

VINTAGE AMP BARGAIN GUIDE

SEVEN

PRODUCT REVIEWS

Guitar Player

GUNS N' ROSES

DECEMBER 1991

ENCYCLOPEDIA
OF
BLUES
TURNAROUNDS

SLASH

The Hands Behind
The Hype

ROBBIE ROBERTSON

The Latest Waltz

DAVID GRISSOM

Mellencamp's Hotshot

ROBERT WARD

Stinging Blues,
Tender R&B

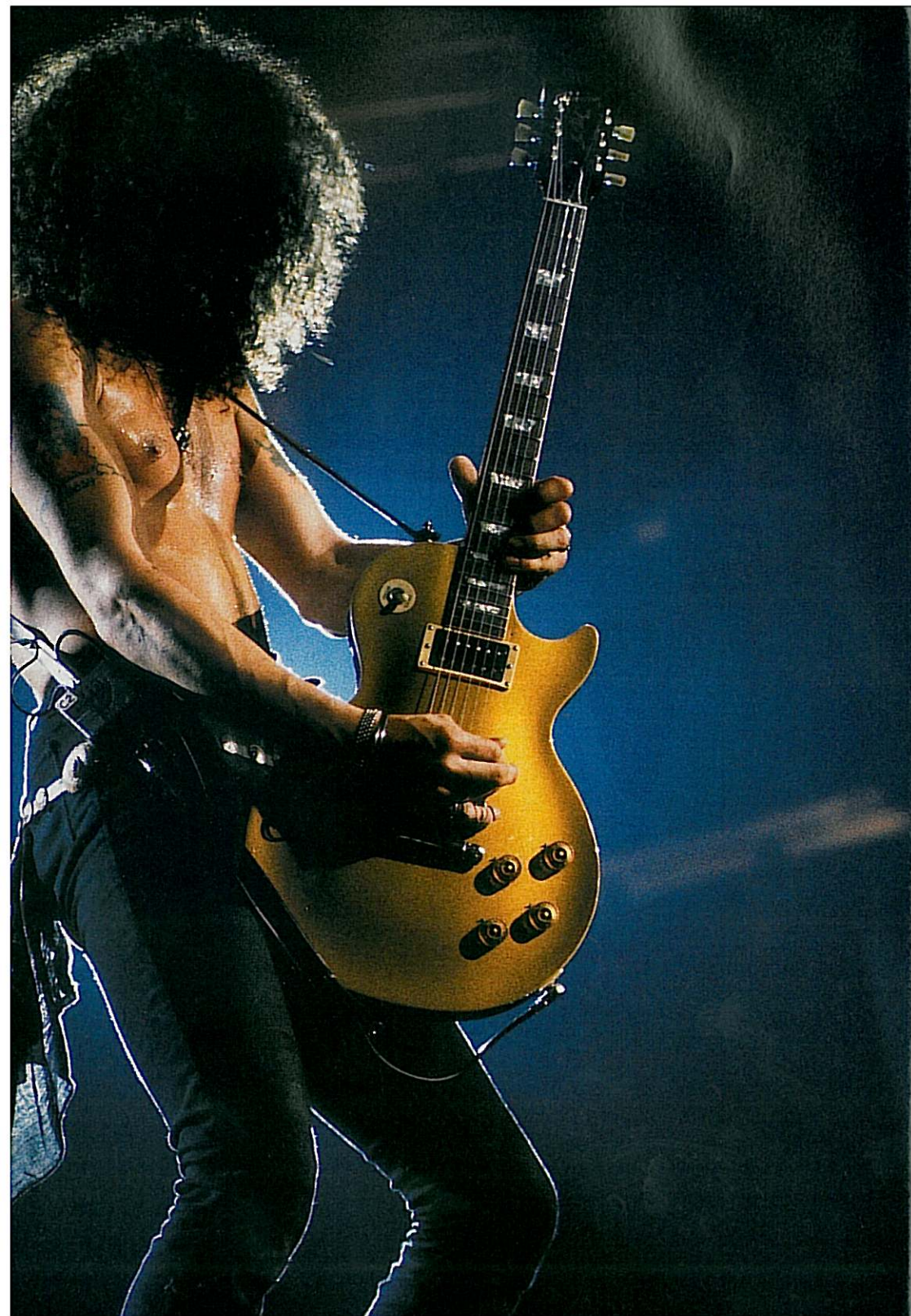
JOAN JETT

Keep It Simple, Stupid!

RIDE

Gorgeous Pop Grunge

73874
0 262935 3 12 U.S.
\$3.50
Can. \$4.25
U.K. £2.50
Display Until
12/18



SLASH

The Hands Behind The Hype

SATURDAY, AUGUST 3, 11:30 P.M., LOS ANGELES: 20,000 rabid Guns N' Roses fans watch the last of four sold-out shows at the Forum. A sea of tattooed arms wave 12-ounce plastic cups of Bud. The audience is on its feet. Men in jeans and bandanas and women in leather miniskirts scream their approval in hoarse, raucous

SLASH

The Hands Behind The Hype

FRIDAY, AUGUST 9, 3:30 P.M., SUNSET BOULEVARD, HOLLYWOOD: In Geffen's publicity department, Roxanne apologizes as she carefully pats me down, looking for a hidden DAT recorder. Security is tight: The pre-release CDs I'm about to hear, she explains, belong to Slash. Only two sets exist—Axl Rose has the other. There have been piracy problems. Even Geffen staffers haven't heard the music.

Two-and-a-half hours later, I emerge from the listening session—dazed, but convinced that *Use Your Illusion* is a smash. Thanks to the new drummer and keyboard player, the band is tighter than ever, the material is incredibly diverse, and Slash is in top form. What burnished, ripe tone.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 9, 10:00 P.M., SUNSET HYATT LOUNGE. The band's controversial image, misogynistic lyrics, substance abuse, ultra-bohemian lifestyle, and internal turmoil have been well documented by both the rock and mainstream press. A Jan. '91 *Rolling Stone* cover story explored Slash—the bad boy rock star—in all his tattooed splendor, including his take on the "One In A Million" lyrics, widely decried as racist and homophobic. So what am I doing here? "You saw the concert," I hear myself say, "you heard the new album. There's an amazing guitarist behind all the hype and hysteria. Get to know him—player to player. It's time to find the story that hasn't been told."

