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**James Meslin Brings ‘The Alien’ Down to Earth for Dream Theater with Mojave Audio Microphones**

*Producer/engineer on capturing ‘massive’ tone in the studio, and tracking the progressive metal band’s Grammy-winning track*

**Long Island, New York, April XX, 2022 —** Producer/mixer/engineer James Meslin has spent the last ten years working both on stage and in the studio with progressive metal pioneers Dream Theater, including manning the boards for their 2021 opus *A View from the Top of the World*, which includes ‘The Alien’, the band’s Grammy-winning track in the Best Metal Performance category. Key to capturing the band’s signature sound has been Meslin’s choice of microphones which include the Mojave MA-1000, MA-301FET, and MA-300 as an integral part of the sound of the record.

**On the road to recording with Dream Theater**Meslin got his start with Dream Theater working as the assistant engineer on both their 2013 self-titled album and its follow-up, *The Astonishing*. Bonding quickly with the musicians, Meslin eventually pivoted roles and went to work on the band’s touring crew. “They needed a playback technician because they were going to be running pretty in-depth sessions and expanding on the way they do personalized clicks to ensure lock with a bigger scale live production,” Meslin said. “I had the advantage of knowing the in’s and out’s of the last two records, which made for a streamlined experience in building the live show.”

“Eventually, my studio foundation began to spill over into the approach of how their live show was captured and mixed.,” he continued. “I had knowledge and resources to replicate effects achieved on the record, and capture approaches used in the studio that could be utilized on the road.”

**‘Go big, or go home’**“The big introduction, for me, with Mojave was the MA-301FET, when we used it on Petrucci’s guitar rig in 2012,” Meslin explained. “Dream Theater’s style is ‘go big, or go home,’ — but the MA-301 gives a true representation of John’s rig in one microphone. It’s just really full range, very realistic and three-dimensional. The MA-301 eventually made its way onto Pertrucci’s cabinets on the road as I began touring with them and brought some of the studio approaches to capturing Dream Theater with me.”

“Flash forward to 2018, I was asked to engineer *Distance Over Time.* It was a unique experience, we recorded in upstate NY on a property called Yonderbarn, an old barn turned studio, but unfortunately gutted of all recording equipment years before our time there. It has a big open floor, beautiful views and acoustics and was intended to be where the band *wrote* the record. The plan was to eventually migrate to a formal recording studio, but the band fell in love with the place. Petrucci asked if we could pull off recording there and I said ‘*absolutely…*’ which unfolded into a huge to-do list of outfitting preamps, computers, monitors, wiring, microphones, cue systems — everything.

“Of the many decisions to be made and challenges to overcome while preparing Yonderbarn to handle a Dream Theater recording session, myself and Matthew Schieferstein, DT’s production coordinator — worked on a gear list to outfit the band’s needs. Running 40 inputs and using up every bit of it, I relied heavily on Mojave’s 301’s to capture some of the most important elements of the record. It lived on Petrucci’s guitar cabinet, blended with a Royer 121 and a Shure SM7B — although the 301 sat in the forefront. It captured the resonant head of Mangini’s kick drum, and was the sole microphone on Myung’s bass cabinet.”

Vocals for James Labrie were recorded by Richard Chycki in Canada, who used a Mojave MA-1000 on Labrie’s voice. “It’s such a brilliant mic,” said singer James Labrie. “The response to the natural organic acoustics is unparalleled.”

**View from the top**

After recording their *Distance Memories, Live In London* DVD, Dream Theater ended their European tour just before the world was put to a halt due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With the live industry at a complete stop, conversation of new music and records being expedited came forth. “In March of 2020, Petrucci and I agreed to keep a small bubble and work together on his second solo record — Terminal Velocity,” Meslin commented. “The entire record was captured using the 301 on his guitar cabinet, and in addition utilized the 301’s as overheads to capture Mike Portnoy’s drums.The 301’s gave unbelievable clarity and top end to the kit.”

All of these discoveries in the studio ultimately led to Meslin’s choice of setup for *A View from the Top of the World*, which incorporated the MA-300, 301, and 1000 as go-tos throughout the sessions including the Grammy-winning track ‘The Alien’. “Mojave microphones have provided me with an easy access path to dial in sounds with confidence and I have yet to come across a situation they can’t handle,” Meslin concluded. “They were an absolutely integral part in making this record sound the way it does, and I can’t imagine doing a session without them.”

For more information about Mojave Audio, please visit <http://www.mojaveaudio.com>.  **About Mojave Audio**Mojave Audio was founded by Technical Grammy Award winning David Royer, widely known for his ribbon microphone designs with Royer Labs. Mojave Audio makes world-class microphones for Artists and Engineers who are passionate about their sound.

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