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CASE NUMBER: 12-2-21829-3 SEA

# IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF KING

GEOFF TATE and SUSAN TATE, a married couple,	ì
Plaintiffs,	
v.	5
EDDIE JACKSON and TERESA GOLDEN-JACKSON, a married couple; SCOTT ROCKENFIELD and MISTY ROCKENFIELD, a married couple; MICHAEL WILTON and KERRIE LYNN WILTON, a married couple; TRI-RYCHE, CORPORATION, a Washington corporation; QUEENSRYCHE MERCHANDISING, INC., a Washington corporation; and MELODISC LTD., a Washington	I
corporation,  Defendants.	

No. \_\_\_\_\_

COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES,
DECLARATORY JUDGMENT,
SHAREHOLDER OPPRESSION,
BREACH OF FIDUCIARY DUTY,
DISSOLUTION, BREACH OF
CONTRACT, CORPORATE WASTE,
DERIVATIVE SUIT, LIBEL AND
SLANDER, AND INJUNTIVE RELIEF

Plaintiffs Geoff Tate ("Tate") and Susan Tate ("Susan") (collectively, the "Tates"), by and through their attorneys of record, Joshua Brower, Ben Stone, and Denver Gant of Veris Law Group PLLC, and for claims against defendants Eddie Jackson ("Jackson"), Teresa Golden-Jackson, Scott Rockenfield ("Rockenfield"), Misty Rockenfield, Michael Wilton ("Wilton"), Kerrie Lynn Wilton, Tri-Ryche Corp. ("Tri-Ryche"), Queensryche Merchandising, Inc. ("QM"), and Melodisc LTD. ("Melodisc") (collectively, the "Defendants"), allege as follows:

## I. INTRODUCTION

- 1. In the early 1980s, four boys from Bellevue, Washington, were performing in a heavy metal cover band that was unable to land a recording contract because they lacked a lead singer. In 1981, Geoff Tate joined them as the lead singer, they recorded a demo tape that received widespread praise, and Queensryche was born.
- 2. Over the last 30 years, Queensryche with Geoff Tate at the helm and as its front man sold more than 30 million albums and delighted audiences young and old with their music. Geoff Tate is Queensryche. Out of the 144 songs ever recorded by Queensryche, Tate wrote 116, or 81%. Geoff Tate and former bandmember Chris DeGarmo receive nearly 61% of Queensryche's royalty payments compared to Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield who *combined* receive only 23.61%. While Geoff Tate has worked his entire career writing songs and music for Queensryche, and has been its face and voice, Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield chose not to be involved with certain Queensryche albums and songs, and had to be replaced by studio musicians.
- 3. Now, in an attempt to mask blind greed with statements of "creative differences," Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield have attempted to expel Queensryche's lead singer, lead songwriter, and front man, Geoff Tate, from the band. Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield intend to tour as Queensryche without Geoff Tate. Jackson's, Wilton's, and Rockenfield's attempt to tour without Geoff Tate will lead to the destruction of the Queensryche name and brand, just as it has for countless other bands that dump their lead singer.

# II. PARTIES, JURISDICTION, AND VENUE

- 4. Tate is a married man who resides in King County, Washington.
- 5. Upon information and belief, Jackson and Teresa Golden-Jackson, a married couple, reside in Snohomish County, Washington.
- 6. Upon information and belief, Rockenfield and Misty Rockenfield, a married couple, reside in Snohomish County, Washington.

- 7. Upon information and belief, Wilton and Kerrie Lynn Wilton, a married couple, reside in King County, Washington.
- 8. Tri-Ryche, a Washington corporation, conducts business in and its registered agent resides in King County, Washington.
- 9. QM, a Washington corporation, conducts business in and its registered agent resides in King County, Washington.
- 10. Melodisc, a Washington corporation, conducts business in and its registered agent resides in King County, Washington.
- 11. This Court has jurisdiction over this matter and the parties pursuant to RCW 2.08.010.
- 12. Venue is proper in King County pursuant to RCW 4.12.025 because a majority of the defendants either reside in King County or conduct business in King County and pursuant to RCW 23B.14.310(1) because the registered agent for Tri-Ryche, QM, and Melodisc resides in King County.

