

SPECIAL COLLECTOR'S EDITION

bassplayer



GREATEST *100,000 VOTES.* BASSISTS *100 KILLER PLAYERS.*

PLUS WHY THEY'RE GREAT BY

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WELCOME



We asked you who the greatest bassists of all time are. You answered.

What makes a great bass player? For most of us, the concept of greatness probably means technique, tastefulness, influence, or just doing something useful on bass that no-one else has done before. All those elements apply to this issue's long-awaited results of the 100 Greatest Bass Players poll that we ran online last year, and to which an astounding 100,000 and more of you responded.

Of course, there's more to greatness than just being good at what you do. There's another factor, too: Whether a bassist stood their ground in the face of opposition, or persevered with their art in impossible circumstances, or went above and beyond in their search for excellence. Add those into the mix, too, and what you come up with is something very close to true greatness.

Note that in this poll, unlike earlier attempts to define a single GOAT bass player, we're neither foolish nor egotistical enough to suggest that an individual bass player is the greatest ever. That just leads to negativity: Believe me, we've witnessed it. Instead, we've broken the world of bass down into musical genres, listing 10 bass players in each category: That's a much more arguable, and therefore more reasonable, approach to take. Still, who knows if the results will hit the right spot with the bass-playing community? Let us know where we got it right... or wrong.

One more thing. What have you done as a bass player that makes you great? And what could you do better? I'd like to hear your answers. See you next month!

Joel McIver, Editor



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Last summer, we asked you to choose the 100 Greatest Bass Players Of All Time. More than 100,000 of you responded, making this the ultimate list of its type, we think. We've divided it into musical genres, as follows...

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THE Lowdown

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

SNAKE RATTLE AND ROLL

Veteran rockers Whitesnake announce their new bassist

Whitesnake have announced a new bassist, Tanya O'Callaghan, for their upcoming farewell tour, who will replace their long-time bass player Michael Devin. O'Callaghan, an Irish musician who operates as an established freelance bassist, has a star-studded resume, which includes stints with Dee Snider, Steven Adler, and Maynard Keenan, as well as numerous TV appearances.

Breaking the news in a statement on the band's official website, Whitesnake singer David Coverdale wrote, "Well, well, well, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls. We are very proud to announce and introduce you all to our newest Snake... or should I say, Snakette! A whirling dervish of a performer whom we feel will bring a fresh, new, exciting musicality, and welcome energy to the band, both in the studio and onstage."

"For whatever reasons," Coverdale added, "Whitesnake has never featured a female musician in the band before. Bad boys! We are thrilled and delighted to welcome Tanya O'Callaghan to Whitesnake. Let the music do the talking!"

Coverdale went on to say that O'Callaghan was the first person Whitesnake contacted following Devin's departure, having been "blown away" by her performance at the 2019 M3 Festival, where she played in Steven Adler's band.

On her own social media account, O'Callaghan wrote, "I guess the snake's out of the bag. What an absolute honour to be joining Whitesnake/David Coverdale for their worldwide farewell tour. This small town gal still pinches herself over the amount of legends I've had the joy to work, tour and record with over the past few years since I made the terrifying solo leap across the Pacific with no clue how everything would unfold."

"It's been a wild ride, and just when I thought it couldn't get any better, who calls, only Whitesnake!" she continued. "And the best part, to step into the snake shoes of my bass brothers Rudy Sarzo, Tony Franklin, Neil Murray and Michael Devin... are you kidding me? What an honour beyond belief. My heart is exploding."

Whitesnake are currently preparing for their worldwide farewell tour, which is set to kick off in May next year. ■



© Scott D'Amico/Getty

Tanya O'Callaghan: here
she goes again, but not
on her own

ROBBIE SHAKESPEARE RIP

The great reggae bassist and producer Robbie Shakespeare died in early December, aged 68. Often paired with the equally great drummer Sly Dunbar, Shakespeare was half of one of the world's most sought-after rhythm sections, playing with artists such as Bob Dylan, Sinead O'Connor, and many others. Announcing his passing, Jamaica's Culture Minister Olivia Grange said "Sly and Robbie took bass playing and drumming to the highest level as they made music for themselves as a

group, and for many other artistes locally and internationally."

Jamaica's Prime Minister Andrew Holness added, "When it comes to reggae bass playing, no-one comes close to having the influence of Robbie Shakespeare." The music business had long known this about Shakespeare, nominating him for 13 Grammy awards over the years, of which he won two in 1984 and '88. ■



© Scott Dudelson/Getty



Big Notes

Troy Johnson, bassist with Ratt frontman Stephen Percy, has announced this unique bass instrument, which can be played with a guitar strap, or with an endpin like an upright bass.

"I would go from the upright, to the guitarrón/mariachi bass and the harp guitar, plucking, and listening," Johnson has said. "I then drew up a trapezoidal flatback body with guitarrón/Ernie Ball Earthwood dimensions, and an extended harp arm that connects to the headstock, almost creating a small grand piano... it has more volume, sustain, durability, and playability than any acoustic bass in the known universe." ■



Pine Time

G&L has updated its Fullerton Deluxe bass guitar line with the Western sugar pine-bodied JB-5. According to G&L, sugar pine is a light wood with striking resonance, and on this bass it's paired with a maple neck boasting a 9 1/2 radius and Jescar 57110 medium-jumbo nickel-silver frets. Sonically, the bass is armed with a pair of G&L Alnico jazz pickups, controlled by a pair of volume knobs and a single tone. The G&L Fullerton Deluxe JB-5 bass is available now in Tobacco Sunburst and Himalayan Blue finishes for \$1,799. ■



As They Are

Our chum John Patitucci, veteran bassist and winner of 2019's Bass Player Lifetime Achievement Award, returns on a new album, *As We Are*, from guitarist Dave Stryker. "I've always loved the way Dave plays guitar," says Patitucci. "He's a soulful, blues-oriented player, with a beautiful touch and tone. His originals were fun to play, with plenty of harmonic sophistication, but lyrical, too. He's the real deal."

On the new album, Stryker and Patitucci are accompanied by Julian Shore (piano), Brian Blade (drums), and a full string section. "It's my dream project," says Stryker. "I always wanted to do something where strings would really be integrated into the music, not a coloring or sweetening that comes in later." The album consists of six new Stryker originals, a Shore original, and a cover of Nick Drake's 'River Man', arranged with string quartet by Shore to create, we're told, "one of the most truly beautiful and exciting recordings in recent times." ■



Justin Chancellor: a smokin' bassist

© Steven Fardim/ Getty Images

TOOL BOX

Justin Chancellor announces signature Dunlop Cry Baby Wah

Tool bassist Justin Chancellor has been treated to a versatile new wah pedal, which boasts a modified circuit, and crams three of his favorite effects into one unit. Dubbed a "multi-tool of sonic craftsmanship", Chancellor's wah pedal serves up a custom-voiced midrange filter, a chainsaw-esque vintage fuzz and a classic modified wah, which promises "bright aggression".

The UK Filter voice boasts a custom solid-state circuit that pays homage to the envelope-like filtering of the tone control on Chancellor's bass, and can be combined with the fuzz to curate smooth, synth-y sounds. Elsewhere, the wah utilizes a classic red Fasel Inductor and takes inspiration from the circuitry of a modified Cry Baby, which has been favored for its harmonics and aggressive character.

As for the fuzz, Chancellor's preferred tone has been modelled on an unspecified device of vintage UK origin—Dunlop has

handily supplied Tool's 'Jambi' as a reference track—and at default is the only thing you'll hear when using the rocker pedal. Each additional effect can be selected via the onboard control layout, which features two footswitches that flick between the Wah and Fuzz modes, as well as individual Volume and Q control knobs for the Wah and UK Filter effects.

While Volume is self-explanatory, Q adjusts the

bandpass shape for each voice from wide to narrow. The fuzz tones, meanwhile, are controlled by three parameters for

Chancellor's pedal serves up chainsaw-esque fuzz and a wah that promises "bright aggression"

Fuzz, Tone and Volume, with a Fuzz Independent side-mounted kick switch and LED indicator allowing you to access uncompromising fuzz tones without additional wah action.

As for how Chancellor himself uses the pedal with his own Tool rig, Dunlop says he uses the UK Filter by itself, but will combine the Wah and Fuzz voices for his heavy-hitting soundscapes.

The Justin Chancellor Cry Baby Wah is available at \$299. ■

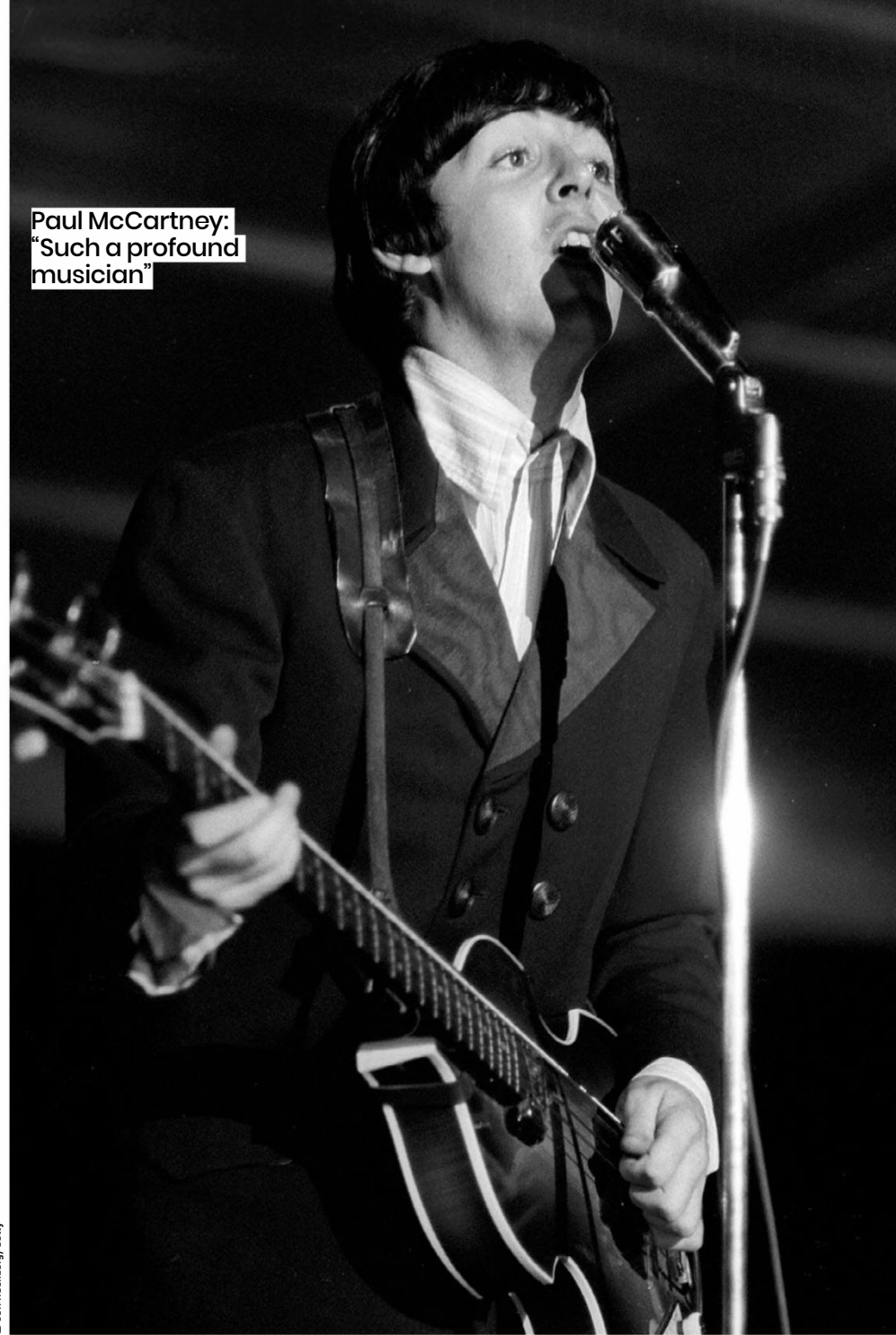
The BEATLES

IN THE Groove

THE BEATLES
THE BEATLES
(APPLE, 1968)

Paul McCartney:
“Such a profound
musician”

© Jeff Hochberg/Getty



Every month, a noted bassist pays tribute to an album that influenced them. Here, Enuff Z’Nuff bassist **Chip Z’Nuff** salutes the Beatles’ self-titled ‘White Album’ of 1968

“**T**he idea of doing a Beatles covers album came to me a few years ago. We’ve been influenced by the Beatles for years, and I love all their stuff from the early days, but I also love their music from 1967, and

I thought perhaps we could dive into that. The first track I recorded was John Lennon’s ‘Cold Turkey’, and it was solid as a rock. We just bashed it out live, basically, with no overdubs.

“The ‘White Album’ is my favorite Beatles album. They were really experimenting back then. I don’t think they were really writing for radio any more—they were just writing for themselves.

“There’s just so much information on this record, you know, not only about their everyday experiences, but lots of storytelling too, that is just fabulous. Those cats are great liars—because every word they sing, we believe them.

“In terms of bass, the record starts off with ‘Back In The USSR’: It sounds like Paul just plugged that Beatle bass into maybe an Ampeg B-15. I like his aggressive playing on that track, but to be honest with

you, the whole record is fabulous. Every single song catches my attention. ‘Wild Honey Pie’ would be another great song for bass, or ‘While My Guitar Gently Weeps’.

“One thing that John Lennon didn’t like was overplaying—he didn’t want a lot of bass notes. But when he heard the bass parts that Paul recorded, he didn’t touch them. He didn’t say one word, because they fit perfectly. I heard in the old days that McCartney was a little bit insecure about his bass playing, but there was no reason to be, because he was such a profound musician. He’s a multi-instrumentalist, and he really was the real McCoy.”

Chip Z’Nuff’s *Hard Rock Nite* album of Beatles songs is out now.
Info: www.enuffznuff.com.

“On the ‘White Album’, the Beatles stopped writing for radio. They were writing for themselves”



© Scott Duvelson/Getty

The Albums That Made Me



THUNDER All The Right Noises (2021)

"Recording live
can inspire you."

"We recorded at Rockfield, largely live, to get the vibe. Luke Morley, our guitarist, is also like the musical director, and he produced it too. When he writes the demos, he writes the bass-lines, and obviously I get the opportunity to put in anything that might be appropriate—fills and so on. He's actually a very good bass player, with a bassist's sensibilities, and that means he really approaches the lines from a bass point of view. Now, 99 percent of the time I use a pick, which is more appropriate when you're going for a more aggressive sound, but on the song 'Don't Forget To Live Before You Die', I played fingerstyle with quite a distorted sound. That was fun to do. When I first started recording, it was on two-inch tape, using 24-track machines, so you didn't get that many goes at it. You had to get your technique down, and if you wanted to do something different, you had to have the confidence that you were going to get it right. Recording live brings some of that back, and can inspire you: Something can just pop out, like a little spark of imagination. Listen out for a slide up the fretboard in 'Don't Forget...' that isn't difficult or technically challenging, but it gives extra power and excitement, and was totally unplanned."

THIS MONTH

Chris Childs

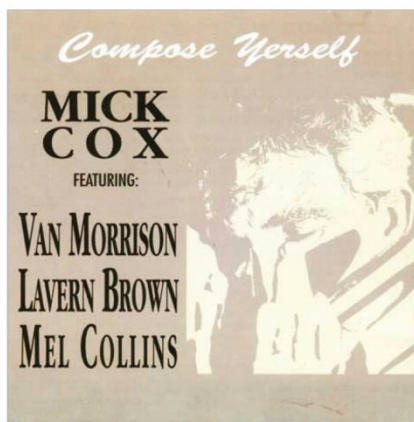
Thunder's bassist reviews five career-defining albums.

Christopher James Childs, to give him his full name, was born in the UK village of Writtle, Essex in 1959. The bass player and producer joined rock legends Thunder in 1996 and continues to hammer out irresistible tunes with the band to this day. In the live arena, his low-end antics have been much in demand by a diverse host of names including Paul Young, Roger Daltrey, Russ Ballard,

Don Airey, Lulu, and Samantha Fox. He has lent his bass skills to other household names, including Bad Company vocalist Robert Hart, Colin Blunstone, Andy Summers, Robert Fripp, Then Jericho, and Go West. He has also guested alongside other bass legends like Nathan East, Pino Palladino, and Abraham Laboriel.

It's fair to say that Childs is one of the UK's most talented and high-achieving bassists,

then, but it doesn't stop there: He's also very active in the roles of producer, engineer, mastering engineer, and graphic designer. He's also a fellow whose enthusiasm for music and bass playing is as honest and thoughtful as it is inspiring. We caught up with Childs recently and he waxed lyrical about his influences, various recording styles, Frankenstein basses, and the fascinating synergy of feel, technique, and aggression. ■

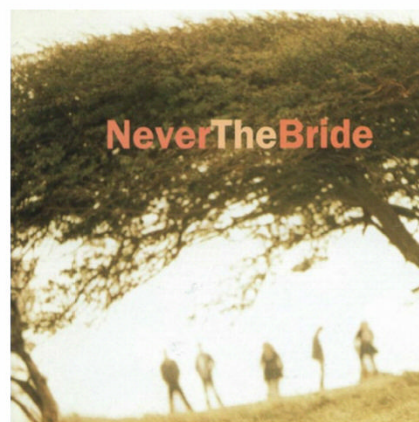


MICK COX Compose Yourself (1990)

“We came up with this on the spot.”

“We went to the studio with no preparation whatsoever. Mick would play a song, we’d learn it and then just as soon as we got on top of it, we’d record it. I’m proud of what I played on this, with lots of fretless bass, which I don’t often get a chance to do. It was the first record that I had a hand in producing and mixing, too. I made the bass myself, actually, and I can’t believe I did that, looking back on it. I didn’t have a great deal of power tools at the time, and so my lounge was completely covered in wood shavings and sawdust.

“Mick gave us a lot of freedom, with the chords and the shape of the songs, so we literally came up with the parts on the spot from front to back. It was a fascinating process, because Mick was a fascinating character. He told us that Jimi Hendrix once gave him a multicolored, psychedelic-painted Gibson Flying V which subsequently got stolen, but whoever had it away clearly didn’t realize its provenance and how valuable it would be, because it just disappeared. The album is memorable for me because one of the tracks was recorded on the day my daughter Rachel was born. She appeared at about 4am—and about six hours later we were in the studio again. The album is dedicated to her.”



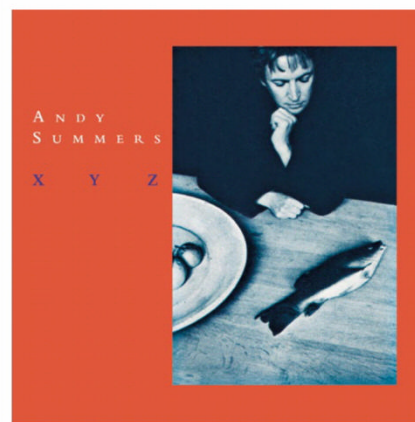
NEVER THE BRIDE Never The Bride (1995)

“Studios vary in vibe and gear.”

“This was the first album I recorded in America. We did two weeks of pre-production in the rehearsal room to get the vibe together, and then went over to Runway Recording in Los Angeles. We recorded it live, which is a brilliant way to work, but I was working with headphones, isolated, with a mixer and monitors so I had my own mix. This was a really different approach to making records, because the drummer had a tech who sorted the kit and changed the heads, and it was so different to working in England. It was a great studio and a really good record to make—and it’s all about the time and the place. That’s what stands out for me.

“Studios vary in vibe and gear. These days I like to use Focusrite preamps and a Universal Audio Apollo Twin straight into them. I also tend to use a lot of Softube software, and there are hardware controllers for that, which is very important. That tactile experience makes your ears take over, rather than simply using your eyes to adjust parameters on a screen.

“If I’m going to do a general session, I take a Fender Bassman and DI with whatever boxes they might have in the studio. I’ve been working on Cubase for a while, but I have ProTools too in case somebody wants to use it.”



ANDY SUMMERS XYZ (1987)

“My hand was like a claw afterwards.”

“On this album, the part on the song ‘Eyes Of A Stranger’ that I recorded was made up of really fast eighth notes, and Andy said, ‘Play it only with downstrokes!’ I thought, ‘Okay, this is a rite of passage’, so I did it—my hand was like a claw by the end of it.

“At first, I didn’t understand it: I thought he was asking me to do something that wasn’t really necessary, but it turned out to be exactly what he was after—that aggression and consistency in the sound. Andy is a very accomplished guitarist, of course, and though I wouldn’t say that it contains some of the best bass playing I’ve ever done, this record was definitely interesting to make.

“That’s because technique wasn’t important this time. When most bass players start out, they strive to become as technically adept as possible—but it’s not always about sheer technique. Look at John Entwistle, who played very messily, technically speaking, but what he did was absolutely unbelievable—you don’t realize how good he was until you try and recreate his lines. He had grace and aggression in his playing, and you realize that it’s the intent of that playing, even more than the choice of notes, that makes it incredible.”



LONERIDER Attitude (2019)

“This was a dream come true for me.”

“I’ve been a fan of drummer Simon Kirke forever, because I was a huge fan of Free and Bad Company. They were the influences on my playing as I was learning, as was Andy Fraser, so getting the opportunity to work with Simon in the studio was a dream come true.

“You never know, actually, when you work with someone like that, how they’re going to be, but Simon was absolutely brilliant—the nicest guy, everything that I’d hoped he would be. He was very energetic, and very into the music: We would record as soon as we got an idea down. I was thinking, ‘The guy who played on ‘All Right Now’ is truly enjoying what I’m playing’.

“We did another session last year, recorded remotely, and you know, it felt as though something had fallen short, because it felt very different. The process of recording online was a lot more clinical than in person, because without the collaboration, you don’t get that spark.

“I guess it’s a product of the times, but I like the finished record, and it was a lot of fun to play with Simon before that. I’ve ended up doing a few records like this over the last couple of years, with people sending me stuff and recording remotely, as pretty much everyone has.”

I WAS THERE!

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

In 1994, Duff McKagan of Guns N'Roses just about survives the explosion of his pancreas...

One day, a movie should be made about the chaotic story of Guns N'Roses, perhaps the last and greatest hard rock band of the last century. Too full of egos to last more than a decade or so at the top, but too talented to drop off the radar completely, the LA band built a reputation for their anthemic songs and their relentless debauchery from 1987 to approximately 1994, when internal tensions caused the band to implode. For our purposes, much of GN'R's musicality can be attributed to Michael 'Duff' McKagan, the punk rocker from Seattle who moved to Hollywood in the mid-Eighties and became a huge star.

Duff, who became iconic for his energetic, melodic playing—delivered on a Fender, with a cigarette permanently drooping from his mouth, and the requisite hairspray explosion atop his head—is a mellower person these days. Most of Guns N'Roses dabbled a little too much with drink and drugs in their time, but Duff took it to the extreme, diving so deeply into the bottom of a bottle that he almost died of alcoholic poisoning in 1994. The extent of his booze habit meant that his pancreas “basically exploded”, in his words.

“You gotta understand,” Duff told *BP* a while back, “the amount of alcohol that I drank wasn’t just a nice, go-to-the-bar-for-a-couple-of-beers type of thing, it was full-on. A gallon of vodka a day, plus whatever drugs I could ingest. That will take its toll on your body pretty quick. I was a still a relatively young man when my pancreas just said, ‘Fuck you!’, you know? You can handle it as a professional alcoholic, but your body will start to rebel. Luckily for me, because it brought me close to death, it made me think, ‘Okay, this is serious’... I was fortunate that it happened, because it woke me up—I was like, ‘Holy fuck!’ I was also fortunate because it didn’t kill me. I’ve been sober since then.”

Guns N'Roses continue to tour to this day, much healthier and wiser. Who could have predicted that, in 2022? ■





Main pic: Duff in 1994.
Below: Jamming with
Bo Diddley and BB
King in '95.

@ Jeff Krantz / FilmMagic, Inc.

Hello, bassists! This time around, I want to dig into the visual side of live performance, and the importance of aesthetics. As much as we concentrate our pursuits on the sonic sensibilities of our sound, both individual and as a band, we'd be naive to believe that this is all that counts when it comes to putting ourselves out there.

Music is as much of a visual art as it is an audible one. When we talk about going to a live show, we say that we're going to go and 'see' a gig, rather than we're going to go and 'listen' to a gig. This is one reason why bands such as U2, Coldplay, and Muse sell out massive shows time and time again: Their gigs are a multimedia experience, aided by elaborate visual productions. So, with that established, let's consider how you can make your live performance look a little better.

POSITIONING

Try to create a visual that highlights the frontperson but which also provides symmetry

for the band, both in width and depth. The scientist Alan Lightman mentions that human brains strive to see things symmetrically, because we crave order among the chaos of life!

IMAGE

Like the Nik Wests, MonoNeons, and Bootsy Collinses of the bass world, we should take care when crafting our appearance. There is a reason why they are visually memorable figures in our community, aside from being monster bass players. Think about how your band's image translates to your audience. If you're all mismatched, and no consideration has been put into a unified look, then you will look like amateurs. You don't need to wear completely matching

outfits, but a color scheme or a certain style of clothing will bring you together as a professional-looking unit.

STAGE SET

Can you include additional lighting in your setup? Could your lighting be operated to sync with the music? Do you have a backdrop with your band name or album artwork? Could you add risers to elevate your band members? Is your backline sufficient to provide a more pro look? Would dummy cabs help to fill out the stage? Could you add furniture or stage props to create a specific aesthetic? Consider these questions for a more refined production and a more exciting visual for your audience.



Maximize your live bass playing with Tax The Heat bassist and BIMM Senior Lecturer Antonio Angotti.



BIMM
INSTITUTE

STAGECRAFT

At the core of every great live performance is a solid command of stagecraft. In today's live climate, there is no room for static or dull performances. You need to provide buckets of energy, emotion, movement, and interaction. For the audience, a live show is an escape from everyday life—so what can you do to ensure that they receive an experience that keeps them coming back every time? ■

The Woodshed

Three elements found in every bass guitar combine to influence its acoustic performance: The body, neck, and fretboard. In my next few articles, we'll explore these critical primary components of every bass guitar.

First, let's consider the body. The majority of electric bass guitar bodies are constructed using a slab of solid wood, typically assembled from two or three boards. In the case of bolt-on and set-neck instruments, a single, wide board is sometimes used. Despite being solid wood, an electric guitar body contributes to the acoustic performance of an instrument.

Just like their acoustic counterparts, electric guitars vibrate through their entirety. Vibration is critical to the performance of every guitar, and

THE ACOUSTICS OF BASS

What resonates inside your bass?

the efficiency of the transfer of vibration through an instrument is key to its individual character. Certain woods and combinations of woods can influence the prominence and suppression of certain frequencies. The density of wood affects its overall resonant qualities, influencing the note bloom, decay, overall sustain, and sympathetic frequencies. Soft woods generally possess better bass response than harder woods, which, in contrast, typically provide a stronger midrange and brighter highs.

The predictable performance characteristics of some woods have made them dependable choices for bass. Ash, alder, and mahogany have been mainstay choices of the industry for years, but lesser-known woods with similar physical characteristics can make excellent substitutes.

In the case of laminated bodies, the addition of a figured wood top can affect the performance of the primary body wood with which it is paired, the combination of woods working to balance the performance characteristics of



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

one with the other. For example, the addition of a hardwood top can add some top-end shimmer to a body made from a lower-density wood which offers good low performance, but which lacks high-frequency definition. Additionally, the thickness of a top wood can make its influence more or less significant, while adding a figured wood top to a primary body wood of similar density may exert almost no influence at all. ■



Joe Hubbard takes us through ways to exploit this useful item of theory

EXPLORE CONCEPTS IN 3/4 TIME

When we're asked to play specific grooves in time signatures other than 4/4, questions arise as how to interpret the specific rhythm and feel. To develop a feel for 3/4 jazz, it's always a good idea to listen to recordings and learn to play along with them. This is really essential for your overall progress, and often overlooked.

In essence, 3/4 is comprised of three different feels—the One Feel, the Two Feel and the Three Feel. We explore these below. As a bass player, understanding how to phrase the 3/4 groove is a combination of how you are interpreting the rhythms being played, and how you are interacting with the other musicians on the bandstand. These feels will help you do that.

Musicians interpret rhythms in 4/4 differently to the way they do in 3/4 because of the perception of the underlying pulse. What

we need is to develop a strong rhythmic interpretation so that we can learn to feel the groove in 3/4 more naturally.

EXERCISE 1

The first feel in 3/4 that we want to focus on is the One Feel. This is where we accent the first beat in each bar and sustain it throughout the duration of each bar. This is written as a dotted half note. The trick to this exercise is to set your metronome at 50 beats per minute and hear that click of the downbeat of each bar. You'll be counting 1-2-3, 1-2-3, and so on, and the click is only heard on beat 1.

EXERCISE 2

The Two Feel in 3/4 is where things start to get interesting, because essentially it creates a polyrhythm of 2 against 3. To understand this, start thinking of how the 8th notes would sound by counting 1 and 2 and 3: Then reinterpret those syllables as 1-2-3, 1-2-3.

This will divide a bar of 3/4 into two equal parts. What you'll also notice is that the first 1 falls on the downbeat of the bar, while the second 1 falls on the 'and' of beat 2. Once you have the co-ordination down, add the click and practice this in real time.

EXERCISE 3

The Three Feel is basically walking in 3/4, so the counting goes back to the same process that we used in Exercise 1. It's a good idea to stick to chord tones and tensions when walking in 3/4 so that you can represent the sound of the chords in your lines. Again, once you're familiar with playing this line, then add the first click of the bar while you play quarter notes throughout. Once you are comfortable with all three feels, experiment by going from one feel to another within the same chord progression.

