

## Mark Egan – Recording “About Now”

Steve  
Gregory

**In our July cover interview with Mark Egan, mention was made of Mark’s impeccable ability to choose the instruments and gear that best serve his music.**

For this article, Mark took time to break down the basses, recording equipment, and recording process used on his most recent release, “About Now”. The album is available now, published by [Wavetone Records](#).

### Recording “About Now”

We recorded “About Now” at my new studio, Electric Fields, which was designed by Francis Manzella from FM Design. My basic recording path for my basses was first into a stereo pair of Radial JDI direct boxes with Jensen transformers.

Next, I went into two Millennia TD1 mic preamps. The Millennia equipment offers pristine sound clarity, which I prefer for my Pedulla basses. They also have EQ built in that I use for some very subtle sound shaping.

Usually I add a little bit of the low-mids and a touch of the highs for clarity. With the TD1, you can use it as a tube or a solid state preamp and I prefer it as a solid state preamp. It is more pure and less colored than the tube mode, which seems to work with Danny’s drum sound.

Another aspect of the TD1 mic pre and EQ is that it’s very portable and easy to bring to other studio sessions. From the TD1 the signal went directly into a ProTools HD3 system for analog to digital conversion. We used multiple mics on the drums, most of which were Blue Microphones. The acoustic Piano is a rebuilt 1929 Steinway D and we also used two Blue Dragonfly microphones.

Here’s a song by song description of how the bass parts were recorded:

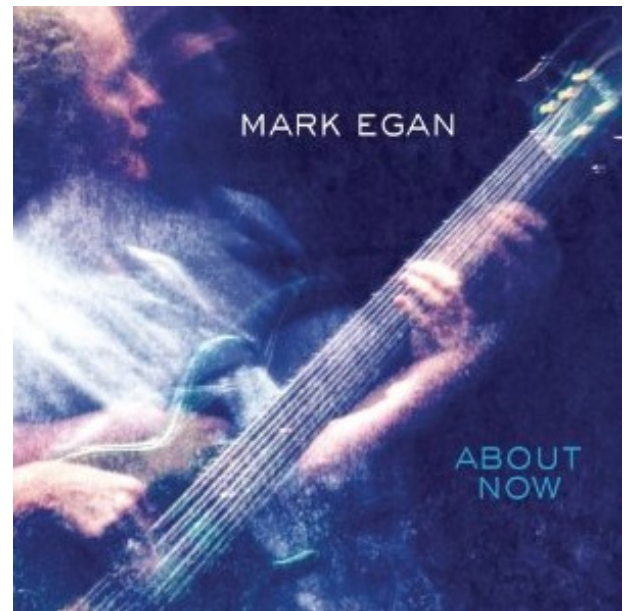
### Sailing

“Sailing”, the opening track, was the first track that we recorded. I chose to start with “Sailing” since it’s a simple song and thought it would give us a chance to get comfortable with our headphone mix as well as give our engineer, Phil Magnotti, time to get all of the sounds together.

On that track I played a mono fretless track for the basic groove and stereo fretless for the solo.

Then I overdubbed the melody on 8 string fretless and doubled the part. Next I overdubbed stereo bass harmonics from my 8 string fretted bass. I recorded two different harmonic parts and then doubled each of those, so there are four tracks, in stereo, of the harmonics at the intro and the outro. For the harmonics, solo, and the melody effects I used a Korg AX-300B, which is an old multi-effects processor, which I use for delay and some chorusing. Most of the melodies and solos had these effects as well as reverb.

### Slinky



This is a simple trio groove song played on my five string fretless Pedulla bass. There were no overdubs on this and we used a mono bass track.

### **About Now**

I also played my five string Pedulla signature fretless and used a mono track for the bass groove and stereo for the melodies.

### **Cabarete**

This is a Latin groove that I played the 5 string fretless for the entire track.

### **Graceful Branch**

I played the groove bass on five string fretless in mono and overdubbed the melody and solo with the five string fretless in stereo, with effects – delay, chorus, and reverb.

