



JIM WEIDER

Shinin' On

Few American guitarists have roots in Americana as deep as those of Jim Weider. For 15 years following The Band's reformation in 1983, he was the sole guitarist, contributing heavily to its finest latter-day album, *Jericho*.

Weider is also part of Masters of the Telecaster, a collaboration with G.E. Smith and Tom Principato that performs exciting live shows honoring the instrument and those who made it famous.

Following the demise of The Band, Weider assembled a group of musicians to continue the group's musical legacy and create new music in its tradition. Calling themselves The Weight Band, they released a debut album in 2018 and toured the country until the pandemic.

Honing their songcraft during the two-year lockdown, Weider and his bandmates recently emerged with *Shines Like Gold*, an album of nine originals and a Willie Dixon cover.

What was the impact of the pandemic on you and The Weight Band?

It was tough. We were on tour in March of 2020, and the bottom just fell out. Everything shut down and we flew home. There was no work for a year and a half, and I've never been unable to go out and play. So, it was strange. I ended up going to my studio and working on music.

That was the catalyst behind *Shines Like Gold*?

It really was. I started going into the studio every day and working on songs and ideas, and they built up. I had nothing else to do, and songs started coming. Despite the uncertainty we all felt, I didn't want the songs to be down; I wanted positive and inspirational, like "There's a new dawn rising and it shines like gold."

"Out of the Wilderness" is a great metaphor for coming out of the Covid era.

It is, though I actually wrote that with (producer) Colin Linden in the '90s for Rick Danko to sing on *Jericho*, but we never cut it. It was perfect for Rick's voice, and for (Weight bassist/vocalist) Albert Rogers, so we lifted it up a bit and I put some mandolin and slide on it. It fit really well with what we went through – or are still going through.

After you developed the songs in your studio, were you able to get the band together and record them live?

Yes, we got together for a rehearsal at the studio, and it felt really good, so we recorded them live in four or five days.

Did you record the solos live?

The main tracks were all done at the same time, but I tracked most of the solos in my home studio.

Which guitars and amps did you use?

For the main tracks, I was using my '52 Tele and '62 Tele into my '55 Deluxe, as well as a Deluxe Reverb. For the slide stuff, I used my Ry Cooder-style Telecaster with the lap-steel pickup. For the first time, I used a ThorpyFX Fat General compressor, which allows you to blend the amount of compression with the straight signal. I did all the guitar overdubs at home, using the Colby dtb-50 amp cranked for "Long Journey," and the tweed Deluxe for the solo on "Weight of the World." For "Shines Like Gold," that's my tweed Super and Deluxe Reverb together. I used a Colby-made Park JTM45 for a rhythm crunch sound on "Tear Down the Walls."

The slide on "Time is a Thief" has a real Little Feat vibe to it...

I think that rubbed off from hanging and playing with the guys from Little Feat – Paul (Barrere) and Fred (Tackett) – when we toured with them in Japan. Paul used to say, "Jim, when are you going to use a compressor?" That was our joke for 30 years (laughs).

Did you use any other pedals?

Yes, the Analog Man King-of-Tone, and the Dunlop Echoplex pedal, in spots.

The record captures the tradition of The Band, but with a more-modern feel.

That's the idea, to carry on that sound, but take it to another place – one that rocks harder. I'm excited about the record and I think it really puts the stamp on our original sound. – Tom Guerra