

GREEN DAY'S

Guest Shredder

Guitarist/Fan is Plucked from the Crowd at Madison Square Garden



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18-year-old mega fan Stephanie Vera-Tudela joined Green Day on stage July 27, plucked from an audience of 20,000 at New York's Madison Square Garden to play guitar for the nine-minute "Jesus of Suburbia" (JOS). That Green Day favorite was among the first songs she learned when she began to play five years ago. **MUSIC CONNECTION** talks with the guest shredder about this once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Music Connection: Plucking a fan from the crowd is a Green Day staple. How did you prepare or practice for this? Did you go to The Garden determined to be picked?

Stephanie Vera-Tudela: One of the main reasons I picked up the guitar was so that I could be picked to play on stage with Green Day. I knew in the past that they'd chosen people based on knowledge [of a song]. It was the only way for me to meet my idols; the people that saved my life. "JOS" is the critical song that describes my life perfectly and I was determined to be picked. I came prepared to The Garden with a neon yellow sign that said "I can play guitar."

MC: Aside from your home-made sign, why do you think you were picked? What did you do to get chosen?

SVT: I think Billie Joe saw the desperation in my eyes. Also, I'd read that Larry Livermore [founder of Green Day's first label Lookout! Records], who was at the show, mentioned that Billie had a

good sense for choosing who to take on stage. I guess he saw from me that I wasn't going to get star struck.

MC: Have you ever been in a band?

SVT: I was during high school. Now I want to start a punk roots, female-fronted band.

MC: What is it that you remember most about being on that stage?

SVT: The whole experience stands out, but multiple times Billie Joe came straight into my face and sang. I know he was also singing to the audience, but I couldn't ask for anything else. "JOS" is a song that defines me and defines why I love them.

MC: When did it sink in what had happened?

SVT: Every time I see Green Day they do "Good Riddance (Time of Your Life)" and it's never meant much to me because it's a hit and they have to do the song. But after I came off stage

and I heard it that night, I broke down and started crying in the front row. I don't care how cliché it sounds, but I really did have the time of my life.

MC: What did Billie Joe say to you while you were on stage?

SVT: Most of the time he was telling me to pay attention to Tré [Cool, drummer] when he'd count back into the song and also not to be startled by the explosions. He also asked for my name and told me that I was fucking incredible.

MC: Who would you like to play with next?
SVT: Pantera.

Green Day wrapped up the North American leg of their tour in Los Angeles towards the end of August. They're currently on tour in Europe and will soon hit Australia and Japan. Vera-Tudela remains unsigned.