

REPORTERS ONLINE

Gary Lucas: A man, his guitar and the world - part 1

C. Cornell Evers 17 February 2021

His name is usually mentioned in relation to the music legends Captain Beefheart and Jeff Buckley (and sometimes Lou Reed and Nick Cave). However, guitarist Gary Lucas's career spans so much more and reads like a fascinating 'who is who' in rock, jazz, and even classical. His musical adventures have taken Gary Lucas all over the world. On the double album 'The Essential Gary Lucas' he collected highlights from his guitar agenda of forty years of encounters. 'The Essential Gary Lucas belongs at the heart of every music collection' and consists of two mutually very different parts:

CD 1 offers an overview over the years of Lucas own avant- and jazz rock band Gods and Monsters, of which he is the leader, guitarist and passionate (part-time) lead singer. The band, which is named after a quote from the 1935 horror film "Bride of Frankenstein" ("To a new world of Gods and Monsters") started in 1989 and rose to fame in the early 1990s when singer-songwriter Jeff Buckley was part of it. CD 1 "Gods and Monsters" contains seventeen tracks that tumble over each other like in and on a cakewalk, in a wonderful zest for life and playing pleasure. The band has gone through quite a few line-up changes over the years. There were also regular guest contributions. I mention David Johansen from The New York Dolls, Uruguayan-French singer and actress Elli Medeiros, Arthur Russell who wrote the beautiful 'Let's Go Swimming', Talking Head Jerry Harrison who produced the Gods and Monsters album 'The Ordeal of Civility' from 2011, and the Canadian singer Mary Margaret O'Hara. Central to this colorful collection of musical influences is the master's virtuoso guitar playing, sometimes sensitive like a reed bending in the wind, but always a beacon of musical determination in the turmoil of an ever-changing music world. I called it a cakewalk, and that's it, one where when you step out at the end you want to go back to the beginning to press start again.

CD2 of 'The Essential Gary Lucas' is entitled 'Solo, Rarities and Collaborations' and starts in style with a Chinese version of 'All Along The Watchtower', sung by the Chinese singer FeiFei Yang. She also sings the second song 'The Moon Represents My Heart' in a duet with Gary. The following song 'Out From Under' takes Lucas to the other side of the world to Havana with Haydee and Suylen Milanes and Los Van Van. Nona Hendryx is the star on Don Van Vliet's 'Her Eyes Are A Blue Million Miles', and our own Metropole Orchestra can be heard in 'Evening Bell' by the Captain and produced by the Dutch radio host Co de Kloet. There is a spooky solo performance by Lucas from Abdullah Ibrahim's 'Bra Joe from Kilimanjaro'. Another highlight is provided by Suicide's Alan Vega in the five-minute long 'Life Kills' with echoes of Jim Morrison as he can be heard in 'The End' from 'Apocalypse Now'. Also 'Music for the Golem', 'Guanguanco' with Adrian Sherwood, and as a bouncer a robust 'Largo' from Dvorak's 'Symphony No. 9 (From the New World)'. Whether all this is essential? Absolutely. But there is probably more. So much more, but for now, 'The Essential Gary Lucas' belongs at the heart of every living music collection.

I spoke to Gary in New York City during lockdown, he was not yet vaccinated but was brimming with musical energy. There, in his apartment in West Village NYC, he puts on a live-streamed performance three times a week on his Facebook page with music, stories and anecdotes under the title 'A Journal of The Plague Years'. Every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday at 3pm EST, Gary plays some of his favorite performances solo acoustically with the support of his followers, who contribute to his PayPal tip jar.

Let's start with your online shows. When I look at it, an interview seems unnecessary. Your entire career is featured in stories and anecdotes.

"Not everything, but I do tell some stories there. But I'm sure you have some interesting questions."

Let's start with the album title: Gary Lucas 'The Essential'. After such a long career, I find it rather difficult to find out who or what the essential Gary Lucas is. A better and perhaps more appropriate title would be, I think: A man, His guitar and the world.

