

Self taught British guitar virtuoso **Dave Sharman's** prodigious talent was discovered whilst still in his teens, with a debut album released worldwide not long after. He belongs to that rare breed, whose musicality extends to composing, song writing and vocals. But the journey began when he first picked up a guitar at the tender age of nine, it was his brother's cream coloured Fender Stratocaster copy, one day left unattended, which first drew the youngster's attention ... **"I distinctly remember walking into the room and seeing this guitar just lying there, I was taken by it's colour, shape & style, visually I found it very exciting & yet it was the way it felt once strapped on that seemed to be the coolest thing, even though I couldn't play a note, it just felt completely natural"** ... the experience proved the starting point of what would become a genuine passion for the instrument, more importantly it was the beginning of a life long love affair with music & a journey that would lead Dave along his own personal voyage of discovery.

It was the early 1980's & the era of the classic 'metal' band, big hair, tight pants, loud amps & fast guitars were the order of the day, yet beneath the imagery there was musicianship of the highest caliber. The previous decade had established some of the greatest names in rock - **Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, Queen, Black Sabbath & Deep Purple**, all helped pave the way for a new generation of stars, but for young **Dave Sharman**, none would shine quite as bright as a band called **Van Halen**. It was their eponymous debut '**Van Halen**' which captivated him, from it's opening bars of '**Running with the devil**' right through to it's last few thunderous moments, Dave was completely in awe, **Eddie Van Halen** had an obvious impact on the kid ... **"I was dazzled by his speed, power & creativity, for me he was completely unique, the near perfect example of all a rock guitarist should be"** ... no doubt, Eddie proved valuable in shaping Dave's own musical development, but more importantly for the boy of nine, he was someone to look up to, his first '**guitar hero**'. Classical music too has had a huge influence on Dave's own compositions, with his love of **Beethoven's** works superseding that of all other master composers.

The next few years gave way to intense periods of practice for Dave and he often spent long hours listening to music and experimenting with scales & chords, taking guitar lessons was never an option! ... **"I think to be honest, it didn't really occur to me at the time, part of the whole fun of learning was that process of self-discovery which sometimes comes about through a lot of trial & error, I'd shut myself away for hours, listening to the likes of Rush, Van Halen & Lynyrd Skynyrd, trying to figure out the guitar parts, I remember the immense feeling of satisfaction when I'd finally get it right and it meant all the more as I taught it to myself. As a player I have no formal training and am completely self-taught. Ultimately learning by ear really helped my sense of creativity as well, 'cos it was that much easier when translating my own feelings & thoughts into music"**.

By the time Dave was a teenager he was already showing signs of a precocious talent, the years of hard work & dedication had produced a powerful technique, but he was now also with a real sense of purpose, his first public performance came at the age of 14, when asked to play at his school's end of year concert, though not a member of any guitar class at the time, he auditioned and was subsequently chosen to perform a solo piece during the night's schedule ... **"that was an interesting experience, it was in front of the town mayor and a few other 'dignitaries', I showed up with this tatty black & white painted acoustic and played a classical piece called 'Mood For a Day' from the album Fragile by Yes, at the end I decided to add the hammer-on part from Van Halen's 'Eruption' mostly for effect ... it went down really well!"**. This was also an important time for Dave's own music as well, for quite a while now he'd been in need of an outlet to fully express & develop his ever growing mountain of ideas, mostly culminating in a desire to write & record original material and to this end he would soon invest in a 4-track recorder & drum machine, meager but very necessary tools for the advancement of his compositions.

Over the next three years he wrote an impressive array of songs & instrumentals, re-working and refining the music to a point where it met with the high standards he'd set himself, it was now only a matter of time for other people to hear it ...

BBC Radio 1's Friday Rock Show had for many years been the UK's number one source for all things rock, hosted by legendary **DJ Tommy Vance**, the show had become synonymous for its mix of the new & up coming together with a more classic playlist. Dave's brother San happened to remark ... **"seems like a good place to send a demo"**... the advice was duly noted and a couple of days later a cassette containing four instrumentals was busy making its way to the BBC studios in Portland Place. Not long after, Dave would get a call from veteran producer **Tony Wilson** ... **"getting that call was a surprise as it was the first time I'd ever sent any material out, basically he thought my guitar work was as exciting as anything he'd ever heard and was impressed with my overall ability, we met for a chat and I was offered a recording session for the show"** ... A band featuring drummer **Neil Huxtable**, bassist **Martin Connolly** and ex **Rainbow, Ozzy Osbourne, Whitesnake & Deep Purple** keyboardist **Don Airey** was assembled to back Dave's guitar work. The session was broadcast January 1989 and included 4 original tracks all written by the guitarist - **Spellbinder, Pandora's box, Torch The Tower** and **Flight 212** lit up the airwaves with Dave's blistering playing screaming out from every track. **Tommy Vance** was in raptures, proclaiming him **"a virtuoso, wizard of a guitar player"** and **"an**

