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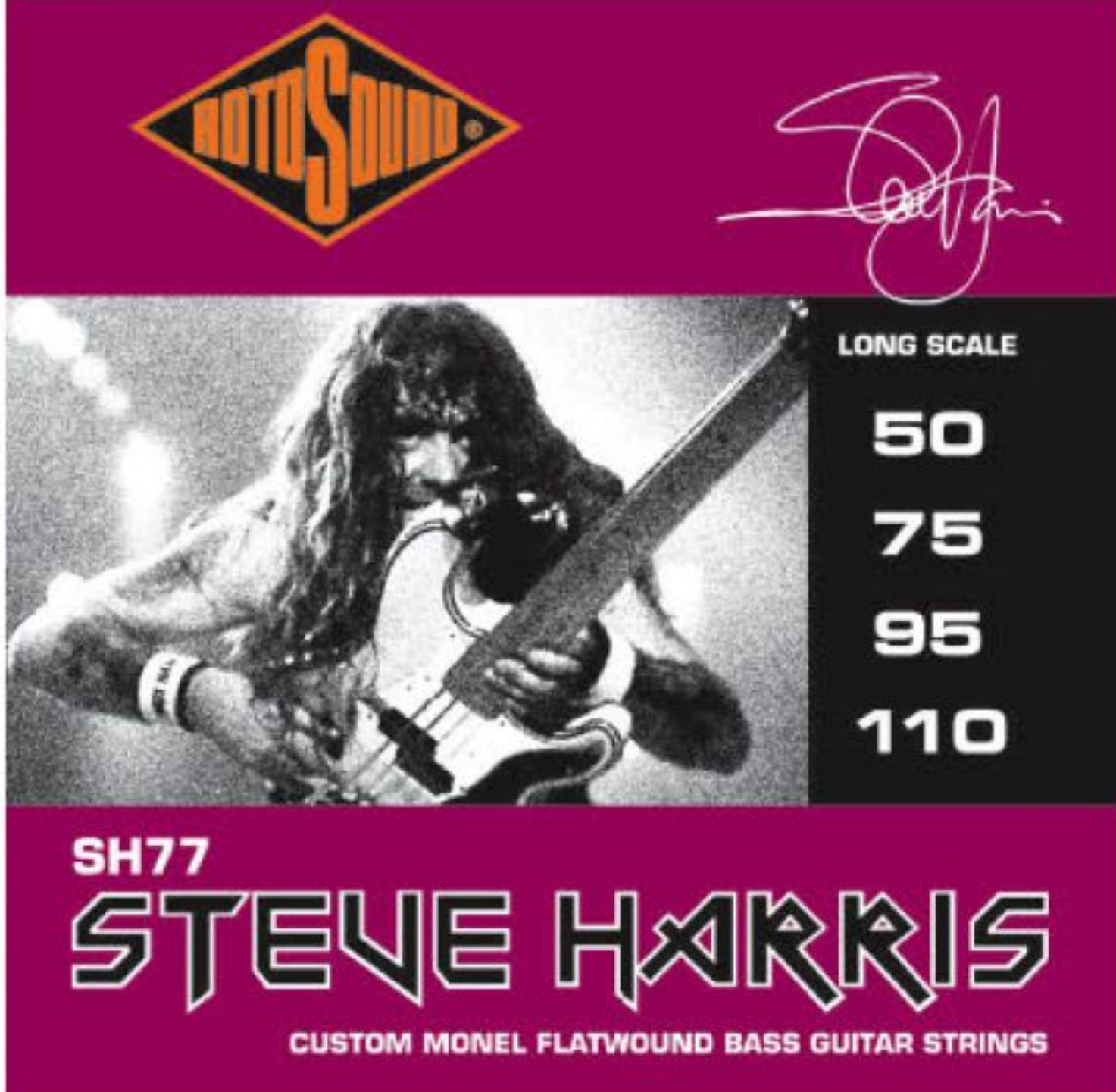
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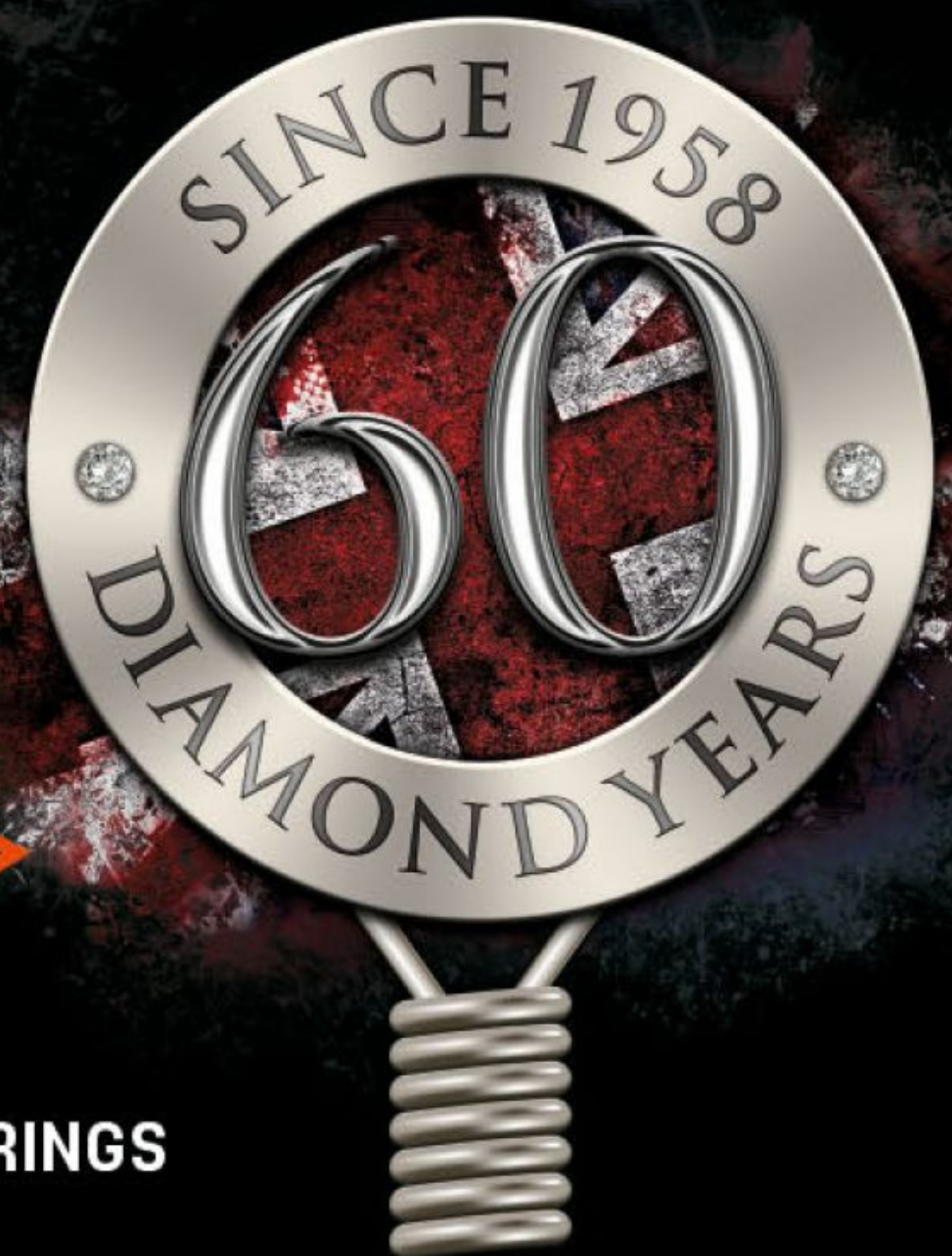
STEVE HARRIS
ROTOSOUND PLAYER



Product packaging for Steve Harris SH77 Rotosound strings. The top section features the Rotosound logo and a signature. Below is a photo of Steve Harris playing a bass guitar. To the right of the photo, the text reads "LONG SCALE" followed by a list of gauge options: 50, 75, 95, and 110. The bottom section of the packaging is purple and contains the text "SH77 STEVE HARRIS" and "CUSTOM MONEL FLATWOUND BASS GUITAR STRINGS".

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Subscription Rate UK £69

UK orderline & enquiries 0344 848 2852

Overseas order line and enquiries +44 (0)344 848 2852

Online orders & enquiries www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk

Head of subscriptions Sharon Todd

Printed by Buxton Press

Distributed by Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU www.marketforce.co.uk Tel: 0203 787 9060

ISSN 1476521

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Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR) www.futureplc.com

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Much as the core of the sun is a bit warm, the late Prince Rogers Nelson was a bit of a genius.

Although he succumbed to an accidental overdose of painkillers in 2016 – a shockingly pointless waste of a life – the legendary musician still found time to give us four decades or so of amazing music. For the last six of those years, the incredibly accomplished Danish bassist Ida Nielsen accompanied Prince in two bands, touring the globe and gathering acclaim for *Plectrumelectrum*, the album she and the band 3rd Eye Girl recorded with him. Nielsen has plenty of stories to tell about that golden era of creativity, which appear in this month's cover interview, executed as she continues to tour with her own supremely funky band.

The rest of this month's *BGM* is packed with goodness. We're fortunate – as this country's only bass-dedicated print publication, as I never tire of pointing out – to have the cream of the bass world interested in talking to us. The line-up this time includes (deep breath) session and stage regulars Dave Marks and Melissa Patitto, metal monsters Steve Tucker of Morbid Angel and Diego Ibarra of DevilDriver, rock legends Robert DeLeo of Stone Temple Pilots and Tony Butler of Big Country, pop-punk scamp Dougie Poynter of McFly and cerebral singer-songwriter Justin Currie of Del Amitri.

That's a lot of transcribing, we can tell you, and that's before we even apply digits to bass gear, which stretches this month from sub-£300 effects and an affordable bass to wallet-busting instruments costing £2000 and more. Add to that 12 pages of state-of-the-art bass tuition from Steve Lawson, Phil Mann and Stuart Clayton – renowned educators and performers all – and you've got an unparalleled set of bass reading ahead of you. We hope you enjoy it, and we'll see you in July!

Joel McIver, editor



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THE LOW DOWN

News and views from the bass world, collated by *BGM*'s team of intrepid newshounds

TOXIC TRACES

Stefan Redtenbacher's Funkestra featuring Helena May recently released a cover of Britney Spears' 2004 single 'Toxic', because why not? Redtenbacher, a fearsomely accomplished bassist, initially played the songs as part of his jazz-funk band's regular 606 Club shows, which led to the recording of the single. We've heard it, and it's nuts; do consider purchase, and what's more, make sure you catch the Funkestra live.

www.redtenbacherfunkestra.com



SOCIAL NETWORKING

Philadelphia bassist Jon L. Smith has announced a debut solo album, *The Social*. "The album is a perfect blend of old school and new," it says here, "acknowledging Philly's rich musical past while also simultaneously looking for its future. Throughout the album's 11 tracks, Smith's bass blurs the lines between jazz and R&B, weaving through slippery grooves and blistering lines." Sounds pretty tasty to us, so check it out.

<https://jonsmithbass.com>



BEN JAMMIN'

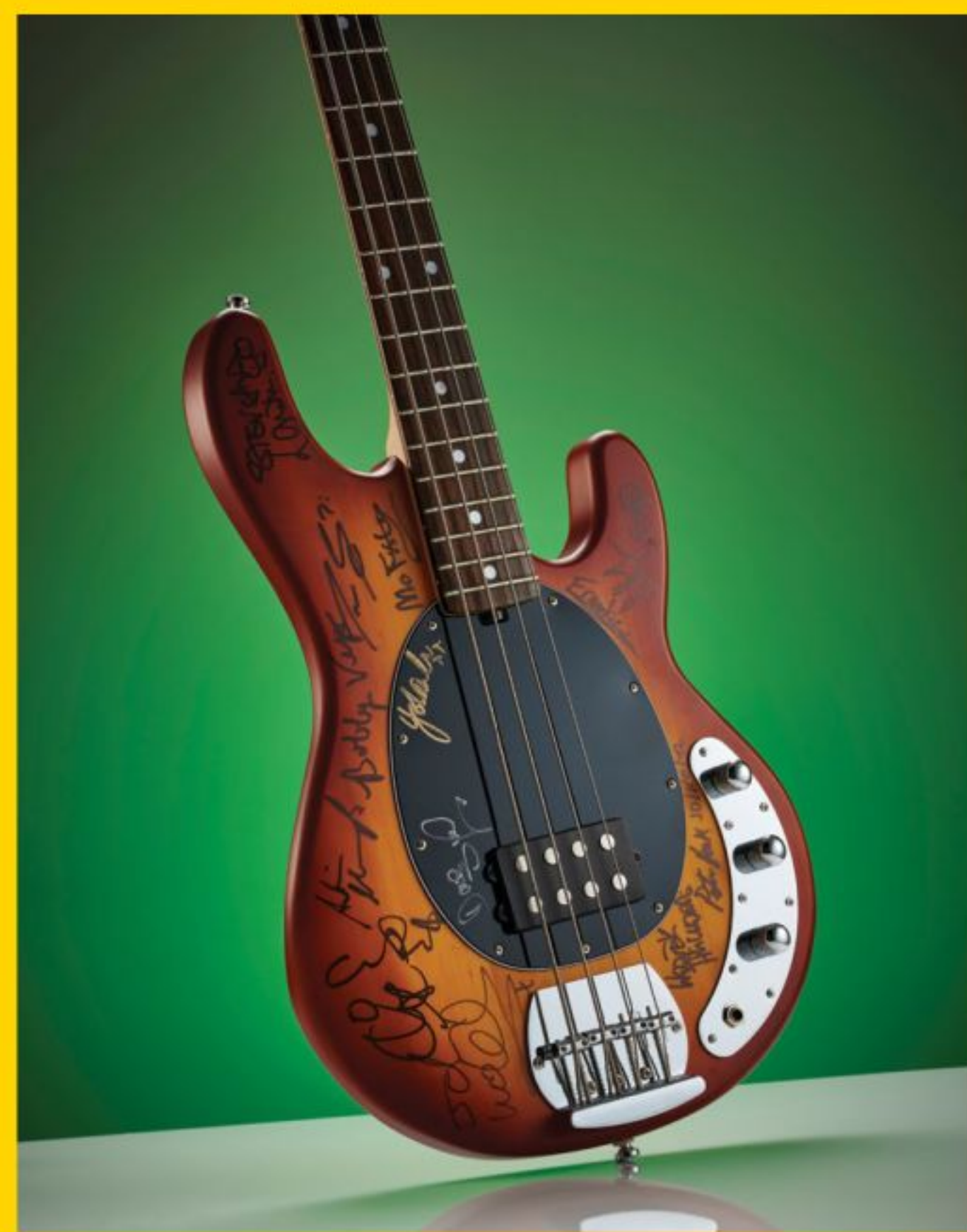
Virtuoso bassist Adam Ben Ezra has a new online course out called *Signature Sounds Of Adam Ben Ezra* via Discover Double Bass. "When I teach what I know and share what I love, it makes me want to keep on discovering more," says the sometime LBGS star. "So after many of you asked me how I do what I do, here it is! You can now learn all my secrets of double bass playing - from bass drumming to making your bass sound like an electric guitar."

The course is available exclusively at <https://bit.ly/2lz01tT>.

SPLENDID SUB!