"That's good, and I'll keep that in mind for a possible next release. I have released about thirty-five albums so far and there's five or six more in the pipeline, as they say. So who knows, I might use your title for another installment in the series. This title goes back to my childhood and a book I had in my collection: "The Essential Lenny Bruce". Lenny Bruce was a very iconoclastic American comedian, and certainly for his time he was quite outspoken and very controversial in the way he spoke about all kinds of taboo topics. Anyway, I liked the title because it clarified the meaning of, okay, well, this is it, this is the gist of it. So you don't have to buy thirty-five albums. This is Gary Lucas in a nutshell. But also—this collection is essential for you to have in your on life, this is important to listen to. My original title was 'Find it, Amigo'. That was a running gag in my band. Very early in my career in the Netherland my band Gods and Monsters invited to play at the TegenTonen festival in Paradiso. My drummer went back to America afterwards, while I stayed in Amsterdam for a few days - I love Holland. When he arrived at the JFK airport, the police came over with a dope-sniffing dog named Amigo, who was quite famous actually. They used Amigo to try and find traces of marijuana in the clothes of people who came in from the Netherlands. Jonathan, my drummer, said they didn't find anything but that the dog's handler kept sending the animal at him and kept saying, 'Find it, Amigo—Find it!'. We laughed our asses off about that and said it would be a really good tittle for an album—}Find it, Amigo". But then you have to tell the story over and over and I haven't smoked marijuana for ten, fifteen years, so I got rid of it. I did have a few other titles. But the Knitting Factory (record label-CCE) wanted to keep it simple. Regardless, I hope it works. And if it doesn't work, I have at least tried."

As a musician and guitarist, you have worked with countless people, but still your name is mainly linked to Captain Beefheart firstly, and Jeff Buckley secondly. Both are important, but there is so much more.

"I know. Unfortunately, these people you mention are still much more famous than I am in the world of music. I live in the shadow of the dead. My tombstone will read something like 'Gary Lucas, ex-Captain Beefheart', or maybe also 'ex-Jeff Buckley". I laugh about it. God knows I have tried my best to change the ongoing situation, but I am going to keep playing their music regardless as part of my repertoire. People love it, the music, and the stories about working with these guys. Myself too. In fact, I think the music I wrote for Jeff might be among my best songs: " Grace" and "Mojo Pin." I am really proud of those songs. And by working with Beefheart I honed my technical skills on the guitar. His insane music forced me to work really hard, really forced me to expand my reach, technically speaking, as a guitarist. You do what you do. I worked with him for five years, did a few albums, toured, and was his manager for a while - his idea. So, yes, I was closely involved with the man.

"There is probably a lot to say about your collaboration with Don Van Vliet aka Captain Beefheart, but let's talk about Jeff Buckley. You where from a different generation, that of his father Tim Buckley. How did you find each other?

"I met him when a friend of mine, producer Hal Willner, who passed away last year, organized a tribute to Tim Buckley with a number of artists in a church in Brooklyn. The event was called 'Greetings from Tim Buckley.'

Hal wanted me to participate and said Tim's son Jeff would be there too. I said: I didn't know he had a son. And he replied, 'Well, neither did we.. But he's contacts us and signed up and wants to do it. And if you ask me, I think you two could work well together.' So it might just have been Jeff's idea to work with me when he saw my name on the roster of people on the gig, because when I met him he said how much he loved my music, my guitar playing, my work with Beefheart. He was really excited. Well I am basically fairly easy-going. In my years of experience I have found that working with people is one of the best things I can do as a musician, to open up and trying to make music with anyone regardless of age, nationality, religious orientation or whatever, I don't care I think this model is worth pursuing because it is a way of achieving a

common ground of mutual understanding, which is so difficult these days with all those nationalist movements and what's going on politically in the world.

