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## Music Eases Pediatric Pain



According to one Northwestern Medicine study, published in *Pediatric Surgery*, listening to music was an effective alternative to post-surgical pain medication (opioid analgesics), which can cause breathing problems in children. In what is believed to be the first study of its kind, pediatric patients, aged nine to 14, who listened to 30 minutes of songs of their choosing, following major surgery, had a significant reduction in pain. The study's senior author, Dr. Santhanam Suresh, believes audio-therapy helps thwart a secondary pathway in the prefrontal cortex involved in the memory of pain. He explains that the audio therapy worked regardless of the patient's initial pain score. One of the added benefits of this type of treatment is that patients can continue treatment at home and there are zero negative side effects.

## Musical Training = Brain Power

A psychiatry team from the University of Vermont College of Medicine studied the outer layer of the brain, or cortex, in brain scans of 232 children, aged six to 18. Cortical thickening or thinning in specific areas reflects the occurrence of emotional and behavioral problems. They found that music training influenced thickness in the part of the cortex that relates to memory, attention, as well as organization and planning, as well cortical thickness in areas critical to inhibitory control and emotion processing. "Such statistics, when taken in the context of our present neuroimaging results, underscore the vital importance of finding new and innovative ways to make music training more widely available to youths, beginning in childhood," conclude the team. They study was published in the *Journal of American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*.

