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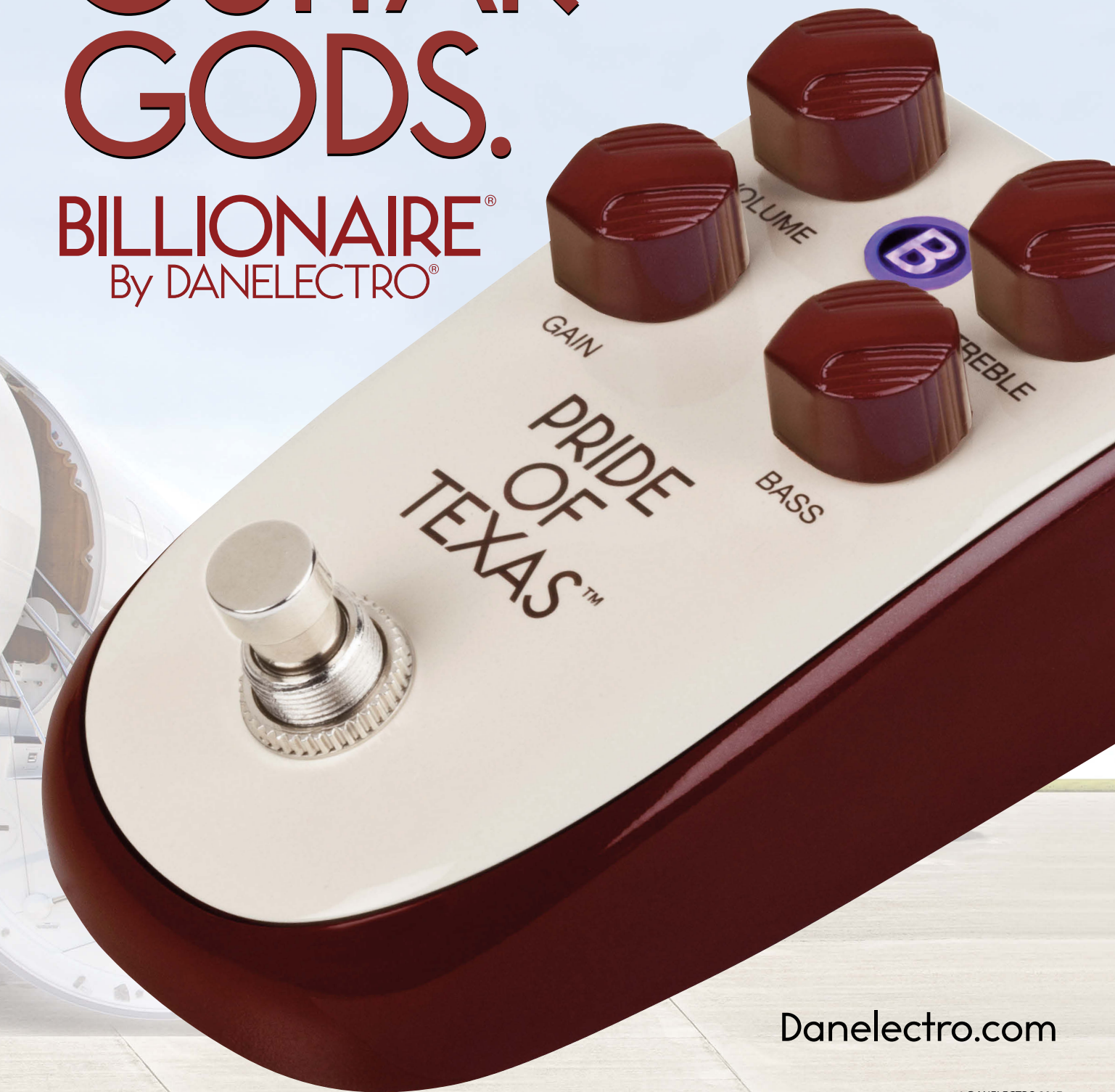
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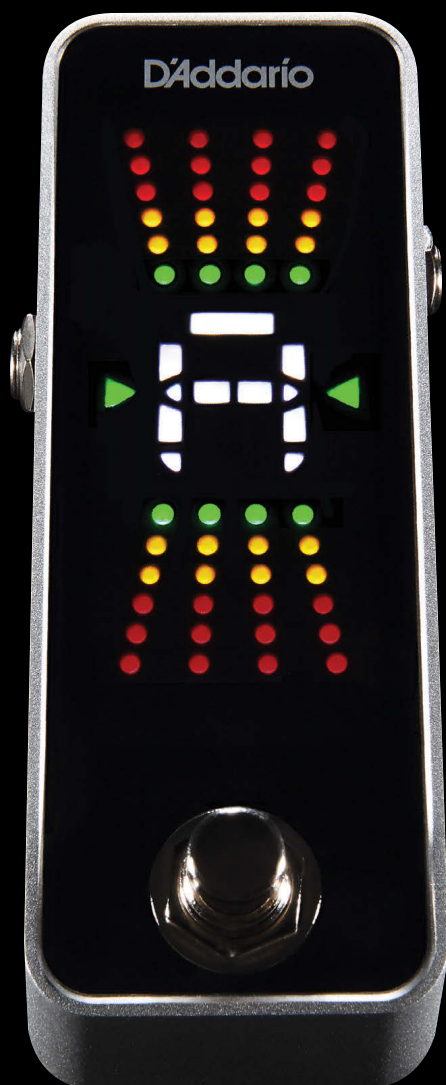
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NOIZE FROM THE EDITOR



WHAT FOLLOWS COULD BE THE MAD RANTING OF A former English major trying to riff on Jonathan Swift's *A Modest Proposal*—though without alluding to cannibalism, nationalism, economic disparities, or the welfare of children, and, certainly, the piece is devoid of Mr. Swift's literary genius and brilliant command of satire.

Or, perhaps this struggling wordplay could be the very tiny seed of a revolution. Let's begin...

What If We Just STOPPED?

It is a melancholy burden to toil at a trade that returns no livelihood or relief from the financial pressures of life. We deliver

beautiful music to a community that can choose to ignore or revile it, or adore it and steal it for their own, or, even more cruelly, exploit it for their personal gain without fair compensation to those who created it. We are enduring the slow, tortuous death of a thousand cuts, and it is we who are wielding the blade.

But what if we stopped hurting ourselves? Stopped degrading the effort and pain and creative struggles and the sweet bliss of accomplishment?

What if we just stopped giving our music away?

It's important to fully understand that this is an action plan for *everyone* without exception. It's for the Foo Fighters and Beyonce and U2 and Keith Urban and the Beatles, and every music star on all the major labels. It's for all the musical estates of every chart-topper, one-hit wonder, and also-ran no longer with us, from Frank Zappa to Glen Campbell to Amy Winehouse to Falco, Doug Fieger, and Minnie Riperton. It's for the underground hordes who make tracks in their bedrooms and rehearsal studios, and who splatter the social networks with millions of pieces of music. No one—not a single, solitary artist of any stature—would post their work anywhere without fair and reasonable compensation. No more promo tracks, video debuts, sneak peeks, free samples, or ego-boost posting. We would create a vast tempest of unhearing.

To accomplish this, we'd need to think less like needy urchins ripe for exploitation, and more like, well, sports figures. It's amusing, for some, how athletes who play what are fundamentally kid's games can earn multi-millions of dollars. Reportedly, Tom Brady earned \$28.8 million for a single season in 2016. In 1958, Johnny Unitas possibly earned \$100,000 after winning the NFL championship for the Baltimore Colts, and that translates to around \$847,000 in 2017 money. Not a jackpot. But as the NFL teams started minting cash in the '70s and beyond, players—or their agents—didn't sheepishly exclaim, "Hey, we do it for the love. We're super jazzed to simply get by on the paltry compensation of yore." Instead, they demanded a fair share of those mammoth profits, and that's one of the reasons why a star player today can pull a salary of millions.

Of course, the NFL is playing kindergarten Monopoly when you compare their gross revenues to those of Facebook, YouTube, Amazon, Apple, and other titans of online data delivery. And yet, musicians skulk around, and, at best, ask, "Please, sir, I want more." At least Oliver Twist had some balls. What about us?

If we just stopped, think about the resounding hush we'd impose on the social networks and streaming sites. Think about the massive revenues they would lose after we ceased providing them with free content. And if they wanted that absence of sound to stop, we creators of those sounds—a united and unified front of musicians—would say, "Yes, and this is what it will cost you to commercially exploit my music. Thank you."

What a day *that* would be...

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Guitar Player
50
1967-2017
YEARS

THE FIRST FIVE YEARS

As part of *Guitar Player's* 50th Anniversary, we are celebrating the advertisers who believed in founder Bud Eastman's mad idea, and supported the infant magazine through its first five years, 1967-1972. They are: Acoustic Amps, Alfred Publications, AKG, Altec-Lansing, Ampeg, Bigsby, Bill Russell Capo, Black Diamond Strings, Carlsboro Amps, Coral, Danelectro, Darco Strings, Dunlop, Eko, Electro-Harmonix, Electro-Voice, Epiphone, Ernie Ball, Fender, GHS Strings, Gibson, Gretsch, Guild, Hagstrom Guitars, Hallmark, Hammond Organ (Leslie), Harmony Guitars, Heathkit, Hohner, JBL, Kustom, La Bella Strings, Martin, Mel Bay Publications, Messenger Guitars, Mosrite, Ovation, Peavey, Randall, Rickenbacker, Robb Guitars, Rowe/DeArmond, Sigma, Standel, Sunn, TWA, Vox, and Yamaha. Thank you all!

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GP COMMUNITY

PEER COMMENT



I'D LIKE TO THANK JIM CAMPILONGO FOR HIS recommendation of the Julie London album, *Julie Is Her Name*, in his October 2017 Vinyl Treasures column. This is an album I might never have come across, had he not written about it. After reading the article, I requested it from my local library, and, I have to say, it is indeed every bit the great piece of guitar work Mr. Campilongo described. Hearing *Julie Is Her Name* raised another question in my mind that perhaps a *GP* editor or reader can

help answer. In 1945, the Harry James Orchestra recorded "I'm Beginning to See the Light" with Kitty Kallen on vocals. James had co-written the song with Duke Ellington, and the guitar intro to this song is not only wonderful, it's very much like the guitar work on *Julie Is Her Name*. Does anyone have any idea who the guitarist on this Harry James session might have been? Again, thanks for the recommendation. There's nothing I like more than being introduced to great guitar work that I had not previously been aware of. — ROB TAMBINI



BOSS BOX-40 WINNER

When we reviewed the BOSS Box-40th 40 Anniversary Box Set in the November 2017 issue, we simultaneously ran a Facebook and guitarplayer.com contest to win #0380 from the numbered set we tested. We are happy to announce that the email selected at random out of the thousands of entries belonged to Derek Saski of Tennessee. "I am stoked about this prize," says Saski. "I love reading *Guitar Player*, and I love BOSS gear. I've been playing guitar for 45 years, and I show no signs of stopping. Thank you for this awesome contest."

DANA'S GP50 GEAR GIVEAWAY!

Happy Holidays from the entire staff of *Guitar Player* magazine! For the final GP50 giveaway celebrating our 50th anniversary, I've selected the **Option 5 Destination Overdrive II**. We dug the "singing, chirpy midrange and dynamic, touch-sensitive crunch" when we reviewed this pedal, and we also thought the 3-band EQ was voiced nicely, and it allowed for a decent amount of tone twisting.

For a chance to win, simply send an email with "Option 5" in the subject line to mmolenda@nbmedia.com. The deadline for entries is January 20, 2018. We'll select the winner at random, and announce his or her name in an upcoming issue. Please note that all gear is "as is," because every pedal was actually used and reviewed by the *GP* staff. Thank you for participating in our GP50 gear contest and for being a supporter of *Guitar Player* over the last 50 years. Many thanks also go out to all the manufacturers who provided us with the giveaway gear we've distributed to lucky readers throughout 2017. We all hope that 2018 is a great year for everyone! — DANA PARKER



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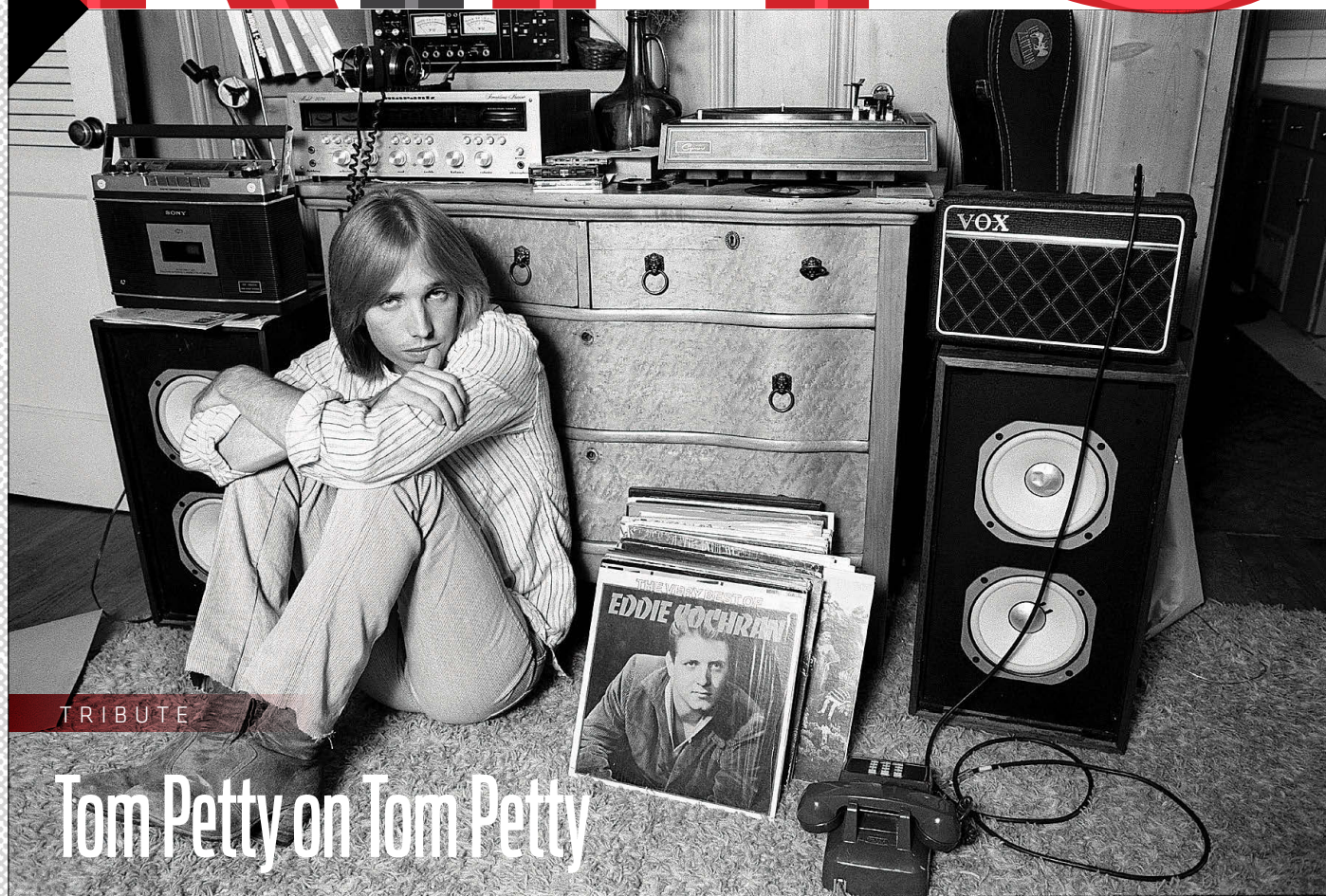


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RIFFS



TRIBUTE

Tom Petty on Tom Petty

PHOTOS COURTESY EAST END MANAGEMENT

IT WAS A TRAGIC JOLT WHEN WE LOST

Tom Petty on October 2, 2017—right after he had celebrated the 40th anniversary tour of his band, the Heartbreakers. Throughout the years, Petty and Heartbreakers' guitarist Mike Campbell had always made themselves available to share musical insights with *Guitar Player* readers, so we felt a fitting tribute to this rock and roll legend would be to dig out some wonderful quotes from his May 1999 and July 2006 *GP* cover stories.

THE HEARTBREAKERS

"We probably invented new wave, but we were running ahead of it. I didn't want any

label to be put on us, and I was very conscious that we were a rock and roll band and not anything else. I think the number one reason we've stayed together so long is that we have become a family over all these years, but the band has somehow become bigger than all of us. To go anywhere else would be a disappointment. I also see it in kind of a holy way. The Heartbreakers have made so many people happy that it would almost be a sacrilege to turn my back on it."

"In the studio, we tend to play best early on—when we're discovering the song.

It's actually a little frustrating that once the band learns a song, it doesn't get any better. It just gets more studied."

"I don't think the Heartbreakers could make it if we had to start all over today. We were so nurtured by Denny Cordell—a great producer who had done all these amazing records. He was the secret. He let us play in the studio for a year before we put our record out. We were allowed to grow."

GEAR & GUITAR PLAYING

"I don't like it if the action on a guitar is real high, but I don't want the strings

to buzz, either. I want a guitar to play in tune all the way up the neck and to stay in tune. I play a lot of open chords on electric guitars, so they have to be really in tune. Many guitars aren't—especially on the B string. I like each string to have the same loudness, too."

"Rhythm playing is a lost art these days—there aren't a lot of people who do it seriously anymore. But it's really important to our band that I play the rhythm, because the music sounds different if I don't."

"The guitar sound that Mike and I make together is particularly *us*, and it doesn't happen when we play with other people. There's something the two of us instinctively do. It's about the way our chords ring, or their voicings, or how our tones work together. It's partly because we've played together for so long, but it's also because we always had to make a lot of racket to carry that sound in a small group."

THE BUSINESS

"I hate the prejudicial way that music is presented these days. Everything is broken down into categories, and stations just play this or that. I remember a time when you could hear everything on one station. It was so great to go from Frank Sinatra to the Yardbirds. You didn't think twice about it. I was also fortunate to come up in a time when there wasn't any music press. You couldn't read about a record. You'd listen to it and make up your own mind. Things that were good stuck, and things that weren't fell by the wayside. Like, you'd hang onto your Beach Boys albums, but somehow manage to lose Herman's Hermits."

"My theory is that you shouldn't be in the music business if you have a choice, because it will beat you down. If you don't have a choice—*now* we're talking."

SONGWRITING

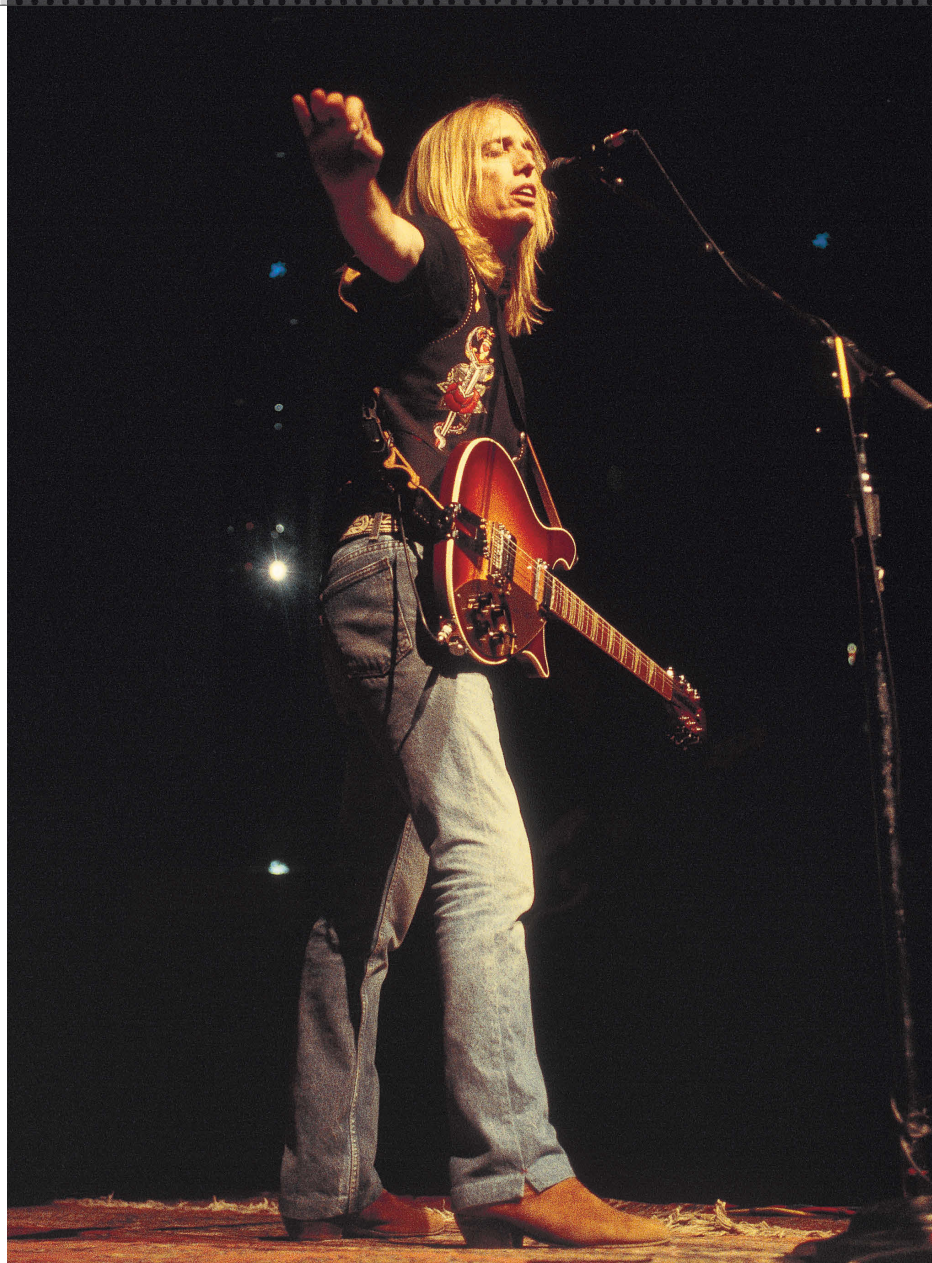
"I'm sure that everything you write probably comes from some place in your soul. I mean, you can only write what you know, so it's all going to creep in there. But I don't often sit down and say, 'I'm going to write about this.' I just start playing, and things

come in. When something feels like it has a nice ring to it, and it connects with me, then I trust it. I always find more in the songs when I look back at them than I knew when I was writing them. For example, I originally thought 'I Won't Back Down' was too introspective. I was surprised when it was received the way it was. People are always telling me, "That song helped me through the worst time of my life."

