



## Strange Beautiful Music: A Musical Memoir

*Joe Satriani , Jake Brown , Brian May (Foreword)*

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**Strange Beautiful Music: A Musical Memoir** Joe Satriani , Jake Brown , Brian May (Foreward)  
**Go behind the scenes with the musician *The New York Times* called “a guitar God!”**

Often hailed as the Jimi Hendrix of his generation, living guitar legend Joe Satriani has long transcended stylistic boundaries with a sound that raises the bar like a new horizon for the broader genre of instrumental guitar rock. Joe’s 6-string secrets have astounded listeners around the world for nearly 30 years.

In *Strange Beautiful Music: A Musical Memoir*, Satriani and coauthor, music biographer Jake Brown, take fans on their first authorized tour of the story behind his climb to stardom and the creative odyssey involved in writing and recording a storied catalog of classics including “Surfing with the Alien,” “Summer Song,” “Satch Boogie,” “Always With Me, Always With You,” “The Extremist,” “Flying in a Blue Dream,” “Crowd Chant,” and more.

Featuring previously unpublished photos and hours of exclusive, firsthand interviews with Satriani, *Strange Beautiful Music* offers a unique look inside the studio with Joe, giving fans a chance to get up close and personal like never before. With insider details about his collaboration with multi-platinum supergroup Chickenfoot, exclusive interviews with Sammy Hagar and Michael Anthony of Van Halen and Chad Smith of the Red Hot Chili Peppers, commentary from fellow guitar legends such as Steve Vai, Metallica’s Kirk Hammett, Primus’s Larry LaLonde, and legendary music producers including Glynn Johns and the late Andy Johns, this memoir offers a rare inside look for die-hard Satriani fans, guitar enthusiasts, and anyone who loves to rock.

## Strange Beautiful Music: A Musical Memoir Details

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## From Reader Review *Strange Beautiful Music: A Musical Memoir* for online ebook

**Jeff says**

MY COPY OF THIS BOOK IS 294 PAGES LONG, THOUGH THE REST OF THE INFORMATION IS THE SAME AS LISTED.

1st Read: September 21, 2016 - September 28, 2016

An interesting look into the life of one of my favorite guitarists and what goes on behind closed musical doors. I love that he always pushes himself to be better than he was on his last performances, excelling into new accomplishments and collaborations. He seems to be a great musician to work with and comes across as very positive.

Even if you are not a **gear-head** (when it comes to his *toys*), you would still enjoy this book!

It was a Bucket List item stroked off from my own personal desires, upon seeing Joe and his band live on October 13, 2013. My mind was blown and I had a permanent smile on my face for days after. It was the best kind of *high* I've ever achieved!

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**gekko100 says**

As a long-time fan of Joe's music, I was gearing up for a fascinating read when I stumbled on his recently-released memoir. Unfortunately, the book rather failed to live up to expectations. Don't get me wrong: it's a reasonably interesting meander through his musical career over the years, and as such is certainly a worthwhile read for any Satch fan. It's just that it could have been so much more.

The approach taken is very straight-down-the-line and uncontroversial: we get plenty (I would argue too much) of detail on the studio production story of each album, but very little on his personal life or the early stages of his musical development. I wasn't hoping for the usual rock-star memoir cliches à la Keith Richards (which, in any case, I suspect were never Joe's thing), but neither did I want to plow through the minutiae of a sound engineer's logbook. For me, those are details that I may want to consult in an appendix; but they're not my main interest. I guess I just wanted to read more about Joe the person, and how he became the staggeringly accomplished musician we know and admire.

A couple of cases in point: his lessons early on with jazz pianist Lennie Tristano merit far more than the one or two passing mentions they are given; while his lessons with Steve Vai – surely the guitar nerd's equivalent of Plato and Socrates sitting around discussing politics – are similarly glossed over. Also conspicuously absent is any real opinion/critique of his contemporaries: not a single feather in the guitar player community could have conceivably been ruffled by what's in the book. Maybe I'm just seeing this through the warped lens of a wannabe guitar geek, but come on, how many people reading this book aren't guitar players?

There is some discussion of the creative process and inspiration behind some of his songs, and indeed these are the most interesting moments in the book. However, coverage is very patchy and I personally would have welcomed a more comprehensive, even a track-by-track, discussion. (On a mischievous note, I for one would still love to know what on Earth he was playing at with the truly awful Woodstock Jam on the Time Machine album??)

As a final peeve, I found the copious use of extended interview excerpts from the likes of producers, session musicians and the other members of his recent collaboration Chickenfoot to be a little tedious and distracting from the flow of the book.

