Sometimes the timeline exceeds two years. Satriani mentions "Through a Mother's Day Darkly," a breathtaking highlight of *The Elephants of Mars*. He wrote the song in 1999, while working on what would become *Engines of Creation*, his eighth studio album. But the unfinished, keyboard-based track didn't make it onto that record.

"I kept trying to bring it into every album," Satriani says. "But it was always either too dark or moody or cinematic. There was something about it that never worked with each album's theme." Yet as he began work on his last record, Satriani returned to the 20-plus year old basic track. "It was kind of an open-ended session file," he says. So he cued up the track in ProTools [digital recording application], picked up a guitar and improvised over it.

But Satriani and his producer Eric Carieux agreed that the recording still wasn't complete; it needed something else. They reached out to the guitarist's songwriting partner Ned Everett and asked him to record a spoken-word voiceover, using dialogue from Satriani's *Crystal Planet* comic book series. That element added just the right amount of drama, and a bit of humor as well. "Suddenly it all came together," he says. He describes the result as "a soundtrack to an imaginary film."

There's certainly a filmic quality to Joe Satriani's music. In fact his songs have often been used in movies, television commercials and other visual media. Satriani is generally quite pleased when his music is chosen for those kinds of applications. He admits that he was "pretty shocked that the Olympics would use a number of my songs to close out their television broadcast." Director Cameron Crowe requested a Satriani tune for a kickboxing scene in his 1989 film *Say Anything*; the guitarist wrote "One Big Rush" to order.





Satriani also recalls an accidental success in the form of an early '90s Sony Walkman commercial. "We spent a lot of money on [music] videos – we had a really fun video for 'Summer Song' – and we just couldn't get MTV to play them," he explains. "So we got a call from Sony, and they said, 'We'd like to use your song to do these radio and TV commercials to support a product called the Walkman.'" Satriani agreed, but with two important stipulations. "We said, 'Well, yeah, but don't talk over the music. And put a chyron at the end like it's an MTV video.'"

Sony agreed, and the Walkman spot ran often on MTV, including during commercial breaks on the channel's annual awards show. "We wound up being on the MTV Awards more than if we had been on the MTV Awards," Satriani says with a hearty laugh. "Summer Song" went on to become the guitarist's biggest international radio hit to that point.

That whole idea of instrumental music being open to interpretation does have its hazards, though. There are the rare occasions when music is repurposed in a way that doesn't meet with the artist's approval. And that happened to Joe Satriani in the early 1990s.

At the time, former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet remained as that country's Commander in Chief. And without permission, his Air Force used Satriani's "Always With You, Always With Me" in its recruiting ads. "My first thought was, 'Why would they play that song? It's a love song!'" Satriani says. "If they would've asked us, we would have said no: 'We don't do foreign military endorsements.'"

He believes the commercial would have confused his South American fans, but admits that there wasn't a great deal he could do about it. "Artists really have very little control over their art," Satriani says. "You just never know what people are doing around the corner with your song. So, at some point, you throw your hands up in the air and say, 'Well, the only thing I can do is to put out my own message.'"

And Joe Satriani has been focused on doing just that. For example, his current track-by-track podcast series digs deep into the creation of *The Elephants of Mars*. And it's the latest in such endeavors from the guitarist, a practice that extends back to the release of his 2006 album *Super Colossal*, if not earlier.

"The Internet really helps," he says. "I can connect and bond with the audience all over the world, which is great!" He believes that the Internet's reach and immediacy make for an important tool to communicate and connect, not just for him and his audience, but for all artists. "From Bombay to Paris and New York to San Diego," Satriani says, "you can instantly tell your story."

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ITALIAN HEARTS

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Sunday Dinners Made Simple: Italian Hearts Homemade Pasta Sauces Bring Italy Into Your Home and Onto Your Plate.

by Daena Smith

Wafting through the house is the scent of dinner cooking. A quick trip to the kitchen to dunk a piece of bread or a chunk of mozzarella cheese into the red sauce simmering on the stove leaves your stomach growling. The jar on the counter shows Italian Hearts Pasta Sauce. Another dip into the luscious red sauce leaves your taste buds covered in flavor and your mouth wanting more. Picking up the jar to check out the ingredients, you notice that you can read all of the ingredients because they are garlic, red wine, peeled tomatoes, herbs and spices—no preservatives and organic. No wonder it's so delicious!

The Beginnings of a Delectable Business

Sal and Val Gray, also known as Papa Sal and Mama Val, started their local small business in 2009 during the recession that hit so many people squarely in the wallet. For Sal and Val, they were left scratching their heads about what to do next when the couple were laid off from their long-standing positions.

"We had to figure out a new way to earn income," shares Val. The recession was in full swing in 2008 through 2009. Scrapping by financially had become a way of life for the couple, as it had been months of being turned away from positions simply because they weren't on the right side of their 30's.



"Our pastor's wife suggested that we take the pasta sauces we had been making and feeding friends and family with for years and turn them into a business, so we could share our sauces with the whole world. That's how we started," states Val.

The couple had spent their 401ks on bills and maintaining their home. Money was tight to start a business. "We had friends who rallied around us and gave us the money to make the first batches of sauce," explains Val.

The next step was to find a place to retail the sauce. "Being accepted as a local food business with Whole Foods Reno was our number one goal. As customers, we appreciated the value of food and quality we got from the store, so we spent the next year going through the process Whole Foods has to be able to retail there." Demand for Italian Hearts Pasta Sauces grew, and the couple worked diligently to share their homemade pasta sauces with surrounding areas at craft fairs and in-store tastings. They had investigated producing their sauces by a commercial factory, but realized that their ingredient list may not remain true to their vision, so they didn't pursue it.



