



# MIDI *in* MINISTRY

THE INFO SOURCE FOR CHURCH MUSICIANS

Vol. V No. 3

## Music in Motion

### Fantom: A Next-Generation Interactive Keyboard Workstation



The Fantom workstation is a powerful tool in creating dynamic and expressive soundscapes for worship. Interactive controllers, a large display and a simplified front panel facilitate a musical experience free of frustration and distraction.

#### MUSIC WAITING TO HAPPEN

Another keyboard? Hardly. The new Roland Fantom is a musical instrument in the truest sense, and it goes far beyond. Any musician, whether vocalist, violinist or accordionist, understands the expressive link between instrument and instrumentalist. It's all about interactivity—the way a musician plays his or her instrument is what makes a performance inspiring.

Fantom offers musicians a wealth of interactivity. For starters, it has a Variable Arpeggiator which can generate a pattern or musical phrase that can be woven into what's being played on the keyboard. The arpeggiator pattern can be changed to suit the dynamics or sound by turning one of Fantom's assignable knobs. This generates a fluid environment where sonic texture and energy can be contoured to suit the worship setting.

#### RHYTHM ON 'TAP'

Along with the interactivity of the Variable Arpeggiator and knobs, the Fantom has onboard rhythm patterns that can be triggered from keys. With several keys assigned to different grooves, players can add rhythm and

percussion to support a performance. Tempo can be changed in realtime with the infrared D-Beam controller, or "tapped in" from an assignable button. This next level of interactivity yields expressive results in live worship, but it's also a great tool for composition.

All the creative elements of arpeggiation, one-touch rhythm patterns and dynamic controllers are bolstered by Fantom's professional sequencing capabilities. This intuitive sequencer truly makes music composition a fast and seamless process. Pressing REC displays all the relevant parameters in the huge, friendly screen and opens the gateway to recording. Start building a song with the preset drum patterns. Use the arpeggiator to create bass lines, strummed guitar riffs and keyboard patterns. Knobs, buttons and the D-Beam provide realtime, interactive variations.

Check out the Fantom and experience new levels of musicianship and joy in the creative process. This workstation blurs the line between playing and composing with a friendly environment for keyboardists at every level. Hear it at a Roland dealer or online at: [www.RolandUS.com](http://www.RolandUS.com)



## 5 MINUTES

with Norm Stockton

*Norm Stockton is a bassist/composer/instructor whose credits range from jazz artists Steve Laury and Rob Mullins to Christian artists Peter Shambrook and Billy Batstone. He is also an experienced worship musician, having traveled extensively throughout North America as a bassist and clinician for Maranatha Music's Worship Leader Workshops.*

**MIDI in Ministry:** What role do you feel the bass plays in a worship setting?

**Norm Stockton:** With worship, you're generally not looking for a bass to take the sonic lead; it's mainly about being foundational and not becoming a distraction. As in any kind of music, but especially worship, I listen to the sounds happening around me. As I hear what's happening instrumentally, I try to create a solid foundation to support the rest of the rhythm section.

**MiM:** How does technology play into the picture?

**NS:** One big element of technology that blows things wide open is the whole world of effects. The first effect pedal I ever got was a BOSS Flanger pedal, the BF-2. It was one of things that really got me excited about using effects. It was usually the guitar players

(CONT. ON PAGE 2)

# 5 MINUTES with Norm Stockton

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

with all the effects—they were the ones who got to have the fun! But nowadays, there are so many great sounding effects for bassists, too.

**MiM:** How do effects help to create different sounds?

**NS:** For bass, I still feel that the biggest factor relative to the sound and texture is the actual playing technique; what you do with your fingers and where you play on the bass are hugely important. Effects boxes can definitely enhance what I'm doing, though, and can really inspire me to play in different ways.

