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Our mission at *Bass Guitar Magazine* is the same today as it has been since we assembled issue one out of sticky-backed plastic and cardboard

back at the dawn of time (2002). We want to bring you the glorious world of bass in all its multifaceted glory, from the stages, studios, stadiums and sessions via gear manufacturers and dealers to the players themselves, and to that end,

we think we've excelled ourselves in the issue you're holding. First up is the legendary Stuart Hamm, a man for whom adjectives 'fast-fingered', 'imaginative' and 'talented' simply do not suffice. Anyone who witnessed Stu's set at the recent London Bass Guitar Show will know what we're talking about: dive into his interview without delay. After all, anyone with a tattoo that reads 'No Regerts' (sic) is our kind of guy.

Then we bring you interviews with a stellar range of bassists. Sometime Rolling Stone Bill Wyman and Blondie bassist Nigel Harrison need little introduction, while Wolfgang Van Halen and Grog Rox bring the rock like few others. Then we've got headbanging aplenty from the Helloween and Cradle Of Filth bassists, and insane levels of funk from pick-wielder Cody Wright.

How could it get any better? Only with the addition of our renowned gear reviews and tuition sections, in which ace gear from the likes of Bass Centre, Carvin and Ashdown rub shoulders with world-class educators from every field of music. Finally, we've thrown in a lesson of Stu Hamm exercises to keep you busy until July. The objective stays true after all these years: stick with us, and we'll make you a better bass player. Enjoy!

Joel McIver, editor



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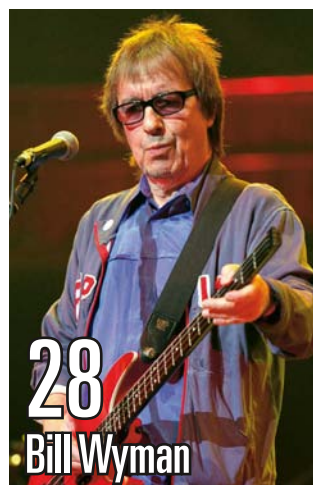
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LOW DOWN

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE BASS
WORLD, COLLATED BY *BGM'S* TEAM
OF INTREPID NEWSHOUNDS



WEB WONDERS

Both German companies, veteran bass-makers Sandberg and all-round MI suppliers Thomann have updated their online configurators lately, the relevance to us being that when ordering a bass product you can tweak it to your satisfaction without getting off your beanbag. In the case of Sandberg, juicy new bass finishes have been added to the available menu, while Thomann are offering a bunch of different options for their bass cases. All very useful, we reckon.

Info: www.configurator.sandberg-guitars.de,
www.thomann.de

LOUIS JOHNSON RIP

'When I play, I become the bass; I'm no longer Louis Johnson, I am the bass - so the bass is in trouble!' warned the younger of the Brothers Johnson, the Californian duo whose music enthralled a generation of club-goers between 1976 and 1982. The late Louis Johnson, who died on 21 May, and his guitar-playing brother George were much admired for their flamboyance and musicianship, with the former particularly admired for his mastery of the slap bass technique. This combined lightning-fast thumb slaps with string pops of such power that Johnson regularly blew his bass amplifier's speakers, leading to a lifelong nickname of 'Thunder Thumbs'.

Although Johnson was not the first bassist to adopt the now-ubiquitous slap style, having been preceded by Sly & The Family Stone's Larry Graham, he was inspired to develop the technique not by Graham but by older sources. As he later explained, "I was trying to find the little clicks and pops I got when I strummed chords on the guitar... I hadn't even heard of Larry yet, my influences were Ray Brown and James Jamerson."

Born in Los Angeles in 1955, Johnson was the youngest of three brothers, after Tommy and George. They shared a guitar as children, although Louis moved to bass in 1961 after being attracted to the sound of the gitarron, the large acoustic bass played by mariachi bands in a Mexican-themed arcade in LA's Olvera Street. Together with a cousin, Alex Weir, the three brothers formed a band called the Johnson Three Plus One, and played concerts at high schools and festivals, opening for bigger bands such as the Supremes. George Johnson later recalled that the boys would sometimes draw moustaches on their faces in order to get into the clubs while underage.

In 1971, when soul singer Billy Preston met George Johnson at a band rehearsal, he asked him to tour Europe with his band as guitarist; when Preston's bassist left the band, Louis Johnson joined the group at his older brother's suggestion. For the next two years, the brothers toured with Preston, supporting major bands such as Chicago, Led Zeppelin, Iron Butterfly, Pink Floyd and Grand Funk Railroad. Prolific songwriters, the duo wrote over 250 songs of their own while with Preston, and quit in 1973 to form their own group, the Brothers Johnson.

Success came after the Brothers were adopted by the producer Quincy Jones, who became their manager, mentor and collaborator on several key recordings. After the duo toured Japan in Jones's band, he secured them a deal with the A&M label. Their Jones-produced debut album, *Look Out For #1*, was released in 1976, rapidly selling over a million copies. Four more albums followed in the next five years, all but the last gaining platinum status: the Brothers' most enduring hit was 'Stomp!', from their fourth album *Light Up The Night*, released in 1980.

Tensions between the brothers led to a split in 1982, and Louis Johnson went on to become a sought-after session bassist. His association with Jones led to several collaborations with Michael Jackson: Johnson's catchy but economical bass-lines on the *Off The Wall* album (1979) helped propel Jackson to superstardom. His parts on *Thriller* (1982) are known to millions, as it became the biggest-selling LP of all time. Johnson's best-known bass-line appeared on Michael Jackson's 'Billie Jean', the song used for an ill-fated Pepsi commercial in 1984: an accidental fire occurred during filming, leading to the loss of much of Jackson's hair.

Sessions with George Benson, Stanley Clarke, Paul McCartney, Aretha Franklin and dozens of other musicians from the soul and rock field gave Johnson a comfortable living for the rest of his life. He played bass on the 1985 USA For Africa collaboration 'We Are the World', and his line from Michael McDonald's 1982 version of Leiber & Stoller's 'I Keep Forgettin', was later sampled by hip-hop musicians Warren G and Nate Dogg for their 1994 hit 'Regulate'. Reunions and new albums by the Brothers Johnson in 1984, 1988 and 2002 were met with limited success, although Johnson's instructional videos on slap bass, released by Star Licks Productions in the 1980s, remain set texts for all funk bass players.

Johnson died on 21 May 2015, aged 60. He is survived by his ex-wife Valerie, his brothers Tommy and George, and his sons Kodi and Kenji.



Pic by Tina K



GOLDEN GRAHAM

Slap-bass pioneer and *BGM* regular Larry Graham is among the many fine musicians slated to appear at this year's Love Supreme festival at Glynde Place in East Sussex from 3-5 July, alongside Chaka Khan, Van Morrison, Omar, Candi Staton, Submotion Orchestra, The Bad Plus, Neneh Cherry and many other bass-heavy acts. "It's a wonderful event," says Mr Graham himself, quizzed by us about this year's fest. "I love coming over to play in your country, especially when there's a festival like Love Supreme, which has such a high-quality line-up. You can expect seriously funky grooves from me. Bass players, I'll see you in the front row!"

Info: www.lovesupremefestival.com

TOP MARKS

Celebrating the ongoing 40th anniversary of M.V. Pedulla Guitars, founded in 1975, the Mark Egan Signature model has been reissued with modern features that weren't available in the original. The Anniversary Edition Mark Egan bass is a five-string with 19mm string spacing and has a body shape similar to the MVP model but with a slightly thinner neck, no heel, and the treble horn cut slightly lower, according to Pedulla. This limited edition bass guitar has a greater-than-AAAAA grade flame maple body, an ebony fingerboard, Pedulla's Bartolini PJ pickups and electronics, a bone nut, and a finger ramp. It is available as fretted or fretless, with choices of hardware colour and in any current Pedulla finish.

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FOR WHOM THE BELLER TOLLS

Ace bassist Bryan Beller appears on guitar wizard Joe Satriani's new album, *Shockwave Supernova*, to be released in the UK on 24 July via Sony Music/Legacy Recordings. Beller will also be touring with Joe on a nine-date UK tour from 1 November at the O2 Manchester Apollo, alongside special guest Dan Patlansky. Go see him!

Info: www.satriani.com, www.bryanbeller.com



Pic by Christie Goodwin

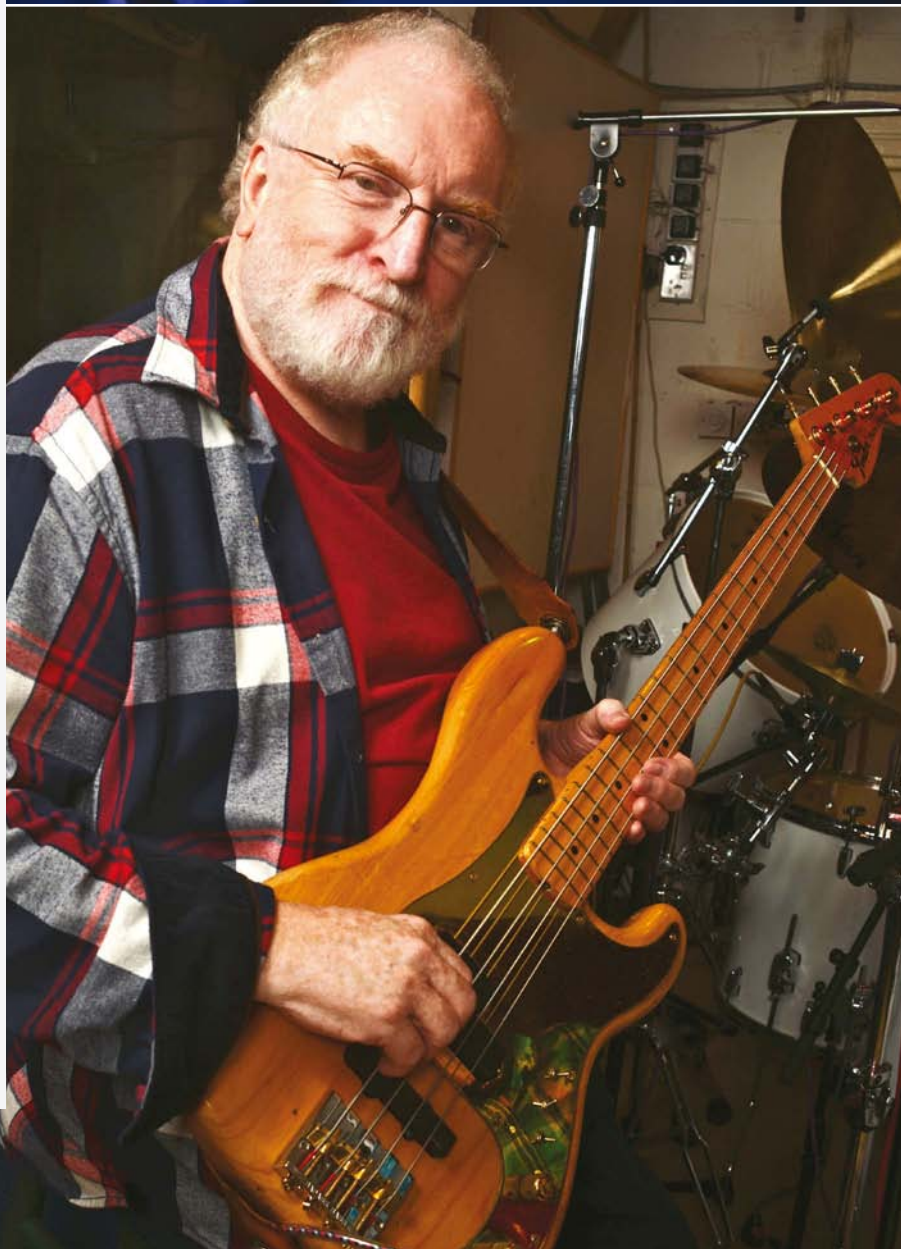
DOCTOR FOSTER

All-time session bass great Mo Foster has checked in with *BGM* for an update on what he's been up to, telling us: "In 2011 the University of Sussex, my alma mater, celebrated its 50th birthday. I put a band together for a reunion concert. At the start of the show, one of the singers announced that we had been asked to play something out of the charts. 'No problem,' he said, 'every song tonight has been out of the charts for over 40 years.' You're killing us, Mo..."

The great man continues: "Linda Hoyle, who just happened to be visiting England, joined us onstage that night and sang a couple of songs. She had been the lead singer in my early 70s jazz-rock band Affinity, who were managed by Ronnie Scott. In early 1971 the band split, and Linda recorded a solo album called *Pieces Of Me* (vinyl copies of this LP now change hands for over £1,000). The reunion sparked her desire to perform again, and she and I began writing and recording."

He adds: "The project was made slightly difficult because I live in London, England and Linda lives in London, Ontario, but it's one of those albums that had to be made - simply because it's a little piece of art. And it's been great fun. It took a year's planning, culminating in two intense weeks in a studio in Canada, but I really feel that this is the best album I have ever produced. A CD of the album, called *The Fetch*, will be released on Angel Air Records in August. Do you think it would be possible to give the CD a mention in the magazine?" Consider it done, that man!

Info: www.mofoster.com, www.angelair.co.uk



Revolver

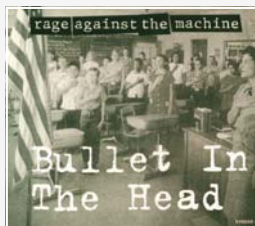
Every month we tell you the bass-line we can't stop listening to

THIS MONTH: 'Bullet In The Head'

Bassist: Tim Commerford

Album: *Rage Against The Machine*

Ah, why is it that we can't all write lines this simple, make a bazillion dollars and retire laughing to the Caribbean? Perhaps we're just not as gifted as the great Tim Commerford, Timmy C in Rage's early days, who laid down this simple octave-of-E-plus-E-plus-two-string-chord with insouciant ease back in 1992, when trousers and recording budgets were similarly generous in dimensions. The song itself is all about the enslavement of the masses by evil corporations and their satanic advertising campaigns, but we were too busy being enslaved by that unforgettable bass part.



Win

Three readers can nab copies each of Joe Satriani's *Shockwave Supernova* and the Aristocrats' *Tres Caballeros*, both featuring Bryan Beller on bass, by answering this simple question:

What is a supernova anyway?

- A A small car made by Vauxhall in the 80s
- B A star which explodes at half the speed of light
- C A cocktail from the planet Krypton

Answers by post to Bass Competition at the usual *BGM* address or go to www.bassguitarmagazine.com/competition. Closing date: 11 August.



Won

Congratulations to Paul Hindle who wins Simon Goulding's educational e-book, while Graham Horner, Luke Norton, Derice Lamb, Cliff Davis and Doug Sutton bag some tasty Elixir strings. A big thanks to all who entered.

ERRATUM

In our last issue, we incorrectly credited the suppliers of the Phil Jones M300 head and 12B cab: the correct credit should have read 'Supplied by Synergy Distribution and tested at the Great British Bass Lounge'. The offending member of staff has been whipped and then forced to restring all our basses. Apologies to all concerned.

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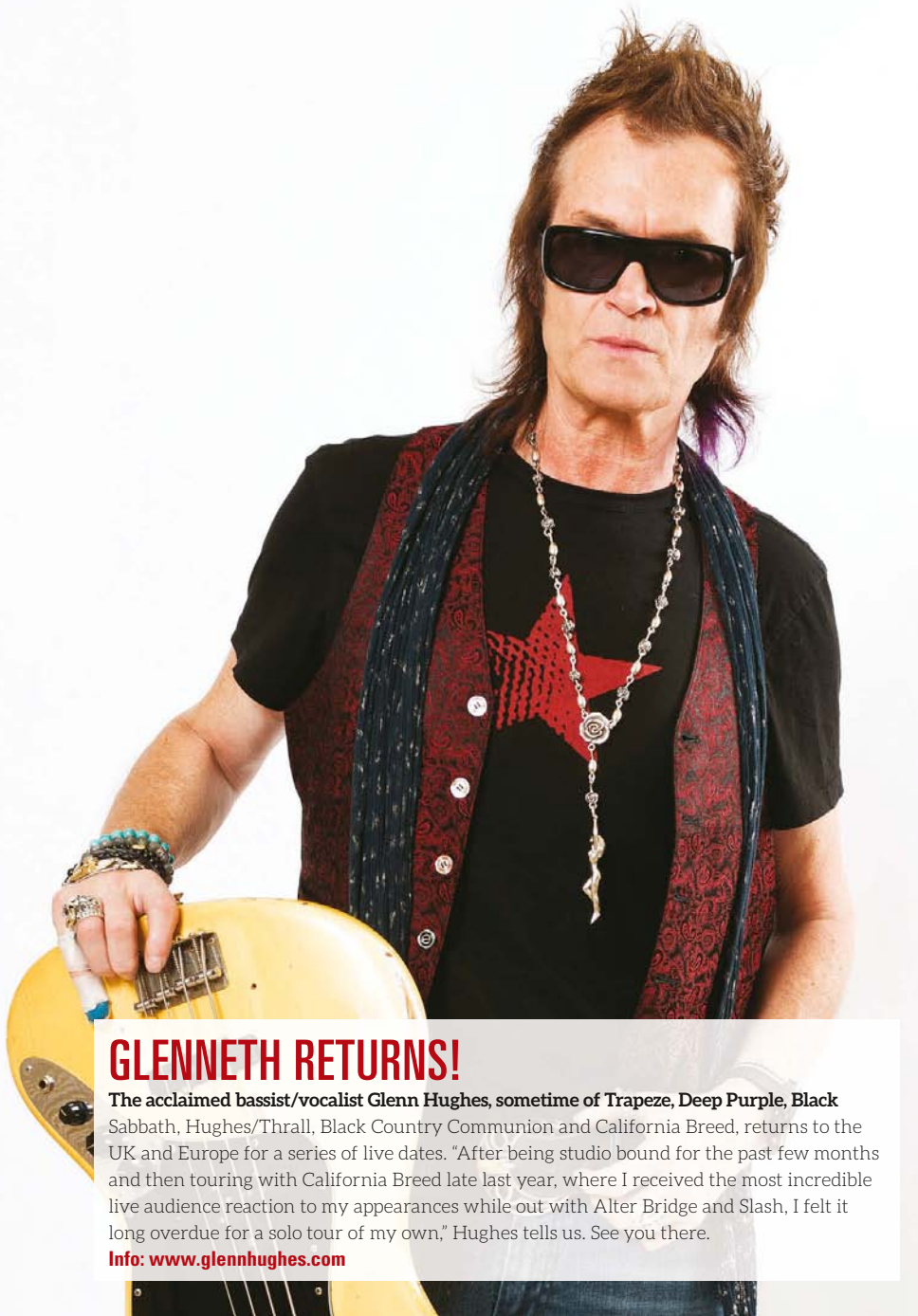


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GLENNETH RETURNS!

The acclaimed bassist/vocalist Glenn Hughes, sometime of Trapeze, Deep Purple, Black Sabbath, Hughes/Thrall, Black Country Communion and California Breed, returns to the UK and Europe for a series of live dates. "After being studio bound for the past few months and then touring with California Breed late last year, where I received the most incredible live audience reaction to my appearances while out with Alter Bridge and Slash, I felt it long overdue for a solo tour of my own," Hughes tells us. See you there.

Info: www.glennhughes.com

THE STRING'S THE THING

La Bella and SIT Strings both have new products out in time for Summer NAMM, where one of our dedicated bass experts will be giving them a thorough workout, we promise you that. First up, La Bella Vapor Shield are, it says here, "like no other string on the market because the surface of the string is modified during the treatment process. Using a highly sophisticated Ionic Vapor Process developed by Acoustic Science, proprietary compounds are activated in a glow discharge electromagnetic plasma, modifying the string's entire surface. The result is a string protected from grime, tarnishing, and oil residue." Now is that futuristic or what?

As for SIT, they tell us: "The RB Bass String starts with a 92/8 phosphor bronze under-wrap wire, over a hardtempered hexagonal steel core. Then, the Fusion Winding process uses electricity to fuse the phosphor bronze wrap to the core. The final wrap is available in either nickel plated steel or stainless steel. This innovative method is designed to fuse a string into one super-flexible mass, thus eliminating dead spots." Look out for tests as soon as they land on our doormat...

Info: www.labella.com, www.sitstrings.com



HIM TOO

U2 bassist Adam Clayton and Warwick have announced a new signature model. The Irish rocker's signature Streamer CV is the successor to Clayton's Reverso, released in 2010, and was used on U2's recent album, *Songs Of Innocence*.

Info: www.warwickbass.com

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DAVE SWIFT

Jools Holland, Joe Bonamassa, Adele,
George Benson, Chaka Khan, BB King,
David Sanborn, Gregory Porter
and well, we could be here all day.....

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BASSICALLY SPEAKING

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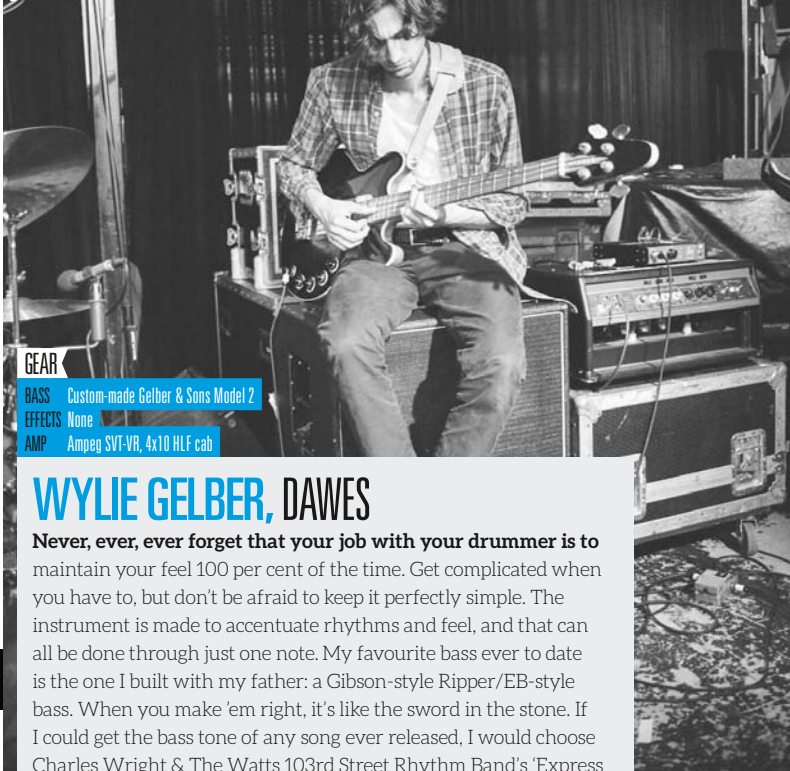
BASSES Ibanez SR5005 Prestige
EFFECTS Sansamp RBI, Darkglass Electronics B7K, Cali76 Compressor, Boss TU2, NS 2 ISP Technologies Decimator
AMPS Mesa Boogie Strategy 88 and Powerhouse cabinet

KEVIN BUTLER, THY ART IS MURDER

I use a pick for a hard, percussive attack and a lot of tremolo picking. I play a five-string bass, to utilise the lower tunings we play in and the extended range it offers. Tuning stability with the extended range means I don't have to use telegraph wires for strings. The bass tone relies on a consistent pick attack to gel with the wall of high gain guitars. I was a guitar player originally so there certainly has been a learning curve involved in the transition the last few years. My first bass was a Warwick Corvette, and when I first joined Thy Art I was playing a Warwick Streamer LX as well as a Streamer Stage II through-neck. They're great basses but the honk didn't really work out for our sound. My favourite bass ever to date is my new Ibanez SR5005 Prestige. The neck is absolutely insane and I would recommend it to anyone who has to play fast material and match the guitar riffs on a bass. I wouldn't be able to play some of the new material on a more cumbersome neck. At the end of June we head over to the USA for the Rockstar Energy Mayhem festival and then begin touring our new album *Holy War*. The first single is out in a few weeks.

www.facebook.com/thyartismurder

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WYLIE GELBER, DAWES

Never, ever, ever forget that your job with your drummer is to maintain your feel 100 per cent of the time. Get complicated when you have to, but don't be afraid to keep it perfectly simple. The instrument is made to accentuate rhythms and feel, and that can all be done through just one note. My favourite bass ever to date is the one I built with my father: a Gibson-style Ripper/EB-style bass. When you make 'em right, it's like the sword in the stone. If I could get the bass tone of any song ever released, I would choose Charles Wright & The Watts 103rd Street Rhythm Band's 'Express Yourself'. When playing with other artists, I always try to serve their songs and genre. But having said that, I really just do me and that's what I do well. And I most enjoy playing for people who understand that and enjoy what that brings to their songs.

www.dawestheband.com

LZI HAYES, TWOSIXONES

The secret of playing bass well is to thoroughly love what you do. Have confidence in how you do what you do and always try to complement the drummer. You're only as good as the drummer you're playing with. I do not play five- or six-string bass, because having to restring them would bankrupt me. I do not slap because I still haven't mastered it properly. Until I can slap like Mark King, then I'll keep it in the woodshed. My favourite bass ever to date is my Fender 1961 Jazz. Nothing has or will ever sound this good. My bass heroes are the late Mike Porcaro from Toto - he was such a classy player and never overplayed; I have him to thank for learning to play the bass - and Geddy Lee for being able to sing and play those parts... wow! Paul Simonon from the Clash made the bass look so cool. TwoSixOnes are currently touring Europe and the UK promoting our new single, 'Big Time'. We'll be playing festivals all through the summer.

