

Tuesday, March 01, 2005

Nancy Wilson of Heart: The Interview



Nancy Wilson grew up in a musical family and began playing instruments including ukulele and piano at an early age....but in the mid 1960's she was struck by the lightning bolt that was The Beatles and knew she had to have a guitar. She almost immediately began to write songs and put bands together, ultimately settling into a collaboration with her sister Ann that became [Heart](#), one of the most successful rock&roll bands ever!

Soon the band was enjoying huge hits like Barracuda, Dog and Butterfly, Even It Up, Magic Man, These Dreams and All I Wanna Do which afforded them the opportunity to play to sold out audiences around the world.

Sparked by Nancy's creativity and tasteful guitar playing, the band is still going strong today! In 2003 Heart released a live DVD from the 2002 Summer Of Love Tour, completed another successful nationwide tour (Alive in America Tour) and in 2004 released their latest studio album, Jupiter's Darling, supporting it with yet another full European and USA tour.

Epiphone's Will Jones recently had the chance to chat with Nancy at the 2005 NAMM Show in Anaheim, California.

EPI: Nancy, thanks for joining us! What a privilege this is for me...the very first concert I went to was in 1983 at the Municipal Auditorium in Nashville...Heart and Kansas.

NANCY: Oh no...(laughs)

EPI: I've always been impressed with the fact that Heart has been revered as a legendary rock band, not just a girl band, but serious rock legends and we're all very excited at Epiphone to have a relationship with you.

NANCY: Yes, we're a rock band....and Thank You! I'm excited to have a relationship with Epiphone too. You know, my whole thing has always been about vintage guitars. That's all I've really played for the past ten years, so when you guys sent me a guitar on the road I was kind of like ok, I'll try it. I mean, Epiphone has a rich history and like Gibson, has been around forever, so why not try it? But, when I plugged it into my set-up, it was...WOW! This is really fun to play!...and it sounds great! That Epiphone made me feel like Jimmy Page or something...You know! (Laughs) Then when I got the prototype of the [Les Paul Ultra](#) I took it into the studio and was able to find that certain type of distortion that I'm always looking for....and is hard to find. The one where there's enough "clean" in it that if you want to play open strings like an acoustic, you can....like the way Neil Young's distortion often sounds. It's beautiful enough to pull off any style of playing, not just big rock block chords, you know? You can play open strings or acoustic type figures and the distortion doesn't cancel the open strings out. The Ultra brought that to me. I think it's partially due to the open spaces inside the body.

EPI: The chambers?

NANCY: Yes, chambers, thank you, chambers inside the guitar...I was going to call them caverns! (Laughs) They make the guitar lighter but also give it a new sound you don't get with a solid body, a semi-hollowbody or a hollowbody. So, I'm really loving that guitar a lot!

EPI: Yeah it's contoured too, and just more comfortable...

NANCY: Yeah it is. I'm not a tall girl. I'm sort of a mid-sized person, semi-short so I also appreciate a guitar that's not gonna pull me over (Laughs)...if I lean in one direction! (Laughs) I used to play a big Les Paul on stage and it could really get to your shoulder after a while. With the Ultra, there's no pain....and the sound....I'm loving that a lot.

EPI: "All of the sound and none of the pain!"

NANCY: (Laughs) Yes! And in the studio I've noticed the sound is a little richer because of the slightly acoustic tone. It's not enough that it's really different....I can still get that heavy, fat-rockin' sound but even when I play it acoustically in the room there's a little more you can hear. It just shines without even plugging it in....which is cool for a quote: "solidbody".

EPI: We're thrilled that you like it so much and feel like this guitar is going to be very successful. Thank you so much for taking the time to chat today and thank you for choosing to play our instruments!

NANCY: Thank you and it's my pleasure.

For more information about Nancy Wilson and Heart visit the bands official website at www.Heart-Music.com.



Nancy with the new [Epiphone Les Paul Ultra](#).



Nancy discusses the "chamber" design of the Ultra with Gibson President Dave Berryman and Epiphone President Jim Rosenberg.



Left to Right: Jim Rosenberg (Epiphone President) Nancy Wilson, Dave Berryman (Gibson President) and Henry Juskiewicz (Gibson Chairman and CEO).



Epi President Jim Rosenberg shows Nancy the [John Lennon Revolution](#).



Nancy checks out the Epi line but obviously has an eye for the Ultra! (far left)

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