

Rudy Sarzo – Ace of Bass

by Johnny DeMarco

With over 30 million records-sold to his credit, Rudy Sarzo is one of the most decorated bassists in rock. He's also one of the friendliest musicians you'll meet — and a longtime fan of Roland and BOSS gear, as you'll read below.

As a member of Ozzy Osbourne's band in the early '80s, Rudy toured the world in support of the Blizzard of Ozz and Diary Of a Madman records. His bass playing can be heard on Ozzy's multimillion selling CD Tribute and Speak of the Devil CD and DVD.

Rudy joined Quiet Riot during their mid-'80s heyday, recording the multi-platinum albums Metal Health (the first Heavy Metal debut to reach #1 on the Billboard charts) and Condition Critical. During this period Rudy headlined worldwide tours, appeared on numerous MTV videos, and was voted #1 Bassist in Circus magazine.

In the late '80s, Rudy became a member of Whitesnake, and recorded the multi-platinum album Slip of the Tongue. During this period Rudy also performed worldwide on headline tours in support of the multiplatinum 1987 and Slip of the Tongue albums, and appeared on six MTV videos. The band's platinum streak carried Rudy into the '90s.

When Quiet Riot reunited in 1997, Rudy came back onboard. He performed around the world on headlining tours and as special guests in support of the Quiet Riot CDs Alive and Well and Guilty Pleasure. Rudy also appeared on VH1's Quiet Riot, Behind the Music. In 2003, Quiet Riot Live in The 21st Century DVD was released after the group disbanded. Rudy's recordings with all of these artists combined have sold over 30 million copies.

In 2004, Rudy joined Yngwie Malmsteen's Rising Force for the U.S. 30-city Attack tour. Later that year, Rudy became a member of the multi-platinum heavy metal group Dio. The band will be embarking on a worldwide tour this summer.

Besides his musical accomplishments, Rudy also demonstrated Acid, Vegas and DVD Architect software at the Sony Pictures booth during the 2004 Winter NAMM Show, released the Acid for Non Linear Editors training DVD directed by Douglas Spotted Eagle for the VASST training series, and created the Working Man's Bass loop library exclusively for Sony Pictures' Acid Software.

BOSS met up with the legendary bassist at the Dio Rehearsal spot in Los Angeles during rehearsals for the upcoming tour.

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You emerged on L.A. music's metal scene back in the late '70s. How did you break in?

I started playing in the L.A. metal scene with Quiet Riot, with Randy Rhoads in the band. Randy left the band to join Ozzy. When Randy and Ozzy were looking for a bass player back in 1981, Randy recommended me for the bass spot. That was for the U.S. Blizzard of Ozz tour. Tommy Aldridge and I joined at the same time. We took a month off because Diary of a Madman had already been recorded with Bob Daisly. We continued touring. As a matter of fact, I've just finished writing a book about those days. Those days starting with Randy back in Quiet Riot and chronologically explaining the accident and right on up to the time he left Ozzy's band, which was for the two performances of Speak of the Devil with Brad Gillis playing guitar on the DVD and the record.

There's the Randy Rhoads version of Quiet Riot and the Metal Health version of Quiet Riot. In late 82, I officially joined Quiet Riot right after recording *Speak of the Devil*. Metal Health got to #1 in November of '83 and by early 85 I officially left the band. After that I joined Whitesnake and we started practicing right here at Mates, the same place you and I sit right now. In '87 we did *Still of the Night*, and we all got along so well together: Vivian Campbell from Dio, plus David Coverdale, such a great singer and songwriter, and Adrian Vandenberg who played the solo on "Here I Go Again" — they were all great guys to work with. There were many combinations of guitarist back then: Tony McAlpine, Craig Goldy, who is now in Dio again, he was around — it's like one big web of guys.

Last year you joined Yngwie Malmsteen's Rising Force 30-city tour in support of the Attack release.

That was so cool. It happened at the right time because I wanted some musical growth. Playing with Yngwie reminded me of the early Ozzy period with the neo-classical approach to the tunes. He is so gifted. There were nights I would listen to him and it was like listening to God talking thru his guitar. I never missed listening to all the Malmsteen notes. It was a delight. To play his bass lines. . . . I mean if he ever wanted to stop playing guitar he could just be the number one bass player [laughs]. I was like a kid in a candy store playing those bass parts.

Who are your influences?

