

Nashville Notes



David Hungate

A TALE OF FOUR BASSES

I recently did some sessions for Terry Radigan that reminded me of L.A. in the '70s.

The producer, engineer, and most of the band were survivors of Hollyweird. (I hadn't seen David Leonard since we worked together on *Toto IV.*) These were the first tracking dates in Masterphonics' new studio, a huge state-of-the-art room unlike any other in town. The music was country-pop, but with a nice edge. We even covered a Fleetwood Mac tune.

We did four tunes in four sessions. The bass was recorded on three tracks: amp, rack, and direct box. (A combination of the rack and amp will probably end up in the final mix.) After it was over, it struck me that I had used a different bass and a different sound on each tune. The first track, the Fleetwood Mac song, had a medium-tempo, dotted-quarter-and-eighth feel; the feel and attitude called for a pick and a fairly aggressive sound, which I got with my Rotosound-strung '62 P-Bass. The producer, B.A. Aherne, requested fretless on the second tune; he wanted lots of growl, which the Pentabuzz can do. The third tune was an uptempo rocker, for which I came up with a fairly busy eighth-note boogie pattern. It called for a distinct, aggressive sound, but the feel was more comfortable to play with my fingers than a pick. The Tyler proved good for that. The last tune was a ballad; any of the previous three axes could have been made to work, but it seemed that a Joe Osborn approach—a huge, fluid sound with the clarity of a pick—would be ideal. [Ed. Note: For more on legendary studio bassist Joe Osborn, see *May/June '92.*] I had played about three notes on the Jazz Bass when B.A. hit the talkback button to say he loved the sound. I had guessed right, although it doesn't always work that way.

The moral of the story? Although two basses would have been adequate for this situation, four were better. I could have gotten by with just the fretless and the Precision or the Tyler, but I wouldn't have felt as good about the end result.

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than one good, usable sound. Learn to play fretted bass with your fingers first—that's what you'll need most of the time. Then get a fretless and learn to play it in tune. (Good luck—most of us are still working on that!) Work on pick and thumb technique too; there are many excellent videos out there to show you the way. Sure, it's possible to make a career out of being a specialist—but the simple

truth is that the more different things you can do well, the more opportunities for gainful employment you'll have. ♪

SESSION NOTES

Terry Radigan Session

Producer: B.A. Aherne

Engineer: David Leonard

Studio: "The Tracking Room"

Musicians:

Steve Kahn, Glen D. Hardin (keyboards)

Steve Turner (drums)

Stewart Smith, Bobby Field (guitars)

Tommy Spurlock (pedal steel, banjo)

Equipment used:

Stock '62 P-Bass with Rotosounds

James Tyler 5-string

Pedulla Pentabuzz fretless 5-string

'64 Jazz Bass with LaBella flatwounds

Telefunken preamp

LA2a limiter

Tubetek EQ

Ampeg B-15 amp

Demeter tube direct box

A native of Missouri, David Hungate made a name for himself in L.A. as a member of Toto and as a session player on hit records like Boz Scaggs's *Silk Degrees* [Columbia]. In 1980, he moved to Nashville, where he quickly became one of the top studio bassists.