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Strange Beautiful Music: A Musical Memoir



Synopsis

Go behind the scenes with the musician The New York Times called "a guitar God!" • Oft-hailed as the Jimi Hendrix of his generation, living guitar legend Joe Satriani has long transcended stylistic boundaries with a sound that raises the bar like a new horizon for the broader genre of instrumental guitar rock. Joe's 6-string secrets have astounded listeners around the world for nearly 30 years. In *Strange Beautiful Music: A Musical Memoir*, Satriani and coauthor, music biographer Jake Brown, take fans on their first authorized tour of the story behind his climb to stardom and the creative odyssey involved in writing and recording a storied catalog of classics including "Surfing with the Alien," "Summer Song," "Satch Boogie," "Always With Me, Always With You," "The Extremist," "Flying in a Blue Dream," "Crowd Chant," and more. Featuring previously unpublished photos and hours of exclusive, firsthand interviews with Satriani, *Strange Beautiful Music* offers a unique look inside the studio with Joe, giving fans a chance to get up close and personal like never before. With insider details about his collaboration with multi-platinum supergroup Chickenfoot, exclusive interviews with Sammy Hagar and Michael Anthony of Van Halen and Chad Smith of the Red Hot Chili Peppers, commentary from fellow guitar legends such as Steve Vai, Metallica's Kirk Hammett, Primus's Larry LaLonde, and legendary music producers including Glynn Johns and the late Andy Johns, this memoir offers a rare inside look for die-hard Satriani fans, guitar enthusiasts, and anyone who loves to rock.

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Customer Reviews

“Joe has refined his own style of playing to a point where he’s forever up there in the stratosphere of excellence that is reached by very few musicians.”
—Brian May
“Every time Joe puts his fingers on a guitar, what comes out sounds like inspired music, even if it’s just a finger exercise. He created and branded a niche with his own voice and in so doing he wielded an entire genre.”
—Steve Vai
“After all the times I had been on stages with Joe, been on the side of stages watching and listening to Joe, and all the times I have been in the audience cheering for Joe, I continue to have no idea how Joe does what he does.”
—Robert Fripp
“Joe Satriani’s my favorite guitar player.”
—Sammy Hagar

For three decades, Joe Satriani, the biggest-selling instrumental rock guitarist in the Soundscan era, has traveled the world, playing to sold-out crowds both as a headliner and as founder of the all-star “G3” guitar extravaganza. His studio and live recordings have sold more than 10 million copies worldwide. Of his 14 solo albums, two have gone platinum and four others went gold, with 15 Grammy nominations between them. In 1988, Mick Jagger invited Joe to perform as lead guitarist on his first solo tour, and in 1994, Joe toured with Deep Purple as their lead guitarist. His side project, Chickenfoot, featuring former Van Halen front man Sammy Hagar and former bassist Michael Anthony, and Red Hot Chili Peppers drummer Chad Smith, saw their debut album certified gold. Award-winning music biographer Jake Brown has written 35 published books in his decade-long career, featuring many authorized collaborations with some of rock’s biggest artists. In 2012, Brown won the Association for Recorded Sound Collections Awards in the category of Excellence in Historical Recorded Sound Research.

The term “memoir” is a bit misleading. Other than the first few chapters which cover his life before recording (which I found to be the most interesting part of the book) the book is more of a studio log book than biography. If you love the minutiae of what microphone was plugged into which preamp etc., then you will love this book. I’m a total gear head, but the book was closer to reading a catalog than a story. I would say that unless you are a complete Satriani nut, this is not the book to read.

