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## It's smokin' Joe Bonamassa!

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By Simon Umlauf  
CNN Headline News

**(CNN) -- I first heard one of Joe Bonamassa's songs in Austin, Texas, while visiting family and hitting the city's music scene. I was in my grandmother's Buick station wagon when "If Heartaches Were Nickels," came on the radio. I almost caused a pile-up, pulling to the side of the road searching for something to write down the name of the band.**

After several people gestured that I was No. 1 because of my driving, I found a Kleenex box under the passenger seat and used it as a pad while listening to the Stevie Ray Vaughn-like guitar chops and a husky voice similar to Bob Seger or Greg Allman.

Within ten minutes of hearing the song title, I was in a record store with an empty Kleenex box asking the clerk about "Joe Bon-somebody." I'm no music critic, nor do I play an instrument, but I did grow up listening to my dad's enormous record collection -- the Smithsonian of 60s blues and rock-n-roll, featuring the masters: B.B. King, Hendrix, Eric Clapton, Muddy Waters and others.

I believe I know good music when I hear it, and when I bought Bonamassa's latest album "A New Day Yesterday" (on Okeh/Epic Records) I knew I'd made my father proud.

Bonamassa is only 24 years old. At age 8 he opened for B. B. King and by 12, he had performed over 20 shows with the blues legend.

B.B. King commented on Bonamassa's guitar wizardry: "Joe's potential is so great... He's young with great ideas. He's one of a kind...a legend before his time." -B.B. King

Bonamassa then joined Bloodline, a band that supported Z.Z. Top, Eddie Money, and Lynyrd Skynyrd. Bloodline was composed of the offspring of famous musicians: Waylon Krieger, son of Doors guitarist Robbie Krieger; and

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drummer Erin Davis, son of jazz giant Miles Davis.

Joe played lead guitar and co-wrote much of the original material on Bloodline's self-titled album, released in 1995. Like Bonamassa's latest CD, Bloodline's album had a bluesy, funk-inflected roots-rock traditional sound. After three years with Bloodline, working with some of the best talents in the business and honing his song-writing skills, Bonamassa was ready to head out on his own.

In 2000, Bonamassa released his first major label solo album, "A New Day Yesterday," but with the demand of alternative rock and mainstream pop, the album never got the marketing attention that it deserved from the company that released it. In September of 2001, the album was re-released after it caught the ears of veteran record executives.

If you listen to any song on "A New Day Yesterday," you will hear why this album was re-released. Bonamassa plays the music you listen to while driving an old convertible through a small town, the kind you play in a fire station on a Saturday afternoon or while cruisin' the live-music capital of the world, Austin, Texas.

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