

OFFICIAL CRAIG CHAQUICO FAN CLUB



Gathering of the Tribes

Spring 2004



Hey Everybody!

Things have been really hectic lately with me and the guys getting things wrapped up with the new CD which should be released sometime in the fall and working out some new things for the live show this year. (See Lil's interview with me in this issue for the latest scoop on this!)

We're all having a blast working on this new project and I truly believe you'll all really enjoy it; you have all been such an inspiration in this process. From some great song titles that will end up on the CD, to ideas we got playing live on the spur of the moment in front of you that have ended up on the CD in musical form too. If it wasn't for you all we wouldn't be here right now!

We wrote a new song at our sold-out Yoshi's concerts this past weekend! There was something about being able to play one of the premier jazz clubs in the country in our own bay area "backyard" with friends, family, and fans all around us that were a true inspiration!

Plus the fact that there are so many photos that grace the walls of the club of amazing jazz artists who have graced the same stage and dressing rooms of the club over the years that we were humbled and also grateful for the honor and privilege of performing there!

So one of the nights after the concert we enjoyed the moon and planets above the historic waters around Jack London Square and watched the city lights dancing off the waves that lapped and chuckled in between all the boats swaying and creaking along the docks and piers, the wind whispering to the sails that flapped in agreement that this was still a special night in the warm evening breeze and the salt air, we could still feel the excitement of the evening and the great vibes that carried over from all the fans that took the time to come out and see us play, that we still felt like playing, so we strolled back to the club and began a new song! It was so new that we didn't even have a name for it yet when we played it for the first time the next two nights in front of an unsuspecting audience.

Maybe it was the photos of the remarkable musicians who have played there before, but something was mentioned about the magic that happens at night among musicians after playing a concert and maybe getting together for an impromptu jam session on the same stage with the doors locked and the empty seats and tables, with a few candles on them and the stage lights dimmed. There is an expression that 12 Midnight is Jazz Noon and after we mentioned that to the audience that just may be the actual title of this new song on the next CD!

This has been such a great project to work on though things got a little delayed because of my hand and wrist nerve injury, but I'm back 100% and raring to go to finish up the new material and get back out on the road. If you check out the tour page on my site, it will have the latest updates on my summer shows. As you can see, things are starting to get busy and rest assured I will hit as many cities as I possibly can, though sometimes it may be difficult to get to some that are very close to you.

I hope you will consider going to a show that's as near to you as possible! We also had an idea that we should ask the fan club what songs they might like to hear in concert this year and also where they might like to come and see us play? If you have any favorite places in your area you can maybe check with them and see if they have any plans for our kind of music this year? It would be kind of cool to know that we are playing places the fans wanted us to play! BBQs and pool parties are not out of the question...ha ha! JUST KIDDING! (That is, unless it's at Lil's or at a band member's house.)

I'm really excited for you all to hear the CD; I have been using all my guitars on this one! There is more info on all this in the answer to a fan question this time so check out the mail bag section of the newsletter ok.

Besides the most recent shows at Yoshi's in Oakland, CA, we had a lot of fans turn out for my first full show down in Reno last month at John Ascuaga's Nugget. Thanks to everyone who attended, for making it a sold out performance in advance! Did you see the pictures I posted on the website from the event? It was a total blast, and the guys & I had such a great time doing the show for everyone.

This year marks the third anniversary of the creation of the club. Wow how time flies when you're having fun! The band and I really want to thank each and every one of you for your continued support and enthusiasm, especially during my down time with my injury and all. Your kind words and get well wishes meant a great deal to me and I know they were instrumental (no pun intended) in helping me get better more quickly. We're hoping to have some fun fan club meet and greets coming up this year, so stay tuned for updates on what we'll be doing with them this year. As always, we love to hear your feedback, questions and comments, so please make sure you send them in, rest assured Lil does pass everything on to me so she keeps me very much in the loop on everything.

Craig

CRAIG'S MAILBAG



"Craig, what was the transition like moving from rock and roll to the smooth jazz genre?" Janis Mayer

****Hi Janis!

The whole transition process was a pleasant surprise! I actually was working on a more hard rockin project with Mike Clink (great recording engineer for Jefferson Starship among other big rock acts, and later award winning producer for Guns n' Roses, White Snake, etc.) so needless to say I had been thinking to go more rock and loud electric guitars with big vocals at first! However, the musical climate was changing there in 1990 to more of a grunge vibe and my wife Kimberly, also became pregnant with our son, Kyle! (Funny how that happens when yer home a lot and not on tour – "what do ya wanna do tonight, honey? Not that AGAIN?") Anyway, besides the fading desire to listen to and labels to sign more hard rock bands, needless to say, and because we were newly expecting parents, the acoustic guitar became a lot more welcome around the house than the loud electric guitar at that time. Little did I know that a pregnancy was actually the start of my musical transition and the start of a few other transitions too.