Until next time—practice smart, work hard and play creatively! ■

EXERCISE ONE

B $\flat$ Δ 7 G7(b9) Cm7 F7

Count: 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3

EXERCISE TWO

B $\flat$ Δ 7 G7(b9) Cm7 F7

Count Double: 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3

EXERCISE THREE

B $\flat$ Δ 7 G7(b9) Cm7 F7

Count: 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3



THE 100 GREATEST BASSISTS

Last summer, we asked you to nominate the GOAT Bass Player in a series of musical categories. An unprecedented 100,000 votes later, let's see who you chose!

Writers: Hywel Davies, Joel McIver, Joe Shooman **Photography:** Getty

We've all asked ourselves who the greatest bassist in history might be. Why do we do this? The answer is simple—because we love bass and the musicians who play it. The coolest instrument ever invented deserves its own GOAT list, even though we'll never really agree on who's really the best bassist of all, so we ran a poll at www.guitarworld.com in the summer of 2021 to see what you thought about this important matter.

Make no mistake, we thought long and hard about how to take a snapshot of bass in 2021. It's a fun but tricky task,

because there are so many amazing bass players around, from young social media stars to veterans who've been on *Bass Player's* cover many times since we published our first issue in 1990.

What's more, accomplished bass players can be found in all genres of music. We solved that by splitting 200 possible candidates into 10 categories, each as historically important as the rest, and we asked you to vote for as many of your favorites as you wished.

Without further ado, behold the greatest, best, most influential and all-round coolest members of our community... ■



"I am a very bad imitation of Jerry Jemmott."
Jaco Pastorius, as told to Peter Mengaziol in *Guitar World*, 1983

01 JACO PASTORIUS

It's arguable that the greatest bass player who has ever lived was the late Jaco Pastorius, whose breathtaking technique, coupled with searing innovation, inexhaustible creativity, and a charismatic personality, has made him a bass legend like none other before or since. It's a sign of this unique status that we in the bass-playing community only need to use his first name when referring to him: Like Elvis, Madonna, and Prince, everybody knows who Jaco was.

Born on December 1, 1951 in Norristown, Pennsylvania, John Francis Pastorius III started his musical education with the jazz which his father, Jack, a professional drummer, played for him. He trained as a drummer for some time, but his career as a sticksman was cut short when he broke his right wrist in a soccer game at the age of 13, leaving him with insufficient power to play the drums successfully. Jaco then switched to less demanding disciplines, studying no fewer than four other instruments simultaneously—piano, saxophone, guitar, and bass.

He might never have emerged from relative obscurity if it hadn't been for a chance meeting in 1975 with Joe Zawinul, leader of the renowned fusion outfit Weather Report. Zawinul was amused rather than impressed by Jaco when he introduced himself with the words "I'm John Francis Pastorius III and I'm the greatest bass player in the world", a brag he had been making since the tender age of 18. "Get the fuck outta here!" was Joe's response.

Jaco made his name with Weather Report and a phenomenal self-titled solo album in 1975, but struggles with a bipolar condition and drugs effectively ended his career, before he lost his life in 1987 in a fight with a nightclub bouncer.

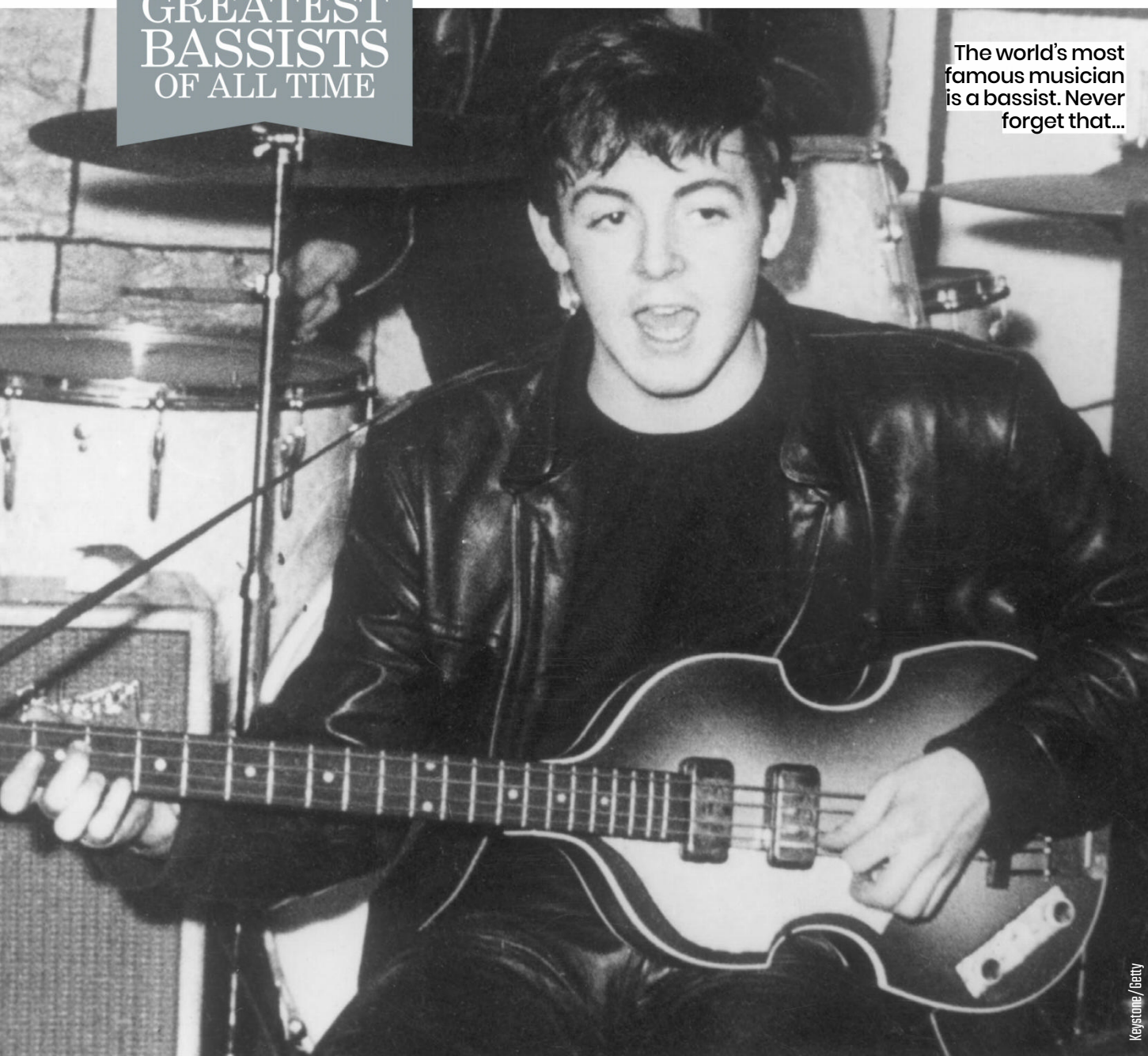
He is our Jimi Hendrix: a musician who burned brightly but too briefly, and whose genius we're still trying to figure out.

THE PIONEERS

The musicians who first brought bass to the forefront:
We owe them *everything*

Paul Nathan/Getty

100 GREATEST BASSISTS OF ALL TIME



The world's most famous musician is a bassist. Never forget that...

Keystone/Getty

02 PAUL MCCARTNEY

You might reasonably define Sir Paul McCartney as the co-leader of the Beatles, the most famous rock star in the world, an incredible singer-songwriter or a spokesperson for a generation—but we regard him primarily as the first major musician to do interesting things with a bass guitar.

As you know, the bass was regarded as by far the least cool instrument in the Fifties, at least in rock and roll bands. The instrument was usually handed to the band-member who could most easily be persuaded or bullied into playing it. Bass amps lacked power, and most bass guitars—the hallowed Fender Precision aside, which few musicians could afford—were basically junk. You couldn't get any clarity out of the strings, and even if you could, your amp couldn't make you loud enough to cut through the guitars. If you were

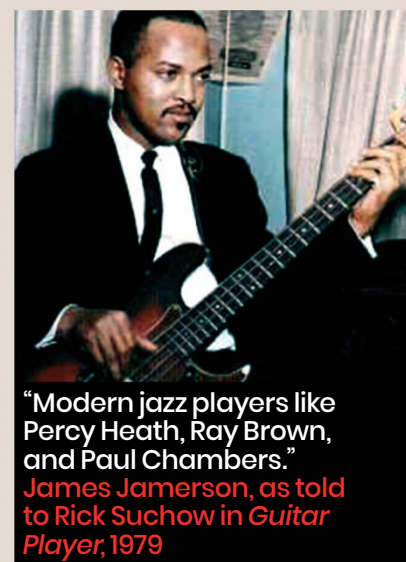
the bass player, you were the butt of many a joke. McCartney got rid of all that nonsense.

Through the Beatles' rock'n'roll years, let's say up to the release of *Help!* in '65, McCartney's bass parts were known for being fast but supportive; by the

“In the Fifties, bass players were often the butt of many a joke. McCartney got rid of all that”

middle of the decade, he had switched to a more robust bass, a Rickenbacker 4001S, and begun to elevate his lines' melodic content. Simple bass parts still abounded in his repertoire, in order to properly serve songs such as 'Ticket To Ride' and the descending part which anchored 'Nowhere Man', but as time passed the bass began to be more and more important. By

Revolver (1966), he was all over songs like 'She Said She Said', 'And Your Bird Can Sing', and 'Taxman', in which he echoes the lightning-speed central guitar riff with little apparent effort. Fifty years later, he's still doing it, and he's a Sir, too.



Michael Ochs Archives/Getty

“Modern jazz players like Percy Heath, Ray Brown, and Paul Chambers.”
James Jamerson, as told to Rick Suchow in *Guitar Player*, 1979

03 JAMES JAMERSON

Along with Carol Kaye and arguably Macca, the Motown legend James Jamerson was the Year Zero, the founding father, the very DNA of the electric bass. You know the stories: He never changed his strings; he only plucked with one finger, 'The Hook'; his career ended when times changed and slap bass got popular. Thankfully Jamerson's legacy is now acknowledged and secure. Listen to him, and learn.



GAB Archive/Rediffusion/Getty

04 CAROL KAYE

It's nearly impossible to select a recording from the 1950s into the 1970s that doesn't feature Carol Kaye. She was top call for producers and engineers, tracking albums, television scores, and movie soundtracks. Today, she is primarily focused on being an educator. She maintains a website and a Facebook page, where she communicates with fans and shares music and memories. She has authored numerous educational books, beginning with 1969's *How To Play The Electric Bass*, and released many instructional DVDs and CDs. She is unique.



The great Stanley Clarke in his element

05 STANLEY CLARKE

A maverick in so many ways, Stanley Clarke blew our minds in each one of his creative guises, whether as a member of the fusion monsters Return To Forever, as a fiery solo artist, as a highly prolific movie soundtrack composer, or as a member of projects such as SMV with Marcus Miller and Victor Wooten. He's still breaking boundaries today, at an age when most of us would be taking it easy.

06 JACK BRUCE

For many years a double bass player influenced more by jazz and classical music than rock, Jack Bruce brought an acute melodic awareness to the bass guitar from the moment he picked one up. By the time he was 30, he was a veteran of Alexis Korner's Blues Inc., the Graham Bond Organisation—an incarnation of which featured the young John McLaughlin—John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, innumerable sessions and, of course, Cream, in which he created a mesmerizing, blues- and jazz-laced rock spectacle alongside Ginger Baker and Eric Clapton. After Cream split in late 1968, Bruce went on to release a string of solo albums, which demonstrated his trademark blend of jazz, rock, blues, and world influences.

07 CHARLES MINGUS

Improvisation genius Charles Mingus, Jr. changed the world of jazz bass forever. He actually started on trombone before moving to cello, but the overt racism of the Fifties closed classical doors to him, and Mingus settled on double bass in high school. Studying under Herman Reinshagen, his classical influences helped him break through as an innovator, working with Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, and the great Charlie Parker. His Jazz Workshop brought together a host of musicians to try and keep up with his flights of fancy, before Mingus smashed through the 1960s with a series of boundary-stretching albums. Sadly, in the 1970s, Mingus was diagnosed with motor neurone disease, which robbed him of his co-ordination, stopped him playing the bass and ended his life in 1979, aged 56.



Michael Ochs Archives/Getty

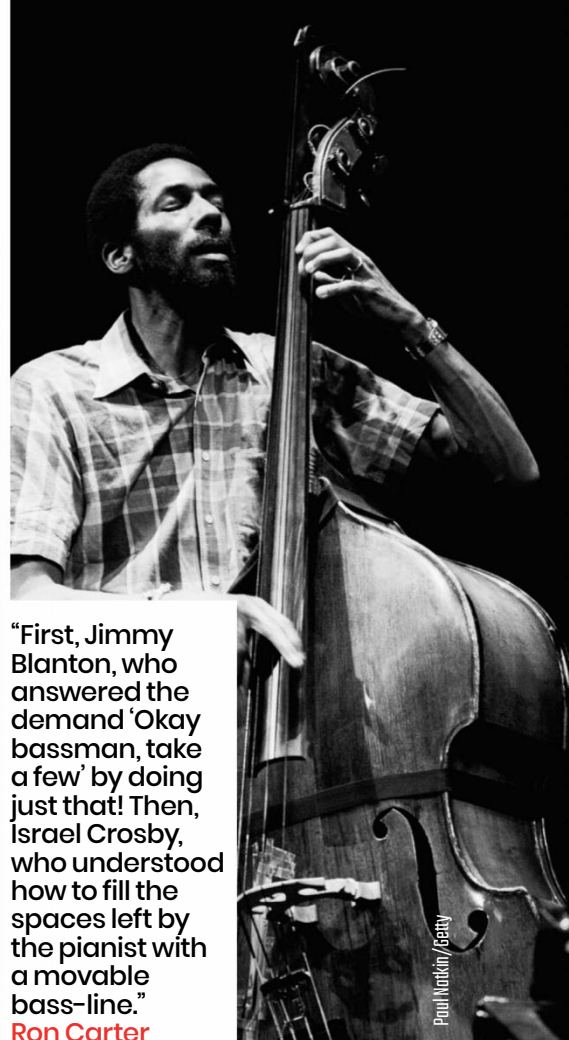
"Charles Mingus. Charlie Haden." Jack Bruce, talking to BP in 2005

08 RON CARTER

If your life's achievements add up to a quarter of what Ron Carter has done in his career so far, you'll have led a first-class sojourn on this planet. He has a bewildering array of data on his resume: We can talk endlessly about the 2,200-plus recordings that he's completed, for which he's earned a Guinness Book Of Records award; we can discuss his classical background and education, or his immersion in New York's never-more-swinging jazz scene in the Sixties. We would be remiss if we didn't mention Miles Davis, in whose immortal second Quintet he played alongside Herbie Hancock and Tony Williams; his roles as a university educator and author; and the long series of solo and collaborative albums which Carter continues to release to this day.

09 RAY BROWN

If the parents of Raymond Matthews Brown had been better off when he was a schoolkid in the 1930s, you'd now be reading a *Star Trombonist* profile. Thankfully for us—if not for the young Ray—his folks couldn't afford the brass instrument, and so he took to the upright bass instead. And what a decision that was, leading to a 60-year career that took in work with the likes of Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, Ella Fitzgerald—to whom he was briefly married—Buddy Rich, and Frank Sinatra, through to Kiri Te Kanawa, Diana Krall and Larry Fuller. Brown is one of the legends of jazz and in particular bebop, due to his work with Oscar Peterson. Multiple Grammy-winner Ray passed away on July 2, 2002 at the age of 75, touring to the very last.



"First, Jimmy Blanton, who answered the demand 'Okay bassman, take a few' by doing just that! Then, Israel Crosby, who understood how to fill the spaces left by the pianist with a movable bass-line." Ron Carter

10 DAVE HOLLAND

Few musicians can match the pedigree of the English jazz bassist Dave Holland, thanks to his work with Miles Davis, Stan Getz and just about everyone else. Born in 1946 and a star by his mid-twenties, he has performed with such an array of influential musicians—and in so many different bands—that it's hard to describe his contribution in a few words. Look at the map of jazz history and he's all over it. After moving to London in 1964 and scoring a regular slot at Ronnie Scott's, Holland met Miles Davis. "The drummer Philly Joe Jones came up to me and said, 'Dave, Miles wants you to join his band!' A few weeks later, I got a call from his agent, asking me if I could be in New York in two days to start work."

Runners-Up

Paul Chambers
Scott LaFaro
Charlie Haden
Joe Osborn
Oscar Pettiford
Jimmy Blanton
Milt Hinton
Percy Heath
Israel Lopez Valdes
Bobby Rodriguez

A photograph of Victor Wooten performing on stage. He is a Black man with dreadlocks, wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt. He is holding a light-colored double bass and has his right arm raised in the air. The background is dark with some stage lighting.

Victor Wooten:
a genius, pure
and simple

JAZZ AND FUSION

Your Top 10 jazz and fusion bassists are revealed below. Raise a glass! It's a tricky category, of course, because so many jazz legends appear in our Pioneers poll—but you catch our drift, right? If a jazz-related great isn't in either of these two categories, we'll want to know why.

01 VICTOR WOOTEN

Record company owner, songwriter, producer, book author, magician, acrobat, naturalist... oh, and a wonderful bassist, too. Victor Lemonte Wooten has certainly packed in the adventures in a life that began on September 11, 1964 in Mountain Home, Idaho.

He wasn't the first bassist in the Wooten family, though: That honor went to his brother Regi, who subsequently taught two-year-old Victor the basics. Four years later, Victor was performing with the Wooten Brothers Band. Later, Victor met banjo player Béla Fleck, and by 1988 the pair, enhanced by Victor's brother Roy and Howard Levy on

piano and harmonica, formed Béla Fleck and the Flecktones. The band continues to ride rampantly across genres—always inventive, always playful. Victor plays a bit of cello in the band now and again, having learned in school, but generally you'll find him playing a Fodera Monarch, or his signature Fodera Yin-Yang, which he helped design. He also has a Compito fretless five-string and Upton stand-up basses.

Wooten's first solo album, *A Show Of Hands*, was recorded with only a four-string bass; a love letter to the instrument, it is considered to be a seminal release. Wooten has also worked with offshoot Vital Tectones, plus

releases with Bass Extremes alongside Steve Bailey and SMV with Stanley Clarke and Marcus Miller. Oh, and he's won five Grammys along the way.

Wooten kicked things up a notch in 2008 by concurrently releasing *Palmystery*—an album featuring everyone from Bootsy to Will Lee—as well as a mystical novel called *The Music Lesson: A Spiritual Search For Growth Through Music*. The book was subsequently added to curricula in universities such as Stanford and the influential Berklee College of Music.

It's little wonder that Wooten has been repeatedly voted as best bassist by readers of this very magazine. Long may he reign.

M. Von Holden/FilmMagic/Getty

100 GREATEST BASSISTS OF ALL TIME

02 MARCUS MILLER

Brooklyn's William Henry Marcus Miller, Jr has so many strings to his bow that his four-string mastery is only one part of his stellar career. Born on 14 June, 1959, he has composed music for movies, worked as an arranger and a record producer, and played with the likes of Luther Vandross and Miles Davis. Miller was also a member of the Saturday Night Live house band in the early Eighties, and of his 500-plus recordings, he has featured in sessions with Michael Jackson, Frank Sinatra, Elton John, and Chaka Khan. He has multiple Grammy Award nominations, with two wins.

03 JOHN PATITUCCI

There are many giants in the jazz/fusion field, but many look up to John Patitucci. A real student of jazz, he has been the artistic director of New York's Bass Collective, a professor of Jazz Studies at City College, and he has hosted numerous bass masterclasses, both online and in person. He was born in Brooklyn on December 22, 1959 and studied at both San Francisco State and Long Beach Universities. His work with Chick Corea and Wayne Shorter is some of his best-known, and he swaps effortlessly between double bass and electric where needed.

ESPERANZA SPALDING

04 With four Grammys under her belt, Esperanza Spalding's career has already been out of this world, and she's still only 37 years old. The Portland, Oregon-born multi-instrumentalist was a real prodigy, playing violin in Oregon's Chamber Music Society at only five years old. Later, she went to Portland State and Berklee, and in 2006 released her first LP. Spalding's latest album is her eighth solo release, and as ever she alternates between stand-up, semi-acoustic and electric work. She is renowned for her vocals, too, and in 2009 was selected personally by President Obama to perform at the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony.



Roberto Finizio/NurPhoto/Getty

It's always Miller time in our world

05 NIELS-HENNING ØRSTED PEDERSEN

Danish jazz legend Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen was born in Osted, Zealand on May 27, 1946 and by the tender age of 15 was working in nightclubs as an upright bassist. Count Basie tapped him for his band, but the bassist was too young at 17 to get the requisite paperwork to move

to the States. His collaborations with pianist Kenny Drew were prolific, and he also arranged many traditional Danish folk songs for jazz. He won a 1974 Grammy for Best Jazz Performance, his trio also comprising heavyweights Joe Pass and Oscar Peterson. Niels-Henning left us on April 19, 2005, but his wonderful legacy remains.

06 VICTOR BAILEY

Not many bassists would have had the talent to replace Jaco Pastorius, but Victor Bailey certainly fit the bill, joining Weather Report in 1982. The Philly native was barely out of college, having attended Boston's Berklee College of Music, and in the flush of his relative youth he had the confidence to go with his undoubted chops. Bailey—born on March 27, 1960—also released seven albums as bandleader, including 1992's *Petite Blonde*, which brought together a quintet of jazz stars. Sadly, Bailey suffered from the debilitating Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease, which gradually robs the body of muscle tissue and sensation. He died on November 11, 2016.

07 JEFF BERLIN

Jeffrey Berlin, of Queens, New York, was a violinist as a kid until he heard the Beatles and saw the light. The Fab Four's rise came at a formative time for the growing musician, who was born on January 17, 1953. Once he'd got to grips with the bass, he played on a number of sessions for the likes of Esther Phillips, Patti Austin, and Ray Barretto. He was subsequently talent-spotted by Bill Bruford, who engaged the low-end fusion/prog player for a verdant period up until the early Eighties. Berlin went on to provide the low frequencies for

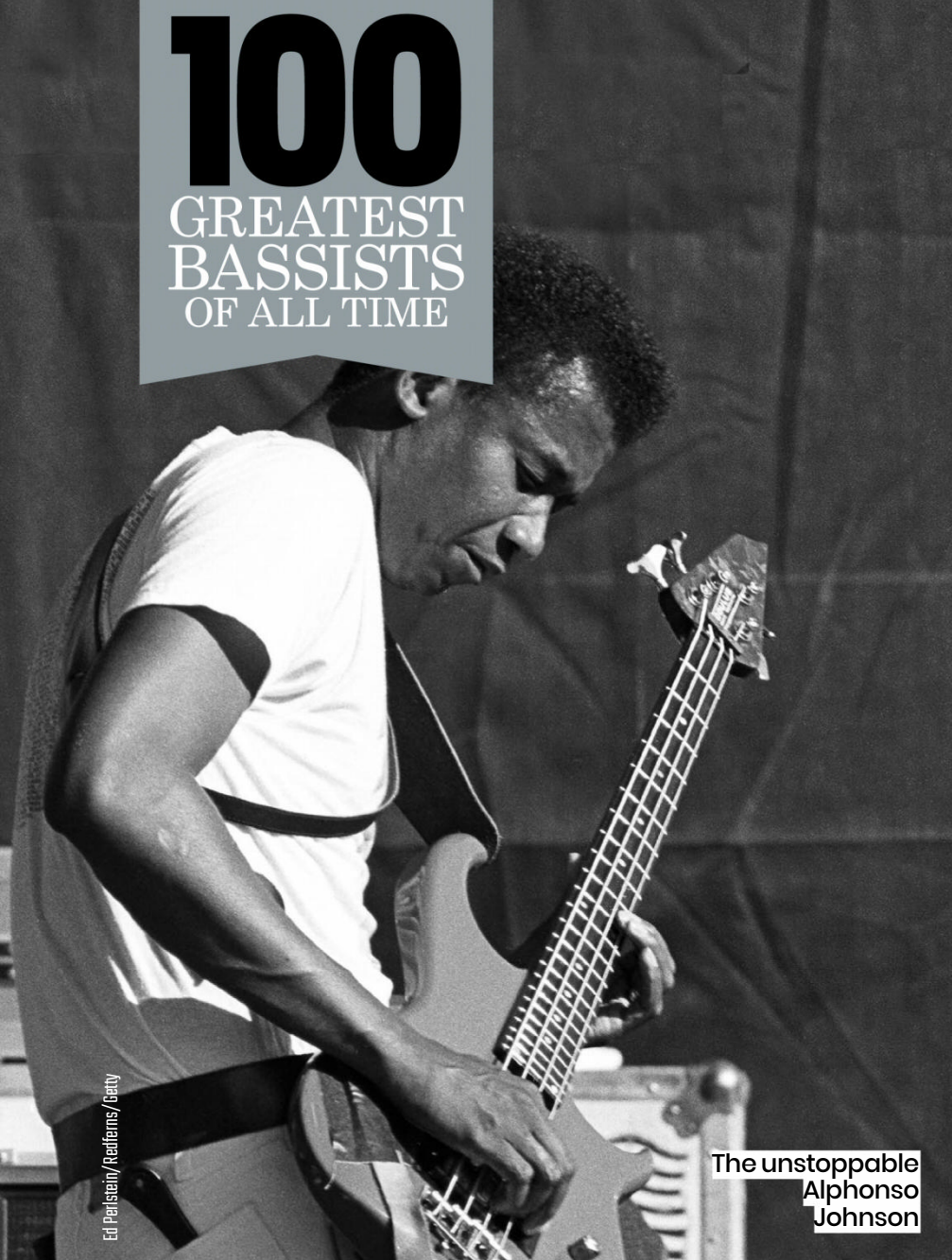


"The thing that happened was: Stanley Clarke says, 'I don't want to be in the background and be a bass player; I want to play some music.' Then Alphonso Johnson says, 'Okay, but I can do more with the bass.' And then Jaco says, 'Hell with being a bass—let it be whatever I want it to be!'"

Victor Bailey, as told to Peter Mengaziol in *Guitar*

Peter Van Breukelen/Redferns/Getty

100 GREATEST BASSISTS OF ALL TIME



The unstoppable
Alphonso
Johnson



Intellect and
technique:
Esperanza
Spalding

The maestro:
Christian
McBride



“Ray Brown was the ultimate ‘five tool’ player. Great sound, great ideas, great groove, great technique, and great vibe.”
Christian McBride

many other artists, including Janis Ian, KD Lang, and Richie Kotzen.

08 CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE

So far, McBride has clocked up seven Grammy Awards from over 300 recordings, worked with an eclectic bunch of star names, and been director of the Newport Jazz Festival. All mighty impressive, and even more so when you consider that he’s still in his prime at the age of 49. Not many people can work with Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock, James Brown, Paul McCartney, Celine Dion, and Isaac Hayes—but the Philadelphia-born McBride takes it all in his stride. Great times lie ahead from a man who was handpicked by sax player Bobby Watson to join his band at age 17.

09 ALPHONSO JOHNSON

Born on February 2, 1951, Johnson has worked with Carlos Santana, Chet Baker, and Phil Collins over the years. Adept on stand-up bass, Chapman stick and electric, the innovative jazzier found his first job with Weather Report in 1973. It was a position he held down for over two years, before branching off to record solo music as a band-leader. Whether funk, fusion, or pure jazz, Johnson’s licks are much sought-after; he even stepped into academia, successfully graduating from a Music

Education degree in California State University. The practice sounds great—and now he has the academic theory down, too.

10 GARY WILLIS

These days, Gary Willis can be found teaching new generations of bassists about jazz, improvisation, composition, and technique in Catalonia and Spain—quite a way from Texas, where he was born on March 28, 1957. His most prominent ensemble is Tribal Tech, which he co-founded with Scott Henderson. Willis also has a solo career of some repute, including 2007’s *Actual Fiction*. Originally a guitarist, he moved to bass during his time as a student at the North Texas College of Music. Willis has also written several instruction books on technique, harmony, tips, and ear training, all for bass and guitar.

Runners-Up

Jimmy Haslip
Alain Caron
Brian Bromberg
Jonas Hellborg
Miroslav Vitous
Bunny Brunel
Gary Peacock
Steve Swallow
Mark Egan
Jimmy Garrison

SOUL, FUNK AND DISCO

The masters of the groove...
and the dancefloor



01 BOOTSY COLLINS

We don't know which planet Bootsy Collins came from, but we're sure as hell glad that he crash-landed here. The great man is nothing short of an anomaly—the living, breathing incarnation of funk itself. For an entire generation, he and his precision-engineered playing have symbolized a free-spirited zeitgeist that still resonates decades on.

Born William Collins in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1951, Bootsy's first musical influence was his older brother Phelps 'Catfish' Collins, a guitarist that he looked up to and emulated. After forming a group, the Pacemakers, in 1968, Bootsy turned to bass as the position of guitarist was already filled.

Grabbing the attention of none other than James Brown, Bootsy got his first taste of the spotlight as a teenager. Although they played together for less than a year, Brown became somewhat of a father figure to Bootsy, pushing him to become a better musician with each show and take. Bootsy's path

would eventually take him to Detroit, where he joined forces with future Parliament members Mallia Franklin and George Clinton.

In subsequent years with Parliament, as well as with his own side project, Bootsy's Rubber Band, our man's eccentricities really took flight. He took on many alter egos, each more outrageous than the last, including Bootzilla and Casper The Funky Ghost. The birth of the Space Bass completed the picture, with one impossible to picture without the other. This instrument came into being in 1975, when Bootsy took a drawing to luthier Larry Pless, after being turned down by several other instrument manufacturers. Name a bass as iconic as this one. Go on, we'll wait.