The splendid people at Strings And Things recently auctioned off a beautiful Sterling by Music Man SUB bass to raise funds for the ace bassist Ellen O'Reilly, who is currently undergoing cancer treatment. The bass was signed by a host of stellar musicians at the London Bass Guitar Show back in March, with their signatures preserved via a clear coat finish courtesy of Martin Sims Guitar Works. This one-off instrument was bought by lucky bassist Mike Hammett for a magnificent £725. Thanks to Mike, Alex Byford, Martin Sims and everyone who helped to make this happen.

www.stringsandthings.co.uk, www.sims.guitars, www.facebook.com/lowendlady



LEAGUE OF GENTLEMEN

Snarky Puppy bassist and all-round industry mover and shaker Michael League has announced a signature Markbass head and cab, the CASA series. "As bassists, we all know that good tone starts in our hands," says our man. "But once we start seeking out the gear to best amplify it, we have almost unlimited options for our sound. Between our choices of instrument, strings, and cabinet, it can get a bit overwhelming... The great amps of the past have all shared the same qualities: rich and deep lows, a warm and punchy midrange, and the ability to get a great sound the second you plug in. The Markbass CASA has all of these. Out of curiosity, I ran a blind listening test for four professionals - two recording engineers and two musicians - using five different amplifiers and over a dozen different basses. On almost every single pass, the Markbass CASA was unanimously chosen alongside the classic amps as the favourite sound for each instrument." We'll let you know our verdict as soon as we get our hands on one.

www.msipro.co.uk

SHOP TALK

A new feature in which we meet a renowned bass-maker

THIS MONTH: Andrew Taylor-Cummings, Anaconda Basses

It's been four years since we last spoke to Andrew Taylor-Cummings of Anaconda Basses, and the brand is enjoying a hugely increased profile in 2018. Tell us about your version of the classic Jazz design, Andrew... "When I designed the Crusher, that was the culmination of all my thoughts and ideas; to me, that was the ultimate bass in terms of design and playability. The characteristics of a Jazz appeal to such a broad cross-section that you have to address that requirement. When people listen to a Jazz bass on record, they hear a particular sound and they recognise it, so when they try something different, they're still listening and looking for that Jazz bass sound."



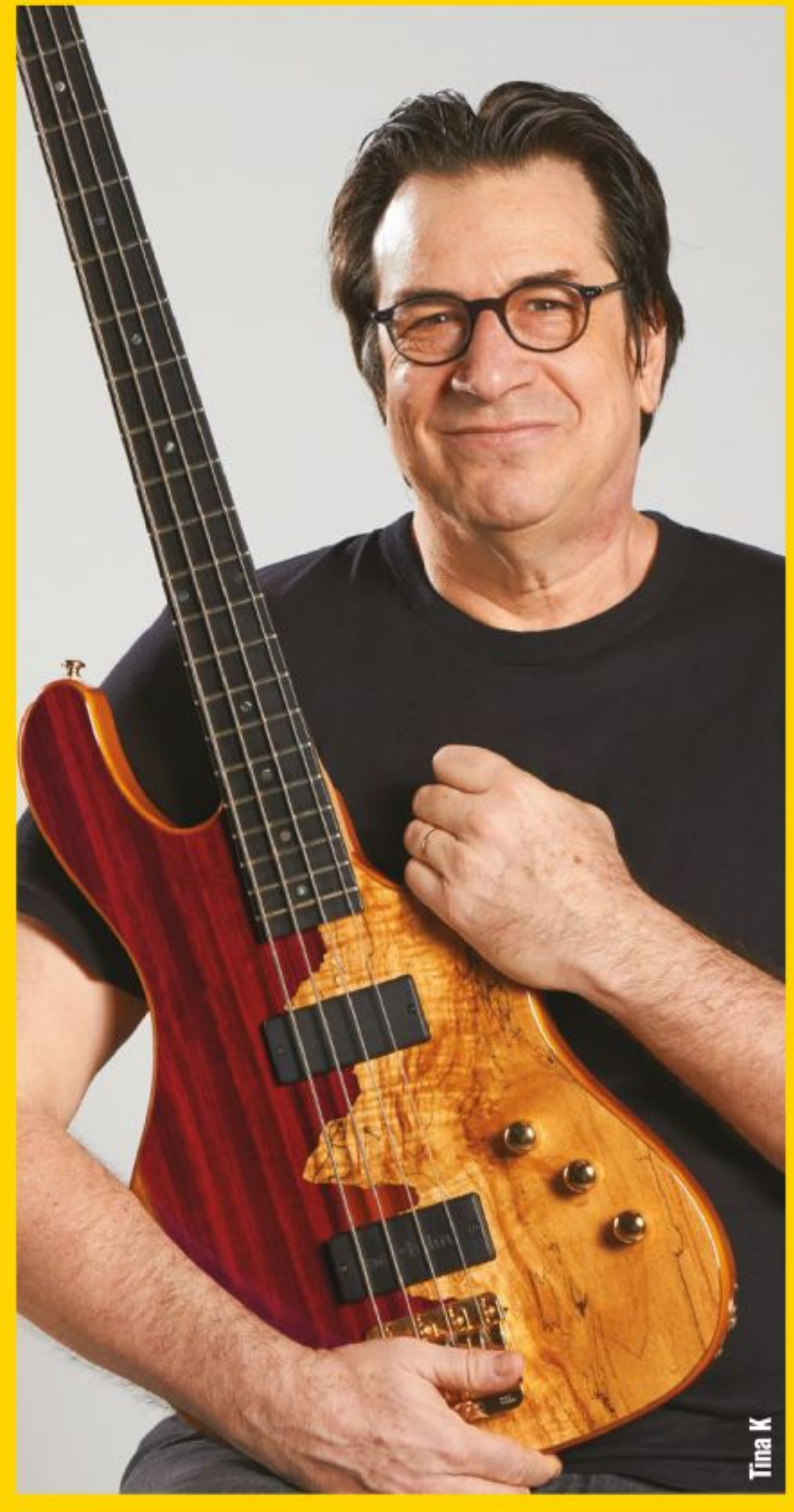
In the age of YouTube, Andrew is keen to see individuality and unique bass voices come to the forefront. "If you went back 20 to 30 years ago, different players had an individual voice; Stanley Clarke didn't sound like anybody else, for example. Unless you play the instrument in a radically different way, chances are you will sound quite similar to a lot of other players."

"I'm a new kid on the block," he concludes, "but my designs come from 25 years of playing. I've tried everything out there, I know what works and I have the experience of how a bass should look and sound. I spent 2017 getting the product out to people; I'd go to jam sessions four or five nights a week, putting the basses in people's hands - because advertising only gets you so far!"

Mike Brooks

BOXING CLEVER

The legendary Jeff Berlin returns with a 30th Anniversary Edition vinyl LP reissue of his song 'Joe Frazier', with the release including the original remastered song from 1987 and a new 'Round 3' version, on which the esteemed educator and composer is joined by Steve Vai (lead guitar), David Sancious (keyboards), Keith Carlock (drums) and Tom Hemby (rhythm guitar). It's available in multiple formats, including audiophile vinyl, signed and 'mix minus' versions, the latter allowing the listener to play along. www.jeffberlinmusicgroup.com/jbmerch



Tina K

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BASSWATCH

Every month, keen bass-spotter Ray Walker brings us an online bargain
Ibanez Prestige SR5005-OL £1,550
<https://tinyurl.com/y9faxanx>



Take a long hard look at the delectable Ibanez Prestige SR5005-OL five-string. This high-end beauty has an African mahogany body with a wenge top and back. The neck is an Atlas five-piece comprised of wenge and bubinga with titanium rods. It comes fully loaded with Bartolini pickups and switchable, active electronics. A mid-range selector yields sounds ranging from powerful to gentle. On the hardware front, it comes with Gotoh tuners and a monorail V bridge, which claims maximum vibration transfer without interference. With that hefty price reduction, this bass will help you pass that GAS!



JAM HOT

MC50, a supergroup led by the near-mythical Wayne Kramer of Detroit's proto-punk band MC5, has gathered to play forthcoming dates around the world in honour of the 50th anniversary of the original band's debut album, *Kick Out The Jams*. UK dates are scheduled for November. Guitarist Kim Thayil of Soundgarden and Pearl Jam drummer Matt Cameron are on board, but most excitingly from our point of view, the bassist is none other than Dug Pinnick of King's X, an absolute hero in our world.

As Kramer explains, "This band will rip your head off. It's real, raw, sweaty, total energy rock and roll, like a bunch of 40- to 70-year-old 'punks on a meth power trip'. I'm not interested in a note-for-note reproduction of a record you've known your entire life. The world has lived with these songs burned in amber for half a century, so we're going for an energy blast to end all. Let's bring the monster back to life with supremely talented musicians who will interpret it in their own unique ways." Go Dug!

www.MC50th.com



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CREAM TEAM

Ginger Baker's son Kofi Baker, Jack Bruce's son Malcolm Bruce and Eric Clapton's nephew Will Johns will be touring America in the autumn under the banner *The Music Of Cream - 50th Anniversary World Tour*, as it's half a century this year since the original Cream executed their farewell US tour dates. "We had such an amazing response to our first tour in Australia and New Zealand that we've spent some considerable time adding to the show," said Malcolm. "Now, we not only have this amazing legacy of music to play, but an opportunity to share some wonderful insights and stories with our audience... a backstage pass like no other, if you will."

www.musicofcream.com

THE MU

The Musicians' Union on its core values and ongoing function

The MU represents musicians – that much you know. But we also campaign on issues that have an impact beyond our community of over 30,000 members. When it comes to influencing government and decision-makers to protect venues, music education, orchestras and musicians' rights as workers, we punch above our weight. We want that to continue. And for that, we need your help.

The power of fans

We are calling on all musicians to ask their fans to become MU Supporters. Supporters will receive a monthly update on our campaigning and what they can do to help. That could be signing a petition, writing to an MP or tweeting in support of musicians fighting for their rights or for access to music for others. It's free and it only takes a minute to sign up at theMU.org/SupportTheMU, but it could make a big difference to the local music community.

MU campaigns

So what are we campaigning for? You may have seen us in the press recently talking about 'The Musician Behind the Moment' – our new campaign to showcase the UK's orchestral musicians and reveal the extraordinary breadth of work they do, from performing on film soundtracks to helping the elderly make music. Members of the public are invited to share the moments in their lives which have made better by orchestral music using the hashtag #MUmoment.

We also campaign for music venues, supporting those under threat of closure, and fighting for legal protections and their proper implementation, so that the future of our music venues is secure. Most British bands tour and play festivals in Europe. We want to make sure that they continue to be able to do this cheaply and easily after Brexit. The same goes for the European bands who come over here to gig. That's why we're leading the music industry in the fight for freedom of movement for musicians.

Who can sustain a career without being paid? Only the very rich. We battle against companies and promoters who ask musicians to play for free and fight for fair pay for all performers. Last but not least, it shouldn't just be children with rich parents who are able to learn an instrument. We want fair access for every child – that's why we're lobbying local and national government for fair access to music education as well as fair terms and conditions for music teachers.

Do your bit

These are big goals, but they're achievable. 'The Musician Behind the Moment' was seen by more than two million people on social media in a single day. Our campaigning to protect venues led to a change in the law that makes developers responsible for features such as soundproofing if there is a music venue nearby. Our Working in the EU petition has around 25,000 signatures, including those from MPs, peers, musicians and music fans. Share theMU.org/SupportTheMU with people you know and boost our collective campaigning power. ■

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Trisha Vestal

GEAR

BASSES Fender Jazz
EFFECTS Sansamp Tech 21
AMPS None

JONAS ASPLIND

FOLLOW THE CIPHER

My bass style is minimalistic; I just keep the bass as a solid foundation together with the drums. My first bass was an old black Ibanez, although I don't remember what series as this was 24 years ago. My favourite bass ever to date is my black Fender MIJ Jazz from 1994. Heroes? John Paul Jones of Led Zeppelin, Markus Grosskopf of Helloween and Dee Dee Ramone. You know it's pretty cool to move around on stage, I do it all the time. You should try it sometime, my fellow bassists (joking...) The greatest bass player that ever lived is John Paul Jones. Hey, he played in Led Zeppelin, so enough said there... If I could get the bass tone of any album ever released, I would choose Pantera's *Vulgar Display Of Power*. Our self-titled debut album is out now on Nuclear Blast.

www.followthecipher.com



GEAR

BASSES Spector Legend, Aguilar DCB humbucker pickups, Aguilar OPB-2 preamp, Spector Coda 5 Pro
EFFECTS Strymon, Aguilar, Ibanez, Boss
AMPS Aguilar Tone Hammer 500, Aguilar SL 410x cab, Aguilar DB 112 cab

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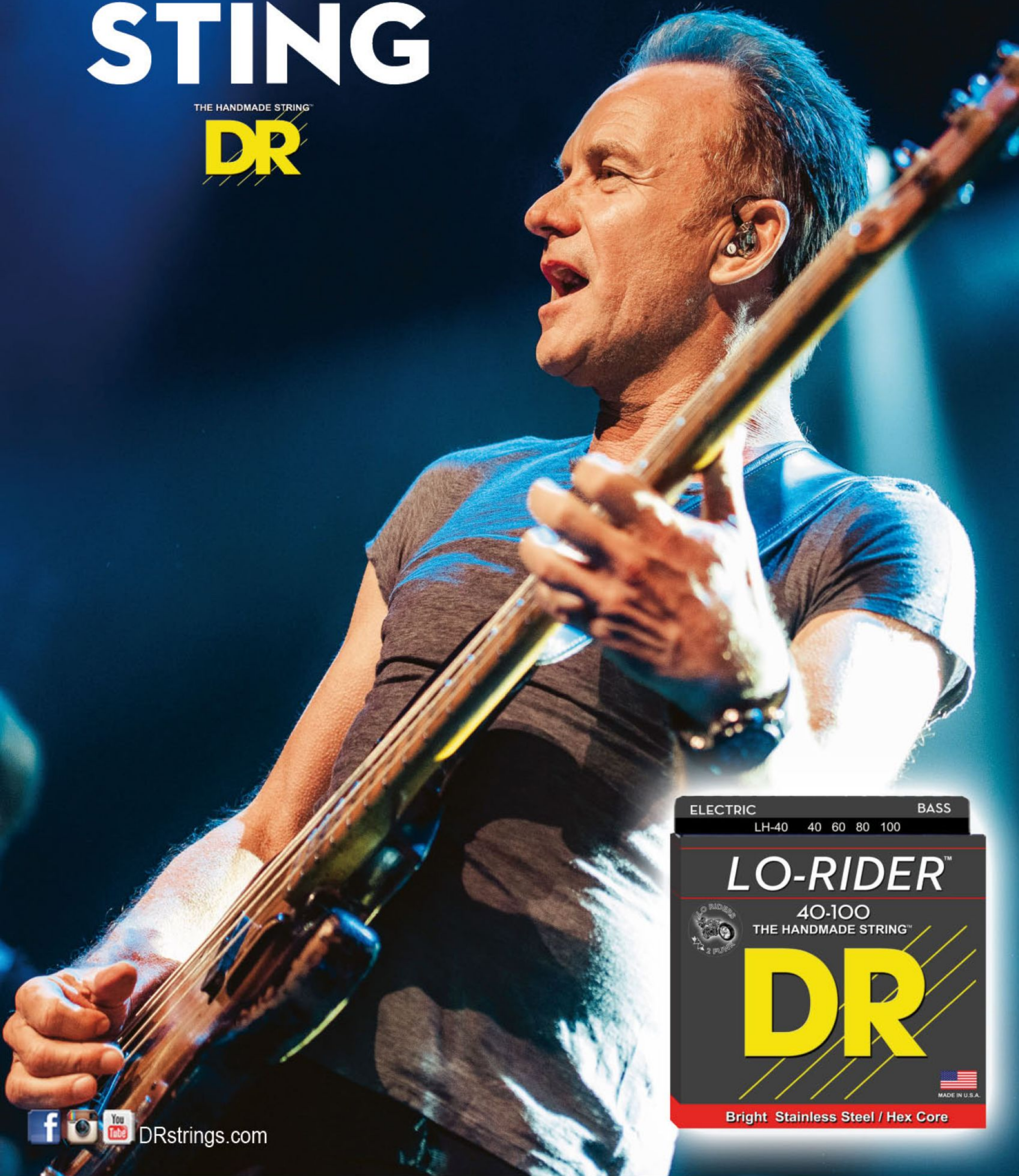
I'm a rock guy, but fluent in a lot of other genres. I grew up listening to everything; my parents are into bossa nova and Brazilian music in general, but my teenage years were all about AC/DC, Metallica, Nirvana, U2, the Beatles, Deep Purple, Guns N'Roses and so on. I'm privileged to work with a few of the best bass gear companies in the world. My bass rig is all Aguilar; their products help me define my sound. My weapons of choice are Spector basses, they make instruments for any style you need soundwise, and the care they take with the details and specs, plus the amazing sound of their basses, made me choose this company. I'm also endorsed by Dean Markley strings; I love the tone and feel of their Blue Steel line, and all of us from Disciples Of Babylon use Klotz cables. What's the point in having the best gear if you're not feeding it with a clean signal, right? I play five-string basses, mainly because I play in bands with crazy guitar tunings, so having that extra low B string available and not worrying about retuning my instrument every two songs is very convenient – plus it looks badass. I don't consider myself an amazing slapper, especially if I compare myself to the likes of Larry Graham, Les Claypool, Marcus Miller and Flea, but I do enjoy slapping the bass and even have a little video on my YouTube channel proving I can do it! There hasn't been a song yet in any of my bands for which I felt the need to use this technique; I like to think of my role in every band I play with as an instrument to serve the song and that hasn't happened yet, but you never know what the future reserves for you. I think that learning an instrument, especially if you choose that as a profession, is a lifetime commitment to studying and improving your art and technique. There's no way around it: practise, practise and practise some more, but most of all, learn to have fun with it, otherwise it's going to be a burden to you. For me personally, based on the impact he had in my life in general, not only musically, my bass idol of all time is Paul McCartney. He's just an incredible songwriter, a brilliant bassist who was influenced by many of my bass heroes, and an amazing singer – he's simply awesome all around! My band Disciples Of Babylon released our first full length album *The Rise And Fall of Babylon*, produced by the man of the hour Andres Torres, one of the guys behind the worldwide hit 'Despacito'.

