

ONE MAN BAND

Keller Williams' electronic inspirations culminate with amazing new music

by Simon Weedn



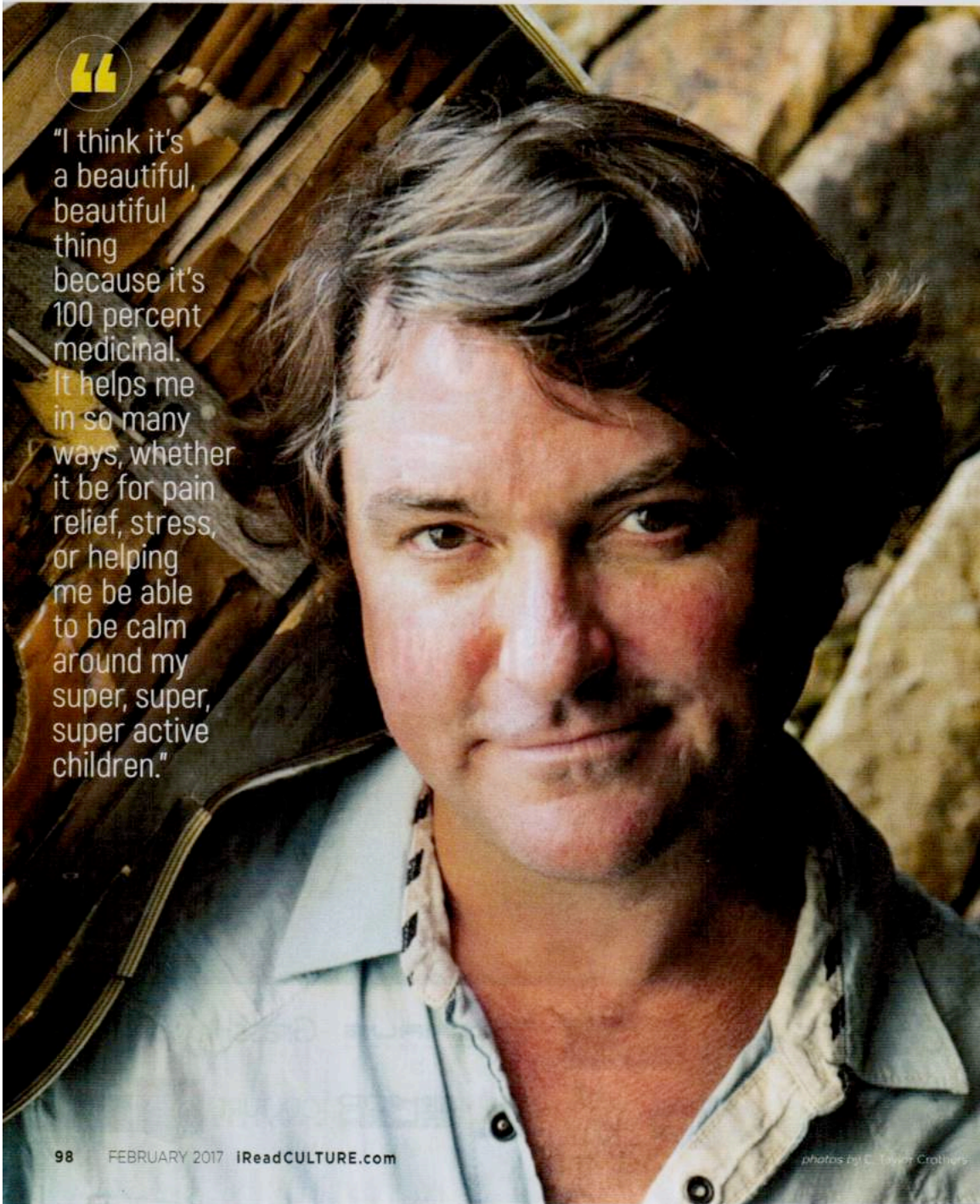
For over 20 years now, Keller Williams has been one of the most innovative and interesting fixtures of the international jam band community. Blending an array of styles while using looping pedals and a cluster of electronic effects, Williams has taken the concept of a one-man band and moved it into the 21st century. In addition to his solo work, which has been incredibly prolific, Williams has worked tirelessly collaborating with other musicians of all different walks of life and backgrounds, including members of The Grateful Dead, String Cheese Incident and The Keels, and dreaming up new projects to take on the road or put into action at festivals.

To kick off the New Year, Williams released two new albums on the same day. The first, *Sync*, is all new recordings from his quartet, KWhatro, which features world renowned musicians Danton Boller, Gib Droll and Rodney Holmes. The second is entitled *Raw*, and features Williams by himself with just his acoustic guitar, no looping, effects or other outside production elements, playing some new and unreleased material as well as some old favorites stripped down to just their fundamental elements.

Recently *CULTURE* got to catch up with Keller Williams and hear all about the new records, his motivations and themes, and, of course, his thoughts and feelings on medical cannabis. >>



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photos by C. Taylor Crothers

I know that the single word titles of your albums tends to be a descriptor of the over-arching theme of each one. What is the meaning behind *Sync*?

Well, I did my tracks for the record in March or April of last year, then I sent those tracks to Rodney. About three months later he sent those tracks to Danton Boller, and then about a month after that Gib Droll recorded on them. So it's all different mindsets in different parts of the country, but yet somehow they all come together in sync. I think on the first listen, it really sounds like we're all in the same room too.

Medical cannabis has been a beneficial thing for you, right?

I think it's a beautiful, beautiful thing because it's 100 percent medicinal. It helps me in so many ways, whether it be for pain relief, stress or helping me be able to be calm around my super, super, super active children. Now, there are folks out there that need it way more than I do, cancer patients and folks with other more extreme conditions, and the fact that there are so many states that have legalized is just awesome and amazing. I'm so proud of all of the people who have been sticking to this over the years

and getting somewhere with it. Now, even folks like super conservative parents are starting to come around to the fact that this stuff has legitimate medical uses, and I think that's a beautiful thing.

Is cannabis something that has also helped you with your creativity and inspiration?

Absolutely! It can be a blessing and a curse though. I think little bits can go a long way, but if you go all day every day, I think you're going to be really mellow. However, small, small increments for me is what is helpful for me being creative.

After all of these albums, bands and tours, do you have a secret to maintaining your creative drive?

Well, I have a lot of creative drive to get up on stage playing and improvising. As far as my songwriting goes, it's just not really there anymore it seems like. I mean, I'll make up songs and play them a couple of times and then they'll just go away. I think if I was able to take a long period of time off without having to leave and go anywhere, I think that boredom and anxious energy from being still might



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cause my creative juices to flow best. I used to tour where I'd be on the road for two or three weeks and then off for two or three weeks. The first week off would be sort of decompression from the road, but by the second week that boredom would slip in and my mind would start to wander and come up with different material. ●

