



Two time Grammy-nominated blues guitarist Joe Bonamassa, who at the tender age of 11 toured with the legendary B.B. King, will bring his skillful guitar prowess to Jones Beach on Fri, Aug 19, 2022 - tix: <http://JOEBONAMASSA.jonesbeach.com>

Bonomassa plays with special guest The Kenny Wayne Shepherd Band on Aug. 19. He was recently nominated for a Grammy in the category of Best Contemporary Blues Album for his "Royal Tea" record from 2020 and just released a new album called "Time Clocks."

For the first 20 years of Joe Bonamassa's career, one constant has always been touring. Even as he maintained a schedule that has seen him release 14 solo albums, even more live CDs or DVDs, as well as multiple releases with the bands Black Country Communion and Rock Candy Funk Party, and collaborations with Beth Hart, among others, Bonamassa has generally played a pair of extensive U.S. tours and a trip through Europe every year.

So seeing the pandemic interrupt what has been a key component in making Bonamassa arguably the world's most popular blues-rock artist — all while self-releasing his albums rather than singing to a record label — had to turn life upside down for the talented guitarist/singer.. Bonamassa isn't complaining too much, though.

"It was definitely the break that I needed to take that I would never have taken myself," he said

in an early October phone interview. “So there’s that. I mean, it is what it is. There was nothing anybody could have done about it. I was just fortunate to be in a position where I didn’t have to sell my car.”

Now Bonamassa is back playing in person for audiences. He has plenty of songs to work with, including material from his 2020 album, “Royal Tea” (the pandemic prevented him from touring behind that album) and his new effort, “Time Clocks,” which was released on Oct. 29. Despite the wealth of new songs, Bonamassa said his show will cover his back catalog as well.. “We have a lot of new stuff. The whole show is new,” Bonamassa said. “So yeah, I brought back a few old songs, a couple of songs from (older) records we never played (live). I did a lot of stuff. We have a lot of alternates, too, that we haven’t gotten to. The cool thing is it keeps it fresh for us. We can change the sets every night, and still hopefully achieve the same result.”

Writing and recording “Time Clocks” was one way Bonamassa passed time during the pandemic. His plans for “Time Clocks” had to be adjusted to meet COVID protocols. Rather than being able to bring into the studio any number of musicians and singers, Bonamassa had to take what he called a bare bones approach to the project. “It was (drummer) Anton (Fig), (bassist) Steve Mackey and myself and a couple of engineers, and my assistant, who was acting as my guitar tech, and a whole bunch of masks and just whatever,” he said.

Another person who wasn’t in the studio was Bonamassa’s long-time producer, Kevin Shirley, who was stuck in Australia at the time. Once again, they found a way to adjust, using Zoom calls so Shirley could be in touch as takes were recorded.. “Obviously, it was something that was very odd at first,” Bonamassa said. “But then we got our heads around it. It wasn’t a thing that, it was odd at first, but it was workable. But everything was odd. So what can I do?”

What Bonamassa did was make a rock album with a decidedly big and epic feel — somewhat surprising considering the rather minimal approach that needed to be taken to recording the basic tracks. “Time Clocks” features swaggering, blues-laced rock on songs like “Notches,” “Hanging on a Loser” and “The Heart That Never Waits” a chunky rocker in “Questions And Answers” and several multi-faceted songs, such as “Mind’s Eye,” which opens on a silky note and builds into an expansive rocker and the Zeppelin-ish “Curtain Call.”

“I mean, it wasn’t conscious when I wrote it. It just kind of scaled that way,” Bonamassa said of the album’s feel.

Writing and recording in New York City marked a homecoming of sorts for Bonamassa, who managed to scrape by as he started his career doing recording sessions around the city. By that time, he had already made waves on the blues scene, getting tutored at age 11 by Danny Gatton and the following year opening some 20 shows for B.B. King, who was generous in his praise of the young guitarist... He made his debut as a solo artist in 2000 with the album “A New Day Yesterday.” He’s released 13 studio albums since then, nearly all of which have topped the “Billboard” magazine blues album chart. Along the way, his formidable skills as a guitarist have grown more refined and his songwriting has improved considerably. The size venues he plays have also grown to the point where he commonly plays large theaters and arenas.. Producer Shirley, in press materials, has said he views “Time Clocks” as an album that could elevate

Bonomassa from a blues artist to a superstar. Bonamassa isn't concerning himself with such talk. His focus is on his music.

"I really don't know what my future holds, personally and professionally, it's a very difficult landscape at this point to navigate. And only I can answer that, and only I can see the true (path)," he said. "Everybody can speculate, but I actually have to go out and do the work. It's like you've got to make sure your heart's in it still." |