Commercial Kitchen: The Next Step



After spending a couple of years working in Reno in a shared commercial kitchen, the couple came to realize that if they wanted to grow the business and maintain their ingredient standards, they would have to build their own kitchen.

"We wanted to create a product that was homemade. As we progressed in the process, we learned that the only way to achieve that was to have our own commercial kitchen. We had to have full control of the ingredients' list and the cooking time and strength, so we could make the sauces exactly as we made them from home only in larger quantities," shares Val.

Italian Hearts Pasta Sauces had gained momentum, enough for the couple to begin building their own commercial kitchen in Reno. In the midst of working out the logistics of a commercial kitchen, Sal and Val received a call from a former food producer who had just sold her business.

She asked the couple to come and look at her kitchen in Gardnerville. They did so and bought it because it would have been a difficult and expensive project to reproduce the kitchen they found in Gardnerville in Reno.



Opening Up The Kitchen: Helping

"About 5 years ago, we opened up our kitchen to commercial food producers," states Val. The couple realized that a local commercial kitchen was in dire need for our area. "We opened our kitchen to commercial food producers, helping others who were in the same position we had been at the beginning of our journey" explains Val.

In their commercial kitchen in Gardnerville, Sal and Val shared their invaluable knowledge with newbies to the industry. "We turned our kitchen into an incubator kitchen, where we help food producers become chefs, so they can start and build their own food business," shares Val.

"We've helped launch many food businesses," explains Val. "We actually have ten food producers who live in Gardnerville now. Multiple food businesses have come from all over our area, including Truckee, the North Valleys, and Tahoe because there are no other commercial kitchens available."

Real Homemade Pasta Sauce in a Jar

Good Italian pasta sauce has been made multiple ways, depending upon the region of Italy where a family hails from. The couple wanted to recreate the sauces they had been sharing with their own family and friends. They didn't skimp on quality, creating the sauces from real vegetables, red wine, and organic olive oil, just like the ingredients they would use at home.

Mama Val says that good Italian sauces cook all day, making the sauce more complex. The sauce also has to be slow cooked, using only specific ingredients, so it is true to the sauce they made at home.

Italian Hearts Pasta Sauce offers three versions of Papa Sal's family recipes. The original is known as their Three Meat Sauce, which is based on Sal's family's recipe that goes back generations to Italy. "We changed a couple of things up to make it uniquely our own," explains Val. The meats included in the cooking are pork roast, chuck roast, and mild Italian sausage.

Next is the Bella Amore Sauce, which cooks with Val's organic meatballs and has a spicy kick. "Right before we jar it, we have to remove the meat, though we can leave 3% in the sauce; otherwise, we would have to have a USDA inspector on premises," explains Val.

"Then we have friends who are vegan and vegetarians, who wanted to know what Papa Sal and Mama Val could cook up for them. "Val's Vegetarian Sauce starts the same as the other two with good olive oil, skinned ripe tomatoes, and red wine, but it gets organic vegetables (portobello mushrooms, carrots, onions, & peppers) which are cut into chunks and left in the sauce when jarred.

"We were able to take our homemade sauce to the commercial level. You're not going to get that with any other sauces on the shelf," states Val. "We want to create Sunday suppers and meals around the table. In today's world, not everyone has time to cook sauce, so we gave them fast food in a jar."

Tempted and want to put that sauce on your own pasta? Look up Italian Hearts on Shopify or Facebook. Find them at Raleys, Whole Foods in Reno, Urban Market, and Natural Grocers.

Want one of those meatballs or leftover meats flavored with red sauce? Contact Sal and Val via facebook and request some for dinner tonight. Just remember that red sauce goes with just about anything, including poaching an egg for breakfast.

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From everyone here at the magazine, I want to say, thank you, and Rock On!

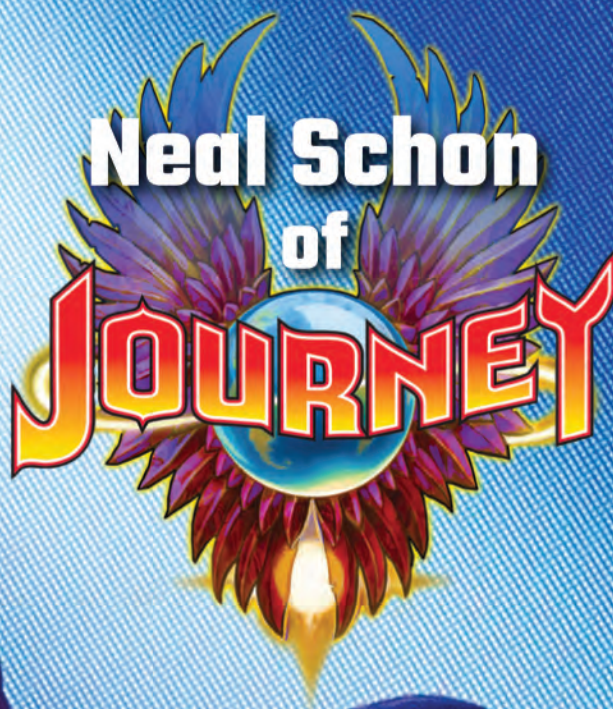
Sincerely,

Gina Adams - CEO - Rock On Magazine



ROCKOn MAGAZINE

Journey: To Infinity and Beyond
by Bill Kopp



"Bands evolve."

That was Neal Schon's response to the opening question in a recent conversation with Rock On. He was reflecting on the career trajectory of Journey, the multi-platinum selling band he co-founded in San Francisco in 1973.

Between 1978 and 1987, Journey was on top of the pop and rock music world. The band's fourth album, *Infinity* propelled Journey to the top of the charts, and featured a pair of hit singles, "Wheel in the Sky" and "Lights." The latter, a prototypical power ballad co-composed by Perry and Schon, was a slow burn, initially peaking at #68 on the Billboard singles charts. But the tune's popularity grew, pulling the band along with it. Today it's widely considered a classic.

