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THE SOUNDS THAT
TURNED ON THE
GUITAR NATION

BECK

THE FOUR TIMES
HE PUT THE
RAGA INTO
GUITAR ROCK

THE BEATLES

THEIR TRIPPIEST
GUITAR TRACKS

SIX DECADES OF GUITARISTS BEHIND ROCK'S UNSTOPPABLE REVOLUTION THE PSYCHEDELIC ISSUE

MY MORNING JACKET

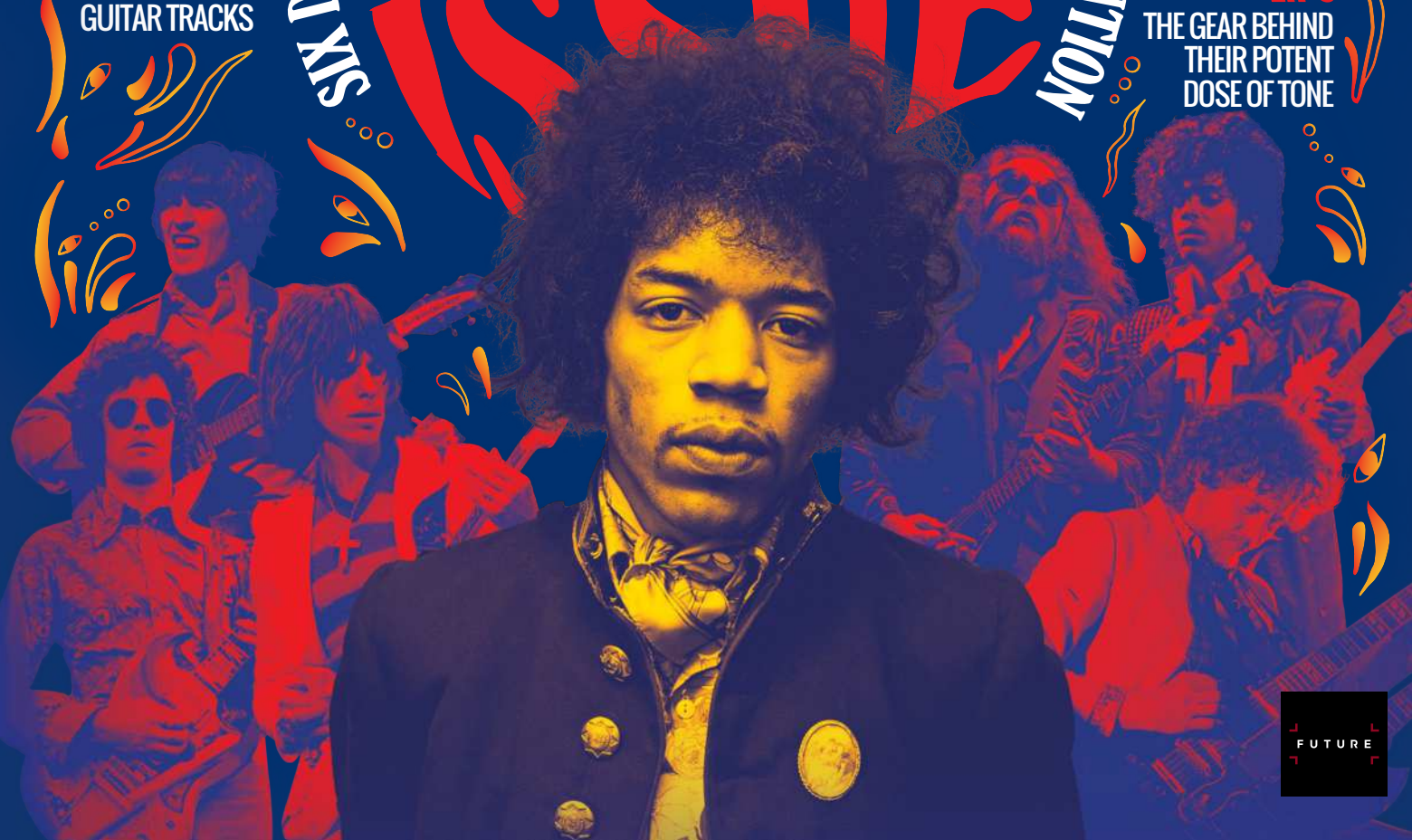
INSIDE THEIR
PSYCHEDELIC
ROADSHOW

PRINCE

HOW PURPLE
RAIN LAUNCHED
A PSYCH-ROCK
REVIVAL

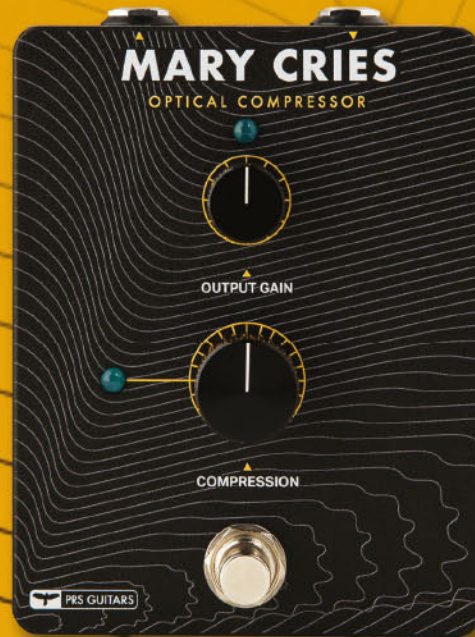
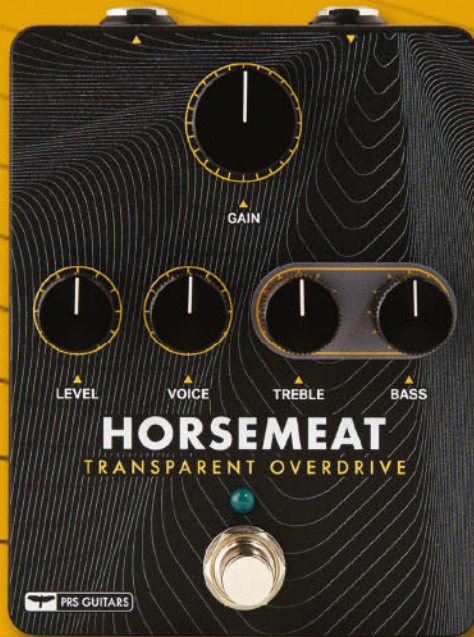
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DOSE OF TONE



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- Paul Reed Smith

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A photograph of three Mesa Boogie California Tweed 6V6 2:20 tube amplifiers. On the left, a compact head and a 1x12 combo are stacked. In the center and right are two 1x10 combos. They are all cream-colored with blue side panels and are sitting on a green pool table. A red and white rectangular light fixture hangs above them. The background is dark with some vintage-style decor.

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LIKE A RAINBOW

THE MID-TO-LATE '60s psychedelic movement was a remarkable time when rock musicians began to see themselves as sonic pioneers, creating new sounds and developing innovative musical approaches. The scene tends to be viewed, retrospectively, as limited to a few years of activity, mostly in London and on the U.S. West Coast. But in fact it was a much larger phenomenon that drove music, gear and production in innovative ways that are still relevant to this day.

But it had another impact, as well, in how it made us hear and think about sound. It's this influence that continually came to my mind as we were making this issue, and not incidentally. I was born in the early 1960s and came of age, musically speaking, during the psych-rock boom. For my seventh birthday, I received a copy of the Doors' *Strange Days*, an ambitious but odd record on which the band and their engineer, Bruce Botnick, experimented with electronics and new recording methods. It joined my small but growing collection of albums, which included the Beatles' *Rubber Soul*, a disc that gave the flowering psychedelic movement such gems as "Norwegian Wood (This Bird Has Flown)" and "In My Life," with its baroque faux-harpsichord solo.

But I was about to go deeper into psychedelia's ether. About a year later, my collection came to include *Their Satanic Majesties Request*, one of the most reviled albums in the Rolling Stones' catalog. Although it's often dismissed as the group's failed attempt to copy *Sgt. Pepper's*, to my young ears it was a remarkable and even magical record. Its wild sounds entranced me: bassist Bill Wyman's heavily filtered vocals on "In Another Land," the synthesizers that rendered wind effects and wild swoops on "2,000 Light Years From Home," and the hammers and saws that popped up for no apparent reason on "She's a Rainbow." But without a doubt, my favorite sound was Keith Richards' distorted tremolo guitar tone on "Citadel," one of the heaviest songs the Stones have ever written or recorded.

I don't doubt for a second that *Their Satanic Majesties Request* molded and even warped my brain. It opened my mind to the magic of sound, which is how I've gravitated toward music, more than through stylistic choices. It also made me question how those sounds were created, which sent me off on discoveries beyond the guitar and helped attune my ears to the intricacies of tone and frequency. More than *Sgt. Pepper's*, *Satanic Majesties* is the album that, for me, defines sonic experimentation and 1960s psychedelic music, with its indulgent and frequently headlong approach to songwriting, arranging and production.

It's in that spirit of curiosity and discovery that we invite you to turn off your mind, relax and float downstream with this issue as we survey the past six decades of guitarists who have shaped psychedelic music. Hopefully we've covered some of your favorite players in these pages, but more importantly, I hope we open your ears to some musicians and albums you didn't know about.

Christopher Scapelliti

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(from left) Eric Clapton 1967 and George Harrison 1966, Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images. Jeff Beck circa 1970s, Chris Walter/WireImage/Getty Images. Jimi Hendrix 1967, Monitor Picture Library/Avalon/Getty Images. Jim Jones 2016, Jeff Kravitz/Filmmagic/Getty Images. Prince 1984, Mirrorpix. Wayne Coyne 2006, Brian Rasic/Getty Images

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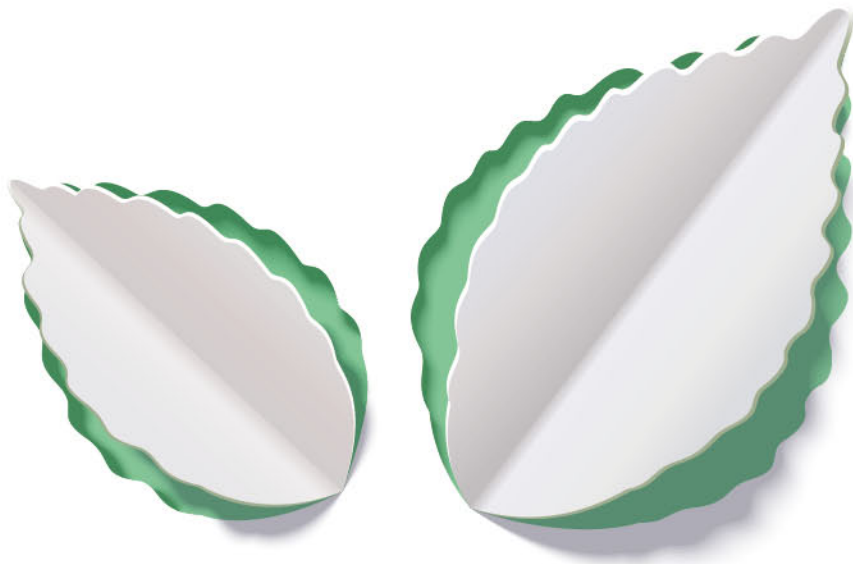
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The Canivell C 20:16 (left) and S 20:20 V are on test this month.

QUICK-CHANGE ARTISTS

Canivell's pickup-swapping C 20:16 and S 20:20 V take versatility to the cutting edge.

TESTED BY DAVE HUNTER

GUITARS WITH QUICK-CHANGE

pickup-swapping capabilities are nothing new. Yet rarely has a lineup hit the scene with a system that works as quickly as Canivell's, while boasting a bundle of cutting-edge design details that sets it apart in many other ways. Will the Canivell S and C Series guitars earn some staying power in a traditionally conservative market? Let's jump in and assess their chances.

The term *Spanish guitar* pops up frequently in the history of the six-string we've all come to know and love. Guitars made in the country so often accredited with the instrument's birth are more famously of the classical variety, however, and few players can cite great examples of Spanish-made electrics. Jordi Canivell clearly hopes to

change all that. A musician and avid guitar collector, Canivell founded Aclam Guitars in his home city of Barcelona, Spain, in 2007, initially to manufacture accessories. Aclam pedals and pedalboards have been featured in *GP* in the past, and the company's Woman Tone overdrive is reviewed this issue [see page 90]. But the brand has expanded over the years to include an audio-visual rental company, a recording studio, a guitar museum and now this range of guitars that carries the founder's surname.

Designed primarily by Canivell, and manufactured in Barcelona, the guitars in no way ape the vintage models that first inspired the entrepreneur's passion. Instead, they marry new looks and features in an effort to be the most versatile electrics on the market,

while making an entirely original statement onstage as well.

"After many years of collecting guitars," Canivell tells us, "I envisioned a series of instruments where innovation and tradition meet and become the perfect tool for the sound builder: the restless musician who is in constant search of his own voice."

Most obvious among Canivell's design goals, perhaps, are the guitars' pickup-swapping capabilities. Achieved via the ingenious Aclam Exchangeable Cartridge Pickup System — AECPU for short — it enables virtually any type of conventional or custom electromagnetic pickup to be swapped out of and into the guitar in a matter of seconds once it's loaded into a bespoke cartridge. After just a try or two,

I found it took me about one second to get the pickup out and two seconds to slip a new one in. The simple process involves twisting the two finger grips that unlatch the cartridge from behind, and lifting it from the back of the guitar; the reverse latches the new pickup cartridge in place, while all necessary electronic contacts are broken or remade simultaneous with the latching mechanism.

Among the pickups included for review are Gretsch Filter'Trons, Kinman HX Strat-style single-coils, DiMarzio Utopia high-output humbuckers, DeArmond Dynasonics and Lace Sensor Alumitone Deathbuckers, as well as Lollar Firebird-style mini-humbuckers, Wide Range Humbuckers,

**"IT'S THE PERFECT
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Staple P-90s, DB Humbuckers and Charlie Christian blades. What's more, several other types are available for purchase from Aclam, pre-mounted in interchangeable cartridges. In all, it's a nifty means of eliminating the perpetual frustration of having to decide on just one type of pickup as the sonic heart and soul of your preferred instrument.

But the Canivell guitars' innovations don't end there. The C 20:16 also boasts interchangeable tops (flat or arched, from a selection of available woods and carbon fiber), convertibility between stop-tail bridge and through-body stringing, a MIDI system with 13-pin output, a GraphTech Resomax bridge with Ghost Piezo saddles, and a neck attachment via the single-bolt Aclam Neck Balancing System. The streamlined S 20:20 V has a more traditional four-screw neck attachment but carries a Fishman VS50P PowerBridge modified with the Aclam Compression Springs System that works behind the inertia block, enabling the pickup-cartridge system to operate in the space that standard trem springs would normally span. Concentric volume and tone



The Strat-like S 20:20 V comes in a range of colorful finishes.

controls govern each pickup on both guitars, each of which also carries switches for pickup selection and magnetic/both/piezo, and a volume control for the piezo output (wired to a stereo jack for splitting, or selectable simultaneously or individually with a mono cable). The C 20:16 also has volume and a program up/down switch for the MIDI output.

Both guitars have chambered bodies of ayous (a.k.a. obeche) wood, with the exception of the changeable tops on the C model. They also boast hard-maple necks unbound ebony fingerboards, 22 EVO gold alloy frets, and staggered three-per-side headstocks cut to an original profile that allows a straight string pull across the slots of their black Tusq nuts. The C is built to a 25-inch scale length, while the S is 25 1/2 inches.

The S 20:20 is the lighter of the two models, and exudes more of an offset-waist vibe (though both are offsets, technically speaking). It's also arguably a bit more palatable visually. Both models are "stuck with" the big black rectangles of the



cartridges in which the pickups sit, but to my eyes the modernistic vents and plethora of switches on the maple-topped C 20:16 are slightly distracting esthetically and lend it a '70s Swiss army knife look, although no doubt plenty of others will feel differently (and it's certainly a nifty piece of design in its own



right, regardless). Construction, fit and finish are first-rate on both guitars, and even before plugging them in, each proved extremely resonant and lively, promising good things when the electronics kicked in.

Both guitars played very well with a little tweaking for setup after their travels. (They came to me from Nels Cline, another resident of the northeast, who received them from their native Spain to use for a promotional video.) I personally got along great with the girthy neck profiles on both — comfortable “C” shapes that are a little different but equally appealing — and each presented smooth and faultless fret work. Marry that to the plethora of pickup options, the piezo systems and the versatile switching, and the sky really is the limit with these things.

I tested them into a tweed Deluxe-style 1x12 combo, a Friedman Dirty Shirley Mini head and 2x12 cab, and a Quad Cortex modeler into studio monitors and enjoyed them immensely throughout my playing. To call them chameleon-like is perhaps too obvious, and yet it's entirely appropriate, and



hard to avoid. Given the variety of pickups available and the ease of swapping, it really is a doddle to dial up a platform that suits virtually any style in the broad rock-pop-blues camp. And if, for example, the C doesn't sound exactly like a Les Paul or the S exactly like a Stratocaster, they certainly get close enough to do almost anything you might use those classic templates to achieve.

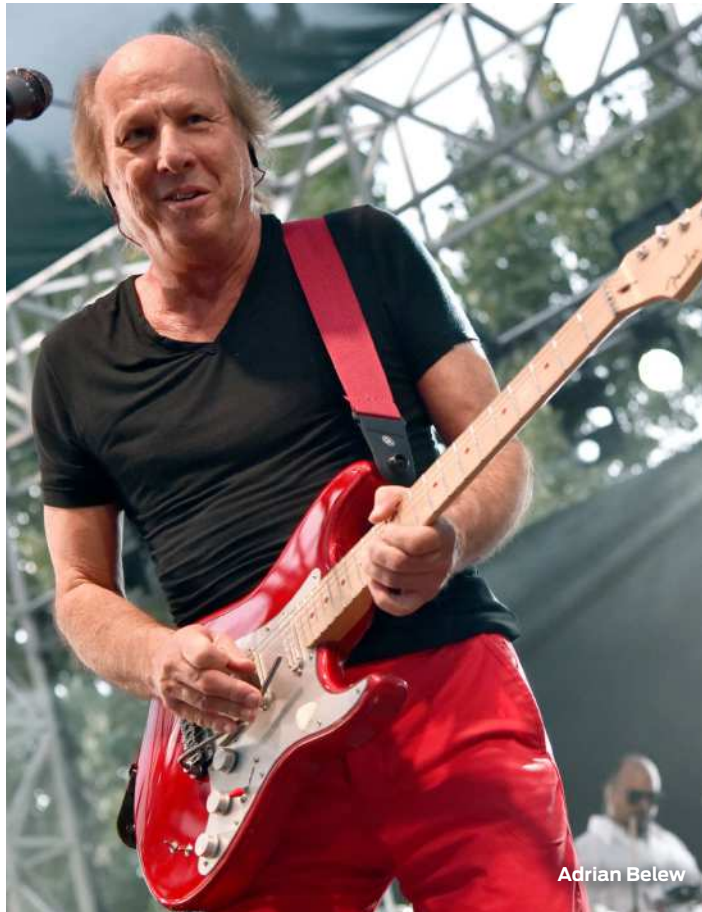
My favorite pickups? I really enjoyed the combination of thickness, clarity and compression the Lollar Charlie Christians brought to the S 20:20 V (which also sounded mammoth through overdrive), while the Lace Sensor Alumitone Deathbuckers converted the C 20:16 into a monster of

a modern rocker. There was no facility available to easily test that guitar's MIDI function, but that's a standard protocol and there's no reason to expect it not to do the job. The piezo outputs on both guitars worked great, though, and added exponentially to the sonic versatility.

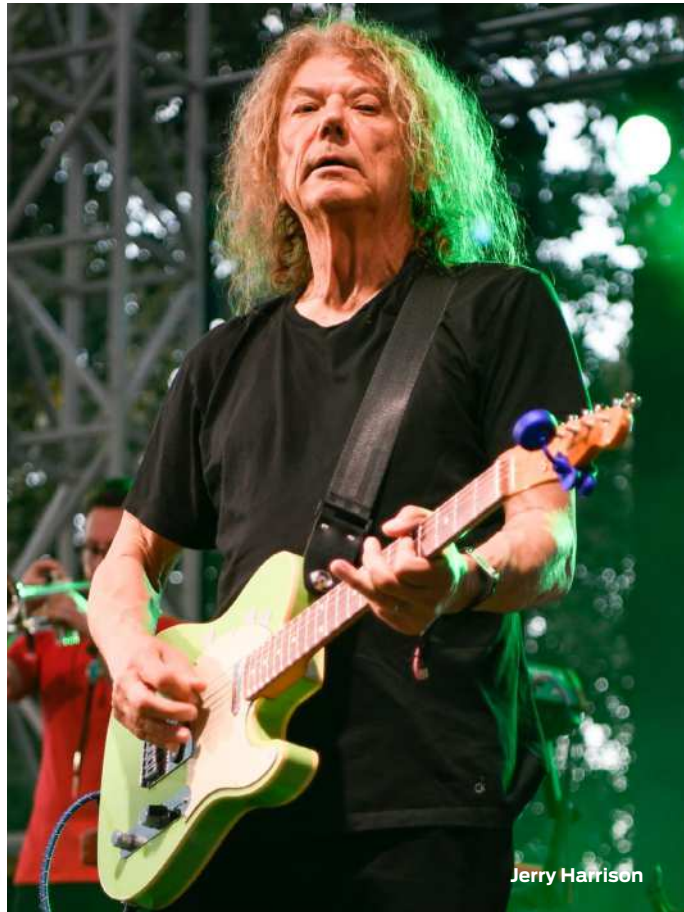
All in all, the Canivell C 20:16 and S 20:20 V showed themselves to be powerful tone-crafting instruments, while asserting their creator's innovativeness... even if you've never heard of him before now. ▶

CONTACT canivell.com

PRICE Canivell C 20:16, \$7,410 direct. Canivell S 20:20 V, \$4,449 direct (includes pickups)



Adrian Belew



Jerry Harrison

LIGHT DUTY

Jerry Harrison and Adrian Belew reunite for a live performance of the Talking Heads' 1980 milestone, *Remain in Light*.

BY JOE BOSSO

THE RECORDING OF the Talking Heads' epochal 1980 album *Remain in Light* marked a dramatic difference from how the band had previously operated. On prior long-players, singer-guitarist David Byrne, guitarist-keyboardist Jerry Harrison, bassist Tina Weymouth and drummer Chris Franz began album sessions with fully or mostly finished songs. This time, the quartet, with producer Brian Eno, spent weeks in Compass Point in the Bahamas creating loops out of improvisations without knowing what the arrangements would ultimately become.

"It presented challenges for David when he wrote melodies and lyrics," Harrison says, "because there weren't many chord changes to help him go somewhere. It really was a new way for us to record. And for any band, I think."

When the Heads returned to New York City to finish the album, they reached out to a

new friend, guitarist Adrian Belew, and asked him to play on the tracks. "All of my parts were done in one day," Belew recalls. "They basically said, 'Go into the studio and wait around till you think there should be a guitar solo.' I played and I could see everybody all excited in the control room. So I thought, What the heck? I'll play a second one. All in all, it turned out quite well."

Over the past four decades, *Remain in Light* has been hailed as not only the Talking Heads' definitive musical statement but also a groundbreaker in terms of its fusion of African polyrhythms, funk, art rock and new wave. It's been nearly 25 years since Harrison played live on stage with Belew, when the guitarist was part of the Talking Heads' expanded 1980-'81 *Remain in Light* live lineup. But on September 29, the two musicians reunited for the *Remain in*

Light celebration concert at the Wilmette in Los Angeles, where they performed music from the album and discussed the Talking Heads' legacy. Joining Harrison and Belew were members of the Brooklyn-based funk band Turkuaz, along with Julie Slick on bass and Yahuba Garcia-Torres on percussion.

"Jerry and I would run into each other over the years, and we would talk about how great the *Remain in Light* tour was," says Belew, who, incidentally, is preparing for the Celebrating David Bowie tribute tour [see story, page 38]. "Finally, we talked about it enough 'til we said, 'That's it, we've got to do this.' Jerry was producing Turkuaz and found them to be the perfect band for this. Otherwise, it might not have happened."

When you hatched the idea for this show, did you consider Chris and Tina?

TIM MOSENFELDER/WIREIMAGE (BELEW); STEVE JENNINGS/GETTY IMAGES (HARRISON)

JERRY HARRISON I talked to them about it, but they just couldn't do it. They get offers to do Tom Tom Club shows, and there were some other conflicts. Besides, once we had started going with Turkuaz, we realized half of that band wouldn't work. And the great thing about Turkuaz is that they already did a number of Talking Heads songs in their set. We were one of their big inspirations.

Let's talk about the recording of *Remain in Light*. Jerry, you play both guitar and keyboards. What specifically did you play on those original tracks?

HARRISON Because these weren't initially songs in the traditional sense, I would play a part for four or five minutes, and then the next person would go out and do something. The record was basically composed by using mute buttons on the console.

At what point was the decision made to bring Adrian in?

ADRIAN BELEW I'd met Talking Heads on the *Fear of Music* tour. You guys played three shows in Illinois. I went to all of them. I was just jumping around backstage when you were about to do your encore, and you guys said, "Come on out with us and play 'Psycho Killer.'" I said I didn't know the chords, and you guys said, "That's okay. Just come out at the end and freak out like you do."

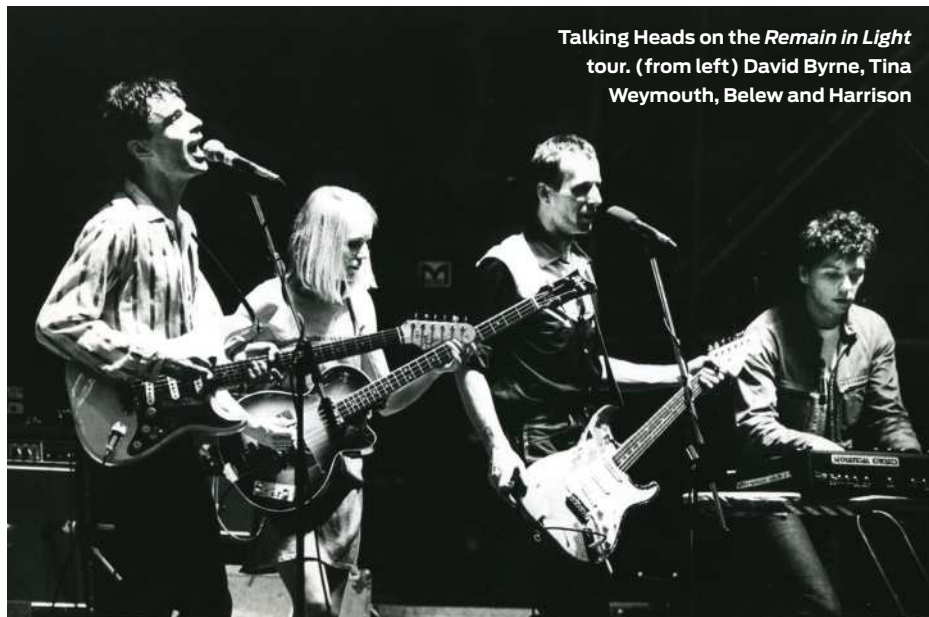
HARRISON Which you did. And then, when we got back from recording at Compass Point, I remember going to a club in New York, and I saw you there.

BELEW Yes. I remember we were in a stairwell, and you were with David, and you both asked me to come play on the record. I had to tell my band they would be hanging out in New York an extra day. But yeah, I went to Sigma Sound and jumped right in. I was super excited by the music. I was like, Wow, this is great. I can't wait to play on this!

Let's talk about some songs. "Born Under Punches" has a bonkers solo.

HARRISON That's David. He's using a Lexicon Prime Time delay and working the hold button. You could record little bits and mess with how fast it played back. It was done piece by piece. But Adrian could pull it off live.

BELEW Well, I didn't do it exactly like the record, but I did similar things while playing it live. I used a similar effect on one of my



Talking Heads on the *Remain in Light* tour. (from left) David Byrne, Tina Weymouth, Belew and Harrison

songs, "Three of a Perfect Pair," with a synthesizer guitar. You push this button and trap a tiny portion of the sound, and then you manipulate it.

You do play the solo on "The Great Curve" though.

BELEW Oh, yeah. That's me.

HARRISON I consider that to be one of Adrian's finest solos on any record.

Were you using a Roland guitar synth?

BELEW Oh, no. I didn't have one yet. I got one soon after, when the Talking Heads toured Japan. I came back from that tour with a GR300. I think I was the first person in America who owned one. Then we formed the new King Crimson, and Robert [Fripp] got his own guitar synth, and away we went.

But on "The Great Curve," I'm using my battered old Strat through a Roland Jazz Chorus 120. I had three or four pedals. I think it was a Big Muff and an equalizer that I used to boost the midrange. Also, my Stratocaster had a Strat-o-Blaster that really upped the output. I had an Electric Mistress, too, so when it starts doing all the crazy, weird sounds, that's just me stepping on that and introducing it into the chain.

What's going on in "The Overload"? The whole song is a sustained series of growling guitar atmospherics.

BELEW That sounds like something I would do. It was so improvised. I remember when we were putting the live set together, we said, "This one won't work so well because we're trying to keep everything so upbeat."

Adrian, beyond your solos, did you play any rhythm parts on the record?

BELEW I don't think so. I didn't do anything on "Once in a Lifetime." I think I played on "Crosseyed and Painless," and I did some solo stuff on "Listening Wind." I used the Electric Mistress and bent the sound up and down while working a delay and the volume control on my guitar to make certain notes drift up and down. It's a very interesting sound.

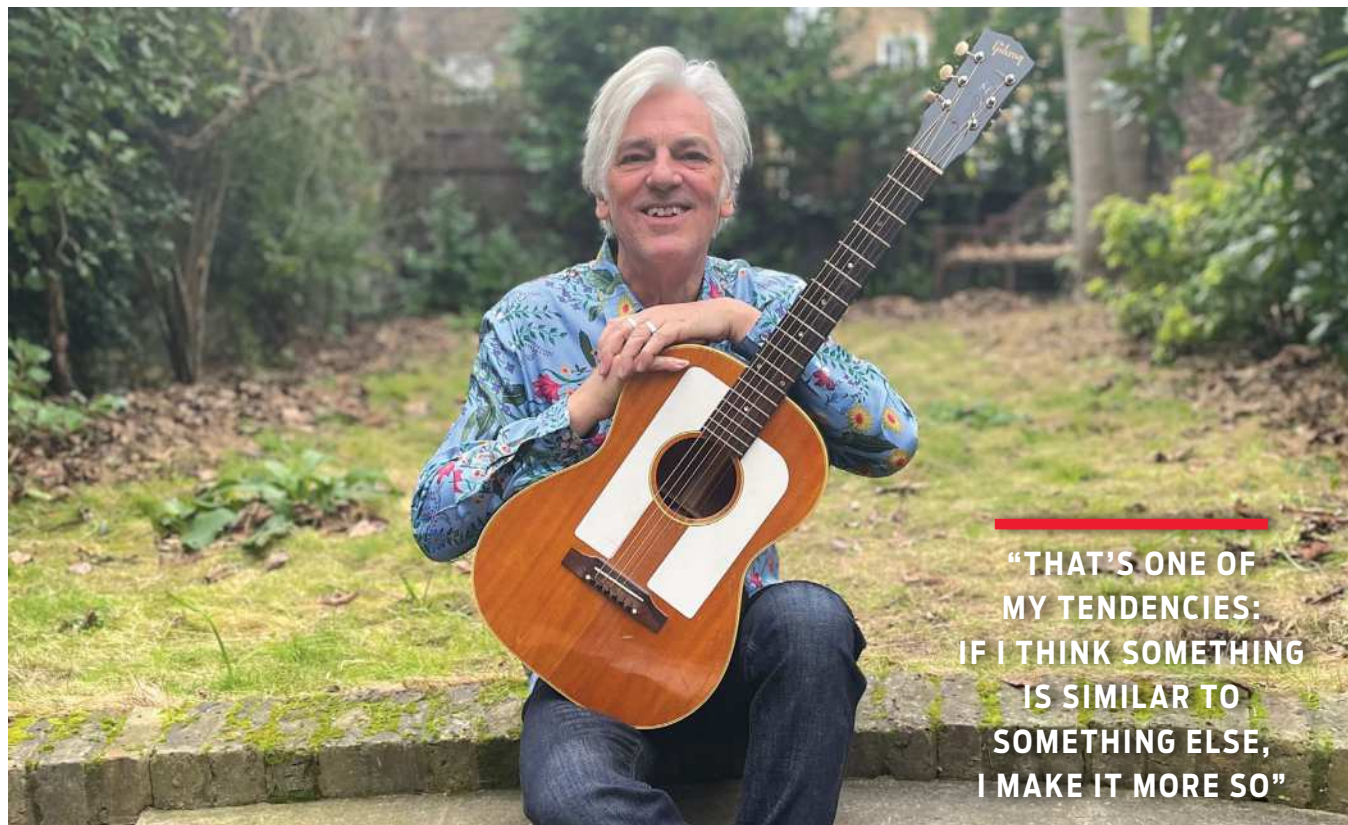
Adrian, seeing as your parts took one day to record, were you surprised when you listened to the final album?

BELEW Oh, of course! You know, I considered myself a sideman at the time, so I had no idea how the record would turn out. Same thing with *Lodger* by David Bowie — I was very surprised at how he used my guitar. Both of those things, of course, are connected to Brian Eno. He had his own taste and liked to use what I did. He was a big supporter.

The album was seen as being revolutionary. How do you two rate it within the band's body of work?

HARRISON Of course, I love them all, but I would say I take *Fear of Music* and *Remain in Light*, if I had to pick two. *Fear of Music* is the culmination of the four-piece, and *Remain in Light* is the switch to when we thought about having an expanded format, and all of the influences that had begun with "I Zimbra" on *Fear of Music* came in. So I don't quite go to one album; I go to those two.

BELEW I agree with Jerry about those two. I've been fortunate to do a few albums in my career that have been called groundbreaking — *Discipline*, *Graceland*, *The Downwards Spiral* — and I put *Remain in Light* high up in there. I loved making it. I loved playing it live, and it's still a record that stands up today, very, very well. ■



“THAT’S ONE OF MY TENDENCIES: IF I THINK SOMETHING IS SIMILAR TO SOMETHING ELSE, I MAKE IT MORE SO”

KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON

Robyn Hitchcock emerges from lockdown with *Shufflemania!* an album that offers “if not hope, then at least something to believe in.”