Well I started playing in Miami, which was very interesting with my Latin/Cuban influences, but we also had the Caribbean movement of reggae. Also R&B, show bands, Vegas-type groups were all big because of the tourism. I had also been to disco hell and back. When you look back, for every great drummer there was a great bass player. It's really about the partnership a bass player has with the drummer. From Carmine Appice to Tim Bogart. . . . Tim was my first great rock bass player. Of course there was James Jamerson from the Motown sessions. Also Paul McCartney — a lot of people don't give Ringo the credit, but he was and is a great drummer. I think he and Paul were a great pop rhythm section. Then after that, Chris Squire and Bill Bruford, then Alan White, and of course John Bonham and John Paul Jones. Later, there was Jaco and Stanley Clark and Lenny White.

What new musical endeavors are you involved in right now. I understand you're leaving for Japan with Dio next week.

It's Dio 24/7.

We heard some talk of another Stars video.

Yes, it's being worked on right now at Ronnie's studio, Dio central. We are working on the visual production for the next tour, which is being called *Holy Diver*, an Evening with Dio in Russia and England. It's the 20-year celebration of *Holy Diver*. A film crew will be following us around for a month. There will be a DVD made at the end of the tour.

Tell us how over the years you may have incorporated Roland and BOSS gear into your bass setup.

I got the first version of the Roland bass synth way back in 1981, maybe late 1982 during the *Diary of a Madman* tour. I would play it backstage to warm up before the shows, and to experiment with it because it was completely new to me. It was the first version of the module. Unlike today's version it didn't have presets, only knobs. By the time I played in Quiet Riot I incorporated it into my onstage bass system. My first session for the Metal Health record was a song called "Thunderbird," which was a tribute to Randy Rhoads. I used the Roland bass synth on that one. That's completely Roland bass on "Thunderbird." I've used it on other records and on tour. As a matter of fact, I have the

Roland CUBE Amp that Randy used backstage as his practice amp. I think that's the only thing I have of Randy's, and I would never let it go. It means too much to me.

I'm a huge fan of Roland, I've always used Roland and BOSS products through the years. As a matter of fact, I'm using the BOSS GS-10 now. It's incredible because it does so much. We as musicians today are always using computers, and everything needs to go through them. If we want to get an idea down, we have to turn everything on, then by the time you're ready to lay it down you may have missed the chance to capture the creative idea you were working on. This is one of the things I like about the GS-10, besides being able to interface with the computer — you just turn it on and it's ready to go. It's right there. You can take GS-10 to your hotel room. You can take it backstage. The GS-10 has speakers built in, and it's got the amp and speaker modeling internally along with a tuner built in. Many of the interfaces on the market only have MIDI or audio. The GS-10 has not only MIDI, it's an audio interface as well. I'm telling you the GS-10 is so flexible — I think of it as the musician's Swiss Army Knife. The GS-10 is one of the only pieces of equipment like this that can be used as a stand-alone unit. The speakers in my laptop do not have much tone, so when I want good tone, I use the speakers in the GS-10 for playback; we don't have to wear headphones.

I also checked out the new Roland DS-8 monitors. They're the first powered monitors that I've used, what a difference in sound the speakers make when the power is matched with the cabinets. Sometimes, I undermatch the power or even give too much power to the speaker, but with the DS-8s, you can't go wrong. The DS-8's are completely digital speakers with digital connections; you are hearing exactly what you are putting in. There's no second-guessing here.

It's inspiring to see how much you embrace technology.

I look at it as another tool of expression. In the last few years with computers, I've been able to make my loop libraries for Acid, write my book, and create songs very quickly.

Right now, I'm about to go to Japan on tour. In the old days, when I was out of the studio, what was I going to do? Go to the bar or to the mall? But now, I'm always working. I'm always creating. I'm always doing something. I like to set goals. This year I want to write a new solo album using the GS-10. I want to continue learning computer technology and animation.

Today's generation is fortunate to have all this technology at its disposal. We must learn to adapt and embrace technology, and ultimately give ourselves the freedom to create.

It's come full circle, it's about the music again, and the tools we have available to us to create music. Sometimes it can be overwhelming, because of so many choices. I would focus in areas and go for product that would give you the most. For example, I'm being honest here, the GS-10 is one product that will give you the flexibility to use it as a standalone, in addition to putting it directly into the computer. Not everybody can go out and spend thousands of dollars on gear, but if you spend money on gear that's very flexible, I believe you're on the right path.

Also with the DS-8s you're not going to need anything else, because they are self-powered. Connect to GS-10 as an option or use the speakers on the GS-10 when needed, Ya know, it's a great package.

Through the years you have also used BOSS pedals.

Definitely, I've always used BOSS tuners and BOSS delay pedals.

On behalf of Roland and BOSS, we want to thank you for the many years you have been using our gear.

My pleasure.

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Catch Rudy on tour with Dio, fronted by legendary metal vocalist Ronnie James Dio. For current info, tune into: www.rudysarzo.com.



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