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Discover the Untold Stories of Musical Genius: Joel Harrison's "*Pity the Genius*"

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Cymbal Press is thrilled to announce the release of *Pity the Genius: A Journey through American Guitar Music in 33 Tracks* by Joel Harrison, a compelling exploration of American guitar music and the lives of the musicians who shaped it. Available September 16th in paperback (ISBN: 978-1-955604-16-1), hardcover (ISBN: 978-1-955604-17-8), and Kindle editions, this book promises to be embraced by guitar lovers and listeners alike.

About the Book:

Pity the Genius is more than just a compilation of biographies and song analyses. It's a deep dive into the oft-tumultuous lives of 33 extraordinary guitarists, their brilliance, triumphs, and struggles. From Arthur Rhames' volcanic performances to the introspective elegance of Pat Martino, Joel Harrison captures the essence of these musicians in a way that is both intimate and illuminating. The tracks he selects tell the story of American music, across time and genre. Jazz, rock, blues, country, folk, roots music, and more are all represented.

This book goes beyond the music, delving into the personal challenges and societal obstacles these artists faced. Whether it's the tragic early deaths of guitar prodigies like Danny Gatton and Jimi Hendrix, or the enduring influence of genre-defining musicians like Prince and Joni Mitchell, *Pity the Genius* presents a vivid tapestry of musical stories that have shaped the sound of America. Ultimately, it is a celebration of guitarists and the extraordinary music they gifted the world.

Highlights Include:

- **Arthur Rhames:** An extraordinary talent whose life and career were cut tragically short.
- **Pat Martino:** A journey of recovery and rediscovery after a near-fatal brain aneurysm.
- **Danny Gatton:** The highs and lows of a guitarist whose virtuosity was matched by his personal demons.
- **Emily Remler:** Breaking barriers as a female jazz guitarist and her tragic struggle with addiction.
- **Blind Willie Johnson:** The spiritual and soulful depth of his music— and the hardships he endured.
- **Jerry Garcia:** The iconic figure of the Grateful Dead, known for his improvisational genius, blending of genres, and impact on rock and counterculture.
- **Allan Holdsworth:** The innovative genius who pushed the boundaries of guitar technique and tone.
- **Roscoe Holcomb:** His unique style and contributions to the Appalachian folk music tradition.
- **Sister Rosetta Tharpe:** The godmother of rock and roll whose gospel music influenced countless rock legends.
- **Prince:** The multifaceted musician whose groundbreaking work in funk, rock, and R&B changed the music landscape forever.
- **Joni Mitchell:** The legendary songwriter and guitarist whose poetic lyrics and unique guitar tunings have inspired generations.

- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -

- **Curtis Mayfield:** The soulful guitarist and social activist whose music became the soundtrack for the Civil Rights Movement.
- **Jim Hall:** A master of subtlety and nuance whose contributions to jazz guitar set new standards of excellence.

Advance Praise for *Pity the Genius*:

“This is really profound, evocative stuff—Joel is not only a great player, he’s a great writer. Everyone should read this book.”

—Mike Stern: Jazz Guitarist

What a wonderful series of essays. While Harrison is writing about guitarists, his subject really is how people deal with the need to make art, what happens at the intersection of creativity and personality. And Harrison was there: Allan Holdsworth, Danny Gatton, you’re finding out what it was like to be in their presence, what the world was like then, what was expected, what happened. Deep, deep stuff, sometimes profoundly sad, sometime ecstatic, but always illuminating.

—Peter Watrous: NY Times jazz critic 1986-2000

Author Joel Harrison:

Joel Harrison, an acclaimed guitarist and composer, brings his unique perspective and deep understanding of music to this project. His previous work, *Guitar Talk*, laid the groundwork for this more expansive exploration. Harrison’s writing is informed by personal connections and in-depth research, making *Pity the Genius* a heartfelt tribute to the musicians who have inspired generations.

About Cymbal Press

Cymbal Press is an imprint of Constructing Modern Knowledge Press specializing in books about the arts and artists. Cymbal Press’ first book was voted *Jazz Book of the Year 2021* by the Jazz Journalists Association. CMK Press is an independent publisher of influential books by creative educators for creative educators with more than a dozen titles published in nine languages.

Pity the Genius: A Journey through American Guitar Music in 33 Tracks by Joel Harrison

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