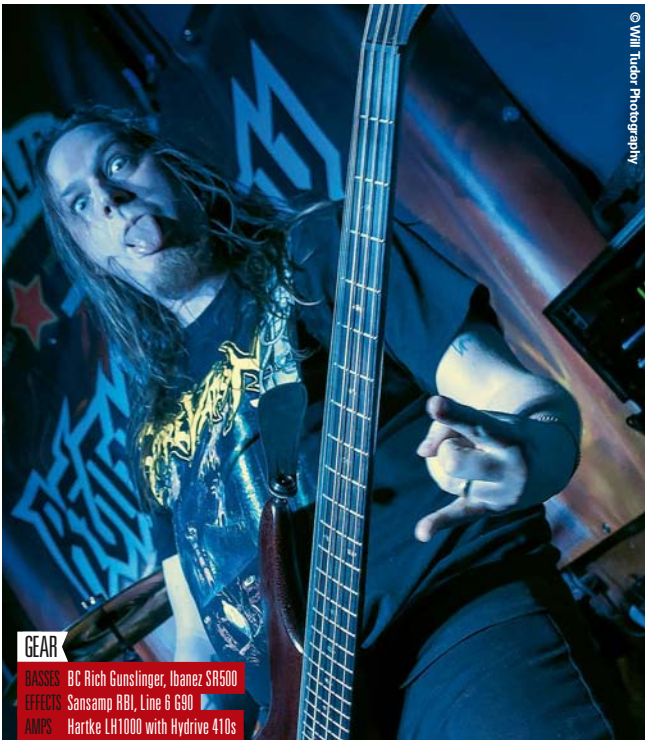
www.twosixones.com

GEAR

BASSES Spector Legend, Fender Jazz
EFFECTS T Rex Tube Squeezer, MXR Auto Q
AMPS Ampeg BA 115 HP, Marshall VBA400, Orange AD200B



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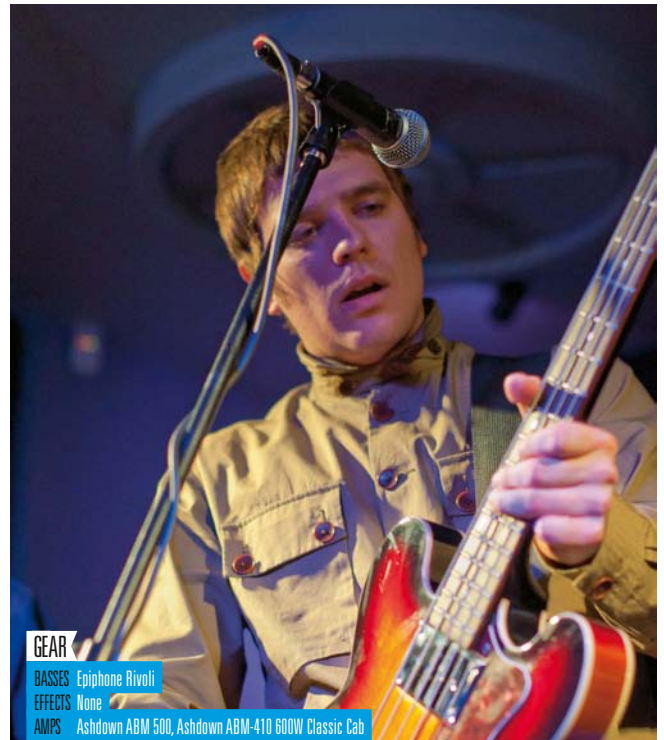
GEAR

BASSES BC Rich Gunslinger, Ibanez SR500
EFFECTS Sansamp RBI, Line 6 G90
AMPS Hartke LH1000 with Hydrive 410s

PAUL BIELBY, REIGN OF FURY

My bass style is supportive, in that I try to accent what's going on in the song. I like to underpin the beat and fit in bass runs when the guitars lay off a bit, which doesn't happen much in Reign Of Fury. They're pretty relentless, but as long as it suits the song I'm happy. I don't slap as I'd get slapped, I love the sound but it just doesn't suit thrash metal. Listening is very important, to your own band and others. When I was writing bass-lines for our new album, *Death Be Thy Shepherd*, I was constantly jamming to CDs, seeing how other players approached different riff and beat styles. I find it good to go and play someone else's music for a while: when I come back I'm usually fresher and ideas come easier. My favourite bass ever to date is my BC Rich Gunslinger with maple neck and reverse head, it's taken me ages to find one and I love it. The greatest bass player that ever lived is probably John Paul Jones or Jack Bruce for me: those guys have an incredible feel for where to take their music. We've also got a big UK tour lined up for the autumn to promote the album, and we're opening the Bloodstock Festival this year, which is a really privileged spot.

www.reignoffury.co.uk



GEAR

BASSES Epiphone Rivoli
EFFECTS None
AMPS Ashdown ABM 500, Ashdown ABM-410 600W Classic Cab

LOU TAYLOR, THE INCREDIBLE MAGPIE BAND

I've worked out how to play my bass riffs with a kind of strumming action that creates more energy and feels better when we play. Sometime bass players have one hand planted to the body of their guitar and can look really bored. This way, when done right, it feels and sounds great. I don't play five- or six-string bass because I don't feel the need for the extra strings for the type of music our band produces, and to be honest I just don't like the look of them. Nobody has ever shown me how to do anything on a bass guitar. I taught myself how to play standard six string guitar and eventually progressed to bass, so slapping has never been on the agenda: I suppose that's where my technique comes from. The secret of playing bass well? Without a shadow of doubt the secret is to be tight with the drums. You can be the most technical player in the world, but if you and the drums are out it's gonna sound shit. My first bass was an Epiphone Rivoli. The greatest bass player that ever lived was John Entwistle, obviously. Listen to *Quadrophenia* and you'll understand what I mean. Entwistle at his best.

www.facebook.com/theincrediblemagpieband



© Sharon Dursman

GEAR

BASSES Fender Mark Hoppus Precision, Fender American Vintage Jazz
EFFECTS Fulltone Bass Overdrive, Faralley Designated Driver
AMPS Ampeg SVT Classic, Ampeg SVT II, Orange AD200B MK3, 8x10 cabinets

SEM CHRISTOFFEL, VANDENBERG'S MOONKINGS

I would describe my bass style as raunchy, quick and to the point. I like four-string basses most, because they've got that classic vibe and sound of how the electric bass was originally invented. In my opinion, having limitations - like only four strings - actually stimulates creativity. Besides, it's bass. Four strings is all you really need. Two of my early bass heroes were Marcus Miller and Larry Graham. I studied my ass off learning about their slapping techniques and melodic approaches. I hardly ever use the slapping technique for rock music, though. The secret of playing bass well is having telepathic conversations with your drummer while playing. I started playing bass when I was 11. In the first few years I learned most things on a 1976 Ibanez copy of a Rickenbacker 4001. The playability was rather poor but I didn't care about that back then. Our self-titled debut album is out now on Mascot.

www.moonkingsband.com

THE LUTHIER

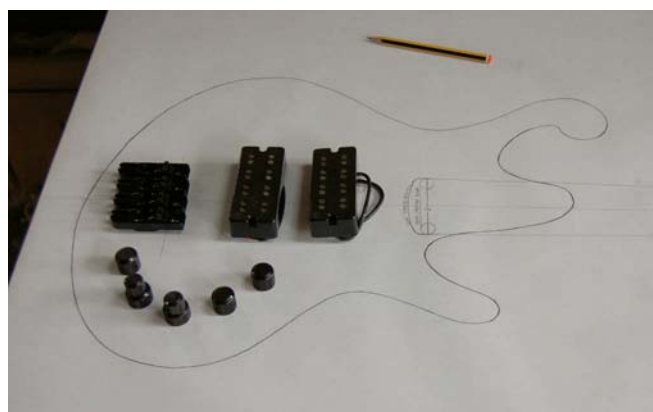
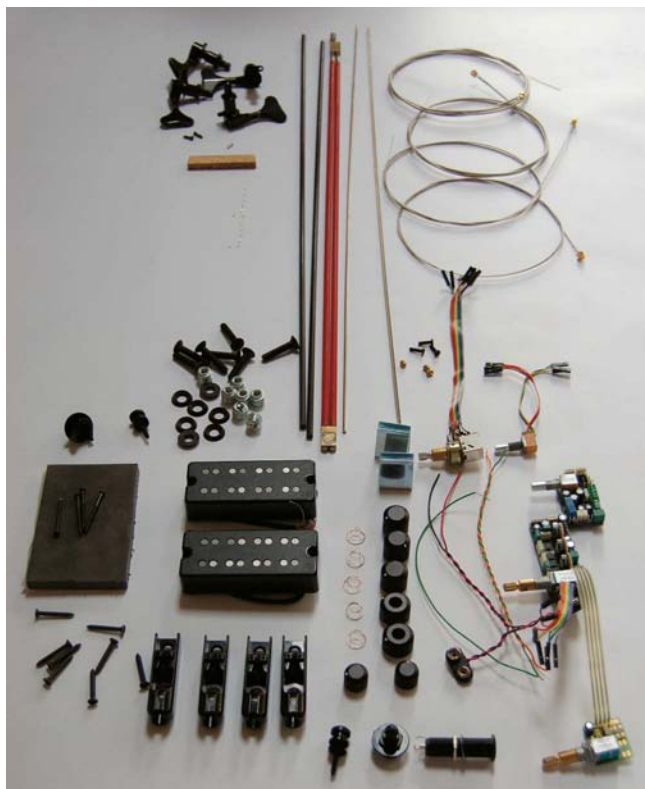
WELCOME TO A NEW COLUMN WRITTEN BY GEORGE MARTIN OF THOMAS AND GEORGE MARTIN DOUBLE BASS MAKERS, THE BRITISH FIRM RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WILLIAMSCOT ELECTRIC BASS RANGE. THIS MONTH GEORGE RUNS US THROUGH THE INITIAL STAGES OF A HIGH-SPEC ELECTRIC BASS BUILD. READ ON!

Welcome to our new bass-building column! For this build, we've decided to make a four-string, bolt-on bass guitar. The starting point is our Gagliano model, but we plan to reduce and simplify the horn where the strap post is situated. We're doing this to make the model look more elegant and give the instrument a more classic look. Our basic design works and will look pleasing to the eye, but as we want all of our basses to be individual, we sometimes change small elements of these designs. The Gagliano has smooth lines that flow together well, making the basic shape.

As this bass is going to be a four-string, we're going to use a 34" scale length, the standard for this instrument. Scale lengths can vary depending on what the player wants to feel, taking into account the number of strings and whether the instrument is fretted or not. Shorter-scale instruments can lack tension: this can of course be counteracted by different strings, but the tone of the bass will change too. We usually recommend a longer string length for five- and six-string basses as the clarity achieved on the low B is improved with increased tension. Accuracy when playing on a fretless bass is also improved by having an increased string length.

Another important consideration when designing an instrument is the wood choice. This can have a huge bearing on how the instrument sounds, feels and looks. Different types of wood will also affect the final weight of the bass, which is something that people often comment on as it affects the playing as well as the transportation of the bass. There's nothing worse after a hard night's gigging than lugging a ton of timber back home!

For this bass we're going to use three different choices of English wood: ash, sycamore and walnut. As is the case with our double basses, made in the workshop alongside the bass guitars, we are very proud to use homegrown woods. Each has its part to play in making the Williamscot tone.



As this is going to be a smaller instrument we are going to use denser, heavier cuts of wood: these will supply a clear and responsive tone with sustain that will go on into next week. We're going to use heavier ash for the main bulk of the body, with a thin slice of walnut and maple before a top of beautifully book-matched walnut. This should make for a visually striking instrument, with the ash providing punch and weight to the sound, the softer sycamore a rounded tone layer and then the more dense walnut giving cut and sustain to the sound. See you next month!

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Applied Improvisation with

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PLEASE MIND THE GAPS, SAYS NIK PRESTON IN ROCKSCHOOL'S NEW COLUMN

EXAMPLE 1 Cycle of fourths

Leading on from Joe's column last month, we're going to take a look at an exercise designed to improve your knowledge of intervals and fretboard familiarity.

First, it is worth acquainting yourself with the cycle of fourths as notated in **Example 1**. Many musicians' introduction to the cycle of fourths is through learning the order of flat keys, but it has many more practical applications. One of these is to use the cycle to practise any new vocabulary and thus ensure you are always developing any new idea in every key.

Now, through using the cycle as a device over which to practise any new, pitch-specific vocabulary, you can specifically target areas that you know to be most in need of attention: intervals, arpeggios, inversions, chromaticism, enclosure and so on.

Example 2 shows how you can use the cycle to practise intervals. For illustrative purposes we're going to use major 9ths, but my strong advice would be to target those that you know you're least familiar with.

With the metronome set at a slow tempo, say around 40BPM to begin with, you simply need to look at the chord, play the interval and then play the root note. This will go some way to help free you from any motor or pattern orientated clichés referred to in Joe's first column. If you were to play from the root first, you could soon fall into the trap of seeing and playing patterns on the fretboard without truly thinking and hearing the interval first.

Once you feel comfortable with your ability to think, hear and play the interval in every key, through the cycle, then progress to

EXAMPLE 2 Major 9ths through the cycle of fourths

EXAMPLE 3 Applying 9ths to progressions

EXAMPLE 4 Major 9ths/Minor 9ths through 'Giant Steps'

applying to a context. This could either be the chords to a whole tune, or just a section of it, as in **Example 3**, which is an abridged version of the chords to Marvin Gaye's 'What's Going On'. Alternatively, it could be a more difficult sequence from a contrasting genre such as John Coltrane's 'Giant Steps' as in **Example 4**, where you can see that we're using a mixture of major 9ths and minor 9ths.

Try to dedicate as many short, focused practice sessions to this concept as possible. Joe's back next month! ■

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BASSCHAT

THIS MONTH SILVIA BLUEJAY OF BASSCHAT INTRODUCES THE FORUM'S REGULAR BASHES

The period from late spring to early autumn is the Basschat Bashes season; we've had some great ones already this year, and more will follow before its end. So what is a Bass Bash? Does it involve hitting a musical instrument with a blunt object? No, it doesn't!

Our regional Bashes are member meetups organised by Basschatters who are active in our virtual community and also socially involved in their real-life neighbourhoods; they are held in places such as schools and churches which offer several large rooms suitable for different music-related activities. Typically, there will be a foyer for admission, refreshments, a bass-themed raffle and a bit of a natter to catch up with old friends; an auditorium for attending talks, masterclasses and presentations;

"AT A BASH, MEMBERS CAN FINALLY SEE EACH OTHER IN PERSON AFTER TALKING ONLINE"

a large 'noisy room' for testing basses, amps and cabs in more spec permutations than you can shake a (drum)stick at; a 'quiet room' for checking acoustic set-ups; and often a separate area with a drumkit (hopefully complete with drummer), a guitar or two, and as many basses as you like, for a bit of jamming. Any admission charge money left after expenses is given to charities or youth centres chosen by the bash organisers and approved by the community.

At a Bash, members can finally see each other in person after talking online, sometimes for years; gear is brought in for other bassists to admire, try out and, in some cases, buy; tests and comparisons are performed on instruments, effects and amplification; and Basschatters with specialist knowledge hold informative talks and question-and-answer sessions for attendees. The events also give participants the opportunity to strengthen online friendships over a cuppa and that long-yearned-for rig or weird-and-wonderful custom bass.

A good way to welcome and encourage new members to become regulars is by showing them that there's more to this community than arguing about roundwounds versus flatwounds, solid state versus valves, or Fender versus any other make you can think of. You can meet the guy you've been having an online spat with about whether six- and seven-string basses are the devil's own tools or really cool instruments, and see if indeed he looks and sounds exactly as you imagined - or totally the opposite! Once you meet face to face, you're actually likely to forget about all that and become friends over your shared love of music.

Each Bash takes the name of the region it's held in - the South East Bash in Addlestone, Herts Bash in Hatfield, Midlands Bash in Leicester, South Wales Bash in Cardiff, and North East Bash in Gateshead. However, Bashes are only regional in the sense that they are held every year in the same venues in easy-to-reach areas all over the country - Basschatters from anywhere can attend any bash if they are in the area on the correct day. I routinely report from the Bashes I attend, with photos - loads of photos! After all, no photos means it didn't happen, right? - as well as video snippets and blow-by-blow diaries.

Google my name alongside 'bassbash' or 'basschat bash' and check out my blog entries, or visit the Events section on Basschat and click on the relevant threads. For some highly entertaining banter, and some serious and not-so-serious descriptions of what 'really' goes on at these events, search General Discussion for the thread titled 'What the Hell is a Bass Bash Anyway?'. See you at the next one! ■

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(Miles Davis, Jimmy Smith, Elvin Jones, John McLaughlin)



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THE MU PAGE

THE MU ADVISE ON PACKING YOUR BASS CASE FOR OVERSEAS WORK

Thinking of gigging abroad? Taking your first hop across the water, you'll need to think about many things – from securing gigs to finding funding to getting the right insurance...

ARE YOU PREPPED FOR EXPORT?

Whether you're heading down the showcase, guerrilla gig or festival route, you need to be export ready. That means you need to be in a position to prove to bookers overseas that you can haul in a crowd, garner some press attention and put on a good show – and have something to promote and sell to the industry. Make sure you have a strong, comprehensive online presence. Use the right social and digital platforms for the right countries. YouTube will probably be a key part of your plan, as that's where engagers go to hear and see you.

IT'S ALL ABOUT WHO YOU KNOW

While there are UK-based promoters and bookers with solid contacts who can smooth the passage for bands wanting to tour abroad, they come at a price. If you don't have much in the way of funds at your disposal, arranging a tour will need some lateral thinking and plenty of networking. "Artists can get overseas gigs by talking to musicians from other countries who are gigging in the UK. Word-of-mouth contacts and recommendations can be invaluable," says MU live official Kelly Wood.

Focusing on genre-specific festivals and events is a good starting point. You may be able to tap into an existing jazz, folk, heavy metal or other circuit. Want to create a little more buzz? Guerrilla gigs in sitting rooms and empty spaces have increased in popularity since the Libertines gatecrashed fans' front rooms in the early noughties – and it's not just the preserve of the lesser-known acts.

Prince embarked on his own guerrilla-style tour in 2014, playing an intimate gig in Lianne La Havas' sitting room. Organisations exist to support guerrilla gigs, such as Sofar Sounds (sofarsounds.com) who connect artists willing to play with those eager to host. Another option may be industry showcase events – from Womex in Europe to SXSW in Austin, Texas.

...AND THE MONEY

Touring overseas can be expensive. It's not just transport, food and accommodation. Take into account hidden expenses, such as insurance, repair and breakdown costs. Still, there are ways of getting funding. PRS for Music Foundation's International Showcase Fund, UKTI's Music Export Growth Scheme and the British Council/Arts Council's Artists International Development Fund are good places to start.

If you're planning a tour around Europe with gigs in different venues in different countries, we strongly advise you contact the MU to discuss international differences in tax law.

AN EXPERIENCE FOR LIFE

From the goldrush of showcase events via the buzz of foreign festivals to the thrill of enjoying cultural differences, playing overseas provides lifetime memories. For the latest advice on visas, insurance, tax laws and travelling with instruments, get in touch with your regional office via theMU.org.

MU members get access to a range of career development advice. If you're considering a change, contact your regional office and book a one-to-one with your MU official for bespoke advice. For general advice and more information about how to join the Union, please visit theMU.org.



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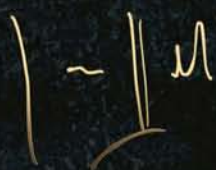
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Stuart Hamm is one of the bass world's great composers, performers and characters. Joel McIver meets the maestro for a chat about all things bass. Flip to page 26 for a lesson in pure Hamm-style awesomeness!

— Photography by Eckie —



W e like to make our interviewees earn their keep here at *BGM*, so when the great Stuart Hamm walks off stage at this year's London Bass Guitar Show at Olympia, we don't let him rest up after his exertions: we give him a

Coke and a chocolate bar ("Powered by Twix!" he laughs) and push him onto the sofa in the green room and make him answer questions until his head spins.

Not that the great man shows any sign of needing a break, even after running around the stage, tapping and slapping like a mad person in front of 400 people for 45 minutes: Hamm relaxes, sips his caffeinated beverage and talks animatedly about his career to date with great enthusiasm. In fact this could serve as a useful metaphor for Hamm's life in general: at 50 years old, having played with the great and the good of rock for 30 years, he's showing no sign of slowing down...

"The set was great!" Hamm tells us between bites of his refreshing chocolate treat. "I hadn't changed my strings in about three days, but I changed them right before I went on so it sounded killer. I'm a freak when it comes to strings, which are GHS Boomers, 45 to 105: I even change them on my main bass during a set! I know, I know... but especially when I'm doing my solo stuff, the sound and sustain that my strings have when they're new is really part of the sound. Also, I have one of those really weird toxic sweats, so with all the sliding I do, the sound does change."

The Boomers to which he is referring are attached to a Warwick prototype with EMG pickups which doesn't have an assigned name just yet: Hamm calls it 'Cap' after the Captain America star stuck to the back. So how did he hook up with Warwick, we ask? "Steve Bailey and all the other guys I know were saying 'You've got to check out Warwick!' so I went over there and checked out the facilities," he tells us. "The guys at Warwick were really passionate and it seemed like a perfect fit, so we're just at the last stages of tweaking the red one I have now. I've always taken

the MI side of my career seriously, and I've learned a lot: I was the first person to have a Fender signature bass, the Urge, so my knowledge of basses and what I want from them is ever-evolving as I continue to grow and learn, as a luthier as well as a musician."

He continues: "What I've tried to do with Warwick is design a balanced, ergonomic instrument. Making a bass for me is like making a record. The best thing a composer can do is hire great musicians and tell them, 'Do what you do!' and I do the same thing with instrument design. One thing that I champion is the ergonomics of playing. I've been through a number of playing-related injuries, and these are so rarely addressed in any of the bass schools where I teach. It seems criminal to me that people my age are going through various stages of injury, because there are easy steps you can take to prevent those, especially if you get to people while they're young and tell them about posture and warming up and introduce them to the Alexander technique."

Is Hamm a fan of extended range basses, or is he strictly a four-string man? He laughs and asks: "Have you ever seen me play a five- or six-string bass? Well, there you go... If you have limits to your instrument, you are forced to find the art within those limits, which is a pretentious way of saying that five- and six-strings are too difficult for me. And with the tapping that I do, the whole key would change. I play five-string when I have to, of course, and I admire players who do it well. I watched Nathan East play his six-string bass at a James Jamerson tribute concert recently - and man, he had the best-sounding low B

"ON EVERY RECORD I TRY TO COME UP WITH SOME NEW TECHNIQUE"

string I've ever heard. Every note he played was like a discovery."

Hamm's forthcoming sixth solo album is *The Book Of Lies*, a collection of songs which span the full gamut of dynamic bass playing. Readers familiar with Hamm's astoundingly technical material will find it here, but he often eschews the high-speed, high-octane playing for emotive, subtle songwriting that is all about atmosphere rather than technique. Asked about his evolution as a songwriter, Hamm explains: "On every record I try to come up with some new technique, like on the last record I played some sliding harmonics. But I was listening to some of my earlier records, like *The Urge* (1991), which I sang on, and which I hired [Mötley Crüe drummer] Tommy Lee and Joe Satriani to play on, with the idea that it would sell a million copies and I'd get rich and buy a house in Bel Air, and I realised that nowadays I'm free to write the music that I hear. That's the wonderful thing about turning 50 years old. You don't give a shit about a lot of stuff, because you don't feel under pressure!"

