

## Guitar Nine (guitar9.com)

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### Interview: Vinny Roth

by Dan McAvinchey

Based in the Washington D.C. area, guitarist Vinny Roth divides his time soulful, progressive blues with The Vinny Roth Band, or doing session work. On his current CD, entitled "2 Stratz Are Better Than 1" (released in the summer of 2014), Roth hit every color of the music spectrum with his singing Strat, while keeping his ideas fresh. Check out [vinnyroth.com](http://vinnyroth.com) for more information.

Dan McAvinchey recently conducted this interview with Roth to discuss his career and how to best get attention in the crowded music scene.

**Dan McAvinchey:** *OK Vinny, let's get started. Tell us, when did you first get interested in guitar, and how did you learn and progress as a player?*

**Vinny Roth:** I first got interested in guitar when I was about 7. I saw an Elvis movie, and in the movie the King played guitar and sang, beat up the bad guys, rode a motorcycle and walked off with a pretty girl. That is when I thought Wow now this is rock and roll! About a year later I heard the riff to Aerosmith's "Walk This Way" and was amazed at how big the opening riff sounded and decided I need an electric guitar.

I originally started playing the piano as a young child, and I think it help my ear develop as well as my rhythm. I originally started teaching myself out of guitar method books, but hit a wall and needed a real teacher. I started taking lessons when I was about 11 or 12. I learned how to strum chords first and how to read music. My first teacher was strict and wouldn't teach me tunes. Because of this I further developed my ear trying to figure out tunes I heard on the radio. I was fortunate to have a much cooler guitar instructor named Rick when I was a freshman in high school. He was the original Jack Black from the "School Of Rock". Rick would loan me all kinds of rock, blues, metal, and even jazz albums. He taught me full songs but got me started on improvising and made learning fun! I use to practice all the time even getting up an hour early before school. I would play guitar off and on all day on the weekends. I was lucky to have tons of great teachers and went on to major in music while in college.

**Dan McAvinchey:** *It's obvious great teachers can make a huge difference in your development. Was your latest CD, "2 Stratz Are Better Than 1", self-released?*

**Vinny Roth:** My latest CD Was self-released and promoted via every source of social media and word of mouth I could find. I wish I could have found a label interested, but I knew that my own self-promotion would be the best way to go.

**Dan McAvinchey:** *How would you describe your music to someone who has never heard you before?*

**Vinny Roth:** I would describe my music as new school progressive blues with an old vibe. I like to think that I am taking the traditions of the original blues players and mixing it with more modern elements of funk, blues, fusion and country.

**Dan McAvinchey:** *Did you write all the material for your CD yourself?*

**Vinny Roth:** I wrote all of the material (with the exception of one cover tune) by myself over the many years I have been playing. I have always been a member of a band so my last CD was my first solo original effort. I was lucky to be able to work with a great producer, as well as have many great players to record with.

**Dan McAvinchey:** *Which of the tracks from "2 Stratz Are Better Than 1" do you enjoy playing the most?*

**Vinny Roth:** My favorite tracks from my latest CD are the title track ("2 Stratz Are Better Than 1") and "Shinebox". These are the ones that I think represent my sound and style the best. "Two Stratz..." is my take on what I try to emulate when I play blues melding B.B. King with all the newer blues cats. "Shinebox" is my take on the Allman Brothers meet prog rock.

**Dan McAvinchey:** *What do you strive for musically?*

**Vinny Roth:** What I am trying to strive for musically is playing the music that I feel inside my soul. I am hoping to create great guitar driven music that all generations and ages can enjoy while trying to keep the melody and grooves stuck in the listener's head. I would also pray that someone big looking for a serious guitarist would hire me up, or a big label would sign me.

**Dan McAvinchey:** *Tell us a little about the gear you use to get your sound.*

**Vinny Roth:** I use a basic old school rig to get my guitar sound. First off my main amp is a new Yorkville Traynor Yc-80 that is all tube. It is like a twin reverb, but lighter, and has a bit more balls. I am using an original Ibanez TS-808 Tube Screamer, an Exotic booster pedal, a Boss DD-6 delay, an MXR Distortion 3 and a Morley Bad Horsie 2 wah. My main guitar pickups are made by JBE and have tons of tone without any hum.

**Dan McAvinchey:** *Are you using any social media sites to promote your CDs and/or music career?*

**Vinny Roth:** I am using every form of social media to promote myself and my music. I use everything from my YouTube guitar lessons and live videos, to CD Baby, MySpace, and Facebook.

**Dan McAvinchey:** *From a publicity and promotion standpoint, what do you find is working best for you at the moment?*

**Vinny Roth:** I find that YouTube and Facebook are working best for me as well as getting out and gigging.

What isn't working is the sad fact that music is in a state of looks more than substance. What I mean is that kids are not learning guitar, they are busy

playing video games. Many clubs are doing away with great live bands and are using DJs instead. Plus many new artist that are famous have limited musicality. Sure they look great but their songwriting is laborious and they have limited chops.

**Dan McAvinchey:** *Why do you think a subset of music fans prefer instrumental music over traditional, vocal-oriented music?*

**Vinny Roth:** I think certain music fans like instrumental music over vocal music is because of the chops that many players possess today, as well as the brilliance in song structure and melody that are ever present in this style of music.

**Dan McAvinchey:** *Who would be one guitarist you'd love to work with on a single project?*

**Vinny Roth:** If I could do a once-off guitar album with any other guitarist in the near future it would be a toss-up between Dickey Betts, Oz Noy or Jimmy Herring.

**Dan McAvinchey:** *What do you have in the pipeline for the rest of 2015 and for the following year?*

**Vinny Roth:** What's next for me is finishing my next CD Project titled "Redwine Sunshine And Loud Guitars". It is in a similar vein as "2 Stratz..." as it is mostly instrumental with a few vocal spots. I have a few name players helping me out like Ike Willis of Frank Zappa fame, sax greats Al Williams and Ron Holloway and keyboardist Kevin McKendree (Brian Setzer, John Hall). I am hopeful to garner more press, sell more CDs, and maybe get some serious recognition. Above all I want to keep making great music, have a ton of fun doing so, and be grateful to God I am lucky to do it.

Read the standard version of this column online at: <https://www.guitar9.com/interview200.html>

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*Dan McAvinchey is a composer/guitarist living in Raleigh, NC. He believes every musician or composer has the power to release their own record. His CD release on Guitar Nine was entitled "Guitar Haus". Please direct all comments and suggestions for future columns to [Dan McAvinchey](#). © Dan McAvinchey - Used by permission*