Previous Journey releases sounded quite different from these new songs. And Schon admits that he had reservations about the change when Perry first joined the group. "But when I finally got in a room with him, he and I knocked out our first song in about 20 minutes," he recalls. "And it was immediate chemistry."

And "Lights" paved the way – or opened the floodgates; choose your metaphor – for future Journey successes. Starting with *Infinity*, the Bay Area rockers entered a high profile arc that saw each of seven successive albums go Platinum – one million units sold – or better. In fact one went double-Platinum, three sold enough to earn the triple Platinum designation. And one, 1981's *Escape*, went Diamond. That's ten million copies sold.

But the Journey of those years bore little resemblance to the group that Schon and four other musicians put together in the early '70s. At its start, Journey was a musical hybrid, a grab-bag of hotshot musicians who had fled other bands in hope of making their mark with something new.

The Journey of those days – as heard on the group's self-titled 1975 debut, 1976's *Look into the Future* and *Next* from 1977 – was a progressive-fusion band. Early Journey showcased the instrumental and compositional prowess of its members, and while keyboardist Greg Rolie was nominally the lead singer, vocals were not a top priority.



Rolie, Schon and bassist Ross Valory provided the instrumental backbone of those days and beyond, with assorted other members coming and going. And by fall 1977, the band had added Steve Perry to its lineup. Then in his late 20s, Perry had a powerful tenor voice. He also brought with him an accessible songwriting style; eight of Infinity's ten songs would feature a Perry co-credit.

With Perry on board, Journey's progressive inclinations were set aside, and largely forgotten. The Steve Perry era defined what would become the group's signature sound. Today Schon acknowledges that "the younger audience is not aware of our earlier records."

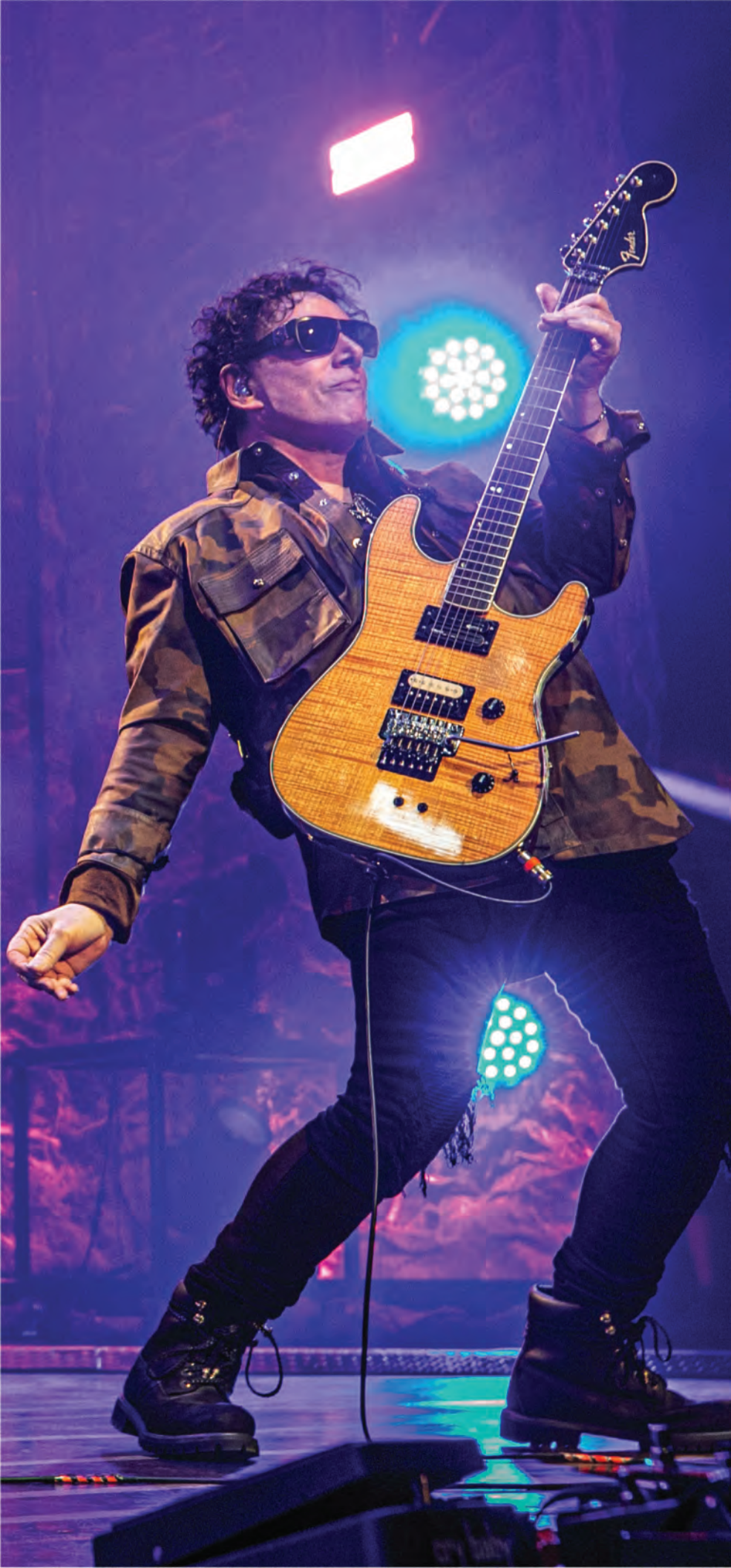
But there would be no denying the appeal of the "new" Journey. And it was on the singles charts where Journey would truly make their mark. After that initial modest success in 1978 with "Lights," the band took off for the outer limits.

