



"Mike saw a change in me as a person, a musician and a songwriter. I had just gone through some life-changing stuff. He sent me two demos that he'd worked on his own: fully orchestrated, bass, drums, guitar and mumbling guide vocals to give me an idea, and these two demo songs wound up being paired with lyrics I had written. I bought into the idea the minute

I heard the first demo. This approach is nothing new, although perhaps it is in the blues genre. The Black Keys made albums this way, as did Shelby Lynne. There were elements of Gary Clark Jr.'s albums that influenced us as well. *Masterpiece* has done pretty well this past year. When you trust your heart, good things come."

On the album, Castiglia acknowledges

that old debt to Muddy Waters's own masterpiece, *Hard Again*, by recording a version of Johnny Winter's 'Too Much Seconal'. "Johnny was one of the most influential artists in my career. He produced the Muddy Waters album that changed my life and his records absolutely moved me, even the albums that Johnny didn't particularly care for. The *And/Live* album is one of my favourites and he absolutely hated it! We recorded *Masterpiece* at Mike Zito's studio in Nederland, Texas, which is the next town over from Beaumont, and where Johnny was born and raised.

"I just felt it was right to pay tribute to him. He meant so much to both of us and we were pretty much recording in his hometown. 'Too Much Seconal' and 'I Wanna Go Home' by Muddy Waters were both important pieces and were tied to my daughter in a way, in the fact that while I was in my late teens woodshedding and learning these records, my daughter that I didn't know I had, was living a life somewhere else. I wrote a letter to her telling her how happy I was to be her father. At the end of it I wrote, 'I've been an artist for thirty years, but you're my masterpiece.' That line made it a perfect song with which to express my love." ♦

HAWKWIND "IT'S A DIPLOMATIC NIGHTMARE"

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