

NOT ONLY  
WOMEN BLEED

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NOT ONLY  
WOMEN BLEED

BY: DICK WAGNER

VIGNETTES FROM THE HEART  
OF A ROCK MUSICIAN

FOREWORD BY: ALICE COOPER

EDITED BY: SUSAN MICHELSON

DESERT DREAMS®  
BOOKS & MUSIC

# FOREWORD

*A few words from Alice Cooper*



“I first saw Dick Wagner while he was playing with The Frost in Detroit, and quickly I filed him under ‘guitar players I’d like to steal.’ Later I had the great pleasure of adding him to the *Welcome to My Nightmare* touring band, where along with Steve Hunter they became known as the ‘Dynamic Duo,’ a name given to them by Steven Tyler. He considers them two to be the best tandem American guitar players in Rock N Roll. But Dick isn’t JUST a guitar player...

He’s a gifted writer, and I wrote most of the post Alice Cooper Hits with him... ‘I Never Cry,’ ‘You and Me,’ ‘Only Women Bleed,’ ‘How You Gonna See Me Now,’ ‘Welcome to My Nightmare,’ and on the new album, ‘Something To Remember Me By’ were all Alice Cooper and Dick Wagner collaborations... Most of them all Top 40 Hits. My personal and musical friendship with Dick goes on and on, and thankfully it’s not over yet.”

— **Alice Cooper 2011**

# INTRODUCING MYSELF

***Hello Dear Reader,  
My name is Dick Wagner...***



I'm a Rock 'n Roll musician and songwriter with a story to tell.

I had been encouraged to write an autobiography, but I felt the notion of an autobiography was somehow a bit presumptuous and egomaniacal, so I began to put down my thoughts in a series of vignettes. This vignette approach means you can either start at the beginning—or basically open the book and start reading from any page you choose.

So here I am, sixty-nine years on my journey, and just egocentric enough to hope some people might actually be amused or touched by these simple stories from my life. It's taken me almost ten years of writing down memories to pass on to you, my family, friends, fans and co-workers, and you lovely complete strangers as well.

To my friends and fans, I recommend starting at the beginning and reading to the very end. Some of you may recognize yourselves in certain situations, or you might not. But you will certainly recognize and relate to many characters who probably had meaning in your lives, as well as mine.

However you decide to approach this book, I sincerely wish you peace and enjoyment on your reading journey.

Love and respect,

*“Walk a mile in another man’s shoes, and try to ignore the wet spot.”*

*I dedicate this book*

*To my son Robert  
Who lovingly understands his old man,  
And fearlessly follows in his footsteps.  
May God bless you my son and by the way... will you  
Please hand me that Piano?*

*To my late son, Michael,  
You are gone from our lives,  
But never from our hearts and minds.  
My love for you is steadfast and forever a part of my being.*

*And to dear Mark, my in-between son,  
We are connected and always will be.  
And that is very special to me.  
Whenever I see your face, I see myself.*

*Also to my daughter, Jasmine Dreame,  
I dedicate this book to you, my elusive and enigmatic child.  
I'd really like to know you, but read this and know that  
I've always loved you. In spite of our distance.*

*Reading this book may help you all understand.*

## A FAN LOOKS BACK



It's a Friday night in the fall of 2009, and my red Corvette is rolling west on Interstate 10, back home to Los Angeles. Just minutes ago I had left Dick Wagner's house in Phoenix. For the first time, I had met the man who had essentially written and performed the constant rock n' roll soundtrack of my life. From the moment when I got my first vinyl of an old album called "Welcome to My Nightmare" at age 5, then through my teenage years in Germany, with Dick's songs playing loudly in my room at homework time, all the way to my new life in California—Dick Wagner music was always a steady companion.

When I visited Dick that day, he pointed me to a "little project" he's been working on lately... the manuscript of the book that you now hold in your hands. I read it all through the night after I arrived back home in L.A. that evening—what a page turner —of full-out rock n' roll, with honest, wild and heartbreaking stories that describe show business and the life that comes with it in drastic reality.

Dick Wagner's influence is woven deeply into the universe of classic rock music, having resulted in more than 200 recognized albums, including more than 35 Gold and Platinum awards, Emmys, and numerous songwriter awards.

Growing up in Michigan, Dick founded his first band "The Bossmen" and scored radio coverage with his composition. His next band, "The Frost," was formed in the late '60s and built up a significant following in Michigan and area. The band released several powerful albums before Dick formed the short-lived group "Ursa Major" and released one self-titled album.

Technically skilled enough by then to reach for the stars, Dick was soon recruited into Lou Reed's touring band along with guitar genius Steve Hunter. The guitar-dueling duo Hunter & Wagner has been best known for the intro to the *Rock n' Roll Animal* live album song "Sweet Jane." Many famous guitarists, leading critics and major publications have rated this section as one of the best guitar solos of all times.