"My rule is to let the music dictate the lyric—don't try to hammer two things together that don't like each other."

"I think my best songs are the ones where you can find different levels of meaning in them, but I don't always write that way. Sometimes, I'll write a linear kind of thing—such as 'Into the Great Wide Open'—which is just straight-on storytelling. But the ones I really like have a bit of ambiguity."

"If you do good work, it will take care of you. I take some pride in that I was honest in what I did. I wasn't writing crap just to get on the radio, and I didn't embrace fads. When I hear my songs on the radio, I think, "Yeah, a lot of my life is reflected in this work." ■

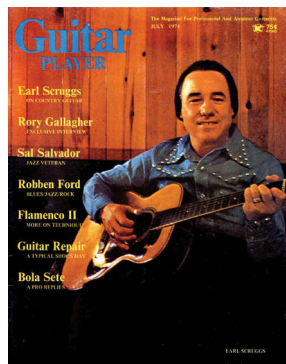


PRO'S REPLY



Bola Sete July 1974

One of GP's fab content innovations was its "Pro's Reply" columns that brought readers into the worlds of professional sessions and live performances, and offered insights from guitar stars. We're celebrating that grand idea by republishing some of the most interesting bits from the "Pro's Reply" archive. —MM



PRO'S REPLY

Bola Sete

The following questions were submitted by Merle Rapasardi, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma:

What model guitar and strings are you presently using?

I use the same guitar in concert as in the studio. It was made in Concord, California in 1969 by Mario Martello. It is a classical guitar with a piece of plastic on the top, as if it were a flamenco guitar. I use La Bella silver strings.

Do you ever use any other tunings besides the standard?

Yes. In some selections I tune my sixth string in D and my fifth string in G; on some tunes, I tune my sixth string in F; on some pieces, I tune my fifth in G and the first string in D.

I understand you meditate before playing; does this help in your development of technique or creativity?

Yes. When you meditate before you go on stage, you put yourself into a state of mind and into a peaceful space in which you don't see anybody around you except the guitar and yourself — you're aware only of your music. You are more receptive to the natural energy which exists in the universe. I am always praying for good things to come to everybody at my concerts — those prayers are in my music. As I play my music, I pray that everybody in the audience will be as happy as I am during my performance.

What recordings have you made?

I recorded in Spain with a Brazilian group in the early 50's, using an electric guitar. I recorded with that same group in Italy around 1955. I recorded in Brazil in 1956. From 1956 to 1959, I recorded five albums for Odeon, the Capitol Records distributor for South America. I came to America in 1959. In 1962, I recorded an album with Dizzy Gillespie on the Philips label in Vancouver, Canada. Also in 1962, I recorded an album for Fantasy Records, *Bola Sete—Bossa Nova* [8349]. I recorded with Vince Guaraldi in 1963, *Vince Guaraldi, Bola Sete and Friends* [Fantasy 8356]. Also in 1963, I recorded *Bola Sete—Tour de Force* [Fantasy 8358]. In 1964, I recorded *The Incomparable Bola Sete* [Fantasy 8364]. In 1964, *Vince Guaraldi and Bola Sete—From All Sides* [Fantasy 8362]. In 1965, I recorded a solo guitar album, *Bola Sete—Solo Guitar* [Fantasy 8369]. On this album I played some Villa-Lobos, Almeida, Granados, and some original compositions. In 1966, I recorded *Bola Sete Live at the Monterey Jazz Festival* [Verve V6-8689] with a trio. In 1967, I recorded *Autentico!* [Fantasy 8375] with a trio. *Workin' On A Groovy Thing* [Para. 5011] was recorded with a quartet for Paramount Records in 1969. On this LP I recorded contemporary composers — Beatles, Laura Nyro, Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, as well as some original tunes. I recorded *Shebaba* [Fantasy 8417] in 1971 with a quintet. *Shebaba* was the first album I recorded based on the folk music of Brazil. I used the lutar, which is an instrument I designed based on an old Brazilian folk instrument called the alaude. The alaude had ten strings, five sets of double strings. The lutar has thirteen strings — six sets of double strings and one single string. The name "lutar" is my own creative name for the instrument. On *Shebaba* I played the type of songs I heard played in the street fairs in Brazil. In 1973 I recorded *Goin' to Rio* [Columbia, KC-32375]. It was recorded with Santana's rhythm section as well as with members of the Los Angeles Symphony and Philharmonic Orchestras. It contains all original music. All the music is structured around the guitar.



Janie Hendrix on the Fender Monterey Stratocasters

THIS SUMMER, FENDER MANUFACTURED an affordable version of the Jimi Hendrix Monterey Stratocaster (\$899 street; it had previously been a Custom Shop model) to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first American appearance of the Jimi Hendrix Experience at the Monterey Pop Festival on June 18, 1967. The new Monterey Strat celebrates a thrilling moment in pop-culture history, as Hendrix not only painted it himself, but burned it onstage in one of rock's most infamous and enduring performance acts. To observe the Fender reissue, Janie Hendrix—Jimi's adopted sister and CEO/President of Experience Hendrix and Authentic Hendrix—shared some thoughts about her brother and this legendary Stratocaster.

Did you and your dad travel to see Jimi at Monterey?

Unfortunately, we did not. We knew he was really excited about it, because he would call us once a week to check in. I mean, he was still just a kid—25 years old. Things were new and fresh. I think Monterey was really important for Jimi, because he wanted audiences in America to see what he could do.

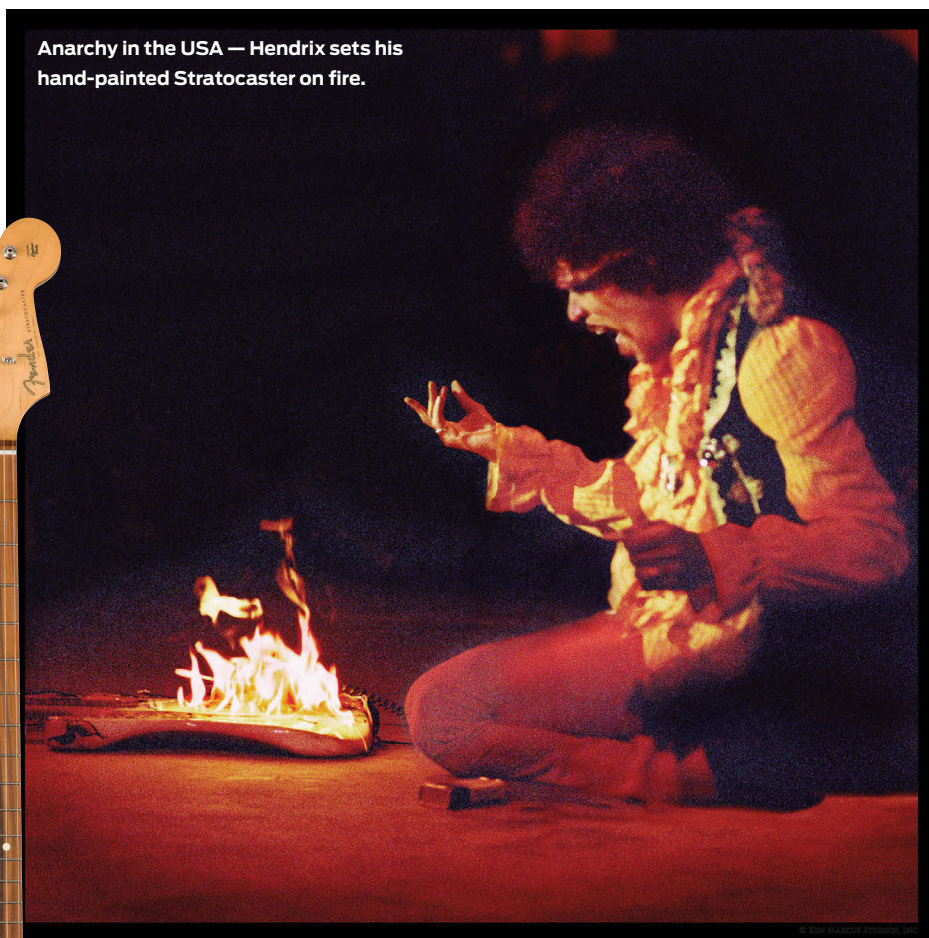
When did you become aware of all the uproar over Jimi burning his guitar?

There were no news reports about it, so I didn't realize he burned the guitar until I saw the movie at our local theater [*Monterey Pop* by director D.A. Pennebaker, 1968]. He didn't tell us what he did. He just said he was so excited that the audience really embraced him. When I finally saw it—wow—it was awesome. It really established who he was going to become.

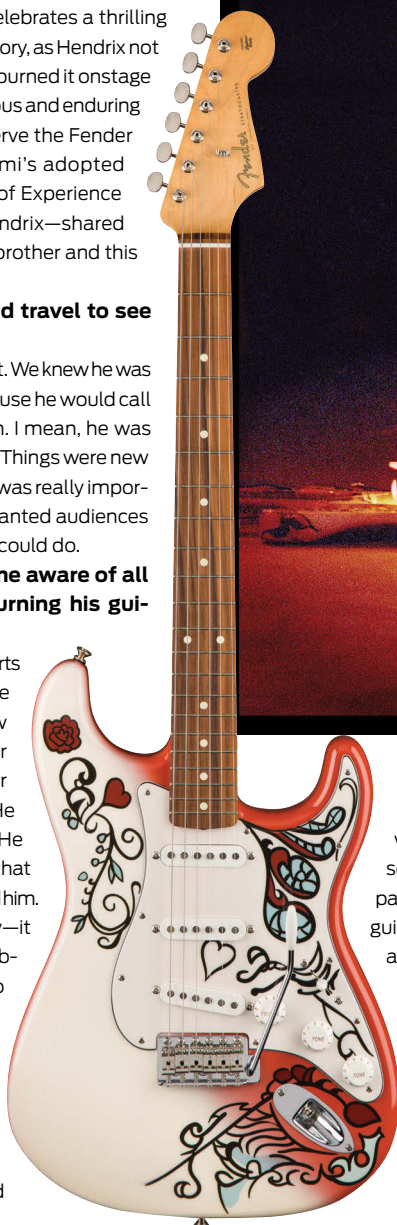
Did Jimi ever tell you why he decided to paint his Strat for the Monterey Pop show?

No, but, as a kid, he would

Anarchy in the USA — Hendrix sets his hand-painted Stratocaster on fire.



KEN MARCUS



doodle, draw cartoons, and paint with watercolors. That was how he expressed himself early on. After his mom passed away, he picked up the guitar—it was kind of his therapy—but he never stopped drawing. In fact, he made drawings for Warner Brothers about how he wanted *Electric Ladyland* to look. I heard he painted his guitar before the show, and that he had always planned to sacrifice it. He was very

aware that Monterey was a chance for him to be reborn in the U.S., and he knew he had to do something fabulous. So it was a ceremony of sorts. But the guitar was never an ornament to Jimi—it was an extension of who he was—so burning something he loved, and had made his own by painting it, was like offering a sacrificial lamb to the audience. It wasn't just theater. You know, I think some guitarists look at their guitars like they shouldn't touch them. But Leo Fender made the Strat and Tele to be hot rods—to be modified. So the cool thing about the Monterey Stratocaster is that Jimi showed people, "Yeah, draw on it, do whatever you want with it. Make it your own." 🎸

VINYL TREASURES

BY JIM CAMPILONGO

Howard Roberts Quartet *H.R. Is a Dirty Guitar Player*

MY FIRST GUITAR TEACHER,

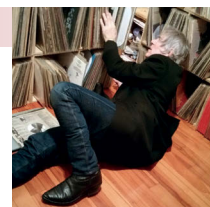
the ultra-hip Bunnie Grégoire, turned me on to *H.R. Is a Dirty Guitar Player*. Although, at the time, I had trouble relating to traditional jazz guitar, this LP struck a chord in me—and it still does. Here, Roberts' Gibson ES-150 sings soulfully with a thick guitar tone that drips perfectly with reverb. The tunes are a great combination of tight arrangements—many clocking in at three minutes or less—and fiery improvisation. Burkley Kendrix's organ playing is a wonderful and worthy foil to Roberts, and they throw the ball back and forth with expertise and spirit.

This record was an inspiration to me and I studied it fiercely, but also it led to a few archeological digs. Roberts' smoky, late-night version of



"Watermelon Man" inspired me to seek out the original Herbie Hancock version, and then onto the Mongo Sanataria version that is absolutely amazing. Additionally, Roberts' great cover of "One Note Samba" led me to discover the Antonio Jobim version, which gave me perspective on Roberts' unique reinvention of the piece. The standout track is "Satin Doll," where Roberts and company reinvent the tune with a syncopated, Wes Montgomery meets James Burton vibe. Roberts' arrangement shows how imagination and creativity can override a cynical disqualification of a tune that might be typecast as a cliché.

I tried to apply what I learned from *H.R. Is a Dirty Guitar Player* to my Jim Campilongo & the 10 Gallon Hats releases: short compositions, limited solo time, but cohesive dialogs between the soloists. I also learned that I could rework a cover song and make it my very own. As a result, I never underestimate the potential of a jazz standard—no matter how often it has been dragged through the mud. If you haven't heard *H.R. Is a Dirty Guitar Player*, I highly recommend it. Howard Roberts makes me love guitar. 🍷



MAXIMUM INSPIRATION



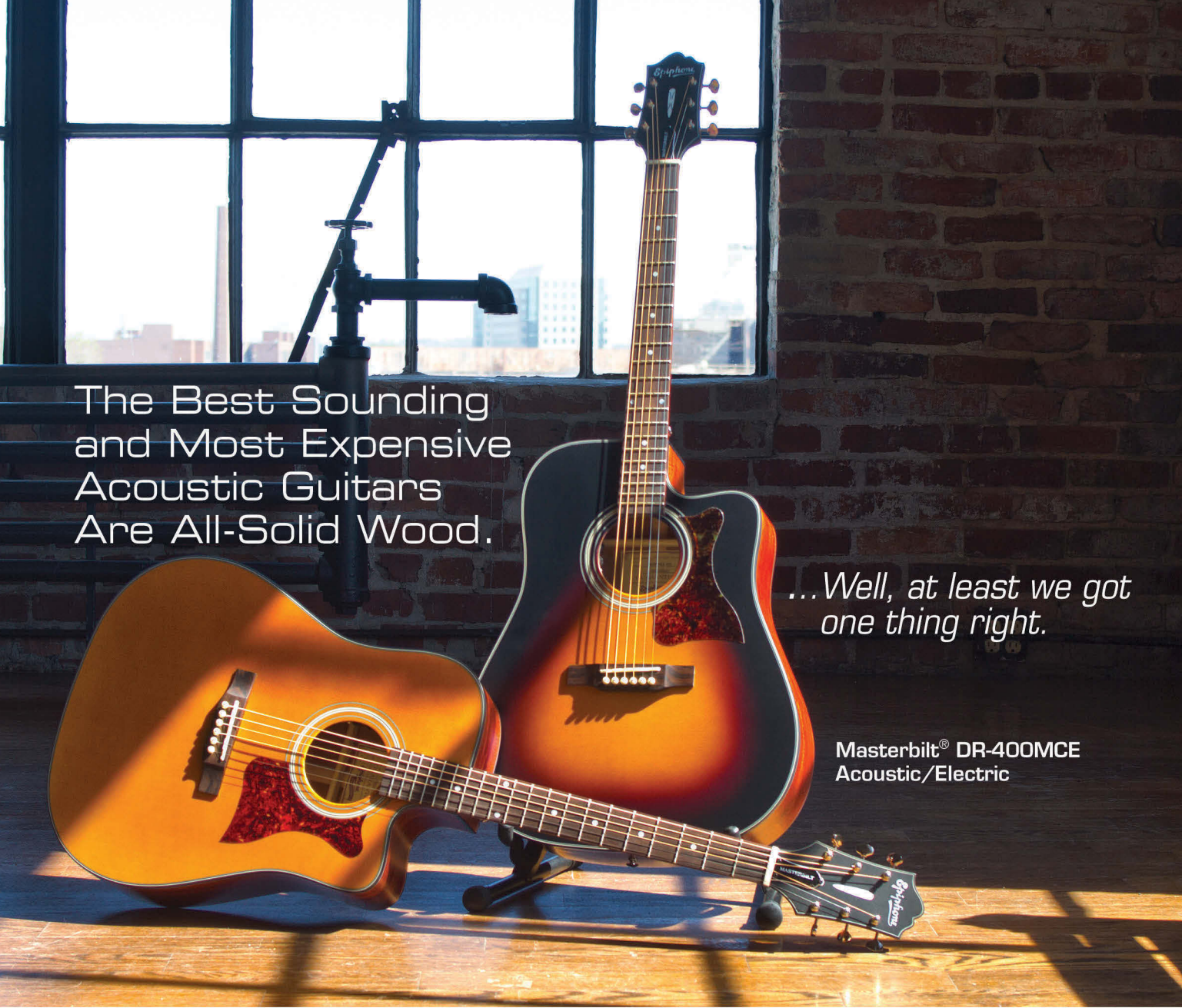
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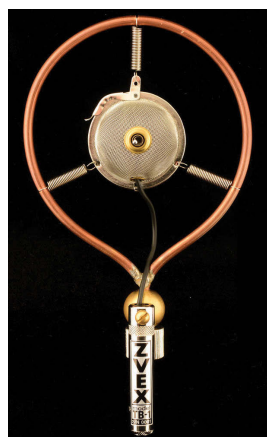
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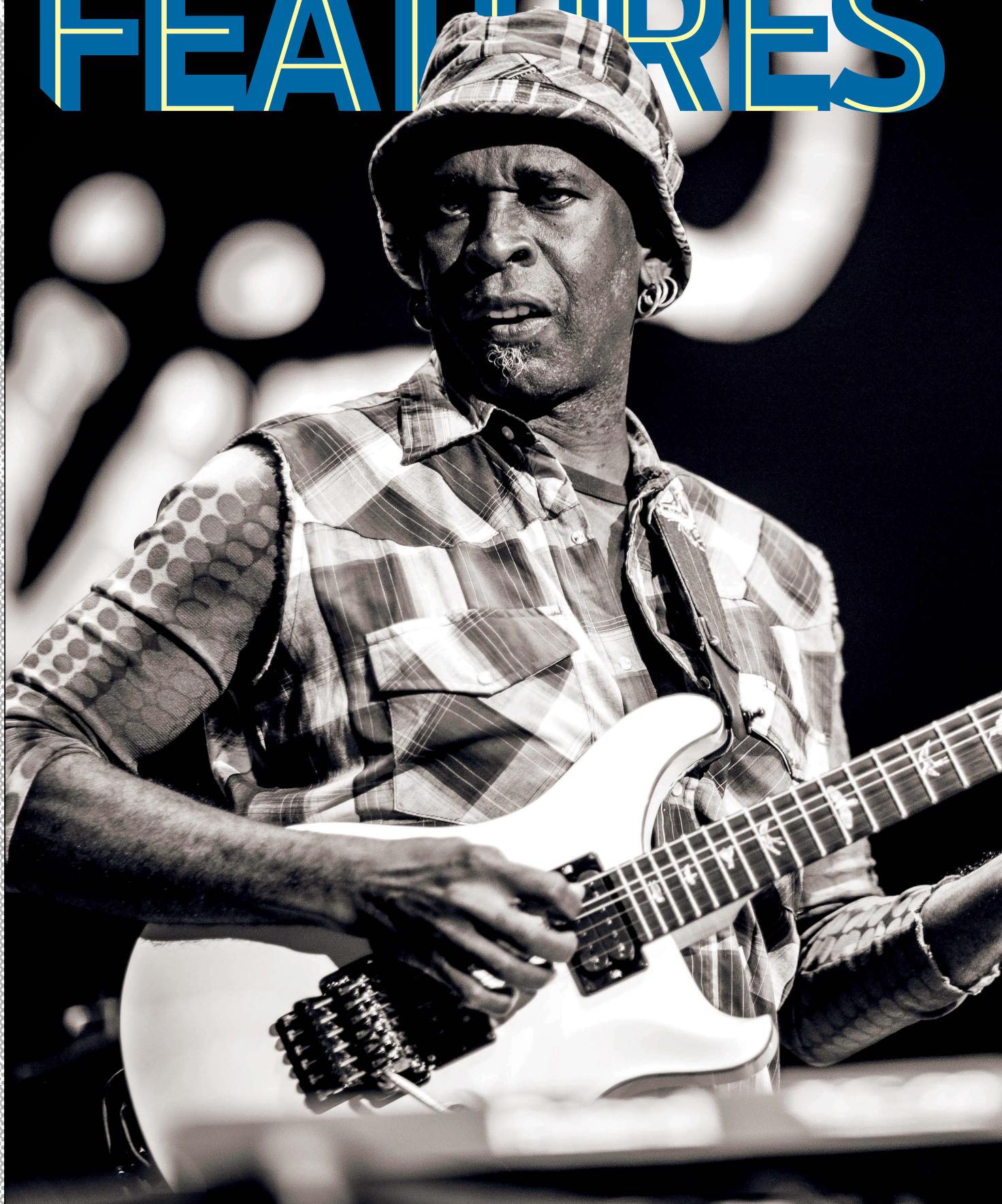
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FEATURES





ZACK WHITFORD

Supersonic Blues

VERNON REID AND LIVING COLOUR TAP INTO ROBERT JOHNSON

BY JOE BOSSO

HOW DO YOU MAKE A BLUES RECORD WITHOUT making a blues record? For Vernon Reid and his band, Living Colour, this question fueled the recording of *Shade* [Megaforce], their first album in eight years. During that time, the veteran genre-bending group struggled mightily to find a cohesive musical thread they could all agree on. But nothing took hold until they performed Robert Johnson's "Preachin' Blues" at a benefit concert honoring the legendary bluesman at New York's Apollo Theater in 2012. While on stage that night, Reid saw the direction for band's next album laid out before him.

