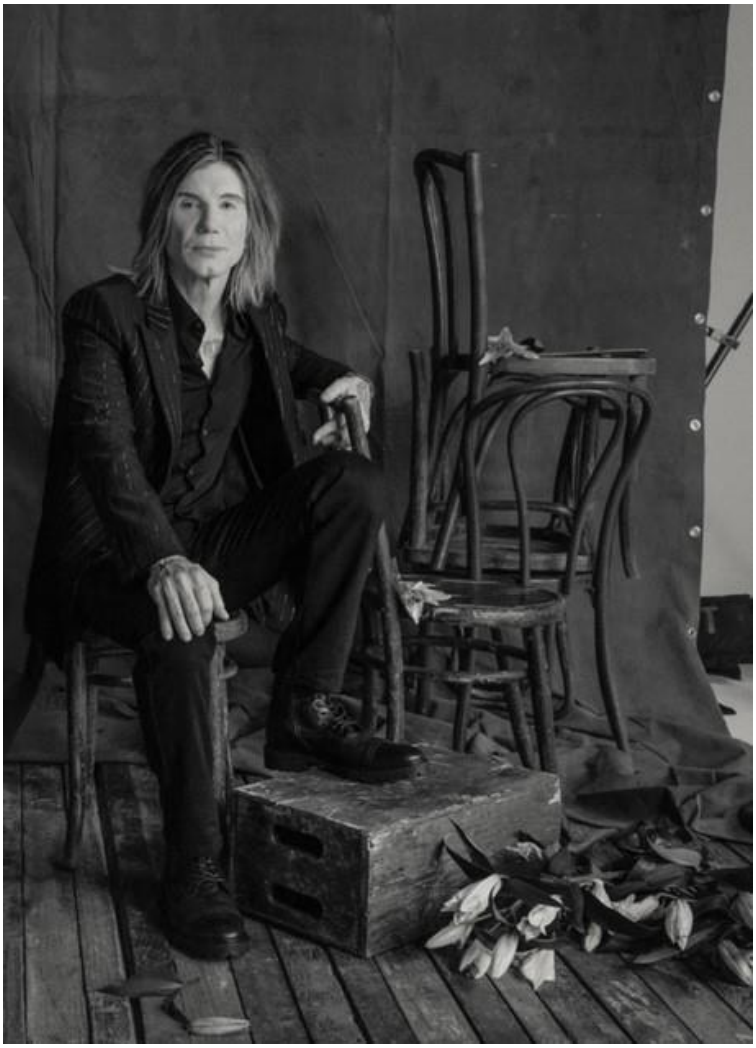
John Rzeznik



Alternating between taking notes on his iPhone and scribbling on yellow legal pads with pencils, singer, songwriter, and guitarist John Rzeznik approaches songwriting with a workmanlike craftsmanship and analog sense of soul. Fronting The Goo Goo Dolls, he has imparted that energy and ethic into nearly three decades of music, penning cornerstones from the modern American songbook such as "Iris," "Slide," "Black Balloon," and "Name"—among many others.

"Somebody once asked me, *'What's it like to write a song?'*," he recalls. "I answered, *'It's like getting dropped out of an airplane into the middle of a jungle and you've got to cut your way out.'* I like it that way because I never had any formal training. For some reason, it works."

It still "works" to this day. Moreover, his songs continue to influence subsequent generations. Everyone from Phoebe Bridgers and Maggie Rogers to Snail Mail, Leona Lewis, Boyz II Men, Sleeping with Sirens, New Found Glory and more have covered the band, while Taylor Swift, Demi Lovato, Avril Lavigne, Echosmith's Sydney Sierota, and Cash Cash jumped at the chance to duet with him. Recognizing the impact of his storytelling and songcraft, the Songwriters Hall of Fame bestowed the prestigious "Hal David Starlight Award" upon the frontman in 2008.

Since their 1986 formation in Buffalo, NY, The Goo Goo Dolls—Rzeznik and Robby Takac—have prolifically delivered a string of immortal anthems and albums, garnering four GRAMMY® Award nominations and nearly a dozen platinum & gold singles combined. They've seized a page in the history books by achieving 16 number one and Top 10 hits and as a result, have sold over 15 million albums worldwide while holding the all-time

radio record for *"Most Top 10 Singles."* After historically clutching the the #1 spot on Billboard's Adult Top 40 chart for 18 weeks, *Billboard* lauded "Iris" as #1 on the "Top 100 Pop Songs 1992-2012" chart, placing "Slide" at #9 and "Name" at 24.