As for that title? "The 'Book Of Lies' is a code word on tour for what we call the itinerary," he chuckles. "Someone will say, 'What time's soundcheck?' and we'll say 'Why don't you look in the book of lies?' because it'll say 'Soundcheck: 5pm' and you'll get to the venue and they'll say 'Soundcheck's at eight'. That's the first song on the album, and it's a really funky-ass track: I wrote it to be my [the Meters' super-funky 1969 song] 'Sissy Strut', with a single line with no chords or harmony."

He adds: "A major part of the album is a seven-piece suite called 'Le Petit Suite For Solo Bass'. Each piece uses a different technique - harmonics, chords, slapping, tapping and so on. As a kid playing flute, I would go to competitions and there would be a catalogue of beginner and intermediate jazz and classical pieces. Similarly, although we can't deny that solo bass is now an actual idiom, there's very few actual charted-out pieces for the genre, so I wrote this suite in the hope that high school kids would pick one of the pieces and perform them for auditions - and in learning them, acquire the techniques involved."

There's a real sense of groove on Hamm's new album: a human touch that is worlds away from the super-shreddy technical stuff so prevalent in his early career. As he explains, "I've worked in the studio in the past with Steve Vai and Joe Satriani and all those Zappa guys who were so precise, and if you make a record that sounds like you're trying not to make a mistake, it sounds Pro-Tooled - even though it isn't! I've gotten much better at trying to capture a performance: the mistakes are usually the good stuff! So we mixed the record to sound like three or four guys playing together live."

Still, it's not easy getting these complex pieces down on a hard drive, he admits. "It's difficult sometimes, because I'll go and listen to [the late Canadian pianist] Glenn Gould and then go back and listen to what I've recorded - and all I hear is fret buzz! I can hear my hands moving from position to position, and so I try to punch in the notes afterwards, but then I realise that it doesn't sound like a bass guitar any more. The reason it sounds that way is because that's the way it sounds when you play! It's never going to sound like Glenn Gould playing piano. But when my bass is set



“SOMETIMES I THINK A GOOD BASS PLAYER IS INVISIBLE AND THEY MAKE THE ENTIRE SONG SOUND AMAZING WITHOUT YOU REALLY NOTICING THEM”

up correctly, and I have the right Hartke head and cabinet, and the strings are broken in enough, then there have been times in my life when I've played well and I've been able to coax something new out of the music."

Asked if he feels that he is improving as a bass player, Hamm tells us: "I'm definitely getting better in every way. Maybe I've slowed down a little bit, but compositionally I'm really pleased with the way I'm going. I'm playing upright bass now for the first time, for example. People ask me 'Who's your favourite bass player?' and I say 'Me!' because if I didn't like the way it sounded when I played bass, I'd play it some other way. I'm not trying to be egotistical! There's no competition among bass players: we're a band of brothers. As you get older, taste kicks in a little bit and you don't feel the need to show off any more.

"Sometimes I think a good bass player is invisible and they make the entire song sound amazing without you really noticing them. Versatility is important: there's work for bass players who show up on time and can play with their fingers and a pick, and they play upright and sing and so on. I'm always happy to hear from ex-students of mine who are working on cruise ships and so on, because they're working, and work is good."

Asked for some final words of wisdom, Hamm explains: "It's great to see in the UK that there is an environment where bass players can get work by reading music. When I do clinics here I'm able to bring students up and they can play from charts. But the power of music is what's important: to me, the point is to create music with other people, and if you can make people dance by playing a simple bass-line in 'Poker Face' by Lady Gaga, that's just as important as nailing all the changes in John Coltrane's 'Giant Steps.' ■

The Book Of Lies is out now. Info: www.stuarthamm.net.



Bass educator Stuart Clayton presents an exclusive lesson for Hamm fans...

Throughout his career, Stuart Hamm has continuously pushed the technical boundaries of the instrument. In the late 80s he redefined the limits of slapping and tapping techniques, releasing popular instructional DVDs such as *Slap, Pop & Tap For The Bass* and *Deeper Inside The Bass*. His innovative approach to the instrument has continued over the course of his last two albums, 2012's *Just Outside Of Normal*, and the recently released *The Book Of Lies*. Let's look at some of Hamm's most recent ideas.

EXAMPLE 1: SLIDING HARMONICS

This is a technique which can be heard on 'Windsor Mews' from *Just Outside Of Normal* and involves sliding harmonics around the neck to create new pitches. To perform this line, fret the harmonics at the 12th fret of the A, D and G strings - the beauty of harmonics is that they will continue to ring after you release your fingers. With all three notes still ringing, use the first finger of the picking hand and the first finger of the fretting hand to slide the G harmonic up to the B at the 16th fret, and the A down to the G at the 10th fret. Take care to apply enough pressure to move the pitch of the note, without pressing down so hard that you get fretted notes.

For the next chord repeat the process, this time sliding the A down to F# and the G up to A. This will create a D major chord in first inversion. For the next chord, fret the 12th fret harmonics as follows: the E with the first finger, the D with the second and the G with the third. Slide the E down to C and the G down to E. Keep the

90

A7(sus4) G A7(sus4) D/F# Em7 C(sus2) C A7(sus4)

Harmonics (see performance notes)

12 16 12 14 12 9 12 10 9 12 12

12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12

12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12

G

3 2 0 10 9 12 12 12 9 10 0 2 3

Am7

0 3 2 0 12 15 14 12 14 12 14 15 12 0 2 3 0

G7

3 2 0 3 0 9 12 10 12 10 12 9 0 3 0 2 3

Em7(b5)

0 3 1 0 2 0 8 7 9 7 8 0 2 0 1 3 0

D ringing: this will create a Cadd2 sound. Finally, touch the D harmonic with the first finger of the right hand, and move it down to a C, resolving the tension. This is a tricky technique to get right, but sounds great when you've mastered it.

EXAMPLE 2: OPEN STRING ARPEGGIOS

One of Stu's frequent techniques is the use of open strings as 'jump points' to move around the neck. You'll be able to hear examples of this on 'Dr Gradus Ad Parnassum' and 'Country Music' from his debut album *Radio Free Albemuth*: 'Open Note Aria' from his latest album *The Book Of Lies* uses the concept extensively.

This example demonstrates how to use the technique to perform a G major two-octave arpeggio across the fingerboard. When playing this, move your fretting hand to the G at the 10th fret as soon you play the open D.

The use of open strings allows the fretting hand time to move to the higher fret positions, meaning that it's possible to play these arpeggios very quickly. Here are some further arpeggios that can be played using the technique: See which arpeggios you can find to play using this technique.

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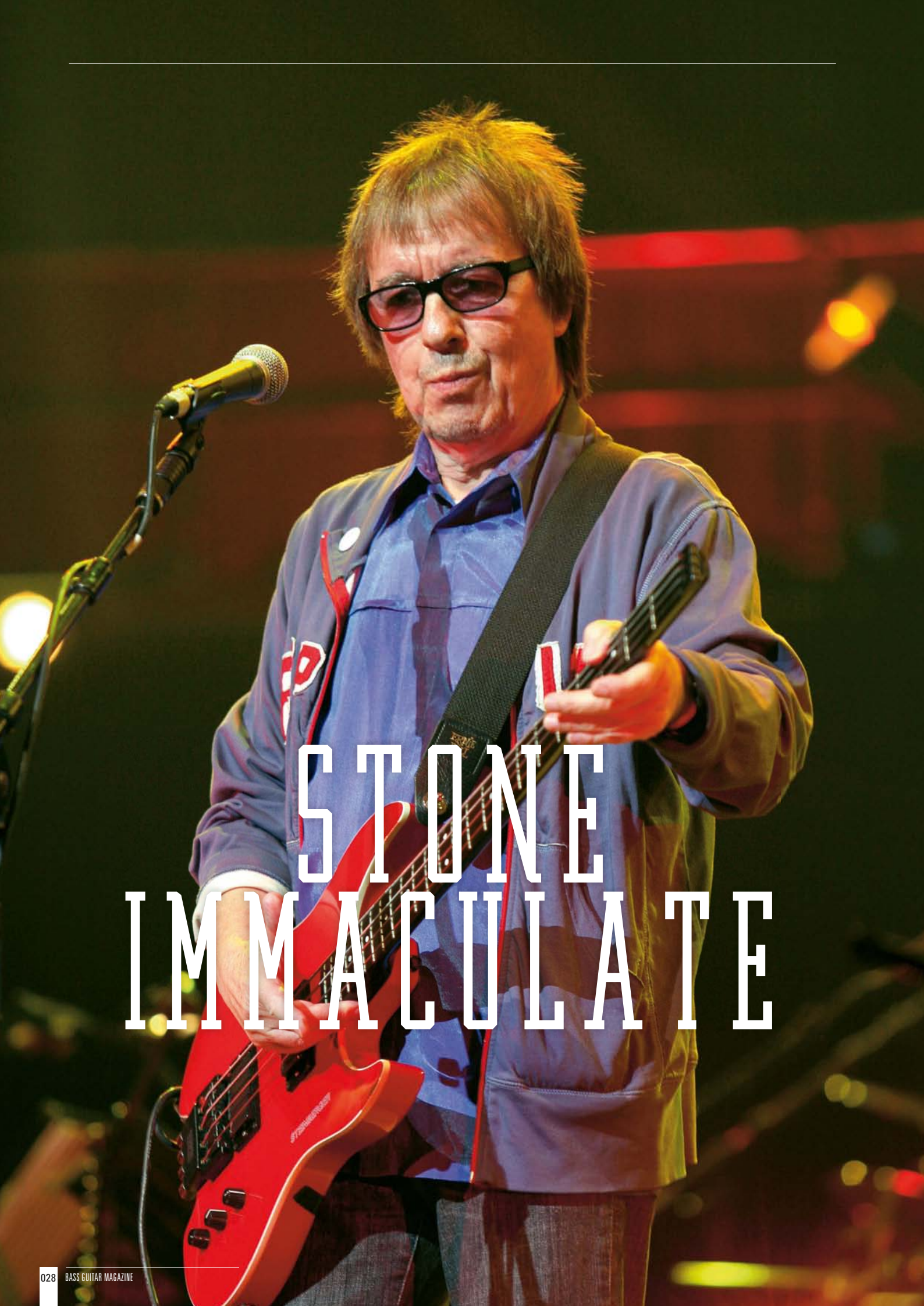
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STONE IMMACULATE

Sometime Rolling Stone Bill Wyman returns with a new album and signature bass. Paul Trynka asks the sticky-fingered questions

Photography by Judy Totton

There's no place like home. While his ex-bandmates head for the stadia of North America, Bill Wyman has been busy in his basement – where he cooked up his aptly-named *Back To Basics*, his first solo album in over 30 years, aided by the home-made bass that underpinned his band's rise to fame 50 years ago.

Sitting in Sticky Fingers, the Kensington restaurant that features a luscious selection of his old basses, plus the Gibson Les Paul goldtop that the late guitarist Brian Jones played for his very last public appearance with the band, Wyman is relaxed and almost uncharacteristically cheery. It's been 20 years since he left the Stones, but the joy of a low-key career, away from the hassles is one, he says, that's "much more fun".

Over the past couple of decades, Wyman has produced plenty of albums with his Rhythm Kings, the blues and roots band that hinges on musical luminaries and friends like Georgie Fame and Geraint Watkins. The idea of a solo release, he says, came "when I was listening to some old demos, and suddenly started

an upbeat, positive vibe. The optimistic feel denotes something of a renaissance for the 78-year-old, who has three young daughters – one of whom, Matilda, helped audition the new material along with her friends: "I thought they'd like the newer, more uptempo stuff, but it turns out they like blues. It still appeals to a younger generation."

Compared to musicians starting out, Wyman reckons that he and his ex-bandmates benefited from a freedom that's gone today – even if it was harder work back then. "You had to find out how to do everything yourself," he says. "It was totally different from today, where everyone wants to become a star and go on TV or Youtube – we were doing it with no idea at all that it would become a big deal. We did it because we loved the music."

Wyman's new album, both in its bass-lines and its cover, pays tribute to the incredible primitiveness of the music scene when he first started out, for his current instrument of choice is a modern Bass Centre reissue of the practically home-made bass that kicked off his career. Most of the instruments on offer when he decided to take up the instrument were "pretty horrible", including the Dallas Tuxedo bass that his friend, drummer Tony Chapman, helped source. With Tony's encouragement, Wyman took the primitive, single-cutaway instrument round to a neighbour, who owned a fretsaw; soon the instrument was a double-cutaway fretless.

Chapman later joined the Stones, which is how Wyman first hooked up with the band. The former was booted out a few weeks later, but Wyman stayed on for three decades. That first bass saw him through many of those decades: he continued using it despite several endorsement deals, and reckons the Fender Mustang bass, often associated with him thanks to its use on several seminal Stones tours, was "OK", but never appealed in the same way. The original sits in a glass case on the wall of Sticky Fingers, replaced by the modern replica. He explains: "It was made by Barry Moorhouse from the Bass Centre in Surrey. He told me lots of other people love the production model, including girls, because the neck's so slim."

The instrument itself is deliciously distinctive – a small slab alder body with simple pickguard, one humbucker and one Baldwin-style pickup, like the one that Wyman added to his own, but with a solid, modern bridge-tail-piece with chunky saddles replacing the original's unadjustable, pressed metal affair. With its 30-inch scale, it's extremely compact, but with a distinct, rather than woolly, basic tone. "It really is the perfect bass for me," Wyman adds. "That's why I put it on the album sleeve!" His main version is fretted, although the Bass Centre is planning to deliver him a fretless instrument, and are currently considering a stripped-down, single-pickup 'Junior Blues' model.

As one of Britain's leading bassists from his first Stones show on December 14, 1962, Wyman had to contend with the lack of knowledge about his instrument in those early days. He'd managed to get close to the sound he wanted, initially with a homemade bass cabinet: "My sound has

"EVERYONE WANTS TO BECOME A STAR AND GO ON TV OR YOUTUBE"

thinking, 'These sound pretty good!' And it just grew from there..."

Wyman's solo albums were a big deal in the 1970s, when he famously became the only Stone to have a solo hit – much to the chagrin of Mick Jagger, who hired the hippest producers and musicians for his own solo works, which mostly sank without trace. Yet those days were "a real drag, dealing with a company and everything they'd line up for you", which is why recording the skeleton of his album in the basement was "low-key. It just grew bit by bit. I wasn't even thinking in terms of it being an album until I played it to friends, and they said 'people need to hear this!'" The initial songs included the laid-back, sweetly melodic 'November And Stuff' – a song about money, initially intended as a follow-up to Wyman's 1981 hit 'Je Suis Un Rock Star', but which, with its shuffling Alabama 3 groove, sounds startlingly contemporary.

Most of the songs (heretically) were built around a core of acoustic guitar, played by long-time collaborator Terry Taylor; these were augmented in two stages, as more friends, including Mark Knopfler and long-term Stones engineer Glyn Johns, suggested improvements, firstly with drummer Graham Broad and keyboardist Guy Fletcher, while Robbie Macintosh's guitar lines were added later, for emphasis here and there. Although the whole album shares the same JJ Cale-ish groove, along with a distinctive Wyman world-view ("quirky, is what everyone called it") the newer songs especially share

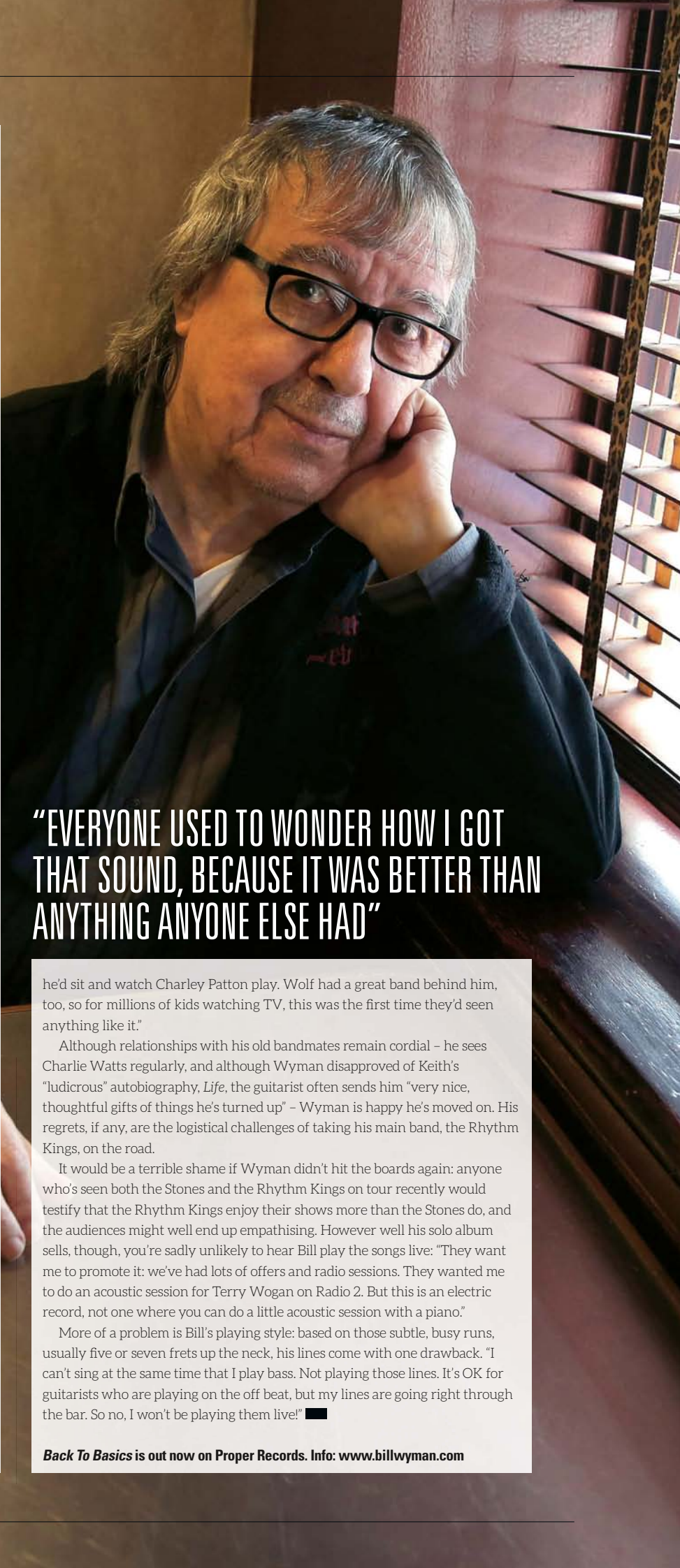
always been about that bass, short scale, and 18-inch speakers," he says. Yet, in Britain's mostly primitive recording studios, capturing that sound on tape wasn't easy: "The one thing is that they didn't really understand how to record bass and drums in the studios we worked in then. So the record would come out, and you couldn't hear the bass at all, and you couldn't hear Charlie's bass drum either," he says. "It bothered me, but I'd come to accept it, that it was about the whole band and not just me. But finally, with some of the remasters you can hear it properly!"

It was those 2002 Abkco masters that first revealed the subtle sleaziness behind Wyman's playing, especially the fluid creativity of classic sides like 'Under My Thumb'. Of the original versions, it's probably the band's first Top 20 hit, 'I Wanna Be Your Man', that first revealed his potential - its intensity and distortion, helped by the absence of manager and Phil Spector wannabe Andrew Oldham for that session, helped inspire American garage rock. "People go on about that bass-line," says Wyman, "but it's really just a simple walking bass, except it's doubled up in tempo."

By the time of the band's first American tour, the Stones had already scored their first endorsement deal, which saw Bill eventually bag his own Vox V248 Wyman bass. Today, he reckons the instrument "really wasn't very good" - but adds that when the band first hit the States in 1964, he finally had his sound down. "When we got Vox involved, they supplied the bass and the amplification. I had a 100-watt top and two cabinets, about two feet high, each with an 18-inch speaker. We'd split the lead from the amplifier to the two cabinets, and placed one on either side of the stage. Everyone used to wonder how I got that sound, because it was better than anything anyone else had."

That first Stones US tour also revealed the gulf between English and American recording techniques. The whole band was enthused about recording at 2120 Michigan, the Chess studios, where so many of their idols, from Chuck Berry to Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf to Little Walter had recorded. They recorded the hits 'Time Is On My Side' and 'It's All Over Now' at that first session, which was a revelation: "Ron Malo [the main Chess engineer] was terrific, he really knew how to record. I remember him telling me, 'Plug in there.' It was a socket on the wall, and I was looking around to see if it was connected to an amplifier by hidden wires." This was, of course, Wyman's first experience of DI recording.

Although Wyman's personal assistant occasionally interrupts our conversation should your fearless interviewer have the gall to ask about the 'old days', it's obvious that Wyman feels a justifiable pride in his band's role in pioneering the blues, and alerting mainstream America to its own heritage. They witnessed Howlin' Wolf's TV debut in May 1965, sitting down at the great man's feet for his performance: "It was a very special moment, all sitting there," says Bill. "We were taking something that America had, and introducing it to them. And it was all the more amazing, in that Wolf introduced us to this elderly gentleman who he said was a friend. Brian and I went over and chatted to him, and it was Son House - this fantastic legend, who told us how



"EVERYONE USED TO WONDER HOW I GOT THAT SOUND, BECAUSE IT WAS BETTER THAN ANYTHING ANYONE ELSE HAD"

he'd sit and watch Charley Patton play. Wolf had a great band behind him, too, so for millions of kids watching TV, this was the first time they'd seen anything like it."

Although relationships with his old bandmates remain cordial - he sees Charlie Watts regularly, and although Wyman disapproved of Keith's "ludicrous" autobiography, *Life*, the guitarist often sends him "very nice, thoughtful gifts of things he's turned up" - Wyman is happy he's moved on. His regrets, if any, are the logistical challenges of taking his main band, the Rhythm Kings, on the road.

It would be a terrible shame if Wyman didn't hit the boards again: anyone who's seen both the Stones and the Rhythm Kings on tour recently would testify that the Rhythm Kings enjoy their shows more than the Stones do, and the audiences might well end up empathising. However well his solo album sells, though, you're sadly unlikely to hear Bill play the songs live: "They want me to promote it: we've had lots of offers and radio sessions. They wanted me to do an acoustic session for Terry Wogan on Radio 2. But this is an electric record, not one where you can do a little acoustic session with a piano."

