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The holiday season is officially here, and as the arduous mission of prezzie shopping comes to a head, the big question looms: what do I get that one family member who's super into guitars!? Fear not, dear reader, for we've got eight jam-packed pages of the latest and greatest gear to fill their stockings with!

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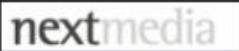
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AUSTRALIAN GUITAR DIGITAL #136

IN EACH ISSUE, WE BRING YOU VIDEO INTERVIEWS WITH AUSTRALIAN AND INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS, SAMPLE TRACKS, VIDEO TUTORIALS, AND STYLE STUDIES COMPLETE WITH TABLATURE AND BACKING TRACKS.

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS

FROM THE VAULT: AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. MARTIN TAYLOR, MBE

Dr. Martin Taylor, MBE is an award-winning guitarist, composer, educator and musical innovator. Widely considered to be the world's foremost exponent of solo jazz and fingerstyle guitar playing, the Englishman possesses an inimitable style that has earned him global acclaim from fellow musicians, fans and critics alike. He dazzles audiences with a signature style that artfully combines his virtuosity, emotion and humour with a strong, engaging stage presence.

Taylor has enjoyed a remarkable musical career spanning over five decades, with more than 100 recordings to his credit. Completely self-taught as a guitarist, beginning at the early age of four, he has invented and developed a unique way of playing the instrument that is greatly admired - and often emulated - by guitarists all over the world.



FROM THE VAULT: AN INTERVIEW WITH EUGENE "HIDEAWAY" BRIDGES

Born in 1963, Eugene Bridges is the son of acclaimed blues guitarist Hideaway Slim. His mother was from the Bullock family (the same as Anna Mae Bullock, better known to most punters as Tina Turner), and Eugene claims that he got his guitar skills from the Bridges side and his voice from the Bullocks. At the young age of 56, he's a nomadic musician living his life at full speed on the road.

Though he hails from New Orleans, Bridges' home is wherever his next performance takes him. Every year, this takes him from America through Europe, to Australia and Asia with many other stops in-between. In fact, he's visited our shores over 30 times thus far!



TUTORIAL VIDEOS

MASTERS OF ROCK

Steve Flack presents a tutorial based on the style of a "Master of Rock Guitar" - in this issue, part one of a Lou Reed-style study. Includes backing tracks, tablature and Guitar Pro 6 files.

SLIDE GUITAR

Steve presents an ongoing series covering slide guitar techniques. This issue presents part two of a Dwayne Allman-style study. Includes backing track, tablature and Guitar Pro 6 files.

IMPROVISING

Steve explores the 'secrets' to improv. This issue presents the third part of a study on Chet Baker's "All the Things You Are". Includes tablature, solo and backing tracks, and Guitar Pro 6 files.

UNPLUGGED BY ARRANGEMENT

Steve presents one of his unaccompanied arrangements of popular music for the guitar. This issue features an arrangement of George Harrison's "Peace On Earth". Includes tablature.

"KILLER BACH" WITH STEVE FLACK

Steve Flack performs a J.S. Bach piece for solo guitar. Not for the faint of heart!

Also available are our regular columns, supporting tracks and tablature, plus artist tracks, What's New, gear galleries and more!



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CRY CLUB

THEY ARE two fierce and fiery disco-punk debonairs from Wollongong (though now based further south) with their sights set on the stratosphere and their songs set on making you move. Up front, Heather Riley oscillates between sugar-sweet singing and a gut-punching yell, twisting and twirling around onstage like their body was made of rubber. And with axe in hand, shredhead Jonno Tooke is a force you wouldn't dare think of f***ing with, his overdriven juts as powerful as the synths they meddle with are bouncy.



THEY SOUND LIKE a genre-neutral chasm of crunchy guitars and soul-thumping electro leads, merging punkish attitudes and heart-on-sleeve fury with dizzying disco vibes and inescapable danciness. They rock a sharp and unapologetically gaudy, Bowie-esque theatricality that makes them stand out like a grizzled wolf in a room full of poodles.

YOU'LL DIG THEM IF YOU LIKE the Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Panic! At The Disco, and coming home to an ice-cold raspberry Cruiser on Friday afternoon (before heading to the club for another 35).

YOU SHOULD CHECK OUT the airwave-dominating "Robert Smith" – an equally fun and furious (and a tad cheeky) ode to the titular Cure legend, and a well-earned middle finger to Morrissey. Note the 9/8 time signature that pops in for the driving riff, which absolutely *shouldn't* work in a four-to-the-floor pop banger like this, but they nail with punishing piquancy.



ZEN HAIRCUTS

THEY ARE a trio of heartstring-tugging emo dorks from Sydney busting out some of the genre's best new sounds (albeit all too infrequently). The focal point is the deft, razor-sharp interplay between vocalist Kieran Baskerville and guitarist Julie Enriquez, the former's battered drawl a welcome contrast to the latter's equally chaotic and charismatic fingerpicking.

THEY SOUND LIKE the perfect soundtrack for that part of the road trip where surroundings are barren and introspection looms. Songs ebb and flow between chill noodlers and all-energy head-thrashers (oftentimes repeatedly in the same cut), bringing to the current emo revival a bright and buoyant flavour all of their own.

YOU'LL DIG THEM IF YOU LIKE Modern Baseball, American Football, Modest Mouse, and gazing ominously out of train windows and pretending you're the underdog protagonist of an indie ballad music video.

YOU SHOULD CHECK OUT their luminescent 2019 EP, *Why Are All My Plants Dead?* Its 13-minute runtime is depressingly minuscule, but layered deep with polychromatic guitar hooks and earwormish vocal melodies, there's more replay value on deck than some hour-plus epics. We could listen to Enriquez's neck-noodling fluidity for hours on repeat.



SLEEPEASER

THEY ARE a brand new alt-rock outfit hailing from Newcastle, who made quite the mark on their local scene with the release of debut single "Suffer" in March 2018. Further kicking up a storm with their debut EP, *Everyone You Left Behind*, Sleepeaser are already on their way to a major mainstream breakthrough, having caught the eye of high-profile acts the likes of Moose Blood and Hundredth.

THEY SOUND LIKE the fuzzed-out love child of Taking Back Sunday and the Foo Fighters. Sleepeaser teeter on the edge of late-'90s transition grunge and turn-of-the-century punk-rock, before falling right in an explosion of indubitably Australian character. That quality harbours a particular melancholy in the vocals, offering metaphorically charged narratives while retaining a true grit in the guitar.

YOU'LL DIG THEM IF YOU LIKE early Foos and Taking Back Sunday, naturally. The hybrid is unusual, yes, but the ingenuity of some of their songs makes them very much standalone, and very much Sleepeaser.

YOU SHOULD CHECK OUT "Little Victories", which utilises intricate guitar solos as an introduction, and swells into some very powerful sentiments carried by a bedazzling rhythm section and an optimistic voice.



BLACK ROCK BAND

THEY ARE a voice of community, family, and social justice that grows out of work of not-for-profit organisation Children's Ground. The soul-thumping eight-piece blend rich cultural sounds with a deliciously heavy onslaught of rock stylistics.

THEY SOUND LIKE a joyous fusion of western beats and Aboriginal Australian colour – which ultimately, after you listen to them, is an excellent example of integration over segregation. Tinges of reggae, folk and rock meddle with the vibrancy and powerful collaborative efforts of the band's motley crew of songwriters.

YOU'LL DIG THEM IF YOU LIKE Bob Marley, Fever 333, and any other band that has a strong sense of self and cultural identity, who want to use their creative platform not just for awareness, but to bring joy and excitement through their music.

YOU SHOULD CHECK OUT Last year's album *Struggle*: a simply mind-blowing, defiantly eclectic demonstration of the pure magic that can occur when you put together a group of sensationally talented musicians.



LALCHAND

IT IS the solo project of Melbourne artist Jordan Lalchand, who after years of session work and performing with bands, has stepped away to make his mark in his own bold and beautiful way. Currently working toward the release of his debut EP in 2020, Lalchand runs with a very intriguing slogan – that he’s a “music-making Malaysian Melbournian”.

HE SOUNDS LIKE a whole damn lot. Musically, Lalchand draws on many influences – that much is clear, but it’s the resourcefulness and imagination of his arrangements that flaunt his talents as a solo musician. Triumph and deliberation are sensations often stirred by Lalchand’s music.

YOU’LL DIG HIM IF YOU LIKE Karnivool, Alter Bridge, A Perfect Circle, Dead Letter Circus, The Butterfly Effect... The list goes on! Ultimately, there’s no nuance occupied in any of Lalchand’s work that you won’t be able to gel with. The intricacies of his arrangements come at full flavour with much to be taken away.

YOU SHOULD CHECK OUT latest single “Feast”, featuring vocals from Ryan Wilson and an accolade of local talent. Lalchand pulls on the aptitudes of many other fantastic musicians, who execute intricate rumbles and variants in rhythm, and develop a sense of seeping colour that just explodes off the spectrum.



CARLA GENEVE

SHE IS a young whippersnapper with talent aplenty, 20 years old and native to the sunny isle of Perth. And she’s already causing quite the stir; the singer-songwriter has developed a glowing reputation for her relatable and clever songs, already taking to the road in coveted support slots with her idols Abbe May and Jen Cloher. The opportunities for an acquaintance with Geneve on an international scale will occur when she performs at SXSW in Austin, Texas next March.

SHE SOUNDS LIKE indie leanings with a blues-rock hue gracing her rich vocals and sombre guitar work. The notes she produces with her voice dance on your ears, and her guitar carries a spirit all its own – largely in part to the natural demonstration of the acoustic.

YOU’LL DIG HER IF YOU LIKE Abbe May, Dean Lewis, Jake Bugg and Neil Young. If you’re into emotive and powerful commentaries on all aspects of life, this is the sound for you. Indie and folk-rock have a new face, and it’s that of Carla Geneve.

YOU SHOULD CHECK OUT her recently released self-titled EP. In particular, tracks “Things Change” and “Yesterday’s Clothes” offer an unparalleled view of Geneve’s personality as a performer and person, and serve as the best way to enjoy her well-developed technique as a guitarist.



THE SWEET JELLY ROLLS

THEY ARE a country and blues duo giving the genre a brand new look. Since 2011, Andrew Cavalieri and Matt Golotta have been performing shows in Sydney, and have shown their might at festivals such as the Tamworth Country Music Festival, the Gulgong Folk Festival, the Hill End Arts Festival and the Parramatta Park New Years Eve Celebration.

THEY SOUND LIKE some truly fun-loving blokes who aren’t afraid to get creative, naughty, and silly with their sound. That’s not to say they aren’t sensational at what they do, though! Bolstering ripping guitars, banging banjos and some mind-melding harmonica work on top of a grooving mandolin, The Sweet Jelly Rolls are the poster kids for what may be the most underrated scene in Australian music.

YOU’LL DIG THEM IF YOU LIKE... Erm... Well, off the top of the ol’ noggin, it’s hard to shove these guys into any one section. The Sweet Jelly Rolls class themselves as “real country music and old time blues,” and they’re not wrong. If you like The Teskey Brothers or Chris Wilson, and can imagine either outfit being a little more psychedelic or having a tinge of ADHD, then you’ve got yourself some Sweet Jelly lovin’.

YOU SHOULD CHECK OUT *Smokin’ Darts & Breakin’ Hearts*. It’s one of those fun-loving, smile-inducing releases that are out for a good time but will also blow your mind. Between the dexterity, the skill and the class (or, humorously, lack thereof), words won’t do this release justice. The lashings of Australiana country and blues lacing this release need first-hand ingestion to be truly understood and appreciated.



FREEDOM OF FEAR

THEY ARE a deadly fierce prog-metal outfit crashing down the gates of Adelaide to cover the nation in a wild amalgam of extreme melody and zealous rhythms. Freedom Of Fear were well-received at this year’s BIGSOUND showcase, and are only continuing to dominate an admittedly very complex and technical genre.

THEY SOUND LIKE a very particular brand of crunch and crawl that scribe Anna Rose adoringly brands “vomit metal” – heavy on the gutturals and unforgivingly brutal. Definitely check these guys out if you froth a good wall of death. The double-pedal bass drumming and the wonderfully demonic screech of the lead guitar is certainly attention-grabbing.

YOU’LL DIG THEM IF YOU LIKE other fervent and septic styles of death metal – the more unleashed Deafheaven cuts, Alcest, Children Of Bodom and the like. Or, if you like the idea of Dragonforce coming down with a nigh-on fatal disease, then Freedom Of Fear are the band for you.

YOU SHOULD CHECK OUT “The Consciousness Of Misery” from their most recent offering, *Nocturnal Gates*. The cut is exemplary of some pretty powerful proficiencies in each of Freedom Of Fear’s members – brutally majestic and incredibly gripping.

SKEGSS

TOTALLY UNICORN

YOURS & OWLS FESTIVAL

WHEN: **SATURDAY OCTOBER 5TH - SUNDAY 6TH, 2019**

WHERE: **STUART PARK, WOLLONGONG NSW**

REVIEW: **MATT DORIA** • PHOTOS: **PETER ZALUZYNY**

Adoringly dubbed by locals simply as “the fezzie”, Yours & Owls has fast grown into a cornerstone of Wollongong’s ever-exploding live music culture. Stormy weather means the beachside grounds are muddy and humid across the two-day stint, but that doesn’t faze any of the wide-smiled devotees that flood the fields – the good vibes are abundant, as seagulls hover above us and a Mother Energy van doles some much appreciated free caffeine to early risers.

It stands to reason that the 2019 edition of the Gong’s favourite festival would peak early with a landmark set from one of the city’s best; scuzz-punk scorchers **Totally Unicorn** erupt onstage with the fury of rioting prisoners, and across their 30 short minutes of amp-bursting anarchy, wreak more havoc than most bands could dream to in two hours. First worth noting is that they’ve set up their very own tiki bar onstage, complete with a bartender spinning out colourful cocktails to side-stage bystanders and lucky punters up front.

Aaron Streatfeild is a goddamn maniac with his weathered Tele at play, ripping out an equally sweet and sour onslaught of shred as he whips around the stage. But all eyes are on frontman Drew Gardner, naturally: as he belts pure, unadulterated fire into his mic, the underwear-clad screwball throws himself directly into the action, spending much of the set getting knocked around in his own delightfully deranged, beautifully barbaric mosh pits. It’s a crazy, messy, almost obscene show of passion and power. And we wouldn’t have it any other way. Shoutout to *AG* contributor David James Young on his scene-stealing vocal cameo, too.

On the other side of the back-to-back stage

setup, **Angie McMahon** establishes an atmosphere that could not be further in the opposite direction from Totally Unicorn’s. The heart-melting Melbournite takes us on a cool and cruisy journey through the emotional peaks and valleys of her debut album, *Salt*, rocking a bold, blood-red hollowbody Harmony that juts against her honey-sweetened crooning with just the right balance of buoyancy and bite. A slow-burning set, it feels like McMahon’s onstage for no more than ten minutes. We could easily stick around for at least another hour or three.

If we thought her set was emotional, however, we have another thing waiting for us when **Ceres** take to the stage. Repping cuts from their recent LP *We Are A Team*, the Melbourne fivesome lean on their tantalising alloy of emo and Australianism to conjure up some of the biggest singalongs we ever see, frontman Tom Lanyon lapping up the love as his throaty hooks and crusty Tele juts cut deep into a swarm of black-shirt tragics belting it all back at him. Their setlist leaves a bit to be desired, but if nothing more, Ceres’ festival showcase serves as a perfect tease for their denser, more deep-diving headliners.

Her shimmery, guitar-slicked synthpop bounding around the grounds like lingering smoke, **Hatchie** delivers us some perfect mid-arvo respite. It’s a lowkey set from the Brisbane wonder, her lashings of dreamy, reverb-addled shoegaze and bubbly nostalgia something better suited for the head-nodders and shoulder-swayers amongst us, rather than the moshlords. The set is pulled almost entirely from this year’s cracking sleeper hit *Keepsake*, and though she sounds quantifiably stunning on record, it’s here onstage that Hatchie and her band’s intimate idiosyncrasy really shines.

Making perfect use of the cozy Rad Bar stage (which, off to the side in its own little tent, has the best sounding mixes of the entire fezzie), **The Lazy Susans** start at a level ten and drop below it for not so much as a second. Their full-length debut, *Now That The Party’s Over*, is one of 2019’s definitive must-listens, and with an extended set highlighting a good chunk of its doughy, heart-on-sleeve emo bangers, the quartet fast become an instant highlight of the weekend. The titular Antonia Susan is a natural in the spotlight, pouring out their heartbroken hymns with goosebump-inducing poignancy. Guitar in hand, their chemistry with lead shredder and backup vocalist Kieren Turnbull is, while often understated, something so perfect it could only otherwise exist in a dream.

With a whole album’s worth of ferocious newies, the polychromatic Adelaide punks in **West Thebarton** cram their set to the rafters with raw, authentic energy. The quad-guitar attack belts across the fields as frontman Ray Dalfsen bellows dry and emotive. You’d be forgiven for thinking the septet were today’s headliners with how massive their crowd is; the band don’t take a second of it for granted, either, pumping the brakes not once throughout their 40-minute celebration of crunch and crawl.

Capping the first night is a career-defining set from pop-rock luminary **Amy Shark**, who’s enjoyed a truly transcendental year as one of Australia’s biggest rising stars. Despite her recent soar in fame, however, the Brisbanite is right down to earth in her hourlong jaunt, cracking jokes and stirring shit aplenty in-between impassioned strums of her acoustic and vocal rollercoasters that leave even seasoned fans with their jaws dropped. It’s no

ANGIE MCMAHON



BASS DRUM OF DEATH



surprise they call her the love monster: Shark has all of our hearts gripped tightly in her claws.

Day two starts off with a curiously empty park, which means a dismal turnout for Gold Coast indie-popper **San Mei**. It's sad, because Mei is an absolute gem with axe in hand, offering gem after gem of bold and bouncy incandescence. And despite only playing to a handful of punters, she and her band still give it their all, each track bursting at the seams with devotion. It's undoubtable that Mei has a huge future ahead of her: she wields her Strat like a weapon and rocks the mic like her life depends on it.

The Delta Riggs look cheesy as all hell with their freshly pressed leather jackets and melodramatic stage movements – but with a slick set of fierce and fiery rock 'n' roll behind them, the Melbourne lads get an instant pass for the cringe-inducing getup. A handful of new songs have our curiosity piqued, driven by lovably thick, overdriven leads and accented with just the right hint of Gallagher-esque tambourine. Alex Markwell is a demon with his sweat-soaked axe, every riff he spits somehow more stunning than the last.

Making a clear case for why they'll end up headlining festivals like this in due time, Brisbane punks **WAAX** came out hard and heavy with an avalanche of anthems from their cracking debut album, *Big Grief*. The singles from it spur immediate chaos in the pits, axemen Ewan Birtwell and James Gatling shredding away to their hearts' content while frontwoman Maz DeVita wrings her heart out into the mic. It's hard to believe this year almost spelt the end for the fortuitous fivesome: here they're sharp, searing and sprightly. If only their set were approximately ten times longer...

Melbourne nu-metallers **Ocean Grove** keep the

intensity afloat with their crisp and quirky brand of off-colour craziness. In somewhat of a transitional phase as they head into their first proper era with new frontman (and former bassist) Dale Tanner, the five-piece run through reinvented versions of older tracks and tease a massive future with a handful of new ones. And though they have plenty of their own top-notch tunes to keep us off our butts, it's a cover of the Presets classic "My People" that cements Ocean Grove as one of the festival's key stars – who knew the only things missing from the club-house banger were some ripping overdrive and thrashing cymbals?

Expertly named, up next are **Love Fame Tragedy**, the side-project of Wombats frontman Matt Murphy and, no disrespect, a brilliant tease for whenever his main hustle's next tour rolls round. It's not that his new tracks are any bad, of course – the debut EP, *I Don't Want To Play The Victim, But I'm Really Good At It*, is well worth your attention – but there's just something so unique about Murphy's stage presence that abets memories of seeing The Wombats crush it to packed mainstage crowds at festivals like Splendour In The Grass. Love Fame Tragedy's set lives deep in the shadows of such reveries, and the same levels of energy and ardour are never even approached, let alone matched.

Somewhere between disco, punk and indie-pop lies the cheerful charm of Sydney's **Georgia June**, who throw the Rad Bar tent into a tizzy with their resplendent set of soon-to-be anthems. The eponymous frontwoman is a show-stealer in every sense of the term, her performance deft and dynamic and doused all over in a gravitas typical of arena-fillers. Crumbly and coarse with his fretwork, Jack Johnston adds a nice level of bite to the

otherwise ultra-bright rhythm section. The quintet reign with a flavour that's undoubtedly unusual, but one we can't wait to get another taste of. Georgia June are definitely one to keep an eye on.

As we've come to expect from the Melbourne mood-rocker, it takes exactly one second of **Courtney Barnett** strumming on her bedazzled Jazzmaster for us to slip into an alternate dimension, where the vibes are so good and plentiful that we're convinced Barnett is some kind of wizard. She dips into every corner of her timeline across the hourlong set, from early gems like "Avant Gardener" to recent cracker "Everybody Here Hates You". She ebbs and flows between punchy punk-esque jams and sweet slow-burners, her and the CB3 taking time to explore and embrace each peak and valley, rather than simply run through the motions.

Barnett leaves us feeling cool, calm and collected; a welcomed vibe for sure, but one Canadian punks **F***ed Up** are hellbent on catastrophising. Hot off the heels of their enormous *Dose Your Dreams* album, the sextet bring an overflowing crowd right to its tipping point with cataclysmic circle pits and maniacal moshes in well-earned abundance. It's a fitting end to the festival at large, with Damian Abraham and co. leaving no soul unpunished by their hard 'n' fast sonic tsunami.

For yet another year, we leave Yours & Owls with spirits higher than Party Marty and hype for next year's jaunt in full force. Wollongong will be an integral player in the future of Australian music, and it's events like this – with an equal focus on community, atmosphere and, of course, incredible music – that are paving the way for its eventual domination. We, for one, welcome our new bucket hat-bearing overlords. **89**



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THE BEST AROUND

ONE OF THE SHARPEST SONGWRITERS IN AUSTRALIA RIGHT NOW, **ALI BARTER** HAS DELIVERED BIG TIME ON HER SECOND ALBUM – COMPLETELY AVOIDING THE SOPHOMORE SLUMP. SHE SPOKE WITH **DAVID JAMES YOUNG** ABOUT HOW IT WAS FORMULATED, AND THE GEAR RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS SOUND.

The term ‘power couple’ is often tossed about with a sense of irony these days, but when it comes to the husband-and-wife team of Ali Barter and Oscar Dawson, there’s no better term. Having been a co-writing force throughout all of Barter’s solo career, the pair kept the ball rolling with the collaborative writing, recording and production of her second album, *Hello, I’m Doing My Best*. “I write all the lyrics, melody and the chords,” explains Barter.

“Then, Oscar and I will build it up from there – I’ll have the idea for the sound and the tone, and I’ll often have very clear ideas. When it comes to mapping out a solo or a guitar part for Oscar, I tell him exactly what I want in the spirit of the song – something energetic, something hectic, something that mirrors the melody, anything like that. This record has a lot of quiet verses and loud choruses – a lot of fuzz, a lot of grit, a lot of dirty tone into clean tone... We’re really set in the way that we write together, and I think you can hear that on the album.”

The end result is a listen that’s dynamic, volatile and unashamed in its approach. It takes both the rockier and the poppier elements of Barter’s debut, *A Suitable Girl*, and blows them up even further. A lot of it has to do with the guitar sound of the record, which can jump from shiny and resplendent to guttural and churning. “We experiment a lot, but I think we’re a lot clearer and more specific about things now,” says Barter on achieving her new tone.

“When we were making *A Suitable Girl*, there were moments where every single pedal that we

had was an option for every single song. That’s not really the case anymore – it’s down to a key few of them. For instance, I have this Fuzz Factory pedal that we have a lot of fun with. It’s completely bonkers! I also have a Cream Puff fuzz pedal made by Frantone, which is used a lot on the album. For anything we just wanted to go crazy with, we’d bring in the [EHX] Memory Man – we love that one.”

Mixing power-pop, alt-rock and the hybrid now commonly known as ‘bubblegrunge’, Barter has nailed the combination of sugar and spice for her all-important second album. The self-assuredness that came with selecting pedals and tone also translated into Barter and Dawson’s guitar choices. “I’m playing a Tele on the album for the most part, but Oscar was always good at picking up when we needed something different,” she says.

“There are a few instances where we’d move it over to the Strat, or where we’d use this SG I’ve got that has Humbucker pickups installed. Alex [Crosara, touring guitarist] had a different guitar he played, but for the life of me, I couldn’t tell you what it was called. It *looks* like a Tele, but it’s not. It’s got a very jangly, ‘90s kind of sound to it – it goes well against the harsher, fuzzier stuff on the album.”

The dream of the ‘90s is alive and well on *Hello*; much of it is indebted to Liz Phair, whom Barter toured with back in March, as well as bands like the Pixies and the sound established on their *Surfer Rosa* LP. One album Barter points to in particular, however, is Weezer’s oft-maligned second album *Pinkerton*.

“In terms of production, I was listening to it a lot and

getting inspired by it,” she says.

“It’s funny... I wanted the record to be really raw, rough and live-sounding, but my voice is basically like a choirgirl’s, so it’s never going to sound anything but squeaky clean.” She laughs, before continuing: “That really was the endgame with the sound of the album, though. Just two guitars, bass and drums. That live sound. Oscar would keep wanting to add more guitars, and I’d have to stop him straight up – like, ‘No more guitars!’”

Barter also notes the influence of The Breeders on the sound of the album, as well – “I really like the way they incorporate space into their songs,” she says, “and how their songs are often centred around the way Jo [Wiggs] plays bass. I’d just started playing bass live before we went in to track this album, and I definitely wanted there to be a bigger presence of bass on this album.” Indeed, Barter made the switch from six to four strings in the live setting back in 2018, to convert her once five-strong touring band into a power trio. Although it was initially a business decision, Barter has found herself right at home amidst the low-end.

“It was originally a financial decision,” she says of her swap. “Being a touring band is really expensive, and just being a trio is a significant help. I did this massive tour with The Preatures last year, and when we got the offer I made the decision to move over to bass. When I was playing guitar live, I was often just chugging on the one chord. It seemed like a natural move to switch over to bass – and now I just love it. It’s a whole different energy for the live show.” 



OVER A WICKED 15 YEARS, **PARKWAY DRIVE** HAVE GONE FROM BEACH BUMS SHREDDING UP THEIR LOCAL PUB TO A GENERATION-DEFINING METAL MONOLITH. NOW, THEY'RE TAKING THEIR STORY TO THE CINEMA. WORDS BY **MATT DORIA**.

Hell hath no fury like the bloodthirsty fortitude and undying passion of Byron Bay metallers Parkway Drive. Since making their mark on the scene with 2005's *Killing With A Smile*, the band have consistently pushed further, fought harder, and cranked up the volume louder with every new effort.

2020 looks to be another wild year for the quintet, as they wrap up a titanic two years of international anarchy on the back of album no. six: the critically adored *Reverence*. A follow-up is in the pipeline, lead shredder Jeff Ling assures us, but in the meantime, fans will have a new chunk of longform content to sate their Parkway-starved palates with: a full-length theatrical film.

Following lowkey home projects *Parkway Drive: The DVD* and *Home Is For The Heartless*, the new big-budget documentary – dubbed *Viva The Underdogs*, its title pulled from the lyrics of setlist staple “Wild Eyes” – aims to take a deeper, dirtier, ultimately more daring look at Australia's biggest metalcore band. As Ling fills us in, such a project has been a long time coming for Parkway Drive.

Do you consider *Viva The Underdogs* a sequel to the first two Parkway docos, or is it more like a reboot, telling the story from the ground up?

You can definitely relate them to the other two – it has that kind of similar flavour. It basically just goes into a lot more depth – we get a little bit deeper on things like what it's like on the road and being away from family, and also shedding a bit of light on how much work we actually do behind the scenes.

What was that process like, going back through the last 15 years of your lives and condensing it into this epic two-hour story?

It's pretty humbling. You really do take for granted all the thrills and spills along the way. You kind of forget them, or you're just always focused on the next big thing. So yeah, looking back on it all and seeing some of the old footage was wild. There's a lot of unseen footage as well – the guys did some major digging into our archives of footage, and they found some pretty weird stuff. There's plenty of

interesting material to be seen, that's for sure.

The story of Parkway Drive is so crazy and monumental. Would you ever go the route of doing a *Bohemian Rhapsody*-esque drama?

I mean, in a way, this is kind of like that – we show more of the real drama that happens. It's always been there, but with a lot of DVDs and movies, you sort of glorify the good things and don't show as much of the negative aspects. So yeah, that's probably one of the bigger parts of the movie – it's definitely not all fun and games, and there's a lot of sacrifice that comes with [being in a band like Parkway Drive] as well.

It's kind of an anomaly, the way Parkway has captured the attention and spirit of this generation – especially in an era of pop music that was, and is, fairly adverse to heavy acts. What do you think it is about Parkway Drive that allowed you to burst through the industry's barriers and take the world by storm in the way that you have?

Well, we've always had a unique way of running things. In the very early stages of dealing with management and labels and all that kind of stuff, we realised really quickly that our vision was *our* vision, and we didn't want anyone else messing with it. We had directions that we wanted to go in. Management agencies and labels would have these templates for what they'd see as a success story, but those just didn't match what we wanted to do.

We've always been passionate about the direction of the band, the sounds that we have, taking control of our recordings and all of that. Everything we do is basically 100 percent us. Our guitarist [Luke “Pig” Kilpatrick] is our manager, and all of our live shows are designed by ourselves; Winston and Luke get really hands on with all the theatrics and production. We don't have any foreign influence, really. And I would definitely say that's our greatest achievement.

How have you managed to retain that independence, even as Parkway has grown into the monolithic brand it is now?

To be totally honest with you, at this point, it is

pretty overwhelming. It's a lot of work, and you can see why most bands just get a team to run the whole thing. It *is* starting to get to that stage where it's actually really difficult to manage everything and still have your family life, your tour life and your work life, and have it all be organised. We're still holding it together at the moment, but we'll have to see how we go in the future.

Another thing too is that, bar one member, you've kept the same lineup since '03. I can't think of another band in your class that could say the same. How do you stop yourselves from wanting to rip each other's throats out?

At this stage in the band's career, the absolute most important thing is transparency. Communication is everything, and you have to be extremely honest with each other. You have to be on the same page, and because everything is going a lot further than we ever could've imagined, we're constantly talking about what our next move.

That's where a lot of bands fall apart. They get to a point where they go, “Oh, I'm over it,” and they just sort of turn their back on it all. And if you're not talking, things start going wrong – you'll start arguing, and it's just all pear shaped from there. So I would just say it all comes down to communication. We're always communicating our ideas, and we're just so lucky that we all have similar visions and ideas about where we should be going as a band.

Coming into a new decade of Parkway Drive, how are you excited to progress your skills as a guitarist?

I mean, anyone that's into the guitar and knows our music will be able to tell, but I sort of gave up taking on the tech world with super fast riffs or speedy solo stuff. I just realised that I didn't have the time to spend ten hours a day practising scales or messing around with time signatures. That just wasn't my thing anymore, so I focused on writing cool licks that hopefully get stuck in people's heads. I want to come up with really different, strange sounds that you don't hear in other metal bands.



AT THE HOTEL LAST RESORT, EVERYBODY IS WELCOME AND NOBODY CAN LEAVE. AHEAD OF THEIR LONG-AWAITED RETURN TO AUSSIE SHORES, **VIOLENT FEMMES** RINGLEADER **GORDON GANO** CHECKS US IN FOR A “VISIT”. WORDS BY **AVERY JACOBS**.

After a storied 40 years of world domination, you'd forgive the Violent Femmes for taking it easy nowadays – preferring to tend to their crops and focus on planning their next family vacation, rather than continue to smash out crash-hot folk-punk opuses and rip it up onstage the world over...

Wait... What's that? We've got the wrong band? The seminal foursome of fury *are* still going as hard as they did when “Blister In The Sun” was making the airwaves its little bitch!? Huh!

Okay, so Gordon Gano and co. aren't the spry youngsters they were in the late '90s – they can't scale amp stacks like monkeys or stagedive into the abyss – but if their tenth album, *Hotel Last Resort*, tells us anything, it's that the Milwaukee monoliths still know how to write a gem of a tune. Before they take their new set of them to local stages in March, we spoke to Gano about what makes *Hotel Last Resort* a must-suss for any frother of the Femmes.

Here we are: album number ten! Does it feel like this enormous milestone for you?

I like when people mention it, because it makes it seem like this band really *did* exist. We really *did* do something, y'know? We made some music over a stretch of time, and we're still doing it! I think that's very cool.

Did you ever foresee the band not only reaching its tenth album, but retaining the legacy and relevancy that it has?

Nope! There were different periods of time – first in the mid 1980s, and then again in the late 2000s – when I was certain that the group was over and done with. And then we got over ourselves and started back up again, and it's always been exhilarating. We've had our ups and downs, obviously, but it's always been the music that got us back together. There's something special that happens when myself and Brian Richie get into a room together. There have been a few different drummers over the years, but there's still that recognisable sound when the three of us are playing music together.

How is this album the best reflection of what the Violent Femmes are, and mean, and stand for as a band in 2019?

To be honest, I don't think about those things. I think Brian might – he thinks more about those kinds of things than I do. I'm always interested in just making the best music that we can in the moment. I don't know what Brian would say about it, but we used the approach that we've almost always used, which is primarily recording live. We think there's something special that happens when you're recording like that, with musicians playing off of each other – like we do – consciously and not consciously. We're always making adjustments in the moment because of what somebody else is doing. We're constantly evolving. But we're not purists about it in the studio; we'll make use of some aspects from one recording and then overdub something from another.

What sorts of tones and styles did you want to explore on *Hotel Last Resort*?

I think we wanted to have a little bit of variety between the guitars – even just the simple variety between playing with an electric guitar or an acoustic. And then even the acoustics, I use some different ones just because certain guitars seem to speak better for certain songs, or they'd work better with the way that I was playing. Sometimes I'm using more fingers or focusing on individual notes, and sometimes I want more of that full-on, hard strumming.

So depending on where on the neck I'm playing, or what other people in the band are playing, or what sort of tone I was thinking about... There are so many factors that determine why something fits or sounds better. And that process begins in the studio by having an idea of which guitar you want to start with. Maybe you'll stay with that one, or maybe you'll flip it and say, “Okay, how about *this one* instead?” And you keep moving through the cycle until you find the guitar that feels right for that song. There were some times [in recording *Hotel Last Resort*]

where I'd be playing an acoustic guitar, and then at a certain point in the recording, I had this sudden feeling of, “Hold on, I think I should play electric here.” And then we'd switch it. I tend to like that little bit of variety.

But I've gotta say, the thing I'm most excited about with the guitars doesn't have to do with me. It just has to be mentioned that Tom Verlaine [of Television] is playing electric guitar on the track “Hotel Last Resort”. He's one of my – and I know also one of Brian's – favourite guitar players. And to have him on that song, the way he's playing and the sound he's making... It just had to be Tom Verlaine doing it. And it is! He's been an inspiration of ours since Brian and I were teenagers, and now he's playing with us on a track. It's unbelievable.

Did you have a favourite guitar to mess around on out of the arsenal?

Our studio engineer had a bunch of old Martins, and those were oh so much fun to play with. We've always used Maton guitars – the Australian ones, of course – throughout all the years. And they're great; y'know, they've a great company that makes great guitars. It's kind of hard for me to single out one guitar. I have a Maybelle guitar from the '30s, which is really fun and interesting and old-timey sounding... I can't pick! There's too many! 

Violent Femmes are touring Australia in March:

Thu 19th Odeon Theatre, **Hobart** TAS
Fri 20th Forum Theatre, **Melbourne** VIC
Sat 21st Sandstone Rocks - **Moreton Bay** QLD
Sun 22nd Miami Marketta - **Gold Coast** QLD
Fri 27th Enmore Theatre, **Sydney** NSW
Sat 28th Thebarton Theatre, **Adelaide** SA
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A RIDE ON THE YOLACOASTER

NOBODY KNOWS WHAT TO EXPECT AT A **YOLA** SHOW. ESPECIALLY NOT HER.
WORDS BY **MATT DORIA**.

Never before has country music enjoyed such a resurgence in the mainstream. Part of its recent squeeze back into the charts is thanks to an array of artists fusing their own unique sounds and styles into the genre – like Bristol singer-songwriter Yolanda Quartey, who takes a distinctly twangy base and adds to it a full palate of tonal idiosyncrasies.

