

THE 1991 BASSIST OF THE YEAR

**BASS**™

**P L A Y E R**



W

hen the first "Special Edition" of *Bass Player* hit the newsstands in late 1988, the cover artist was Geddy Lee.\* Now, nearly three years later, the winner of our first Bassist Of The Year poll is Geddy Lee.

¶ Like a good bass line, this result has reassuring symmetry: Geddy was one of the first rock bassists to be the focus of a major band, and his enduring role as the frontman of Rush has provided constant, visible proof that the bass player is no longer just "the fat boy in the

back" (to borrow a phrase from another high-profile bassist, Paul McCartney). ¶ Geddy has garnered many honors in his long career, including enshrinement in *Guitar Player's*

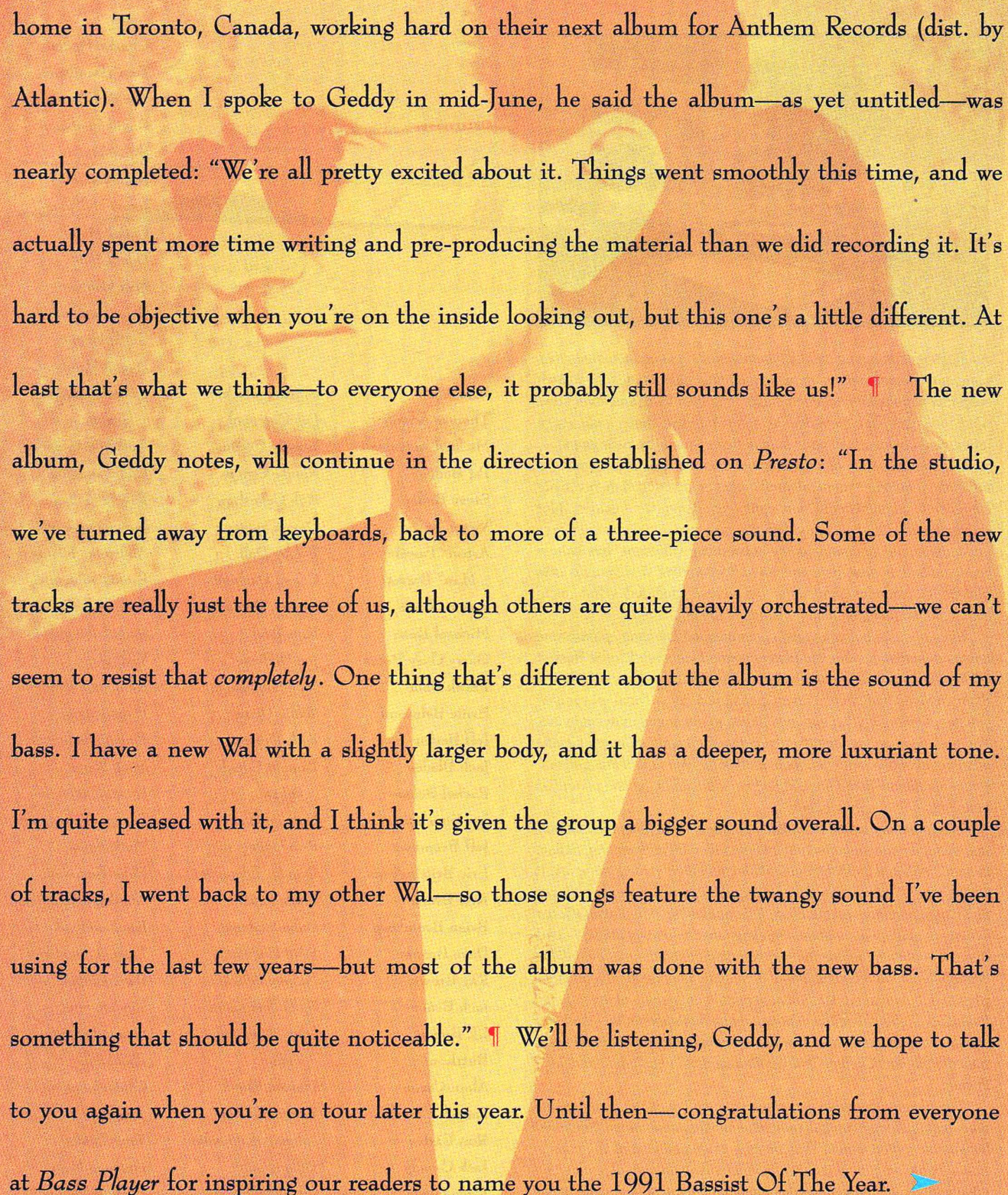
## GEDDY LEE

2. Muzz Skillings
3. Billy Sheehan
4. (tie) Stuart Hamm  
Will Lee
6. (tie) Flea  
Marcus Miller  
John Patitucci
9. Michael Manring
10. Victor Wooten

Gallery Of The Greats, but he remains modest and unassuming. When informed he was *BP's* first Bassist Of The Year, he said, "That's very gratifying, and it really means a lot. I'd like to thank all the people who voted for me—I hope I deserve it." ¶ Interestingly, Lee won this honor during a period of low visibility. Since late last year, the members of Rush have been at

\* Sorry, Special Edition 1 is out of print and no longer available.