Growing even more legendary for his revolutionary collaborations with Alice Cooper—for whom he was musical director, lead guitarist and

co-writer of the icon's biggest hits, including "Only Women Bleed," "You and Me" and "I Might As Well Be On Mars"—Dick Wagner was Cooper's partner in crime on such groundbreaking albums as *Welcome to My Nightmare*, *Alice Cooper Goes to Hell*, *Lace and Whiskey*, *From the Inside* and *Da Da*. Together, the team Cooper and Wagner wrote most of Alice Cooper's top selling singles and albums, including more than 50 songs that are featured on 22 Alice Cooper albums as of today, and still counting.

Coming from Detroit, Dick Wagner was one of the driving forces that defined an era in rock history by playing lead guitar or writing songs for Aerosmith, Kiss, Lou Reed, Peter Gabriel, Meat Loaf, Rod Stewart, Tina Turner, Air Supply, Hall & Oates, Ringo Starr, Guns & Roses, Tori Amos, and many more.

Nearly 50 years into his illustrious career, hit songwriter, guitar virtuoso, celebrated producer and arranger Dick Wagner remains a creative and vibrant force in American music, recently touring the Detroit area again and also in hot preparation of a new studio album.

In his deliciously scandalous Sex, Drugs and Rock n' Roll memoir *Not Only Women Bleed*, Dick Wagner exposes all the drama that life brings, some dreams achieved and some dreams destroyed. Here is one of America's best guitar players telling tales from the inside of rock music royalty and its colorful entourage.

So enjoy this ride, and if you wake up angry with a broken guitar and naked women piled all over you, plus a bad hangover, chart-breaking lyrics written on the wall, and a tour manager banging on your hotel room door, you likely are still sleeping through a rock n' roll nightmare conceived once again, brilliantly, by Mr. Dick Wagner. Read on... for true Rock n' Roll.

— **Jörn Kleinhans**  
**President**  
**Fulbright Association,**  
**Greater Los Angeles**



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## OELWEIN... MY MOMENT OF AWAKENING



I woke up screaming and wondering, “What the fuck? Where am I? And who am I?” It was December 14, 1942, in Mercy Hospital in Oelwein, Iowa. And I was Little Dickie Wagner, age zero and counting.

I opened my eyes to a world beyond any possibility of recognizing or comprehending. An entire future awaited me, with the wonder of music, altered states, and romance destined to unfold their powerful wings and sweep me up on a ride that my little mind, heart, and penis could never have imagined.

Sex, drugs, and rock ‘n’ roll lay far ahead on my journey... three major parts of this *Baby Boy’s* future existence.



## AND NOW A FEW STORIES FROM MY LIFE...



**O**n my way to Bay City, Michigan, from my home in Saginaw, I had several minutes to mentally prepare myself for my upcoming birthday concert at the historic State Theatre. The building had recently been restored to its original art deco look, and my concert was the first rock concert to be held in its six hundred seat main room. The seats were pretty much sold out in advance, and walk-up patrons would undoubtedly fill the remaining seats by show time.

It was 2002 and it had been more than forty years since my first gig. Still, I went through the same ritual of envisioning the evening's performance, just as I had for every gig in the intervening years. From the beginning of my musical career, I expected a great deal from myself, and this event was no different.

As I let the years unwind in my imagination, I was reminded of how much I had achieved as a musician and as a songwriter. My songwriting and guitar playing had been featured on tens of millions of albums worldwide. Although each musical achievement was extraordinary, there were certain special moments that rang through and stood out in my mind—moments of good fortune, outrageous behavior, and music as my universal backdrop.

My story is not altogether different from many artists living the rock 'n' roll lifestyle. Like so many, I fell into a drug-controlled period of existence that quite literally took me to the edge of death, but I chose to live. That part of my story is nothing I enjoy speaking about, but I will examine some of these moments as we go along, if you have the patience to let it all unfold naturally. Care to continue?

Fortunately, living the rock 'n' roll lifestyle put me in contact with much more than drugs. It introduced me to a many great musicians and artists, and it allowed me to collaborate and travel with a select few. These are the events and the people who shaped my life for so many years.

# PART ONE



## JERRY LEE LEWIS



I was a junior in high school when Jerry Lee Lewis became a phenomenon and helped to shape the newly born art form known as rock and roll. Most parents in the 1950s didn't understand this popular new music, with its sexual, racial and sometimes animalistic overtones. I spent many a night sitting in the family room in my home in Waterford, Michigan, enraptured by "Whole Lotta Shakin'" on my 45 RPM record player, trying to emulate his vocals while thoroughly entranced by the intensity of the song, the ambiance of the recording and the totally original vocal delivery by Jerry Lee. I had just recently begun learning to play the guitar, so I tried to play along with some degree of success.

There was no one out there with quite the reckless intensity of Jerry Lee, and he was white, unlike my other idols, Little Richard and Chuck Berry. Jerry Lee captured the same sexual, passionate, and rhythmic emotions that, until then, were heard almost exclusively in what were then called "race records." A black man in white skin. It gave me chills. At that time, I was a middle class white kid with absolutely no exposure to black people outside of those I discovered on the radio. Living just one hundred miles north of Detroit, I was still unaware of the burgeoning Motown movement, which would eventually bring the black world into my upstate home and consciousness.