More of a problem is Bill's playing style: based on those subtle, busy runs, usually five or seven frets up the neck, his lines come with one drawback. "I can't sing at the same time that I play bass. Not playing those lines. It's OK for guitarists who are playing on the off beat, but my lines are going right through the bar. So no, I won't be playing them live!" ■

Back To Basics is out now on Proper Records. Info: www.billwyman.com

4 String Basses



- 10067 - Brian May Bass in Cherry with Gig Bag
- 14315 - Cort Action 4 String Bass, Black
- 14317 - Cort Action 4 String Lefty, Walnut Satin
- 14316 - Cort Action 4 String Bass, Trans Red
- 14314 - Cort Action 4 String Bass, Walnut Satin
- 13805 - Cort Action Deluxe, Faded Grey Burst
- 14318 - Cort Artisan 4 String Fretless Bass
- 13800 - Cort B4 20th Anniversary BEX (Black Exotic)
- 13801 - Cort B4 TAB Tobacco Spunburst Bass Guitar
- 12314 - Cort GB4 Custom Sallasted Maple Top
- 12807 - Cort Jeff Berlin Rhythmic 4 String Bass
- 7262 - Epiphone Thunderbird 4, Sunburst Finish

Fender

- 13365 - Fender American Dlx Dimension IV Cayenne
- 9083 - Fender Am Special Jazz Bass, Sunburst
- 13650 - Fender Am. Vint. 64 Jazz, LP Blue
- 13890 - Fender Dee Dee Ramone Precision Bass
- 13694 - Fender FSR American Dlx Jazz Bass, Black
- 13723 - Fender Ltd Ed Sanblasted Am. Jazz Bass
- 13307 - Fender Marcus Miller Jazz Bass, White
- 12288 - Fender Mike Dimt Road Worn Precision SB
- 8113 - Fender Modern Player Available To Order
- 13253 - Fender Road Worn 50's P Bass, Sunburst
- 12426 - Fender Standard Jazz Bass Brown Sunburst
- 5572 - Fender Standard Precision, Arctic White
- 12895 - G&L Tribute L2000 4 String Bass Guitar
- 12894 - G&L Tribute L2000 4 String Bass Guitar
- 10997 - G&L Tribute SB2 4-String, Metallic Black

Gibson

- 13811 - Gibson EB14 120th Anniversary Bass, Used
- 12194 - Godin Shifter 4, Trans Black, Used
- 10074 - Gretsch G6073 Electrolone Bass, Burgundy
- 11189 - Hofner HCT Shorty Bass, Black
- 12218 - Hofner HCT Violin Bass Guitar in Blue
- 12188 - Hofner Violin Bass Ignition Sunburst
- 14255 - Hofner Headless Bass B2ADB, Secondhand

LEVIN

- 13795 - Levin LB300 Bass Guitar, Natural, Used
- 6780 - Levin LB400, Redburst

LODESTONE

- 8073 - Lodestone Primal Artist
- 8081 - Lodestone Primal Pro in Chignal Blue
- 4175 - Marleaux B Votan 4, Black Gloss
- 5216 - Marleaux Consat Custom 4, Bubinga
- 14167 - Marleaux Votan XS Deluxe, Black Burst
- 10278 - Marleaux Votan XS Deluxe, Black Burst

MUSIC MAN

- 8997 - Musicman Sterling SB14 Bass, Sunburst
- 8344 - Musicman Singray 3 EQ Natural 4 String Bass

Overwater

- 8435 - Overwater Aspiration Std 4, Black Cherry
- 13012 - Rickenbacker 4003, Walnut
- 14105 - Spector Bass Performer 4, Blue Stain
- 11197 - Spector Bass Performer 4, Red
- 13337 - Spector Coda Pro 4 Black Cherry Stain
- 4417 - Steinberger Spirit XT2 4 String Bass

Tanglewood

- 13322 - Tanglewood Rebel Bass, Lefty, Used, Blk

West Coast

- 6446 - Westcoast BG4 Neck Thru Body, Brown
- 8437 - Westcoast J1P1 4 String Bass in Trans Red

YAMAHA

- 10120 - Yamaha BB1024X 4 String, Caramel Brown
- 4649 - Yamaha BB2024X, VSB Vintage Sunburst
- 6953 - Yamaha BB424, Vintage White
- 5634 - Yamaha BB714BS Billy Sheehan, Lava Red
- 10314 - Yamaha RBX170EW Bass
- 4331 - Yamaha TRB1004J, Trans Black
- 13927 - Yamaha TRBX174EW, Translucent Black
- 13926 - Yamaha TRBX174EW, Translucent Natural
- 13137 - Yamaha TRBX304 Bass in Mist Green

5 String Basses



- 13264 - Bass Collection Portrait Fretless 5
- 10109 - Cort A5 5 String Bass, Open Pore Natural
- 13657 - Cort A5 Custom SP 5, Spalled Maple
- 14312 - Cort Action V 5 String Bass, Black
- 14313 - Cort Action 5 String Bass, Walnut Satin
- 12538 - Cort GB75 5 String Bass, Open Pore Nat.
- 14311 - Fender 5 String Jazz Bass, 1992, Used
- 13117 - Fender Deluxe Dimension Bass V Natural
- 11066 - G&L Tribute L2500 5 String Natural Gloss
- 9702 - G&L Tribute L2500 5-String in Walnut
- 5323 - Lakland 5501 5 String Bass, Sunburst
- 8174 - Lodestone Primal Pro 5, Chignal Blue
- 12294 - Marleaux Consat Custom Bolt On 5 String
- 13729 - Marleaux M Bass Custom 5 String Bass
- 13875 - Kelly Dragonfly 5 Fretless Acoustic Bass
- 12198 - MusicMan Singray 5 Honeyburst
- 13306 - MusicMan Singray 5, Black
- 9002 - Overwater Aspiration Deluxe Bass, Black
- 9009 - Overwater Contemporary 5-String Bass
- 10963 - Overwater Inspiration 5, Red Burst
- 10660 - Pedulla Rapture Fretted 5-String Bass
- 5121 - Rockbass Streamer LX5, Black
- 11196 - Spector Bass Legend 5 Classic Blk Cherry
- 11195 - Spector Bass Performer 5 Black SP5BK
- 6448 - Westcoast JB5, Trans Amber
- 9351 - Yamaha BB425 5 String Bass Guitar, Black
- 8275 - Yamaha BB425X Sunburst, Used
- 8699 - Yamaha RBX5A2 5 String Bass, Black
- 13193 - Yamaha TRB1005J Bass, Black
- 7232 - Yamaha TRB5 5-String Bass in Sunburst
- 13388 - Yamaha TRBX305 Bass, Candy Apple Red
- 10310 - Yamaha TRBX505 Bass

Acoustic Bases



- 8687 - Breedlove Passport Plus B350/CB4
- 5393 - Levin LAB150 Bass, Electro 4, Black
- 5394 - Levin LAB150 Bass, Electro 4, Natural
- 5392 - Levin LAB150 Bass, Electro 4, Sunburst
- 6782 - Levin LB100 Bass, Electro 4, Sunburst
- 13875 - Kelly Dragonfly 5 Fretless Acoustic Bass
- 10498 - Ortega D Walker, Blk, Used
- 14263 - Takamine GB72CE Jumbo Cutaway
- 13014 - Tanglewood TWRBE Travel Bass Guitar

Electric Upright Bases



- 4910 - Bridge Cetus Electric Double Bass
- 5110 - NS Design NXT Electric Double Bass
- 6360 - Yamaha SLB200 Silent Double Bass

Fretless Bases



- 13264 - Bass Collection Portrait Fretless 5
- 14318 - Cort Artisan 4 String Fretless Bass
- 13875 - Kelly Dragonfly 5 Fretless Acoustic Bass
- 5719 - Squier Vint Mod 4 Fretless Jazz 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

Bass Combos



- 6762 - A arena BASS45 (45W, 1x12)
- 13577 - AER Amp III Bass Amp Combo
- 5627 - AER Amp One (200W, 1x10)
- 4942 - AER Amp Two (240W, 1x12)

Ashtdown

- 4389 - Ashtdown 220 Touring 112 (220W, 1x12)
- 4388 - Ashtdown 220 Touring 115 (220W, 1x15)
- 4385 - Ashtdown 330 Touring 115H (300W, 1x15)
- 11192 - Ashtdown ABM C115H Neo Evo 3 Bass
- 6459 - Ashtdown ABM C210T-500 Evo 3 (575W)
- 12259 - Ashtdown ABM Mini 115 NEO Bass Cab
- 12258 - Ashtdown ABM Mini 210 NEO 2x10 Cab
- 11193 - Ashtdown ABM NEO C210 400W 2x10
- 8712 - Ashtdown ABM414H 4 x 10 Bass Cabinet
- 8714 - Ashtdown After Eight 20 Bass Combo
- 13135 - Ashtdown DH15 C110 Drophead
- 13134 - Ashtdown DH30 C115 Drophead Valve
- 8757 - Ashtdown Electric Blue 12 220
- 8758 - Ashtdown Electric Blue EB15 220
- 8753 - Ashtdown Five Fifteen Mini Rig 100
- 8718 - Ashtdown Mag C115 300 Evo III Bass
- 8720 - Ashtdown Mag C210T 300 Bass Combo
- 8727 - Ashtdown Mag C410T 600 Evo III
- 9320 - Ashtdown MiBass C110-200
- 9321 - Ashtdown MiBass C115 550 Bass Combo
- 8750 - Ashtdown Perfect Ten Bass Combo
- 13202 - Ashtdown RM-C115-420 420w Bass
- 13312 - Ashtdown RM-C210T-420 420w R/master
- 9371 - Ashtdown TE12 C115h Bass Combo
- 9310 - Ashtdown TE12 C210h 12 Band Combo
- 5224 - Ashtdown Tourbus 10 (10W, 1x6.5)
- 5062 - Ashtdown Tourbus 15 (15W, 1x8)
- 13122 - Ashtdown Vintage Twelve 75 Bass Combo
- 13905 - Blackstar ID Core BEAM Bluetooth Amp
- 13806 - Cort GE30 Bass Amp Combo
- 8988 - EA Euphonic Audio iAmp 350 Bass Head
- 13705 - Eden D210XLT 80Hms Bass Amp Combo
- 12430 - Eden EC10 50 Watts Bass Amp Combo
- 12432 - Eden EC15 180W Bass Amp Combo
- 12431 - Eden EC210 2 x 10 Bass Amp Combo
- 13375 - Eden EC28 Bass Amp Combo
- 12429 - Eden EC8 20 Watt Bass Combo
- 13566 - Eden EGRW1264 Head & Cab Package
- 13704 - Eden EM275 Bass Amp Combo

Fender

- 13497 - Fender Rumble 100 Bass Amp Combo
- 4238 - Fender Rumble 15 (15W, 1x8)
- 12745 - Fender Rumble 200 Bass Combo
- 8284 - Fender Rumble 30 Bass Combo
- 4237 - Fender Rumble 350 (350W, 2x10)
- 4772 - Fender Rumble 75 Watt Bass Combo

Hartke

- 10104 - Hartke A35 35W Bass Combo
- 9278 - Hartke A70 Solid State Bass Amp Combo
- 9471 - Hartke David Ellefson A70 Bass Combo
- 14093 - Hartke HD15 Bass Combo
- 14095 - Hartke HD150 Bass Combo
- 13773 - Hartke HD50 Bass Combo
- 13783 - Hartke HD75 75W Bass Combo
- 9008 - Hartke HMH112C Bass Combo
- 9281 - Hartke Hydrite HMH210C Bass Combo
- 9279 - Hartke Kickback 15 Bass Amp Combo

Mark Bass

- 9004 - Markbass 121 Lite Alain Caron Combo
- 6239 - Mark Bass CMD102P Bass Combo
- 6238 - Mark Bass CMD103H (400W, 3x10)
- 5472 - Mark Bass CMD151P J Berlin (300W, 1x15)
- 13279 - MarkBass Markacoustic AC601 Combo
- 5473 - Mark Bass Micromark (50W, 1x6)
- 6240 - Mark Bass Mini CMD121P (300W, 1x12)
- 5474 - Mark Bass Mini CMD151P (300W, 1x15W)
- 5471 - Mark Bass Minimark (250W, 2x6)
- 5475 - Mark Bass CMD121H (300W, 1x12)
- 9940 - Markbass Mini CMD 151 Jeff Berlin
- 9939 - Markbass MiniMark 802 Bass Combo
- 9938 - MicroMark 801 Bass Combo
- 5234 - Orange Crush PIX 25BX (25W, 1x8)
- 5233 - Orange Crush PIX 50BX (50W, 1x12)
- 10265 - Orange Crush Pix CP100BXT
- 8061 - Peavey MAX126 10 Watt Bass Amp
- 11005 - Peavey Max 110 Bass Amp Combo
- 5965 - Peavey Max 112 (35W, 1x12)
- 5964 - Peavey Max 115 (50W, 1x15)
- 11004 - Peavey Max 158 Bass Amp Combo
- 6320 - Roland CB100 (100W, 1x12)
- 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)

Bass Heads



- 13136 - Ashtdown ABM400LITE Lightweight Head
- 13641 - Aguilar Tone Hammer 500 Bass Head
- 4387 - Ashtdown 330, 330W
- 4386 - Ashtdown 427 Small Block 427W
- 4384 - Ashtdown 550, 550W
- 8706 - Ashtdown ABM1000 Lite Evo III
- 8704 - Ashtdown ABM2000 Lite Evo III
- 6760 - Ashtdown ABM500 Evo III 575W
- 6761 - Ashtdown ABM900 Evo 3, 575+575W
- 4389 - Ashtdown J500 JJ Burnel Sig 575W
- 5338 - Ashtdown BT4400 400W
- 13131 - Ashtdown CTM100 100W Valve Bass Head
- 11229 - Ashtdown CTM115 15 Watt Bass Amp Head
- 8707 - Ashtdown CTM300 Classic Tube Magnifier
- 13192 - Ashtdown Five 15 BBH 220w Big Boy Head
- 8706 - Ashtdown Little Bastard 550 Head
- 6455 - Ashtdown MAG300H Evo III 300W
- 10938 - Ashtdown MiBASS 2.0 640w Small Head
- 8713 - Ashtdown MAG600 Head Evo III Bass Head
- 8710 - Ashtdown MiBass 220
- 13203 - Ashtdown RM Mag 420 Bass Amp Head
- 14171 - Ashtdown RM220 Rootmaster Bass Head
- 9309 - Ashtdown TE12 500H 12 Band Bass Head
- 13200 - Eden E300 Bass Amplifier
- 13566 - Eden EGRW1264 Head & Cab Package
- 13414 - Eden WTB500 Bass Amp Head
- 13149 - Eden WTX500 Bass Amp Head
- 9349 - Hartke HA2500 Bass Head
- 9027 - Hartke Kilo 1000 Bass Head
- 12382 - Hartke LH1000 Bass Head
- 10408 - MarkBass Bass MultiAmp Stereo
- 5675 - Mark Bass Little Mark 250 (250W)
- 5245 - Mark Bass Little Mark 800, 800W
- 6243 - Mark Bass Little Mark III Bass Head 500w
- 9035 - MarkBass Little Mark III Tube Bass Head
- 5244 - MarkBass Little Mark Tube 800, 800W
- 5243 - Mark Bass SD1200, 1200W
- 7962 - Markbass TTE500 Randy Jackson Head
- 9256 - Markbass Big Bang 500W Bass Head
- 9250 - Markbass Classic 300 Head
- 9941 - MarkBass Little Mark 250 Head Black
- 9249 - Markbass L Mark Rocker 500 Amp Head
- 9255 - Markbass Mornark Modular Bass Systems
- 9944 - Markbass MultiAmp
- 9725 - Markbass TTE800 Randy Jackson Head
- 6261 - Orange AD200 MK3
- 8231 - Orange Dark Torque Valve Guitar Head
- 5242 - Orange TE1000 1000W Terror
- 5957 - Peavey Pro VB3 300W
- 5960 - Peavey Tour 450, 450W

Bass Cabinets



- 13640 - Aguilar SL112 Bass Cabinet
- 13809 - Ampeg 410 Classic Bass Cab
- 8733 - Ashtdown 210T Deep Lite Bass Cab
- 6457 - Ashtdown ABM115 Compact (1x15)
- 6456 - Ashtdown ABM410H (4x10)
- 4376 - Ashtdown ABM610 (6x10)
- 5677 - Ashtdown ABM810 (8x10)
- 4394 - Ashtdown CL115 Large (1x15)
- 4393 - Ashtdown CL410H (4x10)
- 4392 - Ashtdown CL414H Plus Horn (4x10)
- 4391 - Ashtdown CL610 Tit-Cab (6x10)
- 4390 - Ashtdown CL810 (8x10)
- 6146 - Ashtdown NEO115H Compact (1x15)
- 6452 - Ashtdown MAG110T Deep (1x15)
- 6451 - Ashtdown MAG210T Deep (2x10)
- 8754 - Ashtdown MAG414T Deep Lite
- 8730 - Ashtdown Mag 115 Deep Lite Bass Cab
- 8755 - Ashtdown Mag410T Deep 4 x 10 Bass Cab
- 8756 - Ashtdown Mag810T 8 x 10 Bass Cab
- 9315 - Ashtdown Mi10 Bass Cab
- 9316 - Ashtdown Mi12 Bass Cab
- 14172 - Ashtdown RM210T Bass Cab
- 4379 - Ashtdown VS115 200 (1x15)
- 8711 - Ashtdown VS412 600 Bass Extension Cab
- 14196 - Blackstar HT Metal 412A Extension Cab
- 0000 - Eden - 8 Models in stock now
- 14254 - Hartke 210XL 2 x 10 Bass Cab
- 9007 - Hartke HCH112 Bass Cab
- 9292 - Hartke HCH410 Hydrite 410 Bass Cab
- 4766 - Mark Bass NY804 New York 804 (8 x 4)
- 6241 - Mark Bass STD102HF (2x10)
- 6242 - Mark Bass STD104HF (4x10)
- 5476 - Mark Bass STD104HR (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)
- 5431 - Mark Bass NY121 New York 1x 12 Bass Cab
- 10412 - Markbass NY122 2 x 12 Bass Cab
- 10409 - Markbass NY151 1 x 15 Bass Cab
- 10410 - Markbass NY151 RJ 1 x 15 Randy Jackson
- 10411 - Markbass NY604 Bass Cab
- 6259 - Orange OBC115 (1x15)
- 10266 - Orange OBC210 Bass Guitar Speaker Cab
- 6260 - Orange OBC410H (4x10)
- 5241 - Orange OBC810 (8x10)
- 6766 - Peavey 410TVX (4x10)



Studio Talk

Stair wars: (from left) Eric Friedman, Mark Tremonti, Wolfgang Van Halen, Garrett Whitlock

An occasional column in which an awesome bassist talks about his or her new album. This month: Wolfgang Van Halen of Tremonti and Van Halen

Photography by Ashley Maile



Wolfgang Van Halen, best known of course for playing bass in Van Halen with his dad Eddie Van Halen (Yipes! That's four 'Van Halens' in one sentence) also plays with Tremonti, the excellent rock band fronted by Creed and Alter

Bridge guitarist Mark Tremonti. Their new album, *Cauterize*, is out as we speak and features serious fretwork from VH Junior, who tells us about the new suite of songs as follows...

"I used my usual set-up of a Fender Super Bassman head and a Fender 8x10 PRO speaker cab. I also used a EVH 5150-III head and EVH 5150-III 4x12 cab for the 'dirt'. I used my custom black with silver stripe 'Stealth'-finished Wolfgang four-string bass and my custom

"FOR ME, PLAYING BASS WELL IS ABOUT STAYING IN THE POCKET AND ESTABLISHING A LOCK WITH THE DRUMS"

'Wolfenstein' J-Bass, which is blue with white and black Frankenstein graphic. I do not play a five-string or six-string because I feel like I'm still trying to figure out how to play four strings. Any more than that and it gets a bit overwhelming... for me at least.

"Mostly Mark came to us with a [song] idea and we would all jam and come up with what we thought we should play, unless Mark had a specific idea of what he wanted to hear for a certain part. If Mark already knew what he wanted I would just put my own flavour on it.

"Van Halen and Tremonti are two very different bands. VH is more rock-centric, whereas Tremonti is much more metal-oriented. I love doing both. Tremonti requires a lot more aggressive picking like triplets and syncopations. A good example of what Tremonti requires from me would be the song 'Radical Change'. That song is ridiculous! Doubling what the guitar is doing is a pretty crazy thing to do. With Van Halen it's all about the pocket and grooving with my uncle [VH drummer Alex Van Halen] and staying locked with the drums.

"A part that sticks out in my mind for Tremonti is the slap section in the breakdown of 'Dark Trip'. It was really fun to explore a different style of playing that I haven't had the chance to before. I can slap but I don't really do it much. I don't have much of an opportunity in either of the bands that I'm playing with right now. If I do, it's usually in the context of a jam. In Van Halen, a song I very much enjoy playing is 'China Town' off of the *A Different Kind Of Truth* album: a wicked uptempo song that's got a lot of fun parts to play, especially the tapping intro that I need a capo to do. The crazy tapping at the end with the bass wah is another highlight. From a groove standpoint, the song 'She's The Woman', also from that record, comes to mind.

"I got started as a bass player when my dad asked if I wanted to start jamming with him and my uncle in 2006. I had never really explored playing the bass that much. I had already been playing drums for five years and I'd been playing guitar for three years. It was a great foundation to have in order to make the transition to bass. For me, playing bass well is about staying in the pocket and establishing a lock with the drums: that's the most important thing you can do. After that, exploring and contributing your melodic ideas for the benefit of the song is important as well.

"My first bass was a vintage 1974 Sunburst Fender Jazz that my dad owns. I dug that bass a lot. I played my first song, 'On Fire', with my uncle and my dad on that bass. He still has it... It's killer! I own many basses but my favourite would have to be my black with silver stripe Stealth Wolfgang bass. Its one of two that exists. The other one is the black with yellow stripe, built for me in 2011 by Chip Ellis at EVH/Fender. Chip is the master builder for all EVH brand guitars. We're working on bringing my Wolfgang bass to market. I'm really excited about that, because I think if people could play it and know what I know about how perfectly balanced and amazing-sounding it is, they would embrace it big time. Even before Chip painted it, he brought it to me unfinished but assembled to test, and I fell in love with it at that very moment. I wouldn't let him have it back for a few weeks because I didn't wanna part with it... even for a paint job! I've never played a more comfortable or better-sounding bass.

"My bass heroes are Les Claypool and Justin Chancellor. I was probably about 14 years old when I discovered Primus. Hearing the song 'Lacquer Head' with that rhythmic thumping thing he does in the main riff, I thought that was the coolest thing I'd ever heard on a bass and said to myself 'I have to learn how to play that'. Around the same time, I got heavily into Tool. They were like one of the first bands that literally took over my life! I was completely consumed by Justin's style: the way he used effects and the fact that he played with a pick was a big inspiration. He's such a melodic player. I love the way Adam [Jones, Tool guitarist] holds it down and Justin moves around him. The range of his dynamics is mind-blowing. From the heaviest to the cleanest tone on the record and everything in between, it's just badass! A good example of his heavier tone would be when the guitar drops out in the verse of 'Vicarious' and it's just bass and drums. That tone is enviable.

"There's also an Australian band called Karnivool. The bass player, Jon Stockman, is very similar to Justin Chancellor. Check out the song 'Simple Boy'. He's got wicked tone, high skill and amazing musical sensibility. If you haven't checked out Karnivool, I highly recommend you do. They are one of my favourite bands. One of the most incredible bass players that I've ever seen has got to be Victor Wooten. I don't know where to even start... he's just amazing!"

Cauterize is out now. Info: www.marktremonti.com, @wolfvanhalen

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FULL MARKUS

Markus Grosskopf of Helloween on old
basses and total perseverance

W

e're just about to release our fifteenth album, *My God-Given Right*. How many other bands get to make 15 albums? Kiss, AC/DC... not so many! I remember when we played at the

Donington festival in England in 1988: I was playing Warwicks at the time, and after that I went to Fender. I've still got my old Jazz basses and a couple of old Precisions, but live I mostly play my Sandberg basses. They make pretty good instruments – good-looking basses that sound great and work on tour really well. I play them live all the time.

When I started out, all the punks played Fender Precisions, like Sid Vicious and the others. Glenn Hughes played one with Deep Purple at the California Jam in 1974, which is my favourite rock video ever. He's a great bass player and singer. My oldest Fender is a '62: a few years ago I wanted to buy a bass that was older than me, so I bought that one. I thought that was cool! It's in very good shape although it has scars here and there, like I have. But most of the time I get along great with the Sandbergs, live and in the studio. I have a five-string but I can't play every Helloween song on it: if you try to play 'Eagle Fly Free' on a five-string, you suddenly get confused. I only play the five when I really need it. That song has a tapped solo, it's nice.

As for amps, I like old Ampegs, although I don't need to take them to festivals because there's Ampeg stacks everywhere, which makes it easy. Ampegs sound great live, they always sound good. Any technician can make an Ampeg SVT sound good. I personally prefer the SVT 2s from the 70s and 80s. On the new album I didn't use amps: we used a Kemper and it sounded great. You don't need to set up a massive stack and get on people's nerves! It sounded good so I thought I'd save the amps for the live shows.

I don't use effects, apart from a booster for the 'Eagle' tapping section, but even that can be done by the sound guy, so I just plug in and play. It helps if you don't have the same sound guys at each gig, because you don't have to explain tons of technical stuff to different people. I just tell them to get me the Ampeg sound and that's enough.

I organised a side project in 2008 called Bassinvaders, and we released an album called *Hellbassbeaters*. Now that was a lot of fun. It was only bass guitars. I organised it all myself, so it was a lot of work, but I got in touch with all my heroes like Rudy Sarzo and Billy Sheehan so I had a great time. But I don't think I'll do it again, it's a lot of work! I was so happy to get Lee Rocker on there, because when I was a kid he was a hero of mine. For an experiment that I was trying out, it worked out really well.

One of the secrets of keeping a band going this long is that when you hit the bottom, which we have done a few times in our career, you just refuse to quit. We said, 'Shall we just give up and let everything go, or shall we keep going?' We had the band name, after all. We lost a lot of money with some companies here and there, and we had to pay those bills, so we decided to keep writing songs and going on tour, to show ourselves that we could do it. And here we are... ■

***My God-Given Right* is out now on Nuclear Blast.
Info: www.helloween.org.**

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BY

GROG ROX Name...

Grog Rox of Die So Fluid talks to Mike Brooks about sessions for Kelly Osbourne and Mel C, plus the rise of her own band

Pics: Tina K

W

hether playing the sidewoman role with major names such as Melanie C and Kelly Osbourne on stages around the world or perfectly carrying off the singing bassist role in her own band, Die So Fluid, there's no denying that Grog Rox

has her musical head screwed on and is able to adapt to a whole host of musical situations given the opportunity. Fifteen years since DSF's formation, the band are touring their fourth album, *The Opposites Of Light*, and converting crowds to the Fluid cause, moshpit by moshpit.

