

# X marks the 'Naked' spot for do-it-all frontman Dug Pinnick

DUG PINNICK | APRIL 21, 2013 | BY: JAY NANDA |



King's X singer/bassist Dug Pinnick will release solo album "Naked" on May 7 and perform on the outdoor stage at Backstage Live with his 30-year Houston-area trio May 17 in support of Yngwie Malmsteen.

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With roughly 35 years in the music business, you'd think King's X singer/bassist Dug Pinnick would show signs of slowing down. Hardly. If anything, his musical mindset is in overdrive.

Pinnick releases solo album *Naked* on May 7 before coming to Backstage Live on Friday, May 17 when [King's X](#) (http://www.kingsxrocks.com/) (Pinnick, guitarist Ty Tabor and drummer Jerry Gaskill) plays as direct support to guitar virtuoso Yngwie Malmsteen (details at bottom). And oh by the way, Pinnick has a few other projects finishing up or in the that he's none too happy to discuss.

*Naked* is a wonderful 11-song proclamation of Pinnick's signature vocal grooves that metal and blues into a conglomeration of dark rock rooted in deep subject matter that hits home for him personally.

Given that Pinnick is taking his drive for music into another gear these days, it's only fitting that the [San Antonio Metal Music Examiner](#) (http://www.examiner.com/topic/san-antonio-metal-music-examiner/articles) called the frontman of the Houston-area trio Monday while he was en route from San Francisco to L.A.:

**Hey, Dug! Thanks for taking the time. It's a pleasure to talk to you.**

No problem, man! Thank you for calling.

**I've been enjoying the new album for a couple of days now, and we're looking forward to King's X coming here in about three weeks, so I'm going to get to it all without taking too much of your time.**

Oh, cool!

**Q: First of all, did you do anything besides bass and vocals on *Naked*, and can you tell me who else played on it with you?**

**A:** I did everything except the lead break on "Ain't That The Truth." There's that little lead break. That's Tracy Singleton. I rent a room from him in L.A. He did the lead on that and the lead-out. But other than that, I played everything.

**Q: Is the title a reference to the songs being stripped down and maybe going back to basics, or is it to be taken in a literal sense?**

**A:** (Laughs) Yeah, it's more emotional and revealing than anything else. Just naked like this. I poured my heart in it (laughs).

**Q: It's been about six years, I believe, since your previous solo album. Did that**

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do, so I try to do the things that I like. And the things that I don't like, I'm done trying to improve, because there are just some things that you can't do or you can't be, and you've gotta enjoy it coming from somebody else (laughs). For me, it's just a growing-up period of accepting that what I do is what I do and what I can is what I can, and don't beat myself up over it, and accept the fact that what I do best, people like. And I've made a living at it. It moves more into my relationship with the people that love the music that I make. When I have all these personal feelings about myself, it's just really deep now, because music has basically been the only thing that I've ever had in my life. Everything has a deep meaning to it somewhere.

**Q: What can San Antonio expect from the King's X show here May 17?**

**A:** This record's been done for almost a year, and I've moved on to other projects. I've got five other projects going, and I've been sitting on this, waiting to get it out because I've been excited about it. So when it comes out, yeah, I'll be out with King's X. I won't have any with me to sell because we don't do that kind of thing. We believe in not bringing outside projects to a King's X merch show because we believe that all the money needs to go to all of us three ways (laughs). So for me, I don't know what's going to happen. I'm going to do the normal thing. I just don't have it boiled down again. I hope to maybe get a band together to do my solo stuff and maybe some of the side project stuff together. You never know. I'll just figure something out. We're gonna concentrate on King's X now.