BY TOM BEAUJOUR

PHOTOGRAPHY BY EMMA SWIFT

ALTHOUGH HIS CAREER now spans six decades, and luminaries from former R.E.M. guitarist Peter Dinklage to *Silence of the Lambs* director Jonathan Demme count among his admirers and collaborators, 69-year-old singer-songwriter Robyn Hitchcock has never had the sort of mainstream success that would allow him to stop being a very much working musician. Before the COVID lockdown, the London-born Hitchcock, who now splits his time between the British capital and Nashville, was still averaging almost 100 solo acoustic shows a year, crisscrossing the globe — often with his wife, the singer Emma Swift — to perform for the devoted fans of his often surreal and spidery brand of pop.

“When lockdown came, all the income dried up, so we had to make money somehow,” Hitchcock says. “So we started Patreons and doing our bi-weekly *Live*

From Sweet Home Quarantine internet broadcasts, which was great when there was nowhere else to go and nothing to do.” The performances — which often featured Swift on backing vocals, as well as appearances by the couple’s two Scottish Fold cats, Tubby and Ringo, a plush Gorilla named the Edge, and Perry the stuffed lobster — kept the couple solvent. And when he wasn’t preparing for the show, Hitchcock found his isolation to be uniquely productive. “Artistically, it was wonderful,” he says. “It gave me time to do some painting that I never would have gotten to otherwise,” he says. “And of course, it gave me time to start recording *Shufflemania!*”

Using a Zoom H6 recorder to capture most of his guitars and vocals, Hitchcock then enlisted an impressive group of friends to flesh out the album’s tracks. Former Smiths guitarist Johnny Marr contributes guitars, bass and drums to the ethereal “The Inner Life of

Scorpio,” Sean Ono Lennon adds Mellotron, celeste, Hohner Clavinet and more to the cautiously optimistic “One Day (It’s Being Scheduled),” and the Raconteurs’ Brendan Benson and Wilco’s Patrick Sansone also provide valuable assists. Two members of Hitchcock’s legendary late-’70s group, the Soft Boys, are also on hand: Drummer Morris Windsor flies in vocal harmonies on the aforementioned “One Day...” and guitarist Kimberley Rew (guitarist for Katrina & the Waves and the composer of their hit “Walking on Sunshine”) performs on the darkly humorous “Socrates in Thin Air” and the driving “The Sir Tommy Shovel.”

It’s a typically Hitchcockian combination of tuneful absurdism, existential dread and pure power-pop bliss, one that the singer hopes will bring his fans some measure of solace at a time where the world seems to be perpetually teetering on the brink. “I’m an

anxious person, and maybe my view is skewed 13 percent to the dark side,” Hitchcock states. “But we have pestilence and famine, and you could have nuclear war by Christmas, right?” He laughs. “And one of the functions of music is to keep people company, to let you know that someone else is there. The records that I listened to as a teenager and could still go back to, like Love’s *Forever Changes*, or *Revolver*, or *Blonde on Blonde*, their main function has always been to be like a voice in my ear going, ‘You are not alone. Whatever you feel about life or how sad it is is reflected here.’ And I suppose that’s the job that I have now, to give people, if not hope, then at least something to believe in.”

Watching your *Live from Sweet Home Quarantine* broadcasts, it seems like you relied primarily on three acoustic guitars: a British-made Fylde, a Larivière and a ’60s Gibson Folsinger. Which guitar does what for you?

My first Fylde Olivia, Olivia I, is my absolute go-to guitar. I’ve had it for about 40 years, and I started playing it on the album *I Often Dream of Trains*. It’s also on the songs “Balloon Man” and “Queen of Eyes.” It’s got a rather wide neck, which I prefer. The other guitars you mentioned I generally use for different tunings.

What are some of your favorite tunings? Did you use any in particular on *Shufflemania!*?

There are three or four that I use pretty frequently. I’ll often just drop the low E to D, but I also like open G, which is D G D G B D, and DADGAD. On the new record I actually used a variant of DADGAD, D A D G A E, on several songs like “The Man Who Loves the Rain.” Another one that I made up and like is F G C G C E. You can hear that on the song “Heliotrope” from my album *Moss Elixir*. I never play it live, because I can’t put my guitar in that tuning and then go back, and I can’t afford a guitar tech to travel around and do that stuff for me. And then there’s a lost tuning: I used it on the song “The Green Boy,”

from *A Star for Bram*, and I can’t remember what it was. People have written in suggesting what it might be, but that one’s gone.

Did you use any of those when you were in the Soft Boys?

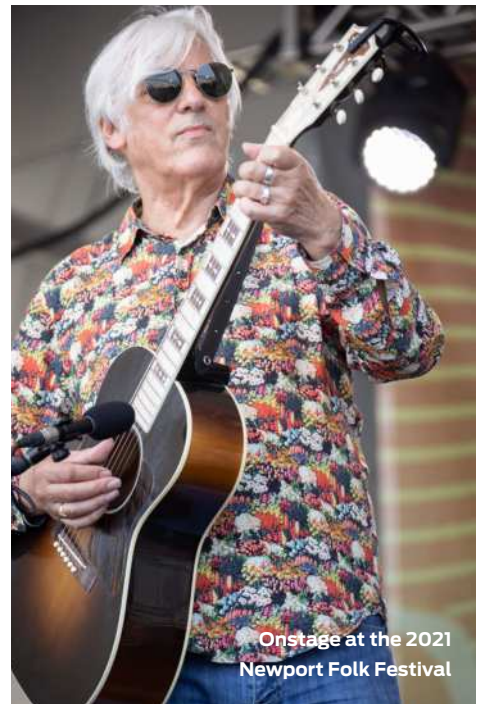
You know, if I started playing the guitar in 1967, I think I learned to tune it in 1968. Then I got a guitar that was actually in tune in 1969, and I started playing electric seriously with the Soft Boys in 1977. So I don’t think I put the guitar into open tuning on electric at all. I kept it really straight.

The sinewy interplay that you had in the Soft Boys with the other guitarist, Kimberley Rew, is in full evidence on “Socrates in Thin Air” and “The Sir Tommy Shovel,” the two tracks where he appears on *Shufflemania!* Did the two of you have to work at developing that kind of musical dialogue?

I think we immediately had a guitar battle, actually! I mean, he was three times better than me, and twice as loud. As I say, Kimberley could drown you out on a tennis racket. [laughs] Kim was the prodigy genius guitar player in Cambridge in the mid ’70s. When I got to town, everybody said, “Oh, Rew, he’s the best guitar player in Cambridge.” And it took us about two years to get him into the Soft Boys. Once he was in the band, I just kind of defiantly played in my channel and he played in his. It’s probably a much happier process now.

You once referred to the years 1969 and 1970 as being “the great bullshit years of the guitar,” because players of that era developed an over-reliance on blues tropes. Was that something you were very conscious of avoiding as a young guitar player?

Even by the end of 1967, you had Jimi Hendrix and Eric Clapton and a few others who were obviously brilliant. And then you had another 200 people who played like that. And people also realized that they could get a record deal without really having songs. All



Onstage at the 2021 Newport Folk Festival

they had to have was long hair, long jams and, you know, the attitude. So my instinct was just not to bother to try to learn to play like Eric Clapton. Also, none of the groups I liked best had conventional guitar heroes, but they all had that very incisive playing. People like Barry Melton from Country Joe and the Fish. That band had a rhythm section that weren’t seasoned rock players. It was sort of quite tentative, but they made nice landscapes, and Barry Melton could play some really exciting lead guitar that was a little bit raga-ish. I also particularly like Captain Beefheart and His Magic Band. I got *Trout Mask Replica* as an import when I was 15, and it was so expensive that I had to learn to love it. [laughs] And then there was the Velvet Underground. Lou Reed, when he played lead, would play what we called “torture guitar.”

Davey Lane, who formed the Australian band You Am I, plays on “The Raging Muse.” Those lead parts are very incisive and aggressive, almost reminiscent of the guitars on the Bowie “Berlin Trilogy” albums of the late ’70s.

Oh yeah, yeah. I know what you mean. You mean something off *Low*. I think the keyboard that my mixer, Charlie Francis, put on it also adds to that. That’s one of my tendencies: If I think something is similar to something else, I make it more so. I would probably be more of an innovator if I did the opposite. Like, “This song sounds like John Lennon so, let’s put banjo on it!” But I try to do the music I like. And I suppose that some of what I like is so old [laughs] that that’s why you get echoes of the past like that. ■



RECOMMENDED LISTENING

Shufflemania!
 “The Shuffle Man,”
 “The Sir Tommy Shovel,”
 “Socrates in Thin Air,”
 “One Day (It’s Being Scheduled),” “The Inner Life of Scorpio”

TIP SHEET

Gretchen Menn offers 10 guiding principles to help you grow as a guitarist.

BY JOE BOSSO

PHOTOGRAPHY

BY RENEE JAHNKE

ZEPPARELLA GUITARIST AND solo star Gretchen Menn is happy to offer her tips to fellow guitar players. But she's quick to add that she doesn't consider herself any kind of six-string authority. "I'm in the same boat as everybody else who plays guitar," she says. "I'm still learning something new about the instrument every day." She pauses, then adds, "That's the point, really — I'm trying to learn something new. I never want to assume that I've got it all down."

For Menn, the art of playing and studying guitar is a journey fraught with conflicting emotions. "It's thrilling, fun, aggravating and humbling — everything rolled into one," she says. "But I keep at it. Some days the progress is fast; other days it feels like a grind. That's when I have to tell myself, Hey, at least I'm learning! I would rather spend time trying to uncover areas of weakness than simply bask in what I already know."

Menn certainly knows a thing or two about a thing or two when it comes to the guitar, and she offers the following sage advice.

1. PROTECT YOUR LOVE OF MUSIC

"Even if your goal is to make money as a musician, it's important that playing music shouldn't feel like a job. I tried not to put the pressure of finances on my love of music. I remember when I had student debts to pay off; I didn't want to take on a musical gig I didn't like just to relieve myself of that burden, because I would feel a kind of resentment. Music should be a passion,



always. You never want to get into a mindset where you don't want to pick up the guitar. Playing the guitar should always be that thing you look forward to. It's your refuge from everything else."

2. ALWAYS BE A STUDENT

"It's easy to get in a rut and think that you're going nowhere. The way out of that is to constantly challenge yourself. One way you

can do that is by listening to music that's different from what you already know and like. For instance, a lot of rock musicians know that they're 'supposed' to like jazz, but for whatever reason they just can't get into it. But if you keep exposing yourself to it, you're going to find something about it that you do like. It'll be a song or an artist, and you'll go, 'Okay, now I get it!' For me, Django Reinhardt was my entry point, and he led me to Charlie

Parker. That's how it works. So stay curious. Don't shut yourself off."

3. DON'T BE AFRAID OF BASIC TERMINOLOGY AND THEORY

"You're going to conceptualize what you're doing in some way, so why not have it be in a way that allows you to communicate it most efficiently to other musicians? I'm not saying you have to read Arnold Schoenberg's *Theory of Harmony*, but simply knowing the notes on your guitar is important. What are the sharps and flats? What's a major scale and what's a minor? These are things you can learn very quickly, and I don't know a single literate musician who thinks it's a waste of time."

4. DEVELOP YOUR EAR

"This means understanding what you hear and applying it to your instrument. These days it's so easy to see videos online and learn how to play something. But do you really understand it? Are your ears trained to pick up on all the different aspects of playing? I'm talking about groove, articulation, tone, bends, vibrato. And feel. Even with some of the most accurate visual transcriptions, a player's feel isn't always conveyed fully. You can't write feel. But if you train your ear to pick up on what a player is doing, you'll be able to play it yourself — and feel it."

5. ENLIST TEACHERS AND MENTORS WHO CAN IDENTIFY YOUR WEAKNESSES

"I listen to things I recorded five years ago that sounded great to me at the time. Now I hear them and I go, 'Oh god, I'm rushing. I sound really off.' If only I had somebody who could have helped me fix those problems then. What you can do is work with teachers and mentors who can identify what you're doing wrong. It's like you're getting a second opinion from somebody, and you can fix the problem right away. Otherwise, it might take you years to detect your weaknesses on your own."

6. ALIGN YOUR PRACTICE WITH YOUR GOALS

"Years ago, I practiced sight reading for an hour a day, and a very wise person asked me, 'Are you planning on becoming a studio



guitarist?' I said, 'No, actually, I'm not.' It was a revelation — why was I working on something that didn't really apply to what I wanted? I think people have a checklist of things they want to master, but they haven't figured out what they actually need. The list of things we could work on is massive, and the reality is that you're only going to be able to focus on a small part of it. Focus on what you really want to accomplish and leave the rest behind."

7. LEARN FROM YOUR HEROES

"Of course you want to learn all the riffs and solos of people you admire, but there are also nonmusical things you should pay attention to. Some of your favorite players might be cautionary tales. Maybe they burned out from drugs and alcohol, or maybe they don't conduct themselves well onstage. I saw one of my heroes have a hissy fit onstage because he didn't like something. I thought that was pretty uncool, and I said to myself, No matter what, I'm going to conduct myself professionally onstage."

8. WRITE MUSIC

"Even if you don't want to be a songwriter, writing music is one of the best ways to learn how to internalize musical concepts. Instead of just trying to tap like Eddie Van Halen, go write your own song that incorporates the

tapping. It'll help you grow in so many ways. Things will come out of that endeavor that you won't believe. And you might even have a great song."

9. LEARN HOW TO IMPROVISE

"It's a lifelong process, and I'm still learning. To me, it's like speaking. I might not say everything perfectly, but I don't need to plan every sentence to make my point. Improvising is the same way in that I don't try to think note per note, but the more I play spontaneously, the better I am at letting the music flow. Yeah, there will be some bad notes and trains of thought, but there will be a lot of good stuff. Also, different genres of music are like different dialects, so you'll uncover new ways of speaking musically if you dive into improvisation."

"FOCUS ON WHAT YOU REALLY WANT TO ACCOMPLISH AND LEAVE THE REST BEHIND"

10. KEEP YOUR EGO IN CHECK

"To me, insecurity is the other side of the coin of an inflated ego. It's a preoccupation with yourself. I'm more inclined to walk off a stage and feel like a total imposter than I am to think I'm awesome. A healthy ego means you can say, 'Okay, I've made mistakes. I'm a work in progress.' Make it a point to always remember what you can't do, but also feel good about what you're doing right. It'll all balance out." ■

ORIGINAL RECIPES

Fender's American Vintage II line aims for period-correct specs. We explored a pair of Telecasters to see how they did.

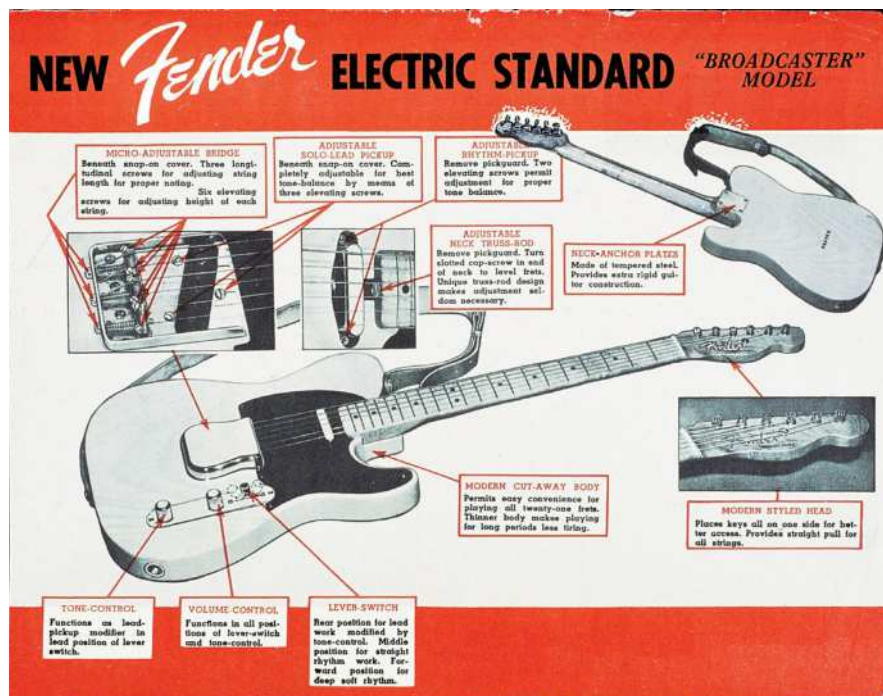
BY ART THOMPSON

SEEKING TO REFINES its vintage roster by offering models that embody the coolest and most interesting aspects of various production years, Fender recently launched a new line of guitars called American Vintage II, which comprises five Telecasters, three Stratocasters, a Jazzmaster, and a Jazz Bass and two Precision Basses. They were chosen from years spanning 1951 to 1977, with a primary focus on getting the details correct for any given year that Fender produced these instruments.

"The idea was to go back to the original recipes and make sure we're adhering to them," says Justin Norvell, executive vice president of Fender products. "Because even if we're doing guitars with stainless frets and compound-radius necks, there's always that baseline of the vintage stuff. Over the many iterations of vintage reissues we've done, even our most recent American Original series was more of a 'greatest-hits' type of package. People look at a vintage Strat or Tele or P-Bass or J-Bass and think they're all very similar, but they were changing constantly — like every six months for the first 15 or 20 years. So, just like in 1954 a Strat was ash, had a U neck and beveled pole pieces, by 1957 it had a V neck and an alder body, and by '59 it had a rosewood board. We had a lot of people clamoring for a return to year-specific reissues. What they really like is vintage correctness, and a greatest-hits package isn't accomplishing that."

To give *GP* a taste of how the new line manifests on the Tele side, Fender sent an American Vintage II Telecaster and a '75 Telecaster Deluxe, which present the opposite extremes of a group that also includes the American Vintage II '63 Tele, '77 Tele Custom and '72 Tele Thinline.

"These guitars show such a wide range of what the Telecaster is and can be," Norvell explains. "With the '51 and '63, you have brass saddles versus steel saddles, Alnico III versus Alnico V for the pickups, and a round lam



The first ad for the Broadcaster, the model that started it all

fingerboard with a rosewood option in '63. They even used mahogany on the Trans-Red model that was only offered in '63 and '64, and it was the last year of clay dots in '63. So they're very different instruments. And then you get into the '70s models, when Roger Rosmeisl [*designer of the Coronado, Tele Thinline and Wildwood models, among others*] was in the picture, and Seth Lover did these pickups with CuNiFe magnets [*an alloy of copper, nickel, iron and copper*]. So for the '75 Tele Deluxe, we got people to make CuNiFe again, and Tim Shaw [*Fender's chief*

engineer] worked to recreate the Seth Lover Wide-Range humbucker pickups."

The American Vintage II '51 Tele is a beautifully rendered version of the first model to wear the Telecaster name. It's finished in sweet-looking Butterscotch Blonde nitrocellulose lacquer that shows off the grain

of the woods, especially the wavy figuring in the solid ash body. Its one-piece maple neck has a Thick U shape, a 25 1/2-inch scale and 7 1/4-inch radius, black dots and 21 well-finished Vintage Tall frets. The bridge has three brass saddles, and the

"PEOPLE LOOK AT A VINTAGE STRAT OR TELE AND THINK THEY'RE ALL VERY SIMILAR. BUT THEY WERE CHANGING CONSTANTLY FOR THE FIRST 15 OR 20 YEARS"



The Vintage II '51 Tele (left) and '75 Tele Deluxe are as true as possible to the specs of models from their respective years.

pickups are a Pure Vintage '51 Tele set with non-staggered poles on the bridge unit. There's a three-way blade switch and the controls are volume and tone. Cloth covered wire in black, yellow and white is used for the internal connections and slot-head screws secure all of the components, including the black phenolic pickguard, vintage-style tuners and four-bolt neck, which has a plain chromed plate.

The guitar arrived in a tweed hardshell case and was well set up, with easy action and excellent intonation. I took it on a three-set gig that evening and didn't change it the entire time. This one is on the light side at 6.9 pounds, and the beefy U-shaped neck is very comfortable. The fret ends are smooth and the bone nut is rounded on the ends, making for a fine playing axe that sounded terrific though a Fender Deluxe Reverb, with drive pedals from Fulltone and MXR to provide different levels of grind. The clean tones are richly detailed, and both the neck pickup and the neck/bridge combo delivered excellent dirty rhythm tones when gained up. For lead, the bridge pickup sounded great with the tone knob rolled down a little to tame the bite, and even at loud stage volume, pickup squeal wasn't an issue, although it was easy to get controllable feedback by moving closer to the amp. The Vintage II '51 Tele makes you appreciate how right Leo Fender got it, and this guitar is as versatile today for just about anything you throw at it.

The Vintage II '75 Tele Deluxe is an entirely different animal that reveals its CBS-era origins with an alder body with a belly cut and a gloss polyurethane finish that's available in Black, Mocha and 3-Color Sunburst. The one-piece maple neck (also finished in gloss urethane) has a Medium C shape and is topped with a maple fingerboard carrying 21 jumbo frets and black dots. As per vintage spec, it has a three-bolt neck plate and a Micro-Tilt mechanism for adjusting the neck angle. The Strat-style headstock features 2-Pin Modern tuners, a bullet-style truss-rod adjuster and "suntan" coloration on the facing. At the opposite end, strings load through the back and run across a hardtail bridge with stainless-steel block saddles.

The big thing here is the pickups: two Pure Vintage CuNiFe Wide-Range humbuckers, which are, by design, the thing that takes this guitar far afield from standard Tele realm. As



The Vintage II '51 Tele has a four-bolt neck with a plain chromed plate, while the Vintage II '75 Tele Deluxe has an F-stamped three-bolt neck plate and a Micro-Tilt mechanism for adjusting the neck angle.

to the properties of CuNiFe, Norvell says "It's weak and soft and it's not optimal to work with. These pickups aren't high-powered, but they're super musical and very clean. They have a voice that's somewhere in between a Gretsch pickup and a P-90. It's not a typical humbucker, because the weaker magnets kind of round off and glass up the tone in a unique way. Twenty years ago, CuNiFe was thought of as a CBS-era thing that was not of the 'golden age,' but there are a lot of people that really love the sound of them. It's become something that's been reappraised in the guitar community."

The Vintage II '75 Tele Deluxe is a great player thanks to its slender neck and a sweet factory setup that provides low, buzz-free action and musical-sounding intonation. Sonic girth is the name of the game here, and this guitar delivered a warm, sweetly crisp sound on the neck position. It's clear and prismatic in the middle setting, where you can easily shape the response with the dual volume and tone controls that are slung on the elongated three-ply pickguard. The bridge pickup is bright and smooth, and it sounded great played cleanly though a low-gain amp like the Deluxe Reverb, or with drive added via

pedals or a high-gain channel such as on a Blackstar St. James 6L6 combo.

The Wide-Range pickups were originally voiced to be a little brighter than Gibson humbuckers, but they still retain plenty of meatiness and give the Tele Deluxe its own sound. Players like Chris Shiflett, John 5 and James Iha are Tele Deluxe users, and it's easy to see why they choose this model from Fender's CBS era, where the Tele was pushed in new directions partly because people weren't so vintage focused at the time.

"I think stuff that's cool on the '70s guitars is like Wine as color option, which was big in the '70s," Norvell says. "The reason we picked a '77 Tele Custom instead of a '72 is because we liked the vintage-accurate colors of '77 better. You'll also see on the '70s guitars where the headstock has the suntan color because it's a lacquer finish that darkens, and the neck is urethane and doesn't discolor. Whatever people think of it, that's how they age, so we build them just as they were." 🍷

CONTACT [fender.com](https://www.fender.com)

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Steve Vai performs at the Columbia Theater in Berlin, July 8, 2022.

MY CAREER IN FIVE SONGS

From freight trains to wild horses — Steve Vai reveals the influences behind a handful of his most significant tracks

BY MARK McSTEAD

AS ANY LONGTIME *Guitar Player* reader knows, Steve Vai and this magazine go way back. His introduction to the wider guitar community came via an appearance in the magazine in October 1984. The unveiling of “The Attitude Song” on the Eva-Tone Soundsheet flexi-disc provided in that issue brought Vai’s insane chops and melodic sensibilities directly to the people who would appreciate them the most, the *Guitar Player* readers, something Vai acknowledges in the following list of career highlights.

He is currently celebrating the success of *Inviolata*, his 10th studio album, which was released earlier this year to universally strong reviews and debuted at the top of the *Billboard* Hard Rock album chart. “I’m humbled by the response that *Inviolata* has

received,” he says. “None of my solo work has ever debuted at number one on any chart, anywhere. I can’t believe it.

“It’s been a while since I did a purely instrumental record,” he continues. “When I was making it, I was in that frame of mind where I thought, I don’t know how people are going to take it, but I’m not going to worry about that. What I do know is that the people who follow what I do and like what I do want me to make the music that’s most important to me. Because then it has in it the thing that they like, and it’s a great formula: I’m satisfied, and they’re satisfied. The right people are attracted. It is so nice to feel that your contribution is appreciated.”

Shortly after the album’s release, Vai underwent shoulder surgery and recorded

a YouTube video which showed him shredding one-handed through a piece called “Knappsack,” while his right arm was suspended in a sling. Vai re-injured the joint but fortunately the damage wasn’t too severe. “They thought that I had re-torn the shoulder, which would have entailed a 16-month healing time, but fortunately that wasn’t the case,” he explains. “It was a different tear, and I was already able to pick a little with my right hand a week later.”

Always one of the most cerebral and spiritually minded artists, Vai has an interesting philosophy on what it takes to maintain a mind-and-body approach to well-being. “I’m a vegetarian,” he says. “I like to eat foods that are close to nature, I don’t take any drugs and I’m not on any drugs.

FRANK HOENSCH/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

I don't really drink or anything like that, but that just feels natural to me. It's not like I'm doing that to be healthy. I don't think that health comes from things like that but from the health of your mind. That requires a whole different focus. If you're open enough, you know what things work for you, whether it be food or exercise or whatever. But if you're in some kind of funky mindset, you won't know what your best choices are. That's how I view things."

Having spent so long in lockdown, and several more months recuperating from surgery, Vai is currently embarking soon on a mammoth global tour. "What I do is psyche myself up for whatever lies ahead of me," he explains. "That means that if I'm at home, I'm psyched to be at home, and I'm psyched to be in the studio, recording. When the record is done, I start to psychologically align myself with going on tour, and that's when the feeling changes to 'I've got to get out of Dodge and I've got to get on that iron horse! [laughs] I've got to play my guitar to people

"IF YOU'RE IN SOME KIND OF FUNKY MINDSET, YOU WON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR BEST CHOICES ARE. THAT'S HOW I VIEW THINGS"

now!' I cultivate the impulse and then I'm ready to go. When the tour starts to wind down, I then psychologically align myself with being at home, and then I don't want to be on tour. It's all mental gymnastics to keep my sanity."

Vai picked through his extensive catalog to select these five tracks that he considers among the most important to his career.

"THE ATTITUDE SONG" FLEX-ABLE (1984)

"This was a very important song for me. When I recorded it, I had no expectations with regard to what would happen with it, or even whether anybody would hear it. It was just like joy when I made it. I had so much fun, and I had so many ideas. 'The Attitude Song' checked off a box for me, with regard to the



wild kinds of things that I was working on at that time on the guitar.

"Some of the things I was doing seemed unique: pulling up on the bar and playing the melody, the weird harmonies, and the way that things were structured. It didn't dawn on me until decades later that those things were quite unique. It had innovation, but I didn't realize that so much at the time. It was quite a tricky song to play, with the polymeter: 7/8 over a 4/4. When it appeared in *Guitar Player* on a Soundsheet, I can honestly say that that was the first major exposure for me as a guitarist to the guitar community, and it went over very well."

"FOR THE LOVE OF GOD" PASSION AND WARFARE (1990)

"I think this is undoubtedly my best-known piece of music. I'd probably get beat up after the concert if I didn't play this live. I never get bored playing it, though; I can lose myself for an eternity in just one note in that song. This was another track that came from a very innocent kind of approach. At the time that I made *Passion and Warfare*, I knew that I was deliberately turning my back on 'rock stardom.' I had toured the world multiple times with David Lee Roth and Whitesnake, and it was really big, and it was lucrative. You get to play the part of a rock star, which was fantastic, but it wasn't entirely what I was looking for. I knew all along that there was this music in me that had to come out, and in my mind, I thought that it would just be the end of my career. It was a nice run being a big rock star, but I have to do this music.

"When I recorded 'For the Love of God,' it was under the auspice that this record that I was making really didn't have an audience or a place, because there was nothing like it at the time. I knew it was something that was

in me that had to come out, regardless of how the guitar community was going to receive it.

"I remember someone hearing it and saying, 'It's nice, but it's kinda long and wanky.' [laughs] I remember thinking those sentiments may be true, but fuck that; this is a beautiful piece of music. I really had an intimate relationship with that song when I recorded it, and I think that's what people feel. When I handed this album to Capitol Records, who had previously released Eric Johnson's *Ah Via Musicom*, they actually said to me, 'We have no idea what this is. We are not going to promote it, and the advance that we told you we were going to give you, we're cutting that in half.' I just said, 'Fine, I'm taking it away from you. You broke the deal, so I don't have to release it on Capitol.' Relativity picked it up after that."

"TENDER SURRENDER" ALIEN LOVE SECRETS (1995)

"For me, this is the perfect amalgamation of my intense side and my tender side. I love the way that it starts out with those octaves. It's very sweet, and there are so many dynamics and such articulation. Those things really make melodies speak. I knew that I wanted it to build and build organically; every note is part of the melody in that piece. It's another song that was very well received by the guitar community. It was planted at exactly the right time for me, whereas my previous album, *Sex and Religion*, seemed to have come out at exactly the wrong time. I think the guitar community had a big question about that album: 'What's he doing? Why vocals? This isn't an instrumental album!'

"When *Alien Love Secrets* came out, it was friendly for the guitar community, with tracks like this, 'Kill the Guy With the Ball' and 'Bad Horsie.' 'Tender Surrender' has such a nice

melody and builds so well to a climax that it was almost a perfect formula for those people that really love instrumental guitar music. It really struck a nerve. It's another song that I play in concerts all the time, because if I didn't, I think people would be very disappointed."

"BAD HORSIE"

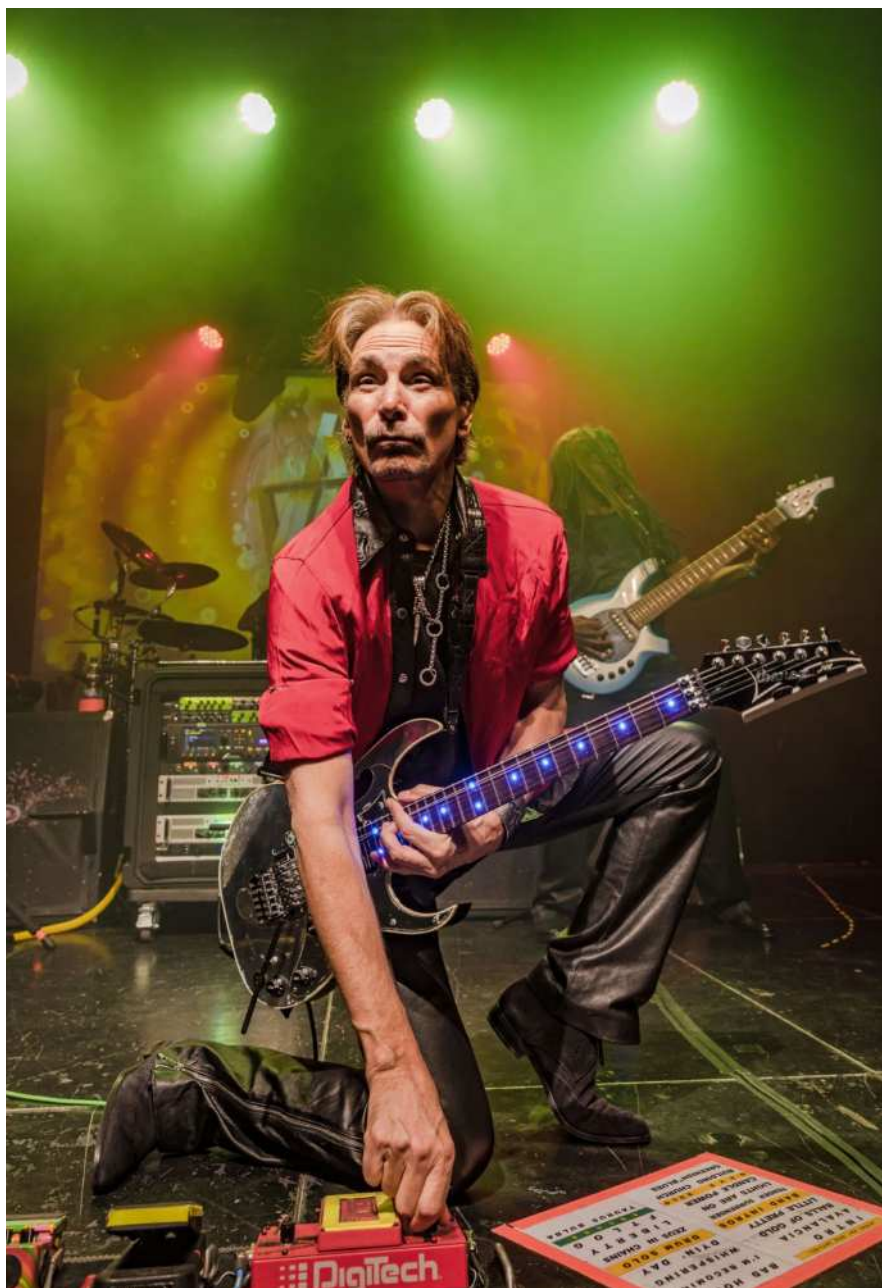
ALIEN LOVE SECRETS (1995)

"This is a very different track from 'Tender Surrender.' It had the bones to exist in the metal community. It's a side of me that I really enjoy. It's sort of like Jack Butler [*the character Vai plays*] in the movie *Crossroads*. It's connected to that song that I played in that film; that movie had a significant impact on my career. When I was doing *Crossroads* and

"I THINK THE SOLO ON THIS IS PERHAPS MY GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT ON THE GUITAR"

reading the script, it said, 'Jack Butler kicks into a guitar riff that sounds like a freight train.' I wondered what a freight train would sound like if it were mimicked with a guitar.

