



KENNY GREENBERG :

NASHVILLE ROUGHRIDER

NASHVILLE SESSION GUITARISTS ARE JUSTLY KNOWN FOR THEIR PRECISE performances and inside sensibilities. So why does Kenny Greenberg get so much work?

"I'm the guy they bring in on country records when they don't want the 'perfect' thing," he says. "I'm not a total roots guy, but I have a loose, Stones-like way of playing that just feels good. I don't have to play those perfect, clean guitar parts you hear on most country records. I can be a little rougher."

Judging by Greenberg's resume, Nashville is hungry for roughness. You can hear Kenny on discs by Trisha Yearwood, Toby Keith, Amy Grant, Rodney Crowell, Rich Mullins, Wynona, Edwin McCain, Brooks & Dunn, Natalie Imbruglia, Jewel, Mandy Moore, Lucinda Williams, Indigo Girls, Lee Ann Womack, Pam Tillis, Billy Ray Cyrus, Peter Cetera, Michael Bolton, SheDAISY, Nicole Mullen, and Reba McEntyre. Greenberg is also a respected songwriter and instrumental composer (you've probably heard his music on VH-1's *Behind the Music*, *Beverly Hills 90210*, *Bay Watch*, Fox Sports, E Channel, Disney Channel, Playboy Channel, CBS Sports, or ABC Sports) and a two-time Grammy®-winning producer for his work with his wife, rock-gospel singer Ashley Cleveland.

While Nashville studio regulars are accustomed to seeing Greenberg with his Yamaha AES1500B ("It sounds like a vintage guitar, only it stays in tune better," he says), Kenny spends much of his time sitting behind keyboards and computers. "I'm really into electronic stuff," he says. "I play keyboards on most of my records and on my film and TV music. I like to use beats, and I love the idea of combining beats with bluesy-acoustic instruments like guitars and Dobros."

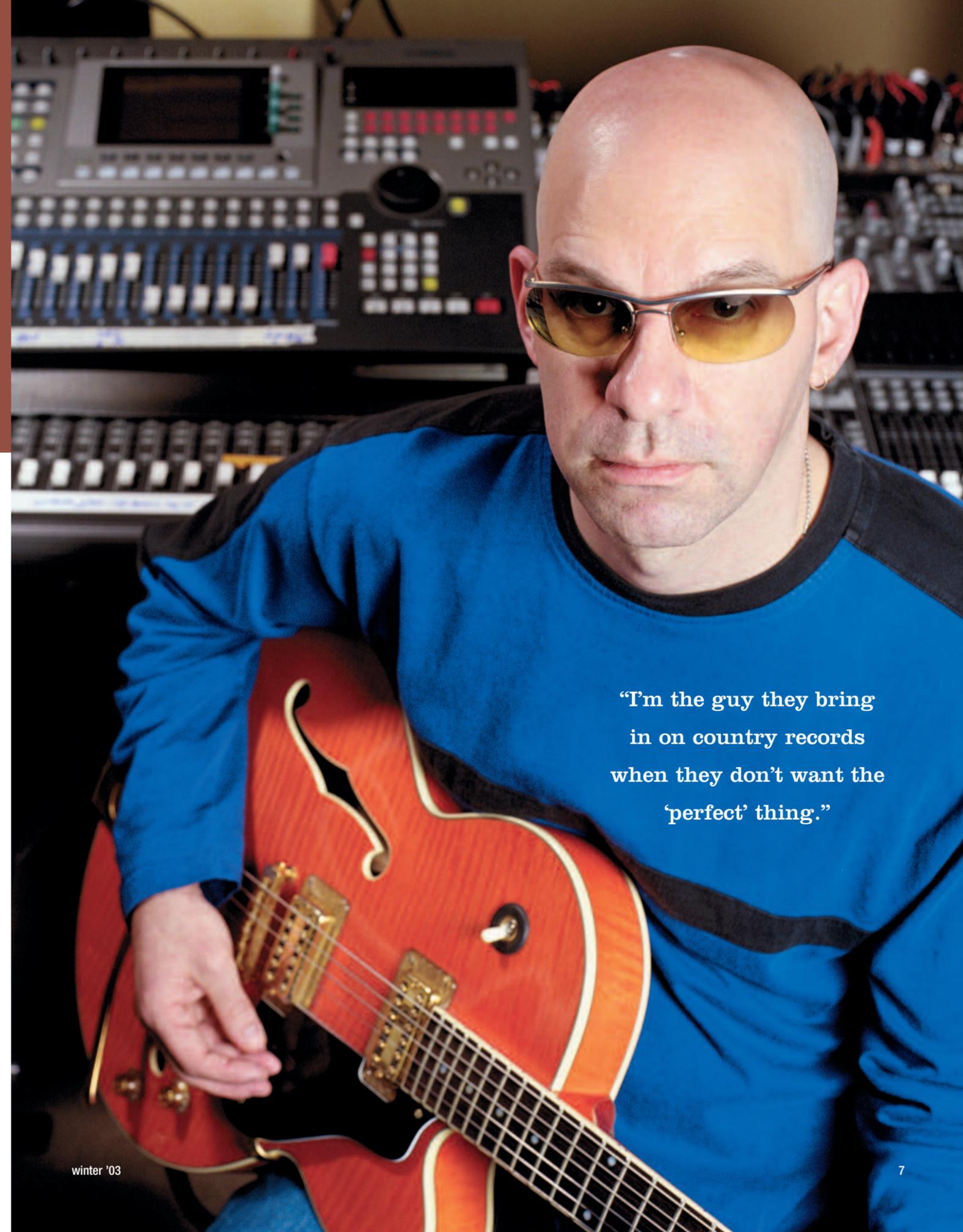
Greenberg generates some of his beats with a Yamaha DJX Box — supposedly a toy instrument. "It just sounds good," he says. "It has these funky, lo-fi sounds and effects like slicer and distortion. I like using it when I want to step away from something too clean and hi-fi." Greenberg is equally fond of

the analog-type sounds on his Yamaha Motif6 music production synthesizer. "The straight-up piano and Wurli sounds are as good as any I've heard. It has great beats and drum sounds, and I especially like some of the compressed, mono pianos — they sound like the old, funky pianos from a Beatles record. With the Motif and a couple of lo-fi boxes, I'm in."

These days Greenberg assembles his music with a computer and a Yamaha AW4416 digital audio workstation. "The AW4416 is fantastic for a songwriter like me," he says. "It's a simple little box that's so easy to work. I sync it to my computer, and then run a two-mix from whatever I'm doing on my computer into the Yamaha. It's great for demos, songwriting, and pre-production, because it's so fast."

Why not work exclusively on the computer? "There are several reasons," replies Greenberg. "First of all, there's just something I like about sitting in front of a box and pushing faders. I also like the fact that I can start something at home, and then take the box to a songwriter's studio and work with it there. And the AW4416 effects are great, especially the compressors and delays. In fact, a lot of things that start out as demos on the AW4416 sound so good that they wind up on records. For example, I just finished working with my wife on a cover version of Neil Young's 'The Needle and the Damage Done.' I just programmed a beat, loaded it into the AW4416, played some guitar and bass into it, and then we recorded some vocals. Then I added a lo-fi organ sound from the DJX, and we mixed it all on the AW4416. The record was done — we just blew it out in a day."

Greenberg insists that he's not the only Nashville session ace who wishes today's country records were a bit less polished. "I guarantee you," he says, "all those great players who play on all the slickest records don't listen to music like that on their own time. Everyone wants to be more raw, but I just kind of do that naturally."



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