



PRESS & REVIEWS

"Be it through Baker's pounding bursts during *Sitting on the Top of the World*, Bruce's jazzy climbs throughout *Politician*, or the shreds and wails of Johns in *Deserted Cities*, the group had the audience eating out of the palm of their hands."

– AmbientLightingBlog.com

"Who better to explore Cream's music further than a group who share the same DNA... all three musicians (Baker, Bruce & Johns) have pedigree."

– [Team Rock](http://TeamRock.com)

"Eric, Ginger and Jack (if looking down on us), would be proud. This is an exceptional night of wonderful music."

– [The RockPit](http://TheRockPit.com)

"They shook Sydney's State Theatre with electrifying covers of timeless classics like *Crossroads*, *White Room*, *Badge*, *Strange Brew*, and of course, *Sunshine Of Your Love*. All musicians got their time in the spotlight however, taking turns on lead vocals for various tracks, jamming and taking the audience on an instrumental odyssey. Kofi Baker would make his father proud, busting out an impressive ten-minute drum solo that raised the roof". It's hard to believe that it's been 50 years since Cream's explosive debut, but this glorious band sure did them justice and made fans feel the fire and the freedom of 1967".

– TheMusic.com.au

"*Sitting On Top Of The World*, found the trio sliding into their groove as Malcolm Bruce sang the song in a voice that was eerily like his father's... Will Johns proved that he was no slouch on guitar, firing off a well-executed solo, that, if you closed your eyes, you could imagine Clapton was in the house...

The three musicians truly sounded like a band, jamming freely and fluidly...

Malcolm wowed the crowd with a stunning *We're Going Wrong*... That passion for the band and its music spilled out of the stage and filled the theatre, leaving several thousand music lovers to head home and crank up their dog-eared copies of *Disraeli Gears*. Classic rock is alive and well."

– [13th Floor](http://13thFloor.com)



FANFARE

Comments from concert-goers...

Absolutely awesome. Amazing and incredible in every way. You have soooooooooooooo got to come back soon.
Thank you and thank you and thank you again for the most wonderful evening of entertainment.

Leanne – Wellington

Last night was absolutely beyond brilliant.

Lynne – Wellington

Brilliant night in - riding on a high today following the gig!

Simon – Auckland

Brill show, just superb!

Graeme – Auckland

Still talking about the amazing show in Brisbane, Australia. Thank you for making wonderful music and for honouring your famous family members.

Gail – Brisbane

Omg... best show ever! Loved every minute of it. Amazing musicians.

Jeff – Brisbane

Lived it, loved it. Seeing them all grinning and so enjoying it was great.

Rob – Christchurch

Best show I've seen in a very long time! Fantastic night!

Jan – Christchurch

WOAH! The concert at the State was heart soaring. My mind is still grappling how anyone can play like that. You guys soooooooo goooooood!!!!!! THANK YOU!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Kat – Sydney

Just been to the greatest show ever - long live the music of Cream!

Barbara – Melbourne

Front row - absolutely brilliant!

Chris – Perth

ENTERTAINMENT / LIFESTYLE

MUSIC OF CREAM BROUGHT THE LEGACY FULL CIRCLE THIS PAST THURSDAY IN LYNN

BY BILL BROTHERTON (images by Paul Mueller) | October 12, 2018

LYNN — In 1966, rock music's first supergroup, Cream, exploded on the scene.

The British power trio consisted of Eric Clapton (guitar, vocals), Ginger Baker (drums) and Jack Bruce (lead vocals, bass) and by 1968, after four studio albums and many hits, they were done, due to infighting and dissatisfaction. The music they created during that too-brief two-year existence continues to thrill music fans old and young.

Thursday night at Lynn Auditorium, the band's legacy came full-circle: Kofi Baker (Ginger's son), Malcolm Bruce (Jack's son) and Will Johns (Eric's nephew by marriage; his mom is Paula Boyd, sister of Clapton's ex Pattie Boyd) performed "The Music of Cream: 50th Anniversary World Tour" before a small but enthusiastic and vocal crowd. There were no special guests, save for the excellent James Brown impressionist Tony Wilson, who did backflips during a rousing "I Feel Good." Otherwise it was just Baker, Bruce and Johns on stage for some 2½ hours, with Baker's towering drum set anchored in the middle of the stage.

These three can play (all have successful careers of their own) and the music of Cream sounds as innovative and electrifying as it did more than 50 years ago. Skeptics might say this is a cash grab by three young family members of rock and roll royalty. There might be some truth to that, but this is no tossed-off tribute-band treatment. There's plenty of jamming and interplay between the rhythm section and Johns, who is an excellent guitarist in the Clapton mold, natch, and delivers many spectacular solos.