After five decades of funk-ing out with musicians and artists from all over the musical spectrum, Bootsy's spirit has taken bass to places never thought possible. Expanding artistic horizons for bassists all over the world, no-one flies their freak flag higher or prouder.



"I grew up on James Jamerson's bass playing, so he would be my first choice. I loved the total perfection in his note spacing and the melodic sensibility in his playing style, during a time when bass playing was very basic, and melody styles wasn't the coolest thing to do. I also love the fact that he changed with the times by adding the electric bass to his arsenal. He had to prove that he made the correct choice by using the electric bass, while doubt was still present. His one-finger style amazed me, because it was always a wonder how he could do what he did using one finger. I think it helped me create the style that I wound up with. 'Finger Funkin' with Two Fingers!' Then my big brother Larry Graham came from another time and space, playing thump and pluck, which set up a whole new era of bass playing. He laid the foundation to that style which continues to evolve into what my little brother Victor Wooten is playing today. Victor is so bad he just thinks it and the notes appear! There are so many great bassists out there, but these three helped me take bass to 'Spacebass' playing and beyond. Thanx and blessings to all our fellow bass players out there! Bootsy baby!"

Bootsy Collins

100

GREATEST BASSISTS OF ALL TIME

02 LARRY GRAHAM

Bassists like Larry Graham come around maybe once a century. Widely credited as the man who invented thumping and plucking, or 'slap bass' if you prefer, Graham brought out the rhythmic and percussive soul that lay dormant within the instrument. As a teenager, Graham switched to bass from guitar, and famously began to thump the strings to compensate for not having a drummer while playing in his mother's band. Joining Sly & The Family Stone in 1967, he made his new style the defining sound of funk.

03 ROCCO PRESTIA

Equipped with fingers that could run for days, the late Francis 'Rocco' Prestia's fingerstyle playing helped to drive forward the bass revolution of the Seventies. The Tower Of Power bassist became a unique force of nature, sprinting and sliding his way through octaves without sacrificing melody or musical integrity. Building on simple ideas and gradually adding layers, he created lines on tracks such as 'What Is Hip?' that few modern players have matched in terms of technique and creativity. When he died in 2020, we lost a true innovator.

04 VERDINE WHITE

Having been nominated for more Grammys than we've boiled strings, Earth, Wind & Fire wouldn't be the household name they are today without the work of bassist Verdine White. Born in Chicago, Illinois in 1951, White was raised into a musical household which exposed him to a wave of different sounds and influences from jazz to Motown, all of which seeped into his playing. Picking up the bass guitar at the age of 15, White later joined Earth, Wind & Fire in 1970, where his full melodic powers were



The Boss: Larry Graham.

finally unleashed, summoning the spirit of soul and funk through his fingers and encouraging a whole generation to get up and dance.

05 MARK KING

He may not have created the style, but Mark King certainly pushed slap into the mainstream with his band Level 42 in the Eighties. The milkman-turned-bass-icon was recognized for his musical abilities back in high school, and formed Level 42 at the age of 19, having switched from drums to bass. As a natural rhythm player, King evolved a phenomenally fast, highly technical thumbing style, creating rapid-fire lines on tracks such as 'Love Games' and 'Lessons In Love'. He remains an important voice in the world of bass.



"Choosing my favorite bass player of all time is a tough one... but if I have to, then it would be Stanley Clarke. When I first heard Return To Forever it was a revelation. Stanley made the bass front and center... He was such an inspiration!"

Mark King



The much-missed Bernard Edwards (left) with Nile Rodgers.

06 BERNARD EDWARDS

One of the slickest bass-lines of all time, Chic's 'Good Times' is probably responsible for more players picking up the instrument than any other line from the disco movement. Taking dance music to a whole other plane during the late Seventies, the miraculously-talented Bernard Edwards placed the bass firmly in the spotlight that imprinted the instrument as a pop culture icon on par with its six-string brethren. He died aged only 43, the day after a 1996 show in Tokyo: His immortal bass-lines are his legacy.

07 JOHN TAYLOR

It's impossible to think of Eighties pop music without getting Duran Duran stuck in your head. Born Nigel John Taylor in 1960, Taylor didn't venture into music until his early teens. Forming Duran Duran with keyboardist Nick Rhodes in 1978 and switching to bass from guitar, Taylor found his groove by turning the would-be New Romantic giants' rhythm section into his own personal playground. Bouncing off drummer Roger Taylor, his busy yet catchy bass-lines springboarded his band to superstardom: They regularly sell out arenas to this day.

08 NATE WATTS

Raised in the era of Motown in the city that spawned it, Nate Watts was shaped by the exploding musical environment of Sixties Detroit from an early age. Bouncing from instrument to instrument, his path to bass was encouraged by fellow Funk Brother bandmate Ray Parker Jr back in 1972. Taking inspirations from bassists such as James Jamerson and Bob Babbitt, Watts' mastery of diverse techniques and musical intuition gave way to a sound that was divinely smooth and soulful, garnering the attention of none other than Stevie Wonder, with whom he

would spend almost the entirety of his career, both on and off the stage.

09 LOUIS JOHNSON

The thumbprint Louis Johnson left on the world of bass before his passing in 2015 was immeasurable. Picking up the bass in 1961, Johnson first saw success with his band The Brothers Johnson in the early Seventies after being snatched up by legendary producer Quincy Jones. Developing game-changing techniques along the way, Johnson became one of the grandfathers of slap playing. He went on to build one of the

most impressive session careers of all time, having played alongside Aretha Franklin and Michael Jackson.

10 STUART ZENDER

As co-founder of Jamiroquai, Stuart Zender helped to usher bass into the twenty-first century. Smooth, groovy and otherworldly, his genre-fusing lines are unforgettable. After spending his last pennies on a Warwick Streamer in the late Eighties, Zender put his life and soul into the instrument and soon struck gold with the Grammy-winning acid-jazz group. He also played alongside D'Angelo, Mark Ronson and Stevie Wonder, and as a musical chameleon, his bass-lines continue to inspire us.



The funky fingers of Stuart Zender.

Runners-Up

Anthony Jackson
Ida Nielsen
George Porter Jr
Paul Turner
Paul Jackson
Rick James
TM Stevens
Doug Wimbish
Meshell Ndegeocello
Marshall Jones

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100 GREATEST BASSISTS OF ALL TIME

Dusty Hill: a bassist
like few others



Al Pereira/Getty

BLUES AND BEYOND

Bassists from the world of traditional music, including blues, country, gospel and folk, saluted.

01 DUSTY HILL

July 28, 2021 was the saddest of days. Joe Michael ‘Dusty’ Hill departed the planet at the age of 72, and the world became that little bit less fun. Of course, the long-bearded Dallas native left a long legacy with ZZ Top, with whom he starred for five decades. The hard rock and blues juggernaut continues, as Hill personally requested, with his former bass tech Elwood Francis on bass.

It was the cello that first turned Hill’s head, but by age 13 he’d already decided that the electric bass was his bag, and he duly exploded onto the local bar scene while still in high

school. Later, he and drummer Frank Beard played in various Texas bands, including American Blues, at that time also featuring his older brother Rocky. Beard and Hill, however, were more interested in a certain Billy Gibbons, late of the psych rockers Moving Sidewalks, and the trio formed the backbone of a new, exciting group—ZZ Top. By 1973 their single ‘La Grange’ tickled the Billboard Top 40 and won them fans around the States. The enormous hit ‘Tush’ was to follow.

The band certainly wore its blues and rock credentials on its sleeves, as well as a huge dollop of self-aware humor and sheer, catchy music. When ZZ took time off in the mid-Seventies, Dusty found himself kicking around and, at a loose end, he worked at Dallas Airport—yes, you read that right.

The band returned in 1979, with newly-grown enormous beards (with the exception of Frank Beard, famously), and delivered a string of hits including ‘Cheap Sunglasses’ and the ubiquitous ‘Gimme All Your Lovin’ plus the slightly un-PC ‘Legs’.

The tale could easily have ended in 1984 when Hill somehow managed to shoot himself in the gut with his boot-holstered derringer. He immediately drove himself to hospital, made a full recovery, and continued to record and perform for three more decades, until a hip injury forced him off the road in early 2021. With at least 25 million album sales to their credit, ZZ Top are a towering presence at the very pinnacle of blues-rock: The irresistible melodicism of Dusty Hill was an inexorable force in their stellar career.

02 JOHN MCVIE

There are three certainties in life: Death, taxes, and that all budding bassists must learn the bass-line to 'The Chain' by Fleetwood Mac. You can credit—or blame—John McVie for that maddening earworm, though his career is a whole lot more nuanced than one cultural cliché. Born on the outskirts of London, England on November 26, 1945, McVie's first jobs were in wedding bands while working as a tax inspector. His talent soon got him the nod by John Mayall for his Bluesbreakers, where he met Peter Green and then Mick Fleetwood. British blues has never looked back.

03 TOMMY SHANNON

Double Trouble's low-end hero is one Thomas Smedley, better known as Tommy Shannon. Born on April 18, 1946 in Tucson, Arizona, he was something of a prodigy, performing in bands by the time he was 13 years old. A meeting with Johnny Winter led to a collaboration, launching Shannon onto the wider stage. He is best-known for his tenure with Stevie Ray Vaughan in the Eighties, the Double Trouble band lasting until Vaughan's tragic death in 1990. Shannon was considered for the Rolling Stones job post-Bill Wyman, and has recorded with numerous top-level roots and blues musicians.

04 DAVE PEGG

Folk-rocker David Pegg was born in Birmingham, England on November 2, 1947. Initially making his way as a guitarist, he shifted to the bass in The Uglys after an unsuccessful audition for their six-string spot. After The Uglys split, he played stand-up bass and mandolin in the Ian Campbell Folk Group, and joined Fairport Convention in 1969. Fairport went through numerous line-up changes before their 1979 split, freeing Dave to join Jethro Tull in 1980.



"While I could never say who is the greatest, I can say who is my favorite. When I was younger it was Jaco, and he always has a special place because it was at a Weather Report concert that I decided to attempt a career in music. In my older years I have grown to appreciate Aston 'Family Man' Barrett immeasurably. At a time when I went back to four-string, and was also hitting a spiritual low point, he simultaneously helped to heal me and showed me the power of finding the perfect bass-line: One crafted to be balanced rhythmically and harmonically, while also being both a great counterpoint and support for the vocal. Which of his lines is not absolutely perfect? You change any of those lines and it's not even the same song."

Oteil Burbridge

Fairport weren't finished, of course, re-forming in 1985 and continuing to play live and record to the present day.

05 TIMOTHY B SCHMIT

Oakland, California's Timothy Schmit is most notable for his stints in Poco and Eagles: Interestingly, he replaced Randy Meisner in both cases. Schmit is also an accomplished vocalist whose pipes can be heard on tracks by Crosby, Stills & Nash, Boz Scaggs, and Richard Marx. He has toured with Toto, repeatedly with Jimmy Buffett in the early 1980s, and was Ringo Starr's All-Starr Band bassist in 1992. Schmit was born on October 30, 1947, and in 2012 was made an honorary Doctor of Music by Berklee College of Music in the same year that he successfully completed

treatment for throat and neck cancer.

06 OTEIL BURBRIDGE

Throw any genre at Oteil Burbridge, and he'll throw back a brilliant bass-line. Having trained in classical music and

jazz from an early age, the Washington, DC native quickly developed skills on a number of instruments including the piano, banjo, drums and bass clarinet. He was with the Allman Brothers Band for 17 years, and was awarded a Grammy Lifetime Achievement award in 2012.



Tommy Shannon with the late SRV

100

GREATEST BASSISTS OF ALL TIME

He's also worked with the Tedeschi Trucks Band, Vida Blue, and his own outfit Oteil & The Peacemakers. Burbridge has also dabbled in acting, podcasts, comic books, and avant-garde musical explorations—not to mention his bass/scat-singing adventures.

07 BILL BLACK

Without Bill Black, the career of Elvis Presley would have been very different. William Black, Jr was born in Memphis on September 17, 1926 and followed his banjo-playing father into music, first on a home-made cigar box guitar and then on an acoustic in local bars. He met Scotty Moore in 1952, and Sam Phillips asked the pair to back the youthful Elvis for some sessions. Black's slap bass provided both low end and percussion, and the energetic Presley reciprocated playfully. Sadly, Bill left the building aged just 39, passing away on October 21, 1965, but the legend was already established.

08 BERRY OAKLEY

The tragically short life of Raymond Berry Oakley III was an incredibly innovative and influential one. He was born on April 4, 1948 in Chicago and was a founder member of the Allman Brothers Band in 1969, wielding what became nicknamed the Tractor Bass—a Fender Jazz with a Hagstrom Guild pickup. The band released four albums in quick succession, including *At Fillmore East*, but on November 11, 1972 Oakley succumbed to complications from a motorcycle accident. The previous year, Duane Allman had died from a similar motorbike crash just a few blocks away. There now exists a Raymond Berry Oakley III Bridge, in Macon, Georgia.

09 LEON WILKESON

Like many of us, Leon Wilkeson took up the bass after hearing Paul McCartney's bass-lines.

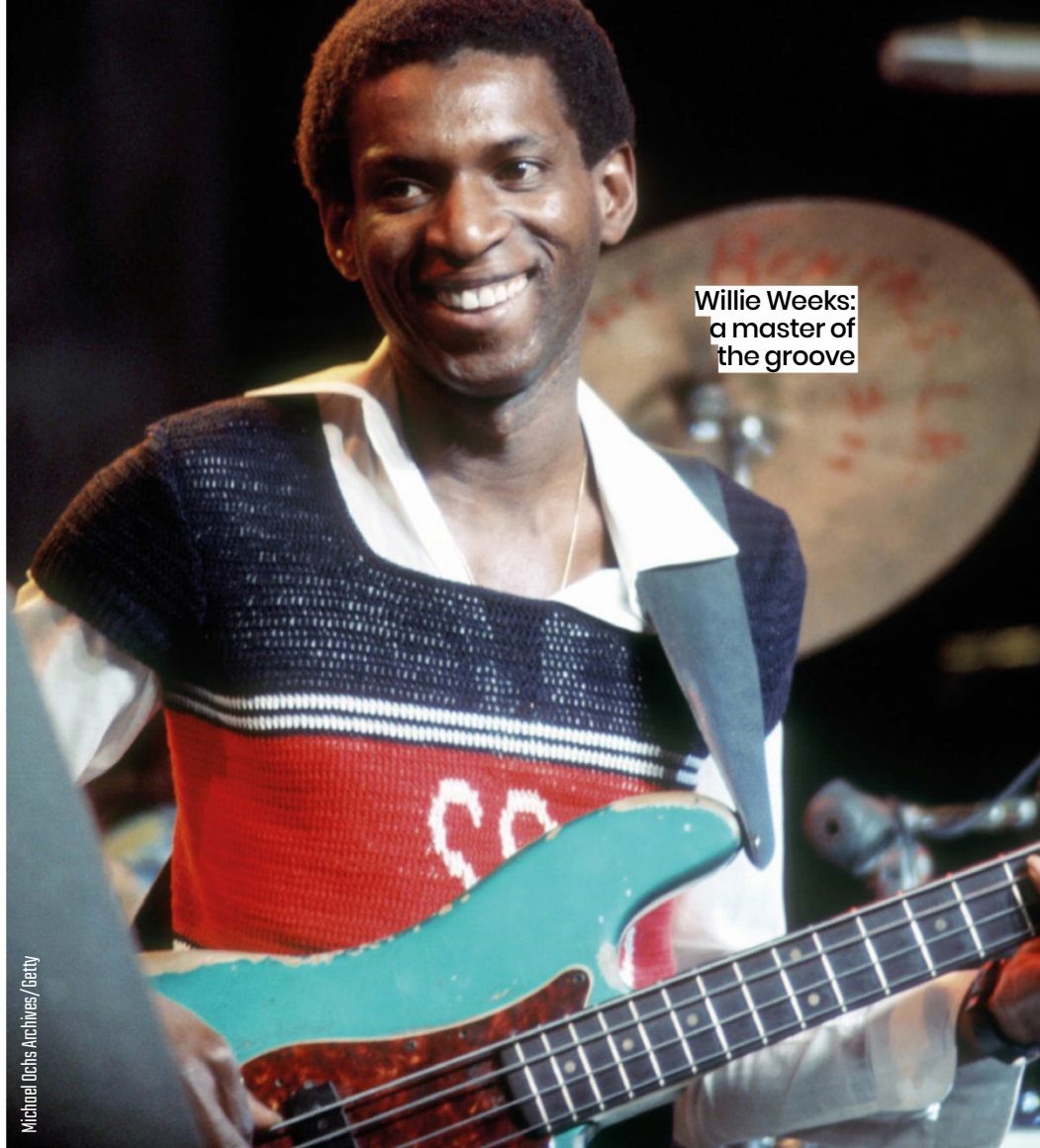
Wilkeson was born in Newport, Rhode Island on April 2, 1952 and by the time he turned 20 he'd joined Lynyrd Skynyrd as replacement for Greg T. Walker. During the group's mid-Seventies heyday, he would most often play the 'Fenderbird', a hybrid bass with a Gibson Thunderbird body and a P-Bass neck, which was first owned by John Entwistle. Wilkeson survived the 1977 plane crash that robbed the world of three Skynyrd members, and was active up until his death at age 49 on July 27, 2001.

10 WILLIE WEEKS

Take one look at Willie Weeks' discography and you'll see an exemplary history of blues, rock and jazz. He was born in Salemburg, North Carolina on August 5, 1947 and has lent his bass skills to huge names including David Bowie, Isaac Hayes, Bo Diddley, Aretha Franklin, Stevie Wonder, David Lee Roth, Bette Midler, and more. Seek out the 1972 *Live* album by Donny Hathaway for an unbelievable solo which shows the man absolutely fizzing and crackling with talent. The Doobie Brothers, Chaka Khan, Vince Gill, and Eric Clapton could not resist the Weeks experience—and the world is so much better for it.

Runners-Up

Allen Woody
Andrew Gouché
Jimmy Johnson
Roscoe Beck
Michael Rhodes
Gerry McAvoy
Larry Taylor
Dave Pomeroy
Reggie Young
Calvin 'Fuzz' Jones



Willie Weeks:
a master of
the groove

Michael Ochs Archives/Getty



Leon Wilkeson
delivering the
rootsy goods

Tom Hill/Getty

SESSION BASSISTS

Hats off to the players who make their producers happy! Of course, many bandmembers play sessions and many session bassists join bands, but for the best of those who are most prolific in the studio, read on...



The Welsh wonder: Pino himself

"I'm truly honored to be included in this list. Thank you to all who voted! No surprises here, but I have to give you two names—I really cannot narrow it down. First, James Jamerson, as he always found a way to be so creative within the framework of a song, constantly reacting to the vocal and offering surprising note choices to support the melody, while locking in with the drums and grooving like no-one else can. And Jaco, who I always go back to for inspiration. He opened up a whole new world of possibilities. It's incredible how much he has added to the vocabulary of bassists today."

Pino Palladino

01 PINO PALLADINO

Paul Young and his producer Laurie Latham were in the studio, tweaking their latest recording. It was nearly there, but there was something missing; it wasn't as expressive as it felt it ought to be, and it wasn't hitting the buttons they hoped. Enter session bassist Pino Palladino, and his fretless Music Man bass. Asked by Latham to provide an intro to the song, Pino provided something wonderful: a legato, full, unhurried mix of chords and reverse arpeggios. The song, a cover of Marvin Gaye's 'Wherever I Lay My Hat (That's My Home)' became a huge hit in 1983. The bass-line is iconic, and pure Palladino.

Giuseppe Henry Palladino was born in Cardiff, Wales on October 17, 1957 to a Welsh mother and an Italian father. He took classical guitar lessons before being drawn to bass, and by the mid-Seventies was playing in local rock bands. Pino's first big break was on Gary Numan's 1982 solo album *I, Assassin*, on which he delivered dreamy, atmospheric lines. That helped get the gig with Paul Young, and the bassist was suddenly hugely in demand. Later he backed Don Henley, Tears for Fears, Joan Armatrading, and Jeff Beck.

It's testament to his huge skill and versatility that, when John Entwistle of The Who passed away in 2002, it was Palladino

who was tasked with the huge challenge of stepping into the fray. He also worked with Erykah Badu, De La Soul, and Nigerian Afrobeat legend Femi Kuti, and performed live with Simon & Garfunkel, Jeff Beck, and John Mayer.

Palladino is a one-off; a chameleonic presence who is at once steady and innovative; a player of great skill whose genius is expressed in the beauty and simplicity of letting whole notes ring out; and a man who, if you ask him, will tell you that his line on 'Wherever I Lay My Hat' was a) lifted from a Stravinsky melody, b) mixed too loud, and c) out of tune. Musicians, eh? Never satisfied.

100 GREATEST BASSISTS OF ALL TIME

02 LEE SKLAR

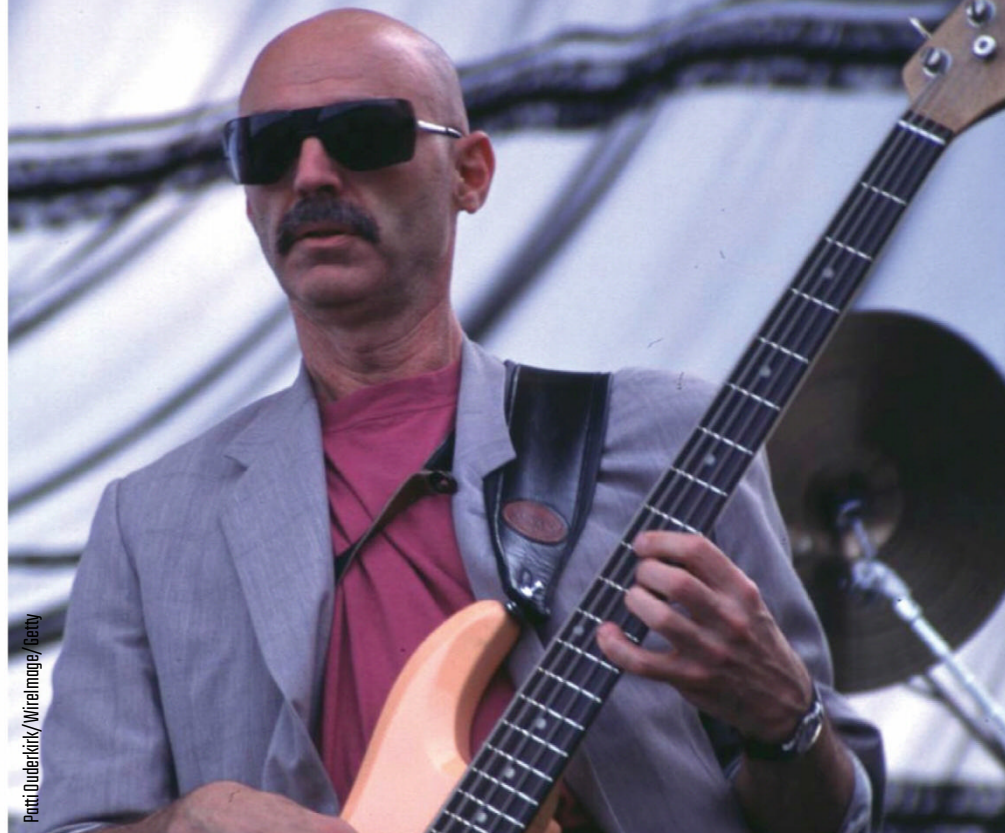
Leland Sklar is a Milwaukee native, born on May 28, 1947 and one of the most prolific sessionists out there. He met James Taylor at California State University and their careers blossomed together. His famous Frankenstein bass—bits of a P, bits of a J, mandolin frets, custom pickups—became his go-to instrument, not least during the Seventies, when he was part of legendary backing band The Section. Jackson Browne, Carole King, Phil Collins, and Toto have all benefited from the Sklar low end, and he has also performed on numerous soundtracks. The beard, of course, is iconic too.

03 DONALD 'DUCK' DUNN

Session bassist for the mighty Stax Records, 'Duck' Dunn's impressive oeuvre stretches to thousands of recording sessions. The likes of Otis Redding, Sam & Dave, Albert King, Muddy Waters, and Eric Clapton utilized his grooving presence, as did Booker T & The MGs. He was born in the musical hotbed of Memphis on November 24, 1941 and was given his nickname by his dad while the two watched cartoons. Dunn passed away on May 13, 2012, leaving behind an outstanding set of recordings full of soul, feel and impeccable technique.

04 TONY LEVIN

Whether playing the Chapman Stick, a double bass or electric bass, Anthony Levin is one of the high-fliers in prog, fusion, world music and rock. His work includes sessions for John Lennon, Paul Simon, Tom Waits, Joan Armatrading, Pink Floyd, Bowie, Stevie Nicks, and more. Levin, born in Boston, Massachusetts on June 6, 1946, invented the Funk Fingers—drumsticks attached to the fingers to create a percussive, funky sound. He has long-



Patti Oudekirk/WireImage/Getty

"Though I have no single favorite, as too many bassists have enlightened and inspired me, I will nominate Oscar Pettiford. He had a beautiful sound, his solos were lyrical, distinctive and concise, and he always played exactly the right notes, placed perfectly. What more could you want from the bass?"

Tony Levin

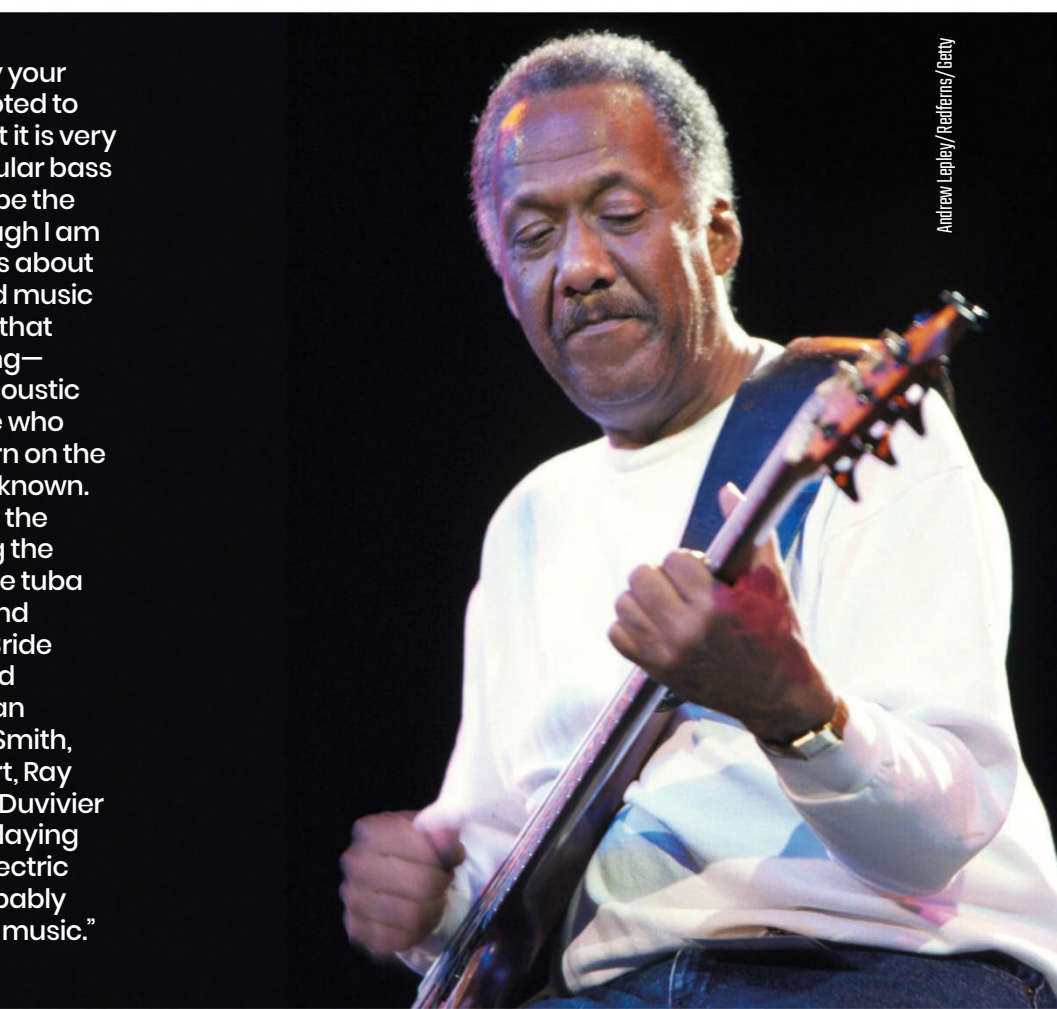
"I appreciate being included by your readers in the issue that is devoted to such a prestigious list. I find that it is very hard to pick out any one particular bass player that I would consider to be the best of all time. However, although I am an electric bassist, my thoughts about the role of the bass in organized music comes down to all the bassists that I have had the fortune of hearing—whether it was an electric or acoustic player. That also includes those who played the bass feel and pattern on the organ and tuba, known and unknown. In saying that, my influences at the beginning of my career playing the bass were from listening to 1) the tuba in orchestral and marching band music genres, naming Joe McBride (Youngstown, Ohio) and Howard Johnson (New York City), 2) organ players in jazz, naming Jimmy Smith, 3) upright bassists Slam Stewart, Ray Brown, Milt Hinton, and George Duvivier were a great influence on my playing and listening habits; 4) as an electric player, James Jamerson is probably at the top of my list in recorded music."

