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Forget everything you think you know about the role of the bassist.

We bass players pride ourselves on being a versatile bunch of musicians, but times change in our sector of the industry just as they do everywhere else, and if you think that being a bassist in 2021 is all about getting gigs and playing live, just like it was 20 years ago, you've got another think coming.

Today's best-known young bass players aren't necessarily out there playing live, even if the pandemic allowed them to do so. No, some of the biggest earners in our business are YouTubers, Instagrammers or TikTokers, raking in many millions of bucks while the rest of us complain about our low-paying local shows. It's time we paid our respects to these visionary musicians, all of whom have harnessed the monetising power of social media.

In this special, four-cover issue of *Bass Player*, we meet some of the biggest among them: Davie504, April Kae, Blu DeTiger and Darrell Freeman, known to millions as the future of our instrument. Don't resent their success: these people are spreading the word about bass, and bringing the instrument to a whole new generation of social media-devoted kids who might otherwise never have put fingers to strings. The future starts here, friends.

We're not neglecting the heroes who got us to this point, though: in this issue we also talk to Tony Levin, Lou Barlow, Ariane Cap and the great Mo Foster. We review traditional bass gear designs as well as new ideas, and our bass teachers espouse learning methods that are both established and progressive.

Enjoy this issue, and I'll see you next month!
Joel McIver, Editor



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Future PLC, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA, UK

Editorial

Editor **Joel McIver**, joel.mciver@futurenet.com
Art Editors **Rosie Webber**, **Mixie Von Bormann**,
Philip Cheesbrough, **Mark White**
Managing Editor **Stan Bull**
Technical Consultant **Stuart Clayton**
Content Director, Music **Scott Rowley**
Group Art Director **Graham Dalzell**
Head Of Design (London) **Brad Merrett**

Contributors

Gregory Adams, Antonio Angotti, Tom Bowls, Mike Brooks,
Stuart Clayton, Rob Elrick, Steve Lawson, Ryan Madora,
Phil Mann, Chloe Peacock, Nik Preston, Kevin Sanders,
Joe Shooman, Dan Veall

Cover image

Davie504, Tommy Rizzoli (April Kae), Amadi J Phillips (Darrell Freeman), Sophie Hur (Blu DeTiger)

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Advertising

Media packs are available on request
Chief Revenue Officer **Zack Sullivan**
UK Commercial Sales Director **Clare Dove**
Advertising Sales Director **Lara Jaggon**
Account Sales Director **Guy Meredith**
guy.meredith@futurenet.com

International

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Head of Print Licensing **Rachel Shaw**, licensing@futurenet.com

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CRM Director **Louise Dudfield**

Circulation

Head of Newstrade **Tim Mathers**

Production

Head of Production **Mark Constance**
Production Project Manager **Clare Scott**
Advertising Production Manager **Joanne Crosby**
Digital Editions Controller **Jason Hudson**
Production Manager **Vivienne Turner**

Management

Chief Content Officer **Aaron Asadi**
Brand Director **Stuart Williams**
Commercial Finance Director **Dan Jotcham**

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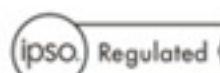
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Chief Executive **Zillah Byng-Thorne**
Non-executive Chairman **Richard Huntingford**
Chief Financial Officer **Rachel Addison**

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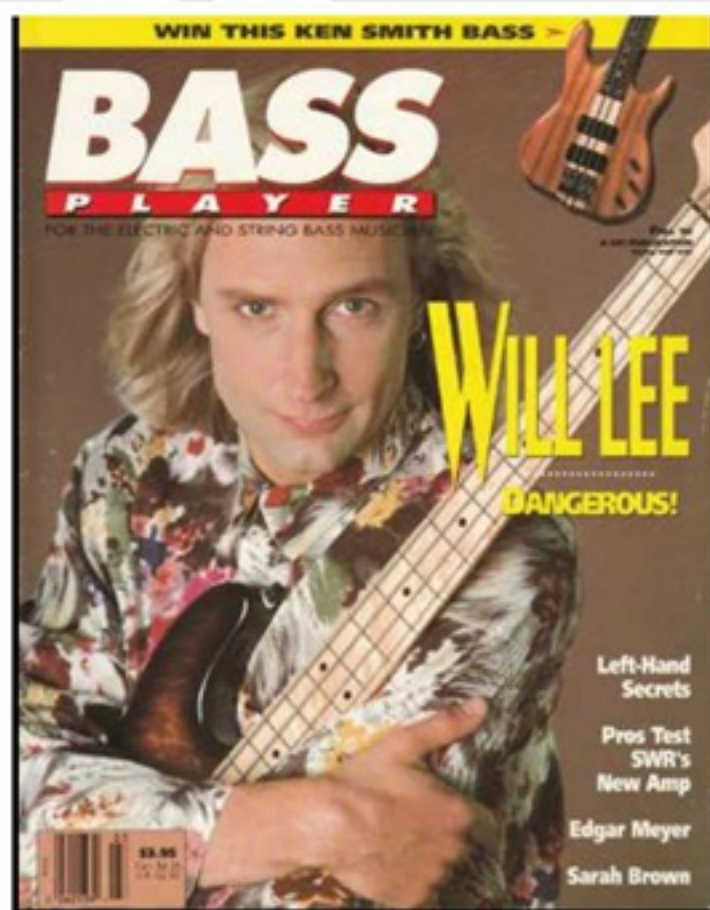


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THE Lowdown

News and views from the bass world, collated by BP's team of newshounds



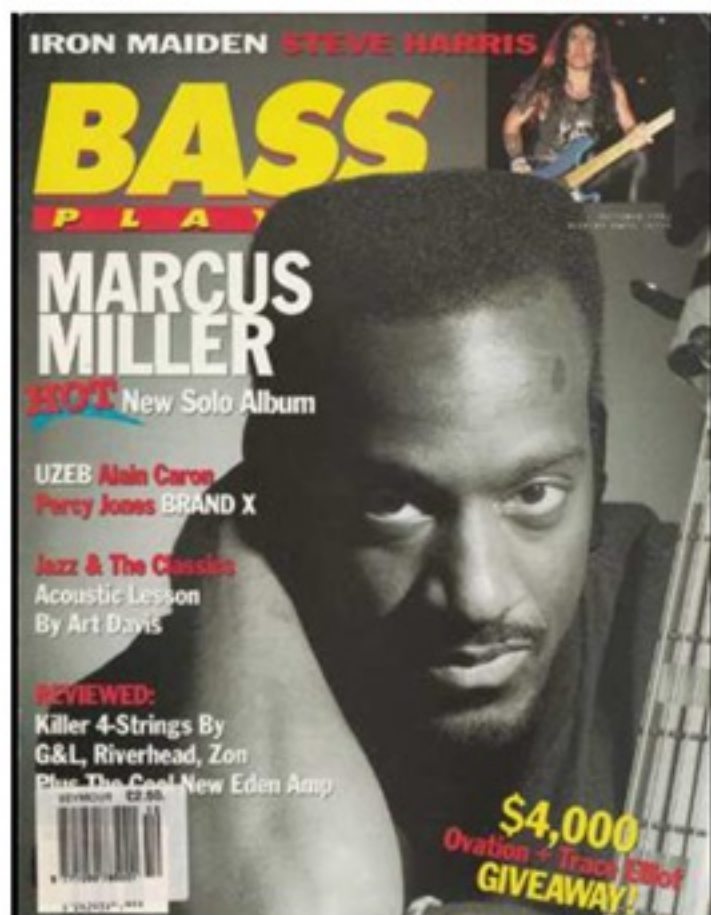
VOTE NOW!

Who's the greatest bass player of all time? You decide!

It's time to get voting! *Bass Player* magazine is running the biggest poll of our 31-year history to decide, once and for all, who the world's greatest living (or dead) electric or upright bass player is (or was), across several relevant categories, with the results to be published in Issue 413, on sale 20 August in the UK and 7 September in North America.

Will it be a rock star? Will be a jazz icon? Will it be a hot young gunslinger, or a veteran of a long-gone era? Only you can decide, with online voting opening at our social media on 12 July. Visit facebook.com/bassplayermag or twitter.com/bassplayerweb before 4 August and make your choices! 





NEW ASSUME NOTHING COLUMN LAUNCHES IN BP

Say hello to our new columnist, Chloe Peacock

Hi, and welcome to Assume Nothing, the place where you can have an honest conversation about challenges we all face as a musician. It's also where you can find insights from those who have been through similar situations, allowing you to feel confident and supported.

I've been a professional bassist and multi-instrumentalist for over a decade. I play in the indie folk band Unkle Bob, who have recently got back together after a nine-year hiatus. I'm fortunate to have experienced a lot of highs throughout my career – but I've also seen some awkward situations, ones that I'm not alone in experiencing.

One issue that resonates with colleagues of mine, mostly women, is that we spend a large amount of time talking to people who assume we don't know what we're doing. I've walked into venues, lugging basses and a suitcase full of pedals, only to be asked if I'm either the singer or a girlfriend of the band. Um, nope!

While these assumptions are mostly innocent, the sheer amount of time that they take up can get tiring. How do you deal with them? Firstly, remember they don't mean harm. Rephrase their words back to them, and let them know how this makes you feel. Their assumption is the issue, not them as a person.

So, what assumptions have been made about you within your musical journey? If you feel that anything you read here resonates, then write it to me on Instagram at [@assume_bassplayermag](https://www.instagram.com/assume_bassplayermag).

See you soon!

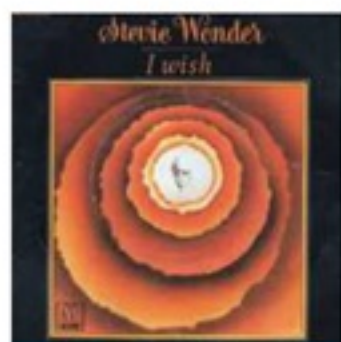
THE Lowdown



Hey Joe

New Ernie Ball Music Man Joe Dart models inbound.

You will recall the unusual signature bass which Vulfpeck bassist Joe Dart developed with Ernie Ball a couple of years back. The limited-edition run sold out rapidly, but anyone who missed out will be pleased to hear that two all-new full- and short-scale models are on the way. We haven't played them ourselves, but EB tell us that the new basses are equipped with lightweight ash bodies, maple necks and streamlined control layouts. The smaller model will be limited to 50, so order one now if short scales are your slab of funk. ■



Love Lines

A great bass-line, in 75 words or thereabouts.

Stevie Wonder, 'I Wish' (1976)
Back in the Seventies, you could write simple bass parts and they sounded cool because no-one had written all the good lines yet. This applies in abundance to Stevie Wonder's remarkable 'I Wish' – up there with 'Sir Duke' in terms of sheer funkability, but somehow even more catchy. The great Nate Watts was responsible for this supremely cool line, and remains a hero in our world for this and many more iconic parts. ■



Here And Now

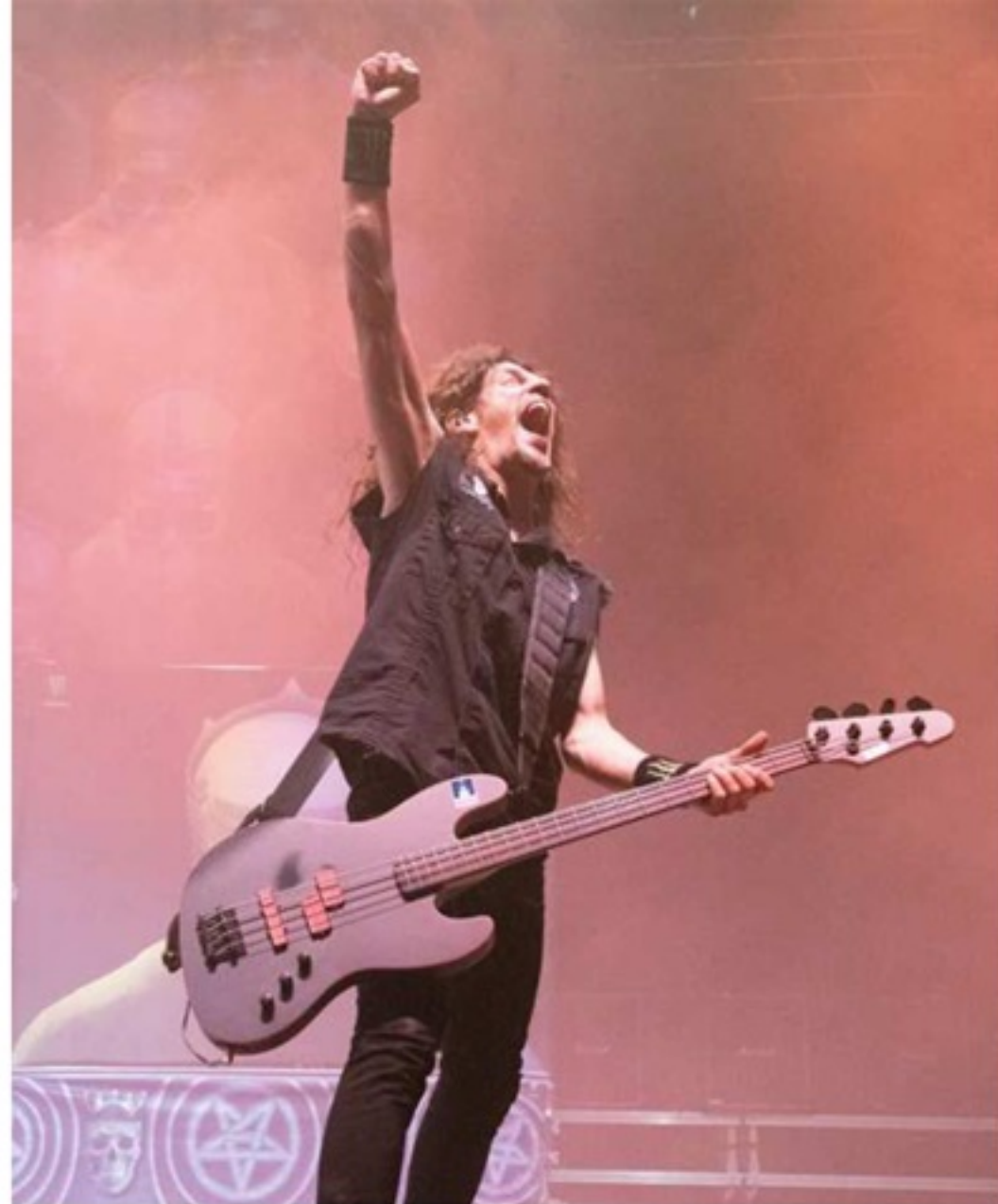
As you probably know, the mighty Lee Sklar released a debut EP in late 2020 with his band, the Immediate Family, alongside Danny Kortchmar, Waddy Wachtel, Russ Kunkel and Steve Postell. A second release has now been announced, titled *Can't Stop Progress*, featuring five original songs. A live cut, 'Machine Gun Kelly', features an effortless solo from Sklar. A video is available, in which Sklar can be seen wielding a stainless steel bass from Stash. ■

Cue The Jazz

The Q Sessions is a new live EP from Christian McBride and his band, recorded earlier this year at New York City's Power Station. The three-song release was recorded by McBride plus saxophonist Marcus Strickland, drummer Eric Harland, and guitarist Mike Stern, and is available on the streaming service Qobuz. ■

Soul Man

Darryl Anders returns with his AgapeSoul project and a new EP (what is it with EPs at the moment?) called *Nobody But You*. On the record, which also features Incognito singer Maysa, Anders delivers the grooves on a passive Stenback five-string alder rosewood bass, direct into a Jule Monique Bamboo preamp via an Apollo Twin interface. ■



SPEAKING FRANKLY

New memoir incoming from Anthrax bassist Frank Bello

Anthrax bassist Frank Bello has announced the publication of his autobiography, *Fathers, Brothers, And Sons: Surviving Anguish, Abandonment, And Anthrax*, set for release by Los Angeles publisher Rare Bird in October. Bello's co-writer is *Bass Player* Editor Joel McIver, and the book comes with a foreword by Kiss bassist Gene Simmons.

Bello, bassist with the New York thrash metal band Anthrax since 1984, grew up in difficult circumstances. With an absent father and no male role model, Frank found inspiration in bass players, following their example and forging a career with Anthrax from his early teens, first as a roadie, and then as the group's bass player. International stardom came Frank's way by the mid-to-late Eighties, when he was still in his early twenties, but tragedy struck in 1996 when his

brother Anthony was murdered in New York. Although the case went to trial, the suspected killer was released without charge after a witness, intimidated by violent elements, withdrew his testimony.

"This book has been a long time coming," Bello tells *Bass*

"This book has been a long time coming. Bass made me who I am!"
Frank Bello

Player. "There's a whole lot of important discussion about big themes, as I'm sure you can appreciate, although I want

you to know that I also talk about my journey as a bass player, from my early inspiration in Rush, Kiss and Iron Maiden until today. Bass made me who I am!" ■

Fathers, Brothers, And Sons is scheduled for release in hardcover, e-book and audiobook and will retail for \$28. A percentage of the book revenue is going to charities assisting abandoned families. Signed hardcovers can be pre-ordered at rarebirdlit.com



Each month, we celebrate a classic, bass-loaded album. Has it stood the test of time?

Madonna's lengthy career has encompassed many, many different areas of activity. Films, businesses, philanthropy... you could almost forget that under all the white noise there is a talented songwriter. We like a lot of her songs here at *BP*, although we tend to think that her early stuff was her best, and especially the songs gathered on 1990's *Immaculate Collection*, possibly the finest ever best-of album after Queen's *Greatest Hits*.

From a bass player's point of view, there's tons of fun to be had with this album: Maddy – or her MD, more likely – roped in some serious low-frequency talent for the 17 songs here, even discounting the large number in which a tinny synth bass appears, for example on 'Material Girl'. Let's face it, if you invite players like Bernard Edwards and Anthony Jackson to play on your singles, you're likely to record a bass part that people will remember.

Where to start? 'Like A Virgin' is anchored with a catchy, low-rent Motown line that it is impossible not to hum in the shower. 'La Isla Bonita' does the same trick but about an octave lower, perhaps after Madonna's producers realised that the dancefloor was primarily where her songs would stand out. And then there's 'Into The Groove' ("You can dance – for inspiration") with an insistent, sixteenth-century bass part that made FM radio throughout the whole of 1985 sound like a woodpecker on speed.

The Immaculate Collection is possibly the finest best-of after Queen's Greatest Hits



Where Madonna excelled in those increasingly far-off days was with her ballads, maudlin though they invariably were. 'Crazy For You' was her first hit in this downtempo style, with the low end anchored by that surprising thing, a synth bass that sounded like a fingerstyle electric line: the computer must have been glowing in the studio that day. Then there was 'Live To Tell', a slightly more mature wallow in unrequited love that seemed to have a couple of different bass parts – the clacky synth tone that ruled the day back then, plus a lower sub-bass figure extracted from who knows where.

In due course Madonna grew up and started annoying people by talking about topics such as parenthood and religion. 'Papa Don't Preach' deals with the immortal theme of a kid telling her dad where he can shove his parental advice, and then, of course, there is the career-best of 'Like A Prayer', with its still-astounding bass performance from *BP* chum Guy Pratt.

'Vogue' is probably the most enduring song from this increasingly far-off era. Sticking to what she knew best, Madonna wrote a song about striking mysterious poses on New York dancefloors while making a face that looked as if she'd just chewed a lemon. A truly splendid bass-line of epic proportions makes this fairly silly song a lot more memorable. Great days, eh? ■

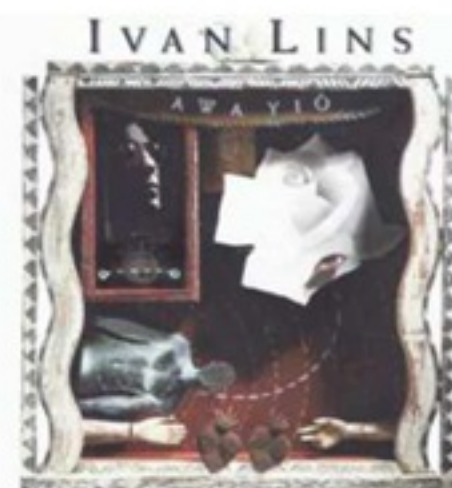


Tony Levin

Tony Levin's stellar career in progressive rock, jazz and world music can be tracked through an estimated 500 album appearances. He has been a long-term member of King Crimson and Peter Gabriel's band, as well as his own outfit, Stick Men, which he formed in 2010. Whether playing a traditional electric or stand-up bass, occasional keyboards, or the Chapman Stick with its

blend of bass and high-register strings, Levin has always been in demand as a session player. He has worked with John Lennon, Lou Reed, David Bowie, Paul Simon and Stevie Nicks, and has toured extensively with Herbie Mann, Peter Dinklage, Judy Collins and many more. An innovator and sonic explorer, his inventive methods of manipulating his equipment with all manner of weird and wonderful household goods are

legendary. Levin is regularly voted one of the greatest bassists of all time, and the Boston-born musician continues to work with a variety of artists. We spoke to Tony recently, and he talked us through some selections from his mighty back catalogue, including the importance of the drummer-bassist relationship and the role his two-month old daughter played in one particular incidence of instrument manipulation. ■



MUST-HAVE ALBUM

IVAN LINS

Awa Yô (1991)

★★★★★

"Ivan is a fantastic, exciting Brazilian artist. It was an extraordinary opportunity to work with him, because he usually uses Brazilian musicians, but he came to my hometown, Woodstock. We chose the marvellous drummer, Vinnie Colaiuta, to play on the album. His groove is unique; you can tell it's him from the way he puts together the accents on different notes.

"It's a joy and the music grooves easily, but also one learns a lesson from playing with a great musician, such as subtleties of rhythm. With Vinnie we listen to each other, and learn, and there's a really great feel, whether that means being in the pocket, or just making the audience want to dance. For a bass player to play with a drummer providing all of that, you just have to sign on for the ride. It's an interactive situation.

"In a recording situation, we all create our part on our instrument, which is easy on bass, but the vast majority of drummers would play pretty much the same thing. Great drummers like Vinnie have the ability to keep the music grooving, and also to add something of themselves to the groove.

"I used my five-string Stingray in those days, and also the Chapman Stick Bass with both bass and guitar strings."



WORTHY CONTENDER ROBERT FRIPP

Exposure (1979)



"This allowed me to dive deeper into the world of progressive music. At the time I'd not played with King Crimson or even listened to them all that much.

"The drummer, Narada Michael Walden, was more of a jazz, groove and funk player, and the two of us, along with Robert, got to create together.

"It was strikingly different music, with compositions that I found very challenging, and I really think it's one of the albums where I grew as a player, from being in that place even for a short time. I was playing my Fender Precision, which I had grown up playing.

"I recorded with a mix of DI and also through my SVT Ampeg, with an 8x10 cabinet, which was my go-to in those days. The sound is a mix of the two, and when you really dig in, with the amp pretty loud, and almost overplay the P-Bass, there's a crunch and distortion.

"I'd say about a quarter of the time I used a pick, the rest with fingers. I would put something like foam rubber to dampen the strings, to get a different kind of sound, with less midrange and less sustain.

"There's a purity to recording with just the bass and your fingers. Some bassists can get great, unique expression with a pick, but I can't do that, unfortunately."



COOL GROOVES DAVID BOWIE

The Next Day (2013)



"I was thrilled to get the call to play on parts of this album and ended up on a decent amount of tracks. David's bass player at the time was Gail Ann Dorsey, a great singer and bassist and a good friend of mine. The week of the recording, she was busy elsewhere and I was the backup. I was honoured to have the opportunity. The session in a studio at Greenwich Village, New York, was a secret, so nobody knew that we'd done it until almost exactly a year later. Tony Visconti, the producer, emailed me and said the single was out at midnight, so I could now tell people!

"David would present a song, play it on keyboard and sing it, then the drummer Zach Alford would take it to the place where it needed to be. He's a wondrous drummer. I got to interpret the bass end of things in my own way. Tony had plenty of good advice about the sound of the bass and the part; to me it doesn't matter where it comes from, it only matters that it is supportive of the song and what it is about. Sometimes staying out of the way is appropriate, and sometimes stepping to the front is what's required. David gave me a surprising amount of leeway, said maybe a thing or two, and we ended up with a felicitous combination of all of us that really worked."



WILD CARD PETER GABRIEL

So (1986)



"I have had a long and close friendship and musical relationship with Peter, so it's hard to know where to begin. Since I met him in 1976, I've enjoyed the process of creating bass parts with a man who's so creative that a 'normal bass-line' almost never worked for him. For example, on 'Big Time' I did the left-hand fingering, while Stewart Copeland drummed pretty fast on the strings. When we toured the album, I was practising how to recreate it, but I couldn't get it. Peter said, 'Why don't you put two drumsticks on your fingers and play that way?' And so, with help from my tech, Andy Moore, we created chopped-off sticks attached to my fingers with stretch Velcro. I use those Funk Fingers to this day, and softened the attack by having the ends rubberised.

"Now, the song 'Don't Give Up', has a coda which is a very different, laid-back groove. It needed a similar bass sound with no sustain. My baby daughter Maggie was two months old, so it so happened that my bass case was full of diapers. I dampened the strings with a diaper to get short, thumpy notes. It became known between Peter and the producer, Daniel Lanois, as 'The Super Wonder Nappy Sound'. They loved it! The door was always open to try an unusual approach."



TAKE A DEEP BREATH... AL DI MEOLA

Scenario (1983)



"Now this is not an album to avoid, musically, at all, but there are some unique issues I had with playing on it. Al had the very interesting idea of asking me and King Crimson's drummer Bill Bruford to be on his jazz record, and the session was booked for Caribou Ranch Studio in Colorado; Michael Jackson, John Lennon and others had worked there.

