

Ayla Tesler-Mabe in action with Ludic

Ludic

WITH HER NEW BAND, FORMER CALPURNIA GUITARIST (AND WEEZER MUSIC VIDEO STAR) AYLA TESLER-MABE HEADS FOR UNDERSTATED, GROOVE-FORWARD WATERS

By Gregory Adams

▶ **"I REMEMBER ABOUT** a year into my playing I started learning the 'Back in Black' solo; [that's when] I discovered vibrato. I was like, 'this actually sounds, for a brief moment here and there, somewhat like the song!'"

Ludic guitarist Ayla Tesler-Mabe is recalling the breakthrough moment in her early teens when she first got the hang of Angus Young-style string theatrics. In the years since, she's amassed a massive online following by bringing that glowing vibrato and peppy scale work to YouTube run-throughs of classics like Led Zeppelin's "Since I've Been Loving You" (nearly 6.5 million views and counting); her dextrous fretboard adventurousism has also made her a NAMM showcase regular. But with Ludic, the Vancouver-based guitarist is often locking into more understated, groove-forward guitarplay.

"I've always had influences that transcend whatever project I'm working on at the time," Tesler-Mabe says in reference to taking a more stylistic approach alongside Ludic's brotherly rhythm section of bassist Max and drummer Rhett Cunningham. That's not to say the trio's songs don't have their share of knuckle-busting leads — sample the unhinged, Eddie Hazel-inspired cringing on the band's "Call Me" for proof — but the razor-



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sharp, Boss chorus-warped rhythms slicing through lithe neo-soul struts like "Heart Emoji" and "Terrified" owe more to vibe than sheer prowess.

"That's a huge part of funk playing, you find the appropriate pocket to accentuate... wanting everything to feel like it's there for a reason," Tesler-Mabe says of her integral,

deceptively simple flourishes. "The more you listen, the more you hear these little guitar licks peeking through here and there, textural stuff like that. It was about trying to weave a bed of sound as opposed to having guitar as a lead instrument."

Though now laser focused on Ludic, Tesler-Mabe's career previously included a run with Calpurnia, a scrappy pop-rock act that toured the globe — even subbing in as a teenaged Weezer in the latter's "Take On Me" music video — before splitting in 2019. Now, Tesler-Mabe is fine-tuning her stealthy funk approach as Ludic transitions from a recent spate of digital singles and the three-song *Live @ the Warehouse* EP toward delivering a more full-bodied release.

"We were putting out singles just the past little while to test the waters," she says of Ludic's long-game, adding, "We might not start with an album right off the bat, but there's a bigger body of work coming soon."

AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** 1966 Fender Coronado II; 1967 Gretsch 6117 Double Anniversary; Fender Ultra Stratocaster; Fender Meteora; Ernie Ball Music Man Valentine
- **AMPS** 1973 Fender Twin Reverb, Fender Hot Rod DeVille III
- **EFFECTS** Lawrence Petross Design Sixty 8 Deluxe; Aleks K Production Honey Moon Sweet Overdrive 2; Boss DD-7 Digital Delay; Boss TR-2 Tremolo; Boss CE-2 Waza Craft Chorus; Electro-Harmonix POG, MXR Phase 90