

the **DIRECTBUZZ** ↗



Larry Carlton Tak Matsumoto

East Meets West

Plus:

**RGK Entertainment Group
President Ron Kitchener**

**College Troubadour
Corey Smith**

**Christian Music
Weekly**

**Charts, Featured
Artists & Reviews**

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Welcome to the June edition of *the Direct Buzz*. Nashville is bouncing back from the thousand-year flood that overtook her in early May. Through the proud spirit and generosity of our artists and residents at-large, our fine city is returning to normal.

Two extraordinary talents take over our cover feature this month: American Jazz and Pop guitar master Larry Carlton and Japanese Rock guitar wizard Tak Matsumoto talk about their new album – a wonderful collaboration of Eastern and Western guitar music. With Carlton's history of playing with everyone from Joni Mitchell to Michael Jackson – and Matsumoto's reign as Asia's most-renowned guitarist, they have a great story to tell.

Ron Kitchener holds court in the "Behind the Desk" feature as we profile this man of many talents who has proven successful – not only as an artist manager, but also as a record label head who controls the Canadian rights to Taylor Swift's recorded music and a host of other Country and Americana artists.

We are saddened with the recent losses of singer, dancer, and actress, Lena Horne and Heavy Metal vocal legend, Ronnie James Dio. The silencing of these great talents will leave a void and they will be missed.

"The Writer's Round" highlights college sensation Corey Smith and one of his latest songs that is destined to be another sing-along anthem for his fans.

We also introduce a great new Opportunity for our AirPlay Direct artist members to have their music available on the interactive video game, "Rock Band." So whip out your hottest guitar tracks and submit them today.

We hope you enjoy *the Direct Buzz*. We welcome your comments and feedback. Until next time, keep your eyes on the horizon.

Robert Weingartz

Founder & CEO, AirPlay Direct

Founder & Publisher, *the Direct Buzz*

Larry Carlton Tak Matsumoto

East Meets West

By: Clif Doyal



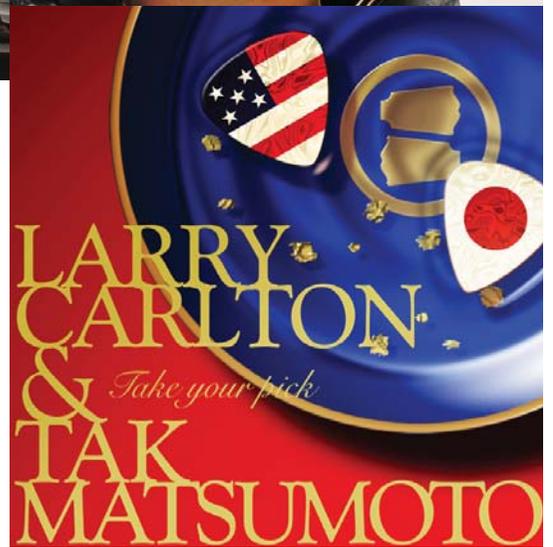
East meets West – for some, the concept may conjure images of political intrigue from the halcyon days of the great James Bond films. For others, it envelops the senses with exotic images of the historical first encounters between the great empires of Europe and the Orient. But in the musical realm, when East meets West, it is a rare occurrence. And when two guitar wizards from opposite sides of the globe unite to collaborate on a project together, it is a rare treat indeed.

On their new album, *Take Your Pick*, Grammy® -winning American jazz guitarist extraordinaire, Larry Carlton, and Asian rock guitar wizard, Tak Matsumoto, create an exciting blend of modern Eastern and Western guitar styles delivering a dynamic collection of music that will be enjoyed by fans from around the globe – regardless of where they live.

Carlton has a long-established music career - both as a solo artist and ace first-call session musician. He has recorded with some of the top names in a multitude of genres, including Steely Dan, Joni Mitchell, Michael Jackson, Sammy Davis Jr., Herb Alpert, Quincy Jones, Bobby Bland, Dolly Parton, Linda Ronstadt

and dozens of others. Along the way, he has performed on over 100 albums which have been certified in the Gold, Platinum and multi-Platinum categories and has received 18 Grammy® nominations.

Matsumoto is known as the most renowned guitarist in all of Asia. As the chief songwriter, guitarist and producer of the Japanese rock band, B'z, Matsumoto has presided over



“Something great would happen if we could get together in the studio.”

their 12 albums which have sold over 80 million units in Japan alone, making them the country’s bestselling band in history. He has also released two critically heralded instrumental albums, *Hana* and *Dragon From The West*. He is the only guitarist from Asia to be given a Gibson Signature Model Les Paul.

