

Official Craig Chaquico Fan Club



Gathering of the Tribes

Summer 2006

Message from Craig

Summer greetings to all!

Here we are halfway through 2006 with the summer in full swing; I hope you're all enjoying the summer as much as my band and I have been! A couple of months ago I bought a new Harley (from fan club member and friend, Dena Besece's family dealership, C & A Harley-Davidson in Plain City, OH) and I can tell you that I'm having a blast breaking in this new baby. I've enjoyed some great rides on the open road and there's really something inspiring about gliding along with the wind in yer hair and a song in yer heart, literally! There's something about getting out there on two wheels, whether it's a bicycle or motorcycle, it really gets yer heart and soul aligned to some kind of "spiritual true north" or something and that has led to more than a song or two being written in the past

In fact the song, **Sacred Ground**, was partly inspired by a bike ride and stopping to enjoy the late afternoon/early evening, watching the shadows growing longer and longer across the valley and remembering that we weren't the first people to ride these places and appreciate the beauty. That song was on my **Acoustic Highway** CD and also on the very first Harley-Davidson road songs collection.

I have also had the good fortune of starting a little "side business" with long time Harley rider and old friend, Jimi Dunlop that was inspired by riding along the open road. The Dunlop family business is the biggest musical accessory company on the planet in over 75 different countries and has made my guitar picks and slides and wha wha pedals since the 70s. So, if ya see any cool new Harley-Davidson guitar picks and leather guitar straps and guitar strings and slides etc. out there in North America, Canada, Japan and Europe, you'll know who came up with that idea while on a bike ride. I saw a photo with Sammy Hagar using one of our H-D straps the other day on stage, by the way, pretty cool! Kid Rock & the Doobie Brothers all have the stuff now, too!

Plus I'll be riding out to the biggest motorcycle rally in the world in the black hills of the Dakotas through the bad lands in August, called Sturgis! Hundreds of thousands of motorcycles and tons of bands in a wild west setting for a week...maybe there will be some Stur-JAZZ music inspired along the way?

I'll be riding from the west coast down highway 1 from Oregon to Southern California and then all the way there with long time friend and fan club member, Clyde Fessler, who has done the trip many times and was the guy who came up with many Harley-Davidson innovations over the years as a top executive before he retired (handsomely) from the company. Congratulations, Clyde and many thanks to you and Joan for the invitation to join you guys this year!

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You might have noticed his name on some of my CD credits, many years ago when I told him I had an idea to do a mellower acoustic record while my wife was pregnant right after the rock & roll Starship days he said I should go for it! I remember he said something like, "Sometimes when everybody expects you to follow the pack and all the bikes make a right turn up ahead, sometimes its best to take a left. That way you're not lost in the crowd with everybody else and you get the whole road and scenery to yerself and decide where to go and stop whenever ya want. It's the same thing with music, when everybody thinks you would "turn right" and do another rock & roll band and play the electric guitar, doing an acoustic record by yerself is a great left turn. You won't be lost in the crowd and you'll have the whole road to yerself."

That was **Acoustic Highway** which had many songs written because of the Harley experience and riding with friends like Clyde and his son, Derek (also a fan club member) and Bill Davidson Jr. and millions of fellow Harley-Davidson riders who always take the time to wave to each other along the highways! It was Clyde who came up with the idea that these rides are what is "aligning our hearts and souls and minds to a spiritual true north" or something like that, he says it better!

So my keyboard player, Ozzie Ahlers and I began a musical trip down an acoustic highway that is still inspiring with each new turn in the road and over each new hill. Many thanks to you all, as they say, "It's not the destination, it's the journey and the friends you get to meet and share it with along the way." Little did we know the band would grow from just Oz and I to what it is now as a sextet with #1 songs on radio charts and #1 album sales and Grammy nominations, Bammie awards and Guitar Player magazine readers poll wins for Best Pop Instrumental Guitarist and especially the chance to play live for you all along the way with such an awesome band of really great guys to hang out with on the road. And to think, much of it was because of riding a motorcycle! This summer promises more of the same, it's not the destination, it's the journey! So, does that mean I can write my bike off as a business expense? Hmm?

