

JOHN PETRUCCI



GIVEN ALL OF THE accolades that have come guitarist John Petrucci's way since he first created waves on Dream Theater's debut album, 1989's 'When Dream And Day Unite', it's remarkable that the 57 year old is so grounded. Petrucci is as unassuming as they come. Send him an email and he'll always respond. Ask him for an interview and he's generous with his time, whether it's sharing his love for Iron Maiden, discussing his phenomenal technique, or talking about his main musical preoccupation which is, of course, Dream Theater. Petrucci talks quietly, without hyperbole or any sense of self-aggrandisement, and he listens attentively. But the man who's been referred to as 'one of the most celebrated and popular guitarists in the world of progressive metal' and 'arguably the most versatile and proficient player in his realm' also has a steely determination that suggests you wouldn't want to get on the wrong side of him. It's this combination of humility

and absolute focus that's helped Petrucci drive Dream Theater – the band he founded with bassist John Myung and drummer Mike Portnoy as Majesty back in 1985 – to become one of the most enduring and successful prog metal bands of all time. As guitarist, writer, and producer, Petrucci has spearheaded Dream Theater's rise to prominence over the course of 16 studio albums that have yielded a total of over 12 million worldwide record sales, three Grammy nominations, and one Grammy win for 'Best Metal Performance' with the song 'Alien' from the 2021 album 'A View From The Top Of The World'. It's an achievement he tells me – with typical understatement – that he rates as "not bad."

Petrucci's latest contribution to the Dream Theater canon comes in the form of the band's new studio effort, 'Parasomnia', an eight-song prog metal extravaganza that our very own Dave Ling described in this issue's review as an album that has "exceeded all expectations" and "might

even be their defining statement." It's high praise indeed, and to celebrate this milestone achievement, we at *Rock Candy Mag* are delighted to bestow the honour of cover star status on Dream Theater.

No doubt this moment is particularly sweet for the magazine's owner Derek Oliver. Why? Because it's no exaggeration to say that Derek is one of the single most important and influential figures in the history of Dream Theater. It was Derek who signed the band to Atco Records in 1991 when he was working in the label's A&R department in New York. And it was that major label deal that proved to be the springboard for the group's enduring success.

"I don't honestly remember how we first came into contact with Derek," says Petrucci. "But what I do know is that he's an absolutely integral part of our story. It was because of him that Atco felt like the right label for us. Derek really understood the kind of band we were.

He got the prog thing. He got the metal thing. We were lucky to have him."

And now here we are, more than 30 years later, celebrating Dream Theater's incredible career through the lens of new release 'Parasomnia'. Isn't it great when things work out?

JOHN, IT'S WELL KNOWN THAT YOUR MUSICAL JOURNEY STARTED EARLY IN THE KINGS PARK AREA OF NEW YORK. BUT CAN YOU SET THE SCENE FOR US?

"Sure. When we were kids, [keyboardist] Kevin Moore lived right around the corner from me, and we became friends really early on. I started playing guitar when I was 12, and Kevin played piano. One of the first things that I ever played was at Kevin's house. He had some friends over and there was a guitar there. I don't even remember if it was mine or not, and they were