

BILL LEVERTY

2009



Photo by Doug Raffik

Deep South An Introduction

Bio

Bill Leverty has been working full-time in the music business for over 25 years. In 1984, he started working in a local music store giving guitar lessons. His instruction was sought after by many aspiring guitarists in his hometown of Richmond, VA. After many years of working toward procuring a recording contract, Leverty and his band, FireHouse, inked a deal with Epic Records, and over the course of several hit albums, popular videos, and sold out tours, have sold over 6 million units to date.

FireHouse, received many accolades, including the American Music Award for best new hard

rock group in 1991. Leverty also won several awards such as best newcomer in Young Guitar magazine.

Bill Leverty produced the fourth FireHouse album, *GOOD ACOUSTICS*, which garnered gold sales in six countries. Leverty has also produced the last five FireHouse albums, as well as his first two solo albums: *WANDERLUST* and *SOUTHERN EXPOSURE*.

Continuing his musical evolution, Leverty has produced his third solo album: *DEEP SOUTH*. The album is a collection of songs originating from the Southern United States.

“Most of these songs have been around for about 100 years”, says Leverty. “I have a great new appreciation for the American music of the late 1800’s and early 1900’s, and I wanted to put my twist on it”.

DEEP SOUTH is an album that takes the listener way back to an era before the birth of blues; where gospel, bluegrass, and traditional music sang of hardship as well as values still relevant today. “I love every one of these songs, and recording them with my interpretation has been a great honor and privilege” says Leverty. “I hope more people around the world will appreciate these songs

The Songs Traditional, Yet Today

Back To Where It All Began

Unquestionably, Leverty chose the right songs for *DEEP SOUTH*. With more hooks than you'd find in a tackle box, *DEEP SOUTH* is, for the most part, surprisingly comprised of traditional songs. "When you hear the songs in context, you'll hear that this is not a typical hard rock/heavy metal album. On this one, I tried to let the music tell ME how to sound, not the other way around. There are so many different instruments on this album that I have never recorded before. This album is a chance for me to stretch out as a musician, singer, producer and engineer" explains Leverty.

The CD kicks off with "Trouble So Hard", where Leverty's signature guitar sound and bluesy riff sets the soulful tone for the album. The wide range of his authentic, resonant voice captivates the listener into an emotion that is sure to leave goosebumps. Sonically, the musical arrangement seems inspired by 70's funk and classic rock. The song features a signature Leverty guitar solo that sings like a bird and tastefully shreds when called for. The percussion on this track is unique and worldly, adding to the distinctive texture of the track, which ends in 6 part vocal harmony.

"Run On" nudges the listener into the diverse instrumentation of the album. "The main rhythm guitar is actually a guitarelele which is the cross between a classical guitar and a ukulele. One solo section is a 1929 banjo, and I also play mandolin on the outro". Vocally, Leverty's baritone delivery is bold and stunning; yet, it doesn't overpower the song's acoustic soundscape, which eventually gives way to a warm, emotional, yet blistering electric guitar solo, dressed in a hauntingly dark tonality.

"Boll Weevil", the first single of *DEEP SOUTH*, showcases Leverty's vision of the marriage between bluegrass and hard rock. The immense guitars are accompanied by an accordion which make for a unique rhythm section coloration. With elements of modern production heard throughout this track,

Leverty's vocal sound is reminiscent of Scott Weiland, while his guitar soloing is like something you'd hear on a Steve Vai album. A very interesting blend to say the least. Leverty's vocals at the end of the song sound like a combination of Sting, Bono, and Peter Gabriel spontaneously riffing melodies that evoke deep emotion.

"Nine Hundred Miles" departs from the hard rock scene into an acoustic/ electric treatment of this classic railroad tune. Leverty breaks out the dobro for the first solo, and then alternates solos between a Telecaster and his signature Grem Guitar. The dueling guitar solos at the end of the song sound like they are singing long distance from one to another a la Lynyrd Skynyrd or The Outlaws.

"Samson And Delilah" takes the listener back to the rock side of Leverty's multiple musical personalities with an infectious, up-tempo, hard-driving, rock guitar riff. Leverty's vocal is stylistically different on this tune, with hints of Billy Gibbons of ZZ Top in the delivery. A lap steel guitar is unleashed for the first solo, and a dramatic, modern percussion break showcases Leverty's production prowess. "The lyrics of this song tell such a great story".

"Walk Beside Me", one of the two contemporary songs on *DEEP SOUTH*, was written by Tim O'Brien and Darryll Scott, who have written songs for The Dixie Chicks et al. This gem of a song places Leverty in a most intimate light, with only acoustic guitar and his endearing voice. Leverty adds, "I played the guitarelele for the solo on this song because it added a warm acoustic tone to the steel string backing guitars. Tim and Darryll wrote a timeless masterpiece here." The song should become a favorite to any person listening to this album with an affinity for acoustic music.

"Hit The Road Jack" is one of the biggest surprises of this album on so many levels. Unknown as a piano player, Leverty pays tribute to the late, great Ray Charles, in an authentic way, while still pushing the boundaries of modern pop rock. A phenomenal vocal appearance by Bill's wife, Kris, proves that musical talent is abundant in the Leverty household. "The song is about getting kicked out of the house, so it seems fitting that my wife would sing the female vocal part" chuckles Leverty. The outro solos feature

Leverty playing a Clapton-esque solo leading into a piano solo that is an homage to Ray Charles. This track sets Leverty apart from the norm as a multi-instrumentalist with jazz chops to boot.

"Rain And Snow" brings the listener back to an acoustic environment where Leverty's tuneful vocal style gently finesses this classic murder ballad to perfection. Bill showcases both his mandolin playing as well as his dynamic acoustic guitar playing with great nuance. His wife, Kris, joins him once again on this song, and reveals her silky-smooth Alison Krauss-like vocal tone in the high harmonies.

"Wade In The Water" kicks the listener right back into the hard rock arena where Leverty layers 6 part background vocal harmonies and a bone-crunching lead vocal. His electric guitar solo in this song is a perfect example of why Leverty is revered as a virtuoso among guitarists around the world, playing at lightning speed with the legato fluidity of melted butter. "This is one of the few songs on the album that I had heard when I was a kid. I wanted to make it heavy!" Leverty says with a grin.

"Man Of Constant Sorrow" brings the album to a close with Leverty playing dueling solos with his old friend and harmonica maestro, Houston Scott, who has played with such legendary names as Dickie Betts. The solos are breathtaking, and this electrified arrangement of the classic bluegrass song will leave you wanting more of Leverty's hybrid cross of multi-genre artistry.

You will find yourself playing this album over and over again. It is destined to become a classic, possibly creating a new musical swath, and the CD belongs in the collection of every person who loves music, especially guitar. The album is very deep, and it seems Leverty has aptly entitled it, *DEEP SOUTH*.

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Contact Info

Inquiries:
info@leverty.com

Press:
Chip Ruggieri
chip@chipsterpr.com
Tel: 561-691-1652