

THE SOUND

GUITAR MAGAZINE

FEATURING LESSONS FROM SOME OF THE MOST DISTINGUISHED GUITARISTS

Volume 8 - June 2011

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Interview with:

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TS: You joined Supertramp in 1985, and after being apart for a few years, the band has recently reunited. How have the shows been going?

CV: This old band never ceases to amaze me as to how well they draw all over the world. We played to 18,500 fans in Lisbon, London and Barcelona, and the French and Swiss shows were even bigger. I'm actually in the airport right now, getting ready to fly up to Canada for a run of stadium shows up there. It's a great bunch of guys with a fine musical catalog to play, and they let me stretch out on a few songs each night, so I enjoy it.

TS: What's your live rig for Supertramp?

CV: It's pretty big, even by my standards. I use a stereo clean rig which is two Shadow MK-40 heads feeding a THD stereo 4X12 cabinet. There is some dedicated rack gear that splits it into stereo. That is the "A channel" on my Lehle A B C switcher on my pedal board. Channel B runs through a couple of distortion pedals and straight into a Victoria Tweed Deluxe type of an amp.

This amp is actually behind my rig and used only for power chords and the distorted lines I double with the bass. I want it to sound very different from my solo sound, which is channel C. For this I run through a handful of pedals and directly into a Dr. Z SRZ-65 head. I take the speaker out jack and run it into a THD Hotplate.

From the Hotplate I feed a dry 2X12 cabinet. But I also come out line level from the Hotplate and hit a Lexicon PCM-41 for delay. That signal is now line level, so I run it through the power section of a 1969 100 watt Marshall that's been modified to include a "power amp in" jack. That wet signal feeds another 2X12 cabinet, so my solo sound is a wet/dry tone. The Victoria is underpowered compared with the other stuff, but with in-ear monitors it doesn't matter, you can get the levels perfect in your cans.

TS: How about for your solo shows with the Carl Verheyen Band?

CV: CVB uses the same Dr. Z / Marshall distortion rig, but a different pedal board and a different clean signal path. When I play close to home, my clean rig is a 1963 Vox AC-30 and a 1964 Fender Twin. In Europe, I use two Fender Classic Twin reissues. But I may begin using the Shadow heads here, too.

They sound like brand new sparkly, shimmery AC-30s but with even more clean headroom. I don't need the second channel (dedicated power chord signal path) with my band; I can get enough tonal variations with the 4 amps and a handful of pedals and rack mount pieces.



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TS: You've got a few solo US dates coming up; one is featuring a "top secret special guest." Can we get a tiny hint?

CV: There's an outdoor music festival in LA called the "Culver City Music Festival." We're going to have Albert Lee join the band for some ripping country, blues, rockabilly and whatever else happens that night!

TS: Please tell us about the forthcoming European tour in September and October, with Dave Marotta and Chad Wackerman?

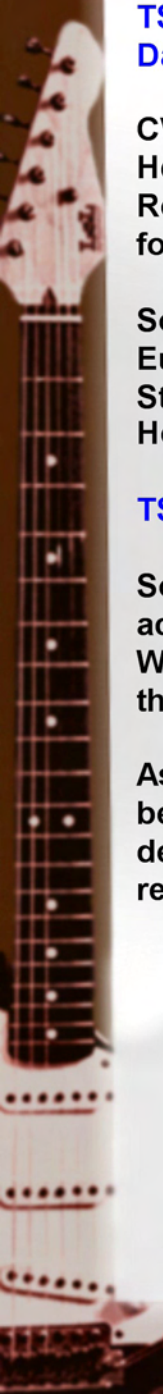
CV: As you probably know, the drummer with the CVB is normally Walfredo Reyes, Jr. He's one of the baddest and busiest guys I know, having played with Santana, Traffic, Robbie Robertson, Steve Winwood and many others. Lindsey Buckingham called him for a tour that happens at the exact time we've got a European tour booked.

So I called my old friend Chad to play with the band, and this will be no surprise to the European fans as he's done two of our tours in the past. He played on my "Take One Step" CD and I've played on a few of his records, sharing the guitar duties with Allan Holdsworth. All of us are old friends so the hang is as great as the music.

TS: Could you share with us about the upcoming solo album in the works?

So far the next CVB album is only in the writing stages, but I do have about five solo acoustic pieces recorded for a follow up CD to my "Solo Guitar Improvisations" record. With the band, I like to get out on the road and preview the songs live before recording them.

