

THIRTY-TWO YEARS OF BASS

WE LOOK BACK... AND FORWARD

WHAT'S NEXT FOR BP?

THE NEXT PHASE BEGINS!

bassplayer

THE FINAL ISSUE

SPECIAL COLLECTOR'S EDITION

JOHN STIRRATT

The bass master
behind Wilco

GUY PRATT

Psychedelic secrets
from the road

ERNIE BALL DARKRAY 5

EB spec plus Darkglass
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SHORT SCALE



The 2022 Collection

5 EXCITING NEW FINISHES AVAILABLE NOW IN THE ERNIE BALL MUSIC MAN VAULT



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WELCOME



This is the last print issue of *BP*. We're not finished yet, though...

We knew this day was coming. Magazines have been ceasing publication at an increasing pace over the last few years, not because their content is substandard or because their readers are moving on, but because the print industry itself is on its knees. Now it's *Bass Player*'s turn.

Our sales are good. Advertising revenue is decent. Subscription numbers are great. Our content is better than it's ever been. Our readers are loyal—but paper stocks have increased punitively in cost, while energy prices make distribution a nightmare.

We're still *Bass Player*, though, the coolest bass magazine ever published, and we still have a community to support, and a lot of great bassists and basses to write about—so we're not going anywhere. You can still find us at www.bassplayer.com, where we'll be reporting with artist and gear exclusives before anyone else.

In some ways, our jobs will be easier as a digital channel because we won't be worrying about print logistics. We'll be especially happy not to have to lie awake at night asking ourselves whether the stupid coronavirus will be preventing you from reading about life in the world of bass.

Thank you for your support, your engagement, and your friendship over the last 32 years. You mean more to me, my team, and my many talented predecessors than words can possibly express.

Now, we've got important bass stuff to write about. You don't want to miss it, believe me. See you at bassplayer.com!

Joel McIver, Editor



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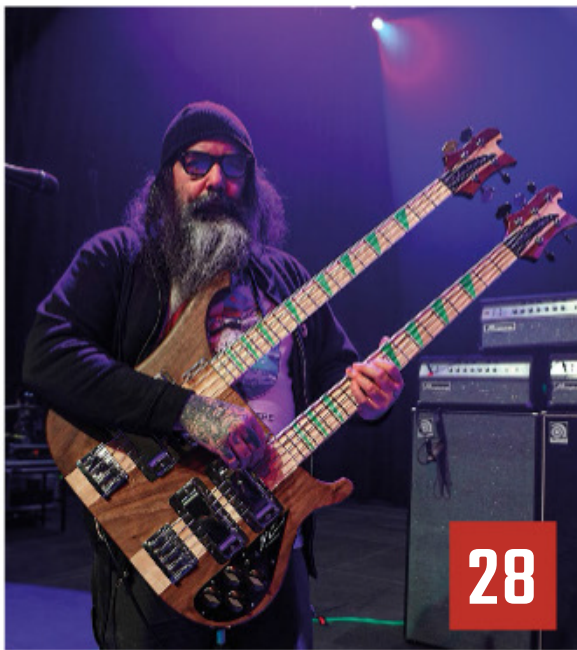
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Mike Lowrie/Getty



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bassplayer

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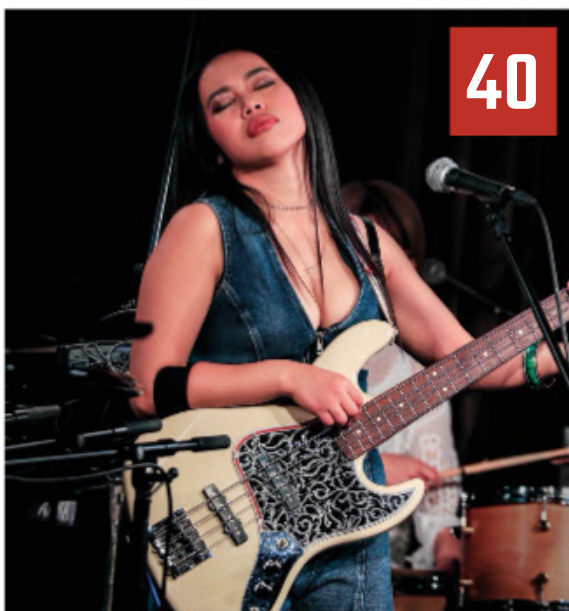
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Mihail Sergejevich/ Getty

THE Lowdown

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

BASS PLAYER MAGAZINE MOVES FULLY ONLINE

BP's print magazine is over, but
we're not done. See you online.

It is with regret, a lot of sadness and a whole load of bring-it-on that the *Bass Player* team announces the end of our print magazine. You're reading the last US and UK issue: the next one will be a final, UK-only issue.

Subscribers will be contacted and offered alternative options.

We've faced massive challenges over the last few years, through a difficult retail landscape and an *actual pandemic*, to maintain *Bass Player* as a profitable magazine, but 2022's dramatic increase in costs for us and our suppliers – paper, printing, fuel, and distribution to name a few – mean that our print edition is no longer viable. Every cloud has a silver lining, though – the time has come to focus 100 percent on our huge and growing online community.

Editor Joel McIver will join the online team, running the *Bass Player* channel at www.guitarworld.com, and serving *Bass Player*'s growing digital audience, which already numbers almost half a million followers on social media, with daily news, reviews and features.

As Joel says, "I'm gutted, that goes without saying, but we also think that the bass-playing community will be much better served by us putting all of our efforts into *Bass Player*'s digital side, as one part of the Guitar World site.

"Until now, *Bass Player*'s online content has only consisted of content that has come from the print magazine. Now we can focus on delivering new and exclusive stories and videos that appeal to the global bass community on a daily basis.

"We thank everyone who's ever bought an issue of *Bass Player* over the last 32 years, all the great bassists who have given us their wisdom and their time, and all the talented writers, photographers, designers, educators and gear manufacturers who made the world of bass such a great place to be. We will strive to do you proud at *Bass Player*'s new online home."

Bass Player magazine was founded in 1988 as a spinoff of *Guitar Player* magazine. Two trial issues paved the way for issue 1 in 1990, featuring Billy Sheehan on its cover: 32 years and 426 issues later, he's scheduled to appear in the final issue, too.

If you need a reason why *Bass Player* won't be in print any more, here it is. While readers stayed loyal (thank you) and subscription figures are healthy (likewise), the market for print magazines is impossibly difficult. Our content has never been better: the market has never been more harsh.

The second phase of *Bass Player*'s career is about to begin. Stay with us – good times are ahead! 
www.guitarworld.com/bass-player





bassplayer





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Boogie Down

Mesa/Boogie unveils the Subway D-350.

Mesa/Boogie's new Subway D-350 is a compact but powerful unit that the Gibson-owned company says is the lightest, smallest, and most affordable bass amp it's ever produced. Given that it weighs just over three pounds and measures at just 3" high and 9" wide, we have no reason to quarrel with those claims. Small as it is, the amp packs a punch, with 350 watts of power. It's built with a solid-state preamp coupled with a lightweight Class D power amp and switch-mode power supply, a four-band EQ, separate Gain and Master Volume controls, Active/Passive and Input Mute switches, and a Bright switch. Expect to pay \$699. ■



© Daniel Bacarski/Redferns

Che Bello

Anthrax bassist releases solo tunes.

After releasing his memoir *Fathers, Brothers, And Sons* last year, co-written with this magazine's editor, Anthrax bassist Frank Bello has released a solo EP, *Then I'm Gone*. "I revisited some really dark times in my life when I was writing my book, and writing these songs was the result of reliving them," Bello explains. "Music has always been a great outlet for me as a coping mechanism. I felt it was a good time to put out these songs for people who connected with the book, and maybe some who haven't yet. Thanks for listening!" ■



PAUL RYDER

RIP to the Happy Mondays bassist.

Paul Ryder, the co-founder and longtime bassist of the British alt-rock band Happy Mondays, died at the age of 58 on July 15.

"The Ryder family and Happy Mondays band members are deeply saddened and shocked to say that Paul Ryder passed away this morning," the band wrote in a statement, adding "A true pioneer and legend, he will be forever missed. Long live his funk."

Born in Salford, England in 1964, Paul Ryder took up the bass at 13, and formed the Happy Mondays with his brother Shaun, the band's dynamic frontman, guitarist Mark Day, drummer Gary Whelan, keyboardist Paul Davis, and dancer/percussionist Mark 'Bez' Berry in the early Eighties. Usually playing a Fender Jazz bass, Ryder supplied much of the band's club-friendly low end, which helped give them a crossover audience.

The Happy Mondays reached their commercial zenith in 1990 with their third album, *Pills 'N' Thrills And Bellyaches*. Propelled by the hit single 'Step On', the album then went platinum in the UK and helped spread what came to be known as the Madchester sound—that same blend of dance rhythms and psychedelic pop hooks—across the rest of the world.



Rex Brown

GEAR ROUNDUP

There's plenty of gear to get excited about. Check BP online for more!

Pantera and Down legend Rex Brown has joined forces with **Gibson** to create a new signature

Thunderbird bass guitar. The metal bass titan's first collaboration with Gibson, the Rex Brown Thunderbird was reportedly two and a half years in the making, and features a mahogany body and mahogany neck with a slimmer-than-usual profile and a 34", 12" radius rosewood fretboard with 20 medium jumbo frets. It'll cost you \$2,799.

Baum's first artist signature bass, the Thunder, is on the way. Designed for Seye Adelekan, live bassist with Gorillaz, the pink instrument has a lightweight mahogany body, a one-piece maple neck and a dark rosewood fretboard with a signature lightning strike inlay across the

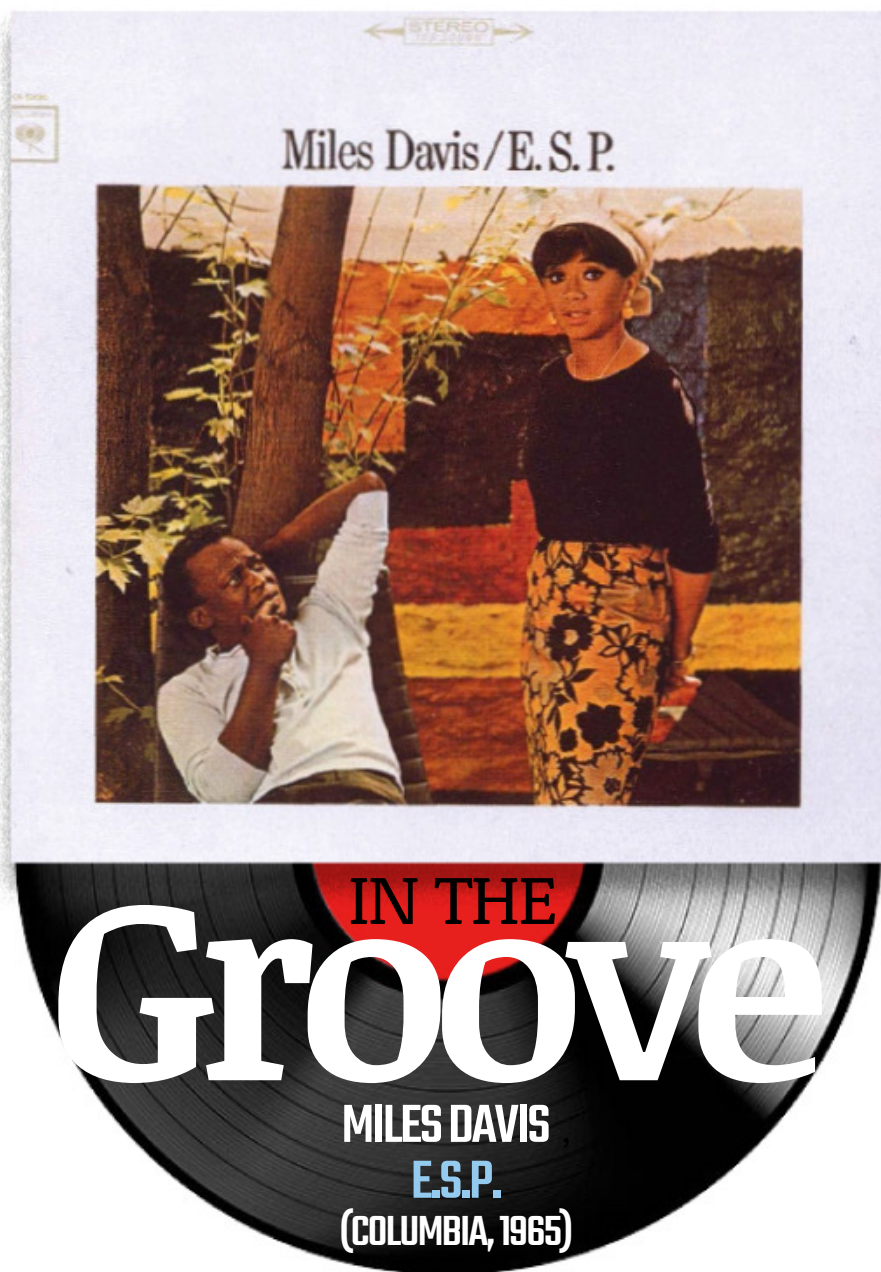
11th to 13th frets. Sporting 22 frets, a 34" scale length, a 12" fretboard radius and a single Goldsound pickup, the new instrument is designed to help Adelekan switch his right-hand technique from thumbing, fingerstyle or using a pick.

Markbass has lifted the lid on the MB58R range of 20 cabinets, eight combos and two heads that the Italian firm says will all offer "next-level power-to-weight ratio". The MB58R head and combos all share the same core amp circuit, the Little Mark 58R. The MB58R is a 500-watt solid-state build, which features a four-band EQ, a bi-band limiter, plus a handy option for preset EQs, including Flat, Scooped and FSW (footswitchable) settings. Available combos in the range will include 2x10", 1x12" (both standard and mini) and 1x15" speaker builds, with each available in Pure or P specs.

Finally, after 2000 sales across 30 territories, **With Bass In Mind** has republished *Chord Tone Concepts, Volume One: An Excavation Of The Humble Triad*. This second edition of the original manual has been expanded into a series that includes further publications from BP writer Philip Mann. ■



Seye Adelekan



Even the mighty Ron Carter has to warm up.

Let's dig out a bass-heavy LP from the vault. This month: the Ron Carter-featuring *E.S.P.* by Miles Davis

E *S.P.* is the debut LP from what is considered to be Miles Davis' second great quintet, and it is notable for its broad range of composition by all its members, aside from drummer Tony Williams. The album teeters on the precipice of the avant-garde, while retaining Davis' signature hard bop style. With its improvisational nature and tonal exploration, it is a statement of intent regarding the direction in which Davis et al would soar on forthcoming releases. That direction was to send Miles, and jazz, into previously uncharted territories of sound and rhythm.

The line-up was completed by tenor saxophonist Wayne Shorter and pianist Herbie Hancock, making the quintet one of the most skilful and flexible in their field. It was also one of the most anchored, with the extraordinary Ronald Carter on bass.

In school, Carter's first instrument had been the cello until he quickly realised that many groups had no bassist, so he sold the cello and took lessons on his new bass. He's been quoted as saying that the bass player is the quarterback of a band; in the Davis quintet he is certainly throwing out the passes for the flair players to run with. And run with it, they certainly do.

Bandleader Davis takes a long solo on the rambunctious title track, with Carter smashing out incredibly speedy sixteenths. Things take a turn towards a more bluesy sound on the co-write with Carter, 'Eighty-One', the trumpeter constructing a signature solo. Carter

is restrained, in contrast, with the story being told through his attack and tone as he walks solidly up and down the song. The bassist and drummer provide a solid, almost riff-like basis for the intensity and energy of the piece, which settles into a late-night mellow blues jam.

The youth of his new band—Williams was just 19—was just what the trumpet hero needed as he faced his late thirties. There's an edge to the sound that is both cool and spiky, not least because Davis provides a more trebly and piercing timbre than ever before. More than anything, this was a band, a unit, a collective, with the chops and solidity to play themselves into ever more complex compositions.

Carter's 'R.J.' is an exemplar in working in and around the spaces:

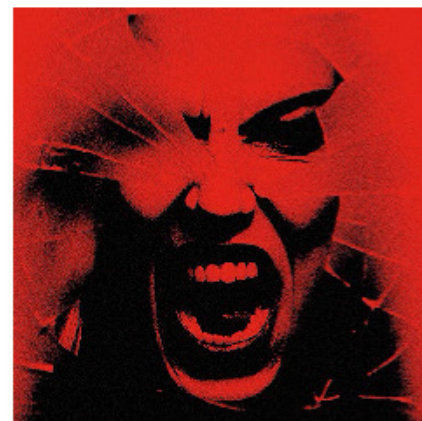
He's off on another kick, along with the splashing hi-hat work of Williams. Hancock jumps in and out with clustered interventions, leaving room for Davis to expand. The relentless 'Agitation' has Carter working the whole fretboard, adding some very high-register urgency. The bassist's second collaboration with Davis closes out

the set, 'Mood' leaning into a much more laid-back groove—by the standards of the rest of the album, at least. Carter is increasingly prominent on the track, to the extent that his is the last note you hear.

The great bassist went on to become one of the most-recorded players in jazz, with approximately 2,200 credits to his name. He continues to work in his ninth decade on the planet: Long may Ron reign. ■

Carter said the bass player is the quarterback of a band; in the Davis quintet he is certainly throwing out passes

The Albums That Made Me



Back From The Dead (2022)

“Don’t overthink it—just play the song!”

“This was the most head-on, straightforward approach I’ve ever taken on an album and it really sets it apart. Joe Hottinger [guitar], Lzzy [sic] Hale [guitar/vocals], and I are locking in and playing very similar riffs, with obviously some movement and voicing differences. Usually I try to explore the songs, to shape and expand on the melody, but we’re locking in with the drums, diving into it head first. Don’t overthink it: Just play the fucking song.

“Over the years we’ve matured as musicians, and we’re fortunate to play these big open arenas. It’s less about quantity, and more about what value you’re giving a note rhythmically, and how long you’re holding it down. It’s our second album with Nick Raskulinecz producing, so with that comes evolution. His studio has a really dialled-in setup, so there’s an old Ampeg SVT cabinet with an Orange head—it’s beefy with that heavy tube sound. He loves his Geddy Lee Sansamp too. So the cab is being miked, of course, but there’s also a DI going on, so it’s a blend of several channels. Nick has an early 1970s P-Bass which is really heavy, like a brick. He’s never done anything to it, and never modded it, but that thing just rips across the board. Every note on the neck is as present as the last, and it’s just unbeatable.”

THIS MONTH

Josh Smith

The rock bassist du jour discusses his band Halestorm’s five albums to date...

Josh Smith is the bassist and keyboardist in the shape-shifting rock band Halestorm, whose five albums to date have been acclaimed for their growing, ever-developing sound. The group’s willingness to push their own musicianship, as well as their genre, marks them out as one of the most inventive heavy acts of today, as evidenced by 2013’s Best Hard Rock/Metal Performance Grammy award for ‘Love Bites (So Do I)’.

The band’s new album, *Back From The Dead*, blends their juggernaut live energy with their customary studio explorations, as the engaging Smith tells us. He’s not just a fine bassist: His background includes accomplished jazz studies, which have imbued him with a superior technique. His first instrument, Josh explains, was the piano. “When I’m home I usually go up to my piano and play Beethoven: At the moment it’s his *Sonata Pathétique*,” he

says. “In the second movement, even the right hand is down in the bass clef. If you want to hear a cool bass-line I highly recommend it. That said, to get back into the bass guitar and nerd out is just fun.”

We couldn’t agree more, so let’s crack on as we discuss how songs develop constantly on the road, the advantages of using a pick, the value of jamming in the writing process—and how you sometimes have to bite the bullet and jump right in. ■



Halestorm

(2009)

“I was trying to get my hits in where I could”

“We were just over in the UK, and we were looking at the set-list, as we like to change it up live, keep it interesting for the crowd. We do a little jam, I switch to keyboards, and it’s a lot of fun, so we pulled out ‘Dirty Work’ from the debut album. It was one of those ‘end of the album, let’s put this on there’ situations. It’s a really fun bass-line—a very thumpy walking line, which goes right back to my roots of being a jazz bassist. The song is quirky.

“On ‘I’m Not An Angel’ I do this one-five thing up the neck on the 14th fret. I always think of the way Flea uses his voicings—they’re just so beautiful—so I tried to employ a little bit of that. There’s a fun little riff at the end where Lzzy is singing the title. It’s the climax of the song and I did a little pentatonic. I was trying to get my hits in where I could, as a bassist.

“It was our first big release, so I knew I had to make some moments, make more of it. I feel like that is where your signature is as a player. You’re the glue between the melody and rhythm for an entire song, so you have to pick and choose these moments and say, ‘That’s me, right there’.”



The Strange Case Of...

(2012)

“We were ready to make album two”

“You spend your whole life making that first record, and with the amount we were touring we got a feel for what we needed to do. You go on the road and every night is a lesson. We’d done a covers EP [2011’s *Reanimate*], and learning someone else’s song and approach is a lesson in itself too. On there we’d done Skid Row’s ‘Slave To The Grind’, and when we wrote ‘Love Bites’ you can see the connection there.

“We were ready for album number two. It was fun to make. We’ve been trying ever since this album came out to find a better closing song live than ‘I Miss The Misery’, and we’re damned if we can! We do this big long jam every time and the crowd reaction is always amazing. I have a really melodic part in the bridge—it’s tucked away, but if you listen you can hear it up top in that 12th fret area.

“Another breakthrough moment was when Lzzy brought ‘Rock Show’ to the table. I decided to just drive it, on the downbeat, with an accent at the top of the measure. I could tell everyone was looking at me like, ‘What the hell is he doing?’ But on the playback, they were like, ‘That’s really cool’. It’s this syncopated moment before we all come back in, locking in again.”



Into The Wild Life

(2015)

“We challenged ourselves in new ways”

“We decided to experiment and challenge ourselves in new ways with this one. It’s such a departure from the first two albums. We threw the rock formula of the time out of the window. It’s still one of my favorite albums.

“I’d always played with my fingers, but around this time I started using a pick a little more, trying to get some new sounds, using new techniques. I was waiting for people to call me out and say it sounded bad, but I treated it as a really great challenge, and these days I use a pick more than fingers.

“I had a little fun intro in ‘I Am The Fire’, then there’s ‘The Reckoning’ which is almost abstract in a way that it doesn’t seem to be following any part or any pattern. I’m just peeking in and out, and then hitting it with the vocals, then off I go again. I think of ‘Airbag’ from Radiohead’s *OK Computer*, and little ninth-grade Josh saying ‘Oh, I can do that’. I love making unique voicings and rhythms. I was a piano player first, and to me, our band is less-is-more. My tone has moved into the midrange over the years. Bass down, mid pushed and treble pushed even more. That’s where my bass sits really well.”



Vicious

(2018)

“It’s all about taking new risks”

“Our producer, Nick Raskulinecz, got us to come to the studio, set up a jam and start recording, then if we heard something we liked in the playback we’d go back and work on it. So we were in the live room playing for weeks. Joe had a riff for a chorus, a really interesting, unique metal riff, and from there we built ‘Uncomfortable’ which is a kind of Frankenstein of a song. In the verses I do a much more rhythmic strum live than just straight 16th notes, and the song is quite a ride for how relatively short it is.

“We experimented with different backbeat rhythms too, like on ‘Vicious’ and ‘White Dress’. Joe, Lzzy and Arejay [Hale, drums] and I are playing, and everyone has a part they are responsible for to make it rhythmically sound as a whole. We did that a bunch on this record. I don’t know what I was listening to at the time, probably soul, as I was employing the ninth a lot more, like on ‘Skulls’ which moves around the root note by a whole step. It’s a voicing I hadn’t used as the focal point of a bass-line before, so again, it’s about taking new risks, learning new approaches, and making them work for us.”

THE Lowdown

I WAS THERE!

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





Duff and Axl in 1988:
practically (sweet) children

When Duff McKagan of Guns N'Roses wrote a certain bass solo...

Michael 'Duff' McKagan, the punk rocker from Seattle who moved to Hollywood in the mid-Eighties, joined Guns N'Roses and became a star, is best known in bass world for a slinky four-bar solo executed in the upper register over the intro to their best-known song, 'Sweet Child O' Mine'. How did he come up with the solo, we ask?

"It just happened," he told us a while back, adding: "Really, it's all a product of what you listen to and what influenced you, and then what you hear and what you think is right for the part—and it's either gonna happen for you or it's not. I've never tried to force any sort of bass-line, it's either gonna come to me or it's not."