Interestingly enough, their summit meeting would come as no surprise to their followers. Carlton has long been adored by music fans in Japan, while

Matsumoto has been blending inspiration from American staples such as Aerosmith and Jimi Hendrix with modern classical and oriental sounds for most of his career. With the smooth jazz stylings of Carlton juxtaposed against the rock and classical tones of Matsumoto, *Take Your Pick* presents both guitarists in full creative bloom. Playing off of each others strengths as soloists, they easily slide into support roles to propel the other where needed, and the results are a wonder-

ful collaboration that showcases each man's instrumental prowess to great effect. *Take Your Pick* was produced by Carlton and Matsumoto, and features Billy Kilson on drums, Michael Rhodes on bass guitar, Jeff Babko on keyboards, Mark Douthit on saxophone, Mike Haynes on trumpet, and Barry Green on trombone.

We had the opportunity to visit with these two formidable talents recently to discuss the new project, their forthcoming tour, and learn about what drives these journeymen guitar stylists to continue to push the boundaries of their musical careers.

the Direct Buzz (tDb): You have just released a new album together entitled *Take Your Pick*. Tell us how the collaboration came about.

Larry Carlton (LC): My manager, Robert Williams, was having a meeting with Rick Gembar, one of the CEO's of Gibson Guitars here in Nashville. Robert was telling Rick that I had been thinking about putting something very special together for the Japanese market. Rick suggested that maybe Tak Motsumoto and I should make music together. And that's how this idea came about, as a suggestion from those two gentlemen. Once I heard Tak's music, I was very impressed. His songwriting is remarkable, and his touch on the guitar is great. Gosh, when he plays a ballad it's the real deal. It's the stuff that's going to hit you in the heart and make you glad that you're listening to a great guitar player.

Tak Matsumoto (TM): First of all, Larry approached me in 2007. It seems he was looking for someone to collaborate with, and asked Gibson if they could recommend any interesting guitarists and my name came up. So we planned to have lunch together when Larry came to Japan. At that time, I told him I would like to write some new material if we were going to collaborate and make an album together. Larry liked the idea but my

schedule was so tight for the coming year due to the 20th year anniversary of B'z. I just couldn't commit to anything else at that time. However, we kept in touch via e-mail. Larry would be coming to Japan again later that year with his group Fourplay and we

this record?

LC: Tak actually had four songs prepared prior to me even starting to write for this project. That really inspired me and gave me great insight to what the material and the approach of this album could be. Tak and I

"We both have the same vision for any music that we play, and that vision is to be honest."

talked about doing pre-production during that time. I knew something great would happen if we could get together in the studio.

tDB: Tell us about your initial impressions of each other when you first met.

LC: At my first meeting with Tak, we just got together for lunch. I noticed that he was very soft spoken, very respectful, and there was a quiet assuredness to him that I will talk about later, because in the studio he's very sure of what he wants. My first impression was that he was just a really nice guy - very, very successful - and yet very, very humble. And I could see on his face that day that he truly wanted to make some music with me and I was very flattered by that.

TM: To begin with, I really wanted to play guitar with Larry. From the moment I met him, I had been thinking of what kind of music he and I could create. And when we played together in pre-production, I felt we could certainly make something great. I was bringing what I wrote and knew it would be totally different once Larry worked on it and added his color to the song. I found it much easier and more productive once we got together in the studio.

tDB: Give us a snapshot about how the two of you collaborated to make

worked on a couple of demos together. He had great ideas and he knew exactly where he wanted me to play harmony, where he wanted me to play just the melodies, so he could play harmony. I found Tak's leadership to be of great value on this project. Tak composed six songs by himself and I wrote six songs. I would send mp3s to Tak and he did the same. We ended up keeping everything that we demoed for the album.

TM: Larry was in Japan on tour with Fourplay in 2007, and we spent three days in the studio and worked up four songs. As we were both fired up, we wanted to keep the momentum going. Both of our schedules were open later that September so we decided to get together in LA and record an album.

tDB: Tell us about the recording process for the album. Where and how was it done?