exceptionally fluid guitarist" the press likened it to "the upward spiral of a rising star" and with favourable public response, the session went on to attract one of the highest ratings in the show's history, drawing in fan mail and record company interest alike, it wouldn't be long before a debut album would soon follow ...

Dave Sharman's **'1990'** was recorded & mixed over a two week period at Berlin's Skytrak studios in Germany. Upon its release in October the same year, the album received widespread critical acclaim and commercial success. With strong emphasis on melody, one of the keys to the record's success was the balance between the virtuosity of Dave's playing and the importance of the music, one never taking priority over the other. This allowed Dave to venture into a variety of different styles without appearing self indulgent, from the **neo-classical leanings of 'Spellbinder'** the **rhythm n' blues of 'Southern Comfort'**, to **'Cloud 9's' funk**, he successfully manages to add his own special brand of flare & creativity to all. These factors help make 1990 an album with appeal beyond that offered simply by the lure of it's guitar wizardry and pyrotechnics, in Dave we not only find a musician of undoubted talent but someone who knows how to apply it well within the context of a song, and it is this that really separates him from the pack. Critically the album has been hailed a **'classic'** with Dave nominated for several awards including US magazine, **Guitar For The Practicing Musicians: 'Guitar God in waiting'**, journalist **Pete Prown** added **"he's probably the finest guitarist to emerge from the European continent in decades and could well single handedly redress the international balance between Europe and the US."**

Arriving on the international music scene there was to be no shortage of offers for his talents, the **David Lee Roth** band were seeking a replacement for recently departed guitarist **Steve Vai**, with the former Van Halen frontman's management claiming how Sharman reminded them of a young Eddie Van Halen. New Jersey based thrashers **Overkill** also took note, vocalist **Bobby 'Blitz' Ellsworth** nominated Dave his **favourite player in a Kerrang Magazine** poll, but it was to be **Deep Purple** mainman **Ian Gillan**, who would secure his services, if only for a short while. Hard at work on his latest studio album he was keen to see what the young guitarist could offer in terms of fresh ideas ... **"Ian came up to see me with a cassette of about 6 songs he'd been working on, I worked out some new parts and we went into the studio to record them"**... with Dave onboard, Gillan's sound was radically transformed, the music now had an edge and vitality, with Sharman's electrifying playing, proving an exciting combination with that of the legendary singer's vocals.

Meanwhile **Police & Sting** manager, **Miles Copeland** had been busy adding the final touches to his much anticipated **Night Of The Guitars II** tour, it's previous incarnation had been a huge success and featured several well known artists in the form of **Steve Howe** of Yes, **Robby Krieger** of The Doors, **Alvin Lee**, **Steve Hunter**, **Randy California** and **Leslie West** of the band **Mountain**. The line-up for the mark 2 version had so far penciled in **Ronnie Montrose** of 70's rockers **Montrose**, **Robin Trower** formally of **Procol Harum**, **Focus's Jan Akkermann**, **Rick Derringer**, **Saga's Ian Crichton** and **Laurie Wisefield** of **Wishbone Ash** and **Tina Turner**, all that was now needed was a player who best represented the new era of guitarists and in Sharman they found their perfect match. Upon hearing Dave's debut, Miles wasted no time in contacting the youngster's management and arrangements were soon made to invite him onto the tour. Kick starting in Marseille France, the 8 guitarists would perform to over 200,000 people across 5 countries ... **"the Night Of The Guitars tour was my first real experience of playing to arena sized crowds, I'd say I learnt a lot about myself as a performer and how audiences respond in different parts of the world, overall it really helped my stagecraft, playing alongside the likes of Robin, Jan & Ronnie was also great, I learnt a lot along the way."** Winding up in London, the tour finally came to a close and Dave immediately set to work on the follow-up to **'1990'**, determined to push the boundaries of rock guitar even further he would venture into new and unexplored territories to produce the amazing **'Exit Within'**.