He added, "The first Fender I bought was in 1986: I got it at Guitar Center when GN'R got our record advance. I had some money to get some gear, and that was the bass

I chose to get, and it really was that bass that was the core of my sound—the *Appetite For Destruction* sound. I played that bass on every record that I've played bass on. I've used that exact same setup."

Duff's scooped tone had a crisp top end that stood out among the layers of screaming guitars, as readers of a certain age will remember. "Nobody advised me about my tone—I really didn't know who to ask back then," he explained. "I knew what I didn't want to sound like, I didn't want to have a big fuzz-tone bass where you couldn't hear the notes. Izzy [Stradlin, guitar] had this real thin, sparse sound, and Slash had a big, Marshall-plus-Les Paul sound, and somewhere in there was a spot for me. We all had to have our spot to make that band work, and I kinda knew where I wanted to go—and I really landed on it with that bass and the Rotosound strings and a Gallien-Krueger rig. It's real simple what I use."

He doesn't hear his lines like the rest of us, he reveals: "I'll hear those bass-lines, like the beginning of 'Sweet Child O' Mine' or the beginning of 'Fall To Pieces' [by his later band Velvet Revolver], as a cello line for some reason. I don't know why that is, I don't play cello or anything. It would be a neat thing to learn it, but I'm busy right now learning how to play bass!" ■



Always the coolest
member of GNR

The question of whether to use a compressor live is one that I hear often. Compression is an absolute staple for mixing and mastering engineers in a studio context, or for front-of-house engineers when they need to get an overall polished sound for a band—but is it as essential when we play live?

To remind ourselves what compression actually is, Universal Audio gives the following industry definition: “Compressors and limiters are used to reduce dynamic range: The span between the softest and loudest sounds”.

In essence, a compressor makes our louder notes quieter and our quieter notes louder, resulting in closer volume consistency.

The argument often made against the use of compression in a live setting is that it has the potential to strip our ability to be dynamic with our playing. If we want to drop the dynamic of a quiet section or provide huge

COMPRESSION: YES OR NO

Do you need a compressor when you play live shows?

contrast through a build into a climactic chorus, compression will reduce that effect in favor of a more even output. It’s also argued that compressor use essentially compensates for a lack of control in a bassist’s technique. I’ve always loved the concept that your plucking hand is essentially your ‘compressor’, as the mindset behind this focuses on really developing your dynamic control through metering your attack, touch, and note lengths, in turn opening the doors to both consistent and expressive playing.

However, don’t let this paint a negative image of using

compressors live. There is a time, place, and personal preference—irrespective of my recommendations—for the use of one. I’d say one of the most common uses of a compressor is when using the slap bass technique, due to the transients between slapping, popping, and muting. Again, you could work on your technique here to gain more consistency in velocity, but a compressor will help draw out the percussive details with better clarity. The same applies for tapping.

Compressors are also great at increasing sustain with the right settings dialled in: This is



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



BIMM INSTITUTE

perfect for ongs where you are holding on longer notes.

In addition, don’t forget that a compressor doesn’t have to be an ‘always-on’ part of your signal path. Use it creatively and for occasions where it is really relevant. Otherwise, work on your technique to achieve an accurate level of consistency so that you have the flexibility to play evenly, as well as having full access to the widest dynamic range. ■

The Woodshed

YOU DESERVE THE BEST...

...but what really makes one bass better than another?

I don’t know you, but I know a lot of people like you, and I think it’s a safe bet that you deserve better. You may aspire to own the best bass that money can buy, but too often that ‘dream bass’ is financially out of reach. Or is it?

Having the best instrument rarely makes anyone a better player overnight. Owning an instrument from an aspirational brand may provide motivation to spend more time with a bass in our hands, and inspire more diligent practice regimens to justify its investment. But the most valuable investment we make as musicians is not in the gear we own, it’s the time we invest in ourselves to develop and improve.

Let’s take a moment to think about what makes the best bass. Ideally, it’s the best instrument you can comfortably afford, that plays comfortably and performs well. Depending on one’s resources, what may be considered affordable can range from a modestly-priced import

to a custom-spec’ed creation. Fortunately, in today’s market good-quality instruments are available across a wide price range—so what amounts to the ‘best bass’ may have little to nothing to do with price.

The search for anyone’s ‘best bass’ should never be limited to aspirational brands. The focus should always be on attainable instruments that meet the performance demands and playability requirements of an individual player. While

most players trade up numerous times throughout their careers, many also recount stories of ‘the one that got away’. Too often, those were basses passed over for an instrument from a more affluent brand which may not have lived up to expectations.

So before you go brand shopping, focus on utility over vanity. Look for basses that are comfortably attainable within your budget, and take a second look at the bass that’s been by



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

your side and in your hands for years. Is it possible to attain optimal performance from your existing instrument? Maybe it would benefit from a little fret work, better pickups, or an improved circuit? Perhaps all it really needs is more frequent setups and string changes?

Experiment along the way to find the best strings to complement your instrument and your individual playing style. Consider the best qualities of the bass you already have to ensure it doesn’t become ‘the one that got away’—and never save the best for last. ■

Before you go brand shopping, focus on utility over vanity

STUDY LINE TRANSPOSITION

Exercise 3 follows the same line transposition rules as in the previous exercises. Over the Cmaj7 the scale is C Lydian, so now we have three different notes to Exercise 1: E, F# and B. Work out the fingerings slowly as dictated in the tablature, and once you have the fingerings down, practice slowly with a metronome. 

The image shows the bass line of the song "The Sound of Silence" by Simon & Garfunkel. The notation is in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is written on a single staff. The notes are: F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F#6, G6, A6, B6, C7, D7, E7, F#7, G7, A7, B7, C8, D8, E8, F#8, G8, A8, B8, C9, D9, E9, F#9, G9, A9, B9, C10, D10, E10, F#10, G10, A10, B10, C11, D11, E11, F#11, G11, A11, B11, C12, D12, E12, F#12, G12, A12, B12, C13, D13, E13, F#13, G13, A13, B13, C14, D14, E14, F#14, G14, A14, B14, C15, D15, E15, F#15, G15, A15, B15, C16, D16, E16, F#16, G16, A16, B16, C17, D17, E17, F#17, G17, A17, B17, C18, D18, E18, F#18, G18, A18, B18, C19, D19, E19, F#19, G19, A19, B19, C20, D20, E20, F#20, G20, A20, B20, C21, D21, E21, F#21, G21, A21, B21, C22, D22, E22, F#22, G22, A22, B22, C23, D23, E23, F#23, G23, A23, B23, C24, D24, E24, F#24, G24, A24, B24, C25, D25, E25, F#25, G25, A25, B25, C26, D26, E26, F#26, G26, A26, B26, C27, D27, E27, F#27, G27, A27, B27, C28, D28, E28, F#28, G28, A28, B28, C29, D29, E29, F#29, G29, A29, B29, C30, D30, E30, F#30, G30, A30, B30, C31, D31, E31, F#31, G31, A31, B31, C32, D32, E32, F#32, G32, A32, B32, C33, D33, E33, F#33, G33, A33, B33, C34, D34, E34, F#34, G34, A34, B34, C35, D35, E35, F#35, G35, A35, B35, C36, D36, E36, F#36, G36, A36, B36, C37, D37, E37, F#37, G37, A37, B37, C38, D38, E38, F#38, G38, A38, B38, C39, D39, E39, F#39, G39, A39, B39, C40, D40, E40, F#40, G40, A40, B40, C41, D41, E41, F#41, G41, A41, B41, C42, D42, E42, F#42, G42, A42, B42, C43, D43, E43, F#43, G43, A43, B43, C44, D44, E44, F#44, G44, A44, B44, C45, D45, E45, F#45, G45, A45, B45, C46, D46, E46, F#46, G46, A46, B46, C47, D47, E47, F#47, G47, A47, B47, C48, D48, E48, F#48, G48, A48, B48, C49, D49, E49, F#49, G49, A49, B49, C50, D50, E50, F#50, G50, A50, B50, C51, D51, E51, F#51, G51, A51, B51, C52, D52, E52, F#52, G52, A52, B52, C53, D53, E53, F#53, G53, A53, B53, C54, D54, E54, F#54, G54, A54, B54, C55, D55, E55, F#55, G55, A55, B55, C56, D56, E56, F#56, G56, A56, B56, C57, D57, E57, F#57, G57, A57, B57, C58, D58, E58, F#58, G58, A58, B58, C59, D59, E59, F#59, G59, A59, B59, C60, D60, E60, F#60, G60, A60, B60, C61, D61, E61, F#61, G61, A61, B61, C62, D62, E62, F#62, G62, A62, B62, C63, D63, E63, F#63, G63, A63, B63, C64, D64, E64, F#64, G64, A64, B64, C65, D65, E65, F#65, G65, A65, B65, C66, D66, E66, F#66, G66, A66, B66, C67, D67, E67, F#67, G67, A67, B67, C68, D68, E68, F#68, G68, A68, B68, C69, D69, E69, F#69, G69, A69, B69, C70, D70, E70, F#70, G70, A70, B70, C71, D71, E71, F#71, G71, A71, B71, C72, D72, E72, F#72, G72, A72, B72, C73, D73, E73, F#73, G73, A73, B73, C74, D74, E74, F#74, G74, A74, B74, C75, D75, E75, F#75, G75, A75, B75, C76, D76, E76, F#76, G76, A76, B76, C77, D77, E77, F#77, G77, A77, B77, C78, D78, E78, F#78, G78, A78, B78, C79, D79, E79, F#79, G79, A79, B79, C80, D80, E80, F#80, G80, A80, B80, C81, D81, E81, F#81, G81, A81, B81, C82, D82, E82, F#82, G82, A82, B82, C83, D83, E83, F#83, G83, A83, B83, C84, D84, E84, F#84, G84, A84, B84, C85, D85, E85, F#85, G85, A85, B85, C86, D86, E86, F#86, G86, A86, B86, C87, D87, E87, F#87, G87, A87, B87, C88, D88, E88, F#88, G88, A88, B88, C89, D89, E89, F#89, G89, A89, B89, C90, D90, E90, F#90, G90, A90, B90, C91, D91, E91, F#91, G91, A91, B91, C92, D92, E92, F#92, G92, A92, B92, C93, D93, E93, F#93, G93, A93, B93, C94, D94, E94, F#94, G94, A94, B94, C95, D95, E95, F#95, G95, A95, B95, C96, D96, E96, F#96, G96, A96, B96, C97, D97, E97, F#97, G97, A97, B97, C98, D98, E98, F#98, G98, A98, B98, C99, D99, E99, F#99, G99, A99, B99, C100, D100, E100, F#100, G100, A100, B100, C101, D101, E101, F#101, G101, A101, B101, C102, D102, E102, F#102, G102, A102, B102, C103, D103, E103, F#103, G103, A103, B103, C104, D104, E104, F#104, G104, A104, B104, C105, D105, E105, F#105, G105, A105, B105, C106, D106, E106, F#106, G106, A106, B106, C107, D107, E107, F#107, G107, A107, B107, C108, D108, E108, F#108, G108, A108, B108, C109, D109, E109, F#109, G109, A109, B109, C110, D110, E110, F#110, G110, A110, B110, C111, D111, E111, F#111, G111, A111, B111, C112, D112, E112, F#112, G112, A112, B112, C113, D113, E113, F#113, G113, A113, B113, C114, D114, E114, F#114, G114, A114, B114, C115, D115, E115, F#115, G115, A115, B115, C116, D116, E116, F#116, G116, A116, B116, C117, D117, E117, F#117, G117, A117, B117, C118, D118, E118, F#118, G118, A118, B118, C119, D119, E119, F#119, G119, A119, B119, C120, D120, E120, F#120, G120, A120, B120, C121, D121, E121, F#121, G121, A121, B121, C122, D122, E122, F#122, G122, A122, B122, C123, D123, E123, F#123, G123, A123, B123, C124, D124, E124, F#124, G124, A124, B124, C125, D125, E125, F#125, G125, A125, B125, C126, D126, E126, F#126, G126, A126, B126, C127, D127, E127, F#127, G127, A127, B127, C128, D128, E128, F#128, G128, A128, B128, C129, D129, E129, F#129, G129, A129, B129, C130, D130, E130, F#130, G130, A130, B130, C131, D131, E131, F#131, G131, A131, B131, C132, D132, E132, F#132, G132, A132, B132, C133, D133, E133, F#133, G133, A133, B133, C134, D134, E134, F#134, G134, A134, B134, C135, D135, E135, F#135, G13

Musical notation for the bass line of "The Sound of Silence" in C major, 4/4 time. The notation shows a descending eighth-note pattern across four measures. Below the staff is a fretboard diagram with fingerings for the thumb (T) and index (I) fingers.

Fretboard diagram (T = Thumb, I = Index):

Measure	Fingering
1	9 9 7 10 9 7
2	11 8 9 9 7 10 9 7
3	12 9 10 11 9 12 10 9
4	14 11 12 11 14 12 15 14

★ Readers, We Salute You
BP GOES ONLINE

Goodbye Print, Hello Online

Thirty-two years and 427 issues since its launch, Bass Player is going online. We'll miss the print magazine, but we're excited about our future.



Find us @ www.guitarworld.com/bass-player

Print magazines have had a tough time in recent years, with readers migrating to online news and social media, advertising revenue going to Google and Facebook, paper stock prices spiralling out of control, energy costs making distribution difficult – and the small matter of a global pandemic meaning that many readers couldn't physically get this magazine.

Here at *Bass Player*, we've watched while magazines closed all around us, with our colleagues and friends left jobless and their readers devastated. While you, our readers, have stayed loyal and our subscriptions and advertising numbers have remained relatively healthy, the costs of paper and distribution have finally caused us to cease print publication as of our next issue.

While we're saddened by this, we'll continue to do our jobs at our online channel as efficiently and with as much enthusiasm as ever. We're bass players, right? That means we have a job to do, and damn it, we will do it well. There's as much to write about in the world of bass as ever, and without printing and scheduling logistics to worry about, we'll be free to do that better than ever before.

We're proud of our history as the world's first and best bass magazine, of course. You may remember when we launched our first issue in 1990. Our first editor Jim Roberts knew what he was doing, blazing an editorial trail that combined information with education and added a ton of bass-centric entertainment on top.

Regular cover stars in the early years included rock stars like Geddy Lee, Flea, Les Claypool, Tina Weymouth, Prince and Jason Newsted, and fusion monsters such as Victor Wooten, Stanley Clarke, Jeff Berlin and Marcus Miller.

Heroes of the past for whom BP came too late for an interview – Jaco Pastorius, Charles Mingus and James Jamerson among them – still got much-deserved covers, with our staff knowing full well how important those pioneers were to today’s bassists.

BP didn’t just stick to headline names, though, and as subsequent editors Karl Coryat, Richard Johnston, Bill Leigh, Jonathan Herrera, Brian Fox and Chris Jisi guided the magazine into the new century, newer bass players such as Meshell Ndegeocello, Michael Manring, Fieldy, Tony Kanal, Thundercat and Justin Chancellor all got page space.

The regular Bass Day added a live strand to BP’s role, expanding to the Bass Player LIVE! event that became a must-visit for a generation of bassists. We also awarded Lifetime Achievement Awards in most years, a tradition that we’ll be proudly continuing. A BP award on even the biggest bassist’s shelf is something to treasure, as you’ll recall from the reactions of Gail Ann Dorsey, John Taylor, Marcus Miller and Charles Berthoud last year.

Our job isn’t over yet. Come and see us at our web page, where we’ll be doing what we’ve always done, which is chronicling the history of our instrument and pushing its role forward. We’ll miss the physical artefact of the print magazine, of course: but now we will be able to do our jobs without worrying about paper costs, delivery trucks that can’t afford gas, or pandemics preventing readers from getting to the store.

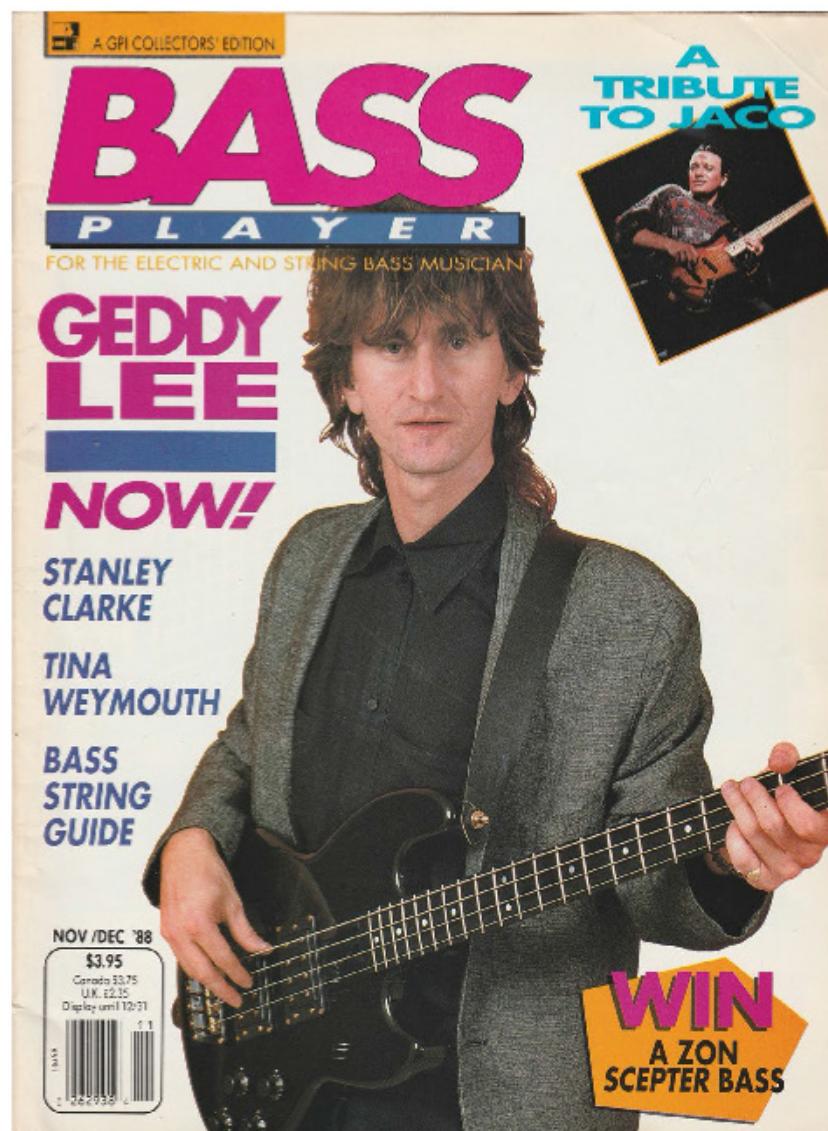
I’ll see you at our online channel. We’re just getting started.

We’re all bass players.
We’re all Bass Player.

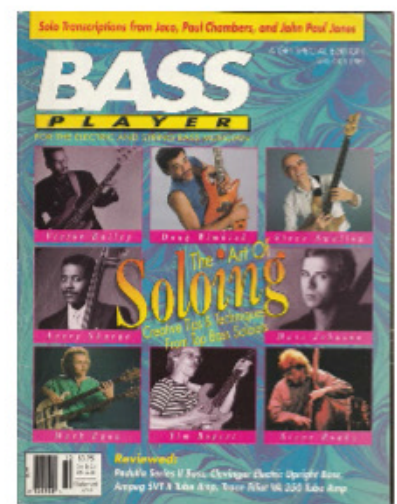
Joel McIver
August 2022



Our early covers were a bit naive and sometimes overambitious, but damn, they had charisma. All credit to BP's killer design teams.



Trial issue 1, 1988
Could the magazine market sustain a regular bass magazine? That was the question back in 1988. Geddy helped us all say yes.



Trial issue 2, 1989
Just look at that background. We knew BP was badass from the off.



The first 'real' issue, 1990
The beloved BP 001, the first of many Billy Sheehan showcases.



Stu Hamm, July 1991
Our friend Stu has always been a regular in BP. He rules.



Flea, February 1992
As the Red Hot Chili Peppers rose, Flea became an enduring star.



Les Claypool, January 1993
An early hero in our world, Les has never let us down. Hats off.



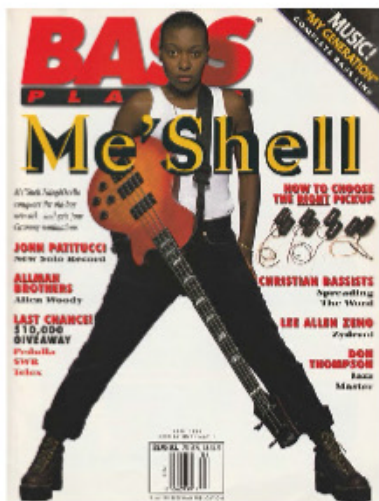
Geddy Lee, December 1993
A mix of intensity and naivety, our early covers had charm.



Michael Manring, January 1994
A 'hot' bassist, right? By now our art direction was really cooking.



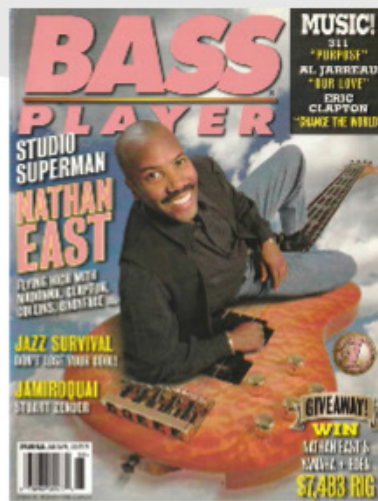
Robert Trujillo, August 1994
Rob T plays bass bongos, you win \$11.5k of prizes: everybody wins.



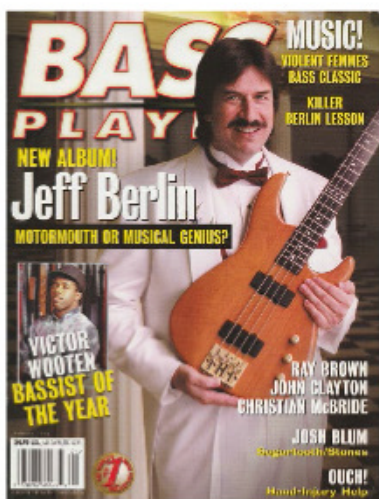
Meshell Ndegeocello, Apr '95
Taking no prisoners and teaching the value of groove.



Tina Weymouth, March 1997
Weymouth and Wooten in the same issue: two geniuses.



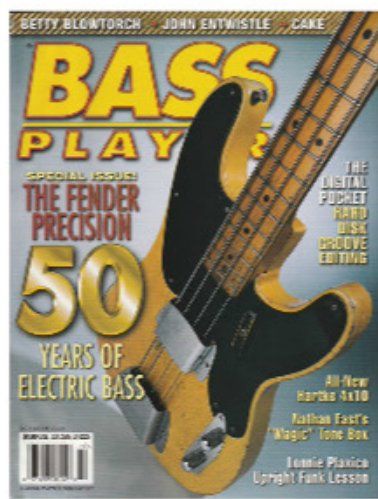
Nathan East, May 1997
Look at this cover concept! Give the editor a raise.



Jeff Berlin, January 1998
The answer to this cover's question? "Both." Cheers, JB.



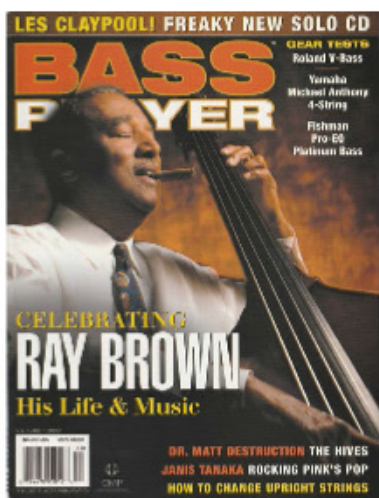
10th anniversary issue, Jan '99
A decade in, our role was clear, and we knew how to fulfil it.



