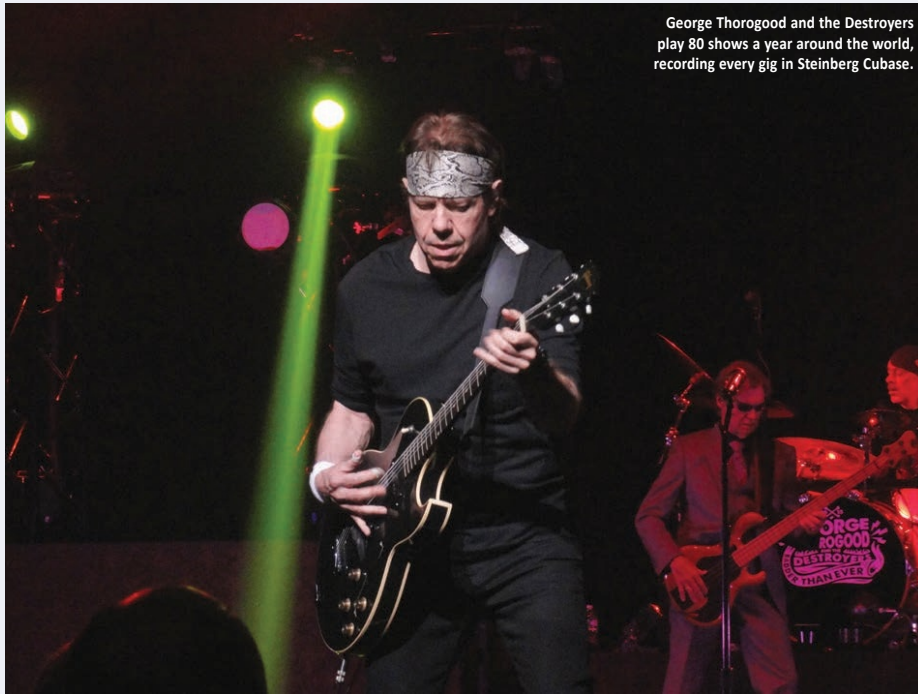


Not Just Good; Thorogood

BY CLIVE YOUNG

NEW YORK, NY—George Thorogood is many things—a guitar slinger, band leader and the man who wrote “Bad To The Bone,” the go-to track for every Eighties action movie soundtrack—but above all, he is an entertainer. Despite all the tough-guy songs about rough livin’ and hard drinkin’, he’s not above shuffling, preening, cracking jokes or anything else it takes to grab your attention and keep it for the rest of the show.



George Thorogood and the Destroyers play 80 shows a year around the world, recording every gig in Steinberg Cubase.

It’s a well-oiled, time-tested act that he and his band, the Destroyers, have honed over 40-plus years, still playing 80 shows annually around the world with a passel of gear from Hendersonville, TN-based 242 Concepts in tow. Along for the ride each time is the tried and true road crew of production manager/FOH engineer Jeff Pitt,

a 16-year veteran of Thorogood tours; monitor and recording engineer Shawn Berman (12 years); and system engineer/alignment specialist Nick Abrahamson (6 years). That kind of longevity is standard throughout the rest of the crew, too. “It’s a family operation,” Berman explained. “George knows your family, he knows your kids’ names,

sends birthday presents—still kind of an old-school approach.”

In keeping with the rough-and-ready vibe of the original records, Pitt mixes the shows to match. “We keep it fairly raw in nature,” he said. As a result, while there are Midas Pro2 digital consoles at both FOH and monitorworld, Pitt approaches his house mix as if he’s working on an analog desk. “I keep a basic start file, but I’m an analog

and wanting to take our package everywhere, I came back to digital three years ago, and ended up on the Midas Pro series desks—which have been great. I’ve been extremely pleased with the sonic quality, ease of operation and customer support, and the reliability has been stellar. We have had extremely minute issues, but nothing show-stopping—which we had in other formats—so it’s been a very stable device for us at both ends of the snake.”

Touring in four-week blocks, some North American runs find the act carrying PA, while for others, the production uses local stacks and racks, just bringing along subs and front fills to supplement as needed. “We always find those are typically the weakest link in a house rig,” said Abrahamson. “You can usually make the top boxes work for you and cover what you need to, but front fills are always the thing for us, because our shows are typically standing shows where folks are heavy drinking and having a good time—so we want to make sure they can hear what they came to see.” Helping prevent angry audiences on this year’s shows were Clair CP218 subs and P2 front fills.