"The first thing I did was tune down, then grind out that rhythm on the bass notes. Soon after that, I had a dream where I was on a wild stallion, and I was riding through a field of high grass, being chased by a train. Suddenly the horse stopped, turned around and charged at the train, at which point I woke up. [*laughs*] That was when I thought I'd write a song with the train concept from *Crossroads* and mix it with a horse. It's a song that I really love playing. It's malleable — we can



constantly change it up. It's heavy and it's satisfying when you feel that heaviness. It's another song that has gravitated toward becoming a favorite of my fans. It's definitely one of my most metal tracks."

"AND WE ARE ONE"

MODERN PRIMITIVE (2016)

"I would go on record to say that I think the solo on this is perhaps my greatest accomplishment on the guitar. That would be because of its phrasing, its neatness and its beauty. I don't feel pretentious saying that, because I'm speaking within my capacities. So if I say something is profoundly, deeply moving and beautiful to me, that's to me, you know? There may be others that feel that way, but it's important that an artist invests

their intimacy into their music, because it carries their DNA in it. This is what people want: They want you, your unique creativity. They don't want you to sound like somebody else. They can smell fake a mile away.

"With this song, I told myself, 'You're going to record a solo here, where every riff is going to be unique for you. It can't be anything you've done before, and it has to be innovative.' In that one song, there is more phrasing and melodic intimacy than anything I've ever recorded. That's why this song is so important to me. There is really a lot going on in my playing that might not be apparent to someone who isn't watching me play this. Not that that is important in itself, of course. What is important is that when the listener hears it, they feel something." ■

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Horns of Plenty

As the replacement for the Les Paul Special, the SG Special was a well-appointed entry point to Gibson's golden age.

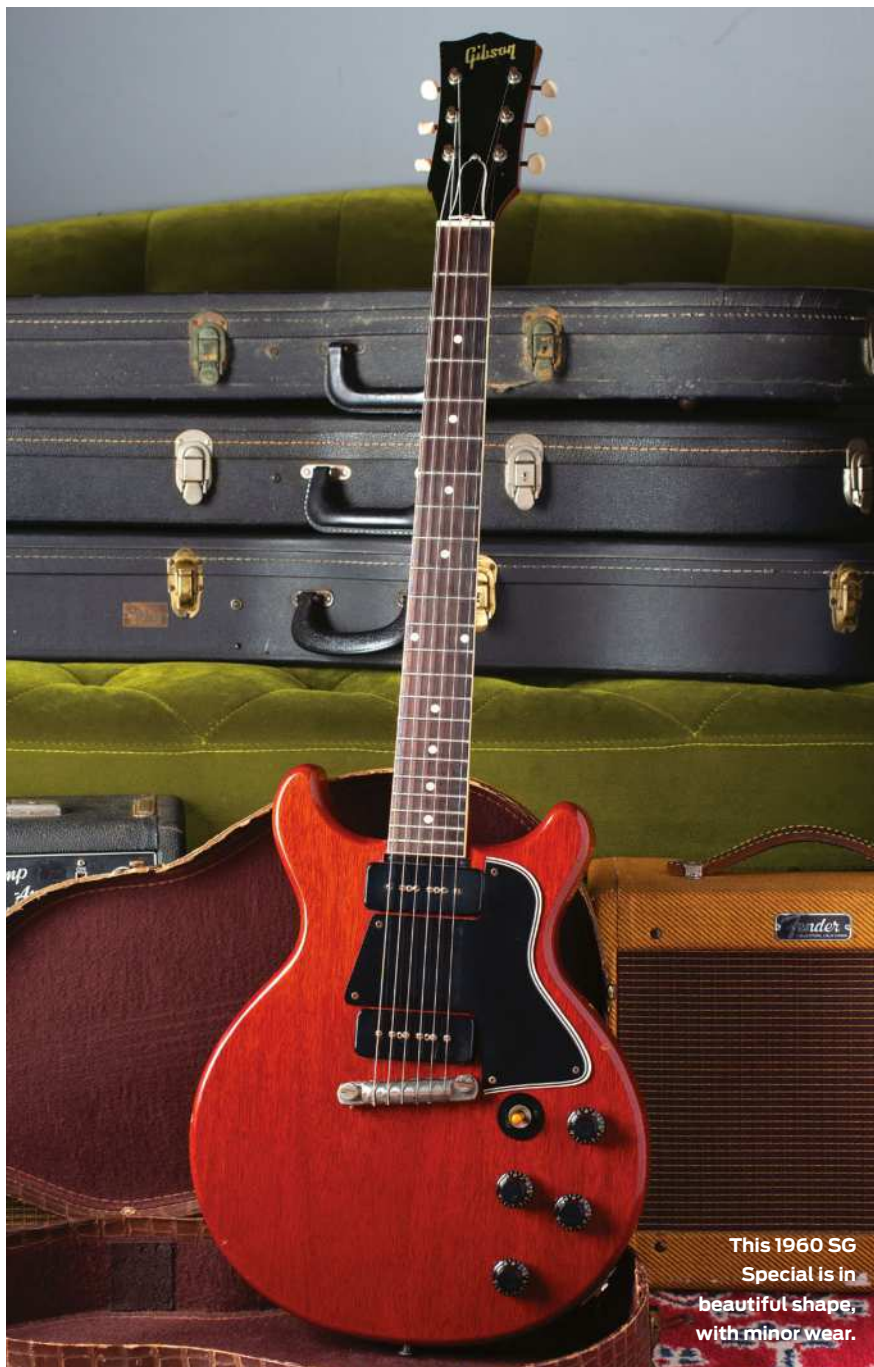
IN A WORLD where Gibson's 1958–'60 sunburst Les Paul Standard reigns supreme for collectability and tone, the down-to-earth Gibson SG Special has long been seen as the rowdy younger sibling: brash, raw, a little unrefined and occasionally ill mannered. Given both its low cost and golden-era lineage, it became a nifty pawnshop find, even as the 'Burst values soared. Many punks and garage rockers were among the clued-in guitarists who knew it to be a stealth behemoth in the tone stakes.

The SG Special arrived in 1959 as the predecessor to the single-cutaway Les Paul Special of 1955–'58. The SG Special embraced all of that guitar's features, but its double-cutaway styling gave it a sleeker and racier appearance. Players throughout the wider guitar world might generally refer to guitars like this fine example from 1960 as a Les Paul Special, and indeed the single-pickup version sold alongside it was called the Les Paul Junior. But officially speaking, by the end of 1959 and certainly into 1960 when this guitar was built, the "Les Paul" name had been dropped from the headstock, as Gibson felt its association with the guitarist had become less valuable. The catalog officially referred to the double-cut, slab-bodied, two-pickup Special as the SG.

While the Les Paul Standard was still flying the PAF-loaded, carved-top 'Burst flag through 1960, the Special became an SG a full year or more sooner than its siblings. But what's in a name? Not much, in this case, other than the lack of that gold "Les Paul" silkscreen on the headstock, which for these

ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS

- > Solid Honduran mahogany body
- > Rounded double-cutaway styling
- > Glued-in mahogany neck with Brazilian rosewood fingerboard
- > Bound fingerboard with dot inlays
- > Two single-coil P-90 pickups
- > Wrap-around bridge



This 1960 SG Special is in beautiful shape, with minor wear.

BY DAVE HUNTER



The SG's tight and tidy electronics cavity.

guitars carried no designation other than the cellulose "Gibson" inlay. It's noteworthy that the shift to the double-cutaway design nearly doubled Gibson's sales figures, from 958 single-cut Specials in 1958 to 1,821 double-cut Specials in 1959.

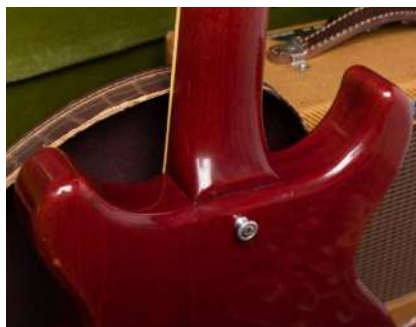
The Special is further defined by stripped-down features in the form of the simpler slab body made from Honduran mahogany, dot inlays and a wrap-around bridge, but the Special was a fully fledged Gibson in every way and built to be an uncompromising professional guitar. The glued-in neck has a bound Brazilian rosewood fingerboard and a slightly thinner profile than earlier examples, but at .82 inches deep at the first fret, it isn't quite as slim as many 1960 Gibsons are purported to be. It also carries two excellent P-90s, the gutsy, dynamic single-coil units used on all second-tier Gibson guitars of this era. The 1960 Special provided for my examination by John Shults of True Vintage Guitar is a stunningly nice example, with a cherry finish that's still impressively bright and colorful, and a relatively minor level of playing wear. It could easily be mistaken for a Custom Shop reissue at first glance.

In addition to the excellent Gibson build quality of the era, the Special's appeal lies in the combination of its well-aged Honduran mahogany and the early P-90 pickups. The wood from this era is known to have been among the best ever used in Kalamazoo. It's

well seasoned, resonant and light, bringing this guitar in at a mere 7.2 pounds. And any fan of vintage P-90s knows that, despite being single-coil pickups, these units can drive an amp as hard as any PAF-style humbucker, with a little added grit and sting that suits them beautifully to a wide range of rock and blues tones. Most P-90s, in fact, display resistance readings similar to the era's PAF humbuckers, sitting in the range of 7.25 to 8.25k ohms. It makes sense when you consider they were wound with similar lengths of 42 AWG wire, although it was divided between two coils in the humbucker and loaded in one big spool on the P-90 (which also had two Alnico bar magnets to the humbucker's one).

WHAT'S IN A NAME? NOT MUCH, OTHER THAN THE LACK OF A GOLD "LES PAUL" SILKSCREEN ON THE HEADSTOCK

Some players have worried about the neck-body joint of the double-cut Special, since, unlike the single-cut, it lacks added support at the upper bout. The design change means owners need to treat their double-cuts with a little extra care. Despite this alteration, the tone of the '59-'61 Specials doesn't suffer in the least. A good '60 SG Special can sound as toothsome and rich as a single-cut, as displayed in many side-by-side tone tests. That said, guitars of this era can vary considerably from one to the next, regardless of the manufacturing date.



The list of notable double-cutaway Special players merges somewhat with that of double-cut Les Paul Junior players, since they are essentially the same guitar, barring the absence of the neck pickup and the addition of some wood adjacent to the neck joint. Considering the latter variant always leads to talk of Johnny Thunders, but the double-cutaway Special was heavily leaned into in the punk era, too. Keith Richards also donned a double-cut Junior now and then, while Green Day's Billy Joe Armstrong has frequently played a Special along with his fleet of Juniors.

The SG Special in this thick-bodied, double-cutaway guise carried on into early 1961, though a little further into that year the more familiar thin-bodied, pointy-horned version of the SG joined a team of similarly styled guitars, the rest of which wore the Les Paul model name into 1962, and SG after. Since the 1970s, the Les Paul Special has been a near-constant in the Gibson catalog, in a variety of single- and double-cutaway models. Prices for originals have ascended rapidly on the vintage market, over the past two or three years in particular, reaching the high four-figure range. Even so, the Les Paul/SG Special is still a far more attainable golden-age Gibson original than a sunburst Les Paul or a dot-neck ES-335 — although it'll cost you a little more than the \$150 pawnshop prize some lucky punk rocker walked out the door with in 1977. ■



BY JIM CAMPILONGO

Free Spirits

Talk Talk's *Spirit of Eden* plays like a great psychedelic opera.

A WHILE BACK, while doing a radio interview, I was asked about my cover of the Rolling Stones' *Beggars Banquet* track "No Expectations," from my album *Orange*. I resigned to be totally honest with the interviewer and admitted the producer, Anton Fier, chose the song after politely vetoing my original selection, the traditional pop tune "Hawaiian Wedding Song." As it turned out, my version of "No Expectations" has become a Campilongo fan favorite and another entry in the column titled "If It Hadn't Been for the Producer..."

After the interview, I put on *Spirit of Eden* by Talk Talk, and while I listened, I pondered: Might our purposely free and vibey performance of "No Expectations" or Talk's Talk's *Spirit of Eden* have ever existed without the Stones' *Exile on Main St.*, one of the vibiest records of its time? That record was the Stones being unapologetically their loose and stylistically unfettered selves. And while *Exile* and *Spirit of Eden* couldn't be more different, both albums took completely different journeys to arrive at some place similar.

Released on the Parlophone label in 1988, *Spirit of Eden* is the collaboration between singer/multi-instrumentalist Mark Hollis and producer Tim Friese-Greene, who added guitar, harmonium and organ to the proceedings. The album features a big cast of instruments, including trumpet, Dobro, 12-string guitar, violin, bassoon, clarinet, Mexican bass, double bass, harmonica (played by Mark Feltham)



and drums (by Lee Harris). All these instruments color the music and are used sparingly and with great care. Nothing upstages the sonically barren landscape of *Spirit of Eden*.

I have to admit, this LP is hard to describe track by track. *Spirit of Eden* is filled with peaks and valleys that transcend traditional

song form and present more of an emotional approach. Tracks segue seamlessly into one another. Somehow, Hollis and Friese-Greene pull this off by employing fantastic guitar sounds, a harmonica as big as a house (at times I thought it might be a B-3 organ) and impassioned vocals that are mostly and fittingly unintelligible. One can feel the prioritization of creating music dripping with vibe.

Spirit of Eden is almost painfully patient. Its production values remind me of a '60s Italian art film that takes its time to develop. When something big finally happens, it's momentous. Despite this reading like a recipe for something too ambitious to be successful, there are numerous moments of significant beauty on *Spirit of Eden*. It plays like a great psychedelic opera.

While I can't say I love all of *Exile on Main St.*, in its finer moments its songs ooze a primal vibe that sounds like "the magic take." *Spirit of Eden*, on the other hand, oozes with atmosphere, craftsmanship and focus. Many of its tracks were based on long improvisations played in an intentionally darkened studio. And despite the improvisational composing, the nontraditional song form, and the weaving in

and out of sound collages, Hollis and Friese-Greene created an album that could have easily sounded narcissistic and druggie. Instead they made something lovely and extraordinarily connected. *Spirit of Eden* follows the *Exile* aesthetic but instead is successful thanks to its sober vision. Could it have existed without *Exile*? It's hard to say, but I enjoy connecting the dots between significant stylings in rock history. And perhaps those of you unfamiliar with *Spirit of Eden* will feel your curiosity piqued enough to listen to this brave and unique record.

Incidentally, when we reissued *Orange* on vinyl, I had to cut some tracks to make it fit the format's time restrictions. The first song I removed? "No Expectations." Oh well. Sometimes it's hard to learn how to play the game. 🎱

Jim Campilongo has 14 critically acclaimed instrumental records available on vinyl, CD and digital download at jimcampilongo.com.

**ITS PRODUCTION
VALUES REMIND ME
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ART FILM THAT
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(from left) Adrian Belew, Todd Rundgren
and Scrote join forces for the new
Celebrating David Bowie tour.

LOVING THE ALIEN

Adrian Belew, Todd Rundgren and Scrote take David Bowie's music on the road with a new show that celebrates the breadth and depth of his catalog.

BY MARK MC STEA

THE PURPOSE OF the *Celebrating David Bowie* show is simply that — to praise Bowie's music and rejoice in the joy of listening to some of his greatest songs in the rock canon. The band is assembled from fans and former Bowie band members, who play with passion and verve as they aim to capture the essence of what made his music so iconic and influential.

The show has been put together by music business veteran Miles Copeland and guitarist Scrote, who has a long track record of producing shows celebrating landmark artists, including the Beatles and Miles Davis. While the Bowie show has toured sporadically since 2015, this year sees the first full tour of North America and features the unique talents of Adrian Belew, who not only played on Bowie's 1979 album, *Lodger*, but also toured extensively with him, acting as musical director for his global run in 1990. Longtime Bowie admirer Todd Rundgren also features in the show, which covers material from the artist's earliest days to the end of his career.

While all three guitarists are about to release new albums — Scrote's *Magnificent Bastard*, Rundgren's *Space Force* and Belew's *Elevator* — and commence on intensive rehearsals for the Bowie tour, they were happy to speak to *Guitar Player* about the project's

background and what audiences can expect from the upcoming shows.

What was the initial spark behind the idea of doing shows to celebrate the work of David Bowie?

SCROTE I've been putting shows together for many years, working out of L.A. as a musical director. Back in 2015, I was doing some dates on my own with some of the guys who played on David's last album, *Blackstar*, and we actually heard that he'd died when we were in the break between sets at a show. The next day I started talking to people about David's passing, and they were suggesting that, given how much of a fan I was of his work, maybe I could put some kind of show together. I reached out to a few people who'd worked with David, and the first show started to evolve, which ran at four hours with 70 performers. [laughs] That project was so

⚡
“I HEARD ‘HEROES’
FOR THE FIRST TIME
WHEN I WAS DRIVING
MY BROKEN-DOWN
VOLKSWAGEN. AND
18 MONTHS LATER I WAS
PLAYING IT LIVE WITH DAVID”
—ADRIAN BELEW

successful that I realized there was a lot of interest from Bowie fans for us to do more. We did another really long show a few months later, and then I came up with a plan for 2016 to take the show on the road to seven cities around the world that were significant to Bowie. In 2018, we lined up more dates around the world, including Iceland. Adrian came onboard after the second show, and Todd joined us when we went to Iceland. **TODD RUNDGREN** Yeah, the trip to Iceland was my first involvement, but originally it was only supposed to be that one event. After that, I didn't carry on with the rest of the tour, so I guess I wasn't a permanent member of the entourage. But then, with the project kicking off again post lockdown, I've got back onboard.

ADRIAN BELEW I first worked with Scrote on an event celebrating the Beatles. I watched the way that he put everything together, which seemed kind of haphazard at the time, but then it turned out to be really well planned, and I really enjoyed being a part of it. When he told me about the *Celebrating David Bowie* idea, I knew he'd be able to put a great show together, so I really wanted to be a part of it.

Todd, I know you didn't work with Bowie, but did you cross paths with him much over the years?

RUNDGREN Yes, a few times. I actually

met him on his very first American tour with the Spiders and then on various occasions over the years. Ironically, just at the time that I moved from upstate New York to California, he moved to about a mile from where I'd been living, so I guess we'd have seen a lot more of each other if I'd stayed in New York. I never really ever thought seriously about us working together. I know he had a core of people that he spent a lot of time working with. I actually had a lot more contact with Mick Ronson, who also moved to upstate New York at the same time that I was living there, and I still see his wife, Suzi, occasionally.

BELEW When I first met David, he was very different from all of the preconceptions that I had about him. I thought of him as an untouchable superstar. I was surprised to find that he was real down to earth and a fun person, with a great self-deprecating sense of humor. He was always so interested in so many different things, not just rock music. We got on like a house on fire.

Todd, you and David both had very theatrical stage shows in the '70s. Was there an influence going on there in either direction?

RUNDGREN I had a permanent costume designer who traveled with me who would come up with weird ideas all the time, and I think his inspiration was what informed the theatrical things that I was doing to a degree. I know he was looking at things that David was doing and re-interpreting some of them for me. I have no independent correlation of the fact that people David worked with may have taken some ideas from things I did, but it's a possibility when you're working with stylists and designers.

Adrian, were you already familiar with Bowie's work before you first toured with him in 1978?

BELEW Very much so. I'd been in a lot of cover bands, and I'd played a lot of his material. A funny story is that I remember hearing "Heroes" for the first time when I was driving my

broken-down Volkswagen. And then 18 months later, I was playing it live with David.

Given how many great guitar parts there are on Bowie's records, is there much competition for who gets to play what?

SCROTE Before Todd came onboard in Iceland, it was divided between Adrian and me, and things seemed to work themselves out naturally. When Todd joined us, it was interesting, as I'd never worked with him before. He just naturally gravitated toward certain songs, but there was no ego from him or anyone else. The whole set list is deliberately very guitar-centric. I think that Todd is kind of Mick Ronson meets Earl Slick, I'm kind of Reeves [Gabrels] with maybe a little Ronson and some Adrian. And Adrian is Adrian too. [laughs]

Who's Robert Fripp?

SCROTE That's a tough one. Maybe somewhere between me and Adrian.

RUNDGREN Mick Ronson was such a great guitar player. I love to play some of the things that he did, and he was a really skilled arranger too. I think he's always been very underrated. I don't think I'll be doing a whole lot of shredding with Adrian in the show. [laughs] David was a connoisseur of guitar players, so there's certainly no shortage of great guitar parts.

BELEW I really liked Mick's playing too. I always thought David's material was great for guitar players.

Are there any particular songs that you earmarked for yourselves?

RUNDGREN I got turned onto David a little earlier than a lot of people, who probably picked up on him when *Ziggy Stardust* broke, but I'd been spending a lot of time in England before that and was already very familiar with *Hunky Dory* and "Changes" being on the charts in England. That means that my leanings are very much toward the earlier stuff,



**"I MET BOWIE ON HIS FIRST AMERICAN TOUR WITH THE SPIDERS. I ACTUALLY HAD A LOT MORE CONTACT WITH MICK RONSON"
—TODD RUNDGREN**

and I get to do a lot of that, like "Life on Mars" and "Changes." I do some of the later songs as well, but I definitely have a soft spot for the earlier material. I really enjoyed the way he would change his sound from song to song.

SCROTE I try to think of the show as a package and who suits what songs best. I don't have songs that I have earmarked for myself as such, but I do like a lot of the material from the "Heroes" era.

RUNDGREN I could take a pretty good stab at the Stevie Ray stuff. I started out as a blues guitarist, so I might make my case for "Let's Dance," although I'm not sure it's in the set yet. [laughs]

BELEW I tend to play a lot of the things that I was involved with when they were

recorded, but Scrote will often make suggestions that turn out really well. We have a lot of different singers and instrumentalists in the show, and we're all very happy to share vocal duties or different parts.

How do you come up with the set list when there are so many great songs to choose from?

RUNDGREN I think we're not far from the set we did in Iceland. Scrote seems to have his finger on the pulse of what the fans





Belew performs *Celebrating David Bowie* at the Huxleys, Berlin, January 19, 2018.

want to hear. It's not like we're going out there to deliver a college lecture or be comprehensive. We just want to do the stuff people want to hear, which is the guiding principle. There are songs that you know you have to play, so a good two-thirds of the set is pretty obvious.

BELEW Scrote has a vision as the producer, and I have a lot of faith in his ideas. We work together quite closely, and we'll suggest things to each other. We have done some obscure things on previous shows, but I think we're sticking to the more well-known songs for this tour.

What guitars are you using on the tour?

RUNDGREN Things have been in a tizzy for me because my favorite guitar, Foamy, has disappeared. I'd just finished a Beatles tribute tour and was about to start rehearsals with Daryl Hall and the guitar just vanished somewhere between Missouri and Connecticut. FedEx traced it and said it should have been delivered, but I haven't found it. I suppose I can assume that it was stolen, but I can't definitively say that. Maybe it will turn up at some point.

I was supposed to start rehearsals in Chicago, and I had to go to the store and make an emergency purchase of a new guitar. I ended up with a Schecter, which was laid out in the same way that Foamy was, which was one of my primary considerations. Foamy was made by P-Project and given to me by the company in Japan many years ago. The Schecter has become my main guitar, but I think I might also take a vintage Telecaster that I spent a lot of money on as well. I'll probably also take my replica of the SG that I used to have called The Fool that I auctioned off because I owed the IRS a lot of money. *[laughs]*

SCROTE I think we're all thinking of traveling kind of light when it comes to gear. I'll be taking a custom-made thinline Tele, a Les Paul with P-90s for the Slick/Ronson territory, a 12-string acoustic and maybe a Strat, although Adrian has the Strat thing covered.

BELEW I've had three new Stratocasters built for me by the Custom Shop, so I'll be taking those. My live rig is very simple and fits in one case. It's the first Axe-Fx built by Fractal. I'm not sure what the model's name is. Other than



that, it's a couple of pedals and a Mastermind MIDI controller. For a tour like this, where I'm playing the early music before I had the more complex equipment, I think it makes sense to try to use similar things.

What were your favorite albums from Bowie's catalog?

RUNDGREN *Hunky Dory* was the first record that I knew and one that I still really love, but there are so many great albums.

SCROTE That's a tough one. I guess I've always kind of leaned toward "*Heroes*", but I also really love *Hunky Dory*.

BELEW I really like *Young Americans* and "*Heroes*".

There are going to be songs that Bowie never actually played live himself in the show, aren't there?

SCROTE Right. I don't think he even toured for many years before his death. To do Bowie's songs justice live, I think we need to bring everything to the table and cover as many bases as possible, to replicate things that happened in the studio. There are no backing tracks anywhere; everything is live. We have a real pool of talent in the show, and everyone is really at the top of their game. There's a certain relaxed camaraderie, both personally and musically, with Adrian, Todd and the rest of the band that I've rarely found in anything that I've ever done before. It's a real great fun hang when we're together. There's a beautiful spirit about the show, and to be able to celebrate the genius of David's work in such great company is a genuine gift.

BELEW Everything is done on a much bigger scale than the tours I did with David, particularly in 1990. Whereas back then, we had to find ways to cover parts and even leave some things out, now we have the ability to reproduce everything. It's a lot easier for me these days, that's for sure. I no longer have to try to sound like a saxophone or something. *[laughs]* ■

THE PSYCH ROCK Issue



What a Long Strange Trip It's Been

Join us on a journey through six decades of mind-blowing music and the guitarists who have led rock and roll's unstoppable psychedelic revolution.

NINETEEN SIXTY-FIVE was the year rock and roll grew a pair. After its raucous birth in the 1950s and early demise following Buddy Holly's death, Chuck Berry's imprisonment, Elvis Presley's Army enlistment and Little Richard's spiritual rebirth, rock and roll shriveled up. The epicene years from 1960 to 1964 had been a formative but difficult period in which garage rock bands claimed back a piece of the teen pop charts before the British Invasion groups led the way to a rock and roll victory.

Those spirited rebels were anything but monolithic. Many brought together influences of early rock, folk, blues, soul, trad jazz and more. It's hardly surprising that the old formulas for songwriting and music production were inadequate to the aims of these young and ambitious performers. Something had to change, and in 1965, it did, largely due to the work of guitarists. Fuzz effects, once novelty devices on songs like the Venture's "The 2000 Pound Bee," were used in earnest by players like Jeff Beck and Keith Richards for their otherworldly tones, along with already established effects like tremolo and reverb. It was Beck, too, who introduced the sonorities of Indian music to rock and roll with his guitar, soon to be followed by George Harrison and Brian Jones, who did likewise by learning the rudiments of the sitar.

What followed was a radical reconfiguring of teen "beat" music. In the hallowed halls of recording studios like London's Abbey Road and Trident, this took place with serious application of orchestras, Mellotrons, electric pianos, harpsichords, organs and

early Moog synthesizers. In the dingy basements and dirty garages of teen bands in the U.S., it was evidenced instead by a deconstruction of norms: screamed vocals and fuzzed-out guitars plied against primitive, pummeling beats.

In either form, this was psychedelic rock. The shocking new sounds fired off synapses in ways familiar to those who had taken LSD. The drug had become popular in California's youth culture, primarily in San Francisco, where the Grateful Dead were at the epicenter of Ken Kesey's acid-fueled happenings, as well as in Los Angeles, where Byrds guitarists Roger McGuinn and David Crosby dropped LSD with the Beatles in the summer of 1965. Within months, both of those bands would dramatically change their musical direction as acid opened their minds to new approaches to sound.

By late 1966, in London, a newly arrived guitarist christened Jimi Hendrix was conjuring up his own singular brand of psychedelic guitar rock. He needed nothing more than a Stratocaster and Marshall stack to do so, but with assistance from early effects guru Roger Mayer, Hendrix blew down the walls and signaled the birth of a potent brew of blues-based psychedelia that redefined the electric guitar. Rock and roll was never the same.

Over the next pages, we look at these and other innovative guitarists at the heart of psychedelic rock's beginnings, as well as those behind its 1980s rebirth in the Paisley Underground movement and its subsequent endurance run to the first decades of the 21st century. Long may they trip.

JEFF BECK

(THE YARDBIRDS)

Would psychedelic rock have happened at all were it not for Jeff Beck's attempt to emulate a sitar with his Fender Esquire and Sola Sound Tone Bender fuzz? As Eric Clapton's replacement in the Yardbirds, Beck kicked off his 20-month tenure with ingenuity at his first recording session with the group, in April 1965, for "Heart Full of Soul." Songwriter Graham Gould's exotic hook suggested a sitar line, but the musician hired for the job couldn't perform it to anyone's satisfaction. "What he was doing was totally magical, but it just didn't have any groove to it," Beck revealed. "And I showed him on guitar what I thought would be a good idea, which was that minor riff with the D

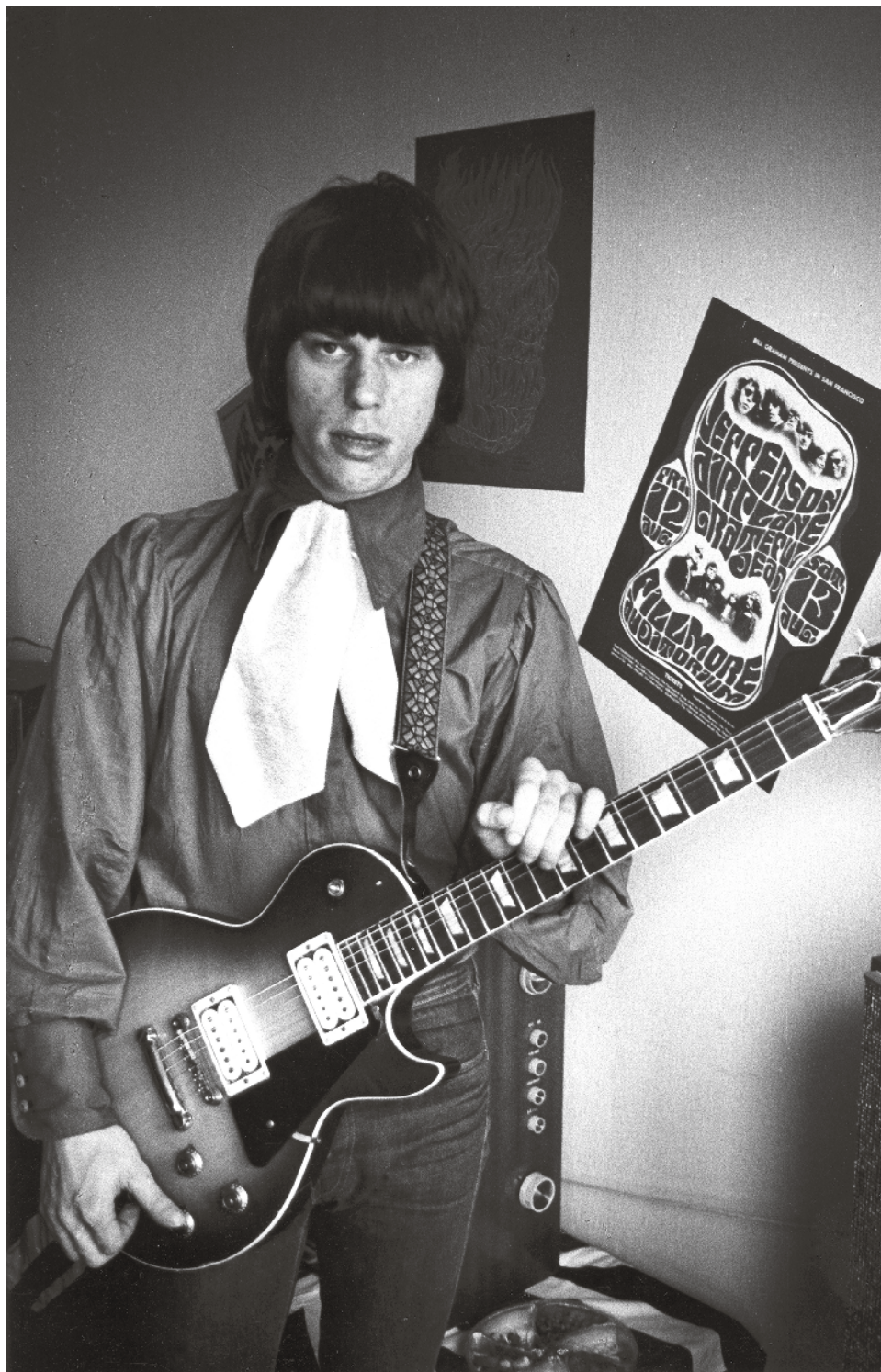
"How could string bending be adopted to such an extent that you can play a melody with one bend?"

string droning an octave below. And everyone said, 'That sounds great. Let's just leave that.'"

With one line, Beck introduced an evocatively exotic sound and musical scale to rock and roll. "When I heard Jeff's playing, it was noticeably different, even then to my young ears,"

Aerosmith's Joe Perry recalled. "There was a sound to his guitar that kind of stood out and was different from the usual pop stuff. The notes he was playing. It was more lyrical, to me."

