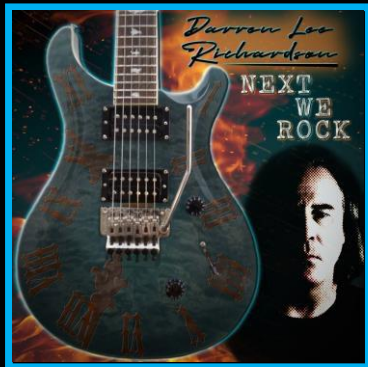




**Artist:** Darren Lee Richardson  
**Album Title:** Next We Rock  
**Label:** MOZO Studios  
**Genre:** Classic Hard Rock



**Influences:**  
Aerosmith, AC/DC, Scorpions, Heart, Queen, Led Zeppelin

**Band Line-Up:**  
Darren Lee Richardson - Everything

**CD Track Listing:**  
1- Fear  
2- You're So  
3- Not The One  
4- Just A Man  
5- Sweet Dream  
6- Prisoner  
7- Sometimes  
8- This Is Life  
9- Son Of A Gun  
10- Sooner Or Later

**Discography:**  
From Another Time - 2023

Hailing from East Bay, CA, USA, we find solo artist **DARREN LEE RICHARDSON**. He has an excellent new ten track album out now called 'Next We Rock' which clocks in at around thirty-nine minutes long and is the artists sophomore full length release. He has released other band related projects over the years. The album opens up with '**Fear**', this is a catchy hard rocker with strong musicianship, punchy catchy chorus coupled with driving energy driven vocals, the guitar work is crisp and well performed with the song as a whole having an early eighties vibe. Darren Lee handles all the musical instrumentation and vocals himself, and he is a fine slick musicians with diverse styles. '**You're So**' is catchy with a more retro heavier seventies melodic hard rock vibe, the music is

groove based and vibrant with crisp melodic guitars, where the riffs get faster as the song progresses. Next up is the anthemic guitar strutting rock n roll of '**Not The One**', this song is catchy as hell with Darren Lee vocally hitting some high notes. This song is quite groove based and - up-tempo and perfect for the radio shows. Excellent song. '**Just A Man**' is also an impressive song, it is looser musically flowing with a melodic Americana southern feel a 'la bands such as The Eagles, its catchy and flows well with softer southern tinted vocal tones that soar quite high. '**Sweet Dream**' is a heavier song, almost progressive with a Rush vibe, especially vocal as Darren Lee channels his inner Geddy Lee at certain points of the song. It is musically diverse and heavy, yet still catchy, one of my favourite songs on the album. **Meanwhile** '**Prisoner**' is a catchy heavy hard rocker with plenty of energy and stadium sized chorus with strong forceful vocals and musicianship, this song will get you singing along from the get-go, the guitar

work has that raw Slash vibe.

Next up is the acoustic and piano based '*Sometimes*', which musically has that classic rock and American vibe and in some ways the melodies remind me a little bit of Moot The Hoople's 'All The Young Dudes', superb vocals and quite atmospheric track.

The guitar heavy '*This Is Life*' is one of my favourite songs on the album, this is a fabulous song with sharp melodic vocals, very catchy with big chorus and fast paced anthemic music, the main solo is slick with a slight blues edge coming through. Showing a heavier guitar retro vibe is the stomping '*Son Of A Gun*', I love this song to bits, the groove is catchy, it's quite melodic with an addictive chorus, this is my favourite song on the album, classic had rock with that extra melodic punch.

The album ends with '*Sooner Or Later*', on this song Darren Lee vocally sounds a lot like Bret Michaels from the band Poison mixed with Lynyrd Skynyrd and the song has a similar kick to their more classic rock orientated songs, this is great song, organic with classic pop rock and Americana hooks, quite soulful and once again showcasing the diversity of this album.

*I*t is late afternoon, on what has been a nice summers day. The sun is out, a slight breeze blows from the west, and a few clouds dot the blue sky. Darren has up since before the sun, for his morning workout, and while having a breakfast of sausage links and English muffins topped off with peanut butter, he takes a little me-time to work on something musical before starting his work day. "The choices are editing tracks for the new

album project, enhancing my website for better promotion or user experience, wrapping up an indie music review, pondering my next blog, or planning my next video to support 'Next We Rock' my latest album," he smiles. As his day comes to a close, after a hard day's work in the consulting tech industry, he takes care of the family, has a little dinner, and return to his studio/office space to rehearse or record the current instrumental pieces to move his next album project forward. Shortly after this he then spends time hanging out with his son, then the night is finished with similar music-related choices that started his day.

