



Nick Oliveri: 'Each Song Took A Part In My Childhood And Inspired Me To Play', date: **january 16, 2010**



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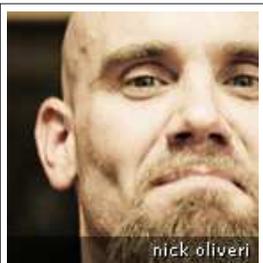


## Nick Oliveri: 'Each Song Took A Part In My Childhood And Inspired Me To Play'

artist: **nick oliveri**

date: **01/16/2010**

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nick oliveri

**Nick Oliveri** used to play bass and sing in a band called **Queens Of The Stone Age**. He also plays in a band called **Mondo Generator**; and a band called the **Dwarves**. He just released an album of acoustic tracks titled **Death Acoustic** and he recently returned from Europe where he was preparing and recording music for a new project called the **Nihilistic Army**. **Oliveri** is a busy man. Oh, and he also rocked it with **Slash** on the guitarist's new solo record to be released in several months time.

It would be impossible to cover all the bases with this singing/writing/bass playing/acoustic and electric guitar strumming musical madman. But we tried. *(Note: this interview was conducted via email)*

**UG:** Can you talk about the new project you went to Europe to record?

**Nick Oliveri:** The Nihilistic Army is the new band I am recording with now. It has Tommy from Silver on drums, both Happy Tom and Euro Boy from TurboNegro on guitars, and I am on bass and vocal duties.



**Was this a Mondo Generator album?**

Yes and no. There is a few or more songs that would have been on the next MG record. But since this is moving forward, I decided to put the tunes we all agreed rocked on the record. So its the best of what would have been on the new MG record and the new TN record.

**Talk a little about some of the music.**

Song titles: "Taking Back the Night;" "Burn the Bridge;" "The Nihilistic Army;" "Like the Sky;" "Let's Get Radical!" "Deathrider" and "I Get Off on the Way I Let You Down." To name a few. The style is like QOTSA meets TurboNegro meets Rose Tattoo meets Black Flag.

**On the other side of the spectrum is the Death Acoustic album. What possessed you to record an acoustic album?**

Well, this label out of Australia, Impedance, wanted a record so I did an acoustic. Also my band MG was busy having little ones and taking time off to do so.

**Does the acoustic guitar intrigue you?**

No. I don't listen to acoustic music so much. In fact I choose to approach acoustic in the same fashion I would electric: Full volume, screaming vox; the crowd won't know what hit 'em.

**Did you know you wanted to approach the music in a stripped-down way?**

It is as naked as it gets; I like playing nude!

**Talk about the make and model of the acoustics on Death Acoustic?**

I used Maton and Alvarez acoustic guitars and a Fender acoustic bass and a home made 8-string electric bass.



*"The Nihilistic Army is the new band I am recording with now."*

Why did you choose the material that's on the album? In other words, did each song mean something special to you?

Yes; each song took a part in my childhood and inspired me to play. Also it is quite fun proving people wrong about what can and can't be done acoustically! I mean, when I told some of my bros I was reworking a Raw Power song acoustic, they laughed. Not anymore!

**Talk briefly about these tracks:**

**"Invisible Like the Sky."**

"Invisible Like the Sky" is a new song that I wrote about a long dark relationship I had with a girl a few years back. It was demoed acoustic and T.N.A. just recorded it electric.

**"I'm Gonna Leave You."**

"I'm Gonna Leave You" is again another relationship song I wrote. This one was a QOTSA song and I was doing it in my live set and wanted to do a stripped down version.

**"Hybrid Moments."**

"Hybrid Moments" is the track that has the most time put into it. I did a track left with an ebow on an 8-string bass and a track right with ebow on an 8-string bass focusing on the 5ths and 3rds in the middle. Lots of keys and cool deep vocals to offset the pretty melodic ones. It turned out cool.

"Unless I Can Kill" was another weird track; I wanted to prove it could be done acoustic and this time challenging myself and doubting it could be done.