What was different about Beck's playing was certainly his talent for bends, which he developed by listening to Indian ragas by Ravi Shankar and Ustad Vilayat Khan. He marveled at their fluid string bending. "How could this be adopted into the guitar?" he recalled wondering, "this bending of the string, to such an extent that you can play a



melody with one bend?" He came close on the Yardbirds' next single, 1966's "Shapes of Things," widely considered the first psychedelic rock release. He continued to push the emerging genre forward with the group's next release, the fuzz guitar-drenched "Over Under Sideways Down." But it was with "Happenings Ten Years Time Ago" that Beck, playing alongside new band member Jimmy Page, blew young

guitarists' minds by combining his Indian-tinged lead work with incendiary solos in which he conjured a maelstrom of sirens and revving engines. Though he soon moved on to blues rock and jazz fusion, Beck established a template for psychedelia — as well as heavy metal — that would be followed by countless future guitarists. — *Christopher Scapelliti*
TOP TRACK: "Happenings Ten Years Time Ago"

VAL WILLMER/REDPERNS/GETTY IMAGES

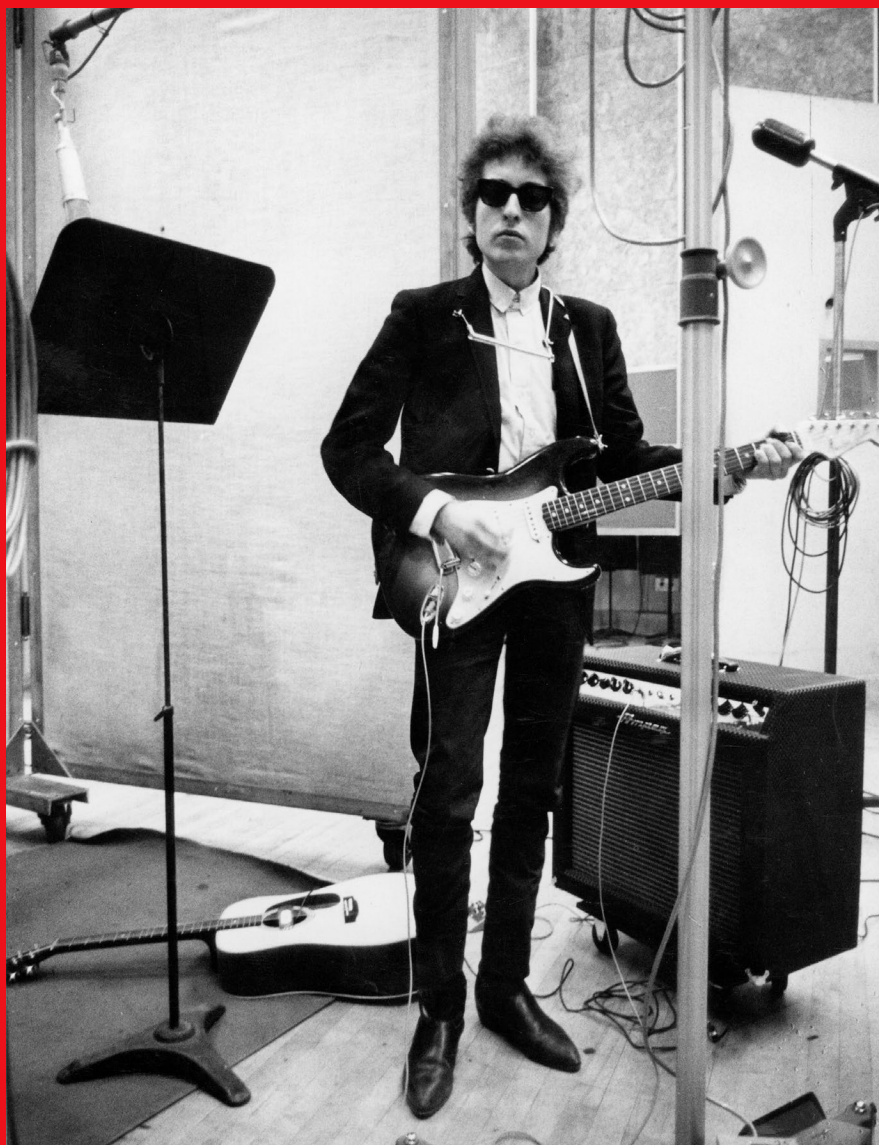
BOB DYLAN

With his folk guitar jangling and surreal lyrics, Bob Dylan more than perhaps anyone laid the groundwork for psychedelic rock's more fanciful abstractions. His raw-boned tunes were transformed into baroque-pop balladry by psychedelic-rock trailblazers like the Byrds ("Mr. Tambourine Man," "Chimes of Freedom" and "All I Really Want to Do"), the 13th Floor Elevators ("It's All Over Now, Baby Blue") and Manfred Mann ("The Mighty Quinn").

But many other groups found in Dylan's songs inspiration for their own peculiar musical explorations. While his early tunes like "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall" and "Mr. Tambourine Man" are charged with mysticism, Dylan's lyrics had largely lost their fanciful edge and turned dark, more surreal and menacing by the writing of 1965's *Bringing It All Back Home* and *Highway 61 Revisited*. Songs like "Subterranean Homesick Blues," "Maggie's Farm," "Bob Dylan's 115th Dream" and "Highway 61 Revisited" describe danger zones and deals to be avoided, pointing the way to psychedelia's darker side. This menacing style can be heard in everything from the Beatles' "A Day in the Life" to Jefferson Airplane's "White Rabbit." Dylan could still be playful: A tune like "Desolation Row" presages the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's*, with its mix of historical and literary characters, fanciful themes and flirtations with fatality. Speaking of which, it was Dylan who turned the Fab Four on to pot, which inspired the earliest psychedelic stirrings of John Lennon and Paul McCartney's music and the group's nascent studio trickery.

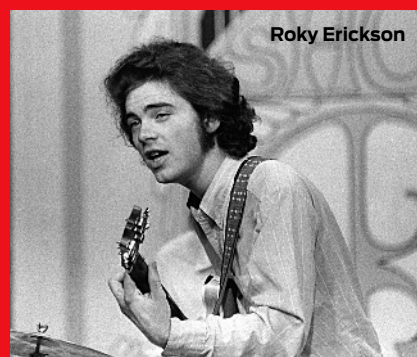
And lest anyone forget, it was Dylan whose look, sound and music inspired a young Black guitarist to let his processed hair go natural and begin singing in his own imperfect style in the clubs of Greenwich Village. As Jimi Hendrix, he became the biggest guitarist in late-'60s rock and scored his highest-charting U.S. hit with a transformative reworking of Dylan's own psychedelic nightmare, "All Along the Watchtower." — CS

TOP TRACK: "Desolation Row"



ROKY ERICKSON AND STACY SUTHERLAND (THE 13TH FLOOR ELEVATORS)

Reportedly, it was Elevators guitarist Stacy Sutherland who coined the term *psychedelic rock*, leading the Austin, Texas, group to title its 1966 debut *The Psychedelic Sounds of the 13th Floor Elevators*. Sutherland's co-architect in the group's intergalactic guitar tones was lead singer Roky Erickson. Running their Gibson ES-330s through Fender blackface Twin Reverbs, Fender Reverb Units and Gibson Maestro FZ-1 Fuzz-Tones, they kicked up a gnarly echo-and-reverb-laden sound that served as a template for many other psychedelic groups to come. As Erickson revealed in a 1980 interview, the Elevators assumed they had an exclusive on the style until they heard the Yardbirds' "Shapes of Things." "That really bothered us, 'cause



we had some stuff that we'd already recorded and hadn't been released," he said. Soon after, the group's 1966 debut single, "You're Gonna Miss Me," reached 55 on the *Billboard* Hot 100. They remained a cult act to the end, but in their brief tenure the 13th Floor Elevators helped launch psychedelic rock from obscurity to the record charts. — CS

TOP TRACK: "Slip Inside This House"

FULL CIRCLE

Wielding a sonic scalpel, Giles Martin separates *Revolver*'s multitracked instruments to present the Beatles' 1966 landmark recording as you've never heard it.

BY CHRISTOPHER SCAPELLITI

The Beatles' *Revolver* is a psychedelic rock landmark, a sonic marvel that marked a sea change in music production and culture. Joined by their new recording engineer Geoff Emerick, the group and producer George Martin set about using the recording studio as their sonic workshop, creating sounds never heard before and introducing classical Indian music into Western pop rock.

But like most pre-1968 Beatles albums, *Revolver* was recorded to four-track tape, with the result that the main rhythm instruments — usually guitar, bass and drums — were placed together on one track, making it impossible to separate them for stereo mixes. Until now, that is. Using groundbreaking de-mixing technology, Giles Martin — George Martin's son, and the producer behind much of the group's reissues in recent years — was able to separate the instruments, and even the individual pieces of the drum kit, without losing the room ambience or creating ugly artifacts.

Fans can hear the results this October 29, when *Revolver* is reissued in a new stereo mix that reveals the music with newfound clarity and definition. In addition to a Standard 14-track edition, *Revolver* will come in a 29-track two-disc Deluxe edition that includes session



Revolver's five-disc Super Deluxe edition (left) features 63 tracks, including 31 session cuts and the album's original mono master

highlights, and a five-disc Super Deluxe edition with 63 tracks, including 31 session cuts and the album's original mono master. Both deluxe editions will boast new stereo mixes of the album singles "Paperback Writer" and "Rain." *Revolver's* new Dolby Atmos mix will be released digitally.

At a listening session for the reissue, Martin demonstrated the technology using the rhythm track from "Taxman," removing the electric guitar, then the bass, and then the drum kit, piece by piece, down to the snare. As Martin

"Remixing *Revolver* was like mixing eight different bands"

explained in our subsequent interview, this novel technology brings with it a new dilemma: "How does one represent an artistic work years after nearly everyone who created it is no longer around to weigh in?"

What were the challenges of de-mixing and re-mixing *Revolver*?

Well, it's funny. Geoff Emerick, the Beatles and my dad were pretty good to begin with, and the album sounds pretty good. And, you know, it is very compressed, and I've still respected that. But in order to have the band sound like they're in a room, you kind of have to pull them apart to a certain extent and put some air between them. And you know, on *Revolver*, John Lennon never sings in the same voice. It's different on every song. Same thing with the guitars and drums. Remixing it was like mixing eight different bands.

It's come down through history that Geoff Emerick was critical to helping

your father and the Beatles create these new sounds. Is that assessment accurate?

Listen, Geoff was a genius, yes. But I think it comes from their fingers and the guitars; my dad would say this, and Geoff would have said this as well, I think — before he became too bitter. The sounds came from themselves and their willingness to innovate, especially with guitars. So the disappointing answer for everyone is, "It's the band." And the reason why it's disappointing is because you're looking for what knob you can turn — [laughs]

And what box you can plug into.

Absolutely — to get *that* sound. And that's the tricky thing.

There's a video of you, your father and Dhani Harrison listening to a "lost" George Harrison solo on "Here Comes the Sun" that you discovered. Were there any surprises like that with *Revolver*?

No, but there was a thing with fuzz guitars: They were originally going to play the horn lines on "Got to Get You Into My Life," but they decided to go with brass instead.

Just the opposite of what happened on the Rolling Stones' "Satisfaction."

Yeah! So that exists in a previous version of the song. But because the recordings were four-track, if they didn't get something right, they'd just record over it. So there are no hidden gems.

But you really get a sense of their efficiency. For example, "Paperback Writer": There's just one and a half takes of the basic track, which is guitars and drums. So I've just left the tape running for this box set. They play, it breaks down, they immediately play it again,



Giles Martin

and that's it! It's all done but the bass and vocals. It's very efficient.

Revolver is a psychedelic rock landmark, and I imagine de-mixing presents you with an opportunity to make it more vivid — more what they might have done had the multitrack technology existed.

The tricky thing is, the claustrophobia you get from mono can make things sound more psychedelic. And when you open things up, it can sound less so. And the challenge is with something like “Tomorrow Never Knows”: The expectation is it's this crazy song. And it is — but it isn't. There's bass and drums, there's a bit of tamboura, there's an organ, tape loops... And that's it! There's not much going on. And so you really have to work at it to create something that satisfies the expectation.

When I was working with [Martin] Scorsese on the George Harrison film [the 2011 documentary *Living in the Material World*], he questioned my revisionist approach to mixing. And then I played him some stuff I'd done, and he liked it. And I said, “I just try and make songs sound how we remember them, not how they are.”

Having literally dissected *Revolver*, what's your takeaway about the Beatles at this point in their musical evolution?

You can hear them like kids in the back of a car saying, “We're bored! We want to do something different.” That's what's going on with *Revolver*. It's like a prog record — kind of like, “Look how many ideas we have!”

And what I find fascinating is that they went from being this four-headed monster with Beatles suits on to being these four individuals going in different directions — but helping each other. Like, no one's saying, “Come on, John, change chords on ‘Tomorrow Never Knows.’” Or, you know, “Why are we doing Indian songs? We're from Liverpool!” It's like that pure confidence of jumping out of the plane without a parachute and knowing you're going to land safely. It is kind of a fearless record.



JOHN LENNON, GEORGE HARRISON AND PAUL McCARTNEY (THE BEATLES)

Psychedelic rock owes much to the Fab Four, and not just because of the group's obvious entries in its canon: *Revolver*, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and *Magical Mystery Tour*. From the chiming circular guitar lines that close 1964's “A Hard Day's Night” to those that run throughout 1965's “Ticket to Ride,” George Harrison and John Lennon made droning, arpeggiating riffs a stunning motif of mid-1960s electric guitar playing and psychedelic rock. And as much as Jeff Beck laid the groundwork for Eastern influences, the Beatles helped cement it into the psychedelic palette with Harrison's sitar work on “Norwegian Wood (This Bird Has Flown)” and the bouzouki-like guitars on “Girl,” both from 1965's *Rubber Soul*. It was but a prelude to Paul McCartney's raga-influenced solo on “Taxman” and the classical Indian instrumentation on “Love You To,” both from the group's 1966 psychedelic rock milestone, *Revolver*. That album also saw Harrison record a backward guitar solo on “I'm Only Sleeping,” laying the foundation for

sonic experiments by psychedelic axe slingers Jimi Hendrix and Jimmy Page.

Over the next year, the Beatles would continue to define psychedelic rock with *Sgt. Pepper's* and *Magical Mystery Tour*. But where other guitarists opted for the obvious fuzz-box-and-reverb recipe, the Fabs took a more soporific approach (McCartney's exhilarating “Taxman” solo notwithstanding). In addition to Harrison's lysergic droning solo on “I'm Only Sleeping,” there are that song's druggy, offbeat acoustic guitars, while on *Magical Mystery Tour's* “Flying,” the electric guitars plod out the melody not only behind the beat but with a dollop of echo that makes them sound leaden.

And lest anyone forget, it was Harrison who wrote the group's 1967 ode to LSD, the *Sgt. Pepper's* outtake “It's All Too Much.” “I just wanted to write a rock and roll song about the whole psychedelic thing,” he said. “Because you'd trip out, you see, on all this stuff, and then, whoops, you'd just be back having your evening cup of tea!” — CS

TOP TRACK: “Rain”

KEITH RICHARDS (THE ROLLING STONES)

Just as Jeff Beck plugged into a Tone Bender to mimic a sitar on the Yardbirds' "Heart Full of Soul," Keith Richards ran his 1959 Gibson Les Paul into a Gibson Maestro FZ-1 Fuzz-Tone to perform the lick he'd originally written for horns on the Rolling Stones' "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction" (released June 5, 1965, one day after the Yardbirds' single). While no one would mistake that Stones' hit for a psychedelic rock record, it did help popularize the fuzz-tone effect, which would become a staple of the 1960s psychedelic rock sound.

No less influential was Brian Jones' use of a sitar on the group's 1966 gloom-rock hit, "Paint It Black." Although it was released in May 1966, some six months after the Beatles gave the sitar its rock debut on *Rubber Soul*'s "Norwegian Wood," "Paint It Black" was issued as a single and went to the top of the U.S. and U.K. charts, giving it broader exposure. And, like Beck, Richards would imitate the instrument's sound with his guitar on the Stones' next single, "Mother's Little Helper." Soon after, they dipped a toe in the psychedelic waters with *Between the Buttons*, using a range of baroque instruments, including dulcimer, harpsichord and recorder, on tracks like "Ruby Tuesday" and "Yesterday's Papers," and sprinkling it with traces of old-time music-hall brass.

It was but a prelude to the Stones' full-on plunge into psychedelic rock with 1967's *Their Satanic Majesties Request*. Here, the group both adopted and created some of the sonic tropes of the emerging genre. Richards' handiwork is well represented with the crunchy tremoloed guitar riff on "Citadel," one of the Stones' heaviest rock tracks, and the snaky lead lines on "2000 Man." On "2,000 Light Years From Home," Keef dons a fuzz bass to deliver that song's proto-punk one-note solo. Although their follow-up, *Beggars Banquet*, marked a hard turn toward stripped-down roots rock, the Stones' imprint is all over early psychedelic rock. — CS

TOP TRACK: "Citadel"

Keith Richards goes mod in 1966.



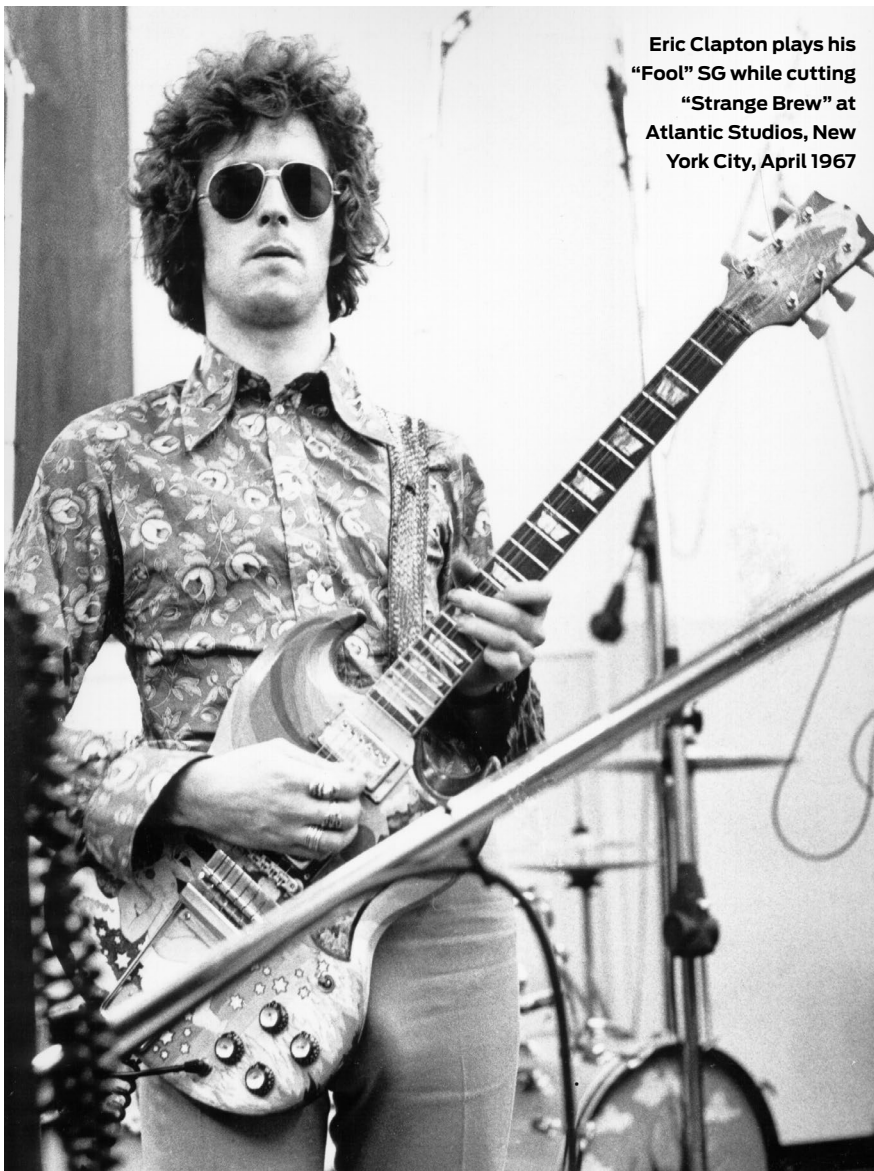
ROY WOOD (THE MOVE)

One of British pop's most outlandish performers, Roy Wood was also an adept writer of infectious and slightly daffy tunes, composed as if from the other side of the looking glass. As the leader of England's the Move, he composed the bulk of their early material, which favored rock and roll, rockabilly, blues and heavy rock, in addition to psychedelia. With such range to their music, the Move served as a gateway drug to the then-emerging styles of hard rock and prog rock.

Although the emphasis in the Move's recordings were on the ensemble arrangements and vocals, Wood supported it ably with solid roots-rock skills using a white pre-CBS Fender Strat and a Fender Electric XII. Some classics of the early era include "Flowers in the Rain," "Fire Brigade," and the amazing "Cherry Blossom Clinic Revisited," on which Wood quotes J. S. Bach's "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring," Paul Dukas' *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* and Tchaikovsky's "Thé" from *The Nutcracker*, using acoustic, electric and wah guitar. His layered



tones create a veritable symphony of guitars, and there's no ignoring his chromatic runs that punctuate the chorus. The Move eventually morphed into Electric Light Orchestra after guitarist Jeff Lynne joined, but Wood split to form Wizzard, where he helped forge the glam scene with infectious tracks like "Angel Fingers (A Teen Ballad)" and "See My Baby Jive." — CS
TOP TRACK: "Cherry Blossom Clinic Revisited"



Eric Clapton plays his "Fool" SG while cutting "Strange Brew" at Atlantic Studios, New York City, April 1967

ERIC CLAPTON (CREAM)

Cream were a tight, powerhouse electric blues trio when they recorded their debut album, *Fresh Cream*, in 1966. Shortly before its release, Eric Clapton came face to face with a force of nature called Jimi Hendrix and promptly permed his hair and upped his guitar game.

By the time Cream cut their 1967 follow-up, *Disraeli Gears*, in New York City over five days, they had integrated psychedelia's surreal lyrics into a heavier riff-oriented blues-rock style. By this point Clapton had begun playing a 1964 Gibson SG painted with psychedelic images by the Dutch art collective The Fool, an instrument that was key to the harmonically rich, vocal "woman tone" that would characterize

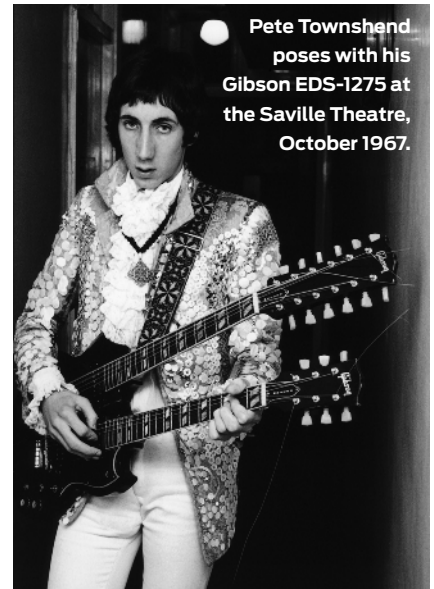
his playing during this era. He had also, notably, picked up a wah pedal that he slathered all over "Tales of Brave Ulysses" and through a fuzz box on "We're Going Wrong" and "SWLABR" (an acronym for "She Was Like a Bearded Rainbow").

Cream tempered their psychedelia against more traditional blues on their next two records, *Wheels of Fire* and *Goodbye*, by which time both psychedelic rock and the group itself were calling it a day. Clapton's longest-lasting contribution to the genre may well be his singular woman tone, which remains both a hallmark of the era and a holy grail for many guitarists more than 50 years on (see page 90 for proof). — CS

TOP TRACK: "SWLABR"

PETE TOWNSHEND (THE WHO)

At its best, psychedelic rock could transport listeners to alternate worlds with tableaux that evoked unusual settings and past eras, as the Beatles did with *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. In this regard, it provided fertile ground for Pete Townshend's growing musical ambitions. After the Mod stylings of the Who's first releases, Townshend plied his talents in psychedelia with 1967's *The Who Sell Out*, a concept album structured as songs and commercials broadcast by a pirate radio station in London. While tracks like "I Can See for Miles" and "Magic Bus" stand out as obvious examples of his psychedelic leanings from this time, the songs "Tattoo" (with its early use of Leslied guitar) and "Silas Stingy" are



Pete Townshend poses with his Gibson EDS-1275 at the Saville Theatre, October 1967.

excellent representations of how the genre provided artists like Townshend with a palette for creative storytelling and sound design. Best of all was the group's June 1968 single "Dogs," a whimsical music hall-style number about greyhound racing that includes spoken-word passages. Though it was a dog on the charts, it is nevertheless a masterpiece of psychedelic pop. — CS

TOP TRACK: "Dogs"

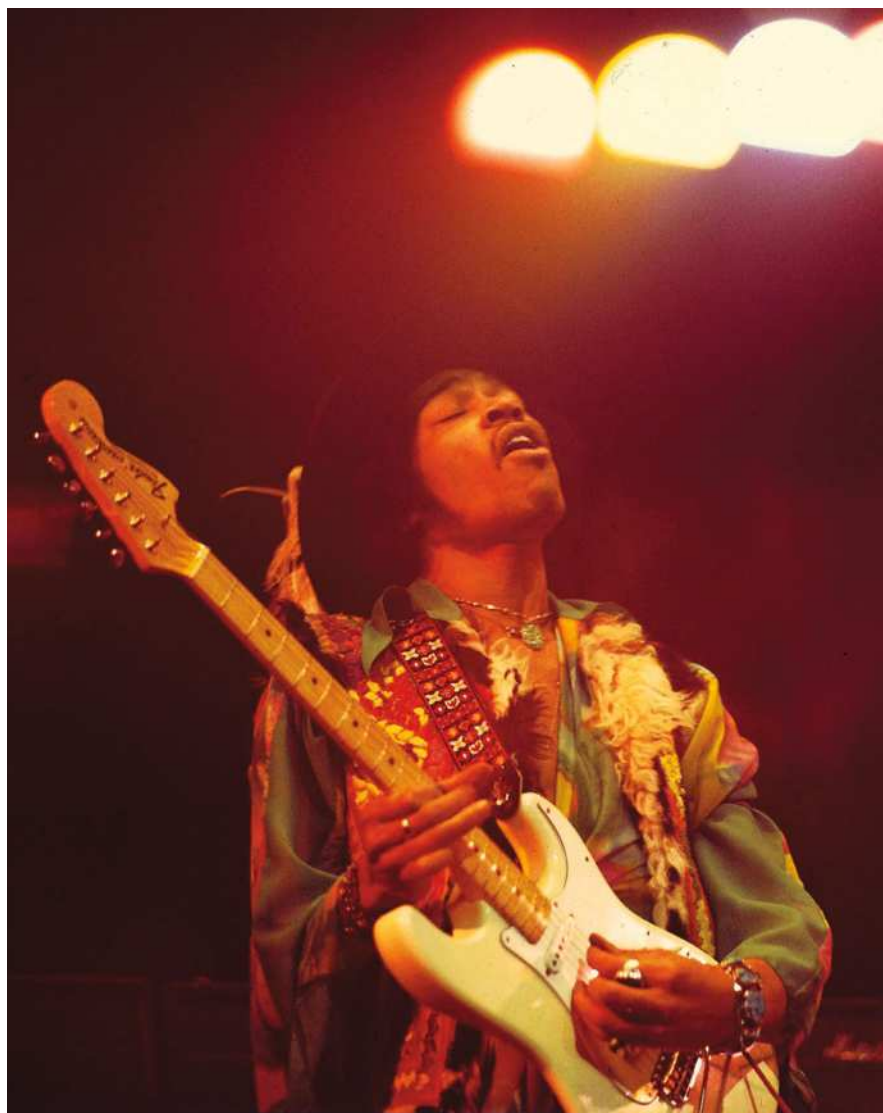
JIMI HENDRIX

As the high priest of the psychedelic era, Jimi Hendrix created a sound that was entirely different from anything anyone had ever heard. Regardless of how progressive *Sgt. Pepper's* may have seemed, when Hendrix's psychedelic masterpiece "Purple Haze" detonated on the airwaves in 1967, it was clear Jimi held the psychedelic high ground. Besides being a great song, it was the first time anyone had heard the ringing, double-octave sound of the Octavia, Hendrix's secret weapon that was invented by British electronics designer Roger Mayer. Hendrix and Mayer bonded right off, and since both were pioneers in their own right, they continued to work together to create evocative sounds, mainly via evolutions of the Octavia, on the albums that followed: *Are You Experienced*, *Axis: Bold as Love* and *Electric Ladyland*, Hendrix's final studio album.

"The idea now is not to get as complicated as you can but to get as much of yourself into it as you can. Music has to go places"

Jimi, of course, carved out his own rock sound using a Stratocaster that he flipped upside down and restrung for left-handed playing, which he ran through Marshall Super Lead amps, along with a Vox wah — used famously on "Voodoo Child (Slight Return)" and a host of other tunes — the Octavia, a Dallas-Arbiter Fuzz Face and a Uni-Vibe phase shifter, all hooked up in that order.

Hendrix told *GP* that Muddy Waters, Elmore James, B.B. King and Eddie Cochran were early influences, and you can certainly hear the soul of Curtis Mayfield in his playing too. He apparently also dug Howlin' Wolf, because he opened his performance at Monterey Pop with Wolf's "Killing Floor." Hendrix did Bob Dylan's "Like a Rolling Stone" at Monterey and he



presented "All Along the Watchtower" on *Electric Ladyland*. So how does any of this explain how Hendrix literally changed the world on *Are You Experienced*, an album where bluesy numbers like "Red House" and "Highway Chile" sit alongside such progressive tunes as "Third Stone from the Sun," "Fire," "I Don't Live Today" and the title track? And he continued on *Axis: Bold as Love* with tunes like "Little Wing," "Spanish Castle Magic" and "One Rainy Wish."

"All of my songs happen on the spur of the moment," he told *Guitar Player* in 1968. "I write songs to release frustration, and 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 you naturally. On some records, you hear all this clash and bang and fanciness, but all we're doing is laying down the guitar tracks, and then we echo here and there. We're not adding false electronic things. We use

the same things anyone else would, but we use it with imagination and common sense. Like in 'House Burning Down' [from *Electric Ladyland*], we made the guitar sound like it was on fire. It's constantly changing dimensions, and up on top that lead guitar is cutting through everything."

Hendrix was evolving his sound when *Guitar Player* spoke with him, and he mentioned using Sunn amplifiers and spoke of playing a Gibson on some of the *Electric Ladyland* tracks: "You can't just get stuck up on guitar," he said. "You have to use a little bit of imagination and break away. There are millions of other kinds of instruments — there's horns, drums, everything. Music is getting better and better, but the idea now is not to get as complicated as you can, but to get as much of yourself into it as you can. Music has to go places." — Art Thompson
TOP TRACK: "House Burning Down"



JIMMY PAGE (THE YARDBIRDS, LED ZEPPELIN)

With Jeff Beck's departure from the Yardbirds in 1966, Jimmy Page took over lead guitar duties and assumed a more directorial role. Although this marked the Yardbirds' most commercially unsuccessful period, it also produced some of their most overtly psychedelic rock. On 1967's *Little Games*, Page played his guitar with a bow on the middle break of "Tinker Tailor," used DADGAD

Page produced some of the Yardbirds' most overtly psychedelic rock

tuning on the acoustic guitar jam "White Summer," employed audio loops on "Glimpses," and combined distortion and wah on the October 1967 single "Ten Little Indians." As the Yardbirds transitioned to Led Zeppelin, Page's psychedelic efforts continued to a lesser extent but with decidedly more skill. The solo break on "Dazed and Confused" shows him merging psychedelic rock into hard rock, while the trippy "Whole Lotta Love" finds him conjuring atonal guitar swells and sirens sounds. While the first psychedelic rock era had died out by 1970, Page continued to explore elements of it in songs like "Friends," "Achilles Last Stand" and "Kashmir," the latter two of which aren't so far removed from the dirge-like incantations of Yardbirds cuts like "Still I'm Sad" and "Glimpses." — CS

TOP TRACK: "Dazed and Confused"



SYD BARRETT (PINK FLOYD, SOLO)

Syd Barrett picked up the guitar during the skiffle boom before falling under the spell of the blues. In the mid 1960s, he named his combo the Pink Floyd after American bluesmen Pink Anderson and Floyd Council. The group might have continued in that vein if Barrett hadn't begun dropping acid regularly, opening his mind to a host of new avenues of musical exploration. By April 1966, months before Hendrix arrived in London, Pink Floyd were performing an extended jam called "Interstellar Overdrive," on which Barrett created searing swells of echo by sliding his Zippo lighter over the strings of a Danelectro or Fender Telecaster, which he plugged into a Binson Echorec. The group's wild improvisations made them

the flagship group for London's psychedelic rock scene, but their momentum was short-lived. Following a disastrous tour of America in 1968, Barrett eventually drifted away from the group, an early acid casualty. Working solo, in 1970 he released *The Madcap Laughs* and *Barrett*, a pair of largely acoustic albums filled with whimsical and charmingly eccentric tunes that proved influential to future psychedelic purveyors. Sadly, his continued mental deterioration led him to retire from music and become a recluse. "All I ever wanted to do as a kid was play guitar properly and jump around," he told *Rolling Stone* in 1971, "but too many people got in the way." — CS

TOP TRACK: "Astronomy Dominé"

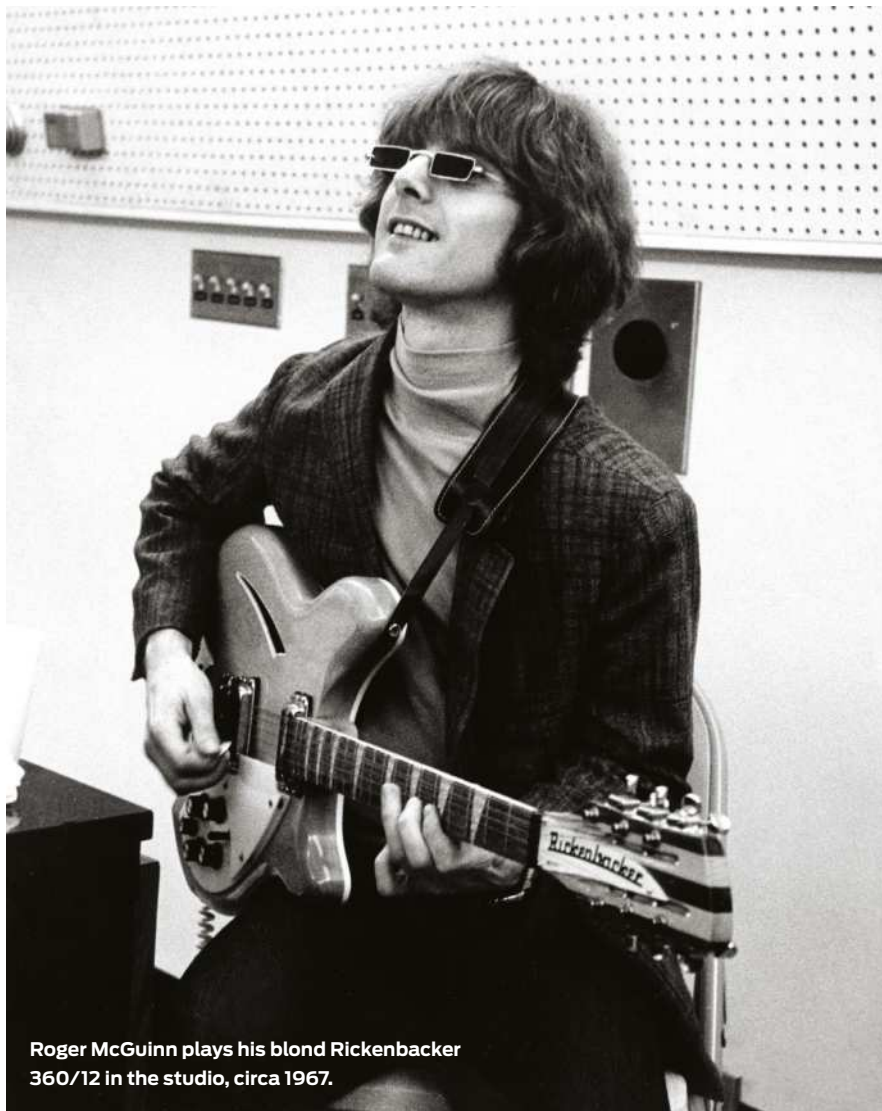
ROGER MCGUINN (THE BYRDS)

The Byrds were among the first bands to have success in the folk-rock genre in 1965, with their jangling electric version of Bob Dylan's "Mr. Tambourine Man," featuring Jim (Roger) McGuinn's languid vocals and ringing 12-string fretwork on a Rickenbacker 360/12. The group continued in this vein over the next year and two albums, during which time they also released their hit folk-rock cover of Pete Seeger's "Turn! Turn! Turn!"