When Jerry Lee blew into Michigan on an early promotional tour, my band was asked to back him up on a few dates around Detroit and other parts of Michigan. We had recently morphed from a four-guitar noise fest into a two-guitar, bass, drums standard line-up rock band. We had the instrumentation, the youthful energy, and the balls to meet the guy and back him up. It was my first taste of "big time" showbiz.

We were all set up in the Ortonville, Michigan roller rink and Jerry Lee was late. We stood out in the parking lot for many restless and worried moments, waiting for the great man to arrive... And arrive he did, in a brand new emerald green Cadillac. Braking to a stop just a few feet from us young boys, he jumped out of the back seat. With a bottle of Jack Daniels in hand, he hollered, "The killer has arrived!"

Somehow, I knew it was going to be an interesting evening after all. It's hard to describe how it felt to stand on stage and make music with such a great performer. But I know this: that night I learned the lesson of taking command of your audience, of reaching out to them and pulling them in. It's not enough to simply play your instrument well. You need to sell the act of playing at the same time.

## THE RADIO & ELVIS



There were two distinct moments in my life that forever molded my future. Actually there were others, but these two were connected to the radio.

I was a sixth grader in Jane Addams Junior High in Royal Oak, Michigan, sitting in the school lunchroom and eating a hamburger on a normal school kid day. Radio broadcasts were allowed in the cafeteria at lunchtime. I was always into the music, but on this particular day, I was astounded by a music I'd never heard before. A guy with the weird name of Elvis Presley sang a song called "Heartbreak Hotel." I couldn't believe what I'd just heard. What a fantastic sound. What a crazy name.

I became, in that moment, an Elvis Presley fan for life, although I'm not into the idolatry shown to him today by so many of his hero worshippers. My Elvis fanhood kind of peaked with "Jailhouse Rock," but I still love his early records. In fact, the album *Elvis* was the first LP I ever owned, and "Heartbreak Hotel" was one of the first 45s I ever owned.

"Heartbreak Hotel," written by Mae Axton (mother of Hoyt Axton), with Tommy Durden and Elvis, was an original country blues gone pop. A defining combination of elements with a sexy guy to deliver it, "Heartbreak Hotel" was the fuel that propelled the sky-high flight of Elvis Presley's career. I still love the song. It was an early lesson for me in songwriting and the blues and how a song can have an emotional impact on a growing boy's lunch hour.

I was inspired by Elvis's recordings, the Jordanaires' vocal backgrounds, Scotty Moore on guitar, Bill Black on bass, D.J. Fontana on drums, and the raw, early recordings by legendary Sun Records producer, Sam Phillips.

These men were strongly instrumental in establishing the sound of early rock ‘n’ roll, even though Elvis was the magical focal point of this gospel/blues/country fusion.

Elvis was an early and major influence on my life. I tried to emulate him—from my obsession with singing Elvis songs, to sporting an Elvis hair-do, to wearing shackled blue jeans and white collared shirts open in front with the collar raised in back. I loved and was fascinated by his music. I remember arguing with my father about Elvis’s viability as a singer. I truly believed Elvis was a great singer with a powerful and melodious voice, singing new, original, and important songs. Dear old Dad thought the opposite. When Dad was home, Elvis, and in fact, every rock ‘n’ roll band or singer, were not allowed to take up airspace in my house, which was really my dad’s house, a point he made very clearly and very often.

## MY UNCLE JOHN



Christmas at my grandparents’ homes was always steeped in mystery and anticipation, especially at my mother’s parents’ house, Grandma and Grandpa King. There was always a big old Christmas tree, tons of packages under the tree, and much joy in being with family.

My brother Steve and I would sing for everybody—harmony and all. After dinner, we would all gather in front of the tree and sing Christmas songs and old traditional songs like “John Henry” and “This Land is Your Land.” It always felt a little scary to do the annual Christmas “concert,” and then I would glance at the Christmas tree, imagining the many gifts waiting to be opened. And suddenly, the bird did sing.

My Uncle John played the guitar and it was from him that I got my first taste of the wondrous reality of the sound of the instrument. I was fascinated and curious, but I was told not to touch the guitar for fear I would break it. I was 10 years old so I obeyed, but I was intrigued and determined to someday play the guitar. It was my maternal grandmother King who taught me my first three chords. I’d like to thank her, but she has long since passed on. Thanks anyway, Granny!

Every year, the ritual of singing songs at holidays with Uncle John on guitar was a high point of my young life. At my dad's parents' house, we shared music as well. Both Aunt Roberta and Aunt Eleanor played piano, and all the kids would stand there and sing the songs accompanied by one or the other of my aunts. Family fun and a terrific emotional memory for me.