"But the spanner in the works was that it was way high up in the mountains. Because of the altitude, you just cannot catch your breath. Bill and I came in late at night, and managed to get some sleep, but the next day in the studio I could not speak to anybody; maybe a couple of words before I had run out of air.

"As you can imagine, discussing the tracks was impossible, and because of our schedules we only had one single day there and had to leave straight after. The making of it was very difficult, and it would have been musically better if we'd been able to acclimatise. It was really difficult for us to play.

"Since then, I've played at higher altitudes at concerts – I have played in Bolivia and visited northern Chile – but you need maybe three days before you're acclimated to it. Everything is harder at those altitudes, and the whole experience was absolutely exhausting."

THE Lowdown

I WAS THERE!

A historic moment in bass world – recalled by those who were there to see it

Three decades ago, Metallica released the biggest metal album of all time...

On August 12, 1991, the Californian/Danish heavy metal band Metallica released their fifth record, a self-titled effort usually known as 'the Black Album'. Packed full of bass courtesy of Jason Newsted, the record was a first in that sense for Metallica, whose previous albums had focused more on guitars and drums. Indeed, their most recent LP, the otherwise admirable 1988 release *...And Justice For All*, had included no audible bass whatsoever.

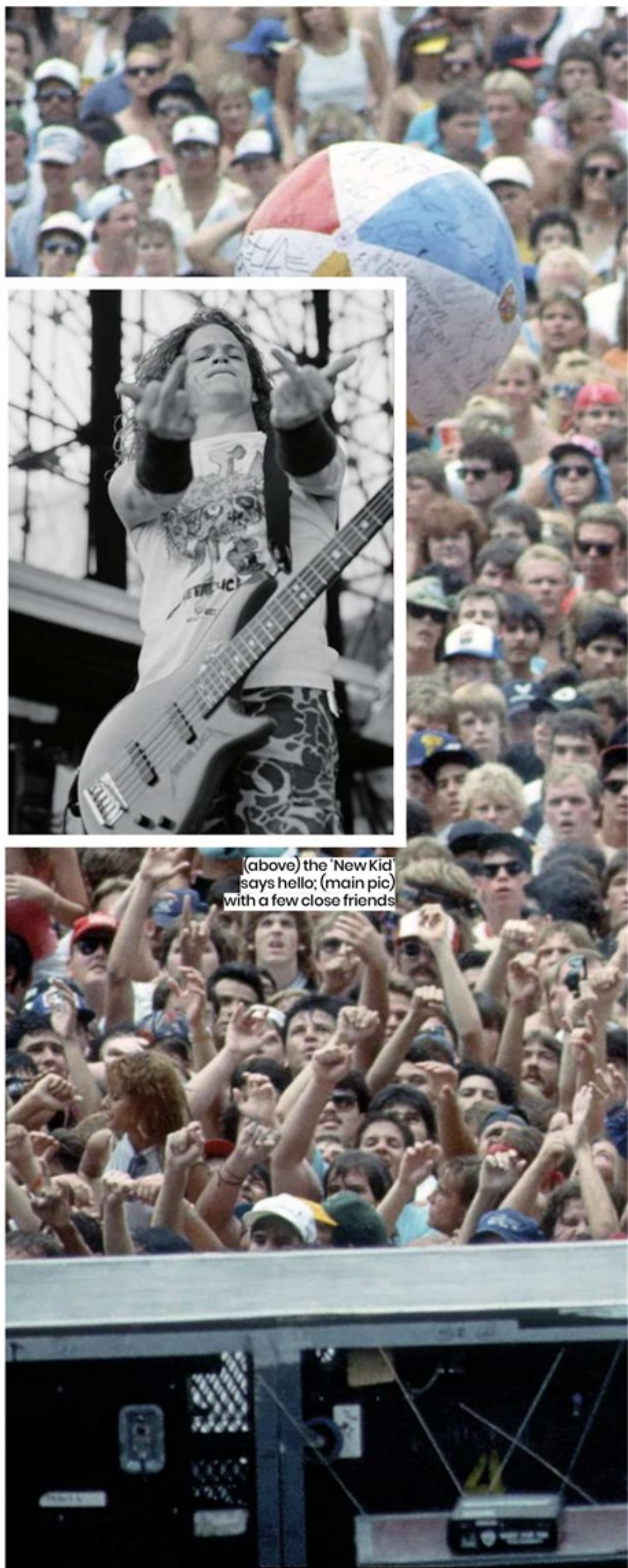
As drummer Lars Ulrich accurately said at the time: "The bass guitar has always been this weird instrument in the band, it's always been overlooked. With Jason I guess we misfired on *Justice*, but this time around I didn't want to make the same mistake, so early on we steered the bass more towards the drum kit and away from the guitar a little."

Metallica had found their new, bottom-heavy sound in Canadian producer Bob Rock, who had worked with Mötley Crüe, the Cult and other not-very-metal bands. Although more than a few fans were unnerved by Metallica's decision to go with a rock rather than metal producer, Rock brought a huge sound to the new songs, placing the bass guitar squarely at the bottom of the mix for a deep, radio-friendly sound. Newsted remembered: "In Bob Rock I found someone who knew what he wanted and how to achieve it. I learned a lot by listening for what was needed in terms of actual bass sound. I learned to bring lots of mids up in my sound. I didn't do that before."

The Black Album was pivotal to Metallica's career in many ways, re-establishing a whole-band sound for the group after the curve-ball of *Justice*, and moving the group squarely into the heavy metal – as distinct from thrash metal – arena. Vast success followed. However, fans of Metallica's earlier, more aggressive music made their disappointment clear: lead guitarist Kirk Hammett once commented, "I've run into fans who think the album's crap. Friends of mine who are really hardcore fans have said, 'Well, the album's not as heavy. You guys aren't as heavy as you used to be'."

Most of all, the Black Album presented a new, stripped-down, simpler Metallica. The new songs were shorter, more anthemic and more straightforwardly structured. Even the black sleeve was a statement of intent, with Ulrich explaining that Metallica had wanted to avoid the "big fucking circus, big cartoon images, fancy wordplay" and adding: "Here's 65 minutes of music. The wrapper it comes in doesn't have to be a big production. Looking around at other bands and looking at what we'd done before, we thought it was time to play that thing down to a minimum... Maybe in three or four years, we'll look back and go, 'Gee, that was really dumb'."

The Black Album wasn't dumb, though. It sold over 16 million copies in the US alone and has become an iconic release in the whole canon of popular music, not just heavy metal. It seems that turning the bass up was a good idea after all. Who knew? ■





Welcome back, 'itching-to-gig' bass players! This is part

three of my post-pandemic live performance column, on our continuing mission to rebuild the skills necessary for playing live. In this issue, I'll be addressing the potential anxieties of getting back on stage again, hopefully to be faced with a great many more people than we have been used to over the last year or so.

Even if you feel that the transition back will be an easy one, and you're 'born to play live', I think – if we're truly honest – there are some doubts in all of our minds about what our first few gigs back will look and feel like.

Anxiety is essentially born from pressure and fear of the unknown. If we unpack these further, the real pressure that accompanies live performance derives from wanting to put on a great show that is well received and flawlessly played.

RETURNING TO THE CROWDS

Let's manage our performance mindset, says Antonio...

The personal pressure that we put on ourselves not to make mistakes is also an interesting concept. I see this when I lecture about live performance, with a lot of musicians tending to concentrate on the five percent of minor errors rather than the 95 percent of solid performance.

We're human, after all, and we simply need to understand that mistakes are always a possibility. As long as we're well-rehearsed and prepared, minor mistakes should not affect the goal of delivering a great show – in fact, most audience members won't even realise that a mistake

has been made as long as you recover quickly.

As for the unknown, we naturally dream up the worst-case scenarios, and we also struggle to visualise the performance space and the gig atmosphere of a particular show, which can lead to feeling out of control. For the sake of our mental health, remember that it is pointless to envision things that may well never happen. This thinking affects our ability to enjoy the moment, and if you focus too much on those negative outcomes, then they're more likely to occur. Likewise, we'll never be able



Maximise your live bass performance with Tax The Heat bassist and BIMM tutor Antonio Angotti.



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to predict what a gig will be like ahead of time, but take comfort in knowing that you're basically at home in that environment.

A little tip to help with your preparation for a gig is to use YouTube to track down other live performances at the same venue. I find this really helps you to plan your upcoming performance, as well as take in some inspiration from other bands, artists or bass players on how to tackle the gig. ■

The Woodshed

COMPOUND RADIUS

What the heck is this all about? Explain please, Rob...

Last month we discussed the basic rules of understanding fretboard radius. Today, let's delve into the more complicated concept of compound radius. Now, while a fixed radius can easily be visualised as the cross-section of a circle, a compound radius is actually the cross section of the surface of a cone.

Like a cone, a compound radius fretboard does not maintain a regular fixed radius along its length – its surface radius changes from one end to the other. A common compound radius for bass guitar is 12" to 16", with the smaller radius at the headstock end of the fretboard: this becomes progressively larger along its length.

So how is a fretboard with a compound radius superior to a fretboard with a regular fixed radius? Early promotion for guitar necks featuring compound radius touted them as affording guitar players

a small radius in lower neck positions, for comfortable chordal playing, and a flatter radius in the higher registers, which was better for bending and soloing – the best of both worlds, if you will. While that marketing angle held a lot of appeal for guitar players, the truth is less strategic and far more practical.

Since the neck of a guitar tapers, the path of its strings also tapers from the nut to the bridge. In fact, each string follows its own irregular path – not only along, but also across, a fretboard's radius. On a fixed radius fretboard, this can create

setup issues, particularly on fretless instruments. These issues, however, are easily resolved by dressing the fingerboard along its length. 'Truing' the fingerboard in this way creates a playing surface on which a regular plane is achieved under the individual path of each string. It also results in a compound radius.

On short narrow necks with minimal taper, such as those found on electric guitars, a compound radius fretboard is not a remarkable achievement. The irregularities encountered along the length of the strings on a guitar can often be



Ace luthier Rob Elrick brings decades of wisdom to the table. Listen up as he delivers the verdict!

compensated for by dressing the frets. However, on long-scale bass guitars, and particularly extended-range instruments, incorporating a compound radius fretboard can result in significant improvements to setup and playability, resulting in an improved player experience compared to a fixed-radius fretboard.

Zero radius fretboards, which are flat with no surface curvature, also exist and can offer similar advantages, but that's a topic for another day... ■



Nik Preston takes us through three ways to exploit this useful theory

USING ALTERED SCALES OVER DOMINANT CHORDS

It's that time again, theorists! This month's column leads on from our previous investigation into various types of dominant scales and modes.

Ready? The Altered Scale derives its name from the fact that it has the most 'altered' tensions of any seven-note scale in western harmony. It's found on the seventh degree of melodic minor, the seventh mode.

If we identify chord tones and extensions in the usual way for tertiary harmony, we would find ourselves with a min7₅ chord. While this is theoretically correct, it has a more widespread application as a scale that we can employ over dominant chords because it contains a root, major 3rd and 7th. The 'altered' description gets its name from the fact that both a raised and flattened ninth are available, as well as a raised and flattened

No scale is much more advanced than another – it's a question of familiarity. The more we familiarise ourselves with a scale, the sooner we can create with it

fifth. The flattened fifth, by the way, is just another way of notating the sound of a #11 – in other words, they are enharmonic equivalents. So, in a C altered scale we have C, D_b, D#, E, F#/G_b, G#, B_b – and you would most often use it over an altered dominant chord, sometimes written as either Calt or C7(#5#9).

As we've seen before, no one scale is much more advanced than another – it's more a question of familiarity. We tend to encounter these more dissonant scales later in our development, but that's more down to convention than their actual complexity. The more we familiarise ourselves with any scale, mode or chord, the sooner we are able to recognise it and the sooner we can create with it.

Additionally, from a technical and fretboard familiarity perspective, we have spent a lot of time discussing the need for multiple fingerings for scales and arpeggios in the past, so please don't be restricted by the choices you find here. As always, take it slowly and leave

EXERCISE ONE: BEGINNER



EXERCISE TWO: INTERMEDIATE



EXERCISE THREE: ADVANCED



the practice room with more options than you entered with!

EXERCISE 1: BEGINNER

Here we have a predominantly scalar or stepwise phrase, which moves through the altered scale before resolving to the 3rd of an Fmaj7#11 chord. The perfect cadence from C7(#5#9) up a fourth to an F chord is the most common resolution of a dominant chord. In this example we resolve to a major chord, but it could just as easily be a chord of any quality.

EXERCISE 2: INTERMEDIATE

Here's exactly the same harmonic resolution, but melodically, we're using an enclosure technique over the C7#5#9 chord. Enclosure is a technique where we build lines approaching a specific chord tone from both above and below. In this example we're approaching each chord tone from one semi-tone above and two semi-tones below. You may see this referred to as 'single above, double below'. It's

a great concept for building chromaticism into lines while still being able to describe the harmony through 'enclosing' chord tones.

EXERCISE 3: ADVANCED

Here's the same chord movement, but we have a more technically challenging line due to the wider intervallic leaps, and because semi-quavers (16th notes) are the predominant subdivision. Generally speaking, wider intervals equate to more string crossing, hence the increased technical challenge. The line moves mostly across thirds, fourths and fifths in the first bar before exploring sevenths in bar two, and is intentionally written more as a study of the C altered scale than a genuinely melodic phrase. The wider intervals contrast with the chromaticism found in Exercise 2: ultimately, we want both at our disposal, so this is a brief introduction to those two contrasting approaches. You'll also see that the line resolves to the C of the Fmaj chord before targeting the B (the #11). ■

THE

FUTURE

Words: Joel McIver

Anyone who wants to know where the world of bass is going simply needs to check YouTube, TikTok and Instagram, where a whole new generation of super-talented, super-successful bass players are pushing the instrument forward.

Let's meet them!

IS

HERE

For the first, say, 50 years of the bass guitar's existence, the idea was that if you wanted to build a career on the instrument, first you worked privately to master it, then you recorded music onto pieces of plastic, and then you went out and played the bass in front of people. That was how you got a) known, and b) paid.

Times are a-changing, though, and thanks to the rise of the internet from being merely a communications medium to an essential part of everyday life, playing bass on YouTube and social media is how a lot of musicians make their living. We at *Bass Player* magazine feature these new musicians from time to

time, but we've never devoted our cover to these innovative people until now. Why not? Well, we're not complete stick-in-the-mud conservatives here, but at the same time, we're the last and most prominent embodiment of the received wisdom that a career as a bassist must mean 'bass plus amp plus venue plus live, paying audience'.

It's time to upgrade that thinking, but don't worry – our hearts remain on stage rather than on a phone screen. We value the connection between bass player and audience member, and we always will, no matter how many followers a given YouTuber may boast – but the amazing bass players that populate this feature deserve every bit as much of

your attention as those of us who pursue a traditional path.

With all that understood, please read on for an unprecedented insight into the future leaders of bass. Note that Instagram, TikTok and YouTube are where they dominate, with Twitter and Facebook now the domain of relative oldies like me rather than the younger audiences that pay most attention to these musicians. All the social media numbers we quote are accurate as of June 2021 – but who knows, they might have tripled by the time you read this. These fantastic bassists are on their way up, right now. Watch out for them.

Joel McIver, Editor

DARRELL FREEMAN



APRIL KAE



DAVIE504



BLU DETIGER



9.43M
YOUTUBE
SUBS

840K
INSTAGRAM
FOLLOWERS

833K
FACEBOOK
FOLLOWERS

262K
TIKTOK
FOLLOWERS

141K
TWITTER
FOLLOWERS

DAVIE504

Over nine million subscribers tune in to **Davide Biale**, known to all as **Davie504**, on YouTube. He's a phenomenal bass player, with a sharp sense of humour that gives his videos an edge. In a rare interview, he tells us about his life before the internet came calling...

Davie, we know you were born in 1994, but no-one knows much about your early life.

I grew up in a very beautiful town near the beach called Albisola Superiore, near Genoa in north-west Italy. Before bass I had other passions such as astronomy and geology: I loved to collect minerals. Italy winning the 2006 World Cup really inspired me to start playing football as a goalkeeper – I am very tall – and becoming one of the best goalkeepers was my goal. Unfortunately, while I was quite good in training, I just didn't have the right mindset and I would get very anxious while playing official matches, so after a few years I quit, and switched to bass. I was okay in elementary and middle school, but then I suddenly started getting very, very good grades in high school, right after I started playing bass. That's the power of the instrument, I guess.

I've read that you started playing bass in November 2009. Is this right?

Correct. It all started because of a video game I used to play a lot: *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*. That game's soundtrack is iconic, and there was one particular song that I always enjoyed listening to. After intensive research I managed to find out that the title of the song in question was 'Strutter' by Kiss. I did a quick search on YouTube and the first video that came up was a live version of it. Between all the band members, the bassist, Gene Simmons, really caught my eye and made me interested in the instrument he was playing. Before that I didn't even know what a bass guitar was.

So video games led you to music?

It's crazy. I wanted to get more familiar with music and instruments and, since I was a gamer, I bought *Guitar Hero* – the perfect combination of music and video games. Unfortunately there were no Kiss songs in the version of the

"I started getting very good grades at school right after playing bass. That's the power of the instrument, I guess"

game I played, so, tired of playing random songs I didn't like, I finally asked my parents if they could buy me a bass. They agreed and that's how I first became a bass player.

You now have over nine million subscribers on YouTube.

It still blows my mind to think that I am the most subscribed Italian YouTuber – and it now looks like I might be the first Italian person to get up to 10 million subscribers! I can't wait.

Why do you think your videos are so popular?

YouTube is always very unpredictable, so it's hard to really understand what made my videos recommended and popular, but, throughout the years I've always managed to renew my content, keeping it fresh. I've constantly adapted

my bass-oriented videos to popular trends all over the internet. I think adding humour to bass videos is ultimately the key reason why my channel got popular. Adding humour makes videos entertaining and fun to watch, whether you're a bassist or not.

Slap bass is a subject of much sarcasm in your films. Do you enjoy this playing style, in fact?

A big part of my humour is making fun of popular musician stereotypes, so I make fun of playing bass with a pick – because it's 'illegal' – and lots of sarcasm. I actually love to slap. It's my favourite technique, but I like to overly joke about it and make it seem like it's the only 'right' way to play bass. Obviously I support every technique on bass. Slap is still the best for making videos on YouTube, because it is very easy to hear, on any kind of speaker. Whether your viewer is using high-end speakers or a smartphone, they will always easily hear which notes and melodies you play. There are too many videos of bassists where you can barely hear what they are playing, and I found the solution in slap.

Your films with Charles Berthoud are hilarious.

I discovered Charles in a series of videos I where I hired bassists on the internet, sent them a drum track and paid them to compose a bass-line. He was labeled as a 'Pro' bassist on a website and it quickly became a tradition to hire him in every episode. He's always played extremely well and people demanded some kind of bass battle between us, which happened. To this day, it's one of my favourite collaborations.

What does the 504 in your name mean?

Everybody always asks this question, and my answer always changes... but today I'm gonna tell you the truth. 504 is just my birthday date – the 5th of April. Shhh, it's a secret. Don't tell anybody.

A lot of our readers will be interested in making a career on YouTube. Can you give them some advice?

Good quality video and good quality audio are a must. My advice is to study what other successful YouTubers are doing and try to adapt their concepts to the content you want to make. Most of the time you have to be prepared to compromise and find a balance between what you like and what the general audience likes. For example, there was a period when the video game *Minecraft* was trending, to the point where every video featuring that game would get millions of views – so I played *Minecraft* and I re-created all the sound effects using my bass. Be aware of trends on the internet, adapt and include them in your own unique way in your videos.

How do you handle negative comments online?

Luckily I have a very thick skin and I'm able to just ignore negative comments. Actually they usually make me laugh: most of the haters are just people who don't understand sarcasm and think that when I say, "Don't play with a pick or I will call the cops and steal your bass", that I'm serious. When my channel was small I mostly had positive comments, but once the channel started gaining some traction, some people seemed to dislike that. It's almost like once something becomes popular, some individuals are going to hate it just for the sake of it.

What bass gear do you use?

I have more than 60 bass guitars and some of them are very crazy – 36-string bass, quadruple neck, and so on – so if I started to list them all it would take forever. Some of my most iconic basses are the Fender Jazz I used in my first videos, and the Music Man Sterling I've been using in the past year. Because I am always travelling, I don't use much musical gear. I just use a sound card and that's it. All the basic effects I use – compression, EQ, reverb – are done in my recording software, Ableton and Pro Tools.

Talk us through your filming and editing setup.

The process changes depending on which type of video I want to make. The hardest part is to get a good, interesting idea. Once I get that, half of the job is already done. Before I even start working on a video, I already have in mind what the title and thumbnail of the video are going to be. It's very important to have a clear vision of what you want to achieve. I then proceed to search for material to show or talk about. After that, I write a script. Once I've finished writing the script, it's time to shoot the video. First I shoot the parts where I talk to the camera and then I proceed to do the musical parts and play the bass. Because I just have one camera I usually shoot multiple takes to get different angles, so the video can be a little more interesting and dynamic. Once I have all the footage and audio recorded, I transfer everything to my computer and I start editing in Final Cut Pro. When I first started making 10-minute videos, this process would take more than 40 hours, but nowadays I can finish everything in five to six hours. You have to be quick. Trends don't last forever and the faster you can make a video, while maintaining good quality, the better.

Do you have staff who help you with this?

No. I've always done everything, from editing, shooting, graphic design, audio mixing and mastering, by myself. When I need some high-quality drawing in my thumbnails, my girlfriend will help me. I've tried to hire video editors in the past, but my editing style is unique and it never worked



out too well when other editors were involved. It would be like hiring another bassist to play my parts – it just doesn't feel right.

Do you ever play live shows?

I used to play live shows with my band when I first started playing bass. Since I went full-time on YouTube, I've never played live except for a performance at Rock In Rio. I was called to perform there as a solo act. I didn't really have any experience, so going there was a crazy thing to happen.

Who is the greatest bass player ever?

Victor Wooten.

What have been the high and low points of your career?

The highest point of my career on YouTube was in April 2020, where my channel got almost 70 million views in that month alone. I managed to be near those numbers for well over a year and half, which in YouTube time is a lot of time. The lowest point: I'm not sure. Something that a lot of YouTubers have in common is the constant uncertainty of what's going to happen next. Many times, I've felt my channel was going to be forgotten and, a week later, my channel would go viral, and so on. It's important not to give up at low points and to keep improving yourself. Success will come to you!

“Many times, I've felt my channel was going to be forgotten, but a week later it's gone viral. It's important to never give up”

1M
TIKTOK
FOLLOWERS

443K
INSTAGRAM
FOLLOWERS

76.2K
YOUTUBE
SUBS

BLU DETIGER

New York bassist, songwriter and DJ **Blu DeTiger**'s profile has gone stratospheric over the last year or two. We find out why it happened, and what it feels like.

Welcome to *Bass Player* magazine, Blu.

Thank you. I'm a big fan, so it's really cool to do this.

You're having a crazy year.

Yeah, it's been pretty crazy. I think it was part of the game plan, though. All the accomplishments the past year have definitely been goals of mine, but I just didn't know or think that it would happen this fast. I hoped that all this stuff would happen eventually, but I never would have anticipated this accelerated growth.

Have you got good people around you, supporting you through all this?

Yeah, definitely. My family and my team. Everyone's really good. I'm very, very careful with that.

When did you start playing bass?

I started when I was seven. The bass was taller than me! I don't even know how I was doing it; I could barely hold it.

Did you start because you had a musical family?

Yeah. My older brother was playing djembe and drums, and I was just like, 'I want to play an instrument too'. Somehow I chose bass, and I don't know what I was thinking because I was so young, but I was just like, 'Oh, the guitar is too mainstream. I see so many people playing guitar. I don't see many people, especially girls, playing the bass'. I wanted to be a little different, so I took lessons and jammed with my brother and got super-passionate about it at an early age. My parents never forced me to play or anything – they were just very encouraging and supportive.

What music influenced you?

Right when I started playing, I did this programme called

School Of Rock in New York. They have them all over the country: it's this programme where you take lessons and you play covers at a concert. The first one I did was a Rolling Stones concert, and then I think the show I did after that was AC/DC, so I got super into both of those bands. It was such an amazing way to learn music and get better on your instrument, because you're really studying it and trying to replicate what these players were doing. Then I got into Van Halen and David Bowie and Prince, and I got into funk.

It sounds like a good education.

It really was. When you're first starting out, it's important to experience the fun part of it, and the joy part of it. A lot of people message me now, and they're like, 'I'm learning to play bass and I'm getting really frustrated and my fingers hurt'. I tell them to pick a song that they really like to listen to and learn it, so that they can connect to the fun of playing it. Then, when they go to do their scales and practise finger exercises, that part doesn't seem as bad any more.

When did you transition from studying bass to playing professionally?

I kept learning songs, and studied all the genres. I got really into jazz in high school and got way better at improvisation. I really nerded out over theory and found all these bass players that inspired me. While I was doing all of this, I was always playing in bands and taking a professional approach. I started getting known around New York: bands would hire me to play bass for their sessions or for their shows. I always said yes to every opportunity out there, and you know, one person sees you at a show, and they hire you for the next thing. What really helped was that I was DJing in New York a lot, and bringing my bass on my DJ sets, which is super rare. No-one sees that, ever. I was just like, 'Oh, this is sick. I really like DJing and I love playing bass. Why not combine them? It's all music, it should work'. So I would bring my bass around to my DJ sets and improvise bass-lines over different disco and house and funk records. People would go crazy. For some reason it worked. Then I started getting touring gigs, and the bass covers that I played online got me a profile on social media.

Why make the step to social media?

