

RAY LEONARD

From Metal to Meditation

Here's one for the Twist-of-Fate File. Ray Leonard, a prolific new-age recording artist, once engineered some of the meanest metal of the '80s — Ronnie James Dio, Ratt, and the like. Who would have predicted back then that hard-rockin' Ray would go on to win Emmy awards for his work on children's cartoon music, and then launch a career as an artist specializing in ambient, meditative music? Today Ray is about as far from his rock roots as it gets, and it soothes his soul just fine.

Ray began his musical journey as a member of the theatrical rock group Shadow in the '70s. After seven years of extensive touring with the band, Ray settled in L.A. and fell into the aforementioned career as a top-call recording engineer, working in tandem with legendary producers such as Keith Olsen, Richard Perry, Gary Katz, David Kershenbaum, and David Holman. Ray's work at the console earned him a slew of gold and platinum albums.

After a decade of engineering rock and pop records, Ray moved into mixing sound for television shows, and soon established himself as a leading engineer in music for cartoons. He received Sound Mixing Emmy awards for his work on *Alladin* and *Back to the Future*; he earned a pair of Golden Reel awards as well.

No newcomer to Roland gear, Ray has used many a BOSS and Roland product over the years. "In the Shadow days, we used all kinds of BOSS pedals, choruses, overdrives," he recalls, "and we had a Roland Space Echo on our PA system running up all the time; we wanted to get that big stadium-type sound in medium-size clubs. People used to comment, 'How is it that you guys make it sound like a concert in here?' That was our secret weapon," he chuckles, "the Space Echo."

During his rock engineering years, there was seldom a shortage of Roland gear onhand. "We were always using 808s and Jupiter-8s on ses-



sions, and effects like the SRV-2000 reverb. Guitar players would come in with Jazz-Chorus amps. I fell in love with the Jupiter-6. The JUNO-106 was the bass for almost every Pointer Sisters song we did, and it was almost always played live, no sequencing."

Today, a key instrument in Ray's rig is the Roland GR-33 guitar synthesizer. "I went to the NAMM show a couple of years ago and saw a guy demoing the GR-33, and it was amazing. I was blown away." He soon added on to his rig, and is in the process of creating a live multimedia show to showcase his solo music, all built around his use of the GR-33 onstage.

For up-to-the-minute info on Ray's recordings and performances, log onto his site at.

—Greg Rule

