

**By Martin Popoff**

**KING'S X BASSIST  
AND VOCALIST**

Dug (or Doug, or dUg, depending on who you ask) Pinnick is a busy musician, what with making solo albums and teaming up on various side projects. He's been particularly busy in 2013, what with the release of his new solo effort, "Naked" and the eponymous debut from Pinnick Gales Pridgen, for which he hooked up with blues guitar craftsman Eric Gales and ex-Mars Volta drummer Thomas Pridgen for a snarling blues metal monster.

**GOLDMINE: Congratulations on this PGP record! What was the mission with this album?**

**DUG PINNICK:** Well, the mission was to make some extra money (laughs). Mike Varney called me and said, "Dug, would you like to do an album with Thomas and Eric?" He says, "This is what we're doing, and if you have time available, we'd like to have you." And I said, "Hell, yeah." So we got together, and Mike Varney basically put it all together, and we just went up to a studio north of San Francisco and did the record. It took us 10 days. I brought five songs in, Eric brought a couple songs in, Mike Varney wrote a couple songs and we made a record. "Hang On, Big Brother" is one Mike Varney wrote. To me, it reminds me of a Texas Ford Bronco commercial, basically that you'd play before the Super Bowl (laughs). The music really does sound like it. What was the question again?

**GM: Well, the vibe...**

**DP:** The listener has to decide on their own, because I've never been good at telling somebody what I sound like, because as soon as I say it is, it's not. You know, Eric says he heard some Tool in our music, and I don't hear it at all. For me, Eric is a great, great blues player. He could play leads all night long. So that's what I wanted him to bring to the plate. And Thomas, he's young, and he's a really busy drummer. It reminds me of the Mitch Mitchell kind of era. And I thought, man, with Thomas on the drums and Eric on guitar, and me just holding the bass down, this is going to be a "Band of Gypsies" on steroids or something. That's my take on it. Even though it doesn't sound like "Band of Gypsies," when you've got three black guys, and we're all left-handed, and we're playing sort of like this funk rock, I think that's what you're going to get.

**GM: And what are some of your favorite lyrics on the album, and why?**

**DP:** "Me and You" is one my favorites, just the story that I told in it. I was listening to Fiona Apple at the time, and I just like the way she puts her lyrics together, about who she is and her relationships with other people. But you know, I don't pay attention to lyrics a whole lot. I put my heart into lyrics, and then after that, I just stand back and let people decide. Because you know, I love Bob Dylan, and I'll never be able to reach that status, right? He can just

**Whether he's working in King's X, spending time on one of his many side projects or putting out a solo album, bassist Dug Pinnick is seldom idle**

# POWER PLAY

Publicity photos courtesy of Magna Carta Records

tell a story, or Ronnie Van Zant. Those guys can tell a story like anything. So I could never say I like anything that I do, because my standards are way too high (laughs).

**GM: We know you're a major student of music, but do you remember the first record you ever bought with your own money?**

**DP:** Yeah, I remember one of them was Sly and the Family Stone, "Thank you" (Falettinme Be Mice Elf Agin). I was just obsessed with that song. I bought the 45, and I played it on repeat until my cousin came over and hid the record on me. Played that like crazy. Also, I remember going down to the buy "Cold Sweat" by James Brown, on 45, and baby-sitting for my mom. I used to baby-sit as a teenager, all my brothers and sisters, and she was at work, and I was left just all by myself, and took the bus down, and it took an hour. I said, "Don't

tell Mom," went downtown and bought the record.

**GM: Have you been much of a vinyl collector over the years? Did you end up with a pretty big collection?**

**DP:** I've got a big collection of vinyl, but I wasn't necessarily a vinyl collector. I'm sort of more of a music junkie. Anything that makes music, I have a lot of it. Once I got done with records, I started buying CDs until I had like 5,000 CDs, and then after that I got a couple of terabyte hard drives with music on it. So it's always been there. I had a thousand 45s back in my teenager days, but when I joined the band and went on the road, my brothers and sisters took all my 45s and played Frisbee with them. That's what they said anyway. I think they sold them. I don't know what the did, but I came home and all my records were gone.



Bassist Dug Pinnick, drummer Thomas Pridgen and guitarist Eric Gales have one very interesting thing in common for a rock and roll band: They are all left-handed, Pinnick says.