A list of Journey singles from that era is sure to bring nods of recognition to anyone with even a passing familiarity with 1980s pop culture. "Lovin', Touchin', Squeezin'" (#15), "Any Way You Want It" (#21), "Who's Cryin' Now" (#3), "Don't Stop Believin'" (#8), "Open Arms" (#1) and "Separate Ways" (#9) are only a sampling of Journey's decade-long dominance on the singles chart.

Neal Schon gives much of the credit for those successes to lead singer Perry, a former drummer. "Steve was a master at manipulating time," Schon says. "He knew how make things sound faster, even though they weren't. I learned a lot from him."

But nothing lasts forever. By the time of 1987's *Raised on Radio*, longtime drummer Steve Smith and founding member Valory had been summarily fired by Perry. Rolie had left by 1980, replaced by Jonathan Cain, formerly of pop group The Babys. Though *Raised on Radio* spawned hit singles, on the whole it was less well-received critically. In the wake of that disappointment, and in the face of changing popular tastes, Journey went on hiatus for nearly eight years.





When the band regrouped, Perry was again its dominant force. But health problems eventually sidelined him. By 1998 Journey's most well-known member announced his exit from the group.

Many bands have folded in the wake of the departure of their lead singer. But Journey – now effectively co-led by Schon and Cain – kept on. The group brought in Steve Augeri, a relative unknown who had worked with Michael Schenker.

Augeri took an active role in songwriting and handled lead vocals on a pair of Journey albums: *Arrival* (2000), 2005's *Generations* and the band's only EP, *Red 13*. None sold in quantities remotely resembling the band's peak '80s period. And vocal problems necessitated Augeri's leaving the group in 2005.

His replacement didn't work out. Schon admires Jeff Scott Soto as a vocalist, but says that ultimately he wasn't a good fit, lacking "the tenor-alto-soprano voice you need to be able to cover the [Journey] catalog."

After Soto's departure, Neal Schon again sought a new lead singer for the band. In February 2008, Philippines-born Arnel Pineda became Journey's sixth lead singer. A powerful vocalist, Pineda helped Journey return to the charts. Self-released in 2008, the aptly-named *Revelation* sold more than one million units.

But that level of success would prove difficult to sustain. Pivoting, the resilient band turned its attention to live work, releasing a string of concert albums and DVDs. Journey would release no new studio material between 2012 and 2021.



Meanwhile, the lineup changes that had been a characteristic of the group's past would return, marked by frequent additions, dismissals and departures. Valory and Smith – both of whom were on hand when Journey was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2017 – were fired in 2020; a flurry of lawsuits ensued. “The cool thing about the name Journey – and the brand Journey – is that the name means you’re always evolving,” Schon says. “It’s okay to make changes.”

The band’s long studio silence was broken with a 2021 album, *Freedom*. And 15 years into his tenure with the group, Pineda remains an effective ringer who can render faithful readings of the classic Journey tunes.

Neal Schon is as compelling and tuneful an axeman as he’s ever been. As Journey’s sole remaining original member, he represents the through-line that ties it all together. “To be frank about it,” Schon says, “it’s my guitar playing. I’ve still got the fire; I’ve still got the chops.”

He’s right. Though they’re subtle, echoes of the prog-fusion era band are in there on *Freedom*, if one listens closely and past the studio sheen. “You never quite leave things behind,” Schon admits.

And he’s looking toward the future. “Everything just keeps on going straight up,” Schon says, passion and determination in his voice. “We keep attaining younger audiences. I’ll look in the front row, and they’re singing every song at the top of their lungs.” Journey seems poised to return to the big time. “We went back into arenas shortly after Lollapalooza this year,” Schon says.

Journey should be celebrating its half-century of music in 2023. That might not happen, and the reason is actually good news. “We already have 2023 and ‘24 planned out,” says Schon. So a 50th anniversary celebration may have to wait a bit. “I think,” says the guitarist with a hearty laugh, “it’s going to take a couple more years.”

And nobody really knows what changes might be in store for Journey between now and then, let alone in the years to follow. It’s all okay, though, because as Neal Schon reminds us, “bands evolve.”

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Foreigner at Forty Five

By Jay Luster

FOREIGNER



When I first got into it, I was inspired by people who had come before me, and I found myself in the position of handing that on.
-Mick Jones

In March of 1977, just a few months ahead of their first album release, Foreigner dropped the single "Feels Like The First Time." A few weeks later, the song reached #4 on the charts. Critics like pigeon holes, and they just weren't sure which one the song fit into. With its hard-rocking guitar, whirling synthesizer, and Lou Gramm's powerful voice, Feels like the First Time was, quite simply, kick ass rock and roll and no matter what the critics thought, the kids loved it. When the album hit the store racks, it sold five million copies in the United States alone. The singles "Cold As Ice," and "Long Long Way From Home," joined Feels Like The First Time as concert powerhouses, and over the next decades, the band would release albums and singles, which would make them legendary.

Along the way, there was drug use, infighting, near fatal illnesses, and personnel changes. Eventually, this left Mick Jones as the only original member in the band. Jones started Foreigner after the break-up of Spooky Tooth. He had found the right musicians, but had a hard time finding the right vocalist to bring his musical vision to life.

After an extensive and time consuming search, he was introduced to Lou Gramm. Gramm had been working in the Rochester, New York area and was glad to come to New York to work with Jones. After all, it's not everyday you get an invite from one of the greatest guitar players of his generation. Once the band was assembled there were four Americans, and two Britons, and with that lineup, no matter where they were they'd always be foreigners. Puns aside, the name Foreigner became synonymous with great records, and great concerts.

We had a chance to catch up with Michael Bluestein, the keyboard player with the band. Bluestein joined Foreigner in 2008, and has been with them ever since. In the late 1980's he studied music at the prestigious Berklee College Of Music in Boston, and then moved to the San Francisco Bay area. His touring history reads like a copy of Who's Who of the music industry. Over the years, he's played with Boz Scaggs, Roger Hodgson, and Stevie Nicks. When he received the invite to try out for Foreigner, he was touring with the Latin king of pop, Enrique Iglesias, but ready for a new challenge.