www.disciplesofbabylon.com

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CONOR MARSHALL CONJURER

My bass playing started when I joined Conjurer last May. They were coming out of the studio and they rang me up, saying, 'You're our bassist now'. I was just coming out of university and I had nothing on; they were all my mates and their band was wicked, so why would I not? I'm very much a guitar player playing a bass, really, but since I was 14 I've always played all sorts of death metal rhythms, so it's not been a huge leap for me. I'm a pick player, because my fingers aren't that fast, but never say never. I'd say I have a few more years to explore that avenue. I'd like to at least sit down and give fingerpicking a go, but at the moment I'm a pick player. I play a four-string Fender Geddy Lee Jazz and a white Precision through a Kemper and Ampeg SVT profile, and so far, I've not had to look back. Since we play in a bit of a weird Mastodon type variant, which is basically a five-string tuning in G# but missing out the fourth string, I suppose it would make sense to actually use a five-string. Then again, we still use six-string guitars

and things are written for a four-string anyway, so for simplicity's sake I probably won't change. In terms of my influences it's a weird one, because I think back and it's always been guitar, guitar, guitar. Lately, though, I've been re-evaluating bassists. Troy from Mastodon is an obvious influence given our tuning; part of the reason I went for a P-Bass was because of what Gojira were playing. They've got the riffs and they're super-heavy as well, so for me the question is, who do I want to be as a bassist? Even when I was a guitar player, I'd always admired Alex Webster from Cannibal Corpse. I just can't get my head around what he does; my hands and those of any other human just don't work the same way as his do. His style is mental. My philosophy is very simple at the moment. I haven't had much chance to consider where I fit in with all this, as a bass player and a musician. Recently, though, since we've been working on new music, I've had a lot more time on the bass to figure out what I want to do and what kind of player I want to be. Right now, it's all about bringing the rumble to those riffs. **Hywel Davies**

www.facebook.com/conjureruk



DANIEL ORCHARD THE REVIVAL

My bass style is somewhere between Mike Dirnt and Donald Dunn. I'm not a slap player, but I've developed a style where I can emulate that 'pop' using my pick and palm muting. I think it comes from a place where as a younger player, slap bass wasn't totally my thing. I simply didn't need to play percussively all the time. Now I'm older I do bring a little more of that to my style, in little moments of flair rather than my main technique. The first bass I can remember buying was an Ibanez SRX 400 in Martini Olive. I sold it a few years back and later regretted it because of the sentimental attachment. Incredibly, my wife found it online last year and bought it for me again as a surprise. I did one last gig on it, and now it's retired, hanging on my studio wall, back where it belongs. I own quite a few basses, it's probably an addiction, so picking a favourite is hard as it's like picking your favourite kid. But I do own an amazing Firemist purple Music Man HH Stingray with a beautiful flame maple neck. Quite incredible. I use that and a Fender Precision Deluxe for pretty much all my gigs. The greatest bass player that ever lived was James Jamerson. He wrote the bass-line for 'Higher And Higher', so any other answer would be wrong. Think of your instrument - whether it's bass, guitar, drums or whatever - as a voice. You can create mood, feeling and emotion like a singer does. Actively hear and understand (rather than just listening) to what all the other voices in the band are doing. It can help you use the space between the notes to create light and shade, tension and balance.

www.therevivalbanduk.co.uk

GEAR

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- Joel McIver
Bass Guitar Mag
April 2018

The **revenge** of all those trees
that fell in the forest but were
never heard

Randy Edwards



GEAR

BASSES Spector Euro 4LX, Spector Coda P4 Pro

EFFECTS Darkglass Alpha/Omega, Ernie Ball Delay Expression, Korg Tuner, Sansamp Compressor, Digitech Bass Whammy

AMPS TC Electronic RH750

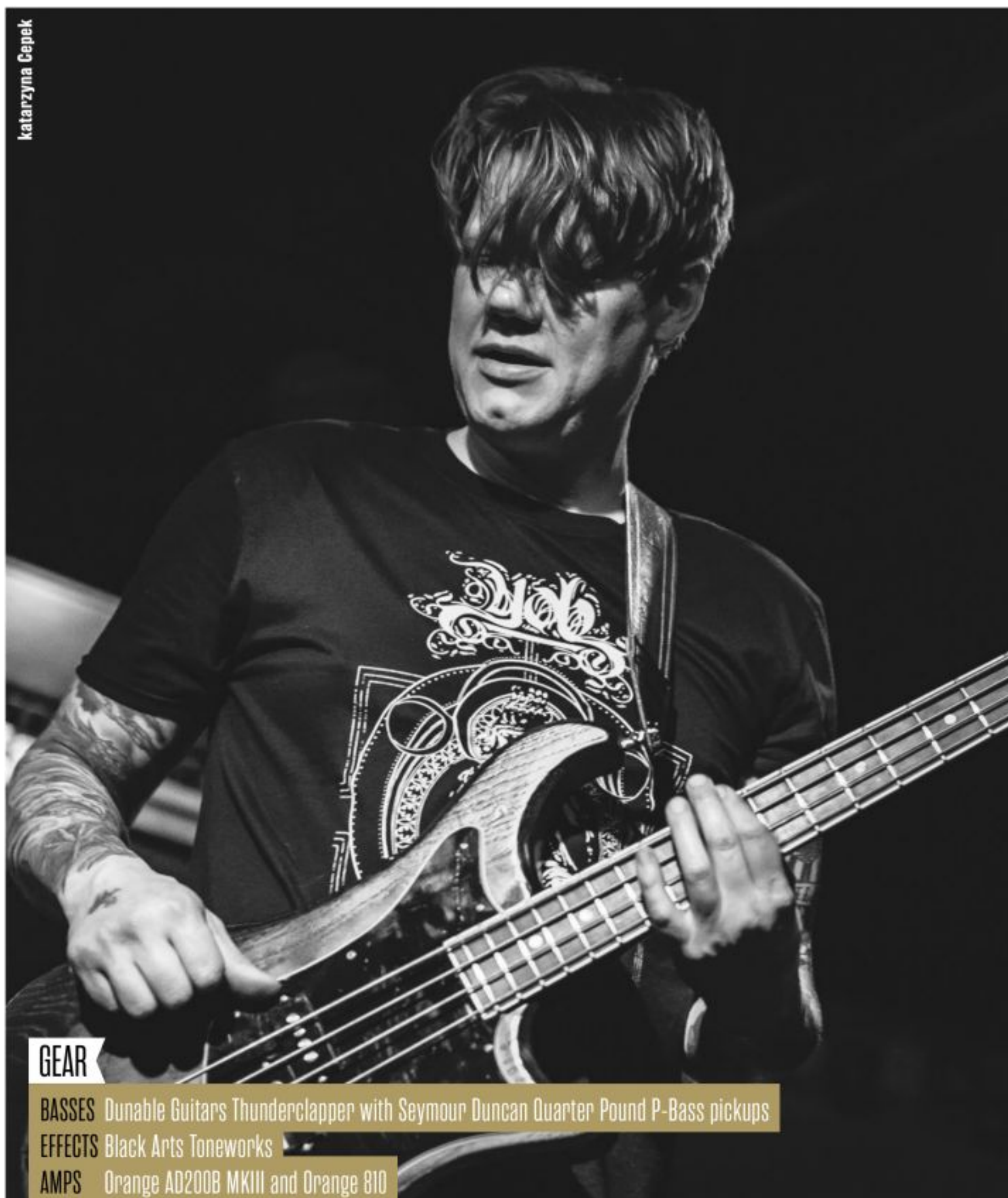
REILLY HERRERA NIGHT VERSES

My bass playing has become kind of weird, to be honest, especially with the new Night Verses record. I've been able to expand on what would be a typical bass part and do a lot of new things (for me) within songs. There are songs with slapping, speed-picking, finger-picked pocket grooves, high melodies and heavy low end all in one. Although it is a challenging approach, I prefer it that way because we intentionally try to integrate each other's instruments in as interesting a way as possible. I'm currently endorsed by Spector, Ernie Ball, Korg USA, 13th Street Guitars and Learn To Forget Clothing. They're all genuinely great people and have been incredibly supportive. As of this moment I prefer playing four-string basses. It's almost overwhelming, seeing all these crazy new options for guitars and basses. While I'm not opposed to jumping to a five, or tuning lower, to achieve more depth and low end, most of the bass sounds, songs and parts I really love come from a traditional four-string. I slap, and if you think slapping is whack, it just means you don't know how to integrate it in a non-cheesy way. The secret of playing bass well is playing with dope musicians, practising and being open-minded. My bass heroes are Justin Chancellor from Tool, Jeff Caxide from Isis, Matt Freeman from Rancid, Caleb Scofield from Cave In, Victor Wooten, Charles Mingus and while it may be a typical response, Flea from RHCP. He's as original as it gets and is a true individual who I admire greatly. He's uncompromising in his style, and has written some of the catchiest and most memorable bass-lines in rock as far as I'm concerned. Please don't pay attention to things that insult your intelligence every day. There isn't any positivity that comes from taking in media that purposefully puts a division or barrier between you and your next door neighbour. Thank you for caring about bass and music enough to read this interview and this magazine. All love.

www.nightverses.com

PLAYERS SCHOOL

In our series of columns from non-bassists on the role of the bass, courtesy of the Players School in Florida, we welcome the perspective of sometime Sting saxophonist Butch Thomas



Katarzyna Ceppek

GEAR

BASSES Dunable Guitars Thunderclapper with Seymour Duncan Quarter Pound P-Bass pickups

EFFECTS Black Arts Toneworks

AMPS Orange AD200B MKIII and Orange 810

DAN BEIERS KHEMMIS

I'm a finger player and I wear the bass pretty high up on my body, at least compared to many bass players in heavy music, so I guess that fits with a more traditional style. I try to get my hand into the correct position when playing, though my understanding of what is correct is vague as I am totally self-taught. I have a fairly heavy hand, especially live, so I've been working on my positioning and fingerpicking, trying to ensure that I can get a nice clean, clear note when I'm really digging in. It's an evolutionary process. I've been fortunate to be with Seymour Duncan for a while now. I really like their Quarter Pound P-Bass pickups. They just have a nice full tone to them and are more aggressive than the vintage P-Bass sound. I've tried a few others, but these work well for me. Recently, I was honoured to become an ambassador for Orange amplifiers; I couldn't ask for anything more than what I get from my AD200B MKIII. It's a simple, beautifully-voiced amp that makes anything I put in front of it sound great. For what I play, and like to hear, their 8x10 cabinet is the best-sounding one out there. I've also played D'Addario strings exclusively for several years; I really like that they have a tension chart for all their string sets. When I was playing around with string gauges for Khemmis, this was really helpful. I have a great relationship with Dunable Guitars and Black Arts Toneworks, and use their products almost exclusively. For what we do in Khemmis, I don't often find myself needing a fifth or sixth string. That said, I used a five-string Lakland (55-64) as my main bass for over a year. I fell in love with the 35" scale of the Lakland because I was able to maintain decent string tension in the B position, despite our low tuning. The greatest bass player that ever lived? Many will say Pastorius, Wooten or Sheehan for this. I probably should too. They're incredible players and rare talents, with an ear and ability that I could never hope to achieve, but I'm going to keep it rock'n'roll and say John Entwistle. In my opinion, what he contributed to the amazing compositions of the Who could not be bettered by anyone. He was the perfect bass player for that band, a pioneer and a visionary bassist. We've recently finished recording our third full-length album, *Desolation*, and we're excited to share our new tunes with everyone.

<http://khemmisdoom.com>

I had a great opportunity, a dream gig, playing with a great bassist; his style was completely different to that of anyone I had previously worked with, and his name was Sting. I learned a lot from him about music, songwriting and health. When I started to get to know him, Sting made me think about a lot of different things - including yoga. It was extremely weird at first - I hated it - but after a couple of months I started to see the benefits, and it has now become a lifestyle for me. I used to love to watch Sting perform; you could tell he was a true veteran. He had a global vision, which amazed and inspired me. I toured the world with him from 1996 to '97, which gave me the chance to go to places and see things that I had never seen before. Sting treated us in his band really well; we stayed everywhere he did. Talk about rock star treatment... that was pretty much the ultimate!

It was a magical time during the years that I played with Sting. The band consisted of Kenny Kirkland on keys, Vinnie Colaiuta on drums, Dominic Miller on guitar, Clark Gayton on trombone, Sting on bass and myself on saxophone. It was a band made up of some of the most talented musicians I've ever known. To be in a band of such a high calibre, one must be well versed in many genres of music, and be very fluent on your instrument. It also helps to meet people who can introduce you to a higher level of the music business.

Sting used to tell me that I was a great musician but that I needed to focus more on songwriting. As he said, 'That's where you make the big bucks.' It made me think. I wrote for 11 years while working and playing, and over time I came up with a couple of hundred songs.

It was a good time to create; I will never forget his suggestions about creating music and being conscious of the world. I love Sting and I am very proud to call him my friend and brother. ■

<http://playerschool.edu>

Contact: Vicky Fulop Berlin, vfberlin@playerschool.edu





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GEAR OF THE MONTH

In which three renowned gear experts nominate their bass, amp and effects unit of the month. Whether new or old, cheap or pricey, simple or complex, this gear has earned its place in our affections through simply being brilliant...

