

GUITAR WORLD



DECEMBER 1994

A Man And His Blues

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On Clapton's Blues

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BLUES POWER '94

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SANTANA
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WITH
BUDDY GUY**

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BLUES POWER '94

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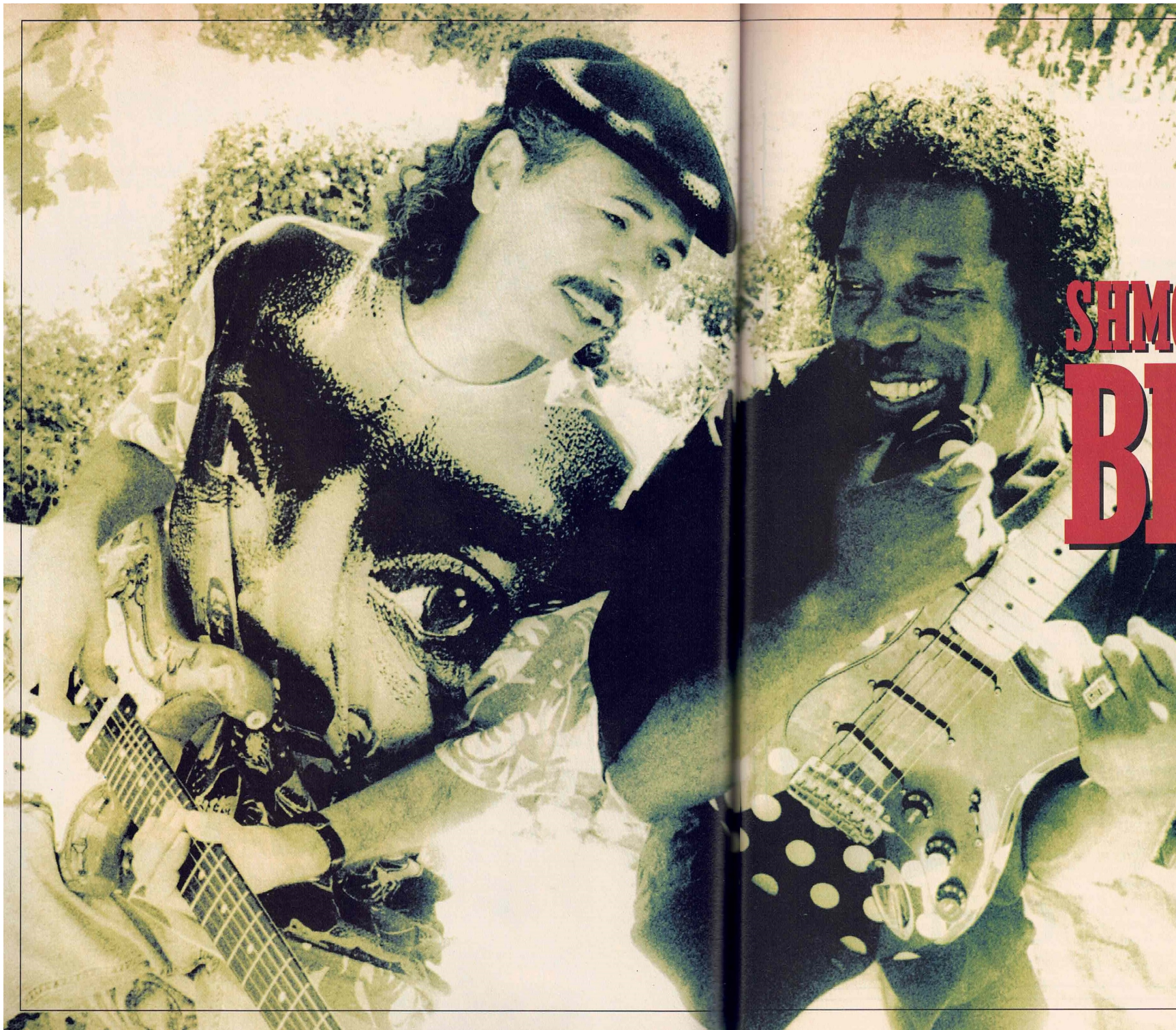
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**GUITAR TITANS AND
LONGTIME PALS
BUDDY GUY AND CARLOS SANTANA
GET TOGETHER
AND DISCUSS
LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE BLUES**

SHMOOZIN' THE BLUES

KEYED UP LIKE A KID AT CHRISTMAS, CARLOS SANTANA THROWS OPEN HIS FRONT DOOR.

"BUDDY!"

OUTSIDE, IT'S ANOTHER GLORIOUS, SUN-DAPPLIED LATE MORNING AT CARLOS' HOME OVERLOOKING THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY. HALFWAY UP A RED BRICK PATH ASCENDING A GREEN SLOPE, BUDDY GUY PAUSES AND LOOKS UP. A BROAD GRIN SPREADS ACROSS HIS EXPRESSIVE FACE. TWO ARMS EXTEND FROM HIS SUBSTANTIAL FRAME.

"HEY THERE, CARLOS."

THE TWO LEGENDARY GUITARISTS MEET MIDWAY ON THE PATH. THEY SHAKE HANDS, THEN EXCHANGE A BIG HUG.

"OH MAN, I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE HERE." CARLOS SMILES.