Chuck Rainey

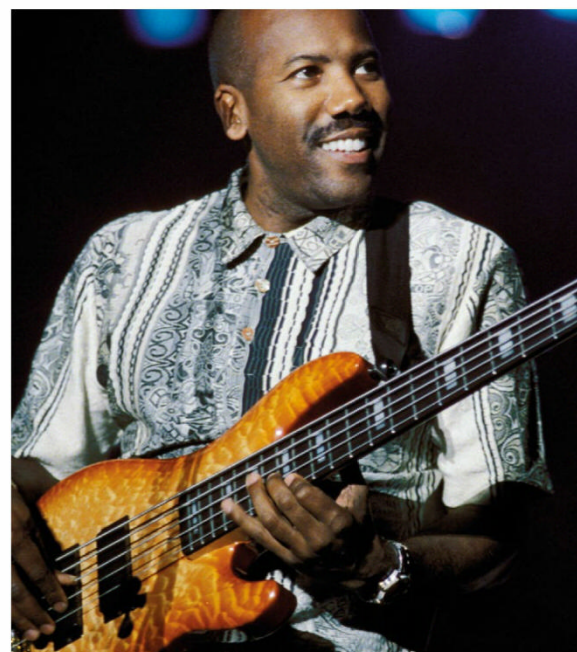
standing collaborations with Peter Gabriel and King Crimson, and his own band, Stick Men, continues to explore the intersection of art-rock and prog.

05 NATHAN EAST

Nathan East, born on December 8, 1955, began his musical education on the cello before picking up the bass in the church band. East went on to study the instrument at UC San Diego and quickly found that he had a major talent. Working in the fields of jazz, funk, R&B, and soul, East has appeared on more than 2,000 recordings by artists



Andrew Lepley/Redferns/Getty



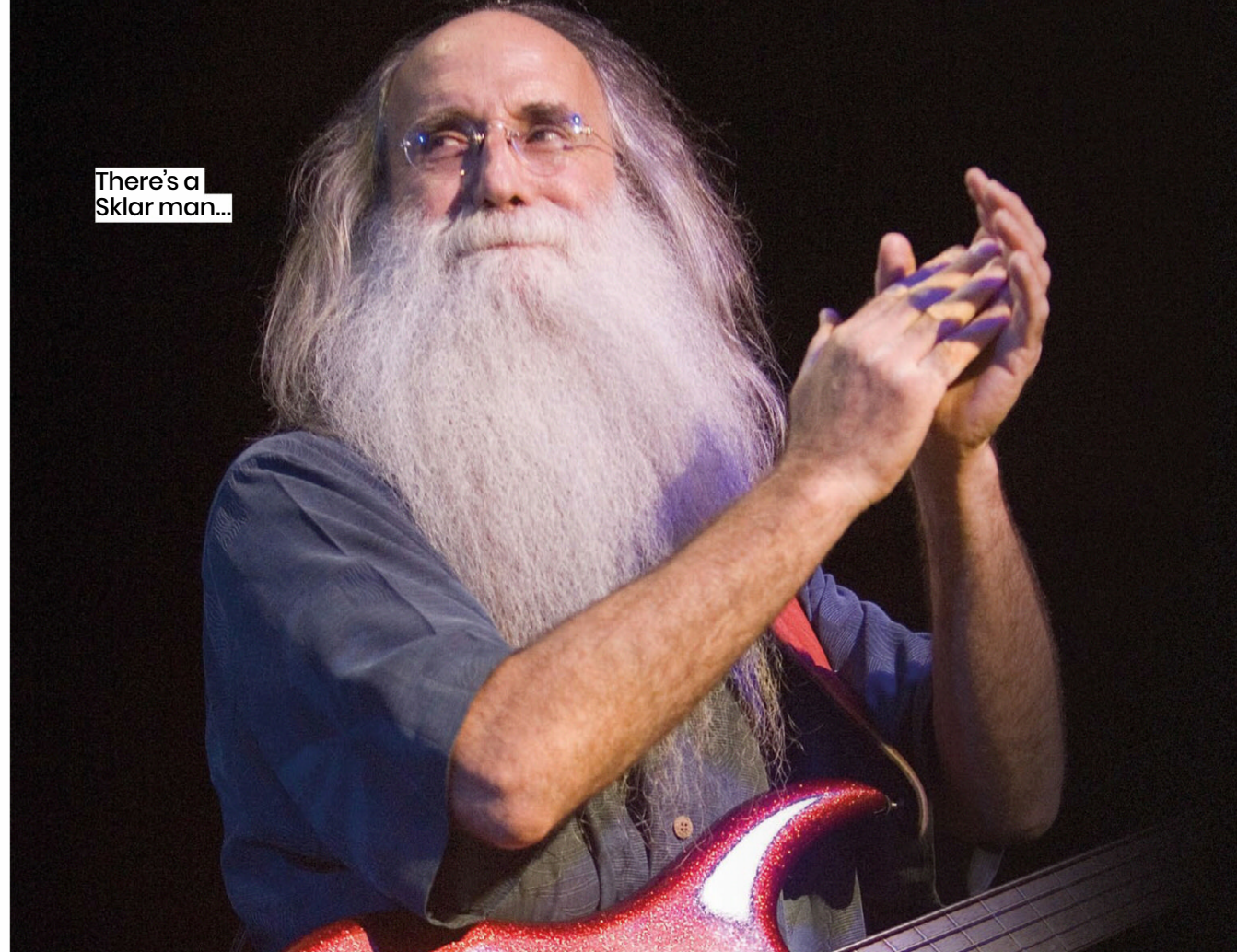
"I'd have to say James Jamerson is the GOAT! Every one of his bass-lines could be a study in the genius of creativity from the low end. His creativity was matched by his impeccable feel and soul. He accomplished all this in a popular genre where the singer is always featured, which makes it even more outstanding!"

Nathan East

Andrew Lepley/Redferns/Getty

There's a
Sklar man...

Joey Foley/FilmMagic/Getty



"One of my absolute favorite bassists was Rinat Ibragimov. He was a most astounding double bassist. He was the principal bassist with Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra, Moscow Academy of Ancient Music and principal bassist with the London Symphony Orchestra. His facility, intonation and passion were profound. I was captivated the first time I ever heard him play. He passed away in 2020 after a stroke and Covid. A monumental loss to the bass community."

Lee Sklar

including Al Jarreau, Barry White, Eric Clapton, and Herbie Hancock. It's his line you hear on the Daft Punk smash 'Get Lucky'—stardust sprinkled on the song by a man who is also, brilliantly, a part-time magician.

06 GUY PRATT

Renaissance man Pratt is an actor, comedian, graphic designer, producer, and programmer, as well as backing a smorgasbord of massive names as a bassist. He can do it all, whether that means inhabiting the spirit of Floyd in Nick Mason's *Saucerful Of Secrets*, working with Madonna, Michael Jackson, Iggy Pop, and The Orb, or touring with Pink Floyd, post-Roger Waters. Pratt was born in Lambeth, London on January 3, 1962 and you can watch and listen to him speak about his storied career on his YouTube channel.

07 CHUCK RAINEY

Charles Walter Rainey III, to give him his full title, was born on June 17, 1940 in Cleveland, Ohio, and is one of the most recorded bassists in history. Albums with Quincy Jones, Aretha Franklin, Frankie Valli, and Dusty Springfield are a small selection of the more than 1,000 LPs on which he's played. Chuck also wrote the *Complete Electric Bass Player* study course, and wrote for this very magazine in

the early Nineties. Chuck retired recently from performance, though his presence remains ubiquitous, and rightly so.

08 WILL LEE

You'll know Lee's work if you've ever watched the *Late Show With David Letterman*—he's been the bassist for the house group, The World's Most Dangerous Band, since 1982, also known as The CBS Orchestra. Lee has won numerous awards for his playing as well as his session work as a singer, and plays a signature Sadowsky, built for him by Roger Sadowsky himself. The keyword for Lee is versatility, whether it's switching genres

live on air, working from chord charts or launching into a solo in a jazz session.

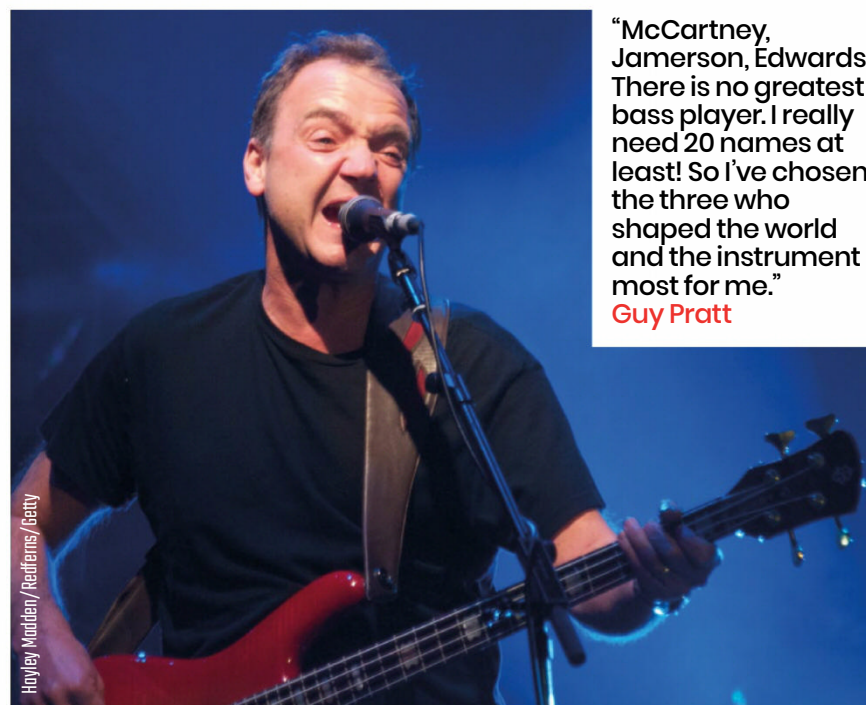
09 ABRAHAM LABORIEL

It was a great day in Mexico City on July 17, 1947, when Abraham Laboriel López was born. Abe trained as a classical guitarist before moving onto the bass, and a meeting with the one and only Henry Mancini led to Laboriel moving to Los Angeles. Tours with Olivia Newton-John and Al Jarreau quickly followed, but it was the studio in which he made his name. George Benson, Quincy Jones, Ray Charles, and Stevie Wonder only work with the

best, and Laboriel certainly fits that bill.

10 DARRYL JONES

The Chicago-born master has locked in the bass-lines for the Rolling Stones for 28 years and counting. His chops were already well-known in the industry, Jones having recorded two albums as part of Sting's solo band, including *The Dream Of The Blue Turtles*. He's also worked with Neil Young, Ziggy Marley, LeAnn Rimes, and notably Miles Davis in the early Eighties. Jones, born on December 11, 1961, was still wet behind the ears, but nailed it down immediately with the jazz innovator. One heck of a way to announce your arrival on the scene—and since then, Jones has never looked back.



"McCartney, Jamerson, Edwards. There is no greatest bass player. I really need 20 names at least! So I've chosen the three who shaped the world and the instrument most for me."

Guy Pratt

Runners-Up

Bob Babbitt
Gail Ann Dorsey
Nick Beggs
Rhonda Smith
Herbie Flowers
Yolanda Charles
Neil Murray
Mo Foster
Phil Spalding
David Hood

100

GREATEST
BASSISTS
OF ALL TIME

"I will never forget the first time I heard that undeniable, twangy, and ferocious flurry of notes which comprise the solo of 'My Generation'. Little did I realize at the time, how much The Ox would change the way I listened to music. My ears would be forever attuned to the murkier, nether regions of a song, that place where bass guitar parts roam."

Geddy Lee



ROCK... BEFORE 1980

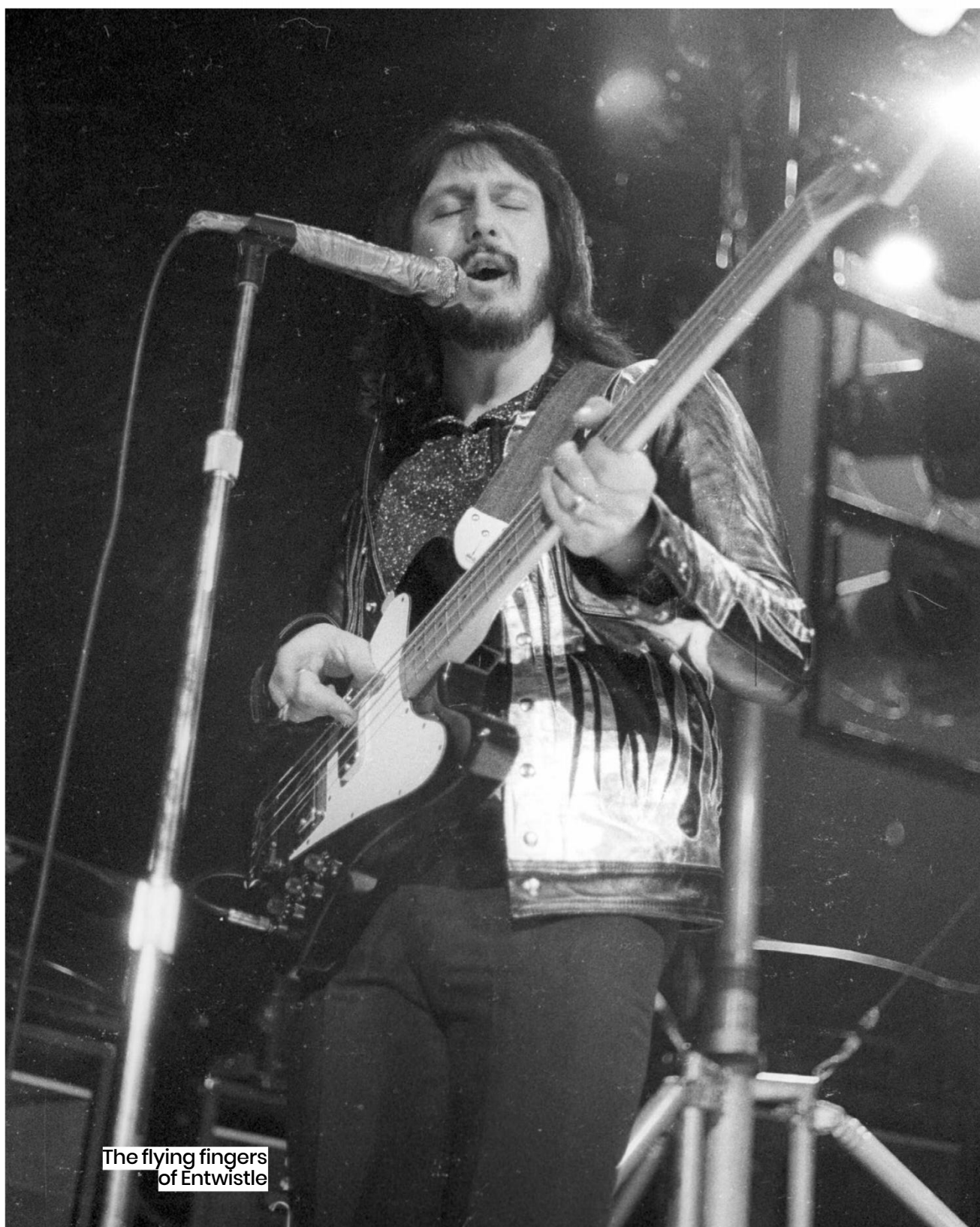
They were there first—and they liked it loud.

01 GEDDY LEE

Blessed with an incredibly versatile set of pipes, in addition to his superlative bass skills, Gary Lee Weinrib—nicknamed Geddy Lee after the way his grandmother used to pronounce his name—was among the first electric players to combine funk with progressive-rock elements (quirky time signatures and key changes, a flurry of different musical styles, intoxicating dexterity... you know the drill) and make it big while doing so. Complemented by his virtuoso band-mates in Rush—guitarist Alex Lifeson and the late drummer Neil Peart—Lee's bass playing veered from the subtle, to the atmospheric, to an all-out riff storm.

Players of all styles are heard worshipping at the altar of Lee, with Les Claypool of Primus taking his fanhood as far as screwing a bit of wood with the GL signature on it to the headstock of one of his Carl Thompson basses.

Gear-wise, Lee is best known for his signature Fender Jazz, although he's plucked a Rickenbacker or two in his time as well. A feature of his live bass sound in the Seventies and Eighties was the clean-dirty combination he achieved by using a dual-amp setup. Nowadays, however, he eschews amplification entirely, preferring to use his signature Sansamp. He is the master of all he surveys.



The flying fingers of Entwistle

02 JOHN ENTWISTLE

The Ox', as the solid, stoic John Entwistle was inevitably labeled by his more extrovert bandmates in The Who, was a man whose

influence on the bass guitar world is difficult to exaggerate.

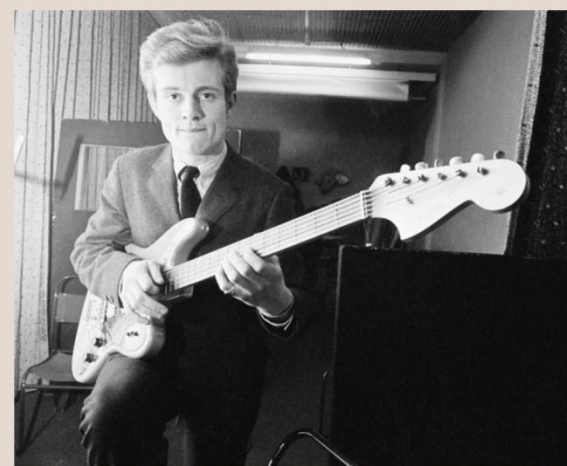
He was that rare beast—a bassist whose status as a pioneer matched his technical ability—and stands tall alongside Paul McCartney and Jack Bruce as one of the very few Sixties bass players who can genuinely claim to have changed the world he moved in. Entwistle, born in 1944, first made bass history at 21 when he added a solo to

The Who's 1965 single 'My Generation'. Still a tricky exercise four decades later, the solo opened the eyes of bassists and producers to

Entwistle's solo on 'My Generation' showed bassists the possibilities of playing above the seventh fret

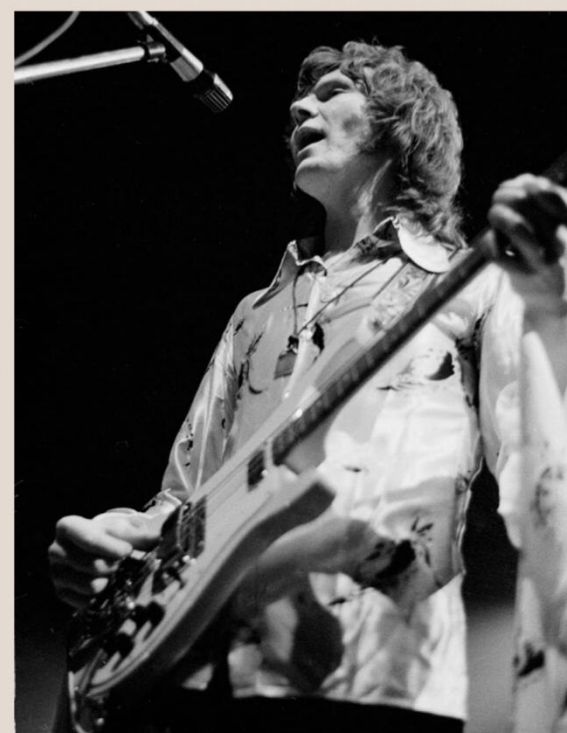
the possibility of the ol' four-string actually being playable above the seventh fret. By the Nineties, Entwistle was regarded as a bass god. Amassing a vast collection of instruments, semi-retiring to his country manor, and coming out to record solo albums and tour with The Who, John lived a quiet but creative life until 2002, when he

succumbed to a fatal dose of cocaine. What a man. What a player. What a life...



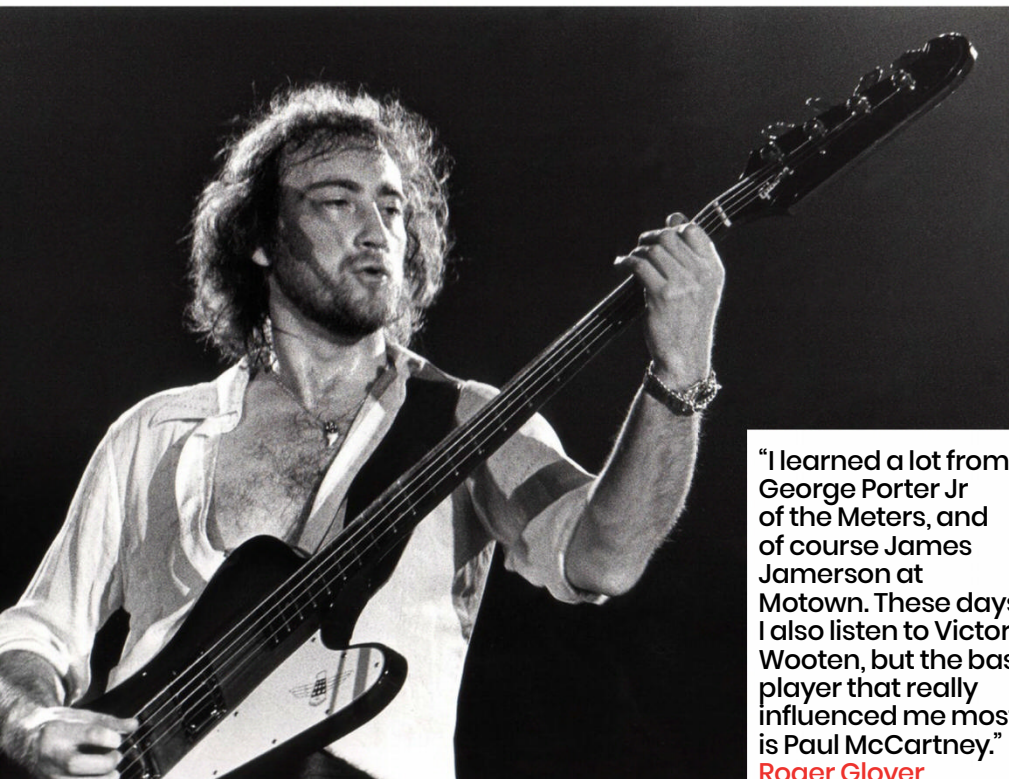
03 JOHN PAUL JONES

A choirmaster, organist, and expert in many archaic music styles, JPJ also just happened to play effortlessly melodic bass in Led Zeppelin, the biggest heavy rock band there has ever been or ever will be. Whether anchoring those chunky riffs with huge grooves, or adorning them with subtle upper-register flourishes, he inhabited the bass parts with the greatest of ease.



04 CHRIS SQUIRE

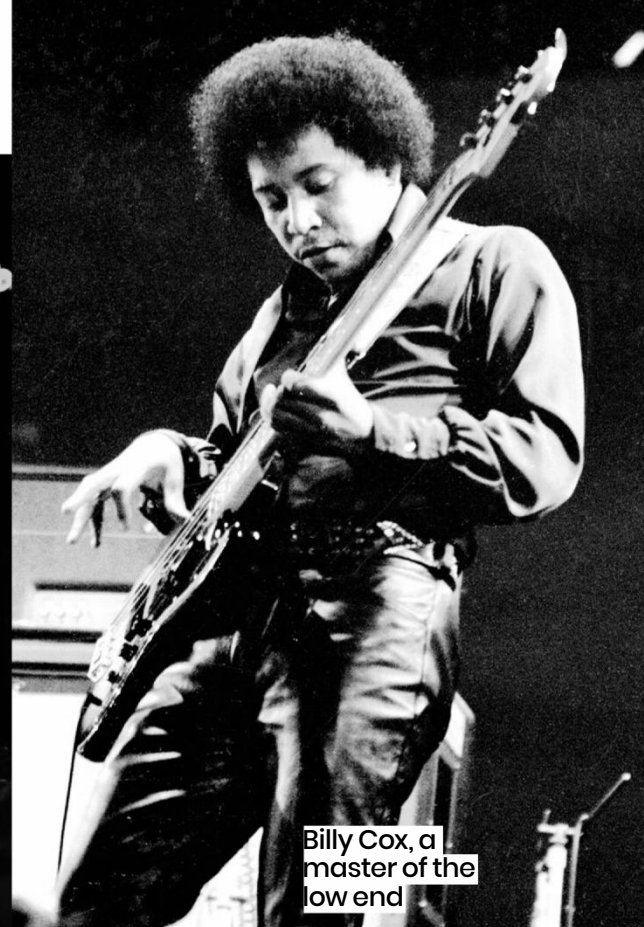
For decades, prog-rockers Yes retained a single founder member while other musicians came and went. That fellow, bassist Chris Squire, was literally and audibly the heart of the band, having earned his stripes as an innovator in the early days with his fabulous, crunchy tone and basses with an unreasonable number of necks. His style is often imitated but never equalled.



"I learned a lot from George Porter Jr of the Meters, and of course James Jamerson at Motown. These days I also listen to Victor Wooten, but the bass player that really influenced me most is Paul McCartney."
Roger Glover



The inimitably great Tina Weymouth



Billy Cox, a master of the low end

05 JOHN DEACON

Queen formed in 1970 and, once joined by John Deacon in February 1971, they began to progress into the juggernaut we know today. While he may have retired from public life, the legacy that Deacon has left for those of us of a bass-playing persuasion is immense. Looking from the outside, it would be fair to say that he possessed the traits of many a classic bass player—laid back, a little shy, quiet, letting the bigger egos get the persona of the band across. But in Deacon's case, these characteristics were extreme to say the least, with guitarist Brian May remarking, "We just knew that John was the right one, even though he was so quiet. He hardly spoke to us at all."

06 PHIL LYNOTT

At the heart of the band Thin Lizzy and its songs, the late Phil Lynott was a poet, and he wore his heart on his sleeve as a lyricist. As a bassist, he wasn't a technician, but he didn't need to be; his bass-lines always sat perfectly between the drums and the rampant, dueling guitars. He used several basses through his career but for his fans, his trusty black Fender Precision with a mirrored scratchplate was the favored instrument. He used the scratchplate to highlight members of the crowd from his vantage point on the stage, which he bestrode like a leather-clad god. Rest in peace, Philo.

07 TINA WEYMOUTH

Tina Weymouth was born in Coronado, California in 1950. Her initial foray into music—and bands—was a rather unconventional stint as part of a touring handbell outfit called the Potomac English Hand Bell Ringers, who even scored a gig at the New York World's Fair. Weymouth first picked up an acoustic guitar aged 14, teaching herself as she went. It was art and design, however, that was to be her focus, leading her to enrol at Rhode Island School of Design in 1971. There she met Chris Frantz, a drummer, and David Byrne, a guitarist and singer. The pair were in a group called the Artistiks at the time, but when that fell to pieces a new project was born, with Weymouth taking over the bass. The band's name was Talking Heads—and their debut gig was at CBGBs, supporting the Ramones. Always musically inventive and itching for new territory, Weymouth has also worked as musician and/or producer with Happy Mondays, Ziggy Marley, Chicks On Speed, Gorillaz, and of course the highly-regarded Heads offshoot, Tom Tom Club.

08 ROGER GLOVER

Best known for Deep Purple, Roger Glover has played with Rainbow, David Coverdale, Alice Cooper, and many more stellar musicians. As a producer, he

has helmed albums by Status Quo, Judas Priest, Rainbow, Nazareth, Dream Theater and more, and has released solo projects such as *The Butterfly Ball*, a 1974 concept LP. "I believe in playing simply, because of the virtuosity that surrounds me in the rest of the band. I have to be the bedrock for them to lie on and do what they do—I never think too much about what I play—I just like to go for what feels and sounds right at the time," he recently told us, with admirable understatement.

09 BILLY COX

We once asked Billy Cox, the bassist with the Jimi Hendrix Experience, what it was like to play with Jimi. "I loved all the songs we did together," he said. "We were locked together spiritually, and I think that doesn't happen so much nowadays: Musicians can't lock in so well together because there's a lot of egos around. That wasn't a problem for us because I knew I was there to support Jimi and I enjoyed the role." When we asked Cox what he thought Hendrix would have gone on to do had he not died so young, the bassist replied, "He had so many areas that he could have gone into: The music was good and it was light years ahead of its time, so he probably would have produced music that was even *lighter* years ahead of its time." Amen to that.

10 MICHAEL ANTHONY

As sometime Van Halen bassist Michael Anthony once said, "Playing with Eddie Van Halen all those years, he would just go off, and if you weren't right there playing what you were supposed to, it could get really confusing. At times it holds you back because you want to go out and showboat a bit, show the people what you can do, but the most important thing is to really be the anchor." That's the secret, isn't it?



