



## MICHAEL SCHENKER

*Temple of Rock*  
Inakustik Music  
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Michael Schenker has returned to the limelight with a generous offering nearly three years in the making. **Temple Of Rock** contains 14 tracks all heavily laden with classic Schenker riffs to inspire, resonate and prove the guitar icon is vital, healthy and strong. There is no doubt this is a solo Schenker record though he does employ several old mates while bringing along a few new friends to boot. Familiar names like Simon Phillips, Carmine Appice, Chris Slade, Neil Murray, Chris Glen, Robin McAuley, Paul Raymond and Doogie White join newcomers Brian Tichy, Elliott Rubinson, Michael Voss and Wayne Findlay. Remarkably it's Schenker's house band of bassist Pete Way (UFO) and drummer Herman Rarebell (Scorpions) that really capture the groove of the record. Along with a few surprises like William Shatner, Michael



Amott and Leslie West, the record is full to the brim with star-



studded bling.

For long-time fans and a hint of things to come Michael also gives fans a taste of the future Schenker Brothers LP with the surprise visit of brother Rudolf on rhythm guitar.

A career that spans 40 years with history-making albums for Scorpions, UFO and the Michael Schenker Group, the guitarist has risen to the top of his own temple of rock. His rise has been glorious and tempestuous. He has been misunderstood, taken advantage of and exploited. Through it all he has come out the better for it and with his new record, **Temple of Rock** he showcases his magnificent talent and abilities in the finest order. "I was a fan of all the great 'distorted' guitar players," say Schenker in his phone call to us from Germany. "Rory Gallagher, Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple, Black Sabbath all the stuff that was coming out before my time. I first learned to play guitar from my older brother. When I was young, eight or nine, Rudolf was already working, so he paid me to teach him guitar. He's six and a half years older than me and while he was at work I would be occupying myself, having fun, learning how to play and figuring out different guitar solos and riffs from records. My brother realized that it would be beneficial for him if I would figure stuff out for him, so I did."

One of Schenker's first rock icons was **Leslie West** the guitarist and founder of heavy rock trio Mountain. "When I was about 15 years old, there was one particular song Mountain did called "Theme for an Imaginary Western" (*Climbing!*) 1970," says Schenker. "The guitar solo was incredible; it was full of feeling, and the vibrato, the tone and the choice of notes. Everything was speaking to me. That particular solo was the last one I ever copied. It's still my favorite guitar solo of all time. Leslie had a



very big impact on me. I'm the guy that only listens to music that has great guitar. Ever since I was 9-years old I was listening to all sort of music that had guitar in it. Still very much lead guitar orientated, instrumental music like the Shadows. When I was 13-14, when the distorted guitar was coming out, all I wanted to hear was that sort of stuff. So, you see, it is a very big honor for me to have Leslie play on this album."

When Schenker was 12 he joined his brother's band **Scorpions**. He was playing a Gibson (gold-lam) Les Paul Standard but eventually

switched to a **Gibson Flying V** that was his brother's. "Rudolf already had a Flying V and a couple of times I couldn't get my guitar - I left it somewhere so I had to borrow his. The guitar that he had, combined with my amplifier, a 51 Marshall, was the sound that I liked a lot, and so I decided to keep going on the Flying V. When I joined UFO I had just the Les Paul and the Flying V. In UFO, on the first tour of the States, the Flying V got broken. Back then Flying V's always broke because they were made of very soft wood. Because they broke so easily, I've had quite a few of them. I would have them fixed, and after they got fixed they were more durable, stronger because of the glue I guess."

Scorpion drummer **Herman Rarebell** plays with Schenker on *Temple of Rock*. It's the first time the two have played together since 1979's *Lovedrive*. "Herman says that it was me that got him into the Scorpions," says Schenker. "I didn't really encourage him but I did introduce him to my brother. I used the **Schenker Brothers** on this new record as an introduction, a little taste of what is to come. When we are together, me and Rudolf, we are the 'Schenker Brothers'. When it comes down to a proper Schenker Brother's album that will happen when it happens, we will know when the time is right - right now it isn't. But sooner or later - we will know." The Schenker Brothers are one of the most lasting and enduring relationships in Rock music; together they have proven to be a formidable force.

Another rare guest appearance is the inclusion of UFO's keyboardist / guitarist **Paul Raymond**. "I invited Paul to one of the concerts I did in London about a year ago," says Schenker. "He got on stage and played with us. I did some playing on his solo album that is soon coming out, so he did some playing on mine. He came into UFO in 1977 as what I needed then, which was to present the canvas I can paint on. The rhythm guitar that he plays is very good for me to play my solos over. When he joined UFO it was tremendous for me to have someone keep going with the rhythm guitar and me, playing the solos like we did on the records. He adds a very nice, unique little piece on the keyboard to put special colors into a song. I still like his playing to this day. He is probably going to go with us to Japan to do some shows early next year."