If you’re a Joe Satriani fan, this is a must read. Joe tells his story from his unique perspective, from how he decided to be a guitarist, to how he recorded his first record and how it’s review in guitar player magazine gave him a glimpse of the guitarist he could be, an identity he embraced and sought to fulfill since that time. He describes what his approach was to every album, and other individuals add to the narrative, like Steve Vai, and (recording engineers) John Cuniberti, Andy

Johns, and Glyn Johns, throughout the story. It's interesting to learn how each album was recorded, and make going back to purchase and listen to any albums you may have missed along the way, a very intriguing and satisfying possibility. The self-titled Joe Satriani, for instance, was recorded by Glyn Johns, with Joe playing straight through an amp, the only recording of his to be done this way. That was one album I'd passed by over the years, and going back and listening to it, knowing there were no overdubs, no punch-ins, no effects, etc. gave me an even greater appreciation of Joe's technical prowess on the guitar, if that were possible. If you like Joe Satriani's music, it's certainly worth hearing Joe tell his story...

I've been a fan of Satriani since before I knew who he was. I heard his song, "Hordes of Lucusts", at a concert before the featured bands came out and thought it was amazing. This was sometime back in the 80s. Then, "Surfing with the Alien" came out and his back catalog was easier to find and I discovered the HE was the one who did "Hordes of Lucusts." Backstory complete. I'm a guitar player and a bit of a musical equipment gear-head as well, so I can follow along with most of his references to what equipment and techniques he used in the studio. I found it to be insightful and it gave me a deeper appreciation for the music he makes. His albums (showing my age) are done as chapters, so if there is a favorite disc, you can go straight to that chapter and read about how he made it. I had no idea he was such a driven taskmaster with lessons and studio work. He seems so mellow. Ha! There are "guest speakers" peppered throughout as witnesses to the studio work, stage shows and guitar lessons. They all offer their perspective and admiration of Joe's drive and enthusiasm. No haters here - it's a love fest. As it should be; it's HIS book. My only complaint: the pictures were small and you cannot resize them (Kindle version). Most ended too small to really see anything worthwhile. Most of them are just of long-haired dudes sitting around anyway! Ha! I found it to be a fun and interesting read about Joe's career. Worth buying if you are a musician and a fan. If you're a fan, but don't play an instrument or run a studio, you'll probably find yourself flipping past the studio equipment references. Worth the price of admission!

A must for any Satch fan. He breaks down how he started off as a musician along with the struggles he went through to create each of his Cds. It also goes over his ideas and methods for recording each album. The book is a little unique because it has Joe's version of events written by him and then it will include excerpts from other musicians, producers, managers, etc. version of the same events or period of time written by them, so it gives different perspectives on each topic. The excerpts include Steve Vai, Stu Hamm, Jeff Campitelli, etc. The book covers a lot of technical

aspects of playing and recording, but does not get too technical, so it is still enjoyable to read even if you don't understand the technical aspects. If you love his music, you will love the book. I

I was a HUGE fan of Satriani during the 80s. I pretty much stopped buying his music with his TIME MACHINE release. The albums after that just didn't appeal to me. I was more of a fan of his upbeat stuff... songs like SUMMER SONG, FLYING IN A BLUE DREAM, SATCH BOOGIE... and what I think is a masterpiece: BACK TO SHALLA BAL. But as far as I can tell... he pretty much abandoned doing pieces like those... so I stopped buying. I even loved his singing... so my favorite Satch release is still FLYING IN A BLUE DREAM. The title track is still awesome to me all these years later and I really like all the vocal songs. So... back to this book... I really loved reading about his days up to Time Machine. Everything after that I didn't find interesting. He has so many albums, I think even he had trouble assigning interesting anecdotes to individualize many of the later ones. I will probably sit down one night, and listen to all of them on iTunes or MP3... and maybe buy a few if I like them. One thing that was neat was there was a section detailing what gear he used for the different albums. This was awesome. I knew I heard some Rockman on those early albums! I still recommend getting this book... I bought it on my Kindle, and will probably re-read it if I buy some of the later albums. Think of it as 'super long' liner notes. There's not much personal stuff... it pretty much sticks to the music. I for one would like to hear some of that Squares stuff!

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