## FISHIN' WITH GRANDPA



When I turned 12 years old, my parents dropped me off to spend a summer with Grandma and Grandpa Wagner. There in my own room was a minor miracle—a RADIO. That radio became my whole summer, as I discovered Johnny Cash, The Mills Brothers, The Four Aces, Patsy Cline, Teresa Brewer, and the many songs and artists of the late 1940s and '50s that permeated the Oelwein, Iowa airwaves in that time and place.

Between my grandfather's tirades at my grandmother and his beating my aunts for "bumming around" and discovering boys, my bedroom with my radio became my safe place to hide away for most of that summer.

Now and then, Grandpa would take me fishing at Buck Creek, and we'd spend the entire day, from 5 a.m. till dusk, just sitting there with two cane poles, a sack lunch, and a relentless sun kicking my scrawny ass. Restless and bored, I learned to hate fishing. I almost never caught a fish, and Grandpa didn't break any records either—a catfish here, a crappie there.

On one of our fishing trips, he warned me about masturbation, telling me, "a man only has 3,000 loads of cum, so pace yourself, son." I hadn't ever masturbated and didn't have a freaking clue as to what he was talking about. I've now been cumming and counting all my life and I'm way past 3,000, so I guess Gramps was full of shit. He died at 93 years old, cantankerous and abusive to my grandma right to the end.

They were both Germans from the old country and very spirited people. Grandma Wagner was a great cook, very intelligent and loving, while Grandpa Wagner was a crotchety old fart with a mean temper, yet with a rare soft heart at times. He believed Germany should be re-armed

and returned to world power. Hmmmm I wonder what happened to that idea, Grandpa.

## TREACHEROUS TERRAIN



It was the 1950s, and I was unaware of much that raged on around me. As a child entering my teenage years, I saw the world primarily through the eyes of my parents and their beliefs and prejudices. I was a straight “A” student with a measured I.Q. of 142; and so, I became an avid reader of just about anything available to me, but I remained politically naïve for many years to come.

I had a lot of friends and two or three close friends—guys and girls I could talk to in a greater depth of understanding and substance than I ever could with my family. Freddie Greenleaf and I, along with our friend Jim Woods, used to sit down at the corner of Malcolm Street and Cooley Lake Road in the summers late at night and dream big ideas about getting motorcycles and riding to California—just as soon as we got out of high school. We pictured ourselves with our guitars and our unstoppable charm, winning over young starlets in Hollywood. Straight from Malcolm Street to Sunset Boulevard. How to do it? Must come into some money.

This is where the dream got scary. Somehow the notion to rob the Kroger Store came up, and as a trio, we began to map out a plan to invade the store with shotguns and shake down the crew and rob the place. A mighty adventure on paper. A little more frightening in person.

I suddenly saw where this was leading us restless young boys. And so I began to drop out of our regular street corner meetings, in order to regain my total sanity before something tragic were to happen. Just talking about this criminal activity scared the you-know-what out of me.

The Kroger store did not suffer a robbery. The plans (along with the rudimentary diagrams) were cast to the winds. Sadly, I never made it to California on a motorcycle. I eventually did make it to California on my first trip with The Frost, to play some dates in the late 1960s. Freddie is

gone; Jim is missing and unaccounted for in my life, and I am entering my third childhood.

## HE'S GOIN' FOR THE LONG SHOT



**A**s a kid, I was plagued with a severe case of asthma, which left me out of most sporting events. I loved basketball and was determined to overcome and try out for the Junior High team. I was a rather frail kid, and standing among the super healthy and normal jocks, I was not an imposing picture.

Still my heart was into making the team, so I waited patiently while everyone else got chosen for the first try out teams. Since I was last chosen, the coach tossed the ball to me and said, “Take it out, kid” whereupon I took the ball and ran outside the school, not realizing that “Take it out,” meant take it to the sidelines and throw the ball into play. Out of bounds, goofus. Humiliated and with head hung low, I took the ball to the locker room and didn’t go near the basketball court again. I have never, ever been so embarrassed.

For years, the vision of that try-out for the basketball team caused me to get goose bumps every time it crossed my mind. Later on, when a woman would say, “Take it out,” I’d leave it in on purpose. So there, Coach.

## MY WINTER OF DISCONTENT



**T**here were bad things happening in my life at sixteen. Two of my friends and I decided to “explore” the criminal side of life. We were young and all from dysfunctional families and inherently rebellious spirits. So we embarked upon a winter of discontent and criminal deeds, which included auto theft (joy riding), breaking and entering (summer cottages on Union Lake), and drinking (beer and Crème de Cacao.) Big mistake. Violent



vomiting in the snow as the spoils of our caper. And besides, it was dead winter, and we froze our asses off.

We never took anything from any of the sixteen cottages that we broke into (aside from the Crème de Cacao). We did it just for the thrill of being punks, I guess. The cars were always left a mile or so from whence they came, and they were laboriously and nervously wiped clean of any possible fingerprints. What a group of big time crooks we were. Eventually, we got caught by the police while going into an empty cottage on the lake. We were put on probation with the threat of maximum-security prison in the future if we did not immediately change our ways. I was secretly happy to have been caught, so the pain in the pit of my stomach could finally go away. Being a criminal is not fun.

