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A chat with Roger Waters guitarist Dave Kilminster

A CHAT WITH ROGER WATERS GUITARIST DAVE KILMINSTER

interview by Tony Cole



Dava on top of " the Wall" 40ft in the air.

MGS First Dave welcome to musicgearsources and thanks for taking time to do this while you are on the Wall tour!

DK Absolutely my pleasure... :O)

MGS Can you start our readers off with a brief history of your career up until you met Roger?

DK- So sum up the last twenty years in a sentence or two?!! Haha... ok, I'll try.

1991 won the European 'Guitarist of the Year' competition, and shortly after started writing/transcribing/recording for 'Guitar Techniques' magazine... as well as teaching at the Guitar Institute (in Acton, London... not LA!!)... later went on to teach at the ACM in Guildford.

During this time I got a job with John Wetton (Asia, UK, King Crimson, etc) singing and playing guitar, and a little while after that we got together with Carl Palmer (the 'P' in ELP) and had a band called Qango...

Did my manager a huge favour by touring with Ken Hensley, and then shortly after that I played and toured with Keith Emerson for a few years. And then six years ago, I met Roger... :O)))

And somewhere amongst all that I managed to release a few of my own CD's too!!! 'Playing With Fire', 'Closer to Earth' and 'Scarlet-the Director's Cut'... All on iTunes... O)

MGS How did you meet Roger and get the great gig in the sky < of course we mean the Wall tour>?

DK- My manager told me he'd heard that Roger was looking for a guitarist who could sing a little like David Gilmour... so I thought, 'do I need to start smoking again'?!
Haha... this was for the 'Dark Side of the Moon' tour , way back in 2006...

As far as this tour goes though, I met up with Roger in New York in January 2010 to play a charity event with him, and he asked me if I'd like to play guitar on 'The Wall' tour... Of course I said yes, even though I'd never actually heard the album at that point!!!

MGS What do you do to prepare for a tour like this?

DK- When I heard we were definitely doing 'The Wall' I went out and bought the album (always a good start!!!), and sat down and wrote out every single guitar part (as I didn't know which parts Roger wanted me to play). Then by each guitar part I made copious notes on tone, distortion, modulation, which pick-up, type of delay, etc, etc... and then figured out whether I needed to buy any new gear!!!

I also played the album in the car a lot, just to get used to the tunes and arrangements... and practiced singing along too, in case I was asked to do any lead vocals or harmonies.

One thing I've learnt with Roger is that it's not possible to be 'too' prepared!!!

MGS Does it ever become a job and just want to be home?

DK- No, never... absolutely not!!!! This is what I've always wanted to do... travel, make music... and make people happy!!!! And barely a day goes by where I don't think to myself how ridiculously lucky and incredibly fortunate I am...

MGS What is the funniest thing to happen out there?

DK- Oh God... there are far too many funny things. I wouldn't even know where to begin!!! We do laugh a lot... only yesterday we (Kipp, Pat, Marky, Robbie, Jon Joyce and myself) went out to a sushi restaurant. And as we were about to leave the restaurant the heavens opened and the rain came pouring down like a tropical storm!!

So we borrowed some black plastic bin liners from the restaurant, made little holes for the eyes and mouth, put them over our heads and walked back to the hotel... we looked totally ridiculous!!! Haha...

MGS What has been your favorite city to play in and your most memorable gig?

DK- A favourite city would be impossible to pick, as there are so many that I love... I've enjoyed pretty much everywhere we've played, for different reasons... except maybe Shanghai, as it's so ridiculously polluted!!! :O/ If anyone out there is looking to shoot a 'post apocalyptic' type movie, then they could probably save a fortune in special effects and set design, and just film there instead!! As for gigs, I have very fond memories of a gig we played in Israel a few years ago, somewhere between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem in a place they named the Peace Village... the media there were calling it their 'Woodstock', and roughly 75,000 people turned up... such a wonderful evening...

More recently some of the shows in Mexico were pretty crazy... especially this 'thing' they did during 'Waiting For The Worms' with their lighters... flashing them on and off in

time with the music... it looked totally incredible!!! :O)))

Wrigley Field was a lot of fun too!!! Standing on top of the Wall, with the wind in my hair playing the 'Numb' solo... it probably looked like a Whitesnake video!!! Haha.....

MGS Do you have to drop a xanax every night to get on on that wall to play Comfortably Numb? What were you thinking when they told you about doing that?