**GM: What did you like about the 45 vs. the LP?**

**DP:** If there was a full album, nobody would buy it, because usually there were some good songs on it and the rest was just filler. So albums weren't a big deal back in the day. Beatles changed that in many ways, but they still put out a lot of singles, too. For me, it was more about control, tone controls. When I was young, I saw two knobs: a volume knob and a tone knob. And then when I was little bit older, I saw it had another one: bass and treble. And then I remember I was about 12 or 13, there were three of them, bass, treble and mids, and I'm losing my mind. To me it's always been tweaking sound and tone more than anything else.

**GM: What's the latest on Jerry (King's X drummer Jerry Gaskill)?**

**DP:** Jerry's doing great. You know, he had his heart attack, and got married, and then the storm came to New Jersey, and eight feet of water was in his house, so he lost everything. So he'll laugh; he'll laugh and say, "I died, I got married, and I lost everything all in one year." But they're working on getting a new house. And he's happily married.

**GM: What do you think is one of your favorite underrated King's X albums, one that really hasn't got a lot of attention and should?**

**DP:** "Mr. Bulbous" was one that people just did not get. When we made the record, we decided ... very seldom do we sit down and decide what we're going to do on a record. We just usually go in and just start making a record, and see what it ends up sounding like. And then we see the picture, and we're done with it. But for that record, we came in and said, "Look, let's make a record and use our drop B guitars and drop them to A, as low as we can go," and make a record in that key, I mean, that low, and try to make the most interesting and f\*\*ked-up progressions as we could. Also we wrote a lot of the lyrics together,

which is something we've never done before. We usually bring demos in, and there might be maybe one song the we write together. But "Mr. Bulbous" was one album we did from scratch. That album and "Tape Head."

**GM: Which is my favorite from the whole catalog.**

**DP:** Oh, thanks! I think "Tape Head" is one of my favorites, because I finally got to sing lyrics that I can look back on and be proud of, because I was in a transition in my life, spiritually and mentally and everything else. It's really hard to be singing old King's X songs, because I just don't believe in a lot of things I believed in back then.

**GM: What would you say is your favorite tour memory of all time: Bands you went out with, spent a lot of time with, big crowds?**

**DP:** Yeah, I think AC/DC was at the top of the list. We toured with them for four months, and you don't get better than that. We got to experience that, playing arenas all over the world, pretty much. Woodstock ('94) was my favorite time, I think. I don't think I was very good at Woodstock, but it was the most incredible feeling to play for almost 300,000 people right when the sun went down. So it was the perfect time. And we got good press. We didn't sell much records after that, but we got good press from MTV and USA Today.

**GM: How do you think you landed that AC/DC tour?**

**DP:** Back in the day, record companies went to war, to take people on tour and stuff. So I'm pretty sure the record company had something to do with it and probably paid. But I was also told by Angus that they actually hand-picked us, that the guys in AC/DC really loved King's X, and he wanted us to tour with them. So I guess it was a combination.

**GM: Now those guys are thought to be pretty secretive, quiet guys, keeping to themselves. Did they interact with you much?**

**DP:** Yeah, we spent a little bit of time with them. I don't know if they're secretive as much as that they just never get deep into anything. Whatever they say isn't really deep, but funny and really clever, and all you do is laugh, and you really don't know any more about them (laughs). But that's the fun of them. Anyway, they're a very private band for sure.

**GM: Was Atlantic good to you?**

**DP:** Atlantic allowed us to do what we wanted to do. A lot of people want to blame Atlantic for King's X's lack of success or whatever, but they did more for us than I've seen with a lot of bands. We were on MTV a lot. I don't know how to explain it, but it just seemed like they took special interest in us. And the reason I think why we didn't sell is just because people didn't buy it. The bottom line is, you can have Tide or potato chips, but if somebody doesn't care for that brand, they're not gonna buy. It doesn't matter if it's good or bad. It just didn't work. And King's X is like a fine wine. You either love us or you don't care. You know, I wish that people either loved us or completely hated us, because I'm hearing that's the success story for everybody. If people hate you, then you're doing good. But with King's X, it was you either love us or you just don't care. And I think that's the death. I've been told that from the beginning. They said, if they're indifferent, that's not good. And that's what we had.

**GM: And finally, will PGP become a touring situation? Or will it be back to King's X now?**

**DP:** Well, you know, we're going to do the touring thing, and a second PGP record also, if we can work it out ... We're getting scheduled right now. Also, I have a new solo record. I'm putting it out on my own: Dugtone Records ... I've written so many songs, and I've been on so many records, and I've got nothing. You know, I've got no control over stuff. And I want to own something. I've found out how much my solo records sell, and what the record companies are making. They're making four times as much as they've paid me. And I'm going, you know, "I can do the same thing, and get it to the same people." **GM**