

## Bass Players

Rock music and jazz would not be the same without an insistent bass line. They say that good bass players are hard to find. We take them for granted sometimes, while the lead guitarist or drummer shows off his solos, the bass just does its job. These guys, and sometimes women, are usually the quiet ones that stand at the back. As Mick Jagger cavorted around, Bill Wyman looked vaguely bored.

One of the most accomplished players is Paul McCartney, respected by other musicians as one of the most melodic bass players around. Sting is also respected and being the leader in The Police, their reggae inspired songs tended to be bass driven. He is also extremely accomplished on the double bass. Early rock and roll and rockabilly used the double bass before the electric bass began to take over. Bill Black was an expert player on this, performing on many early Elvis Presley hits. His old instrument came up for auction and McCartney bought it.

Drum 'n' Bass is a recent innovation, which puts the bass guitar at the forefront. Sampling and computer programming can relay the bass sound but good, live bass players can't be beaten. Another outstanding player was Noel Redding, who played in the Jimi Hendrix Experience.

Jack Bruce came from a jazz background and went on to fame and glory in the supergroup Cream. Bruce, guitar hero Eric Clapton and drummer Ginger Baker took live rock music to another level. Baker came from the world of jazz too and these jazz influences gave Cream another dimension from other rock bands at the time. Bass players are just as necessary to jazz, from the double bass in a trio to a full band. The classic combination of piano, bass and drums is very simple and it works, as shown by the Oscar Peterson Trio.

Charlie Mingus is the most influential double bass player to come from jazz. Unusually, he led his own band that meant extended bass solos. Modern rock and folk musicians have been inspired by him and recorded their own versions of his compositions. Covers have been done by Joni Mitchell, Elvis Costello, Jeff Beck and Pentangle's Danny Thompson. Bass players also draw inspiration from the work done by bassist, Jaco Pastorius. He was a member of jazz group, Weather Report and perfected a technique of playing fretless electric bass. The bass keeps everyone on track, we don't appreciate it as much as we should and we'd quickly notice if that bass line wasn't there.