

GUITAR & BASS
TRANSCRIPTIONS

→ **FENDER'S AMERICAN ULTRA AXES REVIEWED!**

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Loving"

GUNS N' ROSES
"Sweet Child
O' Mine"

JEFF BECK
"Cause We've Ended
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& MORE!**

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O)))**

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TROWER**

**HERMAN LI
... & more!**

×
**SLAYER'S
KERRY KING**
TALKS NEW
SIGNATURE DEAN V!

×
**GLENN TIPTON,
WILLIE ADLER & MORE**
REVEAL THEIR WORST
SPINAL TAP MOMENTS!

×
STONE TEMPLE PILOTS
SHOW US THEIR GEAR!

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**MEET LADY GAGA'S
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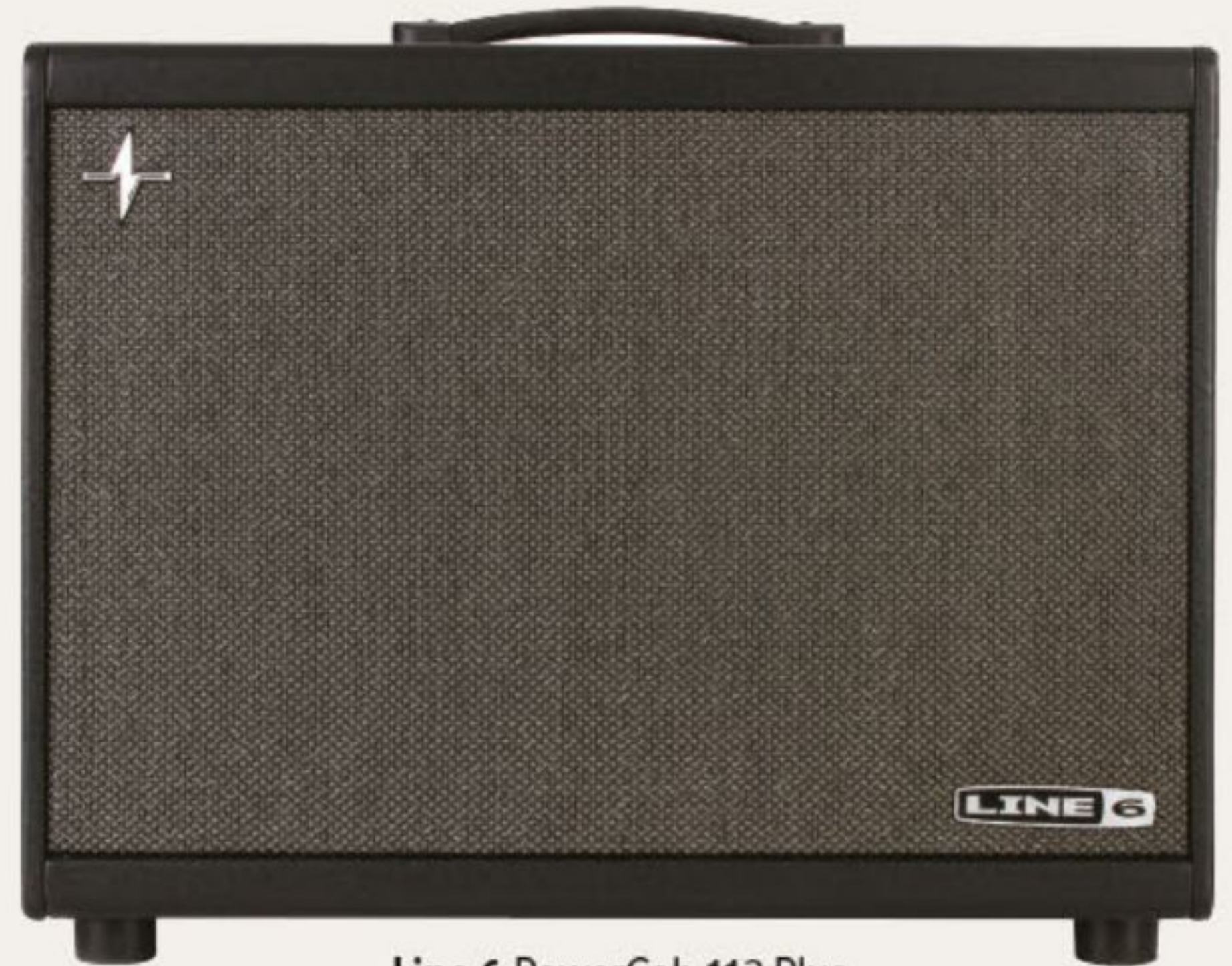
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A detailed view of the Marshall ORIGIN 20 amplifier, showing its control panel with knobs for Presency, Master, Treble, Middle, Bass, and Tilt, along with a Tilt switch and a Power switch. The Marshall logo is visible on the top of the amp. The background features a guitarist playing an electric guitar, with a teal geometric overlay on the left side of the image.

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Rory Clewlow with Enter Shikari - Pic: Tom Pullen



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CONTENTS

VOL. 41 | NO. 3 | MARCH 2020

FEATURING

36 STONE TEMPLE PILOTS

Simply put, **Stone Temple Pilots'** Robert and Dean DeLeo show us their gear!

44 LOOKING BACK WITH STEVE VAI

Steve Vai revisits several career highlights, including his days with **Frank Zappa**, **Alcatrazz**, **David Lee Roth** and more. Also, as part of a GW exclusive, Vai spills the beans about his hot new signature guitar, the Ibanez PIA (page 52)!

60 VAI REVISITS A WHITESNAKE CLASSIC

Steve Vai takes you inside the making of **Whitesnake's** hit 1989 album, *Slip of the Tongue*

66 MEET LADY GAGA'S GUITARIST!

Tim Stewart has worked with **Lady Gaga**, **Rhianna**, **Jennifer Lopez**, **Adam Lambert** and **Miley Cyrus**. What's his secret?

72 GLENN TIPTON'S SPINAL TAP MOMENT

Metal guitarists — including **Glenn Tipton**, **Matt Heafy**, **Willie Adler**, **Michael Sweet** and **Dino Cazares** — reveal their most embarrassing rock 'n' roll moments

44



Steve Vai with his new signature guitar, the Ibanez PIA

TRANSCRIBED

"Fool for Your Loving"

by Whitesnake

PAGE
95

"Sweet Child O' Mine"

by Guns N' Roses

PAGE
104

"Cause We've Ended As Lovers"

by Jeff Beck

PAGE
112

DEPARTMENTS

14 WOODSHED / MASTHEAD

16 SOUNDING BOARD

Letters, reader art, Defenders of the Faith

19 TUNE-UPS

Slayer's Kerry King, plus **Sunn O))),** **Chelsea Wolfe**, **Billy Strings**, **Joanna Connor**, **Austin Meade**, **Dear Guitar Hero** with **DragonForce's** Herman Li and **The Garage** at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame

77 SOUNDCHECK

77. Fender American Ultra Jazzmaster and Stratocaster HSS

80. Yamaha CG-TA TransAcoustic

82. Electro-Harmonix Mod 11 Modulator

83. Line 6 Powercab 212 Plus

84. Orangetop Hudson and Sage
Live guitars

86 COLUMNS

86. String Theory

by Jimmy Brown

88. In Deep

by Andy Aledort

90. Dweezil Ripped My Flesh

by Dweezil Zappa

92. Wrembel On

by Stéphane Wrembel

94 PERFORMANCE NOTES

122 TONAL RECALL

The secrets behind **Robin Trower's** legendary tone on 1974's "Bridge of Sighs"

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a dark hat, glasses, and a dark denim jacket, is playing an Ovation acoustic guitar. The guitar has a distinctive round back with a cutaway and a dark finish. The background is dark with some light filtering through blinds on the right.

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I JUST SOLD MY PEDAL STEEL GUITAR

SO, YEAH, LIKE the headline says, I just sold my pedal steel guitar on eBay. Even though I've been a "normal" guitarist for ages, I actually think the pedal steel — when played by a master like David "DB" Berzansky, Paul Franklin, Lloyd Green, Pete Drake, Tom Brumley, Al Perkins or Ralph Mooney — is the most beautiful-sounding thing in the universe. Sadly, I sucked at it. I got it in October 2014, took some lessons in NYC, worked really hard at it for a few



months and made my big "pedal steel debut" in Louisville, Kentucky, in May 2015. I sucked so bad that I literally packed it up and never played it again. I did actually take it out of its case two years later, but it became a combination sweater rack/cat fortress. It had to go. Whether it's a Telecaster, a Les Paul or a Sho-Bud LDG, if you're not gonna play an instrument, get rid of it — let someone else play it! And sure, you can call me a quitter and tell me I should've "stuck with it" — but the point is I didn't care. We learn more about ourselves as we get older, and I learned that the guitar is the only instrument I'm ever going to give a rat's ass about. Plus I actually made a profit, something that never happens to me on eBay!



A QUICK WORD ABOUT OUR COVER STAR: One day in 1984, I walked "up the avenue" in Jersey City, New Jersey, to buy the October 1984 issue of *Guitar Player* magazine. I wanted it because my idol, Stevie Ray Vaughan, was on the cover (a cover that looks a hell of a lot like *Guitar World's* November 2019 SRV cover, but let's not talk about that...). The issue also happened to include *GP's* first-ever "Soundsheet" — a square, black, one-sided flexi-disc featuring "The Attitude Song," a tune by Steve Vai, who I'd never heard of before that day. Even though it sounded nothing like SRV, Albert Collins, Johnny Copeland, Johnny Winter or the other stuff I was into as a teenager, I loved "The Attitude Song" because it opened my eyes to so many new ideas, including, "Yikes — I never knew a guitar instrumental could sound like this!" So, 36 years later, I hereby officially thank *GP* and Steve Vai! By the way, *GP* did another really cool Soundsheet in 1986 — "Cookin'" by Jimmie Vaughan and Duke Robillard. Track it down on YouTube!

—Damian Fanelli
Editor-in-Chief

GUITAR WORLD (ISSN 1045-6295) is published 13 times a year, monthly plus Holiday issue following December issue, by Future US, Inc., 11 West 42nd Street, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10036. Phone: 212.378.0400. Fax: 917.281.4704. Web Site: www.futureplc.com. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Newsstand distribution is handled by Curtis Circulation Company. Subscriptions: One-year basic rate (12 issues) US: \$14.95. Canada: US\$29.95. Foreign: US\$49.95. Canadian and foreign orders must be prepaid. Canadian price includes postage and GST #R128220688. PMA #40612608. Subscriptions do not include newsstand specials. POSTMASTER: Send change of address to Guitar World, P.O. Box 2024, Langhorne, PA 19047-9957. Ride-along enclosure in the following edition(s): None, Standard enclosure: None. Returns: Pitney Bowes, P.O. Box 25542, London, ON N6C 6B2, Canada. Entire contents copyright 2020, Future PLC. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited. Future PLC is not affiliated with the companies or products covered in Guitar World. Reproduction on the Internet of the articles and pictures in this magazine is illegal without the prior written consent of Guitar World. Products named in the pages of Guitar World are trademarks of their respective companies. PRODUCED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. SUBSCRIBER CUSTOMER SERVICE: Guitar World Magazine Customer Care, P.O. Box 2024, Langhorne, PA 19047-9957. Phone: 1-800-456-6441. Email contact@myfavoritemagazines.com. BACK ISSUES: www.myfavoritemagazines.com REPRINTS: Future PLC, 11 West 42nd Street, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10036. Phone: 212.378.0414

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LICENSING: Guitar World is available for licensing. Contact the Licensing team to discuss partnership opportunities. Rachel Shaw, Head of Print Licensing, licensing@futurenet.com

EDITORIAL AND ADVERTISING OFFICES
11 W. 42nd St., 15th Floor, New York, NY 10036
212-768-2966; FAX: 212-944-9279

FUTURE US, INC.
11 W. 42nd St., 15th Floor, New York, NY 10036
www.futureplc.com

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Future plc is a public company
quoted on the London Stock
Exchange
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A Few Notable Omissions?

The Guitarists of the Decade issue [January 2020] was quite a mix of players and styles. That being said, some omissions I noticed were Gretchen Menn, John 5 and Zakk Wylde. But props for the “Head Cuttin’ Duel” transcription! In closing, regarding the Tonal Recall section, it might be better served to pick a song in the issue to focus on for the feature. Thanks for doing a great job.

—Wayne Harrod

Some Sweet Words About Michael

Thank you for featuring Michael Sweet in the Holiday 2019 issue. Sweet is a highly underrated guitarist. Heck, Sweet is a highly underrated talent, period. With Stryper, his solo career and side projects, he has been on an incredibly creative run over the last several years. As a singer, songwriter, producer, lead and rhythm guitarist, he has proven that he can wear many different hats. Thank you for putting the spotlight on one of the true talents in hard rock/heavy metal. God bless!

—Troy Tennard

Wired About Our Jeff Beck Issue

Accolades for the enlightening profile and guests who verified that Jeff Beck remains the inimitable fretboard virtuoso [Holiday 2019]. This boundlessly talented guitarist can master hard rock, jazz fusion, funk, blues, techno, rockabilly and even classical genres. Beck’s tone is astounding because he expertly uses myriad tones. In addition to being the incomparable guitarist Jeff Beck is also the most mysterious. Maybe it’s good karma. Beck has been an animal-loving vegetarian since 1968, and he’s dedicated to saving British wildlife.

—Brien Comerford

Check Out Blacktop Mojo!

I would like to direct GW’s attention to an indie band out of Texas called Blacktop Mojo. Their newest release, *Under the Sun*, is likely the best guitar album I’ve heard in a good 10 years. I’m an old-school Eighties kid from Canada, and these guys came to my attention with their previous release, *Burn the Ships*. I really think they’re deserving of some coverage by the best guitar publication out there!

—James Radford

Not Sounding Bored at All!

I’ve played for five years and recently signed up for the magazine. From what I can tell, for all you new folks out there, it’s really a great subscription to get in your mailbox. I love the Sounding Board, especially because of the Defenders of the Faith. If you want a good read, GW is your mailbox favorite.

—Tyler Hammock

Defenders: Where Are They Now?

Just a random idea. Every now and then while thumbing through an older copy of *Guitar World*, the Defenders of the Faith section will catch my attention. The last time this happened I Googled the [guitarists’] names out of curiosity. It was inspiring to find that many of these players from decades ago are still active in music. They may not have ever reached rock-star status, but it was inspiring to see that many of them succeeded in keeping music in their lives. Have you ever considered skimming through the decades’ worth of people featured in Defenders of the Faith to see what became of them? It might make for an interesting and inspirational article.

—Doug DeWald

[Editor’s note: This is a brilliant idea!]

An Ode to Carmen Vandenberg

Several months ago, I had the pleasure of attending a sold-out concert with Buddy Guy at my favorite venue, the Belly Up here in San Diego. Unfortunately, I was very disappointed as the blues icon spent the majority of his time reminiscing and joke-telling while his band provided most of the music. Then, just as the show was ending, Buddy introduced the audience to this guitarist by the name of Carmen Vandenberg. Without a doubt, this was absolutely the best part of the evening. She was amazing and had the impact of a California earthquake with her playing ability. She made the cost of the expensive ticket worthwhile.

—Bob Hudson

More George Thorogood!

When will George Thorogood get a cover and some respect from *Guitar World*? Have you heard *Live in Boston, 1982*? He gets a little carried away with John Lee Hooker and alcohol, but his guitar playing is fantastic! Please write a good George story!

—Robert Gallagher

That Hits the (Ink) Spot

Ink Spot should be renamed “Bad Life Choices” or “Future Regrets.” I mean, who thinks this is a good idea? My guess is there is someone at your mag that has a lot of ink and wishes to indulge others to do the same.

—Jerry Freese



Ink Spot

I have a sleeve dedicated to “the King of Surf Guitar,” Dick Dale. He taught me how to play guitar in Twentynine Palms, California, and mentored me since I was 15. After his passing on March 16, 2019, I helped his wife lead the Dick Dale fundraiser. He was amazing and taught me so much!

—Elliott D. Janz



GOT A TATTOO of your favorite ax, band or guitarist? Send a pic of your ink to GW SoundingBoard@futurenet.com!

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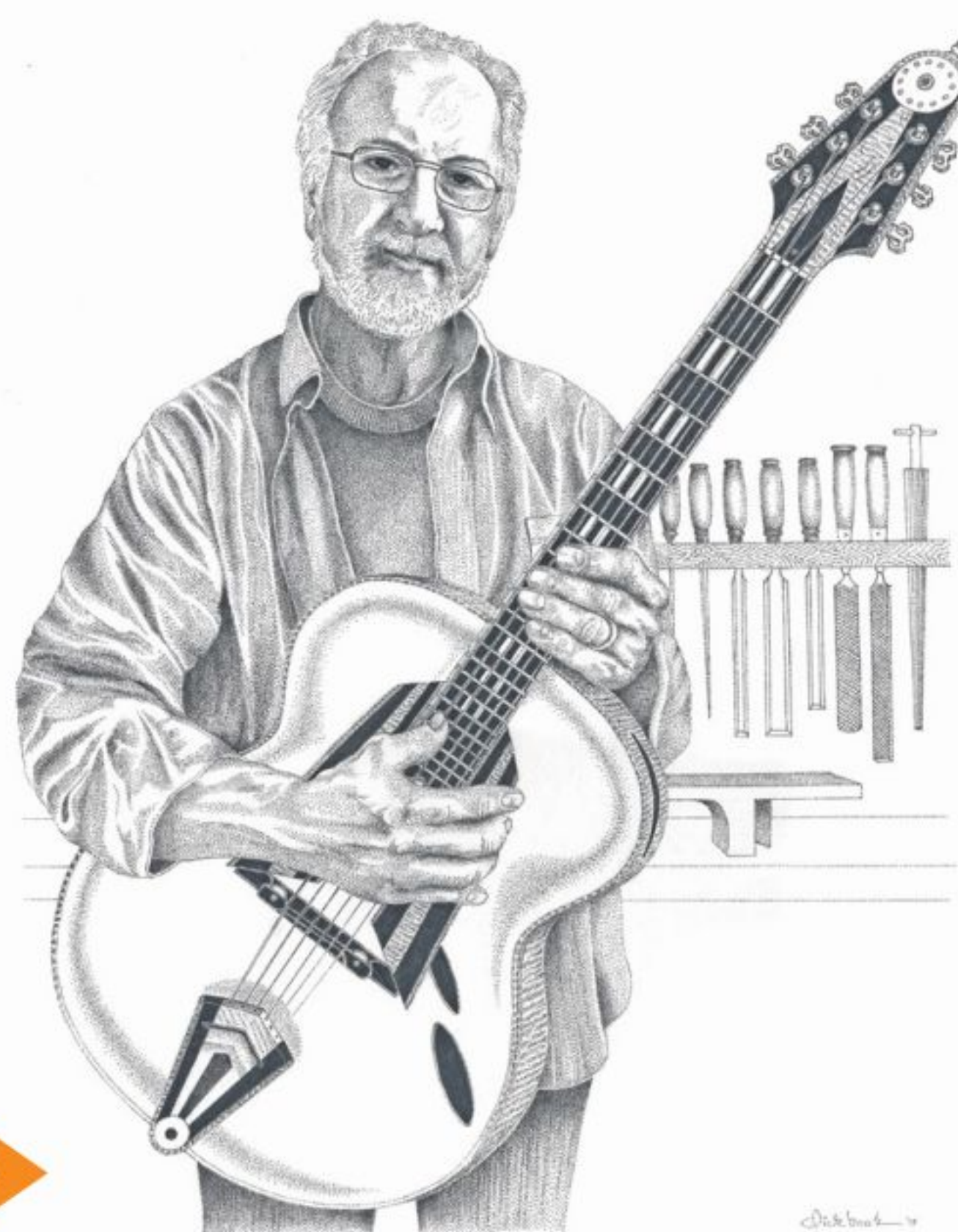


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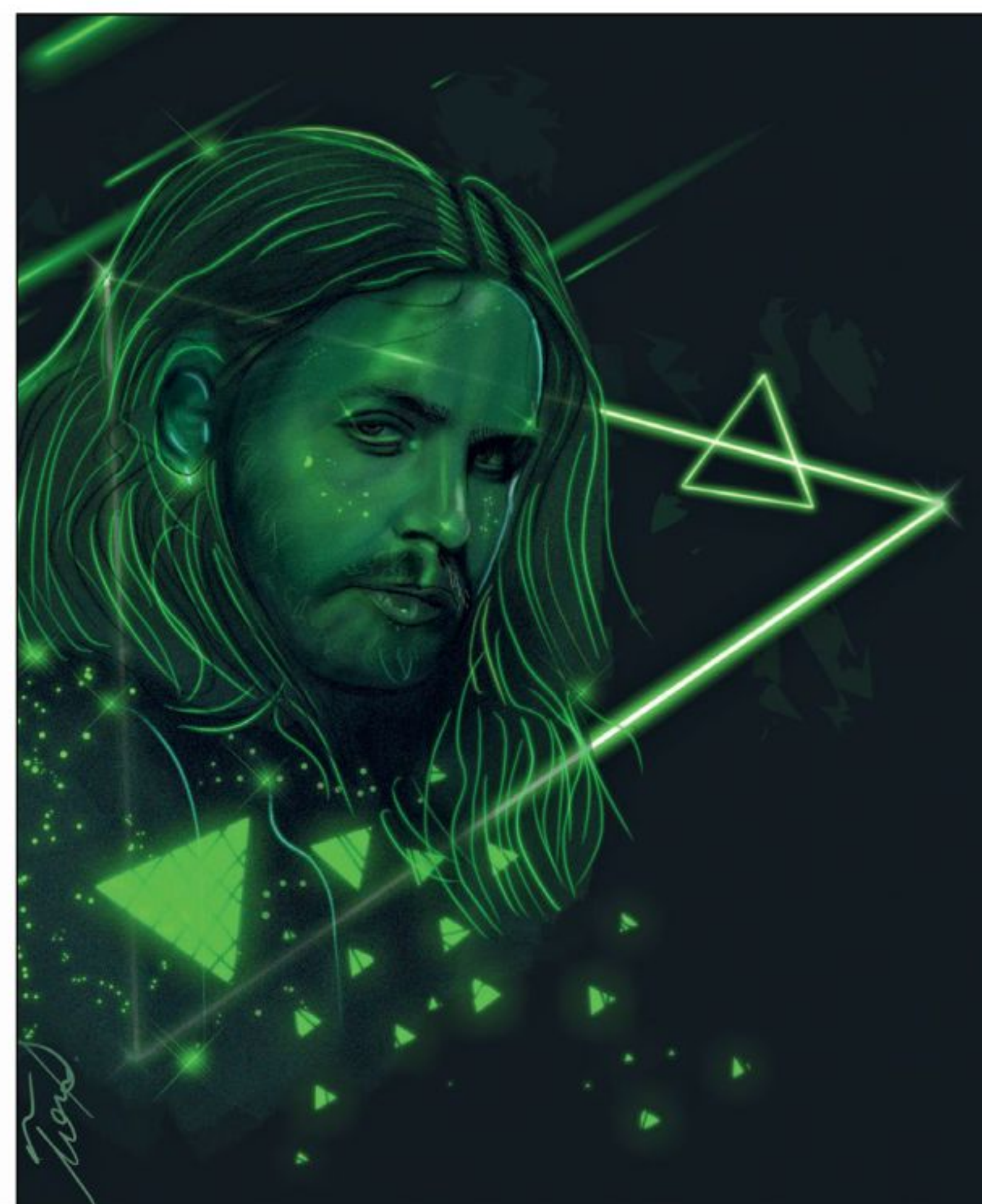
OF THE MONTH

If you've created a drawing, painting or sketch of your favorite guitarist and would like to see it in an upcoming issue of *Guitar World*, email GWSoundingBoard@futurenet.com with a scan of the image!

Also, please let us know if you'd like us to share it on Instagram!



JOHN MONTELEONE BY DICK BOAK



THE STRUTS' ADAM SLACK BY TONI SANTIAGO

DEFENDERS of the Faith



Mehedee Hasan

AGE: 44

HOMETOWN: Gurnee, IL

GUITARS: Gus G Jackson X, Gibson Les Paul Jr., Fender Stratocaster, Ibanez Iron Label, ESP LTD M-400, 1989 Charvel

SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Warfaze "Protikkha," Metallica "Jump in the Fire," Love Runs Blind "Aaj Theke Eer"

GEAR I WANT MOST: Gibson Les Paul Goldtop, Fulltone OCD Red, Marshall Origin 50-watt combo



Anthony Navratil

AGE: 33

HOMETOWN: Tamaqua, PA

GUITARS: Gibson Les Paul Studio, Taylor 214ce, Gibson J-45

SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Bryan Adams "Summer of '69," Tom Petty "Learning to Fly," Metallica "Nothing Else Matters," Led Zeppelin "Stairway to Heaven"

GEAR I WANT MOST: Taylor 914, Bose L1 with sub



Sean Francis

AGE: 46

HOMETOWN: Saskatoon, SK, Canada

GUITARS: Gibson Randy Rhoads LPC Relic, Wylde Audio Odin Gangrene, Partscaster Tele, Bunkman super strat, Natural top quilt maple LPC

SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: The Haunted North "Rise," Black Sabbath "Supernaut," Brent Mason "Hot Wired," Chris Duarte "My Way Down"

GEAR I WANT MOST: Epiphone Jared James Nichols "Old Glory" LPC, Wylde Audio 100-watt amp



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TUNE-UPS

SUNN O)))

22

CHELSEA
WOLFE

24

25

AUSTIN MEADE

BILLY STRINGS

26



28

JOANNA CONNOR

DGH:
HERMAN LI

30

ROCK AND ROLL
HALL OF FAME

34



Kerry King plays his Dean USA Kerry King V Limited Edition guitar at Slayer's final show — November 30, 2019, at the Forum in Inglewood, California

Born of Fire

IN THIS *GUITAR WORLD* EXCLUSIVE, SLAYER'S KERRY KING TAKES YOU INSIDE HIS NEW DEAN GUITARS USA KERRY KING V LIMITED EDITION AXE

By Brad Angle

▶ AFTER A NEARLY 40-year reign as thrash metal's most uncompromising band, Slayer have called it quits. The game-changing Los Angeles crew concluded their Final Campaign farewell tour November 30, 2019, at the Forum in Inglewood, California — a fiery, furious show with blistering versions of fan favorites and genre classics like “Angel of Death,” “South of Heaven,” “Raining Blood” and more.

While the Big 4 road dogs may have reached the end of their live actions (management has clarified that while Slayer is finished touring, they haven't *officially* broken up), founding guitarist Kerry King isn't quite ready to hang up his axe. In fact, he recently signed on with Dean Guitars and unveiled the first fruits of their partnership: the USA Kerry King V Limited Edition guitar.

The striking six-string, prototypes of which King sported during the last tour leg, boasts a custom V-shaped mahogany body, EMG and Sustainiac pickups, Kahler KFK bridge, three-piece maple neck, 24 jumbo-fret ebony fingerboard, pearl, stone and ebony inverted-cross inlays, fiber optic LED side dots, Black Satin with Gloss Red Cross finish and more. Only 50 of the USA Kerry King V models are being →

KEVIN ESTRADA

made, and, as such, each arrives with the appropriately hefty price tag of \$8,666 – the number of the beast, plus.

“We really went out of our way to make something unique – and not so crazy that it would turn people off. I, for one, am very proud of it,” explains King, who, along with late founding guitarist Jeff Hanneman, was the architect behind the sinister themes, vicious rhythms and hell-raising, squealing solos that always defined Slayer’s unparalleled attack.

Throughout the final world tour, King and his bandmates – founding bassist/singer Tom Araya, guitarist Gary Holt and drummer Paul Bostaph – were uncharacteristically silent offstage. They eschewed the typical press rounds and public good-byes and were tight-lipped about what new musical projects might be on the horizon. But the week before King hit the Forum for Slayer’s finale, the guitarist agreed to open up to *Guitar World* about the details behind his new Dean – including why the signature six-string is a good sign that we’ll be hearing some new solo music from King in the not-too-distant future.

Why was Dean the right company to partner with for your new signature guitar?

Well, it’s no secret that I’ve always liked “pointy” guitars. I’ve been friends with the Dean people for at least 15 years, so it was really a no-brainer. And Dean has given me the opportunity to create things no one has seen before.

Dimebag was obviously a Dean guy for years, and you two were tight. Did you ever test out any of his guitars back in the day?

I have one of the Razorback Vs numbered to 333, so yes!

You were with B.C. Rich for a lot of years, a partnership that resulted in a bunch of iconic signature guitars. What were your requirements when you first sat down with Dean to brainstorm a brand-new guitar? From first glance the black finish is a big departure from some of your previous tribal-inspired designs.

Well, nothing against the tribal paint – that’s been my thing for 20 years. But it was more about making something fresh – first new company in 20 years, gotta have fresh ideas. So I had them make a couple guitars made from different woods. It was all about having to make sure what was right for Kerry now, not 20 years ago. And that also meant new paint ideas.

Dean is touting the new USA Kerry King V Limited Edition model as having a “never



“We went out of our way to make something unique – and not so crazy that it would turn people off. I, for one, am very proud of it.”

before seen guitar design.” Can you share some details about the inspiration behind the new V guitar body and headstock shape?

For me, Dean has its own iconic headstock shape. It was just a little too big for my taste. So I suggested that if we were going to join forces, how about if we made a headstock more my style? And this is what we came up with. Then we basically had the body mimic the headstock. Funny story. The first body they cut for me off a drawing I sent them was way too big. We had to downsize it twice! Dean guitars for giants!

Did you start with one of their existing guitars as a template and then tweak the design? Did you test a lot of different

prototypes before you landed on something you liked?

Actually, the only thing I wanted the same or similar was my neck dimensions, of course. The only other parameter I was focused on was doing something with a V. In the beginning that’s all, because that’s what I play 90 percent of the time. And I certainly wasn’t going to ask Dean to do anything resembling a [B.C. Rich] Warlock! We really started nailing the design down when I was able to go to the Dean factory on a day off in Tampa on whatever tour I was on at the time. We did a lot of streamlining in those 36 hours.

You mentioned neck dimensions. The neck shape is listed as “Kerry King Spec C.” Is it closer to an oval C shape or more of a modern, shallower flat oval shape? I really don’t know! It’s my fuckin’ shape!

The custom fretboard inlays are rad. What inspired that design?

To tell you the truth, I think it was my friend Josh [Maloney] at Dean. Early on he was shooting me ideas that I believe he was predominantly responsible for. It’s two crossed stakes with an upside-down cross in the middle of them. [He] definitely stepped it up for this one.

You’ve been playing a prototype of the Dean during this last leg of the final tour. How’s it holding up? Has the live “trial by fire” brought to light any aspects of the guitar that needed to be tweaked?

I play the Dean guitars for 12 of the 20 songs we play live. And, I know, everyone talks great things about new products, but I also know that my reputation is being a straight shooter. I am super pleased with the new guitars. The only thing I’ve changed from the first two Deans is I’ve finally come up with graphics.

Dean will be kicking off the line with a limited run of 50 U.S.-made, signed models. Are there talks yet of a larger factory run?

I’m sure there will be a larger factory run. I’ve been so busy with the final [tour] that we haven’t really discussed it, unfortunately.

Speaking of the final Slayer tour, now that you’re at the end of the run, fans are anxious to learn what you’ll be up to next. You’ve been clear in the past that you’re not retiring. Is it safe to say fans can expect to hear some new music from Kerry King and the new signature Dean guitar in the future?

Let’s just say... Dean didn’t sign me for nothing!



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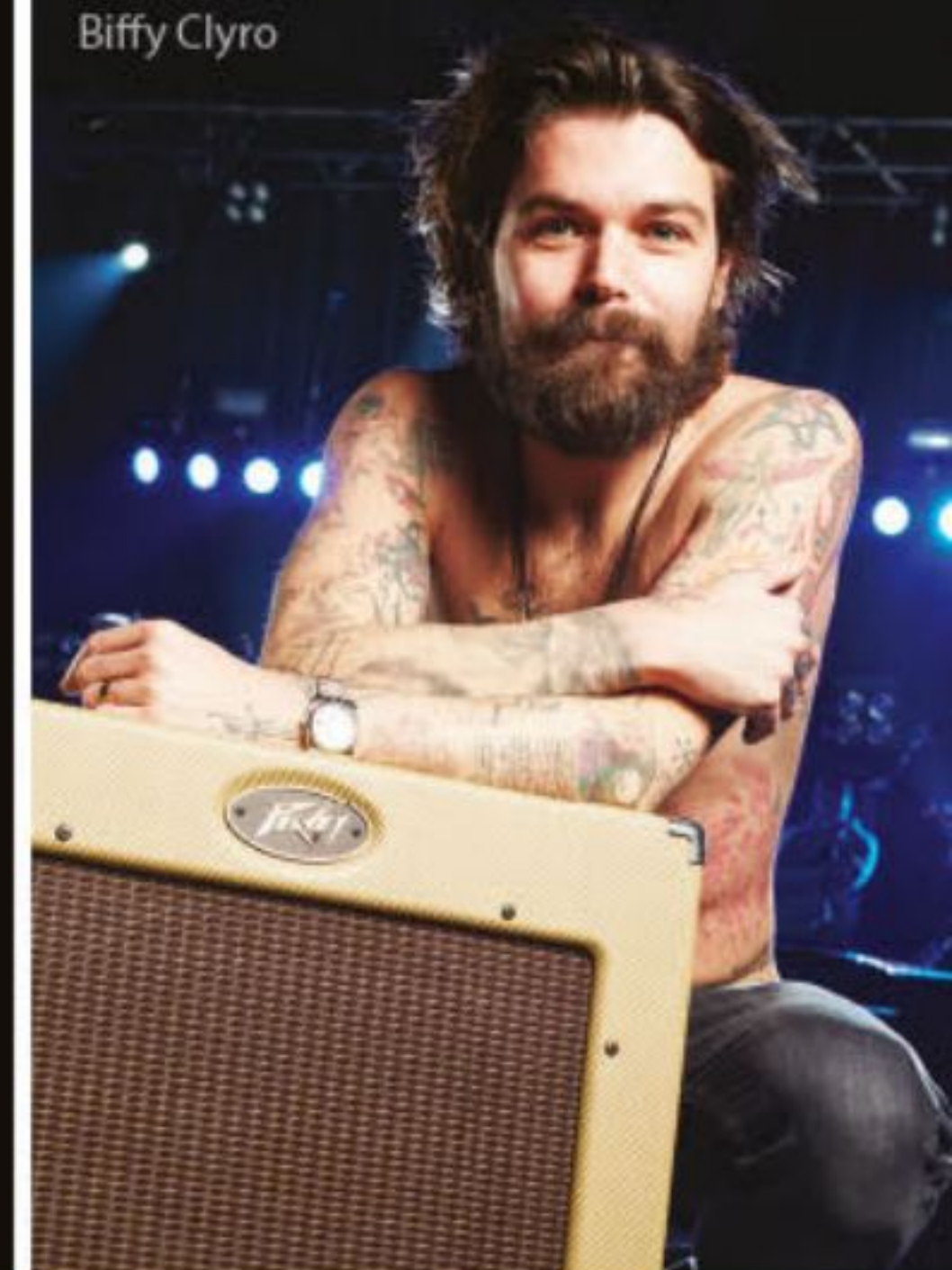


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Sunn O)))

DRONE METAL LORDS
STEPHEN O'MALLEY AND
GREG ANDERSON DISCUSS
THE MEANING OF *LIFE METAL*
— AND THEIR NEW SIGNATURE
STOMPBOX, THE LIFE PEDAL

By Gregory Adams

▶ “IT’S NOT VIOLENT, actually. It might be kind of aggressive because you’re in this sound field, but it’s not a violent, destructive thing. It’s an expressive thing.”

That’s Sunn O)))’s Stephen O’Malley on the misconception that he and sonic life partner Greg Anderson are maliciously looking to destroy audiences with their body of extended, speaker-and-ceiling-cracking drone experiments. In fact, 20 years into one of heavy music’s most unlikely success stories, the robe-donning duo are in the mood to celebrate. While their *Life Metal* is ostensibly rooted in the murkiest corners of metal — pulling inspiration from the slow-mo crush of early Melvins and Grief, as well as godfather of gloom Tony Iommi — the guitarists’ latest occasionally comes across as jubilant as its uplifting title. Take “Novae,” the double album’s 25-minute finale, where the pair gleefully bowl into a series of mountain-leveling power chords before allowing each other to venture off into their own textural journeys.

“One of the names we’ve given it is ‘the riff exchange program,’” says Anderson of the benevolent back and forth he maintains with O’Malley. “One person [plays] a solo — which, in the traditional sense, is nothing like a John McLaughlin or Eddie Van Halen solo, of course. It’s solo riffing that’s improvised. Once that finishes, there’s a unison riff, and then the next player starts [his solo section].”

Sunn O))) [pronounced “sun”] have been feeling extra generous this year. Across *Life Metal*’s four epic compositions, O’Malley and Anderson unveil a breadth of riches, from the deep power surge of inverted bends and pipe organ that caps “Troubled Air” to the medieval, meditative harmonies of “Between Sleipnir’s Breaths,” an ode to a mythological horse. The pair have also just unveiled *Pyroclasts*, a sister set to *Life Metal* containing a series of fully improvised pieces that arose from a series of studio warmup exercises. While some Sunn O))) records have taken years to complete,

both *Life Metal* and *Pyroclasts* were cut with esteemed audio engineer Steve Albini (Nirvana, Shellac) at Chicago’s Electrical Audio facility in just two weeks. Decades of working together have transformed Anderson and O’Malley into a naturally intuitive duo, but the group also credit their current focus to Albini’s get-it-done-in-the-moment recording methodology.

“Producers we worked with in the past [would say], ‘Hey if you make a mistake, don’t worry about it. We’ll fix that. We’ll fix it five different times!’” Anderson says. “With Albini, that wasn’t the case at all. You felt like you really had to bring your best self to the recording session.”

