



Take 5: Dave Swift

Dave Swift reveals the top five recordings that have helped shape his career.

Dave has been a permanent member of Jools Holland's Rhythm & Blues Orchestra since 1991, and has taken to the stage with some of the biggest names in popular music. Having recently recorded independently with Tom Jones at Peter Gabriel's Real World Studios, Dave is about to embark on something of a world tour with Jools, visiting Japan, Singapore, Australia, New

Zealand and Buenos Aires before returning to the UK later this year, where the R&B Orchestra will be joined by guest vocalist Alison Moyet. When it comes to listing his influences on the bass, Dave is quick to mention James Jamerson, Jaco Pastorius, Steve Swallow and Marcus Miller before drawing our attention to this month's cover artist, Anthony Jackson.



Weather Report

Night Passage (1980)

Already a trombonist at school, I decided to take up bass guitar and double bass too. On hearing this, a fellow trombonist lent me this album and said, 'You need to listen to the bass player in this group.' The bassist was, of course, Jaco Pastorius, and he completely blew me away! I felt so exhilarated, but also somewhat apprehensive, thinking, 'Blimey, will people expect me to play like this guy if I join a band?!' I especially love his playing on the title track and 'Rockin' In Rhythm' – no solos as such, just superb, melodic, incessant and sassy bass playing. Without question my favourite Weather Report album with my favourite Weather Report bassist.



Charles Mingus

Nostalgia In Times Square/The Immortal 1959 Sessions (1979)

This album was given to me by one of my brothers when I started to play the double bass. I guess he felt I needed a little inspiration. When discussing Mingus most people refer to his compositions, but make no mistake, Mingus was a monster bassist! He was a very muscular player, some would even say aggressive, but he also had amazing agility and dexterity, and was able to play uptempo bebop solos without breaking into a sweat. I love how he hollers and screams on this record, clearly attempting to work the rest of the band up into a frenzy! This may not be the best Mingus album, but it's the one that made me realise I wanted to play the double bass as much as I wanted to play the bass guitar.



Bill Evans

The Complete Village Vanguard Recordings (1961)

This was the first time I heard Scott LaFaro and I just couldn't comprehend how someone could play such incredible solos on such a cumbersome instrument as the double bass. In Scott's hands, bass playing took a huge evolutionary leap forward. He was a true virtuoso, and it's remarkable what he achieved in his tragically short life. Not only did I get to play Scott's restored Prescott bass that he used on this record while I was in New York a few years ago, I also had the pleasure of meeting two of his sisters, Helene and Lisa, and Manny, Helene's husband in California. I was asked to contribute to Helene's book, Jade Visions: The Life And Music Of Scott LaFaro, which was such a great honour for me.



Steve Khan

Modern Times (1982)

Anthony Jackson is my favourite living bass guitarist. His passion and artistry never fail to amaze and inspire me. He is, of course, a stunning fingerstyle player and was the person who got me into playing with my thumb while muting the strings with the palm of my hand (which I do almost exclusively with Jools), but it's his playing with a pick and a flanger that really floors me. It's simply the best sound I've heard any bass guitarist produce from the instrument. It's not just his sound, it's what he plays and how he plays it, but don't take my word for it – go buy all the albums he's on with Steve Khan and you'll hear why Anthony Jackson is recognized as being one of the most phenomenal bass guitarists on the planet.



Chaka Khan

What Cha' Gonna Do For Me (1981)

Many years ago I lovingly transcribed all of Anthony Jackson's basslines from this album. Then, in the mid 90s, I was fortunate enough to play with Chaka Khan on TV, but because she wanted to sing 'I'm Every Woman' and 'Ain't Nobody' (neither of which Anthony played on) I never did get to play Anthony's parts with her. Doing your own transcriptions is never a waste of time, though, and for me, they've been a crucial part of my musical development. Anthony's playing is so creative on this record, which is a remarkable achievement considering the commerciality of the material.

To find out more about Dave visit
www.daveswiftbass.com