Overall the book is an easy, pleasant read; it's just a little too "safe". To sum up, it was something like the memoir equivalent of Joe and his buddies sitting around in the studio reminiscing over all the good times, with smiles and good-natured compliments all round, while Rubina's Blue Sky Happiness plays softly on an endless loop in the background.

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### **Penelope says**

Joe is one of my all time favorite guitarist and being a guitarist as well he has influenced me in ways others haven't. This book really got inside the head of a genius and shows us how he approaches his music from inception to the finished product. What I really enjoyed about this book was not only did Joe give us his perspective on his work but had the people he worked with do the same. The entire book is laid out almost like a call and response. I would have to say that there is a bit of technical detail in this book that may seem foreign to those unfamiliar with the recording process, the equipment and instruments involved. Overall it is a must read for fans of Joe Satriani.

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### **Matto says**

Four stars might be stretching but if you're a fan you'll enjoy at least portions of the book. Best read while listening to the songs being described!

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### **Oscar Quintero says**

I was looking for Satch to open up more but he fails in this book. A lot of interesting anecdotes on each of his recorded albums, but that's about it.

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### **N.N. Light says**

As one of the greatest guitarists in the world, Joe Satriani is a must-listen to and I am pleased to own several albums. When I heard he's written an autobiography, I knew I had to read it. Brutally honest, Joe takes us behind the scenes and inside his mind as he shares his musical life. I loved every part of his story and felt a deep connection with him. A must read!

My Rating: 5 stars

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### **Chris says**

*I won a free copy of this ARC through the First Reads program at Good Reads.*

OK, here's what happened. I read the first 60 pages or so of this book word by word. The story of Satch's childhood and teen years as he made the decision to be a professional musician - now those sections were very good. But then as the recording process started, we got a play by play of the technical side of music and guitar theory.

While all of that is fascinating on a big scale, I'm more interested in reading the story of a person's life and experiences when I read a memoir. There is more of it here, but it seems to be buried in more technobabble.

So I skipped ahead to the Chickenfoot chapter and read about how Satch formed that band with Sammy Hagar, Michael Anthony, and Chad Smith. I really enjoyed that and read up until we started seeing the recording sessions outlined.

Also, there are too many blurbs & quotes from other people. I thought that some of them worked in giving insight, but the constant shift from Satch to someone else back to Satch again and then again to another person was jarring.

I did give the book 3-stars because I enjoyed the biographical parts. I think a serious guitar player would love the other stuff too, but it's just a foreign language to me.

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### **Danny says**

Essential for Joe Satriani fans. This book reads like the liner notes for every one of Joe's albums. Before I read a biography, I typically ask myself "what interesting thing do I hope this person cover in this book?", if these questions are addressed and I learn a couple of other things, I usually come out of the book happy. By these standards this is a great biography. It reads more like a documentary, Joe details parts of a tour or recording the album and then someone comments on it, and then Joe adds to those comments. It is an interesting style that fits the subject perfectly. There is a lot of information on instrument and recording specifics but in my opinion it did not interfere.

My favorite parts were learning how Joe self funded his first album and was almost done if not for a gig in the Greg Kihn Band at the end of their fame, how Silver Surfer ended up on the cover of "Surfing with the Alien", all the great guitarists that were taught by Joe and how long he was a guitar teacher. This definitely not a biography you will enjoy without having any previous knowledge of the subject but I found it a unique and easy read.

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## **Molly Anna says**

Joe Satriani is considered a guitar legend, having sold millions of albums and been nominated for many Grammy awards. If you are familiar with his work, you will know that he specializes in instrumental rock, and from reading his memoir, it is obvious that he is a guitar and recording gear geek. So, if you are into amps, wahs, and pedals and you can't get enough of recording techniques, I recommend this book to you (especially if you are very familiar with Satriani's work -- much of the book also focuses on his inspirations, preparations, and histories for his songs). Overall, it was an unique experience reading Satriani's book. (I do recommend having his albums on hand while reading so that you are able to reference the songs Satriani highlights.)

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## **Mr. Dex says**

I enjoyed reading this book. As a fan I always wanted to know what was this great mind thinking while writing those beautiful songs.

A major part of the book is about what gears Joe has used for the recordings which I personally didn't find fascinating however I'm a guitar player myself.

There aren't so many details on Joe's life. it's more of him and other musicians explaining about the record process and song writing.

Overall it was a great experience.

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## **Mike Garrigan says**

Anyone who has been through law school will tell you that the experience requires a lot of reading. I like to listen to music when I read, as long it's instrumental music. Over the past month, I gathered all the best instrumental music from my collection and placed it on my laptop. I have Bernstein conducting Brahms, Beethoven, and Mozart; a few Brian Eno albums; most of the Miles Davis electric period; and all of guitar hero Joe Satriani's studio albums.