BY **ALAN DI PERNA**

PHOTOGRAPH BY

MICHAEL SEXTON

Although the two greats have been friends for a decade and have often shared the same stage, this is Buddy Guy's first visit to the home of Carlos Santana. A gracious and eager host, Carlos leads his compatriot up to his "clubhouse"—the airy, high-ceilinged building where he rehearses and keeps his instruments, tapes, artwork and memorabilia. The walls are literally covered with history. There's a photo of Cream addressed to Carlos and signed by Eric Clapton, plus talismans from all of Santana's main musical gurus: Jimi Hendrix, Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Bob Marley and Marvin Gaye. In the foyer hangs—perhaps in honor of Buddy's visit—a brightly colored silk-screen mural containing images of the blues immortals: Muddy Waters, John Lee Hooker, Robert Johnson, Albert Collins....

The artwork suits the occasion, since Guitar World has brought Buddy Guy and Carlos Santana together on this beautiful sunny day to discuss the true nature of the blues. Both are eminently qualified to speak on the subject. At 58, Buddy Guy is nothing less than the foremost blues guitarist of his generation, the man Eric Clapton called the greatest guitarist on earth and an artist who exerted a profound influence on Jimi Hendrix. Just go back and listen to Buddy's 1958 recording, "This Is The End." Many rock guitar fans would describe those fluid licks and ecstatic vocal interjections as pure Hendrix. Actually, they're pure Buddy Guy.

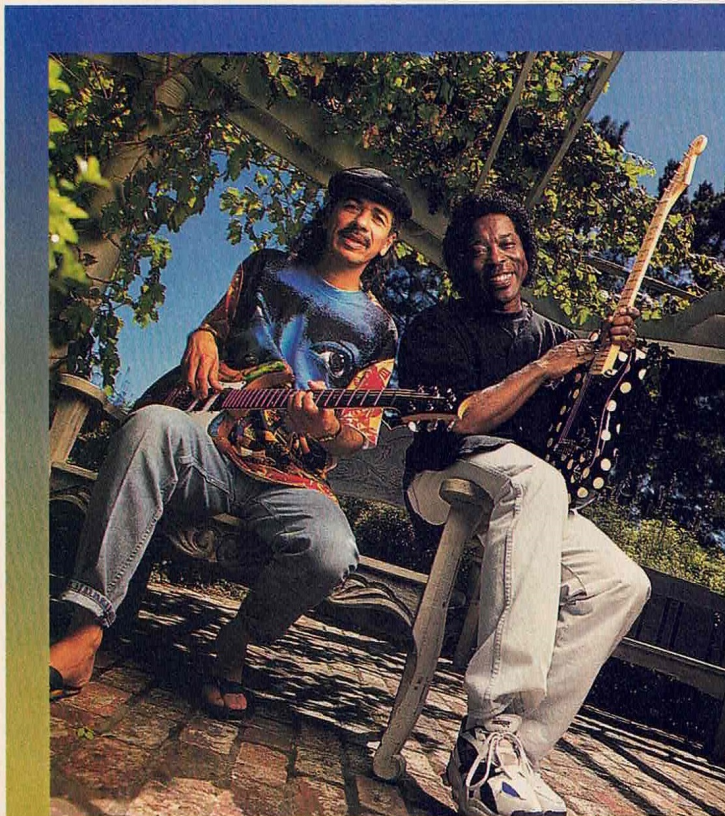
Mr. Guy is the living link between the blues' vital present and its illustrious past. He played on Muddy Waters' 1963 *Folk Singer* album and on other pivotal Chess recordings with Howlin' Wolf, Sonny Boy Williamson and Little Walter. His own records, many of them collaborations with frequent road partner Junior Wells, have energized the blues scene since the late Fifties. Today, Guy still can be found on the road, tearing up blues joints across the globe whenever he's not back home in Chicago presiding over his own Legends club. As Buddy's brand new album, *Slippin' In*, attests, the man has still got

the blues, and he knows how to sing and play 'em as no one else can.

And while Carlos Santana has mainly made his mark outside the blues arena, it should never be forgotten that the original name of his group was the Santana Blues Band. It was the blues that led Carlos from the streets of Tijuana, Mexico, to San Francisco and the Haight-Ashbury hippie scene. Along with guitar colleagues and friends like Michael Bloomfield and Peter Green, Santana was part of the great awakening of interest in the blues among white youth in the mid-to-late Sixties. There's always been a touch of the blues in everything the guitarist

scopically outward.

While Buddy Guy and Carlos Santana have markedly different guitar styles, both are players who put passion above all else. When soloing, both are given to frenzied bursts of energy, as if they're trying to jump outside the music, like a cartoon character who leaps out of the frame and finds himself in a new plane of reality. Carlos Santana and Buddy Guy are both spiritual men, although both have a keen appreciation for the good things of this earth. When they speak of the blues, their voices resonate with an emotional conviction that goes deeper than words.



**"I DON'T BELIEVE THAT
OLD CRAP THAT
YOU HAVE TO BE BLACK TO PLAY THE BLUES.
WE ALL GOT FIVE FINGERS
ON EACH HAND."**

—BUDDY GUY

has done, from Santana's 1969 debut album to Carlos' brand new *Brothers* album, recorded with his sibling Jorge Santana and cousin Carlos Hernandez. Just back from Woodstock '94, Santana says he felt the soul of Jimi Hendrix "make a landing" onstage at the festival. Of all the guitarists who came out of the psychedelic era, Santana has remained most faithful to Hendrix' adventurous quest to expand the blues kaleido-

as pretty as you look." 'Cause my father-in-law was a very handsome cat, you know. So that's the first thing I said to Buddy: "Man, you look as beautiful as you sound."

GUY: I always figured you need glasses, Carlos. But see, I had become friendly with John McEnroe; we'd met at my club in Chicago. We got to be good friends and he brought me and Carlos together.

GUITAR WORLD: So, how and when did you guys first meet?

CARLOS SANTANA: John McEnroe!