Dad gave in and bought me my first guitar, right after my reign of terror—a Harmony Acoustic. Very pretty, but not so easy to play. Good enough for a 16-year-old beginner, I suppose. And so, I began to use music as a serious outlet for my need to act out. I became a lovingly tolerated irritant in the family life with my constant practicing, night and day. While the family watched their favorite TV shows, I plunked and twanged until my dad would say, “Get off that E string, will you? It’s driving me insane!” Off to the bedroom or the basement I would slink, the lonely rejected artist, misunderstood and unappreciated in his own time (and learning to play the guitar very well, and very quickly, I might add).

## I WAS A TEENAGE POPCORN PUSHER



**A**s part of my transition from childhood to adulthood, I needed to learn a viable work ethic, which meant, “Sorry son, if you want money, I suggest you get a job.” It was 1960, and the summer of Alfred Hitchcock’s monumental film, *Psycho*.

I read in the paper that the local drive-in movie theatre was hiring refreshment stand workers for the summer. Being a horror film, hard-core adrenalin junkie, I jumped at the chance to work behind the counter and watch *Psycho* for free through the refreshment stand window. The first

couple of nights watching *Psycho* were an exciting experience and a great film as well. However, on day thirty of my employment and special point of view, I swore I could not be a *Psycho* fan even one day longer. I walked out of the popcorn stand just as Janet Leigh was about to spill blood for the thirtieth time and became an unemployed teenager once again, like so many of us during that period of life.

It may have been this prolonged encounter with Alfred Hitchcock's atmospheric masterpiece that fully prepared me for my imaginative and life shaking years with Alice Cooper. In some ways, my life since my popcorn pushing days has been a bit of a horror show, but the pay has been better. I do mourn the demise of the drive-in theatre as a place of passionate refuge for the lonely teenage soul and the financially needy teenage wallet.

## LITTLE RICHARD



The other seminal radio event in my life was the first time I heard “Tutti Frutti” by the legend himself, Little Richard. I think Little Richard was perhaps the greatest influence ever on me musically. His music created my intense love for pure rock ‘n’ roll.

How do you describe the feeling of walking into your junior high school dance and hearing the outrageous truth of “Long Tall Sally” blasting over the P.A.? I was just a boy then, but I’ve never had an orgasm that could render me as helplessly joy-filled as that moment. I collected and wore out every one of his records on the *Specialty* label.

I came in contact with the father of rock ‘n’ roll on three other occasions in the future...

Once, we met at the Continental Hyatt House in Los Angeles, where we sat and talked for a couple of hours. Actually, Little Richard did most of the talking. He loved Alice Cooper and, of course, took credit for Alice’s success, along with the Beatles, The Stones, and everyone he could think of—an ego unparalleled, but deservedly so.

Another encounter with Little Richard was in the late ‘60s at the Grande Ballroom, the Detroit center of rock ‘n’ roll. My band, The Frost,

was on a bill with Johnny Winter and the venue was at overflow capacity. Late in the evening, in walked Mitch Ryder, the legendary Detroit rock singer, announcing the pending arrival of Little Richard himself. We got all set up—Johnny Winter, Mitch Ryder, me, and The Frost—ready to welcome Little Richard. It was a steamy Saturday night, over ninety degrees inside the Grande, and three thousand kids were milling about, waiting and waiting. At last, in strolls Richard... wearing a suit made of mirrors... shining, reflecting the lights. Outrageous. And totally cool beyond cool.

Little Richard joined us onstage, and we hit “Good Golly Miss Molly” like an express train downtown. The audience went wild, and I was in rock ‘n’ roll heaven.

The next time I met up with Richard was during a recording session in Los Angeles, where I was producing a CD for Geffen Records for a group known as, The Throbs. There was a song that called for a Little Richard type piano part, and everyone wanted the master himself to play it. So the guys in the band went to the Hyatt House (Richard’s place of residence), to persuade the great man to sit in on a CD by a totally unknown band, something Richard had never done before. After lookin’ pretty and talkin’ fast, the guys did persuade Richard to come on out to the valley and make a guest appearance on their CD.

Three hours later, Richard shows up in his white stretch limo, ruffled sleeves, silk jacket, and smelling like a Chanel #5 commercial. What a scene—me directing my boyhood idol on my own production, with me dancing in the control room (at Richard’s request), in order to “inspire” his playing. A-wompbomma-looma a-womp-bam-boom!

Little Richard just has to be the greatest rock ‘n’ roller of all time. And the most flamboyant. LORD, that perfume!

## RAY SPEAKS TO ME



**D**id you ever hear a song that literally knocked you off your feet and changed your musical perceptions? I had that happen to me when I was maybe seventeen and a senior in high school. It was Ray Charles

Bending over backwards  
to please my fans.



