

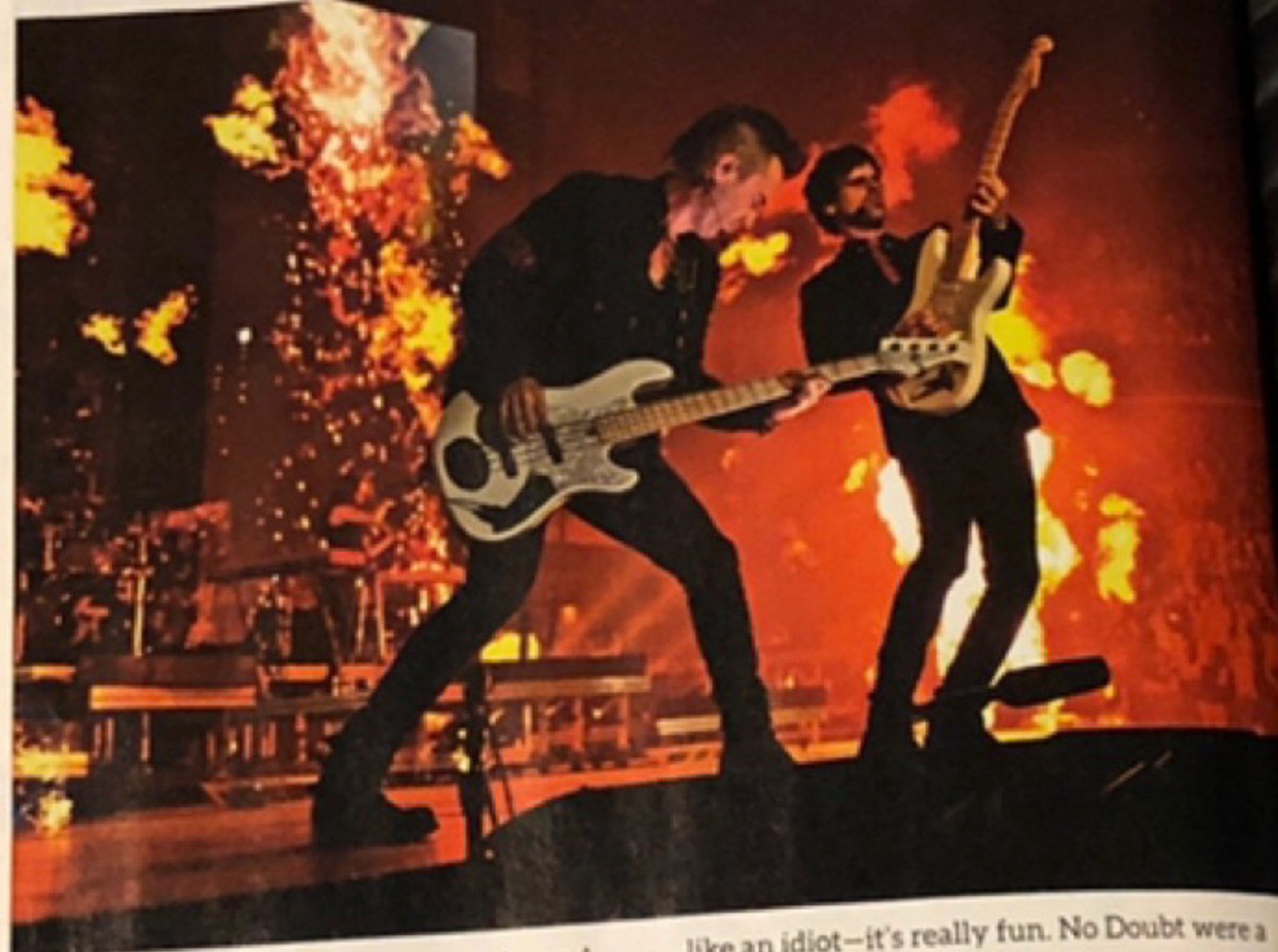
Frank Talk

Derek Frank has played the planet's biggest venues alongside Gwen Stefani, Shania Twain, Air Supply, and other stellar acts. He takes time out of his hectic schedule to talk about gear, gigs, and getting the perfect sound

There's a lot of variety in the bass gear I use, depending on the gig. I've done a bunch of Las Vegas dates with Gwen Stefani this year. For her show I'm using a Kemper Profiler; it seems these days that a lot of the bigger pop tours are going ampless, because a lot of front-of-house engineers prefer it that way. We run around the stage so much that it's cool to have something that's MIDI-controlled and a virtual amp.

