

INSTRUMENTAL

PAT GRAHAM



The bond between musician and instrument is strong: an instrument travels with the musician, taking its knocks, but moreover performing alongside. As a documentary music photographer, I have a close perspective on these travels. Over the years I have photographed musicians and their instruments in many different settings. While on tours I've watched closely as the same band plays live hundreds of times, and I've realized that musicians have individual actions that repeat over and over, relative to the song and the set list. These actions reflect rhythms and pressures, tempo and emotion, creating movements that

erode or mark the surface of the instrument. Eventually the actions physically alter the surface, or landscape of the instruments and tell an intimate and resonant tale. The instruments hold the patterns of the songs that have played through them. A slight scratching where tremolo was used, or heavy gouging from the same rhythm, these marks begin to appear as part of the surface. It's all there, the repetition, movements, sweat, even blood and emotion.

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OPPOSITE PAGE: REM – Peter Buck's Rickenbacker photographed on stage at Twickenham Stadium, London. Two weeks after I did these shots I received frantic calls from REM management. "Someone stole the Rick in Helsinki right off the stage! Can you get us those photos asap?" I got the photos over to REM HQ which were used to help find the Rick. It was returned safe and sound weeks later. The Rick is Peters signature guitar, he has used it on stage and in the studio since the band recorded the Chronic Town EP back in 1982.

ABOVE: Tortoise – This series was taken at sound check at a club in Christiania, Denmark. The frame with the set list has the instrument that holds samples and parts to play the songs listed on it. While driving through Germany late at night the hatch of the trailer flew open and Tortoise's gear was strewn about on the Autobahn. We thought we put it all back, until the next gig and the little box with that song list was gone. That night Tortoise couldn't play those songs, being Tortoise it was sorted out of course.