"We went through a lot of different things trying to make a record," he explains. "The biggest issue was that, whatever we did, it had to have *meaning*. When we played 'Preachin' Blues,' it had a spark. We were playing the blues, but we did it our way. So I knew we could make a record in which the blues would be a conceptual thread, and there was something about connecting metal and hard rock back to the blues that excited us."

Living Colour never got by on subtlety, and *Shade* is every bit as forceful as its early work. And yet, the spirit of the blues had a dramatic effect on the band's metallic crunch. The grooves are wider and less impatient, and everything

feels more soulful and less strenuous. The group's fiery originals are dotted with rousing covers of Marvin Gaye's "Inner City Blues" and the Notorious B.I.G.'s "Who Shot Ya," along with a reverent version of the track that inspired the whole record, "Preachin' Blues." And while nobody will mistake Reid's guitar playing on *Shade* as the second

coming of Albert King or Eric Clapton, he tempers his incendiary approach with a more relaxed attitude.

"When you're younger, you're obsessed with beauty and age—being sexy and groovy," he says. "But that's not going to last, and as your personality changes, so does your playing. I hear it in my vibrato, and the way I

bend notes. I'm trying to move on to something more everlasting, and, hopefully, it shows on this album."

Given the nature of this record, how would you say the thread of the blues runs through you?

It's like there are branches of the blues. There was Carlos Santana doing "Black Magic Woman." Then, there was Hendrix and the Band of Gypsies. I was really digging Hendrix, and I loved "Who's that Lady?" by the Isley Brothers. But the first record I ever bought was *Cosmic Slop* by Funkadelic, and that was blues and rock. When I heard *The Inner Mounting Flame* by Mahavishnu, I could certainly tell that the blues was sideways, but it was there in this path of modal jazz and Eastern mysticism. So that's how we approached this record—the blues was part of the DNA of what we were doing.

So how did you bring out "more blues" in your playing during the album sessions?

I think it's a metaphysical-existential thing. The blues has always been a part of what motivates me—even though I'm a person from an urban area. I would be a "city blues" person, like Luther Allison, Buddy Guy, and B.B. King. Plus, there's Hubert Sumlin with Howlin' Wolf—that's the blues I most identify with. Of course, I respect the country-blues guys, too. Lightnin' Hopkins is one of my favorite blues artists of all time. Like I said, there are all the branches—Hendrix, Santana, and so on. It's all there.

Still, you've never hid your avant-garde influences.

Well, it all comes down to the question of "What is avant-garde?" For me, Hendrix was very avant-garde. Look at the way he did "The Star-Spangled Banner." It's one of the most beautiful renditions of our national anthem ever done, but it was also the soundtrack of a country tearing itself apart. The feedback and the screaming notes—he just heard it that way. I do like avant-garde guitarists such as Hans Reichel, James "Blood" Ulmer, and Robert Fripp, but I also like Harvey Mandel, Johnny Winter, Jan Akkerman from the band Focus, and Jeff Beck—who has been somewhat avant-garde at times. So I think of it like this: We have to be who we are. Some people have tremendous technique. Some people just make a fascinating noise. And

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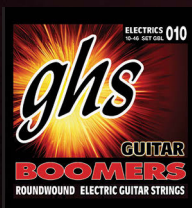
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Your guitar sound on the new album is more full-bodied than before. Are you doing something different with your gear?

I've been dancing around. There are a lot of pieces of gear on the record. I've

been using an old Roland VG-99, and I got pretty far into programming it. Then, I started using a Kemper Profiler—which is just a remarkable piece of technology. I also used a '90s Mesa/Boogie Dual Rectifier and an early Triple Rectifier, a Quilter, a Bias Positive Grid, and some '70s Fender Twins that showed up on some overdubs.

There were a bunch of different guitars, too. I pulled out some Hamers from way back when, and I used my Parker signature guitar and my Howard Roberts Fusion. I have a custom PRS S2 Vela that's called the "VR Vela," and it's pretty great. It has this V-shaped neck profile, which has nothing to do with my name. A long time ago, I sat down with a '63 Stratocaster that had a V-shaped neck, and I fell in love with it. So for this Vela model, Paul Reed Smith shaped that kind of neck for me. I love it. But there's still one guitar that's "it" for me. It's the multi-colored ESP that was in the "Cult of Personality" video. It's an amazing instrument.

What about effects?

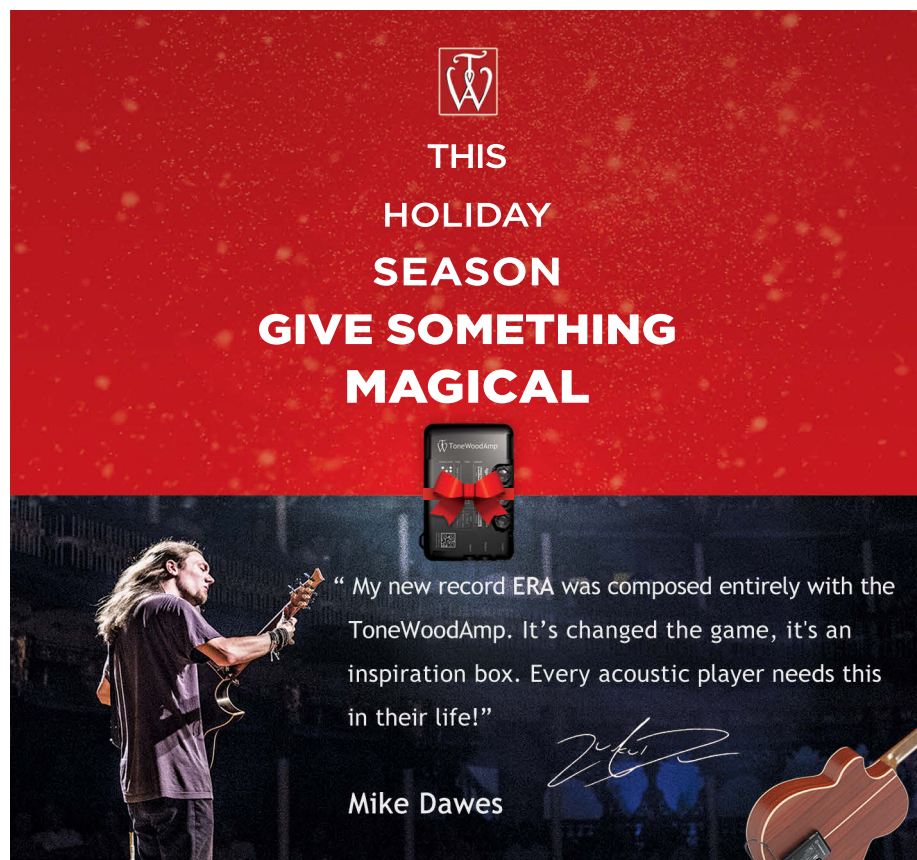
I had some basics things—wah wahs and such—a Source Audio Nemesis Delay, and an Eventide H9 pedal for chorus and harmonizing effects. I also had some arcane stuff, including two refurbished Pefftronics Rand-O-Matics. They're pretty freaky.

The big guitar riff in "Program" is reminiscent of "Cult of Personality." Is it a nod to the earlier song?

"Cult" was very much influenced by growing up on Zeppelin and Sabbath, and "Program" is a big-riff tune in that same way. They're very different tunes, but I can see where you'd think they were distant cousins. Riffs are funny things. They're like photographs. You can snap a picture, and it's one way, and then snap it a second later, and it's different. The trick is to get that riff just right and not compromise the feeling. You have to reach that exact moment when you're like, "That's it!" In a way, you have to do it without thinking, because if you think too much, you're going to wreck it.

What's the most recent thing you've learned on the guitar?

I've been working on my picking. I'm holding the pick between my forefinger and thumb, and I'm using my middle and ring fingers to get this cool combination thing going. I try to play these intervals in pairs across the neck—sort of like doing fifths. It's like everybody always says, though—to get them really smooth, you have to play slowly and articulately at first, and then you can speed up. It's only recently that I've been able to play them fast and smooth across the neck. But you know, there's always another breakthrough coming your way. You just have to play, and be receptive to new ideas. ■




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Me, Myself, and I

GEORGE THOROGOOD THROWS A SOLO-GUITAR PARTY

BY JOE BOSSO

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 40 YEARS, GEORGE THOROGOOD is flying completely solo on his latest album, *Party of One* [Rounder]. On an inspired collection of blues, country, and folk covers (Robert Johnson to Hank Williams to Willie Dixon and the Rolling Stones), he didn't call on his backing band, the Destroyers, opting instead to do live takes with no punch-ins, and leaving any missed notes intact. So one might assume he'd woodshed a little before undertaking such a naked and stripped-down project.

"You heard the record," says Thorogood. "Does it sound like I need to practice? Playing on my own is nothing new to me, and this is all stuff I used to do before most people even heard me—before I got locked into the Destroyers thing. I knew I could do this. The only question was, 'Did anybody else?'"

As an electric guitarist, Thorogood established a signature sound early in his career. His low-down, gritty, and growling Gibson ES-125 is one of the most instantly recognizable tones in rock. While he cranks up his Gibson on a number of cuts for *Party of One*, for the majority of the album, he goes the unplugged route, performing with Gibson J-200 and Super Dove acoustics, a Hohner HR-100 Roundneck resonator, a Dobro 33C, and a Gretsch G9200 Boxcar Roundneck resonator.

"I picked the guitars to fit the songs," says Thorogood. "I didn't look at the album as me playing acoustic. I was just playing *alone*. So that was my mental approach—'It's just me here. What works?'"

Unlike a lot of solo records, this is the real thing. It's like you're busking on a street corner, or playing on someone's front porch.

That's the whole idea. You know, this project was always on the back burner. I'd done my share of live albums and drinking songs. I'd done songs about being bad [laughs]. So I decided it



was time to do that one thing I hadn't done before. There was demand from the fans, as well, so that was that—"Let's do this!"

Does an acoustic guitar provoke a different physical response from you, as opposed to an electric?

I guess so. Once I picked up that ES-125, I really found myself—that's for sure. But I listened to Robert Johnson, and, you know, he's just a genius on the acoustic. So I was like, "I'm going to play solo-acoustic and see what happens." And it was cool. It was a part of me. But the rock-party thing with the Destroyers is the real me. Once I picked up an electric guitar—and I got a drummer and bassist—I said, "I'm home. This is where I belong."



DAVID DOBSON

Do you play a lot of acoustic at home?

Not too much. Acoustic guitar is really not my thing. I always like to say, “Acoustic guitar is the machine of protest, but electric guitar is the machine of rebellion.” I guess I’m more rebellious.

Still, you are a very fluid acoustic player.

Listen, when I say that acoustic isn’t my bag, it doesn’t mean I can’t do it, or that I’m terrible on it. I *can* do it. I’m just more comfortable on an electric guitar. You’re always going to get a little more fight out of an acoustic.

Do you have your acoustics set up the same as your ES-125s?

It varies from guitar to guitar. Some of them are similar to

my electric. The tension is a little tighter, and the strings are a little heavier. That’s how you get that big, thick sound—especially when you’re doing slide guitar.

The album opens with an electric cut, “I’m a Steady Rollin’ Man,” and, for most people, that’s the definitive George Thorogood sound. When did you realize you had a signature sound?

Again, it was when I first picked up my 125. The main thing is, you’ve got to have the right approach, and the right guitar gave me the right approach. Van Morrison once remarked that people know it’s him the second he starts singing. I wanted that to happen when I played guitar. “Listen to that lick—that

FEATURES >>> GEORGE THOROGOOD

has to be George!" I wanted a signature sound—which is different from a signature style—and the second I got that 125, I had it. Now, you've got to put the guitar through a good amp. For me, it has been a Fender Princeton with a 12-inch speaker, or a Fender Dual Showman.

I was struck by some of the not-so-obvious covers you chose, such as Johnny Cash's "Bad News" and "Down by the Highway" by Dylan.

Well, I didn't want to go obvious. I love John Lee Hooker, Bob Dylan, and Johnny Cash. Who doesn't dig those people? I was lucky to find "Down the Highway," which is from the early days of Bob when he was kind of a blues guy. That song sounded like Bob Dylan doing John Lee Hooker. So I'm doing George Thorogood doing Bob Dylan doing John Lee Hooker.

What about the Rolling Stones cover, "No Expectations"?

I wanted to do something from that

particular era. The Stones put out some outstanding stuff from the time of *Let It Bleed* to *Some Girls*. They had a great ten-year run there. But, for me, the heart of the Rolling Stones was when they had Brian Jones in the band. You know, it's going to come as a shock to a lot of people with all the great slide players I've been turned on to—such as Fred McDowell, Muddy Waters, and John Hammond—but the first slide guitar player I ever dug was Brian Jones. He's my favorite guitar player of all time. Slide player, rhythm player—that cat could do it all. Plus, he had the coolest hair. In 1966, who didn't want to be Brian Jones? It's amazing to me that he's underrated as a guitarist. He shouldn't be.

Were you dubious about redoing John Lee Hooker's "One Bourbon, One Scotch, One Beer" for *Party of One*? Some would say that you already recorded the definitive version of that song years ago.

No, because I played that one—and so

many others—on acoustic long before I put the band together. I did "Bourbon," "Steady Rollin' Man," "Boogie Chillen'," and all kinds of songs. So I had no qualms about picking it up again, and saying, "I know I can handle this as good as anybody." John Lee Hooker told me so [laughs]. He told me to my face, "You play my stuff as good or better than I do." What better endorsement is there than that?

The sound of your slide playing is pretty extraordinary. You really hear the metal against the fretboard. Are you still making your own slides out of cooper pipe?

That's what I use, but I don't make them myself. I'm not out there in a garage cutting pipes [laughs].

What did the rest of the band say when you told them you were doing a solo album?

I didn't tell them. I just went and did it. I didn't think it was any of their business. ■



A while back, a group called The Pretty Terribles asked me to be their guitar player. It seemed like a good fit so I said "whatever". We were playing some Country tunes and everyone kept saying "You should get a B-Bender". Well, I thought I might like to give it a go, until I found out how much it costs and that I'd have to make holes in the lovely Telecaster Mr. Fender made for me. Not going there. So I thought perhaps I could make my own. One that was simple, inexpensive and didn't hurt any guitars. Well, here it is and it works better than I ever could have imagined. You play it with the heel of your hand while chording and you have control over an amazing chorus and when picking you have a range of pitch-control of about 10 semitones! You can impersonate sitars, slide, steel and a fantastic "keyboard pitchwheel" effect. It's not like using a whammy or vibrato arm because it's only 1 string changing while all the others stay in tune.... a completely different effect! It's also NOT just for Country. Dive-bombing your low-E by 7 notes while the rest of your chord stays where it is, is Most Metallic!! We've all done it with our tuning peg, but a Pilot does it better! As far as staying in tune, it NEVER goes out! Don't ask me why, I didn't invent physics! And if you don't have a girlfriend and you need to do some palm-muting, the handles turn off to the side! I met my target! PitchPilot is simple, inexpensive and works like a charm without wrecking your favorite guitar. Take a chance and buy a Pilot today....I'm sure you'll love it! Rory Fireplace



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BY ART THOMPSON

IN A BUSINESS THAT HAS SEEN

its share of hot pickers since James Burton demonstrated what could be done with a Telecaster so long ago, Brad Paisley stands out. Not only for his prodigious talent as a guitarist—and for the ways he has helped redefine the sound of country—but also for how he has done it on his own terms by not losing sight of one of the most important elements of traditional country: the *song*.

Paisley's tunes can range from dead serious to downright hilarious—see the Netflix special *Comedy Rodeo* for examples of the latter—but if there's anything he has held onto, it's the importance of crafting songs he feels are meaningful. On *Love and War* [Arista Nashville], this is expressed in darker tunes like "The Devil is Alive and Well," and the title track, which delves into the plight of today's veterans, and features a cameo performance by one of the most celebrated songwriters to rise during the anti-war movement of the '60s and '70s, John Fogerty.

"I knew what I wanted to write as far as the subject, because I had

PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF LIPSKY

COVER STORY

BRAD PAISLEY



already called the album *Love and War* in my mind,” says Paisley. “I’d come up with the idea of paying tribute to these veterans that we are neglecting. So I thought, ‘Who better to sing this with than John?’ We were able to make that statement together. I’m representing this generation, and he’s representing the Vietnam generation.”

Even the lighthearted “selfie#theinternet is forever” has undeniable poignancy in the Andriod/iOS era, but Paisley punctuates the subject of people behaving badly with their phones with plenty of scorching guitar. In fact, this album is so awash in badass tones and crazy good playing that it seemed like divine intervention when Fender’s new Brad Paisley Road Worn Telecaster hit my doorstep a few days before this interview. And since this issue also features a review of the new model on p.64, it was mighty convenient to be speaking with the guy who specified what his signature Tele should be.

“When Fender first came to me to do a guitar, I was reluctant, because there have been many things over the years where something didn’t quite go right” says Paisley. “I didn’t want that to happen

with something as important to me as a Telecaster. But Fender was great about ensuring that wasn’t going to happen. They said, ‘You can do whatever you want with this guitar,’ and that was very appealing to me.”

However, instead of opting for a super-trick model that would be priced beyond the means of many players, Paisley reached back to his own days as working musician. He wanted to create a guitar that would appeal to those who simply want something that plays and sounds like a great Tele should—skip the icing and keep the cost down.

“I wanted something an aspiring guitarist down on Broadway in Nashville is playing, or that some kid is taking lessons on,” he explains. “Fender really understood that, and I think it’s what they wanted, too. The Tele was intended by Leo Fender to be a workingman’s tool. As I’ve called it before—it’s a cutting board with a neck. You can literally chop vegetables on it, and go play a gig. I really wanted a guitar you could cherish, but not something that if your kid knocks it over it’s the end of the world.

Is the Road Worn patterned on any particular Tele that you own?

It was Fender’s idea to come out and look at all of my guitars—including a ’63 silver-sparkle Telecaster with a rosewood neck that is all original except the finish. I bought it at Guitar Center in Hollywood, and they didn’t want much for it because it was covered in bar lacquer. Somebody had literally taken that thick clear coating they use for bar tops that you can put playing cards underneath, and they sprinkled a box of gold sparkle powder on it to make it look like a gold sparkle Telecaster. It was one of the most hideous things you’ve ever seen, but I picked it up, and it weighed less than seven pounds, and it also had the original pots and caps and wiring. So I bought it and took it to [custom builder] Bill Crook and had him refinish the body in heavy silver metal flake. And then I put a piece of paisley paper under a see-through pickguard, and stuck it on. The Fender guys saw that one and liked it, and my signature model is a variation of that guitar without the rosewood neck. It has a great pickup, so they duplicated its specs, and the neck is patterned on my ’52 Tele, which has more of

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JEFF LIPSKY

a soft-V shape. It's kind of a hodge-podge of different guitars that I love. The finish is like the one of my '63, the neck is like my '52 in terms of feel, and then there's the body wood, which is a combination of paulownia and spruce.

Why did you choose a combination of paulownia and spruce for the body instead of the traditional ash?

I think the weight is probably a good 60 percent of the sound of an electric guitar. The woods in the body and neck, and the way they pair up—that's what a Telecaster is. When a Tele is too heavy, it doesn't feel right to me. So I asked them if they could use paulownia for the body, because I had a guitar made of that wood, and it was really light, and I loved it. Then, they came up with the idea of putting a strip of spruce on it—which is harder. When you think about what spruce does on the top of an acoustic guitar, it makes sense that it would do the same thing when you're bolting strings and pickups and everything else on it.

Did you play a lot of prototypes be-

fore the guitar was how you wanted it?

When they first made a prototype, I was wondering if they'd nail the pickup, or if I would wind up swapping it for one of the boutique pickups I like. We went through many different pickups, and I wound up back with the Fender unit, which was wound just for this guitar. I play this guitar every night on two or three songs, and it's just stock, but it holds its own with my '52 Tele—which has the original pickup—as well as with guitars I own that have other cream-of-the-crop boutique pickups. I love that the signature guitar doesn't cost much more than some of these individual components!

On the amp side, you've been working closely with Dr. Z for some time now. How did that happen?

I discovered Dr. Z back when all I was touring with was a Vox AC30, a Telecaster, and a pedalboard. I did a gig where the amp wasn't sounding quite right, and I was thinking, "This is asking for it. If this amp breaks, I'm screwed." This was back in '99, and I went to a place called Black

Keys Music in Nashville—it's not there anymore—and started trying out a bunch of different amplifiers. I finally plugged into a Dr. Z Mazerati and I thought, "There's something special about this!" So I bought it, and I paired it up with two blond Vox speaker cabinets, and started touring with that rig for a little while, in addition to the AC30. Through the years, I tried all kinds of different models that Z [*a.k.a. Mike Zaitz*] makes, and we became best buddies. One of the most perfect amps he has ever made was the Z-Wreck—a cathode-biased AC30-style platform. I was asking him for certain things, and, at the time, he was also talking to Ken Fischer [*of Trainwreck Amplifiers fame*]. Ken suggested that he build me this kind of amp and call it a Z-Wreck. And so that was born, and it was a tremendous amplifier.

Most recently there's the DB4. What specifically were you looking for with that design?

The DB4 is somewhere between a Bluesbreaker and a black-panel Vox AC30 with the EF86 front end. When it came out, there were guys saying, "Why does he need that?" But the thing is, for a three-dimensional sound, I've always paired amps onstage—especially at big venues. I think Joe Bonamassa does that a lot, too.

No amp covers the full sonic spectrum, and you want to use a combination of amps that makes a good soup. For a while I was using a Bluesbreaker with an AC30s, and every time I would do that, I would think, "This is amazing." So I told Z, "What if we were to build an amp that's kind of clean sheet of paper thing, where it has a pentode tube in the front-end, and you're using a bass-rolloff switch to get kind of a set sound. I've always loved amps that are real simple like that—like the AC15." He said, "Well, there's this tube I've been wanting to build an amp with called the 5879." He said it was like an EF86, but more reliable. So he built this amp called the DB4 that had a five-position rotary switch, and it's great. It's thick and it's loud, and it stays clean just enough. And when you pair it up with a Z-Wreck, it's ridiculous!

