

We'll play the same thing on many occasions, but usually we try to pick different parts. That's easy, though, because most of the songs we play have much more than two guitar parts. The other interesting thing about our playing is that we couldn't be at two more opposite ends of the spectrum.

Rafael is a much better lead player than I am. His technique is unbelievable. There is nothing he can't do on a guitar.

I usually stick to the rhythm parts. As a songwriter I'm drawn to the chords and

you. Sometimes they make it hard. There are times when we've got a song sounding great, then the singer will want to change the key, the arrangement and the whole vibe of the thing. Now, I'm not suggesting that all of their ideas are bad, since they're obviously not. Sometimes we need them to take charge of a so-so song and make it into something. We only have so much time to get an arrangement together, and we usually do just what we get on the record. That being said, the way a song was originally written and recorded is part of what

Monday: Get the cuts and learn at home.

Tuesday: Rehearse with the house band for the performance show; rehearse with contestants for the Wednesday elimination show.

Wednesday – Do the elimination show; rehearse with house band for the performance show.

Thursday: This is the day off.

Friday: Rehearse with contestants.

Saturday: Rehearse with contestants.

Sunday: Do the performance show.

Somehow, we seem to make it work.



melody. Plus, with all the singing I do, it helps to be strumming away underneath. This also helps appease my tone-freak side. I get to work with different guitars and pedals and amps, and get as close as possible to the original vibe of the song.

**I actually prefer playing rhythm, because it makes me feel that I'm part of the foundation of the song.**

Speaking of the foundation, our drummer Nate Morton and bassist Sasha Krivtsov are an absolutely amazing rhythm section. (We affectionately refer to them as "the Kitchen," but I'm not sure why). They're super-solid with every groove and style of music that we play. Working with musicians of this caliber makes my job that much easier.

So, once we've learned all the songs, we bring in the contestants. This is where it gets interesting. I'm not going to lie to

makes it a hit. Once you start changing things to a significant degree, it can drift away from the song you used to love. So, you have to be careful. We do the best we can to strike a middle ground between the contestant's vision and what we feel is the best way to approach the song. I'd say I'm happy with it about three-fourths of the time. Once the arrangement is decided, we just have to own it. So, the process of taking it from rehearsal to a show performance in one-and-a-half days is a big part of the gig. Since I never really use a chart, I start to memorize the songs from the first time we play. That helps keep me from relying on anything but myself. We also run the songs on the day of the taping, just to tighten everything up. So, by the time we do the actual show we've probably played each song ten or fifteen times. Here's a recap of the process:

Well, now that you know how we do it, let's check out a show! Rockstar: Supernova airs Tuesday night at nine and Wednesday night at eight on CBS.

Thanks for the support.

—Jim

**Jim McGorman**

[www.jimmcgorman.com](http://www.jimmcgorman.com)

[www.rockstar.msn.com](http://www.rockstar.msn.com)

Stay tuned for Part Three of

Backstage at Rockstar: Supernova  
in next month's issue...