Over at stageside, Berman puts together monitor mixes heard through 10 JBL VP7212MDP wedges and a variety of Sennheiser G3 IEM systems and Shure PSHW6 hardwired IEM units, all with custom Future Sonics molds. Because he’s so interactive with the audience, Thorogood skips wearing in-ears, but the rest of the band made the transition a dozen years ago. The result was that they had more mobility onstage as they were no longer locked down to wedges; transport costs dropped due to carrying fewer wedges and smaller guitar amps; and the band’s career prospects got a booster shot, too. “There had been a lot of premature hearing damage

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“Our shows are typically standing shows where folks are heavy drinking and having a good time—so we want to make sure they can hear what they came to see.”

Nick Abrahamson

guy from inception,” he said. “I’ve been on every digital console in the last 10 years, even went back to the Midas XL-4 for several years because I was frustrated with digital formats, but with the way we tour

over the years, so we had certain players that we just had to do this for,” said Berman. “That was a big choice, as an operation, to make this concession, but it means they

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Thorogood

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can do this another 10-15 years. It makes a difference.”

While Berman handles the monitor rig, he also records every show, not only for archival purposes (“in case some kind of magic happens”), but also for release. “I’ve done stuff for ESPN, I’ve recorded George and Elvin Bishop for an Elvin Bishop album on the road, we sent something for one of Buddy Guy’s things...there’s a lot,” said Berman. All of that is captured in Steinberg Cubase, a DAW choice that was already in place when he joined the crew—and that was fine with him: “I’d used it for years in my studio, so I was excited when I found out that’s what they had. I really like the logical way that Steinberg products work; Nuendo and Cubase basically work



Seen here at New York City’s Beacon Theatre are (l-r): production manager/FOH engineer Jeff Pitt; system engineer/alignment specialist Nick Abrahamson; and monitor and recording engineer Shawn Berman.

the same, and the customer service is great. I’ve never told them

who I work for or what I do; when I have an issue, I contact them through email, get the immediate response that ‘we’ll get back to you in 24 hours’—and they always do. They’ve gotten me through every single problem every time.”

Despite recording every show, the band’s miking doesn’t get esoteric; instead, it tends to match the music—road-ready and you know what you’re gonna get. Vocals are captured with wireless Sennheiser E865s; guitars are nabbed alternately with Shure KSM32s, a SM 57 and a Royer R121 ribbon mic; the bass runs into a Radial JDI; the saxophone is heard via a Sennheiser EW572 wireless system with an E908 instrument mic; and the drums are surrounded by a plethora of Shures and Audio-Technica ATM 23HEs.

While the days of crazy touring—like the band’s famed 50/50 Tour of 1981, where it played 50 states in 50 days—have long passed, some things just don’t change. “George has what he calls The Dirty Dozen: 12 songs that he has to play,” laughed Pitt. “‘Move It On Over’ is in there, ‘Night Time,’ ‘I Drink Alone,’ ‘Who Do You Love,’ and of course, ‘Bad To The Bone.’ And if he doesn’t play ‘One Bourbon, One Scotch, One Beer,’ people are going to be pretty upset!” It keeps the audience happy and out of trouble—and that’s not bad at all.

242 Concepts
242concepts.com

Steinberg
Steinberg.net

Midas
Midasconsoles.com

VITALstats

George Thorogood and the Destroyers

242 Concepts (Hendersonville, TN)

Production Manager/ FOH Engineer:

Jeff Pitt

Monitor/Recording Engineer:

Shawn Berman

Systems Engineer/ Alignment Specialist:

Nick Abrahamson

FOH Console:

Midas Pro2 with Midas DL251

Monitor Console:

Midas Pro2 with Midas DL251

House Speakers:

Supplemental Clair Global CP218 subs, P2 front fills

Monitor Speakers:

(10) JBL VP7212MDP wedges; Clair Global R-4III sidefills

Personal Monitors:

Shure PSHW6; Sennheiser G3; PWS IAS software; Future Sonics

FOH Equipment/ Plug-Ins:

Rational Acoustics Smaart; Lake LM44; TASCAM SSCDR200; Steinberg Cubase; Klark-Teknik DN9650

Microphones:

Shure SM 91, Beta 52, SM 57, Beta 56, SM 81, KSM32; Sennheiser, E865 wireless, EW572 wireless, E908; Radial JDI DI; Royer R121; Audio-Technica ATM 25HE

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