Did you specify the DB4's Bluesbreaker-sized cabinet?

It was Z's idea to use a 2x12 oversize Bluesbreaker cabinet. He had it made for



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BRAD PAISLEY

something else, and when he stuck the DB4 into it, he called me and said, “You’ve never heard anything like this!”

How did you deploy the DB4 on the new album?

Most of the clean sounds you hear on this record are the DB4—especially when it’s a simple lead line on a Tele. The five-position switch is super handy. When I plug a Tele into it, I use settings four or five, which gives the most bass. With a Les Paul, it’s going to go down to 3, or maybe 2. With a 12-string Rickenbacker, I use position 1. We just mic it up, and it really fills the space.

Were you using a distortion pedal for your solo on “Go to Bed Early”?

Yes, the solo is a Wampler Underdog Overdrive into a Trainwreck Rocket. Wampler doesn’t manufacture the Underdog, but he made me one to try out, and then I had him make me a couple of others. It’s really thick sounding and has a singing quality to it. I’m glad you asked about it because he just bought out a Paisley Drive Deluxe, which is a Paisley Drive and an Underdog in one pedal. It’s great because you can finally get the Underdog, and there’s a switch so you can choose which circuit is first or second in the chain, which is very handy as you can imagine.

How do you typically cast your amp choices in the studio?

I sort of pick amps like you would pick guitars. I go for something consistent, which, for a clean Tele sound, starts with a Boss DD-2 delay pedal. That old 8-bit digital delay has some sort of compression going on that makes it great. Following that, I choose the amp based on what I want that sound to be. I’ve got one of the old Trainwreck Rockets that I used on a couple of songs, and it’s like the ultimate AC30 in some ways. I also have a couple of AC30s from ’62 and ’63, and I’ve found that, compared to a Rocket or a Z-Wreck, the AC30s have a little bit more honk. I don’t know why that is, but it’s there, and I’ll pick one of those amps based on that. When you hear a dirty part, it’s either one of those amps, or a cranked Trainwreck Liverpool. On “Contact High,” that’s just a Liverpool doing its thing with a Wampler analog delay in front of it. It’s fantastic, and I’m just using the Volume knob on the

guitar to make it a little cleaner, or a little dirtier here and there. Sometimes, I’ll put on some background tracks, like a rocking rhythm part or something, and I’ve got a couple of old Marshalls—a ’69 or ’70 Super 100, and a ’68 Super PA, which is as good as any amp ever made. I plug it into a 4x12 open-back cabinet in the studio, and we’ll rattle the walls for the right rhythm part. Amp-wise, I’ve got a ridiculous collection at this point. I’ve also got a ’62 Vox AC15

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that I use when I want to shimmer something with a 12-string. I’ll run a Rickenbacker into a compressor pedal and the AC15. But when I want something well rounded, it’s the DB4. Now, if I was a session player doing a demo project, and they only wanted you to bring one amp, I could bring a DB4, and I’d get all that stuff with it.

What made you gravitate toward British amps in the first place?

You can credit John Jorgensen for that. When I was growing up and finding my way—as all guitar players do—it was like, “Who do you love?” and “What do you want to be?” In the ’80s, I was listening to all this stuff that was going on then, and a lot of it was heavily processed—either a variation of a Fender or a preamp into a board with a chorus pedal. It was a strange time for guitar music. There were a lot of Strats at the time in country music, and I was playing a Strat a lot. But I also had a

Tele, and, around that time in the mid to late ’80s, the Desert Rose Band formed, and they had their first few hits. I went, “Oh my god—what is that guitar sound?” And here’s John Jorgensen—who was really ahead of his time—and he played AC30s almost exclusively. He would play his Tele, and then he would switch to a Gretsch, and then a baritone, and then a Rickenbacker 12—all through an AC30. It was all about what that band was supposed to be, which was a combination of the Byrds and the Flying Burrito Brothers—the pedigree of Chris Hillman and Herb Peterson.

So I told my dad, “I’ve got to get an AC30 or two.” But in 1990, you couldn’t find one. I mean, I’m a high-school kid searching for AC30s, and people looked at me like I was crazy—especially the guys at my local music store. They’d go, “Why do you want one of those?” I’d say, “Because of John Jorgensen.” Eventually, I bought two AC30s from England, and I had them shipped to Wheeling, West Virginia. The shipping cost as much as the amps, but it was still a pretty good deal at \$2,500 for two AC30s. I’d saved up all my money from the gigs I was doing, and I told my dad I’d pay him back for whatever else I needed. He still says I never did, but he’s full of it! So I got my AC30s, and I went to plug them in, but I couldn’t. They had the British plugs on them. I had to wait a whole other day to find a place that would change out the AC plugs.

So it was Jorgensen’s tone that influenced you most?

I loved John’s playing. It took me down this path, and I never turned back. But there’s something magical about an AC30 or a Dr. Z—or some of these other cathode-biased, EL84 amps—which absorbs everything that’s *not* pleasant about a Telecaster, and hands it back to you full of butter on a platter. That’s what I like about them. And they’ve got guts, too!

James Burton defined classic Telecaster tone decades ago playing through Fender and British-voiced amps, and you’ve helped redefine modern country using a Tele though British amps. Do you think country music has completely morphed into something else now?

It seems like it has in some ways. As you say, it used to be a Tele and a Fender

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amp—that was country. But you certainly can't do that now, and we're stealing from the best. I used to think country would come back to the more traditional thing, and maybe it will, but I think it's at its best when it's song-centric. The issue we have is a long discussion, but it has to do with this: The songwriting community is not emboldened anymore, and they're not making the money they used to, either. Some of these amazing songwriters are struggling, because there's no money in album cuts now. Unless you have a single, you're out of luck in terms of making much money. That changes the way you write. It used to be that if you wrote a bunch of really artistic songs, you could get somebody to cut those songs. But now, the incentive is gone to do that, because the mindset is, "Well, that'll never be a single, so how are you going to live off that?" This has changed everything in our town in some way. I think it will equalize eventually, and come

back around, but it's currently a difficult time to work in Nashville for some people who used to make a lot more money that they do now. My hope for country music is I want people to be true to themselves, and write about things they care about. I don't care where it goes stylistically, as long as people are saying what they really want to say.

Are you always coming up with song ideas, or do you mainly get down to writing when the next record is due?

I'm always coming up with things. Right now is one of those times when I'm not working on an album—I just released this one and we're touring it—so I'm good with saving up. What I do is I write down the ideas, or I type them in my phone to make sure I've got them. Then, I don't think about it. I've probably got 20 to 30 titles in there right now. Sometimes, I look back and think, "What the hell was that supposed to be?" Other times, I'm pleasantly surprised. If I get a song idea

in the middle of an album project, though, I instantly start working on it.

You often work humor into your songs. Does that just come naturally to you?

As long as I can remember, I've goofed around like that, but I'm serious with songs, too. It's a strange sort of yin-yang thing. When I was a kid, the first song I ever wrote was a heartfelt Christmas song that got me on the Wheeling Jamboree [see wheelingjamboree.org for details], which was life changing. The second thing I did was a parody song called "My Teachers Got Run Over by a Reindeer," which, of course, was just stupid. But the whole sixth grade learned it as a surprise, and we got up and sang it for our teachers at Christmas. So I guess there's always a part of my mind that thinks that way.

Has the Netflix show *Comedy Rodeo* been a fun outlet for you in that regard?

Absolutely. I love things like that. My co-writing friends and I write stuff you'd never put on an album, so when I started hosting

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the standup night at our festival in Nashville, I said, “Look, here’s a chance to do all this.” The song “My First Cousin” would be odd on an album [laughs], but when you hear it in the comedy thing, it’s perfect. However, the “Selfie” song was something we wrote for standup night, and it wound up on the new album. It wasn’t a big a stretch to put it on there, either.

“Drive of Shame” is a cool tune. What was involved in getting Mick Jagger on that one?

It was deceptively easy. Mick has become a friend of mine. I’ve opened for the Stones a few times, and I’ve gotten to know the band. When they played Nashville a couple of years ago, we went out to dinner the night before the show, and Mick was asking some questions about Nashville. I said, “Well, you’ve got to come back and experience it. You can hang out at my farm and spend a week.” I thought he’d never do it, but two or three weeks later, one of his folks called, and said,

“Mick wants to take you up on your offer.” Sure enough, we had a week booked with a couple of days of writing, and it was so much fun to work with a guy who is still hungry to write songs and record. The writing sessions were just like you would think. I had a note pad, a guitar, and an amp, and he brought some gear of his own. He sits down, and goes, “Well, what do you think?” One of the ideas I had was “Drive of Shame,” which is a twist on the song “Walk of Shame.” We hacked through it pretty quickly—although we did get stuck for a while on the name of the perfume. We had our phones out checking brands, and, finally, settled on Obsession.

Was it similarly easy getting John Fogerty on the title track?

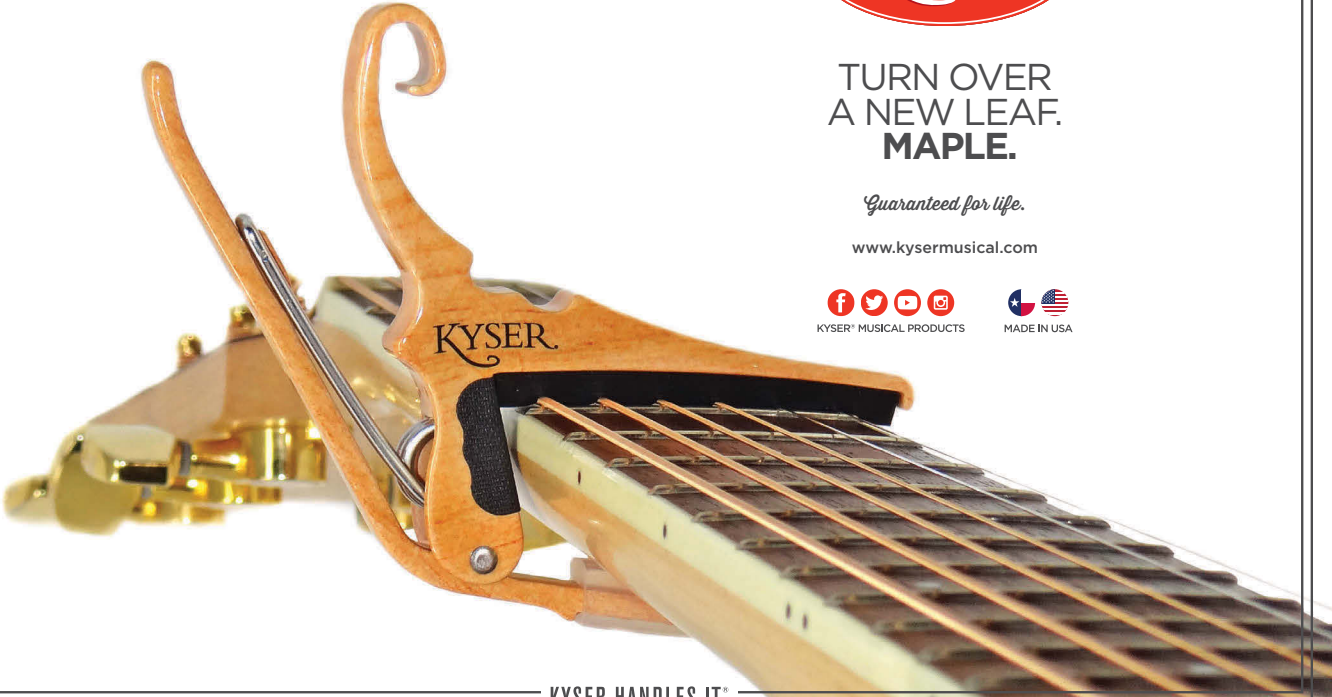
It was the same situation. John gets here, and the most mind-blowing moment for me was when we start to write, and he looks at me and says, “How do we do this? I’ve never co-written before.” I asked him if he hadn’t co-written the old stuff with the band, and

he said, “Well, to some degree, the guys get credit, but as far as sitting down in a room with someone to write, I’ve never done it.”

Have you heard of the Swamp Box? That’s what he was running his black Les Paul through. It’s that tremolo/vibrato combo box he developed in the ’70s. It’s on “Run Through the Jungle,” and all of that. He brought the original with him, and as soon as he played a note on that song, I’m going, “Oh man, I’ve been drafted.” We also traded solos on the song. John’s a genius.

Did you mostly use your Tele for solos on the record, or were you playing other guitars, too?

The solo on “The Devil is Alive and Well” is my favorite Gibson—a ’59 ES-330 with P90s. I played a Strat on something that you’d think was a Tele, but I can’t remember the tune. Also, when you hear a distortion part in the background—like in a chorus—that’s an Ernie Ball Music Man Axis. I’ve got one with P90s, and one with humbuckers. I’ve also



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been using a Gibson Firebird with a whammy bar a little bit. If you listen to “Dying to See Her Again,” all the delayed guitar stuff is the Firebird through a delay pedal and the DB4 combo. It’s very ethereal sounding.

You’re covering all the acoustic parts too, right?

Yes. The basis of everything always begins with acoustic guitar, and I’m largely the only acoustic player on my records. I’ll get other guitar players here and there—like Gary Hooker, who plays in my band. I’ll have him play some guitar parts—especially tremolo parts, distortion parts, and tic-tac parts—but I always handle the acoustic stuff. I love that part of it, because it’s the blanket you’re laying on.

Are you more of a flatpicker on acoustic?

I use less fingers on an acoustic, because I play more bluegrass style with a heavy pick. But I kind of do that based on what I want it to sound like. If you really want to pop it and chicken pick, you’ve got to use the fingers a bit.

What are your favorite acoustic guitars?

I collect dreadnoughts, and my most prized possession—as far as material things go—is my ’38 Martin D-28. It wound up in my hands due to fate. You just can’t explain it otherwise. There’s a strange connection with the man who owned it and my grandfather that I didn’t know about until I bought it, and it has been on every record since *This Is Country Music*. That’s the first song I wrote on that guitar, and it’s the first song on that album, so when you hear that first open D chord strum, that’s the Martin. I’ve been using that guitar when I host the CMA Awards with Carrie Underwood. It’s my safety blanket. It’s sort of overkill for a comedy monologue, but that ’38 Martin is superstitious to me.

How did your signature Santa Cruz dreadnought come to be?

I discovered Santa Cruz when I started buying boutique instruments. I would go into Artisan Guitars in Franklin, Tennessee, which is a great place to try boutique guitars. They sell Collings and Bourgeois, and I think they’re the number-one Santa Cruz dealer in America. I kept trying out dreadnoughts, and, inevitably, I’d wind up back at the Santa Cruz wall. Every one of their

guitars spoke to me. Richard Hoover [*Santa Cruz Guitar Company founder*] has it figured out, and after I’d bought two or three guitars, he asked if I’d like to do a Brad Paisley model that people could buy. I said, “yes,” because you definitely get what you pay for with a Santa Cruz guitar. I don’t think there’s a bad one in existence.

What do you most remember about Glen Campbell?

He was fantastic—a huge influence on me. I think Glen is the reason you have guys like Steve Wariner and Vince Gill, and, therefore, Keith Urban and myself. Those guys really looked up to Glen. He was a monster guitar player, and he played on so many iconic records before he even made any of his own. If you go onto my Instagram page, and go back to around the time he died, I posted a shot of us onstage a few years ago, when he sat in at a concert of mine up in Connecticut. I didn’t get to know him really well, but we got to play together some, and it’s amazing what he brought to our music. And more than that, it’s what he did for Alzheimer’s disease. I think he did the right thing by performing with it. I went to see one of those shows in California, and what a night. He couldn’t remember what the next song was—or even if he’d already played it—but as soon as the song started, he was Glen Campbell. And he was happy. It’s an amazing thing they did by showing what’s capable for someone like that. He raised more awareness for that disease than anybody in a long time.

You’re a solid promoter of guitar playing though your music, your involvement in signature models, and also the way you hand out guitars in concerts. What makes you optimistic about the future of the instrument?

I love the idea that there are enough things out there for people to customize what they want to be as players. That’s always what appealed to me, and it’s what’s fun about the guitar. This is a paintbrush on a canvas. What do you want your style to be? That’s why I enjoy handing guitars out at concerts. Fender has been really generous in providing me with guitars to give away, and there’s no greater thrill than looking down and seeing a kid in the front row who is eight years old, or a teenager, and to be able to give them a guitar. That guitar could literally change who they are. ■

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LESSONS

National Treasure

AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT WILLIE NELSON'S TASTEFUL SOLOING ON "TIME OF THE PREACHER"

BY JESSE GRESS

THE YEAR WAS 1975 WHEN AMERICAN country music singer-songwriter, author, poet, actor, activist, philanthropist, and badass guitarist Willie Nelson—who for years had been fighting record labels that discouraged his desire to record his songs devoid of the schmaltzy string arrangements and over-production values that pervaded popular country music of the day—finally put his foot down and got his way. The result was country's first concept album, *Red Headed Stranger*, which marked Nelson's move from RCA to Columbia Records, and presented for the first time Willie's songs, along with select covers arranged in a narrative form and stripped down to their essentials with his trusty, well-worn Martin N-20 nylon-string acoustic soulmate, Trigger, mixed front and center.

OUTLAW COUNTRY

The album's opening track, "Time of the Preacher," recently featured on the AMCTV series *The Preacher*, epitomizes the "outlaw country" genre that Nelson subsequently spawned, and hosts a classic guitar solo that's a little bit country and a little bit jazz—not surprising, considering Willie cites "gypsy jazz" legend Django Reinhardt among his main musical influences.

Now Willie is well-known for his off-kilter, laid-back vocal and guitar phrasing, i.e. getting slightly ahead of or behind the beat in a really good way, but the original studio version of this solo is about as straight ahead as you'll ever hear him play. Contrast this with live performances from years later, however, and that's a whole 'nother story. Here are the play-by-plays for both.

IN THE STUDIO

Nelson's studio solo—presented as 16 bars of 6/8 meter in **Ex. 1**—is framed by a simple eight-bar, IV-I-V-I progression in *E* (*A-E-B-E*) played twice, and it offers a textbook example of Willie's knack for balancing tasteful melodic playing with just a touch of flash. He begins by mimicking the vocal melody with a pickup into two bars of the IV chord (*A*). It's a 5-6- $\flat$ 7-6-5 lick (*B-C#-D-C#-B*), incorporating a slide that targets what becomes a 2-1 slide into the root of the *A* chord starting on the downbeat of bar 1, followed by a Django-style descending *A* major arpeggio that reverses direction halfway through bar 2. The *E*-based phrases in bars 3 and 4 emphasize first the 3 and 5 (*G#* and *B*), and then a pair of 3-to-4 bends (*G#*-to-*A*), both of which create a suspension and release to *G#*. Note how both bars end with a 16th-note triplet, and how the second one sets up a series of descending broken sixth intervals that beautifully outline the *V* chord (*B*) in bars 5 and 6. Also noteworthy here is how Nelson approaches the bottom note of each sixth interval with a half-step (one-fret) slide, and how the rhythm morphs from 16th-note triplets, with the last note tied, to a pair without ties. He covers the return to *E* in bars 7 and 8 with a thrice repeated 2-3-6-5 motif (*F#-G#-C#-B*). The *F#* is initially played as the first note of the second triplet, before Nelson tightens up the rhythm and plays the next two as grace notes.

Halfway through bar 8, Willie hybrid picks three descending 16th-note triplets, surprisingly outlining *A7*, *G#7*, and *E7*, before targeting *C#*, the 3 of the *A* chord on the downbeat of bar 9, which, along with

bar 10, consists almost entirely of *A* chord tones (*A*, *C#* and *E*). He targets the 3 of *E* (*G#*) via a whole-step grace-note slide on the downbeat of bar 11 before filling bar 12 with a descending *Eadd2/9* arpeggio. The half-step *G#*-to-*A* bend that rings into bar 13 now functions as the 6 and $\flat$ 7 of *B*, the *V* chord, and foreshadows another round of descending broken sixths, this time condensed into one-and-a-half measures. Willie concludes the solo and song in bars 15 and 16 with arpeggiated open *E* and *A*-chord shapes.

LIVE ON STAGE

Nelson's typical live performances of the same solo in the years that followed tended to be a little more wild and aggressive, and played about 10 beats per minute faster, as illustrated in **Ex. 2** (see page 46). The opening pickup, for instance, paraphrases the studio version but displays some of the guitarist's aforementioned signature quirky rhythmic phrasing, along with a quarter-step bend and release, and a chromatic 16th-note pull-off.

Bars 1 and 2 feature a repetitive rhythmic motif applied to descending *A* chord tones, tagged with a clever sliding chromatic approach to *B*, the 5 of the *E* chord, on the downbeat of bar 3. A cool chromatic descent in the second half of the measure—dig that quarter-step bend and release—targets *G#* on the downbeat of bar 4, the remainder of which paraphrases the studio version, albeit with a different triplet pickup into bar 5, where we reprise the four descending sixths from the studio version, applied to a slightly different rhythmic motif that's enhanced by added *B*, *A*, *G#m*, and *F#m* backing chords.

Like the studio version, bars 9 and 10 feature more arpeggiated *A*-chord tones, but this time they lead back to the tonic *E*, via a quick hammered-and-pulled filigree.

changes *B-A-G#m-F#m*. A slightly busier-than-before set of arpeggiated open *E-A-E* chords fills out bars 15 and 16, drawing the solo and the song to a satisfying close—a cool compositional touch.

Nelson's super-expressive soloing isn't easy to capture on paper, and these transcriptions can only take you so far, so be sure to listen to, study, and ultimately absorb the artistry of this true American Master. 

LESSONS >>> WHERE WERE THEY THEN?