Music is a greatest force going to break down barriers. I don't care how old people are, what experience they come to the table with, but I try to meet them halfway always. So that's how Jeff and I got together. He approached me immediately after a rehearsal with the vocalist I worked with at the time in Gods and Monsters. And to be honest, it won't go very well with her. We had a contract with Columbia Records and we argued over the name. She didn't like Gods and Monsters. She thought that name was sexist. I was like, so shall we call it Goddesses and Monsters? What a joke. We were just bickering about stupid things. And then Jeff showed up and he said, 'I love your guitar playing. But not only that, I love the name Gods and Monsters.' He came over and jammed and then I took him out for lunch. And at that point I thought to myself, I really don't want to be stuck with my female singer in this project. Musically it's not sounding so good. She fights with me about everything. And Jeff loves the name. And not only that. We asked each other which groups we liked, what the other's favorites were. That's what musicians often do when they get together to find common ground. And Jeff said: Led Zeppelin, The Doors, and The Smiths. So I was like, I love those groups, man. We agreed on that! So okay, let's do a band together. I have a contact with Columbia as :Gods and Monsters. How would you like to be the singer of that? And he said, Oh, that's great. That's how it worked. Because I thought to myself - I was thirty-six, thirty-Seven at the time - I need a young male singer, a Jim Morrison, Robert Plant, or Morrissey, whom Jeff adored--and then Jeff just walked in. So that's how he came into my life and he was excited about what I was doing, at least during the first year. Jeff was in the band as a singer for about a year and he did some live shows with me. We recorded two demos in the studio and wrote twelve songs together. When he quit I was not happy about that, to say the least. I was pretty sad and not just because it was so good for me musically and otherwise. He got his big solo deal with Sony, quite a lot of money. They liked him, but one they got into the dll with them they noticed that he mainly did covers live, at Sin-é and all those other places. Somebody at Columbia woke up and said, 'Hey, didn't Gary Lucas write some songs with Jeff? They found the demos I'd done with him and they got excited. So I got a call from Jeff out of the blue one day after a year's absence when he'd stopped talking to me, which I was fairly annoyed about. But he said: 'Do you remember those great songs that we used to play? I want to record them with you.' And I was like, Okay. I was open to recording them with him."

Gods and Monsters

"I started Gods and Monsters in 1989 and it was entirely instrumental, two bassists, a drummer and me. The song, 'King Strong', which ends 'The Essential Gary Lucas' first CD, is a good example of our sound back then. It's a kind of wild, fierce jazz rock, very aggressive, bluesy. Then I got a strong desire to start writing songs. I didn't want to limit Gods and Monsters to just instrumentals. But I had never written a song at the time. I was also very shy in a way and used to psych myself out, like, 'everyone can write a song better than I can'. And I knew some really good songwriters. But that was just performance anxiety. One day I took the bull by the horns and told myself I was going to write a song. I had an idea, wrote some lyrics, and I composed a very spectral and dark acoustic piece on the guitar. I combined that with my lyrics and voila! I had my first number. It's called 'Poison Tree' and it is sung on my album by Mary Margaret O'Hara, an amazing weird and witchy Canadian singer, who is not so well known these days unfortunately. She had great success early on with an album called 'Miss America', but then became something of a hermit. Anyway, that's how I got into songwriting. When the tracking session for the song was finished, I thought: I can do this. I mean, you can't do anything unless you try, that's so true. So I was just waiting for my shell to crack—and once it did, I thought, Okay, Okay. And I just kept making music. I look around now and am surrounded by thirty-five albums. I think most of them are pretty damn good and I'm quite proud of them."

We talked about the difference in generations and you said you don't care how old or young someone is.

