

What's the story behind the name Plastic Yellow Band?

GERRY: As a song-writer/producer, I like the concept behind Plastic Ono Band which was essentially that John Lennon and whatever musicians he was working with at the time made up the band. Plastic Yellow Band is composed of a songwriter (in this case me) and the various studio musicians who join with me at any given time to produce and record the music that is in my head. And I like the song *Yellow* by Coldplay, so the two thoughts came together.

Can I get a backstory on the band/ band biography?

GERRY: Over the years I have performed solo as a singer-songwriter in venues in the US including the Bluebird Café in Nashville while managing the real estate/finance business I founded in 1974. In 2011, I sold my business and formed ISI Studios to focus on music production. Plastic Yellow Band's music reflects a wide range of influences and my abilities as a musician, composer and producer. Some songs are in the singer-songwriter style, produced simply with an acoustic guitar and vocals. Others exhibit the progressive rock influence of Porcupine Tree and Pink Floyd, with an emphasis on varied tempos and multi-track productions. And still others are influenced by the intellectual and emotional depth of John Lennon's music.

You describe your music as "New Classic Rock". Can you define what this "new" classic rock means for you?

GERRY: Original rock music written and recorded today that sounds like it was written and recorded in the 1960's-70's..... that's "new classic rock".

You say you like the tradition of an era when music wasn't considered authentic unless it was composed and played by musicians. Why does this mean so much to you doing what you do with music making?

GERRY: It means music played by musicians who have practiced to achieve a certain level of proficiency with their musical instrument, as opposed to someone getting on stage with a laptop and microphone and hitting the play button.

How would you describe the sound of your original music to any potential new fans?

GERRY: If you like classic rock, there's a good chance you'll like my original music.

What is your musical background, both as a listener and musician?

GERRY: When I was in high school years ago, I would come home and put on a Jimi Hendrix album and listen from start to finish half-asleep on the couch. That's still my favourite way of listening to music but it's very rare that I can do that now. When you listen to an album from beginning to end, it is so much more fulfilling than just listening to one track.

In the past, my performances would tend to be more in the vein of singer/songwriters like James Taylor, Jackson Browne, Elton John, etc., since I can play both guitar and piano. In the studio, I can work with a number of musicians and create complex pieces. The 21-minute production of *Starlight* on the album *Above Gravity* had 51 recorded tracks to mix and master to create the final product. I loved doing that!

How did it happen that you created a song, *Starlight*, that's over twenty-one minutes long?

GERRY: I wanted to create a piece that went through the emotions you might feel after the loss of someone very important to you. So as I went through the emotions of sadness, loneliness, anger, acceptance, etc., the song just developed. I knew from the start that it was not going to be a 4-minute song ready for airplay. I think if you take the time to listen to the entire composition you feel the emotions.

You seem to be in the studio a lot. Do you plan on touring or playing live?

GERRY: From 2011 through 2016 we recorded three albums of original music at my studio and have received good reviews for our work. This year I have put together a group of musicians who are now practicing and planning on playing live.... my originals and covers of classic rock tunes.

The writing process is unique to everyone. Can you tell us how you go about creating your songs?

GERRY: Something usually inspires me to write. It's not often that I just decide to write a song. It doesn't have to be a life event, or something I've heard. A lot of times it's a guitar riff or piano piece that inspires me and then it just comes together.

Some people like music streaming and file sharing while others are strongly opposed to it. How do you feel about the rise of digital and the decline of physical copies?

GERRY: I miss the album art. That was a huge part of the physical copy. I don't mind the digital files and streaming, but I wish the music had to be delivered in physical form first so that you can hold in your hands the creative art that wraps around the music medium.

What lyrical themes do you use in your music? What messages do you want to send?

GERRY: The songs I write tend to be about personal relationships, social justice or environmental issues.

What kind of guitar do you play, and why?

GERRY: I have a lot of different guitars in my studio to get different sounds: a Stratocaster, a Les Paul, a Taylor acoustic. I have a cheap acoustic on which I put electric guitar strings to get a really cool high-pitched sound. I used it on the debut CD, *Breathe Air*.

What musicians influenced you the most?

GERRY: OK, Here's the list: Lennon, McCartney, Clapton, Hendrix, the Kinks, Badfinger, the Everly Brothers, the Eagles, Jackson Browne, James Taylor, Elton John, Yes, and Pink Floyd. I probably left someone out but if they were around in the "classic rock era" then I was influenced by them. In the past few years, definitely early ColdPlay and my favorite contemporary musician Steven Wilson (of Porcupine Tree).

How long have you been writing and recording your songs?

GERRY: Since I was 14 or 15 years old. I have close to 100 demos that I have recorded that no one, other than myself, has ever heard.

There is so much emotion in your music. Are you an emotional type of person?

GERRY: Yes, very much so, and I've learned to accept it. My emotions tend to drive my songwriting. I think that by having empathy for someone or some cause I am able to understand it from that person's point of view, and then the song takes on life even though it may be some event or experience that I have never had. As in, for example, *Starlight*.

A lot of artists write from life experiences, is that true for you?

GERRY: Some songs come from my life experiences, yes, but a lot of my songwriting comes from my imagination.

If we could look inside your heart, what would we find?

GERRY: That's a very personal question! I hope that what you would find is honesty and caring. My personal motto for most of my life has been, "you help yourself best when you are helping others." So I try to live that way.