



By [John McGlasson](#)

About a year ago, a writer from a guitar magazine that had reviewed a couple of our releases contacted me about releasing an album from one of his favorite guitarists, John Blakeley. I'd never heard the name before, so I told the guy to send me a copy, which he did. I was mesmerized! The tones, the style, the class, the production, it sent me places, and I knew we had one of those rare albums that gives you visions and sends you somewhere else when you listen. The album is called *Tan Mantis*, and was released last Oct. by our label.

Upon learning John's story, that he was a guy nine years into a heart transplant that lasts about ten years, who'd played with so many greats, had an unbelievable career, but now was just trying to record all the material he could, racing the clock, waiting every day for the phone to ring telling him to get to the hospital to get his new heart, or for time to run out, whichever came first, I felt like it was my new mission to get John recognized by the guitar community, while he was still around to enjoy it.

John first rose to fame as the guitarist for the Sandals, pioneering the California guitar sound, a smooth, reverb-soaked style with strong emphasis on tone and technique. He co-wrote and recorded the score for the legendary surf film *The Endless Summer*, played with Stoneground, the Medicine Ball, Van Morrison, Country Joe McDonald, and worked on the scores for many, many films, including *The Exorcist* and *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*, TV shows like *WKRP in Cincinnati* and *That 70's Show*, and much much more.

I know there are a lot of guitarists out there who've made a real contribution to the world of guitar and never get credit, but none are more deserving of it than John. Besides being a man who can get more heart and soul from a single note than most ever could, he's an incredible producer, heading Duncan Street Studios in San Francisco. John's love of old preamps, mics, guitars, and amps, and the art of recording with them, has resulted in a wealth of knowledge that is heard, and felt, throughout *Tan Mantis*. John has spent countless hours on the phone with me, graciously allowing me to pump him for information about tone, engineering, writing, the past, and life in general.

Through this process, I've gotten to know the man, though we're 2000 miles apart, and have never met face-to-face. I made a great friend in John Blakeley, and it's more important to me than ever to make sure I use my ability to reach guitarists to let them know about a guitarist they really need to hear. Money, sales have nothing to do with it, I just want you all to get the same feeling I get when I hear him play.

The best part of this article is that I get to report that John got the phone call a week ago last Sunday. He got his new heart, along with new kidneys. He's doing great, I spoke with him on the phone on the 1st. He can't wait to get back to work making music for his old fans, and especially his new ones. You'll never hear more sincerity from a guitarist. Thanks for reading!

*[John McGlasson](#) is a life-long guitarist, producer, and founder of [o.i.e. Records, Ltd](#) ., a musician-oriented independent record label based in central Illinois.*