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Written by Matt

Thursday, 10 January 2008



Dave Kilminster, the great guitarist who impressed so many on Roger Waters' recent tours, has kindly taken some time out before preparations start for Roger's 2008 shows to undertake an

interview with us. Included in the questions were a number of those we received from Brain Damage visitors from around the world.

Find out what makes Dave tick, how his auditions for Roger didn't go quite as planned, what it is like to play guitar in concert with Roger, and what he thinks of David Gilmour...

Brain Damage: First off, Dave - how the devil are you? Rested after the lengthy Roger Waters tour?

Dave Kilminster: I'm very well thank you, despite the fact that practically everyone I know is ill at the moment with one of those nasty viruses that are doing the rounds... I

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haven't really been resting though, as there's always just far too much to do... :O)

How did your involvement with Roger begin?

My manager got a phone call from Snowy White asking if he knew any guitarists... and he didn't, so he asked me if I knew of anybody!!!

Did the auditions go smoothly?

They were a total nightmare!!!!!!! Apart from the fact that they wanted me there at the studio in London at 9:00am (which is never a good time for playing guitar), when I got there I found that my amp wasn't working!! We finally got that up and running and then my acoustic guitar refused to work through the PA!!!

Then when we played 'Money' I realised that I was wearing the wrong guitar to play the solo (you need 22 frets, and I'd put on the guitar with 21 frets!!), so I had to stop the band and switch guitars...

Next we started playing through 'Wish You Were Here', and I was just about to play the guitar solo with my slide when I realised that the slide was still in my jacket pocket!!! So I had to stop the band once again... It was all very embarrassing....

I left that room kicking myself for being so hopelessly unprepared and untogether... :O/

Were you a Floyd fan before you got the chance to play the material with Roger?

No, not at all... I was of course familiar with some of their songs, but I didn't have any of the albums...

Has your perception of David Gilmour's guitar work changed now that you've performed the same music live?

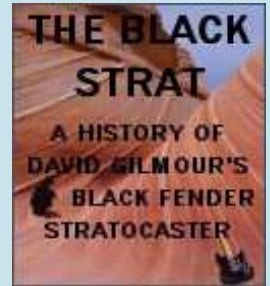
No, not really... As I mentioned I wasn't really a huge fan, although I do of course appreciate what he's done. He's written some great stuff. The beginning of 'Shine On...' for example is just fab!!!

From a technical viewpoint, was Roger's show a challenge?

I think any large scale production like this is always a challenge if you care about your performance.

One of the main challenges with this show is that everything is played to a click track, so that the music matches up to the visuals and sound effects... So apart from having to play in time (which sounds like a basic

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requirement for a musician, but is actually quite a rare commodity!!!), there's also no room for tuning and messing around in between numbers!!! Also, the pressure involved in playing those 'famous parts' correctly every night is quite intense!!!

And artistically, did you have much latitude to express yourself? Do you find yourself fairly constrained in



terms of how far you can explore various songs or solos?

There wasn't really any room for self expression... but I knew from the start that it wasn't that sort of gig. And to be honest, if Roger would have said 'you can play your own solo on that tune if you like' then I would probably still have stuck pretty closely to the original parts, because they're so ingrained in peoples memories... I think it's what most of the fans want to hear anyway!!!

How does playing for Roger compare with, say, Keith Emerson?

It's the two opposite ends of the spectrum!!! With Keith it's about the improvising... exploring... the showmanship... the technique... going out on a musical limb, taking chances, and creating these magical moments that can occur when you're not actually sure where you're going!!!

With Roger it's far more controlled, with the emphasis on creating an amazing show... the drama... the spectacle... You know when you go to see Roger then it's going to be a truly awe inspiring gig, with wonderful visuals and a fantastic sound system... very little is left to chance!!!

I guess when you have higher ticket prices, it's more difficult to justify having a section in the show where you go 'OK, let's just jam in E for a while and see what happens'!!!

A question we also asked Jon Carin: how does it feel taking part in such a long tour? Is it difficult to be creative or motivated on certain nights?

No, not at all... I love my job!!!!!! Actually, it doesn't feel like a job... for me it's a way of life. To play music every day... to visit new countries... new cultures... I could happily be out on tour for the next ten years!!!!!!!!!!!!!! :O)

Did any place you visited on the tour make a particular impression on you?

I have so many wonderful memories from the last year and a half, that it's actually really difficult to pick just one particular place... But I think our concert in Israel stands out for me as just a really amazing evening... Very intense emotionally... We didn't know what to expect going in... and we certainly never expected such an incredible reaction!!! I met some wonderful people over there too, and it just made me feel really sad when I heard that about a week after our concert the fighting had broken out again... :O(

What were your views on the Live Earth event, and your segment of the show?

Well it's obviously a very worthy cause, although I'm not sure how much it helped with the amount of electricity, fuel, etc that was used on the day!!! But it was a strange day actually... I was hoping for a great community spirit between the musicians backstage, but pretty much everyone kept to their own dressing rooms... complete with heavy security outside each one. And all the bands left as soon as they'd played... :O/ So that was a little disappointing... I think our segment was OK... although it really was over in a flash!!!

