



Faster Pussycat featuring

The Decline of Western Civilization, Part II: The Metal Years was a movie produced by Penelope Spheeris to show people just what it's like to be in a rock 'n roll band. Featured prominently in that landmark documentary was a band that symbolized the L.A. scene and everything that entailed: a band called **Faster Pussycat**.

Faster Pussycat rose up from the streets of Hollywood during the period, during the late '80's, when rockers had once again discovered their roots. They—along with contemporaries **Guns 'n Roses**, **L.A. Guns**, and **Jetboy**—brought a disarming simplicity back to contemporary rock music, with powerful, chunky guitar riffs, no-nonsense production, and songs written directly from the gut.

Guitarist and co-founder **Brent Muscat** explains the band's initial appeal. "We weren't really great

musicians in the beginning," he admits, "and we probably weren't ready for everything that happened when it did. But we were in the right place at the right time, and there was always this chemistry within the band—it fit in really well with what was happening in L.A. at that time."

Brent had actually grown up just outside of Pasadena, and so wasn't fully immersed in the Hollywood music scene until he moved there after high school. In fact, he didn't even pick up a guitar until a freak accident bashed

in his two front teeth—ending his budding trumpet career at a stroke.

"I was frustrated because I couldn't play my horn," he recalls, "so I went down to the store and traded it for a guitar. My mom was pissed! She kept it away from me for months."

When he was finally allowed the instrument, he started to absorb a wide variety of musical styles, eventually weaving them into his own unique blend.

He studied for two years with a country player, then worked under the accomplished tutelage of **Wolf Marshall**, who pushed Brent to

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Left: *Faster Pussycat*—singer Taime Downey, drummer Brett Bradshaw, guitarist Greg Steele, bassist Eric Stacy, and Brent—was one of the bands that spearheaded the "back to basics" rock movement in L.A. Right: Brent and Taime sharing a special moment on stage.

band into classical as well. "Although my main influences were probably **Stevie Ray Vaughan**, **Keith**

"My tech showed me the *Heartfield Talon* and I was immediately impressed. The guitar had a great sound . . ."

Richards, and **Jeff Beck**, I was exposed to a lot of different types of guitar techniques," says Brent.

It was with his first real band, **Shanghai**, that

Brent's introduction to the gritty power of bands like **Aerosmith** and the **Rolling Stones** took place. "My older brother played bass in the band," Brent reflects, "and all the other guys were older too, which forced me to grow. The other guitar player opened my eyes to a number of artists, and got me to listen to the people that influenced *them* as well."

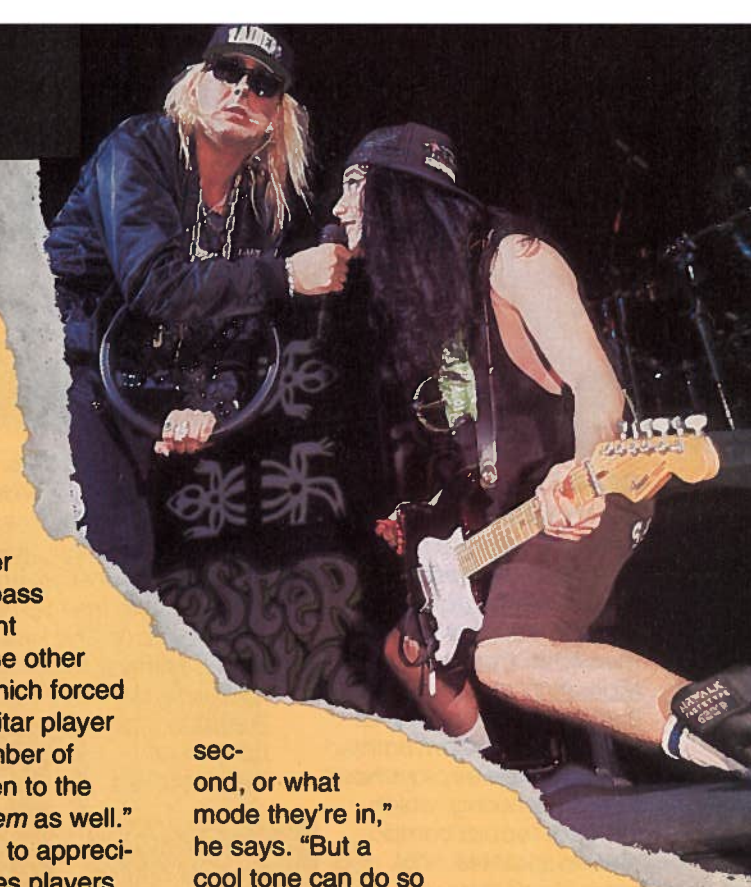
One thing Brent grew to appreciate was not just what notes players chose, but how their sound worked for them. "Guitarists get caught up in how many notes they can play per

second, or what mode they're in," he says. "But a cool tone can do so much—it's amazing."

When Brent was kicked out of **Shanghai**, he was devastated ("I thought they were 'it!'", but again lady luck guided his path: he joined forces with singer **Taime Downey**, and the two formed **Faster Pussycat**.

According to Brent, "Things sort of snowballed after that. Within 8

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guitarist Brent Muscat



Brent has been alternating between the *Talon II* (above left) and the *Talon I* (right) during the bands' preproduction rehearsals. He also still has a *Strat Plus*, which has been his main guitar for several years now. The bluesy sounds he gets out of all three guitars will be well showcased on the upcoming album, due out probably around summer.