



By Trip Wamsley - GJD Contributor

Salutations from the Dirty South! My name is Trip Wamsley and I'm a bass guitar addict. I've been at it for the past 26 years or so. My chosen instrument has taken me all over the world and into all sorts of clubs and halls all over the nation. It's been a good ride so far for me and it's only getting better and more interesting as the years go on. In this grouping of words that purport to be my inaugural column, I'm going to blurb briefly about some things I have found to be true for me. As a player you can find out more about me at www.twbass.com and about my band at www.thepowertriplets.com

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Now here goes:

Let me interject one thought before I get rolling. The instrument I play is a bass guitar. I have all the techniques regular guitar players have available to them. I use them. Some guitar players love it, some hate it. Some bass players hate it too. Most love it. Most.

Cut yourself some slack. In other words, don't obsess too much about gear. If you have found a few axes that do what you want them to do then stick with them. Settle on something that works and don't switch out instruments every 6 months or so. When you switch things out too much you never sound consistent and it gets expensive and stressful. Now, if your playing a bass made out of tree bark through a 10-watt amp in a metal band, then by all means upgrade. But, for the long haul, get it, play it, work it. Also, allow yourself the leeway to change your mind about styles, sounds and music and art and life in general. You'll be a lot happier. Trust me on this one. I've obsessed enough for all of us.

The more you know the longer your career will be. Knowledge of various styles and being able to play them in a convincing manner will keep you on the bandstand and it will also only help you in your writing and overall performance of your own material. I mainly function in the realms of popular music, which, to me means anything with a human voice plopped on it. This does not mean I don't do instrumental music or just plain strange stuff.

Always learn new things and assimilate as much info as you can. This will only help in career longevity. Learning music theory can't hurt anyone. Now, I must confess I'm not the most knowledgeable guy about music theory. I know enough to be really dangerous. It has only helped me. When you learn as much as you can, it should in no way affect your style. From my point of view, style is something that only others can perceive in its entirety. If leaning new

things affects your overall style, then perhaps it wasn't strong enough to begin with. Cut yourself some slack and go with it. If it's too disturbing then drop it. I always want to change as a player. I'm not really that interested in being who I was four years ago. Get my drift?

Observe behavior. Watch how other musicians and artists conduct their lives. Learn from their mistakes as well as triumphs. I have never known an artist, who drinks too much, does stupid amounts of horrid drugs to stay at the top of their game. They either get sober, burn out or die. Watch for ones who have solid relationships with their spouses or mates. Watch the ones who are always involved in tempestuous relationships also. Observe their business models as well. If they are making good money find out why. If they aren't find out why. You can make good money playing what you want. But, that involves LOTS of energy in self promotion and hitting the road. In other words:

If your town doesn't dig your tunes, find a town that does and take your show there. Which brings me to:

To make a living at music, sometimes you will have to play things you don't like to pay the bills. If you are playing something you don't with people you DO like then that makes things a bit more bearable. If you don't like the tunes and don't like people, you need to find another gig.

Creativity is a muscle. It needs to be exercised. So go on and do that crazy idea. You know, THAT one. Take out live and record it if you can or want to.

I think that's enough for now. In future columns I will address everything from the practical to the outlandish with occasional visits to the mundane. I hope you all enjoy the ride. Love to all and later! If you want you can contact me at tripster999@hotmail.com

About: Trip Wamsley has been playing bass for 26 years. He's been at it since 1982 when he opted for a decent stereo that could reproduce bass frequencies instead of a go-kart which of course could not. When he's not playing a solo bass gig somewhere in the world he's performing with his band the Power Triplets or hanging with his incredibly supportive wife Sarun and their intense son Xander.