After mastering their tone in the studio, the band and EarthQuaker Devices teamed up to recreate *Life Metal*’s fuzz-forward feel with a signature stompbox — dubbed, of course, the Life Pedal. An octave fuzz blending the nasty appeal of a classic RAT with Seventies-era Shin-Ei distortion, the Life Pedal was built for those looking to blissfully blast themselves into oblivion like the kings of drone. The pedal is also a more satisfying anniversary gift to each other than a set of fine china. “The idea to work with Albini and the idea do this Life

Pedal came out of us trying to think of ways we could celebrate surviving 20 years as a band,” O’Malley says. “Those were our gifts to ourselves, in a way. I think they were great ones!”

AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** (O’Malley) Travis Bean “Deo Dei” TB1000A, Electrical Guitar Company DS Ghost; (Anderson) 2005 Les Paul Deluxe goldtop with black DiMarzio Super Distortion P-90s
- **AMPS** (O’Malley) SUNN Model T, Ampeg SVT, Fender Twin Reverb, Fender Champ, Hiwatt Custom 100, 1952 Supro; (Anderson) SUNN Model T 1972-75, SUNN 2000S, SUNN 1200S, Ampeg SVT blueline
- **EFFECTS** (O’Malley) Rat Keeley Mod, J. Rocket Archer, Pete Cornish G-2 & P-2, Big Muff Ram’s Head clone, OTO BIM, BAM, Roland RE-201, Fulltone Tube Tape Echo, EQD Black Ash, Bright Onion phase switch/channel splitter, FY-2, FY-3, Zvex Super Hard On; (Anderson) Turbo Rat (w/ LM308 chip), Electro-Harmonix/Sovtek “Civil War” Big Muff PI, 4-way splitter box, EarthQuaker Devices White Light, Aguillar Optimizer, Ernie Ball Jr. Volume Pedal, EarthQuaker Devices Life Pedal

[from left] Greg Anderson,
Tos Nieuwenhuizen
and Stephen O’Malley



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Chelsea Wolfe

THE ENIGMATIC SINGER-SONGWRITER TALKS *BIRTH OF VIOLENCE*, A HAUNTING, SPRAWLING AND EERILY HEAVY ALBUM WHOSE UNEXPECTED STAR IS AN ACOUSTIC GUITAR

By Mike Huguenor

▶ CHELSEA WOLFE WAS on the heaviest tour of her life when she decided to make an acoustic record. It was 2018, and she had just released *Hiss Spun*, an album of sludgy, doom-laced metal that opens with shrieking feedback and ends with the sound of a scraping tractor.

“Our tour schedule was pretty heavy, and obviously the set was really heavy,” Wolfe says. “Plus we were opening for Ministry, so sometimes we’d dig in and get really heavy, really aggro. Things just got super heavy all around.”

When it all got too much, Wolfe would hole up in the back of the tour bus with her acoustic guitar. “I just started writing these songs that felt really calming against the chaos of everything,” she says. “A lot of it was about trying to find a place I could call home.”

The result of her trips to the back of the bus is *Birth of Violence*. Recorded in her home studio in the mountains of North-

“To me, it feels very much like an American folk record. But a really fucked-up version.”

ern California, *Birth* is a rare gem: an album as haunting, sprawling and heavy as many of Wolfe’s metal counterparts, but consisting almost entirely of acoustic music.

“One of the main themes of this album, and kind of all my work as I look back, is balancing strength with softness,”

she says. “I really do have both sides. I have a super-heavy side that I like to explore, and I have this intimate, quiet folk side that I like to explore.”

With few exceptions, *Birth* is a one-guitar album, recorded entirely on her Taylor 416ce. Coupled with Wolfe’s confident, minimal fretwork, the 416 sounds expansive — a clean, powerful spine driven, like a stake, through the songs’ murky ar-

rangements. And with no pedals or amps to hide behind, *Birth of Violence* is a reminder that all good songwriting — heavy or otherwise — is just a matter of the right chord played at the right time.

“To me, it feels very much like an American folk record,” Wolfe tells us. “But a really fucked-up version.”



BEN CHISHOLM



Austin Meade with a double-cutaway Gibson Les Paul Special

Austin Meade

HE'S JUST A GOOD OL' BOY FROM TEXAS WITH A FLAIR FOR HEARTFELT AMERICANA ROCK AND A KILLER MUSTACHE, TRYING TO MAKE A NAME FOR HIMSELF

By Jeff Kitts

▶ NOT EVERY YOUNG musician who one day finds himself featured in the hallowed pages of *Guitar World* actually had dreams of growing up to be a famous guitarist — some, such as Austin Meade, aspired to be the next great drummer along the lines of Don Henley, Paul Leim or Tommy Aldridge. But when Meade, the son of a church minister who grew up deep in the heart of Bible-Belt Texas, was suddenly asked to learn to play a few religious songs on a guitar because his father's church was in a musical bind, little did he suspect that the course of his life was about to be forever altered.

"My dad pulled an acoustic guitar off the wall and handed it to me," recalls the 26-year-old, "and told me I had to learn these songs because service was in a few days and we didn't have a guitar player. I was like, 'Oh shit!' But that got me started on the basics of guitar: learning a couple of chords and things like that. Luckily, I was able to make my way through it. Thank god they were patient with me. [laughs]"

"Once I started playing, I really liked it," continues Meade, who now fronts his own Americana-country-rock outfit, "and that's when I started branching off and getting into my own style of music and discovering guitar players rather than just focusing on the drummers. And that led its way into

the songwriting, which is when this kind of turned into what it is now."

You might not know it from listening to Meade's countrified mix of blues and rock with piercing licks from bandmate David Willie, but the singer/songwriter is no stranger when it comes to the heavier side of music. Interestingly, his exposure to hard rock and metal came at the hands of his father, an Air Force veteran who found his calling in the ministry when Austin was only a tiny pre-schooler.

"He's definitely not all fire and brimstone," says Meade, who cites John Mayer and Tyler Bryant among his current faves. "He's really relaxed and chill and just the opposite of the standard finger-shaking pastor. He was always a huge fan of rock, especially big guitar-based bands. He would take me to see Cheap Trick, Journey, Styx, Tom Petty and stuff like that — but his favorites were always heavier bands like Iron Maiden, Van Halen and Megadeth. That's kind of what got me into the whole thing to begin with; he was always talking about the guitar players in those bands. One of my favorite things is to just disappear into my own space for a while and listen to someone shred on a guitar."

Meade's second full-length record, *Waves*, was released March 1, 2019, via 7013 Records, but the guitarist who grew up in

rural southeast Texas is already getting excited about where he's headed musically.

"*Waves* is definitely a great step in the right direction of where I want to go, but now I want to start taking things in a heavier direction," says the guitarist, who also has a degree in agriculture from Texas A&M. "We're already writing for the next record, and we're starting to lean toward the heavier side of *Waves*, which tends to be more guitar-heavy. Songs like that give us opportunities to do more guitar trade-offs, which are really cool moments live — like watching ping-pong. I get that feeling when I see a Maiden show — you have great guitar players on all parts of the stage, and then you hear somebody hit a lick and you go, 'Whoa, where'd that come from?'"

Until Meade and his cohorts return with new music sometime in the future, we'll just have to keep admiring his songwriting, playing and singing skills on *Waves* and his three previous releases, the EPs *Long Ways to Go* and *Heartbreak Coming*, and his first full-length from 2014, *Chief of the Sinners* — as well as his ability to maintain a world-class mustache. Exactly how does he do it?

"That's a good question," he responds with a hearty laugh. "Hotel shampoo on a decent basis, a good trimming at least twice a week, and definitely smile a lot — it looks better when you smile."

Billy Strings
goes ballistic on
a Preston Thompson
dreadnought

Billy Strings

THE INTERNATIONAL BLUEGRASS MUSIC ASSOCIATION'S GUITAR PLAYER OF THE YEAR DISCUSSES HIS ANYTHING-GOES APPROACH AND HOT NEW ALBUM, *HOME*

By Richard Bienstock

BILLY STRINGS HAS already packed a lifetime's worth of flatpicking into his 27 years — and that's no exaggeration. Born William Apostol, the Michigan native, who just released his second solo album, *Home*, was immersed in the sounds of bluegrass legends like Bill Monroe, Ralph Stanley and Doc Watson practically from birth by his father. By the age of three, he was playing guitar himself. "My dad taught me G, C and D and gave me a capo, and I could play just about any bluegrass song," Strings says.

Within a few years he was performing in earnest. "My dad and I would go down to the VFW hall and it was, like, a bunch of 70-year-olds with music stands playing old country tunes — the same crowd as the bingo crowd," Strings says with a laugh. "We would pick with those folks every once in a while and I loved it. So I knew that being a bluegrass musician was what I wanted to do since forever."

These days, Strings is not just a bluegrass musician — he's quite possibly the most electrifying bluegrass picker around, with a devastatingly clean and precise flatpicking technique that is showcased in racing rhythm runs and speedy solos. And while his music is clearly rooted in

"I see a lot of similarities between metal guitar and mandolin. Especially in the tremolo picking."

the traditional sounds he was weaned on, as *Home* demonstrates, this is hardly your grandpappy's bluegrass. Rather, Strings infuses his old-timey approach with elements of rock, country, folk, psychedelia and even metal.

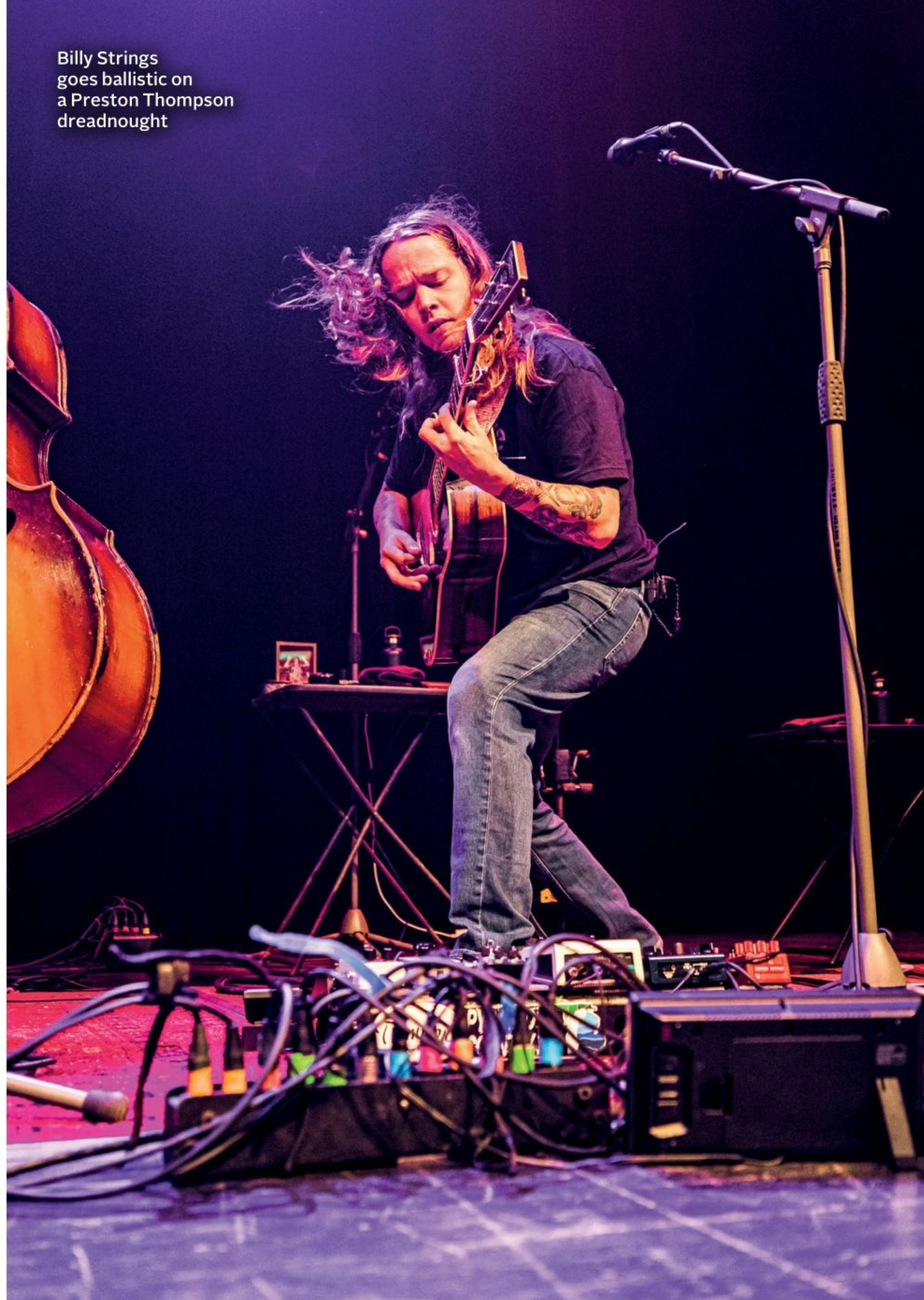
In fact, Strings actually is something of a former metalhead, having played electric guitar as a teenager in a grindcore band called To Once Darkened Skies. Which isn't as bizarre as it sounds. "I see a lot of similarities between metal guitar and

mandolin," he says. "Especially in the tremolo picking."

But it's all just music. "I'm not claiming to be a bluegrass artist or a rock artist or any one type of artist," he says, adding, "when we play shows we see all ages, all shapes and colors and sizes — everybody from old-school bluegrass fans to metal-heads. So I'm not worried about genre or anything like that. I'm just making music."

AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** 1948 Martin D-28; 1946 Martin 000-28; Preston Thompson dreadnought with Brazilian rosewood back and sides; "Grandpa's prison guitar," made by Strings' grandfather during a prison stint in Jackson, Michigan, in the early 1960s and restored by Dave Johnson of Scale Model Guitars
- **AMP** Fender Twin
- **EFFECTS** JHS Bonsai, Ernie Ball Volume Pedal



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and even the drummer.

Joanna Connor with her band [from left], Ryan Shea, Alphonso Bugg-Z Dinero, Delby Littlejohn, Joewaun "Jay Red Bass" Scott, Cameron Lewis and Keithen Banks



Chicago Fire

SLIDE GUITAR "MANIAC" JOANNA CONNOR TALKS INTERNET FAME, JAMMING WITH JIMMY PAGE, BUDDY GUY AND OTIS RUSH — AND HER BRAND-NEW ALBUM, *RISE*

By Richard Bienstock

▶ BACK IN 2014, Joanna Connor went viral. Which is one thing if you're, say, a pop singer or the company that created "Baby Shark." But it's pretty unusual if you're an adult woman in a purple dress playing stinging slide guitar on a cover of an almost-century-old blues song.

And yet, there was Connor, onstage at the North Atlantic Blues Festival in Rockland, Maine, tearing through an electrified version of Son House's "Walking Blues," with an incendiary solo that fused shredding licks, tapped passages and, yes, plenty of searing slide work, in a show-stopping performance.

As for what pushed the fan-filmed clip into the millions? "Because I look like a middle-aged mom playing like a maniac," Connor says with a laugh. "So it was like, 'What the hell is *this*?' But I think on the internet, anything that's a little unusual will catch on. And especially if it's good." She laughs again. "Or crazy — one of the two."

Crazy, of course, is in the eye of the beholder. But what's not up for debate is that Connor's playing in the video is good — damn good. Which apparently was a shock to the millions who first glimpsed her with that "Walking Blues" performance, but will come as little surprise to those blues fans who have been keyed into her more-than-three-decades-long career.

As for blues and guitar aficionados who haven't heard of Connor? Well, that's understandable, too. Because even though she's been releasing albums on and off since 1989, for the past 15 years or so Connor had been

largely under the radar to anyone outside the Chicago area, where she has been playing regularly four nights a week. "I do three nights at the Kingston Mines [club] and one night at the House of Blues," she says. "So for half the week I have steady work."

Steady, but not easy — at the Kingston Mines her shows often stretch up to five hours in length and combine solo acoustic sets with full-band electric jams. "It's like combat training," Connor says. "I feel like I'm ready for anything."

Connor first took up her Chicago residencies in the mid 2000s in order to raise her young daughter at home after decades of continuous touring. But with that child now grown and off at college, Connor is looking to get back out on the world's stage in a big way. "You're going to be seeing me everywhere again," she says. This year she'll join Joe Bonamassa on his 2020 Keeping the Blues Alive at Sea VI cruise, as well as hitting Europe and the festival circuit. And she has also just released a new album, the rather excellent *Rise*.

The record, just like that viral "Walking Blues" video, reinforces the fact that Connor is a singular force in the modern blues world. On *Rise*, she whips together everything from slinky funk ("If You Want Me to Stay") Wes Montgomery-esque jazz ("Rise") and pop standards ("Since I Fell for You") to Celtic-style acoustic numbers ("My Irish Father") hip-hop ("Flip") and hard rock ("Cherish and Worship"). There's also, of course, a heaping dose of fiery, blues-drenched slide playing, in particular

on tracks like the whiplash boogie "Blues Tonight" and the strutting "Earthshaker."

As for where Connor's inspiration comes from? The answer is, well, everywhere.

"I grew up in the Seventies, when you could turn on the radio and listen to heavy R&B or soul music one minute and the Doobie Brothers the next, and then Led Zeppelin and then some silly pop tune and then the Rolling Stones, and it's all on the same station," she says. "I never worried so much about genres and things like that."

When it came to the blues and blues guitar, meanwhile, Connor was fortunate enough to have a mom who took her to see Buddy Guy when she was just 10, and a teacher who opened her eyes and ears to the intricacies of slide playing.

"I loved Freddie King and B.B. King, Taj Mahal, Robert Johnson, all of it," she says. "And this teacher, I told him what I wanted to learn and we started with a lot of fingerpicking stuff. Then he was like, 'Ah, I'm going to teach you to play slide...' I didn't really even know what that was — I was just a young teen at the time. But he was a taskmaster, and he turned me on to a lot of Ry Cooder, and then I found different players for myself, like Sonny Landreth, Lowell George, the Allman Brothers, later on Derek Trucks... I love all of them."

By her late teens Connor was gigging steadily around her hometown of Worcester, Massachusetts, and also doing some touring. After a visit to Chicago, she decided to relocate there for good in her early 20s. There, she landed a steady gig playing



Connor in action with a Gibson Les Paul; "I just think there's so much versatility out of Les Paul and a little bit of gear, you know?"

"[IT'S] BECAUSE I LOOK LIKE A MIDDLE-AGED MOM PLAYING LIKE A MANIAC. SO IT WAS LIKE, 'WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?' BUT I THINK ON THE INTERNET, ANYTHING THAT'S A LITTLE UNUSUAL WILL CATCH ON. AND ESPECIALLY IF IT'S GOOD. OR CRAZY — ONE OF THE TWO"

with Dion Payton's band at venues like the historic Checkerboard Lounge on Chicago's South Side, and also sat in with legends like Otis Rush, Little Milton, Junior Wells, James Cotton and Buddy Guy himself. "I went out seven nights a week, watching and talking and listening and jamming — I was thrown in the deep end of the pool," she says. "Or, I threw myself in there!"

But it wasn't all just "blues heaven," as she calls it. One time, she even found herself onstage with Jimmy Page.

"He was on tour with the Firm, and there was a guy from Atlantic Records who was a big blues fan," Connor recalls. "So he brought Jimmy down to the Kingston Mines, where I was playing with Dion. And Dion

said to me, 'Joanna, go up and play — there's some English guy here, he's going to play my guitar.' I'm like, 'Okay, whatever.' And it was freaking Jimmy Page. Some English guy!"

She laughs. "I remember the first song we played was Sonny Boy Williamson's 'Help Me.' And Jimmy leans over and he goes, 'What key are we in?' I'm like, 'A minor!'"

Clearly, Connor has made her mark on the stage, and continues to, to this day, playing upwards of 200 shows a year. And even though she has recorded plenty of albums at this point, she admits "the studio to me is still something I'm getting used to. But with the new album, I was just hoping that some of that energy from the stage came off on the record. And I think it did. With my

band, all of the rhythm tracks were done in no more than two takes. They laid down seven tracks in four hours. So we nailed it."

As far as Connor's setup, she kept things fairly streamlined, relying primarily on her trusty Gibson Les Paul 1960 reissue and a newer Les Paul Modern. Amp-wise she played through an Orange Crush Pro 120 combo and a Vox AC30, and for the acoustic parts she ran a Dean acoustic straight into the board.

Effects were likewise minimal, headlined by a Boss delay, reverb and Blues Driver. "You hear the different tones on the album and it's like, 'Oh, is that the same guitar?' And it is," Connor says. "I just think there's so much versatility out of a Les Paul and a little bit of gear, you know?"

As for her playing, she continues, "I play from my gut. I approach my music, in terms of the soloing part, kind of like a jazz person — get in the moment, get in fully and just go at it." Sometimes, she admits, that no-holds-barred approach has led to her being pigeonholed as a particular type of guitarist. "Everybody's kinda like, 'Oh, you're a shredder,'" Connor says. "But it's just that my adrenaline is pumping and I get really excited!"

That said, it wouldn't be the first time she's had to deal with preconceptions. "I've always been seen as unique — I was a white woman from Massachusetts who played the blues. It worked in my favor in some ways because people were curious. But in other ways it was rough because some people were really against me being around. It just depends on the individual. But it made me stronger, you know?"

At the end of the day, she says, "My main goal is to make good music and enjoy the times I'm playing. I just hope it opens doors for people to listen to the blues and keep the art form alive, and maybe inspire other women to pick up the guitar."

Connor continues. "Because the guitar, it's a universe. Besides maybe the human voice, it's the most expressive instrument there is. I mean, what's more amazing than a killer guitar solo?"

TUNE-UPS ▶ DEAR GUITAR HERO

DragonForce guitarist
Herman Li with one of his
signature Ibanez
EGEN models



HERMAN LI

Sure, the longtime DragonForce guitarist loves Ibanez guitars, videogame sound effects and shredding while snorkeling. These days, however, he's also understandably excited about the band's killer new album, *Extreme Power Metal*. That said, what *Guitar World* readers really wanna know is...

Interview by Mark McStea



YOU HAVE A VERY DEFINITE MUSICAL AND TECHNICAL STYLE. I'D LIKE TO KNOW IF, WHEN NO ONE'S WATCHING, YOU PLAY OTHER STYLES. MAYBE SOME BLUES, JAZZ OR REGGAE?

—DAVID ALVAREZ

I will play blues or maybe jam along to a fusion album when I'm at home, but I don't see myself as a guitarist that is most effective in these genres. I don't think I can do a million different styles effectively. I am a specialist in my own weird guitar sound.

Q: After five or so years of following DragonForce, I've looked up live performances for pretty much all your songs, but I haven't found any trace of one of the fan favorites (and one of my favorites), "Cry for Eternity." Why is this — and will we see you play it soon?

—Michael Thewlis

We've never played it live, but we actually just started rehearsing that song for the next tour as a lot of fans have been asking for it. That song came out in 2006. It's an eight-minute song with a million guitar parts. The joke when we were learning this song is that it was like learning four songs at once. It takes some time, so we don't want to play it until it's completely ready to go. Maybe we set the bar quite high when we recorded it. We were younger and interested in doing as many guitar solos as possible.

Q: What's your favorite Eddie Van Halen guitar solo?

—Nobody of Interest

I like the one on "Dreams." It's not complicated but it is memorable. There are millions of great ones.

The ones on [Van Halen's 1991 album] *For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge* are his best work, I think. People don't think as highly of that album as others so they might give me shit for saying it, but I still believe it features his best playing.

Q: Artists — like chameleons — develop and evolve without knowing it. What do you appreciate most about how you've evolved over the years? Do you find you enjoy learning and picking up elements of different genres of metal or creating your own?

—Christopher Vizcarra

I think when you look back, you do think, "Wow!" The first album is nowhere near as good as the last album. The fans will often still think it's the best because it's the first one they got into, perhaps. My evolution goes beyond the guitar, so instead of just trying to play the guitar all the time, I learn other things that will help my guitar playing. As a musician you want to make the show better — make it a better experience for the fans that come to see

DragonForce. Don't just practice the guitar, learn about production, video technology, the ways you can make things better for the fans.

Q: I love the band's new album, *Extreme Power Metal*. Which of your solos on the album is your favorite?

—Isaac Pterodactyl

I like the solo on "Cosmic Power of the Infinite Shred Machine." The title almost says it all! Not because it's a really fast solo but because I was able to replicate the sound of a platform videogame character jumping across the screen with the slides and stuff to give that Eighties or Nineties game feel.

Q: Are you finding that streaming on Twitch has increased the amount of people you've reached versus traditional media like TV shows and magazine interviews? Has this in any way correlated to an increase in concert attendance, or fan interactions or streams or downloads?

—Lester Santos

I think it has definitely made a difference in many ways. It has definitely brought new fans to the band. It's a great thing.

Q: What made you want to play Ibanez guitars over other brands?

—L. Viator

When I was growing up, I saw that Steve Vai, Joe Satriani, John Petrucci and most of my other favorite guitar players were playing Ibanez. That's what drew me to the brand, and I've played them ever since — but I'm not limited to just the one brand. In my house right now, I've got a John Petrucci Ernie Ball Music Man, a few PRS guitars, even a Fender Strat.

Q: Do you like to play *Super Smash Bros.*?

—King Blue

I've played it a bit but I'm not great at it. It is a very complex and technical game, but I don't really have the time to memorize all the moves of the players and how to fight in the battles. I think that is what is so cool about it, though, that it's so technical.

Q: Is it true that you invited popular YouTuber Stevie T. [guitarist Steve Terreberry] to play the triangle on tour with you? How do you rate him as a guitarist? And how do you feel YouTube “celebrity” guitarists in general?

—Mark Ellmore

We did invite him to play triangle and to play the bass. Unfortunately, he pulled out two weeks before the tour. We’re always up for doing something crazy. The whole YouTube world is very different from the live stage. It’s different worlds but they all have their own skills, sure. The YouTubers often have great video production and editing skills as well as being great guitarists. Making interesting content is a great skill. Stevie is a really good guitar player. I’ve spoken to him a lot and his main problem is that he’s anxious about playing in front of people. But he has some great videos and he can make a lot of people smile.

Q: How did DragonForce start up back in the day, and how did all of the numerous band members meet?

—VenomThor2

I met [guitarist] Sam [Totman] in London and he had some songs, and I wanted to do this kind of music... so that’s how we started, basically. We used ads and the

usual ways to find others to join the band — the way most bands start up, I suppose.

Q: What were your initial intentions when you began writing and producing *Extreme Power Metal*?

—Cameron Morris

Just like all the albums — to go full-out, no limitations with no one telling us what to do. That means full-out on every level, including artwork, songs, touring, production and promotion from top to bottom. It’s the first time for many years that we made an album with no one telling us anything that they wanted us to do. It was Sam and I making all the decisions on how this one would go.

Q: Your guitar style pays homage to many of the classic REH and “Star Licks” VHS tapes. Which of those players from the different series helped shape your technique and sharpen your skills?

—Alex

In particular, it was the Frank Gambale, Reb Beach and Brett Garsed tapes. I watched pretty much every one. The Michael Angelo Batio Star Licks tape showed me about going crazy on the guitar, how to make exciting, weird, crazy stuff. There was a music shop that I lived near that used to rent them out. They were

really expensive to actually buy back then. I could have never afforded that, but it was cool to be able to rent them.

Q: As far as you are aware right now, what’s your most valuable guitar?

—H. Munck

I have a chrome anniversary Joe Satriani model and a Private Stock PRS. One of my guitars that was sold for charity went for \$17,000, so — on that basis — maybe the one I’ve played for the last 10 years would be the most valuable. I don’t buy guitars, and vintage guitars are extremely expensive.

Q: What’s the most difficult part to compose — a song or a solo?

—Héctor Daniel Sánchez Ortiz

The song, of course. Without the song there’s nothing to solo over. The song will suggest ideas for the solo anyway, but the song is always the most important thing.

Q: How many hours a day on average do you tend to practice and how long did it take you to be able to sweep pick to the incredible standard that you’ve reached?

—Adam West

I’ve played for more than 20 years now. There’s no limit to a standard you can reach. These days it is very hard to find time

to practice. I might spend time working on songs or ideas, but I don’t really have a routine where I’d maybe have a metronome and run scales. When I did have the time when I was younger, I’d practice for about eight hours a day. To learn sweep picking doesn’t take long; it just depends on what you want to do with it. I still use shapes that I learned early on. Just because something is simple, that doesn’t mean it isn’t good. Often the simple things sound better. Of course, I still play a lot, when we record or we’re playing live. When I’m doing that, I suppose it is still practicing, in a way, particularly reinforcing things like muscle memory.

Q: What do you think you would probably be doing right now if you weren’t already in a successful touring rock band? How would you make a living?

—Lyri Cummings

Before I transitioned into becoming a full-time musician, I was working in IT. I’d still be an IT computer expert/nerd, whatever you want to call it. I’m still doing that now, really. I’m in a band but I’m dealing with IT things all the time. Twitch, editing videos, etc. It never goes away.

Q: Is there a genre of music you can’t stand?

—D. Kustow

It depends on where I am and what I’ve been doing. If I’ve been on tour playing really loud every night, I’d probably prefer to listen to something quieter or more mellow. On the other hand, the opposite is equally true where if I’m going out at night, sometimes I’ll really want to hear some loud, thrashing death metal. At any time, those genres could be my least or most favorite. I don’t have most- or least-favorite anything in life. I just don’t view the world that way.

Q: Is there something you’ve never been asked that you wish someone would ask you?

Be honest!

—Casper Blue

No, because then I’d sound like a real “me, me, me” guy!



WERE YOU A QUICK LEARNER? COULD YOU TELL YOU WERE PICKING THINGS UP QUICKER THAN YOUR FRIENDS?

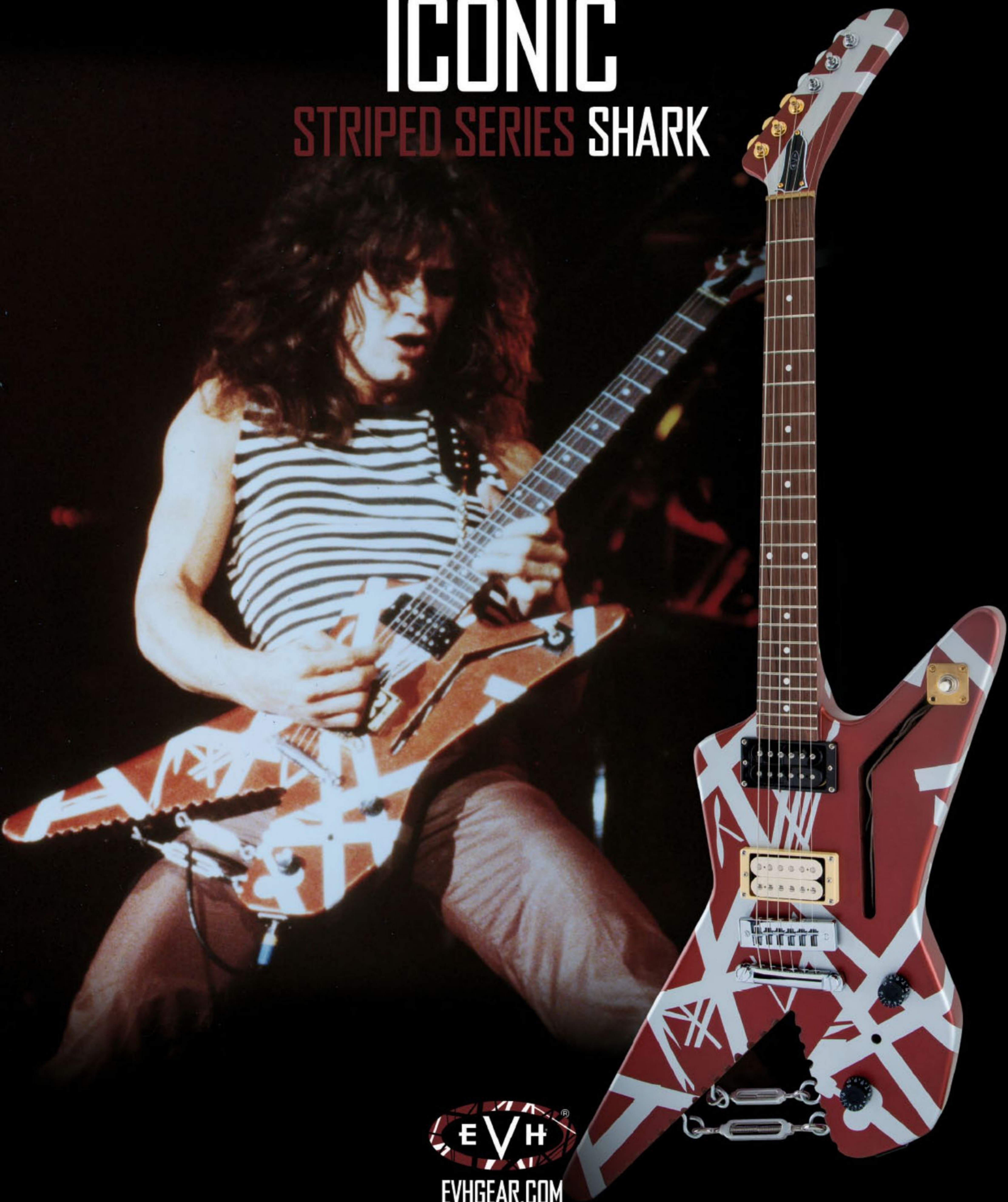
—ELLIOT CUERDEN

No, I wasn’t a quick learner. I don’t think I’m particularly talented in any way and I didn’t pick things up

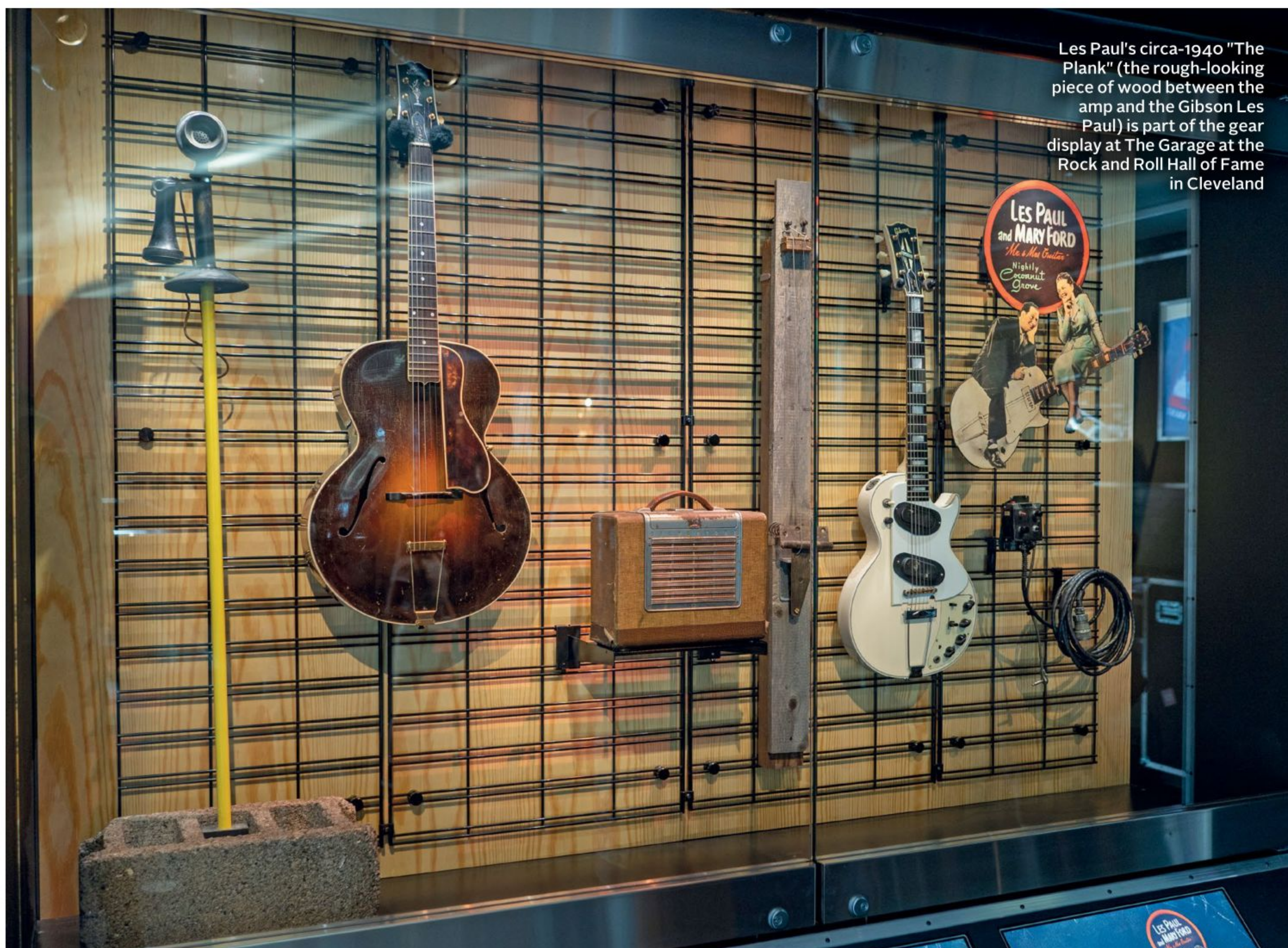
any more quickly than friends. I practiced hard and worked on my playing until I could play whatever it was that I was trying to learn. Someone might be particularly talented and learn something more quickly than me, but I always think that if I work hard enough, I will be able to play anything. It might take weeks of work but as long as I put the effort in, I believe I will get back what I put in. Everybody should think that way because there is no reason to think you can’t do something if you work hard enough at it. That thought should inspire anyone who is struggling to learn something.

