



## The Mighty Quinn

You ain't seen nothing like Quinn Sullivan, a 12-year-old electric blues guitarist who's poised to be the genre's next big thing.

By MIKAEL WOOD

**T**HANKS TO HIGH-PROFILE appearances on *Ellen*, *Oprah* and the *Today Show*, Quinn Sullivan's whiz-kid guitar chops are no secret to those on the lookout for the next Joe Bonamassa (or Jonny Lang). What might be less established is how advanced this 12-year-old Massachusetts native is in the street-smarts department. "I don't tend to brag to my friends about all the cool things I've done," says Sullivan, who's hung out with Ronnie Wood and jammed onstage with Buddy Guy. "It's not really the way to go when you're in this position."

Sullivan started playing after his parents bought him his first guitar at age three. Assignment number one was teaching himself to play along with his parents' Beatles records. Formal lessons came a little later. "Being a professional seemed like it'd be pretty fun," he says with typical understatement. "I wanted to try it out." In 2007 a friend of Sullivan's dad arranged a meet-and-greet with Guy before a gig

in Sullivan's hometown of New Bedford. "I just wanted to get my guitar signed," Sullivan says. "Buddy asked if I could play and I showed him a few notes. Then he said, 'Be ready when I call you.'" A video clip of their collaboration that night has racked up more than two million views on YouTube.

Now Sullivan has just released his debut album, *Cyclone*, which he recorded in Nashville with Guy's producer, Tom Hambridge. "I'll tell people that in between Buddy and George Thorogood I'm working with this little kid, and they're like, 'What are you doing, man?'" Hambridge admits with a laugh. "But Quinn really has this amazing musicality about him. He's not just sitting in his room learning scales. He plays with feeling."

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Sullivan's goal for the album is simple. "I basically just wanted to show people what I've got," says the Fender devotee. He also wouldn't mind if it caught the attention of another living legend. "I'm still waiting to meet Eric Clapton. That's my dream." □



## Thursday's Steve Pedulla



**What first inspired you to pick up a guitar?**

Watching the Who—just hearing those songs and seeing videos of Pete Townshend playing. That made me want to play guitar.

**What was your first guitar?**

My first guitar and bass are both equally embarrassing. The bass was a Hohner Steinberger knockoff, and the guitar was a B.C. Rich Warlock. But I was stoked about it when I was in eighth grade.

**What was the first song you learned?**

I just learned riffs that I liked. It must've been "Whole Lotta Love."

**What do you recall about your first gig?**

I played saxophone in my high school jazz band. I was nervous—lots of butterflies. Regardless of whether it was any good, it felt awesome to perform. My first gig as a guitar player was a high school talent show. There weren't many rock bands in high school at the time. Kids only knew of "pro" rock bands, so they were stoked to see that their fellow students could do it too.

**Ever had an embarrassing onstage moment?**

We were performing at the Starland Ballroom in New Jersey. We were playing this song that we don't normally play, and I was yelling at everyone else that they were out of tune. I stepped on my tuner and it showed that I was in tune. Then my tech came onstage and showed me that I'd accidentally turned on my whammy pedal, set to a third.

**What's your proudest moment as a player on the new record, *No Devolución*?**

I would say on "No Answers." The guitar parts are definitely not flashy, but they serve the song. I just really love the textural kind of stuff I got to do for that.

**Do you have any advice for young players?**

The way I learned the most was by playing with as many different people as I could. I loved writing with friends. You're communicating on a different level.

—RANDY HARWARD