

George Thorogood

George Lawrence Thorogood (born February 24, 1950) is an American musician, singer and songwriter from Wilmington, Delaware.[1] His “high-energy boogie-blues” sound became a staple of 1980s rock radio, with hits like his original songs “Bad to the Bone” and “I Drink Alone”.[2] He has also helped to popularize older songs by American icons, such as “Move It on Over”, “Who Do You Love?”, and “House Rent Blues/One Bourbon, One Scotch, One Beer”.[3]

With his band, the Destroyers, Thorogood has released over 20 albums, of which two have been certified Platinum and six have been certified Gold. He has sold 15 million albums worldwide. Thorogood and band continue to tour extensively, and in 2014 the band celebrated their 40th anniversary of performing.

Music career

Thorogood began his career in the early 1970s as a solo acoustic performer in the style of Robert Johnson and Elmore James[2] after being inspired by a John P. Hammond concert.[4] However, he soon formed a band, the Delaware Destroyers, with high school friend and drummer Jeff Simon.[2] With additional players the Delaware Destroyers developed its sound, a mixture of Chicago blues and rock and roll.[4] The band’s first shows were in the Rathskeller at the University of Delaware and at

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the Deer Park Tavern.[5][failed verification] Eventually, the band's name was shortened to the Destroyers. During this time, Thorogood supplemented his income by working as a roadie for Hound Dog Taylor.[6]

Thorogood's demo, *Better Than the Rest*, was recorded in 1974, but it wasn't released until 1979. His major recording debut came with the album *George Thorogood and the Destroyers*, which was released in 1977. In 1978, Thorogood released his next album with the Destroyers titled *Move It on Over*, which included a remake of Hank Williams' "Move It on Over". He followed those recordings in 1979 with "Please Set a Date" and a reworking of the Bo Diddley song "Who Do You Love" both released in 1979. The band's early success contributed to the rise of folk label Rounder Records.[7]

During the late 1970s, Thorogood and his band were based in Boston. He was friends with Jimmy Thackery of the Washington, D.C.-based blues band, The Nighthawks. While touring in the 1970s, the Destroyers and the Nighthawks were playing shows in Georgetown at venues across the street from each other. The Destroyers were engaged at The Cellar Door and the Nighthawks at Desperados. At midnight, while both bands played Elmore James' "Madison Blues" in the same key, Thorogood and Thackery left their clubs, met in the middle of M Street, exchanged guitar patch cords and went on to play with the opposite band in the other club.[8] The connection with the Nighthawks was extended further, when Nighthawks bass player Jan Zukowski

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supported Thorogood's set at the Live Aid concert in Philadelphia, PA on July 13, 1985.

Thorogood gained his first mainstream exposure as a support act for the Rolling Stones during their 1981 U.S. tour.[9] He also was the featured musical guest on Saturday Night Live (Season 8, Episode 2) on the October 2, 1982 broadcast. During this time, Thorogood and the Destroyers also became known for their rigorous touring schedule, including the "50/50" tour of 1981,[10] on which the band toured all 50 US states in 50 days.[11] After two shows in Boulder, Colorado, Thorogood and his band flew to Hawaii for one show and then performed a show in Alaska on the following night. The next day Thorogood and his band met his roadies in Washington and continued a one-show-per-state tour for all 50 states in 50 nights. In addition, he played Washington, D.C. on the same day that he performed a show in Maryland, thereby playing 51 shows in 50 days.

With his contract with Rounder Records expiring, Thorogood signed with EMI America Records and in 1982 released the single "Bad to the Bone" and an album of the same name that went gold. The song became the band's most well-known song[12] through appearances on MTV and use in films, television and commercials. Thorogood and his band went on to have two more gold studio albums in the 1980s, Maverick and Born to Be Bad. The former features concert staple "I Drink Alone" and Thorogood's only Billboard Hot 100 hit, a remake of Johnny

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Otis's "Willie and the Hand Jive".[13] In 1985, he appeared at Live Aid performing with Bo Diddley and Albert Collins.[9]

Thorogood's popularity waned in the 1990s, although he had a No. 2 hit on the Billboard Album Rock Tracks chart in 1992 with "Get a Haircut".[13]

In 2012, Thorogood was named one of the "50 Most Influential Delawareans of the Past 50 Years".[14] He released his first proper solo album in 2017 titled Party of One.

Band members

The Destroyers

- George Thorogood – lead vocals and lead guitar
- Jeff Simon – drums, percussion (1973–present)
- Billy Blough – bass guitar (1976–present)
- Jim Suhler – rhythm guitar (1999–present)
- Buddy Leach – saxophone, piano (2003–present)

Former members

- Michael Levine – bass (1973–1976)
- Ron "Roadblock" Smith – rhythm guitar (1974–1980)
- Hank "Hurricane" Carter – saxophone (1980–2003)
- Ian Stewart

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Discography

Studio albums with the Destroyers

- 1977: *George Thorogood and the Destroyers* (Gold)
- 1978: *Move It on Over* (Gold)
- 1979: *Better Than the Rest* (Recorded in 1974)
- 1980: *More George Thorogood and the Destroyers*
- 1982: *Bad to the Bone* (Gold)
- 1985: *Maverick* (Gold)
- 1986: *Nadine* (CD Rerelease of *Better Than the Rest*)
- 1988: *Born to Be Bad* (Gold)
- 1991: *Boogie People*
- 1993: *Haircut*
- 1997: *Rockin' My Life Away*
- 1999: *Half a Boy/Half a Man*
- 2003: *Ride 'Til I Die*
- 2006: *The Hard Stuff*
- 2009: *The Dirty Dozen*
- 2011: *2120 South Michigan Ave.*

Solo studio album

- 2017: *Party of One*— keyboards (1982)
- Steve Chrismar — rhythm guitar (1985–1993)
- Waddy Wachtel — guitar (1997)

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Personal life

Thorogood has been a baseball fan^[11] for most of his life, playing semi-pro ball as a second baseman during the 1970s (drummer Jeff Simon played center field on the same team). He took his daughter to Chicago for her first major league game (Cubs vs. Rockies), during which he sang "Take Me Out to the Ball Game". In a 2011 Guitar World interview, he stated "I'm a Mets fan. There aren't many of us but you know, that's me."

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