



Scott Kahn on Working with a Legend

DAYS BEFORE TOMORROW GUITARIST SCOTTKAHN TALKS ABOUT how he and his bandmates came to work one of their favorite producers for their latest release, *The Sky Is Falling*. —Matt Blackett

How did you end up working with Ron Nevison?

I sent our demo material to a handful of producers we thought had

the right musical background to be a good fit with Days Before Tomorrow. Ron had the right history, especially his work with Jefferson Starship before they went pop, and it seemed like our music would really resonate with him. To our pleasant surprise, it did.

What was the most important thing you learned about tracking guitars from him?

Ron's ideas made an especially great mark on the recording of acoustic guitars, which I had historically approached with a condenser near the soundhole and a good room mic, mixing those with the output from the guitar's onboard piezo pickup. He said, "I know this may seem a bit unorthodox, but I want you to throw a Shure SM57 on the acoustic guitars." I never would have thought that a 57 would sound so great on an acoustic, but blended in combination with the other mics, it provided a significant enhancement to the tone. I'll never record acoustics without it again.

Did Nevison talk about any of the huge bands he's worked with, like Zeppelin or the Stones?

Ron brought with him an old DAT that he found in storage of rough tracks from the *Physical Graffiti* sessions. We were sitting there listening to "Kashmir" in a whole new way. It was drums, bass, Robert Plant's vocals, Jimmy Page's *scratch* guitar track, and no keyboards. It was this incredible step back in history, and it sounded like a strong live band with a monster singer just blowing us away with this unbelievably powerful song. Just amazing.

The Reopening of the Joint in Las Vegas



IT WOULD BE HARD FOR THE HARD

Rock Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas to rock any harder than it already does. But with the reopening of the Joint, the concert venue at the hotel, they have upped the rock quotient considerably and have created one of the most guitar-approved places to catch a show on the planet. This is not a remodel, however, as Vice President of Entertainment Paul Davis explains.

"We closed the old Joint back in February with two Motley Crüe shows," says Davis. "That venue has been demolished, and the new Joint is built on what was a parking lot where we used to have concerts. The Killers are from Las Vegas and they played the parking lot two years ago. Now they're playing the very first show here. This is a \$60 million facility that holds 4,000—double the capacity of the old Joint. A lot of elements carried over from the original: the wood flooring, the handrails that have Flying Vs in them, and the general vibe and atmosphere. It's all definitely in keeping with our history, only now we can do full-on arena sized shows in what's still a fairly intimate environment."

In addition to the great guitar playing that can be heard at the Joint

(Santana is doing an extended residency there starting May 27), guitarists will find even more reasons to hang out there. "We had thought about lining the walls with guitars like we had in the old Joint and like you can see in the rest of the Hard Rock," says Davis. "We decided to take that to another level and make the entire wall a rendering of a massive guitar fretboard. In true Hard Rock fashion, we made sure those were to scale. We had to push back a few times with the designers to make sure the dots were just right and properly spaced. Any guitar players that walk in here will instantly know that these are accurate."

The inaugural weekend also included Avenged Sevenfold on Saturday and Sir Paul McCartney on Sunday. McCartney guitarist Brian Ray gives some insight as to why his boss might play a venue smaller than a soccer stadium.

"This place sounds and feels amazing," he says. "There's not a bad spot in the place from the audience's perspective. The stage is huge and guitars sound perfect from up there. In this time of arenas with exchangeable corporate monikers, there's a new kid in town: the Joint. Move over, big boys!" —Matt Blackett