The arch Deacon

Runners-Up

Bill Wyman
Dee Dee Ramone
Jack Casady
Tom Hamilton
Rick Danko
Suzi Quatro
Trevor Bolder
Tim Bogert
Andy Fraser
Tom Petersson

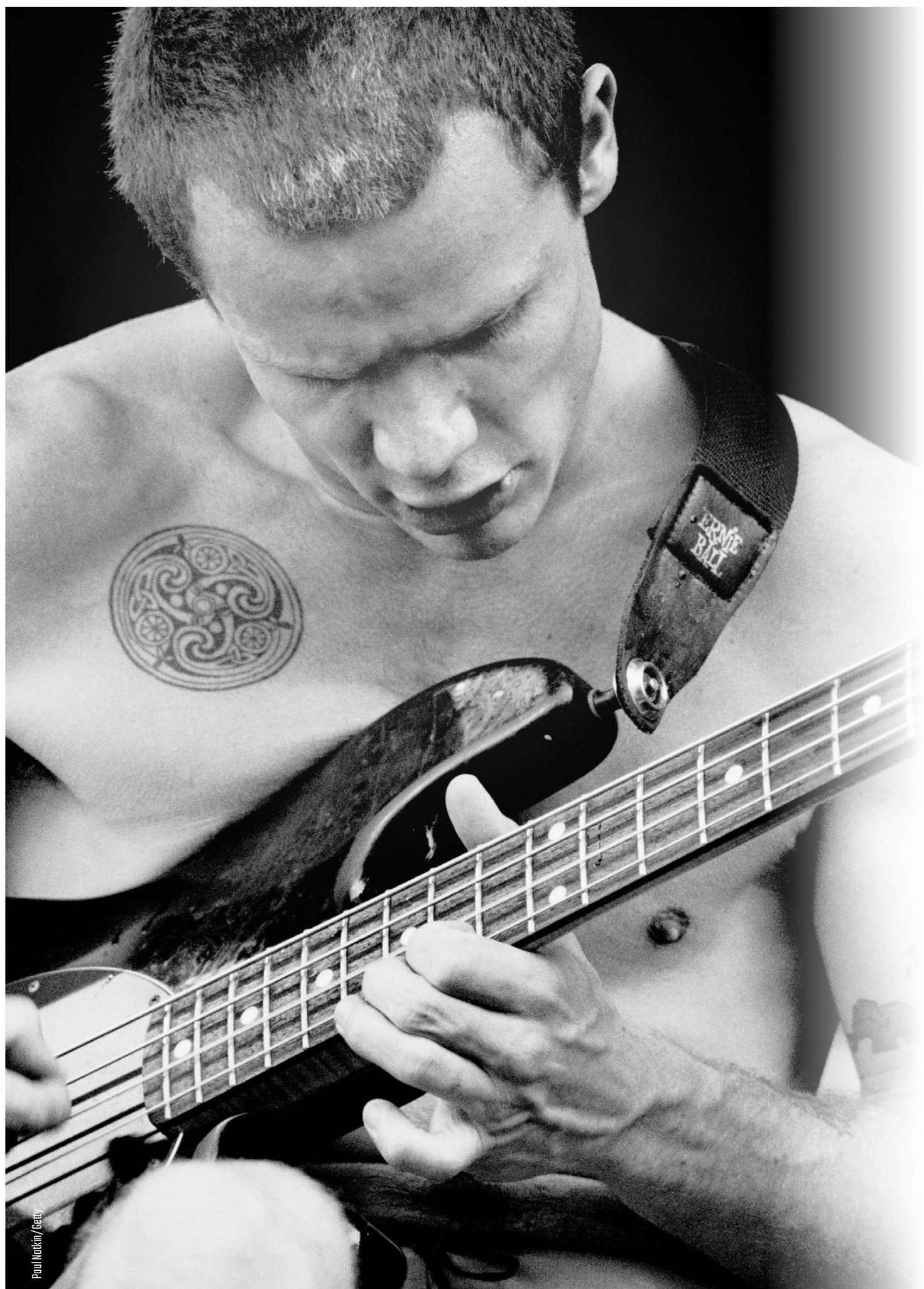
All pics: Getty

POST-1980 ROCK

Punk,
new
wave and
beyond

01 FLEA

The Australia-born, Hollywood-raised Michael 'Flea' Balzary, so nicknamed for his diminutive stature and on-stage leaps, is, many bassists feel, one of the finest funk players ever to stalk the earth. Bred on a diet of cool jazz and trumpet lessons, with his most treasured childhood memory a meeting with Dizzy Gillespie, Flea took up the bass after the prompting of his high-school classmate Hillel Slovak, who—along with singer Anthony Kiedis and drummer Jack Irons—formed the first line-up of the Red Hot Chili Peppers, then a cheeky funk-punk act. From these humble beginnings, Flea evolved a frighteningly fast slap-and-pop style, influenced by Larry Graham and Bootsy Collins, but spiced up with the energy of his beloved hardcore punk scene. After applying scintillating bursts of notes to four Eighties albums, he had become known as “Joe Bass Player”, as he put it in this magazine, and decided to tone down for 1991’s landmark *Blood Sugar Sex Magik* album. The rest is history, but Flea hasn’t given up the hunt for the perfect bass style yet, experimenting with a variety of basses and approaches. More power to him.



Paul Natkin/Getty



02 LES CLAYPOOL

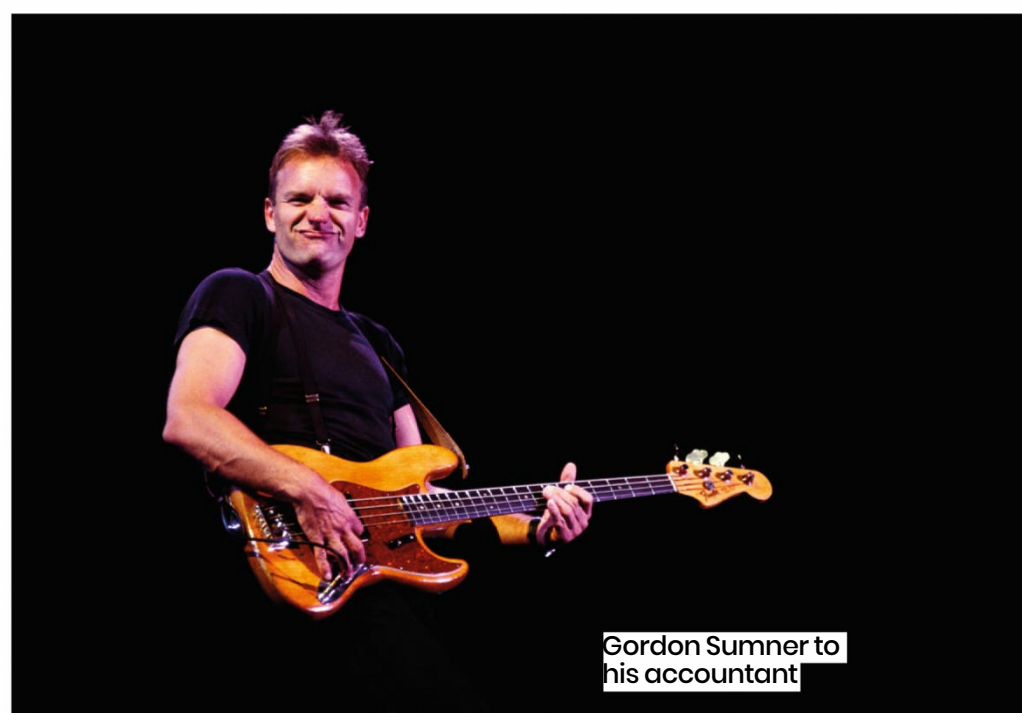
Frontman with the perennially remarkable funk-rock band Primus and a whole string of side projects, including Sausage and Oysterhead, Les Claypool is best known for his stunning slap-and-pop technique which, combined with near-impossible speed and eccentricity on a host of fretted, fretless, whammy-barred and multi-stringed instruments, leaves all but the world's best players in the shade. But Claypool is no mindless shredder. Technique is only an adjunct to feel in his philosophy, with the butt-shaking groove of his playing the mainstay of his approach. It's no wonder that he is revered as a deity in bass circles.

Claypool's speed and eccentricity leaves the world's best players in the shade



03 JJ BURNEL

Not punks, but accepted by punks because they looked hard and played aggressively. Not prog, even though they played songs in 'difficult' time signatures. More than rock, bigger than pop... the Stranglers were and remain all those things and more, a unique band who defy categories and have done since they were formed all the way back in 1974. The grinding bass parts of the great Jean-Jacques Burnel are unforgettable, too.



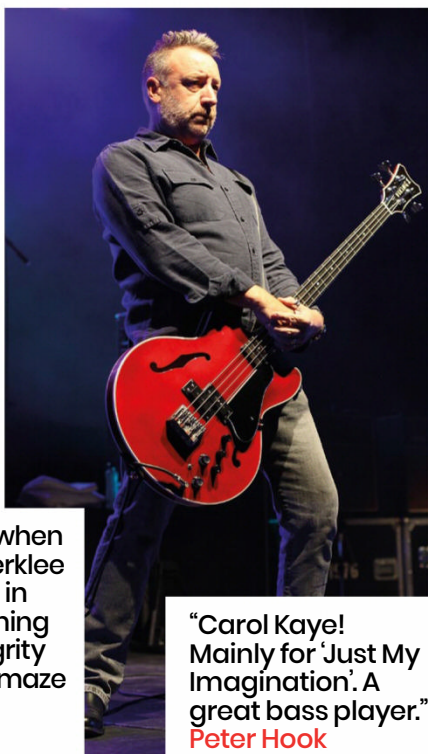
04 STING

You may know Sting as the guy who fronted the Police, or the solo artist who sold a gazillion copies of songs like 'Fields Of Gold', 'Russians', 'Englishman In New York' and all the other tunes that are now in your head because you just read their titles. Or you may recognize him for acting in *Quadrophenia*, *Dune*, *Lock, Stock And Two Smoking Barrels*, and what have you. Your kids know him as the funny levitating guy from *Bee Movie*. Everyone knows

Sting for something. In bass world, though, we know the guy as Gordon Sumner, the ex-teacher born in 1951 who played in jazz and fusion bands before forming the Police in 1977, playing whopping great bass parts and being a massive rock star. Fretted, fretless, double bass, eight-string—the man was unstoppable on bass, filling up the empty spaces within the trio format of the Police with a variety of lines, from the simple to the finger-threateningly complex.



"I first saw Jaco Pastorius when I was a freshman at the Berklee College of Music in Boston in 1978. He stunned me. Listening to his recordings, the integrity of his tone and pitch still amaze and inspire me."
Stuart Hamm



"Carol Kaye! Mainly for 'Just My Imagination'. A great bass player."
Peter Hook

05 BILLY SHEEHAN

As the world of bass guitar has evolved, we've watched Billy Sheehan ascend to its very zenith—playing but never overplaying, touring relentlessly while staying healthier than a bassist half his age, maintaining an unwavering creative output and still being a man that you'd love to sit down and have a beer with. That's a rare combination in our experience; after a 50-year career of playing bass, something usually gets lost—whether health, playing skill, or just personality. But not Sheehan, whose 1990 debut appearance on the cover of our first issue was just the start of his unique career.

06 LEE ROCKER

Rockabilly bass is alive, well and thriving in the hands of Lee Rocker, Stray Cats bassist and solo artist for the last four decades and counting. After 11 studio albums with the veteran trio and even more of his own, he's the most successful player of Fifties-indebted rock bass currently performing today.

07 STUART HAMM

The veteran session and stage bassist, solo recording and touring artist and virtuoso Stuart Hamm has been blowing our minds for 30 years with albums and tours with Steve Vai, Joe Satriani, Frank Gambale and many other artists of note, and his many solo albums are worth the attention of anyone interested in the perfect blend of taste and technique.

08 DUFF MCKAGAN

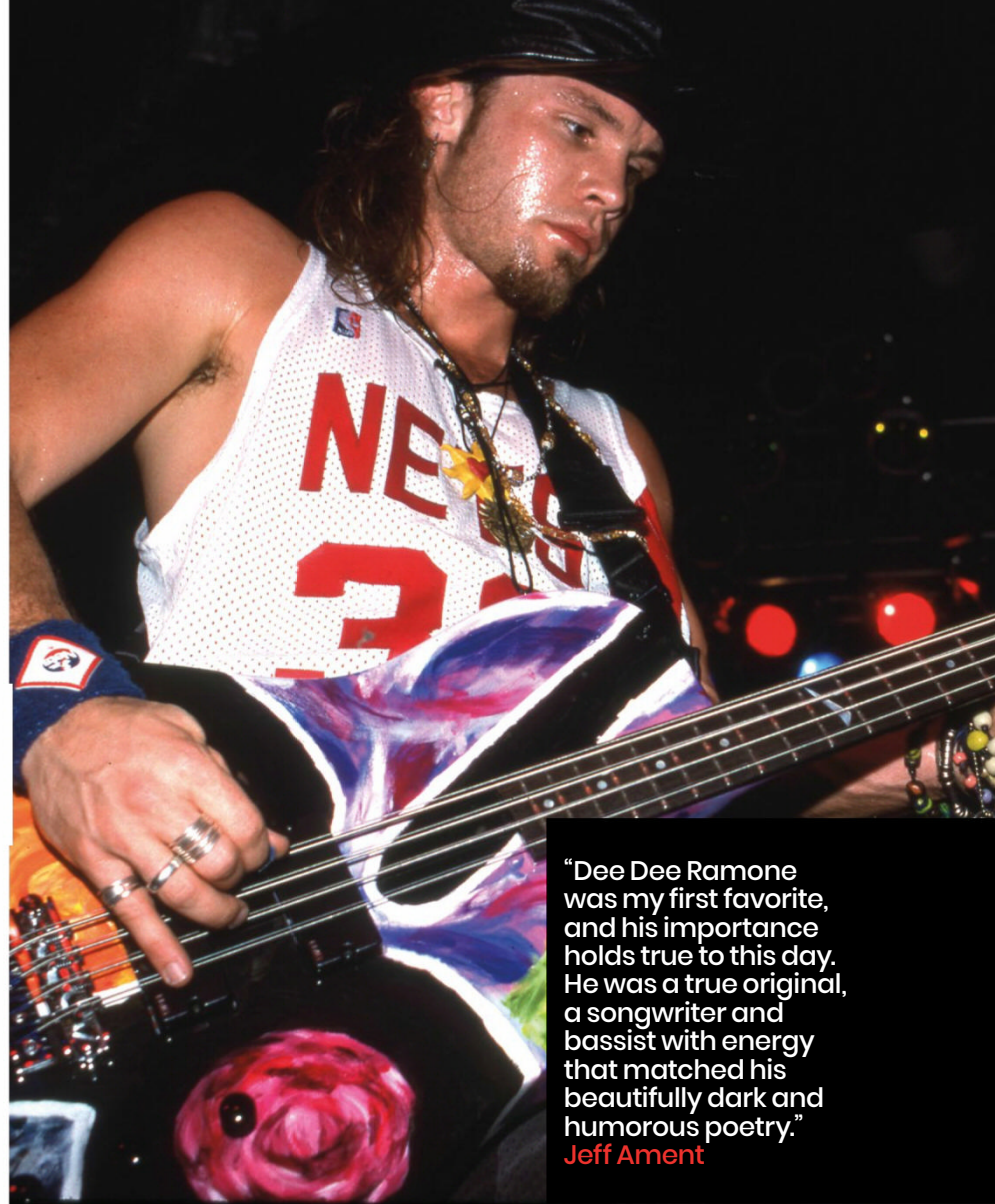
The stories of Duff McKagan's escapades as a founder member of Guns N'Roses, a band whose members practically had their humanity ground out of them by sheer fame and debauchery, are legion. We could fill this entire magazine with bullet-pointed lists of the mad things that Duff did with, to and near people before 1994, when a brush with death caused him to clean up, sober up, get ridiculously fit, and go on to a very productive post-GNR career. A look at his discography reveals how active he's been over the years, whether that means forming the supergroup Velvet Revolver, recording with Iggy Pop and the Manic Street Preachers, or working with his own bands Loaded and Walking Papers.

09 PETER HOOK

On *Unknown Pleasures* (1979) and *Closer* (1980), Joy Division's two albums before the tragic death of their singer Ian Curtis, Peter Hook invented a style of bass playing that continues to register and inspire to this day, with his moody post-punk grit sitting at the very forefront of the mix. In New Order, he experimented even further, mutating his acerbic low end into electro-pop. It is no stretch at all to consider the man one of the most influential English players since Sir Paul McCartney himself.

10 JEFF AMENT

Over the years, Jeff Ament



"Dee Dee Ramone was my first favorite, and his importance holds true to this day. He was a true original, a songwriter and bassist with energy that matched his beautifully dark and humorous poetry."
Jeff Ament



"Mike Dirnt. The man drives the pulse of Green Day with power, intensity and killer tone. Great low end, but also incorporates enough high frequency to cut through. Dirnt has got it all, from onstage performance to studio perfection."
Lee Rocker

has earned a reputation as one of the most creative and hard-working bassists of his generation. He's played in several now-legendary bands, with Pearl Jam alone selling upwards of 100 million albums worldwide, snagging a Grammy and entering the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame in 2017. His two-album solo catalogue bristles with scathing political lyrics and a punchy rave-up of punk and classic rock. When he's not flexing his songwriting chops, Ament can often be found patrolling the bowls and ramps of his local skate park.

Runners-Up

Paul Simonon
Krist Novoselic
Mick Karn
Bill Gould
Kim Deal
Andy Rourke
Juan Alderete
Mike Watt
Kim Gordon
Darryl Jenifer

Gone long
before his
time: Cliff
Burton

Ross Marino/Icon and Image/Getty

100
GREATEST
BASSISTS
OF ALL TIME

METAL

The
headbanging
starts here

01 CLIFF BURTON

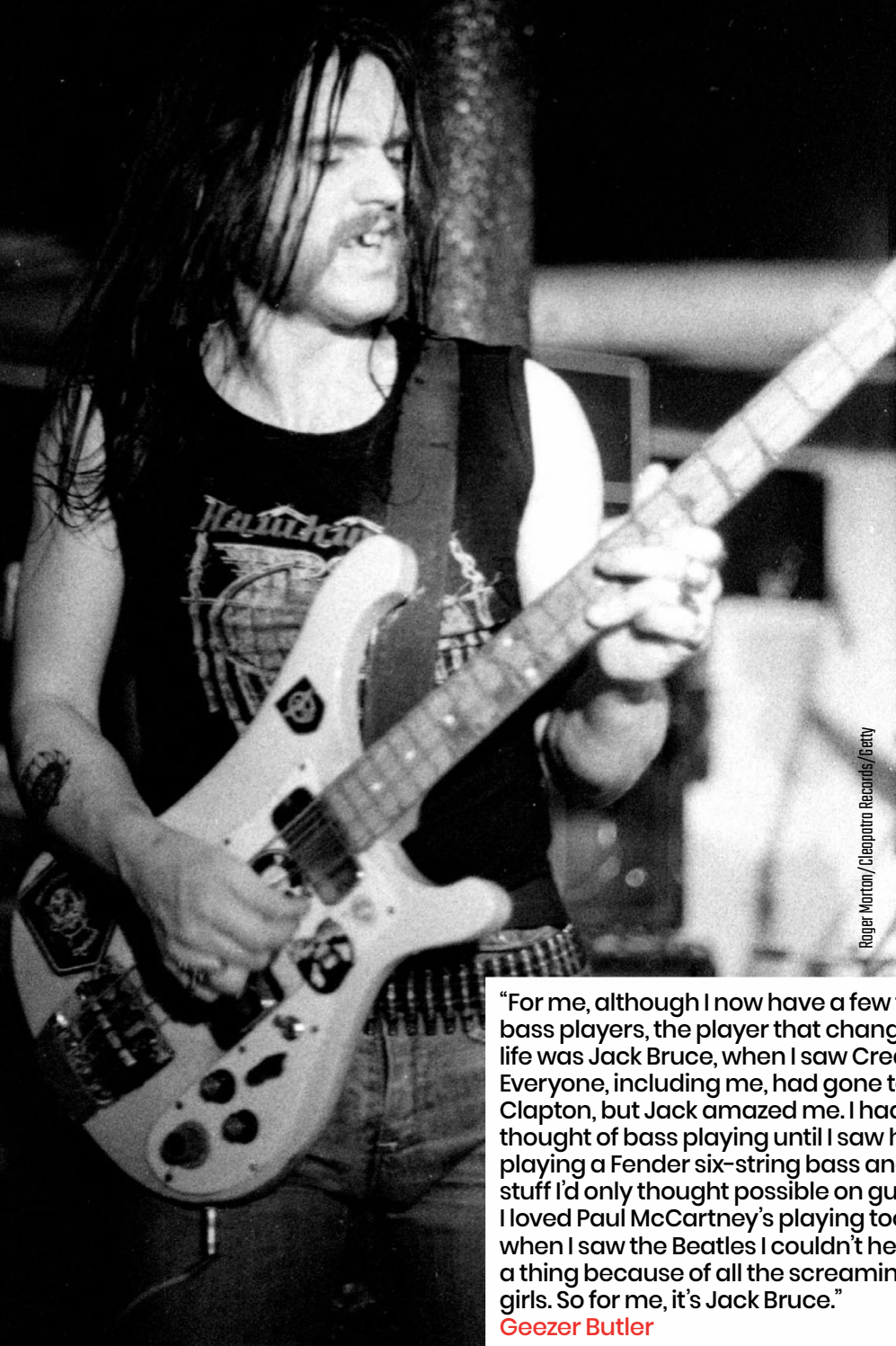
Like Jaco Pastorius, Metallica's second and most gifted bassist, Cliff Burton was a prodigy who lost his life in a tragic accident at an early age, and in so doing deprived us all of decades of horizon-expanding playing. While we can only surmise what musical direction the 1962-born San Franciscan might have taken, had he survived that fatal Swedish coach crash in 1986, it's likely that he would have elevated his signature style—thrash metal and hardcore punk aggression, combined with classical fugues and magical effects trickery—to unparalleled levels.

Cliff's legacy lies not just in the many studio and bootleg performances that still unnerve many of us today, but

in the enormous cultural impact of his work. On the extreme metal scene of the early to mid-1980s, bass players were expected to stick to precise root notes, or at most to copy the main guitar riff, without deviating into their own territory. Cliff blew all that out of the water, taking his admiration of Geddy Lee and Steve Harris to new planes by stirring in a heavy dose of the Bach-based theory he had studied as a youngster.

The impact of this approach on Metallica's music was immense—listen to 'Orion' from their superlative *Master Of Puppets* album for evidence—and on the next generation of metal bassists, all of whom owe Cliff a debt to a greater or lesser degree.

Lemmy would
have laughed at
all this nonsense...



Roger Mouton/Cleopatra Records/Getty

"For me, although I now have a few favorite bass players, the player that changed my life was Jack Bruce, when I saw Cream. Everyone, including me, had gone to see Clapton, but Jack amazed me. I had never thought of bass playing until I saw him, playing a Fender six-string bass and doing stuff I'd only thought possible on guitar. I loved Paul McCartney's playing too, but when I saw the Beatles I couldn't hear a thing because of all the screaming girls. So for me, it's Jack Bruce."

Geezer Butler

02 IAN 'LEMMY' KILMISTER

A genuinely unique character, whose taste for Jack Daniel's and amphetamines was only equalled by his love for the Beatles, the Ramones and classic rock'n'roll, Lemmy was born the son of a clergyman in 1945. He began his career with the R&B band the Rockin' Vickers before joining the Sam Gopal Dream and roadieing for Jimi Hendrix, but his career took off when he joined Hawkwind in 1970. Fired after being detained for drugs, he formed Motörhead and went on to much better things. He died in 2015 at the age of 70. We miss him.

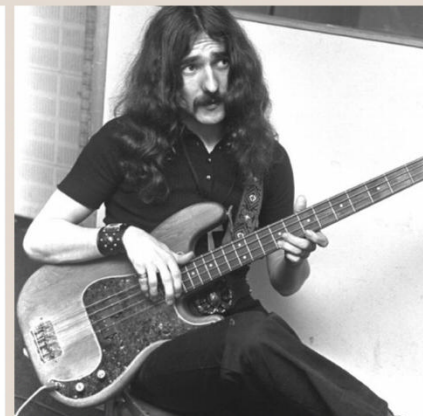
"Lemmy's taste for Jack Daniel's was only equalled by his love for rock'n'roll"



Chris Walter/WireImage/Getty

03 STEVE HARRIS

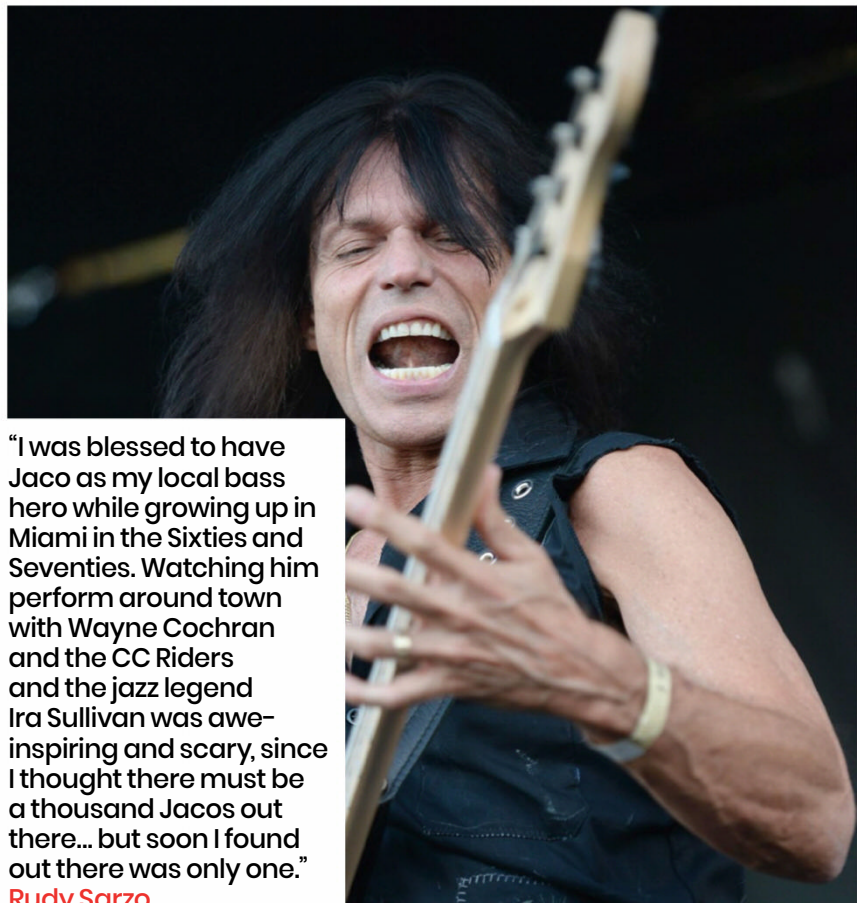
Iron Maiden have been headbanging away since 1979, anchored by founder member Steve Harris, who told us: "I'm not playing as busy as I was in the early days, because when we started off there were long periods of time where there was only one guitar—and not by choice, a lot of the time—so you try to fill in and make up the space a little bit. There was an element of that going on. Now, in Maiden we've got three guitar players, so it's just a case of trying to fit in between them." And the secret of his tone? Flatwounds, played with the edge of his fingernails for some scratch. Really.



Chris Walter/WireImage/Getty

04 GEEZER BUTLER

Terence 'Geezer' Butler, born in 1949, has seen and done it all when it comes to the bass. A founder member of the first ever heavy metal band, Black Sabbath, he formed a rock-solid foundation with guitarist Tony Iommi and a swung interplay with drummer Bill Ward that has influenced countless acts ever since. In between stints with Sabbath, who finally called it a day in 2017, he recorded and toured with Heaven And Hell, the post-Sabbath band featuring Ronnie James Dio on vocals, recorded three solo albums, and guested with Sabbath singer Ozzy Osbourne. Lately he's been playing in a new project, Deadland Ritual, armed with a formidable arsenal of bass gear from Lakland and Ashdown.



"I was blessed to have Jaco as my local bass hero while growing up in Miami in the Sixties and Seventies. Watching him perform around town with Wayne Cochran and the CC Riders and the jazz legend Ira Sullivan was awe-inspiring and scary, since I thought there must be a thousand Jacos out there... but soon I found out there was only one."
Rudy Sarzo

05 JOHN MYUNG Possibly the most technically gifted bassist in the world today, with the arguable exception of Mr V. Wooten, Dream Theater's founding member John Myung specializes in high-speed playing of terrifying complexity. This is just as well, because the rest of his band are equally adept on their instruments, resulting in a barrage of melodic, metallic harmony that has redefined heavy music since the Nineties. Like many a genius, Myung is a quiet, introspective individual, allowing his playing to do the talking, which is a refreshing change in the opinionated world of bass, believe us.

06 ROBERT TRUJILLO Metallica's third proper bass player after Cliff Burton and Jason Newsted deserves all of our praise. First, he's been in the world's biggest metal band since 2003, making him their longest-serving bassist. Second, he's an absolute monster player, powering through funk, rock, and metal styles with ease and panache. Third, he produced a documentary, *Jaco*, in 2012, telling the tragic story of Jaco Pastorius. Finally, he bought Jaco's famous 'Bass Of Doom', and restored it to the Pastorius family. Hats off to him.

07 JUSTIN CHANCELLOR What is it about Tool that makes them unique? Perhaps it's because their music is so unnerving, while they themselves are essentially a fun-loving bunch of geezers. Maybe it's because their music is basically metal, but non-metal-lovers worship them. In the specific case of bassist Justin Chancellor, there's an unusual contrast in that he's a Brit in a band of Americans: Last time we spoke to him, he jokingly complained that he couldn't find a pint of Stella in California. Either way, his bass grooves sit beautifully against the often complex music that his band makes, helped by an array of tone-boosting hardware.