WILDMAN! Pete Woodman,  
me, Warren Keith.



A pack of wild female  
creatures, under the  
Bossmen spell.



Rock royalty engenders rock loyalty from the Bossmen: L to R: Pete Woodman, Jerry Lee Lewis, Dick Wagner, Lanny Roenicke, Warren Keith.

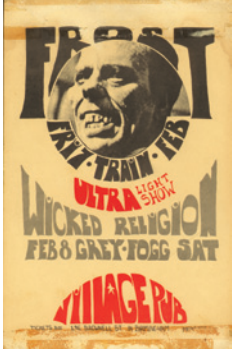
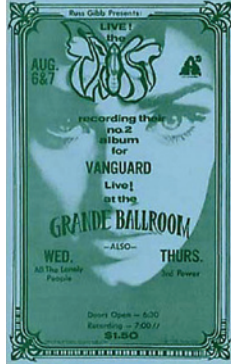
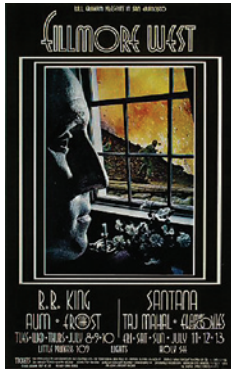
The Bossmen in blue velvet.



Another Saturday night with Lanny and Warren.

Dick Wagner and The Frost for Vanguard Records: From top: Gordy Garris, Donny Hartman, me, and Bobby Rigg, 1969.





Special nights with The Frost.

Which way to Woodstock?



URSA MAJOR  
Exclusively on RCA



RCA Records and Tapes

Ursa Major:  
Greg Arama,  
Rick Mangone,  
Dick Wagner,  
1972.

With Lou Reed,  
Rock n Roll Animal European tour.



Tickets from around the world.







In the studio, recording  
 Welcome to My Nightmare:  
 Joey Chirowski, Prakash  
 John, Dick Wagner,  
 Whitey Glan, Alice  
 Cooper, Steve Hunter.



Welcome to My Nightmare, Antwerp.

Welcome to My Nightmare.



NIGHTMARE BAND: from top left:  
 Prakash John, Whitey (Pentti) Glan,  
 Joey Chirowski, Dick Wagner, Steve Hunter.

live, singing “Drown in My Own Tears,” from the *Genius of Ray Charles* album.

Someone once said to me, “It’s more than the notes you play; it’s the space between the notes.” Ray Charles was a musician who had complete command—not only over the notes, but also of the spaces between them. He conveyed the essence of intense feeling in the delivery of every song he performed. But “Drown in My Own Tears” was, in my opinion, the finest example of the band, the singer, and the song, coming together in soulful harmony. The Ray Charles band, his girl trio, the Raelettes, and Ray himself played the song so simply, and with deliberate command of space and tempo, creating an emotional intensity I’d never heard before. Completely blew me away.

“Drown in My Own Tears,” recorded in 1956 and first heard by me several years later, remains as powerful today as the first time I heard it. I love his entire body of work, but I’ve been inspired especially by “The Night Time Is the Right Time,” and “Let the Good Times Roll,” along with his spectacular duet with Willy Nelson, “Seven Spanish Angels.”

Ray Charles was perhaps the greatest musical force in all of recorded American music. He left an indelible imprint on my soul and in my attempts to deliver my music with passion and honesty. I was a young white boy from Michigan and feeling totally moved by a master of the blues and soul... That was me.

## THE INVICTAS



**T**he Invictas, my first band, was a four-man group, all of whom were guitar players. It happened by pure happenstance, serendipity, or whatever. I was about 17 years old and had been attempting to play my Harmony acoustic guitar for a couple months. I was making progress by copying Duane Eddy songs. Playing by ear, I had conquered “Forty Miles of Bad Road” and “Cannon Ball” and was quite proud of myself. One day, while driving my mom’s 1954 Buick, I came upon a hitchhiker with a guitar.

## A FRIEND LOOKS INWARD

### Afterthoughts from Dr. Gil Markle



**R**ichard Wagner, the German, is arguably the most influential writer-composer-arranger to have impacted the Western world of music during the 19th century, and, with Lennon-McCartney set temporarily aside for history to have its cool say, the greatest writer-composer-arranger of all time.

Pronounced “Vahg-ner,” not Wagner, this man from Leipzig, Germany wrote musical operatic scores for large orchestras which astounded audiences with what then amounted to a “wall of sound.” I was soon to find that this was the same musical approach used by new guest at the studio, the modern day Richard (Dick) Wagner.

This should explain my reaction when I was told, by my studio manager, that the premises had just been booked for a month’s time, and deposited in cash, by a group of well-known music business “movers and shakers” on behalf of Tim Curry—the artist fresh off his startling success with *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*—these movers and shakers co-captained by the acclaimed musician-composer Michael Kamen, from New York City, and by his friend and colleague from the Midwest, Richard (Dick) Wagner.