LC: Tak owns a studio in Beverly Hills and we tracked the basics with drums, bass and keyboards. The players played along with the Pro Tools demos with the guitar parts that Tak and I had already laid down. So, we actually didn't play together with the band in the studio. It was a very relaxed session and we had a chance to really sit back and focus on the groove and what the guys were playing. I normally play live with the

players when the tracking happens – this was the first time that I have made an album this way.

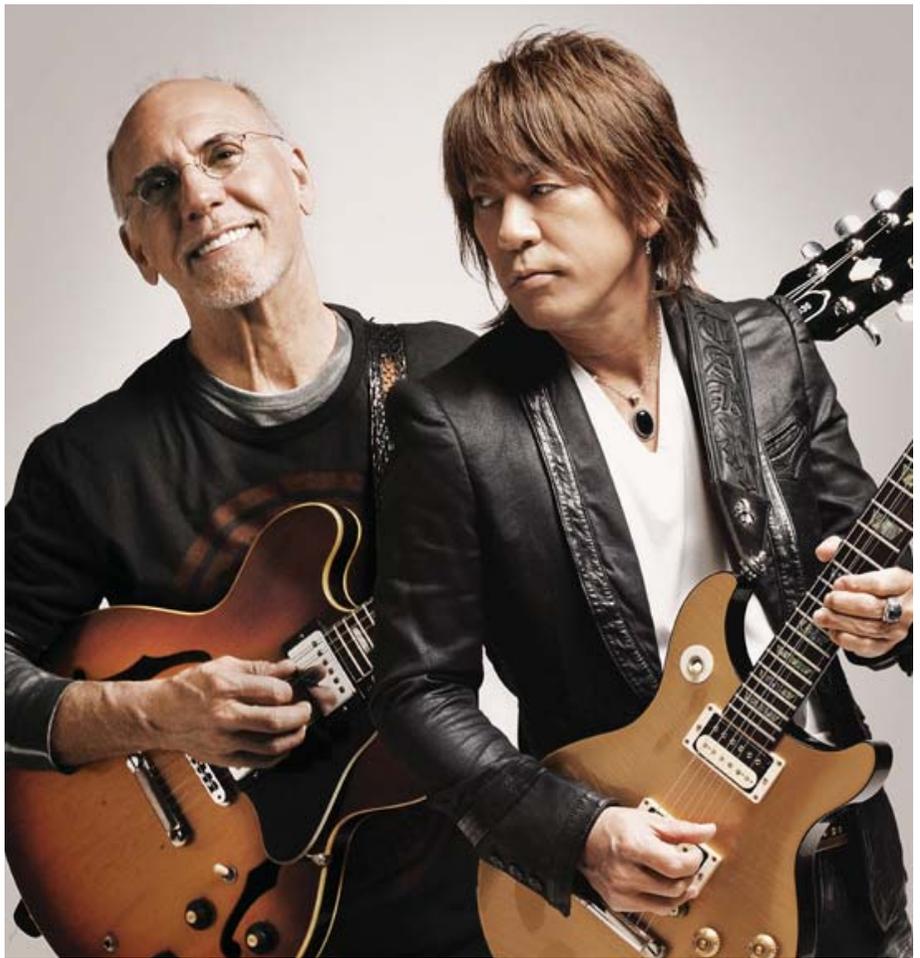
tDB: What do you think of the guitar performances by each other on this album?

LC: Well, I was not surprised at the versatility that Tak has. He's such a great musician. So it didn't really matter what song I presented to Tak or what he presented to me - both of us felt very comfortable performing in that style - or our interpretation of that style for that particular song. I found that Tak played so appropriately for each particular song. He didn't try to play hard rock sound on a beautiful ballad. I really admire his taste and his choice. His versatility is as high as any guitar player would want to have.

TM: Well... Larry is the master, so what can you say about his guitar playing except that it is simply brilliant in all aspects. Every time he plays, something different comes out, including his chord progressions. If I find a phrase I like, I would use repeatedly, but not in Larry. Aside from the melody, he will just play improvisation as he feels. I was amazed at how deep his musicality goes. So, recording and touring with him is a great learning experience for me. As this whole thing has unfolded, I've just felt so grateful for the opportunity to create music with him.

tDB: On all the songs, you both bounce guitar solos and harmony off of each other and that combination works beautifully together. How did you arrive at the final sounds together?

LC: I actually think as a producer, Tak had more insight into how to do a two guitar record - meaning, a guitar record with two guitars. I learned a lot from him. He was so specific as to when he wanted certain lines to be played by me, and places where he wanted just harmony from him, and that leadership that he provided really



“This album is the proof of our chemistry; there are no egos involved, just pure music created by two guitarists, one from the East and one from the West.”