Your first question might be, "Did they play 'Toad'?" You bet, toward the end of the show, and Baker replicated his dad's infamous drum solo. It lasted 17 minutes and was mind-blowing, though it did slow the momentum, as did a lengthy jam on the next song, for an audience that was eager to hear "Sunshine of Your Love" and "Spoonful" and get home before midnight on a work night.

No such problems in the early going. The trio opened with an extended version of "N.S.U." ("Driving in my car, smoking my cigar/The only time I'm happy's when I play my guitar") that quickly proved these guys meant business and weren't there to knock out three-minute covers. "Politician" ("Hey now, baby/Get into my big black car") maintained its bluesy, psychedelic vibe. The crowd went nuts at the first notes of "Badge" ("Thinkin' 'bout the times you drove in my car/Thinkin' that I might have drove you too far/And I'm thinkin' 'bout the love that you laid on my table") and "SWLABR" ("Coming to me in the morning, leaving me at night/Coming to me in the morning, leaving me alone/You've got that rainbow feel but the rainbow has a beard"). Why are so many Cream song titles not included in the lyrics!

The heavyosity quotient went up whenever Johns shifted into a blues solo and Bruce played a strong, melodic bassline, especially during Robert Johnson's "Crossroads," Skip James' "I'm So Glad" and 1920s country blues "Sitting on Top of the World." The playing on "Born Under a Bad Sign" was particularly impressive, with Bruce and Baker embarking on a long, exciting jam. "Sleepy Time Time," featured Bruce on vocals and included a lovely story about how his mom "wrote" the song while trying to put the kids to bed.

Roars of recognition and applause greeted "Strange Brew" and a 10-minute-long "White Room." Baker recited the nonsense lyrics of his dad's "Pressed Rat and Warthog." It was weird and wonderful.

Vintage film of the original band members were shown on a screen at the back of the stage throughout the show. Band members shared personal stories. A 20-minute intermission featured a short biographical film about Cream, with fascinating descriptions of how each band member approached playing their instruments.

"The Music of Cream: 50th Anniversary World Tour" successfully celebrates one of classic rock's all-time great bands, and Baker, Bruce and Johns brought to life the music of their dads and mentor.



The Kids Are All Right: Classic Rock's Next Generation

We've said goodbye to a lot of legends lately. But their children are carrying on their legacies with tribute tours. Here's a guide. By Andy Greene



Ben Haggard and the Strangers

BACKGROUND Merle Haggard's son was just 15 when his father hired him as a touring guitarist. He never planned to be a singer, but after Merle's death, in 2016, he stepped up as the new frontman of his dad's band, the Strangers.

LESSONS FROM DAD Toward the end of his life, Merle encouraged his son to keep his music alive. "He said to me, 'Play my songs and don't give a fuck what anybody thinks,'" says Ben, 25.

MUST-SEE MOMENT With his deep croon, Ben can chillingly replicate his dad's outlaw ballads, like 1967's "Sing Me Back Home." "It's some of the best music on this Earth, in my opinion," says Ben.



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LESSONS FROM DAD As a teenager, Kofi got some memorable drum lessons from his famously irascible father. "If I didn't get it right immediately, he'd swear at me and smack me around," he says.

MUST-SEE MOMENT Kofi, 49, channels his dad's explosive style with a 20-minute drum solo on "Toad," from Cream's 1966 debut, *Fresh Cream*.



Jason Bonham's Led Zeppelin Evening

BACKGROUND Zeppelin fans were crushed when Robert Plant pulled the plug on a reunion tour after their one-off 2007 concert. So was John Bonham's son, Jason, 50, who played in that '07 show and now leads this tribute act.

LESSONS FROM DAD "I almost threw it away a few times by trying to emulate the wrong John, the party person," Jason has said of his father, who died in 1980. "I've got one crack at this in life."

MUST-SEE MOMENT The emotional highlight of Jason's show comes when he stops the action to show home movies and reminisce about his dad.



The Devon Allman Project

BACKGROUND This summer, Gregg Allman's son Devon is touring with Duane Betts, son of former Allman Brothers guitarist Dickey Betts, as his opening act.

LESSONS FROM DAD Gregg, who died in 2017, had five children from five different relationships; Devon didn't meet his father until he was 17. "He was scared to death of the role of a father," says Devon. "He felt a great weight off his shoulders once we forged a relationship."