**You previously used an acoustic with Mondo Generator? Was Death Acoustic an outgrowth of that?**

Yes. I always have at least one track acoustic on each MG record.

**Does playing acoustic feed your creative soul in a different way than playing bass does?**

Yes. It's all up to me with no band or loud drums to hide behind. Nudity at its finest!

**Can you describe what the connection you had with Josh Homme was back in the day?**

Me and Josh were schoolmates; we played our first gig which was a party at Chris Baker's in 1987 on Halloween. Our band was called Katzenjammer and would later change to Kyuss.

**Did you know you wanted to work with him musically?**

Yes; we didn't meet until our first practice at Brant Bjork's parents' house.

**Was Kyuss a connecting thread with Queens?**

Josh knew he wanted to play with the Kyuss trademark to get QOTSA started. A smart way to reinvent yourself without having to start over from zero.

**You talked a bit about your work on the Death Acoustic album. How about a few words on some QOTSA songs. What about the Rated R album and the "Quick and to the Pointless" track?**

That was a scratch vocal track I shouldnt beat later when asked to. That's why it starts with me saying, "I dont even know what I'm doing here!" I didn't know what or how I was going to sing this. I had no words and no ideas on style; I just went for it!

**"The Lost Art of Keeping a Secret."**

"The Lost Art of Keeping a Secret?" Oh yes, "I Want You to Want Me" by Cheap Trick. Inspired but not stolen! But all the same a great place to get inspired. I love that band.

**Can you describe the approach to writing songs with Josh Homme?**

Always different but it still makes sense when we write and play together. It's feeling - not thought.

**And what about Songs For the Deaf?**

Probably the greatest record I have ever been part of.

**Was Songs For the Deaf a big leap forward from Rated R?**

No, it was leaning in that exact direction.

**What were your favorite and least favorite moments with Queens?**

Getting a Grammy nomination and getting a Grammy nomination!

**Do you have any feelings about the Queens albums after you left?**

Seems like there are a lot of yes men around Josh now. Instead of getting the best out of someone and pushing them to get more, he is getting, "That's good enough" or "That sounds perfect."



**Slash was really impressed with Songs For the Deaf – did you talk to him about this album or about QotSA in general?**

No, we didn't speak too much about QOTSA.

*"I choose to approach acoustic in the same fashion I would electric: Full volume, screaming vox."*

**Talk about working with Slash on "Chains and Shackles" track?**

Very nervous for me. I didn't do so well whenever Slash was in the room. But whenever he would walk out of the room it was magic. You have to know I listened to Slash's old band quite a bit in the early days so I was very nervous. He has really got a great record here.

**This song will be released on an Australian version of the album?**

Yeah; I maybe in Japan too.

**What was it like working with Slash?**

A real honor.

**You play and sing with so many different bands – Mondo Generator, The**

**Dwarves, Moistboys, et al. Does each band feed you musically in a different way?**

Yes, I get all the musical food groups here!

**In other words, what do you get playing with Mondo Generator that you don't get playing with the Dwarves, for instance?**

The Dwarves is a band I feel I get to do; Mondo I have to.

**Do you become different characters?**

Sometimes but it's all just parts of myself.

**Talk about your singing – you can do the scream thing but you also have a real melodic voice (evidence: "Hybrid Moments")? Do you like doing the more melodic style?**

First of all, thank you for the words. I try to sing and I feel you can only get better the more you do it. I hope.

**Can you talk about some of the singers you may have listened to and been influenced by?**

Lemmy, Ozzy, Rollins, Roky Erickson, Chris Goss, and Phil Lynott.

**As a singing bass player, did you ever listen to people like Paul McCartney or Jack Bruce?**

Yes! P.M. rules.

**Talk about the basses, amps, and effects you use.**

Fender P bass; Ampeg SVT; a Boss gain boost pedal.

**What is it about Fender basses that have cut across the different bands with whom you've worked?**

They perform for me; they feel right to me. I love them.