"I think the gap between generations is mainly something inherent in Western culture. In other cultures I know that is much less common. There is a word for this-- ageism. People can be 'ageists', as they can be

sexist. When the COVID pandemic started, someone said to me that young people, millennials, called it the boomer remover. I am a baby boomer. I am from the post- WWII generation and born in the 1950s. I was really angry hearing this. I'm sure I could find common ground with a lot of young people if they got the chance to hear my music. I think they would enjoy it a lot, even if it doesn't sound like the latest hits or anything. I have never been concerned with connecting with the musical trend of the day. I just tried to be true to myself, to my own influences, and to try composing things that moved me personally.

What are your influences? What were important albums to you?

"Well, that's a long list. Co de Kloet interviewed me a while ago and asked me to list my ten favorite albums. I know a lot of people don't rate this group, but The Incredible String Band made in 1967 the 'Sgt. Pepper' of English folk music entitled 'The 5000 Spirits' and subtitled 'or the Layers of the Onion'. They are two guys (Robin Williamson and Mike Heron - CCE) from Scotland. It is incredibly well put together music--melodic and creative, joyful and mystical. Some people dismiss them as old hippies. I don't hear that. I think they were on another level entirely. They were with Elektra, my all-time favorite label. That was lays my number one album. I would also cite some early Rolling Stones albums. They are kind of my favorite rock group of all time. I like the older stuff like 'Aftermath' the most, before Brian Jones left. I think he added a lot. And no matter how good they stayed and they stayed very well indeed, part of the magic was lost for me when he left. I saw the band with Brian Jones live when I was a boy. So maybe there is nostalgic appeal there. On the jazz front, I was always awed by Charles Mingus. He had a record, 'The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady', which sounds so dark and passionate and eloquent, there is pain and joy in every note, he could make his instrumentalists evoke spirits. The way his musicians are speaking through their instruments is simply thrilling. As for the blues, because everything I do has a touch of blues, even my Chinese music or my arrangements of Janáček or Dvorak or Wagner, I like Skip James (American Delta blues singer, guitarist, pianist and songwriter-CCE). He is my favorite of all of the country blues artists, especially the album 'Skip James Today'. His keening upper register is like hearing a ghost sing, it's the most haunting voice I know. It's transcendental and mysterious and wonderful. Let's see, I love early Van Morrison. I am not very happy with his recent statements about the pandemic though, I believe he is wrong there. But his 'Astral Weeks' album is really one of the best albums of all time, so poetic and beautiful. He is incredibly real in his singing, he turns himself inside out. And of course, Van's album 'Moondance'. He just made good music. Beefheart is still a big influence. In addition to a few specific tribute projects, which I enjoyed doing, I had a group, Fast 'N' Bulbous, playing free jazz versions of Beefheart without a vocalist. And then there was the Magic Band, whom I played with in the Paradiso. There were a few Beefheart alumni in that project. I love 'Lick My Decalls Off, Baby', the most avant-garde of all of the Beefheart albums. That would really be my favorite. Immediately after 'Trout Mask Replica'. Lots of female performers. Laura Nyro especially. She had a record entitled "Eli and the Thirteenth Confession" in the summer of 1968. I found that so exciting. She was only seventeen or eighteen, and she had a whole universe of beautiful songs and characters and a great voice, very passionate and a unique way of playing the piano. Unfortunately, she is more known for the people who covered her songs, such as Barbara Streisand, The Fifth Dimension, and Three Dog Night. They had hits with many of her songs, But she was fabulous in her own right. She died way too young. Who else? I like Fela Kuti. The inventor of Afrobeat. He had so many strong musical statements, very political, over a strong rhythmic drive from his group Africa 70. There was a song, "Sorrow Tears of Blood," from 1977 that described the invasion of his living compound in Lagos. He broke away from the Nigerian government and founded a compound and declared it an independent state, the Kalakuta Republic. After that, they sent in the army and they destroyed and raped the women who sang with him and threw his mother down the stairs murdering her, she was one of Africa's original spiritual feminist leaders. Fela Kuti was one of the the most fearless musicians of all time along with Bob Marley. And so I could go on for a long time."

As I said before: A man, his guitar and the world.