But with 1966's "Eight Miles High," they made what is considered the breakthrough psychedelic recording, with McGuinn channeling the cascading modal melodies of saxophonist John Coltrane and funneling them through the ragas of sitarist Ravi Shankar. While touring the U.S. in 1965, McGuinn had acquired an early portable cassette deck and recorded Coltrane's *Africa/Brass* and *Impressions* albums, along with some music by Shankar, who was then becoming popular in the West. As McGuinn told *The Guardian*, the Byrds' nascent attempt at psychedelia "actually came about as a tribute to John Coltrane. It was our attempt to play jazz... I was in love with his saxophone playing," he said. "All those funny little notes and fast stuff at the bottom of the range."

McGuinn's guitar for much of this classic era was his Rickenbacker 360/12, which he purchased after seeing George Harrison play one in *A Hard Day's Night*. He added a Vox Treble Booster to his setup in 1966 at the suggestion of Jefferson Airplane's Paul Kantner, who also played a Rickenbacker 12-string. "I took the Rick apart and installed it in the guitar," McGuinn said. Compression, a key element to his sonorous guitar sound, was added liberally in the studio, although McGuinn never found an outboard compressor that he liked well enough to use in performance. "Not until Rickenbacker designed my signature guitar with the built-in compressor did I find one that worked for me," he said of his late-1980s 370/12 RM model. — CS

TOP TRACK: "Eight Miles High"



Roger McGuinn plays his blond Rickenbacker 360/12 in the studio, circa 1967.

STEPHEN STILLS, NEIL YOUNG AND RICHIE FURAY (BUFFALO SPRINGFIELD)

After making their debut in the budding folk-rock movement with the 1966 hit "For What It's Worth," Buffalo Springfield delivered their entry in the psychedelic rock pantheon with 1967's *Buffalo Springfield Again*. It's a stunning mix of folk, soul, rock and baroque pop that stands the test of time with its elegant songcraft, potent arrangements and the guitar work of Stephen Stills, Neil Young and Richie Furay. "Neil had a fondness for Gretsch guitars, which rubbed off on me, so the original Buffalo Springfield sound was comprised primarily of Gretsches," Stills notes. "Richie got an Epiphone to saw on." On *Buffalo Springfield Again*, Stills' "Rock & Roll Woman," "Everydays," "Hung Upside Down" and "Bluebird" have psychedelia's requisite stinging fuzz

(from left) Stephen Stills, Dewey Martin, Neil Young, Richie Furay and Jim Fielder



guitar lines and touches of moody tremolo and reverberating guitar. But it's the group's foray into baroque pop that dazzles on Young's "Broken Arrow" and the gorgeously orchestrated "Expecting to Fly." The group broke up soon after, but its brief run was influential to the California country rock that emerged in the early '70s, another example of psych-rock's unlikely progeny. — CS

TOP TRACK: "Expecting to Fly"

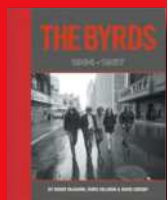


Chris Hillman departs
a tour bus in 1965.

BYRDS'-EYE VIEW

The group's classic era comes into focus through the surviving members' words and a trove of legendary photographs.

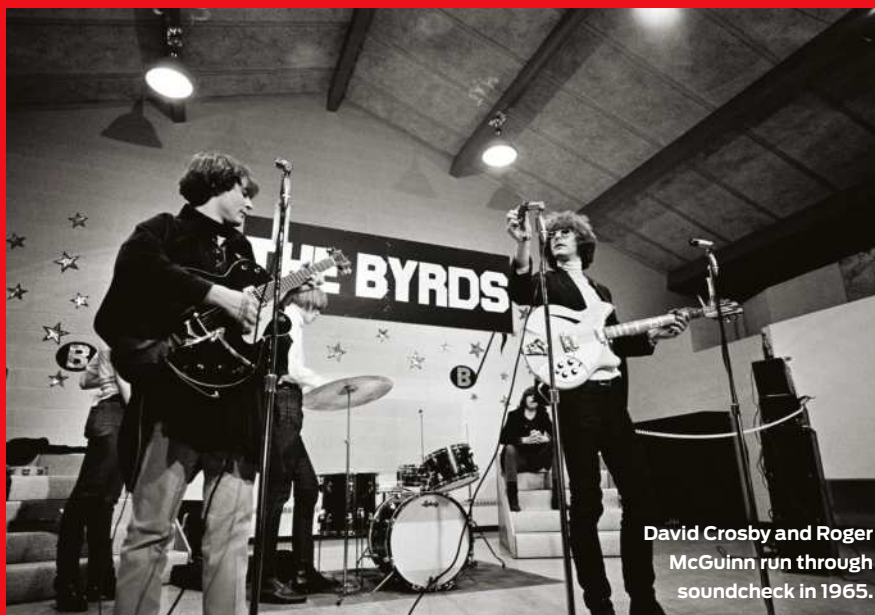
"Being in the Byrds was a detour to my dream of being a folk singer," Roger McGuinn says. "It was a very special detour, and one I will always hold close to my heart." Now a visual history of the group's remarkable trip comes together in *The Byrds: 1964–1967*, a 400-page art book curated by McGuinn and former members David Crosby and Chris Hillman.



The three musicians drew more than 500 images from a trove taken by legendary photographers like Henry Diltz, Jim Marshall and Linda McCartney. More than a photographic journey, *The*

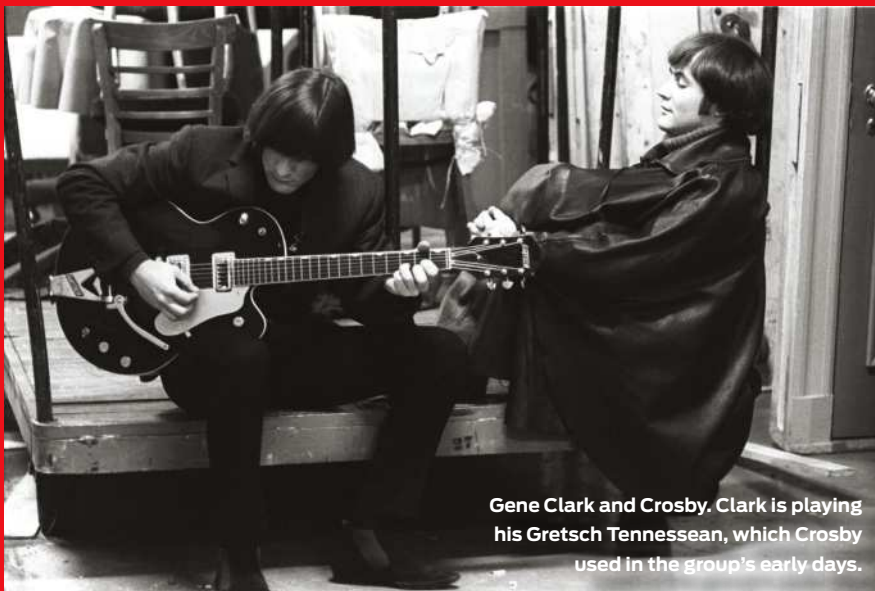
Byrds: 1964–1967 is threaded with McGuinn's, Crosby's and Hillman's reminiscences. Best of all, of course, are the many shots showing McGuinn and Crosby with their guitars. *The Byrds: 1964–1967* is available in a Standard version (\$125) and three hand-signed editions: Deluxe (\$350), Super Deluxe (\$475) and Super Deluxe with fine-art print (\$1,700). Visit byrdsbook.com for more information.

BARRY FEINSTEIN PHOTOGRAPHY, INC.



David Crosby and Roger
McGuinn run through
soundcheck in 1965.

JIM DICKSON ARCHIVE, COURTESY OF HENRY DILTZ PHOTOGRAPHY



Gene Clark and Crosby. Clark is playing
his Gretsch Tennesseean, which Crosby
used in the group's early days.

KEN WILLIAMS (THE ELECTRIC PRUNES)

There is perhaps no better example of classic-era psychedelic rock than the Electric Prunes' 1967 single "I Had Too Much to Dream (Last Night)." Selected by Lenny Kaye to lead off his seminal 1972 psychedelic compilation, *Nuggets*, the song checks all the essential boxes, including heavy tremolo and fuzz guitars and snaky Eastern-inspired lead lines that swell up from the record's depths. Credit for the latter goes to Ken Williams, who used his sunburst 1958 Gibson Les Paul — purchased for \$285 in 1967 — to play the track's stinging fuzzed-out intro. "That would be my 15 minutes of fame," Williams told

ThePsychedelicGuitar.com. "Those are the hardest to make, as most players are so ready to show you they can shred." Starting out as a L.A. surf act in 1965, the Prunes landed a gig opening for Bo Diddley at the Troubadour before honing their trademark psychedelic sound. Those stylings tended to obscure the fact that Williams was a terrific blues-rock guitarist, something immediately evident to anyone who's heard his lead playing on "I Got My Mojo Workin'" and "Smokestack Lightning" from the Prunes' live album, *Stockholm 67*. — CS
TOP TRACK: "I Had Too Much to Dream (Last Night)"

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES (PRUNES)



Ken Williams (far left) played a 'Burst on
the Prunes' seminal psych-rock classic.

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ROBBY KRIEGER (THE DOORS)

Formed in Los Angeles in 1965, the Doors turned their vision of psychedelic music into a pop phenomenon that resulted in millions of records sold in the wake of recording six studio albums in five years. The Doors didn't ride the same wave that buoyed rock bands from the San Francisco scene, and, perhaps because of that, the music that Jim Morrison, Ray Manzarek, Robby Krieger and John Densmore created is timeless. Innate talent may have been the main reason why the band developed so quickly, although having a residency at L.A.'s London Fog — where they played four to five sets a day — as well as becoming the house band at the Whisky A Go Go on Hollywood's Sunset Strip certainly helped them forge their sound. However, to account for what the Doors accomplished, one has to appreciate how the sum of the parts made the magic happen.

"Jim told us at the very beginning, 'I've got this concert in my head. I'd like you guys to help me get it out,'" John Densmore recalls. Morrison's behavior was unpredictable, to be sure, but he was a poet who possessed a voice like no other. As Krieger says, "Jim had the most amazing vocal range I've ever heard. And not only the range but the power — and he was never out of tune. Jim was a total natural."

"Jim told us, 'I've got this concert in my head. I'd like you guys to help me get it out'"

Krieger was influenced by players that ranged from flamenco-master Sabicas to Chuck Berry, Albert King, Wes Montgomery, Bob Dylan and Ravi Shankar (to name a few), but it's not easy to pin down where outside influences show up in his songs, even the early ones he wrote, such as "Light My Fire," "Love Her Madly," "Touch Me" and "Love Me Two Times." "Honestly,"



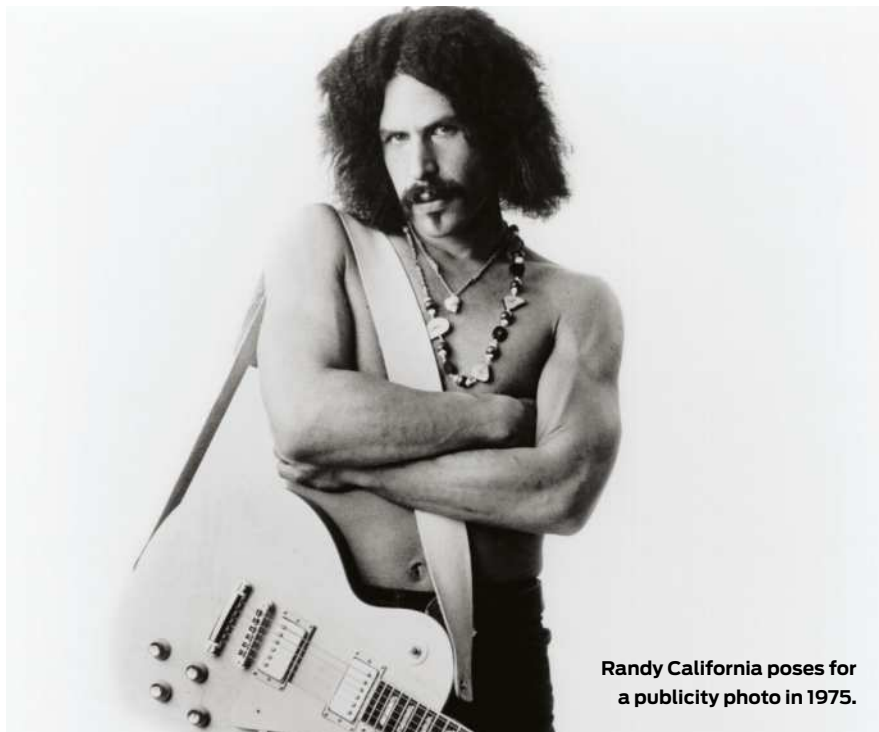
Robby Krieger sits for a portrait with his 1963 José Ramírez flamenco, circa 1967.

Krieger says, "I only stole guitar ideas to write songs out of them, never to copy someone else's playing style. The only exception to that might be Duane Allman, whose slide style I really dug."

What we know is that Robby came into his own with astonishing speed after moving from flamenco and folk to electric guitar, where his jazz-inspired playing and round, rich tone quickly become sonic signatures for the Doors, particularly on "Light My Fire," where Krieger's melodic lead so perfectly balances Manzarek's charging, harpsichord-like organ work and Morrison's charismatic crooning and screaming.

On the early albums, Krieger played a 1964 Gibson SG Special with P-90s, which he mainly ran through Fender Twin Reverbs, often adding a Maestro

Fuzz-Tone for grind. In the studio, he says, "I always like to be really near the amp, to keep the dynamics going between the guitar and amp. Engineers would always want to put the amp in an iso booth, but that never worked for me." He also varied his fingerstyle technique to get the sounds he was after, such as, intentionally or not, making the solo on "Roadhouse Blues" sound like he was using a pick. "Robby never played with a pick," Densmore recalled. "He had these long fingernails on his right hand from playing flamenco, so when he'd take a solo or play a riff, he would play it with his fingers. They'd sort of crawl across the strings like a crab. It gave him this very unique, liquid style, a gloriously impressionistic sound." — AT
TOP TRACK: "Spanish Caravan"



Randy California poses for a publicity photo in 1975.

RANDY CALIFORNIA (SPIRIT)

History has not been kind to Randy California. His name is stubbornly linked to his estate's failed 2014 lawsuit claiming Jimmy Page and Robert Plant copied his 1968 composition "Taurus" to write "Stairway to Heaven." He should be remembered instead for his work with the band Spirit and as one of the great early hard rock guitarists.

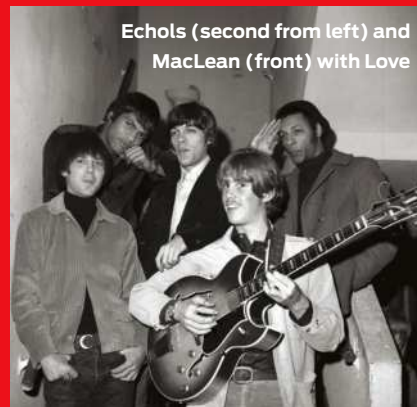
Born Randy Craig Wolfe, he was a 15-year-old Los Angeles transplant when he met Jimi Hendrix at Manny's Music in New York City, in 1966, and joined his band, Jimmy James and the Blue Flames. It was Hendrix who dubbed him "California," to distinguish him from the group's bassist, Randy Palmer (whom Hendrix nicknamed "Texas," also for reasons of geography). When Chas Chandler took Hendrix off to London, California and his stepfather, drummer Ed Cassidy, formed their own group with singer Jay Ferguson, bassist Mark Andes and keyboardist John Locke.

Calling themselves Spirit, the band debuted in 1968 with their self-titled debut, a psychedelic pop masterpiece that featured "Taurus." A U.S. tour that year saw Led Zeppelin as their opening act, a stint that would later bolster claims that Page had more than a passing familiarity with Spirit's music. The group drifted from psychedelia for its next two releases, although California's

"I Got a Line on You," from 1968's *The Family That Plays Together*, and "Dark Eyed Woman," from 1969's *Clear*, were cut firmly in the style. Spirit returned to the genre in earnest with 1970's *Twelve Dreams of Dr. Sardonicus*, their lowest-charting album at that point, although, ironically, it included a song for which the band remains well-known today, the folk-rock tune "Nature's Way."

What's remarkable about California's guitar playing is not just his stinging tone or versatility with everything from blues and folk to the blistering maelstrom of wails that peals over the outro of "Nothing to Hide." It's also his supreme gift for melody that graces his solos. Early on, he used a Danelectro U56, but later photos show him with Fender Stratocasters, Gibson Les Pauls and an Ampeg Dan Armstrong Lucite guitar. Consistent to his setup for at least the first four Spirit albums was a Jordan Bosstone jack-mounted fuzz unit, which he taped to his guitar's body for extra security onstage. Among the best examples of his psychedelic skills can be heard in "I Got a Line on You," "Uncle Jack," "Mechanical World," "Dark Eyed Woman" and his harmonized solo on "1984." He died too young, at age 45, in 1997, saving his son from a rip current while swimming in Hawaii. — CS

TOP TRACK: "Dark Eyed Woman"



Echols (second from left) and MacLean (front) with Love

JOHNNY ECHOLS AND BRYAN MACLEAN (LOVE)

They once featured future Manson Family member Bobby Beausoleil on guitar, and leader Arthur Lee was friends with Jimi Hendrix. But Love stood out among the late-'60s psychedelic bands for other reasons, including their interracial lineup and a psychedelic approach that drew from Spanish styles rather than the typical Eastern influences. The group started out performing a mix of garage rock and Byrds-influenced folk rock but took a more ambitious approach on their second album, 1966's *Da Capo*, which incorporated baroque rock as well as jazz rock on the 18-minute jam "Revelation."

Forever Changes has gone on to be one of the most celebrated LPs of the first psychedelic era

But it was *Forever Changes*, from the following year, that established the group's largely acoustic guitar-driven approach to psychedelia. The tandem of lead guitarist Johnny Echols (who favored a Stratosphere Twin double-neck) and rhythm guitarist Bryan MacLean (often seen with a Gibson Barney Kessel) paired together smoothly on tracks like "Alone Again Or" and "Maybe the People Would Be the Times or Between Clark and Hilldale," where Echols plied his nimble fretwork against MacLean's steady rhythm. Overlooked at the time, *Forever Changes* has gone on to be one of the most celebrated albums of the first psychedelic era, and one that continues to sound fresh rather than stylistically dated and derivative. — CS

TOP TRACK: "Maybe the People Would Be the Times or Between Clark and Hilldale"

JORMA KAUKONEN (JEFFERSON AIRPLANE)

If the Summer of Love had a poster-child band, it was Jefferson Airplane, who started out playing the folk rock featured on their first album, *Jefferson Airplane Takes Off*. But in 1967, with Grace Slick taking over as lead singer, their album *Surrealistic Pillow* soared into the stratosphere, fueled by “Somebody to Love” and “White Rabbit.” Guitarist Jorma Kaukonen (who gave the band its name) was a folk and country-blues fingerpicker whose style was heavily influenced by having spent his youth in Pakistan, where he would listen to local sitar players, something that was very evident in his snaky phrasing.

“The fact that I had listened to a lot of ethnic music played a role in what I did with the Airplane,” he said. “I also didn’t really know how to play the electric guitar, so I was open to adapting a lot of stuff, which is where things like the moderately psychedelic solos on ‘White Rabbit’ and ‘Somebody to Love’ were coming from. People say, ‘How did you figure that out?’ My answer is, ‘I didn’t know any better.’ I couldn’t figure out how to do a lot of the stuff that I heard people like Michael Bloomfield doing, so I just dicked around until that came out.”



With Jefferson Airplane in 1967



Jorma Kaukonen performs with Hot Tuna in 1977.

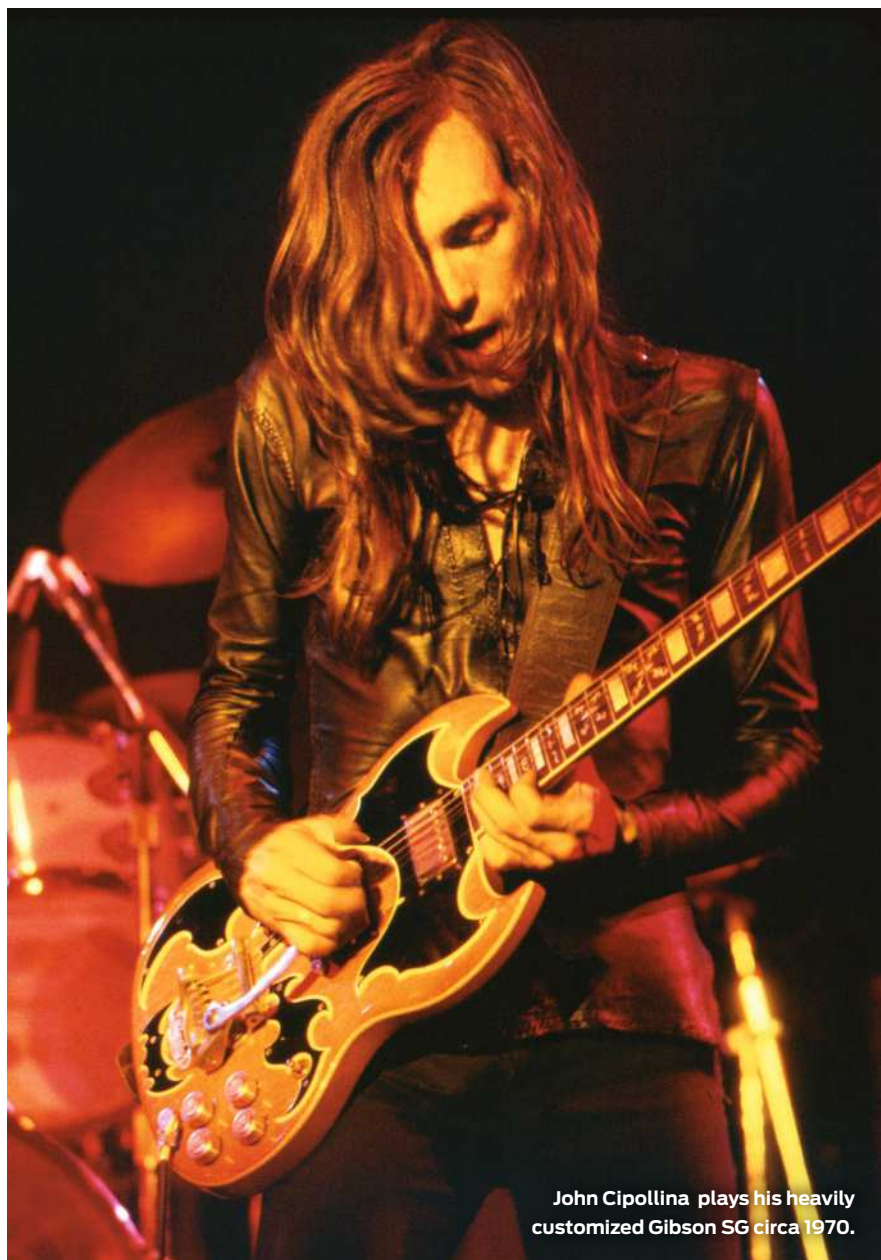
Kaukonen says the band’s first truly psychedelic album was 1967’s *After Bathing at Baxter’s*, mainly due to the jamming. “At that time we were getting into the technology of learning how to play electric instruments in the style that became our benchmark, and that was the first time where [bassist] Jack Casady and I really start to stretch out.”

Kaukonen also discovered the wah-wah in 1967 and moved from a Guild Thunderbird (as heard on *Surrealistic Pillow*) to a Gibson ES-345 stereo guitar that he ran through four Fender Twin Reverbs. “The front pickup was the wah channel and the back

“People say, ‘How did you figure that out?’ My answer is, ‘I didn’t know any better.’”

pickup was the Ampeg Scrambler channel. That was it.” Kaukonen called the 1968 live album *Bless Its Pointed Little Head* “the essence of what the Airplane did.” He and Casady formed Hot Tuna in 1969 and have released some 21 albums. — AT

TOP TRACK: “White Rabbit”



John Cipollina plays his heavily customized Gibson SG circa 1970.

JOHN CIPOLLINA (QUICKSILVER MESSENGER SERVICE)

Songs like “Gold and Silver,” “Who Do You Love” and “Pride of Man” gave Quicksilver Messenger Service a sound that stood out from other hippie-era San Francisco bands. But it was the impossibly slender lead guitarist John Cipollina who stole the spotlight with his peekaboo ‘do, biting tone and signature warbly vibrato. Wearing two fingerpicks, Cipollina played a cherry-red Gibson SG that he customized with batwing pickguards, binding and a Bigsby tailpiece. He also inlaid the fingerboard with ivory, added slabs of ebony on the headstock and neck heel to enhance sustain, and topped the control

knobs with San Francisco Mint Mercury dimes. The guitar was wired for stereo so that he could feed a rig consisting of a pair of Standel solid-state bass amps for the low frequencies and a pair of Twin Reverbs for the highs. “I like the rapid punch of solid-state for the bottom and the rodent-gnawing distortion of the tubes on top,” he said. Cipollina could also kick on a Fender Dual Showman head that powered six Wurlitzer horns, and his effects included reverb, an Astra Echo, a Standel Modulux vibrato, a Maestro Fuzz-Tone and a Vox wah. “My love for electronic gadgetry has been a shaping influence on my playing,” he revealed. “The trick, however, is learning how to use them just a little bit.” — AT

TOP TRACK: “Fresh Air”

Moby Grape pose in 1967. (from left) Bob Mosley, Jerry Miller, Don Stevenson, Peter Lewis and Skip Spence



PETER LEWIS, SKIP SPENCE & JERRY MILLER (MOBY GRAPE)

Moby Grape stormed onto the San Francisco scene in 1967 with their self-titled debut album. That it happened at all was thanks to Columbia Records’ unprecedented promotion, the triple-guitar lineup of Peter Lewis, Skip Spence and Jerry Miller (who still plays the Gibson L-5 archtop nicknamed Buelah that he purchased in 1966), and the fact that all five members wrote superbly crafted songs. As experienced players, they had great groove and harmonious vocals that helped establish them as one of the pre-eminent psychedelic bands of the ‘60s with songs such as “Can’t Be So Bad,” “8:05” and “Come in the Morning.” It’s impossible not to still be knocked out by Spence’s “Omaha,” with its furious guitar assault that helped propel it to number 95 in *Rolling Stone’s* 100 Greatest Guitar Songs of All Time.

“I always thought the world of Moby Grape,” said Sam Andrew, guitarist and founding member of Big Brother and the Holding Company. “They were guys who’d obviously been in clubs every night since the mid ‘50s. It’s amazing what they came up with. Skip Spence and [bassist] Bob Mosley brought the psychedelic edge to that band, and they had a lot going.” — AT

TOP TRACK: “Omaha”



The Grateful Dead perform in Ann Arbor, Michigan, August 13, 1967.

JERRY GARCIA AND BOB WEIR (GRATEFUL DEAD)

Born in the full glory of the psychedelic era, the Grateful Dead began their journey as Mother McCree's Uptown Jug Champions before morphing into an electric band called the Warlocks, in 1965. As guitarist Bob Weir told *GP* senior editor Jas Obrecht in 1997, "We were still the Warlocks when we played the first Kool-Aid Acid Tests [*a series of multimedia/LSD events hosted by author Ken*

"We didn't turn our backs on psychedelic rock so much as we started looking in other directions"

Kesey], and by that time we were taking LSD and playing psychedelized. We began turning up loud pretty quickly. From the start it was faster, looser, louder and hairier. We were going to see what this baby'll do. It helped that we were playing in an uncritical situation. What didn't help was that we were completely disoriented, so we had to fend for ourselves and improvise. We got better at it as time went on, so we could take a pretty massive dose and hang in there for a while."

Classic psychedelic-era Dead tunes include the strangely beautiful "Rosemary" (from 1969's *Aoxomoxoa*); "The Eleven" (1969's *Live/Dead*), a mostly instrumental jam in 11/4 that features wall-to-wall wailing by Garcia; "China Cat Sunflower" (*Europe '72*), with its interlocking guitar riff creating the counterpoint to one of Robert Hunter's most mesmerizing compositions; and "Viola Lee Blues" (1967's *The Grateful Dead*), of which bassist Phil Lesh said, "To my ear, it's the only track that sounds at all like we did at the time."

Weir also cited a November 1965 version of "Caution (Do Not Stop on Tracks)" as representing the band's truest acid vision. "That was sort of an ironic name for the tune, because caution was anything but what the tune was about. By the first album [*1967's The Grateful Dead*] we had moved past our psychedelic era. We had gotten to a point of diminishing returns after taking acid for a couple of years. We'd started going back to the same places, and so it seemed, Okay, we got what we could out of that. Let's move on. We didn't turn our backs on it so much as we started looking in other directions. It sure as hell contributed to a willingness to listen to, and try to beg, borrow or steal from, other musical forms." — *AT*

TOP TRACK: "Dark Star"



MARK LOOMIS AND NED TORNEY (THE CHOCOLATE WATCH BAND)

Formed in 1965 by guitarists Mark Loomis and Ned Torney, the Chocolate Watch Band released their first album, *No Way Out*, in 1967 and followed it a year later with *The Inner Mystique*. The guitar work of Loomis (who died in 2014) was inventive and refreshingly original, his playing delightfully angular and completely devoid of clichés. No

Outside-the-box songwriting and production values made them one of the most organic and original-sounding psychedelic bands of the time.

doubt the Chocolate Watch Band's sound was strongly influenced by their early interest in covering songs by obscure British groups instead of playing Top 10 hits like everyone else. "Dark Side of the Mushroom" offers a good taste of how Loomis orchestrated guitar parts, as do "I Ain't No Miracle Worker" and "Gossamer Wings," both tour-de-force examples of the outside-the-box songwriting and production values that made the group one of the most organic and original-sounding psychedelic bands of the time.

Although the CWB have dissolved and reformed many times, they reunited and got back in the studio in 2013 (with guitarist Tim Abbott replacing Loomis) to record the critically acclaimed album *This Is My Voice*. To wit, the debut single, "Secret Rendezvous" was heralded as the "coolest song in the world" on Little Steven's *Underground Garage* program in February 2019. — *AT*

TOP TRACK: "Secret Rendezvous"

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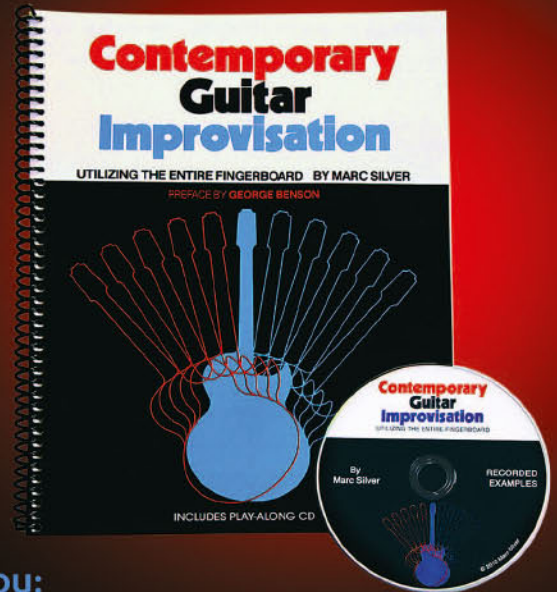
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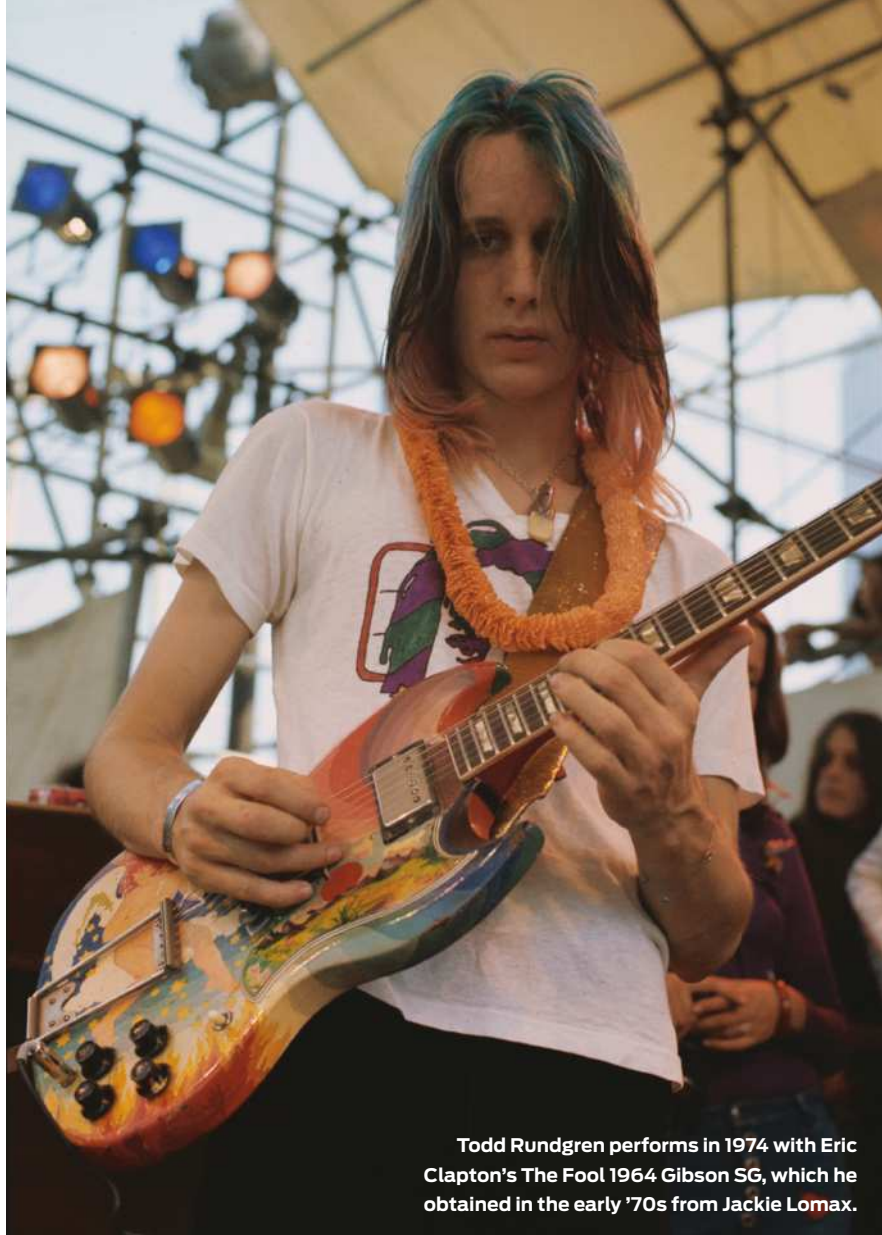
TODD RUNDGREN (NAZZ, SOLO)

As the guitarist and main songwriter for Philadelphia's Nazz, Todd Rundgren emerged in 1968 as a 20-year-old wunderkind of the budding power-pop genre. His ambitious mix of musical styles doomed the group's chances — imagine Eric Clapton leading the Who, with Laura Nyro on piano — but it resulted in psychedelic gems like “Open My Eyes,” “Forget All About It” and “A Beautiful Song,” an opus that merged all of Rundgren's nascent musical interests into 11 breathtaking minutes of orchestrated proto-prog balladry.

