

Buddy Texas Tornados

Congratulations to the Buddy Texas Tornados of Guitar, Class of 2017

THE TEXAS SOUND. FOR SOME, IT'S THE report of a .12-gauge on the opening day of dove season. For others, it's the grinding of a diamond bit on a dusty Austin-Chalk lease. For the rest of us, it's the sound of a guitar laced with a smidgeon of sweet distortion, a singing violin-like tone that can make an audience quiver in harmonic sympathy with a bend this way or a vibrato that way

Texas is guitar country. Has been since before World War I, when Wortham-born Blind Lemon Jefferson brought the Texas Blues from his hometown to Dallas and then to the whole Midwest.

Before Dallas-born Charlie Christian became the first electric guitarist to gain fame, with the Benny Goodman Sextet. Before Tioga-born Gene Autry strummed his way to fame as the first singing cowboy star. Even before Buddy Holly denned the rock trio format for generations to come.

Buddy readers need no further proof of just how deep Texas is immersed in guitar history. The successes of 1978 Buddy Texas Tornado inductees Stevie Ray Vaughan, Jimmie Vaughan, Billy Gibbons, Eric Johnson, Bugs Henderson, Rocky Athas and John Nitzinger. The variety of styles in Texas is as wide as a Panhandle horizon.

We salute the new inductees for 2017 as they take their place alongside previous *Buddy* Texas Tornado inductees.

Texas Tornado bassists for 2017 will be added next month.

Will Owen Gage

JUST WHEN YOU START TO wonder if the well will ever run dry, a new young guitar slinger will emerge to restore your faith in history. At the top of the list for the next generation of guitarists to watch and follow closely is Will Owen Gage. He's currently playing guitar for the iconic Two Tons of Steel and has his first solo release *Travelin' Man* under his belt.

To put his place in the guitar world in perspective, consider the opinion of Marc Benno; who's played with The Doors, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Eric Clapton and a



Will Owen Gage

few other pretty good players, "If someone were hired to do a demonstration of everything a Stratocaster could do, it would be Will Owen Gage. He is the best guitarist I have heard since Stevie Ray Vaughan & Lil Doyle Bramhall."

On his fifth birthday, Gage's uncle gave him a copy of the *The Vaughn Brothers: Family Style*, which sparked a fire for guitar work and immersion in the blues for the remainder of his formative years. From the time he was eleven, he was sitting in with bluesmen across San Antonio and playing regular gigs by the time he finished junior high. Before he finished high school, his chops and talent had developed to the point where he was playing with and opening for musicians like Stephen Stills in Austin.

A condensed list of the artists he's played with will give you a feel for just how deeply rooted Will Owen Gage has already become in the Texas music world. Gage has played with the Texas Tornados, Steve Miller, Ray Wylie Hubbard, Flaco Jimenez, Roger Creager, Marc Benno and Roger Creager with a lengthy run with Lucky Tubb, son of The Ernest Tubb. Gage now anchors his spot with Two Tons of Steel, as well as gigging with The Will Owen Gage Trio around San Antonio on his days in between.

It's a good time to be Will Owen Gage, with two new solo projects in the works in addition

to his current workload. It's also a good time to put his name on your list of established and impressive Texas guitar players. He's earned his place with his skills to match the credentials. It's not future promise as a skilled musician; it's delivery as a Texas blues man.

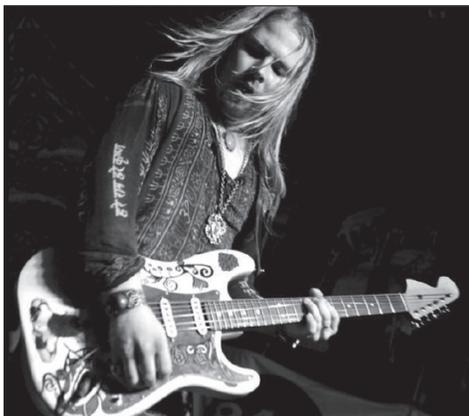
Gage plays his Gretsch "Brian Setzer" Nashville through his beloved 1960 Fender Stratocaster, 1967 Gibson Flying V, & Hot Rod Magazine Edition 58 Gibson Les Paul. Voodoo V-Plex Amps, Holy Watt Amps, Fender & Matchless Amplification. I use Elixir Strings exclusively.

