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## **GUITAR TECHNIQUES MAGAZINE: DAVE KILMINSTER INTERVIEW**

*By Guitar Techniques Magazine | April, 2007*

Regular UK guitar magazine readers will know Dave Kilminster as one of the Guitar Techniques earliest contributors, one of its best-loved players and wittiest writers. They will probably also know that from time to time he joins the band of legendary prog keyboard player Keith Emerson to tread the world's boards and show his musical mettle.

Dave was Guitarist magazine's first Guitarist Of The Year back in 1990, has been a regular demonstrator for Vox at various trade shows here and abroad and even stands in for Guthrie Govan in his group The Fellowship, when GG is off on his own jaunts. For years he has also been a regular tutor at the Academy Of Contemporary Music (ACM) in Guildford, where he is one of the school's most popular figures.

On a GuitarBreak weekend in 2006 at which Dave was teaching, he leaked it out that he was awaiting the outcome of a 'big' audition. He didn't tell any more, but as this article will describe, it was with Pink Floyd bassist, singer and songwriter Roger Waters. The brief, it seems, was simple: 'We want you to sing and play just like Dave Gilmour...'

### **How did you hear about the Roger Waters gig?**

DK: My manager told me that Roger was looking for a new guitarist but I had some American dates in the book with Keith Emerson for that time so I was committed to those. Then about two days later I had an email from Keith's manager saying that the American dates had been cancelled. I took this as a sign that maybe I should go for an audition, so I phoned Snowy White to find out what they were after...

"Hello, it's Snowy here"... "Really, it's quite mild here" I thought, but resisted the temptation to say it! "Can you play and sing like Dave Gilmour"? He asks.... "Well, I've absolutely no idea, but I'll give it a go!"

So I recorded a demo CD of me playing and singing some classic Floyd tunes (I actually used the GT backing of Comfortably Numb) and drove it down to Andy Fairweather-Low's house. He didn't listen to it while I was there, but called me up on my way home saying it sounded great. It all depends on what Roger thinks though

### **And what did Roger think?**

DK: Well, a few days later I get a call from his manager asking if I can go down to a rehearsal studio in London at some unfeasibly early hour of the morning. And what a total disaster it was! More or less the whole band was there and after some brief introductions I plug my amp in and it's not working. I fiddled with it for a while and managed to get it going, and then I plug my borrowed acoustic in and that's not working either!

I'd also brought along two electrics for the audition, my black '73 Tele with 21 frets, and a 22-fret Mike Stern Yamaha that had been sent to me for a TV appearance that I was scheduled to do at LIPA (Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts) that coming weekend.

Why am I telling you this? Because we started off with Money (which I didn't realise I was expected to sing as well) and I was halfway through trying to play and sing the tune with the black Tele before I realised that I needed 22 frets to perform the solo on the record.

I stopped the song and switched guitars, but it was around this point that I was thinking to myself "I've really blown this... big time!"

We went through the tune again and I played the solo almost note for note, but really I was thinking, "Please, just dig a very big hole and bury me in it." I spoke to Roger on the way out and apologised for being totally unprepared and a bit crap.

As I left I also bumped into some guy that had flown over from America for the audition - he looked like he'd fit in perfectly, and I thought to myself, "You idiot... you really messed this one up!" I don't think anyone was more surprised than me to find that they actually liked me and I got the gig.

### **Did you then go straight into rehearsals?**

DK: Yeah, our two weeks of rehearsals took place at an old film studio out near Windsor, where they'd filmed a lot of the Hammer House of Horror movies... The first week went fine, but during the second I had a bit of a horror story of my own. My girlfriend had called me up saying that she was feeling really ill, so I drove back home to see her... she was burning up with a ridiculously high temperature, so I took her to the local hospital where they told her, "You're not going home tonight".

So for the whole of the last week of rehearsals I was commuting over 100 miles every day, driving to Windsor, playing all afternoon (and really struggling to concentrate), driving to the hospital in the evening, staying there all night, going home and collapsing. Fortunately she was diagnosed and cured, and they let her out just in time for her to attend our last day dress rehearsal...

### **That must have been a terrible distraction'**

DK: Well in a way it helped, because by the time we played our first 'warm-up' gig in front of about 66,000 people (which, by the way was broadcast live on Portuguese TV!) I was far too tired to be nervous. Ironically I did get to meet the rest of Pink Floyd during rehearsals though, as they were next door preparing for the Dave Gilmour tour. David was especially friendly, and he particularly smiled when I told him I was going to be his 'stunt double'.