"Ha. That's right. I see the world as ready for beautiful sounds. And I am always open to hear everything. But not to consciously analyze what's going on and try to see if I can fix it. I like to write unconsciously. My whole method is basically picking up the guitar, running my fingers randomly across the strings until I hear

some magical notes. And if I like it, I'll grab a little tape recorder and record that bit, so as not to forget it. After collecting enough of these modules it sometimes leads me to make songs."

DARK and LIGHT

This morning I listened to your 'Bohemian Classics'. You didn't mention a single classical album before, but classical music was also part of your musical life.

"Yes and there are favorite classical albums. There's the Stravinsky recording with himself conducting of "L'histoire du Soldat", which as music is one of my favorites. It's just incredible. I love his earlier period. Stravinsky's "Petrouchka", "Rite of Spring", "Symphony of Winds", "Pulcinella", which tends towards neoclassicism. I like Debussy's Preludes, and Chopin's Mazurkas. I am really a big fan of classical pianists. I have a wall of classical records, many operas too. I like to listen to Schönberg, all of the experimental composers such as Berg, Webern, Ives, Varèse, electronic composers like Takemitsu, Pierre Henry, Stockhausen, many others. At the same time that I had my first guitar lesson I began to study the French horn. Due to the band conductor at my elementary school making my class take a test to measure your sense of tone, rhythm and harmony. And I had a perfect score. So he assigned me the French horn to master and play in the school band, which was kind of absurd because playing the horn isn't that easy, you have to be able to keep the pitch steady with a good embouchure and I don't have much of an upper lip. So it was like, how do you expect a kid to do that? I tried, but I immediately knew I wouldn't get very far in there. But I enjoyed playing and stayed with the band. After a while they gave me the baritone horn and then they moved me back to the French horn. I stuck with it. I played in a number of school orchestras as well. So I have a classical background, that's for sure."

In 1973 the Yale Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Maestro John Mauceri, traveled to Vienna, for the European premiere of Leonard Bernstein's 'MASS', previously commissioned for the opening of the Kennedy Center in 1971. The work is based on the Tridentine Mass of the Roman Catholic Church, but Bernstein opted for a more "innovative" form. Although the liturgical passages are sung in Latin, the Mass also contains additional texts in English written by Bernstein himself, Broadway composer Stephen Schwartz and Paul Simon. (Source: Wikipedia).

As a young solo guitarist, you were involved in one of the first performances of the legendary, may we say, 'MASS' by Leonard Bernstein.

"Yes. I played lead guitar in the European premiere of Bernstein's 'MASS' in Vienna in the spring of 1973. And then I became friends a few years later with an Austrian journalist and producer, Klaus Totzler, who was the head of the music department for ORF. I told him about this premiere. He searched the ORF archive, found the 1973 video material, and made a DVD for me of the television broadcast at the time. It was quite a tumultuous event. Austria is such a super Catholic country and then there's a Jewish person like Leonard Bernstein, who was a hero to many Austrians and very famous, who made an adaptation of the Catholic Mass and mixed it with rock elements, and things like 'Hair' and 'Godspell'. I think it's a very beautiful piece. I am a huge fan. There are great melodies in it. Some parts give me goosebumps when I hear them. But the MASS came under attack, and I think some seventy-three Catholic bishops wrote a letter of protest about the broadcast. Klaus made a copy for me before the tape could fall apart. Bernstein himself never authorized this version to come out on a DVD, despite a lot of money being invested in recording and filming it at the time. Officially I'm in it. You can clearly hear me on the soundtrack, in fact the piece opens with this big shimmering guitar chord—Kerranggg! That's me. But you don't actually see much more than my pants in it. I'm off to the side on the stage where the other rock musician were situated. I was wearing a hand-made suit with a floral print. In those days I was quite a dandy. I liked psychedelic attire, some kind of unusual rock outfits with platform shoes. It's funny—when you see the show, the hippies are protesters. It's a really good attempt by Lennie (Bernstein - CCE) to try to reflect the fear going on in the world. And people want answers. The priest who is the protagonist cannot really live up to his noble ideals and has a breakdown on stage. But then he comes back and at the end everyone is united. The piece has a compelling message of unity and peace. The ending actually brought tears to my