#### III. GENERAL FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

## A. Queensryche Formed

- 13. In 1981, four boys from Bellevue, Washington, formed a band called the Mob, but they needed a lead singer.
- 14. Jackson, Rockenfield, Wilton, and Chris DeGarmo ("DeGarmo") recruited Tate to be the front man and lead singer of the Mob.
- 15. After recording a demo tape with Geoff Tate on lead vocals that garnered widespread praise, the Mob renamed the band after the title track to their demo tape and Queensryche (the "Band") officially came into existence.
  - 16. The Band signed with a record label shortly thereafter.

17. Over the last 30 years, the Band sold more than 30 million records worldwide, toured extensively, and has a top-10 hit, "Silent Lucidity," and the critically acclaimed concept album, "Operation Mindcrime."

# B. Geoff Tate Is The Heart, Brains, And Soul Of The Band

- 18. Tate is by far and away the most prolific songwriter for the Band.
- 19. Out of the 144 songs the Band has recorded, Tate wrote or co-wrote 116 or 81%.
- 20. By comparison, the other band members, individually or collectively, wrote or co-wrote a fraction of Queensryche's songs or music: Jackson co-wrote 24 (17%), Wilton wrote or co-wrote 49 (34%), and Rockenfield wrote or co-wrote 31 (22%).
- 21. As a reflection of the above statistics, Tate receives 33.77% of the royalties for the Band's songs.
- 22. By comparison, the rest of the Band receives a paltry amount: Jackson receives 4.56%, Wilton receives 12.52%, and Rockenfield receives 6.53%.
- 23. DeGarmo, who left the band nearly 15 years ago, wrote 64 songs, which is more songs than Jackson, Wilton, or Rockenfield.
- 24. DeGarmo also receives a higher percentage of royalties, 27.06%, than Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield *combined*.
- 25. During the last 15 years, studio artists, producers, and temporary band members contributed more to the Band's songwriting than Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield.
- 26. It was common practice inside of the Band to give small or equal publishing rights to Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield to appease the jealous conflicts that arose over the amount of royalties Tate and DeGarmo received.
- 27. Removing these small or equal publishing rights shows that Tate wrote or co-wrote 71% of the songs, while Jackson wrote 7%, Wilton wrote 24%, and Rockenfield wrote 11%.

- 28. As time went on, Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield became less and less involved in the day-to-day operation and management of Queensryche.
- 29. Geoff Tate has always been the "face" of Queensryche, conducting the majority of media relations, interviews and press appearances.
- 30. Tate would do multiple promotional interviews a day in support of Queensryche's touring efforts.
- 31. Jackson, Wilton, or Rockenfield would do no more than one or two interviews per tour.
- 32. Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield were replaced by studio artists on multiple tracks recorded for Queensryche albums.
- 33. For example, on the "Operation Mindcrime II" album, the Band would reserve studio time only to have Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield not show up.
- 34. Consequently, Geoff Tate, along with studio musicians and producers, wrote and performed all of the songs on the album with almost no help from Jackson, Wilton, or Rockenfield.
- 35. Every attempt was made to include Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield but they did not participate.
- 36. Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield received copies of the songs on the demo and time was reserved for them to come to the studio to record their parts.
- 37. The Band reserved two weeks for Wilton to record his part of the songs written by Geoff Tate and the others.
- 38. When Wilton showed up, he hadn't learned any of the songs so the two weeks were wasted trying to teach him the songs.
- 39. In the end, Wilton could not learn his parts of the songs, could not perform them accurately enough, and the record was released without any guitar tracks performed by Wilton.

Tate, the Members and DeGarmo formed Tri-Ryche in 1989.

