

# Guitar Player

## February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010

### Marillion's Steve Rothery Talks Tones and Effects

Marillion guitarist Steve Rothery specializes in crafting lush sonic atmospheres with layered guitars and effects processing, as exemplified on *Ostara* [Eagle], the latest release from his other band, the Wishing Tree. His primary effects included three TC Electronic 2290 Dynamic Digital Delays, and Roger Linn AdrenaLinn III, Hughes & Kettner Rotosphere, Xotic AC pedal, Analogman Bi-Chorus, and Emma RF-1 ReezaFRATzitz pedals routed through a Gig-Rig Pro-14 controller to maintain signal quality. (*Ed. Read Rothery's take on track layering in the May 2010 issue of GP.*) **How did you get the great wah**



**sounds on “Ostara”?** That’s an AdrenaLinn III preset. The pedal has lots of weird modulation and filter sweep things. It’s a really cool box if you are looking for inspiration in the studio—those little moments that lift the track into another place. And it syncs to MIDI clock, so if you are driving your tracks to a steady tempo, you can get all of the pulsating and modulating effects exactly in the groove. **It sounds like you used it to set up a reversed loop.** Yes, I looped a phrase, recorded it, and then flipped it around inside Nuendo to create the reversed loop. Similarly, I recorded an acoustic 12-string hit, reversed it, and positioned it so that it swells into the downbeat at various points. **Your solo tone on “Falling” sounds different than the tones on the other tracks.** That solo is actually a guide track that I recorded in my kitchen using a travel guitar going through Native Instruments GuitarRig 2 and listening on a pair of tiny speakers. I lived with the demo for that song for several years and when it came time to record the album I was quite happy with it and just decided to keep it. Most of the time, I don’t like to use

software amp models, though there are some really good ones now, such as Waves GTR and IK Multimedia AmpliTube 3, and even the models in Logic Pro. **Do you ever record a straight guitar sound in addition to your amplified track just in case you want to re-amp later using another amp or a software model?** I used a Radial splitter box to split my guitar signal out to six different amplifiers and also to record a track for reamping. As it turned out the sound I'd committed to when recording was fine, but I had the option if I had wanted to reamp later. There is obviously a lot that you can do after the fact, but the sound that's coming out of the guitar is the most important thing. I've got a Blade Stratocaster-style guitar with Lindy Fralin pickups that I've been using for the past few years, and most recently I've had some guitars—including a signature model—made by Jack Dent. Those guitars also have the Ghost MIDI system. The main thing is getting a great-sounding signal chain together. **Break down what's going on guitar-wise on "Hollow Hills."** The first part is an electric phrase that repeats with additional melodic phrases happening over it. That goes into the middle section, which is picked acoustic guitar with a Keeley-modded Boss TR-2 Tremolo and a bit of delay, into a Groove Tubes Trio valve preamp with a Groove Tubes D75 power amp. The end section is light acoustics, a 12-string Portuguese guitar, and various electrics. There are typically about five guitar tracks on a given tune, though there can be additional tracks that happen just once here and there. **How do you recreate all those layers live?** It's a challenge. Even though we have a seven-piece band when we play live, we still use loops and triggers with backing tracks, with a click for the drummer. In the future we'll try to avoid the click, because that can feel a little bit restrained, as you want to have the freedom to push the tempo a little bit if you choose.