So how did Grog get into bass? With a wry smile, she recalls: "I had a lightbulb moment, actually! I started off singing in a band at art college, when I'd just moved to London. We were auditioning bassists and none of the bassists were fitting in. I picked up one auditionee's bass and said, 'Can I have a go?', and it was one of those moments... but we couldn't say anything as the guy was standing there. As an instrument, it felt very natural to play. Luckily, I'm a tall girl and I taught myself, played by ear and that's how it started."

She continues: "Growing up, I'd always loved bass. My brother took me to an Iggy Pop gig at the Forum, and I remember hearing this huge sound that hit me in the chest. I remember that very clearly but little did I know what my destiny was. I had two elder brothers who listened to the likes of the Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath, so I was absorbing that while I was growing up. My mother

was a classical pianist and she took me to musicals all the time, and then I was into Adam & The Ants, the Cure, Siouxsie & The Banshees, the Smiths and Echo & The Bunnymen. So I always had that stuff and the really heavy stuff going on. But when I started playing bass, I became very aware of bands like Tool and A Perfect Circle, plus Nirvana were obviously big at the time. But I also love stuff like Jeff Buckley - I don't limit myself, I don't just like one genre of music."

How did the call to be a session bassist come about, we ask? "The Melanie C thing was the session job that kicked everything off for me," remembers Grog. "It was quite a high profile job to get: before that, I hadn't really considered doing session work as I was always very centred around writing my own music and that was all I really loved doing for a long time. I was very purist about that, but I then grew up a bit and realised that it's actually very good for you to play different kinds of music and to expand your horizons, because you don't know what kind of stuff you will bring back into what you do yourself. A friend of mine, [guitarist] Will Crewdson, had an agent who was sending him to the Melanie C auditions and he asked me if I wanted to come along - so I said 'Yeah, what the hell, I will' and the rest is history."

"I GREW UP A BIT AND REALISED IT'S GOOD TO PLAY DIFFERENT KINDS OF MUSIC"



She adds: "There were quite a few people at that audition. Two or three people were after the same job at the same time, and they even videoed us while we were playing. Melanie wasn't actually there, but she looked through the footage and really liked my vibe: I probably looked the part. I was joking around and getting on with everyone, and of course in the session world, it's really important that you can get on with different temperaments. I think she just liked my style!"

Were there any experiences that Grog was able to bring back and apply to Die So Fluid's advantage? "Yes, definitely," she nods. "You have to rein in the ego, that's for sure. You have to know when to step back, and I think that's quite difficult for some people to manage. I was able to do it... just about! But we got on very well. Melanie allowed me to have a bit more of the spotlight in one of the songs, where I was singing with her. It was great to be appreciated."

Grog continues: "I was using money from session work to fund the Die So Fluid album and the band, so after Melanie C, I went to play for Kelly Osbourne, which was a three-month European tour supporting Robbie Williams along with the Darkness and Moby, playing in stadiums, which was a great experience. The tour was quite extensive and included the Knebworth shows when Robbie was at his peak, so there were lots of support bands: big events. After that, I needed to get really focused on Die So Fluid but I still got asked to do bits and pieces. There was a Blur offshoot band called the Ailerons with Blur's drummer Dave Rowntree and the MD from Gorillaz. I'm always open to trying different musical things."

Rumour has it that Grog was once lined up to join Kylie Minogue's band but was unable to take up the opportunity. What was the story behind that? "I was actually on tour with Die So Fluid at the time when the auditions were held and I don't think it would have gone down too well at the time, so I had to be professional about it," she says. "I'm a very lucky person to be offered jobs like that, but I couldn't do it - and I'd always vowed that Die So Fluid would come first. It's my first love."

"I also more recently attracted the attention of a film director called Tom DiCillo, with whom I've been collaborating on side projects. We released an album of material under the name The Black & Blue Orkestre and now we're developing more ideas. He's inspirational to work with. His amazing documentary film about the Doors called *When You're Strange* was both Emmy and Grammy nominated, and he gave me a copy, saying 'They should have had you on bass'. That blew my mind!"

Let's talk bass, we suggest... "I've had my G&L endorsement for a while now," Grog tells us. "I've used them for eight years at least. I used to use Charvel Surfcasters but the G&L basses are great. The distributor in England saw photos of me playing and spoke to Drew [DSF guitarist] about me and offered me a trade deal. Once I moved to the US, the guys in the office there invited me to look around the factory: I saw Leo Fender's office, which is in the same state as he left it. I'm really excited about my deal with them. They've given me a gloss black L2000 which I toured with this year in the US."

Now based in the States, Grog obviously faces the difficulty of writing with her bandmates over long distance, although the internet reduces the effects of such constraints. Does the band have to plan their writing and touring activities a long way ahead or is it still business as usual? "We try to plan ahead," she replies. "I'll try to come over to the UK early if we have a tour coming up, or vice versa, and we'll do blocks of rehearsing which is a very focused way of working. The writing has taken on a different process. Since I moved to LA, I've forced myself to learn and use Sonar [home



**"I'D ALWAYS VOWED THAT
DIE SO FLUID WOULD COME FIRST.
IT'S MY FIRST LOVE"**



“YOU HAVE TO REIN IN THE EGO. YOU HAVE TO KNOW WHEN TO STEP BACK”

recording software), which I get on well with, and I've gone from strength to strength with it. Drew and I have a process where we both write and send the ideas back and forth: the songs grow that way, and it's an interesting way to work.

Last words, Grog? “Well, the new album shows the results of that process, which allowed us to be extremely perfectionist in both writing and performance! So far our self-released album has been met with an outstanding reception from fans and press alike, for which we are so grateful, and stirred up a fresh interest in the band. This year we've completed a 26-date tour of the States, which even took us up to Canada with Wednesday 13 and Eyes Set To Kill, and also a West Coast tour with the Dreaming, including ex-members of Stabbing Westward. Some very cool opportunities are arising from it. We've definitely captured imaginations and hearts and we aim to keep on rolling with it!” ■

Info: www.diesofluid.net,
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Wright Stuff

Cody Wright does that rare thing: play funk with a pick. Stuart Clayton asks the hows, whys and wherefores

Pic: Wayne Eminger

Every year the London Bass Guitar Show plays host to some of the world's most accomplished bass players, both known and unknown. The 2015 show was no different, with several exciting new voices heard alongside the more seasoned regulars. One such voice was Cody Wright, who funk'd up a storm at the Vanderkley and Elixir booths with his monstrous plectrum groove work and assured soloing.

Over the last year Wright has been gradually catching the collective ear of bassists around the globe, through his work with the Jonathan Scales Fourchestra – an indescribable trio built around steel drum player Scales – and recent YouTube videos. A converted guitarist, Wright only turned to the bass at the beginning of 2011. “My musical life began at 13, when my nephew got a guitar” he recalls. “I had been listening to blues and rock since I was three or four, so the sound of the guitar was really in my ears: I could sing all the parts, all those Hendrix licks. As soon as I picked up his guitar I was able to hack away at it and play that stuff.” Wright soon discovered legendary guitarists such as Stevie Ray Vaughan, Scott Henderson, Shawn Lane, Nuno

“WHEN I FOUND OUT WHAT BOBBY VEGA WAS DOING, IT WAS A TURNING POINT”

Bettencourt and Frank Gambale. As he explains: “I would count all those guys as huge influences. That’s where a lot of my lines and technique came from.”

Fast forward to 2011, and Wright received a phone call from steel drum player Jonathan Scales, also based in his home town of Asheville, North Carolina. “He was doing this really innovative band and running it professionally, which are two things that stuck out to me as something to aspire towards. My audition was on January 16, 2011 and I had to borrow a bass from somebody to do it. Jonathan sent me the charts and I learned the set by reading, listening and watching a bunch of videos to make sure I was getting the right notes. I still missed a ton of stuff, but he liked my intent and my attitude, and so I got the gig.”

Wright initially considered switching to fingerstyle, but everything changed for him when a friend introduced him to the playing of session veteran and plectrum guru Bobby Vega. “When I found out what Bobby was doing, it was a turning point,” he confirms. “I realised that I already had the technique, I just had to learn how to get good tone out of it. Bobby had a bass player’s ear and sense of groove, but also a bass player’s sense of the role that the bass plays in the band. But it was the hardest thing I ever did, really, to transition from the guitar to bass: the band was definitely supportive, but they weren’t very forgiving – and I think that eventually was a good thing because I got my act together as fast as I could.”

Equipment-wise, Wright relies on Vanderkley amplification, favouring the new Aurora head, and a selection of Zon basses. “The first Zon that I owned is a 1997 Sonus and it’s the one I had with me at the LBGs,” he says. “It has a bubinga top over a swamp ash body, a composite neck and Bartolini pickups. I also have a Zon Sonus TJ Todd Johnson model that Joe Zon gave me at the NAMM Show back in January. It’s a beautiful bass and has a couple of Hipshot tuners on the headstock which are really fun to use with harmonics. I also have a ‘94 Zon Legacy, which is probably the punchiest one: in a lot of ways it’s one of the best sounding basses I have, if not the best.”

The future looks busy for Wright. A touring schedule that averages 180 shows a year would be enough for most musicians, but he’s also busy working on a solo album. “The title is *A Bass Only A Mother Could Love*,” he laughs. “When I first started doing what I do with a pick, I was still getting a handle on tone and groove, and people were saying ‘Use your fingers’, or ‘Get out of the higher register’. That’s where the title comes from, the fact that some people didn’t really dig what I was doing. The focus of the record will be instrumental and based around my songwriting in terms of riffs, being as melodic as I can be, but first and foremost, having a good groove.”

Info: www.codywrightmusic.com



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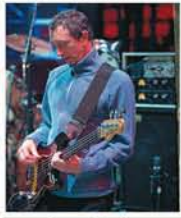
Cubbie Fink
Foster The People



Simon Mitchell
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Nate Mendel
Foo Fighters



Pino Palladino
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Sublime



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PussnBoots



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Rizzle Kicks



Dougie Poynter
McBusted



Ross Macdonald
1975



John Hassel
The Libertines



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Karnivool



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Gwen Stefani



Rob Malone
David Gray



Gordon Moakes
Bloc Party



Bushers
Madness



JJ Burnel
The Stranglers



Will Farquarson
Bastille



Youth
Killing Joke



Aaron Julison
Kid Rock



Tim Kingsbury
Arcade Fire



Nick O'Malley
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Pulled Apart by Horses



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A



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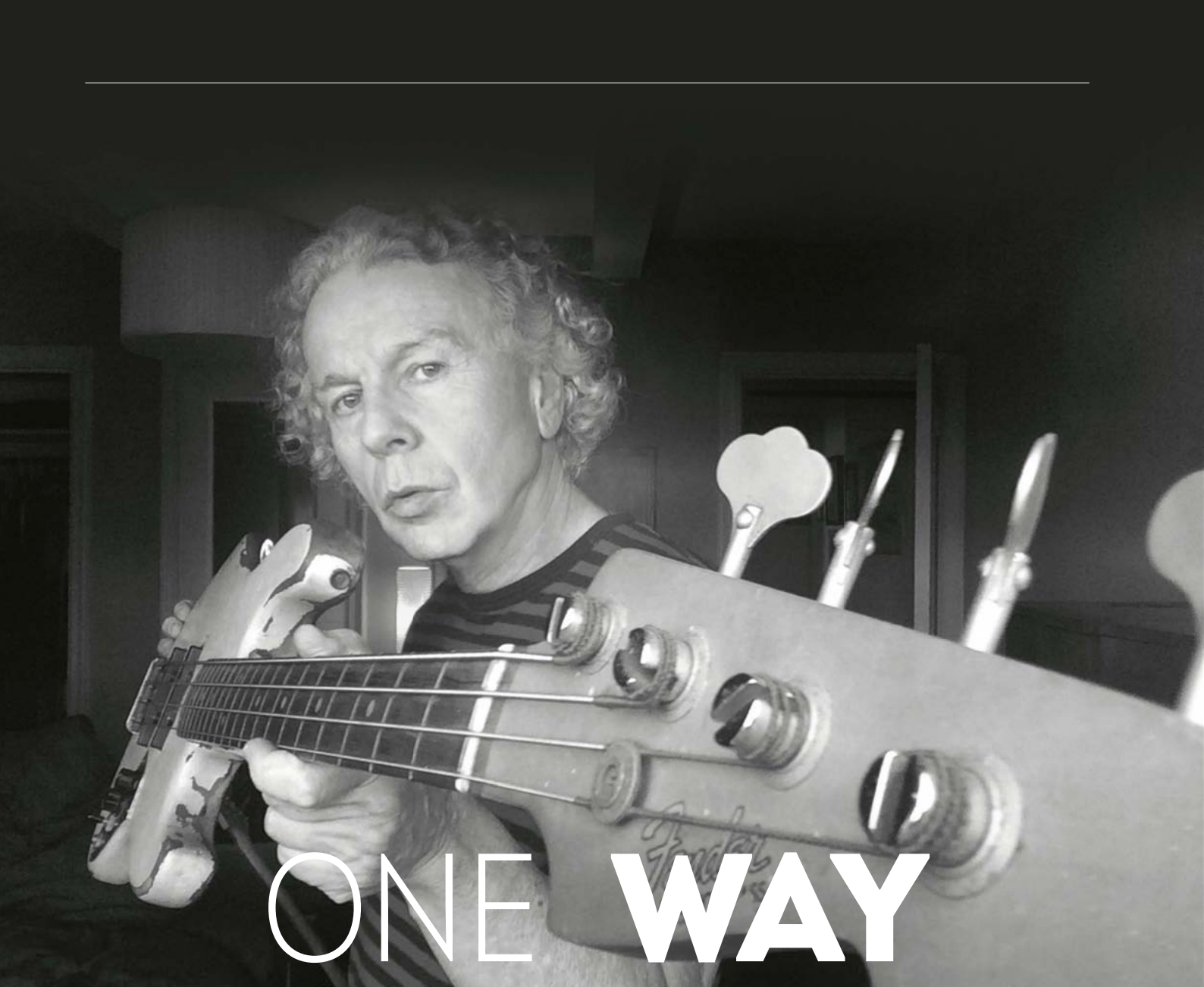


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ONE WAY

OR ANOTHER...

... he's gonna rock ya! Blondie bassist Nigel Harrison talks to Freddy Villano about the small matter of holding down the low end on songs that soundtracked a generation

Nigel Harrison might not be a household name in the bass community, but his bass-lines adorn some of the most popular songs of the late 1970s and early 80s. His four-and-a-half-year stint in the New York City-bred new wave sensations Blondie yielded hits such as 'Call Me', 'Heart Of Glass' and 'One Way Or Another', the last of which he co-wrote with lead vocalist Debbie Harry.

Less widely known, but equally impressive, is Harrison's work with several seminal bands of the 70s, including session work with the Runaways and Nite City, a band that was formed by former Doors keyboardist Ray Manzarek. Prior to all that, he was a founding member of Silverhead, an incendiary glam-rock band that heavily influenced the 80s hair-metal wave and featured frontman Michael Des Barres.

Harrison recently re-united with Des Barres for the singer's latest solo album, *The Key To The Universe*, an

album that channels the same kind of youthful bombast so evocatively captured by Silverhead on both their 1972 eponymous debut and *16 And Savaged*, the 1973 follow-up. Their spontaneity on *...Universe* is palpable, particularly on songs such as 'I Want Love To Punch Me In The Face' and 'Black Sheep'. Harrison's bass is front and centre on the lead-off track 'Can't Get You Off My Mind', where his melodic descending lines add the perfect counterpoint to Des Barres' melodies. But being a bass player isn't about being in the spotlight for Harrison: he's a bassist who truly embraces the supportive role of the instrument.

Harrison was born in Stockport but moved south to Buckinghamshire when he was 12 years old. "I was always into music," he recalls, "but I had no musical background whatsoever." Inspired by seeing a classmate perform the Beatles' 'I Want To Hold Your Hand' at a school party, Harrison eventually decided to acquire a guitar. "Vox Guitars kept running an ad in the local paper. A few of my friends had already sent away for, and received, some cool guitars. After a few months, I saved up enough

money to make a purchase." According to Harrison, the advertisement guaranteed delivery in three to six weeks. After three months of nail-biting, it finally arrived. But when he opened the box, something was amiss. "It was a bass," he says. "I knew about bass guitars, but it wasn't something I'd shown any interest in." Sure enough, Harrison was the owner of a Vox Clubman bass. "I eventually met up with my friends and said, 'Look what I got'. I remember one of them saying, 'What's that?' And I said, 'It's a bass'. And he said, 'What did you get one of those for?' And I said, 'Because I'm a bass player.'"

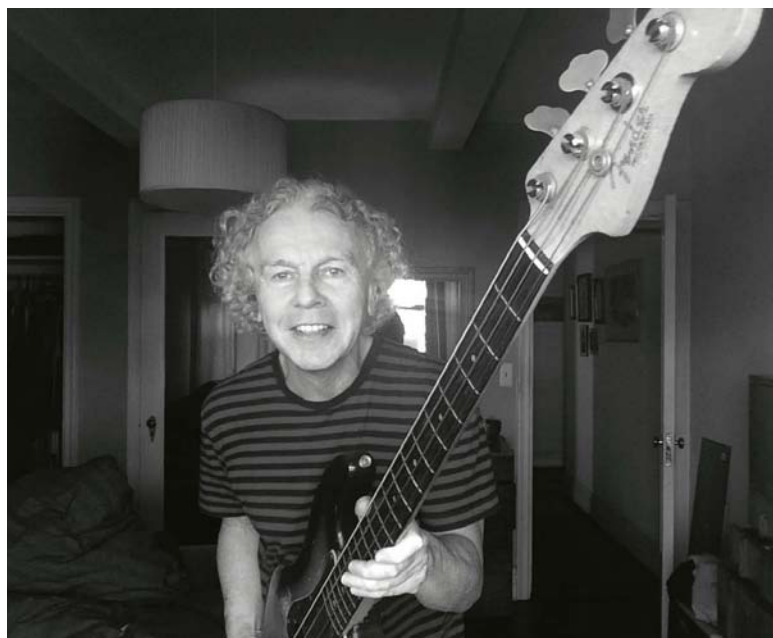
Admittedly, Harrison didn't really know what bass players did, but he quickly got an education at a local club. "On any given night I could see the Pretty Things, the Yardbirds... all the greatest bands in the world at the time," he recalls. "I totally fell in love with the Small Faces. The place was small enough that I could literally stand in front of [singer] Steve Marriott." He remembers the first time he saw the band, saying: "They opened with 'Whatcha Gonna Do About It' and they were so pumped up. That's when the power of the bass hit me."

Harrison could get so close to the stage that he could watch their fingers and memorise their movements. "I would go home afterwards and mimic the hand positions in songs like the Spencer Davis Group's 'Gimme Some Lovin'," he says. "Before I knew it, I was playing the riff, not totally accurately, but I based it on watching people's fingers."

To this day, Harrison admits that, if someone is showing him a riff, he relies on his eyes. "I have to watch their fingers," he confesses. "I have no musical ear. I also don't count in bars either. For me there's the first part, the second part and the twiddly bit, the riff. Luckily it hasn't stopped me from making music." He adds that the older he gets, the more he realises that this 'handicap' has helped him in terms of developing his own, unique style. "I certainly listened, but I never attempted to learn a John Paul Jones bass-line. Obviously I love all of that, whether it be Jack Bruce or James Jamerson or Carol Kaye, but I never tried to copy any of it. I don't think I've ever even attempted to learn a Paul McCartney bass-line. If anything I was influenced by their attitude and approach, not the actual notes: it's their sound, not necessarily what they're playing."

Though Silverhead didn't sell a million records, Harrison boasts that they played as if they did. "It was the best band I've ever been in," he says proudly. "We were all on the same page." From Silverhead he hooked up with former Doors keyboardist Ray Manzarek and recorded the album *The Whole Thing Started With Rock & Roll, Now It's Out Of Control* in 1974. Though Harrison remains uncredited, the result of visa issues at the time, he remains very proud of the album. "There's a track called 'Whirling Dervish' on there, which has a crazy riff: no overdubs, no punching in."

In 1975 Harrison also made another uncredited appearance, this time on the Runaways' debut album. "They were a good band," he recalls. "It wasn't like they were just good for girls: they were really good, full stop." The album was recorded in Van Nuys, California under very strict direction from Kim Fowley, the Runaways' manager. "Fowley walked into the studio when we were getting sounds and said, 'What is this crap? I don't want Deep Purple. It's 1975. I want garage. I want trash. I want punk'. The term 'punk rock' hadn't really been used yet, though, and the engineer didn't know what to do."



**"I DON'T
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INSTRUMENT.
IF YOU
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GUITAR"**

While playing in Nite City, another Manzarek-led band that popped out two albums in '77 and '78, Harrison got a call from the manager of new band called Blondie asking if he could recommend a bass player. At first, he said he didn't know of anyone. "I called back 10 minutes later and said, 'What about me?' I wanted to get back to England and they were about to embark on a European tour."

Blondie was performing at Hollywood's famed Whisky A Go Go with guitarist Frank Infante playing bass. "The night they were playing I went down and stuck a cassette player under my coat and recorded their set," admits Harrison. "I went home and learned the songs. I had no idea what the titles were, and of course the tape was all muffled, but the next day I went to the audition and said, 'I saw you last night, why don't you just play the set and I'll play along with it'. They didn't know I had recorded it. The first song we played was 'X Offender'. I played it and Deborah Harry looked over at me and said, 'You're fucking amazing!'"

As for his role as a writer, Harrison says it's all about spontaneity and capturing the moment. "It's about getting those first takes and capturing the inspiration," he advises. "My iPhone is full of ideas." The music for 'One Way Or Another' was originally demoed by Harrison on a machine called the Sony Rhythm 9000, acquired on tour in Japan in 1975. "It had a built-in drum machine and you could plug a guitar in as well," he recalls. "The song originally had a real kind of surf, psychedelic vibe to it. At some point I played it for [keyboardist] Jimmy Destri and he told me to play it for the rest of the band. I remember Debbie started singing, 'One way or another I'm gonna find ya, I'm gonna get ya...' and it all came together."

As for his gear, Harrison says, "I have three words for you: Precision, Rotosound and Marshall." He's also a staunch finger player: no picks for this man. "Lately, I seem to get more volume and a deeper, richer tone using my thumb, but not in a slap and pop way," he says. "There's no way I do any of that kind of stuff. I'm not even capable. It sounds like someone falling down the stairs. The role of the bass player is to be supportive. I don't think the bass should be a lead instrument. If you want to be flashy, play guitar!" ■

Cradle To Grave

Extreme metal doesn't have to mean boring bass playing, says Cradle Of Filth bassist Daniel Firth

Our new album, *Hammer Of The Witches*, has a very different line-up to the previous record (*The Manticore And Other Horrors*, 2012), so there's a different bank of writers and we've all been contributing, so it's a real band effort. I used a Sansamp plugin to record my bass parts, although I think it was reamped by the producer afterwards. I used Schecter Hellraiser Extreme basses, which I endorse. They're five-strings: I started off on a four-string and moved to a five, and after that, I didn't miss four-strings. We tune to D standard, so I tune the whole thing down a step. I use the Sansamp for live performances too: I go straight into the desk with it, and in fact it would be pretty crazy to bring a bass amp and cab out with you on tour these days. Cradle are booked up until the festival season, we're doing at least eight or nine in Europe - and we're off to the Philippines this week, which is a first for the band. It's an exciting time for us.

I joined Cradle before the *Manticore* album from a band called Man Must Die. I've been in a few bands over the years, but Man Must Die was the first professional one. I was in a Misfits tribute band too, which was a laugh: I just played fast and aggressive and that was all I needed to do. I was recording a Man Must Die single with Cradle's producer Scott Atkins, and they asked him to recommend someone, so he recommended me. They trusted Scott's word, so it was just a case of exchanging a couple of emails with them and I was in the band.

My main influences on bass are Steve Harris and Geddy Lee, although I'm generally not fingerstyle. I do a bit from time to time but there's so much demand for all the really fast pick stuff that I haven't had much time to devote to fingerstyle. Like them, I spend a lot of time making the bass parts complementary to the drums wherever possible.