Slash appears, dressed in black leather. We settle in. Peering through his dark, curly hair, the 26-year-old talks for several hours in a husky voice hammered by cigarettes and Jack Daniels. He's articulate, focused, and has a lot to say about rock guitar.

You've got the warmest, fattest lead tone since Dickie Betts and Duane Allman.

I was always really into guys with great tone. When I first started playing, without even thinking about it, I instantly went for a particular sound. I tried effects—an Echoplex, a Boss pedalboard—but I could never deal with them. I'd kick the shit off the stage because I move around so much. At one point, I even stopped using a wah-wah pedal because it was such a hassle to run back to it during the song. And I hate having anything mess

with my signal. It took me forever to get used to wireless: We went through at least a hundred Nadys before we finally dialed in on the right one that didn't affect my sound.

You're one of those rare players who has a real signature tone.

Think so? Here's an easy way to tell if you can identify it. I did the solo in a song on the new Alice Cooper album. I'm using a [Gibson] Melody Maker with two humbuckers—so it's not my Les Paul tone—but the solo sounds like me when I hear it. I'm a bit perturbed, 'cause Alice has a video for this song with Joe Satriani in it. That pissed me off. I love Alice to death, so I don't want it to sound like I'm really angry, but it burns me out to have anybody think that it's Satriani playing my solo, right? When I left the studio, all the guitars were done. Somewhere down the line they put in this other guy—maybe from the band, maybe it's Satriani—playing the chorus melody at the tail end of the song. I heard it today on MTV: There's my sound, which is sort of nasty and ratty, and then all of a sudden this other guitar comes in. I hope nobody thinks that's me; I want to get that straight.

EARLY DAYS

How did you get started?

My first guitar was a one-string Spanish acoustic that was lying around the house. I taught myself a UFO song and "Smoke On The Water." My grandmother was really sweet; she bought me an Explorer copy that I flipped out on. Unfortunately, it was a piece of shit. Then I got a Memphis Les Paul copy. At rehearsal one day, I ended up sticking it through a wall neck first, because I could not keep the fucking thing in tune.

Did you practice a lot?

I was a workaholic; I'd play 12 hours a day. I picked it up really quick because I was naive in a way. I wasn't star struck, and I wasn't so flipped out by other guitar players that they intimidated me. I didn't feel like I was trying to reach some goal—I was just learning. A lot of people go, "It's gonna take me 10 years to reach this place," and it freaks them out. I'm real single-minded, so once I got into guitar, that's all I did. It basically replaced school.

At some point you got a good instrument.

That was a B.C. Rich Mockingbird—I wish I had it now. [Quietly] I hocked it during one of my so-called bad periods. But I played that while I was going through different bands. Later, I got a handmade '59 Les Paul copy, built by a guy who makes awesome guitars, better than anything the company produces now—nothing against Gibson. I think that's when I turned into a Gibson freak—Gibson and Marshall. That's been my standard until this album.

When you were coming up, did you see many hot players in L.A.?

I couldn't afford good enough concert seats to pick up anything from watching guys perform. But for some reason, when I listened, I understood how to go about it. Eddie Van Halen was the only one who might have thrown me for a loop, but I never tried to emulate him, 'cause I always thought that style was his. It really bummed me out when everybody ripped off his whole trip. Now I think he doesn't even know exactly what he's doing [laughs].

Did you have any formal instruction?

One teacher, Robert Wollan—a great guy who had a lot to do with me getting into guitar—pointed me in the right direction. As all music teachers are supposed to do, he started me reading music and playing "Mary Had A Little Lamb." It was so boring! But Robert played the shit out of the guitar—he's still one of the most amazing players I've ever met. I'd bring in records, and he'd play "Stairway To Heaven" note for note. He had a great cover band that played Cream and Zeppelin. It really pissed me off, 'cause I'd sit there with this bullshit Mel Bay. Finally, I quit and spent a lot of time teaching myself. I worked full-time to support my guitar habit and stayed up until God-knows-when practicing and learning. My main thing was Jeff Beck at that time. I remember learning "'Cause We've Ended As Lovers" [Blow By Blow] note for note, getting every subtlety. There was Aerosmith, Ted Nugent, Cheap Trick, and Zeppelin. I sold my soul to the guitar. If I quit playing now, I'd have no future [smiles].

Did you practice scales?

No. Robert tried to instill that in me. I must have learned pentatonic scales in a few positions, but as soon as I really started getting into lead guitar, scales went out the window.

Then how do you approach your solos?

I know what key I'm in, but it's more the note I'm looking for. You automatically adhere to certain patterns because the notes are there. *Use Your Illusion* is the first time I really branched out with passing tones.

What's the secret to playing a great solo?

The most important thing is to be able to hear it in your head and apply it through your fingers to your neck in a split second. That's what people miss out on. Instead of playing patterns, hear the melody you're going for. You need enough experience to know where it is on the neck. I'm still learning this; it's something that very few guitar players of my generation even paid attention to. You have a better chance of reaching your goal if you hear the solo before it happens, rather than just flipping around.

In concert, do you try to recreate your recorded solos?

"Instead of playing patterns, hear the melody you're going for."

For certain songs, it's out of the question because I have no idea how I did them. It only works if the melody is so stuck in my head that I just hear it when I'm playing.

Do you practice much these days?

I hate playing at home. I'll do it to write songs, but I love to play really loud and I don't like my neighbors listening. If anything, I'll crank up the stereo and jam along with a record. I always have a guitar around, but the chances of seeing me just sitting around playing are pretty slim. I'm either at rehearsal—writing stuff there and playing at mega-decibel volume—or in the studio.

Do you carry a tape recorder to keep track of ideas?

I never have—I remember everything. If I play a riff, like in the dressing room before a show, somehow I can retain it in my head. If I do tape anything, it's gotta be on some little blaster. I hate getting into 4-tracks and 8-tracks; the whole headphone bit just doesn't gel.

Describe your picking technique.

It's probably my weakest point. "Locomotive" [Illusion II] has this ongoing riff; I have to be really consistent with it. If I don't concentrate on my right hand—really watch the angle—I can lose it. I always grasp right underneath the treble pickup with my pinky.

