

# THE TONEZONE

## ONE OF THE UK'S HARDEST WORKING GUITAR PLAYERS GIVES US A PEEK AT HIS LIVE RIG...

**... If you've ever been to the London Guitar Show, this man will require no introduction. For the past five years, backed by a 'house band' of Iron Maiden drummer Nicko McBrain and an array of special guests, Phil Hilborne has been wowing visitors to the show the only way he knows how – with some kick-ass guitar playing.**

### THE MAN

You might be surprised to learn that Phil Hilborne studied classical guitar at Trinity College Of Music before teaching himself to play the electric instrument and finding his feet in the rock world. He's toured on and off with Nicko McBrain for the best part of 20 years, and with the Phil Hilborne Band for 15, and played with just about anyone and everyone in between.

A man of many talents, Phil also owns and runs WM Studios in Essex where he has recorded the likes of Zakk Wylde, Steve Morse



Phil's signature PRS is finished in bright red and 'bonnie pink' – it's certainly eye-catching

and Paul Gilbert. He has also produced records for Adrian Legg and Eric Roche, music for the BBC and Channel 4 and countless instructional CDs.

As if that weren't enough, Phil is the Musical Director for the National Youth Rock Orchestra, and can sometimes be seen taking up the guitar duties for the Queen musical *We Will Rock You* in the West End.

### THE GEAR

Phil's guitar is a one-off: an early PRS, custom-built for Phil from Private Stock wood in the late '80s, with custom-wound Vintage Bass and Deep Dish pickups, coil tap and 'sweet switch'.

In the studio, Phil uses a pair of Cornford MK50H heads (one of which was previously owned by Gary Moore) for dirty sounds and a pair of Fender Blues Deluxes for clean sounds. On stage, he has a pair of Marshall Silver Jubilee heads

(mounted in black chassis as opposed to the standard silver – another unique touch) hooked up to two Marshall 4x12 cabs loaded with Celestion Vintage 30s.

Next we come to his formidable pedalboard. As you'd expect with such a versatile guitarist, there's enough gear here to handle just about any situation. It's all kept in order by a Pro-14 pedalboard controller, manufactured by The Gig Rig. This provides 10 completely discrete effects loops (nine mono and one stereo), which can be combined at will in 14 presets, with the advantage that the guitar signal only ever has to pass through the pedals you are actually using.

Phil's pedalboard shows a fondness for Robert Keeley's modded pedals. Keeley ([www.robertkeeley.co.uk](http://www.robertkeeley.co.uk)) takes the standard stompboxes, adds extra features and improves sound quality. In addition to a Keeley compressor and Keeley-modded Boss (Tremolo, Distortion and Super Overdrive) and Ibanez (Analogue Delay) pedals, Phil also uses Boss Octave and Chorus pedals, an MXR Phase 90 and, of course, his signature treble booster, the ThunderTomate Phil Hilborne Fat TB. A separate mini-board houses a Digitech Whammy, a Dunlop Rotovibe rotary speaker effect and a Crybaby 535Q Multi-Wah.

The bottom row of presets on the Gig Rig Pro-14 is set up to cover a range of dirty and boosted sounds, while the top row brings in the various different modulation effects on top of whichever sound is selected. The Whammy board is always on so it can be accessed whenever the need arises. **GB**

• Phil's signature treble booster, the ThunderTomate Phil Hilborne Fat TB, is reviewed on p 93

### PHIL'S RIG



- 1 Custom-built, Private Stock PRS
- 2 2 x Marshall Silver Jubilee heads
- 3 2 x Marshall 4x12 cabs with Celestion Vintage 30 speakers
- 4 2 x Yamaha D1500 rack delay
- 5 Digitech Whammy
- 6 Dunlop Rotovibe
- 7 Dunlop Crybaby Wah
- 8 The GigRig Pro-14 pedalboard switching system
- 9 Boss CE-5 Chorus Ensemble
- 10 Keeley-modified Ibanez AD-9 Analogue Delay
- 11 MXR Phase 90
- 12 Keeley-modified Boss TR-2 Tremolo
- 13 Keeley-modified Boss DS-1 Distortion
- 14 Keeley-modified Boss SD-1 Super Overdrive
- 15 ThunderTomate Phil Hilborne Fat TB
- 16 Keeleer Compressor
- 17 Boss OC-2 Octave
- 18 Boss TU-2 Chromatic Tuner