Well, either way, I've been keeping the creative avenues going and the band and I have been working on some great new material which we hope to release later this year or the early part of 2007. Of course we've been touring this year as well so the writing and recording is being weaved in between the touring and bike rides. In fact you may have a chance to be on our next CD. Fan club member's names have already been credited for song titles and we even have had some great photography on our CDs from fan club members, Brian and Kaye Runner. This time you might actually get to hear yerself and be recorded on the next CD because it looks like we'll be doing that live album everybody has been asking about for years! And, if your in the audience at one of the shows, well, you'll be on the CD when ya sing along or maybe clap and cheer. No BOOOOs, not to be confused with booze since several club members have taken the time to treat the band with some pretty awesome top notch bottles of tequila over the years. Kids, don't try this at home, we are trained professionals and we never drive in situations like that. We pay somebody to do that for that for us! Ha ha.

This year we're also embarking on some dates with Warren Hill & Ray "Who ya gonna call? Ghostbusters!" Parker Jr., with a tour we're calling **Superstarzz**. I am very much looking forward to touring with these guys as it's always interesting when you hit the road with multiple artists like this. You never know what creativity will come from such an endeavor so it should be a blast. In fact, Warren played on one of my CDs because of a package tour like this where we got to know each other and become friends. It started with the very first Guitars and Saxes tour where Warren and I toured with Peter White and Richard Elliott, and so much has come from that first summer playing together. So, who knows what this summer will bring?



Some dates have been set (see the tour page) and others are in the works, stay tuned for updates on this! I'm excited to be working with these guys and of course seeing you all at shows as we make our way from the west to the east coast and back again. Hopefully it brings many of the fan club members together again out there on the road to say HI on the "Superstarzz tour" or with my own band and to maybe literally be ON our next CD!

There will be many shows that I'm doing with my band, such as the show in Temecula this October at Ponte Estate Winery. This should be a great event as it's a benefit concert with the funds going to a very worthy cause. Speaking of worthy causes, I just finished a great couple of shows in Huntington Beach, CA which benefited the Autistic Children's Foundation. It's always so rewarding to do events that support worthy causes such as this and it was great to see the "World's Greatest and Sweetest" fan club president there in the audience, Lil Duarte, who attended the show with her friend, Sue (thanks for that cute little guitar playing stuffed critter that's looking at me in the studio right now-btw!).

After the last notes of that benefit concert faded away on the evening wind, there was the ring of MUCH support generated for the cause by all the fans who showed up at the benefit and that will make a sweet and lasting melody in the songs of these children's lives for a long long time to come, because of all of you who came!

The Carvin 60th Birthday Bash is also coming up in August in Carlsbad, CA; I can't think of a better way to celebrate their birthday but with them drinking a toast to all of their successes with some of that fan club tequila. You know, I've been associated with Carvin since the 70s and their guitars and amps, speakers, mics, basses and mixing consoles have been on all my records going back to the Jefferson Starship all the way through the Starship and now with my own solo projects. I was able to help design the Craig Chaquico signature series guitar with Mark Kiesel from Carvin who along with his wife Mari, and son Jeff, I have known and been friends with since the 70s. That's a long time and really a part of that, "It's not the destination, it's the journey and the friends ya make along the way" motto.

Besides being one of the family owners of the whole company and Jeff and Mark being award winning race car drivers together on the tracks across the country, Mark also DESIGNS and actually BUILDS many of the Carvin guitars and basses himself by HAND! The guitars are made in America down near San Diego at the Carvin factory and Mark's artwork of wood and strings have been seen and heard at the Grammy's with me as well as the Academy Awards, American Bandstand and every tour and recording since the 70s. Even an episode of The Sopranos had his guitar on the #1 song **Luminosa** that was featured in a scene before somebody got whacked. Fuhget aboutit badda bing badda boom."