Sometimes I'm heavy-handed in my strumming; I hit the guitar really fucking hard. Here's how I hold my pick [grabs pick with extended thumb and index finger].

Your thumb is curved back and the movement is mostly in your fingers' first joints.

For intricate stuff; otherwise I just slam it.

Do you break many strings?

I used to all the time, but it's pretty rare now. If I do break a string onstage, it fucks up my whole trip, because it's always a D or B. I have to grab another guitar.

Do you play much fingerstyle?

I pluck strings with my fingers a lot, like, say, Mark Knopfler—especially for blues and solos. During the show, I just use my thumb and forefinger for the Hendrix bit [the "Voodoo Chile" riff].

STUDIO GUITARS

Rumor has it you've got a pretty righteous guitar collection.

About 50 guitars. I'm really a guitar freak. I spend money on what—snakes, guitars, and cars? I try not to spend too much on women. I keep everything in storage; I don't take the really good shit out on the road because things get too banged up. There was a point when I had to take the guitar that I used for

Appetite on the road, 'cause it was the only guitar I had. Now, it's beat to shit.

The '59 repro?

Yeah, the handmade yellow flame-top with zebra [Seymour Duncan] Alnico II pickups. For the first record, I must have gone through 10 guitars trying to find one I liked. And I couldn't afford to buy some ridiculously expensive Les Paul. When our former manager showed up with this one, it became my main studio guitar.

Did you use it on "Sweet Child O' Mine"?

Yeah. For almost everything on *Appetite* and then for most of the heavier songs on *Use Your Illusion*.

You used other guitars on this album?

Some fucking great guitars—a '58 V and a '58 Explorer. There's a certain nasal sound that you can hear on "Heaven's Door," "Locomotive," and a couple of other songs—it's almost [Michael] Schenker-sounding. That's just the tone control on the V, no wah pedal. There were a couple of other guitars that people aren't used to hearing me play: I used one of those small-scale Music Mans like Keith Richards has. There's a Travis Bean that I use for slide on "Bad Obsession" [Illusion I]. When I first got into slide, I went to a Joe Perry Project show; he had a Travis Bean, and it sounded killer. So when I saw one in the paper, I

SLASH

The Hands Behind The Hype

bought it. It has a gorgeous mahogany body with this real subtle rainbow in the finish—it's almost airbrushed. I played maybe 20 different guitars on *Use Your Illusion*: a Strat, a Dobro, a 6-string bass, a banjo, some acoustics. But the sound that I'm recognized for is my Les Paul through a Marshall half-stack.

Will there ever be a Gibson Slash model?

At one point they had an idea for a Slash Les Paul. I gave them my best live guitar; they had it for six months, trying to get the weight and density and everything right. God bless the guys who worked on it, 'cause they're really cool, but they sent me four instruments and none of them sounded anywhere close to it. I'm sort of pissed off at Gibson, because in the six-odd years that I've been with them, I've only gotten three gold-tops that I can use live. And I've spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on old Gibsons. We just cannot seem to get a sound that I'm happy with from the new ones.

Are you looking for any other guitars?

I wanted a black strat with a bar and humbuckers, so I had two built by Performance Guitar in Hollywood. I use one with a talk box during the show.

RECORDING *USE YOUR ILLUSION*

How do you set up to record?

For the basic tracks, I play with the band, using headphones; we're all in one room. The main goal is to get the bass and drums down. It's a great vibe and I wish I could record my final tracks that way, but I can't. I need to be in my own studio—away from where the basic tracks are done—in the control booth. I don't let anybody in from the band, if I can help it. On "Shotgun Blues" [*Illusion II*] Axl and some friends popped in, and I did the solo in one take. Sometimes you just want to fuckin' jam in front of somebody. Usually no one was in the studio except for Mike [Clink, producer] and Jim Mitchell, our engineer. That's really my element. I love it.

What happens after the basic tracks?

I redo all my parts. There are a lot of guitars on the album. Izzy has only one guitar throughout the whole record; he comes out of the left speaker. He recorded most of his stuff



SELECTED GUITARS from Slash's collection (left to right): (1) Tobacco '59 Les Paul, formerly owned by Joe Perry. In the late '70s, Slash fell in love with the sound of this guitar at Aerosmith concerts. Now it's his. (2) A '52 Tele-

caster—refinished, but otherwise stock. (3) A gorgeous '58 Les Paul Standard sunburst with stock pickups. (4) This '59 Flying V—used for the "Knockin' On Heaven's Door" and "Live And Let Die" solos—is one of Slash's favorites. To produce a

warm, violin-like sound, he often plays through the neck pickup with the tone knob turned fully counterclockwise. (5) A '59 Les Paul with original pickups, hardware, and finish. Acquired after *Use Your Illusion* was recorded. (6) Slash played the

slide solo on "So Fine" and lead on "Yesterdays" with this all-original '65 Strat. (7) The "Sweet Child O' Mine" Les Paul—actually a '59 replica with zebra Seymour Duncan Alnico II pickups, built by Peter "Max" Baranet of Max Gui-

tars, Hollywood, California. Used for virtually all of *Appetite For Destruction* and much of *Illusion*. (8) Another recent purchase: Except for its finish, this very clean '58 Explorer is completely original.