**Q: Can you tell me anything about those five projects?**

**A:** Oh yeah! Well, you've heard about PGP, right? [Pinnick Gales Pridgen \(http://magnacarta.net/pinnickgalespridgen/\)](http://magnacarta.net/pinnickgalespridgen/). I'm driving back from San Francisco right now from doing the second record, so we just did the new record. But that won't be out for awhile. I did a record with a guy named Robbie Robb from [Tribe After Tribe \(http://robbiobb.com/bands/tribeaftertribe/\)](http://robbiobb.com/bands/tribeaftertribe/). They used to have a couple records out back in the '90s along with King's X in the early days on Megaforce Records. We've got a jam band. We're called [Third Ear Experience \(http://www.robbiobb.com/thirdearexperience/\)](http://www.robbiobb.com/thirdearexperience/). We just finished a CD, and we've got it up online. I'm in the middle of a project with George Lynch (see SAMME's interview link in blue at bottom) and Ray Luzier, who plays drums for Korn, and we're called KXM. We've got three songs that we'll send out to a few record companies that want to hear it. And we're almost finished with that record. And then I have a blues band in Vegas, with a guitar player and a drummer, and I hooked up with them and decided to do an old, straight-up blues album. I just got the mixes for that yesterday, and so we'll get that out soon. And I think that's it. What else?

**Q: That's it, huh? Otherwise you've got nothing going on?**

**A:** (Laughs) Yeah, I got out to L.A., man, and just went crazy. I just became a whore. I went out to L.A. to figure out what I wanted to do with my life. It's time for a change, and that's where that record (*Naked*) came from, just a big change in my life.

**Q: You and I have a couple things in common: We were born and raised in Illinois, and we played saxophone at an early age. What were you able to take from your youthful experience on a woodwind instrument into your eventual bass playing?**

**A:** Well, what really happened was all through school, because I could sing, all my teachers -- even second and third grade -- always took me under their wing. They'd take me into the piano room and make me sing these little songs. They even put me in contests in school, and I always won 'em. They always loved my voice, so I always understood music. I've been obsessed with music ever since I can remember. Everybody knows that. To almost a fault. It was like a drug. If I didn't have the music, I couldn't function, and it seemed like nobody else really mattered sometimes. So people saw that, and they took me under their wing and showed me stuff. Whatever I loved in music, it became a part of me. The reason I love music that pounds in your face is Beethoven's 5th: Da da da da! Da da da da! That was metal to me because there was no metal back then. But that shit was in my face! And anytime I heard anything that made me feel that way, that's why I like heavy music now.

**change the approach to this one?**

**A:** It really did, because the last one I did with a band, which was really, really, a lot of fun. This one was out of necessity more than anything. It's like, I just write music all the time. I never stop writing. I'll get a bunch of songs piled up, then all of a sudden, King's X wants to do a record. And the other guys contribute too. And if I've got side projects or whatever, I've always got songs laying around. And what's left over, I usually put on a solo record. This time, I'd just been out in L.A. for a couple of years, just trying to figure out what to do, and I moved out here. In the process, I wrote a whole bunch of songs dealing with the things I had to deal with. But when I write, it's usually sort of to get something off my chest more than anything.

**Q: "I Hope I Don't Lose My Mind" is one of my favorites. An eight-minute steady flow, where the rhythm section takes over with the guitar solo late. Anything special behind that one?**

**A:** Oh yeah, that's about a friend of mine who was having a very, very hard time physically and was having a really, really bad drug problem. It wasn't like somebody that was loose or just a drug addict or something where people go, "Why don't you just get stronger rehab?" It was a deteriorating situation, and I guess I had to write a song about it. That's how I deal with things. It's a true situation, for sure.

**Q: How challenging is it to make a solo album not sound too similar to the work fans know you for with King's X, or do you not worry about that given that it's always going to be your voice and style?**

**A:** Yeah, I don't even think about it. I can't because I know if I think about it, then I won't make music that's true. You know, funny thing is that I write the same song every day, I think. I try to go outside the box as much as I can and try to be creative. But at the end of the day, when you've written as many songs as I have, they start to sound the same. For me, I like that, because I've finally found what I like about what I do and what I don't like about what I

**Q: Was your eventual move to the Katy/Houston area with King's X a culture shock?**

**A:** Not really. It probably would've been a culture shock if I moved straight from the Chicago area. But I moved to Springfield, Mo., first, and we stayed there for five years, and that's where we formed. Then we moved to Texas, so by the time I got to Texas, I was kind of ready for a change. I was used to being in the South with Southern accents and sort of a slower way of living life. But the thing for me with moving to Texas was I was in love with ZZ Top way back in the '70s. So I was ready for Texas! The only shock for me was that when I got to Houston, it wasn't a desert. It was actually green and swamp. And I realized we were that close to New Orleans. I was expecting the Lone Star cowboy shit like ZZ Top had shown me. But, you know. We figured it out.

