

sometimes tune pairs of strings in harmony, instead of in unisons or octaves. In 'Cinema Show' I tune the acoustic so that the top strings are D and A, rather than having them both at E. You can get lovely sounds, but you're rather limited in that it's often hard to play minor chords. If you play in the right style, though, it works well. Did you employ an open tuning on 'Afterglow'?

No. I just played up rather high. It's difficult to tell by listening, so if I hadn't done it myself, I might think it was an open tuning. Do you break many strings as a result of all the retuning?

I hardly ever break strings. I change my bass strings fairly often - every third gig or so. But the electric 12-string sets can stay on for a fairly long time. The acoustics need new strings a bit more often; same with the 6-string leads. They're changed every month.

What kind of strings do you use now?

On the bass, I have Rotosound Swing bass strings, and on the electric guitars I use Rotosounds as well. They're gauged from about an .008 on the top down to a .042 or .046. On the 12-strings they're a bit heavier, starting on a .009 and going down to about a .050. I'm not sure what all the gauges are in between, because I worked out the ones I wanted quite a while back, and the roadies change them most of the time. Also, when I'm in the studio, I experiment with different gauges in order to find just the right sound to put on tape. Do the thicker strings on the 12-strings afford a fuller sound?

I play a lot of chords, and I believe the heavier they are, the better. Then there's less rattle and a nicer tone. I also prefer a wound octave A string. I have found that an unwound A comes through too prominently when I'm picking. Do you fingerpick?

Only on the acoustics, and not very much then. For most of my guitar and bass work, I use plastic Flatpicks that my roadies get for me. They're similar to a Fender medium-gauge. I don't really like nylon picks because they don't have the same snap to them.

Do you find that you have a heavy touch on the guitar as a result of playing bass?

Not really. You see, I was originally a guitarist, and I write most of my songs on the guitar. In fact, when we're off the road, I seldom play the bass, because it doesn't seem to be the kind of thing you just sit around and play by yourself.

When you became Genesis' main guitarist upon Steve Hackett's departure, were you apprehensive about your abilities as a lead player?

It was scary, but it was also a challenge. And I really enjoyed the challenge. I've always played lead on my own, so it wasn't that drastic a change. I just found that it was necessary to get into the technique again.

Now that you perform double duty as a guitarist and a bassist, do you practice more? I tend to practice enough by writing new songs. I don't really sit down and play exercises. But I work with my guitars plenty. Also, before each concert I spend about



learned to cope with feedback.

What other equipment changes had you made?

I'd got a bin-and-horn speaker setup; it was a three-way system with deep reflex cabinets for the bass guitar and Taurus bass pedals, plus a high-frequency horn and a Crown amp. I found that the Taurus pedals were also a great improvement over my old ones. They're designed so that if you make a tone or octave change while a note is sounding, the change won't occur until the next note is hit. That's a very handy.

What prompted you to play bass pedals in the first place?

There was a period of about six months in 1970, just after Anthony left, when we were a four-piece. I was playing some guitar and began filling in with bass pedals, while Tony was filling some of the lead lines on electric piano. Although we didn't have to work like that for very long, we learnt a lot. Suddenly I had to cover two guitar parts in what had been essentially a two-guitar group. By the time Steve joined, we were just beginning to make it work.

Were you employing any effects with your bass?

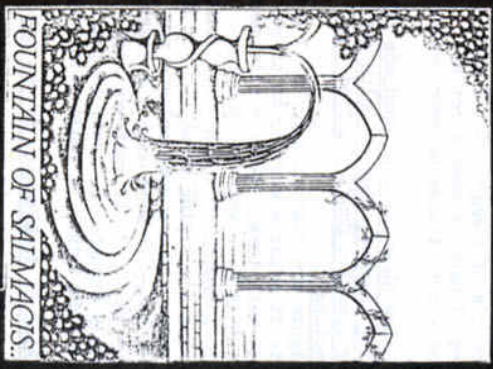
I always used a wah-wah pedal - more as a tone changer - and a fuzz box. There were so many different fuzz boxes that I find it hard to remember them all. For a long time, I had a Marshall fuzz.

Did you use your Rickenbacker bass in the recording of The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway?

Throughout the album I used a Micro-Prets 6-string bass. The company that made it only lasted a short time. It's a really great bass, and I still use it - primarily for mellower parts, such as on 'Snowbound'. It has its obvious faults. It can't stand up to a lot of use - you can't hit it very hard - but it has a nice sort of old, woody, hollow sound, even though it's a solid body. And at high volume levels it tends to feed back. It's one of those basses that has tons of character, but it's difficult to play. It sounds great with fuzz, too. Wasn't it difficult to adjust to the narrower string spacing on the 6-string bass?

Yes. Not only did I find that the strings were closer together, but I also found that the scale length was much shorter than that of the Rickenbacker. But I always like a change, and every once in a while I get bored playing guitars.