Better known simply as Yola, the genre-bending soul-soother had her big break come back in February with the release of her stunning debut album, *Walk Through Fire*. She'll be taking it to the Byron Bay Bluesfest in 2020 – so, to kick the hype train into overdrive, we sought to give her a quick buzz.

For those of us who have never had the privilege of seeing you perform live, what can we expect to get out of your Bluesfest set?

I like to describe myself as genre-fluid [*laughs*]. Because essentially, we have sounds of classic soul music, classic pop music, classic country music, and maybe a little bit of classic rock music in there. And those things; it's not necessarily distinguishable which genre is prevailing in any one song. Some songs are a bit more straightforward, but there's always a little bit of something else in there.

We have one song called "Faraway Look" which is perfect for that classic pop sound, but there's also a tiny bit of soul in there. And then some of the more country-oriented songs like "It Ain't Easier", you might get a tinge of soul or pop in there as well. I'm always in the middle of a group of genres, and that's definitely something I pride myself on.

I love being taken on a journey at a show, where you have no idea what's coming next.

Yes! There are certainly times when you go to a show, and by the third song, you feel like you know everything you're going to get. And you have

to make a decision with yourself to commit to the predictability of the set. You have to come to terms with the fact that, "Now *this* is going to happen, and now *this* is going to happen." I certainly operate within a range – it's not like I'm going to come out and start rapping – but not necessarily such a narrow range as one genre.

It gives the crowd a chance to explore all the different things about yourself and your creativity. Because you think about your own record collection: it's not like your record collection is just one genre, right? If you like country music, you might like blues music, folk, soul music, Americana... And so the idea is to exist within certain areas and explore the meeting points between those areas.

You recorded your album in Nashville, the bonafide home of country-rock. Was it important for you to make the trek over there give it some of that Southern authenticity?

Not really, because I'd been exposed to a lot of country music in the UK since around 2004. I didn't feel the need to imitate the aesthetic behind the sound, because I didn't relate to it – in the same way that Eminem didn't necessarily grow up with hip-hop in a lifestyle fashion; there's a difference between listening to an artist and then being in the environment where those sounds rose up.

The great thing about country music – and maybe the difference between it and other genres – is that as much as it can be about coming from rural areas in America, it's also designed to be outreaching. Which is crazy when you think about it, because every time we think of country music, we think of it being very specific to an area – the Southern states and the Midwest. But really, it's the storytelling that makes it. You think about Dolly – she sold records *everywhere!* She's not a niche, unknown artist, just known in one part of America – she's *international*.

And the consequence of selling records everywhere is that everyone gets into your music.

And this is something that people are being surprised by, but it's like, "Well, if you sell records in Japan, guess what's going to happen in Japan!" And so I grew up on Dolly, and other artists in and around the country genre – I don't think necessarily pure country, though, which is probably why I don't make pure country. You think about Elton John and the Honkey Château record – there's a lot of country sounding stuff on that record, and that really spoke to me, listening to a fellow Brit explore those sounds.

What's your go-to guitar right now?

At the moment, I'm playing a Fender Paramount. I've been looking for something that would be a good workhorse for gigs, that could take a beating in travelling, sound really even, and I suppose have a little bit of EQ control depending on what I'm playing. And that guitar has done a great job of doing all of that for me. The Paramount gives you the opportunity to dial in which frequencies you want and control your volume as you're playing, because it's all so close to you. That's one thing that I found is really, really handy for me, is that ability to tailor myself to each song depending on what I'm playing. 

Yola is touring Australia in April:

Mon 6th	Hammer Hall, Melbourne VIC
Wed 8th	Enmore Theatre, Sydney NSW
Thu 9th	Bluesfest, Byron Bay NSW
Fri 10th	Bluesfest, Byron Bay NSW
Sun 12th	Bluesfest, Byron Bay NSW

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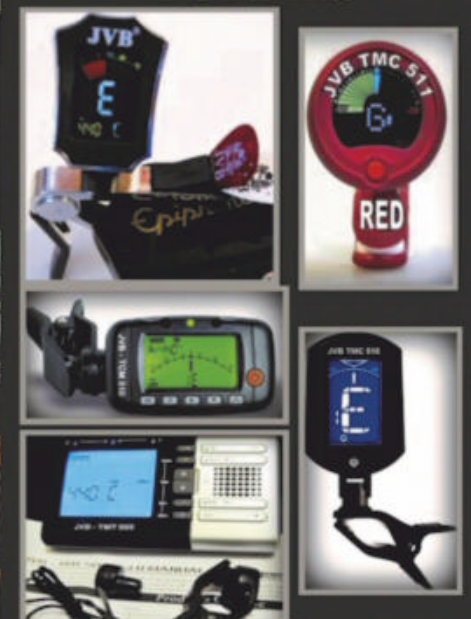
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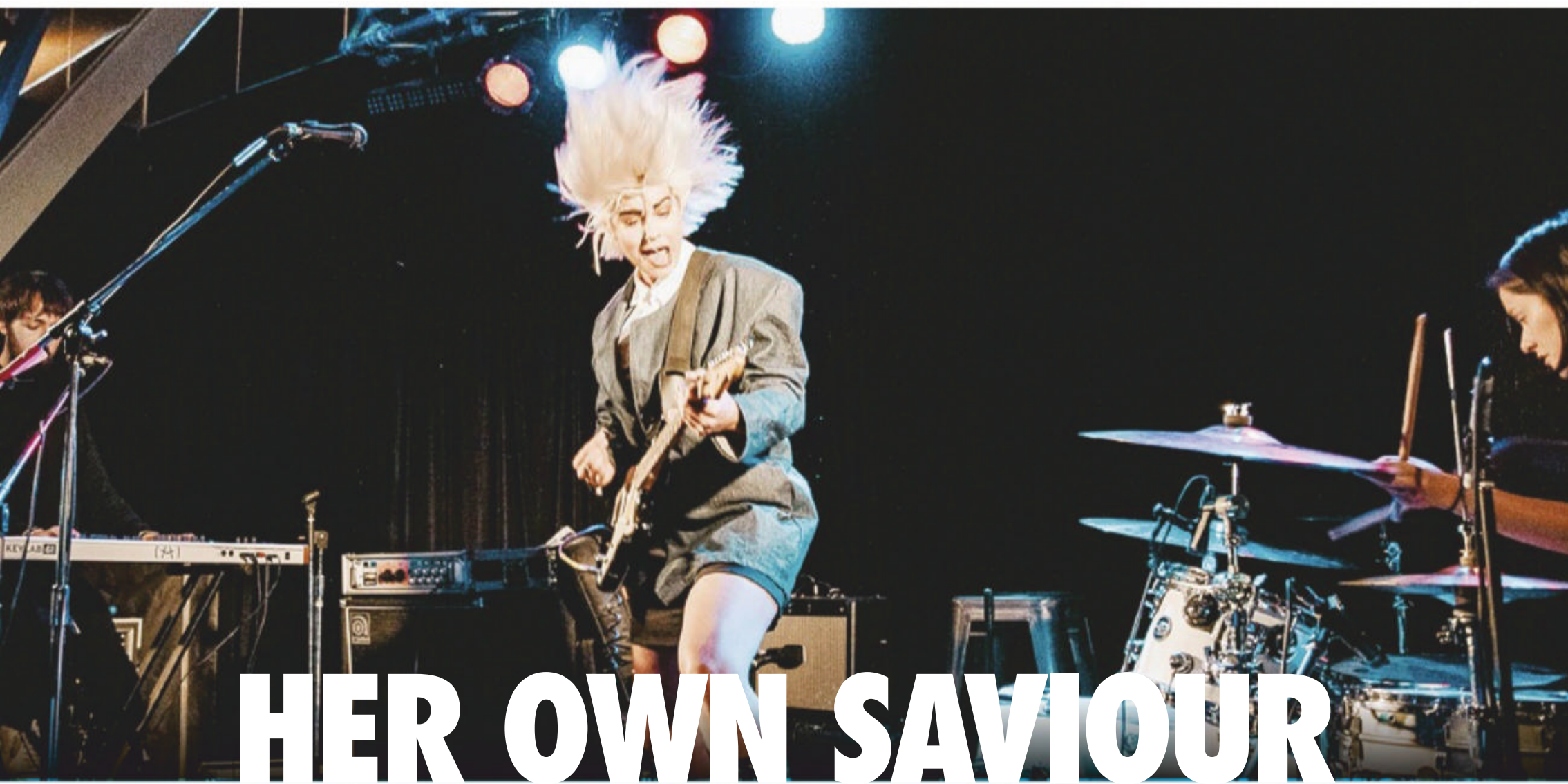


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WORDS BY **MATT DORIA**. PHOTO BY **SAMANTHA QUINTAL**.

Kaleidoscopic in every sense of the term, navigating a dizzying flurry of '80s pop, cock-rock, disco and dance vibes, there's no one proper way to describe Bec Sandridge. The Wollongong-native pop goddess is an absolute anomaly, her tunes at once ruinously retro and freakishly futuristic. And with her debut album – the transcendental *Try + Save Me*, which she released sans label in October – Sandridge taps into a range of sonic aberrations spanning the full gamut of emotion and creativity. Naturally, we had to learn more...

How did you look to explore beyond the boundaries of genre with a full album of material to work with?

I think this is the first time I really took the time to work out what actually I wanted for any of my songs. I definitely nerded out very hard on things like tones and styles. I have all these playlists on Spotify, like, "Drum sounds I like," or, "Guitar tones I like" – I really just honed in on working out what I do and don't like, which was a pretty cool experience.

With my *In The Fog* EP, I had five days in the studio and I was like, "I need to get this done, and whatever happens at the end of it is what happens." Whereas this time I worked with Oscar Dawson and Gab Strum, and it was a very conscious decision to get both of them in because the guitar is my main instrument, but also I love the idea of throwing myself in an anxious, manic club. It's just very un-me. So the decision to work with them allowed me to pick different sounds and ideas because I really liked them, rather than just, "Oh I must put this in here because of time or budget or whatever."

Was there a lot of experimentation involved?

Yeah! Oz is quite an organic producer – he's very much a 'live band' kind of dude. His work with Holy

Holy and Ali Barter and Alex Lahey... They're all indie-rock, kind of '90s sounds. I've always found my music a bit more collage-y. I like building my songs, piece by piece, from the guitar upwards. So I think it was a good challenge for both of us.

We initially tried to play the songs with my live band in the studio, and it just didn't feel like me. It felt like I was *trying* too hard – like a covers version of my own band. So we experimented with playing songs live, and then we brought them back. We got a live drummer in, and then we replaced their tracks with electronic drums. Then we decided to put live drums back on. And then we were going, "Actually, let's double everything." So we had live drums *and* electronic drums. We had synth bass *and* electric bass.

It was a really cool exercise in trying to figure out where I sit between genres, too. My project is definitely a pop thing, but also, the guitar is what I love, and having that kind of 'live band' energy... Sometimes I feel like it's hard to replicate that in a recording. So with Oz, it was really fun to explore how we can put that down.

What's your philosophy when it comes to picking up a guitar and thinking, "How is this going to shape a song?"

I think it's song-by-song. A song like "My Friends Think I Can Do Better" – that's definitely a nod to bands like Queen who would often use the guitar as a synth, which is what I wanted to do. My overall philosophy is that if it's gross, it's great. I struggle to leave space in a lot of my songs, and I know that's something I need to get better at.

But I much prefer things to be on the nose than, say, just the nice-sounding guitar. I just don't find that interesting – and it's always in the back of my mind that a song is going to be played live later. So

my playing style is a lot more angular and jutty. If it sounds too nice, then it's just not going to be *me*.

Do you whip the guitar out onstage for those big solos?

If I'm honest, I actually hate doing guitar solos. I'm doing lead and chord stuff at the same time, but it depends what mood I'm in. Sometimes I'll be, "No, I can't do that." I don't know. It's the same thing with being on the nose – it's a fine line to figure out, "Am I playing cock-rock because it's funny, or is it because I actually enjoy it?" It's hard to know at this point.

The line between irony and authenticity is a fun one to blur.

I feel like I'm discovering that it's genuine love. I have this joke with all of my friends that I'm obsessed with Bon Jovi's "Have A Nice Day", but I just don't think it's a joke anymore. I think I actually love that song.

I like that you don't take yourself too seriously on *Try + Save Me*, especially with the '80s pop slant. What is it about that era of music, and that style as a whole, that enraptures you as an artist?

The artists that I like from that era aren't scared – or they're just not aware. I don't know. It's like a weird thing. I think it's the theatre of it. It's this theatre of punk, almost. I think it's a real art in taking yourself really seriously, but being able to have fun in the process. I always have my tongue planted firmly in my cheek, and I know it's a protection mechanism because I don't want anyone to think I'm taking myself too seriously. But also I'm like, "Here I am. I'm writing about stuff to do with my family or stuff that hurts me." I think there's something really beautiful in it when an artist has shittonnes of fun, but they're like, "Yeah, take me seriously." 



AS THEY NEAR THEIR THIRD DECADE AS THE BONAFIDE KINGS OF DOUGHY EMO ALT-ROCK, **JIMMY EAT WORLD** HEAD IN AN AMBITIOUS NEW DIRECTION. WORDS BY **SARAH COMEY**.

You never quite know when your favourite band will end up disappointing you. Because let's be real for a second: every band ends up sucking at a certain point in their career. Most will fall off the wagon somewhere around the fifth or sixth album – others are luckier, and make it deep into the double digits. Jimmy Eat World are now ten albums down, and not only are they yet to break a sweat, they – *somehow* – just keep getting better.

Easily their most open-hearted and ambitious effort yet, *Surviving* takes the raw, temperamental poignancy that made the Arizona alt-rockers such a jaw-dropping force to begin with, and ups the ante by a margin the size of their millennial fans' student debt. Which is to say, of course, that it's an absolute levithian of an LP.

In an effort to unearth their secrets to longevity, *Australian Guitar* made a quick detour past frontman Jim Adkins' favourite deli on the way home from a day at the office... Because you can't call it stalking if you're just in the neighbourhood, right?

How did you want to push Jimmy Eat World further than ever before on this LP?

The challenge we gave ourselves is to do less things that felt like more. And to do that, we definitely leaned into some of our strengths as a guitar-rock band. There's some varied textures and different kinds of songs happening on *Surviving*, but I feel like it's really weighted towards our core guitar-rock roots.

So you were trying to find the power in simplicity – to not have simple songs, but simple concepts that you can then turn into these big, powerful songs.

Yeah, definitely. I've always been a fan of having restrictions in place – self-imposed lines to colour within. You can get as subversive as you want within those lines, but you need to establish some kind of parameter before you can allow yourself to explore. That way, the song comes to life in a really interesting way; it wants to be effective for the kind of song it is. For me, that's where the reward is,

when you are developing something with a song telling you what *it* wants to be.

Do you find it crucial to step out of your comfort zone with each new record to keep things feeling fresh, not just for the fans, but for yourselves as creatives?

Oh yeah. The worst thing you can do isn't necessarily coming up with an idea that you don't like. The worst thing you can do is come up with an idea that you think is exactly *you*. Like, what are we doing in that case? We have nine other albums that sound like us! What are we doing adding more stuff that sounds exactly like that? I feel like a really good gauge of whether I'm on the right track or not is if I find I'm laughing at myself a little bit – just a little bit. If you're struggling with your self-identity, then you're growing. Your strengths are useful, but if all you're doing is executing your strengths, you're not doing anything exciting. If everything feels easy to you, you're not on a path of growth.

It feels like you've kicked the emotional energy into overdrive on *Surviving*. What drove the anthemic nature of the record on a creative wavelength?

It just sort of came out that way. I think when you're working on material, you have to strike a fine balance between trying to be present and tuning out. Because music is all about responding to something you're hearing. You might be creating what you're hearing and trying to respond to it at the same time, but as a songwriter, you also need to be able to turn around and be outside your own belt in a way.

Unless you're able to silence the inner critic, you're not going to get far. You're just going to be shooting down every idea as soon as you have one. Writer's block is when you can't shut off your inner critic and you don't get anywhere. It's a tricky line to balance there. And in the process of shutting off that inner critic, you end up with a batch of songs that start to tell you something about where your subconscious is heading. And we listen to that, and we try to explore

more aspects of what our subconscious is trying to tell ourselves. And I guess in the case of *Surviving*, that's guitar-rock as a prompt.

So I was reading that you would record some of your guitar parts on an iPhone as a way to experiment with your sound...

I wanted to get a particular kind of sound out of an acoustic guitar; I wanted it to feel spontaneous and immediate. So I just threw my phone down and started a voice memo – I wasn't concerned about mic placement or acoustic treatment of the room. I was in the warehouse of our studio space, it was not ideal. And I took what I recorded and I dumped it into a session and... It sounded great!

I was like, "*Huh? How!?*" I ended up having to process things to make it sound more like I intended, because it just sounded *too* good. I can see why there are SoundCloud rappers that have never seen an XLR cable before, because the microphone in your iPhone is really good. It might be the most expensive component in the entire phone.

What about the guitars you were repping?

For almost every part of the recording, I used the guitar I play live, which is an off-the-shelf Fender signature model of mine. It's kind of like a Les Paul Thinline hybrid, and I just really dig it. It does everything I want a guitar to do, so that's really all I play. The only difference between what you'd buy in a guitar store and what I play is that I put .013 gauge strings on mine, and Fender told me I was insane if I thought they would package it like that for retail. 🎸

Jimmy Eat World are touring Australia in March 2020:

Fri 20th Download Festival, **Melbourne VIC**
Sat 21st Download Festival, **Sydney NSW**

Tickets are on sale now via moshtix.com.au



CELLO FROM THE OTHER SIDE

RETURNING TO THEIR SYMPHONIC METAL ROOTS, APOCALYPTICA PAINT A BRUTAL PICTURE – BOTH SONICALLY AND VISUALLY – WITH THEIR NEW ALBUM *CELL-O*. WORDS BY **ANNA ROSE**.

Okay, so Apocalyptica aren't guitarists, but they're revolutionaries in their own right. The Finish outfit have made waves over the course of their 26-year career for their ingenuity in marrying the traditionally classical cello with heavy metal, fusing together the two worlds in an epic chasm of effects pedals and headbanging.

Three of the band's members sit in the green room of the Sydney Opera House – cellists Eicca Toppinen and Perttu Kivilaakso, and drummer Mikko Siré – killing time before they take to the stage for a special performance of their debut album, *Plays Metallica By Four Cellos*: the release that started a movement all of its own and put Apocalyptica on the map.

But we're not here to talk about that. Apocalyptica are about to release a new album of all-original cello-metal, inventively titled *Cell-O*, and with it opening themselves to some seemingly unorthodox methods and emotions. Differently compared to the rest of their discography, *Cell-O* was about a return to the band's non-vocal days.

"We wanted to go back to our core instrumental stuff – that's why we self-produced this album," says Toppinen. "We wanted to go back to our roots – not of when we were playing Metallica, but when we were playing original instrumental music."

As a concept album, there's a melancholic beauty enveloped in *Cell-O*; one that is typically Apocalyptica, but introduces some strong ideals as well. "We approached it from many angles," begins Kivilaakso, "But for me personally, one of the strongest inspirations for all the ideology behind it is that humans are the cancer of the Earth. We just f*** up everything. We are but little pieces in the planet and destroying everything we can."

"Then we see particles and details in everything: space, billions of stars, cells... The music is built from a little note and it creates a full symphony. We looked into the microcosmos for the little details, and *Cell-O* is something that is lacking inside us and the universe."

"The god particle might be the word," adds Siré. "It's more that the cell is the origin of everything," Toppinen tidying up any misconstrued ideas caused by the language barrier. In Apocalyptica's vision,

Cell-O represents a fallout of destruction from one particle. "And also, creation," says Siré, philosophical undertones in his optimistic discussion. "In the core of one cell, it creates life."

"That's why we have strong contrasts," adds Kivilaakso. "Some of the songs, they definitely flirt with demolition, but we also have the hopeful ones where we build up the creation."

It's interesting to hear the words 'demolition' and such, for it (and indeed, listening to the album) stirs up imagery of a desolate sci-fi world that is – for lack of a better word – apocalyptic. Siré, struck by the observation, asks if I've seen the accompanying artwork for the album – the answer is no, so this whole portion of the conversation piques his interest. The sound Apocalyptica have created is very much a societal reflection of where we are now, and where we could push ourselves if we're not careful. "It's a combination of where we are going and where we should go," Toppinen says, smiling knowingly.

It's hard to believe that such vivid imagery and colourful projections should be created without words. Indeed, there are elements on the new album where the cello imitates the sound of a siren – something we've heard from the band before in songs like "En Route To Mayhem" – where Apocalyptica somehow make the instrument scream. As for the technology they're using, it's pretty simple. "We have handpicked guitar effects, with the song in our head and just fool around to find a way to create," Toppinen says.

"It's always interesting to plug something into the cello, because even though you know how it sounds for the guitar, it totally reacts differently with the cello," adds Kivilaakso. "When you are playing [and] recording, there are many moments where you actually surprise yourself and go, 'Woah, I didn't know this kind of song was possible to play with the instrument.' It's interesting to experiment."

Quite. And while Apocalyptica aren't able (or perhaps willing) to give specific details as to the rig or speakers they chose to garner some of the harbinger effects we hear on *Cell-O*, the band have been advocates for Genelec products, including the 8341 SAM monitors, the Loudspeaker Manager

that features auto-calibration, and G-Lab guitar controllers, including the MGC-6 MIDI controller and the GSC-3. It's a safe bet to say that Apocalyptica have found new ways to operate the same sort of gear for the new album.

"It's one of the reasons we wanted to self-produce the album – we know all the basic stuff and we can do that, but then we really didn't finish arrangements of the songs when we started to record them, so a lot of things happened in the moment in the studio," says Toppinen. "A lot of things were very free. We understand each other so well, and it was hard to get someone from the outside to explain to somebody what we planned to do."

Does that mean there's no going back now – that Apocalyptica will continue to enjoy the freedoms of self-production on future releases? Their flexibility on past albums is certainly one of the reasons for their success, but the three men simultaneously scramble to assert that this is not the case. "We never set rules for ourselves," says Toppinen. "This time we had more freedom to create the full instrumental structure that *Cell-O* needed, but we will probably work with producers again."

"At this moment, we felt we had a strong vision of how we should sound, and we didn't want anybody to hassle us," adds Kivilaakso. 'Vision' is the operative word, too. Apocalyptica have gone into the studio with one vision, and the resulting anthology might draw out a completely different vision in the listener. "That's the best part," says Siré. "We shouldn't try to dictate how people feel. We do this as honestly as we can, and then we push it out, and then it's not for us to decide."

"People comment to us in their own way," adds Toppinen. "That's the magic of it, and that's how we can really touch people – by giving them the freedom to experience our music in their own way."

"It's funny that with this concept, we only give you the music, some titles, and some paintings for the songs," says Kivilaakso. "Every song has a picture – sometimes a little abstract, but it's the only kind of 'lyric' you'll get. We hope people watch through the picture and listen to the music, and then create their own story." 



HALF A CENTURY OF SHRED

50 YEARS ON, *KICK OUT THE JAMS* STILL REIGNS AS A PROTO-PUNK CLASSIC. **SARAH COMEY** CATCHES UP WITH THE LEGEND BEHIND IT RIGHT BEFORE **MC50** LAND DOWN UNDER.

Unless you've spent the bulk of your life wearing military-grade earplugs, there's a good chance you've come across the fretwork of – or at least some inspired by – Wayne Kramer. The MC5 leader makes the term 'virtuoso' seem like a participation trophy, and wielding his Stratocaster like a rifle aimed squarely at the core of the machine, he kick-started a revolutionary chapter of the political punk movement.

2020 marks a prodigious 50 years since the release of MC5's debut – the rough 'n' rugged, yet luminescent *Kick Out The Jams* – and though it's grown some dust around the edges, the OG live recording still a crucial listen for any self-respecting music lover. With the revitalised MC50 project, Kramer is set to take *Kick Out The Jams* on a stint through Australian arenas in March. Of course, we needed to get in on this hype.

I hear you're in the studio with Alice Cooper?

That's true! We've written a bunch of songs and done a bunch of fascinating covers, and I think it's going to be a pretty interesting record. It really rocks. We had some really great players on the sessions, and we all had a good time doing it. It was hard work, but that's the name of the game!

What can you tell us about the experience you had making the record?

Well, we were all playing together live, like a band. We had Paul Randolph on bass, Garrett Bielaniec on guitar, and the great Johnny "Bee" Badanjek from The Detroit Wheels on drums – there was a rocking little powerhouse of a band, and we had Alice and his producer Bob Ezrin with us all the way through it all.

That's the only way you can make music that has genuine heart to it. You need to follow the path the song is taking you on, not what might seem like the most technically proficient path.

Exactly. I remember I played a couple of solos where I would take a pass at one and then I'd say, "Here, let me do another one." And then I'd record a second one and think, "Well, technically that one was better," and Bob would say, "Nah, the first one had the juice in it, let's go with that one."

What are you most excited to get up to on this arena tour with MC50 and Alice?

Well, the Australians are kind of like Detroiters to me. The people in Detroit, they work hard and they

play hard. I always have that feeling about Australians – that they work hard and then play hard, and when they come to a show, if the band really puts it on up there onstage, the audiences respond with great fervour. To me, it's very inspiring to know when people are really enjoying what you're doing. I want them to enjoy it as much as I'm enjoying it, y'know?

There's always been such a powerful message behind the music of MC5, which is arguably as relevant as ever today. Do you see touring these days as an opportunity to reach a new generation with that message?

No question about it. When we come to Australia, 99 percent of the people in the audiences will not know a great deal about the MC5; y'know, their older brothers will and their parents will, but they won't. This'll be the first time they've ever been exposed to it, and I think they'll be pleasantly blown away. At the risk of tooting my own horn, we're a great band! We slay live and we really rock hard, and I think audiences know what that means when they hear it, and I think they'll respond appropriately. I'm really looking forward to it.

You've got a brilliant lineup with you on this run, too. How did you manage to pull together such a supergroup team?

Once I made the decision to move forward with MC50, it was just a matter of calling up all my friends to see if they were available – if they thought it sounded like fun. That was really the criteria. Because not to brag, but I don't really need the money from this tour – I have another job writing music for film and television, which I enjoy very much – so if I can't have fun doing this, I'd rather do something else. And so I just looked for guys that would be fun to play with.

The main thing was that they had to be good people. Y'know, when you tour with somebody, you're around them all the time. Sometimes you don't get to eat right, usually you don't get a lot of sleep, and you're always in motion. I wanted people that understood that from the get-go, that were professionals, that had been down this road before – and all of the guys in the group have been in touring bands all their adult lives. They know exactly how it goes and they all have a great, mutual respect for each other.

They also have a great intellectual curiosity about the world that we're all travelling through, so that

makes it an enjoyable experience for me. I like their company and I like coming up with ideas with them, and to me, that's the real payoff.

As guitarists, what's your chemistry like with Kim Thayil in particular?

We ebb and flow in an interesting way. We come from two different generations of guitar players, but there are things that connect us – we both love the hard rock of the '60s, all the Hendricks and the Yardbirds and The Who and Jeff Beck. And then he can bring all of his experience in Soundgarden to the table, and the way they approach things. All of that was completely their own and uniquely original. And I can bring what my experience has been in jazz and funk and early rock 'n' roll. The good news about Kim is that he keeps an open mind. I can present him with unorthodox ideas on the guitar, and once he figures out how to do it, he'll embrace the challenge.

What's your current go-to guitar setup?

I have a custom Stratocaster that Fender made for me – it's a reproduction of the one I played in the early days of the MC5. I also just bought myself an effects processor called the Helix, which sounds unbelievable, and we all play through Fender Hot Rod DeVille amps.

What is it about that classic Stratocaster sound that you just can't shake?

It's more than just the sound, it's the feel of the guitar itself – the action of the resistance of the strings against the fretboard, the position of the volume control knob... I recently started to realise that I control everything through one volume knob on my guitar – I change it a thousand times in a set. That's the secret to making the guitar do what I want it to do. 

MC50 is touring Australia with Alice Cooper in February:

Sat 8th RAC Arena, **Perth** WA
Tue 11th AEC Theatre, **Adelaide** SA
Fri 14th Rod Laver Arena, **Melbourne** VIC
Sat 15th Qudos Bank Arena, **Sydney** NSW
Tue 18th Entertainment Centre, **Brisbane** QLD

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a foo with EXPENSIVE TASTE

WHEN HE'S NOT DRUMMING IT UP FOR THE GROHLY SPIRIT AS A FOO FIGHTER, TAYLOR HAWKINS IS A VENERABLE ROCK DOG OF HIS OWN ACCORD. NEVER HAS THAT BEEN MORE TRUE THAN ON HIS NEWEST SOLO ALBUM, *GET THE MONEY*.

WORDS BY SARAH COMEY.

It's bitterly ironic that the most often ignored member of a band is the single most crucial in making a song work. Of course, we're talking about the drummer (sorry, bassists). Taylor Hawkins is perhaps best known as "the drummer from the Foo Fighters" first and foremost, but the 47-year-old Texan is much more than just Dave Grohl's beat monkey. Since '06, Hawkins has released five of modern rock 'n' roll's most underrated gems – two of the best from that handful under the moniker of Taylor Hawkins & The Coattail Riders with mates Nate Wood and Chris Chaney.

Now, nine years since dropping the inhumanly groovy *Red Light Fever*, Hawkins returns to the Coattail Riders for a star-studded chasm of crazy new jams dubbed *Get The Money*. In addition to being classic Hawkins from cover to cover, LP3 shows a looser, more experimental edge of the rocker's artistry. *Say, shall we vibe on it with him?*

Nine years later, we have a new Coattail Riders album! What drew you back to this project after so long?

Well in all honesty, The Coattail Riders, Birds Of Satan, the *KOTA* thing – these are really all just monikers for the same thing. At the end of the day, it could be a record for any of those projects – I just like the way 'Taylor Hawkins & The Coattail Riders' looks on a t-shirt [*laughs*]. It wasn't like I slammed my fists on the table and went, "At last, it is time to return to The Coattail Riders!" It's just a name – but it seems to be the one out of all the little side-projects that I've done that has the most pop, as far as the way it looks and what people remember it to be. And it was the first thing I ever did outside of just being someone's drummer, y'know? It was the first thing I felt comfortable enough doing on my own.

How did you want *Get The Money* to kick things up a notch for you?

At the end of the day, you're always just trying your best to write the best song you've ever written – or just a good song, for that matter! I don't know if these are the greatest songs I've ever written – I've kind of just sheepishly put them out

into the world because y'know, who the f*** really cares? I'm just the drummer from the Foo Fighters. It won't add up to a hell of a lot of beans to most people, but that's okay because it's still fun for me. Every time I go into the studio and something good comes out of the speakers, it's exciting! And you always think it's the best thing you've ever done. Y'know, you have to. You have to believe in yourself when you're recording a song, or making an album, or whatever – you have to have a certain kind of confidence. But you also have to be a good self-editor as well, y'know?

Did you play much guitar on this record?

I played pretty much all of the guitars on the *KOTA* EP I put out a couple of years ago, but I only played a little bit of guitar [on *Get The Money*]. I played a little bit of the keyboards and a little piano too, but mainly just drums and vocals. Most of the guitar was played by Brent [Woods] or Dave [Grohl], or Gannin [Arnold] from the original Coattail Riders lineup – he's on that last track, the Yardbirds cover "Shapes Of Things" that Roger Taylor and I sing together. That's actually an old recording from, like, ten years ago, and I just dug it up and loved it. And I thought it would be fun to throw a cover song on there!

Sometimes people don't like it when bands do covers, but I'm all about them. I love Van Halen's covers – I think their cover of "Pretty Woman" is awesome! I like cover songs, because they kind of give you an insight... It really shows you what a band sounds like sometimes, because even though it's a cover, they're still playing it, y'know? They're still the ones making the noise – so you can learn a lot about a band when you hear the way they interpret another artist's song.

So as far as the guitar goes on your own non-Fooeys projects, what's your philosophy behind approaching the instrument as a drummer first and foremost?

Well, the thing I like about drummers that play other instruments and write songs is we generally play *for* the song – you've heard that saying a bunch of times, but y'know, there is something to

that. Playing for the song means you're not sitting there just trying to sound like you're on top of everything. There are moments where you want to surprise people with some blistering drum solo on the toms, or a ripping guitar part or something like that – but there's a time and a place for everything, y'know?

But the approach is essentially to come up with the right feel on the drums first. And with some of these songs, it did take a while to get to what they are now. I remember with "C U In Hell", what's on the album is, like, the 43rd take. Because we were kind of figuring it out as we went along, and when we finally hit that take, we went, "Okay, *there* it is!" "Don't Look At Me That Way" was a song that we initially tried with a click track, but it just felt too stiff, so I did it without a click track and all of a sudden it started to sing a lot more.

Some of them happened really quickly, too – like "Middle Child". Dave came over and I showed him the song – I had a demo from, like, three or four years ago – and we tweaked a few things and did two takes, and the second take was it. So you never know! But you do know! *Y'know?* You don't know *when* it's going to feel right, but you *know* when it does.

What's the latest on how the new Foo's album is progressing?

Well, it's progressing! Dave's got some really great songs, and we're doing everything within our power to get them down on tape – or computer, or whatever – as quickly as possible. I think in the end, we'll have a really cool record.

Is it shaping up like a natural progression from *Concrete And Gold*?

From what I can tell from the demos that Dave's done, and from the little bits that we've done together so far, I think it's going to be a little bit more reminiscent of, like, *early* Foo Fighters. It's a little poppier and a little more upbeat. But we're still in the earliest stages of writing, so I can't *really* say. Y'know, there'll be a noisy song – there's always a good noise-rock, and there's always a punk song... We'll see what happens! 🎸



THE (NEW) JIMI HENDRIX EXPER

RIX IENCE

NOT YOUR GRANDDAD'S TRIBUTE SHOW, STATELY SOUL SHREDDER HARTS IS SHOOTING A NEW DOSE OF ENERGY INTO THE CATALOGUE OF A TIMELESS FRETBOARD WARRIOR. WORDS BY SARAH COMEY.

Cover bands are a dime a dozen these days. For every one dude that once picked up a guitar and managed to make people shake their butts, there are a solid 50 wannabes trying to emulate that dude's skill. The problem is – quite frankly – none of them have it.

That's not to say there isn't value in paying tribute to one's idols: there is absolutely a tasteful way to step into the role of a guitar great long since past – just look at how Melbourne mind-melter Harts is tackling his approximation of the Jimi Hendrix discography. *Harts Plays Hendrix* is much more than a ticketed cosplay session – it's a show of honest love for a guitarist that transcended genres and touched generations of budding shredders. And, most importantly, it's being done with authentic passion and genuine care.

Before he kicks off his dozen-plus show stint, we caught up with Darren Hart himself to riff on the importance of Hendrix's legacy, and how he aims to treat it right when he takes to some of the country's most prodigious stages to show it off.

What are you most looking forward to in bringing the arguably timeless music of Jimi Hendrix to life on this tour?

I'm most looking forward to celebrating his legacy. The show is about him – next year it'll be 50 years since he died in 1970, so it's about really paying tribute to the guy that started it all with guitar heroes, and kind of where the guitar ended up today. I've always wanted to do a show that specifically pays tribute to the music of Jimi Hendrix, but brings it to life for a new kind of audience and a new demographic. I'm really trying to connect the dots in connecting my audience – the younger generation – with the older generation, and doing that through Jimi Hendrix's music. I'm excited about it. It's a fun project, y'know? It's not too serious, either; it's a lighthearted celebration of Jimi Hendrix and his music. And it's not an impersonation of any style – it's not me trying to *be* Jimi Hendrix. Obviously, no one can do it the way he did it.

I'm always curious, when an artist does the whole 'X plays Y' thing, about the ethos behind it, and what differentiates it from the average tribute show. Are you doing a straightforward performance of songs from Jimi's catalogue, or are you bringing a sort of Hartsian twist to it?

I'm not trying to recreate a specific performance of Jimi's or play exactly the way he did; it's more about digging from the same well as he was, in a way. I feel as though it's very hard to capture the vibe that Jimi Hendrix had, unless you kind of look at it in the same way he did, as a jazzier, kind of improvisation-type show rather than playing all the licks exactly perfect.

The way we're structuring the show – and the way we did the two test shows that we did – is completely improvised. We obviously know the songs and we know the structures and things like that, but how we get from point A to point B within a song is going to be different every time. I think that kind of falls in line with Jimi Hendrix, and particularly the really good Hendrix impersonators out there, like Randy Hanson, who have been doing it for years – they've got it completely down.

I read a lot of interviews with people like that, just researching how they found the best way to capture the Hendrix vibe. And it's kind of the same thing that I was thinking in my gut – it's really hard to try and play something exactly the way he did. Even if we did spend the time to practise the songs down to a T, it

wouldn't feel right... The magic wouldn't be there. The magic is in the danger of it being improvised – being completely alive – and having that kind of energy to it, where no show is going to be the same as the last.