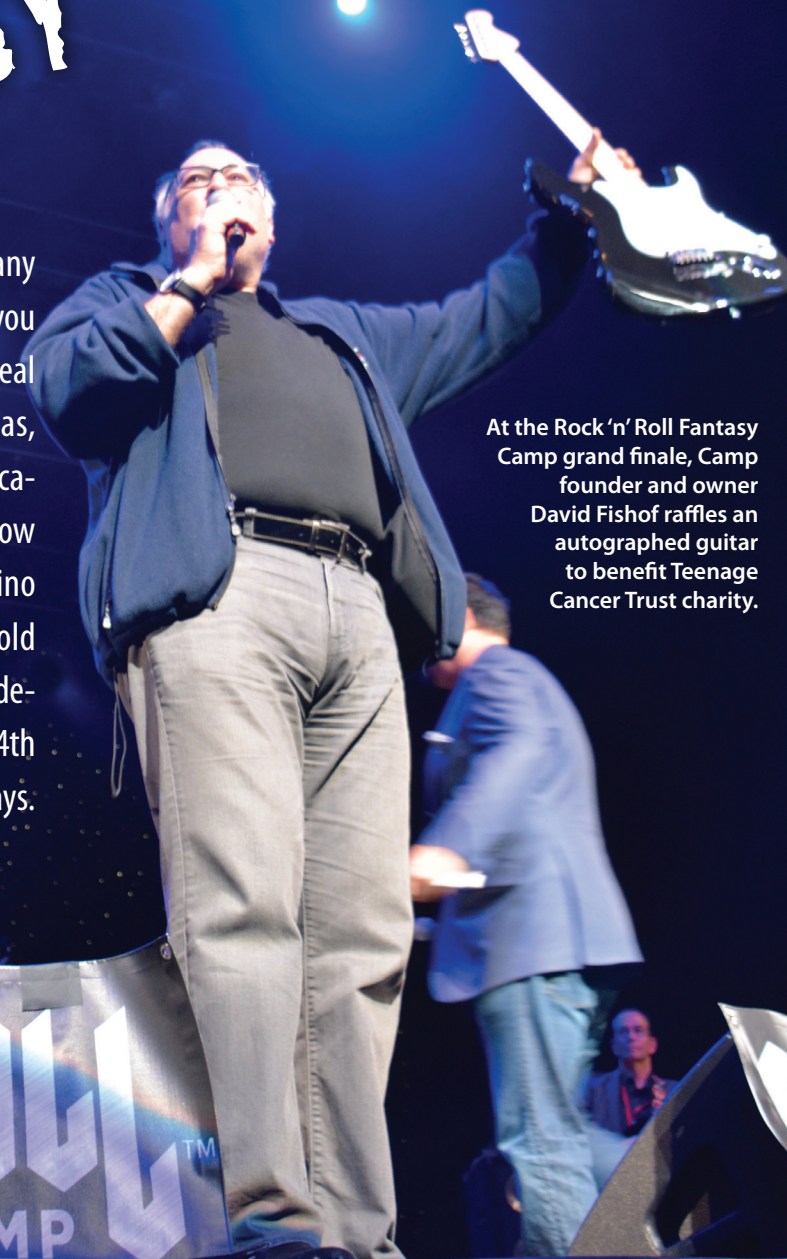


# LIVE YOUR ROCK AND ROLL FANTASY

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CHERIE YURCO

Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy Camp is unlike any other band camp on the planet. There you play out rock and roll fantasies with real rock stars. Headquartered in Las Vegas, Nevada, camps are held at multiple locations across the US. I was invited to follow a camp held at Foxwoods Resort Casino in Mashantucket, Connecticut. On a cold Thursday afternoon around 40 campers descended on the hotel, transforming its 14th floor into jam rooms for the next five days.

At the Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy Camp grand finale, Camp founder and owner David Fishof raffles an autographed guitar to benefit Teenage Cancer Trust charity.



David Fishof, founder and owner of Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy Camp, makes it his mission to ensure that everyone who attends feels welcome and relaxed. Participants are interviewed ahead of time, given tips for preparation, and matched to bands based on their abilities, instruments, and preferences.

"I understand there's an intimidation factor, especially for beginners, and we totally break that down for them from the minute they sign up," says Fishof, who carefully selects the counselors. "I have a great network of counselors. I recruit them on their personality." Each counselor I met was a patient teacher, friendly, and passionate about music and jamming with the campers.

## It's All About the Music

Before the camp became Fishof's full-time gig, he was on the road seven months out of the year with various tours. The former concert producer and promoter founded Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy Camp about 18 years ago because he wanted to spend more time with his family, but didn't want to leave his musical life behind. "I love the music; I love being around talented people," he says. All the rock stars he's connected with over the years seem to really love him too.

"David has the most amazing friends in the music business," explains Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy Camp Music Director and Counselor Gary Hoey. "He is the only person on earth who can call these collective musicians and do something like this. It isn't about the money; it's about the love of the music."

"The musicians [counselors] love it as much as the campers. Number one, they get to play with their heroes; number two, they get to give back," says Fishof, who says the pros are, in turn, inspired by the campers. "It reminds them of what it was like when they first started. The campers are such amazing people; they want it so badly."

People of all ages and levels of ability attend the camp, though he says most campers are 40 to 60 years old. Musicians attending may seek tips or connections, or just have a desire to meet, play with, and

learn from their idols. "Gibson told me that they sell 4 million new guitars each year to people aged 40 and over," he says. "Some campers have never been in a band; they just want to have that experience."

Among the campers I met at Foxwoods there were a few professional musicians, a couple teenage guitarists, a 10-year-old attending camp with his father, and others from a wide variety of career fields—college professors, social workers, surgeons, tech gurus, and current or retired executives. They arrived from all corners of the country, as well as overseas.

The camp began with a welcome session where campers were assigned to their bands and respective counselors. "The craziest thing is going to happen by Monday," Hoey said at the session. "You are all going to create this bond with each other that you won't even understand. We connect because this makes us realize why we love music."

On the first night of camp, the counselors helped break the ice by performing on the Hard Rock Café stage, and inviting a few brave campers to join them. By Saturday evening each of the nine bands had their turn performing on that same stage, and for Sunday's grand finale each band performed at Foxwoods' 4,000-seat Grand Theater.

For four days, each band worked diligently, from morning to evening, with its own bandleader/counselor, which included: Rudy Sarzo (Quiet Riot), Gary Hoey, Johnny A., Matt Scursfield (Lita Ford), Bumblefoot (Guns N' Roses), Joe Vitale (CSN), Vinny Appice (Dio), David Hull (Aerosmith), and Mark Clarke (Uriah Heep, The Monkees).

Campers were immersed in music all day. Aside from many hours of practice, there were master classes like "Songwriting Tips," "Brain Exercises for Guitar," and "How to Lock with the Drums." Among the other highlights were lunches, Q&A sessions, and jams with Joe Perry, Lou Gramm, Jaimo, and Steve Morse. And there were also surprise "drop-in" guests.

Cry Wolfe takes the stage with Joe Perry. (L to R) are: Christa Bellmare, Brian White, Zach Pastore, Joe Perry, and Jason Wolfe. James Royce is at the drums.