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1	53.	Tri-Ryche is a Washington corporation.
2	54.	Tate is a shareholder of Tri-Ryche corporation.
3	55.	Tate, the Members and DeGarmo formed Melodisc in 1991.
5	56.	Tate is a shareholder of Melodisc.
6	57.	Tate, the Members and DeGarmo formed QM in 1996.
7	58.	Tate is a shareholder of QM.
8	59.	Tri-Ryche owns the intellectual property of Queensryche, including the name and
9	trademark, "Ç	
10	60.	QM conducts Queensryche's marketing activities.
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12	61. Melodisc and	Melodisc owns Queensryche's publishing rights (the three companies, Tri-Ryche, I QM are collectively referred to herein as the "QR Companies").
13	•	
14	62.	Tate, Jackson, Wilton, Rockenfield, and DeGarmo each owned twenty percent outstanding shares of capital stock in each of the QR Companies.
15		
16	63. Agreement ("	Tate, Jackson, Wilton, Rockenfield, and DeGarmo signed a Shareholder's Agreement") for the management of Try-Ryche in 1994.
17 18	64.	The Agreement defined the rights to ownership of the Band's name and contained
19		pital stock transfer provisions should a Band member leave or be expelled.
20	65.	DeGarmo left the Band in 1998.
21		
22	66.	The Agreement expired in 2004 and is void.
23	67.	As a result of DeGarmo leaving, the share of capital stock Tate, Jackson, Wilton, eld hold in each of the QR Companies increased to twenty-five percent (25%) each.
24		
25	68.	Tate has been a shareholder, a member of the board of directors, and an officer of panies for every year since the inception of the QR Companies.
26		fames for every year since the meephon of the Qit companies.

# D. The Members Pick A Fight With Tate

- 69. Because of personal differences with Tate, in early February 2012, Rockenfield decided he wanted to move Queensryche's highly profitable in-house merchandising and fan club operations to a third-party merchandising management company.
- 70. Under Rockenfield's proposed deal with the merchandising management company, the Band would lose significant profits from merchandising and touring proceeds.
- 71. Geoff Tate, along with the Band's manager, Susan Tate, and the Band's long-time business manager, tried to convince Rockenfield this would result in substantially less money for the Band.
- 72. The Band's business manager solicited other bids from merchandising management companies and found one that was reasonable.
- 73. Rockenfield refused to consider this bid despite the evidence the Band would make more money compared to Rockenfield's proposal.
- 74. In early April 2012, Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield attempted to call a meeting of the shareholders and/or directors of the QR Companies without proper notice to Tate.
- 75. Sometime before April 14, 2012, Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield held a shareholder and director meeting despite failing to provide proper notice to Tate.
- 76. After that meeting, Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield told Tate they fired the Band's manager (Tate's wife, Susan), the merchandising director (Tate's daughter, Miranda), and one of the Band's guitar techs. This was part of Rockenfield's personal vendetta against Tate and was not based on sound business judgment.
- 77. As a result of firing the merchandising director, the Band has had little to no merchandising sales and limited or poor contact and interaction with its fan base and fan club.
- 78. Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield also told Tate they were forming a side project without Tate.

- 79. On May 8, 2012, Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield attempted to convene another shareholders and/or board of directors meeting without proper notice to Tate despite Tate informing them he was unavailable to attend the meeting.
- 80. On May 31, 2012, Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield told Tate they no longer wanted to perform with Tate.
- 81. In a letter from their lawyer, Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield threatened Tate by telling him he should accept a low-ball buy-out offer or be publically forced out of the Band.
- 82. On June 5, 2012, Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield, at a board or shareholder meeting Tate did not attend, attempted to expel Tate from the Band and the QR Companies.
- 83. Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield decided they would continue to use the Queensryche name and hire a new lead singer, along with studio musicians, who could cover Queensryche's songs in the same style as Tate.
- 84. Three days before Queensryche was scheduled to appear in Salt Lake City, UT, Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield told Tate they would not play the schedule concert on June 11, 2012.
- 85. In order to prevent further damage to the Band for breach of contract and damage to its brand and reputation, Tate played the June 11, 2012, show in Salt Lake City as a solo-act.
- 86. At that time, the Band had at least five (5) additional shows scheduled for various venues around the Country.
- 87. Upon information and belief, in early June, Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield fired the Band's long-time agent, and cancelled all scheduled shows except one, the Halfway Jam, for which the Band is still listed as Queensryche with a picture of Geoff Tate.
- 88. On Monday June 18, 2012, Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield, through a new agent, began soliciting new offers for booking "Queensryche" without mentioning in that solicitation that Tate would not be the lead singer.

- 89. On June 20, 2012, Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield sent a statement to Billboard.com stating that "creative differences" led to Queensryche replacing Tate with a new lead singer.
- 90. The Billboard.com story contains false, slanderous and libelous statements about Tate.
- 91. On June 20, 2012, Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield sent a press release to Pollstar.com stating that Queensryche intended to tour without Tate.
- 92. Upon information and belief, Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield intend to tour and perform Queensryche material without Tate.
- 93. Tate will not receive money from the Band's touring and is suffering damages in an amount to be proven at trial.
- 94. Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield are damaging the name Queensryche by touring and holding themselves out as Queensryche without Tate as the lead singer.