BASS

Released in 1989, Peavey's Rudy Sarzo Signature bass didn't look too dissimilar from the Sarzo model released by Aria several years earlier, maintaining a multi-laminate through-neck design coupled with extensive active electronics, twin humbucking Peavey pickups, oval eye position markers and gold hardware. At the time, Sarzo was widely known for his work with Ozzy Osbourne and Quiet Riot, and was a mainstay in the ever-changing Whitesnake line-up of the time. With other members of 'Snake being featured in endorsement advertisements for Peavey, it wasn't surprising that Mr Sarzo would eventually find a bass from the brand that suited his requirements. This model has a Charcoal Black gloss finish, but it was also available in red and purple. It featured a 34" scale, ebony fingerboard with 24 frets, Schaller hardware and a three-band EQ – and was built to rock, naturally! Blessed with a growly midrange, bags of sustain, thunderous bottom end and defined top end, this bass worked well in many styles of music – but as it wasn't produced in large quantities, it's now collectable, and prices are on the rise. Not to be confused with the Sarzo Cirrus model, this is one Peavey worth keeping an eye out for.

Mike Brooks



AMP

Mesa Boogie once described their former flagship bass amp, the 400+, as 'a four-rack 12-pack of pure, mean punch' and it's hard to argue with that. The '12-pack' refers to the dozen STR-425 (6L6) valves that make up the power amp section; there are another four 12AX7 tubes driving the preamp. By modern standards, 400 watts for a bass amp isn't that much, but not all watts are created equal; these are juiced-up, maximum-security prison-yard watts. If you dare to turn up the volume until the amp has to work hard, you're rewarded with a thick, fat overdrive that's about as far removed from the standard digital distortion as it's possible to get. It'll happily run four standard 4x10 cabs at 2 ohms, and the front panel, like the rest of the amp, is a straightforward, no-nonsense piece of solid design. I had one of these which I gigged hard for years, and it never let me down. I'll admit that at over 20 kilos in its flight case the weight is an issue – but once you're used to its effortless, warm, punchy sound and intoxicating volume, you manage to cope with it.

Kev Sanders



FX UNIT

If ever there was a pedal search to produce option paralysis, it's the quest for the perfect envelope filter. There are so many cool pedals around that give us those delicious squelchy, quacky, funky sounds, with varying degrees of plug-and-play simplicity or space-station control. The Aguilar Filter Twin plots a judicious path between the two, offering a distinctly different but deeply musical take on the classic options of 'up and down' or 'open and closed' filters. These are often offered on a switch, so we can have either sound from our filter pedal, but Aguilar have the two of them available at the same time, meaning that you can have two filters mixed in whatever ratio works for you.

"AGUILAR HAVE OBVIOUSLY GONE FOR A PEDAL THAT'S MUSICAL ABOVE ONE THAT WORKS LIKE AN OVER-ENGINEERED LAPTOP PLUG-IN"

For example, you can have the Bernie Worrell-like sound of the filter closing quickly after the start of the note, blended with just a little of it opening to give the sound some harmonic definition. Add to that a 'velocity' control that governs how fast each filter reacts, and you can even stagger the two responses in relation to one another. The threshold allows us to balance the point where the filter kicks in to be either always on, or more responsive to us digging in, and the range of possible tones is beautiful. There's no blend control, no high/low/bandpass option, and no expression pedal, because Aguilar have obviously gone for a pedal that's musical above one that works like an over-engineered laptop plug-in. I've yet to find a sound that it makes that I don't like. If you're shopping, add it to the try-out list.

Steve Lawson





POWER BASS

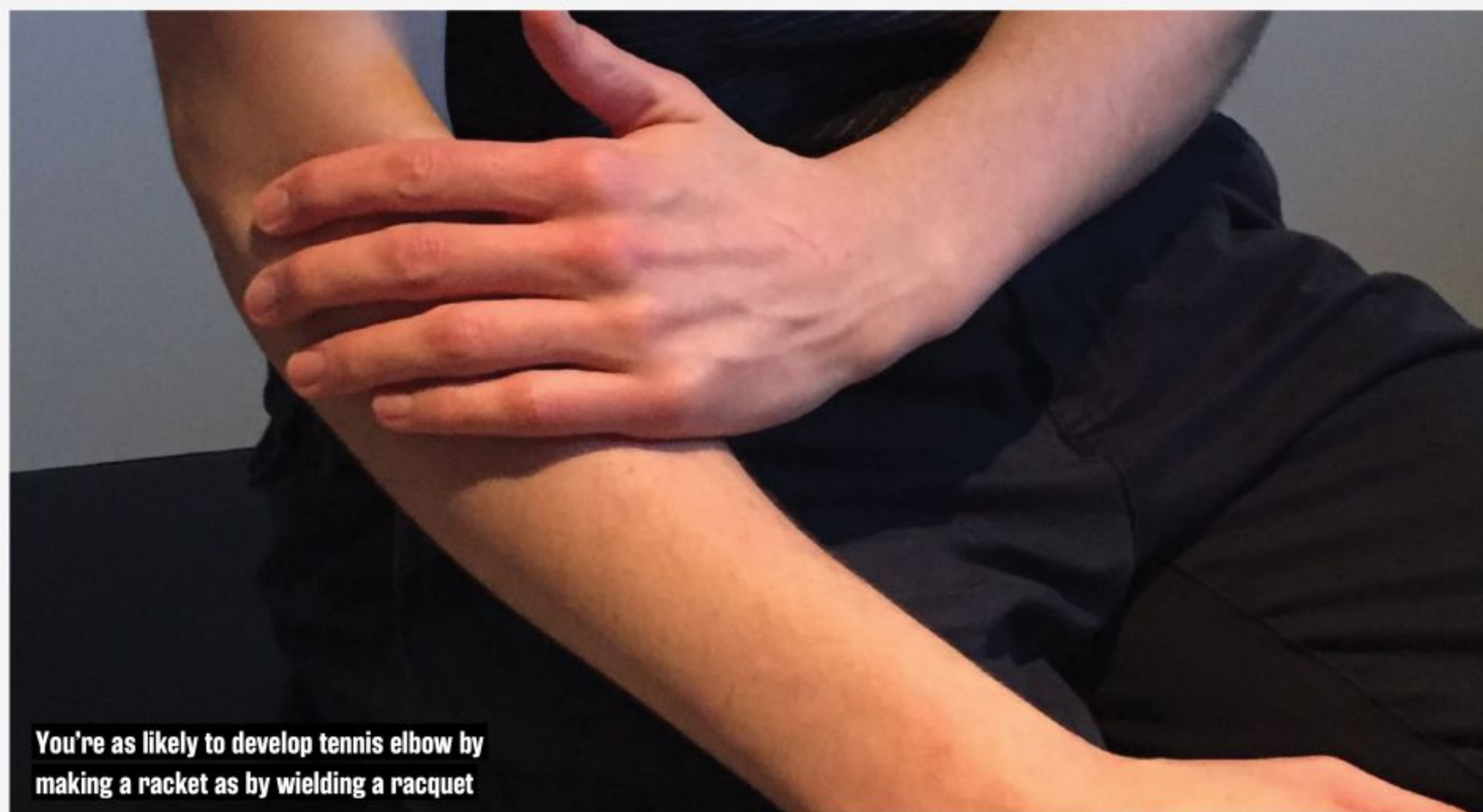
Bassist and physio Ben Whybrow is here to save us! This month: the dreaded tennis elbow

“**B**ut I don’t play tennis!” is what I can hear half of you shouting at the magazine right now. In fact, many bassists who acquire the symptoms of tennis elbow, or lateral epicondylalgia as no-one calls it, don’t play tennis. Due to the high-demand wrist and hand activities required of us bassists, tennis elbow can easily occur.

Although the pain of tennis elbow is typically located on the outside of and just below the elbow joint, the issue is actually to do with the muscles that straighten and raise the wrist and fingers; these run from the outside of the elbow to the back the fingers. Tennis elbow symptoms occur when these muscles are made to work considerably more than they normally would, whether in one instance or over a short period of time, and as a result cause the tendon which connects the muscle to the outside part of your elbow bone to become overloaded.

As a protective measure, our brain triggers a pain response around that area, and usually in the muscle just below it, which is generally made worse by any further hand or wrist activity and conversely relieved by rest. Other factors can also contribute to the occurrence and persistence of these symptoms, such as lack of rest and sleep, and any psychological stressors (*Like drummers? – Ed*).

In the first few days of symptoms, if possible, try to reduce the amount you do of downwards plucking, strumming and any similar playing techniques that involve repeatedly straightening and raising the wrist and fingers. This is so that the affected tissue can have a chance to recover. After those crucial few days of recovery, the next step is to exercise



You're as likely to develop tennis elbow by making a racket as by wielding a racquet

and gradually rejuvenate the tissue so that it recovers its previous functional ability, if not better. The necessary exercises are described below. Ensure that you regularly change your wrist and elbow position as well.

- 1 With your sore arm resting, place your other hand over the top. Try to extend the lower hand into the top hand as hard as tolerable, with the top hand resisting.
- 2 With your arm resting on a surface, extend the wrist up and down slowly.
- 3 As above, but with increasing weight as it gets easier.

For most bassists these exercises will be effective and your symptoms should gradually get better over time. Healing will be slow, however, as tendons have a poor blood supply and will take several months to fully recover. The good news is that most

people will be pain-free and playing as normal long before then.

Steroid injections, although they may provide some short-term relief, are associated with poorer long-term outcomes for those with tennis elbow symptoms due to the detrimental effect they could potentially have on the soft tissue. Surgery is rarely needed, and yields mixed results.

From a prevention perspective, regular wrist strengthening two to three times a week, and avoiding sudden increases in playing demand, may help to reduce the risk of recurrent tennis elbow symptoms.

If you feel that you have tennis elbow symptoms and that they are not improving after four to six weeks, then seek some medical support. And take care of yourself! ■

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1



2



3



APPLIED IMPROVISATION WITH

ROCKSCHOOL

Let's head to Hollywood with a jazzy II V I progression, says the mighty Joe Hubbard

Welcome! When learning what to play over a set of chord changes, it's important to understand that not all dominant 7th chords function in the same way. When trying to figure out a song that is in a particular key area, there will be chords that function diatonically as well as chords that function non-diatonically. What might seem to work melodically over a V7 of a given key may not work as well over a dominant 7th chord that functions outside of that key.

A very common II V I progression, which is based on one of those non-diatonic dominant 7th chords, is built from the bVII Dom7th chord. Because the related II-7 chord would be the IV-7 chord borrowed from the parallel minor key, this is often referred to as a subdominant minor cadence. I've also seen this chord sequence being called a "backdoor dominant" progression but the bVII7, when used in a functional harmonic context, really functions as a substitute for the V7 chord of the given key area.

Confused? Don't be! To understand how this works in the key of C, try comparing the notes of the V7 chord (which is G7), to the notes

of the bVII7 (which is Bb7). By doing this you'll see that the Bb is the #9, the D is the 5, the F is the b7 and the Ab is the b9 of the G7 chord. Substituting the Bb7 for the G7 creates a G7#9/b9 sound.

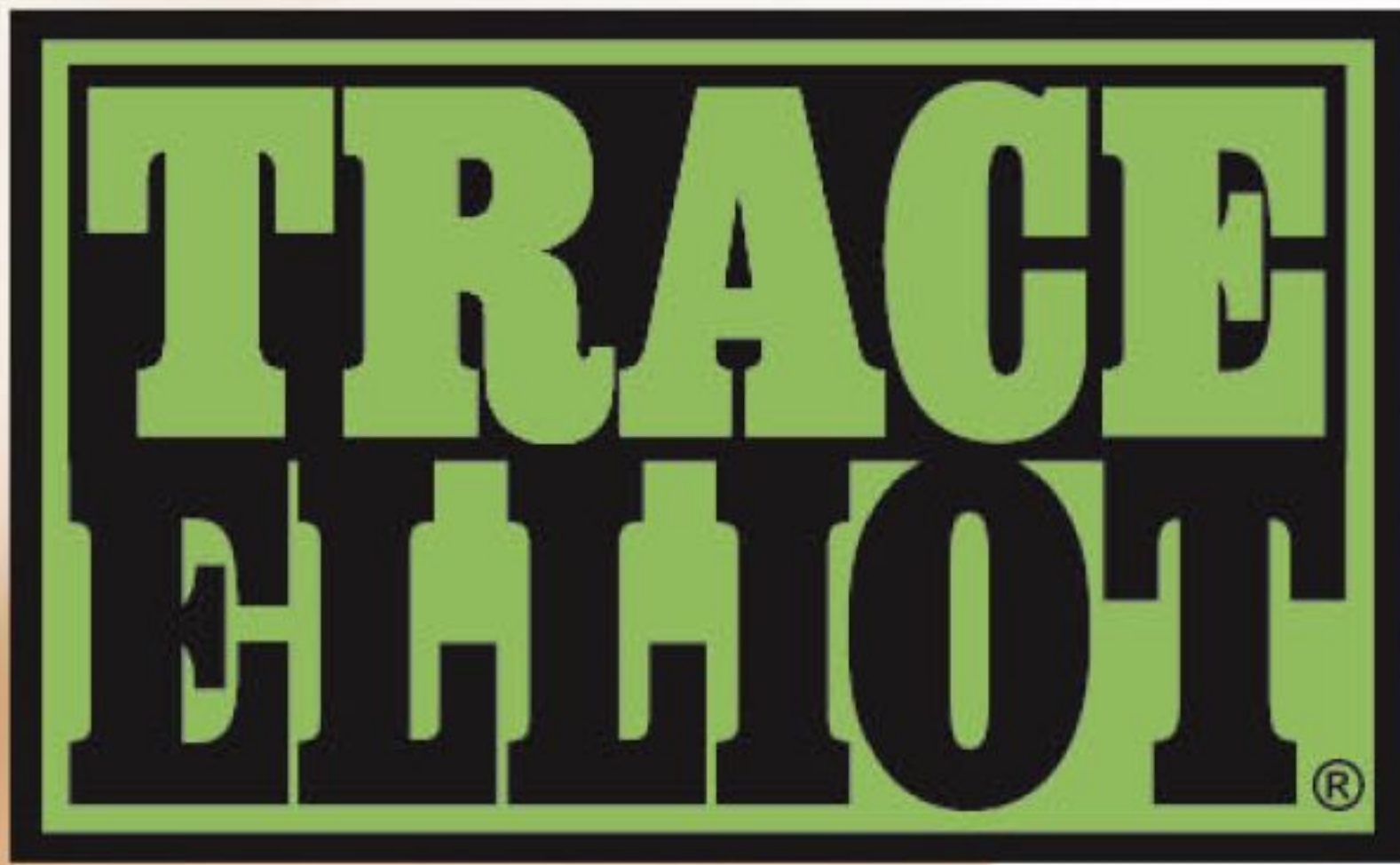
These bVII7 chords are found in many jazz standards such as 'Days Of Wine And Roses', 'Stella By Starlight', 'Lady Bird' and 'Cherokee', just to name a few. You will either see this as a standalone chord or preceded by its related II-7 chord. The sound of this progression creates a very dense and romantic effect, functioning as a substitute for a V7 chord resolving to the I chord. Many Californian composers and session musicians refer to this chord progression as the "Hollywood II V I" as it is heard regularly in many film and television scores.

There are various ways to approach playing through these changes but the best way, in my opinion, is by superimposing an F-(maj7) chord over the Bb7 chord. This brings out the sound of the 9 and the #11 over the bVII7 chord. You can also think of this by using a F melodic minor scale. In the following example, notice how I'm using the F melodic minor over the F-7 to Bb7. Enjoy, film buffs! ■

“IT'S IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THAT NOT ALL DOMINANT 7TH CHORDS FUNCTION IN THE SAME WAY”

EXAMPLE 1

Example 1 shows two bass lines in 4/4 time. The first line features a progression of C Δ 7, Fm7, and Bb7. The second line features a progression of C Δ 7, Fm7, and Bb7. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4 below the notes.



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- Bass Guitar Magazine, March 2018



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Each month we celebrate the great — and rather less great! — work of an acclaimed bass player.

