

BASSNOTES

Continued from page 18

with the drummer, who plays more fills than I would like at times. But Meat likes it. I hardly play any fills—someone's got to hold down the fort.

What was your primary consideration when Archer approached you about creating a signature model?

I wanted it to be affordable, and I wanted it to be good enough for me. It's made of ash with a neck-through-body design. The J-style neck is based on one of my old Spectors. I asked for the Hipshot Xtender because I like having access to a low D, but I don't like 5-string basses. Ibanez makes the active electronics and string-through bridge, and it's constructed in China. At about \$500, it's not a mortgage payment. It's all I need onstage or in the studio.

What was it like to play Benjamin Orr's bass parts when you toured with the New Cars?

That was fun because I was familiar with the music, and the band; the Cars used to

open for Utopia before they became popular. The gig itself was surprising, because you'd think playing bass on Cars tunes would be simple. It's just eight notes, right? Wrong! When I started working on that gig I discovered that Orr wasn't just picking away at the obvious eighth notes. Those are really smart parts. He changes it up a bit on every verse and every chorus in order to make each part of each song work individually. "My Best Friend's Girl" is a decent example. There's an art to the way he picks the part using lots of downstrokes, the occasional upstroke, and an occasional sixteenth-note stutter. And he incorporates just the right amount of palm muting throughout.

What's coming up next?

The new Meat Loaf record will drop sometime in 2010, and I'll be working on solo material and performing with my band during the beginning of the year.

How much bass do you play in your own band?

None.

What do you look for when you hire a bass player?

There's a song called "Sacrifice" on my solo CD *Quid Pro Quo* that features the bass for about four bars. It's just a little riff that incorporates some vibrato. This kid Mike Chiavaro came to audition. He didn't play it exactly right, but he did it really well. I figured he'd be fine if he could pick that out on his own, and he is.

What ever happened to those kids who kicked you out of your first band?

They still live with their mothers. — JIMMY LESLIE



Ampeg

Relaunches U.S. Manufacturing With Premium Heritage Line

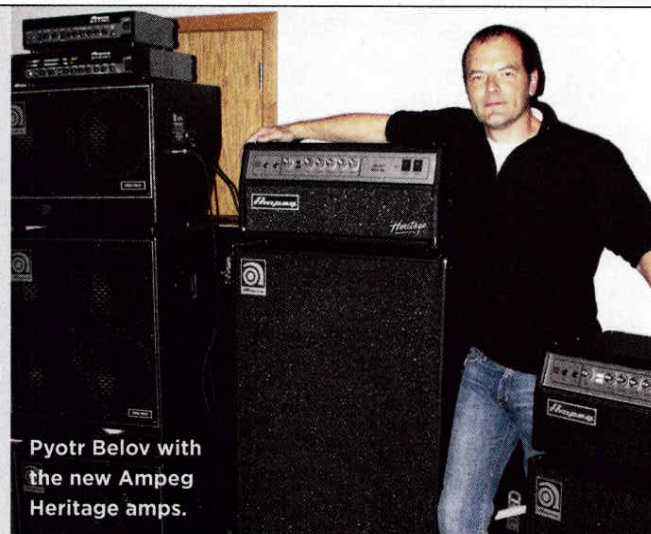
By Bryan Beller

IN TODAY'S TRULY GLOBAL MARKET, it's tougher and tougher to keep product manufacturing solely in the U.S. and keep prices in check. It's a hard business reality that's led to no small amount of unhappiness on the "bass street," especially when it comes to certain specifically iconic American products. Well, sometimes the squeaky wheel gets the grease: Ampeg, who caught some flak for moving their manufacturing to Asia, is actually relaunching their American production line, with a new series of ultra-high-end SVT products designed and assembled in the U.S.A. And it was done in direct response to customer feedback.

"For most of our customers, this move [offshore] was seamless," says Pyotr Belov, Ampeg's Director of Musical Instrument Amplification, quite diplomatically,

"However, there's a select group of customers and artists who really crave U.S. made Ampeg rigs. We hear you loud and clear!"

You can guess which products will roll off the new premium U.S. Heritage line in Woodinville, WA. It'll be an SVT-CL head (with specially-selected JJ preamp and "Winged C" power amp tubes) and SVT-810 and -410 cabs (with U.S.-made custom Eminence drivers). They'll run concurrently with the offshore line's very-similar-but-not-identical models, so vintage purists can put their money where their mouths are and choose accordingly. The Heritage Line MSRP's are \$3,299 for the SVT-CL, \$1,799 for



Pyotr Belov with the new Ampeg Heritage amps.

the 810 and \$1,249 for the 410. Hey, premium means premium.

Belov also relayed a tidbit some might find interesting. "Every Heritage model has a hang tag that is hand-signed by the bassist who completes the final test. Since we are located near Seattle, we frequently have our endorsing artists in house, and they sometimes help with our 'test drives.' So pay attention to the signature on the hang tag because you never know who might have played it." **BP**