#### IV. FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION: DECLARATORY JUDGMENT

- 95. The Tates incorporate all preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.
- 96. Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield relied upon an invalid and expired agreement in an attempt to expel Tate and transfer Tate's shares of Tri-Ryche to themselves.
- 97. Because there is no authority under the Articles of Incorporation or the Bylaws of any of the QR Companies for other shareholders to vote to expel Tate and transfer his shares of the QR Companies to themselves, the Tates are entitled to a judgment declaring Tate retains his 25% interest in the Band, the QR Companies, and the name Queensryche.
- 98. For the reasons articulated herein, an actual dispute exists between Tate and Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield, the parties have genuine and opposing interests, which interests are direct and substantial, and of which a judicial determination will be final and

conclusive. Therefore, Tate is entitled to a Declaratory Judgment determining that he remains a shareholder of the QR Companies.

#### V. SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION: SHAREHOLDER OPPRESSION

- 99. The Tates incorporate all preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.
- 100. Tate is a founding member of Queensryche and the QR Companies.
- 101. Tate is a shareholder in each of the QR Companies and is a Director of the companies.
- 102. Tate has been actively involved in Queensryche and the QR Companies for over 30 years.
- 103. Tate has been employed and earned his livelihood from Queensryche and the QR Companies for over 30 years.
- 104. As a founding member of Queensryche and the QR Companies, Tate has a reasonable expectation to retain his ownership in the QR Companies and his employment with Queensryche and the QR Companies.
- 105. By attempting to fire him and voting to expel Tate from the QR Companies, Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield are oppressing Tate, a minority shareholder.
- 106. Jackson's, Wilton's, and Rockenfield's actions are burdensome, harsh and wrongful, lack probity and fair dealing in the affairs of the QR Companies and are prejudicing Tate.
- 107. Jackson's, Wilton's, and Rockenfield's actions are a visible departure from the standards of fair dealing and a violation of fair play on which every QR Company shareholder is entitled to rely.

- 108. Because Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield are oppressing Tate, the Tates are entitled to damages in amount to be proven at trial but no less than amount equal to the fair value of Tate's ownership interest in the QR Companies and their assets.
- 109. Because Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield are oppressing Tate, Tate is entitled to an Order awarding him the name "Queensryche" in exchange for paying Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield the fair market value of their interests in the QR Companies.

#### VI. THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION: BREACH OF FIDUCIARY DUTY

- 110. The Tates incorporate all preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.
- 111. In his capacities as an officer, director, and shareholder in the QR Companies, Jackson owed fiduciary duties to Tate as a shareholder in the QR Companies.
- 112. In his capacities as an officer, director, and shareholder in the QR Companies, Rockenfield owed fiduciary duties to Tate as a shareholder in the QR Companies.
- 113. In his capacities as an officer, director, and shareholder in the QR Companies, Wilton owed fiduciary duties to Tate as a shareholder in the QR Companies.
- 114. Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield breached their fiduciary duties to Tate when they voted to expel Tate from the Band and the QR Companies in violation of the Articles and Bylaws of the QR Companies.
- 115. As a direct, proximate, and foreseeable result of the aforementioned breaches of fiduciary duties Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield owe to Tate, the Tates have been damaged in an amount to be proven at trial.
- 116. As a direct, proximate, and foreseeable result of the aforementioned breaches of fiduciary duties Jackson, Wilton, Rockenfield, owed to Tate, Tate is entitled to an Order awarding him the name "Queensryche" in exchange for paying Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield the fair market value of their interests in the QR Companies.

# VII. FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION: DISSOLUTION OF THE QR COMPANIES

- 117. The Tates incorporate all preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.
- 118. The paragraphs above establish that Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield have acted and are acting in a manner that is oppressive to the minority shareholder and in breach of their fiduciary duties owed to Tate.
- 119. RCW 23B.14.300(2)(b) allows for judicial dissolution of a corporation where, "[t]he directors or those in control of the corporation have acted, are acting, or will act in a manner that is illegal, oppressive, or fraudulent."
- 120. The Tates are entitled to a decree of judicial dissolution of the QR Companies because of the oppressive manner in which Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield have acted and are acting.
- 121. The Tates are entitled to a decree of judicial dissolution authorizing the Court to marshal and sell the QR Companies' assets because of the above-described circumstances pursuant to RCW Chapter 23B.14, including awarding the name "Queensryche" to Tate in exchange for paying Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield the fair market value of their interests in the QR Companies.

