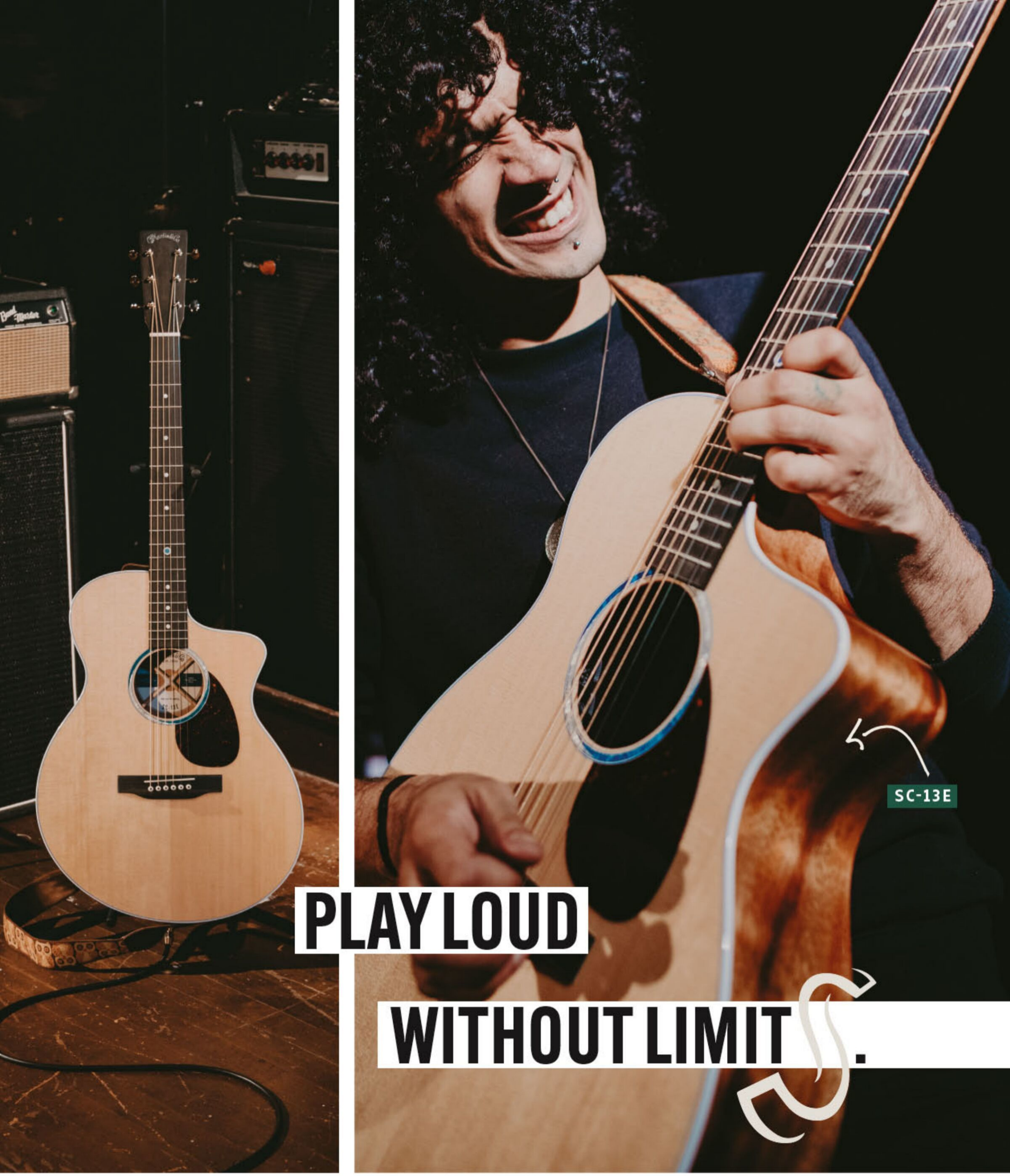
SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE

GUITAR WORLD

EDDIE VAN HALEN

1955–2020

A FAREWELL TO THE KING



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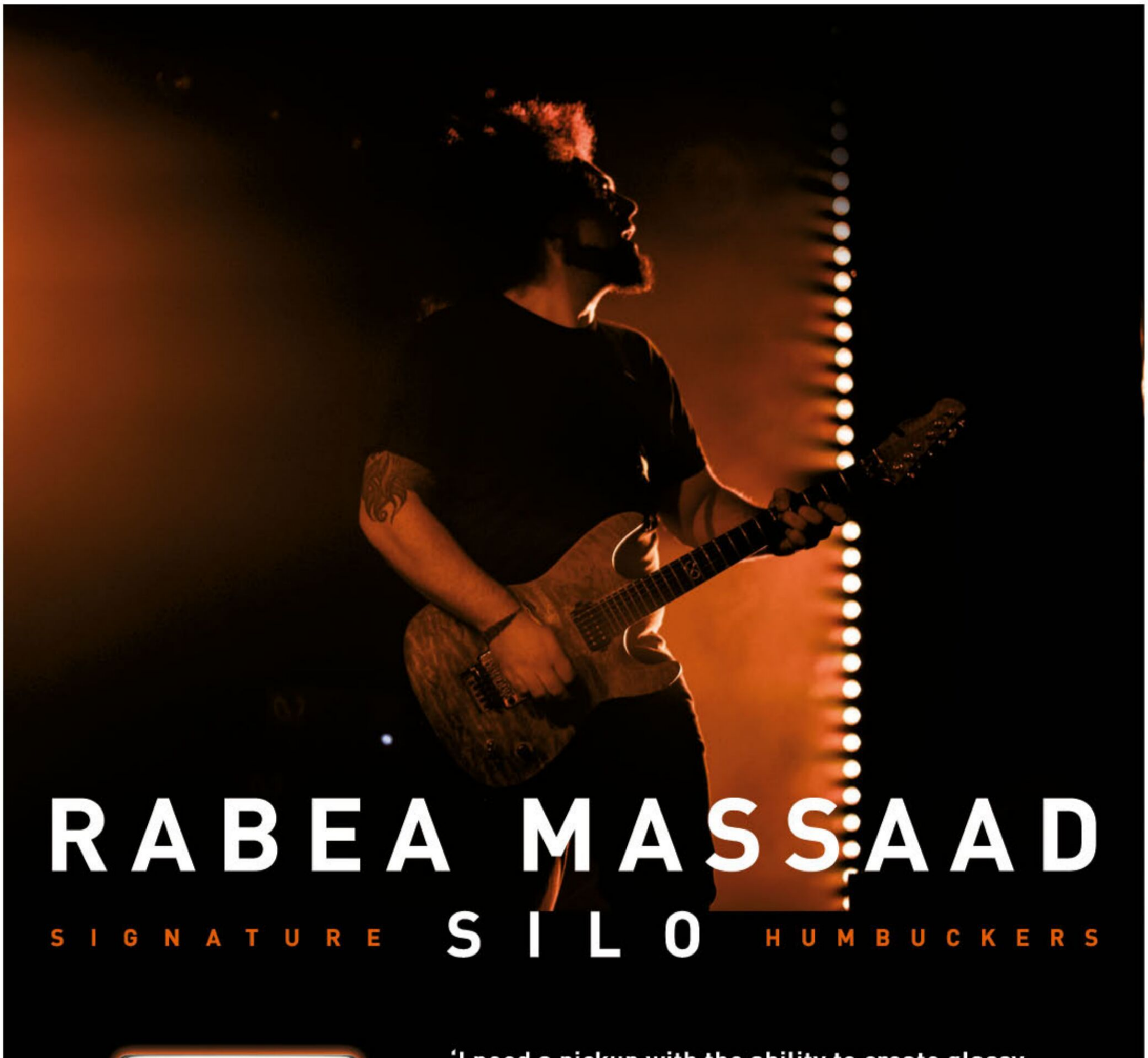

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AN ODE TO EDDIE

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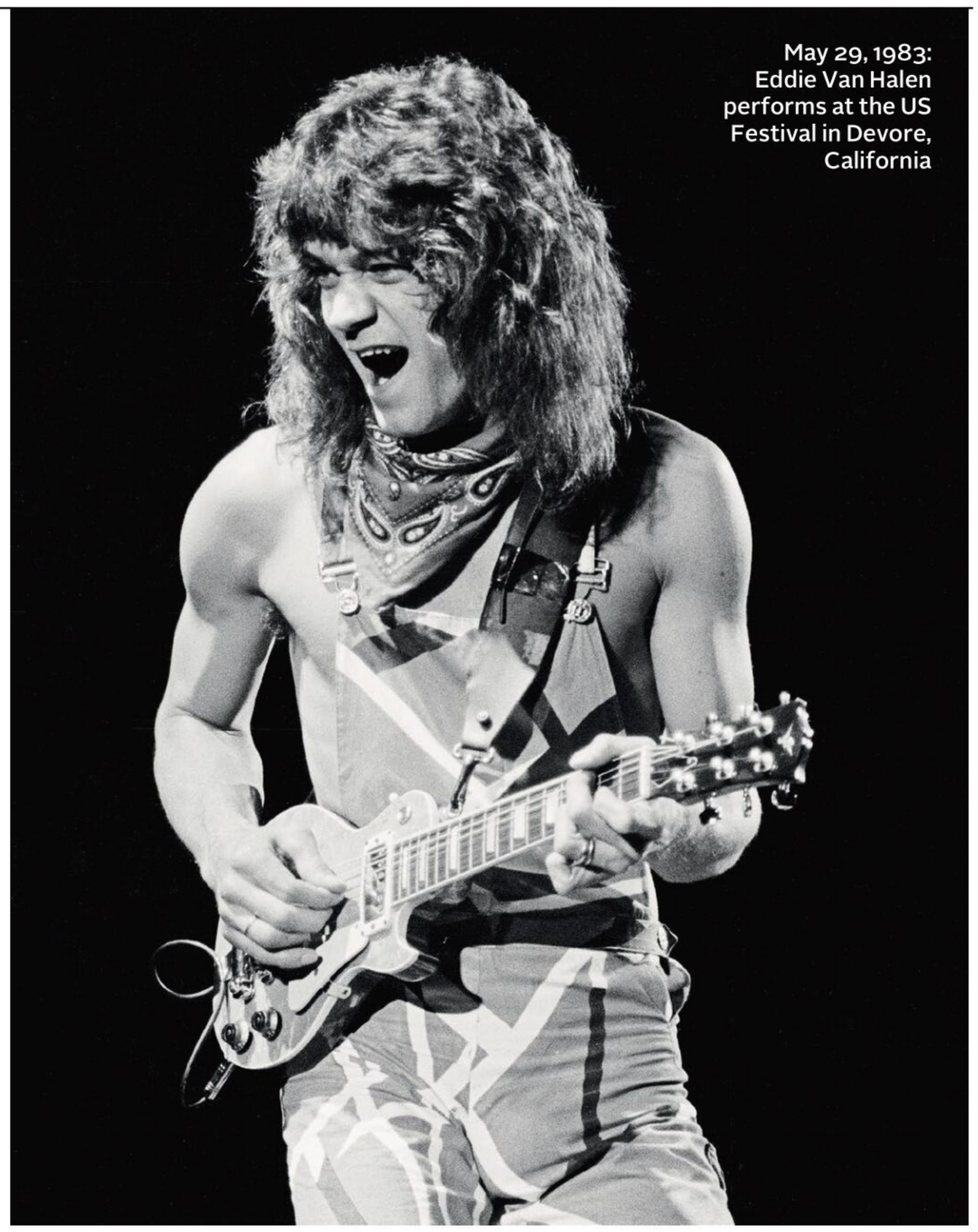

May 29, 1983: Eddie Van Halen performs at the US Festival in Devore, California

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BOB RIHA JR./GETTY IMAGES

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WOODSHED

VOL. 42 | NO. 1 | JANUARY 2021

A MATTER OF TIMING

STRANGE AS IT seems, the great Eddie Van Halen passed away on the exact same day (October 6) that our December 2020 issue came out — an issue that features Eddie on the cover as the smiling representative of our "40 guitarists who changed our world since 1980." Yes, it's a bizarre coincidence, but it's also oddly fitting, given how many times Eddie and *Guitar World* have crossed paths since the dawn of the Eighties, when *GW* was born. Chris Gill and Brad Tolinski address the longstanding *GW*/EVH connection in stories that start on pages 30 and 54, respectively. Me? Sadly, I never got to meet Eddie, but — as I said in a Facebook post the day he died — when you work at *GW*, Eddie is this ubiquitous presence forever in the background, perhaps similar to the relationship between *The New Yorker* and J.D. Salinger from 1946 to 1965 (I actually didn't think of the *New Yorker* thing until just now, but it works!).

A few minutes after I heard the news of Eddie's passing, I realized that Eddie's son, Wolfgang Van Halen, is 29 — the same age I was when my father died, also of cancer, also at an age that was definitely "way too young" (He was 58). I remember how I felt back then; I knew he was sick, but I didn't want to think that "the inevitable" would *actually* happen. But I digress... Like a lot of the guitarists who penned Eddie tributes for this special issue of *GW*, I offer my deepest sympathies to Wolfgang, Janie, Alex and the entire family. Eddie was truly one in a billion.

Why didn't we transcribe Van Halen songs for this issue? We wanted to! However, it takes a fair amount of time to get approvals for the songs we transcribe, and the planning for this issue was put into place on October 6, just a few weeks before deadline. In a lot of ways, putting out a magazine is a lot like piloting an ocean liner; you can turn the steering wheel (or whatever they call that thing) really fast, but the ship doesn't actually start turning until about five minutes later. Anyway, we'll bring you those transcriptions as soon as we can.

There's a poster in this issue! This is definitely worth mentioning, since it's the first "included in the magazine" poster since, well, I literally have no idea. It feels like seven years or so. Anyway, the photo of Eddie Van Halen's iconic "Frankenstein" guitar was shot in July 2013 by Kevin Scanlon, who also shot our cover photo (and the photo on pages 30/31). As always, here's hoping you enjoy every centimeter of this issue!

DAMIAN FANELLI
Editor-in-Chief

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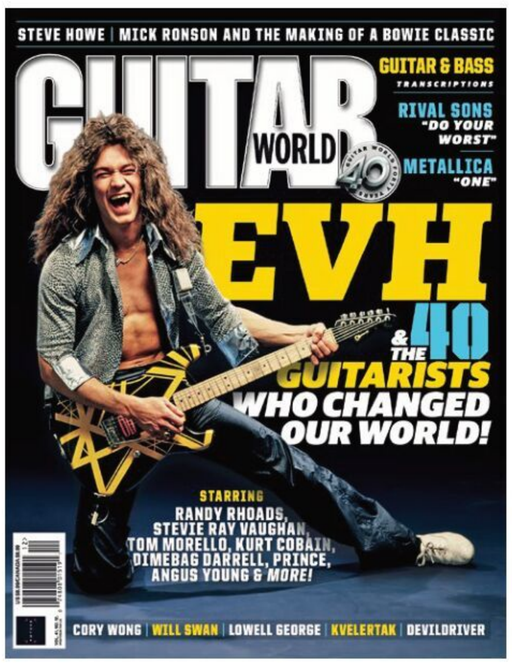


Ode to Our No. 1 World-Changer

Initially I had a problem with the omission of some of my favorite guitarists from "40 Guitarists Who Changed Our World Since 1980" in the December 2020 issue, but *GW* nailed number one: Edward Van Halen. Ironically, this would be the last cover Eddie appeared on before his untimely death on October 6. I believe, like Jimi Hendrix, that Eddie will posthumously grace your cover many times in the future. I wonder if we'll also hear, like Hendrix, posthumous releases from Van Halen's vast library of unreleased music in the years to come?

— Ted Corby

Having a digital subscription to *GW*, the new issue came overnight — and it had EVH on the cover. Hours later I found out he passed away. A really sad day. I'm sorry for his family and his many, many fans. I always like what Frank Zappa said, that Eddie "reinvented the electric guitar."

— Anonymous

A Welcome Trip Down Memory Lane

Receiving the "40th-Anniversary Collector's Edition" [November 2020], I realized how *Guitar World* has been a constant in my life. I found myself extremely emotional while reading "The 40 Greatest Moments in *GW* History." I was able to memorialize moments in my life as reflected in the changes to the music I love and *Guitar World* itself. A lot has changed, but having the comfort of *Guitar World* magazine is a true blessing, and for that I am grateful. I will be here for as long as you are.

— Scott Hinman

One thing I didn't see mentioned in the 40th-anniversary issue was the posters that used to come with the magazine. I believe you guys even had a special issue of just posters once! My childhood room was lined with posters of Angus, Zakk and Jimi, all thanks to *GW*. P.S. I loved all the stuff on John Paul Jones in the 40th issue. JPJ is the man!