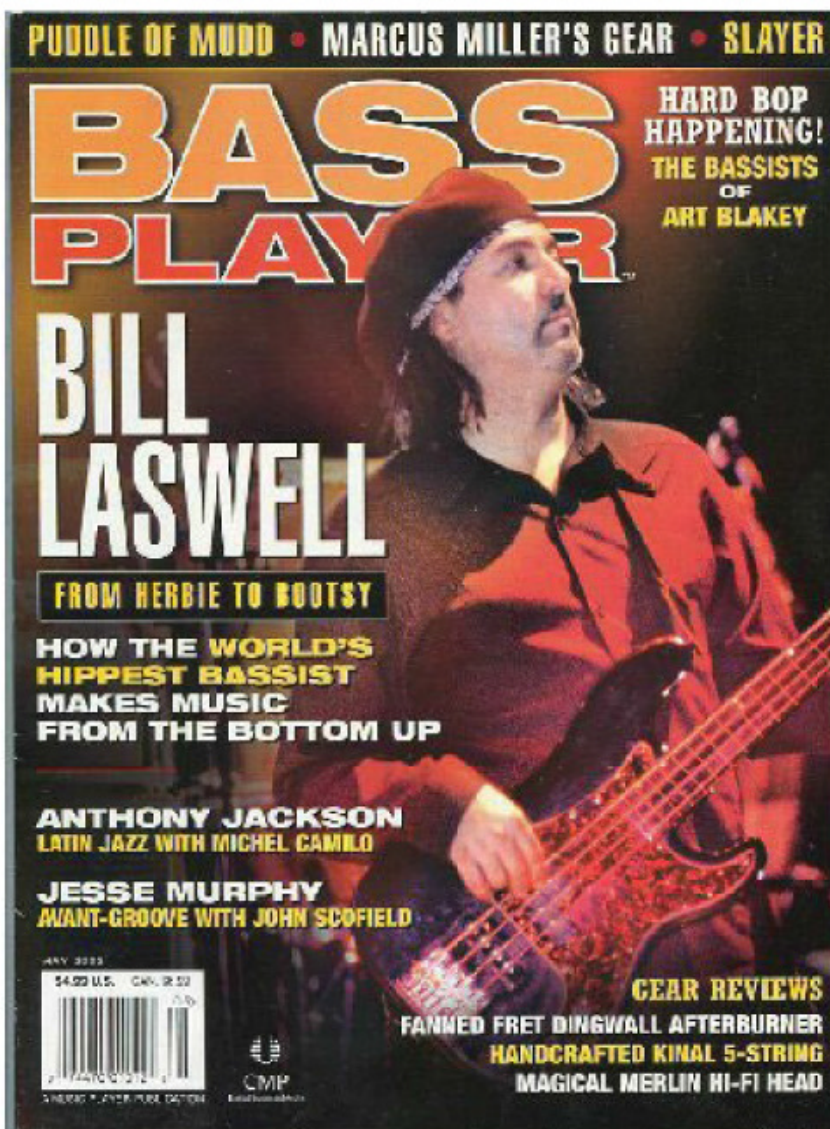
50 Years Of The P-Bass, Oct '01
We never lost sight of the past, even as we looked to the future.



Charles Mingus, April 2002
Upright bass meant as much as electric bass, then as now.



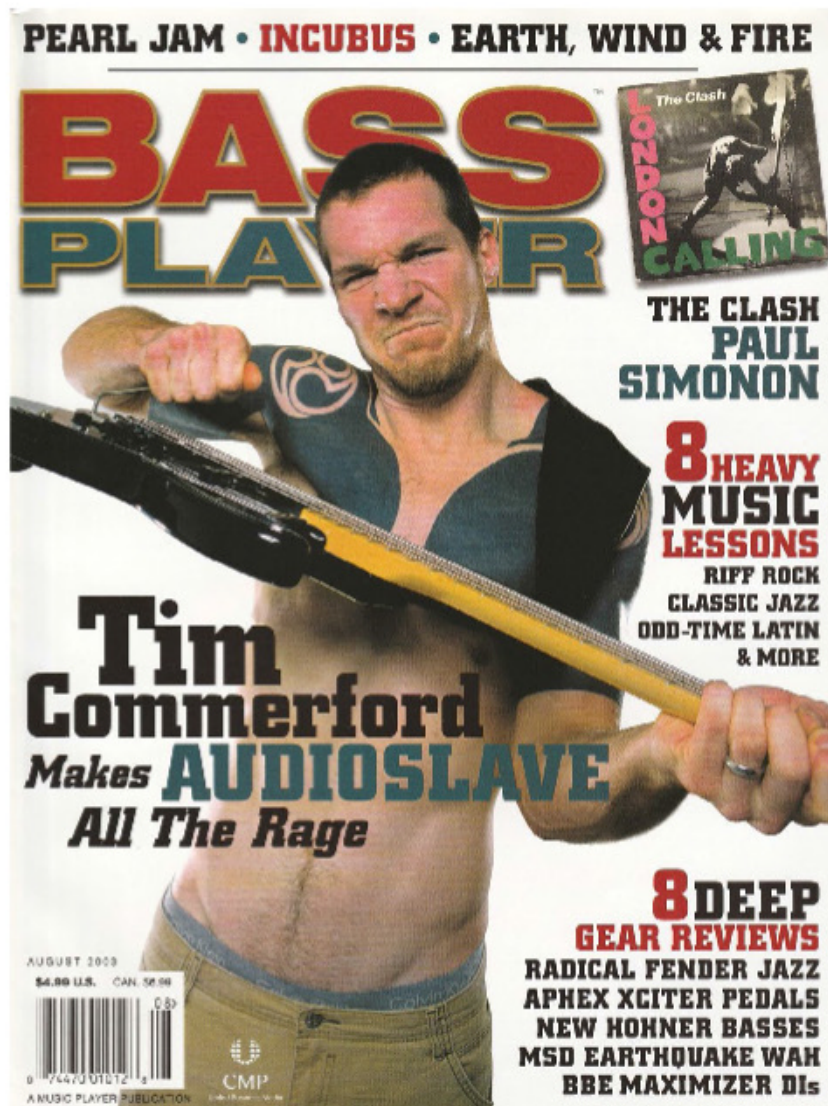
Ray Brown, October 2002
We always saluted the greats who paved the way. RIP, Ray.



Bill Laswell, May 2003
Name another magazine of BP's stature that would give Bill Laswell the cover. That's right: you can't.

We featured bass stars, sure, but we always made room for new, experimental or just cool bass players, no matter how many records they sold.

By the mid-2000s, BP had become the archetype of its world. Bass was in safe hands, thanks to the commitment and expertise of our staff and writers.



Tim Commerford, August 2003
Heavy music could and does combine with world-class bass technique. We always knew this, and our coverage reflected it.



Pino Palladino, March 2004
The ultimate modern session bassist? We think so.



Prince/Rhonda Smith, June '04
One of multiple Prince covers: rightly, he held us in high regard.



Geezer Butler, July 2004
Fifteen years in, BP was on a roll. Look at these names.



Brian Wilson, October 2004
A huge coup for any magazine: we encountered a lost legend.



Kim Deal, November 2004
Ms Deal earned this cover many times over. Farewell, Rick James.



Cliff Burton, February 2005
It's hard to find cool Cliff cover shots, but this one is perfect.



Verdine White, November 2005
One of the ultimate bassist showmen, deep in the groove.



Funk/R&B Special, 2005
From time to time, we spun off a special issue. Just look at LG!



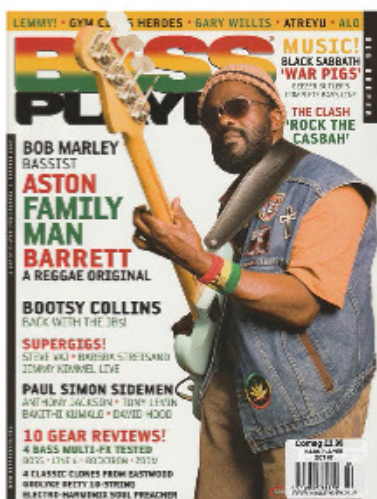
Adam Clayton, Jan 2006
Adam rarely does interviews, so this was a real coup for us.



Brian Ritchie, May 2006
Why picture the whole band, not just Brian? There's a tale...



SMV, January 2007
We made history by helping to bring three icons together.



Aston Barrett, October 2007
Saluting the reggae and root master: a key player for us.



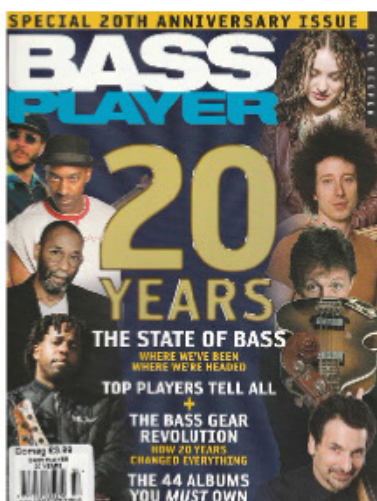
Meshell Ndegeocello, Nov 2007
Another beautiful shot: at their best, BP's covers were pure art.



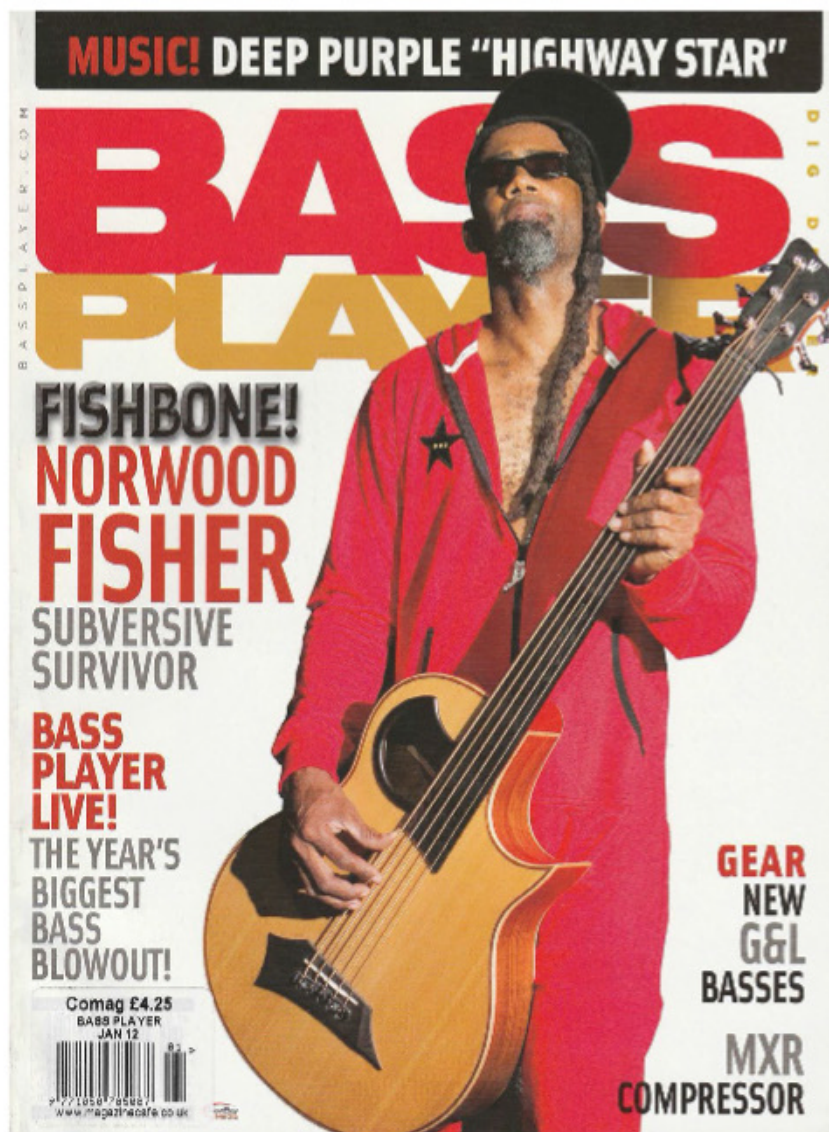
John Taylor, January 2008
Stark and convincing, this shot sent a clear message.



Esperanza Spalding, June '08
We saluted the future star, just as her career took off.



20-year issue, Holiday 2008
Looking forward and back as two decades rolled to a close.



Norwood Fisher, January 2012
Keeping things classy and simple, we celebrated the Fisher talent and reported on that year's Bass Player LIVE! event.

As the years passed, BP embraced the internet, launched a digital issue and founded a live event. Our core mission stayed the same, though.

In Bass Player's last decade, we've pushed the envelope even further, welcoming YouTubers and TikTokers on board. We're all part of the same family.



Lee Sklar, July 2014
Lee Sklar is the coolest person on the planet. That is all.



Sheryl Crow, Holiday 2017
"Wait, Sheryl Crow plays bass?" said an uneducated world.



Lenny Kravitz, Holiday 2018
Another massive coup: Lenny had never done a bass interview.



Tal Wilkenfeld, April 2019
Kind of blue: giving Tal a much-deserved front cover.



Hot new bassists, July 2019
Four different covers celebrating four amazing bass players.



VMan, October 2019
Yes, that mask looks weird, but under it, there's a bass master.



Justin Chancellor, Nov 2019
Giving the prog bassist of our era his due, after a long break.



30-year issue, April 2020
Mr S was on issue 1, so the wheel came full circle 30 years later.



Our 400th issue, October 2020
Do you know how much work it takes to put together 400 issues of the world's coolest magazine? We loved every single day of it.



Suzi Q and the 70s, Dec 2020
Possibly the coolest cover we ever did. What do you think?



Jason Momoa, February 2021
This bassist is a huge movie star. Do you know what that means?



Thundercat, March 2021
Turn off your mind, relax and float downstream...



Bootsy Collins, April 2021
The cable says 'Funk' behind him. That's how we rolled.



Prince, June 2021
Paisley Park sent us that photo. The BP/Prince link endures!



Lemmy, January 2022
Plug in. Play loud. Live life to the full. In the end, what else is there?



100 Greatest Bassists, Feb '22
We asked the question. You answered it. A job well done.



The Future Of Bass, August 2021
These four bassists deserved their cover, for sure, but the future of bass is also about you, us, and our online home. See you there!



Charles Mingus, March 2022
The master returned for one last cover. Rest easy, sir.

After 32 years and 427 issues, we're proud of what we achieved at BP. We couldn't have done it without you: our gratitude surpasses words.

SECRET SAUCE

The great **Guy Pratt** takes Ellen O'Reilly on a tour of the incredible bass gear that his current world tour with Nick Mason's Saucerful Of Secrets requires. Be warned, your mind may be blown...

Photography: Getty, Guy Pratt

Who could have predicted that one of the most acclaimed rock bands of recent years would be devoted to playing the early, vividly psychedelic music of Pink

Floyd? Led by that legendary band's drummer Nick Mason, who is joined by Spandau Ballet's Gary Kemp (guitar, vocals), Guy Pratt (bass, vocals), Lee Harris (guitar), and Dom Beken (keyboards), Saucerful Of Secrets have been met with rapturous approval since their pre-pandemic formation back in 2018.

The fact that this unique group has been met with such a keen universal response may be down to the musicianship of its members; it might be because the music, taken from Floyd's unnerving but brilliant Syd Barrett era, is so powerful; or perhaps it's because real music, delivered by real musicians, always finds its niche.

Pratt in particular does a lot of work in this ensemble, trading vocals with Kemp while navigating a sea of bass effects and anchoring the group through arrangements and time signatures that would defeat most of us. Little wonder that the band has international dates lined up throughout this year and beyond: They will be on tour in North America in September and October.

"I'm very excited about this amp: Ashdown and I have been talking about doing this for years"

Pratt guides me to his impressive signature Ashdown Engineering bass rig, made up of his signature Interstellar 600 head and two CL-310 DH cabs. "I'm very, very excited about this amp," he says. "Ashdown and I have been talking about doing something like this for years. It all started back in 2006, on a David Gilmour tour, when I had WEM logos put on my Ashdown cabs. We always had this joke

about old WEM cabinets, because in the early days, it was all WEM gear and PA equipment."

Readers of a certain age will remember that gear by WEM, or Watkins Electric Music, epitomized a certain Sixties

and Seventies bass sound. As Pratt points out, "Roger [Waters, original Pink Floyd bassist] used to use a WEM PA speaker and a WEM bass amp, so the idea that Ashdown and I had was to build something that was a bit like that. It's basically an ABM head, but the EQ is slightly different and it's got a much pokier valve in it, because I never really used to use drive at all, but on this stuff I do. It also has a Taurus input on the back, which I'm actually using!"

I ask him if the Taurus pedal input was built specifically for Saucerful Of Secrets. "Yes, it's for this tour—but it's part of the ethos. The joke is, what's the most prog thing you could have? The cabs are based on the old WEM PA cabinets: Each of them has three



10" speakers, with a tweeter on top." That's right—three speakers. "They're concise and punchy, and they work really well, especially now that I'm on in-ears. You always want something that you can really hear."

We move on to his arsenal of basses, and in true prog fashion there are a couple of Rickenbackers in the mix—a 2003 Montezuma and a 2018 Jetglo. Pratt also brings out a 2007 Bill Nash bass, which Nash built especially for him.

As he tells us, "On everything Floyd from '67 to 1970, I play a Rickenbacker bass, and on everything from 1970 onwards, I play a Precision. The year 1970 was when they had their gear stolen in New Orleans, so that's when Roger got his famous black Precision. Mine is an American Professional P-Bass: It's the first new Fender instrument that I've played for years, and it's really great."

He then shows me his pedalboard, although—as you can see from the photos, shot especially for *BP*

while Saucerful Of Secrets were on tour in Europe earlier this year—it's more like a pedal patio, laden with all kinds of weird and wonderful stompboxes. While he's tap-dancing on these, the show also requires him to sing lead, employ incredible playing technique in different time signatures—and still stay true to the Barrett-era spirit of the band.

No mean feat, we think you'll agree, and when Pratt demonstrates a complex

bass-line that doubles up on Taurus pedals, chorus, and octave effects at the same time, it sounds beyond epic.

"My previous tech, Mike Clement, had this pedalboard built," he explains, "but I now

have to have this exact amount of pedals—because I have to have a full board!"

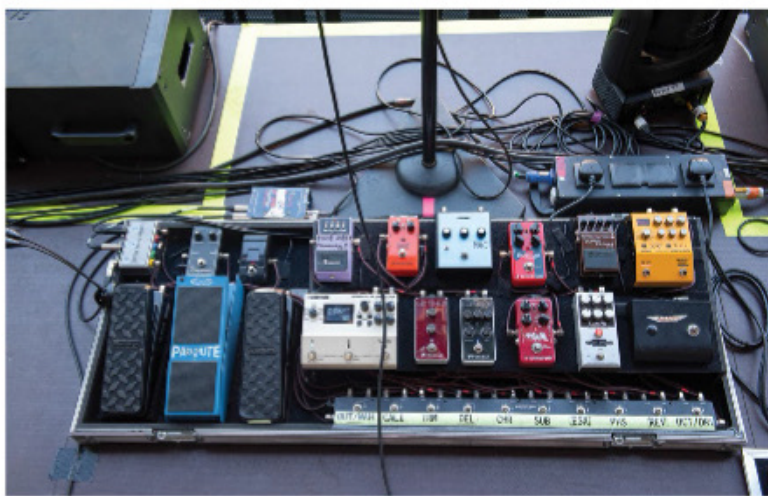
Pratt does literally mean a full board; to his right he has Studiologic Taurus pedals, a TC Electronic Alter Ego Vintage Echo, and a Moog Minotaur Bass Synth. Directly in front of him he's got a Chicago Parachute Wah and a Dunlop DVP1 Volume pedal.

"The year 1970 was when Pink Floyd had their gear stolen, so that's when Roger got his black Precision"





Bass: How high can you go?



What about the infamous early-Floyd delay sounds? He has those covered with a Foxgear Echosex, a Boss DD-500, a TC Electronic Hall Of Fame reverb, a Boss Dimension C DC-2W Chorus and his signature Foxgear Knee Trembler tremolo.

As for drive, that's sorted too, with the Ashdown footswitch to kick in the valve when needed, and a Boss OD-200 to give it more bite. Pratt demonstrates the various effects configurations for us, depending on which classic song from the early Floyd repertoire he's playing, including some impressive cinematic soundscapes.

With all this mayhem going on, pretty much any bassist would need a hell of a lot of compression, as the touring bass players reading this will agree. Pratt has

not one but three compression pedals in tow: These are an Origin Effects Cali 76, his signature Ashdown Macchiato, and a Demeter Compulator at the end of the chain.

All of this is topped off with two octave pedals, a Boss Super Octave OC-3 and a TC Electronic Sub'n'Up. Why, we ask? "Well, it just wouldn't be me without one!" he chuckles.

At this point I'm buzzing—and I can't wait to go and see Saucerful Of Secrets play live. Make sure that you see them if you can: It'll be a bass masterclass that you won't forget in a hurry. ■

Saucerful Of Secrets are touring the USA in 2022.

Info: www.guypratt.com,
www.thesaucerfulofsecrets.com

DUB STORM

OM and Sleep bassist **Al Cisneros** gathers his solo singles into a collection, *Sinai Dub Box*, discusses the role of flow states and the universal groove, and reveals which bass is so heavy he needs pain relief to play it...

Interview: Joel McIver **Photography:** Tim Bugbee, Getty

Sinai Dub Box (2012–2022) is the perfect collectible artefact, a box set of seven 7" vinyl singles that is limited to 1000 copies and is therefore both scarce and expensive to buy, although fortunately digital alternatives exist. Fans of Al Cisneros, bassist and vocalist with the cult stoner/doom metal band Sleep and founder of the experimental duo OM, will line up to purchase the box set. Somehow, its weight and exclusivity, coupled with the sidewalk-shaking low end of the immense music it contains, aligns perfectly with the ethos of Cisneros' mission.

"There's a few new songs on this box set, and the rest are ones that I put out myself over the past decade. I decided to remaster all of those and put them into one place, because it's time to move forward with the next chapter," says Cisneros.

With a decade of monstrous bass tones contained in these seven slices of vinyl, does he feel that his sound has changed over the years? "To an extent," he agrees. "The early songs were recorded on a Rickenbacker 4004, and I love those bass tones. It's just direct: It's not even through an amp, it's just direct into the board with a little bit of compression. And then the most recent song is 'High Concentrate', which I recorded with a Ricky 4003S5, again straight into the board, although I'll also use Ampeg and Orange if I need an amp. I think that bass sounds a little bit better than the 4004, but it's not a large difference. As I'm sure you can tell, I EQ the hell out of it, to get some overwhelming sub frequency."

The box set also represents 10 years of Cisneros learning to engineer his music, he tells us. What are the challenges there? "Well, there's been times I've got a test pressing back from the vinyl factory, and the stylus doesn't even want to stay in the groove, because there's so much low end. It's resonating the

vents in the building and everything! That doesn't sound good, so it's been a learning process for me about bass frequencies and their relationship to the drums, so that they can both speak without eclipsing one another. There's a couple of records in the box which I would definitely remix if I was recording them today. You have to turn the bass down on the hi-fi to hear it properly, because it just sounds like a truck outside."

A lifelong Rickenbacker player, Cisneros has been seen with a variety of Rickys worldwide since he first came to prominence in 1992 with Sleep's much-acclaimed second album, *Sleep's Holy Mountain*. "For my lifespan, I'll be playing Rickenbackers," he says, prompting us to ask what it is that he loves about these ever-popular, always-divisive basses.

"I also like the sound of a Fender Jazz," he tells us, "but for me, when I hear the sound of the Rickenbackers on Rush's *Permanent Waves*, and

Geddy Lee's tone on 'Free Will' and 'Jacob's Ladder', there's nothing else like that. I see bass makers trying to improve and re-improve what they do, but for me, I think that at a certain point, it's more important to pause

"It's important to pause and ask, 'Are we really making this bass better than it was before?'"

and ask, 'Are we really making this bass better than it was before?'"

Does he acquire new Rickenbackers as time passes, or has he got his collection down? "I've got it down now," he says. "They recently built me a 4420, which is a four-string 4003AC on top and the five-string version on the bottom. It's incredible. It means I don't have to switch basses on stage between songs. Depending on the way that we compose the set, that can be really cool."

We recently interviewed Les Claypool of Primus, a fellow Geddy Lee fan, who bewailed the weight of his Rickenbacker 4080, which has a bass at the top and a guitar on the bottom. "My 4420 is really



heavy,” agrees Cisneros. “I played it on tour a couple of months back, and I assumed I could get through a whole set with it, but now I understand why Geddy only used it on the song ‘Xanadu’! You pretty much have to get physical therapy to play that instrument.”

When Rickenbacker first introduced five-strings to their classic 4000 bass series a few years ago, the new instruments divided Ricky fans, partly because the pickups looked out of place, but also because the idea of a low B string on such a resolutely vintage design felt a touch blasphemous. Which way does Cisneros go on this crucial matter?

“I love their five-strings,” he says, “and since about 2010, I’ve been using them more and more. You can only tune down a four-string so far, and I don’t believe that those drop-tuning devices really do anything. I think they’re just a way to sell more strings. Also, if you want to keep the tonality of the instrument, as well as the action that you’re used to playing on the fifth string, you need a proper five-string bass.”

