

John Entwistle

b a s s b e a t s

Through his work, John Entwistle remains one of the most influential bass guitarists in the world. **MARK BURNETT** met him at his sprawling estate to discuss his reworked *Quadrophonia* project, The Who's classic 1970 Isle Of Wight performance and his new *Anthology* recordings.

Photography: **BOB STROTTING**

THE WHO

Sitting in the heart of the Gloucestershire countryside, John Entwistle's house is a testimony to the life he has led over the last 30 years as a member of The Who and an acclaimed bassist.

Remember his iconic virtuosity and grinding sound. The rhythm of his movements is evidence as obvious as you walk through the front door: with golf-bags hanging down by the fire, a top also hanging from the ceiling (inspired by Cat) and a bank of around 100 vintage guitars that would shame even the most ardent collector.

We immediately get down to the business of *Quadrophonic*, the 1973 Who album that spawned the 1976 Phil Spector/Leslie Landis double-album, and which has now been brought back to life by the former Who members as a multimedia live production seen for the first time at the Hyde Park Masters CD Master concert in June.

It first advertises about the recording sessions for the original album, John: "We were in the process of building our own studio, Hampton in Boreham, and we were hoping it would be ready to start the recording. *Quadrophonic* has only the actual studio that was used. So we used Studio Lane's studio in a silver streamer, which was quite fantastic. I was told to play more or less what I wanted. Pete had left the bass parts very simple on the album, which was in a way limited since by the time we heard them, the sense of the song was very strongly building on top of Pete's ideas. On others we played along to the synthesizer part and Keith Moon would lay down a thick track for us to keep track to. We had the mix recorded live from the start and I like it even better as we were recording. I was just going off and getting what I was doing into of the way through it, but that's the take they used."

"It was a long process before we going into the studio and knowing how to play the songs to the final extent because there was a lot of complicated stuff on the album. There were a lot of backing overdubs and it did take a long time to get the tracks on record, which took a long time. There was one really strange moment when we were recording *Overcast*. It started to pour with rain outside and it was raining into the piano booth. It was about a foot high when we finished the take. It took about 20 minutes and a way to drive it all up. The actual mixer across the street was also not available, so we borrowed his tape!"

Did the band fully understand the concept of *Quadrophonic*?

"There was a real story as such. What we



JOHN ENTWISTLE'S GUITAR COLLECTION INCLUDES A NUMBER OF RARE MODELS, INCLUDING THIS ONE, THE STRATOCASTER BEING CURRENTLY AVAILABLE FROM THE FENDER

did understand was that the guy was a synthesizer, or rather quadrophonic, because there were four of us in the band and we were each represented by our own theories. That's as deep as we bothered to get into it, we were more concerned with the music."

What gear were you using on the session?

"It was a Gibson Thunderbird bass and Fender amps. I used a very straight tone sound in the studio, although later for the tour I started to use more treble and got a lot more bite. But I basically used the same amps completely. The Fender were basic fully combination with no face board, and it doesn't seem to translate to tape very well unless it's live. I like the 'I'd get stuck in a rut and the only way I could get out of it was by changing my playing style, my technique and all my gear. I started using the Thunderbird which had a much better sound, in that no matter at all how much built a pretty solid sound to them and all the overboard helped me out of that rut. I wasn't as a player. I then went back to using treble and my style changed again. There was, when I had myself in a corner, I'd use myself to change equipment to play in a different way."

How did you learn of the plan to produce *Quadrophonic Live at Hyde Park*?

"I know Peter had plans to produce songs for us that he knew which were it would take. The first I knew of it was when Peter was and asked if I would play on it. My only problem was that I had some glasses to play with my own hands which I've now had to put off until next year. What encouraged me to do it was the possibility of something happening about Hyde Park, even though there were no definite plans. It would have been a lot of effort for a small amount, but we're doing it because Alan McGee's Square Records was suggested, my own place next to the railway but in a way it will help me to take my own hand out of the road more easily. Peter doesn't want to be called The Who, he thinks it's a

