

NEIL GIRALDO – BIOGRAPHY

Neil "Spyder" James Giraldo, has been a professional musician, producer, arranger and songwriter for over four decades now, changing the face of the pop charts throughout the 1980s with his collaborator, muse and wife, Pat Benatar. More than just an explosive steel-bending guitar player, Giraldo's innovative vision helped him create the signature Benatar sound, from its inception.

His impressive back catalog includes more than 100 songs written, produced, arranged and recorded for Benatar, as well as many hits he helped create for John Waite, Rick Springfield (Number One, Grammy-winning classic "Jessie's Girl" and Top Ten hit "I've Done Everything For You" included), Kenny Loggins (Top Twenty hit "Don't Fight It" – also Grammy-nominated), Steve Forbert, The Del Lords, Beth Hart and countless others.

Giraldo began his career in 1978, as a key member of the Rick Derringer band, after beating out 200 other guitarists for the position. It wasn't long before Rick discovered Neil's piano-playing prowess and quickly put those skills to work in the studio as well, while recording *Guitars and Women*.

In the spring of 1979, producer and writer, Mike Chapman, introduced Giraldo to an up and coming singer who had recently signed to Chrysalis Records. While impressed with the young vocalist, Chapman felt she needed a musical director/partner who could establish a more aggressive sound. The vocalist was, of course, Pat Benatar and, in Giraldo she found someone as strong as her, someone who could match the same fire-power, someone who could inspire, while being inspired by her.

Shortly afterwards, the world was introduced to Giraldo and Benatar's enduring partnership and rock 'n' roll love affair via her platinum 1979 debut album, *In The Heat Of The Night*, which included the classic "Heartbreaker", as well as the Giraldo-penned hit, "We Live For Love".

The following year, Benatar and Giraldo cemented their place in music history forever, by being the first female and first guitarist, respectively, to ever appear on MTV, with the video for "You Better Run", taken from 1980's *Crimes of Passion* – an album that also included the Grammy-winning, gold-certified single, "Hit Me With Your Best Shot".

1981's *Precious Time* outdid its predecessor and with Giraldo now officially at the helm as producer, it delivered a second Grammy for Benatar. The Giraldo/Benatar partnership continued to be an increasingly unstoppable force with *Get Nervous*, which featured yet another Grammy-winner, *Shadows of the Night*.

After their wedding in 1982, the pair released their biggest hit yet with the Grammy-winning "Love Is a Battlefield", taken from the *Live From Earth* album, which featured Giraldo's most innovative production to date, creating a thundering, rock 'n' roll soundscape out of what had started as a somber, acoustic demo.

They closed off the decade with 1989's *True Love* – an ahead of its time, ultra-stylized recording for the contemporary market, inspired by the sound of the Count Basie Band - one of Giraldo's piano-playing idols - and by the Big Joe Turner/Roomful of Blues record, 1984's *Blues Train*.

Thus, Giraldo and Benatar took over radios, TVs, jukeboxes, turntables and car stereos around the world, throughout the 1980s and beyond, exciting fans and selling millions of copies of their twelve original albums, as well as two live records and an anthology.

Neil Giraldo was born in 1955 in Cleveland, Ohio. Eternally immersed in the Sicilian culture of their ancestry, parents Anthony and Angela bought Neil his first guitar at the age of six, in the hope that he and big sister Priscilla might serenade the family with songs from the old country. Neil's Uncle Tim, who was only four years older, had different ideas, however, and introduced Neil to bands like The Yardbirds, The Kinks, The Rolling Stones and all the other great guitar-driven rock 'n' roll bands of the 1960s. It was a move that was to change Neil's path forever.

Finding new and innovative ways to shadow path his way into songs, Giraldo formed a habit early on of, not just playing along with his favorite artists, but writing different parts for himself within those tracks. At the same time, the budding guitar wizard also became proficient on piano by playing along to Chuck Berry and Jerry Lee Lewis records, and played drums to Simon & Garfunkel albums to explore how different rhythms could change the complexion of the songs. These were habits and practices that would go on to give Benatar's biggest hits – like "Love is a Battlefield" and "We Belong" – their truly unique identity.

Today, Giraldo's career is as dynamic as ever, as he is in the process of completing two books – one an autobiographical novel, one a coffee table book - as well performing in a new band project with Scott Kempner from the Del Lords/Dictators and Ron Young from Little Caesar. He is also further expanding his Bel Chiasso entertainment company, which develops a variety of television and film projects. In addition, he has also opened up his large vault of unreleased, unfinished songs and will be completing and releasing various new tracks with Benatar, as well as with other artists, in the coming months.

As their thirty-three-year anniversary approaches, Benatar and Giraldo still hit the road every summer, thrilling audiences just as they always have. Whether, it's in support of the vocal, or a guitar solo, or jumping from piano to guitar and back again, Giraldo's gift is knowing how to always up the power in a song, increase the excitement and keep himself and Benatar as creative as they've ever been.

DISCOGRAPHY:

- 1978 Rick Derringer *GUITARS AND WOMEN* (piano/guitar)
- 1979 Pat Benatar *IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT* (arranger/guitar/keyboards/vocals)
- 1980 Pat Benatar *CRIMES OF PASSION* (arranger/guitar/keyboards/vocals)
- 1981 Pat Benatar *PRECIOUS TIME* (producer/arranger/guitar/keyboards/vocals)
- 1981 Rick Springfield "JESSIE'S GIRL"/"I'VE DONE EVERYTHING FOR YOU" (arranger/guitar)
- 1982 John Waite *IGNITION* (producer/guitar/keyboards)
- 1982 Pat Benatar *GET NERVOUS* (producer/arranger/guitar/keyboards/harmonica)
- 1982 Kenny Loggins "DONT FIGHT IT" (arranger /guitar)
- 1983 Pat Benatar *LIVE FROM EARTH* (producer/arranger/guitar/keyboards/drum/perc programing)
- 1984 Pat Benatar *TROPICO* (producer/arranger/guitar/keyboards/drum/perc programing)
- 1985 Pat Benatar *SEVEN THE HARD WAY* (producer/arranger/guitar/keyboards/drum/perc programing)
- 1986 The Del Lords *WHEN JOHNNY COMES MARCHING HOME* (producer)
- 1988 Pat Benatar *WIDE AWAKE IN DREAMLAND* (producer/arranger/guitar/keys/drum-perc programing)
- 1988 The Del Lords *BASED ON A TRUE STORY* (producer)
- 1989 Pat Benatar *TRUE LOVE* (producer/arranger/guitar)
- 1993 Pat Benatar *GRAVITY'S RAINBOW* (producer/arranger/guitar/keyboards/drum-perc programing)
- 1997 Pat Benatar *INAMORATA*
- 2001 *NAILED*, original film score for the movie, starring Harvey Keitel (composer)
- 2001 Beth Hart "CALIFORNIA DREAMIN" (producer/arranger)
- 2003 Pat Benatar *GO* (producer/arranger/guitar/keyboards/vocal)
- 2004 *SMILE*, original film score for the movie, starring Linda Hamilton (composer)