At this same time, my co-writer and co-producer and keyboardist on all my solo stuff, Ozzie Ahlers, was working with me a bit with the rock band, but also doing his own award winning music and movie scores at a well known studio in San Francisco, CA. I had always admired his work with Jerry Garcia, Clarence Clemmons, Van Morrison and Jess Collin Young and always wanted to be in a band with him. He first invited me to do a recording session w/him that originally had Joe Satriani slated to record the guitar parts, but Joe's schedule conflicted and Ozzie invited me to record the guitar instead for this new film he was doing.

So, I always like to think of Ozzie as being my first choice in keyboard players and I was actually his second choice in guitar players here. Thanks to Ozzie and Joe, I ended up doing the guitar parts for one of the greatest movies of all time. Yes, I did guitar parts for the GUMBY MOVIE and when you see GUMBY rockin out with POKEY and all at big clay animated outdoor concert, that's really yer friendly neighborhood guitar man, MEEE! As Eddie Murphy would say on old Saturday Night Live years ago, "I'm GUMBY, dam-bit"

At the recording sessions Ozzie and I began to talk about the idea of recording some instrumental songs at my home studio with the acoustic guitar being the main instrument rather than the electric guitar, at least while my wife was pregnant anyway. I mentioned I had written a few songs already around the house to play for Kimberly and the yet unborn Kyle still in the womb. Ozzie had some instrumental ideas too, so we made an instrumental CD and called it Acoustic Highway. Grace Slick heard it and said that in the Starship the guitar player had to wait for the singer to tell most of the story with lyrics first, and then the guitar player had to wait to get a few bars in the middle of the song to tell part of the story in the language of music and maybe at the end of the song I'd start playing again only to be faded out when the guitar playing started to get really good.

Grace pointed out that my CD had the guitarist telling the whole story from beginning, middle to end w/out a singer at all; I told her we should do a song someday where the singer gets a few bars in the middle of the song and maybe at the end and then we would fade-out the singer when they started to get really good! On the title acoustic highway, we were at a neighborhood Christmas party and began talking to people about starting a new musical direction and a new member of the family. The conversation went back and forth between family time and work obligations that we all are challenged with at one point, Grace asked me if we had picked out a name yet and I thought she meant for the new CD, but she meant for the new baby so I said, "Yeah, we're gonna call it Acoustic Highway." This conversation went on for a while till we realized we were talking about two different things, kinda like "who's on first?"

Otherwise, the transition went well creatively but we weren't really sure if we would ever release a CD of this stuff except to our friends since coming from full-on bands w/vocals and all this was such new and untested waters for us. A friend who was working with a lot of labels heard it though and thought it might sell, but several labels still weren't sure about how to categorize the CD we had made either, so we were passed on at first by a lot of them. That is until Higher Octave signed us. When the CD came out it became the #1 CD in Billboard of the whole year of 1993 on the Adult Alternative Independent Label chart and many of the songs were played on the radio and on TV before other band's concerts and sporting events. Nobody was more surprised than us...except maybe all the labels that had passed on us.

The next CD went to #1 the first week it was released above Yanni and was nominated for a Grammy, not to be confused with a Gumby. My webpage has a lot of amazing awards and achievements that I sure never expected, all because of fans like you who have supported and encouraged this music from the start...THANK YOU SO MUCH! And of course thanks to my wife for getting pregnant, Ozzie, Joe Satriani, Higher Octave Music, and GUMBY. :)

Thanks for the question Janis, hope to see you at a show soon! I'll be the one in the green rubber GUMBY outfit in the hotel lobby. **Craig**



IN STEP WITH CRAIG

I'm sure many of you fans out there know quite a bit about Craig but we thought it would be fun to chat with him about some things you might not know and/or have him talk about things that many of you have often wondered about. So with that said let's get this interview rolling.

1. Hey Craig, how are you doing, is the arm completely healed up?

Completely healed, no more lifting gear for me though! I guess I won't be doing my own stunt work in any movies anymore either!

