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03.09 Dean Cascione, Shred Guitarist

Dean

By Alex Kantarelis

The shred guitar scene has a new face to look up to: it's Dean Cascione, and he's sitting at the forefront of the genre. With dedication, professionalism, and work ethic like no other, he is well on his way to becoming a shredding guitar legend.

Cascione is a life-long fan of metal ~ in particular, shred, a subgenre that showcases the fastest and craziest guitar riffs imaginable. But it's not just about the metal. Cascione's songs are complex arrangements of "neo-classical music," as he put it. Imagine a modern orchestra, where the guitar takes the place of your standard orchestra instruments, and you've got his sound.

Cascione, who grew up in the Worcester area, got his start as a young guitarist. "I was just average like everybody else," he said, speaking of the early days. In typical young guitarist style, he began taking lessons, but quickly knew it wasn't his calling. "I was learning jazz and classical, and I hated it. I wanted to learn how to play metal," he said. As he grew up, the image of being a guitarist became more important than the instrument itself. "I was more about telling people that I play guitar, and walking around dressed up like I was in a band, but never really put any effort into it."

As time went on, he realized that guitar was a passion, not just a hobby. He started dedicating more and more to the instrument. He began building his own custom guitars, which are all he now uses. With his friend Randy Ciak, he started a website (randyciak.com) entirely dedicated to guitars. Through the site, he met up with Joe Stump, a shred legend who took him to the next level. He began taking guitar lessons again, a move that most guitarists' egos would not allow. "That was a turning point in my playing, it was almost like learning to play the guitar again. Joe teaches at Berklee [School of Music], and he knows exactly what he's doing," he said. With the help of Ciak and Stump, Cascione had the confidence to start writing his own songs.

The next step was simple: write and record an album. Cascione began working hard to compose his shredding masterpiece, doing everything himself to make it happen. He recorded all the guitars and bass tracks on his own, inviting some friends to help out with the orchestration, drums, and even a few vocals (shred typically is instrumental). The result, Guitar Chop Shop, has already garnered him lots of attention. The album held the #1 chart ranking for the week of May 24th and an overall ranking of #2 on the Guitar Nine Records Top Sellers, and is still getting rave reviews from guitar critics all over the world.

Cascione is quick to dole out credit to everyone around him, but gives the most to his endorsements. And of those there are many ~ *Voodoo Amps, DC Custom Guitars, SIT Strings, GraphTech, Ollmann Pedals, GuitarHeads Pickups, In Tune Guitar Picks, FXDoctor Pedals and Mods*. "When you have big companies like that who believe in you, that just puts you up to another level," he said. "That gives you that next mountain you need to climb to be a professional musician."

For Dean Cascione, the future looks bright. He has already established himself among the best of his fellow shred guitarists, is ready to continue his ascent to the top, and plans to record the follow up to Guitar Chop Shop and have it out next fall. But he remains humble. "My ultimate goal would be to become a name in that circle of shredders. To tell you the truth I would do it all for free."

Photo credit to Shawn Allen Guilbault and stylist credit to Dale at TuModa on Pleasant St., Worcester

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1. Dean is a top player!!!! Its so inspiring to hes song!!!! Keep rocking Dean Cascione!!! You are a Guitar God!

   Comment by Mike Kerr — March 5, 2009 @ 12:36 pm

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