We're making it a lot more modern, too; we're not trying to go back to the '60s and recreate that sound. That's going to shine through anyway, just in the style of playing and the style of the songs, but we're trying to bridge the gap between what people would expect from a normal Harts show and what they'd expect from a Hendrix show. It's about finding the balance between what feels natural to me and authentic to myself as a performer and an artist, but also playing the music of someone iconic and not butchering their artistry.

So how did you first discover the music of Jimi Hendrix, and what was it about it that just struck a chord with you?

I used to play the drums – that was my introduction to music. And once I started learning the drums in high school, I started to listen a lot more to music, and listen a lot more to what people were listening to, and how the drums were interacting with different instruments in the songs. I eventually discovered blues music, and I discovered an artist named Buddy Guy, who was just this amazing, phenomenal guitarist. And through delving into Buddy Guy's career, I found about Jimi Hendrix, who was influenced by Buddy Guy. And when I discovered that whole style of music – both through Buddy Guy and Hendrix – I fell in love with what the guitar was doing in it. I fell in love with that really soulful blues, and that powerful energy when the blues transitioned into rock 'n' roll.

So I started playing guitar after discovering Buddy Guy and Jimi Hendrix, but I wasn't serious about it. I wasn't really serious about music at all – I was just playing as a fun little hobby, just teaching myself on a cheap nylon-string classical guitar that I'd bought myself. And that went on for a good couple of years, until it kind of just spiralled into a place where I was getting quite comfortable with the guitar, moreso than drums, and moreso than anything else I was into at the time.

So I really kind of knuckled down, and I used to play every day – I used to watch DVDs of Jimi Hendrix and copy everything he was doing. That's how I learned to play the guitar. I never had a teacher or anything – it was just a matter of going, "Okay, well I really like this style of music, I wonder if I could learn it by ear?" So I always say that Hendrix and Buddy Guy were teachers of mine, because I literally learned to play the guitar from copying videos of them. 

Harts is touring Australia throughout 2020:

Fri Mar 6th	The Gov, Adelaide SA
Sat Mar 7th	Crown, Melbourne VIC
Fri Mar 27th	Anita's Theatre, Wollongong NSW
Sat Mar 28th	Enmore Theatre, Sydney NSW
Fri Apr 3rd	Tivoli Theatre, Brisbane QLD
Fri May 29th	Twin Towns Services Club, Tweed Heads NSW
Sat May 30th	Events Centre, Caloundra QLD
Fri Jun 5th	Astor Theatre, Perth WA
Sat Jun 6th	Performing Arts Centre, Bunbury WA
Fri Jun 12th	Panthers, Penrith NSW
Sat Jun 13th	The Arthouse, Wyong NSW
Sat Jun 20th	Costa Hall, Geelong VIC

Tickets are on sale now via hartsmusic.com



SCORPIONS

NOW WITH TWICE AS MUCH STING!

2020 IS SHAPING UP TO BE A COLOSSAL YEAR FOR THE GERMAN METAL ICONS IN SCORPIONS, WITH ALBUM #19 ON THE CARDS *RIIIIIIGHT* AFTER A TITANIC TRIO OF ARENA SHOWS DOWN UNDER. WORDS BY AVERY JACOBS.

A new whole decade lies ahead, and if there's but one thing we can't wait to see, it's how the culture surrounding the guitar will continue to evolve – both à la new acts we've never seen before, and by way of the old-time greats taking fresh new approaches to the axe. Scorpions shredder Matthias Jabs is one such rifflord who's never grown stagnant behind the instrument. On the cusp of his return Down Under, we gave the 64-year-old icon a buzz to chat all things six-strings!

So, are you getting all pumped up to make your way back to Australia next year?

Of course! I'm really looking forward to going back to Melbourne and Sydney especially, because on the last tour we did with Def Leppard, Klaus has had problems with this voice so we didn't get a chance to play those two cities. But this year's tour has been very smooth, so we're looking forward to finally coming back and playing to those fans. And then when we go home, we start preparing for a new album. We decided that we're going to do a new album next year, and hopefully finish it before the summer so that we can release it in the fall and have some new material to play.

Where do you want to take the sound and style of Scorpions on album #19?

We actually just met with a producer, and we all agreed that we should maybe go back to the *Blackout* days, where we kept things very simple. There's always gonna be a couple of overdubs of course, but at its core, it's just two guitars, bass, drums and vocals. I think lately, we've had a tendency to... I don't want to say 'overproduce', but to spend a lot of time in the studio thinking about guitar arrangements – put an extra detail here and another one over there – and maybe that wasn't so necessary. Maybe we should

go back to our roots and keep things simple; have everybody in one room while recording and do it like we did in the old days, because there was a certain charm to that. And not too many ballads – we want to tap into the harder side of Scorpions.

I wouldn't say no to a heavier record!

Well, that's the idea. It'll also refresh our live set. It's always good to have a new song to play. The fans will always want to hear the old classics, but for the musicians onstage, it's nice to have something new that you can go out and play around with. Even if it's just a new opening song – that gives you an entirely new feeling when you're playing the show.

One thing I love about your live set is the way the guitars twist and turn around each other in the mix, like you and Rudolf are wrestling with your riffs. When you play live, do you have much room to shake things up and improvise?

I think I'm the only one who has still the freedom to improvise with my solos. With certain songs, you just want to play the melody the way people know it – let's say the intro to "Rock You Like A Hurricane" or the guitar solo on "No One Like You" – songs where the melody is so familiar to people's ears that you don't want to mess with it. I keep those the way they were originally played, but with some of the other songs, depending on what we do in this live set, I can play a different solo every night if I want to!

Scorpions were one of the first bands to go all in on that two-guitar attack in heavy music. What drove that in the early days?

Everybody has their early influences. When I started out I listened a lot to Jimi Hendrix, and all the great guitarists like Jeff Beck and Eric Clapton and Ritchie

Scorpions is touring Australia with Whitesnake in February:

Wed 19th	Rod Laver Arena, Melbourne VIC
Sat 22nd	Qudos Bank Arena, Sydney NSW
Mon 24th	Entertainment Centre, Brisbane QLD

Tickets are on sale now via livenation.com.au

Blackmore. But soon after, I developed my own style. I think it depends a lot on the songs. When we started out, I always looked at the song as a whole first. That's how I find my melodies – I'm inspired by the main vocal line. Scorpions often have a guitar-driven intro in their songs, and that is always inspired by the vocal melody. I'd take it from there in the solo, too, because I think the guitar solo should help the song continue – it shouldn't be this random jump in the song where all of a sudden, it's become something else and someone's just noodling like crazy.

What guitars are you playing on these days?

I play a lot of Boris Dommenges's guitars. He makes fantastic guitars for me and Rudolf. So I have my own signature guitar from Boris Dommenges, which we call the Mastercaster – it looks a lot like a Strat, but it has a lot of different things in it so that I can reproduce all the kinds of sounds we make in the studio. And the Explorer 90 was also an idea of mine, which Gibson and I came up with at the Music Museum in Frankfurt back in '87. I told them that the Explorer was too big – I would prefer if they could make it slightly smaller, and I would like to have 24 frets. And so they came up with a prototype, and we called it the Explorer 90 because it's 90 percent of the original body size. 🎸





A FEVER YOU CAN'T SWEAT OUT

POP MUSIC IS A DANGEROUS GAME, BUT WITH THEIR BOUNCY AND BOISTEROUS *FEVER DREAM*, OF MONSTERS AND MEN HAVE LANDED A HIGH SCORE. WORDS BY MATT DORIA.

Wikipedia describes a fever dream as being “particularly intense or confusing”, which makes it perfect to represent the long-awaited third album by Icelandic indie-poppers Of Monsters And Men. Dipping and diving around a spellbinding spate of sounds that covers the entire musical spectrum, the 40-minute mammoth stands as their most diverse and dynamic effort yet.

As the band gear up to make their way Down Under for this year's Falls Festival, we caught up with guitarist Brynjar Leifsson to riff on how *Fever Dream* came to life, why it took Of Monsters And Men in a bold new direction, and what fans can expect to see when he and the rest of the fivesome tear it up on our stages later this month.

What was the mission statement you had with the stylistic direction you wanted to take *Fever Dream* in?

I think we just wanted to write music that would provoke a feeling. On the first album, we provoked a lot of happy feelings – there was a lot of joy and happiness on [*My Head Is An Animal*], and then [*Beneath The Skin*] was very emotional and kind of melancholic. I think those are two sides of us that we



Of Monsters And Men are touring Australia in December and January:

Mon Dec 30th Falls Festival, **Lorne** VIC
Tue Dec 31st Falls Festival, **Marion Bay** SA
Wed Jan 1st Falls Festival, **Byron Bay** NSW
Sat Jan 4th Falls Festival, **Fremantle** WA
Tue Jan 7th Enmore Theatre, **Sydney** NSW
Wed Jan 8th Anita's Theatre, **Wollongong** NSW
Fri Jan 10th Festival Hall, **Melbourne** VIC

**Tickets are on sale now via
frontiertouring.com and fallsfestival.com**

both enjoy writing from, but we wanted to recapture some of the free spirit that we had on the first album. But still, of course, have that... I have the perfect Icelandic word for it, but I can't find the right English word! We wanted to capture the joy of the first album and the melancholy of the second one. And we wanted to change the way we went about writing and recording music, because that's kind of where we got stuck on this one. We got tired of tired of the way we were putting the songs together. So on this one, we challenged all of that. We stepped out our comfort zone a lot and created a new workflow.

So did that upset the status quo for you as a guitarist in particular?

No one in the band is a traditional guitar player. We don't write out riffs and stuff like that, so it comes more naturally for us to use [the guitar] more as an atmospheric instrument. Kind of set the mood for the record. "Alligator" is very guitar-driven and there are some big riffs in there, but it's nice to try things that you normally wouldn't do with an instrument. I think because we haven't studied music a lot, I wouldn't say we're master players. So we kind of approach every instrument in the same way. We ask ourselves

whether it needs to be in the track to begin with, and if so, how we can have it mix in and create something that works together. We're not the type of band to have people go, "This is my instrument and I do this, so it has to be here."

I like that – it shows the versatility of not just the guitar, but musical instruments in general.

I think it's useful for a guitarist to have a skill to sell – and I think everyone in the band has that – but if you kind of challenge it and you think about everything in the bigger picture... Everything is everything. The piano can sound the same way a guitar can with the right effects, for example. So, we can just kind of play with it and keep it open.

Do you remember what guitars you were playing on in the studio?

I played my custom Martin guitar for the acoustic stuff. It's an M body, I think... I don't remember exactly what I did with it. I played my '76 Les Paul, too, which is mighty fine because I'm left-handed and they don't have a lot of vintage left-handed instruments out there. We also like Duesenberg a lot. I played my Duesenberg as well, and then basically

just a lot of piano. This would be a perfect question for our main guitarist Brynjar [Leifsson] because he has about 20 guitars that he just alternates between.

What do you think will define your sets at the Falls Festival this December?

I think it's all about emotion. It's all about doing it together. We're not here to just be onstage, we're here to be with a crowd. English is not our first language, which means we sometimes forget words and stuff like that – so we're not the greatest at talking to people, but we like to get them involved in our set. People can just let down their guard and be in the moment with us, and that's what we like the most.

You're also playing a few sideshows – what would you say separates the vibe between your festival set and a headliner?

We plan to go a bit deeper and show off more of our sides. You can get away with playing more of a balance and more intimate songs [at a headliner], whereas a festival set is shorter so we you want to punch through it and play something that gets the crowd going. We bring people up with us, and then we take them down for a couple of slower songs. 



THE FUTURE AND THE FOR

WITH THEIR 2017 DEBUT, POLARIS CAPTURED LIGHTNING IN A BOTTLE. FOR ITS FOLLOW-UP, THE SYDNEYSIDERS TURN THAT BOTTLE INTO A MOLOTOV AND PELT IT RIGHT AT OUR FACES. WORDS BY MATT DORIA.



From opening spots at their local YMCA to sold-out headliners in foreign arenas, Polaris are on the type of skyward soar you typically only see in Hollywood fantasies. It was their debut full-length, *The Mortal Coil*, that lit the fuse on their still-exploding firework – since the day it dropped in November 2017, the Sydney metalcore crew have been kicking goals and brewing pits non-stop.

Now, a breath over two years later, it's make or break. All eyes are on the little rifflords that could for their second shot at the airwaves – and according to lead guitarist Ryan Siew, they're not about to blow it.

How did you want *The Death Of Me* to kick the sound and style of Polaris up to the next level?

It's been quite a while since we put *The Mortal Coil* out, and that album did have a much bigger impact than we ever thought it would. So we felt very pressured – especially since a few of us suffer from poor mental health and anxiety, it did feel like a huge weight to follow up something like [our first album].

But in those few years, we've been to Europe about five times now, and the States twice; we've seen Japan, we've seen New Zealand... We've seen the world, pretty much, and that changes you as a person. And inevitably, that seeps into the music. I think this record is just a culmination of that.

We never really sat down and had a brief, like, "Oh, we want to make a heavier record," or, "We want to do this..." We just wanted to write music for the sake of writing music. I think a lot of people are going to be surprised by what the album turned out to be after hearing the single. "Masochist" is a bit of a softer song, but without saying too much, the heavy metallers out there won't be disappointed by the whole album.

I know that in the creative process, you tried a few new approaches to songwriting – like how with "Masochist", you wrote the riffs around the vocal melody instead of vice versa. How else did you shake things up as songwriters?

I think after doing two EPs and an album, you learn so much about songwriting. I think it's always a really gruelling process, but we've kind of figured out a way to streamline it. Honestly, it hasn't really changed too much, because the reason the band sounds the way it does is hugely due to us as individuals.

You've always been a pretty technical shredder, and it seems that with each new release, you try to up the ante for yourself. How did you want this record in particular to challenge your skills as a guitarist?

I really wanted to challenge myself as much as I could with my lead playing, because I didn't get to explore that as much as I would've liked to on the last record. And because of the sporadic nature of how this album was made – we had about six months, which is half the time we did *The Mortal Coil* in – we were just kind of like, "F*** it."

The rule was that it didn't matter if you had a crazy technical part or an impossible blastbeat section; if it sounded good, we'd use it! So I guess in that sense, the music did come out more technical, in a strange way. But yeah, we always go into a record wanting to be better musicians than we were the last time, and give ourselves a little bit of a challenge.

What guitars were you ripping out on?

We used our Mayones guitars. For the seven-string stuff, we used a Mayones Regius Core that had this crazy gradient finish on it, which was just beautiful. It's got a Schaller Hannes bridge on it, and an 11-piece wenge neck-through. Crazy, crazy stuff. And that Schaller Hannes bridge – it's, like, bolted onto the body, and it's got this big f***ing chunk of brass for the tail piece. And it sounds so clunky and growly and mid-range-y – I can't really describe it, but it's very attack-y, which was really suck. And that was perfect for the seven-string stuff because it was tuned lower.

And then for the six-string stuff, we mostly use the Regius 6 that I have; it's blue, and it's another very solid guitar, spec-wise. It's got an 11-piece maple dominant neck and ash wings, and a buckeye burl top. We've been fortunate enough to be working closely with Mayones – and even Fender, through EVH – so we pretty much had any choice of guitar we could have picked up. We're very spoilt [laughs]. So it was mostly those two Mayones guitars, but there was also a Strat and a bunch of other stuff.

For the pickups in the rhythm guitars, we used the Bare Knuckle Juggernauts. We've been big fans of Bare Knuckle for ages, and they're so nice to us as well. We used them in the bridge when we were tracking all the rhythms, and then the leads were mostly done with a Juggernaut pickup on the first guitar that Mayones ever made for me. And then for all of the clean stuff, we used the Bare Knuckle VHII pickup, which is... It's not a high-output pickup, but it's really fat and round, and it's got that 'pick attack' thing going. So that was really cool for some layers – and it sounded great split as well.

I know you're hard at work developing your first signature guitar at the moment. What can you tell us about that?

Yeah! It absolutely blows my mind that it's even happening. It's still in the prototyping stages, obviously – they won't let me post about them on the internet yet, but they're really, really cool. I've had the luxury to play around with every single option you could imagine. And [Mayones] have been so good to me; they just came up to me one day and said, "A lot of our dealers are getting customers coming up to them and going, 'I want that red guitar that Ryan has!'"

That red guitar is the first one that Mayones ever made for me. I did some stuff with it on YouTube a long time ago, and I feel like a lot of people associate that finish with what I do, and with the band. So it's based on that OG guitar, but I've taken everything that I've loved from every single guitar I've played since then, and that has built me [as a guitarist], and smashed it into one. 

Polaris are touring Australia in February:

Fri 21st	The Gov, Adelaide SA
Sat 22nd	Forum Theatre, Melbourne VIC
Sun 23rd	Astor Theatre, Perth WA
Fri 28th	Enmore Theatre, Sydney NSW
Sat 29th	Tivoli Theatre, Brisbane QLD

Tickets are on sale now via polarisaus.com

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IN THE BLOODY MOONLIGHT

FEW BANDS CAPTURE THE SPIRIT OF AUSTRALIA LIKE COLD CHISEL. CASE IN POINT, THE *BLOOD MOON* TOUR: A SUMMER RUN UNDER THE STARS, WITH A SCORCHING NEW ALBUM TO MATCH. THE LEGENDARY IAN MOSS RUNS US THROUGH WHAT TO EXPECT FROM BOTH. WORDS BY MATT DORIA.

Like the sight of koalas munching on a eucalypt, politicians with spiderwebs for brains, and the distinct sound of VB tinnies cracking open on a hot summer's arvo, Cold Chisel are a fundamental bastion of Australian culture. Anthems like "Khe Sanh" and "Choirgirl" are ingrained in our minds as sonic adaptations of our identities, and you'd be hard pressed to find a cobbler that can't belt the chorus of "Cheap Wine" on instinct. They play for the underdogs that bring our country together; the blue-collar blokes and shielas that make our day-to-days as bright as they are.

So how do you make Australia's favourite band just that extra little bit truer and bluer? Well, how about stripping back the boundaries that often confine them in concert, tear off the roof (quite literally) and let them shine under the stars that illuminate our summer nights? That's what Cold Chisel are doing with their monumental *Blood Moon* tour: a truly one-of-a-kind run of entirely outdoors, summer-set jams set to sprawl across our shores in the early weeks of 2020.

Fuelling the tour is the band's hotly awaited ninth studio album, also dubbed *Blood Moon*. A distinctly collaborative effort between the band's motley crew of creative dynamites (keyboardist Don Walker is credited with penning much of the disc, but each of the fivesome's flavours are felt duly across the board), the ten-tracker comes at a perfect time for Cold Chisel. It's been hinted that the *Blood Moon* cycle may be their last before dropping off the radar, and as such, they're making it an album and tour that's sure to go down in the annals of Aussie rock history.

According to lead guitarist and co-vocalist Ian Moss, *Blood Moon* is 100 percent classic Chisel, through and bloody through.

When you kick back into Cold Chisel mode after however many years away, do you have to dust the cobwebs off and ease back into it, or is it just

like old times when you all get into a room?

Psychologically, it's just like old times. Y'know, I don't think we'd still bother to play if we didn't have that chemistry together – even besides any personal differences we may have had between us over the years. One thing that never fails is that when we all get into our rehearsal space, there's a palpable sense of excitement – I just feel like a teenager again! And I'm sure the others feel the same way. So there's that psychological aspect, but as far as dusting off goes, yeah – I mean, like anyone, we have to rehearse and practise. Whether you're a sportsman or a musician, you've gotta go into training and get your muscles warmed up. So we take that very seriously; we don't just rock up at the gig on the day and say, "Ah, d'ya think my guitar works?" We nurture the product of Cold Chisel very carefully. We look after it, which means being match fit and the best we can be, each and every time we go out to play in front of an audience.

And then there's that title, *Blood Moon*. As a visual phenomenon, a blood moon is "a rare lunar eclipse where the sun, earth and moon all briefly align before continuing on their own orbits". In this instance, is that a metaphor for the state of Cold Chisel?

Yeah – almost accidentally. When you're searching around for a tour or album title, normally you might use a title of one of the songs, or a catchy phrase from the lyrics. We had management wanting to call it 'The Chisel Summer Moon' or 'In The Sun' or whatever, and they all just sounded a little too cheesy for us. And it was Dom, once again coming up with all the brilliant ideas – he saw the blood moon, and how apt it would be in that it's us all sort of coming together in a way that we haven't before, which is to do full-on mid-summer, open-air kind of venues. We've done a few shows like that before, but we generally tend to stick



to indoor venues. But this time, we’re going all out to make it as big as possible – because y’know, we are thinking that this could well be our last... Obviously they won’t be our last gigs, but it *could* be our last national tour. So yeah, it is a rare coming together before the individual parts [of Cold Chisel] drift off on their own ways – perhaps forever!

Was that something you had kicking around in your mind? “If this is going to be the last one, we have to make it extra special and meaningful...”

No, not really. We were all too busy going, “Oh shit, we’ve gotta come up with songs!” We were worrying about just getting an album together at all, rather than thinking “Well this will be the last album so we better think this way, or think that way.” It was just business as usual – heads down, bums up, trying to come up with songs. Of course, we don’t take for granted that we’re great songwriters – we generally tend to do pretty well, but it only comes out of hard work!

How did you want *Blood Moon* to build on the legacy that Cold Chisel has established?

It’s the same as usual – every time you go and do an album, you just think that you want to make it the best one you’ve ever done. That’s the attitude we’ve all maintained every time, with each and every album we’ve made. This time around, when I was doing the guitar solos, in the back of my mind I was thinking that I really wanted to see if I could get some stuff down that people might look back on and end up in that file known as ‘classic’. But then again, y’know, I like to try and do that every time I record – have that attitude, at least.

How long did it take to bring this record to life?

As usual, it’s a mixture of ideas. I’ve got one song on the album that I started writing about 30 years ago. I just started playing it, and I thought, “Oh, these guys are going to tell me it sounds a bit old.” But it’s come up really well. That’s just an example – that’s arguably the oldest track on the record. But then again, you’d have to double check that with Don, because there’s a couple of songs we were working on where I thought he’d just scrambled to get stuck back into it, but he’d say he’d been working on it for 15 years. There’s at least one song like that – I won’t name what it is at the moment, but that’s the great thing with Don: he’s always pulling ideas out from the back of his mind.

And [Jimmy Barnes, lead vocals and guitar] has really come into his own as a lyricist on this one – there’s at least four songs on the record where Jim’s written the lyrics and Don’s written the music. And they’re that good, in fact, what when we were rehearsing and

making demos before we actually did the real album, we were going through the songs and Don was teaching everyone the chords, and I’d be going, “God, how did you get so good at songwriting?” And he said, “Well, you better thank Jim – he wrote all the lyrics!” So that’s a great new twist .

What was the creative dynamic like between the five of you?

As usual, people will just start writing on their own and come into the rehearsals with a song, rather than walk into the room and start from scratch. That rarely happens. And that’s hard work at the best of times. My current Ian Moss album, which I put out last March, for example – that was the first time I had a major hand in writing almost every track on the album. But for each and every one of those, I walked into a writing session with an idea in place, whether it be just one line or whether it be a 75 percent finished song. Very rarely does it work when you walk into a room with a perfectly clean slate in a co-writing session. Most of the time it’s just an agonising disaster.

As far as the guitars go, what were you ripping out on in the studio?

I had a little collection of Stratocasters, as usual. I think I kept it all pretty Fender-y; I don’t think any of my Gretschs got a trot. I was just swinging between Eric Johnson’s maple neck Strat and my lovely rosewood neck Strat from Greg Fryer.

When we saw you play in Sydney last month, you were telling us about this incredible mint green Strat that you had swinging around. Did that get a run on tape?

That’s the Fryer job, that one. Greg Fryer is a fantastic luthier from Brookvale, here in Sydney. I’ve got two from him with very similar neck shapes and builds. That one’s another favourite. I had EMG pickups in that night; mainly because the Enmore Theatre is an absolute horror show with its electromagnetic field. The problem with some buildings, when the wiring is all old and unshielded, it emits a magnetic field that single pole guitar pickups – which are mainly the ones on Strats – pick up like antennas, and it creates a massive buzz through your amp that is way louder than the actual sound the guitar makes. And the only way to get rid of it is to use a special kind of pickups that have inbuilt protection – which is what the EMGs do. There might be a compromise in the sound sometimes, but those pickups seem to really sit in that guitar quite well.

Let’s talk about the absolutely insane *Blood Moon*

tour you’re about to head on. Where did the idea for something like this come from?

Once again, I hand a lot of it over to the skills and ideas of Cold Chisel’s management – the wonderful John Watson and John O’Donnell. Part of it was trying to fit it into people’s calendars. We might have gone out earlier this year, if it hadn’t been for the fact that Jim was touring, and my *Matchbook* tour was already in place. But the team came over and said, “Hey, there’s going to be a lot of people out on their holidays in these kinds of locations at that time of the year.” It just made sense to bring it all together like that.

Is the atmosphere of it something you’re excited about, playing under the stars every night?

Yeah, it is. It really is. And particularly for me, I spent a few months of this year in Europe and the United States. And you always have a great time over there, but you always just think back to how lucky you are to be from Australia. It’s a hell of a long way to go, but it helps add to your isolation – in a good way – that you can go back to this country, which is so huge and vast and exciting.... Y’know, a lot of it is pretty rubbishy desert, but we’ve got some beautiful coastlines all the way around the country. And we’ve only got 25 million people, if that, that can share all this. And we have beautiful summers. And the air’s different here. That’s one thing I notice most about Europe and America – the air is different. I don’t know if it’s because I miss the smell of eucalyptus or something like that, but it just seems fresher, cleaner and clearer to me here. 

Cold Chisel are touring Australia in early 2020:

Tue Dec 31st	Fremantle Park, Fremantle WA
Wed Jan 1st	Barnard Park, Busselton WA
Sat Jan 4th	Glenelg Beach, Adelaide SA
Tue Jan 7th	All Saints Estate, Rutherglen VIC
Fri Jan 10th	Rochford Wines, Yarra Valley VIC
Sat Jan 11th	Mt. Duneed Estate, Geelong VIC
Sat Jan 18th	Hope Estate, Hunter Valley NSW
Sun Jan 19th	Scully Park, Tamworth NSW
Fri Jan 24th	Bankwest Stadium, Parramatta NSW
Sat Jan 25th	Stuart Park, Wollongong NSW
Thu Jan 30th	Stage 88, Canberra ACT
Sat Feb 1st	Heifer Station Wines, Orange NSW
Sat Feb 8th	Sirromet Wines, Mount Cotton QLD
Sun Feb 9th	Sirromet Wines, Mount Cotton QLD

Tickets are on sale now via coldchisel.com

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FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN A PAIR OF JH AUDIO JH13V2 PRO IN-EAR MONITORS

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As we step into a brand new decade, we can all agree that guitar music has had many faces, many trends, and many, many instrumental musicians (pun unintended, but we'll embrace it) over the last few. "Why not take a look at the faces that have shaped guitar music over the last four decades or so?" we thought. And when we did, we realised something: while the guitar is typically seen as a 'masculine' instrument (and, we'll admit, *Australian Guitar* is not exempt from having given men an unfairly extended time in the spotlight), a great many of its most talented, most daring and most memorable rulers are women.

And before you think about it, no, this isn't a socio-political exposé into gender equality in the music industry - though we very much welcome the attention such topics are receiving of late. Rather, it's a general overview of just how many women in music have been ripping up the scene, terrorising the transition of genres, and generally running amok just as fervently as their male counterparts. Because the fact that discussions about women in music are in vogue does not mean their presence in music is a recent trend. Chicks rock, and they've rocked for as long as we can tell.

If you love the guitar - hell, if you love music in general - you're bound to love at least one of the

women included in this list. These lady legends were among several pilgrims of the genres that shaped these decades, doing as much as (and sometimes more than) the fellas to bend, break, twist, and create sounds on the guitar that would inspire future generations to pick up where they left off. This here is proof of a domino effect. You might have heard of some of them, and you might just find your new favourite guitarist among them. Whatever happens, we think you'll agree their music is well worthy of discussion.

It's the core of indie-rock, punk, pop, shred guitar, glam metal and all those tasty little subgenres in between: guitar music knows no limits, no labels, and certainly no expiration.

We begin in the 1980s, where after the advent of musicians like Eric Clapton, Susie Quatro and Jimi Hendrix, the guitar continued to enjoy a massive spike in popularity. It sat alongside the trending dance-pop and post-disco boom in a decade whose experimentations in sound were as daring as its ones in fashion. Rock music got a real overhaul, effects pedals as big as the hair-dos. Guitar music was palatable, flexible, and downright exciting to hear.

People's tastes in music took a relatively quick twist in the '90s, where grunge ruled supreme and a plaid shirt or crushed velvet dress were

the staple uniforms for those that held a guitar between their hands. This decade also saw a rise in chicks who rocked, both on the guitar and on the microphone. Alanis Morissette, The Breeders, L7, and 4 Non Blondes offered just a mere snapshot of the brilliant urban rhythms produced by the gals that penned the soundtrack of a decade of recessions and baggy jeans.

Emo and nu-metal ruled at the turn of the century. Sure, you might think of My Chemical Romance, Silverchair and the like, but chicks were doing a lot for their scene, too. These were the years of unprecedented passion and soul-baring anthems; the advent of the internet meaning charts and trends took off and changed faster than you could change the strings on your Strat.

Crashing quickly into the 2010s, we've seen many different trends shape the recent years. Metalcore, blues-rock, Taylor Swift when she was a "guitarist"... It's all been happening. We've been given the gifts of the likes of Larkin Poe, Nili Brosh, Courtney Cox and so many more. Such has been the diversity of this decade that we're left in high anticipation about what the future will bring to guitar music, and what further accolades the ladies will achieve.

And now we wonder: what will the guitar sound like in the 2020s? We wait with baited breath...

WORDS BY ANNA ROSE

1980s

Jan Kuehnemund



Was there anything more glam-metal in the 1980s than Vixen? At the helm, wielding the neck of her guitar to conduct the band like a baton conducts an orchestra, was the remarkable – the raw and ruinous – Jan Kuehnemund.

To say Kuehnemund had a gift would be an understatement. Her relentless command of the electric guitar made her thrilling performances seem effortless. Onstage, she cherishes her guitar – she makes love to it, clutching it in her hands like it's the most precious thing in the world to her. It's that passion – that unabashed devotion to the thing you might call her soulmate – that got so many people hooked on the vibrant, vicarious nature of Vixen.

Kuehnemund's solos told a story. Her guitar sang of the loves and losses, ambitions and disappointments that Vixen's music set out to say. Vixen paved the way for women in a largely male-dominated '80s rock scene; they made musicians out of girls when many were considered groupies, and they blazed the way for some hellish attitudes in years to come. Vixen signed with EMI and generated over half a million sales from their self-titled debut, featuring the seminal "Edge Of A Broken Heart".

Sadly, Kuehnemund passed away in 2013 from cancer, aged just 59. But her legacy remains in her astounding discography under the Vixen moniker – always wild, always free.

Lita Ford



Referred to by *Rolling Stone* as "heavy metal's leading female rocker", Lita Ford earned that ascription in the 1980s for her palatable pop-metal distinctions and glam-tinged heavy metal melodies. Making her mark as lead guitarist for the first all-girl rock outfit Runaways in the 1970s, it was Ford's solo career that marked her success and perpetuity.

A pioneer of girls on guitars, Ford favoured B.C. Rich guitars back in the day. She frequently put to rest the doubts of naysayers who weren't encouraged by her ambitious attitude. With her crank on the gain and a powerfully developed style, Ford's impression on music over the years has been undeniably feminist, kicking the door down for modern contemporaries like Halestorm's Lzzy Hale. For a real juicy hit of Ford's talent, have a listen to "Back To The Cave". Simply wild.

Of course, you'll know Ford for that accidental hit song, "Close My Eyes Forever" – a duet with none other than Ozzy Osbourne. But it's the calibre of releases like 1984's *Dancin' On The Edge* and her self-titled release in 1988 – featuring very particular howls and raspy rhythmic foundations in her guitar work – that made Ford a hair-metal staple.

Playing as hard as her male contemporaries in her heyday, Ford eventually took an extended hiatus to raise a family – however, these days she's back and as dynamic as ever. It's not unusual to see Ford still at it, still touring and still rocking her heart out.

Poison Ivy

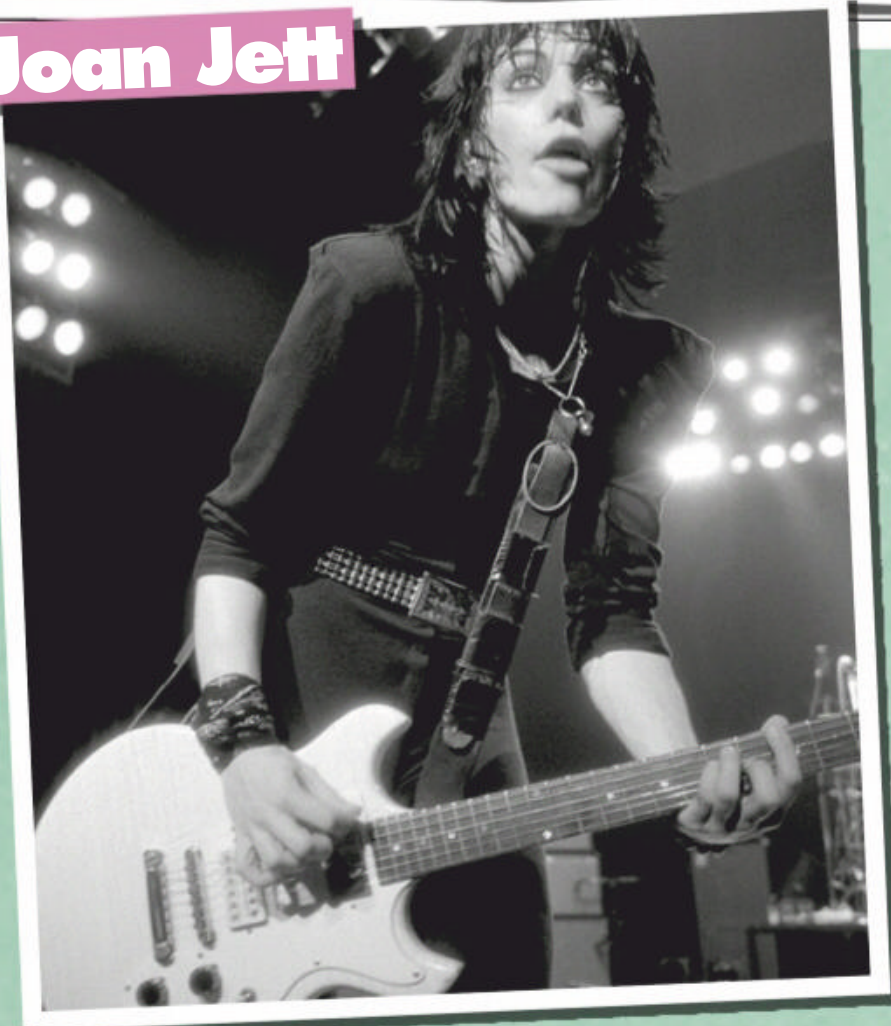


Whoever said guitarists have no soul clearly had never set their eyes on the rollicking ways of Poison Ivy! Otherwise known to her family as Kristy Wallace, Poison Ivy is best known as a co-founder of seminal American punk outfit The Cramps. There was something incredibly primitive about The Cramps' take on the genre – but it's that unrefined, almost vulgar approach that gave the band (and consequently, Poison Ivy) their tempestuous character.

Ivy was the original bad girl. She wore heavy makeup, promiscuous clothing, and even worked as a dominatrix in New York City for a time – all very worthy of a finger wag and a tut or two in those days. Ivy's personality and appearance were as striking as her musicianship. With her attention on maximum reverb and tremolo, Ivy created riffs that weren't necessarily challenging, but complemented the monotone character of singer Lux Interior's vocals beautifully – everything delivered with a very particular don't-care attitude.

A serious lack of bass guitar in much of The Cramps' music exposed the raw nature of Ivy's take on old-school rhythm and blues, her crunchy wrist work on some more vibrant progressions creating a focal point of intrigue and excitement. Such executions are best heard in The Cramps' 1986 release *Live In Zurich*.