When writing, rehearsing and recording the songs for ***Temple of Rock*** Schenker's main emphasis was on the new music he was hearing in his head. "I think I'm hearing music differently now," says Schenker. "People ask me what's my favorite solo or song.

I don't categorize things like that. Basically my art stretches over my whole period of life. I'm still in the middle of painting my picture. The album **Temple of Rock** is just another piece of the puzzle of my whole expression and will finish with the last record I will ever do in my life. I keep developing year after year and keep adding other things to it. By the end of my life I will have a wide range of emotions that I captured over my whole recording career. The changes on this record are not really based on musicians. The changes are within my own playing and my own development as a person - things that I am learning in life which



give slightly new flavors into my guitar playing. The connection with **Michael Voss** (Mad Max, Casanova, Wolfpack) happened when Gary Barden, the singer for MSG, announced he had some personal things to take care of. So, I went ahead and did this solo album, I wrote the songs and while I was writing I teamed up with Herman Rarebell who lives by me, and Pete Way. We were thinking of putting together a live show to play some of the

**Strangers In The Night** (UFO) stuff because I hadn't played that music for a long time."

"As I was rehearsing with them, I was writing for a new album at the same time. When I was ready to record the demos in the studio, I knew about Michael Voss's studio (Münster, Germany) so we decided to do the demos there. I needed a guide vocal so I asked him if he would put some vocals on the demo. I didn't really know what kind of a singer he was. He sounded very good, so we kept working on it. He had actually said at one point, before we recorded the demo that we should get together and write some songs. It developed in to him doing more and more vocals, we wrote really well together. The idea came up to use some of my (recent) past musicians like Carmine Appice (Vanilla Fudge, Cactus, Ozzy Osbourne) and Elliot Rubinson (owner of Dean guitars), Simon Phillips (Judas Priest). One by one, we approached them and ended up with all these guys from the past



and newer guys like Brian Tichy (Whitesnake).” Other noted guests are **William Shatner**, **Leslie West**, **Michael Amott** (Arch Enemy, Spiritual Beggars), **Doogie White** (Rainbow), **Robin McAuley**, **Don Airey** (Deep Purple), **Chris Slade** (AC/DC), **Chris Glenn** (SAHB), and **Neil Murray** (Gary Moore, Whitesnake, Black Sabbath).

Continues Schenker, “Michael Voss helped out in every sense, as a musician and as a producer. He is quite a talent. He is somebody I would definitely work with again in the future. My writing was the same for this record as all the ones in my past. I always write my bits and pieces when I practice and experiment on the guitar. Like all songs, I basically bump into something I like and I keep a little piece of it on a cassette recorder. When it’s time to make an album, I select my favorite parts and make songs out of them. When I have my music all together and decide to make a demo I already have the vocal melodies. Then



we all get together to work on it, that’s when it goes to the next level. Simultaneously, when I was writing songs for the new album, I was rehearsing with Pete Way and Herman Rarebell for the “**Strangers in the Night**” live tour. When Herman heard my first demo of “Saturday Night” he was like, ‘Come on Michael, we have to record this one.’ So we recorded it and we

decided to put it on YouTube to promote this lineup. When Pete and Herman heard the next demo and they were so into it they insisted on being the rhythm section for the whole album.”

Schenker admits that when he was younger he struggled with the labels people put on him “I was called a guitar hero and was very uncomfortable with that,” says Schenker. “It was very frightening in those days when fans would carry around signs or scream at me. I was a very fragile person and when people said something like that...it was a bit weird. That has changed now, I have a very strong spiritual foundation I have developed a strong spiritual life. It has taken me years to finally be comfortable with me, who I am now.” Schenker’s philosophy has

helped establish his inner-strength. "For me it's all about development, he says. "I am constantly developing, learning, experiencing and understanding. It happens to all of us while we are living, some people are consciously aware of it and others are not. My father was a very philosophical person, so my brother and I are the same way."

When asked about the current tour that included Schenker, Uli Jon Roth and Leslie West Schenker commented, "We wanted to do a tour that had some of the guys that worked on the record all go out together. We had everything in place with Uli and Leslie, but due to Leslie's medical condition (his leg was recently amputated) we had to cancel. Leslie is still recovering, so we had to postpone the tour until after the first of the year. We are looking at Japanese, European and America offers. The band is still planning on play next year. Pete (Way) has an incredible spirit and Herman is such a tremendous and funny personality. We have to take it step by step but we will soon be out on the road playing these songs." It was fantastic to hear Schenker so optimistic about the future. He was not someone who considered his better years in the past, but someone who looked forward to progressing with his music, that maybe the best is yet to come. We thank him for taking the time to speak with us and we wish Leslie West a speedy recovery.

Website: [Michael Schenker](http://www.michaelschenker.com)

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