There are some really interesting bass parts in Cradle Of Filth - some cool melodic stuff as well as the fast lines. There's a high-register bass part in 'Her Ghost In The Fog', for example, which is great to play live because it gives the bass a moment to shine. The bass can sometimes get a bit lost in the double bass drums in extreme metal! Coming from a guitar background as I do, it's not too hard to play those things: when you're playing bass with a pick in this genre of music, it's a little bit like playing the guitar anyway... ■

***Hammer Of The Witches* is out now on Nuclear Blast.
Info: www.cradleoffilth.com**



GEAR REVIEWS

Behold our world-beating bass gear review section, where we bring you the crop of each month's new, interesting or otherwise relevant bass guitars, bass amplifiers, bass speakers and bass effects. Occasionally we'll review a guitar effect if it's particularly useful for bassists, and we'll test recording equipment and general accessories every now and then as well, but generally speaking, this zone is for bass-specific gear.

We take the ratings that we give each item very seriously. *BGM* is the only print magazine devoted to bass in this country, and we have readers from all over the world, so we're responsible about our conclusions. If a product is worth your investigation, we'll say so; if it's flawed in some way, we won't hold back from making that clear. We're not beholden to advertisers in any way and our conclusions are entirely independent of the views of manufacturers, musicians and distributors.

When you read about a bass-related product here, you know you're getting a sensible, balanced review from an experienced bass tester. Value for money is at the top of our agenda in these cash-strapped times, but on the other hand, we believe in paying for quality.

Right, that's enough from me. Remember, this is just about the only place that it's good to have GAS!*

Joel McIver, editor

*GAS = Gear Acquisition Syndrome (a malaise often suffered by bass players)



48
Bass Centre Bill Wyman
Signature



52
Carvin Brian Bromberg



56
Ashdown CTM-100 and CL-410



62
Diamond Halo Chorus



64
Pigtronix PxBOD FAT Drive,
PXPBC Philosopher Bass
Compressor and PxBEP
Envelope Phaser



60
Schecter Stiletto Stealth and Vintage



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

PRICE | £595

MADE IN | Korea

BODY | Alder

NECK | Maple, 30" scale

NECK JOINT | Bolt-on

NUT WIDTH | 41mm

FINGERBOARD | Rosewood

FRETS | 20

PICKUPS | Baldwin-style neck, Soapbar bridge

ELECTRONICS | Passive

CONTROLS | 2x volume plus master tone

HARDWARE | Hipshot, black; chrome bridge and controls

WEIGHT | 2.45kg

CASE/GIG BAG INCLUDED? |

Yes, padded gig bag

LEFT-HAND OPTION AVAILABLE? | No

WHAT WE THINK

PLUS | Short scale makes riffing guitar-easy. Authentic 60s look and sound

MINUS | Tricky to play seated, neck join a bit bulky

OVERALL | Well made and great value. A must for any Stones tribute bassist and also a good choice for someone with small hands or who doubles on guitar

BGM RATING

BUILD QUALITY	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
SOUND QUALITY	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
VALUE	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

BASS CENTRE

Bill Wyman Signature Bass

Kev Sanders sees a red scratchplate, and he wants it painted black... when he tries the new Bill Wyman Signature from Bass Centre

Manufacturer: Bass Centre
www.basscentre.com

Tested at: The Great British Bass Lounge
www.greatbritishbasslounge.com

Considering his legendary status as bass player with the self-proclaimed 'greatest rock'n'roll band in the world' (at least until 1992) it's a little surprising that there hasn't been a Bill Wyman signature bass available now for years. In fact, back in the late 60s Vox made a 'Teardrop' bass with Wyman's name on it, although he had no input into the design and has since said that he actually didn't like the bass very much, despite using it for some time. If you look at old pictures and film from the early days of the Stones, Wyman is more likely to be seen playing either a Dan Armstrong or a Framus 'Star' bass. But there's a bass that pre-dates either of these and, like the story of Brian May and his guitar, it was one that Wyman made (or at least modified) himself.

In 1961 Wyman took an old short-scale bass of dubious lineage and cut down the body to a smaller size that he found light and comfortable. Next, in a prophetic move – and to deal with the buzzing and rattling from the strings – he removed the frets, in effect creating a fretless bass years before Jaco did the same, and long before one was commercially available. He called it his 'Tuxedo' bass and he used it on and off for most of his career. Now it's the inspiration for the new Bill Wyman Signature Bass from the Bass Centre.

BUILD QUALITY

Let's start with the obvious; this is a simple instrument made with simple construction methods and materials. Of course there's nothing wrong with that – after all, so is a Fender Precision. In fact there seems to be a growing trend among the bass-building community to move towards simpler construction techniques and electronics. Manufacturers seem to be increasingly focused on using high quality tonewoods and hardware, and this Bass Centre instrument is a good example of what I mean. It is very well put together: details like the accurate neck join and perfect fretting point to a quality build with tight tolerances and careful quality control at the Korean workshop, where they also build the Brian May signature guitars.

Everything is finished in a smooth glossy black so there's no way of checking the quality of the alder wood used for the body, but it's light and resonant and sounds good when played acoustically. What you can see is the tightly grained rich, dark rosewood fingerboard: unusual

at this price point, as are the large white pearl dot markers which, like the jumbo nickel frets, are flawlessly fitted and smoothed.

The pickups and preamp are all authentically 60s, both in terms of looks and design. It's a simple format, but again, this is in no way a negative observation and anyway, less is most definitely more when it comes to this kind of instrument. The two-a-side tuners are quality lightweight Hipshots. These look good in the black chrome finish but personally I think a set of traditional chrome cloverleaf Schallers would be more in keeping with the retro vibe of the bass and a better match for the rest of the hardware. The chunky bridge is chrome and looks as dependable as it is functional, but perhaps the most striking aspect of this bass is the thick red perspex scratchplate. It looks fantastic, and elevates the instrument to something much more visually interesting.



“LIGHT, RESONANT AND
SOUNDS GOOD WHEN
PLAYED ACOUSTICALLY”

SOUNDS AND PLAYABILITY

The pickups are powerful, quiet and – unsurprisingly – have a tone which is perfectly suited to old school rhythm and blues... particularly the back pickup. Although it doesn't have the vintage looks of the front unit, with the bridge pickup volume and the tone turned up full, the sound is authentically Stones.

If you listen to the two-beat feel and tone of Wyman's bass-line on the track 'The Last Time' you'll get a good idea of how this sounds. It's punchy with a thick, rich lo-mid bias, and has more than enough presence to be used on its own. Adding in some of the neck pickup fills out the sound considerably and now you have a great Fender-ish vintage rock'n'roll tone – a bass sound that will sit perfectly in any blues trio alongside an old distorted archtop or battered Tele.

There's plenty of scope for adjusting your sound using the simple passive tone control and pickup volumes, but the way you play this bass will also have a big effect on the tone. I had some great results playing right over the end of the neck and even tried playing it with an old felt pick. Like this, you can get the perfect 50s and 60s bass sound, minus of course the hum and crackle that was such a common part of any bass guitar's sound back then.

**"A GREAT FENDER-ISH VINTAGE
ROCK'N'ROLL TONE WHICH WILL SIT
PERFECTLY IN ANY BLUES TRIO"**



The tiny size of this bass is a bit of a mixed blessing. It's a little too small to play comfortably with it on your lap, but standing up with it strapped on, the tiny body makes much more sense and the light design means that it's effortless to play, even for long periods of time.

For me, a little more thought could have been put into the neck joint. It may well be of the same form and dimensions as Wyman's Tuxedo bass, but with quite a thick body and very shallow neck socket, there's a lot of the body protruding at the point where the neck joins the body at the 16th fret. However, the chunky short-scale neck is super-comfortable to play and the Elites flatwound strings it comes fitted with are a perfect match for the feel of this bass.

CONCLUSION

I guess you'll either love or loathe the look of this instrument. Personally I think it looks cool in a kitsch, early-60s sort of way: rather like a Vox Phantom or one of those old 60s basses that were made in Italy by electronic organ manufacturers. £600 is not a lot for a bass these days, and although you could argue that there's not a lot of it, what there is in the Bass Centre Bill Wyman Signature is very good quality. Like any instrument at this price, there are limitations: this won't be a bass for everyone. However, my guess is that most potential buyers will either be dyed-in-the-wool Wyman fans or will have started their careers on the kind of bass that this instrument takes its cue from. Features like the chunky neck join and short scale will be of less importance to them than its accurate and authentic appearance and sound.

Bass Centre and their distribution partners House Music have brought us some cracking instruments over the years – from the Bass Collection range to their signature models in the British Bass Masters series. They've always represented great value for money too, and although the Bill Wyman signature is a bit of an oddity and a deviation from the Fender-inspired instruments that form the bulk of Bass Centre's catalogue, it continues the company's tradition for quality basses at affordable prices. ■



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"Darkglass has refined the art of integrating tone INTO your sound as opposed to a synthetic feeling layer on top. Their products represent a new level in low end processing. Well done guys!"

Devin Townsend



CARVIN

Brian Bromberg B24P

Stunning looks, extreme playability, tones to die for. Are these things too good to be true? Mike Brooks finds out

Bass Gear
www.bassgear.co.uk

Recent Carvins that we've played here at *BGM Towers* have been seriously top notch, and we've said so time and again. This particular model carries jazz legend Brian Bromberg's name and the spec is particularly impressive: at a pound under £1,800, how do they cram in so many topline features? Read on...

BUILD QUALITY

The spalted maple top adorning the Bromberg's alder body is eye-catching to say the least, with its brown and yellow hues and black figuring, and is reinforced with the headstock cap; the natural look is further enhanced by the maple and walnut five-piece through-neck construction. Rear contouring and chamfering make it a comfortable bass to play despite the thick body depth, and the lower horn grants perfect access to the upper frets for those patrolling the dusty end of the fingerboard. The elongated upper horn improves the balance: weighing in at 3.9kg, this is no backbreaker. Although there is some evidence of neck dive, this is remedied once put on a strap.

The flame maple and walnut neck has a very slim, Jazz-like profile and nut width, which gradually broadens as you move up the neck, but the depth remains slim, making it an easy neck to play. The level of finishing is first class, with rolled fingerboard edges and no sharp frets: the bass as a whole is immaculate in every department. Abalone block markers have been used for navigation across the ebony fingerboard and they look exquisite against the dark timber, although this particular example has foregone the Bromberg inlay at the twelfth fret.

I'm not convinced by the mixture of black and chrome hardware, but the tuners operate smoothly and the Hipshot Piezo bridge facilitates through-bridge and through-body stringing, so at least the player has options. The RAD-J single-coil pickups are radiused to match the curvature of the fingerboard, and are partnered by an 18-volt three-band EQ, comprising bass, treble and mid controls with a mid-sweep option and piezo blend - so plenty of tone tinkering is available should you need it. A quick look at the electronic guts shows that the control cavity is shielded with copper foil. The cabling is quite busy but sensibly laid out, and the batteries for the circuit are housed in fliptop compartments for easy changing.

SOUNDS AND PLAYABILITY

A sprightly acoustic performance greets the player upon first picking up this bass: it's very resonant and harmonically rich, which is always a good sign. Plug in and... wow! Even with the EQ set flat, this bass sounds truly wonderful. Clarity, power, grit, sizzle and depth of tone, it's all here. It's difficult to know where to start, there is so much going on - but it's all good. The flat basic tone is very useful as a starting point, and panning across the pickups shows the level of tonal variation on offer with the obvious differences in tone between both single coil pickups. If you want rounded-out bass goodness, the neck pickup won't disappoint, but if some brighter mid-range honk is your preference, the bridge pickup has plenty of that to offer too.



"WITH SO MANY TONAL OPTIONS ON TAP IT'S A VERSATILE INSTRUMENT, FULL STOP"



“THE NECK IS IMMENSELY PLAYABLE, ALL THE COMFORT BOXES ARE TICKED AND THE BASS AS A WHOLE IS A JOY TO PLAY”

So we get to the EQ, which is a feast of options. The bass and treble controls offer power, depth and clarity without being extreme at any point: the bass EQ particularly works well without getting boomy when boosted. Slappers and tappers will enjoy the treble EQ, which never becomes harsh or brittle. The mid-sweep is a useful tool: there isn't a tone here that I didn't like or couldn't find a use for. Adding the piezo option into the mix adds yet more options. Introducing it judiciously is definitely the way to go, but if a more acoustic-like tone is what you're looking for, the sparkle is definitely there. For me, a mix between the pickups and the piezo worked best. Either way, you will have the best of both worlds at your discretion.

CONCLUSION

This is a real winner of a bass. It has so much going for it, and with so many tonal options on tap it's a versatile instrument, full stop. I doubt there is a musical situation that it couldn't adapt to, which is great news for the player. The neck is immensely playable, all the comfort boxes are ticked and the bass as a whole is a joy to play. I can't imagine anyone who takes the plunge and buys one being disappointed in any respect. So what are you waiting for? ■

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ASHDOWN

CTM-100 Head, CL-410H Cabinet

Big, ballsy and proud of it! If valves make your heart beat faster, take a look at this beauty. Mike Brooks gets down and dirty with Ashdown's valve monster

Ashdown Engineering
www.ashdownmusic.com

For some bassists, a fully featured valve amp is sonic nirvana and in some contexts, rightly so. The rich lush overtones, harmonic colouring and warm grinding bass tone that can be coaxied from a great valve head is a sound to behold and no amount of circuitry or modelling can totally replicate the qualities a valve head can give you. Ashdown offers this smaller version of the CTM-300 behemoth – but be aware, this is no shrinking violet!

BUILD QUALITY

Built here in the UK, these are solid pieces of kit and very much in keeping with Ashdown's no-nonsense approach. Coming in at 590mm x 250mm x 290mm with a weight of 19kg, it's not small by any means but easily transportable. Both units are finished in a tough black vinyl, the amp coming with thick leather handles sensibly positioned on the top of the chassis to save the player's back. The cab, made from birch ply like the amp, sports a fetching vintage red tweed speaker covering and black metal protective corners. The cab is a fair size with dimensions of 760mm x 617mm x 425mm and a weight of 36kg, so I'd advise two pairs of hands when shifting it – although the recessed carry handles make the job a little easier. The cab features dual Speakon/jack sockets so you can choose which method you wish to hook the pair up with.

The amp is fully featured, the front panel displaying high and low jack inputs, a Send/Return loop for your effects, a sensibly simple control layout with selection buttons for Mellow, Deep, Shift and Bright, controls for Gain, Bass, Middle, Treble and Master Volume, followed by an XLR DI socket with Pre and Post EQ selection, a selector for the VU Meter's operation (audio or valve bias) and a control for selecting one or two valves of the output stage. The rear panel has three separate Speakon/jack sockets for 8, 4 and 2 ohm loads as well as PreHeat and Main HT power buttons to protect the valves (2x KT88s in the power amp, 2x ECC832s and 2x ECC82s in the preamp) and allow them to warm up before operation.

Visually, it all looks the business – and the reflex port at the base of the cabinet also provides some extra height, as well as





“IF THE DESIGN PREMISE WAS TO COME UP WITH A TRULY FANTASTIC VALVE AMP WITH TONE TO REVEL IN, IT’S A BULLSEYE”

taste. This isn't an amp full of sparkly, glass-like highs and neither should it be, it's fully tailored to the distorted valve-loving rock brigade.

Naturally, the Fenders totally worked with this combination, bringing out all they had to offer in terms of warm passive rock tones – but

surprisingly, the two active basses seemed to benefit from the added colouration and growl on offer. The graphite-necked, wooden-bodied Empathy sounded like an entirely different instrument, its clarity working well in tandem with the amp and cab. Who says active, tech-heavy basses don't sound good with valves? This bass and set-up disproves that theory.

CONCLUSION

At almost £2,000, it's not a cheap set-up by any means, but this isn't trying to be an all-in-one solution, it's merely addressing a section of the market that yearns for valve tones. Ashdown has a seriously good amp on its hands here. If the design premise was to come up with a truly fantastic valve amp with tone to revel in, it's a bullseye – and the cabinet is the perfect match for what this amp has to offer. It may be rated at 100 watts but with two cabs attached this would be seriously loud... ■

STING

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SCHECTER

Stiletto Vintage and Stealth

Wallet-friendly in price and glossy to the touch, these two Schecters have much to offer us. Joel McIver feels the width

Westside Distribution

www.westsidedistribution.com

Popular among bass players of the “heavy” and “metal” persuasion, Schecter has carved out quite the enviable niche with the sector of the bass-playing population concerned with throwing the horns on a nightly basis. But as always round these parts, we’re keen to discover whether basses lumped into a genre tag can perform when required to do different things – so we’ll be slapping, tapping and generally being funky with these metal monsters during this review. Fingers flexed: let’s go.

BUILD QUALITY

Schecter’s Vintage and Stealth basses have much in common. Both are made in Indonesia, the land of cheap guitars; both have a six-bolt bolt-on neck joint, which – with two more bolts than your usual budget bass – is a good sign; and both come with identical, usefully detented controls: master volume, pickup blend and treble and bass EQ. Each has a scratchplate, presumably of more use with the Vintage’s sunburst finish than the Stealth’s ‘very metal’ black-on-black.

Where the two instruments differ, however, is in their body size. The Vintage feels tiny, at least if you’re of average build: in fact, compared to some of the massive barn doors we regularly review here in the *BGM* command bunker, it feels like a toy. This is not meant to imply that it feels cheap, because it doesn’t: everything is fitted together with machined precision, especially the neck, a skinny bit of wood that has the same feeling of general smallness as the body.

The Stealth is weightier in every way, a solid slab of basswood and maple that probably wouldn’t feel large at all if you weren’t playing it immediately after the Vintage. Like its little sibling, this bass is well made, with no flaws that we could detect. How Schecter has kept the price low is presumably to do with the quality of the components, rather than how they’ve been assembled. Again, no complaints, all the way from the Schecter’s own-brand tuners down to the battery compartment. None of the hardware is world-class:

why would it be at this price? But it’s all usable, manageable and generally not particularly good or bad, it’s just there to do a job.

SOUNDS AND PLAYABILITY

Now look, we play super-slick, super-slim necks on a lot of basses, and we’re hard to impress on that front. In fact, we’re waiting for the day when the neck wood is transparent because it’s so thin... but these Schecters redefine ‘neck playability’. Skinny to the point of being lightweight and slippery to the point of being frictionless, these fretted bits of maple are really quite remarkable to play. We’re big fans, but we know perfectly well that a hell of a lot of bassists definitely are not, preferring a nice chunky neck for that hefty feel and tone. So make your choice: you may feel that a thicker neck would suit you, and that your hands and/or playing style simply don’t need the added speed that a weeny neck supplies.

Fire up the Vintage and you’ll note immediately that it’s not a reggae or dub player’s instrument: that little body simply doesn’t supply enough low end, despite the active EQ. If that’s not a problem for you, explore the considerable midrange and top end to your heart’s content. There’s no end of tones for you to play with up there, from a relatively glassy slap to a punchy, mid-enhanced thunk (sorry for the technical jargon) that would cut through more or less any guitar riff, at least if your band’s axeman doesn’t tune down to M. The bridge humbucker is the more useful of the two pickups, we reckon: on its own, the Jazz-style neck unit doesn’t pump out enough power, unless you’re in a folk trio or similar relaxed environment.

As well as its physically larger dimensions, the Stealth has a Precision-style pickup in the neck position, enabling an unexpectedly clanky, almost Rickenbacker-like tone that will perfectly suit its role as a heavy metal bass. The low end is tangibly greater from this instrument, and the extremely slick gloss finish on the neck and body (the former of which feels almost, but not quite, like a composite) rewards anyone who needs to play fast and technically. And who doesn’t, at least from time to time?

CONCLUSION

The Vintage is a sweet little instrument, offering serious playability for its price but not threatening to outperform more expensive and/or bigger-bodied instruments. Perhaps the old tobacco burst finish plus white scratchplate is a bit unoriginal, but it’s called a Vintage, after all. As for the Stealth, what we have here is a rock monster that will enable you to keep up with the other headbangers in your band as well as step away from that and play in different styles too. Bodyweight and tone range aside, these two basses are very similar in feel and performance, and we suggest that you’ll feel equally happy with either, depending on your requirements. ■

“THE SLICK GLOSS FINISH ON THE NECK AND BODY REWARDS ANYONE WHO NEEDS TO PLAY FAST AND TECHNICALLY. AND WHO DOESN’T?”

DIAMOND

HCH-1 Halo Chorus Pedal

£300 for a chorus pedal? It may sound steep but quality costs, as Mike Brooks finds out

Bass Gear

www.bassgear.co.uk

At one time or another, most of us will be called upon to use a chorus effect. As well as its ability to conjure up the obvious effect-laden sounds of many an 80s bass part, a chorus pedal can be very handy at giving your bass signal some added oomph and colour. This particular pedal from Diamond is of the same high standard as their highly regarded bass compressor but, being a chorus pedal, it's a little more complicated and involved due to the mono/stereo permutations. Sizewise, it's not huge (125mm x 120mm x 38mm), moderately proportioned and built to last in its metal casing. The flashing LED indicates the pedal is operating correctly, and the unit comes with a compact 24-volt DC switching adapter.

The completely analogue pedal combines pitch and parallel phase modulation with delay, to produce possibly the smoothest chorus effect I've heard for some time. With inputs and outputs to facilitate mono to mono, mono to stereo and stereo to stereo routing and an input to incorporate an expression pedal (to control the speed of the Low Frequency Oscillator or LFO), there isn't much those chaps at Diamond haven't thought of.

The CH Depth control dictates the amount of pitch detuning of the chorus signal, the Speed control affects the LFO speed, important for the chorus and phase modulation. The CH Mix control selects the amount of chorus effect added to the clean signal, while the PM Mix determines the amount of phase modulation added to the clean signal. The 180 degree switch inverts the phase of the second input channel, should you wish to use it. Under the cover there are also trim pots for a kill/dry switch, a waveform shape jumper and delay time - this sounds complicated, but it isn't. As with most effects, experimentation is the name of the game.

I'm pleased to say that this is one of the best chorus pedals I've heard. The tonal quality is outstanding and the control set is fairly intuitive after some initial fiddling about. Place this pedal up against cheaper units and you can instantly hear the difference. A little taste and sensitivity with the controls is certainly desirable to start with, and a little tweak here and there goes a long way. Pick or fingerstyle playing both benefit from a little chorus now and again and, in terms of fattening up your sound, this pedal certainly does that without losing the bottom end and its performance is glitch free. Use this with a fretless bass and all your Jaco licks take on a whole new life. Using chorus constantly can become very annoying (ever felt a little seasick when someone overdoes it?) but when it's tastefully used to create a mood or atmosphere, or to embellish a solo, it really works.

Diamond has another great pedal on their hands - but at £300, only time will tell if players are willing to part with that sort of cash for an effect they use sporadically. However, if a chorus effect is a necessity on your pedalboard, they don't come much better than this. ■



"I'M PLEASED TO SAY THAT THIS IS ONE OF THE BEST CHORUS PEDALS I'VE HEARD"

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

PRICE | £299

MADE IN | Canada

FEATURES | Ch Depth, Speed, PM Mix, CH Mix, 180 degree switch

DIMENSIONS | 125mm x 120mm x 38mm

POWER | Internally regulated to 15v, can be run from 24V UK plug adaptor included (polarity reversing cable included for 9V use) or from 18v pedalboard supply

WEIGHT | 480g excluding battery

WHAT WE THINK

PLUS | Chorus pedals don't come much better than this

MINUS | £300 is a lot of money for one effect, but hear the quality

OVERALL | Two out of two isn't bad for the guys at Diamond, this is an impressive pedal that sets the bar for bass chorus pedals

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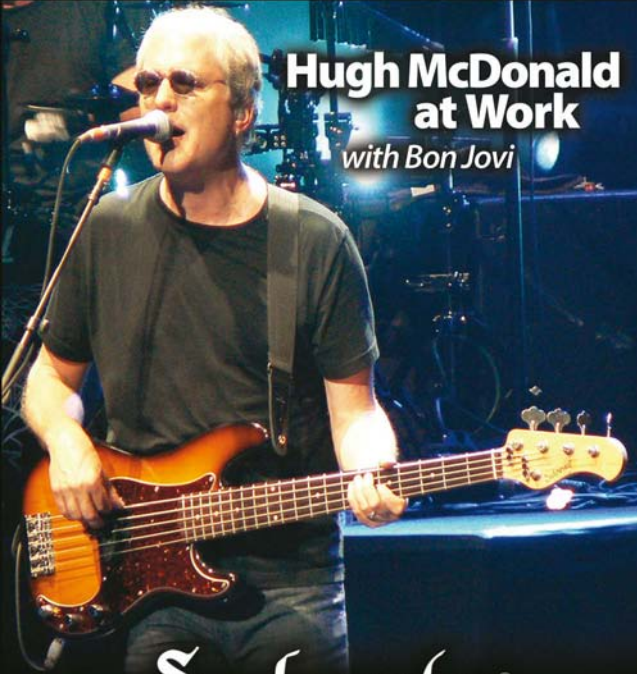
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BUILD QUALITY	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
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VALUE	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

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SOUND QUALITY	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
VALUE	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

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TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

WHAT WE THINK

PLUS | A durable, easy-to-operate set of effects pedals
MINUS | Other FX may make more spectacular sounds
OVERALL | Impressive spec: you're getting quality for your money

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BASS

TUITION

MAKING YOU A BETTER BASS PLAYER

Welcome to our redesigned tuition section, in which *Bass Guitar Magazine* collates the wit and wisdom of the *crème de la crème* of the electric and upright bass world. We're fortunate enough to have some serious talent on the team, from world-class music educators to experienced touring musicians, who between them have laid down the low notes in every studio, club and arena in the civilised world. Note that we've divided the columns according to **Beginner**, **Intermediate** and **Advanced** level for easy reference. Whether you're looking to improve your playing technique, expand your awareness of theory, set up your rig to sound like your particular bass hero or simply get on a bus and tour, we provide the answers you need here. What are you waiting for? Dive in...