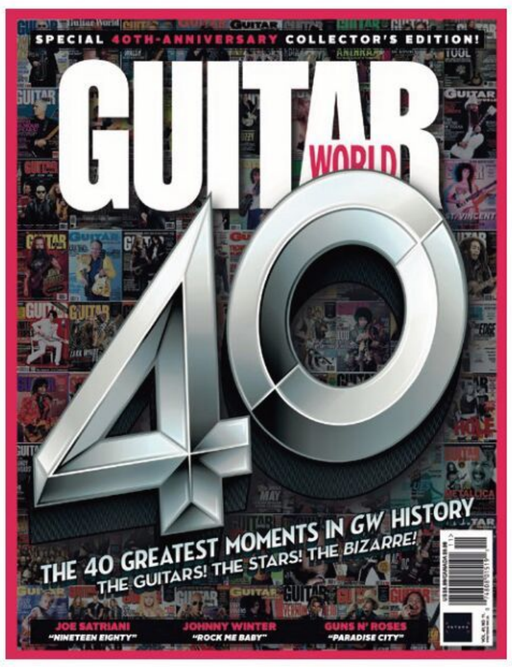
— Cody Martin

As a young reader who just within the last year fell in love with *Guitar World*, I found the rich, rich, history of your magazine fascinating. From features on unknown artists to guitar gods. Wow. Keep up the good work — and here's to another 40 years of a great magazine!

— Brandon Smith

I'm a big fan of your magazine, although a relatively recent subscriber. I enjoy the in-depth coverage of guitar matters from the Sixties to today. But I found your 40th-anniversary issue very frustrating. Where can I access this "most extensive Randy Rhoads editorial collection in history"? Or some of these past interviews with Jimmy Page over the past 34 years? I don't like buying pricey back issues or hunting through magazine bins. I feel like we need some "best of" issues. Or some of this information posted on your website! You've got 40 years of history — you should take advantage of it!

— Mike Brown



Does He Have a Point?

Referring to November 2020, page 54, it says something like, "In 1980, Harris was ignoring big hair, tight jeans and pointy guitars." I was a rocker during that era, and at that time there were no "pointy guitars," per se. Those came along a few years later.

Also, I understand that the mag has to have lots of ad pages, but why can't you start and finish the article consecutively? A perfect hard-to-follow example is on page 54 of the November issue. Why couldn't the "Rock and roll all night" column be continued on that page and the Skid Row and "My First Cover" be with the rest of that particular subject/article? All the jumping around back and forth and "continued on page X" nonsense! Is it to promote people seeing the ads as they flip through the pages? Whatever the reason, I wish (and I'm not alone) that magazines would start an article and finish them in consecutive pages. It would be a fresh Idea.

— Jerry Freese

Lifeson's Influence Is *Permanent*

I really enjoyed the *Guitar World* article on the making of Rush's *Permanent Waves* to commemorate its 40th anniversary [October 2020]. I was 15 when I first heard this album the day it was released. The next day I bought a bass, which I still play. I hope you do a similar commemoration of *Moving Pictures* for its 40th anniversary! As a longtime reader of *GW*, the first issue I bought had Alex Lifeson on the cover with the words, "Is he really too good for heavy metal?" [November 1981]. At that time, the mainstream media ignored Rush, and music publications relentlessly criticized them. *GW* was one of the first publications to take the band seriously. It's great to see your relationship with Rush continues.

— John Vice

Our Sliding Is Slipping!

Imagine my surprise when your giant slide guitar cover story [September 2020] didn't include even a mention of Lowell George. He may not have Duane Allman's monster chops, but his slide work was fluid, expressive and always fit the songs perfectly. His playing on *Waiting for Columbus* deftly combined with the Tower of Power horn section to create one of the greatest live albums of all time. Surely *Waiting for Columbus* was deserving of a spot in your essential-listening sidebar! Additionally, it's a shame that the ethereal slide work all over Built to Spill's *Keep It Like a Secret* wasn't highlighted. Perhaps not virtuosic, but the mood and tone that the slide guitar adds to that album is beyond compare.

— Eldon Holliday

I enjoyed the "Slide Tracked" list of slide songs. I also like Ron Wood's slide work on "That's All You Need" from the Faces' *A Nod Is As Good As a Wink to a Blind Horse*. I look forward to each issue of *Guitar World*.

— Tom Hord

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OF THE MONTH

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

JUNIOR BROWN BY STEVE LEVIN

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN BY SCOUT STORMCLOUD

DEFENDERS *of the Faith*

Pat Campbell

AGE: 52
HOMETOWN: New York City
GUITARS: Vintage guitars, Gibson Les Paul, BC Rich Mockingbird and Rich Bich
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Any and all Blackmore, Moore and Schenker, plus songs by my all-original band, Blindman
GEAR I MOST WANT: An original 'burst

Nick Accardi

AGE: 19
TOWN: Lake Park, FL
GUITARS: Gibson Les Paul Studio, PRS SE seven-string and homemade FrankenStrat
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Meshuggah "Future Breed Machine," The Contortionist "Language II," Death "Symbolic" and Engulfed, the debut album by my band, Vanished
GEAR I MOST WANT: Mesa Boogie Mark V, Ibanez JEM7 and PRS Custom 24

Dino Mor

AGE: 46
TOWN: Grand Rapids, MI
GUITARS: Three PRS Custom 24's (Trampas Green, Yellow and Sapphire)
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Jamiroquai "Seven Days in Sunny June," the Rolling Stones "Saint of Me," Peter Frampton "Lines on My Face," Prince "Let's Go Crazy" and my own music
GEAR I MOST WANT: Vox AC-30, PRS Custom 24 in purple, Rickenbacker 360, Bugera V55HD Infinium and 4x12 cab, Fender Jazz Bass

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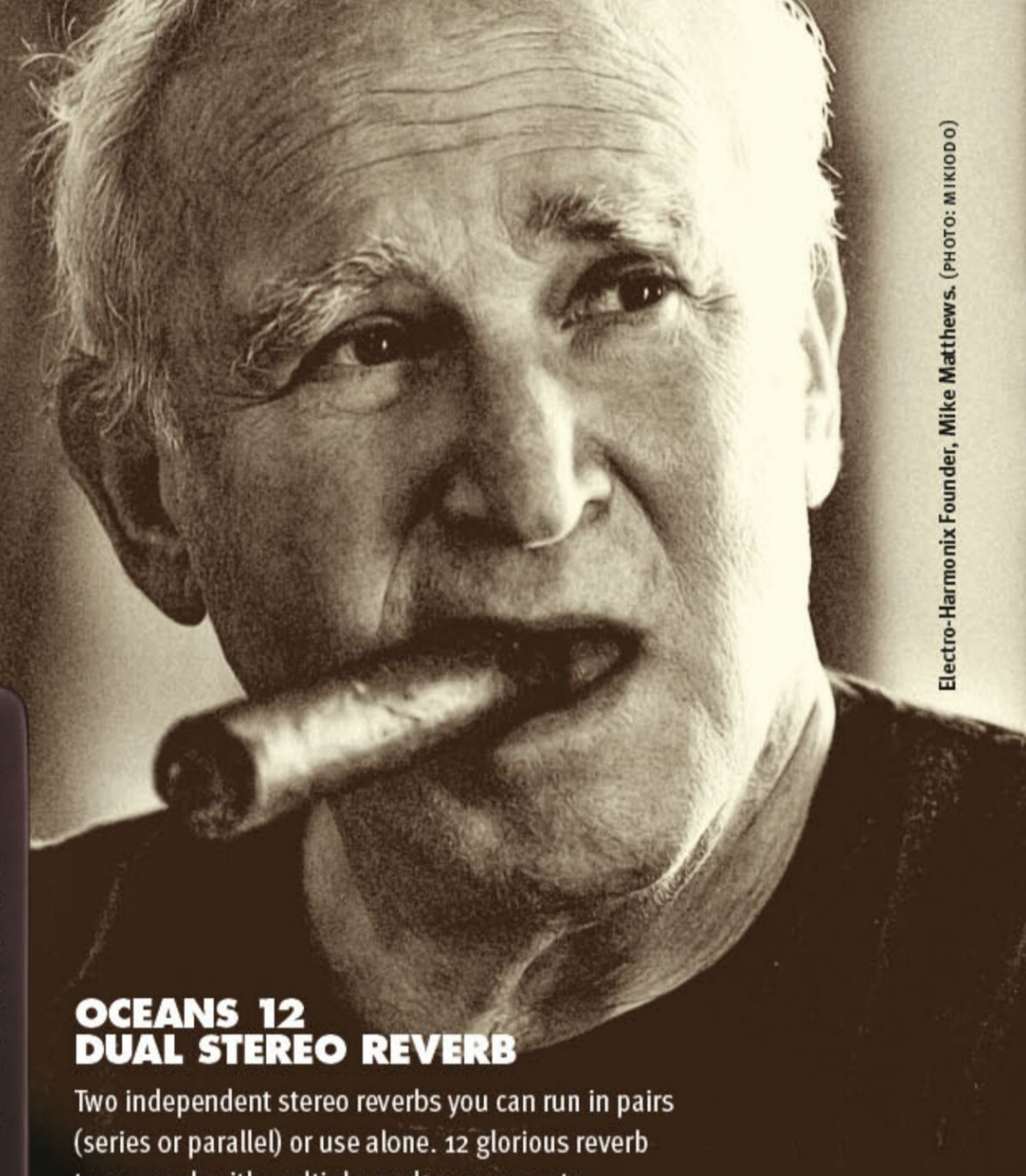

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JOE BONAMASSA GOES NATIVE! 24

"[It] was *all* Stratocaster," says Kirk Fletcher about his new album, *My Blues Pathway*. "Every song had the Strat the whole way through"

RICK GOULD

Different Shades of Blue

BLUES ACE KIRK FLETCHER TAKES US DEEP INTO THE HEART OF HIS NEWEST RELEASE, THE APTLY TITLED *MY BLUES PATHWAY*

By Amit Sharma

KIRK FLETCHER WAS driving back from the 2019 King Biscuit Blues Festival in Helena, Arkansas, when he experienced what he describes as "a bit of an epiphany" regarding his next studio release. Initially it was set to be an album of original material, delving deep into the singer/guitarist's love for funk and R&B, but early one fateful morning he realized he needed to go back to the source and pay tribute to the blues masters of old.

"That festival is near to where my family are from, close to the Mississippi," says Fletcher of the lightbulb moment behind his sixth album, *My Blues Pathway,* a mixture of originals, co-writes and covers of Sonny Boy Williamson, Chris Cain, A.C. Reed and Juke Boy Bonner. "I was driving at 6 in the morning, literally through the Delta, and I asked myself, 'What *am* I doing?!' I know it sounds cliché but it just hit me — I realized I needed to do a blues record. All the lessons I've

learned along the way, all the mistakes, fused into everything I know about singing my own songs as well as other people's music."

Inspiration also came from his "Eighties heroes," who further engrained those flat fives and 12-bar turnarounds into popular culture. It's evident in the slickness of new tracks like "No Place to Go" and "Rather Fight Than Switch" — which hark back to an era of blues treading new sonic ground — less raw and more refined, yet still gripping and thrilling at every turn. Much like the prodigious Joe Bonamassa, for whom Fletcher has occasionally played rhythm guitar, there's a sweetness and authenticity to his approach that screams class. "I looked at it in the same way as Robert Cray, Stevie Ray Vaughan or the Fabulous Thunderbirds," Fletcher says. "All those players behind the big Eighties resurgence. They would mix their records more like pop or soul records. It was a big potpourri of influences."

The Robert Cray connection doesn't end there; Cray's long-serving bass player, Richard Cousins, co-wrote two of the album's 10 tracks. In a bizarre twist of fate, the musicians — both American — discovered they were living within half an hour's drive from each other in Switzerland, some 5,000 miles off home soil. Fletcher describes the collaboration as "incredible and kinda full circle" considering he's been "in complete awe of Robert and Richard" for the majority of his musical life.

Though he's been known to play various Gibsons and Fenders, the tones recorded over the six days of sessions mainly boiled down to one guitar and one amp. Fletcher simply didn't feel the need to use anything else. Well, if it ain't broke...

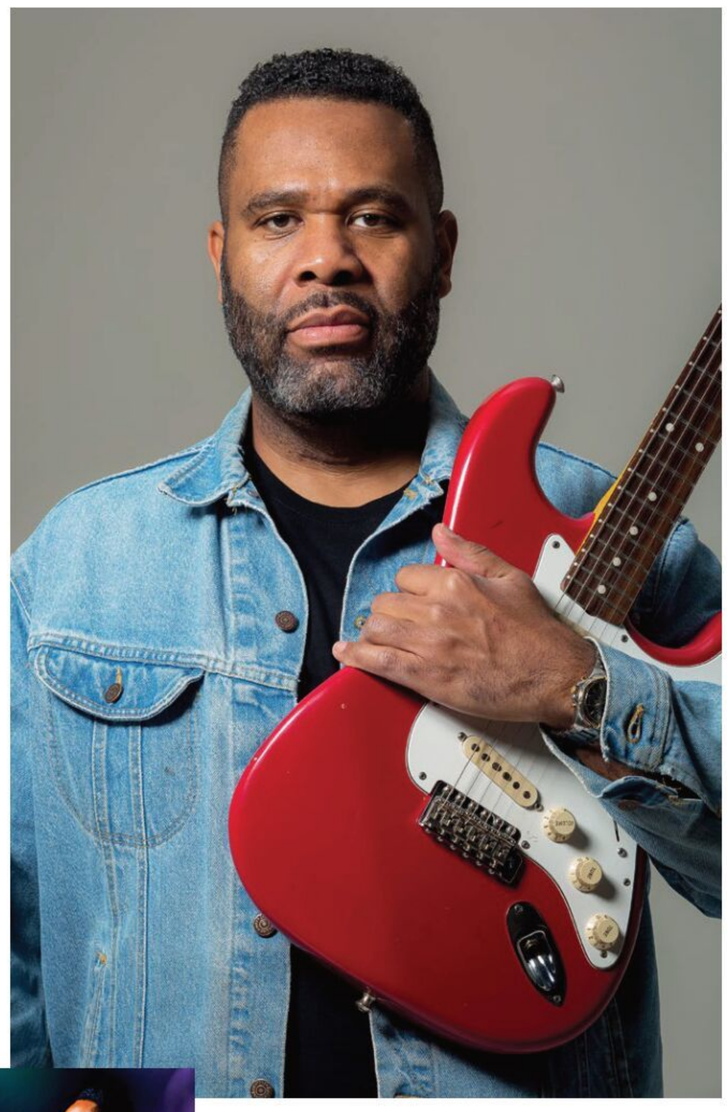
"This was *all* Stratocaster," he says. "Every song had the Strat the whole way through, plugged into a 1965 Deluxe Reverb Blackface. That said, my buddy Josh Smith had some amazing stuff when I went over to do a couple of overdubs. He had a 1955 Bassman, a Morgan PR12 — which is based on a Princeton, so still Fender-esque. I might have used a Vemuram/Ibanez Tube Screamer for a little grit... but it was pretty clean, to be honest. To find 'my blues pathway,' I had to put my own spin on it."

And that spin, he attests, is key. When asked about the missing ingredient many of today's aspiring players seem to lack, he says there's usually a fundamental sense of context behind any blues great. To some extent, in order to speak the blues, you have to understand the story of the blues.

"Some players neglect the history. That doesn't mean you have to be some musicologist who plays exactly like Robert Johnson," he says. "But when you hear the most iconic players of all time — Hendrix, Clapton and Page — they *all* had that foundation. They were big music lovers and record collectors who spent millions of hours absorbing their favorite albums."

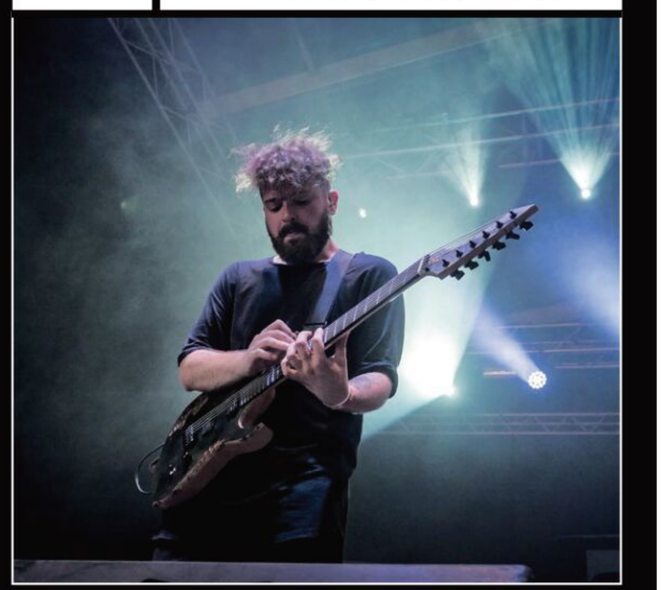
There's always something to listen to and learn from, summarizes the former Fabulous Thunderbirds guitarist, noting how a lot of the biggest bands in the world, past and present, discovered their own voices as students of the blues, eventually going on to create something unexpected and new. This trend, believes Fletcher, is far from over.

