A VULGAR DISPLAY OF POWER

THE GUITAR RIGS OF THE STARS

PUNCH LINE

Zoltan Bathory of Five Finger Death Punch discusses the power produced by his high-gauge strings and baritone tuning.

By **NICK BOWCOTT**

»DESIGN PHILOSOPHY "I tune down to B, but since I use extremely heavy strings, my guitars stay fiercely in tune," says Five Finger Death Punch guitarist Zoltan Bathory. "Plus, the strings don't feel spongy whatsoever."

When Bathory says "extremely heavy," he's not kidding. His Dunlop strings are a custom-gauge set consisting of .013, .017, .028, .038, .048 and .062! "They're like ship-towing cables," he says, laughing. "Unless you're used to such heavy gauges, they're difficult to play, especially on solos. The low-end payoff is worth it though."

For that reason, Bathory runs his Diamond Nitrox amp relatively clean. "I don't use crazy, über-distortion because I'm getting so much beef from my strings. Also, I don't scoop out my midrange. A lot of metal guitarists do, and I think that's a mistake. Midrange produces attack and that heavy umph!'"

»CONTROL ISSUES "I control everything with my DigiTech pedal board, and I basically jump back and forth between four tones. My rhythm sound is completely dry, and my solo setting is the same basic tone but with a little more midrange and gain added, and some delay and chorus. I also have two clean settings: one has a slap-back delay on it; the other has chorus and is on the verge of distorting. I control whether it's clean or dirty with the strength of my picking."

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»FAVORITE PIECE OF GEAR "My Dunlop Custom Shop two-channel MXR Smart Gate keeps my rig completely quiet while maintaining all of its dynamics. I have channel one of the gate in front of my amp and channel two at the end of the effect loop. But since the Smart Gate works so well with my Nitrox head, I would have to say that, together, they're my favorite piece of gear."

»SECRET WEAPON "My heavy-gauge strings. They give me unbelievable power and incredible dynamics." ❐

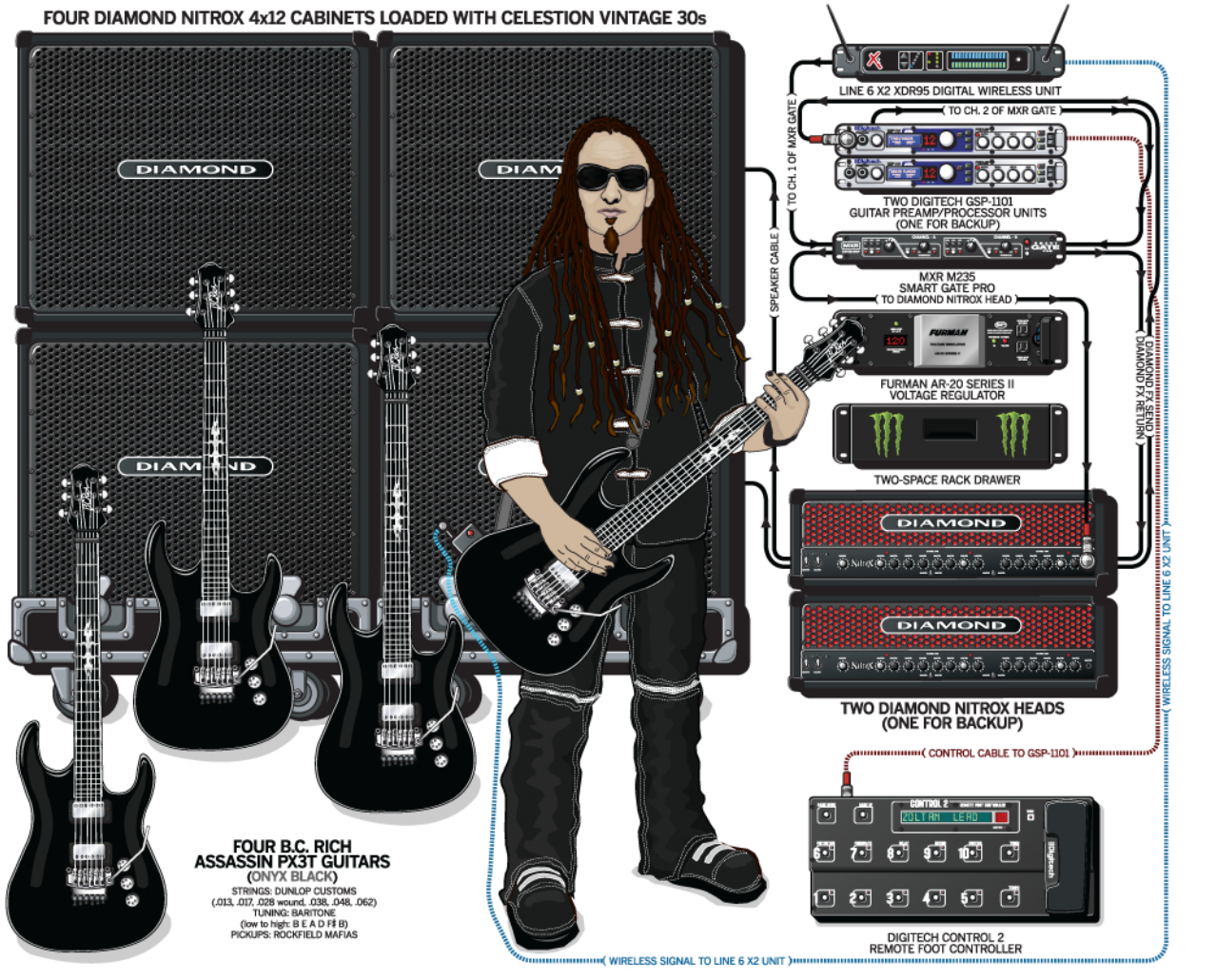

Illustration by Adam Cooper/guitargeek.com