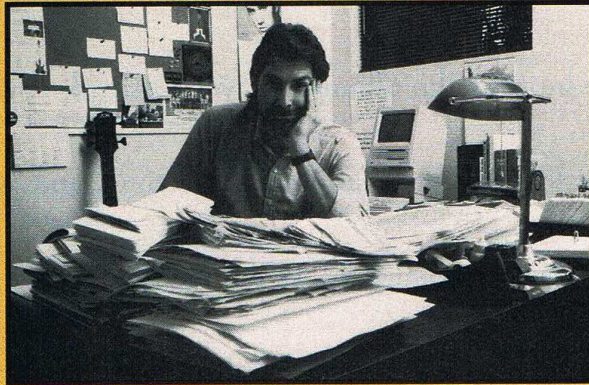




home in Toronto, Canada, working hard on their next album for Anthem Records (dist. by Atlantic). When I spoke to Geddy in mid-June, he said the album—as yet untitled—was nearly completed: “We’re all pretty excited about it. Things went smoothly this time, and we actually spent more time writing and pre-producing the material than we did recording it. It’s hard to be objective when you’re on the inside looking out, but this one’s a little different. At least that’s what we think—to everyone else, it probably still sounds like us!” ¶ The new album, Geddy notes, will continue in the direction established on *Presto*: “In the studio, we’ve turned away from keyboards, back to more of a three-piece sound. Some of the new tracks are really just the three of us, although others are quite heavily orchestrated—we can’t seem to resist that *completely*. One thing that’s different about the album is the sound of my bass. I have a new Wal with a slightly larger body, and it has a deeper, more luxuriant tone. I’m quite pleased with it, and I think it’s given the group a bigger sound overall. On a couple of tracks, I went back to my other Wal—so those songs feature the twangy sound I’ve been using for the last few years—but most of the album was done with the new bass. That’s something that should be quite noticeable.” ¶ We’ll be listening, Geddy, and we hope to talk to you again when you’re on tour later this year. Until then—congratulations from everyone at *Bass Player* for inspiring our readers to name you the 1991 Bassist Of The Year. ➤



## A NOTE TO THE READERS



AS EDITOR, I ENJOYED TRACKING THE RESULTS AND READING THE comments enclosed with many of the ballots. Since I can't respond personally to each letter, I'd like to thank everyone who took the time to write. You can be sure that I read *every* letter, and I appreciate your suggestions (even the rude ones).

On the question of whether we should continue to have a vote for a single "inspirational" player or establish multiple categories, the sentiment was split right down the middle. (Not going to make this easy for us, are you?) Many readers applauded the decision to try something different, but others complained it was just too hard to narrow it down to one player. The debate continues: we haven't decided what to do next year, so feel free to send in more ideas.

Many of the ballots were accompanied by long, passionate letters describing why the player named deserved to be Bassist Of The Year. Some of these were quite moving, especially when they praised the inspiration provided by a local player or teacher, someone who was not likely to get more than one vote. For that reason, we decided to print the name of *every* bassist who received a vote as well as listing the top vote-getters. Every musician listed should feel proud that he or she provided inspiration to a fellow bassist.

What did we learn from this? It wasn't startling that Geddy Lee won, or that established players like Billy Sheehan, Stuart Hamm, Will Lee, and Marcus Miller received strong support. It *was* surprising to see the energetic outpouring for Muzz Skillings and to watch Flea, Michael Manring, and Victor Wooten pile up votes. Seeing such innovative—and diverse—players make the top ten demonstrates the incredible flexibility of the electric bass. (I'm sure Leo Fender would be pleased.) Acoustic bassists weren't left out, either: John Patitucci—noted for his Akoustic *and* Elektrik skills—led the upright contingent, and the list of vote-getters included such masters as Ron Carter, Charlie Haden, Dave Holland, and Milt Hinton.

The biggest surprise was the universality of the poll: ballots were mailed in from all over the world, and more than 200 bassists received votes. This proves, once again, that the bass is not a look-at-me instrument, but one that brings out the admirable qualities of selflessness and mutual support in its players. On behalf of the *BP* staff, I'd like to thank everyone who voted—you've inspired *us*.

—Jim Roberts