

# THE LOW DOWN

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

## MAMMA MIA

**BGM** publishers Future sent a team of experts to participate in the MIA (Music Industry Association) awards recently: the winner in the bass category was Blackstar Amplification's two-channel FLY 3 combo, while Orange's Crush Bass 50 combo and Sandberg's Forty Eight bass guitar (distributed in the UK by Synergy) were highly recommended. Trebles all round!



## SWIFT STRINGS

**Veteran bassist Dave Swift, the most visible British bassist of his generation thanks to a 25-year career as a member of Jools Holland's band, has announced a new endorsement with Ibanez.**

"It shouldn't come as any great surprise to *BGM* readers that I'm now officially endorsing Ibanez basses," the great man tells us. "For a number of years, I've been collecting and playing many vintage Ibanez models, including Musician, Studio, Roadstar and Roadster basses. I've actually lost count how many I have! I felt that with the Ibanez Musician series in particular, I'd found my ultimate four-string bass, which is why I was more than happy to use it on the front cover of the June 2016 issue of *BGM* beside my boss Jools Holland. To my surprise and delight, shortly after the magazine came out, I was contacted by Headstock Distribution, the UK distributors for all Ibanez products. They said how pleased they were that I was using vintage Ibanez basses and drawing so much attention to the brand, and asked if I would be interested in trying their current, newer models. I think we all know what my answer was!"

He continues, "At Headstock Distribution's offices, I played a lot of Ibanez basses and singled out two in particular. They were a BTB686SC singlecut in Natural Flat finish and a BTB1606 Premium in Deep Twilight Flat finish. I loved both of these six-string basses, and I knew that either one could easily become my number one working bass. In fact, I was so taken with the BTB1606, I've decided to use it on Jools' Annual Hootenanny on New Year's Eve on the BBC, and when you find out who the heavyweight guests are in this year's show, you'll see why I gave this serious consideration. A testament to just how good this bass is! Shortly afterwards, I also acquired an SRFF806 in Black Stained finish. I was already familiar with fanned fret basses, but this particular model really appealed to me like no other. These three Ibanez six-string basses have become my regular touring and recording instruments. In fact, the only problem for me is that they are all such a joy to play, I honestly have a daily dilemma which one to choose to play each evening!"

Paul Oldfield at Headstock Distribution adds: "There's a lot to say about Dave Swift. I struggle to think of a working musician who has enjoyed such a diverse career. His CV is outstanding across every genre of music. Ibanez had heard, and were genuinely excited, about Dave's unrivalled collection of vintage Ibanez basses. From that point we knew we had to get instruments in those extra-large hands of his. The one thing you learn quickly is that Dave's a truly devoted professional who understands his craft intimately, so from a product perspective, it's the perfect partnership for Ibanez. More than that: on a personal level he's a joy to spend time with, as few people have the stories, dedication and enthusiasm that Dave brings."

[www.daveswiftbass.com](http://www.daveswiftbass.com), [www.headstockdistribution.com](http://www.headstockdistribution.com)



## GREG LAKE RIP

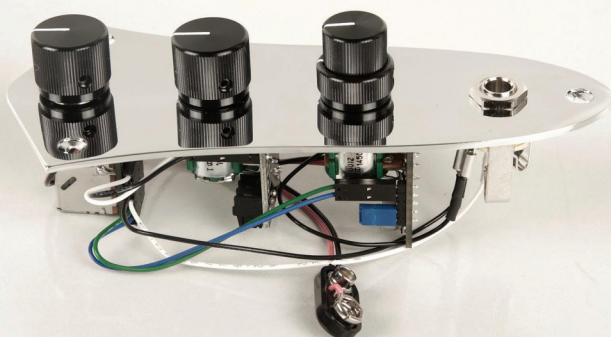
**Mike Brooks writes:** As if 2016 hasn't been bad enough, we were saddened to hear of the passing of the much-revered Greg Lake on December 7 following a battle with cancer. Greg rose to prominence as the bassist and initial frontman of prog-rock stalwarts King Crimson alongside Robert Fripp in 1969. The release of their first album, *In The Court Of The Crimson King*, launched the band skyward, reaching number five in the UK album charts and number 28 in the US. After the recording of Crimson's second album, Greg formed the supergroup ELP with Keith Emerson and Carl Palmer, a move which saw him travel the world, the band proving mightily successful throughout the 70s.