Anyway, when Mark makes a guitar he likes or we come up with a version we both like, like we did on my Craig Chaquico signature model. Mark makes the whole thing out of a slab or two of hand-selected wood and turns it into a work of art with his own hands that I get to make my art with eventually. When he gets the guitar EXACTLY the way he wants it, he has it scanned in 3-D by a laser connected to a super computer (it takes 24 hours) but when all the specs are in the computer, the computer can control a machine that makes a "clone" of the original guitar out of another slab of hand-picked wood down which is accurate to 1/10th the thickness of a human hair, so from there all the frets and electronics and finishes are added. This way we KNOW that every Craig Chaquico model is EXACTLY the same as the very 1st original prototype we took so much time and care to perfect, and for Mark to create and build by hand.

I've had other signature guitars on another company before Carvin made acoustics, but sometimes the ones that were being made by the other company weren't made in the USA and the quality really varied from my original design. The good thing was that a tree was planted for every one of those thousands of old Craig Chaquico guitars made, even if they weren't made to the exacting specs that the new Carvin Craig Chaquico guitars are made with.

In closing let me again thank you all for your continued support and genuine friendships. I'll see you out on the road either on stage or on the Harley this summer, and maybe you'll even be on the next CD with the band and I as we record some of the shows for a live CD!

Craig



Q & A with Craig



Hi Craig - Lil has told me that you very athletically inclined and that you love skiing, skate boarding, scuba diving as well as participating in numerous other challenging sports. I would like to know if you also do snow boarding. How accomplished are you at snow and skate boarding and is there an underlying fear factor deep within you as you are careening down the slope or sliding down a concrete incline on a piece of wood at an unheard of rate of speed? When did you decide to test gravity and become one with the wind on those really tiny pieces of wood? Do you and your son participate in these fun and scary sports together or is this just your time with the spirit of the earth, wind and sky? I'm I thrill seeker myself, but I like a more controlled environment like a roller coaster.

I will look for a detailed play by play on your latest downhill experience in the summer issue of the fan news. Thanks, Sue C., Phoenix, AZ.

Hi Sue - About the snow boarding, nope, not yet. As for the skateboarding, well, I'm pretty unaccomplished although I appeared in Skateboard magazine once skating illegally with Tony Alva and friends in a pool and a culvert in LA as well as appearing in one of the greatest films of all time SKATEBOARD with a bunch of world champion boarders. I made my first skateboard when I was 8, from a piece of wood and some roller skate wheels and the rest was history!

The funny thing is that after the photo shoot for Skateboard I was holding my board and slipped on some sand and gravel just walking out of the culvert and fell on top of my thumb (which I had already broken in a car accident when I was 12) on the concrete side of the culvert. Bunker Sprekles, who was a world famous surfer and boarder and martial artist, tried to "reset" it and only made it WORSE. I had a concert at the San Diego Sports Arena that night and got to the sound check late with board in hand and the security wouldn't let me in the arena because they didn't believe this teenage hippy was really the lead guitar player for the sold out concert that night! Lucky for me our Road Manager, Bill Laudner happened to skate by the backstage door on HIS own 6 ft long custom made skateboard and he vouched for me. That was the same year Pete Sears, our bass player, broke his leg skateboarding on the road with us and had to perform on stage in a leg cast...kids don't try this at home!

So, for the next few concerts with Jefferson Starship, Fleetwood Mac and Lynard Skynard that year I played with a small cast on my left hand and thumb. There are some photos floating around from that year, and that SKATEBOARD movie sometimes come on at 4 am cable TV. Did you know that an "unknown" singer named Mickey Thomas sang the title track, he later became the lead singer in Starship on many #1 hits, but we didn't know each other at the time of the movie. I had a song in the film and later wrote a tune with Grace Slick called SKATEBOARD on the platinum album, EARTH! We went out behind the studio one morning at 2 am and set up a bunch of mics and threw a skateboard down the alley a few times to get the sound of a "wipeout" in the middle of the song ...ya gotta listen close to hear it, but it's there.