"You might hear some crazy Howlin' Wolf beat and get really inspired. I mean, the White Stripes... *hello*?! We've seen how bands like the Rolling Stones went far back in order to find themselves. It's even easier now. A 13-year-old learning to play has everything available. All they need is someone to point them in the right direction, whether that's Joe Bonamassa, Josh Smith... or even me!"



"A 13-year-old learning to play has everything available. All they need is someone to point them in the right direction, whether that's Joe Bonamassa, Josh Smith... or even me!"

WHAT'S ON MY PLAYLIST



ROMAN IBRAMKHALILOV
OF JINJER

1

System of a Down

"Prison Song"

This is the first System of a Down song I ever listened to. It impressed me so much from the first second on. Heaviest shit ever!

2

Deftones

"You've Seen the Butcher"

Simple riffs and low tuning make for a real cool atmosphere. I love the harmony and composition. Love Deftones!

3

Limp Bizkit

"Hot Dog"

The first riff of this song inspired me to write a lot of cool riffs using the Floyd Rose. Huge respect to Wes Borland and his huge riffs!

4

Pantera

"Fucking Hostile"

This song got me into thrash music. Dimebag's playing inspired me a lot; his riffs and leads crashing everything.

5

Karnivool

"Themata"

The first riff is one of my most favorite — ever! The song is perfect from the beginning to the end: composition and groove. The guitar parts in this band are insane!

JINJER'S FIRST LIVE ALBUM, *ALIVE IN MELBOURNE*, IS AVAILABLE NOW VIA NAPALM RECORDS

FLETCHER: RICK GOULD PLAYLIST: OLEG ROOZ

Adam Slack performs with the Struts in Milan, Italy, in 2019

The Struts

THE U.K. OUTFIT HIT THE NAIL ON THE HEAD WITH THE TITLE OF THEIR LATEST RELEASE — *STRANGE DAYS*, INDEED

By Joe Bosso

"EVERYBODY WE TALK to says, 'This is the strangest time I've ever lived through,' or 'These are strange days,' so the title was right there in front of us," says Adam Slack, guitarist for U.K. band the Struts, referring to the group's new album, *Strange Days*. "I have to admit, I've never lived through a more bizarre time myself."

When reminded that back in 1967 the Doors called their second album *Strange Days*, Slack laughs and says, "I imagine that was a pretty weird era as well."

Despite its ominous title, the music on the Struts' third disc is anything but dark; if anything, much of the album feels like a party-hardy tribute to the band's adopted home of L.A. and their embrace of decadent, late-Eighties Sunset Strip culture. "We do love living in Los Angeles, so I think that's rubbed off on us," Slack says. "During normal times, you can have fun at the clubs at night, and the next day you can hit the beach. It's a pretty amazing place."

After acing their COVID tests last spring, the group (which also includes singer Luke Spiller, bassist Jed Elliot and drummer Gethin Davies) holed up in producer Jon Levin's L.A. home for 10 days of quarantine-style tracking.

"I have to admit, I've never lived through a more bizarre time myself"

— ADAM SLACK

"The good thing was that nobody bothered us, so we were free to do whatever we wanted," Slack says. "We set ourselves up and just blasted through songs live. The only bad thing was, Jon's rooms aren't soundproofed and my amp was super-cranked. I had to stop recording by 7 p.m. so we wouldn't bother the neighbors."

Even while keeping the neighborhood peace, Slack managed to crunch through strutting, bombastic rockers like "All Dressed Up," "Cool" and "Can't Sleep." And through the wonders of remote recording, he was able to welcome guitar pals Phil Collen, Tom Morello and Albert Hammond Jr. to beam in their parts without causing a disturbance.

"It's pretty amazing what you can do with technology," Slack says. "You would think those guys were playing right next to me, but they were miles away in their homes."

AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** Gibson Mike McCready 1959 Les Paul Standard, Nelson Guitarwerks Strat-style model (by Bruce Nelson)
- **AMP** Divided by 13 BT23, Kemper Profiler
- **EFFECTS** SoloDallas Schaeffer Replica, Rimrock Effects Mythical Overdrive, Strymon Flint reverb and tremolo, Boss chorus

ROBERTO FINIZIO/NURPHOTO VIA GETTY IMAGES

Devon Allman [*left*] and Duane Betts perform at the Fillmore in San Francisco December 7, 2019

TIM MOSENFELDER/GETTY IMAGES

Allman Betts Band

THE PROUD INHERITORS OF THE ALLMAN BROTHERS' GREGG ALLMAN, DICKEY BETTS AND BERRY OAKLEY PROVE TO BE MORE THAN CHIPS OFF THE OLD BLOCK

By Alan Paul

THERE WAS NO mystery about why Allman Betts Band's 2019 debut, *Down to the River,* sounded like the work of a veteran group, though they had never played together as a unit before recording it. While the band was new, the core members had a connection that stretched back before they were born. Co-leaders Devon Allman and Duane Betts are the sons of Gregg Allman and Dickey Betts, longtime dual front men of the Allman Brothers Band. Bassist Berry Oakley Jr.'s namesake father was the Hall of Fame group's founding bassist.

Now, with a year of hardcore touring (interrupted only by the pandemic) under their belt, the seven-piece band takes a big step toward establishing their own Americana sound on their second album, *Bless Your Heart*. "It's a more experimental album," says Oakley, who takes lead vocals on one song. "We felt comfortable going in different directions."

"I think it's apparent when you listen to *Bless Your Heart* that we're having a love affair with being in this band together"

— DEVON ALLMAN

The material displays a great breadth, with an instrumental that echoes Allman Brothers classics, as well as country tinges, a Rolling Stones-style rocker, a Pink Floyd-tinged ballad and textured layers of acoustic guitar and keyboards. The material allows Allman, Betts and lead and slide guitarist Johnny Stachela to each stretch out and each have their moments in the spotlight.

"There's plenty of space for everybody to express themselves," Betts says. "It comes pretty naturally to decide who should play what on each tune. There's a lot of solos that we're all proud of, but this is a song record as well as a guitar record."

Adds Allman, "We all got to stretch out on this one. I think it's apparent when you listen to *Bless Your Heart* that we're having a love affair with being in this band together. Me, Duane and Berry have a bond that goes back forever, but the seven of us are really a unit and we're totally focused on establishing ourselves, marching forward and continuing our own body of work — world tours, records — just like our fathers did it back then. We have to make our own mark."

Gabriella "Guitar Gabby" Logan with her trademark lime green ESP LTD M-50 FR

Guitar Gabby

MEET THE TWO (EQUALLY ROCKING) SIDES OF THE TXLIPS BAND'S GABRIELLA LOGAN

By Richard Bienstock

GABRIELLA "GUITAR GABBY" Logan is many things, but lazy certainly isn't one of 'em. The Atlanta native and proud purveyor of a trademark lime green ESP LTD M-50 FR is not only an attorney working in the music and environmental fields, she also serves as the singer, songwriter, guitarist and manager of two rock outfits, the Txlips Band and her own Guitar Gabby solo project. Furthermore, earlier this year both acts released full-length albums — the Txlips Band's *Prison of Life* and Guitar Gabby's *Musicology* — within months of each other. "It's been an interesting journey to mix all of it," Gabby says, "but it's also been working for me."

Indeed it has. Over the past several years Gabby has made a name for herself as one of the brightest new players on the block, mixing elements of rock, metal, funk, r&b, blues and prog into a distinctive and fiery guitar stew. The Txlips Band's *Prison of Life* leans heavily on her straightforward rock side — "it's more grunge driven," she says, citing acts like Nirvana and the Foo Fighters as inspiration — while *Musicology* is where she lets that ESP LTD shine. "I wanted that album to be more of an instrumental expression of my writing," she says.

"Black women bring a lot to the table. Hopefully my voice and my music can be a tool for unity and representation"

As for what that instrumental expression is, let it be said that while Gabby clearly enjoys guitar pyrotechnics — she points to Steve Vai, Jimi Hendrix and Orianthi as three of her influences — she also finds "something beautiful in simplicity," she says. "I think all of that kind of playing is cool, but I also want to be able to connect to people on any level they're on."

For Gabby, connection is the key. In addition to playing music, she's a tireless advocate and supporter of women and youth in the arts, and she works to inspire those looking to get into the industry. "When I first started the Txlips Band, we would play for different Girls Rock camps around the world, and the joy a lot of the kids would express from seeing a band — especially a band of young girls of color — doing something that they aspire to do one day was incredible."

In general, Gabby says, "I want to showcase that black women bring a lot to the table, and that music can bring all of us together. Hopefully my voice and my music can be a tool for unity and representation."

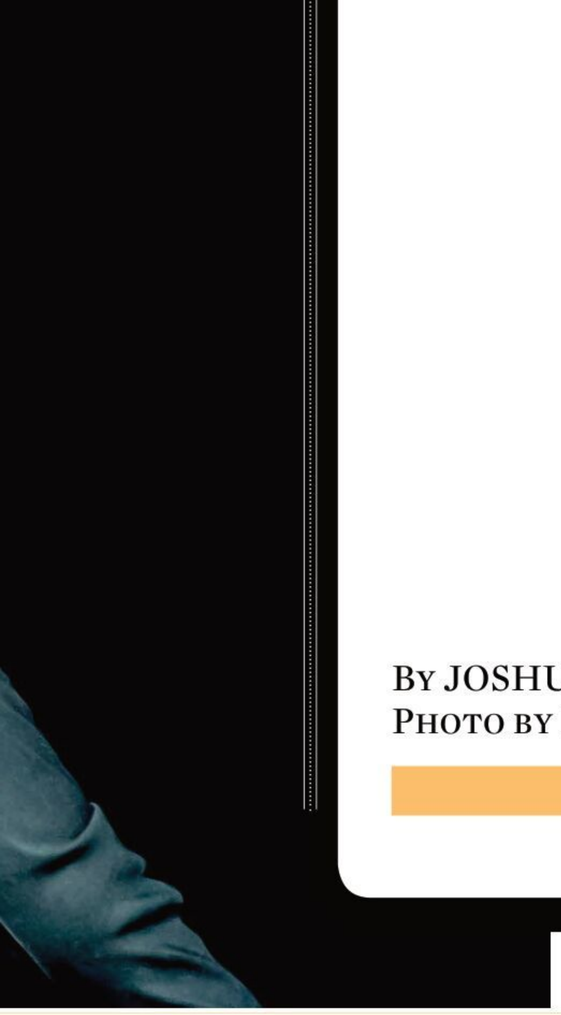
JAWAN SCOTT

“ABBEY ROAD IS HAPPY TO SHOW YOU THE JOHN LENNON MICROPHONE, THE PIANO ‘HEY JUDE’ WAS CUT ON, THE CONSOLE *THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON* WAS RECORDED ON… BUT WHEN YOU’RE THERE RECORDING AND YOU HAVE A MISSION, YOU HAVE TO KIND OF DETACH YOURSELF FROM THAT AND JUST GO, ‘WE’RE IN A RECORDING STUDIO TO MAKE A RECORD’”

Joe Bonamassa performs in London with a Gibson Custom Shop ES-355 (with his signature inlay)

LONDON TEA PARTY

HOW **JOE BONAMASSA** DECAMPED TO ABBEY ROAD STUDIOS WITH BERNIE MARSDEN AND FORMER CREAM LYRICIST PETE BROWN TO WRITE AND RECORD ***ROYAL TEA***, AN ALBUM THAT'S BURSTING WITH THAT BRITISH BLUES BOOM



BY JOSHUA M. MILLER
PHOTO BY ROBERT SUTTON

JOE BONAMASSA HAS WORSHIPPED BRITISH blues and rock 'n' roll for as long as he can remember. When he was around 12, he raided his father's vinyl collection, which introduced him to — among other things — different aspects of the U.K.'s musical output. He began listening to some of England's finest six-string exports — namely Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck and Jimmy Page — as he started pursuing his own career in music. "The British were my gateway into the blues," says Bonamassa, who even dedicated an entire 2016 U.K. tour to his British guitar heroes. Some of that tour's highlights — including Bonamassa's scorching takes on the Jeff Beck Group's "Let Me Love You," Cream's "SWLABR" and Led Zeppelin's "How Many More Times" — can be heard on 2018's *British Blues Explosion Live*.

That same year, right around the time we called Bonamassa to discuss *British Blues Explosion Live,* the guitarist joined former Whitesnake six-stringer Bernie Marsden, former Cream drummer Ginger Baker and ex-Cream lyricist Pete Brown (who co-wrote "SWLABR" with Jack Bruce) for a rollicking session at London's Abbey Road Studios, the hallowed ground where the Beatles and Pink Floyd — among countless other artists — tracked their masterpieces. Bonamassa fondly recalls that original session, which wound up being the last time he saw Baker, who died October 6, 2019. ("It was, as you would expect, as advertised," he says.) He enjoyed it so much that he began talking with Marsden and Brown about doing it again. "[I said], what would it be like if I came over and kind of camped out in London — and we wrote a record? I'd made the last couple of records in Nashville. And I thought, maybe if I come to England, [it would] change the sound a little bit — or at least change my headspace. It was a bucket-list thing that I really wanted to do."

Bonamassa, Marsden and Brown reconvened with producer Kevin Shirley in London in January 2020 to write and record Bonamassa's bluesy new album — *Royal Tea,* released October 23 via J&R Adventures — at Abbey Road. Joining them was Bonamassa's touring band, including drummer Anton Fig, bassist Michael Rhodes and former Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble keyboardist Reese Wynans. Bonamassa co-wrote with Marsden, Brown and former Squeeze keyboardist Jools Holland, who also plays on the album. "Writing this record in London has done its job," Bonamassa says. "It really does sound inherently British. Bernie and I, we finish each other's sentences. We're cut from the same cloth."

RECORDING AT ABBEY ROAD

WHILE IT WAS easy to be in awe of such a storied studio, Bonamassa was laser-focused on the mission at hand: capturing a British-sounding record.

"Abbey Road is happy to show you the John Lennon microphone, the McCartney mic, the piano 'Hey Jude' was cut on, the console *The Dark Side of the Moon* was recorded on," he says. "But you can get overwhelmed. You can just go, 'Oh my God, this is where John Lennon had a tomato-and-cheese toastie.' It's great for history, it's great as a fan. But when you're there recording and you have a mission, you have to kind of detach yourself from that and just go, 'Okay, we're in a recording studio to make a record.'"

They recorded on and off for five weeks, during which time Bonamassa considered Abbey Road his home office. While recording, he focused on two guitar tones that helped shape the record — a "bitey" sound courtesy of a Fender Telecaster and a "real dark" Gibson Les Paul tone. "It's like when you're painting landscapes — the sky is always blue," he says. "You just have those outlines and then you fill them in sonically."

In something of a "full circle" moment, *Royal Tea* arrives on the heels of *A New Day Now*, a remixed, remastered and re-sung version of Bonamassa's debut album, 2000's *A New Day Yesterday*. "When I listen to [that] album, even though I re-sang it, I was just a kid who could play a little bit," Bonamassa says. "And when I listen to [*Royal Tea*], there's an artist. Like, this took 20 years. And there's a lot more to it than just being able to play. When I listen to the first album, as much as people like that record, the tempos are quick. I was just this kid who didn't really have direction, although [producer] Tom Dowd did the best he could with what he had. It's a 20-year bookend."

Below, Bonamassa discusses *Royal Tea* — part two of that bookend — track by track.

"WHEN ONE DOOR OPENS"

I WROTE "WHEN One Door Opens" with

MARTY MOFFATT

Bonamassa performs in London

berating, and I started to think about hypothetical ways the whole situation could play out — not in a good way, obviously. A blues song. By the time I got to the studio, I had this idea for the chorus. We knew it was the title track as soon as we had it.

"WHY DOES IT TAKE SO LONG TO SAY GOODBYE"

THAT'S ONE I wrote with Bernie Marsden. I think it's one of the better songs I've been involved in for a minute. It's obviously inspired by Gary Moore, but it's also very topical, something I was living through at the moment. Bernie had this great knack. If I brought him something, I'd ask him, "What would the British do?" He'd be like, "No, no, you've got to go to the minor fifth" or something like that. But he knows those British chord changes. Because he is one — he is British! That was great because we speak the same language, but we're coming from different continents.

"LOOKOUT MAN!"

"LOOKOUT MAN!" WAS a Pete Brown lyric. Kevin and I were messing around in the studio. We never make demos, but we made a demo for that. So we came up with this riff, then Errol Linton, a great musician in London, came in and added harmonica. I was like, "All right, now we have a blues song!" Having blues harmonica on it really glued it together.