It was the same approach – creating different bass-lines over a record; playing what I would play if someone like Cardi B said, 'Yo, play bass on this record'. I was just filming what I would play in that situation, but obviously a little bit exaggerated, because clips for TikTok are so short that you have to get it all in there to show people what you can do. I started very, very simply – just putting my phone up and playing along to popular songs. And then I started to get an audience.



CASH FLOW

We have to ask: how much money are these people really making?

The following numbers are necessarily approximate because information varies so much between sources, but a quick consultation of a few different websites indicates that we're in the right ballpark here. We're just talking about income from YouTube views, not any other ancillary deals that might follow from sponsors, merchandise sales or whatever.

Say you shoot a film, stick it on YouTube and a million people watch it. Depending on where these people are, how much of your film they watch, if they watch the ads that come with your video, and depending on what those ads actually are, you might reasonably expect to end up earning between \$2,000 and \$10,000 after YouTube's deductions. Davie504's most popular clip currently stands at 32 million views, and a quick look at his video list reveals that even his 50th most popular film has had 5.7m views – so it all adds up to a tidy chunk of change, right?

Then again, all this needs to be put into perspective. Quite a few films have received a billion views, which indicates revenues for a single clip of many millions of dollars. The most successful YouTuber at the time of writing is a pre-teen called Ryan Kaji, who is said to have made \$26m in 2019 alone. And then, of course, Jeff Bezos of Amazon has reportedly netted \$150,000 in the minute it took you to read this.

Don't worry about it. Enjoy life!



Which bass players inspired you?

Marcus Miller was a big one, and Bernard Edwards. When I heard Chic for the first time and all of the Nile Rodgers productions, I learned every bass-line that Bernard recorded. I thought they were so interesting. They're such a groove, but there's so much melodic and harmonic information to the songs. Then I got really into James Jamerson, and I learned all the Motown stuff, which is obviously really important. I think Meshell Ndegeocello is incredible too. I remember looking at her at her playing, and thinking how insane it was that she could play such complicated parts and sing over them.

Tell us about the bass gear that you use.

A Fender Jazz is my go-to bass. It's super versatile. The one that I have has an active preamp in there, which I use to add that extra punch. I use D'Addario strings, and for amps, Aguilar is my favourite. I also have their pedal preamp, which is really good if you can't bring an amp on a gig. I don't like to use compression, but I have a Big Muff for some crunch, and a phaser for solo stuff.

Are you equally happy on four or five strings?

I tried to play five-string, but I don't know, I just like the classic four strings for some reason. I should probably get into it. Maybe I'll try six strings soon, because I like playing bass chords.

Who is your online audience?

Well, this past year, I've seen more female bass players online than I've seen in my entire life. Before the pandemic, I didn't know any women in New York besides myself that played bass. Even if you look at the people who came before me, there's Meshell, there was Carol Kaye, there was Tina Weymouth, and Kim Deal and Kim Gordon and Gail Ann Dorsey as well. How many is that? Six? It's just crazy. I'm trying to change that and get in front of more people so that more women are inspired to start playing, because it's such a cool instrument. I definitely think things are changing.

We know a lot of great bass-playing women at this magazine, but maybe we men are just louder and more obnoxious?

I think that might have something to do with it. I think that traditionally, in the way that civilisation has evolved, men are likely to try to take up more of the space, and women are more in the background. But I'm definitely trying to change that now. I think we're on the way, just from what I've seen online, with girls really getting out there and playing guitar and drums and shredding. And you know, it's not a moment too soon.

"I'm trying to get in front of more people so that more women are inspired to start playing"

288K
INSTAGRAM
FOLLOWERS

21K
TIKTOK
FOLLOWERS

8.7K
YOUTUBE
SUBS

DARRELL FREEMAN

A seasoned session player who has embraced the online medium and built a fanbase devoted to his “electric versus synth bass” videos, **Darrell ‘The Real Free’ Freeman** explains how it all gets done.

You have a large online following. Are you in personal contact with these people?

Well, I do work with some of them: people that send a message, like ‘Hey, can you play bass on this?’ And sometimes there’s a few celebrities that might ask me ‘Do you want to work on this?’ I try to interact where I can.

I love your synth bass versus real bass videos. Was the idea to open people’s minds to the fact that bass can come from another source?

Oh, thank you. Yeah, definitely. I’m always trying to stick in more synth bass when I can. I have a piano keyboard background so it’s very easy for me.



How much of your session work is bass guitar and how much is synth bass?

I’ll say at this point, it’s 50–50, whereas before now electric bass was 80–20, something like that.

Talk me through some of the amazing basses that I’ve seen you play in your films.

Okay, I guess my favourite is my Fodera, and then also a Callowhill J5 made by a friend of mine, the late Tim Cloonan. That’s my favourite Jazz right now. I have an Eighties Japanese P-Bass, and then a host of Fenders. I endorse Dunlop strings. Amps-wise, it’s Trickfish.

Tell me how you got started on bass.

I come from a musical family in Macon,

Georgia, and early on – around five or six – I played drums. My dad and my brother played guitar, so there was always basses and guitars around. So I picked up the bass guitar while still being the drummer. Then I ventured into keyboards, and somewhere in there, the love for bass came back and I just solely focused on that. As a professional, you know, things just started happening.

Who was the bass players you admired when you were coming up?

Oh, wow. Obviously the music that was around in the Eighties, the R&B on the radio, like the stuff Marcus Miller was playing on, and Prince of course. As far as today, a lot of my work is in gospel music, and there’s a lot of gospel players that I admire like Andrew Gouche, the late Joel Smith, and Reggie Young. I also studied R&B greats like Bernard Edwards, Leon Sylvers III and Anthony Jackson. I’m getting more into the bassist–composer side of things, where the driving force of the song is the bass.

Is your playing changing as the years pass?

Oh, definitely. When I started, I was more about – not flashiness, that’s not the correct word – but kind of standing out with the bass. Now I’m getting older, I just really want to find what moves the song, and sheds new light from a group standpoint. If that’s very, very simple, then that’s great. Playing simpler makes the whole thing feel good, because I think people feel the music better when there’s less going on. I think people attach themselves more to the music when it’s simple.

Have you got any advice for our readers about playing bass?

Well, it seems like the players coming up now are so

CHARLES BERTHOUD

YouTube sensation Charles Berthoud reveals that it’s not all about the numbers.



What does your daily routine look like, Charles?

YouTube takes up about 80 percent of my time, whether

that’s recording, editing, uploading or promoting on social media. I do record on the side, as a traditional session bassist,

for websites like Fiverr. I do it all except the YouTube thumbnails, which my fiancée does for me. I might try and outsource some of the video editing at some point, but at the moment, it’s pretty much all me.

You have 650,000 or so subscribers on YouTube. Are those numbers important to you?

Well, it’s all relative. Three years ago, that number of subscribers would have seemed crazy to me, because I only had 3000 or something at that time. I’m really grateful to have that following, but sometimes I really don’t care about that and I just want to make the best music that I can. It’s better to focus on the music rather than the subscribers, I feel, because



advanced and so talented, because they have a wealth of resources that I didn't have when I was coming up. But in the simplest sense, we still have to make the foundation be very, very important, right? So if you know all the theory and all the scales and rhythms, you still need to know what makes a song, unless you're going to be a solo performer. Make the basics important, as well as the advanced things that you want to do. Like I said, as a youngster, you're drawn to the flash and the acrobatics, but when you really study music, you will find that you got to have the basics and the foundation very, very tight.

Do you spend all day editing video and audio?

Not at all, because I have a very rigorous practice schedule. Most of the time, it's just playing along with songs that

"Bass players coming up now are so advanced. They have a wealth of resources that I didn't have"

I like, just to see how I fit in without overplaying, or just adding a little vibe to it. So I thought, why not just turn the camera on while I'm practising? That's

actually where it started, and now it's a streamlined process. Now I've got it set up to where I can just walk in, pick what song I want to play, record it and edit it in five or 10 minutes. It's not really that long a process.

Can you play a wrong note or will everyone hate you?

You can definitely do that, but getting back to the point about taking the craft seriously and having the basics down, as a touring guy and a session guy, you have that down like second nature to where you don't mess up. It might seem like 'Oh man, he doesn't ever mess up. He's perfect'. But it's from the years and years put in practising. It's like riding a bike – once you learn how to ride a bike, you don't really fall off.

**28K
TIKTOK
FOLLOWERS**

the only thing I can really control is the quality of the music that I make.

Are print magazines regarded as rather quaint these days by internet stars?

I've never really read magazines that much, so I might not be the best person to ask. I did read them occasionally back in the day, but now I'm so involved in

**652K
YOUTUBE
SUBS**

YouTube I guess maybe print media does feel old-school. I probably wouldn't have said that three years ago, when I was playing live shows and hadn't got deeply into YouTube yet.

Are people really going on YouTube to find good music, or are they just looking for something amusing?

**94K
INSTAGRAM
FOLLOWERS**

Personally, I think people watch the clips for different reasons. It's definitely a balancing act. I don't want my music to only appeal to people who play bass. I love those people, and I do want them to enjoy my music, but I also want my music to appeal to people who know nothing about bass, which is why I try to get some humour in there.

258K
INSTAGRAM
FOLLOWERS

93K
TIKTOK
FOLLOWERS

APRIL KAE

Influencer, model, activist and highly trained bass player **April Kae** is out to change the world. We salute her mission.

How are you, April?

I am fuckin' thrilled! *Bass Player* magazine is talking to me now. It feels incredible.

Well, if you go on social media playing bass to thousands of people, these things happen.

Apparently. It's wild.

How much time do you spend playing bass, as opposed to all the other stuff that you do?

Well, three years ago, my band IMANIGOLD – which is fronted by my sister Nikki and me – put out a single and we did a big fundraiser to raise money to build a home studio. When we did that, I neglected to realise that it meant that I would have to learn to produce. That's been a three-year process, where I've been basically teaching myself to produce. Throughout that, I've gotten to do a lot of bass, and like any musician, I love to play as much as I can.

Your bass films are really popular.

I'm trying to do two of those videos a week. I really enjoy creating them because it's a chance to study a range of different genres and contribute to the conversation around music in a way that's genuinely me. I have a deep love for the bass, and because I'm also a model and influencer, I have flexibility in my schedule to set aside a few days a week to dedicate to music. The solitary part of the process is just as fun as the public part.

How important is the number of followers on your social media?

I can't say I don't care about followers, because of course I care about my followers, but I like to think I'm self-aware enough to know that the numbers are also somewhat meaningless. What does mean something is to see people be inspired, especially people who don't look like those we often see on bass. It goes back to how I got into the instrument in the first place. I was around 12 at the time, in sixth grade.

I began playing upright bass in the school orchestra, and the other bass players were all six foot tall-plus white guys. I'm five four, so the school actually had to order a special bass in my size.

You're a musician, model, influencer and activist. Which came first?

Music was always first, for sure. We weren't rich by any means, but growing up in Austin, Texas it seemed like there were guitars lying around everywhere, including a few old ones in my mom's apartment. So, when I was about 10 years old, I started learning songs from the radio on guitar. I loved music so much that when I was 17 – I went to a super-small hippie private school that doesn't

exist anymore, on scholarship – I created an advanced jazz theory programme for myself. It was a kind of independent study curriculum that I wrote.

When did you become politically active?

It all goes back to my upbringing. Austin was such a free, hippie town back then that I was able to easily explore and go to shows, and I started getting involved in social justice work, which was a big part of the community. I became a teenager during the George W. Bush era, and was very political, and I still am: very anti-war and anti-racism and anti-Islamophobia. When I was 13, I started combining the two – music and community organising. I pretty much became the benefit concert girl of Austin! My friends and I would work together and organise various events. For example, I did a huge battle of the bands, and I had a friend who did a fashion show, and I helped her with that.

Which causes benefited from these events?

These were for all sorts of different causes. Some of it was around youth media, and some was anti-war. We raised money for the genocide in Darfur, benefiting refugees, and for people affected by Hurricane Katrina, because a lot of people came to Austin from Louisiana. That's really when creativity and activism came together for me, and ever since then, those two things have been the heartbeat of who I am. As for the modelling and influencer strand, my sister and I were cute kids, so our mom got us with a small modelling agency in Austin, and booked a few jobs here and there. That was great, because I learned how to be in front of a camera. Now that I'm more in the spotlight for my music, I'm realising how super-advantageous that is.

What music influenced you?

I was always into rock and pop music. My mom's a music teacher and an incredible singer, and my dad was always in bands doing lots of different things, which I thought was so cool, even when I was little. Even at age 12 I knew I wanted to play bass. One day, I was supposed to go to the music room at my elementary school and choose an instrument to play in band or orchestra the following year. They had all the instruments laid out, and I was like, 'I'm gonna play upright bass'. The music teacher said, 'No, your hands are too small' and signed me up for tuba. Now, I'm realising, looking back, that it was actually some thinly-veiled racism, because it was the orchestra, right? There was no upright bass in band. And then sexism, because the hands thing has never been an issue. There's some Jaco songs I have to modify, like 'Portrait Of Tracy', because there's one note that I can't play the way he does, but other than that, the size of my hands has never been an issue. Anyway, when I got to middle school, I was able to do jazz band and orchestra, so I played classical as well as jazz. I didn't really like classical because it felt too restrictive, but it was good for my technique and it was fun to hang out with other upright bass players.



When you switched to bass guitar, did you benefit from having studied the upright bass?

Massively. I think they're really similar. I don't understand people who say they're not. I will say that I'm still coming to terms with how important intonation is on bass guitar, because it's not automatic. You don't just put your finger on a fret and it's perfectly in tune. Playing online with people watching me has made me very aware of that.

You have a lot of online followers watching you play bass. Do you ever make errors?

Yes, but I guess the thing to do is just own it. Sometimes my performances aren't perfect, but that's part of it, too. I think it's sometimes cool to be a little out of tune. It can work with the song. Bass is a real instrument, so those little fret buzzes and weird harmonics are part of what I love about it. I've never been about being perfect or a 'highlight reel' on social media, and bass is no exception.

What bass gear do you use?

I just got endorsed by Fender – they sent me an American-made Jazz, it's really nice and fun to play. I was joking with my dad about it yesterday. I was like, 'I'm in this position now, but I'm not a gearhead'. I also have a Mexican P-Bass that my dad and I paid for, and an Apollo Twin, and that's pretty much how we rock. The Precision is the bass you see me playing on social media. I'm pretty picky about my tone, but for me, that's mostly about the amps, so I can do a lot in post if I'm looking for a different tone. What I want is to make it sound the same on people's phones as it does when I'm recording, so I usually don't do a lot to it. I like a pure sound when it works with the song.

When did you first attract large numbers of followers?

Before I went viral, I had about 80,000 followers, and I got there through a ton of hard work posting, creating images, and having real conversations about social justice and inclusivity – almost daily, over five years. This February, my band was getting ready to release our new single, and I had the idea to do covers on bass on Instagram as a way to introduce my community to me as a musician. I decided to play bass rather than sing or play guitar, because it's the instrument I feel the most connected to.

Your videos became popular very quickly.

The first video that I posted that went viral got almost, I think, 1.5 million views. It was a cover of 'Up', the Cardi B song, which I wanted to do partially because I'm in Harlem, a stone's throw from the Bronx where she's from, and because she's a woman of colour and she's changing the game. But it's funny, I thought the bass-line I improvised was kinda corny. I didn't think it was that cool. Next thing I know, people are like, 'Wow, you sound so funky!' I'm just like, 'I was just playing something that sounded cute'... so now I'm thinking about things differently. Bringing my



TN/pictures

bass playing to social media has challenged me, and I feel like I'm growing. I like to master things, and I feel like after studying bass consistently for all these years, I could play in most bands and get away with it. I couldn't go in and be like Primus, with a wild slapping line, but other than that, I can hang. I could be in any space with a bunch of musicians who weren't bass players and they would think my technique was top-tier. But social media exposes me to a whole different set of challenges and opportunities. I don't regret waiting this long to bring my music to social media because I am benefiting so much now from everything I've learned over the years. That said, whenever I hear a musician frustrated that their career isn't moving forward, I always suggest they invest more time in social media, specifically TikTok and Instagram Reels. There is so much energy there, and it's so beneficial to both my career and my musicianship to be part of it.

What is the best part of what you do?

It's been so cool to see so many messages that say, 'You make me want to play bass again' or 'I bought a bass because of you'. It's the biggest reward, honestly.

"I could play in most bands and get away with it, but social media exposes me to a different set of challenges"

What did you do before your career took off?

I went to Reed College in Portland, Oregon, a super-unique school for the liberal arts. André St James, who was Esperanza Spalding's bass teacher back in the day, was there: he was a staple in the Portland, Oregon area, and also a black guy when there's just not a lot of black folks out there. I went to Reed because its uniqueness appealed to me, but I didn't know what I was doing there, so I dropped out and went to Philly, and spent a year volunteering full-time at a high school as a teaching assistant and mentor. After that, I returned to Reed to study economics and that's what I got my undergraduate degree in. I did that because I realised that money really does make the world go round, and as an Austin hippie musician who didn't grow up with a ton of it, I didn't have much of an

understanding of how money works. Studying economics is a good way to see what matters in America, where we don't really have a healthcare system, for example. Now, I have a better understanding of why. It breaks my heart: we kill our citizens with this terrible system when there are so many viable alternatives. And like most things in this country, poor people and people of colour bear the brunt of it. If there's anything that's true about this country, it's that it was founded on the genocide of Indigenous people and the exploitation of black people. There are more black men incarcerated now than were enslaved at the height of slavery. So, there's no denying that the United States as we know it is synonymous

with exploiting and killing marginalised people. It bothers me so much when I hear 'racism is un-American' because it's actually extremely American. And we have to acknowledge that to move forward in a meaningful way. But all this is why I studied economics, so I could try to understand it. I knew learning about money would be powerful. And it is.

Are you optimistic that things will eventually start to improve?

That depends on what things you mean, but yes, I think so. Across the world, infant mortality rates and maternal mortality rates are going down. We have eradicated all of

“That I can play bass and get this recognition as a musician gives me a personal sense of freedom”

these illnesses, we're living longer, there are those indisputable things. I like to be hopeful, and I think hope is crucial, but at the same time, the maternal mortality rate in the United States is higher for black women, even controlling for every variable under the sun, including income and education. It hasn't really been falling alongside some of these other rates. I've read a lot of research on this, and from what I understand, the main reason is the unconscious belief that black women are inherently stronger, which is a legacy from slavery. But it's so important to appreciate the tangible wins. The fact that I can play bass and get this recognition as a musician makes me feel a personal sense of freedom. That's a sign of progress.



TUBE TALES

Want some more? Check out these 'primarily-online' bassists...

Nilanjana Ghosh Dastidar Phenomenal, high-speed bassist in the metal realm
Daric Bennett Founder of his own Bass Academy
Aldana Ace Solo bass player
Chris '9Goma' Goma Multi-talented multi-instrumentalist
Julia Hofer Austrian slap and tap specialist
Ana Karina Sebastião Supremely funky chops
Yuki Atori Fusion prodigy from Japan
Vincen Garcia A slapper supreme
Fernando Rosa The funk runs deep in this one
Giane Rangel Thumb-friendly lines from Brazil

I'm assuming that this struggle informs everything you do, musically.

Yeah, exactly. I understand my position and the possibilities that I have, and I'm so connected to this legacy. There's a line that Maya Angelou says: "I am the hope and the dream of the slave." Every time I say it, I get shivers. Our band IMANIGOLD is also an art and social justice collective, and we have a digital publication that discusses a range of social justice issues. One dimension of ethical practice that is often minimised is being ethical in business. I pretty much always pay musicians and other artists more than they ask, because I want to celebrate them. It's really about conducting my business in a way that sets an example and shows artists they deserve to be treated well. I truly believe that, as artists, we don't have to be in a constant state of struggle and exhaustion. And hopefully, one day, our work will grow to the point where we're an example for business owners and C-suite executives, too. Who knows? Maybe we already are.

What is the best thing about being widely known on social media?

It's a community, which is integral to everything. All the social and political issues I talk about are not individual issues – they're community issues. We have to be social in order to make change happen. Like Toni Cade Bambara said, "The role of the artist is to make revolution irresistible." I'm not actually a super-social person, I'm pretty introverted, but I have to be connected with people and talk to people every day in all the work I do. I have a built-in community at my job, which I'm so grateful for, because I'm not the 'party all night' type. For a long time, I thought that meant I couldn't reach as many people as I'd like with my work, because I've always preferred to stay inside and kick it with music and close friends, and I'm becoming more accepting of that part of myself. IMANIGOLD has some shows coming up this summer that we're thrilled about. I've missed seeing people respond to our music in person, but playing from my bedroom is completely different yet equally engaging. I can experience solitude, and still enjoy connecting with others and performing for the online community. ■

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TREVOR BOLDER

In every issue, we dig into the vaults to bring you an interview with a bass great. This month it's the late **Trevor Bolder**, once of David Bowie's band the Spiders From Mars, and in 2004 when we met him, enjoying a long career with Uriah Heep. He passed away in 2013 at the age of 62: rest in peace, Trevor.

Interview: Joel McIver Photography: Getty

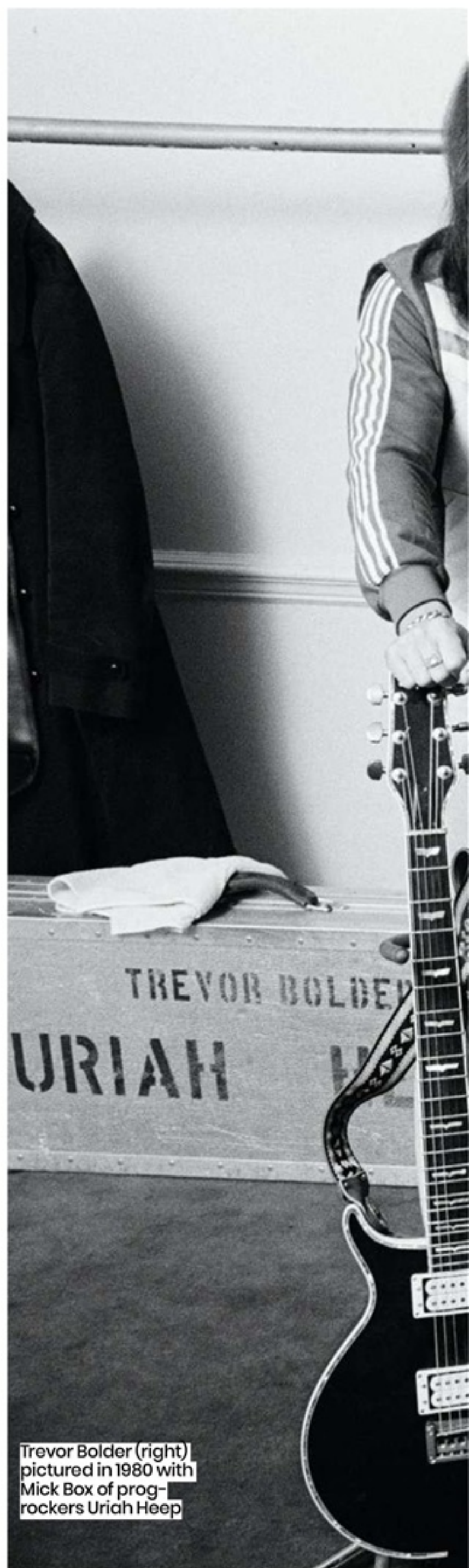
Few bass players have as impressive a pedigree as Hull-born Trevor Bolder, who began his musical career playing cornet and trumpet in brass bands. After switching to guitar and then bass, he hooked up with his guitarist friend Mick Ronson, with whom he played gigs in the Hull area. Recruiting drummer Woody Woodmansey in 1970, Bolder renamed his band Ronno, only for the entire group to be adopted the following year by none other than David Bowie, who rechristened them the Spiders From Mars. They appeared on three seminal albums, including *Hunky Dory*, *Aladdin Sane* and *Ziggy Stardust And The Spiders From Mars*, before their association with Bowie ended in 1973.