This month: Sara Lee

Words: Joe Shooman Image: Getty

T

The West Midlands-born bassist Sara Lee first gained mainstream attention when Robert Fripp came to see her group in 1980 and promptly signed her up for his League Of Gentlemen band. At the time, Lee was working as a secretary for Polydor Records, but soon found herself working with the likes of Robyn Hitchcock, Gang Of Four, the B-52s and Ani DiFranco. During the 1990s, Lee spent seven years with Indigo Girls, and has also linked up with a host of other artists including Joan Osborne,

Fiona Apple and Thompson Twins. Lee's debut solo LP, *Make It Beautiful*, came out in 2000 on DiFranco's Righteous Babe label, and by the end of that decade she was to be found touring with Todd Rundgren. The daughter of two music teachers, she is considered one of the most accomplished five-string players of her generation, working that low B with a melodic funkiness and a unique ear for phrasing. No doubt her younger days as timpanist and stand-up bassist in local orchestras gave a great feel for all things low-end. Lee is also the executive producer of fellow bassist Gail Ann Dorsey's 2003 album, *I Used To Be*. ■



MUST-HAVE ALBUM

Gang Of Four Songs Of The Free (1982)

Widely regarded as a post-punk classic, *Songs Of The Free* is also where Lee started to really cut loose. Her syncopated root notes and octaves on 'Call Me Up' set things up for a track heavy on politics and irresistibly weird pop, plus a dodgy near-rap to boot. Around this time, Lee was generally using a red 1967 Fender Precision with an additional Jazz pickup wired in, through a Carlsbro M300 head and a Pro Cab 400 or IH200 cab. Her sound is punchy and sparse, as post-punk often is, with the bass anchored to the rhythm but with plenty of opportunity for turns and runs on the otherwise simple 'I Love A Man In Uniform'. Lee's backing vocals are also an integral part of this fine album's sonic tapestry, the call-and-response with Andy Gill both challenging and complementing the frontman's melodic lines. There's even a tense, portentous ballad of sorts, 'Of The Instant', which brings the LP to a close with a palpable sense of pent-up passion. Bass-wise, it's an object lesson in 'less is more'.



WORTHY CONTENDER

Indigo Girls

Rites Of Passage (1992)

Lee's playing generally comes from the standpoint that the bass and drums need to lock in, providing a solid foundation for guitar and vocals to soar. Her clean, deep sound is varied by her technique; she switches between pick and fingers, depending on the required feel, and employs a near-bridge thumb-slap to get a sharp, metallic attack. Over the years she's used Ampeg amps and occasionally a headless Steinberger bass, mostly for its ease of transport. On *Rites Of Passage*, Lee kicks off 'Three Hits' with a part that works the octaves before settling down into an anchoring line, allowing the vocals and guitars of Amy Ray and Emily Saliers to fill out the sonic space. The Billboard No. 10 'Galileo' is a stripped-down, Celtic-American folk track; there are no acrobatics here, and indeed none are needed. Lee's scalar upward runs in 'Joking' lend great movement, and her minor sevenths on the ace 'Jonas & Ezekiel' keep the tension rolling before resolving into major-chordal country-rock choruses. It grooves along, there's nothing there that doesn't need to be, and that is Sara Lee in a nutshell.



WILD CARD

Sara Lee

Make It Beautiful (2000)

We're almost contractually bound to state that the title is entirely appropriate for Lee's first solo LP, a layered opus rich with ideas and atmosphere. The title track is Prince versus Shakespear's Sister, with a hint of 'Slow'-era Kylie – a funk-pop, gothic hybrid with long string pads and a very Lee-like, syncopated, root-note bass-line underneath. The GOF-y minimalism continues on 'Grace', which soon resolves into a potent, legato chorus. 'Traffic', meanwhile, has more of a reggae bump to it, underneath a Suzanne Vega-esque deadpan tale of the city, and 'I'll Wait For You' is very nearly trip-hop, all liquid bass and smooth, husky vocals. Lee pulled in a host of top-notch collaborators for the album, including Ani DiFranco, Kristen Hall and Emily Saliers of Indigo Girls. As a result, the record has a freshness about it that brings a light but confident touch to its smoky, late-night, hazy, regretful pop. See 'All Cried Out', which harks back to St. Etienne and prepares the world for the likes of Coco Rosie. At other moments, as on the funky 'Gone', Lee reclaims 1980s grooves to the right side of kitschiness.



COOL GROOVES

B52s

Cosmic Thing (1989)

An obvious choice it might be, but the exuberant and camp *Cosmic Thing* is pretty much the sound of optimism; heaven knows we need more of that these days. Lee's bass is prominent on 'Dry Country', acting pretty much as lead instrument in a staccato line that leaps and drops through the scale. And, yes, for all its ubiquity, 'Love Shack' has to be acknowledged as a 1960s-tinged classic pop moment, with Lee channelling the spirit and feel of Motown while also heading up the high scales way up the neck. She even finds space to throw in the odd glissando. The Eighties never sounded more fab. The relative simplicity of the riffs underneath the layered vocals of 'Roam' are tailor-made for Lee to lock in with the drummer and add flourishes of funkiness. Her ability to shorten or lengthen the notes she plays in order to step back from or fill out frequencies is evident here, and although she has been known to use an Octave Doubler at times, it's pure, and brilliant, technique we're talking here.



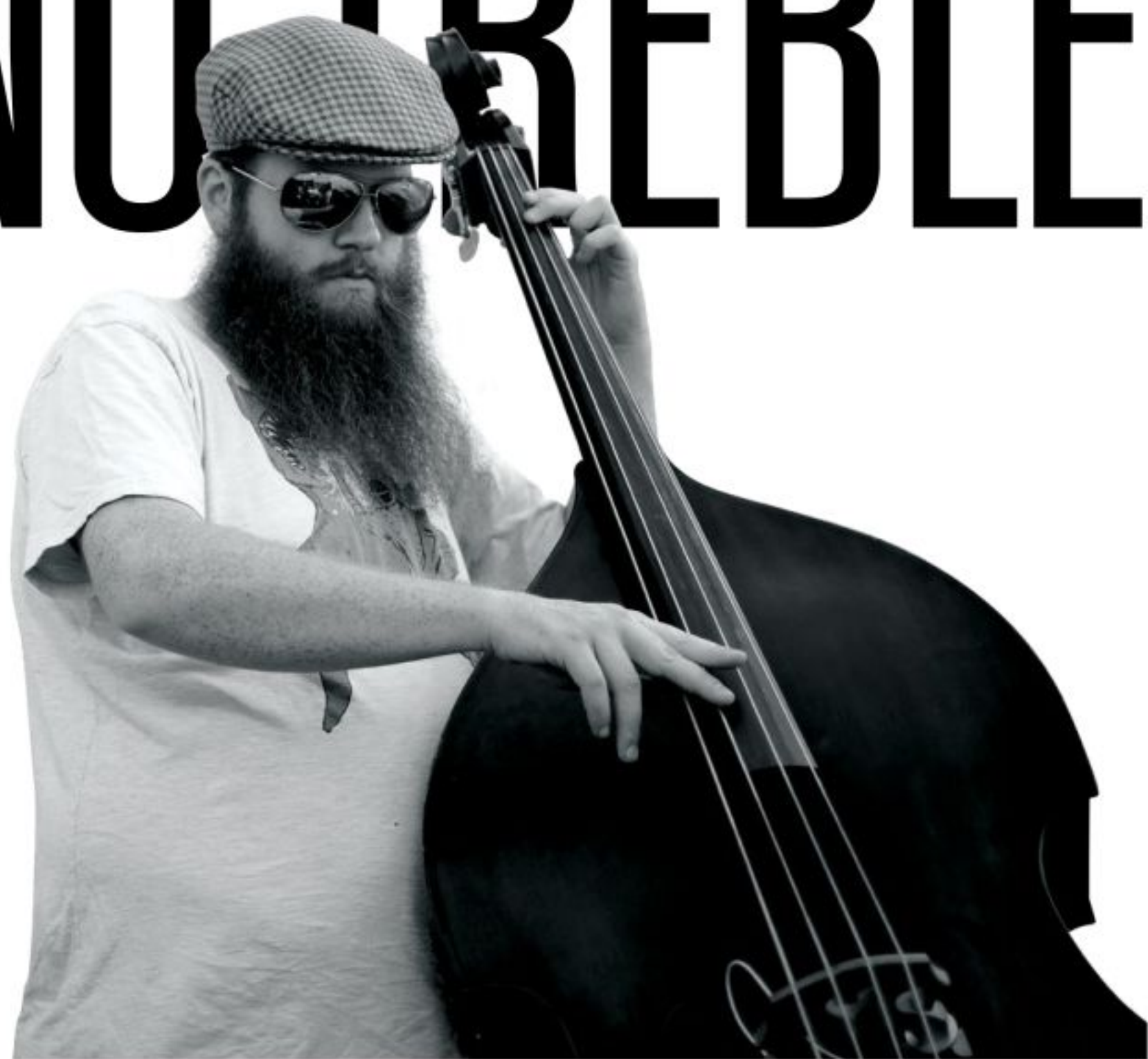
AVOID AT ALL COSTS

Binky Philips

Binky Philips (1987)

Affable and funny, Binky Philips' book *The Story Of A CBGB Almost-Was* reflects the man himself, but by 1987, still plugging away at any angle possible, Philips was way past the heyday of the semi-legendary Planets of the 1970s. This curious five-track EP was recorded at that legendary New York venue, with hired hand Lee underpinning Philips' Pete Townshend-obsessed blather. Philips has revealed that Lee came on board largely for financial reasons, and even told him that she hated his material. On songs like 'Watching Wendy Walk Away' you can hear her point; it's lumpen, sub-Who rock that even the quality of Lee's playing (and BVs) can't rescue from the MOR bin. Lee's funksome riff that introduces 'Nothing's Free' is by far that song's best moment, before it all descends into a song that Roogulator would reject for a B-side. The whole sorry collection is proof that you can have all the talent in the world and still produce a steaming pile of you-know-what. Shame, really, because Philips is a great guitarist, wonderful storyteller and very decent singer – and way better than this mis-step shows.

NO TREBLE



Kevin Johnson updates us on bass happenings in the US of A

Some bassists have so much character in their playing that they make the sound of a band, and that makes it fun for us to imagine our heroes in different musical settings. What if Paul McCartney guested with the Rolling Stones? What if Les Claypool played in Pearl Jam? What if Billy Sheehan played in Rush? Well, at least for that last one we have a bit of an answer.

The overwhelmingly most-viewed video on No Treble this month was a clip shared by the legendary Mr. Big bassist Sheehan, who was lucky enough to sit in with Alex Lifeson and Neil Peart nearly 30 years ago. Luckily for the rest of us, it was recorded. "Years ago, Mr. Big was on tour with Rush on their *Presto* tour, and Geddy Lee was late for soundcheck - stuck in traffic from LA to San Diego," Sheehan wrote on Facebook. "They asked me to get up and jam with Neil and Alex for soundcheck, and recorded it. I played through Geddy's rig on his bass and it was a blast! Great times."

Sheehan, Peart, and Lifeson jammed for about 15 minutes through a few rock grooves to feel each other out. For an on-the-spot improv, it's rather stellar. The bassist seems to play more of a "Geddy" groove in the first few minutes before busting loose with his signature style.

In music industry news, readers were surprised by the announcement that Ampeg was acquired by Yamaha Guitar Group. A press release by the iconic bass amp company's former owner, LOUD Audio, stated that it was proud to have contributed to the brand's legacy during their ownership, but that they were focusing on their "audio roots". LOUD also owns Mackie, among other brands.

This isn't the first time that Ampeg has been bought and sold; they were acquired by LOUD from St. Louis Music in 2005, and LOUD itself was purchased by Transom Capital Group last year. Reactions across the community ran the gamut, but one No Treble reader saw it as a positive. "It's very good news, in fact. Instead of being sold to some financial organisation full of young guys in suits who are competent in Excel spreadsheets but know nothing about music, Ampeg has been sold to guys who know a lot about basses and musical instrument manufacturing as a whole, and who are great at manufacturing and quality control," he wrote.

Other stories of note include a column by Damian Erskine on whether or not you need a compressor, an original take on Bach's 'Prelude' from the first cello suite by Joanna Dudkowska, and the introduction of the new HiWatt DR401 all-valve bass head. Until next time, keep grooving! ■

www.notreble.com

BASSCHAT

Silvia Bluejay ponders the eternal 'Musician Wanted' issue



In the last few months, there has been a proliferation of forum threads about 'musician wanted' adverts, the trials and tribulations of forming/finding a band or bandmate, and auditioning. Except for the customary Basschat sense of humour lightening the tone, they unfortunately make for rather depressing reading.

Take advertising for a musician. There are several dedicated websites on the internet, and many groups on Facebook, as well as a subforum on Basschat itself. All you need to do is describe yourself or your band, your musical influences, and your plans, and state who or what you are looking for. Yet the scope for misunderstanding and obfuscation is huge. The sheer number of badly-worded ads that neglect to mention where the musician or band is based, quote incompatible or nonsensical musical influences, or describe a desired candidate that simply doesn't exist, is astonishing. It's as bad as online dating, and here we can't even swipe left.

Many ads boast about promoter interest, gigs 'waiting', and plans for the future that, more often than not, vanish into thin air at the first request for further details. Most of us, however, know not to take the advertising blurb literally; instead, we like to check out recordings of what our prospective bandmates look and sound like, and draw our own conclusions. That's when we often hit the second major obstacle: minimal or non-existent online presence. No website, a sparse Facebook page, a Soundcloud account last updated in 2016 - that sort of thing, even when the person or band is established enough to know and do better. This usually also implies that at most only old, poor-quality MP3s will be available to stream, and there'll be little or no YouTube footage to watch. Really? In the era of the infinitely capable mobile phone? Alarm bells should be ringing at this stage.

Some people will make studio recordings available, but the disadvantage of that, compared to live audio or video, is that such recordings will usually sound great without revealing whether the artist is actually any good on stage. In one extreme case, a poster invited a prospective guitarist to audition on the strength of 'his' album, mentioned in his reply to the ad; the songs turned out to have been recorded by excellent session musicians hired for the occasion, while the guy himself was barely able to play two chords in a row.

Up-to-date recordings are also important as an indicator of whether the musical influences quoted by an ad are recognisable in the actual tracks and style of playing, or if they have simply been added to make the person or band sound cool and contemporary. Basschat's collective experience also tells us to be aware that some influences are less deeply rooted than others, even when clearly present in the band's sound. Some of us have joined a band because we shared idols and inspiration, only for them to drift towards a different style and start targeting new audiences.

