

LOWDOWN

FROM THE EDITOR



BILL LEIGH

REWARDS & RECOGNITION

I'M NOT SURE, BUT WHEN I STARTED AT THE BOTTOM of the BP masthead in late 1995, I doubt I gave much consideration to the potential rewards of working here. Honestly, I was just happy to have a job, let alone one that had something to do with music. Sure, it was great to work for the group of magazines I grew up reading, but it took me a few years to grasp how meaningful BASS PLAYER is to people, and how rewarding that can be for those who work on it. Today, the benefits remain sharply clear, even amid the demanding work requirements and resource pressures typical of most corporate jobs. It's immensely enriching to interact with all kinds of players and help capture and distill their ideas and experiences in order to enrich others. It's certainly satisfying to bring overlooked yet culturally important stories to light, and it is delightful and often thought-provoking to hear from passionate readers whose playing, gear knowledge, or musical sense have been impacted positively or negatively by BP.

The richest reward, however, is probably the least obvious and the most common: working with my fellow staffers. It's a lot like being in a band, especially one that has played together for a while. You learn from each other, develop camaraderie, and grow musically as you cop bits of your bandmates' style and refine your voice in how you react to them. While I've learned so much from everyone I've worked with at BP, I feel especially fortunate to have seen how each member of the current long-time lineup—Chris Jisi, Greg Olwell, Jonathan Herrera, and Brian Fox—has helped shape BP's editorial personality through their individual voices, values, tastes, and tendencies.

A rhythm section with a strong, collectively developed style is never quite the same when a key player departs. This month we're saying goodbye to one of our key players, Greg Olwell. Greg joined the BP band about a year after I did, first as Administrative Assistant, then as Editorial Assistant and Assistant Editor. He has always been the get-stuff-done guy, meaning that he became the de facto Managing Editor well before he got the title. You could say that Greg has been BASS PLAYER's bass player. "He's the glue," Chris Jisi remarked after I broke the news, using the oft-used description given to super-supportive bassists. And there's a good chance you've experienced Greg's adhesive qualities, too. If you've ever asked us a question via e-mail, MySpace, or the bass-player.com forum, it was likely Greg who answered it. If you've contributed an article, it was Greg who kicked your butt about meeting a deadline, then made sure you

were taken care of at invoice time. If you've enjoyed the steady increase in articles on upright players, you have Greg—our resident doubler—to thank for nudging us in that direction. Stylistically, Greg's contributions to BP's editorial voice have been rooted in his exacting adherence to accepted conventions, his encyclopedic knowledge of instruments, and a brain that's packed full of easily accessed editorial history. No one glues like Greg glues; so we'll have to figure out just how to hold it together without him. Best wishes, friend.

JUST BEFORE WE STARTED WORKING ON THIS ISSUE

in earnest, I skipped town to attend the South By Southwest Music conference in Austin, Texas, where I hustled among thousands of attendees trying to catch hundreds of bands in four days. (This intensive experience made for some interesting trendspotting; check out my observations on page 20 and at livefrom.music-player.com/bleigh.) Perhaps the most interesting thing I saw wasn't a band at all. Denny Tedesco, son of super-prolific session guitarist Tommy Tedesco, premiered his documentary film, *The Wrecking Crew*, about his father and the other musicians who, as part of the go-to group of Los Angeles studio pros, played on countless cuts in the '60s and early '70s. (Of course it was Greg Olwell who hipped me to this happening.)

At once heartfelt filial tribute and splendid historical document, *The Wrecking Crew* is reminiscent of the 2002 film about the Funk Brothers, *Standing in the Shadows of Motown*, which was based on Allen "Dr. Licks" Slutsky's James Jamerson book. Both tell the stories of musicians who were often heard, but rarely known. While James Jamerson and the Funk Brothers in Detroit were dishing up a fat and flavorful pie-slice of signature-sounding pop R&B, the Wrecking Crew—with bassists Joe Osborn, Carol Kaye, Ray Pohlman, Lyle Ritz, Chuck Berghofer, and Bob West—made a smorgasbord of records that spanned the reaches of rock & roll style. Their largely uncredited performances were on records by the Beach Boys, the Mamas & the Papas, Sam Cooke, the Tijuana Brass, Sonny & Cher, the Byrds, the Chipmunks, and hundreds more. I caught the film's third and final SXSW showing, which included an informative Q&A with Denny. (*Guitar Player's* Darrin Fox cornered Denny for an interview, too; you can watch it at livefrom.music-player.com/dfox.) When I spoke to Denny, he was still working on the film's distribution, so keep your eyes out for this one. When *The Wrecking Crew* does show at a theater near you, you won't want to miss it.

BP



BASS PLAYER's bass player, Greg Olwell gives props to James Jamerson.



Esperanza Spalding photographed in Barcelona, Spain, by Johann Sauty. Esperanza is pictured with the bass she uses in Europe, a 3/4-size Strunal bass that is also frequently used by Orlando "Cachaïto" López, nephew of Israel "Cachao" López.