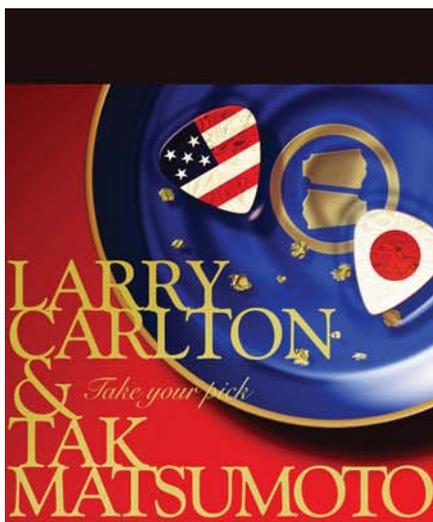
set the pattern for me to know how I could organize my songs and be consistent with his approach to an album of two guitar players. I think he just has more experience at producing certain kinds of records. So he was the leader, definitely, in setting the precedent on how two guitars could interact, and I followed his lead, and then I was able to do my songs that same way.

TM: It felt very natural. For my songs, Larry plays more of the main melody part. I put both main melody and harmony parts on the demos. When recording, harmony parts can sometimes be a burden. But I do a lot of this in B'z music, so it wasn't that

big of a deal for me. For the songs with twin leads, it's a different story. Larry would not play the exact same thing twice, so I recorded my parts first for most part. After, he kindly played along with what I recorded at his studio in Nashville.

tDB: What kind of guitars did you use on the album?

LC: The ES 335 Larry Carlton model is the only guitar that I used on this album. I think as you listen to the album you'll hear many, many different tones I could get out of just that one guitar, and as you know, that's my favorite guitar. It's the one I'm most comfortable with, and so I just kept playing the same guitar, but finding



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Larry Carlton
and Tak
Matsumoto's
new CD:
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different tones with each tune. Yes, I'm still "Mr. 335!"

TM: I tried several guitars playing along with the tracks and chose the best fit. Basically, I narrowed it down to the Gibson double cutaway, but others were used for contrast and different colors. The black double cutaway #4 and the gold top #2 with P-90s seemed to be a nice match for this kind of music.

tDB: Larry, you have a long and successful history of working with numerous great talents. What are some of the more creatively satisfying projects that you have been involved with?

LC: In the 70's, I was fortunate to be a session player for many great artists, I really enjoyed working with Joni Mitchell on *Court and Spark*, and Steely Dan on *The Royal Scam* and *Asia*. Working with Quincy Jones was a great experience – he really knows how to "cast" musicians for particular projects, much like he is casting for a film. My time with the Crusaders was a standout for me. I have been so fortunate to have a long career and have been able to do whatever "moves" me. I have not lost my passion.

tDB: Tak, you have found enormous success working with a group – then as a solo artist, and now as a duo with Larry. Which do you prefer?

TM: All of them are so important and vital for my life as a musician. The collaboration with Larry was such an amazing experience. I learned a lot from him. At the same time, B'z has been a very successful band in Japan. Together with singer Koshi Inaba, we have had the luxury of touring and making records since 1988 without any breaks. I feel so fortunate to be a part of the band and grateful to have the opportunity to appeal to, and meet so many wonderful people.

tDB: You have a highly-anticipated concert tour of Japan that is scheduled to kick off on the 12th of June to promote the new album. Do you

have a message to your fans prior to the shows?

LC: To my fans, to Tak's fans, please, don't miss these shows. The Japanese fans are among the best in the world. I have been going there to perform since 1974 and once they get to know you they are fans for life. I am personally looking so forward to being on stage with Tak and sharing this music. So please come and see it because it's going to be very, very special.

TM: I am really looking forward to the tour. The venues are much different than what I am used to with B'z and the show is all instrumental. I don't know what to expect at this point, but I know I will enjoy it from the bottom of my heart.

tDB: You are delivering this album to radio via AirPlay Direct. How has the digital delivery of your music helped streamline your business?

LC: It gives radio easy access to your music. Radio can download it and make it available immediately. With AirPlay Direct it is very easy and economical – unlike the old school way that my music was serviced in the past.

tDB: Talk about the chemistry between the two of you on this collaboration.

