The DEEP End

Classic players. Vintage gear.

Mahal's Main Man

Versatile groovemeister **Bill Rich** has been part of Taj's foundation since the Seventies

by **Ken Micallef**

On Taj Mahal's 1978 Columbia release *Mo' Roots*, Bill Rich's bass elevates each tune from good to great. Rich's repertoire—a mix of fat, funky slap and smooth, melodic lines—is the perfect foil for Taj's eclectic blend of blues, reggae, R&B, and Caribbean rhythms.

Rich's bass playing on *Mo' Roots* is a study in contrasts. On "Lovin' Cup," he lays down a deep, dubby groove that's as much felt as heard. On "Ain't Gonna Worry My Life Anymore," Rich's bass is a rubbery, popping delight. And on "Sweet Mary," Rich's bass is a warm, round, melodic counterpoint to Taj's vocal.

Rich's bass playing on *Mo' Roots* is a perfect example of how a great bassist can elevate a song from good to great. Rich's bass is the glue that holds the band together, providing a solid foundation for the rhythm section to build upon. But Rich's bass is also a source of melody and harmony, adding depth and texture to the music.

Rich's bass playing on *Mo' Roots* is a testament to his versatility as a musician. He can play in a variety of styles, from funk to reggae to R&B, and he can do it with equal skill and conviction. Rich's bass playing is a joy to listen to, and it's a perfect example of how a great bassist can elevate a song from good to great.