



Guitar Laboratory

It was late one Wednesday night, and I was up in my studio that I sometimes call Twangri la. Out of every window all I could see was black, and I had lost all track of time...again. I had guitars, cables, mics, pedals and amps strewn all over the place. I had been working on a guitar track for I don't know how long! All I know is I finally got it to the place where I was pretty proud of it!

One of my friends popped in on me unexpectedly and saw the environment I had slowly created around me over the last ten or twelve hours. I guess he also noticed the circles around my eyes and my hair every which way from the hours of being in headphones. He then said, "Man, what are you, some sort of mad scientist up here?"

At that moment, I started thinking that is what this CD should be--a "laboratory" of sorts to give me the opportunity to explore and search for guitar textures, tunes and tones.

Guitar Laboratory represents without a doubt the most versatile project I have recorded. It's a trip all over the map as far as genres and styles. I think what people will enjoy most is seeing a glimpse of me they have never seen before. I played upright bass, lap steel, resonator guitar, acoustic guitar, steel string guitar, classical guitar, pedal steel guitar and a lot of electrics. I sure hope you enjoy your visit into my *Guitar Laboratory*.

TELE KINESIS

(Steve Wariner)

I guess I've been drawn to the telecaster 'chicken pickin' style since those early days of watching James Burton at the end of the *Ozzie and Harriet* TV show. He would play that Tele and bend those strings accompanying Ricky Nelson, and I loved it! It really got me going and made me wanna bend some strings of my own. I seemed to always gravitate to those guys--Burton, Don Rich, Buck Owens, Roy Nichols, Roy Buchanan, and Albert Lee. My Uncle Jimmy was a huge influence with his twangy style of Fender pickin'. I always loved his playing and learning licks from him.

I learned to play on my dad's Fender Jazzmaster, but in my mind sometimes it morphed into a Telecaster. When I was a sophomore in high school, I saved up enough to buy my first guitar. Of course, it was an early '70s, yellow black guard Telecaster. I ordered it sight unseen out of a catalogue from a store in Fort Worth, Texas. When the shipping company called and informed me my guitar had arrived at the airport, I drove like a maniac that 30 miles wide open and actually threw a rod in the car I was driving! I walked, found a pay phone, and called my dad at work. He came and took me to get my guitar! That car was just left there on the side of the road!

In the late '80s, I was in southern California playing at a club called the Crazy Horse. The venue's owner, my friend Fred Reiser, called and said, "Do you want to have lunch with Leo Fender?" Are you kidding?!! My brother Terry and I jumped at that chance! One of the coolest things I've ever done!

I looked up **telekinesis** in the dictionary. The definition is *the apparent causing of movement in an object by unexplainable means, as by some mental process*. I put a space between **tele** and **kinesis**, and there's your title. I'm not sure about the unexplainable part, but there *is* a lot of movement here for sure!

A GROOVE

(Steve Wariner)

The impetus of this song was the open string, chromatic finger roll that continues throughout. You don't necessarily think of this type of groove having finger rolls. It may seem a little out of sorts, but I think it works here.

While it's possible that I'm considered primarily a tele style player, on this one I actually got out my '60 stratocaster that I bought from my brother Terry years ago. It really is a fine instrument. I played through one of my very favorite amps, too--my black-face Fender deluxe with analog tape delay.

John Jarvis, David Hungate and John Gardner were the rhythm section. They sure played some brilliant parts. I believe out there in cyber world there's a video clip of this track being recorded.

GOODY 2 SHOES

(Steve Wariner)

Okay, I admit it; I am just a selfish musician! On this track I am playing everything.

My friends asked me, “What in the world did you put down first?” My answer is . . . bass. It’s an old King upright bass made in Cleveland. I had the song and arrangement pretty much in my head and started there. Next, I recorded the rhythm guitar using my 1949 Epiphone Broadway cut-a-way arch top, mic-ing it with my vintage Neumann U67. I then recorded the acoustic leads on my 1954 0018 Martin that I’ve had since I moved to Nashville around 1973. Lastly, I recorded the lap steel on my old Bakelite Rickenbacker, playing through my blackface Fender Princeton using a ribbon RCA 77 microphone.

Call me selfish if you like, but man, it was just too fun!

KENTUCKIANA

(Steve Wariner)

I was born in central Indiana, as were my siblings, except my oldest brother Kenny. Like my parents, he was born in south central Kentucky. Dad and Mom migrated to Noblesville, just outside Indianapolis, after he came along. Dad had an opportunity to work there and increase his salary considerably.

In the late ‘60s, we moved to Louisville for a short while. Going from a small town to the city was a culture shock for us. I’ll have to say that ‘67 holds some good memories, but for the most part it was a tumultuous time.