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Les Paul's circa-1940 "The Plank" (the rough-looking piece of wood between the amp and the Gibson Les Paul) is part of the gear display at The Garage at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland

Get in Gear at The Garage

YOU — YES, YOU! — CAN JAM IN THE PRESENCE OF SOME TRULY ONE-OF-A-KIND GEAR AT THE GARAGE AT THE ROCK AND ROLL HALL OF FAME

By Richard Bienstock

THE GARAGE AT the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame is the place to be for anyone who has ever wanted to pick up an instrument and create music like the greats of yesterday and today. Whether they're first-time players or pros, Garage visitors are fully immersed in the rock and roll experience, from mastering riffs and songs from the catalogs of Rock Hall Inductees, to jamming along with friends, to branding their bands with custom merchandise. What's more, they do it all while surrounded by the instruments that helped to create the legendary music.

The Garage gear exhibit highlights great guitars, basses, amps, drum kits and more from the Museum's collection — a Fender Telecaster used in the studio by artists including B.B. King, Jeff Beck and the Smiths' Johnny Marr; a Ludwig floor tom played by Tobi Vail during her tenure with Bikini

Kill; the Technics Quartz direct-drive turntable used by Public Enemy's Terminator X — in an ever-changing display of rock's iconic tools of the trade.

And that's just for starters. Other artifacts currently on exhibit include the 1970 Gibson Les Paul Custom Joe Walsh used to write the classic-rock anthem "Rocky Mountain Way"; the Aria bass played by Kim Deal onstage and in the studio with the Pixies and which can be seen in the band's "Monkey Gone to Heaven" video; and a Sixties-era Fender Bassman amp that was among the house gear at FAME Studios, home of the celebrated "Muscle Shoals Sound."

For guitar lovers, there's a pair of not-to-be-missed items from two of the instrument's most renowned players — Les Paul and Eddie Van Halen. Paul's guitar, a circa-1940 experimental prototype known

as "The Plank," is a genuine historical artifact; consisting of 2x4's, screws, a door hinge, a spring and two guitar strings, the rudimentary design represents one of the inventor and musician's early attempts at constructing a solid-body instrument. Van Halen's model, meanwhile, is a 1996 Peavey Wolfgang prototype, hand-built and delivered to Eddie at his home recording studio to be played and critiqued by the artist in the development of what would become his signature production-line guitar.

These one-of-a-kind instruments are genuine pieces of rock history come to life. And they serve as an inspiring backdrop for Rock Hall visitors creating their own unforgettable musical moments in the Garage, the place where it's your turn to play.

Visit GuitarWorld.com to discover more about the "Garage gear" on display and how you can rock a trip to The Garage.



Photo Credit: Scott Dachroeden



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Stone Temple Pilots



Stone Temple Pilots recently announced a new acoustic album, *Perdida*, and a 15-date acoustic tour. Stay tuned for *GW*'s coverage of the disc, which will be released February 7.

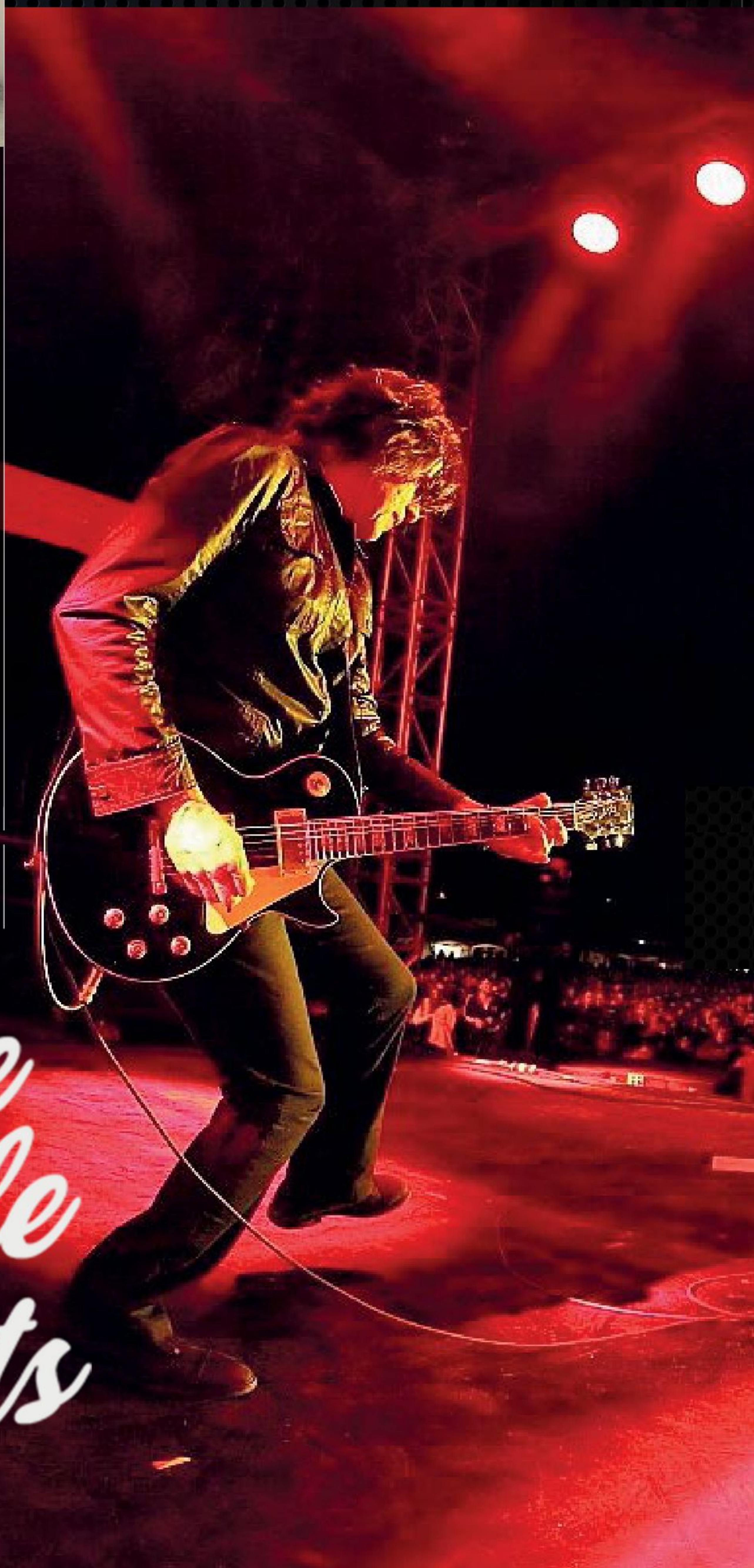
For more information, check out stonetemplepilots.com

[Right] STP's Dean LeLeo plays one of his 2009 Gibson Les Pauls



WORDS BY **ROB LAING**
LIVE PHOTOS BY **HARRY REESE**
GEAR PHOTOS BY **OLLY CURTIS**

Tone Temple Pilots





We recently caught up with **Stone Temple Pilots' DEAN** and **ROBERT DeLEO** – and their luthier extraordinaire, **BRUCE NELSON** – to dissect the venerable rockers' tonal recipe

"It's amazing, I've been using the same setup, the same rig since 1990," Dean DeLeo says. "Every time we plug in, it sounds great." The guitarist's soundcheck at a recent London show confirms this. It's a huge, full-bodied sound, perfect for one of alternative rock's most versatile players. Favoring reliable rigs and reliable people, the Stone Temple Pilots team are a loyal bunch who Dean and his bassist brother Robert are quick to praise, noting, "You're only as good as the people around you."

FOH [front of house] engineer James "Hootsie" Huth has been working with them since the pre-*Core* days of 1990. Affable tech Bruce Nelson has manned his station side-stage for more than 16 years with STP and also builds the DeLeo brothers' instruments (as well as guitars for the likes of Joe Perry). "I don't know where I'd be without [Bruce]," Dean says. "He's just an amazing person." So it's only right that we get Nelson's "rig tour" input alongside the sibling songwriting powerhouse duo. Read on!

DEAN DeLEO

2009 GIBSON LES PAUL

1 **BRUCE:** "All the Les Pauls in this rig are 2009. They all have Seymour Duncan Jazz pickups in the bridge; they're clear and they're pretty similar to the stock pickups the Seventies Les Pauls have. With this rig I was trying to replicate Dean's other Seventies Les Pauls, and that pickup was the closest. He's playing on the bridge 99 percent of the time; the only time he'll flip to the neck is when they're jamming or something like that between songs. We're mostly using gauge 10 strings, but on low alternate tunings we'll go up to 11s."

DEAN: "The guitars I have with me now are my B-rig stuff. All the A-rig stuff are the solid bodies. These Les Pauls are semi hollow, which are very different. They play a little different to begin with, but they're interesting because they're semi hollow; they can get away from you. And fortunately when they get away from you, they're in key! [laughs] Which is always good. It's nice to have that extra little thing to play with."

2009 BRUCE NELSON T-STYLE

2 **DEAN:** "Bruce is just an incredible luthier. He builds really, really fine instruments like the Tele-[style]. I have three [T-style guitars] he's built me, and he's built me a Strat-style. And what he's just building for me now, it'll be very close to the Gibson Les Paul Special with the P90s. He's just putting the finishing touches to that now. His guitars are great because in the studio, when you start layering guitars, sometimes you can't get them in tune and it's really frustrating. But his — perfect! It [gives you such peace of mind] when you start layering guitars and they're just perfectly in tune. It makes the recording process so much more delightful."

BRUCE: "This is the first guitar I built for Dean. This has Lindy Fralin pickups in it, although I'm now using Lollars [for builds]. It's swamp ash so it's fairly light, and the neck is chunky but comfortable, kind of a soft V-shape. The [bridge] is by Callaham and it's made of steel so it resonates. It's currently tuned to Dm for 'Lounge Fly.' The serial number on this is his birthday; every subsequent guitar I've made for him has been a birthday — of his kids or wife."

DEAN: "I have some different tunings to cover throughout the night. 'Lounge Fly' is open D minor, to 'Roll Me Under' and 'Meadow,' [which] are double drop D. There's



5

The VHT 2100 Classic Power Amp has been paired with Dean's Demeter since the band's early days

some drop D stuff and some standard. That's why all the guitar changes are happening throughout the evening. And different tonality, too. There's a big difference between a Paul and a Tele."

PRS MCCARTY II

3 BRUCE: "It's semi-hollow. The piezo has its own designated output to a DI box and then the electric pickup signal goes to the amp like normal."

DEAN: "I use that generally for 'Creep' and 'Sour Girl.' It allows me to do a nice blend between the electric and the acoustic sounds. Those guys make beautiful instruments too."

SLIDE BANDOLIER

4 DEAN: "I've got to grab one for each section of 'Big Empty' [there are three slide sections between the rhythm chorus parts]. I thought, how am I going to pull this off? Let's build

a thing here and give me something like a bullet strap. And it's kind of cool because if I have someone's attention while I'm finishing up the slide part, I toss [a slide] out into the audience. It's nice."

DEMETER TGP-3 PREAMP, VHT 2100 CLASSIC POWER AMP AND ROCKMAN MIDI OCTOPUS

5 DEAN: "When we put that VHT and that Demeter together, it really allowed me to take up a lot of room for a three-piece. We really spent a lot of time figuring out what would be best for us, and it's nice because with the VHT we run stereo — that's why you see the two 4x12s. The VHT goes through the Demeter, runs through the two 4 x 12s, and then I have the [Vox] AC30 in the middle.

"So the VHT runs stereo and then it goes into the Demeter, which is a three-channel amp. With the first channel, you can get a really nice blues tone, but I



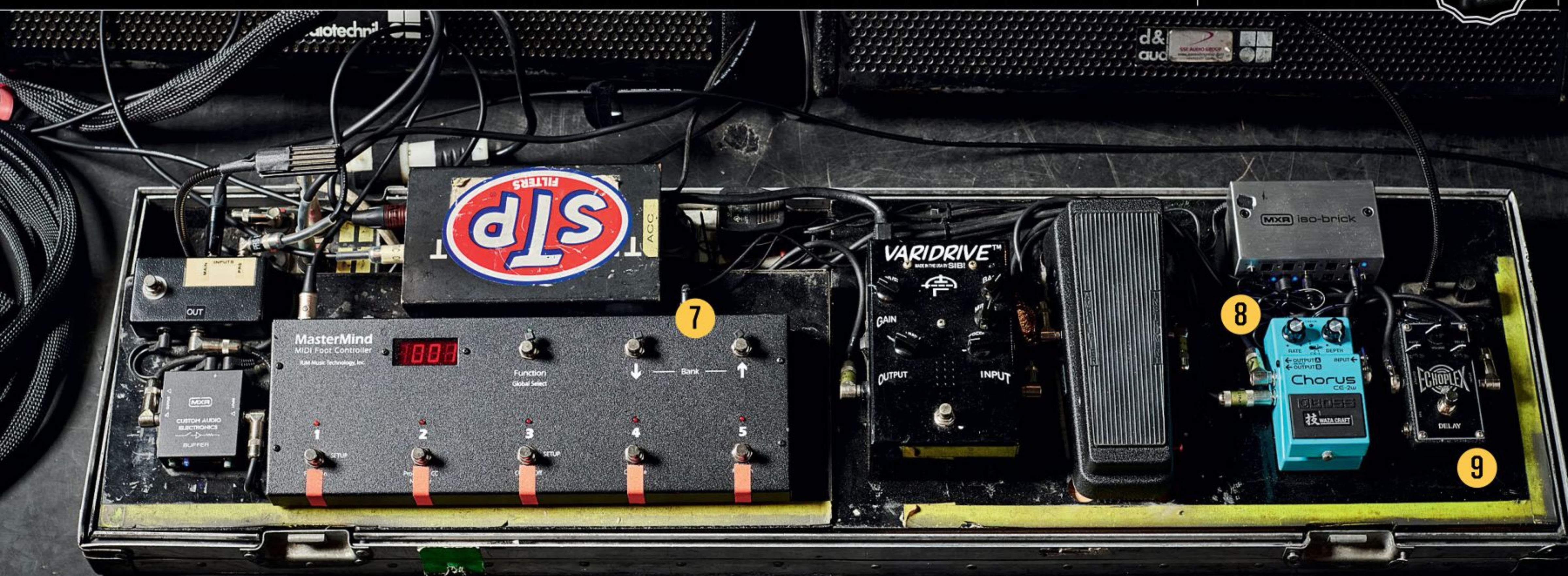
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don't use the first channel at all. I use channels two and three. Channel two just gives me a little more gain, and I get my mellow, less-saturated tones backing off the volume of the guitar. And it really holds a nice clarity and body to it. I just back it off."

VOX AC30

6 DEAN: "If you hear the AC30 it is set really clean, real chimey and gets that nice chimey mid stuff, and then the [VHT/Demeter] has got the big bottom and the nice sizzly top. That AC30 is really there to capture that clarity of the chords. You'd be astounded when you turn that AC30 off; it's obvious right away that something is really missing.

"It's important for me that I hear every string of the chord. There are a lot of interesting chords being played throughout the night. I wish I could tell you what they were [laughs], but I don't know! I just know



what I want to hear and I get it. But that AC30 set real clean — [it's] one of the greatest amps, man. It's funny, we were doing the last record and we had a ton of amps just stacked up, and Robert and I looked at it, and we're like, 'They're all English!' We had a Laney, a Selmer, some Voxes, some really nice little Marshall 18-watt combos — plus some [U.S.-made] Supros. They only did those [Marshalls] for two years and I have a few of those. Boy, that's a great amp. It was all from the [British] invasion."

MASTERMIND MIDI FOOT CONTROLLER

7 DEAN: "I have a five-bay patch that I go from throughout

the night; 1 and 2 are my kind of clean. Patch 3 is a wetter tone. So 1 and 2 are the same, 3 and 4 are the same, but 2 and 4 are just louder — if I want to get into a solo. I hit the 4 patch for the chorus on 'Dead and Bloated' for just a big [makes distorted noise], just to move everyone's hats out there! Then the 5 patch is a big wet solo patch that I use a couple of times throughout the night. But generally I solo on the 4 patch."

BOSS CE-2W

8 DEAN: "I drastically went through my effects when we were playing with Chester [Bennington]. I felt there was too much chorus. I want to dial that down and hear more

of the guitar, not so much of the effects. But it definitely comes in handy. The way I had it set is I wanted it to appear as if another guitar were coming in. An example is 'Trippin' on a Hole in a Paper Heart.' I'll play that clean and then when I come to the chorus it just sounds like a whole other guitar is coming in. It was just more of a differentiation, to give the illusion another guitar is coming in. And I know Hootsy — he does some stuff out front too.

I was using a CE-1, that old Roland thing, forever and ever. They were original from back in the day, but there was just too much stuff to break getting moved around. I finally succumbed to a pedal. But I'm not using it for a chorus; I'm trying to emulate a Leslie. I've got it really cranked up and it's the pedal that I found that wouldn't give me that detuned chorusy thing. I just wanted that fast Leslie sound."

DUNLOP ECHOPLEX DELAY

9 DEAN: "This is a cool slapback. I have it set on a nice tight slapback. It's kind of cool to solo with at times when you're playing those country licks. We were actually doing ['Middle of Nowhere'], the first song on the record with Jeff [Gutt, vocals], and that pedal came in handy for that."

ROBERT DELEO

BRUCE NELSON PJ-STYLE BASS

10 ROBERT: "It's like getting the tube amp [see 11]... there was a resonance on particular notes. A big difference. My experience with the vintage instruments I have at home definitely influenced what I wanted. I've always liked the block-inlay bound neck that came in '66 and I've always loved Olympic White. I always enjoyed seeing Brian Wilson play bass, playing with his thumb. And the painted headstock — the custom ones" ➤

"YOU'D BE ASTOUNDED WHEN YOU TURN THAT **AC30** OFF — IT'S OBVIOUS RIGHT AWAY SOMETHING IS REALLY MISSING"



10



they made back then. It's a Jazz neck, between a P and a J, Lollar PJ pickups and brass saddles, brass nut. I notice more sustain with brass. I've got a detuner that's very convenient too.

"Bruce made two of these basses and I named them after my two sons. The serial numbers are their birthdays. The one named after my other son recently got stolen and then it got recovered at a pawn shop. This is the Duke bass and my other son is Malcolm, so that's the Malcolm bass."

FRYETTE 292 STEREO POWER AMPS, LINE 6 BASS POD XT PRO AND AMPEG SVT 8X10S

11 **ROBERT:** "I just got these amps made by Stevie Fryette who does VHT, and I'm really happy with them. They're stereo, 100 watts per side. Four KT88s — two per side. I'd been looking around for something that would do what I wanted it to do, and now I've got just the right thing."



Robert DeLeo with a Schecter Model T bass

"THE VINTAGE INSTRUMENTS I HAVE AT HOME DEFINITELY INFLUENCED WHAT I WANTED"

14



"I've been using this Bass POD since 2008; actually, I first got it in Army of Anyone in 2006/2007. I kind of model around what I do in the studio; it gives me a little flexibility to get into the sound I use in the studio. I have a 1970 Marshall 8x10 and I use that with the Ampeg V4 head and then I split that off into a [Ampeg] '67 B15 FlipTop. It covers a lot of ground. I was using a solid-state amp with it, but I wanted to get more fidelity and I noticed when I switched over to [the Fryette], it bloomed. It really made a huge difference."

LINE 6 FBV EXPRESS FOOTSWITCH

12 ROBERT: "On some songs I just cock the wah a little bit."

ELECTRO-HARMONIX BASS MICRO SYNTH

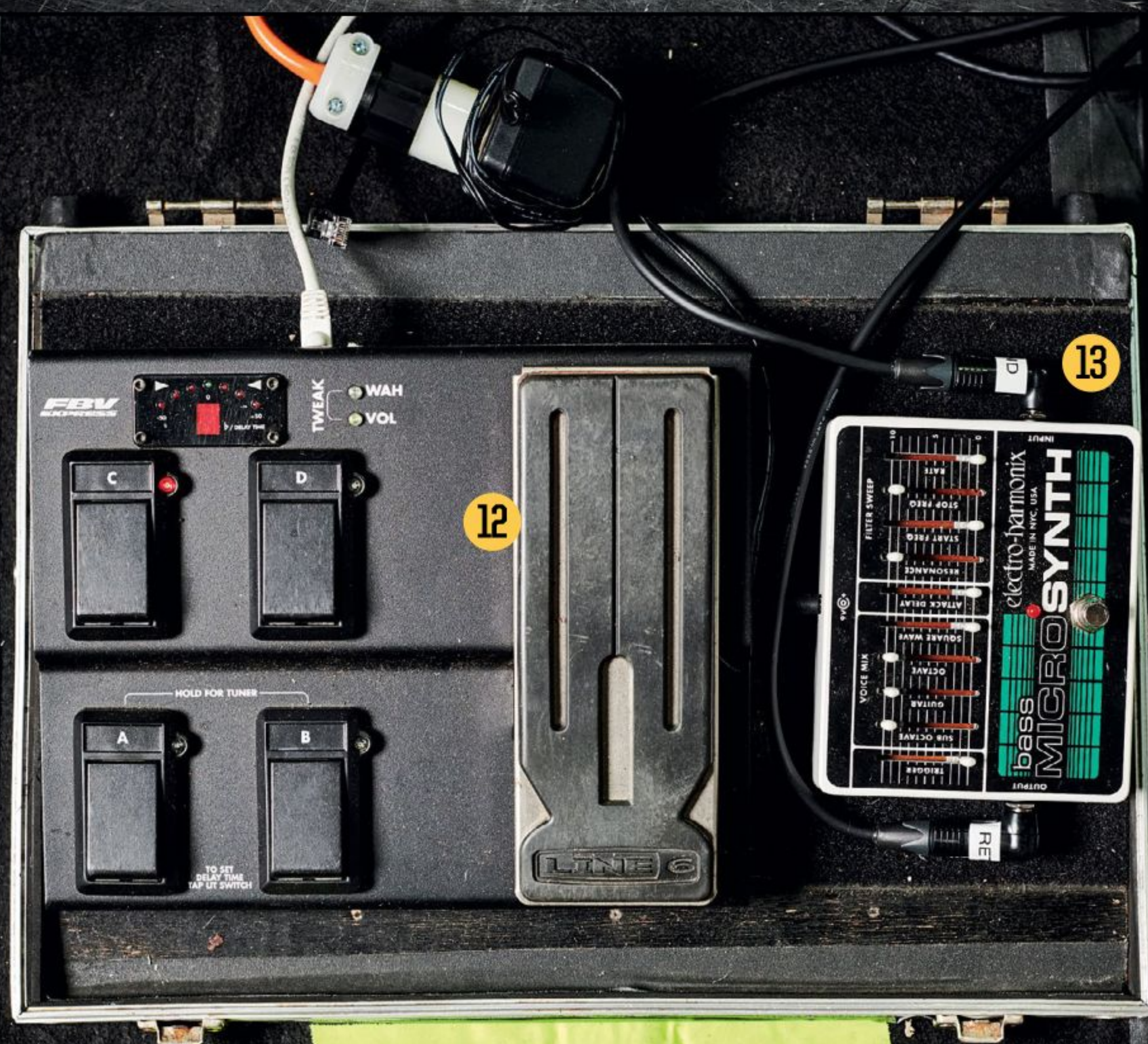
13 ROBERT: "I've used that on records we've done before and I use it on the solo section of the song 'Meadow' from the last record [2018's *Stone Temple Pilots*]. I love that pedal."

LINE 6 VARIAX ACOUSTIC

14 ROBERT: "We use this in 'Lounge Fly,' and have it on the 12-string setting. It's nice and convenient. I used to use a real acoustic, but you get up there and all of a sudden [makes feedback noise]. It works for that section. Hopefully I can put it on the nylon setting and play some bossa nova!" **GW**

11

Like Dean, Robert relies on the amp-building expertise of Stevie Fryette to deliver the sonic goods



Whitesnake



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EVEN

With the big 6-0 just around the corner, guitar icon **STEVE VAI** reminisces about Satch, Zappa, Alcatraz and a life in the ultra zone

BY JOE BOSSO

STEVEN

Photographs by Larry DiMarzio



Steve Vai with his new signature guitar, the Ibanez PIA. For more about the PIA, head to page 52!



BY

Y THE STANDARDS TO WHICH WE USUALLY tend to hold rock stars, Steve Vai doesn't quite fit: He's never been arrested. He's never punched anybody out. He doesn't have a drug or alcohol problem. He's never wrecked a hotel room or driven a car into a swimming pool. He doesn't engage in Twitter wars with fellow musicians (in fact, he routinely offers kind words for anybody he's ever played with, and those compliments are summarily returned). He's never released a sex tape, nor does he have a string of ex-wives dishing dirt on him. Truth is, his home life could be described as a model of everyday suburban stability: He's been married to the same woman, Pia, for 31 years, and the couple have two great kids, Fire and Julian Angel.

So how is it, then, that Steve Vai is a rock star? "Well, I would hope the answer lies in the music itself," he replies. "You can make the music without all that other stuff. See, I fell in love with rock 'n' roll as a kid, and it's stayed with me ever since. The energy of it, the sound, the melodies, the freedom — it got in my blood. I knew at a very young age that I wanted to play this kind of music — well, of course, in my own way — and that's really been what's guided me throughout my life. When I think about people I know or have met who are quote-unquote 'rock stars,' their temperaments vary greatly — they're everything from really depressed people to very centered and happy people. And it's not uncommon to dabble in various vices — drugs, sex, money. But for me, those things never really had much of an attraction. There was always something in me that never let me take things too far."

For Vai, the secret to avoiding some of the pitfalls that have crippled a few of his contemporaries lies in a carefully considered choice between impulses. "It really comes down to two options," he says. "There are bad ideas, which are the dangerous indulgences — having a drug monkey on your back or complicating your life with affairs — and all those things can destroy your creativity. I was always drawn to the power of a really good idea, and that's musical creativity. That's always the thing that excited me the most. So to pursue that really good idea, I find it's better to have a comfortable, simpler life."

Steve Vai is certainly at an interesting point in his life and career. At 59, he's surely too young to be considered an elder-statesman guitarist, but 60 is in his rear-view mirror, and he admits it feels like it will be something of a milestone. "At this point in my life, when looking back at all that's been accomplished, I feel completely fulfilled and grateful. In fact, I never expected that I would accomplish as much as I have, and although I still love the creative process more than ever, and I still have a great many engaging projects ahead of me, if it all ended today I would still feel complete. It's a great head space to live in, and all it requires is a little focused appreciation of all that you have now and all the creative contributions you've made. If you can do that, I think it's impossible for anyone not to be making creative contributions."

Hearing Vai speak in this way, it's so easy to feel swept away by such a philosophy, but when pressed, the guitarist does allow that his perspective "is very much a 59-year-old Steve Vai speaking." He reveals that he has felt trapped by intense bouts of depression at various periods in his life, plagued by periods of insecurity and notions that his work was never fully appreciated. "It's a form of insanity, though, isn't it?" he says. "It's very painful psychologically, and it's all brought on by fantasy ego beliefs. You think you haven't accomplished anything, that you don't have enough fame or money, or that you haven't arrived. But after a while, you learn to let go of all that, because it's hell."



One way in which Vai has learned to let go is through spiritual growth; each day he sets aside time to reflect and, as he puts it, “search for the peace within myself.” And he inevitably turns to the guitar. “Even through difficult periods, it’s been my happy place,” he says. “The guitar always felt like magic to me — it was the gateway to my imagination. How a person expresses their imagination is up to them, but for me it’s been in the form of little black dots and the guitar. So it’s always been my friend.” He pauses. “Of course, there’s the flipside to that: I can get very critical about myself, and then the guitar becomes unfriendly.” So what does he do in those instances? “I just learned that it’s got nothing to do with the guitar — it’s me. I came to understand that those periods are necessary because they show me what I don’t want. And at the same time, they show me what I do want. So I just change my perspective and go on from there.”

I remember way back in the early days of *Guitar World*, your father would call the office and ask if we were writing something about you. He was almost like your unofficial publicist.

[Laughs] He was. I was very fortunate to have two parents who were very supportive of me. My father could be tough at times, like all fathers, but he was always very proud of what I was doing. I remember when I was young and playing my guitar too loud, the neighbors would complain. He’d tell them to shut the fuck up. [Laughs] He’d say, “That’s my son up there playing the guitar.” Meanwhile, it sounded like hell. And then my teachers would get upset when I’d bring a guitar to school. They’d call my parents, and my father would say, “My son will bring his guitar wherever he wants.” [Laughs]

A lot of kids back then didn’t have that kind of support.

It’s true. But I’ll say this: Even if my parents fought me, I still would’ve become a musician. I had no choice in the matter; it was going to happen.

You talk openly about having doubts and insecurities. When you and Joe Satriani were teenagers, back when he gave you guitar lessons, did you two ever talk about that sort of thing?

I think we were a little too young to be discussing such lofty concepts, but in our own teenage way those messages were being transferred. For me, a lot of them came from just watching Joe. There were all the academics of the lessons, but there was also





April 9, 1988: Vai (playing one of his triple-neck Ibanez "Heart" guitars) performs in Tilburg, Netherlands, with David Lee Roth

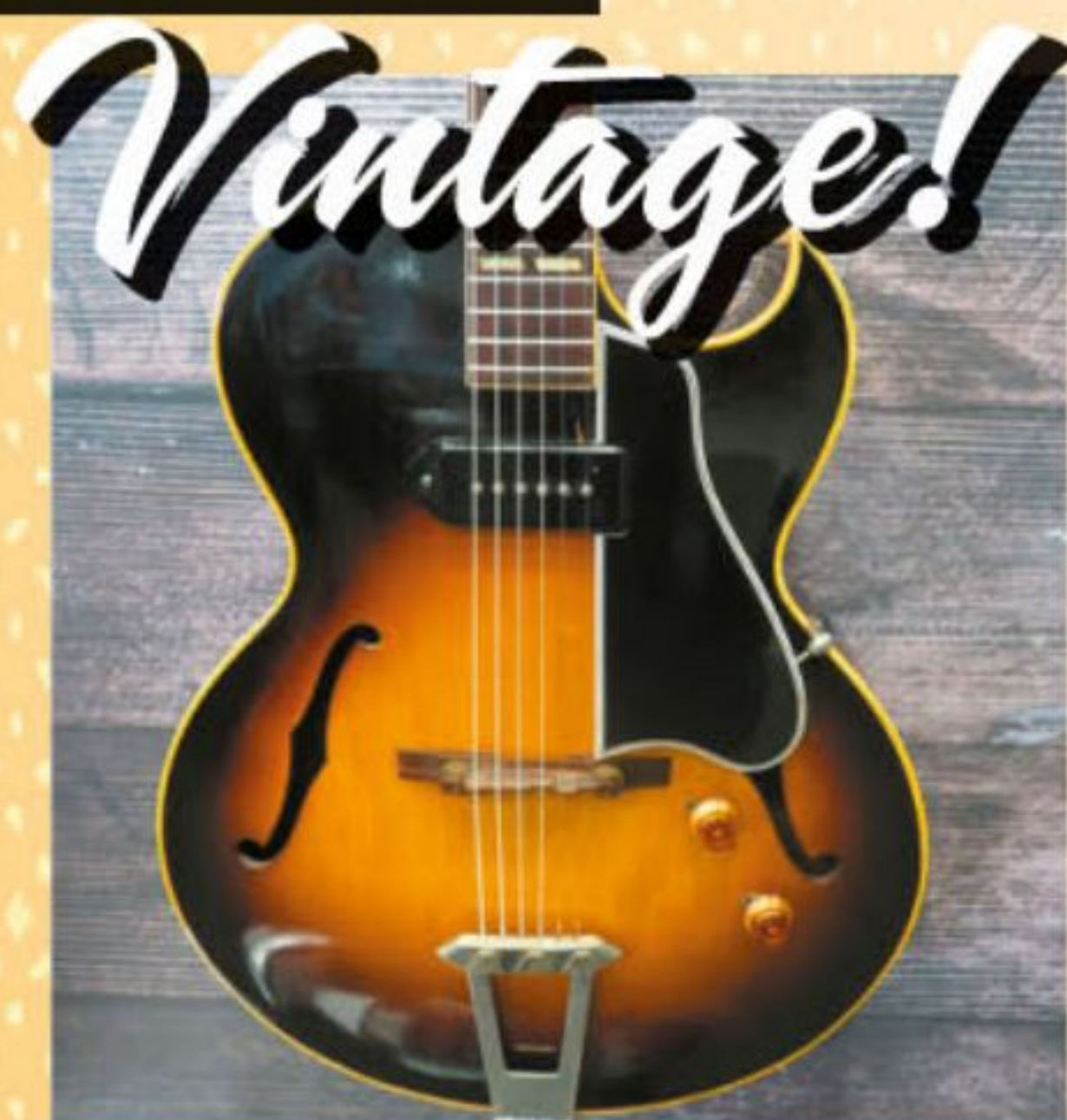
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the cool that he was. He's four years older than me, and he was in high school, while I was still in junior high. He was always cool: He had long hair, he played the guitar, he said cool things and wore cool clothes. I picked up a lot by just being around him. I will say this, though: There was this huge field in our town, and occasionally Joe and I would pull up to it, and we'd look out over it and just talk. We called the place "the Sea of Emotion." For however deep teenagers can go at that time in our development, that was the place where we had these lovely life discussions. We bonded on a different level than just "student and teacher."

You went to work with Frank Zappa at such a young age. It was a great opportunity, but were you intimidated to be around him?

Oh, my God, yes! On one level it was petrifying. I was 18, and this was Frank Zappa. I was enamored of him. I would watch him and think, "OK, Frank is reaching for his coffee. What's he gonna tell me? What the fuck am I doing here?" All those things went through my head. *[Laughs]* But it's funny, because at the same time, on a performance level, I was completely different. I knew I could contribute to his music, and I was fiercely confident. I was like, "Go ahead. Give me anything you want. I'm going to play it, and I'm going to blow you away. I am not one bit intimidated, because I know the secrets." And my secret was just my practice ethic. Give me anything and I will break it down. I'll learn it perfectly until I can play it with confidence to the point where you're impressed. And I did that. I did things that to this day I can't believe — things like "The Jazz Discharge Party Hats" and "Sinister Footwear." I loved playing those things perfectly and as beautifully as I could. On that level, I wasn't intimidated at all.

Soon after leaving Frank's world, you joined Alcatraz. Did that feel like a starter band into the big leagues, or were you thinking at the time that it might be a lifetime commitment?

No, when I joined Alcatraz, I knew it wasn't how I would spend my life. But I saw it as a good opportunity to step into the limelight of an incredible virtuoso, Yngwie Malmsteen, and make a rock record with some really cool guys. I never looked at any of the bands I joined as lifetime commitments; that just didn't seem realistic. And this was much to the chagrin or disappointment of my high school band even, because we had a great little thing going, and then I suddenly moved to Boston to attend Berk-

“

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lee. "Why are you doing this to us and our band that has all these hopes and dreams of fame and fortune?" I loved that band. I've said this before: It was my favorite band that I was ever in. Because when you're in a high school rock band, there's nothing cooler than that.

So you obviously didn't see playing with David Lee Roth and Whitesnake as lifetime commitments either.

No, absolutely not. I loved those guys, and I wouldn't trade those experiences for anything. But as I was going through it all, I saw how easy it was to get wrapped up in creating an identity for yourself from it: "I'm a rock star. I'm playing arenas, winning all the polls and making so much money. It's who I am, and I'm going to hold on to this forever." That always seemed like insane thinking to me. Did I enjoy it? Sure, but I also knew it wasn't what I was going to do all my life, because the music I had in me had to come out; otherwise, my career would be an epic fail.

At this point in your life, would you ever join another band?

It would have to be an extraordinary situation, with extraordinary people who are looking to do something very artistic, accessible, powerful and different. I get asked a couple times a month to join bands, and unfortunately, all the situations that have the potential for me to join are relatively insipid. Now, that's just my perspective, but it's the only one that's valuable. So

no, unless those parameters were met, it's unlikely that I would join another band.

I always loved your playing on the PiL record, *Album*. You occasionally play on other people's recordings, but you don't do a lot of it.

Sometimes I do. Just recently I played on a Jacob Collier record. It was fantastic, because there's a guy who's completely in touch and connected with his inner-creative being in a powerful way. When somebody has a creative idea and can express it like that, I'm happy to contribute. I get offered to play on records several times a week. Sometimes I'll do it as a favor for a friend. But at this point in my life, with whatever time I have left, my main focus is to create the music that's stimulating to me.

For most of us, our old photos are tucked away and nobody ever actually sees them. However, everybody can see your old photos. Do you ever look back at your hair and clothes in the Eighties and go, "What was I thinking?"

[Laughs] There was a period of time when I thought that. Then I realized I knew *exactly* what I was thinking at the time: "Let's get crazy! Let's do something over the top." I look at photos from the Eighties, and a part of me cringes, but then I remember we were having a blast. It didn't seem preposterous when we were doing it. It was just fun, and I wore it well. Back then, we were gods. We were entertainers. We wore what we wanted, and we played our asses off.

Trends come and go, and there's a point when the trend becomes insipid and is considered bad or wrong. But in the long run, history doesn't remember the times when the trends dipped. You can see that now with all these people who show appreciation for music of the Eighties. They don't remember that when grunge came in, if you were Eighties, you were a bad disease or something. I was fortunate enough not to create so much of my identity out of that stuff, so that when I did change my clothes or cut my hair, it wasn't like I was killing my image or disappointing anybody. Because in the long run, none of that stuff matters; it's all little stuff.

Have you ever experienced times in your life when you simply didn't know what to do next, musically?

There was never a point when I didn't feel like there was a creative direction for me to turn to. For me, one of my challenges was coming to the brutal reality that all of the projects that I've imagined and started

{continued on page 56}

FLOWER POWER

In this exclusive interview, **STEVE VAI** takes you inside his brand-new signature guitar, the Ibanez PIA

STEVE VAI'S FIRST collaboration with Ibanez, the JEM, debuted in 1987. In the more than three decades since, the revolutionary instrument (and let's be frank — with its monkey grip handle, "lion's claw" tremolo cavity, five-way HSH pickup options, deep cutaway and eye-popping fluorescent finishes, among other features, it was indeed groundbreaking) has become firmly established as one of the most popular, celebrated and instantly recognizable designs in modern guitar-dom.