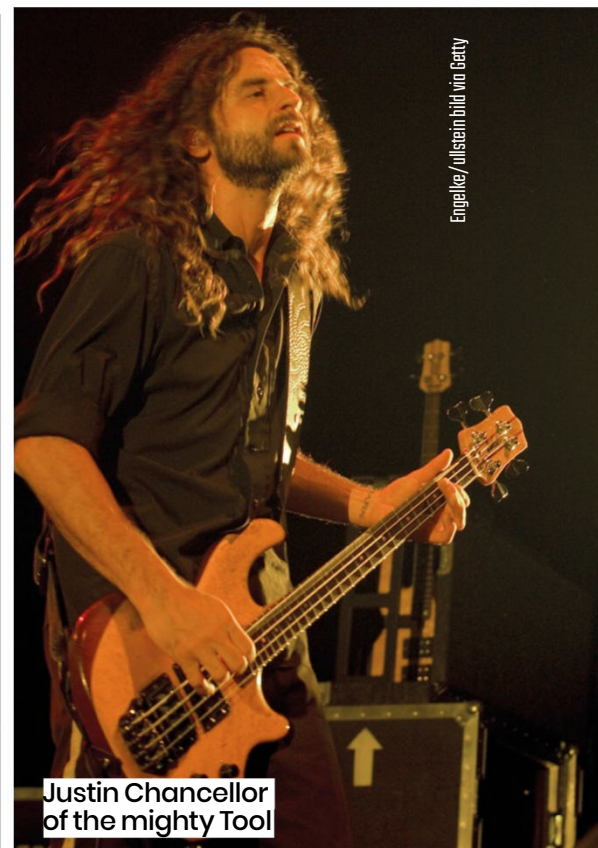


Sometime
Pantera
bassist
Rex Brown

"Jaco Pastorius. His bass-lines were so intuitive with the other players in all of his arrangement situations, and his chops were impeccable. Never before, never after!"
Rex Brown

08 TIM COMMERFORD There's a whole lotta metal bass players on this list, perhaps because that genre is where most progression is currently taking place when it comes to the low end. Then again, RATM's bassist Tim Commerford is far from just a metal guy, as you'll know if you've heard the funk-heavy approach he took on those immortal Nineties Rage albums, the Audioslave stuff that followed, and the punk rock and EDM-influenced bass parts that he's delivered with Wakrat and Future User in recent years.

09 RUDY SARZO Rudy Sarzo is a hero of no fewer than six decades of bass. In the Sixties, as a Cuban national living variously in New Jersey and Florida, he plucked the bass in garage-rock bands. Later, he made his bones with Quiet Riot, pioneers of Hollywood's hair-metal scene. Catapulted to fame in Ozzy Osbourne's band in the Eighties, courtesy of a recommendation from his erstwhile Quiet Riot colleague Randy Rhoads, Sarzo toured the planet with bands such as Whitesnake. By the Nineties, he was a classic rock bassist who commanded enormous respect, laying down lines with Yngwie Malmsteen, Dio, and Blue Oyster Cult in the decade that followed. In recent years he's trodden the boards with Queensryche, Animetal, the Guess Who, and now Quiet Riot again. We should all be more like Mr. Sarzo.



Justin Chancellor
of the mighty Tool

10 REX BROWN Playing bass in the long-gone metal heroes Pantera was no easy task, as we know because we asked their bassist Rex Brown about it. First, the bass had to sync up with the millimetrically-precise guitar playing from 'Dimebag' Darrell; second, the bass had to occupy a frequency that didn't clash with Vinnie Paul's mids-heavy drums. The former 'Rex Rocker' pulled it off, though, and how.

Runners-Up

David Ellefson Megadeth
Mike Inez Alice In Chains
Dug Pinnick Kings X
Bob Daisley Alex Webster Cannibal Corpse
Frank Bello Anthrax
Ian Hill Judas Priest
Jeff Hughell Six Feet Under
Troy Sanders Mastodon
Sean Yseult White Zombie

WORLD BASSISTS

Reggae, ska, dub, Indian, and African music: The term ‘world music’ doesn’t come close to covering the work of these amazing bass players.

01 ASTON ‘FAMILY MAN’ BARRETT



C. Brandon / Redferns / Getty

Aston Barrett is the key bassist in the emergence of reggae worldwide: His mighty influence towers over the genre. He was born in Kingston, Jamaica on November 22, 1946 and, along with his younger brother, drummer Carlton Barrett, got bitten by the music bug at an early age. The family home was in the same yard as a sax player called Val Bennett, and the ska and rocksteady innovators the Skatalites would come to rehearse there, too.

In his early days, Aston was a budding singer and pianist, singing bass in a harmony group, albeit to little effect. While at his day job as a welder, he constructed a one-string bass guitar from plywood and curtain rods that he’d twang while Carly hammered out rhythms on tins of paint. The Barrett boys broke through when Max Romeo’s backing

band, the Hippy Boys, were a no-show at a gig. In they stepped, and so a career was born—as was the reggae rhythm.

After debuting in 1968 backing the Uniques at a session, Aston and Carly were employed regularly by the late Upsetter himself, Lee ‘Scratch’ Perry, for numerous recordings, and likewise for Bunny Striker Lee. It was these that brought Family Man to the attention of Bob Marley. As the legend has it, Marley was bemused at Family Man’s youth, thinking that his nickname indicated an experienced performer. In contrast, Aston was as prolific in the bedroom as he was in the studio, siring at least 41 children.

The Wailers conquered the world with their crossover reggae, rebel music, and rock throughout the Seventies and after the death of Bob Marley in 1981, Barrett kept the Wailers touring to spread the Rastafarian word

through their music. Wielding his favorite Fender Jazz, equipped with his preferred flatwounds, he achieves his enormous, melodic sound through Acoustic 370s, Ampegs and custom-built 2x15” speaker cabs.

Although he has retired from touring for medical reasons, his son Aston Jnr continues the bass legacy. Sadly, Carly was murdered in the late Eighties, but the recordings continue to emerge from that fertile, exciting period when anything was possible.

It’s unlikely that anyone will ever catalogue all of the sessions on which Family Man played, but you can hear his influence on any reggae, dub, trip-hop, 2-Tone, and melody-friendly bass-line on pretty much any radio show at any time of any day. Without him, the world would swim in shallow seas of sound. With him, we dive into the depths of life-affirming low end.

100 GREATEST BASSISTS OF ALL TIME

02 BAKITHI KUMALO

The South African bassist, composer and vocalist was born in Alexandra, Gauteng on May 10, 1956. Remarkably, he was depping for his uncle's bassist at age seven; by the Seventies and Eighties he was in demand as a session player. In 1985 he famously appeared on Paul Simon's *Graceland*, and subsequently divided his time between SA and the US, working with Joan Baez, Herbie Hancock, Cyndi Lauper, and more. His blend of influences from Africa and beyond make him one of the most inventive and versatile players the world has ever known.

03 RICHARD BONA

Bona Penda Nya Yuma Elogo hails from Minta, Cameroon and is a major name in jazz, fusion, world music and funk. He was born on October 28, 1967 and was surrounded by musicians from a very early age. His first instrument was the balafon—similar to a xylophone—which he learnt to play at age five. By 11, he was a guitarist in bands in Douala, and by 14 was adept at jazz. Subsequent moves to Paris and

then New York added to his story: He took up the bass following an epiphany when he first heard Jaco Pastorius.

04 MOHINI DEY

The very definition of 'prodigy', West Bengal-born musician Mohini Dey has been performing since the age of 11, following in the footsteps of her bassist father Sujoy and her mother, Romia, a classical singer. A grounding in Weather Report, Miles Davis, Yellowjackets, and Jaco, and playing a tiny home-made bass, followed. At the age of just 25, Dey has already worked with Nitin Sawhney, Harmet Mansetta, Darshan Doshi, and Steve Vai. She does everything from funk, blues, and jazz to Indian classical and fusion, and has the chops, ambition, and pure ability to hit even greater heights.

05 ROBBIE SHAKESPEARE

Think of Robbie, who sadly passed away as we were compiling this issue, and you'll no doubt think of drum legend Sly Dunbar, too. The pair were one of the most sought-after reggae rhythms in the world, and to list



"Wow, my favorite ...such a hard ask... but it will be Aston 'Family Man' Barrett. He had all the musicality, moving through song chords, of McCartney, Jamerson, or Kaye, but was as powerful as a force of nature. If any one single thing led to me being a bassist, it was watching Family Man with Bob Marley at the London Lyceum in 1975."

Jah Wobble



"Mark King is one of my favorites of all time, and a great influence on my playing. I grew up listening to his music."

Mohini Dey

The genuinely
astounding
Mohini Dey

Chris Williams/Icon Sportswire via Getty

the names they backed would take more pages than we could print in a year. Born in Kingston, Jamaica on September 27, 1953, the low-end innovator was noted as a producer and for his use of effects. No wonder Bob Dylan, Yoko Ono, and Sinead O'Connor rushed to employ the legend over the years.

06 JAH WOBBLE

John Joseph Wardle was born on August 11, 1958 and first came to prominence as one of the notorious Four Johns, a group of mates kicking around the capital that also included John Grey, John Simon Richie—aka Sid Vicious, whose mangling of Wardle's surname renamed him 'Wobble'—and John 'Johnny Rotten' Lydon, whose post-Sex Pistols band Public Image (PiL)

launched Wobble as a bass player. After overcoming personal issues, he revived his career in the late Eighties, and has worked since then with musicians from all over the world, from Chinese orchestras to electronic explorers such as Brian Eno. It's all anchored, of course, by that unmistakable dub-devoted low-end.

07 TONY KANAL

Holding down the deep stuff for the likes of No Doubt and Dreamcar has propelled Tony Ashwin Kanal to the top echelons of the industry. He was born in Kingsbury, London on August 27, 1970, to parents who had moved to the capital from India, and the family moved to Canada and the States before settling in Anaheim, California. Kanal started on the

"It's very hard for me to nominate just one bass player of my preference, but I would say Hadrien Feraud. He is just a phenomenon. At a very young age of around 20, he appeared to be one of the greatest bass players on the planet, pushing all the boundaries and frontiers of the instrument in terms of technique, melodies, harmonies, and so on. He's not only gifted, he really went deep working hard on that. So lyrical, so musical... We're very proud of him in France."

Etienne Mbappé



Jordi Vidal/Redferns

Monsieur Mbappé, deep in the groove

sax, but it was as a bassist that he joined No Doubt at 16 years of age, and never looked back. He is also a sought-after producer and programmer, as well as a talented synth player.

08 HORACE PANTER

Horace was born on August 30, 1953 as Stephen Graham Panter, but is better-known as Sir Horace Gentleman in seminal 2-Tone group The Specials. A chance meeting with Jerry Dammers at college kicked it all off, the pair also forming the 2-Tone label, and inspiring a host of other ska groups along the way. Panter's fine art degree was not wasted either: He is a noted artist, and has spent time working as an art teacher in a special needs school. A gentleman indeed, and a very, very fine bassist.

09 BILL LASWELL

Prolific, innovative, playful, and eclectic: William Laswell has zipped around the globe collaborating with countless fellow musical explorers. The Salem, Illinois native was born on February 12, 1966 and is noted for his openness to experimentation: He's produced albums for Yoko Ono, Sly & Robbie, and Motörhead, for example. The ever-changing lineup of his band Praxis also means they're

impossible to pin down to any one style—which is, of course, just how Laswell loves it.

10 ETIENNE MBAPPÉ

Mbappé is instantly recognisable for wearing black silk gloves when he plays. He says it keeps the strings nice and bright, as well as giving a smooth tone, and who are we to argue? He was born in Cameroon in 1964, moved to France in 1978, and transcends genre boundaries, able as he is to tackle everything from rock to classical music and, of course, the music and rhythms of his homeland. Mbappé played on Ray Charles' last-ever LP, he has toured worldwide with his own band, the Prophets, and he also possesses an expressive, rich singing voice.

Runners-Up

Junior Groovador
Tunu Jumwa
Armand Sabal-Lecco
Errol 'Flabba' Holt
Nilanjana Ghosh
Dastidar
Munir Hossn
David Mankaba
Ngouma Lokito
David Goldfine

Horace Panter:
Truly Special



"My first bass hero was Andy Fraser. Free's music was very funky, due in no small part to Andy's bass-lines; there was always loads of space in their music. He had a very musical, melodic approach, which I didn't cotton onto for a long time. I then gravitated to Kenny Gradney when I started listening to Little Feat, for pretty much the same reasons that I liked Andy Fraser. Then the reggae guys took over: Aston Barrett and Robbie Shakespeare. These days, I often dream of being as good as Keith Ferguson."

Horace Panter, Specials

Brian Rasic/Getty

100 GREATEST BASSISTS OF ALL TIME



"My favorite bass player of all time would have to be Victor Wooten. He combined new techniques with a beautiful tone, incredible sense of groove and great compositional instincts to create some of the most iconic bass performances of all time, and then became a world-renowned educator to inspire the next generation. It doesn't get much better than that!"

Charles Berthoud

THE FUTURE

Who's pushing our instrument forward, whether on stage or online? You told us...

01 CHARLES BERTHOUD

First, Charles Berthoud wins our first ever Rising Star award, then you vote him Best New Bass Player in this poll? It's been quite a year for the Brit, who crossed the pond to take up residence on the east coast of the USA. He's enjoyed a

rapid ascent to YouTube stardom thanks to the wit and skill he displays in his videos, over 200 of them so far. His range of techniques is astounding, but that alone wouldn't be enough to attract the large fanbase that has gathered to see him play. What

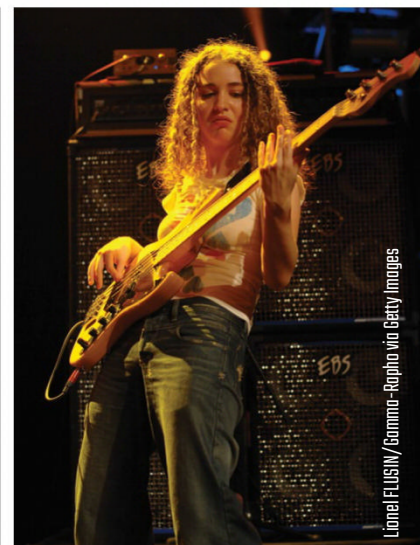
makes him stand out on the crowded playing-field of social media is that his movies are both funny and mesmerizing, whether he's translating classical music to bass, performing high-speed picking stunts, or (fake) battling fellow YouTuber Davie504.

02 DAVIDE 'DAVIE504' BIALE

This infamous Italian YouTuber has over 9.3 million YouTube subscribers and countless more on other social media, but it's important to remember that the man is a phenomenal bass player too. In fact, with a reach like his, it's arguable that he's doing more

to spread the word about bass to a young, online audience than anyone else on the planet. "It still blows my mind to think that I am the most subscribed Italian YouTuber," he told us. "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, and constantly adapting my bass-oriented videos to popular trends all over the internet. I think adding humor to bass videos is ultimately the key reason why my channel got popular. Adding humor makes videos fun to watch, whether you're a bassist or not!"



03 TAL WILKENFELD

Tal Wilkenfeld's 2007 debut album was titled *Transformation*, and although it was an instrumental record made with a handful of New York City's top jazz musicians, the connotation seemed clear. After all, here was a bassist who moved from her native Bondi Beach, Australia to Los Angeles at 16 to pursue a career playing music, and within a handful of years she had become a Youtube-aided global sensation. The flashpoint was a viral clip of her expressive solo on 'Cause We've Ended As Lovers', as a member of Jeff Beck's quartet at Eric Clapton's Crossroad Festival in 2007. These days, Wilkenfeld is a bassist for hire with everyone from Herbie Hancock, Toto, and the late Prince, to Mick Jagger, Ringo Starr, Jackson Browne, Keith Urban, and Ryan Adams.

04 JOE DART

"My advice is to always develop good time," says Vulfpeck bass phenomenon Joe Dart, "and build good stamina to be able to play with good time throughout the whole song. Stamina will come, and the vocabulary you can learn from listening to great bass players. To me, the one thing that you can't skip on, especially when you're young and just learning, is developing great time, because you're going to play with a bunch of different drummers throughout your life. They're all going to put the time somewhere else, and you should be able to always be the bridge between the drummer and the rest of the band

and make it feel good. That's a huge thing I think about when I think about what to practice."

05 STEPHEN 'THUNDERCAT' BRUNER

Stephen Bruner isn't just a bass player—he is a whole way of approaching life, built on a philosophy somehow espoused in the TV cartoon whose name he has adopted. We say 'somehow' because Thundercat doesn't really explain his thoughts or methods, preferring to remain opaque. This approach serves his unclassifiable music well, allowing him to express himself in a wide range of environments, as he's done with artists from Suicidal Tendencies to Erykah Badu. Check out his incredible hollow-bodied Ibanez bass, too—it has its own, wholly unusual charm.

06 MICHAEL LEAGUE

While over 40 musicians have passed through the ranks of Snarky Puppy over the years, bassist Michael League is the man in charge. Between stints in the band, he works on outside projects with David Crosby and other stellar musicians, as well as running a band called Bokanté, and while bass is definitely a strong suit in the League arsenal, his roles as bandleader, songwriter and general organizer are arguably more crucial to the group's success.



Richard Ecclestone/Redferns/Getty

"I'm terrible at picking favorites, but 'greatest' to me implies technical excellence, both physically and in terms of musical understanding. My reference for that is Jeff Berlin."

Michael Manring

07 MICHAEL MANRING

Only one bass player would write this in *BP*: "From what I can see, life in the early part of this still new century is increasingly technological and globally inter-connected, complex and full of both possibilities and problems. It continues to be a time of dramatic new conceptions in physics, information and philosophy of mind with remarkable implications for epistemology and society. I find these ideas recur in my thoughts and compositions as I try to make sense of the world around me." That bassist is Michael Manring. Listen to his music.



Pliginsk/Redferns/Getty

"My own nomination should go without saying: It's my father. Not just because he was the greatest of all time, but also because I came out of his balls. I wouldn't be here giving you my vote otherwise. Peace and love."

Felix Pastorius



C Brandon/Redferns/Getty

"I've still got to go with Flea. He was my first influence on the instrument, and his commitment to playing every note as if it were his last, to truly dedicating his whole body and soul to the groove, and to holding it down in what is essentially a three-piece band—he inspired me as a kid and still does today."

Joe Dart

08 HENRIK LINDER

Henrik Linder was a student at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm when Dirty Loops first rose to prominence as internet sensations with their fusion covers of pop hits, starting with Lady Gaga's 'Just Dance'. What's happened since is no accident, as Dirty Loops' debut *Loopified* showcased a trio as adept at creating inventive, infectious pop originals as creatively reimagining global hits. Linder's virtuoso slap, pluck, and chordal style on five- and six-string bass is both anchor and color for the Swedish group's unique sound.

09 FELIX PASTORIUS

Brooklyn-based Felix Pastorius was born, along with his twin brother Julius, in 1982, five years before the premature death of his father Jaco. A superb bassist himself, with a long list of recording and performance credits behind him, including a stint in the Yellowjackets from 2012 to 2015, Felix plays in a handful of elite bands, and delivers clinics and bass lessons. He's also the author of several books, including *Hot Dog Dinners For 4 String Electric Bass*, *Just A.S.I.P. Of Coffee & The Chromatic Scale* and *Scales From Rhythm And Outer Space... Aka Tetra Cocktails*.

10 MIKE KERR

Vocalist, bassist, and keyboardist Mike Kerr's setup involves many effects pedals, multiple amps and a range of basses including his humbuckered-up custom Fender Jaguar. His tone is often a rounded fuzz that is the essence of rock and roll, but despite the sonic bravado, Kerr also has moments of self-doubt, he once told us: "I always have such imposter syndrome, calling myself a bass player. My worst nightmare is there being a covers band, and they say, 'Come up and play with us'. I would be well and truly found out. It's also ridiculous for me to not consider myself a bass player, because that is what I spend the majority of my time doing in my band, Royal Blood." Keep it up, fella!

Runners-Up

MonoNeon
Hadrien Feraud
Blu DeTiger
Janek Gwizdala
Steve Lawson
Laura Lee
Ariane Cap
Este Haim
Damian Erskine
April Kae

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GEAR Reviews

Welcome to our expert road-tests of state-of-the-art bass gear



Behold our world-beating bass gear review section, where we bring you the crop of each month's new, interesting or otherwise relevant bass guitars, bass amplifiers, bass cabs, and bass effects. Occasionally we'll review a guitar effect if it's useful for bassists, but generally speaking, this zone is reserved for bass-specific gear.

We take our reviews seriously. *BP* is the last English-language print magazine devoted solely to bass in the world, and we have readers all over the planet, so we're responsible about our conclusions. If a product is worth your time, we'll say so; if it's flawed, we'll make that clear. We're not answerable to advertisers in any way, and our tests are independent of the views of musicians, manufacturers, and distributors.

When you read about a product here, you're getting a fair, balanced review from a highly experienced gear tester. Value for money is at the top of our agenda in these cash-strapped times, but on the other hand, we believe in paying for quality. Let us know what you think of our conclusions. Did we get it right?

Joel McIver, Editor

Reviewed this month...

48

DINGWALL

D-ROC STANDARD 5 AND HELLBOY

\$2440, \$3400, www.dingwallguitars.com

52

LUNA VISTA

BEAR BASS

\$799 MAP, www.gear4music.com

54

BLAST CULT

HOLLOW VEE

\$4395, www.blastcult.co.uk

56

BOSS

WAZA-AIR BASS

\$449.99 MAP, www.boss.info





DINGWALL

D-Roc Standard 5 and Hellboy

DINGWALL
www.dingwallguitars.com

Mike Brooks tests
two diabolical
Dingwall fives,
one of them a
Darkglass-loaded
beast: The Hellboy

Take a long look! These are two beautiful basses, carrying with them all the attention to detail and design ethos that you would expect of a Dingwall instrument. The Aquaflake model is a looker by any reckoning, and then we have the Hellboy Limited Edition—a bass, it is claimed, that comes straight from hell. It comes fitted with a Darkglass distortion circuit, so there's no need for pedals, effect modeling, or amp tinkering—the Hellboy can be made to rip and tear into any band mix with the turn of a control. Read on!

Build Quality

Both instruments follow the D-Roc body template, with a sizable cutaway to allow extended access to the upper-range frets. To facilitate the Hellboy graphic on the body-facing, the standard raised central portion of the body, as seen on the Standard model, has been replaced with a smoother integration that doesn't interfere with the graphic. Both basses have been built using



\$2440

\$3400

khaya, an African mahogany, and five-piece maple necks with pau ferro fingerboards are attached using four-bolt joints. The neck pockets on both instruments feel tight and solidly connected.

As Dingwall fans will already know, both basses feature multi-scale string lengths, ranging from 34 to 37 inches across the five strings, with the much-discussed fanned fret system providing a more natural fretting angle for the player's benefit. Both basses incorporate three FD3N Dingwall pickups: The Standard model uses Neodymium magnets whereas the Hellboy incorporates alnico equivalents. Dingwall bridges have been used, with both basses fitted with Hipshot Ultralite machine heads to reduce the weight and improve the balance. Both basses weigh in around the 10-pound mark, but thankfully the weight distribution has been sensibly addressed. The slimness of the body helps to make the excess weight manageable.

The Standard D-Roc is a passive instrument, with volume and tone controls and a four-way rotary pickup selector. This offers four distinct voicings, depending on the coils you choose and whether parallel/series

mode is selected. The Hellboy follows the same layout, but with an extra push/pull facility on the volume pot and an extra distortion level control. With the volume control up, the bass remains passive and the Darkglass circuitry is inactive, but push the volume control down and the full might of the drive circuit is unleashed. At this point, the active circuitry is in operation, powered by a nine-volt battery underneath the magnetic plate on the rear of the body. The amount of distortion added to your signal is controlled from the drive control: The options are extensive, based on your tone and pickup choices.

Sounds And Playability

Both basses exhibit a big, warm unplugged tone—and digging into the strings highlights the effect of the pau ferro fingerboard on the overall sound. The tone of each string, and indeed each note, sounds punchy with a high degree of attack as the note is played. Put simply, the notes you play will stand out: Of the two, the Hellboy sounds as though it offers a little more depth.



Plugging in, the Standard 5 is an impressive beast: Even selecting one pickup setting and panning across the tone control reveals a distinct amount of tonal light and shade. Throw different playing styles into the mix and then apply the pickup combinations, and you won't be short on tonal options and flexibility.

Tonally speaking, the Hellboy is a very different proposition. Played with a pick or fingerstyle, the bass is a tonal heavyweight, and opening the tone control up reveals a gnarly bite, even in passive mode, across all five strings. It should be noted that the low B performance on both basses is exemplary, thanks to the extra scale length.

Kicking the Darkglass circuit into play adds a whole other tonal dimension. I suggest you secure the crockery, because this circuit may well shake the foundations. In basic terms, it's brutal. If distorted bass tones are your thing, you may just have found sonic nirvana in this instrument. Although the fingerstyle tones are impressive, the real bite comes from playing with a pick. The level of definition can be tailored

“The Hellboy is an exciting prospect, and the inclusion of the Darkglass circuit is a masterstroke”

with the tone control, although I found the pickup selector to be my preferred option when changing sound, as I didn't want to move away from the sweet spot that I'd found with the tone control. The medium-thin C-shaped neck profile on either bass is super comfortable—and although both basses are fives, their 18mm

string spacing makes for a rewarding playing experience.

Conclusion

Both of these basses will blow your mind. I'm even more impressed with the D-Roc than I was four years ago, when it was launched in its previous guise as the D-Bird. The Standard model is a fine, fine bass and at this price point, it offers excellent value for money. The Hellboy is an exciting prospect—and even without the fantasy-fiction connections, the inclusion of the Darkglass circuit is a masterstroke. Sure, the price reflects this addition, but the tones it offers are jawdropping. Try both basses at your earliest opportunity. ■



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

DINGWALL HELLBOY D-ROC 5

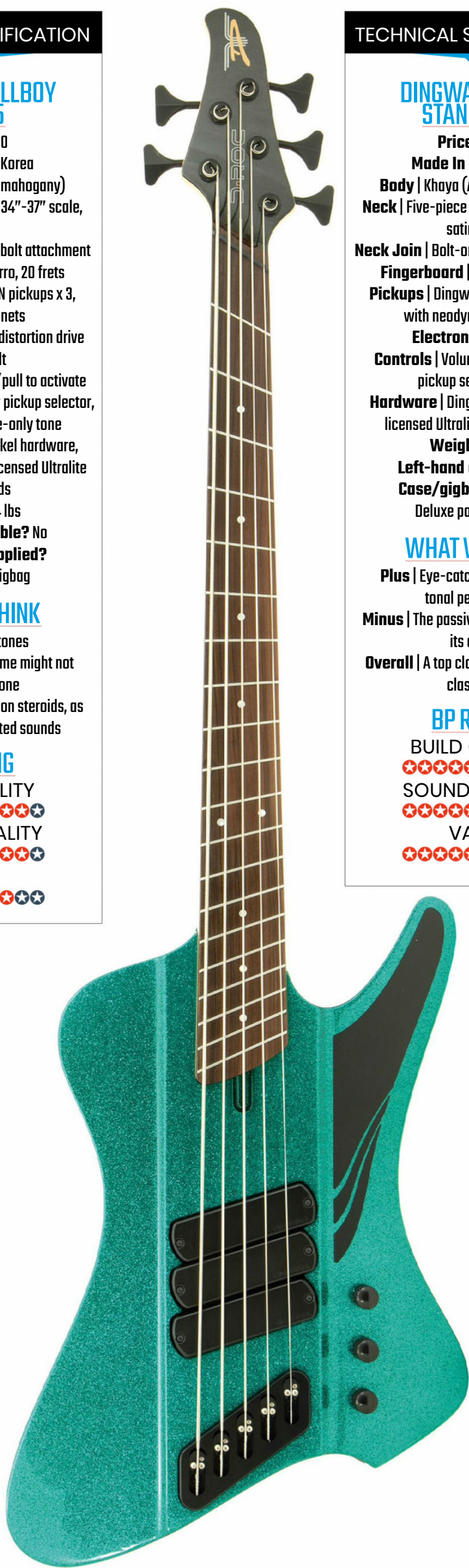
Price | \$3400
Made In | South Korea
Body | Khaya (African mahogany)
Neck | Five-piece maple, 34"-37" scale, satin finish
Neck Join | Bolt-on, four-bolt attachment
Fingerboard | Pau ferro, 20 frets
Pickups | Dingwall FD3N pickups x 3, with alnico magnets
Electronics | Darkglass distortion drive circuit, 9-volt
Controls | Volume (push/pull to activate the circuit), four-way rotary pickup selector, Darkglass drive, active-only tone
Hardware | Smoked nickel hardware, Dingwall bridge, Hipshot licensed Ultralite machine heads
Weight | 10.14 lbs
Left-hand available? No
Case/gigbag supplied? Deluxe padded gigbag

WHAT WE THINK

Plus | Amazing tones
Minus | The Hellboy theme might not work for everyone
Overall | A tone machine on steroids, as long as you like distorted sounds

BP RATING

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



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

DINGWALL D-ROC STANDARD 5

Price | \$2440
Made In | South Korea
Body | Khaya (African mahogany)
Neck | Five-piece maple, 34"-37" scale, satin finish
Neck Join | Bolt-on, four-bolt attachment
Fingerboard | Pau ferro, 20 frets
Pickups | Dingwall FD3N pickups x 3, with neodymium magnets
Electronics | Passive
Controls | Volume, four-way rotary pickup selector, tone
Hardware | Dingwall bridge, Hipshot licensed Ultralite machine heads
Weight | 9.7 lbs
Left-hand available? No
Case/gigbag supplied? Deluxe padded gigbag

WHAT WE THINK

Plus | Eye-catching looks, superb tonal performance
Minus | The passive operation may limit its appeal
Overall | A top class performer at a top class price

BP RATING

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

LUNA VISTA

Bear Bass

This pretty-looking acoustic critter has serious claws, says Joe Daly

GEAR4MUSIC
www.gear4music.com

\$799
MAP

There is a sentiment held in certain corners of the bass world that acoustic basses lack the efficiency and practicality to justify their cost, and that an electric bass is more than equal to any task set before it, thus rendering its acoustic colleagues irrelevant. We at *Bass Player* heartily disagree. A reliable acoustic presents a natural choice for intimate sets in small clubs or restaurants, and there's also a considerable advantage to having an unplugged option for outdoor jam sessions where power sources are scarce. Perhaps the greatest draw, however, lies in the innate simplicity of having an acoustic bass sitting close by for those moments of sudden inspiration, or when you feel like noodling without making a racket.

