

A NEWBAY MEDIA PUBLICATION

1967-2017 · FIFTY YEARS · 1967-2017 · FIFTY YEARS · 1967-2017 · FIFTY YEARS · 1967-2017 · FIFTY YEARS

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and completely*
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NANCY'S SEVERE STUTTER CAUSED ANXIETY EVERY TIME SHE SPOKE. BUT WHEN SHE LEARNED TO PLAY GUITAR, NANCY DEVELOPED SOMETHING MUCH MORE THAN MUSICAL TALENT—SHE DEVELOPED CONFIDENCE. KNOWING FULL WELL THE STAGE IS NO PLACE FOR A STUTTERER, SHE STEPPED ONTO IT ANYWAY. AND WHEN NANCY BEGAN TO SING, SOMETHING ASTONISHING HAPPENED: HER STUTTER COMPLETELY DISAPPEARED. SINCE THEN, NANCY HAS WRITTEN OVER 100 SONGS AND PERFORMED BEFORE AUDIENCES OF MORE THAN 500 PEOPLE. IT'S THE KIND OF STORY THAT INSPIRES US AT TAYLOR, AND REMINDS US THAT THE WORLD NEEDS MORE PEOPLE LIKE NANCY. *For more about Nancy and others with the courage to step forward, visit taylorguitars.com.*



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Joe Walsh

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NOIZE FROM THE EDITOR



WE'VE ADDED 50TH ANNIVERSARY CONTENT TO GP

since the January 2017 issue, but, now, you are holding our “official” 50th birthday issue. The staff worked hard to present an informative and entertaining celebration of five decades of guitar players, guitar gear, and music culture, and it was a blast to go through the *Guitar Player* archives and revive some of the goodies from our past for a new look. In fact, it’s still humbling to absorb all of the guitar content that past editors Jim Crockett, Don Menn, Tom Wheeler, Dominic Milano, Joe Gore, and Richard Johnston—as well as their brilliant staffs and writers—have indelibly etched into the virtual asphalt of

the information superhighway.

As I’ve proudly revisited GP’s impact on world guitar culture the past few months, I’ll now allow myself one indisputably true, but admittedly arrogant commentary: The late Bud Eastman *invented* the guitar magazine in 1967, when he took a big chance and published *Guitar Player*. So if you dig other magazines such as *Guitar World*, *Guitar Aficionado*, *Guitar Player Brasil*, *Acoustic Guitar*, *Vintage Guitar*, *Premier Guitar*, *Total Guitar*, *Guitarist*, *Gitarre & Bass*, *Magazyn Gitarzysta*, *Young Guitar*, or any other guitar or gear publication (such as *Frets*, *Bass Player*, *Keyboard*, and *Electronic Musician*, for example), you should salute Bud, because he first identified the possibilities of serious guitar journalism. Sure, someone would have created the guitar magazine at some point if Bud had never existed, but he did. Bud took huge financial, marketing, business, and cultural risks, and the community of guitar players and manufacturers of guitar gear was forever changed for the better because of his vision and grit. He gets to own that. Thanks a bazillion, Bud. You certainly enriched my musical life, and you provided a wonderful home for me throughout the past 20 years of my editing your “baby.”

All of this resonated with me last week, when I found the television tuned to *Access Hollywood*, where three very beautiful hosts were debating the dance of manners when some stars meet fans. I sat spellbound as an inane and pointless discussion went on for about five minutes. While not enriching or entertaining or informative, I must begrudgingly acknowledge that this nattering is a viable form of content in 2017. Go humanity!

And then I thought about all of the brilliant players who enhanced the guitar culture we love—the heroes of rock, jazz, blues, metal, country, funk, punk, classical, flamenco, and beyond that we’ve honored in GP’s pages from 1967 to 2017. These astounding and artistically gifted guitarists changed our world because they had something significant and life affirming and f**king magnificent to say. No guitarist who woke us up and inspired us to adore our fretted instruments even more than we ever thought possible used their gifts to prattle, babble, or spread musical inanities across the globe. Their guitars were instruments of truth and beauty, and the affect of their playing was thrilling and transformational. The community in which we live today, as fervent collaborators of guitar music, would not be as strong and IMPORTANT if those fathers and mothers of modern guitar had simply blathered nonsense and gone for the quick chuckle or infobyte.

I hope that GP’s awesome readers can pay this gift forward—or *play* it forward—and resist the era of informational inconsequence. Please don’t embrace clichés or trifles or tricks. MEAN what you play. Change the world with a riff—or at least aspire to that goal. We have so much power in our hands. Let’s respect it. After all, no one wants to get to heaven and have their ass kicked by Robert Johnson, Jimi Hendrix, B.B. King, and all the greats if we destroy the emotional majesty of the guitar with frivolity and triviality. Do you?

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For our "official" 50th anniversary issue, we busted into the archives, sought content suggestions and "favorite player" votes from readers, and researched the world around the guitar during the past five decades. That's a lot of data to digest! But we've broken it all up into four sections with a timeline of gear innovations running across the pages: 50 Years of Extraordinary Players (as picked by you), Top Cover Artists Year By Year, Noteworthy Albums of the Past 50 Years, and Five Decades of Thrills & Disruptions. Enjoy!

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GuitarPlayer 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

WINNERS!

HERE IS THE CURRENT LIST OF HAPPY CAMPERS WHO HAVE WON PEDALS in Dana's GP50 Giveaways. We're continuing the contests throughout the remaining 2017 issue dates, so don't forget to check this page each month and get your entries launched.

January: Dennis Dembinski, Wampler Sovereign Distortion; Juan Carlos Rodriguez Garcia, Wampler Latitude Tremolo Deluxe; Dale Valiquette, Wampler Tumnus Overdrive/Boost; Mike Mermelstein, Wampler cataPulp British Distortion.

February: Bert Cotton, McCaffrey Reactor Boost; Glenn Meizlesh, McCaffrey Green Vodka

March: Tom Packlick, Diamond Fireburst; Jonathan Aron, Diamond Counterpoint; Blair Stretch, Diamond Tremolo; Bojan Hostic, Diamond Halo Chorus; Masi Claudio, Diamond Blaze; George Munyan, Diamond Compressor; Rodney Allison, Diamond Quantum Leap; Kane Miller, Diamond Cornerstone.

April: Paul Vizza, Deep Trip Hell Bender; Kenneth Helle, Deep Trip Bog; Steve Krueger, Jam Red Muck; Mike Rawlings, Jam Big Chill.

May: Christopher Palko, Mu-FX Octave Divider

June: Sean Evers, Fargen Pete Anderson Tumbleweed

OOPS!

We accidentally ran the wrong-size photo of the AmpTweaker PressuRizer pedal in the September issue's review of it and the FatMetal Pro. For reference, the PressuRizer has the same footprint as an MXR Phase 90. Our apologies for the confusion!



Guitar Player
50
YEARS
1967-2017

DANA'S GP50 GEAR GIVEAWAY!

TO HELP CELEBRATE GUITAR PLAYER'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY, VauxFlores is contributing three rad and unique fuzzboxes for our GP50 Giveaway. Here's what's on deck for you to win: The **Number 23** is a buzzy box with some upper-octave sear, the **Gold Standard** is called a harmonically rich "racing fuzz," and the **Platano Verde** invokes "vintage Latin psychedelia."

For a chance to win, simply send an email with the subject line "GP50 VauxFlores" to mmolenda@nbmedia.com. The deadline for entries is October 20, 2017. I'll select the three winners at random—one for each pedal—and announce their names 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 my October GP50 gear contest. Good luck!

—DANA PARKER

CHARLIE PARKER



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RIFTS

INDUSTRY INTEL

Brendon Small KEEPS HIS SCI-FI METAL VISION ALIVE WITH *GALAKTIKON II*

BY MICHAEL MOLEND

IT'S NOT AN EARTHSHATTERING realization, but it's still a bit unsettling. You see, the Monkees can't tour or release music as the Monkees unless they get permission from the entity that actually owns the name, the Monkees. The public may envision Micky, Peter, Davy, and Michael as a band, but "the band" was actually a television show, and none of the members of the Monkees actually control the rights

to be the Monkees.

What does any of this have to do with Brendon Small?

More than you might think. In 2006, Small created (with Tommy Blacha) the cartoon series *Metalocalypse*—and the mythical legendary metal band Dethklok—for the Adult Swim network. The popular TV show launched four Dethklok albums (one, *The Doomstar Requiem*, a full-blown metal

opera), and actual live tours where Small and his band performed Dethklok music for the masses. But Adult Swim owns the rights to *Metalocalypse*, and when the network tanked the series in 2015, Small was left without the rights to the very thing he created. See? It's kind of a "Hey, Hey, we're not the Monkees" scenario.

But, instead of mourning the possible demise of Dethklok, Small went to work



JIM DONNELLY

on his second solo album, *Brendon Small's Galaktikon II: Become the Storm*, which features Dethklok alum Bryan Beller (bass) and Gene Hoglan (drums).

"I don't think I wrote this album like a Dethklok album," explains Small, who produced his previous *Galaktikon* release in 2012 when, perhaps prophetically, negotiations with Adult Swim over a Dethklok album stalled. "I think that after making six albums, my main question to myself was, 'What haven't I done in this genre that I'd really like to hear?' The answer was pulling away from some traditional metal restrictions and blending styles with other musical genres I grew up with. Another thing that happens when you start piling up albums is every time you write a cool song, it means you can't write that song again—your options are more limited. But I've developed a particular sound over the years, and the challenge is to maintain some parts of that style while breathing new life into it. So, for me, *Galaktikon II* was more about arranging and messing up song structure and form."

Small tracked the majority of his guitar parts for *Galaktikon II* in his Los Angeles home studio.

"I used a charcoal-burst Gibson Explorer prototype called 'Night Horse,' and my Gibson 'Snow Horse' prototype—which is an all-white Explorer with a really fat neck and Seymour Duncan Pearly Gates pickups," he says. "Then, there was my original Gibson Thunderhorse prototype with Gibson Burstbuckers. That

guitar just sounds the best. For 'Rebuilding a Planet,' I played my '59 reissue tobacco-burst Les Paul, as well as Joe Satriani's Ibanez JS with a Sustaniac pickup for some fun 'sustain-y' moments and harmonies on the song's breakdown. On 'Nightmare,' it was a Keisel DC800 8-string, although the Snow Horse was onboard for the song's contrapuntal solo. My '57 goldtop Les Paul appeared here and there for a few quick bits. It was a lot of Gibson and Seymour Duncan on the album. I typically plugged into the Clean channel of my Marshall JVM410JS Satriani Signature along with some pedals—mostly the MXR EVH 5150 Overdrive pedal and the JHS Andy Timmons Signature Channel Drive. I also used a Line 6 Helix for some fun splashy overdubs. I should mention—especially after detailing all this gear—that I think guitarists forget how important the mixing stage is for guitar sounds. I love that I can zero in on guitar frequencies and manipulate them as an album reveals itself to me."

Although Hogan stated in an interview that *Galaktikon II* is a Dethklok album that can't be called a Dethklok album, Small has a different take.

"I was actually in the mindset of the *Galaktikon II* sci-fi narrative," says Small. "I had this big, embattled outer-space war story, and the songwriting had to suit the plot. It was like *The Doomstar Requiem*, in that when you listen to all of this music in the album order, it will tell a story." 🎸

VINYL TREASURES

BY JIM CAMPILONGO



Julie London *Julie Is Her Name*

I DISCOVERED JULIE IS

Her Name while I was in my early 20s. Originally released in 1955, it features the incredible guitar work of Barney Kessel—with Ray Leatherwood on bass—and I fell in love with the stripped-down and dreamy production, the sultry vocal performances, and the cinematic guitar playing.

A good example of Kessel's tour de force is the track "Cry Me a River," where his intro is a lovely mini-composition that leads into Ms. London's breathy vocals. To me, it's right up there with the great intro hooks of all time—as if "Secret Agent Man" was interpreted by Chopin—because it tells you what the song is about even before the vocal begins.

Another standout is "Laura," which was written for the 1944 film of the same name, where a detective falls in love with the "dead" woman whose murder he is investigating. Here, Kessel plays otherworldly, dissonant note clusters that invoke the Johnny Mercer lyrics of the

song. The effect is like hearing a music box in a haunted house.

On *Julie Is Her Name*, Kessel taught me an essential lesson about artistry. Let me explain it this way: Whenever I host a clinic, I ask, "What is the song 'Stella By Starlight' about?" Usually, folks don't know, so I tell them it's from the movie *The Uninvited*, about a supernatural romance. My point is that musicians should investigate the origins and lyrics of a song before playing it, as this is the difference between being an artist, or a guitarist on autopilot. Think about it—some jazz guitarists know 500 songs in every key, but, unfortunately, all of the songs sound similar. Kessel's playing on *Julie Is Her Name*, on the other hand, is by an artist with a complete understanding of the source material. Every note he plays is perfectly supportive, yet fiery, and he gives each song the appropriate thematic treatment. There are also hooks galore. This is virtuosity at its best. 🎸



QUICK TIP

RESEARCH!

"I grew up listening to African-American blues—the real greasy, Southern sound of blues. I was a big fan of Albert King and Albert Collins. I didn't want to copy them, but I spent a whole lot of time going back and listening to what those guys were listening to—and to the people they were playing with—to get into their feel, and to truly understand what I needed to achieve to be a modern blues player." —ANA POPOVIC

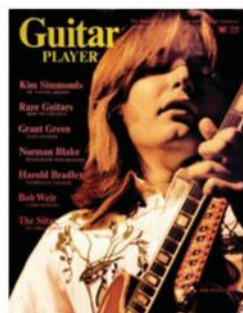
PRO'S REPLY



Bob Weir

January 1975

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

Bob Weir

The Grateful Dead has long been an institution in the field of contemporary music. This month's "Pro's Reply" spotlights The Dead's fine rhythm guitarist, Bob Weir.

The following questions were submitted by Jarrett Lesko of Rancho Palos Verdes, California.

Who were some of your early musical influences?

I loved Rev. Gary Davis and Chuck Berry. The more contemporary artists include Jorma Kaukonen, The Beatles, Joan Baez, and of course Igor Stravinsky, plus a whole host of others.

When did you first pick up the guitar?

I can't remember exactly when, but I wanted to play music, any old kind, really, and the guitar just happened to look very good to me.

What kind of guitar, amps, strings, and devices are you presently using?

To get that really clear "good" sound, I am using a 1959 Gibson Les Paul SG with Ernie Ball custom strings: .011, 1st string; .014, 2nd; .018 unwound, 3rd; .026, 4th; .036, 5th; and .046, 6th. For amplification, I run through an Alembic Parametric Equalizer (tone circuit), an Eventide Clock-Works "Instant Phaser," an Eventide digital delay unit, an Orban Parasound reverb unit, then a MacIntosh 2300 power amp, and out through eighteen JBL D-120's arranged in a column. In the spirit of proper Christian temperance, I have never used all these gizmos at once. This list is subject to change without notice, of course, and in lieu of any of it, a Fender Twin Reverb will do.

How did you get that strange sound on "Casey Jones"?

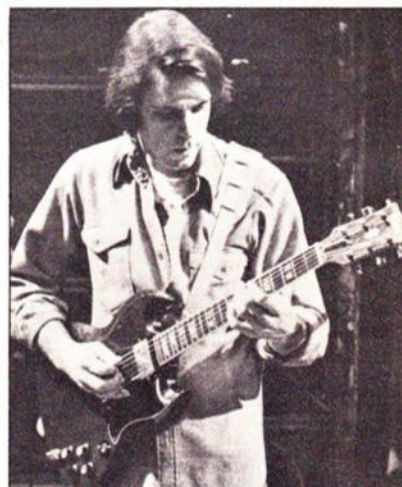
I "double tracked" it: I played the first track through a Twin Reverb, then doubled through a Leslie speaker.

Who are some of your favorite guitarists today, besides Jerry?

I like Bola Sete, Doc Watson, B. B. King, George Harrison, Baden Powell, Eric Clapton, and a bunch of others. Actually I am very easy to please.

Who are some of the competent rhythm guitarists around today who you like?

My favorite "chording" guitarists today are Keith Richard, again Bola Sete and Baden Powell, David Nelson, Paul Simon, Johnny Smith, and many others.



Mary Ann Mayer

SESSION FILE

Peter Gabriel's "Excuse Me"

BY STEVE HUNTER



As you can probably tell, we had a lot of fun doing this track, and we were all playing outside the envelope a bit. I've always loved songs—especially when written by an artist like Peter Gabriel, and produced by a mastermind such as Bob Ezrin—that take you out of your comfort zone and into a new place. The barbershop quartet at the beginning was made up of Joey Chirowski, Jim Maelen, Tony Levin, and Peter Gabriel, and Tony actually had a tuba solo. How cool is that? But what amazed me the most was Robert Fripp playing banjo (that's him on

the left channel), and his wonderful, Neil Levang-type phrases played on his famous black Les Paul (on the right channel). Brilliant stuff! (By the way, Levang was an extraordinary guitar player who worked with Lawrence Welk. Worth a look...)

I played pedal-steel (also on the right channel) on an ancient and primitive Gibson model with four pedals, of which only two worked properly. There was no way to flatten a note as there is on modern pedal-steels. So to get minor chords, I had to use relative major chords. For example, if I needed an *Em*, I would play a *G* major, which actually made the chord become a minor 7. I tuned the steel several different ways, but I think I finally settled on an open *E* major, and then, pressing the first pedal down, I tuned that to an open *A* major, so I could get that wonderful slurring of chords that is so pedal-steel. With an album project such as this, you just never knew from day to day what kinds of things you might be doing—which is why they're always the most fun and exciting. ■



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Troy Van Leeuwen ON COLLABORATIVE GUITARING

BY JOE BOSSO

"WE WANTED AN UPBEAT RECORD," says guitarist Troy Van Leeuwen in describing the agenda behind Queens of the Stone Age's new Mark Ronson-produced album, *Villains*. "We're a rock band, and we write big riffs, so we wanted things to be catchy and simple."

In QOTSA, Van Leeuwen shares guitar duties with frontman Josh Homme and Dean Fertita, and he says that a shared sense of humility is the biggest key to their interplay.

"It's not about me—it's about all of us," he notes. "If somebody plays a significant guitar part, it's my job to support it. And, likewise, they support what I play. So we have an understanding: 'Do your thing. I'll back it.'"

Here, Van Leeuwen shares three ways the guitar trio supports each other.



Stay in Your Frequency Lane

"With three guitarists, everybody has to claim their own sonic real estate," he says. "On *Villains*, I live in an anti-big guitar place—a very single-coil-driven sound with some ambience. I use a wet amp/dry amp combination, although it's not stereo. That way, if I need some ambience, I've got it, but if I want to be heard, I'm right there. For the most part, I went for a clean sound. I didn't really turn my amps up very loud, because less distortion gives the notes more value—especially when you turn up your parts in the mix."

Silly Solos Aren't That Silly

"A lot of our best solos are kind of silly, and we constantly try to 'out-silly' one another. We

improvise as we're doing them. I'll go in with sort of an idea, but you want a solo to sound like it's the first time you've played it. Josh will go, 'Troy, you take this one. Dean, you take that one. I'll take this one.' Josh plays a solo in 'Feet Don't Fail Me' that's amazing. He pulled it out of thin air, and it sounded so funky and funny. On 'Head Like a Haunted House,' Dean does a solo that's completely nutty. He just flicks things out and they're great."

It's All at Your Fingertips

"There aren't a lot of effects on the record. That isn't to say I didn't *try* some effects, but what ended up on the record were the tracks without so many pedals. There are even direct guitars that were distorted at the mic preamp. If doing direct doesn't amplify what your fingers do, I don't know what else will! Our sound has progressed in that it's less about the gear, and more about your fingers and your intention. For me, it's all about getting the right balance of clarity and ambience." ■



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FIVE GUITARS I REALLY WANTED TO STEAL FROM SUMMER NAMM

BY MICHAEL MOLENDRA

OKAY—MAYBE NOT STEAL. “GUITAR Player Editor Arrested at Nashville NAMM Show on Magazine’s 50th Anniversary” is not a headline

you want following you around. So, although there were tons of fantastic guitars that I’d love to review, play, and/or own at the summer NAMM

show, July 13–15, these five instruments made me want to win the state lottery and immediately bring them all home on the plane with me.



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No photo I’ve seen does true justice to the gorgeous faded cream finish on this parlor guitar. It quite literally stopped me dead in my tracks as I was rushing to an appointment. I had to stop for a while to grab it off the stand and play it. The sound was focused and shimmering, and it felt great in my hands. Chalk up another NAMM demerit for tardiness. artandlutherieguitars.com



EPIPHONE LES PAUL SL

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If a brand new Les Paul for under \$100 doesn’t get you all revved up, you might want to check if you’re still breathing. The legendary design has been tweaked with two Epiphone single-coils and a poplar body, but the SL is no toy. I played a couple on the NAMM floor, and they felt nice and solid and they sounded good. Bargain! epiphone.com



FENDER GEORGE HARRISON ROSEWOOD TELECASTER

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Ever since I saw films of George playing this dark beauty during the Beatles “rooftop concert” on January 30, 1969, I’ve lusted after one. Who wouldn’t? The new edition is pricey, but it’s less than half of what you’d pay for the Fender Custom Shop version. Just don’t take too long wrestling with your desires—only 1,000 of these wondrous planks will be produced worldwide. fender.com



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It’s no secret that I’m a Gabrels fan—duh—but how could I resist a signature model finished in the stunning metallic hues of his 1966 Schwinn Stingray and ’71 Honda dirt bike? Oh yeah, there’s also one Railhammer Reeves Gabrels Signature pickup and a Wilkinson WVS50 IIK trem. No option but surrender here. reverendguitars.com

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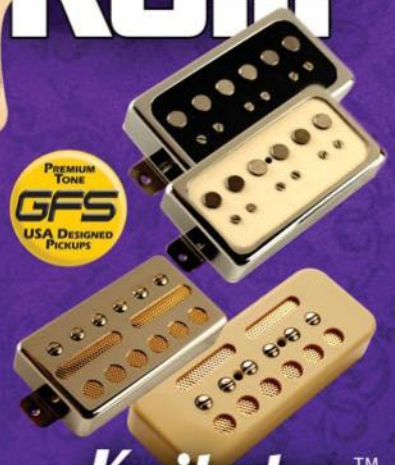
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FEATURES

A Man Apart

MARTY FRIEDMAN ON MAKING GUITAR MUSIC BY NOT LISTENING TO GUITAR INSTRUMENTALS

BY JOE BOSSO

DURING THE '90S, HE WAS A THRASH-METAL star in Megadeth. More recently, he has been a popular TV host and J-pop collaborator in Tokyo. But the lion's share of Marty Friedman's notoriety still stems from his work in the field of shred-guitar instrumental music, starting with his two-album partnership with Jason Becker in Cacophony during the late '80s, and continuing with a series of solo records the Washington, D.C., native has released since relocating to Japan in 2003. Interestingly, Friedman has no idea who his guitar instrumental contemporaries might be, and he doesn't care to find out.

"That kind of music isn't something I'm a big fan of," he says, "so I don't really know what everybody else is doing. 'I know that sounds strange, because it's something I do a lot of, but I do it in the spirit of trying to make instrumental music that isn't instrumental—if that makes any sense. But make no mistake—I pour everything I have into my records. Even though I don't listen to guitar instrumentals, I try to make my music the best it can possibly be. If you liked the last record, I want you to love the new one. I spent a lot of time trying to outdo myself on it.'"

The new album Friedman refers to—*Wall of Sound* [Prosthetic]—is his 13th solo offering, and in terms of turbo-charged fretboard aerobics, it outpaces its predecessor, 2014's *Inferno*, by a country mile. The guitarist's studio band was comprised of bassist Kiyoshi, veteran drummer Gregg Bissonette, and newbie sticksman Anup Sastry, and their aggressive brio amply supports Friedman, who transcends his more thrashy material. But it is on the album's softer moments, such as the heart-string-tugging symphonic rock of "Streetlight" and "For a Friend," where Friedman's compositional skills match

his widescreen vibrato, and he scores emotional bullseyes each time.