MUST-SEE MOMENT Devon, 45, and Duane, 40, don't play together until the encore, when they let it rip. "We start 'Blue Sky' and see tears rolling down people's faces," says Devon.

The Mix

RISING STAR

AWKWAFINA STRIKES IT 'RICH'

She may be starring in two of the summer's biggest movies – Ocean's 8 and *Crazy Rich Asians* – but don't assume Awkwafina, née Nora Lum, is living large. "Not at all," says the Queens-born rapper-turned-actress. "Sometimes I look at my bathroom like, 'I can't believe this is my house, dude. I need to upgrade.'" That goal should be well within reach after *Crazy Rich Asians* (out August 15th), a blockbuster-in-waiting based on Kevin Kwan's bestselling novel about the lifestyles of the rich and snobbish in high-society Singapore. As the movie's resident bottle-blond best friend, Goh Peik Lin, Lum puts the "com" in this rom-com with her signature hip-hop swagger (see "My Vag," the viral music video that launched her career in 2012) and gonzo improvisation. "It's funny, everyone says, 'This is the best year of your life!'" says Lum. "But I don't want this to be the best year of my life. Hopefully there are more to come." **MARIA FONTOURA**



TECH

Old-School Headphones for Streaming Fans

There's something about a steel-and-aluminum pair of headphones built to last. The new **Master & Dynamic MW50+** have the warm sound of old-school 'phones – except lighter, with an impressive wireless range. They're also shape-shifters, coming with two pairs of magnetized earpads: a small pair for living-room speaker sound and larger ones for a focused, noise-reducing experience. **JESSE WILL**

MASTER & DYNAMIC MW50+
\$399, masterdynamic.com



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FRIENDS AND FAMILY PREPARE TO CELEBRATE THE LEGACY OF ROCK GIANTS **CREAM**. BY **PAUL SOUTHWELL**

British power trio Cream's ongoing legacy has well outlived the band's explosive, yet brief tenure, and will be celebrated by their bloodlines with *The Music Of Cream* - a 50th anniversary tour. The core trio consists of singer and guitarist Will Johns [Eric Clapton's nephew and son of the late audio engineer Andy Johns], singer and bassist Malcolm Bruce [son of Jack] and drummer Kofi Baker [son of Ginger], who will be joined by blues guitarist Robben Rord and bassist Glenn Hughes [Deep Purple's *Mark III* line-up]. We spoke to Johns about the impending tour.

When did Cream become an important band for you as a musician?

I guess from when I started playing guitar at the age of 15. One of the first CDs I had was *The Cream Of Eric Clapton*, which had some Cream tunes that were more full-on and meaty to my brain.

The legacy of Cream has a widespread impact to this day. Would you say that the melodies and harmonies they came up with are the defining aspects of that power trio?

It's a combination of the elements that those guys brought to the table, so it was the melodies, but also the drive and rhythmic aspects. Ginger [Baker, Cream drummer] was time itself, so all of these elements coming together made it as hard as diamond.

Would you say that the tensions between Ginger and Jack [Bruce, late Cream bassist] were somehow manifested musically?

Definitely. They had a thing of musical competitiveness which I have witnessed first-hand with Malcolm and Kofi, as they have that too. They are so good at what they do that they have a musical vocabulary; they make it fun to be a part of this edgy rapport between them. They spark off each other. I'd like to think that I've also got some sort of spark, but those two had it handed down from their fathers. It's quite a crazy thing to watch, and it definitely adds something to the mix - both creatively and in the sound.

Did Eric Clapton mentor you on any aspects of that experience?

Not those aspects, but I used to hang out with Eric when I was starting to learn guitar - he showed me some things, such as the opening riff to "Crossroads" which took some time to master. I can remember going back to him after I got that bit down and asking, "What's the next bit?" We all know now that it's the D7 chord change, but he didn't give it to me outright. He said, "You've got to figure out that next bit on your own." He wasn't teaching me so much as he was guiding me. My mum was also an influence by saying, "You'll never learn that instrument," so I guess something inside me had to prove her wrong because I was going to be dedicated to something.

Do the live recordings of Cream - and Eric's nuances in that playing - inform your own playing substantially?

I've always had the utmost respect for Eric's playing, and was digging on what he was doing. It is impossible to try to recreate anyone's playing, even though you can allude to parts of the musical vocabulary. If you try to play all those licks and mimic that feel, you lose whatever you had going on in your own music.

For your tour setlist, do you favour referring to the live recordings of Cream songs over the studio versions?

