

# Bass To The Future



## Introducing... Phil Simmonds

### How would you define your playing style?

I would have to say that it's groove based, and definitely gospel influenced. I play a lot of R'n'B, funk, soul, and jazz too. I'm not the greatest at soloing over changes, but I'm happy to just lock in with a great drummer.

### Who are your influences?

My brother is a drummer and I've always looked up to him as a player. He did the Drumtech thing a few years ago, so I always aspired to follow that, which is why I am at Bass Guitar-X! But I never really did the 'bass thing'. My brother got me in to Dennis Chambers when I was 15, so I used to check out his albums a lot and listen to the players, never knowing who they were!

When I moved to London I started to be influenced by other bass players more – guys I study with, and the teachers at Tech Music Schools are great. I met a couple of bassists at the Troy Bar in Hoxton – Rick James, and through him Chris Webb. Those guys definitely give me something to aspire to.

### Tell us about life at Bass Guitar-X...

I'm currently in the 2nd year of the degree course and enjoying every minute. The teachers have really pushed my playing ability and professionalism to work well in the music industry. The teaching approach is spot on and so inspiring. With the school being centred around such a great musical culture in London, I would definitely recommend the school to any aspiring young bassists.

### Tell us about your current projects...

I've just put together a new band with drummer Phil Jones and guitarist Tom Hill called Slinfold. We're playing jazz, R'n'B and funk with some great players: Chris Wintermeyer on trumpet, Joe Thomas on keys and João Caetano on percussion. We've been writing for a while and now we are just about to start gigging.

I also play in the John Russell Band. We've just signed a deal with KMR records. We are recording the album at The Way studio in Shoreditch, which should be out sometime next year. Kissmet I

mainly play guitar for, but I dep on bass too. We play 'bangra fusion' and play the world music summer festivals.

Apart from that, I'm working on my own portfolio of compositions and doing a project with singer Libby Shone called 'The Jazz Side of Motown'. I've reharmonised a lot of classic Motown songs and we're doing them in a swing lounge jazz style. I do some theatre work too and get called for other gigs and unsigned pop showcases at clubs around London. I'm just trying to keep busy while I wait for a big tour to come along!

### What are your career highlights?

Just being able to earn a living as a working musician. I could be playing in front of a big festival crowd or playing a bar gig in London; I'm just happy to be playing. Getting an endorsement with Lakland last year was very cool, and the very first time I got up to play at the Troy Bar, in Hoxton, Rick James told me he dug my playing, which was great. But I always look forward and hope there are even better things to come.

### What's your main gigging bass?

I play a Lakland 44-01 and 55-01. I would recommend Lakland to anyone. I was doing a session at a studio a few months ago; I had my Lakland and a 1960s Precision plugged into an Ampeg SVT going into an all-analogue desk. After we had set up we compared the two basses, and honestly, you could hardly tell the difference. For a new bass to compete with the sound of a vintage Fender is quite a feat.

### Tell us about your backline...

I'm not too geeky with equipment, but at the moment I'm using Markbass. I will usually just take my 2x10 Traveler cab and Little Mark II head. At bigger gigs there is normally a backline provided, but I love the Markbass stuff.

### What's your best gigging tip?

Enjoy it! Research into whatever genre you're playing and get on with the people that hire you. It depends what gig you're doing: if it's a band gig you might know the band well, but in a session situation you just have to do what you need to. At the end of the day it's a job, not a chance to show off your chops...unless it's required!

## FACT FILE

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### THE BANDS

John Russell Band  
Kissmet  
Slinfold  
The Jazz Side of Motown

### THE GEAR

Lakland 44-01  
Lakland 55-01  
Little Mark II head  
Traveler 210 cabinet  
Korg DT10 tuner  
Morley bass wah