



In 2003, Evanescence scored one of the biggest hits of the decade to date with *Fallen*. The disc clicked thanks to the inspired pairing of guitarist Ben Moody's infectious riffs and vocalist/keyboardist Amy Lee's dramatically ethereal vocals. But when it came time to tour, the duo expanded to a quartet, adding guitarist John LeCompt and drummer Rocky Gray.

And things got a lot heavier.

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John LeCompt:

Evanescence's Not-So-Silent Guitarist

LIKE MOODY AND LEE, LeCOMPT AND GRAY WERE PRODUCTS OF the Little Rock, Arkansas, Christian rock scene. And you can sum up the newcomers' influences in one word: metal.

"My dad wanted me to be a country boy," chuckles LeCompt, who grew up in Hot Springs, a small town 45 minutes from Little Rock. "He owns a BBQ, and he's into country music. But I rebelled against everything around me. When I discovered Slayer, that was the end of it."

John honed his skills with the Christian metal trio Mindrage. "That's how I met Ben Moody," he recalls. "He was running around in our mosh pit when he was a pimple-faced 14-year-old." LeCompt went on to record and write with Moody, contributing musical ideas to some of the songs that would ultimately appear on *Fallen*.

But LeCompt's biggest Evanescence contribution may be the way he helped pump up the live show. "At first, Ben and Amy didn't have much success as a live band because they'd paid so much attention to recording," notes John. "But when I got involved, we started taking the live show more seriously. I was able to help out in that department because I'd been playing live for so long with other bands."

Basically, says John, he metalizes the music whenever

metal. A lot of fans are surprised, but they end up liking the live show better because they feel like there's more art there."

Live, LeCompt plays acoustic songs such as "Breathe No More" on a Yamaha steel string Silent Guitar. "Oh man," he says. "That thing is crazy! It was originally created as a practice guitar. It doesn't have an actual body, just a metal frame. But it sounds just like a real acoustic guitar. In fact, it sounded a lot better than the acoustic guitar I'd been playing before. The Silent Guitar has a 1/4" output, so you can send a line out to P.A. I use it with a Yamaha AG Stomp: a pedal that simulates various acoustic sounds. The setup sounds incredibly realistic. I've played arenas with the Silent Guitar, and it sounded like I was playing a great steel-string acoustic guitar."

John also owns a nylon string Silent Guitar. "Back in the '80s and '90s, I was seriously into learning classical guitar, so the Silent nylon lets me get back to those roots. It feels just like a classical guitar, with traditional neck-width and machine heads and no pickguard. Whenever I want to chill out with some of that stuff, I just plug in headphones and go."



possible. "The production on *Fallen* is clean and straightforward. But live, we're pretty much all metal. Rocky and I are very technical and heavy players, but we also believe in putting on a good show. I bounce all over the place—massive jumps through the whole show. I almost killed myself a hundred times jumping off the highest thing I could find onstage."

John says his biggest musical adjustment in joining Evanescence had to do with the band's backing tracks. "Nothing I'd ever done before had that—the guitars were always nonstop. But Evanescence has recorded samples, loops and vocal tracks, so sometimes I don't even play a note for 10 seconds. But I don't mind. It's enlightened me to new ways of approaching music."

You can hear how LeCompt and Gray have influenced Evanescence's sound on the band's live CD, *Anywhere But Home*. "Listen to those songs side-by-side with the ones on *Fallen*, and you'll see what I'm talking about," says John. "We didn't pull any punches. It's straight-up

Personnel changes have slowed the release of Evanescence's next album. Ben Moody left the band, citing creative differences, and was replaced by guitarist Terry Balsamo, formerly of the band Cold. But while Balsamo and Amy Lee finish writing new material, LeCompt and Gray are pursuing their own group, MourningSide. (You can hear several MourningSide tracks at www.myspace.com/mourningSide).

"I just recorded a new MourningSide song with the Silent Guitar," says John. "I just plugged it straight into Pro Tools and it sounded great. I have five dogs and you'd definitely hear them scratching around on the floor if I'd set up a hot mic." He laughs. "I definitely recommend a Silent Guitar if you live in a house with five dogs."