I would find an opportunity, shortly after the arrival of the entourage one day in 1979, to have a word or two with Dick Wagner about his German namesake, Richard Wagner.

“Dick,” I said, “you share a name with one of the world’s greatest people in music. You’ve got to have some thoughts about that. You’re Richard Wagner, too.”

“Not so loud,” Dick said. “Got a piano player in the band who’d take offense. She’d flip out hearing us talk about that anti-Semitic German.”

“Sure, Dick, the guy had some opinions on what should happen when you get “delivered” by a musical experience. What motivated Wagner is interesting though. Basically it was *the missing female*.” Wagner believed the male player alone is flawed, lacking and incomplete. That he needs to be made whole, to be delivered, and to be redeemed. And that redemption is something that only the application of female energy can bring about.

“Fucked-up male made whole by a woman at his side,” Dick offered. There was always a woman at Dick’s side, it seemed.

In the weeks and months to come, Dick Wagner and I became fast friends. We found ourselves in a seeming automatic agreement on all matters involving activities scheduled at the studio, and flew around in the twin-engine Cessna to weekend ourselves in a big city nearby, or to fly his session-musician friends back into the countryside for days at a time, during which there would occur little sleep for anyone involved.

So here in the countryside of Massachusetts, we heard the stylings of a sweet American man in his early thirties, able to express music so powerfully as to bring himself to tears while writing songs on the keyboard of a Steinway piano, and yanking stadium-grade amplified majesty out of the wire strings and metal frets of an amplified Gibson Les Paul guitar.

“You going to bed so early?” This was Dick Wagner speaking, sitting on the cat bench in front of the fireplace, one night about midnight. The session had shut down early. Tim Curry had put down a rough reference vocal on “I Do the Rock,” and didn’t like it, and went to bed. Mark Parenteau, the celebrated disk jockey from WBCN, in Boston, had just swilled down what was left of his drink, made his apologies, and made his exit. Everybody else was down in the game room, watching videos.

“Come here for a minute, I want to talk to you.”

I approached the cat bench, eager to please.

“Listen,” Dick said. “They’re all outta’ here. It’s still early. Let me play you a few tunes on the piano. A couple of them are songs for Tim. We need a quick tape of them in any case. What happened that night in North Brookfield is Dick went into the studio, and sat down behind the Steinway. I went into the control room, emptied out the ashtrays and put a reel of two-inch tape on the tape machine. The piano was already miked. An E flat chord on the piano struck sharply by Richard Wagner would sail courageously out into time—his energy alive and the needed female passionately felt in his stories.

*“A heart steeped in Romance can never be satisfied. It is always following the mystical pull of an imaginary future that must be so much better than what it is experiencing at any given moment. I had a Romantic heart. I followed its challenge to know all, love all, see all, and be all. When you are unable to do these basic things, you turn to your music and to destructive behavior to numb the pain of unfulfilled romantic dreams and aspirations.”*

— **Dick Wagner**

Again, in Dick’s own words, as propelled into cyberspace in the studio that night in North Brookfield, Massachusetts:

*If you love me, leave a message on my service, if you need me, leave a number I can call... if you’re lonely, drop a letter... should I phone you, from the pay phone down the hall... should I sit here, on this barstool, till I fall.*

*If you love me, leave a message on my service, ‘cause you know I don’t deserve this slice of life... if you love me, leave a message on my service, ‘cause I just won’t sleep, till I hear from you tonight.*

*... but in this motel, on the outskirts of Toledo, you know the only thing I see, is my reflection in the bottle, in front of me.*

— **Dick Wagner, Alice Cooper, Bernie Taupin**

Dr. Gil Markle  
Black Rock, Tobago

**This book could not be as filled with truth and feeling as it is without the favored contributions of the following friends:**

Alice Cooper, Alex Cyrell, Bo White, Bob Babbitt, Bobby Flores, Bobby Rigg, Brian and Mark Pastoria, Dan Kingen, Dave Wagner, David Libert, Don Richard, Donny Hartman, Doreen Shore, Fred Mandel, Dr. Gary Telgenhoff, Gil Markle, Greg Sweet, Herb Wollny, Irv Burt, James St James, Jerry Lebloch, Jessica Cyrell, Jim Kalson, John Peacock, Judy Wagner, Karen Haggerty, Lanny Roenicke, Lawrence Spagnola, Lee Davey, Leo Najar, Linda (Smith) Bischoff, Liz Miesch, Maria Brunner, Marilyn Weishaar, Mark Schuknecht, Mary Ann Reynolds-Burt, Matt Leach, Pete Woodman, Prakash John, Ralphie Cafuoco, Randall Michelson, Robert Wagner, Ron Volz, Ryan Sparks, Sam Charters, Steve Hunter, Steve Miller, Suzanne Copley, Tawny Ellis, Terry Barckholtz, Thomas Lubinski, Tom Wright, Tony D'Annunzio, Victory Tischler-Blue, Vivian Rae, The staff of the Coffee Plantation in Scottsdale, Arizona, where Suzy Michelson and I sat many hours writing and editing this book.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**D**ick Wagner is an American songwriter, lead guitar player, producer and author. Wagner's songs and lead guitar have been featured on more than 200 renowned albums, garnering more than 35 Platinum and Gold records, BMI songwriter awards, and numerous prestigious international awards. The Detroit area native helped define an era in rock history by playing lead guitar or writing songs for Alice Cooper, Aerosmith, Kiss, Lou Reed, Peter Gabriel, Meat Loaf, Steve Perry, Etta James, Rod Stewart, Tina Turner, Air Supply, Hall & Oates, Ringo Starr, Guns & Roses, Tori Amos, Frank Sinatra, and dozens of others.