Darren does not write love songs per se, but rather songs about love based on a barely subtle hint of reality. "I like to write lyrics with a broad sense of delicate philosophical interpretation. In my early days, I certainly wrote about the proverbial sex, drugs, and rock n' roll, but as time moved forward, even those songs started to transfer into more philosophical terms. Songs about sex became songs about sex being a common human trait rather than the goal of the hormone-infused youth," he expresses. "Songs about drugs became songs about the weaknesses of the human condition rather than the fever of the ignorant invincible youth. Songs about rock n' roll, however, are still about rock n' roll, but I think most of those have gone through me for the most part; we'll see."

His style of music is for the most part straight-ahead hard rock. "It could be argued that my compositions differ within that style in being simpler

in stature, but strong in delivery, not unlike AC/DC in that regard. I love to create what is best for the song. If it calls to me to keep a simple pattern because the lyrics seem to drive the energy and emotion, then I concede to the song," explains the musician. However, more often these days, the song calls to him to make arrangements that lift it or draw it down, as needed, to swing the energy and give more life to the song. "I love bridges, either vocally or just for the guitar solo if one is warranted. It takes the listener on a side journey, a focused lyrical point, or an action sequence brought on by a solo. 'You're So,' from Next We Rock, is a good early example of a solo bridge in line with that thought process. I also love to add unexpected breaks or transitions that propel the song to different levels while maintaining the song as a congruent composition. If it doesn't complement the song, it doesn't belong. So, the difference as I see it, is that I don't follow any norms for creating my music. I don't try to be anyone who may be popular, or try to ride a wave. I write rock songs, hard or easy, like Darren Lee Richardson. I think my sound is unique within its realm. When people do listen, they tend to find it fresh and original. I greatly appreciate that. So, if I could get you to listen for a bit, perhaps you might agree, but you don't have to," he chuckles. His musical journey began when he was six years old. When he was young, a man by the name of Lou Jacklich (see link at the end), came to his house with an accordion and continued to mesmerize the youngster. His parents bought an accordion and

along with his brother and Darren took lessons. His brother didn't last long, but Darren played it and took lessons for six years. "I used to take it to school and play it for my classes. Eventually, it became a chore. I would play the songs that I knew at double-time so I could get through my catalog of songs and be done with practicing. I learned some basic music reading, but at twelve, the accordion wasn't necessarily that cool, so much to my parent's chagrin I would quit the accordion," he tells me. When he was thirteen, he tried to take some guitar lessons but quit after about two months. "It was a cheap rental acoustic and I didn't have the drive to commit to it then. It wasn't the right experience at the right time." Fast-forward six-plus years, and Darren finds himself fresh out of high school being influenced in a big way by bands like Queen, Aerosmith, AC/DC, Iron Maiden, The Cars, Journey, Styx, and many more. "I bought a bass and started taking lessons. Two of my friends started taking up guitar and one wanted to sing. We tried to jam together but they could not keep up with me. I was excelling, learning complicated bass lines for the time, like 'Flight of the Icarus' by Iron Maiden. My music teacher was surprised at my accelerated pace. I guess my previous instrumental experiences stuck with me," he smiles. One of the younger brothers of one of his good friend's, also had a friend who lived up the street from him who needed a bass player. "Two months after starting bass lessons, I am in my first all-original hard rock band singing lead on my first songs and playing bass. The band was

called Seducer (see link at the end). We would play our first gig of all original songs in less than a year. This was the start of a rock n' roll journey that, to date, has never ended," he enthuses. He grew up surrounded by a variety of music. "I've already mentioned a couple of handfuls, most of those were the ones that sparked me into the rock n' roll direction of the time. Others mentioned, like Tom Jones and Neil Diamond, were records Mom played when I was young. She was into all the crooners and singers of the time and I listened to them all; Elvis Presley, Johnny Mathis, Wayne Newton, and Engelbert Humperdink to name a few more. And with shows like Sonny and Cher, and Donny and Marie, there was certainly a large variety of musical influences subliminal or otherwise while I was growing up," he recollects. Darren's interests outside of music have ranged from going to concerts, snow skiing, water skiing, four-wheel driving, hanging with friends, golfing, going to movies. "These days I'm focused on music and my immediate family outside of work. Along with my wife, I am focused on helping my son gain traction in his career in the film industry. He is currently on a great trajectory and we are excited for his future." His new album 'Next We Rock' is the second in a planned three-record series that he started in 2023. £That idea, along with my website that I started towards the end of 2024 which is part of my plan to chronicle my journey with music. I am working on the third one right now," he states. Near the end of 2023, he went through a process to consolidate and update his