Ex. 2

♩ = ca. 148 (E)

A

The score is written for guitar and bass in E major, 6/8 time. It consists of four systems of music. The guitar part is on a single staff, and the bass part is on a single staff. Chord diagrams are provided for the guitar part. The bass part includes a 2:3 time signature and a B 1/4 R (B flat 1/4 rest) notation. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and accidentals. The guitar part includes a 2:3 time signature and a B 1/4 R notation. The bass part includes a 2:3 time signature and a B 1/4 R notation. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and accidentals.

E B A G#m F#m

E A

E

B A G#m F#m E A E

let ring ----- l.r. ----- l.r. -----

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>>> TECHNIQUE LESSON

Learning to Fly

How to Shred Rock leads Using Pivot Arpeggios

BY DAVID BREWSTER

THE GOAL OF BUILDING SINGLE-NOTE

playing technique and increasing speed is a popular and passionate one among many improvising guitarists in a variety of musical styles. While there are several paths one can follow to develop the finger strength and dexterity required to perform fast, clean licks and runs, you'll find there's much to gain by taking a small fragment

of a scale or arpeggio and drilling on it until it becomes comfortable and seemingly effortless to perform. In this lesson, I'd like to show you what I find to be a particularly effective approach to achieving this objective, and that is to use what some call a "pivot" arpeggio as a musical springboard to generate cool-sounding repetition licks that flow and work well in a

variety of musical contexts. We'll begin by focusing on a popular arpeggio-based pivot lick that has been employed by many rock, metal and jazz players alike. As you work through the examples and concepts presented in this lesson, you'll hopefully learn how to generate your own variations based on a single musical idea. Doing this will no doubt expand your repertoire of

Ex. 1

Em

TAB

Ex. 2

à la Gary Moore's "End of the World" solo

Em

TAB

Ebm

TAB

Ex. 3

The image shows two systems of musical notation for guitar. The first system is labeled 'Em' and the second is labeled 'Eb m'. Both systems consist of a treble clef staff and a tablature staff. The treble staff shows eighth-note triplets. The tablature staff shows fret numbers. The Em system starts on the 10th fret of the D string, and the Eb m system starts on the 10th fret of the D string (which is an E-flat note).

licks, so this is a worthwhile pursuit for any aspiring lead guitarist. Let's get started!

At the core of this lesson is the aforementioned pivot arpeggio, which may be thought of as a major seven shape. After a quick listen to Gary Moore's opening guitar solo in "End of the World," from his classic album *Corridors of Power*, you'll locate the origin of this timeless and breathtaking legato phrase. During the middle section of Moore's solo, you'll hear him distinctly perform a fluid legato repetition lick (performed in two different fretboard positions) that has since filtered into the playing of countless other guitarists over the years. **Ex.1** depicts a basic version of this celebrated lick, performed here on the *D* and *G* strings, in the key of *E* minor and at a moderate speed, using an eighth-note triplet rhythm. In terms of notes and their melodic-harmonic function, we have the note set *G, E, C, B*, which form a *Cmaj7* arpeggio and, relative to an *E* minor tonal center, give us the minor third, root note, minor sixth and perfect fifth, respectively, painting an *Em(add♭6)* sound, which lives within the *E* Aeolian mode (*E-F♯-G-A-B-C-D*), also known as the *E* natural minor scale.

Practice the repeating note pattern slowly until you get a feel for how the phrase should flow and develop the two-hand coordination necessary to perform it quickly, seamlessly, and with minimal effort, which you'll discover entails keeping both hands as relaxed as possible and using *economy*

of motion—small, efficient movements. As you practice the lick, strive for a connected sound as the movement between the two strings and slurred activity begin to merge. The pivot here is the *C* note located on the *D* string's 10th fret, which functions as a sort of hinge or fulcrum connecting the *B* note on the *D* string's ninth fret and the *E* note located at the same fret on the *G* string. After this pivot and string cross is performed, the six-note sequence begins again on beat three, on the 12th-fret *G* note, and the entire cycle repeats.

After you've practiced this lick a bunch of times at a slower tempo and acquire a feel for how it's supposed to flow, you can kick it into high gear by performing it twice as fast at the same tempo, as 16th-note triplets, as demonstrated in **Ex.2**. This figure recalls the blistering flurry of notes heard in Moore's "End of the World" solo, and as you play through the example, notice that once you've performed the entire six-note sequence four times (in bar 1) it shifts down a half step and one fret (in bar 2), from the key center of *E* minor to *E♭* minor.

Once you're comfortable playing the lick this way, shift it up an octave to a higher fretboard position and the top two strings, as illustrated in **Ex.3**. This phrase recalls the octave shift you'll hear Moore employ during his aforementioned solo. Notice that we're employing the same fingering shape and movement on the top two strings that we used previously on the *D*

and *G* strings, only now we're three frets higher up the fretboard.

Ex.4 introduces a variation to our previous six-note sequence, by reaching up to the high note *A* at the 17th fret and substituting that note for the 15th-fret *G* every other time. This move requires a bit of a fret-hand stretch and some limberness to reach the high *A* note with your pinky, so be patient, and make sure your hands are warmed up first before attempting this move. With practice, it will become easier to execute. Note that, as you reach for the *A* note, you can shift your fret hand up the neck slightly, then quickly shift it back down to play the *E* note at the 12th fret again with your index finger. The introduction of the high *A* note adds variety and color to the sound of the lick and transforms our six-note sequence into a longer and more interesting 12-note phrase. It also reveals a new harmonic application that we can explore with this idea, which is to repurpose it to the key of *A* minor, producing cool, jazzy *Am9* and *Am(add9)* sounds.

Ex.5 offers a Steve Vai-inspired eight-note variation on our pivot arpeggio that's played in a faster rhythm of 32nd notes and includes both the *G* and *A* notes, beginning with a pick-hand tap on the *A* note, followed by two pull-offs to the fret hand. You can hear Vai utilizing this type of lightning-fast, dizzying phrase in several of his songs, typically performed in conjunction with his wah pedal, which he'll often use

LESSONS

>>> LEARNING TO FLY

Ex. 4

Am7

(play 4 times)

The image displays the guitar tab for the song "The Wind" by The Beatles. The notation is presented in two staves. The top staff is a standard musical notation in 4/4 time, featuring a repeating eighth-note pattern with triplets. The bottom staff is a guitar tab with fret numbers (15, 12, 13, 12, 17, 12, 13, 12, 15, 12, 13, 12, 17, 12, 13, 12) and a capo symbol at the 12th fret.

Ex. 5

Steve Vai tapped variation

Am7

(play 4 times)

Ex. 6

Steve Vai shift-tapping variation

Dm7

The image displays a musical score for the song "The Wind" by The Beatles. It consists of two systems, each with a guitar staff and a corresponding TAB (Tape Automated Banking) line.

System 1:

- Guitar Staff:** The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is composed of eighth and quarter notes, with a repeat sign at the beginning. The notes are: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F6, G6, A6, B6, C7, D7, E7, F7, G7, A7, B7, C8, D8, E8, F8, G8, A8, B8, C9, D9, E9, F9, G9, A9, B9, C10, D10, E10, F10, G10, A10, B10, C11, D11, E11, F11, G11, A11, B11, C12, D12, E12, F12, G12, A12, B12, C13, D13, E13, F13, G13, A13, B13, C14, D14, E14, F14, G14, A14, B14, C15, D15, E15, F15, G15, A15, B15, C16, D16, E16, F16, G16, A16, B16, C17, D17, E17, F17, G17, A17, B17, C18, D18, E18, F18, G18, A18, B18, C19, D19, E19, F19, G19, A19, B19, C20, D20, E20, F20, G20, A20, B20, C21, D21, E21, F21, G21, A21, B21, C22, D22, E22, F22, G22, A22, B22, C23, D23, E23, F23, G23, A23, B23, C24, D24, E24, F24, G24, A24, B24, C25, D25, E25, F25, G25, A25, B25, C26, D26, E26, F26, G26, A26, B26, C27, D27, E27, F27, G27, A27, B27, C28, D28, E28, F28, G28, A28, B28, C29, D29, E29, F29, G29, A29, B29, C30, D30, E30, F30, G30, A30, B30, C31, D31, E31, F31, G31, A31, B31, C32, D32, E32, F32, G32, A32, B32, C33, D33, E33, F33, G33, A33, B33, C34, D34, E34, F34, G34, A34, B34, C35, D35, E35, F35, G35, A35, B35, C36, D36, E36, F36, G36, A36, B36, C37, D37, E37, F37, G37, A37, B37, C38, D38, E38, F38, G38, A38, B38, C39, D39, E39, F39, G39, A39, B39, C40, D40, E40, F40, G40, A40, B40, C41, D41, E41, F41, G41, A41, B41, C42, D42, E42, F42, G42, A42, B42, C43, D43, E43, F43, G43, A43, B43, C44, D44, E44, F44, G44, A44, B44, C45, D45, E45, F45, G45, A45, B45, C46, D46, E46, F46, G46, A46, B46, C47, D47, E47, F47, G47, A47, B47, C48, D48, E48, F48, G48, A48, B48, C49, D49, E49, F49, G49, A49, B49, C50, D50, E50, F50, G50, A50, B50, C51, D51, E51, F51, G51, A51, B51, C52, D52, E52, F52, G52, A52, B52, C53, D53, E53, F53, G53, A53, B53, C54, D54, E54, F54, G54, A54, B54, C55, D55, E55, F55, G55, A55, B55, C56, D56, E56, F56, G56, A56, B56, C57, D57, E57, F57, G57, A57, B57, C58, D58, E58, F58, G58, A58, B58, C59, D59, E59, F59, G59, A59, B59, C60, D60, E60, F60, G60, A60, B60, C61, D61, E61, F61, G61, A61, B61, C62, D62, E62, F62, G62, A62, B62, C63, D63, E63, F63, G63, A63, B63, C64, D64, E64, F64, G64, A64, B64, C65, D65, E65, F65, G65, A65, B65, C66, D66, E66, F66, G66, A66, B66, C67, D67, E67, F67, G67, A67, B67, C68, D68, E68, F68, G68, A68, B68, C69, D69, E69, F69, G69, A69, B69, C70, D70, E70, F70, G70, A70, B70, C71, D71, E71, F71, G71, A71, B71, C72, D72, E72, F72, G72, A72, B72, C73, D73, E73, F73, G73, A73, B73, C74, D74, E74, F74, G74, A74, B74, C75, D75, E75, F75, G75, A75, B75, C76, D76, E76, F76, G76, A76, B76, C77, D77, E77, F77, G77, A77, B77, C78, D78, E78, F78, G78, A78, B78, C79, D79, E79, F79, G79, A79, B79, C80, D80, E80, F80, G80, A80, B80, C81, D81, E81, F81, G81, A81, B81, C82, D82, E82, F82, G82, A82, B82, C83, D83, E83, F83, G83, A83, B83, C84, D84, E84, F84, G84, A84, B84, C85, D85, E85, F85, G85, A85, B85, C86, D86, E86, F86, G86, A86, B86, C87, D87, E87, F87, G87, A87, B87, C88, D88, E88, F88, G88, A88, B88, C89, D89, E89, F89, G89, A89, B89, C90, D90, E90, F90, G90, A90, B90, C91, D91, E91, F91, G91, A91, B91, C92, D92, E92, F92, G92, A92, B92, C93, D93, E93, F93, G93, A93, B93, C94, D94, E94, F94, G94, A94, B94, C95, D95, E95, F95, G95, A95, B95, C96, D96, E96, F96, G96, A96, B96, C97, D97, E97, F97, G97, A97, B97, C98, D98, E98, F98, G98, A98, B98, C99, D99, E99, F99, G99, A99, B99, C100, D100, E100, F100, G100, A100, B100, C101, D101, E101, F101, G101, A101, B101, C102, D102, E102, F102, G102, A102, B102, C103, D103, E103, F103, G103, A103, B103, C104, D104, E104, F104, G104, A104, B104, C105, D105, E105, F105, G105, A105, B105, C106, D106, E106, F106, G106, A106, B106, C107, D107, E107, F107, G107, A107, B107, C108, D108, E108, F108, G108, A108, B108, C109, D109, E109, F109, G109, A109, B109, C110, D110, E110, F110, G110, A110, B110, C111, D111, E111, F111, G111, A111, B111, C112, D112, E112, F112, G112, A112, B112, C113, D113, E113, F113, G113, A113, B113, C114, D114, E114, F114, G114, A114, B114, C115, D115, E115, F115, G115, A115, B115, C116, D116, E116, F116, G116, A116, B116, C117, D117, E117, F117, G117, A117, B117, C118, D118, E118, F118, G118, A118, B118, C119, D119, E119, F119, G119, A119, B119, C120, D120, E120, F120, G120, A120, B120, C121, D121, E121, F121, G121, A121, B121, C122, D122, E122, F122, G122, A122, B122, C123, D123, E123, F123, G123, A123, B123, C124, D124, E124, F124, G124, A124, B124, C125, D125, E125, F125, G125, A125, B125, C126, D126, E126, F126, G126, A126, B126, C127, D127, E127, F127, G127, A127, B127, C128, D128, E128, F128, G128, A128, B128, C129, D129, E129, F129, G129, A129, B129, C130, D130, E130, F130, G130, A130, B130, C131, D131, E131, F131, G131, A131, B131, C132, D132, E132, F132, G132, A132, B132, C133, D133, E133, F133, G133, A133, B133, C134, D134, E134, F134, G134, A134, B134, C135, D135, E135, F135, G135, A135, B135, C136, D136, E136, F136, G136, A136, B136, C137, D137, E137, F137, G137, A137, B1

to accent specific notes, giving his solos an aggressive edge.

In **Ex. 6**, we have another Vai-influenced tapping variation on our lick, now played in the context of the key of *D* minor. Here we're shifting the fret-hand shape down two frets, to 10th position, then back up

to 12th position while keeping the tapped A note stationary throughout. This variation creates a unique twist to the sound of the phrase and transforms it into an even longer and more interesting two-bar idea. As you play around with this and the other examples presented in this lesson, use your

imagination and creativity and try exploring and experimenting with different keys and tonal centers and transposing both the left- and right-hand notes to different frets.

Also inspired by Steve Vai, **Ex. 7** presents another harmonic repurposing of our original six-note pivot arpeggio sequence, similar to

à la "Ladies Nite in Buffalo" solo

a fast legato run the guitarist played in his solo on the David Lee Roth song “Ladies Nite in Buffalo” (*Eat ‘Em and Smile*). Here we’re starting out with what looks like a *Cmaj7* shape played in 12th position, which, when played over a *D* bass note, implies either a *D* Dorian (*D-E-F-G-A-B-C*) or *D* Mixolydian (*D-E-F#-G-A-B-C*) sound. In bar 2, we shift the shape up a perfect fourth and five frets, to 17th position, which gives us an *Fmaj7* shape and a cool *Dm9* (*D-F-A-C-E*) sound. Try to make the abrupt position shift sound smooth and seamless.

Ex. 8 is inspired by Nuno Bettencourt's brilliant intro solo in the Extreme song "Mutha (Don't Wanna Go to School Today)," from the band's eponymously-titled debut album, and offers another highly useful variation on our six-note

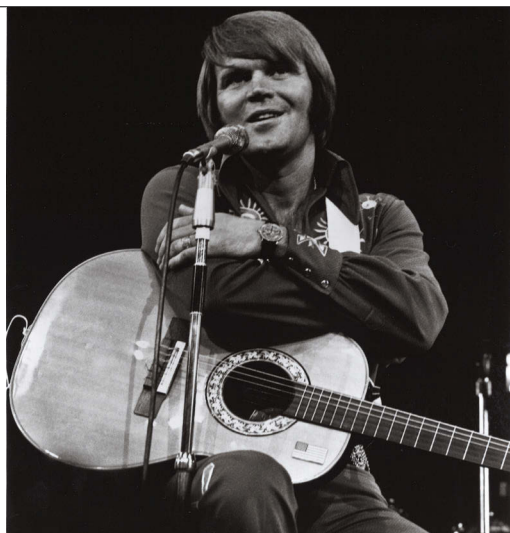
pivot arpeggio shape. Here we're moving up the fretboard through a series of implied chord changes and arpeggio movements, using both our familiar *Cmaj7* shape (bar 1), transposed up to *Fmaj7* in bar 4—and a new, minor-seven shape (bars 2 and 3), which incorporates the use of wider intervals and finger stretches and may be analyzed as *Dm7* then *Em7*, or *F6* and *G6*, respectively. This extended run should ideally be articulated quickly and cleanly, so practice nailing the position shifts from bar to bar, with the goal of producing a seamless flow of notes across the entire four-bar phrase. Notice how this example moves through an *Em-F-G-Am* chord progression, which reveals another path that you can explore with this concept—matching the underlying chords

of a progression with shifting melodic arpeggio shapes.

There's much to be learned and earned from taking a short musical idea and expanding and developing it into variations and longer phrases of connected repeating sequences. This "reduce, reuse, and recycle" musical mentality is crucial to understanding how you can borrow a musical lick or phrase and creatively transform it into a seemingly endless assortment of new sounds and possibilities. Now that you've fully-explored this pivot arpeggio idea, branch out and look to discover additional licks and phrases from other guitarists whose playing you admire. Doing so will help you uncover even more variations, fresh sounds, and new ideas to put your own stamp on. Good luck! 🎸

'a la Nuno Bettencourt's "Mutha" solo

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>>> CLASSIC RIFF

“Southern Nights”

BY GLEN CAMPBELL

BY JESSE GRESS

NEED A REAL HEAD TURNER IN YOUR vocabulary of country licks? Try this one on for size. In 1977, with inspiration from Jerry Reed, the late Glen Campbell’s cover of Allan Toussaint’s “Southern Nights” received more airplay than any other song that year. Reed’s contribution was the crazy cool lick—essentially two single-note lines simultaneously converging from opposite directions—that Campbell tagged onto the song’s opening *E* major pentatonic hook.

Ex. 1 shows both parts in action. The upper part of bar 2 is simply a descending one-octave *E* blues scale starting on *G*,

the $\flat 3$, with an added *F#*, the $2/9$ —*G*, *F#*, *E*, *D*, *B*, *Bb*, *A*, *G*, or $\flat 3$, 2, root, $\flat 7$, 5, $\flat 5$, 4, $\flat 3$. Meanwhile, the bottom part takes a different tact. Here, we begin on a low *F#* (which shouldn’t work, but somehow does with the top line’s *G*—that’s a flat-nine interval!), and then ascend a whole step to *G#*, the 3 of *E*.

From there we ascend chromatically to *B* (via *A* and *A#*) before jumping to *D* and a pair of *D#*’s, both played on the fourth string. Combining these two parts can be tricky, so the best way to get them down is to visualize each eighth note as a harmonic interval and play them using hybrid

picking with your pick and middle finger. We’ve got the aforementioned flat nine (*G* over *F#*) on beat one, a flat seven (*F#* over *G#*) on the “and” of one, a fifth-plus-octave (*E* over *A*) on beat two followed by a major tenth (*D* over *A#*, a.k.a. *Bb*) on the “and”, *B* octaves on beat three, followed by a minor sixth (*Bb* over *D*) on the “and”, and a tritone flatted fifth (*D#* over *A*) on beat four, followed by a major third (*G* over *D#*, a.k.a. *Eb*) on the last eighth note leading into a targeted *E* chord in the next measure.

Take your time and gradually work the lick up to tempo. It’s a finger-twister that’s well worth the effort!

Ex. 1

= ca. 96
12-string elec.

N.C.
Play three times

E

etc.

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Jimmy Stewart's THE COMPLETE MUSICIAN

A Tribute To Barney Kessel

Barney Kessel, considered a chief disciple of the Charlie Christian school of guitar playing, was born in Muskogee, Oklahoma in 1923.

As he states in his book *The Guitar* [Windsor Music, Box 2629, Hollywood, CA 90028], "In the southwestern part of the United States where I was born, the guitar was called a 'starvation box.' My earliest recollection of the guitar was hearing it played by tramps, hoboes, and wanderers. As I grew older, I became aware of the guitar being used by many amateur musicians as they played and sang western songs, such as 'Red River Valley,' 'Rye Whiskey,' and 'Strawberry Roan.' There were many itinerant preachers who sang beautiful hymns, such as 'I Walked In The Garden' and 'Love Lifted Me.' From these simple experiences came my first desires to play the guitar."

Barney's career has been full and rewarding. A thumbnail sketch, beginning in 1944, might read as follows: appeared in the 1944 film short *Jammin' The Blues*; worked as a member of the Oscar Peterson Trio in 1952; hired for literally thousands of recording dates in the Hollywood studios; worked on eight LPs with Billie Holiday; was music director and arranger for CBS' *Bob Crosby Show*; served as A&R man for Verve Records; cut his own jazz albums on Contemporary Records; sat in on a Dial recording session with Charlie Parker.

He has won guitar awards from such magazines as *Down Beat*, *Esquire*, *Metronome*, England's *Melody Maker*, and *Playboy*, as well as an award presented to him by the other *Playboy* poll winners.

My first introduction to Barney Kessel's playing was at a Jazz At The Philharmonic concert in San Francisco. My guitar teacher insisted that I hear this new, upcoming guitarist. Kessel was working with the Oscar Peterson Trio, with Ray Brown on bass. Because of the drummerless format, Barney was asked to do the impossible job of being the rhythmic "glue" of the trio. After feeding chords to pianist Peterson, he was then asked to solo. The tune that sticks out in my mind is their arrangement of "Seven Come Eleven." Barney's solo was absolutely magnificent. He played with the rhythmic magic and imagination characteristic of Christian's playing, and his notes and phrasing were similar to that of the finest alto saxophonist of that period, Charlie Parker.

* * * *

This tune is characteristic of some of Barney's musical techniques. Note the symmetrical chord movements, the full-voiced chords, the intervoiced movements, irregular alterations of accents, and the natural feeling of swing.

