

TAKE FIVE

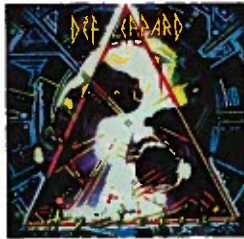
Every month a bassist reveals five albums that changed their world

Jonny Thornton, Night by Night

Melodic rockers Night By Night have more than a touch of 80s stadium rock in their DNA, and looking at the five albums selected by bassist Jonny Thornton below, it's no mystery how this sound found its way into the band's work. Evidently, size matters – with big hair, big shoulder-pads and big bass-lines gaining Thornton's admiration. What's not to like?



Toto
Toto IV (1982)
This is the first album I remember hearing, and I'm still listening to it today. Although it marked the crossover of bass players for Toto (Porcaro replacing Hungate), the bass-lines here are what shine through – solid, clever and impressive. I think the hallmark of a good bass player is keeping things flowing, only letting your tricks out of the bag at the right point. This album is perfect for that. The slap/groove on the fading outro of 'Lovers In The Night' is a great example of subtle-but-impressive.



Def Leppard
Hysteria (1987)
I think Rick Savage is the perfect bassist for a rock/pop band. He's a brilliant player, songwriter, singer and a frontman in his own right. Some of my favourite moments on this album are in the fusion of bass and synth, like the verses of 'Women'. The 'swell' or 'heartbeat' is bordering on futuristic and, although it's simple in terms of the actual notes played, it's immensely infectious, not to mention effective. Rick is the quintessential bassist – solid, driving and highly musical.



Aerosmith
Pump (1989)
Tom Hamilton epitomises everything I love about rock bassists – solid, bluesy and great at dropping in suave runs. The intro of 'Voodoo Medicine Man' is a good example. To me, his playing perfectly bridges the gap between the guitars and drums – he's the backbone of it all. There are some old-school walking bass-lines on 'Young Lust' and 'My Girl', which I spent hours learning, as well as a brief but notable bit of slapping on 'Love in an Elevator'.



Extreme
Pornograffitti (1990)
This album got me through my shifts at Somerfield! Pat Badger seems to be the most overlooked bassist I can think of. He's groovy, aggressive, flashy, and a master at holding the band together. Even when following a fast guitar lick, there's not that 'drop' which can occur when there's only one guitar part. He not only nails the bass/drum synthesis but also the bass/guitar synthesis. I love the funk element of his playing, like the riffs in 'Decadence Dance' and 'Get The Funk Out'.



Mr Big
Lean Into It (1991)
Billy Sheehan changed how I approach bass playing. He taught me that there are no rules. His style of playing makes him sound like a guitarist, trapped in the body of a bass player, who longs to be a drummer. There are the obvious big moments, like the renowned 'mechanically assisted' guitar/bass harmony solo, but it's Billy's use of thirds/chords that I love the most. For example, the post-solo verse on 'My Kind Of Woman' is pure genius. This album still blows me away with its intensity.