"HIGH CLASS GIRL"

THAT'S A JOHN Mayall-inspired song that was inspired by true events. Bernie and I were fucking around with an amp. I was showing him how good it sounded before we left, and I just kind of wrote that. We were just messing with that riff and he goes, "Let's write it!" And we wrote it in an hour — before dinner.

"A CONVERSATION WITH ALICE"

THAT'S ABOUT MY two trips to a therapist, so it's based on true events. I figured out that being a character is better than talking myself out of being a character. It makes me good at my job. So be it. You can't fix everyone and everything, me being one of them.

"I DIDN'T THINK SHE WOULD DO IT"

A COOL LYRIC by Pete Brown. The idea was, if Iron Maiden and Cream did a song, like a Cream blues gallop. It's an odd fellow, as they say. It's a very odd fellow, that song!

"BEYOND THE SILENCE"

THAT WAS ONE I wrote myself on the baritone guitar. It's about what happens to someone who lives a very fast-paced life and all of a sudden it all goes quiet. The shock to the system — kind of like what we're going through now.

"LONELY BOY"

THAT'S A BOOGIE I did with Dave Stewart and Jools Holland. By that point in the record, we said what we had to say. It's just a fun track — and Jools played great on it.

"SAVANNAH"

BERNIE CAME IN with that, but with a slightly different title. To me it sounds like Pure Prairie League; it's the most American-sounding song on the record, so it's odd that Bernie wrote it. I helped finish it, but it was one of those things where you just go, "Okay, it's just how it works sometimes." GW

"BERNIE [MARSDEN] HAD THIS GREAT KNACK. IF I BROUGHT HIM SOMETHING, I'D ASK HIM, 'WHAT WOULD THE BRITISH DO?' HE'D BE LIKE, 'NO, NO, YOU'VE GOT TO GO TO THE MINOR FIFTH' OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. HE KNOWS THOSE BRITISH CHORD CHANGES!"

18+

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Brian Setzer

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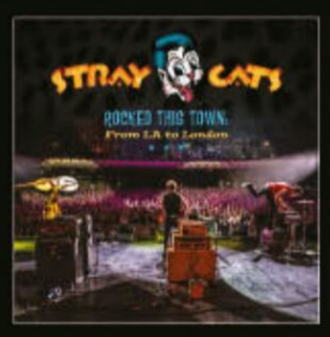

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Eddie Van Halen
photographed in
Malibu, California,
July 12, 2013

GUITAR WORLD
JANUARY 2021

A FAREWELL TO THE KING

CHRIS GILL, WHO INTERVIEWED

EDDIE VAN HALEN

15 TIMES BETWEEN 1995 AND 2016, OFFERS A HEARTFELT TRIBUTE TO ONE OF THE GREATEST GUITARISTS THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN

❁ Words by CHRIS GILL | Photo by KEVIN SCANLON ❁

EDWARD VAN HALEN IS GONE.

The greatest guitarist of our generation left this earth on October 6, 2020, after succumbing to a long, painful battle with cancer that had kept him away from the public spotlight for the last few years. He was only 65 years old.

NEWS OF VAN Halen's death shocked the guitar community, which is still mourning the loss of a man that many of us considered the most influential guitarist of our lifetime. It is certainly understandable to mourn Ed's death, particularly since he passed earlier than most of us imagined he would, and his imagination and individual musical voice have now been silenced.

But while some are grieving his passing as the end of an era, the encouraging truth is that Ed's numerous contributions to the guitar will live on for many more decades, and perhaps even centuries, well into the future. His life will endure as guitarists celebrate the many gifts Ed shared with the world that made our favored instrument better, more popular and enduringly cool.

The majority of *Guitar World* readers today are probably too young to remember what things were like before Edward Van Halen came along, but for many older guitarists — myself included — the release of Van Halen's debut album on February 8, 1978, was as historic to my generation as the Beatles' performance on *The Ed Sullivan Show* almost exactly 14 years earlier on February 9, 1964, was to the previous generation. I consider myself very fortunate that I got to witness Van Halen's rise to fame as the band first gained exposure beyond the Los Angeles club scene, having heard "You Really Got Me" on Los Angeles radio station KMET when Warner Bros. rush-released the single about a month before the debut album hit record store shelves. The song's unique sound — the brash, powerful guitar, massive drums, distinctive vocal harmonies and David Lee Roth's wild screams — simply blew me away, but even that didn't prepare me for what came soon after.

At 8 p.m. the day of the album's release, San Diego radio station KGB (I lived in northern San Diego county so my radio picked up signals from both cities) played *Van Halen* in its entirety. I was mesmerized from the very first seconds of "Runnin' with the Devil" as the cacophony of blasting car horns descended in pitch like a landing alien spacecraft, followed by a bass line that stomped like Godzilla crushing Tokyo, a dissonant metallic swipe of the strings between the guitar's stop tailpiece and bridge (a sound I already recognized from my own wanderings beyond the fretboard) and the biggest rush of power chord fury I had ever heard.

Then came 102 seconds that changed my life forever — "Eruption." I considered myself a connoisseur of the finest guitar music of the day, with a record collection that featured the work of guitarists like Al Di Meola, John McLaughlin and even Andres Segovia in addition to revered rock gods like Jimi Hendrix, the British "holy trinity" of Jeff Beck, Eric Clapton and Jimmy Page, Ritchie Blackmore, Brian May, Uli Jon Roth, Michael Schenker and many, many others, but "Eruption" sounded completely unlike anything I had ever heard before. The blazing tremolo-picked lines were immaculately precise; the vibrato bar dives plunged to the deepest lows; and the semi-classical flurry of triads that I soon discovered were generated by playing with both hands on the neck made the guitar sound like an entirely new instrument. But "Eruption" was impressive for much more than Ed's rapid-fire licks and fretboard fireworks — every single note had a playful yet aggressive attitude, raw power and massive tone that still impresses to this day.

Many other jaw-dropping moments followed, including the hot-rodded blues boogie of "I'm the One" featuring two dazzling solos, the phase-shifted muted-string helicopter chop dissonance of "Atomic Punk" and the exploding harmonic fireworks and bombastic whammy bar dives of "On Fire." Ed's solos were filled with flash, dynamics and drama, and his tone was visceral and more violent than anything punk rock and heavy metal had delivered at the time. As soon as the record finished, I called my best guitar-playing buddy Robert, who had also heard the broadcast and was as awe-struck as I was. The next morning, we both rushed out to the record store to buy a copy of the album and set out on a race to see who could figure out how to play "Eruption" first.

That album had a profound effect on me, and I soon discovered that thousands of guitarists felt the same way, igniting a deep passion for the instrument that remains to this day for all of us. Some of us were there right at the beginning, while others discovered it a few months or even years later, but the overall effect was identical. It is the event that inspired us to look at the guitar in an entirely new way and to pursue careers that involved music. Some of my fellow guitarist friends and acquaintances that I met over the next few years who were similarly affected by *Van Halen* went on to become great guitarists themselves, some designed guitars, amps or pedals, a few became recording engineers and one illustrated album covers. I ended up working for record companies and musical instrument manufacturers before finding my dream job as a guitar journalist.

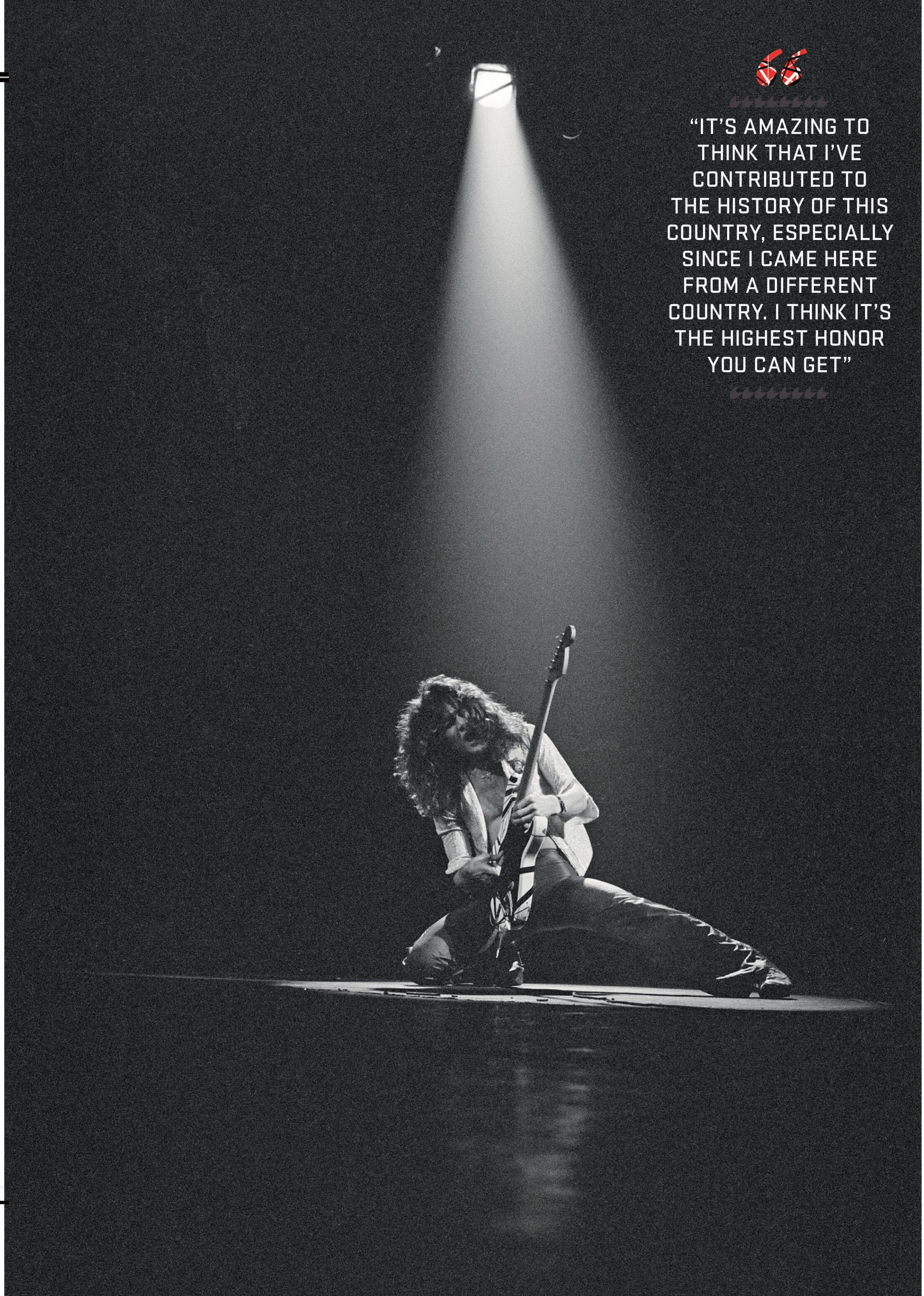
It took a few years before guitarists, instrument manufacturers and the record industry started to catch up with what Ed was doing as it took that long to get even a hint at what he was doing — many early reviews even mistakenly described "Eruption" as a synthesizer solo. Soon Van Halen's influence became the pre-eminent driving factor for guitar music and gear throughout the entire Eighties into the early Nineties. It has often been said that Ed changed both the way the guitar was played and how it was made, but his influence is more far-reaching than the oft-cited examples of his signature tapping technique or the popularity of his "Super Strat" guitar design.

One of Van Halen's most overlooked contributions is his impact on guitar education. The licks that Ed played went well beyond the common blues-based pentatonic scale patterns that many players could easily figure out by ear, which motivated many dedicated aspiring guitarists to seriously study the instrument like never before. During the late Seventies and Eighties, enrollment in guitar programs at Boston's Berklee College of Music, Hollywood's Guitar Institute of Technology and other higher-learning establishments skyrocketed. Detailed note-for-note transcriptions and tablature became the new norm, replacing sheet music that only provided basic chord charts and simplified melodies adapted for piano players. Guitar magazines proliferated, with the previously established *Guitar Player* joined by *Guitar World* in 1980 and *Guitar for the Practicing Musician* in 1982, culminating with more than a dozen regular guitar publications available on newsstands in the mid Nineties in the United States and numerous others abroad in the U.K., Europe and Japan.

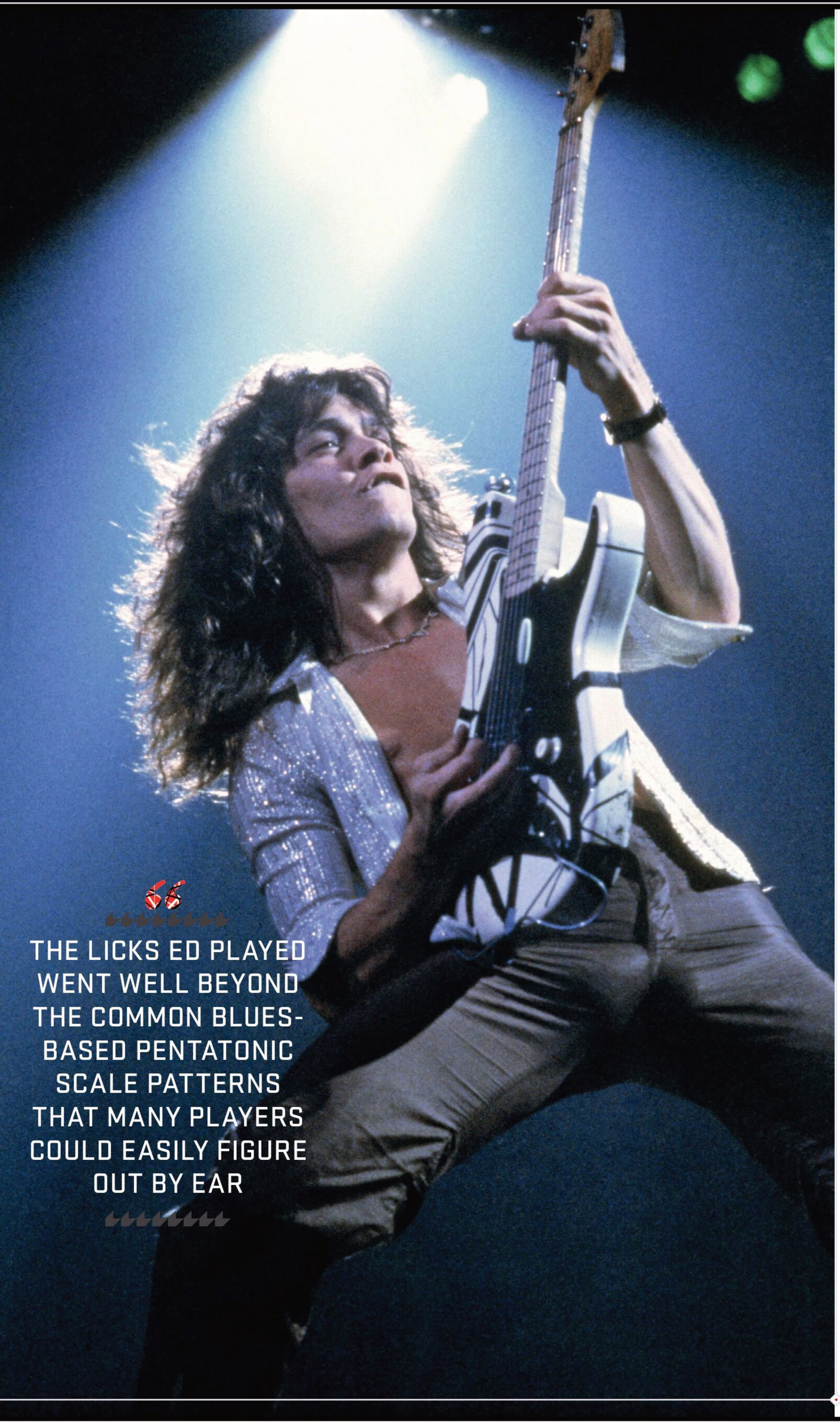
The seeds of Ed's inspiration truly began to sprout during the early Eighties. Hoping to discover the next Van Halen, Mike Varney established Shrapnel Records, which introduced the world to numerous virtuoso

Eddie Van Halen strikes a classic pose at London's Rainbow Theatre, October 22, 1978

FIN COSTELLO/REDFERNS



“IT’S AMAZING TO THINK THAT I’VE CONTRIBUTED TO THE HISTORY OF THIS COUNTRY, ESPECIALLY SINCE I CAME HERE FROM A DIFFERENT COUNTRY. I THINK IT’S THE HIGHEST HONOR YOU CAN GET”