BUDDY GUY: Was that it?

SANTANA: Yeah, it's unbelievable. It was through [tennis star] John McEnroe.

GUY: No, no, no. You sure it wasn't that time you was at that theater in Chicago?

SANTANA: No, that was the second time.

GUY: See, I needed this from him. My memory is not like Carlos'. I need some correction on that. That's why I stop him. [To Carlos:] So go ahead and answer that.

SANTANA: It was late '84 or '85. You see, what happened was I went to the Cow Palace [a San Francisco auditorium] to see John McEnroe, 'cause we know John. I was looking through my binoculars and I said, "Oh, there's John, and he's talking with a chocolate cat!" [laughter] So I focus in, like, "He's got a beautiful smile. He looks like Buddy Guy. It is Buddy Guy! Oh shit!" I went over to them and said, "You're Buddy Guy." I remembered something that Billie Holiday once told my father-in-law, [guitarist] Saunders King: "You sound

GW: Carlos, can you recall the first time you ever heard Buddy Guy?

SANTANA: Yeah, it was in the mid-Sixties. I went to this cat's house, a singer I knew, and he had *Hoodoo Man Blues* [a Junior Wells album with Buddy Guy on guitar]. I remember it because, even though I grew up in Tijuana, I'd never really hung around people who smoked pot before then. Because I was a kid, people would always do that away from me. But here at this guy's house, they were smoking pot and we were listening to this record. And it hit me so strong by being so soft. It was really beautifully recorded. And I said "Man, who's that?" And someone answered, "Oh, that's

Junior Wells' new album." After that I started buying all the Chicago blues I could find. I kept checking out the guitar players. And Buddy had a different kind of thing than B.B. or the guitarist with Bobby Blue Bland [Wayne Bennett]. Buddy injected a different kind of passion into the mainstream of electric guitar. It reminds me of a bottle of Perrier that's been left in the car a long time, all shaken up. It's very effervescent. That was the first thing I heard. And it made me want to know more about that passion of Buddy's. And that effervescence. I heard it again later when I heard [Jimi Hendrix] "Red House" for the first time. This guy says, "I know you love the blues, but wait till you hear this!" Boom, they put "Red House" on—the version from

England, 'cause it didn't come out like that in America. And I said, "That's Buddy?" They go, "No man, it's Jimi." "Jimi who?" "Jimi Hendrix." "Whoa." So Jimi gave birth to something that came from Buddy Guy. And I know that if Jimi was here, he'd be the first one to tell you that.

GW: Well, didn't Hendrix often tape your gigs so he could learn your licks, Buddy?

GUY: Yeah. A couple of years ago, I actually got the tape he made of me the night of the death of Martin Luther King [April 4, 1968]. I'd like to know who sent me that tape. My manager at that time was Dick Waterman, who was Bonnie Raitt's boyfriend and manager, and who stutters like John Lee Hooker. So we were at this club and he kept hollering "Dat-dat-dat's Hendrix!" And I say, "So what? Who the hell is that?" And everybody started looking and laughing. So [Hendrix] came up and he says, "Pay that no mind. Can I tape what you're playing?" And I said yeah. Somebody had a tape [machine] on 'em and he got down on his knees and stayed there at the corner of the stage. And now I've got the tape from that club. But Jimi and I got a chance to jam a lot together, and I got to sit and talk with him—as much as he did talk, which wasn't much. And I really flipped out over the things he was doing. He reminds me so much of this guy here. [Points to a video image of John Coltrane flickering silently on Carlos' TV screen.] You know, Guitar Slim once said, "Every time you live one day, I live two." And I think Hendrix and Coltrane were just that creative. They was years and years ahead of their time, for what they was playing. Those kind of people come around once in a lifetime. I would love to see those two guys around today. Who knows what we would be listening to?

GW: I know Carlos really feels the link between Coltrane and Hendrix.

SANTANA: Yeah. It's just a tone that liberates. A long time ago, I realized that the blues is not just from the swamp, or the alley, or a certain walk of life. Miles Davis said, "I never had anything to do with cotton, but I can play some blues." Miles came from really rich people in St. Louis. Miles breaks the stereotype, man. So blues, to me, comes from when a person can feel other people's pain and is able to articulate it. If you can feel the people's pain, like in Rwanda or on an Indian reservation, you can play some blues. 'Cause I've heard the blues from Japanese people, Italian people, all sorts of people. There's a different beauty, of course, in blues from Chicago vs. Texas vs. Tupelo Mississippi. But the blues is still the blues.

GUY: [nodding sagely] Yes, yes. [snaps fingers] Blues! 'Cause you get beat up by it all.