eyes. You know what? Bernstein gave me my first major compliment. I met him after the premiere. He had a suite at the Sacher Hotel at the time and there was a party at the US Ambassador's residence after the show. I went into the garden to meet him and shake his hand. He asked me what I played in the show and I said I played the electric guitar and he said, "Man, you were really wailing!", I thought, that's the best thing I've ever heard. That's what I try to do with the guitar too. You don't necessarily have to be a classically skilled musician to play an instrument. But if you make or interpret music yourself, you should try to make it sound as human as possible. I also think that's the essence of blues. That's the "blue note", a microtonal friction between a white note on a piano and a black key, the space in between. That's where the voice on God lives to me, or the Holy Ghost. I can't rally describe it, but that's what I try to go for when I play guitar. In my solos I try to go to those infinitesimal places, and make my guitar sound like a voice that sings in ecstasy, or a voice that howls with anger. That's the beauty with guitars, you have a little miniature orchestra under your fingers"

You seem to be attracted to the dark of the night in the context of your music. I mention 'The Golem', Spanish 'Dracula', the song 'Judgment at Midnight' on the album 'Gary Lucas vs The Dark Poets: Beyond the Pale'. What is your connection to the stories of the night, musically speaking?

"I have been interested in it all my life. Not that I'm an ardent devotee of the occult. But in my own life, I have had some supernatural experiences that cannot be explained scientifically or rationally on points. So yes, what you say is correct. It's also a fundamental thing in my own life. I am a book-devouring reader. I also much rather read a book at the moment than listen to an album or something. And for years my favorite author was Isaac Bashevis Singer, who won the Nobel Prize. He is less read today, but he wrote about fifty books and is an esteemed Jewish writer. He believed in the supernatural. So I think, yes, there is a hidden agency. And again I have had some experiences in that area. Both with Beefheart and afterwards, on my own. I can tell you about that, but then it will take hours. My only conclusion is that there are a number of forces at work that infuse the world and cannot be dismissed by, say, a theory of quantum mechanical cause and effect. You know there is something else going on. Getting back to those nocturnal subjects, I have always been drawn to horror movies since I was a little boy. Not the movies of today, I can't stand them. I am a classicist in my aesthetic. And my favorites are the early silent films and then sound films doing with horror and science fiction up to about 1977. The films of today with their profusion of atrocities and ripped eyeballs and the blood splashing from the screen are not my thing. I just think they are disgusting. I like the power of the suggestion, and that you don't show explicit atrocities in it. Long story short, from my interest in horror movies it was a short step into the occult and literature that drew on it, like some of the early pulp science fiction and horror writers. Anyway when I started playing seriously under my own name in 1988 in the Knitting Factory in New York as an experiment. I thought it was going to be a disaster. They left my name out of the ad in the newspaper. It was a Tuesday evening. I didn't expect anyone to show up. But who I arrived to play there was a line right around the the block. I got several encores and they handed me 600 bucks off the door. That's how I found out that I could move a large group of people, just by playing solo. The following year I was given some commissions and one of them was to come up with a project that would combine my music with another art form. I chose to create a live score for a silent film. Which was quite a unique idea at the time. I mean, there were a few folk doing it, like Carmine Coppola's soundtrack to the 1927 film about Napoleon's early years, produced and directed by Abel Gance, "Napoléon vu par Abel Gance." But I was one of the first in New York to do this and it was successful, I'm still working with that film, 'The Golem' (German expressionist film from 1920 - CCE). I must have played it about twenty times in The Netherlands. I still love it. Last March, I had another performance with 'The Golem' up at Cornell University. Yes, I like the night. But also like a sunny day. Unlike Beefheart. He hated sunlight, remarkably for a man who lived in The Mojave Desert. He liked to stay up all night and sometimes sketch for several days in a row. He was a force of nature."