That summer was the first time for me on television! I traveled and played drums with my Uncle Jimmy’s band on a live television show on WLTV in Bowling Green, Kentucky, on Saturday nights. What an experience!

Living in Louisville, I remember hearing for the first time the term *Kentuckiana*, referring to the areas along both sides of the Ohio River--part Kentucky, part Indiana. I always thought that term described me pretty well. I guess when it’s all said and done I’m a mutt of sorts!

This track feels to me like traveling music. I played my brown ‘58 Gretsch re-issue Country Gentleman with analog tape echo, of course.

SUGARFOOT RAG (featuring Leon Rhodes)

(Hank Garland and George Vaughn)

Hank Garland’s “Sugarfoot Rag” is embedded deep in my memory banks. There are several versions of this classic tune done by many great guitarists.

I was fortunate enough to meet Hank several years ago and told him how I admired his playing. He had such sensibility in the studio, having played on so many hit recordings through the years.

My arrangement here is a combination of part Paul Yandell, part Odell Martin. Odell was a remarkable finger style player who toured with many popular country stars of the day. He was widely known in the country guitar world as one of the best. He and Paul Yandell, who brought me to Chet Atkins, were the best of friends and both Kentuckians.

Paul was gracious and patient enough to show me Odell's arrangement of "Sugarfoot," along with a few of his own inflections. Since Paul and I played together on "Pals," I invited another legendary player, Leon Rhodes, to play with me on this one. Leon is famous for his work with Ernest Tubb and the Texas Troubadours.

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CRAFTY

(Steve Wariner)

S.W. totally solo here. I really wanted to explore some classical style guitar on this one. I used my Hascal Haile hand made classical guitar. Mr. Haile was a remarkable luthier from Tompkinsville, Kentucky. He made my guitar in the early '70s. He also made beautiful furniture pieces and amazing grandfather clocks. His guitars are sought after today because he really didn't make that many instruments. He only started making guitars later in his life. I find it fascinating that he made such wonderful instruments, but he didn't play.

A lot of my friends have commented that this track reminds them of Jerry Reed. That's a wonderful compliment! Jerry was such a great friend and great influence. What a fantastic player!

I WILL NEVER FOR GET YOU (JE NE T'OULBIERAI JAMAIS)

(Ross Wariner and Steve Wariner)

This began as a vision and idea concocted by me and my talented arranger/composer son Ross. It is the story of an American soldier at the end of World War II. He befriends and falls in love with a beautiful French girl in the village of *Honfleur* just outside Paris.

The war comes to a close, and the soldier heads back stateside, regrettably leaving his love behind in France. It's a decision he will wrestle with the rest of his life. She never gets over him or his memory.

The challenge for me and Ross was to tell this love story without the luxury of actual lyrics. We wrote some lines as a poem almost in letter form for recitation.

Ross played some wonderful piano, Joey Miskulin, some beautiful accordion and Aubrey Haynie, some very tasty violin helping us weave this tale. David Hungate played upright bass, and Ron Gannaway played brush snare. Ron's lovely wife Elisabeth, from Paris, translated and recited the verses toward the end of the song.

PALS (featuring Paul Yandell)

(Steve Wariner)

This song was a great opportunity to break out the Gretschs and Standel amps and get down to some thumb style pickin'! Speaking of pals, my dear friend Paul Yandell, who was my bandmate with Chet Atkins, came in to offer me some much-needed help on this one. No one plays this style better than Paul. It's always a learning experience when I'm with him. He is a wealth of guitar knowledge.

You can easily tell we were having a big time here. Paul gave me a beautiful Standel amp recently that was made in 1955, and boy, I had to utilize that! That 15-inch JBL speaker really projects. I also played my '58 Gretsch 6120. Incidentally, Paul played through his 1954 Standel amp with his Gretsch 6120 c.g.p. model.

Paul has always seemed like a big brother to me, always nurturing and supporting unconditionally. Paul and I have another thing in common; we sure miss *our* pal, Chet!

WAIKIKI '79

(Steve Wariner)

In 1979 I was touring and playing bass with the legendary Chet Atkins. Believe me, between him and Paul Yandell, the guitar position was very well covered!

I was so excited to learn we were going to play a concert with the Honolulu Symphony! We would do one show, then have six days off to relax in paradise! I had only heard about Hawaii, mainly from my father, who had been stationed there in the Navy right after World War II.

There were several things on my to-do list, including visiting Pearl Harbor, witnessing the incredible surfers and humongous waves up on the north shore of Oahu, and trying to hear the great Jerry Byrd play his Hawaiian steel guitar live! I knew of and followed him via my dad, who just loved Jerry's playing.

