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FROM BLACK COUNTRY TO CALIFORNIA GLENN HUGHES AND JASON BONHAM BECOME CALIFORNIA BREED



GIVIN' 'EM HELL
Sebastian Bach talks
about his new album



SHADOWY FIGURES
Magnum plot their 'Escape
From The Shadow Garden'



LOOKING FORWARD
There are 'Better Days
Comin' from Winger



STARTING OVER
Asia record a new
CD with new guitarist



IAN ANDERSON ♦ H.E.A.T ♦ PATTI RUSSO ♦ DAUGHTRY

bass, and guitars and then eventually grew into a string section with drums, tabla, bass, and guitar. For 'The Observer' I used a 6 piece band: Tripp Dudley on Tabla and other Percussion, Sean Hagerty on Violin, Joe Renaud on Drums, Raymond Sicam III on Cello, and Lorenzo Wolff on Bass. I did all the guitars and programming and writing for the album," he says.

The concept of the album was basically a collection of stories told through music. Mostly things that Pontus had picked up through his travels across Sweden, India, and even in New York. "My way of experiencing or seeing a new place is to walk it back and forth. When I first moved to New York from Sweden I got to know the city by taking my disc man (ha - yes, no iPod back then) - and putting a CD I was in love with and walk the streets back and forth. Simply observing and absorbing everything around me. Things started to change and look differently depending on the music; I basically created an entire sound track to real life. 'The Observer' is basically that - music based on events and experiences I have had and hopefully a way for the listener to experience this same event on their travels or explorations."

"The Observer" took around 1 year to record, produce and release. This entire project is self funded (and self produced) so Pontus would work / save up money to get into the studio. Most of the album was planned out and written on ProPellerheads Reason and scrap guitars and ideas were recorded on Pro Tools at his home studio. Pontus recorded the drums at a studio right around the corner from his house - a place called Spaceman Sound (in Greenpoint, Brooklyn) run by Alex Mead-Fox and Tom Tierny. The drummer on the album is Joe Renaud who had been playing with Pontus for the last 2 years. They spent about 3 hours on tracking the drums for 9 of the pieces on the album, once they had found the right drum sound the guys were able to track everything pretty quickly and Joe did an amazing job on the kit. Joe has a very natural and relaxed drumming style which really blends well with the Tabla and the other percussion on the album. The next step was to get all the percussion done.

Pontus had been working with this really great Tabla player called Tripp Dudley and had to get him recorded for his album. He is really busy however - so Pontus had to wait for him to get back from touring to get everything recorded. The studio was booked up to record the Tabla so decided to sound proof his studio apartment and get the percussion done at his place. "I basically took all my couch pillows, the bed mattress, and all the blankets I could find and built a smaller isolation booth in my apartment," he says. Pontus then rented a really solid ribbon mic and set the Tabla recording. They spent about a solid 12 sweaty New York August (no AC) hours getting all the percussion down for the album. Tripp recorded all the Tabla, Darbuka, Cajon, and other percussion on 'The Observer'. All the guitars were done by Pontus in his apartment. "I would set up an amp setup or run it straight to the Eleven Rack. My goal was to complement and merge the guitar tone with the strings. I used a mix of a custom tweed amp and different custom settings on the Eleven Rack. The guitar took about 2 weeks to get finished and recorded - since I was entirely in control of this process and could pretty much record when I wanted - I allowed for more time to focus on the guitar parts. Bass was recorded by Lorenzo Wolff who had been with me since I started this project in 2010. Basically spent about 10 hours getting 10 tunes done - using a Universal Audio LA610 PreAmp for the bass. Strings were done at Virtue and Vice Studios in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. I had Raymond Sicam on Cello - he has been playing with me for about a year and a half or so, but has a steady gig with Celine Dion in Vegas for half the year so had to get him when he was in town. Sean Hagerty was the violinist for the recording. Everything was set to be recorded the weekend of Nov 3rd, this was a little chaotic because only a few days earlier Hurricane Sandy had hit the New York area and the East Coast. The album was finally mixed at Virtue and Vice by Rocky Gallo on December 28th, 2012 and finally mastered by Adrian Morgan of Timeless Mastering in January of 2013. 'The Observer' was released on May 7th, 2013."

Next up, Pontus is looking to release a Live EP from different shows around New York. I also am working with an artist for a visual aspect of my live shows - a concept I have been thinking about for a while but have never been implemented. Next summer I'll most likely record a new album. It's possible it will be a live album / recorded with video at the same time. I'm still working out the details for this... Apart from that -

looking to book for festivals in the summer of 2014! More info at:
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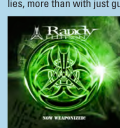
RANDY ELLEFSON



'Now Weaponized!' is the new CD from multi-instrumental **RANDY ELLEFSON** who is from Maryland. Randy plays all instruments on his album. Anyone who knows me will testify my love for instrumental guitar music and Randy's album has been high up on my playlist of instrumental albums the past few months. It's melodic and full of fabulous tunes like 'Surreal'.