studio, recording hardware and software, and some instruments, to be able to create these albums on his own. "The knowledge and experience I gained over the years, along with the new tools inspired me to move on this project. These albums, 'From Another Time,' 'Next We Rock,' and the in-process 'Until Hell Freezes Ever Over,' are in large part, higher-quality recordings and productions of many songs that were popular in my band days, but never recorded, or recorded in lower production quality. Some songs were never performed live in any band as well. There are some songs on the third one that were never completed but will be for the final album of this project," he explains the me. 'Next We Rock' is the better of the first two. 'From Another Time' was only a six-song EP because it was the guinea pig of the new studio updates. "I learned much about my new hardware, software, and instruments on that album, so 'Next We Rock' took better advantage of those lessons. It also became a full album with ten songs. What ties these albums together is in the naming. If you look at the album covers here, you will see, like a crossword puzzle and with some slight coloration to help in the effect, the words 'ONE' and 'TWO,' denoting the placement of these albums in this three-album project. Those are my guitars and I created the graphics myself. I even took the pictures, including the pictures of myself, lol. 'Until Hell Freezes Ever Over' will be similar to tie them all together, but it will be my bass on that cover. My wife took pictures of me about an hour ago for your magazine, but I asked her to take some for the next

album for me so I won't have to," he chuckles." This album has more songs and the production improved due to the lessons learned from the previous album. "Every album I have ever created, by myself or as part of a collaboration or band project, is chronicled on my website. My journey in music has been a continuous learning process. The new albums are significantly better in production and performance. In large part, the new studio is responsible for that process. That and my stronger vocals. For 'Next We Rock' I built a portable sound booth with sound attenuation blankets to reduce some room reflections that were discovered in 'From Another Time.' The stronger vocals stepped up with my experience with my band, Syne Wave (see links at the end). This is the only band I was ever in as just a singer. My Syne Wave bandmates gave me carte blanche to grow my voice. This gave me a lot of focus time on my technique and range and I became a better singer for it. They were more progressive rock than I am as a soloist, with cool odd-time signatures and guitar work. When I started writing for them, I wrote some of my best lyrics and melodies," he enthuses. 'Next We Rock' was recorded at MOZO Studios, which is Darren's home studio. "I have a soundproof room in my garage where I work on music, as well as work for a living. I have a back wall that is covered with green screen for capturing video footage. My recording equipment is basically in one corner, and my post-production desk is in the other corner. He also produced 'Next We Rock.'

The process, which includes the album cover and setting up digital distribution took about fifteen months to complete. From a song perspective, his highlight of the album is the track called 'Sweet Dream.' "It had been played in a couple of bands, but never recorded on any previous project. So it was great to hear a version of it recorded at a higher level and more to my vision of the song. Also, 'Sometimes' is a song I wrote a while back that has always had a piece of my heart. I was really happy with the way the added instrumentation, such as the piano and strings, came out to lift that song," he says. "From a production perspective, applying what I learned from 'From Another Time' to 'Next We Rock' was satisfying and efficient. From a release perspective, I enjoyed the Bandcamp listening party. I had many guests and sold several copies of the album that day. There was a live chat, so I got to hear what they thought of the album as they were listening. There were many supportive and gracious comments. I did another listening part on a live video indie music show which was also a great experience." He has not yet played a live show since before the pandemic. "Unfortunately, and not likely to do any soon. Currently, life is focused on getting my son launched with his film career. That is going well, but the process requires patience and availability. Music is still a priority, but it needs to be in-house right now. I tried last summer to get back with my band, Syne Wave, but it was difficult to maintain any consistency in rehearsal due to my current priorities. I am more

productive with my website, album projects, and the indie community by keeping it at home so I can be better available for my son and his future. If I pursue performing again, I lose all productivity with music at home because that requires commitments that I take seriously. Those commitments band would be hard to keep if I needed to shift gears on a moment's notice for my son. There may come another time for that, but that time is not this time." Right now he is focused on sharing his story through his website and streaming platforms, and working on his next album project. "I also enjoy reviewing indie music as time permits, writing blogs to share my experiences and progress, creating videos for songs on my albums, and hopefully getting people to notice and listen to my music through these efforts. Today is my future. My son's future is my priority above all that," concludes Darren, bringing an end to our conversation. 'Next We Rock' flows perfectly the production is crisp and I recommend checking this out.

#### Web and Social Media

##### Links:

<https://www.darrenleerichardson.com/>  
<https://x.com/DarrenLeeMusic>  
<https://www.facebook.com/MusicByDarrenLeeRichardson>  
<https://www.youtube.com/@DarrenLeeRockMusic>  
<https://www.instagram.com/darrenleerichardson/>  
<https://www.musicforaccordion.com/eTracks/inform/jacklich/graphics/LouJacklich.pdf>  
<https://www.darrenleerichardson.com/bands#seducer>  
<https://synewave.wixsite.com/synewave>

