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Dave Kilminster Interview – In Depth With Roger Waters Guitarist

Posted on June 18, 2017 by T-Mak



Dave Kilminster

For a full experience we suggest you read our review of Roger Waters US +THEM Tour as a companion to this article (click here)

June 15 2017 – I first noticed **Dave Kilminster** on September 20, 2006 at Toronto's Air Canada Centre. The occasion was **The Dark Side of the Moon Live** tour by Pink Floyd's **Roger Waters**. While our seats were not that good I do recall seeing a long haired dude on stage nailing all the classic Gilmour sounds and thinking to myself, that this guy is damn good. As Waters made the band introductions the loudest cheer came for Dave Kilminster. I realized that I was not the only one in the crowd that was blown away by this (previously unknown to me) musician.

That was not the end of the journey as Kilminster then toured with Waters for the best concert of all time – **The Wall Live** (2010-2013) and continued to win fans over. I saw that tour 10 times in four different countries and Kilminster was always a highlight. When we heard he was playing with **Steven Wilson** we caught that show and noticed the breadth of techniques Kilminster used extended way beyond what was seen with Waters.

Currently Kilminster is on the road with Waters for the **Us+Them** tour which is easily the best rock tour of 2017. **We reviewed the opening night of that tour in full detail which you can check out here.**

We were honored to know that Kilmister read our review of the show and agreed to grant us an interview. The opportunity to find out more about the man behind the guitar was a great privilege and the insight we got makes this the most interesting interview we ever conducted. Here we go:

T-Mak: Dave, thank you very much for taking the time for us, I am sure our readers will appreciate the insight. Please offer us a brief introduction about yourself.

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Kilminster: Umm... ok... I sing and play guitar for a living... I have a few solo albums out, I've toured, played and recorded with a bunch of rock icons, and for no apparent reason I appear to be incredibly lucky!! :O)

And apparently a bit modest! Well speaking of rock icons, what do you listen to musically? Have your tastes changed as you grow older?

Kilminster: I don't listen to a lot of music at the moment... I mean, there's music everywhere... in shopping centres, restaurants, bars, planes... even in the hotel elevator!! There's just no escaping it, and most of it is so utterly hideous!!

I realise that for a lot of people music is their way of escaping... but when you live *is* music, I think you need a certain amount of quiet to retain your sanity, especially on tour... besides which, I have music playing in my head most of the time anyway!! New song ideas, random 70's TV theme tunes, Gregorian chants, reggae remixes... my head's a mess!!!

I'm trying to find some good new stuff at the moment, actually... I particularly enjoyed the latest Radiohead album (A Moon Shaped Pool), and Bowie's Blackstar is very cool... Nik Bartsch does some very interesting rhythmic things... but sometimes when you're constantly travelling/touring & everything is changing, it's nice to have something familiar to you... so I'll maybe put on some Steely Dan or Joni in the hotel room... just to feel a little more grounded.

I don't think my tastes have changed that much, though... I still love Classical music... Debussy, Rachmanioff, Vaughan Williams... still love Jazz music... although some of the rock things that I used to listen to maybe haven't aged quite so well!! :O)

T-Mak: Surely you must have loved Pink Floyd growing up. Did you own all the albums?

Kilminster: Oh dear... this is the part where lots of readers immediately close their browser, and go watch TV instead... ummm, no, I wasn't really a fan of Pink Floyd... so I didn't have ANY of their albums!!

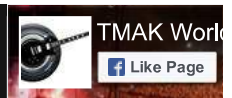
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The first Floyd album I actually remember buying was 'The Wall', which I bought in 2010... earlier that year I'd played a charity event with Roger (a Rita Hayworth Gala for the Alzheimer's Association), and Roger asked if I'd be up for touring 'The Wall'... so I bought a copy shortly after, so that I knew exactly what I was letting myself in for!! :o)



Dave Kilminster 2017

T-Mak: Solo material? You seem to be always on the road but will you be working on anything of your own? We loved 2014's "...And The Truth Will Set You Free..." (which by the way should have been released on vinyl.)



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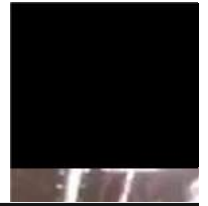
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Kilminster: Thank you!! I always have way too many song ideas... I have about thirteen hours(!!) of random ideas on my computer at that moment, that I just collect via my iPhone or whatever... and of course I would love to record another solo album. I feel like I learnt so much from recording 'The Truth', that this next one would be infinitely better... but finding the time to put it together, that's the tricky part at the moment.

Some people can do that on the road, but for me when we're travelling to different towns I just want to get out and explore... to see the sites, and experience some of the local culture... or just sit in a park or by a lake and switch off... I really can't think about staying in my room programming up a drum track or whatever if we're somewhere like Prague or Barcelona!!! There's just always way too much stuff to see and do...