"If it's romantic or ultra-sad, I'll go for it," he says. "I love those moments when a tear comes to your eye. Some people think that's cheesy, but I don't care. You gotta have heart."

Is *Wall of Sound* a sort of homage to Phil Spector?

It's not a tribute to Phil. I just love that phrase—it's so powerful. A lot of people who know my music have never heard it before, so I could just say I made it up [laughs]. I love Phil Spector, though. I love girl groups and doo-wop and music from the '50s and '60s—my influences are all over the place. My music doesn't sound like Phil Spector's, obviously, but I would say I'm influenced by him in that I want my music to have a dramatic impact on the listener.

Are there any other influences of yours that are lurking below the surface in your music?

Absolutely. They're all there. But you're not going to hear rippin' rockabilly from me, even though I'm influenced by '50s stuff. Where my influences come out is in the melodies and harmonies. For example, doo-wop has a lot of interesting chord voicings—as does Beach Boys music—and I try to weave those elements into my material. I don't think a lot of people like me listen to romantic, old-school vocal harmonies. Musically, that turns me on. Here's another example: You never hear "on" chords—that's what they call them in Japan—in heavy music. This is where you'll have a B bass note, but the chord is F. You hear it in pop songs all the time. It's a very basic substitution that I like to do, but I do it with full-on distortion.





You're quite critical of guitar instrumental music. Have you ever gotten flack from fans because of that?

I don't know where that flack would come from. I don't think "this is good" or "this isn't good"—it's just not something I'm interested in. In that way, I'm not influenced by anybody. I could never play what these other guys play, so I don't even try to copy it.

But can you pinpoint why that music doesn't interest you? It is interesting, because it's something you do.

It's hard to say. I don't think anybody does anything wrong, and I don't think I do it right. I just do my thing, and I do it exactly the way I want it to be. To me, labeling it as "instrumental music" cuts down on the possibilities of people listening to it—myself included. I try to make listeners not miss the vocals by playing a lot of melodies—like a singer would. I don't fill everything up with guitar accoutrements, so

to speak. There are strategic points where that fits, but I'll play a whole verse-bridge-chorus where it's all melodies. I don't know anybody else who does that.

Have you reached a level of technical proficiency where you don't have to push yourself?

Not at all. It's the opposite. Maintaining what I've got would be really easy. Pushing myself is my top priority. On every single album—including this one—I have to do something I've never done. It's just a natural instinct I have. When I finished my last record, *Inferno*, I thought, "There's no way I'm gonna be able to top this."

So what would be an example of where you outdid yourself on the new record?

The whole thing is a breakthrough. Pick a moment—it's all new territory for me. But I can point to the last song, "Last Lament," where I go from point A to point Z without repeating any melodies. I'm so

proud of that. I'm also playing melodies over chords in new ways. I'm not falling into any crutch patterns or licks. A lot of well-known guitarists play certain licks so they don't let their fans down. That's kind of the opposite of what I do. Every album for me is a new era and a new challenge.

Your rhythm and lead tones on the record are fairly consistent. Do you worry about listeners getting ear fatigue?

I don't think they'll be sitting there going, "Man, this song sounds like the last one." If anybody gets ear fatigue from this record, it'll probably be from data overload. There's a lot of information to take in.

But regarding the tones, when I'm doing the demos, I don't think about sounds other than what needs to be clean, and what needs distortion. Once I've gone through the demo 1000 times and I'm recording for real, then I'll tell the engineer to dial up sounds. You hear a lot about guys who are

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inspired by tones, but I'm more into composing. I would get so bored tweaking frequencies. It's just not me.

You do a guitar/violin duet with Jinxx from Black Veil Brides on "Sorrow and Madness." Did you have a hard time matching his vibrato?

In my formative years, I spent a lot of time

studying the vibrato of stringed instruments, but I didn't try to match Jinxx's vibrato. I just love how the song starts as a guitar/violin duet, and then it turns into this mad monster. It's a world of insanity that I've never experienced before. I commend Jinxx for his openness to writing a violin part that I could counter. Our fans are pretty diverse,

and they're probably going to think this is pretty off the hook.

Did you use your new Jackson signature guitars—the USA and X Series MF-1—on *Wall of Sound*?

Oh, yeah. During the making of the album, I was tweaking prototypes of the signature models. I had the people with Jackson in the studio several times, so that was great, because we had instant feedback. The record was a real chance for me to get the prototypes just right. By the end of the record, things were absolutely perfect.

What about amps?

Fancy that—I've got a signature Engl amp coming out, too. I've been working on this amp since the *Inferno* record, so I'm calling it the *Inferno*. It's basically a Frankenstein of all the Engl amps I've been using for the past ten years. The goal was to include all the things I really use, and leave out the things that just drive the price up. It's kind of a stripped-down and streamlined version of Engl's Steve Morse amp, but with a few extra things. What you hear on *Wall of Sound* is the approved Engl Marty Friedman *Inferno* amp.

I know you're not a big sound tweaker, but what about effects?

I'm not a big effects guy at all. I have a Boss chorus, and I use a Maxon Auto Filter very subtly. Everything is set to zero. If you use too much of it, it makes it sound like you're using a wah. I simply try to color the sound with the way I fret notes or pick the strings. That's about it. Oh, wait—I did use this rad pedal. It's a Mooer Ocean Machine, and that thing is killer. I don't know everything it does, but I use it as a half-speed and double-speed looper. It's great for creating a sonic landscape that sounds unique.

Is there anything you can't do on the guitar, but you wish you could?

If I wished I could do it, I'd be doing it [laughs]. I think a lot of young guitar players think they need to be proficient at everything. That kind of thinking creates a lot of great guitar teachers, but it doesn't make for people who are lifers in the music business. Look at the people who you think are really great—there's a ton of stuff they can't do. But go to a music store in any town, and ask for a guitar teacher, and I'll bet that person can play anything. Being able to play everything isn't necessary—you need to get good at your own thing. ■

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Stratospheric Stratocaster

ADAM ROGERS' DICE PROJECT EXPLORES HENDRIX-STYLE GROOVES AND TEXTURES

BY MICHAEL ROSS

ADAM ROGERS' PARENTS WERE BROADWAY performers who exposed him to a steady diet of show tunes, jazz standards, popular songs, and opera, so it is no surprise he became a musician. Tracing the roots of his early musical heroes Herbie Hancock's Head Hunters and Weather Report back to Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, and John Coltrane made him a jazz musician, while it was playing on the streets of New York City's rough-and-tumble, pre-Disney Times Square that gave his music an edge. That edge informed the two-guitar attack (with David Gilmore) of his breakout funk/rock/fusion group, Lost Tribe.

Rogers' post-Tribe career touring and recording with the likes of Michael and Randy Brecker, Norah Jones, Joe Jackson, Walter Becker, Paul Simon, John Zorn, Marcus Miller, and Chris Potter slotted him into the role of journeyman. Wielding a Gibson ES-335, his series of records as leader on the Criss Cross Jazz label have centered on dark-toned straight-ahead jazz, but, for the past decade, this technically fluid guitarist has been simultaneously exploring the edgier possibilities of Hendrix's favorite axe. Over that time, his Dice trio has developed a unique take on territory explored in similar trios led by Oz Noy and Wayne Krantz—modern harmony and single-note lines, combined with Strat tones and killer grooves. But only now has Rogers deemed the project ready to record.

"I wanted to give it time to marinate," he explains.

Released on his own imprint, *Dice* [Adraj Records] is a fully formed funky fiesta, with the guitarist nailing Hendrix's clean rhythm tones on many tracks, while atmospheric loops honor Jimi's experimental side. When not working as a sideman or leader, Rogers teaches, making him more comfortable than most when explaining how he does what he does.

Would you say the Dice project is an exploration of the Stratocaster and funk rhythm?

It is. My initial inspiration was the Fender Stratocaster. I was motivated to get serious about guitar because of Hendrix. You have rhythm, melody, and harmony, but sound is both the most basic and challenging part of music. Playing my ES-335 with the sound I use for straight-ahead jazz versus playing a Stratocaster through a Marshall turned up changes the way I approach music. With this band, I wanted to explore mostly one sound. That limits things, but through limitations you can discover things.

Which Strat did you use for the record?

It's a stock 1965 Fender Stratocaster. I had it refretted once, but other than that, it's all original.

Were you using a Marshall?

I used a few different amps. I have a 1971 Marshall 50-watt bass head—the slightly darker-voiced one. I was also using a Divided By 13 amplifier. When recording, I typically have two amps set up and miked, and I use

a Lehle Dual Amp Switcher to turn one on and turn the other off, so I can go back and forth within the same tune.

Were you using any pedals with that setup?

I have an Ibanez AD9 analog delay pedal, an Ernie Ball VP JR volume pedal, and the Lehle pedal. The distortion sounds all come

from cranking the amps.

Do you find the Stratocaster harder to play than your Gibson ES-335?

It depends on the music. My 335 is set up with a high action, and I use heavier strings than on the Stratocaster. On the Gibson, it's a little bit easier to pick accurately because of the heavy strings and high action.

What gauges do you use?

On the Gibsons, the four bottom strings, E, A, D, G, are from a set of D'Addario .011s: .049, .038, .028, .018. The B and the E are a .016 and a .013. On the Strat, I use a .052 low E, and then .038, .028, .018, .014 and .012. The Stratocaster is easier to play in the context of Dice, but playing straight-ahead jazz on the Strat feels all over the place. I figured out that the string is more stable on the 335, because the action is high, and there's a lot of tension, so when you pick the string, it doesn't move much. When there's less tension and the string is lighter, the string flies around more. Every time you hit it, it's in a different place. But if I put heavy strings on the Strat, or make the action higher, I can't get that spanky sound out of it. With the Gibson, if I lower the action too much, the strings fret out, and I can't get the solid pure sound I like.

Dice's music leans on one-chord vamps. Do you have any tips for keeping one's playing interesting over static harmony?

That's a good question. I want to stay to some extent within the confines of what I think is appropriate to the music, so I don't play any II, V, I patterns over one chord. I use chromaticism, polytonality, and a lot of superimposing other key centers over the key center I'm in. I use chromatic pivot notes within the key to suggest ways of leaving the key. For example, if I start playing a $\flat V$ note, I'll use that chromatic note as a pivot on which to base other arpeggios that may suggest polytonality. So if I'm in D minor and I play G#, it might be interesting to use the G# (or A $\flat$) as a pivot note to play in A $\flat$, or maybe use that as the tonic for an A $\flat$ arpeggio, D $\flat$ maj7, or F minor. If I'm in D minor, I might use a scale that's not D minor Dorian, but also has a natural seventh and a minor third. Perhaps an altered scale, a diminished scale, or I'll play a major third and a minor third. You assimilate these things to the point where it's second nature. Ultimately, you're using your ears in the same way as when all you knew were three notes on the E string, but you now have file cabinets of information internalized so you can hear things you wouldn't have heard before.

Why did you choose to cover Willie Nelson's "Crazy?"

I've loved that tune since I was a kid. It's great to go into the realm of standards

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that aren't Broadway show tunes. That's a lot of string bending and bending behind the nut. On "The Mystic," "Crazy," and "The Interlude," I used my all-original 1956 Tele through a '66 black panel Fender Vibrolux.

How did you create the ambient sounds in "C Minor," and the textures on "Flava"

and "Elephant"?

On "C Minor," I did some post-production things after we played the basics live as a trio. I played bass clarinet, and there's a Line 6 DL4 looper pedal. Also, before recording some of the tunes, I would create an ambient loop that I would turn on during some of the takes. On "C Minor," the loop was a

sample of a Fairlight synthesizer and samples of classical electronic music I got from an old LP. On "Flava" I created a loop in the solo section using clarinets, synthesizers, and a backwards loop.

The two metal-sounding tunes on the record—"Flava" and "Seven"—are played on my 2009 1960 Reissue Les Paul with the Marshall cranked to 10. When you're standing anywhere near a Marshall on 10 with a Les Paul, if you take your hands off the strings it's going to feedback and go crazy—which I used any chance I could.

Were you in the same room with the amps?

I always like to record in the same room as the amp so I don't have to listen through headphones. If you want to get feedback, you need proximity. There are two mics on each amp, and room mics all over the place—which I used on every tune. When I was rough mixing the record, I would find mic combinations that reflected the tone I wanted. There's no reverb, compression, or EQ on this record.

I notice in videos that you angle your pick up. What advantage do you derive from that?

If I come across the strings diagonally, it's a warmer and fatter sound than playing with the pick exactly parallel to the strings. You find a sound with the pick on the strings that is the greatest sound you can come up with, and everything should flow from there.

What pick do you use?

Very small, extra-heavy teardrop D'Andrea jazz picks.

Do you use the pointy part or the round part?

I use the pointy part. When playing blues and funk, I also pull up the strings with my thumb or middle finger. I really love doing that with Strats and Teles, because you can get the amp to explode. If you have a great instrument, many different tones will reveal themselves, depending on how hard you're striking the string, or if you pull up on it.

Do you plan to continue doing straight-ahead records as well?

Definitely, I have a whole book of music for acoustic quartet that I'd like to record. I create other music—like ambient music and solo stuff in my home studio. I wanted to create my own label because it would allow me to release things myself. ■



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50 Years of Extraordinary Players

WATCH OUT! THE *GP* COMMUNITY PICKS ITS FAVORITE GUITAR HEROES

BY MICHAEL MOLEND A

WE'RE GUITARISTS, SO WE KNOW how we are. We have elevated praising and blasting other guitar players to an Olympic-level sport. So the staff thought it would be fun to step out of the way for a 50th Anniversary issue feature lauding supreme guitarists between 1967-2017, and let *you* pick the honorees. Now you have no one to blame but yourselves for any omissions, controversies, or blasphemies. Hahaha.

Seriously, though, we felt it would be appropriate and immensely interesting to turn the selections over to you, as the readers have supported this magazine and all of the musicians it has written about in its pages for 50 years. You have been an essential part of *GP*'s longevity and success. We appreciate that fact more than you could ever know, and we trust your collective wisdom.

To collect your votes for this feature, we posted a "redacted" image of the October 2017 cover with all of the images blanked out on Facebook on July 14, and we asked

that you name your most influential/inspirational guitarists. Getting to the list you see here required a bit of editing, of course, as there were thousands of names put up for consideration.

We determined that if a player was mentioned just once or twice, that wouldn't be enough to get his or her name on the magazine's list. Every player we left behind was an excellent guitarist, but we had to produce a manageable list—rather than a free-for-all of every player who ever touched an instrument—and we also wanted to see which guitarists a democratic, "majority rules" process would reveal. All of the players presented here were chosen multiple times by different readers.

We also asked readers to choose players who had kicked off their commercial careers during the magazine's 1967-2017 anniversary timespan—which is why you don't see Robert Johnson, B.B. King, Chet Atkins, and other seminal and legendary guitarists on the list. Placing the guitarists in certain decades was a bit of a conceptual

challenge, as many artists have had long ramp-ups to public acclaim, and have also enjoyed extensive and fruitful careers. We opted to mark a player's "decade of influence" either by the release of their debut album, the period of their most pivotal work (if an artist released one album, say, in 1979, but had the most impact in the 1980s, we put them in the '80s), and/or their first major appearance in *Guitar Player*. We did this not to put artists into facile categories, but to show the evolution of players and styles—as well as our coverage of the community—throughout *Guitar Player*'s 50 years of publishing.

We thank everyone who participated in this fun and hopefully illuminating survey. There are obvious names on the list, for sure, but there are also some surprising mentions and strange omissions, and every selection celebrates the heart and soul and passion of *GP*'s reader community and the incredible players who have kept us thrilled and challenged the past 50 years. Bravo to all! —MICHAEL MOLEND A

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Mitchell

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Guitar
Center

Musician's Friend

.....
1967-1969

Jeff Beck
Ritchie
Blackmore



Duane Allman
Jeff Baxter
Pierre Bensusan
Dickey Betts
Tommy Bolin

Jimi Hendrix
John Lennon
Paul McCartney



Al Di Meola
Robben Ford
Peter Frampton
Ace Frehley
Robert Fripp
Rory Gallagher
Billy Gibbons
Steve Hackett
Steve Howe
Tony Iommi
Terry Kath



Glen Campbell
Eric Clapton
Jerry Garcia
David Gilmour

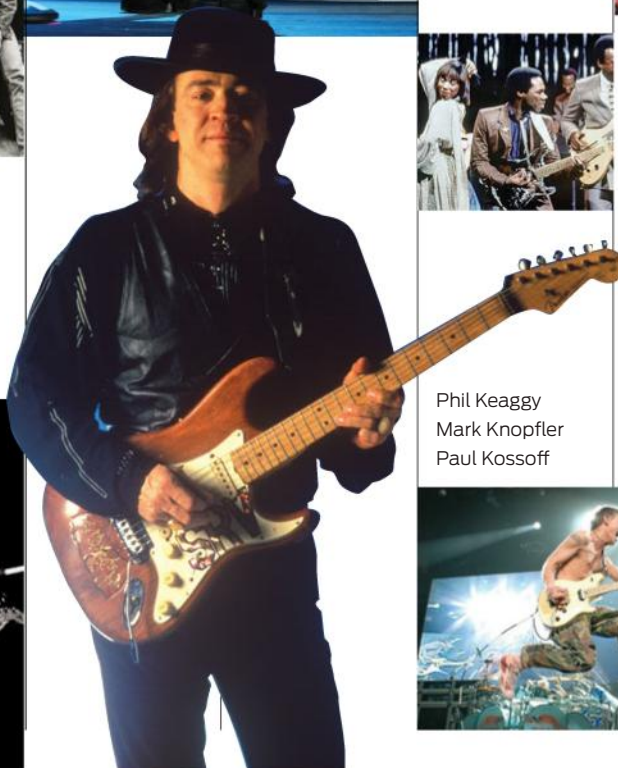


Jimmy Page
Keith Richards
Carlos Santana
Pete Townshend
Frank Zappa

Roy Buchanan
Lindsey
Buckingham
Mike Campbell
Larry Carlton
Ry Cooder
Larry Coryell



Peter Green
George Harrison



Alex Lifeson
Steve Lukather
Brian May
John McLaughlin
Pat Metheny
Ronnie Montrose
Steve Morse
Rick Nielsen
Joe Perry
Nile Rodgers
Mick Ronson
Uli Jon Roth
Michael
Schenker
Neal Schon

Phil Keaggy
Mark Knopfler
Paul Kossoff



Gear Innovations and Evolutions

BY ART THOMPSON AND DAVE HUNTER

IN THE 50 YEARS THAT **GUITAR PLAYER** has been printing magazines there have been incredible highlights in the development of gear. Back in 1967 when *GP* began writing about all things guitar, the equipment landscape was evolving right along with music. Amplifiers were getting bigger and louder as Marshall and Vox vied for arena supremacy, effects took a big leap forward with the advent of the Vox Wah-Wah

(followed closely by the famous Uni-Vibe), and in 1969 alone, Mesa/Boogie launched its revolutionary Mark I combo, Ampeg went power-mad with the SVT, and Electro-Harmonix etched its place in stompbox history with the Big Muff.

Whew! As if a fuse was lit on an innovations skyrocket, the number of guitar-product launches from that point to where we are today has been pretty

mindblowing—and *GP* has been along for the ride all the way with in-depth reviews, large-scale shootouts, and all the advertisements that have graced the pages each month. It's been an honor and a privilege to have helped spotlight some of the most important guitar innovations to come along, and we hope you enjoy looking back on some of those noteworthy releases via this 50-year timeline.



Andy Summers
Richard
Thompson
Ralph Towner
Robin Trower

Eddie Van Halen
Joe Walsh
Brad Whitford
Nancy Wilson
Johnny Winter
Angus Young

1980s

Jennifer Batten
Adrian Belew
Lita Ford
Bill Frisell
Danny Gatton
Paul Gilbert
Kirk Hammett
Michael Hedges
James Hetfield
Joan Jett
Jake E. Lee
George Lynch
Yngwie Malmsteen



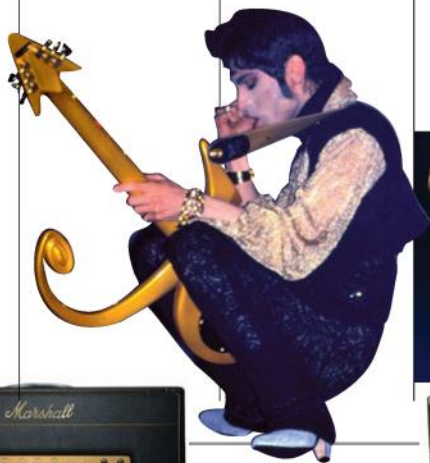
Johnny Marr
Gary Moore
Dave Mustaine
Prince
Vernon Reid
Randy Rhoads
Joe Satriani
Brian Setzer
Slash
Mike Stern
Steve Stevens
The Edge
Steve Vai
Stevie Ray Vaughan



1990s

Trey Anastasio
Billie Joe Armstrong
Nuno Bettencourt
Vivian Campbell
Jerry Cantrell
Dimebag Darrell
Tommy Emmanuel
John Frusciante
Reeves Gabrels
Jonny Greenwood
Warren Haynes
Scott Henderson
Jimmy Herring

Josh Homme
Charlie Hunter
Eric Johnson
Richie Kotzen
Wayne Krantz
Sonny Landreth
Shawn Lane
Brent Mason
Tom Morello



Ed O'Brien
John Petrucci
Kenny Wayne Shepherd
Ty Tabor
Mark Tremonti
Zakk Wylde

2000s

Dan Auerbach
Joe Bonamassa
Synyster Gates
Dan Hawkins
Orianthi



Brad Paisley
Derek Trucks
Keith Urban
Jack White

2011-2017

Tosin Abasi
Gary Clark Jr.
Guthrie Govan
Marcus King
St. Vincent
Nita Strauss



Vox V1141 Super Beatle transistorized amp



The Marshall "Plexi" Amplifier

After launching its first amplifier, the JTM45, as essentially a British copy of Fender's 5F6A tweed Bassman circuit, Marshall morphed its flagship into something with more of its own flavor in 1967, and created a legend in the process. Hot, crunchy EL34 output tubes and 4x12 cabs with Celestion Greenbacks have helped to define rock tone ever since.



Fender Vibratone rotary-speaker cabinet (by Leslie)

Ace Tone FR-1 Rhythm Ace electronic drum machine



1967



Vox Guitar Organ



Roger Mayer Octavia pedal—the secret ingredient in Jimi's fuzz sound that has inspired Octavia clones ever since.



The Vox Wah-Wah Pedal

Initially developed by engineers at Thomas Organ in California at the behest of studio guitarist Del Cacher, the Vox Wah-Wah was one of the most expressive new sound-shaping devices available to the player in its day, and has remained an essential creative tool for many artists ever since, excelling at everything from rhythmic funk to wildly fuzzed psychedelic rock.

THE ONCE & FOREVER KING ALLAN HOLDSWORTH IS IN READERS' HEARTS AND MINDS BIG TIME

PERHAPS IT WAS THE STILL-WRENCHING

memory of losing him on April 15, 2017. Or maybe it was the continuing awe and respect guitarists hold for his supernatural technical and creative powers. It was most likely a heart-felt blend of both, because when we asked the *GP* community to select its most indispensable guitar heroes, it responded with a colossal barrage of votes for Allan Holdsworth.

When we tallied your selections, Holdsworth was named almost ten times more than any other player. Furthermore, your impassioned and well-considered praise for this transcendent artist through Facebook and Twitter posts forged a communal tribute that was informative, celebratory, and powerful. Here's a sampling of reader comments...

"Holdsworth represents how the past (overdriven blues-based pentatonic playing) paved the way for the future," says Todd Mason. "He was melodic in a way few are, and with a compositional sense like Debussy. He was technical in a way few others were. If there was no Holdsworth, there would be no Van Halen in the way we know him today. When I think of how many people picked up a guitar because of what Allan did, it boggles the mind. He was a genius, and one who would do kind things, such as donate guitars to children who had no money of their



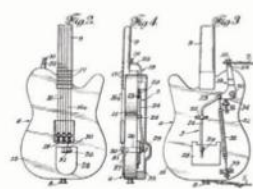
own to get them playing."