Wes Jeans

MICHEAL WESLEY JEANS WAS born in the heart of East Texas January 13, 1981, only fifteen minutes from Freddie King's birthplace. Wes grew up in a musically enriched family and showed an interest in performing at a young age. It wasn't until the age of fifteen that Wes chose his path.

In 1996, after only playing nine months, Wes entered the International Jimi Hendrix Competition held in Austin, and placed second among fifteen hundred other young guitar players. Special guest Al Hendrix (father of Jimi Hendrix) told Wes "In my eyes, you won because you played straight from the heart, like Jimi!"

He released his first album



Wes Jeans

Hands On on Icehouse Records in 2000, *Rough Cuts* in 2004, followed by *Live At Juanitas Ballroom* in 2005, *Forest Of The Pine* in 2006, *Live At Music City, TX* in 2009, with Lance Lopez - *Higher Ground*, Oliver White on *Control*, and the documentary *Solidbodies :50 Year Guitar War Movie* with Joe Bonamassa & Derek Trucks. This is just a partial list of his session work.

"My biggest influences are Jimi Hendrix, Freddie King, Billy Gibbons, Stevie & Jimmie Vaughan, Bugs Henderson, Albert Collins, Johnny Winter, BB King, Albert King, Doyle Bramhall II, Alan Haynes, Derek Obrien, Warren Haynes, Lance Lopez, Eric Gales. The list goes on & on," he said. He added that he has had the honor of meeting and sharing the stage with many musical idols. *Guitar Player Magazine* readers voted Wes number three among the Young Gun Guitar Players in the nation between Jonny Lang and Kenny Wayne Shepherd (*Guitar Player* March 2004).

His main rig consists on his beloved 1960 Fender Stratocaster, 1967 Gibson Flying V, & Hot Rod Magazine Edition 58 Gibson Les Paul. Voodoo V-Plex Amps, Holy Watt Amps, Fender & Matchless Amplification. I use Elixir Strings exclusively.

"My approach to playing and generally performing has always been very intense. I put every ounce of my being into my playing. As I have grown older and wiser from the past 22 years touring, I have polished my musical vocabulary. I feel that it's more important to have something to say with your playing than to just play a million notes at top speed. BB King was a big influence on me as far as that is concerned. He was always so good to me and had the best stories and advice I could have ever dreamed for," he added

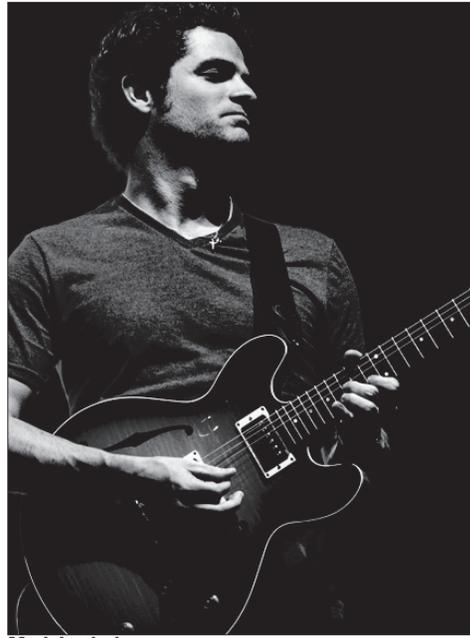
Mark Lettieri

LURED AWAY FROM THE San Francisco Bay area by the charms of TCU and Fort Worth, Texas; multi-disciplinary guitarist and composer Mark Lettieri's wide-ranging body of work includes his role as guitarist with the Grammy Award-winning ensemble Snarky Puppy. In 2016, Lettieri released his third solo album, *Spark and Echo*. Throw in another trio project (standing in as a house musician on a Christian television network) and numerous radio and television jingles, he's a busy man.

