

FOUR NEW ELECTRIC PLAYERS OF NOTE

sound—but only when I want to sound like an oud or a baglama.

Describe your creative process.

It varies. Sometimes I'll just have a particular feeling and a style in mind. For example, on "Ben Sende," I began with just the key and the time signature, which is 5/8. Then I heard a traditional Turkish folk melody in my head, and I decided to re-harmonize it, and ultimately to compose a new piece based on it. Another example would be the song "Happy Moments," which has no melody. I played a few chords that sounded happy, and then, when I played them as chord arpeggios, they outlined a melody. On other occasions I might start with a jazz standard and re-harmonize it in a modern way, then replace the melody with another melody, resulting in an entirely new composition. —BC

Scott Carstairs

"A guitar player should aspire to be a virtuoso," says Scott Carstairs, who spearheads the San Francisco Bay Area-based and politically charged band Fallujah, armed with an Ibanez RG7321 7-string loaded with DiMarzio Blaze humbuckers. "It takes the whole package: proficient technique, tasteful notes and phrases, and a solid tone."

Carstairs possesses that package at an age when most are happy to have had their first legal beer. He and gravel-voiced screamer Alex Hofmann started formulating their progressive metal in 2006, and along with second guitarist Rob Maramonte, Carstairs threw down the guitar gauntlet at the close of 2011 on Fallujah's, *Harvest Wombs* [Unique Leader]. It's brutal as hell and rhythmically complex, causing Carstairs' clear, legato melodies and soaring, liquid shred lines to stand out in stark contrast.

"I focus on melody foremost, and then phrasing," explains Carstairs. "Music should sound like one fluid piece, not chopped up segments."

What inspired you to become proficient, and when was the turning point?

The insanely clean riffs and melodic solos in Necrophagist's tunes inspired me to pursue technical proficiency. The turning point came when I began taking lessons with Christian Muenzer of Necrophagist and Obscura. We analyzed Necrophagist's "Epitaph," and Obscura's "Cosmogogenesis." Studying with the original architect gave me a great understanding of how such melodic runs were created. We also analyzed techniques used by players such as Greg Howe, Allan Holdsworth, Guthrie Govan, Scott Henderson, Steve Vai, and Joe Satriani.

Describe your right-hand technique.

I use a small jazz pick with a closed fist because it facilitates a very controlled motion, making it a lot easier to execute fast, articulate runs. I use sweep picking, but I find that tapping is the easiest way to play extended arpeggios. I tend to tap with my middle and ring fingers to add scale degrees such as 5ths and major 2nds to whatever lick I'm playing.

What is unique about your style and what you're bringing to progressive metal via Fallujah?

The way I enhance progressions by playing chord extensions and voicing triads phrased in odd groupings of five and seven over them is unique. Trying new ideas in progressive metal with a background in jazz-fusion brings something a bit different to the table.

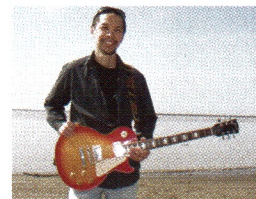
How did the epic instrumental "The Flame Surreal" come about?

We wanted to have an instrumental that was a little more prog than the rest of the album, so we incorporated alternate time signatures, polyrhythms, and a lot of chromatics to give it that jazz-fusion sound. I created some progressions that left a lot of leeway for note choices and then began constructing the phrasing from there.

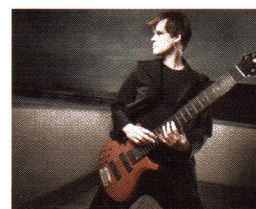
What are your aspirations and goals?

I want complete control over the notes I choose to play and how I play them. As simple as that sounds, it's a long journey. —JL

Honorable Mentions



Roland Nipp rolandnipp.com



Alexander Dowerk alexanderdowerk.de



Tohpati moonjune.com/artists/tohpati



Anthony Pirog anthonypirog.com



Lage Lund lage-lund.com



Blake Mills blakemillsonline.com