"Allan Holdsworth was the most important guitarist since Hendrix," says Gary Bryans. "He developed a totally unique approach to guitar, both musically and technically, and he influenced a whole generation of players from EVH onwards. RIP, Maestro."

"Out of all of the influential guitar players worldwide, Allan will be one of the most remembered in the history books when all is said and done," says Rob Norris. "His immense contributions to guitar, composition, and sound are too numerous to catalog here. This *is* Allan Holdsworth's time to be heralded and recognized, as he should have been in his lifetime."

"The man every other world-class guitarist on the planet aspires to be like, but have to settle for lowering their expectations by 1,000 percent," says Ian Hartley.

And we also received a short, poignant note from Holdsworth's daughter, Louise: "I vote for Allan Holdsworth—although I may be biased. RIP, Dad." —MICHAEL MOLENDAA



Clarence White/
Gene Parsons
B-Bender Telecaster



Rickenbacker Transonic TS100 solid-state amplifiers



Ampeg Dan Armstrong
Lucite Guitar



Gibson Les
Paul Personal



Electro-Harmonix Big Muff
Pi fuzz pedal

1968



Univox Uni-Vibe pedal

Hiwatt DR103 amplifier



1969



The Mesa/Boogie Mark I Amplifier

As the first broadly successful means of achieving cranked-stack lead tone in a compact and manageable combo, the Mesa/Boogie amp established a new trend in cascading-gain preamp designs, as well as forging a compelling new sound in rock *et al.* Countless high-gain amps still on the market today all owe something to the original Mesa/Boogie.

Faces in the Crowd

TOP COVER ARTISTS OF THE YEAR, 1967-2017 BY MICHAEL MOLEND

IN ITS 50 YEARS OF EXISTENCE, *Guitar Player* has produced more than 600 covers. That's a mammoth assemblage of awesome guitar players peering at you from newsstands or from the bottom of your mailboxes over five decades. Of course, not every

cover in the magazine's history showcased a specific artist—far from it. *GP* covers have also promoted conceptual themes, gear shootouts and guides, technique and style lessons, how-tos, career advice, and more (see sidebar, "Subject Matter.")

However, when we posted a note on Facebook asking the community what type of content readers would like to see in our official 50th anniversary issue, Lyle Ketchum suggested that we pore over 50 years of artist covers and select



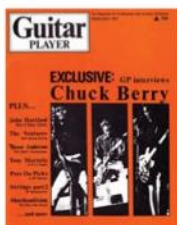
1968 Jimi Hendrix



1969 B.B. King



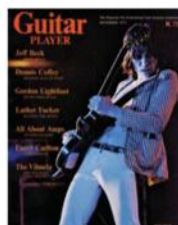
1970 Eric Clapton



1971 Chuck Berry



1972 Chet Atkins



1973 Jeff Beck



1974 George Benson



1975 John McLaughlin



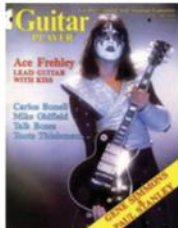
1976 Roy Buchanan



1977 Les Paul



1978 Ritchie Blackmore



1979 Ace Frehley



1980 Eddie Van Halen



1981 Duane Allman



1982 Randy Rhoads



Alembic guitars and basses go into production



Orange OR120 amplifier



MXR is founded, releases Phase 90 pedal



DiMarzio Super Distortion humbucking pickup



Pete Cornish begins building switching systems and rack units for major British artists

1971

1972



Fender Telecaster Thinline with Wide Range Humbucker pickups



Fender Twin Reverb gets a master-volume control



Musitronics Mutron III envelope filter pedal



Dumble Overdrive Special



Heil Sound Talk Box

COVER STORY

the top players from each year. He basically set us up to be pummeled by hordes of readers angered that their personal hero didn't get selected. (Thanks, Lyle!) But we thought about his idea, and we

determined it was a fun way to showcase some "vintage" *GP* covers, as well as celebrate a timeline of wonderful guitarists throughout the years.

Here's how we made the year-by-year

selections: [1] The artist had to personify that year's guitar culture (by popularity, game-changing technique, and/or guitar-community stature) or harken back to an

Continues on page 46



1983 Brian May



1984 Mark Knopfler



1985 Stevie Ray Vaughan



1986 Eric Johnson



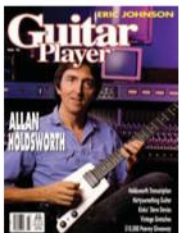
1987 George Harrison



1988 Vernon Reid



1989 Danny Gatton



1990 Allan Holdsworth



1991 Slash



1992 John Lee Hooker



1993 Albert Collins



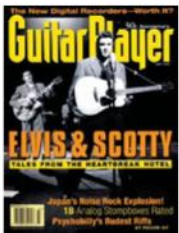
1994 Muddy Waters



1995 Steve Vai



1996 Joe Satriani



1997 Scotty Moore



1998 Brian Setzer



1999 Carlos Santana



2000 Prince



2001 The Edge



2002 Alex Lifeson



2003 Jack White



MXR Distortion+ pedal



Pignose amp goes into production



Hamer Guitars

Founded by Jol Dantzig and Paul Hamer in 1973, Hamer started out building custom guitars and basses that were based on Gibson designs, but with hybrid elements that made them unique. Their first official model was the "Standard"—basically an Explorer with Les Paul-style flame-maple top and binding—and it wasn't long before pro players were ordering production and custom models with all sorts of features that weren't available anywhere else. In a nutshell, Hamer kickstarted the "boutique" guitar market.



Roland RE-201 Space Echo

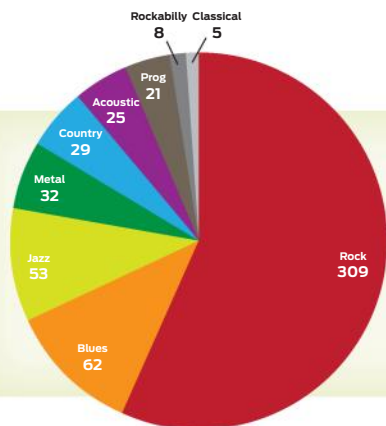
1974



Marshall moves to printed circuit boards



Gizmotron electric-bowling device



Style Mapping GP Covers

This might be an exercise in imprecision, as some players are known for straddling stylistic boundaries, but we thought it would be fun to match 50 years of *GP* cover artists to the main styles they represent. Below is a causal tally of how many times a particular style “owned” a *Guitar Player* cover. (Please note: Only covers bearing a single cover artist were calculated. Conceptual covers and covers showcasing multiple players were left out of the mix.)



2004 The Beatles



2005 Dimebag Darrell



2006 Warren Haynes



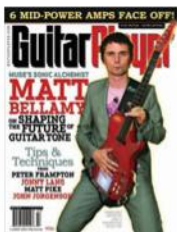
2007 Andy Summers



2008 Neal Schon



2009 Brad Paisley



2010 Matt Bellamy



2011 Guthrie Govan



2012 John Petrucci



2013 Gary Clark, Jr.



2014 Joe Bonamassa



2015 Steve Lukather



2016 Keith Urban



2017 Tommy Emmanuel



Taylor Guitars

Bob Taylor and Kurt Listug redefined what the modern steel-string acoustic guitar was all about. By steadily improving production methods and striving to make each guitar consistent in sound and playability, they turned their small operation into what has become the largest manufacturer of acoustic guitars in America. Taylor's innovations in both acoustic and electric instruments, and its worldwide efforts to further the use of sustainable woods make this company a leader in the music industry.



Rob Turner develops his first EMG active pickup



Chapman Stick, first production model

1975

Travis Bean aluminum-neck guitar



Marshall Master Model amps with master-volume controls

Korg WT-10, the first handheld, needle-meter electronic tuner



Leo Fender becomes president of Music Man

COVER STORY

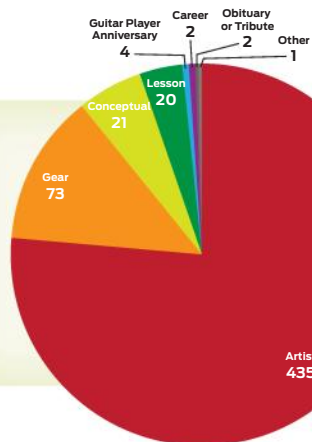
FACES IN THE CROWD

Continued from page 44

essential point of the guitar's history (if a tribute or obituary article); [2] Once selected, an artist could not be chosen again (to give more players a chance for recognition); [3]

Our first year, 1967, was not included, as, believe it or not, we didn't put any artists on the four covers produced that year; [4] We *did* include 2017, as we already know the cover artists for the remaining months of this year.

We hope you enjoy this little jaunt down memory lane—even if you plan to sling nasties at us for forgetting a hero or two (or three). One thing is incontestable, however: *GP* has covered an epic multitude of incredible guitar players since 1967. ■



Subject Matter

Throughout the past 50 years, showcasing major and up-and-coming artists has been our go-to cover-design tactic. But putting the faces of famous guitar players on the cover isn't the only way to excite readers about the magazine, and, quite frankly, that approach would get boring if we never varied the cover content. Here's a survey of *Guitar Player* cover themes from our debut in 1967, right up to the issue you're holding in your hands.



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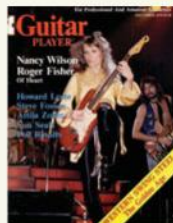


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MIA? Obviously, a ton of male and female guitarists did not make our list of "top cover artists by year." While the selections skewed 100-percent male, we made our picks based solely on a specific year's most influential, groundbreaking, or popular player, without regard to sex, style, or age. That said, non-male guitarists have graced *GP* covers in every decade. Here's a look-see...



Nancy Wilson
DECEMBER 1979



Kelly Johnson
MARCH 1983



Tina Weymouth
MARCH 1984



Liona Boyd
JULY 1987



Liona Boyd
JANUARY 1989



Jennifer Batten
JULY 1989



Badli Assad
JUNE 1994



Bonnie Raitt
JULY 1998



Meredith Brooks
NOVEMBER 1999



Chrissie Hynde
MARCH 2003



Allison Robertson
MARCH 2003



Orianthi
MAY 2010



Bonnie Raitt
NOVEMBER 2016



Sister Rosetta Tharpe
MAY 2017



Buffy Sainte-Marie
JUNE 1969



Mary Travers
AUGUST 1969



Bonnie Raitt
MAY 1977



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WE PICK 60+ NOTEWORTHY GUITAR ALBUMS OF THE PAST 50 YEARS

BY THE GP STAFF

WE MAY HAVE MISSED THE EARLY BLUES and jazz sides, Les Paul's sound-on-sound masterworks, and the birth of rock and roll guitar, but *Guitar Player's* launch in 1967 still made it possible for us to cover tons of incredible and historic moments in the evolution of recorded guitar playing. In 50 years of reporting on players, performances, tones, and techniques, we've documented literally tens of thousands of albums. It would be extremely difficult to look back at all of those releases and select a "top albums" list for our 50th Anniversary issue—especially one that explicitly represents guitar history and our reader community.

So we didn't.

Instead, we opted for a collection of *notable* albums that exemplifies *GP's* diversity of styles, genres, and players. There are some obvious choices on our list, to

be sure, but there are also some perhaps unexpected surprises—due to the fact we tried to pick albums that would stand for jazz, country, acoustic, punk, and, hopefully, most of the music-culture revolutions, disruptions, and popular movements of each decade. We didn't want to always be obvious or predictable, and we didn't attempt to be comprehensive or all-inclusive. We'd need the page count of a hefty reference book to go *that* route. Our goal was to create an "overview" of what was happening across the many threads of guitar love during *GP's* 50 years of serving *all* guitar players and fans of guitar music.

We're aware a few choices may be controversial, that some massively huge albums are AWOL, and that we'll get a bazillion angry and/or happy emails over the whole thing. To that end, we want to invite *you* to help us post a web story on the *GP*

community's picks of their favorite albums between 1967 and right now. Please send your votes to mmolenda@nbmedia.com, and we'll get your voices heard.

The staffers and freelancers who contributed to this report—along with me—are Art Thompson, Jude Gold, Dave Hunter, Jimmy Leslie, and Michael Ross. A special "bravo" and shout out goes to Michael Ross, who really dug into the project, and provided the team with a very firm foundation of options. (Thanks, Michael!) We all hope you enjoy our little jaunt down *GP's* "History of Noteworthy Guitar Albums, 1967-2017." (All recordings are in the order of their release date, and all artist quotes appeared in *GP* interviews.) Don't forget to check out some of the songs from these albums on YouTube, as there is a whole galaxy of cool guitar licks you can absorb from these bands and instrumentalists. —MICHAEL MOLEND



Schaffer-Vega
Diversity System,
first commercial
wireless guitar
transmitter



Yamaha SG-2000 (considered the first post-lawsuit-era Japanese guitar to be a contender)



EBow
introduced



Boss Chorus
Ensemble CE-1



Santa Cruz
Guitars is
founded

1976



Roland Jazz Chorus
JC-120 amplifier



Tycobrahe
Pedalflanger



Electro-Harmonix Memory Man Delay Pedal

Mike Matthews's Electro-Harmonix was already a revolutionary company in many respects, but it really turned the guitar world on its ear with the release of the Memory Man Delay around early 1977. The first successful alternative to cumbersome and breakdown-prone tape echoes, it used "bucket-brigade" chips to produce a rich, warm analog echo.

1967-1969



The Fastest Guitar in the Country

Jimmy Bryant

The radio deejays of the day thought this was studio trickery. It wasn't. Bryant was *that* fast. Released 1967. Produced by Scott Turner.

"Frankly, I'd rather play fiddle than guitar, because you can get more phrasing out of a fiddle." —Jimmy Bryant



Are You Experienced

Jimi Hendrix

For many, our first real taste of the unbridled majesty of the electric guitar—and it was all

over Top 40 AM radio, too! Released May 12, 1967. Produced by Chas Chandler.

"I like to play lead sometimes so I can express myself. But the way I play lead is a raw type of way—it comes to me naturally." —Jimi Hendrix



Born Under a Bad Sign

Albert King

No Albert King, no Stevie Ray Vaughan. Simple as that. Released August 1967. Produced by Jim Stewart.

"I play a few chords, but not many. I concentrate on my singing guitar sound—more of a sustained note." —Albert King



Disraeli Gears

Cream

Eric Clapton goes psychedelic, but still celebrates the blues. Released November 2, 1967. Produced by Felix Pappalardi.

"Cream made me very bitter about being successful. When we first came here [America] to play, our egos really broke loose. We thought we were god's gift. Then, the bubble burst, and we started to get put down by the press." —Eric Clapton



Super Session

Mike Bloomfield, Al Kooper, Stephen Stills

The dawn of the super-group—of sorts. Bloomfield's unexpected (and unexplained) absence necessitated Kooper bringing in Stills to finish the album. As a result, one side belongs to Bloomfield, the other to Stills. Released July 22, 1968. Produced by Al Kooper.

"I thought Clapton had taken the blues just absolutely as far as it could go. And when Hendrix came along, I wanted to burn the guitar. I'm sure Eric felt the same way." —Michael Bloomfield



Truth

Jeff Beck

The 6-string sorcerer's debut solo album—plus Ron Wood (on bass!) and Rod Stewart.

Released August 1968. Produced by Mickie Most.

"I've spent half my life trying to get out of ruts." —Jeff Beck



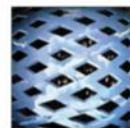
Led Zeppelin

Led Zeppelin

Jimmy Page conjures hard rock, textural guitar, and one of the coolest drum sounds ever, and ups the game of record producers everywhere.

Released January 12, 1969. Produced by Jimmy Page.

"I'll always leave the mistakes in. I can't help it. You've got to be reasonably honest about it." —Jimmy Page



Tommy

The Who

Peter Townshend's rock opera proved heavy guitar could support and embellish grand concepts. Released May 23, 1969. Produced by Kit Lambert.

"I started smashing guitars when we were doing long feedback buildups. We wanted to go a bit farther each night, but we didn't have any more volume, musical ideas, or musical dexterity. All we could do was freak out!" —Pete Townshend



In a Silent Way

Miles Davis

Miles' first foray into his "electric" fusion period, aided and abetted by John McLaughlin. Released July 30, 1969. Produced by Teo Macero.

"When I heard Miles Davis, it completely blew away my previous concepts of how to improvise. That hard bop movement was where it was at for me." —John McLaughlin



6- and 12-String Guitar

Leo Kottke

Back in the day, it seemed like every college dorm room had



A/D/A Flanger



Floyd Rose starts making his "locking" vibrato units by hand



Sony PCM-1 digital recording system



Seymour Duncan releases his hot-rodded humbucker replacement



Les Barcus and John Berry invent first piezo-crystal transducer for acoustic instrument



Ibanez TS-808 Tube Screamer pedal

1977



Nady introduces its wireless system under the name Nasty Cordless



Roland GR-500 Guitar Synthesizer

1978



1979

Groove Tubes

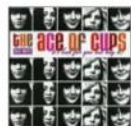
Founder Aspen Pittman made it his mission to develop high-quality amplifier tubes after most American manufacturers had stopped making vacuum tubes. Groove Tubes sourced tubes from around the world and established rating systems so that users could choose the right ones for their particular musical application. The company also produced its own GT-branded amplifiers, speaker emulators, and studio microphones—tube equipped, of course. Fender purchased Groove Tubes in 2008.

COVER STORY

VINYL, CDS, DOWNLOADS & STREAMS

this hugely influential album spinning on a turntable. Released December 1969. No producer listed.

"Picking up the guitar to me is like chewing your nails—it's a nervous habit. In the process, things pop up. The ones I have to analyze are the ones which work the least, and the ones that just barrel through work great." —Leo Kottke



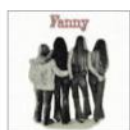
Echo from the Past... It's Bad For You But Buy It.

Ace of Cups

San Francisco's first all-female psychedelic band released no albums during its 1967-1972 lifespan, but this compilation of live tracks, demos, and rehearsals shows that women

instrumentalists were rocking the Summer of Love.

1970s



Fanny

Fanny

While all-female bands date back to almost the dawn of music entertainment, Fanny was the first female rock band signed to a major label, and they indeed *rocked*. Sorry, Runaways. Released 1970. Produced by Richard Perry.

"I think a solo should be melodic first, and, if you are an exceptional player, you can make it melodic and disjointed at the same time. But that's a difficult trip to play." —June Millington (guitarist, Fanny)



At Fillmore East

Allman Brothers Band

The album that broke the Allmans as a commercial and artistic force, and so appropriate that it was recorded in the band's element—on a live stage where everyone could burn bright. Released July 1971. Produced by Tom Dowd.

"I heard Ry Cooder playing slide and I said, 'Man, that's for me.' At first, everybody just lowered their heads—start it off fast and get it over with! But then, I got a little better at it." —Duane Allman



The Inner Mounting Flame

Mahavishnu Orchestra

Marshaled by John McLaughlin, this immensely influential jazz-fusion album reached number 11 on the *Billboard* jazz charts, and, surprisingly, also crossed over into the pop charts. Released August 14, 1971. Produced by Mahavishnu Orchestra.

"If someone thinks I play fast, they should hear John Coltrane." —John McLaughlin



Machine Head

Deep Purple

This guitar opus for Ritchie Blackmore influenced the evolution of heavy metal, and also produced one of the most-played riffs heard in guitar stores ("Smoke on the Water"). Released

March 25, 1972. Produced by Deep Purple.

"The only way you're going to get good on guitar—unless you're a genius—is to copy. That's the best thing just steal." —Ritchie Blackmore



The Atkins-Travis Traveling Show

Chet Atkins/Merle Travis

Two guitar giants, a stark yet organic production, and a Grammy for Best Country Instrumental Performance. Released 1974. Produced by Jerry Reed.

"Trying to copy licks from piano players was how I started using my right-hand fingers. I play with a thumbpick, but I don't recommend it for other guitarists, because it produces

a one-dimensional sound. You can get a lot more tone colorings with just the thumb." —Chet Atkins



Bright Size Life

Pat Metheny

Only 21 when this debut album was released, it's a monster—and that's before you realize that Jaco Pastorius is playing bass. Released 1976. Produced by Manfred Eicher.

"One thing that's cool about a guitar trio is it's a blank slate. There aren't a lot of archetypes to say, 'Okay, this is how you do it.' It was open territory." —Pat Metheny

Benson Burner

George Benson

This compilation of mostly Benson's earlier work was the right release at the right time, and, soon, every cool guitarist was talking about him. Super sweet and soulful stuff. Released 1976. Produced by John Hammond, Sr.

"I never try to get away from the basic concept of a song. Even when I'm improvising, the melody of the song is always in my head—though the single lines and chords I use are all George Benson." —George Benson



Kahler Tremolo System



Pro Co Rat distortion pedal



Joe Barden winds his first blade pickup for Danny Gatton's Telecaster



Bob Bradshaw forms Custom Audio Electronics and begins building custom switching systems



Boss Super Overdrive SD-1 pedal

1980



Dean Markey unveils his acoustic guitar transducer



Leo Fender invents his Magnetic Field Design (MFD) pickup for G&L



Steinberger headless guitars and basses



Tom Scholz Power Soak amp attenuator



Marshall JCM800 amp line

1981

1st name bassists...

... are on a first name basis with Radial!



Bootsy

"The Firefly is the real funk!"
~ Bootsy Collins



Marcus

"I never play without it!" (JDV)
~ Marcus Miller



Tony

"I use my JDI for everything!"
~ Tony Levin



Nathan

"The most valuable DI I have ever used!" (Firefly)
~ Nathan East



Billy

"I love it and use it every day!" (JDV)
~ Billy Sheehan



Chuck

"My Bassbone gives me the sound I want!"
~ Chuck Rainey



John

"The Bassbone sounds consistently great!"
~ John Patitucci



Mark

"The Bassbone is fantastic!"
~ Mark King



Rex

"The Bassbone OD kicks ass!"
~ Rex Brown



Victor

"The Bassbone OD is my choice"
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VINYL, CDS, DOWNLOADS & STREAMS



Live: Jimmy Witherspoon & Robben Ford

Jimmy Witherspoon/
Robben Ford

This smoking live set is the jazz-blues bible. Released 1976. Produced by Jerry Goldstein and Mike Vernon.

"The blues is vocal music, and good blues-guitar playing has to come from the same place as singing does. You're using notes—not words—but you're saying the same things."—Robben Ford



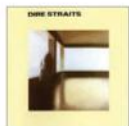
Van Halen

Van Halen

One of those truly earth-shaking guitar albums. Everyone remembers where they were when they

first heard Mr. Edward Van Halen. Released February 10, 1978. Produced by Ted Templeman.

"I don't care if a solo is melodic or spontaneous. If it has no feeling, it's screwed."—Eddie Van Halen



Dire Straits

Dire Straits

Mark Knopfler gives a master class in how to wallop high-gain sounds with the beautiful tone of a clean Stratocaster. Released October 7, 1978. Produced by Muff Winwood.

"Finding parts [for a song] is a musical musician's specialty. Parts are what make great records—not producers."—Mark Knopfler

1980s



Blizzard of Ozz

Ozzy Osbourne

There's a messy history to this album (check Wikipedia), but it gave us the late, great Randy Rhoads, as well as some kick-ass metal classics. Released September 12, 1980. Produced by Ozzy Osbourne, Randy Rhoads, Bob Daisley, and Lee Kerslake

"My strength is my determination. I just want to keep getting better. I don't want to be satisfied with myself."—Randy Rhoads



Boy

U2

The Edge unleashed a "stand-up-and-take-notice" guitar sound that was fresh and powerful. Did many of us buy delay pedals after we heard *Boy*. Duh. You bet we did. Released October 20, 1980. Produced by Steve Lillywhite.