Jay Luster, Rock On Magazine:

Hi, thanks for agreeing to speak with me. Foreigner is touring again?

Michael Bluestein:

Yeah, we're heading out for about six weeks or so.

ROM:

How did you come to join Foreigner?

Michael Bluestein:

In 2008 I was at a music convention called NAMM, at an arena in Anaheim. I ran into the keyboard player for Foreigner, a guy named Paul Mirkovich. He was playing keyboards with them as a sort of temporary solution. He told the guys, he'd help out for a bit, and said, "when I leave I'll help you find a replacement." When we ran into each other, a light bulb sort of went off for him, and he said, this guy might be the right replacement. So we got to talking, I was with Enrique Iglesias at the time, but I was open to a change. When this came up, I got to audition for the guys, and that's how it all got started. That was 14 years ago.

ROM:

Did you have to sing as part of the audition?

Michael Bluestein:

Yes, background vocals were a big part of it. Foreigner has some pretty heavy background vocals with a lot of harmony, so yeah, that was definitely a part of it.

ROM:

I know you're an amazing keyboard player, but do you enjoy singing?

Michael Bluestein:

Yeah, most musicians, at some point, discover they can sing to some extent. Even if they didn't start as singers, it becomes part of what we do.



ROM:

How did you weather Covid?

Michael Bluestein:

It was actually a good creative time for me. I did a lot of writing and producing here in the studio. The beauty of technology these days, there's just so many tools available for us. Even for most of us who weren't trained as audio engineers. The technology has gotten to the point where most musicians have a rig, and they record and produce on their own. I got to do a lot of that here in the home studio. My girlfriend and I have a duo called Tina Blue, and we wrote some new tunes, and I did some producing and arranging for us. We recorded a lot, and got into the streaming thing. We figured out the multi-angle camera situation for doing live concerts out of the studio, and getting the audio and video together. That was sort of a fun project that kept us busy.

ROM:

It sounds like you kind of thrived during the isolation period?

Michael Bluestein:

Yeah, for a while it was kind of nice, the isolation part of it. A lot of apprehension about the virus was obviously there. People were freaked out, and for a year or so they didn't know what was going on. They didn't know how transmissible it was or how sick you were going to get? I think there's a lot more perspective about it now. It's becoming more endemic instead of pandemic. It's become something we just have to live with. I've had it. Everyone in the band has had it at this point. The blessing was having all that time to do some creative work. Being in the lab, so to speak, working on new music, geeking out in the studio, so that part of it was fun.





ROM:

What was getting back on stage like?

Michael Bluestein:

Pretty amazing. People were just so psyched. We have a lot of fans who are repeat customers. Some have been to tens of shows, even hundreds in some cases. Everybody was dying to get back out and see live music again after being isolated for so long. You could really feel the excitement for everybody, and for us getting back to what we do.

ROM:

Is there a possibility of new Foreigner music on the horizon?

Michael Bluestein:

It's been a little bit since Foreigner had a new album. There are some new things floating around, and some songs in various degrees of completion that will hopefully be getting out there in the next year or two.

ROM:

Foreigner has so much great music, how do you choose what to play?

Michael Bluestein:

We have quite a list of hits we have to deliver for the fans. We're in the enviable position of having more hit songs than we can do in a set. As far as what people want to hear, those hits come first, but it's hard to get to everything.

ROM:

Considering how long Foreigner has been around, you've somehow still remained one of those must see live acts. How, after 45 years, has the band managed to remain so relevant?

Michael Bluestein:

It's pretty incredible. Songs like Feels Like The First Time, which came out in '77, were built to last. The musical arrangements, and those amazing vocal arrangements, and of course Lou Gramm. They're hit songs that became part of the culture. They've been featured in many movies, and TV shows, and people grew up with them and then raised their kids on Foreigner and classic rock. It's pretty cool to see the kids, the teenagers, the twenty something's, the thirty something's coming to the shows and knowing all the tunes too. Not many bands have the type of music that can stand the test of time the way Foreigner has.



ROM:

It must be amazing to look out in the crowd and see several generations of the same family all enjoying the show together?

Michael Bluestein:

The music being passed down through the generations is the gift that keeps on giving. I do love the fact that it's not just the original audience. That part of it keeps it fresh. Knowing that youthful energy is being passed on, that's invigorating. When you see the youth there and people getting into it who weren't even born when the songs were on the radio. That part of it gives you an injection of adrenaline, and excitement.

ROM:

Does the audience want you to play the songs exactly like the record, or do they like to see a little improvisation?

Michael Bluestein:

We have to pay tribute to, and honor the original parts. For example, we're not going to play "Waiting For A Girl Like You" without me playing the theme synth lead that comes in at the beginning of the song. You're not going to play "Juke Box Hero" without that iconic low bass synth intro you hear when it first starts. You're not going to do Hot Blooded without that opening guitar part. So I think the answer is we have to honor the original parts, and we do. They were there for a reason, and those are the parts the people remember. But yeah, within that framework there's room for some improv, and some dancing around in between the spaces. I'd say we're at 85% to 15% new as far as tweaking things a bit.

ROM:

That must help keep it interesting for the band?

Michael Bluestein:

Yes, definitely. I think over the years we've all found little spots where we can sprinkle in some of our own flavor into the tunes. There are spaces within the arrangements, and some songs that are extended, where there are solos where there weren't any before. The drummer and I have solo spots in the middle of the show, so we can showcase some stuff there too.

ROM:

It sounds like the audience is pretty open minded?