Joan Jett



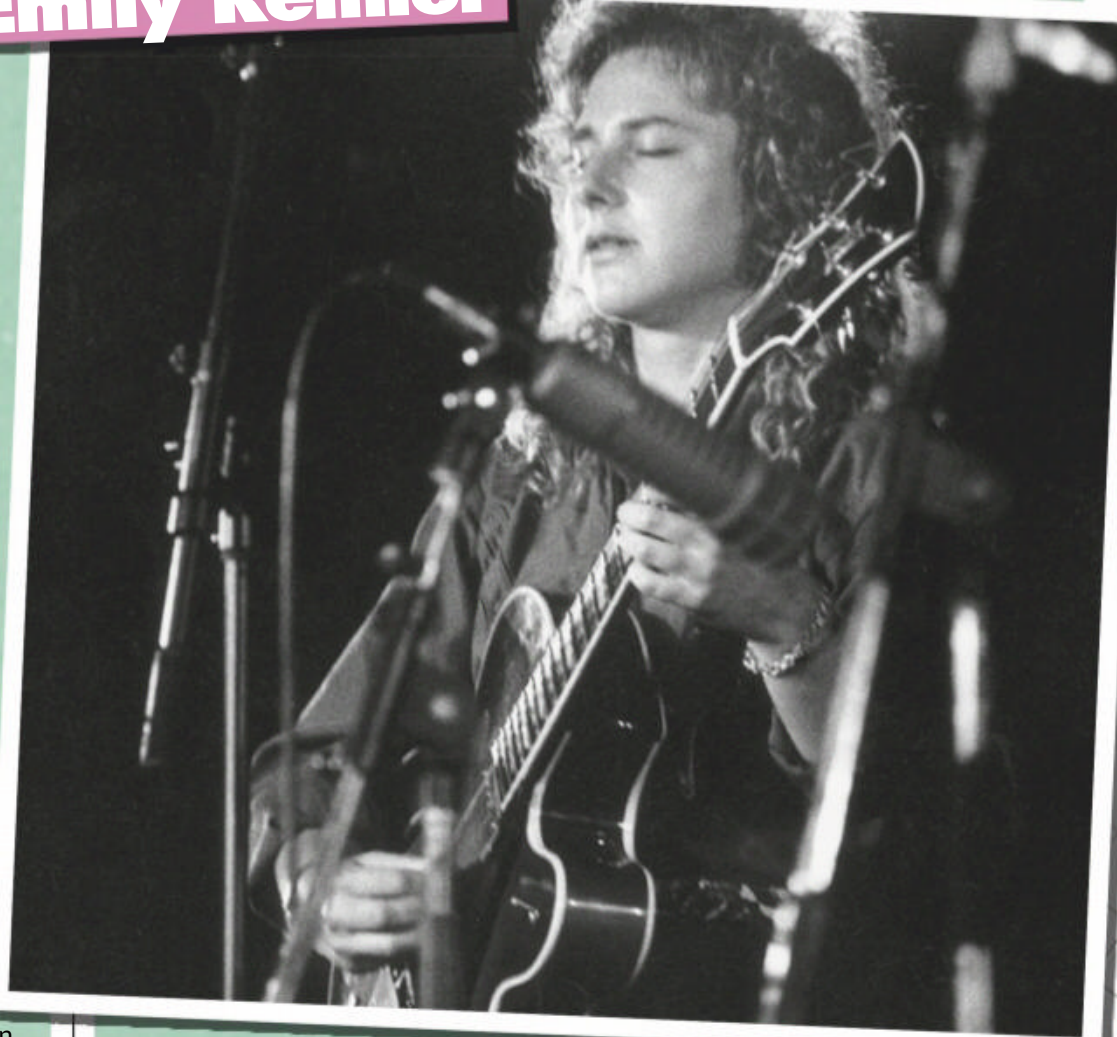
Jett is, for lack of a better word, an icon. An icon of rock 'n' roll. An icon of Americana. An icon of the guitar, and known the world over for it. So, do we really need to splay her accolades and reasons why she's awesome on these pages? Of course we bloody do!

At the helm of Joan Jett & The Blackhearts, Jett would pen songs that became nothing less than immortal. "I Love Rock 'N Roll" is an anthem of the genre – one of those songs many know without even knowing who's playing it. It's a staple; a classic; an absolute blessing in music history. Similarly, "I Hate Myself For Loving You" – with its raw, rampant, unpurged delivery of sexual promiscuity and bad girl antics across some truly gritty riffs and howling guitar lines – is equally as important in the discography of essential rock music.

Jett's mezzo-soprano range could get as wild and raspy as it could be sweet and sultry. Many of her songs displayed a certain kind of spikiness in her guitar work, the hard-driving tempos stirring up just the shocking and adoring reaction Jett was aiming for.

"Bad Reputation", "Crimson and Clover", "Do You Wanna Touch Me (Oh Yeah)", "Dirty Deeds" – Jett is behind so many amazing, wild, and flabbergasting songs that have stood the test of time. To boot, she initiated a domino effect of female guitarists that has yet to stop tumbling over.

Emily Remler



Early in the decade, Emily Remler established herself as one of the most deft and dynamic jazz guitarists alive. Favouring the big, eccentrically designed hollowbody guitars of Borys, Remler riffed to her heart's content with a passion that few could authentically muster.

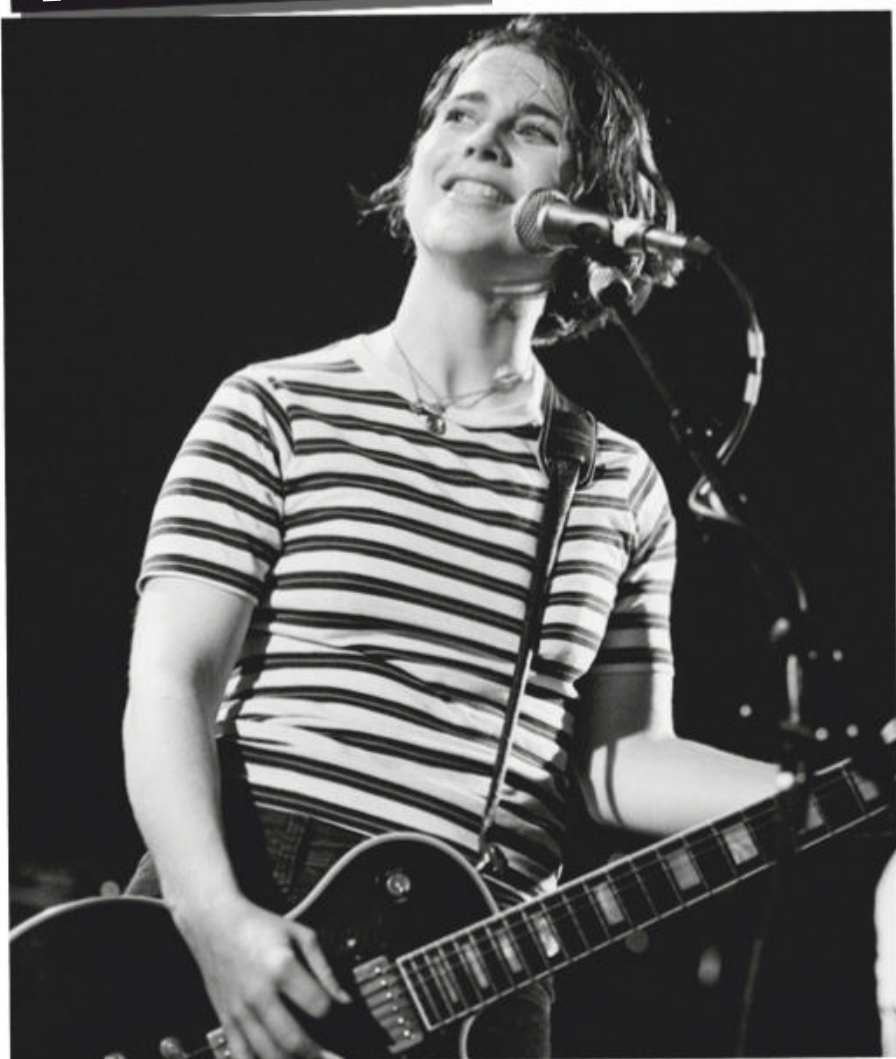
From the moment it landed on shelves in '81, her debut album *Firefly* was revered as a luminous bastion of classic fretwork. The next year, in an interview with *People*, Remler delivered the best description one may ever read of herself: "I may look like a nice Jewish girl from New Jersey, but inside I'm a 50-year-old, heavy-set black man with a big thumb, like Wes Montgomery."

Come 1990, Remler died at the young age of 32 while on tour in Australia; it's unclear where she may have progressed as a guitarist had she been allowed to, but if the skills she displayed in her later years give us any indication, it's without a doubt she'd have continued to soar towards stardom.

When she was asked how she wanted to be remembered, Remler cited "good compositions, memorable guitar playing and my contributions as a woman in music... But the music is everything, and it has nothing to do with politics or the women's liberation movement."

1990s

Veruca Salt



Female alt-rock was largely shaped by salty narratives and crunchy chords in the 1990s. It was an era where grunge reigned supreme and the girls were having a hard go at it. Veruca Salt were one such group, crashing onto an already busy scene with an unabashed devil-may-care attitude that fit in nicely in an age where women were establishing their place in music insistently and pridefully.

Veruca Salt's music was largely shaped by a positively rude insinuation of sound – one almost perfectly in line with the fictional Roald Dahl character for which the band named themselves. And that unembellished approach ties in nicely with that stripped-back sound we hear in later years via Courtney Barnett.

Pinned by a colossal number of break-ups, in-house arguments and lineup changes, Veruca Salt's professional lives were as angst-ridden as their riffs. Fusing elements of punk with metal and a side of shoegaze, founding members Louise Post and Nina Gordan quickly laid down a foundation of distortion and fuzz that held up sweet, yet sinister voices – a blend which would culminate in their hit song "Seether".

In some opinions, they peaked in the 1990s with their debut album *American Thighs* – an underrated cult classic of cutting guitarmanSHIP and cunning songwriting. But as they're still performing today (in spite of the collective mood swings affecting the band's structure), it's safe to say Veruca Salt's place in rock history (and this list) is warranted.

Donita Sparks



A co-founder of the sensational all-girl punk outfit L7, it's with them that the unrivalled Donita Sparks made an impression on music at large throughout the '90s. With her leadership quality and prowess as a rhythm guitarist, Sparks transcended the expectations of the status quo, socially and musically, operating her instrument with a seemingly indifferent caress to create a fuzz-infused outburst of grunge-heavy riffs, delivered with a righteous punk attitude.

Back in those days, Sparks' guitar of choice was the Gibson Flying V – an angular instrument that Sparks described as being like "something from *The Jetsons*." Regardless of the futuristic facets of her guitar, that never stopped her from thrusting the thing into angsty audiences in a primal display of dynamic dominance.

Clearly, it wasn't just about the music for Sparks – it was about the attitude, too. Who could forget that historical moment where, during a performance of L7's hit song "Pretend We're Dead" on US television show *The Word*, Sparks decided to drop her underwear and expose her derriere?

Corin Tucker and Carrie Brownstein



At the very forefront of the riot grrrl boom that swept the mid-'90s into a fiercely feminist tizzy, Sleater-Kinney delivered a well-needed wallop of unforgiving fury and incandescent energy into a fast stagnating punk scene. Whipping out three of the trend's biggest and most boisterous albums back-to-back, the cornerstone of their sound was the rich, yet raw – tight, yet turbulent and tempered – interplay between shredder-singer duo Carrie Brownstein and Corin Tucker.

Though it was largely their political activism that garnered most of the attention, Sleater-Kinney were instrumental in developing the new wave of DIY punk-rock that crash-landed at the turn of the millennium. And even as both Tucker and Brownstein moved beyond the boundaries of the genre (readers might spot the latter in some of their favourite TV dramas, for example), they've remained die-hard guitarists first and foremost. Just look to Sleater-Kinney's 2019 effort, *The Center Won't Hold*: a rollercoaster ride through lashings of powerful riffs a la poignant theatricality.

Fun fact: the self-titled Sleater-Kinney debut – which changed the game forever in 1995 – was recorded over one impromptu overnight stint while Brownstein and Tucker (then a couple) were holidaying in Australia. So when you think about it, they're virtually locals, right?

Kat Bjelland



Pow! Right in the kisser! The aggression of Kat Bjelland was not to be ignored over these years, as she made music lovers sit up (but far from shut up) as the lead guitarist for punk-rockers Babes In Toyland.

If you listen back to sensational songs like “Sweet '69”, “Hello”, and “Calling Occupants Of Interplanetary Craft”, you'd be forgiven for thinking Bjelland was endorsed by pedal companies back in the day – after all, she douses her tone with that much of the stuff. Overdrive, fuzz, distortion, tremolo... The extent of Bjelland's experimentation was infectious.

Of course, the surprising thing about Bjelland's musicianship is that until 1993, she never actually played with any effects (a fact she revealed in an infamous interview with John Peel in the same year). That means everything you heard on the Babes In Toyland albums *Spanking Machine*, *Fontanelle* and *Painkillers* was simply the ingenuity of Bjelland in an attempt to personify her guitar, much in the same way many ladies would do in subsequent years. Lashings of tremolo in “He's My Thing”, and the crunch of what you think is distortion in “Fontanellette” – it's all Bjelland and her treatment of the guitar.

“If you learn how to play without effects,” Bjelland explained to Peel, “You have to learn how to make your guitar speak instead of the electronics.”

Jennifer Batten



They called her “stadium-ready”, and they certainly weren't wrong. Who could forget the 1993 Super Bowl halftime where Jennifer Batten and Michael Jackson tore it up in tandem? Batten performed in all three of Jackson's world tours between 1987 and 1997, and delivered the first instance of a live solo guitar performance for many who attended Jackson's shows.

When she wasn't shredding up a storm with the king of pop, Batten was the go-to guitar goddess of blues lord Jeff Beck; in addition to touring with Beck from 1999 to 2001, she appears prominently on his albums *Who Else!* and *You Had It Coming*.

As a virtuoso-for-hire, Batten also played with classics like Dave Rodgers and Domino. And as a solo shredder, she released three phenomenal full-length albums – 1992's *Above Below And Beyond*, the tribal-tinged *Momentum* (released in '97 as Jennifer Batten's Tribal Rage) and, most recently in 2007, *Whatever*.

A pioneer of the two-handed tapping technique, Batten's influence on the guitar cannot be understated. To boot, her book *Two Hand Rock* remains an essential tool for budding riffers everywhere.

2000s



Courtney Cox



Arguably, there's no-one on this list more able to induce some serious air guitar action in the astute listener than the Iron Maidens guitarist. In 2008, having already performed with established acts like George Lynch (Dokken) and Jon Anderson (Yes), Cox was invited to join The Iron Maidens as a guest performer, where she then drew more recognition for her electrifying stage presence and her wild solos.

When she's not putting her all into her Iron Maidens "Adriana Smith" persona (channeling her inner Adrian Smith, original Iron Maiden guitarist), or performing with The Starbreakers and Femme Fatale, Cox is known to execute solos and improvisations on tour, at conventions and in guest spots, with a very distinct pull on classic blues licks merged with some heavy metal vehemence.

Cox boasts a small flight pedal, useful for her short and sharp touring runs with The Iron Maidens (short, but still plentiful mind you), with a preference for Friedman for the gain and punch their pedals offer. And when she's talked of her technique, tone is often a focal point for the American axewoman.

In April 2018, Caparison announced the new Courtney Cox Signature Horus-M3 CC electric guitar – an impressive model suited for an equally impressive performer. Cox is a chick who definitely helped shape the sound of the '00s. She's a guitarist worthy of the *Wayne's World* chant, "We're not worthy!"

Orianthi



One of our own – and one to be treasured at that – is the incomparable Penny Panagaris. If angry-girl music of the rock persuasion needed a face for turn-of-the-century output, Orianthi was *it*. Suffice to say, her 2009 debut *According To You* not only put a giant flag in the ground for the Australian scene, but was a great little demonstration of how pop and blues tunes can mesh.

Orianthi's dexterity in technique, fluidity of style and cutting creativity meant she's achieved acclaim far beyond our shorelines. By the end of the decade, she was awarded the coveted Breakthrough Guitarist of the Year award by *Guitar International*.

Not only is she a sensational guitarist, her music veering further and further into blues over time, but she has a voice that could melt ice. From her early '00s rock (as heard in the aforementioned single) right up to one of her more recent offerings, "Blues Won't Leave Me Alone", Orianthi demonstrates a maturity and growth rarely heard so succinctly in an artist of her calibre.

Ultimately, Orianthi operates with something resembling a god complex (even if she doesn't realise it). The sustain she utilises in many of her solos don't just bare her soul, it makes her music sing; her instrument suddenly has a voice. Orianthi will certainly go down in the books as having created a living, breathing, *feeling* entity of her guitar.

Kaki King

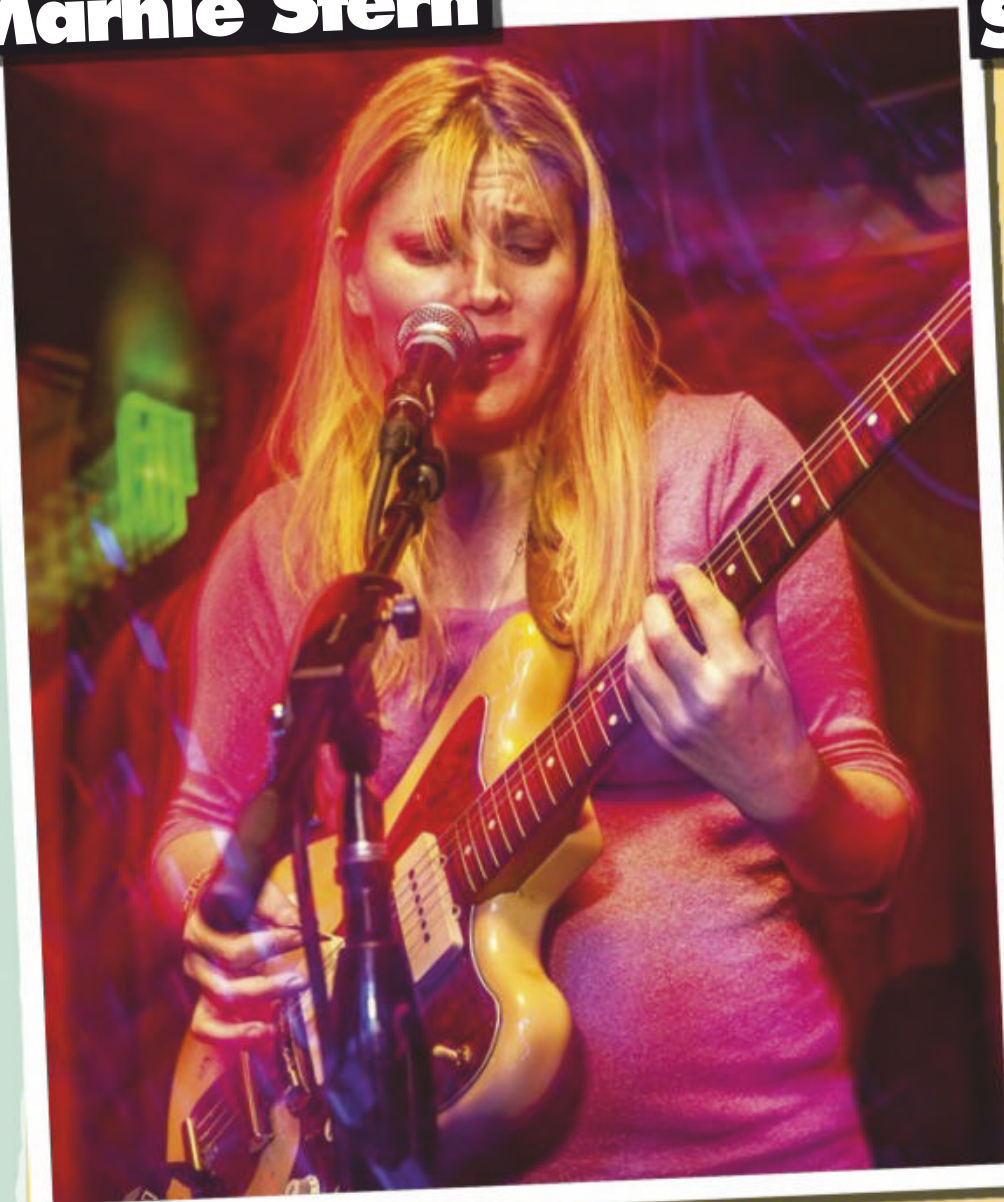


What's the '00s without Kaki King? Not much. Steely shoegaze, sultry post-rock and smooth jazz is made exciting by multiple tunings on an acoustic and lap-steel guitar, with dazzling live performances often built on narrative arcs. King has paraded as an artist devoured by her instrument since her arrival in the early 2000s – that observation of which was cemented by admittance in the 2006 issue of *Rolling Stone's* 'New Guitar Gods'.

A signing with Velour Records in 2002 resulted in the release of King's debut album, *Everybody Loves You*, incorporating flamenco percussion and demonstrating an astonishing dexterity in her fret tapping techniques. Despite the success of this release, King soon moved away from a solo acoustic sound, concerned she would be pigeonholed by her initial material.

There's been nothing but stylistic growth and development from King since. The remainder of the decade saw her expand into more full-band recordings and performances, her third studio album *...Until We Felt Red* praised by critics and peers alike for its rich chemistry and the distinguishable personification of the guitar. Moving even further into the creative realms of her musical mind, King's next album, *Dreaming Of Revenge*, was coveted for its melodic pop persuasion.

Marnie Stern



In early 2007, the independent record label Kill Rock Star released Marnie Stern's debut CD, *In Advance of the Broken Arm* – and thus, a teacher in experimental tapping was born. Her music is whimsical, wondrous, and fantastical at times; a style that reflects her seemingly quirky personality.

With her very particular style of tapping, Stern's performances through the peak of her popularity in this decade were like a massage for the ears – titillating, yet relaxing. Often seen with a Fender Jazzmaster in her hands, Stern stepped onto the scene with an experimental dissonance in her music, projecting an overtone of punk, a maddening medley of fusion and a density that's hard to ignore.

Early on in her career, she cited the likes of The Who, King Crimson, Hella and Yoko Ono as influences, and their spirits certainly carry through her sound. 'Exuberant' is perhaps the best word to sum up Stern's output.

Susan Tedeschi



You might remember Susan Tedeschi from such opening act performances as with B.B. King, The Allman Brothers, Bob Dylan and The Rolling Stones. It's the blues musician's performance with the latter group that brought her national recognition in her native America in 2003.

She also has a wonderful, wonderful voice. Tedeschi's 2004 album *Live From Ausitin, TX* is exemplary of a gravelly, gracious tone – one as majestic as the solos she executes. And if it's a boisterous kind of blues that gets you going, the rumbling riffs of songs like "Rock Me Right" and the voluptuous bass of "Back To The River" expose such a fervent experience that it's no wonder so many got hooked on Tedeschi's outpourings of material throughout this decade.

In the years following her breakthrough, Tedeschi was the recipient of no less than seven Grammy Awards – just one more reason that Tedeschi should be a staple in your blues guitarist collection.

With a superfluous number of influences and idols, Tedeschi's sound is so very augmented by a variety of styles that it's hard to know where Tedeschi begins and her role models end – but that's what makes her music it so endearing. Tedeschi somehow encompasses that to create a sensual singularity – a dichotic statement, sure, but an accurate one nonetheless.

2010s

Tina S



Masters of the cover song are not to be fobbed off when considering guitarists on the scene – particularly not when they have skill like the incomparable Tina S. Making metal magnificent, this French native has some blinding technique when it comes to adapting songs that demonstrate her shredding skills and personality.

When Tina S metallicises classical anthems like Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata" and the various works of Antonio Vivaldi, she's marrying together two amazing things – the sensuality of hard-hitting classical greatness and the dexterity afforded by heavy metal. The 20-year-old does of course add her own style to the works of more genre-standard greats like Pink Floyd, Van Halen and Dragonforce, and her shredding in these renditions is performed with a steely sweetness that is as captivating as it is inspiring.

A prodigy who's played the guitar since the age of six, today Tina S is a featured artist of the French guitar manufacturer Vigier. Without a doubt, she's made more than a mark on the music scene in recent years, and will no doubt have more to contribute in shaping the guitar sound of the future. To Tina S we say, "Très bon, très bon!"

Courtney Barnett



Kurt? *is that you!?* We're kidding, but our very own Courtney Barnett sure has the stoic sentiments and peppering passion of grunge greats gone by. Though Barnett's music isn't technically astonishing, sometimes it takes something a bit more stripped-back to expose the sensations of sound that a guitar is capable of. Cue Barnett.

Her brand of heart-on-sleeve indie-rock harkens back to some of those crushed velvet and plaid top attitudes of the '90s – "Nameless, Faceless", for example, could have been on the soundtrack for *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*. It's the coolness of the naked noise she embraces on her instrument that really exposes not only the timbre, but the foundations of guitar playing.

Even screeching experimental solos as heard in "Need A Little Time" are minimalist (and, excitingly, just teetering on something resembling metal), yet retain a classicism of character not often heard these days. Analysing her music for more influences takes you back even further, to a point where you could argue that Barnett is channelling her inner Keith Richards, tracks like "Elevator Operator" good enough to sit alongside some of The Rolling Stones' greatest hits.

Is there scope for Barnett to merge the sounds of the last four decades and shred in the future? Watch this space, but observe knowing that we have at least one artist right now who's got enough wiggle room in her repertoire to shock and astound, should she decide to step into something a little more sinister.

Sarah Longfield



Known for her exhilarating tapping technique, eight-string guitar virtuoso Sarah Longfield isn't about the three-note arpeggio shapes of your bog standard tapping. Rather, she's chiselled out a very unique niche that is otherworldly and atmospheric.

Longfield has described her sound as being more prog than heavy metal, and that's largely in part to the constant evolution of her sound through experimentation. A multi-instrumentalist, the tones and reverberation of her other instruments have evolved into a hybrid beast of melodic/tech/prog/math rock.

Earlier this year, .strandberg* Guitars introduced the Boden Metal Sarah Longfield Edition: an instrument which reflects the guitarist's long-standing love affair of fusing modern metal and an array of other genres. These guitars feature a basswood body a maple top with a full tonal range and cutting acoustic character.

Longfield uses multiple tapping fingers to play linear scale sequences and tumbling arpeggio runs over several octaves. It's hard to believe that Longfield, by her own admission, doesn't have a practice schedule as such. From her debut album *Collapse//Expand*, the video for "First Flight" is visual evidence of Longfield's sweltering dexterity.

Nita Strauss



Sure, American guitarist and all-round bloody goddess Nita Strauss is the current touring guitarist for the equally godlike Alice Cooper; but it's the cosmically colossal noise she brings of her own volition that makes Strauss one of the hottest shredders around today.

Her career has been shaped by her ensemble work, most notably with all-girl tribute band The Iron Maidens. But add to that her performances with current band Consume The Fire and previous projects like hard-rock outfits Femme Fatale and We Start Wars, and you've got an incredibly admirable musician who has truly earned her nickname of Hurricane Nita.

She grinds and she growls, her storming riffs creating an absolute animal when coupled with some rabid drumming. Her fingers, with an acute precision and boisterous sound, dance on the neck of a fretboard like ants at a picnic. Strauss made history last year when she was made the first female Ibanez signature artist. She entered the arena with the JIVA10, boasting a mahogany body and bolt-on maple Wizard neck with an ebony fretboard, putting Strauss in the company of Joe Satriani, Steve Vai and Paul Gilbert, to name just a few.

Strauss is a hard rockin' staple, that much is clear. Does she need a spotlight? Not really - you already know her, but her work is epic and worthy of a mention at each and every opportunity. We know Strauss packs a punch, and we're pretty damn certain her creative river won't run dry any time soon.

St. Vincent



With a mind so eccentric she makes Willy Wonka seem beige, - not to mention the musical prowess to do whatever she damn well pleases - St. Vincent (real name Annie Clark) brings to the guitar a world of whimsicality entirely of her own. She leaps between isles of pop, rock and electronica, slicking all of her tunes with an artistic edge that many have imitated, but none have come close to mastering quite like St. Vincent. She plays with the guitar in ways many never thought to be possible, bending the instrument far past any wrongly preconceived 'boundaries'.

When she isn't ripping it up in her own kaleidoscopic bubble of creativity, St. Vincent can be found working closely with some of the biggest and best artists on the planet - for example, she produced the cracking new LP by Sleater-Kinney, *The Center Won't Hold*, and she's lent her talents to such scene-ruling stars as The National, Amanda Palmer and (believe it or not) Taylor Swift.

She's also responsible for revolutionising the guitar at its core level, designing - in tandem with Ernie Ball Music Man - a signature model that aims to make holding and playing the guitar a more comfortable experience for women whose bodies may be at odds with the more 'traditional' shapes out there. She's been doled praise for such by everyone from Lila Ramani to Jack White, and it's without a doubt that St. Vincent is to thank for a whole class of new guitarists soon to break out on the scene.

Honourable Mentions



JOAN ARMATRADING

A three-time Grammy Award nominee, Joan Armatrading shapes songs of love and loss with an unparalleled power in her guitar work. Somehow, Armatrading was able to merge the popular synth-pop elements of the day with traditional rhythm and blues licks, her dexterity to adapt one of many reasons that make her an amazing guitarist.



BONNIE RAITT

You ain't got the blues if you ain't got Bonnie Raitt in your arsenal. Her 1989 commercial breakthrough *Nick Of Time* put a glaring spotlight on women in blues. Raitt's unique bend in her guitar work drew attention from Fender, with Raitt becoming the first female guitarist to be granted a signature model in 1996.



NANCY WILSON

Through the swells of rock and blues in Heart's discography, you can hear the unbridled influence of Spanish and classical guitars. Wilson's skill was largely amplified by her dexterity with an acoustic guitar, and yet Heart's 16-album output have cemented Wilson as one of the most influential women in rock.



TRACEY CHAPMAN

In 1989, Tracey Chapman won no less than eight awards from six different ceremonies after her self-titled debut release the previous year gained global critical acclaim. Who could forget the contemporary folk allure of the seminal classic "Fast Car"? Chapman's guitar seemingly feels the same angst and longing as herself.



DEBBIE DAVIES

American blues was given a particular kind of care and a new sensibility when Debbie Davies popped up on the scene. Producing seven studio albums in this decade alone, Davies is truly an underrated talent.



KRISTIN HERSH

Beginning her solo career in 1994 after the dissolve of her former band Throwing Muses, Hersh is something of a cult hero when it comes to the dissonant sway of acoustic folk guitar. Her playing style is quite abrasive – and unapologetically so – yet somehow Hersh retains an integral emotional depth in her performances.



BADI ASSAD

There's likely no such colour or flair created as when Brazilian flamenco guitarist Badi Assad picks up her instrument. Her releases *Verde* and *Wonderland* (2004 and 2006, respectively) boasted tones of bossa-nova and world music – a truly eclectic woman of the world.



JENN WASNER

Wasner is completely afflicted by melodic folk flourishes, coupled with the blues ilk and synth-pop nuances of her band Wye Oak. It's indie, if you must stick a label on it, and it's Wasner's diligent method of crafting beyond the standard atmosphere of the genre (plenty of fuzz) that make her an impeccable guitarist.



LZZY HALE

Frontwoman wailer of popular hard-rock heroes Halestorm, Hale has known nothing but the guitar since she and brother (and drummer for the band) Arjay began touring in their early teens. Taking her cue from the riot grrls of days gone by, Hale has a cutting execution within hard-rock guitar, and wastes no time lining that up with powerful themes of sexuality, relationships and life on the road.



GABRIELA QUINTERO

As part of the Mexican acoustic duo Rodrigo y Gabriela, Quintero is blindingly skilful as she merges a number of genres into her impeccable fingerwork. The duo's recordings are largely of flamenco ilk, but Quintero is particularly adept at fusing metal, rock and nuevo flamenco through an acoustic guitar jacked up with effects and utilising extended techniques. A simply stunning performance of such skills can be found on YouTube – look for a 2011 performance by the duo in Berlin.



CHELSEA WOLFE

No word better to describe Wolfe's guitarmananship than 'exhilarating'. Even in the midst of the most drudging gloom that the Californian goth rocker exudes, there's a ride through her style that will pique your interest. Do check her out if you don't mind experiencing the drabber potentials of the instrument.

audient Sono



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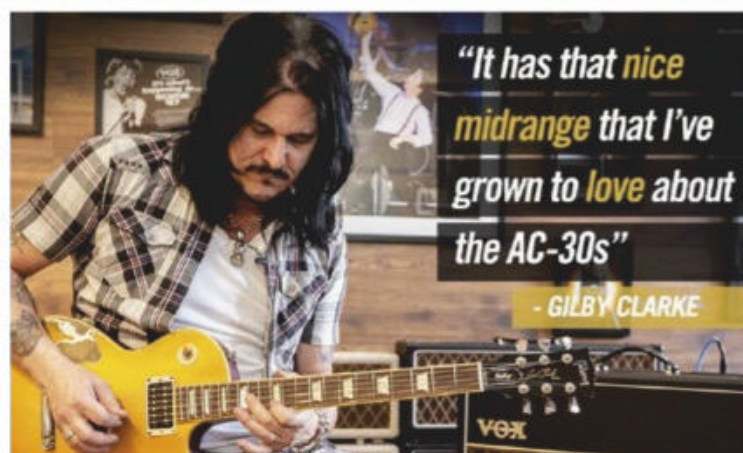


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the interactive, online audio and
TAB.*

Born to Be Wild

Words and Music by Mars Bonfire



Intro
Moderate Rock ♩ = 148

E

mf
w/ dist.

TAB

Verse
E5

1., 3. Get your mo - tor run - nin',
2. See additional lyrics

P.M. -----

head out on the high - way. Look - in' for ad - ven - ture

P.M. ----- P.M. -----

and what - ev - er comes our way.

P.M. -----

Pre-Chorus

G A E

Yeah, dar - lin', go make it hap - pen,

let ring ——— let ring ———

5 3 3 3 4 5 7 5 0 9 7 9 (9) 7 9

2nd time, substitute Fill 1

G A E G A

take the world in a love em - brace. Fire all of your guns

let ring ——— let ring ——— let ring ——— let ring ———

5 3 3 3 4 5 7 5 0 7 5 7 (7) 5 0 5 3 3 3 4 5 7 5

2nd time, substitute Fill 2
3rd time, substitute Fill 3

E G A E5

at once and ex - plode in - to space.

let ring ——— let ring ———

0 9 7 7 9 7 9 7 5 3 3 3 4 5 7 5 7 0

Fill 1

14 12 14 (14) 12

0

Fill 2

grad. release

0 7 5 7 (7)

Fill 3

12 14 12 14 12 14

0 12 14 12

2.

E

Like a true na - ture's child we were

G A G

born, born to be wild. We can climb so high,

E5

I nev - er wan - na die.

Chorus

E5 D5 E5 D5

Born to be wild.

E5 D5 E5 D5 *To Coda*

Born to be wild.

Organ Solo
E5 *Play 3 times*

E7#9 *Play 4 times*

E N.C. *D.S. al Coda (take 2nd ending)*

Coda
Outro
E5 *Play 4 times* E7#9 *Repeat and fade*

Additional Lyrics

2. I like smoke and lightning,
Heavy metal thunder,
Racin' with the wind,
And the feelin' that I'm under.

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HOT GEAR



KEMPER PROFILER STAGE

RRP: \$2,899 • innovativemusic.com.au

The Profiler Stage offers the same features and the legendary sound as the well-known Profiler Head and Rack, and even a bit more. It's a multi-effects powerhouse and state-of-the-art guitar amplifier, featuring Kemper's unique Profiling technology to capture the sonic DNA of any guitar amp. It also comes preloaded with a Profile pool of hundreds of the best guitar amps in the world, created under perfect conditions in professional studios worldwide.

This combination of Profiler and Remote allows you to control, administer and program performances, as well as manage rig switches and complex parameter morphs, all in an unparalleled intuitive manner. The illuminated sunlight-proof display – which increases display contrast even with the sunlight's intensity – is designed to be viewed from any distance, under any lighting conditions. And the housing is built like a tank.

FENDER REFLECTING POOL DELAY & REVERB

RRP: \$599 • fender.com

The relationship between time-based effects, like delay and reverb, is critical to operating them correctly. Fender's new Reflecting Pool delay and reverb pedal combines these two classic effects into one comprehensive chassis, making it easy to integrate into any pedalboard. Utilising cutting-edge DSP for rich and complex algorithms, the Reflecting Pool faithfully recreates classic sounds while also conjuring otherworldly new ones. Type, Variation and Quality controls make it easy to precisely shape your sound, the Time toggle adds rhythmic subdivisions, and the Tap Tempo footswitch makes sure everything stays in time.



FENDER PINWHEEL ROTARY SPEAKER EMULATOR

RRP: \$469 • fender.com

A classic sound achieved with an organ speaker and amplifier, rotary speaker effects have become an integral part of modern music. Featuring three different rotary speaker voices – including Fender's very own Vibratone effect – the Pinwheel makes it easy to add this swirling sound to your tonal toolbox. Switchable Slow and Fast speeds let you spin up the perfect sound for your music, while the onboard Overdrive adds some texture to your tone. The Sensitivity control allows modulation rate changes based on your playing dynamics – dig in and the effect gets more intense.