I still haven't watched it... I hate watching myself...

And the VH1 Save The Music event - what was that like?

Another amazing cause!!! What a great thing to do, to help improve peoples music education... I've been involved in teaching music since about 1992, through my work at several music schools, as well as my magazine articles for Guitar Techniques... and also a whole bunch of instructional DVDs, and even a little series for TV!!! So it's a cause that's dear to my heart. And maybe if kids had better music education then they wouldn't buy all this shit that's in the charts!!!

The event itself was loads of fun though, and the kids were just amazing!!! I was very flattered that Roger asked me to help out too.

It was only Roger, myself and a children's orchestra!!!

Which songs from the Floyd/ Waters catalogue would you like to play, that you haven't yet had the opportunity to?

I'm not familiar with Floyd's entire collection of work, or

Rogers solo output... but I'd love to play 'Welcome to the Machine'... That's a great tune!!!!!! :O)

Which songs did you particularly enjoy playing - and any that you'd have rather not had to play?

I love playing guitar... playing music... So there isn't much that I wouldn't enjoy playing!! Although I do have a special affinity for anything that's a little rhythmic and funky. So tunes like 'Have A Cigar', 'Any Colour You Like' and 'Time' were particularly fun to play!!! I always enjoyed 'Us And Them' too... it's just such a great track...



What were your thoughts on the filming of a number of shows? Is it distracting, or more pressure? And, do you hope or think that there will be an eventual DVD release?

There's definitely more pressure there, and it makes you overly conscience of every move you make, and every note you play, so I didn't really enjoy the process... But I think there's enough good stuff on film so that if Roger DID want to make a DVD it would be possible... :O)

Have you had any involvement with Roger's current work in progress material?

No. I believe he already has a backlog of recordings to look at... but hopefully I'll get a call if there are any new tracks to be recorded!!!

With the release of Scarlet, any plans to tour the album?

My friend Ron Thal wrote a great tune called 'Lost', and one of the lines in the tune goes 'We make plans, and God laughs'!!! I love that lyric... I try to have a rough idea of what I'm doing... what I'd like to do, etc... but the last two years have just happened with zero planning!!!

Saying that though, I am planning on going out this year in the summer and playing some of the music from Scarlet... probably with one or two guitar playing buddies of mine as well... Watch this space!!!!

Are you pleased with the reaction to Scarlet so far?

Yes, of course... Pleased, and a little surprised with the amount of positive comments about my voice too!!! It's a totally new instrument for me, and these vocals (and

lyrics) are really the first that I've ever written and recorded... :O)

And what else have you lined up?

I've just started working with an extremely talented singer/songwriter called Murray Hockridge... so I'm intrigue to see where that takes me...

Do you still teach? Any notable ex-pupils?

I haven't taught since January 25th 2006... and it's been really great to take a break from it!!! I may get back to it eventually, but at the moment there's far too much other stuff that I'd like to achieve...

Re ex-pupils, I guess Newton Faulkner is doing pretty well at the moment!!! Fraser Thorneycroft-Smith (guitarist with Craig David) has also had a pretty good career so far!!! It's really difficult to know how many other guitarists I've helped though, because I get emails all the time from people citing one of my magazine articles, DVD or TV lessons as helping or inspiring them... It does make me feel a little like a proud father sometimes!!! :O)

Will your work with Roger - immersing yourself in his material for over a year - influence itself on any new material you may be writing?

Good question!!! I've no idea!!! Roger has certainly made me very aware of the power and beauty of space and simplicity...

Before we left for the first leg of the tour though, I bought an iPod and put most of my CD collection on it... which amounted to about 34 days of music!!!!!!!!!! So I've been listening to a whole bunch of new stuff, and I think my next album will be very, very different... although I know everyone says that!!!!

What sort of equipment set-up do you have at home?

I have a 16 track hard disk recorder at home and a bunch of keyboards... Nothing elaborate, but it means I can demo any ideas I have. I always make sure that I produce the absolute roughest demos though... I hear people all the time saying 'yeah, I did this vocal/solo/whatever on the demo and then couldn't reproduce it in the studio'!!, so I make sure that whatever I do at home is thrown down with the minimum of effort. Just to have a record of the idea. In fact most times I'll just use a cheap cassette recorder!!

How do you relax? Do you put music to one side in favour of another activity, or is it too much part of your lifeblood?

I find music, and playing music very relaxing... although I can relax in any number of ways... Playing squash, reading, sightseeing, photography, wandering around a museum, along a beach... Going for a coffee, going for a drive... Seeing friends... Recently I discovered the delights of diving!!! I passed my PADI Open Water diving exam last October, and so I'd love to do some more of that...

Finally, is there any question that you are itching to be asked, and never are?! If so, here's your opportunity!

Ummm... Why does Dave Gilmour sound so much like me?!!! Ha ha ha, just kidding... No, I can't think of anything off hand...

Now, a small selection of questions from the Brain Damage readers from the many that we received, which haven't been covered in one way or another above:



From Bob Hennigan, USA:

I had the pleasure of seeing you perform in Atlanta, simply fantastic. I don't remember you playing anything but the Tele that night. Do you have other favorite axes that you tour with?