He adds: “I only use a five for a few songs here and there: On the new OM album, which we’re about to start mixing, it’s on a couple of longer pieces. I have one from the Nineties that they made on the first run, and the 4003S5 that they introduced with the wider fretboard. I think I prefer the more recent model. Anyway, they both sound good. You know, Rickenbacker really put spirit into their builds. You can go there and see it. It’s not a soulless, mechanized assembly line. It’s individual people putting care into it. It’s really something else.”

This brings us to the thematic content of the music on the box set. Whether with Sleep, OM or solo, Cisneros’ songs and lyrics have always reflected an interest in otherworldly dimensions and how to get there, assisted by a keen interest in psychedelic

experimentation: See Sleep’s classic *Dopesmoker* album from 2003 for more on this. I’m interested to know how playing bass, especially with the numbingly heavy dub style that Cisneros plays so effortlessly, fits in with all this.

“Well, it’s a cliché, but you get out of the way,” he says. “You just let be, and if there’s a bass and a drum groove happening, that’s what the universe is doing with you. Just be, just let it go. It’s hard to explain.”

Do we bass players have a shortcut to that mindset because of what we do? “Definitely. My mind goes back to the writings of [medieval Japanese philosopher] Miyamoto Musashi, and his *Book Of Five Rings*, and these types of things. That’s the OG flow state, right? Let your heart go into the amplifier. If it’s not coming from there, it’s generally going to be more noise than music. Take

your music seriously, but keep a sense of humor, too.”

Cisneros’ method is to clear his mind and allow his bass parts to come to him, he says. “I’m not religious in a conventional sense, but I have a daily

practice based on meditation and internal quiet. That’s the starting point for my daily life for me. I do some yoga, too. Not hatha yoga, but yoga proper from the teachings of [ancient Indian sage] Patanjali, which is basically mindfulness. Technically, it’s mindlessness—you want less mind and more heart. All of those things are the Rush albums of my daily life. You know what I mean?”

He continues: “Bass grooves are all out there in the universe. When we’re quiet, on our best days, we sense them. I don’t think we build or create them—I think they’re there already. They were there way before us, and they’ll be there way after. We have this calibration in our body with our heart and our breathing. Those are both timing mechanisms, and I think they hone in on the

universe. If you’re quiet enough, and this ties into the daily practice I mentioned, sometimes—due to something beyond you—you will be lucky enough to hear a groove. It appears, and you recognize it, and you’re like, ‘Holy shit. There it is!’ You hear it, and feel it. You can document it and recreate it on your instrument, and hopefully it will make people feel happy when they hear it. I think that’s the secret.”

We’ll take that. Plug in your bass, switch off your mind—and listen. ■

Sinai Dub Box (2012–2022) is out now.

Info: www.dragcity.com/products/sinai-dub-box

“Bass grooves are all out there in the universe. When we’re quiet, on our best day, we sense them”



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PASSING NOTES

Dylan Flynn nearly died in a car crash more than two decades ago. His injuries were so bad that he had to give up playing bass—so now he lends his bass out to professional bass players to raise money for charity. Lee Marlow tells his unique story.

It's a late-Nineties American Fender Precision Deluxe, in one of those colors that only fragrant interior designers or Fender custom paint sprayers truly know or even attempt to describe. "Just say it's bluey-green," says its owner, Dylan Flynn.

Flynn, 37, of Columbus, Ohio, bought the bass new 20 years ago for \$1,200. "I started with a Squier, then a Mexican P-Bass—and then this. It's such a beautiful instrument. I care about two things in this house: My bass and my dog. It's the most expensive thing I own."

And yet, for most of the time Flynn has owned the bass, it has remained in his closet gathering dust,

untouched and unplayed. There's a tragic, real-life reason for this.

Flynn learned to play bass when he was 15. He was a natural and quickly became proficient, playing with a guitarist friend. However, on the last day of that year's school term, it all came to an end when Flynn was involved in a serious car crash. He was lucky to survive, having been in a coma for 12 days. Doctors told his mother he might not live and that if he did, he'd be severely mentally and physically disabled.

Miraculously, Flynn walked out of the hospital six weeks later—but more or less everything he used to take for granted had crumbled. His recovery was slow. "I remember nothing of the crash, and very little

"I'd like bigger bands and bigger bass players to play my Precision. Wouldn't it be great if Paul McCartney could play it?"

afterwards," he says. "Just endless therapy and physio. It was hard work." He had to teach himself to walk and talk—and to play the bass.

"The crash affected the entire left side of my body. My left arm and hand just couldn't do it," he tells *BP*. "I was going to the gym, I was lifting weights, building back my strength—but anything requiring fine motor skills, even just brushing my teeth, I couldn't do it. So playing the bass, without the strength I needed in my left arm and the dexterity in my fingers, it was over. I was devastated."

The American Deluxe was silently packed away and never played again. Flynn couldn't sell it. He couldn't bear to part with it—but neither could he play it.





What a waste, he used to think. A thousand-dollar American P-Bass, labelled by his bass teacher as “the Mercedes of basses”, just sitting in his cupboard, loved but untouched. So seven years ago, Flynn hatched a plan: If he couldn’t play it, he’d try to persuade some of his favorite bass players to play it. ‘Pass the Bass’ was born.

It’s not easy to get well-known bass players to play your instrument, especially when the world has been locked down for the best part of two years and there are hardly any gigs, but Flynn has persevered. Since he started the campaign, he and his Fender Deluxe P have travelled more than 20,000 miles across the US, by air and in Flynn’s trusty Honda Civic. The bass has been played by an impressive roll-call of bassists.

Chris Barker, aka Chris Number Two, of Pennsylvania punksters Anti-Flag, was the first to play it. “I went to a lot of their gigs,” says Flynn. “I struck up a conversation with their merch guy, and he was interested in the story so he arranged for me to meet Chris at the next gig. Chris took it on stage at the Showboat venue in Washington, Seattle and played it.”

Flynn was watching from the balcony. “Aw, man, it was amazing. I was smiling from ear to ear. It was the happiest, proudest moment—a real emotional experience,” he says.

Other punk bassists followed—Mark Hoppus of Blink 182 (“although he only played it in the soundcheck—but, man, that was a thrill”), Matt Freeman of Rancid, and Fat Mike from NOFX.

“These were my punk rock heroes,” says Flynn, “so it has genuinely meant something to me.”

His old school pal, Brian, persuaded him to raise money while doing this in order to help other people, like Flynn, with lasting brain injuries. In five years, they have raised more than \$30,000 for two US brain charities.

It’s good, says Flynn—but it could be better. It could be bigger. They could raise more money, and he aims to spread the word beyond the US punk community.

“I’d like bigger bands and bigger bass players to get involved,” he says. “The Eagles, well-known metal bands, Elton John—wouldn’t it be great if Paul McCartney, the world’s most iconic bass player, could play it?”

More than 50 bass players have played Flynn’s Deluxe Fender Precision—but what if it was 150? 500? 1000 or more?

“We’ve done a lot and raised a lot just by word of mouth—but I know we could do more,” he says. ■

Do you want to play Dylan Flynn’s Fender American Deluxe bass and raise money for a good cause? Visit <https://passthebass.org> and drop him a message.





COPING STRATEGIES

Kelly-Dawn Hellmrich of Aussie rockers Camp Cope had a tough start on bass, but persevered. Read and learn!

I grew up with a musical parent and a house full of instruments, so it feels like I've played guitar forever: I probably picked up a guitar every day of my life once I was physically able to. My dad bought me a bass for my 13th birthday because he was so determined that I was born to be a bass player. I was really repulsed by the idea at first, but I came around. I picked it up to learn some Blink-182 riffs one day—and then never really put it down.

My first bass guitar was an OLP MM4 Stingray, but it was so heavy and way too big for me. I got that bass because a kid in a local band I really liked had one, but it was just so wrong for me. It hurt my hands and my shoulders—and for a while I thought I was just too small to play bass. It was frustrating because I got pretty good at bass, but just couldn't play for long periods of time.

The singer of my first band ended up giving me her brother's short-scale Mustang bass that was lying around their garage. It turned out to be a Japanese vintage from the Nineties. The curve of the body of that bass fit so much

better for my body and my chest, and its short scale meant I could reach notes I couldn't before. That's when I really started to develop my style of playing high up on the neck—it just felt so comfortable to sit there.

I think what has been cool is that a lot of our female, trans and non-binary fans have reached out and said that the Mustang bass has been perfect for them to learn on, too: they wouldn't have really known that if I didn't preach its playability in that way.

I'm painfully loyal to the Mustang. As I said, I've just never found a bass that fits my body in the same way. I usually play through an Ampeg SVT. I don't use any effects: I like a clean sound and plugging straight into the amp.

Peter Hook was a major influence. He's super unique, and when you hum a Joy Division song you hum the bass-line. That's the inspiration for how I write for Camp Cope.

I'm heavily influenced by the post-punk sound, and I like listening to Nineties R&B and early-2000s synth parts to inspire me when I write. We write very emotional music, so our lead singer Georgia is also a big inspiration for my bass parts: I try to tell the same story through the bass-lines that she does lyrically.

People tend to have a lot of opinions on the

way I play. I've been told I play bass more "feminine", "like a guitar", "all over the place" and the worst of them all is when people say "I play wrong". I don't

"I think that if I was a man I'd be more respected in my bass playing individuality, rather than scrutinised"

think that there is such a thing as playing an instrument "wrong" and it's the most hurtful when people imply I don't know what I'm doing. I also think that if I was a man I'd be a bit more respected in my individuality the way Peter Hook was, rather than constantly scrutinized.

My band have been my number one fans when it comes to my bass-lines, and are always supportive with me trying out new things. They also push me when it comes to the writing and recording process: they're like, 'Okay, you need to make the song more interesting, that's your job. You can do better'.

It can be frustrating, but they're always right, and it always leads to me coming up with an interesting part. During the recording of our last album I said 'On the next album, you gotta give me some different chords because I'm running out of ideas.' And you know what, on this new album they did that—I think it's some of my best work. ■

Camp Cope's new album *Running With The Hurricane* is out now.

Info: campcope.bandcamp.com



COUNTRY WAYS

Wilco bassist **John Stirratt** looks back at decades of struggle—and a trajectory that has made his band a modern alt-country institution.

Interview: Ryan Madora Photography: Getty

John Stirratt is one of the best bass players you've never heard of. He has served as the steadfast foundation of Wilco, a band that has shaped our definition of rock, alt-country, and indie music for nearly three decades. Standing alongside Jeff Tweedy since Wilco's inception in 1994, he has received two Grammy awards and industry accolades, headlined festivals and toured the world, and recently recorded their twelfth studio album, *Cruel Country*. Stirratt has made a career as the bass player in a rock and roll band—something that many of us have aspired to do.

As with most bands, the first few years were riddled by landmines: Ego trips, label feuds, rigorous touring schedules, and personnel changes. By 2004, Wilco finally settled into their current line-up, a six-piece ensemble that could instantly go from chaotic noise and grizzly guitars to an exposed acoustic sound accompanied by vulnerable vocals. With hard work, consistent output, and the willingness to defy industry standards, they've anticipated the needs of their audience and continued to reap the benefits of longevity. They've never had a hit song or topped the charts, yet they've proven time and time again that if they make a record, the fans will listen.

2021 marked the twentieth anniversary of Wilco's industry-disrupting and critically acclaimed record, *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot*, which they've taken to re-releasing and performing in full. It's only fitting that they follow this milestone with *Cruel Country*, a new

double LP that recently debuted at their Massachusetts festival, Solid Sound.

The creation of this record took advantage of The Loft, a Chicago-based Wilco clubhouse that serves as a creative playground, studio, and gear-filled wonderland. For the first time in years, the band recorded live and with all members on the studio floor. This old-school method meant that Stirratt had to carefully select gear that would work within this setting. While his go-to basses typically include a few vintage Precisions, a '65 Fender Jazz, and a '73 Les Paul Signature, this record called for something slightly different.

“With Wilco, things happen live, and the first take could really be the take”

“I wanted to hold everything down, given how much instrumentation was going on: Acoustic guitar, two electrics or two pianos, and drums. I've had a Guild Starfire since recording the album *Being There* [1996] and I've always come back to it for this sort of mid-tempo, acoustic-style bass. It's got an incredible bottom end when played with fingers, and when I play it with a pick, it's got a wonderful, woody sustain.

“I was also using an Epiphone Embassy bass. It has the same pickups as a Thunderbird, but with a cutaway and a massive low end, and I also bought an Eighties Rickenbacker that was really useful on a couple of songs. I went with these basses because there were a lot of competing frequencies when using Precisions. With this material, and the band recording six at a time, Jeff was playing a lot of acoustic, so I was looking for the boomiest basses I could find.



Plus, I played a B-15 throughout the whole thing, so that was fun.”

Regarding inspiration, Stirratt referenced classic country recordings and the concept of tic-tac bass, a style of playing that involves doubling or mimicking the sound of an acoustic bass. “I think one of my favorite bass sounds is Bee Spears’ tone on *Honky Tonk Heroes* [1973] by Waylon Jennings. It’s a super clicky, picky bass, almost like they’re trying to approximate a tic-tac bass. As we were working on a few songs, I was playing with a pick and sponge, and it was a big enough ensemble that it needed something broad and really full-range. I grabbed the Guild and the sonic scope of it just sounded right. I also listened to George Jones and Tammy Wynette records, music from the English folk scene, and to players like Danny Thompson and Dave Pegg.”

Thinking back to some of his favorite bassists, Stirratt cites the studio giants known for their melodic sensibilities. “Joe Osborn is one of my favorites, without a doubt. He’s a player that you aspire to be like. His playing on Simon and Garfunkel’s *Bookends* [1968] and *Bridge Over Troubled Water* [1970] is just so enjoyable; all of the counterpoint is amazing.

“There’s also Tommy Cogbill.

I remember hearing ‘Son Of A Preacher Man’ when I was really young, and the bass completely moved me. I also have a real appreciation for Lee Sklar’s work in the Seventies, especially the smooth, nuanced finger-style playing on Gene Clark’s record, *No Other* [1974]. And then there’s Chris Hillman, who inspired me to buy a Guild Starfire in the first place. It’s amazing how he just picked up the bass as a beginner and did what he did with the Byrds.”

“McCartney will always be the gold standard. He writes songs within songs on bass, with amazing melody and muscle. I’m still trying to learn Beatles bass parts: I go back to them whenever I can. That should be required, I think, for every bassist.”

Thanks to his obsessive musical knowledge and plenty of experience in the studio, Stirratt goes into

the session with a goal in mind. “I try to provide a good rhythm track with Glenn [Kotche, drums]. Alongside his innovation and creativity, he also has a great pocket and feel for what the song needs. It has to be something that can be built on by the other instruments. With this record, I was very intent on keeping the right vibe—giving people something substantial to play off of, and guiding things with a certain direction and feel. I do think that with the bass, you can change the tone of different parts and decide to be more flowery or sparse. I try to find a really good rhythm track that aids the melody.”

Stirratt also has an aptitude for chord inversions and recognizes how flexible the harmony of folk music can be. This stealth tactic takes a familiar sound and adds color by nudging our ears toward something other than the root note. Referring to the song ‘Handshake Drugs’ from *A Ghost Is Born* [2004], Stirratt mentions how working with producer Jim O’Rourke inspired him to “find something memorable that really starts from a different place. There’s a lot to beginning on a fifth or a third and trying to work your way down to where the root is.” This approach was put to good use on

the *Cruel Country* tracks ‘Many Worlds’ and ‘Country Song Upside Down’.

Crafting parts and harmonizing alongside Jeff Tweedy, both as a vocalist and as an instrumentalist, has gotten easier over time.

“There’s a second nature thing about playing off of his voicings. It’s really innate. With Jeff playing all acoustic on this record, it’s a very comfortable place for me, and I can often feel where he’s going. There are interesting parts and I’m playing off of the arpeggiated stuff that he does. A lot of the mid-tempo stuff is in our DNA and has been established for a long time, since *Being There*. Even singing with Jeff, I can make my voice sound exactly like what it needs to be. We’ve got this brotherly thing happening after all this time.”

Even though they can anticipate what might happen, there’s still a mystical element that keeps Stirratt returning to the studio. “I think it’s the magic of a take, frankly, beyond anything. It’s the chills that you get when you come down on the last note or when you listen to the playback. You think ‘This might be pretty special’. That’s the drug, for me. It’s trying to find magic in the air and going after that. It’s what makes everything else worthwhile.”

Capturing that magic often happens quickly, especially when recording with everyone on the floor. “With Wilco, things happen live, and the first take could really be the take. We talked about it not being unlike a Nashville session. When we started to take on more of a cosmic country direction, we realized that so many of the records we liked were done this way—pretty fast—and I think the Buck Owens or Seventies Waylon Jennings records were like that. Plus, Jeff had great live vocal takes and this material really lent itself to that. I think that now, we work so much faster and we’re just better at what we do.”

And they really have been working together for a long time. Making a lifelong career of playing in

“It’s wonderful to have this camaraderie with a larger group and to work on your craft”

© Tim Mosenfelder/Getty



Jeff Tweedy and Stirratt in Mountain View, CA in 2003.



With Michelle Zauner
in Austin, Texas in 2021.

@ErikaGoldring/WireImage, Jeff Kravitz/FilmMagic



San Francisco, 2015.

Wilco isn't something that came easy. Like any band, their success didn't go in a straight line: It took almost a decade to find the right collection of players.

"Going back to the Nineties, it was no holds barred, substances, and the gamesmanship that happens with kids in bands. Around 2005, we were getting out of that. We didn't have the aspects that you have in young bands during their first few years—the power moves or Machiavellian stuff going on. It's really been incredible. We've had this 'third act' for 18 years now and I feel like I've grown with this line-up. It's wonderful to have this camaraderie with a larger group and to work on your craft and your own instrument. We have it so good in a way, with an older, more traditional rock and roll mentality."

When the band isn't on the road, each member continues to seek out musical opportunities—an extremely important aspect for growth and continued creativity. Upon reuniting, they bring that experience to the stage and studio. "Pat Sansone is doing Nashville sessions, Nels Cline is in the jazz world, and there's a sharpness that people bring back to the

situation. It's all learning, it's all experience. That's what I've always really loved. Playing with a different rhythm section keeps you sharp and gives you different ideas. Some of the times I've been most stifled is when I couldn't converse or have musical conversations with other people."

Now that they're hitting the road again, the task of learning material for festival dates and touring season can be an intimidating task. In addition to working through Wilco's material, Stirratt is also getting reacquainted with music from The Autumn Defense, a side project with multi-instrumentalist Pat Sansone.

"The catalog is huge, and I do find that any sort of playing helps with muscle memory and the connection of old material. Even as I'm learning songs, I'm just playing a lot. In this situation, I'm learning 21 songs: The whole new record. The preparation is daunting in terms of the amount of material, and there are covers to learn too. I like to work on stuff in the early morning; I tend to wake up and run the material a couple of times because that's when I retain the most. We also get vocal stems and I drive around and learn the vocal parts. That's something we weren't able to do before, so it's pretty deluxe to have that now."

Despite all of the time and preparation that goes into touring, Stirratt still has a bucket list and sincerely appreciates the band, crew, and fans for showing up time and time again. "Iceland is somewhere I still haven't played, and I'd love to get to Africa sometime. I love going to most of the places and they're still really magical to me—even the Midwest and places we've been to a million times. The support from the fans and the crew is great; it's always been this culture in and among itself. There's a heavy social implication to it, and the fans get together and it's beautiful. The crew is like that too. I'd like to say that it's a reflection of the band, but it's even more than that.

"We can't believe this is still happening and I have to say how fortunate we are," he says. "No-one could ever ask for more." ■





KEY MOMENT

Be a musician, or take the safe route?
Solo bassist **Juna Serita** weighs in
on a tricky decision...

“I first started playing the guitar, since my original music inspiration was making songs and singing rather than playing any instruments. Instruments just helped with that. However, there was a Japanese band called the Blue Hearts that inspired me to play guitar, so I decided to be a guitarist and vocalist.

“Originally, I was doing some covers and originals, but whenever I performed live, every other guitarist played solos so well, but I really couldn’t—that was my first musical frustration in my life. My lack of talent on the guitar made me not want to play it any more. Later on, I got the idea that even though I can’t play the guitar well, maybe if I reduced the two strings from the six strings, it might be way easier to play. That’s how I started on bass.

“At the time, music was just a hobby: I was working three different part-time jobs at the same time, while I was a high school student, to buy gear. I used all my money and time on that and did nothing else. Then I started thinking, ‘I have to make a decision about my life. I should stop putting energy into music and get a stable job, or put all my time into becoming a professional musician.’ I knew that if I become a pro, then all of this time

and money wouldn’t be wasted, but actually invested. Luckily, my grades weren’t that good and I had no confidence to work in general society, so I chose to become a professional musician.

“My very first bass was a Photogenic. At the time, it was the most affordable bass I could find, and it helped me to start playing bass right away. Eventually, I felt like I was getting better at bass much faster than guitar, so I bought the second one pretty soon after, which was an FGN. I enjoyed this one because it was a simple instrument, sounded good, and wasn’t too complicated, meaning I could use it for live performance as well.

“I knew that if I became a pro bass player, all of this time and money wouldn’t be wasted, but invested”

“My latest album is called *Battlefield*. The basses I play on it are both Sadowsky Slapmaster basses, one a four-string and one a five. I play a Phil Jones Bass BP800 amp

head with two of their C4 cabinets.

“I’d say some of my favorite players are Rocco Prestia, Bootsy Collins, Flea, Louis Johnson, and Marcus Miller. Funk music inspired me in many ways, and these players are the main reason why I want to keep improving on the bass. A great piece of advice is: Don’t focus on the phrase first, feel the groove first.” ■

Instagram: @junaserita

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THE SOUND

Soreption's Rickard Persson nominates 10 bassists who are taking metal playing to the next level

Metal bassists may not be as flashy as their six- or seven-string counterparts, but there are countless bassists out there elevating the act of plucking four to eight strings to an art form. One of these is Rickard Persson of Swedish tech-death headspinners Soreption, whose playing is frankly off the scale: Check out one of his YouTube playthroughs if you don't believe us. But which bassists get the seal of approval from Persson himself?



A full-page photograph of Steve Di Giorgio performing on stage. He has long, flowing reddish-brown hair and a beard, and is wearing a dark vest over a patterned shirt. He is playing a four-string bass guitar. The stage is lit with vibrant green and blue lights, and a metal truss structure is visible in the background. The word "OF METAL" is overlaid in large white letters.

OF METAL

STEVE DI GIORGIO

DEATH, SADUS,
TESTAMENT ▲

“A true legend and an absolute giant of the scene, and someone I’ve looked up to a lot over the years, Steve really influenced me with Death and Sadus—his fretless playing, with the fresh look of it all, really brought tons to the scene in my opinion. A game changer.”

EUGENE ABDUKHANOV
JINJER ▶

"I first heard Jinjer around two years ago, and of course that band has a lot of reasons for the listener to be blown away. For me, Eugene's playing was the reason. A really great tone, combined with intriguing ideas regarding rhythmical patterns, surely hits home! I hope I'm able to see them live one day or even better, tour together."

OLIVER PINARD
CATTLE DECAPITATION
AND CRYPTOPSY

"This dude is just a straight ripper of the bass, putting that fine Spector Euro LX to work in Cattle Decapitation and Cryptopsy. They're two bands that I hold dearly. Cryptopsy were the first really extreme and technical death metal band I got to hear, and I remember being totally blown away with the sound and the playing. And then at a later stage in life, discovering Cattle Decapitation: They have become one of my favorite bands."

ALEX WEBSTER
CANNIBAL CORPSE ▼

"The all-father of the metal bass, the main man! He's been a truly inspirational figure for me when it comes to playing. His tone is just unprecedented, and you just know it's him every time you hear him play. I looked a lot at his techniques when I got into playing, and I tend to always go back to him in search for inspiration. A personal hero."



▶
"Jinjer has a lot of reasons for the listener to be blown away. For me, Eugene's playing was the reason"

MIKE FLORES
ORIGIN

"I remember being introduced to Origin by a good friend who was like 'Dude, you should really check these guys out'. So I gave them a shot and now I have a squirrel on a bike running things in my head where my brain used to be. The saying should really be 'Fast, faster, Mike Flores'. Crazy speed and great technique!"

ERLEND CASPERSEN
SPAWN OF POSSESSION,
ABHORRENT

"In my opinion, the absolute best. A beast of a player, like nothing I've ever seen or heard before. So fluid in his playing and so precise and aggressive, a true inspiration. Spawn Of Possession is just the freaking best for me—and Erlend's playing is the driving force. An icon!"



