

The 100 GREATEST GUITARISTS OF ALL TIME!

Chosen by the 100 greatest

living guitarists

NICE ONE

DAVY O'LIST

By Gary Lucas

David O'List is one of the greatest – though, sadly, largely unsung – avant-rock guitarists of all time, whose pioneering fretwork on The Nice's first two albums on Immediate (*The Thoughts of Emerlist Davjack* and *Ars Longa Vita Brevis*) and in the very first edition of Roxy Music (largely unrecorded) should by all rights have earned him a place of honour in the guitar-slinger pantheon. I would rate him up there with Syd Barrett and Jimi Hendrix in this regard. His incendiary, borderline psychotic, polytonal explorations cut through the crap of every other guitarist *du jour* in their sheer audacious dazzle: razor-sharp lines etched in blue viciousness that explode into feedback and Binson Echorec mayhem.

Listen to *Dawn* on the first Nice album – astonishing in its technical mastery, panoply of voicings, and variegated tonal palette. The hammered-on chromatic runs up and down the fretboard at the end just sent me in 1968 – still do. Check the heroic, soaring space guitar and majestic loopiness (reiteration of sequential passages in audacious octave leaps, for example) throughout *The Cry Of Eugene* from the same album. I don't know how he does it to this day. He just sounds nuts.

I wrote a fan letter in 1969 about Davy to *Disc & Music Echo* ('More coverage of David O'List' it read, basically) that David Fricke at *Rolling Stone* remembers reading back in the day. *Disc* ran Davy's picture along with my letter, too.

Gary Lucas headlines solo live at the London Jazz Cafe on Oct. 3rd with special guests. Visit www.garylucas.com



O'List (right):
"audacious".

Hammett:
"innovative".

ONE IN A MILLION KIRK HAMMETT

By *Ol Drake*

For me, Kirk Hammett is one of the greatest metal guitarists ever – and also one of the most underrated. The thing about his playing is that, while he can certainly shred, that's not all he does. Kirk has his own voice and style – and to me, that's instantly recognisable.

The problem is that everyone knows Metallica's songs so well that what he contributes is overlooked. More than that, people take him for granted. You walk into a guitar shop at any time, and the chances are you'll hear someone playing one of his solos, from a song like *One*. And there will always be a bright spark going: "That's just boring. Anyone can play that." The point is that not everyone can play what Kirk did on something like *One*, and he also came up with it in the first place. And the reason you always hear it being played is because it is just brilliant. But familiarity breeds contempt, as we know.

I first got to know his playing when I went with my brother to a guitar shop and got a book with the tabs for the *Ride The Lightning* album. I went home, started playing and was hooked. If I was to choose one song to suggest to someone who's never heard Kirk play before it would have to be *The Unforgiven*, from the *Black* album. His performance is just so innovative, and it features some of his best playing ever.

I think Kirk goes beyond being a great thrash guitarist, because his playing is so diverse. I'd love to hear how Exodus would have developed if Kirk had stayed with them, rather than joining Metallica. What might they have achieved with his talents?

The bottom line for me is that without his inspiration I wouldn't be in a band right now. So, thank you, Kirk Hammett.

Ol Drake is guitarist in thrash revivalists Evile. Their album Infected Nations is out now on Earache.



AFTERBURNER ALVIN LEE

By *Mick Mars*

You know, sometimes I feel I should've been true to myself as a guitar player and stuck with the blues. All bullshit aside, George Clinton, Bootsy Collins, Paul Butterfield, Mike Bloomfield, Alvin Lee, Jimi Hendrix – that stuff was the total shit for me. I was brought up on those players and they all influenced me in one way or the other.

When Bloomfield started getting too countrified for my liking, that's when I discovered Alvin Lee, and *Ten Years After*, of course. Alvin brought a real explosive side to the blues. Some people said they couldn't handle it, but I thought he was great.

Mick Mars is guitarist in Mötley Crüe. Their latest album Saint Of Los Angeles is out now.

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their top guitarists
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ADMIRABLE NELSON BILL NELSON

By *Brian Tatler*

Bill Nelson was one of my favourite guitarists in the 1970s. I used to listen to *Be Bop Deluxe* albums a lot, and Bill's solos always seemed very tasteful, not bluesy, just kind of soaring. I really liked his playing and some of it rubbed off on my technique, particularly songs such as *Jet Silver (And The Dolls Of Venus)*, *Maid In Heaven* and *Crying To The Sky* – they all had these fabulous, beautiful guitar solos in them. Bill was very fast and fluid for the time. He also named his albums after guitars – *Axe Victim*, *Sunburst Finish* and *Futurama*. Everything seemed to be guitar-related with Bill.

Diamond Head's triple-CD set, The MCA Years, is released on August 24.

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LIGHT YEARS AHEAD JEFF HEALEY

By *Philip Sayce*

I heard Jeff Healey's *See The Light* for the first time sitting in the supermarket car-park when I was 11. I was just overwhelmed. I literally punched the radio; I didn't know what else to do. That song completely turned me around. Then a few years later I jammed with Jeff on stage in Toronto and afterwards he asked me to join his band. I couldn't believe what I was hearing! So I got to study with one of the greatest electric blues players of all time.

I learned so much from him: what he could do with just one note, the vibrato that he had, the confidence that he always had when he went on stage. He was like a cat; whatever he did – and sometimes he'd take off in the most unexpected directions – he'd always land on his feet. So much of that has rubbed off on me. He really stretched me as a guitarist.

Philip Sayce's album Peace Machine is out now on Provogue.