FENDER MTG:LA TUBE DISTORTION

RRP: \$399 • fender.com

Few things are as satisfying as the real-deal distortion sound of glowing glass. The MTG:LA is a tube distortion pedal based around a genuine, US-made NOS 6205 preamp tube. Tone, Bass, Treble and Tight controls make it easy to shape your sound, while the distinctly Fender footswitchable Boost adds Volume, Gain or both to make your solos stand out.



EARTHQUAKER DEVICES PLUMES OVERDRIVE

RRP: \$189.99 • au.yamaha.com

One of the most important features of the Plumes Small Signal Shredder is that EQD founder Jamie Stillman used it on his own pedalboard for a long time before releasing it for everyone else. Not to say that he hasn't done that with other EarthQuaker designs, because he most certainly has. But this is the case of a designer who wasn't necessarily crazy about a specific circuit, created something that he enjoyed using, and brought the whole thing to another level for everyone else. The use onstage and at band practice is where one can really hear what a pedal is lacking, and which attributes rise to the top. This obsession with testing and refining a circuit into something special is what makes Plumes stand alone in a vast sea of Tube Screamer-style transparent overdrives.



MORLEY 20/20 BAD HORSIE WAH

RRP: \$349 • innovativemusic.com.au

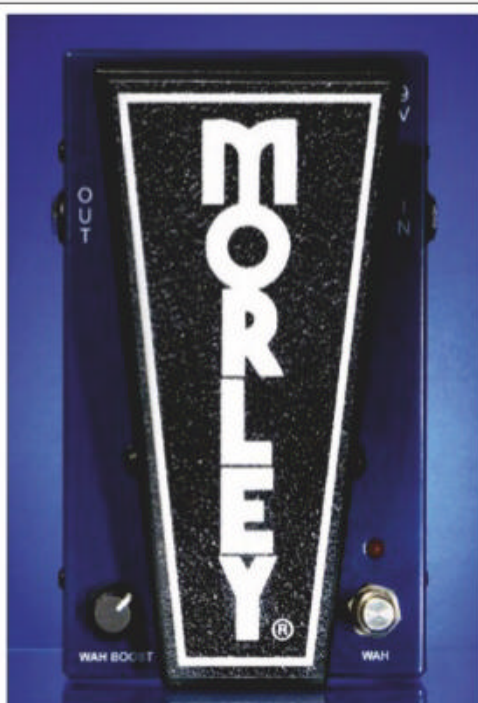
Morley's famous Bad Horsie Wah continues in the now standard pedalboard-friendly size. This little beast is switchless, optical and built like a tank. Plus it includes the new 20/20 Buffer to defend your sound. Try one today and see why it's used by countless professionals.



MORLEY 20/20 POWER WAH VOLUME

RRP: \$329 • innovativemusic.com.au

The Power Wah Volume is the ultimate space-saving combo pedal. You get the classic Morley Power Wah with its vintage tone, wide sweep and 20 decibels of clean boost, plus a smooth audio volume taper. Pedalboards rejoice: your saviour has arrived!



ERNIE BALL EXPRESSION TREMOLO

RRP: \$395 • cmcmusic.com.au

Two years ago, the makers of one of the world's most popular expression pedals expanded that format as the platform for their new series of hands-free effects pedals. We've seen the Expression Overdrive and the Expression Delay thus far, and now we have the Expression Tremolo.

The Expression Tremolo offers instant, foot-controlled expressive capabilities that provide performance options not available on regular switching stompboxes. The Ernie Ball Expression Tremolo is a fully featured tremolo pedal with a versatile set of controls, which includes a smooth sounding DSP spring reverb that greatly expands the Expression Tremolo's wide range of applications.



ERNIE BALL EXPRESSION AMBIENT DELAY

RRP: \$395 • cmcmusic.com.au

The Ernie Ball Ambient Delay provides a hybrid of digital delay layered with plate reverb, for everything from slap-back to extended repeats. It features settings for delay time, delay feedback, reverb level, and a foot-sweepable effect level control to create anything from subtle textures to ambient soundscapes, all without taking your hands off the guitar.

The pedal provides complete signal transparency in the zero position. The sealed aircraft aluminium chassis offers a mechanically and electrically superior experience by protecting internal components from outside elements. Leveraging the 40+ year heritage of Ernie Ball's volume pedal, the usability, easy-access controls, and no-slip grip have been incorporated and modernised.



SINGULAR SOUNDS AEROS LOOP STUDIO

RRP: \$1,199 • innovativemusic.com.au

Featuring the ability to create 36 unique loops per song, add unlimited overdubs for each loop, and record up to 48 hours (when using an SD card) of content, the Aeros loop studio goes beyond what's expected of a looper pedal. Blurring the lines between traditional loopers and audio workstations, the Aeros allows you to mix your tracks live during a performance using the built-in scroll wheel, and gives the ability to save and export songs. This will let you share your best loops with your fans.

With its 4.3-inch touchscreen and color-coded cues and waveforms, the Aeros looper will never leave you wondering where you are in the loop. Additionally, the Aeros packs tons of power into a small form factor. Coming in at just 7.8 by 5.6 inches, the Aeros lets you add a six-track stereo looper to any pedalboard. Plus, the Aeros fully compatible with Singular Sounds' drummer pedal, the BeatBuddy. Using the two together is a plug and play experience.



FENDER AMERICAN ACOUSTASONIC TELECASTER

RRP: \$3,599 • fender.com

The American Acoustasonic Telecaster embodies the spirit of purposeful innovation that Fender was built on. From acoustic shapeshifting to electric rhythm tones, this powerful guitar uses a revolutionary Fender and Fishman-designed Acoustic Engine to deliver new sonic expression from the studio to the stage.



TWO NOTES TORPEDO C.A.B. M

RRP: \$549

innovativemusic.com.au

The Torpedo C.A.B. M takes Two Notes' acclaimed cabinet emulation technology and packs it into a pedalboard-friendly enclosure. Thanks to this speaker cabinet emulator pedal, you can bypass your guitar or bass amplifier's cabinet while preserving every ounce of your tone and spatial dimension. This pedal is loaded right out of the box - you get 32 guitar and bass cabinets, eight power amplifiers, eight microphones, and eight rooms. And it sounds great, by virtue of 24-bit (or 96 kilohertz) processing. Besides the stellar onboard emulations, the Two Notes Torpedo C.A.B. M is also compatible with third-party IRs - you can even create your own! If you're searching for an effective way to create a portable, amp-free guitar rig, the Torpedo C.A.B. M delivers top-shelf results.



STERLING BY MUSIC MAN ALBERT LEE SIGNATURE

RRP: \$995 • cmcmusic.com.au

With its unique "retro-modern" offset design, the Sterling by Music Man Albert Lee Signature model is one versatile instrument. It has a lightweight African mahogany body, two Humbuckers wired to five-way switching, a 25.5-inch scale and a full-floating Vintage Tremolo.

Dual Sterling by Music Man four-conductor humbuckers (each wired to a bespoke five-way switch) deliver a full range of tonal options, from full-on humbucker thickness to shimmer, clean, single-coil bite.

Music Man's first signature model by Albert Lee, and their first artist-designed model in the SUB Series, the AL40 gives a retro, yet fresh look with its offset body styling and vintage accoutrements.



YAMAHA REVSTAR RS702B

RRP: \$1,399 • au.yamaha.com

Inspired by the 1974 Yamaha Super Flighter guitar, the RS702B Revstar solidbody electric guitar combines distinctive looks with cutting tone. The mahogany body and maple top are contoured for gigging comfort, while the Revstar neck profile and jumbo frets deliver smooth, precise playability. A pair of Yamaha YGD Custom Alnico V P-90 single-coil pickups serves up a wide tonal range, further

enhanced by the push-pull dry switch that enables single-coil-like tones. The guitar is also equipped with a Bigsby B50 vibrato tailpiece for old-school pitch expression. With excellent craftsmanship, distinguished tone, and great playability, the Yamaha RS702B Revstar is an outstanding instrument in its class, for newcomers to the guitar and virtuosos alike.





ALVAREZ AD30CE

RRP: \$649.99 • daddario.com

The Alvarez AD30CE is a great starting point for anyone entering into the world of steel-string acoustic guitar. Whether you plug in and play to a stadium or just yourself in your bedroom, this will do it all. With a solid spruce top, the AD30CE is going to sound great and last forever and a day. The Alvarez Artist Series is designed to produce a tone and player experience rarely found in affordable instruments. These features include the FST2M bracing system, bi-level bridge, real bone nut and great quality tonewoods. The sound is warm, open and powerful, and both the treble and bass registers are clearly present and balanced in relation to each other. These guitars feel right, are exciting to play, and are immediately responsive. Dig in and they shout right back at you, but treat them gently and they whisper and respond instantly to the lightest strum or pick.



FENDER BRITT DANIEL THINLINE TELECASTER

RRP: \$3,649 • fender.com

Britt Daniel's slashing precision-punk guitar style has helped fuel Spoon's 20+ year career - from local Austin clubs to sold-out arenas around the world. Stunning in a custom Amarillo Gold lacquer finish, the Britt Daniel Tele Thinline's lightweight semi-hollow ash body resonates sweetly, while sacrificing none of the Telecaster's signature steely clarity - all thanks to its Fender Custom Shop pickups and an S-1 switch that allows you to change instantly between series and parallel pickup wiring. The single-piece 'Deep C' maple neck shape fits comfortably in the hand, and the 9.5-inch-radius fingerboard and medium-jumbo frets allow for fast playing and choke-free bending. Other features include Fender ClassicGear tuning machines, electrosocket output jack and an Elite molded hardshell case.



MUSIC MAN AXIS

RRP: \$4,250+ • cmcmusic.com.au

The Ernie Ball Music Man Axis is a staple in guitar rigs all over the world. And thanks to Music Man's finish, their high performance is perfectly matched by their collector-grade looks. The Axis' gorgeous top sits on a resonant and lightweight basswood body. Its maple neck is legendary for its ability to fill the hand while also promoting blistering-fast technical playing. And thanks to a set of DiMarzio custom humbuckers - with simple three-way toggle and single volume control - along with a vintage-style tremolo, this guitar is ready for a wide variety of tones and styles. The Axis comes equipped with first-class hardware, including Schaller tuners and an Ernie Ball Music Man vintage-style tremolo. All the while, a pair of DiMarzio custom humbuckers packs this Axis with countless genre-breaking voicings.



FAITH NOMAD SERIES

RRP: \$995 • cmcmusic.com.au

Small-scale powerhouses with a scale of 590 millimetres, the Faith Nomad models are designed for those players who want and need to travel frequently with their guitar, but don't want to compromise on sound quality. You're off camping for the weekend with some friends and you don't want to take your main guitar? Well, the Nomad is for you! Or perhaps you just want a physically smaller guitar because you find them easier to handle, or like the way they sound. Whatever your reasons for choosing a Nomad Travel Guitar, you can be confident that you're not compromising on anything, as the Faith Nomad models are still made of all-solid tonewoods - just like their bigger siblings. They're made in just the same way as other Faith Guitars too, so you can sure of a great tone and an instrument that will mature over time, always improving.



FAITH BLOOD MOON VENUS

RRP: \$2,095 • cmcmusic.com.au

Faith Blood Moon Acoustic Guitars are strikingly beautiful instruments which use only the finest, figured solid Javanese trembesi for the top, back and sides. With an appearance not unlike Hawaiian koa, a solid trembesi instrument reacts similarly to mahogany, delivering warmth and balance across the strings, but with an extra little rosewood-esque sparkle at the top end.

Each guitar has its own distinct figuring - some with straight, pronounced verticle grains, some with horizontal 'flaming', and even some with a combination of the two. But regardless of the individual figuring of each model, you can rest assured knowing the tone will be wonderful, and the appearance truly unique.

The Venus Blood Moon includes the legendary Fishman INK3 preamp as standard with an undersaddle pickup for full-range amplification of its award-winning tone.



FENDER ALTERNATE REALITY TENOR TELE

RRP: \$949 • [fender.com](https://www.fender.com)

A modern take on the classic four-string tenor guitar, this Tele has a huge sound that belies its small size. Tuned to the same pitches as the top four strings of a six-string – or any of a number of alternate tunings – guitar players will feel right at home on this fun-to-play Telecaster.



SCHECTER C-6 PRO FR AURORA BURST

RRP: \$1,599.99 • [daddario.com](https://www.daddario.com)

Equipped with custom Diamond Decimator pickups, the Schechter C-6 Pro offers players the very best in precision guitar construction from the company that defined the term.

Built with a Beautiful mahogany body and maple neck, the C-6 Pro comes with a carbon fibre truss rod running through it, so you can never claim that it's spineless! 24 jumbo frets make playing with speed easier and more fluid than ever, giving you full access up and down the neck. There's also a three-way switch on deck to control your output and tone while on the go.

With a stunning Aurora Burst finish, the C-6 Pro is bound to cause a stir in whatever scene you place it. This dark, edgy shred monster is a truly one-of-a-kind instrument, fusing playability, hardware quality and gorgeousness all in one delightfully devilish package.

SQUIER CONTEMPORARY ACTIVE JAZZMASTER HH ST

RRP: \$849 • [fender.com](https://www.fender.com)

True to the Jazzmaster's tradition of smashing rules, the Squier Contemporary Active Jazzmaster is packed with audacious new features. Sporting a matching headstock for a sleek aesthetic and black chrome hardware for a stealthy vibe, this guitar looks every last bit as sinister as it sounds. Blending its sharp appearance with a bevy of player-centric features, this here is a trailblazing rendition of a Fender classic. It features a slim and fast 'C'-shaped neck with a 12-inch fingerboard radius – ideal for speed and effortless bends – while an adjustable bridge with stopbar tailpiece provides optimal stability, even in drop tunings.



YAMAHA FG-TA TRANSACOUSTIC DREADNAUGHT

RRP: \$799 • [au.yamaha.com](https://www.au.yamaha.com)

The Yamaha TransAcoustic Guitar recreates the incredible experience of live strumming without needing any external amplification or effects – just pick up and start noodling away. It's the most inspiring, engaging acoustic guitar you'll have ever played.



YAMAHA FS-TA TRANSACOUSTIC CONCERT GUITAR

RRP: \$799 • [au.yamaha.com](https://www.au.yamaha.com)

The Yamaha TransAcoustic Guitar recreates the incredible experience of live strumming without needing any external amplification or effects – just pick up and start noodling away. It's the most inspiring, engaging acoustic guitar you'll have ever played.

STERLING BY MUSIC MAN AXIS

RRP: \$895 • [cmcmusic.com.au](https://www.cmcmusic.com.au)

The Axis AX3 borrows the classic single-cutaway body style of Music Man's Axis guitars. An original, classic design that is familiar to all fans of great guitars. The SUB Series version uses a solid hardwood body topped with a bound quilt maple image top. The neck and body are mated with the same five-bolt neck joint found on the Silo3, sculpted and contoured for a super comfortable joint that allows easy access to the upper register.

The Asymmetrical neck carve on AX3 is sublime, and has plenty of girth for grip while remaining thin enough for easy playability. The 25.5-inch scale maple neck and fingerboard has 22 medium sized frets, and is super easy to play. The neck is seamlessly integrated onto the body. Two high-output Zebra coil humbucking pickups are directly mounted to the body. The special wiring of these pickups offer five distinct, versatile tones via the five-way selector switch. Different combinations yield everything from chicken pickin' single-coil tones to huge, throaty humbucking rock tones. No matter what you're looking for, the Axis AX3 has it all there in one guitar.





YAMAHA FG RED LABEL ACOUSTIC SERIES

RRP: \$1,299 • au.yamaha.com

Inspired by their iconic guitars of the 1960s, Yamaha's new series of FG Red Label folk guitars blend modern inspiration with a timeless design. Featuring a classic semi-gloss finish and high-quality components, these guitars capture an authentic vintage aesthetic. The mahogany back and sides are paired with a premium Sitka spruce top, which is professionally treated with Yamaha's Acoustic Resonance Enhancement process for genuine aged-wood tone and sustain. With a new scalloped-bracing design that delivers plenty of volume, the Red Label series features a wide range of all-acoustic models, as well as models with Yamaha's new three-way Atmosfeel pickup system, which provides a natural acoustic sound when amplified.

QSC CP8 ACTIVE LOUDSPEAKER

RRP: \$849 • tag.com.au

Compact, sleek and powerful, the QSC CP8 is the perfect powered speaker for the musician on the go. With 1,000 watts of power (thanks to a lightweight Class D amplifier) and a number of preset contours, the CP8 is incredibly dynamic and suited for a wide range of applications. With two mic/line inputs and an aux input, the CP8 is ideal for buskers in need of a single box PA. The box also doubles as a floor monitor or an amplifier for those using modellers as the core of the rig.



EV EVOLVE 50 PORTABLE COLUMN SYSTEM

RRP: \$2,728 • jands.com.au

The EVOLVE 50 Portable Column System is a three-component loudspeaker system powered by a 1,000-watt Class-D amplifier and driven by Electro-Voice's QuickSmart DSP. The system consists of a wooden, ported and powered enclosure that houses a 12-inch subwoofer capable of a functional frequency output down to 37 hertz.



KRK ROKIT 5 G4

RRP: \$299 • jands.com.au

The new 5-inch KRK ROKIT RP5 G4 bi-amp professional monitor takes music and sound creativity to a whole new level. A DSP-driven Graphic EQ (with 25 settings) helps condition your acoustic environment, while offering new levels of versatility in a studio monitor. Matching drivers made with Kevlar ensures the same sonic integrity across all frequencies. A new scientifically designed speaker enclosure and front-firing port offer exceptional low-end extension and accuracy, punch and flexible room-positioning. And the new powerful, yet efficient custom Class D power amplifier drives the speakers evenly and more efficiently at reduced operating temperatures, and improves audio integrity.



FENDER '62 PRINCETON CHRIS STAPLETON

RRP: \$3,299 • fender.com

The brown '62 Princeton amp's sensitivity and smooth organic tremolo made it a longtime studio favorite for Grammy-winning country artist Chris Stapleton. This hand-wired special edition combines the classic 6G2 circuit with Stapleton's favorite features and personally chosen aesthetic touches. This 12-watt combo features Fender Vintage Blue tone caps, Schumacher transformers, an upgraded 12-inch Eminence CS speaker, and an output tube-biased tremolo circuit. The acoustically resonant, solid pine cabinet wears rough, textured vinyl covering, wheat grille cloth and a thick, dark brown leather handle, while the dark brown control panel sports dark brown "radio" knobs and the rear panel features an engraved brass plate with Chris Stapleton's signature.



LINE 6 SPIDER V 60R

RRP: \$599.99 • au.yamaha.com

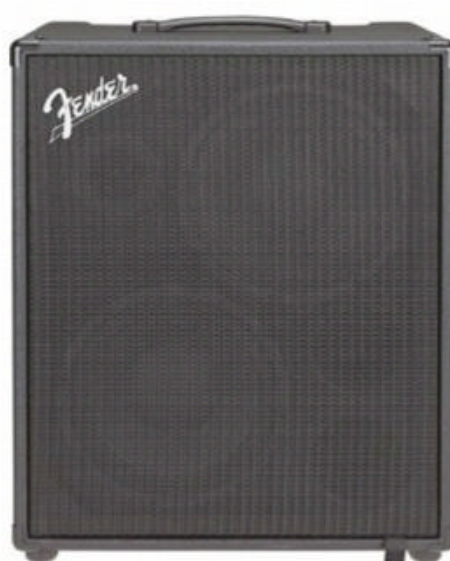
Featuring amazing guitar amp and effects modeling, an easy-to-use design, and a full-range speaker configuration, the Spider V60R is packed with the innovative features that modern guitarists crave. More than 200 amps, cabs and effects give you an incredible sonic arsenal to define your sound. Innovative color-coded controls make it fast and easy to craft your tone to perfection, and the incredible full-range speaker system delivers your modeled tones with incredible depth and clarity.

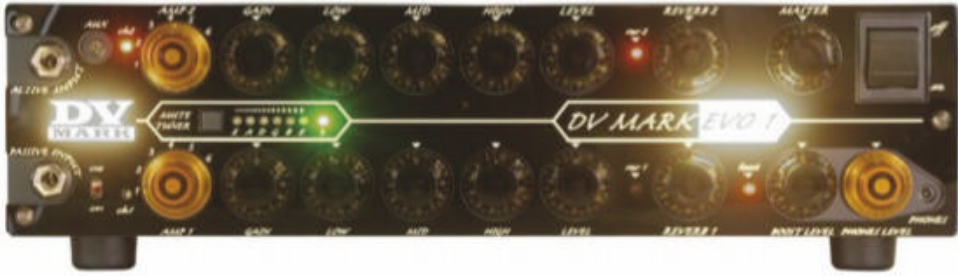


FENDER RUMBLE STAGE 800

RRP: \$1,199 • fender.com

A world leader in tone and build quality, the Fender Rumble Stage 800 makes it easy to explore contemporary sounds and update your palette for an unfathomably huge range of new sonic possibilities. Create your own sound, or get inspired with over 15 amp models and 40 effects – all of which are controllable via Bluetooth and the exclusive Fender Tone app.





DV MARK EVO 1

RRP: \$1,695 • cmcmusic.com.au

The DV MARK EVO 1 is 12 amps in one – and more – offering six unique amp choices for each of its two channels along with a host of other useful options, all updatable via a simple download or patch swap.

On each channel, you'll find reverb, speaker emulators, MIDI, an onboard tuner, aux in and headphone out, two serial FX loops, XLR Line Out, Boost, and a powerful 250-watt MPT (Mark Proprietary Technology) power amp with a warm tone and unmatched dynamics.

The 12 amp options available provide choices of clean, crunch and lead tones. The Boost function on each channel gives you a dynamically responsive boost of up to 12 decibels for punching your sound up during solos. The tuner function also incorporates automatic muting for live work. The optional DV Mark EVO 1 controller can be used to access channel switching, Rev1 and Rev2 on/off options, Boost, and Tuner with Mute features. The EVO 1 can also be controlled via any programmable MIDI pedalboard.



DV MARK MARAGOLD

RRP: \$1,750 • cmcmusic.com.au

Master guitarist Greg Howe (who you might know from his work with Michael Jackson, Christina Aguilera, Rihanna, Justin Timberlake and many others) and Italian amplification manufacturer DV Mark have teamed up to design Greg's dream head: the Maragold. Named after Greg's band, this two-channel, 40-watt, all-valve head uses three ECC83s to feed two EL34s and an ECC83 in the power stage.

But what gives it the headroom Greg needs for sparkling cleans and dynamic distortion at any level? That would be the oversized transformer packed into its compact chassis – no pumping or limiting as you crank up the gain, just endless clarity and dynamics. “My best performances happen I'm inspired, Howe says. “The Maragold delivers more than just amazing tone – it delivers inspiration!”



MARKBASS LITTLE MARK VINTAGE

RRP: \$1,995 • cmcmusic.com.au

Markbass have finally taken everything they've ever learned about bass amplification, combined that knowledge with the feedback they've received every day for the last 18 years (from artists and players around the globe), and executed a brand new bass amp design that will let every player achieve their own unique 'voice' – no matter what style of music they are into.

The Little Mark Vintage is a part of the new Gold Series from Markbass – a state-of-the-art range of amps that offer superior quality thanks to the use of ultra high-quality components and proprietary Markbass technology, all of which is underpinned by premium gold plated circuitry. If bass guitar is the name of the game, the Little Mark Vintage offers your best bet to win.



YAMAHA THR10II

RRP: \$499.99 • au.yamaha.com

Guitarists are all familiar with tube amp stacks that sound amazing when turned up loud on a big stage, and combo amps that are a perfect fit for smaller venues and rehearsal. The THR ignores the convention that a practice amp should simply be a smaller version of a larger amplifier, creating a new 'third amp' category designed around what players need when they're playing at home.

Yamaha's patented Virtual Circuitry Modeling (VCM) technology simulates each circuit down to the component level. By modelling these components and the interactions between them, VCM realistically recreates the nuances that give boutique tube amplifiers their unique sound and feel. All THR-II models feature Bluetooth connectivity for audio playback, the “THR Remote” mobile editor app, and third-party footswitch support.

VOX AC30 ONETWELVE

RRP: \$1,199
au.yamaha.com

The VOX AC30 has been an integral component of rock 'n' roll since the 1960s. Its peerless and unique sound continues to amaze and inspire players to this day. The AC30 OneTwelve delivers the full-fledged experience of the classic AC30, but in a more stripped-down and straightforward way.

Its single channel design is based on the revered Top Boost channel of the AC30 – the source of some the most famous riffs in rock history. This unique, touch-sensitive circuit delivers a wide range of tones, from chimy clean to rich overdrive. The AC30 OneTwelve also features a studio-quality digital reverb, an effects send/return for pairing with your favorite pedals, and an external speaker output for pairing with other speaker cabinets. This all-new AC30 represents the evolution of an iconic sound, pairing legendary VOX tones with a simple, modern approach to amplifier design.



ALLEN & HEATH ZEDI8

RRP: \$299 • tag.com.au

The ZEDi-8 gives musicians, recording artists and venues the ruggedness and hands-on control of an analogue mixer, paired with the versatility and convenience of a two-by-two USB interface. Whether it's bouncing ideas around at home, performing live or recording tracks to share on YouTube and Soundcloud, the ZEDi-8 is a versatile companion for every step of the creative journey.

Featuring the new GSPre boutique preamp design – developed from the revered GS-R24 studio recording console – the ZEDi-8 boasts exceptionally low noise and massive headroom, with a signature analogue warmth and depth. Guitarists will be pleased to know that each ZEDi-8 comes with a pair of Guitar DI high impedance inputs, allowing guitars to be plugged straight into the mixer without the hassle and expense of carrying separate DI boxes.





AUDIO TECHNICA ATH-M50xBT HEADPHONES

RRP: \$379 • tag.com.au

The ATH-M50xBT harnesses the legendary M50x studio sound for an exhilarating wireless listening experience, with exceptional clarity and deep, accurate bass response. Utilising Bluetooth wireless technology and 45-millimetre large-aperture drivers with rare-earth magnets and copper-clad aluminum wire voice coils, the ATH-M50xBT brings the coveted sonic signature of M50x to a wireless, on-the-go design. In addition, the ATH-M50xBT is compatible with the Audio-Technica Connect app for iOS and Android, which provides an array of convenient tools and features.

FOCUSRITE SCARLETT 2i2

RRP: \$289
innovativemusic.com.au



The most popular audio interface for artists across all genres, the third-generation Scarlett 2i2 provides two mic/line/instrument inputs, allowing for simultaneous recording and playback of up to two channels with independently controllable headphone and monitor outputs. The 2i2 features two upgraded third-generation Scarlett mic preamps with an optional Air setting to reproduce the effect of Focusrite's original ISA mic preamp, giving your vocal and acoustic recordings a brighter and more open sound. Equipped with high performance 24-bit (192 kilohertz) AD-DA converters, Scarlett guarantees the same professional sound quality throughout the entire third-generation range.

LINE 6 RELAY G10S

RRP: \$499.99 • au.yamaha.com

The Relay G10S is a compact instrument wireless system that frees guitarists and bassists to move around the stage untethered. The G10S features a rugged metal stompbox receiver that easily integrates into a pedalboard, as well as simple plug-and-play operation. The unit immediately locates and locks onto the strongest available wireless frequency as soon as the transmitter is docked in the receiver. The Relay G10S provides pristine 24-bit audio quality, free from dropouts and interference, and has an impressive 130-degree line-of-site range.



SHURE PORTABLE VIDEOGRAPHY KIT

RRP: \$549 • jands.com.au

The Shure Portable Videography Kit is your new go-to professional recording rig. This kit includes the MV88+ Video Kit, SE215 earphones to take care of your monitoring needs, and an AMV88-Fur Windjammer to reduce unwanted wind noise when recording outdoors.



BLACK DIAMOND X JIMI HENDRIX FOUNDATION "MUSIC FOR LIFE" STRINGS

RRP: \$17.99+ • jvbstrings.com

Long before every wide-eyed guitarist yearned to get their fingers plucking whatever strings would come for free in their endorsement package, it was up to them to find a string that suited their unique sound and style. Jimi Hendrix swore by his trusty set of Black Diamond wires, twiddling with them day and night and, in the process, coming up with some of the most iconic licks in the guitar's history. Now, Black Diamond have teamed up with the Jimi Hendrix Foundation's "Music For Life" program to debut a new line of bespoke strings. Available in three distinct configurations, the line aims to deliver the classic tonality and inimitable quality that Hendrix himself swooned over all those decades ago, all the while contributing to a great cause. All three sets are available in extra light, light, and medium gauges.



ERNIE BALL AXIS UNIVERSAL CAPO

RRP: \$29.95 • cmcmusic.com.au

The Ernie Ball Axis Capo features a quick and easy clamp-and-release design that facilitates fast, single-handed changes when needed. It also has a dual-radius design that allows it to adapt to flat or curved fretboards, which makes for buzz-free operation on six- or seven-string electric and acoustic guitars. The Axis comes in four bold finishes: black, silver, bronze and gold.



ERNIE BALL FLEXTUNE CLIP-ON TUNER

RRP: \$52.95 • cmcmusic.com.au

The Ernie Ball FlexTune is a remarkably high-quality, portable tuner suitable for guitar, bass and other stringed instruments. Featuring an oversized two-inch LCD screen, the FlexTune provides a large and vibrant display that's easy to read from any angle. This large screen is complemented by the tuner's dual-axis 360-degree pivot arm for complete flexibility to position the display to your liking. The FlexTune also features Chromatic, Guitar, Bass, Ukulele and Violin tuning modes, as well as selectable clip and microphone sensors.



G&G DELUXE HARDSHELL CASES

RRP: \$440 • fender.com

G&G has been manufacturing cases to protect valued Fender instruments during transport and storage since 1952. This three-ply wooden hardshell case sports hide leather end caps for extra protection against knocks, while the bonded, leather-wrapped handle is easy to grip and won't degrade when exposed to weather. Not only will this case protect your Strat or Tele with authentic style - the padded interior and velvet plush interior lining will keep it scratch and damage-free. The convenient storage compartments for accessories ensure you'll always have strings, picks, straps and more easily accessible.



ERNE BALL POWER PEG PEGWINDER

RRP: \$49.95 • cmcmusic.com.au

The Ernie Ball Power Peg is the first of its kind – a self-contained, motorised pegwinder that allows you to restring your instrument up to 70 percent faster than traditional manual pegwinders. The Power Peg is powered by four AA batteries (not included) and features a proprietary universal peg head that fits virtually all bass, acoustic and electric guitar tuning machines.



FENDER STRAT AND TELE BODY BOOKENDS

RRP: \$95 • fender.com

Amp up your personal workspace with stylish Fender décor, and keep your library upright with bookends from the company that wrote the book on cool. Each set of bookends is crafted from the same materials used to build Fender's legendary guitars at their Corona, California facility.

FENDER STRAT AND TELE CUTTING BOARDS

RRP: \$55 • fender.com

Complete your kitchen collection with this cutting board inspired by Fender's timeless guitar designs. Each one is crafted from 100 percent natural bamboo, sporting idiosyncratic knots and color variations for unique aesthetic appeal. This simple gift is perfect for any Fender fan looking to get their chops together.



GRUV GEAR GIGBLADE SILVER INSTRUMENT BAGS

RRP: \$225 • cmcmusic.com.au

Meet the new standard in slim and lightweight gig bags. The GigBlade Silver is a slice of the original, but still a cut above the rest. Continuing with the side-carry convenience of the GigBlade, the Silver introduces a patented invisible 'yin-yang' neck brace that secures your instrument automatically when closing the bag. It's smart, quick, and über cool – and not to mention, strong as hell. Stay nimble and gig-ready across town and around the world with the new GigBlade Silver.



ERNE BALL INSTRUMENT CABLES

RRP: \$27.95+ • cmcmusic.com.au

Ernie Ball instrument, patch, speaker and microphone cables feature a high-quality design, and are made with superior components that are built to last. Dual conductors deliver reliably clear tone with crisp highs, tight mids and rich harmonics. Multiple shielding materials preserve the signal with low handling noise, and on the range of braided cables, the braided exterior provides a perfectly tangle-resistant experience. Ernie Ball instrument cables are available in a range of PVC, coiled and braided formats, with straight to straight, straight to angle, and angle to angle options. Lengths vary from 15 centimetres all the way up to nine metres.



FENDER CUSTOM SHOP TOOL KIT BY CRUZTOOLS

RRP: \$145 • fender.com

Every musician needs a basic tool kit for setting up and adjusting electric guitars and basses. The Fender Custom Shop Tool Kit makes it simple with a convenient collection of the most essential and commonly used tools, specifically designed for electric instruments. This kit contains all the basics for most minor adjustments, including a five-in-one screwdriver with a special four-millimetre hex adapter for truss rod adjustments, telescopic adjustment mirror, ruler, diagonal cutter, capo, feeler gauges, and string winder. These are the same high-quality setup tools used by the pros, and everything is stored in a convenient polyester pouch that fits easily in your case or gig bag.



FENDER LADIES PAISLEY FADE T-SHIRT

RRP: \$35 • fender.com

Nothing beats the feel and style of a Fender, and the same goes for this 100 percent soft cotton ladies t-shirt. Stay casual and comfortable in this purple v-neck tee, which features a paisley Strat graphic rendered in warm, California-inspired colors. Capture the West Coast vibe of Fender's legendary guitars with this staple of any music lover's wardrobe.





ROBERT MACMILLAN



DANIEL BRAUCHLI

DELORAINE STRINGFEST 2020

IN APRIL 2020, THE TASMANIAN TOWN OF DELORAINE COMES ALIVE WITH LUTHIERS, WOOD SUPPLIERS AND MUSICIANS FROM THE APPLE ISLE. HERE'S A SNEAK PEEK.

**WORDS BY
PETER HODGSON**

Luthiers know that some of the world's finest tonewoods for the guitar come from Australia's oft-ignored haven of Tasmania. Tasmanian blackwood is particularly revered, but the entire state is home to beautiful tonewoods salvaged or sustainably harvested by local professionals that are fascinated with the art and craft of guitar-making - and with a great respect for the land.

And while many of those timbers find their way into guitars the world over, many stay right at home in Tasmania to be crafted into instruments by Tasmanian luthiers and played onstage by Tasmanian players. Stringfest is a celebration of those Tasmanian timbers, luthiers and music, taking place in the town of Deloraine from April 17th to the 29th. Artistic director Nick Weare has a resume packed with work in the arts: he's worked at the Film and Sound Archive, in radio and in the music industry for most of his life (and is a heck of a photographer too). Weare founded the festival to celebrate the people of the Tasmanian music community just as much as the music and instruments the community produces.

The best way for *Australian Guitar* to get a feel for this before the actual festival was to spend a few days driving around Tasmania with Weare and fellow journalist Michael Smith, meeting the folks who are making it all happen. Here are a few of them...

ROBERT MACMILLAN

Owner of Tasmanian Tonewoods, Robert MacMillan has worked with timber for over 50 years, operating a timber salvage business supplying wood for customers worldwide - and if you hit up the gallery on their website, you'll see an impressive client list including Warwick, Peter Combe, Tarrant Guitars, Rizzolo Guitars, Taylor, and - soon, at least - Fender, who recently placed an order for a run of 50 Fender Custom Shop Telecasters featuring Bob's Tasmanian blackwood.

"I've got a lot of wood," MacMillan says. "Enough to give you a woody. A lot of clients love Tasmanian blackwood because it's a relative of koa - they're both acacias - and koa comes from Hawaii. It's a beautiful timber. Think about it: Hawaii, warm climate. Tasmania, cold climate. So it's slower-growing and denser."

MacMillan's not as fast on his feet as he used to be, as he battles arthritis, so he's brought in boatmaker Matt Stevens to help out one day a week for the heavy lifting. "This guy has saved my f***ing life," MacMillan says. "People say to me, 'Why don't you go to the Men's Sheds and find an old bloke to help ya?' I said, 'No way, this guy is so good!' He's amazing. I'm going to leave him five million dollars in my will."

MacMillan picks out a prime piece of wood earmarked for a mandolin supplier, and has Stevens demonstrate the sheer precision needed to run off a piece of timber intended for high-end instrument sales. Believe it or not, some instruments featuring MacMillan's woods have sold for up to \$25,000. Before we leave, Stevens shows us a Telecaster-style guitar he made for his sister, featuring woods from MacMillan. It's a gorgeous guitar, and methinks Matt Stevens will be one luthier to keep an eye on in the not-too-distant future.