## Solid Itinerary

"Playing with the rock stars, Lou Gramm and Joe Perry, was definitely the first thing that got me going. Then, as I read more about the itinerary, everything seemed pretty solid," says Mike Sankari, a 34-year-old professional drummer from New York City. "I am surprised by the people that just show up and walk into my jam room. The drummer from Bad Company [Simon Kirke] walked in and said, 'Why don't you play it like this?' And I said, 'Okay, thank you for the tip.' That was a surprise!"

Sankari's main purpose for attending was to connect with and learn from the pros. He'd heard good things about Rock Fantasy Camp from a friend who had attended in Las Vegas. He says his biggest focus during camp was transitioning to become a more professional player.

Though Sankari was already used to playing with a lot of different musicians, Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy Camp presented him with

a unique challenge. "We had such little time to rehearse before playing with Lou Gramm of Foreigner or Steve Morse. These guys own the songs. You have two days to get ready and you've never met the people in the band. It's a different level of pressure to buckle down and get it done," he says.

"What's good is you have the counselor in the room playing quarterback—knowing who is going to play what," he says of his band Concrete Habit and its leader, Mark Clarke. "Mark is hilarious, has a great attitude, lots of patience, and an excellent work ethic. When the song is done, you own it. To make that happen in such a short time is definitely a great thing."

## Living a Fantasy

For Christa Bellmare attending Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy Camp was a Christmas gift from her husband that fulfilled a lifelong dream. Roughly 21 years ago the singer from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, moved to New York City with her

husband to launch her career. "Then we realized that we had to have real jobs to live there," she laughs.

The 43-year-old social worker has always kept singing, though her most recent gigs were lullabies to her two children, aged six and seven. She confesses she was a little terrified before arriving. "What if I'm not what I think I am or it doesn't all come back?" she recalls thinking.

Like every camper I talked to, Bellmare loved the band she was placed in. Coached by Rudy Sarzo, it also included 15-year-old guitarist Jason Wolfe, 10-year-old bassist Zach Pastore, 52-year-old guitarist/biology professor Brian White, and drummer/landscape architect James Royce, 49. They called their band Cry Wolfe.

Bellmare says the experience was totally positive. "It's given me confidence," she says. "What a great thing to be able to say: 'I just played the Hard Rock last night!'"

## Building Friendships

Rey Moré of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, says he's met some of his best friends at Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy Camp. That's why he keeps coming back. This was his fifth camp. "I'm hooked," says the 61-year-old retired Motorola senior executive. "I now have a network of people that are a blessing in my life. It's a group of friends that live all over the United States, all tied together by music."

The singer and guitarist played throughout his professional career. "I always said, 'I work as a manager, but I *am* a rock guitarist,'" says Moré whose next goal is songwriting. At a camp master class he got some tips from Joe Vitale about a song he's working on.

Moré's first Fantasy Camp was a blues camp in 2012. "Every one of them turns into the best in its own way because it's a different set of experiences," he laughs. "I've negotiated a two camp per year contract with my wife. It cost me a BMW 650, but that's the best money I ever spent."

"It's really all about personifying the

people that used to be your idols and understanding that they are just plain folks who are approachable and willing to reach out and help you musically and talk to you personally—that really is an eye-opener for people," he says.

## Fresh Experiences

"This was about eight million firsts for me," says Brian White, 52, as he begins to list them. "Thursday was the first time I played at a volume greater than 'one' on my electric guitar. I thought to be loud and bad at the same time is really a terrible thing. I went into a jam room and the amp was on 'six.' I got to make this big noise! That was one of many profound transformations."

"When we played with Lou Gramm on Friday, that was the first time I ever played in front of a large group of people," continues White, who before camp wasn't even sure he wanted to be on a stage. "Then we played at the Hard Rock, and I was afraid I was going to be nervous, but actually it was really fun. I was playing 'real' songs with a band. And then the big theater on Sunday night—to play for a crowd that big was really cool!"

True to Gary Hoey's prediction, Sunday night's performance was the culmination of five days of connecting and bonding through music that is difficult to process or express in words. Each camper boosted their self-confidence and experienced the feeling of achievement that can only come from creating great music together.

Though you may think playing with the pros would be intimidating, attending Fantasy Camp is just the opposite: accepting, positive, and even nurturing. Participants walk away from five-days of intense music performance with confidence and memories to last a lifetime.

For a video visit:  
[www.MakingMusicMag.com/rock-fantasy-camp](http://www.MakingMusicMag.com/rock-fantasy-camp)



Rey Moré (left) shares the Hard Rock Café stage with (L to R) counselor Johnny A. and campers Mark Begelman and Jeff Morris.