JEROEN PAUL THESELING OBSCURA ▲

“Another fretless cat is Jeroen Paul Thesseling, bending really heavy strings with his seven-string bass in Obscura. That fingerboard scares the life out of me, I’m feeling light-headed just looking at him play. With his fusion and jazz-inspired playing, he can let it rip with that monster of a bass.”



SEAN MALONE CYNIC ▲

“A personal gem for me and one that we lost too soon. Sean’s playing really is up there with the greats, and his tasty progressive fretless bass work made him a pioneer and a master of his craft. Cynic is a great inspiration and so was Sean’s playing. He’s sincerely missed.”



“From absolute shredding to tasty playing, Jared Smith can do it all” ▼

JARED SMITH ARCHSPIRE ▲

“Jared Smith of Archspire is a really good friend and a really serious player on the scene—and he is one of the current great death metal bassists, in my opinion. Archspire’s records *Relentless Mutation* and *Bleed The Future* absolutely kill. From absolute shredding to tasty playing, he can do it all. I’m really happy that I’ve had the privilege to tour with him and that I was able to watch him perform every single night.”

STEPHEN FIMMERS NECROPHAGIST

“One of the reasons I got into technical death metal was Stephen Fimmers. He’s basically the reason that I’m in Soreption, because without him I wouldn’t have gravitated towards that style of music at such a rapid pace. His playing on *Epitaph* really flipped a switch inside me and made me pursue the craft of being a death metal bass player. No slapping, no plectrums... just fingerstyle at an amazing pace and great technique.” ■

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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.

Let us know what you think of our conclusions. Did we get it right?

Joel McIver, Editor

Reviewed this month...

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**ERNIE BALL
DARKRAY 5**

\$2,799, www.music-man.com

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**CHARVEL
PRO-MOD SAN DIMAS PJ V**

\$1099.99, www.fender.com

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**TRICKFISH
BULLHEAD MINI 500 AND MINI 112 CAB**

\$799, \$879, www.trickfishamps.com





ERNIE BALL
www.music-man.com

MUSIC MAN

DarkRay 5

The DarkRay saga continues with the addition of a five-string model.
Chris Gill goes low

FROM
\$2799

Last year, Music Man captured the hearts, minds, and fingers of thousands of bassists by revealing the company's collaboration with bass effect and amplification specialists Darkglass Electronics on a new bass model called the DarkRay.

Combining features of the beloved Music Man StingRay with built-in Alpha (distortion) and Omega (fuzz) circuits and a new two-band EQ preamp designed by Darkglass, the DarkRay was an instant hit. Now, Music Man has returned, offering a five-string version of the DarkRay.

Build Quality

In essence, the DarkRay 5 is a single-pickup StingRay 5 Special with Darkglass electronics and a handful of slightly different specs. The neck is crafted from roasted maple and features 22 high-profile/wide stainless steel frets, an 11" radius, a 1.75" nut width, and a single choice of fingerboard, made of ebony.

Music Man's signature five-bolt design solidly attaches the neck to the body, and the heel is generously rounded to facilitate playing comfort around the highest frets. Music Man doesn't specify the exact tonewood used for the body other than 'select hardwood', but our example weighed in at a reasonably comfortable 9.4 pounds (4.3 kg).

Even the knobs here feel classy, with a firm-but-silky-smooth action

Whereas last year's DarkRay four-string came in either Obsidian Black or the limited Graphite Stone finishes, the five-string is offered with either grey sparkle Starry Night or limited White Sparkle high-gloss polyester finish options, with the former featuring a plain headstock while the latter has matching paint. The top-loaded steel bridge with steel saddles, neck plate, and round string tree for the A and D strings on the four-plus-one headstock have a matte black finish, while the knurled dome-top metal control knobs and tuners are gloss black. Two compartments for the 9-volt batteries that power the preamp, EQ and effects are located on the back.

Our DarkRay 5 arrived nearly perfectly set up, needing just a minor tweak of the truss rod: We have lots of love for the Music Man easy-access truss rod wheel that can be adjusted without special tools. Every single detail of the fit and finish was perfection, from the rock-solid neck-to-body joint and expertly capped, crowned and polished frets to the mirror-like shine of the Starry Night finish, which is decidedly more uptown bling than the downtown industrial vibes of last year's Graphite Stone paint job. Even the knobs feel classy, with firm-but-silky smooth action similar to that of the controls on an expensive studio mixing console.



ERNIE BALL
www.music-man.com

Sounds And Playability

The original StingRay bass is known for its distinctive midrange character. The DarkRay, however, lives up to its name by delivering an inherent tone that is warmer and richer with the preamp-only setting engaged and the treble and bass EQ controls centered, although the StingRay growl comes out in the Alpha and Omega settings. Many players will consider this a bonus, as it tames pick attack and string slide noise while bringing core musical notes even more to the forefront. The noise-free specs of the Darkglass electronics provides an excellent clean base that keeps harsh overtones and attack transients under control when the distortion and fuzz beasts are unleashed.

The ring around the Gain control for the Alpha and Omega effects illuminates blue when the three-way switch is set to Omega, red in the Alpha settings, and is unlit when the preamp-only setting is engaged. Omega's distortion effect scoops out the midrange slightly, while the mids are more prominent with Alpha's fuzz, which is more of a smooth Big Muff-style effect than a sizzling classic fuzz like that of a Gibson EB-oF Fuzztone bass. The Blend control adjusts balance between unprocessed and distorted signals, which is especially helpful for maintaining clarity for more percussive styles or dialling in fat,

Perfect for StingRay lovers who want even more tones and textures

compressed tones. The Gain control can also be backed down to provide just the slightest hint of grit in the Alpha or Omega settings, providing a useful range of textures.

Although the Alpha's fuzz effect fortunately never gets flabby or farty, I found that it made the low B string sound less clear and defined than when the Omega distortion was engaged, which enhanced the low B's punch and growl. The Darkglass treble and bass EQ is an improvement over the classic StingRay EQ and a better complement to the humbucker, with its powerful neodymium magnets, than the StingRay Special's three-band EQ, capable of dialling in a wide range of highly desirable tones with deeper, rounder bass and shimmering treble.

Conclusion

The Music Man DarkRay 5 is perfect for players who love the StingRay's feel, tone, and character, but want even more tones and textures. Fuzz and distortion enthusiasts who don't mind always having these effects first in the signal chain will like the instant access—and metal, punk, and progressive players may never use anything but the aggressive, gut-punching Alpha and Omega settings, free at last from the tyranny of the pedalboard. ■

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Price | \$2,799 (White Sparkle \$2,899)

Made In | USA

Body | Select Hardwood

Neck | Roasted maple, 34" scale, gunstock oil and hand-rubbed special wax blend finish

Neck Join | Bolt-on, five-bolt attachment

Nut Width | 1.75"

Fingerboard | Ebony, 22 frets

Pickup | Single humbucker with Neodymium magnets

Electronics | Active

Controls | Volume, Gain, Blend, Treble, Bass, three-way blade switch (preamp, Alpha/preamp, Omega/preamp)

Hardware | Matte and gloss black hardware, five-saddle Music Man top-loaded steel bridge with steel saddles, custom Music Man lightweight tuners with tapered string posts

Weight | 9.4 lbs / 4.3 kg

Gigbag/case included? | Hardshell case

Left-hand available? | No

WHAT WE THINK

Plus | Distortion/Fuzz circuits optimized for bass, stellar craftsmanship

Minus | Electronics and light wear batteries quickly

Overall | Incredibly versatile and useful tones plus convenience of effects at fingertips

BP RATING

BUILD QUALITY

★★★★★★★★★★

SOUND QUALITY

★★★★★★★★★★★

VALUE

★★★★★★★★★★★

CHARVEL

Pro-Mod San Dimas PJ V

Charvel's new five gets a new DiMarzio: Joel McIver gets nostalgic

FENDER
www.fender.com

\$1099

We reviewed Charvel's relaunched San Dimas bass models a year ago, partly because we're suckers for Eighties chic around here and a day-glo finish always gets our collective heads spinning. More importantly, they were and remain highly playable, fully-featured active basses that acknowledged their *Bill & Ted*-era roots, but added modern touches for today's player. They continue to occupy a midmarket position in the low four figures, too. Now the five-string San Dimas has been beefed up with a new Area J DiMarzio pickup in bridge position, hence its reappearance, with new black and white finishes that are a little more mature than the vivid options of last year.

Build Quality

First off, Charvel and the brand's owner Fender are presumably keenly aware of the value of these instruments' legacy from the late Seventies, when real men wore denim and a flannel wristband was as essential as a cab the size of a fridge to any self-respecting bassist. However, rather than simply clone the old basses, stick a \$4000 price tag on them and sell them to nostalgic "business leaders" in their fifties, they've kept the cost down to a relatively manageable level and added the power and tone range that your modern bass player requires.

What this means in practice is an alder body for familiar tones and weight, a graphite and maple neck that is almost comedically fast under the fingers, and a focus on general practicality that should make the San Dimas easy to work with. There may only be 20 frets, so very

high-register playing is out, but at least you can get up there with ease thanks to the deep lower cutaway. There's a range of solid hardware—a hi-mass bridge, open-gear tuners and heavy-feeling controls—that are designed to work without any fuss, and a heel-mounted truss-rod adjustment wheel for that quick pre-gig tweak.

Sounds And Playability

Eighteen volts of power has almost become the default in today's look-at-me-on-YouTube era, but never fear, the 9-volt battery we have here is capable of powering some monstrous tones. Make sure the volume pot is pushed down to the body, so you're in active mode, and roll on any of the three EQ controls. The treble and mids pots perform in a bitey, aggressive manner that you can (and should) use to irritate your drummer, while the bass boost is truly huge, especially when you hit hard on the low B string.

There's a pickup blend control that actually makes an audible difference, quite the revelation given that such controls often have little value, which brings us to the new DiMarzio bridge pickup. Zero in on it and you're rewarded with a subtler performance than this otherwise enjoyably over-the-top bass might suggest. DiMarzio themselves caution that this pickup is not intended for high overall volume; instead, it allocates punch to the center of the tone. In use, this means that it gives you clarity and a precise feel, which adds some edge to the overall sound you get when you add in some input from the much bigger-feeling split-coil.

This is a very playable instrument, with a neck profile that players of basses by Jackson and other shred-friendly marques will recognize. The slippery, flat maple neck gets flatter as you approach the heel, and the rolled fretboard edges really help you get from bottom to top at speed. Fun as this slinky feel is, you might prefer an old-fashioned sticky baseball-bat neck if you want to play slowed-down reggae or soul—although there's no reason why you can't use any bass for more or less any genre of music nowadays, is there?

Conclusion

For around \$1100, or £1100 if you prefer, you're getting a lot of bass. The new San Dimas five is solid, sleek, and professional, and offers 99 percent of all the tones you would ever need. It looks and feels great, and plays flawlessly, with the only possible hesitation before purchase being the fact that there are hundreds of other, equally tasty basses available at this exact price point. In that case, your incentive to buy it is the Charvel name and heritage, both assets that should help with its value retention and (admit it) bragging rights. ■



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Price | \$1099.99

Made In | Mexico

Body | Alder

Neck | Maple, graphite reinforcement

Neck Join | Bolt-on, four bolts

Fretboard | Caramelised maple, 20 frets

Pickups | DiMarzio Area J DP551 at bridge,
Charvel Split-Coil P in middle

Controls | Three-band active EQ, pickup
blend, master volume with push/pull
selector for active/passive modes

Hardware | Charvel tuners and
hi-mass bridge

Weight | 9 lbs / 4 kg (approx)

WHAT WE THINK

Plus | Very playable; tone range
is impressive

Minus | 20-fret range may hinder soloists

Overall | Excellent homage to a vintage
style, with added modern touches

BP RATING

BUILD QUALITY



SOUND QUALITY



VALUE





TRICKFISH

Bullhead Mini 500 and Mini 112 Cab

Think small, think cool: Can this agile amp match its competitors? Steve Lawson finds out

TRICKFISH
www.trickfishamps.com

\$799
\$879

Trickfish have now been around for almost a decade, making highly regarded heads and cabinets as well as preamps, and have built up an impressive list of pro players who swear by their range. The Bullhead Mini 500 and Mini 112 are the newest additions to their line. Let's see if they live up to the reputation of their larger, more powerful siblings.

Bullhead Mini 500

The Mini 500 is instantly recognisable as a Trickfish amp. The same in-line six-knob layout as the larger amp heads is present, and it sports the same Mike Pope-designed four-band preamp. Gone are the frequency selector switches for the EQ bands, but otherwise it's what we've come to expect from Trickfish, balancing the versatility of two bands of mid control with the ease of use of a simple cut and boost EQ section.

The headphone socket and line-in have been moved to the back panel, part of a series of adjustments that have made the Mini 500 significantly smaller and lighter than previous Trickfish units. The front panel is rounded out by a -10dB pad switch for hotter signals, and a mute switch. It's clean and simple without lacking any essential features.

On the back we have a DI out with ground lift and pre/post EQ selector, a combined jack/Speakon speaker out and an effects loop that's placed handily before the level indicator, so any pedals can be factored into setting the optimum input signal. No surprises, but nothing missing.

So what does it sound like? The first thing you notice is how usable every EQ band is across its whole range. The treble, set at 8Khz, adds air and sparkle without a hint of brittleness. This is particularly striking on slap sounds where the pops are way more present but not significantly louder than with the treble down. The bass control, at 80hz, offers fullness and body rather than mud.

It really feels like a lot of time has been taken to get the Q (the width/slope of the EQ) right, so there are no surprising or disrupting edges to the sound when you cut or boost particular frequencies. The fixed frequency mid controls are broad enough to be highly usable in shaping your tone, or controlling how present your bass is in a mix without the sensation that the center frequency is off.

However, the striking thing about the Mini 500 is how responsive it is to everything across the frequency spectrum, so if you wanted more EQ, adding one as a pedal works wonders. Both the superpower of the Trickfish sound, and potentially the thing that would make some

players look elsewhere, is that it is incredibly transparent. It's as close to a 'Full Range' bass amp as I've come across. Even the gain control adds no noticeable harmonic enhancement: It just sets the level of the input signal, making it perfect for amplifying sounds that you've developed with pedals or an FX unit elsewhere.

For pedal junkies, the Bullhead Mini 500 is a godsend. It also has the quietest fan I've ever encountered on a bass amp, making it perfect for low level at-home playing and recording. Nowhere is this transparency more apparent than when pairing it with the Mini 112...

Mini 112

Trickfish's speaker range already includes a 112 cabinet, so the addition of the Mini 112 invites a bunch of questions, including 'Why add a second one?' Well, as the name suggests, it's significantly narrower, width-wise, by approximately four inches, and consequently lighter. It's one of the most compact 1x12 cabinets I've ever tried, although not the lightest: The birch construction and metal handles and corners leave it feeling robust, and therefore able to handle some volume without rattling off the edge of the stage.

The back panel for the 8-ohm cabinet is simple, with a level control for the tweeter and two combi jack/Speakon connectors. The tweeter control is an attenuator, so fully up is just 'on' and anything else reduces the level. This would be useful for a more muted, vintage tone, but in most situations leaving it wide open makes the most sense.

With everything set flat on the head, the notched zero positions on the EQ knobs making this particularly easy, the cab sounds present across the frequency spectrum with a slight mid boost, but no significant tonal bias either way. If you're used to a more hyped low end, you'll be reaching for the bass control on the head straight away. Thankfully the amp is more than capable of dealing with a ton of low end. While the 'flat' sound is more balanced, it's quite possible to get a dub-heavy tone at the kind of volume you'd expect from a 1x12 cab.



This setup isn't designed to keep up with a drummer in a metal band and definitely isn't the best choice if you spend most of your time playing a five-string in drop-A. For situations where portability is a must and the volume requirements are more modest, though, such as rehearsals, recording sessions and folk or jazz gigs—especially paired with a second cabinet—it's ideal.

What makes it such a perfect match for the Mini 500 head is the transparency: Its ability to amplify anything across the frequency spectrum. There's none of the harshness that often comes with tweeters in bass cabs when you run a lot of treble into them, and none of the woolliness that can plague larger cabinets. With the bass boosted on the amp just a fraction, every nuance of my sound is apparent—whether it's just a passive bass plugged straight in, or a full suite of pedals and effects running multiple loops and layers. Every aspect of the EQ in an active bass is pleasingly replicated in glorious detail. The slight mid-boost noted earlier can be easily compensated for with the on-board EQ, but in a live situation it can really help a bass sound shaped in isolation actually carry all the way to the audience.

Back in the Nineties, one American boutique builder used the slogan 'the sound in your head is in this bass', and while that may or may not have been entirely true, it's certainly the case that the sound of your bass is in this amp. The Trickfish Mini 500 and Mini 112 do a sterling job of faithfully reproducing whatever you throw at it.

If you're looking for an amp with a signature sound of its own, you may be disappointed, but for clarity and versatility when handling a huge range of effected or clean bass tones, it's tough to beat. ■

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

MINI 500 AMP

Price | \$799

Made in | USA

Power Output | (4 ohms) 500W
(8 ohms) 250W

Features | Class D amplifier, all-analogue solid-state preamp, 1/4" phone input with switchable attenuation and rotary gain control, signal level and clip LEDs (green/red), four-band EQ with shelving bass and treble, Variable Gain Band Pass Low-Mid and Hi-Mid, master volume, line in, headphones out, mute switch, effects loop, balanced direct out, XLR, Pre/Post, Ground Lift, Neutrik speakON connectors, five-year limited warranty

Dimensions | H 2.77" x W 10.55" x D 7.87"

Weight | 3.5 lbs

WHAT WE THINK

Plus | Transparent, lightweight, well thought-out EQ

Minus | Fixed frequency mid controls aren't for everyone

Overall | A remarkably clean, powerful and well designed amp for its size

BP RATING

BUILD QUALITY

★★★★★★★★★

SOUND QUALITY

★★★★★★★★★

VALUE

★★★★★★★★★

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

MINI TF 112 CAB

Price | \$879

Made in | UK

Power | 300 watts RMS, 600 watts peak handling

Speakers | 1 x 12" proprietary Neodymium speaker built by Eminence, HF driver (3500-20,000 Hz) 80° conical horn

Frequency response | 35Hz-16kHz

Features | Custom crossover with peak protection and HF Attenuation, 2 x NL2 Combo connectors, 16 gauge steel grille, 22oz sharkskin vinyl

Dimensions | H 17" x W 15.25" x D 12.25"

Weight | 29 lbs

WHAT WE THINK

Plus | Compact, robust, amazing clear high end

Minus | A tad light on the deep low end

Overall | A wonderful addition to the world of pro-level compact speaker cabs

BP RATING

BUILD QUALITY

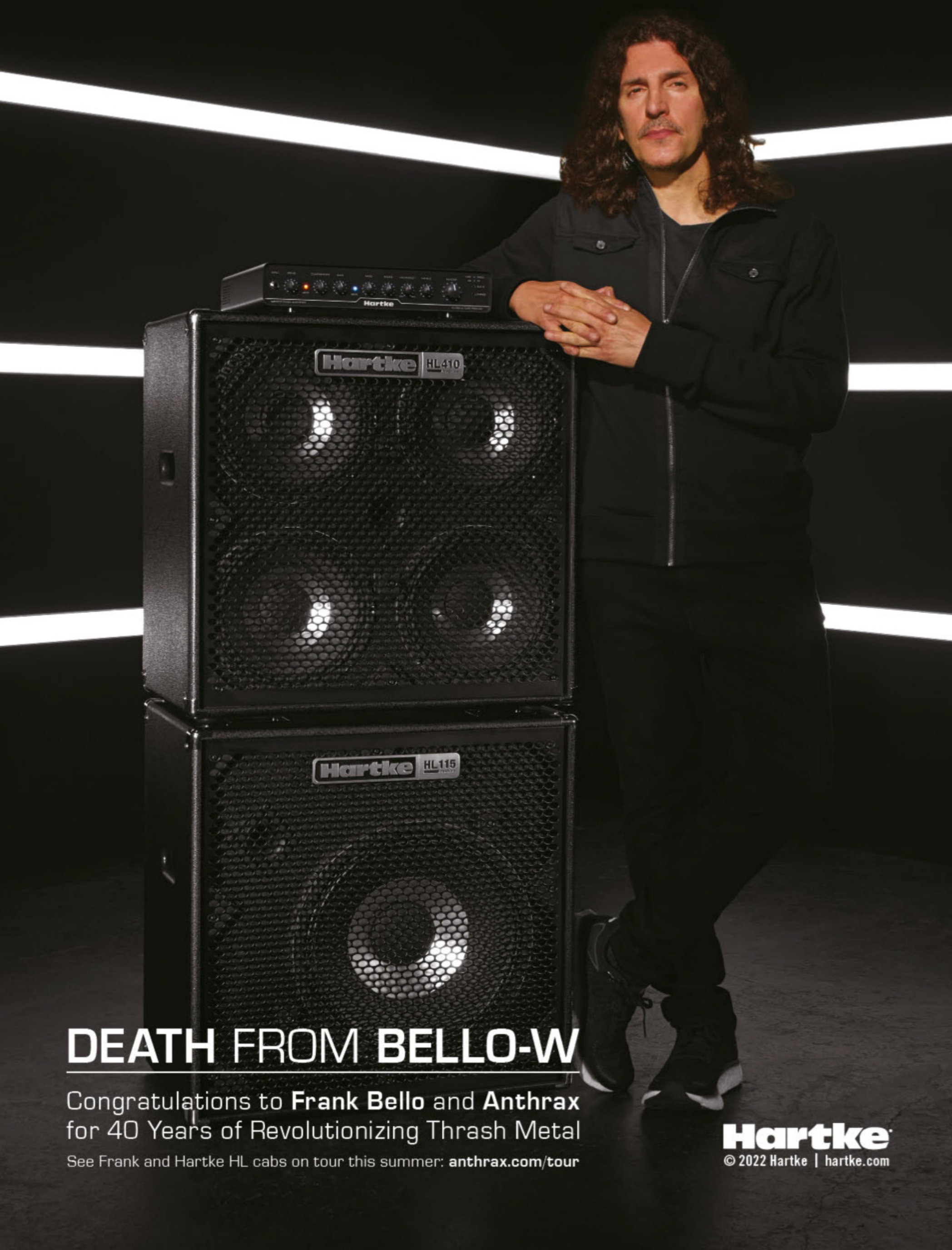
★★★★★★★★★

SOUND QUALITY

★★★★★★★★★

VALUE

★★★★★★★★★



DEATH FROM BELLO-W

Congratulations to **Frank Bello** and **Anthrax**
for 40 Years of Revolutionizing Thrash Metal

See Frank and Hartke HL cabs on tour this summer: anthrax.com/tour

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SUBWAY D-350

THE NEW **ULTRA-COMPACT** BASS AMP



MESA/BOOGIE

Bass Lessons

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



I SPY...

60

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
Twitter RyanMadora
Instagram ryanmadora



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
Twitter solobasssteve
Instagram solobasssteve



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
YouTube With Bass In Mind
Instagram with_bass_in_mind



ADVANCED

76

RICH BROWN

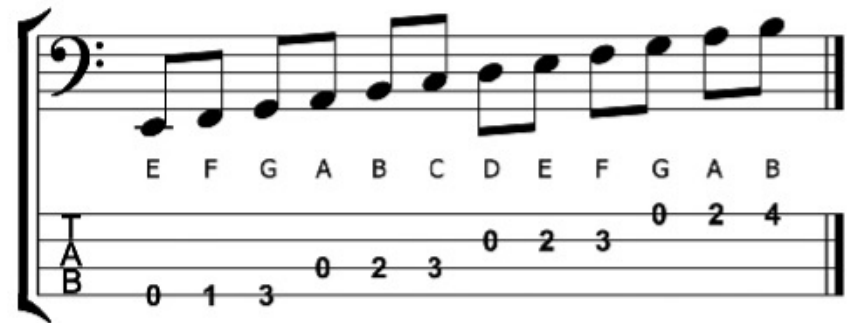
Maximize your bass skills with our advanced studies Toronto-born electric bassist Rich Brown has established himself as an incredibly versatile artist. Along with being one of the most called-upon electric bass players in Canada, Rich is a composer, producer, bandleader, educator and clinician, broadcaster, 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



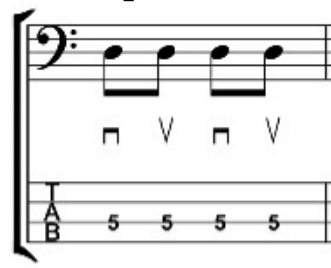
SLAP AND POP TECHNIQUE

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

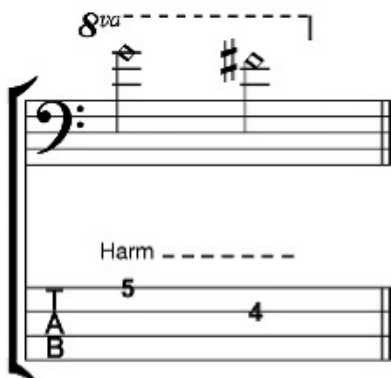
Trills are performed by rapidly alternating between the two notes shown, using hammer-ons and pull-offs.