Lastly, communication skills on all sides are critical. Posting or replying to an ad but not bothering to acknowledge incoming messages until a week has passed is a complete turn-off. If you enter into a conversation, don't leave the other person waiting for five days between replies - you may get yourself dumped by someone who could have been your perfect musical soulmate. ■

www.basschat.co.uk

4 String Bases



13994 - Bass Collection Portrait Fretless Bass
15510 - Bass Collection Rhythm Stick, Sunburst
10067 - Brian May Bass in Cherry with Gig Bag

Cort

16343 - Cort Action 4 PJ Bass Guitar, Open Pore Walnut
14315 - Cort Action 4 String Bass, Black
16156 - Cort Action PJ OPB, Open Pore Black
16769 - Cort B4 FL Plus AS OPN Fretless Bass
16608 - Cort B4 Plus Artisan 4-String Left handed
16984 - Cort GB54JJ 4-String Bass Guitar Natural
16396 - Cort GB74JJ ABA Aqua Blue
12807 - Cort Jeff Berlin Rhythmic 4 String Bass
15242 - Cort Jeff Berlin Rhythmic 5 String Bass

Fender

16450 - Fender American Pro Jazz Bass, Natural
17076 - Fender American Pro P Bass, Sunburst
15354 - Fender American Vintage 74 Jazz Bass, 3-Cell
15533 - Fender Flea Jazz Bass, Shell Pink
16448 - Fender Geddy Lee Jazz Bass, Black
16284 - Fender JMJ Mustang Bass, F. Daphne Blue
16894 - Fender Limited Edition 70s Jazz Bass Nat
16895 - Fender Limited Edition 70s P Bass Nat
15686 - Fender Mustang Bass PJ, Sonic Blue
17091 - Fender Mustang Bass PJ, Torino Red
8929 - Fender Roger Waters Precision Bass
16596 - Fender Standard Jazz Bass, Black, MF
16595 - Fender Std MIM Jazz Bass Candy Apple Red
16537 - Fender Standard Precision Bass, Black
16263 - Fender Standard P Bass, Brown Sunburst
16303 - Fender Std Prec. Bass, Candy Apple Red
11069 - G&L Tribute L2000 4 String In Blueburst
11189 - Hofner HCT Shorty Bass, Black
16914 - Ibanez SR500 Bass in Brown Mahogany
17063 - Iala Maranello Bass, Black Sparkle
4175 - Marleaux B Votan 4, White
16731 - Marvit Apof P J4C 4 String Bass, Used

MUSIC MAN

16236 - MusicMan Caprice, Heritage Tobacco Burst
16149 - MusicMan Stingray 4 Bass with 3 EQ Black
15941 - MusicMan Outlass Bass, Heritage Tobacco Burst
16762 - PRS SE Kestrel Electric Bass, Black
14367 - PRS SE Kingfisher Bass, Natural
16761 - PRS SE Kingfisher Bass, Tortoise Shell
6919 - Pickenbacker 4003, Maple/Go
16421 - Pickenbacker 4003 Bass, Fireglo
7890 - Pickenbacker 4003, Jetglo

Spector

11197 - Spector Bass Performer 4, Red
14105 - Spector Legend Standard 4 Blue Stain
16681 - Squier Affinity P Bass PJ Pack, S.Burst
16175 - Squier Bronco Bass, Black
16567 - Squier Classic Vibe P Bass 70s, Black
12248 - Squier Mike Dint Precision Bass
16845 - Squier Vintage Mod P Bass PJ C Apple Red
17500 - Squier Vint. Modified P Bass PJ S-burst
17502 - Squier Vint. Mod. P Bass PJ LP Blue
17043 - Tanglewood TE4 BK Alpha, Black
17042 - Tanglewood TE4 BL Alpha, Blue
17041 - Tanglewood TE4 CP Alpha, Copper
14778 - Vintage ICON V74MR Fretless, Sunburst
14613 - Vintage Icon VJ74 MFBK, Distressed Black
17084 - Vintage Reissued VJ74 Bass Natural Ash
14489 - Vintage VJ74 MSSB Bass, Sunset Sunburst
6446 - Westcoast BG4 Neck Thru Body, Brown
8437 - Westcoast JP1 4 String Bass in Trans Red

YAMAHA

14836 - Yamaha 2024 Bass, Sunburst, Secondhand
5634 - Yamaha BB714BS Billy Sheehan, Lava Red
15998 - Yamaha TRBX204 4-String Bass, OVSunburst
15997 - Yamaha TRBX204 4-String Electric Bass
15996 - Yamaha TRBX204 4-String Bass, Black
13138 - Yamaha TRBX304 4 String Bass in White
15999 - Yamaha TRBX504 Bass, Trans White

5 String Bases



16985 - Cort Action Bass V Plus TR Trans Red
16788 - Cort A5 Plus FMMH 5-String, Black Cherry
15363 - Cort A5 Ultra Artisan 5-String Bass, Nat
15725 - Cort Action DLX 5 FGB Faded Grey Burst
14312 - Cort Action V-DLX, Cherry Red Sunburst
12538 - Cort GB75 5 String Bass, Open Pore Nat.
16526 - Cort GB75 5 String Bass, Black
16397 - Cort GB75JJ Amber Glossy 5 String Bass
15844 - Fender 5-String Jazz Bass, Blue, Used
15530 - Fender Deluxe Active Jazz Bass V, Black
16734 - Fender Dlx Active Jazz Bass V, Sunburst
13117 - Fender Deluxe Dimension Bass V Natural
17038 - G&L Tribute L2500 5-String, Natural Used
15265 - G&L Tribute L2500 5 String, Blueburst
16744 - Ibanez SR30TH5 NNF
16766 - Ibanez SR30TH5PII Premium, 5-String Bass
16768 - Ibanez SR805 5-String Bass, Amber
15407 - Marleaux Contra 5, Old Violin Finish
16288 - Overwater Progress Deluxe 5, Pre-Owned
10960 - Pedulla Rapture Fretted 5-String Bass
17326 - Rockbass Starbass 5-String Bass, Used
16120 - Shuker Horn Bass, Trans Turquoise, Used
15343 - Spector Bass Legend 5 Custom Bubinga
16329 - Spector Coda 5 Pro Black Cherry Stain
16773 - Spector Coda 5 Pro Trans Black
12406 - Spector Legend Custom 5 String, Amber
11195 - Spector SP5BK Performer 5 in Black
16776 - Spector SP5BK Performer 5, Black Cherry
15797 - Squier Deluxe Dimension Bass V, Sunburst
4732 - Warwick Rockbass Corvette, Black
0000 - Yamaha - 4 Models in Stock Now

Bass Cabinets



13640 - Aguilar SL112 Bass Cabinet
5677 - Ashdown ABM810 (8x10)
6457 - Ashdown ABM115 Compact (1x15)
15766 - Ashdown ABM115 Compact (1x15) Used
15178 - Ashdown ABM210H EVO IV 300w 2x 10"
15460 - Ashdown ABM210H NEO
6456 - Ashdown ABM410H (4x10)
6450 - Ashdown MAG410T Deep (4x10)
15185 - Ashdown RM210T EVO 300w 2x 10" Cab
15183 - Ashdown RM 112T EVO 300w 1x 12" Cab
15184 - Ashdown RM 115T EVO 300w 1x 15" Cab
15186 - Ashdown RM 610T EVO 900w 6x 10" Cab
16800 - BLUGuitar Nanocab
13566 - Eden EGRW1264 Head & Cab Package
13195 - Eden EX210 Bass Cab
16054 - Eich 110XS Bass Cabinet 4 Ohm
16055 - Eich 110XS Bass Cabinet 8 Ohm
16041 - Eich 112XS Bass Cabinet 4 Ohms
16042 - Eich 112XS Bass Cabinet 8 Ohms
16075 - Eich 115L Bass Cabinet
16052 - Eich 115XS Bass Cabinet 4 Ohm
16053 - Eich 115XS Bass Cabinet 8 Ohm
16039 - Eich 1210S Bass Cabinet
16040 - Eich 1210S Bass Cabinet
16071 - Eich 210M Bass Cabinet
16069 - Eich 212L Bass Cabinet
16070 - Eich 212M Bass Cabinet
16048 - Eich 212S Bass Cabinet 4 Ohm
16050 - Eich 212S Bass Cabinet 8 Ohm
16068 - Eich 410L Bass Cabinet
16067 - Eich 610L Bass Cabinet
16061 - Eich 612XL Bass Cab
16065 - Eich 810L Bass Cabinet
16321 - Gallien Krueger CX115 Bass Cabinet
16444 - Gallien Krueger CX210 Bass Cab
16320 - Gallien Krueger MB210 Bass Combo
14254 - Hartke 210XL2 x 10" Bass Cab
5476 - Mark Bass STD104HR (4x10)
6241 - Mark Bass STD102HF (2x10)
6242 - Mark Bass STD104HF (4x10)
5477 - Mark Bass STD151HR (1x15)
9033 - Markbass Traveler 121H Bass Ext Cab
9034 - Markbass Traveler 151 P Bass Guitar Cab
4733 - Mark Bass Traveller TRV102P (2x10)
16013 - Markbass 123 Alain Caron Bass Cab
16014 - Markbass CMD Super Combo K1 Alain Caron
5431 - Mark Bass NY121 New York 1x 12 Bass Cab
10412 - Markbass NY122 2x 12 Bass Cab
10409 - Markbass NY151 1x 15 Bass Cab
10410 - Markbass NY151 RJ 1x 15" Randy Jackson
15272 - Markbass New York 122 Ninja Bona Cab
6259 - Orange OBC115 (1x15)
6260 - Orange OBC410H (4x10)
5241 - Orange OBC810 (8x10)
16856 - Trace Elliot 1x10 E1 Cab

Bass Combos



13577 - AER Amp III Bass Amp Combo
5627 - AER Amp One (200W, 1x10)



15190 - Ashdown AAA 30 8 30w 1 x 8" Combo
15187 - Ashdown AAA 300 210T 300w 2 x 10"
15189 - Ashdown AAA 60 10T 60w 1 x 10"
15953 - Ashdown ABM410 Bass Combo, S-hand
8714 - Ashdown After Eight 20 Bass Combo
15182 - Ashdown RM C112T 500 EVO 1x12
15181 - Ashdown RMC210T500 EVO2 2x10"
5062 - Ashdown Tourbus 15 (15W, 1x8)



12431 - Eden EC210 2 x 10 Bass Amp Combo
13566 - Eden EGRW1264 Head & Cab Package
16046 - Eich BC112 Bass Combo
16028 - Eich BC112 Combo

Fender

12686 - Fender Bronco 40 Bass Amp
13497 - Fender Rumble 100
4238 - Fender Rumble 15 (15W, 1x8)
12745 - Fender Rumble 200 Bass Combo
15113 - Fender Rumble 25 Bass Amp Combo
13083 - Fender Rumble 40 Bass Amp Combo
15114 - Fender Rumble 500 Bass Amp Combo
17118 - Fender Rumble Studio 40, 1x10 Combo
16765 - Gallien Krueger MB110 Bass Combo
16445 - Gallien Krueger MB112 Bass Combo
16446 - Gallien Krueger MB150S/112 Combo

Hartke

9279 - Hartke Kickback 15 Bass Amp Combo

Mark Bass

9004 - Markbass 121 Lite Alain Caron Combo
6239 - Mark Bass CMD102P Bass Combo
5472 - Mark Bass CMD151P J Berlin (300W)
5429 - Mark Bass Covers For Mark Bass Amps
6240 - Mark Bass Mini CMD121P (300W, 1x12)
5474 - Mark Bass Mini CMD151P (300W, 1x15W)
5475 - Mark Bass CMD121H (300W, 1x12)
9940 - Markbass Mini CMD 151 Jeff Berlin
16764 - Markbass 102 250 Richard Bona Combo
9938 - MicroMark 801 Bass Combo

ORANGE

15715 - Orange Crush Bass 100 Amp Combo
15716 - Orange Crush Bass 25 Amp Combo
15714 - Orange Crush Bass 50 Amp Combo
15111 - Orange OB1 300 Combo

Roland

4433 - Roland CB120XL Cube 120X (120w, 1x12)
4435 - Roland Cube 20XL Bass (20W, 1x8)
4434 - Roland Cube 60XL (60W, 1x10)
5678 - Roland Microcube Bass RX, (5W, 4x4)
16758 - Vox Adio Air BS Bass Guitar Amp
16470 - Vox VX50BA Bass Amp Combo
5422 - Vox amPlug-BS Bass Guitar Practice Amp

Bass Heads



15176 - Ashdown ABM1200-EVO IV 1200w Head
14618 - Aguilar Tone Hammer 500 Bass Amp Head
15115 - ABM600 EVO IV 600W Ashdown Bass Head
15171 - Ashdown ABM600FC EVO IV 600W Head
17012 - Ashdown Geezer Butler Signature Amp Head
14553 - Ashdown Retrograde 800 Compact Bass Head
13566 - Eden EGRW1264 Head & Cab Package
13198 - Eden WTX500 Bass Amp Head
16044 - Eich T1000 Bass Amp
16043 - Eich T300 Bass Amp
16027 - Eich T500 Bass Amp
16026 - Eich T900 Bass Amp
15484 - Fender Bass Man 800
16318 - Gallien Krueger MB500 Bass Amp Head
16319 - Gallien Krueger MB500 Fusion Bass Amp H
17147 - Gallien Krueger MB800 Bass Head
9027 - Hartke K10 1000 Bass Head
15588 - Hartke TX600 Bass Amplifier
14828 - Mark Bass Nano Mark 300 Bass Amp Head
10408 - Mark Bass Bass Multi Amp Stereo
6243 - Mark Bass Little Mark III Bass Head 500w
9035 - Markbass Little Mark III Tube Bass Head
5244 - Mark Bass Little Mark Tube 800, 800W
9256 - Markbass Big Bang 500W Bass Head
17254 - Markbass Little Marcus 1000 Bass Amp
17252 - Markbass Little Marcus 250 Bass Amp Head
17009 - Markbass Little Marcus 500 Bass Amp Head
17010 - Markbass Little Marcus 800 Bass Amp Head
9941 - Markbass Little Mark 250 Head Black
5271 - Markbass Little Mark Ninja Bona Head
9944 - Markbass Multi Amp
15151 - Markbass Randy Jackson TTE501 Bass Head
9725 - Markbass TTE801 Randy Jackson Bass Head
15109 - Orange 4 Stroke 300 Bass Amp
15110 - Orange 4 Stroke 500 Bass Amp
6261 - Orange AD200 MK3
8231 - Orange Dark Terror Valve Guitar Head
17148 - Peavey MiniMax 500W Bass Amp Head
16531 - Trace Elliot E1 200 Watt Bass Amp Head

Electric & Silent Bases



4910 - Bridge Cetus Electric Double Bass
5110 - NS Design NXT Electric Double Bass
14482 - NS Design NXT Electric Double, Black
16847 - NS Design NXTA Upright Bass, Active
14014 - Yamaha SLB100 Silent Upright Bass
6360 - Yamaha SLB200 Silent Double Bass

Acoustic Bases



10498 - Ortega D Walker Acoustic Bass, Black
15771 - Ortega D Walker Acoustic Bass, Mahog.
15117 - Takamine GB30CE ElectroAcoustic Bick
14263 - Takamine GB72CE Jumbo Cutaway

Fretless Bases



16769 - Cort B4 FL Plus AS OPN Fretless Bass
14778 - Vintage ICON V74MR Fretless, Sunburst

String Deals



2 Sets of Elite (4 String) £25 inc P&P
2 Sets of Elite (5 String) £30 inc P&P
2 Sets of Rotosound (4 String) £25 inc P&P
2 Sets of Rotosound (5 String) £30 inc P&P
2 Sets of D'Addario (4 String) £35 inc P&P
2 Sets of D'Addario (4 String) £40 inc P&P

Groove Is In The Heart

Danish bassist, singer, songwriter and bandleader Ida Nielsen is a force of nature, whether as a solo performer or with the late genius Prince, with whom she played for six years. Want to know how it feels to plug in and play at Paisley Park? Read on...

Interview: Joel McIver Pics: Will Ireland

W

hen Ida Nielsen picked up the phone in 2010 to hear Prince's manager asking if she'd like to come and audition, a career began that included six years alongside the great man, playing bass in two of his bands - the New Power Generation and 3rd Eye Girl. Prince always knew his stuff when it came to picking phenomenal musicians, with Ida sadly one of the last in a prestigious line of bassists going as far back as Andre Cymone and

Brown Mark, both of whom have appeared in *BGM* over the years.

Prince died at the age of 58 in April 2016, 20 years before his time and with his life's work far from complete; his last few years showed that he had plenty of creative capital in the bank. Nielsen fuelled his final works with immaculate bass playing, and her performances over those years of touring the world, plus the slick funk she contributed to 3rd Eye Girl's 2014 album *Plectrumelectrum*, marked her as one of the finest bassists of her generation.

