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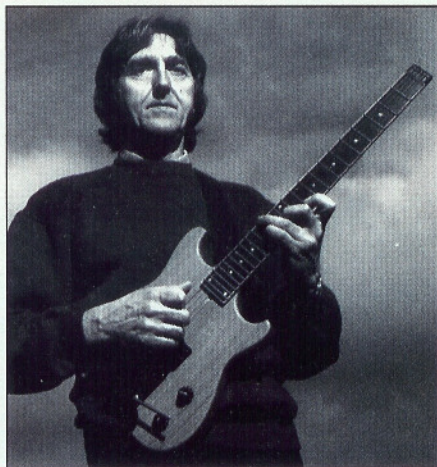
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Pickups



RICK GOULD

"I have to keep learning," asserts Allan Holdsworth. "That's what I live for."

Allan Holdsworth

"My sound is like my personality," says Allan Holdsworth. "I can't just change it." But for *The Sixteen Men of Tain* [Gnarly Geezer], the guitarist who first turned heads 30 years ago with astounding legato lines and otherworldly phrasing *did* try to change his sonic environment. "I added trumpet and acoustic bass to this album," he explains. "And those instruments brought a certain softness to my music that I had never exploited before."

Holdsworth also turned to modeling amps to reproduce his unmistakable tone—employing a Yamaha DG80 1x12 and a 1x12 cabinet. While the lead tones hammered out by his chambered Carvin signature guitar were miked, he used a Simon Systems D.I. to record his clean rhythm sounds direct. "I've never liked distortion," he admits, "but I need it to get sustain. Some amps sound so hairy that I want to give them a shave."

Although maintaining his identity is important to him, Holdsworth always pushes himself to evolve. "When I'm improvising, I *always* want to play something new," he says. "Even if I know a riff I played in the past was good, I purposely avoid going back to it. Change is *crucial* to me."

—SHAWN HAMMOND

Paul O'Dette

Extra strings, alternate tunings, and tablature. No, it's not a current Korn tune. It's a 1590 John Dowland composition as performed by lutenist Paul O'Dette—a giant in an intercontinental early music fraternity where "R&B" stands for "Renaissance and Baroque." O'Dette, director of the early music program at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New

York, has recorded a staggering 100 albums—including 25 as a solo performer. His current release, *Portrait* [Harmonia Mundi], smokes with daredevil runs that would leave shred fans speechless, and enough mind-blowing counterpoint to startle Tuck Andress.

But what does early music have to offer the modern guitarist? "There is something musically universal in the Renaissance lute repertoire," says O'Dette. "It has the same kind of improvisational qualities found in jazz or rock. You must use your imagination to come up with different licks—which is much different than classical music, where the composer tells you every note to play. In addition, early music is based on dance rhythms and harmonies that have much more in common with modern folk and rock than mainstream classical music."

The ancestor of the modern guitar, the lute evolved from the Turkish oud, an instrument with four courses of unison strings made of sheep gut. The lute's gut strings are played fingerstyle in *p, i, m, a* fashion—like those of a classical guitar. However, O'Dette discovered that early lutenists plucked fast runs by alternating the thumb and first finger (*p* and *i*), not the first two fingers (*i* and *m*) used in contemporary technique. And, as tablature was invented in the 1500s for the lute, O'Dette usually performs with sheet music in the original tab.

In concert, the lutenist covers the 1500s to the first half of the 1700s, and tells the audience about the history of the pieces, as well as the theory and technique. "In early music," says



HANVA CHILALA

"There's a joke that says if a lute player lives to be 80, he spent 40 years of his life tuning," laughs Paul O'Dette.

O'Dette, "the player takes the tune's framework, like a jazz chart, and then turns it into a piece of their own. But you can't simply sit down and jam. You need to have played enough of the different styles of early music to know what types of things are idiomatic. Then you push the envelope as far as you can."

—WHEAT WILLIAMS