After listening to a lot of Satriani, both during my commute and while reading, I became familiar with the subtle nuances of and differences within Joe's arc of records, from the early NOTE/Surfing albums through the mid-period Engines of Creation, through the last few, which are polished masterpieces. Naturally, I became interested in understanding why his music shifted the way it did over the past 30 years. Satriani's memoir, *Strange Beautiful Music*, details these artistic choices and brings light to his evolution.

Written by Joe Satriani and Jake Brown, *Strange Beautiful Music* was published on April 8, 2014 by BenBella Books. Todd McLaren narrated an well-done audiobook version of the memoir. At just over 300 pages (or about 8 and a half hours on audiobook), *Strange Beautiful Music* tells Satriani's story through the lens of his solo albums. Also, the book takes a few explanatory detours into Satriani's time with supergroup Chickenfoot.

When I was 14 years old, I had the first two Satriani albums on cassette. The first album, *Not of This Earth*, always sounded a bit strange to me but I could never put my finger on why. As the memoir points out, *NOTE* was both revolutionary and experimental—no one had made a record like that before. Those techniques would be perfected on *Surfing with the Alien*, which became one of the best selling instrumental rock albums of all time. Satriani's production team used a drum machine kick drum, a live top kit, and glued it all together with non-linear reverbs. With each subsequent record, Satriani challenged himself by changing some critical component in the production chain.

The memoir's strength is also its weakness—this is a technical book. *Strange Beautiful Music* takes time to explain Satriani and producer Cuniberti's varying rationales for selecting various of hardwares throughout the different recordings. I know the differences between a Neve and an API console, but I don't know that a casual listener would.

For me, reading *Strange Beautiful Music* brought a greater insight into Satriani's albums, especially a new found appreciation for a project I didn't fully understand: *Chickenfoot*. I recommend this book to anyone who is a fan of Satriani's work as well as any aspiring studio engineers who are looking for a well documented history lesson in the evolution of recording over the past 30 years.

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### **Daniel Gonçalves says**

A great book detailing this brilliant musician's life.

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### **P.e. lolo says**

This book is really like the title says, beautiful music. Joe Satriani has been making music for decades and he takes you through his journey. From his learning to play the guitar to actually teaching and one of his students was Steve Vai, I thought that was actually an interesting part of this book because both of these men are guitar giants now. I don't know how many people have heard of Joe Satriani, but I do know it is more than when his *Surfing with an alien* album first came out. Not only was that a very good album but it was totally different and perfect at the time. From there each record was something different until he got together with *Chicken Foot*. Now that music is special and I wish they could make more records. He takes you through each album he made and the people that were on them. There are also excerpts from the people that worked on those records talking about making them. Overall I thought it was a good book talking about the music that he has made over the years like the title stated. I got this book from [Netgalley.com](http://Netgalley.com) I gave it 4 stars. Follow us at [www.1rad-readerreviews.com](http://www.1rad-readerreviews.com)

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### **Eric Bittner says**

The subtitle of this book tells you what to expect: a musical memoir. If you're looking for sordid tales of life on the road as a rock star, keep looking. But if you want insight into Satch's approach to songwriting and recording, this is it. I'm definitely biased, as I've been a fan of Joe's music since *Surfing With the Alien*, but I found the stories about recording each of his albums fascinating. If you're a fan like me, you'll want to have your iPod, etc. cued up with his music as you read, as you'll probably want to hear the songs as you read about how they were written and/or recorded.

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## **Rod says**

WARNING: this is a book for serious musicians and guitar players ONLY.

I would have given this book 5 stars if it shared just a few more stories about Deep Purple and all the people Joe has Jammed with over the years - especially his G3 gigs with Steve Morse, Paul Gilbert and John petrucci. Even a bit more of his Mick Jagger experience would have been cool. Thankfully we do get some great moments with Chickenfoot. (and yet no mention of him touring with Bassist Dave LaRue???)

But this is mostly a quick run through Joe's albums and career. He chats a little about his guitars and amps - but not much. The strangest thing was finding out he often does NOT use an amp on some songs. As I was reading this I went back and listened to almost all of his albums - they are still great. I've been a fan since Surfing With The Alien came out back in 1987. Wow! 28 years I've been a fan of Joe's.

I still prefer to hear him live with no overdubs or endlessly tracked guitars. But both are necessary for a long ambitious career. Right now i'm loving " black swans and wormhole wizards".

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