"If you want to do something new, there's no reason why you shouldn't be able to. For us, it was an important lesson, and we've never put up with anything that lacked vitality or originality. We've always dumped it if we felt it smacks of an era gone by, or that it isn't musically relevant."—The Edge



Friday Night in San Francisco

Al Di Meola/John McLaughlin/Paco DeLucia

Three transcendent

players cut one of the most influential live acoustic-guitar albums of all time. Released August 10, 1981. Produced by Al Di Meola, John McLaughlin, and Paco DeLucia.

"I like the way the notes pop out when you mute. They project more, and I have always liked to play very percussively—which goes back to when I played drums before the guitar."—Al Di Meola



Texas Flood

Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble

Two days of recording with no overdubs produced an album that revitalized the blues and gave us an enduring guitar hero. Released June 13, 1983. Produced by Double Trouble,

Richard Mullen, John Hammond.

"I got a lot of the fast things I do from Lonnie Mack—the ideas and the phrasing—and I got a lot of turnarounds from Freddie King. I also wanted to see how many places Albert King's stuff would fit."—Stevie Ray Vaughan



Aerial Boundries

Michael Hedges

Hedge's remarkable technical and creative arsenals—as well as his extreme, yet musical dynamic sensibilities and genre jumping—helped make this album an indispensable altar of the acoustic canon. Released 1984. Produced by Will Ackerman, Michael Hedges, and Steven Miller.

"I'm trying to be

more primitive. I call it 'savage myth guitar.' The savagery implies it's tough, and the myth implies that it's mystical."—Michael Hedges



Rising Force

Yngwie Malmsteen

Just over a year since he appeared in GP's February 1983 Spotlight column by Mike Varney, Malmsteen dropped this blazing beast, and defined—and perhaps even invented—shred guitar. Released March 5, 1984. Produced by Yngwie Malmsteen.

"Stop listening to other guitar players. Stop listening to me. Don't do what I'm doing. Do something else."—Yngwie Malmsteen

Fishman Transducers

Starting out making pickups for upright basses in his garage, Larry Fishman is a true visionary of the MI industry who turned his company into a hugely successful producer of amplifiers, pickups, effects pedals, preamps, tuners, and much more. Holding over 30 patents, Fishman has overseen the development of such innovative products as Aura Imaging Systems, Fluence electric-guitar pickups, the Powerbridge series, and the TriplePlay wireless MIDI guitar controller.



Ken Fischer builds his first Trainwreck amplifier



Fender's first Vintage Reissue Stratocasters and Telecasters released

1982



James Trussart builds his first steel-body guitar, the Steel-Deville



Jim Dunlop resurrects the Cry Baby wah



Tom Scholz's Rockman headphone/recording amplifier



Gibson Chet Atkins CE and CEC solidbody classical-electric guitars

ehx loopers

The 45000 is a 4-track powerhouse SUPER LOOPER with a console-style layout for intuitive control. Each loop features four tracks and it delivers unlimited standard, reverse and variable speed overdubbing, speed control, stereo loop recording and much more.

This looping tour de force also syncs to MIDI clock and saves directly to SD Cards.

Optional external Foot Controller.



The 22500 Dual Stereo Looper's loops can be locked to each other or run independently in free form. It lets you do verse/chorus switching in Sequential mode, or two-loop simultaneous playback in Parallel mode. A phantom-powered mic input adds convenience. The compact 22500 also includes 16 Drum/Rhythm tracks, or import your own!

Optional external Foot Controller.

With 12 minutes of stereo loop recording on 10 banks that remain in memory until you erase them, plus unlimited Standard, Reverse and 1/2 Speed overdubbing and an adjustable Fade Out mode, the 720 Stereo Looper packs plenty of power in a compact pedalboard friendly design.



Boasting 6 minutes of looping time, the super-affordable 360 lets you record, store and recall 11 loops. Single footswitch control of record, erase, undo-redo and unlimited overdubbing, plus a compact size and easy-to-use functionality, complete the picture.



electro-harmonix
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Master of Puppets

Metallica

Metallica's major-label debut was the first so-called thrash-metal album to go platinum. In 2016, it was preserved in the Library of Congress' National Recording Registry. Released March 3, 1986. Produced by Flemming Rasmussen and Metallica.

"Metallica is an ensemble. There isn't a lot of room for outrageous spotlighting. Someone might come in with a part they think is brilliant, and someone else will say, 'That won't cut it—you're overplaying.'" —Kirk Hammett



Unfinished Business

Danny Gatton

GP's March 1989 cover proclaimed Gatton as an "unknown great," and he was one of those supremely talented shooting stars who never enjoyed the success they deserved during their lifetimes. But, to those in the know, Gatton was a thrilling mix of technique and stylistic diversity. Released 1987. Produced by Danny Gatton.

"Part of the ability to play various styles correctly is attitude. There should be nothing condescending when you play something simple. I appreciate Link Wray's 'Rumble' as much as

I do Les Paul's 'How High the Moon' — Danny Gatton



Surfing with the Alien

Joe Satriani

Surfing's impact on guitar culture was meteoric. The album was virtually all over 1987's music scene—going platinum and getting nominated for Grammys—and it was an instrumental guitar album. Wow. Released October 15, 1987. Produced by Joe Satriani and John Cuniberti.

"I don't discourage myself from going in one direction or the other. I'm more afraid of what would happen if I wasn't excited about what I was playing." —Joe Satriani



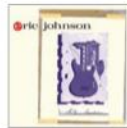
Lita

Lita Ford

Ford's duet with Ozzy Osbourne ("Close My Eyes Forever"), the rousing "Kiss Me Deadly," and her frequent MTV appearances cemented her '80s icon status. Released February 2, 1988. Produced by Mike Chapman.

"I'm not one for flashy performances. I go for the feel—not for speed or effects. Asolo should come from the heart—a mini journey, a story, a piece of your life." —Lita Ford

1990s



Ah Via Musicom

Eric Johnson

Ah Via Musicom gave us the superlative "Cliffs of Dover," which won a 1992 Grammy for Best Instrumental Rock Performance. Released February 28, 1990. Produced by Eric Johnson.

"I want my solos to have a kind of skimming-across-the-water sound. They should also have some lyricism and say something that moves me when I hear them back." —Eric Johnson



Cowboys From Hell

Pantera

Dimebag Darrell's tremendous chops and aggro groove—as well as an equally ferocious band—made this one of the most inspirational and defining albums of the '90s metal scene. Released July 24, 1990. Produced by Terry Date.

"I'm not going for soft sounds, and I ain't looking for no warm sound. For what I do, I can't get enough f**kin' chunk. No one had grabbed a hold of that tone, so I built my sound around it." —Dimebag Darrell



Passion and Warfare

Steve Vai

Vai has focused more on his compositional chops the past few albums, and this is the one that may have paved the way. His virtuosity is still burning, of course, but it shines within works that are cinematic, sensitive, powerful, and, at times, whimsical and humorous. Released September 1990. Produced by Steve Vai.

"Where do melodies come from? They can't just come from grids and scales. They have to come from your mind's ear." —Steve Vai



Electro-Harmonix 16 Second Digital Delay pedal



Bruce Egnater introduces the IE4 preamp



Ernie Ball purchases Music Man



Boss DD-2 Digital Delay pedal



1983

MIDI

According to Craig Anderton's "Brief History of MIDI," Dave Smith of Sequential Circuits formally debuted his Musical Instrument Digital Interface at the 1983 NAMM show in L.A.—demoing a Prophet-600 synth "talking" to a Roland keyboard over a small 5-pin cable. Smith envisioned a "simple, inexpensive, and foolproof interface that no manufacturer could refuse," and MIDI accomplished that goal, becoming the standard in computers, keyboards, switching systems, and many other musical products ever since.

1984

1985

Paul Reed Smith Guitars

The founding of PRS is notable for its introduction of fresh and wildly successful new US-made guitar design to a market that was otherwise largely dominated by just a few major names, and off-shore copies thereof. Using an "in-between" scale length and a cleverly conceived vibrato unit, and just built darn well, PRS's early models quickly became one of the guitar brands to reckon with the world over.



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Ask the Ages

Sonny Sharrock

At times manic and blistering, other times spellbinding and melodic, Coltrane fan Sharrock turns jazz upside down and sideways, playing like (in his own words) "a horn player with a really f**ked-up axe." Released August 6, 1991. Produced by Bill Laswell and Sonny Sharrock.

"When I improvise, I play the melody, and, by the time I reach its end, I want it to have led me to someplace else. There's a point where you're walking along the road, and then the road disappears from under your feet. But that doesn't matter, because as you step, the road builds itself." —Sonny Sharrock



Nevermind

Nirvana

Everyone likes to say that this was the album that killed hair metal. It definitely ripped across pop culture, brought grunge into the mainstream, and inspired scores of kids to pick up guitars. Released September 24, 1991. Produced by Butch Vig.

"I've never considered musical equipment very sacred. I don't like to be that familiar with my guitar." —Kurt Cobain



Unplugged

Eric Clapton

A massive hit for the "relaxed" Clapton, this set was the best-selling

album in the MTV *Unplugged* series, and helped ignite another era of high interest in acoustic guitars and acoustic players. Released August 25, 1992. Produced by Russ Titelman.

"I think that jamming—unless it has a goal at the end of it—is pretty much a waste of time." —Eric Clapton



Rage Against the Machine

Rage Against the Machine

Tom Morello's unique and electrifying blend of metal, punk, and hip-hop made him one of the most original guitarists of all time. Released November 3, 1992. Produced by GG Garth Richardson and Rage Against the Machine.

"Once you get off the beaten path

of chords and notes, any noise can be its own microcosm of songwriting."

—Tom Morello



Cover to Cover

Jeff Healey

Perhaps inspired by his bar-band role in 1989's *Road House*, Healey puts his blues mojo in the service of (mostly) rock cover songs, and hits number one on the *Billboard* Blues Albums chart. Released June 13, 1995. Produced by Thom Panunzio and the Jeff Healey Band.

"There are an awful lot of people with a hell of a lot of technique and no soul. I have been fortunate to at least have the soul behind what I'm doing." —Jeff Healey



Nashville

Bill Frisell

The avant-jazz guitarist goes to Nashville, interprets country guitar, and recasts the style with respect, admiration, and a radiantly evocative vibe. Released April 29, 1997. Produced by Wayne Horvitz.

"Music has always been this world I could be in where anything was possible. I feel like I can go however far my imagination can go, and it will all be okay somehow." —Bill Frisell



Follow the Leader

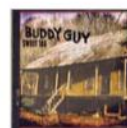
Korn

The album that kicked nu-metal into the

musical mainstream, and helped popularize 7-string guitars, low tunings, and sludgy heaviness. Released August 18, 1998. Produced by Steve Thompson and Toby Wright.

"I play strictly rhythm. I practiced lead so much when I was younger that I'm sick of it now." —Brian "Head" Welch

2000s



Sweet Tea

Buddy Guy

Buddy Guy blows minds with one of the most sonically adventurous blues albums of the decade. It was also the first time he interpreted Northern Mississippi-style blues, and he responded with absolutely feral performances. Released May 15, 2001. Produced by Dennis Herring.

Only

Tommy Emmanuel

The acoustic shaman's first solo-acoustic release was a master class of virtuosic performance. For the rest of us, blown minds, artistic envy, and renewed commitment to practice followed. Released



Alesis XT Reverb rack-mounted digital reverb unit



G&L releases Leo Fender-designed Broadcaster (renamed ASAT in '87)



Ernie Ball Music Man introduces the Silhouette model



Soldano SLO-100 amplifier

1986

1987



Rick Turner Model 1 guitar

ADA MP-1 MIDI Tube Guitar Preamp (rack-mounted guitar preamp)



Charvel debuts its Model Series production guitars

THD Electronics introduces its first tube guitar amplifier patterned on the 1959 Fender Bassman



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guitar and bass amps
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"I told Dennis [Herring] I didn't know enough about traditional Mississippi blues to play it [for *Sweet Tea*]. He said, 'I don't want you to know it. I want you to play Buddy Guy with what we're going to give you.'" —Buddy Guy



Origin of Symmetry

Muse

Guitarist Matt Bellamy's re-tooled guitar tones, grand compositions, and film-noir-like production redefine the power trio for a new age and score massive world-wide pop hits, as well. Released July 17, 2001. Produced by Muse, David Bottrill, and John Leckie.

"The guitar is a huge part of rock history, but, at the same time, I feel music is evolving away from the traditional rock format. I make modifications to my guitar—Kaoss Pads and onboard effects—that allow me to incorporate new and different sounds."

—Matt Bellamy



Elephant

The White Stripes

Basic, glorious garage-rock guitar comes roaring back with a mammoth pop hit, and "Seven Nation Army" delivers one of the decade's must-played riffs. Released April 1, 2003. Produced by Jack White.

"I usually limit myself to two guitars on a particular track. Once you get into three guitars, you might as well put 60 on there."

—Jack White



Everybody Loves You

Kaki King

King's technical power, unique creative voice, and dynamic performances produced one of the most singular and original instrumental albums in years—definitely a standard bearer for modern acoustic guitar. Released April 22, 2003. Produced by Kaki King.

"As a solo-acoustic performer, if you're standing onstage for

45 minutes trying to keep people's attention, you're going to have to start screwing around with some interesting ideas."

—Kaki King



De-Loused in the Comatorium

The Mars Volta

Prog-rock reimagined with epic melodies, riffs, and noises by guitarist Omar Rodriguez-López. Released June 24, 2003. Produced by Rick Rubin and Omar Rodriguez-López.

"The real way of winning over a crowd is by being yourself. For me, that means putting across where I'm at right now. I don't understand the mentality of a band that builds

its live show around the fact they had a hit once. Who cares! I prefer to adopt the same mentality as an unknown band that's just starting out. We're going to do our thing, and afterwards you can make your decision about whether we stuck in your head or not." —Omar Rodriguez-López



Live at the Georgia Theater

The Derek Trucks Band

We knew that Trucks had formidable chops and southern-rock roots, but this live set also established him as one of the premier jam-band guitarists of the decade. Released 2004. Produced by

Derek Trucks Band.

"It's easy to lose track of why you're getting a sound if you analyze it too much."

—Derek Trucks



Mafia

Black Label Society

When we put Wyld on our 2004 "re-design" cover, we had no idea he was planning such a masterstroke of shred, pop metal, societal reflection, balladry ("In This River"), and stunning guitarcraft. Wow. Released March 8, 2005. Produced by Zakk Wyld.

"To get fast on guitar, you just have to play everything a million times. It's a matter of repetition

and practice. If you don't use it, you'll lose it." —Zakk Wyld



Play

Brad Paisley

A celebration of modern- and vintage-country guitar that also included guests James Burton, Albert Lee, Vince Gill, and Brent Mason. B.B. King joins the party, as well. Released November 4, 2008. Produced by Frank Rogers.

"Play was a chance to do things I would never get away with on a country record. Of course, the country guitar playing comes through—I can't help sounding like me—but it was a great feeling



The Fender Custom Shop is founded, headed by John Page and Michael Stevens



VHT 2150 power amp



Kendrick 2410 amplifier



DigiTech Whammy Pedal



Bogner Ecstasy 100A and 100B amplifiers

1988 - 1989



Ibanez JEM guitar co-designed by Steve Vai



Electro-Harmonic founder Mike Matthews launches New Sensor



Matchless DC-30 amplifier



Mesa/Boogie Dual Rectifier



Tech 21 SansAmp analog tube-amp emulator/DI

1990

Gibson starts producing reissue flat-top guitars in Bozeman, Montana



to be completely unrestricted.” —Brad Paisley



Live From The Royal Albert Hall Joe Bonamassa

The hardest-working bluesman in show biz delivers a roaring, stomping set that shows how he revitalized the blues for new audiences. Released September 22, 2009. Produced by Kevin Shirley.

“My goals have always been pretty simple. I just want to play my guitar—no more, no less.” —Joe Bonamassa

2010-2017



Nightlight/Daylight Muriel Anderson

A beautifully produced song cycle of slumber and awakening to a new day—all informed by Anderson’s wondrous acoustic chops and sensitive compositional approach. Released March 2014. Produced by Muriel Anderson and Mark Kibble.

“Find the thing you do that is unique, and that will enhance the quality of someone’s life so much that they would actually be happy to pay for it.” —Muriel Anderson



Live Gary Clark, Jr.

The current hero of the blues lays it down in an onstage environment—great solos, cool swagger, and blissfully raw. Released September 14, 2014. Produced by Rob Cavallo.

“In this day and age of music, anything could be made in the studio, so it’s a testament of your honest skill and talent to show what you can do in a live setting with no tricks.” —Gary Clark, Jr.



Let Love Show the Way Simo

A brilliant hybrid of soul, country, southern rock, and psychedelic craziness that completely kicks ass. Released September 23, 2014. Produced by J.D. Simo.

“One might argue some of the best improvisers in history were extremely inconsistent, but the great performances happened because they were always reaching.” —J.D. Simo



Still Richard Thompson

The master British folk-rock songwriter and guitarist teams up with Wilco’s Jeff Tweedy and adds tons of guitar colors to his compositions. gorgeously spooky and vibey. Released June 23, 2015. Produced by Jeff Tweedy.

“The performances I like most are the ones in which the guitar is playing around the structure of a song—providing some interesting musical development from verse to verse. I like to harmonically tease things along so I’m almost evolving the

narrative along with the singer. I’m telling an instrumental story against the vocal story.” —Richard Thompson



Arclight Julian Lage

Jazz on a Fender Telecaster and it works marvelously—vivid, articulate tones and supremely dynamic phrasing with a punch. Released March 11, 2016. Produced by Jesse Harris.

“What I love about the Telecaster is the feedback you get from it. It really sounds like the person playing it, and it was comforting to see that just because you play a Tele, it doesn’t mean

you have to play Tele music.” —Julian Lage



Silk Around the Marrow Dagger Moth

Italian experimental guitarist Sara Ardizzone creates live loops with guitar tones that animate her songs by being angular, brash, off-kilter, ambient, lovely, or fuzzy and biting—sometimes in the same tune. Released April 21, 2016. Produced by Sara Ardizzone.

“I often go down unforeseen pathways in order to keep myself from getting bored.” —Sara Ardizzone



Fender releases its own recreation of the '59 tweed Bassman to kick off its Reissue Series



Pro Tools digital recording/editing software launched



Gibson Art & Historic Division launched (now Gibson Custom)



Way Huge Red Llama



Steinberg releases Cubase Audio digital recording software



Voodoo Lab introduces Ground Control (the GCX system debuts in 1993)

1991



Alesis ADAT digital recorder

Mesa/Boogie Tri-axis rack-mounted guitar preamp



Celestion Alnico Blue

The original G12 speaker was first built in 1936, and was used as a guitar speaker in the late 1950s, after being reinforced to withstand the extra power supplied by the early Vox amps. It wasn’t until late 1960 that it appeared in the Azure Blue format. It was the world’s first purpose-built guitar speaker, but it became too expensive to produce in the 1960s due to the inaccessibility of cobalt. Reissued in October 1992 as the Alnico Blue, it has become one of the most popular low-wattage speakers for guitar amps.

1992

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The Marcus King Band

The Marcus King Band
We featured King in our September 2017 "Youthquake" cover story, and this Warren Haynes-produced release documents an "oldsoul" with glorious tone, dazzling chops, and a reverence for the past. Released October 7, 2016. Produced by Warren Haynes.

"When someone plays directly from the heart, rather than thinking too much,

that's when you find the likes of a Duane Allman or a Bukka White." —Marcus King



The Madness of Many

Animals as Leaders
Guitarist Tosin Abasi is the guitar hero of the new prog-metal and djent movements—and he owns it with smarts, compositional originality, great tone, and awe-inspiring chops. Released November 11, 2016. Produced by Animals as Leaders.

"The culture around guitar playing has been reignited. People want to study advanced concepts and techniques—things that were definitely not in vogue a while ago." —Tosin Abasi



Abandon All Hope

Gretchen Menn



The Defiant Machine

LoNero

Both of these young guitarists opted to make their instrumental-guitar offerings special by tackling thematic concepts—Dante's *Inferno* for Menn, and the world of war for LoNero—that informed their compositional approaches with striking tones, dramatic melodies, and cinematic wonder. *Abandon All Hope* released December 12, 2016, and produced by Gretchen Menn and Daniele Gottardo. *The Defiant Machine* released May 26, 2017, and produced by Bill LoNero and Andy Watters.

"Instrumental music, for the most part, is a very safe thing to listen to, but it never puts you on edge. I'm a huge fan of Metallica, so I wanted to be aggressive. War and instrumental doesn't go hand in hand, but war and metal does, so I tried to combine the two." —Bill LoNero

"I'm not somebody who likes a ton of effects. I like a guitar to sound like a guitar. But if it's going to sound like something other than a guitar, I don't want it to sound like a synthesizer. I'd rather it sound more like other

stringed instruments." —Gretchen Menn



Way Out West

Marty Stuart and His Fabulous Superlatives

Who knew? Stuart abandons his usual trad-country style for a divine and ghostly atmospheric tale of the American West. Every guitar part, riff, and melody tells a story, and all of the guitar tones are either achingly beautiful or as mean as an angry steer. Released March

10, 2017. Produced by Mike Campbell.

"Whether I am writing songs, taking pictures, playing guitar or mandolin, hosting a TV show, or making up a set list, it is all the same world to me. It is all creative architecture, and I love every aspect of it." —Marty Stuart

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Peavey introduces
the 5150 amplifier (in
1996 it rolls out the
EVH Wolfgang guitar)



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Klon Centaur pedal



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Five Decades of Thrills & Disruptions

SOME KEY CULTURAL MOMENTS DURING THE GUITAR PLAYER ERA

BY MICHAEL MOLEND A

MOST ARTISTS DO NOT LIVE IN IMPENETRABLE bubbles where they conceive work solely from the firestorms raging in their right brains. They desperately need the world around them to inspire beauty, horror, anger, bliss, and all of the other elements that trigger creative action. So we thought it would be fun—and possibly instructive—to look into some of the cultural, technological, political, and musical events that swirled around guitarists between our first issue in 1967 and today. It's far from a comprehensive timeline—and it's more focused on entertainment than world or U.S. politics—but it provides some brief and amusing nuggets regarding the environments surrounding guitarists as they composed their riffs, songs, and solos throughout the past 50 years. Did any of these events forge or inform your own compositions or

musical style back in the day? If you have any cool stories about *your* artistic journey, send them my way at mmolenda@nbmedia.com.

1967

- *Guitar Player* magazine is born. Thanks, Bud and Maxine Eastman!
- President Lyndon B. Johnson (1963-1969)
- Top grossing film: *The Graduate* (\$104,901,839)
- Number One television show: *The Andy Griffith Show*
- Best-performing album on *Billboard* charts: *More of the Monkees*, Monkees
- Super Bowl I, January 15
- Monterey Pop Festival, June 16-18
- San Francisco's "Summer of Love"



1968



- Top grossing film: *2001: A Space Odyssey* (\$68,700,000)
- Number One television show: *Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In*
- Best-performing album on *Billboard* charts: *Are You Experienced*, Jimi Hendrix Experience
- My Lai Massacre, Vietnam, March 16
- Martin Luther King assassinated, April 4
- Civil Rights Act of 1968 signed, April 11
- Robert F. Kennedy assassinated, June 5



1969



- President Richard Nixon (1969-1974)
- Top grossing film: *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (\$102,308,889)
- Number One television show: *Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In*
- Best-performing album on *Billboard* charts: *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida*, Iron Butterfly
- First confirmed death due to HIV/AIDS in North America, May 15
- Apollo astronaut Neil Armstrong steps onto the moon, July 20
- Woodstock, August 15-18



Blackstar Amplification is founded in Britain

IK Multimedia releases AmpliTube Jimi Hendrix. The first software recreation of Jimi's complete guitar, amp, and fx rig.



Steve Fryette of VHT fame changes his company's name to Fryette Amplification



PRS introduces acoustic guitars and tube amplifiers



Kemper Profiling Amplifier is introduced



Supro is resurrected and releases the Thunderbolt, Dual Tone, and Coronado amplifiers

2007 — 2009 — 2010 — 2011 — 2013 — 2014



EVH 5150 III amplifier (EVH Wolfgang guitar is released in 2008)



Magnetone

One of the most noteworthy comebacks in the amplifier business, Magnetone was revived in 2013 by Ted Kornblum, who put together an R&D team that included amp designer Obeid Khan (Ampeg, Crate, Reason) and longtime Neil Young tech Larry Cragg. The company now offers a line of hand-built U.S.-made heads and combos, many of which feature the pitch-shifting vibrato that was a hallmark of the original Magnetone amps.