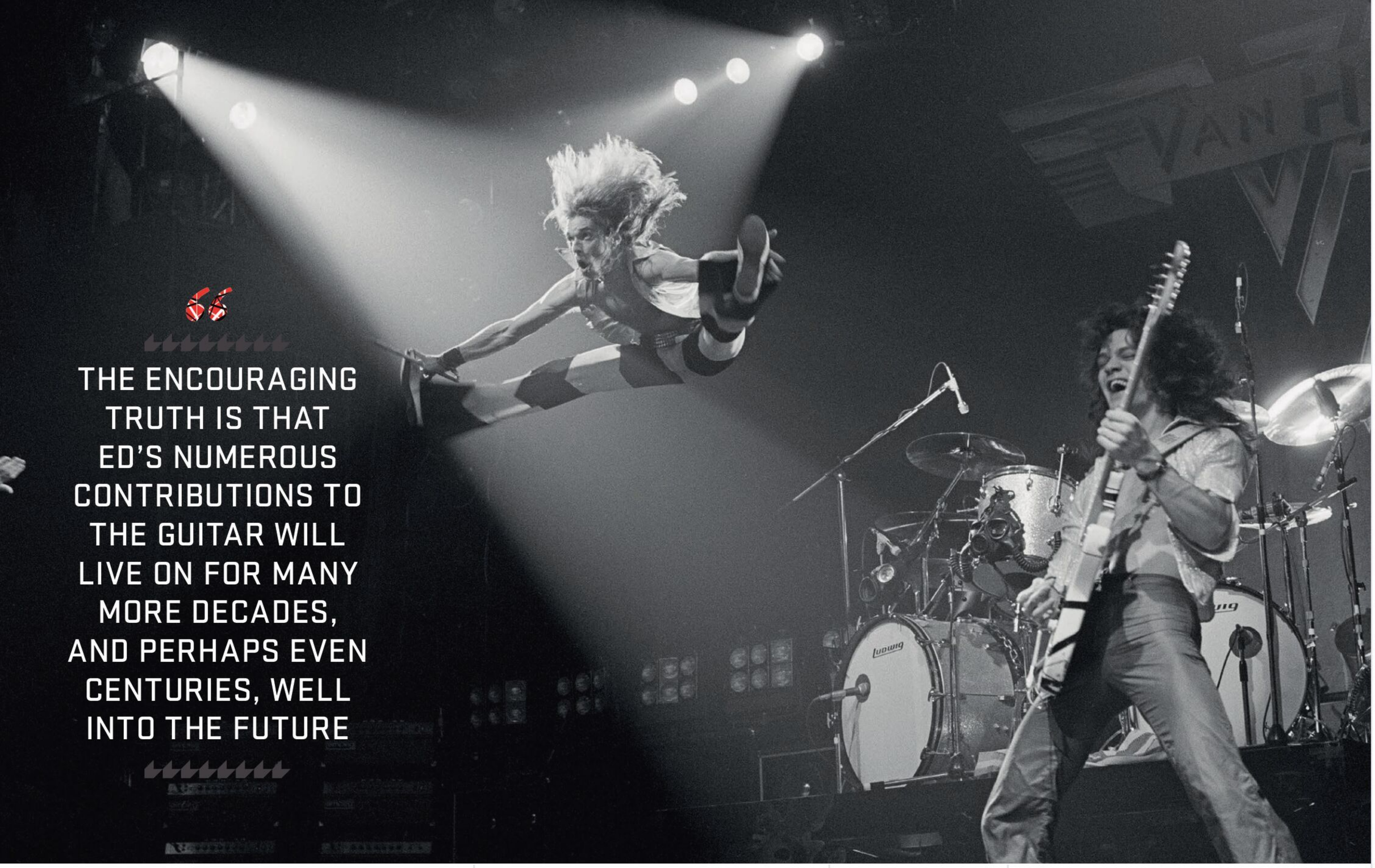
> THE LICKS ED PLAYED WENT WELL BEYOND THE COMMON BLUES-BASED PENTATONIC SCALE PATTERNS THAT MANY PLAYERS COULD EASILY FIGURE OUT BY EAR

FIN COSTELLO/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES (BOTH PAGES)

guitarists, including Michael Angelo Batio, Jason Becker, Marty Friedman, Paul Gilbert, Greg Howe, Richie Kotzen, Shawn Lane, Tony MacAlpine, Yngwie Malmsteen and Vinnie Moore. After parting ways with Black Sabbath, Ozzy Osbourne, who certainly had fresh memories of Van Halen blowing his band off the stage every night when they toured together in 1978, joined forces with guitar phenom Randy Rhoads, who came from the same Hollywood club scene as Van Halen. It soon became common for vocalists to pair up with hotshot guitarists, like Billy Idol did with Steve Stevens, Ozzy continued to do with a string of players like Brad Gillis, Jake E. Lee, Zakk Wylde and Gus G. and even David Lee Roth did in the mid Eighties with Steve Vai when he left Van Halen to pursue a solo career.

There is not enough space to list all of the guitarists that Van Halen inspired who emerged in the Eighties and beyond. Most of these players used a "Super Strat" guitar with a Strat-style body, humbucking bridge pickup and double-locking vibrato inspired by Van Halen's original "Frankenstein," making Ed's design the most popular guitar style to emerge since the Gibson Les Paul and Fender Telecaster and Stratocaster were introduced in the Fifties — a distinction that endures today. B.C. Rich, Carvin, Charvel, Dean, ESP, Fernandes, Hamer, Ibanez, Jackson, Kramer, Robin, Schecter, Valley Arts, Washburn and Yamaha were among the larger companies that offered guitars with this design during the Eighties, and boutique shops from Pensa-Suhr in New York City to Performance Guitar in Hollywood established their initial success by building custom Super Strats as well.

Ed's impact on the musical instrument industry reached much further than imitations of his signature guitar design. Pickup companies like DiMarzio and Seymour Duncan were just starting out when Van Halen came along, and Ed gave their business a huge boost when he discussed how he swapped his guitars' pickups in interviews. His numerous experiments with amplifiers bolstered the popularity and development of high-gain amps as well as the emergence of amp techs that performed hot-rodded modifications, many of whom went on to establish boutique amp companies. Even replacement-tube companies benefited from Van Halen's statements about preferring 6CA7 tubes in his Marshalls over stock EL34s, as gui-



> THE ENCOURAGING TRUTH IS THAT ED'S NUMEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE GUITAR WILL LIVE ON FOR MANY MORE DECADES, AND PERHAPS EVEN CENTURIES, WELL INTO THE FUTURE

tarists who never previously gave tubes much thought unless they needed to be replaced suddenly became obsessed with finding the ideal tubes for their amps. Although Ed didn't use distortion pedals, companies that manufactured them also benefitted as guitarists sought an affordable means of boosting gain to replicate his tones.

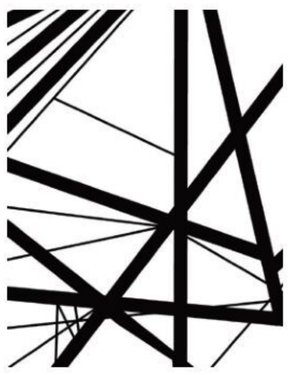
While Ed is best known for his homemade "Frankenstein" guitars as well as the signature models he developed, first with Ernie Ball Music Man in 1990, then with Peavey in 1996 and the Wolfgang model introduced by his own EVH brand in 2009, he consistently explored new sounds from a wide variety of instruments throughout his career. Ed was one of the few guitarists who played a Ripley stereo guitar (on "Top Jimmy," "Ripley" and "Blood and Fire"), and he was also one of only a handful of guitarists who truly mastered the revolutionary Steinberger TransTrem vibrato, using it on "Get Up," "Summer Nights," "Pleasure Dome," "Fire in the Hole" and "Me Wise Magic." He even recognized the musical potential of amplifying a Makita cordless drill through his guitar's pickups on "Poundcake."

My favorite interview with Ed was a cover story for *Guitar Aficionado* where he invited me to his 5150 studio to view about 40 guitars from his collection. Ed told illuminating stories about each guitar, and I quickly realized he could find the songs lurking in any instrument he touched, whether it was the Gretsch 6120 he played on "Once" or the trio of Airline guitars, each tuned to separate open chords, that he used for "Learning to See."

I had interviewed Ed 15 times, starting in 1995 when I talked with him about the recording of *Balance* for *Guitar Player* magazine and ending in early 2016 when he discussed details of his 2015 tour rig, but that interview for *Guitar Aficionado* gave me more insight into his musical genius than any other. Ed was most comfortable talking about his instruments and innovations rather than interpersonal relations with former band members, and hearing him talk about his creative pursuits I realized he had become frustrated with a world that wanted him to constantly retread his former glories while his musical talents and ambitions had moved well beyond that.

This was particularly evident when he talked about the guitars he used on *Van Halen III*. "It's too bad that the album didn't sell really well," Van Halen said. "I probably did some of my best playing on that album. Some of the riffs are really great, like on 'Fire in the Hole.' I played all kinds of different guitars on 'Ballot or the Bullet,' from a Coral electric sitar on the intro ('Primary') to a National resonator guitar for acoustic slide parts."

[*left and above*] **Two more photos from Van Halen's October 22, 1978, show at London's Rainbow Theatre. Eddie's influence became the preeminent driving factor for guitar music and gear throughout the Eighties into the early Nineties. It has often been said that Ed changed both the way the guitar was played — and how it was made**



Considering that *Van Halen III* is the closest thing to a true Van Halen solo album that he ever released — Ed played most of the bass parts and even recorded some drum tracks in addition to laying down the widest variety of guitar tones ever heard from him — I believe he was crushed and even offended by his fans' reluctance to embrace his new, more mature and progressive direction. Ed could have taken the easy way out and put the blame on Gary Cherone, providing more fodder for gossip rags, but instead he became private and withdrawn, letting personal demons get the best of him.

Ultimately, Ed's son Wolfgang became his saving grace. Ed valued family more than anything else in his life, probably because family was all he really had during his formative years after he emigrated to the United States with his father, mother and brother in 1962. The band had become Ed's family as well, and when other members strayed and no longer viewed it as a priority the same way he did, he felt betrayed and abandoned.

When Wolfgang was born on March

16, 1991, Ed expressed hopes that his son would become a musician too, following in his footsteps and maintaining the family's musical legacy that stretched back to Ed's father Jan. Like Jan had done when christening Ed with the middle name "Lodewijk" after Ludwig van Beethoven (Lodewijk is the Dutch version of Ludwig), Ed named his son Wolfgang after Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Ed never pressured Wolfgang into playing music, but he was elated when at age 9 Wolfgang gravitated toward the drums after watching his father and uncle rehearse at 5150. Wolfgang started playing guitar shortly afterwards as well, and by the time he was 13 he was good enough to accompany his father on stage during several shows on Van Halen's 2004 tour.

Impressed by his son's rapid musical development, Ed encouraged Wolfgang to play bass so he could jam with him and Alex. In late 2006, Ed revealed to *Guitar World* that Wolfgang had become Van Halen's new bass player. Many were uncertain that Wolfgang deserved the role considering that he was only 15 at the time, but his performances on Van Halen's subsequent 2007-08 tour — the band's first with David Lee Roth since 1984 — proved the skeptics wrong. Hearing how good Wolfgang actually was, no one other than the most hateful curmudgeon or troll could fault Ed for wanting to play on stage with his son. The bond between the two was as musical as it was familial.

"I don't even know how to explain how it feels to have Wolfgang follow in the footsteps of my father and me," Ed told me in 2015. "He's a third-generation Van Halen. When people ask me what it's like to play with my son all I can say is that it's the greatest feeling you can imagine."

While many Roth-era fans longed for a reunion of the original four members of the band, without Wolfgang the band very likely would not have done three tours and recorded *A Different Kind of Truth*, not to mention *Tokyo Dome Live in Concert,* its only official live album with David Lee Roth on vocals. The positive effect that Wolfgang had on Ed was particularly evident on the 2012 and 2015 tours, where the guitarist was playing better than he ever had before. Ed's solo segment on the 2015 tour consistently showcased his playing in peak form, particularly during the band's final concert on October 4, 2015, at the Hollywood Bowl.

Van Halen may have released only three songs in 2004 ("It's About Time," "Learning to See" and "Up for Breakfast") and one album of new material in 2012, but Ed remained creative and productive during the new millennium years in an entirely different way. After collaborating with Ernie Ball Music Man and Peavey on the design of his signature guitars and with Peavey on his 5150 amp, Ed devoted his creative energy to his own EVH brand products. EVH went well beyond the usual artist endorsement agreements and signature models by giving Ed full creative control of an entire line of musical instruments — an industry first.

With EVH, Ed approached product development with the same dedication, passion and attention to detail that he devoted to playing and recording music. Perhaps the greatest example of this was the EVH Wolfgang guitar. Although Ed had played prototypes of the EVH Wolfgang on Van Halen's 2007-08 tour, he did not approve the model for production until 2009. Over the two-year course of the Wolfgang's refinement, Ed spent nine months trying out more than 80 new pickup designs until he found the right ones. Ed even had specially designed potentiometers made for the guitar — a low-friction pot for the volume control to facilitate the swells he performed on "Cathedral" and a high-friction pot for the tone control to keep it solidly in place. Every detail of the Wolfgang was painstakingly examined and refined, whether it involved moving a pickup's mounting 1/32nd of an inch or finding the best clearcoat finish.

That attention to detail is simply unheard of with any other artist model guitar. And Ed's elevated standards for quality control applied to every product that EVH offered. The proof of that was Ed's use of an EVH Wolfgang Standard — the most affordable EVH guitar model with prices that currently start at $600 — to play "I'll Wait" on Van Halen's 2015 tour. Further proof lies in the 5150 III amp's status as a standard recording studio fixture and its presence in the touring backlines of numerous bands of genres ranging from metal to country.

So-called fans and casual observers who called Ed's EVH endeavor a "cash grab" have no idea how offensive and just plain incorrect that characterization was. Ed could easily have put his name on just about any guitar, amp or musical product with very little effort and made millions, but he truly cared about fellow musicians as much as he cared about his own reputation. Those same standards applied across the board to everything from albums to the licensing of Van Halen's music for films and commercials. Only two Roth-era songs have been licensed for commercials — "Runnin' with the Devil" for the Acura NSX in 2016 and "You Really Got Me" for the Nissan 300ZX Turbo in 1996 — and both ads are undeniably cool. Ed constantly received very generous offers for money-making endeavors, but he turned down everything that he didn't believe in 100 percent, which was likely 999,999 of out of a million offers.

This is probably as good of a moment as any to bring up Ed's relationship with *Guitar World*. For the last 14 years I was very privileged to work closely with Ed on all of the interviews he did with the magazine. I've interviewed more than 1,000 different artists over the span of 30 years, but I've never encountered another subject who was as dedicated to the process as he was. Most artists' involvement with an interview starts and ends with the interview itself, but with Ed the interview was just the beginning as he and Matt Bruck (who started as Ed's tech and became his EVH business partner) would work with me through various drafts like editors.

This was not because Ed was a control freak. It was because he truly cared about other guitarists and he wanted to make sure that every detail of an article was as correct as the details were on his guitars and amps. The fact-checking process started with the 2007 feature about the gear that he used on Van Halen's first album. Ed and Matt made numerous corrections, changes and clarifications to that article, and it stands as the definitive account, despite the claims of self-proclaimed internet experts who never met Ed, let alone visited 5150 and saw his original Marshall head or held the original "Frankenstein" guitars in their hands.

I will admit that Ed sometimes cut information or quotes from articles, but he had good reasons for doing that. Sometimes this was done when Ed realized that his words could easily be misinterpreted and that he could potentially upset or offend fans or people he knew. More often it was something that he either thought wasn't all that important or that he decided not to share so he could preserve some mystique and motivate guitarists to figure some things out on their own, the way he did when he stumbled across many of his best ideas.

His desire to preserve some element of mystique is why Ed refused to participate in social media and reveal every minute detail of his personal life. In casual conversations after our interviews, he often talked about how he loved that he knew very little about bands like Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath during the Seventies and how those bands left so much to fans' imaginations. But I also think that Ed never really cared all that much for being the center of attention when he didn't have a guitar in his hands. Ed was never comfortable with the term "rock star," and he preferred to be described as a guitarist or — even better — as an inventor and innovator.

That mystique often led to fans and the mainstream press characterizing Ed as some sort of Howard Hughes-style eccentric hermit, holed up in private within the confines of 5150, safely sealed off from the outside world by his home's security gates. The truth is that Ed was down to earth and more of a regular guy than anyone could imagine. One of my favorite stories that Ed told me was about him driving his rather massive and unmissable 1947 Dodge cab-over stake-bed truck (painted bright red — what else?) to buy groceries near his home one day, only to have it break down just as he was pulling out of the parking lot, blocking both the parking lot entrance and a lane of a major ave-

> “PEOPLE ASK ME WHAT IT’S LIKE TO PLAY WITH MY SON. ALL I CAN SAY IS IT’S THE GREATEST FEELING YOU CAN IMAGINE”

KMAZUR/WIREIMAGE FOR VAN HALEN

nue. I know many rock stars nowhere near as famous as Ed who would never go out in public like that, let alone buy their own groceries, but Ed was never a prima donna or snob.