2. I know it must have been tough to have that down time to heal and I know your fans were worried about you and kept sending prayers and good vibes your way. What was it like to get back on stage again after having taken a few months off, and to have the first performance be at the last place you performed at?

Yeah, it was like the twilight zone when that happened, the last performance was a special guest appearance on an exclusive sold-out yacht cruise in Southern California on my birthday sponsored by a fantastic gourmet restaurant, Spaghetiini's and the premier smooth jazz station in L.A., the WAVE. The next day, I blew my wrist out my hand was starting to get tingly having to move all my own gear around between concerts which believe it or not I usually don't have to do anymore. Why was I doing it this time everybody has asked while looking at me like I'm the biggest dumbsh*t. Well, the appearance was booked without me knowing anything about it and I found out about it at the last minute so rather than cancel, I had to lug my own gear without a roadie. My management at the time never mentioned the show to anybody and I had to cancel all my birthday plans to do it too!

My usual tech and tour manager never was told about it either and was already doing another show for somebody else, so we had to rebook flights and hotels at the last minute and figure out how to get me and my gear from a show at Humphreys in San Diego to Long Beach for the cruise and then up to San Francisco, all without a tech.

Management also didn't hire a replacement tech or tour manager tech for me either, so I was kinda stuck but I figured I'm young, I can still handle this...no problem! WRONG! Right after the concert and on my way to northern California I blew my wrist out lugging the gear at 6 a.m. and lost all the feeling in my right hand! I couldn't even hold a pencil much less write my name or grab a guitar pick or show my ID without dropping it and my tickets etc. it was very humbling and certainly brought my attention to all the people out there who are dealing w/similar injuries like carpal tunnel. My heart goes out to them now in a big way!!!!

Months later after tons of doctors, MRIs, hand therapy, acupuncture, mega vitamins, and thanks to many many kind thoughts and prayers from friends, family, the band and especially my FANS, my hand started to come back. I didn't know it would make it all the way back at first either, so one of the worst parts was having recurring dreams that it was healed and I was happily playing guitar again only to wake up every morning and realize I still had this numb hand I couldn't control!

It bummed me out I couldn't toss the football w/Kyle, play Frisbee, or ride a bike, but we tried to keep a sense of humor and most of the tears shed were from laughing at myself trying to put the fork in my mouth instead of my ear, pouring coffee onto the table and missing the cup by a foot and stuff like that. "I can hear daddy swearing in the shower again and I thing he dropped the shampoo bottle, again."

Guitar came slowly at first but everyday it was a little better so I never gave up hope. As I mentioned in another letter to the fans awhile back, I still can't play fast Segovia passages or complex Beethoven violin pieces, or Miles Davis horn licks, but Ozzie pointed out that I could never do that anyway, so everything is finally back to normal!

But, like you said, the weirdest thing was going back for the first concert since the injury as a guest to play with Dave Koz, David Benoit and the Grammy in the Schools Big Band kids and having it be on the very SAME yacht for the very same radio station! Ozzie joined me this time and we had SOMEBODY ELSE lift the gear, somebody else is the manager now, too.

Seriously it was GREAT to get so many awesome song titles and the interaction between the "tribes" here is a first and is very inspiring to us! Thank you!

3. I know folks can't wait to hear the new album, care to share any inside scoops about the process for recording this album, any inspirations that came along during the writing and recording of it and, how long does it typically take for you to write and record an album?

I like to take a year between records to record along with touring and "time off" with the family and with maybe a wilderness river rafting trek and communing w/nature to recharge my creative batteries. Acoustic Highway took a year but Acoustic Planet only took three months. With technology now, you would think it would go faster but it's like a Pandora's Box of endless possibilities that beg to be explored and that takes time too.

IN-STEP CONT'D.

Question 3 Cont'd.

This CD was different in that there was a six-month delay to heal my hand, and we also wanted to get inspiration from fans and live performances in the midst of recording in the studio. Usually, it's divided into all studios and then all touring, the most fun for me is the touring and playing for live humans instead of computers and blinking lights in the studio. Often times the live interaction influences the way we play too, so we wanted to tap into that energy and bring it into the studio during the recording process of this CD.

So, there have been some concerts interspersed between recording this time to make it more interesting and to seek out new inspirations and go where no man has gone before. Hopefully, it won't be a five year mission (knock on wood no more injuries please) we will mix the CD in Ojai, CA in early June w/William Aura of 3rd Force and it comes out in September 2004!!!

