

STYLE FILE

John Currie on Ewan Vernal

Deacon Blue's success has been achieved by a combination of excellent songwriting, years of live performing, and the abilities of the band in putting their songs across in the most effective way. Ewan Vernal, one of my favourite bass players on the pop scene, plays no small part in helping to create the diverse feels and dynamics required by Deacon Blue's arrangements, be it stomping quarter note roots as in *Queen Of The New Year* or *Real Gone Kid*, the funkier groove of *The World Is Hit By Lightning* or the slow, evocative *I Will See You Tomorrow*.

There is already a Bass Analysis in the pipeline on Ewan, so if you have a fave track or two, write and let me know, and you might start the new year with a brand new set of freebie Elites! For now, here are a couple of examples of Mr Vernal's work, from the albums 'When The World Knows Your Name' and 'Fellow Hoodlums' on which he used Fender Jazz and Warwick 4- and 5-string basses, D'd straight into the desk.

NOTES

1. The well known unison riff from *Fergus* followed by the similar, but slightly more 'open' sequence leading up to the chorus. The use of the A (the maj 3rd) over the underlying F chord here gives a much smoother flow to this section than dropping back to an F root each time.

2. The title track from 'Fellow Hoodlums', from the bass entry. Note how the first five bars have a very off-beat feel, with a rest on beat one and no downbeat on four; then, in the final bar we have the emphasis on beats one and four as a point of rhythmic contrast and strength on the turnaround to the repeat - love that low C, too!

3. The excellent *Your Swaying Arms* off the last album, where the high bass figure is the focus of the intro and bridge sections. A two bar phrase from the E major scale (E,F#,G#,A,B,C#,D#) here becomes a memorable little melody with the slightly different third and fourth repeats, and a gentle vibrato on the long B. The verse is slapped, but very subtly, so as not to be obtrusive; there is not a lot of treble in the sound and it's probably also well compressed - and works a treat! Ewan is fond of sliding to and away from notes, and this is displayed well in this part, as a feature in every bar! Root, 5th and 6th (E, B and C#) are the only notes used here, and is a very effective economy compared to the busier following chorus.

More (Mc) Ewan to whet the palate in the New Year...

FERGUS SINGS THE BLUES

♩ = 116

F

G
D
A
E

(Gm) (Eb)

G
D
A
E

Gm

G
D
A
E

Vib *Gliss* *Gliss Gliss* *Gliss*

E sus 4 S E E sus 4 % T T T T S T S T T T S P T

G D A B 14 H 14 14 12 0 7 9 7 7 2 0 7 9 7 7 2

Gliss *Gliss* *Gliss Gliss*

% T T T T S T H T % T T T T S T T % T T T T S T S

G D A B 0 7 9 7 7 2 4 2 4 4 2 4 4 (4) 2 0 7 9 7 7 2

Gliss *Gliss* 1. *Gliss*

% T T T T S P T H B E E sus 4 T T T T S P T

G D A B 0 7 9 7 7 2 4 2 2 2 2 2 2 0 7 9 7 7 2

2. *Gliss* (*Gliss*)

E T P T T T S P T S P To Chorus

G D A B 9 9 (6) 9 0 7 9 7 7 (4) 7

F/A B \flat F/A

G T 7 5 6 7 8 5 8 5 7 7
 D A A
 E B 5 5 5 5 6 6 8 5 8 5 5 5 5

FELLOW HOODLUMS

C C sus 4 C C

G T
 D A A
 E B 3 0 3 3 1 1 1 3 3 3 3 3 0 3 3 1 1

(Note: 5-String Tab)

C sus 4 C G G sus 4 G

G T
 D A A
 E B 3 3 3 3 0 3 (1) 2 3 3 (1) 2 3 (4) 5 3 0 3

YOUR SWAYING ARMS

E E sus 4

G T (11) 13 11 14 11 12 14 14 14 14 11 14 14 14
 D A A
 E B

E E sus 4 E

G T (11) 13 11 14 (11) 11 12 14 14 14 14 11 14 14 (11) 13 11 13 11 14 11 12 14 14 14
 D A A
 E B