He soon abandoned Nazz to make his mark largely as a piano-playing singer-songwriter, but in 1973, years after psychedelic rock had been laid to rest, Rundgren gave the genre a late, last gasp with his 1973 masterpiece, *A Wizard/A True Star*. Riding high at the time from the success of his hit “Hello, It's Me,” he abandoned his career as “the male Carole King” and set out to explore his emerging interest in the music of artists like Yes, Frank Zappa and John McLaughlin's Mahavishnu Orchestra. Fortified by psychedelic mushrooms and Ritalin, Rundgren settled into his newly created New York City studio, Secret Sound, and began composing and recording the music of his mind. The result was a psychedelic mashup of musical styles that included power-pop, hard rock, show tunes, blue-eyed soul and instrumental synth-pop. Largely considered a career mistake at the time of its release, *A Wizard/A True Star* has since been celebrated as a landmark work of psychedelic electronica, and hailed by artists ranging from Trent Reznor to modern psychedelic acts like Tame Impala.

Rundgren's bizarre sound explorations continued on his next release, 1974's *Todd*. Although notable mostly for the keyboard-driven hit “A Dream Goes on Forever,” it also saw him firmly re-embrace the electric guitar, the instrument with which he has ever since been associated. — CS

TOP TRACK: “No. 1 Lowest Common Denominator”



Todd Rundgren performs in 1974 with Eric Clapton's The Fool 1964 Gibson SG, which he obtained in the early '70s from Jackie Lomax.

ERIK BRANN (IRON BUTTERFLY)

Erik Brann's sustaining fuzz-toned lead lines and stinging vibrato made for quintessential psychedelia. While San Diego's Iron Butterfly are remembered best for their 1968 stoner-rock classic “In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida,” they were also prog-rock pioneers cut from the same cloth as Deep Purple, performing everything from pop (“Flowers and Beads”) to proto-prog hard rock (“Are You Happy”). But without question, Brann's fuzz-wah-drenched workout on the 17-minute “In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida” is his finest moment on record, from his snarling blues riffing to the elephant trumpets he conjures up near the solo section's conclusion. The track may have been pretentious then, and remains so now, but Brann's performance crystalizes



psychedelic guitar playing at this singular point in rock's evolution. — CS
TOP TRACK: “In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida”



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John Squire performs with the Stone Roses at the Corn Exchange, in Cambridge, England, in 1995.

JOHN SQUIRE (THE STONE ROSES)

When the Stone Roses' self-titled debut album appeared in 1989, guitarist John Squire became the biggest indie guitar hero since Johnny Marr. Both hailing from Manchester, England, they exhibited more than a few similarities in their styles, but Squire's playing channeled a much deeper '60s groove. He made no secret of his love for Jimi Hendrix, favoring a Strat for iconic songs such as "I Am the Resurrection" and "She Bangs the Drums." The trademark sound of the early Stone Roses records, however, was the clean, chiming arpeggios that Squire utilized, played on a Gretsch Country Gentleman or a Hofner T4S.

The Roses' influence on the U.K. scene was instant and immense, spawning numerous similar bands in their wake and igniting the indie/retro/dance phenomenon that became known as Madchester. Squire managed the neat trick of creating constantly evolving, interesting guitar parts that could stand up in their own right, eschewing the obvious for intricate, rippling waterfalls of arpeggios, riding on waves of delay and reverb that transported the listener back to the late-'60s summertime vibe of

the Byrds. The band's follow-up album, *Second Coming*, released five years later, saw them morph into a Zep-like riff-based behemoth. Shortly after its release, the Stone Roses imploded. Squire has been relatively inactive on the musical front ever since, with a handful of releases to his name. — Mark McStea

TOP TRACK: "I Wanna Be Adored"

ROBYN HITCHCOCK AND KIMBERLEY REW (THE SOFT BOYS)

Mostly ignored, often hated, England's the Soft Boys debuted in 1979 with *A Can of Bees*, an odd art-punk entry that took an edgy approach to late-'60s rock and prog, wrapping it up with witty wordplay and surreal subject matter.

Guitarists and songwriters Robyn Hitchcock and Kimberley Rew gave a less abrasive treatment to their classic-rock influences on its follow-up, 1980's *Underwater Moonlight*, resulting in an album that is credited for launching the neo-psychedelic revolution. With it, Hitchcock and Rew assimilated the ringing guitars of the Beatles and Byrds with Hitchcock's apparent admiration



Hitchcock (left) and Rew in 2013

for Syd Barrett and Dylan-esque absurdity. A song like "I Wanna Destroy You" filters punk through psychedelia's jangling guitars and plangent harmonies, while "Queen of Eyes" anticipates the brand of chiming rock that R.E.M. (who cited the Soft Boys' influence) would bring to U.S. college rock radio within a few years. On the hypnotic title track, Hitchcock's and Rew's syncopated tremolo guitar lines ping off one another, segueing into power-pop and funk on the chorus and even delivering a raga-tinged solo in the break.

Although the group broke up shortly afterward, *Underwater Moonlight* paved the way for Britain's neo-psychedelic acid-punk scene as well as shoegaze and dream pop. — CS

TOP TRACK: "Queen of Eyes"

The Rain Parade



THE PAISLEY UNDERGROUND

Signs of a psychedelic rock rebirth flickered in Los Angeles in the early 1980s. Operating under the banner of the Paisley Underground, bands like the Three O'Clock, the Rain Parade, the Dream Syndicate and — the movement's most successful group — the Bangles merged elements of late-1960s jangle rock with the DIY aesthetic and attitude of the then-recent punk movement.

In the spirit of the British Invasion groups who covered classic rock and roll, the Paisley Underground bands were less concerned about fidelity to any classic sensibility and more interested in adding their own interpretation to it. The Three O'Clock demonstrated range beyond the psych-rock realm, and guitarist Louis Gutierrez pounded out slashing power chords and circular riffs with his Rickenbacker 330 and Fender Telecaster that made the band the most rocking of the scene. The Dream Syndicate drew influences from the well of New York City acts like the Velvet Underground and Television, something evident on their single "Tell Me When It's Over." But guitarist Steve Wynn could also deliver feedback-drenched jams like "The Days of Wine and Roses" that harkened back to psychedelic's classic era.

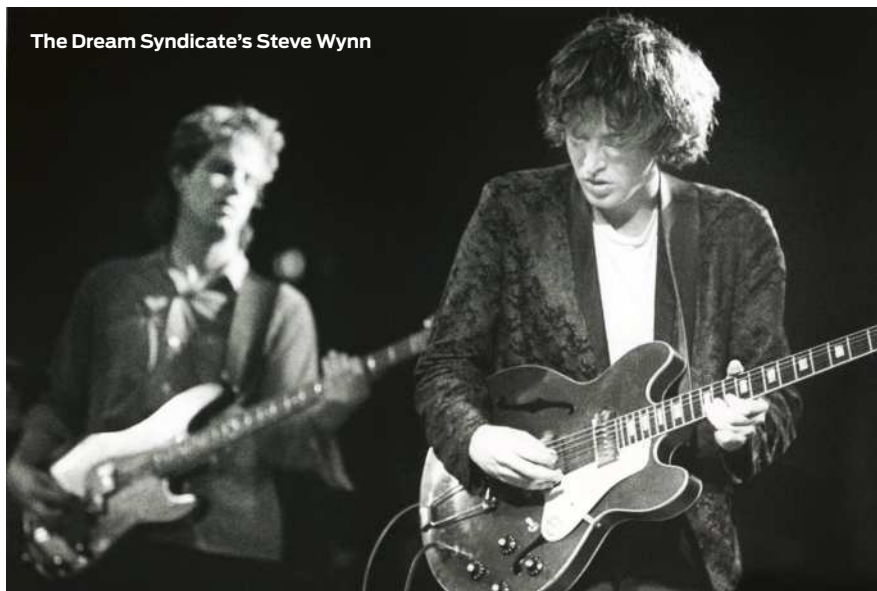
The Rain Parade were the most traditional of the groups. Guitarists David Roback and Matt Piucci laid down lovely arpeggiating melodies in Byrds-like fashion, and their debut album, 1983's *Emergency Third Rail Power Trip*, was filled with flourishes of backward guitar, fuzz-tone and tremolo.

In the end it was the Bangles who would make the biggest impression of the Paisley Underground groups. Guitarists Susanna Hoffs and Vicki Peterson had solid power-pop chops with their respective Rickenbacker 320 and Vox guitars. And while there was little traditionally "psychedelic" about the Bangles, they showed flashes of it early on in songs like "Going Down to



The Bangles. (from left) Vicki Peterson, Susanna Hoffs and Michael Steele

The Dream Syndicate's Steve Wynn



Liverpool" (penned by former Soft Boys guitarist Kimberley Rew for his next group, Katrina and the Waves), "Dover Beach" and the Byrds-ian jangle of "Tell Me," and "Where Were You When I Needed You."

The Paisley Underground would influence many groups, including the U.K.'s Teardrop Explodes and Echo and the Bunnymen. But its most significant adherent was Prince [see page 65], who began to adopt psychedelic elements into his 1980s recordings and even called his label Paisley Park Records. He eventually signed up the Three O'Clock and wrote the Bangles' 1986 monster hit "Manic Monday." — CS

TOP TRACKS: "Dover Beach," The Bangles. "The Days of Wine and Roses," The Dream Syndicate. "Jet Fighter," The Three O'Clock. "I Look Around," The Rain Parade

Louis Gutierrez (right) with the Three O'Clock



PAUL NATKIN/GETTY IMAGES (THREE O'CLOCK); GIE KNAPS/GETTY IMAGES (DREAM SYNDICATE); LESTER COHEN/GETTY IMAGES (BANGLES); BRIAN McLAUGHLIN/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES (RAIN PARADE)

ANDY PARTRIDGE & DAVE GREGORY (XTC/THE DUKES OF STRATOSPHEAR)

If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, then the Dukes of Stratosphear were the most heartfelt tribute to classic 1960s psychedelia. The act was a side project for U.K. new wave band XTC, dreamed up by guitarist and singer Andy Partridge, who pushed bandmates Dave Gregory (guitar) and Colin Moulding (bass) to write and produce an album that sounded like it was made in 1967. In 1984, plans were drawn up and boundaries set for the project, to be released under the Dukes of Stratosphear pseudonym.

"There's Syd Barrett's Pink Floyd, the Yardbirds, plenty of psychedelic Beatles, the Byrds, the Hollies," Partridge said at the time, rattling off the acts who influenced the effort. "The criteria was to use older guitars, older amps and older techniques. We used the old thought as well. Everything was first take, which adds to that off-the-cuff feel a lot of those old records had."

The first Dukes release, the six-track mini-album *25 O'Clock*, appeared in 1985. Partridge's guitar work always stood apart from his contemporaries, his angular, dexterous riffs and rhythms mixed with soloing that never took the obvious route. But in the Dukes, both he and Gregory considerably expanded their range. Extended guitar wig-outs



Dave Gregory



Andy Partridge

were always a little frowned upon by the new wave taste police, but no such constraints applied to the excesses of the late-'60s psych giants.

Although XTC's role in it was initially kept secret, *25 O'Clock* outsold both that group's previous album and its next record, 1986's *Skylarking*, on which XTC continued to reflect their love for psychedelia. *Skylarking* producer Todd Rundgren, no stranger to excess, was tailor-made to focus the band's ambitions into a memorable album. Partridge's "Season Cycle" would be the record's strongest indicator of XTC's willingness to embrace the joys of late-'60s pop. Its melody and arrangement seemed to hop from Beach Boys-worthy lush harmonies to Beatles-like melodic hooks. "That's Really Super, Supergirl," meanwhile, managed to ally the trademarked XTC spikey rhythmic pulse to a lush, densely layered wall of vocals, and Gregory's effervescent solo — played on Eric Clapton's The Fool SG, then owned by Rundgren — injected a dose of infectious tomfoolery into the proceedings.

Partridge needed little persuasion to start working up songs for *Psonic Psunspot*, the second Dukes album, released in 1987. The tunes were more tightly focused this time, but once again,

the influences were everywhere and not too hard to spot. The opener, "Vanishing Girl," was more mid-'60s pop than psychedelia, but "Have You Seen Jackie" took the band back firmly into the world of "Arnold Layne"—esque Floyd. There was plenty of *Sgt. Pepper's*-era Beatles as well, and the inevitable hint of the Byrds on "You're My Drug." Partridge and Gregory didn't get as many opportunities to take flight on their guitars, and the album was much more song-focused than its predecessor, but they still crammed in a psychedelic masterclass, with magical fills, twists and turns.

XTC's *Oranges and Lemons*, from 1989, was the logical conclusion of the four-album psych-cycle. The group was still instantly recognizable as the one that turned the new wave rule book on its head, but the depth and breadth of songwriting and invention reached a new peak. XTC seemed to be fully liberated from the need to observe any rules or conventions, letting the music take them wherever the muse led them. In addition to creative freedom, it gave them a chart hit in the U.S. with "The Mayor of Simpleton," a track on which XTC found their voice between the excesses of the late '60s and the economy of the new wave aesthetic. — MM

TOP TRACK: "Vanishing Girl"



PRINCE

With 1984's *Purple Rain*, Prince gave his fans a hint of the shape of things to come. The influence of Jimi Hendrix was writ large everywhere you looked, but never more so than on the title track. While there was never any doubt about His Purpleness's killer chops, *Purple Rain* was the record that really secured his reputation as one of the greats.

One year later, Prince nailed his colors to the psychedelic mast with *Around the World in a Day*. But while the music embraced the style, no one would ever mistake the record as the work of anyone other than Prince. "Paisley Park" was the best example of his signature groove-based vibe married to a spacey,

Purple Rain hinted at things to come, with the influence of Hendrix writ large everywhere

retro feel, while "Raspberry Beret" captured the flavor of the Small Faces' "Itchycoo Park." Fans and critics were initially wrong-footed by his deep-dive into '60s sensibilities, but Prince clearly relished employing a much more rock-focused approach that let him showcase some of his greatest soloing, particularly on "Temptation." Although he moved away from the more obviously retro approach, *Sign O' the Times* had a couple of tracks that continued his dabbings, particularly "Starfish and Coffee" and "The Cross." — MM

TOP TRACK: "Raspberry Beret"



ROBERT SMITH (THE CURE/THE CURE)

The Cure's Robert Smith is vastly underrated as a guitarist, perhaps because his unique vocal stylings and distinctive image tend to overshadow his axe-ploits. While early recordings by the Cure feature Smith working a minimalist groove, it was always clear that there was plenty more under the hood. Smith's friendship with Siouxsie and the Banshees' bass player, Steve Severin, led to the idea of making an album together, and in 1983, they teamed up to release *Blue Sunshine* under the name the Glove. The two musicians' shared love of psychedelia delivered a record which has become something of a lost classic of the genre. Smith maintained the psych vibe into the next Cure album, *The Top*, the following year.

His playing on both albums is expansive and almost visceral at times, in opposition to much of his work with The Cure. He was clearly on a creative roll when he recorded *The Top*, perhaps emboldened by the artistic, if not commercial, success of *Blue Sunshine*. "Shake Dog Shake" grinds and lurches, "The Caterpillar" builds dissonant layers of jarring tones, and throughout it Smith revels in exploring, expanding and demolishing the boundaries of what the Cure should sound like. In one revealing quote, he offered a useful hint at how to obtain his sound, noting, "A lot of the things on our record that sound like heavy chorusing are actually just detuned instruments." — MM

TOP TRACK: "The Caterpillar"



JIM JAMES (MY MORNING JACKET)

A long, successful career and psychedelic music have rarely gone together. Jim James is certainly an exception to the rule. As the guitarist for My Morning Jacket, he's been at the forefront of the group's indie-art-country-psychedelic alt-rock since he formed the act in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1998. The band's music references everything from late-era Beach Boys to Bob Dylan and Marc Bolan, but the common thread throughout is James's plaintive vocal and warm, anthemic guitar lines that shimmer behind a mirage of spring reverb. For much of his band's 24 years he's used a Gibson ES-335, a devotion that was rewarded this year when Gibson issued the Jim James Signature ES-335 model.

"I use a 335 because it allows me to do everything I need to," James says. "But the important thing to remember

is you don't really know how it's going to work out until you're onstage with the guitar performing."

Equally important is the arsenal of pedals behind his psychedelic tones. Over the years, James has been seen with a range of effects at his feet, including, most recently, a Boss BD-2W Blues Driver Waza Craft, an Electro-Harmonix POG Polyphonic Octave Generator, a Spaceman Effects Orion Spring Reverb, and Universal Audio's Starlight Echo, Astra Modulation Machine and Golden Reverberator. Like every touring musician, James has seen his gear fail at crucial moments, but experience has taught him to go with the flow. "Sometimes, what seems like a bad thing can turn into a really cool opportunity," he offers.

Which leads to perhaps the most important thing: How he deals with his

performance. The otherworldly sense one gets from My Morning Jacket's music isn't just the result of James' psychedelic tones; it's also due to his ongoing discipline of prayer and acceptance. "I get down on my knees and pray before every show," he reveals. "I pray to the spirits that are there in the air and the dead people I met in my life. And I have to accept the outcome of the show is not in my hands fully.

"You can be super excited about playing a certain show you think is going to be really amazing, and then afterwards feel like it sucked. Or you could be playing some place you think isn't all that, and it ends up being one of the best shows of your life. There's no way you can understand it other than it's just the universe and spirits speaking."

— CS (from an interview by Rod Brakes)

TOP TRACK: "Circuital"

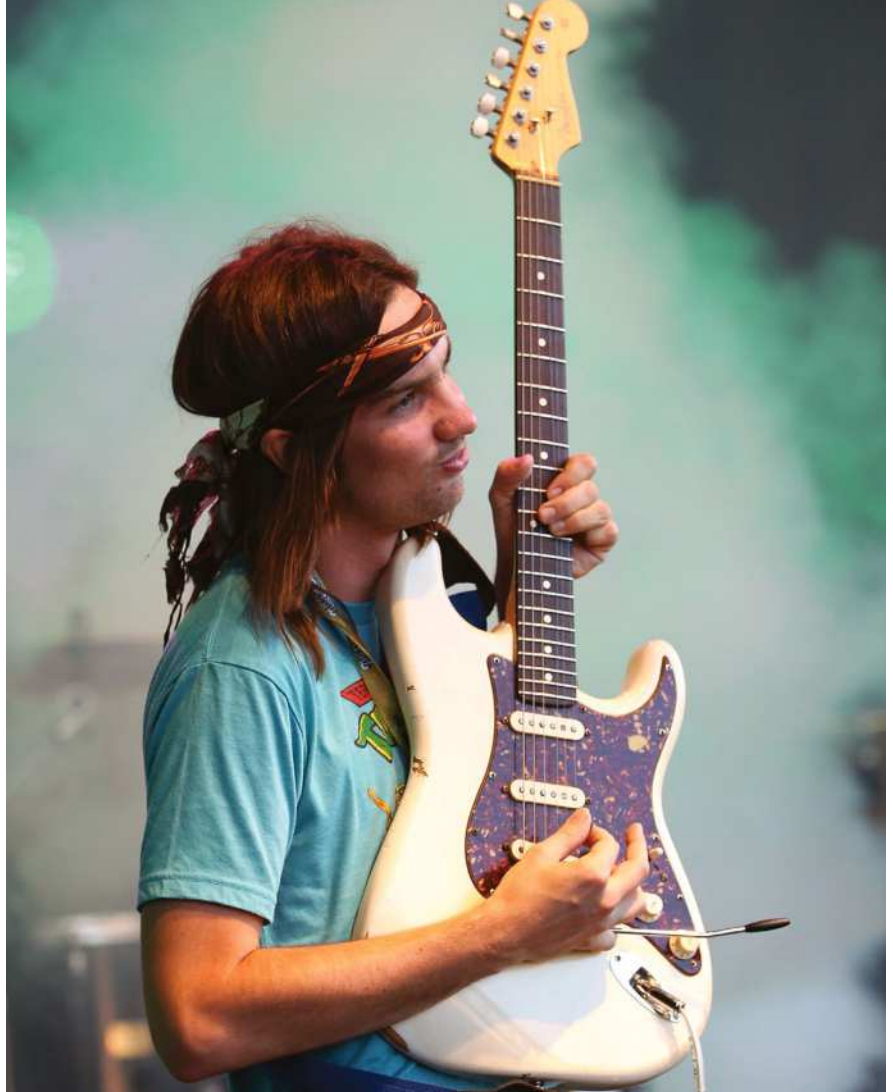


DAVID ROBACK (OPAL, MAZZY STAR)

If psych-rock was a fun experiment for many of the guitarists featured here, it was a discipline for David Roback. In 1983, after enjoying modest success with the Rain Parade [see page 63], Roback departed to form the band Clay Allison with fellow Paisley Underground musician bassist Kendra Smith, formerly of the Dream Syndicate. By 1984, they had changed their name to Opal, a beguiling name for a folk-country psychedelic outfit. As much as the Rain Parade were psych-rock revivalists, Opal were intent on moving beyond the genre's Byrdsian tropes. On their sole full-length, 1987's *Happy Nightmare Baby*, Roback peels off squalls of Crazy Horse-style distorted wah guitar on tracks like the loping country-punk "Relevation," the stoner-rocker "Siamese Trap" and the ethereal noise jam "Soul Giver," but he punctuates the proceedings with plenty of fine blues guitar lines, served up with a generous dose of distortion and reverb.

When Smith departed prior to their followup, Roback tapped Hope Sandoval, a young unsigned singer whose band he was producing. Changing their name to Mazzy Star, they took their songs at a slower pace and with more bare-bones arrangements that worked his sensuous guitar lines against Sandoval's tentative vocals. Their best-known song, "Fade Into You," is a good measure of their sound and a classic example of Roback's neo-psychedelic "dream pop" approach. It was also an odd and unplanned minor hit from an artist with no concern for commercial success. "It doesn't matter how well our records do," he told *The San Diego Union-Tribune* in 1990. "None of that matters, because we're completely free." Despite his low exposure, or perhaps because of it, Roback proved influential to artists ranging from Nada Surf's Matthew Caws to Dinosaur Jr.'s J Mascis. He died from metastatic cancer on February 24, 2020. — CS

TOP TRACK: "Soul Giver"



KEVIN PARKER (TAME IMPALA)

Even before he became famous, Kevin Parker, Tame Impala's sole member, had no time for rock and roll showboating. "The bands that rose to the top were always the crowd pleasers," the multi-instrumentalist says of the scene in his hometown of Perth, Australia, when he was starting out in the mid '00s. "I always thought that was so lame."

That stubborn refusal to please other people has never left Parker. When he released the first Tame Impala album, 2010's *InnerSpeaker*, what psych-rock scene there was existed largely underground. Yet the album launched him on a journey that has seen him become a bona fide pop star and the collaborator of choice for everyone from Kanye West to Lady Gaga.

From the start, Parker envisioned Tame Impala as his thing and his alone. Creative autonomy gave him the freedom to experiment with sounds, styles and structures, without the hassle of compromise. Some of the music he

was writing was progressive, and some of it was more pop, but it was all heading in broadly the same direction.

By the time he released 2012's *Lonerism*, this weird project he'd cooked up in a bedroom in Perth had inadvertently helped instigate a full-blown psych revival. "[The term] psych was something I cringed at, because it was thrown around so much with my music," he says. Things have changed. He's not just happier with the term these days, he says, but feels more connected than ever to his roots, something evident on Tame Impala's latest, 2020's *The Slow Rush*. "*The Slow Rush* reminds me a lot more of that kind of free-flowing music that *Innerspeaker* has," he says. "Knowing now just how little of a clue I had with a lot of what I was doing [on *Innerspeaker*] makes me realize that maybe I have come a long way after all." — Dave Everley

TOP TRACK: "Keep On Lying"



King Gizzard's Joey Walker (left) and Stu Mackenzie perform in Melbourne, Australia, February 8, 2020

STU MACKENZIE, JOEY WALKER & COOK CRAIG (KING GIZZARD AND THE LIZARD WIZARD)

Australia's King Gizzard and the Lizard Wizard have an extensive back catalog that embraces everything from '70s stomping glam to thrash metal, surf music and jazz. For many, however, the band is most readily identified as part of the ongoing revival of psychedelia and prog rock that has informed so many artists' work, whether openly acknowledged or not. It wasn't until the band released their third album, 2013's *Float Along — Fill Your Lungs*, that they fully embraced the psych ethic. "Head On/Pill," the 16-minute-long opening track, comes out of the gate with every trick in the playbook. Electric sitar? Check. Ambient, spaced-out grooves? Check. Incoherent, vaguely meaningful lyrics? Check. Five minutes in, it morphs into a Hawkwind-like "Silver Machine" boogie, with guitars and keyboards swirling in a hazy whirlwind of stoned delight.

Singer/guitarist Stu Mackenzie and fellow six-string comrades Joey Walker and Cook Craig are constantly looking for ways to expand the guitar's traditional role and break with the predictable song structures. They took this approach beyond expectations with

their 2017 experimental album, *Flying Microtonal Banana*, the first of five records the group released that year. Mackenzie charged the band with modifying their instruments to be able to play the complex microtonal music referenced in that album's title, inspired by a guitar he'd acquired and similarly named.

Mackenzie has acknowledged that, with three guitarists in the band, the potential for overkill and chaos is always there. That said, the division of labor is carefully thought out and, despite the number of players onboard, extended solos are in surprisingly short supply in their music. Mackenzie notes that none of the guitarists were strongly influenced by guitar-driven artists, and, consequently, King Gizzard's approach is primarily textural, probing at the possibilities to open up new sonic dimensions.

While the band's interest in an unconventional microtonal approach may be the logical end result of their quest for the road less traveled, it is actually informed by a love for great songs. Strip back the elaborate thematic and rhythmic approaches that King Gizzard employ, and you'll find that

at the heart of most of their work lies a strong sense of melody and composition.

Given their ongoing search for the unconventional, it's perhaps not surprising that the guitarists of King Gizzard prefer cheap '60s bargain-basement gear, though they also play instruments constructed for them by Australian luthier Zac Eccles. In common with the forerunners of the genre, King Gizzard's psych leanings are very evident in their exploration of non-Western stringed instruments. The use of the sitar is a given for so many acts reflecting their '60s influences, but King Gizzard go much further, utilizing such exotic instruments as the Persian setar and a Turkish baglama. The moveable frets of both instruments were key to Mackenzie's microtonal flights of fantasy, although he was just as happy to butcher existing guitars to achieve the result that he heard for the band. King Gizzard's ongoing desire to push back the boundaries puts them as firmly in the prog rock camp as the psych camp, but for lovers of the unconventional and unpredictable, the band's music is endlessly rewarding. — MM

TOP TRACK: "Head On/Pill"

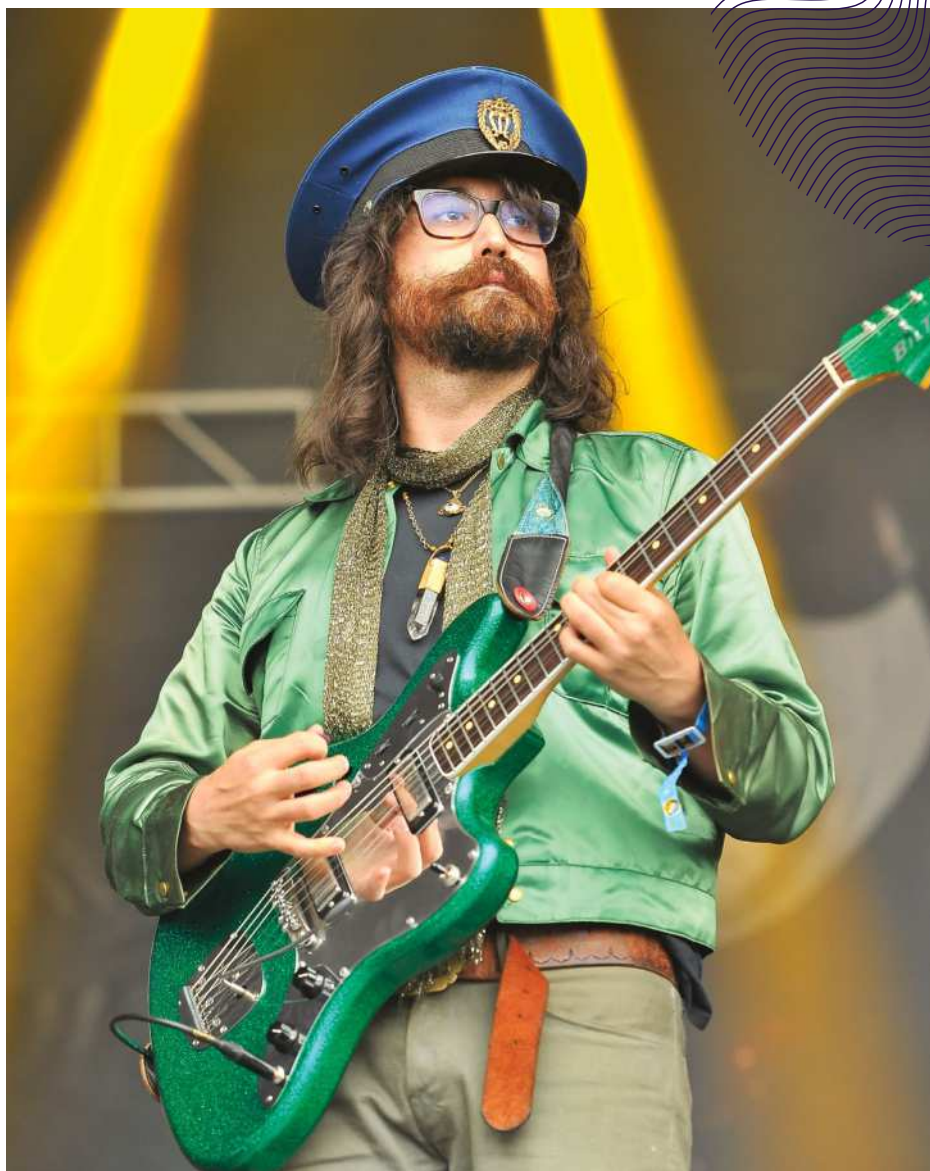


NICK MCCABE (THE VERVE)

The Verve's 1993 debut album, *A Storm in Heaven*, owed more than a small debt to the work of the Stone Roses [see page 62]. That influence was apparent in the vocal approach of each band, the mood of their songs and their unashamed plundering of the best of the 1960's experimental psych-pop sounds. Interestingly, guitarist Nick McCabe, like the Stone Roses' John Squire, has also maintained a very low profile since his time with the Verve.

McCabe often spoke of wanting to make his guitar sound like a synthesizer. Certainly, he was unafraid to create soundscapes that suggested anything but a guitar in his playing. He had a fondness for using the instrument as an aural paintbrush to spray unconventional colors across songs that were otherwise fairly traditional in structure and ambition. Utilizing a heavily processed sound, he would often have banks of reverb and delays bouncing against each other to develop a polyrhythmic bed. As such, McCabe's always captivating playing elevated the band's songs to something much more substantial than the sum of their parts. His go-to guitar was a 1979 Strat that he ran through a Mesa/Boogie Mark III combo or a Roland JC-120. A panoply of delay units combined for the uniquely expansive sound that McCabe achieved, particularly a vintage Watkins Copycat, Roland Space Echo and an Ibanez flanger. — MM

TOP TRACK: "A Storm in Heaven"



SEAN LENNON (THE CLAYPOOL LENNON DELIRIUM)

The combination of Primus bassman Les Claypool and Sean Lennon was almost guaranteed to generate something off-the-wall and unworldly. Claypool's left-field sense of humor was apparent in his work with Primus, and Lennon had already dabbled in music that challenged the boundaries of the conventional with his band the Ghost of a Saber Tooth Tiger. Claypool said of Lennon, "He plays things that I wasn't expecting, and that always intrigues me." The first Delirium album, *Monolith of Phobos*, was released in 2016. Underpinned by Claypool's gargantuan sound and thunderous grooves, Lennon revealed himself on the disc as an endlessly creative guitarist, fearlessly unleashing dexterously liquid guitar lines that constantly defy expectations,

often while using a Bilt Revelator with built-in effects. Best described as prog-meets-psych (with a dash of funk and pop), their music is so varied that no two songs sound alike.