Photo: Peter Figen

SLASH

The Hands Behind The Hype

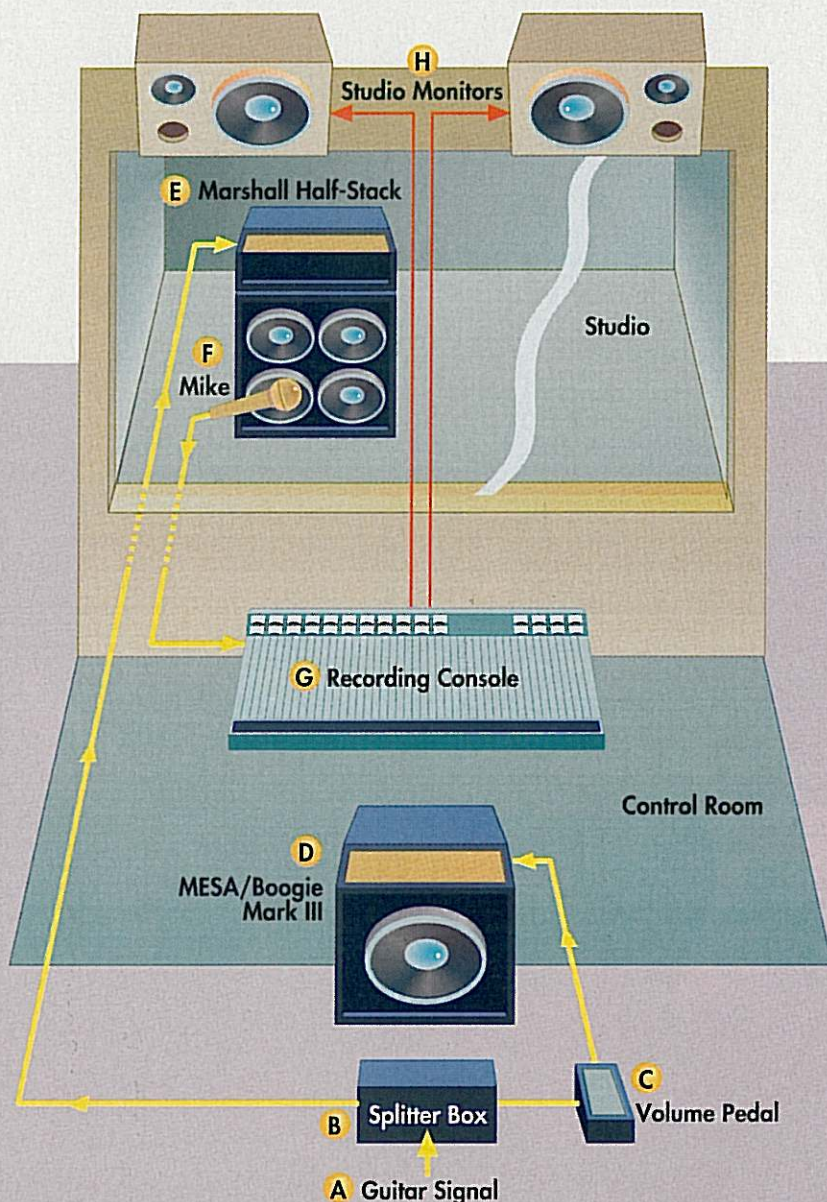
WELCOME TO THE EQUIPMENT JUNGLE

ACCORDING TO ADAM DAY, Slash's guitar tech, the onstage rig consists of one 100-watt Marshall stack for a clean sound, a second Marshall stack for a dirty sound, and another amp for the Heil talk box. Day switches between amps offstage. A Boss 7-band graphic EQ pedal—patched into the dirty amp's effects loop—supplies a midrange boost that lends edge to the lead sound and enhances feedback.

Slash uses four Nady 1200 wireless receivers, each set to a different frequency. The transmitters are always on, giving him a choice of four guitars at any time. His custom voltage-controlled wah system is built by Matt Bacchi of EMB Audio, Oakland, California. The tone circuitry is housed in a single rack-mount unit. Four onstage modified volume pedals connect to the unit via XLR cables. "The beauty of this system," says Day, "is that the audio signal never leaves the rack. The pedals simply vary the voltage." Front-panel tone controls let Adam adjust the wah's boost and bandwidth.

The guitar cabinets are miked with Shure SM-57s (dirty) and Electro-Voice RE-20s (clean). No direct sound goes to the board.

Live, Slash plays with lots of feedback. Reproducing this sound in the studio isn't easy. Says Day, "It's tough to get natural feedback through the control room monitors with the whole track coming out of the speakers." Mike Mayhue, Duff's bass tech, and Day solved the problem by developing the Feedback Generator (see diagram).



Here's how the Feedback Generator works: In the control room, Slash's guitar signal (A) goes through a splitter box (B). One split goes to a volume pedal (C) and into a MESA/Boogie Mark III combo amp (D). The second split goes into the studio, feeding a Marshall half-stack (E). The Marshall is miked (F); this signal returns to the control room, enters the console (G), and is finally heard through the studio monitors (H), along with the rest of the tracks.

Adam explains, "I picked the MESA/Boogie Mark III because it had the most gain and distortion. It developed feedback the quickest and at the right frequency; this goes right back to the pickups and out to the Marshall. The Boogie wasn't on all the time: When Slash wanted to have it in, I'd press the volume pedal down and he'd start getting feedback. The rest of the track was so loud in the monitors that the feedback wasn't too distracting." You can hear the Feedback Generator in the beginning of "You Could Be Mine" and throughout *Illusion*.

during basic tracks. I did all the overdubs and harmonies, plus my regular rhythm track. There are a couple of songs, especially ones I wrote, where I beefed up the tracks over on Izzy's side, 'cause he's got a particular sound that doesn't necessarily...

... weigh as much.

Yeah, exactly. It falls out of balance. I did all that, the acoustics, and my other instruments in five weeks. For 27 songs, it was pretty quick.

Did you cut all your rhythm tracks and then do all the solos, or did you complete one song at a time?

Because there was so much material, I debated both approaches. But I ended up going in and doing the entire song. If there were four different parts on that song, I'd just get into it and do 'em. Otherwise, even if you switch rhythm sounds for each song, you'd end up playing all your rhythms the same. You need to get into one song at a time, so when you go to the next one, it's a whole different entity.

How do you set up for overdubs?

When I was doing my guitars, I stood out in front of the main monitors with Mike and the engineer. Just *blasting* as loud as possible.

Playing through the monitors, how did you get your trademark feedback?

That's a major problem that I've been battling for a long time. Normally, you go out into the studio and stand in front of your Marshall. With headphones on you can't even hear the tracks—I don't know how people deal with it. Anyway, my techs came up with a trick [see *Welcome To The Equipment Jungle*, page 44]. I bet them that it wouldn't work. They set it up so I was coming through the monitors and a MESA/Boogie [Mark III combo]. I had the monitor so loud that even though the Boogie was right in front of me, I could still hear the band and sit in the control room. I got a *lot* of feedback that way.

Did you have to stand in certain places?