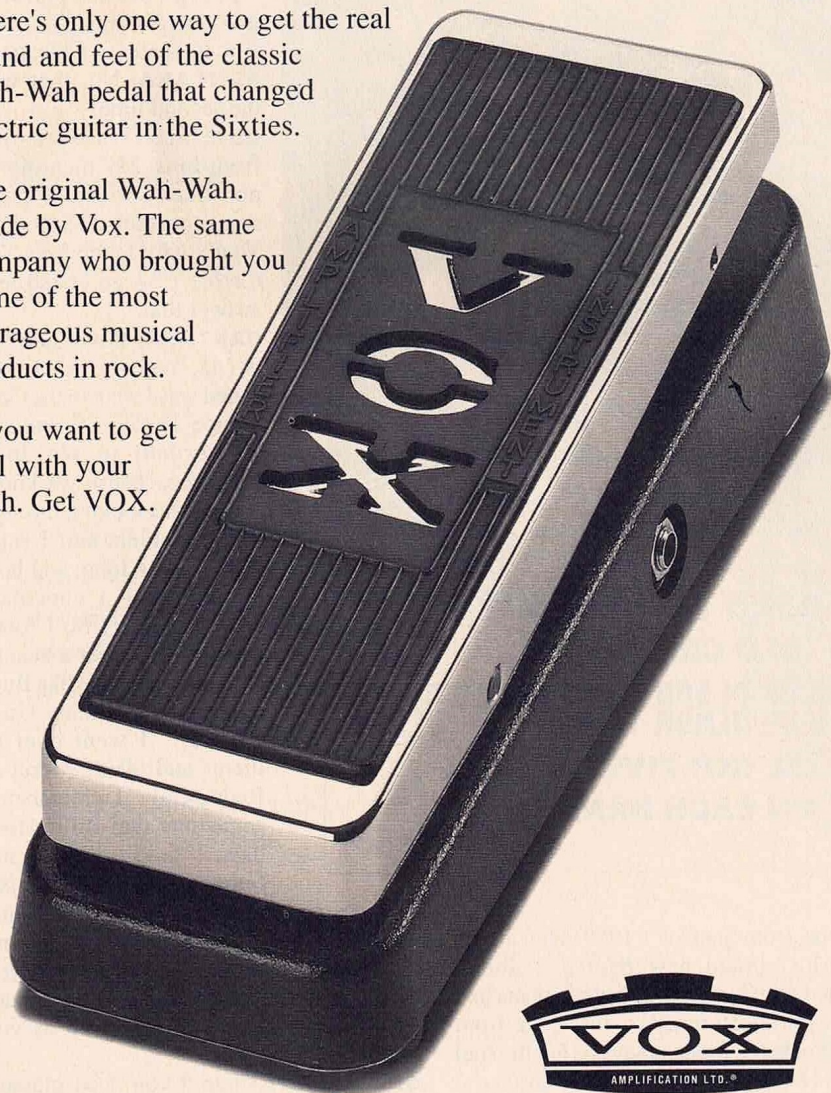
SANTANA: Coltrane and Miles, Buddy and Jimi, they play a different kind of blues. It's not so much "woe is me" as much as it's "I crave to be free from it all!" It's the cos-

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mic blues. And whoever plays on that level, like Buddy, can go to Istanbul, Jerusalem or Japan, and people will receive him the same. 'Cause it's a universal feeling that we all have. If you're black, white, Jewish or whatever, you can claim his pain as your own. That's why blues players are so supremely important. 'Cause they put a lot of people in touch with their feelings for the first time.

GUY: That's right.

SANTANA: That's what he does every night. That's what we do every night. With blues players, it's not a surface thing. It's a very profound, deep thing. And when it affects you, it changes your life. It makes

you feel a little deeper. It makes you think a little wider. Not whiter, but wider. That's why a lot of white people like the blues. Because it takes them away from the stereotype of who they're supposed to be.

You know, I gotta tell this one story, because I've never seen a musician arouse an audience the way Buddy did at this club in Costa Mesa [California] one night about two years ago. My brother and I drove in and we heard this sound like a riot. We ran to the stage and there was Buddy Guy. There was a lot of Hell's Angels in the crowd, or it seemed like Hell's Angels, with tattoos, you know, bikers and stuff. And Buddy hit this one note and this one woman in the crowd raised her shirt right up. And she had no brassiere. [Carlos stands and raises his own

t-shirt, exposing a scrawny torso.] Now, I've seen people clap with their hands and do the air guitar and things. But she was clapping with her breasts! [General hilarity.] I swear. I'm not making this up.

GW: Do you remember this, Buddy?

GUY: No. Somebody told me about that later. 'Cause I'd probably have missed a few notes if I'd seen it.

SANTANA: She was going like this.... [Carlos goes into a dance, shimmying his shoulders, doing his best to emulate a well-endowed woman making her breasts collide rhythmically.]

GUY: Somebody told me the next day. They didn't tell me that day, Carlos. They said, "You see that woman...?" I says, "No." Because when I get sunk into my guitar, I don't be trying to look at tits, legs, whatever. My main concern is, "Can I see as far as I can in the back and find somebody with a frown on their face?" And if I don't find that, I sleep well at night. But if I do find that, I say, "You wasn't reaching that guy in the back." And that's why I really run off the stage sometimes. 'Cause I can't see so far back. I want to make sure everyone's smiling back there. But no, Carlos, I am sorry I missed that other part.

SANTANA: My brother and I and the rest of the audience didn't miss it. We were entranced. I mean, I've never seen any musician do that to a person.

GUY: It makes you feel good. It's a lot of fun when you can see you're making someone happy, man. I'm real proud to be able to do that. I can go home at night and say, "I don't know what kind of problem this lady or man had before they came, but I took it away from them for that hour or so that I played."

SANTANA: Spiritual orgasm.

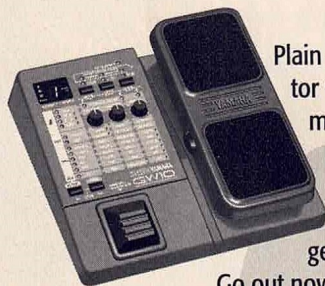
GW: Carlos, the original name of your group was the Santana Blues Band. Where did it come from?

SANTANA: When I came out, there was nothing but blues, man. Where I was hanging out, it was either that or the Beach Boys. When I crossed the border, I literally thought all the people in America would know Muddy Waters and John Lee Hooker. So I'd ask people, like, "Hey, you know Muddy Waters?" And some cab driver would look at me funny. I just came from Tijuana; what did I know? Because in Tijuana, where I grew up, I would go to certain people's houses and they'd have Jimmy Reed just resonating from the speakers. And it was shocking to come to San Francisco and realize that people didn't know what the hell I was talking about. I mean, I had to go to San Jose to see Bobby Bland or Ray Charles or B.B. King together on one show. So I'd take the train down to San Jose.