Bolder then toured with Ronson's band before joining the venerable progressive rockers Uriah Heep in 1976, as a replacement for the departed John Wetton. And there he

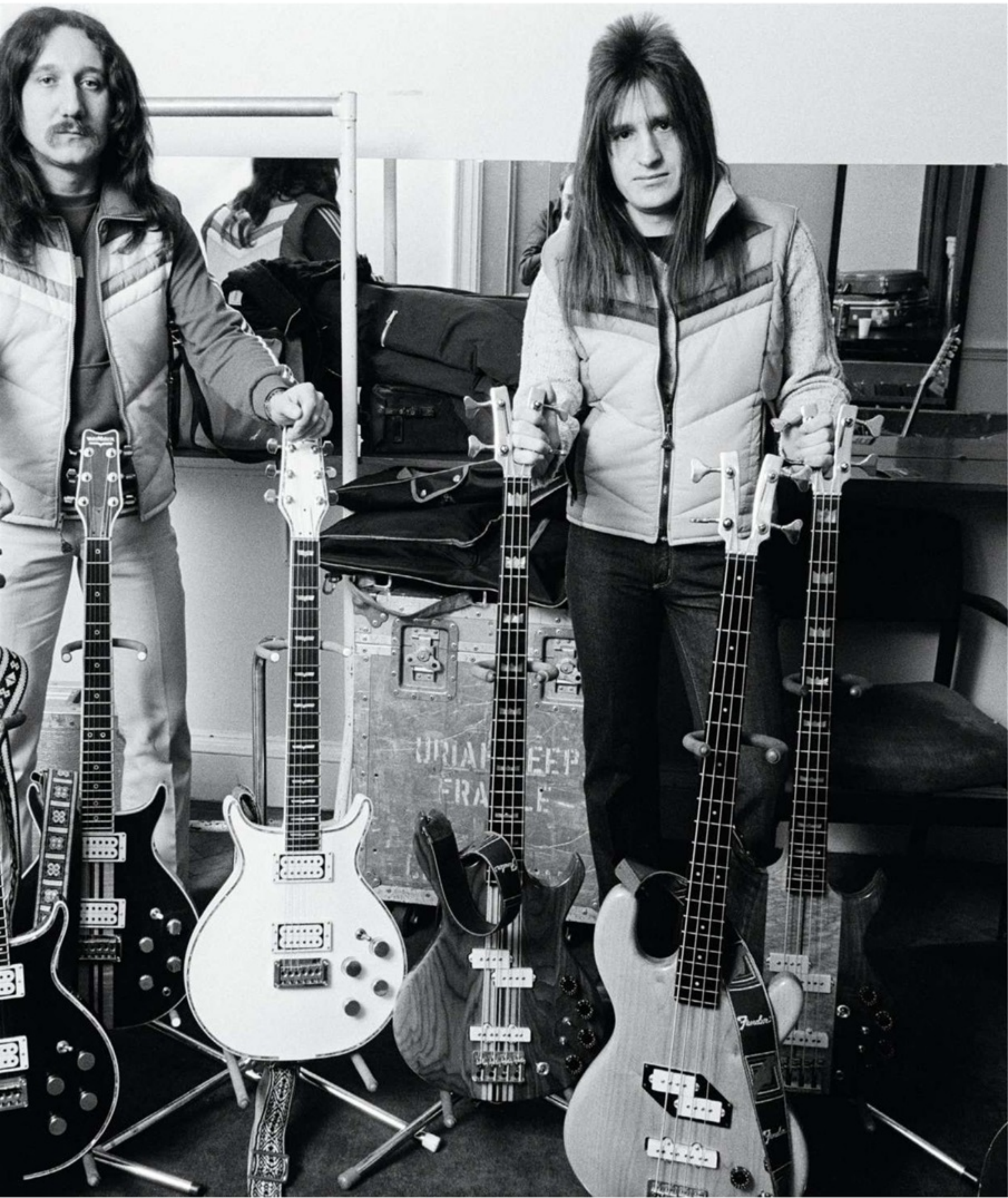
has remained ever since, apart from a brief two-year sabbatical in Wishbone Ash, in which his predecessor was also Wetton. Heep remain immensely popular and regularly tour worldwide, so it's appropriate that as Bolder talks to us, he has just taken delivery of a luxurious new bass, made by the Brazilian Dalegria company.

How did the move to Dalegria come about, Trevor?

One of the partners at the firm happens to run one of the Uriah Heep websites. He's a big Heep fan down in Brazil and also runs the fanclub down there. I've been trying to get a new bass guitar for years, actually. I play an old Fender, a 1972 Precision, and there's nothing wrong with it at all – I've just been trying to get a new bass so I can leave the Fender at home, because it's too valuable to take out now. I've lost it a couple of times on tour, on



Trevor Bolder (right) pictured in 1980 with Mick Box of prog-rockers Uriah Heep



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The Classic Interview

TREVOR BOLDER

different flights, and I'm starting to get a bit panicky about it.

Tell us about the new bass.

It's a Jazz copy, really. The first week I got it I didn't put it down. It has a great sound, a bit toprier than the Precision, but you can fix that on the amp. It just felt really nice. I think I can play slightly faster with it. I've got one with a dark wood neck, but I'm asking them to make me one with a maple neck, partly because you can see it better on stage. It's pretty standard, although it's got EMG pickups on it. But we're going to Brazil this year, so when I'm there I'm going to try and design a special model with them at the factory. The way they've put the neck on, I can't get to the top of it very easily, especially as I've got small hands.

Why didn't you just buy another Fender?

I couldn't find one. I searched and searched and I couldn't find one that felt the same. I wanted one that felt exactly the same. I couldn't find a '72, but I did find earlier ones. They were all battered, though.

When did you get your original Precision?

I bought it when we split from Bowie, and I've played it at every venue since then, except for

a year when I played Washburns. It's just a standard Precision, except I put a Seymour Duncan Jazz pickup at the bridge. I don't use the actual Precision pickup, because it was disconnected for years. I thought, I don't use it anyway, so I might as well leave it.

Do you prefer the treblier sound?

Yeah, well it's punchier, you know. I play bass with my fingernails. If you ever look at the Precision you'll see that I've dug a big hole out of it. I reckon that when air can get through to the other side I'll retire it.

How do you keep your nails strong?

Well, I'm really lucky, they're just naturally strong. I have to keep the edges cut, because when they get too long, they break all the way down. I keep them filed down to a little point. But you can actually play faster because you don't have to get your actual finger on the string. If you're clicking on it with your nail, you can get more percussion and speed up with it.

Isn't it difficult to avoid a scratchy sound if you're playing with your fingernails?

No, I adjust it on the amp to the sound I want. I don't like a lot of treble, probably because I played a Gibson EB-3 in the old days and liked that Jack Bruce sound. Actually that bass is up for auction at Cooper Owen shortly – it's got a reserve price of £45,000 on it.

What amps do you use?

I was using big Trace Elliott valve amps, but I lent them to John Entwistle – and when he died, they went into his estate and I never got them back.

“With Bowie, he played you a song, and you had one run-through and that was the one you took”

So they got sold at auction with the rest of his stuff?

Yes! And they're mine, whoever bought them.

Can you put a notice in the magazine for the person to return them? But there's nothing you can do in that situation, really. Anyway, I've been using the new Ampeg Pro 2s, they're great. I usually use them with a couple of 2x15 cabs and an 8x10. Some Ampegs are supposed to be for funk players, but I don't find that myself.

What was your setup when you were playing with David Bowie?

In Cologne, Germany,
on Uriah Heep's 2001
Acoustically Driven tour.





With Bowie, or rather Ziggy, in LA in 1973: note those glam-era silver sideburns in fullest effect

With Bowie I used a 100-watt Marshall bass head and two 12" cabs. That was it. It was like, plug in, turn it up, and away you go. I was a huge fan of Jack Bruce so I had a slight edge of distortion on it, but there were no pedals or anything like that back then.

Did Bowie get involved in writing the bass parts when you were in the Spiders From Mars?

No, it was all mine. With him, he played you a song, and you had one run-through and that was the one you took. That was it. *Ziggy Stardust* was recorded in a day and mixed in two days. The backing tracks for *Aladdin Sane* only took two days.

For budgetary reasons?

No, that was just how he worked. He was an easy man to work with, but it was difficult when you were doing something like 'The Jean Genie', which he played you once and then made you record it. That's why that cock-up is on there at the end of the first verse, where he says 'Get back on it'.

But you didn't.

No. I went down to the B before I should

have done, one bar early. He liked it, though, and said he wanted to keep it. I went on tour with a couple of the guys from Def Leppard a few years ago and we played that song every night – and I had to play that mistake every night, because they said, everybody knows it!

What bass did you start out on?

Another Fender. I swapped it for a Mustang when I joined Bowie's band, because I didn't know the value of a bass in those days.

Let's be honest, it was more important to have a bass that matched the silver suits and platform boots back then, wasn't it?

That's right, ha ha! Actually I only swapped it because I had such small hands. The first bass I ever had was a Burns. They were horrible, weren't they?

Do you go higher than four strings?

Not really. I drop down to D quite a lot and I do play a five-string, but I find that with Heep we

don't really use it that much. The extra string just gets in the way.

Do you use any effects?

I use a Boss octave divider and a Boss chorus. I use the octave divider for solos, just to enhance the sound at the top of the neck, just to fatten it out. The lower line just gives it more beef. I use the chorus for more ballady

"Playing 'The Jean Genie' on tour with Def Leppard, I had to play the mistake in the verse every night!"

stuff. And I also use a delay pedal to make it sound fretless. I do also play fretless bass, but I prefer not to swap basses on stage if at all possible. Talking of fretless, I've got a great story. I'm friends with Pino Palladino, and

one time in the Eighties he was going off to audition for Jools Holland's band and needed to borrow a bass off me. So I said, take a fretless – and he said, oh no, I can't play that! And then a few years later he'd become regarded as one of the great fretless players. Would you believe it? ■

*Trevor Bolder's posthumous album **Sail The Rivers** is out now at www.cherryred.co.uk*



SPACE ROCK

Dinosaur Jr.'s **Lou Barlow** on life down below

Interview: Gregory Adams Photography: Getty

As part of one of the most legendarily eardrum-obliterating bands of all time, Dinosaur Jr. co-founder Lou Barlow naturally courses plenty of powerful-yet-poppy, gain-cranked bass-lines throughout *Sweep It Into Space*, the Massachusetts-based trio's 12th album overall, and fifth since reforming their classic line-up in 2005. Live, he's happily decimating crowds with multiple stacks. It's trickier in the studio, however, with the bassist admitting he's still seeking an idyllic boom to best complement – or perhaps compete with – the screaming leads of guitarist J Mascis.

"To be perfectly honest, it's hard to get a recorded sound with Dinosaur Jr. that I feel is there," he reveals. "Because of the nature of the way the records are mixed, the bass really gets pushed back in the mix. I have a fighting chance live – I've got my wall of amps, and J's got his – but once it comes to recording, and once the overdubs start, it's hard to get the bass to sit in the right place. Every time we make a record I start from scratch, hopefully finding some magic combination that approximates the growl of what we get live. I don't know if I've done that yet."

Though humble about his presence, Barlow's rhythms on *Sweep It Into Space* are nevertheless hefty. During sessions at Mascis' Biquiteen attic studio in Ahmerst, MA, Barlow tracked his parts pushing a pair of Gibson Grabbers through a Marshall JCM 800 2205 "with a bunch of tubes taken out of it" and an old SVT cabinet, which all gives a gritty, mid-range sneer to strum-heavy pieces like 'I Ain't', 'Hide Another Round', and 'N Say'.

Having first formed the band in 1985 with Mascis and drummer Murph, Barlow loves the moments that reflect the dynamism of Dinosaur Jr. working purely as a power trio. "It really cuts it down to the bare essentials of the band," the bassist says of their spare, yet steel-reinforced approach. "I think it's a lost art with a lot of rock bands and recording techniques. People are like, 'It sounds too empty; you've got to put rhythm guitars in there!' I've never liked that. I think it should be like the Sixties, like, 'No, fuck that! It's 1967 – bass in the left channel, guitar in the right.'"

Cut it down and let the guitar talk. Let the bass be heard."

That's not to say there aren't overdub-embellished sections on *Sweep It Into Space* – check, for instance, the feral, sustained bends Mascis layers atop the chunky, Crazy Horse cringing of 'I Met The Stones', or the spangled 12-string which album co-producer Kurt Vile brings to 'I Ran Away'. But on 'Garden' and 'Wonder Why', notably the two tracks that Barlow penned for the set, lead sections take a more streamlined three-piece approach. Interestingly, each of these arrives as bass-on-bass moments, with Mascis laying down both the groove and some high-neck noodling on a '65 P-Bass; Barlow handles six-strings outside of those sections.

"It's hard to teach my guitar parts exactly to J. You know, we both have idiosyncratic styles of playing," Barlow says of swapping roles for those particular cuts. Though he has often switched from bass to guitar across various

releases from his other longtime band, Sebadoh, he and Mascis first performed their instrument exchange on 2016's *Give A Glimpse Of What Yer Not*. "It's cool to change it up, and he's into it."

While Barlow cut his elegiac 'Garden' and the closing alt-ballad 'You Wonder' with Dinosaur Jr. before the pandemic shut down the sessions, a third track of his called 'Why Can't It Wait' didn't make it to tape. Instead, it's featured on Barlow's latest solo LP, *Reason To Live*, as an acoustic piece. As for what was captured on *Sweep It Into Space*, the LP further refines the band's unique, sand-blasted sonic blueprint.

"The sound of the band is something we forged when we were very young. There's such a familiarity to it; I find it really comforting," Barlow explains of locking into the instantly identifiable crunch of Dinosaur Jr. "My love of the Ramones' first four or five records is just boundless; any early Black Sabbath, too. To be in a band that has this similar kind of lunk-headed energy to it plays so perfectly to my limitations. At the core of the sound, there's something that reminds me of my youth, in a good way."

Sweep It Into Space is out now.
Info: www.dinosaurjr.com

"Our new album has bass in the left channel and guitar in the right. Let the bass be heard!"







MO FOSTER

From session bassist to composer, producer to author, over the last five decades **Mo Foster** has occupied a seminal position among session musicians. But how do you even begin to quantify a 50-year career with Gerry Rafferty, Jeff Beck, Phil Collins, Eric Clapton, Frida Lyngstad of ABBA, Ringo Starr, Van Morrison, Joan Armatrading and many more?

Interview: Phil Mann **Photography** Courtesy of Mo Foster

Do yourself a favour and pick up *Mo Foster & Friends In Concert*, which its creator hails as “some of the very best musicianship that I’ve ever captured on one of my own recordings”. On the eve of release of the album, Mo takes time out to reflect with *BP* on his diverse portfolio, kicking off with a snapshot of life in Swinging London.

“In the mid-Sixties, you have to understand that there was jazz and then there was rock. They were two separate genres of music that had nothing to do with one another – at that time, there was no crossover. It wasn’t until a couple of albums by Miles Davis and Blood, Sweat & Tears that the artistic lines began to blur. Davis brought in electric piano and electric bass, which nobody had ever heard, let alone contemplated before.”

How did Mo enter this fertile music world, we ask? “At university we had a jazz trio. Linda [Hoyle, singer] was first introduced to us through our keyboard player, and we spent the summer of 1968 rehearsing. Our band Affinity

was born, and we were immediately signed to a manager, Ronnie Scott. The project came as a result of attempting to delve into both rock and jazz camps, so essentially, we were playing jazz-rock for the first time”.

This was a truly seminal time to be an active musician in the capital. “Indeed, we regularly played Ronnie Scott’s Jazz Club in London, and even found ourselves supporting the great Stan Getz’s quartet. I remember one afternoon seeing Jack DeJohnette practising straight 16ths patterns prior to a show, and six months later he was delivering it on *Bitches Brew* with Miles. What I had unintentionally witnessed in real time was the start of the transition from jazz to fusion.”

He namechecks another key musical relationship: “I’d met the guitarist Ray Russell in a Transit van travelling up the M1 four years prior to the recording of Ray’s 1977 album, *Ready Or Not*. It was stunning for me to be part of that recording, as it felt like an American record, with so many influences – horn and string sections, plus a great



Mo with George Martin at AIR Studios in London

rhythm section featuring Simon Phillips. At the time you'd hear like-minded material coming out of America through the likes of Herbie Hancock and Chick Corea, but there was nothing like that here. To witness it coming out of Basing Street Studios in Notting Hill was novel. The composition 'Surrender', written with a friend of mine, Tim Whitehead, was the first tune I ever wrote! The opening riff, played on my Fender Jazz, was heavily influenced by Anthony Jackson's on 'Money, Money, Money' – and has since gone on to feature in a Ron Howard film."

1979 was the beginning of a dense period of touring and recording for Foster, where a whole sea of artists began to grace his resumé. One of these was Gerry Rafferty and the album *Night Owl*. "This was a pivotal time and recording for Gerry, who had all sorts of problems with management and musicians, so had fired half the band. Naturally, new faces came in, and I was one of those. Gerry would present a song on piano, then you'd have to figure out what the key was, what the chords were, what the structure was, write down your own chart and even write down the inversions, as his chords were very sophisticated. Of course, the choice of bass note ultimately alters the emotions which are portrayed in the music."

Was this a laborious process? "Not at all – the experience was very sociable! We spent two weeks in the Cotswolds at Chipping Norton Studios, where we lived together as a family

"What I had witnessed in real time was the start of the transition from jazz to fusion"

and every evening was greeted with a barrel of Hook Norton beer. Routining sometimes consisted of up to 12 hours revising and refining a single song, and then we'd have the final version."

Glancing through Foster's awe-inspiring resumé, you can't help but notice the

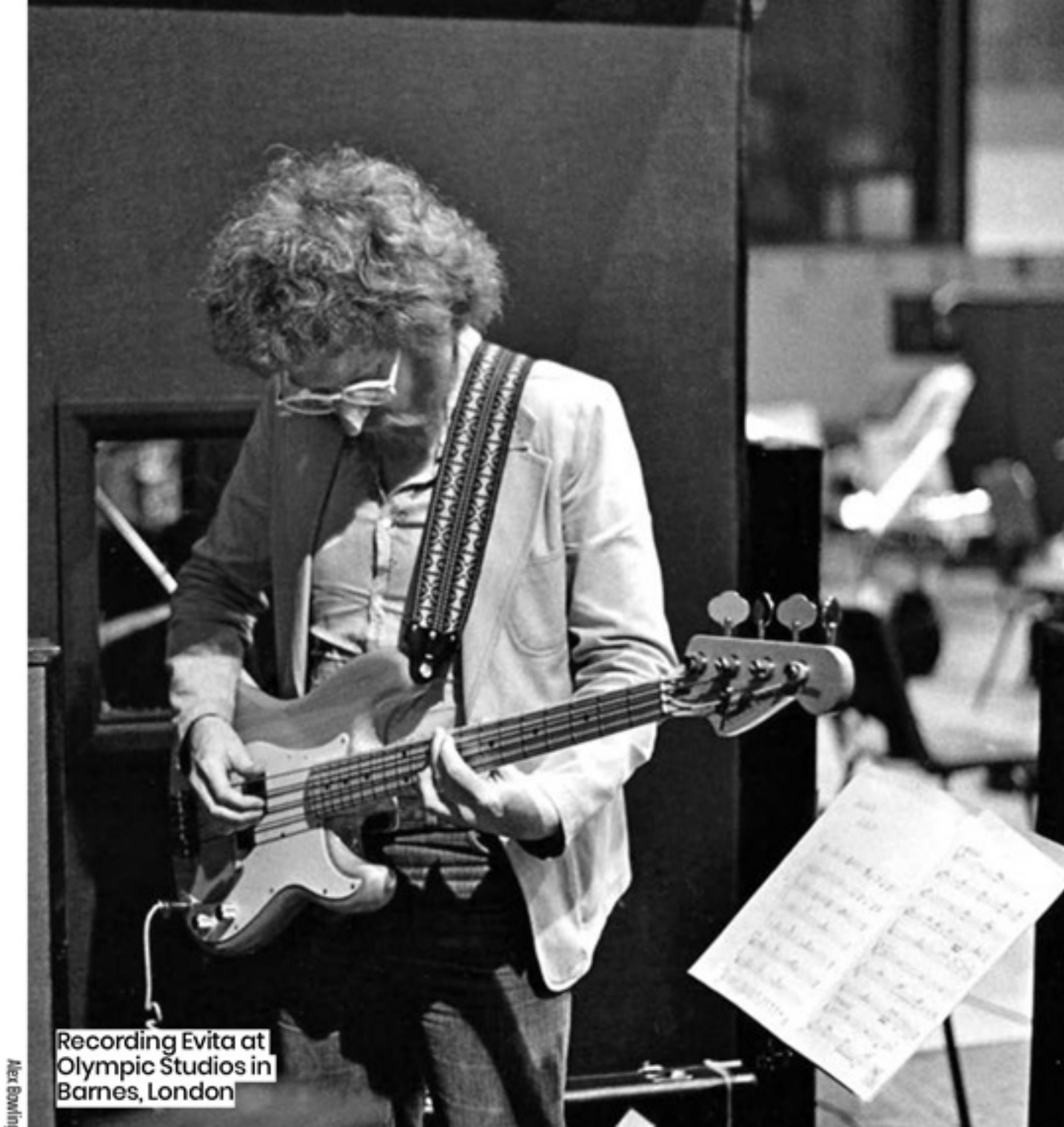
presence of a number of innovative artists beginning to appear at the start of the Eighties, notably Jeff Beck. "In 1980 we recorded the *There And Back* album for Jeff. He had started the recording, but wasn't happy with the line-up, so he brought in Simon Phillips and Tony Hymas, who had been in the Jack Bruce band before that. Stanley Clarke had left and I was one of a shortlist for the bass seat, which also consisted of John Paul Jones and Rick Laird, who had been working with John McLaughlin. I think it must have been all my jokes that got me the job!"

How did everything transpire once he arrived at Abbey Road? "A lot of the tracks were already recorded, so I had to overdub to keyboards and drums," he continues. "'Space Boogie' was a very hard song, a fast 7/8. I had to have the music sellotaped together across three music stands in the control room of Studio Two. It would have been good to have been on casters, so somebody could have pushed me along while I was performing it... When I finished, Simon and everyone reached down below their seats and bought out score cards to mark my performance!"

Foster's association with so many rock artists may come as a surprise. "By the end of 1980 I was working with the Michael Schenker Group, which was being produced by Deep Purple's Roger Glover. The rehearsals were in a very small room in Nomis Studios in Shepherd's Bush, London. Schenker turned up with a full Marshall stack, while all I had was a Roland cube, which was like a cornflakes packet in comparison! Thankfully, back in those days I used to smoke, so I took two Marlboro cigarettes out of the packet and put them in my ears, filter first. I looked ridiculous, but it worked!"

With the great Gary Moore at a Vibes From The Vines charity show





Recording Evita at Olympic Studios in Barnes, London

Alex Bowling

While working for producer Chris Neil, Foster was part of a British ensemble reminiscent of LA's Wrecking Crew. *One More Time* is a forthcoming documentary, produced by Alan D. Boyd, attempting to honour this prestigious period. "I was part of a house rhythm section which included Peter Van Hooke on drums and Phil Palmer on guitar. We'd play on everything of the day, including an album for the actor Dennis Waterman. A couple of years later, one of the tracks, 'I Could Be So Good For You', was picked up for a television series called *Minder*. This was the song which featured my aluminium-necked Kramer 650B, which I bought as you couldn't get Alembics at the time. I had been listening to the likes of Louis Johnson, and was keen to adopt his slap approach for the Waterman session. The problem was I had never seen him play, so I had to invent a way. What you hear on the record is a combination of that instrument and me simply being spontaneous."

The line-up of the Phil Collins band at this time was formidable – how did that gig come up? "I got a call to go to the Townhouse Studios to overdub a couple of parts for the producer Hugh Padgham. Phil never tells you what he wants – you just listen to the track and play along, developing ideas until he says yes. He's a dream to play with, because he's got such beautiful time. He drives and swings, but never speeds up – it's amazing. After completing his album *Hello, I Must Be Going*, I remember Phil asking if I'd like to go on the



With the great Gil Evans

road with him. The subsequent live album, *Live At Perkins Palace*, was filmed, recorded and engineered by Robert Margouleff. Lee Sklar came up to me after the show to say how much he had enjoyed it, which was a lovely compliment as I think he was originally intended for the line-up, but was unavailable due to commitments with James Taylor."

He continues, "Phil was always a total professional, just getting on with the job, working very hard and expecting you to do the same. During the first week of tour rehearsals we had just the basic rhythm section at Shepperton Studios – Chester Thompson, Daryl Stuermer, Peter Robinson, Phil and me. I have this lovely memory of Phil standing at the mic with a book of lyrics, as he had no idea of what he'd written! During the second week, the Earth, Wind And Fire horn section turned up. They all thought I was Swedish, as that's where we'd originally met while I was working with Frida Lyngstad from ABBA."

Mo's sessions with Gary Moore in 1983 supplied some surprisingly challenging moments, he says. "As you can imagine, Gary was a big fan of Jeff Beck, so I think that was why he invite me to play on the *Victims Of The Future* album. I remember a nylon-strung guitar solo during 'Empty Rooms' that he wanted me to copy on fretless. I had to sit down in the studio and learn it phrase by phrase, twice, and then I doubled it to achieve that wonderful Jaco sound."

He adds: "Gary was such a lovely guy. I remember doing a couple of charity shows where Ray Russell and Gary Husband and I had invited him to join us as a guest artist. I composed a fun announcement for him, saying to the audience, 'Would you please welcome a dear friend of ours, and one of the finest guitarists in his price bracket...'"

Gil Evans is always held in high esteem, and when in 1983 an opportunity arose for Foster to tour with the seminal composer and arranger as part of the British Orchestra, he jumped at it. "I was in America, on tour with Phil Collins at the time. I rang Ray, who was at home looking after my diary, and he said 'When you get back you're going on the road with Gil Evans'. My immediate response was "What? My hero?"

He remarks: "It was a difficult show. Gil's music was hard and never very clear. You had to listen to 10 people at once to figure out what you were supposed to play. Gil was very much a free spirit. I remember him standing in front of this established brass section, examining some incredibly complex parts together, and then very quietly he said, 'This is the note I've written for you, but if you don't like it, feel free to play another one'. They were different times, when you'd play with everyone. Cliff Richard was one of the good ones, but there was also a lot of gigs there just to pay the rent. I was invited to join Cliff's band around 1977 or '78 to tour Europe, Hong Kong and Australia, and that started a long affiliation."

Somewhat nostalgically, he adds, "'Move It' was the first ever piece of English rock'n'roll, recorded back in 1958. Jump forward and Cliff wanted to re-record the composition on the same spot in Abbey Road for his *Two's Company* duets album, supported by Brian May, Brian Bennett of the Shadows and me. Brian turned up at the studio nearly an hour late, looking very tired, but with one of the best excuses I think you'll ever hear! He said, 'I'm sorry lads, I've been up all night with [the legendary astronomer] Patrick Moore, proof-reading a book that we've co-written on the history of the universe'. How do you even begin to top that?"

Mo Foster & Friends In Concert is available now via HMV and Amazon.



