

Andy Aledort

The *Guitar World* columnist and instructor works his blues mojo on *Live at North Star 2009*.

By ALAN PAUL Photo by JUSTIN HYTE



GUITAR WORLD READERS know Andy Aledort as a pioneer of tablature and the author and star of countless instructional books, articles and DVDs. Now you can know him as a blazing blues-based guitarist, thanks to *Live at North Star 2009*, his recently released album on Steve Vai's new Digital Nations label.

Aledort spent the past five years touring with Dickey Betts as the Allman Brothers founder's guitar foil. His nightly interactions with Betts deepened the knowledge he's gained during his career, in which he has interviewed some of the world's greatest guitarists.

"Dickey has been a mentor in so many ways," Aledort says. "He's explained and illustrated the focus and intensity that you need to express yourself and communicate with an audience. He always plays full tilt, and he sets the bar very high every night. I've always been a pretty intense player, but playing with him taught me a lot in that regard."

Working with Betts also helped Aledort realize the impact that his instructional work has had. "Peo-

ple always come up to me and say how much they've learned from my transcriptions, instructional articles and DVDs," he says. "It's nice to be recognized as a teacher and as a player, and it's great to know that the DVDs have been an inspiration to people."

Aledort played slide licks pioneered by Duane Allman during his gigs with Betts, but it wasn't the first time he's been asked to fill huge shoes: he's also performed with Jimi Hendrix's Band of Gypsys and Stevie Ray Vaughan's Double Trouble. Aledort has channeled each of those blues-rock masters into the deeply rooted and original voice heard on *Live at North Star 2009*.

The results found a ready fan in Vai, who Aledort has known for almost 30 years. "Andy is independent, focused and committed to his love for his craft," Vai says. "The blues is a multidimensional world of tone, color and emotion. When we play the blues effectively, we speak from our core, which is what Andy does. The amazing tone in his fingers offers an authentic and classic blues rock experience." □

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Steve Jones OF THE SEX PISTOLS

What inspired you to start playing the guitar?

I actually got pushed over from singing to playing guitar. I wasn't planning on being a guitar player; I was going to be a singer. And I was for a little bit in the Sex Pistols—that is, until we got

John Lydon [Johnny Rotten]. And then I realized I wasn't really suited as a front guy. The only spot open in the band was guitarist, so I had to do that or fuck off.

What was your first guitar?

It was a '74 Gibson Les Paul, a white Custom. [Former Pistols manager] Malcolm McLaren brought it back after he finished managing the New York Dolls and gave it to me when I was around 18 or 19. It used to belong to [Dolls guitarist] Sylvain Sylvain.

Do you remember your first gig?

My very first gig was with the Sex Pistols, and it was also our first-ever gig. It was a very short set, and it was at Saint Martins College of Art [in the U.K.], in 1975. We were opening up for a band called Bazoooka Joe, and their bass player at the time was Adam Ant, who

went on to form Adam and the Ants. But they pulled the plug on us after only four songs because we were so loud and different. They all freaked out.

Ever had an embarrassing onstage moment?

I really can't remember any specific one, though I know I've had many of them.



And I do know it was usually when I was intoxicated. But who doesn't do silly things when they're drunk?

What is your favorite piece of gear?

I haven't got one because I don't get attached to things like a lot of people do. A lot of guitar players collect loads of guitars and all that, but that is not my thing. If someone offered me the right price for my Les Paul, I would fuckin' sell it. At the end of the day, it's how you play that matters, not your gear.

Got any advice for young players?

I would say that they have picked a weird time to start playing music, as there is no money to be made right now. But if you still want to, go ahead. I'd tell them to copy me, because whatever I do is fantastic.

—JOE MATERA