Tom Bedell purchases Breedlove Guitars

- First message sent over ARPANET, precursor to the Internet, October 29
- Altamont Free Concert, December 6

1970

- Top grossing film: *Love Story* (\$106,397,186)
- Number One television show: *Marcus Welby, M.D.*
- Best-performing album on *Billboard* charts: *Bridge Over Troubled Water*, Simon & Garfunkel
- Paul McCartney announces the Beatles are no more, April 10
- Kent State shootings, May 4
- **Jimi Hendrix dies, September 18**



1972

- Top grossing film: *The Godfather* (\$134,966,411)
- Number One television show: *All in the Family*
- Best-performing album on *Billboard* charts: *Harvest*, Neil Young
- Motown abandons Detroit for Los Angeles, June 1
- Watergate break-in, June 17
- Atari releases arcade version of *Pong*, Nov. 29

1973

- Top grossing film: *The Exorcist* (\$193,000,000)
- Number One television show: *All in the Family*
- Best-performing album on *Billboard* charts: *The World Is A Ghetto*, War
- Vietnam War ends, January 23
- Elvis Presley's Hawaii concert is first worldwide



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2016

2017

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Guitar Player
50
1967-2017
YEARS

COVER STORY

5 DECADES OF THRILLS & DISRUPTIONS

telecast by an entertainer, July 14
• Skylab space station launched, May 14

1976

- President Gerald Ford (1974-1977)
- Top grossing film: *Rocky* (\$117,235,147)
- Number One television show: *Happy Days*
- Best-performing album on *Billboard* charts: *Frampton Comes Alive!*, Peter



Frampton

- **Ramones** invade England and start the punk-rock revolution, July 4
- Peavey T-60 becomes the first major-market guitar produced by CNC machines

1977

- President Jimmy Carter (1977-1981)
- Top grossing film: *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* (\$307,263,857)
- Number One television show: *Laverne & Shirley*
- Best-performing album on *Billboard* charts: *Rumours*, Fleetwood Mac



• Digital onslaught: Sony PCM-1 recording system, Synclavier sampler, Fairlight workstation

1981

- President Ronald Reagan (1981-1989)
- Top grossing film: *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (\$212,222,025)



- Number One television show: *Dallas*
- Best-performing album on *Billboard* charts: *Hi Infidelity*, REO Speedwagon
- **First Space Shuttle launch**, April 12
- Introduction of MIDI by Roland founder Ikutaro Kakehashi and

Sequential Circuits' Dave Smith

- **MTV debuts**, kills radio stars, August 1

1983

- Top grossing film: *Return of the Jedi* (\$252,583,617)
- Number One television show: *Dallas*

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- Best-performing album on *Billboard* charts: *Thriller*, Michael Jackson
- Phillips and Sony introduce the Compact Disc in the USA

1984

- Top grossing film: *Beverly Hills Cop* (\$234,760,478)
- Number One television show: *Dynasty*
- Best-performing album on *Billboard* charts: *Thriller*, Michael Jackson
- *Hello*, Apple Macintosh!
- *This Is Spinal Tap* tells it like it is—hilariously



1990

- President George H.W. Bush (1989-1993)
- Top grossing film: *Ghost* (\$505,702,588)
- Number One television show: *Cheers*
- Best-performing album on *Billboard* charts: *Rhythm*



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Safe and gentle for use on plastics and fine woods	✗	✓	✗	✓
Cuts down on fret wear and string fretting notches	✗	✗	✗	✓
Kills noise and static in pots, jacks and pickup switches	✗	✗	✗	✓



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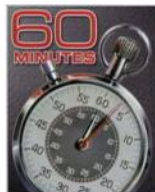
COVER STORY

5 DECADES OF THRILLS & DISRUPTIONS!

Nation 1814, Janet Jackson
• Inception of the World Wide Web by inventor Tim Berners-Lee

1991

- Top grossing film: *Beauty and the Beast* (\$218,967,620)
- Number One television show: *60 Minutes*
- Best-performing album on *Billboard* charts: Mariah Carey, Mariah Carey
- **Pro Tools introduced**
- Apple debuts Quick Time
- Nirvana kills '80s hair metal
- Alesis ADAT affordable digital multitrack really kicks off the home-recording market



1997

- President Bill Clinton (1993-2001)
- Top grossing film: *Titanic* (\$600,788,188)
- Number One television show: *Seinfeld*
- Best-performing album on *Billboard* charts:

- Spice*, Spice Girls
- Antares Auto-Tune makes the world a nurturing place for pitchy singers
- DVD discs and players introduced

1998

- Top grossing film: *Armageddon* (\$553,709,788)
- Number One television show: *ER*
- Best-performing album on *Billboard* charts: *Titanic: Music from the Motion Picture*, James Horner
- Digital amp modeling goes super mainstream with Line 6 POD
- Bluetooth specs formally announced, May 20
- Google founded, September 4
- Germany's Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft enforces its patent on mp3 technology, opening the way for portable mp3 players.

2001

- President George W. Bush (2001-2009)
- Top grossing film: *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (\$974,755,371)
- Number One television show: *Friends*

- Best-performing album on *Billboard* charts: *1*, The Beatles
- Wikipedia founded
- XM makes first satellite-radio broadcast, September 25

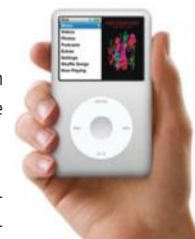
- **Apple iPod introduced**, October 23

2003

- Top grossing film: *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (\$1,119,929,521)
- Number One television show: *CSI*
- Best-performing album on *Billboard* charts: *Get Rich or Die Tryin'*, 50 Cent
- Apple launches iTunes Music Store, April 28

2004

- Top grossing film: *Shrek 2* (\$919,838,758)
- Number One television show: *CSI*
- Best-performing album on *Billboard* charts: *Confessions*, Usher
- Apple releases **GarageBand**, January 6





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- Facebook founded, February

2005

- Top grossing film: *Harry Potter and the*



- *Goblet of Fire* (\$896,911,078)
- Number One television show: *American Idol*
- Best-performing album on *Billboard* charts: *The Massacre*, 50 Cent
- YouTube founded, February 14

2006

- Top grossing film: *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest* (\$1,066,179,725)
- Number One television show: *American Idol*
- Best-performing album on *Billboard* charts: *Some Hearts*, Carrie Underwood
- Twitter founded, March 21
- Spotify launches, April 23



2007

- Top grossing film: *Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End* (\$963,420,425)
- Number One television show: *American Idol*
- Best-performing album on *Billboard* charts: *Daughtry*, Daughtry
- Apple iPhone drops and changes everything, June 29
- **SoundCloud** founded, August



2010

- President Barack Obama (2009-2017)
- Top grossing film: *Toy Story 3* (\$415,004,880)
- Number One television show: *American Idol*
- Best-performing album on *Billboard* charts: *I Dreamed a Dream*, Susan Boyle
- **Apple iPad** debuts, January 27
- Instagram goes live, October 6



2013

- Top grossing film: *Frozen* (\$1,276,480,335)
- Number One television show: *NCIS*
- Best-performing album on *Billboard* charts: *The 20/20 Experience*, Justin Timberlake
- Cloud computing ramps up
- **Edward Snowden** discloses the U.S. government's mass-surveillance program, June 6



2016

- President Donald Trump elected, November 8
- Top grossing film: *Captain America: Civil War* (\$1,153,304,495)
- Number One television show: *NCIS*
- Best-performing album on *Billboard* charts: **25**, **Adele**



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LESSONS



>>> STYLE LESSON

The Father of British Blues

A Tribute to the great John Mayall, Then and Now: 1967 & 2017

BY JESSE GRESS

Ex. 1a

♩ = ca. 132

-3-

Musical score for "The Rose Tree" in 4/4 time. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It features a melody in the treble clef and a bass line in the bass clef. The melody starts with a quarter note G, followed by a quarter note A, then a quarter note B, and a quarter note G. This is followed by a half note G, then a half note A, then a half note B, and a half note G. The melody ends with a quarter note G, followed by a quarter note A, then a quarter note B, and a quarter note G. The bass line starts with a quarter note G, followed by a quarter note A, then a quarter note B, and a quarter note G. This is followed by a half note G, then a half note A, then a half note B, and a half note G. The bass line ends with a quarter note G, followed by a quarter note A, then a quarter note B, and a quarter note G. The score includes a key signature change to G major (one sharp) and a time signature change to 4/4. The score is marked with "sim." (simile) and "tacet on repeat".

Ex. 1b

♩ = ca. 132

The image shows a musical score for the song "The Sound of Silence" by Simon & Garfunkel. The score is written for guitar and bass. The guitar part is in the key of B-flat major (two flats) and 4/4 time. It features a melodic line in the upper register and a chord progression in the lower register. The bass part provides a steady accompaniment. The score is divided into two systems, each with a guitar staff and a bass staff. The guitar part includes a capo on the 4th fret. The bass part includes a capo on the 7th fret. The score is written in standard musical notation with a treble clef for the guitar and a bass clef for the bass. The guitar part includes a melodic line and a chord progression. The bass part provides a steady accompaniment. The score is divided into two systems, each with a guitar staff and a bass staff. The guitar part includes a capo on the 4th fret. The bass part includes a capo on the 7th fret. The score is written in standard musical notation with a treble clef for the guitar and a bass clef for the bass. The guitar part includes a melodic line and a chord progression. The bass part provides a steady accompaniment.

Ex. 1c

♩ = ca. 132

[illegible]

MUCH HAS BEEN WRITTEN ABOUT THE dozens of musicians that John Mayall has fostered over the course of the past half-century—Eric Clapton, Peter Green, Mick Taylor, Harvey Mandel, Jack Bruce, John McVie, Mick Fleetwood, Aynsley Dunbar, and Keef Hartley among them—but there's been relatively little discussion about the Father of British Blues' own unique guitar style. Well, it's time to remedy that situation, so this month, rather than revisiting the classic Clapton, Green, and Taylor albums, we pay homage to and commemorate the 50th anniversary of a long overlooked gem from 1967, entitled *The Blues Alone*, where Mayall plays every instrument except drums (provided by Keef Hartley) on the album's 12 original compositions, predating D.I.Y. records by Todd Rundgren and Paul McCartney by several years. (Mayall even designed the album's artwork and shot the cover photo.) In addition, we'll take a quick peek at Mayall's playing 50 years on with his current trio, in which he is the lone guitarist.

O SOLO MIO

It's amazing in itself that Mayall was able to record *The Blues Alone* between finishing the Bluesbreakers' *A Hard Road* with Peter Green and breaking in Green's replacement, Mick Taylor, but what really puts it over the top is the fact that the entire self-penned package was completed in just one day. Geez! Who does that?! Sure, Mayall only plays guitar—both 6- and 9-string

electrics—on half of the album, and his solos are few and far between, but his rhythm playing, spooky atmospherics created with and without slide, and even a bit of studio sleight-of-hand all merit investigation.

Ex. 2a

♩ = ca. 140 $A\flat m(I m)$ (to $D\flat m$)

Ex. 2b

♩ = ca. 140 $D\flat m(IV m)$ (to $A\flat m$)

Ex. 2c

♩ = ca. 140 $E\flat m(V)$ (to $A\flat m$)

Ex. 3

♩ = ca. 126 Open C# Tuning $G\sharp/D\sharp$ $C\sharp/D\sharp$ $B/D\sharp$ $C\sharp/D\sharp$ $F\sharp$ $F\sharp 6$ $F\sharp 7$ $F\sharp 6$ $C\sharp$ $C\sharp 6$ $C\sharp maj7$ $C\sharp 6$ $C\sharp$ $G\sharp 7$ (to $C\sharp$)

OMINOUS AMBIENCE

For instance, the album's opening track, "Brand New Start," features Mayall on vocals, harmonica, and piano while his heavily reverberated 6-string electric

creates a melancholy vibe via an $E\flat 7\sharp 9$ -based rhythm figure like that shown in **Ex. 1a**. (Apparently, Mayall has a penchant for flat keys.) Play the two-bar figure twice as written, omitting the last beat as indicated, and then insert **Ex. 1b**'s IV-chord transposition to $A\flat 7\sharp 9$. Tack on another two bars of Ex. 1a before adding the V-to-IV figure ($B\flat 7\sharp 9-A\flat 7\sharp 9$) illustrated in **Ex. 1c** and two more bars of Ex. 1a to complete the 12-bar progression. It's notable that the entire drum track consists of Hartley hitting a lone side-stick snare click on the fourth beat of every measure, providing the perfect complement to Mayall's lonely blues harp and plaintive vocal.

THE KEY OF WHAT?

Next up is "Please Don't Tell," constructed from a I-minor figure similar to **Ex. 2a**, a two-bar call-and-response phrase that contrasts broken chordal stabs with slippery double-stopped slides. We're in the dreaded key of $A\flat$ minor, with seven flats (relative to $C\flat$ major), but that's just the way it is, folks! Like "Brand New Start," the song's I-minor figure is played four times as shown, transposed verbatim up a fourth to cover the IVm chord ($D\flat m$), à la **Ex. 2b**, before first moving back to $A\flat m$ for two bars, and then to **Ex. 2c**'s Vm chord ($E\flat m$), followed by two more bars of Ex. 2a to complete the 12-bar form.

IF SIX WAS NINE

What could be a bigger pain than notating a blues in $A\flat$ minor? How about $C\sharp$ major with seven sharps in open- $C\sharp$ tuning? (Aargh!) But don't panic—it's just open E tuned down one-and-a-half steps, or open D down a half step. "No More Tears," the album's most prominent guitar showcase, features Mayall on both 6-string electric and his legendary self-modified 9-string electric. According to

>>> JOHN MAYALL

Ex. 4

♩ = ca. 126

$D\flat 7(I)$

8va-

[illegible]

*Recorded at half-speed.

8va

G_b9(IV)

[illegible]

D_b7(I)

(to A|9)

[illegible]

John Peel's original liner notes, "In the clubs the appearance of the Mayallian 9-string is greeted with shouts of approval."

Mayall bought the original instrument—a 6-string Weldone electric archtop—while on leave in Japan during his three-year army tenure in Korea that began in 1952. For the 9-string conversion, he eventually retrofitted it with three additional tuning machines to accommodate doubling the top three strings, with the first and second strings tuned in unison and the third string up an octave—essentially a 12-string minus its bottom three octave strings—and also added his own artwork to the top. (The guitar is pictured on the cover of *The Blues Alone*.) Mayall typically tuned what became his signature instrument to an open chord. Though unconfirmed, the open-C# tuning on “No More Tears” makes perfect sense because it decreases string tension and increases playability compared to

its open-*E* and -*D* counterparts.

Ex. 3 approximates Mayall's V-IV-I-V-based ($G\#F\#C\#G\#$) 9-string intro, a four-bar figure whose last three bars also serve as the last three measures during each cycle of the song's 12-bar progression. There's a lot going on here. First, we've got bar 1's unusual (for blues) chord voicings formed by barring the top five strings (actually eight!) at the seventh fret, and then pedaling constant $D\#$ eighth notes (the 5 of $G\#$) punctuated with $G\#$ root notes and three-string (actually six!) pinky barres at the 12th and 10th frets on each downbeat. This results in $G\#/D\#$, $C\#/D\#$, and $B/D\#$ (with an added 6) sonorities fortified with extra chime, courtesy of the third string's octave doubling.

Bar 2 drops the index-finger barre to the fifth fret to cover $F\sharp$, the IV chord. Because the chord is voiced with the 5 ($C\sharp$) on the bottom, the measure's alternating

F#-F#6-F#7-F#6 boogie-woogie pattern, which gets transposed verbatim to the I and V chords during the first nine bars of the song's verses, can be formed simply by raising the C# on the fifth string a whole step for F#6 and an additional half step for F#7. This pattern is easily transposable to open position to accommodate the arrival of the I chord in bar 3, but Mayall adds another twist by converting the third chord in the pattern from C#7 to C#maj7, creating what I used to jokingly refer to as "the happy blues"! It's an incredibly cool touch that I've never heard anywhere else. The intro wraps up with a single open-C# hit on the downbeat of bar 4, followed by seven consecutive eighth-note hits on a nifty G#7 V-chord voicing.

STUDIO MAGIC

As if the intro weren't cool enough, Mayall

Ex. 4 emulates part of Mayall's half-speed solo. It's played in the ninth-position blues box on a standard-tuned, 6-string electric, thus I've opted to notate it in the slightly less cumbersome enharmonic key of *D $\flat$* .

Mayall rarely uses his fret-hand pinky.) Here's the rub: You'll need a pitch transposer set one octave higher to produce this sound in a live setting.

There are certainly more guitar goodies worth checking out on *The Blues Alone*, notably the spooky, atmospheric 9-string slide work that underpins “Down the Line,” and the honking overdriven rhythm figure that drives “Don’t Kick Me,” but since Mayall is still actively touring as the only guitarist in his current band, let’s investigate what he’s been up to 50 years later.

Ex. 5a

♩ = ca. 115
 ♩ = ♩ ♩
 ♭7♯9(no 3)

 T
 A
 B

Ex. 5b

[illegible]

Ex. 5c

[illegible]

phrases inspired by a 2017 live performance of “Walkin’ on Sunset,” a medium 12-bar shuffle that first appeared on 1968’s *Blues from Laurel Canyon*. We’re back in the key of $A\flat$ and the same fourth-position blues box, but this time it’s $A\flat$ major. (Whew!) Playing a ‘50s vintage Gibson ES-125 $\frac{3}{4}$ (I used to own one!), Mayall spins a rhythmically inventive three-bar opening statement over three measures of the I chord (a third-less $A\flat7\#9$ voicing), using only a few single notes interspersed with partial chords and yet another variation on those now familiar double-stops, before resting for the first half of bar 4. **Ex. 5b** commences with a broken octave pickup into the IV chord, where Otis Rush-style reverse-raked triplets punctuate partial $D\flat6$ and $D\flat9$ chords, followed by two bars of $A\flat7\#9$ with lazy quarter-note triplets

and another flash of double-stopped pull-offs. After soloing for eight bars, Mayall often reverts to chordal playing during the last four measures of a 12-bar progression. Accordingly, **Ex. 5c** completes the picture with a bar each of $E\flat 9$ (V) and $D\flat 9$ (IV) quarter-note triplets, followed by another signature Mayall move, for which we're riding a partial $A\flat 7\#9$ (no 3) shape for the final two bars. (Tip: try riding it through an entire 12-bar cycle.)

SHRED LITE

John Mayall: Shredder? Well, not exactly, but a few choruses into his solo, the adventurous guitarist does employ a unique form of finger tapping, or, in this case, edge-of-the-pick tapping rarely heard in the genre. To play **Ex. 6**, dial up a low-volume clean tone with a touch of chorus, anchor your index

finger with a fourth-fret barre across the top four strings, and use the edge of your pick—positioned parallel to the frets—to tap all of the higher fretted notes three times on each beat, as eighth-note triplets. The prepared fourth-fret notes between each tap will sound automatically, producing a string of trilled sextuplets, which move from string to string to create different varying degrees of tension over the I and IV chords until the spell is finally broken by the chordal turnaround from Ex. 5c after bar 8.

At 84, Mayall is still touring incessantly with his current trio, featuring bassist extraordinaire Greg Rza and powerhouse drummer Jay Davenport, so catch them while you can. (In 2016 they played a whopping 63 shows in a row! I repeat: Who does that?!) Long live the King of British Blues! 🎸

Ex. 6

♩ = ca. 115

ca. 195

1

A $\flat$ 7 $\sharp$ 9(no 3)

T

6

7-4-7-4-7-4

T A B

*Tap w/edge of pick.

4

D $\flat$ 9

T

6

7-4-7-4-7-4

T A B

7

A $\flat$ 7 $\sharp$ 9(no 3)

T

6

7-4-7-4-7-4

T A B

(to E $\flat$ 9)

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Owning a music store is a natural fit for Brett Mulzer. After all, music has been a focus his entire life. From playing in garage bands to teaching band and directing drum lines. Not to mention owning successful music studios. When Mulzer got the chance to purchase Moore Music in 2012, he jumped at the opportunity. It gave him a chance to continue the legacy of a store that he frequented from a young age, and to share his passion for music with aspiring and accomplished musicians.

Since 2012, the business has grown from a modest 3,000 square-foot music store to a 28,000 square-foot musical

campus. The new Moore Music site includes an expanded store, a music lesson program with nearly 300 students, and a contemporary performance venue.

Building upon the foundation that Pat Moore created when he opened Moore Music in 1976, Mulzer operates the business with integrity, hiring staff with vast musical experience and knowledge. Moore Music has become a destination store for music enthusiasts. Under Mulzer's direction, Moore Music has been named a top dealer for well-respected brands such as Paul Reed Smith Guitars, Breedlove Guitars, and Mesa-Boogie Amps, as well as a NAMM Top 100 Dealer

>>> STYLE LESSON

Widespread Chaos

Uncovering Jimmy Herring's Outside Playing Secrets

BY DAVID BREWSTER

IF THERE'S ONE NAME SYNONYMOUS with bridging the gap between modern rock, blues, and jazz, it's Jimmy Herring. Being able to pinpoint where you first heard his name or music has become a challenge, as his lengthy career includes being a founding member of the late Colonel Bruce Hampton's Aquarium Rescue Unit and the instrumental Grateful Dead tribute supergroup, Jazz Is Dead. Additionally, Herring has worked and toured with Widespread Panic, the Allman Brothers Band, the Derek Trucks Band, the Dead, Project Z, and various other side-projects, and has released two outstanding solo albums under his own name. Herring's career has continued to flourish with the recent assembly of his own group, Jimmy Herring and the Invisible Whip, in addition to the monumental opportunity of touring and performing alongside the legendary John McLaughlin during the fusion pioneer's 2017 "Meeting of the Spirits" farewell tour.

Herring has enjoyed a sustained career as a highly respected musician, while his command of improvisation and melodic soloing have helped him become a first-call session and touring musician. These abilities, combined with a mastery of blues-rock technique, applied jazz theory, and a daring, adventurous approach to musical choices and chance taking, prove that Herring is a unique musical force. You'll discover plenty of things you can learn from

this diverse and inspiring fretboard magician.

To study some of Herring's slight-of-hand playing concepts, let's begin with an analysis of how he mutates and arranges standard blues licks and phrases. Uncovering this realm of Herring's playing reveals how he creates outside lines. After listening to some of the guitarist's music, you'll discover that he's very skilled and comfortable combining multiple concepts borrowed from jazz, rock, and blues into cohesive musical expressions. This includes his frequent use of harmonic tension, which he builds by adding dissonant sounds and chromatic movements to his licks and phrases. While there are a number of ways you can approach adding dissonance and passing tones to your playing, there are a few things you should know before attempting to do this. First, it's important to know that when a musician skillfully employs dissonance, there's usually an underlying method to the musical madness. Playing "outside" means you're using information from a tonal center that radically differs from the chords or key in which you're playing overall. As you begin adding these outside sounds, you'll ultimately have two choices: either build more tension and dissonance by continuing to avoid the original key or tonality, or *resolve* the tension by returning to the home key in a smooth, tasteful way.

It may seem that musicians playing outside of the key are randomly playing a

bunch of wrong notes, but an aware and knowledgeable improviser knows exactly what he or she is doing at all times and is skillfully able to control the varying levels between melodicism and dissonance. Legendary fusion players like John Scofield, Scott Henderson, and the late Allan Holdsworth have spent the majority of their careers chasing the wrong notes but have found countless ways of using these ideas at the right time, in a way that's musical. In the rock realm, you can hear this off-center approach in the music of players such as Robert Fripp, Buckethead, Trey Anastasio, and Larry LaLonde of Primus, to name a few.