Grinding it out on the road for over a decade supporting four fan favorite albums, the group unveiled 1995's seminal *A Boy Named Goo*. Propelled by "Name," it eventually earned an RIAA double-platinum certification and elevated the band to rock's vanguard. In 1998, *Dizzy Up The Girl* became a global phenomenon, moving 6 million copies, going quadruple-platinum, and boasting "Iris" and "Slide" on its divine tracklisting. Both *Gutterflower* [2002] and *Let Love In* [2006] achieved gold status as *Something for the Rest of Us* [2010] and *Magnetic* [2013] soared to the Top 10 of the *Billboard* Top 200. 2016's *Boxes* received praise from *People* and *Huffington Post* as *Noisey*, *Consequence* of *Sound*, and more featured them. On the horizon for Rzeznik is Goo Goo Dolls' highly anticipated thirteenth studio record, due out summer 2022 via Warner Records alongside the band's high-profile headline summer shed tour spanning the entirety of North America.

Long before this success, the artist grew up surrounded by music. His parents were both casual musicians, while his four older sisters each boasted a diverse record collection. Inspired by everything from Cheap Trick's *Live At Budokan* and The Ramones' *Rocket to Russia* to Hüsker Dü and The Replacements, he wrote his first song at 13. By 1990's *Hold Me Up*, he had tapped into raw energy by embracing signature alternate tunings in his writing.

"Using alternate tunings expanded the canvas I could work on to be able to come up with atypical sounds and chords," he goes on. "By doing this, you fill the space more when there are only three musicians. There are absolutely no rules involved. I could create anything I wanted. Songwriting constantly evolved. Around the time of *A Boy Named Goo* and *Dizzy Up The Girl*, it became time for me to really leap into my own space."

It's a space he proudly inhabits to this day. The band's thirteenth official studio album *Chaos In Bloom* [Warner Records] serves as an engaging body of work that finds the band continuing to evolve just as they have throughout their entire career. Marking the first album of their career to be produced by frontman Rzeznik, it's an album of biting sarcasm, stadium-ready choruses, and the type of spear-sharp songwriting that's led them to becoming one of the most influential alternative rock outfits of all time.

While *Chaos in Bloom* isn't necessarily an album borne out by the pandemic, many of the tracks reflect on all of the things in daily life that became amplified while everyone was isolated from one another and sequestered at home. To record the album, Rzeznik and co. retreated to Dreamland Studios just outside Woodstock, New York during the pandemic. An environment as remote as it is rich with historic rock music roots, the location proved to be the perfect setting for clearing the noise and creating such a record, which carries a true live quality that the band captured by blending vintage instruments and gear with new-age recording processes and techniques.

"Sometimes, I'll sit down and think about an event, a person, a moment in time, or something I've read, and it'll just spark an idea in my mind," he explains of his process. "There are other times where I'll be playing guitar and humming a melody. A phrase will come out and spark a memory. It causes a chain reaction of thoughts. A lot of the songs come out that way. As far as subject matter goes, some darkness is beautiful. For me, there's always that little touch of remaining one step away from being connected. I'm there, I see it and feel it, but I'm always slightly removed from it."

"For every songwriter out there, I think it's very important to gain the insight of other people's processes, because it can only improve yours," he says. "What is it about a song that provokes an emotion in a person? That's what I want to learn most. I think songs are the snapshots of moments in our lives. They're mile markers. I can't wait to discuss these topics with guests that I respect. SiriusXM has given me an incredible platform."

In the middle of everything, Rzeznik became a first-time father in 2017. "When I held my little girl for the first time in the delivery room, I said to myself, *'You have to work a lot harder than you've ever worked in your life'*," he admits. "I have this desire to play and record more, because all I want to do is take care of her, make sure she's okay, and give her the life I didn't have as a kid."

"I'm very proud that we're still here," he smiles. "This band is in my DNA. It's my life. I've been doing it longer than I haven't been. I feel more comfortable than ever in wearing The Goo Goo Dolls as my coat. I'm just a guy who wants to feel connected. It's the one thing I've always craved. I lost my family when I was a teenager. That desire for connection has driven a lot of my lyrics. I can't wait for my daughter to see me play. Hopefully, the songs mean something to her."