VIBRATO

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

PLAYING HARMONICS



NATURAL HARMONICS

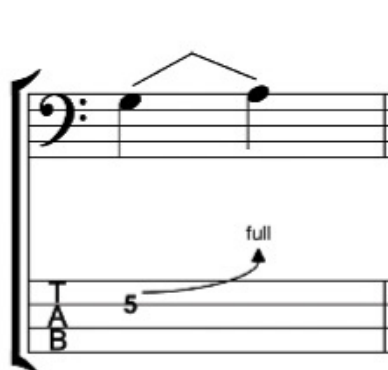
The note is played as a harmonic by lightly touching the string above the fret indicated.



ARTIFICIAL HARMONICS

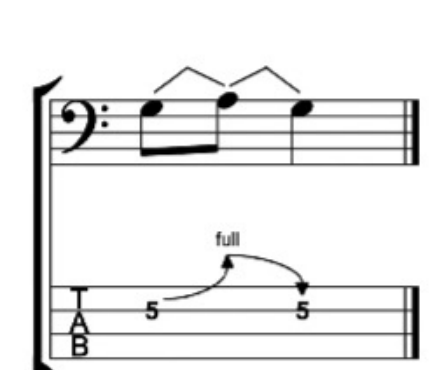
Pluck while fretting the lower note and touching the edge of the picking hand thumb to the note in brackets.

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.



In session and stage bassist Ryan Madora's amazing new column, we discover a stack of useful secrets hidden inside our favorite bass-lines

I SPY...

CONNECTIVITY EXPLORED

Hey there, bass players! I don't know about you, but when I sit down to craft a bass-line, I like to find a nice balance of flavors. Maybe I'll stick to something classic, like chord tones with a splash of pentatonics, or perhaps I'll add a few sour notes to tug at the listener's ear in the form of half-step dissonance. It's a delightful cocktail of sorts, complete with a few harmonious liquors and a touch of bitters. The process of mixing and matching notes that are deemed "right" with those that are deemed "wrong" can be a delicate recipe, but one worth mastering.

In our previous column, we discussed the use of half-step dissonance to bring tension into our bass-line, particularly when resolving to the root note of a chord. Depending on the style of music you're playing, the desire to add dissonance may need

to be tempered. To do so, we're going to sandwich our dissonant note between two consonant notes and connect the chords.

By approaching our destination from either a whole step above or below, we can often play a chord or scale tone followed by a chromatic note as a method for setting up the next root. This allows us to take advantage of the voice-leading that we get from half-step dissonance, but with a slightly sweeter and more palatable approach.

Lucky for us, this method is great for integrating chromaticism, and it's easy to learn and conceptualize as a pattern for connecting chords. In fact, certain chord progressions, and extremely common ones at that, cater perfectly to this type of motion.

Typically found in jazz and pop, the I-vi-ii-V progression sounds quite harmonious and allows for this movement to take place. Most of the chords are a fourth apart: The vi-ii, ii-V, and V-I all feature this intervallic distance. When moving a fourth, you can easily play the fifth of the chord you are currently on, and either ascend or descend chromatically to the upcoming root note.

Let's look at these relationships in the key of C. Here, the vi chord is Am and the fifth of the chord is E. Since our destination point would be the ii chord, Dm, we can move down chromatically by playing E-E_b-D. Therefore, when we're moving a fourth away, going from Am to Dm or vi-ii, we now have a tried-and-

true method for using half-step dissonance and connecting the chord tones.

Let's practice this in Exercise 1. The I-vi-ii-V

The process of mixing and matching notes that are deemed "right" and "wrong" can be a delicate recipe, but it's one that is worth mastering

EXERCISE ONE

♩ = 120

Chord progression: C, Am, Dm, G, C

The exercise is written in bass clef, 4/4 time, with a tempo of 120. It consists of two systems of music. The first system contains four measures for the chords C, Am, Dm, and G. The second system contains two measures for the chords C and C. Each measure has a staff with notes and a fretboard diagram below it. The fretboard diagram shows the string (A or B), the fret number, and the finger used (1-4). The notes in the first system are: C (C2), Am (A2, C3), Dm (D2, F3), and G (G2). The notes in the second system are: C (C2) and C (C2).



Esperanza Spalding
performing in 2019.

© Paul Marotta/Getty

chord progression in the key of C will begin on C Major, then move to Am, Dm, and G Major. We'll play with a quarter-note feel to allude to a walking bass-line. First, play the root note on beats one and two. On beat three, play the 5th of the chord (G on the 3rd fret of the E string). On beat four, ascend chromatically

and play the #5th (G#). This will set up our new destination point, the root note of the Am chord, to be played on the downbeat of the second measure.

As you can see, we're approaching the new root by way of a chord tone and a chromatic note. This creates a sense of motion and

provides a textbook example of voice leading. As you move through the progression, use the same method to set up each new chord. Once you've returned to C, repeat the progression but search for the root notes in other places. For instance, ascend to the higher G to set up the Am chord on the 7th fret of the D string.

EXERCISE TWO

♩ = 120

Exercise Two consists of two systems of musical notation in 4/4 time, with a tempo of 120 beats per minute. Each system features a bass clef staff with notes and rests, and a corresponding fretboard diagram below it. The first system shows a progression of four measures: C Major, Am, Dm, and G Major. The second system shows a progression of five measures: C Major, Am, Dm, G Major, and C Major. The fretboard diagrams indicate fingerings for each note, with numbers 1-4 for the first four fingers and 5-7 for the fifth, sixth, and seventh fingers. The notation includes notes, rests, and fret numbers for fingerings.

EXERCISE THREE

♩ = 120

Exercise Three consists of two systems of musical notation in 4/4 time, with a tempo of 120 beats per minute. Each system features a bass clef staff with notes and rests, and a corresponding fretboard diagram below it. The first system shows a progression of four measures: C Major, Am, Dm, and G Major. The second system shows a progression of five measures: C Major, Am, Dm, G Major, and C Major. The fretboard diagrams indicate fingerings for each note, with numbers 1-4 for the first four fingers and 5-7 for the fifth, sixth, and seventh fingers. The notation includes notes, rests, and fret numbers for fingerings.

In **Exercise 2**, repeat the same exercise, but with a new rhythm. Instead of playing quarter notes for all four beats, play the root notes on beats one and two, then rest on beat three. Play the connector to the next chord using eighth notes on 'four-and'. Feel free to experiment with this and try to tackle the more syncopated rhythm in **Exercise 3**.

Let's switch up our chord progression and see if this method still works. In **Exercise 4**, we'll use a progression very common in pop, rock, and country: I-IV-ii-V. Still in the key of C, our chords will now be C Major, F Major, Dm, and G Major. Since this progression essentially substitutes the IV chord for the vi chord, we can still take advantage of this motion. Furthermore, the interval distance between C and F is a fourth, so we can easily play the root note of the C chord, the fifth (G) and then descend chromatically with G_b to land on F.

While this doesn't work for every chord progression, there's a good chance that any song you're playing will include some kind of movement in fourths. Plus, we don't need to limit this movement to the fifth of the chord, but that's another lesson for another day. In the meantime, let's do some spying.

First up, take a listen to Esperanza Spalding's 2008 release, *Esperanza*, and the track 'I Know You Know'. The bass is featured loud and clear,



gracefully demonstrating this technique as she moves through the chord progression. While there's a bit of extra dissonance thrown in, the method of approaching a root note is front and center.

Next, throw it back to one of Stevie Wonder's biggest hits, 'Isn't She Lovely'. As the tune moves through the vi-ii-V-I chord progression, the bass-line has a bouncy feel

that often goes between the root, fifth, and octave. Listen closely to hear how the bass connects the chords by moving chromatically from the fifth of one chord to the root of the next one.

Taking it back even further, listen to just about any jazz standard that features walking bass and this type of harmonic movement. One personal favorite is Frank Sinatra's

version of 'Fly Me To The Moon'.

Enjoy practicing these connectors, and thank you all for reading! ■

Depending on the style of music you're playing, the desire to add dissonance may need to be tempered

EXERCISE FOUR

♩ = 120

Chord progression: C, F, Dm, G, C

Bass line notation (Bass clef, 4/4 time):

First system (measures 1-4):

- Measure 1 (C): Root C, 3rd G, 5th E
- Measure 2 (F): Root F, 3rd A, 5th C
- Measure 3 (Dm): Root D, 3rd F, 5th A
- Measure 4 (G): Root G, 3rd B, 5th D

Second system (measures 5-8):

- Measure 5 (C): Root C, 3rd G, 5th E
- Measure 6 (F): Root F, 3rd A, 5th C
- Measure 7 (Dm): Root D, 3rd F, 5th A
- Measure 8 (G): Root G, 3rd B, 5th D

Third system (measures 9-12):

- Measure 9 (C): Root C, 3rd G, 5th E
- Measure 10 (F): Root F, 3rd A, 5th C
- Measure 11 (Dm): Root D, 3rd F, 5th A
- Measure 12 (G): Root G, 3rd B, 5th D

Fourth system (measures 13-16):

- Measure 13 (C): Root C, 3rd G, 5th E
- Measure 14 (F): Root F, 3rd A, 5th C
- Measure 15 (Dm): Root D, 3rd F, 5th A
- Measure 16 (G): Root G, 3rd B, 5th D

START HERE!

LEGATO PLAYING MADE EASY



The great Steve Lawson is dealing with health issues this month, so let's revisit this classic lesson from a while back...

Welcome back! This month, we're going to look at an aspect of controlling your sound that is often overlooked, but which for a number of reasons has become more and more noticeable over the years—giving notes their full length.

The amount of decay we want in a particular note—from ultra-short palm-muted notes to infinite sustain—is a huge factor in shaping the sound of a line and its impact on the song. Today, we're looking at the sustain end of the graph.

The reasons why this has become more significant over time are both stylistic and technological. Style-wise, the prevalence of synth bass in much pop music has brought about a taste for incredibly smooth-sounding bass-lines—often with no gap between the end of one note and the start of the next.

Simultaneously, advances in bass guitar manufacture have also impacted the degree to which controlling the tail end of the note is a significant factor. A lot of older basses had a relatively short natural decay. That

The amount of decay we want in a note is a huge factor in shaping the sound of any bass-line

could be lengthened by using a compressor, but for the most part, there used to be a pronounced dip before the end of the note if we were playing anything longer than a half note at about 80bpm.

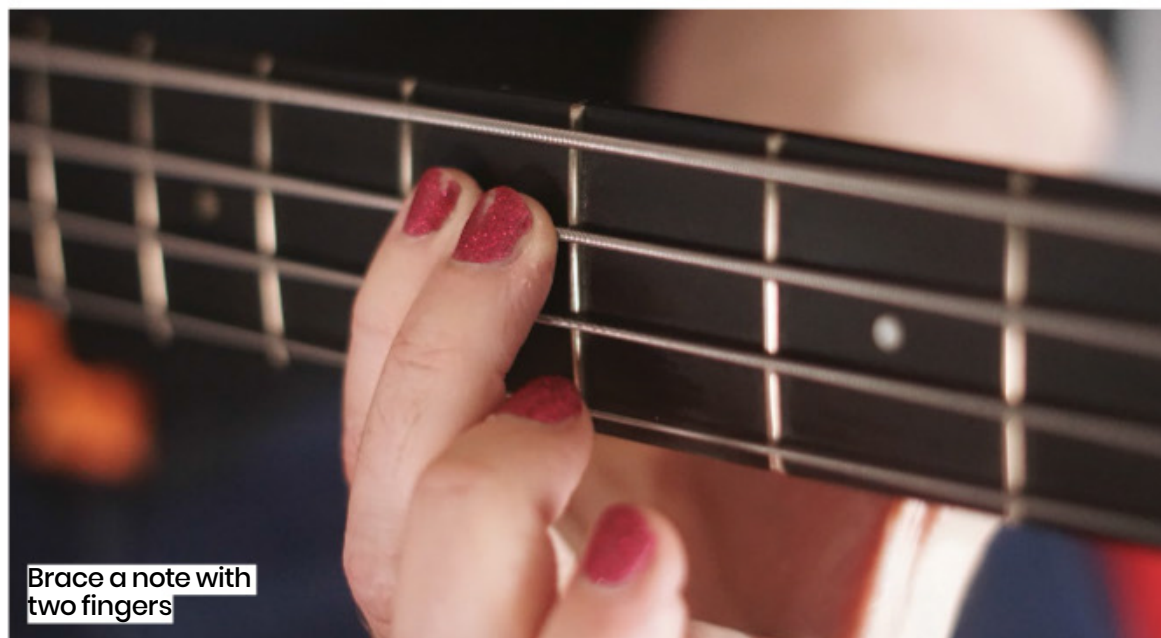
Modern bass construction favors instruments with super-long sustain. I remember my early recording sessions with my Modulus four-string in the Nineties, when engineers would be amazed at its sustain. It would even cause problems in lines where I needed to 'drop in' to replace part of a recording, because there was no obvious gap. With computer editing,

that's way easier to fix, and a lot of modern construction methods have caught up with what graphite necks are capable of in terms of sustain. Our basses now demand a bit of a rethink in terms of what we can do with all that natural sustain.

So, after that long introduction, let's get playing! The first thing we need to be aware of is just how long the sustain is on our particular instrument. Fret a D at the fifth fret on your A string and pluck it with whatever technique first comes to mind. Try and visualize the shape of the note. We've talked before about the four

parameters that we use to describe dynamics over time for any given sound—Attack, Decay, Sustain and Release, or ADSR. What would you say the ADSR of that note looks like? Big peak right at the start as you pluck the string? Slow-ish fade to a sustained quieter note, and eventually disappearing, right? How can our picking hand technique change that?

Try playing the same note—but this time, instead of plucking it with your fingers, 'squeeze' through the note with the side of your thumb, bringing your thumb to rest on the next string down. If you hear any fret



buzz, you're pressing too hard. Experiment with the level of pressure that gives you the most sustain and the smoothest transition from peak to sustained note.

Our picking hand, as we've noted before, is our first tone control. Before we touch the knobs on our bass, amp or pedals, we can do a whole lot to shape the sound—and length—of a note with our picking hand. The distance our hand is from the bridge, the angle we move our finger or thumb through the string, even the amount of flesh of our finger that is in contact with the string will all impact the sound and shape of the notes we play. And when we're thinking about legato—and therefore slow—playing, we can extend our techniques beyond those we might use for playing a constant eighth note line or a more tricky funk line.

Here, we're reimagining what it means to be a 'beginner'. Your current lack of extreme dexterous ability doesn't mean that you don't get to apply your exquisite taste to the task of playing simpler lines. As we've noted in the past, many of the greatest moments in bass didn't require amazing amounts of dexterity, just great taste and controlled execution. These are both factors that we can work on from the very beginning.

Okay, now we've given some thought to how our technique can elongate and smooth out individual notes, let's try it with two notes! Our first move is going to be to try a hammer-on. It's a technique we've explored before, but this time, we're using it as our baseline (no pun intended) for what sustaining the first note as long as possible sounds like. With a hammer-on, the second note relies on the vibration of the first note for its volume and tone.

Place your first finger on a C at the third fret on the A string, pluck it, and after a second or two, hammer on with your little finger on the D at the fifth fret. If you find that your little finger struggles with this, you can brace it with either or both of your ring and middle fingers. If the stretch feels a bit

much at this stage, move that same two-fret shape

further up the neck to a place that's more comfortable.

Once we've got the motion comfortable, we can start to really listen. What's the volume difference between the two notes? What's the tonal difference? Does how close

Learning to control the signal before relying on an effect leaves you with many more options



to the fret you place the hammer-on impact the tone or duration of the second note? Is there any buzzing? How do the variations in picking the first note that we've just been looking at change the relationship between the two notes?

This may seem like a crazy number of questions to ask of just two notes next to each other, but if we make these kind of observations part of our playing, you won't

have to suddenly start listening to yourself properly when you've learned a bunch of Victor Wooten licks, but finally notice your tone, timing, and articulation are terrible!

Let's play those same two notes, only this time we're going to pick the second note

with the same technique as the first. If that's with the side of your thumb, you may notice a tendency to bring your thumb down onto the string a fraction of a second before the note is supposed to sound, leaving a gap. Try to eliminate that gap, and as you adjust your fretting hand to reach for the second note, listen for fret buzz or for the first note decaying too fast if you release too much pressure off that first note.

This exercise is all about the details. If you're playing a line that's exposed in the mix, these elements become really significant. What we're trying to eliminate here, as much as possible, is any gap between the two notes—and we're trying to smooth out the dynamics of each note.

If you own a compressor pedal, hold off on using it for a while. They're designed to reduce the volume of any note above a threshold, and increase the volume of any notes that drop below it. However, learning to control as much of the signal

The mighty Joe Osborn



© Andrew Lepley/Redferns/Getty

as you can before relying on an effect leaves you with many more options in the moment.

On a number of occasions in my career, I've found I was a little too quiet, so I dug in harder to increase the volume, only to find that a compressor was thwarting my attempts at fixing the problem! So, long before we start messing with compressors, we need to sort out our hands. It gets even more tricky when we need to cross strings between notes. It's possible to hammer on notes on adjacent strings, but without the initial vibration of the note we've just played to carry on, we end up with less continuity. So we need to think about how our picking hand can move across the strings, as well as how we can make sure our fretting hand doesn't let go of the first note earlier than it has to. Let's look at two examples.

First, let's take the interval of a fifth, between a D on the fifth fret of the A string and an A at the seventh fret on the D string. This is a great test of how relaxed and comfortable our fretting hand is. Remember, you don't need to hold both

It's important that we explore all the options so we know we've chosen the best, not just the first

notes down for the whole time, and if it feels like a bit of a stretch, it's okay to shift your hand between the two. What we're focusing on is making that transition as smooth as possible, and reducing the gap between the notes so that it's imperceptible.

With our picking hand, we can experiment with the same range of techniques we applied to our single string exercise, but we need to be aware of which strings our fingers come to rest on. If we're playing the fifth with our index or middle fingers, bringing that finger to land on the A string after playing the note is a great way to mute the D and have the two notes meet in the middle. No further muting action is needed in your fretting hand. We just have to work out whether we're going to get that finger out of the way to switch to a different

one when we play the D again, or just leave the finger where it lands ready to play the note.

These are all decisions that depend on a number of factors, some tonal and some just to do with comfort. What's important

is that we explore all the options so we know we've chosen the best one, not just settled for the first.

Let's shift the string-crossing exercise to a bigger hand position shift. This time we're going from D to E, but we'll play the E at the second fret on the D string—so we've got D at the fifth fret on the A string, and then we move to the adjacent string for the next note. For our picking hand, it's the same movement as the previous interval. But for our fretting hand, we're far more likely to need to pivot on our thumb to reach it in time. This is a co-ordination exercise: How we deal with the dead zone between our little finger leaving the D and our index finger arriving on the E. We also want to make sure that no strings are left ringing, or squeaking as our hand moves over them.

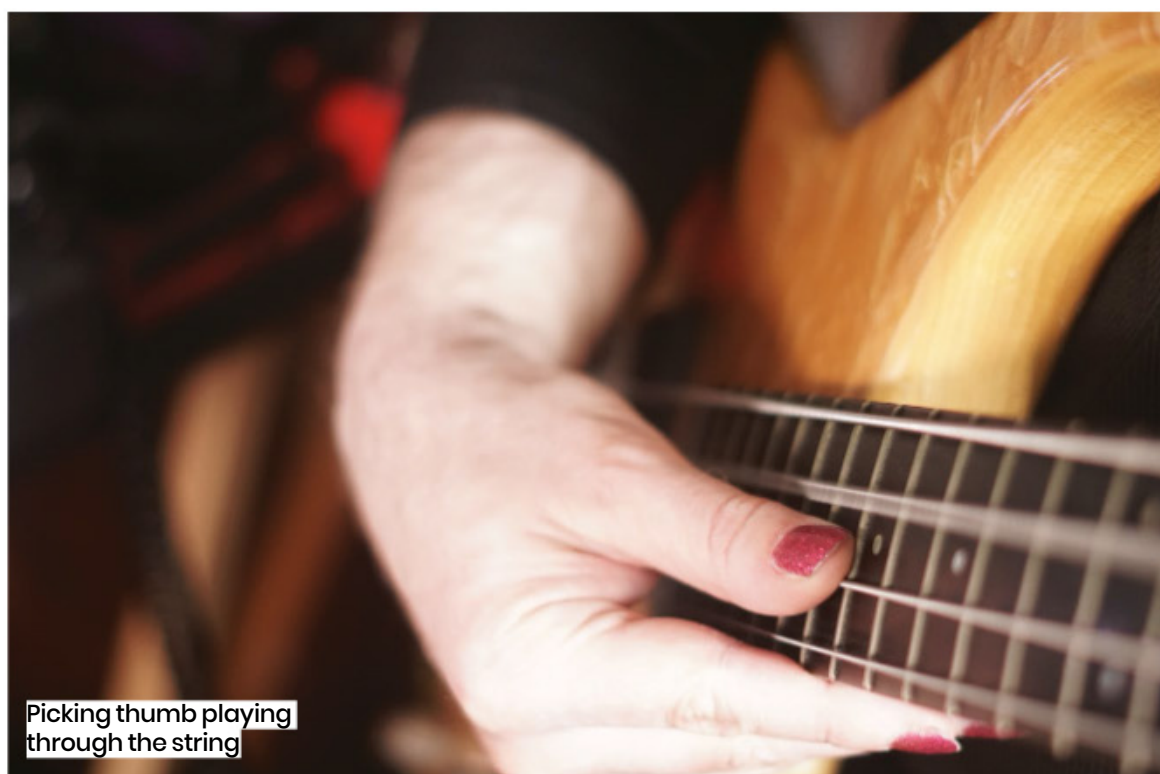
These exercises can be approached in a lot of ways—why not see what a pick brings to the table?

All of a sudden, playing two notes accurately becomes a maddeningly specific task, but if you're detail-oriented, giving yourself space to think about these things will pay massive dividends going forward. And if—as is the reality for so many of us right now—your main musical outlet is recordings, this skill will improve the quality of your tracks massively. You'll find that it's easier to EQ or process your sound after you've recorded it without discovering unwanted squeaks and scrapes that were hidden before you tried to add a trebly edge to your sound. The cleaner your playing, the more malleable it will be as you try to manipulate or edit it.

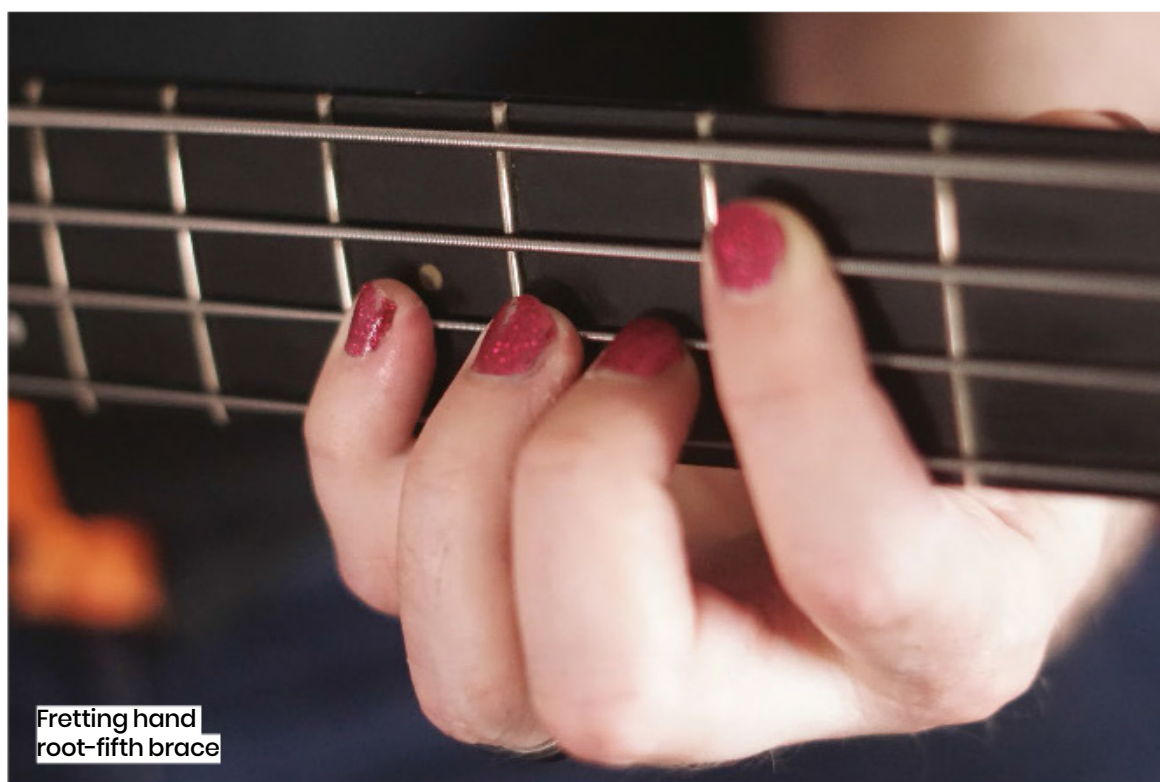
These exercises can be approached in a lot of ways. You can see what a pick brings to the table; you can try moving the notes across bigger intervals; or string together multiple string shifts to see if your hand position needs to change mid-note. You can try playing the same interval in different places on the neck to see if the thickness of the string impacts your tone in a desirable way. And obviously, we can start to mix up our line between shorter and longer notes.