**MiM:** What are some examples?

**NS:** If I need a more distinctive sound or need to make a more overt musical statement, I might use a flanger or even an octaver. The BOSS SYB-3 Bass Synthesizer pedal totally makes you wanna go into a '70s retro-funk kinda thing. The BOSS OC-2 Dual Octave is a bass classic which tons of guys use to emulate a keyboard synth bass. If I use a nice warm chorus effect, that might lend itself to playing some slap stuff or nice melody stuff. It's great for playing melodic, legato, singing types of lines.

**MiM:** You've also done lots of recording. How does that differ from live worship?

**NS:** My sonic approach to bass playing is very different for live worship than recording. For me, recording can be more about exploration and experimentation. I

get to try lots of ideas that wouldn't really be appropriate for most live worship environments. On my recent album, I created sounds with multiple layers of flanging and chorusing. In a worship context I have a much different approach. It's all about staying out of the way and supporting what's happening on both a musical and spiritual level.

**MiM:** What is one of the most important things you try to teach bass players in your worship seminars?

**NS:** From a musical standpoint, I try to emphasize the idea that the bass is a rhythm instrument, and though it has the capability to be melodic and harmonic, it should never be so at the expense of rhythmic considerations. One of the ideas I emphasize is "bass as drum." This idea is focused on making the bass so rhythmically solid that it's difficult to tell where the bass leaves off and the drums begin. Almost as though the bass is part of the drum kit. In a worship setting, what the ensemble needs is that foundational statement, making a platform for the rest of the band so they have total solidity.

Another big point I try to get across to bass players is the idea of 'emoting' on their instrument. We're trying to musically convey what's happening lyrically and spiritually. Sometimes bass players slip into the mode of, "Okay, here's a bar of C, and now a bar of D, next is two bars of F, so when is this song gonna be over?" What we should be doing is thinking about phrasing, dynamics, note duration... you know, things that help the instrument convey emotion instead of what I call the 'FedEx' bass line: "Okay, here's your bass line. Just sign right here."

**MiM:** You've also created some instructional videos. What concepts do you cover?

**NS:** One thing I cover is a study of different genres, called "Bass Idioms Analyzed: 'What Makes the Funk...Funky?'" which explores specific rhythmic, harmonic, sonic and phrasing ideas that define various common styles of music. Bass players can really benefit from expanding their stylistic vocabulary.



*"Sound is derived from the hands..."*

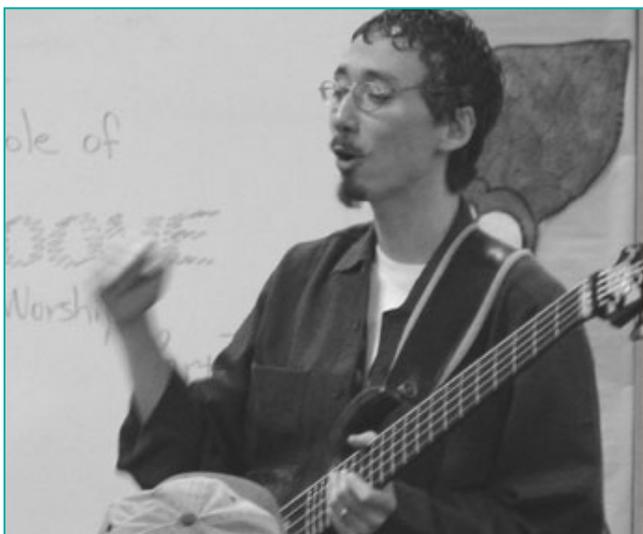
Playing a Latin-style bass line isn't about grabbing a sombrero and playing a rock bass line. There are certain tangible, practical elements that characterize a part as Latin, funk, reggae, or whatever else.

Among the other topics covered, there is a section devoted to the somewhat subjective area of how to play a fill tastefully ("Taste: Is It All in Your Mouth?"). I spend some time demonstrating how to weave embellishments around a vocal line, giving both good and fairly bad examples of how one might play a fill! Especially for worship bass players, it's critical to be sensitive to what's going on musically. Any fills or embellishments must be done tastefully, so they don't impede but rather enhance what is going on musically and spiritually. Anyway, in that section, I show a number of examples of what does and doesn't work and why.