Luna's Vista Bear bass is, without a doubt, one of the most attractive acoustic basses that we've ever seen. The top features a stunning mosaic of tropical woods that depict a bear heading towards the treeline as a full, pearly moon rises over the hills. Given that Luna Guitars was founded by a renowned stained-glass artist, it's hardly a surprise that the Vista Bear boasts such a striking design. Let's hope that it sounds as wonderful as it looks.

Build Quality

When we pull the Vista Bear out of its hardshell case, we're immediately struck by how light it feels—so much so that we can't help but start bashing away at it while we're still standing, balancing the instrument on a raised leg as we run our fret hand up and down the smooth mahogany neck.

The ornate glossy top features a blend of tropical woods—padauk, quilted maple, ebony, spalted maple, ovangkol, and koa—while the back and sides consist of ovangkol, which proves a shrewd choice.



Sharing many tonal properties of East Indian rosewood, ovangkol comes from West Africa and offers a bit more midrange fullness, along with a brighter treble resonance not unlike koa.

The C-shaped mahogany neck runs along a 34" scale that, with the Grand Concert Cutaway design, offers easy access to the fullest reaches of the light brown Pau Ferro fretboard. There are 21 frets with mother-of-pearl inlays depicting the various phases of the lunar cycle, with the full moon at the 12th fret. The headstock showcases Luna's prominent logo and design, along with gold, sealed die-cast tuners and a maple binding. Given the affordable price point and its strikingly light weight, we were initially concerned that these observations signaled the cutting of corners in the build quality department. We're happy to report, however, that after putting the Vista Bear through the paces and then some, it proves to be durably constructed from stem to stern.

Sounds And Playability

Unplugged, the Vista Bear delivers precisely what you would expect from an acoustic bass: warm, earthy tones, and decent sustain at the low end of the neck. Channeling our inner 'Duck' Dunn, we run through some blues standards, and as expected, the lower the note, the longer the sustain. As we run up into the higher register, without the benefit of amplification, the sustain ebbs proportionately. That said, it's a hell of a lot of fun to play unplugged.

The real magic occurs when we plug in, at which point rich and creamy tones begin flowing from both high and low registers. This is where the instrument's versatility takes center stage: With amplification, the Vista Bear easily handles most of what you'd expect out of an electric bass. Much of this is down to the Fishman Presys+ preamp system located on the top side, which includes knobs for volume control and a three-band EQ for tone-sculpting options. There's a built-in tuner with LED display as well.

Critically, the preamp additionally features Phase and Notch knobs that, in tandem, work to suppress the low frequency feedback inherent in most acoustic basses. The Vista Bear is no exception to this: Moving up the low E string, a droning buzz begins, and we're able to eliminate the problem with the Phase knob. For the lower frequencies, Notch allows us to scoop out the lowest range of feedback: Set at approximately two o'clock, we're able to suppress any lingering resonance in the lowest frets.

Conclusion

The Vista Bear offers players a high-quality instrument that proves to be every bit as versatile as it is affordable. Were it not for the robust suite of tone shaping controls in the preamp, our assessment would differ considerably, but this hybrid bass checks all the boxes with a rich, natural sound, sturdy construction, and yes, one hell of an attractive design. Physically comfortable, and boasting a broad spectrum of tones, both unplugged and amplified, the Vista Bear is a joy to play. ■

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Price | \$799 MAP

Made in | China

Body | Padauk, quilted maple, ebony, avangkol and koa top, avangkol back and sides, maple binding

Neck | Mahogany, 34" scale

Neck join | Set neck

Fingerboard | Pau ferro, 21 frets

Hardware | Sealed die-cast tuners, pau ferro bridge with bone saddles

Electronics | Fishman Presys II preamp

Left-hand available | No

Gigbag/case supplied | Hardshell case

WHAT WE THINK

Plus | Price, versatility, appearance

Minus | Some low-frequency feedback, limited sustain without amplification

Overall | A serious contender for any acoustic fan

BP RATING

BUILD QUALITY



SOUND QUALITY



VALUE



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Price | \$4395
Made In | UK
Color | Midnight black, glass lacquer finish
Body | Mahogany, maple top
Neck | Quartersawn maple, 32" scale, gloss finish
Neck Joint | Bolt-on, four-bolt attachment
Nut Width | 42mm
Fingerboard | Ebony
Frets | 19
Pickups | Blast Cult handwound 54 Tele Bass single-coil pickup, fitted to a P-90 dog-ear surround
Electronics | Passive
Controls | Volume, tone
Hardware | Chrome hardware, Gibson bridge, Hipshot Ultralite machine heads
Weight | 7.05 lbs / 3.2 kg
Case/gigbag included | Hard case
Left-hand option available | As a custom order

WHAT WE THINK

Plus | Great tones and build
Minus | You'll have to really want this bass to justify its cost
Overall | A fine take on a classic design

BP RATING

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



BLAST CULT

Hollow Vee

Like the sound of a handmade Flying V bass? Add a hollow body and a fiendish pricetag and let's go, says **Mike Brooks**

BLAST CULT

www.blastcult.co.uk

\$4395

We reviewed an upright bass from the high-end luthiers Blast Cult a few issues back, and were suitably impressed. Now, they've sent us a semi-acoustic take on a classic design from rock's golden age, hand-built in London. It's expensive, but comes with a deluxe Midnight Gloss finish and celluloid pearloid binding to the body, F-holes and headstock: The basic Hollow Vee model is significantly cheaper. Let's check it out.

Build Quality

If you've ever tried to wear or play a Flying V bass, comfort, balance, and all-round playability tend to play second fiddle to the overall look and aesthetic—we're talking pose-ability here! Well, the Hollow Vee has all of that, but thankfully, it balances well on a strap, and its hollow construction facilitates plenty of playing time without leaving a dent in your shoulder. In terms of portability on stage, it may be left wanting somewhat, and as a hollowbody it is open to knocks and dings with potential regularity, but there's no denying its wow factor.

This bass is constructed from mahogany, with a maple top for the body and quartersawn maple used as the neck timber. The four-bolt neck attachment is solid and sturdy, and these elements alone point towards a throaty tone, a clear delivery and a certain degree of bounce that a bolt-on design tends to guarantee. With no contouring at front or back, fingerstyle players may find their usual style a little challenging to implement, but pick players who wear the bass low will find it comfortable.

The rounded neck profile certainly gives the player a solid chunk of wood to hold onto, and with its sleek feel and only 19 frets, the whole neck is easy to navigate. The level of finishing is professional, while smart touches such as the use of coins on the neck joint, a three-ply black scratchplate, and aluminium and carbon fibre position markers on the front and side are certainly individual, although the side dots might be a little too small, especially if the bass is worn low.

The volume and tone controls are on the upper side of the lower horn, and the jack socket is on the underside of the upper one: at least these features are out of the player's way, but they aren't easily accessible at speed should you need to make adjustments on the fly. Still, there are only so many placement options on a bass design such as this. Chrome hardware has been used throughout, with a Gibson bridge and Hipshot Ultralite tuners.

Sounds And Playability

Clearly, the hollow-body design has a major effect on the overall tone. Played acoustically, the Hollow Vee resonates and sustains with some authority: you can feel this through the back of the body. The clarity of tone is quite evident, no doubt helped by the ebony fingerboard, and despite the physicalities required from the design, the bass is very playable.



The handwound 54 Tele Bass single-coil pickup provides a warmly rounded bottom end, mixed with a raspy low-mid performance. With the tone control essentially turned off, you can easily make use of the rich, plummy tones on offer—but in rock-out mode, you'll want to open that tone control right up to get the full attack. Employing fingerstyle playing dampens some of the natural harshness, but swapping over to a pick, the attack sounds mightily impressive. Tonally, the Hollow Vee is not too dissimilar from a high-quality Precision: That characteristic thump and natural midrange should stand it in good stead in a full band mix.

The sizeable headstock easily counterbalances the large body design, and when placed on a strap, the bass sits at a comfortable playing angle. The 19mm string spacing at the bridge and 42mm nut width offer the player plenty of room to dig in, so if you like a tightly spaced string set and narrow nut width, this bass probably won't appeal to you.

Conclusion

The materials and craftsmanship here are strong selling points, and Blast Cult have performed a fine job of taking a classic design and making it fit into the 21st century. Its build quality and level of finishing are to be applauded, but of course I can understand players questioning the pricetag. Let's just agree that many of us would pay serious money to have a bass like this hand-made for us, with scope for personal touches in the design process. We can dream, right? ■

BOSS

Waza-Air Bass

Amp-modeling wireless headphones? Joel McIver unplugs and plays

BOSS
www.boss.info

\$499

In bass world, there has been a clear and steady move for some years now away from amplifiers, in the sense of hefty, tube-, or solid state-powered boxes that you lug to the studio or stage and plug your instrument into. Here at *BP* we've witnessed the rise of Class D heads, then pedal-sized amps, then amp-modeling units such as the Kemper, and of course amp-simulating software in a digital audio workstation or laptop. There have been a few attempts at iOS or Android-based amp apps on phones and tablets too, with varying degrees of efficiency and take-up by our community.

The Waza-Air Bass system combines a lot of this backstory, as a new variant of the guitar version that Boss launched a couple of years ago: It's been eagerly awaited by bassists impressed by the original product. It comes in two parts, a chunky set of headphones, and a matchbox-sized transmitter that plugs into your bass. Charge them up for three hours each via the supplied USB cable, and you'll get five hours of use out of the headphones and 12 from the transmitter, we're told.

The third component isn't mandatory but it would be self-defeating not to use it: Your phone or tablet, and the app that controls the system. As the Waza-Air Bass setup has multiple functions, controlling them all via the buttons on the headset would be impossible for the average sausage-fingered bassist, me included, so you should really download the app and spend a few minutes getting to know it.

Once the phones are on your head, the transmitter is plugged into your jack socket and you have the app open—like you needed another reason to stare at your phone all day—you're ready to go. First up, the headphones feel great. This isn't a hi-fi magazine, so I can't tell you how they compare in technical terms with whatever headphones the kids are all wearing these days, but I can confirm that they feel comfortable, solid, and high-quality—as they should for their significant pricetag, which we'll come to in a moment.

The other important first impression is that it feels so, so great to

walk around your practice space with no cables trailing after you, and no traditional wireless setup to worry about if you move too far away from your amp. It's also fantastic to have nothing, but your bass tones in your ears, as the headphones do a great job of blocking out extraneous noise.

In fact, the idea of walking around and playing brings me to one of the Waza system's key features, something that Boss call "advanced spatial technology and integrated gyro sensor delivering a deeply immersive playing experience with 3D ambience and dynamic sound localization". In other words, your bass sound can appear to be coming from a fixed point, if you select that mode. No matter where you turn your head, it comes from the same spot 'over there', just like it would if you were using a real amp in a practice space or on stage. There's a surround-sound option, too.

You can switch this feature off if you want, and in fact I didn't really see the point of it, although I did like the room-sized reverb that can accompany this function if you wish: On the app it's referred to as 'Ambience' and is quickly and effectively controllable. I suppose the idea is to emulate reality as closely as possible without having to actually plug into an amp. Still, others may find this function more useful than I did, and anyway, I get that a lot of younger bassists are digital natives and are home studio-based, either out of choice or because the current apocalypse prevents in-person rehearsal.

The other big deal about this system, and the real reason to buy as I see it, is that you get to choose between five amp types and 30 customisable bass-specific effects. You get these from Tone Central, the section of the app that allows you to add single or multiple tones at a single tap. You can then edit them with a bunch of simple virtual rotary controls for Gain, Volume, a three-band EQ, and the five amps mentioned above. In fact, the most fun I had with this system was when I went deep into the Effects screen, and fooled around with the parameters of a ton of effects.

Not only that, the system allows you to play along with 10 acoustic drum grooves or a metronome that has 32 time signatures, quite an uptick on the three signatures that the average band needs you to know. You can operate these from the headphones if you wish,

The real reason to buy is the choice between five amp types and 30 customizable bass-specific effects



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Price | \$499.99 MAP**Made In** | China**Features** | 50mm speaker drivers, power/volume/channel/function controls, charge/power/Bluetooth indicators, separate transmitter unit**Power** | Micro USB, cable supplied**Weight** | Headphones 12 oz, transmitter 2 oz**WHAT WE THINK****Plus** | Fabulous build quality and sounds**Minus** | Do you really need all this functionality?**Overall** | Does its job perfectly... but plugging into an amp is way easier**BP RATING****BUILD QUALITY**

★★★★★★★☆☆

SOUND QUALITY

★★★★★★★☆☆

VALUE

★★★★★★★☆☆

The acclaimed Dave Swift, delivering the low notes in style

although the tiny selector you use to do this is a bit tricky to find and use. Finally, there's a tuner, which operates more or less intuitively.

You can control all this stuff at the app, the Boss Tone Studio, or go fully down the rabbit-hole with an optional wireless MIDI pedal. The app permits you to edit, collate and download your tones, giving the user a sense of having a full-featured bass effects and practice unit at your fingertips. As far as I can ascertain, you can't save or export recordings, but then that's not what this system is about—and anyway, if it sounds as if the Waza-Air will have a place in your life, you no doubt already have some form of digital recording setup.

On a practical note, the phones and transmitter are perfectly portable, storing in a compact case that will cost you an extra \$30

If your intention is to use the Waza-Air Bass professionally, it will be a great investment

or so. The power in both units switches off automatically, which will be a godsend when, not if, you forget to turn them off.

Now, the cost. If your intention is to use this system professionally, taking advantage of the tone and practice options and sticking with the gear for the long term, it will be a great investment. If you're thinking of giving it as a gift to a novice who may or may not stick with it, you're risking them giving up and being left with a high-quality set of wireless headphones for the usual everyday applications.

Will the user really prefer this gear over an amp and a pedalboard? Will they really want to sit around in front of a computer, or will they want to go out and jam with real humans? The Waza-Air isn't for everyone in that sense, so consider that before you buy. ■

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I SPY...

62

RYAN MADORA

Dig into your favorite 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
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BEGINNER

64

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 catalog 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
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INTERMEDIATE

70

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
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ADVANCED

76

RICH BROWN

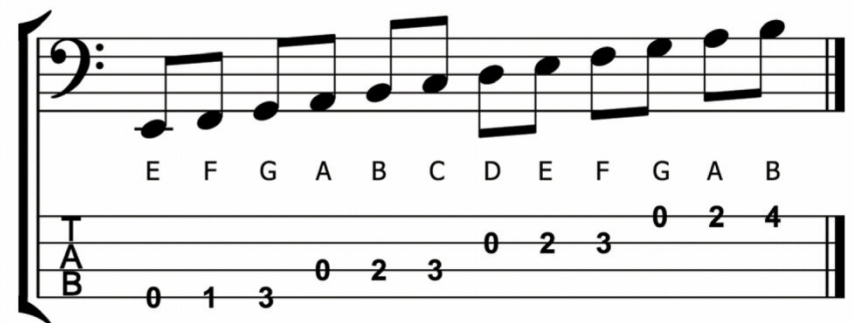
Maximize your bass skills with our advanced studies Toronto-born electric bassist Rich Brown has established himself as an incredibly versatile artist. Along with being one of the most called-upon electric bass players in Canada, Rich is a composer, producer, bandleader, educator and clinician, broadcaster, and voiceover artist. He has recorded three albums as a leader, including his critically acclaimed album of solo bass compositions *Between Heaviness & Here*. Rich appears on a plethora of recordings, ranging from jazz to traditional Arabic and Asian music. He has performed with a wide variety of artists, including Rudresh Mahanthappa, Vijay Iyer, Steve Coleman and Angelique Kidjo. Rich leads two groups—rinsethealgorithm and The Abeng—and was nominated for a Juno Award in 2016 for his latest album, *Abeng*. fbass.com/artists/rich-brown
Instagram richbrownbass
Youtube Brown'stone With Rich Brown

BP Notation Legend

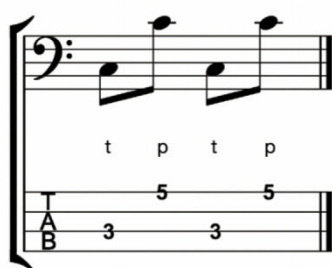
The following is a guide to the notation symbols and terminology used in Bass Player magazine

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.

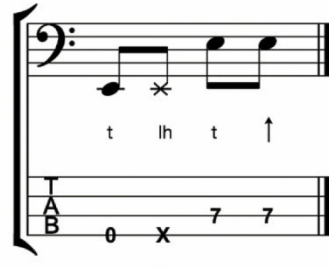


PLAYING TECHNIQUES



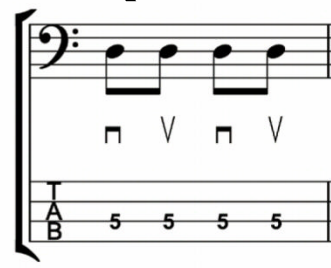
SLAP AND POP TECHNIQUE

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

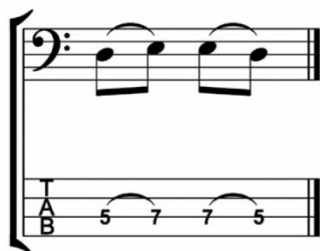
Where necessary, down and upstrokes with the pick will be shown using these symbols (down-up-down-up).



TAPPING TECHNIQUES

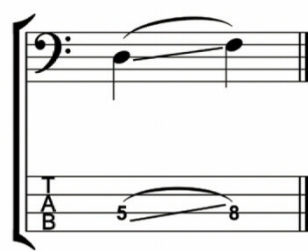
Fretting hand taps have a '+' in a circle. Picking hand taps are just '+'. Particular fingers may be shown with numbers.

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.



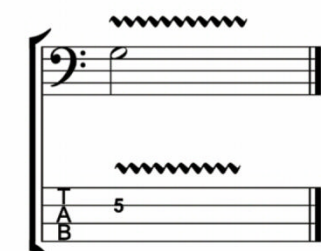
SLIDE (GLISSANDO)

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



TRILLS

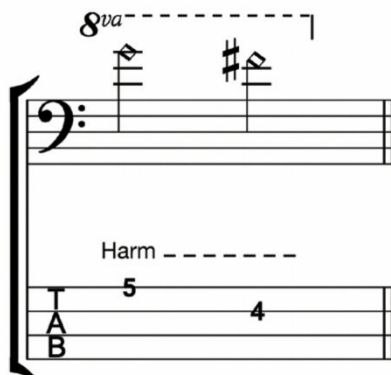
Trills are performed by rapidly alternating between the two notes shown, using hammer-ons and pull-offs.



VIBRATO

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

PLAYING HARMONICS



NATURAL HARMONICS

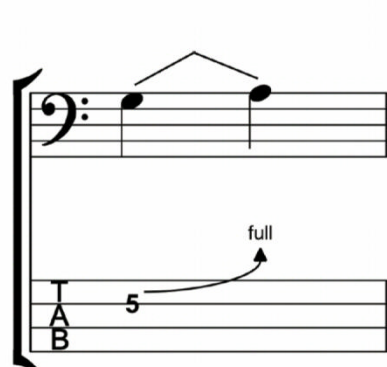
The note is played as a harmonic by lightly touching the string above the fret indicated.



ARTIFICIAL HARMONICS

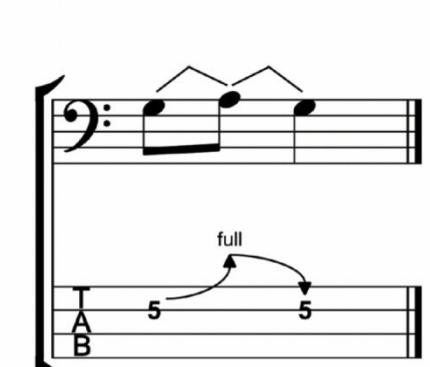
Pluck while fretting the lower note and touching the edge of the picking hand thumb to the note in brackets.

BENDING NOTES



BEND

The note is bent upwards to the interval specified: $\frac{1}{2}$ 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...

PLAY QUARTER NOTE TRIPLETS

Hey there, bass players! Welcome back to our discussion of rhythm. While scales and arpeggios are great ways to practice technique, let's maintain a musical balance with our understanding of rhythm, articulation, and note duration. These concepts can make or break your groove, so learning how to create or interpret different rhythms will help you stand out of the pack, or more importantly, stand next to a drummer on the bandstand.

We've spent the past few columns discussing two types of triplet-based rhythms: Swung eighth notes and eighth note triplets. Now, it's time to tackle something slightly more complex, the quarter note triplet. At first glance, you may be wondering, "How can this be more complex? Quarter notes are larger increments than eighth notes, so shouldn't this be easier?" Yes and no. While we play fewer notes, we have to be more responsible for the space between those notes. Quarter note triplets are a bit tricky,

and can be easier to feel than they are to count. Let's break down this rhythm, play through examples, and do some spying.

The quarter note triplet involves fitting three equal attacks within the space of a half note. Half notes, which normally account for two beats (or two quarter notes), will now get split into three attacks, resulting in quarter note triplets. In a 4/4 bar of music, we would have two half notes; this gives us two sets of triplets, or a total of six attacks per bar. Each note will feel longer than a quarter note, but slightly shorter than a dotted quarter note.

We use the same syllabic breakdown for both eighth note triplets (three attacks within the space of a quarter note) and quarter note triplets, even though they are different rhythms. This results in a wider sounding triplet phrase, still spoken as "tri-pa-let."

At the risk of complicating matters further, we can also discuss this concept in relation to quarter notes, rather than half notes. This will allow us to see the correlation between quarter note triplets and eighth note triplets.

In a 4/4 bar of music, four beats would result in four sets of eighth note triplets (a total of 12 short "tri-pa-let" syllables per bar). If we speak every-other syllable, starting with the downbeat (or the "tri" of beat one, followed by the "let"), we would, again, arrive at six quarter note triplets. Hello, math skills!

Now that we've described this rhythm, let's practice it. For the first three exercises, we'll stick with the same chord progression, an eight-bar phrase in the key of G Major. We'll play each chord for two bars, going from G Major to C Major, D Major, and back to G Major, or I-IV-V-I.

In **Exercise 1**, we'll practice switching between a bar of half notes (two attacks) and a bar of quarter note triplets (six attacks). Move this pattern across all chords in the progression. Notice how each half note is equal to a group of quarter note triplets, as described above. The most challenging aspect of this exercise involves accounting for time, especially since half notes may require a bit of silent subdividing. Do your best to physically

EXERCISE ONE

♩ = 100

Exercise 1 is an 8-bar phrase in the key of G Major, consisting of two systems of four bars each. The first system covers the G Major (I) and C Major (IV) chords, and the second system covers the D Major (V) and G Major (I) chords. Each system contains two bars of half notes and two bars of quarter note triplets. The notation includes a bass staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a guitar staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The guitar staff shows fret numbers for the notes.

System 1: G Major (I) and C Major (IV)

- Bar 1: G Major (I) - Half note G (fret 2), Half note D (fret 4).
- Bar 2: G Major (I) - Quarter note triplet G (fret 2), Quarter note triplet A (fret 3), Quarter note triplet B (fret 4).
- Bar 3: C Major (IV) - Half note C (fret 3), Half note G (fret 7).
- Bar 4: C Major (IV) - Quarter note triplet C (fret 3), Quarter note triplet D (fret 4), Quarter note triplet E (fret 5), Quarter note triplet F (fret 6), Quarter note triplet G (fret 7), Quarter note triplet A (fret 8).

System 2: D Major (V) and G Major (I)

- Bar 5: D Major (V) - Half note D (fret 4), Half note A (fret 9).
- Bar 6: D Major (V) - Quarter note triplet D (fret 4), Quarter note triplet E (fret 5), Quarter note triplet F (fret 6), Quarter note triplet G (fret 7), Quarter note triplet A (fret 8), Quarter note triplet B (fret 9).
- Bar 7: G Major (I) - Half note G (fret 2), Half note D (fret 4).
- Bar 8: G Major (I) - Quarter note triplet G (fret 2), Quarter note triplet A (fret 3), Quarter note triplet B (fret 4).

feel the time; bop your head, bounce your knee, or count quietly. Moving your body is a great way to keep yourself rhythmically on track and please, please, please, practice with a metronome.

For **Exercise 2**, play the first bar of each chord with four quarter notes, followed by a bar of quarter note triplets. This should be slightly easier than Exercise 1, simply because you'll play all four beats in the first bar. Notice how two quarter notes are played in the same amount of time as a group of three quarter note triplets.

In **Exercise 3**, we're going all triplet, all the time. The first bar will feature eighth note triplets on each beat, equalling 12 attacks. The second bar will return to the quarter note triplet. This will likely be the most difficult exercise, simply because it takes a good amount of stamina to play eighth note triplets. Feel free to reduce the tempo on your metronome.

Let's finish with **Exercise 4**. We're finally switching up the chord progression to produce a minor-sounding eight-bar phrase. Begin with two bars of Em, followed by two bars of C, two bars of A, and two bars of B. On the first bar of each chord, play four quarter notes on the root. On the second bar, play two quarter notes to account for the first half of the bar, followed by one group of quarter note triplets. The final bar of the exercise features two groups of quarter note triplets for maximum metal. Notice how the last note of each quarter note triplet is used as a passing tone to lead to the next chord, and watch out for that fancy movement in bar eight!

Now that we've practiced these rhythms, let's do some spying. First up, the iconic theme of 'Seven Nation Army' by the White Stripes. Is it possible to quantify the catchiness of this riff? It is, thanks to the quarter note triplet. This song is perfect for listening to the relationship between quarter note triplets and half notes.

Next up, 'Love Me Two Times' by the Doors. If your classic rock band decides to tackle this tune, make sure you're ready for octaves, root-fifth action, and your new favorite rhythmic figure. Quarter note triplets shine as full-band hits during the chorus.

And finally, take a listen to Metallica's 'For Whom The Bell Tolls'. Quarter note triplets show up during the synchronous riff played just before the vocals enter. Not only do they provide a rhythmic heaviness, but they offer contrast to the eighth note triplet themes played on electric guitar. This rhythm can be spied in plenty of tunes in the metal genre, so grab your bass, and get it under your fingers. See you next month! ■

EXERCISE TWO

♩ = 100

G C

D G

EXERCISE THREE

♩ = 100

G C

D G

EXERCISE FOUR

♩ = 100

Em C

A B

THROW DOWN!

BUILD FUNK LINES LIKE A BOSS



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

This month, we're going back to one of the points of origin for funk. Let's look at a way of creating bass-lines that was first popular in the soul music of the Sixties, and which has continued to be a staple for many bass players ever since.

When we think about creating bass grooves with three notes, our immediate thought is to jump to the three notes in the chord—the major or minor triad. However, players such as Donald 'Duck' Dunn, Carol Kaye and James Jamerson brought in a couple of other shapes that we can use for creating moving lines: These don't require a ton of scale knowledge, but still give us scope to add interest to a groove.

EXERCISE ONE

We're going to look at two specific three-note groupings. For our Major pattern, we have the root, the fifth, and the sixth. For our minor pattern, we have the root, the fifth, and the minor seventh.

This exercise shows you both of those shapes, starting on C and D, respectively. Both of those shapes, as written, stretch across three strings, so they require a little

bit of extra work from both hands to accomplish. They also leave a large part of the low end of our instrument untouched. This is where it can be very useful to allow the root note to be something other than the lowest note in the line. If we move the other two notes in our phrases down an octave, we get to use the 'bassiness' of those low notes in our grooves and also pull all the notes a little closer together.

EXERCISE TWO

This exercise shows what it looks like when we drop those other two notes by an octave. Do you find those easier to play? What about the sound? Which do you prefer? Once we've got our group of notes, we can try mixing up the rhythm.

EXERCISE THREE

For much of his work on the Stax label, Donald 'Duck' Dunn used eighth-note repeating patterns to underpin the songs. So for Exercise 3, let's add that to our C Major to D minor progression, extending each one for two bars. Notice that we're only using two frets on two strings for the whole line—the 5th and 3rd frets on the E and A strings. I've

also kept the rhythm exactly the same all the way through. There's no tempo marking, because it's important to get comfortable with this at a slow tempo, and then gradually increase the speed as you get more comfortable with it.

If you can try this with a drummer and a chordal instrument, that will help you to hear how the kind of variations in dynamics and note length that we've been talking about in relation to funk for the last few months will impact a line like this. Try playing every note as long and smooth as you can, then try it again with all the notes played staccato, which means cut as short and punchy as possible. Mix up those two extremes, and see what happens to the feel.

We can already hear that the sound is very different from that of just using triads. There are soul lines that use triads, 'Midnight Hour' by Wilson Pickett, with 'Duck' Dunn on bass being the most obvious example, but it's worth remembering that every new pattern we learn is not just one we can play, but one we can recognize, when working out lines from our favorite songs.

Ear training is often talked about as a separate skill from what we can play, but it's inextricably entwined with our knowledge of patterns and shaped on the fingerboard and what they sound like. It's almost impossible to hear a pattern you've never played before and find it quickly on the fingerboard, but when we start to hear fragments of shapes that we've played before, it becomes much easier to map those to the song in question and have the line playable in a much shorter time. So this exercise serves multiple purposes.

EXERCISE ONE



EXERCISE TWO



EXERCISE FOUR

One of the main roots of soul music, alongside gospel and jazz, was the blues. As such, it's very common for chord progressions in soul music to follow the harmonic conventions of the blues, moving backwards and forwards between the one, four, and five chords.

For Exercise 4, let's try alternating our C Major pattern from Exercise 3 between C and F, the four (or IV) chord in the key of C Major.