As we begin studying what Herring chooses when he mixes things up, be aware that stepping outside the key requires that you're fully aware of the chord progression and overall tonality. It's still a matter of respecting the original key and related information, but you'll want to purposely avoid conventional diatonic movements and regular phrasing when you're putting these kinds of outside ideas together. Once you're comfortable using this altered melodic concept, you can blend different keys, scales, arpeggios, and other harmonic destinations, which will move your music into the outer limits of what the listener is expecting when you solo.

We'll start by modifying a common scale that every electric guitarist reading

this lesson should be familiar with, the trusty five-note minor pentatonic, which is intervallically spelled 1, $\flat 3$, 4, 5, $\flat 7$. The examples presented herein will loosely

revolve around the key of *D* major, with a *D* dominant-seven modality. Remaining in a single key like this will help you hear the subtle differences between what

we're altering and adding to the sound and formula of the minor pentatonic scale. In beginning this kind of study, it can be difficult to hear these alterations accurately if you were to move through an assortment of keys and tonalities, so it's best to focus on a single key at first and get an earful of what you're adding and altering before moving forward with this concept. After you become comfortable playing altered and mutated phrases based around dominant-seven sounds and the general flavor of *D7*, I highly recommended that you try transposing these same concepts to other keys, while exploring different chord types, progressions, and tonalities.

The first area of this lesson blends the *D* minor pentatonic scale (*D, F, G, A, C*) with the eight-note *D* half-whole diminished scale (*D, E $\flat$, F, F $\sharp$, A $\flat$, A, B, C*), played in the same fretboard position. **Ex. 1a** shows a one-octave *D* minor pentatonic scale run played in a rhythm of steady 16th notes and centered around tenth position. Most of you are probably familiar with the sound and fingering of this common scale. Once you have the sound ringing in your head, play through **Ex. 1b**, a *D* half-whole diminished scale run played in the same position. Notice that the five-note *D* minor pentatonic scale resides within the octatonic (eight-note) *D* half-whole diminished scale, which is intervallically spelled 1, $\flat 2$, $\flat 3$, 3, $\flat 5$, 5, 6, $\flat 7$, with the $\flat 2$ and $\flat 3$ alternatively being reckoned as the $\flat 9$ and $\sharp 9$, respectively.

Combining the minor pentatonic and half-whole diminished scales is one of Herring's favorite musical strategies, so if you aspire to emulate his brilliant style, invest some time acquainting yourself with the feel and sound of blending these two scalar entities. The dissonant flavor heard over a *D7* chord (*D, F $\sharp$, A, C*) is created by combining and using the *D* minor pentatonic and the *D* half-whole diminished scale—which we'll simply refer to hereafter as the *D* diminished scale—over the dominant-seven-based tonality of this chord type. This kind of "mix-and-match" phrasing, by the way, is very common in blues, rock, jazz, and fusion styles.

In music theory, the *D7* chord belongs to the major-key family and would normally signal the use of the seven-note *D*

Ex. 1a

D Minor pentatonic scale

D7

Ex. 1b

D half-whole diminished scale

D7

Ex. 2a

D diminished lick with legato phrasing

D7

Ex. 2b

Same lick with legato finger slides

D7

Mixolydian mode (D, E, F#, G, A, B, C), but in this lesson we're taking the minor pentatonic and diminished scales and finding ways of using these sounds over a dominant-seven tonality. The concept of playing minor scales over major chords is nothing new, especially in blues, but the inclusion of adding the diminished scale to the mix can really spice things up. In some ways, this is the musical equivalent of cramming a square peg into a round hole, but you should notice that the sound produced by the D minor pentatonic and D diminished scales over the D7 chord is interesting. Needless to say, the amount fresh-sounding licks and phrases you can generate from blending these two resources together is immense!

To begin building some mix-and-match licks, **Examples 2a** and **2b** present an idea performed and written two different ways. In Herring's unique world of building inventive musical variations, a run like that shown in Ex. 2a uses legato phrasing (hammer-ons and pull-offs) to give the notes a smooth and connected sound, while Ex. 2b recycles the phrase and introduces a series of legato finger slides, or *glissandos*. While comparing the two examples, notice how the variance in the way they're performed makes a subtle but noticeable impact on the sound of the phrase. The concept of creating variations in music is something Herring employs very effectively in many of his extended solo excursions. Historically, you'll find plenty of other musicians

who've mastered the concept of building variations in their music. One of the biggest names in this musical territory is Jeff Beck, who firmly cemented his status as a master of building melodic variations during his inspired instrumental cover of the Stevie Wonder classic, "Cause We've Ended As Lovers," featured on Beck's landmark 1975 album, *Blow by Blow*.

Ex. 3 offers an interesting, Herring-worthy lick built from the D diminished scale. As you play through this example, you'll notice that we're skipping around the strings using lots of wide intervals, which create the kind of modern and unique sound heard frequently in Herring's music. Injecting wide leaps or gaps between the notes of a melody, scale, or arpeggio instantly creates a dramatic, compelling sound, one that can be found in various musical styles.

Thanks to players like Ritchie Blackmore, Randy Rhoads, and Yngwie Malmsteen, most rock players are familiar with the sound of the four-note diminished seven arpeggio, which is intervallically spelled 1, b3, b5, 6, but many aren't nearly as familiar with the eight-note diminished scale that we're using here. If your fingers and ears are confused by this finger-twisting scale, play through the challenging four-bar legato run found in **Ex. 4**, which will help you become acquainted with it and serve as a superb warm-up exercise. The benefit is created from incorporating all four fret-hand fingers to navigate through the

Ex. 3

Intervallic D diminished lick

13 10-11 13 10-12 13(15)

Ex. 4

D half-whole diminished scale legato exercise

10 13-12-10-12-13 10-11-13-11-10 13 10-11-13 10 12-10 13-11-13 10-12-13 13-12-10-12-13 10-11

3 13-11-10 13-12-10-12-13 10 13-12-10 13-11-13 10 12-10 13-11-10 10-11-13-11-10 13 13-12-10-12-13 12



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challenging note pattern. This example also gives you a birds-eye-view of how Herring likes to combine picked and slurred (legato) phrasing in his playing. This “semi-legato” articulation approach produces a smooth, yet accented sound, one that you’ll also hear in the playing of great improvising guitarists like Pat Metheny, Paul Gilbert, and Joe Satriani.

The next area of this lesson focuses on the concept of adding passing tones from the 12-note chromatic scale to pentatonic licks and phrases. **Ex. 5** depicts a one-octave chromatic scale run centered around tenth position and beginning and ending on a D

note. As you play through the example, notice the fingering challenge of performing the scale gracefully, as you’ll need to use every fret-hand finger in succession and a couple of slides to play the note sequence smoothly. This four-fingered chromatic movement makes this scale a popular choice as a warm-up and technique-building exercise for many guitarists.

For a demonstration of how to add chromatic passing tones to a pentatonic-based lick, play around with **Ex. 6**, a slippery-sounding line featuring some expressive legato finger slides and bluesy twists. Notice that we’re only hinting at the chromatic scale

here, by sprinkling a few targeted chromatic notes into the phrase. In his playing, Herring skillfully and tastefully weaves between pentatonic and chromatic notes, and you’ll find him connecting boundless streams of chromatic lines punctuated with bluesy “pit stops” all the time.

Ex. 7 gives you an idea of how Jimmy approaches adding passing tones to enhance the flavor of basic blues licks. The example presents two versions of the same phrase, as we’re taking the lick from the first bar and moving it up an octave in bar 2. The idea of relocating a lick to another octave, string group, or fretboard location is common in all styles of guitar music, and you’ll find Herring doing this kind of thing all the time. This example demonstrates how an octave transposition of a phrase can create an entirely new sound and flavor. As you practice the second version of the lick (in bar 2), notice the wide two-whole-step bend that’s applied to the final note. This seemingly random “overbend” is a common expressive device that Herring loves to employ, and you’ll hear him meticulously altering and twisting string-bending phrases in his solos all the time. This is especially true after the guitarist started collaborating with slide

Ex. 5

One-octave D chromatic scale
D7

Ex. 6

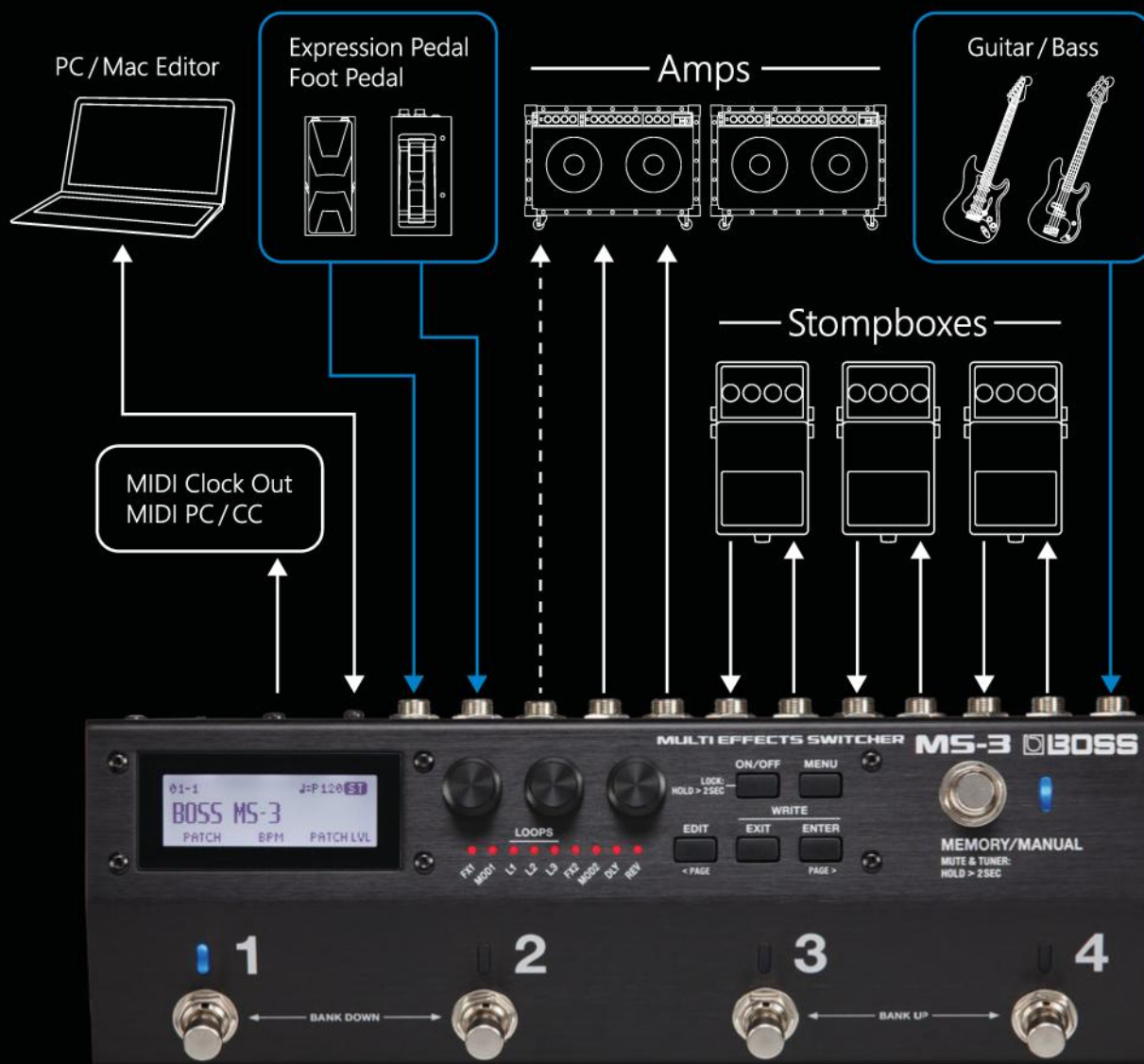
Blues-rock lick with passing tones
D7

Ex. 7

Chromatic blues-rock lick
D7

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guitar wunderkind Derek Trucks, as Herring has proudly admitted the positive influence Trucks' slide playing has had on his own playing. This is understandable, as the two brilliant guitarists have recorded, performed, and toured together for years, and the quirky, non-slide slide guitar emulation that Herring has embraced and refined in recent years is very creative and inspiring.

Ex. 8 demonstrates another way in which Herring will add passing tones to his licks and solos. The busy blues sound emanating from this passage should give you plenty to experiment with, as we're weaving and shifting between chromatic and pentatonic movements to create this swinging little jazz-blues phrase. The idea is similar to a number of phrases found in songs like "Scapegoat Blues," from *Subject to Change Without Notice*, or "Albright Special," from the self-titled *Project Z* album. Experimenting with this type of phrasing will no doubt lead your fingers toward new and exciting musical areas and directions.

Our final example features a combination of several things we've explored in this lesson. **Ex. 9** reveals a demanding Herring-inspired lick, and you can hear a number of different versions of this idea in songs such as "No Ego's Underwater" by the Aquarium Rescue Unit or Jimmy's take on the Billy Cobham fusion classic "Red Baron," from Jazz Is Dead's self-titled debut album. The final bar of this example features a common sextuplet legato phrase that Herring has employed for a long time now. You can hear multiple incarnations of this blurry-sounding lick coming from his fingers on various recordings and live performances. These flowing legato runs are very similar to the rapid-fire pivot licks you'll hear coming from rock players such as Gary Moore, Nuno Bettencourt, and Steve Vai, but Herring has always found a way to put his own identity and sonic fingerprint on these types of busy runs.

Once you've experimented with the examples and concepts presented in this lesson, you should continue your awareness

and discovery of Jimmy Herring's music, and this includes applying outside scale sounds and chromatic passing tones to your own licks. As you become more familiar and comfortable with these kinds of ideas, I highly recommend studying the music of the other jazz and fusion guitar masters mentioned earlier who thrive in this musically-altered underworld, all of whom happened to be among Herring's biggest influences and helped him make the connection to these outside flavors, movements, and sounds ■

MORE ONLINE!



For audio of this lesson, go to guitarplayer.com/lessons/october2017

Ex. 8

Swing feel

D7

T
A
B

Ex. 9

D7

T
A
B

LIFE. AFTER. DETH.

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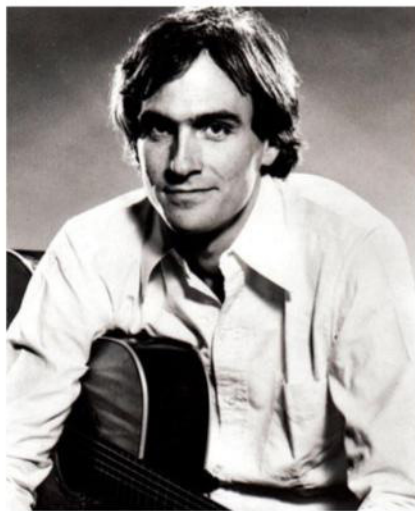
“You’ve Got a Friend”

BY JAMES TAYLOR

BY JESSE GRESS

WHEN I RECENTLY HAD TO LEARN HOW to play James Taylor’s celebrated version of this classic Carole King song, I was particularly struck by his acoustic fingerpicking, which typically employs the thumb (*p*), and index (*i*), middle (*m*), and ring (*a*) fingers. “You’ve Got a Friend” was recorded in 1971 for Taylor’s *Mud Slide Slim and the Blue Horizon* album, during the same sessions and using the same studio musicians that performed on King’s version of the song (from her *Tapestry* album), and its four-bar intro encapsulates the precision and intricacies of Taylor’s signature fingerpicking style.

Ex. 1 illustrates how Taylor transposed King’s piano-based version of the intro from the key of A $\flat$ to A, by performing it as if it were in the acoustic guitar-friendly key of G and using open “cowboy chords” with a capo clamped at the 2nd fret to transpose everything up a whole-step, to the concert key of A. Doing this allowed the guitarist to incorporate lots of “open” strings into



the figure and access the first-position (relative to the capo) G and C chord shapes in bars 1 and 2. He begins by fingerpicking all three octave G notes (*p-i-a-i*) that reside within the capo-ed G grip. Next, Taylor

plays the 3 of the chord (B) on the open second string on beats three and four, following the first one with the 2 (A) and the second with the 4 (C) to create a G-Gsus2-G-Gsus4 harmonic scheme that morphs into an arpeggiated C chord (picked *m-i-m-m*) in the first half of bar 2. Let the last note in bar 1 ring over the C on the downbeat of bar 2 before adding the open fourth string (D) to transform this shape to the arpeggiated Dsus4 chord (picked *p-a-i-m*) during beats three and four.

The same G-Gsus2-G-Gsus4 scheme returns in bar 3, where it is embellished with three high-G common tones (picked with *m* and *a* in tandem), preceding a nearly exact duplication of the first half of bar 1. Six sixth intervals (picked simultaneously with *p* and *m*) follow in bar 4, outlining a harmonic transition from A7 and B7 to the relative minor key of E minor. You might hear Taylor play this intro a little differently during live performances, but this is how it all began. ■

Ex. 1

♩ = ca. 96 G C Dsus4 Gsus4 Gsus2 A7 B7 (to Em)

*Capo II

let ring throughout

T
A
B

*All music sounds in the key of A, one whole step higher than written. All tablature positions are relative to the capo.

You've Got A Friend

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Digging Wes' Thumb

BY JIMMY STEWART



Poised to pluck: The mighty Wes Montgomery.

IN HIS JULY '73 WES MONTGOMERY *GP* cover story, Ralph J. Gleason wrote, "The first time I heard Wes play, it was like being hit by a bolt of lightning. When he hit the guitar strings with his thumb, you could feel it in your gut anywhere within the reach of sound."

Wes never took a lesson in his life. One of his most identifiable characteristics was the sound he created using his thumb instead of a plectrum. Like so many innovations, this came about by accident. One day Wes was practicing at home. When his neighbor complained about the noise, Wes took his amp to the back of the house and played with his thumb to quiet the attack. He soon found that his thumb gave him more control than a pick.

From the very beginning, Montgomery always used an amp when practicing. He also discovered that angling his thumb produced different tonal colors—similar to classical guitar technique. For octave and chord-style playing, Wes' movement originated from his wrist. At faster tempos, he struck the string with less thumb meat and ghost-

ed some notes with the left hand. Occasionally, he'd upswing with his thumb.

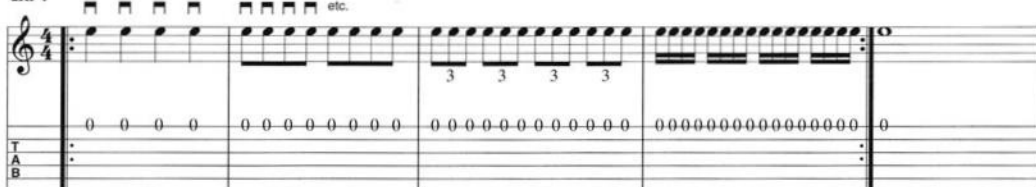
Thumb tips. Even if you play with a pick, it's worth developing a strong thumb technique for its unique timbre. Here are some tips for emulating the mighty Wes:

- Gently rest your loose, extended pick-hand fingers on the guitar.
- Originate the stroke from your thumb's second joint, keeping the first joint relaxed and mobile.
- Move your thumb toward your palm, striking the string near the thumbnail with the fleshy lower side.
- Pick with a slightly circular motion.

Practice the downstrokes in Ex. 1 until the movements feel familiar. Keep your hand relaxed. Play the same rhythms on the other open strings.

Next try the chromatic line in Ex. 2. Again, transfer this exercise across the fretboard. Ex. 3 introduces string skipping. Play slowly, striving for a good tone. Don't force the sound—let your amp do the work.

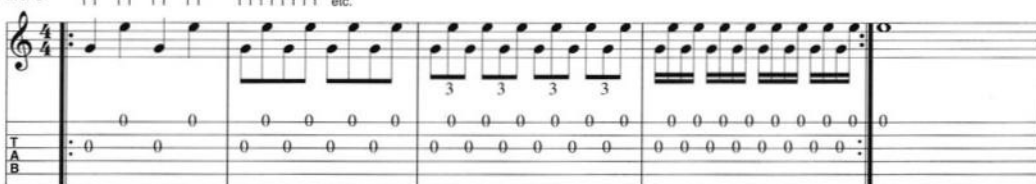
Ex. 1



Ex. 2



Ex. 3



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"A great deal of imagination is required to bring those dots to life."—Eliot Fisk on notation, June '80 *GP*



Long-time *GP* columnist Jimmy Stewart—himself a formidable jazz player—decoded the glories of Wes Montgomery's thumb in this January 1996 lesson. To think that one of jazz guitar's most revered tones and techniques came about because a neighbor complained about the noise when Montgomery practiced with a pick. (Good thing it wasn't the '70s, and that the neighbor didn't live next door to Pete Townshend!) —MICHAEL MOLENDA



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Framus Masterbuilt Television P90

TESTED BY SAM HAUN

ONE OF THE BEST PARTS OF REVIEW-ing gear for *GP* is when I'm assigned a super-upscale guitar that I can play and enjoy for several weeks—such as this Framus Masterbuilt Television P90. First off, I couldn't stop staring at the unbelievably striking bleached turquoise-blue finish. It's like viewing the ocean from a remote South Pacific island on a clear spring day, as the "ocean waves" of the Television's striped maple top ebb and flow in an almost hypnotic dance. A big part of the illusion is due to Framus' exclusive water-based UV lacquering process that results in an ultra-thin, clear finish.

Looks aside, what do you get when you invest in a Masterbuilt Framus? Well, the attention to detail all over this handcrafted guitar is staggering. From the rubber rings on the chromed Volume and Tone controls (which give your fingers something to easily grab hold of), to the perfectly dressed frets (thanks to Plek fret-dressing technology and Framus/Warwick's exclusive "Invisible Fret" process), to thoughtful "little goodies" such as the fluorescent side dots on the neck, a tool kit, and an awesome leather gig bag, the Television hits all of the right marks for a luxury model. Even the hand-selected wood used to build the instrument is

naturally dried for a minimum of five years in a moisture-controlled environment. And all of this is done by a family-owned company in a carbon-neutral factory—an industry first.

Despite the unusual shape of its semi-hollow body, the Television feels balanced and sits comfortably on my shoulder. It's also very light—weighing in at less than 8 lbs—and I can attest to the lack of fatigue after extended rehearsal sessions. This was a big bonus for me, as I've recently dealt with some back problems, and the heavier guitars in my collection are often difficult to manage if I'm standing and playing for too long. Overall, the Television





felt comfortable immediately. There was no period of “playing it in.” Much of this is due to the neck, the back of which is sanded almost glass smooth, and gives you a great feel of the wood grain. It’s also wide enough to make playing chord in any position a breeze, yet it’s slim enough that single-note runs, double-stops, unison bends, and wide interval steps can be executed with almost no effort.

The Television was getting under my skin before I even plugged it in, but once I did—wow. The Seymour Duncan P90s deliver a crisp yet meaty tone that’s both bright and gutsy. There’s lots of bite and girth to the Television’s sweet, bell-like tones, and the pickups are a great match for the body’s aged maple and mahogany, because you can really hear the resonance of the wood. When I dimed the guitar’s master

Volume, both the neck and bridge pickups yielded a very satisfying crunch with lots of sustain for solos. Backing off the volume didn’t compromise midrange articulation much, making the sound perfect for comping and rhythm-guitar parts. Even when I rolled off the master Tone knob, the sound was warm and jazzy, but still chock full of note definition.

Some instruments are just inspiring from the get-go, and you want to keep playing them for hours on end. If you are ever able to spend just a few minutes with the Television, you’ll understand exactly what I’m talking about. This is an expensive guitar, to be sure, but the quality, presentation, tone, playability, and ultra-exclusivity all stand up to the investment, and the Television P90 certainly deserves an Editors’ Pick Award. 