Michael Bluestein:

If what you're playing, the kind of spontaneous things that might happen, if that's coming from the same vibe, and spirit of the song, and adds something without getting in the way then yeah. Also, there are some spirited outtakes from the original performances that didn't make it onto the final track. There were takes that were cut for the sake of the radio, or for the sake of being concise that didn't make it onto the final recording. When you're live and you're extending things, or the chorus goes around another time, or there's a solo space, that may be the time where you can tap into some of those tasty little bits that didn't make the record.

ROM:

Wow, this has been great. Thanks for speaking with me, it's been a lot of fun. Have fun on tour, and we'll see you in Reno.

Michael Bluestein:

Yeah, Thank you too, See you there. With 13 top ten hits between 1977, and 1991, including two #1's, it's little wonder people are still excited when they hear Foreigner is coming to town. With players like Michael Bluestein, singer Kelly Hansen, and the incomparable Mick Jones, the tickets are sure to sell out so get them early. Their show is Saturday, September 24 at 8:00pm at the Grand Sierra Theatre - Grand Sierra Resort, Reno, NV and Rock On Magazine will be there.

Foreigner will be out on tour all summer, be sure to catch them opening for Kid Rock on 14 dates.

www.foreigneronline.com



FOREIGNER



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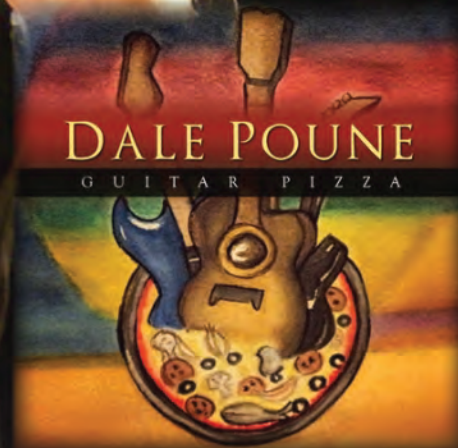
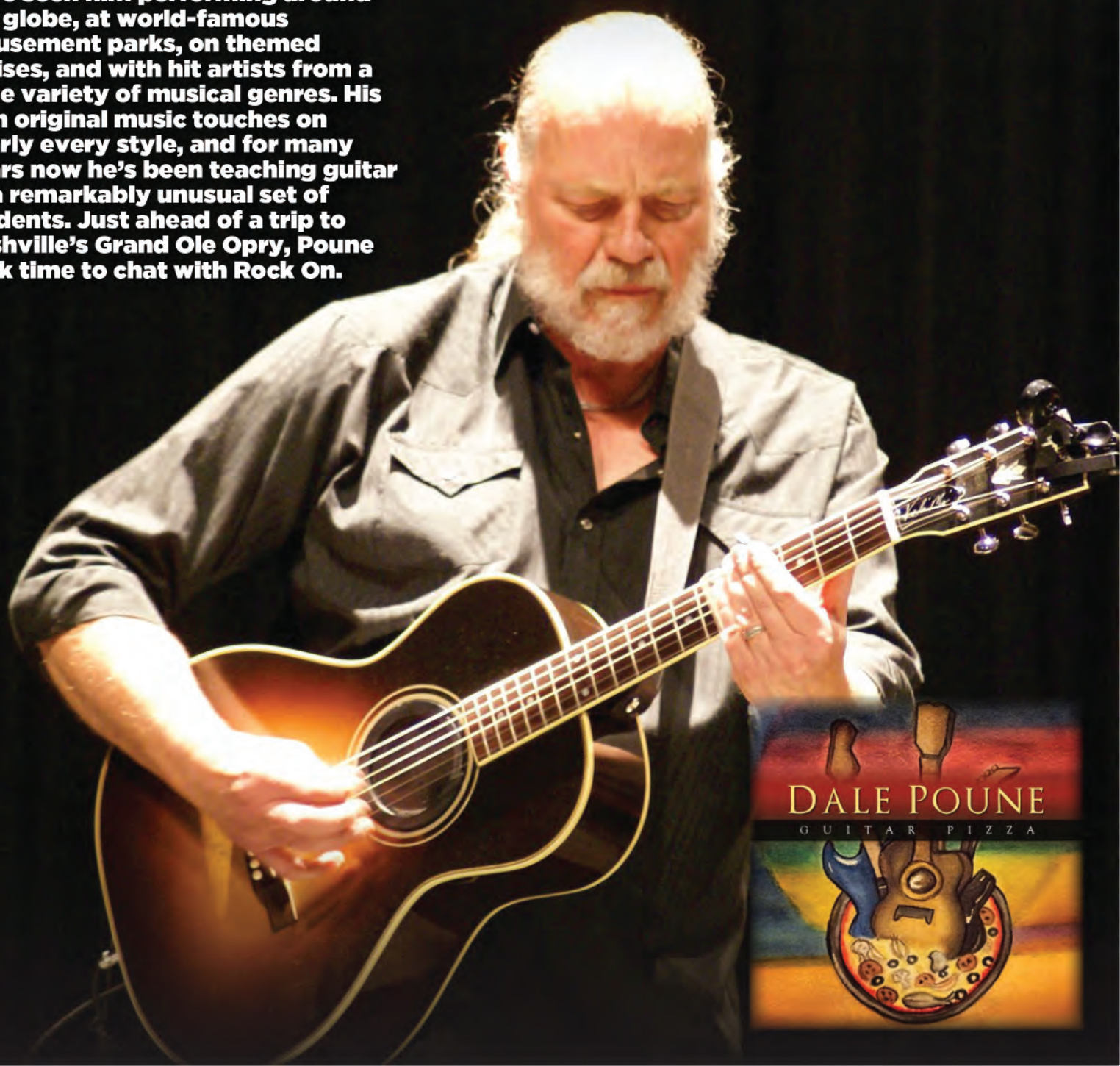
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Dale Pounce: Jailhouse Rocker

by Bill Kopp

Dale Pounce (pronounced PAW-nay) is a Nevada-based singer, songwriter and journeyman musician. A lifetime player, Dale's musical adventures have seen him performing around the globe, at world-famous amusement parks, on themed cruises, and with hit artists from a wide variety of musical genres. His own original music touches on nearly every style, and for many years now he's been teaching guitar to a remarkably unusual set of students. Just ahead of a trip to Nashville's Grand Ole Opry, Pounce took time to chat with Rock On.



