



They're really great inexpensive pedals, and I probably use that model on every show. For delays and other chorus-type stuff I use the Line 6 Delay (invaluable) and Modulation. I love Line 6, but I wish the Delay had more than three settings (after all, I do 18 songs a week). And though it's a great tool and the overall sound quality is very good, I feel that the Mod pedal can cut your tone and volume a bit if you don't have a lot of time to work with it.

Since I'm not a switching-system guy, I had the greatest pedalboard maker on

earth design me a custom board. Rooster, at TrailerTrash Pedalboards, put it all together for me and is actually working on a second one right now. I'll tell you, that thing is my life-support system. It's tough, quiet and looks killer on TV. I use a Lehle A/B switcher to keep my tuner out-line and a good old Cry Baby. My new board has a bunch of really cool stuff, too. I'll have more on that for you later.

One thing I've learned is that the sound coming out of a TV lacks depth. It's an odd thing, but if your tone is dark and in any way muddy, it ends up getting lost in the mix. I feel that if I set my tone a little brighter, it translates better when you hear it at home. I also find that the more direct the sound is—whether it's big and delayed or clean and to-the-point—the better off you'll be.

Now that we have the gear going, I'd like to say a little about preparation. The biggest thing about a show like this is learning the songs. It's an interesting process that starts with listening to the original recording in my bedroom and ends with us playing the songs on international television. Obviously, you have to learn the parts first. Then you have to translate the studio part to a live part. With a show like Rock Star we're constantly altering

the songs and arrangements. For instance, in order to have a heavier or more "rock" sound (which we're doing this year for Supernova), I might add a bit more drive or less effects than the studio sound would indicate. But it also has to do with the performance. When the producers were looking for musicians for the house band, they not only wanted professional, competent musicians but they wanted guys who would own every part they play—and play it aggressively.

Obviously, the goal is to be comfortable enough to commit to each part as if you've known it for years. The challenge is that we only have a day or two to get it to that point. So, it's really important to focus. When I first heard that we'd be learning 200 songs for the season (15 to 20 songs a week), I was very nervous about memory. But it's really no different than people on quiz shows have to do. The brain is capable of processing a multitude of information. It's simply a matter of doing it.

Well, I've gotta run and shoot another episode. I'll check back with you soon. In the meantime, please email me any questions or topics. ☺

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Backstage at Rock Star: Supernova

in next month's issue...