

With an electric guitar strapped to the shoulder, like a soul-extension, musical sensation Rodney Sheppard brings his energy and vitality to the stage. Being the lead guitarist of Sugar Ray, Sheppard lives and breathes music. Performing at small and large venues, Sheppard transcends unforgettable shows. Starting his career in a teen band in Newport Beach, Sheppard and a couple of high school friends got together to perform at parties with fellow students as their audience. Sheppard and his bandmates travel the world and continue their musical pursuits seeking profound opportunities in the industry. Tackling every new experience with open arms, Sugar Ray hit the big leagues after signing a record deal with Atlantic Records in 1993.

The band had an everlasting career of live performances around the world, until 2020 when their days on the tour bus came to an abrupt end due to lockdowns and restrictions, putting Sheppard in a state of limbo. With the inability to see fans face to face, the band's future was in question. Sheppard searched for hope and motivation to continue the legacy of the band.

"The future of the band was unclear because the once-vibrant music industry became dim," Sheppard expressed.

With the unpredictability that came with live music in the pandemic, Sugar Ray was concerned that their online band meetings and social media presence weren't enough to help them reconstruct their career. Amid this difficult time, Sheppard utilized digital sources to create cameos, and post covers on Facebook and X to offer content and guidance for his fans. He was able to discover a newfound appreciation for his fandom and music.

Bandmate Justin Bivona emphasized the power of Sheppard's presence. "Coming up with new music is challenging, there are a lot of expectations so you have self-imposed pressure," Bivona said. "But when Rodney entered the room, it was instantly uplifted from his comedic personality and creative abilities."

Sheppard envisions a future where the stage continues to be his playground. The band will continue to tour new destinations and extend their musical horizons. Sheppard is tremendously proud to say he sees an indefinite journey ahead.