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Tak Matsumoto on His New Solo Album, Signature Gibson and Beatles Inspiration

Bryan Wawzenek | 07.26.2012

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Tak Matsumoto is the most famous guitarist in all of Asia, and it's a job that keeps him busy. Best-known for his work with superstar Japanese rock band B'z, Tak has been working on a new solo album, allowing him to explore different musical genres. In conjunction with Gibson Custom, he's also just released the [Tak Matsumoto Doublecut Custom Ebony](#), available to fans worldwide. Plus, North American fans will have the opportunity to catch Tak with B'z, when the group crosses the Pacific Ocean for tour this fall (check out the full list of dates after the interview).

Although Tak's projects keep him plenty busy, he still found time in his schedule to chat with *Gibson.com* about his new solo album, his favorite guitars and his 2011 Grammy Award win, which he shared with friend and fellow guitar master Larry Carlton.

You have a new solo album coming out. What is it called and when will it be released?

My new album is called *Strings of My Soul* and will be released August 7 from 335 Records. I hope you enjoy the melodies which were written by a Japanese bluesman.

Musically, how does it compare to your work with B'z?

My solo album is basically instrumental, more bluesy and mellower than B'z.

What guitars did you use on the album?

I used my own model Gibson DC, 1958 Les Paul Gold Top, 1954 Fender Stratocaster and Martin and Yaili acoustics.

Is there any theme or emotion tied to this album? What does this album mean to you?

This album represents me right now, in the present moment. It's my favorite songs with the best performance – "Strings of My Soul."

Do you remember the first song you heard, or the first guitarist you heard, that made you want to learn to play the guitar?

My parents bought me The Beatles album *1967-1970* on my 14th birthday. I really loved "While My Guitar Gently Weeps." Eric Clapton's guitar solo inspired me very much. It felt exactly like the guitar was weeping! So I got started playing guitar after that.

Please describe B'z sound to American audience.

Basically B'z is a rock band, but our music is not only rock. Many kinds of things inspire and influence us to write songs. We are bluesy, catchy, heavy and also have Asian flavor.

You have some North American tour dates planned with your group B'z in September. How many times have you toured the U.S.?

Actually, this tour is going to be the fourth tour in the U.S. for B'z. I always love to play in the U.S., and I felt we should release English songs for the American audiences. Our first English album is now available on iTunes.

What can fans expect to hear/see at the concerts?

We would like to just do the best show we can in every city. We will do some English songs, but the show will be a mix of both Japanese and English. I want to play everywhere I haven't been yet so I'm looking forward to hitting the East Coast.



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How do performances in America and Japan compare?

There's really no difference.

But is there a big difference between Japanese and American audiences?

I think American audiences respond more directly than Japanese. I love all audiences.

What's your go-to guitar for playing live and why?

It's my own model DC, because it corresponds to any kind of sound and is very comfortable to play. It satisfies all demands.

Tell us your everyday favorite guitar at home.

I play the DC at home, too.

You won the Grammy last year. How was your experience working with Larry Carlton?

It was a dream come true. Larry Carlton is an amazing player and wonderful person. I really respect him and learned so much. I'm very proud to play with him.

What would you consider the proudest moment in your career?

30 years ago I started my career as a professional guitar player, and I'm playing at the forefront of the music world. That's my proudest achievement. I'm so grateful to all the people who support my music.

B'z North American Tour Dates:

- Sept. 17 – The Warfield – San Francisco, CA
- Sept. 19 – The Showbox SODO – Seattle, WA
- Sept. 20 – Orpheum Theatre – Vancouver, BC
- Sept. 26 – Sound Academy – Toronto, ON
- Sept. 28 – The Fillmore – Silver Spring, MD
- Sept. 30 – Best Buy Theater – New York, NY
- Oct. 7 – Gibson Amphitheater – Los Angeles, CA

For more information on Tak Matsumoto and B'z, click [here](#).

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大樹 菅野 1 day ago

I'm a japanese fan of B'z!! Tak is a great guitarist!! His sound always rocks me!! Koshi is a great vocalist too. B'z will show amazing shows in U.S!! Don't miss it!!

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