

On this album, I used a lot of  $\text{min}7\flat 5$  and  $7\text{sus}4$  chords. I love the sound of those chords, and I feel they are terribly underused in heavy rock.

ilkshake-thick power chords, and then the phased, slippery leads and straight-ahead arpeggiated solos. In your pre-Mr. Big days, you were using an ADA MP-1 tube rack preamp, which had something like 128 presets. How do you approach tone selection now? Do you have a standard set of, say, 10 or 15 go-to tones, or do you just dial things up from scratch with each song?

I used the same amp and just a few guitars for almost the whole record. I mostly use pedals to change sounds. I saw Frank Marino play a club show a few years ago, and he had one of the best guitar sounds I've heard in a long time. I used to listen to Mahogany Rush Live all the time when I was a kid, and Frank was legendary

for having this giant pedalboard. I still love the way pedals sound in front of an amp, so that's what I do. Some of my new pedal discoveries on this album were two overdrives by Majik Box. One is a Venom Boost, and the other one was a prototype with no name. I used them for the whole record, so they're going to put them together into one box and make a new signature pedal for me called the Fuzz Universe. It's a good name, I think!

I also used a HomeBrew Electronics UFO fuzz octave pedal, a HomeBrew THC chorus, a HomeBrew CPR compressor and Detox EQ for clean stuff, a Cry Baby 535Q wah, and, of course, the Phase 90 and Airplane Flanger. And lots of Velcro to hold it all together.

The beginning of "Blue Orpheus" sounds a bit like a Brian May tribute. Did you intend it that way? Also, the main verse guitar tones seem to have more of a fusion feel than I've heard in your past work. What was the inspiration there?

That's a Todd Rundgren song that was originally all vocals. I tried to stay true to Todd's arrangement, but I used guitars instead of voices. And I'm happy anytime I can sound like Brian May. The verse was challenging for me, because I wanted to use the cleanest sound possible but still have sustain. I ended up using my HomeBrew ►►

