



STEVE MORSE

Blazing Ahead with Deep Purple

While many classic British bands have hung up their spurs, Deep Purple is not only fully active after 45 years, but absolutely thriving. The group regularly tours around the planet and features rock and roll icons like front man Ian Gillan, bassist Roger Glover, and drummer Ian Paice. On guitar, Steve Morse has been with the group for close to two decades and is credited with bringing the mighty Purp to new levels of excitement and technical finesse. Its latest studio album is called *Now What?*

The opening track, “A Simple Song,” has that classic Deep Purple feel. What’s your role in crafting that sound?

My job is to deluge the band with musical ideas! Everybody brought bits, but the

I always expected to make suggestions, but not be the main creative force in the band because the core of the classic lineup is still here. Even when I stridently disagree, it’s just like any guy at his job who wishes he could change something, but can’t. You get frustrated, but then realize you have a job to do and just deal with it. I start each writing session reminding myself that the best use of my talents is to provide new ideas, of which only a certain percentage will get used.

“Body Line” has a classic Morse lead. What settings do you use on your guitar and amp?

That solo starts with the bridge pickup of my Music Man Steve Morse going through the Engl SM100 amp. It’s on Channel 2 with every control at about 6. As I move higher

work was in the “Where do we go from here?” phase. I’m comfortable writing with anybody who’s good at music, so I enjoy that.

What did producer Bob Ezrin bring to the party?

Bob knows what he likes and doesn’t like, so we had somebody to make all those decisions, such as whether an idea was getting too far from the point or if the melody line was too weird. He’s active every step and helped develop material in a relatively short time.

With the Dixie Dregs and the Steve Morse Band, you call most of the musical shots. With Purple, do you have to adjust to being just one voice in the room?

Yes, it’s an adjustment. I often tell the guys that the only time they’re wrong is when they disagree with me (laughs)! Seriously,

up the neck, I switch to the neck humbucker and dial in bit of delay from a TC Electronic Flashback. It has my settings saved and can be loaded into any of their pedals. I love that feel on that song because it’s got a bit of swing, like “Walk this Way” by Aerosmith.

Tell us about the guitar swells at the beginning of “Uncommon Man”?

That’s the band live in the studio, as if we were improvising in front of an audience. Bob liked what we did in our solo spots during shows, so he wanted us to just jam. It turned out nice, considering it was just one of two takes! Since there was no time-grid or conductor, we really had to listen to each other. When we hit the end chord, our engineer faded in a click track to help us sync up to the main song.

Describe your studio rig.

It’s my Music Man Y2D or my old blue Steve Morse model plugged into a TC Electronic PolyTune tuner and Keeley compressor, and then straight to the Engl SM100 head. My cabinets were in a separate room and mic’ed with a Royer condenser mic mixed with a Shure, I think. From that first Engl head, which I call the Dry amp, I sent signal out to the two TC Flashback pedals, and they are set to 100 percent wet, then throttled back with an Ernie Ball volume pedal on each. There is a third pedal that controls the TC reverb, which has this gorgeous smooth reverb, again set to wet and controlled by that third volume pedal. Each of these volume pedal outputs were summed to the power amp or Effects In section of the second amp, which I call the Wet amp. That was also an Engl Steve Morse 100-watt head. The corresponding cabinets were also into the isolation room and mic’ed separately.

Any other guitars?

Bob often wanted me to overdub some double-tracked parts using his Gibson Les Paul. If you double a part with a different-sounding instrument, sometimes the doubling is more effective, so I went along with that idea. Most of the double-tracked stuff, however, was with my Music Man Y2D, which has a more-rock sound than my original Music Man. So it’s great to double those guitars together, which makes for a fat-but-clear and distinctive guitar track.

What’s the status of your projects outside of Deep Purple?

The Steve Morse Band did a successful trip with G3 in Europe and South America, so we’ll be going on tour with Joe Satriani again soon. Also, Flying Colors will be recording a new album soon, we’ve already started on some fresh material. – *Pete Prown*