Let's finish with a line that uses both the intervals we've been looking at today, and mixes up the length. Take it slowly and focus on giving every note its full value.

Stay in touch, everyone! ■



Picking thumb playing through the string



Fretting hand root-fifth brace

EXERCISE ONE



If you only practice one thing this month...

Alternate between C and D on your A string, getting that shift as smooth and 'bump-free' as possible. No gaps, no rogue squeaks, no spikes in volume. Just smoooooth bass!



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

STEP UP!

MASTER MINOR 7TH FLAT 5 ARPEGGIOS

Did you know that contemporary music only tends to reference a few fundamental chord sequences—and that in the

majority of those environments, the focus is generalized on those primary structures residing on the first, fourth, and fifth harmonic degrees? That's why any structure

found on the seventh diatonic degree is less familiar than its more common counterparts. Let's explore this!

EXERCISE ONE

♩ = 100

Chords and arpeggios for Exercise One:

- C Δ 7
- Dm 7
- Em 7
- F Δ 7
- G 7
- Am 7
- Bm $^7(b5)$
- C Δ 7

Exercise 1 denotes the chords and arpeggios produced when the major scale is harmonized using tertian construction. These structures, their arpeggios, and most importantly, the order in which they're presented are a fruitful source of information, as this data is used to analyze and interpret the majority of contemporary music. Dissect each bar, memorizing the chord names and accompanying structures, paying particular attention to the minor 7th, 5 arpeggio in the penultimate measure, as it'll be the focal point of this month's studies.

EXERCISE TWO

Interval sequence for Exercise Two:

- Minor 3rd
- Minor 3rd
- Major 3rd

Like all 7th arpeggios, minor 7th, 5 structures are formulated using tertian construction; the process of stacking of intervals of a third. As the name suggests, minor 7th, 5 structures are simply a minor 7th arpeggio with a flattened 5th, produced by stacking two minor 3rds, followed by a major 3rd. This sequence appears in Exercise 2, so take the time to learn the formula of any melodic, or harmonic structure, whether it's a triad, arpeggio, or scale.



Nova Twins bassist
Georgia South

Take the time to learn
the formula of any
melodic or harmonic
structure

EXERCISE THREE

♩ = 100

Am^{7(b5)}

For ease, each of this month's studies will be notated using the appropriate key signature associated with minor^{7th},⁵ chords when perceived as the seventh degree of major harmony, but be aware that it's more common to encounter these structures as two chords in minor tonality than as sevenths in major. Exercise 3 denotes the minor^{7th},⁵ (or 'half-diminished') arpeggio over two complete octaves. It's possible to deliver this linear approach to the structure utilizing only two fingers of your fretting hand, so try to play the exercise with just your index and little fingers in an alternating manner.

EXERCISE FOUR

♩ = 100

Am^{7(b5)}

Many of you know that an inversion is a means to interpret melodic and harmonic vocabulary with an alternative perspective. Essentially, you're delivering the same vocabulary in an array of different circumstances, but the audible outcome from this process is enlightening. Exercise 4 delivers the minor^{7th},⁵ arpeggio in root position and its ensuing inversions. In each instance, the lowest note of the preceding structure is repositioned an octave higher to form the next. If this process seems unclear, take a pencil and write the names of each pitch above each crotchet (quarter note): You'll soon become receptive to the pattern.



Intermediate Lesson

EXERCISE FIVE

♩ = 100

Am^{7(b5)}

Exercise Five consists of two staves of music in bass clef, 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The tempo is marked as ♩ = 100. The first staff begins with the chord Am^{7(b5)}. The notation includes a series of eighth notes and a corresponding set of fingerings (5, 8, 6, 5, 7, 5, 6, 8, 6, 5, 7, 5, 8, 5, 7, 5) written below the staff. The second staff continues the exercise with a similar pattern of eighth notes and fingerings (5, 7, 5, 8, 5, 7, 5, 6, 8, 6, 5, 7, 5, 6, 8, 5).

To help develop the physical dexterity required to deliver minor7th_{b5} arpeggios, these exercises will investigate them from different perspectives. This exercise will require you to deliver the inversions in the preceding study in an alternating manner. Although this process may seem straightforward, in practice the fingering can feel alien, partly due to the presence of the _{b5} interval and the unfamiliar patterns produced as a result. Patience and perseverance are your biggest allies.

EXERCISE SIX

♩ = 100

Am^{7(b5)}

Exercise Six consists of two staves of music in bass clef, 6/8 time, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The tempo is marked as ♩ = 100. The first staff begins with the chord Am^{7(b5)}. The notation includes a series of eighth notes and a corresponding set of fingerings (5, 8, 6, 5, 6, 8, 6, 5, 7, 5, 7, 5, 7, 10, 8, 12, 13, 10, 13, 12, 14, 12) written below the staff. The second staff continues the exercise with a similar pattern of eighth notes and fingerings (14, 12, 13, 10, 13, 12, 8, 10, 7, 5, 7, 5, 7, 5, 6, 8, 6, 5, 6, 8, 5).

Arpeggios are customarily perceived as four-note structures, so it's habitual to deliver their content using even subdivisions. But what happens if we go against the grain and utilize odd groupings? Exercise 6 investigates this notion by delivering an A minor7th_{b5} arpeggio using groupings of three notes. Commencing on the tonic, you'll be required to ascend only three notes up the arpeggio before descending the same distance from the consequent pitch. This pattern is then synthesized and duplicated over two complete octaves. It's worth noting that although it's written in a 6/8 meter, this rhythmic arrangement can easily be portrayed in 12/8, or even triplets in a 4/4-time signature.



Thom Yorke of Radiohead, playing bass in a side project, The Smile

What happens if we go against the grain and utilize odd groupings?

EXERCISE SEVEN

$\text{♩} = 100$

$A_{m7(b5)}$

The exercise is written for bass guitar in 4/4 time. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The notation consists of two staves. The first staff shows a sequence of eighth notes: B2, D3, F3, A3, B3, D4, F4, A4, B4, D5, F5, A5, B5, D6, F6, A6, B6. The second staff shows a sequence of eighth notes: B6, D7, F7, A7, B7, D8, F8, A8, B8, D9, F9, A9, B9, D10, F10, A10, B10. The fingering is indicated by numbers 1-5 on the strings.

Although constructed using intervals of thirds, the manner in which the consequential pitches of an arpeggio are delivered can easily be manipulated. For instance, instead of approaching the minor7th $\flat$ 5 arpeggio using a rudimental ascending and descending method, Exercise 7 will require you to play the note a diatonic 5th interval above, and below, all of the associated pitches as you transcend two octaves.

EXERCISE EIGHT

A^7

$C\sharp m7\flat 5$ Arpeggio (Portrayed from the third of A^7)

The exercise is written for bass guitar in 4/4 time. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The notation consists of two staves. The first staff shows a sequence of eighth notes: A2, C#3, E3, G#3, A3, C#4, E4, G#4, A4, C#5, E5, G#5, A5, C#6, E6, G#6, A6. The second staff shows a sequence of eighth notes: A6, C#7, E7, G#7, A7, C#8, E8, G#8, A8, C#9, E9, G#9, A9, C#10, E10, G#10, A10. The fingering is indicated by numbers 1-5 on the strings.

Although minor7th $\flat$ 5 arpeggios seem less common than other four-note structures, their strengths aren't necessarily limited to minor II-V progressions and the seventh degree of major tonality. For example, examining the notes of an A^7 arpeggio discloses the pitches: A, C#, E, and G. However, when isolated C#, E and G actually produce a diminished triad... which is 75 percent of a minor7th $\flat$ 5 arpeggio! Thus, playing a 'half-diminished' structure off of the 3rd of any dominant 7th chord allows access to the 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th intervals, while simultaneously omitting the root. The result is a wonderfully inspiring and influential melodic device that can be utilized to strengthen the portrayal of all dominant vocabulary.



Intermediate Lesson

EXERCISE NINE

♩ = 80

A7

Here's a four-bar motif designed to utilize the melodic device introduced in the last exercise. For the first three measures, chord tones and chromatic vocabulary have been utilized to portray the associated A7 chord. This ostinato phrase commences on the tonic, conveyed by a dotted eighth note, which is then supplemented by an ascending slur between the 7th and octave, and chromaticism between the 3rd and 5th degrees. In bar four, the melody is crafted from a C# minor 7th, 5 arpeggio. Placing your index finger on the fourth fret of string three will optimize your delivery of the subsequent vocabulary.

EXERCISE TEN

♩ = 80

A7

Expanding upon the conceptual components of the last exercise, this month's penultimate study once again addresses an A7 chord, with the help of a C# minor 7th b5 arpeggio. One significant difference is the inclusion of 16th note triplets. Traditionally, 16ths are portrayed as a subdivision of four, residing evenly within the space of a single quarter note, but 16th-note triplets are an entirely different beast. They require you to divide each quarter note in half, producing two eighth notes, and then deliver a triplet within each of these subsequent subdivisions.

EXERCISE ELEVEN

♩ = 120

A⁷

1.

2.

Exercise 11 collates all of this month's insights into a single study. Although you will once again encounter dotted rhythms, slurs, and 16th notes, there are a few additional surprises to keep you on your toes, such as 8th triplets and a little syncopation. Work through each of the measures, remembering at all times that the bulk of the context is derived from insights you've already covered. Until next time!



James LoMenzo of
Megadeth

If you only practice one thing this month...

Most contemporary musicians are more likely to encounter major 7th, minor 7th, and dominant 7th chords on a regular basis than minor 7th_b5 structures. Therefore, if you only have time to practice one thing, try to ensure you're familiar with the basic construction of a half-diminished arpeggio and are able to identify where the structure is within diatonic major harmony.

AND FINALLY...

STU HAMM: CHORDS LESSON



Ace bass educator Stuart Clayton takes us deep into the work of Stu Hamm for an advanced masterclass.

Welcome back! In the last issue we looked at chordal fingerstyle playing, an area of bass technique that offers some alternative perspectives on the combination of harmony and melody. In the previous instalment, we looked closely at the technique and worked through 10 exercises that put it to use. If you've worked through that material successfully, you're ready for the next challenge.

This month, we're looking at an entire piece that was performed using the chordal fingerstyle technique. 'Chordally Yours' was written by virtuoso bassist Stuart Hamm and is part of his *Le Petit Suite For Solo Bass*, a series of solo bass pieces written to illustrate the versatility of the instrument. You'll find this piece on Stuart's 2015 album *The Book Of Lies*.

"Chords are a great tool that you can use in your solo bass vocabulary," says Hamm. "When writing this piece my aim was to include every permutation of chord that I could think of, so that you'll be learning new shapes and fingerings while also learning to perform a beautiful piece of music. We'll be using some different fingerstyle techniques here as well, while paying attention to phrasing and dynamics again. I hope this piece leads you on a journey to writing your own solo pieces using chords."

PART A

When playing the Intro (at letter A), the chords are initially arpeggiated across the A, D and G-strings. It is recommended that you use the thumb of the picking hand for the A-string (and later, the E-string), the first finger for the D-string and the second for the G-string. When playing this part, you should allow all notes to ring into one another, as this is usually the desired effect of using this technique.

After ascending the neck during the first eight bars, a descending sequence of augmented triads is played in bars 9 to 12.

Augmented triads are made up of two stacked major third intervals, which results in an augmented fifth interval between the root note and the fifth. The first augmented triad is E+, played with the E at the nineteenth fret of the A-string, the G# at the eighteenth fret of the D-string and the C at the seventeenth fret of the G-string. This figure (or shape) is played twice, then descends down the neck, following the whole tone scale. You'll hear that augmented triads—and the whole tone scale with which they are frequently used—have a unique sound.

PART B

At letter B, the main melody section

"I hope this piece leads you on a journey to writing your own solo pieces using chords"
Stuart Hamm



begins. The first time through (bars 13 to 20) it is predominantly played with two-note chord voicings. Over an open A, various voicings of an A minor triad are played. Bars 15 and 16 hint at a Lydian-flavored chord (Fmaj7#11), which will be fleshed out more fully later in the piece.

In bars 17 and 18 we have three-note chords that feature some difficult minor sixth intervals. In bar 17, I recommend fretting the A with the second finger, the E with the fourth and the F (a minor sixth above the A) with the first finger. These notes should be arpeggiated quickly, as indicated by the arpeggiation direction next to the chord. The same fingering can be used for the chord at the beginning of bar 18, which is the same voicing a fourth lower.

In bars 21 to 28, the melody is played again, but with embellishments to make it bigger and louder. First of all, the initial voicing of A minor is arpeggiated using the chordal fingerstyle technique. Next, a full voicing of Fmaj7#11 is used in the third bar of the sequence (bar 23). Fret this as follows: First finger on the F, second on the E, third on the C, fourth on the B. This chord resolves to an Fadd9 chord in the following bar that should be fretted as follows: F with the first finger, A with the second, C with the third, G with the fourth.

When playing these chord note voicings, use the thumb to play the notes on the E and A-strings, the first finger for notes on the D-string and the second finger for notes on the G-string. These chords are followed by a B_b maj7 chord in bar 25, after which a ii-V-I progression in B_b is played: Cm7-F7-B_b⁷. This progression, common in jazz, is something that most bass players should be familiar with.

Unusually, the B_b maj7 then moves to E7, which in turn then resolves to A minor. This is a nice sequence, one that illustrates how effective three-note chord voicings can be on the bass. Note that when playing three-note voicings such as these, the fifth is



The master at work.

★ Advanced Lesson

usually omitted as it is the most 'expendable' note of the chord.

PART C

At letter C, four-note chords are played, one note per string. The first of these, C, is arpeggiated and is followed by a simple ascending tenth line. In the next four bars, the previous C chord voicing is embellished, with the octave note moving upwards to the ninth of the chord. I recommend fretting this with the first finger on the C, the second on the E, the third on the G, and the fourth on the D. The same fingering can then be used for the Fadd9 chord that follows it.

I recommend the following fingering

for the awkward D7/F# chord in bar 40: Play the F# with the first finger, the D with the third, the octave F# with the second and the C with the fourth. Similarly, the G7sus and G7 chords in bars 41 to 44 must be fretted in a particular way. For the G7sus, fret the G with the first finger, the D with the third, the F with the second and the C with the fourth. When this chord changes to G7, you have two options: You can either move the fourth finger down to B, or if you find this uncomfortable, switch to the following position: First finger on the G, fourth on the D, second on the F and third on the B. Switching between these two positions will require some practice.

PART D

At D a new section begins, outlining more four-note chords. You will have used the first two voicings earlier in the piece, but the Dm7/C should be played as follows: Second finger on the F, fourth on the C, first on the D and third on the A. This section is played four times, and Stuart suggests that it could be looped for a solo when playing live if desired.

PART E AND ONWARDS

The remainder of the piece consists of repetition of earlier sections. The very best of luck, and let us know how you get on! ■

PART A

A With freedom ♩ = 110 approx

N.C.

mp

5

9

PART B

B (Am) (F Δ 7 $\sharp$ 11/A) (F/A)

13

T 5 9 17 16 14 16 17 14
A 7 10 14 15 15
B 0 (0) (0) (0)

(Am 6) (Em 6) (G $\sharp$ Δ 7) 3 (Am)

17

T 10 12 10 12 12 10 9
A 14 12 14 12 10 10
B 12 12 12 11 0

(Am) (F Δ 7 $\sharp$ 11) (Fadd 9)

21

T 5 5 17 16 14 16 17 14
A 7 7 (7) 9 14 15 15
B 0 0 0 0 0 13 13

(B $\flat$ Δ 7) (Cm 7) (F 7) (B $\flat$ Δ 7) (E 7) (Am)

25

T 14 12 14 15 14 14 13 14
A 12 13 13 13 12 12 10
B 13 15 13 13 12 0

PART C

C (C) (Dm) (Em) (F)

29

33 (Cadd⁹) (Fadd⁹)

37 (C) (Dm) (Em) (F)

41 (G⁷sus⁴) (G⁷)

The musical score for Part C consists of four systems, each with a musical staff and a fretboard diagram. The first system (measures 29-32) features a C major triad in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The second system (measures 33-36) introduces Cadd9 and Fadd9 chords. The third system (measures 37-40) returns to the C major triad and includes Dm, Em, and F chords. The fourth system (measures 41-44) features G7sus4 and G7 chords. Fret numbers are indicated for the left hand, and triplets are marked in the right hand.

D

(Gadd⁹)

45 

Figure 1 is a schematic diagram of a 16-bit parallel adder. It consists of four 4-bit adders, labeled A, B, C, and D, connected in series. Each adder has two 4-bit inputs and a 4-bit output. The outputs of the adders are connected to a 16-bit output bus. The adders are connected in a chain: A to B, B to C, C to D, and D to the output bus. The inputs are labeled 14, 14, 14, 14, 16, 16, 16, 16. The outputs are labeled 18, 18, 18, 18, 19, 19, 19, 19.

 (Dm^7/F)

49

Exercise 49 consists of four measures. The top staff (treble clef) features eighth-note triplets in a key of one sharp (F#). The bottom staff (bass clef) features half notes in the same key signature.