DK- Yeah, it is pretty scary up there... emotionally... physically... psychologically... in all ways really!!!

And as for being 'told', that never actually happened!!! During rehearsals one day Roger just said "let's try Comfortably Numb, with 'Killer' (that's my nickname in the band!!) playing the whole solo"... So I played it, and when we finished the band gave me a round of applause... which was really nice... :0)) And then the next week during production rehearsals (at the Izod, New Jersey), they said "Ok, can you go and stand over there on that platform and play the solo"... so I stand on this platform, and all of a sudden it's going up in the air... getting higher and higher... it just didn't seem to stop, and it felt like it was wobbling around all over the place!!! My hands were sweaty and my legs were shaking...

Anyway I play the solo, and they say 'great'!!! And that was that....

Don't get me wrong, I'm not a total idiot... I assumed it was maybe going to happen!!! But I was never actually 'asked'!!! Haha...

Anyway, afterwards I talk to the Tour Director, and he says "so how are you strapped in up there" and I say 'I'm not'!!!!

He replies "wow, that's really dangerous... we need to do something about that".... and that was the last I heard... two years ago!!!!

MGS Do you have much time with Roger or is the tour pretty secluded?

DK- Roger loves this band... and so we're always going out for band dinners, or having after show drinks together... :O)

MGS Anyone on the tour you gravitate towards hanging out with?

DK I'm sorry if this sounds like an Oscar's acceptance speech, but they're all such great guys... and I can easily hang with any of them... I guess I spend a lot of time with the singers though, as they're essentially Californian beach bums... which is no doubt what I would have been, had I been born in LA... I love spending time by the beach!!!

MGS Can you tell us about your gear for this tour ?

DK- Sure... I have a very simple set up. My main electric is a custom made Suhr (called 'Rose'), which has roses burnt into the wood... It's Telecaster shaped, with a swamp ash body and maple neck, and has a trem and three pickups in it... a Seymour Duncan Custom Custom in the bridge, and two Suhr JST FL singles in the middle and neck. The guitar goes (wirelessly) into a Dunlop volume pedal, a Dunlop Wah pedal and a Suhr Riot pedal. Also on my main board I have an Eventide TimeFactor and a Boss Chorus Ensemble, which are both in the effects loop. Finally for amps I'm using two Brunetti Mercury 50w heads (in stereo) into two Brunetti 4x12 cabs.

For anyone that's curious there's more details and info on my website,
www.davekilminster.com

MGS Anything you really do not like about touring?

DK No, I really can't think of anything!!! I guess being away from home so much you do sometimes miss out on special birthdays, weddings, funerals etc... but that's all part of the job... and I wouldn't change it for anything!!!

MGS Can you tell us about the gig David sat in on ? Did you spend any time with him tweaking your gear or just hanging out ? Can you tell us about it?

DK- Unfortunately there's not much to tell... I'd already met him back in 2006 during the 'Dark Side...' rehearsals, and he seemed like a really nice guy... so we had a chat in the afternoon before the show at the O2, just about general stuff really... but we didn't talk gear or anything.

MGS Touring with Roger would be very hard to top but if you could pick another artist to play for who might it be?

DK- Is that an 'alive or dead' type question? Because I would love to have been Jeff Buckley's rhythm guitarist, just to listen to him sing every night... :O)

As for artists that are still around, I really don't know... the music is the main thing for me though... I'm a creative musician... I write my own music, and have my own 'voice' on the instrument... and so actually being able to express myself, and play the way that I play naturally... with my own voice... even my own songs... that's the ultimate really...

Actually the tours that I played last year with Guthrie Govan and Murray Hockridge... where I was totally myself... living and breathing the music... transcending the instrument and pouring my heart & soul out onto the stage... that goes way beyond anything really...

MGS Any favorite songs to play ?

DK- In this set? 'Young Lust' is fun... especially when Graham (Broad) is really going for it, as he's such an incredible drummer!!! 'Hey You' is a great tune... we play it at the beginning of the second set, when there's a complete wall between us and the audience... so it's almost like we're playing it for each other!!! 'Empty Spaces' feels really good when the guitar and amp are happening... which they are pretty much every night!!! 'Goodbye Blue Sky' is a nice moment... and obviously 'Comfortably Numb' is a very powerful tune too... although it's difficult to enjoy when you're mildly terrified!!!



Dave with Roger Waters on the DSOTM tour

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