Dick Wagner's fans and friends call him "The Maestro of Rock." Wagner lives in Fountain Hills, Arizona with his wife and three chihuahas.



## THE MUSIC INSIDE

So it's a book... Why the music?



'Cause I want you to know how much I appreciate you buying the book! *Full Meltdown* is a collection of fifteen of my long lost recordings, songs written with some of my favorite co-writers and played with some of my favorite musicians...

*In The Box* is an introduction to the music of my friend Dr. Gary Telgenhoff and his musical vehicle named "SkinnerRat." I played guitar on "SkinnerRat," much to my betterment as a fully functional human being...

Together, these CDs are a gift from me to you, for supporting my venture into authorship and to provide background ambience while you read.

### THANK YOU ALL

From the heart of a rock musician

#### CD 1.

#### FULL MELTDOWN DICK WAGNER

*15 lost songs recorded by Dick Wagner between 1979 and 1995.*

- Still Hungry** (Dick Wagner, Alan Hewitt)
- Blue Collar Babies** (Dick Wagner, Mark Williamson),
- Insatiable Girl** (Dick Wagner, Dennis Morgan)
- I'd Take the Bullet** (Dick Wagner)
- Another Twist of the Knife** (Dick Wagner, John Wetton)
- Stagger Lee** (Lloyd Price, Harold Logan)
- Ecstasy** (Dick Wagner)
- She Said** (Dick Wagner)
- These Days** (Dick Wagner)
- Modern Times** (Dick Wagner)
- I Might As Well Be On Mars** (Dick Wagner, Alice Cooper, Desmond Child)
- Steal the Thunder** (Dick Wagner, Dennis Morgan)
- Darkest Hour** (Dick Wagner)
- Motor City Showdown** (Dick Wagner)
- Feel It All Over** (Dick Wagner)



CD 1. continued

***The Musicians:***

**Lead Guitars and Vocals:** Dick Wagner.

**Rhythm Guitars:** Jeff Morley, Chuck McKenna.

**Bass Guitar:** Jay Henshall, Matt Bissonnette,  
Ian Gardiner, Brad Hallen.

**Keyboards:** Norman Jolly, Fred Mandel,  
Dick Wagner, Mark Williamson, Dave Branch.

**Drums:** Greg Schroeder, Gregg Bissonnette, Jack White, John Sands.

**Darkest Hour, These Days, I Might As Well Be On Mars:**

Dick Wagner, all instruments and vocals.

***Recorded***

Long View Farm, North Brookfield MA, Trax Studio, Los Angeles CA,  
Soundside, Lawrence MA, Music Grinder, Los Angeles CA,  
Fenton Woods Studio, Fenton, MI, Disc, Ltd., Eastpointe MI

***Produced by Dick Wagner***

**Executive Producers:** Susan Michelson, Alex Cyrell, Gil Markle  
Stereo re-mix by Gil Markle for Desert Dreams Productions, LLC  
and [www.studiowner.com](http://www.studiowner.com)

Desert Dreams Global Music, BMI and Spirit Music Group, BMI  
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**CD 2.**

**SkinnerRat**  
**In the Box**

Written, Produced, Performed, Recorded by  
Dr. Gary Telgenhoff (DrT)  
Ratzass Productions, Inc. ASCAP © 2002  
www.SkinnerRat.com

<b>Flags on the Pickup Trucks</b>	<b>Trite and Small</b>
<b>Entropy</b>	<b>Monkey Spunk</b>
<b>Pain and Pleasure</b>	<b>Save Me from Myself</b>
<b>Traitor's Kiss</b>	<b>Wings Tied Down</b>
<b>Food Chain</b>	<b>Too Close to the Flame</b>
<b>White Coat</b>	

**Drums, All Vocals, Backing Guitars, Keyboards,  
Concept, Artwork, Layout, Design, Telgenhoff**

*Featuring*

**DICK WAGNER**

All lead guitar

*Recorded*

WMG Downtown Digital Studios, Saginaw, Michigan  
with the exception of

**SAVE ME FROM MYSELF:**

(Telgenhoff, Ratzass Productions, Inc., Las Vegas, NV)

**FOOD CHAIN:**

(Jeff Bower, Digital Media Co-op, Las Vegas, NV)

Mixed by Bower/Telgenhoff, Mastered by Jeff Bower