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## glen drover

BY DARRIN FOX

"I HAD BEEN OUT OF MEGADETH FOR A FEW MONTHS and I started to get a little antsy," says shredder extraordinaire and former Megadeth and King Diamond guitarist Glen Drover. "So I figured, I have a full studio in my house, I may as well use it!" The result of Drover's urge to burn is *Metalusion* [Magna Carta], a ten-song extravaganza (which features five originals and five covers from the likes of Al Di Meola, Frank Zappa, and Jean-Luc Ponty) that showcases Drover's relentless, ultra-musical assault that runs the gamut between full-bore shred and liquid legato lyricism. Drover—who engineered, mixed, and mastered the release—also added fellow mega-shredders Vinnie Moore, Jeff Loomis (Nevermore), Steve Smyth (Forbidden, Testament), Fredrik Åkesson (Opeth), and Chris Poland to the festivities.





# Artists

GLEN DROVER



“This album took over two-and-a-half years to make, but it was recorded very sporadically, basically tracking whenever I was inspired,” explains Drover, who was with King Diamond for two years (he can be heard

on 2000’s *House of God* album), before he began his stint in Megadeth, which lasted a little more than three years (Drover’s playing is exceptional on the band’s 2007 release, *United Abominations*). “The making

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- Watch Megadeth rock “Trust” live in Argentina in 2005.
- Dig Drover burning on “Over the Wall” with Testament live in Mexico in 2008.
- See Drover run down “Tornado of Souls” at Canda’s Metal Works Institute.

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## GLEN DROVER

of *Metalusion* went really smoothly, especially considering that, and I'm very proud of the fact that *everything* was tracked separately. No two people were ever in the room at the same time. The drums were done in one studio, the bass was done in another, I did all of my guitars at my home studio, and all of the guest guitarists did their parts in their own studios. We just sent the files back and forth over the Internet. Yet it wasn't difficult to make the record sound cohesive. Everyone had top-notch equipment and got great sounds. I love being able to collaborate like that." Although Drover shares the spotlight, *Metalusion* is clearly his album as his lethal blend of classic power metal melodicism and terrifying technical mastery are front and center.

### Who are your formative influences?

When I started seriously playing the guitar I was 11, and I was really into Tony Iommi and Black Sabbath. I'd play along with *We Sold Our Soul for Rock and Roll* and then *Heaven and Hell*, and that's how I got my initial chops—by stringing the parts together and jumping from a solo back into the rhythm. I played to records a lot, and I still do a little bit. After Sabbath, I was into albums like Iron Maiden's *Killers*, Judas Priest's *Screaming for Vengeance*, and Def Leppard's *High 'n' Dry*. From there, I went to the shred things like Tony MacAlpine's *Maximum Security*, Yngwie's *Marching Out*, and Al Di Meola's *Casino*.

### Did you take lessons?

I never had formal lessons, but I'd learn from older guys at school or in the neighborhood. I think most people do that. Nobody showed me what I should or shouldn't be doing, that's for sure. For example, I have a weird picking style—I hold the pick with my thumb and middle finger instead of my index finger. I started noticing all of my heroes weren't holding the pick that way, and it took a ton of chromatic exercises to help strengthen my picking hand because the second finger isn't as strong. Even now, if I go a while without practicing I have to pay attention to my picking and whip it back into shape.

### Would you say you're a schooled player as far as theory goes?

I'm schooled to a point, but I think I'm more of a street player. I learned theory

from videos and stuff and grabbed what I needed along the way. Vinnie Moore's first video back in the late '80s was a really good one for me as far as getting into theory and tons of great techniques. Ritchie Kotzen's first video was also very inspirational for getting into legato. Man, that guy is the legato king! A lot of people say, "Oh you need to learn this or that chord progression or technique"—no thanks—I play what I want to play. If I don't think it's something that will help me play how I want to play, I won't bother with it. I don't like Perry Como, so why would I try to play a Perry Como song?

### Did you work any of the solos out for *Metalusion* or are they off-the-cuff?

No. I find out where the solo section is and I start playing. It's very loose. Jon Lord from Deep Purple said once that his best solos were usually his first ones. When he tried to recapture them by doing take after take, they would inevitably get worse as by then he'd lost all of the original fire of the idea. That's how I work. If I start dissecting it, it starts *sounding* like I dissected it.

### Did either Megadeth or King Diamond want you to work your solos out?

Yeah, Megadeth did. That's why some of them I like and some of them I don't. They would force me to work stuff out and I feel some of it sounds processed and lifeless. The listener can hear if a guy has played something a zillion times. But as a professional you have to adapt to the situation. King Diamond wasn't strict with the solos.

The thing with Megadeth is they wanted me to sound like Marty Friedman. Marty is great, but if you play guitar in that band, you always have to try and be Marty—it's a drag. I understand it's important to pay tribute to the solos that came before you, but at the same time, you need to inject your own thing into them. If you play them note-for-note, it sounds like you're reading the parts off of a piece of paper. I always tried to get close to the original solo, but also to have spots where I did my own thing and got my identity in there.

### What did you use to track *Metalusion*?

I used Dean guitars. I mostly used the Cadillac, but I've also been playing the Deceiver and the Vendetta. I always put Seymour Duncan pickups in them—a Distortion in the bridge and a '59 in the neck. For amps, I used a Randall V2 head paired

with a Randall 4x12 cab loaded with 70-watt Celestions. I also used a DigiTech GSP1101 preamp. That thing is killer. I would run it direct and through an amp. I didn't use a ton of effects, but I occasionally plugged into a BBE Soul Vibe rotary speaker emulator, a Seymour Duncan SFX-03 Twin Tube Classic overdrive, and an MXR GT-OD overdrive.

### Did the fast, heavy rhythmic thing come easy to you?

It did. I always found it fun to play. When I was in Megadeth, I would play to old Exodus albums before we went on tour to make sure to get the machine gun thing happening.

### Do any non-guitarists influence you?

Totally. [Keyboardist] Jon Lord is probably the biggest. I've taken bits of his solos and incorporated them into mine. I've also listened to a lot of Jean-Luc Ponty. I pick up stuff from those guys—especially their phrasing—and try to make it my own to a certain extent. Years ago all I did was to listen to metal and fast guitar stuff, but you have to evolve, right?

### You don't use the whammy bar as much on *Metalusion* as you have in the past.

Yeah, I think I'm playing the fixed-bridge guitars more because I teach a lot, and people come in who want to learn something in dropped-C, then something tuned to *E $\flat$* , then dropped-D, so I need to be able to tune and retune quickly. I just got out of the habit of reaching for the bar.

### Do you have a specific practice routine or time set aside everyday to practice?

No. It's whenever I have time. Between teaching, recording, and my family, well, let's just say I don't have the time I did in my early 20s. In between lessons or if someone cancels, I'll get some time in. I just try to get in a half-hour or hour a day if I can. My practice routine is I just start playing. I'll start with some slow melodic sequences, but nothing specific. I really ad-lib. I'm not a very structured person.

### You did some touring with Testament last year filling in for Alex Skolnick. Do you have any desire to get into another big band?

It would have to be right. I almost didn't do Megadeth because I had just gotten married and we had a two-year-old son. Plus, I had just gotten out of King Diamond a couple years earlier and I didn't want to tour anymore. Touring is great for some people, and I love to go out and play, but when it's nine months out of the year, no way! ■