



Tina Korkonen

JACK BRUCE

The legendary bass ace returns with his first solo album in a decade

JACK BRUCE CEMENTED HIS LEGACY when he composed one of rock's most enduring riffs—the signature bassline of “Sunshine of Your Love.” But his many contributions to the 1960s supergroup Cream—which he formed with Eric Clapton and Ginger Baker—comprise but a fragment of a career that's veered from jazz to metal to R&B. In the years since Cream broke up, Bruce has released more than a dozen studio albums. His first solo record in a decade, *Silver Rails*, finds his innovative instincts as sharp as ever. “I'm simply still in love with making music,” says Bruce, 71.

Why the 10-year wait?

The head of Esoteric Records asked if I'd be interested in making a studio album, and I realized I hadn't made a totally solo album since *More Jack Than God*, which was released just before I got ill [liver cancer]. I knew then I simply had to make the album. The first song I wrote, “Drone,” was inspired by listening to my son's favorite band, Om. The others quickly formed themselves in my mind, a combination of ideas I had been playing with as well as some brand-new ones. “Candlelight” was inspired by a

beautiful and evocative lyric written by my wife, Margrit Seyffer, and the tone and pace for *Silver Rails* was set.

How did the sessions go?

The recording was amazingly smooth and organic thanks to my wonderful producer Rob Cass, as well as others at Abbey Road Studios, including recording engineer Paul Pritchard and programmer and engineer Pearse MacIntyre.

Sum up your experience with Cream.

Cream was tremendously hard work at the time, but ultimately very satisfying. The internal pressures were significant, but I think that applies to all successful bands. Most problems were caused by extremely poor management—and our manager, Robert Stigwood, was very greedy to say the least. His shortsighted vision of the band helped its early demise.

How'd you write the rock classic “Sunshine of Your Love”?

One night I was working with my lyricist and friend Pete Brown, and we just hadn't come up with anything good. Suddenly I picked up

my double bass and played the “Sunshine of Your Love” riff. Pete looked out the window at the glow in the sky and wrote, “It's getting near dawn.” I took the riff, melody and lyrics to a band rehearsal and Eric [Clapton] wrote the turnaround chords and we had a song. It was [engineer] Tom Dowd's idea to reverse the drum beat. He told Ginger, “Play like those Western movies when the Indians appear and the drums go, BOOM boom boom BOOM boom boom boom.”

Any chance of another reunion?

I'm only in irregular contact with Eric, but I know we have mutual respect for each other's work. I don't believe there will be further Cream reunions. However, I never thought the first one would happen, so there you go!

What inspires your diverse styles?

I love the challenge of attempting to master many different musical styles and techniques. I have been very comfortable playing blues-rock with Robin Trower or my late friend Gary Moore. But I also love the edgier music of Carla Bley or Tony Williams—or my recent band, Spectrum Road.

—Lee Zimmerman

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