The JEM has undergone updates and modifications since that first iteration, from changes in pickups and fretboard inlays, to wild new finishes (floral patterns, a limited-edition swirl with Vai's blood mixed in) and even a 20th anniversary acrylic-body-with-LED-lights model. All the while, Vai acknowledges, "Ibanez has been extraordinarily supportive of all of my 'imaginative meanderings' over the years."

As if to prove his point, Vai recently unveiled — exclusively to *Guitar World* — his latest JEM-related imaginative meandering with Ibanez — and it's a big one. So big, in fact, that this creation is not even a JEM at all. Rather, Vai has spent the last few years developing and designing a brand-new guitar with the company: the Ibanez PIA.

For the design, Vai says, "I wanted something simple, and something that for me also had personal meaning." Those ideals

are reflected in the guitar's moniker — the PIA. "It stands for Paradise in Art," Vai says. There's a second personal meaning as well. "It's also my wife's name," he adds.

Spec-wise, the new guitar resembles a JEM in some very foundational ways. Its measurements — 25.5-inch scale, 43mm neck width at the nut and 58mm at the top fret, 430mm fretboard radius — are, to be sure, certainly JEM-like.

But for the most part, this is where the similarities begin and end, as almost every other facet of the guitar has been subtly tweaked and reimaged in service of a stunning new design. For starters, the monkey grip handle, arguably the JEM's defining feature, is still prominently displayed on the body just above the pickups. But the PIA's grip is unlike any you've seen before. In place of the standard JEM cutout with four "finger" notches, the new design, which Vai has named the petal grip, is comprised of two complimentary cutout swoops that resemble, well, the petals of a flower.

"From the beginning, it was always in the back of my mind that if the JEM grew legs and started running, there might be a time where I would change the hand grip," Vai says. "I thought we could do something different and also 'more.' And so we came up with the petal grip."

PETAL TO THE METAL

AS FOR THE inspiration behind the unique design? "I think flowers are beauti-

ful," Vai says simply. "They're sort of little eruptions from heaven that come through the earth. There's a softness and a simplicity to them. [Laughs] I know that in our world being attracted to flowers may not be a masculine trait, but I could give a shit about that stuff — I like them. I mean, I could have used skulls and crossbones and things like that, but boy, has that been done!"

But that's not all. "Also, I'm a beekeeper," he continues. "I love bees and I keep them, and the grip design is a bit reminiscent of the way certain honey bees sleep inside of flower petals."

Finally, he adds that the petal grip is "reminiscent of the yin and yang symbol — a representation of balance. And I think we really achieved that balance in the overall design of the PIA, because the grip is something that works with the shape of the guitar. If you look at it, there's synergy in the whole layout of the body."

Indeed, the PIA encompasses a unique and continuous flow, from the petal grip to the uniquely contoured body to the fretboard inlay and beyond. "There's a certain aesthetic — mathematical angles and arcs, different ratios — to this design that we've incorporated into various elements of the guitar," Vai says. "For example, we were so specific about how the petal grip would work with the guitar's curves, and we even reshaped the body a bit from the JEM — the contours are all different, and they're really nice because when I sit with this guitar, it just fits so beautifully to the body."

BY RICHARD BIENSTOCK PHOTOGRAPH BY LARRY DIMARZIO

"I think flowers are beautiful. They're sort of little eruptions from heaven that come through the earth. There's a softness and a simplicity to them. I know that in our world being attracted to flowers may not be a masculine trait, but I could give a shit about that stuff — I like them. I mean, I could have used skulls and crossbones and things like that, but boy, has that been done!"



Vai with the new Ibanez PIA. "It stands for Paradise in Art," he says. "It's also my wife's name"

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Furthermore, the petal motif extends to the PIA's fretboard inlay work, which at first glance is reminiscent of the vine-like Tree of Life pattern of some JEM fingerboards, but on closer inspection proves to be a singular abalone and pearloid creation that Vai is calling the PIA Blossom inlay.

When it comes to the real nuts and bolts of the guitar, Vai proudly rattles them off from memory for us: alder body; five-piece maple-walnut-maple neck; rosewood fingerboard (scalloped at the top four frets) with stainless steel jumbo frets; Edge tremolo bridge; Gotoh SG381-07 tuners; gold hardware; locking nut; and a pickup set consisting of two humbuckers with a single-coil in the middle.

He pauses when he comes to this last feature. The HSH pickup layout is, of course, the classic JEM configuration, but these are not JEM pickups. Rather, Vai collaborated with DiMarzio on a new design, the UtoPIA, that, he says, "is sort of based on my Evolution pickups, but with less mids, a tighter bottom and a little lower output." What's more, these new pickups come complete with stamped covers designed by Michael Mesker — Vai's art director for the past 13 years — that reflect the PIA Blossom fretboard inlay and petal grip.

And speaking once again about the petal grip, at this point in our conversation Vai flips over the prototype PIA he's holding in his hands to reveal, yes, that very same design emblazoned on the backplate. And there's another feature of the backplate that Vai is particularly jazzed about — the fact that it is attached to the guitar's body via magnets.

"I'm always trying to do away with inconvenience," he says. "And one of the things that has always seemed kind of inconvenient to me is that whenever you need to take the backplate off the guitar — which is relatively often for someone like myself — you have these little screws that you have to take out and put down someplace and hope they don't fall on the floor, because god forbid, if they do, they're lost forever — they get eaten by the carpet, kind of like picks. So we're just chipping away at things that are unnecessarily complex."

Vai may eschew complexity, but at the same time, he also designs his guitars to dazzle. And in this arena, the PIA, like the JEM and Vai's seven-string Ibanez Universe before it, is quite the looker. The initial rollout will see the PIA offered in four eye-popping finishes: Stallion White, and limited-edition Sun Dew Yellow, Envy Green and Panther Pink colors. And just like the original JEM, which came in a choice of three vibrant hues that were also

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Just like the JEM, it's a very sleek, very kind of 'metal machine.' It's built for tone, for speed, for intonation, for real performance. The way it sits on me, the way it sounds, the way it plays... it just feels like home. The minute I got my hands on it, I instantly felt a deep connection to the instrument"

represented in the guitar's "disappearing pyramid" fretboard inlay, the PIA Blossom inlays on the limited-edition models incorporate acrylic pieces that are reflective of the finish options.

It's a sly allusion, but as Vai sees it, "whenever I'm in a position to have this much creative control, I try to exaggerate it and create a story of sorts."

And why not? As he explains, "It's so much fun to work with [Ibanez owner] Hoshino, because I'm always surprised at how far they'll go with me."

In fact, that is very much the reason Vai chose to team up with Ibanez in the first place. "Back in '84 or '85, when Ibanez was looking for a hot new artist to play their gear, I approached them with the JEM," Vai recalls. "And I said, 'Oh, and by the way, I would like it to be released in three fluorescent finishes. With different color pickups. And a monkey grip. You know, the whole deal.'"

As for the origins of Vai's out-there ideas? "One thing was that I had been playing with Frank Zappa, and Frank was perpetually creative and never made excuses," he says. "Frank would imagine something and then kind of manifest it. I was very young and impressionable, so I figured, 'Well, that's how it works — you get an idea and you just do it, right?'"

When Vai teamed up with Ibanez, it's worth noting, the company was hardly a major player in the guitar universe. But, he says, "One of the reasons I went with them is because the other manufacturers at the

time would simply never entertain the idea of the guitar I had created. They would just never take those risks. But Ibanez was all over it."

Take the body rout behind the tremolo as just one of many examples. "The way that came about," Vai recalls, "is that I was sitting around one day many years ago with my Charvel 'Green Meanie,' experimenting with all the new Floyd Rose tremolos that were coming out. I could never understand why you couldn't pull up on the bar to have the notes go really sharp, but then I realized that the reason was because the tailpiece was being confined by the cavity. So I took a screwdriver and a hammer and just chiseled out all the wood that was obstructing the bar. I started using it and I remember how excited I was that I could pull up on the strings and they would basically go sharp until they fretted out. Ibanez created the lion's claw design as a sort of refined version of my cutaway, and we did it on the JEM. And I'm pretty sure I hadn't seen anything like that on a production-model guitar before that."

From there, he says, "I wanted 24 frets, and that was very rare at the time. I wanted the last four frets scalloped because, like Yngwie Malmsteen says, 'scalloped frets allow you to really grab the note by the balls!' I wanted a deeper cutaway. I wanted a humbucker and single-coil configuration that made it possible to get those Strat-y, 'in-between' sounds. And I wanted to contour the body so that it looked sexy."

Vai got everything he wanted, but, he says, "With all of these things, I had no expectations about how they would be received. It wasn't as if I was sitting there going, 'What does everybody else want? I gotta know my market...' Because I had no idea. I was just doing it based around my own comfort zone. So I was completely shocked by the success of the JEM."

More than three decades later, he still is. "I'm astonished," he says. "I cannot believe the dedication from the JEM enthusiasts and the collectors that have made this guitar thrive. But I think it all comes back to, when I first set out to design a guitar specific to me, I really felt a lot of freedom in doing it."

That freedom extends to the new PIA as well. "Just like the JEM, it's a very sleek, very kind of 'metal machine,'" Vai enthuses. "It's built for tone, for speed, for intonation, for real performance. The way it sits on me, the way it sounds, the way it plays... the PIA really just feels like home. The minute I got my hands on it, I instantly felt a deep connection to the instrument." And he smiles broadly. "It's a guitar built for freakdom, you know?" **GW**



EVEN STEVEN

continued from page 51

could take anywhere from six months to two years to finish. It was like a rude awakening. So I had to prioritize, and to do that I had to go deep into my imagination and create something that transcended all of these projects that I wasn't going to be able to finish.

That's something I want to put out to everybody: If you feel creative, you have to search for what is unique, vital and valid. To be creative on your deepest level — without any excuses or fear — is what

you're here for. That's vital to the contribution of everything. I know that sounds lofty and extraordinary, but that's the way I feel about it. And that's helped me prioritize. If you're enjoying what you're doing now, what does it matter if you can't achieve the 300 years' worth of projects that you want to? None of that matters. What matters most is that you're enjoying the process of your creative expression *now*.

You've had a huge impact on guitar design. When did you realize you wanted to build the first Ibanez JEM guitar?

Well, the evolution of the ideas came from the time I picked up my first guitar. There were things I liked about Les Pauls and Strats, but there were things I didn't like. So I battled with those things until it got to the point when I said, "Why don't I just have a guitar made that's exactly what I want?" This was when I was in Alcatraz. I had run into a little money, and that's when I really started on the idea.

When I joined Dave Roth, I needed to have an arsenal of guitars that were relatively interchangeable, and that's when I designed the JEM. This was before I was

with Ibanez. I just made it like a one-off for me, and it was very simple, but it was based on my own idiosyncrasies of playing. I took a very practical approach: I wanted 24 frets, very rare at the time. I wanted a deep cutaway so I could comfortably play on 24 frets — also non-existent at the time, basically. The pickup layout and switching system were big ones; I wanted a pickup configuration that satisfied me as a guy who liked both Les Pauls and Strats. The floating trem was an obvious Vai-ism. I wanted to pull back on the strings, so I just chopped the wood away from the tail piece, and there it was — a floating tremolo system.

The whole thing felt very natural and innocent, and nothing about it really felt revolutionary to me. I didn't even think anybody else would be interested in it. But that's just like all art, isn't it? You have to please yourself.

I assume by that point you had all kinds of guitar companies on your doorstep just begging you to be an endorser.

I did, but I was put off by that. Their idea of an endorsement was, "We'll give you a free guitar, and we'll use your name." And I was like, "No fucking way." But with Ibanez, I thought, "If I did have a company making this guitar, that would be really nice for me." I wasn't doing little cosmetic changes; this was an overhaul of a guitar, in a sense, even though, as I said, it was just my idea for myself.

Even with that said, it was definitely a groundbreaking decision.

Right. It took me by surprise. I mean, people were interested in it. Because back then, when I went to Ibanez and they brought me the guitar that was a perfect guitar, I said, "OK, great. Let's make it in three Day-Glo colors and put a monkey grip handle in it. And they're like, "What? Are you sure?" The president of the company's scratching his head, saying to his A&R guys, "Are you sure this Steve Vai guy is the right guy?"

"Is he just goofing on us?"

Yeah, "Is he goofing on us?" Because this seems completely insane compared to what was going on at the time. But I was really quirky and just looking to be different. And surprise, surprise — the guitar hit a nerve. I can't even tell you what an incredible wind-fall that guitar has been for me over the last 35 years. It's been great.

A lot of times I hear artists say, "I love all my albums. They're all my babies." OK, I get that. However, when you look at the

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So other than speaking with you right now, which is a nice break, that's what I'll be doing throughout the day. I'll be sitting in my studio chair and working until I can go to sleep again at midnight. And I'm perfectly fine with that. It's work, but I love it. I can't tell you how grateful I feel to be able to immerse myself in this thing I do"

studio albums you've put out thus far, is there just one that stands out to you as being the best?

Well, without sounding pretentious, they're all perfect. [Laughs] On one level, they're all fine — perfect. When I look back and I hear them, of course there may be certain things that I might do a little differently now, but that's *now* — the only time I could do them. Having said that, I don't think it's uncommon that an artist might feel that their last record is usually for them, their best. And for me, I think *Modern Primitive* is exceptional. It's so quirky. It's so... "Vai." [Laughs]

So let's say a plumber came to your house. He'd never heard your music before, but he wanted to hear what you do. You'd play him *Modern Primitive*?

No, it's according to what he wanted to hear. If he wanted to hear a guitar piece, I would play him the new thing I recorded last month, which is the last thing I did. It demonstrates my evolution as a player, I think, so that might be what I'd play him.

I guess it's an impossible question: What one song would define you to somebody? Can the song be 90 minutes long? [Laughs]

If the plumber has the time, sure. But I imagine he'd charge you.

[Laughs] Probably. See, I don't think it's a matter of which song you choose to play. I think what matters is the level of enjoy-

ment you find in playing it, and you can do that with any song.

You don't churn out albums; you seem to work on them and issue them pretty thoughtfully. Is creating an album always a very dedicated process, or have you ever just banged one out in a moment of complete spontaneity?

All of the above. *Alien Love Secrets* came very quickly. I had just come off the *Sex and Religion* tour, and I was conceiving *Fire Garden*, which, like many of my other records, was incredibly laborious. I get very specific, and I knew *Fire Garden* was going to be a huge ordeal of time and intensity. So I decided to release a simple trio record right away for the fans who really wanted to hear that kind of thing, because I'd neglected them. I knew what they wanted and I hadn't been doing that because I was chasing all these other things. I really loved *Alien Love Secrets* — it was very quick and easy. Certain songs on my records are just like that, but other ones are behemoths that need to be built a particular and specific way, based on my inner-ear and my creative desires.

Do you ever engage in those marathon practice sessions from your youth — 10 or 15 hours? Or is there no need for that?

The intensity of focus shifts to various things. For instance, this morning I woke up at 7:30, which was a bit of a drag, because I like getting up earlier. I got a cup of coffee, walked right into the studio and sat at the computer to continue working on what I had finished at midnight. I'd been editing these musical scores that are very dense and intense, and in June I'm going to record them with various orchestras. This music requires a lot of concentration on my part — I don't just hand stuff off. There's a 40-minute symphony that has really wild guitar playing and all sorts of stuff I'd written quite some time ago. I composed it and had performed it with the North Netherlands Orchestra in Holland, and now I'm basically re-orchestrating it and preparing to record it.

So other than speaking with you right now, which is a nice break, that's what I'll be doing throughout the day. I'll be sitting in my studio chair and working until I can go to sleep again at midnight. And I'm perfectly fine with that. It's work, but I love it. I can't tell you how grateful I feel to be able to immerse myself in this thing I do. It's my hope that everybody can find that kind of outlet in their lives... We should all be so fortunate. **GW**



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July 10, 1990: Steve Vai performs with Whitesnake in Allentown, Pennsylvania

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TONGUE TWISTER

Three decades after its release, Steve Vai takes you inside the making of Whitesnake's *Slip of the Tongue*, the album that sent the band into uncharted territory

STEVE VAI WILL BE THE FIRST TO TELL you how uncanny his charmed life in rock 'n' roll has been. While his work as a game-changing guitar expressionist (and his hallowed discography of instrumental albums) might take priority in the minds of guitar fans, Vai's odyssey through the ranks of rock music is the stuff of legend. As a gifted teen, Vai travelled from bedroom woodshed to the bootcamp of Frank Zappa's band,

after which he took the reins from famously furious neo-classical shredder Yngwie Malmsteen in Alcatrazz. Vai left the Alcatrazz gig to join David Lee Roth in spearheading the singer's wildly successful post-Van Halen solo group, a gig he left in 1989 only to have yet another coveted lead guitar role "fall in his lap" (as he tells it), this time with one of the biggest bands of the Eighties: Whitesnake.

BY DAVID VON BADER

With Whitesnake, Vai did more than just enjoy a casual walk-on with a band at the peak of its success. He reshaped the group's sound from the inside out with his contributions to 1989's *Slip of the Tongue*. That album marked a major shift away from the brand of muscular blues-rock Whitesnake was known for, chiefly due to Vai's penchant for theatrical flash, flare for painting with effects and layered approach to tracking guitars. *Slip of the Tongue* brought Whitesnake's sound into the future and, while it was an album that risked leaving fans behind, it would go platinum before the grunge revolution changed the face of guitar music altogether. Oddly, despite Vai's massive resume, he got the Whitesnake call because frontman David Coverdale was so impressed by his performance and guitar contributions to the 1986 film *Crossroads* in which the guitarist famously played the role of Jack Butler, the Devil's shredder.

Slip of the Tongue celebrated its 30th anniversary late last year and was treated to a royal re-release package, complete with a fresh remaster and an expanded, deluxe edition of the album that boasts unreleased studio recordings, music videos, a new interview with Coverdale and a recording of the band's positively blistering 1990 headlining set at Castle Donington. In anticipation of the album's big birthday, *Guitar World* was invited into Vai's studio, the Harmony Hut, to chat about the album. The guitar hero opened up about his sole release with the band, lessons learned from Diamond Dave and his working relationship with Coverdale and co-guitarist Adrian Vandenberg. He also reflected on what was one of his finest moments as a bona fide rock star.

David Coverdale had a lot of experience working with gifted players when you joined the fold and seems to be someone who really values the interplay between a frontman and a dazzling lead guitarist. What was he like to work with? Was he hands-on or did he get out of the way and let you do your thing?

David was a prince! He had a lot of confidence in me and basically knew he needed to just let me do my thing. David knew what I was capable of and didn't really interfere with what I wanted to do. I just did it, and if there was something he didn't like I was happy to change it because it was *his* thing. Working with David was great and there was something in his phrasing as a singer that I just adored.

There was really only one situation where David asked me to re-do something and I completely agreed. It was on "The Deeper the Love." I had done a solo using a

piece of rack gear that was the hot new piece of gear at the time. I won't mention who it was made by, but I hated the thing, but everybody was saying how great it was, so I gave it a spin. It sounded like shit — thin and buzzy like a deranged mosquito! I wasn't really satisfied with the sound on the solo and, sure enough, David heard it and went, "Steven darling, would you mind re-doing this solo — it sounds a bit thin." Other than that, he just let me run with it.

The lore goes that many of the guitar parts on *Slip of the Tongue* were already written by co-guitarist Adrian Vandenberg when you joined, but he had a recurring wrist injury flare-up and was unable to track the album. Is that correct?

Not exactly. When I had joined Whitesnake, the tracks were already recorded and Adrian had laid down guide rhythm tracks. What had happened was Adrian developed this situation with his wrist that persisted throughout the tour. I'm not sure what caused it, but he'd have to soak his wrist after every show. Adrian's *such* a great player, but the injury made it so he couldn't really sustain for too long because of the pain. I've stayed pretty close with Adrian over the years and I see him whenever I'm in Holland, and when I spoke to him a couple of years ago he was still having that wrist problem — but they located the source of it to his neck. So Adrian had made these guide tracks and that were basically chords and structures, and I obviously copped a lot of the riffs from those, but I put my spin on them because it was all like one track of guitar. I went in with 20 tracks on some songs; it's a very dense guitar record and I definitely did my best to decorate it! It was a departure for what Whitesnake was normally known for in the guitar department.

Did you have any reservations about not staying wholly true to Whitesnake's old signature sound?

You have to find a balance between what's expected of you from the band, what the fans are expecting, what the song requires and is telling you to do — and also being true to your own voice. I had no choice but to express my own voice because that's all I know! If I had tried to sound like Yngwie [Malmsteen] when I had joined Alcatraz, it just wouldn't have worked because I'm very satisfied with the way I play, but I also *can't* play like Yngwie. It was the same thing when I was playing with Dave [David Lee] Roth; I needed to deliver in a rock context — which was very natural to me — but I'm not going to compete with Edward Van Halen! There's no way those records would've been

accepted if I didn't have some kind of rock integrity, but I knew what the songs needed and I knew what the audience was expecting and there's a side of me that I knew could deliver that. It was the same thing with Whitesnake.

The foundation of Whitesnake's sound was rooted in rock blues, and there's a whole culture that emanated from Europe in that traditional solid rock blues guitar playing that had a real authenticity to it. Michael Schenker, Uli Jon Roth, Adrian Vandenberg, Ritchie Blackmore, Jimmy Page — that was the sound all Whitesnake records had been built upon. But Whitesnake had gone through different permutations of guitar sounds throughout the years, and the previous one to me was John Sykes, and he absolutely had his own sound. Sykes didn't sound like any other previous Whitesnake guitarist, but his thumbprint is an indelible part of the Whitesnake record he did. The fatness of that record and the rock integrity it had was *all* Sykes. So I knew I wasn't going to sound like Sykes and I wasn't going to try to. You cheat yourself when you try to do that and play like someone else. And the audience is a lot smarter than you think; they're very intuitive and perceptive and if you try to pull anything over on them — like biting someone else's thing — you'll get beat up for it.

What did you learn during the Roth years that you brought with you when you took the Whitesnake gig?

When I joined Dave Roth, I was coming from Frank Zappa and Alcatraz, so I had never really had the experience of being on a big rock arena stage. With David Lee Roth in the Eighties, it didn't really get any bigger than the rock 'n' roll we were doing, and there was an element of fun and even a quirkiness to it. I was perfectly suited to the Roth gig and I think that experience taught me how to translate what I do to a big audience — how to truly entertain in a rock band. With Frank [Zappa], you stood there and you made sure you're playing the right notes. With David Lee Roth or Whitesnake, you have to *entertain*. Now, I've always liked theater and the over-the-top and I'm a total ham — I really love performing! In my mind's eye when I was a kid, I'd lie in bed and listen to music and see myself *performing* — not just playing. I'd create a visual of myself doing the whole thing because when you're a kid you're allowed to think like that. There's no taboo in being 11 years old with your headphones on making believe you're playing in front of thousands and thousands of people and creating an image. The image I created was this character that had almost effortless skill, wizard-like in their playing



[from left]
Adrian Vandenberg,
Tommy Aldridge,
Steve Vai,
Rudy Sarzo and
David Coverdale

and very graceful in their movements. I saw this very elegant movement to things and a specific integration between their playing and their movements. What I didn't realize at the time is I was creating who I'd become. We all do it and don't even realize we're doing it, but whatever you're thinking about and fantasizing about as a kid, you might become if you're lucky and work hard.

Your iconic second solo record, *Passion and Warfare*, was happening around the same time you got the Whitesnake call, is that right?

I had started recording *Passion and Warfare* before I had even joined Dave Roth's band, and the release was scheduled before

I knew I was going to join Whitesnake. It kind of coincided right when I was kicking off the Whitesnake tour.

It shows a pretty serious lack of ego to push a solo record that you had toiled over for that long to the back burner to tour with another band.

The decision at the time came because I was always very comfortable with the idea of being the sideman and working with a really great lead singer. With Dave Roth, you had one of the best frontmen of all time and especially of the Eighties. What Dave did — his command and the ego he brought to the stage — was theater and show and such an important part of what made rock 'n' roll

what it was back then. However, when I was working on *Passion and Warfare*, I knew that all of these rock bands I was in were relatively fleeting and that the whole big rock-star thing had a certain shelf life.

I'm so grateful that I was able to play around in that arena for a while; it really satisfied a lot of that urge to be a rock star and to explore that life. But, the more compelling movement in me was always — since before *all* of the bands and even before Frank [Zappa] — the music I was hearing in my head. As uncommercial or whatever you want to call it, *that* music was compelling and always calling to me, you know? That music said to me, "You can do this rock star stuff and that's OK, and you do it the

best you possibly can, but I'm waiting for you." I went to Capitol Records to deliver *Passion and Warfare*, and I had to tell them I had joined up with David Lee Roth and I couldn't finish my own record and go on tour because the schedules conflicted. I'll never forget what Joe Smith at Capitol said to me: "Steve Vai, you are a shooting star that has no place to land," meaning you're just going to keep going and it's OK that you're doing this stuff now, but you will have to at some point do the music that's inside of you because if you don't you're going to be miserable and there's not enough money or fame that will be able to satisfy your creative instincts.

That's an unexpectedly empathetic sentiment from a record exec at a major label in the 1980s!

That was the gist of it, and what was interesting was when it came time to finally release the thing, I went back to Capitol, and Joe Smith wasn't with the company any more. The guy that took over — Simon Potts — actually said to me, "I don't understand this record and I don't know what to do with it. We'll put it out, but we're not going to do any promotion, and your advance of \$250,000? We're going to cut that in half." Most musicians at the time would've been like, "Oh, you suck! But OK." and I just said, "OK, great! Bye!" and I left and didn't give them that record. They thought that I'd be fine with whatever they said, but I said no, paid back my advance and I shopped my record elsewhere.

Where were you at as a player when you got the Whitesnake call?

It's interesting because a couple years ago I saw a clip of one of the shows we did at Donington and I couldn't believe it! I said, "Is that what I played like back then?!" It was pretty fierce and there was a real aggression to it. And a lot of control. I just remember thinking it was never good enough back then. I think that's a common thing in some people: knowing that what you're playing is the right thing and that it feels right, but always feeling like you could do better or do *more*. And then you get older and you look back and realize you were completely blind to how good you were. There was a part of me back then that always went, "Why are all these people reacting this way to the way I play? It's not that great," because I always felt like there was another level! You don't know that you can't see the forest for the trees.

You tracked the guitar parts for *Slip of the Tongue* at your own recording

studio. Do you recall your core signal path for the album?

Tons of guitars made appearances, but the majority of the tracks were done with the first prototype of the Ibanez Universe seven-string. I got that guitar right before we started tracking that record, and that's what I used for the main parts. You can really hear it there, but there's also all sorts of decorations and auxiliary guitar parts that were done with a lot of different guitars.

As far as the effects at the time, multi-effects were just coming out, so we were still stacking various rack-based choruses, delays and phase shifters. With the exception of the distortions and wah-wahs, everything was in rack units. There was a myriad of amps being used, but for the most part I was into Soldanos at the time — early SLO-100s. I also had some older modified non-master volume Marshalls that had been modified by Jose Arredondo who was the guy at the time and had done all of Edward Van Halen's amps. I was introduced to him through the Roth camp and he did a bunch of amps for me. The Carvin amps were out of the picture at that point.

Could you give some examples of how and where you incorporated the extended range?

It's all over the record. It's hard to hear because it's not utilized the way contemporary seven-string players use it. Whenever there were low notes between B and E, I used them. The seven-string is really apparent on "Slow Poke Music," "Judgement Day" and "Kittens Got Claws." Obviously this is well before the djent thing, but when I was doing that stuff with the seven-string, I instinctively knew there was going to be kids that saw the seven-string and recognized a completely different potential for it.

When you listen to that record now, are there any sections of which you remain particularly proud?

Well, as far as the music itself goes, I think it stands up! It didn't sound trite or forced and it doesn't sound too dated to my ears. On some of the tracks, I was able to really kind of "bust my nut," as they say. I love listening to a track like "Kittens Got Claws" with that intro with all of those cat sounds — that's all guitar! I listened to that not long ago and I wondered how I did all that cat stuff. In retrospect, when you look back at something like that, you learn a lot about who you were at the time, and I was a very different person.

My trajectory from my bedroom to Frank Zappa to Alcatraz to the Roth gig was pretty uncanny, and as I started to

really hit the scene, so to speak, it was awkward feeling when I started getting recognition. At one point, I honestly couldn't really figure out what people saw in my playing. Then you start winning Grammys, you win every guitar poll and you're on the cover of every magazine, there's tons of money coming in and everyone's telling you how great you are and the ego comes in through the backdoor, and it starts to infiltrate you without you even knowing it! It can kill creativity, but it also becomes an attention demander. There was a period there when I was in Whitesnake where I was probably experiencing more of my pretentious nature than I had ever before and I don't think I was that easy to deal with.

Surely many would say that attitude is part and parcel of a gig like that. Would you not agree that at least a touch of that ego and attitude was required to pull off a gig like Donington?

I don't know. I've worked with a lot of people and we're all caught up in our ego — that's just across the board — but it reflects into the world in different ways. I think what you're really referring to is confidence, and that's what it boils down to. That's something I had in truckloads and I had no doubt that I was going to get on that stage and play my ass off and be a rock star — for the people! The guitar is such a focused instrument and people love rock guitar and they want to see you blow up the bridge. They want to see you be *that* guy and I was all too happy to be *that* guy and I was fiercely confident in everything I did. When it came time to do the guitar parts on any of those records, whether it was replacing Yngwie or the Roth gig, it was always like, "Yeah! Let me at it! I know what I'm gonna do, stand back!"

What's it like looking back on that whole experience as we mark 30 years of *Slip of the Tongue*?

It ticked all the right boxes for me because I didn't have to front the band, I had the greatest lead singer in the world at the time, and I was treated like a king. The guys in the band were just fantastic and they were gentlemen. Rudy Sarzo is the nicest guy in the world. Tommy Aldridge is hilarious and gifted. Adrian Vandenberg was fantastic; very cultured, liked good things, killer player with good tone! And they all tolerated my attitude and pretension brilliantly.

To this day I remain very happy with the record itself and I think it stands up as a great-sounding record, even if it may be a little different from the rest of the Whitesnake albums. **GW**

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Tim Stewart, photographed at Universal Studios in L.A. with his Schecter USA PT

POOP ART



LADY GAGA GUITARIST TIM STEWART — WHO'S ALSO PLIED HIS TRADE WITH RHIANNA, JENNIFER LOPEZ, JANET JACKSON, MARIAH CAREY, MILEY CYRUS, ADAM LAMBERT AND THE AMERICAN IDOL HOUSE BAND — DISCUSSES LIFE IN A HIGH-PROFILE BACKING BAND AND OFFERS SOME SOLID GIG-LANDING ADVICE **BY JOE BOSSO, PHOTOS BY KYLE MURPHY**

DURING THE PAST two decades, Tim Stewart has established himself as the first-call guitarist for pop music's biggest stars. Even a cursory glance at the 44-year-old Los Angeles-based ax man's credits is nothing short of staggering: He's toured and/or

recorded with artists such as Rhianna, Jennifer Lopez, Janet Jackson, Mariah Carey, Miley Cyrus, Britney Spears, Adam Lambert — and that's just for starters.

So what is it about Stewart — or more specifically, what is it about his guitar playing — that places him in such high demand? By his own admission, he's not much of a showboater. Given his druthers, he's content to lay back and play deep, in-the-pocket grooves — although when

called on to bust out a solo, he'll uncork a metallic-tinged doozy. "It's a funny thing, because nobody's ever come out and told me, 'Hey, I like you because you do *this*,'" he says. "I think people hire me because I'm versatile. I can play rock, funk, R&B and pop. No matter the style of the song, I really get into the rhythm. To me, that's what makes music tick. Sticking with that pocket is harder than it sounds, but once you get it, it becomes part of your mindset."



For the past few years, Stewart has been a key fixture in Lady Gaga's band. He recalls the experience of playing with the pop star at 2017's Super Bowl as one of the most memorable moments of his career. "There's no way I can fully describe the feeling you have on that stadium stage," he says. "You've got everybody around you, and you're being beamed out to a billion people around the world. It's thrilling, humbling, scary, crazy — you're like, 'This can't possibly be happening, right? This must be a dream.'"

Since last year, Stewart has been playing with Lady Gaga at her ongoing residency shows in Las Vegas, but he stresses that this is no schmaltzy lounge gig. When the band isn't performing one of the pop icon's many hits, they might be prompted to segue from

jazz standards to an Iron Maiden cover. "She's in this upper-stratosphere of fame, but people have to remember she's a serious musician," Stewart says. "She's really trippy and exciting in that way. There is no limit to the kinds of music she likes to play, and that's why we get so many types of people who come to see her. We get pop fans, but we get the guys from Anthrax and Slayer, too. For a lot of the show, we do a German industrial thing, so I tune down to C and just go. For a guitar player like me, it's so cool to be a part of that."

During breaks in Lady Gaga's Vegas shows, Stewart has been flying back home to Los Angeles to join guitarist Greg Suran in the *American Idol*

house band. Having studied jazz and classical guitar at Cal State University, Stewart likens his tenure on the show to something of a continuing-ed course in music. "*American Idol* is very fast paced, and there's so much material I have to learn each week," he says. "And I have to get things right — my tone, my phrasing. There's no room for slop. The whole band is full of top-notch players. I'll sit with Greg and go through stuff, and at times it feels like I'm getting paid to take lessons."

With his dance card perpetually filled, one might imagine that Stewart has little time for his own musical endeavors, but back in 2013 he and his co-guitarist in Lady Gaga's band, Ricky Tillo, found a few minutes in their schedules and formed a hip-hop/thrash group called thebandknives.

ing when I was 12. We played worship-type music; it had elements of rock and R&B. It was kind of the perfect training ground for me, because I had to learn songs and play them live. I was always playing guitar in elementary school and high school. We started our own rock bands and played in garages. It was a combination of that — church and garage bands.

Even though you grew up with music, was there one specific artist who really blew your mind and set you on your path as a guitarist?

Eddie Van Halen. When I heard him, that's when the guitar kind of exploded in my head. He made me go back and listen to Jimmy Page, Jimi Hendrix, all the classics. And then I started playing all the time, six and seven hours a day. I didn't always fit in at school, so I would hide out in my bedroom and play. I got so much fulfillment from that. At the same time, my sister was into the Bay Area thrash scene — Testament, Death Angel, Forbidden, all those types of bands. I got into Alex Skolnick when I was 14 or so. The guy's incredible. I liked how he could mix up everything but he was still playing thrash. I wanted to do the same thing.

rut, or I'd be pigeonholed — “He only does one thing.”

Were you always into Strats and Strat-style guitars?

I love Strats, but my main thing was Teles. Give me a Tele and it feels like home, although I do love humbucker guitars like SGs and Les Pauls. It depends on the music you're playing; you pick up the right guitar for the sound you want. I'm all over the place with the guitars I play.

You were inspired by Eddie Van Halen, but did you ever get into the really technical shredder stuff?

Oh, sure. I got into the Shrapnel guys — Marty Friedman, Jason Becker, Gregg Howe. And, of course, I loved Joe Satriani and Steve Vai. There was a time I was into the super-heavy stuff. I still listen to it from time to time, and I'm still in awe of what those guys can do.

Can you tell us a little about how you got your big break? How did you secure your first pro gig?

My first pro gig was with Jessica Simpson in 2001. I had just moved to L.A. and joined a band called 4th Avenue Jones. We had

“[LADY GAGA] IS REALLY TRIPPY AND EXCITING IN THAT WAY. THERE'S NO LIMIT TO THE KINDS OF MUSIC SHE LIKES TO PLAY, AND THAT'S WHY WE GET SO MANY TYPES OF PEOPLE WHO COME TO SEE HER. WE GET POP FANS, BUT WE GET THE GUYS FROM ANTHRAX AND SLAYER, TOO. FOR A LOT OF THE SHOW, WE DO A GERMAN INDUSTRIAL THING, SO I TUNE DOWN TO C AND JUST GO. FOR A GUITAR PLAYER LIKE ME, IT'S SO COOL TO BE A PART OF THAT”

The outfit released their debut album, *KNIVES*, last year, and they've just issued a follow-up titled *IIIIIO*. Beyond time constraints, geography is also a sticking point for the band: Tillo is based in Toronto, while singer Mr. J. Medeiros lives in Paris.

“It's definitely a juggling act,” Stewart admits. “When we first started doing this, I thought, ‘How can we make this work?’ But we manage to come together and create, and I'm really happy with what we're coming up with. Whether I'm doing my own thing or being a sideman, I feel very fortunate to play with such marvelous people.”

Let's go back to the beginning. How did you start playing the guitar?

My whole family plays music. I was raised in church, and that's where I started play-

Your guitar sound at times recalls Seventies disco and Eighties-era Madonna. I hear bits of Nile Rodgers, but also David Williams, who used to play with Madonna and Michael Jackson.

David Williams, man — he was awesome. I dug him and Paul Jackson Jr. Of course, I listened to Al Green's band and Sly and the Family Stone. I loved Earth, Wind & Fire, too. Great rhythm guitar on all that stuff.

You were all over the map when you were younger — church music, R&B, thrash metal. And then you studied jazz and classical guitar in college.

I really liked everything. That's just the way I am, and I think it prepared me for what I eventually did. If I limited my listening and playing, I would be stuck in a

deal with Interscope, but it just wasn't moving as fast as we wanted. That's when I got a call for the Jessica Simpson gig. I met her musical director and we hit it off. That was the first thing that got things clicking for me.

Were you ambivalent about leaving your main band at first to take a session job with a pop artist?

Initially, I was. You know, I wanted to be in my own band and do my own thing, but at the same time, I was newly married and I needed to work. It was strange at first. I was a little naïve, like, “I don't know this person's music. It's not really aimed at me.” But once I got in the band, I started to realize, “Hey, this can be OK.” And I met so many cool people and amazing musicians.