### **Mckenzie Portage**

It was recorded all on the five string fretless bass for both the basic groove and the solo. For most of this record I was going for a simple trio interaction. We use stereo chorusing, reverb, and delay on the solo section to help feature the bass.

### **Little Pagoda**

This was all five string fretless bass. The track was recorded with stereo effects throughout, as I wanted to feature the lyrical sound of the bass.

### **Tea in Tiananmen Square**

The basic track was played with my MVP five string fretless and then I overdubbed the melody with five string fretless as well.

### **Puerto Plata**

This is a fretless Latin groove that was a jam that came out of the song Cabarete played live as a basic, mono track.

All of the tracks on the record were played as a trio, leaving spaces for overdubs if needed. Mitchel overdubbed some sparse keyboard pads on a few tracks. Some of the tracks were complete, in themselves. In those cases I would play the groove and then go into a solo, with Mitch then creating a bass function on the piano.

As I mentioned, Phil Magnotti engineered the sessions, which were recorded at my studio in three days. We mixed at Phil's studio – Silvermine Studios in Norwalk, Connecticut –in about five different sessions. I wanted to get the music into a different studio environment for objectivity and a different perspective for mixing. The album was mastered in New York by Fred Kevorkian at Avatar Studios. He didn't have to do too much additional equalization, except for adding some of the ultra low end and adjust for some midrange clarity and sparkle on the high end frequencies.

We were very pleased when we brought back the master to Electric Fields studio and realized that the sound was true to the sound that we recorded at the original sessions. It gave us a lot of confidence in how Francis Manzella tuned the control room. One of the most difficult things about getting a well balanced sound in a control room is the management of the low end frequencies and FM Design got it right.

### **Mark's Gear**

### **Basses**

All of the basses are M.V. Pedulla Mark Egan signature models. I've been working with [Michael Pedulla](#) for many years, since 1978. The first bass that I bought from Michael Pedulla was the first Buzz bass in 1981 and I've loved the sound of his basses ever since then. He continues to evolve his bass designs.

He worked on a signature model of the MVP-5 fretless and fretted bass that are featured on this recording, About Now. The necks are a little bit thinner, front to back, and the cut out is scooped out so that my left hand can play all of the way up to the 24th fret.

For electronics, they have a mid-range boost with Bartolini pickups and preamp.

My fretted bass has a J-J configuration and my fretless bass uses a P-J combination, also Bartolini pickups. For the fretless I wanted a warmer sound and for the fretted I wanted it to be a punchier sound. It turns out that both combinations are punchy, but the P-J combination gives it some low-mid warmth that is really desirable for the fretless.

## **Strings**

I've been playing D'Addario strings exclusively since 1976 and generally use the XL170 nickel round wound strings. I like the clarity, punch and center of tone that the strings create as well as the great feel.

Here's what I use specifically on my various basses:

M.V. Pedulla 5-String fretted and fretless Mark Egan signature basses: D'Addario XL 170 – E, A, D, G (100, 80, 65, 45) with XL 125 low B

M.V. Pedulla 8-string fretless and M.V. Pedulla double neck with a 4 string fretless and an 8 string fretted: D'addario XL 170 on the regular E, A, D, G (100, 80, 65, 45) D'Addario XL8 for the doubled strings E, A, D, G (45, 40, .28, .18p)

## **Amps**

I've been playing Markbass amps since 2011 and really enjoy the sound they produce with my instruments. They are warm and punchy with plenty of power. Their new Multibass stereo amp is a state of the art modeling amp as well as having great effects.

[Markbass Amps](#) Big Bang (300 watts@8ohm)?2xNY 121 each with single 12' speakers

Bass Multiamp Stereo (2x300 watts@8ohm) or (1000 watts bridged) Traveler 102p (2x10)?Standard 102HF (2x10 front ported)

Little Mark 800 (500 watts@8ohm)

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