Joel McIver, editor

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Ellen O'Reilly is a freelance bassist and vocalist currently studying at ICMP. Ellen has extensive experience in gigging, studio and television work.

www.lowendlady.com

ELLEN O'REILLY BEGINNER'S THEORY 72



Paul Geary attended the Berklee College of Music in Boston and the Musicians' Institute of Technology. He also heads up the Academy Of Contemporary Music's bass school.

www.paulgeary.com

PAUL GEARY BEGINNER'S THEORY 74



Rob Statham has amassed over 25 years as a professional freelance bass player. He has played in a wide range of musical settings, including jazz, blues, prog and classical, and he has taught for the past three years at Tech Music School.

ROB STATHAM INTERMEDIATE TECHNIQUES 76



Alex Webster founded the frankly terrifying Cannibal Corpse in 1988 and has guested since then on musically complex projects such as Blotted Science. He is the author of the *Extreme Metal Bass* instruction book.

ALEX WEBSTER INTERMEDIATE THEORY 78



Head of the Bass Department at BIMM Brighton, Franc has worked with artists such as Steve Howe (Yes), Lisa Moorish, and Mike Lindup (Level 42). Franc uses Jeff Chapman basses and Elites strings.

www.francooshea.com

FRANC O'SHEA ADVANCED THEORY 80



Say hello to advanced techniques columnist Philip Mann, star of studio and stage. Ready to get those fingers flying? Mann up...

PHILIP MANN ADVANCED TECHNIQUES 84



David Etheridge studied double bass at the Royal College of Music. Since then he's worked with musicians such as Nigel Kennedy and Martin Taylor. David teaches double and electric bass and is the MD of two big bands and a 55-piece jazz orchestra.

DAVID ETHERIDGE UPRIGHT BASS 86



Mike has written for *BGM* since 2004 and has been a bassist since 1987, clocking up over 3000 gigs around the world in the process. He has played for and worked with the likes of Bonnie Tyler and Toyah Willcox, and has a bass collection to rival a small shop.

MIKE BROOKS COVER BAND PRO 88



Steve Lawson is the UK's most celebrated solo bass guitarist, with 15 years of touring and 36 solo and collaborative albums to his name. He also lectures at colleges around the world.

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BGM Notation Legend

THE FOLLOWING IS A GUIDE TO THE NOTATION SYMBOLS AND TERMINOLOGY USED IN *BASS GUITAR MAGAZINE*

The Staff: most music written for the bass guitar uses the bass clef. The example to the right shows the placement of the notes on the staff.

Tablature: this is a graphical representation of the music. Each horizontal line corresponds with a string on the bass guitar, with the lowest line representing the lowest pitched string (E). The numbers represent the frets to be played. Numbers stacked vertically indicate notes that are played together. Where basses with five or six strings are required, the tablature staff will have five or six lines as necessary.

Notes shown in brackets indicate that a note has been tied over from a previous bar.

PLAYING TECHNIQUES

SLAP AND POP TECHNIQUE

Notes slapped with the thumb are marked with a 't', notes popped with the fingers marked with a 'p'

ADVANCED SLAP TECHNIQUE

Fretting hand slaps are marked 'lh' and double thumbing upstrokes are shown with an upward pointing arrow

PLECTRUM TECHNIQUE

Where necessary, down and upstrokes with the pick will be shown using these symbols (down-up-down-up)

TAPPING TECHNIQUES

Fretting hand taps are shown with a '+' in a circle. Picking hand taps are shown with '+'. Specific fingers will be shown with numbers if necessary

FRETTING TECHNIQUES

HAMMER-ON AND PULL-OFF

Hammer-ons and pull-offs are shown with a slur over the notes. Only the first note is plucked by the picking hand

SLIDE (GLISSANDO)

Slides are performed by playing the first note then sliding the fretting finger up to the second note

TRILLS

Trills are performed by rapidly alternating between the two notes shown using hammer-ons and pull-offs

VIBRATO

The pitch of the note is altered by repeatedly bending the string up and back with the fretting finger

PLAYING HARMONICS

NATURAL HARMONICS

The note is played as a harmonic by lightly touching the string above the fret indicated

ARTIFICIAL HARMONICS

Pluck the string while fretting the lower note and placing the edge of the picking hand thumb an octave higher (the note shown in brackets)

BENDING NOTES

BEND

The note is bent upwards to the interval specified: 1/2 = semitone, full = tone

BEND AND RELEASE

The note is bent up to the interval indicated then released back to its original pitch

THE FRONT LINE

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THE JAZZ BASSIST

RUTH GOLLER

Jazz ninja Ruth advises on transporting the beast

I am often asked how I can carry such a huge thing as a double bass around. People sometimes think that having small hands is a real obstacle for a bass player, but I've never really known anything different – and I certainly didn't choose the bass because I wanted to play something big and difficult to transport! It was always about the sound for me. I have a few students with small hands who ask me similar questions. The answer is that everyone has to find their own way around the instrument. Usually people with small hands automatically develop a bigger stretch than others, adding some stretching exercises to help that along. I usually do those before I start playing. A good one is to put your right thumb against your left pinky, and vice versa, with the palms of your hands facing each other, and then gently press your hands towards each other. Bass players with small hands also learn how to move faster up and down the neck in order to

compensate. However, I think the double bass is a tough instrument for everybody, regardless of physical size: it's really about posture and a good left-hand technique. For people with small hands, these can be crucial. Making sure that your thumb is around the middle of the fretboard and developing a good one-finger-per-fret technique can make things a lot easier and avoid wrist pains. The set-up of your bass also has to suit your body. There is no point in having a massive bass if you're having trouble playing it. I was so happy when I discovered my 5/8-size bass, which is slightly smaller than the usual 3/4-size basses. I also play a short-scale electric Fender Mustang, but it doesn't matter what kind of bass you have: your sound and your choice of notes are going to make you sound unique.

www.ruthgoller.com



THE METALHEAD

PAOLO GREGOLETTO

Trivium bassist Paolo supplies some sound business sense

Focus. That is a word which I would like to see hammered into each and every young musician's head. Focus is a virtue in my opinion, at least when it comes to being a musician. Creativity is a fleeting thing that comes and goes as it pleases, so cluttering your mind up with multiple tasks does you no favours. It is disheartening how many musicians I've met who simply accept where they are as a player. I've been fortunate to have Matt Heafy and Corey Beaulieu as bandmates: they share the same drive as I do and they really challenge me as a bass player to always grow my skill set. Having great focus on your creative outlet is number one. When it comes time to write new music or practise, I tune out the rest of the world. Great songs and great players come about with intent and purpose: you cannot bypass the effort and time that it takes to achieve results. Bearing that in mind, too many musicians overextend themselves. In this era, we are so obsessed with having tons of projects on the go. My suggestions:

Put your music first

If you're talented and have a knack for playing or writing music, hone those skills. Immerse yourself in listening to music as well as playing it. Always give yourself time to learn and reflect on the music you make.

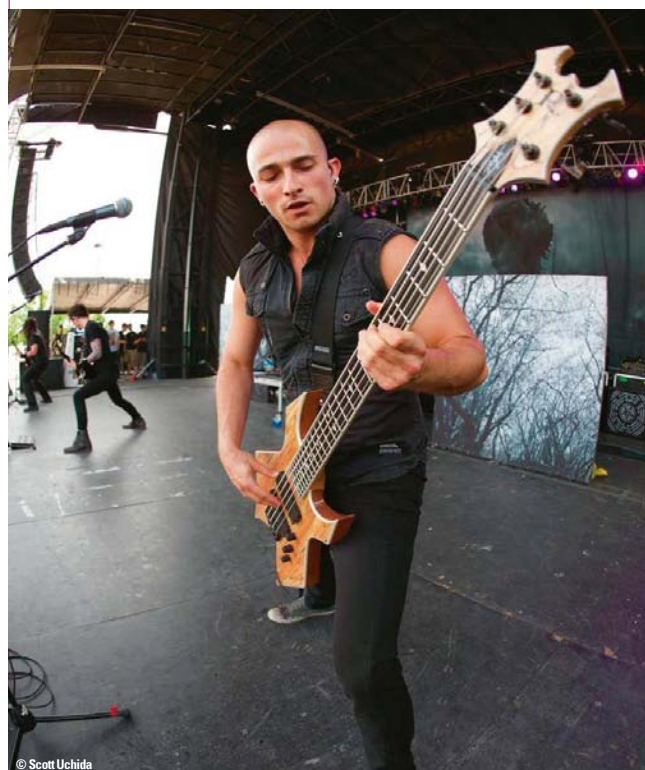
Start with one outside project

The time to start adding secondary projects to your schedule is when your band has a solid foundation. If your band is doing well, I suggest adding one extra outlet to your plate. Prioritise it accordingly and let those you work with know where each project stands in your mind.

Know when to move on

The rule of thumb in a new business is five years. If it hasn't taken off in that time, it probably never will. One of the hardest things to do is walk away from something you have helped to create. Focus more time on fewer projects, channel every ounce of your abilities into a single goal and it may be greater than anything you could imagine.

www.trivium.org



© Scott Uchida

THE ALTERNATIVE ROCKER

MICHAEL MCKEEGAN

Mixmaster Mike of Therapy? gets his Magimix out



A few weeks of downtime at home have meant that I've been able to finish up some ongoing projects, most notably a couple of remixes for other bands. It's a great honour that bands trust us enough to do a remix of their songs, and it's always enlightening to hear the original stems of the instrumental tracks which are sent through. I'm particularly interested in the bass tracks: it's fascinating to hear what other players are doing, how they shape parts and how they sit in context with the other instruments. This can lead to a few interesting 'misheard' parts of the song, where you get the impression that the bass is busier than it is in reality: when you hear it soloed, it's often a different part altogether. Thankfully all the remixes we've done have come with no brief, so we've had free rein to move things around as much as we want. I've done this occasionally to my own bass parts at demo stage, which is always a good way to see if you are missing a trick. Simply by moving a bass part around within the song, it's fun to see where else it may sit, either rhythmically or harmonically, and it's amazing how even a slight variation can change the complete dynamic of a part. Next time you're working on a demo or a song, I recommend approaching it from a remix mind-set: try and pretend it's the first time you've heard it, pull out some of the elements and move around a few of the main bass themes. If you're using a DAW this is really easy, but there's no harm in trying it in band rehearsal where the live approach can put some fresh twists on an arrangement and the way a song builds. You might find that a slightly more esoteric approach benefits your individual parts and the song overall.

www.therapyquestionmark.co.uk

THE EXTENDED-RANGE SPECIALIST

STEWART MCKINSEY

Ten-stringer Stew completes his chordal explorations

Welcome back, extended rangers! In this last instalment of my chordal series, I'd like to explore the use of chords built from the other tones in a scale. Since the previous columns used E minor as the reference scale, I'll continue using it. In those other articles we were building chords from the tone centre of the scale: E, G and B. This time we'll start looking at the other sonorities you can develop. If you know all the triads in the E minor scale, start figuring out your 7th and 9th voicings. If you're already acquainted with these, start working through all the inversions. Remember, you can create interesting tensions by leaving some notes out of your chords, particularly in the case of inversions.

To briefly revisit an earlier example, your band is playing in E minor. How does the C major 7 chord sound against it? What if you play the 7th in the root of your chord or arpeggio? By using that B, you are creating consonance, and with the other chord tones - E and G - you are emphasising the tone centre. That C will create an interesting tension, as it's the sixth above the E and a minor second away from the B. If you play it in one of the higher registers, however, you'll find it isn't so dissonant.

But what about the F# half diminished chord, F#-A-C-E? The major second above the tonic is consonant, but it makes an interesting texture as the tension is less dramatic than a tritone or minor second. The A will give you a suspension as a perfect interval that is neither major nor minor. We discussed the C above, and then you have an E again to support the band's theme. What if you move the A to the root position of your chord? What does that do to its flavour, and how does it mesh with what the band is playing?

Remember that we learn by exploring, which means you have to wade through material that you may not be able to use right away - but it's a process, and it takes time. Be patient with yourself and don't give up if things aren't clear at first. Most of us need time to make sense of new ideas. In my next column, we'll return to more exercise-oriented material.

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ELLEN O'REILLY

ELLEN TELLS US WE PLAY IT BEST, WHEN WE PLAY NOTHING AT ALL

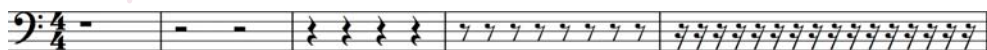
Last time we had a look at how notes can be divided up and counted. A quick reminder: assuming we are playing in 4/4 time, a whole note lasts for four beats (meaning you play one note to last four beats), a half note lasts for two beats (meaning you play two notes lasting two beats each), a quarter note lasts for one beat (meaning you play four notes per bar) and an eighth note lasts for two halves of a beat (meaning you play eight notes per bar, playing two notes on each beat of the bar). These are also known as the subdivisions of a beat. I include a diagram of how these notes break down, as follows:

These types of subdivisions are what is known as simple meter or simple time, which just means that the notes can be split up in such a way so that they are all divided into equal parts. Think how a cell divides, one divides into two, and then the two both divide into two (resulting in four in total) and so on. There is a new subdivision that I've added to the table above which is called a sixteenth note: here, you play four notes per one beat in a bar, which (in the case of a bar of four

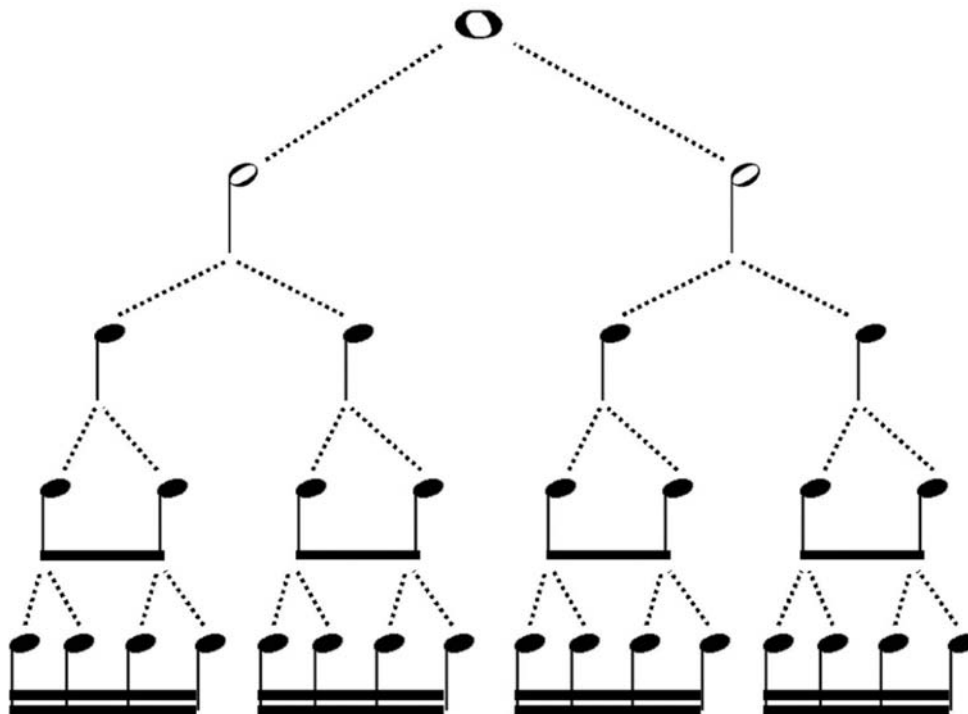
EXAMPLE 1



EXAMPLE 2



EXAMPLE 3



"A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF MUSIC IS ACTUALLY WHAT YOU DON'T PLAY"

beats) leaves you with 16 notes, as four beats per bar, with four notes per beat, equals 16 notes per bar. Count sixteenth notes as '1 E & A, 2 E & A, 3 E & A, 4 E & A' and so on.

As you can see in the diagram, each note divides into a smaller and smaller fraction. For every one of these notes that is played, there is also a rest that goes with it. After all, we can't enjoy music properly if the music we're listening to has no chance to breathe. In **Example 1** we have more subdivisions including sixteenth notes, in **Example 2** we see the rest equivalents of these subdivisions.

When you see a rest, don't play for the duration of the value of that rest. This is something that a lot of people don't really consider when it comes to playing music: a very important part of music is actually what you don't play, and the space you leave for the song to breathe. Music needs rests and space as much as it needs notes, after all, because it is most importantly about feel and emotion. **Example 3** mixes up both note values and their rests for you to play and get comfortable with. Enjoy! ■



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PAUL GEARY

BASS GURU GEARY INTRODUCES INTERVAL STUDIES 101

This month I would like to start a new series of columns focusing on intervals, with a collection of exercises to help with fretboard knowledge. An interval is the distance between two notes. It is used in the construction of scales and chords. It is vital that we understand how to use and apply intervals in the music we play. The following examples will help you to build a practice regime tailor-made to give you the necessary tools to learn your fretboard inside out.

“IT IS VITAL THAT WE UNDERSTAND HOW TO USE AND APPLY INTERVALS IN THE MUSIC WE PLAY”

EXAMPLE 1

The following examples are in the key of A major, with three sharps - F, C and G. However, the starting note of this first example is F sharp. The reason for this is that we are playing A major's relative minor, which is F sharp natural minor. This is also known as the Aeolian mode.

The reason it is called a relative is that, as with all relatives, we are joined by blood - metaphorically speaking! In this case it is the key signature of three sharps which stays the same. If we take any major scale from the sixth degree it will give us its relative minor. Begin to play the scale, ascending and descending. Watch out for the stretch over to the G string, as the scale continues over four strings.



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EXAMPLE 2

This example is based on a third interval. Take it very slowly with a starting tempo of 70BPM. The first interval from F sharp to A is a minor third. G sharp to B is a minor third. A to C sharp is a major third, and so on. In bar two, watch out for the major third played from E (second fret D string) to G sharp (first fret G string) as this is where you will need to move your hand for the stretch across to the G string. Descend the intervals as written, making sure you use one finger per fret.

EXAMPLE 3

Next we move on to the 4ths. Most of these within this shape and mode will be perfect 4ths apart from in bars two and three, where we hit an augmented (sharpened) 4th. Remember to use one finger per fret, rolling off each string as you play the interval. Take these slowly, increasing the tempo when you feel more confident with the scale.

EXAMPLE 4

This is an intervallic reading exercise using thirds and fourths. Other intervals are contained within it: we will begin to take a look more closely at these next month. There is no tablature, so make sure you keep your eyes moving across the page as you read the intervals. Keep focused and don't stop! Most importantly do not break out of the scale shape.

This month we are in the key of A major, looking at its relative minor F sharp, in position one (which is the first five frets of

your bass). Try taking this shape and playing the same exercise in different areas on the neck.

Next month we will move on to the next set of intervals, taking a different area of the neck and a different scale. See you next time. ■



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ROB STATHAM

OPEN STRINGS ARE MANNA FROM BASS HEAVEN FOR ROB STATHAM

The use of open strings – where and when – is a subject that can divide opinion, so let's take a look at the subject this month and provide a new perspective on the matter.

To some extent my early study as a bass guitarist was always something of an amalgam of bass guitar and double bass techniques, probably from a result of using both electric bass and acoustic bass tutorial books and being as much influenced by great double bass players as electric bassists – and so I probably have a more permissive attitude to open string use than some. Certainly, I was, from the beginning, not of the school of thought that said one should always use one finger per fret and always avoid the use of open strings which many are told to observe.

At the extreme end of this school of thought, I recall I once taught a student who never used any open strings – apart

from the open bottom E – and she told me that this was an approach that had been instilled in her from the beginning.

I would imagine most of us don't take quite such an extreme position as this, and, to some extent, my own use of open strings might be influenced by such factors as the tempo of a piece and the duration of the note in question. So, at a slower tempo, I would prefer to fret a note for the sake of the tonal quality, but at a faster tempo and if the note is of a short duration then I might well use an open string. Sometimes this means I am able to play bass-lines using solely double bass fingering which can aid endurance on some lines in lower positions.

Example 1 is an instance of double bass fingering in what acoustic bassists would term 'half-position', what we might think of as first position at the first fret. I have written out the scale of F major, extending into the second octave to encompass all notes in that position, using double bass fingering as indicated and open strings as shown. I think most people would likely use this fingering, whether or not they're aware of its acoustic bass provenance, as it sits so comfortably under the hand and negates the need for a position shift which would otherwise be necessary. This fingering would also work in the key of Bb across all four strings in this position, the notes beneath the root note at the first fret on the A string fitting into this overall scheme comfortably, using the open A and third and first fret on the E string.

In **Example 2** I take this idea to what we might regard as second position, with our first finger over the second fret, but what double bassists would conceive of as first position. Here I have written out an E Mixolydian scale, again using double bass fingering and open strings, except I have reverted to one finger per fret on the G string in order to make the G# at the first fret on the G string. I think this illustrates how my technique is somewhat a mix of double bass and electric bass concepts, and while perhaps most bass players would agree on the F major scale fingering, many might prefer to avoid the open strings in the second example, using one finger per fret throughout and making a one fret adjustment on the G string. You can make a case for both, and depending on context I might well use one finger per fret when playing in this position and key, but equally I might also use the patterns indicated, dependent on such factors as tempo and note duration; I think it is always preferable to have as many options as possible open to us and use what works best in any given context.

And so, in **Example 3**, I have written a sixteenth-note two-bar bass-line on an E7 and A7 chord using the fingering in the second example, double bass fingering and open strings. One of the advantages of using this system for this example is ease of playing, aiding endurance and the ability to play this pattern for a long time without tiring. Try this exercise both ways; as written using double bass fingering and open strings, but also one finger per fret, using the fourth finger at the fifth fret instead of open strings. I would note that I am not trying to say that the way I have notated it is the 'correct' way; you may prefer to use one finger per fret and find that perfectly comfortable for this idea, and indeed, I might use that system myself depending on tempo, but it makes for an interesting exercise to try it both ways and at different tempos to see which might work

EXAMPLE 1

Open Strings in 'Half Position' - F Major

EXAMPLE 2

Open Strings in 'First Position' - E Mixolydian

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best in different circumstances. Again, it's about giving ourselves different options rather than always using a default fingering assumption in every situation.

One situation where the use of open strings are extremely useful to us is in order to facilitate position shifts and I have demonstrated this usage on a 12-bar blues in F in the fourth example, a walking bass-line played pretty much as an acoustic bass player would most likely play it, using double bass fingering throughout and open strings. Much of this idea can be played in 'half-position' as per the first example, but we will need to make some position shifts to access the higher register. In each case, when shifting up and back down again, I have used an open string to facilitate this, as per the tab, and I have also indicated the double bass fingering in the higher positions under the staff. As you can see, this certainly helps when making use of the range of the instrument, a judicious use of an open string helping us change position and register with comparative ease.

The extent to which we make use of open strings is a personal choice and, as I have said, I present these ideas to demonstrate possibilities without wishing to suggest that this is the 'correct' approach. Tempo, note duration, tone and other considerations will all have a bearing on what we think sounds best in any given situation. Certainly, these options are worth exploring and can be very useful as an alternative to standard bass guitar fingering and the notion that we should avoid the use of open strings. On the contrary, they can be very useful in many situations and we can learn a lot by noting how double bass players approach these technical issues. ■

EXAMPLE 3

Example 3 shows a bass line in 4/4 time. The first measure is marked with an E7 chord and the second with an A7 chord. The notation includes a staff with notes and a guitar tab below it. The tab shows fingerings like 1 2 4 1 4 2 0 0 4 4 1 4 0 and 0 2 3 4 2 4 2 0 0 4 4 2 4 0.



