

# Team Rock 'n' Roll

It's hard to imagine much of the classic West Coast sound without the exquisite playing of THE WRECKING CREW. A new film lifts the lid on how the magic happened.

PHIL ISTINE breaks rocks with director Denny Tedesco

Denny Tedesco's father Tommy was the guitar mainstay of LA's session musician conglomerate, The Wrecking Crew. Whether backing Frank or Nancy Sinatra, The Monkees, The Byrds, The Beach Boys or scores of others, the team delivered the songs that united a generation. Denny began filming the documentary in 1995 as a tribute to his ailing father. It is finally released after 19 years of legal wrangles and financial toing and froing.

#### On growing up under the shadow of fame...

"It was Mom that kept us going. I look at my Dad's work books and realise I didn't see him for days on end - gone in the morning and home late at night. The fact that I don't remember it being a problem says a lot about my Mom keeping us straight."

#### On beginning the film...

"The first interview we did was with Hal Blaine, Carol Kaye and Plas Johnson at a round table. That was fun. I put them there and let them talk. I wanted the interview be like [Woody Allen's] *Broadway Danny Rose*. Guys sitting around just BS-ing. My father kept it going - he knew what I needed. I interviewed Dad about eight months after the first round table and six months before he passed. The time took so much out of him."

#### On struggling to get backing...

"The worst time was after the success in the film festivals. We won awards and audiences



**"We won awards and audiences were giving it standing ovations, and no one cared"**



were giving it standing ovations, and no one cared. I tried every company to look at it but they didn't see what we kept seeing. They saw the truth about the economics of documentaries. The cost of paying off the music was too much for them to be able to make money on the film.

"For years everyone kept saying you should do Kickstarter. People started really spreading the word and many championed the cause to tell the story."

#### On the film's appeal...

"It would be almost impossible for someone in the audience not to know some of the music. But there were other common dominators that I didn't intentionally plan on. The fact I'm losing my father in the making of the film strikes many folk my age."

#### On the interviews...

"Many had surprises but one of my favourites was Jimmy Webb. Sixty minutes of gold; so articulate and poetic."

#### On making another documentary...

"I'm telling people only if it's a solo kazoo player and they only play a classical song with no licensing issues."

*The Wrecking Crew is out on March 13th in North America - in selected cinemas and as a digital download. Its release in the rest of the world is slated for later in the year*

"Come on Hal, get your finger out." Mr Blaine sits at the heart of the crew (this pic); Denny Tedesco with his father Teddy (top); Hal and Glen Campbell