The Bass Summit
STUART HAMM AND ARIANE CAP

STUART HAMM *MEETS* ARIANE CAP

Every now and then, we get a couple of great bass players together to do our hard work and interview each other about their lives at the low end. This month, the great **Stuart Hamm** breaks bread with the equally great **Ariane Cap**, both state-of-the-art educators and practitioners of solo bass

S **TUART HAMM** Ari, you're my closest musical neighbour in Los Angeles. I've really valued your friendship over the years. We go hiking, we go for coffee, I take Logic lessons with your lovely husband. It's great.

ARIANE CAP Remember how we first met? My husband and I were at a branch of Whole Foods in Los Angeles, and all of a sudden, my husband says, 'You know that bass player you were talking about? I think that's him over there'.

SH Later, we met at a Warwick Bass Camp in Germany, and you told me that you'd seen me at Whole Foods, and we figured out that we lived five miles apart in LA.

AC Right! After that you sent me a text saying you were going on a solo tour, and asked me if I would be interested in opening for you. I was like, 'Wow!' To be addressed like that by Stu Hamm...

SH Oh, that's very kind of you. Now, you're always taking very good care of yourself. Are you still being super-healthy?

AC I definitely try to be. It's really important to my wellbeing to be as healthy as possible, because if I don't look after my body and eat right and sleep, I find that I just don't function very well. I'm extremely active every day with writing books and teaching and so on, so working out keeps me sane. Right now I'm doing this crazy workout twice a week that is very heavy. I find that it really forces you to be in the moment.

SH I tried lifting weights once, but man, those things are heavy! But seriously, I'm just glad that my kid has grown up fit and athletic and slender. She inherited her mother's genes. Anyway, what have you been working on over the past year?

AC I've been incredibly busy over the pandemic. I've helped a lot of other teachers get online. I've done a ton of online teaching seminars, and I finished my second book. Now I'm deeply involved in the Indiegogo campaign with that. I've created new teaching formats, practice groups, you know, all sorts of different things. So that's been going really well. What about you?

SH Not being able to see my mom has been the main problem – she's up in Seattle and she's 97, so I've been dealing with that. But I managed to get some music done. I went to Sweetwater in Indiana to do a recording workshop, and I'm going back soon to finish



a record with Alex Skolnick. I also went to Tampa to do two courses for Sweetwater. Now things are opening up here in California, I'm upgrading my studio with lights and a backdrop and a new keyboard and monitor and all that stuff. I still refuse to create 'content', because I'm a musician, and I want to make music, but at the same time, you better start swimming, or are you gonna sink like a stone? Like Bob Dylan said, the times they are a-changing.

AC Are you teaching too?

SH I'm teaching a lot. Also, there's been a pretty steady stream of guitar players wanting me to play on their projects, so I do

a lot of recording here in my studio. I've really had to up my Logic game. It's funny, I always pushed back against doing any of that stuff, because I don't really want to be a video editor. The time that I spend learning iMovie or whatever, I could be becoming a better bassist, or becoming a smarter man, you know.

AC Come on, Stuart. Do you seriously feel that you need to improve your abilities as a bass player?

SH That's why I get up in the morning. Everyone has their own little niche that they can carve out of the music industry. You're really great at the education and the content

The Bass Summit

STUART HAMM AND ARIANE CAP

and the books and all that stuff. To my detriment, I just wanted to be a respected bass player in lots of different styles, so I'm still motivated to get better. I'm still trying to make my bass sound like Glenn Gould, with articulation on every note. I'm still trying to get that clarity. Also, it takes me time to get to where I want to be. There may be some bass players that are so physically talented that they don't have to practise anything. I'm not that way. It takes me a good 15 minutes or half an hour to get to a point where I like the way I play, and in my life, there have been maybe 10 times when I felt that I was playing at the level that I'm really capable of. I enjoyed those times immensely, so I always try to get back there. What about you? I know you come from a music-conservatory background, with classical training that is steeped in the European tradition.

AC Yes, that's correct. I have a really unusual background compared to most other electric bass players. I grew up kind of secluded, in a small town in Austria called Innsbruck, and I started studying classical music when I was very little. I didn't listen to any rock or pop – nothing like that. Any music that had drums was frowned upon and dismissed as not being 'real music', you know. I was talented, but I didn't like practising – and that's not a good combination, because at some point you hit a wall.

SH Wow. When did that change?

AC When I was 18, I had the sense there was another world out there. I suddenly turned

into a rebel and I felt that I needed to break out, so I went to America for a year on my own – and there it was: rock and roll. I was in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and I fell right in the middle of it. People were playing jazz and rock and pop stuff. Everybody I knew had instruments, so when we were hanging out, I would pick a bass up and play something and go, 'Oh, yeah, that makes sense – I can do that', because I had the theory and I understood how music was put together.

SH Is that when you started performing?

AC Actually, no. When I came back from that year, aged 19, I took a totally different route and did a degree in biology. I knew I had to be in a band, though, because I loved the vibe of hanging out and making music. The first song I ever learned was 'Cheap Sunglasses' by ZZ Top. That was my first bass-line.

SH Did you find that improvising was hard to do after reading classical music off the page?

"My father played poker with John Cage. I used to put my army men in his piano strings" Stu Hamm

there. Nobody ever showed me that improvising even existed. I didn't know you were allowed to do it. I tried improvising once when I was in my teens, and they were like, 'Why are you doing that? Forget it'. But when I saw a jazz gig, I said to myself, 'I don't care what it takes, but I want to be able to do that'. So when I finished my biology degree, I got really serious about catching up on bass. It was an amazing journey. When I started getting

AC Strangely, that came quite easily to me. You're right that when you do classical music, it's all about the book. You never play something that's not



GEAR BOX

ARIANE CAP

Marleaux Bass Guitars, Fibenare Bases Hungary, Gruv Gear, BeatBuddy, Aeros Looper, Tsunami Cables, Back Beat

STUART HAMM

Warwick, Markbass, GHS strings, Wireworld Cables, TC Electronic, Zoom, River Straps

into solo bass, studying Steve Lawson, Michael Manring and you, it really cracked a huge door open for me, because I realised that I could do whatever I wanted. I should add that a huge paradigm shift took place in the world of bass when you started taking pieces by Bach and Gershwin and playing them on your bass. I understand that you come from a musicology background?

SH Yes. My dad, Charles Hamm, was the President of the American Musicology Association for a number of years. He was also the editor of the *Grove Dictionary*, and he was a composer, a sports fan, a novelist. He was my best friend and the greatest guy I ever met. I guess his claim to fame was that he started the academic study of popular music, so next time you read a scholarly paper on Snoop Dogg's beats, you can blame my dad for that. He also started the International Association For The Study Of Popular Music.

AC Was your mom musical too?





“I have no control over the future, and so it doesn’t really matter what I want. What I’m aiming for is peace and tranquillity, possibly nirvana, and then the rest will take care of itself” Stu Hamm

AC I did that because I noticed that a lot of my students know a bunch of songs, but they can’t crack the code to come up with their own bass-lines or to understand what they mean. That’s a typical student: they’re a little bit self-taught, and they’ve picked up a scale here and there, but it doesn’t connect up. Now, normally when you teach theory to a student, you tell them ‘Forget everything you know, and open up this music theory book on page one’. There’s Every Good Boy Does Fine on page two, there’s a whole note and a half note on page three, and after that you have pages and pages of arpeggios that just don’t connect with people, because it means they have to forget everything they already know.

SH Absolutely. How did you manage to solve that problem?

AC I wanted to meet them where they’re at – at the place where they already know some stuff on the fretboard. You know, ‘This five-note scale you already know is called a pentatonic, and you can play it here and you can play it there’. That was the purpose of my first book: it was step one in the way that I like to teach bass. But it’s still not the completely comprehensive knowledge of the fretboard that I want for my students, where they can fluidly go into the next chord in any progression. I want them to be able to go anywhere from anywhere – and that’s what

the second book is about. I’m not against reading by any means; I think everybody should learn notation, but learning notation is so much easier when you understand music

theory and how it translates to the fretboard. We do this by using fretboard patterns in all sorts of combinations, from easy to hard.

SH What has been the high point of your career so far?

AC I’ve played with some amazing bands and musicians, but when you’re asked to come to a foreign country and play solo bass, that is just an amazing honour. So when I got invited to Brazil and we played a double bill together, that was one of my favourite experiences – and I’m not just saying that because you’re here! And you?

SH Personally, I feel blessed every time I get on an aeroplane and realise that I’m flying someplace to get paid to play original music, and to do something that no-one else does. Early on in my career I did a gig with Joe Satriani, and we played the Wiltern – and Stanley Clarke came to see me play. That’s a highlight for sure. And then there’s a town in south-eastern Estonia called Voru, where the Stu Hamm Bass Wellness Camp will happen when all this is over. I’ve had my two best gigs there. It’s such a beautiful country, and the people there are incredible. It looks like Vermont, where I grew up, with the birch trees and the snow and the hills. I don’t know what it is about that place, man, but those were two of the best gigs I’ve ever had.

AC What are the challenges that you face in 2021?

SH Well, I’ve been making my living at bass, and doing nothing else, since 1979, so it’s a challenge to keep that up. I’m not going to complain about it, but you gotta get ready, because the next Mike Tyson of bass is coming. He or she might be here tomorrow, or next week, but it’ll be soon. So that’s certainly a challenge, but that’s what life’s about. Bob and weave, man. Hold fast. Batten down the hatches. What about you?

AC I’m super-happy with how things are going with the teaching. I’m so happy with all the interactions I have with my students and the success they’re having. That is really feeding my soul, and I’m looking forward to creating more books and recording more solo bass stuff. Being in a band again would be great too – I’m starving to play with people. Let’s just live life.

SH You said it right, Ari. I have no control over the future, and so it doesn’t really matter what I want. What I’m aiming for is peace of mind and tranquillity, possibly nirvana, and then the rest will just take care of itself. I hope I can play bass. I’m really trying to do that. I’m working on it.

AC You know, Stu, you’re doing okay.

SH I’m doing okay. We’re doing okay! ■

Info: <https://arianecap.com>,
<https://stuhamm.com>

SH Yes, my mother was a voice teacher and opera singer, so my brother Bruce and I were exposed to all kinds of music. My father was a poker-playing friend of John Cage, so we used to go and take my plastic army men and put them between the strings of John’s piano for him to play. At home we had a microtonal piano that had 19 tones in an octave.

AC That sounds amazing.

SH It really was. We would go to a John Prime concert one day and then the Sun Ra Arkestra for three nights in a row. Bruce, who is an incredible musician, had all the cool music in his room –

Mahavishnu Orchestra, and *Live/Evil* by Miles Davis, and Pink Floyd and all this weird stuff. Later on he ran the Ali Akbar Khan School of Indian Music in San

Rafael: he and his wife are the driving force of Indian music in the Bay Area. It was a really great, varied musical upbringing, and nothing was looked down on, whether it was pop or Judy Collins or the Staples Singers or Victor Borgia or whatever. I started playing bass by playing upright and walking through chord changes. The first time I played with a rock band, the first song I learned was ‘Whipping Post’ by the Allman Brothers Band. Now, you’ve really done wonderfully as an educator, and your two books are awesome. I steal from them regularly to use with my students. I wanted to ask you, why did you choose diagrams over TAB in your books?

“When I saw a jazz gig, I said ‘I don’t care what it takes, I want to be able to do that’” Ariane Cap

COSMIC NOTES

Angeline Saris on the thinking behind her approach to bass

What was your way into bass, Angeline?
I started playing bass in our high school jazz band when I was 15 years old.

We were lucky enough to have one of those special teachers who goes the extra mile. He booked our band on a handful of cruise ships where Joe Henderson, Les McCann, and Roy Hargrove were playing. I remember being 16 years old and watching them perform, totally transfixed. It was a magical time in my life and also the root of my love affair with the bass, jazz, and all things music.

What was your first bass guitar?

A 1979 Musicman Sabre. I still have it.

Which other basses have you played since then?

I have a pretty nice arsenal that includes four Fenders – an American Deluxe FMT, an American Elite, a Precision and a fretless – a Warwick custom shop electric upright, a Sadowsky NYC 5, a Marleaux Consat Soprano, a Kala U-Bass, and a Shen upright acoustic. They are all in constant rotation depending on what the gig calls for.

What bass gear do you currently use?

My main electric is my American Deluxe Jazz, and my go-to upright is a custom shop Warwick that I co-designed. Working with Warwick on it was a fantastic experience. For amplification, I use Fender. I have a Super Bassman Pro 300-watt tube head with an 810 Neo for bigger shows and tours. For smaller shows and more local gigs, I use my 550 Rumble head paired with my 410 Neo.

What's the best advice you've ever been given about playing bass?

Learn to play with the click on two and four.

Which bass player do you most admire?

There are so many bass players I admire for their unique voice and contributions. It's tough to narrow it down to one, but if I had to, it would be Pino Palladino. His versatility really stands out to me, as it is something I encounter in my

own career. He plays so authentically across a broad spectrum of genres, his pocket is undeniably deep, and he always seems to find the perfect balance of being supportive yet tasty. Plus, he strikes me as someone whose heart and spirit are in the right place. I think that matters in music.

As live music slowly returns, where will we hear you play?





“Pino Palladino strikes me as someone whose heart is in the right place. I think that matters in music”

Matt Green

Normally, you'd see me out on the road with the Narada Michael Walden Band, Ernest Ranglin, and my own collaborative funk fusion dance project, Angelex. Right now, the best place to hear me is on the last two releases with Angelex. One of my favourite tracks off the *Tight Lips* album is 'Top Down', which features a Larry Graham-inspired bass-line that I wrote. You could also take a listen to one of the four albums I've recorded with the

Narada Michael Walden Band. The odd-time 9/8 fusion classic 'Cosmic Strut' from the *Rising Sun* album easily remains one of my faves to this day. 'The Poor Shall Inherit The Earth' from *Immortality* is a gorgeous tune that I felt would be best supported by my fretless in drop D tuning. 'Thunder Angel Funk' from *Thunder* totally encapsulates the fire of Jimi Hendrix, the Oakland funk vibe, and the spirit of the band at that time just before our Japan

tour. Last but certainly not least, I spent seven years with an all-female Led Zeppelin tribute band called Zepparella. To hear my JPJ-inspired bass-lines, I'd suggest checking out Zepparella's self-titled album. I'm popping back into the studio next week to record some tracks for my own project, so I'll have more to share in the coming months. ■

Info: <http://angelinesaris.com>



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Editor, putting on
his Ray-Bans

Without diving completely into a nostalgic *Stranger Things* and *Ready Player One* rabbit-hole, let's just say that these vivid, almost day-glo basses from the most Eighties bass brand of them all, Charvel, take us instantly back four decades. That is, let's be honest, a huge part of their attraction, just as it was for all those lime-green BC Rich and Jackson basses that infested MTV back then. Presumably Fender – Charvel's owners since 2002 – are aware that nostalgia doesn't necessarily equate to quality, which is why their designers have loaded these relatively affordable basses with player-friendly features. Still, the very name 'San Dimas' is utterly Bill and Ted,



£989
£1079

right? And the 'Pro-Mod' designation – which apparently means 'hot-rodded' – is pure skateboard half-pipe. Let's plug and play, dudes... I mean, readers.

Build Quality

For a reasonable but not particularly excessive chunk of your taxed income, you get an active, bolt-on bass with either four (PJ IV) or five (JJ V) strings. Both are fairly lightweight, with an abdomen-friendly body chamfer for the 'well-nourished' bassist, and two graphite reinforcement rods running through the necks. The active EQ, presumably where the Pro-Mod branding earns its stripes,

comes in the form of the expected three-band cut and boost, and a pickup blend and master volume complete the control layout. The pickups are DiMarzios, like the original Eighties San Dimas basses, for an extra touch of authenticity.

As always, the fine details are where mid-market basses tend to fall down, but there's none of that on our review models, which have been set up with a super-low action. Each has one of those handy pop-out battery compartments, which will be made mandatory on all active basses after the revolution; a heel-mounted truss rod adjustment wheel for that genuine 1987 touch; and a solid, high-mass bridge. The fretboard edges are rolled, the fret ends buffed,



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Charvel Pro-Mod San Dimas
PJ IV (JJ V)

Price | RRP £989 (£1079) MSRP

Made in | Mexico

Body | Alder

Neck | Caramelised maple, reinforced with
graphite rods, 34" scale (35" scale)

Neck join | Bolt-on

Fretboard | Caramelised maple, 20 frets,
GraphTech nut

Pickups | DiMarzio Model P DP122 (middle),
Model J DP123 (bridge) (Area J DP550
[middle], Area J DP551 [bridge])

Controls | Volume, pickup blend,
three-band active EQ

Hardware | Charvel chrome (gold) tuners
and hi-mass bridge

Weight | 8 lbs / 3.7 kg (8.5 lbs / 3.9 kg)

Left-hand option available | No

Case/gig bag included | No

WHAT WE THINK

Plus | Comfortable body, great EQ,
insanely playable neck

Minus | Pickups don't sound very different

Overall | Not just an exercise in nostalgia

BP RATING

BUILD QUALITY

★★★★★★★★★★

SOUND QUALITY

★★★★★★★★★★

VALUE

★★★★★★★★★★

the control pots and tuners rotate smoothly, and there are Luminlay side dots on the neck to save you when the stage lights go off in the middle of your solo in 'Sweet Child O'Mine'. I've seen it happen...

Sounds And Playability

It's interesting that Charvel describe the pickup on either bass nearest the neck as the 'middle' one. It's accurate to label it that way – rather than as the 'neck' pickup – but it instantly begs the question of why they didn't move it forward a bit. This would have increased the difference in tone between it and the bridge unit, a difference which is not huge, as things stand. There's definitely a bit more edge from the rear pickup, make no mistake, but the comparison is not huge. As Lemmy, himself a pretty Eighties character, once barked at me over a glass of something noxious, "I like 'em to sound different, not the same, like they do on Fenders!"

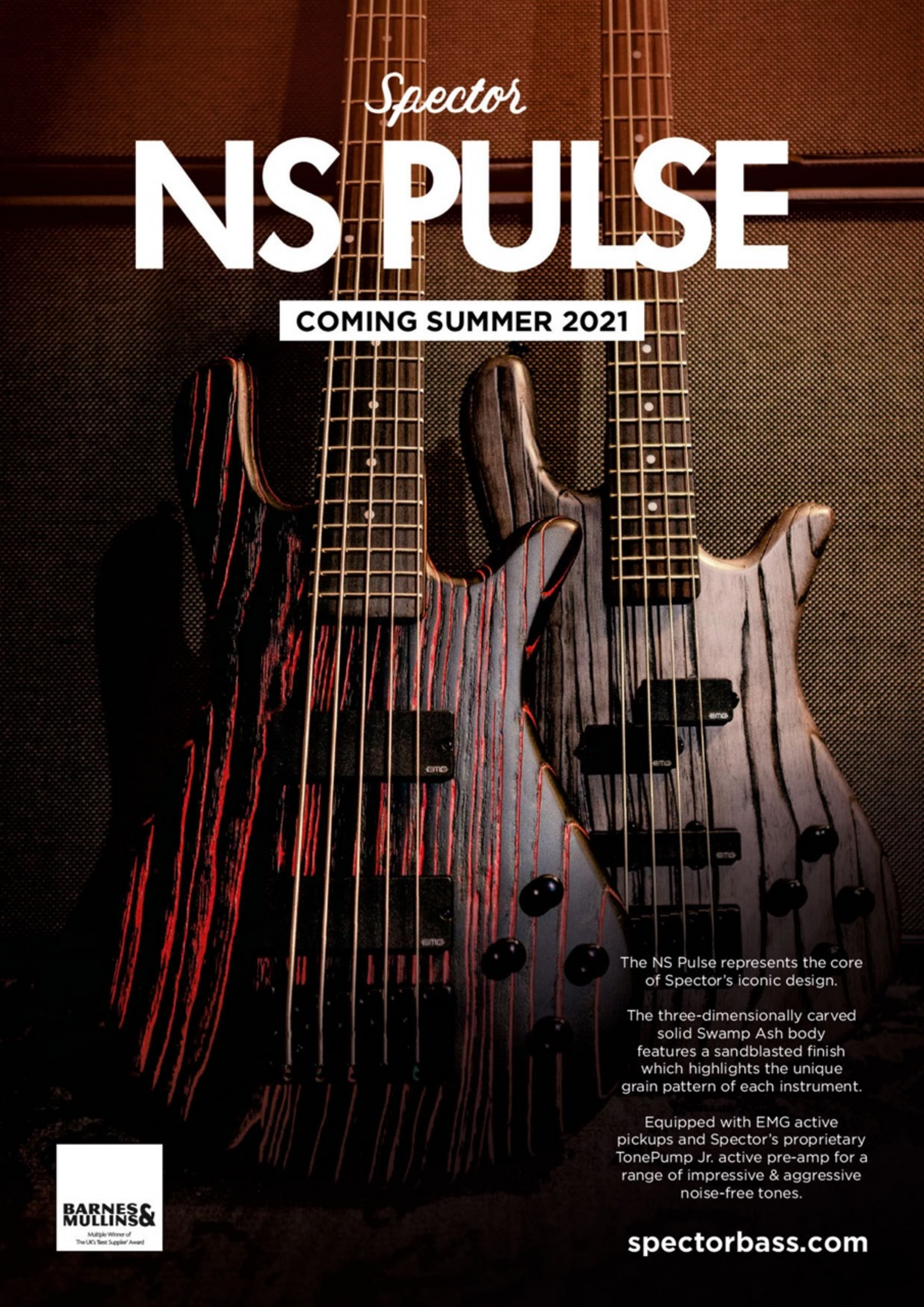
As it happens, you can tweak the pickup blend all you like, but the real tone range comes from the supercharged active EQ. Fully boosted, the top end is useful rather than scintillating, but that's fine – these are Fender-alike basses, after all. The bottom end is much more potent, kicking out a floor-shaking rumble if you max it out.

Fortunately the three tone controls have centre detentes, which I know I always go on about, but they do come in rather useful when you're trying to tame a boost as powerful as this.

Playability is these instruments' middle name, so to speak. This is largely to do with the 'speed neck', as Charvel somewhat amusingly name it, a truly slippery shredder's delight. The familiar 12" to 16" compound radius (see this month's column by Dr R. Elrick for more on this very subject) has been enhanced with a practically frictionless finish and a very flat heel for those foot-on-monitor, mullet-blown-by-fan moments. On the JJ V, with its 35" scale and correspondingly taut low B-string, this amount of shreddiness is especially welcome.

Conclusions

No arguments from me: I love these basses. For me at least, they take away everything that I like least about traditional Fenders – the chunky bodies, the predictable tones, the sticky necks – and give you an instrument that is somehow both Eighties and modern at the same time. That's quite a feat at this price point, and whether the retro vibes amuse or annoy you, if you're looking for a souped-up Fender variant, you should really give one of these a whirl. ■



Spector

NS PULSE

COMING SUMMER 2021

The NS Pulse represents the core of Spector's iconic design.

The three-dimensionally carved solid Swamp Ash body features a sandblasted finish which highlights the unique grain pattern of each instrument.

Equipped with EMG active pickups and Spector's proprietary TonePump Jr. active pre-amp for a range of impressive & aggressive noise-free tones.

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SPECTOR

NS Ethos 4SFB

Kev Sanders takes a close look at Spector's smart new NS Ethos

BARNES & MULLINS
www.bandm.co.uk

£1575

Since the Eighties, Spector have moved much of their production to outside of the US, either to the Czech Republic where their Euro-branded basses are made, or to one of several factories in Asia, where their new NS Dimension and Ethos ranges are manufactured – in Korea, to be precise. Several of New York's bass-making elite have followed a similar business model – so what's the outcome in the case of the venerable Spector brand?

Build Quality

The good news is that after some quality time with this new Ethos, I can report that the standards of build and finish from Spector's Asian division seem to be as good as ever. This new Ethos is available as a four- or five-string, and in two finishes: firstly, 'interstellar gloss' which is an interesting blue, red and purple fade, and the one we have here, a 'super faded black gloss' which is neither black nor particularly faded, but rather a fairly uniform mid-tobacco brown.

Nomenclature aside, this glossy finish shows off the figured burl poplar used for the top of the main body maple wings. These are fixed either side of the three-piece figured maple through-neck. At the headstock end, there's no volute, and with wood also removed here for the truss rod access here too, this could potentially be a structurally weak area, especially given the slender dimensions of the four-string neck at the nut end. We assume Spector has addressed this, however.

The fretboard is a real highlight of this bass. It's a perfect piece of rosewood; smooth, flat and evenly coloured, and the 24 medium frets are well finished and neatly dressed without being over-polished. The glossy black hardware consists of generic M4-style sealed tuners and a chunky bridge – no real surprises there, just good-quality, functional components. There are lovely details such as the knurled aluminium controls, an immaculately fitted brass nut and Luminlay dot markers on the edge of the board.

Inside the control cavity, although it's not as neatly laid out as some, is the superb Aguilar OBP-2 preamp capsule. This means that control-wise, you get a master volume, pickup pan, bass (+/-18dB of boost and cut at 40Hz) and treble (+/- 16dB of boost and cut at 6.5 kHz). This is such a simple, elegant preamp layout and is, for me, the perfect balance of simplicity and versatility, especially when allied to the P/J configuration of the pickups.

