

**COUNTRY SPECIAL!**

**5 PLAYERS TO WATCH • GREG KOCH'S LICK SAMPLER**



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# Guitar Player

## KEITH URBAN

ON FOLLOWING HIS MUSE

“Play In Your Joy—Not In Your Head!”

**GEAR SCOOP #1**

**ERNIE BALL  
AMBIENT DELAY  
& EXPRESSION  
OVERDRIVE**

**GEAR SCOOP #2**

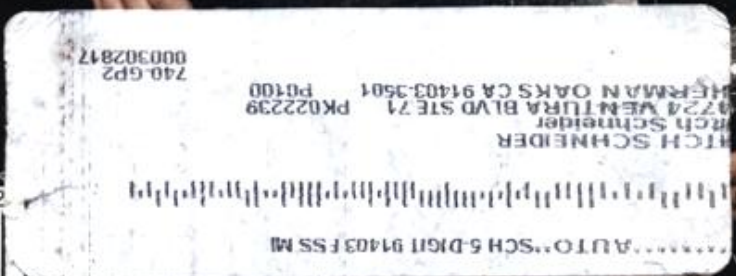
**ROLAND  
GT-1**

**PLUS  
NANCY  
WILSON**

**DAVE NAVARRO  
& J MASCIS**

**DOYLE  
BRAMHALL II**

**JAKE SHIMABUKURO**



A NEWBAY MEDIA PUBLICATION

# RIFFS

Heart. The Wilson Sisters  
Nancy (left) and Ann.

## STUDIO JOURNAL

### Nancy Wilson on Altering the Past and Comping Solos

AFTER PLAYING VARIOUS SONGS from the Heart catalog onstage for years, the band decided to reinvent seven of them for *Beautiful Broken* [Concord]. But, unlike some other classic rockers, the band didn't simply re-record their hits. Instead, guitarist and album producer Nancy Wilson focused on reimagining some perhaps "underappreciated" songs from past releases, while also including three new tunes to prove the band's creative muse is still alive and rockin'.

**What gear did you bring to the *Beautiful Broken* sessions?**

It was basically my live rig. My '53 blue Telecaster is my main man—although I also used my Gibson Nancy Wilson



Nighthawk Standard. I love the Budda Superdrive 30 head and the Fender Tonemaster a lot, and I've got Orange 4x12 cabinets loaded with 30-watt Celestion speakers. I don't use a lot of pedals, but my go-to's are an MXR Custom Audio Electronics Boost/Line Driver, a Way Huge Swollen Pickle Jumbo Fuzz, an Electro-Harmonix Holy Grail reverb, and a ToadWorks Howard Leese Signature Barracuda flanger. For acoustics, we used a Hermann Hauser II classical that I've had forever, as well as my Martin Nancy Wilson Signatures.

#### How did you approach the basic tracks?

We tracked everything live with Ann in an isolation booth. We opted to do it the old-school way, because it captures something you can't get by constructing music piece by piece. The energy comes through in this amazing way that no other way of doing it will give you.

#### Well, given the brutally fierce attack of your rhythm-guitar tracks on the album, I'd say that method worked.

I actually like rhythm playing the most. And I think my attack comes from being an acoustic player first, because we couldn't afford an amp or any electric stuff when we started out. I was pretty ferocious on the acoustic guitar, and I played it a lot like a percussion instrument to accompany Ann. I spent a lot of time trying to make one guitar sound like a whole band.

#### Did you take any solos?

I didn't. Craig Bartock did all the solo stuff. But I took what was there, and I edited the solos together. As a producer, I was sort of behind the glass more than not.

#### What was your process for comping the solos?

We had Craig try a bunch of things, and then I'd craft exactly what I wanted along with our bassist Dan Rothchild, who co-produced the album. We were sort of "growing" the solos and cutting them into the song. For example, we wanted the solos to be more like another lead singer in the song, rather than a lot of busy notes. Every note was carefully chosen to represent the song, and not be sort of freestyle, so that each solo had a musical symmetry.

#### Did you also focus on tone?

Sometimes we'd work on the tone, but, normally, it was looking at how to create sentences with the lead guitar part. One of my favorite lead players in the world is David Gilmour, because he plays solos like you would sing a lead vocal, and they really say something. It was pretty intensive. We wanted every piece of the work to really shine. There's nothing that's kind of extra or wasted or just tossed off. Everything mattered. ■

## VINYL TREASURES

BY JIM CAMPILONGO



### Chet Atkins

#### *A Session with Chet Atkins*



#### I OWN MORE THAN 100

Chet Atkins LPs, so it's difficult to say which one is the "best"—especially as all of Chet's records have something special to offer. My personal favorite has always been *A Session with Chet Atkins*, and my enthusiasm for this record inspired me to try to replicate its cover for my *Loose* album in 1997.

*A Session with Chet Atkins* was released in 1954, and it features the great Bud Issacs on steel guitars and Homer and Jethro in the rhythm section. The group's talents and energy seemed to push Chet beyond playing somewhat safely—as a consummate craftsman—and, instead, he gets his fingers dirty while retaining his compositional soloing aesthetic. High points for me are Chet's ripping solo over "South," the breathtaking harmonic solo over "Birth of the Blues," the exotic "Caravan" solo, and the lovely intro to "Honeysuckle Rose" that is unlike any

version I've ever heard.

*A Session with Chet Atkins* is where I broke the "Chet-Barrier" learning "Frankie and Johnny" note for note. If you want to learn some Chet style, this record is a great place to start your adventure. At first, it may feel like you are splitting your brain in two, so my tip is to play slowly and clearly, while concentrating on getting the bass notes steady on the downbeats. The invaluable thing I've taken from Chet is that any tune can be approached without any musical snobbery. In Chet's hands, a "corny" song is transformed into something melodic, clever, and charming. I've also learned a ton from Chet's crafty uses of double-stops and triple-stops, and I've shamelessly applied them on all of my records.

Amazingly, many of Chet Atkins' LPs are very affordable on eBay, and I would recommend 99 percent of them. Vinyl forever! ■