GW: Both of you traveled north to make it, Carlos from Tijuana to San Francisco, and Buddy from Louisiana to Chicago.

GUY: You know, I never dreamed I'd be sit-

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VAN HALEN: TAPE 103

Meanstreet, Unchained, Little Guitars (intro.), Little Guitars, Good Enough, Why Can't This Be Love, Summer Nights, Best Of Both Worlds

VAN HALEN: TAPE 104

Hot For Teacher, 5150, Jump, Panama, Top Jimmy, Drop Dead Legs, Girl Gone Bad

VAN HALEN: TAPE 130

Poundcake, Judgement Day, Spanked, Runaround, Pleasure Dome, Man On A Mission, The Dream Is Over, 3:16, Top Of The World

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Voodoo Chile (Slight Return), Little Wing, Boot Hill, The Sky Is Crying, Empty Arms, Wham, So Excited, Life By The Drop

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Vaughan/Johnson: TAPE 125

Johnson: Cliffs Of Dover, High Landrons, Righteous Vaughan Testify, DFW, Long Way From Home, Telephone Song, Brothers

50'S/60'S ROCK: TAPE 116

Johnny B. Goode, Roll Over Beethoven, Honky Tonk, Memphis, Guitar Boogie Shuffle, Rock Around Clock, Hound Dog, Rock This Town, Stray Cat Strut

BLUES KINGS: TAPE 121

Everyday I Have the Blues, How Blue Can You Get, Sweet 16, Why I Sing the Blues, The Thrill Is Gone I'll Play the Blues For You, Blues Power, Going Down

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Good Times Bad Times, Dazed & Confused, Communication Breakdown, Heartbreaker, Since I've Been Loving You, Black Dog, Rock & Roll, Moby Dick, Stairway To Heaven

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The Song Remains The Same, Rain Song, Over The Hills & Far Away, Custer's Pie, The Rover, Ten Years Gone, Achilles Last Stand, Nobody's Fault But Mine

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No Quarter (live), Whole Lotta Love, I Can't Quit You Baby, The Lemon Song, The Immigrant Song, The Ocean, The Wanton Song, Hots On For Nowhere

RUSH: TAPE 127

La Villa Strangiato, Freewill, Spirit Of Radio, Tom Sawyer, YYZ, Red Barchetta, Limelight, Show Don't Tell

GUNS 'N' ROSES: TAPE 117

Welcome To The Jungle, Nightrain, Out Ta Get Me, Mr. Brownstone, Paradise City, Sweet Child O' Mine, Anything Goes, Patience

SATHIAN: TAPE 110

Surfing with the Alien, Ice 9, Crushing Day, Always With Me Always With You, Satch Boogie, Circles

SATHIAN: TAPE 120

Flying In A Blue Dream, The Mystical Potato Head Groove Thing, One Big Rush, Back To Shalla-Bal, The Forgotten (part 2), Into The Light

RHOADS: TAPE 106

Over The Mountain, Flying High Again, Believer, Diary Of A Madman, I Don't Know, Crazy Train, Dee, Mr. Crowley, Revelation (last half), Steal Away

VAI: TAPE 105

Yankee Rose, Shy Boy, Goin' Crazy, Bump & Grind, Knucklebones, Just Like Paradise, Bottom Line, Hot Dog & A Shake, Eugene's Trick Bag (Crossroads)

LYNCH: TAPE 111

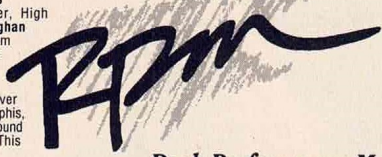
Mr. Scary, Kiss of Death, Dream Warriors, Unchain the Night, In My Dreams, Into The Fire, Tooth And Nail, Alone Again

MALMSTEEN: TAPE 112

Rising Force, Heaven Tonight, Dreaming (Tell Me), Riot In The Dungeons, Crystal Ball, Now Is The Time, Queen In Love, Fire, Liar, Hot On Your Heels (intro.)

Alternative/Pop '92: TAPE 136

Hot Chili Peppers Give It Away, Under The Bridge Black Crows Sting Me, Hard To Handle, Remedy, Thorn In My Side Alice In Chains Man In A Box Nirvana Smells Like Teen Spirit



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ting here talking to somebody like Carlos or with you asking me questions about things like this. My dream was to sit and watch people like Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf and Jimmy Reed, to see where the real stuff came from. And overnight I found myself playing with them. I learned so much from those guys. And some of the things I learned from them I carry with me now. When I first got to know Muddy, he said, "When you start, you'll start in a small club what had 12 people, and I'll stop by there. They'll know I'm comin' and when I give you a boost, then you gonna have your own little crowd." So I says to myself, "What else can you ask for if Muddy Waters tells you this?" I was getting, I think, four or five bucks a night. And Muddy come in and everybody knew who he was. But he got up to the bar and ran a tab on me for 15 bucks. When I got off that night, the club owner was looking at me serious. And I say, "Where's my money? Give me my four dollars so I can go home." And he say, "You owe me 11 dollars. Muddy Waters drank this bottle of whiskey and brought a couple more for his friends." I couldn't pay it, so I had to come back the next three weeks and play for nothing to pay it off.

GW: Was Muddy the sort of guy who would show you a riff on guitar?