Before she got that call, Nielsen was already a supremely accomplished bassist and solo artist, with a recording and touring career underway. We interviewed her back in our April issue, when she talked at length about her background as a musician; this time, we're looking at her experiences with Prince, her ongoing solo career and her amazing bass gear. There's a lot to discuss; with a fourth album underway and a summer of tour dates ahead, she's a musician with tons on her plate. Read and learn, folks.



“I FEEL LIKE I LEARNED SO MUCH ON SO MANY LEVELS. WHEN I DO MY OWN BAND NOW, I CAN FEEL SO MANY THINGS INSIDE ME THAT I LEARNED FROM HIM”

What are you up to at the moment, Ida?

My next album is practically done, I just need to put finishing touches on it. Right now I'm touring a lot, so it'll have to wait until then. I love creating new music but I also love to play with my band. In a normal band you have to respect the music, of course, but I deliberately set this one up so I could get to play a lot of bass, ha ha!

What's the line-up?

In Denmark, the line-up is me, drums, keyboards, a DJ, a rapper and a guitarist, with everybody singing, so it's six people on stage, although my dream is to expand it and have a really big band with horns and percussion, but that will have to wait a while. When we travel abroad, it's just a quartet – bass, drums, guitar and rapper.

“ON THE ALBUM I PLAY GUITAR TOO. ACTUALLY, PRINCE TAUGHT ME HOW TO PLAY, SO I'VE GOT RHYTHM GUITAR DOWN PRETTY WELL”

What are your objectives with the band?

When I decided to form a band with a lot of bass in it, I wanted it to be a playground for me, but at the same time I wanted it to appeal to people who don't love bass as much as bass players do. That means writing real songs, although of course there are grooves too. Sometimes I don't even play, to create a little balance – and then when I do play, I go for it even more than usual. I love the fact that there is an audience for funk music.

Do you play other instruments too?

Live, I play some keys as well as bass. I can play drums as well, although my drummer in the band has that covered. On the album I play guitar too. Actually, Prince taught me how to play, so I've got rhythm guitar down pretty well, but I can only really play funk, so if I need a guitar solo I call a friend.

That signature Sandberg California bass of yours is gorgeous.

Isn't it beautiful? I tried my first Sandberg at the Musikmesse in Frankfurt in 2009, and I said 'I need this bass!' Holger Stonjek from Sandberg said 'I think you need it too!' and we exchanged contact details. But he'd already sold that particular bass, so he sent me a different one; unfortunately, it didn't sound the same. I felt terrible, but I had to say

'I'm really sorry, Holger, but this bass doesn't sound like the one I tried at Frankfurt!'

How was it different?

The tone wasn't the same, even though the pickups were identical. Every bass sounds different, anyway. The one I tried was a Hardcore Aged Masterpiece, and those basses get a hundred hours on a vibration machine. It just didn't sound the same, but Holger was really sweet about it; he'd sold that bass to a music store in Vienna, but he got it back from them and gifted it to me. That was so cool, man; he did that just because he wanted me to have it. This was before I started playing with Prince, too, so Holger wasn't doing it for profit; he's just a good-hearted guy.

How did the signature version come about?

In 2016, during a break with 3rd Eye Girl, I went to Sandberg's workshop for three days and we put together my signature bass, trying out different pickups and pickup positions. I had a really nerdy time there, it was fun! What was interesting was that you can find a position for one pickup that sounds really fantastic, but if you add another one and blend the two, it sounds horrible. I ended up with a bass that is very close to standard, but it was a cool journey to take.

What's the spec?

The front pickup is a Jazz-style unit, which is different to my previous Sandberg's Precision-type pickup because I wanted a different sound. That colours the sound a lot when you blend it in. Then there's a Music Man-style pickup in the back, and you know how they sound. You can get a real tight sound from it, because it's further back than it would be on a Music Man. So this bass can sound like all my favourite sounds; you can have a 70s sound if you play just the front pickup, and then you can switch to the back and it's more Jaco-like. And the combination of the two gives you a really nice, warm, all-round sound. When I play, I add a little bit more of the front one so that it sounds a little more vintage.

Does it give you all the tones you need?

I feel that you can't have everything in one instrument, but at the time I wanted a bass that sounded good for Prince and 3rd Eye Girl, which was mainly rock and funk. It sounds perfect for that, and also for my own stuff, but if you're a fusion player, for example, you might go for another type of bass. It's a matter of taste, of course, but I love the way my bass can sound really old or really modern.

The fabric under the scratchplate is beautiful.

I wanted it to be black and gold, so it looked like a rock-star bass. I said that to Holger and he said 'You have to see this!' and showed me this cloth, which is in between two acrylic plates. When I do double pops with my

fingers, it really helps, because I have little fingers and they don't get stuck beneath the strings because it's thicker than a normal pickguard. That was a bonus that I didn't expect.

How many basses do you take out on the road?

I only take one. We're in the middle of doing a five-string version, though, and when that's ready I'll take that out on the road too. If we drive around Europe, I'll take two basses, but on fly dates I'll take one and hope for the best!

What amps do you use?

I'm with Eich; I have two 2x12 cabs and their T-1000 head. I was very happy with TC Electronic for almost nine years, but sometimes you need to make a switch and move on.

What effects do you take out?

It's a long story! Okay, my full pedalboard, which I'm not bringing out this time because it's too big, has a mini Dunlop Crybaby bass wah, an old green DOD envelope filter which they don't make any more – I love how it reacts so fast when I do a solo – and then a Sub'N'Up octaver from TC Electronic, which can go up and down, or blend the two octaves if you like, to add more frequencies in a solo and make your notes sing more.

Then I bring a fuzz pedal; I have a few of the old Fab Tones from Danelectro, because they were the ones that Prince preferred. They don't make them any more, and they're not super stable – they'll move around if you hit them too hard with your foot! I tried all kinds of fuzz pedals with Prince, but every time I tried a new one he was always like, 'What is that? Where's your Fab Tone?', ha ha! I tried one from Darkglass too, which I thought sounded great, although I don't have it in my board, and there's a TC Polytune tuner as well.

I tried a compressor recently called a Golden Ratio from Crazy Tube Circuits; it's very good. I mostly use it when I solo, to boost my signal. I don't use it when I'm just playing, because I like to feel the dynamics of my bass. The pedal also gives the tone a kick, which is cool for slapping and means I don't need a booster pedal. I use delay and reverb as well, just for playing around, but I don't carry them around in the board because I don't use them with my band.

Very cool. Which strings do you prefer?

I play DR Pure Blue strings, which are really bendy; they seem a lot thinner than they are, for some reason, which





is good because I bend a lot and they make that easy for me. Last year a Norwegian composer called Rolf Wallin wrote a classical piece for bass for me, and I had to play some really, really crazy stuff at the South Bank with the London Sinfonietta. I appreciated the Pure Blue strings on that gig.

Classical music for bass sounds a bit tricky.

It really was. There were no drums, and I had to follow the conductor, which made me pretty stressed, ha ha! I had to read a lot of music and there was a lot of stuff to learn, so it was hard, and there was a lot of pressure because you couldn't hear a rhythm in any of the music. It wasn't on the downstroke, it was in between them and somewhere on the way up again, so I just played it as best as I could. Rolf had me slapping some crazy stuff. I'm really happy I did it, though, because it was a step into a completely different world. The skills that those musicians have is incredible, and it's a huge honour to have someone write a classical piece for you. We did it twice, once in London and once in Norway.

Do you do sessions too?

I do a few sessions for friends when I have the time, but right now I'm busy doing my own thing. You know, I played with Prince

weren't using a click. I said 'Aren't we using a click?' and the drummer, John Blackwell [who died in 2017 - Ed], said 'No, we lock to ourselves'. I know on some of Prince's records there are some drum machines, but most of it is not played to a click - it just sounds like it is because it's so tight. It was mind-blowing to me to see him work in the studio and arranging things; I learned so much, it was such a gift. Of course, I enjoyed all the flashy superstar stuff, and I'm glad I saw those things, but it's really the musician that he made me into, just by being there and observing, that I'm most grateful for.

You said earlier that Prince taught you to play rhythm guitar. Was it literally from scratch?

I knew three funk chords and that was it, but I had a good rhythm and he saw that. He was great at seeing stuff in people before they discovered those things themselves.

Was he directive with your bass parts, or did he give you free rein to do what you wanted?

Both. Some of the stuff had to be quite specific, because he could play everything himself and he wanted to make it sound the way it would if he played it.

downtempo, with a really heavy beat, and I had a fuzz solo. We all had a little place in each show to play a few bars of our own stuff.

Sounds like a great opportunity. What did you play at that point?

That depended on the song and the mood. Mostly I would slap if I could get away with it, ha ha!

Did you jam a lot with Prince?

Yes, a lot - we jammed all the time, almost every day. We did a lot of recordings, and some of it went on the CD and some did not. We definitely did some very cool stuff that didn't make it to the album. I guess it's in the vault now.

What do you recall of the recording of *Plectrumelectrum*?

We actually didn't know we were recording an album, because he didn't tell us. He taught us the songs and we recorded them, but we thought we were keeping them for reference, because we taped everything we did. The album was recorded in one room, so we couldn't do redos because there would be bleed in the drum mics, so we really didn't think we were doing an album.

Would you have recorded another album with him?

I'm sure we would have, at some point. We were on a break and he was doing the solo tour, but there was lots of material ready for us to pick up again afterwards.

So here we are in 2018. How long have you been a full-time musician?

A decade or so. Before I got the call from Prince in 2010, I was a musician but not full-time, because I was also teaching. A year before that, I made the decision to record an album and form my own band, and really crack down on everything so I could just focus on making music rather than doing a lot of other stuff. If you're teaching, you're giving a lot every day, and when the day is over you can be burned out. You don't feel like going home and creating music, so I made my decision in 2008 or '09, recorded my first album and cut down on everything else. I've stuck to that, and now I'm ready for the next step.

Thanks for the interview, Ida. Any words of advice for the bass community?

Well, I'm super grateful that I've been able to enjoy a career as a musician. Of course, making it happen is about having skill on your instrument, but it's also about luck - being in the right spot and being heard by the right person. You have to be willing to make some sacrifices, but it's definitely been worth it. ■

Info: www.idanielsenbass.com

“YOU CAN'T HAVE EVERYBODY BEING BUSY OR IT WON'T BE TIGHT ANY MORE”

for such a long time that it's a little hard to imagine playing for someone else, because for me he was the biggest artist of all. At some point I'll get over that, but at the moment I feel that doing my own stuff is the best way to stay in music.

So let's talk about Prince. How long were you with him?

Almost six years, from 2010 until the last gig I did with him, which was New Year's Eve, 2015; that was the last time I saw him. I played with the NPG from 2010 to 2012, and then he formed a big band in 2012. I played a bit of guitar in that band while Andrew Gouché was on bass, and then we started 3rd Eye Girl, which was completely different, because we played rock.

How do you look back on your time in his band?

I'm extremely grateful. I feel like I learned so much on so many levels. When I do my own band now, I can feel so many things inside me that I learned from him. He was a great bass player, too, and the musicianship, arrangements and recording was really next-level. The first time I was in the studio with the NPG, I was surprised because we

So how did he like it to sound?

He didn't like ghost notes, so I had to relearn to play lines without putting in all that stuff. But sometimes he would give me a free hand, although if you have a line, you have to play that line. You could play a little around it, and if it was cool it was cool, but if you did something that wasn't cool, he'd go 'You should stick to the part!'

Surely ghost notes are the essence of funk?

Yes and no. In the old Minneapolis style of funk, there's a lot of very straight drum beats; the funk is mainly in the rhythm of the guitar parts. What I learned, and I apply this in my band now, is that you can't have everybody being busy or it won't be tight any more - it'll just be one big soup with a lot of notes. Prince's stuff is so tight and energetic, because there's space there; the keyboard or the guitar might be busy, but no-one else will be busy at the same time. Everybody has little tight parts, and it's so funky. In my band, for instance, the bass is busy, but the other people can't be busy at the same time, ha ha! That's the rule...

Did you have a solo spot in the live show?

Yes; we did the revamped version of 'Let's Go Crazy'; have you ever heard it? It was

OWN YOUR MARKS



Dave Marks is a session and stage bassist, festival organiser, educator and writer. We ask the great man how he gets it all done...

Pics: Kaye Ford



W e catch up with the splendid Dave Marks while he's on tour with Deep Purple keyboard player Don Airey in Great Yarmouth. "The event is called Legends Of Rock,

which we're headlining," says our chap.

"Ironically, we're the only band that isn't a tribute act!"

Marks has built a reputation as bass-man to trust with a host of stellar artists – Carl Palmer, Albert Lee and the late Rick Parfitt among others – so we're not surprised to hear that he's occupying the top slot with Airey. Give us a bit of career history, fella?

"I grew up in Belfast and was there until I was 18," he says. "I started playing guitar when I was about 12 or 13. I then got into bass when I was in a rock covers band, and moved to London when I was 18 to go to what was then Basstech and is now the ICMP, and studied there for three years. I loved the college thing, and went to every jam session I could, playing jazz tunes really badly. We knew it sounded crap, but we also knew that we had to go through this in order to get good, and when college finished I was recommended for Carl Palmer's tour as my first professional gig."

For those not in the know, Palmer is the P in ELP, the legendary prog-rock band Emerson Lake & Palmer. That must have been a fairly challenging debut gig, we suggest. "It certainly was. Between guitar, bass and drums we had to recreate songs that ELP had done with Keith Emerson's organ and even an orchestra, which is how I got into using effects as well as tapping and chordal stuff – anything I could do to deliver the goods. I loved it; my chops were as good as they've ever been, because I practised bass for eight hours a day at college, so the gig was right up my alley.

So what else is Marks up to these days?

"My time is broken into several things," he tells us. "First, gigs; I get parachuted into a lot of gigs and it's never a soft landing. I'll have three days to learn the whole set, with no rehearsals. For this one, though, I had a whole week, plus two rehearsals, which was incredible, but typically that won't be the case. I usually do three or four projects of that kind a year – Wishbone Ash called me a while back, and I've played with Hans Zimmer too. Typically, a call will come out of nowhere, because a particular bass player can't make a bunch of gigs, so I show up and do them."

Sounds good to us, we say. "It is! It works for me, because a lot of bands need someone who

will learn the music, come in without making a fuss, and do the show. I love it because it's all a honeymoon period; you're not in the band long enough for anyone to fall out, and the craic is great. I just smile and head off home."

What takes up Marks' time when he's not on stage? "When I'm at home I do studio stuff. I'm producing Simon McBride at the moment, who has a five-album deal with Edel in Germany, so that'll be a focus for me for the next three to five years. Simon was a child prodigy of a guitarist when I was growing up in Belfast. He's an astonishing, world-class musician. He's also doing the Don Airey gig and he worked with Purple's singer Ian Gillan last year."

All that would add up to a sufficient workload for most of us, but Marks has more up his sleeve: "My wife and I also run a three-day pop festival in St Albans called Meraki, which is hilarious, because I'll play bass in the house band and then literally leap off stage to go and fix a broken water main, or whatever. It's on 10 to 12 August this year and we've got Pixie Lott, Nik Kershaw, All Saints and a ton of artists and DJs playing. And on top of that we run a virtual reality show in the tech world."

As for original music, Marks has a mission to fill a particular gap in the market. "I have a project called Belfast Bullfighters, which has been ongoing over the last few years. It's Celtic fusion, that's the best way I can describe it. I used to listen to a lot of Irish music when I was growing up, and I was always gutted by how lame the rhythm sections were. You know, Uncle Mick would be playing bass, or whoever, and there were barely any drums.