Behold the flying
thumb of Rhonda
Smith!



★ Beginners Lesson

The maestro, Billy Sheehan, in full flow.



EXERCISE THREE

EXERCISE FOUR

EXERCISE FIVE

Notice that even though we're using the sixth as part of the bass-line, it isn't written into the chord symbol. Unless it's also featured in the piano or guitar chords, it's uncommon for notes incorporated into the bass-line to be notated as part of the chord. These notes function as passing notes which, while having a harmonic function, are primarily melodic in purpose.

EXERCISE FIVE

So far, we've just played a continuous stream of eighth notes for our rhythm, but this kind of line lends itself to being able to accent the root note at different points in the bar. Exercise 5 alternates between two very common soul patterns, similar to 'I Can't Turn You Loose' by Otis Redding and 'Rescue Me' by Fontella Bass. Notice that in bar one

the second root note is on beat 3, whereas in bar 2 it lands an eighth note ahead. That 'push' is a very commonly used accent in soul, and it will help you a lot to get familiar with hearing it, seeing what it looks like in notation and being able to play it. It's especially important to hear where that is also happening in the drums, so you can follow the accents of the kick drum and help lock the bass and drums together. That's the essence of groove.

EXERCISE SIX

Exercise 6 is the same line but over the D minor chord, so using the root, fifth, and minor seventh instead. As we said at the start, like the value of investments, these lines can go up as well as down. One of the cool things about using the sixth over our

major chords is that it gives us the chance to experiment with a slide as part of the articulation. Articulation just means the way we choose to play those notes, whether we use hammer-ons, pull-offs, slides, bends, or other methods to get between the notes, as well as our recent concerns about note length and dynamics.

Whether or not you need to pluck the sixth after you slide up to it will depend on how comfortable you are with the technique, as well as the kind of sound you're going for. If you choose not to pluck the note, you'll have to time the slide so that the note lands right on the beat it's meant to be played on. This can be a little tricky if you've never done it before, so take it slow. If sliding your little finger up feels weak, try bracing it with your third finger behind it, and remember not to

Dm

4/4

T
B

5 3 5 3 5 3 5 5 3 5 3

The musical score for "The Wind" by The Beatles is presented in a two-staff format. The top staff is a bass line, and the bottom staff is a guitar line. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The bass line begins with a C chord, followed by a sequence of eighth notes. The guitar line features a series of chords and single notes, including a 5/7 chord and a 3 chord.

Musical score for "The Rose Tree" in 4/4 time. The score is written on two staves. The top staff is in bass clef and contains the melody. The bottom staff is in treble clef and contains the guitar accompaniment. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The melody starts on a whole note C4, followed by a half note D4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note F4. The guitar accompaniment starts with a whole note C4, followed by a half note D4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note F4. The guitar accompaniment includes a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) and a triplet of eighth notes (C5, B4, A4). The melody ends with a double bar line and repeat dots. The guitar accompaniment ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.



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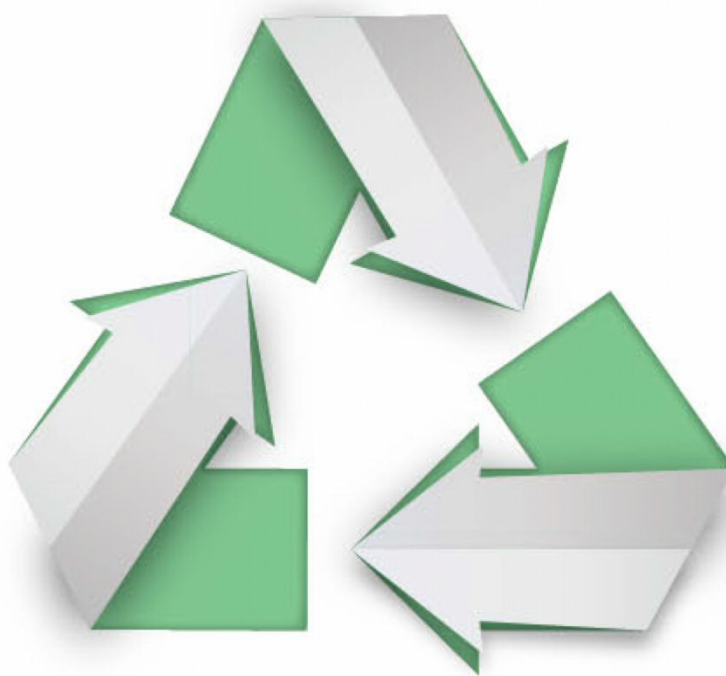
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Phil Mann is a stage and session star and educator extraordinaire. Get ready to step up your bass game!

NEXT STEPS

MAXIMIZE YOUR VOCABULARY

once watched a wonderful exchange between the Oscar-winning actor Tom Hanks and the star of the Marvel franchise, Tom Holland, where the actors discussed a speech exercise formulated from repetitions. The objective was simple: Ask the same question using different vocabulary. The question was simply “Would you like more coffee?”

Holland’s first response was “Coffee? Boy, do I need more coffee!”, but then he

was required to repeat the process using different words. “Would you like more coffee?” Hanks asks. “Yes please, Mr. Hanks, I need some more coffee!” The process repeats, stretching Holland’s vocabulary.

“Would you like more coffee?”

“Coffee? Come on, Tom Hanks, all I want is more coffee!” comes the reply.

Eventually, with the exercise exhausted, the process forces the speakers to use

a whole variety of diction, articulation, and vocabulary, which can be used at a later date.

Now, as musicians, there’s a lot we can learn from repetition exercises such as this. The important point to bear in mind is that learning a load of different scales may feel like a way of instantly measuring progress, but improvement in musicality actually comes from your ability to utilize the vocabulary you already have. ■

EXERCISE ONE

♩ = 125

G⁷



C⁷

G⁷



D⁷

C⁷

I7
G⁷

V7
D⁷



Cast an eye over these measures, which portray a rudimentary 12-bar blues in the key of G major. You’ll notice that the final two bars of the study have been highlighted to focus on the perfect cadence between the V7 and I7 chords.

EXERCISE TWO

♩ = 125

In the first exercise, we focused on developing the melodic portrayal of the chords in measures 11 and 12. The exercise resulted in the development of an extensive range of contrasting melodic portrayals, all of which were successful in breathing life into a rudimentary chord progression. One of these motifs has been revisited in Exercise 2, but you'll also notice that bars four and five have been highlighted. This month, our studies will focus on developing this particular part of the progression, so that we can combine our 'plagal' (which means IV to I) and 'perfect' insights to paint a complete picture.

EXERCISE THREE

♩ = 125

If you play a major triad in root position on the tonic chord, it produces a sequential pattern which surrounds the root note of the subdominant chord. Here, this is exemplified by the notes G, B and D enveloping the root note of the C7. The inclusion of a chromatic ♭5th interval produces an employable motif for transcending between the I7 and IV7 changes. Feel free to choose to utilize, or omit, the note in brackets, as you prefer.

★ Intermediate Lesson

EXERCISE FOUR

♩ = 125

G⁷

Exercise 4 continues to expand our melodic portrayal of I⁷ to IV⁷ movements. On this occasion, the fourth measure starts with the simple execution of the tonic chord's root note. However, the next stage of the motif can prove rather taxing, as you'll be required to simultaneously rake through three strings with your plucking hand, muting the initial notes with your fretting hand, but then playing the last note of the subdivision as an open A string. Once you've developed some consistency with this passage, hammer on a B₁ and ascend chromatically towards the IV⁷ chord.

EXERCISE FIVE

♩ = 125

G⁷ C⁷

The previous exercises focused on developing your ability to ascend from the I⁷ to the IV⁷ chord. Once you arrive at the sub-dominant, how do you go about transcending back to the tonic structure? After all, that's where the progression habitually leads. Well, the diatonic 3rd of C⁷ is an E, which also conveniently coincides with the lowest note on a four-string bass. Therefore, we can utilize this pitch in our efforts to return to the tonic chord. Exercise 5 delivers the aforementioned chord tone, before chromatically ascending back to G, where the primary motif can be revisited.

EXERCISE SIX

♩ = 125

G⁷ C⁷

Exercise 6 continues to investigate an array of melodic pathways between the IV⁷ and V⁷ chords. In this instance, the 8th note triplet utilized in Exercise 4 has been drafted and redistributed to encompass all four strings. Just prior, you'll encounter a cool motif inspired by the works of Stu Hamm, where the same pitch is conveyed in two different ways to create varying timbres. In this example, the G on the second beat of the fourth measure is portrayed both as an open string and fretted in an effort to produce a variety of sonic textures.

Try not to fall into the trap of thinking that progress is always measured by learning new information...



Pete Trewavas of Marillion in action.

© Roberto Ricciuti/Redferns/Getty

EXERCISE SEVEN

♩ = 125

17 G⁷ IV7 C⁷ G⁷ 17 G⁷

IV7 C⁷ G⁷

D⁷ C⁷ G⁷ D⁷

Handwritten notation for Exercise Seven, showing a 12-bar progression in 4/4 time. The notation includes a bass staff with notes and a guitar staff with fret numbers. The progression is as follows:

- Bar 1: Bass note G2, Fret 3 (T), 2 (A), 5 (B), 2 (B).
- Bar 2: Bass note A2, Fret 3 (T), 2 (A), 5 (B), 2 (B).
- Bar 3: Bass note B2, Fret 3 (T), 2 (A), 5 (B), 2 (B).
- Bar 4: Bass note C3, Fret 3 (T), 2 (A), 5 (B), 2 (B).
- Bar 5: Bass note D3, Fret 3 (T), 2 (A), 5 (B), 2 (B).
- Bar 6: Bass note E3, Fret 3 (T), 2 (A), 5 (B), 2 (B).
- Bar 7: Bass note F3, Fret 3 (T), 2 (A), 5 (B), 2 (B).
- Bar 8: Bass note G3, Fret 3 (T), 2 (A), 5 (B), 2 (B).
- Bar 9: Bass note A3, Fret 3 (T), 2 (A), 5 (B), 2 (B).
- Bar 10: Bass note B3, Fret 3 (T), 2 (A), 5 (B), 2 (B).
- Bar 11: Bass note C4, Fret 3 (T), 2 (A), 5 (B), 2 (B).
- Bar 12: Bass note D4, Fret 3 (T), 2 (A), 5 (B), 2 (B).

I7 to IV7 changes continue to appear in an array of different scenarios. One of these is in the first two bars of the 12-bar progression, and is commonly referred to as a 'quick change'. The idea of this placement is to generate additional movement in the sequence, to add interest to the four bars of similar content. This exercise enables us to employ additional I7-IV7 melodic insights.



Intermediate Lesson

EXERCISE EIGHT

♩ = 125

Chord progressions: I⁷ G⁷, IV⁷ C⁷, G⁷, I⁷, IV⁷ C⁷, G⁷, D⁷, C⁷, G⁷, D⁷

Staff 1 (Bass clef, 4/4 time):

Measure 1: I⁷ G⁷. Notes: G2, B2, D3, E3. Fingering: 3, 0, 1, 2. Triplet: G2, B2, D3.

Measure 2: IV⁷ C⁷. Notes: F2, A2, C3, D3. Fingering: 3, 0, 5, X. Triplet: F2, A2, C3.

Measure 3: G⁷. Notes: G2, B2, D3, E3. Fingering: 3, 2, 5, 2.

Measure 4: I⁷. Notes: G2, B2, D3, E3. Fingering: 3, 0, 5, 6, 7.

Staff 2 (Bass clef, 4/4 time):

Measure 5: IV⁷ C⁷. Notes: F2, A2, C3, D3. Fingering: 8, 7, 5, 7.

Measure 6: G⁷. Notes: G2, B2, D3, E3. Fingering: 8, 7, 7, (0), 6.

Measure 7: G⁷. Notes: G2, B2, D3, E3. Fingering: 5, 7, 5, 7.

Measure 8: G⁷. Notes: G2, B2, D3, E3. Fingering: 3, 7, 5, 7.

Staff 3 (Bass clef, 4/4 time):

Measure 9: D⁷. Notes: F2, A2, C3, D3. Fingering: 5, 4, 7, 4.

Measure 10: C⁷. Notes: F2, A2, C3, D3. Fingering: 3, 2, 5, 2.

Measure 11: G⁷. Notes: G2, B2, D3, E3. Fingering: 5, 3, 2, 5, 6.

Measure 12: D⁷. Notes: F2, A2, C3, D3. Fingering: 5, 3, 5, 2.

This month's penultimate exercise collates the preceding motifs to help us transcend the chord progression. When played individually, the triplets in the previous exercises may seem rudimentary. However, in the opening measures of Exercise 8, these phrases now appear side by side, and are rather more taxing. You'll also encounter another melodic adaptation of I⁷-IV⁷ movement in bar four. Start with your index finger on the G, then immediately move the digit a whole step while the open A string rings out on beat two.

EXERCISE NINE

♩ = 125

The exercise is a 12-bar blues progression in G major, written in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 125. The progression consists of three 4-bar phrases. The first phrase has chords G7, C7, and G7. The second phrase has chords C7 and G7. The third phrase has chords D7, C7, G7, and D7. The score includes a melodic line and a guitar fretboard diagram below it, showing fingerings and bends.

By focusing on just two harmonic modulations, we've been able to enhance our melodic interpretation of the movements. This month's final study collates all of the insights covered in the preceding exercises in an effort to produce a portrayal of the 12-bar progressions that even more advanced players may find a bit challenging. Once complete, use this month's studies as a catalyst to produce your own vocabulary. Remember at all times that less is more, so try employing just a single scale. After all, it's what we do with it that counts.

If you only practice one thing this month...

Try not to fall into the trap of thinking that progress is always measured by learning new information. Most of the time, musicality is enhanced by refining the vocabulary you already possess. Ultimately, you just need to learn to use it better. If you're limited for time this month, transcend between a I7 and IV7 using the Mixolydian mode to discover as many pathways as possible. Good luck!

SCALE UP

REVISIT THE MAJOR SCALE



Rich Brown guides us to Advanced level every month. Read on as he takes us to the very top of bass theory!

This question might sound silly for an advanced lesson, but here it is. How well do you know your major scale? I know the tried and true 2-4, 1-2-4, 1-3-4 pattern has been our go-to for years now, but there are distinct advantages to learning as many of the major scale patterns as you possibly can. The same goes for minor, melodic minor, melodic major, harmonic minor, harmonic major, and bop scales. But let's not get crazy here. In all honesty, I don't

know anyone who has done all that work—so today we're only going to be focusing on the major scale.

One of the main advantages of learning the different ways to play a particular scale is the economy of motion provided by its alternate shape, especially when playing over changes. For example, we're quite often told to practice a particular exercise or song in all 12 keys. This method is something I recommend to my students as well. But if we're merely moving the same shapes

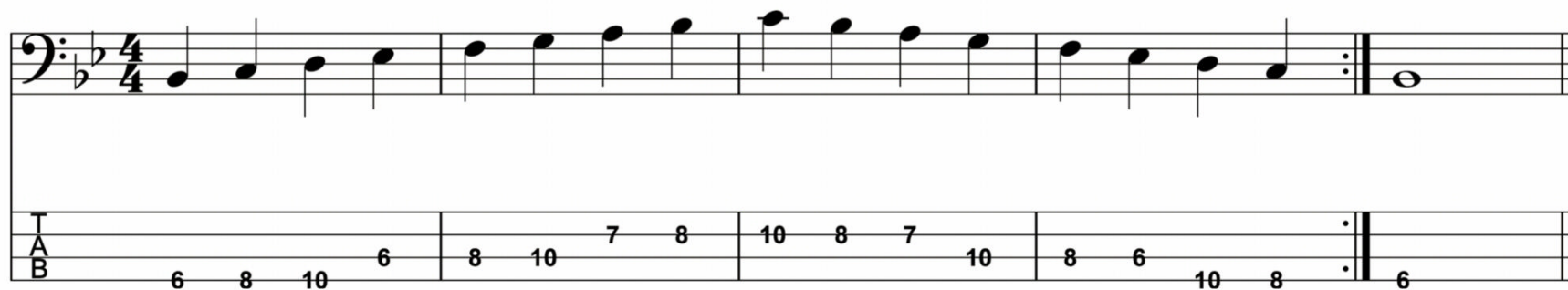
through the cycle, are we really learning anything new? I think not.

So today, I want to give you a few alternate shapes for the major scale. The goal here is for these shapes to become as familiar to you as our tried and true 2-4, 1-2-4, 1-3-4 pattern. As I've said in previous lessons here, knowing your options is essential. You might have played some of these patterns before, but there's a chance you might not be using them to their maximum potential. So let's get to work!

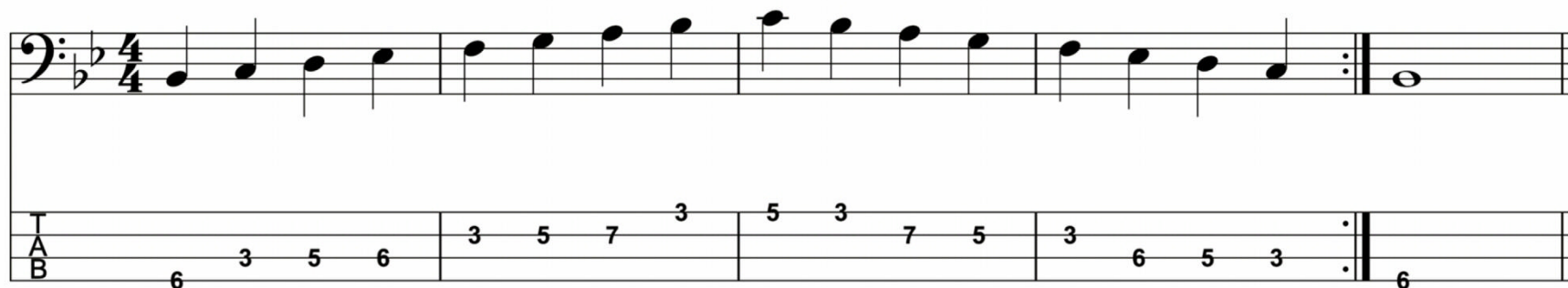


Hit that major chord

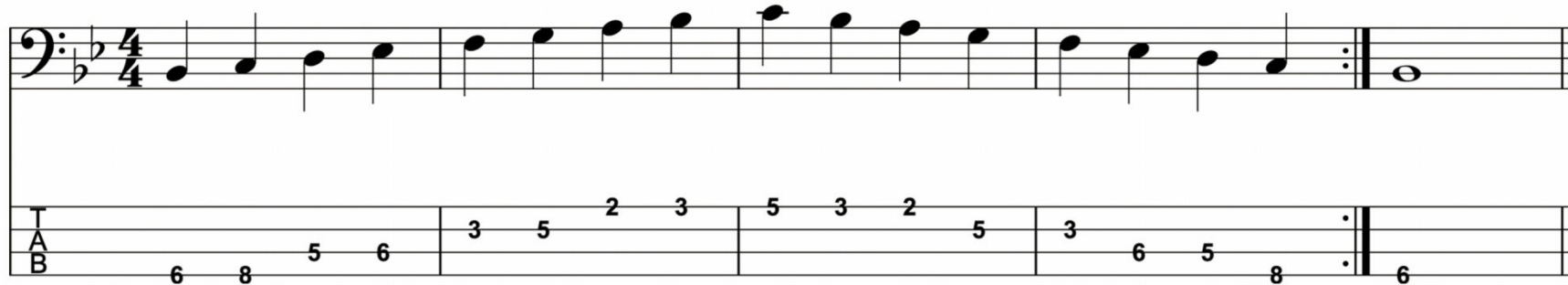
EXERCISE ONE



EXERCISE TWO



EXERCISE THREE



Today, we'll use the B $\flat$ major scale as our example. For this lesson, the tab notation staff will serve as your main point of focus, as the bass clef staff will look like the same B $\flat$ major scale over and over again, and as you know, today we're learning a few alternate shapes of one scale.

EXERCISE ONE

Exercise 1 might be the most familiar alternate shape for the major scale. This shape has you playing the first three notes on the E string, the following three notes on the A string, and the last two notes on the D string. I would suggest that you run this exercise a few times to get the shape into

Exercise 1 serves as an excellent challenge for the left hand, as the little finger plays the first note

your muscle memory before moving on to Exercise 2.

EXERCISE TWO

Exercise 2 is a fun one. It's a shape that you might not be as familiar with, but it could very easily save you from having to make excessive moves around the fretboard when

playing over changes. In addition, this shape serves as an excellent challenge for the left hand, as the little finger plays the first note. A good way to remember this shape is to think of it as a Dorian scale, but with the fourth finger opening the shape from below the root. Again, run this one a few times. Take it at your own pace, and let it sink in before moving on.

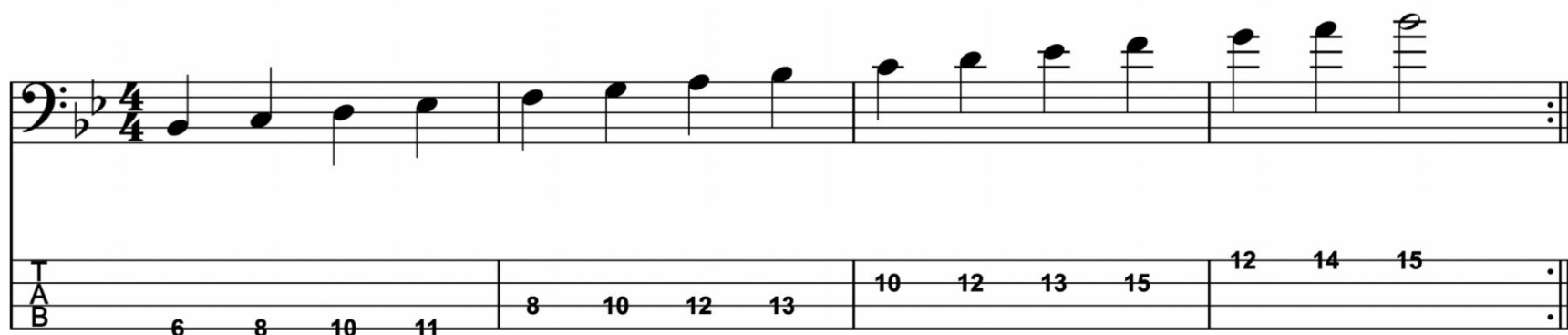
EXERCISE THREE

Have a look at Exercise 3. It's an exercise that poses a very different challenge. Here, you're playing the B $\flat$ major scale using two notes on each string. Now, I know in previous lessons I've talked about trying to stay in one

Chris Kael of Five Finger
Death Punch: Hair-raising
bass technique



EXERCISE FOUR



Exercise Four is a musical exercise in the bass clef, 4/4 time, B-flat major. The melody is an ascending scale over two octaves, starting on the B string (F) and ending on the E string (D). The notation shows the melody on a five-line staff and the corresponding fret numbers on a six-string diagram below. The fret numbers are: 6, 8, 10, 11, 8, 10, 12, 13, 10, 12, 13, 15, 12, 14, 15.

EXERCISE FIVE



Exercise Five is a musical exercise in the bass clef, 4/4 time, B-flat major. It consists of two systems of notation. The first system shows a melody on a five-line staff and a six-string diagram below. The fret numbers are: 6, 3, 5, 6, 3, 5, 7, 3, 5, 3, 7, 5, 3, 6, 5, 3, 6, 8, 5, 6, 3, 5, 2, 3, 5, 3, 7, 5, 3, 6, 5, 3. The second system shows a melody on a five-line staff and a six-string diagram below. The fret numbers are: 6, 8, 10, 6, 8, 10, 7, 8, 10, 8, 7, 10, 8, 6, 10, 8, 6, 8, 10, 11, 8, 10, 12, 13, 10, 12, 13, 15, 12, 14, 15.

position as much as possible, but this is an exercise in fluidity. Your focus for Exercise 3 is simply to take your time and make your movements from one string to the next as smooth as possible. There's a beautiful fluidity that happens in the descending part of this exercise. With practice, this part of the exercise will feel like one fluid motion. We'll work on more of this fluidity in the following example.

EXERCISE FOUR

Exercise 4 is one that I play regularly. Here, we're playing an ascending B $\flat$ major scale over two octaves using four notes on each string. The key to this exercise is in the

There's a beautiful fluidity that happens in the descending part of Exercise 3

transitions. I suggest you play each four-note sequence using the first, second, and fourth fingers of the left hand, especially on the E and A strings. This method allows the sequences on those strings to flow naturally under the fingers. Also, the semitone shift with the little finger sets you up perfectly for

the next string. Note that the four-note sequence on the D string has a tone-semitone-tone structure. Try playing this sequence using all four fingers on the left hand. Doing so will once again put you in the perfect position to play the last three notes of the exercise. Well done!

EXERCISE FIVE

Once you feel comfortable with these shapes, the next step would be to play them all as one entire exercise, as seen in Exercise 5.

EXERCISE SIX

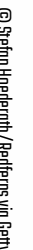
I enjoy playing these more extended exercises, especially those that cover a lot of

The image shows a musical score for the song "The Rose Tree". It consists of two staves. The top staff is a bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 4/4. The melody is written in eighth and quarter notes. The bottom staff is a tablature for a guitar, with the letters T, A, and B indicating the strings. The tablature is written in a simple, easy-to-read format, with numbers 1 through 4 indicating frets. The score is divided into four measures, each containing a measure of the melody and a corresponding measure of the guitar tablature.

This is a more pragmatic approach to playing that takes the guesswork out of your musical decision-making process. It can also send you down a wondrous musical rabbit hole of ideas in the practice room that will

keep you busy for years. By simply applying sequential patterns to these shapes, we can generate a plethora of new exercises to keep the creative juices flowing and our chops at an ever-evolving level.

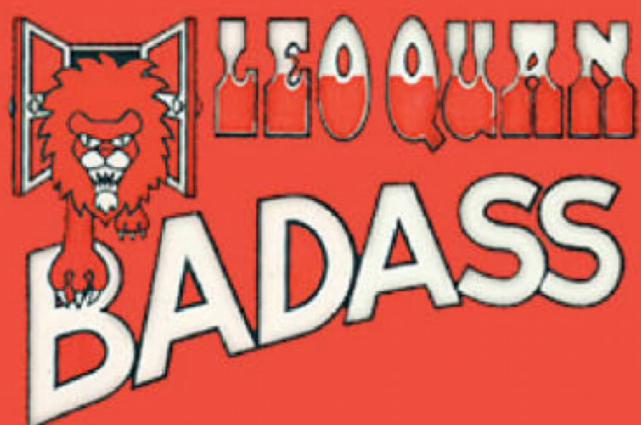
Take, for instance, Exercise 6. Here we have a simple sequential pattern of ascending thirds on a B_b major scale, but I've intentionally left the tablature blank. It's now up to you to choose which shape you'd like to apply to this sequence. There are four from which to choose, but ultimately you should work towards playing them all. Try playing different sequences on all four shapes. You can also try playing already familiar melodies or bass-lines. You can even improvise on a groove in B_b while you shapeshift your way through uncharted territory. The possibilities are limitless and also very exciting. Have fun! 



Eric Judy of Modest Mouse focuses on correct fretting



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Last month, I decided to introduce you to the nerdy world of digital multi-effects units—and as a tech nerd myself, it's a subject that I'm really interested in. We looked at the specifications that you might reasonably expect at entry level, so let's explore the features that you'll find on more expensive, midmarket units.

Should I spend a lot of money on an multi-effects unit?

It's a bit like buying a laptop: a cheap one will only do so much. I wouldn't be able to edit 4K videos with a low-spec processor, nor would I try to create professional video with an entry-level app. It's the same with effects units. Quad-core processors and AI modeling algorithms will always outperform those more elementary systems.

Great. More computer talk...

Be quiet and pay attention.

So where's a good place to start, Veall?

How about the Line 6 Helix Stomp? This pedal is absolutely crammed with effects and connectivity options for bassists. It's small and practical, and ideal for chucking in a gig bag, but also compact enough to live on a pedalboard. Then there's the Boss GT1000 Core, another

MULTI-EFFECTS, PART II

More expensive FX: What do we get for our bucks at the midpoint of the market?

contender for the feature-rich small-pedal crown. Zoom's newly released B6 also enters the market at a similar price point, and TC Electronic almost deserve a column of their own as they have DSP in micro-sized pedals such as the Plethora X5.

What advantages do these things have that cheaper units don't?

Processor enhancements mean that you are more likely to get a multichannel interface on board for use as a computer audio device. This will mean being able to record into a DAW (digital audio workstation) with both your dry bass signal and glorious stereo effects. The outputs will feed studio monitors and headphones, turning your laptop into a fully-equipped studio.

What if I want to rock out on stage with a band?

No problem. We use MIDI to allow devices to communicate with each other, and thus you will find those connections included, space allowing. For those who have balanced line applications, we replace a single DI output with balanced inputs and outputs. Combination Neutrik sockets that accept both 1/4" and XLR-style plugs cater for all our cabling requirements. Finally, the usual small monochrome screens get replaced with color and, on really top-tier processors, touchscreens are becoming more common, all of which are very useful for dark stages. Did I mention that you'll get a tuner, a looper, an effects loop, and a drum machine on board, too?



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

Anything else we should know?

Yes. We bassists often like to run dual or parallel signal paths, right?

Sounds like a lot of hassle.

Well, it works wonders for Royal Blood. This method allows us to blend different effects at the output that aren't affected by each other, specifically in the chain. Or I could send a guitar amplifier distortion to one output and a clean bass octave effect to another.

Are we done with this subject?

Hell no. Next month we're taking a look at what makes the top-tier processors rule the (sound) waves.

After that, can we get back to talking about bass guitars?

Shut your piehole! ■



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