

Longtime Musician Begins Promising Solo Career.

By Matthew Pleasant



Dean Shoultz plays guitar Thursday inside his home studio in Houma. Photo by Emily Schwarze

HOUMA — Even behind a desk, Dean Shoultz looks every bit the rocker. The musician and business owner checked his e-mail before leaving his office last week, his long hair swept from his face. He clicked through the messages from his fan club. They came from all over the world.

Since his youth, Shoultz has toiled away in bands. He also built a company, Advanced Software Development, that continues to expand. But the attention his December solo debut garnered has him wondering whether the second career he always wanted is within reach.

“It’s all kind of surreal,” the 42-year-old said. “I’ve just been shocked by the response.”

The album, *All The Pretty Horses*, is named for a traditional lullaby. Shoultz sings on a few tracks, but most of them are up-tempo, guitar-driven

instrumentals written in collaboration with local producer Pershing Wells.

The pair swapped digital files back and forth, adding parts to songs until the tracks were completed.

“It begins taking a shape of its own at some point,” Wells said.

The pair have a follow up planned for this year, which Shoultz said will come accompanied by music videos.

Shoultz began playing guitar when he was 12, learning on an inexpensive electric his father bought in a department store. He’s primarily self-taught. He tried other instruments, like piano and bass, but always returned to the guitar.

His tastes usually lean toward rock.

“It’s the crunch sound the guitar gives,” he said.

He started playing in bands just after graduating from South Terrebonne High. Local guitar craftsman Gerard Melancon helped him learn to play. Shoultz still considers him a major influence, and the guitar maker’s company is now among Shoultz’ equipment sponsors.

His bands usually performed their own material. Covering radio hits would have been more profitable, he said, but that’s never been his style.

“I just don’t do it,” he said. “I’ve always taken that other path, and I’m glad I did.”

Shoultz took what he learned playing in bands and applied it to his solo career. Instead of endless tours to promote himself, he’s making the most of the Internet to spread his music. Fan-club members get the album for free.

“Lady Gaga didn’t play every club in Raceland to get hot,” he said.

Shoultz has gotten radio play, specifically in Scandinavian countries, where his style of music seems to be popular, he said.

Wells is particularly proud of the title track. They took the traditional lullaby and reworked it with a hard edge.

“It starts off with a soft, sweet guitar and then we just slam it against the wall in a beautiful way,” he said.

The album was released by Prime Time records, said Jim Quinn, who manages Shoultz via his Cleveland-based Sunburst Entertainment company.

Quinn expects cameo appearances on the next album from artists who have heard and enjoy Shoultz’ first record. He said Shoultz’ fan club grew by more than 5,000 members in six days.

People seem drawn to the unique music, once popular in the ‘80s and ‘90s but now seeing resurgence, he said. Part of Shoultz’ appeal is the depth of his songs. “Everything has a purpose and meaning,” he said. “And I think that’s the sign of a true artist.”

To hear Shoultz’ music or join his fan club, go to www.deanshoultz.com.

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