DANIEL BRAUCHLI

Alaskan-born Daniel Brauchli is another luthier



making incredible Weissenborn-style instruments – but that’s just one element of an extremely refined, world-class approach to luthiery incorporating things like carbon/wood composite braces, locked-bridge designs to reduce phase cancellation and increase dynamic range, and a unique technique where the sides of an instrument are shaped to fit around the top, eliminating the need for binding and giving the instrument a more sculpted feel.

Brauchli approaches the guitar as a sensitive, ultra light speaker box. His website is a virtual encyclopedia of his research, findings and theories on sound, and his instruments are made from Tasmanian timbers such as blackwood, eucalyptus, King Billy pine and western red cedar.

Among the instruments Brauchli shows us on our visit are an acoustic bass with the most impressive low-frequency projection we’ve ever heard in anything smaller than a double-bass, a mini guitar that sounds massive, and an instrument that appears very close to his heart: the cittern guitar. Inspired by the early English guitar, the cittern guitar is a teardrop-shaped instrument (the balance means you have to play it with a strap) with an extremely pure, dynamic, three-dimensional sound. It’s hard to describe in words, but it’s almost like if an acoustic guitar was a female vocalist: the sound isn’t as bassy as a guitar, and yet the frequencies that it does project are utterly haunting.

“The cittern was basically an Irish bouzouki with extra strings,” Brauchli says. “It was originally a medieval instrument, and it was like a real folk instrument in the sense that it was very accessible. But one of the problems with citterns was that they became so accessible, brothels used to have them in the waiting rooms! So then they got a bad reputation with people. But it existed in lots of forms. I don’t know at what point the guitarra – the double-bout instrument that led to the guitars we know – came about, but the idea with that type of design is that they really were two chambers with the sound hole separating them.

“The good reason for a double-bout instruments is that there’s a smaller sound hole, but the body is bigger, so it changes the ratio of body to sound hole. Whereas with my cittern guitar, the ratio of the body size *is* the sound hole size. So all I’m throwing away is the body frequency. And it’s only a tiny difference. Once you get used to that shape, it’s awesome! The 12th fret is way past where the neck joins the body. And once you get used to the shape, it just makes so much sense.”

BILLY TARRANT

Billy Tarrant of Tarrant Guitars is well known for his Weissenborn-style guitars, but he’s also a great luthier of acoustic and electric guitars, and a well-known repairer. Some of his work comes from some of Tasmania’s more enthusiastic, but not necessarily ready-for-primetime luthiers, who need a little extra help to in making their instruments reach their full potential.

“About 11 years ago,” Tarrant explains, “I was running a fish farm in Victoria, and I had this silly idea that I’d combine woodworking and music and make a guitar. I researched it and realised it was the silliest idea I’d ever had – nobody makes any money out of it, but I just had to try it. That was 11 years ago, and I haven’t stopped yet! I still haven’t got it out of my system. The first guitar I made was an acoustic, which I thought was the best guitar on the planet until I met another guitar maker who pointed out all the things I could improve on. People are getting more of an appreciation for handcrafted stuff. They want things they can’t get anywhere else; something that’s just for them.”

On the day we visit, Tassie blues artist Gnarly Burl drops by to pick up his brand new Tarrant multiscale acoustic guitar – a fine complement to his existing stable of Tarrants. “I’d always been a singer, but I didn’t pick the guitar up until my 20s,” Burl says. “And the first guitar Billy made me changed my life.”

Tarrant’s right-hand man Trent McCarthy (An “electronics guru and rock god,” as Tarrant describes

him) is doing some work on his own SG, bringing its pickups back to factory spec after various mods and experiments over the years. If you’re in Tasmania – even if you’re there on tour – he’s the guy you want to call for your setup and tech work. The dude really knows his stuff – as evidenced by the extremely geeky conversation we had about pickups, pickup covers, neck profiles, bridges, Gibsons and Ibanezes... Y’know, guitar nerd talk. Good guy.

STUART PHILLIPS

Stuart Phillips of String Worx Custom Guitars isn’t a guitarist himself, but as a skilled woodworker and model maker with an inquisitive mind, he’s crammed his head full of knowledge about what makes a guitar great and what makes a guitarist want to play it. He’s a devotee of the Leo Fender school of ‘listen to the players’. And so although he makes exceptional electric guitars, he’s currently run off his feet with orders for cigar box guitars. Phillips’ cigar box guitars are effortlessly playable, and some incorporate resonators and mini humbucking pickups for a real down-and-dirty bluesy sound.

Phillips is a big fan of Tasmanian tonewoods, and as the industry evolves, so too does his wood sources. “Tasmanian sassafras grows in the south-west, and the dark staining in it is the result of the fresh water getting in where a branch has broken off,” he informs us. “An old second- or third-generation logger told me the guys used to go out into the rainforest looking for celery pine, a furniture timber, and they’d use the sassafras trees as a lookout.

“They’d put a notch in it, put a plank in and climb it, so they’d be able to tell their team, ‘There’s a celery pine 100 feet that way, and another one 50 feet that way.’ And now they’re going back for the sassafras with the notches in it, because the water has gotten in over the years and the stain is beautiful. The stain is actually the death of the tree; it’s the rot, but if it’s milled and tried in time, it’s a spectacular timber.”

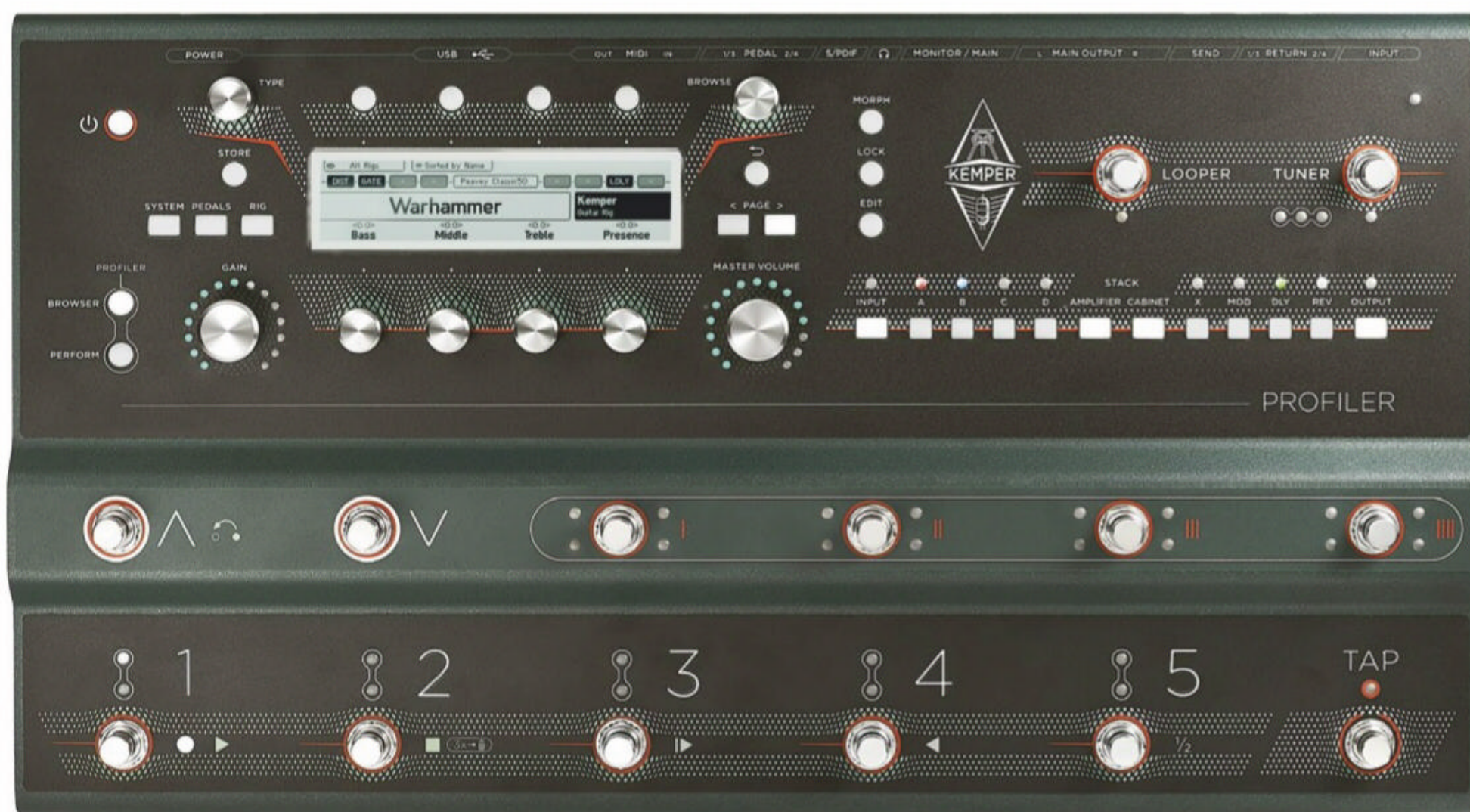
AUSTRALIAN
guitar

SHOOT OUT

FLOOR-BASED MULTI-EFFECT UNITS

The floor-based multi-effects family is a much misunderstood part of the wider guitar tribe. Starting to play and attend shows at the turn of the millennium, I can understand why. In the days before the boutique pedal and tube amp renaissance, many guitarists and bassists proudly owned these cumbersome units that gave one access to a seemingly endless library of fizzy distortion and novelty modulation effects. Lots of my guitar mates now look back on these rudimentary multi-effects units (mostly models of the Zoom and Boss ilk) as a humorous relics, conjuring up the two-note riffs we used to mosh to at teenage matinee metal shows while trying to not get roughed up by some guy with cargo shorts and a ponytail.

While the sound might have left much to be desired, the basic concept behind these old pieces of gear was solid: it was something versatile, portable and – hopefully – affordable. These days, multi-effects units aren't the only game in town for players on a budget (or teenagers in garages). This competition has been a blessing, because it's meant that the companies pitching in this market have to pack more quality than ever into the units we're about to look at. Despite their muddled reputation amongst analog purists, it's arguably more sensible than ever to purchase a floor-based multi-effect, as the constant advances in emulation shortens the gap in quality between digital and analog tones. Let's take a gander at a few contenders for your cash...



KEMPER PROFILER STAGE

For the past seven years, Kemper have implemented their beloved amp-matching and effects technology as a rack/head controlled remotely by a separate digital foot controller. As of July 2019, they're selling their latest iteration: the Stage. There's nothing here that's going to blow the minds of people already familiar with what a Kemper is capable of.

However, the integration of the company's full functionality into such a compact unit warrants a fresh look. These are selling in Australia for a little under \$3,000; this is knocks about \$1,000 off the previous cost of buying the amp head/rack and foot controller separately - incredible, right? The only thing you'd want to be wary of is whether you'd need a power amp. The Stage doesn't have one, due to its small chassis being taken up with the digital processing hardware. Unfortunately, it also doesn't have an expression pedal, so you'll need one to connect up to use the relevant functions

The reputation of Kemper's amp and stompbox emulations is second-to-none, with the company's products now a staple for touring acts, session musicians and studio operators who need a combination of portability and high performance. You'll be paying top dollar compared to other products here, but you can rely on the quality.

Without getting too technical, the price difference between the Kemper and its similar units below is due to the former's proprietary 'profiling' technology, and opposed to more inexpensive forms of digital signal processing deployed in competing models. The extent to which you see a Kemper as worth the purchase depends on how much you think you (or maybe more importantly, your audience) can hear the difference that 'profiling' allegedly imparts.





LINE 6 HELIX LT

At about half the price of the Kemper, but fulfilling essentially the same tasks, the Helix LT is an exemplar of affordable floor-based digital amp and effects processors. For those interested in diving a bit deeper, similar competitors at the same price point include Mooer's GE300, Boss' GT-1000 and the Headrush Gigboard.

In addition to providing all the requisite amp, cabinet, microphone and stompbox emulations to play with, what sets the LT apart for us is the very practical connectivity built into the hardware. As well as having an onboard expression pedal, two additional pedals can be connected. Moreover, a quarter-inch jack can be connected to the footswitch input of your amp to control that via the LT. There are also four separate effects loops on top of

the requisite MIDI loop, stereo XLR and jack outputs. Possibly our favourite feature of this kind is the full soundcard functionality. The LT can be connected to another device via USB for digital recording, and it boasts a single mic input for capturing other sources. We can really see this being of interest to beginner home recorders, as much as we can for pro musicians who like to demo on the road. Line 6's idea to pair the LT with its two-by-12 Powercab powered speaker cabinet effectively solves the "getting to a guitar cab" issue presented by digital multi-effects in an elegant, simple and cheap way.

Finally, the sound. In this reviewer's opinion, at least 95 percent of all punters and players would struggle to accurately tell the difference between this and a Kemper - or any modern digital processor and tube amp, for that matter. This unit sounds great, and offers tremendous value for money to amateurs and pros alike.



T-REX SOULMATE

And now for something completely different! Great Danes T-Rex Effects' compact and smooth-sounding SoulMate is for unpretentious guitarists who want the convenience of a single unit, while keeping analog tone and workflow. The SoulMate's signal chain is based on the company's Møller, Mudhoney, Replica, Reptile and RoomMate pedals - an all-in-one overdrive, distortion, delay and reverb.

Each of the effects offered by the SoulMate has its own footswitch and knob controls, and there's a basic preset system for saving and recalling sounds whenever needed. Convenient extras like a simple tuner, tap tempo

button and boost footswitch really help to make the SoulMate feel like a generous and usable unit. As well as its stereo unbalanced output, the SoulMate's effects loop occurs between its distortion and delay circuits, making it perfect for use running with a tube amp or integrating with other stompboxes you may wish to use.

While it's certainly more sonically limited than other products we're talking about, some players will never wind up finding any use for that extra (and perhaps dizzying for more simplistic players) functionality. And coming in under the Line 6 Helix LT and its ilk at around \$800, T-Rex aren't making the analog purists pay for what they don't need. For an even simpler and more boutique unit, check out the Carl Martin Quattro.

ZOOM G1X FOUR

If the Kemper Stage is a gourmet burger with the lot, then the Zoom G1X Four is but a simple Vegemite sandwich. But you'll only pay around \$180 bucks for that sarnie, so fair enough.

What's astounding to us is how good this pedal is, regardless of its price and position with other competitors. Its sounds are not the best in the world, granted, but they are worlds away from the ugly digital cack that Zoom was known for back in the late '90s. And though it's true the sounds lack a bit of character and polish compared to their more well-heeled brethren, it's undoubtable they'd still hold their own at a gig or for beginner recordings.

What feels the heat of the unit's low price isn't nearly as much the tone as the features - you just don't get that same input and output flexibility. No stereo, only mono. And then there's the issue of build quality, too - at this pricepoint, the housing will always feel a bit more vulnerable. But on the other hand, lots of good stuff has been stuffed into this little guy, such as a looper, tuner and drum machine.

As guitarists these days, we take so much for granted, like amp and cabinet simulation and quick workflow based around a 'live' digital pedalboard. It makes us grin to think that this tech is available so cheap to kids at home or school who are just getting started with the guitar. And cheap as it is, a little Zoom is still a great introduction to the vexed, yet joyful quest to make a guitar sound good.



NUX CERBERUS

This interesting and feature-packed processor feels like a smart compromise between the immediacy of the SoulMate and the complexity of the Helix. Although there are knobs to tweak and a compact, stompboxy enclosure, the amount of computing power under the hood is formidable. While the sound options here aren't the most comprehensive on the market, there's still a great deal of depth to the drive, modulation and time-based effects that you can access with this little beast.

NUX has organised the inputs and outputs here to deploy what's called the four-cable method. You should look it up for more information, but in essence, it uses that precise number of leads to put the Cerberus' overdrive and distortion circuits into the front of your amp while running the rest through the effects loop.

You could also simultaneously run an extra quarter-inch signal while doing this, with an optional and customisable impulse response.

One of the things we really like about this setup is how easily the Cerberus adapts to your situation, whatever that may entail. For example, there may be times when you just want to have a casual jam and not be so beholden to an avalanche of presets. In this case, switch the unit over to Live mode, where its robust profile and tweakable knobs really show up the typical touchscreens and selection menus.



TONWOODS, PART ONE: WOODN'T IT BE NICE?

WORDS BY **STEVE HENDERSON.**

The guitar is a magical instrument, but its construction is almost completely practical. There's nothing mysterious about the components. The mystery is how these components, in the hands of a master luthier, can come together to create something special. It starts with "tonewood" – that category of timber that helps make the magic happen. Actually, many of the timbers used in guitar building are used in other fields of manufacture (such as furniture) and are not regarded with the same awe. We call them tonewoods not just because most are hardwoods, because a "hardwood" is not necessarily hard (balsa is a hardwood). So, what do these tonewoods do for us?

Tonewoods – timber that affects the sound in a specific way – can be analysed and assessed in terms of their sonic quality, allowing the player to achieve an expected tone or even a personalised sound. It's actually easy to hear the difference if you tune in to the various types of timbers, and not get distracted by other factors like colour, shape, pickups, celebrity, snobbery, and so forth. Let's look at electric guitars...

Gibson and Fender took quite different pathways in achieving the same thing: a practical electric guitar. Gibson's approach was to produce an artisan-level instrument, while Fender's was more of a mass-produced item made on a conveyor belt. For the Les Paul, Gibson used a mahogany neck on a mahogany body with a maple top.

While mahogany is generally regarded as a heavy timber, Honduran mahogany (*Swietenia Macrophylla*) was Gibson's tonewood of choice in the 1950s, and is lighter than the mahogany available today. It has a warm, dark tone, and was a good vehicle for the woody clunk of their P-90 pickup. A few years later, Gibson outfitted the Les Paul with their new humbucking pickup, and a classic tone was born. The darker humbucking sound mated perfectly with the warmth of the mahogany body and neck, with the maple top adding a touch of brightness.

Fender's approach was much more practical: they used what they could get easily and cheaply. Their early instruments (in the early '50s) were built with ash bodies and maple necks. Swamp ash (*Fraxinus Caroliniana*) is a lightweight timber and has a much brighter tone than



mahogany, so the top end is clear and present, the mids subdued, and the bass tight and defined. Maple (*Acer Saccharum*) is a very bright timber, providing loads of treble clarity (that's why it's used to make violins) and subdued lows. The combination is a bright, spanky tone.

Fender then used single coil pickups, which have a treble and upper mid focus, and this produced the classic tones of the Telecaster and Stratocaster – only sonically different, in their simplest forms, because of the different pickups applied to each model. Fender soon started to use alder (*Alnus Rubra*) as an alternative to ash. Alder has a very even tone spectrum – the highs remain bright and snappy, and mids have good breadth. Both ash and alder became the standard for a Fender-style guitar.

Some guitar builders are using Spanish cedar (*Cedrela Odorata*) in place of mahogany for their guitar bodies. This timber is neither Spanish nor cedar – it comes from Central and South America, and is more like

Honduran mahogany. It's lightweight like the Honduran mahogany of the 1950s, and has similar tonal properties. Boutique luthiers tend to use this timber, as well as some larger manufacturers such as Godin on their Summit models.

Claro walnut (*Juglans Hindsii*) and black walnut (*Juglans Nigra*) have often been used by major builders (Fender's 1982 Walnut Strat and Gibson's 1978 The Paul) and boutique custom luthiers (Ed Roman and Alembic). It's a little lighter than mahogany or maple, and is warmer than maple but still has plenty of bright sustain. Silver maple (*Acer Saccharinum*) and bigleaf maple (*Acer Macrophyllum*) are also being used for guitar bodies. These species are about 20 percent lighter than rock maple (*Acer Saccharum*) and have a bright, resonant impact on the tone. Gibson use laminated maple for the ES-335, to add brightness to the warmth of the humbucker/semi-hollow combination.

I have a couple of custom electrics that required some planning. I knew

I wanted to use EMG pickups because of their low impedance design and their strong focus on mids, but I'd loaded them into ash- and alder-bodied guitars and felt that the treble disappeared. Knowing that maple adds a lot of top-end, I had the renowned luthier Gerard Gilet cut a Strat body out of a slab of rock maple – this added the treble presence that balances out the dark pickups. It's even simpler today, when there is so much information to access and so many options available from body and neck makers. It just needs a bit of thought.

Of course, an even simpler way is to check out the specs on the guitar you've been salivating over, and evaluate what it might do for you. As above, you need to consider the body and neck timbers, and then think about how the pickups might interact with them. Most builders, large and small, will readily offer this info. The more guitars you try out, the more informed you'll be – so, go to your local music store and talk to the boss. They'll usually know their stuff. 



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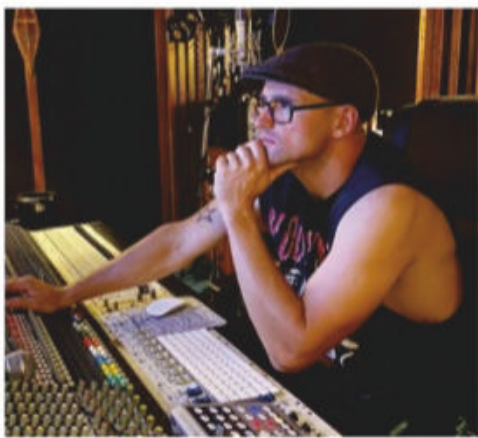
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RECORDING TECHNIQUES WITH RYAN MILLER

THE FRONTMAN OF SYDNEY'S OWN **BLACK RHINO** BREAKS DOWN THE ART OF RECORDING A TRICKY METAL SUBGENRE: SLUDGE. WORDS BY **PETER ZALUZYNY**.



Black Rhino found themselves in a good position when they were ready to record their groovy, sludgy and downright heavy debut, *Nosie Smasher*. Their vocalist, Ryan Miller, happened to own a little studio called Housefox, where they regularly rehearsed. But rather than get someone else to work the desk, Miller decided to handle recording and engineering in-between vocal takes, while everyone in the band lent a hand elsewhere during production.

Aside from the mix – which Converge's Kurt Ballou took care of – Miller had his hand in every piece of the pie, leaving him with a broad understanding of how to create a gritty, hard-hitting, high-energy, balls-to-the-wall groove metal record that'll make your eardrums bleed.

There's a lot of recording wizardry going on in *Noisie Smasher*, but one defining feature is the grimy, sludgy, almost filthy tone that pumps through it. How did you manage to convey that feeling?

I always feel that you need to go for the sound you want in the mix right from the start. Our chain was a Gibson RD, DS1, HM2 clone, ABY splitter, Matamp LX 60 with a Matamp cab, and Orange OR 50 with an Orange cab. We had two mics on each cab – the Matamp had a Heil PR30 and a TLM 102, and the Orange had an SM57 and

a TLM 102. We had a Neumann U87 set up in omni as a room mic capturing both speakers, but there were different variations in gain and so on depending on the track.

I kept things pretty simple for guitars in the control room. We started off running them through my Neve 1073s, but ended up going with my console – a Soundcraft MH4 – instead, because it just sounded a bit more open and aggressive. I had a touch of EQ coming from the desk, too, just to make sure we didn't get too deep in the mud.

And how do you make an album sound big and intense without relying on volume?

Record things with dynamics and build that into the production, so that when it comes time for mixing, you don't need to squeeze the life out of something to try bring it up – unless it calls for a good ol' crushing, of course.

There are a million different ways to go about building a mix, but using automation – not just on volume rides, but also on saturation and effects channels, mix knobs and things like that – help create some dynamics without just turning guitars up or down. It also allows you to push something pretty hard in the effected channel while maintaining the dynamics in the original source, so you're bringing that effected channel up underneath it.

It leans into distortion a lot too, across guitars, vocals, and even the drums to a degree. How do you work with those harsh sounds?

One neat trick is to pop a high pass filter on the miked up amp track with the distortion – say around 150 hertz or something – then grab the DI track and pop a low pass filter on it at the same EQ point. This helps keep the bottom end tight and leaves the distortion work to the miked track with the amp.

You can also side-chain your bass drum track to the DI track with all the low end to duck just a smidgen every time the drummer hits it, allowing the bass drum's low end to come through without making the whole bass line completely bop down and up.

Guitar distortion is pretty common, but putting it on vocals seems like an entirely different beast. How did you wrangle that?

I really like the U87, and just large-diaphragm condensers in general, for hardcore vocals. You put them through some nice EQ and they just sound crisp. Then, with some compression and a bit of added crunch in mixing, they become super aggressive and present, even when they're turned down.

Finding a cool compressor – one that has super slow and fast setting – can give you a nice spitty vocal,

too. The Soundtoys Devil-Loc has some pretty extreme settings. The Decapitator is also a pretty great tool.

Speaking of compression, the LP has a tonne of punch to it. What role did it play, aside from the vocals?

I only used compression on the room mics for drums – there was no compression on the close mics at all. It still plays a pretty big role in lots of different ways, though; you might have a parallel channel going to the kick and snare that hits a compressor together. Then maybe another channel with another compressor receiving the snare, kick and toms that gets hits a little harder and brought up underneath to suit. An overall parallel compressor usually makes its way in, too. I used a DBX 160, 1176, Distressor, Waves Puigchild 660, Waves Pie and SSLs.

So now that you've finished the album, in your experience, what's the art of sludge?

Choose the right guitar, amp, pedals and EQ. Then get Nano, our guitarist, to play the absolute hell out of them – then tweak to perfection. But really, don't pull back on the gain, distortion or anything like that just because you're in the studio. Play things as messed up and dirty or ugly as you would live, and if something starts to get too muddy, fix it. But just don't hold back. Be ugly! 



BEDROOM ACOUSTICS, PART ONE: SOUNDPROOFING

SO, YOU HAVE A RENTAL PROPERTY, A SMALL SPACE, A TEMPORARY LOCATION, OR A MULTIPURPOSE ROOM THAT DOUBLES AS A MUSIC SPACE. BUT.... IT SOUNDS LESS THAN PERFECT FOR RECORDING? WORDS BY **ROB LONG**.



ABOVE:
TAKE A SEAT

Unfortunately, the expensive part of setting up a professional recording studio isn't the gear, but rather the physical space! This is especially true in today's climate. Living spaces seem to be getting smaller, while real estate prices climb through the roof and out of everyone's grasp. Meanwhile, recording technology is getting cheaper and far more powerful. This has given rise to a situation where there's greater access to recording setups than ever, while there's less and less room to work in.

However, there are many things that can be done to at least improve your working environment, sonically – even if they are temporary measures. Ideally, you'll want to spend as little money as possible and do as much as you can yourself. Also, you may want to make things portable or able to be dismantled and reinstalled somewhere else, should you ever need to move from your current location.

Obviously, most high-end studios are purpose-built from the ground up. A small fortune is usually spent on the design alone, before construction even starts. Thus, the most limiting factor of

setting up a studio in any preexisting structure is that you can't change the space's dimensions. Doubly so if it's not even your structure to alter!

In a perfect scenario, a recording space will have no parallel surfaces for nasty standing waves to accumulate; the room will be isolated from the outside world, both to keep certain sounds in and others out. Surfaces will be carefully chosen to minimise excessive and unbalanced frequency reflection, yet provide a natural sounding environment.

SOUNDPROOFING VS. ACOUSTIC TREATMENT

A vital starting point is to clarify the critical difference between these two terms – which, despite being related, are not interchangeable. Soundproofing refers to isolating the recording space from the outside world. Acoustic treatment, on the other hand, refers to dealing with the reflective sonic properties inside the room – walls, ceilings, floor surfaces and the like.

Soundproofing is by far the most difficult and expensive part of studio building, and even with a large budget can be very challenging. To achieve even a 50-to-60 percent reduction in sound transference is hard work. True,

100 percent soundproofing is almost impossible, unless you happen to have a vacant underground military facility at your disposal.

To even partially soundproof a room in a rental property, a lot of care would need to be taken to avoid doing damage to the property. To boot, you'd probably end up breaking a few laws and lose a whole lot of money. Still, a lot can be achieved with innovation, experimentation and lots of research.

SOUNDPROOFING

The main two issues to be dealt with are the mass and thickness of the walls, floor and ceiling, and air gaps. Thin walls and ceilings will allow sound to transfer easily in both directions. Doors and windows are also your enemies, as they do very little to keep sound in or out.

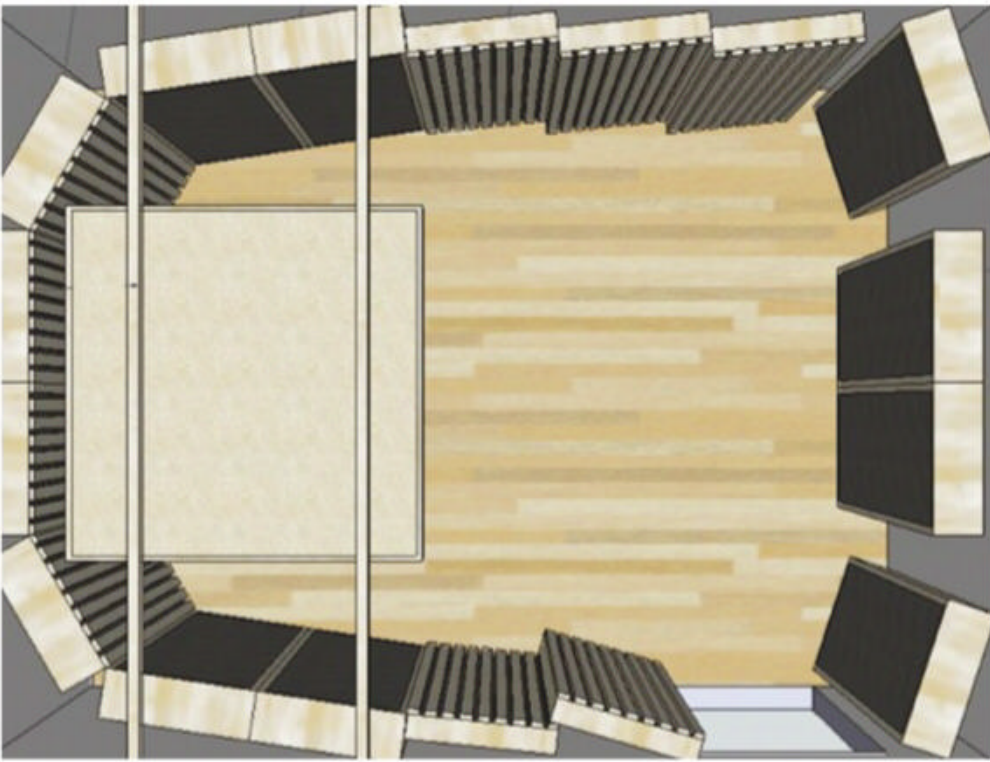
In a high-budget scenario, the best thing to do would be to build an entire room inside a room. This is not for the faint-hearted, and not a cheap or portable solution. There are several companies that market prefab soundproof booths which can be dismantled and relocated. Once again, however, they're not cheap.

A medium-budget solution is to at least improve the doors and windows to seal gaps and increase their mass.

Replacing the existing door is a great start. Most internal doors are not solid timber – they're basically a timber frame with a cardboard core, which is useless for sound isolation. Rather than potentially damaging the existing door, try your hand at building a studio door. That way, you can put the original door back on when needed.

There are lots of tutorials and door plans available online. You can often start with an existing solid-core door from any hardware shop, or source a secondhand one. In simple terms, you want to add mass to the door. Basic methods include adding a layer of gyprock or plywood to the door on the outer side. The main thing to watch is the increase in weight – you may need to consult a tradesman on what's possible and safe.

Once you've improved the door itself, you'll need to make it as airtight as possible. Door and window sealant kits are readily available – often sold as weather-stripping tape. Adhesive rubber strips can be attached to the door frame to close gaps. Specially designed door sweeps – which effectively seal the gap between the door and floor in the closed position – are also available. The style you want will depend on the floor surface – carpeted floors will require a different solution to one made of



ABOVE:
ROOMCEPTION



ABOVE:
(NOT) AN EGG-CELENT OPTION

BELOW:
WEIGHT A MINUTE...



timber, for example.

Windows are even more of an issue, as most only have six millimetres of glass and lots of air gaps. As much as natural light is lovely, it's likely that a window will be the weakest point in the room. The easiest method to fix this is to simply board the window up with a sheet of heavy plywood or similar. The least damaging way to do this is by inserting the covering sheet inside the window frame and lightly tacking it into place. Seal all the gaps with weather stripping first, then place some insulation either up against the glass before you put the sheet into place, or apply it to the glass-facing side of the board. This will largely reduce rattle and movement.

You could also try mounting another sheet of framed glass up against the window frame, if you're wanting to maintain light and/or the view. The glass used in studio windows is usually at least ten millimetres thick, and is very heavy and pricey.

There are also companies that make inserts from glass or acrylic for this purpose. They're often known as 'storm windows', and are designed to make the windows airtight and reduce sound transfer by up to 50 percent. They can easily be unscrewed when not required.

WALLS

The old trick of sticking egg cartons up on the wall as 'soundproofing' will mostly make your room look like a chook shed! The idea comes from the concept that an uneven surface will break up sound reflections, and thus provide a less reflective environment than shiny, flat surfaces. This is true, but will not actually aid in any way towards isolating your room.

The other common scenario (and I was guilty of this myself back in my early days), is to cover every surface in commercial acoustic tiles. The result will be a highly unnatural sounding room devoid of mid/high frequencies, that sucks the life out of virtually every sound made. Acoustic treatment has to be carefully planned and balanced to achieve a natural result.

A lightweight DIY room-in-a-room is simpler than you may think, and certainly worth considering. There are various ways to do this. One of the simplest methods is construct a room out of sheets of plywood, with minimal framework - kind of like a giant cubby house. Of course, if the walls are only ten-to-12 millimetres thick, you may find that they actually resonate and cause even more issues. You may need to use at least two or three layers of ply to make it viable.

A simple stud wall is relatively easy to construct out of lightweight

radiata pine. It'll be most effective if you can leave a small air gap between the original wall and the 'false' wall, and also make the inner room free-standing so that sound is not transferred from mechanical connection. You can include a false ceiling to completely seal the room in. Once again, bringing in a tradesman, even just for advice, may be a good idea if you want to make sure it stays in place!

If you're going to go to that amount of trouble, you may as well try setting the walls at a slight angle to each other to minimise standing waves. These occur when you have a frequency with a wavelength that matches the dimensions of two parallel walls. The result is that you end up with 'nodes' and 'antinodes' as the wave bounces between the two surfaces - points where the frequency is boosted in amplitude, and points where the frequency cancels itself out. This is obviously a nightmare when recording or monitoring low frequencies, as their wavelengths are often longer than the dimensions of a small room.

Another potential fix is to erect a series of acoustic baffles around the room. This is much easier than trying to build a permanent structure, though obviously not as effective. The baffles will work more like acoustic treatment than pure isolation - though it will assist, to some degree, with reducing sound transference.

Of course, don't forget that if you do create an isolated booth, you'll still need to bring in power, lighting and air. Once again, this is quite complex - especially getting fresh air in and out, not to mention temperature control. Heating is not an issue, though cooling is very difficult (unless it's going to be a permanent setup).

A novel (pun intended) - though far more manageable - approach to buffering sound without actually having to build anything is to line the walls with bookcases and fill the shelves with books! Of course this won't give you a fully enclosed room, but the weight of the books will have a dampening effect on the room, and provide the all important uneven surface which will scatter frequencies and flatten things out.

In the next article, we'll look more closely at the much easier task of treating the room acoustically. A room inside a room is just the beginning, after all. It will still need to be treated in order to create an even, natural sounding space. Meanwhile, do some research into products and methods that people have used to transform spaces. Chances are that whatever your situation is, someone else has been there already! 

Rob Long is a multi-instrumentalist and producer working @FunkyLizardStudios in Newcastle.



RRP: \$399

SHURE DIGITAL RECORDING KIT

SHURE PRESENT A BASIC STARTER KIT FOR ANYONE WANTING TO GET INTO RECORDING. **ALEX WILSON** TAKES A LOOK AT WHAT'S INSIDE THE BOX.

When you're starting out on your music recording journey, knowing what to buy can be a bit intimidating. Audio giant Shure is here to help with their Digital Recording Kit, providing reliable no-frills gear that will cover all the bases when you're starting out.

The core of the package is the MOTIV MVi audio interface. This helps you to connect your microphone (more on that later) or instrument to your computer or mobile device, creating a portable recording studio. It's compatible with PC, Mac, iOS and most Android devices. A nice touch is the five preset DSP modes: speech, singing, flat, acoustic instrument, and loud. These will really help a novice user to get the most out of this overall kit in different contexts.

Nonetheless, if you want to get under the hood, the limiter, compressor and EQ settings can all be tweaked. There's one combo jack onboard for connecting your mic or instrument cable, and then a headphone jack.