How did you get your start in music?

Dale Pounce:

I started back in the '60s. The Beatles got me excited, then I discovered the Rolling Stones. And that was a portal to B.B. King, Johnny Winter and The James Gang. I played the bass through most of the '70s; I learned how to play keyboards as well. Then one night [after a gig] I saw the guitar player with just his amplifier and his guitar: "See you later!" Meanwhile, I had four large keyboards and all the stuff that goes along with that. So I said, "That's it! I'm playing guitar from now on. This is too much work." [laughs]

You came up in the L.A. music scene, didn't you?

Dale Pounce:

Yeah. I worked solidly through the '70s. One of my first real gigs was with The Kingston Trio; their bass player broke his hand, and they needed somebody to come in and fill in for a few weeks. The thing about the '70s that's different from nowadays is that the [musicians'] union was real strong. One time, the union called me up and said, "Hey, this band needs a bass player who plays a little guitar. Go down, audition, sing a couple songs, and you'll probably get the gig." So I played Disneyland for a while.

Listening to random selections from your body of work (on Spotify, Soundcloud and elsewhere), there's country, bluegrass/Americana, rock, blues, reggae-flavored songs, and even urban r&b. You're clearly comfortable in a wide variety of musical styles. Which is the "real" Dale?

Dale Pounce:

I'm a rocker, a blues player at heart. But for the last few years, I've played with a lot of country artists. I've played with Paulette Carlson, Dave Frizzell and Johnny Lee. I get the job done, and that's what's important.

I also perform with Doug Sandall. We went on a country cruise earlier this year; we played with T. Graham Brown, The Bellamy Brothers. We're together in the studio now.





Listening to the country-flavored tracks that you have recorded, I just assumed that you were immersed in country from an early age...

Dale Pouné:

When I wrote those songs, it was just something that was in my head, so I wrote it. Like everybody else wants to do, I'd like to get a hit – or at least get a song on [somebody else's] hit album – and make a few bucks. But it's like fishing: you've got to find the right spot.

You also play with country and western hitmaker Lacy J. Dalton. How did you connect with her?

Dale Pouné:

I had been on the road with The Fortunes [best remembered for "Here Comes that Rainy Day Feeling," a Top 40 hit in 1971] for quite a few years, and I had to come home to settle some personal matters. So then I was playing guitar in a rock band called Cool Black Kettle. I had a huge Marshall stack [amplifier].

I've always been a musician, so you find some way to survive; whatever that's going to take. Lacy lives here in Virginia City, Nevada. She had several hits in the '80s and '90s, but when I went to audition, I had never heard of her. Now I've been playing with her for more than 12 years! Even though she had her hits as a country artist, what we do is more like high energy acoustic music.

We're going to go to Nashville in October; she's going to get the Josie Music Award for [Top 40 country hit single] "16th Avenue," which is 40 years old now. We're going to play a couple songs in the Grand Ole Opry.

You write and arrange your own music. But when you work as a sideman for Lacy J. Dalton or other artists, everything you're doing is in service of their artistic vision as opposed to your own. How do you approach that differently?

Dale Pouné:

It's about business, and about getting along with other people. And it's just survival. It's just like a long time ago when I stopped taking drugs and drinking; it was just self-preservation. And self-preservation is being a sideman, the best sideman you can be. You don't worry about, "This isn't my thing." You're just trying to make them sound good, and you continue to get good work through that. And that's all you can do.

One of your regular gigs is teaching music at prisons. That strikes me as more of a passion project as opposed to a just-getting-the-bills-paid gig.

Dale Pouné:

I teach at High Desert State Prison. It's a level 4 prison, so you get all the gangbangers and murderers. They called me up a few years ago and said, "We need a guitar teacher to teach in the prison at night." Originally, I said no, but then they talked me into it. And I love the job.



When I started, I thought, "There are so many people here who are so talented. What are they doing in jail?" And it's not like they're serving 60 days; these guys were lifers, or in there for 7-10 or 20 years. I get re-trained every year, and the instructors say, "Don't get too familiar with them." But you can't help but be familiar with them. So you learn how not to get yourself in trouble.

It's a pretty great job. The amazing thing about it is that they want you to be the teacher. Often, you're the only authority figure they've ever known... outside of the police, of course. So they want you to run the class. But then [laughs] they want you to prove that you can play guitar, too! So you go out there, and they all say, "Well, play some Jimi Hendrix. Play some Santana," And I do. And then they say, "Okay. You can teach us."

What's the most rewarding thing about teaching at High Desert?

Dale Pounce:

I'll give you one example. There was a guy who came to me, and his name was Luis Hernandez. He had never played guitar before, never wrote a song. In the time he spent with me, he learned how to play guitar, and he wrote some pretty clever songs. He wrote one called "Streets of Gold." It's about how people from Mexico view the United States; they think they're going to come here, and their ship's going to come in. And then they get up here and move in these neighborhoods with all the crime and things like that.

After he got released from prison, he was deported to Mexico. We communicate on Facebook, and he's got a family, and he's giving a good life. So, that's pretty rewarding just to see that.

Beyond your teaching role at High Desert State Prison and your out-of-town gigs with Lacy J. Dalton, what's next for you musically?