**MiM:** Do you think most bass players like to experiment with different sounds?

**NS:** Yes, it boils down to the fact that bass players historically have been a bit left out of the effects thing. That's good to some extent because there's no substitute for a good clean, dry bass line. But some effects can be great, like chorus for a worship ballad, when your line is a singing type voice or needing more sustain. The octaver (OC-2) can be great for certain styles too.

**MiM:** In your seminars, do you encourage bass players to experiment with technology to achieve different sounds?

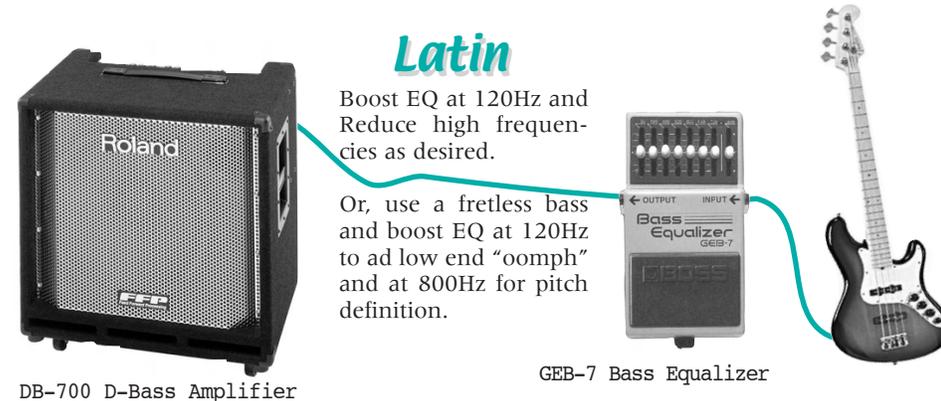
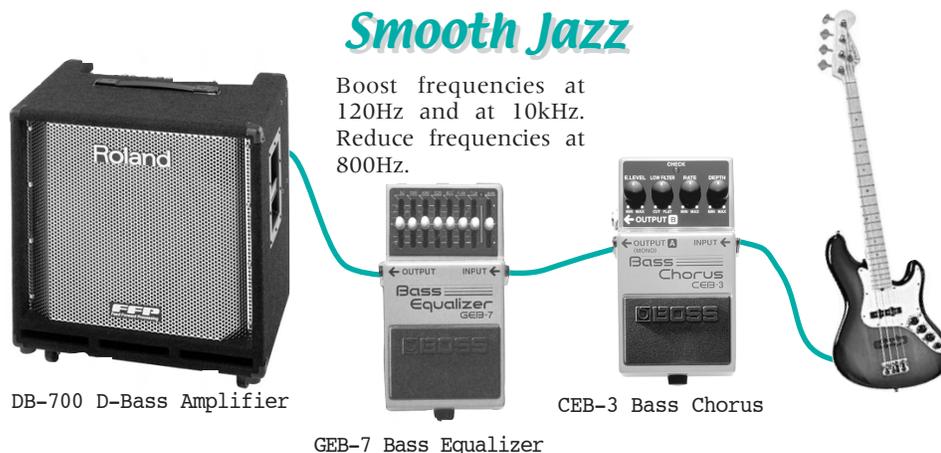


*Norm teaching bassists "The Role of Groove in Worship."*

(CONT. ON PAGE 3)

# Norm's Recipes for Cookin' up Great Bass

These are a few choice ways to get genre-specific bass tones using BOSS pedals and the Roland DB-700 D-Bass Amplifier, courtesy of Norm Stockton. Enjoy!



## Fingerstyle Funk or Rock

Same diagram as Latin example above. Boost low frequencies at 120Hz. Slightly boost mid's around 250 – 400Hz depending upon the type of bass and strings. Use Speaker Modeling as appropriate to emulate 15" speakers. Adding a slight tube overdrive effect may work well for rock styles.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

**NS:** It's good for bass players to learn where effects can broaden their sonic palette, and expand their bag of tricks. I spend a lot of time, though, showing players how much sound is derived just from their hands. I explain how much a bass sound can be changed without touching a knob. So the ultimate is when you can combine what's happening, from a technique standpoint, with all the choices that are available with BOSS pedal effects and such.

