

two years later, mined a similar vein, but included more original songs.

On this year's *Last Day In Paradise* [Magnatude], Skolnick, double-bassist Nathan Peck, and drummer Matt Zebroski continue their compositional expansion, penning seven of the album's ten songs between them. One of the covers is a Latinized version of Testament's "Practice What You Preach"—which Skolnick co-wrote back in 1989—and Rush's "Tom Sawyer" and Ozzy Osbourne's "Revelation (Mother Earth)" also get jazz treatments.

In addition to his Trio work, Skolnick performs with the Trans-Siberian Orchestra, and has rejoined Testament.

"The Testament reunion started out as just doing some fun shows for old time's sake, but, for me, it was a big awakening," enthuses Skolnick. "I had no idea how many young guitar players there were out there who love the Testament albums I played on. One reason the Trio covered 'Practice' is because a lot of fans have said hearing that song was when they discovered I had a different voice on guitar. The song meant a lot

to me during the Testament years, and it still means a lot to me now."

Describe the process of finding your jazz tone after playing metal.

At first, I tried playing jazz lines with more of a rock sound, and then I realized that to play electric jazz, you really need to have a foundation in acoustic jazz. I could figure out solos by Randy Rhoads and Eddie Van Halen, but I couldn't grasp what John Scofield or Mike Stern were doing because I wasn't grounded in traditional jazz harmony. I had to study players such as Jim Hall and Wes Montgomery, and while I was learning jazz, I went for a more traditional jazz tone. Later, I developed a tone that felt modern, which allowed me to apply some of my rock techniques, and not feel like I was playing music from the '50s.

Your tones on *Last Day* are more diverse and generally a little brighter than those on the first two Trio albums.

The previous recordings were done with just a Tech 21 Trademark 60, and I was going for a more traditional sound. But for the new album, I wanted to get more experimental.

I used a vintage Fender Vibrolux in addition to my Trademark 60, and we blended the two tones together. To get the early-'70s Black Sabbath sound on "Western Sabbath Stomp," I used a vintage Marshall that was at the studio. Also, in addition to my Heritage H-575 jazz guitar, I used a reissue '60 Gibson Les Paul goldtop and a Heritage H-150 solidbody on a few songs, and we overdubbed a few layers of 12-string on "Mercury Retrograde."

Did you try other jazz guitars before you settled on the Heritage?

Yes. I bought a blonde '76 Gibson L-5 that I play while practicing and composing, but I almost never play it out because it's my most valuable guitar. I mainly bought the Heritage because, living in New York, I have to take cabs and the subway a lot. The Heritage is a great guitar, but it's more expendable than my L-5. At this point, I'm so used to it that it feels right, and it has become my sound.

Are there any essential pedals that you carry around in cabs and on the subway?

One of my favorites is an Ernie Ball

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