SPECIFICATIONS

MASTERBUILT TELEVISION P90

CONTACT	framus.com
PRICE	\$6,999 street
NUT WIDTH	1.7" (Graph Tech Black Tusq Low Friction)
NECK	Mahogany, set
FRETBOARD	Tigerstripe Ebony, 25.5" scale, 12" radius
FRETS	22 extra-high jumbo, nickel-silver
TUNERS	Graph Tech Ratio Locking with wood knobs
BODY	Flamed AAAA maple top and back over mahogany
BRIDGE	TonePros
PICKUPS	Seymour Duncan P90 RW/RP (neck), Seymour Duncan P90 (bridge)
CONTROLS	Master Volume, master Tone, 3-way selector
FACTORY STRINGS	Cleartone, .010-.046
WEIGHT	7.7 lbs
BUILT	Germany
KUDOS	Brilliant looks. Great tone. Feels wonderful to play.
CONCERNS	An ultra-lush Framus can be costly.



Teye The Fox

TESTED BY DAVE HUNTER

A NEW MODEL THIS MIGHT BE, BUT THE Fox epitomizes Teye's work so completely that it feels like the archetypal guitar from this maker of self-proclaimed "electric Gypsy" instruments. A Netherlands-born guitarist and luthier who now splits his time between Seville, Spain, and Austin, Texas, Teye has long been inspired by the work of the late Tony Zemaitis. And while his upmarket Master Series and Artisan Series guitars like La Perla and La Pirata might carry more bling in total, the Fox is torn straight from that playbook, albeit with Teye's own twists, both visually and sonically.

It's worth noting at the outset that the Fox is broadly similar to the Super Coyote model from the same TMF series, although this one benefits from a flame maple top, which is also somewhat less obscured by engraved metal than the Super Coyote's plain mahogany top. The Fox has the familiar single-cutaway shape and a body made from beautifully figured mahogany, also seen in the glued-in neck, both of which exhibit dramatic striping in a boldly contrasting irregular grain. At 1-5/8" deep the guitar's body is thinner than that of a Les Paul Standard, but

with this exotic mahogany and the plethora of metal, it brings the guitar in at a pretty hefty 9.6 lbs, although that's an easy enough compromise in comfort for the player that digs what's happening here. (Teye states this prototype came out a little heavy—they aim for a weight of 8.5 lbs.) Personally, I like that there's a little more wood in evidence here than in this company's more ornate endeavors—and that it's finished with Teye's tactile (and fragrant) hand-rubbed



SPECIFICATIONS

THE FOX

CONTACT	teye.com
PRICE	\$3,850 street
NUT WIDTH	1.75"
NECK	Select figured mahogany
FRETBOARD	Ebony, 25.5" scale
FRETS	24 medium-jumbo
TUNERS	Grover Super Rotomatic Imperial
BODY	Select figured mahogany with flame maple top
BRIDGE	Proprietary Teye SuperSustain bridge and Teye tailpiece
PICKUPS	Jason Lollar custom humbuckers
CONTROLS	Dual Volumes, single Tone, Mojo knob, 5-way selector
FACTORY STRINGS	D'Addario, .010-.046
WEIGHT	9.6 lbs
BUILT	USA
KUDOS	Artfully alternative looks and surprising sonic versatility from an adaptably "hi-fi" template.
CONCERNS	A bit heavy. The 1.75" width at the nut might be too much for some players.



“luthier’s oil”—but there’s also still enough acid-etched aluminum to utterly mesmerize.

Hardware includes Teyé’s in-house bridge, tailpiece, and knobs, partnered with elegant Grover Imperial tuners, and the humbuckers are a custom-wound set supplied by Jason Lollar. They are wired for use with a 5-way switch and translated via Teyé’s proprietary Mojo knob, a passive “analog spectrum circuit modeler” that uses a custom potentiometer and EQ filtering

to balance the pickups’ coils to achieve a broad range of voices. I found the playing feel very good even at the girthy 1.75” neck width across this luscious bound-ebony fingerboard, although smaller hands might find it a stretch, and this new Fox wanted some playing-in before tuning stabilized. Played unplugged, the guitar exhibited a lot of sustain and sonic “boing,” with a lively jangle that’s likely aided by the 25.5” scale length.

I tested the Fox through a Victory V40 Deluxe

combo and a custom AC15-style combo, with a couple of overdrive pedals for good measure—setups that proved that this guitar really enjoys slicing through some gain for sizzling yet clear lead tones. Played clean, the Fox revealed itself to be a very full-frequency instrument, almost hi-fi, yet with plenty of character at its core and a lot of shimmer and sparkle. Adding some hair to that translated into an extremely detailed sound that could be simultaneously raw and articulate. The bonus here is that you can dial in more traditional dual-humbucker tricks via the Fox’s versatile electronics, but an entirely more “broadband” performance is there if you want it. The Mojo control’s effects at first seemed subtle, but this knob was great for dialing between thicker and brighter voices, which could then still be shaped via the remaining bevy of controls, and the 5-way selector’s middle and out-of-phase options enabled further alternative tone sculpting that most guitars simply don’t offer. All in all, this Teyé is worth auditioning for any player seeking both looks and sounds that are equally outré. ■

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Dr. Z EMS Combo



TESTED BY ART THOMPSON

OHIO BASED DR. Z HAS BEEN ON A roll of late with the introduction of the Surgical Steel pedal-steel amp (reviewed in the August Issue), and now the EMS or “Essential Marshall Sounds,” which is designed to replicate the tones of three eras of classic Marshall 50-watt amplifiers: a mid-’60s JTM 50, a ’70s “small box” JMP, and an ’80s JCM800. To nail the essential ingredients for these brews, Dr. Z equipped the EMS with a pair of EL34 output tubes, which are fueled by selectable rectifiers: a 5U4G tube (for ’60s-era response) and a solid-state type as per the ’70s and ’80s models. Along with a set of Gain, Volume, Treble, Middle, Bass, and Presence controls, the EMS also features a Touch switch and a Hi/Lo switch that boosts the gain by adding another 12AX7 stage to the preamp.

The EMS is built on a rolled aluminum chassis and features hand-wired circuitry to all the components, including pots, jacks, switches, and tube sockets. It also carries a precise copy of the Drake 784-139 50-watt output transformer, which was a hallmark of vintage Marshalls with two EL34s.

The EMS on review here is the first one Dr. Z made with a “Bluesbreaker”-style cabinet housing two 12" Celestion G12 M speakers. The

birch-ply cab is covered in black Tolex and is accented with gold piping and a woven grille. In this format the amp is big (32" wide by 23" tall), and it weighs a robust 62 lbs. Of course, as with all things Bluesbreaker, the open-back rig has a sound unto itself—one of the reasons why Brad Paisley went with the same-sized cabinet for his signature DB4 model (reviewed July 2016).

Tested with a Gibson Historic Les Paul, a PRS P90-equipped semi-hollow, and a G&L ASAT with a Duncan BG1400 bridge pickup, the EMS sounds as big as it looks. It has impressive girth even at low volumes, and while the Bass control doesn't exactly pour on low-end when turned up, there was no shortage of beef with single-coils. This amp sounds very clear and warm at low Gain settings—great for fat jazz and blues tones—and the headroom is astonishing. Leave the gain switch in the Lo position and simply dial up the Volume to get a big, dimensional tone for rhythm playing or when you want a clean foundation for your drive, delay, or modulation pedals.

On the flip side, the EMS is really in its element churning out gritty crunch at medium to higher volumes. The response is a little tighter when using the solid-state rectifier, and the Touch switch (which adds a .047uF cap from the B+

SPECIFICATIONS

EMS

CONTACT	drzamps.com
PRICE	\$2,499 street (2x12 combo); \$1,899 (head only); \$2,599 (EMS set with head and 2x12 cab)
CHANNELS	1
CONTROLS	Gain, Volume, Treble, Middle, Bass, Presence. Touch switch, Hi-Lo (gain) switch, Tube/Solid-State Rectifier switch.
POWER	50 watts
TUBES	Three 12AX7 preamp tubes, two EL34 output tubes, 5U4G rectifier
EXTRAS	Switchable tube and solid-state rectifiers. Extension speaker jack. Impedance selector (4Ω, 8Ω, 16Ω)
WEIGHT	62 lbs
SPEAKER	Two Celestion G12M "greenbacks"
BUILT	USA
KUDOS	Broad range of British-style sounds. Impeccable build quality.
CONCERNS	None.

center tap to ground in the high-voltage power supply) is designed to give a more tactile playing feel. Its effect is subtle, but, when combined with the tube rectifier, the amp treads into juicy, tweed-Fender-style territory with the Gain knob above two o' clock and the gain switch either on Lo or Hi depending on how loud you're playing and/or how much distortion you want. With minor adjusting of the tone controls (the Middle knob is particularly effective), the EMS conjured a good impression of my '66 Marshall JTM-50, and had a similar sensitivity to guitar volume changes. Switching to the solid-state rectifier gives a little more punch, and—with the gain switch set to Lo and the Gain control turned up



with the master Volume cranked—was reminiscent in sound and feel to my '72 JMP Marshall non-master 50-watt (running though an open-back 2x12 with Celestion Vintage 30s.) The EMS is punishingly loud in this configuration, so fortunately there's a Volume control to set overall levels without compromising the core tone.



In Hi mode, the cascaded 12AX7 stages reflect Marshall's '80s-era solution for coaxing more overdrive from the JCM800. The EMS actually has quite a bit more overdrive and is more tonally consistent too, courtesy of some circuit modding by Dr. Z, and it's all there with a sweep of the guitar's volume knob: gutsy grind for rhythm playing, smooth transitions into sustaining solos, and the ease of going from humbuckers to single-coils with very little fiddling with the amp's tone controls.

Put it all together and the EMS comes off as a mini library of old-school Marshall-flavored tones. The combo version may not be for everybody (plug-in casters are included, however), but it's an impressive amp visually and sonically, and one that carries on the tradition of blues/rock righteousness as etched into history via the original Marshall model 1962 amplifier. The EMS enhances that platform for modern players (albeit with no effects loop), making it a standout model in the Dr. Z line and winner of an Editors' Pick Award. ▶

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Soul Tramp Wraith

TESTED BY DAVE HUNTER

ALTHOUGH HE SPENT MUCH OF HIS career as a systems integrator of software and hardware solutions for manufacturers, Don Hills has been working with electronics since he was a kid in high school in the early '70s. Several years ago he decided to make this his full-time gig, founding Soul Tramp amps in Gray, Maine, where he now crafts hand-built tube machines on the idyllic shores of Little Sebago Lake, just northwest of Portland. Long a fan of Fender's classic blackface amps of the '60s, those circuits lie at the foundations of many of his current models, although he turns to tweed and British templates for others—while all of the above take the final product to places far beyond what any of those roots imply. Such is the 50-watt Wraith on review here, which marries one tweed Bassman-inspired clean channel with Hills's scorching lead channel, dubbed the Soul channel, plus a ton of functionality to create a versatile and powerful amp that's quite a bit different from anything else out there.

The full control complement is found in this review's spec box, but it's worth noting that these knobs work a little differently than the traditional two-channel dichotomy. The first Volume control, the three tone knobs plus

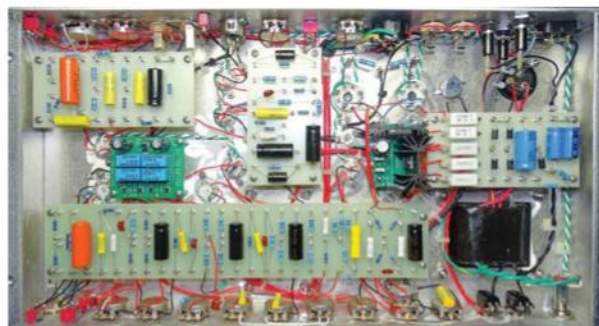
Slop control (which shifts the frequency range of the entire tone stack), Master Volume and Presence are all active in clean mode. Stomp on the Soul button, though, and the first gain stage shifts to the Soul knob and, although the lead channels still uses the same EQ stage, the Drive knob also becomes active as a post-tone-stage master of sorts, to dial in gain levels before the final post-phase-inverter master. Step on the OD footswitch and a like-named knob on the amp's back panel slathers on another stage of cascading gain, while the footswitch's third button—Grind—adds a preset bump to subtly increase the lead channel's edge and rawness. There's also tube-driven spring reverb with back-panel Depth control and bypass switch, and an extremely versatile buffered effects loop available as serial or parallel with both Level and Mix control, or totally bypassable.

Hills builds every Soul Tramp himself by hand, using high-quality components such as the Mallory and SBE signal caps, Sprague and TAD filter caps, and Mercury Magnetics transformers on evidence here, all within a custom-built, heavy-duty aluminum chassis. He even gives the first two preamp tubes DC heater filaments for extremely low-noise performance.

SPECIFICATIONS

WRAITH

CONTACT	soultrampamps.com
PRICE	\$2,335 retail
CHANNELS	2
CONTROLS	Volume, Soul, Slope, Treble, Middle, Bass, Drive, Master, Presence. Switches for Hi/Lo input, Bright, Woof. Back panel: OD Level, Reverb Depth, and Reverb Bypass switch
POWER	50 watts
TUBES	Five 12AX7s, two 12AT7s, two 6L6GCs
EXTRAS	Tube-buffered FX loop with On/Off switch, Serial/Parallel switch, Level and Mix controls, Dual speaker outs with 4/8/16Ω switch, 3-button footswitch for channel, OD, and Grind
WEIGHT	42 lbs
BUILT	USA
KUDOS	An extremely well-built amp at a reasonable price. An original take on some very playable "pushed-Fender-style" lead tones.
CONCERNS	Shared EQ might mean compromises between clean and lead voicings for some players.



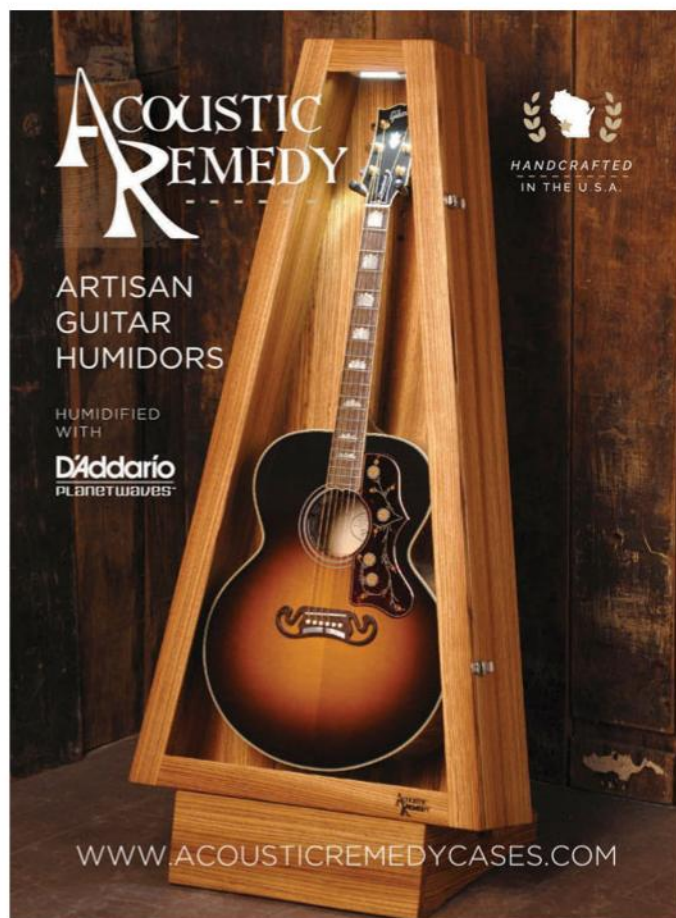
The cab, grille, and control panel are all elegantly styled and professionally rendered, and the Wraith comes with one of the finest covers I've seen as standard issue, custom made from high-grade auto-interior vinyl with marine-grade piping.

I tested the Wraith with a Stratocaster and a Les Paul, into a Port City 2x12 cab with Celestion G12-65 speakers and a StoneAge 1x12 with an Avatar Fane M65. Note that it takes some experimenting to find your own sweet spots amid the bevy of very interactive controls, on the Soul channel in particular, but the Wraith

rewards any exploration with a diverse palette of sounds. The Clean channel is warm and round, an excellent voice for jazz that is goosed toward vintage rock and roll with a Tube Screamer injected. For any real country twang or shimmery pop jangle it likes to have the Treble and Presence controls pretty far advanced, at which point—since they share the EQ stage—the Soul channel is a hair brittle when you bring it in, but it's easy enough to tweak the tone controls toward an acceptable compromise. I had the most fun on the Soul channel with the OD

engaged, but also enjoyed the subtle raw lift that Grind added to the equation. It was easy to coax sizzling lead tones from the Les Paul that were still wiry and articulate, while the Strat at these settings was snarky, unhinged, and eviscerating in an extremely enjoyable way. Hills's reverb circuit is delectable, too, with a lush shimmer when you want it, but returns more gain to the dry amp when bypassed.

All in all, the Wraith is a cool amp that is well built and able to deliver a worthy palette of alternative rock voices. 🎸





Eminence

WheelHouse 150, Pete Anderson Signature HempDog & Josh Smith Signature JS-1250

TESTED BY DAVE HUNTER

KENTUCKY-BASED EMINENCE SEEMS

to be firing on all cylinders lately, and they have introduced another three speakers that blend elements of the classics to bring something entirely new to the table. I tested each speaker in a birch-ply StoneAge 1x12 cabinet with a convertible open/closed back, using a Les Paul, a Stratocaster, and a Novo Serus J with P-90s. Test amps were a tweed Deluxe and a 65amps Producer EL.

WHEELHOUSE 150

This 150-watt, 8 Ω speaker was developed with input from session and touring guitarist Andy Wood with the aim of delivering versatile, well-rounded tone whatever amp you put into it. Eminence bills it as “in a category all its own,” and indeed it is. Using a hemp cone, a large-diameter 2.5" voice-coil, and an 11-ounce Neodymium magnet (which is fairly large for Neo), this

speaker packs a lot of power handling into a 6.6 lb package.

I found the WheelHouse (\$149 street) an extremely likeable driver with a balanced voice that was relatively neutral, if leaning somewhat toward the dark side (something Eminence did intentionally at Andy's request to be able to dial-in as much high-end on the amp or pedal as needed without getting harshness).

It handled both cleans and leads extremely well, allowing the guitar and amp to sound like themselves with little extraneous coloration. Although Neo is known as a sensitive magnet, this speaker wanted to be pushed some to sound its best—consequently, it was a little dead with the Deluxe at lower volumes, but came to life at higher decibels, and it ate up anything on the 65 Amps Producer EL past about 11 o'clock on the Master. Powerful stuff in a light package.

KUDOS Balanced and transparent, with exceptional power-handling for its weight.

CONCERNS None.

PETE ANDERSON SIGNATURE HEMPDOG

From Eminence's Signature Series, the HempDog (\$119 street) is one raging hunk of speaker. Capable of handling 150 watts, its extremely efficient sensitivity rating of 102.3dB also translates whatever you throw at it into a lot of sound. The maker tells us Anderson sought to blend his two favorite speakers—Eminence's Cannabis Rex and Legend

EM12—into one clear, powerful, articulate unit. Given a broader reference, you might call the lovechild of those two simply "a hemp-coned EVM12L." All this engineering brings the cast-framed speaker with 80-ounce ceramic magnet in at a weighty 16.3 lbs, but such is the cost of tone.

The HempDog sounded superbly bold and balanced, yet rich and dynamic with all guitar and amp combinations, and it remained surprisingly nimble and lively even at lower volume levels. This one seemed to love everything I threw at it, delivering a warm midrange, taut lows, and sweet highs that were never spikey or shrill. A fun alternative to the legendary EVM, a major bargain at this price, and an Editors' Pick Award winner along with it.

KUDOS Clear and powerful, with a bold, rich voice and some sweetness throughout the range.

CONCERNS None.

JOSH SMITH SIGNATURE JS-1250

Contemporary blues artist Josh Smith turned to Eminence to create this signature model (\$99

street), which he spec'd as a three-way amalgam of the Tonespotter's lows, the Wizard's clean upper register, and the Red Fang alnico's sparkle and grit. This ceramic-magnet speaker handles 50 watts max and comes only in an 8Ω version.

Much as Smith's requested recipe would indicate, I found the JS-1250 a broadly "British" speaker in nature, but one that took well to American playing styles too, with a voice that runs between Greenback and G12H camp, and a character that's likely to appeal to a great many players who lean in that direction for their tones. Cleans were chimy and just slightly textured, while lead tones pushed the speaker into more upper-midrange sizzle, with rounded yet balanced lows. A great all-rounder, I see the JS-1250 as an excellent choice for the player who's having a tough time deciding which more specific British alley to head down.

KUDOS A good Brit-voiced all-rounder, covering several styles well.

CONCERNS None.

CONTACT eminence.com



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>>> CLASSIC GEAR

The 1961 Vox AC15 1x12 Combo

BY DAVE HUNTER

VOX WASN'T THE FIRST PLAYER ON THE British amp scene, but it was the first brand to make a major mark on the history of rock tone, and the AC15 is where it all started. Back before anyone conceived that a band was likely to need more than about 18 watts to get the job done, the AC15 was the market leader in the nation that was incubating the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, the Yardbirds, and other soon-to-be Vox players, and the sound of this amp is virtually etched into the cochlea of any fan of popular music.

Designed in large part by Dick Denney as the first proper guitar amp for Jennings Musical Instruments' new Vox brand, the AC15 was launched early in 1958, but evolved considerably through its first couple of years of manufacture, hitting its stride—and its archetypal form—by the time our featured amp was made in 1961. By 1959 the new Vox model had picked up endorsements from major British stars like the Vipers, Wee Willie Harris, Marty Wilde, Bert

Weedon, and Billy Fury. Heard of them? Probably not, but the AC15's use by guitarists Hank Marvin and Bruce Welch of the Shadows—who were not only the backing band to hit maker Cliff Richard, but scored dozens of Top 40 instrumental

hits in the UK in their own right—was a significant precursor to the coming British Invasion, which would also make Vox amps must-haves for teenagers all across America.

Vox and the AC15 are synonymous with “the class-A sound,” even if that’s something of a misnomer. Rather than being strictly “class-A amps”—a condition proved up on the test bench by measuring very specific performance characteristics—the sound of the AC15 is, in part, typified by its cathode-biased dual-EL84 output stage with no negative feedback. This platform enhances harmonic overtones for that lively jangle when played clean, and segues easily into rich distortion when overdriven. But many other factors contribute to the legendary AC15 sound.

AC15s of the late '50s and early to mid '60s stand out for their use of an EF86 pentode preamp tube in channel two, which adds girth and thickness to the output stage's sweetness. These amps also had unusually large output transformers for their wattage ratings, which helped to maintain a firmer, punchier tone than that delivered by many amps their size. Add to all that the extremely luscious sounding Celestion G12 alnico speakers that these combos carried, later referred to as the “Vox Blue” and reissued as the Celestion Alnico Blue, and the AC15 cruises in as one of the best-sounding sub-20-watt amps of all time. They record beautifully, and still deliver enough oomph to keep up with most drummers on a club stage—or on any stage when miked up through the P. A.

As it goes with so many of the classics, the AC15 is also one of the most emulated amps of all time, and glimmers of its key features continue to be reflected in myriad boutique designs to this day. Matchless, TopHat, 65amps, Morgan, and many others have been inspired to use renditions of an EF86 channel in their amps, and Vox has released several AC15 reissues over the years. One of the more popular, the English-made AC15TB (and “TBX” with Alnico Blue speaker) of the '90s and early '00s wasn't necessarily the most accurate—with an AC30-style Top Boost tone stage and no EF86 preamp tube at all—but was a great sounding 18-watter nonetheless. This crucial element of original AC15 tone first returned to the fold in 2007 with the release of the Heritage Handwired AC15H1TV, which did finally carry the magical pentode preamp tube. ■

ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS

- > Two EL84 output tubes generating around 18 watts RMS
- > Long-tailed-pair phase inverter
- > 1 x EF86, 3 x 12AX7, 1 x 12AU7 preamp tubes
- > EZ81 rectifier tube
- > Cathode-follower tone stage with Treble, Bass, and Middle controls
- > Single Celestion G12 speaker with alnico magnet
- > Open-back combo cab with fawn-colored Rexine covering

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THE SELDOM HEARD ACOUSTIC SIDE OF SONNY LANDRETH

BY JIMMY LESLIE

"I'M AN ELECTRIC GUITAR PLAYER," SAYS SONNY Landreth. "I suck at playing acoustic. I can play it around the house or record it in the studio, but on a gig in the heat of battle—it's just a different angle."