My biggest regret of Ed’s passing is that I knew he had so much more to offer guitarists and the band’s fans, but the complications of his cancer affliction prevented that. In April of 2018 I was thrilled to be one of the first people to find out (after swearing to keep the news secret) that plans were being made for the long-awaited reunion of Ed, Al, David Lee Roth and Michael Anthony for a massive stadium tour. Ed had lived out his dream of playing music on stage with his son for more than a decade, and now he was looking forward to finally giving fans what many of them had wanted more than anything.

About a year later, we reached out to Ed about doing an in-depth interview about the recording of *Van Halen II* in celebration of the album’s 40th anniversary. Matt Bruck asked me to prepare some questions in advance so Ed could refresh his memory, but before I was able to do that, Ed’s wife and publicist Janie notified us that Ed wouldn’t be able to do the interview. I respected Ed too much to ask for an explanation, and I knew he would contact us when he was ready to go, as he had done a few times in the past when an interview was postponed.

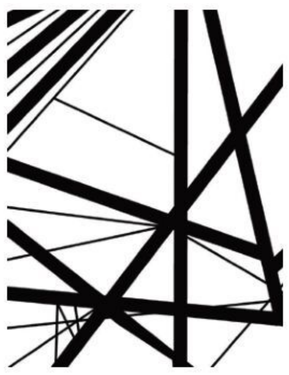
Unfortunately, that interview never happened. I had heard the rumors about Ed’s cancer, and I realized that, if they were true, Ed had more important matters to tend to than talking to a guitar magazine. The news that arrived on the afternoon of October 6 hit me like a ton of bricks as I realized the guitar community had lost the best friend and biggest champion it had ever had, and that I would never have another opportunity to seek out his wisdom and share his insights with our readers.

I can’t speak for Ed, but I think he would like to be remembered mainly for his guitar playing and instrument inventions and innovations. Of all the musicians he met and knew, he respected Les Paul most of all, and I believe that Ed would like history to remember him playing a comparable role to Les in the electric guitar’s evolution.

After the Smithsonian National Museum of American History honored Ed as a musical innovator and inventor on February 13, 2015, when he donated some of his guitars to the museum and participated in a conversation hosted by the museum and Zocalo Public Square, I asked Ed how he felt about the event. “To be acknowledged by the Smithsonian for my contributions to American music and pop culture is much bigger and more of an honor than any award I could think of,” he said. “It’s way beyond a Grammy or the usual music-industry awards. It’s amazing to think that I’ve contributed something to the history of this country, especially since I came here from a different county. I think it’s the highest honor you can get.”

Thank you, Ed, for all that you gave us. We love you, and we miss you. GW

Wolfgang [*left*] and Eddie Van Halen perform “316” at the Meadowlands in East Rutherford, New Jersey, June 22, 2004



GUITAR WORLD
JANUARY 2021

'TALKIN' 'BOUT LOVE

AN AWESOME ASSEMBLAGE OF EDDIE VAN HALEN'S FRIENDS, CONTEMPORARIES AND ADMIRERS PEN THEIR OWN HEARTFELT TRIBUTES AND PICK THEIR FAVORITE "EDDIE MOMENTS"

STEVE LUKATHER: "THE WORST THING THAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO EDDIE WOULD HAVE BEEN GUITAR LESSONS"

I FIRST MET Eddie at the CaliFFornia World Music Festival in 1979. Van Halen was headlining one night after their first album. Toto's first album was out and we had a hit with "Hold the Line." I loved him from the moment we met. It was like I'd known the guy my whole life.

I was close with Ed for 40-plus years. And he was more than my guitar buddy. Of course, we played each other whatever we were working on, just showing off our shit and going, "Look what I'm doing!" But we didn't speak about guitars a whole lot.

With Ed, he always showed me love, and I had the deepest respect for him. And there's no doubt he was one of the greatest of all fucking time. Who could ever dispute that — how he changed everything? But he was just a humble little guy who just loved to mess with shit and do things different. Like, the worst thing that could have happened to Eddie Van Halen would have been guitar lessons. When it came down to details about equipment and how he liked to do things, he always had an "adventure" mentality. He knew what he wanted. And he wanted really weird shit.

We co-wrote a song for my first solo record ["Twist the Knife," from 1989's *Lukather*]. He said, "Yeah... I have this riff, I want you to learn it." So I got to get inside his head for a minute. And what he did was he gave me a guitar and he said, "Tune it up a whole step and take an A bass string and tune it to B." And I go, "*What*? The neck's gonna bend in half. What the fuck?" He goes, "Trust me." I did it and I got a good take out of it, and that's the record.

We did a few things together. I sang some background vocals on a couple Van Halen tunes, and Ed and I got to do that crazy Michael Jackson record that was fluke-ishly put together. I was working on the album [1982's *Thriller*] already. Long story short, they did a version of "Beat It," and they sent it to Eddie to do the solo. But he cut the tape because he wanted to play over a different section. So Quincy [Jones, *Thriller* producer] called me and [Toto drummer] Jeff Porcaro and said, "I need you guys to fix this record for me because Eddie cut the tape!" Ed, he didn't give a fuck. It's like, "We're in my studio, we do things my way." He didn't do sessions. He said to me later, "I didn't get paid..." I said, "You didn't go to the union and pick up your check, Ed. It's probably still there — your thousand bucks for the session." He goes, "I never thought about that!"

Ed fucking changed the world. I remember him telling me, "Look, man, I never meant to turn [tapping] into this parlor trick thing — it's just the way I play." It's playing rhythm and lead at the same time, you know? He found a new way to fill out the sound. He created a whole orchestra on the instrument. You have to look at things pre-Van Halen and post-Van Halen when it comes to guitar.

I'm really upset. What do you say? Somebody you spent 40-odd years with. The good, the bad, the ugly. Marriage, divorce, kids. We spent a lot of life together. He would drop by my house and we'd sit and talk for hours. Wolfie's doing this, my kid's doing that... We were both proud parents. And he was the same cat I met in 1978, all the way up to the end.

Compiled by RICHARD BIENSTOCK and AMIT SHARMA, with BRAD TOLINSKI and GREGORY ADAMS

EBET ROBERTS/REDFERNS

Eddie Van Halen (with his Kramer 5150) performs at New York City's Madison Square Garden, March 30, 1984

I just loved him so much. And we all knew he was sick. He was struggling with this shit for 10 years but he kept beating it. Motherfucker was a pit bull. He was strong. It breaks my heart that he's gone.

I feel so sad for Wolfie and Al and Janie, his wife. I feel for the people that really knew him and loved him. I'm gonna miss him more as a friend than a guitar player. But man, that shit's gonna be played and studied for all eternity. As it should be.

ADAM JONES: "I WAS REALLY HAPPY TO HAVE THAT MOMENT WITH HIM"

THE FIRST TIME I heard Van Halen, a friend's babysitter played the first album for me. It was like the clouds parting, or like aliens had landed and they were showing us how music is played. "Running with the Devil" — the guitar comes in and it chills you to the bone — in a good way. It scared me. And then "Eruption" comes on and you haven't heard anything like it at all. It was a lot different from the freedom rock I was listening to at that time. It was weird music.

And it's inspiring music. When I started playing guitar I remember my brother telling me, "Oh, this is how he does the hammer-ons." And he was showing me how to hit and pull the string — not with two hands, just one hand. It was all so innovative. Eddie was a modern virtuoso. He influenced *everyone*. He created this springboard for every other guitar player. Just think about Eighties guitar players all emulating Eddie Van Halen and trying to top him. Guys like Michael Angelo Batio — "I need two necks!" "I need *four* necks!"

A lot of people, when I'd tell them how much I like Eddie Van Halen they would say, "Well, I don't really hear it in your guitar playing..." And yeah, I'm more of a rhythm guitar player, and my leads are more like a vocal. But Eddie had stuff like "Ain't Talkin' 'Bout Love" — his leads in that [song] are very vocalish and very structured, with a lot of discipline. My ringtone is "Ain't Talkin' 'Bout Love."

Eddie's son Wolf is a big Tool fan and a really cool guy, and he brought his dad to our show at the Staples Center [in L.A.] last year. I don't know if you saw that thing online where there was a guy in the audience that asked someone to take his photo, and he doesn't realize the guy he asked is Eddie Van Halen, the greatest guitar player ever. It was great.

Afterward, Wolf brought his dad to my dressing room and we had a good talk. Eddie was so humble and I was really happy to have that moment with him. To have one of your ultimate heroes shake your hand and say, "Hey, what you're doing, it's really cool," it's like a trophy. Meeting Eddie Van Halen and having him tell you that he thought your show was really cool and you're a good guitar player? That's one of the best things that's ever happened to me.

I feel lucky to have had that music in my life and to have that influence. And even though people can't pinpoint it to what I do, it is absolutely there. Especially my riff writing — it's influenced by Eddie Van Halen. Absolutely. I worship that music. I connect with the way he experimented, and just the idea of taking what you do as far as you can take it. One hundred years from now, when people talk about music and the history of music, they will talk about Van Halen, and Eddie's name will always be there. That guy will live forever.

TONY IOMMI: "VAN HALEN WERE A BLOODY HARD ACT TO FOLLOW, BUT WE WORKED AS A TEAM"

I'VE GOT TWO really great friends in the music business — Brian May is one and Eddie Van Halen was the other. Ed was just fantastic, and his death is a terrible loss. I feel so sad for his wife Janie, brother Alex and his son Wolfgang. It's such a loss for everybody, fans and musicians alike.

He was a fabulously caring human being. Whenever I was in L.A., I'd call him and we'd go out for dinner with our wives, and it was lovely. He was so easy going and we'd just sit and chat about anything.

I met Eddie in '78 when Van Halen toured with Sabbath. It was the band's first world tour and we were on the road together for several months. We had such a great relationship. I used to see Eddie most nights after the show either in my room or his room or in the bar or whatever. We used to just chat all

ROBERT KNIGHT ARCHIVE/REDFERNS

Steve Lukather [*left*] and Eddie Van Halen in the studio in the late Nineties

bloody night, and he's been a really great friend to me ever since. We just talked a lot about music, guitars and the business, really, because Van Halen were fairly new into the business. And sometimes he'd bring his guitar around to my room and we'd play for a bit.

I first heard him on the tour, and I thought, "What?!?!" His energy and persona stood out immediately. You could see he loved playing and was brilliant at it. It was the first time I'd ever heard his various techniques, and he just got better and better as his time went on. I've always had great respect for his playing.

Van Halen were a bloody hard act to follow, but we worked as a team. We were both there to entertain and to enjoy ourselves. I think they learned a lot from us about putting on an arena show — like using drum risers and doing guitar and drum solos.

We stayed in contact in recent years through email or phone. I was going through some of his emails recently and they were really heartwarming. We went through some similar things so we could really relate to each other. For example, a few years ago I told him I was having problems with the cartilage in my thumbs, and Eddie recommended that I go to this guy he was seeing in Germany. So, I went there, and I had this form of STEM cell treatment like Eddie had. And yeah, it was really good. It's not well known that Eddie struggled with his arthritis — I'm amazed how well he played, really.

We were also similar in that neither of us went by the book. We both worked on our guitars and amps to make them do things we needed them to do. He liked to pull things apart, rebuild them and make something out of nothing. He created his own guitar world — and what a world it was!

RICHIE KOTZEN: "I SCREAMED, 'NO, STOP!' AT THE TOP OF MY LUNGS WHILE POINTING AT THE CAR RADIO IN DISBELIEF"

THE FIRST TIME I heard Eddie Van Halen's playing was on the solo of the Michael Jackson song "Beat It." I vividly remember pulling into our driveway, and as my dad was about to turn off the car I screamed, "No, stop!" at the top of my lungs while pointing at the car radio in disbelief at what I was hearing. From there I immersed myself in all things Van Halen and did my best to try and figure out the how and why of it all. The sound, the notes, the chord voicings. It was all so fresh, unique and previously unheard. I quickly realized I was not very good at copying the ways of others so I abandoned the idea of dissecting but remained well aware that what I was hearing and feeling would surely become a part of my musical DNA forever. He was, beyond a doubt, the greatest rock and roll guitarist of all time, and his music defined a generation. Rest in peace, Master Edward Van Halen. Love and respect.

JOHN 5: "THIS HAS TO BE ROCK BOTTOM"

WHAT A SAD year this has been — and this has to be rock bottom. Of course, like millions of other people I love the Van Halen deep cuts because you don't hear them all the time like some of my favorites. "The Full Bug," "Hang 'Em High," "Romeo Delight"... the list goes on and on. Eddie is a genius and will always be the greatest. The way he approached his solos was so special, he had so much rhythm in his playing — even when he was at a blistering speed it always had an incredible rhythm to it. Eddie did it all — tapping, double stops and string-skipping — and ended up influencing not thousands but millions of musicians. Don't listen to just the hits, listen to *all* of his genius work.

GENE SIMMONS: "LOTS OF PEOPLE SAY, 'YOU DISCOVERED VAN HALEN.' I DID NO FUCKING SUCH THING, OKAY?"

BY THE END of '76, Kiss had become a pretty big deal. We'd come back to L.A. to write and take two weeks off, and my phone rang and a guy named Rodney Bingenheimer said, "You've got to come with me to the Starwood tonight." So I said, "Sure, I'm not doing anything." I think I grabbed some Popeye's chicken on the way. Greasy stuff, but great.

I get to the club and they stick me in the asshole section on the second floor, where the general public can't go. I was toward the wall and there were people in front of me looking over the railing. I was waiting for the Boyz, who were the headliner and the band everybody was talking about. They had George Lynch on guitar. But the first band came on and it was, "What the hell is *that*?" It sounded like three or four guitar players playing, some of them in harmony, and with speed and melody. It was like a guitar symphony.

I hurried up to the railing and couldn't believe what I saw: There was a lead singer with long blonde hair and no shirt doing splits and all kinds of physical stuff, like an acrobat. And the bass was rocking out and the drummer was pounding away with a double kick. And I was searching for the other guitar players, but it was just one little guy. Looked like a kid. And when this amazing noise was coming out of his guitar, his pick hand wasn't always picking. He had both hands on the neck and I didn't understand what was going on. I was thoroughly knocked out.

Within a few songs the band stopped and this kid stepped out to the front of the stage and started playing by himself. But he was doing the kinds of runs that most guitar players didn't do. None of this old-fashioned blues — it was more classical music. B.B. King may have been in Eddie's DNA someplace, but I didn't hear it.

I wound up taking the guys to New York. I put them up in hotels, bought David [Lee Roth] leather pants and some high-heeled shoes. And we recorded 15 songs at Electric Lady Studios. Almost all of those songs wound up on the first Van Halen record, excluding "House of Pain." Different version, which kicked the recorded "House of Pain"'s ass.

Now, lots of people say, "Hey man, you discovered Van Halen." I did no fucking such thing, okay? That first person who looks up and sees Mount Vesuvius can't say they discovered Mount Vesuvius. It's always been there. You just happened to be the person that came by and said, "Look at that!"

When Kiss went back out on the road about a year later, we turned on the radio and what did we hear? Da-da-da *da-da* [sings the riff from "You Really Got Me"]. I'll tell you, one of the most satisfying things in life is to turn around to everybody and say, "I told you so..."

My favorite Van Halen song of all time is that unreleased "House of Pain." There's nothing better, and that includes "Eruption." That thing is like a locomotive that's going down the track without being able to stop. I love "Jamie's Cryin' " because of that hook. Which, of course, was sampled by Tone Lōc. The funny thing is the other song Tone Lōc sampled was [Kiss'] "Christine Sixteen," which also connects to Eddie and Alex [Van Halen], because they were with me in the studio doing the original demo. In fact, Edward's solo on that — one take — was so good that when Kiss went to re-record the song I forced Ace [Frehley] to copy it note-for-note. He hated that.

Not since Hendrix did anyone change the game like Edward. But don't kid yourself — it wasn't just his guitar. Those are legitimate songs. It's great, classic songwriting. And besides being a monster on his instrument, there was such a pure soul in there. None of that ego stuff. Even when you see the videos of him onstage, when he solos, he looks like he's in heaven. He's smiling his face off while he's just destroying the fretboard. When I heard Edward had passed, the image I got in my head was a big smile.

NUNO BETTENCOURT: "IF 'RUNNING WITH THE DEVIL' WAS THE SPACESHIP, 'ERUPTION' WAS THE ALIEN COMING DOWN THE RAMP TO SHAKE YOUR HAND"

HEARING VAN HALEN for the first time, it made you go, "I love it... but what's happening right now?" We were in a realm of this pentatonic, rock 'n' roll blues-driven thing, but Eddie was a back-to-the-drawing-board moment. We throw out the term "game changer" really lightly, but he was a game changer. One of the few shots heard 'round the world.