I'd find a cool spot and put a piece of tape on the ground. Then girls would come down to the studio and hang out. I'd get in the next day and find these shapes on the floor where they'd had a ball with the tape. I was completely confused: "Where's my spot?" Or somebody would come in and tidy up. I'm like, "Fuck, do *not* touch anything, leave everything alone!" I love things to be a complete disaster. For every beer we drank, we'd stick the label on the [control room] glass—we almost covered the whole thing. One day we got to the studio and the manager had cleaned up. The

SLASH

The Hands Behind The Hype

whole environment was shot—all the porno pictures were taken down.

For your Dobro and slide parts, did you play in standard or open tuning?

The Dobro in "You Ain't The First" [Illusion I] is in standard tuning. I used something I picked up from Keith Richards for "Bad Obsession." You take the low-E string off and just have five strings. That's how I play it live, too, in open G [GDGBD, low to high]. I think those are the only slide tunings I used.

And the banjo in "Breakdown" [Illusion II]?

It was a 6-string banjo tuned like a guitar and played with a flatpick. I don't know shit about real banjo.

Your classical guitar solo at the end of "Double Talkin' Jive" [Illusion I] is poignant.

Thank you; I enjoyed doing it. That

Ramirez was one of my better finds—expensive, but beautiful. It's really satisfying to hear that the solo has some emotion. It was done pretty quick. Actually, I didn't spend too much time on anything. It was always one or two takes, more or less. If the intonation was really off, Clink would tell me, and I'd go back and maybe punch in. But we never spent entire days on guitar solos. We'd take an entire day and do a whole *song*. Of course, for the really long songs, it would take two days to get all that shit right. But I'd like to think that it was more rock and roll than what most bands are doing these days.

What steel-string acoustics do you play on the album?

I have several Guilds—a nice 12-string and a couple of great big dreadnoughts. I used a Gibson J-100 too.

Do you use the same picks for electric and acoustic?

Yeah. I'm real simpleminded about that. I use the heaviest picks I can find for everything. I don't believe in switching picks like people switch guitars. It would probably be worthwhile, especially for strumming an acoustic—a thin pick is definitely easier to use. Mine are purple [Dunlop] Tortex, really rigid. I have to work harder for certain subtle things: Sometimes when I get up the neck to play soft, I really have to pay attention to the pressure I'm putting on the strings to get the right sound, whereas with a light pick you can strum away. But I can't be bothered to change. And I can't be bothered with string gauges, either—I stick to Ernie Ball .010s and that's that. I'm really simple when it comes to equipment. I don't like to switch around too much.

LIVE SOUND

There is quite a tone change when you swap your Les Paul for your B.C. Rich.

Yeah. The Rich has got a bar on it. I love the look of that guitar—it reminds me of the one I had a long time ago that sounded so killer. The one I'm using now sounds cool, but because of the bar, it doesn't have the sustain of my Les Pauls. I only use it for certain songs. When I got it, it had a Kahler and sounded like crap. So I took the Kahler off and put on a Floyd Rose, which helped a hell of a lot. I love using a bar for textures and vibrato—stuff I can almost do with my fingers. I don't do divebombs—not much, anyway—or those high-pitched harmonic things.



all that jerky stuff.

You have several wahs-wahs.

They're custom-made. There are certain things I don't like about them, but they're completely original-sounding. I used one on "Civil War" [Illusion II]. It doesn't sound like a [Dunlop] Crybaby, and it doesn't sound like fuckin' '90s metal tinsel-town wah. It's real thick. There are four of 'em onstage. I lean more towards the Crybaby sound; that's what I used on the first album. Even on this album I use a Crybaby for a couple of songs.

Do you use any other effects?

I've got my talk box. For the guitar solos, I

SLASH

The Hands Behind The Hype

use a little Boss EQ pedal 'cause I need that gain. We have a great rig. It's complicated, as far as I'm concerned—I don't even know how

to turn it on! But it's one Marshall head for the dirty sound and one Marshall head for the clean sound.

How do you switch amps?

In concert, Adam [Day, Slash's guitar tech] switches for me. At rehearsal, I do the footswitching for a while, and then Adam picks it up. That's really hard, because I don't like to stand in front of my amps. I always move off to the side to get a little ambience because they're completely dry—no delay. And I like to hear the entire band; I can't stand to hear guitar by itself.

THE GN'R SOUND

With both you and Izzy playing rhythm, there's a lot of guitar in each song, yet somehow the music doesn't sound cluttered.

We don't work out our parts. If it's Izzy's song, I might turn the riff around a little bit and add something. But he'll play his part the way he wrote it—very loose, very Stonesy. When it comes to my tunes, I write riffs that are a lot more intricate—that's my style. So he just takes his style and adds it to my riff. Usually, for every five notes there's one chord on that side [points left and chuckles]. We don't consciously work out parts, whereas Glen Tipton and K.K. Downing probably get into that. I did most of the harmonies on the record. I try to emulate them live by getting my fingers in weird places. I never really got into what you'd call true harmony; I usually layer the same notes in different octaves. On "Knockin' On Heaven's Door" and "Live And Let Die," it's just two guitars—the melody high and low.

The bottom is really tight on this album. Duff, your bassist, and Matt Sorum, the new drummer, fit hand-in-glove.

Yeah. That was an important factor in choosing Matt. It's different from the way, say, AC/DC works, where the guitars play together and the bass just keeps a line that goes straight through the song. Izzy plays really simple; me and Duff play all the intricate stuff—it's almost like one thick part. Duff takes whatever riffs he and I play and does them with the drums. And everything has to be in sync. So if Duff's playing with somebody who's not hip to what's going on, he knows in an instant.

There's an impromptu quality to your solos.

I don't believe in making everything polished. This record sounds almost too polished on some songs. It's not anybody's fault; that's just how we play—as opposed to certain songs where we sound really brash and loose. Duff, Matt, and I are so tight that the main chord thing is really together. Izzy keeps it loose; he's got a great rhythm style.

AMP TALK

Do you hunt for amps the way you do guitars?