Also, I have a pet goal on this CD, to use EVERY guitar I own on it somewhere plus use every style as a cameo somewhere, some electric guitars, mostly acoustic guitars, slide guitar, nylon string, steel string, six string, 12 string, 10 string, wha-wha pedal, backwards recorded guitar, volume pedal, fuzztone, e-bow, finger tap, slap, hammer-ons, bends, finger pick, flat pick, big guitars, little guitars, etc., etc., etc.

I also have a violin my great-grand father brought over from Portugal on a boat that has been handed down for generations that may be used in the CD and Kyle may play a note or two on his sax that he's been talking lessons on.

We have been having fun sometimes recording session together while 300 miles away between Ozzie in Marin County, CA and me in Ashland OR, and sending the performances over the internet and having them arrive seconds later in the studio ready to play along with. We are also working on this with a fantastic musician, Bill Heller, who lives in New York 3000 miles away from both of us! Talk about a love triangle!

Nothing beats playing live like we do with the band for a lot of this though, but with some of the overdubs, extra spontaneous creative ideas a 4 a.m., and little extra parts to add it's great to get the instant gratification of sending studio quality stuff over the internet when yer miles apart!

4. Any chance that the fan club members might get to hear a sneak preview of some of the new songs?

We are looking into the legalities and copyright issues to sneak some parts of songs on the web for fans only! We really want to do that, kind of like a movie trailer! But I would hate to have somebody steal an idea and release it on a CD before us, like say that guy Gumby for example. Ha ha.

The fan club has already inspired several titles for songs by sending in some GREAT ideas! We will definitely use at least one title from the fan club for a song that fits the mood better than the working title we had been using! We will keep you posted and list the fan's name in the CD credits and the name of the song they contributed, so far the person who sends the most money or buys the most CDs will get their title used...HAHA, JUST KIDDING! Send checks too, JK! Seriously it was GREAT to get so many awesome song titles and the interaction between the "tribes" here is a first and is very inspiring to us! Thank you!

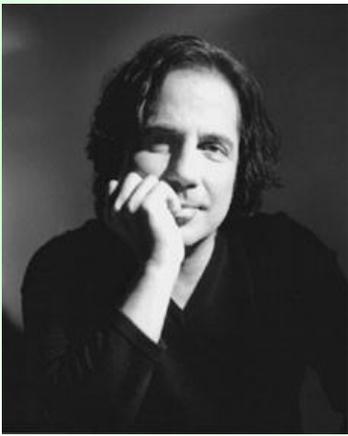
Also, if the fans ever want to send in requests for their favorites songs they would like to see us play live or put on a live CD we would like to hear from them. Same thing goes for any places they would like to see us play, although in that case, they should contact the venue itself or the radio station! Actually that would be great to do a whole tour that the fans help put together by suggesting the actual places we play on parts of it?!

5. Speaking of songs, where do you pull your inspirations from when you write? For instance, I know Luminosa was inspired by a person whose presence seems to illuminate a room and you talk about seeing eagles when you wrote Return of the Eagle. Do you find yourself needing to just separate yourself from everything when the writing process happens or does inspiration strike when you least expect it?

All the above! Like a good book or movie, I think we try and draw from all the feelings and experiences that we all have in common, humor, irony, laughter, sadness, love, romance, passion, mystery, intrigue, suspense, surprise, majestic imagery, inspiring scenery, engaging settings and evocative moods. Maybe just like a smile means the same thing in every language, almost everybody understands the language of music and the feeling in a melody or a song means the same thing too? Maybe it's that breadth of experiences, relationships, emotions and pathos that makes life so interesting and the fact that we can all relate in some way personally to the same kinds of feelings like that is what draws us to a good play, book, poem, movie, or work of art?

Hey I dunno, but don't forget the action scenes and the special FX in the movies that keep us on the edge of our seats! We try and do those too on our CDs and in concert with the way we play and improvise sometimes flying by the seat of our musical pants! It may sound pretty ambitious to be inspired this way and to try and translate all that into a song or CD or live concert, but at least that's what we try and do in the language of music and the way we play and write! Hopefully it works out that way sometimes!





IN-STEP CON'TD.

6. *Whose music do you listen to and like, and if we were to be able to look into your CD player what would we find?*

Led Zeppelin...ha ha, I grew up listening to a lot of rock...still do! Clapton, Hendrix, Santana, Allman Bros., Doobies, Pink Floyd, etc., but my brother's record collection of jazz and my mom and dad's tastes in earlier popular music had a big influence on me growing up too. My life was changed when I was babysitting for my big brother and put on the headphones and listened to Hendrix for the first time...whew.