T-Mak: While looking at Discogs I noticed that you are credited on Rush's 2112 40th anniversary edition. We are a Toronto based website and that fact caught our attention. Is it true? How much were you involved with that project?

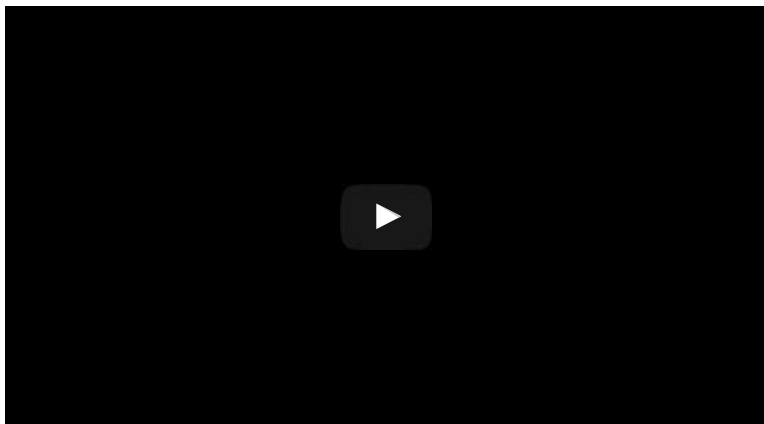
Kilminster: Yes, of course it's true... I'm not a politician!! :o) Steven Wilson has done some work for Rush in the past, and they approached Steven (along with other artists like Dave Grohl, Alice in Chains, Billy Talent, etc) about recording new versions of tracks from '2112' for their special 40th anniversary release!!

It all happened shortly after I'd met Alex Lifeson at Massey Hall too, where they recorded the live Rush album 'All The World's A Stage'... I totally loved that album!! Anyway, Alex had come along to watch the Steven Wilson show there, and was very complimentary about my playing afterwards... which was actually one of the best things ever, as I was a huge fan since 'A Farewell To Kings'. He's such a lovely chap!!!

So anyway, we recorded a new version of 'The Twilight Zone' for the album... it was recorded mostly live during a soundcheck somewhere in Europe, but with a few overdubs back in Blighty... and afterwards Steven forwarded a message from Geddy Lee, who apparently loved my solo at the end... so my life is now officially complete!! :o)

T-Mak: You played with Steven Wilson on his recent Hand.Cannot.Erase tour. We actually got out to see him when we found out you were playing guitar on the tour because we love your playing. What was that experience like? Hopefully you play with him again, there was incredible chemistry in that show.

Kilminster: I really love Steven's music... 'The Raven That Refused To Sing' album is undoubtedly one of the best things I've heard this century, and so playing with him was just an incredible experience!!! I would really love to do it again, but I don't know how long this current tour with Roger will last... at the moment it's looking like I might have to clone myself...



T-Mak: During Us +Them you are using a very cool guitar which looks like a Telecaster. Tell us about that particular instrument please.

Kilminster: Sure... basically I designed it, and asked a company called 'Suhr' to put it together for me. I've been playing long enough now to know what types of wood I like, fret sizes, neck profiles, etc... and I've always loved the telecaster shape... it just feels incredibly comfortable to me... But I also love the versatility of a Strat with the three pickups & tremolo arm... so this guitar just seemed like the perfect combination.

It's a swamp ash body, and maple neck... and I wanted it left as bare wood, as the paint and primer that companies use really affects the tone of the instrument. When I got the guitar back though, I thought she looked a little naked... and so an ex girlfriend of mine burnt the flower designs into the body... hence her name, 'Rose'... :o)

T-Mak: What sort of amps are you using, we haven't seen them before. You run them pretty loud on stage, probably getting the sound guys asking you to turn it down some?

Kilminster: I use Brunetti amps, which are just totally astonishing!!! For me they're the best amps in the world.... they're made in Italy by my good friend Marco Brunetti and they're the only amp that I've ever found that produces amazing clean sounds AND incredible overdrive... I used to think it wasn't possible to get both of those things from one amp, and that I'd end up going the way of Eric Johnson with a multi amp set up... but with these Brunetti Mercury heads I can get any sound that I want!! :o)

They're 50 watts, but because they're so ridiculously well made they're louder than any other 50 watt amp on the planet!! So I asked Marco to add a switch that takes them down to 20 watts for smaller gigs, like the ones with Roger... :o)

T-Mak: A lot has been written on the mainstream media sites about how the Us+Them tour is getting too political and I have read many comments on social media from obvious right leaning folks saying that Roger should keep politics out of the show. I can tell you from the Kansas City show I saw not one single complain from anyone around us. Do you think politics has a role in rock shows or should artists like Waters keep their political opinions out of it?