That's one thing I haven't gotten into. I learned a lot doing Appetite, as far as tone goes. My guitars and amps sounded great live, but not good enough for the studio. I had some used Marshall cabinets with God-knows-what kind of speakers, but I needed a really good head. SIR [Studio Instrument Rentals] must have brought down a hundred fucking Marshalls, and I just couldn't find one that sounded right. They even tried to turn me on to these Soldano amps that go to 11. Finally, SIR brought down one particular Marshall that was magic—I used it for the whole album. I tried to steal it: After I recorded the album, I told one of our roadies, "Listen, as far as SIR knows, we lost it or it's been stolen." But I get to rehearsal and the head is missing; they took it back. SIR and I didn't have a real good relationship after that.

What about Illusion?

It was the same situation. I went through all these different rental people trying to find heads. Finally, SIR turned up with one really great-sounding Marshall. This time we just bought it. So I have one studio amp, and that's it.

You don't take that on the road, right?

No. Live, I use Jubilee Anniversary amps. They sound great, but Marshall doesn't make them anymore. In the St. Louis incident, all my cabinets were completely trashed. Luckily, we had one original Jubilee stack left in the warehouse, so we brought that out in a panic. I have four stacks onstage, but I only play through two. One stack has new cabinets, but they don't sound the same. So right now my whole live sound is teetering on one fucking stack. If that goes, I'm in trouble.

LIFE IN THE SPOTLIGHT

It's amazing to see you jumping off those ramps in concert. At first, I was afraid you'd crash and burn—the band has a rep for playing wasted.

We grew out of that. Before the show I have a couple of cocktails, to loosen me up. I wouldn't chance a show on any kind of chemical; it's just not conducive to accurate playing. I used to play in cowboy boots, but now I'm in my Adidas. We have a chiropractor on the road; right before the show, he'll crack me up and make me a bit more limber. And we have a masseuse. My left hand cramps up sometimes, and she gets right in here and loosens it up. There have been shows when between songs I'm going, "Ax, I can't play"—my fingers are like this [makes fist]. Now at the hotels, re-

gardless of whether I want to or not, for breakfast I'll eat cornflakes and bananas for the potassium. Axl's always been very health-conscious; I'm the complete opposite—I used to do as much damage as humanly possible. Now that we're headlining, all of a sudden I'm really aware—as aware as my personality will allow—of my physical status.

Is that because you owe it to your fans, or do you simply want to avoid breaking your neck when you jump off the platforms?

It's more that I don't want to burn out or have some physical ailment pop up in the middle of a set. It was a conscious effort by

people who work with us, who said, "Try this." For so long, my attitude has been to blow everything off; now I'm striving to be open-minded. I started taking vitamins—pop four with a Coke [grins]. I mean, I'll never completely grow up. After an awesome show, you come away feeling fuckin' jazzed. It's the best feeling in the world, so you do whatever you can to support that. And yes, it does help to have 20,000 people enjoy your show.

The rush must be incredible.

Yeah, it's insane. But crowds vary; sometimes you'll go out there and kick ass for two songs, and if it doesn't come back, you just

Unlock the Power of Sound...

For years, Lee Jackson has been making customized amplifiers for the world's hottest guitar players. Lee's talents are now available to you at the turn of a key.

All VL series amps include a unique key ignition that prevents the curious from taking an unauthorized "test drive" while you're away from the club, studio, or rehearsal hall.

Courtesy of the seven preamp tubes and American-made GE 6550a power tubes, the dual channel VL502 features more



Ampeg
LEAD AMPLIFICATION

gain and overall output than any other stock amp. All aspects of the



effects loop are tube driven.

amplifier scream TUBE. Even the dual reverbs and

giving you the purest hot-rod tube sound available.

The Power Attenuation section allows you to overdrive the output stage and still have total control of your overall listening levels.

Find out why players everywhere are keying into Ampeg VL amps.



Ampeg • 1400 Ferguson Ave. • St. Louis, MO 63133

Photo: Rick Gould

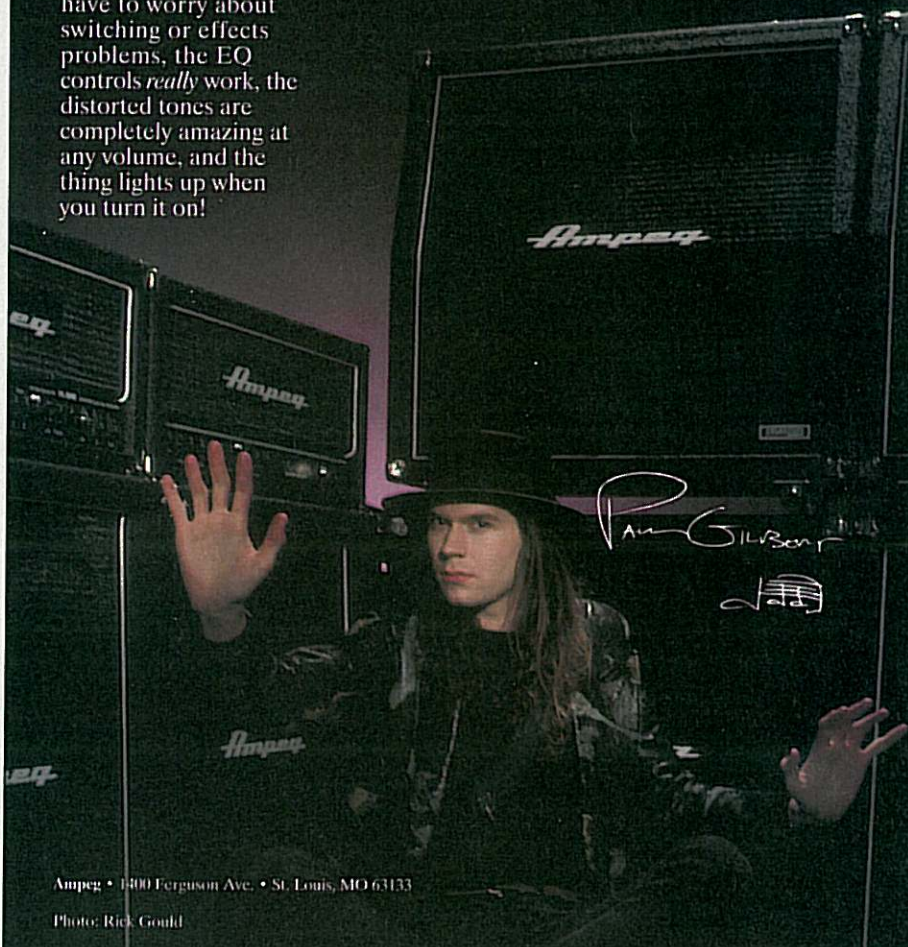
...Paul Gilbert Did.

