



An Interview with Frank Bello of Anthrax: the career, the style and the sound signature

Frank Bello is a real "street guy", born in the Bronx in 1965 and then became bassist of **Anthrax**, one of the most influential bands of thrash metal and one of the metal symbols of the "big apple".

He joined the group in 1984, at first as a technician, he soon replaced Dan Lilker, contributing significantly to the band's success with albums such as *Spreading the Disease* and *Among the Living*.

Throughout his career, Bello has developed a distinctive style that combines aggression and melody. He separated from the band for only one year, between 2004 and 2005, for military in the **Helmet**, which marks a musical history with Anthrax **40 years old**, in 2025.

He has also collaborated with other formations, such as the **Altitudes & Attitude**, and most recently participated in the **Satyricon** tours. His versatility and dedication to music make him a leading figure in the international metal scene.

In addition, Frank released in 2022 an EP titled "*The Then I'm Gone*" with three songs, as well as a special audiobook narrated by Frank himself, based on his autobiography *Fathers, Brothers, and Sons* (of which Joel McIver co-authors).



We are therefore very happy to have been able to interview him, also because many of us in the newsroom have grown up with his records!

Gli Anthrax is a cornerstone of Thrash Metal. How has your approach to the bottom evolved over the years with the band?

My approach to bass has always been to add a unique sound to the song, but without being in the way. In the end, it's always about making the song look the best possible.

You have influenced many musicians with your aggressive but melodic style. Are there bassists or artists who particularly inspired you?

Thank you for the compliment. There are many extraordinary bass players who have inspired me. I grew up with **Geddy Lee, Steve Harris and Geezer Butler** as references.

Other bassists have taught me a lot, but these three great musicians have shown me how to think outside the box and use the melody in the bass inside the songs.

In a band with such a unique sound, how do you ensure that your bass lines have impact and add depth to the music?

That's a good question. Over the years I've learned that bass lines need to make sense within the song and they need to add a "tasty" layer that makes depth and impact organically.

How did your collaboration with Tech 21 for the creation of your signature pedal, the **Street Driver 48** ?

I've been using SansAmp itself in my setup for many years, so I've always known how much Tech 21 NYC is an exceptional company. They have a great experience with bass sounds.

I had some ideas for a pedal and I asked a friend, Joel McIver, to get in touch with their representative, Tyme Rogers. From there, I worked with Andrew Barta (the genius of Tech 21) and John Bednar to design my **Street Driver 48** pedal.

This pedal represents my sound and my personality, I am very proud of it. I can literally connect it anywhere and play like myself. Tech 21 NYC is great!

What are the main features that make it unique and how do they reflect your personal sound?

The main features of my pedal are the control of the gain and overdrive through the "**drive**," the control of bass and highs for cutting or boosting, and the level for the main volume.

The features I love are the "**dirt**" button, which adds an extra gain and malice, and the "**Filth**" button, which takes everything to an even more extreme level.

We've received incredibly positive reviews from musicians from all over the world, and knowing that this pedal helps bassists find their sound make me happy.



Do you have different settings depending on whether you're playing live or recording in the studio? Can you share some of them with the bassists who read us?

One of the great qualities of this pedal is its ability to adapt to any situation, both in the studio and live. I've already used it on the new Anthrax album, where our producer, Jay Ruston, said it's the best sound we've ever got.

Live, I raise a bit of the highs to emerge in the mix of the band. In the concerts with Satyricon, on the other hand, I reduced the highs and increased the drive to get a sound more similar to that of Geezer Butler.



Do you think that the pedal can also find space in genres other than thrash metal?

Yes, absolutely! From the reviews received from musicians of different genres, I can say with certainty that this pedal has a place in **any musical genre**. I wouldn't say that if I didn't really believe it.

This year you played live with Satyricon. How was it to dive into such a dark and different sound than the Anthrax? Were there any special challenges?

I loved playing with Satyricon! They are musicians and great people. I like to test myself because I always want to improve as a bass player. Facing new styles gets me out of my comfort zone and pushes me to grow.

With Satyricon, I developed a sound inspired by Geezer Butler, with more depth and drive. Again, the **Street Driver 48** pedal was crucial to quickly adapt to the required sound.



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