

# DICK DALE

## biography

The Dick Dale phenomenon created an industry back in the late 1950's and continues to turn heads and blow minds. Dale's legendary eight-til-midnight shows at the Rendezvous Ballroom inn Balboa, California broke every existing record for the venue by swelling the ballroom to beyond-capacity crowds of over four thousand screaming and dancing rock-and-roll fans every weekend night. As the tradition continues, Dick Dale today is often called "one of the hardest working men in show business". For the past 51 years he has maintained a heavy concert tour and public appearance schedule throughout the world, touring in Europe, Australia, Japan, Canada, South America and the U.S as one of popular music's most dynamic and respected live acts.

Dick Dale invented the surf sound in the 1950's, what would later spawn a massive industry shift and revolutionize the music business to its very core. Following the release of Dale's 1960 mega-hit "Let's Go Tripin" a multitude of surf related groups exploded onto the scene- most notable were The Beach Boys whose first public performance was an opener spot for Dick Dale at the Rendezvous Ballroom.

As the crowds multiplied Dale became more frustrated with the sound coming from his guitar. Dale sought out Leo Fender, a local guitar and amplifier Guru. At their first meeting Leo asked Dale to play his new creation, the Fender Stratocaster Electric Guitar. The minute Dale picked up the guitar, Leo Fender broke into uncontrolled laughter and disbelief, he was watching Dale play a right handed guitar upside down and backwards, Dale was playing a right handed guitar left handed and changing the chords in his head then transposing the chords to his hands to create a sound never heard before.

Leo Fender gave the Fender Stratocaster along with a Fender Amp to Dale and told him to beat it to death and tell him what he thought of it. Dale started to experiment with the Fender equipment but after forty nine amps and speakers caught fire and blew up Leo confronted Dale and said, 'Dick, why do you have to play so loud?' Dale would explain that he wanted to replicate the sounds of Gene Krupa the famous jazz drummer who studied the pounding rhythms created for indigenous dancers along with the screams from Dale's Lions and Tigers and the roar of the ocean. Nothing would produce this sound in front of 4,000 people.

Leo Fender, lead by Freddy Tavares appeared at Dick's Rendezvous show and said, "Now I see what Dick is trying to tell me. Back to the drawing board." As a result of the

field-trip a new sound was born signaling the dawn of a new era for rock and roll. A special 85 watt output transformer was created that peaked at an impressive 100 watts. Dale now needed a speaker to handle the mega-watt power and not burn up. Leo, Freddy and Dale went to the James B. Lansing speaker company, and they explained that they wanted a fifteen-inch speaker built to their specifications. That speaker would soon be known as the 15" JBL -D130 speaker. Dale's custom package was now complete. Leo called the new equipment the Fender Single Showman in honor of Dale whom he often referred to as the showman.

When Dale plugged his Fender Stratocaster guitar into the new Showman Amp and speaker cabinet, he became the first creature on earth to jump from the volume scale of a modest quiet guitar player to becoming the "Father of Heavy Metal" as quoted from Guitar Player Magazine. Dale broke through the electronic barrier limitations of that era creating a legacy which would affect every major player from Eric Clapton to Jimi Hendrix.

Dale was also responsible for another key element in the world of guitar players, the Fender Reverb unit. Dale found that he did not have strong control of the vibrato in his voice, and he did not like the straight flat dry sound. Dale pulled the reverb unit from his Hammond organ and asked Leo Fender to create a version he could run a mic thru. Leo built it and called Dale into his office. Dale plugged his Shure Dynamic Bird cage Microphone into it and as he sang, his voice took on a very rich, sexy and full sound. Later, Dale plugged his Fender Stratocaster guitar into the Fender Reverb Tank to sustain his guitar notes which became Dale's trademark sound and was replicated by many including The Ventures, Beach Boy Carl Wilson, Jimi Hendrix, Stevie Ray Vaughan and Beatle George Harrison.

Dale's taste in music established him as one of the most eclectic performers during Rocks early years. His Lebanese American father and Polish American mother exposed the young Bostonian to a wide variety of styles. From marathon family jam sessions playing middle-eastern folk songs to attending live performances by legends such as Al Jolson and Gene Krupa, Dale's live repertoire would reflect all styles of music establishing Dale as one of the first rock performers to make world music popular.