The mic that comes with this package is Shure's PGA58. They call it a vocal microphone, but realistically this is a standard cardioid dynamic mic that could be used in a variety of circumstances. Vocals, sure. But for our readers here, this would make a good amp microphone. It's from the same product family as Shure's ubiquitous SM57, which is beloved the world over

as an easy-to-use guitar mic.

If you have a mic stand, you could learn a lot about recording an amp with just this guy. Even without a stand, you can secure the lead to the top of your amp and drape this guy down the front of the speaker grill.

Finally, we have the SRH240A Headphones. While certainly not the best out there, these headphones sound pretty respectable given the overall price of the Digital Recording Kit. The cord is long, which makes them easy to use when trying to record with a guitar in hand, mic in front of you and headphones on. While they are not going to win any audiophile awards, that's hardly the point. They will perform all the functions required for recording, monitoring and mixing with this package.

As well as the three main items, Shure helpfully includes an XLR mic lead, as well as some other nice bits and bobs across the three star products. Everything works together nicely and nothing extra is needed out of the box. If one wanted to record amps, then maybe a short mic stand would be nice. But bear in mind that with the MVi audio interface and the device on hand, one has access to the world of digital audio workstations and all the wonders of in-the-box amp simulation.

If this is a first-timer's kit, it's worth talking about software more generally. For those

connecting the MVi to an iOS or Android device, Shure's native MOTIV app is one of the better software environments for working in - and obviously, it syncs up quite nicely with the company's own hardware.

However, you can use the MVi with any number of other software platforms by third-party developers. This is particularly true of anyone looking to run the MVi as part of a Mac or PC setup, where it will function best interfacing with audio production software. These programs are called DAWs - or Digital Audio Workstations - and there are a huge range of options out there. Talking about this in-depth can't be done here, but a search engine can teach you a lot - particularly about what options won't add to the price of what's already in this kit.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Shure has put together a good little package here. It's priced very reasonably and is ready to use out of the box, making it a great entry point into the vast landscape of audio recording gear. The fact that it's modular really adds to this ground-floor value - you can swap any of these elements out later down the track without affecting the basic workflow. Shure has beginners in mind here, but the quality far exceeds what's typically considered 'amateur'. 

► TOP FEATURES

- Shure MOTIV MVi Audio Interface
- Shure PGA58 Cardioid Dynamic Vocal Mic
- Shure SRH240A Headphones
- XLR Cable
- Optional Shure MOTIV App

► WHAT WE RECKON

PROS

- Great value for money
- Great for beginners
- Modular and upgradeable

CONS

- Not suited to complex recording tasks

► CONTACT

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MODERN THEORY

In this issue, we're building upon two concepts that were introduced in the last one. The first idea is designed to help you break out of any improv-related ruts you may find yourself in, and hopefully give you some techniques that will open up a whole new world of possibilities. By simply turning our two-note-per-string pentatonic scales into three-note-per-string patterns, we can create new ideas and spread the scale out across the fretboard. This idea can also be used to bridge between box shapes one octave apart. The licks you already know can still be utilised in the box shapes, and the three-note-per-string scale can be used as a scale run to bridge between ideas.

The second concept covered in this issue is the idea of modal arpeggios. Last time, we looked at the A minor arpeggio, and how to add interest to those three notes by continuing to stack thirds on top of each other. This time, we'll look at other modal arpeggios. By adding these new colours to our arpeggios, we remain diatonic and keep within the key, but by way of our technique, we're creating more tension. This is a very useful technique for creating interesting and unexpected riffs and solo ideas. The last exercise outlines the concept, but there are unlimited possibilities with this technique. Find an A minor backing track and experiment for yourself. Take the ideas presented here, mix them up, and make them your own!

EXERCISE #1

Exercise #1 outlines the A minor pentatonic scale built with three notes per string. By playing the pentatonic scale with three notes per string instead of two, we break away from the familiar patterns and licks we've developed as muscle memories. This can be a great way to generate fresh ideas with this five-note scale. Played using eighth-note triplets in a legato passage, we create different accents to what can be created with the two-note-per-string box shape when played legato. Exercise #1 is also a great way to bridge between the two box shapes of A minor pentatonic, starting on

The exercises are presented in three numbered sections. Each section includes a musical staff with a treble clef and a guitar-specific staff with a bass clef. Exercise 1 and 2 are in 4/4 time at 120 bpm. Exercise 3 is in 4/4 time and includes three modal arpeggio patterns: D dorian, F lydian, and G mixolydian. The fretboard diagrams show the notes for each exercise, with fret numbers indicated below the strings.

the fifth fret, and an octave higher at the 17th fret. Start out slow and accurate, then get that tempo up as fast as you can – this exercise sounds great when played at higher speeds. It's also a bit of a stretch in places, so it's a great exercise to develop finger independence in your third and pinky fingers.

EXERCISE #2

Exercise #1 takes Exercise #1 a step further by playing a nine-note sequence across this three-note-per-string pattern. This is a great technique exercise for your fretting hand. The 'up' pick markings are notated in the exercise before the start of each sequence, but it's optional as to whether you hammer on or up-pick

these notes. Pay close attention to the pull-offs in the middle of each phrase – it sounds best when you pull your pinky towards the ground, as you'll get a much stronger sound. As with Exercise #1, Exercise #2 works well as a scale run bridging the two A minor pentatonic box shapes. You can shred through your favorite licks on the fifth fret, then use this scale run to bridge up to the 17th fret box shape, before shredding through the same licks again an octave higher. Ascending scale runs are always useful for building excitement in your solos.

EXERCISE #3

Exercise #3 outlines three modal arpeggios from the key of C major. These patterns are in the same key

as Exercises #1 and #2, and should add an entirely different colour to your solos depending on how they are used. This exercise starts by outlining D Dorian in two octaves of thirds. Dorian is unique in that it has a major sixth when compared to the natural minor scale or Aeolian mode. The modal arpeggio helps outline this uniqueness. When played an octave higher, these colours turn into the extensions of a ninth, 11th and 13th. My favorite modal arpeggios to play are built off the Dorian, Lydian and Mixolydian modes. Exercise #3 outlines a run built from these three modal patterns. When combined with ideas from the first two exercises, there is more than enough variety to keep any experiments in improv fresh and interesting.



COLUMN AUDIO AT
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STRING SKIPPING SHREDDING: PART TWO

In my last column, I discussed scale-based shred licks using alternate picking whilst skipping between non-adjacent strings. For this one, I thought I'd expand upon this concept (literally) by adding in some large and rapid position shifts! These types of licks are a personal favourite of mine. When used at speed to solo over a raging thrash beat or a brutal death metal track, they can sound pretty cool!

EXERCISE #1

The following licks use the E natural minor scale (E-F#-G-A-B-C-D). As a quick refresher, here's one of my exercises from the last issue (in case you missed it, an archive of all my previous columns is available at jimmylardnerbrown.com). Using a three-note-per-string fingering, the lick descends, then ascends through the scale twice via 16th note quintuplets (five notes per beat) and strict alternate picking. However, the key here is that rather than strings one and two (which would be more conventional), the lick is performed across strings one and three.

EXERCISE #2

Once you're comfortable with the first lick, we're going to add in the larger position shifts. The melodic contour of the phrase stays the same, but instead of moving from the 12th position on the first string to the 11th position on the third string, it jumps down to the ninth position on the third string (using E natural minor three-note-per-string fingerings throughout). Doing so means that the notes on each string are now the same (G, F#, E), only an octave apart. When shifting between positions, keep your left hand as close to the strings as possible, only barely releasing the pressure as you move up and down the fretboard.

EXERCISE #3

This lick goes even further by starting on the 19th fret with the notes B, A, and G in the 15th position. It then leaps down to the notes G, F#, and E in the ninth position, as with the previous lick. The jump here is quite large (not to mention the string skip), so start off slowly to work on the

accuracy. Accommodated by the quintuplet rhythmic grouping, the circular nature of this lick (and the others) means that you can seamlessly loop it as many times as you like. When performed at top speeds of around 200 beats per minute, it starts to sound pretty crazy. It also looks cool!

EXERCISE #4

The last lick joins Exercises #2 and #3 together to create a longer 'monster' lick (note the repeat

signs). As such, it moves from the 12th position on the first string to the ninth position on the third string, and then to the 15th position on the first string and back to the ninth position on the third string (and so on). Whilst developing the accuracy of the position shifts may take some time, by starting slow and gradually increasing the speed, it will eventually program the muscle memory of your left hand so that you start to nail the wide fretboard jumps more times than not! It'll be

tricky at first, but have some faith!

SUMMARY

Once you're comfortable with these licks, practice transposing them to different keys and scales, and then try coming up with your own variations. You could also apply the technique to different two-string groupings. For those feeling really adventurous, you could extend the concept further by using even larger position shifts and skipping over two, three, or even four strings!



OH SNAP, IT'S AN '80S HAIR METAL SOLO!

I have a confession to make: I'm kind of obsessed with unaccompanied guitar solos from the '80s and early '90s. There was a whole vocabulary of licks that basically every guitarist drew upon back then to go wild with during their live solo spot. It's a bit of a lost art now, but it usually went something like this - although not necessarily in this particular order:

- E5 power chord, a few speedy licks, E5 power chord, a few speedier licks.
- Classical guitar interlude
- Volume-swell cello imitation
- Whammy bar freak-out
- Whammy bar freak-out with delay cranked up to 100 percent so you can do, like, whammy-bar freak-out harmonies against the echo repeats
- Bit that totally rips off Van Halen's "Cathedral"
- And finally, always, the hammer-on or tapping lick that starts out slow then gets faster and faster as the crowd claps along.

It was always a wild time because even if a guitarist wasn't particularly tech-minded (and a lot of late '80s hard-rock guitarists were basically just playing simple boogie riffs along with a handful of licks - please don't write letters, you know it's true), they still knew enough of these tricks to get by. And, most importantly, it was entertaining as hell. Just listen to C.C. DeVille's unaccompanied solo on Poison's *Swallow This Live*. C.C. never had Vai levels of technique, but he always made it fun.

The lick in this lesson is a simple, easy-to-remember pattern that incorporates pull-offs and open strings, and is great for that end-of-solo speedy-uppy bit. I've broken it down into four variations, which should be played with increasing speed until the rest of the band come back from their pee break and burst into a cover of Led Zeppelin's "Rock And Roll".

Figure #1 is the basic lick, broken up into four bars of quarter-notes.

Standard tuning

$\text{♩} = 120$

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

At slow speed, you can easily alternate-pick it. Just try to give equal time to the open E note. No note is more important than the one you're playing right now, so don't rush that one on your way to the

next note. Figure #2 is moved up to eighth-notes and requires you to pull off the first three notes before picking the fourth.

Figures #3 and #4 are for when we're fully up to speed - although if

you're feeling game, you can speed it up even further than this. Figure #3 is the same lick in sequence, while Figure #4 takes the lick out of sequence to be extra impressive and cool. Happy shredding!



PRESENTING... THE SECOND

It's been used by everyone from T-Bone Walker to Hendrix, Rory Gallagher, Gary Moore... You name it, they often threw in this sneaky addition to the pentatonic scale! I have mentioned "the second" multiple times in past issues, but today, I wanted to delve in and make it the whole subject!

The major second is simply the note two frets above the root note, or first note of your scale. All examples are played at 100 beats per minute.

EXERCISE #1

This is just a pentatonic scale with the second added. Can you see it? You'll see it's placed right after the root note, which appears three times in this position. It's worth noting that in the key of A, it changes over to the note B. When you hit the third string, you will have to reach back a touch to grab the 'second', appearing on the fourth fret of the third string. I elect to shift back and use my second and fourth finger to play the fifth and seventh fret, before shifting my first finger back to the fifth fret on the second string. At the first string, you see the root note once more on the fifth fret, followed by the second, and then our minor third to end the position. Practice this exercise up and down, of course!

EXERCISE #2

Let's get into some licks! This reminds me a bit of something like Gallagher's "Philby". Essentially it's pentatonic, but takes on a more natural minor feel with the second added. The cool thing is that even over a typical blues, which may not sound as dark, these notes work well. Again, you'll want to employ your fourth finger to make easier work of the shape on these middle two strings. Take note of the semiquaver triplet to get the right timing.

EXERCISE #3

Nothing too complex here, in theory - once again just a pentatonic lick with the addition of the second. We start out by alternating between the minor third and the second against the root, before descending quickly using pull-offs from the second. For this lick, I wanted to resolve on

E-Gt

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mf

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the second – it makes for a good alternative to the minor third or the root, and leaves the listener hanging. You're welcome to slide off the fifth fret down to the four with your first finger to end this one, rather than switch to your fourth finger as you reach for the third string initially.

EXERCISE #4

This is very T-Bone Walker-esque. Do a little bit of bending and picked-out double stopping before playing around with the second once more. Two more things I decided to

incorporate here: the half-beat rest at the start of the second bar - which is very common amongst blues players - and ending by bending up from the second to the more common minor third. Just a few little tweaks can make a huge difference to your licks.

EXERCISE #5

By adding the extra note into your pentatonic scale, you can completely alter the rhythmic dynamic of the scale. In this example, I'm setting up the shift to the fourth chord with a lowdown twangy riff that walks

up the pentatonic with the addition of the second, then comes back, skipping it to land flush on the A at the end of the bar, which rolls smoothly into the D. The extra note facilitates this placement in a way that would be totally different if we used straight pentatonics.

SUMMARY

I'm always a big believer that you don't need to reinvent the wheel - just add a second! Y'know, as in a second wheel, or the second in this particular example being the note. Great joke, hey? 

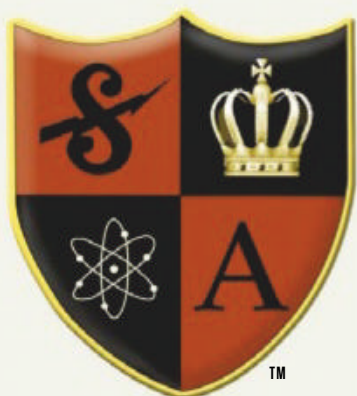
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ag TOP PICK



COURTNEY BARNETT

MTV Unplugged: Live In Melbourne

MILK! / REMOTE CONTROL



Though her studio output is damn near impeccable (this scribe doled her their ‘album of the year’ distinction in 2015 and 2018), Courtney Barnett is a concert crusher at heart. Her shows are characteristically monstrous, manic and

magnetic; she tears into her guitar like it just insulted her mother, and puts so much soul into her voice that we’re convinced she’s got an iron throat.

Lo and behold, her *MTV Unplugged* session could not be more diametric. The CB3 are in tow, of course, albeit stripped to their basics and left to rely on the elements for amplification. Barnett herself wields a bright, resonant acoustic and sings drier and more pastoral than we’re used to. Birds chirp in the background as the band retune and crack jokes between songs. Coughs, clicks and bung notes are all laid bare in the unfiltered recording, and the end result feels distinctly *human*.

Admittedly, our first listen has us polarised. It’s easy to dwell on what this record *isn’t* – it isn’t lengthy, it isn’t polished, and it isn’t as loud or energetic as Barnett’s average gig – but at face value, this neat little package is a wholly enchanting, one-of-a-kind exploration into Barnett’s artistic mind like we’ve never seen it before.

“Sunday Roast” and “Depreston” sound downright *gorgeous* with Lucy Waldron’s deeply spiced cello work dancing around the summery twang of Barnett’s acoustic strumming. Unreleased cut “Play It On Repeat” is candid and raw and feels notably powerful played solo. And though we were skeptical about “Nameless, Faceless” retaining its punkish bite without the beating anger and snarling distortion, the addition of eerie keys and intentional jumps in tune and timing (plus the harrowing chemistry between Barnett and guest Evelyn Ida Morris) imbue in the track a whole new sense of gristly and garish discomfort.

In an eight-track set, three covers seems a tad exorbitant (especially when Barnett’s catalogue is packed with gems of her own), yet when she and Paul Kelly hit the chorus of a gloomy “Charcoal Lane” (Archie Roach) – or when the final refrain of “So Long, Marianne” rolls around and you’re forced to wonder if Leonard Cohen foresaw such beauty when he wrote it – the argument falls immediately flat.

Dismally short but delightfully sweet, Courtney Barnett’s *MTV Unplugged* session is an essential listen; not just for her own fans, either, but for fans of any siren, emotionally rousing music.

MATT DORIA

ALGIERS

There Is No Year

MATADOR / REMOTE CONTROL



It wasn’t intentional, but four bars into *There Is No Year* and the feet started tapping away. So consumed will you be by the rich and impassioned performances, you’ll instantly find

yourself giving into the penetrating rhythm and blues, exalting urban grooves and sensational soul at play. It’s the bright piano mirroring the flurry of guitars in the title track, and the sharp attack of rhythms in “Unoccupied” – there’s a lot that begs for your attention, but Algiers have mastered a certain knack so you don’t miss anything; they revel in stripped bare, cleanly cut and neatly produced components that don’t overwhelm one another. Rather, they quite politely offer each element a turn in the spotlight so that you can really submerge into the essence of each member’s contributions.

ANNA ROSE

BEACH SLANG

The Deadbeat Bang Of Heartbreak City

DEW PROCESS / UNIVERSAL



If Jimmy Eat World came down with a throat infection, doused their gear in whiskey and set fire to it, you’d have a wonderfully gnarly explosion of grit, wit, and tunes custom-built for a

rollicking good time – not unlike this fierce new offering from Philly punks Beach Slang. The guitars croon relentlessly, and the vocals are bright and committed to creating a certain kind of atmosphere: one that will instil in you an urge to nod your head, shuffle your feet and raise your hands high. Of course, if you want to maintain something resembling composure when expressing your love for this album, you might prefer to stroke your proverbial beard and say, “Mm, yes, *quite good!*”

ANNA ROSE

LANDE HEKT

Gigantic Disappointment

INDEPENDENT



Typically loud and livid as the fierce frontwoman in Muncie Girls, on her debut solo effort Lande Hekt dabbles in sensitivity and restraint. The production is looser and more lowkey than

we’re used to with her full-band material, which allows her dry, crumbly fretwork and distinct British drawl to shine brighter and punch harder than ever before. Though maintaining the blunt confidence and boldness that Hekt has made a name of herself for, the EP shows a lighter side of the singer-songwriter; the lyrics are doughier and more personal, and the guitar sings sweetly under them. Disregard the title: this seven-track scorcher is all poised to please.

SARAH COMEY

MCCAFFERTY

The House With No Doorbell

INDEPENDENT



Wearing weathered hearts on tattered sleeves, LP3 sees McCafferty strike a stunning balance between the raw, visceral emotional fervour that defined their early days, and the ear-crushing

brand of fiery, fist-in-the-air energy that made last year’s *Yarn* such a head-turner. Gracefully weaving around his homey, yet palpably strained vocals, Nick Hartkopt’s fretwork is astounding – he pulls every punch he knows across the LP’s tight 30 minutes, showcasing everything from squeaky clean acoustic prings to punchy, overdriven Telecaster chaos. The album came together unusually fast, but you’d never know; the songs are sharp, witty and colossally catchy, and the production is next-level good. However tumultuous McCafferty’s trajectory has been, *Doorbell* shines as a definitive high point.

MATT DORIA

PINEGROVE

Marigold

ROUGH TRADE / REMOTE CONTROL



With denser interplay between its six abettors, tighter playing and a boost in production value, Pinegrove have finally cracked the code to perfecting the warbly emo-country ebullience that only

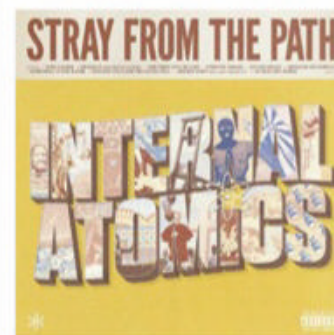
they do so well. Guitars whistle with a sticky-sweet twang, Evan Hall’s striking and sentimental poetry twisting elegantly around the band’s labyrinthine compositions. Where previous records felt more like home projects hatched for friends to toy with their influences, *Marigold* is defiant in its moxie: every steely pluck reverberates with the strength of country legends, every hook sharp and chorus riveting. It’s a slow-burner of an LP, and one that certainly deserves savouring in a dedicated playthrough – on vinyl too, if you can.

AVERY JACOBS

STRAY FROM THE PATH

Internal Atomics

UNFD



As the western world continues to shit itself into shambles, the potential for bands to knock out A-grade political punk is arguably stronger than ever. Stray From The Path’s second post-Trump effort,

LP9 is easily one of the year’s harshest, heaviest and most headstrong releases. And though it’s Drew Dijorio’s guttural quips that take the foreground, the bold and bloodthirsty fretwork of Tom Williams cannot be understated. They’re not the most brutal of riffs on display, but therein lies their beauty – they’re punchy and pummeling without relying on an overdose of distortion; when breakdowns kick in and solos soar, they do so on their own violation.

SARAH COMEY



FENDER AMERICAN ULTRA STRATOCASTER HSS

PETER HODGSON CHECKS OUT FENDER'S MOST SOUPED-UP, MODERN, NON-GRANDPA STRATOCASTER EVER.

If you've ever thought to yourself, "I like Fenders, but I wish they had the kind of high-end playability features of, say, a Charvel or a Suhr," well, that's what the American Deluxe and Elite series have been - you've been totally sleeping on it! Whether it's the model called The Strat in the early '80s, the late '80s-to-early '90s Plus series or later evolutions, Fender has always reserved part of its lineup for the latest and greatest in guitar technology.

The Ultra series takes this innovation to a whole new level, reexamining and redesigning everything about the Stratocaster, Telecaster, Jazzmaster, P Bass and Jazz Bass to meet the standards of pro players. The neck joints are super comfortable with unprecedented upper fret access; the necks have a new shape - a 'Modern D', which is the same depth as Fender's classic 'C' shape, but with higher, squarer shoulders which ultimately make it feel smaller and easier to get your thumb around for those Hendrix chords; there's a

new satin neck finish formulation that will have you gliding all over the fretboard with ease; redesigned fifth-generation noiseless pickups, including a hotter pair of single coils just for the HSS model Stratocaster; and gorgeous new finishes across the line, designed in conjunction with a paint supplier to the auto industry - just like Fender did in the '50s.

The colours are stunning, with the range including Cobra Blue, Mocha Burst, Texas Tea (a kind of black, but brown, but copper, but gold, but green - all depending on viewing angle - finish), Arctic Pearl, Aged Natural, Plasma Red Burst and Ultraburst (which, as the name leads you to believe, is Fender's attempt at capturing the absolute coolest three-tone sunburst in the company's history). And these colours truly have to be seen to be believed, because part of the charm is the way that light dances across the instrument's curves. These are going to look really great when you put them to the test onstage.





IN-DEPTH SPECIFICATIONS

The first thing you'll notice when you pick up an American Ultra is the neck shape: it's the same depth as the old 'C' neck but with higher shoulders for a more 'D'-like shape, and with rolled fretboard edges and fret ends for supreme comfort. Fender also tested over half a dozen new neck finishes before settling on the satin finish found here: it almost feels like raw wood, and yet it's not. It has a vintage tint but isn't glossy, and you'll be able to fly up and down the fretboard like nobody's business.

The fretboard radius goes from a slightly curvy ten inches at the neck end, right up to 14 at the highest frets. Upper-fret access is exceptional thanks to a new sculpted neck joint, which includes a scoop behind the treble-side cutaway as well as a lower-profile block joint. The back of the body also has a more comfortable tummy-cut, which is a nice touch.

The electronics include newly redesigned fifth-generation noiseless pickups, along with some special tweaks in the electronics. The noiseless single coils are hotter here than in the SSS model, in order to more comfortably hang with the beefy, but not-too-strident Double Tap humbucker. Hit the S1 switch built into the volume pot, and you'll find that the humbucker becomes a single coil, but without the typical volume drop expected when you split a 'bucker. Fender achieves this by over-winding one of the humbucker's coils, then taking a tap off it when in regular humbucker mode (effectively removing those extra winds from the coil), then reinstating those additional coils once the humbucker is split. All while

staying noiseless and giving you a hot, SRV-like single coil snarl that complements the power and voice of the other single coils.

The volume pot isn't just an S1 switch: it also includes a treble bleed filter to maintain the sparkle and chime of the high end when you roll the volume pot down. The tremolo system is aided by a low-resistance nut and new staggered Fender locking tuners, and it returns to pitch with exceptional smoothness.

BEST IN THE HANDS OF

You don't buy an American Ultra if you want a faithful '62 Strat reissue - you buy one because you want the ultimate evolution of the Stratocaster concept. This is what a high-tech, super playable Strat looks like in 2019 - and if you've never gotten along with Strats because you find them too traditional, you'll be pleasantly surprised by just how shreddable, comfortable, and purely modern the American Ultra series is.

In terms of sonics, this guitar can cover the vast majority of genres - even some pretty extreme metal - although it's most at home in rock and blues-based styles, and makes a great shred and fusion guitar. It's a great choice as a studio all-rounder, or for cover band guitarists who need to go from Jimi to Eddie to Satch to Morello in the course of a night. Yet, it has enough of a distinctive - if still clearly Stratty - voice to help you forge your own sonic identity.



WHY IT'S ON THE TOP SHELF

Fender has completely redesigned the top tier of their USA production guitars. What was once the American Deluxe and then the American Elite series is now the American Ultra, and it's no mere change in name with a few finish tweaks. Everything has been reconsidered from the ground up. Fender is often accused of being too traditional, but that's one of guitar's great misconceptions: the company has always been appreciative of its past while maintaining an eye to the current state of the instrument and the foresight to see where it's going.

WHAT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER FIRST

This is not your grandad's Strat. If you want a one-to-one recreation of Leo Fender's earliest work, Fender still does that, and you're gonna love it. But if you want those legendary Strat sounds with more of a modern flavour - and with noiseless pickups, because this isn't 1954 and if you can have a single coil tone without the hum, wouldn't you want to? - and which plays like a modern, super ergonomic shred machine, this is the Strat for you. It feels great to play over long periods of time, and the slate of available tones is endlessly inspiring. 🎸

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CORT CM30R

HERE STANDS A WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING... BY **STEVE HENDERSON**.

There are literally dozens of practice amps on the market, and choosing between them is sometimes just a case of figuring out whether it has the colour or knobs you prefer, or if it has “the look” (whatever that is this month). The Cort guitar company – makers of some truly fine instruments (acoustics, electrics and basses alike) – have decided to target the amateur player with a simple, yet stylish 30-watter that represents some surprising bang for buck.

The basic idea is a channel-switching preamp with a full tone set, a nice reverb and a punchy 30-watt power amp driving a ten-inch speaker, all wrapped up in a cab that is just 380 millimetres tall. The brain section is top-loaded for easy viewing and access, and the two channels are footswitchable.

But there's more going on here than just that. The two channels share the tone shaping circuit, but sound quite different – as if channel two has been revoiced. The clean channel has the expected small Fender combo sound: spanky, with a snap to the attack. But Cort have added a crunch mode (effectively, an extra preamp stage) to approximate that pushed-but-not-too-much sound. This is a cool sound because backing off the guitar volume cleans it up somewhat, creating a semi-clean tone with some bite when you dig in. Think of it as a clean amp with a Boss DS-1 in front, but the DS-1's gain is not quite half on.

Stick a low-to-medium-gain overdrive in between the guitar and the crunch channel, and you'll hear a fat lead tone with plenty of note clarity. I used a Zendrive, an old SD-1, and a Mesa Flux-Drive – each one presented their own focussed character, but with a touch of broad grind from the crunch

mode. Very cool. I could use this channel with an overdrive pedal all night and find loads of different clean, crunch and drive options.

The lead channel is interesting, too. Most small amps offer a boosted version of the first channel, but Cort have chosen to bump up this second channel with an extra volume control. In other words, the signal runs through gain, channel volume and master volume controls. With the master up and the channel volume up, the gain can swing from low distortion to solid hard-rock.

Lower the master volume and raise the channel volume, and there's some seriously focused metal grind happening. The task is to find the right balance of these three volume controls – a balance that suits the individual player. Add a drive pedal in front of this preamp, and the options are immediately expanded. That said, I found the second channel had plenty to offer without any extra electronics.

The CM30R has an effects loop – one of the most useful features an amp can have, and something usually only found on pro amps. Modulation- and time-based effects (chorus, delay, phaser, whatever) have inherent background noise, and running through the amp's front end will amplify this noise along with the effect and source signal (the guitar).

Effectively, the source signal and the effect (with its noise) gets amplified twice: first by the preamp and then by the power amp. The effects loop is after the preamp, so with the modulation- or time-based pedal in the loop, the signal gets amplified by the preamp, then hits the effect and then the power amp. The source signal is processed twice, but the effect and its noise are only amplified once. It's amazing how well this works, and all you need is an extra

cable to make it happen.

With the CM30R, the ‘R’ stands for reverb. The onboard reverb is digital and models a hall reverb. For those who like a real spring reverb, they only sound good in the “long pan” form, and practice amps just aren't large enough to fit this inside the cabinet – so digital makes sense. The Cort reverb is a sweet effect, which can be as subtle or dramatic as you require it to be.

The headphone output is for personal practice, but I used it as a line out into a mixer feeding Logic, and it worked well. The Send output on the effects loop will do the same thing, but you'll get a less refined signal – great if you're feeding a second amp, though. The CM30R has an aux input for amplifying an external audio source (such as iTunes), but better still, it's also Bluetooth enabled, so you can send this audio direct to the amp without having to worry about any cables.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Cort's CM30R is a great value combo – just right for personal practice, that late night jam with some friends, or a low-level practice session with the band. Channel one's vintage vibe offers plenty of variety from clean to crunch, and channel two follows on with a revoiced heavy crunch through to modern high-gain.

The old school look belies the tonal variety on tap, because there's plenty going on behind that two-tone vinyl and dark tweed grill. This is the kind of amp you could leave behind the driver's car seat, ready for that impromptu gathering, and have it do the business without any effort at all. The Cort CM30R offers plenty of features for not a lot of money – definitely worth a suss. 

► TOP FEATURES

- 30-watt, ten-inch speaker
- Two-channel, built-in distortion and nice reverb
- Effects loop
- Headphones out and aux in

► WHAT WE RECKON

PROS

- Great tones
- Very well built with plenty of power
- Reverb, effects loop and Bluetooth
- Super portable

CONS

- Limited colour options

► CONTACT

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RRP: \$279

ZOOM A1 FOUR

YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT SMALL PACKAGES? WELL, IT GETS BETTER! BY **STEVE HENDERSON.**

We're now just a few months short of 30 years since the Zoom Corporation hit the market with their groundbreaking 9002 - a multi-effects unit with an astounding amount of processing built into a backpack unit. It didn't sound like a Boogie or a Plexi (and it wasn't meant to), but it had a variety of super useful sounds that were just right for the time. With the market's continuing focus on acoustic music, Zoom's new A1 series (A1 FOUR and A1X FOUR) seems quite timely.

The A1 units have been designed not just for stringed instruments, but also for wind instruments like trumpet, sax and harmonica. Typical for a Zoom products, the A1 FOUR has an amazing amount of 'stuff' inside: over 70 stompbox effects (five at once), 50 memory locations, 15 guitar models, amp models, a rhythm machine with over 60 patterns, a realtime looper and a chromatic tuner, and it even comes with a separate mic pre and adaptor for 'unplugged' instruments. You can also download additional effects to expand the palette, and it runs on a standard nine-volt adaptor or four AA batteries.

The A1 FOUR is only 130 millimetres wide and weighs a diminutive 340 grams - it's a really easy lug. Input and output are jacks, there's a mini jack for aux in, and a USB port for accessing other sounds off the net (for example, there are another 13 guitar models available online). The preloaded guitar and effect models include various Martin and Gibson instruments; a Resophonic; an Adamas; TS and RC sounds; compressors; acoustic EQs (like Fishman and Radial), wahs; various trem, chorus, phaser and flanger options; pitch shifter; detuner; and some lovely reverbs. There are also specific effects and combinations for sax, trumpet, blues

harp, and so forth. The amp models and speaker simulations are cool - mix and match and you can create your very own custom amp.

Plugging in a favourite Maton dreadnought, there are plenty of options to create a tonal shift in its basic sound. Changing the core tone can offer options like a more appropriate sound for a given tune, or in a duo setting, contrast between two similar guitars. In a band, it can be the critical difference between being heard at all or being irrelevant.

I pulled up a band track (with acoustic and electric stems) in Logic and played around with the different guitar models the A1 FOUR has to offer. Muting the track's acoustic guitar (a Maton MSH-210D), I played around with the Zoom's OOO-21, which offers a less boomy tone, and the softer-but-broader sound of the Hummingbird model. Both gave the track a different image - the Hummingbird blended especially well. It's surprising the choices that seem suddenly appropriate: bringing the original acoustic back up, I dialled up Zoom's Resonator to create some contrast. The honky flavour added some poke and immediately found its own place in the mix, without sounding at all out of place.

The Zoom's effects selection offers quite a variety. Some are specifically designed for wind instruments - so, naturally, I couldn't help but run a guitar through them. For example, the 'Hm Juke' models a Green Bullet mic through a tweed Bassman and a tape echo. This is a great solo sound with heaps of presence and cut. Likewise, the 'Hm StevieW' (*whoever could they mean!?*), meant for a chromonica, delivers a fabulous rhythm guitar sound with a sweet chorus and a touch of echo.

Part of the fun in using effects is being able to

really 'mess' with them - change the order, use them 'wrong' or change their function (like using a compressor for a solo boost). The A1 FOUR lets you do all of that. The signal chain can be reordered, as weird as a player wants to sound, or just conventional for those straighter gigs. And don't be scared to use the TS effect on your acoustic - dial down the gain and use it as a warm boost.

Programming is super easy. Click the Stomp button (top left) and see what's there, click the pedal button (1-5) twice, click the Edit button (top left), then choose the sound (footswitches) and dial it in with the knobs. Click Memory (top left), and the A1 FOUR remembers the settings - there's no save button. The looper has 30 seconds of realtime sampling and, like most loopers, is a hoot. It's controlled via the two footswitches and is very easy to operate. Likewise, the rhythm machine is straightforward and offers loads of options - great for personal practice and to goose up a solo or duo gig.

THE BOTTOM LINE

There's no reason to necessarily limit the A1 FOUR to acoustic music. There are quite a number of 'electric' effects onboard (drives, boosts, wahs, and so on) and the gain structure handles electric guitars with ease. That 'Hm StevieW' patch sounds absolutely killer with a Strat.

The A1 FOUR has loads more than we can cover here, so it's worth checking out at the local. It's built solidly, and the A1X model (a chunk pricier at \$319.00) also has an expression pedal that works well with a positive, professional feel. The Zoom A1 FOUR is an outstanding effects unit that turns a complex idea into a surprisingly simple reality. 

► TOP FEATURES

- Effects models
- Guitar models
- Amp models
- Looper and rhythm machine
- Mic pre and adaptor

► WHAT WE RECKON

PROS

- Great tones
- Huge variety of options and combinations
- Easy to program and operate
- Excellent build quality

CONS

- None

► CONTACT

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RRP: \$349

MORLEY MINI STEVE VAI BAD HORSE 2 CONTOUR WAH PEDAL

STEVE VAI'S ICONIC SIGNATURE WAH-WAH PEDAL GETS ANOTHER OVERHAUL, THIS TIME WITH AN IMPROVED BUFFER. BY **PETER HODGSON**.

Legend has it, there are few guitarists more demanding to design signature gear for than Steve Vai. You don't rise to such technical and compositional levels of excellence without being extremely driven, and Vai's demands on gear companies are the thing of legend. So when he turned to Morley to design a signature wah pedal, I'm sure a few white hairs sprung up on the heads of Morley engineers.

That was in the mid '90s, and the result was the Bad Horsie Wah. It must have been a comfortable collaboration in the end, though, because it was followed shortly thereafter by the Bad Horsie 2, which benefitted from the addition of a footswitchable second mode called Contour, which enables the user to adjust Q and wah level. The Bad Horsie 2 has remained in the catalogue consistently ever since, but Morley continues to tinker, now releasing the Bad Horsie 20/20 as part of a new line kitted out with Morley's super reliable 20/20 buffer to maintain your signal strength and integrity when the effect is not engaged.

At heart, this is still a Bad Horsie 2 Contour Wah. It still features switchless activation – that is, there's no footswitch at the toe-end of the pedal's travel to engage the effect. You simply move the pedal and the wah effect begins. Take your foot off, and the wah effect tails off over a period of 1.5 seconds. Or you can pop the bottom off the pedal and adjust a tiny internal trim pot for your preferred off time, from instantaneously all the way up to 3.5 seconds.

The next design twist is the pedal's operation

itself. Instead of using an assembly to rotate a potentiometer when the pedal is moved like other wahs, Morley pedals use an Electro-Optical design which uses an LED light array and a light-sensitive sensor to control the wah sweep. What this means is that instead of stepping on the pedal to rotate a pot, stepping on the pedal brings the LEDs closer to the sensor – and the nearer it gets, the higher the tone sweep gets.