Stewart with his Schecter PT Fastback

I'm so thankful that I got the chance and that I didn't say no. Playing with Jessica really put me on my way to supporting a lot of huge artists.

How did you build on things after Jessica Simpson? Did people start calling you?

They did, and I just said yes to everything. That was the one piece of advice I got from everybody: Go out and play and say yes to whatever comes at you. So I played everywhere and with everybody. I worked with different producers, and then I'd go off to jam sessions. And I still played at churches around L.A. A lot of the sidemen were playing in churches, so for me, playing with them was a good way to network.

Back in the day, there was the Wrecking Crew, and after them came the Laurel Canyon session players. Does anything like that exist now in L.A.?

It exists in some way, but it's not like those situations. There's a whole new group of people making records that aren't really dependent on live musicians as much. They don't have to schedule sessions; records are made in people's homes, and there's no set schedule. Right now, I'd say 80 percent of what I do is remote recording, and that's fine. I have my own space that I record in. When I'm on the road, I take a mobile situation — my laptop, an interface and amp modeling — and I can do what I need anywhere. It's pretty incredible.

How do you prepare for an audition? What's expected of you when you walk into a room?

They generally give me a couple songs to learn, so I make sure I know them. I come

in prepared, and I have my sounds all dialed in. Things move pretty fast, so you don't want to waste anybody's time. That's the biggest thing: show people that you're reliable and that you can do the gig. As far as how you need to act, it really depends on who you're auditioning for. Not everything works for everybody. If you have to be a bit of a showman, then be a showman. If they want you to lay back, then do that. You have to know what the specific gig is calling for.

TIM'S TIPS: HOW TO GET THE GIG

- Show people that you're reliable and that you can do the gig.
- Personality is huge, man. You can't be a jerk. If you have an attitude or a superiority complex, you're not going to last.
- Things move pretty fast, so you don't ever want to be wasting anybody's time.
- The artist hires the musical director to pick the musicians. That's the person you need to impress and build a relationship with.
- Go out there and play, and say yes to everything. Build friendships and be cool. If you play everywhere and get to know people, the right doors will open. It's just a matter of time.

Is the artist at the audition, or is it usually the musical director?

Usually it's the musical director. Sometimes the artist is there, but generally not. The artist hires the musical director to pick the musicians. That's the person you need to impress and build a relationship with.

You touched on this. How important is a player's personality during an audition?

Personality is huge, man. You can't be a jerk. If you have an attitude or a superiority complex, you're not going to last. You have to remember, it's two hours on stage, but it's 22 hours when you're hanging with the band. You need to make sure you're a decent person for the road. For me, that comes pretty easily. Bands become family out on the road, and I like that kind of thing.

Does playing live pay better?

It all depends on who you're playing for and what kinds of sessions they are. Some recording sessions pay well, but other times the budgets can be a little tight. With touring, yeah, if you're out on the road for a while the pay is more consistent. It's really a case-by-case thing.

Let's talk about the tools of your trade. What guitars and gear do you generally rely on?

For most situations, I bring a couple of humbucker-type guitars — a 335 and my '79 Les Paul. Then I'll bring a Tele, a Strat and a Nash, and I've got some Schecters that I really like. I have a custom Schecter that's based on the Dan Donegan Ultra, and I love that one. For amps, I like Kempers. For the Gaga stuff and the last Rhianna tour, it's been Kempers Profiler Power Racks — I put 'em through cabs. I'm pretty basic with effects. I like the Eventide H9 for modulation, chorus and reverb. For delay, the Walrus ARP-87 is great. Vertex makes awesome overdrive pedals. I also use the KHDK Ghoul Screamer for overdrive, and I like their Scuzz Box quite a bit. Earth-Quaker and Beetronics make some really nice pedals, too.

For younger guitarists hoping to be the next Tim Stewart, what kind of advice can you offer?

Pretty much what I said about myself: Go out there and play, and say yes to everything. Build friendships and be cool. Do whatever you've got to do to stay inspired and learn. I know that sounds pretty general, but it's what worked for me. If you play everywhere and get to know people, the right doors will open. It's just a matter of time. **GW**



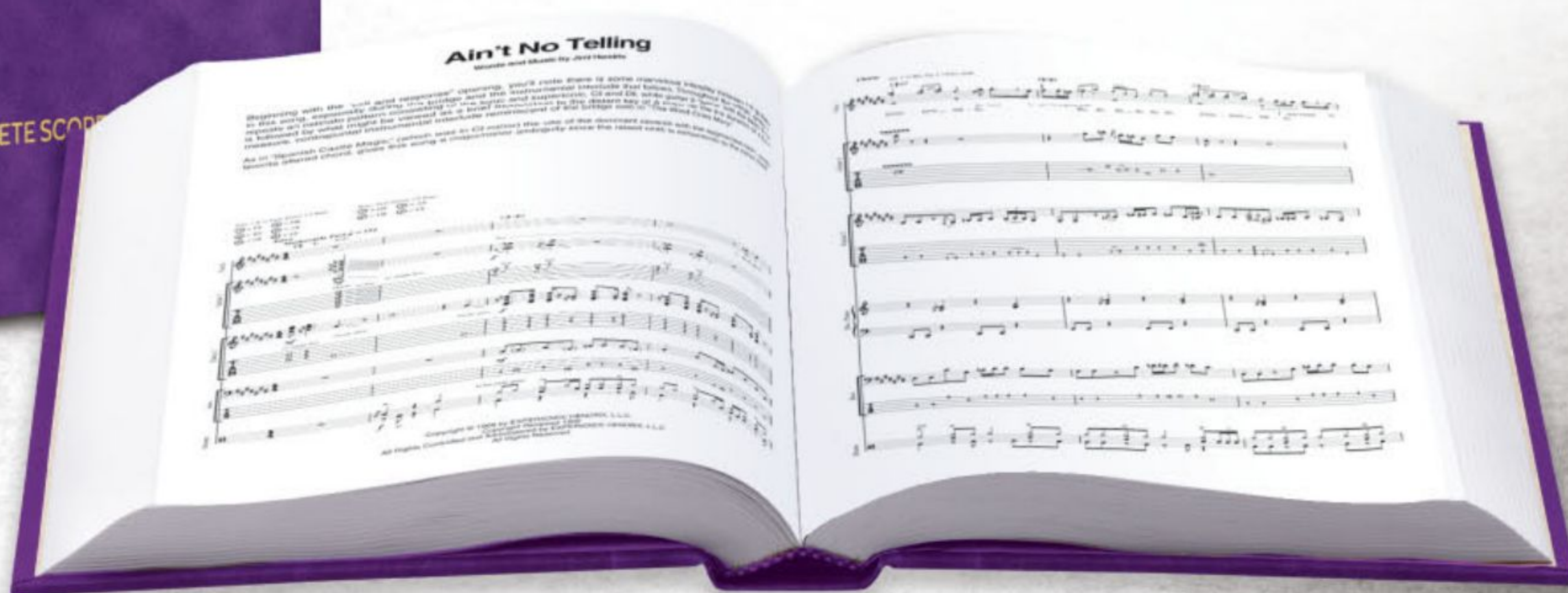
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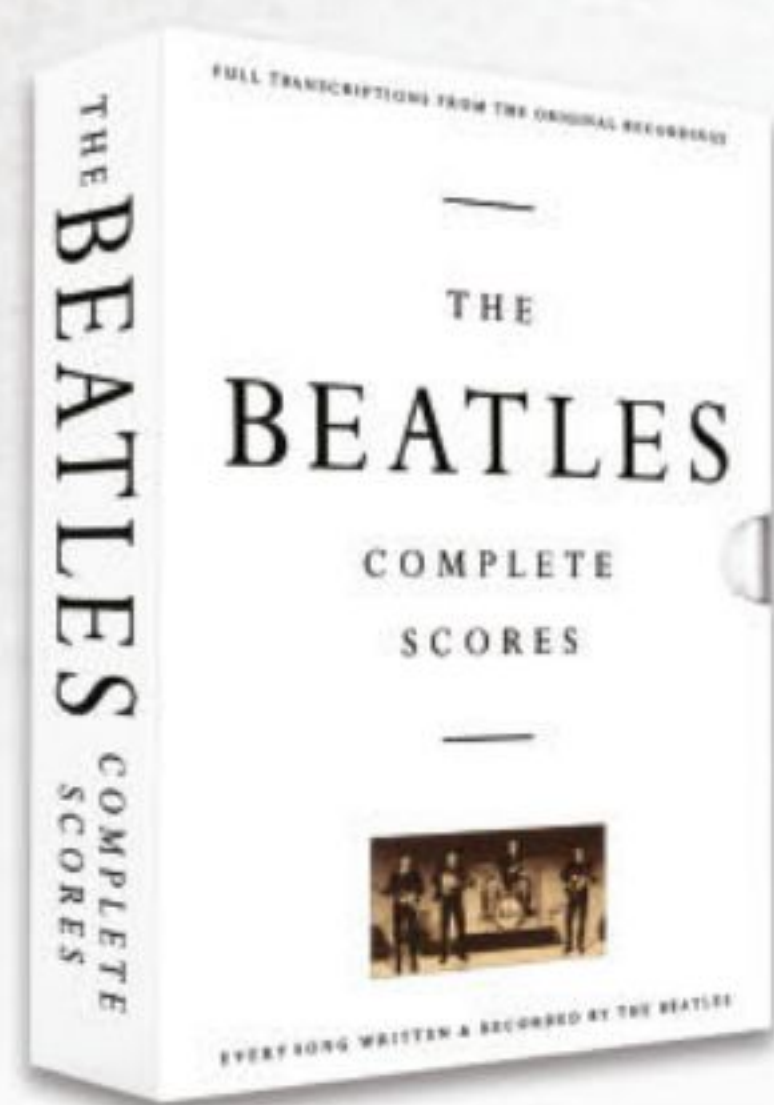
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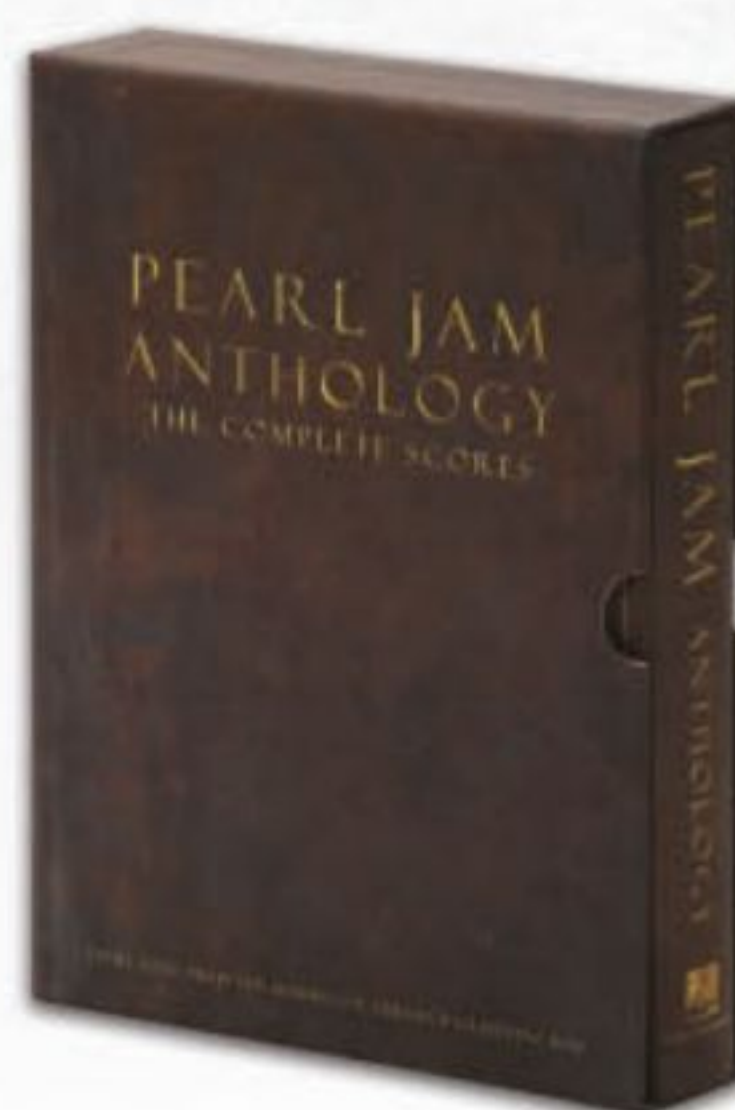
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GUITAR
WORLD

Page 072

EXCERPTED FROM **RAISING HELL: BACKSTAGE TALES FROM THE LIVES OF METAL LEGENDS**
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MOMENTS FOURTEEN REAL LIFE Spinal Tap

*In honor of the 40th anniversary of Spinal Tap's landmark **SHARK SANDWICH** album, metal masters **GLENN TIPTON**, **MATT HEAFY**, **WILLIE ADLER**, **DINO CAZARES**, **BEN WEINMAN** and more share their own embarrassing rock 'n' roll tales*

BY JON WIEDERHORN

PETE CRONIN/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

[From left]
Spinal Tap's
David St. Hub-
bins, Derek
Smalls and Nigel
Tufnel in 1984





WHAT IS A SPINAL TAP MOMENT?

We're pretty sure that — by now — everyone out there knows what a "Spinal Tap moment" is. But, just in case, let's just call it an unplanned, unfortunate, embarrassing and (obviously) comical rock 'n' roll happening. Two years ago, we asked Spinal Tap bassist Derek Smalls if he found the term offensive. "No, it's a tribute," he said. "Look, mate, any time they say your name, it should be — if you don't have someone like [former manager] Ian Faith running the cash register — a cha-ching, shouldn't it? So please, have some more Spinal Tap moments, or some Derek Smalls moments — on me! If somebody says they're having a 10cc moment, you wouldn't know what that meant. But if they say it's a Spinal Tap moment, you know exactly what they mean."

THE 1984 ALBUM *THIS IS SPINAL TAP* WAS THE SOUNDTRACK to the mockumentary of the same name and contained full parodies of metal songs with titles like "Big Bottom," "Tonight I'm Gonna Rock You Tonight" and "Sex Farm." The album, which featured an all-black cover like the controversial *Smell the Glove* record in the movie, was the perfect accompaniment to the film — positioned so much like a real metal album that it kept the nagging "Are they or aren't they?" question alive in the heads of fans who saw the movie and thought there just might really be a British band called Spinal Tap. All of the misfortune the band experiences throughout *This Is Spinal Tap*, including malfunctioning stage props, disastrous promotional appearances and mid-tour lineup shifts are both funny and entirely plausible.

Clearly, co-writer and director Rob Reiner is not only familiar with the traditional music documentaries he parodies, but he's also familiar with the lifestyles of musicians and bands and many of the predicaments they encounter on endless international tours. Reiner chose a perfect cast of actor/comedians and encouraged his actors — Michael McKean (David St. Hubbins), Christopher Guest (Nigel Tufnel), Harry Shearer (Derek Smalls), David Kaff (Viv Savage) and Ric Parnell (Mick Shrimpton) — to improvise dialog to fit the absurdity of the scenes. Had the actors turned their noses up at the music that their imaginary band was supposed to be celebrating, the movie wouldn't have worked. Instead, the entire cast embraced their characters and treated all the ridiculous antics and circumstances as realistic situations, which, in the world of metal, they are.

Granted, it's unlikely that any metal drummers have spontaneously combusted, but countless bands have gotten lost underneath the stage, stood slack-jawed as record label promoters and publicists proposed one inane idea after another and dealt with inadequate hotel and backstage accommodations. Ask any metal musician if he or she can relate to *This Is Spinal Tap* and many will tell you it's the story of their lives.

REX BROWN

**Pantera, ex-Down,
ex-Crowbar, Kill Devil Hill**

LET ME PUT it this way. [Pantera drummer] Vinnie Paul, God rest his soul, thought *This Is Spinal Tap* was an actual movie, not a satire, until I said, "Vince, it's a joke. It's a spoof." He thought it was about a real band. But you can understand why. Everything that happened in that movie is based on shit that happened or easily could have happened to any touring band. We were a professional touring machine and Spinal Tap shit happened to us every day.

GLENN TIPTON

Judas Priest

WE USED TO go to this pub that happened to be in the center of the Hells Angels chapter. They were having a festival not too far from the studio where we were recording so we got to know them a bit. We'd talk to them and they invited us over to their headquarters. When we got there, I saw the leader had this incredible chopper. The forks on it just went on forever. I was looking at it and he said, "Oh, you've got songs like 'Hell Bent for Leather' and 'Leather Rebel.' You must be able to drive a bike."

"Yeah, I can drive a bike," I said without thinking. I have got what we call track bikes, which go through forests. But I'm not a road-bike man. The guy threw his keys at me and said, "Feel free." I couldn't very well step down from that. I'd gotten myself into trouble and dug a bit of a hole. I thought, "It can't be too difficult." So I started it up. Fortunately, it was a key start, not a kick start. I put it in first gear and went across this field, and halfway across was a great big mound of rubbish. I managed to turn around it a little bit because I could turn the machine left okay but I really couldn't turn it right. I realized I was in over my head so I drove the bike just far enough to be out of view. "Okay, I'll put it in neutral and then I'll do a three-point turn until I face

the other way and I'll go back as if I've driven all the way around the field," I thought. As I was turning it around, it fell over on my leg and the exhaust pipe started burning through my trousers and burned my leg. I was trapped underneath. I managed to get up. I was covered in mud. But fortunately, as I picked the bike back up it turned around a little bit and it was still running. So I got back on it, put it back into first and pulled back up to the bikers. It had been quite a long time since I'd vanished, so it appeared as though I'd driven all the way around the field. When I got back to the guy, I accelerated a bit and I did a little bit of a skid to come to a stop and quickly put the rest down. I got off the bike and gave the keys back. One of the other Hells Angels came up and said, "Hey, dude."

"Yeah, what?" I asked.

"I had a guy just this morning who couldn't fuckin' turn the thing right," he said. That was an experienced Hells Angel who had a bike himself. So that was a real test that I came through with flying colors even though it was falsely achieved. Honestly, I'm lucky I didn't kill myself on the thing.

RICHARD CHRISTY

**Charred Walls of the Damned,
ex-Death, ex-Iced Earth,
ex-Public Assassin**

WITH ICED EARTH, we had an amazing Spinal Tap moment in Greece in 2002 on our last show of the tour. Some of the road crew had a tiny Stonehenge monument, which they lowered down to the stage in the middle of our last song just like in the movie. We were all dying laughing. It was hilarious. I don't know if *This Is Spinal Tap* is that popular in Greece because our singer Matt Barlow had to explain to the crowd why we were dying laughing and why we could barely finish the song. A lot of people in the crowd just looked confused.

TOMMY LEE

**Mötley Crüe,
Methods of Mayhem**

FOR OUR FAREWELL shows, we built this Crüecifly roller-coaster that I was strapped into. Every day, I looked forward to getting into the thing. That was my time to fly over everybody's head and get an insanely awesome bird's eye view of the arena. I'd high-five the scoreboard on the way out and on the way back. I loved that shit, dude. We knew we wanted to make a movie of the concerts, so we filmed all three nights.

And on the last night it broke down! I was hanging there upside-down and had to be rescued. We were talking about not using that footage of the thing breaking down and using the shots from another night. And I said, "Hell, no. That was New Year's Eve and that's how it went down." I actually think it was fuckin' hilarious. It was totally Spinal Tap. And it's definitely in true Mötley style. If it can go wrong, it'll go wrong.

WILLIE ADLER

Lamb of God

THERE WAS A really important show we played at L'Amour in Brooklyn. Before we went on, we were all like, "Okay, we gotta put on the greatest show ever." We had labels that were checking us out, including Nuclear Blast. And within 30 seconds of the first song, [vocalist] Randy [Blythe] knocked himself out. He stage-dove and kind of tripped. The next thing I knew, he was out like a light and he was being carried out. I thought, "What is going on? Of all the shows for this to happen!" But the crowd was totally cool about it. Without any planning, this dude from the audience came up onstage and sang the whole set and he killed it. And in an interesting twist of irony, the people from Epic Records asked us to dinner. When we were there, they said it was by far the most dangerous thing they'd ever seen and they needed to sign us immediately.

WILL CARROLL

**Death Angel, ex-Machine
Head, ex-Vicious Rumors**

WHEN I WAS in Vicious Rumors, we played the Wacken Festival in 2002. I had just seen Candlemass and I walked over to the other stage to watch Destruction. On the way, I saw [guitarist] Rick Hunolt from Exodus, who were playing that year. We walked over together. It had been raining all weekend and all morning so there was mud everywhere but there were still thousands of people in the crowd. Rick's not that tall and I'm kind of short so we couldn't really see the stage. "Fuck, this sucks, man. I can't see shit," he said. Then I noticed right in front of us was a mound of mud. "Dude, how come no one's utilizing that? C'mon!" I said. We both stepped up on this mound and we were a couple feet higher than everyone else. We high-fived each other, started watching Destruction and all of a sudden — BAM! — someone shoved us off of the mound from behind. I turned around and it was some woman and she was screaming at us in German. She pointed at the mound. We were confused for a second so we looked back at the mound and someone rolled it over. The mound turned out to be a fat guy with no shirt on and mud all over him. We had been standing on him watching the show!

GARY HOLT

Exodus, Slayer

WE LEFT [DRUMMER] Tom Hunting at a Midwestern Roy Rogers truck stop for 18 hours in around 1987 when we were touring for *Pleasures of the Flesh*. We stopped there to get some food and this was before the era of cellphones so there was no way to communicate with the bus. Everyone got off at this Roy Rogers, including Tom's drum tech, Todd, who was also blonde. And for some stupid fucking reason, Todd crawled into Tom's bunk. The tour manager did a headcount and counted Todd before he got into Tom's bunk. And then the tour manager opened the curtain, saw what he thought was the back of Tom's head and counted him again. So he

thought everyone was there and we left. We didn't realize Tom wasn't with us until we got to the next venue. He used a pay phone and called management to tell them that he was not on the bus. He was sitting at this truck stop with no money and no jacket. Some people fed him out of the kindness of their heart. We had to cancel the show and go back and get him.

MATT HEAFY

Trivium

WE WERE PLAYING on a really crappy old stage in Rochester, New York, and all of a sudden my entire leg fell through it. I didn't get hurt. I was just scuffed up a little bit. But I couldn't get out by myself. So [guitarist] Corey [Beaulieu] grabbed my arm and helped to pull me out, which was more than a little bit embarrassing.

MICHAEL SWEET

Stryper

WE DID A gig and there were tons of people in the crowd. There was also a pit bull roaming loose. My brother [drummer] Robert [Sweet] had feathers on his legs and the dog came onstage and started to attack my brother's feathers. He stopped playing drums and sat down. The dog left. So we started playing again and the dog came back. This went on for 20 minutes. Nobody could get this dog under control.

BEN WEINMAN

Dillinger Escape Plan

AT THIS CRAZY show in Sydney, Australia, people in the crowd were throwing garbage cans all over the place. Some people were bleeding from the violence in the pit and we were going nuts onstage. After the show, all these young girls ran up to me and asked for autographs like I was a rock star. I started signing stuff like I'm David Lee

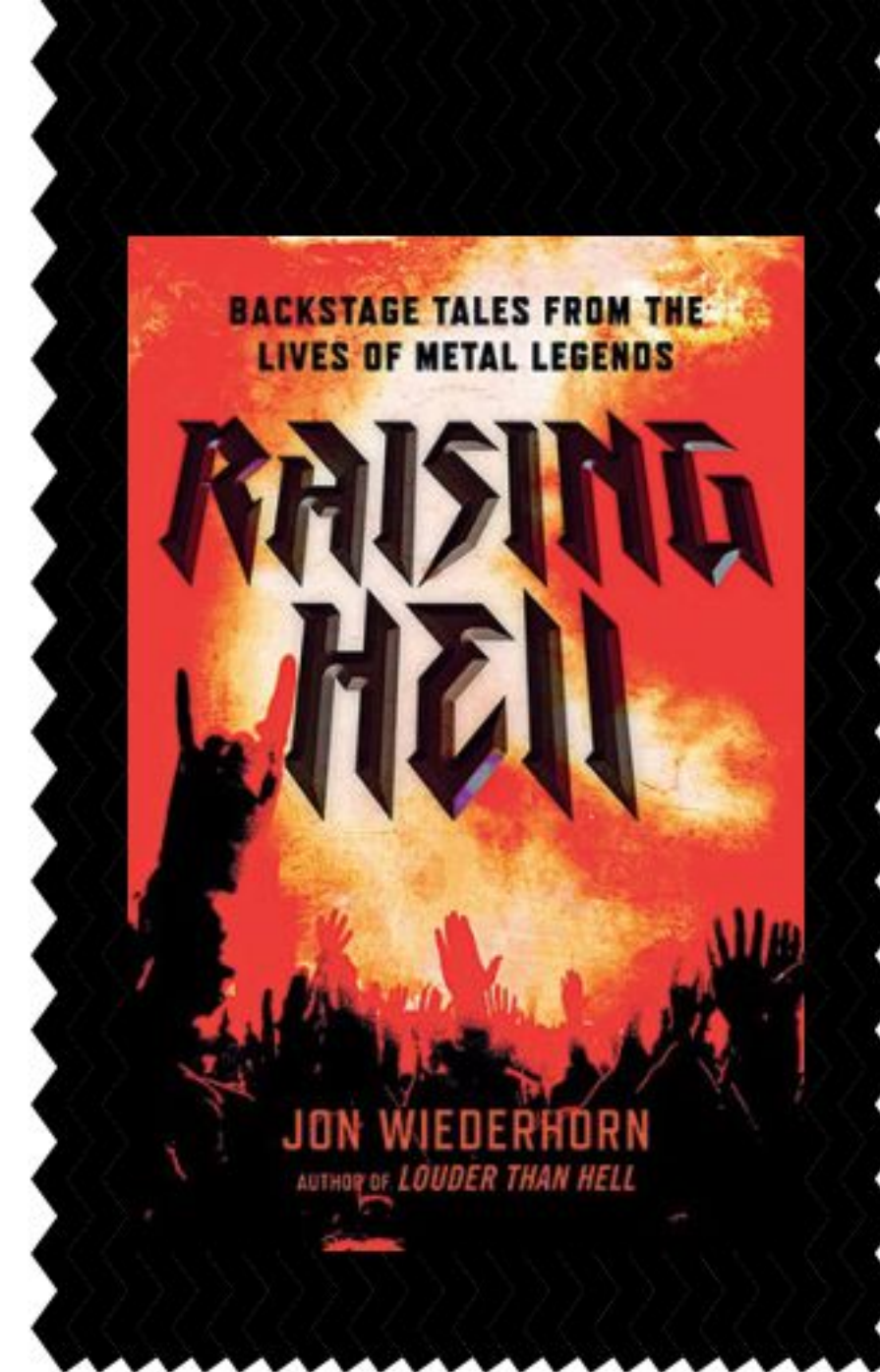
Roth, and more kids showed up. I slowly backed up as I signed shit. Then, SHTOOMP. I literally fell into a garbage can full of water and was stuck in it. It was like my ass was suctioned to the sides. A security guard came over and had to help pry me out. It was like, man, I can't savor just one moment of glory. No matter what it is, the world just won't let me have it. So eventually I got out of the trash with a soaking-wet ass and I just kind of shuffled away from the crowd.

BUZZ OSBORNE

Melvins

WE OPENED FOR Nirvana on their very last round of touring. It was literally within three or four shows of them being completely finished. Their crew was not being particularly nice to us on that tour and the Nirvana guys were oblivious to it. Kurt [Cobain] was certainly oblivious as a result of what his lifestyle was like at that point. We weren't getting paid a lot of money and the crew said if we wanted lights for the show, we had to pay their light person. "Well then fuckin' turn them on and leave them on," I said. "We don't need a light person." They said no. It wasn't the Nirvana guys; it was the people working for them. "Great, we have to pay some fucking asshole to do lights. I can't believe you guys are extorting money from us to do this as well as having us pay to use the monitors."

They wouldn't just leave the monitors off and let us play without them either. Our set was supposed to go from 8 p.m. to 8:40 because Nirvana were starting at 9 sharp. We were all ready to play and the house lights went off. We were there at the side of the stage ready to go on. The audience was cheering. No lights... No lights... Suddenly, the audience was no longer cheering, they were murmuring. We sat there for 15 fucking minutes in the dark because this girl forgot that she had to do lights for us.



Finally, someone reminded her. The lights came on and we got to do a 15-minute set. Did we get our money back? No. We didn't even get an apology.

KYLE SHUTT

The Sword

THE SWORD WERE playing with Metallica in the spring of 2008. We were flying from Saint Petersburg to Riga, Latvia. [Pantera vocalist] Phil Anselmo was on our plane, which was so cool to me since I was such a huge Pantera fan when I was younger. He always seemed like a ferocious bad-ass. So, the flight lands and there was a luggage mix-up, but the only people that lost their bags were me, [the Sword frontman] J.D. [Cronise] and Phil. The three of us were stuck in the baggage area filling out these forms 'cause there was nothing else we could do. Phil had a cut-off-sleeve shirt, cut-off cargo shorts, and he was wearing crocs. To a young me at the time, that was pretty hilarious. I didn't think this was where I'd be 10 years after first seeing the Pantera video for "Five Minutes Alone" on MTV. And I definitely wouldn't have pictured him wearing crocs.

DINO CAZARES

Fear Factory, Brujeria, Asesino, Divine Heresy

WE PLAYED THIS show in Hollywood as part of Foundation Forum. There was no water backstage in our dressing room, so when we were done I was thirsty as hell. There was a plastic tray full of melted ice

in our dressing that had held drinks, but they were all gone. So I thought, "Fuck it, I'm gonna drink the melted ice." I picked up the tray and put my mouth up to it. And [vocalist] Burt [C. Bell] yelled, "What are you doing?!" and pushed the tray out of my mouth. "Dude, I was getting a drink. I'm thirsty!" I said.

"I just washed my feet in there!" Burt said.

DAVE ELLEFSON

Megadeth

THE ALBUM COVER for [Megadeth's 1985 debut album] *Killing Is My Business... And Business Is Good!* was absolutely embarrassing. Dave [Mustaine] did a cool drawing of a skull with its eyes covered, its mouth bolted tight and metal plugs over his ears. It was supposed to symbolize the old saying, "Speak no evil, see no evil, hear no evil." He sent the drawing to Combat Records and said, "We want the cover to look like this, but better." Fast forward many months. We had a P.O. box since we were homeless at the time. We were so excited to see the finished artwork. Dave and I went to the box one day and opened it up and we see a vinyl copy of *Killing Is My Business*, and we were like, "What in the world is this?!" It looked absolutely nothing like what Dave gave them. It was a picture of this cheap-looking plastic skull with metal hooks keeping his mouth closed and this shitty tin can visor over his eyes — totally low budget. There were chains next to the skull and a knife sticking into the ground and a lit candle. It was awful. We immediately called Combat and they had their excuses and their reasons they did such a bad job... "We have our own artist who does all of our artwork and the costs would have been exorbitant to do it the way Dave drew it." They didn't even use the right logo. They just used some Gothic font. So basically, they just disregarded everything we wanted. **GW**

SOUND CHECK

the gear
in review



80

YAMAHA

CG-TA
TransAcoustic

82

ELECTRO-HARMONIX

Mod 11 Modulator

83

LINE 6

Powercab 212 Plus

84

ORANGEWOOD

Hudson and Sage Live

The Ultra Zone

**FENDER AMERICAN ULTRA JAZZMASTER
AND STRATOCASTER HSS**

By Chris Gill

▶ SHOPPING FOR A new Fender solidbody electric guitar can be an intimidating task due to the overwhelming variety of instruments the company offers today. For example, Fender produces about a dozen different series of Stratocaster models alone, often with several variations within each series. Deciding between an American Original, American Performer, American Professional, Deluxe, Player or Vintera model can require a daunting amount of research and legwork, but the good thing is if you have an ideal Fender model in mind, Fender probably makes it.

For guitarists seeking only the absolute best for themselves, the task is much easier as there are only two words to remember: American Ultra. This is the series to choose if you prefer traditional tonewoods over exotic varieties, aren't interested in artist models and want a player-centric combination of modern upgrades and timeless, classic appeal. We took a closer look at the American Ultra Jazzmaster and Stratocaster HSS models, but Fender also offers the American Ultra Telecaster and an additional Stratocaster model with the traditional triple single-coil pickup configuration.

FEATURES All Fender American Ultra models share a few common features, including a body made of either ash or alder, featuring enhanced body contours and tapered heels, a maple neck with a Modern D-shaped profile, 25 1/2-inch scale and Ultra satin finish, maple or rosewood fingerboard (depending on body finish) with 10- to 14-inch compound radius, medium jumbo frets (22 on the Stratocaster HSS, 21 on the Jazzmaster), bone nut, lock-



Fender
American Ultra
Stratocaster HSS



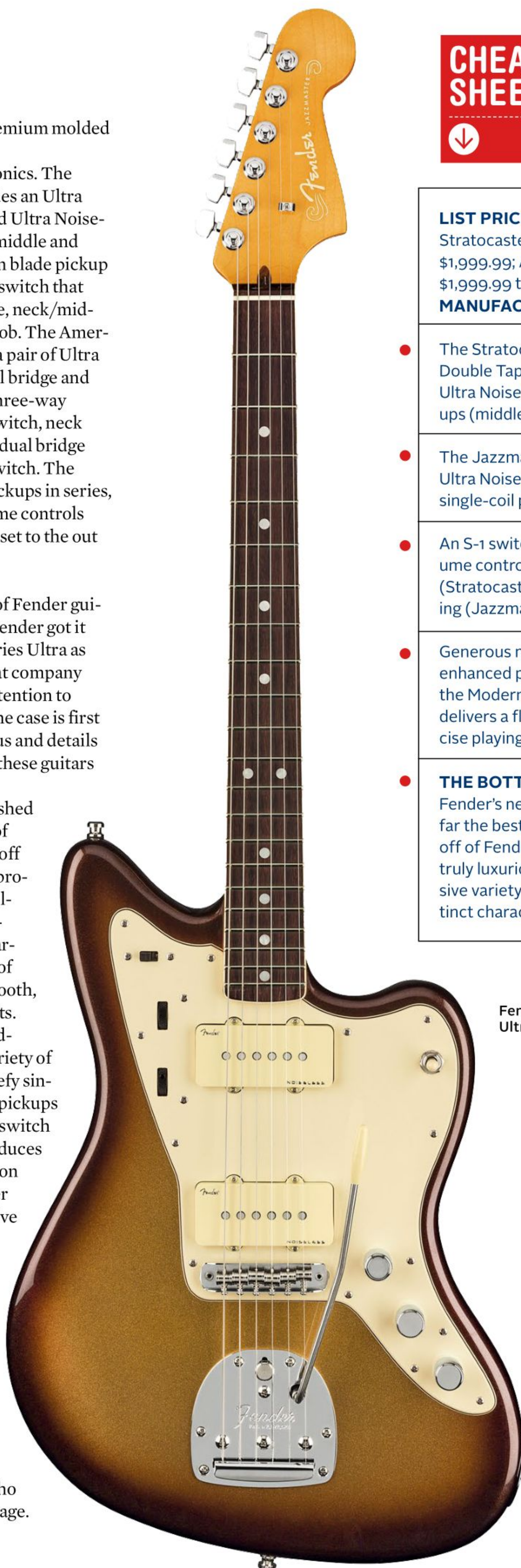
ing tuning machines and an included premium molded hardshell case.

All models also offer advanced electronics. The American Ultra Stratocaster HSS provides an Ultra Double Tap humbucker at the bridge and Ultra Noiseless Hot Strat single-coil pickups at the middle and neck, and controls include a five-position blade pickup selector, a master volume knob with S-1 switch that activates the Custom Double Tap feature, neck/middle tone knob and bridge pickup tone knob. The American Ultra Jazzmaster is equipped with a pair of Ultra Noiseless Vintage Jazzmaster single-coil bridge and neck pickups, and controls consist of a three-way pickup toggle, master volume with S-1 switch, neck tone knob, bridge tone knob, inset individual bridge and neck volume controls and a phase switch. The Jazzmaster's S-1 switch engages both pickups in series, and the individual bridge and neck volume controls will work only when the phase switch is set to the out of phase position.

PERFORMANCE I've played hundreds of Fender guitars, and I can unequivocally state that Fender got it right when they decided to name this series Ultra as these are the best production models that company has produced to date. The quality and attention to detail are noticeable from the moment the case is first cracked open, as the finishes are gorgeous and details like the gold logos immediately identify these guitars with an image of luxury.

That sense of luxury is further established when the guitars are played. The edges of the finger boards are smoothly rounded off and the frets are immaculately dressed, providing a polished feel. I found myself pulling off difficult licks with ease that I usually struggle to play on other guitars. I particularly loved the contours on the back of the treble cutaways, which provided smooth, comfortable access to the uppermost frets.

However, the ultimate feature of Fender's Ultra series guitars is their stellar variety of tones. The Strat HSS delivers big and beefy single-coil tones from the neck and middle pickups as well as the bridge pickup with the S-1 switch engaged, and the bridge humbucker produces fat, aggressive wallop with extra definition from its treble bite. The Ultra Jazzmaster simply sounds awesome, with a distinctive midrange snarl that delivers killer clean twang and delightfully demonic distortion with more body than a Strat or Tele but also more cut and snap than a P90. This Jazzmaster's sounds are truly unique, which is just the ticket for players tired of the same old sounds that most companies are delivering these days. Both models offer a wider palette of tones and textures than standard Strat and Jazzmaster models, making them perfect for pros who need a wider variety of sounds than average.