'Promenade' and 'Farewell' all showing the depth of Randy's playing, it's not a shred album for the sake of shredding, no sir its an album for of fabulous melodies played with feeling and style, think Joe Satriani. Randy has always loved rock and metal, so when he finally saw someone play guitar in person, he became obsessed with knowing how people knew what to do. That led to lessons and his own experimenting, which is how Randy stumbled into writing riffs. "I was hooked right then," he says. Randy is mostly inspired by twin-guitar metal bands of the 1980s, like Scorpions, Iron Maiden, Judas Priest, and Metallica. He wanted to be in a band like that but when grunge hit in the 1990s, he wasn't sure what to do anymore and stumbled into instrumental guitar, and has been doing it ever since.

'Now Weaponized!' is mostly a continuation of what Randy has been doing. "I'm always trying to improve, being more lyrical and adding more textures than before, like the acoustic and guitar synth. Many of the songs were initially written at the same time as previous albums," he adds. With his background in twin-guitar metal, his songs have much more riffing than you'd expect from an instrumental guitarist. "I don't believe in background instruments. Everything is meant to be heard equally. I use classical variation techniques so you can hear melodies in leads and riffs being transformed as the song progresses," he explains. "I sound like what I am - a guy who wanted to form a band like Iron Maiden, Metallica, or Scorpions and just replaced the vocalist with lead guitar. I guess the genre (instrumental guitar) doesn't have a good reputation for song writing, but that's where my heart lies, more than just guitar, and I think it shows."



The album is mostly up-tempo hard rock with tons of riffs. Many songs, like 'Serenade', 'Rapid Fire', 'Ostinato', and 'Farewell', are written from a single musical theme, or motif, that appears in different guises so sections sound familiar but different.

"It's more fun for me and the listener. The biggest difference this album is that I'm the drummer, too, and there's double-bass drumming. The latter was true on the first album but that was a drum machine, so this is the best sounding drum performance so far. The mix and production are the best, too," he adds. "Like every album, this one has a weird song with no lead themes or melodies, just riffs and guitar solos, but fans have cited 'Moshkil' as a favourite and I agree."

Randy recorded the whole album at home in The Firebrand Studios with himself as sole performer, producer, and recording engineer. "I started recording songs for this as far back as 2000, including 'Serenade' and 'Crunch Time', but most of it was done in 2011 while I was also recording songs for other albums. I had a big heap of songs to play through." Next up Randy is intending to release a video for each song and has already filmed all footage. "Each video will show all drums, guitars and bass onscreen at once," he adds.

Next year, is the 10th year anniversary of The Firebrand album and he is going to re-release it. "I've learned a lot since then and the sonic difference between the new and old is considerable," he adds. Randy is also finishing a second acoustic CD for release next winter. "Most of it is already recorded. I just want to add another few songs." And of course he does have a band. "I also have a metal band, Z-Order, that recorded its debut album a couple years ago, but the singer quit and we've had trouble with replacements. The newest one is slated to finish up by spring 2014 and I'm hoping to finally release that shortly after. I might be releasing four albums in 12 months if all goes according to plan." Keep up to date at:

www.randyellefson.com
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WIND

'Wave' is the new CD from USA based progressive rock band **WIND**. The band are: Nori Kelley, Barbie Kelley, Doug Sturgill, Joe Prusa and the new album is superb with songs like 'I Forgive Them', 'I'm In Love With You' and 'My Shepherd' showing elements of symphonic rock, Celtic rock, and with Barbie Kelley we have a new queen to the prog rock throne, she has an edge that mixes Stevie Nicks and Tina Turner with the bombastic power of say Simone Simons. Their style also has a folk edge, so it's like a mix of prog and seventies style folk and makes for a pleasurable listen, such as on songs like 'I'm In Love With You'. This is a gentle ditty and superbly performed with excellent acoustic guitar playing. Like a lot of folks, Nori started out singing in church, in the youth choir. He started playing in local bands when he was 13, doing sessions when he was 20; he recorded his first album when he was 21. Barbie & Nori have been married 20 years this year, so it marks the 20th year for WIND as well. He grew up listening to a lot of stuff, but his favorites ended up being British progressive stuff - Yes, Pink Floyd, Renaissance, Strawbs, Al Stewart. Barbie grew up listening to a lot of that music because of her older brothers, but also cut her teeth on 80's music - Madonna, 10,000 Maniacs, Anita Baker. They are also both huge Bruce Cockburn fans.

"One thing that might make us a bit different is that we try not to settle in on one particular sound," says Nori. "People might tell us they hear Mark Knopfer in one song, David Gilmour in another, Bruce Cockburn in another, and I love that."

Over the years, the band mix of prog and seventies style folk and makes for a pleasurable listen, such as on songs like 'I'm In Love With You'. This is a gentle ditty and superbly performed with excellent acoustic guitar playing. Like a lot of folks, Nori started out singing in church, in the youth choir. He started playing in local bands when he was 13, doing sessions when he was 20; he recorded his first album when he was 21. Barbie & Nori have been married 20 years this year, so it marks the 20th year for WIND as well. He grew up listening to a lot of stuff, but his favorites ended up being British progressive stuff - Yes, Pink Floyd, Renaissance, Strawbs, Al Stewart. Barbie grew up listening to a lot of that music because of her older brothers, but also cut her teeth on 80's music - Madonna, 10,000 Maniacs, Anita Baker. They are also both huge Bruce Cockburn fans.

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