The Micro-Prets is nice for playing



Genesis - Water Themes by Rob Baxter



A Trick of the Tail
Genesis
Aico SD 36-129

Voyage of the Acolyte
Steve Hackett
Chrysalis CHR 1112

by Kris Nicholson

The release of guitarist Steve Hackett's solo album offered assurance that Genesis still had enough talent to compensate for the departure of singer Peter Gabriel. *A Trick of the Tail*, the first post-Gabriel Genesis LP, confirms it, surprisingly drawing most of its strength from the writing of keyboardist Tony Banks, who contributed to all eight of the songs.

Voyage of the Acolyte invites comparison to Genesis, of course, because the band's drummer, Phil Collins, and bassist/guitarist, Michael Rutherford, assist Hackett. The differences lie in Hackett's misty tenor vocals on "The Harlot," and Sally Oldfield's fluid soprano on "Star of Sirius."

Hackett's record is organized around Tavat themes. "Ace of Wands," for instance, opens in a frenzy of guitar reminiscent of King Crimson's Robert Fripp. Like Fripp, Hackett uses the guitar to create sound effects; unlike him, he stresses clarity and fluid note sequences to build instrumental drama. From that base, Hackett builds like textures of acoustic guitar and swarming beds of mellotron occasionally pierced by fuzzy electric riffs. Though his music tends to be more abrupt than the group's, *A Trick of the Tail* is for the most part equally resourceful.

On *A Trick of the Tail*, Hackett backs off from sound-effect guitar to blend with Banks's keyboards. They trade solos, but it's Banks's assortment of piano, synthesizer and mellotron that

chords. One song in particular, "Back In N.Y.C.," was written on the six-string bass. I found I could get a really lovely sound when I played a simple D chord one octave up. The sound is not like a guitar or a bass - more like a harp. It's practically indefinable.

How long have you had a pedalboard for your effects? Ever since we did *A Trick of the Tail* in 1975. It's designed so that I can easily re-arrange the existing effects or add whatever I want. If I want to remove a box, it's no problem, whereas if I had a fixed pedalboard, I couldn't be as flexible. Around the time of *A Trick of the Tail*, Roland came out with their Chorus Ensemble unit, and we used one on just about everything on the album (laughs). It sounds great actually. It gives everything size - makes it all seem bigger.

What other effects do you have on the pedalboard besides the Chorus Ensemble?

I have two Roland stereo volume pedals and two Roland fuzz boxes, an MXR Flanger, a couple of MXR 10-band graphic equalizers, an MXR Digital Delay, and two Danez Tone Bender fuzzes. Then I have a couple of direct boxes for sending my signal out to the PA and the monitors. I also have a Yamaha 12-input/4-output mixer.

What kind of amps do you use onstage? I have a Peavey head that I use as a preamp; I plug its output into my mixer. I also have a couple of Crown DC300A power amps and a crossover. Then I have two cabinets with a pair of 12" speakers in each for the bottom end, and two cabinets with four 12s each for the treble.

How do you keep track of which effects should be turned on at various times?

It's not that difficult. Occasionally, at the beginning of a tour, I'll write down a couple of changes that I must make between songs - whenever I have to make a lot of

changes - but it soon becomes second nature.

Your stage show involves hundreds of lighting changes, some of which are rather drastic. Don't you find that distracting?

The lights are distracting, but I get used to it after a week or so of rehearsal with them. Luckily it's never really that dark when I'm playing guitar, although it's sometimes rather dark when I'm trying to set up for the next song. It's a compromise - you have to learn to work with the lighting guy and tell him what you need. Strangely enough, if I were to play in broad daylight, it would seem even odder.

What kind of double-neck do you use now?

It's called a Shergold. Around the time of *A Trick of the Tail* I told the people at Shergold that I needed a 4-string bass and a 12-string guitar that could either be used as separate instruments or combined as a double-

Musical notation for the song "Back in N.Y.C." by Steve Hackett. The notation is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked "Alto 3/4".

The notation includes several measures with the following annotations:

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Genesis

neck. I also told them that it had to be designed so that I could disconnect the two in order to attach differently tuned 12-strings, one bass, and one 6-string guitar. The bass is the foundation, and any of the other guitars can be attached to it.

How do the two halves connect?
One half has a 6-pin connector for all the electrical works, and the other side has a matching receptacle. You just place both instruments together and tighten a pair of huge screws. Then, on the bass there's a 5-pin Cannon plug for running the stereo guitar and stereo bass signals out to my pedalboard. The 12-strings and the bass are really nice, but I rarely use the six-string. I have my three 12-strings tuned up before each concert, so all I have to do is give the double-neck to my roadie when a different tuning is called for, and he changes them.

Is the SherGold very heavy?
No - at least considering the size of it. I suppose it may be a little lighter than my Rickenbacker double-neck, but I haven't played the Rick for quite some time. At the beginning of each tour I have headaches and a stiff shoulder for about a week, but it's not that bad.

What other guitars do you use?
My favourite at the moment is an Ibanez Artist Eq. I also have a couple of Fender Stratocasters - new ones. I prefer new ones. It's terrible, I go against the grain. But I'm not really a guitar collector. I'm more interested in the sound I get, even if it means digging holes in a guitar. My main Strat has a preamp circuit in it now, so that the tone doesn't change if I adjust the volume. But I don't use it for distortion.