Greg used an array of basses throughout his career, from the customary Fenders, Gibsons and Alembics through to Steinbergers, Spector and others. He was also an accomplished guitarist and multi-instrumentalist, always writing and producing material: even as I write this, his perennial Christmas hit 'I Believe In Father Christmas' is playing on the radio. Alongside solo performance and recording stints, in recent years Greg concentrated on writing his autobiography, due for publication next year. Godspeed, Greg, and thank you for the memories.

## BOARDING FOR BASS

US luthier Roger Sadowsky has launched a new three-control onboard preamp for Jazz-style instruments. The system requires no soldering, is completely pre-wired, and just needs a battery compartment: this can fit under the scratchplate or be routed into the rear of the bass (by a pro: don't try this at home!). A control plate is included, or an existing control plate or pickguard can be used if preferred. The volume control can be pulled up to bypass the preamp if passive operation is desired, and the battery lasts approximately 870 hours (or the duration of a Grateful Dead drum solo). Grab one for \$259 (about £200, Brexit-dependent).

[www.sadowsky.com](http://www.sadowsky.com)





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## THE LOWDOWN



### MR JONES

**Darryl Jones of the Rolling Stones (hey, that rhymes) expressed the viewpoint in a recent BBC interview that after 20 years as a sideman with the venerable blues-rockers, an invitation to full membership status would be wholly welcome should one ever materialise.**

Jones, who has been an honorary Stone since 1994 when founder member Bill Wyman quit, has also played with luminaries such as Eric Clapton and Sting and told the Beeb: "I think most musicians,

somewhere deep down inside, even if they are sidemen, or if they are hired players, there is a desire to be in a band. And I would not be being completely honest if I said that it would not be wonderful... to be considered and, you know, jump into this organisation as a full member... But that is not a decision I am in a position to make." We're rooting for you, Darryl. Come on Mick and Keef, give a bassist his due!



Pic By Tina K

### EASTERN FIRE

**The mighty Nathan East**

– Eric Clapton, Daft Punk, you name it – has released a new old song, 'Serpentine Fire', on Stereogum. The song was originally cut in 1991 and featured none other than Clapton on guitar and Phil Collins on drums. Itself a cover of an Earth, Wind & Fire tune from 1978, the song has been remastered and features vocals from E,W&F members Philip Bailey, Ralph Johnson and the legendary Verdine White, who also plays some extra bass parts. Now that's a supergroup.

[www.nathaneast.com](http://www.nathaneast.com)

## BASSWATCH

Every month, keen bass-spotter Ray Walker brings us an online bargain.

**This month:** Modulus Genesis V five-string fretless £1,434 <http://tinyurl.com/hs5zlcw>



For your consideration this month, we have a Modulus Genesis five-string fretless bass. This beautiful instrument consists of an alder body with a satin finish and a maple neck with Chechen fingerboard, a 35" scale and 22 frets. Boasting Modulus hardware, Bartolini pickups and a Bartolini 18v NTMB preamp with active treble, mid and bass, this high-end instrument weighs in at 9.55lbs. With a very tight low end, this bass really delivers: slappers will love it. This is a very reactive bass with plenty of tonal variety: its lined-fretless neck is silky-smooth to play, the action is low and has apparently had a professional setup quite recently. According to the seller, it's got some light hazing on the finish of the back of the headstock, but no other issues. Mwah-ma, I just killed a man...



## REVOLVER

Every month we tell you the bass-line we can't stop listening to

**THIS MONTH:** Weather Report, 'Procession' (1983)

### Bassist:

#### Victor Bailey

Talk about stepping into big shoes: *Procession* was the first Weather Report album to feature the recently-departed Victor Bailey, whose task was to replace the unfeasibly talented Jaco Pastorius. Only 22 years old

at the time, the new kid on the block was incredibly gifted, delivering a bass part on the album's title track that breaks all the rules with utter confidence. Leaving tons of space between the notes, Bailey made sure that everything he played made an impact, leaving us all speechless.



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