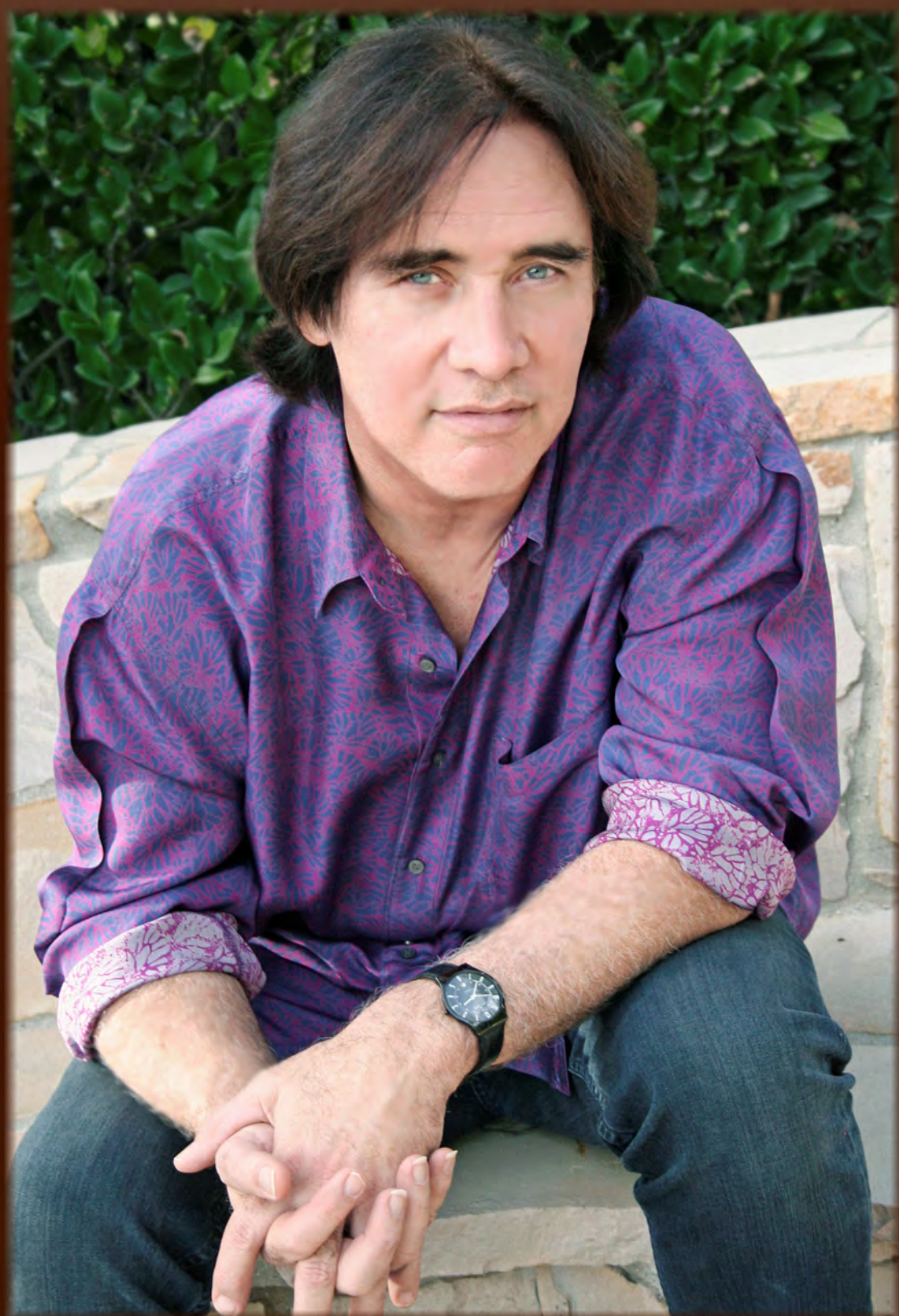
As it so often happens with the more famous bands, the CD is a demo for the tour, because the tour is when the new music really develops: on the road. So a while back I decided to reverse that process and get the arrangements sounding perfect live before recording them.



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GE-DVD2011



carl verheyen band



the road divides

carl verheyen band - DVD - the road divides



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TS: You just released a new DVD called "The Road Divides." Tell us all about it!

CV: I'm really proud of this project because I think the live energy, and most importantly, the tone of the band was finally captured. We had just come off the road and our telepathic jamming chops were at a pretty high level. The rig sounded good that night and some inspiring moments happened between us.

Playing in a trio is so edge-of-the-seat and in the moment sometimes because the music can turn on a dime. There's an extended jam during one of our songs called "Slang Justice" where all of a sudden Wally launches into an African groove. Like a school of fish, Dave and I follow him and the music goes somewhere it's never gone before. I live for that!

TS: How did your sessions go for Cars 2, the sequel to the animated smash hit movie?

CV: It was pretty challenging! The Eastwood Scoring Stage at Warner Bros. is a big place, and there were three of us guitar players with an 88-piece orchestra. We were doubling on mandolins, acoustic 6- and 12-strings, baritones, banjos, slide guitars, nylon string guitars and even ukuleles. I used my 1960 Fender® Telecaster® Custom and my LsL T-bone on most of it, but ended up playing all those other crazy stringed instruments as the week went by.

On the last day John Lassiter, the film's director, brought Brad Paisley down to the studio because Brad wrote the title tune on the movie. Brad and I have jammed together before so it was kinda cool when he walked out into the giant scoring stage and yelled "Hey Carl!" recognizing only me out of 91 other musicians! We hung out, talked Teles, and then I went down to Capitol Studios a few days later to hang with him while he recorded the title track.

TS: What was it like to do the sessions for Disneyland's Star Tours, the Star Wars flight simulator?

