



MIKE VARNEY

SPOTLIGHT

New Talent Discoveries

FOR YEARS WE'VE received letters informing us of exceptionally talented but little-known players. As a way of showcasing these extraordinary, unsung musicians, Guitar Player introduces "Spotlight," a column open to guitarists of all styles who display an undeniable emotional and technical grasp of the guitar. As author Mike Varney explains: "This column will strive to bridge the gap between obscurity and commercial success. Every town seems to have a 'whiz kid,' an unbelievable guitar player everyone expects will one day be a star. Many of these players never make it past the corner bar, and they go unnoticed nationally. They deserve recognition, and it's our goal to help bring some of them to your attention." Each month Mike will choose outstanding examples of original material submitted to him on cassette and write short profiles of the artists.

Varney comes to us with ample credentials. An avid guitar enthusiast with 15 years playing experience, he produced and wrote songs for singer Marty Balin's musical, *Rock Justice* [EMI, SWAK-17036]. In 1981 Mike started his own record company, *Shrapnel Records*, in an effort to locate and record America's hottest unknown heavy metal guitarists. In the November '81 issue he discussed the state of heavy metal music as well as his first release, *U.S. Metal*. We welcome Mike to our family of columnists.

—Editor

* * * *



Guitarist: Pete Zizzo

Age: 16

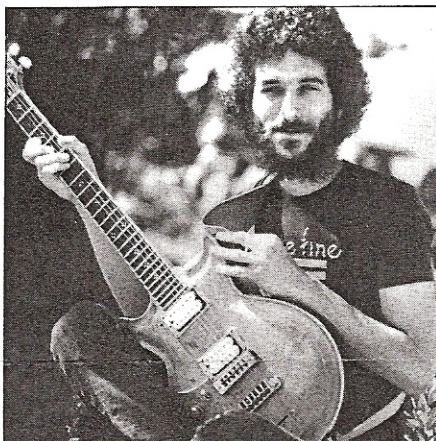
Location: Long Island, NY

Style: Heavy metal

Influences: Eddie Van Halen, Steve Morse, Allan Holdsworth

Main Guitar: Charvel Strat

The son of a concert pianist and an opera singer, Pete began playing guitar at the age of nine and took up piano, voice, and drums shortly after. His first love is heavy metal, although he has been greatly influenced by fusion guitarists. He specializes in fast, searing guitar solos and has a style reminiscent of Neal Schon. Pete is the first guitarist I've heard transpose Bach's *Tocatta And Fugue In Dm* for electric guitar. By combining right- and left-hand keyboard parts and utilizing a hammer-on technique, Pete transposes this piece with ingenuity and originality. Recently he entered the studio to record this classical masterpiece along with two of his latest hard-rocking originals. His technique is remarkable, and it's clear to me that Pete Zizzo is one of the best unknown players in the country. His attitude towards guitar is summed up in this quote: "Everyone says that speed is nothing without class. I say you can't have class without speed. I'm not into lullabies. I play stun guitar." You can write to Pete c/o Brian Koppelman Management, 34 Glenwood Rd., Roslyn Harbor, NY 11576.



Guitarist: Glenn Michael Phillips

Age: 31

Location: Tucson, AZ

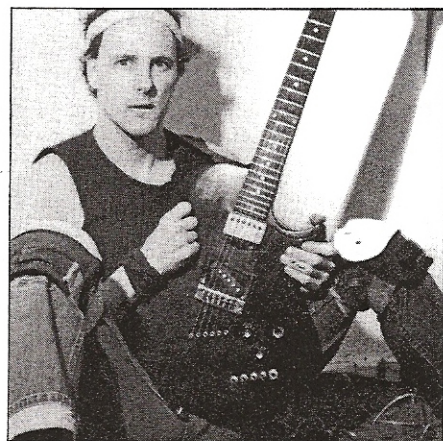
Style: Classical-influenced jazz-rock fusion

Influences: Jeff Beck, Jimi Hendrix, Beethoven, Strauss

Main Guitar: Charles Lobue Custom left-handed guitar

Pete, a serious student of the guitar since age 12, began gigging with rock bands throughout New York when he was 18. At 22 he moved to Tucson, Arizona, to open a natural foods restaurant, where his musical interest widened to include classical symphonies. Pete studied scores and large-scale orchestrations, and in 1980 composed *Light Of Day*, which to his knowledge is the first

real concerto for electric guitar and orchestra. *Light Of Day* was performed and recorded in Tucson with full orchestration. Pete is a gifted writer and has broken new ground with his efforts to bring the excitement of an electric guitar into a symphony context. His playing flows from slow melodic lines to salvos of fast and furious staccato runs, woven between tightly arranged symphony orchestration. When asked about his goals, Pete said, "I want to put the electric guitar in a true classical concerto context with it being, at times, a part of the orchestra and at other times a solo instrument." Pete can be reached at 402 East 4th St., Tucson, AZ 85705.



Guitarist: Glenn Michael Phillips

Age: 31

Location: Atlanta, GA

Style: Rock

Influences: Michael Bloomfield, Harold Kelling, Bill Rea

Main Guitar: Gibson L6-S, modified

Glenn began his career at age 17 when he recorded a double-album for Columbia Records with the Hampton Grease Band, which was followed by a national tour opening for groups like the Mothers Of Invention, Fleetwood Mac, and John Lennon. The group disbanded in 1973, and Glenn has since recorded two critically acclaimed solo albums for the British-based Virgin Records label. A third album, *Dark Lights*, was released in January 1981 on his own label, Snow Star. On *Dark Lights* Glenn delivers solos with wild aggression and some of the heaviest vibrato I've ever heard, which makes this instrumental album a must for my record collection. His strong sense of melody, coupled with fast scaly riffs that burn over a bed of rhythmic psychedelic fusion, has transformed me into a devoted fan. Glenn expresses his feelings for his guitar as