#### VIII. FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION: BREACH OF CONTRACT

- 122. The Tates incorporate all preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.
- 123. The Articles and Bylaws of the QR Companies control the operation of those companies.
- 124. The Articles and Bylaws of the QR Companies do not allow Jackson, Wilton and Rockenfield to vote to expel Tate.
- 125. Jackson's, Wilton's, and Rockenfield's vote to expel Tate breached the contractual provisions of the QR Companies' Articles and Bylaws.

- 139. Jackson's, Wilton's, and Rockenfield's actions are damaging the Band's brand value and the name Queensryche as described and detailed herein.
- 140. It would be futile for Tate to demand Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield remedy the corporate waste because they are causing it.
- 141. It would be futile for Tate to demand Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield remedy the corporate waste because they are the only remaining board members and thus there are no independent Directors of the QR Companies to investigate and make a recommendation regarding Tate's claims of corporate waste.
- 142. It would be futile for Tate to demand Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield remedy the corporate waste because they unlawfully voted to expel Tate from the Band.
- 143. Based on the above, Tate is entitled to an Order appointing a receiver to manage and oversee the Band, its operations, dissolution and winding down.
- 144. Based on the above, Tate is entitled a Court Order immediately removing Jackson, Wilton, and Rockenfield from any participation in the QR Company management.

#### XI. EIGTH CAUSE OF ACTION: LIBEL AND SLANDER

- 145. The Tates incorporate all preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.
- 146. Jackson's, Wilton's, and Rockenfield's false oral and written public statements, detailed above, made with full knowledge that the statements were false, damaged, and continues to damage Tate's reputation.
- 147. The Tates are entitled to damages for these defamatory, libelous, and slanderous acts and statements in an amount to be proven at trial.

#### XII. NINTH CAUSE OF ACTION: PERMANENT INJUNCTION

148. The Tates incorporate all preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

1	160.	An Order finding the public oral and written statements of Jackson, Wilton, and
2	Rockenfield s	slandered and libeled Tate and thus he is entitled to damages in an amount to proven
3	at trial;	
4	161.	An Order granting a permanent injunction to restrain the use of the name
5	"Queensrych	e;"
6	162.	Order and Judgment awarding damages to the Tates in an amount to be proven at
7	trial;	
8	163.	Order and Judgment awarding the Tates' attorneys' fees and costs incurred
9	herein; and	order than the grant and a second of the gra
10	164.	For such other and further relief in favor of the Tates as the Court deems just and
11	equitable.	1 of Such office and further refler in favor of the faces as the court decine just and
12	1	DATED this 22nd day of June 2012
13		DATED this 22nd day of June 2012.
14		VERIS LAW GROUP PLLC
15		John En
16		Joshua C. Allen Brower, WSBA No. 25092
17		Benjamin J. Stone, WSBA No. 33436 Denver R. Gant, WSBA No. 38552
18		Attorneys for Geoff and Susan Tate
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### **VERIFICATION:**

The undersigned, upon penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington, hereby verifies that the above allegations are true and accurate to the best of his knowledge, and that I am and was a shareholder of the QR Companies at the times of the alleged actions described herein. My claims are not a collusive attempt to confer jurisdiction on this court. Jackson, Wilton and Rockenfield are damaging the QR Companies by committing or allowing for corporate waste as detailed and described herein. Jackson, Wilton and Rockenfield's actions are damaging the Band's brand value and the name Queensryche as described and detailed herein. It would be futile for me to demand Jackson, Wilton and Rockenfield remedy the corporate waste because they are causing it. It would be futile for me to demand Jackson, Wilton and Rockenfield remedy the corporate waste because they are the only remaining board members and thus there are no independent Directors of the QR Companies to investigate and make a recommendation regarding my claims of corporate waste. It would be futile for me to demand Jackson, Wilton and Rockenfield remedy the corporate waste because they unlawfully voted to expel me from the Band.

Dated: June 22, 2012

Geoff Tate

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