'Barney's Tune'

By Jimmy Stewart

©1976 Apophis Music



WHILE PAYING TRIBUTE TO BARNEY KESSEL IN HIS JULY 1976 "THE COMPLETE MUSICIAN" COLUMN, Jimmy Stewart actually composed an original piece in the style of Mr. Kessel. Quite a tribute, indeed—as well as a musical challenge to you, if you opt to tackle it. Have fun. **Bonus!** Hear GP's Jimmy Brown demo this tune on his '65 Gibson Barney Kessel double-cut-away hollowbody. Just click to guitarplayer.com/lessons. —MICHAEL MOLENDA

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GEAR

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15 T-STYLE GUITAR MAKERS ALL PLAYERS SHOULD KNOW

BY DAVE HUNTER

FENDER'S ICONIC TELECASTER HAS BECOME SUCH A CORNERSTONE

of electric guitar that, over the years, the design has disseminated more broadly throughout the market, spawning alternative renditions from a wide variety of guitar makers. Although Fender originated the design—and owns the trademark to the precise shape of the slim, elegant Telecaster headstock—the T-style contributions of several other manufacturers still enhance the wonderful variety of bolt-neck single-cuts available to the player today, from extremely affordable options to the most detailed, high-end, hand-built examples. Here, we've identified 15 T-style manufacturers you should have on your radar.



ANDERSON GUITARWORKS

Long one of the most respected names in quality alternative American-made electric guitars, Tom Anderson cut his teeth on T-style creations, and the fact that titans of Tele tone such as Pete Anderson, Clint Black, and Dierks Bentley have wielded Andersons counts for a lot. Anderson's most straight-up rendition is the Classic T, which sells in the upper \$2k or lower \$3k range, depending on your precise specs, but the company also produces several variations on the theme, including the popular—and light—Hollow T Classic, as well as several three-pickup Ts with S-style switching, and others with humbuckers, vibratos, and all kinds of fun. andersonguitarworks.com



CROOK

Throughout his 20-plus-year career, West Virginia-based maker Bill Crook has been known for his high-quality T-style guitars, but he has also been famous for *paisley* guitars in particular, thanks to the patronage of—yep—Brad Paisley. Crook built the blue-paisley copy of Brad's vintage '68 pink-paisley Telecaster in 2002, which was first seen publicly in the video for "I'm Gonna' Miss Her," and his swirly-print Ts have been a "thing" ever since. Which is not to say that's Crook's only option—Bob Seger guitarist Jim "Moose" Brown tours with a vintage-style blonde/black-guard, for example—but even if it was, a paisley for Paisley is enough to set you up in the T-style history books all on its own. crookcustomguitars.com



D'PERGO

Although he renders his guitars in classic shapes and formats, fans of Stefan Dapergolas' Bakersfield models will tell you these are almost as much classical instruments disguised as T-styles as they are traditional electric guitars. Which isn't to say they can't rock, twang, and wail when pointed in that direction, but the extremes of material sourcing and craftsmanship undertaken by D'Pergo are all aimed at producing instruments that exhibit resonance and response characteristics that go beyond even those of the best vintage guitars. From harvesting precious "sinker" logs of tonewoods from remote swamps, to applying a jeweler's precision to fret dressing, the effort put into these \$10k-plus guitars has landed D'Pergos in the hands of top players like David Torn and Julien Kasper. dpergoguitars.com

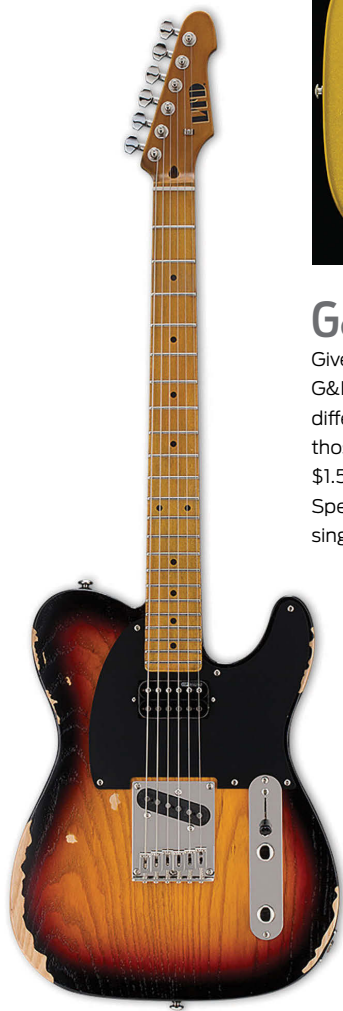
DeTEMPLE

California-based builder Michael DeTemple played with Bob Dylan, Dave Mason, Rick Danko, Albert Hammond, and other notable artists in the '60s and '70s before taking a sideways move into luthiery in the '80s as a means of "settling down." He has since become known as one of the world's premier builders of high-end F-style guitars, and his creations have been played by Vince Gill, Dean Parks, and Rick Springfield, to name but three. We were mightily impressed with the Editors' Pick Award-winning DeTemple Spirit Series '52 Model (\$7,995 direct) reviewed in 2015, which carried refinements such as a nut made from genuine fossilized mastodon, a custom-made titanium bridge plate with titanium saddles, and in-house T-style pickups. detempleguitars.com



DANOCASTER

Nashville-based maker Dan Strain first gained attention for his vintage-style guitars largely via word of virtual mouth on the guitar boards, and has recently become one of the more celebrated makers of pre-aged T-styles. Priced around the \$2.5k mark, Strain's T-styles are largely sold by custom-order, and run the gamut from early '50s blackguards right through to '70s semi-solid models with f-holes and Wide Range Humbuckers. Fans of Danocasters praise these guitars' lusciously "played-in" feeling necks, and the old right-out-of-the-gigbag appearances of the guitars themselves. A tasty double-bound early '60s Danocaster T-style in faded Inca Silver was awarded a *GP* Editors' Pick Award in 2015. danocaster.com



G&L

Given that the company was co-founded in 1979 by Leo Fender, it's no surprise that T-style models have figured big in G&L's lineup. The California maker's T-alternative, the ASAT, has been broadly accepted by players seeking a slightly different breed of still-traditional twang, and, today, G&L produces everything from fairly classic-spec T-styles to those with updated hardware and pickups, as well as highly touted affordable Ts in their Tribute series. At around \$1.5k, the ASAT Classic delivers straightforward appointments—albeit with a six-saddle bridge—while the ASAT Special is closer to Leo's original re-design of the T circa 1985, with a radically updated bridge and his own MFD single-coil pickups. Or, for \$499, the Tribute ASAT Classic provides impressive quality for the price. glguitars.com

ESP

This versatile maker has several guitars based roughly on the bolt-neck, single-cutaway platform, including some notable Super-Ts in the USA-made series. For the hardworking T-style fan, though, the guitars getting most of the attention are those under the maker's more affordable LTD banner, which has been recognized since 1996 for its great bang-for-buck ratio. The LTD TE series has several T-styles, the closest-to-traditional of the bunch being the TE-254 with a six-saddle bridge, a single-coil pickup in the bridge position, and an uncovered humbucker in the neck—along with several other impressive specs and features—at \$399 street, and in an appealingly distressed three-tone sunburst finish at that. Or for closer to \$1k, the Ron Wood Signature model delivers an un-distressed T with a chrome-covered neck humbucker. esp guitars.com



K-LINE

Chris Kroenline began building his K-Line branded F-style guitars as a sideline in the early 2000s, and made it his full-time occupation around 2009. Although this St. Louis-based maker's Truxton model might look like a fairly straightforward T-style—and, in many ways, it is—he has put a lot of thought into subtle refinements in areas such as the neck pocket and neck width and profile, and he has also developed a reputation for his thin nitrocellulose finishes, which can come as pristinely new, or pre-distressed. Priced in the low to mid \$2k range, the Truxton can be had in a fully traditional guise, or with any number of alterations and modifications: bound bodies, chambered with f-holes, full-size or mini-humbuckers, or whatever variation your single-cut-away heart desires. k-lineguitars.com



HAHN

A veritable T-nut, Chihoe Hahn of Newburgh, NY, has devoted a huge part of his craft to nailing the optimum vintage-style tone and performance from his creations, which nevertheless incorporate several cleverly designed in-house variations on the traditional components. Running from high \$2k to mid \$3k price points, depending on specs, his Model 228 (another past *GP* Editors' Pick Award winner) comes dressed as anything from an early '50s blackguard guise to an early '60s bound-with-rosewood-fretboard configuration, and has been lauded by the likes of Redd Volkaert and Jim Campilongo as one of the finest T-alternatives available—at any price. Variations on the theme are found in Hahn's more original Model 910 and 112 (the latter a boutique bargain at \$1,850), which still carry plenty of T-style DNA. hahnguitars.com



LSL

Lance S. Lerman founded LSL Instruments in 2008, with help from his wife Lisa following a long career split between woodworking and guitar playing. Since that time, LSL has become one of the premier contenders for players seeking upgraded performance in a mid-priced F-style guitar. Their T-style model, the T-Bone (there's also a dual-humbucker-equipped Bad Bone), is built in what we'd generally call, "vintage style," yet with plenty of refinements at every turn, including in-house bridges and pickups and high-quality components in other positions—all at around the lower to mid \$2k range, including thin nitrocellulose finishes with tasteful checking and distressing. lslinstruments.com



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LENTZ

Scott Lentz Sr. has been recognized as a distinguished maker of handcrafted guitars since 1975, and has been joined in recent decades by his son, Scott Jr.—a master builder himself for more than ten years after a dedicated apprenticeship under Sr.'s wing. Lentz does make a set-neck model, the Croydon, but the shop is best known for its impressively well-made bolt-neck, F-inspired designs—the cornerstone of which is the impressive T. The T Traditional is just what you'd expect, although highly customizable and extremely well made at around the mid \$4k range. Or kick it all up a notch to the Reserve T, which dips into the Lentz's "private reserve" wood stocks. In-house pickups are used on most guitars, and hardware and components are all top-notch. lentzguitars.us



SENN

Originally from Buffalo, New York, Jeff Senn made Nashville his home early in his career, which was split between stints as head of Gibson's repair department, and jaunts touring the globe as a sideman for several major artists (a passion he continues to pursue with his own instrumental band, the Crazy Aces). Through these multifarious guitar-centric pursuits, Senn developed a passion for vintage bolt-neck guitars, and he established Senn Guitars in 2004 to re-create them for others. Much of his own work has been channeled into producing aged T-style electrics, embodied in a model that he calls the Pomona (starting at \$2,695). Senn has built guitars for Bruce Springsteen and John Fogerty, among others. jeffsennguitars.com



SQUIER

As far as many players are concerned, if you can't afford a Fender Telecaster, you buy a Squier Telecaster, plain and simple. Having been launched by Fender in the early '80s as a more affordable Japanese-made line intended to combat the competition presented by other Japanese makers, Squier has grown exponentially over the years to become the vast lineup of offshore-made models that it represents today. From the vintage-spec'd Classic Vibe Telecaster (\$399 to \$449, depending on features) to the über-affordable Affinity Series Telecaster (\$199), there's a well-made T-style here to suit all budgets. Or check out some alternatives in the Vintage Modified, Thinline, or J5 models. squierguitars.com

SUHR

John Suhr began his career building Pensa-Suhr instruments at Rudy Pensa's famed Rudy's Music Shop in New York City in the early '80s—where his customers included Mark Knopfler, Lou Reed, Eric Clapton, and others—before moving to California to pursue a parallel passion in amplifier design. This was followed by a stint as Senior Master Builder with the Fender Custom Shop. Since setting out on his own in 1997, Suhr's line of custom-built guitars has always included a T-style, and he currently offers three: the Classic T Pro is un-aged, the Classic T Antique is pre-distressed, and the Alt T Pro is a "Thinline" style with f-holes and humbuckers. All are priced in the low-to-mid \$2k range. suhr.com





XAVIERE

Among the broad range of good-value products under the Guitar Fetish (GFS) umbrella, the Xaviere guitar range stands out as exhibiting outstanding bang for the buck, and it presents several enticing variations on the T-style to boot. The XV-820 aims for the most straight-up early '50s to early '60s themes, with a choice of colors in poplar or ash bodies, with traditional three-saddle bridges, single-coil pickups, and either all-maple or maple-rosewood necks (\$169 to \$189). The outwardly similar XV-830 swaps the poplar option for alder, and adds single-coil-sized, dual-rail humbucking pickups with split-coil switching (\$189 to \$199), while the XV-825, XV-840, and XV-845 present neck-bucker, bound-bodied, and dual-humbucker options respectively. guitarfetish.com

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Reverend Double Agent W 20th Anniversary

TESTED BY JON PLUTTE

LET'S START WITH THE CASE. SHAPED like a teardrop in stark black and white, it's kind of a monument to the hot-rod diners of the '50s. And, once opened to reveal the sky-blue flamed-maple Double Agent W resting in black velvet, the optional hardshell case fulfills its promise of showcasing something beautiful and special.

The guitar itself is a celebration of 20 years of Reverend designs. Like some other noted American inventors, Joe Naylor—who holds a

degree in industrial design and is also a graduate of the Roberto-Venn School of Luthiery—started the company in a garage. A lot of Naylor innovations have made the scene since Reverend's 1997 launch in East Detroit, and there have been some business evolutions, as well—a move to Toledo, Ohio, where the company is now run by Ken and Penny Haas with Naylor continuing to provide designs.

The Double Agent W 20th Anniversary is a

fantastic set piece to remind players of Naylor's delightfully off-kilter design aesthetic and Reverend's commitment to quality. The craftsmanship of this blue-hued stunner with exquisite off-white binding is impeccable. The fret dressing is first rate, all hardware is top notch (especially the sensitive Wilkinson WVS50 IIK tremolo), and the brushed-aluminum pickguard is both unusual and practical (it's durable and tough). As a long-time Stratocaster player, I liked



the Double Agent's similar contours, and the easy access to all 22 frets. I immediately felt right at home with the comfortable, medium-oval neck profile that invited fast runs and other fretboard abuse. Intonation was spot-on, and the excellent locking tuners kept me in tune—even as I continually worked the tremolo for solos and chordal effects.

My tone ranges from a growling, gritty jangle to full-on Robin Trower—usually powered by a Vox AC-15 with a single Celestion Greenback speaker—and the Double Agent effortlessly covered my sonic comfort zone. But there were added bonuses. This guitar definitely produces a depth and richness that my Strats can't match. The Railhammer Hyper Vintage bridge pickup delivers all the brightness and attack I could ever want, while the Reverend CP90 in the neck offers ringing bell tones that are articulate, but simultaneously resonant and round. As if the two different

pickup options isn't enough variety, the Reverend Bass Contour control is an adventure in itself. I used it to dial in a multitude of tones that ran the gamut from rich to thin, stout to "filtered" sounding (such as a wah in cocked mode), bluesy to almost a metal-like kerrang, and beyond.

While recording tracks with my band, the songs required that I negotiate such things as gnarly overdriven tones for riffs, chiming funk-like chords, big rock punch for choruses, shimmering parts, and articulate precision for driving an Electro-Harmonix Mel9 Tape Relay Machine (for simulated Mellotron flutes and strings). The Double Agent never let me down, and, in fact, it remained in my hands for the majority of the recording sessions. It's *that* versatile of a tone monster, and it's *that* fun to play. The bottom line is the Double Agent W is a great, great guitar. I think I'll keep playing it. ▶

SPECIFICATIONS

DOUBLE AGENT W 20th ANNIVERSARY

CONTACT	reverendguitars.com
PRICE	\$1,099 street
NUT WIDTH	1.69", Boneite
NECK	Maple, bolt-on, medium-oval profile
FRETBOARD	Blackwood, 25.5" scale, 12" radius
FRETS	22 medium jumbo
TUNERS	Reverend Pin-Lock
BODY	Korina
BRIDGE	Wilkinson WV550 IIK tremolo
PICKUPS	Railhammer Hyper Vintage (bridge), Reverend CP90 (neck)
CONTROLS	Master Volume, Master Tone, Bass Contour, 3-way selector
FACTORY STRINGS	D'Addario, .010-.046
WEIGHT	7.75 lbs
BUILT	Korea
KUDOS	Excellent craftsmanship. Versatile tones. Wonderful playability.
CONCERNS	None.



Fender Road Worn Brad Paisley Telecaster

TESTED BY ART THOMPSON

THE GENESIS OF THIS NEW SIGNATURE model is thoroughly documented in this month's cover story on Brad Paisley, where the guitarist also details all of the elements he wanted for a Telecaster that's designed to have broad appeal for players who need a guitar with excellent tone and playability, as well as an affordable price. Resplendent in its silver sparkle finish, paisley pickguard, and swaths of exposed wood on the upper and lower parts of the body (the

"worn" part if you will), there's more than meets the eye here thanks to a body made from lightweight paulownia wood with a top and back of harder spruce. Our review sample came in at just 6.18 lbs, making it feel very nimble and sound nicely resonant. For reference, paulownia is native to Southeast Asia, and it's the fastest growing tree in the world. Its use here (which Paisley requested) basically gives the player a guitar with boutique-Tele weight but without

the boutique price. Score one for Brad!

Bolted in a super tight neck pocket, the maple-on-maple neck features an ultra-thin, silky finish, and a soft V carve ("Enhanced V" in Fender terms), that is inspired by the neck shape of Paisley's prized '52 Tele. From here on, we find a classic string-through bridge with three compensated brass saddles, a complement of pickups that are patterned on the stock units of a '63 rosewood-neck Tele also owned by Paisley,



and a standard set of Volume and Tone controls with a 3-way selector.

Thanks to a great setup and light strings, the Road Worn plays beautifully, and sounds musically in-tune throughout the reaches of the fingerboard. The medium-jumbo frets are well shaped and finished, string buzz was minimal, and the 9.5"-radius riding atop the generous—but not overly thick—neck creates a righteous surface for bending, plucking, rock chording, speedy flatpicking, etc. Played through a Fender Deluxe Reverb, a '69 Marshall PA20 head driving a Bogner 1x12 cab with a Celestion Greenback, and a selection of OD pedals, the Road Worn delivered balanced bridge-pickup tones that were bright and gutsy in all the right ways. Singing sustain came easy with gain added from pedals, and the snappy attack and low-end girth make it a gas to play. As much as it was tempting to just plant on the

bridge setting and dial the Tone control for creamier textures as needed, the neck pickup is totally viable here, too. Whatever Fender did in formulating this "Twisted Tele" single-coil, there's plenty of complexity and dimension, along with a modest output that invites fat, gritty blues tones though a low-wattage amp with sweating output tubes; or warm, jazzy sounds when using a dead clean setting. It all underscores the versatility that's inherent in a good Tele, which the Road Worn absolutely exemplifies.

Carrying a sub \$1,200 price tag, this guitar has to be one of the best bargains in Fender's extensive Telecaster line. It looks great, it's fun to play, and it sounds killer. Bottom line: If there's one tone fiend who knows what he wants from a Tele, it's Brad Paisley, and this co-design nails all the essential elements and earns an Editors' Pick Award in the process. 

SPECIFICATIONS

ROAD WORN BRAD PAISLEY TELECASTER

CONTACT	fender.com
PRICE	\$1,199 /street, gig-bag included
NUT WIDTH	1.650"
NECK	Maple with Enhanced V shape
FRETBOARD	Maple, 25.5" scale, 9.5" radius
FRETS	21 medium jumbo
TUNERS	Vintage style
BODY	Paulownia core with spruce top and back
BRIDGE	3-saddle, string-through with compensated brass saddles
PICKUPS	"Twisted" Tele single-coil (neck), Custom Brad Paisley Vintage Style single-coil (bridge)
CONTROLS	Volume, Tone, 3-way switch
FACTORY STRINGS	Fender USA 250L 9-42
WEIGHT	6.18 lbs
BUILT	Mexico
KUDOS	A well-sorted Tele that combines classic and new design elements for excellent sound and playing feel.
CONCERNS	None.



Todd Sharp JOAT 20 Combo

TESTED BY DAVE HUNTER

AWARD-WINNING NASHVILLE AMP maker and guitarist Todd Sharp has streamlined his JOAT 20RT by removing the original amp's complex reverb circuit, and compacting it all into a grab 'n' go 1x12 combo that lands at a somewhat more accessible price. Sharp is just getting the model into production post-Summer NAMM, and sent us a prototype for testing, albeit one that's true to the final design ethos. The combo retains the sonic core of the flagship design, however, and the full-bore build

quality—exemplified in meticulously hand-wired construction, using top-flight components—to the end of delivering the same juicy, rich tone and sublime touch sensitivity that players like Keith Urban, Vince Gill, and John Oates have praised in Sharp's work. As with the previous JOAT models (which include a 20-, 30-, and 45-watter) the front end of this amp is based around a little-seen 6AU6 pentode preamp tube (and an NOS GE example at that), pumped into a circuit that eschews conventional tone

SPECIFICATIONS

JOAT 20

CONTACT	ToddsSharpAmps.com
PRICE	\$2,795-\$2,995 direct, depending on speaker. \$2,995 as reviewed with Custom Alnico speaker
CHANNELS	1
CONTROLS	Volume, Bite switch, HR switch, Attitude switch, Low Cut switch, Hi Cut switch, (tremolo) Speed and Depth
POWER	20 watts
TUBES	One 6AU6, two 12AX7s, and one 12AU7, two EL84 output tubes, 5AR4 rectifier
EXTRAS	Footswitch for tremolo, Main and Ext speaker outs with 4/8/16Ω switch. Amplifier Phase switch, 120/240 mains selector
SPEAKER	Custom-made Alnico 12" (as reviewed)
WEIGHT	48 lbs
BUILT	USA
KUDOS	A creative and original design with tons of veracity in both tone and touch sensitivity.
CONCERNS	The cabinet dimensions make it slightly awkward to carry.

controls for a series of multi-position switches that reconfigure voicing capacitors and the like. A Bite switch determines high-mid edge, Attitude adjusts the 6AU6's gain and body, and Low Cut and High Cut do just as they say. Inputs 1 and 2 are tailored toward single-coils and humbuckers respectively, although you can certainly mix by type to achieve other desired sonic ends. The bias-modulating tremolo circuit has Speed and Depth knobs, and, as a bonus on this combo edition, there's an HR switch (for "headroom") that limits the driver-tube current to about half power to enable faster breakup from the amp.