**MiM:** You're also a songwriter. On your recent album, *Pondering the Sushi*, how did you develop your sounds?

**NS:** Much of the inspiration for the sounds came from recording dry (no effects) on the VS-1680 [Digital Studio Workstation] and then scrolling through the myriad effects on the VS8F-2 expansion cards. Those really helped to clarify what sounds would work the best. The effects on the cards are killer and some are very unique, so it really gave me a lot of choices. I could narrow my focus and get good ideas. The immediate and simple access to those presets gave me the ability to easily experiment and try things out without having to permanently alter the sound. It also helped me get to a place where I knew what would and wouldn't work without having to go out and get a bunch of external effects I didn't have.

**MiM:** What other types of gear have you found useful in developing your music?

**NS:** I tracked so much of the record in different places and the VS-1680 is what made that possible. The -1680 has been a huge tool for me from so many different perspectives: compositionally, in terms of arranging, simple woodshedding, etc. Plus, it's ridiculously versatile due to its combination of amazing fidelity and utterly effortless portability. For example, I tracked a lot of the final, "keeper" takes for *Pondering the Sushi* in some fairly unconventional environments. I recorded horns in several churches, including a full brass section in the backstage greenroom at Coast Hills Community Church in Aliso Viejo, CA. I recorded percussion in the living room of a friend of mine's house in Del Mar, CA. And I even took the VS-1680 to New York City last year, and recorded the Star Spangled Banner in a hotel room in midtown Manhattan while overlooking the sea of humanity below. It was very inspiring.

For information on Norm's videos, recordings and workshops, visit his website at [www.normstockton.com](http://www.normstockton.com)



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## In This Issue:

- ▶ "5 Minutes with..."  
 An interview with  
*Norm Stockton*



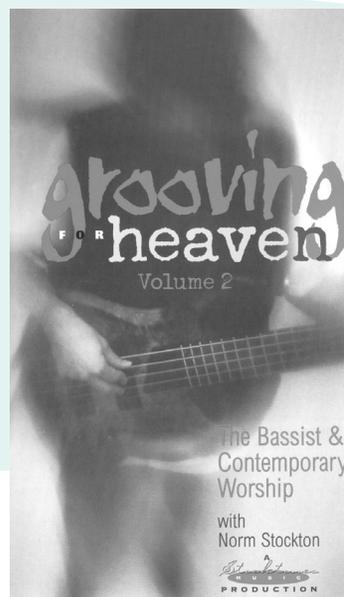
- ▶ **Fantom: the next generation workstation keyboard for worship**
- ▶ **Norm's Recipes for Tasty Bass Tones**
- ▶ **"Grooving for Heaven" Instructional Videos**

## The Bassist & Contemporary Worship

www.normstockton.com

From the technical, to the musical, to the spiritual... *Grooving for Heaven* videos are engaging, one-on-one clinics from Norm Stockton that help bass players establish a solid foundation for their playing and help them advance to the next level.

Volume 1 covers topics like "Warm-ups for the Impatient," "Proper Hand & Bass Positioning," "Effects," and "The Heart & Ministry." This video focuses on playing considerations for contemporary worship, so bassists at any experience level will come away with valuable tools and insights.



the contemporary worship bassist desiring to build upon a solid understanding of the fundamentals. Bass players will

emerge with a fresh perspective on what to play, as well as performance subtleties. Topics include "Basic Communication," "The Slap Style," "Fretless Bass" and more.

Here's what the pros are saying about these videos:

"I endorse and highly recommend these videos... very well done!"  
*Abraham Laboriel, Sr.*

"This section (Modes-Vol. 2) alone is worth the price of both videos!"

*Bass Frontiers Magazine*  
 (Jul/Aug '99)

*Grooving for Heaven* Volume 2 is for