

Mark tremonti biography

Business



“ There are no real dedicated people who wake up, do their scales, take lessons [...] It’s so great to work with somebody who’s like that, because I’m from the same school of thought – you have to be if you’re going to stay alive in this business” (CreedFeed). This was spoken by Mark Tremonti, the lead guitarist for the bands Creed and Alter Bridge, who, over the years, has truly lived up to his words.

Born into an average middle class family from Detroit, Michigan, Tremonti showed an early interest in music. In 1993, he collaborated with Scott Stapp, Brian Marshall, and Scott Phillips to form Creed. When Creed broke up in 2004, Alter Bridge was born, replacing Scott Stapp with Myles Kennedy, formerly of the Mayfield Four. Today, through the breakup and reunion of Creed and the formation of Alter Bridge, Tremonti maintains the position of lead guitarist in two highly successful bands. On April 18, 1974, Mark Tremonti was born in Detroit, Michigan. He and his two brothers, Michael and Daniel, were raised in a Christian background, though Mark “ never liked going to church” (Mark Tremonti).

To escape the dangers of Detroit, Mark and his family moved to Grosse Pointe, Michigan, and later to Wilmette, Illinois. It was here that Mark realized his passion for music; around age ten, he picked up his first instrument: the trumpet. However, as with any ten year old, after weeks of learning how to read notes and doing exercises from a book, he became bored with the instrument. It was at age eleven that he decided to play the guitar, following inspiration from bands like KISS and Metallica (who his brothers introduced him to). Around December of 1985, he bought his first guitar, a twenty-five dollar Les Paul copy called a TARA, from a man who wanted him to play in

his band. Shortly after, he signed up for guitar lessons, but, as he said: “They were teaching me Mary Had A Little Lamb when I wanted to learn Master of Puppets” (Mark Tremonti).

After one lesson with this teacher, Mark decided to teach himself: he bought a few tab books and began learning his favorite songs and studying their structure. By his late teens, he was writing his own songs and had already been in several bands. He found a local Blockbuster that would rent out instructional DVDs, and began to hone his guitar skills. It was only after a move to Orlando, Florida, that Mark’s music career began to kick off. A year into his college education, he reconnected with Scott Stapp, one of his childhood friends.

They decided to get a band together, and began auditioning for a drummer and bassist, soon finding Scott Phillips (drums) and Brian Marshall (bass). With this, Creed kicked into their highly successful career. Creed’s beginnings were humble enough: they played a few shows to small audiences locally, until they could finally afford to record an album. In 1993, their first album, *My Own Prison*, was released under their own independent label (Blue Collar Records), costing \$6000 to produce; coincidentally, only 6000 copies were ever made under this label. They began to tour America, playing for small but enthusiastic audiences at every stop.

As the word began to spread, a DJ from Milwaukee caught wind of them and began putting *My Own Prison* on the airwaves, gaining Creed instant fame. They re-recorded their first album under Wind Up Records, with some small changes from the original, in 1997, which has since gone sextuple platinum.

They went on to record two more albums, *Human Clay* in 1999, and *Weathered* in 2001, both of which went multi platinum. During this time, Mark was approached by Paul Reed Smith: they wanted to give him his own line of guitars. As stated on the Paul Reed Smith website: “ Mark was humbled and deeply honored to help design a guitar that would bear his name,” (PRS Guitars) especially since the only other artist with a signature model at that point was Carlos Santana. The next company to collaborate with him was Morley, who wanted to make him a signature Wah Pedal.

On top of this, he was voted Guitarist of the Year by *Guitar World Magazine* for three consecutive years. In spite of his accomplishments, Mark maintained his humility; he felt undeserving of these accolades, and so began to practice furiously, sometimes more than eight hours a day. However, so soon after finding their success, a schism began to form between Scott Stapp and the other band members. Stapp fired Brian Marshall over a comment made regarding Eddie Vedder, and Tremonti had to record the bass tracks for *Weathered* himself. Inevitably, in 2004, the band officially broke up; as Tremonti said: “ Things just got so political and heavy, it just took all the joy out of it” (CreedFeed). However, rather than ending his career with Creed, Tremonti saw the breakup as a new beginning; and so began Alter Bridge.

With the start of a new band, Tremonti wanted to “ refocus on the goals [he] had personally [and] get back to [his] rock n’ roll roots” (Mark Tremonti).

After several collaborations and side projects with various musicians (including Michael Angelo Batio and Troy Stetina), he began to talk with his former bandmates Brian Marshall and Scott Phillips, and realized they all

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shared a common musical vision. With Scott Stapp's influence gone from the band, they were finally allowed to pursue this vision to its fullest. They began the search for a singer and discovered Myles Kennedy (formerly of the Mayfield Four); Myles was both an amazing singer and someone who shared Tremonti's passion for rock. With this final addition, Alter Bridge was complete.

The name came from an actual bridge in Tremonti's home town, Detroit. This bridge separated the section where he lived from a more dangerous area of Detroit, and to Tremonti symbolized choice and the unknown; it epitomized the new life that he was looking for with Alter Bridge. In August of 2004, they released their first album, *One Day Remains*, probably disappointing many old fans who were looking for a Creed revival; Alter Bridge was anything but. Tremonti viewed Alter Bridge as more of an artistic pursuit, whereas Creed was more commercial; as such, *One Day Remains* only peaked at number 5 on the Billboard charts. However, as Tremonti said: " I think I'm twice the musician I was in Creed [...] the guitar playing in this album is definitely head and shoulders above all the last three records" (CreedFeed).

He was finally free to pursue his initial interests with music, to break from the image of Creed. Their next album, *Blackbird*, was released in October 2007, and received very positive reviews, prompting Alter Bridge to tour worldwide; they later released a DVD, *Live from Amsterdam*, which was filmed during this tour. Meanwhile, Tremonti finally decided to do something he'd wanted to do for most of his career: make an instructional DVD.

Because he was so aided by instructional videos in his youth, this was a major accomplishment in his life; he felt that he was finally doing something

to inspire budding guitarists, and hoped that he could help them, just as he had been helped early on. Shortly after, in 2010, a Creed reunion was held; Scott Stapp had reconciled with the other band members, and they began to record a new album, Full Circle. Meanwhile, Alter Bridge began work on their latest album, ABIII, which was finally released in America in November 2010, receiving widespread acclamation.

In spite of his involvement in two highly acclaimed bands, Tremonti has never faltered in his ability to put out an album. With his highly successful career, Mark Tremonti has truly proven himself to be a dedicated musician. From humble beginnings in an average family, Mark would go on to be the highly acclaimed lead guitarist for two internationally successful bands. Creed saw the beginning of his success, granting him worldwide fame and a solid foundation for his later work. In direct contrast to Creed, Alter Bridge saw a smaller amount of commercial success, but provided Tremonti with the ability to truly express his musical vision.

Tremonti has been an inspiration to many budding musicians; as stated on the Paul Reed Smith website: “ Tremonti has shown time and time again that if you want something badly enough, hard work and determination will get you there” (PRS Guitars). Works Cited CreedFeed Community. 25 Jan 2011. <http://www.creedfeed.com/> Friedman, Eric. Mark Tremonti. 25 Jan 2011. <http://creedkicks.tripod.com/> Mark Tremonti.

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