Sounds And Playability

There are few basses more ergonomically or anatomically well designed than a modern Spector bass. That gorgeous body shape was originally penned by Ned Steinberger for Spector way back in the Seventies – hence the NS in the model name. Strap on the Ethos and you'll find that the light weight and perfect balance make this a comfortable bass to wear. If you're coming from years of playing a Jazz- or Precision-style bass, the fact that the neck joins the body way up around the 19th fret is a little disorientating for a while. Once you're used to it, though,



Spector's years of experience in making some of the best basses available really shines through



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Price | £1575
Made In | Korea
Body | Maple with burl poplar top
Neck | Maple, 34" scale
Neck Joint | Through neck
Nut width | 40mm
Fingerboard | Rosewood
Frets | 24
Pickups | Aguilar AG-P (neck)
 Aguilar AG-J-HC (bridge)
Electronics | Aguilar DBP-2 active preamp
Controls | 2 x pickup volumes, Bass and Treble cut/boost
Hardware | Gloss black
Weight | 3.8 kg / 8.4 lbs
Case/gig bag included? | Yes
Left-hand option available? | No

WHAT WE THINK

Plus | Film-star good looks and some of the best electronics available
Minus | The two available colours might not be for everyone
Overall | A desirable Spector at a price that is achievable for more players

BP RATING

BUILD QUALITY
 ★★★★★★☆☆
SOUND QUALITY
 ★★★★★★☆☆
VALUE
 ★★★★★★☆☆

it's a freeing experience – and allied to the sculpted heel joint, playing right up to the second octave is very tempting.

Plugged in, the quality of the electronics is immediately apparent. It's no surprise that the tone is bright, clean and modern, but there's a depth and clarity to the low end here which is rare, and the preamp layout gives you the opportunity to find the right sound quickly and instinctively. On the front split-coil pickup, even with the EQ set flat, there's an almost passive pureness and clarity to the treble frequencies – rich with harmonics, but glassy and clean. Likewise, the deep, sonorous low end cuts through, adding weight without ever sounding confused or undefined. Mixing in the bridge pickup adds depth and definition to the mid frequencies, and using the pickup pan control gives a wide palette of rich, refined bass tones. Use of the powerful Bass and Treble pots allows accurate and linear adjustment of the overall EQ. This is definitely not a bass where you'll want to crank everything up to full – there are so many nuances here.

Conclusion

You'd expect a bass made with these high-quality timbers and top-spec Aguilar electronics to sound good, and it really does. However, the new NS Ethos is a classic case of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts. Spector's years of experience in making some of the best basses available really shines through. I noticed the word 'refined' kept appearing in my notes; I think that sums things up nicely. ■



NEURAL DSP

Quad Cortex

Tom Bowlus plugs into the Matrix to explore the Neural DSP Quad Cortex

NEURAL DSP

<https://neuraldsp.com/quad-cortex>

\$1599

Howdy, folks. You may know me as the Editor of *Bass Gear Magazine*, and you may ask, “What is Tom doing in the pages of *Bass Player*?” Well, being a bass player means embracing the role of collaborator and supporting those around you. This extends to the larger bass community, and I am honoured to contribute an article to a fellow publication. Of course, when the product your buddy Joel McIver asks you to review is this freaking cool, it makes the decision even easier!

The Quad Cortex from Neural DSP is a modelling pedal which can replicate the functions otherwise provided by your favourite pedals, heads, and even cabs. You can use it without an amp or cab – in the studio, for example, or live with in-ears – or you can run it in front of a bass head or power amp driving your favourite enclosure. It is not the first product to attempt to replace your pedalboard, amp and/or cab, but it does so at the very highest level available on the market. Its competitors include products from Line 6, Kemper, and Fractal Audio Systems. The build quality is off the charts, and the more you use the Quad Cortex, the more innovative design features you discover. It is also remarkably compact for its feature set, and notably smaller than its competitors.

The concept of modelling the sonic characteristics of desirable gear has been around for many years, from using solid-state gear to emulate the sound of tubes – think of the Sansamp, for example – to capturing the sonic fingerprint of a bass cab in an impulse response file, to utilising plug-ins in a DAW. What we have not seen until more recently is the “all-in-one” implementation of all of these concepts, as we have with the Quad Cortex and its direct competitors.

Everything you could want – from a tuner, to almost any effect pedal, to powerful signal-routing options, to the amp and cab you want to use – is right here at your fingertips. More powerful processors allow for both more, and better-sounding, models to take place simultaneously, and the Quad Cortex’s touch-screen interface eliminates the need for a laptop connection.

Out of the gate, the Quad Cortex comes with over 50 amps, nine of which are dedicated bass amps, 70 effects, and 40 cabs, preloaded. You can download more, but what really takes things over the top is the ability to digitise and capture your own favourite preamps, amps, drive pedals, and cabs using the Neural Capture function. This is similar to Kemper’s ‘profiling’ function.

The two bass amp models I played around with the most were the ‘G400K’ and ‘California Bass 400’, both of which sounded and behaved very much like the iconic amps after which they are modelled. The effects are all spot-on: I have to say, the Poly Octaver is the best digital octave effect I have ever heard, by a long shot. The hefty processing power – 2GHz of SHARC chips, compared to the 450Mhz dual-core



processors used in the Line 6 Helix and Fractal’s AX8 – has something to do with this, I’m sure.

Its ease of use really sets the Quad Cortex above the competition, whether you’re setting up your presets and dialling in parameters just right, or whether you’re in the middle of a live performance, turning effects on and off on the fly. Once I realised that all 11 footswitches are also rotary knob controls, I was momentarily dumbstruck. What a brilliant feature! With my Line 6 Helix, I always prefer setting up my presets on the PC, but with the Quad Cortex, there is no need to do so. You don’t even need to plug it in for firmware updates or cloud backups, as the Quad Cortex sports on-board wi-fi. It provides every signal-routing option you could ask for, and even supplies phantom power if needed, through its XLR mic preamps. While the unit does not have a built-in expression pedal, it can support two of these outboard.

Any concerns which I may have had regarding durability were immediately addressed when I took the Quad Cortex out of the (beautiful!) box. The anodised aluminium chassis looks great and feels like a tank. The 7” touchscreen has a 1.8mm protective glass shield, and the fact that the footswitches are the knobs means that you don’t have to worry about breaking any fragile controls when you stomp on the Quad Cortex.

I wish I had more space to sing the praises of the Neural DSP Quad Cortex, but please believe me when I say that if you’ve ever thought about replacing a myriad of gear – some of which may be old, heavy, expensive, and/or fragile – with an all-in-one modelling solution that is at home on stage or in the studio, then the time has come for you to check out the Quad Cortex. Personally, I will be spending some more quality time with this unit, and will feature a follow-up review in *Bass Gear Magazine* a few months down the road. Hope to see you there!

1cQuad Cortex

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Price | \$1599

Made In | Finland

Controls | 7" multi-touch colour display, 11 dual-function rotary footswitches, volume knob, power switch

Presets | 10 setlists, 256 presets per setlist

Number of effects | 70+

Amp Modelling | 50+ amps, Neural Capture technology

Impulse Response | 1,000+ IRs, third-party IR support

Inputs | 2 x XLR-1/4" combo (instrument/mic), 2 x 1/4" (return 1/2)

Outputs | 2 x XLR, 2 x 1/4" TRS, 2 x 1/4" (send 1/2)

MIDI I/O | In, Out/Thru, USB

USB | 1 x Type B

Other I/O | 2 x 1/4" (expression 1/2), 1 x 1/4" (capture signal out)

Features | Wi-Fi (preset sharing, firmware updates), 2GHz Quad-Core SHARC Processors, 7" multi-touch display

Software | Neural CNS mobile app

Weight | 1.9 kg / 4.2 lbs

Dimensions | 290mm x 178mm x 51mm / 11.4" x 7" x 2"

Power | 12V DC, power supply included

WHAT WE THINK

Plus | Ridiculously powerful, easy to use

Minus | None

Overall | Does it all, and does it well

BGM RATING

BUILD QUALITY

★★★★★★★★

SOUND QUALITY

★★★★★★★★

VALUE

★★★★★★★★★



LANEY

Laney Digbeth DB500H Amp, DBV212-4 Cabinet

Laney have a new range of heritage-inspired amps, speakers and FX – Mike Brooks plugs in

HEADSTOCK
www.headstockdistribution.com

£449,
£499

London Laney started producing bass amplification back in 1967, and some 54 years later, this new Digbeth-branded range celebrates the company's beginnings and heritage. With two amplifiers, three cabinets and several FX pedals on offer, there's something to suit most budgets and playing requirements. We've matched the more powerful of the two amps with the new 2x12 cabinet for a portable partnership that should suit more or less any working bassist.

Build Quality

The cab is covered with a rugged black vinyl and white piping, finished off with a tough cloth grille to protect the speakers: the same material has been used on the amp for a uniform visual. The amp is well-proportioned, making it easy to carry and transport without being overly heavy, weighing in at 15.7 pounds (7.1 kilograms). A securely-attached rubber carry handle is situated on the top of the amp and there is venting on the underside and rear. Deeply recessed carry handles have been incorporated into the speaker design and the 'high instead of wide' cabinet design makes carrying the cabinet a more comfortable prospect. Be aware that although this cabinet isn't 'old-school' heavy, at 63 pounds (28.5 kilos) it isn't ultra-light either – so portability in tight spaces may be an issue.

In terms of features and functions, the cabinet has two rear vents and two function switches – one to call the tweeter into play and the other to select between half and full operation: there's nothing too complicated going on there. The Speakon socket is also of the 'combi' variety, allowing a 1/4-inch jack connection if required. The amp is a fully-featured box of tricks, offering a full 500-watt output and two channels featuring FET and valve preamps. These are footswitchable, although a footswitch isn't included.

The controls are all securely attached and turn smoothly, while the switches give a significant clunk as you change settings. The two preamps are quite different tonally: whether you want a clean delivery or the more richly coloured sounds that the valve section can offer is at your discretion, and there's the option of mixing them together as well. The three-band EQ incorporates a mid-section with four individually voiced presets, all of which sound quite different from each other, so there is scope for some tonal tinkering in that department. The Tilt control has a similar effect to adding presence to your signal, making it spikier and more pronounced.

The rear control panel features all the usual inputs and outputs that you would expect to see on an amp of this calibre, and it's pleasing to see level controls added to the headphone output and auxiliary input for external media connection.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

LANEY DIGBETH DB500H AMP**Price** | £449**Made in** | China**Power** | 500 watts @ 4 ohms
(minimum load 4 Ohms)**Features** | Input, FET volume, FET/Tube selector switch, Tube Drive, Tube Volume (push/pull for FET Mix), Bass, four pre-shape Mid selector, Mid, Treble, Tilt, Run/Mute selector switch, Speakon/jack combi output socket, Tuner output, Remote input, Send/Return sockets, FX loop level switch, 3.5mm Aux In and level control, Headphone output and level control, Line Out level, Emulated output/DI output selector, Balanced XLR DI output socket, Ground/Lift switch, pre/source/post EQ output switch**Dimensions** | 8" (H) x 16.5" (W) x 8.7" (D)
/ 205mm (H) x 420mm (W) x 220mm (D)**Weight** | 15.7 lbs / 7 kgs**LANEY DIGBETH DBV212-4 CABINET****Price** | £499**Made in** | China**Power** | 500 watts @ 4 ohms
Impedance 4 ohms**Speakers** | 2 x 12-inch HH Black Label ceramic drivers, 1 x LaVoc DF10 compression driver (with Horn on/off/Half/Full selector switches)**Connections** | 1 x 1/4-inch Speakon/jack combi socket**Dimensions** | 28.3" (H) x 19.7" (W) x 15.4" (D)
/ 720mm (H) x 500mm (W) x 390mm (D)**Weight** | 63 lbs / 28.5 kgs**WHAT WE THINK****Plus** | A whole host of tones and features in a portable setup**Minus** | May not suit you if you don't like distortion**Overall** | A versatile display at an affordable price**BP RATING****BUILD QUALITY**

★★★★★☆☆☆☆

SOUND QUALITY

★★★★★☆☆☆☆

VALUE

★★★★★☆☆☆☆

**Sounds**

Armed with several active and passive basses, with a five-string among them, my first line of

control comes into its own with the passive basses, making the tone pronounced, with a degree of clank, should you require it. One of the active basses gained a very impressive rasp and grind to its tonal character when running through the valve stage: this was carried through when combining the valve and FET stages, giving that bass a fine mix from both channels.

This setup has a lot to offer and will appeal to players of all styles. For those players who prefer clean tones but occasionally need to throw some valve grind into the mix, this amp will offer a suitable solution. Any slappers and tappers who frown upon such sounds may dismiss this amp out of hand, but I strongly suggest that they audition it before settling on that opinion. This combination of amp and cabinet will suit a lot of players, and it is capable of covering all your gigging needs without incurring physical transportation injuries.

Conclusion

There is much to recommend this setup. Laney have come up with a well-featured amp that delivers a considerable amount of tonal flexibility, giving the player real options. The cabinet is no slouch either, and offers a midway point between a 2x10 and a 4x10 – but with the added roundedness and heft offered by two 12-inch speakers. Well worth checking out. ■

investigation is to determine the performance of the FET stage. With the EQ on the amp set flat, the amp provides a clean and powerful response, with a very solid bottom end. The throaty character of the passive basses is projected well, with the 2x12 speaker format conveying a fine mix of lows and mids. The highs are a little restrained until the horn is brought into play, which gives a more articulate display in the upper register.

The active basses benefit from the extra range afforded by the horn, and the mid-EQ presets on the amp are very useful, offering a defined character with each setting. The five-string bass demonstrates how well the FET stage conveys the low-end performance, particularly when entering the extended range of the low B string. The cabinet also puts in an impressive display, offering a defined response without sounding woolly or flappy.

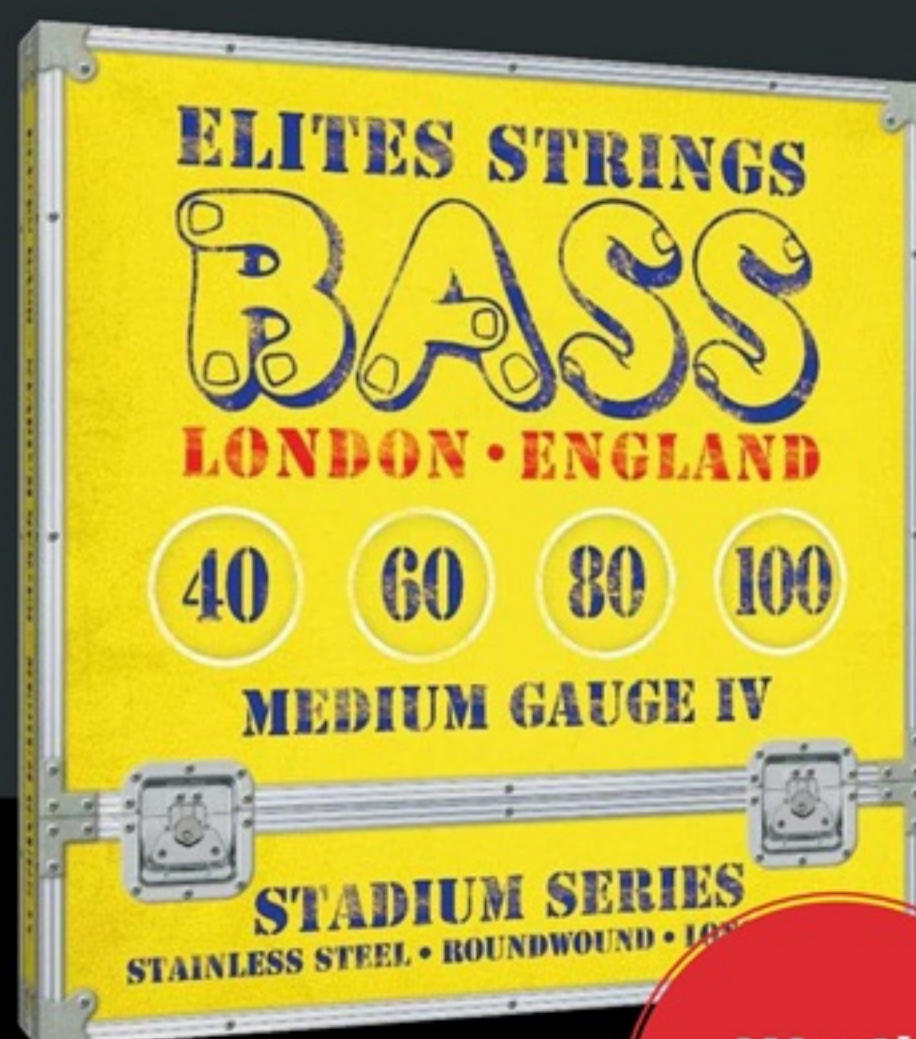
Switching over to the tube preamp, the tone changes, and suddenly valve drive and warmth are the order of the day. There's no disputing the quality of the tone colouration on offer, and the passive basses benefit from the grit and drive – so grab a pick and dive in. The Tilt

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Bass Lessons

Making you a better bass player in every issue, our state-of-the-art team of educators will guide you every step of the way. Say hello to them here!



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INTERMEDIATE 70



ADVANCED 76

RYAN MADORA

Dig into your favourite bass parts... and discover treasure! Ryan Madora is one of Nashville's most sought-after touring and session bassists. Recent touring and session credits include Robben Ford, Kyshona Armstrong, and her instrumental trio, The Interludes. For the past five years, she has served as musical director for Bobby Bones and has played with Garth Brooks, Darius Rucker, and Carrie Underwood. In addition to instructing at Nashville's campus of Musician's Institute, Ryan has taught at Gerald Veasley's Bass Boot Camp, Rock'n'Roll Fantasy Camp, and at universities across the USA. She has contributed columns to No Treble for over a decade and in 2019, published her first book, *Bass Players To Know: Learning From The Greats*. Ryan offers online education at TrueFire and her website. www.ryanmadora.com
Facebook ryanmadoramusic
Twitter RyanMadora
Instagram ryanmadora

STEVE LAWSON

Kickstart your journey to the top of the bass world here Steve Lawson is the UK's most celebrated solo bass guitarist. Across more than two decades of touring, and a huge catalogue of solo and collaborative albums, he's built up a worldwide audience for his looping and processing approach to bass sound. Recent collaborators include Beardyman, Reeves Gabrels, Andy Gangadeen, Tanya Donelly, Divinity Roxx and Jonas Hellborg. He been teaching bass for almost three decades, and lectures at universities and colleges across the globe. Victor Wooten once commented, 'Steve Lawson is a brilliant musician. I've known about him and listened to him for many years. He may not be one of the most famous bassists – but he is definitely one of the most talented'. Who are we to argue? www.stevelawson.net
Facebook solobasssteve
Twitter solobasssteve
Instagram solobasssteve

PHILIP MANN

Now you're rolling, it's time to hit the next level Philip Mann studied at the London College of Music, securing bachelor's and master's degrees in performance before receiving a scholarship to study under Jeff Berlin at the Players School of Music in Florida. Endorsed by Overwater and Eich, he's a busy, internationally freelancing electric and double bassist. His performance and session credits include work with Grammy Award-winning artists Van Morrison and Albert Lee, five-time Grammy Award nominee Hunter Hayes, Deep Purple's Steve Morse, Leo Sayer, Billy Bragg and country artist Peter Dinklage. Author of the *Chord Tone Concepts* texts, Philip is currently a member of the visiting faculty at the Players School while simultaneously lecturing for Scott's Bass Lessons. www.withbassinmind.com
Facebook With-Bass-In-Mind
YouTube With Bass In Mind
Instagram with_bass_in_mind

STUART CLAYTON

Take the bass world by storm with advanced study Stuart Clayton has been a professional musician, writer and transcriber since 2002 and has worked in function bands, on cruise ships, theatre shows and more. He spent four years recording and touring the world with Emerson, Lake & Palmer drummer Carl Palmer and was one of the original writers at *Bass Guitar* magazine. From 2007 to 2019 Stuart worked as the Head of the Bass Department at BIMM Bristol, where he taught all levels of the degree course. In addition, he has also worked as the Bass Guitar Technical Specialist for the Rockscool exam board. Stuart now runs Bassline Publishing, which publishes transcription books for bassists such as Mark King, Stuart Zender, Marcus Miller, Stuart Hamm and Bernard Edwards, as well as an acclaimed range of tuition books. www.basslinepublishing.com
Facebook stuartclaytonbass
Twitter stubassclay
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BP Notation Legend

The following is a guide to the notation symbols and terminology used in Bass Player 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.



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 have a '+' in a circle. Picking hand taps are just '+'. Particular fingers may be shown with numbers.

FRETTING TECHNIQUES



HAMMER-ON AND PULL-OFF

These 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 and 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

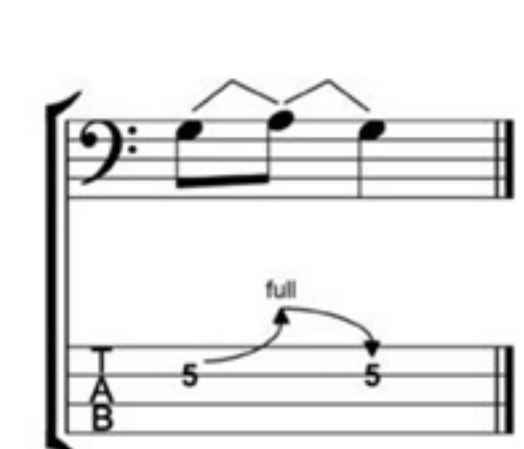
Pluck while fretting the lower note and touching the edge of the picking hand thumb to the note in brackets.

BENDING NOTES



BEND

The note is bent upwards to the interval specified: 1/2 indicates a semitone, 'full' indicates a tone.



BEND AND RELEASE

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



Nashville-based session and stage bassist Ryan Madora is here to dig into bass parts that we know and love for useful information. Pay attention!

I SPY...

SEVENTH CHORDS: MIXING AND MATCHING

Hey there, bass players! Since we've spent the past few columns learning about seventh chords, I'm sure you've been waiting with bated breath to see how they can be mixed and matched. Lucky for you, the wait is over! Let's combine our major seventh, dominant, and minor seventh chords.

So far, you may have recognised a theme in this series. We learn about chords or scales with major tonalities, apply them to a I-IV-V progression, and then adapt them to minor. That's a great way to practise concepts while dealing with consistent chord qualities. Now that we're mixing and matching, it's time to familiarise ourselves with a new chord progression – the notorious ii-V-I.

Chances are, you know that this chord progression has a jazzy reputation, similar to how I-IV-V is associated with blues. If the word jazz sounds intimidating, don't worry, we're not about to play 'Donna Lee'. In fact, this progression just happens to be an extremely popular musical device. Yes, you

can spy this on hundreds of jazz charts, but you can also find it in countless pop songs and virtually every Christmas classic. At its most basic, it's a chord progression that fits the rules of diatonic harmony in a very satisfying way. At its most advanced, it can be reharmonised, extended, or manipulated to fit different melodies. It can also add a touch of jazzy sophistication to blues, rock, pop, and soul music. Long story short, it's very useful and delightfully malleable.

In relation to diatonic harmony, ii-V-I involves a mix of major and minor triads, and therefore, it also involves major, dominant, and minor seventh chords. We pick a key, adhere to the notes in the major scale, and then build chords on each degree of the scale. As we build seventh chords, we discover that the ii chord will be a minor seventh, the V chord a dominant seventh, and the I chord a major seventh. Remember, we're only using notes

of the key we're in, so if we happen to be in the key of C Major, we'll build the chords Dm7, G7 and Cmaj7, respectively.

This seems like a great opportunity to pick up our bass. **Exercise 1** starts and ends on Cmaj7, giving us a nice four-bar phrase. To begin, play a Cmaj7 arpeggio starting with your second finger on the 3rd fret of the A string. Then, use your pinky to begin a Dm7 arpeggio on the 5th fret. Play the low G (3rd

fret of the E string) to outline the G7 arpeggio, and then return to Cmaj7. To resolve the phrase, play the triad as you did in bar 1, but grab the 7th (B) on the second fret of the A string. This

will provide a nice voice-leading note back to the root (C) so you can repeat the exercise.

With this last note, we begin to see that we don't always have to play an arpeggio 'in order', or only in one direction. If you want to play B, the major seventh of a Cmaj7 chord, you can choose to play the note in different

The ii-V-I progression can be found in countless pop songs and Christmas classics

EXERCISE ONE

Exercise One is a four-bar phrase in 4/4 time, key of Bb. The chords are CΔ7, Dm7, G7, and CΔ7. The notation shows the bass line with fingerings (1-4) and specific notes (A, B) for the arpeggios.

EXERCISE TWO

Exercise Two is a four-bar phrase in 4/4 time, key of Bb. The chords are Am7, Dm7, G7, and CΔ7. The notation shows the bass line with fingerings (1-4) and specific notes (A, B) for the arpeggios.

EXERCISE THREE

♩ = 120

The exercise consists of three systems, each with a bass clef staff and a fretboard diagram. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 120. The chords are C Δ 7, Am⁷, Dm⁷, and G⁷.

System 1: The bass staff shows a sequence of notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings: 3, 2, 5, 4, 2, 5, 2, 3, 5, 3, 2, 5, 4, 5, 3, 5.

System 2: The bass staff shows a sequence of notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings: 3, 0, 3, 2, 5, 3, 2, 3, 5, 3, 5, 1, 3, 2, 5, 2.

System 3: The bass staff shows a sequence of notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings: 3, 5, 2, 3, 5, 3, 7, 5, 7, 3, 5, 3, 2, 3, 2, 5.

locations. In this case, we're using the lower B instead of the higher B on the 4th fret of the G string. This helps us resolve to the first note of the exercise, the C on the 3rd fret.

All of a sudden, we have freedom. We can manipulate the order of the notes within the arpeggio to set us up for whatever comes next. By finding the notes we need in different places, we can play with direction, register, and voice leading. Lo and behold, we're on the cusp of creating a walking bass-line. This concept will come into play in the next two exercises.