GUY: I never wanted to go to him and say, "Sit down and show me this." I never done that to any guitar player in my life—to say "Put your fingers and show me how you did that." I just wanted to watch Muddy do it. And even if I didn't get it exactly like him, if I only got half of it, I'd want to take that half and put it with my half and see what I found. And I guess that's how, sooner or later, you come up with something of your own. But there's no way I could get that tone that Muddy had, or that voice.

If Muddy and the Wolf and Sonny Boy would be talking to you now, you'd be tapping your feet. 'Cause every time they open their mouth to hold a conversation, it sounded like they were singing. That's just how much rhythm I think they had in their soul and body.

GW: Who's the absolute greatest blues guitarist of all time?

GUY: You puttin' me on the spot 'cause they got so many. I can't tell you who's the greatest guitar player in the world, 'cause you never would finish with this interview if I started naming names.

SANTANA: It was very important for me when I first heard people like Lonnie Johnson, who was one of the first to move away from straight fingerpicking, to play single-note lines. And of course I used to think T-Bone [Walker] invented the shoe and everybody else created shoe styles. I really did. For a long time.

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GUY: Well, I think he did. If you go back.... Lonnie Johnson died in what, 1968 or '69? A family had taken him to see me in Toronto, and I got a picture of us together somewhere. And I had a chance to sit down and talk with Lonnie Johnson.

But, yeah, I think T-Bone, like you say, invented that shoe. Because I only go by what I've been told by the guys who were there, rather than just getting it from the books. I get it from the mouth of B.B. King and people like that. I go by what Muddy would say. For example, they came to me and I said, "God, I'm coppin' you too much, Muddy." or "I'm coppin' you too much, B.B. Tell me what to do." And they patted me on the back and said, "Look, we're coppin' somebody too. But they don't make records like we do." But I think you could be right about T-Bone.

SANTANA: Yeah, Maybe it was because he played with the guitar out like that [*with the top held horizontally*] instead of down. I don't know. It's a very hard sound to get.

GUY: Yes, it is.

SANTANA: Chuck Berry made a lot of money from playing like that. Chuck Berry's forte was his writing. But his guitar playing is all T-Bone.

GUY: Yes, it is.

GW: Buddy is known for playing Strats.

Carlos, in the early days, was known for playing Les Pauls and, more recently, Paul Reed Smiths. Is there something about finding the right guitar that helps you realize your voice and style?

GUY: What got me with the Strat was I that saw the late Guitar Slim [*aka Eddie Jones—GW Ed.*] come out with it. I finally got able to own one. And what made me love it most of any other guitar was the wear and tear it could take, compared to the hollowbodies and things that came out before. I couldn't afford a case at first, and guitars couldn't stand that. But once I was traveling in Africa in a station wagon, and I had my Strat strapped to the top. The guy was driving about 90 miles an hour, and the guitar blew off and popped out of the case. Naturally, it bounced down the street. The guy stopped and I ran out, to keep him from running it over, backing up; I was gonna lay down in the street and say, "Hey, don't hit me!" I picked that Strat up and my E string was out of tune. One tuning machine got hit but it wasn't broken, just bent. I picked up that guitar, looked at it and said, "You lived through that; you'll be my favorite guitar for the rest of my life." If it would have been a hollow-body, or any other kind, I'm sure it would have been totalled.

I'm not putting any other guitar down. I don't even think they make Strats like that no more, 'cause you can't find the wood or the materials. This was a Fifties Strat I'm

talking about. A '53 or '54, which they call the vintage now. I can't find one high or low. But I got several other guitars I love playing once in a while. I got a couple of the Paul Reed Smiths. I love playing that guitar. But I got branded with that Strat back there in the Chess days. And even some of my fans will say, "I want to hear the Strat." And I don't come to play for Buddy Guy when I come out to play. I come and play for the people who think enough of me to come out in 100 degrees or 10 below or whatever rain or snow to hear me. If they want to hear me play that Strat, I'm gonna give it to them.

GW: Is that what you're using on your new record? The good old Strat?

GUY: Yeah, but also I got one of the [*Gibson*] "Lucille" guitars. I wrote a tune on there called "We Need Help For Our Cities" and I used the Lucille guitar on that.

GW: It's got a mellower tone.

GUY: Well, yeah, but I can't make it mellow like that guy [*B.B. King*]. 'Cause that guy got some vibration in his left hand. Every time I get a chance to see him, I look around his arm and see if he's like—what do you call it?—the bionic man or something.

GW: How do you feel on that point, Carlos? How important is finding the right guitar?

SANTANA: When I went to Africa in 1970 with Roberta Flack, Les McCann, Eddie Harris, Voices of East Harlem, the Staple Singers, Ike and Tina Turner and Wilson Pickett, I could hardly wait to land so I



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could go walk around in the market. I saw people playing guitar there. And when they'd break a string, they'd just tie a knot in the broken string and use it again, 'cause they didn't have any way to get a new one. And I learned back there that the box don't matter. The type of guitar or string or amp or effect isn't important. It's in your hand. Those people couldn't afford new strings, so when they broke one they knew how to tie it in such a way that they could reuse it.

GUY: What, you never learned that trick?

SANTANA: No.

GUY: Okay, you give me a string before I leave and I'll show you how to tie it so it's not gonna slip one bit. You just have to know how to twist it right. Someone used to tease me and say, "That's why you picked up a little speed, jumping over the knot!"

GW: Do blues songs have to be about hard times, liquor, women, money...?

