



WES borland

guitar

from the bottom up

A decade with rap-rock ruffians Limp Bizkit made Wes Borland one of the most visible guitarists of his generation. But Borland's on/off partnership with Limp Bizkit frontman Fred Durst now seems to be permanently off. "We recently had another falling out," sighs Wes. "We've decided we just can't work together anymore."

*But fear not, Borland fans: Wes has just completed *Cruel Melody*, the debut release by his new group, *Black Light Burns*. The album, produced by band member and longtime *Nine Inch Nails* guitarist Danny Lohner, is due this fall.*

*In the meantime, Borland has been touring as bassist with the band *From First to Last*—and collaborating with Yamaha on his first-ever signature guitar, the CV820WB. We recently spoke to Wes about his innovative new instrument.*

What inspired you to collaborate with Yamaha on the CV820WB?

For a long time, various companies have been asking me to produce a signature guitar. But I'd soon find out that what they really wanted was for me to customize one of their existing models. Every time I'd tell them that I'd rather make something completely new, they'd back away. I like working with wood. I've built a couple of guitars from scratch. I've done a lot of sculpture. So I didn't want someone else's design. Yamaha was the first company to say, "We'll design a guitar with you and make sure it's perfect. We'll do whatever you want."

And what did you want?

I wanted an instrument that incorporated my favorite features from every guitar I've ever had—all the things I always wished I could transplant from one guitar to the all the others. I wanted a semi-hollowbody with f-holes that also incorporated features from my favorite solidbodies. I wanted it to look "old" in a classic way, but seamlessly

incorporate a modern locking tremolo. Yamaha has just developed a new tremolo system that uses a lever to lock and unlock the strings, as opposed to wrenches. It's smaller, sleeker-looking, and very cool. It also works perfectly with the headstock I designed. The guitar will come in two finishes: One is glossy black, and the other is dark wood-grain, the color of a violin.

What about the electronics?

I prefer not having a tone control, since I always keep mine set all the way to treble—there's no reason for me to roll off highs. But I like having separate volume controls for each pickup, because I blend them sometimes.

You favor loud, heavily overdriven tones. Is feedback a problem with a hollowbody?

I've played hollowbodies for a long time in many different high-gain situations. The trick is to play the guitar as-is in the studio, but to stuff a few little pieces of foam into the guitar when you play live. It doesn't change the guitar's tone or weight, but it deadens it enough to prevent feedback. I also use noise gates to keep things quieter.

Why have you veered away from the seven-string guitars you used to use?


Actually, I played six-string all the way through the first Limp Bizkit record. But then we went on the road with Korn, who got us some seven-strings for free. But I never played with a low seventh string like they did—I had a doubled high E, which I used to create chorusing effects, or to grab dissonant notes right next to each other. But as time went by, I used the doubled string less, so it was easy to go back to six-string.

You mean you played those low-tuned Limp Bizkit riffs with no low B string?

Right—though in Limp Bizkit I tuned the whole guitar a step-and-a-half lower than standard, C# to C#. I wound up using a lot of different low tunings on the *Black Light Burns* album, because I had to find the right key for my voice. Sometimes we went as low as B. And sometimes, like on the song "Lie," we use the C# tuning, but with the low C# dropped down to B. It's like a regular dropped-D tuning, transposed down.

So is the CV820WB everything you wanted?

Yes—it's exactly what I wanted. Everything came together perfectly. I just can't wait to get my hands on a few more of them!



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