**Q: What has been the secret to yours and Ty's and Jerry's friendship sustaining for over 30 years?**

**A:** You know, I wish I knew. I think it's that no relationships are perfect. It's all about being committed to it and getting through it and finding something great out of it. I think that's probably one of the biggest reasons we've stayed together. We have our differences. I have to say that I love those guys as much as I hate 'em. Probably even, you know? Because we are who we are, and we've been together longer than anybody else in our whole lives. So we know each other real well. We know how to push each other's buttons. And we've learned to work around each other, and we proved to each other that we were -- how do we put it? No. 1, we've got each other's backs, no matter what. And I think that's what kept us together through the years. There was never a break in that connection. As much as we had difficult times, nothing ever came up where, "I never want to see you again. It's done." There's a connection that we can't break, and we know that.

**Q: It's been a little more than a year since Jerry's heart attack (Feb. 26, 2012). How's he feeling, and how much money was raised from the live album that was put out for his benefit?**

**A:** You know, I don't know. I actually really don't know. I was just worried about him, and whoever took care of that, it really helped a lot. That's all I know. But I have no clue, man. But Jerry's doing better than ever now. He even said when I talk to people, tell them that. I've seen him, and he is. It's amazing how he's recovered.

**Q: Why did King's X decide to do away with a rhythm guitarist early on?**

**A:** He quit, and we just never got another one. Both guitar players that quit in the early days, when we got together, a guy named Dan McCollam started the band with us. He quit after the first show, and then Ty's friend Kirk Henderson came down and joined. We stayed together about two years with him, and then he quit. And both guys who quit always said, "You guys are a three-piece band. I don't connect. You guys have a connection that I can't connect with. I gotta go." They saw something in us that we didn't see. We realize it now, but there's a little magic that happens between the three of us that other people don't feel a part of. And it's not like the three of us get together and hang out. It's nothing like that at all. It's totally musical.

**Q: You mentioned George Lynch earlier, and Jeff (Pilson) is in town with Foreigner tonight, so it's only fitting that I ask: what was it like performing the T&N (<http://www.amazon.com/Slave-Empire-t-n/dp/B009KT01E0>), (Dokken) remake of "Tooth And Nail" with those guys?**

**A:** Oh man, that was (laughs) -- whoa! That's a rough one. I don't sing as high as (Don Dokken) does. So I was trying to get it, and I couldn't. And when I went down to the studio to sing, I walked in the door, and I said, "Look, guys. I've really been trying, but I just can't nail it like he does. It's too high for me." And they said, "No, we want you to do it the way you want to do it. We hate him." I was like, "Ohh-kaaay." And I went in the studio, and I just opened my mouth up and sang it in the range where I felt comfortable, and they loved it. They paid me, and I walked out the door. I just kind of grinned and went, "OK." I don't know what to say about that. Bless their hearts. They didn't seem ashamed to even say that. It wasn't like, "Don't tell him." They don't even have no bones with him. Like, wow! I don't know Don at all. I met him once, and he was really cool to me. But I hang out with George all the time, and those two guys hate each other, so . . .

**Well, Doug, thank you so much for taking the time. I've been enjoying the album a lot, and I look forward to the show May 17. Hopefully I can shake your hand and thank you in person.**

You will. We do meet-and-greets, so we'll figure it out.

- **WHO:** Yngwie Malmsteen with King's X
- **WHEN:** Friday, May 17 (doors 7 p.m.)
- **WHERE:** Backstage Live (outdoor stage; 1305 E. Houston St.)
- **TICKETS:** \$30-\$35, buy [here \(http://www.backstagelivesa.com/index.php/component/eventlist/details/123-yngwie-malmsteen-kings-x?Itemid=101\)](http://www.backstagelivesa.com/index.php/component/eventlist/details/123-yngwie-malmsteen-kings-x?Itemid=101).

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