**What kind of a bass sound are you looking for?**

Lemmy and Geezer Butler combined!

**Have there been certain projects that have been more demanding of you as an instrumentalist? Was QOTSA more difficult to play in than other groups?**

Yes and no; they are all hard because I try to push myself.

**Any feelings about the Them Crooked Vultures project?**

Yes - John Paul Jones is a badass.

**What are your current plans?**

Making a great record and getting back out there and surprising people with it

**If Creed asked you to play bass, would you join?**

Hell no!

**What do you think of the new crop of metal bands?**

I love Mastodon.



"The Dwarves is a band I feel I get to do; Mondo I have to."

**Are there new bands who seem to be pointing the way towards new sounds/directions?**

I love a band called Trash Talk from Sacramento, California.

**And we're going to close with some miscellaneous and innocuous queries:**

**What inspired you to first play bass?**

Geezer Butler on Black Sabbath: Vol 4.

**What was your first bass?**

A low-grade Yamaha.

**What was the first gig you ever played?**

At a party at Chris Baker's house in 1987.

**What is your favorite piece of gear?**

My '72 Fender P bass.

**Do you have any advice for young players?**

Yes - keep playing. There is always room to keep getting better.

**What is your most embarrassing moment on stage?**

Being arrested for playing nude in Rio. This is my most celebrated and my most embarrassing moment.

*Interview by Steven Rosen*  
**Ultimate-Guitar.Com** © 2010

POSTED: 01/16/2010 - 09:30 am

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**BrixDK :**

He seems very bitter about being kicked out of QOTSA. Very short and unpersonal answers on those questions.

Well maybe he's just tired of getting questions about his past all the time. Who knows?

POSTED: 01/16/2010 - 09:47 am / quote ↓

**frenchabortion :**

Queens of the trust fund went way down hill after he left

POSTED: 01/16/2010 - 10:20 am / quote ↓

**HerrMagnum :**

If Creed asked you to play bass, would you join?

Hell no!

What do you think of the new crop of metal bands?

I love Mastodon.

Best possible answers.

POSTED: 01/16/2010 - 11:02 am / quote ↓

**DualReaver :**

Man of almost no words. :V

POSTED: 01/16/2010 - 11:03 am / quote ↓

**Ashland112 :**

Are there new bands who seem to be pointing the way towards new sounds/directions?

I love a band called Trash Talk from Sacramento, California.

Haha Yes! I laughed in joy when I saw that.

POSTED: 01/16/2010 - 12:24 pm / quote ↓

**Vinushka :**

I guess his answers are short since it was conducted by e-mail. Doing that sort of thing on the phone or in person would feel awkward.

POSTED: 01/16/2010 - 12:33 pm / quote ↓

**Hand Of Stone :**

He loves Mastodon? I love Mastodon! Mastofans unite!

POSTED: 01/16/2010 - 12:55 pm / quote ↓

**OMMad :**

what's with all the josh homme

POSTED: 01/16/2010 - 01:11 pm / quote ↓

**OMMad :**

what's with the weird josh homme questions? like "did you know you wanted to work with him musically?" what the hell was that... sounds like an interview as research for a josh homme biography commissioned by josh homme.

POSTED: 01/16/2010 - 01:12 pm / quote ↓

**FrothingLunatic :**

It's the same with with journalists pestering Dave Grohl with Cobain questions.

POSTED: 01/16/2010 - 03:20 pm / quote ↓

**JDizzle787 :**

**frenchabortion** wrote:

Queens of the trust fund went way down hill after he left

Queens of the Trust Fund? What the hell do you mean by that?

POSTED: 01/16/2010 - 04:21 pm / quote ↓

**TimboSlice :**

^ Nickname Oliveri gave them after he left.

I was pretty weirded out by all the QOTSA questions too, it's not like they parted on good terms.