Dick Dale's first LP "Surfers' Choice" followed several hit single releases on Dale's indy label, Del-Tone Records. "Surfers' Choice" exploded onto the scene after Dale hand-delivered the LP to two L.A./Inland Empire radio stations, KFXM and KMEN. The DJ's played it and "Surfers' Choice" shot up the charts dominating airwaves with five of its tracks occupying the top five positions on both stations' hit-lists. Dale's domination of the airwaves caused so much hype that the F.C.C. swooped in and investigated the two stations, assuming Dale was a part-owner, which was completely false.

“Surfers’ Choice” was soon picked up and promoted by the L.A. trend-setting music store Wallick’s Music City on Sunset and Vine. “Surfers’ Choice” nuked all competition and created a context for what would become the hottest trend in music since Elvis. Within three months of its release ‘Surfers’ Choice’ would sell nearly 90,000 copies in the LA area alone- equal to four million copies sold today.

After the atomic fallout of “Surfers’ Choice”, Dick Dale had everyone eating from his hands as the “Pied-piper” and father of a new Southern California music movement. RCA, Columbia and Capital waged war to sign Dale onto their label. Meanwhile, Col. Tom Parker flew into L.A. to conduct an emergency meeting with Dale to find out who had the L.A. market all sewn up causing Elvis to take a back seat.

Within a week of the Dick Dale record label wars, Capital dealt the winning blow signing Dale to the most lucrative Hollywood music contract ever. Dale’s Capitol offer included an advance sum which was many times more than Nat King Cole and Elvis’. Another key hook was Capitol’s offer to include the Del-Tone label in the deal. It would be the first time in Capitol’s history to sign a talent and their self-created independent label to a distribution deal.

Dale's recording of the middle-eastern melody "Miserlou" became the anthem for a pre-Beatle generation and was covered by many solo artists and groups including The Beach Boys' album “Surfin’ Safari”. “Miserlou” later propelled Quentin Tarantino to write the Blockbuster movie "Pulp Fiction" which featured “Miserlou” in the opening title sequence. In 2005 The Black Eyed Peas remixed Dale’s “Miserlou” onto “Pump It” and made it a multi-platinum seller for the third time in 45 years. Dick Dale’s “Miserlou” is now one of the most identifiable songs heard around the world.

Dale has also recorded original material for Disneyland's Space Mountain roller coaster ride, and the soundtrack for the History of NASA video shown in Space Mountain. Dale's music is being used in all the Disneyland's throughout the world along with being featured in a Disneyland Music album, which is being sold by Disneyland. May 21, 1998 a historical day for Disneyland, Dick Dale was chosen to be the person to highlight the grand opening of Tomorrowland by standing on top of Space Mountain (without the use of a safety harness) with his Gold Fender Stratocaster guitar (the beast) and play for all to hear throughout Disneyland "Ghost Riders"& "Miserlou". Dick Dale was also featured in a major documentary about the history of Disneyland.

Being a unique and versatile artist, Dick Dale is not limited to his musical skills. He has proved to be a respected Home designer and builder, personally designing and hand drawing the elevations and building his parents 7,000 square foot single story dream home in the California high desert so that he could be within easy reach of them. Dale is an accomplished Horseman, Exotic Animal Trainer, Surfer, Martial Arts Expert, Archer, and Pilot. His favorite plane is a Cessna 337B Super Skymaster, a twin tailed, front and rear engine aircraft which was also heavily used by the U.S. military in Vietnam. Dale currently holds a twin engine pilot rating.

Dick Dale continues to perform worldwide with his band and his 14 year old son Jimmy. Jimmy is a guitar and drum prodigy taught by his father and carries on the legendary Dick Dale sound with a natural ease. Dale and his son play dozens shows each year and are sought out by fans and major venues from all over the US and Europe. Dick Dale and Jimmy have been featured in Stuff Magazine, Corvette Magazine, CBS TV, and many major newspapers throughout the world. Dick and Jimmy were recently featured artists at the World Guitar Congress and have performed alongside everyone from Les Paul to Bono. Dale and his son are currently working on a their debut studio album.