With that first album, if "Running with the Devil" was the spaceship, then "Eruption" was the alien coming down the ramp to shake your hand. And it wasn't just "Eruption" — listen

to any of those songs and think about the tone, what was happening in the rhythm department. The stuff that he was swinging, the bebop stuff that they were doing. He made it so fun to play the guitar. He gave us a map on how to be really interesting and be really creative and not just do your rhythm and then wait for a solo. It was all one thing. And it made you go, "Wow, you can do that? Is that allowed?"

I love all the albums, but *Fair Warning* is my favorite, because of the funkiness. That "Mean Street" intro isn't just tapping, it's this banging kind of thing. And then "Dirty Movies"? That was it. It was like the moment when Keanu Reeves sees the matrix. I went, "Okay, Eddie is talking to me."

I didn't have much of a personal relationship with Eddie, but the 10 or 12 times we were together in rooms and talked it was really special. He was always so warm, so welcoming. The first time I met him I was working on Dweezil Zappa's album [1991's *Confessions*], and he handed me his guitar and said, "You've gotta check out this pedal." And it's like, "You want me to play while I check out this pedal?"

So now Eddie is leaning in front of me, dialing in stuff on his pedalboard. And what do you do when the alien who walked off the spaceship that changed your life is in front of you? What do you play? Like an idiot, I kicked into the solo from [Extreme's] "Get the Funk Out." I became a cover of myself.

But the second I go into the tapping part, Eddie turns around and stops me. He goes, "Hey, hey, none of that silly stuff." That scared the shit out of me. It took me a minute and then I said to myself, "He knows who I am. He reads." Because at that time an article had just come out, it may have even been in *Guitar World*, and the interviewer asked about "Get the Funk Out." He said, "You're doing tapping your own way." And I told him, "To be honest with you, I feel silly when I do tapping. Not because it's embarrassing, but because it's so Eddie."

Later on, after I got comfortable around Eddie, I asked him — "Did you read that article?" And he said, "Yeah, I read that." I was like, "Wow, Eddie Van Halen read an interview I did!" Even that shit seemed impossible to me.

Recently we were recording the new Extreme album and I was summoned down from the studio — "Somebody's outside that wants to talk to you." And it was Eddie. We talked for a while, and he played Wolfie's new album in the car, bragging about his son. He said he would come back and listen to our album when we were done. The other day I was playing it in the car and I almost started crying. I would hear one of my solos and be like, "Oh my God, there he is..." He was so influential to me.

After Eddie died, somebody said to me, "What a loss." And I said, "It is, but, man, you've gotta think about what we gained, right? What we gained from him and what he's left for all of us." Eddie's the perfect example that if you do the right thing, if you build it, they will come. And notes aside, sounds aside, as an artist and as a visionary, what I love most about Eddie is how uncalculated he was. It felt like it was just oozing out of him. He was up there onstage with a smile, just playing and having fun. What more can you ask for?

MARTY FRIEDMAN: "WHAT WAS I GONNA DO... JUST CALL EDDIE VAN HALEN UP AND CHAT?"

I LOVED EDDIE and was always completely in awe of him. I didn't know him very well, but he *loved* Jason Becker, was extremely protective of him, and because of that he was very friendly to me. The first time we met was when we played at a benefit for Jason in Chicago. He gave me his home phone number and told me to call him anytime for any reason. Of course, I never did. What was I gonna do... just call Eddie Van Halen up and chat?

Anyway, to understand just how spectacular he was, you have to go back a bit. I'm a huge advocate for finding amazing new music. There's an absolute ton of fantastic, fresh and exciting new music out there, and it can be found really easily. This being said, I have to admit I am blessed and privileged to have been a teenage hesher at the time Van Halen came out. Yes, there is a lot of super music out there now, but nothing for a really long time will be as revolutionary as what Van Halen did back then. Great and deeply enjoyable music now? Yes. Revolutionary? No.

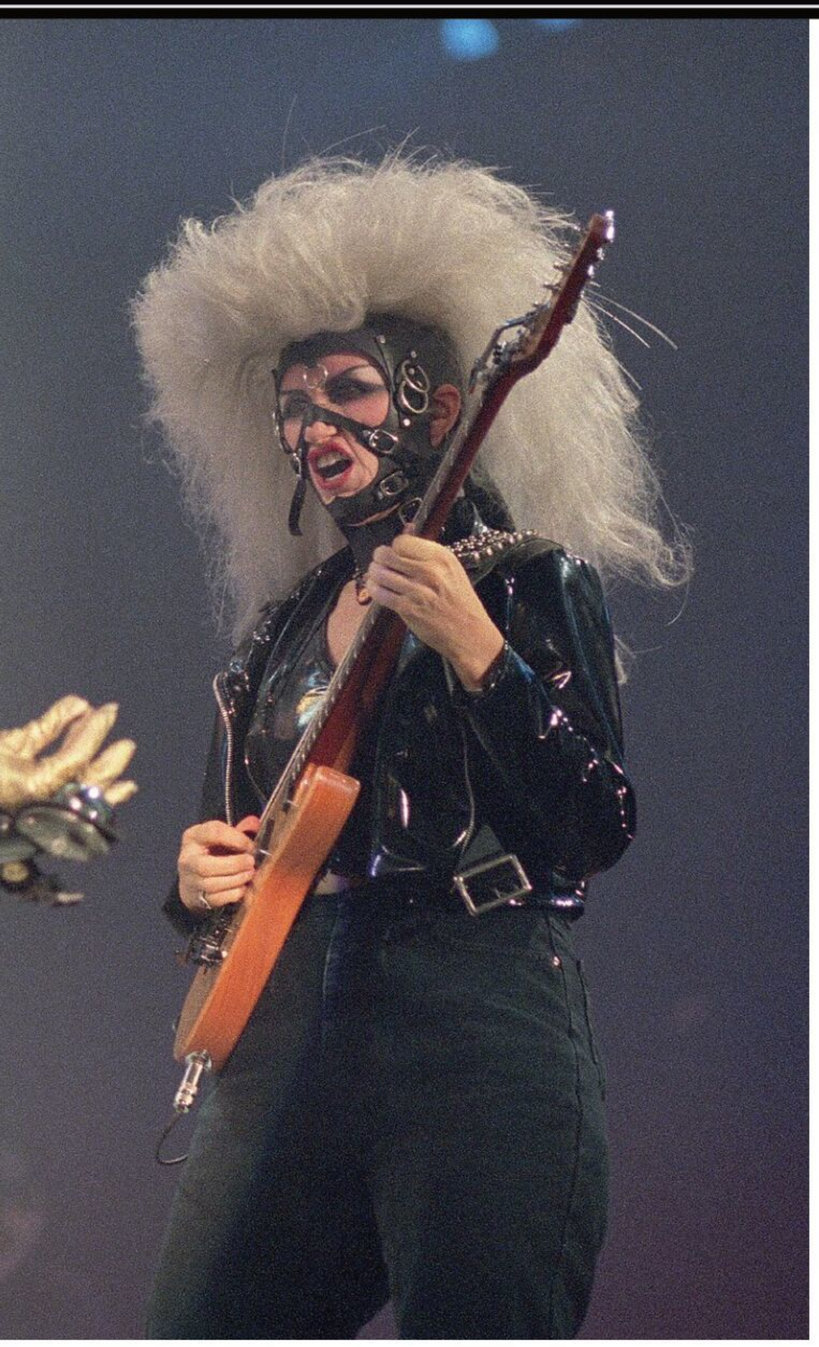
For those of you who didn't experience the first two Van Halen tours live, I'll try to describe it to you. First thing your senses noticed was "that smell" that greeted you at just about every hard rock concert venue back then. It was a unique aroma, made up of 70 percent Mexican and Colombian weed, 10 percent the slight but acrid tang of teenage boys' B.O., 20 percent general female wetness, mixed with that cheap but sweet body spray that all girls used back then, and topped off with a hint of flavored lip gloss. This glorious combination of scents will probably remain lost forever, but those of us who remember it miss it dearly. This smell was the precursor to the rock show that was about to assault our other senses, the show we waited months for, suffering through our hellish school routines.

And no one assaulted us like Van Halen. Eddie's guitar literally *growled* at us. It was almost scary how much sheer force could come out of six strings. Many rock bands back then had two guitarists, but Eddie's guitar sound was a mammoth, larger than any two-guitar-band sound. It was by far the biggest thing we'd ever heard. When I say revolutionary, I mean we were all witnessing for the first time. It was later referred to as the "brown sound," which since then, and still today, a new century later,

is the holy grail of rock guitar tones. Every single rock guitarist has been chasing that sound since then, whether they know it or not. So imagine hearing that when it first came out, blasting through the PA at ungodly decibels. Revolutionary. But, of course, it wasn't just the sound. It was what Eddie did with his guitar that made it just so natural and aggressive. *No one* played lead guitar that aggressively back then — or with so much ease, innovation and new licks for a change! It was a cross between being uber-impressed and enjoying spanking new great rock songs at the same time. And since Van Halen had great pop songs and one of the most charismatic frontmen of all time, half the audience were excited girls, while the other half were boys pointing at the stage with their mouths open in disbelief.

Even after the show was over, the party continued. Local radio stations played VH on loop after the shows and the parking lot was full of cars blasting their radios before everyone scattered off to after parties, where concert goers bragged to those who missed the show and general debauchery continued until all hours. After a VH show, hungover guitar players all over town were glued to their guitars trying furiously to inch a little closer to be a little more like Eddie, because none of us had ever seen a phenomenon like that before. Many of those guitar players went on to become the guitarists we all know and love, and some have gone on to some really great achievements. We have Eddie to thank for that, and also for the future

LEFT: PHIL DENT/REDFERNS RIGHT: MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES



inspiration he will continue to give the next generations.

DEVIN TOWNSEND: "THE INSTRUMENT IS DIRECTLY CONNECTED TO HIS MIND"

HE WAS, IN his prime, the definition of a "connected" player. It's a hard thing to explain, but I get the same feeling about Jeff Beck. Almost like the instrument is directly connected to his mind, so during improv there was a complete control there. He truly made guitar playing seem delicious. There was the blues element that underlined much of what he did, but it was combined with an excitement and fun that was so colorful. We all know about the legendary tapping, but for me it was his overall pick attack and rhythmic sensibilities that really made it work. "Eruption" will always have a place, but anything off the debut album is my jam!

JENNIFER BATTEN: "THAT WAS THE END OF JAZZ FOR ME"

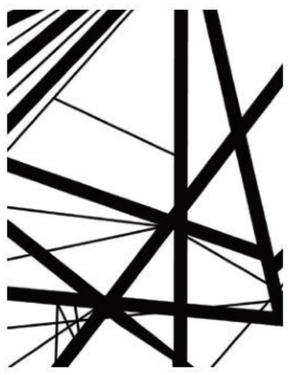
I HAD STUDIED at GIT [*Guitar Institute of Technology*] and wanted to be the next Pat Martino. But hearing the intro to "Mean Street" was one of the things that led to me leaving the jazz world entirely. That intro was so unique and innovative, and the harmonic feedback was so animalistic and wild. It was like, "I want to do *that*." That was the end of jazz for me.

A couple years later I was at rehearsal with a cover band I was playing with at the time. We had the radio on and we heard "Beat It." It was brand new. When that solo came up, we all stopped and looked at each other, like, what the hell was that? It was like time stopped. I immediately bought the record and set out to learn that solo using my little Marantz cassette deck that you could slow down. It was so full of new techniques and sounds and dive bombs and tapping that I couldn't tell what hand was doing what, but I finally figured it out. Later on that solo bought me a house!

The "Beat It" solo was actually one of the things I played during my Michael Jackson audition. I already knew it because I had been playing it in my cover band for at least a year, maybe longer. When I went in to audition, there was no band — it was just me and a video camera. But because of Eddie, every band in Hollywood at that time had an unaccompanied solo spot for the guitarist, and I was in five different bands that would do that. So I was really comfortable playing on my own. For years after that I thought it was "Beat It" that got me the gig. But I finally saw the audition tape 20 years later and went, "Oh, that wasn't as good as I remembered it..."

Onstage with Michael [Batten served as Michael Jackson's lead guitarist from 1987-1997] I would always do the solo just like Eddie. Somebody asked me the other day if I was told to play it that way or if it was my choice. It was definitely my choice because I thought it was one of the most perfect solos in history. I knew I couldn't do better than Eddie. I

[*left*] Jennifer Batten with Michael Jackson in 1996 and [*right*] Van Halen with Jackson in 1984



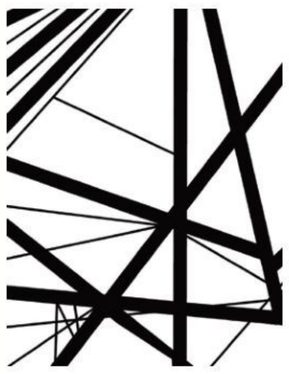
was proud to play it as it was. And it was challenging. It's *still* challenging.

During the *Bad* tour [in 1987-1989] there was a point where we had a break for a couple of weeks and I was going to play a gig with a band. It was one of those nasty L.A. days where the traffic is awful and it's hotter than hell. I showed up late, totally stressed out. And the manager of the band greeted my car and said, "Eddie Van Halen's next door... and he wants you to prove that you can play the 'Beat It' solo." That was just overload from how my day had gone. And my immediate reaction was no.

Eventually Eddie's tech came over and asked if I would come and meet him. And I said, "I would love to." And as soon as I walked in the room, he put his guitar on me and wanted me to play the solo. So, of course, I did. As soon as I finished, he grabbed the guitar and asked me to remind him how the solo went. Because it's not something he had played with Van Halen — it was a one-off in the studio and then he went on his way. But I'd say he picked it up again mighty quickly!

After the whole thing I went back to rehearse with my band, and then Eddie and his guys came in to watch us, which was totally nerve racking. But at one point when we stopped he gave me the greatest compliment of my life, and one that I could never share with my parents. He looked at me and he said, "You're a motherfucker!" And I thought, wow, I'll take that to the bank!

[*above*] Eddie Van Halen and David Lee Roth perform at the Oakland Coliseum in 1977; [*left*] Steel Panther's Satchel jumps, Van Halen style, in London in 2012



SATCHEL (STEEL PANTHER): "WE ARE ALL STANDING ON THE SHOULDERS OF EDDIE"

I LOVED HIS style, technique, phrasing, songwriting... even his paint jobs and his hair and his smile. I loved him from the first time I saw and heard him just like most of us did. Everything he did had passion and so much feel. And he made it sound so easy.

Just listen to "I'm the One" off Van Halen's first album. You could practice that for a lifetime and probably never get it to sound that good. That groove, that aggression... and delivered so clean in such a musical way.

He was the complete package as a musician, from rhythms to leads to songwriting. We are all standing on the shoulders of Eddie. He changed everything. He will continue to inspire us all even long after it finally sinks in that he is no longer with us.

We love you, Eddie. Thanks for every amazing note.

TOP: RICHARD MCCAFFREY/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES
BOTTOM: CHRISTIE GOODWIN/REDFERNS VIA GETTY IMAGES

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YNGWIE MALMSTEEN:
"WHEN VAN HALEN CAME OUT IT WAS JUST, 'FUCK YOU ALL!' AND I LOVED IT"

WHEN I WAS 7 or 8 in Sweden, I was listening to Deep Purple's *Made in Japan* and stuff like that, and I was very into that type of guitar playing. Then by the time I was 12 I was listening to classical violin and I already had a very clear vision of what I was trying to do. So whatever was out there when Van Halen came out, I wasn't really paying much attention.

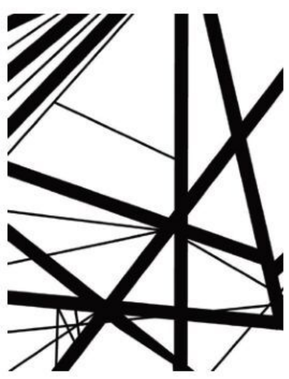
But in 1978 I was playing in a band called Powerhouse, and one day the drummer came in and he brought *Van Halen*. And I was like, "What is this? Another band? Whatever." But he put it on and I couldn't believe what I was hearing. I was so fucking blown away. And you know, the weird thing with me, I think, compared to many other people who felt the same way when they heard that album is that I didn't pack my guitar up and put a humbucker in, I didn't paint stripes on it, I didn't do all the tapping. I didn't do that because to me it was so amazing what Edward was doing — I didn't want to copy it.

You have to remember, in 1978 no one had heard this before. And even though Edward wasn't the first person to tap, he put it on the map. No one did it like him. But what really knocked me out was the energy and the "don't give a fuck" attitude that the whole band had. They were essentially a power trio and they were playing live. They made me so inspired because I had a power trio, too.