"So I got Darby Todd in on drums, who is a monster, and a bunch of guest guitarists like Guthrie Govan and Simon McBride. It's really fulfilling to write in that idiom, whether it's three-minute reels or longer, almost prog pieces that go off in a Pink Floyd ambient direction, but with Celtic instruments. The next step is to expand it to include singers. It'll be the King Crimson of fiddly-dee music!"

What gear does he use to make the big noises at all these gigs? "I've been using an EBS rig for the last 14 years. Other companies have come along in that time and asked me if I'd be interested in endorsing them, but EBS make such amazing gear and have been so good to me that I'm not tempted. There's nothing out there that is an improvement on the rig that I use."

Which EBS is it? "I use Marcus Miller's rig; I went and saw him at the Jazz Cafe when I was interviewing him for the cover of *BGM* back

in 2004. Marcus had two rigs, a 1x15, a 2x10 and a TD650 head. I tested that rig out and I've never heard a better one, and I've played them all, believe me. Lots of them are really good but I haven't found one that is better. My cabs are neodymiums so they're easy to carry."

And bass guitars? "It's Marcus again – a white Marcus Miller Fender Jazz. I used to have two Sei headless six-strings, fretted and fretless, which I got for the Carl Palmer tour in 2001 right after coming out of college, because the gig was very chops-based and technical. I later realised that if I wanted to do pop gigs, showing up with those basses wouldn't go down too well! It's funny, I thought it was just a standard Marcus model, but it turns out that it's quite a special one; I was at NAMM and Bakithi Kumalo played it and asked me how much I wanted for it. If someone like that wants to buy it, that makes me think I shouldn't sell it!"

He adds: "I also have a Precision, and four- and five-string Music Man Stingrays, specifically because I played in a Rage Against The Machine tribute band last year. To me, basses have to be the right tools for the job, regardless of which ones I'd like to play. I like a modern, active sound which allows me to dial in a lot of brightness, because I do a lot of pick playing these days. A lot of boutique basses don't stand up to being thumped; they seem to choke a little when you really lay into them."

As for effects, Marks is a man of many sounds. "An EBS Multicomp, an Octabass, and a Multidrive are the first three pedals in my chain on everything I do," he tells us. "I don't need a wall of distortion; I just use it to make the sound a bit creamy, bring the harmonics up a bit and thicken the sound, perhaps on the last chorus of a song where it needs a lift. I also have an EBS Fuzzmo, which is discontinued now, and if I'm biamping – as I do on Simon's gig – I use a Gigrig switcher, which splits the signal to a guitar rig and a bass rig. The guitar parts go through an EHX Pitch Fork pitchshifter, which sends them up an octave, and then through an EBS drive pedal and sometimes a TC Electronic Flashback delay, so it sounds like a guitar and bass doubling up. It's an ongoing quest to get the perfect split signal, and I know Tim Commerford from Rage and Mike Kerr from Royal Blood are looking for the same thing."

If anyone can complete this noble quest, Marks can. He'll find the time somehow. Who needed sleep anyway? ■

Info: www.davemarks.com



DEL BOY

Del Amitri are the subject of a new, official band biography; singer and bassist Justin Currie casts his eye back



These Are Such Perfect Days: The Del Amitri Story is a new authorised biography of Scottish rockers Del Amitri, written by an Australian author called

Charles Rawlings-Way with the help of Del Amitri singer and bassist Justin Currie. It's quite a coup, with the full story told in detail and – all credit to both chaps – tons of detail about Currie's bass gear and influences. He's still touring as a solo act, playing both guitar and bass, and took time out to speak to us about how the book came together.

These Are Such Perfect Days has turned out great, Justin.

Yeah, it's a lot more comprehensive than I thought. Initially I tried to put Charles off doing the damn thing, because I thought that ours isn't that interesting a story and that there wouldn't be a market for it, but he thought there was. He said he talked me into it, but really he talked himself into it! It's quite gratifying, because seeing it all written down in one place is a good thing; otherwise, any historical record can often come from quite unreliable sources. With a book, you feel that that's the go-to source. It's not something we ever thought would happen, so we're really pleased to have it.

You're a guitarist as well as a bassist, correct?

I'm kind of neither. I'm a punk bassist. I learned from Peter Hook. Even though I spent my entire childhood listening to the Beatles, apart from a couple of tracks I never learned a Beatles bass-line. But when I heard *Unknown Pleasures* by Joy Division, I ended up learning all the bass-lines because they're all played quite high up on the neck. I can do that sort of a bass-line, but once Del Amitri toured, I ended up simplifying what I did because I was singing at the same time.

Del Amitri's songs had tons of arpeggiated guitar melodies. How did you fit the bass in?

Yeah, with our early stuff especially, the whole concept behind it was no pause. The two guitars played melody and counter-melody and then the bass played harmony; that came from listening to a lot of Morrissey. That was our generation. I also listened to a lot of Roger Waters.

What was your go-to bass?

A Fender Precision, but the year's up for debate. A few people told me it was 1976

when I bought it, but it might be '78. It has an ebony fingerboard; everything's black, and it has a black pick-guard. I've also got a slightly more recent one which I still think is American-made; it's a cross between a Jazz, a Precision and a Music Man. It's got a graphite neck and you could literally throw it off a cliff, but it didn't really sound like a Precision. You could set it on Precision settings, but it didn't have that woody, natural sound. The thing I loved was its flaws as much as its advantages. The A on the fifth fret of the E string is always the loudest note on the bass, which is not true of other basses. You learned to play around it, although A is a brilliant rock key.

We've also seen you playing a Stingray before now.

We bought that because we saw a friend playing it at [Glasgow venue] King Tut's Wah Wah Hut, and the DI sound was an amazing boost to the bottom F, so we basically bought it because we really loved that bottom F boost on it. We still use that.

“ I DON'T THINK WE EVER FELT WE DID A CLASSIC ALBUM. THAT WAS ALWAYS OUR AIM ”

Are you still improving as a bassist, or have your skills peaked?

They peaked some time ago! I tend to choke the bass a bit, because I hold the strings a bit when I'm plucking them, and I've never really got my head around the fact that you're not supposed to do that. When we first started out I used to strum the bass. I had a five-string Aria that you could strum like a guitar very high up the neck. It actually sounded quite good on records but live it was absolutely terrible, especially with those crappy 80s PAs. You put that much harmonic turbulence through them and they just couldn't fucking cope. I had to relearn to play with the kick drum. After that, I just never got any better. I can play a few notes around the kick drum, and the odd fill, and that's about it. I'm really bad at grooving. That's one of the things we were always looking for in the studio, and it usually involved getting someone else to play the bass.

Do you slap?

No. Iain [Harvie, Del Amitri guitarist] and I played in a country band that I briefly had a slap bass solo in. That was bonkers. We also played the blues on slap bass, which was quite revolutionary, for want of a better term.

Any dabbling in fretless?

No, we always kind of avoided the fretless. We had a bass player that we'd hire to do particular things for us. If I couldn't do something and Iain couldn't do it, we'd admit it, but occasionally we used it for solo stuff. I think I used a pick for it, on tracks that didn't actually get released.

What about now? What you are up to at the moment?

I've recently been writing, which is something I haven't done for about 20 years – because Iain and I were talking about looking at maybe going on tour. Whether that happens or not, I really don't know. Last year I did a couple of promo tours, and me and my manager put a record out, which was an interesting learning experience. The problem with modern marketing and promotion is you do it all on a computer, which is the last thing that I ever wanted to do. It's like you've got a fucking office job or something! You don't meet anybody you're emailing. Despite the fact that you

can communicate with anyone in the world, you can end up feeling kind of isolated. I found that after a while I was getting up every morning and just sitting at the computer for a couple

of hours. It's not what you get into a band for. You want to be giving out fliers, playing on the radio and getting a gig.

Looking back over your career, would you say you achieved everything you wanted with Del Amitri?

I think so. I don't think we ever felt we did a classic album. That was always our aim. We had a very weird period between 1998 and 2001 when we just made the same records, because our previous records had been so successful and a couple of our singles hadn't sold that well; we were under quite a lot of pressure to produce more commercial material, whereas that was never the remit. We had three really successful albums in the UK, and then the fourth one sold significantly less. It was still quite a lot in today's terms, but back in the day it was considered something of a disappointment. Then immediately, the pressure came on. That was a really tricky period.

But you'll keep performing, we hope?

Yeah, I write songs because there's not a lot else I can do. I'm really sorry about that! ■

These Are Such Perfect Days: The Del Amitri Story is out now on Urbane Publications.

Info: <https://urbanepublications.com>.

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POINT MAN

Dougie Poynter, best known for playing bass in pop-punkers McFly, has a new project called Ink. We catch up with the Sterling-wielding *I'm A Celeb* winner

The band Ink, stylised as INK., bless 'em, is a trio made up of bassist Dougie Poynter, vocalist Todd Dorigo and drummer Corey Alexander. They've just released a debut EP, *Heaven*, which you should check out if you're into rock of the dark, atmospheric kind. Poynter, a thoroughly likeable fellow who was last in *BGM* four years ago, has a stadium-sized CV with youthful punk types McFly and a supergroup of similar ilk called McBusted, winning the reality show *I'm A Celebrity... Get Me Out Of Here!* in 2011 and acting in films here and there. Let's have a word with him.

How are you, Dougie?

Really well, thank you. I've been doing some writing with [Radio 1 presenter and bassist in the band A] Dan Carter, which might seem a bit odd, I suppose, given how different our music is, but it's been great. I've always found that British bands really help each other out.

Dan's a rock guy, so given the dark nature of the new EP, it makes sense.

It does have that darkness to it, but that was never intended. It just kinda happened. One of the songs started with a bass-line on loop, plus a very simple rhythm, and then we layered the rest of the song onto it. The bass stays the same throughout the song.

What are the basses this time?

The Music Man Sterling is my absolute go-to instrument and has been for years now. I have them all; there's the single H, the HS and the HH variants. Each song by Ink features a different bass, and one song has two different basses. There's a Sterling in drop-D which runs through a weird analogue pedal that we found, for example. I've also made my own ones where I've taken out the pickups and put Seymour Duncans in. They're Precision-style pickups, but I flip them round so the upper half is closer to the bridge. I learned that from my friend Mark Hoppus from Blink-182. I have a couple of basses set up that way, and they're useful because they push up all the mids. They sound incredible.

What is it that you like about Sterlings?

Music Man basses are so versatile – you can get a vintage sound or a modern pop-punk one with the flick of a switch. The Stingrays are too big for me, because I've got small hands, hence the Sterling. They have a slim neck, a small body and massive pickups, which is why they work for me. Martin Sims does the LEDs in the necks; I've worked with him for years. He's just made a new scratchplate for one of my HHs, because it was cracked. He did a Union Jack bass for me too. There's nothing that guy can't do.

What amps do you use?

I have an Ashdown ABM head and three or four Ashdown cabs on stage, and I run an

Avalon DI through the PA. Ashdown have always been super-cool to me, and I play everything through them. I also like Kempers for the studio.

How did you get into bass?

Everyone at school played guitar or drums, and I wanted to play in as many bands as possible. They all needed a bass player, so it just made sense, and that's how I joined McFly. My first bass was a black Squier Precision, which I added a red scratchplate to; I was into customising basses as far back as that. One of the later basses I bought was a red Fender Jazz; I got that with my first paycheck. That had a little active button, and the neck was really good too.

Who influenced you on bass?

Blink-182 sounded like they were having fun; they made you think that you didn't have to be cool to be in a band. That was my motivation. There was a whole bunch of bands who were in that genre, and once I got really into bass and wanted to get better, I started listening to Paul McCartney. I started playing with my fingers and using less clank in the tone, which is again why I love the Sterling, because it took all of that out and I could get a nice subby tone with my fingers. I loved the Beach Boys as well.

Any modern players?

I was obsessed with Pino Palladino's playing for a very long time. If you really listen to it, he doesn't do too much, but what he does do is great. He builds a song without you really knowing. His stuff goes almost unnoticed, without looking for the spotlight. He's definitely one of my bass heroes.

Do you play slap?

I was taught to play slap bass, because I really wanted to learn to do it, but it's only really for show-off pieces by the Red Hot Chili Peppers and so on. There's one bit on McFly's last album where I had a moment, and used to really whack it live, but there's so much percussion going on that you can't really hear it.

Are McFly on hiatus at the moment?

Honestly, no-one really knows what's going on with McFly. It's not over, that's for sure. We all still talk pretty much every day. I grew up with those guys, after all.

Congratulations on being the only bassist to win a reality TV show, as far as we know.

Yeah, I'm representing! I'll fly that flag. I only did it because we had some time off and I thought I'd be in and out and that no-one would even know I did it.

Did you buy a load of cool bass gear with the winnings?

Unfortunately you don't get any money for winning. I wish! ■■■

Heaven is out now on Black Ink Records. Info @Dougie Poynter.



MAJOR SCALE

Steve Tucker of Morbid Angel is the only bassist we know who finds a 35" scale too short. Now that's metal

I used to play BC Rich basses, and they're big, heavy instruments, but to be honest with you, I seek large basses out. I'm a big guy, so I'm having an instrument built for me by Devil's Choice in Germany that's even bigger than a BC Rich. I want a bass that will actually fit me! Smaller people have the luxury of a guitar that fits them, after all. I was introduced to Devil's Choice by Derek Boyer from Suffocation, who is a phenomenal bass player.

I met their luthier, who said 'It makes no sense for you to play a normal bass - we have to make one that fits you' and we're putting it together now. It has a 35.5" scale and it's a four-string, although I play it like it's a five-string, with a B string on it. I don't play a lot of runs in Morbid Angel; there's so much going on in death metal that it's really about accompanying the guitars and the drums. To do anything more would be overplaying. I'm playing my butt off as it is!

It's funny, when we were recording our new album *Kingdoms Disdained* I finished a

"I'VE BEEN TOLD BY MANY PEOPLE THAT I DON'T NEED TO BE SO INTENSE ON STAGE AND HEADBANG ALL THE TIME, BUT IT'S JUST WHAT HAPPENS"

vocal take in the studio and I saw that our producer Erik Rutan was laughing. I was exhausted, and I said 'Why are you laughing? This ain't funny' and he said 'You wrote this! You're doing it to yourself'. He was right, but I always end up getting it worked out. I like to have the bass parts so tight that I don't have to think about them before I do the vocals. Once I find myself bored at rehearsal, and thinking about other things as I'm playing, then I know I'm ready to sing. There's a separation there between the two sides of the brain that just works for me.

Of course, playing these instruments in a death metal band like ours has its downside. I've been told by many people that I don't need to be so intense on stage and headbang all the time, but it's just what happens. Sometimes you just feel the vibe and go with it. I've got some accumulated injuries; I was doing carpentry as well as playing music for many, many years, and I built up some injuries from that as well. I've been doing this for a long time, and you never even think at the age of 25 of stretching before a show, or making sure you don't drink too much, so these things accumulate on people.

The bass I've been using on recent tours is a Blakheart Kronos ST-4, my signature instrument. It's a really good-looking bass, and it's high quality. I've played them every single night and they stay in tune and play really nice. The bodies on them are smaller top to bottom but longer than usual, which is what led me to the point I'm at now. I want to be as comfortable as possible on stage.

Over the years I've used lots of effects, but right now all I have is a distortion. I've come right back to where I started, with an Ampeg SVT amp and cab; the switchable sweep and gain on the amp mean everything when it comes to tone. I've tried all sorts of amps in my time, and none of them float my boat as much as an Ampeg. Quality is always in style... ■

Morbid Angel's new album *Kingdoms Disdained* is out now on Silver Linings Music. Info: www.morbidangel.com.



STONE FREE

Stone Temple Pilots bassist Robert DeLeo has been through a lot in recent years. Fortunately his band have returned with a cool comeback album, a great new singer and a shedload of vintage bass gear to drool over. Joel McIver gets on the phone to California...