Originally I had my tech build me a rig that was a pedal rack, with a bunch of pedals rack-mounted on shelves and a MIDI switcher, and I had that along with my Noble preamp. Unfortunately, for a show like Gwen's that causes problems. There are so many lights and video screens involved, plus on-stage props—such as a giant light-up staircase, rainbows that fall from the sky, and crazy stuff like that—that my rig and the guitarist's rig were creating a lot of issues with buzz.

We kept trying to trace ground loops and all this stuff, but my analog pedals—as much as I love them—were acting as antennas for



all the buzz that was happening. In the end I just got the Kemper, and it's been amazing. All the patch changes run via MIDI from the show computer, so I don't have any kind of foot controller on stage with me, and it's easy.

I'm trying out a couple of different basses on the Gwen gig. I recently discovered Fano basses out of Arizona, who put out this instrument called a JM4. It's basically a Jazz bass with Thunderbird pickups and a Jaguar body style, and it's way cool. I'm loving it. I use two of those with Gwen as well as a Warwick CV5 passive five-string.

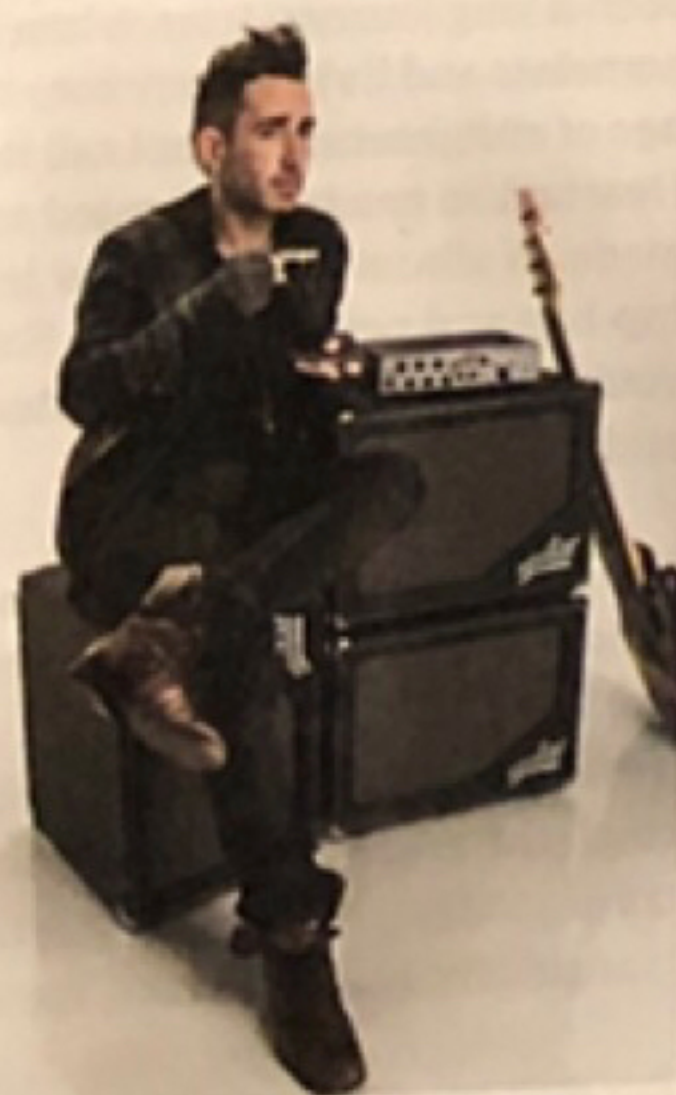
The setlist is the No Doubt hits, and Gwen's own hits too, which include a lot of great basslines. The bass is a little more aggressive and up-front than the parts I played when I was with Shania Twain, and from a performance standpoint, it's a workout. There's a lot of running around the stage and jumping around

like an idiot—it's really fun. No Doubt were a mishmash of punk, ska, reggae, pop... a unique thing. I'm a big fan so it's been so much fun to play these great songs.

When I was with Shania I used a custom Lakland Decade with Nordstrand Big Blade pickups, plus a Lakland Darryl Jones, a LaBella Olinto P-Bass, and a Martin acoustic. There was a Darkglass Vintage Microtubes Overdrive as well as a Cali 76 compressor and MXR and Radial units on the floor. I also have a 1976 Fender Precision for the other band I play in, Mindi Abair and the Boneshakers. For all my gigs I use LaBella strings, and when I'm not using the Kemper, I use an Aguilar DB751 head, with two DB410 cabinets.

On top of all that I did a tour of Asia last year with Daniel Powter, who wrote the song 'Bad Day' about 10 years ago. So it's all busy! I should probably clone myself...

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