We rehearsed and prepared for the concert at the beautiful outdoor band pavilion just outside Honolulu. It was so impressive watching the orchestra come out all wearing the same lovely Hawaiian shirts and leis. I walked over to speak to Chet and he said, "Steve, I'd like you to meet Jerry Byrd." I about fell over! He

had come out to see the show and visit his old friend Chet. The show went great, and I'll never forget a very light, misty rain falling halfway through the show. Seems it only lasted a short while and no one minded. In a way, this track is a tip of the hat to Jerry, but it's also in remembrance of that whole trip, which was some experience indeed.

UP THE RED HILL

(Steve Wariner)

My mom and dad were both raised fairly close to the same area outside Jamestown, Kentucky. While they went to the same school called Freedom, they actually lived a couple "ridges" apart.

To go to my dad's home place, you turn left onto Clifty Creek Road just past the old store building and go back a couple miles.

I understand it is vastly different now than it was back in their youthful days. I've heard my dad tell of walking down that road at night when it was so black and wooded you could barely see your hand in front of you. He seemed happy to have always had plenty of brothers to accompany him!

Down Clifty Creek Road about a half a mile, there is a pretty good incline on the now paved road. Back in the day, of course, it was just a red clay farm road. Dad said if it rained the slightest, there's no way you could get "up the red hill." It was not uncommon to see several old cars just pulled to the side and abandoned right there in their tracks.

When I go back home now, I like to take my dad down to the "red hill" and hear some of those cool stories. I know he really likes it, too!

PHYLLIS AND RAMONA

(Steve Wariner)

We're not sure how old Phyllis is; she won't say! Some think upper 80's, but since she may read this, I am saying nothing further! Our long-time family friend, Phyllis Davis, has taught and played music most of her life and still plays to this day all around Hamilton County, Indiana! She plays harp, piano, organ, and drums. Her sister Ramona, who passed in 2009, was a comedienne, actress, and avid trombone player. Together, they were always so much fun to be around. What a pair! This is my homage to them. I brought renowned trombonist Barry Green in to play the "Ramona" section and the always incredible John Jarvis to play the "Phyllis" parts.

WHITE DOVE

(Steve Wariner)

The morning of April 16, 2010 was somehow different than most. I woke up and walked into the den instead of making my usual trek to the kitchen to get that first cup of coffee. My little black $\frac{3}{4}$ scale Takamine guitar just happened to be lying in the chair, and for some reason I picked it up and immediately started playing a brand new melody.

Since my engineer, Randy, would be here soon, I thought maybe I should put this melody to tape before I forgot it. So that is what I did. Randy and I proceeded to work on it through the morning, into the afternoon. It seemed like a perfect fit for my Del Vecchio resonator guitar that Chet Atkins had given me.

I will never forget the phone call I received later that day from my brother Kenny, explaining that his 28-year-old son, my nephew, had perished in a tragic car crash. We were all devastated to say the least. We were practically at the end of recording the song, so naturally right then and there, it became Matt's song.

As you might imagine, this project was immediately put on hold due to the fact I just didn't feel like doing a whole lot, let alone recording or playing guitar. There was a concert for Matt in his hometown three months later to honor him and hopefully try and heal hearts. Matt's band mates took the stage mid-afternoon in the blazing sun. Out of nowhere a beautiful white dove landed above them on the stage rafters. The audience spotted it plainly, and many were visibly moved as some began taking pictures. It calmly sat there during their set as if it belonged. Then to our surprise, it flew over near my mother and sat close to her for a while before it flew off into the brilliant Indiana sky. I knew right there that my song had received its title. Matty, this is for you with much love and respect.

STING RAY (featuring Ryan Wariner)

(Ryan Wariner and Steve Wariner)

It's about the tone! Tone... tone! That's been my son Ryan's mantra for as long as I can remember. Since he was very young, he sought diligently to connect the right guitar with the perfect amp; that amp with the right speaker; this mic with... and so on. I'm not sure that sort of quest ever ends, but boy, there are good sounds discovered all along the way.

Ryan came up with this very cool, catchy riff and melody. From the get-go I was hooked and walking around singing it. We kept carving on it together and separately till we were both happy and smiling. We think there are at least seven guitars and four amps played here between the two of us. We carefully cast them to layer and create texture throughout the track. We then brought in an awesome rhythm section in Greg Morrow and Michael Rhodes, and here you have "Sting Ray."

The title comes from my garage, which is home to my '66 Nassau blue Corvette Sting Ray that I have had for many years.

Produced By Steve Wariner

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Mastered by Randy Gardner for Gardner Productions

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