Equally comfortable and adept as a jazz musician, R&B and gospel player; Lettieri is also sought after for his work as a session player across multiple genres. If you look at the artists he's supported with his guitar craft, it's clear that he can't be pigeonholed as a one-dimensional player. Lettieri's session work includes playing with David Crosby, 50 Cent, Snoop Dogg, Eminem, Adam Levine, Kirk Franklin, Fred Hammond, Anthony Evans, Eric Roberson, Lecrae, Lupe Fiasco, Keyshia Cole, and Xzibit. Lettieri is also a member of Team SKP, a production collective led by Grammy Award-winning producer Symbolyc One.

Lettieri's guitar work with Snarky Puppy, along with fellow Snarky Puppy guitarists Bob Lanzetti and Chris McQueen,

contributed a near perfect fusion of guitar craft and art on the 2016 Grammy Award-winning album *Culcha Vulcha*, honored as the Best Contemporary Instrumental Album.



Mark Lettieri

Mark relies on a wide assortment of instruments to support his multi-disciplinary style and to complement each artist and project he works on as a guitarist.

Currently, Lettieri uses: a Don Grosh NOS Retro with Grosh 60's Fat & Small Block 327 pickups, a Collings I-35LC semi-hollowbody with Lollar Low-Wind Imperial pickups, a Valhalla Custom '51 T Relic with Döninger Custom Twang pickups, a California Artist Guitars Custom T with CAC pickups, a Paul Reed Smith McCarty 594 with 58115LT pickups, a Fender American Standard Stratocaster with Dimarzio Area '61 & Chopper pickups, a Fender Standard Telecaster with Dimarzio Area T pickups, another Fender American Standard Stratocaster with Lollar Blackface and Special S pickups, a Gibson Les Paul Standard with Dimarzio 36th Anniversary PAF pickups, and a collection that includes several other electric and acoustic setups.

Tommy Nash

TOMMY NASH WAS BORN in Austin, September 18, 1950. His father Charles, had a career in the Air Force and his mother, Marjorie, was a Choctaw Indian. But it was his elder brother, John that "stuck the first guitar in my hands between the age of seven or 8. I remember that guitar, it was an old broken guitar from Sears. It had no back, and the action was really high."

John was a true taskmaster, and his only real instructor. "Looking back, he was a great teacher by the time I was eleven, I was playing in my brothers band." He went on to play in

Ousley Jr high and Arlington High School Bands

John then introduced Tommy to the infamous the Cellar in Fort Worth. "It was a beatnik joint and jazz club at the time" ... Jazz cats, blues cats, rockers ... lots of music, in every genre ... Including: The Vaughan brothers, Rocky and Dusty Hill, Billy Gibbons, Frank Beard ... everybody"

Like all the other inductees Tommy Nash has performed on more projects than he can remember easily. Nash is being modest; but his credits include both Wide Open Spaces with the Dixie Chicks, which won a total of seven Grammy awards. Other projects include Tom Morrell's *How the West Was Swung*, Tommy Young's *Keeper of the "B"*, Jerry Jeff Walker's *Jerry Jeff Jazz*, Penny Gilley's *Picture of Me*, The Hawkes Band's *Hawkes*, several projects with Dave Alexander, and on *Asleep at the Wheel's A Ride with Bob*.

From '96 through 2000, he worked all the late night TV shows including Letterman, Jay Leno, Conan O'Brien, as well as Ru Paul, *The View* and others. Recently he has performed on Austin City Limits and the CMA Awards Show.



Tommy Nash

He performs primarily with fender teles and strats on the road, especially for the country stuff. Most studio applications along with Carvin, which I use mainly for the Jazz stuff, McPherson, Martin Acoustics He uses Fender deluxe amps typically on stage, as well as egnater amps. "I prefer mainly all tube amps, but some digital equipment as well. I have played and love many Gibson Guitars as well," he added. My pedal board consists of Boss, Full Tone, OCD, TC electronics, Sennheiser and Xtasy.

"Performance is an art that you have to learn and master through your experiences with people and music. This inspires and challenges me ... and is always something new to accomplish," he added. ■