Being a solo artist had many advantages for Dave, but the thrill of being in a good band was always more attractive and he began the shift towards this during his second album.

'Exit Within'. A year or so earlier whilst on his first trip to Berlin he had become good friends with German based vocalist **Thomas Brache**, the two stayed in touch and decided at some point they would work together ... **"I was impressed with Thomas because not only did he have a great voice and personality, but I found him genuinely easy to get along with and that really helps for a good working relationship"** ... It was during his time with Gillan that Dave also befriended legendary bassist **Neil Murray** and invited the former **Black Sabbath/Whitesnake** and **Brian May** man to play bass on the album ... **"Having Neil onboard was fantastic, he's a guy that's had a lot of experience and played with many great bands and artists in his time, he's someone I've grown up listening to and respect, so having him play on Exit was tremendous"** ... Rehearsals and pre-production took place at Nina Hagan studios in Berlin, with the album itself being recorded at Skytrak. In **Exit Within** we have a work of the rare and sublime, it's Dave's willingness to experiment and his sense of creativity that lends the album a certain uniqueness and charm. From the beautifully crafted and classically inspired **'Grace'** to the mysterious sounds of **'Andromeda'** and high velocity rock of **'Trucker'** there's never a dull moment, Sharman effortlessly glides from one style to another with equal confidence whilst maintaining his sense of identity throughout. **Exit** also provides Dave's first foray into lyric writing with songs

such as '**Man**' and '**Home**' giving insight into a thoughtful and articulate mind. Two tracks from the album would go on to be used by the **Friday Rock Show** on a weekly basis, '**Frantic**' and '**Trucker**', which ran for several years as part of the programmes background music to it's news and chart rundown, things it seems had almost come full circle from his beginnings on the show as a virtual unknown to his growing status as a recognised and respected guitarist, he wasted little time with the follow up to Exit & began work on the much heavier '**Here N' Now**'.

Embarking on the third record there were also changes within the band, alongside Brache came in two new faces, **Steven Wood** on drums and **Dave Setchfield** on bass. Production duties were given to **Kit Woolven**, a man responsible for many a classic track with the likes of **Thin Lizzy** and **UFO**. Opening with the explosive '**Out Of Time**', '**Here N Now**' moves through quite a variety of gear changes and all to fine affect, it also pays homage to Dave's earlier days with three well crafted instrumentals - '**Tequila Junction**', '**Dragonfly**' and the heart warming '**Forever And A Day**'. With Thomas unexpectedly leaving not long after the record's release, the remaining members scaled down to a three-piece with Dave opting for vocals, as well as guitar and with new bassist **Dave Luckins**, they become known as the power trio '**Wave**', thus entering the next phase in Sharman's musical voyage. Finding himself now writing for his own voice, Dave's songwriting took on a more natural flow, with tracks such as '**Lift**', '**Nowhere**', '**Drown**' and '**Priest On A Hill**', we are treated to an electrifying combination, with that of his vocal and guitar skills, carrying on a tradition best encapsulated by the likes of **Jimi Hendrix**, **Stevie Ray Vaughan** and other greats who had come before, producer **Colin Thurston** was most impressed ... "**Definitely the most talented musician I've worked with since Bowie.**"... High praise indeed from the former **Duran Duran** and **David Bowie** producer.

Dave's music has been licensed by: **BBC Radio 1**, **MTV**, **VH1**, **Sky** and **BBC2** to name a few.

Dave is proud to play and use: **Jackson** guitars, **Dimarzio** pickups, **Rotosound** strings, **Ibanez** basses, **Roland** products, **Hughes & Kettner** amplification and **Kahler** tremolos.

Dave's fourth studio album '**Evolution Machine**' was released on 18 March 2013 and the ten track album showcases Dave's exceptional guitar skills and for the first time features him on lead vocals. He has also taken on production duties and is playing all the instruments.

The new material remains guitar driven, featuring a hybrid of influences incorporating other genres such as funk, eastern and classic rock.

... and finally a little personal **Dave Sharman trivia**:

He is from a large musical family with six siblings. Grew up just around the corner from where **Ozzy Osbourne** lived and attended the same school as members of legendary British band **Black Sabbath**, Dave being much younger was there many years later of course!