POSTED: 01/16/2010 - 05:27 pm / quote ↓

**whotheledbeatle :**

Yeah the answers are obviously very quick and he's clearly bitter, i mean you can't blame the man, but also he's gotta know he was in one kick ass band and it'll always follow him so he's gonna have to accept it at one point

POSTED: 01/16/2010 - 09:08 pm / quote ↓

**DiabolusnMusica :**

if they get olivieri, ask bout qotsa. if they get grohl, ask bout nirvana. if they get mustaine, ask bout metallica, it was always like that. anyway, nick seems pretty hard to interview

POSTED: 01/16/2010 - 09:31 pm / quote ↓

**soapalot :**

**BrixDK** wrote:

Who knows?

No one...

Anyway, where can we get this new album of his? It's not on iTunes.

POSTED: 01/16/2010 - 10:57 pm / quote ↓

**W35M4N :**

^ Icwatudidthar.

POSTED: 01/16/2010 - 11:57 pm / quote ↓

**DavidMikeyWard :**

**frenchabortion** wrote:

Queens of the trust fund went way down hill after he left[/quote]

not true, QOTSA is still amazing, different direction without the impressive Nick Oliveri but still good as hell.

POSTED: 01/17/2010 - 02:01 am / quote ↓

**idle\_tooth** :

**Hand Of Stone** wrote:

He loves Mastodon? I love Mastodon! Mastofans unite!

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mastodon is by far my favorite band of all time, but just because he loves them doesn't mean he's cool. he likes to hit women. that \*\*\*\*in sucks.

POSTED: 01/17/2010 - 03:20 am / quote ↓

**Cobalt Blue** :

I still love QOTSA, but yeah they had more diversity and some more dynamic when Nick was in the band. He sung on some of my favorite songs... Jr. High love is a great song. Nick rules

POSTED: 01/17/2010 - 04:44 am / quote ↓

**oxymoricide** :

Wow, nice and short replies from him. he answers the questions and no more... not really the best way to promote yourself, but hell, whatever makes him happy.

POSTED: 01/17/2010 - 05:00 am / quote ↓

**edinfang** :

only one of his answers was over 1 line long...

POSTED: 01/17/2010 - 07:28 am / quote ↓

**One Inch Man** :

**BrixDK** wrote:

He seems very bitter about being kicked out of QOTSA. Very short and unpersonal answers on those questions.

Well maybe he's just tired of getting questions about his past all the time. Who knows?

Well i think he is just tired of answering the same questions about Queens. He left in 2004 i think, so that's a long time, but still people ask about queens!

POSTED: 01/17/2010 - 12:35 pm / quote ↓

**UnKnown User** :

**BrixDK** wrote:

He seems very bitter about being kicked out of QOTSA. Very short and unpersonal answers on those questions.

Well maybe he's just tired of getting questions about his past all the time. Who knows?

No One Knows

POSTED: 01/17/2010 - 07:00 pm / quote ↓

**Shredder Guitar** :

he reminds me of Mike V in the first picture. haha.

POSTED: 01/17/2010 - 10:15 pm / quote ↓

**JDizzle787** :

**idle\_tooth** wrote:

Hand Of Stone wrote:

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He loves Mastodon? I love Mastodon! Mastofans unite!  
mastodon is by far my favorite band of all time, but just because he loves them doesn't mean he's cool. he likes to hit women. that \*\*\*\*in sucks.

it's not confirmed that he hit his gf... but he was really crazy.  
POSTED: 01/18/2010 - 02:19 am / quote ↓

fede01\_8 :

**UnKnown User** wrote:  
BrixDK wrote:  
He seems very bitter about being kicked out of QOTSA.  
Very short and unpersonal answers on those questions.  
Well maybe he's just tired of getting questions about his past all the time. Who knows?  
No One Knows

Imao  
POSTED: 01/18/2010 - 08:16 am / quote ↓

**Rebel Scum** :  
I don't mind the short answers. Seems to fit an email interview. i agree with his "yes men" comment on Qotsa. Era Vulgaris was just more of the same from Queens. Lullabies to Paralyze was barely acceptable.  
POSTED: 01/18/2010 - 01:36 pm / quote ↓

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