EXAMPLE 4

Example 4 shows a 12-bar blues bass line in 4/4 time. The chords are F7, Bb7, F7, Bb7, F7, Am7, D7, Gm7, C7, F7, and etc... The notation includes a staff with notes and a guitar tab below it. The tab shows fingerings like 1 0 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 0 6 7 8 10 8 10 and 1 8 0 3 0 1 1 2 3 3 1 1 0 7 5 7 5 7.



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ALEX WEBSTER

PROFESSOR WEBSTER SIGNS OFF WITH A RUN-THROUGH THOSE CRAZY METERS

For the past few months we've been learning about odd meters by working with 7/8, 11/8, and 5/4 as examples. This month we'll review what we've learned by playing through some examples that feature all three of these meters.

Example 1 shows the feel we'll be using for each meter in this month's lesson. For 7/8 we'll use a 2, 2, 3 eighth note pattern, for 11/8 we'll use 3, 3, 3, 2 and for 5/4 the pattern will be 3, 3, 2, 2. These are the only patterns we'll use this month, but as you know from previous lessons, there are many other ways these signatures can be felt rhythmically.

In **Example 2** we'll work through some seventh chord arpeggios in the key of C major. In order to play all four notes of these arpeggios in 7/8 I've divided the final beat - a dotted quarter note - into a quarter and an eighth, but be aware that the basic 2, 2, 3 feel remains. After playing the four bars of 7/8 you'll

EXAMPLE 1

Three staves of musical notation in bass clef. The first staff is in 7/8 time, the second in 11/8 time, and the third in 5/4 time. Each staff contains a sequence of eighth and quarter notes with accents, illustrating the feel of each meter.

EXAMPLE 2

Three staves of musical notation in bass clef. Each staff shows a four-measure sequence of arpeggios for Am7, Dm7, G7, and Cmaj7. Above each staff are the chord names. Below each staff is a fretboard diagram with fingerings (1-5) and a '3' indicating a triplet. The time signatures are 7/8, 11/8, and 5/4.

EXAMPLE 3

Two staves of musical notation in bass clef. The first staff is in 7/8 time and the second in 4/4 time. Each staff shows a three-measure sequence of arpeggios for Fmaj7, Bm7(b5), and Em7. Above each staff are the chord names. Below each staff is a fretboard diagram with fingerings (1, 0, 3, 2, 2) and a '(2)' indicating a double fret. The 4/4 staff also includes a '(0)' indicating an open string.



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EXAMPLE 4

Am⁷ Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷

F⁷ Bm⁷(b⁵) Em⁷

Am⁷ Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷

F⁷ Bm⁷(b⁵) Em⁷

The notation consists of four systems. Each system has a bass staff with a treble clef and a guitar fretboard diagram below it. The first system is in 7/8 time, the second in 5/4, and the third and fourth in 4/4. Chords are indicated above the notes. Fretboard diagrams show fingerings for each note.

play through the same arpeggios in 11/8 and 5/4. See if you can get through all of them without getting lost. Navigating a chart featuring multiple meters can be challenging, even when it's a simple practice example like this.

Example 3 shows a short phrase using more seventh chord arpeggios in C major. The first half of the example is two measures of 7/8 and a bar of 5/4. The second half of the example is the same phrase superimposed over 4/4. If you've been using an eighth-note click to practise these exercises, switch it to quarter note for the 4/4 sections. This will help you get the feel for playing phrases that go over the bar.

In **Example 4** we'll make things even more challenging by working through a longer phrase that features all three of the odd meters we've been working with, plus a measure of 4/4 at the end. After you've become familiar with the phrase by playing through the first half of the example, you can try the whole thing again over 4/4 in the second half. You'll be playing over the bar throughout, and often off the beat, until the final bars where things start to line up again. Nailing this will require plenty of concentration, so get focused and give it a shot.

This will be my last entry for the intermediate theory column for *Bass Guitar Magazine*. I've had a fantastic time writing it, and I hope you all have found it useful and enjoyable. I'm also extremely grateful to Joel and everyone at BGM for the opportunity to contribute, it's been an honour. I'm confident they'll find an excellent replacement for me, and I look forward to making other contributions to the magazine in the future. Until then, practise hard and have fun!

Thanks to Alex from all at BGM for his excellent work. Keep an eye out for him on our front cover in a forthcoming issue. ■



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FRANC O'SHEA

FUSIONMEISTER FRANC CONTINUES TO MIX IT UP FOR ADVANCED BASSISTS

In this month's column I will continue looking at how a fusion solo can be effectively devised. For the past couple of issues I have been exploring raking techniques, first by focusing on the right hand and then how to combine right-hand patterns with various left-hand patterns. I then looked at combining picked notes with hammer-ons to create fast ascending scale patterns. In this month's column I will be looking at co-ordinating both hands by combining raking with hammer-ons and pull-offs.

Example 1 shows the two most basic raking patterns, which are groups of three notes that cross two adjacent strings. They are divided into two groups (A and B), and there are three variations shown for each pattern, which cover all the possible starting points for the same sequence of numbers. Since each of these patterns contains three notes, they can be combined with the possibilities of using three fingers of the left hand, as shown in **Example 2**. These patterns condense the possibilities by assuming that the number 2 can represent either the middle or ring finger of the left hand and that the

EXAMPLE 1

EXAMPLE 2

A	123	B	321
	231		213
	312		132

EXAMPLE 3

A	1234	B	1432	C	1324
	2341		4321		3241
	3412		3214		2413
	4123		2143		4132
D	1423	E	1342	F	1243
	4231		3421		2431
	2314		4213		4312
	3142		2134		3124

EXAMPLE 4

EXAMPLE 5



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EXAMPLE 6

EXAMPLE 7

EXAMPLE 8



number 3 can represent either the ring or little finger; the index finger is always indicated by the number 1 (see last month's column for more on this).

So what if we wanted to expand these three-note patterns into four-note patterns by throwing either a hammer-on or a pull-off into the fray? We can use the left-hand patterns that use all four fingers, as shown in the table in **Example 3**. If we combine these with the raking patterns shown in **Example 1**, and include a hammer-on or pull-off where appropriate, we can generate numerous new patterns. To list all the sets of these newly generated patterns would take several pages, but by demonstrating how you can develop these ideas, you will be able to explore them for yourself and pick ones you particularly like.

For example, let's take group A of the four-note left-hand fingering patterns shown in **Example 3**. By combining these patterns with Ai of **Example 1** we can generate the ideas demonstrated in **Example 4**. The right-hand fingering is constant and it is only the left hand that changes with each new configuration of the left hand. The

hammer-ons and pull-offs are dependent on whether the two consecutive notes, where they occur, are ascending or descending. The placement of the hammer-ons and pull-offs can occur either from the third note in the pattern to the fourth note, as in **Example 4**, or they could be placed from the second note to the third as in **Example 5**.

Both **Example 4** and **Example 5** use the same notes, but where the hammer-on or pull-off occurs gives them a slightly different flavour. This highlights the benefits of using phrases such as the ones shown here, they have a distinctive, almost vocal quality that can be absent when simply picking all the notes. There is also the added bonus that with the combination of raking, hammer-ons and pull-offs, you can develop some very fast motifs.

Example 6 demonstrates how you can get even more variations from one single pattern by simply shifting its placement against the pulse. The pattern shown here in the first bar starts out using a left-hand fingering of 2, 1, 4, 3, which is the final variation of group B in **Example 3**. The right-hand raking pattern is Bii, as shown in **Example 1**, and the hammer-on is from the second note to the third in the pattern. By choosing a different note of the pattern to start the sequence with, we discover all the possible permutations.

Example 7 demonstrates another approach to using both raking and hammer-ons/pull-offs in a pattern by adding a dead note into the sequence. The first three bars show how you can use the same basic pattern but on different parts of the scale. The final bar of this example shows how you can vary the upper note of the pattern. **Example 8** demonstrates how you can shift these patterns up and down the fingerboard by using the same strings but shifting position for each successive phrase.

Next month I will be extending the idea of combining hammer-ons and pull-offs with raking by including scale fragments. ■



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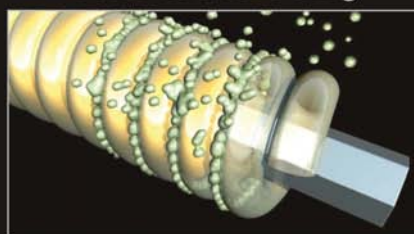
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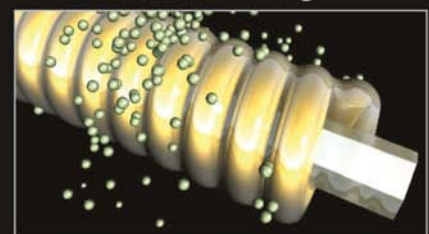
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PHIL MANN

GHOST NOTES? WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

I can remember back to the first time I heard Jaco Pastorius: sitting with my former teacher Andy Higgins, listening to this guy's incredible vocabulary.

His melodic approach to the instrument was simply untouchable, consistently executed with near perfect fluidity and military-type precision. Personally, it wasn't these almost predictable elements that you hear quoted time after time in reference to Jaco that had the most profound effect on me; what really blew me over was his ability to surround melodic phrases with an almighty magnitude of varying types of ghost notes, all coming together to create this wonderful percussive wall of sound.

One of the more operative characteristics of three-fingered technique is the ability to use numerous digits on your plucking hand to enable you to generate a multitude of varied percussive sounds when compared to that of traditional two-fingered technique. A lovely example of this is can be found in Gary Willis' approach: check out some of his playing on early recordings of Tribal Tech with Scott Henderson.

Back in *BGM 116*, I introduced a way of performing sixteenth-

note subdivisions with your thumb, index and middle fingers; let's take a moment to revisit that information now, ensuring that you are able to consistently execute the patterns with competence. Use your thumb to come down upon the string to create a percussive 'thump'. Then, while still resting on the fundamental, use the thumb again to pluck the string, before subsequent plucks from both your index and middle fingers complete the 16th note subdivision.

EXAMPLE 1

PT p i m PT p i m PT p i m PT p i m PT p i m PT p i m PT p i m PT p i m

PT p i m PT p i m PT p i m PT p i m PT p i m PT p i m PT p i m PT p i m

EXAMPLE 2

Example 2 uses the rhythmical constituents developed in our first example to create an ostinato groove. You'll notice that the first two beats of the initial bar use exactly the same rudiment found in the first exercise, and that beats three and four utilise a semiquaver triplet rhythm. A sixteenth-note triplet represents the same duration of time as a conventional eighth note: they can be tricky to perform at first, but sound fantastic once mastered. In bar three you'll notice that the eighth note that succeeds these initial sixteenth-note triplets has now been replaced with two sixteenth notes.

PT p i m PT p i m p i m p p i m p PT p i m PT p i m p i m p i m

PT p i m PT p i m p i m p p i m p PT p i m PT p i m p i m p i p

"A LOVELY EXAMPLE OF THIS IS CAN BE FOUND IN GARY WILLIS' APPROACH: CHECK OUT SOME OF HIS PLAYING ON EARLY RECORDINGS OF TRIBAL TECH WITH SCOTT HENDERSON"



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EXAMPLE 3

A second rudiment for performing sixteenth notes is introduced in **Example 3**: still only using your thumb, index and middle digits in the plucking hand, this exercise now incorporates a hammer-on from the fretting hand to help generate a continuous flow of semiquavers. You may have encountered this technical approach before in slap bass, where you use the left and right hands in conjunction with one another to create a single rhythm. Initially, pluck the open string with your thumb, allowing your fretting hand to then create a hammer-on before the index and middle fingers of

Two systems of musical notation for Example 3. Each system consists of a bass clef staff with lyrics 'p ho i m p ho i m p ho i m p ho i m' and a bass line with fret numbers. The first system shows a sequence of fret numbers: 0 3 3 3 0 3 3 3 0 3 3 3 0 3 3 3. The second system shows: 0 3 3 3 0 3 3 3 0 3 3 3 0 3 3 3.

your plucking hand complete the rhythm. Our written example takes this pattern and reproduces it over intervals of fourths.

EXAMPLE 4

Now that you have a general overview of the harmonised melodic minor scale, let's put it to better use and create some grooves and ambient sounds. You'll find that the scale has some lovely textures to investigate that have been used to provide a basis for the following exercises.

Continuing our study of three-fingered technique, our penultimate example combines the sextuplet rhythms found in last month's columns with the harmonic and melodic content we've just introduced to produce a nice melodic groove. As a refresher, sextuplets are most effectively counted using the

Two systems of musical notation for Example 4. Each system consists of a bass clef staff with lyrics 'p ho i m p ho i p p ho i m p ho i m p ho i m p ho i p p' and a bass line with fret numbers. The first system shows: 0 4 4 4 0 5 5 5 0 7 7 7 0 5 5 5. The second system shows: 0 5 5 5 0 7 7 7 0 9 9 9 0 7 7 7.

mnemonic 'one-and-a-sex-tup-let' or more comically, 'bib-a-di-bob-a-di'. The G7 chord found in bar two is played with thumb, index and middle fingers simultaneously, as is the F7 found in bar four.

EXAMPLE 5

This month's final exercise is an E minor groove. In this example I have not indicated fingering for the plucking hand. This gives you an opportunity to work them out for yourself, basing your decisions on the information you have already encountered in today's work. I will, however, give you one hint... bars one and three are slapped, the remaining bars two and four are played fingerstyle. Until next time, practise hard!

Two systems of musical notation for Example 5. Each system consists of a bass clef staff with lyrics 'PT p i m p i p ho i m p i m p i m p i m p i p ho i m p i' and a bass line with fret numbers and 'X' marks for slaps. The first system shows: X X X X 3 5 0 3 3 3 5 X 2 | 2 3 5 2 3 5 3 5 0 2 2 2 3 0 5. The second system shows: X X X X 3 5 2 3 5 2 3 5 5 X 2 | 0 3 3 3 5 7 5 X X X X X X X X.



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DAVID ETHERIDGE

DOUBLE BASS JEDI DAVID ETHERIDGE DEVELOPS YOUR FINGER STRENGTH

Let's continue this month with more interval exercises. The main reason (although there are several!) that this sort of work is useful is to develop your knowledge of intervals and distances across the fingerboard, with several different fingerings for each interval and group of notes. The reason that I'm looking at intervals is that you'll be using them to construct your bass patterns and chord parts under any progression. If you like, it's an alphabet of fingerings and position work that you can combine in any number of different ways to make up your musical vocabulary.

So to start off this month, let's look at fifths. Most of the time you'll be use a standard 1, 4 fingering, as in **Example 1**. Notice the top fingering: on the way up I've used open strings where appropriate in the key of C, whereas on the way down we're using 4, 1 fingerings. The exception both up and down is



the diminished 5th between B and F natural, or the 4th and 7th notes of the scale. This applies in any key. Of course, if you're playing in 'difficult' keys that have no open strings and lots of sharps or flats, then the 4, 1 fingering can be used going up and down. Your hands will move up for each pair of notes in exactly the same distance as a major scale: tone, tone, semitone, three tones, semitone.

Now look at the lower fingering. Just as we grouped fourths as third intervals across the beat last time, here we're staggering the fifths as fourths across the beat again. The second half of the beat is grouped to the first half of the next beat, and I've given you some different pairings to use coming down each time. One thing to note when playing fifths as a 1, 4 fingering, and also playing fourth intervals across two

EXAMPLE 1

fingering 1: 2 0 0 1 1 2 1 4 0 4 1 4 2 4 1 3 3 1 4 2 4 1 4 1 4 1 4 1 4 1 4 1 4 1
fingering 2: 1 1 1 4 4 4 2 1 1 4 4 2 2 4 4 3 3 4 4 4 4 1 1 4 4 1 2 4 4 4 4 2

EXAMPLE 2

fingering 1: 2 1 4 2 4 1 2 1 4 2 1 4 1 3 1 3 2 3 T 1 1 3 1 2 2 4 1 4 1 2 2 4
fingering 2: 1 4 1 4 1 4 1 4 1 4 1 4 2 3 1 3 3 1 3 1 2 1 4 1 4 1 4 1 4 1 4 2

EXAMPLE 3

fingering 1: 1 2 4 4 1 1 2 4 1 1 3 3 1 1 2 3 2 1 3 3 1 1 4 4 4 2 1 1 4 4 4 2
fingering 2: 1 1 2 1 4 1 2 2 4 1 3 1 3 1 2 3 3 2 1 3 1 3 1 2 1 4 2 4 1 4 2 1

EXAMPLE 4

fingering 1: 1 2 0 4 1 4 1 4 0 4 1 3 1 3 1 3 3 1 3 1 3 1 4 1 4 1 4 1 4 0 4 2



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strings: if you're playing at any reasonable speed, it's easier if you play the fifths pressing both sets of fingers down at the same time, so on fifths you are essentially double stopping with the left hand. With fourths, you can barre across two strings by flattening the fingers across them. It's far more effort to play a 1, 1 or 4, 4 fingering across two strings by raising them off one string and pressing down the other. At speed, it's nigh on impossible!

Now let's look at sixth intervals. As regards fingering, these are more or less the same as thirds, but with the big difference being that you're skipping the middle string. Look at **Example 2** to see what's on offer. With the top fingering we're going up in discrete hand shapes, using major and minor sixths, and grouping pairs of notes together. However, going up we change at the last three pairs: A-F, B-G and top C-A. This means a semitone shift across the top adjacent strings, although you can play them

together if you use extension fingering, although you'll need to leap for the top A from the C. Mind you, you can cheat for the top A and play it as a harmonic on the D string (1st finger, 4th position).

The descending fingering shows what you do if you decide to cross three strings all the way up and down. Here the first four notes of the descending scale are in thumb position, then down as before with major and minor sixths, playing across three strings but skipping the D string in the middle. The lower fingering offers a different approach once again: grouping the notes in fifths across the beat and playing on two adjacent strings instead. Which is best? Whichever one you feel more comfortable with, of course.

Example 3 looks at seventh intervals. Once again on the upper fingering, we're crossing three strings. Minor sevenths can be 1, or 4, 4 (or even 2, 2 if you think about it), although barre-ing across three strings will be rather difficult unless you have strong fingers and a low action. Major sevenths as you can see will be a 1, 2 or 2, 4 fingering. Notice that we're going all the way up the fingerboard again to the thumb position above the A-G interval. Note the alternative fingerings on the way down to show options once again.

With the lower fingering, we'll group the sevenths again as sixths across the beat. One fingering again is not inherently more difficult or indeed that much different from the other: it's a matter of perception, and again the more different ways you can look at an exercise, the more your mind is stimulated to come up with ideas.

Of course, you could always try sixths and sevenths with position jumps and play on two adjacent strings: **Example 4** is the result with sevenths. As you can see, even with open strings on the G and D, this is very intensive stuff, and you may be asking yourself what the point is by this time. Do not tune out, however: this exercise is very useful for those annoying but inevitable times when there's no other recourse but to leap big distances between intervals. We can work out all sort of ingenious methods to approach large intervals by moving across and up and down strings, but sooner or later in the heat of the moment you could be caught out. In the classical world it's a bit more common. One example is Beethoven's 7th Symphony, where the last movement has two octave jumps between low F on the E string and high F on the G. So you have to cross all four strings and move from half to 5th position! Even on a five-string bass it's problematical, and across five strings at that.

Try **Example 4**: it'll help you practise your position shifts and give your ears a workout as well, checking that you actually are in tune between each interval. After a while running through these, you'll notice that your tuning gets better and the leaps more accurate as muscle memory takes over, and that's all helping your ability, strength and fingerboard navigation. ■



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MIKE BROOKS

BROOKSY PAYS 'TRIBUTE'. GEDDIT?

Despite their detractors, tribute bands have been going for years. From the early Nineties through to the late Noughties, there was a huge tribute scene in this country and although it isn't quite as busy as it once was, running a tribute band or operating one alongside your covers band can prove financially beneficial as well as offering clients something different from the standard covers band. It can also double up the amount of work you have if it's marketed properly.

Tributes are effectively covers bands and can be a tribute to a particular artist, a group or a particular genre, such as disco, punk or soul – think the Commitments, for example.

In days gone by, it was only inactive artists or groups that were given the tribute treatment, but by the mid-nineties, it was commonplace for still-extant bands or artists to become the focus of a tribute act if there was money to be made.

First, consider the line-up. In using the same personnel as your covers band, both the tribute and the regular band can dovetail and fill in the

blank dates from each band's diary. Be prepared to represent the band, artist or genre down to the Nth degree; costumes, wigs, stage sets and instrumentation all have to be considered. The busiest tributes are those who take it seriously and run it like a business, so that the audience come close to believing they are seeing the real thing. In this context, your ability to copy the original songs and replicate the vibe is obviously paramount. Having said that, some tributes prefer to be musically identical without going the whole hog with costumes and the extra paraphernalia.

For bassists, having the right instrument, backline and effects should all be considered. For example, being in a disco band, you wouldn't look out of place with a Precision, Jazz or Stingray and a selection of envelope filter, fuzz and octave pedals. Likewise, a Stingray or Jazz will do the job for a Red Hot Chili Peppers tribute. Then there are artist signature models, so a Green Day tribute would benefit from a Mike Dirnt Signature Precision, for example. Those wishing to undertake a Level 42 tribute – and there have been quite a few – will need plenty of cash, and Lord knows which bass you'd opt for from Mark King's extensive back catalogue of instruments.

Although there are fewer regular circuit venues for tributes to play at these days, the theatre circuit is still financially lucrative. By doing your homework, it is still possible to find enough venues around the country to create an impressive gig list. Private parties and corporate events can also be financially rewarding, depending on your tribute. Will the audience want to hear anything more than 30 minutes of the best-known hits? This is where offering both your tribute and your covers band to play a set of each can work very well. Ker-ching! ■



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STEVE LAWSON

WHEN IS A BASS NOT A BASS, ASKS FX SITH LORD LAWSON

There are two very distinct sides to exploring 'the bass'. There's the role of 'the bass player' within the various kinds of music that have adopted it since the invention of the electric bass (we'll leave acoustic upright bass out of it for now - Beethoven didn't care much for effects pedals) with all its history, learning and legends. There are orthodoxies (recognised standard ways of doing things) and renegades (people who went against those orthodoxies) and there's a whole world of study into 'what people do with the bass in a band'.

Then there's the instrument itself, freed from that singular role as the maker of the lowest notes in a band. The design of the instrument has developed somewhat symbiotically with the role of the bass, but has also helped us to see a world of music beyond the function of the bass player in pop music.

And of course, the role of signal processing in moving forward that idea of the bass as something other than a groove machine has been monumental. From Bootsy's use of delay and envelope filters to create

groove and texture at the same time, through to Michael Manring's combination of futuristic bass design (courtesy of his Zon Hyperbass) with some extreme processing to render the sound unrecognisable from 'the bass' as we imagine it, and instead create an entirely new and beguiling sonic world.

Effects pedals for bass are often made with that specific role in mind - chorus pedals and overdrives that leave the low end intact. Filters are specifically tuned to the frequency range explored in funk bass, but the fun often starts at the extremes. It is there that the noises we make can stop sounding like a bass at all. Chorus pedals with everything turned up full can often make the weirdest of watery, wobbly sounds, while filter delays, like the one on the Line 6 DL4, can be sent into a regenerating loop of crazy explosive sound by turning the feedback up too high for normal playing. Crank a fuzz pedal to its extremes and play any double stop that isn't a fifth or an octave, and the resulting dissonance is properly scary! But every one of those crazy sounds has an application. Especially if you're exploring the world of looping alongside your other pedal investigations, creating textures, gnarly sounds, percussive noises and ambient washes can open up the scope of your compositions and improvisations immensely.

I've just started an amazing new project with a painter called Poppy Porter, who has synaesthesia. That means she 'sees' sound as well as hearing it. So when I play, she paints or draws the shapes and patterns that are conjured up. This project gives me licence to mess with sounds that are designed to trigger images, not simply be attached to melodies and chords. I get to think about how the non-bass-like sounds I can make will 'look' not just sound, and so I can dig deep into the extremities of what my pedals will do. Have a listen to the first bit of our experiment on Soundcloud: search for 'solobasssteve' and you'll find us.

Your homework this month is to see just how far away from the recognisable sound of the bass you can get. Can you copy the sound of other instruments? Use a chorus to emulate an electric piano? A fuzz to sound like a synth? An overdrive and whammy pedal to sound like an F1 engine revving? Have fun finding new sounds - musical and otherwise - and then take photos of the settings so you can recall those sounds at a later date. See just how deep you can dig. ■



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