The band's second album, *South of Reality*, released in 2019, refines their vision into a more cohesive overall project. While nothing on the album could be called conventional, the songs are full of infectious hooks and memorable solos that keep one's interest even as the tracks extend past the six-minute mark. It is easy to see why Lennon's primary influence as a guitarist was Hendrix, and perhaps inevitably, given Lennon's heritage, there is even a hint of the Beatles' own forays into the realms of psych. — MM

TOP TRACK: "Little Fishes"

WILL CULLEN HART AND BILL DOSS (THE OLIVIA TREMOR CONTROL)

As the birthplace of both R.E.M. and the B-52s, Athens, Georgia, can lay claim to giving rock two of the most original-sounding acts of the '80s. Lesser known, but no less original, the Olivia Tremor Control emerged from Athens in the late 1990s with a mix of indie-rock and neo-psychedelia that drew inspiration from 1960s acts like the Beatles and Beach Boys, combining ear-catching guitar lines with multipart harmonies in songs that recall that earlier era.

The band was launched in the late 1980s as Cranberry Lifecycle by guitarists Will Cullen Hart and Jeff Mangum. When guitarist Bill Doss came onboard, Mangum left for a solo project that would become the indie-rock psychedelic-folk outfit Neutral Milk Hotel. Between 1993 and 1996, Hart and Doss recorded dozens of songs and odd instrumental bits on a four-track cassette recorder, which became the basis for the group's first album, 1996's *Music From the Unrealized Film Script: Dusk at Cubist Castle*. A double-disc effort, it's a rewarding if not occasionally challenging listen,



drifting from lo-fi indie rock to sunny 1960s pop and avant-garde snippets of sound experimentation.

What's consistent is a passion for rich vocal harmony, lo-fi production standards, and the engaging and ever-changing guitar tones dreamed up by Hart and Doss. "No Growing (Exegesis)" sounds like Iveys-era Badfinger if they'd been produced by Brian Eno in his *Here Come the Warm Jets* phase, combining angular Uni-Vibe-drenched guitar lines and shimmering acoustics in a harmony-laden pop confection. On the loping "Holiday Surprise 1, 2, 3," chiming tremolo guitar outlines the verses before Hart and Doss switch to grungy distorted tones for the chorus. Meanwhile, "Jumping Fences," probably the most immediately engaging of the album's 27 cuts, begins with an infectious circular guitar riff and muscular rhythm playing before descending into caterwauling slide

guitar just as the song — all one minute and 52 seconds of it — reaches its gorgeously saccharine chorus.

"We try to take something really simple and reiterate its theme over and over, and at the same time, like every time it comes in — if you're listening closely or after multiple listens or whatever — you'll notice some things that don't fit," Hart explained to *The Dallas Observer* in 1999. For instance? "Beach Boys harmonies and grating noise. You know, just things that we like." The group followed up its debut in 1999 with *Black Foliage: Animation Music Volume One*, a sonic collage that drew inspiration from *Sgt. Pepper's* and the Beach Boys' unreleased *Smile* album. The band broke up in 2000, and Doss went on to work with the Apples in Stereo. The Olivias regrouped in 2009 and continue to this day without Doss, who died in 2012. — CS

TOP TRACK: "Holiday Surprise 1, 2, 3"



DEAN DELEO (STONE TEMPLE PILOTS)

Emerging from the early '90s grunge movement, Stone Temple Pilots changed direction with the release of their third album, 1996's *Tiny Music... Songs From the Vatican Gift Shop*. Several new influences seemed to permeate the record, with harder, retro-glam riffing fighting for space with elements of trippy psychedelia and more than a hint of late-era Beatles. "Lady Picture Show" in particular, homes in on the classic pop-psych vibe that characterizes much of the Fab Four's own explorations into the beyond. Guitarist Dean DeLeo made a conscious choice to avoid using any humbucker-loaded guitars for the album, generating all the key tones with single-coils or P-90s.

The band's previous album, *Purple*, released in 1994, had hinted at their aspirations to broaden their horizons. "Lounge Fly," played in an open Dm tuning, employed a hypnotically repetitious groove that combined a trance-like Eastern vibe with the band's core riffery. DeLeo's guitar runs conjured up pseudo-sitar sounds, and the acoustic interlude heads straight for the heart of Floyd. Key elements of DeLeo's sound for *Purple* included his use of small amps, particularly a 1950s Supro, and a 1958 Les Paul Special. Perhaps unfairly, he hasn't had the same level of recognition that many of his peers from the grunge era have enjoyed. His self-confessed *modus operandum* — to make every solo different from anything else he's done — has largely been achieved, aided by STP's enterprising intention to continually upend listener's expectations. — MM

TOP TRACK: "A Song for Sleeping"



Steven Drozd (left) plays his Coronado Vibrato while Wayne Coyne performs with his Epiphone G-1275 custom double-neck.

WAYNE COYNE AND STEVEN DROZD (THE FLAMING LIPS)

Formed 40 years ago, Oklahoma's Flaming Lips have always embodied a strong experimental/psych approach to their music. Given that they covered *The Dark Side of the Moon* in its entirety in 2009, there is little doubt where their roots lie. Frontman Wayne Coyne has been an ever-present member since founding the band, sharing guitar duties first with Ronald Jones, and now with guitarist and multi-instrumentalist, Steven Drozd, who originally joined the

Unlike many bands who have dabbled in psychedelia, the Flaming Lips have remained unwaveringly true to their artistic vision

group as a drummer. Jones was deeply into experimentation with signal processors, looking for ways to redefine the typical parameters of the guitar in a rock band. And while Drozd was playing drums in the band, he was also laying down rhythm guitar tracks and collaborating on songwriting, so his shift into the guitar seat when Jones left in 1996 was a no-brainer.

Jones' sound was built on the use of Eventide Harmonizers mixed with a plethora of sonic shapers to obtain otherworldly tones that provided a key component of the band's signature sound. Drozd quickly acquired a formidable arsenal of effects when he replaced Jones, and — influenced by Jimmy Page — worked in altered tunings, which added yet another line of attack to the band's songwriting process. A fan of single-coil guitars, Drozd favors vintage Jazzmasters and an old Fender XII. His use of the XII was inspired by Page, once he realized that it was Page's 12-string of choice for Zep's albums.

The last Flaming Lips album with Jones onboard, 1995's *Clouds Taste Metallic*, was the band's most fully realized encapsulation of their psych-meets-alt approach, but for many, the definitive Lips album is 1999's *The Soft Bulletin*. On it, Drozd carves out his own distinctive niche in the band's sound and stamps his identity firmly on their music — no mean feat with the big shoes of Jones to fill. Unlike many bands who have dabbled in psychedelia before returning to their original mission statement, the Flaming Lips have remained unwaveringly true to their original artistic vision. — MM

TOP TRACK: "Feeling Yourself Disintegrate"



Eternally Grateful

Andy Logan's Grateful Guitars Foundation provides historic Dead-centric axes to worthy keepers of the flame.

BY JIMMY LESLIE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BOB MINKIN PHOTOGRAPHY



Jerry Garcia's Alligator guitar (top row, second from left) joins custom clones, homages, vintage examples and reissue models of the same guitars Garcia used. The numbered-fret guitar (bottom row, third from right) was built by Dan Erlewine, who crafted the original for Garcia in '72 and used the same piece of walnut he had saved from 1969. The Peanut replica to its right was built by Rick Turner, who built Garcia's Peanut guitar used in spring 1971.

ANDY LOGAN IS bringing Dead dreams to life and giving gig-worthy players cause to feel grateful. The avid collector is putting top-shelf copies of the makes and models Jerry Garcia and Bob Weir played — and sometimes the original articles — in the hands of special talents via the Grateful Guitars Foundation, his 501-c3 nonprofit that provides musical instruments for players who help carry the jam band tradition forward.

Logan's arsenal includes many custom builds, as well as two of Garcia's all-time most historic instruments: his 1955 "Alligator" Fender Stratocaster and 1943 "Jerry's Herringbone" Martin D-28. Recently, Logan acquired a pair of Modulus Blackknife electrics and a pair of Alvarez acoustics played onstage by Weir in the '80s and '90s. Logan is on a mission to have a representative version of all their guitars, from their mid-'60s psychedelic years to the group's demise in '95. After dabbling in psychedelic rock in the 1960s,

Garcia, Weir and company spawned the jam band community that thrives to this day, and Logan wants to ensure it stays that way, eternally. He lends and occasionally gives gifted players incredible instruments that would otherwise be beyond their means, all for the greater good for the scene.

“The Dead went to great lengths to get the tones they were after”

“The Grateful Dead went to great lengths to get the tones they were after,” Logan offers. “They wanted the audience to hear exactly what they wanted to express with their instruments. Hearing those tones meant the world to us fans, and as a gear guy, you want to recapture that tone you remember touching you so deeply. When you hear it, you feel enriched and fulfilled. The greater good behind arming musicians with this kind of gear is that it's inspiring. Give them top-quality tools, and it elevates their game. They play better and harder. The more fun they have, the more we have in the audience.”

Logan made international news in December 2019 when he purchased Alligator and Jerry's Herringbone at a Bonham's



These Bob Weir-inspired guitars are from Andy Logan's personal collection.

auction with winning bids of \$420,000 and \$175,000, respectively. Alligator was Garcia's primary electric from spring 1971 to August '73, and the performance debut vehicle for such hallowed tunes as "Tennessee Jed," "One More Saturday Night," "Ramble on Rose" and "Eyes of the World." As for the Martin D-28, Garcia used it to write and record 1970's folk-rock classic *American Beauty*, which featured "Friend of the Devil," "Ripple" and "Truckin'." Inspired by his new acquisitions, Logan launched the Grateful Guitars Foundation in 2021 as a non-profit vehicle to let others share in his passion for authentic Dead tones while giving the instruments in his extensive collection new life.

Logan afforded *GP* an opportunity to play Garcia's

guitars, and they turned out to be way more than mere relics. They are astonishing instruments, and have been well attended to by legendary luthier Rick Turner in the years since Logan acquired them. The Martin's tone is a dreadnought dream, rich and resonant with abundant bass and an articulate top end. Alligator is a holy grail-caliber Stratocaster. Its slim neck feels fabulous in hand, and the pickups produced an array of quintessential Strat tones through Logan's silverface 1969 Fender Twin head that was once part of the Grateful Dead's arsenal and came to Logan via longtime roadie Kidd Candelario. In true Jerry style, the Fender pre-amped a McIntosh 250 power amp and a 1x12 Baltic birch cabinet loaded with a JBL E120.



Alligator

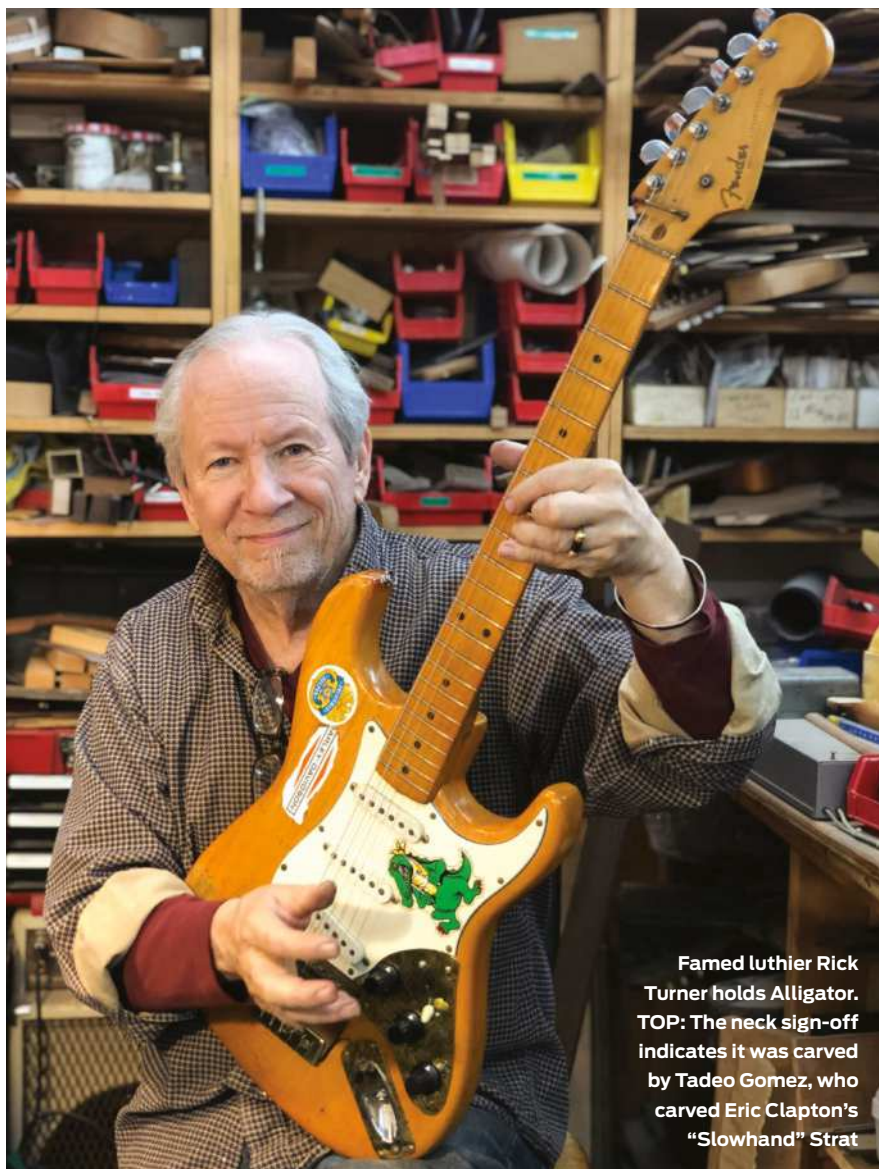
1955 Fender Stratocaster,
Serial Number 7310

“THERE WAS SPECULATION it was Franken-Strat with a '57 neck on a '63 body,” Logan says, “but we were excited to learn it’s a '55 through and through when we took it apart.” Writing inside indicates that the unique one-piece ash body was made in February and the neck in March of '55. Alex Jordan adds, “The neck sign-off is by ‘TG,’ meaning Tadeo Gomez, who famously carved the neck for Eric Clapton’s 1954 ‘Slowhand’ Strat.”

The guitar has been heavily modified with replacement Schaller tuners and lots of brass hardware, including a second string tree for the lower four, a scalloped brass nut and an Alembic U-Channel bridge. During refurbishing, Rick Turner countersunk the bolts so that they could go down into the brass, lowering the action to a more player-friendly height. The frets have clearly been replaced and are very wide. “They’re quite worn down, especially on the treble side, which makes it rather difficult to play in the first place,” Jordan says, “and it was very difficult with the high action before the bridge modification.”

Other Garcia mods include a hammered brass pickguard and a vintage Alembic Strat-o-Blaster output jack, gifted from Mike Wald, who makes buffers and modded Twins for Garcia-style players. “It basically punches up the signal like a guitar with active electronics,” Logan says. Adds Jordan, “It buffers the signal and increases the output, which was important to a player running long cords into a few effects pedals. It drives the amp harder, like the humbucking pickups Jerry was using in guitars prior to Alligator. The Strat-o-Blaster has its own adjustable tonal characteristic as well.”

Alligator has an interesting origin story, and left an influential legacy. Logan says, “Alligator first appeared on December 31st, 1970, and then became the full-time axe in May 1971 and is most famous for being used



Famed luthier Rick Turner holds Alligator. TOP: The neck sign-off indicates it was carved by Tadeo Gomez, who carved Eric Clapton’s “Slowhand” Strat

exclusively during the legendary Europe '72 tour. Jerry got it from Graham Nash, who got it from a pawnshop in 1967. At first, we weren’t sure if the pickups were original, given the Dead’s propensity to modify gear. However, Fender has since confirmed that they are the original 1955 pickups. Interestingly, it does appear that they did tweak the pole heights.” As for the famous alligator graphic, Logan informs, “[the Grateful Dead’s] Steve Parish told me [roadie] Sonny Heard put on the alligator sticker in June of '72.” Curiously, it’s not scratched up at all, appearing perfectly clear as if it were put on yesterday. Jerry was a precise picker!

According to Logan, “The last Grateful Dead show Alligator did was [New Jersey’s] Roosevelt Stadium on August 1st, 1973.” *Wake of the Flood* was recorded later that month and featured the Doug Irwin–built Wolf. Much of what Garcia learned through Alligator went to Wolf and subsequent instruments,



This body marking indicates it is from February

including the Fender scale length, scalloped brass nut, active electronics and buffered circuit.” Jordan adds, “Alligator is part of Jerry’s legacy of having modified and eventually fully customized instruments that helped create the need for a boutique guitar industry.”



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Alligator poses on the grass; Stu Allen plays Alligator, and Andy Logan holds Jerry's Herringbone.

While the two axes may be the crown jewels in Logan's collection, there's a lot more going on with Grateful Guitars. Logan has developed relationships with many of the luthiers that designed and built the custom guitars made famous by Garcia and Weir. He's commissioned Kevin Burkett at Travis Bean Design, former Modulus man Rich Hoeg and Leo Elliot of Scarlet Fire Guitars to build instruments for players including Jeff Mattson and Rob Eaton of the Dark Star Orchestra and Mik Bondy of the Garcia Project.

Logan has also shared his Garcia originals and re-creations with a pair of his heroes: Alex Jordan, who hosts Grateful Thursdays at Club Fox in Redwood City, California, and has a close relationship with highly regarded Gryphon Stringed Instruments in Palo Alto, California, where they help tweak and take care of Alligator and Jerry's Herringbone; and Stu Allen who has played extensively with Grateful Dead bassist Phil Lesh and currently leads Mars Hotel. Allen and Jordan are uncanny at playing the Garcia

“What the builders create is an incredible gift for the players and the fans”

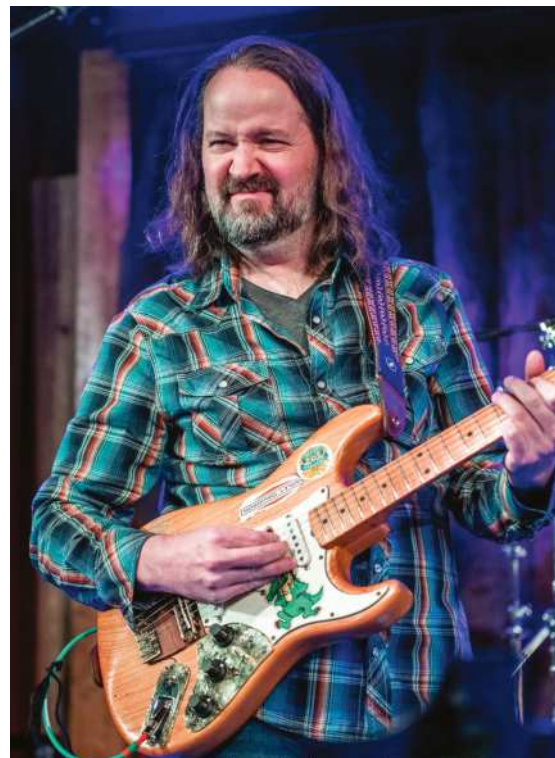
and Weir roles, respectively, and their dedication is most evident when they perform recreations of Grateful Dead concerts from specific historic shows.

With Logan's gear and their eager ears, the two delve into the granular details of the dynamic Dead duo's sound and style.

Best of all, anyone can fill out an application to become a Grateful Guitars player or builder at gratefulguitars.org.

“What the builders create is an incredible gift for players and fans,” Logan says. ▀

Want to hear what Jerry Garcia's guitars sound like now? Check out Alligator's flexibility on a Grateful Guitars cover of “Friend of the Devil” at guitarplayer.com/dec22-aficionado. For insights into “Friend of the Devil,” check out Frets Learn on page 82.



Jerry's Herringbone

1943 Martin D-28, Serial Number 84862

"ALTHOUGH IT WAS listed as a 1941 Martin at auction," Jordan says, "the serial number and the ebony truss rod clearly indicate a wartime instrument created in 1943." Logan and Jordan conclude that this is the same acoustic long misidentified as a D-18. "There are no herringbone D-18s," Jordan explains.

This guitar's back and sides are made from very distinguishable streaked Brazilian rosewood, and the top is Adirondack spruce. The whole guitar has an extra coat of finish sprayed over it. There's also a hole from a primitive sound hole pickup installation and battle scars from where an oddly placed

"The D-28 first appeared on the Festival Express tour in summer 1970 and was played on the debuts of 'Truckin'' and 'Ripple'"

output jack on the lower bout didn't work out very well. Photographs suggests those jobs were from a previous owner. A defunct dual-element pickup system added much later remains, which Logan feels is likely from recording the 1991 album *Jerry Garcia/David Grisman*. A drop-in saddle replaced the original through-cut saddle in order to accommodate an undersaddle piezo. The other element is an interior microphone. The guitar is surprisingly light, especially considering the remaining pickup elements, although Garcia must have used some sort of external element to power the internal ones. In addition to the above alterations, a set of Rotomatic tuners replaces the originals, and a piece of Scotch tape is stuck behind the bridge.

"The instrument first appeared on the Festival Express tour in summer 1970," Logan



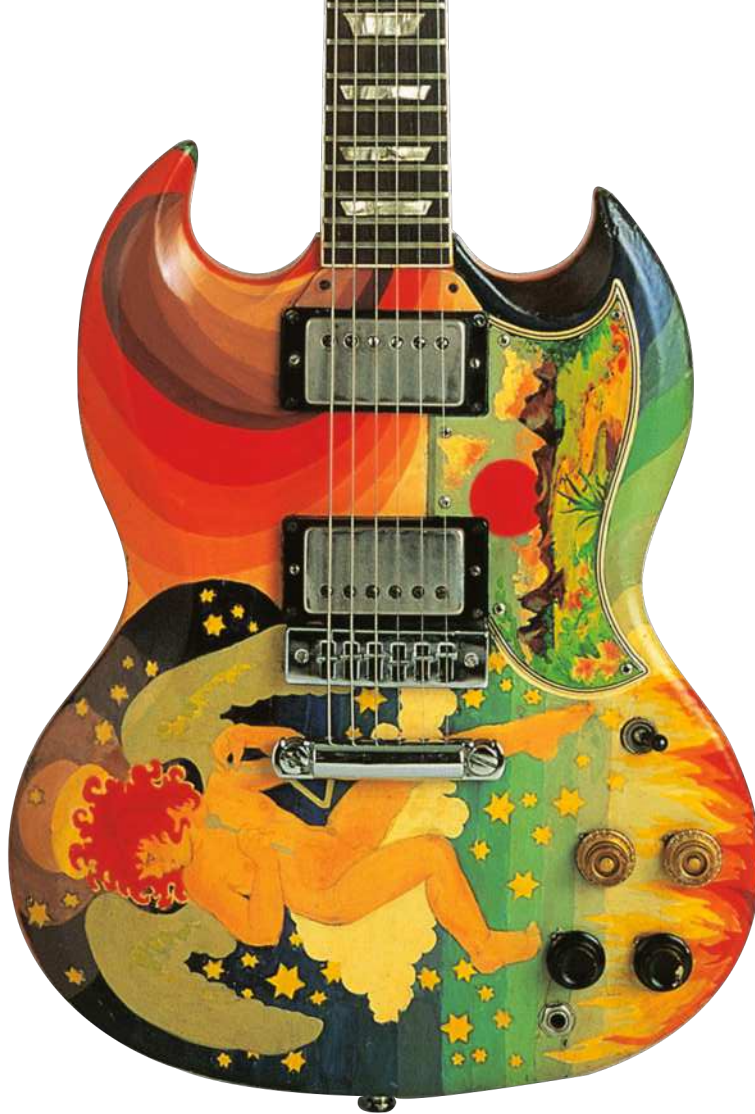
states. "It was onstage for a bunch of the acoustic sets that followed and was played on many firsts, including the debuts of 'Truckin'' and 'Ripple.'" Logan is unsure when or where Garcia acquired the instrument, but he and Jordan presume he traded in either the Martin 12-fret 00-18 or 000-45 or both that he had been playing to purchase the D-28. It's quite possible the 00 was traded in for the 000, which was then swapped for the D-28, since, like many players of the time, Garcia was gravitating toward the

dreadnoughts that he would then favor for the rest of his career.

The D-28 made the famous trek across Europe in 1972. In the last-known photo of Garcia playing it, he is alongside Bob Weir in what appears to be a church, presumably during an off-day jam session with members of the New Riders of the Purple Sage. Peter Rowan told Logan that Garcia generously bestowed what he dubbed "Jerry's Herringbone" to him to record *Old and In the Way* and play it on subsequent tours in 1973.

TUNE UP AND TURN ON

Take a mindbending journey into the adventurous and experimental style of psychedelic guitar as we explore the far-out sonic landscapes created by legendary players from the classic era.



IT WAS THE 1960s, and everything was groovy. Musicians pushed the boundaries of sonic expression and experimentation, with guitarists boldly leading the way. The hallucinogenic effects of mind-altering drugs, most notably LSD, are credited to have contributed to the creation of a new “psychedelic” sound, with guitarists developing a unique and colorful palette of fuzzed-out — and sometimes just plain weird — tones, inspiring generations of players to come. While we don’t encourage you to indulge in hallucinogenics, we do suggest you grab your guitar, as we begin our adventure into psychedelic guitar playing.

One simply cannot revisit the 1960s without paying tribute to the Beatles, who began as a mop-topped pop quartet, but soon morphed into a psychedelic songwriting juggernaut with multiple iconic album releases spanning 1966 and 1967, including *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* and *Magical Mystery Tour*. On 1966’s *Revolver*, George Harrison can be

heard going into full bizarre mode, adding time-warped backward guitar (lead guitar lines that are recorded and then played backwards during the song) on “I’m Only Sleeping.” In addition, Indian music’s heavy influence on Harrison and the psychedelic sound in general can be heard in his sitar-like motifs from “She Said She Said,” also from *Revolver*. See **Ex. 1** for a riff inspired by this song, and pick near your guitar’s bridge to emulate the sitar’s timbre.

Along with the Beatles, the Rolling Stones ventured into this brave new world with album releases like 1967’s *Their Satanic Majesties Request*, featuring the track “2,000 Light Years from Home.” After a 40-second intro of some rather terrifying processed atonal piano musings, Keith Richards enters with a palm-muted single-note guitar riff, which sounds as if it could be the persistent ticking of a clock from an imaginary episode of the bizarre 1960s TV series *The Twilight Zone*. (In fact, a similar guitar line, albeit less rhythmical,

appears in the show’s actual theme music.) No fuzzy tones here — Richards simply goes with an understated clean electric sound, allowing the staccato jabs of his palm-muted notes to do the talking. See **Ex. 2** for a line inspired by this same track. Try moving it around the neck in various keys and octaves to experience different shades of mystery.

March 1965 was a monumental month for the up-and-coming British guitarist Jeff Beck. Upon Jimmy Page’s recommendation, Beck was asked to join the Yardbirds, famously replacing Eric Clapton. Those were big shoes to fill, but Beck did not lack confidence or imagination. And while his stint with the band lasted just 20 months, his influence from this period, as well as his solo career that followed, would be felt by scores of guitarists.

A great example of Beck pushing sonic boundaries can be heard in the Yardbirds’ 1966 single “Over Under Sideways Down.” Here the guitarist adds a wildly strange melodic motif, which,

while initially met with some skepticism by his bandmates, came to be widely regarded as the song's signature hook. Beck combines some deft single-string playing with a gnarly tone. See **Ex. 3** for a similar line, inspired by this song.

The next stop on our magical musical tour brings us to the legendary Jimi Hendrix. His trippy songwriting combined R&B-influenced rhythm playing with soaring guitar solos, steeped in blues and drenched in fuzz. Jimi somehow managed to control, at will, the beast that is amplifier feedback, creating new tripped-out sonic journeys for his audience. Hendrix regularly summoned, as if by magic, all manner of new sounds from his guitar.

With the song "Fire," from the Jimi Hendrix Experience's debut 1967 album, *Are You Experienced*, he introduced himself with a guitar solo consisting of a veritable onslaught of stinging string bends and vibratos. **Ex. 4** brings to mind this face-melter. Note that I've added an octave-up doubling effect to further capture Jimi's sound, as this is something he employed frequently via his Octavia pedal. This pedal, designed specifically for Jimi by his sound technician, Roger Mayer, doubled every note one octave higher, while adding fuzz. It often sounded as if Jimi's guitar was tearing apart at the seams.



While discussing Jimi, let's give a nod to another great guitarist from a later generation who was influenced by Hendrix's psychedelic sound, namely Prince, whose musical legacy continues to live on despite his untimely death

Ex. 1

N.C. A7(6)

pick near bridge let ring

T A B

3-2-3-2-3-5-3-2 2 2 0 0 4 0 4 0 0 0 0 2-3 2

Ex. 2

G5

P.M.-----

T A B

3 5 5 5 3 5 5 5 5 5

Ex. 3

G F

1 3 3 3 3

T A B

12 10 12 10 9 9 10 9 7 7 9 7 5 4

3 G F

3 3 3

T A B

16 14 16 14 12 12 14 12 10 10 12 10 9 7

in 2016. An iconoclast, Prince often fused his R&B/funk/soul foundation with elements of pop, rock, jazz or whatever suited him in the moment. One of his 19 top-10 hits, the single "When Doves Cry," off of 1984's smash album, *Purple Rain*, went to number one on *Billboard's* Hot 100 chart, where it stayed for five weeks. Prince notably played every instrument on the track.

The song bursts through the speakers with a virtuosic unaccompanied electric

guitar line, which seems to answer the question "What would Jimi Hendrix sound like if he were still alive today — after having taken a trip to Mars?" Prince tips his hat to the master more directly with his choice of tone, as he employs Hendrix's signature combination of fuzz and octave doubler. The entire intro solo is masterfully played, darting around in fits and starts, and **Ex. 5** is inspired by Prince's wicked opening statement.

We return to the 1960s with another purveyor of the psychedelic movement: the San Francisco-based band Jefferson Airplane. In the classic song “White Rabbit,” from their seminal 1967 release, *Surrealistic Pillow*, songwriter Grace



Jorma Kaukonen (right)
performing with Jefferson
Airplane, May 1967

Slick’s lyrics evoke 1960s drug culture while guitarist Jorma Kaukonen weaves sinewy lines over a brooding rhythm.

Kaukonen accomplishes this by deftly employing an exotic scale, another element of the psychedelic sound. While the song is broadly in the key of A major, the intro and verses center around a chord progression of F $\sharp$ to G, which is technically out of key. Kaukonen navigates these chords using the 5th mode of harmonic minor, commonly referred to as Phrygian-dominant. Harmonic minor (1, 2, $\flat$ 3, 4, 5, $\flat$ 6, $\sharp$ 7) is nearly identical to natural minor (1, 2, $\flat$ 3, 4, 5, $\flat$ 6, $\flat$ 7), the only difference being its raised 7th scale degree. Note how this creates an unusual augmented 2nd interval (one and one half steps) between the 6th and 7th degrees. The term “5th mode” simply means that Phrygian-dominant’s root is the 5th degree of the harmonic minor scale. This is the note that will sound like “home.”

In “White Rabbit,” Kaukonen employs F $\sharp$ Phrygian-dominant (F $\sharp$, G, A $\sharp$, B, C $\sharp$, D, E), the 5th mode of B harmonic minor (B, C $\sharp$, D, E, F $\sharp$, G, A $\sharp$). But you can take off your thinking cap and mellow out to **Ex. 6**, a trippy line inspired by this song. Note the aforementioned augmented 2nd interval between the G and A $\sharp$ in the last bar.

Ex. 4

N.C.(Em)

grad. bend

Ex. 5

N.C.

Ex. 6

Spanning decades, with some original band members still going strong as Dead and Company, the Grateful Dead's music inspired an intense devotion from their Deadhead fans, who faithfully followed the band from show to show as they

Ex. 7

5 3 0 2 2-0 0 2 4 5 4 2 0 4/

Ex. 8 E9

TAB

9 9 X 7 9

7 7 7 7 7 7

7 7 7 7 7 7

6 6 6 6 6 6

5 7

Ex. 9

Em7

8va

Ex. 9 is inspired by Garcia's effortlessly fantastic playing throughout "Dark Star," the Dead's 1968 single, and showcases one rhythm — the quarter-note triplet — throughout the four-bar phrase, with only occasional respites. Tension is certainly created by the sheer repetition, but more subtly, it is the way its lilting rhythm sits atop and "rubs" against the song's straight-eighths feel that grabs our attention and keeps us

The 1960s psychedelic movement, spearheaded by a wave of innovative guitarists unafraid to break down traditional norms of playing and tone, directly reflected the tumultuous political and social times they inhabited. Many more recent iconic bands, such as Red Hot Chili Peppers, Smashing Pumpkins, My Morning Jacket and the Flaming Lips, owe a debt of gratitude to the risks these players took as they created music that often seemed to be the stuff of dreamscapes. **B**

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MORE ONLINE!

For video and audio of this lesson, go to guitarplayer.com/dec22-learn.

Devil in the Details

Learn three ways to play the Grateful Dead's "Friend of the Devil."

BY JIMMY LESLIE

NO PLAYER BRIDGED psychedelic San Francisco's acoustic and electric waters like Jerry Garcia. To see what I mean, delve into the historic details of Jerry's Herringbone Martin D-28 and his "Alligator" Fender Stratocaster in my Aficionado feature on the Grateful Guitars Foundation [page 72]. Honored with the opportunity to record a track using them at Lucky Recording Company, I reworked one of Garcia's signature acoustic tunes. Here are insights I discovered on that epic trip.

ORIGINAL INSIGHTS

"Friend of the Devil" was written by Garcia and John Dawson (New Riders of the Purple Sage) with lyricist Robert Hunter. The Dead's studio version from 1970's *American Beauty* begins with a simple descending motif played by David Nelson (New Riders of the Purple Sage) that is quickly joined by Garcia's meandering acoustic licks. David Grisman's groovy mandolin playing adds to the acoustic jamboree. Tuning is standard, in the key of G. The main motif is a diatonically descending G major scale played in quarter notes that outlines a I to IV verse chord progression: Play a bar of G, plus a bar of C, and then repeat. The chorus chords are D and Amin7.

You can play everything in open position if you start the motif on the open G string, but peeping live videos of Garcia, I notice he begins in third position on the fourth string before switching to open position. He starts by using the third finger for the G at

the fifth fret, followed by the second finger at the fourth fret for F#. He then switches to open position to play the E at the second fret with his second finger, followed by the open D string.

