

# Land of Oz

By Matt Gallagher

## Creative editing helps shape Oz Noy's music.

Guitarist Oz Noy invigorates New York City's music scene with a distinctive style that seamlessly integrates rock, jazz, funk, pop, blues, and heavy metal. For his solo debut, *Oz Live* (2003), Noy recorded four nights at the Bitter End nightclub with his trio using an ADAT and edited tracks afterward in Pro Tools LE. For his second release, *Hal* (Magnatune Records, 2005), Noy recorded in the studio with regular members of his trio: bassists James Genus and Will Lee, and drummers Keith Carlock and Anton Fig. Guitarist Mike Stern and keyboardists George Whitty and Shai Bahar appear as guests.

"It's all about interaction," Noy says of his music. "I had to go to a big studio to get the sound that I'm used to when I play live." Noy, Carlock, Fig, Genus, Lee, and Stern recorded in Bennett Studios, a commercial facility. "It has a Pro Tools MixPlus rig, a Neve board, and a big [live] room," Noy says. Engineers placed

Noy's guitar amps in a separate room. "I stood in front of that room with the [sliding] door half open," Noy says. "I need to feel the sound of the amp. We recorded with all the options—close miking and room mics.

"I recorded for four days with a different rhythm section each day to get a variety of sounds," Noy says. "Anton's sound is a rock sound, and Keith's sound is jazzier. Setting up two drummers would have been hard, so I recorded each song with each drummer separately with a click track. I took everything home on hard drives and started editing."

Noy spent three months editing tracks in his personal studio using his Mac G4, Digidesign Digi 001, and Pro Tools LE. "I tried to make [the album] sound like we did it live," Noy says. He meticulously alternated and layered drum tracks throughout. "It was more about getting the sonic effect that I needed," Noy says. "On the title track Anton plays the 'A' parts and Keith plays the 'B' parts. 'Chillin' was based on the way Anton played the tune, and when we got to the solos I chose Keith's stuff, I looped a section of Keith playing on top of Anton's stuff, and on 'Say What' I did the opposite."

"Hey You" features the effect of a vinyl record skipping at various points in the track. "One day while I was writing I mistakenly looped a bar and it sounded like a record skipping," Noy says. "I used it as a musical idea. When we recorded that tune I told Keith, 'Every time you get to the end of that section play something hip on the snare, the hi-hat, or the bass drum and I'll deal with it later. I took a couple of beats, looped them, copied them, and put mutes between them.'"

Adding Whitty's keyboard tracks was the final step in production. "I emailed the tracks to him, he recorded his parts at home, and he emailed them back," Noy says. "The keyboard parts are minimal. Otherwise, they'd change the whole vibe of the tune." Noy asked Kevin Shirley to mix the album at The Hit Factory. "He gets incredible [guitar] tone and sounds," Noy says. "He ended up using whatever was recorded and it was fine."

"When you have a really small budget you have to just go in, record, hope you did it the best you could, and then fix whatever you need to fix in Pro Tools," Noy says. "Pro Tools can help you make things sound better in a very natural, musical way—if you know how to use it right." **EM**



Hal/Oz Noy

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