Kilminster: Hmm... I debated about answering this question, as it's potentially a can of worms... but ok, I'm going in!! This will probably be a long answer though, because I'd like to try and answer it properly... so;

Firstly, politics in music isn't a new thing... from the protest songs of the sixties, Bob Dylan, Neil Young, The Beatles, The Stones, through to punk/new wave in the seventies & eighties... The Clash, The Smiths, The Sex Pistols, The Jam, Bob Marley, Public Enemy, Frankie Goes to Hollywood, U2... and in the modern era bands like Radiohead, RATM, Green Day, Metallica, etc, etc... people have been singing about politics and protesting for a very long time!!

I did have an interesting conversation with someone last week who told me "we don't need any damn foreigners, coming over here and telling us what to do"!! But there are also people that just want to go to concerts for pure entertainment and escapism, and not be reminded of their day to day problems... and to be honest, I probably fall into that category too...

But it's obviously a Roger Waters show, and so he can do whatever he wants... and, to be fair, anyone coming to the show who's a fan of Rogers is probably very aware of his outspoken political views... also, contrary to a lot of comments I've seen, he's actually lived in America for as long as I've known him (eleven years) ... which means he's paid a shed-load of US taxes too!!

I think that probably gives him the right to at least comment on how the country's run!!

Secondly, I don't actually view his anti-Trump stance as anything to do with politics... it's really not about right vs left, red vs blue, republicans vs democrats or any such thing. It's about a malignant narcissist, who's dangerously delusional and clearly struggling with mental health issues!!

Earlier this year I read an article in 'Psychology Today' where more than 26,000(!!!) psychologists, psychiatrists, and other mental-health professionals signed a petition stating that he has "a serious mental illness that renders him

psychologically incapable of competently discharging the duties of President of the United States.”

I don't know about you, but I don't feel comfortable with someone like that having access to the nuclear launch codes...

Add to that, his dangerously ignorant & short-sighted views on Climate Change which are a hazard to the entire planet (which is where I happen to live!!!)... I mean, would you rather believe a bunch of a very intelligent international scientists who've studied this phenomenon for many years and have absolutely nothing to gain (i.e. no political agendas) by informing the rest of the world of their findings... or some clueless clown, who's bullied and bullshitted his way through life to get exactly what he wants, and sees this all as some sort of Chinese hoax?!! I mean, seriously?!!!

Besides which, even if Global Warming *wasn't* a fact, what's the problem with wanting cleaner air, safer drinking water, helping the ozone layer, using solar/wind energy, preserving forests and looking after our planet in general?!! How can that possibly be a bad thing?

So although I'm not a fan of politics and social commentary in music, I don't have a problem with the content of this show.

I've absolutely no idea whether a show like this would make any difference to people's opinions... I would suspect not... I mean, I can't see a Trump supporter turning up, watching the show and then saying "oh, I get it now... he's a total ass"!! But people like to feel supported... and so if this show helps in even the smallest of ways then that's a good thing... especially as it feels like the safety and future of the entire human race is currently at stake.



Us+Them Kansas City May 26 2017

T-Mak: I was lucky enough to be directly in front of you in Kansas City and noticed many times you close your eyes and let the music take you away. Can you possibly describe what it feels like to be on stage ripping through solos from something as iconic as the Animals album?

Kilminster: Well, it may be 'Iconic' to you, but it's a new song to me!! Hahaha... :O) Yeah, I guess I close my eyes a lot when I'm playing... it's really not a conscious thing though... I think I've always done it... I guess it's my way of immersing myself in the music... it improves my focus, as there are no visual distractions... and I just concentrate on the notes... on the flow...

I do really love playing 'Dogs' and 'Pigs' actually... I wasn't familiar with either track before last year, but 'Dogs' especially is loads of fun... and there's also three guitar solos!!! What's not to like!!! The middle solo is my favourite though... David's phrasing on the original is really great, and I'm using my Dunlop mini Fuzz Face (FFM6) on that, to get a similar vibe to the original...

... also I'd never used a talk box before, so that was an interesting learning curve... :O)

T-Mak: What is it like being on the road with this mega production? What's a typical day like (both show and off days)?

Kilminster: Well, with Roger it's always the best of everything... so touring is an absolute pleasure!! Show days consist of arriving at the venue in the afternoon for soundcheck (we always soundcheck), having dinner, playing the show, and then doing a 'runner' back to the hotel or flying to the next city...

As for 'typical' days off though, I don't think there are any!! For me I like to do a little sightseeing and photography... visit botanical gardens, aquariums, museums, whatever... or just find a quiet space to sit and think... although recently a few of us have been doing the 'Insanity Workout' course every morning (guided by our security guard), so that's been a fun constant these last few weeks... everything aches, but I'm determined to finish this tour fitter and healthier than when I started it!!