play 4x

The musical score for 'The Rose Tree' is presented in a single system with two staves, labeled A and B. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The melody for both parts is identical, starting on a whole note G4 (one line below the staff) and following the sequence: A4 (first space), Bb4 (first flat), C5 (second line), D5 (second space), E5 (third line), F5 (third space), G5 (fourth line), A5 (fourth space), Bb5 (fifth flat), C6 (fifth line), D6 (fifth space), E6 (sixth line), F6 (sixth space), G6 (seventh line), A6 (seventh space), Bb6 (eighth flat), C7 (eighth line), D7 (eighth space), E7 (ninth line), F7 (ninth space), G7 (tenth line), A7 (tenth space), Bb7 (eleventh flat), C8 (eleventh line), D8 (eleventh space), E8 (twelfth line), F8 (twelfth space), G8 (thirteenth line), A8 (thirteenth space), Bb8 (fourteenth flat), C9 (fourteenth line), D9 (fourteenth space), E9 (fifteenth line), F9 (fifteenth space), G9 (sixteenth line), A9 (sixteenth space), Bb9 (seventeenth flat), C10 (seventeenth line), D10 (seventeenth space), E10 (eighteenth line), F10 (eighteenth space), G10 (nineteenth line), A10 (nineteenth space), Bb10 (twentieth flat), C11 (twentieth line), D11 (twentieth space), E11 (twenty-first line), F11 (twenty-first space), G11 (twenty-second line), A11 (twenty-second space), Bb11 (twenty-third flat), C12 (twenty-third line), D12 (twenty-third space), E12 (twenty-fourth line), F12 (twenty-fourth space), G12 (twenty-fifth line), A12 (twenty-fifth space), Bb12 (twenty-sixth flat), C13 (twenty-sixth line), D13 (twenty-sixth space), E13 (twenty-seventh line), F13 (twenty-seventh space), G13 (twenty-eighth line), A13 (twenty-eighth space), Bb13 (twenty-ninth flat), C14 (twenty-ninth line), D14 (twenty-ninth space), E14 (thirtieth line), F14 (thirtieth space), G14 (thirtieth line), A14 (thirtieth space), Bb14 (thirtieth flat), C15 (thirtieth line), D15 (thirtieth space), E15 (thirtieth line), F15 (thirtieth space), G15 (thirtieth line), A15 (thirtieth space), Bb15 (thirtieth flat), C16 (thirtieth line), D16 (thirtieth space), E16 (thirtieth line), F16 (thirtieth space), G16 (thirtieth line), A16 (thirtieth space), Bb16 (thirtieth flat), C17 (thirtieth line), D17 (thirtieth space), E17 (thirtieth line), F17 (thirtieth space), G17 (thirtieth line), A17 (thirtieth space), Bb17 (thirtieth flat), C18 (thirtieth line), D18 (thirtieth space), E18 (thirtieth line), F18 (thirtieth space), G18 (thirtieth line), A18 (thirtieth space), Bb18 (thirtieth flat), C19 (thirtieth line), D19 (thirtieth space), E19 (thirtieth line), F19 (thirtieth space), G19 (thirtieth line), A19 (thirtieth space), Bb19 (thirtieth flat), C20 (thirtieth line), D20 (thirtieth space), E20 (thirtieth line), F20 (thirtieth space), G20 (thirtieth line), A20 (thirtieth space), Bb20 (thirtieth flat), C21 (thirtieth line), D21 (thirtieth space), E21 (thirtieth line), F21 (thirtieth space), G21 (thirtieth line), A21 (thirtieth space), Bb21 (thirtieth flat), C22 (thirtieth line), D22 (thirtieth space), E22 (thirtieth line), F22 (thirtieth space), G22 (thirtieth line), A22 (thirtieth space), Bb22 (thirtieth flat), C23 (thirtieth line), D23 (thirtieth space), E23 (thirtieth line), F23 (thirtieth space), G23 (thirtieth line), A23 (thirtieth space), Bb23 (thirtieth flat), C24 (thirtieth line), D24 (thirtieth space), E24 (thirtieth line), F24 (thirtieth space), G24 (thirtieth line), A24 (thirtieth space), Bb24 (thirtieth flat), C25 (thirtieth line), D25 (thirtieth space), E25 (thirtieth line), F25 (thirtieth space), G25 (thirtieth line), A25 (thirtieth space), Bb25 (thirtieth flat), C26 (thirtieth line), D26 (thirtieth space), E26 (thirtieth line), F26 (thirtieth space), G26 (thirtieth line), A26 (thirtieth space), Bb26 (thirtieth flat), C27 (thirtieth line), D27 (thirtieth space), E27 (thirtieth line), F27 (thirtieth space), G27 (thirtieth line), A27 (thirtieth space), Bb27 (thirtieth flat), C28 (thirtieth line), D28 (thirtieth space), E28 (thirtieth line), F28 (thirtieth space), G28 (thirtieth line), A28 (thirtieth space), Bb28 (thirtieth flat), C29 (thirtieth line), D29 (thirtieth space), E29 (thirtieth line), F29 (thirtieth space), G29 (thirtieth line), A29 (thirtieth space), Bb29 (thirtieth flat), C30 (thirtieth line), D30 (thirtieth space), E30 (thirtieth line), F30 (thirtieth space), G30 (thirtieth line), A30 (thirtieth space), Bb30 (thirtieth flat), C31 (thirtieth line), D31 (thirtieth space), E31 (thirtieth line), F31 (thirtieth space), G31 (thirtieth line), A31 (thirtieth space), Bb31 (thirtieth flat), C32 (thirtieth line), D32 (thirtieth space), E32 (thirtieth line), F32 (thirtieth space), G32 (thirtieth line), A32 (thirtieth space), Bb32 (thirtieth flat), C33 (thirtieth line), D33 (thirtieth space), E33 (thirtieth line), F33 (thirtieth space), G33 (thirtieth line), A33 (thirtieth space), Bb33 (thirtieth flat), C34 (thirtieth line), D34 (thirtieth space), E34 (thirtieth line), F34 (thirtieth space), G34 (thirtieth line), A34 (thirtieth space), Bb34 (thirtieth flat), C35 (thirtieth line), D35 (thirtieth space), E35 (thirtieth line), F35 (thirtieth space), G35 (thirtieth line), A35 (thirtieth space), Bb35 (thirtieth flat), C36 (thirtieth line), D36 (thirtieth space), E36 (thirtieth line), F36 (thirtieth space), G36 (thirtieth line), A36 (thirtieth space), Bb36 (thirtieth flat), C37 (thirtieth line), D37 (thirtieth space), E37 (thirtieth line), F37 (thirtieth space), G37 (thirtieth line), A37 (thirtieth space), Bb37 (thirtieth flat), C38 (thirtieth line), D38 (thirtieth space), E38 (thirtieth line), F38 (thirtieth space), G38 (thirtieth line), A38 (thirtieth space), Bb38 (thirtieth flat), C39 (thirtieth line), D39 (thirtieth space), E39 (thirtieth line), F39 (thirtieth space), G39 (thirtieth line), A39 (thirtieth space), Bb39 (thirtieth flat), C40 (thirtieth line), D40 (thirtieth space), E40 (thirtieth line), F40 (thirtieth space), G40 (thirtieth line), A40 (thirtieth space), Bb40 (thirtieth flat), C41 (thirtieth line), D41 (thirtieth space), E41 (thirtieth line), F41 (thirtieth space), G41 (thirtieth line), A41 (thirtieth space), Bb41 (thirtieth flat), C42 (thirtieth line), D42 (thirtieth space), E42 (thirtieth line), F42 (thirtieth space), G42 (thirtieth line), A42 (thirtieth space), Bb42 (thirtieth flat), C43 (thirtieth line), D43 (thirtieth space), E43 (thirtieth line), F43 (thirtieth space), G43 (thirtieth line), A43 (thirtieth space), Bb43 (thirtieth flat), C44 (thirtieth line), D44 (thirtieth space), E44 (thirtieth line), F44 (thirtieth space), G44 (thirtieth line), A44 (thirtieth space), Bb44 (thirtieth flat), C45 (thirtieth line), D45 (thirtieth space), E45 (thirtieth line), F45 (thirtieth space), G45 (thirtieth line), A45 (thirtieth space), Bb45 (thirtieth flat), C46 (thirtieth line), D46 (thirtieth space), E46 (thirtieth line), F46 (thirtieth space), G46 (thirtieth line), A46 (thirtieth space), Bb46 (thirtieth flat), C47 (thirtieth line), D47 (thirtieth space), E47 (thirtieth line), F47 (thirtieth space), G47 (thirtieth line), A47 (thirtieth space), Bb47 (thirtieth flat), C48 (thirtieth line), D48 (thirtieth space), E48 (thirtieth line), F48 (thirtieth space), G48 (thirtieth line), A48 (thirtieth space), Bb48 (thirtieth flat), C49 (thirtieth line), D49 (thirtieth space), E49 (thirtieth line), F49 (thirtieth space), G49 (thirtieth line), A49 (thirtieth space), Bb49 (thirtieth flat), C50 (thirtieth line), D50 (thirtieth space), E50 (thirtieth line), F50 (thirtieth space), G50 (thirtieth line), A50 (thirtieth space), Bb50 (thirtieth flat), C51 (thirtieth line), D51 (thirtieth space), E51 (thirtieth line), F51 (thirtieth space), G51 (thirtieth line), A51 (thirtieth space), Bb51 (thirtieth flat), C52 (thirtieth line), D52 (thirtieth space), E52 (thirtieth line), F52 (thirtieth space), G52 (thirtieth line), A52 (thirtieth space), Bb52 (thirtieth flat), C53 (thirtieth line), D53 (thirtieth space), E53 (thirtieth line), F53 (thirtieth space), G53 (thirtieth line), A53 (thirtieth space), Bb53 (thirtieth flat), C54 (thirtieth line), D54 (thirtieth space), E54 (thirtieth line), F54 (thirtieth space), G54 (thirtieth line), A54 (thirtieth space), Bb54 (thirtieth flat), C55 (thirtieth line), D55 (thirtieth space), E55 (thirtieth line), F55 (thirtieth space), G55 (thirtieth line), A55 (thirtieth space), Bb55 (thirtieth flat), C56 (thirtieth line), D56 (thirtieth space), E56 (thirtieth line), F56 (thirtieth space), G56 (thirtieth line), A56 (thirtieth space), Bb56 (thirtieth flat), C57 (thirtieth line), D57 (thirtieth space), E57 (thirtieth line), F57 (thirtieth space), G57 (thirtieth line), A57 (thirtieth space), Bb57 (thirtieth flat), C58 (thirtieth line), D58 (thirtieth space), E58 (thirtieth line), F58 (thirtieth space), G58 (thirtieth line), A58 (thirtieth space), Bb58 (thirtieth flat), C59 (thirtieth line), D59 (thirtieth space), E59 (thirtieth line), F59 (thirtieth space), G59 (thirtieth line), A59 (thirtieth space), Bb59 (thirtieth flat), C60 (thirtieth line), D60 (thirtieth space), E60 (thirtieth line), F60 (thirtieth space), G60 (thirtieth line), A60 (thirtieth space), Bb60 (thirtieth flat), C61 (thirtieth line), D61 (thirtieth space), E61 (thirtieth line), F61 (thirtieth space), G61 (thirtieth line), A61 (thirtieth space), Bb61 (thirtieth flat), C62 (thirtieth line), D62 (thirtieth space), E62 (thirtieth line), F62 (thirtieth space), G62 (thirtieth line), A62 (thirtieth space), Bb62 (thirtieth flat), C63 (thirtieth line), D63 (thirtieth space), E63 (thirtieth line), F63 (thirtieth space), G63 (thirtieth line), A63 (thirtieth space), Bb63 (thirtieth flat), C64 (thirtieth line), D64 (thirtieth space), E64 (thirtieth line), F64 (thirtieth space), G64 (thirtieth line), A64 (thirtieth space), Bb64 (thirtieth flat), C65 (thirtieth line), D65 (thirtieth space), E65 (thirtieth line), F65 (thirtieth space), G65 (thirtieth line), A65 (thirtieth space), Bb65 (thirtieth flat), C66 (thirtieth line), D66 (thirtieth space), E66 (thirtieth line), F66 (thirtieth space), G66 (thirtieth line), A66 (thirtieth space), Bb66 (thirtieth flat), C67 (thirtieth line), D67 (thirtieth space), E67 (thirtieth line), F67 (thirtieth space), G67 (thirtieth line), A67 (thirtieth space), Bb67 (thirtieth flat), C68 (thirtieth line), D68 (thirtieth space), E68 (thirtieth line), F68 (thirtieth space), G68 (thirtieth line),

(E⁷)

53

Exercise 53

The diagram illustrates the construction of a 128-bit block cipher from a 64-bit block cipher. It is divided into three sections. The first section shows a 64-bit block cipher with two parallel paths, A and B, each with 12 rounds. The second section shows the construction of a 128-bit block cipher by doubling the 64-bit block cipher. The third section shows the construction of a 128-bit block cipher by doubling the 64-bit block cipher, with the final output being (14) and 0.

57

Exercise 57 is written in bass clef and consists of a single line of music. It features a series of eighth-note triplets. The first triplet starts on G2 (one line below the staff) and moves up stepwise to B2 (first line). The second triplet starts on B2 and moves up stepwise to D3 (second line). The third triplet starts on D3 and moves up stepwise to F3 (second space). The fourth triplet starts on F3 and moves up stepwise to A3 (third line). The fifth triplet starts on A3 and moves up stepwise to C4 (third space). The sixth triplet starts on C4 and moves up stepwise to E4 (fourth line). The seventh triplet starts on E4 and moves up stepwise to G4 (fourth space). The eighth triplet starts on G4 and moves up stepwise to B4 (fifth line). The ninth triplet starts on B4 and moves up stepwise to D5 (first space above the staff). The tenth triplet starts on D5 and moves up stepwise to F5 (second space above the staff). The eleventh triplet starts on F5 and moves up stepwise to A5 (third space above the staff). The twelfth triplet starts on A5 and moves up stepwise to C6 (third line above the staff). The thirteenth triplet starts on C6 and moves up stepwise to E6 (third space above the staff). The fourteenth triplet starts on E6 and moves up stepwise to G6 (fourth space above the staff). The fifteenth triplet starts on G6 and moves up stepwise to B6 (fifth space above the staff). The sixteenth triplet starts on B6 and moves up stepwise to D7 (first line above the staff). The seventeenth triplet starts on D7 and moves up stepwise to F7 (first space above the staff). The eighteenth triplet starts on F7 and moves up stepwise to A7 (second space above the staff). The nineteenth triplet starts on A7 and moves up stepwise to C8 (second line above the staff). The twentieth triplet starts on C8 and moves up stepwise to E8 (second space above the staff). The twenty-first triplet starts on E8 and moves up stepwise to G8 (third line above the staff). The twenty-second triplet starts on G8 and moves up stepwise to B8 (third space above the staff). The twenty-third triplet starts on B8 and moves up stepwise to D9 (third line above the staff). The twenty-fourth triplet starts on D9 and moves up stepwise to F9 (third space above the staff). The twenty-fifth triplet starts on F9 and moves up stepwise to A9 (fourth space above the staff). The twenty-sixth triplet starts on A9 and moves up stepwise to C10 (fourth line above the staff). The twenty-seventh triplet starts on C10 and moves up stepwise to E10 (fourth space above the staff). The twenty-eighth triplet starts on E10 and moves up stepwise to G10 (fifth space above the staff). The twenty-ninth triplet starts on G10 and moves up stepwise to B10 (fifth space above the staff). The thirtieth triplet starts on B10 and moves up stepwise to D11 (first line above the staff). The thirty-first triplet starts on D11 and moves up stepwise to F11 (first space above the staff). The thirty-second triplet starts on F11 and moves up stepwise to A11 (second space above the staff). The thirty-third triplet starts on A11 and moves up stepwise to C12 (second line above the staff). The thirty-fourth triplet starts on C12 and moves up stepwise to E12 (second space above the staff). The thirty-fifth triplet starts on E12 and moves up stepwise to G12 (third line above the staff). The thirty-sixth triplet starts on G12 and moves up stepwise to B12 (third space above the staff). The thirty-seventh triplet starts on B12 and moves up stepwise to D13 (third line above the staff). The thirty-eighth triplet starts on D13 and moves up stepwise to F13 (third space above the staff). The thirty-ninth triplet starts on F13 and moves up stepwise to A13 (fourth space above the staff). The fortieth triplet starts on A13 and moves up stepwise to C14 (fourth line above the staff). The forty-first triplet starts on C14 and moves up stepwise to E14 (fourth space above the staff). The forty-second triplet starts on E14 and moves up stepwise to G14 (fifth space above the staff). The forty-third triplet starts on G14 and moves up stepwise to B14 (fifth space above the staff). The forty-fourth triplet starts on B14 and moves up stepwise to D15 (first line above the staff). The forty-fifth triplet starts on D15 and moves up stepwise to F15 (first space above the staff). The forty-sixth triplet starts on F15 and moves up stepwise to A15 (second space above the staff). The forty-seventh triplet starts on A15 and moves up stepwise to C16 (second line above the staff). The forty-eighth triplet starts on C16 and moves up stepwise to E16 (second space above the staff). The forty-ninth triplet starts on E16 and moves up stepwise to G16 (third line above the staff). The fiftieth triplet starts on G16 and moves up stepwise to B16 (third space above the staff). The fifty-first triplet starts on B16 and moves up stepwise to D17 (third line above the staff). The fifty-second triplet starts on D17 and moves up stepwise to F17 (third space above the staff). The fifty-third triplet starts on F17 and moves up stepwise to A17 (fourth space above the staff). The fifty-fourth triplet starts on A17 and moves up stepwise to C18 (fourth line above the staff). The fifty-fifth triplet starts on C18 and moves up stepwise to E18 (fourth space above the staff). The fifty-sixth triplet starts on E18 and moves up stepwise to G18 (fifth space above the staff). The fifty-seventh triplet starts on G18 and moves up stepwise to B18 (fifth space above the staff). The fifty-eighth triplet starts on B18 and moves up stepwise to D19 (first line above the staff). The fifty-ninth triplet starts on D19 and moves up stepwise to F19 (first space above the staff). The sixtieth triplet starts on F19 and moves up stepwise to A19 (second space above the staff). The sixty-first triplet starts on A19 and moves up stepwise to C20 (second line above the staff). The sixty-second triplet starts on C20 and moves up stepwise to E20 (second space above the staff). The sixty-third triplet starts on E20 and moves up stepwise to G20 (third line above the staff). The sixty-fourth triplet starts on G20 and moves up stepwise to B20 (third space above the staff). The sixty-fifth triplet starts on B20 and moves up stepwise to D21 (third line above the staff). The sixty-sixth triplet starts on D21 and moves up stepwise to F21 (third space above the staff). The sixty-seventh triplet starts on F21 and moves up stepwise to A21 (fourth space above the staff). The sixty-eighth triplet starts on A21 and moves up stepwise to C22 (fourth line above the staff). The sixty-ninth triplet starts on C22 and moves up stepwise to E22 (fourth space above the staff). The seventieth triplet starts on E22 and moves up stepwise to G22 (fifth space above the staff). The seventy-first triplet starts on G22 and moves up stepwise to B22 (fifth space above the staff). The seventy-second triplet starts on B22 and moves up stepwise to D23 (first line above the staff). The seventy-third triplet starts on D23 and moves up stepwise to F23 (first space above the staff). The seventy-fourth triplet starts on F23 and moves up stepwise to A23 (second space above the staff). The seventy-fifth triplet starts on A23 and moves up stepwise to C24 (second line above the staff). The seventy-sixth triplet starts on C24 and moves up stepwise to E24 (second space above the staff). The seventy-seventh triplet starts on E24 and moves up stepwise to G24 (third line above the staff). The seventy-eighth triplet starts on G24 and moves up stepwise to B24 (third space above the staff). The seventy-ninth triplet starts on B24 and moves up stepwise to D25 (third line above the staff). The eightieth triplet starts on D25 and moves up stepwise to F25 (third space above the staff). The eighty-first triplet starts on F25 and moves up stepwise to A25 (fourth space above the staff). The eighty-second triplet starts on A25 and moves up stepwise to C26 (fourth line above the staff). The eighty-third triplet starts on C26 and moves up stepwise to E26 (fourth space above the staff). The eighty-fourth triplet starts on E26 and moves up stepwise to G26 (fifth space above the staff). The eighty-fifth triplet starts on G26 and moves up stepwise to B26 (fifth space above the staff). The eighty-sixth triplet starts on B26 and moves up stepwise to D27 (first line above the staff). The eighty-seventh triplet starts on D27 and moves up stepwise to F27 (first space above the staff). The eighty-eighth triplet starts on F27 and moves up stepwise to A27 (second space above the staff). The eighty-ninth triplet starts on A27 and moves up stepwise to C28 (second line above the staff). The ninetieth triplet starts on C28 and moves up stepwise to E28 (second space above the staff). The hundredth triplet starts on E28 and moves up stepwise to G28 (third line above the staff). The hundred and first triplet starts on G28 and moves up stepwise to B28 (third space above the staff). The hundred and second triplet starts on B28 and moves up stepwise to D29 (third line above the staff). The hundred and third triplet starts on D29 and moves up stepwise to F29 (third space above the staff). The hundred and fourth triplet starts on F29 and moves up stepwise to A29 (fourth space above the staff). The hundred and fifth triplet starts on A29 and moves up stepwise to C30 (fourth line above the staff). The hundred and sixth triplet starts on C30 and moves up stepwise to E30 (fourth space above the staff). The hundred and seventh triplet starts on E30 and moves up stepwise to G30 (fifth space above the staff). The hundred and eighth triplet starts on G30 and moves up stepwise to B30 (fifth space above the staff). The hundred and ninth triplet starts on B30 and moves up stepwise to D31 (first line above the staff). The hundred and tenth triplet starts on D31 and moves up stepwise to F31 (first space above the staff). The hundred and eleventh triplet starts on F31 and moves up stepwise to A31 (second space above the staff). The hundred and twelfth triplet starts on A31 and moves up stepwise to C32 (second line above the staff). The hundred and thirteenth triplet starts on C32 and moves up stepwise to E32 (second space above the staff). The hundred and fourteenth triplet starts on E32 and moves up stepwise to G32 (third line above the staff). The hundred and fifteenth triplet starts on G32 and moves up stepwise to B32 (third space above the staff). The hundred and sixteenth triplet starts on B32 and moves up stepwise to D33 (third line above the staff). The hundred and seventeenth triplet starts on D33 and moves up stepwise to F33 (third space above the staff). The hundred and eighteenth triplet starts on F33 and moves up stepwise to A33 (fourth space above the staff). The hundred and nineteenth triplet starts on A33 and moves up stepwise to C34 (fourth line above the staff). The hundred and twentieth triplet starts on C34 and moves up stepwise to E34 (fourth space above the staff). The hundred and twenty-first triplet starts on E34 and moves up stepwise to G34 (fifth space above the staff). The hundred and twenty-second triplet starts on G34 and moves up stepwise to B34 (fifth space above the staff). The hundred and twenty-third triplet starts on B34 and moves up stepwise to D35 (first line above the staff). The hundred and twenty-fourth triplet starts on D35 and moves up stepwise to F35 (first space above the staff). The hundred and twenty-fifth triplet starts on F35 and moves up stepwise to A35 (second space above the staff). The hundred and twenty-sixth triplet starts on A35 and moves up stepwise to C36 (second line above the staff). The hundred and twenty-seventh triplet starts on C36 and moves up stepwise to E36 (second space above the staff). The hundred and twenty-eighth triplet starts on E36 and moves up stepwise to G36 (third line above the staff). The hundred and twenty-ninth triplet starts on G36 and moves up stepwise to B36 (third space above the staff). The hundred and thirtieth triplet starts on B36 and moves up stepwise to D37 (third line above the staff). The hundred and thirty-first triplet starts on D37 and moves up stepwise to F37 (third space above the staff). The hundred and thirty-second triplet starts on F37 and moves up stepwise to A37 (fourth space above the staff). The hundred and thirty-third triplet starts on A37 and moves up stepwise to C38 (fourth line above the staff). The hundred and thirty-fourth triplet starts on C38 and moves up stepwise to E38 (fourth space above the staff). The hundred and thirty-fifth triplet starts on E38 and moves up stepwise to G38 (fifth space above the staff). The hundred and thirty-sixth triplet starts on G38 and moves up stepwise to B38 (fifth space above the staff). The hundred and thirty-seventh triplet starts on B38 and moves up stepwise to D39 (first line above the staff). The hundred and thirty-eighth triplet starts on D39 and moves up stepwise to F39 (first space above the staff). The hundred and thirty-ninth triplet starts on F39 and moves up stepwise to A39 (second space above the staff). The hundred and fortieth triplet starts on A39 and moves up stepwise to C40 (second line above the staff). The hundred and forty-first triplet starts on C40 and moves up stepwise to E40 (second space above the staff). The hundred and forty-second triplet starts on E40 and moves up stepwise to G40 (third line above the staff). The hundred and forty-third triplet starts on G40 and moves up stepwise to B40 (third space above the staff). The hundred and forty-fourth triplet starts on B40 and moves up stepwise to D41 (third line above the staff). The hundred and forty-fifth triplet starts on D41 and moves up stepwise to F41 (third space above the staff). The hundred and forty-sixth triplet starts on F41 and moves up stepwise to A41 (fourth space above the staff). The hundred and forty-seventh triplet starts on A41 and moves up stepwise to C42 (fourth line above the staff). The hundred and forty-eighth triplet starts on C42 and moves up stepwise to E42 (fourth space above the staff). The hundred and forty-ninth triplet starts on E42 and moves up stepwise to G42 (fifth space above the staff). The hundred and fiftieth triplet starts on G42 and moves up stepwise to B42 (fifth space above the staff). The hundred and fifty-first triplet starts on B42 and moves up stepwise to D43 (first line above the staff). The hundred and fifty-second triplet starts on D43 and moves up stepwise to F43 (first space above the staff). The hundred and fifty-third triplet starts on F43 and moves up stepwise to A43 (second space above the staff). The hundred and fifty-fourth triplet starts on A43 and moves up stepwise to C44 (second line above the staff). The hundred and fifty-fifth triplet starts on C44 and moves up stepwise to E44 (second space above the staff). The hundred and fifty-sixth triplet starts on E44 and moves up stepwise to G44 (third line above the staff). The hundred and fifty-seventh triplet starts on G44 and moves up stepwise to B44 (third space above the staff). The hundred and fifty-eighth triplet starts on B44 and moves up stepwise to D45 (third line above the staff). The hundred and fifty-ninth triplet starts on D45 and moves up stepwise to F45 (third space above the staff). The hundred and sixtieth triplet starts on F45 and moves up stepwise to A45 (fourth space above the staff). The hundred and sixty-first triplet starts on A45 and moves up stepwise to C46 (fourth line above the staff). The hundred and sixty-second triplet starts on C46 and moves up stepwise to E46 (fourth space above the staff). The hundred and sixty-third triplet starts on E46 and moves up stepwise to G46 (fifth space above the staff). The hundred and sixty-fourth triplet starts on G4

PART E

E (Am) (F Δ 7 $\sharp$ 11/A) (F/A)

61

(Am⁶) (Em⁶) (G $\sharp$ Δ 7) 3 (Am)

65

(Am) (F Δ 7 $\sharp$ 11/A) (Fadd⁹/A)

69

(B $\flat$ Δ 7) (Cm⁷) (F⁷) (B $\flat$ Δ 7) (E⁷) (Am)

73

PART F

F N.C.

77

3 3 3 3 3 3

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

0 (0)

79

3 3 3 3 3 3 (Amadd⁹)

9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 21 17

(0) (0) 17



Stu with the mighty Joe Satriani in 1989.

The Digitech XBW Bass Synth Wah Envelope Filter, to give it its full name, has achieved icon status in our world, having been at the foot of many a bass player the world around. Using Nineties digital signal processing technology, Digitech shoe-horned not one, but seven filter effects in to this cute, green, all-metal casing.

Why on earth are we looking at this uncool dinosaur?

Any “uncool” pedal that more than doubles in value after its demise is worth looking into. We need to find out why!

Does it sound good?

Well, the XBW is capable of a respectable frequency response. From my investigations, I have discovered that it processes at 24bit 44.1Khz, with 16bit 44.1Khz being CD quality, for people who still buy them. Featuring a Harman brand Audio DNA DSP chip, this pedal shares its design with the guitar version, the XSW Synth Wah. The fundamental difference here is the DSP

DIGITECH XBW

A lean, green, fighting machine

programming which produces the bass-centric effects. All of this technical wizardry doesn't guarantee a great-sounding pedal, of course. With modern DSP, the algorithms running have as much to do with the resultant sound as the physical electronics of an analog pedal... are you still there?

Sorry, I fell asleep. You're using too much technical jargon.

Well, listen up, idiot. The octave effect is convincing, but as with many analog pedals, watch your playing to ensure good tracking and stay away from the low bass notes or you may unleash some wobbly noises.

This page is a wobbly noise.

Shut your piehole! Some XBW sounds should probably be reserved for the more 'out there'

moments in your set. There's some undeniable funk in there, especially that quacky envelope filter sound we all know and love. The XBW's performance has its foibles, compared to modern DSP. Sometimes the tracking is a tad suspect, and online reviews leave me with the feeling that overall, the XBW is either loved or hated. Yet in the right hands, it can produce some iconic sounds.

So how do you use it?

The right-hand knob on the pedal selects between five different effect types across seven positions. We're treated to an envelope filter, also available with octave, two synth sound patches, two filter sounds and an octave effect. The processor handles assigning of parameters to the Control and



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Range knobs per effect, while the Sens knob affects the trigger of the filter effects. Two outputs mean you can mix both dry and wet effected sounds elsewhere in the chain and hidden away from view. You can also enable a 4x10 cabinet emulation circuit.

What do the experts say?

We asked Tom Bowlus of Bass Gear that very question, and he said: “The Digitech Bass Synth Wah is lots of fun, occasionally frustrating, and definitely has its own personality. With the ‘right’ settings, it is nicely touch-responsive. One thing it is not is subtle: This is not an effect to use when you want to nudge your tone in one direction or the other without calling for undue attention. This thing screams for attention! For many bass synth sounds, I find that I prefer my Deep Impact or Boss SY-1, but for some funky/trippy/octave tones, I find that the Bass Synth Wah can take me places I can't go with any other pedal.”

So where do I get one?

Well, hold up there, fella. Sadly, the XBW is no longer produced: You'll find the price of second-hand examples climbing fast these days. It's nearly 30 years since it was released, so it finds itself in the Vintage category.

A bit like you, then.

Be quiet. I've read that the brand has been acquired, so maybe we'll see a reissue in the future.

Thanks for reading, everyone. Goodbye from all of us at BP, and keep playing bass! ■



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