Dale Pounce:

Doug Sandall and I are working on that CD. It's just going to be guitar and harmonica; we're just going with a bare-bones thing, because I want to book some songwriters festivals. That's my business plan. I look at it like a business: "Okay, this is the investment I'm going to make," and hopefully it'll all come to fruition.

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Rainie is a native of Reno, NV. She earned her undergraduate degree in Exercise Sport Science at Colorado State University. Her Master's in Physician Assistant Studies was obtained from the University of Kentucky in Lexington. Rainie spent many years in Bend, OR before she finally made her way back home to Reno to be near family. She has been a Physician Assistant since 2004. Developing strong relationships with her patients is her passion. She likes to see patients of all ages. In her spare time, you can find Rainie riding her mountain bike, kitesurfing, skiing, doing yoga, traveling, and spending time with family, friends, and her golden retriever.

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Elizabeth II

April 21, 1926 – September 8, 2022

Elizabeth II was Queen of the United Kingdom and other Commonwealth realms from 6 February 1952 until her death in 2022. She was queen regnant of 32 sovereign states during her lifetime and 15 at the time of her death. Her reign of 70 years and 214 days is the longest of any British monarch, the longest recorded of any female head of state in history, and the second-longest verified reign of any sovereign in history.



Olivia Newton-John

September 26, 1948 – August 8, 2022

She was a four-time Grammy Award winner whose music career included five number-one hits and many other Top Ten hits on the Billboard Hot 100, and two number-one albums on the Billboard 200: *If You Love Me, Let Me Know* (1974) and *Have You Never Been Mellow* (1975). Eleven of her singles (including two Platinum) and 14 of her albums (including two Platinum and four 2× Platinum) have been certified Gold by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA). With global sales of more than 100 million records, Newton-John is one of the best-selling music artists from the second half of the 20th century to the present.



Nichelle Nichols

December 28, 1932 – July 30, 2022

Nichelle Nichols, born Grace Dell Nichols; was an American actress, singer, and dancer best known for her portrayal of Nyota Uhura in *Star Trek* and its film sequels. Nichols' portrayal of Uhura was groundbreaking for African American actresses on American television. From 1977 until 2015, Nichols volunteered her time to promote NASA's programs and recruit diverse astronauts, including women and ethnic minorities. Nichols was born in Robbins, Illinois a Chicago suburb. She trained in dance, and began her career as a dancer, singer, and model in Chicago. She went into stage acting, and had a television and film career.



Paul Sorvino

April 13, 1939 – July 25, 2022

Paul Anthony Sorvino was an American film, television and stage actor. He often portrayed authority figures on both the criminal and the law enforcement sides of the law. Sorvino was particularly known for his roles as Lucchese crime family caporegime Paulie Cicero (based on real life gangster Paul Vario) in Martin Scorsese's 1990 gangster film *Goodfellas* and as NYPD Sergeant Phil Cerreta on the second season of the TV series *Law & Order*. He also played a variety of father figures, including Juliet's father in Baz Luhrmann's 1996 film *Romeo + Juliet*, as well as guest appearances as the father of Bruce Willis' character on the TV series *Moonlighting* and the father of Jeff Garlin's character on *The Goldbergs*.



Marion Barber III

June 10, 1983 – June 1, 2022

Marion Sylvester Barber III was an American football running back for seven seasons in the National Football League (NFL). After playing college football for the Minnesota Golden Gophers, he was drafted by the Dallas Cowboys in the fourth round of the 2005 NFL Draft. He was selected to the Pro Bowl in 2007 during his six-year tenure with the Cowboys. He played for the Chicago Bears in 2011. He was the older brother of former Houston Texans safety Dominique Barber and Minnesota Golden Gophers linebacker Thomas Barber,[1] and the son of former New York Jets running back Marion Barber Jr. He was also a cousin of Peyton Barber.



Ray Liotta

December 18, 1954 – May 26, 2022

Raymond Allen Liotta was an American actor and film producer. He was best known for his roles as Shoeless Joe Jackson in *Field of Dreams* (1989) and Henry Hill in Martin Scorsese's *Goodfellas* (1990). He was a Primetime Emmy Award winning actor and received nominations for a Golden Globe and two Screen Actors Guild Awards. Liotta first gained attention for his role as Ray Sinclair in the Jonathan Demme film *Something Wild* (1986), for which he received a Golden Globe Award for Best Supporting Actor - Motion Picture nomination.



Naomi Judd

January 11, 1946 – April 30, 2022

Naomi Judd (born Diana Ellen Judd; was an American singer and actress. In 1983, she and her daughter Wynonna formed the duo known as The Judds, which became a very successful country music act, winning five Grammy Awards and nine Country Music Association awards. The Judds ceased performing in 1991 after Naomi was diagnosed with hepatitis; while Wynonna continued to perform as a solo artist, she occasionally reunited with her mother for tours as The Judds. Naomi struggled with mental health issues throughout her life. She died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound on April 30, 2022, the day before she and Wynonna were inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame.



Gilbert Gottfried

February 28, 1955 – April 12, 2022

Gilbert Jeremy Gottfried was an American stand-up comedian and actor, known for his exaggerated shrill voice, strong New York accent, and his edgy, often controversial, sense of humor. His numerous roles in film and television include voicing Iago in the *Aladdin* animated films and series, Digit LeBoid in *Cyberchase*, Kraang Subprime in *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, and the Aflac Duck. He was also known for his role as Mr. Peabody in the *Problem Child* film series.



Taylor Hawkins

February 17, 1972 - March 25, 2022

Oliver Taylor Hawkins was an American musician, widely known as the drummer for the rock band Foo Fighters, with whom he recorded nine studio albums between 1999 and 2021. Before joining the band in 1997, he was the touring drummer for Sass Jordan and for Alanis Morissette, as well as the drummer in the progressive experimental band Sylvia.



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