"I can't believe how great this amp sounds! I've always loved Lee's modified amps and this one's the best I've heard—right out of the box! The effects loop and clean tones work and sound great so I don't have to worry about switching or effects problems, the EQ controls really work, the distorted tones are completely amazing at any volume, and the thing lights up when you turn it on!"

Ampeg
LEAD AMPLIFICATION

Hear Paul on the new MR. BIG release Lean Into It on Atlantic Records.

I can't stop smiling. I love my tone again. Thanks Lee, thanks Ampeg. You guys rule."



Ampeg • 1400 Ferguson Ave. • St. Louis, MO 63133

Photo: Rick Gould

cannot fake it. It's a total relationship between us and our audience. If the crowd's not happening, or the building is set up in such a way that you can't get the response, it affects your performance. Then they get pissed off and think they just saw a shitty show and that we sucked. It hurts more from a fan than it does from any critic. You can't really go, "Well, I'm sorry, but this place is fucked," because no one wants to hear it. Yet part of the reason that we're who we are is that we can't fake it either. A lot of people aren't aware of how that works. Our live shows are completely spontaneous: There are no cue cards for stage raps, and we

SLASH

The Hands Behind The Hype

don't play the same song in the same place every single night for an entire tour. Each night is a crap shoot [laughs]. When it's magic, it's

great. If you fuck up—you're standing there for 10 minutes, deciding what song to play—the crowd looks at you, "What are you doing?" So you really take a chance out there, and that's probably why we're so controversial.

Do you ever get a little freaked out when you're in front of a sea of people?

We stopped the show a couple of times at Donington—a big racetrack in England—when things started getting out of hand. It was people as far as you could see. It rained; people would fall over and asphyxiate in the mud. We didn't know that a couple of people died until after the show. But the crowd never freaked us out until St. Louis, when the place exploded. I don't think the band realized how much power we can have over that many people.

What's your side of the story?

Everybody thinks it's just because we were wiped out on photos being taken. But you can only put up with so much shit from one or two members of the crowd. It's distracting to have flashbulbs go off in your face. They're not supposed to bring cameras, right? There was a handful of security guys who weren't paying attention to the audience at all. They were turned around, watching us. Axl told one guy, "If you don't take care of this, I will!" But the guy didn't react. I don't know if it was miscommunication or if he was just not interested. We've been jumping into crowds our whole career—that's how we do things. So Axl dove in to go after the flash. When we finally got him back onstage, he just walked off. We had already played an hour-and-a-half kick-ass set, but a couple of people started throwing things, and then someone jumped onto the stage—that brought out a few security guys. At that point, the crowd got off on rushing the authority and tearing up the amps—the whole fucking grandness of it.

Then what happened?

We decided we were the only people who could take control, so we started to go back onstage. But by then the kit and all my cabinets were down. These people were fucking ripping into the metal MESA/Boogie grilles to get at the speakers! Some guy ran off with a lot of guitars—they caught him. Our crew and our own security were the wall defending our equipment. Some of our guys got stitches. Backstage, there were people on stretchers, bleeding, and cops coming through on stretchers. It was real intense.

How did you escape?

They rushed us out in a van, all huddled together. We saw cop after cop going in the opposite direction. They're trying to blame us for it, and in a small way, I'll say it was our fault, but there were so many other factors involved. We got to Chicago and found out the gig there was canceled 'cause we had no

"At last, I can record my guitar directly."

Mick Jones, Guitarist/Songwriter: Foreigner; Producer: Van Halen, Billy Joel.

"From Marshall® to Fender® with the flick of a switch."

Jeff Golub, Guitarist: Rod Stewart, Billy Squier.

"It is truly revolutionary."

Carlos Alomar, Guitarist: David Bowie, Mick Jagger, Paul McCartney.

SansAmp offers the unique, full sound of various tube amplifiers in one convenient, compact unit you can easily carry anywhere. With SansAmp, you can plug **directly** into any recording console, stage amplification system, stereo, or even into a set of headphones alone. It not only duplicates the warm, rich tones of tube amps, the sounds are actually improved to be cleaner and more flexible ("Hot-Wired") with less noise. The original guitar sound is unaltered so that the individual personality and style remain intact.

Sounds good on paper? Prepare to be convinced!



Designed and manufactured by

Tech 21

1600 Broadway, NY, NY 10019
(212) 315-1116 / Fax: (212) 315-0825

FET hybrid circuitry. Operable with one 9-volt battery up to one year.
©Marshall and Fender are registered trademarks.
MADE IN U.S.A.

Other SansAmp Purchasers:

Living Colour, Def Leppard, KISS, Metallica, Larry Oakes (Bad Company), Robert Quine (Lou Reed), Paul Pesco (Madonna, Steve Winwood), Doug Wimbish (Jeff Beck, Mick Jagger), Rik Emmett (Triumph), Chris Currell (Michael Jackson), Ray Gomez (Stanley Clark), Jeff Campbell (Sting).

equipment. They got the lighting rig, the monitor boards, everything.

At your last show, Axl warned someone to stop throwing things. Do you ever worry about your hands?

I'm less sensitive to it than Axl. He takes it very personally; I just duck. As intense and high-energy as our music is—like Metallica or AC/DC—the rapport with our fans is really good. It's a magical, sweet feeling to be in sync with that many people, everyone having a good time. It's like a really oversized party with everybody dancing to the same groove.

SLASH

The Hands Behind The Hype

EXPANDING HORIZONS

Are you interested in pursuing outside

projects?

I've got to keep active all the time. There was a period—Axl was doing vocals—when I got involved with some different people. The first record I did was with Iggy [Pop], who is just one of the sweetest guys. He was doing *Brick By Brick* and had some songs he thought me and Duff might want to play on. We hung out one night, listened to his home demos, and picked out songs. We went into the studio and cranked out four songs in one day. I co-wrote one. That was great.

You did something with Lenny Kravitz.

I fell in love with his first album. We met at some awards thing and got to be friends. I went to the studio and put a solo on "Fields Of Joy" and played the riff on "Always On The Run" [both on *Mama Said*]. That was a great time too.