CV: Just another session, really. The only cool part was hearing all that great John Williams music played loud and live in the studio. We recorded at Fox studios and I remember the rack gear and pedal board I use for those types of dates had a huge buzz in it. I had it sent directly from the studio to my tech, and now it sounds great. I updated the whole rig, and I have George Lucas to thank for it!



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TS: You're going to be doing some video lessons for TrueFire, correct?

CV: Yes, I'm looking forward to that. I believe that improvisation on the standard 12-bar blues progression can be categorized in three or four levels of sophistication. My plan is to explain and demonstrate this concept, taking you from the most basic level to the most sophisticated level.

TS: You've got some upcoming clinics and master classes in the works - where can we expect to see you for these?

CV: I do them all over the world, usually while on tour. I recently taped a "Sessions" master class at the mother of all Guitar Centers on Sunset Blvd. in Hollywood. I've also got one coming up at Wild West Guitars in July. Hopefully I can do one in Nashville during the summer NAMM, too.

TS: When you do clinics, do you talk more about playing concepts and ideas, or sounds and gear, or do you leave it up to whatever strikes you that day?

CV: I try to get into all of the above! But although I come prepared with a basic format, I let the clinic flow with the questions. I've done entire clinics on making a living in the music business as a guitar player. Or playing in the studio, gear and sounds, song writing, whatever the general interest is that day.

TS: Are you excited to be coming to Nashville for NAMM in July and all the events surrounding it? What will you be doing out there?

CV: I know I will be judging the Guitar Player Magazine "Guitar Superstar 2011" contest with Larry Carlton and Muriel Anderson and beyond that we're trying to cook up some other stuff to do. I always enjoy Nashville, so hopefully I'll have some time off to see some music out there!



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TS: Dean Markley just released a signature string set, the Carl Verheyen "Balanced Bridge" Helix HD™ - will you give us some details?

CV: I believe the Fender Stratocaster® bridge should float, as per Leo's original diagrams, and I've always set mine up that way. But a lot of people complain about tuning problems with this type of setup, and my signature strings are gauged in such a way to balance the string tension with the spring tension underneath.

I worked long and hard to find the perfect gauges because my goal was not only tuning. I wanted the tension to feel like a regular .010 to .046 set on a hard tail guitar, like my Gibson ES-335s, Les Pauls or SG. When you're bending against springs it's a whole new animal, but since I constantly change from floating bridges to hard tail bridges on stage and in the studio, I want there to be some consistency.

TS: How about the LsL "CV Special" signature guitar?

CV: I've got some great old Stratocasters and I use them all the time. But they are not the best guitars to be playing on the road due to their inflated value; I want to be making records with these guitars for the rest of my life. They make such great instruments over at LsL, and they're really willing to listen to the ideas and experience from a guy who's been playing guitar every day for the last 41 years.

Weight is very important to me. I can really tell the "live" ones from the "dead" ones. They set the new signature guitar up to my specs and the pickups have the same output as my '61 sea foam green Strat. I'll be using it all summer with Supertramp and then bringing it to Europe for the CVB tour in September. I've already done two sessions with it and a live duo concert with Steve Trovato, and ...so far so good! With a few minimal tweaks along the way, it's really become my go-to guitar with all the modern upgrades I miss with the vintage instruments.

TS: What is the best deal you've ever found on a piece of gear?

CV: I got my favorite, a '61 sea foam green Strat, for \$500.00 bucks! And I traded a tired Mesa Boogie Mark II head for a 1954 Gold Top Les Paul, straight across. A fan from Phoenix, Arizona sold me a 1968 Plexi Marshall JTM 50 plus the matching, basket weave 4X12 cabinet (with the 25 watt greenbacks) for \$1,000.00 because he wanted me to have it! It's the holy grail of all Marshalls and the cabinet sounds great, too.



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TS: With vintage gear information so readily available nowadays, are the days of finding killer deals on great old gear in pawnshops and garage sales over?

CV: Pawnshops are over, garage sales....maybe. I think there might be a few old timers out there with perfect butterscotch / black guard Teles under the bed that haven't a clue as to the value. But that's pretty rare. A friend of mine just paid \$150,000.00 for a '58 burst, so things have settled down quite a bit in the last few years. I remember when they were a half a million!

TS: You wouldn't have made it this far without being such a professional - do you have any industry advice for anyone who wants to break into the session scene?

CV: Versatility is key. And being a great rhythm guitarist is the best thing you can do. My 16-year-old son is a big fan of the "Saved by the Bell" TV shows that are in reruns. I played on every episode of that show and he's always commenting on my lead lines. But I recently told him, "For every lead guitar part I played, I must have played 10 rhythm parts."

" You get called to play rhythm guitar 95% of the time and you're lucky if you get to solo on the track 5% of the time. And yet everyone practices their soloing and forgets about the rhythm work that really makes you a living!

TS: How about just some general advice for up and coming musicians?

CV: There is nothing you can learn on the guitar that isn't good for you. Learn all kinds of styles. Learn the fingerboard inside and out. Know all the keys and their harmonized scales. Quick: what's the VIm7 chord in Bb major? It's a Gm7, and if you didn't know that instantly, you have some work to do!



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