CHEAT SHEET



LIST PRICES: American Ultra Stratocaster HSS: \$1,899.99 to \$1,999.99; American Ultra Jazzmaster: \$1,999.99 to \$2,099.99

MANUFACTURER: Fender, fender.com

- The Stratocaster HSS features an Ultra Double Tap humbucker (bridge) and two Ultra Noiseless Hot Strat single-coil pickups (middle and neck).
- The Jazzmaster provides a pair of Ultra Noiseless Vintage Jazzmaster single-coil pickups.
- An S-1 switch in each model's master volume control provides a coil-tap function (Stratocaster HSS) or series pickup wiring (Jazzmaster)
- Generous modern contours provide enhanced playability and comfort, while the Modern D-shaped neck profile really delivers a flat, slim feel ideal for fast, precise playing.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE**
Fender's new Ultra series guitars are by far the best instruments to ever come off of Fender's production line, providing truly luxurious playability and an impressive variety of awesome tones with distinct character.

Fender American
Ultra Jazzmaster

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Dressed to the Nylons

YAMAHA CG-TA TRANSACOUSTIC

By Paul Riario

▶ THERE ARE ACOUSTIC guitars, and then there are Yamaha's TransAcoustic guitars. For those in the dark, Yamaha TransAcoustic series guitars are solidly crafted acoustic-electric instruments as is, but what makes them unrivaled is that they come equipped with TransAcoustic technology that incorporates built-in reverb and chorus, which upon activation, elevates the natural acoustic sound into an entirely transformative experience. If you've never tried one, it's something to behold once you hear it, because the effected sound emanating from the guitar's body chamber sounds as if it were processed in a recording studio or even a live setting — and it's achieved without adding any external gear, pedals or amplifiers. I totally gushed over the steel-string FS-TA TransAcoustic in an earlier review, but after playing the Yamaha CG-TA TransAcoustic, I find this one sounds far more enchanting presented here as a nylon-string.

FEATURES The CG-TA TransAcoustic arrives in a standard classical body shape with a fetching vintage orange tint and features a solid spruce top, laminated ovankol back and sides, nato neck and rosewood fingerboard and bridge. For those who are used to

playing traditional dreadnought or concert-sized steel-string acoustics, you'll need to get accustomed to the wider nylon-string spacing from its 2.04-inch (52mm) nut width, which is fairly common for classical guitars.

The guitar comes with Yamaha's TA technology, consisting of an actuator discreetly mounted inside the sound chamber that detects the string's vibrations and transfers those reflections throughout the body, resulting in spacious reverb and thick chorus depending on where you set the controls. Three slim thumb wheels adjust reverb (hall and room) and chorus, while the last one doubles as a line-out volume (for a PA or amp) and turns the TA on/off (all you have to do is push and hold for two seconds).

Finally, the TA is powered by two AA batteries concealed inside the endpin jack's compartment.

PERFORMANCE Without enabling the TA technology, the CG-TA is an all-around robust acoustic and, it's safe to say, an excellent introductory- to mid-level instrument for those who wish to take a deep dive learning classical guitar. I also dug its satiny, matte finish neck and relatively low action that lends to an overall enjoyable feel and smooth playing experience.

But the star of the show is its TransAcoustic capabilities, which instantly reveal the guitar's almost supernatural sound once activated. On just the hall setting, your ears are pleasingly stimulated as the cavernous reverberations uncannily swirl in the air around you, making your sensory perceptions do a double-take — surprised that it's all coming from the soundhole. The chorus is also really good, very lush and very Eighties in its doubled effect. However, I found myself hanging onto the natural-sounding reverb, which makes everything you play sound more polished. Is it novel? Definitely. A bit of a gimmick? You could certainly argue that. Is it a must-have? Man, it's hard to say no. Try as I might, it's a guitar I couldn't put down because its effected sounds are so immersive and just plain fun. No need to get to Carnegie Hall; Yamaha has delivered the acclaimed venue to your living room with this guitar.

CHEAT SHEET



- **STREET PRICE:** \$649.99
MANUFACTURER: Yamaha, usa.yamaha.com
- The CG-TA TransAcoustic has built-in reverb and chorus and uses an internal actuator that responds to string vibrations and processes them to generate natural-sounding reverb and rich chorus from inside the body.
- The TA technology is not limited to only the guitar itself; you can use the onboard chorus and reverb through a PA system and amplifier.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE**
The Yamaha CG-TA TransAcoustic is a next-level classical guitar with TA technology that makes its built-in reverb and chorus sound astonishingly textured and authentic.



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Mod Squad

ELECTRO-HARMONIX MOD 11 MODULATOR

By Chris Gill

▶ WHILE MOST PLAYERS can agree that modulation effect pedals can create some of the coolest sounds out there, many also feel that these devices fall into a “special effects” category for occasional, sparing use compared to frequently used “meat and potatoes” stomp boxes like overdrive, distortion, EQ, compression, delay and reverb. As a result, players on restricted gear budgets often find it difficult to justify spending upwards of \$150 for a decent flanger or phase shifter that they’d only use for a few seconds during a song, or spending even more for a multieffects unit that offers a full selection of mod FX but without the flexibility and character of single-effect stomp boxes. Even worse, if you wanted to go all out and buy a full assortment of modulation pedals like a flanger, phase shifter, tremolo, chorus, vibe, auto-wah filter and rotary, you could easily invest more than \$1,000 to get the whole kit and caboodle.

Recently we’ve seen a few really good pedals that offer a full selection of great-sounding modulation effects, but these pedals still can be pricey. With the introduction of the Mod 11 stomp box, Electro-Harmonix has broken through the price barrier in a big way with a pedal that provides 11 distinct modulation effects for the cost of a good, pro-quality flanger or phase shifter.

FEATURES Although the Mod 11 is the same ultra-compact size as Electro-Harmonix’s Nano series pedals, it packs an incredible variety of modulation effects: tremolo, harmonic tremolo, vibrato, Univibe, chorus, rotary, flanging, through zero flanging, phase shifting, modulated pitch shifting and modulated filter, to be exact, each selectable via the 11-position rotary switch.

A Mode switch greatly expands the power and versatility of each effect by providing additional selectable modes, including, for instance, chorus or vibrato modes for the Univibe, traditional, tri-chorus or bass chorus for the chorus, 4-, 6- or 8-stage phasing, low-pass, high-pass or band-pass for the filter and so on. Three knobs labeled Depth, Rate and Volume/Color perform different functions depending upon which modulation effect is selected.

The Mod 11 also features a “secondary” mode that provides even greater flexibility for dialing in effects by providing an additional set of parameters controlled by the Rate and Volume/Color knobs. These parameters include LFO shape, crossover (for harmonic tremolo), overdrive (Univibe and rotary), scales, envelope factor, mix and more. Tap tempo can be controlled either with the pedal’s built-in footswitch or via an optional momentary footswitch connected to the Tap In jack. Other features consist of

mono 1/4-inch input and output jacks and an included 9-volt power adapter.

PERFORMANCE The variety of effects the Mod 11 provides is impressive, especially for pedal’s price, but even more stunning is just how good each effect sounds in and of itself. The tremolo, chorus, flanging, phase shifting, rotary and modulated filter effects all sound as good as most single-effect pedals that provide these sounds and cost about the same as the Mod 11, and the pedal’s Univibe, through zero flanging, tri-chorus and modulated pitch shifting effects sound as good as effect units that typically cost twice as much or even more. The value that the Mod 11 offers is simply unparalleled.

Unlike more expensive competing multi-effect modulation pedals, Mod 11 is also extremely easy to use, requiring just a simple procedure to access the secondary mode where much of its deeper programming power lies. It only took seconds to nail some of the more complex modulation effects I wanted to replicate, including dazzling effects like glassy, three-dimensional tri-chorus that most expensive boutique stand-alone stomp boxes can’t touch. Few flangers can generate convincing tape-style through zero flanging, but Mod 11 does this extremely well for less than its competitors, and it throws in 10 really cool additional effects to boot.

CHEAT SHEET



STREET PRICE: \$151
MANUFACTURER:
Electro-Harmonix,
ehx.com

- Eleven sophisticated modulation effects, each with selectable modes to provide a comprehensive selection of sounds from tremolo and Univibe to flanging and chorus

- The secondary mode provides access to additional “hidden” parameters that allow users to program effects with impressive precision and flexibility.

● THE BOTTOM LINE

Whether you’re on a limited effects budget or want an incredible variety of truly awesome modulation effects, the Electro-Harmonix Mod 11 offers the industry’s best bang for the buck by far.



Buzz Bin



Line 6 Powercab 212 Plus

WHAT DO YOU get the amp modeler that has everything? Why, a companion stereo guitar cabinet with onboard speaker modeling, of course! Line 6 has upped the powered speaker cabinet ante by offering the Line 6 Powercab 212 Plus, a 500-watt active stereo guitar speaker system that's tailor-made for guitarists who rely on professional amp modelers and, more specifically, Line 6 Helix users.

The challenge for guitarists who use modelers has always been reproducing their preset tones live without coloration when running through traditional amplifiers, PAs and speaker systems. Here, the Powercab 212 Plus is not only transparent when it's set in "Flat mode," but delivers a full-range, flat response (FRFR) that preserves the tonal integrity of your sound. Its custom coaxial speakers with lightweight neodymium magnets and high-frequency compression drivers dish out the same dynamics and gutsy response of guitar speakers.

Powercab has wood construction with rear ports, foldout kickstands for angled placement, and is lightweight (47 pounds). It has all the essential connections and connectivity, a bright LCD display, illuminated volume and select knobs, and home and save buttons for on-the-fly tweaking.

One of its highlights is Speaker Modeling, which isn't the same as cabinet modeling or impulse responses (IRs), but something entirely new in a guitar cab. By simply bypassing the cab model in your modeler's preset, and switching to Speaker Modeling mode on the Powercab, you can access 12 onboard vintage and modern speaker models for more authentic response. You can even mix and match different combinations to create your own mixed speaker preset. Third-party IRs can also be saved and loaded into any of the Powercab's 128 presets.

A standout feature is the Powercab's Stereo Width setting, which allows you to increase or decrease the cabinet's stereo field. At its maximum, it presents an ultra-wide stereo experience that makes ping-pong delays and spacious reverbs sound endlessly vast. And if panning is part of your ensemble, the overall effect at full-tilt stereo is quite hypnotic. You also can set up Powercab in a dual-mono configuration to audition two separate amps (from your modeler) on either side of the Powercab, and add Speaker Modeling to each amp — like a Vox AC30 with a "Greenback" on one side and a Fender Deluxe with a "Blue Bell" on the other.

Powercab 212 Plus is a truly state-of-the-art and incredibly versatile speaker cabinet that enhances your favorite modeler's preset tones and so much more, all while delivering the sound and feel of a classic guitar cabinet. —Paul Riario

STREET PRICE: \$1,399.99

MANUFACTURER: Line 6, line6.com



Orange Crush

ORANGEWOOD HUDSON AND SAGE LIVE

By Chris Gill

THE MARKET FOR acoustic guitars under \$1,000 has become so crowded recently that some of the few ways a newcomer can truly stand out is by offering a product that is either less expensive or better than the competition. Orangewood Guitars has done even better than that by producing instruments that are both less expensive and better. Although the company has been around for only two years, they've already built an impressive buzz amongst the acoustic guitar community for the incredible value their instruments offer. Here we take a closer look at two of Orangewood's leading and most popular models on the market — the Hudson and the Sage Live.

FEATURES Both the Orangewood Hudson and Sage Live are built from quality tonewoods: a solid torrefied (a thermochemical treatment that reduces moisture, oils and resins) spruce top, solid mahogany back and sides, mahogany neck and ebony fretboard and bridge. The high-quality details don't end there either, as both also feature vintage-style Grover open-gear tuners with "butterbean" knobs, a Tusq nut and saddle, scalloped bracing, full body, neck and headstock binding, herringbone top purfling, rosette and back center strip and a thin natural satin finish. The neck dimensions of both models are also identical, providing a 25 1/2-inch scale length, 44mm nut width, slim C-shaped profile and 20 medium frets. The guitars are even strung with Ernie Ball

Earthwood Phosphor Bronze strings and include a high-quality hardshell case.

The main differences between the two models is that the Hudson is a dreadnought non-cutaway acoustic while the Sage Live is a grand auditorium cutaway model. The Sage Live also includes an L.R. Baggs Anthem pickup system with controls mounted inside the soundhole just above the low E string.

PERFORMANCE One huge advantage that Orangewood has over its competition is that the guitars are all inspected and set up by experienced technicians at the company's facility in Los Angeles. To be able to do this and keep costs low for the buyer, Orangewood only sells its instruments direct. The examples we received played perfectly right out of the box, needing nothing other than a quick tuning up.

While many acoustic guitars in the sub-\$1,000 category sound pretty good these days, Orangewood guitars truly stand out for their playability in addition to delivering impressively complex, responsive tone. The necks on the Hudson and Sage Live provide ample width for playing chords and single-note lines comfortably, and the action has that "just right" balance of height for tone while still providing incredibly fast and comfortable playability.



Orangewood Sage Live [above] and Hudson

CHEAT SHEET



STREET PRICES:

Hudson, \$645;
Sage Live, \$945

MANUFACTURER:

Orangewood Guitars,
orangewoodguitars.com

- Both models have a torrefied solid spruce top that is thermo-treated to remove moisture, oils and resins to duplicate the tone of a vintage instrument.

- Numerous high-quality details abound, including herringbone purfling, Grover open-gear tuners, scalloped bracing and an L.R. Baggs Anthem pickup system (Sage Live only).

THE BOTTOM LINE

Orangewood's Hudson and Sage Live models deliver the tone, performance, playability and features of high-end acoustic models at affordable prices that are appealing to beginners and pros alike.

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I GOT RHYTHM, PART 1

Basic note durations

WITH THIS LESSON, I'd like to move on from discussing harmony and chord progressions for the time being and focus on a brand-new topic, the equally important musical element of *rhythm*.

Having taught countless private students over the years, I've found that, among many unschooled and do-it-yourself "home-schooled" guitarists, rhythm is an area commonly lacking in understanding and training, and this represents a potential developmental weakness that can seriously hinder one's ability not only to "solo in time," but on a more basic level, communicate and function effectively in a band situation, or read a transcription without having to rely on listening to the recording to figure out the phrasing. In any case, it is very beneficial to be able to conceptualize and internalize rhythmic structures and patterns in your head, or mind's ear, and to be able to do so while playing your instrument and tapping your foot in an even, steady pattern, with the foot taps occurring either on every beat, every other beat or every third beat, depending on the song's tempo and groove.

The first step in acquiring these skills is to learn how to verbally count rhythms, and a great way to do that is to learn how to read them on paper or a computer screen. For the sake of leaving no one behind, let's start by covering the basic principles of rhythm and rhythmic notation. Some of you may already be familiar with this foundational material, which, by the way, is all based on elementary-school arithmetic and fractions, so please bear with me and consider it a worthwhile review.

Most popular music is conceived in what's called "4/4 meter," also known as "4/4 time," as indicated in sheet music and *Guitar World's* rhythmic tab notation by the visual symbol, or *time signature*, $\frac{4}{4}$ ("four four"), appearing at the beginning of a piece of music. The top number, or "numerator" of the fraction, if you will, tells you how many beats there are in each measure, or bar, of music, in this case, four. So you would basically count "one, two, three, four, one, two, three, four," etc., with a slight emphasis, or accent, on "one," what's known as the *downbeat* of the measure.

FIG. 1

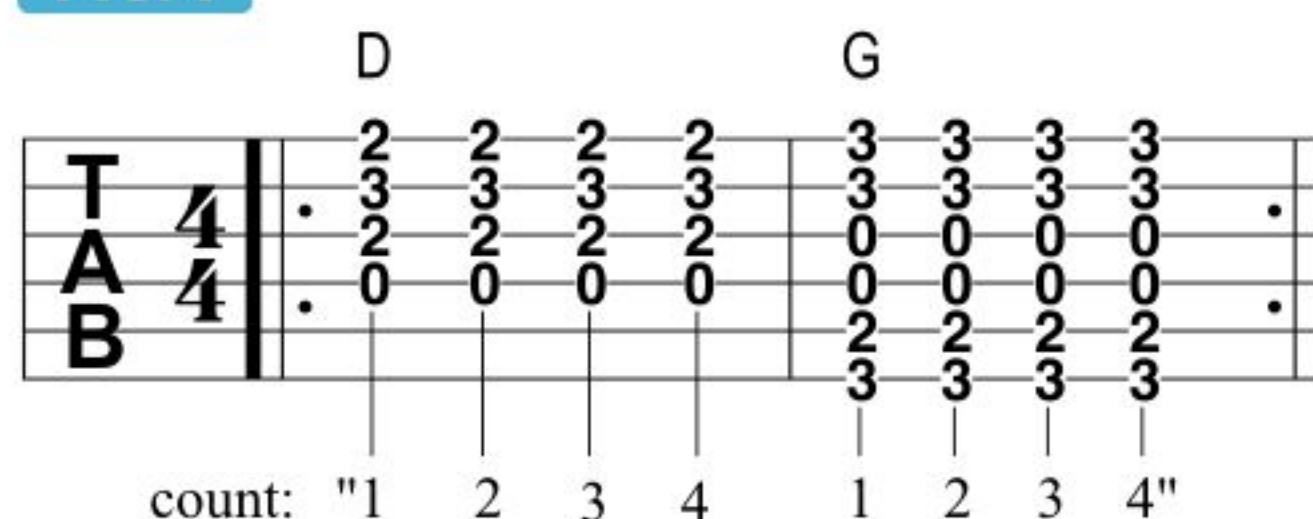


FIG. 2

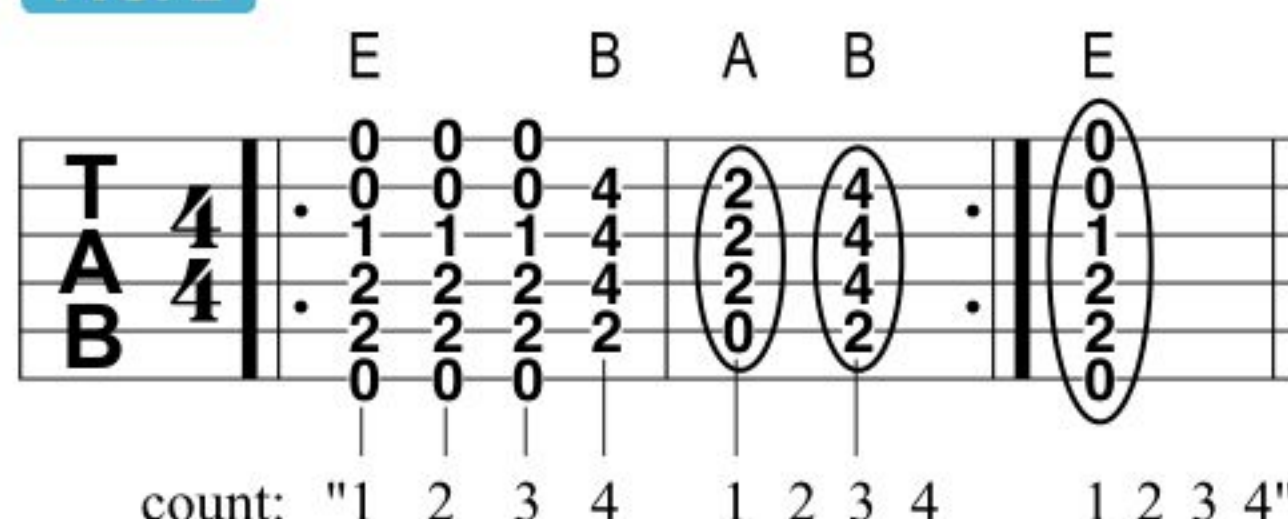


FIG. 3

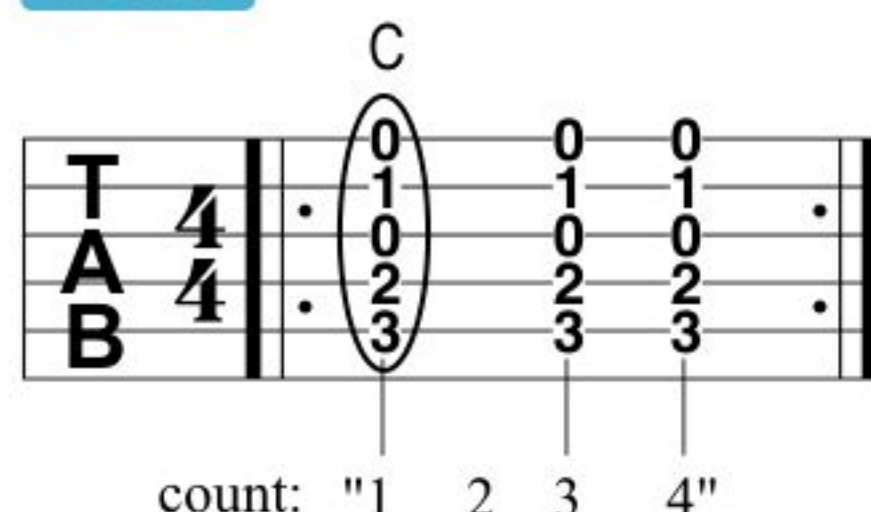


FIG. 4

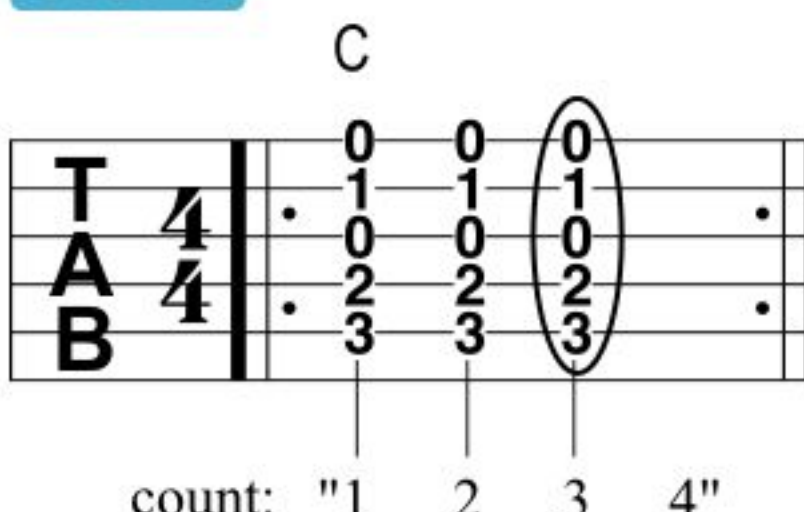
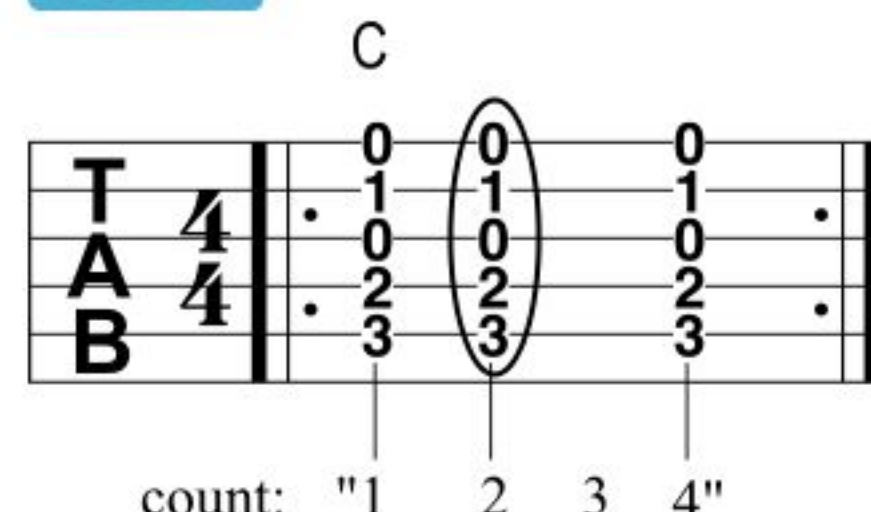


FIG. 5



The bottom number, or "denominator," of the time signature indicates what kind of rhythmic value is serving as the foundational beat, around which everything else is calibrated. The number "4" signifies that a *quarter note* receives one beat. So, in $\frac{4}{4}$ meter, we have four quarter-note beats in each bar of music (see **FIGURE 1**).

A quarter note is indicated in rhythmic tab by a straight vertical line appearing directly below a tab number, or stack of tab numbers if it's a chord. In standard sheet music, the vertical stem would be either below or above a solid (darkened) notehead, depending on its location in the staff.

As you know, $\frac{4}{4} = \frac{2}{2} = 1$. In $\frac{4}{4}$ meter, these values all equal one complete bar of music, rhythmically. So you can have four quarter notes, each held for one beat, two half notes, each held for two beats (played on "one" and "three") or one whole note (played on "one" and held for the full duration of the bar; see **FIGURE 2**).

In rhythmic tab, a tab number or stack of tab numbers enclosed in a circle or oval, with a vertical stem below it, indicates a half-note. A circled number or stack of numbers with no stem signifies a whole-note. In standard notation, a hollow notehead is used instead of a tab number.

Getting back to fractions, $\frac{2}{4} = \frac{1}{2}$. Thus, two quarter notes equal one half note.

Likewise, two half notes equal one whole note ($\frac{2}{2} = \frac{1}{1}$, or simply 1). To make a food analogy (my favorite kind!), picture a loaf of bread, fresh from the oven. Unsliced, it represents one bar of music in $\frac{4}{4}$ time and the duration of a whole note. If you slice the loaf in half (like cell division), that represents two half notes. Slice each of those halves in half, and you will then have four quarters, or quarter notes. You could, of course, continue cutting the loaf many different ways and into slices of varying thickness, and dividing a bar of music into many smaller rhythmic values of varying duration. That is something we will explore in upcoming lessons.

Finally, in a bar of $\frac{4}{4}$ meter, you can have several possible combinations of quarter notes and/or half notes that add up to four beats, as you cannot have a shortage or surplus of rhythmic values within a measure — they must always equal "1," or one whole note, per the $\frac{4}{4}$ time signature.

Other possible permutations are:

- A half note followed by two quarters ($\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{4} = 1$; see **FIGURE 3**),
- Two quarter notes followed by a half note ($\frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{2} = 1$; see **FIGURE 4**), and
- Quarter, half, quarter ($\frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} = 1$; see **FIGURE 5**).

In the next lesson, we'll look at *dotted rhythms*, *ties* and *rests*.

Senior Music Editor "Downtown" Jimmy Brown is an experienced, working musician, performer and private teacher in the greater NYC area whose personal and professional mission is to entertain, enlighten and inspire people with his guitar playing.

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the Stauer Guitar Watch



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"It keeps great time and
has stood up to band
practice very well!"
— E. FROM PHILADELPHIA, PA



"I was absolutely
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As a kid, I stood hypnotized in front of the guitar shop window. I stared at the Gibsons, Fenders, Rickenbackers and Les Pauls, lined up like lacquered mahogany and maple trophies. With their smooth curves, each one could produce hot licks, reverb and a wailing solo. The six string guitar is the heart of rock and roll. I'm proud to say that today I feel the same way about the new Stauer *Guitar Watch*.

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

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UP AROUND THE BENDS

More on unusual string-bending techniques

AS MENTIONED IN the previous column, string bending is a highly expressive technique that creates a portamento sound, which is defined as “a pitch sliding seamlessly from one note to another.” On a fretless instrument, such as a violin, a portamento can be produced by sliding one’s finger along the length of the string. On guitar, one can achieve a similar effect by bending a string. In both instances, the sound of moving seamlessly between notes emulates that of the human voice and offers the player a great range of emotional expression.

I’d now like to show you some cool ways to combine string bending with the use of open strings, with examples presented in the key of F#. Though not among the most commonly used keys in blues and rock, many guitarists have chosen it for its open-string benefits, such as Jimi Hendrix (“Foxy Lady,” “In From the Storm,” “Highway Chile”), Otis Rush (“All Your Love [I Miss Lovin’]”), Jeff Beck (“Let Me Love You”) and Frank Zappa (“San Ber’dino” [A major/F# minor]).

FIGURE 1 illustrates the F# minor pentatonic scale (F#, A, B, C#, E) played in 2nd position using all fretted notes. In the lower octave, the minor third, A, can be sounded with the open 5th string, and in the higher octave, the fourth, B, and the flatted 7th, E, can be sounded with the open 2nd and 1st strings, respectively, as shown in **FIGURE 2**.

The open strings can be utilized in the execution of fast double pull-offs and hammer-ons and can encourage unusual rhythmic phrasing: in **FIGURES 3** and **4**, notes are pulled-off to four different open strings — the low E, A, B and high E. The phrase in **FIGURE 3** ends with a trill between the open low E and the F# root note at the 2nd fret. In **FIGURE 5**, quick hammer/pulls are performed on the low E string, along with string bending and vibrato.

Now let’s apply these open-string-based phrases, along with some unusual bending techniques, to a 12-bar blues progression. **FIGURE 6** offers an improvised solo along the lines of Jeff Beck’s iconic lead in “Let Me Love You,” similarly played in the key of F#. In bar 1, the 4th, B, is bent up two whole

FIG. 1

F# minor pentatonic scale, 2nd position

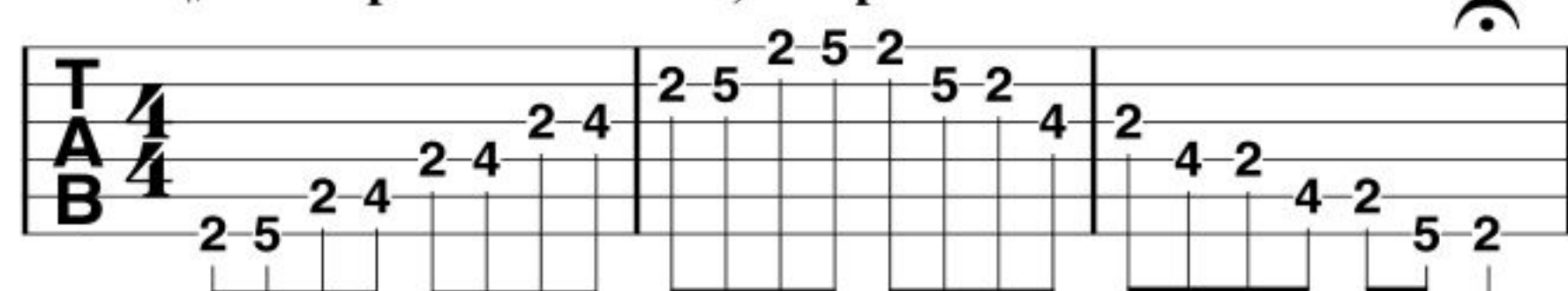


FIG. 2

F# minor pentatonic w/open strings

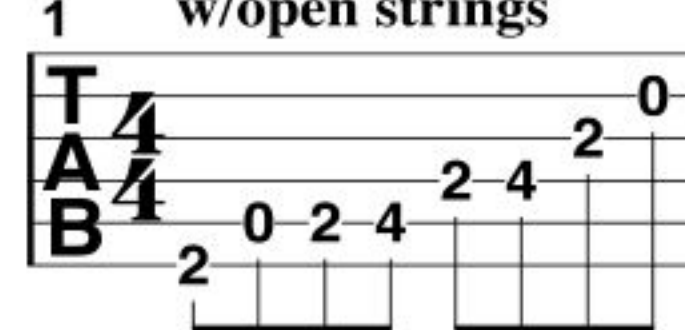


FIG. 3

F#7

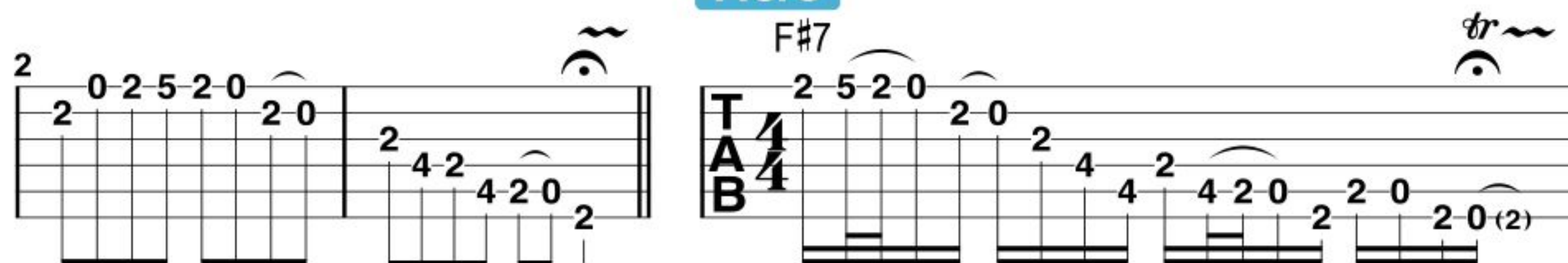


FIG. 4

F#7

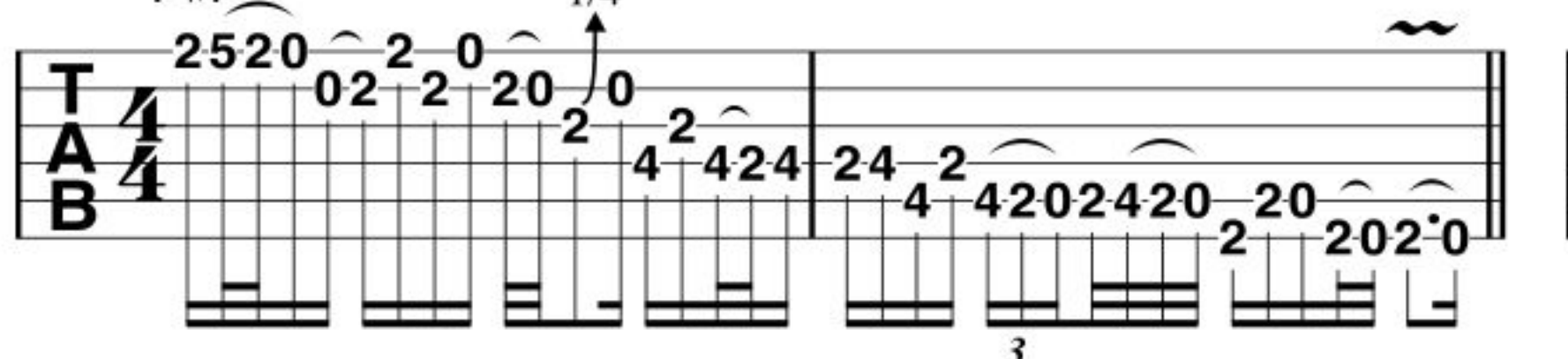


FIG. 5

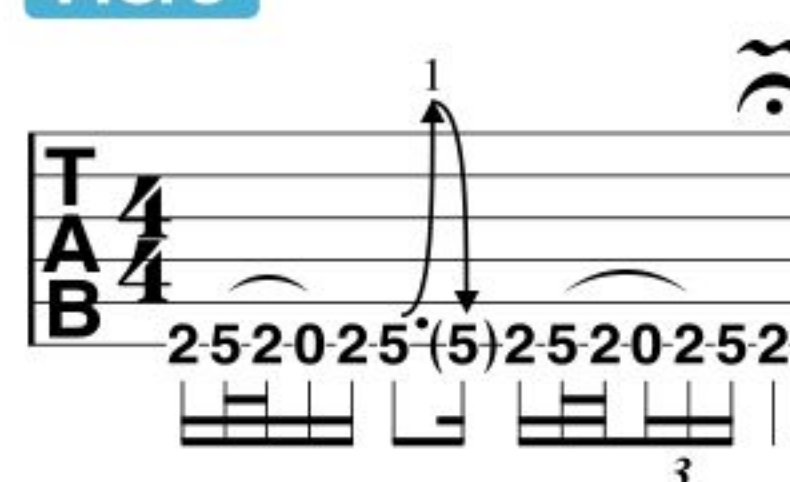
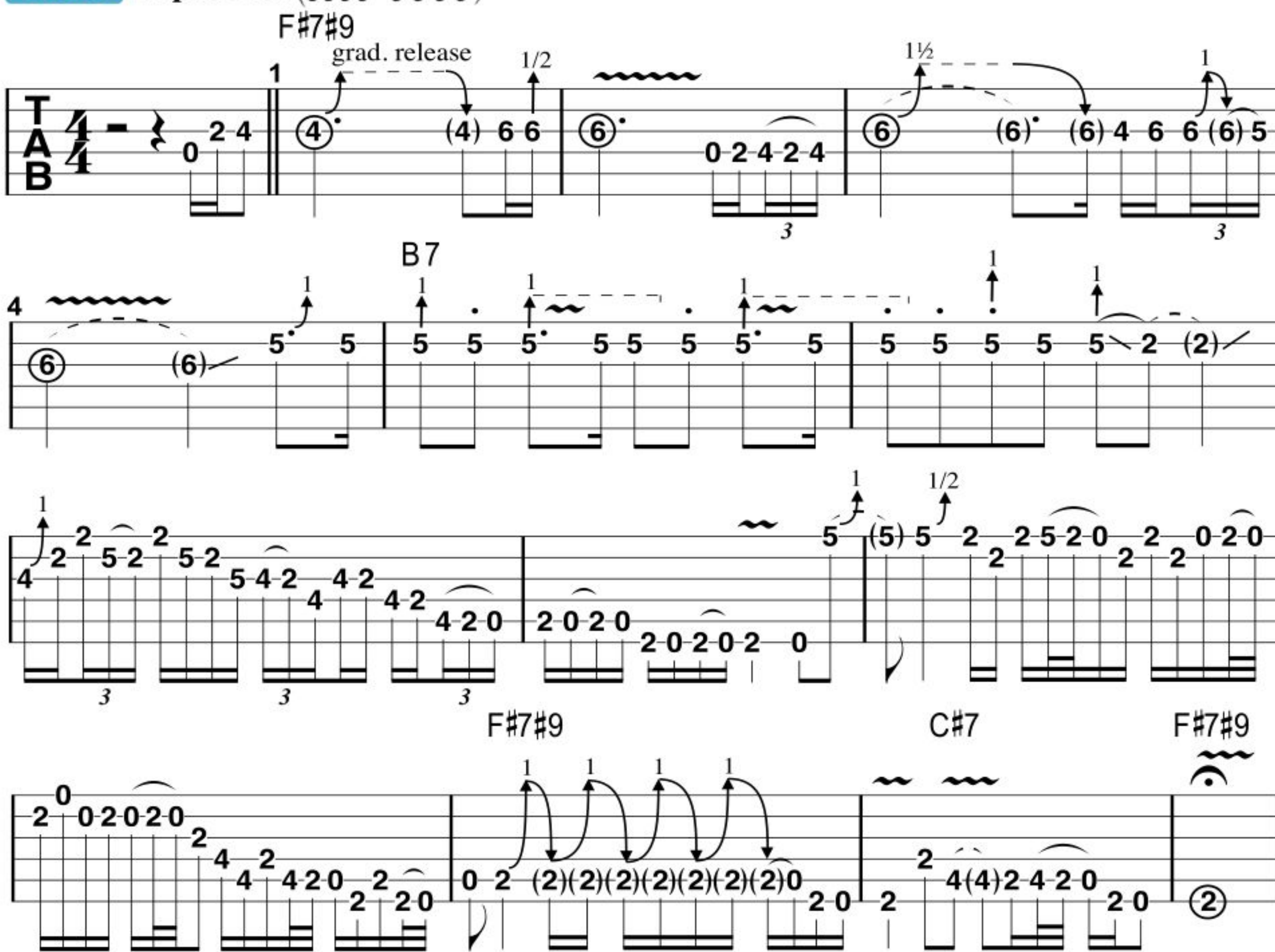


FIG. 6 Triplet Feel (♩ = 8/8)



steps to the 6th, D#. A two-step bend at the 4th fret is best performed with at least two fingers. At the end of bar 2, the inclusion of the flatted 6th, via the open D string, is followed by a one-and-one-half-step bend from the 5th, C#, up to E, the flatted 7th.

