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Three decades after his untimely death, a documentary chronicles the life and music of bass legend Jaco Pastorius

WHEN YOU listen to *Continuum*, a song off Jaco Pastorius' solo debut album that came out in 1976, the electric bass he plays on it sounds like it is singing. As if it is not just a musical instrument but a voice. On the same track Herbie Hancock plays the electric piano, Lenny White is on drums and Alex Darqui is on piano. All of them are great jazz musicians, accomplished and acclaimed, but Pastorius, then 25, stands spectacularly apart with his lyrical bass lines and instantly discernible talent. Pastorius lived for just 11 more years after that solo album came out, dying tragically after a violent brawl with a bouncer outside a Florida bar but his influence on generations of bassists – in jazz, fusion and even rock – has been profound.

Three decades after his untimely death, another famous bassist, hard rocking Metallica's Robert Trujillo, has unveiled a documentary, *Jaco*, that he has produced on the life

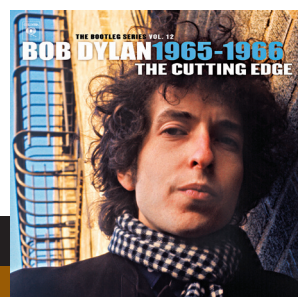
STUFF OF LEGENDS

Left: Jaco Pastorius' influence on generations of bassists has been profound
Right: Another famous bassist, Metallica's Robert Trujillo, has made a documentary on Jaco and his troubled life



bass guitar, his hallmark was the use of a fretless instrument that gave the sound he produced enhanced fluidity. His technical abilities were outstanding as was his use of harmony. And many will swear that he is the best bass guitarist of all time. But sadly his life was troubled. He suffered from acute bipolar disorder and his frequent alcohol and drug abuse didn't help matters. His family life ended unhappily and for a while towards the end he lived on the streets. On the *Jaco* (the soundtrack) album, his daughter Mary Pastorius has a song, *Longing*, which is a deep and poignant tribute to her father. And the tailpiece on the same album is an upbeat cover of the Pastorius song, *Come On, Come Over*, by Red Hot Chili peppers' Flea, Trujillo and his band, Mass Metal. If you're a bass lover, this album can be a great way to begin exploring Pastorius' extensive discography.

Talking of extensive discographies, Bob Dylan's just got longer. The most recent addition to his *Bootleg Series* is *Volume 12: The Cutting Edge 1965-66*. These are 18 discs (yes,



PLAY REPLAY

This recent addition to Bob Dylan's *Bootleg Series* is a collector's edition of 18 discs

18!) that make up a collector's edition of unreleased demos, outtakes and versions of every note or song that was played, replayed or botched up, during the recording of three Dylan albums from that period—*Bringing it All Back Home*, *Highway 61 Revisited* and *Blonde On Blonde*. I love those albums and take them out often for a spin, but 18 discs of outtakes from their recording sessions may be a bit much. Especially since you'll have to listen to multiple takes of songs from those

albums and a bit of studio banter. In case you're planning to spring for that 18-CD set do keep in mind that you'll get CD No. 4, which has 17 versions of *Like A Rolling Stone* – that is, in addition to the five versions on CD No. 3. Interested? I'm not.

What I am interested in, however, is Dylan's *Bootleg Series Volume 11: The Basement Tapes Complete*, which I own and I find quite satisfying. This one's a six-disc set of unofficial, home recordings of songs that formed the basis of *The Basement Tapes* album. The recordings are from 1967 and the band accompanying Dylan comprises Robbie Robertson (guitar, drums and vocals); Richard Manuel (piano, drums and vocals); Levon Helm (drums and vocals); Garth Hudson (keyboards); and Rick Danko (bass). Yes, the band that would shortly afterwards be called The Band.

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of the legendary bassist. The film, released commercially only recently, features musicians such as jazz greats like Wayne Shorter and Herbie Hancock, funk's Bootsy Collins, rock's Carlos Santana and Flea, and singers Joni Mitchell and Sting who talk about the bassist, his life and his work. The film has rare footage too, including clips from Pastorius' shows and his childhood. Then, of course, there is the music. The soundtrack of *Jaco*, available separately as well, is a trove of 12 songs that showcases the bassist's solo music; his work as part of the jazz fusion band Weather Report; his work as a collaborator with artists as diverse as Joni Mitchell and glam rocker Ian Hunter of Mott the Hoople; and also covers and tributes by musicians such as Mexican acoustic guitar duo Rodrigo y Gabriela and the rapper Tech N9ne.

Although Pastorius played both the double bass and the