Cream used the songs as a starting point, and then somewhere within the song, the band would break off into improvisation. We play the songs with those same improvisational breaks, so the songs aren't really the same every night except for the recognisable structural parts. People tend to like how we do it, and we do it in an honest way instead of being a cheap copy.

Presumably, that improvisational freedom would lend itself to better integrating Glenn Hughes and Robben Ford into the show?

Yes, Robben plays a Telecaster and brings an

aspect of attack to these Cream songs because they mean a lot to him. It's great music to play, and I'm excited about his slightly edgy approach to the music. I'm also looking forward to working with Glenn because he has such an amazingly powerful voice.

Cream purists might expect you to use a 100-watt Marshall amplifier, Vox wah, fuzz pedal and a Gibson SG guitar with Clapton's 'woman tone'.

[Laughs]. My main guitar is an Ernie Ball Music Man EVH model, which was something my dad gave me when he was working on Van Halen's *For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge* album. It has two big humbuckers on the neck position to get close to that 'woman tone', but I don't try to recreate that tone exactly because I feel like that wouldn't be honest. But what I create is leaning towards that. I'd rather not use Marshall stacks, and on the tour I might be using Mesa Boogies. I'm lucky enough to be endorsed by Mad Professor pedals from Finland, and I use their Deep Blue delay for a larger and more psychedelic sound, apart from the fuzz and the wah. I've then got the [Moor Ninety] Orange Phaser for the guitar break in "Badge".

Given that your father and his brother separately produced and engineered some amazing albums that included Clapton, do you think that hugely increased your appreciation for Cream?

That's a complicated question really, but for me growing up, Eric was my uncle, so he was just a person. He used to take me fishing. Due to family reasons, when I was young I was taken away from the Los Angeles rock'n'roll studio scene and brought to England for a more sheltered upbringing, which happened to include a lot of weekends down in the country with Patty and Eric. I only got musical about it much, much later. In a nutshell, it was only later in life that I really understood how much these guys worked together.

Rock offspring bring Cream to a new generation



Will Johns, left, Malcolm Bruce and Kofi Baker rehearsing The Music of Cream at Bakehouse studios in Melbourne
Picture: David Geraghty

The Australian 12:00AM May 19, 2017

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Save



IAIN SHEDDEN
Music writer Sydney @Sheddy12

Singer and guitarist Will Johns' first experience of hearing his uncle Eric Clapton playing guitar was on one of the first Sony CD Walkmans back in the day: songs from the supergroup Cream that also featured bassist Jack Bruce and legendary drummer Ginger Baker.

"It had Cream songs like *White Room* and *Strange Brew* on it," said Johns, who next week in Australia will present the 1960s supergroup's repertoire alongside Baker's son Kofi on drums and Bruce's son Malcolm on bass and guitar.

The Music of Cream shows celebrate the short tenure of the band, between 1966 and 1968, when Clapton, Bruce and Baker took the world by storm with their original brand of electric blues.

Johns is the son of British record producer and engineer Andy Johns, who worked with some of the biggest acts in the world in the 1960s and 70s, including the Rolling Stones and Led Zeppelin.

Johns, and the younger Bruce and Baker, are all experienced musicians with their own recording careers who have come together to play Cream's classic rock material, such as *Crossroads*, *Sunshine of Your Love* and *Badge*.

"We're all doing our own stuff as well, but when we get together to do the Cream stuff it's a lot of fun," Bruce said in Melbourne, where the group is rehearsing for its Australian tour. Joining the three family connections for the shows is Deep Purple bassist Glenn Hughes and American blues guitarist Robben Ford.

Bruce said there was a new audience for Cream's music, the new line-up having played shows already in the US and Britain.

"There's the older generation who were around when the band were playing," he said. "Then the whole rock thing comes full circle and younger people are discovering classic rock."

The three musicians have been friends for decades, first meeting through their famous relatives.

"We've lived parallel lives and our families have intertwined," Bruce said. "Dad was very close with Will's dad Andy and they made a lot of records together. We ran in the same circles."

While they want to celebrate Cream's music, they also want to bring something new of their own.

"We're very much our own people," Bruce said. "What we've garnered from our parents and Eric is their sense of improvisation. There something unique about the exploratory nature of Cream's music. They would jam on stage. There have been jam bands subsequent to that, but they paved the way. That's the beautiful thing, suddenly you're going on this spiritual journey, exploring where the music can take you. When it works it's an incredible experience."

The Music of Cream tour begins in Melbourne on Tuesday and travels to Sydney, Perth and Brisbane.