GUY: No. Who said that? Bo Diddley made a comment about three years ago at this television show they give for Eric Clapton—the Rock Awards or something. They asked Bo about the blues and he just looked around and says, "Hey man, what you talking about? Everybody have the blues." Donald Trump and his wife was having a problem then. And Bo say, "Look at Donald Trump. You don't think he got the

blues?" But if you listen to a collection of blues, man, it's not all "you left me and I don't have a place to stay." When B.B. King did "Sweet Little Angel," he sang "I got a sweet little angel. I love the way she spreads her wings." And you got to figure out what the hell he's talking about when he says "spreads her wings." You got to use common sense. And this is a joyful song. That's a blues song, but it's a joyful song.

SANTANA: To me, blues is another form of a supreme prayer.

GUY: Yes.

SANTANA: 'Cause when I hear blues from Africa or Islamic countries, like the way they do five times a day in Istanbul [*i.e.*, *Muslim prayer*], it's a pleading, like "Please God, make me wake up so that I'm not this turkey anymore. So that I'm an eagle instead." So the best blues that I hear is when it transcends human toil and is like a drop of water crying to get back to the ocean. That's the blues to me.

GW: Yet there's a pervasive legend that says you have to sell your soul to the devil in order to play the blues. The myth of Robert Johnson ...

SANTANA: I think that started with white people. I'll just be frank with you.

GUY: I think you're right. Actually, Carlos, back in those days some black people, I think, was taught this. Until they learned better. Seventy-five years ago, if a black

guy heard a white guy say, "You sold your soul to the devil," he didn't know any better. He just went on and said, "My master told me I sold my soul to the devil." Then up come his grandchildren, me and so on, and he repeats these things to them. Like my grandfather used to tell me, "Listen son, there's a lot of money was buried around here a long time ago. If you go dig this money out of the ground, you have to take a bottle of whiskey with you and take shot glasses and pour shots out there. 'Cause the ghosts is gonna be drinking it while you're digging up the money." And I'm sitting up there, like, saying, "Oh shit, can you talk to them?" And when I grew up to be a teenager, I said, "Listen, you know what you told me, about the shots on the ground? That's not true. Somebody told you that. They have brainwashed you with that. They was telling you that so in case you found something, you would leave it alone, and they could go get it." I think we were misled in more ways than one back then about what should be said about our music, or about anything we were doing.

GW: Well, somewhere along the line the blues and church music got separated within the black community.

SANTANA: When I hear [*gospel great*] Mahalia Jackson, or Aretha or Cissy Houston, who is Whitney Houston's mom, I hear

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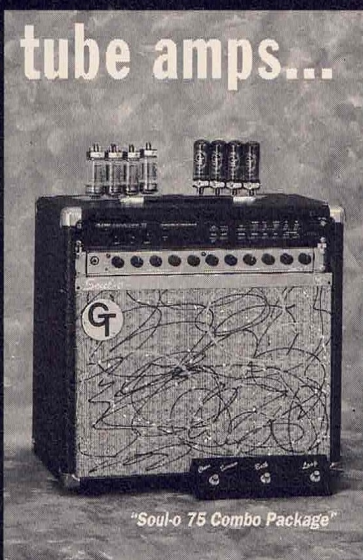
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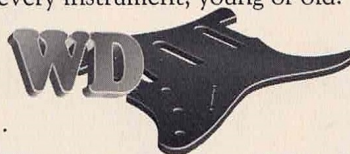
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They also faced technical problems. One night a visitor in the control room spilled coffee on the master tapes. "I remember Tommy Dowd and I standing at the tape machine with what they call Chem-Wipes, which are very absorbent, non-chemical-treated tissue," said Karl. "And we passed the master tape back and forth through the reels to get all the coffee out."

In addition, a quirky tape player caused most of the songs to turn out either faster or slower than their actual tempo. "Layla," for example, came out so fast that it was nearly a half-step sharp, and many thought the variations were deliberate. "There's no reason

for it except the mix-down machine was an old Ampex 351," Karl said. "At the beginning of the reel, you'd record a little slow and at the end you'd record a little quickly."

When Tom Dowd finally walked out of the studio after they had finished the album, he shook his head and said to himself, "That's the best goddamned record I've made in 10 years." To his dismay, *Layla* was hardly noticed upon its release in December of 1970.

"The pity of it was that it took a year for the thing to hit," Dowd said. "When it didn't hit in the first six months, I just thought, 'The public is just a bunch of assholes. They don't know what the hell is good or bad anymore.' Then six months later, it was like the national anthem." ●

SANTANA / GUY

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the same vitality of the spirit that I hear in blues. I don't believe in giving the so-called devil the best part. It's just vitality music [touches his crotch]. You have to have five things in one note in order to touch the hearts of people universally: soul, heart, mind, body and *cajones*. No matter whether you're a woman or a man. You have to get across all of those things with one note. So why give the so-called devil the vitality part—the body, the cajones? That just leaves you with white people in church singing *wooo wooo wooo*. That's not fair. God is in all of it.

GUY: Yes he is.

SANTANA: So therefore I never went for this crossroads thing. People ask me this all the time, about Robert Johnson and the devil. But only white people. I look at Eric Clapton and I hope he don't believe this bunk, man, 'cause this ain't the shit that's happening.

GUY: You look out there and guys like Stevie Ray, Eric, Beck and Keith are selling millions of records. And people ask me: "Can a white guy play the blues?" I feel like saying, "Did you get an education, man?" Eric done collected six or seven Grammys. Did I see that wrong? Or am I the only one saw that? Somebody want to tell me that guy can't play?" I don't believe that old crap that you have to be black to play the blues. I don't have any advantage over Carlos or Eric or anyone. We all got five fingers on each hand and we pick guitar the same way.

