

BASS

DESTRUCTION

On the day Metallica unleash their long-awaited tenth album, bassist Robert Trujillo tells Amit Sharma about his journey into one of the biggest bands of all time

Robert Trujillo is sitting by the window in his penthouse suite of Kensington's Royal Garden Hotel, savouring an unrestricted view overlooking Hyde Park.

Sipping green tea next to a carefully-pruned white orchid, watching the winter chill creep above the trees in the form of grey mist, he couldn't be further away from the sweaty, denim and leather world of the San Francisco Bay Area that spawned the band which he joined in 2003.

Trujillo is in town with his bandmates for the launch of Metallica's long-awaited tenth full-length album, *Hardwired... To Self-Destruct*, where 600 lucky fans will see them bring fire and thunder to the House Of Vans in the tunnels below Waterloo Station later tonight. But for now, everything is an ocean of calm.

"It's such a great view, man," he grins, extending a hand to greet *BGM*. "I've been to

this hotel so many times on and off over the years, I think even with Suicidal Tendencies back in the day. I've never been in this part of the hotel though - it's a seriously nice room. Better check out the price of this thing!"

Welcome to the world of Metallica. They've come an incredibly long way since drummer Lars Ulrich placed an advert in a local Los Angeles newspaper, "looking for other metal musicians to jam with Tygers of Pan Tang, Diamond Head and Iron Maiden" - redefining the laws of heavy music and writing one of the bestselling albums of all time at their apex. Trujillo's story is one that began not long before the arrival of that self-titled 1991 album - in the very same city, in fact - when he joined skate-thrash mob Suicidal Tendencies near the end of the 80s.

"My whole journey with Suicidal Tendencies was a lot of fun, and very experimental," nods Trujillo, with a mischievous grin. "There were no rules, which is always nice: we didn't really know exactly what we were getting into. I just

wanted to experiment with the bass and my main influence from Jaco Pastorius inspired me to write music in a certain way. If you listen to the 'You Can't Bring Me Down' intro, I'm actually playing a fretless. There's this melodic phrase there that, even in its simplicity, has his presence in there. And the song 'I Wasn't Meant to Feel This/Asleep at the Wheel' has a fretless solo - another piece inspired by my biggest influence."

Where Suicidal Tendencies blurred the lines between thrash metal and skate punk, its offshoot, Infectious Grooves, allowed Trujillo to tap into even more of the funk fusion which he'd been practising in his bedroom. "Listen to Infectious Grooves where you have a song like 'Violent And Funky,'" he notes, "which has a very repetitive line, yet still somehow influenced by Jaco. That was actually played on a six-string bass. I wasn't necessarily learning his songs note for note specifically back then, although I've tried that more in recent times. When I was younger, I was trying to create from attitude more than anything else."