Not really... There is just something about a Telecaster that I really love... The shape seems to fit my body really well, they generally have a great acoustic quality about them, and they also have a huge tonal range...

The only thing that I would add to the standard design is a middle pick up and a trem arm, so I've recently had some Suhr guitars made for the next tour that have these additions...

Would you describe your pedal board / rack setup, that is, what are the effects and the order of them?

There are pictures of my guitars, amps and pedal board on my website www.davekilminster.com, listed under 'Gear'.

For this next bunch of gigs though, I'm probably going to be building a slightly different pedal board... and using different Cornford amps and guitars!!!

From GianLuca Giustiniani: I saw you in Arnhem at the Gerledome and I was absolutely impressed by your precision and amazing technique, especially because you never look at your fretboard even during the hardest passages. It looks like you have been playing Pink Floyd material since ages, is this true? Does your passion for Pink Floyd come from long ago? Do you think nowadays there is any candidate great band like Pink Floyd, with that particularly good mix of genius, harmonies, orchestration, and guitar?

I'd never actually played ANY Pink Floyd tunes prior to my addition for the tour!!! And my passion just comes from my love of playing music... I'm a passionate guy!!!

Re your third question, I used to think that Radiohead would carry the torch lit by Pink Floyd... but I haven't heard any of their new material recently... 'OK Computer' is a wonderful album though!!!!

From Hans Petter Sjøli, Norway: How do you rate Gilmour as a guitarist? And what is your favourite Gilmour solo?

Gilmour himself has stated that he's not a particularly technically gifted player, but he writes incredibly powerful and memorable lines... which is the main thing!!! There are thousands of flashy guitarists out there playing millions of notes, but not actually saying anything, or making any of the notes sound good!!!!!!

Probably my two favourite Gilmour solos would be 'Have a Cigar' and 'Shine On'... Both have really nice phrasing and construction... It's a shame we didn't get to do the full version of 'Shine On...' for the tour... That's a great tune!!!

From Juan Carlos Jimenez, Colombia: Please tell us about your visit and concert in Colombia. Would you play here again? I only want to say: the fans in Colombia love RW and all members of the band... thank you!!! This was the happiest day of our lives!

Wow thank you!!!!!! That's really lovely to hear... :O) I had a great time there, and of course would love to come back!!!!!! We didn't really stay very long, so next time I'd like to spend longer and have a look around...

From Cristiano, Brazil: Shine On's solo was wonderful. I would like to ask you if is very hard to play Floyd's song, with Mr. Waters, and give us fans

incredible moments in the show ?

From a purely technical view point the Pink Floyd catalogue is not very difficult to play... But to play it well and make it sound good, with the right tone, touch, taste, vibrato, timing, etc... That's the stuff that takes years of experience...

From Simon Denton, UK: I am sure many of us have enjoyed reading the blogs and diaries kept by some of the band members. They gave a fascinating insight to a dream world. Has Dave any plans to update his website to include the rest of the tour?

Last Christmas (end of 2006/start of 2007, between the American and Australian tours), we had a few weeks off... which was when I decided to finish my album. I worked practically every day on it in the break... Christmas Eve, Boxing Day, New Years Eve... and the day after I finished mixing and mastering the album I flew to Australia for the next leg of the tour!!! So basically I didn't stop for almost a year!!!!!!! And by the time I got to Australia I was pretty exhausted, and so I didn't write anything for a week or so... and then found it just impossible to catch up... Sorry!!

I'll try and write a diary for the next gigs though!!!

I read that Dave was not really a fan of Pink Floyd's music and was wondering whether his view has changed now? Did he or anyone else get bored playing the same set night after night?

Playing music night after night is something I've always dreamed of doing!!!! And I NEVER get bored!!!!!!! And yes, I do appreciate Floyd's music now... :O)

Throughout the tour it was apparent that Dave was getting a real thrill out of the reception from Roger's fans. Can he tell us a bit about what it feels like being backstage just before the show kicks off?

It's actually pretty difficult to describe... a sort of nervous excitement I guess!!! Just before you go on is the worst part though!!! I usually find it pretty impossible to relax and settle... You're pacing around backstage, your head racing with a thousand different thoughts... I like to spend a certain amount of quiet time on my own though before going out on stage... just to clear my head of everything...

Any news of Dave's planned November tour?

Ha ha... I guess I missed the November deadline huh?!!!
Well, as I mentioned earlier I'm finally putting a tour

together for later this year, and dates will be announced very soon!!! :O)

And finally, just what on earth was the significance of the old George Formby classic "When I 'm Cleaning Windows" that concluded the DSotM tour every night?

Maybe they just wanted to get everyone out of the venues as quickly as possible?!! ;O) Actually I think Roger and Andy Fairweather are big fans of the old Ukelele, so maybe it seemed like a good idea to them? To be honest though we rarely heard it, as we were usually already in a van and on the way to the airport for the next gig!!!

Our thanks, Dave - your taking time out to answer these questions is much appreciated.

My pleasure... And I'd just like to wish everyone reading this a WONDERFUL New Year!!!!!! :O)

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