Jerry plays the second half of the motif out of a C chord formation, walking the bass notes on the fifth string from C down to B, hitting the open A string and landing on the G at the third fret of the sixth string. Interestingly, he sometimes played that using his pinkie. He probably found it easier to stretch that way while holding the top half of the C chord above, which equates to an Amin7 with a G in the bass at that point.

COP A SWING FEEL

The studio version has a swing feel: "1 a-2, 3 a-4." You can achieve it by plucking a ghostly G note with an upstroke on the open third string for the "a" while using downstrokes to play the main quarter notes. As the tune progresses, it takes on a jubilant, rollicking feeling. For a galloping giddy-up, try using a "down, down-up-down" plucking pattern to achieve a feel of "1 and a 2 and a 3 and a 4." That can either be precisely focused on individual notes, or opened up for a lively feel like *boom chicka boom chicka*. For the latter, downstroke on the first note, then do a down-up stroke on the second and third strings for maximum chordal resonance.

NEXT LEVEL: OPEN IT UP

Put the guitar in open G to add more jangle (low to high: D G B D G B). Play

both halves of the lick Jerry's way, as the fingering now remains the same. For chords, try a partial barre instead of a full one. For example, find the V chord at the seventh fret, but only barre strings five through three. Leave the top two and the bottom string ringing open for a huge D. Use that same partial barre to add cool suspensions in the chorus and bridge, which includes II, IV and V chords played at the second, fifth and seventh frets, respectively.

ADVANCED LEVEL: TRY IT MY WAY

Honoring Garcia's creative spirit, I spiced up the rhythm and applied the A modal tuning associated with my group, Spirit Hustler (low to high: E A E E A E). I brought the key up to B for vocal considerations, using a capo at the second fret. The root is still on the fifth fret, and the partial-barre trick applies similarly. Refer to the August issue's Frets Learn column to cop the "fingerstyle slap" technique I incorporated to take "Friend of the Devil" to another level.

Have fun learning one of the greatest acoustic tunes ever penned by a psychedelic player — and be sure to listen to the audio and watch the video tutorial online for a little help from your friendly Frets Editor. ■

Jimmy Leslie has been Frets editor since 2016. See many Guitar Player- and Frets-related videos on his YouTube channel, and learn about his acoustic/electric rock group at spirithustler.com.



Jimmy Leslie plays Jerry's Herringbone Martin D-28.

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PEAVEY

Vypyr X2



TESTED BY ART THOMPSON

PEAVEY'S VYPYR SERIES amplifiers give players options to fit their needs and budgets by offering three different combo formats: the X1 30-watt 1x8 (\$199), the X2 60-watt 1x12 (\$299), on review here, and the X3 100-watt 1x12 (\$399). All of them utilize analog TransTube circuitry for the amplifier distortion sounds in order to impart realistic feel to the tones, and they offer 10 instruments models (two for the X1), 36 amp models (including six acoustic and six bass models), 24 digital effects (none for the X1), and 12 stompbox models. All have a built-in

30-second looper and wah that are accessible when you add the optional Sanpera I or II foot controller (\$199 to \$249). All other functions are available from the top of the amp, and you can also control the X2 and X3 models via Bluetooth on your iOS device via the free Vypyr app.

The Vypyr X2 doesn't have the LED display of the pricier X3 but otherwise is functionally similar. There are four buttons next to the input jack that toggle between Guitar 1, Guitar 2, Acoustic and Bass, and each has four presets that will get you up and running without even touching a knob. The two electric guitar presets are quite heavily effected and seem more like demonstrations of what the Vypyr can do, rather than sounds you would deploy in a gig. However, the Acoustic and Bass models are basic and quite handy when you just need to get a good sound quickly.

From there, you can easily shape things with the inst/stomp knob, which has 12 stops, each providing two settings as you turn the knob: Acoustic 1/2, 12str/7str, Res/Sit, Evio/Syn, Bari/Bss, Tsc/Fuzz, Comp/Bst, Aphs/Aflg, Wah/Slice, Achr/Uvb, Rmd/Slap and bypass. These presets provide many different sounds, and you can adjust two parameters by pressing the inst/stomp knob and using the pre-gain and low controls to make EQ, gain and other tweaks depending on the selected model.

Next in line is the amplifiers knob which selects Budda, 6505, 6534, XXX, Classic, Butcher, British, Twin, Peavey and Trace bass amps, as well as Peavey Ecous and Trace acoustic amps. Each offers low-, medium- and high-gain tones when you press the knob (a corresponding LED glows green, orange or red), and the same holds for the acoustic and bass amps, where you can choose between

three tonal variations of each. I was impressed by the sound of the guitar amps, which provide a wide range of touch-responsive tones that cover the spectrum from clean to viciously overdriven, particularly the Budda and 6505, 6534 and XXX models.

Classic is a great all-rounder for clean and medium-gain duties (and well beyond, if needed), and the British model offers a good representation of Vox/Matchless tone and does a nice job of delivering that “blizzard of nails” grind on the orange and red settings. I liked the richness even at low volume, and the pre-gain, bass, middle treble and post-gain knobs made it easy to get happening tones with guitars that included a Gibson Les Paul

SPECIFICATIONS

Vypyr X2

CONTACT peavey.com

PRICE \$299 street

CHANNELS

THREE Instrument Type buttons (guitar 1, guitar 2, acoustic, bass), Inst/Stomp, amplifiers and effects encoders, pre-gain (parameter 1 in edit mode), bass (parameter 2 in edit mode), mid, high, post-gain, master volume. Global delay and reverb controls

MODELING 10 instruments, 26 effects, 36 amplifiers

I/O Input, 1/8" headphone and aux jacks, USB, 8-pin jack for optional Sanpera foot-controller

POWER 60 watts RMS

TUBES None

SPEAKER 12" Vypyr X Modeling Speaker

EXTRAS Looper (30 seconds). Studio quality USB 3.0 output. Bluetooth for control and audio streaming. Run up to five effects simultaneously with the optional Sampera foot-controller

WEIGHT 26 lbs (tested)

BUILT China

KUDOS Tube-like tone and feel thanks to analog TransTube technology. Intuitive WYSIWYG interface. Excellent sounding effects due to processing power not being dedicated to amplifier modeling

CONCERNS Sanpera I or II foot-controller required to access the wah and looper. Amp makes a “thump” when turned on or off, but is otherwise very quiet



'59 Heritage, Reverend Gristlemaster and a '63 LP Junior.

The third knob handles effects, and here you have Chorus, Env. Filtr, Comp BST, Flanger, M.O.G., Pitch Shifter, Reverse, Rot. Spkr, Phaser, Octaver, Tremolo and bypass. In addition, a press of the knob lets you adjust two parameters using the pre-gain and low knobs. Delay and reverb are global functions, and it's convenient that you can just reach down and tweak them with the dual-function mid, high and post-gain controls, which respectively adjust delay feedback (repeats), delay level and reverb level.

The Vypyr X2's knob-based interface is intuitive and easy to use. However, to unlock the potential of this amp — especially for live use — a foot controller is needed. Fortunately Peavey sent me the Sanpera II, a rugged, wing-shaped unit that has a dedicated volume pedal on the left side, with a toe switch to activate the tuner and another pedal on the right with a toe switch that activates the wah or lets you alter the rate of a modulation effect (a red LED indicates when modulation is active). A pair of bank up/down switches on the right let you toggle through the 99 presets offered, in addition to the previously mentioned A, B, C and D presets on the amp's top panel. If you're in Manual mode (indicated by a green LED) and

you select a preset with effects, you can turn them on and off individually with the foot switches labeled 1 to 4. In Normal mode (red LED) the foot switches let you toggle between any four presets you've stored. Either way, you get much more flexibility for live performance. And let's not forget that there's also a dedicated tap-tempo foot switch and two more stomp switches that control the looper's record, play and stop/reset functions.

All in all, the Vypyr X2 is a good-sounding stage amp with the warmth, punch and presence often missing in digital modelers. It's the most muscular for its power that I've tried so far, and if you don't want to shell out for a Sanpera foot controller, you can always run distortion, modulation and delay pedals in the front end, and the Vypyr handles 'em just fine.

I also used the acoustic settings quite a lot, and I liked both the Comp setting (green LED) for its natural tone and the Comp/Trace setting (orange LED) for its enhanced cutting power in louder situations. Note that if you're using the Vypyr for acoustic or bass, it still defaults to electric guitar when you power down, which is a bit annoying if you prefer to stay in those modes.

Bottom line, the Vypyr is a well-equipped and capable performer, and a very cool deal, considering everything it does. It earns an Editors' Pick Award. **A-**



DONNER

Seeker Series DST-400

TESTED BY ART THOMPSON

FOUNDED IN 2012, Donner is a global brand manufacturer of pedals, acoustic and electric guitars, ukuleles, electronic drums, MIDI keyboards, digital pianos and other instruments. Relying on an R&D team of more than 200 people based in China, Donner has become well known for its wide range of innovative musical instruments since it started with a mini pedal 10 years ago.

On review for this issue is the Seeker Series DST-400, an S-style guitar that features a solid alder body finished in gloss green (also available in black) and a satin-finished maple neck with back stripe that's carved in a comfortable Slim C shape and capped with a laurel fingerboard carrying 22 medium frets. As with any budget guitar,

SPECIFICATIONS

Seeker Series DST-400

CONTACT donnerdeal.com

PRICE \$259 street

NUT WIDTH 1 5/8", bone

NECK Canadian maple bolt-on, Slim C profile. Headstock trussrod adjuster

FRETBOARD Laurel 25.5" scale, 9.5" radius

FRETS 22

TUNERS Vintage style

BODY Alder

BRIDGE Two-point trem with bent-steel saddles and push-in arm

PICKUPS Donner Seeker Series Pro single-coils (neck, middle), Pro humbucker (bridge)

CONTROLS Volume, tone (neck, middle), tone (bridge) with push-pull coil-split, five-way switch

EXTRAS Gig-bag and strap included

FACTORY STRINGS.009–.046

WEIGHT 7.72 lbs (as tested)

BUILT China

KUDOS Satisfying playability and tone.

Great price

CONCERNS Stiff-feeling trem

how it feels in the hands is everything, and the DST-400 passes the test, offering good playability thanks to the competent fret dress (the ends are a little prickly, but you can find that on much pricier instruments), a bone nut that's rounded on the corners and a factory setup that was good enough to allow taking the guitar on a gig right out of the box. Sure, it could be adjusted to bring the action down a bit, but string buzz wasn't a problem, and the intonation was musically sound throughout the reaches of the fretboard. Likewise, the two-point trem gets off to a good start with vintage-style bent-steel saddles and a push-in bar. That said, it feels stiff and needs a proper setup to make it easier to work either in floating mode or resting against the body as it is in stock trim.

Following on classic Super Strat form, the guitar packs three Seeker Series Pro pickups: a humbucker in the bridge position and a pair of single-coils in the neck and middle slots. The controls are volume and two tone knobs: one for the neck and middle pickups and a dedicated tone for the humbucker, which pulls to cut the forward coil for a brighter single-coil sound. The only rub is the skirt-style knob slips out of the hand easily, which makes it tricky to grab it on the fly.

The DST-400 is a good playing guitar that's very useful as a spare on gigs and just fun to take out on its own because it performs well. The guitar feels nice in the hands, and, at seven pounds and a few ounces, it's an easy hang on a strap. The tones delivered by the Seeker Series pickups are clear and



balanced, and the humbucker did a good job of driving a Fender Deluxe Reverb, as well as a pair of new 1x12 combos: a Blackstar St. James tube amp and a Peavey Vypyr X2 digital modeler [see review on page 84]. The neck pickup's warmth and body make it cool for blues and jazz, and the humbucker with its PAF-level output was right on for lead and dirty rhythm. And if a traditional S-style pickup complement is needed, pulling the rear tone knob provides a decent bridge single-coil sound and delivers enhanced chime on position two and four.

In all, the DST-400 is a great value for a guitar that plays and sounds as good as it does. Whether you're a beginner or a working player in need of an affordable backup guitar that will cut it onstage, the DST-400 is a worthy consideration. 🎸

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JACKSON



American Series Soloist SL3

TESTED BY JUDE GOLD

SOME THINGS — the Porsche 911 GT3 comes to mind — just plain look fast. Others — like the tail of a scorpion — look obviously

SPECIFICATIONS

American Series Soloist SL3**CONTACT** jacksonguitars.com**PRICE** \$2,499 matte green, \$2,599 black, white or blue**NUT** Floyd Rose locking, 1.6875" (42.86mm) width**NECK** Three-piece graphite-reinforced "soft D-shaped" maple through-body**FRETBOARD** Ebony, 25.5" scale, 12"–16" compound radius**FRETS** 24 Jim Dunlop 6100 jumbo nickel**TUNERS** Gotoh MG-T locking**BODY** Alder, available in polyester-coated Gloss Black or Riviera Blue, urethane-coated Platinum Pearl, or polyester-coated matte Slime Green**BRIDGE** Floyd Rose 1500 locking with push-in vibrato arm**PICKUPS** Seymour Duncan JB TB-4 humbucker (bridge), Seymour Duncan Custom Flat Strat SSL-6 RWRP single-coil (middle), Seymour Duncan Custom Flat Strat SSL-6 single-soil (neck)**CONTROLS** Master Volume (500K), Master Tone (250K)**FACTORY STRINGS** Fender USA nickel-plated steel .009–.042**EXTRAS** Foam-core case, Jim Dunlop Straplok strap retainers and buttons, Luminlay luminescent side dots, neck-heel-mounted truss rod wheel, headstock-mounted hex wrench holder, matching headstock paint**WEIGHT** 7.8 lbs**BUILT** USA**KUDOS** Fast, shred-friendly neck and fretboard. Great sustain. Five balanced tones. Iconic look**CONCERNS** High-friction volume pot hinders pinkie swells. Case could fit better

dangerous. Then there are those objects that exude both those qualities. In the world of guitars, one such fast and dangerous object is the new Jackson American Series Soloist SL3. Rigged with a locking nut and two dozen thick, slippery nickel rails, its speedy neck dares you to, sonically speaking, burn rubber as fast as you can up and down its ebony dragstrip of a fretboard. Meanwhile, the guitar's menacing, backward-angled headstock is so pointy, you'd almost expect a drop of venom to be dangling from it. (Bandmates beware!)

Until September of this year, you could only get Jackson Soloists as imports — or, if you had extra money and time, you could custom order one from Jackson's California shop. (Currently, custom order fulfillment is taking Jackson up to 18 months.) But that whole situation has changed.

Impressed by Jackson's strong performance the past few years, Andy Mooney (CEO of Fender, Jackson's parent company) challenged the specialty brand to come up with a production model that would put American-built Jacksons in the hands of shred guitar lovers everywhere. The first model off this new line (built in Corona, California) is the new SL3, a top-gun shred machine built for the (slightly well-heeled) masses.

If you've never rocked a Soloist before, one of the first questions to ask yourself is, "Am I — or can I be — a neck-through-body player?" Some die-hard bolt-on devotees maintain that while through-body or set necks may sound fuller and even offer more sustain, they lack some of the snappy midrange delivered by a neck held to the body by mere bolts. While the juicy, distortion-friendly Seymour Duncan JB bridge humbucker is the star of the SL3's pickup party, after a month running the guitar both clean and dirty through EL34-powered Mesa/Boogie and Marshall heads, as well as into a

coffee-table-friendly Yamaha THR10 modeling amp, I was impressed by the spankiness of the Strat-style sounds called in via positions 2 (bridge plus middle pickups) and 4 (middle plus neck) on the guitar's five-way selector. I also vibed well with the round, fluty sound of position 5 (neck).

What may be most striking about the SL3's three-piece maple neck, though, is its rigidity. Maybe it's the internal graphite shafts that flank the truss rod, but this neck just won't bend. In other words, pushing hard on the back of the SL3's headstock in no way





causes ringing strings to drift flat the way they would on a Stratocaster or Les Paul. (Careful with your Pauls, people — Slash once exploded a Les Paul–style headstock trying to get vibrato this way.) I like this trait — it means that, although the Jackson headstock is angled back like a Paul's, it's less delicate. Of course, the SL3's stiffness is less notable when you're playing the guitar conventionally, but it contributes to the guitar's very fast, very enjoyable zero-wasted-energy playing feel.

Other things you may notice about the new Soloist's neck: There's no more truss-rod cover behind the nut (yay!) because the rod is now instantly adjustable via a wheel at the neck heel. Just insert the narrower of the two onboard hex wrenches mounted behind the headstock (another new feature) into one of the wheel's holes and turn slightly. And while you're behind the headstock, dig how Jackson has included a convenience atypical of locking-nut guitars — locking tuners! (I guess this guitar's "Fast as F***" tagline is meant to apply not just to its playability but also to string changes.)

Back to those wrenches. Really, any narrow enough metal rod can be used to turn the truss wheel. The wrenches' main application, of course, is for use with the Floyd Rose 1500 locking bridge and nut. Some Floyd Rose cognoscenti may complain that the base plate isn't cast steel, like those of the German-made Floyds, but the Korean-made 1500 (which is a bent-steel plate) has a worthy competitor — its specs are virtually identical to the German one, the molds are apparently newer and more accurate, it's more affordable, and, in my experience with



the SL3, works flawlessly and should keep up just fine with other Floyds, longevity-wise. And not only are the 1500's stainless-steel bridge and nut clamping bolts corrosion resistant, their metallic hue just plain looks cool, especially in contrast to the otherwise all-black Floyd hardware.

For those who play a lot of different styles, it's not impossible to imagine a folk singer somewhere (perhaps ironically?) making this predatorial looking shark's-tooth-inlay-sporting beast of a six-string their main instrument. There are no rules in 2022. But the reality is that if you walk onstage with this new Jackson Soloist, most guitar fans are going to expect to hear high-adventure,

high-adrenaline (or at least high-volume) riffage erupting volcanically from your fingers. And while I'm fascinated with the idea that this distinctive shred weapon could become more accepted in jam band, jazz fusion, pop, and other genres, I must admit that, like a teenager hopping on a WaveRunner for the first time, the second I first plugged this guitar in I immediately "opened the throttle wide." I instantly got in touch with my inner shredder and cranked that bridge Duncan for hours — days, really — reveling in how fun scale patterns, tapped licks, hammers and pulls, and distorted harmonics are to play on the wide-radius, warm-sounding nickel frets.

Hardcore Soloist fans may moan about certain touches they miss from some other iterations, such as the "Made in USA" text of custom Soloists (a phrase that is legally complicated nowadays), steel frets (Jackson swears they would have put them on this guitar if they were the right fit sonically), or neck binding. But, speaking of the latter, I actually don't gravitate toward posh guitar touches. Rather, I dig guitars that are broken in way beyond their first scratch, and for that reason I like the subtly rolled, worn-in feel of the SL3 neck's unbound edges. In fact, I wouldn't mind seeing this guitar get the full Mad Max treatment — its black paint thrashed down to the primer in places, like an old Camaro.

The Jackson American Series Soloist SL3 is not a cheap shred machine — few top-spec American built guitars these days are — but it's bad-ass. Rev up this race car of a guitar for a few minutes and you're not going to want to give up the driver's seat any time soon. 🏎️

ACLAM

Woman Tone Overdrive Pedal

TESTED BY DAVE HUNTER

AS THE NAME implies, Aclam's product designers were inspired by Eric Clapton's legendary Cream-era "woman tone" to create the Spanish company's latest release, and the result promises an impressive shortcut to that sound. But I feel it's also important to say up front that this product shouldn't be written off by players uninterested in chasing Clapton's Gibson SG-into-Marshall Super Lead sounds of more than half a century ago. The truth is, if you just need an extremely well-built Marshall-in-a-box (MIAB) overdrive for any situation in the broad range of rock sonic stylings — one that also happens to carry a nifty bonus feature — read on.

Based in Barcelona, Spain, Aclam was founded as a guitar-accessory maker around 10 years ago, and segued into high-quality, boutique-grade effects pedals shortly after that. As such, the Woman Tone is housed in an extremely rugged custom box that hints at another of the company's products: the

SPECIFICATIONS

Aclam Woman Tone Overdrive Pedal

CONTACT aclamguitars.com

PRICE \$349 street

CONTROLS Gain, Woman Tone, volume.

Foot-switches for pedal on/off and Woman Tone

EXTRAS True-bypass switching, LED indicator for each foot-switch. Center-negative 9VDC adaptor input

SIZE 5.25" x 3.25" x 1.875" (excluding feet and knobs)

BUILT Assembled in Spain

KUDOS A well-designed, well-built pedal offering toothsome overdrive tones and easy access to the hallowed "woman tone"

CONCERNS Some may find it pricey for what it does



Smart Track pedalboard and pedal-locking system it introduced in 2018 [reviewed in *GP Holiday 2018*], with easy-access fasteners built into slots at each side of the housing to eliminate the need for Velcro or Dual Lock. Otherwise, it's simply a handsome pedal by any measure, with custom Gibson-style black top-hat knobs, and graphics designed by Marijke Koger, the former leader of the Dutch art collective The Fool, which famously painted Clapton's SG.

As many guitarists already know, Clapton achieved his "woman tone" by rolling down his guitar's tone control, but this only produces the correct throaty, silky, vocal tone when injected into a cranked Marshall or a suitable fuzz, distortion or overdrive pedal capable of evoking that sound. In that respect, it's best to approach it as a straight-up, Plexi-voiced overdrive first and foremost. The controls include gain and volume, plus an overdrive on/off foot-switch

to the right side of the enclosure, with its own LED indicator. Added to these are the eponymous Woman Tone control between the other two knobs, plus the Woman Tone on/off switch to the left of the enclosure, which is only functional when the overdrive effect itself is on. In addition, a dip switch inside the pedal can be turned on for a darker tone, if you desire it. The input and output are on the pedal's front face, with a center-negative nine-volt DC power jack between them. Aclam explains that the pedal's Woman Tone control responds equally well to a range of pickup types thanks to a "custom pickup simulation circuit" that emulates the response of a vintage humbucker.

I tested the Woman Tone pedal with a Gibson 1959 Les Paul Reissue and an early '60s-style Fender Stratocaster into a tweed Deluxe-style 1x12 combo and a Friedman Dirty Shirley Mini head and 2x12 cab. I truly dug the pedal from several perspectives. First off, as



The easy-access fasteners under the pedal allow it to lock into Aclam's Smart Track pedalboards, though you can still use Velcro or Dual Lock, if you require.

hinted at above, this is simply a great-sounding overdrive pedal by any measure. The voicing is certainly in the cranked-vintage-Marshall ballpark, but that's a broad and extremely versatile crunch and lead tone for many genres and playing styles anyway.

Setting aside the woman tone feature, the pedal makes achieving classic-rock sounds a breeze. But the pedal is also dynamic and expressive when applied to other styles as well, adapting to everything from roots and alt to indie and other more-contemporary gain-ramping needs. The gain control offers a usable range, from mild dirt to floored-tube mayhem, and the volume control packs a real punch and can drive an amp hard, so I mostly kept it below the halfway point. As for the Woman Tone setting, it takes you straight to the stated destination, delivering a round, fluty, singing tone that can be strangely inspiring in a variety of musical settings.

Just as it's achieved with most guitars, full-on woman tone is best attained here by



The Darker Woman Tone switch is located inside the pedal.

rolling the Woman Tone knob all the way down, although some players might find subtler gradients that are useful to them. (I also found the factory preset preferable to the darker tone available from the internal switch, but your tastes might vary.) As for the elephant in the room: Yes, you can achieve the same thing in most instances by rolling down your guitar's tone knob, but the Woman Tone pedal delivers it at the stomp of

a switch, without taking your right hand from its picking position. It may also offer other benefits to players seeking to achieve the sound with their guitars set to middle-position pickup selections, or those with shared tone controls, and so forth. Even if you consider its eponymous leftward foot switch and related knob a mere bonus, it's a great-sounding and versatile overdrive that deserves an Editors' Pick Award. ■



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STONEWALL PICKUPS

Slutty Wolf H90 humbucker-sized P-90 set

TESTED BY DAVE HUNTER

THE PROMISE OF an authentic-sounding P-90 in a humbucker-sized mounting has been afloat for many years now, with several prominent pickup makers throwing their hats into the ring. I've played plenty of them, and while many sound pretty good, I've never thought any quite got there. So it's all the more impressive that a boutique winder from the seacoast region of New Hampshire and southern Maine cracked the code so effectively — and that he did it by applying such an alternative approach to the problem. The crux of the problem is that the shape of any pickup's coil plays a huge part in forming its voice, and you simply can't fit the same coil within the footprint of two differently shaped pickups. As a result, something has to be done differently.

Scott Miller of Stonewall Pickups has been winning plenty of fans in his part of New England since moving his focus from guitar

SPECIFICATIONS

Slutty Wolf H90 humbucker-sized P-90 set

CONTACT stonewallpickups.com

PRICE \$300 for the set, direct

MAGNETS Alnico V bridge, Alnico II and III neck

DC RESISTANCE 6.67kΩ neck, 7.77kΩ bridge

BUILT USA

KUDOS Cleverly designed and great sounding pickups, nailing that elusive P-90 tone with a little something extra

CONCERNS None



repair to full-time pickup manufacturing about 10 years ago, and his reputation has traveled further afield more recently, while he has shifted from reproductions to more original designs.

Outwardly, we might expect his Slutty Wolf H90 pickups to look much like other humbucker-sized P-90s. But they very much do not. Rather than traditional covers, they have integral decorative top plates (available in a wide variety of materials and colors, although we're partial to the tortoiseshell on the review set). But perhaps more dramatically they have two pole pieces per string, for a total of 12. These are resolutely still single-coil units, but the double poles (hit upon after much R&D) enabled a widening of the coil to more authentic P-90-like specs. While Miller doesn't disclose the wire he uses for each design, he did say, "Because most of my new designs don't fit in traditional covers, I can actually make the bobbins bigger and end up using much thicker wire gauges." There are two Alnico V bar magnets in the bridge position (which reads 7.77k ohms), and a mix of Alnico II and III in the neck (6.67k ohms). The pair is RWRP for a hum-canceling middle position.

Tested in an Epiphone Les Paul Traditional Pro supplied by Miller, through a Carr Super Bee 1x10 combo and a Friedman Dirty Shirley Mini head and 2x12 cab, the Slutty Wolf H90s sounded nothing short of spectacular. Rather

than the bovine mud delivered by so many contemporary P-90s (whether standard or H-sized), this set nailed an authentically vintage-inspired voice, yet arguably with a little more of everything we've come to love in the original Gibson units of the '50s and early '60s. That beloved grit and bite is all there, couched in an impressive blend of articulation and girth, plus the seemingly impossible combination of tight, edgy attack and succulent compression that great vintage pickups seem to achieve in the pick feel.

Add it all up, and the Slutty Wolf H90s deliver on the qualities that have made vintage P-90s so lusted after for so many years, characteristics that have long made them some of the most expressive pickups available. Some of the hidden delights include a slightly Fender-ish glassiness that isn't found in many contemporary P-90s, enough power to drive an amp's front end without crushing it into midrange sludge, and a surprisingly PAF-like harmonic complexity that sings sweetly through both clean settings and overdrive. They will rock out, for sure, and I immensely enjoyed them with the Friedman cranked for Plexi-like crunch or with a TS9 or a JHS Angry Charlie into either amp. But they also delivered lush clean tones that evade many P-90s, with lots of appealing chime and sparkle. Great sounds, great pickups and a set worthy of an Editors' Pick Award. 🎸



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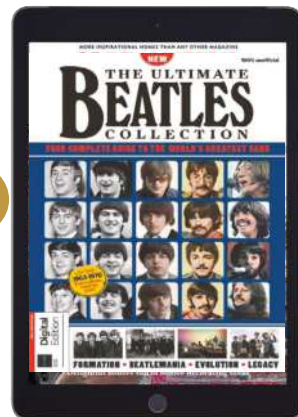
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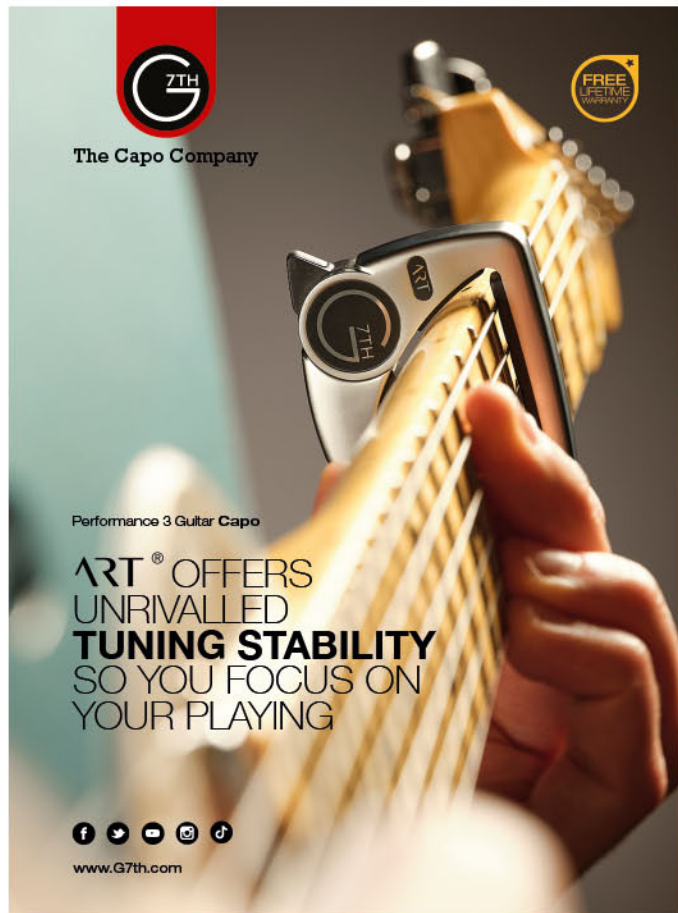


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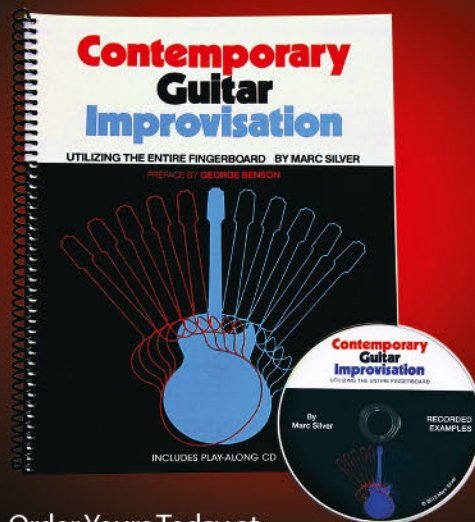
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Phil Collen reveals the short, sweet creation of Def Leppard’s 1987 hit.

BY MARK MC STEA

DEF LEPPARD’S FOURTH album, *Hysteria*, cost the band an alleged \$4 million by the time it was released in 1987. As the highly anticipated follow-up to 1983’s *Pyromania*, it sold well, but it appeared Leppard might still struggle to recoup the massive outlay on recording.

Everything changed with the release of “Pour Some Sugar On Me,” *Hysteria*’s third single. After a slow start, it picked up momentum once the band shot a new promo video for it, and it became a staple of rock radio in the summer of 1987. The single may have stalled at number two on the U.S. charts, but it was enough to propel the album to U.S. sales of 12 million and global sales of approximately 20 million.

SUGAR RUSH

Phil Collen remembers that the song came about almost by accident. “We’d finished *Hysteria*, and [lead singer] Joe [Elliott] was sitting in the corridor, playing an acoustic guitar,” he says. “Mutt Lange, who was producing, said, ‘What’s that you’re playing?’ Joe just looked at him kind of confused and said, ‘I don’t know, just this thing I’ve been messing around with.’ Mutt told him to play it again, and when he’d finished, he decided that we really needed to record it.

“What happened next was that it turned into a kind of hip-hop beat with a rap vocal. Joe and Mutt were coming up with lyrics, which were just random and kind of nonsense at that stage, trying to get something flowing. Prior to that, all we had was the line ‘Pour some sugar on me,’ and the chords. Mutt said

to me we needed a verse to go with the chorus. By that stage it was obviously being very influenced by that mid-’80s minimalist hip-hop feel, and that was when I came up with the riff on the A and E strings, which was meant to be kind of like a bass line.”

A couple of other fairly minimal guitar parts became additional melodic hooks. “Mutt’s a big country fan, and he came up with a fingerpicked country idea for the intro riff on the G and D strings,” Collen reveals. “I’m not really a fingerpicker, so I adjusted it a little by playing it with a pick and giving it a slightly different feel.”

Lang and his keen memory were also responsible for the addition of the bridge riff. “About six months earlier, me and Steve [Clark] were jamming in Ireland and he’d come up with this really wonky riff, which was what we used for the bridge, where it alternates between the seventh and sixth frets on the G string. Mutt had remembered it and stored it in his head. He just said, ‘Let’s try that idea you had,’ and it worked perfectly.”

GEAR ED-UCATION

Collen can remember exactly what he used to record his parts. “The main thing I used was a Strat that my mother bought me for my 21st birthday that I nicknamed Felix. I had a DiMarzio humbucker at the bridge where I’d cut a hole in it. I’d met Eddie Van

Halen on Van Halen’s first tour of the U.K., and he’d said to me that I’d never be happy with the sound unless I changed that pickup. So I thought, If Eddie says I should do it, I’m going to try it! That turned out to be the main guitar that I used on the album. The opening riff was played on a Jackson Dinky and doubled with a Telecaster, but everything else was the Strat, and it was all played through a Rockman.”

Collen views the song’s creation as a happy accident. “We didn’t demo it or anything,” he says. “We just pieced it together quite quickly before we recorded it. It’s wonderful when something pulls together like that. I suspect that if we’d come up with it earlier in the recording process, we’d never have done it as fast as we did. We actually finished the song in 10 days, which is nothing when you consider that the rest of the album took about two years to record!”

SWEET SUCCESS

Def Leppard know it’s the one song that

everyone is waiting to hear when they perform live.

“We still really love to play it, and it’s never sounded better,” Collen says. “This is the most powerful that the band has ever been. It’s a huge kick to hear the audience respond to it. ‘Sugar’ has been good to us. It took us to a whole other level in the States, and we could never tire of playing it live.” ■

“EDDIE VAN HALEN SAID I’D NEVER BE HAPPY WITH THE SOUND UNLESS I CHANGED THAT PICKUP. IF EDDIE SAYS I SHOULD DO IT, I’M GOING TO TRY IT”



Steve Clark (left) and Phil Collen perform with Def Leppard in 1983.

THE SOUND IN MY HEAD.

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