



*By John McGlasson - GJD Contributor*

Modern life's crazy for everyone, but for people around my age (41) there's something of an identity crisis happening. I can remember vividly the Vietnam war coverage, the deaths of Hendrix, Morrison, and Joplin, the end of the Beatles, I remember life before remote control, microwave ovens, cell phones, computers, cable TV and video games. There were only 4 channels, and not even all TV shows were filmed in color when I was old enough to notice that fact. I remember when launching the Space Shuttle was a BIG deal. I've now lived in five definitive decades of US history. And the music of my childhood, well, it's pretty much universally recognized as the greatest period of rock/guitar-oriented music from 1967 through 1980. We really did walk to school every day regardless of weather, and school officials weren't near as reluctant to allow us to walk through major blizzards or deadly heat. Snow days were almost unheard of, and heat days weren't heard of. I went to only three schools in my life, a grade school, jr. high, and high school parked right in a row, and was taught largely by semi-sane old ladies with pointy glasses nearing retirement. I had teachers, books and desks that my parents had before me. We could show up on a snowmobile as long as we showed up. I never rode a school bus unless it was a field trip or sporting event. Looking at modern society, I feel lucky to have grown up in simpler, more sincere times, in a small Midwestern US town of 10,000 people, with brick streets and swinging walking bridges across the river.

I see people I went to school with, and some odd things are happening. I see girls my age with old lady hairstyles straight from the salon, and I see girls my age looking the same as they did in high school. One looks forward to aging, one fights it like a war for oil. I know people my age who refuse to own a computer, and people my age who are tech fiends. One clings to the old way of doing things, one embraces the new.

I see the radical medical advances that can probably allow me to live happily beyond 100 years if I live a healthy life, so at 41, how far do I have to go before I run out of energy like my grandfathers did? When I was a kid, a healthy dinner on a weeknight with the family may include fried pork chops, fried potatoes, gravy, and a vegetable. We were encouraged to eat things that today could have our parents charged with child abuse in certain cities! The old "Food Pyramid" we had crammed down our throats by the FDA was a daily recipe for early

death by today's standards! But oddly, there were very few obese kids since we were all so active and were seldom driven anywhere by our parents. We'd routinely ride our bikes 8 miles out to the woods, ride around and jump over stuff all day, and ride home, and we swam morning, noon, and night. Now we eat healthy pretty much 7 days a week, and it's not hard, but I know I'm somewhat unusual in my age group as far as that goes, because most people that I see that are my age are overweight to some degree.

Anyone that hits 40 has to look back and see what they've done and could've done differently or better, and I have good days and bad days in that respect, in that one day I'll think that if I died today, I've done enough to be remembered, then other days I panic like I'm in a drag race against the clock. But lately I've had a new perspective that I hope can help other musicians come to terms with the fact that we're not all Yngwie Malmsteen or Steve Vai, nor are we going to be.

The truth is, we were lucky to have lived in the Days Of the Guitar Hero, because as Frank Marino clearly explained to our own Ken Volpe in part 1 of his Jamcast interview, those days are probably over. I believe for a variety of reasons that there'll never be another new Global Guitar Hero, we'll just continue to worship the old ones, though I'm always looking for someone who's doing something new with the guitar, as I hope we all are! Please listen to the Jamcast with Frank, he explains it a lot better than I can as far as how categories and genres have contributed to making that nearly impossible.

So as I look back at everything, I realize that the fun and excitement is in the planning, the dreaming, and the execution. I remember sitting around with my friends I've played with and remember the excitement we felt that I know would equal the thrill we'd have had had we actually achieved something. Well, almost. The results really mean little, because I know I've usually done the best I could to this point, and I can't change the times I know I didn't. I've had so much happiness and so many days feeling optimism most people never get to feel, because most people don't plan and execute their dreams. And after knowing some successful people in the music biz, I've learned from them that unless you're Steve Vai, there's almost always a level of disappointment once you "get there". I personally know a Top Ten guitar legend who's absolutely miserable, though he's achieved literally everything he ever dreamed of times 100. He doesn't look back fondly, nor does he look forward with optimism. His music will live forever, he'll be hailed as one of the Greats throughout history long after he's gone, but he's miserable. He was happier when he was planning, executing, and achieving his success, not owning it. Now he plays for money, hanging onto the "old" music business, and wonders what to do with the rest of his life.

I've learned that the victory is in the fact that I've lived my life thus far for music, I've had some success, and I've learned that I'm not that far into my career(s) because I'm working to be healthy. I've learned that I'm still happy and optimistic because I'm still planning and executing, and I have a secure feeling in knowing that selling a lot of albums is pretty much out of the question, I'm doing it for myself, my family, my friends, and a loyal fanbase I've been able to build for our label across the globe. I've learned that to make albums for any reason beyond the fact that I love to hear them is pointless, and I've learned that I'm far from running out of energy, as you GJD readers are going to see over the next year. I have some really exciting things in

the works! Thanks for reading!