T-Mak: We really like the material we have heard so far from Waters new album. One song called Déjà vu starts off with "If I had been God" and continues with some of the things Waters would do in that scenario. What would Dave Kilminster do if he was God?

Kilminster: If I were God? Hmm... ok, it's a bit of a cliché (and I'm probably going to upset even more people now!!), but I'd probably just eradicate religion entirely...

I mean, I really don't have a problem with people if they want to believe in a God... if it helps them through life in some way, gives them a moral compass and maybe helps them to feel less alone in the universe or whatever... and there are roughly 4200 religions to choose from at the moment, so you can probably find one that you feel an affinity for...

But I just dislike the fact that it's traditionally been used as a way of controlling people... usually by manipulative deviants, preying on the weak minded... And all the terrible things that are done 'in Gods name', from The Crusades, The Inquisition, The Holocaust, The Thuggee Murders, The 30 Years' War, 9/11, FGM... the list goes on and on and on...

One of the greatest things about touring though, is that you realise that people all over the world are essentially exactly the same!! You know, we're all just human beings... different colours, shapes and sizes... different languages and cultures... but really we all kinda want the same things... to get a job, earn some money... to have friends, and raise a family... to love and be loved...

And so I have an intense dislike for things that try and separate us from each other... walls, borders, racism, sexism, homophobia, politics, religious beliefs... Brexit (which I think is another HUGE mistake!!)... we should be coming together as a race, not moving further apart.

There's a popular meme going around the internet at the moment which is a quote from A.D. Williams... 'Imagine what 7 billion humans could accomplish if we all loved and respected each other'. It's an amazing thought...

... although thinking about it, if I did get rid of religion then that would mean that, as God, I wouldn't actually exist anymore... so I may have to rethink my answer!!! ;o)

Ummm... ok, mosquitoes... yeah, I'd get rid of mosquitoes... pointless insects... and paedophiles... human trafficking... cyber bullying... well, all bullying really... rapists... racism... animal cruelty... folk music... Bovril...

I'd also ban Americans from using the word 'Like' out of context... like when they like can't complete like a sentence like without you know like putting the word 'like' in every like few words...

...it. drives. me. absolutely. insane!!!

You can catch Dave Kilminster as part of Rogers Waters Us+Them Tour, and we hope you now have a deeper appreciation of the man on stage to the right of Waters .



Dave Kilminster Us + Them 2017

T-Mak: Do you think what happened in the 60's and 70's musically can ever happen again? I mean the nature of humanity has changed drastically with technology in the last 20 years and everyone seems to have much shorter attention spans. Everyone at the shows is on their phone either taking pictures or sending messages to their friends at home about how great the show is. The whole music industry seems manufactured to deal with the new human psyche.

Kilminster: No, that could never happen again... unless it was in some post apocalyptic future, where people no longer had access to technology... besides which, people are just so used to hearing crap now... and so if anything more musically or rhythmically interesting came along it would probably just go straight over their heads...

That sounds very condescending I know, but it's not intended that way... it's just a scientific fact. There was a study by Joan Serra, a postdoctoral scholar at the Artificial Intelligence Research Institute of the Spanish National Research Council in Barcelona, where they studied three aspects of modern songs and compared them with popular songs from the past...

I read it, but it just affirmed what I already felt... the scientific conclusion was essentially that the tripe that's turned out today is a disgustingly homogenised watered down/dumbed down & overly simplified version of what used to be called music...

I feel very fortunate that I lived through (what was for me, anyway) the golden age of music... I'm sure there are people out there that are still doing good stuff (and I'm not talking about the latest 'YouTube teen sensation cover version garbage'), but there just aren't the pubs and clubs for live music to thrive any more... creativity and originality are generally frowned upon... tribute acts are rife, and DJ's are just a lot cheaper and easier...

I listen to the charts occasionally, and it's just the same rhythms, the same tempos, the same auto tuned vocals and the same tired chord sequences... with the usual 'partying on a Saturday night' or 'love you all night long' type lyric... it's truly dreadful and depressing... if I was growing up now I wouldn't even play guitar...

... actually, I've no idea what I'd be doing!! But hopefully something creative...

T-Mak: Dave thank you very much for the time, when you are in Toronto drop us a note and we will be happy to offer you a home cooked meal ;-)

Kilminster: Thank you so much Terry!!! I've probably committed a cardinal sin by talking about politics AND religion in this interview... in fact reading back through my answers, I sound like Roger Waters!!!

But hopefully it won't upset too many people!! I do love to make people happy... that's partly why I play music!!