GW: You were there right at the beginning of that British fascination with American blues, Buddy. You went over to England in 1965 and played shows with the Yardbirds.

GUY: In 1965, yes. Eric slept in the van, he said, in front of the club. I was just real crazy then. I was a much younger man. Actually, it looked like blues was at a standstill, so far as Chicago was concerned. I wasn't traveling. I had a baby at that time and I took a break from performing. I went over just to do two weeks. Willie Dixon helped set that up. And I didn't see nothing explode for me at that time. And then all of a sudden, in '66 or '67, I woke up one day and says, "Hey man, the colleges are protesting this Vietnamese War and a lot of white people are listening to the blues."

GW: Do you do your best solos on stage or in the studio, Buddy?

GUY: I do my best on stage. Because when I'm in the studio, I have a tendency to want to be too perfect. On stage, I just let loose. On my last few albums, I've been more relaxed in the studio. But in my earlier days, I played some pretty good notes on the stand.

GW: What about you, Carlos? Stage or studio?

SANTANA: Stage, definitely. In the studio, a lot of musicians, as great as they are, they play like they're castrated. But on stage, most musicians I know, they close

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SANTANA / GUY

their eyes, they go deep inside themselves and they bring out something that surprises even them. It's like having a baby. You don't know what color eyes it's going come out with. And you don't even know what kind of ugly faces you're making when you're on stage. So for me, live, the spirit comes more full. The studio is a nice indulgence, for people who can afford to perfect things. But the best things I've ever done in the studio—even "The Healer" with John Lee Hooker—was just one take.

GW: Both of you are survivors. You've been doing what you do for quite a few years and you've stuck to your styles without compromising. What's given you the strength to do that?

GUY: I just didn't give up. Blues has always been hard. The only time I saw Muddy Waters' face on national television was the year he passed away. Michael Jackson won all the Grammys and there was a big, dead Muddy Waters on television. And I cried that night when Muddy's face come on, and they said, "We lost the inventor of the electric blues" and so forth. I said, "Why couldn't they have given him that honor before he passed?" I always think of what my mom told me once. She was paralyzed for 20 years with stroke. And she say, "If you got any flowers for me, Buddy, bring 'em now, so I can smell 'em. Don't wait till

I'm dead and put 'em on the coffin, 'cause I can't smell 'em then." And I started giving her flowers when she was alive.

So whatever I got coming, give me my flowers now. Don't wait till I'm dead to put me on your national television. Blues has got a part in this world, as far as music is concerned. If I quit, who's gonna be playing it? So I don't think you're gonna look up one day and see me gone away. You'll say, "Well, he did it till he died." And that's how I feel about it.

SANTANA: For me, it's just grace. Tonight I could be hiding in the bushes across from Tijuana, trying to get in [to the United States]. Instead I'm here. They can't kick me out, and I have the supreme honor of

having people like Buddy Guy or John Lee Hooker or John McLaughlin call me up on the phone. If I won 48 Grammys, more than Eric Clapton, it wouldn't mean as much to me. I grew up in a little town. And if I go there today, they still don't have any lights or running water and there's chickens running all over the place. My mother got the hell out of there and took us to Tijuana, thinking that was like America. Once we got to Tijuana, from '55 to '62, that's where I got my education: Street University. People down there didn't want to listen to Fabian or Elvis Presley. They listened to real gutbucket blues. And I said, "God, this sound is more appealing than anything on this earth. More arousing than women, money, anything."

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SANTANA / GUY

And when I came to America, because of the sound, it made me crave more. I saw Muddy Waters for the first time, Paul Butterfield and James Cotton. And I saw that the sound is a river that will take you all the way to the last day of your life. Our river—Buddy Guy's river, my river—is the sound. Like a huge tree, the roots go right down to the river. Lawyers, accountants and promoters may steal the apples from the tree—they can steal our money—but they can't buy those roots.

GUY: No, they cannot.

SANTANA: 'Cause that's connected to the sound, riverwide. When I was a kid we used to say, "What's going on?" And the older people would say, "Well, the old river, she just keeps on rolling along." I used to think, "What the hell does that mean?" Now I know.

GUY: Well said, well said. ●

MEGADETH

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my brand of guitar. I tried playing a Fender guitar, and it just doesn't have the *chutzpah* that my Jacksons do. On one song, I needed a wang bar, so I used one of Marty's Kelly model Jacksons that had a wang bar. And to me, that's the richest, warmest-sounding guitar I've ever played. But, of course, I still don't sound like Marty. We're very different guitar players, just in the way we hold our hands and everything we do.

FRIEDMAN: That's really noticeable when we're playing harmonies. Like when I'm playing a harmony to something he's already recorded, whether the line is easy or hard, it's fucking impossible to really match up. And that really is frustrating. Because I look at myself as being, at the very least, a decent guitar player. Yet, I'm sometimes completely unable to match a really simple line that Dave has played. We just don't sound alike—even when we use the same gear.

MUSTAINE: Playing someone else's guitar is kind of like lying next to someone else's wife; they don't feel as warm. I'm not saying that we lay next to one another's wives. Let's just say it's like lying next to a new lover for the first time. It's awkward at first. But I think my guitar is pretty loyal to me. Marty's played it a couple of times and it's asked that I come back.

GW: Those harmony guitar parts are a key element in your music. Do you usually record them with each of you playing a line?

FRIEDMAN: That's one guy playing a line, another guy trying to harmonize with it and Max going, "Fuck it, why doesn't one of you guys just play both lines already?" But generally, we both want to play, because that's how it's going to be live.

MUSTAINE: Live, you would never know if the lines don't exactly match. Because on



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