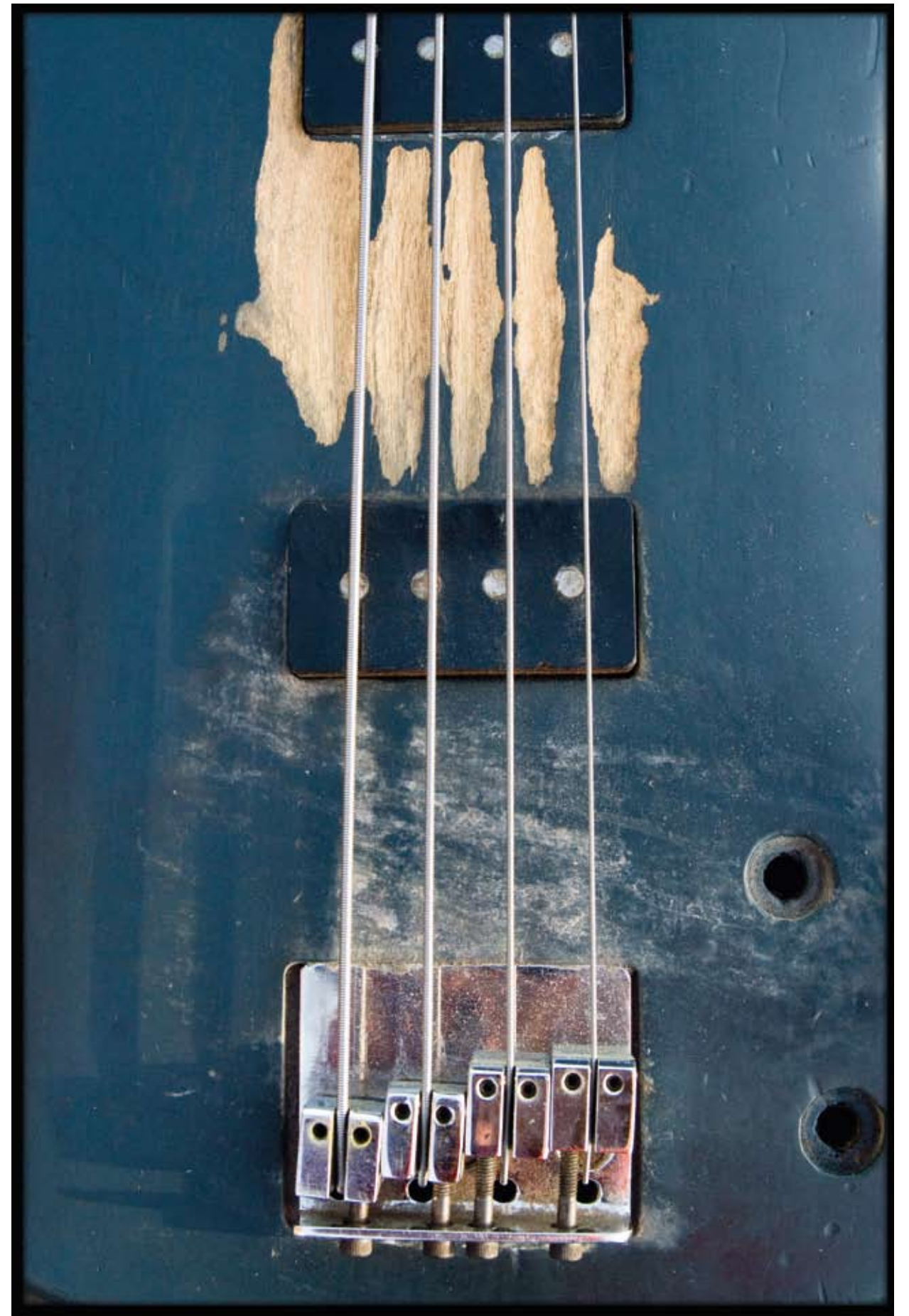


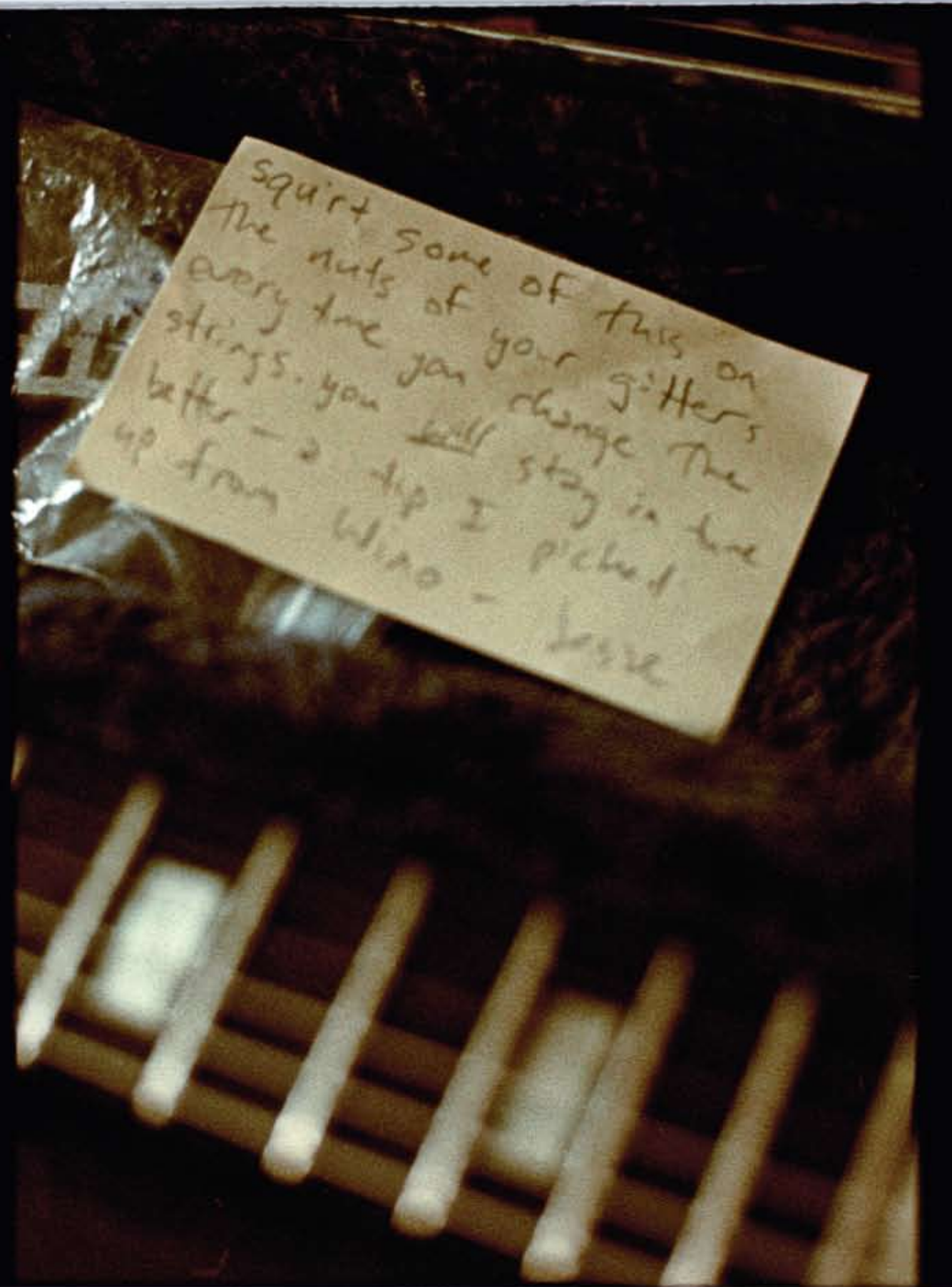
ABOVE: Modest Mouse – Johnny Marr's Jaguar, photographed on the stage of the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, TN. The stickers were purchased at a Walmart at 3am in Oxford, Mississippi. While on a break from recording Jeremiah Green and Johnny went to Jeremiah's favorite shop. Johnny told me the stickers represent people and the zodiac.

RIGHT: Shellac – Bob Weston's bass, photographed on some kind of freight cart behind the Forum in London. The gouges were formed by Bob's playing style, not a wild big cat.

BELOW: Modest Mouse – Isaac Brock's banjo. Isaac plays it on a few songs, including one called Satan in a Coffin. On the last tour while playing the banjo and screaming the chorus "ARE YOU DEAD OR ARE YOU SLEEPING, GOD I SURE HOPE YOU ARE DEAD...", lightning struck dead center in the upper seats of the outdoor venue at Jones Beach, Long Island.

NEXT SPREAD: Fugazi – Ian Mackaye's SG photographed on his kitchen table at Dischord. The note is from guitar/sound guy Jesse Q, he refers to Wino from The Obsessed.





Squirt some of this on
the nuts of your guitar
every time you change the
strings. you will stay in tune
better - a tip I picked
up from Wino - love