As for fun and scary sports, I HATE roller coasters! They scare the sh*t out of me, it's like surviving a plane crash, who needs it? My son rides skateboards a LOT and THAT scares me, we did do some dune buggy rides in Mexico and a canopy tour high above the jungle on cables that I won't soon forget, but probably won't do it again for a while.

I still like to scuba dive and have done wrecks in the north Atlantic, caves, night dives, and I've seen a few sharks and barracuda, but when I ski I take the long easy routes and my wife and son always have to wait for me to catch up with them as they do the daredevil stuff. I've been known to do some scary downhill on my mountain bike runs with my son though...woo-hoo! And I have been known to put the Harley in neutral and turn off the motor and lights and quietly coast and glide down a mountain road once or twice at night under a full moon, not really recommended for any length of time however.

- More on the next page -

Q & A with Craig Continued

Craig - Who are some of your guitar heroes? What was the last concert you attended...not participated in? What was the first concert you attended and when? Is there a musician you would like to meet?

Thanks, Janis M., Corpus Christi, TX

Hi Janis - I'm fond of saying that I had all my "guitar heroes" on posters on my wall when I was a kid growing up, now that I'm older, I realize the real "heroes" were my parents who bought me my first guitar and had the courage to get up every morning and go to work at their day jobs to pay for the walls that had the posters on em, otherwise, I was a HUGE fan of Hendrix, Clapton, Santana, Duane Allman, Pink Floyd, Zep, Wes Montgomery, Jeff Beck, Chet Atkins, George Benson, Larry Carlton, The Dobbies, plus all the San Francisco bands.

The last concert I attended that I did not participate in was The Doobie Brothers. The first concert I attended was Hendrix in 69 or Atalmont, I forget which came first? For Hendrix I worked on the backdrop artwork and was "deputized" to be on the stage crew at the last minute, I got to stay on stage and watch the show! There are photos of that concert from Sacramento Cal Expo with Jimi in front of the American flag I helped paint!!

For Atalmont I was walking around this open concrete area and saw a KFRC helicopter circling, it landed not far from where I was so I had never seen a helicopter up close and I went over to look inside the cockpit. The Rolling Stones got out of it right when I got there and I was looking through the Plexiglas at the dials and controls. I later saw my future Jefferson Starship band mates as Jefferson Airplane members on stage through binoculars.

As for who I'd like to meet, I'd have to say Eric Clapton, though we actually met briefly checking into the same hotel in LA years ago. I gave him one of my Jimi Dunlop custom made Jefferson Starship guitar picks but he didn't have one of his handy, he owes me!

"The last concert I attended that I did not participate in was The Doobie Brothers."



Tour Update

- August 12** Carvin's 60th Birthday Bash, Carlsbad, CA
- October 27 & 28** Ponte Estate Winery, Temecula, CA
- November 3** Crest Theatre, Sacramento, CA
- Dates with Warren Hill & Ray Parker, Jr. - Superstarzz Tour
- September 9** BB Jazz Festival, Huntington Beach, CA
- September 30** Ikeda Theatre - Mesa Arts Center, Mesa, AZ
- October 1** Santa Barbara Zoo, Santa Barbara, CA
- October 13** Florida Theatre, Jacksonville, FL
- October 14** Van Weizel Performing Arts Center, Sarasota, FL
- October 15** King Center, Melbourne, FL

January 27- February 4, 2007
Brian Culbertson All-Star Jazz Cruise

Check the website for updates!!!!



Craig with Franz Weber and friends, in Reno, NV. Franz is an Olympian, six-time consecutive World Speed Skiing Champion and former world record-holder. Franz traveled 150 miles on his bicycle to catch the first show of the Superstarzz tour with Craig, Warren Hill and Ray Parker Jr.

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