Gary Lucas played live in Holland at the end of October 2020 with permission from the Dutch government at the "So What's Next? Festival" in Eindhoven on Halloween—a live solo score to George Melford's classic Spanish 'racula' film from 1931. The show was streamed live on social media from the Eindhoven Muziekgebouw.

You were recently in the Netherlands.

"Yes the festival in Eindhoven. It was arranged. I asked the organizer to give me a letter to show at the border, so that immigration would allow me in. I had everything with me and a negative COVID test. But when I arrived at KLM at JFK, they asked why I was flying to the Netherlands. I showed them all my documents and they said I couldn't fly because I had no essential job. I said I was going to play at a festival, that's what I do for a living, and that the Dutch government was one of the festival's sponsors. They wouldn't listen and tried to get me to turn around and go home.! And I said, no, no, no. I called the organizer, I woke her up in Eindhoven. She was really upset. Finally a KLM agent said, Okay, we are going to email Dutch immigration. Just stay where you are. So I called my wife and said I would probably be coming back home. Then the guy returned: Okay, we just heard from the Dutch immigration that you can board. But even at the Dutch border in Amsterdam, the customs guy there said: What are you doing here? Like you are an American, you can't enter the country. I said I had permission from Dutch immigration. I showed them a photo I took on my cell phone of the email they'd sent to the agent at JFK. What a cock-up! Once I was inside, I mainly rehearsed in Maastricht, where not many people wore masks.

The lockdown is tough, isn't it?

"Man, I can't wait to get back on the road and get back to work. That is my joy. For example, when I was in The Netherlands I made a great record with a Dutch bass player, a young guy from Maastricht named Peter Willems, who sings and plays acoustic bass. He will finish the vocals soon I hope. And there was a programmer from the North Sea Jazz Festival who saw the show and loved it and said they would love to book us for the next one. I want to come back to the Netherlands to play. I want to come back and work everywhere.

An unusual question. You are a successful guitarist. You have made a lot of records and yet you are not exactly rich.

"Ha, I'm rich in spirit. You know what the music world is like today. With the advent of digitization, the internet and Spotify, revenues have been so minimized. Because the royalty rates that are paid are minuscule compared to what was common then. The 'Grace' album came out at a time in 1994 where if you had a song on an album like 'Grace', the rate was four cents for every copy of that album sold-- two for Jeff and two for me. More than a million copies of that album were sold (two million- CCE). Unfortunately in the 90's I was running out of dough, having quit my day-job in 1990 to devote myself to music full-time. And I made a highly disadvantageous deal with Universal Music that for a relative pittance of an advance they would manage the copyrights and co-publish my two songs on that album and take 50 percent of my share of those songs forever. It's been almost 28, 30 years now since the record came out. and the royalties twice a year are sadly diminished from what they once paid out. But I needed the advance money from Universal to cover my operating costs in New York at the time, so I took the deal. Now almost no one buys albums anymore and now everything is more or less available for free on Spotify. And yes, there are a few artists who still score now and then with royalty payouts. But even those rap artists currently streaming millions, when you look at the payouts, it's a joke, thanks to writer-unfriendly deals the labels made with the streaming services. You can have a song with millions of streams and in the end the amount paid out is only around twenty thousand, where it used to be maybe a quarter of a million dollars. That's what happened. In addition, I didn't go try and write commercial music per se. It's not that I don't like some of it because I am a fan of a lot of classic rock, but I wanted to do music my way. I wanted to make something that bore my mark, which is a bit experimental and quirky. I am coming out of avant-garde rock, let's face it. And 'Grace' and 'Mojo Pin' are not typical pop songs—but they are rock anthems that live on in people's hearts. And there but for the Grace of God go I..."