

## Competition Advice from Trey Alexander



### What competitions have you been involved in?

I was the winner of *Guitar Player's* 2006 Guitar Hero Competition.

### How long have you been playing?

Ten years

### Who are some of your biggest influences?

Steve Vai, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Bela Fleck, Stevie Wonder, Guthrie Govan and Greg Howe.

### What gear makes up your favorite rig?

For guitars, it's a Peavey HP Special, Tom Anderson Drop Classic, Jeff Beck Stratocaster, and an Ibanez Jem. For effects, I like a Radial Tone Bone Classic, Keeley Compressor, TS-9 DX Flexi 4x2, Boss DS-1 Ultra Mod, Budda Wah and a T-Rex Replica Delay. Occasionally, I run a TC-Electronics G-Force processor. My amps are a Hot Rod Deluxe and a Mesa Boogie Roadster.

### What sets you apart from other guitarists?

I think that music is an art form and that we should all be so lucky to even get the chance to be involved in music. I have been so fortunate in my life to have good friends and family that music is just the icing on the cake! I just hope I can do something for the world to make it a better place. I remember my dad once telling me to be passionate about whatever I choose to do. I just hope that I can make music that can ignite an interest in other people the way my first influences did for me. I want as many people as possible to enjoy the wonderful gift that is music!

### Tell us an interesting story from your competition experience.

I would have to say that night backstage at the American Music Hall in San Francisco for the Guitar Hero competition would have to be one of the most surreal moments of my life. I had never been to California, let alone to a big competition. It was unbelievable. As I sat down beside my wife backstage for dinner I stared down the hall and happened to see Richie Kotzen – what a guitar god. This guy has the whole package, an unbelievable voice, great presence and is one of the best guitar players in the world. I had listened to him for quite sometime so to actually get to meet him was really ridiculous! Then right after that Steve Lukather and Joe Satriani walked down the hall. I thought for sure I was going to wake up soon – you know how it goes, as soon as the dream gets good you wake up – but this time I didn't wake up. It was really a dream come true!

When I first arrived I got to meet the people from *Guitar Player* magazine who ended up being some of the nicest people I have ever met. I had been reading the magazine since I was a kid, and I feel like I met a group of really great friends out there.

After being announced as the 2006 Guitar Hero I stood on stage with nine of the best guitarists in the country. I could not stop smiling – I felt so lucky just to be there. To have even made the bracket was unreal. All of the emotions over the last ten years just flooded out of me. I just didn't have words for the feelings I had in my heart. When I was 18 my father passed away. He was one of the greatest people I have ever known and his biggest dream was to watch me succeed in music. He put all of his extra time and effort supporting me. So to finally give my father that dream it was like I got to see him one more time and tell him I loved him.

### Can you give PG readers three tips for competitions?

1) Be thankful! I always try and remember how fortunate I am to be alive, healthy, and to have had all of the wonderful people in my life. I also try and remember my influences. Jason Becker is one of the finest musicians in the world today and at the age of 18 was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease and he is still composing beautiful music. I am just happy to wake up and play let alone be invited to these wonderful events.

2) One thing I always try and remember is that doing drugs can severely hinder your progression as a musician. I remember a great mentor told me once. "I am as high as I ever want to be when I am playing music!" I feel the same way. I have so much excitement for music that I would hate to have any of that changed. Drugs are a waste of time and energy. I have seen a lot of people including some really great friends and musicians ruin their lives due to drugs. There is no way you can perform at your peak level if your brain is running a couple of cylinders short. Stay sober and you are bound to perform better!

3) Be passionate. Enjoy every minute that you are involved in something so special. Remember it might be your last moment to enjoy this wonderful journey. Play every note and enjoy every beautiful sound that comes out of your best friend – the six string! Kenny Werner says, "There are no wrong notes!" and "Humans make this stuff up!" And he is right, so play every note with the same love and passion as the last.

### What is a no-no at a competition?

No drinking or staying up late! Musicians have a habit for partying all night and sleeping all day. Competitions are an extreme amount of work so you want to make sure you are mentally prepared as well as physically prepared. There is no substitute for sleeping well; I hate sleeping, but a couple weeks before the competition I would set a certain bed time so that I would get a good 7 to 8 hours of quality sleep. I also had a workout regiment every day and practiced any where from 10 to 15 hours a day. It is really good for your mind to have a good routine.

### What is next on your horizon?

I am recording a full-length album with the band Sonic Lux. I have been very lucky to hook up with two really talented individuals, Hassan Ali (Bass and Vocals) and Woody Campbell (Drums). These guys are superb musicians and composers. I am so excited to finish up the album and set up a tour for next year. I also have two instructional videos coming out next year through TrueFire.

### How can PG readers find more out about you?

We have a website for the band and I also have a personal website:

<http://www.treyalexander.net>

<http://www.soniclux.net>

<http://www.myspace.com/treyalexander1>

<http://www.myspace.com/soniclux>