

happened to music in the eighties, once one hair metal band made it there were 10,000 others all copying each other, saying this is what you've got to sound and look like. It's not good."

International Acrobat

After Dio left the fold first time around the eighties brought mixed fortunes for Sabbath, while Ozzy Osbourne enjoyed a solo career. Although Tony points out that two of the albums during the Tony Martin fronted eras that ran in the late eighties and nineties remain regrets for him in different ways.

"I think [1989's] *Headless Cross*, the second album we did with Tony Martin, was a good one and overlooked. It did well in Germany but as far as promotion in America, the record company didn't get it in the shops or anything. There's a couple I don't like though, [1996's] *Forbidden* being the main one. The way Ernie C [producer and guitarist in rapper Ice T's band Bodycount] was brought in to do it was another idea from the record company at the time."

But those days are long gone, Sabbath's reunion with Ozzy in 1997 and Dio 10 years later have been dreams come true for Iommi fans – and brought the music to a whole new generation around the world in the process, so they could see that without Iommi's guitar, heavy metal just wouldn't be the phenomenon we know now.

With tours for *Heaven & Hell* keeping them busy until the end of the year, Tony is spending the next day making last minute adjustments to his rig before jetting off to South America for gigs.

"It's just me and a couple of engineers with a new set-up. It's the final chance to try it out before I go on tour. I'm trying out a couple of Engls in conjunction with the Laney's. I've had a Pete Cornish pedalboard but that's about to change to

Tony's Gibson SG signature model features his signature pickups – they've also included on the Epiphone version

Reasons why Iommi rules

#4 Hetfield says so

The Metallica man worships Iommi's playing. He literally had tears in his eyes when he inducted Sabbath into the Rock 'N' Roll Hall Of Fame in 2007. Speaking of his nine-year-old self listening to Sabbath he said: "Those monstrous riffs lived inside me and spoke the feelings I could never put into words – sending chills of inspiration through me."

a Mike Hill one. Pete Cornish is known for building some remarkable effects [systems] but I don't really use many effects – a wah, [Dallas-Arbitrator Rangemaster] treble booster, chorus and Korg SDD-1000 delay. I'm not one for loads of combinations - I'd probably step on the wrong pedal! But on the album I actually used a Dunlop wah, it seemed more appropriate than my Tycobrahe [Parapeda] wah. Wyn Davis did the mixing and suggested it – it wasn't quite as harsh as the Tycobrahe."

New album, new rig and new tour: the man in black is clearly not easing off yet. But despite no big agendas for the line-up this time around beyond the album release and tour, his ambitions are very much focused on the music alone: "I just try to do my best for the music all the time. That's what I like most about this album – we were really encouraging each other to do our best for these songs, always pushing and encouraging each other to write the best possible parts." **Q**

None More Black

You know the classics, so here are five of the heaviest hidden riff gems from Iommi's career

1 After All (The Dead)

Find It On: **Black Sabbath – Dehumanizer**
No wonder *Heaven & Hell* opened gigs with this on their 2007 tour – its expertly paced, measured powerchords are harbingers of doom throughout. One of the darkest Sabbath songs ever.

2 The Spill

Find it on: **Iommi/Hughes – Fused**
Iommi's work with Glenn Hughes has showcased a more rock-driven, upbeat side to his playing but this is a relatively Sabbath-shaped curveball for the pair (despite not really suiting Hughes' vocal delivery) that

finds the iron man summoning an instant funeral march feel from minimalism.

3 Song: Under The Sun

Find It On: **Black Sabbath – Vol 4**
Only ever played live four times (including twice in 2001), there are some fantastic riffs throughout here, but pretty much the whole doom metal genre Iommi spawned is defined by this song's opening example. It still sounds leviathan heavy 37 years later.

4 Shadow Of The Wind

Find It On: **Black Sabbath – The Dio Years**
In which Iommi reminds the metal world that

his riffs still flatten his students, this time with modern production to create huge slabs of powerchord breezeblock. Add a measure of Dio, stii, and you've got a metal brew that can fell a Balrog at 50 paces.

5 The Bastard (featuring Phil Anselmo)

Find It On: **Unreleased**
Iommi recorded three songs with Anselmo for his 2000 solo album, one made the cut. This is the second, and you can hear it on YouTube. He's unusually playing at thrash speeds here and easily holding his own, while the mid section slowdown is a mighty riff indeed.