The benefits are twofold: extremely smooth linear wah sweep, and, best of all, no pots to wear out and become all scratchy and noisy. Some higher end tremolo and compressor pedals use similar technology to regulate the effect dependent on internal settings or the strength of the input signal, but it's a logical fit for expression pedal effects.

There's also a Bad Horsie/Contour switch for selecting between two wah voices, plus two knobs that are engaged in Contour mode: Tone and Wah Level. This is great for adding some extra oomph to your wah sound, since some wahs tend to thin out the gain a little when they're engaged.

Being a Vai signature item, the Bad Horsie 20/20 is a modern-sounding, hi-fi, powerful wah with a sort of smoothness in the high end that allows the pedal to sound round and 'glossy' even when you floor it. The top quarter of the pedal's sweep is especially good for pulling pinch harmonics out of guitars that usually put up a bit of a fight against such techniques, and it even made my Ibanez's neck pickup squeal with Dimebag-style harmonics.

Vai's original Bad Horsie mode is the best way to

get a ready-to-go sound out of this pedal, but fiddling around with the Contour and Level controls in the Contour mode reveals fresh layers of flexibility. With the Contour control down low, the sweep reminds me of the classic fat Jimi Hendrix wah tone, with darker treble and reduced range compared to the wild sweep of Bad Horsie mode, and yet a hi fi sheen that takes the classic "wow-wow" wah sound of the '60s and drags it into the future.

Was the refresh necessary? Well, with more players using digital profilers or more complex rigs compared to the general 'heads and cabs' era the Bad Horsie was designed in, it makes sense to enhance the signal fidelity as gear needs evolve.

THE BOTTOM LINE

If you're familiar with the wah tones of Zakk Wylde and Nuno Bettencourt when they used Morley wah pedals in their golden years – or if, of course, you've listened to Vai in the last decade or so – you have a rough idea of the charm of Morley wah pedals. The sweep is bold and drastic, and the tones have a glassy sheen which leaves no doubt as to whether the effect is on or not, even under huge amounts of distortion.

Vai's own spin on this classic effect is as extroverted and extravagant as the man himself, and whether you want to put a bit more Vai in your sound, or you just want a flexible and in-your-face wah pedal, it's worth saddling up this Bad Horsie for a test. And if you're a collector, the Bad Horsie just got even cooler with this new livery. 

► TOP FEATURES

- Switchless operation
- Optical effect operation; no pots to wear out
- Vai and Contour modes
- Compact form factor
- Vai-designed artwork

► WHAT WE RECKON

PROS

- Simple operation – just rock it with your foot
- Two great-sounding modes

CONS

- The model typeface looks cheap

► CONTACT

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MUSIC MAN MARIPOSA

A UNIQUE TAKE ON A CLASSIC IDEA. BY **STEVE HENDERSON**.



Over the years, Music Man has collaborated with some heavyweight players who are, in the main, noted for their instrumental virtuosity. Albert Lee, Steve Morse, John Petrucci, and the legendary Steve Lukather immediately spring to mind. But there have also been players who are more focussed on the compositional side of rock, such as Anne Clark (St. Vincent) and James Valentine, so it's no real surprise to see Omar Rodríguez-López on their roster of 'signature' players. The extraordinary music of The Mars Volta is evidence of this player's worthiness to be included in such an elite group – and like Rodríguez-López himself, the Music Man Mariposa is a bit quirky, but entirely musical.

Right from the start, the Mariposa has that 'personal touch' – a funky body shape, a cool etched scratchplate, gold hardware, and attitude to burn. The body is made of okoume (a hardwood from equatorial West Africa – officially called Aucoumea Klaineana, for those who are interested) and it is surprisingly light. The neck (25.5-inch scale length) is made of torrefied maple with an ebony fretboard and large block inlays. The torrefication process for maple necks is becoming more and more popular, and for good reasons: it dries the timber right to the core (a state that would normally take decades to achieve) and the neck is then stronger, lighter and more resonant. Also, it requires far less finish, and it feels great to play. Combined with the ebony fretboard and the stainless steel frets, the Mariposa neck has a fast, controlled and comfortable feel.

The electronics are super simple: two custom Music Man humbuckers, two volume controls, and a three-way switch. I love this arrangement – there's no pesky tone knobs to check (be honest, when was the last time you used a tone knob?) and no 'clever' switching to worry about. The pickups are fairly high-output units, so driving the front end of an amp is no problem. The tones span classic rock through to metal, and they have a big, robust sound.

Bouncing between a tweed Bassman and channel one of a Mk IV Boogie, the clean tones have a bell-like chime that's very satisfying. Add a little chorus or detuned harmoniser, and the harmonic overtones multiply into a seriously rich sound. Now play an Aadd9 or an Emin9, and you'll get the full picture. The dry sound through a Mesa Flux-Five or a Boss DS-1 offers up the kind of heavy rock and metal drive that is absolutely infectious – the lead tones are dominating and focussed, and the crunchy rhythm sounds have a scooped presence that easily cuts through a mix. There's plenty of full-bodied sustain for those

long notes or legato lines, and even up the neck, notes hang on for a long time.

The Mariposa's slim neck profile – a shallow D with a ten-inch radius, has a very friendly feel. It's finished with what Music Man describe as a "gunstock oil and hand-rubbed special wax blend", and whatever that "blend" is, it works. There are 22 high-medium frets and, like all Music Man instruments, the work on them is impeccable. The four-plus-two headstock is their 'long' version, which creates a more balanced appearance, and its face is colour-matched to the body. Locking Schaller M6 tuners and a compensated nut complete the picture.

The angular body shape has a cool, modernistic look – it totally could have been designed by Ray Dietrich (think Firebird) in the '60s. But it kinda suits the angular vibe of The Mars Volta, and its unique offset shape makes a definite statement. The neck and body joint is the classic Music Man five-bolt arrangement, contoured for easy upper-fret access. Speaking of which, the treble cutaway is a little too straight and inhibits, just a bit, access to the last couple of frets. It's not a dealbreaker, though – just something to know.

The vibrato bridge has a modern look, but with vintage saddles. It's a great system: a two-point fulcrum set up with three springs (there are two more in the case, for the masochists out there), with plenty of sustain, works *really* smoothly, and doesn't suck the middle out of the tone like some 'tremolo' systems.

The knobs and selector switch feel really positive, and under the control backplate, the wiring is neat in the extreme. There's even a tiny PCB to which the wiring and pot tags are attached. Here's a nice touch: the backplate is black plastic but with a layer of shielding on the inside, which has then been painted black except for around one screw. This contacts a grounding wire to maintain the integrity of the cavity shielding; the folks at Music Man just like to put that extra bit of effort in.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Other than the funky shape, the Mariposa's big standout feature is the bold, laser-etched scratchplate. Some will shrug such a feature off, but it's been nicely rendered and brings some old-world charm to the body's George Jestson vibe. Other than that, everything on the Mariposa is entirely practical.

It's superbly built, and the high-gloss poly finish is made to last. It's a simple, toneful, punchy rock guitar; it'll do big clean sounds, rhythm and crunch with clarity, and delivers a dominant lead voice. Don't let its looks fool you, the Mariposa can rock with the best of them. 

► TOP FEATURES

- Two custom Music Man humbuckers
- Okoume body
- 25.5-inch scale neck
- Modern-looking vibrato bridge with vintage saddles
- Stainless steel frets on an ebony fretboard

► WHAT WE RECKON

PROS

- ▲ Plays and sounds great
- ▲ Superbly built
- ▲ Unique styling

CONS

- ▼ The treble cutaway

► CONTACT

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RRP: \$1,899

FENDER TONE MASTER TWIN REVERB

THE TWIN REVERB IS THE STUFF OF AMP LEGENDS. IT COULD ALSO STUFF YOUR WHOLE SOUND UP IF YOU'RE NOT CAREFUL. FENDER TO THE RESCUE. BY **PETER HODGSON**.

The Fender Twin Reverb has existed in one form or another since 1952, and it remains prized for its clarity, its sheer projection of sound, and the heavenly series of harmonic overtones that kick in when you crank it up just enough to get the power amp a little angry. They're also heavy – legend has it that the first singer to skip out on his band when they were loading gear was trying to dodge lifting a Twin Reverb.

Over the years Fender have experimented with variations on the Twin Reverb, such as the Super Twin, the Twin Reverb II, and in 2001, the Cyber Twin, which combined tube and digital technology. Now we've got Fender's new Tone Master series, which includes a Twin Reverb and a Deluxe Reverb. The idea behind these amps is simple: the sounds you love, the controls you know, the amp you covet... But not so damn heavy.

Oh, yeah, and it's digital – but you're not really meant to think about that. It's not that it's a secret: Fender is quite upfront about the Tone Master's digital nature. But they want you to totally forget about it when it's time to actually plug in and play.

Everything about this amp says "Twin Reverb". The front-panel controls are identical. There are two channels, each with two inputs; bright switches; and Treble, Middle and Bass controls – but one with Reverb Speed and Intensity knobs as well.

Around the back, though, you'll find some interesting features that you won't expect on a Twin. There's a balanced line out with a volume knob, switchable cabinet simulation, XLR out and ground lift, plus an output power knob which goes from a full 85 watts down through 40 watts, 25

watts, 12 watts, five watts and one watt.

The amp is actually driven by a 200-watt digital power amp to achieve the Twin's sound: the power reduction is best thought of as a sonic feature that lets you attain cranked tone at lower volumes, rather than actual power scaling.

The speakers are a pair of specially designed Jensen N-12K neodymium speakers. Those selectable cabinet simulations are impulse responses, and the cabinet is made of lightweight, resonant pine. So essentially what we have here is something that looks like a Twin and runs like a Twin, but pulls a clever slight-of-hand when it comes to the whole physical aspect of being a Twin.

Heck, it even comes in at a very manageable 15 kilograms, down from the original's 32. This makes a lot of sense for any player, really, but consider this: while there are always new Fender players picking up the instrument, there are also a lot of older folks who still play – and as we get on a bit, it ain't so easy to carry a heavy amp. So not only will roadies love this amp, but weekend warriors will too.

So what does a digital version of a Fender Twin sound like? Well, eerily similar to the real thing. Only an exceptional pair of ears would be able to tell the difference, although a side-by-side comparison reveals that the Tone Master version doesn't need to be driven as hard to hit that sonic sweet spot. Twins aren't designed to distort when they get loud, and while they will give you a bit of crunch, it's more of a bright, angry clean tone rather than a full-on distortion or overdrive. The power scaling means you can achieve those classic

sounds at much more reasonable volumes than you would need to get a tube Twin to do the same thing.

In true Fender fashion, it's great with single coils, and if you've never plugged a Tele into a cranked Twin before – tube or digital – it's a truly remarkable experience. Then again, vintage-output humbucking pickups and P-90s sound phenomenal through this amp too, retaining their clarity and zing rather than getting all muffled out and compressed.

So what's missing, apart from half the weight? Well, it might have been nice to include an effects loop in order to add some delay to the back of those sweet cranked-up tones. Otherwise, there's really nothing missing. It's a digital amp, but there's no screen and that's totally okay. It's a Twin with no tubes, yet you probably wouldn't know until you looked in the back. There's no gigantic transformer weighing the amp down, and the speakers are more lightweight too.

In other words, Fender has found a way to use modern technology to take away the more troublesome things about owning an all-tube Twin – and a way to sidestep the unattractive things about owning a digital amp, such as menu screens, and features that you can't access without hitting a shift key.

THE BOTTOM LINE

If your budget, spinal health and mode of transport permit you to buy a regular tube Twin, then go for it – have yer fun. But the Tone Master Twin is more affordable and more manageable without losing anything in the translation. **AB**

► TOP FEATURES

- Full recreation of a Twin
- Only 15 kilograms
- IR cab sims for direct out
- Power scaling
- Neodymium speakers

► WHAT WE RECKON

PROS

- Won't break your back
- Won't break your bank
- Won't break your ears

CONS

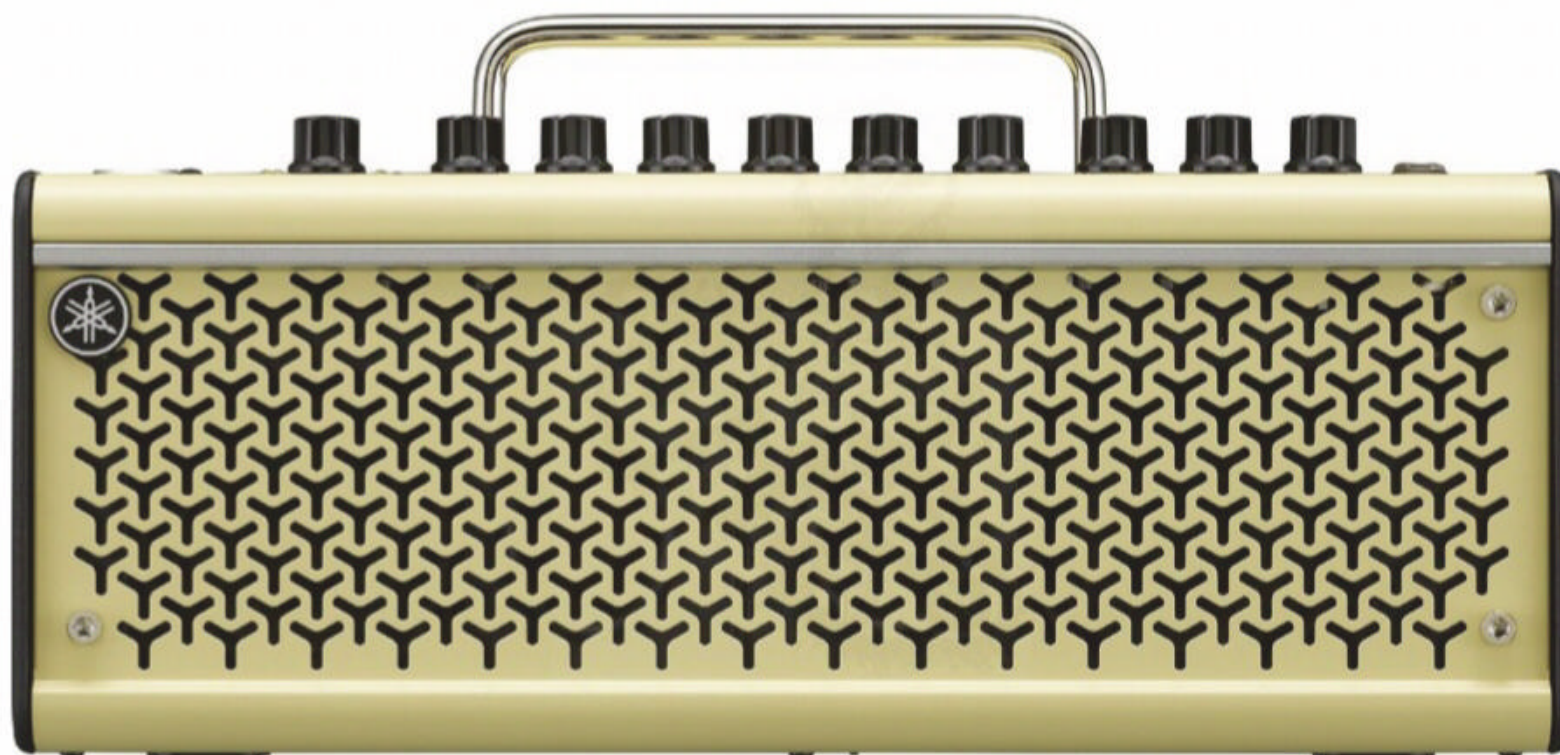
- No effects loop
- No sympathy hugs for slipped discs

► CONTACT

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RRP: \$499.99

YAMAHA THR10IWL

YAMAHA UPGRADES ITS ALREADY LEGENDARY MINI AMP SERIES WITH SOME NEW SOUNDS AND NEW PORTABILITY. WORDS BY **PETER HODGSON**.

The Yamaha THR series has been around for a while now, and these aesthetically pleasing, incredibly flexible little amps are a favourite for many touring guitarists as their backstage and hotel amps. They're also beloved by guitar teachers as affordable, flexible and portable amps for both them and their students. And they look great on a bookshelf for home use.

The THR-II range is beefed up with plenty of new features across a variety of models. On review here is the THR10IWL, which even a cursory look at the specs list might appear to be the ultimate convenient practice amp. Let's have a look why.

The THR10IWL wouldn't be worth a look if it didn't sound great. It features 15 different amp models - including three bass amps, three mic models for acoustic-electrics, a flat voicing for things like keyboards or other sound sources, and most importantly for we guitarists, very tube-like tones across the guitar amp model range.

That's all awesome, and very much a part of the original THR series' charm. But the new version beefs up the specs and convenience considerably with Bluetooth support for audio playback and for remote-editing your presets - plus, very impressively, a built-in wireless receiver which is compatible with the optional Line 6 Relay G10T transmitter. That's right - you can sit one of these babies on your bookshelf or bedside table, then hook into it from across the room without having to worry about cables.

I get a feeling this will be something we'll be seeing more and more now that wireless technology has well and truly matured. Certainly, it's something

we'll be seeing a lot now that Yamaha owns Line 6 - but a case could definitely be made for licensing the technology to other companies. And with the THR Remote app for iOS and Android, you can change your amp settings from the comfort of your sofa.

The rechargeable battery gives you up to five hours of performance when you're on the go (and the amp's hi-fi audio playback makes it a great Bluetooth speaker you can jam along with or use for busking to backing tracks). And you can use it as an interface for your DAW by connecting it via USB. Cubase AI/Cubase LE is included for PC, Mac and iPad, too.

The amp models are divided into three banks of five models - five are included, while the other ten are available via the app - giving you everything from pristine cleans to gritty overdrives and massive high-gain tones; along with eight effects including chorus, flanger, phaser, tremolo, echo, echo/reverb, spring reverb and hall reverb; while there are an additional two effects available in the app - compressor and noise gate. There are two effects circuits, with one handling the modulation effects while the other looks after the delays and reverbs.

Yamaha has perfected what it calls Virtual Circuitry Modeling, which replicates the features of amplifier designs right down to the component level, giving you those magical little interactions between the elements of a circuit - y'know, the stuff that really makes an amp feel like an amp. If you're blessed with Eric Johnson's ears, you'll still be able to tell this isn't a tube amp, but for the rest of us (and especially for its intended users),

the THR10IWL is perfectly convincing, whether pumping out Marshall-like growl, Mesa-inspired roar or Dumble-esque harmonic complexity. The models are very responsive and interactive, unlike some smaller amps which tend to override the individual character of your guitar and pickups.

The effects are useful, and handily programmable thanks to the app - but it would have been nice to see a little more versatility. Maybe a pitch-shifter or octave fuzz? The effects that are here sound great and are pretty unobtrusive, unless you set them to be really over-the-top. Sometimes you just want subtle, well-voiced effects that fit the song, rather than overbearing phasey wooshes that distract from the actual notes. The THR10IWL can manage the hell out of that.

The amp also incorporates Yamaha's new Extended Stereo Technology to create a wide, spacious stereo audio image, which operates across stereo audio tracks as well as the reverb effects to make the amp sound bigger than it is.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The ability to play along with tracks from your smartphone wirelessly makes this a great at-home amp, and the tones are really musical and lots of fun. But for me, that Line 6 wireless function is the real winner here - the thing that ties the whole unit together into something truly worth upgrading to. The visual design of the unit really does lend itself to being used as a piece of functional furniture thanks to its old-timey radio vibe, and it's really fun to set the amp down across the room and wander around the house with your guitar strapped on. 

► TOP FEATURES

- 20 watts
- 15 amp models
- Eight effects
- Line 6 wireless built in
- Bluetooth connectivity

► WHAT WE RECKON

PROS

- Great sounds
- Very portable
- High-pass filter

CONS

- Wireless transmitter is an optional accessory

► CONTACT

YAMAHA AUSTRALIA

Ph: (03) 9693 5111

Web: au.yamaha.com



RRP: \$1,658

HEDD TYPE 05 NEARFIELD MONITORS

ANOTHER ENTRY IN THE CROWDED NEARFIELD MONITOR MARKET, THESE GERMAN SPEAKERS OFFER A CUTTING-EDGE TWEETER AND SOME INTERESTING DIGITAL I/O. **ALEX WILSON** TAKES THEM FOR A TEST DRIVE.

Heinz Electrodynamic Designs (use your “HEDD”) are a relatively new company. They’re essentially a splinter enterprise of well-regarded audio firm ADAM, created when one of the latter’s founders broke off to start a new line. I’ve reviewed my fair share of monitors, and in many ways, HEDD’s products are nothing revolutionary. They’re among a hotly contested segment of the market, where many companies vye to provide the consumer with ever-better performance at ever-low prices.

What makes these speakers worth a closer look are some of the perks that HEDD have included in their design and product ecosystem: the Air Motion Transformer, the Lineariser plugin and the Dante interface.

The Air Motion Transformer, or AMT for short, is an alternative transducer design to the tweeter. In case you don’t know, the tweeter is the small speaker above the larger one. Its function is to reproduce the upper half of the frequency spectrum. Without getting bogged down in the technical details, an AMT serves the same function but translates the signal into vibrations via an accordion-like diaphragm, rather than a speaker cone. The intent here is to reduce distortion and increase resolution in the high-end material. Juxtaposed with my reference set, I did notice an emphasis on these frequencies, with more perceptible detail and ‘space’.

While this is a highly subjective judgement, I’d say the speakers sound good-to-very-good (for the

price). In addition to a nice high register, the lows are also solid. It’s easy to hear and create detailed bass on the Type 05s, which is an ever-important aspect of a great recording. Bear in mind that nearfields like this can’t reach the same level of performance or accuracy as systems with a dedicated sub.

The Type 05’s overall sound is a touch mid-shy, forgiving and contemporary. They are pleasant to listen to, and provide a hi-fi take on the frequency-sculpted consumer-grade headphones many people listen to audio on. If they were paired with, say, a set of flat, mid-heavy, passive speakers, then the mixer would have a great snapshot of how their music will be heard.

Another tool that HEDD provides to increase the accuracy of your listening environment is the Lineariser plugin. Again, without delving into the how, the why is that correcting for phase issues between your paired monitors will increase how accurately your mix is being reproduced. Any differences should be most noticeable in the stereo image and any related low-end information. The Lineariser Plugin is free and sits on your master DAW channel, and is powered by your CPU.

If I understand the pretty complex explanation from HEDD, the Lineariser uses maximally neutral impulse responses to help correct for inevitable phase issues arising from a room or speaker placement. In practise, I thought it made things sound better. I would really invite any prospective buyer to try the Lineariser out at a store –

whether you think it improves the sound would be a large determinant in the HEDD Type 05’s bid for your bucks.

Finally, the HEDD Type 05 offers AoIP (Audio over Internet Protocol) support using Dante architecture. AoIP is a pro-level, large-scale audio solution that comes in several different flavours and is only just beginning to make its way into consumer and small business markets. In essence, an extra card expansion allows for the Type 05 to receive its audio information over one standard Cat-6 Ethernet Cable.

Ethernet is a cheap and robust medium for transmitting multitrack audio, and many people are increasingly turning to Dante – the most popular protocol for Ethernet audio – to enhance their large-scale systems or analog/digital hybrid studios. No doubt Dante connectivity will become increasingly important in years to come. For some, the presence of this connectivity here will be enough to justify a purchase on its own.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The HEDD Type 05 doesn’t reinvent the wheel, but it doesn’t need to. It performs well in mixing and listening situations, and the company offers its customers clever and cutting-edge perks to try and inch themselves to the front of the pack. At this price point, and accounting for taste, the Type 05 sounds as good as any of its competitors. It is well worth a serious look from anyone investing in their first good set of nearfields, or looking for a second set to A/B with. 

► TOP FEATURES

- Air Motion Transformer
- Lineariser plugin
- Dante connectivity
- Six-inch woofer
- All-wood construction

► WHAT WE RECKON

PROS

- ▲ Digital connectivity
- ▲ Quality sound
- ▲ Good value for money

CONS

- ▼ A modern sound that is not suitable for all production tasks

► CONTACT

BUSISOFT

Ph: (03) 9810 2900

Web: busisoft.com.au



RRP: \$1,999

JH AUDIO JH13V2 PRO IN-EAR MONITORS

IN-EAR MONITORS ARE LIKE A PAIR OF JEANS – YOU WEAR THEM SO MUCH AND IN SO MANY DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES THAT YOU WANT THEM TO BE RELIABLE. SOMETIMES IT PAYS TO SPEND A BIT MORE.

ALEX WILSON CHECKS OUT A MID-PRICE PAIR FROM A HIGH-END COMPANY.

I'd never heard of JH Audio before these in-ear monitors (IEMs) landed on my desk for a listen. The company is fairly new, and has a good yarn behind it. Back in the '90s, the titular Mr. Harvey was manning the monitors desk for Van Halen. Alex Van Halen needed some custom IEMs, and Jerry Harvey not only created a great pair from scratch for the drummer, but spun it out into a massively successful brand called Ultimate Ears.

Fast forward to today, and Jerry has moved on from his first firm and is now working the boutique end of the market pretty hard. The company has so many big names using their products (from Slash to Childish Gambino) that they can afford charging an arm and leg for most of them.

I take it that the JH13v2s are the company's attempt to provide some great all-round IEMs, taking some of their best design ideas and packing them into something that's more affordable for the average punter. The short answer is that I think they've succeeded. These are great headphones. They're a touch more expensive than some of the other options around, but really manage to shine in a variety of different situations. As well as writing for this venerable rag, I work as a freelance mix engineer and live tech, and also perform with IEMs. I would trust this set in any of those situations.

The company describes the monitors application as "wide sound stage, good clarity and separation, deep bass extension. From classical to hip hop, the JH13v2 PRO is an all-rounder." This is, staggeringly enough for an audio company, a proud statement that bears scrutiny. The basis of this strong endorsement comes from the combination of technical know-how and one simple user control: The JH13v2s sound both pleasing and 'accurate' across the frequency spectrum, but also have an adjustable bass control. This means that I can use them for tasks when accuracy is paramount (say as a live or traveling audio engineer) while also being able to hype the bass when useful (for monitoring purposes as a live bassist, or just for a certain music listening experience). As many of us who work in the industry increasingly must wear many hats, this kind of well-considered flexibility is a godsend.

Leaving aside this variable bass-extension, the JH13v2s don't skimp on the other parts of the frequency spectrum. Two drivers are dedicated to bass, two to mids and then four to treble. A total of eight drivers per ear is very generous for this price. Interestingly, JH Audio have foregrounded a certain technology called FreqPhase, which uses certain construction methods to minimise any

phase cancellations caused by crossover in the drivers. \Admittedly, I don't have the equipment to be able to determine how this works to enhance the sound. However, given how great these IEMs sound in general use, it was not hard to imagine this thoughtful feature had contributed.

In the box, you get the detachable proprietary four-pin cable with 3.5-millimetre termination and variable bass adjustment, a variable bass adjustment tool, a machined aluminum carrying case, three foam tips, three silicone tips, and a cleaning tool. You can either order a Universal Factory fit (which is what we recieved as our review pair) or have a pair custom-fit for your ears. Overall, I found the JH13v2s were not the easiest to fit initially, but felt snug and comfy once they were in there.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The JH13v2s stand out as a pair of IEMs you could love for life. A really well-considered design makes them strong contenders for some the most useful and versatile IEMs I've reviewed. Their basic sound is strong enough to match competitors, and you really feel that the company is working hard to make the quality they sell to the stars available to the average Joe or Jane. 🎧

► TOP FEATURES

- Eight-driver configuration
- Triple Bore with FreqPhase Steel Tube Waveguide
- Moon Audio cable with four-pin connection and machined aluminum locking collar
- Patent-pending variable bass output
- Integrated three-way crossover

► WHAT WE RECKON

PROS

- Versatile
- They sound excellent
- Good value for money

CONS

- May be out of the price range for some punters

► CONTACT

BUSISOFT

Ph: (03) 9810 2900

Web: busisoft.com.au



ONE NIGHT AT PAT'S PLACE

AFTER FOUR YEARS OF TINKERING IN SECRECY, **PAT METHENY** IS KICKING 2020 OFF ON A HUGE NOTE WITH HIS AMBITIOUS 47TH ALBUM AND AN INTIMATE TOUR DOWN UNDER. WORDS BY **MATT DORIA**.

We have not a single doubt that before too long, the amount of albums in Pat Metheny's catalogue will outnumber that of years he's lived. *From This Place* marks #47 for the Missouri-native jazz icon, and the first of entirely new material since 2014's *Kin*. And though it comes so far deep into Metheny's discography, the 65-year-old describes it as "one of the records I have been waiting to make my whole life," citing a need to explore every other crevice of his creative mind before being able to unearth the inspiration behind it.

"It is a kind of musical culmination," he noted, "Reflecting a wide range of expressions that have interested me over the years, scaled across a large canvas, presented in a way that offers the kind of opportunities for communication that can only be earned with a group of musicians who have spent hundreds of nights together on the bandstand."

Right after the album hits shelves in February, Metheny – alongside a full band of similarly storied virtuosos – will make his long-awaited return to Australian stages. Surprisingly enough, it'll be only his third trip in as many as 45 years (his last visits were in '85 and '14) – and, given the breadth of his catalogue, it's entirely possible that what he plays on the tour will be completely different to what he has on those prior. Hell, he could play two hours of entirely unique material each night with plenty of leftovers!

On a rare day off for the 20-time Grammy winner, we cornered Metheny for a chat about what he has instore for his latest Australian invasion.

What can punters expect when they sit down for "An Evening With Pat Metheny"?

I wanted to put together a group of musicians that could play well across the wide range of things I've done over the years. In a way, my whole approach to music has always been more about the 'how' than

the 'what'. I really feel that the best situations I can be in are when I'm in – and the best thing I can offer the musicians I choose to bring along with me on this or that part of the journey is – an environment that allows a certain personal authenticity in concert, with a distinctive musical identity. That identity is often informed by the tunes themselves.

What goes into scribbling up a setlist when you've got such a broad and diverse catalogue of work to draw from?

Playing is always fun for me. And there's a fairly specific language at work in my playing, which is somewhat unique and maybe a fair amount more challenging to fully embody than it might appear. Having Antonio [Sanchez] on the bandstand with me, night after night in all the different settings we've played in together, allows us a certain code that we can draw from at will. Linda [May Han Oh] and Gwilym [Simcock] are both excellent musicians as well – they really soak everything up at an incredible pace. We can play across the spectrum of many of my things. I've also written some new music for this particular group of players. It's a very exciting band, and I'm sure that even folks who might not be that familiar with my work would enjoy the program.

As a guitarist, what are some of the ideas and techniques that you enjoy exploring onstage?

I try to represent honestly, in sound, the things I love most about music. I'm not a huge fan of the whole idea of genre, or dividing things up into various styles of music as a way of thinking. To me, music is one big universal thing, and I always try to represent that. The musicians who I admire the most are the ones who have a deep reservoir of knowledge and insight – not just about music, but about life in general – and are able to illuminate the things that

they love in sound. When it's a musician who can do that on the spot, as an improviser – that is usually my favourite kind of player.

I feel like I'm a musician in this broad sense first. All the subsets of the way music often gets talked about, in terms of the words people use to describe music – it's a cultural and political discussion that I've found I'm really not that interested in. I'm interested in the spirit and the sound of music itself. And as far as sound goes, I always try to let the music decide what direction I go in, in terms of orchestration. I'm pretty happy to play in a really dense way or a really sparse way, or really loud or really soft or all over the dynamic range, really inside the chords or outside the chords... It kind of doesn't matter too much for me – I go for whatever seems to sound best for what is happening at that particular moment.

What can you tell us about your current rig?

I recently started using a Kemper system. It's been kind of life changing – I can literally plug a thumb drive in and have my whole sound be right there.

Do you have a go-to guitar at the moment?

I have become interested in guitars over the past few years. I have been doing a lot of research into the earliest electric guitars – the Gibson ES150 and ES250 in particular. 

Pat Metheny is touring Australia in March:

Wed 4th	Riverside Theatre, Perth WA
Fri 6th	Palais Theatre, Melbourne VIC
Sat 7th	State Theatre, Sydney NSW

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WED 22TH APRIL
THE GOV
ADELAIDE

THU 23TH APRIL
ASTOR THEATRE
PERTH



LARKIN POE

WED 15TH APRIL
FACTORY THEATRE
SYDNEY

THU 16TH APRIL
CORNER HOTEL
MELBOURNE



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SYDNEY

WED 15TH APRIL
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MELBOURNE



WALTER TROUT

TUE 7TH APRIL
LIZOTTE'S
NEWCASTLE

WED 8TH APRIL
FACTORY THEATRE
SYDNEY

THU 9TH APRIL
CORNER HOTEL
MELBOURNE



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OXFORD ART FACTORY
SYDNEY

MON 13TH APRIL
CORNER HOTEL
MELBOURNE



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THE FUNK APOSTLES**

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170 RUSSELL
MELBOURNE

THU 9TH APRIL
METRO THEATRE
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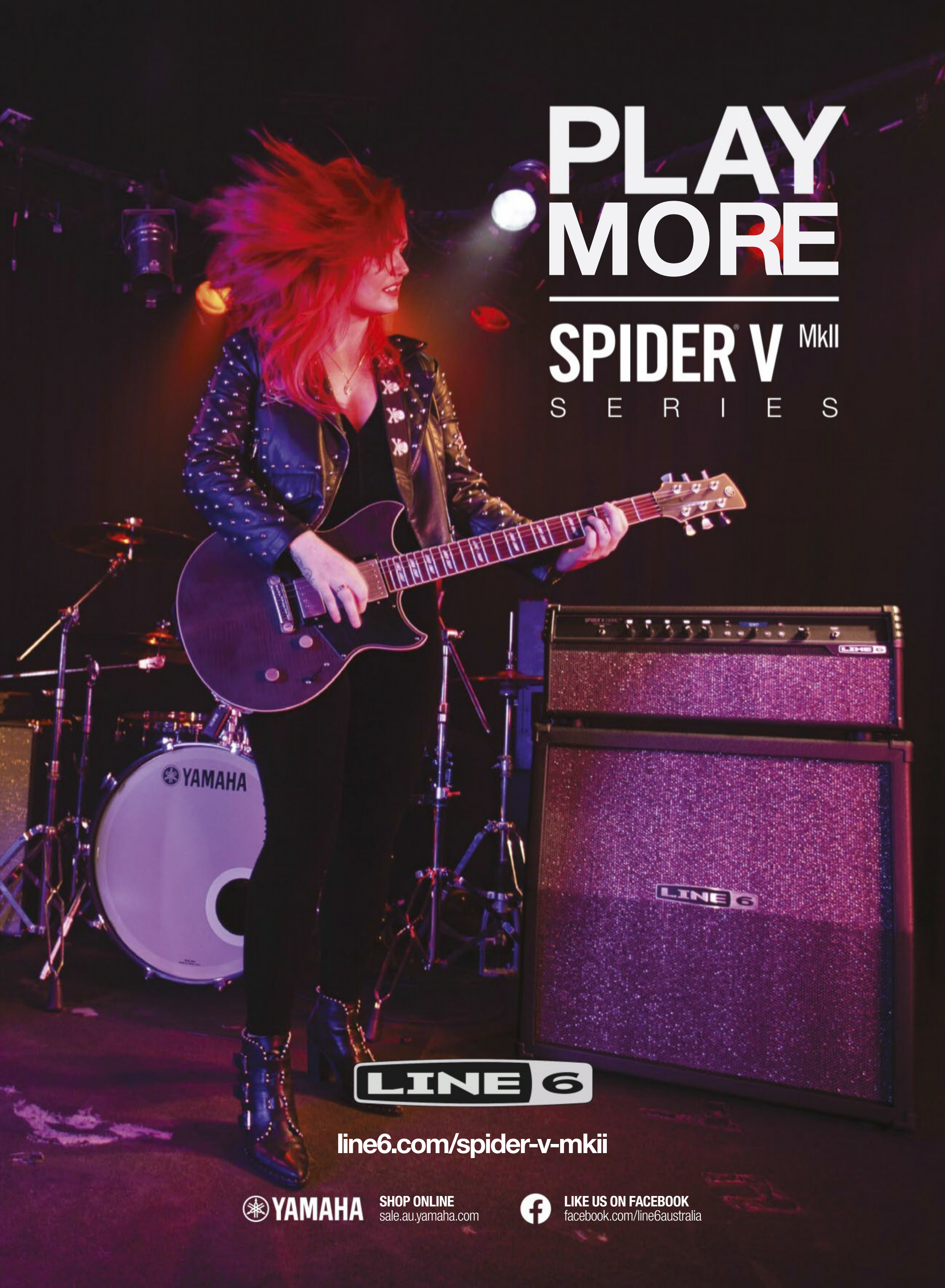
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