As is already understood by many players who have compared the differences between reverb and non-reverb versions of what is ostensibly the same amp otherwise (consider the blackface Fender Deluxe versus the Deluxe Reverb, or Dr. Z's Maz 18 Reverb and the Non-Reverb version), removing reverb from a circuit does more than just turning the effect's level control to "0"—it can sometimes change



the entire performance of the amp. Sharp tells us he set out merely to remove reverb from his original head design, but found he "needed to massage the circuit to speak appropriately to a 1x12 combo," achieved by adding another 12AU7 preamp tube stage between the phase inverter and output tubes. The combo cab itself is hefty and classily attired, and the speaker in this one is a custom-made, 30-watt Alnico, although other speakers are available. At 21.5" x 25" x 11" it might be a tad cumbersome for a 1x12 combo, but I'm willing to bet many players will make the effort.

Tested with a Gibson Les Paul and a Novo Serus S (a Strat-style guitar with single-coils), and a selection of overdrive pedals, the JOAT 20 Combo proved a bold, toothsome, and addictively

playable "little" amp. The fact is, this thing sounds *big* for a dual-EL84 design, with firm lows and a thick, plummy midrange that really gets into your blood after just a few minutes of playing. All the platitudes dished upon the 20RT head in its *GP* review in early 2016 (visit guitarplayer.com to see it) apply again here, with the reminder that the voicing switches combine for astounding versatility, all resulting in a world-class player's amp that's as good a sonic platform as just about any you could hope to find at this size. It's not cheap, but it's built to withstand the rigors of the road, and to sound superb in the process, while also being appealingly original in a world populated by plenty of clones and copies of classic Fender 1x12 combos. **B**

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www.fulltone.com
www.youtube.com/FulltoneEffects





Killer Combo!

EASTWEST MIDI GUITAR SERIES & FISHMAN TRIPLEPLAY

TESTED BY BUDDY SALEMAN

I'VE BEEN USING COMPUTERS TO compose music since the early '80s, so I'm a devotee of synthesis in general, and guitar synths in particular. In fact, I built my first system in 1980 out of an Imsai 88 8-bit computer that controlled a Serge modular synthesizer, and I can tell you this right now: I LOVE the EastWest/Fishman partnership and what it has done for guitar synthesis.

I know it might be strange for a reviewer to start off with a conclusion, but, you see, as a guitar player, I've been somewhat frustrated by guitar synths over the years—even as Roland, Korg, and other manufacturers have made great strides with some wonderful products. This is totally due to my personal playing style, but if you're like me, you want an easy-to-use guitar synth that tracks performance gestures accurately and without glitches, and that allows you to strut around freely with all the "guitar star moves" that attracted you to the instrument in the first place.

The Fishman TriplePlay Wireless Guitar Controller—reviewed in the December 2013 issue of *GP*—remains a gamechanger in that it doesn't ball-and-chain your urge to dance around and rock hard. But what *really* makes this system a sensational synthesis synergy is the EastWest MIDI Guitar Series. EastWest has produced brilliant sound libraries for years, and now the MIDI Guitar Series brings those incredible samples to guitarists with everything arranged and optimized for seamless integration, and virtually imperceptible latency, with the Fishman TriplePlay.

THE PRICE OF ADMISSION

Assuming that you already have a guitar and a DAW-based recording system ready to go, the EastWest collection is currently arranged in five volumes—Orchestra, Ethnic & Voices, Soundscapes, Guitar & Bass, Keys & Perc—costing \$149 (street) each. A Fishman TriplePlay goes for \$399 (street). So newbies can dip their fretting fingers into guitar synthesis for as little as \$549 (a TriplePlay and one EastWest volume), or sound zealots can go all in for \$1,144 (a TriplePlay and the complete EastWest collection).

GETTING TO WORK

There's not much of a learning curve here. Load your selected Guitar Series patches into the TriplePlay software, and the virtual instruments are automatically configured with recommended function settings such as touch sensitivity, vibrato, and pitch bend. Although your personal approach may require you to tweak some parameters to match your performance needs, this "auto configure" feature gets you started right away.

Although users must load the EastWest instruments from the Fishman TriplePlay software preset menu to access the special programming for this series, the EastWest Play software inside is a system wide "mission control" for modifying the EastWest instruments, and there are tons of options (see Fig. 1). An 8-channel mixer lets you stack different sounds for tremendously cool textures, and the FX routing for each channel is so comprehensive your head just might explode. You get an SSL channel strip with EQ,

compression, a transient shaper, and a noise gate/expander, as well as an SSL stereo bus compressor, an amplifier simulator, and a convolution reverb. It's pure bliss for producers and audio-engineering geeks, but even if you've never messed around much with studio signal processors, the sound-sculpting options should make you dizzy in a good way (see Fig. 2). Just twist those virtual knobs and have fun!

SESSION TIME

The EastWest Guitar Series volumes—excepting some brand new electric and acoustic guitars—are collections of previously available sounds. Yes. The computer-music nerds got them first, but all the patches are astounding with richly nuanced timbres, life-like animation (in an aural sense of ambience, attack, and decay), and cinematic impact, so once you start playing parts with your guitar, you'll cease caring about anything else but the wondrous sounds you're constructing.

For example, I am currently scoring an indie Web series about gangs in Asia and San Francisco called *Gold Mountain* (ikeibifilms.com), and I need a lot of ethnic instruments. Using EastWest's Ethnic & Voices volume, I not only found a guzheng and a shamisen (from China), as well as a tar (from Iran), I was able to blend the sounds together and use guitar vibrato to produce strange, yet organic underscores for the series trailer (which you can see at guitarplayer.com—just search for "gold mountain"). In addition, I found some taiko drums that I layered to produce a huge percussion part that really shook

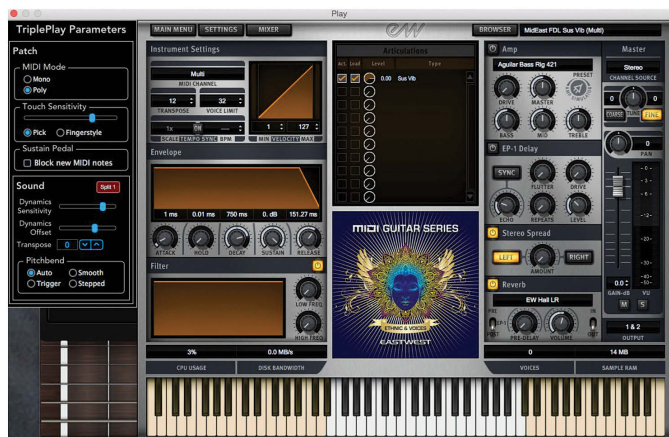


Fig. 1—The Play window is your “mission control” for accessing the power of the EastWest/Fishman MIDI Guitar partnership.



Fig. 2—Look at all the toys you get in the FX window!

my innards. In the five volumes currently available, I wasn't stumped for a sound once, and being able to add amp sims and aggressive EQ to, say, cellos and marimbas, is really inspiring.

CLOSING NOTES

As an independent composer and producer, I am

often burdened with limited budgets from independent film and television clients who want a massive orchestral score, but who don't have the money to hire an orchestra—or even a string quartet that could be layered and overdubbed. With the EastWest libraries in hand, however, I can deliver almost any sound imaginable—from large

string ensembles to solo cellos, sitars to didgeridoos, astral pads to Gamelon boxes and Moroccan darubakas, nylon-string guitars to fuzz basses, and Mellotrons to glockenspiels—and create sonic visuals all on my own. And, of course, all of this happens with a guitar in my hands, which makes me a very happy composer. soundsonline.com

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>>> FIELD TEST

Ernie Ball 40th Anniversary Volume Pedal & Xotic AC/RC-OZ Booster

BY ART THOMPSON

ERNIE BALL 40TH ANNIVERSARY VOLUME PEDAL

This anniversary edition of Ernie Ball's classic volume pedal (\$129 street) is a beautifully rendered unit that has been visually and mechanically updated to celebrate a whopping 40 years of EB volume pedals. So how do you go about improving on a classic that's so ably stood the test of time? Well, the new pedal features include a stronger PVC-coated Kevlar cord connecting the rocker to the potentiometer, a 250k Ω pot that's voiced for passive pickups, improved rocker traction for smoother volume swells, and a brushed black finish on the ultra-rugged extruded aluminum housing.

In use, I honestly don't know what more you could ask from a volume pedal. The 40th Anniversary has a glass-smooth feel, and the tension of the rocker is so nicely dialed-in that you're practically guaranteed to never have to struggle with a too fast or too slow response when trying to execute that perfect swell. The unit's 2.2 lbs weight makes it pedalboard friendly too, which is just one more reason to consider this superb pedal if you're seeking the utmost in foot-controllable volume.

Kudos Stronger design. Excellent sweep response. Tuner out.

Concerns None.

Contact ernieball.com

XOTIC AC/RC-OZ BOOSTER

Stemming from Oz Noy's preference for running an Xotic RC Booster into an Xotic AC Booster, the company put the two circuits together in a new, limited-edition pedal called the AC/RC-OZ (\$196 street). Powered by a 9v-18v power supply (not included) or 9v battery, this pedal basically replicates how Noy sets up the two Xotics on his pedalboard: The RC is a clean booster designed to elevate the clean signal from your guitar to drive a subsequent pedal (or an amp's front end) for increased distortion. By contrast, the AC is a higher-gain pedal that has enough range to cover boost up to full-on distortion.

In the AC/RC-OZ, both stages feature their own Gain, Volume, Bass, and Treble controls, and dual footswitches allow you to select them individually or combined. You can't change the order of the effects—it's always RC into AC—but it's easy to set up very different levels of boost and distortion and switch between them as

needed. I found that the AC side works beautifully for moderate up to fairly high levels of grind, and the sound is warm and dynamically responsive to guitar-volume changes. The 2-band EQ accommodates single-coil and humbucker guitars, and there's a ton of volume available if you need it. For more sustain, click on the RC side and use its controls to push the AC into greater saturation, and without compromising the latter's sweet distortion character.

In some cases, using the RC side by itself was perfect for kicking an amp already on the verge of distortion into wicked overdrive—which can be a cool way to go when the natural overdriven tone of the amp is preferable.

Either way, though, the AC/RC-OZ is a versatile boost/OD pedal that offers Xotic's elegant form factor: Nice looking paint and knobs, blue and red LEDs on the small EQ controls to indicate which sides are active, and an aluminum housing that's rugged and sensibly sized for most pedalboards.

Kudos Two excellent boost and distortion pedals in one affordable package.

Concerns None.

Contact xotic.us

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>>> FIELD TEST

BOSS RV-500 Reverb

TESTED BY KEVIN APARICIO

FULL DISCLOSURE: I AM A HUGE FAN of reverb. I love using it to wash over guitar solos, or provide a subtle and ghostly presence to chord progressions. So the BOSS RV-500 Reverb (\$349 street) is definitely a machine after my own heart, as it offers a huge amount of options, sounds, and parameter control. Drawing on the rich, reverberated history of Roland/BOSS effects throughout the years, the RV-500 includes old and essential favorites such as Plate, Room, Hall, and Spring, as well as some wilder options like Shimmer, Non-Linear, and Space Echo. All of the reverbs sound fantastic, and you can not only use the A/B Simul mode to use two patches simultaneously, but a spill-over function ensures the reverb tails don't cut off when you change patches. Nice! The Hall setting is particularly lush and spacious. My arpeggios drifted far into the ether in the most beautiful ways. On the unconventional side, one of my favorite presets was Storm, which indeed sounds like your guitar signal is being tossed around by a tornado. There is a swoosh and whoosh with

every chord you play! I also liked the Lo-Fi preset—especially for giving double-tracked guitars different filtered effects—and Slowverb, which added post-rock drama to a Jazzmaster and fuzz part.

There are myriad control options in the RV-500, and, at times, the amount of available parameter tweaks—as well as navigating the menus and patches—can be overwhelming. Any box with 297 preset locations is going to be a programmer's dream—as well as a possible point of struggle for players who just want to click a button and get reverb. However, the manual is well-configured and detailed, and it helps smooth out any learning curves by walking you through all of the editing operations. And if you choose *not* to go deep into the menus—which I think would be a mistake, because the reverb-sculpting power is incredible—the top-panel controls are familiar and easy: Time, Pre-Delay, Effect Level, Low and High EQ, Bank Up and Down, and a Tap Tempo footswitch. Back-panel features include stereo/mono 1/4" outputs, MIDI In/Out, USB (for syncing

with the device's free editor/librarian software), and an expression-pedal jack. You can also choose between true-bypass and buffered operation.

The LCD, top-panel knobs, and footswitches make the RV-500 a fantastic choice to put on your pedalboard for live performances. Once you get all of your patches together, it's a breeze to call up tons of cool reverbs on the fly. But the audio quality (thanks to a 32-bit AD/DA running at 96kHz) and the number of sounds also make the RV-500 a wonderful home-studio tool. Sure, there are no balanced XLR outputs, but I had no discernable sonic glitches routing the 1/4" outputs to my DAW of choice using a Focusrite Scarlett 2i2 audio interface. For recording, the reverbs worked great on vocals, background vocals, drums, and percussion—so much so, that I often opted to record the ambient effect with the source sound, using the Effect Level control to add just the right amount of dimension and environment. While \$349 might seem a bit expensive for a reverb pedal, you have to factor in the dual-application (stage and studio), 12 modes and 21 reverb types, NASA-like parameter control, and numerous presets. Not to mention that the RV-500 is a reverb freak's paradise!

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TWO-HAND BAND

FINGERSTYLIST MIKE DAWES ON LOOPING, ARRANGING COVER SONGS, AND PLAYING WITH JUSTIN HAYWARD

BY JIMMY LESLIE

ENGLAND'S MIKE DAWES EXPLODED IN 2012— thanks to a YouTube video of his acoustic arrangement of Gotye's "Somebody That I Used To Know" that charted more than 4.2 million views. The 28-year-old virtuoso's fingerstyle chops have been blowing up YouTube ever since—his recent take on the Metallica epic "One" generated more than 700,000 views just two months after its upload—and, in addition to performing with Justin Hayward of the Moody Blues, Dawes recently put out his sophomore solo release, *ERA* [Qten]. The new album channels his world travels into thoughtful compositions, and it showcases Dawes' melodically sensitive and sonically adventurous techniques, as well as how he is able to bring all of his considerable skills together in the service of a great song.

Were you once dedicated to becoming an electric shredder?

I used to play electric guitar, and Metallica was a big influence. The funny thing is that my arrangement of "One" actually began as a guitar and concert harp duet with my ex-girlfriend about seven years ago, after I switched to acoustic. I'd always found playing with fingers more natural than using a pick. I suppose that's why my alternate-picked shredding was always pretty loose growing up!

So what turned you into an acoustic cat?

I'd always been interested in the music of Pierre Bensusan and Antonio Forcione, but the real turning point for me was discovering a Eric Roche around the time YouTube exploded. Eric is sadly no longer with us, but his influence on the acoustic scene was huge where I grew up in Guildford, England. I started with a few solo tapping pieces on my Les Paul, and then I hit the open-mic scene hard, selling homemade demos to fund the purchase of my first acoustic. It was actually a very natural and organic transition.

How did you develop your arrangement for "One"?

I started the tune while I was at university. *DADGAD* was my default tuning for years, as Pierre and Eric were both regular *DADGAD* abusers. "One" works well

in that tuning, because it's in *B* minor, so there are some straightforward chord shapes and achievable melodic passages. The main issue was figuring out how to make the "chugs" at the end sound convincing. I decided to dive back into it years later, and finish the end using a looper. It's funny how some people think using a bit of looping to enhance an arrangement is somehow cheating, because the hardest part about playing "One" live is managing the live looping. Tap dancing is hard, man!

What's your favorite part of the tune to play?

All three solos are great, but the bit just before the chugs towards the end is so satisfying. It's just straightforward riffing with a tiny bit of dirt—all fun and no pressure.

What was the greatest challenge to master on guitar?

The hardest part technically is the final run of the intro solo, where I'm attempting to play James Hetfield, Kirk Hammett, and Lars Ulrich. Kirk's run is particularly challenging to fret while keeping the beat going. Also, there are lots of artificial harmonics in quick succession over the soundhole, and it's very hard to be accurate, as there are no frets to guide you.

Did any particular tools and techniques factor into composing the original songs on *ERA*?

Well, the ToneWoodAmp is an ingenious device that sits on the back of the acoustic, and it sends effects through the soundhole via vibrations on the back of the guitar. Because I would always compose with the reverb on, *ERA* has a lot of space between notes that creates an ambient, hypnotic vibe in places. "The Old Room" is a good example, as is "Reverie." On a technical level, most of my sound comes from various subtle contortions of my right hand, allowing for different tonal combinations. I explore lots of polyrhythmic ideas on songs such as "Fortress" and "Belle Insomnie." I love the idea of one hand performing in multiple time signatures simultaneously. I find the hypnotic sound of polymetrics very evocative, and such passages can express dark and mysterious feelings. It also helps with creating the illusion



FRETS

MIKE DAWES

of multiple performers—very Steve Reich.

Is your Andreas Cuntz CWG23 signature model your main instrument?

It has been my workhorse for the past few years. It has a 38-year-old Sitka spruce top that's good for the percussive element, and its bright tone works well with the rosewood back and sides. Indian rosewood had the darkness and warmth I was after while also being snappy enough to produce a great percussive tone. I played my Nick Benjamin jumbo—which was primary on my debut album—for one track on *ERA*, and that was the cover of Periphery's "Scarlet."

Speaking of heavy metal, your Cuntz guitar appears like an acoustic version of a shred axe, due to the sleek headstock shape, sharp Florentine cutaway, and DiMarzio magnetic soundhole pickup.

I had the Cuntz made as an electric player's acoustic guitar. I love the aesthetic, but it's completely functional. The headstock is

structured so the strings don't bend—they go straight through the nut to the pegs. That helps maintain a little extra tension for lower tunings. The top is slightly reinforced for heavy kick-drum-like sounds. The string spacing is only 44mm at the nut, rather than the traditional 46mm for fingerstyle, and the action is very low with a slim neck profile. The guitar is loaded with DiMarzio goodness. My electric friends love it. In fact, I believe Periphery's Misha Mansoor is in the process of ordering one.

Can you explain the "scratchpad" on the Cuntz guitar?

Nick Benjamin actually created that as a sort of wooden Band-Aid for Eric Roche to stop him from "Willie Nelson-ing" his guitar, so I had it added to my Cuntz. We essentially taped an extra piece of untreated spruce to the top. As it gets scratched and scraped, the soft parts wear away to reveal the grain, and you can get a sort of güiro effect with it. You can hear the scratchpad

sound on the bridge sections of "Beirut" and "Overload."

Are you still using Ernie Ball Aluminum Bronze strings?

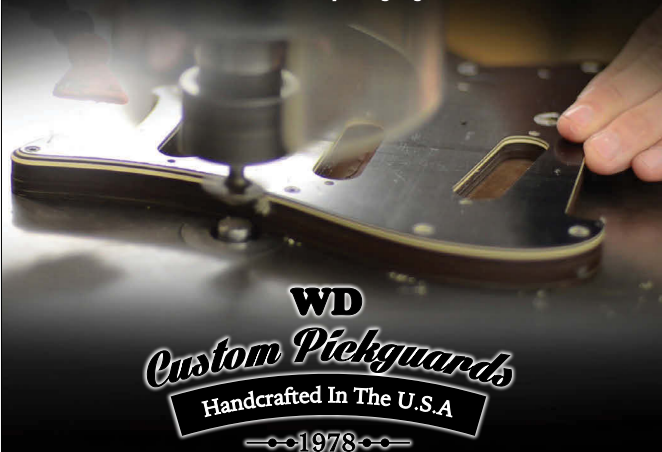
Yes. It's a *DADGAD* set, so the gauges are .013, .017, .024, .032, .042, .056. I dig them for live performance, because they're accurate, and they hold tunings very well. In the studio, I'll use an appropriate string gauge for a particular note in a given tuning to maintain tension and intonation, but, onstage, the *DADGAD* set is a happy medium.

You've got four different pickups in your Cuntz guitar. How do you use them?

The DiMarzio Black Angel Piezo is my main acoustic sound, and I have an internal mic that picks up the percussion on the edge of the guitar. The magnetic Black Angel sounds warm and it works well with certain "electric guitar" effects, such as overdrive and octave. Finally, I use the DiMarzio transducer on the body to pick

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FRETS

MIKE DAWES

up my kick drum effects. Each pickup runs into a specific mixer channel, and they are dialed in before running out to my effects.

Do any particular effects come into play more than others?

The Strymon TimeLine Delay is great, because you can play it like an instrument. You can swell the feedback of the delay by holding a button down, so you can actually improvise with the delay to an extent. I use it on about half of Justin Hayward's set, as well as on my own. Check out Pete Thorn's demo of the Ice preset on YouTube. I've been using that patch for years. On *ERA*, there is a lot of smear and ducked delay on "Overload," and I used a Joyo JF-14 American Sound amp-simulation pedal for high-gain stuff all over the record. To emphasize certain hits and strikes, I use the plate reverb from the TC Electronic Hall of Fame Mini Reverb. I used the BOSS OC-3 Super Octave pedal in polyphonic mode on every song in some capacity. It blows my mind that BOSS is still

the only company to make a pedal with such a function. I apply the pedal effects after the dry take is recorded. We run the recorded signal back into the pedals, or else the recordings would be littered with pedal clicks and the sound of me moving around. The same goes for looping.

What's your main looper?

I use the BOSS RC-300, because it has everything I need for "One." It also comes in handy on "Your Wildest Dreams," when I play with Justin.

Can you detail your typical signal path for the studio and live performance?

I used all four pickups, with the magnetic pickup split at the Boss OC-3 for a total of five lines. In the studio, we used two stereo pairs of large-diaphragm condenser mics—two on the bridge, and two positioned at the 14th fret—and another large-diaphragm condenser pointed at the nut. For live performances, my pedal rig is sent straight to the front-of-house mixer.

Do you change up your acoustic style when you play with Justin Hayward?

Well, part of the reason I got that gig was to arrange the Moody Blues songs in my style, so it's actually the songs that are more adjusted. The cool thing about our show is how all the tunes are arranged for acoustic guitars. It's Justin's way of showing a more naked version of the songs, and he'll often perform them using the guitar on which they were written.

What are your favorite Moody Blues tunes to play?