Bars 5 and 6 feature a series of pre-bends (also known as “ghost bends”) from E up

to F#, and bars 7-10 are comprised of fast phrases built from steady 16th notes combined with some 16th-note triplets and 32nd notes, with an abundant use of open strings.

Now that you have a grasp of this approach, try employing it wherever you have available open-string notes that work well with whatever key you’re in.

Guitar World Associate Editor Andy Aledort is recognized worldwide for his vast contributions to guitar instruction, via his many best-selling instructional DVDs, transcription books and online lessons.

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DWEEZIL RIPPED MY FLESH

by Dweezil Zappa



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LET IT SLIDE

Using finger slides to create expressive, sitar-like sounds

LAST MONTH, WE checked out some unusual ways to phrase melodic patterns, by re-envisioning notes on different string groups, thus changing their sound and articulation. We looked at examples of playing a melody on a single string with finger slides, as well as lines that incorporate half-step bends intended to emulate the sound of sliding up to or down from a note. The intended effect is to make your guitar sound “drunk.”

Over the years, I’ve become obsessed with getting the widest variety of possible sounds using finger slides, by either emulating the sound of a slide guitar or venturing toward the more Eastern sound of a sitar, with its fast, jerky slides between notes. On a sitar, the strings are very light and sit above frets that are not affixed to the fingerboard, so one can easily bend a note very widely by simply pushing down the string. Not so on the guitar, so I instead use quick finger slides to achieve a similar effect.

In **FIGURE 1**, I play a scale sometimes referred to as A dominant pentatonic over an open A-string drone. This scale is almost the same as the more familiar A minor pentatonic scale (A, C, D, E, G), the difference being that the major third, C#, is substituted for the minor third, C. I begin by simply ascending and descending the scale then conclude by sliding freely up and down the G string, in order to create an Eastern-style melody. I’m using a Sustainiac pickup in this example, à la an E-Bow (a magnetic device that can be held above the string), which creates a magnetic loop that keeps the string ringing without having to pick it repeatedly.

In **FIGURE 2**, I begin by ascending in a similar manner, but now I add quick slides between pairs of notes, such as E and G in bars 1 and 2, and G and A in bar 3. These quickly repeated slides serve to emulate the sitar sound I am referring to.

Another cool thing to do is to apply syncopated rhythms to slides, as shown in **FIGURE 3**: I begin with repeated 16th-note-triplet-based slides between G and A, followed by phrases articulated with slides in a manner similar to **FIGURES 1** and **2**.

Another great twist is to broaden the harmony to a more exotic scale, such as Phrygian-dominant, as shown in **FIGURE 4**.

FIG. 1

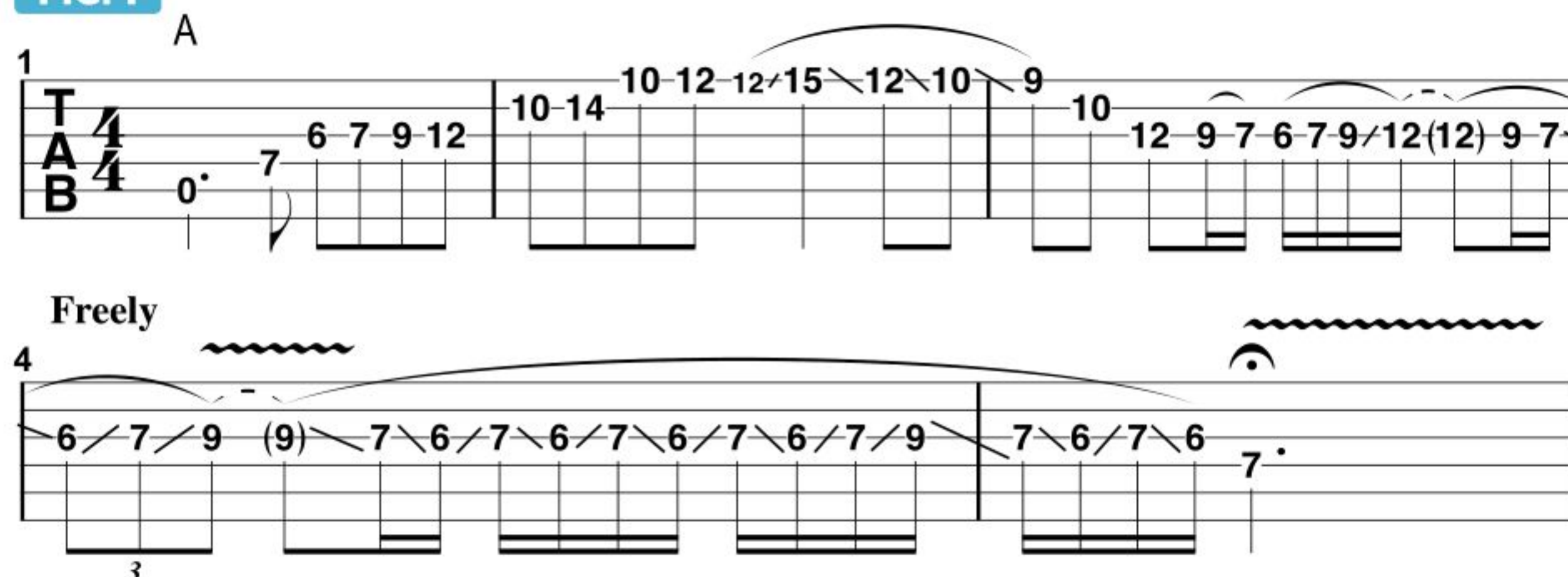


FIG. 2

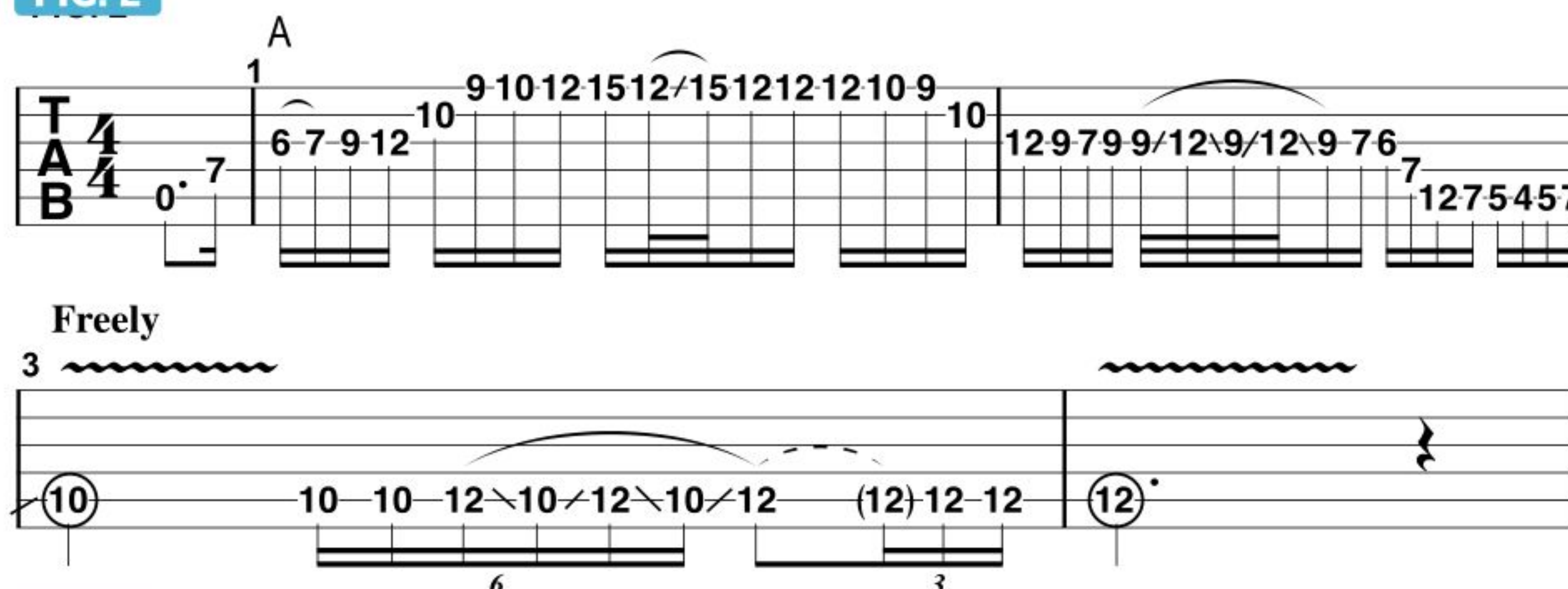


FIG. 3

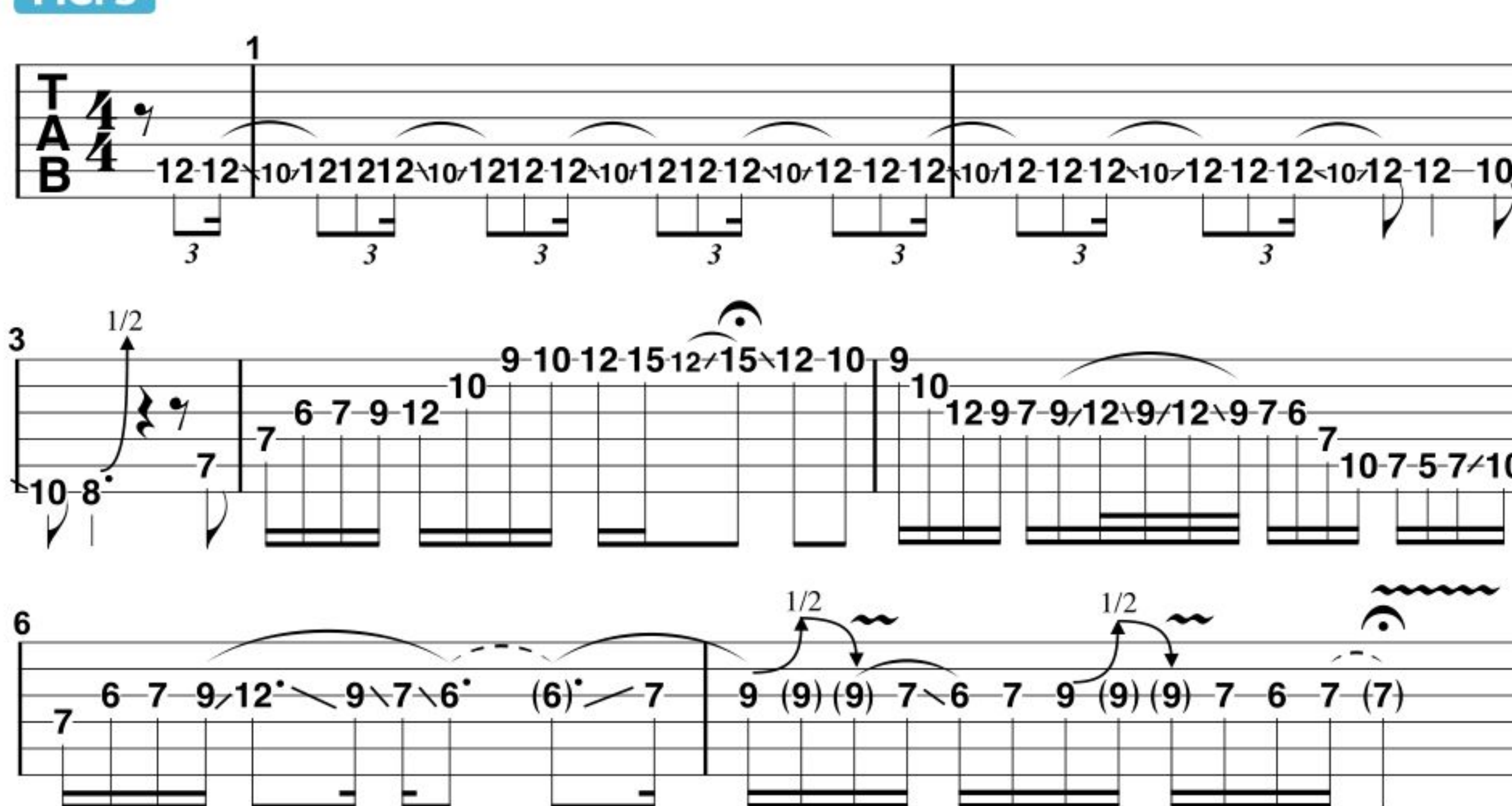
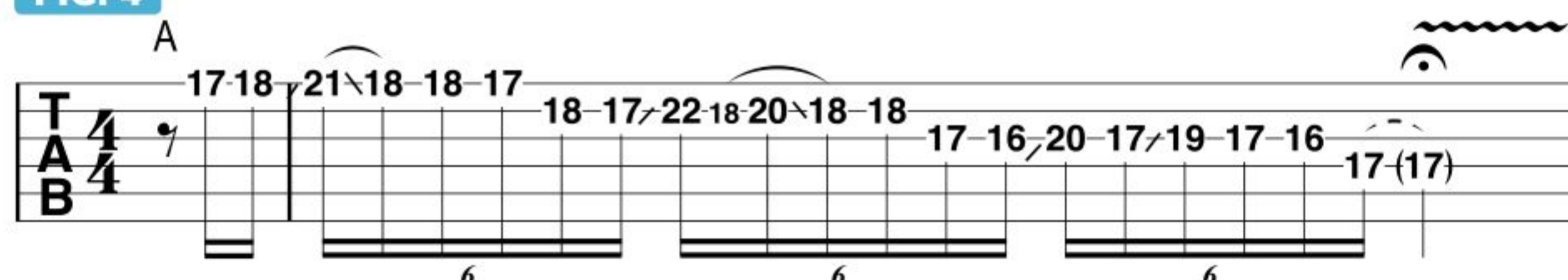


FIG. 4

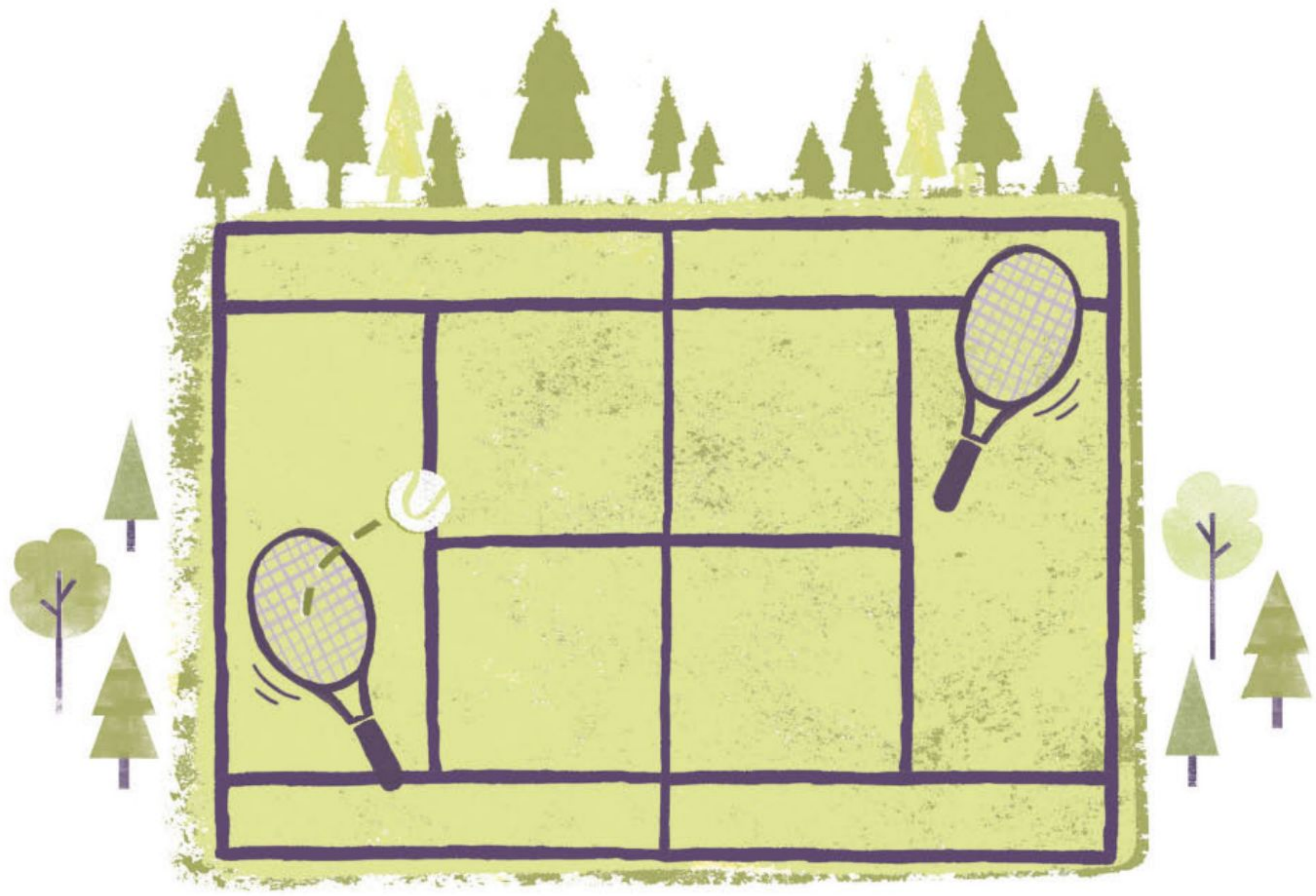


The A Phrygian mode is spelled A, B $\flat$, C, D, E, F, G (the same notes of the F major scale). Just as we had done with A dominant pentatonic, we get A Phrygian-dominant

by replacing the note C, with C#. The quick slides between pairs of notes in this example, phrased as sextuplets, bring us closer to an Eastern, sitar-like melody.

Dweezil Zappa is a brilliant guitarist and son of the legendary Frank Zappa. For the last 12 years he has toured the world performing his father's music with Zappa Plays Zappa and other ensembles. His latest album is *Confessions of a Deprived Youth* (Deep Fried Youth).

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WREMBEL ON

by Stéphane Wrembel



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SHAPES OF THINGS, PART 2

A deeper look at arpeggiating triads

LAST MONTH, I introduced the concept of mapping out a series of arpeggiated triad shapes on the fretboard that basically outline a 12-bar blues progression in the key of G minor. I find studying these forms very beneficial, as they serve as essential tools for playing the guitar. Whether one is performing the melody to a song or embarking on an improvised solo, the ingredients — chordal arpeggios — are the same. These shapes and patterns should be studied thoroughly and included in one's daily practice routine.

As I stated previously, the art of improvisation requires instinctual response, and it's important to examine simple material and common progressions like this and to be able to draw upon this material at a moment's notice. Once you have a firm grasp of how a melody will fit the harmony (chords), you will be able to freely improvise within the progression.

The chordal arpeggios presented here are devised from three basic triadic (three-note) voicings, with the lowest note doubled an octave higher: the tonic (the root note is placed as the lowest note), the first inversion (the major or minor third is the lowest note) and the second inversion (the fifth is the lowest note). In last month's lesson, we examined the arpeggios ascending only (low to high), so this time we'll work through descending patterns (high to low) for Gm, Cm and D, and alternate between ascending to descending.

FIGURE 1 illustrates the Gm, Cm and D arpeggios played from the highest note to the lowest, starting from the tonic position of Gm and moving up to first and second inversions, then back down. This approach is then applied to Cm and D. I use all downstrokes when picking the individual notes here, although you should also try using alternate picking, and all upstrokes too. If you're familiar with rest-stroke picking, feel free to include that, as well.

In **FIGURE 2**, we alternate between ascending and descending arpeggio shapes. I begin by moving from the lowest to the highest note in the tonic position, then from the highest note to the lowest for first inversion, then lowest to the highest for second inversion; this is repeated on the

FIG. 1 Triplet Feel (♩ = ♩♩♩)

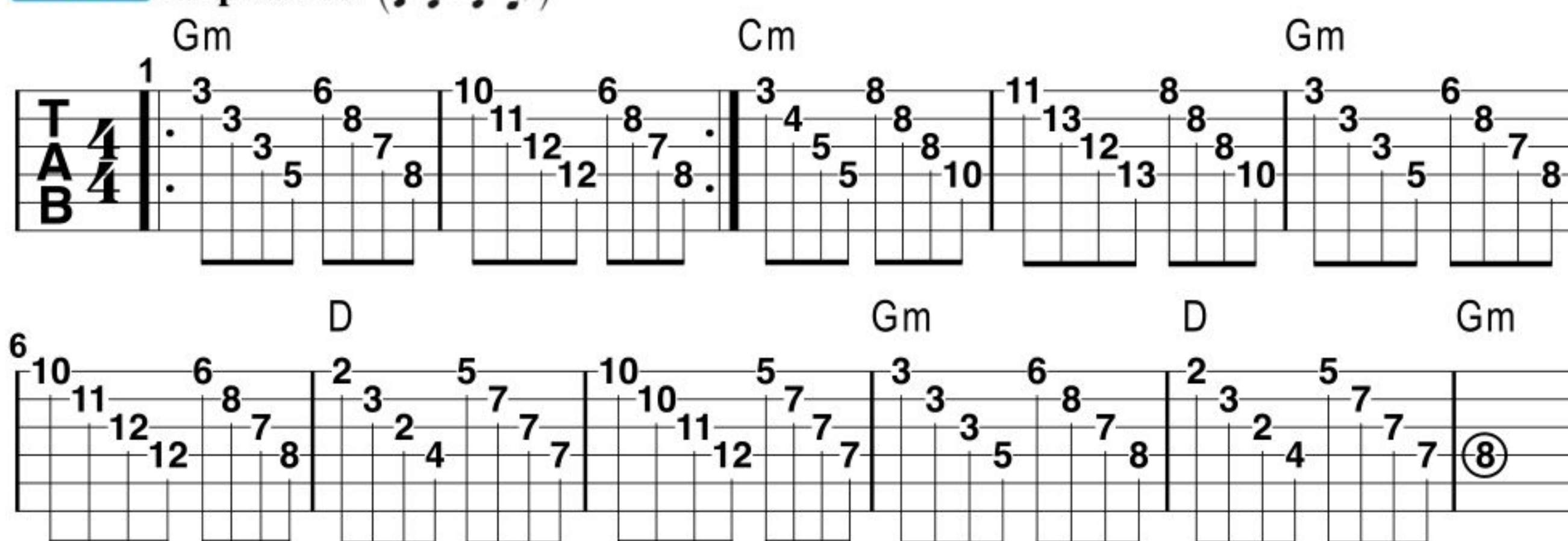


FIG. 2

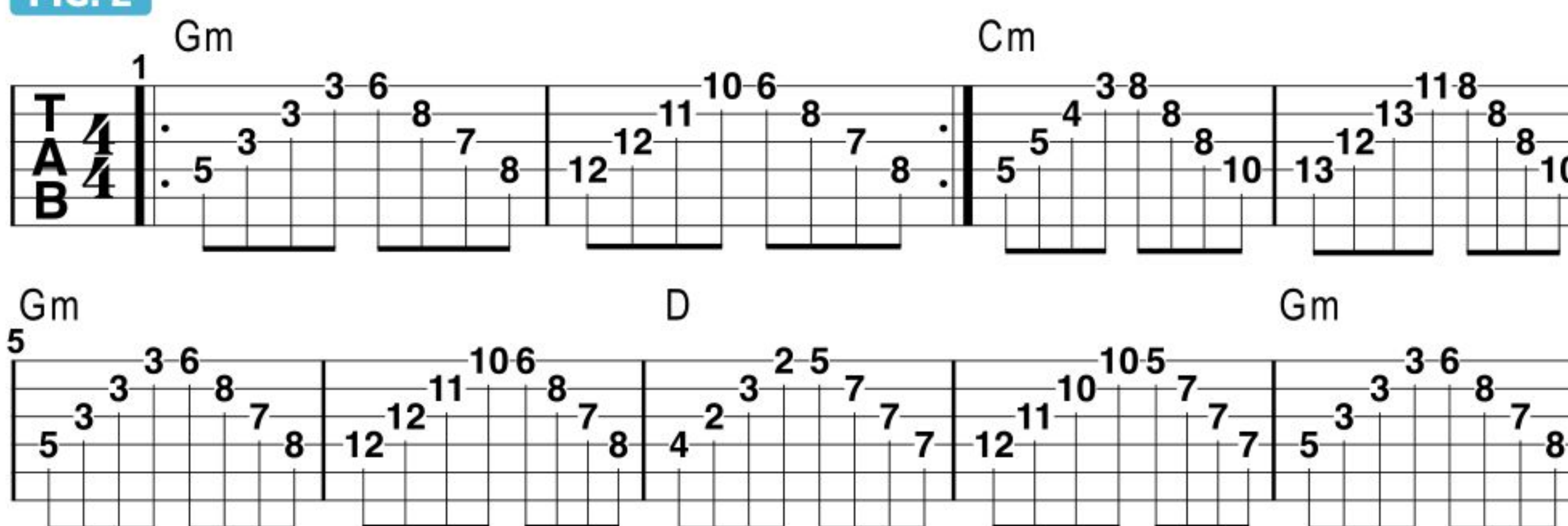
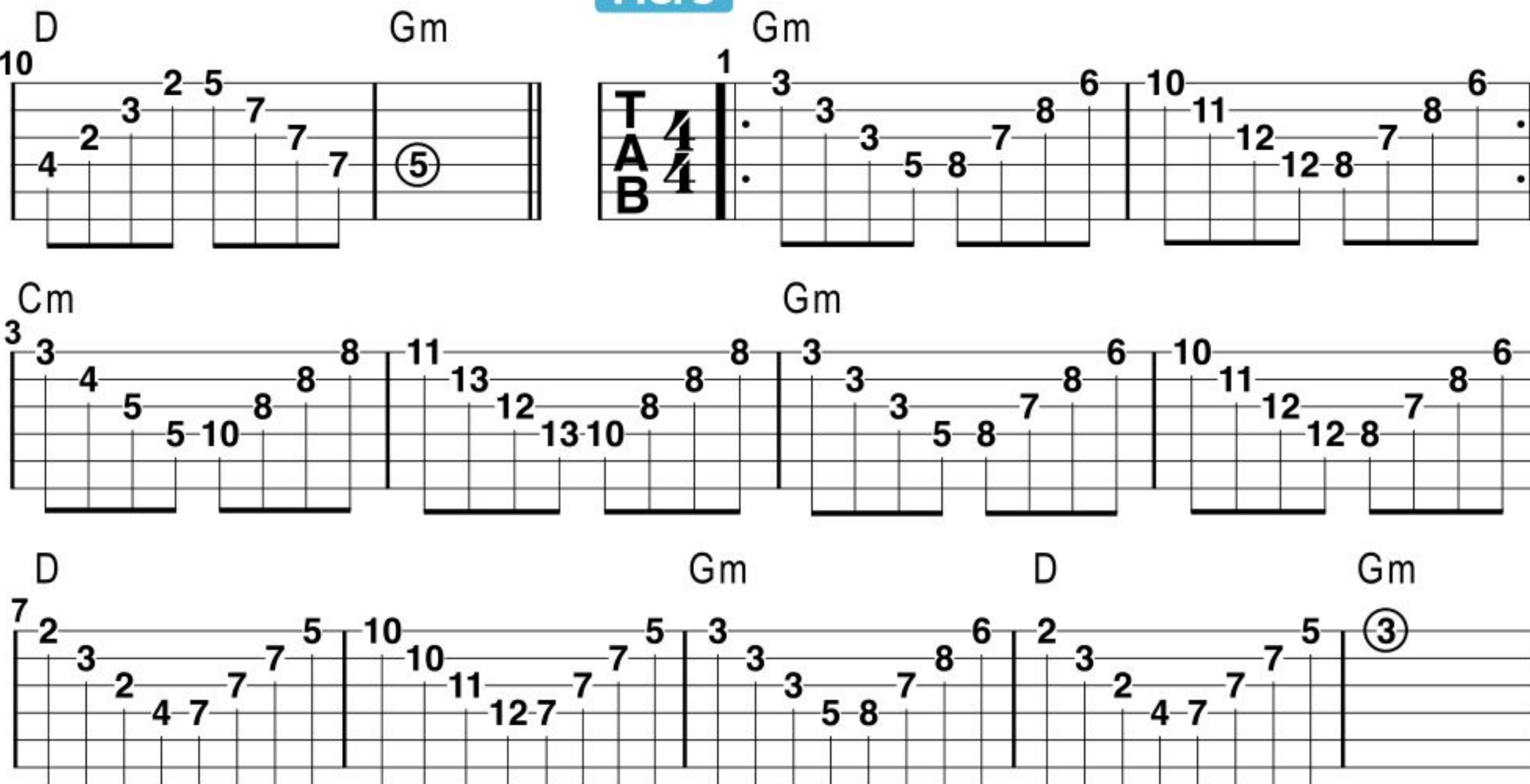


FIG. 3



way back down. For this exercise, I use a combination of all downstrokes, alternate picking and rest-stroke picking.

In **FIGURE 3**, I simply reverse the order of each arpeggio, starting with a descending form for the tonic position, followed by the ascending form for first inversion. Once again, I use a combo of all downstrokes, alternate picking and rest-stroke picking.

To me, the hardest thing to achieve on guitar is to play *legato*, which means evenly

and with consistent articulation, allowing each note to ring as long as possible. But one should also practice the patterns playing each note in the arpeggios *staccato* (each note short and detached), *fortissimo* (very loud) and *pianissimo* (very quiet).

It's important to bring different dynamics to these exercises, so that you will ultimately attain expert control of your technique and equally expert expression with your pick hand.

Stéphane Wrembel is a world-renowned U.S.-based French guitarist whose work has appeared in several soundtracks, including Woody Allen's *Midnight in Paris*. He hosts the annual Django A Gogo festival and releases a new *Django Experiment* album every January.

NOTATION GUIDE

“tablature clef”
time signature
whole note (held for four beats)
N.C.(E)
half notes (held for two beats each)
D A
quarter notes (held for one beat each)
E
let ring

*string

* String 1 is the thinnest string; 6 is the thickest.
Numbers on the lines indicate frets (0 = open string).

eighth notes
C
G/B
dotted half note (held for three beats)
A
quarter rest

count: “1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 1 2 3 4”

eighth rest eighth note 16th notes 16th rest dotted quarter note half rest

count: “1 and 2 ee and uh 3 ee and uh 4 and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and uh 1 2 3 4”

dotted quarter note G
*tied rhythms
hammer-on
legato slide
pull-off
tie

count: “1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 1 ee and 2 ee and 3 4”

* Don't rearticulate notes in parentheses.

bend and release in time (whole-step bend)
vibrato
grace-note bend
grace-note slide
*pre-bend and release (“reverse bend”)

count: “1 and 2 and 3 4” “1 2 3 and 4 and 1 2 3 4” *Bend string before picking.

*natural harmonics
N.H.
*pinch harmonic (note fretted)
P.H.
palm muting (picking hand)
E5 P.M.
fret-hand muting
G5

*Lightly touch string directly over fret, then pick.
*Harmonic sounded by picking hand.
* Loosen grip on strings so that they no longer touch the fretboard.

staccato (short) notes
trill (quick succession of hammer-ons and pull-offs)
tremolo picking
sweep picking (“raking”)
* = downstroke, V = upstroke

* = downstroke, V = upstroke

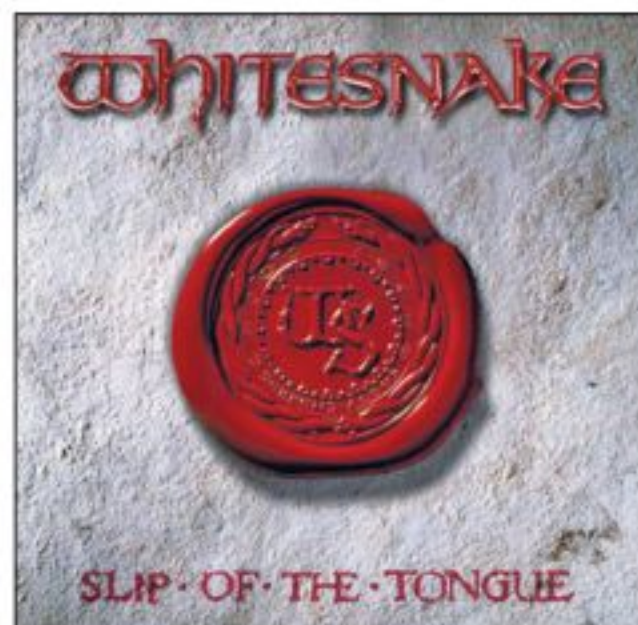
PERFORMANCE NOTES

...HOW TO PLAY THIS MONTH'S SONGS...



"FOOL FOR YOUR LOVING"

Whitesnake



ORIGINALLY RECORDED BY Whitesnake back in 1979 with guitarist Micky Moody, this 1989 re-recording of "Fool for Your Loving" features the

guitar performance and arranging of Steve Vai, who injected his signature style of brilliantly quirky, pyrotechnic licks and tastefully layered rhythm and lead parts to help update the song with a more polished and flashy hard-rock guitar sound.

Due to the highly technical nature of Vai's playing, when recreating his licks throughout the song, it's crucial that you pay attention to all the articulation markings appearing in the tablature. For example, in the second bar of the guitar solo (see bar 61), the horizontal dotted line following the bend arrow for the whole-step bend ("1") during beat two indicates that Vai holds the bend while performing a pick-hand tap at the 19th fret during the following beat. (The tap is indicated by the capital letter "T" appearing above the tablature.) Vai taps with his middle finger and keeps it on the string as he releases the bend with his fret hand, which he then quickly moves up the neck, to pre-position his index finger to "catch" the pull-off to the C note at the 17th fret.

The key to conquering the seemingly unending flurry of 64th-notes heard throughout bars 70 and 71 is to take it slow and consume it in "bite-size" chunks, breaking up this Vai master lick into smaller and more-easily digestible pieces. One good approach would be to start by only tackling the notes confined to the first string on beat one of bar 70. Once you've studied the tablature, memorize the notes (so that you don't have to keep looking at the page and away from your guitar) and practice them over and over until you can play this small section of the lick at tempo.

Mastering this short phrase will give you the confidence to move on to the next beat and eventually make your way through the entire run, piece by piece.

—JEFF PERRIN



"SWEET CHILD O' MINE"

Guns N' Roses



THIS CLASSIC SONG'S well-crafted intro melody is most easily performed using economy picking, a technique whereby the choice of pick strokes is deter-

mined by the minimal movement principle. Rather than using strict alternate picking (down - up - down - up, etc.), try the following sequence for bar 1: down - up - up - down - up - down - up - up. You'll probably find that the eight-note pattern is easier to pick and feels smoother this way. Use this same picking sequence for bars 1-8, as well as *Fill 1* and bars 41-46 (the first six bars of the chorus). And when playing these melodic figures, let go of each note with your fretting hand before picking the next one, so that the notes are separated and don't ring together.

During the song's verse and first guitar solo sections, specifically bars 33-39 and 79-82, guitarist Izzy Stradlin' arpeggiates open chords, picking each note individually and letting the notes ring together. Experiment with various picking patterns for these passages, and go with whatever sequence of downstrokes and upstrokes feels most natural to you.

Slash begins his main solo (see section F) with soulful licks based mostly on the E harmonic minor scale (E, F#, G, A, B, C, D#), upon which the repeating chord progression Em - C - B7 - Am is based. Notice the guitarist's lyrical use of half-step bends here. For his second solo (see section G), Slash takes a more bluesy approach, ripping out E minor pentatonic (E, G, A, B, D) licks in the finger-friendly 12th-position box pattern. Also noteworthy here and throughout is the guitarist's artistic application of his wah-wah pedal, which he uses to emphasize screaming bends and fret-hand-muted, percussive strums.