Exercise 2 features the most common addition to the ii-V-I progression, the vi chord. This gives us voice leading, musical symmetry, and jazz-hands galore. As we build a seventh chord on the sixth scale degree of C major, we end up with A-C-E-G, or Am⁷. Now, our chord progression goes Am⁷-Dm⁷-G⁷-Cmaj⁷. Do your best to follow the arpeggio shapes and the designated finger patterns. They're slightly different from **Exercise 1**, but do contain a few shapes from previous lessons. As you land on the final chord, Cmaj⁷, think about how we have rearranged

the arpeggio. This time, we're hitting our open E to grab the third of the chord, as well as the lower G and B. We're still accounting for all of the notes, but we're getting more flexible in terms of where we find them.

Finally, **Exercise 3** results in a walking bass-line. This time, we're starting on Cmaj⁷ and playing I-vi-ii-V or Cmaj⁷-Am⁷-Dm⁷-G⁷. Think of it as the same chord progression from **Exercise 2**, but starting on the I chord instead of the vi. The chord progression repeats three times. Throughout the exercise, the arpeggio shapes change direction; they ascend and descend depending on what sounds appropriate.

As if that weren't complicated enough, another anomaly is at hand – the purposeful omission of notes. Moving through the exercise, you'll see that some bars don't contain all four notes of the seventh chord. Perhaps we omit the fifth or the seventh. These are musical choices, and that's a good thing. We don't always have to spell out the full seventh chord, but we do need to understand our tonal options. Take extra time with this exercise and work out the

moves in your head; I have a feeling they'll begin to make sense, even if it seems intimidating at first.

Now let's do some spying. First up, the Maroon 5 hit, 'Sunday Morning'. What could be better than a relaxing ii-V-I chord progression? Using it in the verse and the chorus, that's what! While this doesn't rely too heavily on arpeggiating, it's a great way to get comfortable with root notes, walking style fills, and applying this progression to pop music.

Next, take a listen to Roy Orbison's classic 'Oh, Pretty Woman'. The earwormy lick spells out an E⁷ arpeggio with the addition of a 9th, also known as an E⁹ chord. We've got a few great chord progressions at work, but the infamous I-vi-ii-V can be heard during the bridge.

And finally, for a more sophisticated example, take a listen to the Oscar Peterson Trio's rendition of 'All Of Me'. Ray Brown walks through the changes and takes a brilliant approach to voice leading, arpeggiating seventh chords, and integrating low-end melodies. See you next month! ■



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DON'T FRET...

LEARN THE NOTES ON THE NECK



The great Steve Lawson brings us a new approach to studying bass at beginner level. The journey begins...

Welcome to another lesson, everyone! Consider this... When it comes to playing any piece of music, there are three ways we can understand what's going on – and these ways form a triangle. At the most basic, the three ways are what the music **sounds like** (ear training), what the notes **are called** (theory), and how the music **maps out on the bass** (technique). Each of these can be developed in a number of ways.

Ear training can develop beyond just being able to recognise musical notes by ear, to us hearing intricate harmonies and imagining all kinds of possible sounds in our heads for altering and developing the music. Our theory knowledge obviously extends way beyond note names to understanding of keys, chords, unusual scales and the ways that chords build tension and resolve. And our technique isn't just about playing the notes, it's about developing a set of tonal and articulation choices that inform the style and groove of the music we're playing.

But at a more fundamental level, this relationship between ear training, theory and technique gives us our three entry points to playing anything. We need skills in all three areas, but often players will have a speciality that helps them execute their given musical style. Classical players and those who play predominantly from sheet music will probably have a highly developed

sense of theory to which they apply their technique, using their ears to make judgements about how accurately their theory knowledge is being executed.

Jazz musicians often have incredible ears, responding to changes in improvised music settings with or without mentally naming those changes via their theory knowledge, and then making technical choices based on what they hear and how best they can contribute to the music. Meanwhile, people whose development has been in one band with a group of friends often get really good at playing the set of songs that this band plays, whether originals or covers.

If you start out as a rehearsing band, how long you take to learn the parts is of less consequence than if you're playing in loads of bands with a changing setlist. You can gradually develop your technique to play those songs better and better, and that ultimately is what your audience experiences – well-played songs.

For those of us who just want to be better, well-rounded musicians, there are aspects of each of these areas that we can develop over time, and today we're going to look at a number of ways to build our knowledge of where the notes are on the neck. If someone

tells us that the first chord is E Major, not only do we need to know the shape for a major chord, we need to know where the E notes are.

Now, E is an easy place to start because we've got our open E as a reference point. From there we can find the other Es using a couple of different methods. Firstly, we know that an octave is found two strings and two frets away from the note we're on, so we can find another E at the second fret on the D string. If you've ever used the fifth fret to tune your bass to itself, you'll know that the fifth fret on any string is the same as the next highest string – in other words, the fifth fret on the E string is an A, and the fifth fret on the A string is a D. So if we know that E is two frets above the open D, it's also going to be two frets above the D at the fifth fret on the A string – so the seventh fret on the A string is an E as well. And then we've got the octave of that... and so on!

EXERCISE 1

Here's a sequence that plays all the Es over the entire four-string neck. Start very slowly and then gradually increase the tempo. For this one, we will use the open string as a pivot point to make the big jumps easier.

At a fundamental level, the relationship between ear training, theory and technique gives us our three entry points to play anything

EXERCISE ONE

★ Beginners Lesson

EXERCISE TWO



Exercise Two is a musical exercise in 4/4 time, written in bass clef. The notation consists of a single staff with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The exercise is divided into five measures. The first measure contains a quarter note on G2, a quarter note on F2, a quarter note on E2, and a quarter note on D2. The second measure contains a quarter note on C2, a quarter note on B1, a quarter note on A1, and a quarter note on G1. The third measure contains a quarter note on F1, a quarter note on E1, a quarter note on D1, and a quarter note on C1. The fourth measure contains a quarter note on B0, a quarter note on A0, a quarter note on G0, and a quarter note on F0. The fifth measure contains a quarter note on E0, a quarter note on D0, a quarter note on C0, and a quarter note on B0. The exercise concludes with a double bar line.

EXERCISE THREE



Exercise Three is a musical exercise in 4/4 time, written in bass clef. The notation consists of a single staff with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The exercise is divided into five measures. The first measure contains a half note on G2, a half note on F2, and a half note on E2. The second measure contains a half note on D2, a half note on C2, and a half note on B1. The third measure contains a half note on A1, a half note on G1, and a half note on F1. The fourth measure contains a half note on E1, a half note on D1, and a half note on C1. The fifth measure contains a half note on B0, a half note on A0, and a half note on G0. The exercise concludes with a double bar line.



EXERCISE 2

If we know where the Es are, we have a start point to finding the notes around them. Remember that E to F and B to C are the only pairs of notes that don't have a sharp or flat in between, so we can start to find all the Fs by moving one step higher than the Es and all the Ds by playing two frets lower.

EXERCISE 3

Once we remove the Es, Exercise 3 is all the Ds in the same order without the E as a reference. This is another important method we can use on any learning journey: using what you already know to help inform what you're trying to discover. It goes back to our triangle at the top. If we know where the Es are, we can use our theory knowledge to start to define the relationships between E and other notes in terms of intervals, and that can then translate to shapes on the fingerboard. If we know that D is always two frets down from an E, we can find any D in a fraction of a second longer than it takes us to locate the E.

Our next exercise is for you to try this same principle to find all the Fs. Start by playing Exercise 2, but replace all the Ds with Fs. Then remove all the Es and just play the sequence of Fs across the entire fingerboard. Remember that unlike D, we can add in an extra F at the first fret on the E string. Our lowest D is the open D, but F offers us another note lower in that first octave. It's also worth being aware of the pitch of your very highest note – many Fender-style four-string basses run out of notes at E₄ on the G string, whereas many other modern basses extend all the way to 24 frets.

Feel free to adapt all the exercises here to suit your bass. We can repeat the same exercise to find all the E₄ or F# notes across the neck, taking one note at a time, using our Es that we learned first as a reference point and starting to fill in the blanks. Our open strings are such a useful reference, and they give us a way of finding a lot of other notes on the neck. We've already talked about the notes at the fifth fret being the same as the next highest string, so we can work out what the fifth frets on the E, A and D strings are – A, D and G, respectively. Each of those has an octave, so we've got two As and two Ds. For the G, we run out of strings to try and play an octave higher, but we can reverse the shape, play the octave lower, and find a G at the third fret on the E string.

Once again, we can extrapolate from this as a set of incomplete but consistent information. So if G is three frets above the open E, it's also three frets above every other



Stanley Clarke's total upper-register mastery implies keen fretboard awareness

Our open strings are such a useful reference, and they give us a way of finding a lot of other notes on the neck

E on the neck. For example, there's one at the tenth fret on the A string, three frets about the E that we found in Exercise 1. We can check that one against the octave, where the two dots are. The octave on the A string is obviously an A, so we come down two frets from there and we're going to find a G.

Understanding the logic behind this is the first step to being able to do it.

Understanding the method doesn't require you to be able to jump in and find any note, but it does mean you'll now have a method to work out where every note is, and train your muscle memory to find those notes and your eye to remember where particular notes are in relation to the dots on the fretboard.

Let's look at how our major scale pattern can help us find some more notes. We've

★ Beginners Lesson

EXERCISE FOUR



EXERCISE FIVE



looked before in this column at the sequence for a major scale, but let's refresh our memories. Remember that the key of C major has no sharps or flats, which makes it a great start point for learning.

EXERCISE 4

Take a good look at the tab. I've played the scale ascending and descending using different fingering, so we can start to see how the intervals in the scale help us to find notes alphabetically. If we learn that C is the third fret on the A string, or the eighth fret on the E string, we can have that as another fixed start point from which to find things.

Using the two different fingering patterns we can count up or down the scale (we know where the octaves of both those Cs are too, right?) and find the note we're looking for. When we start doing this, we start to build a map of the relationships between the notes on the next string. Rather than looking at the adjacent string and seeing a G or an E, we can see where G and E are in relation to each other, and eventually we can immediately identify that as a minor third, and in time know what a minor third sounds like.

Starting to recognise the shape of particular intervals can really help us with combining naming notes, playing arpeggios and scale patterns and playing what we hear in our heads. The three points of the triangle are all connected: you're never further than

Create time in your practice schedule to prioritise seeing where notes are on the neck

one step away from any of the other approaches, and that gives us a useful metaphor for attempting to integrate all three into a foolproof method for approaching any piece of music.

As we build our map of where notes are on the fingerboard, and start to layer scale patterns and intervals onto that map, those scales and intervals start to become easier to remember as shapes, easier to name as they go by, and easier to recall by ear when we're listening to a new song and wondering what might sound cool.

The sum total of these three skills is what we think of as musicianship: it's beyond just having good chops or looking great on stage. It's the point at which we develop the confidence to delve into a wider variety of situations and play with a broader range of other players, knowing that we'll be able to make sense of a chord chart, pick up a new song by ear, or follow the guitar player's fingers when she's teaching us the riff that she wants us to double.

EXERCISE 5

Let's finish up with a scale pattern that jumps about across two different octaves. This is just an ascending then descending

G Major scale (that's why that F# is there in the key signature), but spread out in a way that means we have to find the location of every note and think about what the note name is. Think of this as an interval pop quiz, and try coming up with your own variations of it.

The paradox of note naming is that it's both a vital skill and one that you will eventually dispense with, in the same way that you rarely have to think about what tense you're speaking in, or whether you referred to someone as plural or singular in your native language.

The grammar of music is one of the fundamental building blocks of music, and varies depending on which of the systems of music theory and notation we're dealing with around the world. It's one that your conscious brain will seek to move beyond, once you can hear what those notes mean and find them on the fingerboard without having to stop and think.

It's not a stage you can bypass without years of inefficient practice time, so if you're struggling with this, dig in and create time in your practice schedule to prioritise seeing where notes are on the neck. The creative pay-off is huge! ■



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MINOR THREAT

THE MELODIC MINOR EXPLORED

Hello again! Being able to understand and utilise harmonisation is a critical component of every musician's ongoing development.

Harmonisation is the process of producing a different chord on each diatonic step of a parent scale. These structures are then placed in a sequential order to produce a progression. Once this is familiar to you, you'll be able to analyse chord progressions and assign suitable melodic vocabulary to them. Whether this process is used to produce an impromptu bass fill, or the development of a virtuoso solo, the method is the same; if you know how the harmonies work, then you know the right notes!

Let's look at minor tonality, not to be confused with the minor scales found in major harmony – Dorian, Phrygian and so on. Although there is a crossover, the latter is a different subject area. Within the confines of minor tonality, you'll often hear titles such as 'harmonic minor', 'melodic minor' and 'natural minor', so what we need here is a little law and order and some real-life insights to help us make head and tail of all this jargon.

Minor tonality usually presents itself as sporadic II-V chord progressions dotted in and around an assortment of jazz standards. These II-Vs commonly reference 'harmonic

minor' in their construction, but truth be told, 90 percent of the time it's 'melodic minor' that's used to interpret them. In short, you need to be able to spot harmonic minor, but know how to employ melodic minor. You can certainly do this, never fear.

Last month, we were introduced to the melodic 'jazz' minor scale, learning to harmonise it to 7th chord arpeggios. This month it's time to immerse ourselves in the modal content, but first, let's remind ourselves of the initial structure.

Whether this process is used to produce an impromptu bass fill or a virtuoso solo, the method is the same

The great Gail Ann Dorsey, groove maestro



EXERCISE ONE

♩ = 100

Cm(Δ7)

In a practical context, 'melodic' minor usually finds itself prioritised over 'harmonic' minor as the default basis for melodic interpretation, just because it's a lot easier to use. Sonically, the resolutions are simple, and physically, the 7th arpeggios feel familiar, with most of the diatonic content conveniently under the hand.

EXERCISE TWO

♩ = 100

Gm^(Δ7)

A^bm^(Δ7)

etc.

Exercise 2 demonstrates a two-octave melodic minor scale in the key of G minor. Once you've recalled the notes, move the entire structure up a half-step and repeat the exercise. When time permits, attempt to repeat this methodology up the entirety of the neck to solidify muscle memory.

EXERCISE THREE

♩ = 100

When harmonised, the major scale produces seven subsequent scales, each of which can be associated with its own unique chord. Referred to as the modes, these are where you encounter labels such as Dorian, Mixolydian and Aeolian. Melodic minor can be harmonised using exactly the same method, producing seven modes of its own. Exercise 3 portrays these structures in diatonic order, so learn to play each one, prioritising the structures on the first, fourth and seventh degrees. In time, you will learn their significance as you employ them in alternative harmonic contexts.

★ Intermediate Lesson

EXERCISE FOUR

♩ = 100

C Melodic Minor D Dorian $\flat 2$ $E^{\flat}$ Lydian Augmented F Lydian Dominant

G Mixolydian $\flat 6$ A Aeolian $\flat 5$ B Altered (Super Locrian)

Exercise 4 portrays similar melodic content, but the structures are now portrayed in an alternating manner. Don't underestimate the complexity of this study, as most scales have a different formula in their ascent to the one used while descending. In fact, Dorian is one of only a few seven-note scales where the formula is the same in both directions. Once you've learned the order of the notes, feel free to portray them in different registers to vary your practice.

Larry Graham: we predict a case of headstock dive



EXERCISE FIVE

♩ = 100

C Melodic Minor B Altered (Super Locrian) A Aeolian $\flat 5$ G Mixolydian $\flat 6$

F Lydian Dominant E $\flat$ Lydian Augmented D Dorian $\flat 2$

Continuing our investigations into melodic minor, Exercise 5 remains loyal to the properties of the last exercise. Once again, the associated modes are presented in an alternating format, ascending and then descending. The challenge becomes apparent when you analyse the format in which the modes are presented, as you'll be required to descend through the entire diatonic sequence in reverse order. So much of what we think is an improvised voice is actually classically conditioned by what we practise, so studying a variety of melodic content will have a positive effect on your practical capability.

EXERCISE SIX

♩ = 100

Gm($\Delta 7$)

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Exercise 6 adds eighth note triplets to proceedings. More often than not, when triplets are part of an exercise, the melodic content can become subservient to the rhythmic. The patterns here alternate in direction from one triplet to the next, so be sensitive of the fingering you choose to employ in your fretting hand, as poor judgement can quickly exaggerate the complexity of the materials.

★ Intermediate Lesson

EXERCISE SEVEN

♩ = 100 $Gm(\Delta 7)$

Measure 1: 12 11 9 7 9 11 9 7 5 8 5 7

Measure 2: 5 8 7 5 7 8 7 5 4 7 4 5

Measure 3: 4 7 5 3 5 7 5 3 6 5 6 3

Measure 4: 3

We bassists need to be able to portray scales as formulas as well as simple shapes, so that when you find yourself in a precarious fretboard position and you can't visualise the pattern you need, you're still able to play the right notes. Exercise 7 starts with a linear descent down the G string, a common occurrence on a four-string instrument. Should you have access to an extended range bass, try not to be tempted to opt for an easier, more accessible position. Push yourself to identify the aforementioned formula, as it will serve you better in the long run.

EXERCISE EIGHT

♩ = 100 $Gm(\Delta 7)$

Measure 1: 5 4 5 3 2 3 4 5 5 4 8 7 5 4 5 4 5

Measure 2: 5 4 5 6 8 2 4 4 5 5 4 7 5 4 4 5 4 5 X 4 7

Here we collate a variety of aspects from the preceding exercises, drawing on not only melodic minor but also linear phrasing. Once you've progressed past the echoes of Joe Dart in the opening measure, you'll then encounter a 16th note triplet rhythm in the second. The best way to portray this rhythm is to visualise the second beat as two even 8th notes. During the first of these subdivisions, deliver three notes of equal duration, then play the second 8th note as usual. All of the notes are on a single string, presented in linear form.

EXERCISE NINE

♩ = 100

Gm(Δ7)

The musical notation for Exercise Nine is presented in two systems. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 100. The chord is Gm(Δ7). The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and fingerings. The first system shows a melodic line in the treble staff and a bass line in the bass staff. The second system shows a melodic line in the treble staff and a bass line in the bass staff. The notation includes a triplet in the bass line of the second system.

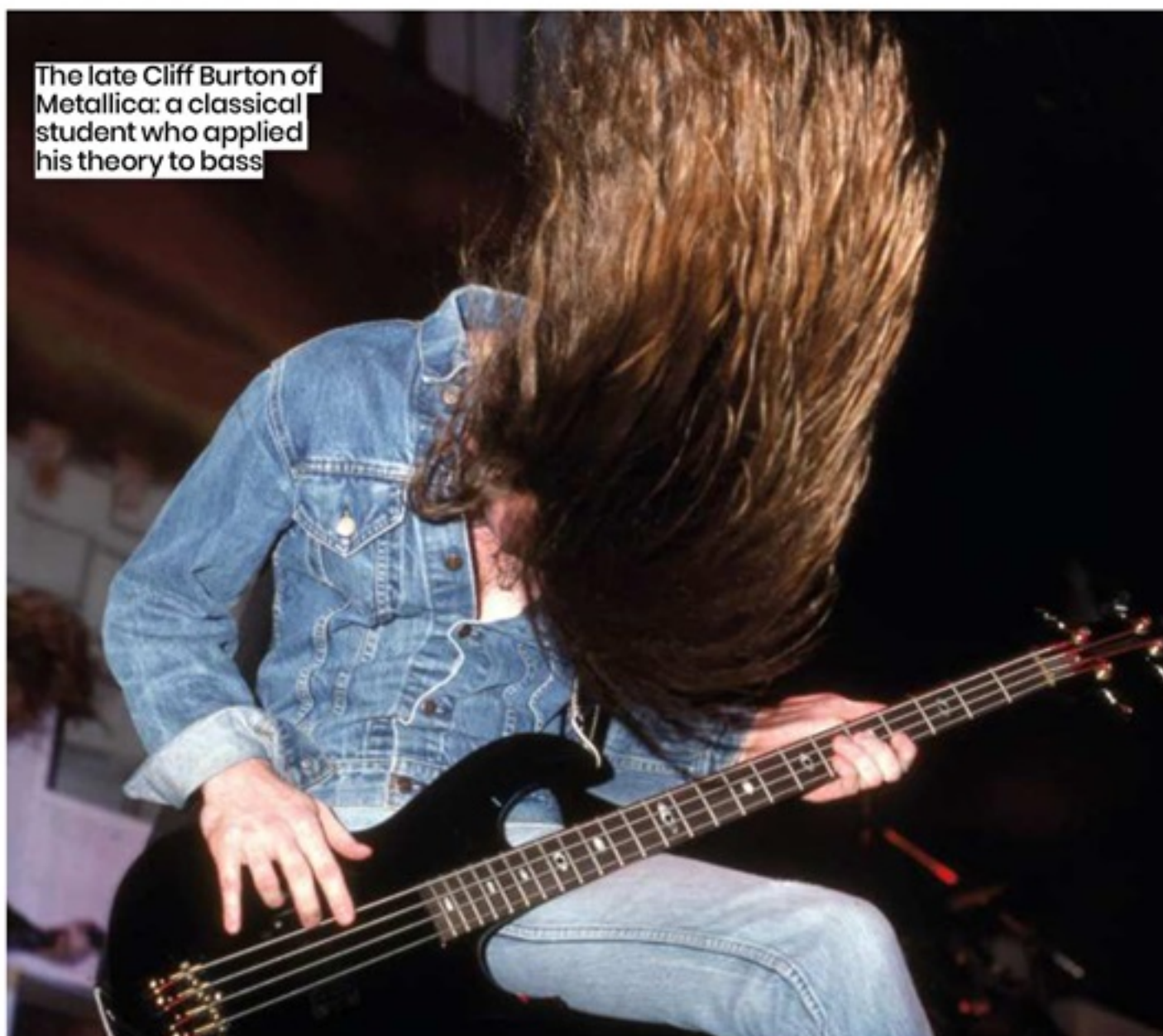
Our final exercise can easily be combined with the last one to produce an inspiring eight-bar motif. Once again, 16th note rhythms, double stops and triplets are all present, combining to envelop the sonic textures of melodic minor. You shouldn't have a great deal of trouble working through these, although be mindful of bars three and four, where you'll observe that the same melodic phrase has been delivered using two slightly different rhythms. Good luck!

Push yourself to identify the formula, as it will serve you better in the long run

If you only practise one thing this month...

The study of melodic minor is a crucial component in the development of any musician's ability to interpret minor tonality. Ensuring you are able to recall the order in which each of the melodic minor modes derives is essential, so if you only have time to tackle one aspect of this month's studies, ensure you know the names and basic construction of these seven structures.

The late Cliff Burton of Metallica: a classical student who applied his theory to bass



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LEARN TO PLAY LIKE MARK KING



Ace bass educator Stuart Clayton guides us to the peak of the bass skills pyramid. Achieve your goals here!

Hello, and welcome back to my long-running Advanced Techniques series. Over the past few instalments, we've been taking a detailed look at the playing techniques of some of the world's best-known slap bassists. So far, we've looked at icons such as Larry Graham, Stanley Clarke and Marcus Miller, and in this month's instalment we'll be analysing the work of Mark King, one of the UK's most popular bass players.

King has fronted the pop/funk group Level 42 for over 40 years, with the group racking up sales of over 30 million albums along the way. Although they're best-known for their Top 40 hits during the Eighties, the band began as an instrumental jazz-funk outfit which slotted in perfectly with the popular Britfunk movement of the late Seventies. Originally a drummer, King switched to bass when he began jamming with his friends Boon and Phil Gould (guitar and drums), and Mike Lindup (keys).

Taking inspiration from bassists such as Jack Bruce and Stanley Clarke, King approached the bass with the mindset of a drummer, quickly developing his own take on the popular slap bass style. Owing as much to percussion as it does to conventional slap playing, King's technique was a more complex, sixteenth note-based variant, with his fretting hand working as a key rhythmic element in the style. This technique was showcased perfectly on 'Love Games', one of the band's earliest singles. The bass groove from this song is a bubbling, continuous sixteenth slap groove that propels the track forward while at the same time outlining the harmony.

This busy slap style permeates much of Level 42's early material, with songs such as 'Sandstorm', 'Mr. Pink' and 'Almost There' contributing significantly to King's growing reputation as a new bass hero through the early Eighties. As the band developed as songwriters, his bass playing developed in tandem, with later hits such as 'The Chinese Way', and 'To Be with You Again', built around challenging fingerstyle grooves. Let's take look at King's slap playing style. ■



EXERCISE ONE

♩ = 110

Exercise One is a bass line in 4/4 time, marked with a tempo of 110 beats per minute. The notation consists of two staves. The top staff is in bass clef and contains two measures of music, each with four groups of beamed sixteenth notes. The bottom staff is a tablature line with fret numbers (0 and X) corresponding to the notes in the top staff. The rhythm is indicated by 'T' for thumb slap and 'LH' for left hand ghost notes.

Top staff: $\text{♩} \text{ } \text{♩} \text{ } \text{♩} \text{ } \text{♩}$ (repeated twice)

Bottom staff: 0 X 0 X 0 X 0 X 0 X 0 X 0 X 0 X 0 X

The key to King's rhythmic style lies in using both hands to build up continuous sixteenth note rhythms. This exercise illustrates a very basic application of this idea: here, you will be slapping the open E-string with the thumb and playing a ghost note with the fretting hand. To do this, you'll need to bring the fretting hand in to slap against the strings, creating a dead note. This is essentially a more aggressive version of the muting technique that you would typically employ to quiet a ringing open string.