All the years in Jefferson Starship and Starship was a true learning experience and became my higher education of sorts! With at least 17 musicians who came and went (and sometimes came back again) while I was on board, it was a fertile and diverse musical ground! So many different influences and approaches to songwriting and playing and soloing gave me inspirations and ideas that have stayed with me to this

day! From playing with several generations in the same band from Papa John in his second half of his century to me not even 21 yet, to all the Airplane alumni in between, to two distinct lead singers in the band at the same time w/Marty and Grace and later Mickey, and great instrumentalists and musicians all along the way. We also had the direction & songwriting of singer/guitarist Paul Kantner and the songwriting, singing and playing of another established lead singer & bassist David Frieberg originally from Quicksilver Messenger Service. Add to that the English influence and incredible musicianship and songwriting of Pete Sears originally from Rod Stewart's band and many great sessions, and the English drumming of Aynsley Dunbar who played with Journey, Frank Zappa and White Snake. Along with many other fantastic players that helped us out, we had a pretty interesting evolution always going on it seemed. Combined with some awesome outside songwriters like Bernie Taupin, Dianne Warren and Michael Bolton joining us, as well as world class producers, it all forced me to try and rise to each challenge and occasion! Although many times I was scared to death at a few recording sessions confronting so many different musical styles, it all helped me grow! What doesn't kill ya makes ya stronger!

7. *What do you like to do in your spare time, any favorite sports or hobbies?*

Whew, lets' see, running, biking, serious Frisbee, camping, river rafting, hiking, fishing, (no hunting) snow and water skiing, stargazing, scuba diving and snorkeling, anything with the family preferably outdoors, reading, drawing, horse back riding, HARLEYS and oh yeah, guitar PLAYING!

Funny, I wrote several of the songs off my first solo CD on an acoustic guitar camping in Yosemite a few months before Kyle was born! This guy comes up to our campsite one morning and asks if I was the guy playing the guitar late last night? I think he's gonna understandably bitch at me for ruining the serenity of his camping trip or something, but he said he liked the music ALOT and if I ever had a CD out someday he would sure like to buy it...ha ha!

I should have taken his address because maybe I wouldn't be here now writing this if it weren't in some small way probably thanks to a fellow camper who didn't demolish my acoustic guitar right there on the spot and throw it in the campfire a la John Belushi in Animal House! He actually encouraged it instead!

8. *I know many fans have asked if a live CD might ever be possible, might it? YES, see above.*

9) *If you had some words of wisdom to share to anyone considering getting into the music business, what would they be?*
Listen to your elders!

10) *What is your life's motto?*

I dunno it changes. Not to be too heavy or anything, but I try and tell my son, Kyle, "It doesn't matter how many times somebody gets knocked down, it's how many times they get back up that counts," (especially when yer skateboarding) and of course the Golden Rule thing.

When Ozzie and I were first starting to play and we were not getting paid anything, in fact, losing money to perform in front of this new audience for us, and trying to get from one place to another with no sleep and still do our best to play great and hopefully have people want to hear our music again. One tour with our whole band opening for another artist (who will remain nameless) and having no dressing room or sound checks, or not being able to use the production we were paying for, or not having hotel rooms, or having our sets cut short, and having to play on a postage stamp size area of the stage blocked of by a black curtain with only 10% of the stage lighting; after every standing ovation for my band at the end of our set and after selling so many CDs more than this other guy (all possible only because of you and many thanks to the fans out there -btw!!!) it was a hard tour and we sure felt like the underdogs, but our motto was still, "Anytime, anywhere baby!"

That motto still comes up, but I know that with our band (and it feels like maybe some of our fans motto too) it's not really spoken out loud these days, but it sure feels like the motto has and always will be "All for one and one for all...or is it "All for fun and fun for all?"

Thanks for the questions Lil!

Gathering of the Tribes newsletters are a quarterly publication distributed to all fan club members. For questions/comments write: Official Craig Chaquico Fan Club, P.O. Box 10716, Phoenix, AZ 85064

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TOUR UPDATE

May 22 – Jazz on the Vine – Elkhart, WI

May 23 – College of Du Page – Glen Ellyn, IL

July 9 – Hyatt Newporter – Newport Beach, CA

August 6 – Garden Theatre @ Villa Montalvo – Saratoga, CA

August 27 – Promowest Pavilion – Columbus, OH

October 2 – Rodney Strong Vineyards – Healdsburg, CA



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