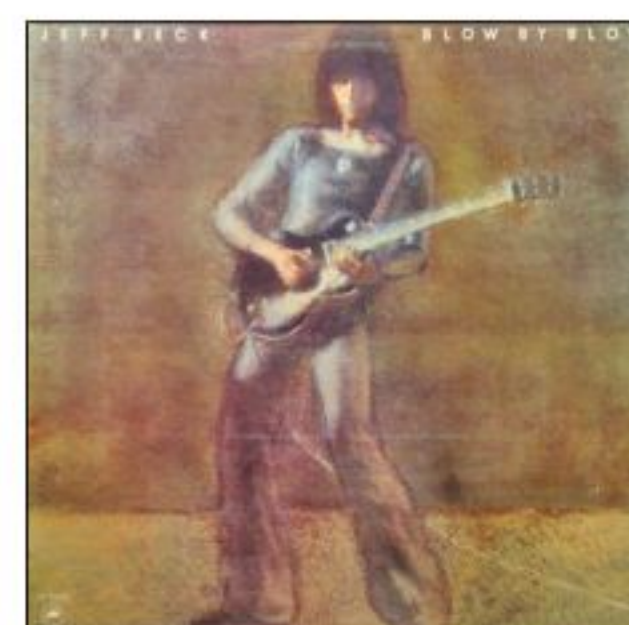
The slight, whammy-like pitch dip in bar 146 is produced by bending the guitar's neck slightly forward at the tip of the headstock. Be very careful doing this, applying too much pressure could cause your neck to crack!

—JIMMY BROWN



"CAUSE WE'VE ENDED AS LOVERS"

Jeff Beck



JEFF BECK'S BRILLIANTLY lyrical instrumental interpretation of this beautiful Stevie Wonder song is one of the finest and most musical displays of the art

of string bending ever recorded. The guitarist performed the piece on a Fender Telecaster equipped with humbucking pickups and liberally employed precisely intonated bends in conjunction with a nuanced pick-hand touch and use of the guitar's volume control to make the instrument sing, weep and breathe with varying intensity.

In bars 2-4, Beck masterfully employs whole-step "pre-bends" (also known as "ghost bends") from C to D, bending the string before picking it, so that the target pitch of the bend, D, is the first note sounded. This move takes skill and experience to perform well, as your bending fingers — use your ring finger at the 8th fret on the high E string, supported one fret below by the middle finger — have to rely on muscle memory, as guided by your auditory memory, to know exactly how much "push pressure" to apply to the string in order to bend the note up precisely a whole step. In bar 3, Beck performs a slick "compound bend," for which he picks the pre-bent D note (bent from C), performs a volume swell, then proceeds to bend the note up an additional half step, to Eb, before releasing it fully to C.

The most technically challenging lick to perform in this piece is the fast, "crammed" chromatic run in bar 59, for which Beck "tumbles" down the G string in a cascading "up-one fret, down-two" pattern, using a series of precisely articulated hammer/pulls, performed in perfect coordination and alternation with descending finger slides, for which only the notes that are slid down to from one fret above are picked. Use a light fret-hand touch here and don't grip the string any more tightly than is necessary to achieve a clear tone, as doing that will only create undue friction, making it needlessly more difficult to shift your hand down

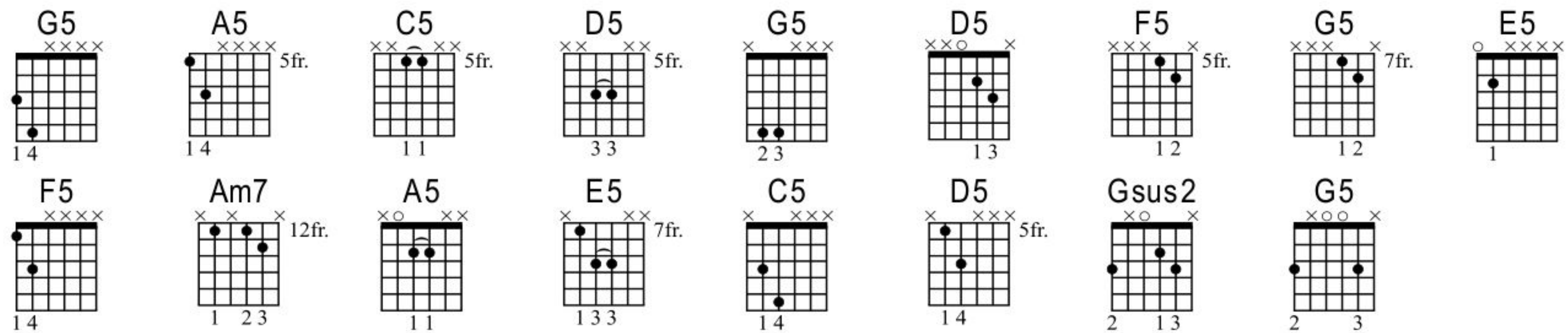
—JIMMY BROWN

"FOOL FOR YOUR LOVING"

Whitesnake

As heard on **SLIP OF THE TONGUE**

Words and Music by DAVID COVERDALE, BERNIE MARSDEN and MICKY MOODY • Transcribed by JEFF PERRIN



A Intro (0:00) (0:05)
Moderately Fast ♩ = 126

(Am9) G5 A5 C5 D5 C5

*Gtr. 3 (elec. w/dist.)
vibrato w/bar

Yeah
D5

yeah
G5 A5 C5 D5 C5

Hmm
G5

1

TAB 4/4

(13) (12) (13) 12 14 14 13 (14) 14-14-12 12 12 7 9

*Gtr. 4 (elect. w/dist.)

P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M.

TAB 4/4

(17) (17) (16) (14) 5 7 5 (5) 5 5 7 (7) 5 5 7 5 (5) 5 5 X X 5 (5) 0 5

Gtrs. 1 and 2 (elec. w/dist.) (doubled throughout)

Bass

TAB 4/4

3 5 5 5 3 5 2 3 2 3 5 (5) 5 0 3 5 5 5 3 5 2 3 2 5 3 0 3 5 3

*Composite: Multiple overdubbed harmony guitars arr. for one part.

A5 C5 D5 C5 D5 G5 A5 C5 D5 C5

6

Gtr. 3

(9) 7 7 5 5 5 4 5 2 (2) 2

tr

Gtrs. 1 and 2

P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M.

TAB 4/4

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

Bass

TAB 4/4

5 5 5 3 5 2 3 2 3 5 (5) 5 0 3 5 5 5 5 7 4

Well I was born under a bad

9

C5 G5 w/bar

14 14 14 14 14 (14) (14) (14) 2/4 14 4/4

5 5 X X 5 (5) 0 7 P.H. 1 w/bar (to slack) 2/4 (X) (0) 4/4

pitch: D

5 7 5 7 5 (5) 5 5 (5) X X 3 2/4 3 5 4/4

B 1st Verse (0:23)

sign

left out in the cold

I'm a

A5 C5 D5 C5

D5 G5 A5 C5 D5 C5

G5

Gtrs. 1 and 2

P.M.

P.M.

P.M.

12

4/4 5 7 5 5 0 7 5 5 5 0 7 (7) X X 5 7 5 0 7 5 (5) 5 5 X X 5 (5) x 5

Bass
Bass Fig. 1

end Bass Fig. 1

4/4 5 5 5 3 5 2 2 3 2 3 5 (5) 5 0 3 5 5 5 3 5 2 2 3 2 5 3 3 5 3

lonely man who knows

just what it means to lose control

But I took all the heartache

A5 C5 D5 C5

D5 G5 A5 C5 D5 C5

G5

P.M.

P.M.

P.M.

Gtr. 2 plays Fill 1 (see below)

16

5 7 5 5 (5) 5 5 5 0 7 (7) X X 5 7 5 0 7 5 5 5 X X 5 (5) 17 15

5 5 5 3 5 2 2 3 2 3 5 (5) 5 0 3 5 5 5 3 5 2 2 3 2 5 3 7 5 7

Fill 1 (0:36)

Gtr. 2

(pick scrape)

TAB 4/4

X 15

Rhy. Fill 1 (1:58)

E5

Gtrs. 1 and 2
P.M.

TAB 4/4

(8) 2 0 2 (2)

And turned it to shame

Now I'm

A5 C5 D5 C5 D5 G5 A5 C5 D5 C5 G5

Gtrs. 1 and 2 P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M.

20

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 twice (see bar 12)

moving movin' on

and I ain't takin' the blame

A5 C5 D5 C5 D5 G5 A5 C5 D5 C5 G5

P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M.

24

C Pre-chorus (0:53, 1:49)

Don't come running to me I know I've done all I can So I can say it to you babe I'll be a

hard lovin' woman like you just makes a hard lovin' man

D5 F5 G5 E5 N.C.(A5)

Gtrs. 1 and 2 substitute Rhy. Fill 1 on repeat of 2nd pre-chorus (see below bar 18)

Gtr. 2 plays Fill 2 on repeat of 2nd Pre-chorus (see below)

Gtrs. 1 and 2 P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. Slight P.H. P.M. P.M.

28

Bass Bass Fig. 2 end Bass Fig. 2

D Chorus (1:09, 2:04, 3:03)

fool for your loving no more

A fool for your loving no more

I'm

F5 G5 N.C.(A5) Am7 F5 G5 N.C.(A5)

Gtr. 3 plays Fill 3 twice on repeats (see below)

P.M. P.M.

32

Fill 2 (2:00)

Gtr. 2

P.M. P.M.

Fill 3 (2:06, 3:05)

Gtr. 3

N.H.

w/bar

pitches: C G

3rd time, skip ahead to **I** (bar 76)

2nd time, skip ahead to **F** (bar 53)

so tired of trying I always end up crying Fool for your loving no more I'll be a fool for your loving no more

F5 G5 E5 A5 Dm7 E5

*Gtr. 1 substitutes Rhy. Fill. 2
second time (see bar 76)*

Musical score for 'P.M.' (Piano Moderato). The score is written on a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked 'P.M.' and the time signature is 12/8. The score consists of two measures. The first measure contains a series of eighth notes: G4, A4, Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, Bb3, A3, G3. The second measure contains a series of eighth notes: G4, A4, Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, Bb3, A3, G3, followed by a double bar line. The score is marked with a 'P.M.' and a '12/8' time signature.

Bass Fill 1 - - - - -

7 3 1/2

2. I'm tired of hiding my feelings

A5 N.C. (E5) (D5) (C5) (B5) A5 N.C. (E5) (D5) (C5) (B5) A5

(let ring next
four bars)

Gtr. 3

3 3 (3) 1 2 (2) (2) 0 2 (2) (2) 15 15 (15) 13 14 (14) (14) 12 14

P.M.

four bars)

[illegible]

Bass
Bass Fig. 3

Bass Fig. 4

5 5 5 5 5 7 5 (5) 5 3 2 (2) 2 3 5 5 5 5 7 5 (5) 5 3 2 (2) 2 3 3

E 2nd Verse (1:33)

You left me lonely too long

C5 D5 C5 D5 G5 A5 C5 D5 C5 G5

Gtrs. 1 and 2

P.M. P.M. * T

(2/0) 5 0 7 5 (5/5) 5 5 0 7 (7) 7 (19)

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 twice (see bar 12)

**Tapped harmonics. Hold chord forms and tap strings at frets indicated in parenthesis.*

Go back to [C] Pre-chorus (bar 28)

gave my heart and you tore it apart Ooh baby you done me wrong

A5 C5 D5 C5 D5 G5 A5 C5 D5 C5 G5

49 P.M. $\frac{1}{2}$ P.M. P.M. P.M.

F (2:19)

G (2:21)

fool for your loving no more

I'll be a
(E5) (D5)

53

Gtr. 3

Gtrs. 1 and 2

Bass plays Bass Fill 1 (see bar 40) Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 twice, simile (see bar 41)

fool for your loving no more

No more

no more

A5

57

Gtr. 4

Gtr. 3 (let ring into next bar)

Bass plays Bass Fig. 4 (see bar 43)

H Guitar Solo (2:33)

A5

C5

D5

A5

let ring

60

Gtr. 4

Gtrs. 1 and 2

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 twice (see bar 12)

Age Group	Male (%)	Female (%)
18-24	40	60
25-34	30	70
35-44	20	80
45-54	10	90
55+	5	95

71 (C5) (A5) N.C. Gtr. 3 T 19 19
 12 7 5 4 12 7 12 7 5 3 5 12 7 5 3 7 12 7 12 7 3 5 12 7 3 (3) 7
 6 5 5 6 3
 (let ring into next bar)

Gtr. 4
 P.M. end Rhy. Fig. 1

72 D5 Gtr. 3 19 15 15 15 17 17 17 12 12 12 15 15 15 15 14 16 14 12 14
 16 12 12 12 14 14 14 9 9 9 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 10 12
 12 14 12 10 12
 Gtr. 4 T 12
 Gtr. 3 (let ring into next bar)

Gtrs. 1 and 2 P.M. P.M. 0 (0) 12
 (7) (7) (5) 5 5 9 9 7 (9) 7 2 0 2 0

Go back to **D** Chorus (bar 32)

So I can say it to you babe I'll be a
 (G5) (A5) (C5) (A5) (C5) (A5) N.C.

N.C.(G5) (A5) (C5) (A5)
 Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 1 (see bar 70)
 Gtr. 4

74 8 10 12 13 12 10 8 13 10 8 12 10 0 13 10 8 13 10 8/10 (10) (22) (22) 22
 7 3 9

I (3:15)

Fool for your loving no more

A fool for your loving no

Dm7

E5

Gtrs. 1 and 2

Rhy. Fill 2

76 P.M. (pick scrape) w/bar 1/2
 0 6 5 0 6 5 6 5 7 (9) 9 7 0 3 1/2
 Bass 5 5 3 3 5 3 5 0 0 2 0 2 2 0 2 5 7 5 7 5 12 3 1/2

J Outro (3:20)

more A5 N.C.(E5) (D5) (C5) (B5) A5 **No more** (E5) (D5) (C5) (B5) A5

79 Gtrs. 1 and 2 P.M. P.M. *Rhy. Fig. 2* P.M.

Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 twice, simile (see bar 41)

No more Fool Fool for your loving no more
N.C.(E5) (D5) (C5) (B5) A5 (E5) (D5) (C5) (B5) A5

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play *Rhy. Fig. 2* twice (see bar 81)

83 Gtr. 3 (enters 3rd time) (play 3 times)

Gtr. 4 (enters 2nd time, grad. increasing in vol.)

*Note played third time only.

Gtr. 5 (enters 2nd time, grad. increasing in vol.)

*Note played third time only.

Gtr. 6 (enters 2nd time, grad. increasing in vol.)

*Note played third time only.

Gtr. 7

*Omit note, first time only. pitch: G#

Gtr. 8

*Omit notes, first time only.

A fool for your loving no more

87 Gtr. 9 N.C. 1/2 14 14 (14) 22 20 (20) 12 13 (13) Gtr. 10 N.H. 5 5 5 5 5 5 pitch: B G D

Gtr. 3 1 15 14 (15) 20 17 (17) 13 14 (14)

Gtr. 4 1/2 7 7 (7) 12 8 (8) 5 5 (5)

Gtr. 5 1 7 9 (7) 12 9 (9) 5 7 (7) 8

Gtr. 6 1 7 9 (7) 12 9 (9) 5 7 (7) 8

Gtr. 7 1 7 9 (7) 12 9 (9) 5 7 (7) 8

Gtr. 8 1 5 5 (5) 5 2 (2) 3 2 (2) (w/delay effects) 5 5 3 3 1/4 1/4

Gtrs. 1 and 2 1 5 5 (5) 5 2 (2) 3 2 (2) (w/delay effects) 5 5 3 3 1/4 1/4

Bass 5 5 5 5 7 5 (5) 5 3 0 (0) 2 3 5 5 5 5 5 7 5 5 3 3 1/4 1/4

Freely

91 Gtr. 3 (w/clean tone and delay effects) 19 17 15 17 15 13 16 14 12 16 14 12

Gtrs. 1 and 2 vibrato w/bar 2 0 (2) (2) (2) (2)

Bass 2 0 (2) (2) (2) (2)

D C G

Gtr. 1 plays first six meas. of Riff A (see meas. 1)

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 simile (see meas. 9)

Gtr. 3

Rhy. Fig. 2

17

Bass

B Verses (0:46, 1:47)

1. She's got a smile that it seems to me reminds
2. She's got eyes of the bluest skies as

D
Gtr. 1 plays Fill 1

Dsus4 D

D
Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 twice simile (see meas. 9)
Gtr. 4 (elec. w/light dist.)

end Rhy. Fig. 2

22

mf

*let ring into next measure

me of childhood memories where everything was as fresh as the bright blue sky
if they thought of rain I'd hate to look into those eyes and see an ounce of pain

C
Gtr. 4

27

Bass

Now and then when I see her face she takes me away to that special place and if I
Her hair reminds me of a warm safe place where as a child I'd hide and

Cadd9

w/chorus effect

32

Fill 1 (0:42)

Gtr. 1 (D)

Fill 2 (3:08, 3:23)

Gtr. 4

C 1st and 2nd Choruses

(1:16, 2:17)

Whoa

A

Gtr. 1

stared too long I'd prob'ly break down and cry
 pray for the thunder and the rain to quietly pass me by }

37 Gtr. 4

Gtr. 2

Bass

*Gtrs. 2 and 4 (w/dist.)

*composite arrangement

whoa sweet child of mine

C5 D5 II

Whoa oh oh oh sweet love of mine

A C5

42 Gtr. 1

Gtrs. 2 and 4

Bass

P.M. P.M.

D5 II

D (1:31, 2:33)

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 simile (see meas. 9)

Gtr. 3 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 simile (see meas. 17)

C

47 let ring

Gtr. 2

1. G D (go back to B)

52

full full full full

2.

G

D

Ooh

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 simile (see meas. 9)
Gtr. 3 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 simile (see meas. 17)

57 Gtr. 1

C

G

Ah

E 3rd Chorus (3:04, 3:19)

Ooh whoa Oh yeah Whoa oh oh oh sweet child of mine

D

A

C5

D5^{II}

Gtr. 4 plays Fill 2 (see previous page)

D

Whoa oh oh

sweet love of mine

A

C5

71 Gtr. 2

1.

2.

D

D5

D#5

F 1st Guitar Solo (3:35)

Em C B7 Am

Gtr. 1
full

79

E5 VII
Gtr. 2
Rhy. Fig. 3a

C5 B5 A5

Gtr. 4 (w/clean tone)
Rhy. Fig. 3
let ring throughout

Bass
Bass Fig. 1

end Rhy. Fig. 3a

end Rhy. Fig. 3

end Bass Fig. 1

Em C B7 Am Em

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 3a twice simile (see meas. 79)
Gtr. 4 plays Rhy. Fig. 3 twice simile (see meas. 79)
Gtr. 1

83

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 twice simile (see meas. 79)

C B7 Am Em C B7

Gtr. 2 plays first three meas. of Rhy. Fig. 3a (see meas. 79)
Gtr. 4 plays first three meas. of Rhy. Fig. 3 (see meas. 79)
Gtr. 5 plays Fill 3 (see next page)

88

Bass plays first three meas. of Bass Fig. 1 (see meas. 79)

G 2nd Guitar Solo (4:07)

A5 E5 G5 A5

Gtr. 1

94

Gtr. 5 (elec. w/dist. and wah)

*Gtrs. 2 and 4
P.M.

Rhy. Fig. 4

*composite arrangement

Bass
Bass Fig. 2

“SWEET CHILD O’ MINE”

[illegible]

G5

[illegible]

P.M. 7

TAB $\frac{4}{4}$ - ♯ ♮ 13-14 f 12-11 14 11-14 16 13\12 11-12-14-11-12 12-13 11-12-14-11-12 14-15-12-14-15-14-12 15 14 16 12 14 12 15 15 (15)

TAB $\frac{4}{4}$

0 1 2 2 2 2 0 2 2 2 1 2 0 2 0 2

TAB

9 7 9 8 7 5

Where do we go Ooh oh Where do we go Where do we go now Where do we go now

A5^V C5 D5 G5 E5 G5 A5^V

114 Gtr. 5 N.H. 7-9 N.H.

mf Gtr. 2 pitches: D F# D

Bass end Bass Fig. 3 Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 twice (see meas. 112)

Where do we go sweet child Where do we go now

C5 D5 G5 E5 G5 A5 C5 D5 G5

119 Gtr. 5 P.M. 7-5-3

I **Outro** (5:08)

Aye aye aye aye aye aye aye aye Where do we go now Ah ah whoa Where do we go

E5 G5 A5 C5 D5 G5 E5

124 Gtr. 5 1/4 full 1/4 full full full full full

Gtr. 2 *Gtrs. 2 and 4 Rhy. Fig. 5

Bass *composite arrangement

Ah Where do we go now Oh Where do we go

G5 A5 C5 D5 G5 E5

129 Gtr. 5 full full full 1/2 full full full

Gtrs. 2 and 4 end Rhy. Fig. 5

Bass

[illegible]

Where do we go now

A5

Gtrs. 2 and 4 play first three meas. of Rhy. Fig. 5 (see meas. 128)

let ring_____

136 *grad. bend*

The musical score for measure 136 is written on a six-line staff. The notation includes a circled '14' at the beginning, followed by a series of notes with various fret numbers and bends. A 'grad. bend' (gradual bend) is indicated above the first note. The notes are: 14 (circled), 14, 15, 14(14), 12, 14°, 14(14), 12, 14-14-12, 14-12, 15, (15), 12, 15, (15), 12, 15-12. There are three triplets marked with a '3' below the notes: 14(14), 14-14-12, and 15-12. A wavy line is placed above the 14° note. A 'full' bend is indicated above the 15, (15), and 15, (15) notes. A 'let ring' instruction is written above the 5-5 triplet. The bottom staff shows the fret numbers for each note: 0, 0, 14, 0, 0, 2, 3, 3, 5, 5, 3, 3, 0, 5, 0, 5, (5), 5, 5, 0.

Sweet child

G5

A5

Gtr. 4 plays Fill 4 (see page 119)

Gtr. 5

[illegible]

Free Time (5:38)

of mine
E5^{VII}

D5

143

bend neck forward

let ring

bend neck forward

Csus4 C Cm7 Abmaj7

12

5/6 4/5

10 8 8 (8) (8)

7 (7) (7) 5 5 (5) 3/6

6 4 4 (4)

4 5 (5) 5 (5)

pp p mf f

end Bass Fig. 1

3 3 3 3 4

C (1:20)

Fm7 Csus4 C D/C

15

3 1 (1)

5 (5) (5) 3 5 6

5 7 5 7

7 (7) (7) (7) 7 (7) 7 5

mf p mf

* Press string (don't pick).

Bass Fig. 2

1 3 3 3 3 3 3 (3) 3

Fm7 Bb7 Fm/C C D/C

18

7 (7) 8 6 (6) 5 3

5 (5) (5) (5) (5) 3/14

13 15 (15) (15) (15) (15) (15) (15) 15 14 (14) 14 13

end Bass Fig. 2

1 1 3 3 3 3 3 3

D (1:45)

Fm7 Bb7 Csus4 C Cm7

21

15 15 13 (13) (13) 13 (13) 12 10

13 (13)

10 (10) 11 (11) 7 (7) (7) 5 (5)

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 twice (see bar 9)

1 1 3 3 3 3

A **Abmaj7** **Gtr. 1** **Fm7** **Csus4** **C**

24 4 6 4 4 (4) 4 (5)(5)(5)(5)(5)(5)(5)(5) 3 * Switch to neck pickup. 3 1 (1) 1/2 5 (5)(5) 3 (3) 5/6 6 1 (6) (5) * Switch back to bridge pickup. 18\8

mp *mf*

Cm7 **Abmaj7** **Fm7**

27 10 8 8 (8) 1/2 7 (7)(7) 5/7\5 3/6 6 4 4 5 (5)(5) 3 1 (1) 1/2 5 (5)(5) 3 5/6

mp *p* *mf* *pp* * Fingerslide (don't pick). *mp*

E (2:18)

Csus4 **C** **D/C** **Fm7** **Bb7**

30 5/6 (5) 5 7 5 7 7 (7) (7) 7 (X) 7 (7) 7 5 7 5 (5) (5) (5) 6 (6) 5\3

p *mf* * Press string (don't pick). Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 twice (see bar 17)

Fm/C **C** **D/C** **Fm7** **Bb7** **Csus4** **C**

33 5 (5)(5)(5)(5)/7 (7)(7)(7)(7)/12 13 15 (15) (15) 15 14 (14) 14 13 15 (15) 15 (15) 13 (13) 12\10 13 (13)(13)(13)(13)(13) (13) (X) (X)

p *mf* *f* *p* *mp* *p*

F **Guitar Solo** (2:44)

Cm7 **Abmaj7** **Fm7**

Gtr. 1
(Turn up volume control)

37 10 8 8 10 (10) 8 10 10\12 10 10 8 10 (10) 10 (10) (10) (X) 6 8 (8) 7 8 7 (7) 13\1 1 1 2

f

Bass

3 3 3 1 4 4 3 1 1 1 2

G maj7

Cm7

A♭maj7

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fill 1 (see below)

40

Bass Fig. 3

G (3:16)

Fm

G maj7

Cm7

43

(3:33)
Cm7
Gtr. 1

49

1/4

6 (6) (6)

3 6 3 3 6

A $\flat$ maj7

X 6 6 $\cdot$ (6) $\cdot$ (6) (6) (6) (6)

3/5 3 5

P.H.

3/4

3 $\cdot$ (3) 5 (5) (5) (5)

5 \ 3 1 3 1 3 1 3

3

Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 three times simile (see bar 41)

pitch: B $\flat$

[illegible]

54 $A\flat maj7$ $Fm7$ P.H. $1\frac{1}{2}$ 1 mf pitch: C

56

G maj7 (4:06) Cm7 A $\flat$ maj7

* Slide past end of fretboard.

Fm7

59

12-13-12-11-12-11-10-11-10-9-10-9-8-9-8-7-8-7-6-7-6-5-6-5-4-5-4-3-4-3-2-3-2-1-3-1-0-1-0

12 12 12 [3]

I Main Theme Restatement (4:23)

[illegible][illegible]

69

Fm7 Bb7 Csus4 C Cm7

16 15 16 15 16 15 16 15 13 13 (13) (13) 12 10 13 13 10 8 10 8 7 (7) (7) 5 (5) (5)

f 3 *mf* *mp* *mf* 3 *mp*

72 $A\flat\text{maj}7$ $Fm7$ $C\text{sus}4$ C

mf *p* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mp*

75

Cm7

Gtr. 1

1

1/2

1

1/2

1

1/2

1

(20) (20) (20) (20) (20) (20) (20) (20) (20) (20)

8 7 5 5 7 (7) (7) 5 5 (5) 7 5 5 (5)

pp

mf

3

3

mp

mf

pp

Bass

③

④

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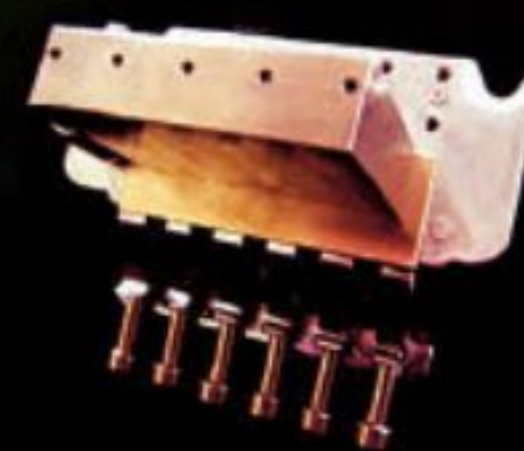
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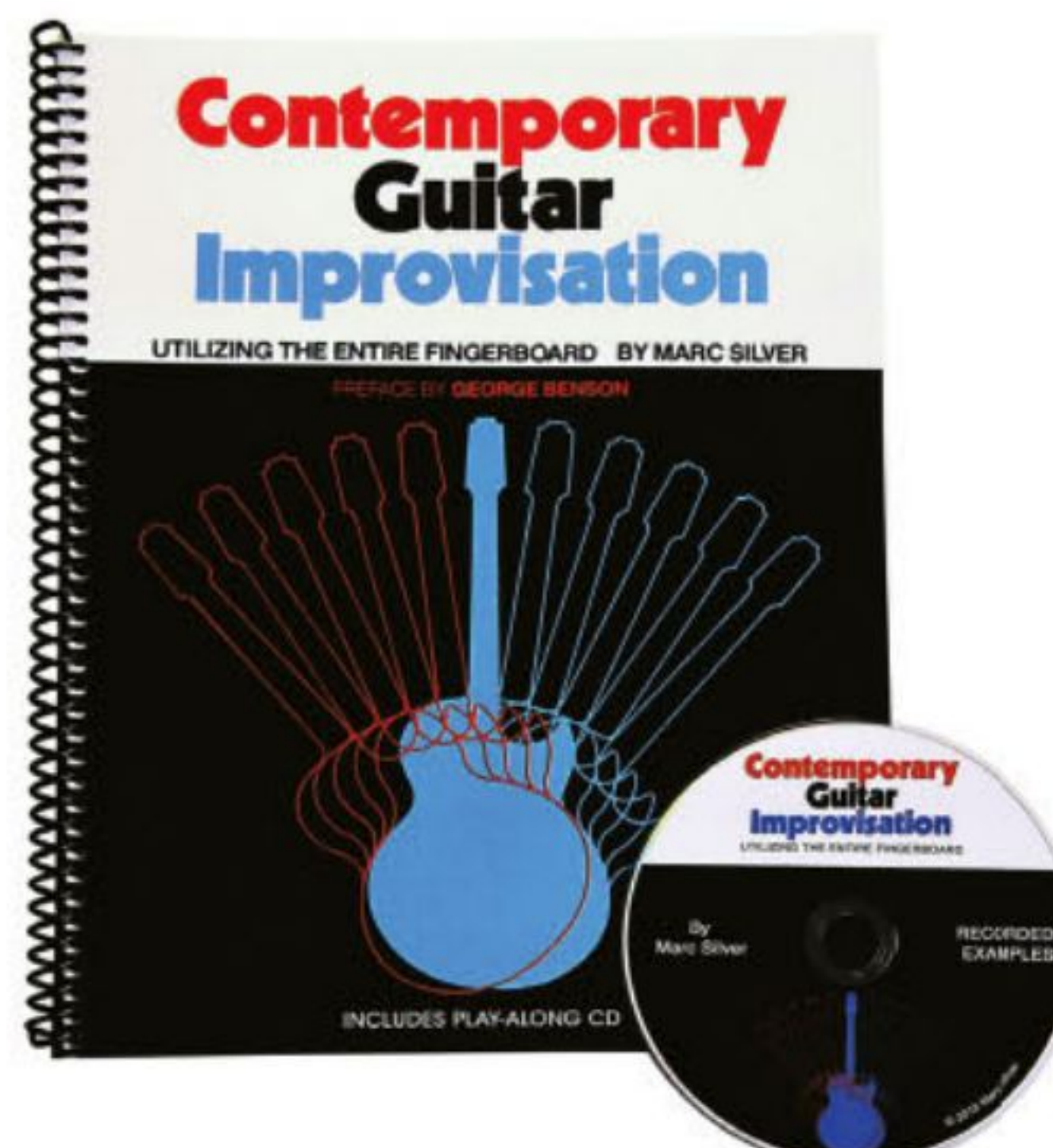
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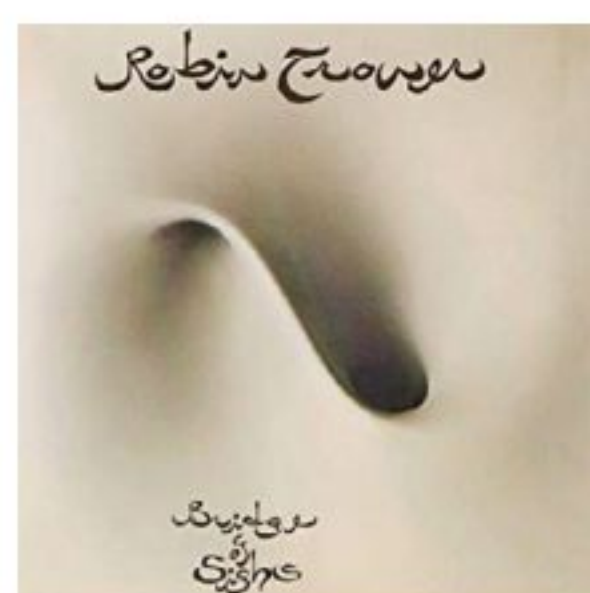
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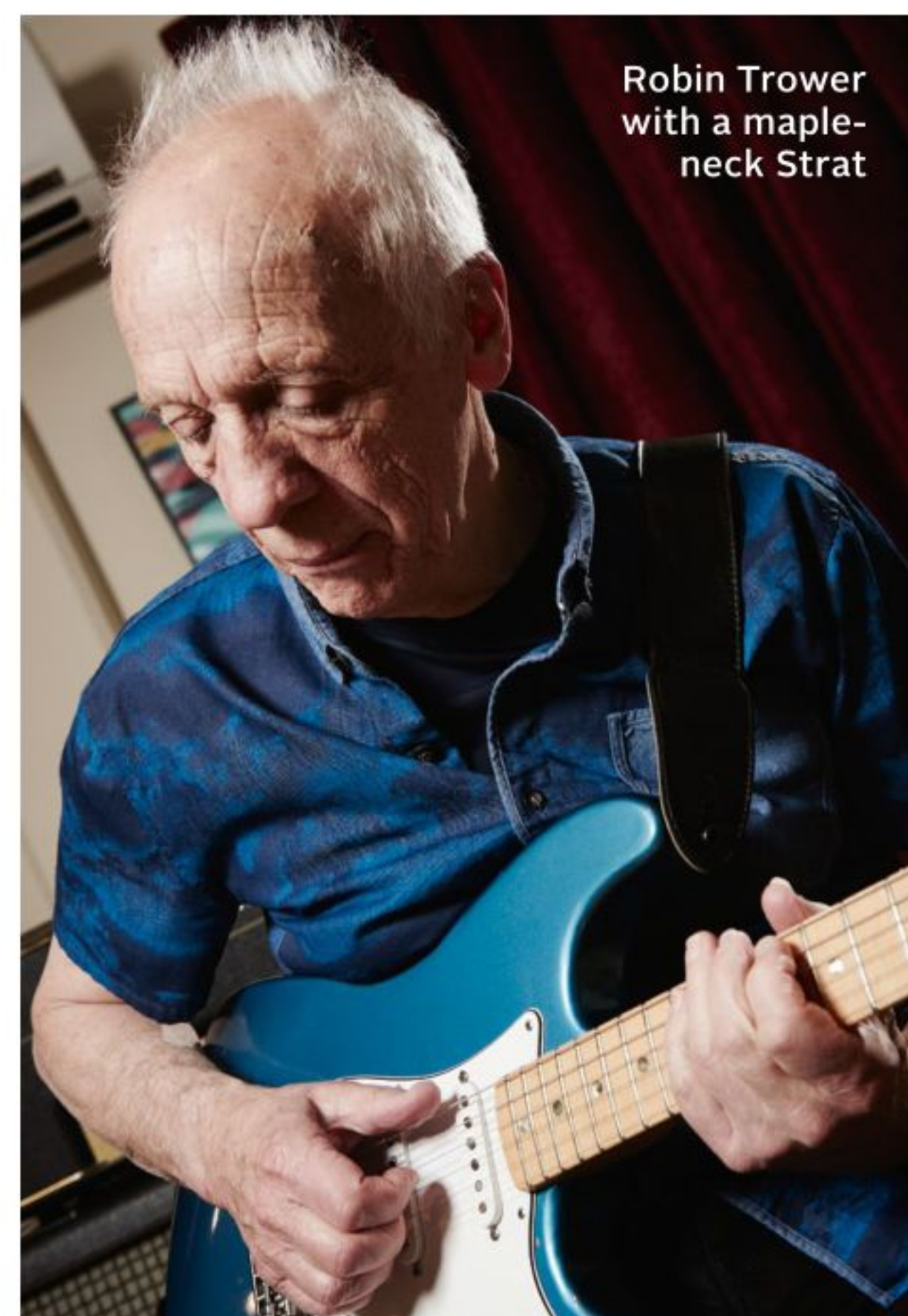
ROBIN TROWER'S SOPHOMORE solo effort, 1974's *Bridge of Sighs*, truly ranks among the top albums that every guitarist should hear.

While the guitarist's Jimi Hendrix influences are far from subtle — he used a Strat/Marshall/Uni-Vibe rig nearly identical to Hendrix's and also played in a power trio format — Trower developed his own signature style by using Jimi's tonal palette and riffs as a springboard for deeper musical exploration. That approach is particularly evident on the album's title cut, which remains as spooky and stunning today as it was when it first bombarded the airwaves in the mid Seventies.

Trower's use of a Uni-Vibe pedal throughout the song is the facet that most guitarists focus upon, and certainly the song probably wouldn't have had as much impact as it did without this effect. The Uni-Vibe delivers a wonderfully thick and chewy psychedelic tone that many players have

tried and failed to duplicate. The key lies in adjusting the amp's tone controls after the effect is engaged instead of dialing in a desirable dry guitar tone first and expecting the Uni-Vibe to sound good when the effect is engaged. Trower achieved his glorious Uni-Vibe tones by using the Strat's middle pickup, cranking up the amp's midrange and cutting the treble and bass. A custom boost/preamp pedal placed in front of the Uni-Vibe also helped thicken the tone by hitting its input with a stronger signal than you'd normally expect.

The swirling Uni-Vibe's trippy ambience is enhanced by copious amounts of natural room reverb provided by Studio 1 at AIR Studios in London where the song was recorded. Engineer Geoff Emerick placed mics in various parts of the room to capture this sound, and the band played most of the parts live. One exception to this is the oft-overlooked overdubbed delay riff toward the end of the song. Trower likely used a Maestro Echoplex EP-3 to achieve this effect. To further thicken and enhance Trower's deep, rich tones,



Robin Trower with a maple-neck Strat

Emerick recorded the guitar parts with generous compression courtesy of the studio's Neve 2254 compressors.



TONE TIP: *Employ the Marshall's gain control sparingly and crank up the master volume instead to achieve just a hint of overdrive. Place the Soul Food in front of the Uni-Vibe pedal and hit its front end with a generous amount of clean boost.*



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