Landreth exudes Southern humility, and a Stratocaster through a cranked Dumble or Demeter may forever be his hallmark, but he certainly does not *suck* on acoustic. Sonny is one of the top electric solidbody slide cats on the planet, and he doesn't change his technique too dramatically to play acoustic. Tonally, he's in a different universe. Landreth's electric hurricane can range from a whisper to a category 5, and he's a master of utilizing sustain to help facilitate a slew of original tricks and licks that have boggled minds for decades—many of which are based on slide bar harmonics and fingering behind the slide. Pulling that off on an acoustic, however, is a different story, so Landreth has enlisted a unique instrument to help him tackle the challenge.

GP caught a glimpse in May at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, where he opened with an acoustic mini-set. Landreth played a cool metallic-blue resonator that caught everyone's ears and eyes. As it turns out, he'd cut a half-acoustic, half-electric double disc in January at the Acadiana Center for the Arts in his hometown of Lafayette, Louisiana.

Recorded Live in Lafayette [Mascot/Provogue] dropped on June 30th, and it's an epic, career-spanning journey. Disc one offers more insight into Sonny's acoustic side than any previous release. His core power trio of David Ranson and Brian Brignac get in on the fun, switching to ukulele bass and cajón, respectively. They're joined by Steve Conn's accordion and Sam Broussard playing the hell out of a parlor-sized Martin. Landreth's slide tone ranges from an almost traditional resonator rattle, to smooth and slinky with plenty of "pop"—practically approaching electric tones such as Marc Knopfler's ultra clean Strat on "Sultans of Swing," or even echoes of Robbie Krieger's bottleneck blues on the Doors' "Moonlight Drive." It all comes down to how Landreth works his groovy blue resonator.

Who made that wild acoustic hot-rod?

Larry Pogreba is a unique character. The luthiers all like him because he comes up with creative ideas using interesting materials and simple, left of center appointments. Bonnie Raitt and Jackson Browne have his guitars. I first saw and played one back in the '90s. He gave me one five or six years ago, and I've been trying to get better on it. I cut a few tracks with a metal-bodied Dobro and a vintage National on my last album [2015's *Bound by the Blues*], but this guitar is completely different.

Can you share some details?

He calls it a "hubcap resonator." Mine has a '56 Oldsmobile hubcap for the cover plate—pretty trippy. The neck is made of wood. [Pogreba says it's mahogany he salvaged from a centuries old stump on a trip to Belize.] The body is aluminum, so it doesn't sound at all like an old National. I love the Pogreba's brighter, airy sound. It's got a cutaway, and it's *light*. Carrying that through the airport is a *whole* lot easier.

What does it feel like to play?

Mine is real comfortable, and it looks especially cool with the hubcap, but sometimes I take it off because I'm so used to having my palm right over the bridge on a Strat. I took it off before Jazz Fest because I was having so much trouble positioning my right hand.

An acoustic resonator is such a different beast than your Strat, but it appeared that you were still up to your tried and true tricks technically.

Some of them—that was my hope [*laughs*]. It's funny because for two years way back in the '70s, I quit playing electric guitar altogether. I played a metal-bodied Dobro and my Martin D-28 all day and all night. Over the years since playing mostly electric, I've found that the basic positioning of my right hand has changed. So this was a bit of an eye-opening experience.

How did you set up for the acoustic portion of *Recorded Live in Lafayette*?

I sat on a chair to help my playing be more consistent.



LUCIUS FONTENOT

FRETS

SONNY LANDRETH

My engineer, Tony Daigle, set up a pair of microphones—a Neumann KM 84 and a Shure KSM137—to capture the natural resonator sound. The Pogreba has a single-coil Teisco pickup near the neck, and it did a nice job picking up the sound from a set of D'Addario EJ17 Phosphor Bronze Mediums, even though you'd think nickel-wound electric strings would translate better magnetically. ["Those Teiscos are so microphonic, they sound like whatever guitar you put them on," adds Pogreba.] We split the pickup's signal in two. One went to a D.I., where it was split again into the recording console and front of house. The other fed into a pair of pedalboards, and then my amp—a Demeter TGA-3 head through a vintage Fender Bandmaster 2x12 cab loaded with Celestion Vintage 30s.

The Radial Engineering Elevator multi-level boost pedal works great with that guitar because you can select the amount of midrange punch at either 10dB or 5dB,

which is what I used—just enough to make the mids pop. From the Elevator, the signal fed a Fulltone Plimsoul overdrive pedal that I'd kick in now and then. The Teisco usually sounds flabby when you drive it, but that Plimsoul has better articulation, and just a bit of gain from it worked well. The signal then ran into my regular pedalboard where I had an Analog Man compressor and an Analog Man chorus that I used for *Bound by the Blues*. The chorus is rich, and it gets kind of crazy, but it shakes up the sound in a cool way. I felt it gave the guitar more of an identity—the steel drum vibe I was going for on that particular song. I also used a Visual Sound Dual Tap Delay to add a bit of ambience at times. I like delay in general, and on an acoustic it's nice for thickening, vibe, and definition. "A World Away" is a good example, and that's the only minor tuning in the acoustic set—G minor.

How did you deal with multiple tunings when you only had one Pogreba?

I had the Pogreba in G major [low to high: D, G, D, G, B, D], which is my favorite open tuning, especially on a resonator. From there, it was only a half step down on the second string to G minor. I had one other guitar—a beautiful Beltona resonator given to me by Mark Knopfler—that I used to play "The High Side" in open D [low to high: D, A, D, F#, A, D]. The Beltona is actually the guitar on the album cover. While I played that, my tech Jimmy Bedsole put a capo at the Pogreba's second fret to put me in A minor, which was the original key for "Bound by the Blues." After that, I took the capo off, and with a quick turn of the second string, I was right back to open G for "The U.S.S. Zydecoldsmobile." We worked that out at soundcheck on the third of three nights recording, so that was the only acoustic performance of it we'd ever done at the time.

That's a powerful tune. Did you use your usual glass slide for the acoustic set, or another material?

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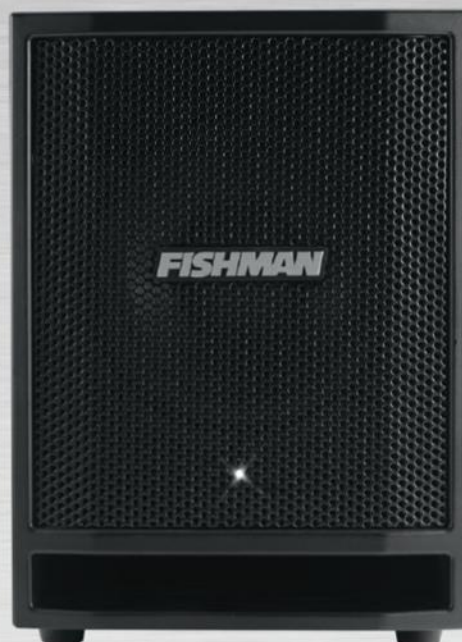
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I used a metal slide that I hacked off from a motorcycle handlebar when I was a teenager. It's longer and weighs more than glass, so I was able to get a bigger, smoother sound, and wider vibrato. It helps me produce more energy and punch playing live. That's one of the adjustments I've been making because I have such a light touch on the electric. The metal bar aids me in the challenge of approaching the acoustic, especially on the top strings. Even more to the point is trying to incorporate my fingernails to get more plucking power, rather than the flesh of my fingertips.

What frustrates you most on acoustic?

Fingerpicking. I use my nails, flesh, and the same Ikeda thumbpick that I use to play electric, but the great players like my friend Jerry Douglas that use fingerpicks—man, they cut through so well. I can't go at it like that because my nails are shot to hell. I've thought about getting acrylics, but even those probably wouldn't stack up

compared to classic Dobro-style fingerpicks because the attack angle is completely different. The latter covers the underside of the fingers, and that's where I could use the leverage.

Kaki King encouraged me to go all in on acrylics a few years back, and it's world of difference.

I think I need them for even for my regular electric playing. I'm still on the fence, but I might jump!

"Key to the Highway" has become one of your signature blues covers. Can you comment on the challenge of creating shimmering harmonic overtones without the aid of an amp, and making those acoustic strings sing rather than plink?

Using a metal bar helps. Sometimes, such as when I'm playing in the lower registers, I'm not hitting the strings as hard as you might think to get those harmonics ringing out on top. Mostly, you have to find the sweet spots, and let it breathe.

Let the open tuning open up the sound of the guitar. When you find the sympathetic tones, the sound becomes more complex—like a layering effect, or a collage. That's how it works, even with an acoustic guitar.

Are you bringing the Pogreba on tour along with your Strat?

Yes, and the audience seems to appreciate the added dynamic range of the acoustic set. Songs with lots of lyrics such as "Bound by the Blues," with its verses paying tribute to various heroes of mine—and even one verse about resonator guitar—come across better when the entire band goes acoustic. Having Brian on cajón rather than a drum kit opens up a lot of space. And Dave's ukulele bass has an upright vibe. You get in a rut doing the same thing all the time no matter how good it is. You need to change it up. The acoustic was such a big part of my life so long ago, and this seemed like a good time to bring it back into the fold. ■

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FRETS

REVIEW



TAYLOR DELUXE 800 SERIES 810e DLX DREADNOUGHT AND 814ce DLX GRAND AUDITORIUM

TESTED BY JIMMY LESLIE

"AT THE VERY UPPER ECHELON OF guitar building, you're pushing the margins of what the materials will allow you to do," says lead Taylor designer Andy Powers. "For a finely tuned-in player that appreciates musical nuances and complexities, the magic lives in the top fraction of a percent, and that's why we started building the 800 Deluxe Series."

Taylor guitars get fancier as the range number advances from 100 to 900, so the Deluxe 800 Series is the second-most fancy (outside the lavish Presentation Series designed in the tradition of royal gift giving). Key upgrades include a rounded armrest, Adirondack spruce

bracing, and ultra-high ratio Gotoh tuners, in addition to some relatively recent 800 Series revamps, which include revoiced shapes, protein glues, thinner finishes, Expression System 2 electronics, and refined aesthetics.

The 810e DLX Dreadnought and 814ce DLX Grand Auditorium shipped to *GP* were gorgeous. The Indian rosewood of their backs and sides radiated a rich brown with figured wood grains glistening through thin glossy finishes. Straight-grained Sitka spruce tops popped brightly through thin finishes too, as did pale maple bindings. Abalone rosettes outlined in rosewood offered a classical

element almost like stained glass windows on an ancient cathedral. The varied tan and brown colors of the ebony fretboards aren't blemishes, but rather natural shadings in the wood that make them look smoky. The most striking design element on each guitar was the armrest—a feature previously found only on 900 Series guitars. According to Powers, the 900's beveled armrests have to be practically handmade on each instrument, so he developed a "semi-mechanized" version for the 800 Deluxe Series, with a sleek, slightly-rounded radius profile, bound beautifully in maple with rosewood inserts.

I found the armrests to be as functional as they were attractive. Without a hard corner digging into my bicep, my right arm felt altogether more agile. My wrist felt flexible to strum, digits free to articulate intricate fingerstyle passages, and, with a plectrum, I was more easily able to crosspick linear runs.

Gotoh 510 tuners with rounded cases are also much more than nice hardware appointments. They're some of the most finely crafted, silky-smooth tuners I've ever come across. The Gotoh's 21:1 ratio means that it takes 21 revolutions to turn the post, or "capstan," a single time. That sounds discouraging for string changes, but it means that you can hone in on a pitch with miraculous accuracy, and experience almost no "backlash" once you're set. The Gotoh 510s made tuning a cinch, and once the guitar was in tune, it stayed there.

The 810e Deluxe Dreadnought and the 814ce Grand Auditorium both felt quite light in hand and nimble to play. By using relatively thin body and top woods, and supporting them with dense-yet-flexible Adirondack spruce bracing custom-designed for each body style, Taylor has created incredibly vivacious, dynamically responsive instruments with lots of headroom. Does that energy efficiency come at a cost of durability? "Heavy doesn't necessarily equal strong," says Powers. "You want a guitar to be strong in the right places, and lightweight at the same time."

The 810e DLX Dreadnought felt and sounded super solid, but with a welcome springiness that made notes pop with plenty of projection and sustain. With no cutaway, I naturally gravitated to the middle and lower positions on the neck, and the 810 sure played well and sounded superb. It's got the bass that a good dread should, but it's not overly boomy. When I plugged the 810e DLX into a variety of acoustic amps (including a Rivera Sedona Lite, a Boss Acoustic Singer Pro, and an AER Compact 60/3 Tommy Emmanuel Signature), there was some low-end feedback that required me to roll off the bass using the onboard electronics, but otherwise the amplified sound was excellent.

The 814ce DLX had an even springier

feel and its sexy Venetian cutaway offered easy access to the high frets. It has a more effervescent, open-sounding tonal center than the 810e, and talk about touch sensitive—this guitar felt practically alive in my hands. High definition sonics revealed a rich spectrum of overtones dancing above notes or chords, and, like a perfect dance partner, it moved right with me wherever I wanted to go, whether it was chord accompaniment, fleet fingerpicking patterns, or melodic forays.

Clearly the 814ce is down for any style you throw at it, and proved an equally good performer through the same amps.

Bottom line: These 800 Deluxe Series Taylors are high fidelity, high-performance instruments made of premium tonewoods and built with the attention to detail that warrants their lofty price. For anyone seeking an heirloom-grade instrument that tracks every turn and delivers immaculate tone, these new Taylors are in a class all their own. **A**

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810e DLX Dreadnought

PRICE	\$3,799 street
NUT WIDTH	1.75", Tusq
NECK	Tropical mahogany, satin finish
FRETBOARD	Ebony, 25.5" scale
FRETS	20
TUNERS	Gotoh 510, 21:1 gear ratio
BODY	Indian rosewood back and sides, Sitka spruce top
BRIDGE	Ebony w/compensated micarta saddle
PICKUPS	Taylor Expression System 2
CONTROLS	Volume, Bass, Treble
FACTORY STRINGS	Elixir Phosphor Bronze Medium
WEIGHT	4.5 lbs
BUILT	USA
KUDOS	Remarkably comfortable and playable. Powerful projection. Balanced, focused tone with resonant lows and articulate highs.
CONCERNS	Bass needed to be rolled off to prevent feedback when amplified.

814ce DLX Grand Auditorium

PRICE	\$3,999 street
NUT WIDTH	1.75", Tusq
NECK	Tropical mahogany, satin finish
FRETBOARD	Ebony, 25.5" scale
FRETS	20
TUNERS	Gotoh 510, 21:1 gear ratio
BODY	Indian rosewood back and sides, Sitka spruce top
BRIDGE	Ebony w/compensated micarta saddle
PICKUPS	Taylor Expression System 2
CONTROLS	Volume, Bass, Treble
FACTORY STRINGS	Elixir Phosphor Bronze Light
WEIGHT	4.5 lbs
BUILT	USA
KUDOS	Lively, open, high-def sound with complex overtones. Impeccable setup. Tunes easily and stays there. Extremely versatile, expressive, and touch-sensitive.
CONCERNS	Bass needed to be rolled off to prevent feedback when amplified.



STEFAN GROSSMAN

ACOUSTIC SET

Alternating Bass Picking The Chet Atkins Way

CHET ATKINS HAS BEEN AN INCREDIBLE influence on many players. Marcel Dadi, John Knowles, and Guy Van Duser are but three of the multitude of young guitarists who both reflect Chet's style and explore its expansive melodic potentials. While I became more involved in black blues and ragtime styles than anything else, Chet Atkins was an important figure in my development, and I constantly seem to go back to his sound and feel when I compose new instrumentals.

The alternating bass approach (often called "Travis picking") that Chet perfected was originally a black guitar style—just listen to Fred Stokes or Mississippi John Hurt to hear it. Country star Merle Travis learned the technique from local black players, and Chet continued Merle's technique into more sophisticated areas, everything from classics and ragtime to film music and Beatles songs. Each note Chet hits has a meaning, and in many of his arrangements there are very subtle movements in the alternating bass that give the tunes a unique feel. [Ed. Note: For more on the subject of Travis picking as applied to other musical styles, see "Travis Picking South American Style" in the Sept. '79 issue of *Guitar Player*, and "Travis Picking Cuban Style" in

the May '81 issue.]

In this month's musical score, "Looper's Corner," I have tried to approximate a Chet Atkins approach. Alternating bass is used throughout, with some rather complicated fingerings added in order to keep the bass flowing. The first measure revolves around a *Bm* chord. The third measure has your middle finger on the 7th fret, sixth string; your index finger on the 6th fret, fourth string; and your ring finger on the 7th fret, third string. This leads into another fretting position where you move your middle and index fingers back one fret while keeping your ring finger stationary (on the 7th fret, third string).

The second section (B) begins with an *A* chord in the fifth position. You could use a barre to accomplish this, but I find it more convenient to place my thumb on the 5th fret, sixth string; my index finger barring across the 5th fret of the first four strings; and my middle finger fretting the 6th fret, third string.

Just remember that in all of the music, the important thing to keep in mind is the alternating bass. It must be accented on the even beats so that the proper movement and feel are created. Good luck. ■

"Looper's Corner"

By Stefan Grossman



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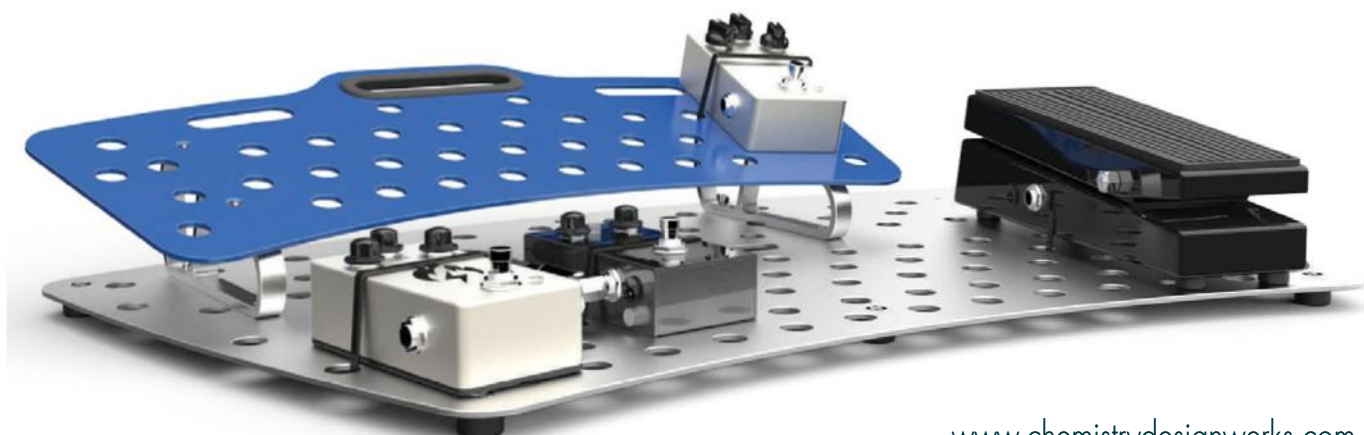


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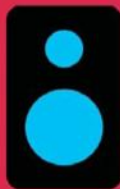
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ON THE SONG "GEE I LIKE Your Pants," there are some unusual tempo changes within certain bars.

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If you were handed a piece of music with such a grouping, how would you react?

I would say, "Hey, great!"

Wouldn't it pose a difficulty for you?

I'm sure it would. It's only a mystery hemiola, but the thing that's fascinating about it is that we end up right back on the beat. One, two, three, four, one—then it comes back on the beat of the second beat of the bar. Anybody can do that if they want to. It's just whether or not you're going to spend the time to learn how to do it. And then after you've done it, who do you impress with it? Do you play it for your girlfriend and say, "Hey, 27 over 3!" She'll say, "Big deal. Why?" When people hear it, they won't say that it sounds like 27 over 3, but they will know that it sounds different.

To what do you attribute most people's lack of understanding of musical complexities such as these?

Most people are only exposed to one spectrum of music. That's all they get to hear; that's all they get to learn. If you learn music in school, most of what they teach you is straight up and down. You know: One, two, three, four; one, two, three. It's all real square; it's all real boring. It's like this: In the realm of mathematics, there is something beyond adding and subtracting—it goes all the way out. And it's the same in music. The type of music that people are taught in schools, especially from the rhythmic standpoint, never gets beyond addition and multiplication. I don't think it ever gets beyond that at all. There's no algebra out there. There's certainly no physics, and there's no calculus or trigonometry. There's nothing interesting in musical rhythm that they teach you in school. Most academic situations tend to ignore this type of rhythmic approach—not just mine, but anybody's that's poly-rhythmic. They ignore that approach because the great bulk of the repertoire that a graduate of a classical institution is going to play doesn't have to have any of that, so they concentrate on stuff that's going to be useful to them when they take jobs in orchestras and have to play Beethoven's Fifth for the rest of their lives. And so, consequently the performance of this type of music is really specialized. There are only a few people that can actually count it and do it.

But don't you think this is a little extreme?

No, it's not extreme at all. I think it's very natural. I think that what's happened is that the musical academic community is so reactionary. This type of music, to me, is natural and up-to-date. It's not advanced; it's just reasonably up-to-date. And I think that most other things are extremely retarded. Let's face it: One of the problems of contemporary music is the dissonance of the harmony. That is the thing that turns off most listeners. Rhythm never really bothered people. You can listen to African drums playing all kinds of poly-rhythms and really enjoy it without understanding the culture or the reason why it's done. You can listen to other types of rhythmic development so long as the harmonic and melodic content is somewhere near where your ear is accustomed to hearing things. You know,

the more dissonant it gets—even quarter notes with dissonant chords on them are not very much fun to listen to, but if you have a diatonic setting or even a bitonal setting with complicated rhythmic stuff on it, there's no reason why that shouldn't be appealing to a wide range of people. People like rhythm. And the thing that makes the rhythm work is whether the people who are playing it are playing it right. There is such a thing as a quintuplet played in a bad way so that you don't really hear five in the space of whatever amount of notes it is taking the place of. And it doesn't impress you when you hear your quintuplets played stupidly. But a real good five over a real good four or a three sounds great. And when it lines up it makes another rhythm—it makes a rhythmic difference tone.

How can you illustrate this?

Well, draw 15 dots on a piece of paper:



Draw stems coming up from every fifth one on the top, and stems coming down from every third one on the bottom, and you'll see the effect of five over three:



Now look at what the combination of those rhythmic spacings are, and it generates another rhythm:



This is a lot like three over two—there's another rhythm that comes out when you play three over five. There's another rhythm that is created when you do anything over anything. If one guy is playing exactly the 4/4 of the bar and another guy is playing nine beats against that, you're going to get another rhythm. If one guy is playing the nine beats and person number two is not playing the four beats of the bar, that other rhythm is still implied. And that's the difference tone, the *mystery note*. You know that it's there: Your foot is tapping, even though the musician isn't playing the four beats; your foot is tapping in the basic time signature of the song. And there is a clock inside your body that's saying, "We're in 4/4." And somebody plays nine across it, and inside your body you hear the difference, and that's part of the excitement of that kind of rhythm. You know, it's the difference between what you hear and what you expect to hear that makes the excitement. Now, to the mundane side: If you're tapping your foot in 4/4, where's the get-off in that? It's a march; it's a polka. Whatever it is, it's not as interesting as hearing those other things against the assumed rhythm.



FRANK ZAPPA'S FRIGHTENINGLY SMART YET PLAYFUL AND AMUSING PERSONA WAS IN FINE FORM throughout his April 1983 column on polyrythms. In just one page of copy, he preaches, regales, informs, shames, and educates—in the process revealing musical concepts that will make you a far better player than you were before the onslaught. —MICHAEL MOLENDRA

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