### **Were you expected to carry a mountain of specialised Gilmour-type equipment?**

DK: I took along a load of guitars, pedals and stuff to the rehearsals - most of which were borrowed. At least my amps were sorted though. Paul Cornford had made me up some very cool Hellcat heads and cabs in black for the gig, which just looked and sounded totally amazing. He also kindly brought along a Ritchie Kotzen signature model Tele that, instead of a tone control has a switch that takes the middle position from series to parallel so you can get some very cool, clean tones. Even though it has a really chunky neck it seemed to be sonically perfect for the gig, so I took two of those and two Takamine acoustics, a six-string and a 12-string.

Roger wanted the sounds to be pretty close to the originals, and I know that Mr Gilmour uses loads of pedals, so I brought a huge collection of hardware, which I gradually managed to whittle down to a manageable chunk (Check out [davekilminster.com](http://davekilminster.com) under 'gear' for a detailed list of his guitars, amps and pedals used on the European and American tours). Paul's amps are so good that I really didn't need any distortion boxes, but I took along a Boss BD2 Blues Driver just for a different tone on one or two solos. A Boss Rotary Ensemble was also a pretty good purchase, as it did a passable impression of an old Uni-Vibe... and those very nice chaps at Dunlop sent me an MXR Phase 90 that sounded a lot like the effect heard on the intro chords to Breathe

### **You must have played some amazing gigs now - any that particularly stand out?**

DK: There've been so many amazing gigs, but the concert in Israel was very special. They don't get too many Western acts over there, and the media were referring to our concert as their 'Woodstock'.

We performed in a place called the Peace Village, about an hour away from Tel Aviv on the way to Jerusalem, and it was a totally unforgettable evening... lovely people... just a very special time.

For different reasons the Madison Square Gardens shows were special too, partly because of the Led Zep film The Song Remains The Same which was done there, and also for meeting John McEnroe, Phil Collins, Jeff Beck and Bruce Willis all in the same evening! And the three nights at the Hollywood Bowl were incredible... walking backstage and seeing all these pictures of Jimi Hendrix and The Beatles on the same stage. Then of course there was Hyde Park, where a lot of my family and friends came along... playing in Red Square outside the Kremlin in Moscow... on the banks of the Bosforus in Istanbul... the audiences in Canada... the Anfiteatro Arena di Verona, and Piazza Napoleone shows in Italy... our last US gig in Seattle (attended by Bob Dylan!) and hanging out with Eddie Vedder afterwards... There are just far too many highlights

### **Which numbers do you particularly enjoy playing?**

DK: Money is always fun. I get to sing that one, and for the first and third solos I double up with Snowy so it sounds a little more like the recorded version (which was double tracked). Have A Cigar is great too - there's a really cool solo at the end

of that one. I also love performing Time with its demonic sounding solo and funky vibe. And of course Comfortably Numb, which is almost a religious experience for a lot of the audience.

#### **Any repeatable road stories?**

DK: You definitely hear stuff backstage that you wouldn't normally hear on tour - things like "Roger hasn't sprayed the pig yet", and "The spaceman's leaking!"

I think one of my favourite moments happened the day after we played Red Square in Moscow. We'd gone out for a band dinner to this posh place called Cafe Pushkin, in a trendy part of town.

During dinner Roger and Andy Fairweather-Low were trying to remember the words to You'll Never Walk Alone, so Andy sings a line or two from the first verse "When you walk, through a storm" Immediately a waitress comes rushing over and informs him that singing is strictly forbidden in the restaurant. With that, Roger stands up and at the top of his voice starts singing the chorus... "WALK ON, WALK ON..." joined by everybody else at the table. Then we all march out of the restaurant, still singing very, very loudly! The staff are a little flustered, but the other diners seemed to find it quite amusing. I do love a bit of rock'n'roll anarchy!

#### **So what's next in the Kilminster calendar?**

DK: We have about another six months on the road with Roger, which started mid January in Australia. We'll be visiting New Zealand, Hong Kong, China, India, South America, and back into Europe in April - with two gigs at Earls Court in May. Roger has also very kindly given me permission to sell my solo album Scarlet on the next tour, too. Last year was totally amazing, but it looks like this one may be even better...