LC: Tak and I have a mutual respect for each other, but we're so unique in our personalities and our approach to music that the chemistry came about so naturally because I think we both have the same vision for any music that we play, and that vision is to be honest. We also had great melodies. Play honestly what you think should be played on that song and let the listener respond. Tak and I both have that same approach – I'm sure of that, the music is not pretentious but it's very honest.

TM: This album is the proof of our chemistry; there are no egos involved, just pure music created by two guitarists, one from the East and one from the West.

GLOBAL RADIO CHARTS[®] FOR MAY 2010

TOP 20 RELEASES/ALBUMS

Result	Artist	Release Name	Downloads
1		<u>Larry Carlton Tak Matsumoto TAKE YOUR PICK</u> Location: AMERICA NORTH: USA:Tennessee (TN)	1005
2		<u>Ray Stevens - We The People</u> Location: AMERICA NORTH: USA:Tennessee (TN)	1000
3		<u>Johnny Gimble</u> Location: AMERICA NORTH: USA:California (CA)	863
4		<u>Elizabeth Cook</u> Location: AMERICA NORTH: USA:Tennessee (TN)	781
5		<u>WHP Digital Compilation Vol. 108</u> Location: AMERICA NORTH: USA:Arizona (AZ)	698
6		<u>Merle Haggard 2010</u> Location: AMERICA NORTH: USA:California (CA)	639
7		<u>Hank III - Rebel Within</u> Location: AMERICA NORTH: USA:Tennessee (TN)	581
8		<u>Nashville Showcase Vol 6 by WHP</u> Location: AMERICA NORTH: USA:Tennessee (TN)	538
9		<u>Aaron Tippin In Overdrive</u> Location: AMERICA NORTH: USA:Tennessee (TN)	447
10		<u>Look To The Light</u> Location: AMERICA NORTH: USA:Tennessee (TN)	441

TOP 20 RELEASES/ALBUMS FOR MAY 2010

11		<u>Wayne Taylor</u>	408
		Location: AMERICA NORTH: USA:Maryland (MD)	
12		<u>Willie Nelson - Country Music</u>	390
		Location: UNKNOWN (not entered)	
13		<u>Doc Walker</u>	388
		Location: AMERICA NORTH: Canada:Manitoba	
14		<u>The Johnson Mountain Boys</u>	373
		Location: AMERICA NORTH: USA:Massachusetts (MA)	
15		<u>J.D. Crowe and the New South</u>	364
		Location: UNKNOWN (not entered)	
16		<u>The Johnson Mountain Boys (Working Close)</u>	346
		Location: AMERICA NORTH: USA:Massachusetts (MA)	
17		<u>Ray Stevens - Laughter Is The Best Medicine</u>	326
		Location: AMERICA NORTH: USA:Tennessee (TN)	
18		<u>Natasha James - "Tequila Time" by WHP</u>	298
		Location: AMERICA NORTH: USA:California (CA)	
19		<u>Dokken</u>	287
		Location: AMERICA NORTH: USA:California (CA)	
20		<u>Jim Silvers aka Col. Jim Silvers aka WindyCityJim</u>	282
		Location: AMERICA NORTH: USA:California (CA)	

VIEW MORE CHARTS AT:
www.AirPlayDirect.com/charts

The AirPlay Direct Global Radio Charts display the top tracks downloaded for airplay by radio programmers internationally. The charts are accurate as of the date published. You can view "real-time" charts at AirPlayDirect.com/charts. We take pride in having built a transparent charting system that accurately reports the hot artists and tracks available within the AirPlay Direct community.

TOP 20 TRACKS FOR MAY 2010

11		A Girl From China By: Larry Carlton Tak Matsumoto TAKE YOUR PICK	77
12		ao By: Larry Carlton Tak Matsumoto TAKE YOUR PICK	75
13		I've Seen It Go Away By: Merle Haggard 2010	73
14		Sweet Georgia Brown (Featuring Merle Haggard) By: Johnny Gimble	68
15		Somewhere South of San Antone (Featuring Vince Gill and Johnny Gimble) By: Johnny Gimble	67
16		Under the X in Texas (Featuring Ray Benson) By: Johnny Gimble	64
17		Lady Be Good (Featuring Willie Nelson) By: Johnny Gimble	64
18		Gettin' Drunk and Fallin' Down By: Hank III - Rebel Within	63
19		All The Time By: Elizabeth Cook	63
20		I Needed You (Featuring Dale Watson) By: Johnny Gimble	61

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