What kind of acoustic do you take on the road?
I leave my Zematris at home so it doesn't get ruined. I now use Alvarez acoustics, and every three or four years I replace them. An acoustic just won't last forever on the road, because it's subjected to all the changes in temperature and humidity.

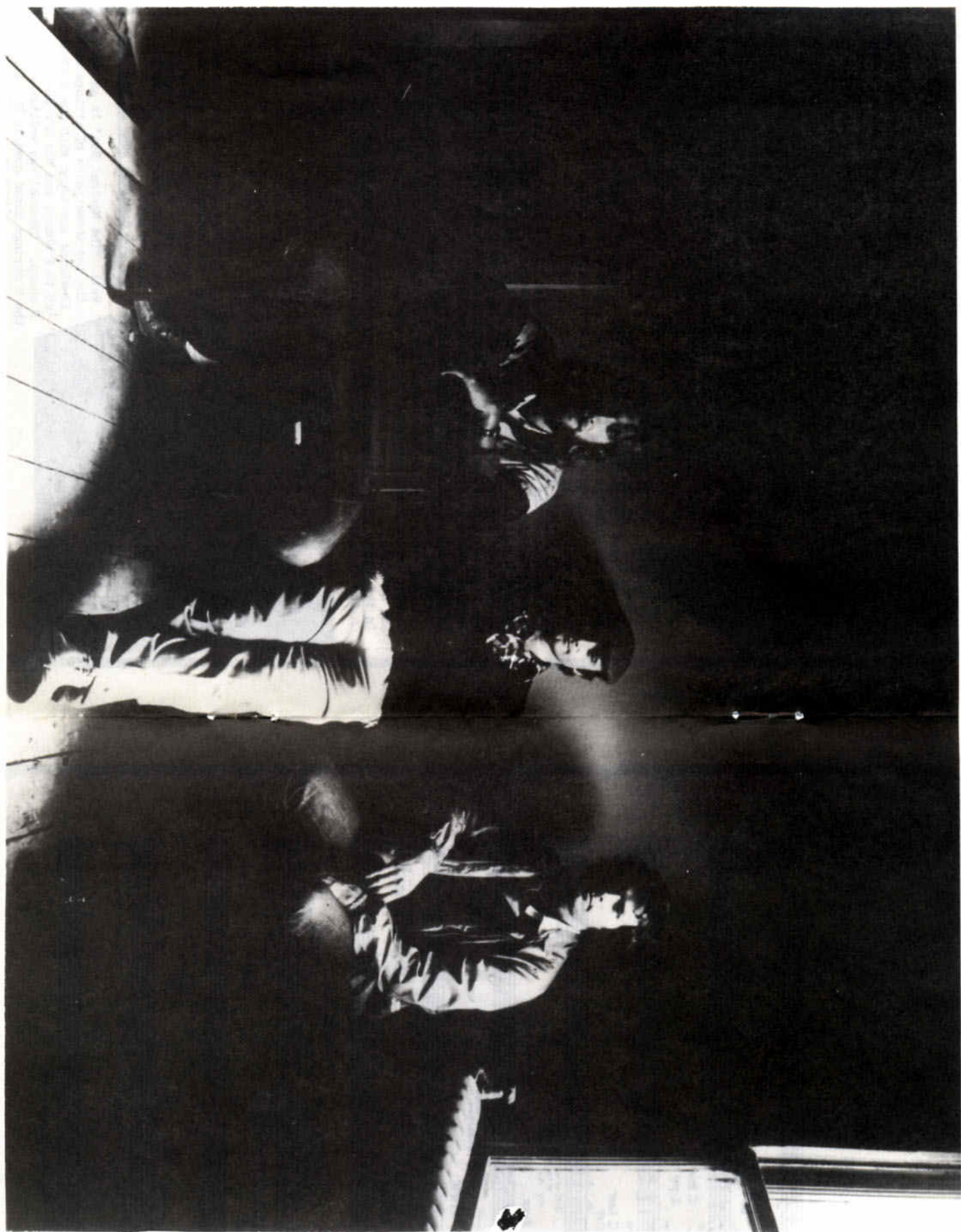
In the course of a typical set, how many different tunings do you use?
On the SherGold, three. But overall I use six or seven, including other guitars.

It's a pain in the ass, really. I mean, I love writing with different tunings, and it's great for recording, but when it comes to playing live I either have to adapt my playing to standard tunings, or use the unusual tunings. And if I use the standard tuning, it never quite sounds as good. There's a magic in open tunings - a low D or intricate chords that you normally aren't able to get.

Can you describe some of your tunings?

Well, 'The Musical Box' is an odd one, the top three pairs of strings on the 12-string are tuned with the E strings up to F sharp, and the G's down to F sharp. 'Squonk' was written with all the E strings tuned down to D. Also, I could on page 12





Genesis abacas