"Question" is a banger, as I take the drums and bass on that one. I also like playing "Never Comes The Day," and, of course, "Nights in White Satin." I get to play the flute solo on guitar, and it's always a show highlight for me.

What challenges as a player are you still hoping to conquer?

My improvisation game needs work. I'll be grinding on that now that *ERA* is out. ■

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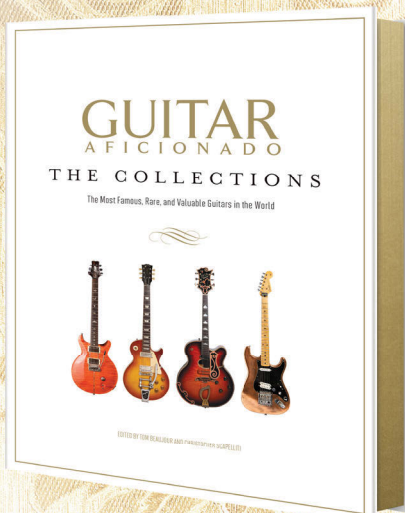
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ANDREW WHITE CYBELE 110C NAT

TESTED BY JIMMY LESLIE

“I’VE BEEN BUILDING GUITARS WITH what I call the ‘Arcing Body Profile’ since 1999,” says Andrew White. “I didn’t invent anything, Steve Klein was doing it way back in the day, but I am a modern pioneer of a design that’s catching on. D’Ambrosio, Razo, and Wilborn are building guitars with similar body profiles, and larger companies such as Bedell are coming close. Jeff Traugott told me that we are looking at a clear change to the next generation of acoustic guitar.”

The premise of White’s forward-minded profile is actually based on an ancient understanding of the power of the arch in construction design. White uses arches in the guitar rim to eliminate flat spots. His arches are slightly more dramatic than traditional curves at the hips and shoulders, while broader arches encompass the top and bottom where acoustics traditionally flatten out. According to White, ergonomic, aesthetic, sonic, and structural integrity advantages ensue because increased curvature makes the guitar stronger, louder, more comfortable, and sexier looking.

The Cybele on review here is his smallest body style. With 14 thin frets to the body and an orchestral figure, it’s like a cross between a parlor guitar and a triple O. Myriad variations are available, and the 110C NAT we received has a tannish red cedar top sporting a fine, straight grain that naturally separates it from the spruce pack. Simple, appealing appointments include a woodblock rosette, white pearl dot position markers, and a straightforward “W”

white pearl logo set into the rich brown rosewood headstock veneer. The rosewood back and sides have deep black grain lines, and the Spanish cedar neck is punctuated with an even darker rosewood heel cap. Black binding and tuners add to the whole “black & tan” appearance. Craftsmanship is solid and clean.

The curvy Cybele is quite comfortable to play sitting down, which was the only way I played it since there was no strap button at the neck heel. I had no expedient way to test White’s theory that having the neck meet the body at a slight arc strengthens and maintains the dovetail joint’s integrity, nor was I about to give the Cybele a direct vertical drop to test the bottom, but arch physics has literally stood the test of time in the form of ancient aqueducts, bridges, and cathedrals that stand to this day.

White claims that an arced profile makes the rim



stiffer, absorbing less energy away from the soundboard while directing more air-flow through the soundhole. The Cybele does deliver ample sound for its body size, with enduring sustain, and a liveliness that you can feel transferring from its body. The sound is on the bright side—snappy, chimy, and super articulate; harmonics also spring forth readily. The Cybele's full, C-shaped neck with its flat fingerboard facilitates fingerpicking and linear lines. It's not ideal for bluesy bending, however, and aggressive playing created fret buzz, even after increasing the height of the strings by adjusting the trussrod. Delicacy is rewarded here. The Cybele excels when plucked like a piano, and it practically sustains like one too. Intonation along the fretboard is quite precise, and the compact body makes it easier to finger complex chords than on most acoustics.

Andrew White's Cybele is like a classical

guitar with steel strings, and it should appeal to fingerstylists that straddle both worlds, and traditionalists who appreciate a natural look with no cutaway and

no electronics. I'd also recommend that Modernists explore the oodles of other Cybeles available from this cutting-edge builder. **D**

Cybele 110C NAT

CONTACT	andrewwhiteguitars.com
PRICE	\$659 street
NUT WIDTH	1.69", Graphtech NuBone
NECK	One-piece Spanish cedar
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TUNERS	18:1 ratio, black oval buttons
BODY	Rosewood back and sides, solid red cedar top
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REVIEW

VOX VX50 AG

TESTED BY ART THOMPSON

I RECENTLY RECEIVED THREE NEW

Vox VX50 amps—the AG (acoustic guitar), KB (keyboard), and BA (bass) models, which were immediately put to use in band rehearsals. All performed above their weight class, and though the bass and keyboard versions were easily out-gunned by the musicians' standard stage gear, we all agreed that these new Voxes were impressive considering how small and inexpensive they are. Focusing on the AG for the balance of this review, this amp is equipped with everything found in pricier acoustic models, including dedicated Instrument and Mic channels (phantom power available on the latter), independent EQ controls, built-in effects (chorus and reverb on the Instrument channel, reverb only on the Mic channel), and a 50-watt output stage that provides good headroom and plenty of volume.

Upstream of all this Vox has deployed a NuTube 6P1 twin-triode vacuum tube, which, developed and produced by Japan's Noritake Itron, is a small, directly heated glass tube that offers low power consumption and long service life, while still able to generate the rich harmonics that a standard 12AX7 tube and its close cousins are known for. All of the VX50 models feature NuTube technology.

Tested with a Martin D-28 equipped with a DiMarzio Black Angel soundhole magnetic pickup and a Taylor 12-string with Expression 2 electronics, the VX50 AG delivered good sounds with little effort. The complement of tone controls on the Instrument channel are effective and well voiced, and since the amp doesn't sound boxy to begin with, getting

natural acoustic tones does not require much knob twiddling at all.

The VX50 AG also sounds more tube-like than solid-state, and even though its closed-back cabinet is quite small, the 8" speaker working conjunction with an internal bass-reflex structure provides a surprisingly big sound with firm bottom and more depth than expected. The effects are controlled by a single knob that sweeps between chorus, reverb, and a combination of the two. Moving the knob through each preset adjusts the wetness of the effect, and, if you like to hear a lot of swirly modulation, you'll likely dig what's on tap here. The reverb does exactly what it should to add depth and ambience, and I simply left it in a setting that enhanced the sound of my guitars. Overall, the effects are satisfyingly

rich and also very quiet.

The Mic channel has a slightly simplified EQ (no Middle control), and a single Reverb knob instead of a multi-effects dial. The XLR jack accommodates a wide range of microphones thanks to selectable phantom-power, and it turns the VX50 AG into a cool micro P.A. for vocals, backing tracks, or break music from your Mp3 device. Again, there's a goodly amount of volume when the Master is turned up, and the delivery is clear and focused.

Vox's VX50 series are useful solutions for players that want ultra-compact amplification for rehearsals, small venues, and practice. In particular, the VX50 AG is a solid performer for its size and cost, a good choice for anyone seeking good amplified acoustic sound, and it looks cool too. **A**

MODEL VX50 AG

CONTACT	voxamps.com
PRICE	\$229 street
CHANNELS	2
CONTROLS	(Instrument Ch) Volume, Bass, Middle, Treble, Effects, Phase switch. (Mic Ch) Volume, Bass, Treble, Reverb, Phantom Power switch. Global Master
POWER	50 watts
TUBES	One NuTube twin triode
EXTRAS	Chorus, Reverb, Chorus-Reverb, and p for guitar channel. Reverb and Phantom power for Mic channel. Aux In and Heaphone jacks.
SPEAKER	One 8" in sealed-back cabinet with bass-reflex structure
WEIGHT	9 lbs
BUILT	China
KUDOS	Super compact. Surprisingly full sound for such a small cabinet. Control panel is oriented for viewing from the front.
CONCERNS	Wish it had a plug-in AC cord instead of an in-line adapter.

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Meet your new favorite rock star. My only advice to the designers was to make a watch that looks exactly like rock and roll sounds. Big, bold and loud enough to wake the neighbors. It should evoke images of Bill Haley, Buddy Holly, The King and The Boss

strumming crowds into a frenzy. But it should also reverberate with the spirit of the world's greatest rock guitar gods like Jimi, Eric and Keith (who was featured on the cover of *Rolling Stone* magazine wearing a Stauer watch). As you can see, the final product is worthy of a standing ovation.

It's only rock and roll, but we like it. One look at the Stauer **Guitar Watch's** voluptuous stainless steel body will bring you right back to the glory days of 45 and 33 rpm records. The eye-catching shape of the case recalls the round-bottomed bodies of the greatest vintage electric guitars.

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The Day Of Your Concert

SINCE AUGUST '78 my column has focused on how you can prepare a recital. Last month we moved the scene of attention from the practice room to the concert hall. I asked, "What is it going to take for the experience of your recital to satisfy you?" and said that for my concerts, it's going to be that an audience is there and that they and I have a good time. This leads directly to my performing philosophy, which I stated in two words—no excuse. The experience of what I want—and only that—will satisfy me. If the concert doesn't go well, explanations or excuses are going to be no substitute. Assuming you share the "no excuse" viewpoint, I also gave some tips on how to get what you want at your concert—the details you must consider and attend to in advance: publicity and promotion; the choice of the hall; the chair on which you perform; the placement of your seating and that of the audience; acoustical matters such as shells, drapes, and amplification; lighting; eliminating noises in the hall; stage appearance; the printed program; and being in the area at least one day in advance. In a nutshell, the no-excuse approach is to take responsibility for all of it. Here are some tips on what to bring and do on the day of your recital.

Getting there. Arrive early and prepared. Even when I've squared away all the details I discussed last month, I like to arrive at the hall a minimum of one hour before performance. If there are *any* details to be handled, I'll come two hours ahead. Early arrivals take care of "accidents" such as traffic jams, car trouble, or something not being right in the hall. This often leaves me time to compose myself, make the environment my own, and play a little music. Turn up at the last minute only if you want to be met with excuses for things not being right; often enough, that's what you'll get. Now, let's look at what you should bring to the concert hall (besides all the preparation I've discussed in this column for the past two years): your clothes, guitar, footstool, and body.

Your clothes make a statement and an impression. Take time to see that they're in order and that they do for you what you want them to. They should look good and travel well, and they should be comfortable for guitar playing. I've removed the buttons from jackets I perform in because they used to rattle on the guitar. If your look is right, it will do much to open the ears of many audience members, possibly most audience members in this visually-oriented culture. For many, how you look will have much to do with how you sound.

Your guitar is your voice. How much time have you spent studying the instrument itself and learning what sort of guitar suits your playing? It surprises me that many good players—artists who have spent years perfecting their skills—know practically nothing about guitars and have taken little or no time to learn what makes an instrument good. Hearing some of them perform and seeing the blasé reaction of their audiences brings to mind a maxim of Chicago guitar importer James Sherry: "A good guitarist without a good guitar is not a good guitarist." Besides the obvious qualities of the instrument—sound, volume, and color, for example—there are subtler matters such as balance and dynamic and timbral flexibility. How a guitar sounds up close may be quite different than how it sounds in a hall. The action of a guitar may be changed in many ways, and what's right for one fine player is not necessarily right for another. The only way to find out what's right for you is to study your technique and physique, and take the time to play and listen to many guitars. When you compare instruments, expand your aural vocabulary by defining differences rather than judging which instrument is superior.

Strings affect the sound and action of your guitar. Are the strings you're using the best for you and your guitar? Tuning is also important—a point that's seemingly so plain that it's hardly worth raising except for this reason: How many times have you heard a recital where the guitarist played nicely but out of tune? Playing in tune requires correct fretting and adjustment of the guitar, accurate strings, and correct tuning. The last item is the only one most players give attention to. Have you checked your instrument for the others? Even the very finest concert guitars can fall down in the first categories. These are the most important ones, since without them the last is futile. My October and November '76 columns give the last word on how to get your tuning right.

Your footstool is one element of your sitting. In important ways this is the foundation of both your appearance and technique. Your posture will both reflect and contribute to what is going on inside of you. Are you comfortable when you sit? Past columns (June-August '76 and January '79) discuss the importance of and techniques for developing good sitting posture.

Your body is going to make a big difference. Without it, for starters, you're not going to give any concert at all. Yet it is surprising what poor care and attention many players give their

bodies. Give yours love, good food in correct quantities, fresh air, exercise, and rest, and give your mind quiet as well as activity, and you'll see what wonderful support you get from your body. Do you remember the no-excuse philosophy? "I didn't sleep well," "I had the flu," or "I just wasn't with it" are not going to be satisfactory substitutes for a good performance. Find out what works for your body. So far no one has had the answer for me. I have learned much, however, from watching cycles of rest, activity, and eating. What's good for me at one time of the year is not necessarily good at others.

Do you smoke? If so, is it adding something to your life that you want? If not, you might well drop it. If playing well and smoking don't exactly seem complementary, the same is true in spades for good playing and alcohol or drugs. I've seen good players become bad players because of non-attention to their bodies.

Being there. As soon as you arrive at the hall, check over last-minute details and get ready to play. I like to see if I'm comfortable sitting in the chair. Is its placement good? Are the lights right both in the hall and onstage? Do the personnel know when I want the lights up or down and when the doors should be opened or closed? Is there anything more that can be done to make the environment work for the audience and for me? I carefully go over the route from the dressing room to the stage and from the wings to where I perform. Artists who don't do this sometimes don't know how to get on or off the stage and occasionally suffer serious damage to their instruments or bodies when they fall into pits or get tripped by props, wires, and other junk backstage. Also there are often completely different climates—warm in one place, cold in another—along the route from the dressing room to the stage. I plan any compensations I'll make for myself or my instruments.

If I'm leaving anything backstage while performing, I'll first check the hall's security. It is sad but true that many artists have been robbed while performing. Then I tune the guitars carefully and make a last check of the sound, going over any passages that make demands on the room's acoustics, and I tune myself for performing in that room. Finally, I enjoy the pleasure of just being in the hall. I'll play some music, rest, talk to people, exercise, or do whatever feels right at the time for having me in the best shape when the moment comes for me to walk onstage.

Next month: Your performance.

Next Month: College Guitar Programs

116 GUITAR PLAYER/JULY 1980



SURE, MICHAEL LORIMER WAS TALKING ABOUT CLASSICAL-GUITAR CONCERTS WHEN HE PENNED THIS July 1980 Master Class column, but there are elements to his piece that all performers—no matter what style of music they play—should take to heart when preparing for a show. —MICHAEL MOLENDAA

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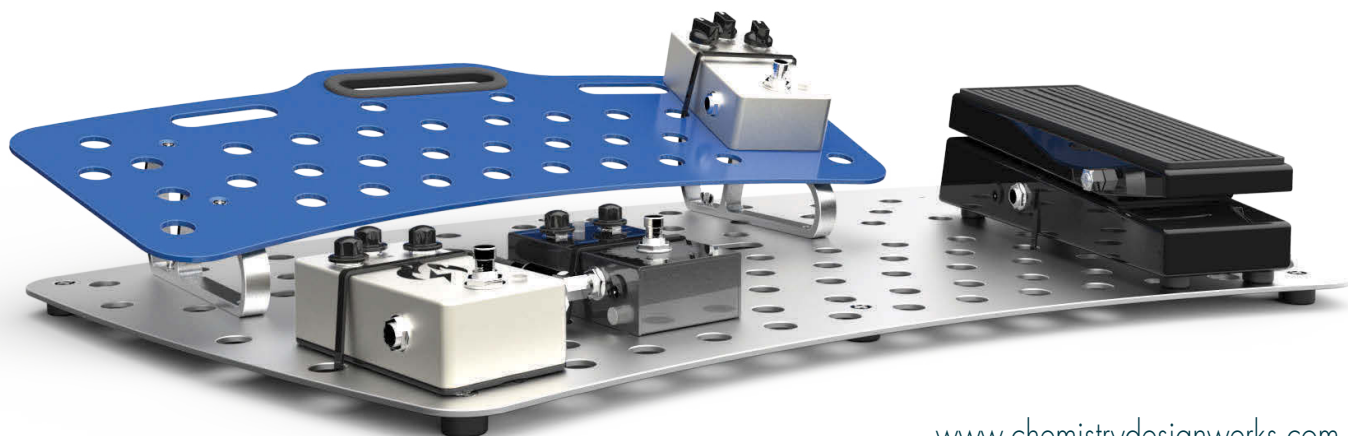


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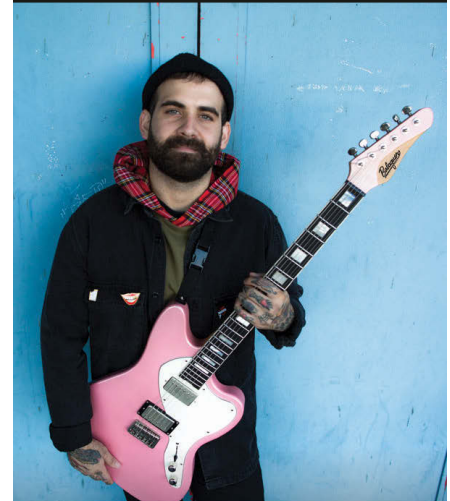
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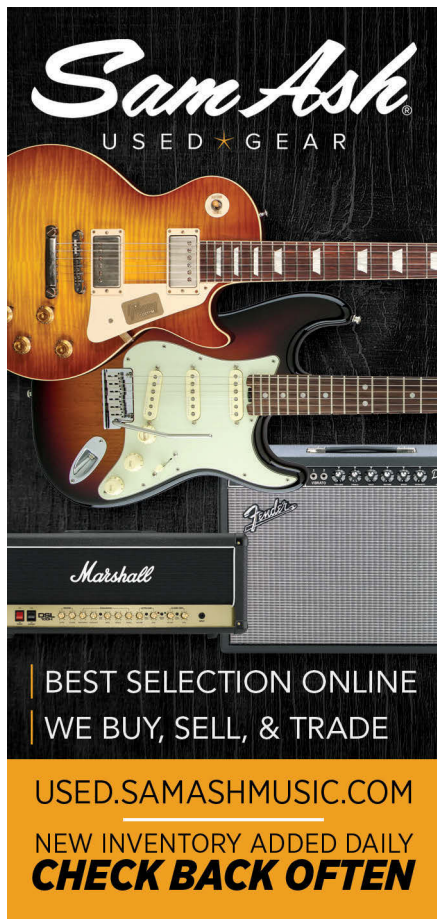
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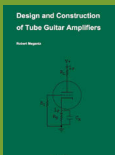
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122 GUITAR PLAYER/DECEMBER 1980



TOMMY TEDESCO STUDIO LOG Creating A Job

Date: June 24, 1980
Project: Recording date — poetry reading
Leaders: Tommy Tedesco and Shelley Manne
Hours worked: 6½
Wages earned: \$640.32
Instruments played: Yamaha SG2000 electric, Ramirez classical, Martin mandolin, Coral Electric Sitar
Electronic devices used: Electro-Harmonix Micro-Synthesizer and Small Stone phaser, Goodrich volume pedal

HYPOTHETICAL CASE in the 1930s: A young guitarist named Django Reinhardt hears a violin player by the name of Stéphane Grappelli in a small Paris coffeehouse. Django asks, "Hey man, do you want to start a group?" The result: a gig for Django.

Hypothetical case in the 1940s: Guitarist Chuck Wayne, after listening to the George Shearing band, comments to the leader, "I think you should add a guitar to your ensemble. It might sound good playing unison lines with vibes and piano." The result: a gig for Chuck Wayne.

Hypothetical case in the 1950s: Someone says to Elvis Presley, "I think if you played guitar while you sang, you might get more work." The result: international acclaim.

Actual case in the 1980s: Shelley Manne, while talking to Tommy Tedesco, says, "I'm doing an album for actor William Conrad where he's reciting poetry and I play percussion." Tommy asks, "Why don't you talk with Bill to see if he'd like to do an album with percussion and guitar." We could probably get a lot of different effects for him." The result: Bill Conrad liked the idea, and Tedesco created a job for himself.

Well readers, you've just read what has to be the longest intro that I've ever used for one of my articles. But don't give up, because there's room for more to come.

This date turned out to be tough, but it

was also enjoyable, allowing me to be quite creative. While Bill Conrad recited 26 poems written by James Kavanaugh, Shelley and I had to dig into our respective bags of tricks because there was no written-out music to guide us. I modified my two Spanish licks, my one jazz fill, one-half of a rock and roll run, and parts of my Middle-Eastern style to play differently on each poem.

Just before my creative juices ran dry, the album was finished. There was one poem in particular, entitled "Terror," from Kavanaugh's book *Will You Be My Friend* (published in 1971 by E.P. Dutton Co., Inc., Two Park Ave., New York, NY 10016) that was very eerie, and it called for my electronic wizardry. "Terror" talks about things like "seething spiders" and "writhing worms of terror" as the narrator of the verse experiences a sort of paranoia about the world around him. Anyway, I set my Micro-Synthesizer to achieve a far-out sound and used my volume pedal and phaser to bring the music in and out. I attempted to create suspense by starting and ending the piece triple forte, which is very, very loud.

Coda: No matter how many years a person is in the recording business, he discovers that nothing is ever cut and dry. There are always new challenges lurking just around the corner (am I beginning to feel paranoid, too?). About 20 years ago I did an album similar to this one, and on comparing that effort with my latest, all I can say is that with time can come experience. What you can do to get a feel for my playing on this date is to get a copy of *Will You Be My Friend* and then have someone read the poems to you while you attempt to interpret the words into music. Sometimes in the studio a producer will ask for a "spooky" or even a "happy" sound, and if there are no musical directions on the sheet in front of you, it can be tough unless you've practiced creating moods spontaneously. Give it a try and see what happens.

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IN HIS DECEMBER 1980 STUDIO LOG COLUMN, TOMMY TEDESCO TALKED ABOUT SOMETHING READERS likely didn't consider as a concern for the ultra-busy, man-of-a-million-sessions: Creating a job. But perhaps the reason Tedesco made the scene for all those recording dates were the simple facts that he was always on his toes, and always thinking ahead. —

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