Do you enjoy guesting on other people's records?

I did one session that I completely regret. Don Was, who produced Iggy's record, goes, "Would you be interested in playing on this Bob Dylan project?" I hadn't been into Dylan since he did something good years ago. Still, I thought, "Why not?" I came down to the studio and met Bob. He was as indifferent as indifferent gets—impossible to work with. On top of that, I did one of my best one-off guitar solos ever, one take—it was killer. When the advance cassettes went out it was still on there, but he took it off the official release. He said it sounded too much like Guns N' Roses. I was like, "What the fuck was I there for?"

That's bizarre.

I played acoustic underneath the lead, right? Well, he wanted me to play like Django Reinhardt! But the chords were a typical I-IV-V progression—I couldn't figure out what he was talking about. I ended up doing some strum patterns, and he went, "That's it." I'm like, "This is *not* Django Reinhardt." The space is still there in the song, so now when it gets to the guitar solo all you hear is me strumming these stupid chords. I learned my lesson from that.

Any other experiences?

There's Michael Jackson's new project. When someone asked me to work with him, I thought it would be cool, sort of an Eddie Van Halen spot where I could really shine. I asked, "Can I have a tape?" That was a major situation. Finally, I managed to get one, but it didn't have any vocals—just synthesizer and drum-box. Three to four months passed before they finally asked me down. I was completely out of my element, but I did one song my way. But no solo—the song was only two minutes long. I used a talk box on another one. I played my lick once, and they sampled it for the rest of the song [grimaces]. I *really* wanted to put a solo on that one. They wanted me to do one

Introducing ChordWorks™ for Guitar

The software companion for guitarists of all ages, skills, and styles!

Bring your IBM PC to musical life with ChordWorks for Guitar—an entire set of accessories every guitarist needs in one powerful, easy-to-use program.

◆ Tune your guitar in seconds. ◆ Learn new chords and fingerings. ◆ Build your own chord reference charts (MIDI guitar compatible). ◆ Compose and playback your own music, or just enjoy the pre-recorded songs provided. Even non-guitarists can learn chord theory and guitar fundamentals with ChordWorks. And, with a MIDI or sound card interface*, you can create compositions for any instrument. Entertaining, yet founded on traditional music and guitar theory, ChordWorks is a valuable accessory for any guitar enthusiast.

◆ Continue building your music software library with ChordWorks SkillBuilder and ChordWorks StyleBuilder Series of lesson plans. Guitar instruction that's self-paced, interactive, and fun!

Requires: IBM PC/XT/AT or compatible: 512K RAM, EGA/VGA color graphics.

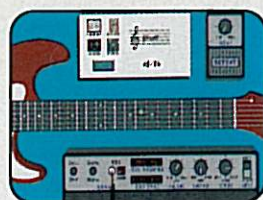
*Options: Sound cards: AdLib, Sound Blaster.

MIDI Interfaces: MPU 401, Sound Blaster.

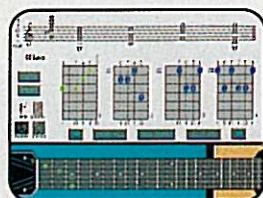
Mouse support: Microsoft, Logitech.

Printers: Epson-compatible, Deskjet, Laserjet

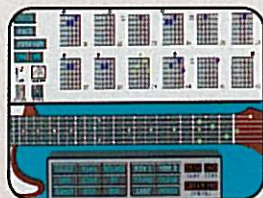
All trademarks are property of their respective holders.



Chromatic Tuner



5300 Chord Dictionary



20 Function Recorder

ChordWorks for Guitar is available from:

Six String Software
P.O. Box 6608 / Kent, WA 98064

206/ 631-5855

9:00 to 6:00 Pacific Time (M-F)

\$99.95 plus \$3.50 P/H

(WA residents add 8.2% sales tax)

...or check at your local software or music store.



Rock 'n Roll will live forever... but your hearing may not.

Some rock concerts exceed tolerable sound levels by as much as 40 decibels. Repeated exposure to loud sound can damage the tiny hairs in your inner ear and slowly destroy your hearing. But you can protect your hearing by wearing ear plugs, or by just turning the volume down.

To find out what rockers need to know to protect their hearing, contact:

H. E. A. R.

Hearing Education and Awareness for Rockers

Box 460847

San Francisco, California 94146

**24-Hour Hotline:
(415) 773-9590**

Send \$7.00 for information packet about H.E.A.R.

SLASH

The Hands Behind The Hype

more song. Six months went by and they called: "Can you come down and finish?" I said, "Yeah, when?" "Well, we're trying to figure it out." A few months later, I finally call them: "Do you want me to finish this? Maybe Michael isn't hip to the stuff I put down." And they said, "No, you've gotta do it." Ages went by and they called again. At this point I said, "No, I'm doing our record and we're on the road. Too late." I never met Michael through this whole thing.

What a hassle.

For a while, I was bummed. But a couple of days ago, Michael called. This little voice says, "Slash?" We talked; it turns out he has a song he won't record unless I play on it. He's going to delay the project until I can get into the studio. Michael sent me a tape—the song is *perfect* for me. I'm practicing it right now; I'm going to wait.

Where do you want to go from here?

I always live day by day; I'm not one to set goals. The main thing is to keep touring. That's really my whole life. When the album has run its course, Guns might go right back in and do the next record. But if we take a long hiatus again, I'd like to put out, not really a solo record, but something with another band—a temporary thing that I'd control. It would be geared towards an almost heavy metal funk-rock concept—music with killer rock and roll vocals and the most awesome riffs. Almost like "Jungle," only a little bit tighter and heavier. A long time ago, Aerosmith got close; Beck has a couple of magic moments too. But I don't want it to be a guitar record where I'm off on some solo trip, 'cause I think that's really boring.

Are you satisfied with your playing?

I'm just happy to still be. . . . There has been so much potential for failure, given the extremes of our lifestyle. The night I came home and played my reference CDs was one of the most romantic evenings I can remember. I listened to the entire set in sequence. After everything we've been through—all the changes, the stress, the drugs—we managed to put out a record and realize that no matter what happens, we are *really* into our music and we're not some fucking bullshit pop band.