EXERCISE TWO

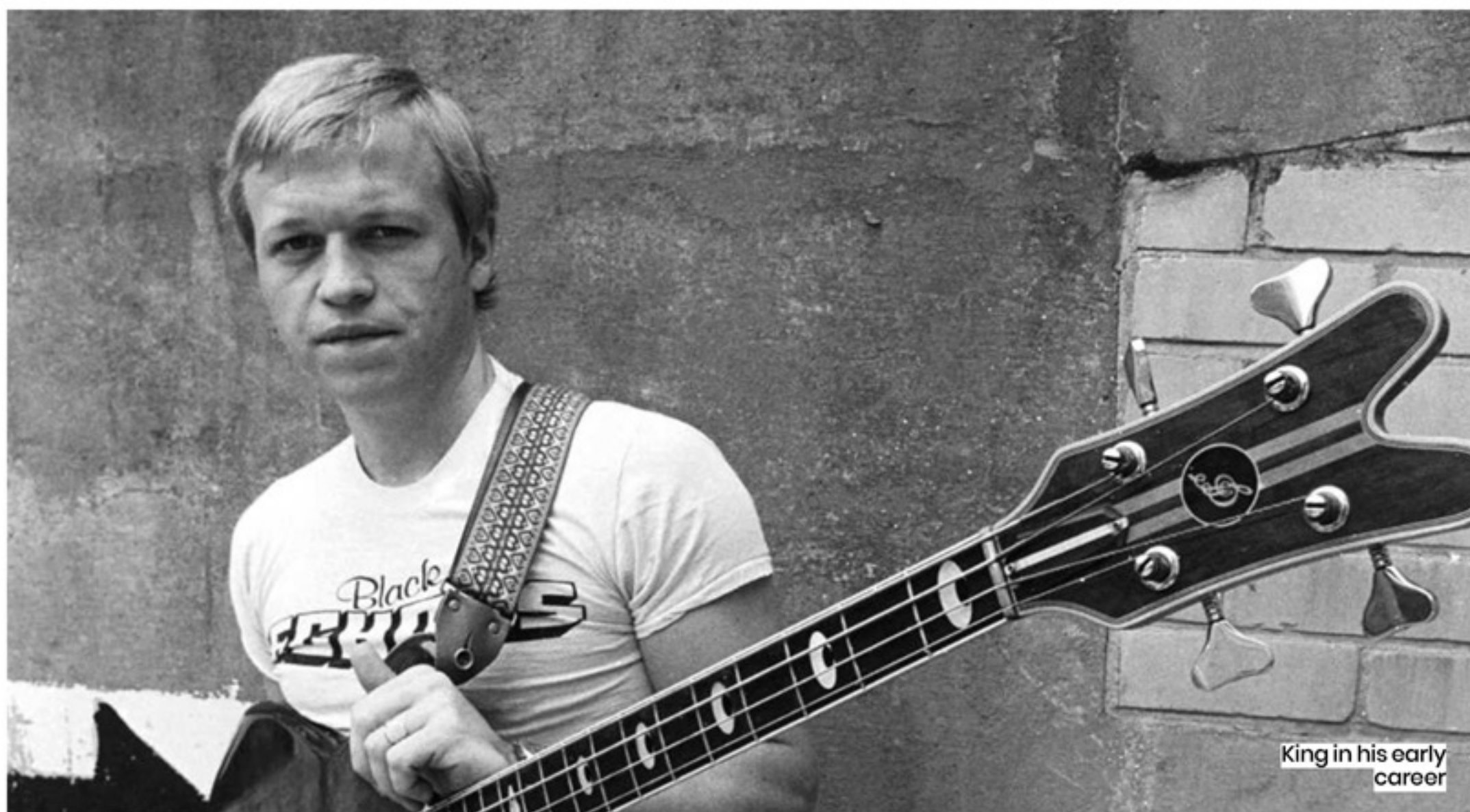
♩ = 110

Exercise Two is a more complex bass line in 4/4 time, also marked with a tempo of 110 beats per minute. It follows the same notation format as Exercise One, with two staves. The top staff features a more varied sixteenth-note pattern, including some triplets. The bottom staff shows the corresponding fret numbers and rhythm indicators.

Top staff: $\text{♩} \text{ } \text{♩} \text{ } \text{♩} \text{ } \text{♩}$ (repeated twice)

Bottom staff: 0 X 0 X X 0 X X 0 X X 0 X X 0 X X 0 X X 0 X X 0 X

Once you're comfortable with the basic concept, you can begin to experiment with different rhythmic ideas. In this exercise a complex rhythmic pattern is used, with some of the slapped notes also being played as ghost notes.



King in his early career

★ Advanced Lesson

EXERCISE THREE

♩ = 110

In this exercise we will add in some hammer-ons and pull-offs: these will add a lot more melodic and harmonic interest to the percussive lines we've played so far. The triplet figure in the fourth bar of this exercise is similar to one that King uses in his solos and can be difficult to execute. Use the fourth finger of the fretting hand for the A, sliding up to the B₁, back to the A, then pulling off onto the G, which can be fretted with the first finger. Play the E on the A-string by hammering on with the fourth finger of the fretting hand.

EXERCISE FOUR

♩ = 110

In this exercise we will add some popped notes. These can be played with either the first or the second finger, although as you'll know from previous columns, it's a great idea to be comfortable using both. Being able to use two fingers will mean that you can develop the technique to include double stops (two notes played at once), something that is required in the final beat of this exercise.

EXERCISE FIVE

♩ = 110

♩ = 110

♩ = 110

7 6 7 9 9

0 X X X X 0 X X 5 7 5 7 X X 0 X X X 3 5 X 4 X 5 5/7 X

7 6 X X

0 X X X X 0 X X 5 7 5 7 X 5 7 X 5 X 4 X X 7 8 7 5 7 X 5 7

Here's another groove built around the same ideas. These kinds of slapped lines would be impossible to play without utilising the fretting hand to 'fill in the gaps'. Many of King's lines are built up in this fashion – in addition to the tracks already mentioned, be sure to check out '43', 'Foundation And Empire' and 'The Machine Stops' to hear this technique in action. With the fundamentals of this slap style now covered, let's look at some additional techniques that King commonly uses in his playing.

EXERCISE SIX

♩ = 120

T P T P T P T P
 3 5 6 7 3 5 6 7

T P T P T P T P
 3 4 5 6 3 4 5 6

King often uses melodic figures in his playing that are based on sliding octaves and tenth intervals. This exercise breaks down the slap and pop pattern that he commonly uses when doing this. In the first two bars octaves have been used, with tenths used in the third and fourth bars. Try to allow the notes to ring into each other in order to enhance the chordal effect. You can hear King use this technique on tracks such as '43' and 'Can't Walk You Home'.

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EXERCISE SEVEN

♩ = 120

Cm

C

This variation on the technique allows King to ascend to other chord tones. For example, for a minor chord he often ascends from the root via the second scale degree to the minor third, as shown in the first bar. This idea can be extended to include other chords such as the fifth, as shown in the second bar. In the third and fourth bars this lick is reconfigured to work over a major chord.

EXERCISE EIGHT

♩ = 110

Another of King's trademark slap licks involves playing sixteenth note triplets at blinding speeds – this is something that he often does in his live solos. Although seemingly complex, this technique is a little easier to perform than it might initially seem: as with earlier exercises, the key lies in the tight integration of the two hands. In the first bar of this exercise, the technique is illustrated with an eighth note triplet.

EXERCISE NINE

♩ = 110

This exercise illustrates how King might incorporate this concept into a line.

Hello again, and welcome to the end of the magazine! We've spent a lot of time discussing the electronics on board our bass guitars and in our amps, so let's take a look at another important area of tech – our bass hardware. Although much of this hasn't radically changed in its function since the electric bass first appeared back in the Fifties, advances in technology have led to better quality and a smoother operation, giving us a more precise performance platform. First, let's take a look at bridges.

What does a bridge actually do?

In simple terms, it anchors the strings at the opposite end of the bass to the tuners. In the case of a headless bass, the bridge is also home to the tuning gear.

Like anyone plays a headless bass these days...

I have a headless bass, and it rocks, so shut your piehole. Now, the strings are fixed at the bridge point, but its individual components have their own, very significant functions.

Oh yeah, like what?

The strings pass over individual blocks called saddles, which are shaped to accept the string, sometimes featuring friction-reducing rollers. The design of the saddles takes into consideration the 'break angle', which improves tone by pulling the string downward tightly against them. Then there's the bridge block, which may be die-cast or milled from a solid chunk of steel, brass or aluminium. This is often shaped, and not just for looks: the saddles may have channels along which they move back and forth to adjust intonation and reduce sideways shifting. The back of the bridge may also have 'keyhole' cut-outs, allowing the strings to drop in and out for quick changes, rather than having to feed the whole string through a small hole.

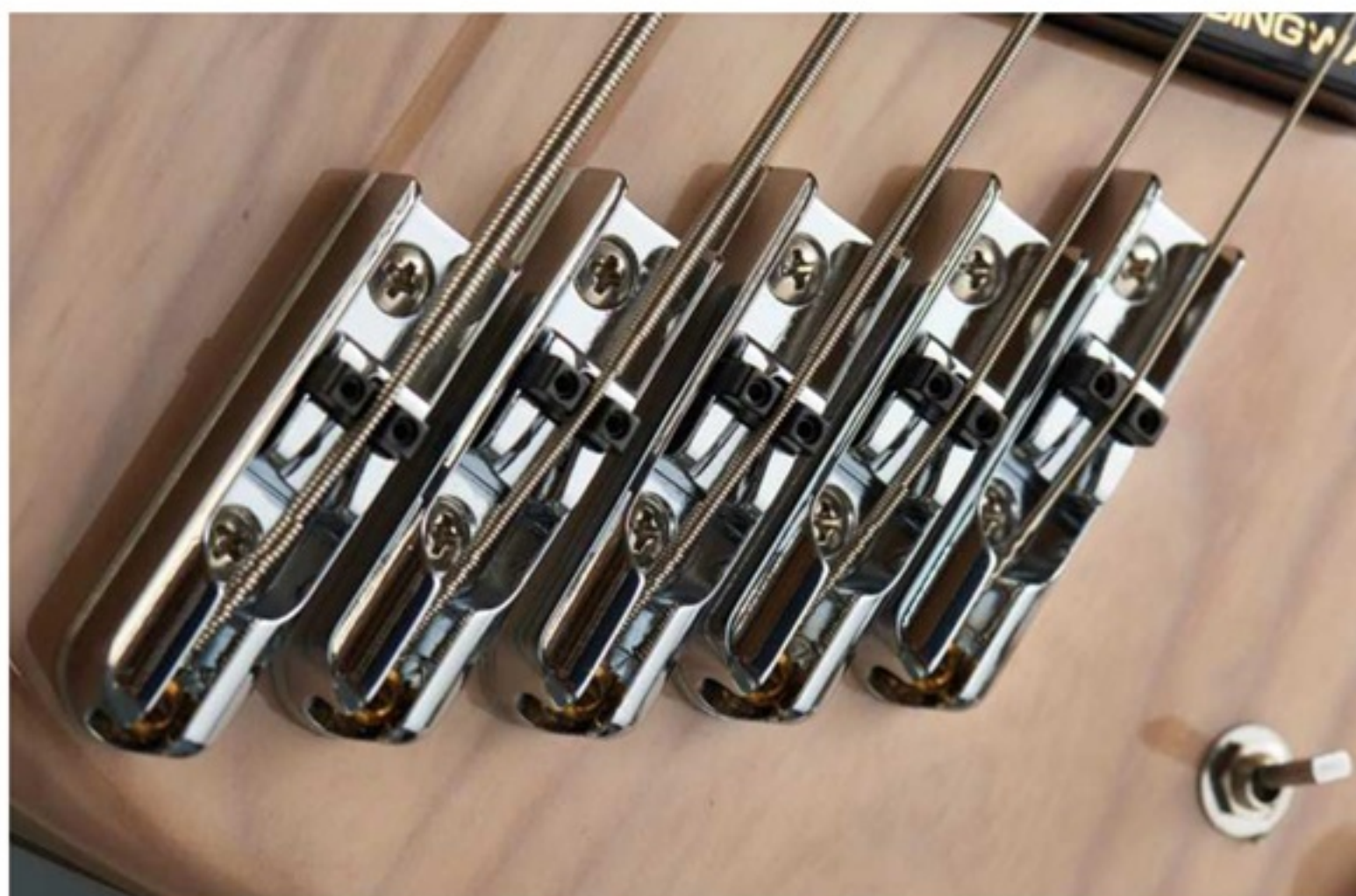
Okay then. How can my bridge help me sound good?
For starters, with intonation

A BRIDGE TOO FAR?

Part One of our search for the perfect bridge



Dan Veall is a session and stage bass player, educator and gear expert and is here to answer your questions. Contact: @DanVeallBassist



adjustment. Moving the saddle back or forward changes the length of the string so that it stays in tune as you fret notes higher up the fretboard. Bridges will either use a single long screw for this, or you may need to unlock the saddle and shift it manually. You can adjust the action, too: the saddles can be raised or lowered, which in turn adjusts the height of the strings from the fretboard. If it's too low, you're more likely to suffer from fret buzz, and if it's too high, the bass may be more difficult to play.

Talk about string spacing.

Some bridges allow for the saddles to be released and moved sideways, thus allowing for your preferred spacing between the strings. Personally, I prefer a close string spacing such as 16.5mm, whereas other

bassists may prefer a 19mm spacing. You can only go as wide as the fretboard will allow, of course.

Well, duh... what's this 'string-thru' jargon?

This refers to the strings passing through the back of the body and up through the bridge from underneath. You will need to use longer strings for this mounting versus the regular, rear-loading types. Note that so-called 'long scale' strings that fit rear-loading bridges may be too short when used for string-through mounting.

And what's a monorail bridge?

Instead of having one large bridge block, separate bridge pieces per string have become favoured for certain designs. These are very useful for multi-scale basses, as it's

more convenient to use them rather than custom-manufacture a bridge designed for different scale lengths. It is thought that the individual monorails isolate each string from one another tonally, but it's not easy to measure this difference.

So is setting up the bridge hard to do?

The setup geometry on a bass bridge is more complex than it may seem, but not impossible for a novice to learn. There is a balance to be had between action, neck angle, fretwork and neck relief. When set up properly, even an average bass can be transformed into an excellent instrument to play. The good news is that there's plenty you can do on your own – and I'll be showing you the basics in future columns. ■

4 String Basses



Cort

22084 - Cort A4 Plus FMMH 4-String Bass, Natural
21669 - Cort Action 4 String Lefty, Black, Used
15422 - Cort Action DLX FGB Faded Grey Burst
19701 - Cort Action Junior Bass, Walnut OPW
19278 - Cort Action Junior Bass, Black OPB
21466 - Cort Action Junior Bass, Black Cherry
16156 - Cort Action PJ OPB, Open Pore Black
10157 - Cort Action PJ, Open Pore Black Cherry
16323 - Cort Action 4 String Lefty, Black
21598 - Cort GB54J 4-String Bass, Olympic White
21493 - Cort GB64J Natural
15242 - Cort Jeff Berlin Rhythmic 5 String Bass
12807 - Cort Jeff Berlin Rhythmic 4 String Bass
18184 - Epiphone EB3 Bass, Black, Secondhand

Fender

21578 - Fender 60th Road Worn Jazz Bass, Sunburst
21756 - Fender 60th Anniversary RWJ Bass, F.Silver
22007 - Fender 60th Road Worn Jazz Bass, O.White
18047 - Fender Am. Original 60s Jazz Bass, CAR
22352 - Fender American Pro. II Jazz Bass, Miami Blue
18246 - Fender Am. Pro Jazz Bass Sunburst Ex Demo
21858 - Fender Boxer Series PJ Bass, Torino Red
19238 - Fender Flea Active Jazz Bass Silver
19570 - Fender Player Jazz Bass, Sunburst
22354 - Fender Player Jazz Bass Polar White
22013 - Fender Player Mustang Bass PJ, Sunburst
22014 - Fender Player Mustang Bass PJ Aged Natural
21755 - Fender Player Precision Bass, Sunburst
21847 - Fender Player Precision Bass, Polar White
19239 - Vintera 50s Precision Bass, Dakota Red
19420 - Hofner HCT Violin Bass, Sunburst
12188 - Hofner Ignition Violin Bass, Sunburst
22169 - Hofner Ignition Sp.Ed Bass, HIBBESB
14498 - Hofner Ignition Violin Bass, Sunburst
22148 - Levin Deluxe LB50-TRD Bass Guitar
22112 - Levin Deluxe LB60 Bass in High-Glo Nat
22113 - Levin Deluxe LB76-SB Bass in High-Glo SB
22111 - Levin LB60 Bass Guitar in High-glo Black
22146 - Levin PB50-BK Bass in High-Glo Black
22147 - Levin PB50-SB Bass in High-Glo Sunburst
19702 - Markbass MB-JP Black Chrome 4 GD PF
19460 - MusicMan Stingray 4 Bass with 3 EQ Blue
18114 - NS Design WAV4 Double Bass Trans Black
13012 - Rickenbacker 4003, Walnut
18083 - Rockbass Streamer LX4 Fretless, Blk Used
22032 - Sandberg Electra VS4 Bass Guitar

Squier

18287 - Squier Affinity Series Precision Bass PJ Pack
21274 - Squier Classic Vibe 70s Jazz Bass, Nat
14778 - Vintage ICON V74MRJP Fretless, Sunburst
14490 - Vintage LV4 Left-handed 4 String
14407 - Vintage LV74 Left-handed Bass, Natural
19680 - Vintage VS4 Reissued Bass, Cherry Red
22095 - Vintage VS4 Reissued Bass, C.RED, USED

Bass Cabinets



13640 - Aguilar SL112 Bass Cabinet
6147 - Ashdown Klystron NEO 210 Secondhand
16800 - BLUGuitar Nanocab



13566 - Eden EGRW1264 Head & Cab Package
16054 - Eich 110XS Bass Cabinet 4 Ohm
16055 - Eich 110XS Bass Cabinet 8 Ohm
16042 - Eich 112XS Bass Cabinet 8 Ohms
16041 - Eich 112XS Bass Cabinet 4 Ohms
16075 - Eich 115L Bass Cabinet
16052 - Eich 115XS Bass Cabinet 4 Ohm
16053 - Eich 115XS Bass Cabinet 8 Ohm
16040 - Eich 1210S Bass Cabinet
16071 - Eich 210M Bass Cabinet
16069 - Eich 212L Bass Cabinet
16070 - Eich 212M Bass Cabinet
16048 - Eich 212S Bass Cabinet 4 Ohm
16050 - Eich 212S Bass Cabinet 8 Ohm
16068 - Eich 410L Bass Cabinet
16067 - Eich 610L Bass Cabinet
16061 - Eich 612XL Bass Cab
16065 - Eich 810L Bass Cabinet
16321 - Gallien Krueger CX115 Bass Cabinet
16444 - Gallien Krueger CX210 Bass Cab
16320 - Gallien Krueger MB210 Bass Amp Combo



5476 - Mark Bass STD104HR (4x10)
6241 - Mark Bass STD102HF (2x10)
6242 - Mark Bass STD104HF (4x10)
5477 - Mark Bass STD151HR (1x15)
9033 - Markbass Traveler 121H Bass Ext Cab
9034 - Markbass Traveler 151 P Bass Guitar Cab
4733 - Mark Bass Traveller TRV102P (2x10)
16013 - Markbass 123 Alain Caron Bass Cab
16014 - Markbass CMD Super Comb. K1 Alain Caron
17732 - Markbass Marcus Miller Cab 102
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
15272 - Markbass New York 122 Ninja Bona Cab



6259 - Orange OBC115 (1x15)
10266 - Orange OBC210 Bass Guitar Speaker Cab
6260 - Orange OBC410H (4x10)
5241 - Orange OBC810 (8x10)
21040 - D'Addario Planet Waves 5ft Speaker Lead
20753 - Staggs 10M Speaker-Jack Lead
20754 - Staggs 10M Spk-Spk Lead (SSP10SS15)
16856 - Trace Elliot 1x10 Elf Cab
19686 - Trace Elliot TE28E 2x8" bass cabinet

Bass Combos



13577 - AER Amp III Bass Amp Combo
5627 - AER Amp One (200W, 1x10)
21842 - Ashdown Studio 12



13566 - Eden EGRW1264 Head & Cab Package
16046 - Eich BC112 Bass Combo
19163 - Eich BC112 PRO Bass Combo
16028 - Eich BC112 Bass Combo
19034 - Eich BC112 Bass Combo, Secondhand

Fender

13497 - Fender Rumble 100 Bass Amp Combo
4238 - Fender Rumble 15 (15W, 1x8)
12745 - Fender Rumble 200 Bass Combo
15113 - Fender Rumble 25 Bass Amp Combo
13083 - Fender Rumble 40 Bass Amp Combo
15114 - Fender Rumble 500 Bass Amp Combo
17118 - Fender Rumble Studio 40, 1x10



16765 - Gallien Krueger MB110 Bass Combo
16445 - Gallien Krueger MB112 Bass Combo



6239 - Mark Bass CMD102P Bass Combo
5472 - Mark Bass CMD151P J Berlin (300W)
5429 - Mark Bass Covers For Mark Bass Amps
6240 - Mark Bass Mini CMD121P (300W, 1x12)
19641 - Mark Bass Mini CMD121P, 300W, Used
18371 - Markbass Marcus Miller CMD101 Micro60
18372 - Markbass Marcus Miller CMD 102 250
18370 - Markbass Marcus Miller CMD 102 500
9940 - Markbass Mini CMD 151 Jeff Berlin
9939 - Markbass MiniMark 802 Bass Combo
16764 - Markbass 102 250 Richard Bona Combo
19729 - Markbass Ninja 102-500 Bass Amp
9938 - MicroMark 801 Bass Combo



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

Bass Heads



14618 - Aguilar Tone Hammer 500 Bass Amp Head
15115 - Ashdown ABM 600 EVO IV 600W Head SH
18854 - Bergantino Custom Padded Carry Bag
18850 - Bergantino Forte Bass Amplifier
21556 - Bergantino NXT210 Bass Cab
13566 - Eden EGRW1264 Head & Cab Package
16044 - Eich T1000 Bass Amp
16043 - Eich T300 Bass Amp
16027 - Eich T500 Bass Amp
16026 - Eich T900 Bass Amp
19468 - GALLIEN KRUEGER LEGACY 500 Head
16318 - Gallien Krueger MB500 Bass Amp Head
16319 - Gallien Krueger MB500 Fusion Bass Amp H
17147 - Gallien Krueger MB800 Bass Head



14828 - Mark Bass Nano Mark 300 Bass Amp Head
10408 - Markbass Bass Multi Amp Stereo
6243 - Mark Bass Little Mark III Bass Head 500w
19081 - Mark Bass Little Mark III Bass Head USED
9035 - Markbass Little Mark III Tube Bass Head
5244 - Markbass Little Mark Tube 800, 800W
9256 - Markbass Big Bang 500W Bass Head
19484 - Markbass Evo 1 Bass Amp Head
17254 - Markbass Little Marcus 1000 Bass Amp
17252 - Markbass Little Marcus 250 Bass Amp Head
17009 - Markbass Little Marcus 500 Bass Amp Head
17010 - Markbass Little Marcus 800 Bass Amp Head
9941 - Markbass Little Mark 250 Head Black
15271 - Markbass Little Mark Ninja Bona Head
19282 - Markbass Little Mark Vintage Bass Amp Head
9944 - Markbass Multi Amp
15151 - Markbass Randy Jackson TTE501 Bass Head



15110 - Orange 4 Stroke 500 Bass Amp
6261 - Orange AD200 Mk3
8231 - Orange Dark Terror Valve Guitar Head
19674 - Orange Little Bass Thing Bass Amp Head
5351 - Orange Terror Bass 500 TB500
16531 - Trace Elliot Elf 200 Watt Bass Amp Head

5 & 6 String Basses



16526 - Cort GB75 5 String Bass, Black
18731 - Cort GB75J 5 String Bass Aqua Blue
16397 - Cort GB75J Amber Glossy 5 String Bass
21970 - ESP LTD RB1005 Rocco Prestia 5-String, Used
22064 - F Bass AC-Signature Fretless Bass, Used
16766 - Ibanez SR30TH5P Premium, 5-String Bass
22085 - MTD Kingston Z 5-String, Sunburst, Used
19381 - Marleaux MBass 5 String Bass, Burl Top
22357 - MusicMan JPB6 John Petrucci, Used
9009 - Overwater Contemporary 5-String, Used

Rickenbacker

21654 - Rickenbacker 4003S 5 Bass Guitar Jetglo
21655 - Rickenbacker 4003S5 String Bass Maplelgo
5121 - Rockbass Streamer LX5, Black, Used
21743 - Sandberg California TM5
21747 - Sandberg California 5 String Bass, Creme

Spector

19735 - Spector Bass Rebob 5DLX Blk Cherry
16773 - Spector Coda 5 Pro Trans Black
11196 - Spector Bass Legend 5 Classic Blk Cherry
12406 - Spector Legend Custom 5 String, Amber
16776 - Spector SP5BK Performer 5, Black Cherry
19158 - Sterling by MusicMan SubRay 5 Bass, HBS
8999 - Yamaha FBX5A2 5 String Bass, Black

Fretless Basses



22064 - F Bass AC-Signature Fretless, Used
14867 - Magic Fluke Timber Electric Bass
18083 - Rockbass Streamer LX4, Blk Used
14778 - Vintage ICON V74MRJP, Sunburst

Acoustic Bases



10498 - Ortega D Walker Acoustic Bass, Black
19342 - Ovation B778TX Electro Acoustic Bass
12180 - Protection Racket Ac. Bass Case Dlx
15117 - Takamine GB30CE E.Acoustic. Blk

Electric & Silent



14482 - NS Design NXT Electric Double Bass
16847 - NS Design NXTA Upright Bass, Active
14014 - Yamaha SLB100 Silent Upright Bass
6360 - Yamaha SLB200 Silent Double Bass
19938 - Yamaha SLB300 Silent Double Bass

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