All the albums are great — I think the first and the second ones [*Van Halen* and *Van Halen II*] almost feel like part one and two of the same album. They have the same feel — no overdubs, just go for it. And the whole band, Alex and Dave and Michael, all of them are *in-fuckin-credible* on those. There's a song on the second album, "Outta Love Again." Edward and Alex's playing on that, it's just one take, you can hear it. It's sick. It's ridiculous. It's just so good. That spirit inspired me immensely. But my favorite song is probably "Ain't Talkin' 'Bout Love." I used that sound as the yardstick for so many years. I would listen to that and go, "If I can get a sound that good, I know I have a good sound." And the riff is just fucking ridiculous.

But overall it was the whole "turn your fucking shit up and go for it" thing that really got to me about Eddie. The impact he had on me was unbelievable. On *all* of us. It's just crazy. You've gotta remember, too — I lived in a socialist country and it was basically, "You can't do this," "You can't do that." Everything was very *no no no no no*. And when Van Halen came out it was just, "Fuck you all!" And I loved it. I *fucking* loved it. I still love it to this day.

[*above*] Van Halen backstage in the U.K. in 1978; [*right*] Kenny Wayne Shepherd performs at Blues Fest 2017 at the O2 Arena in London



KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD: "I WILL MISS MY FRIEND DEARLY"

HIS CONTRIBUTION TO music cannot be measured. He was an amazing guitar player, but he was an even better person. Mine and Ed's history goes beyond just music, but I have toured with Van Halen a number of times, including the very last Van Halen tour in 2015. Nearly every night of the tour, he would seek me out to say hello and share a laugh, a hug or words of encouragement. His innovation and style influenced countless guitar players over the years, and I will miss my friend dearly.

NILI BROSH: "THE LAST TRUE INNOVATOR OF THE ELECTRIC GUITAR"

THE LOSS OF Eddie has hit me harder than I could've imagined. In addition to absolutely loving his music and playing, the biggest heartbreak to me is losing the person who — in my opinion — was the last true innovator of the electric guitar. As far as deep cuts go, I have to go with "Girl Gone Bad." First, it's a great song from an incredible era of Van Halen, and *1984* is a personal favorite. But what I really like about it is that toward the end of what is one of VH's more "commercially accessible" records, you find an even cooler gem that is the culmination of everything that makes him EVH: a killer song, insane rhythm playing, unexpected harmonic moves, an array of dazzling techniques — such as the tapped harmonics — all packed in within a few minutes. It all makes for that elusive EVH feel.

ROB CAGGIANO (VOLBEAT): "HE JUST MADE YOU WANNA PLAY!"

EDDIE VAN HALEN single-handedly (actually two-handedly) reinvented the electric guitar when he hit the scene. He changed the way guitars were built and played from there on out. Even more importantly, Eddie changed the parameters of the electric guitar and its capabilities within the framework of rock roll forever! His otherworldly musicianship and dazzling technique was mind-blowing at the time, but he also had tons of heart and soul in his playing. Countless fingers were moving all over the globe for many years in vain attempts to catch up with him. Nobody ever did. Everything about Eddie was infectious... his riffs, his licks, his sound, his style, his moves, his smile... he just made you wanna play! He had an uncanny knack for making everything he did look easy and fun. To me it always seemed like Eddie was channeling his magic from a higher power, to be honest. He wasn't just playing the guitar... the music was actually moving through him and the guitar was just an extension of his body and soul. He didn't even seem human to me.

Eddie is, without a doubt, my biggest influence on the guitar — and it's funny because I never actually learned how to play any of his stuff. I have so many favorites — the famous ones, as well as "Girl Gone Bad," "Mine All Mine," "Finish What You Started," "House of Pain," "Top Jimmy" — but I guess I just never wanted to copy him (or anyone else, for that matter). I think it's because the biggest thing Eddie Van Halen taught me from afar when I was a kid was "Dare to be different and original at all costs." I never met Eddie, unfortunately, but that message still hits me like a ton of bricks every single time I hear a Van Halen song. It's very inspiring.

On October 6, 2020, we lost one of the greatest musicians of all time. We lost the ultimate guitar hero. Rock and roll will never be the same. The electric guitar will never be the same. There might be a lot of great guitar players out there in the world right now, but there will never be another Eddie Van Halen. Rest in peace, Eddie. You always were and always will be the king of the strings!

GUS G: "HIS TONE REMAINS THE HOLY GRAIL"

I'M STILL IN shock. Eddie Van Halen is gone. I didn't know him, but I believe there isn't a guitarist he hasn't influenced since he arrived. Whether you know it or not, EVH has influenced you one way or another. You've probably used a piece of gear he invented or most certainly his techniques. We owe a lot to Eddie. I certainly do. His tone remains the holy grail to this day; it's the blueprint for a great guitar tone. The first Van Halen song I ever heard was "Jump" on a music-TV channel. I fell in love with the song right away, but when the guitar solo came in I just stood there and couldn't breathe. I *had* to find out more about this guitarist. Then, of course, I heard "Eruption"... life was never the same after that. Tapping looked and sounded like the coolest technique ever, and the way Eddie used it to create new sounds and forge his own style was mind-blowing. But he didn't stop there. He was constantly "tone chasing," and that need for perfection led him to more innovations. Pioneer, Rock star, icon, legend. You'll hear these words to describe him a lot. And it's undeniable. EVH was a musical genius and he might have left us, but the gifts he gave us will live on forever. Thanks for everything, Eddie!

NITA STRAUSS: "THE MORE I HEARD, THE MORE I FELT, 'I'VE GOTTA LEARN HOW TO DO THAT!'"

I'M INSPIRED BY technique, chops and all the usual stuff. But what inspires me the most — and makes me want to run to pick up my guitar and start playing — is hearing guitar that sounds fun, where the joy that comes from the player's hands overshadows all technique and becomes the first thing you hear. That's what EVH has always personified to me. Some guitar players make fast guitar playing seem intimidating. Eddie made it sound... well, fun! The more Van Halen I heard, the more I felt, "I've gotta learn how to do that!" His bravado, reckless abandon, inventive style and constant smile were what drew me in.

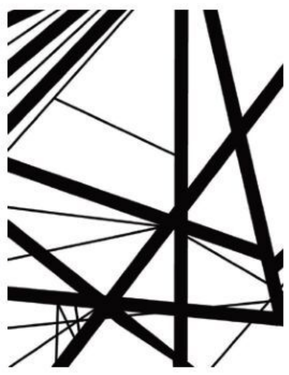
On the total opposite end of the spectrum comes my favorite EVH moment: I remember the first time I heard "Catherine" and thought, "Where did this guy come from?" The expressive, dark, haunting note choices were such a stark contrast to that smiling Southern California guitar hero we were all so familiar with. It made me more of a fan, because he was able to do something so different from his signature style — and do it so well.

MIKAEL ÅKERFELDT (OPETH): "THE VALUE OF BEING A GOOD RHYTHM PLAYER"

LEFT: LESTER COHEN/WIREIMAGE RIGHT: SCOTT DUDELSON/GETTY IMAGES

VAN HALEN WERE everywhere in the Eighties when I was growing up, and EVH was always seen as a pioneer and a trailblazer. He had that distinct tone that singled him out. You hear it's him right away. I never really aspired to become a lead guitar player as such. I think I was too lazy to practice, and I also got more interested in songs. But, of course, I learned tapping from EVH. He was an amazing rhythm player, though — so tight and swinging. He has a lot of groove to his playing, which I love. I picked up on that too: the value of being a good rhythm player, the value of the song. In the grand scheme of things, that was probably more important to him, even if he also could play jaw-dropping solos. Adding to that uniqueness was his sound — which is really, really uncommon these days, actually. There's a lot of fantastic guitar players out there but they become anonymous to me. You rarely hear who it is in the playing itself. That's not the case with EVH. Picking a favorite solo or moment is extremely hard — there are so many. That main riff to "Mean Street"... thank you very much! Then there's "Panama," "Unchained," "I'll Wait," "Spanish Fly"... and "Get Up," which is one of their fastest songs. I love that one. He uses the whammy bar a lot in the actual riff. That's pretty damn original and one of his trademarks. I've tried doing it myself but I'm too sloppy and can't play well with the whammy in my hand. I'd say it got magical whenever he picked up a guitar, really. Everything about him was magical. It's a terrible loss. It's still very very strange to refer to EVH in the past tense. This will sting for a long time. Forever, maybe.

[*above*] Eddie Van Halen autographs a Frankenstein replica in Las Vegas in 2008; [*right*] Lari Basilio performs at the Malibu Guitar Festival in 2017



FREDRIK ÅKESSON (OPETH): "FIRST CAME JIMI AND THEN CAME EDDIE"

HEARING "ERUPTION" FOR the first time floored me... it sounded like a spaceship! That alone was responsible for so many people picking up the guitar. When you think about the biggest and most legendary guitar players, first came Jimi and then came Eddie. Like Jimi, he came up with something ground-breaking, with an aggressive tone to help bring out all the dynamics and techniques — from tapping and legato to open-string tricks and crazy whammy bar screams. But even his simplest parts had this sense of fantastic timing and felt extraordinarily musical. "Eruption" and "Spanish Fly" are legendary, of course. "Drop Dead Legs" is a great example of his incredible rhythm playing. He generally didn't

record many overdubs, which is what gave him the freedom to color his riffs with all these improvised details. That was one of his best qualities.

MATEUS ASATO: "A PERFECT EXAMPLE OF HOW A SOLO HAS TO BE WRITTEN"

I ASSUME THE majority of the comments about EVH revolve around his innovative technique, but his tone always got me the most. My favorite solo is from "Right Now." I get chills every time I listen to that masterpiece. The pinch harmonics give such a cool vibe before the solo kicks in. The first note with that bending is a perfect example of how a solo has to be written — powerful and melodic! Besides that, there's a long slide around 3:51, going toward down the neck, which I love so much! That song is a major reference rock solo for my creative side. A true hero.

MARK MORTON: "THE SOLE REASON I EVER DREAMED OF PLAYING GUITAR"

PUSHING THE LIMITS of technical ability, innovation and style, Eddie singlehandedly set the standard of what rock guitar playing was for his own generation and the ones that followed. His impact wasn't confined solely to the mastery of guitar. As a songwriter, Edward's pop sensibility and song craft propelled Van Halen through decades of success, weathering extreme shifts in popular music trends. His impact on rock music cannot be measured. Eddie Van Halen is the sole reason I ever dreamed of playing guitar. Literally millions of people all over the world have found a passion for music through his work. I am grateful to have been one of them. He will be loved and celebrated forever.

NICK JOHNSTON: "THE TONE, MAN!"

I REMEMBER BUYING Van Halen's debut record when I was a kid and feeling a slight sense of fear and excitement. I was aware of the man's inconceivable talents and musicianship from the various clips and songs I'd heard on the radio or from neighborhood friends who claimed they could play his parts on their guitars, but I had never listened to an entire record top to bottom. What followed was a complete restructuring of what I thought guitar playing was. I obsessed over everything Eddie did. Everything about his playing — the tone, the note choice, the harmony, the rhythm — it was all there. It was the first time I think I could really hear a guitar player's actual hand. I could hear his thoughts on the guitar. He had the ability to take you to a place only he had the map for. My only regret is never having seen him perform in front of me. What a treat that would have been. Some of my favorite moments would have to be the rhythm playing on "Take Your Whiskey Home" and every single aspect of "D.O.A." The tone, man!

BUMBLEFOOT: "IT LAUNCHED ME ON A QUEST"

EDDIE WAS THE gamechanger. For me, it was hearing the intro to "Mean Street" at age 12 that changed my world. I didn't know it was possible for a guitar to make sounds like that, and it launched me on a quest to find my own ways to get more out of the strings. It was a mixture of so many things — that incredible tone, the speed-shuffle rhythms ("I'm the One," "Hot for Teacher"), the originality of his phrasing, the role his guitar played in the delivery of songs like "Little Guitars." Then there was his stage presence! He pioneered modern guitar playing. No other guitarist was ever as innovative in so many ways. He was a one-of-a-kind that inspired generations of guitarists and bands, and raised the bar for us all. We're the ones who are blessed to have had experienced his magic. Sending my deepest sympathies and lots of love to the Van Halen family and loved ones.

JOSH MIDDLETON (ARCHITECTS, SYLOSIS): "THE 5150 IS STILL THE BENCHMARK"

EDDIE'S INFLUENCE ON the guitar world will be never-ending. His use of two-hand tapping opened up a whole new realm of possibilities. Being able to do such huge and fast intervallic leaps meant guitarists could cover so much more ground. But aside from his playing he also had an incredible ear for tone. As far as I'm concerned, the 5150 is still the benchmark for a rock/metal amplifier. They just sit in the mix perfectly. I used my block-letter 5150 for the last Architects album. And then it's been the 5150 mkII

LEFT: EBET ROBERTS/REDFERNS RIGHT: COURTESY OF STEVE VAI

with Sylosis, so always some form of 5150 amp! It's important to remember his dedication to and innovation for sound, which is just as important as his legacy as a player.

MARK LETTIERI: "IT WAS FUNKY. IT GROOVED. IT SWUNG"

I GREW UP learning guitar during a few years when guitar virtuosity wasn't exactly considered "cool." It certainly wasn't on pop radio all that much. But that didn't matter, because when I discovered Van Halen for the first time, and heard the incredible hooks paired with Eddie's otherworldly guitar aesthetic, it was all the cool I needed. It was *mine*. As a young player soaking up inspiration from all directions, Van Halen's music was the perfect catalyst. Eddie's playing not only rocked on an unmatched level, it was funky. It grooved. It swung. Absorbing this sound created a bridge to learning styles like soul and rhythm 'n' blues, which would serve me later in my career as a professional. Above all, however, what was cool about Edward Van Halen and the music he made was that it gave me power. As a track athlete in high school, I'd always listen to "Unchained" and "Mean Street" before competing in an event... and I didn't lose very often. Coincidence? Maybe, but I like to think it's because the other guys didn't have *Fair Warning* spinning in their Discmans.

LARI BASILIO: "TWO THINGS CAPTIVATED ME THE MOST: HIS JOY AND HIS SMILE"

EVH WAS A TOTAL pioneer for the guitar world! Everybody always knew that, but to see the way the guitar community has come together to pay tribute makes it even more clear. Besides his legendary guitar solos, impeccable tone and expression, two things captivated me the most about him: his joy and smile while playing the guitar. It was fascinating to watch the happiness the instrument would bring to him and how he was able to transmit to the audience that feeling in the most brilliant way, always with an energetic performance. This is the perfect translation of what the guitar means to me: joy and fun! And that's the way I'll always remember Eddie.

[*above*] Van Halen's Sammy Hagar, Eddie Van Halen and Michael Anthony perform in New Jersey in August 1986; [*right*] Steve Vai with Eddie Van Halen

SCOTT IAN: "WITHOUT EDDIE, I COULD PROBABLY NAME 100 GUITAR PLAYERS THAT DON'T EXIST"

HE'S THE GREATEST guitar player of all time. I think he is responsible for more people picking up a guitar than {*continued on page 52*}

THE INNOCENCE OF GENIUS

ON

THE INNOCENCE OF genius is fascinating. This idea was prominently on display through the entire career of Edward Van Halen.

We have a tendency to believe that "genius" is restricted to intellectual giants, but perhaps another perspective of "genius" is the ability of an individual to seamlessly connect to their uniquely inspired creative intuitions. "Geniuses" are capable of manifesting these intuitions into the world effortlessly, elegantly and without any excuses or fear; this is their natural and organically creative state of being. The potential to realize this lies within all of us.

Edward was not an intellectual (thank God), but he was a genius. He had the gift of focused intention, undaunted confidence and palpable passion, and he didn't even know it; it was just natural to him. When it came to his musical vision, he was oblivious to obstacles. Any obstacles a person might encounter in expressing their creative inspirations are only ever the negative thoughts they have about reaching their goal. Those obstructions aren't in the outside world, as commonly believed. It's an inside job. They are the insecure and fearful thoughts that cut at the root of a person's ability to discover and express their own simple, creative brilliance that's already there. Edward never fell prey to these kinds of thoughts. Instead, he followed his bliss. In doing so, he created a paradigm shift that evolved the entire guitar community.

His goals were set minute by minute, so he was constantly challenging and satisfying himself. The experience of having an inner pull to play something a certain way, and then hitting that goal and instantly creating another can become quite intoxicating and fiercely addictive. And when he put it all together, if either Sammy swooned or Dave swagged all over it, it didn't matter; he was going to crush it regardless. No exceptions.

When a person is passionate about what they are doing, the sense of enthusiasm and joy are in the forefront and acts as their guidance. That gives them the powerful stamina needed to dig deeper and deeper into finding just the right expression without having to compromise, but practicing alone won't do it. The practice must be joined at the hip with the fearless exploration of one's own uniquely creative ideas. This is when discipline is replaced by passion, which is a far superior tool for creating.

The result of this process is excellence and innovation, which was Edward's calling card. When he was developing his tone and execution, he did not compromise until it sounded the way his intentions demanded. Every groundbreaking technique he developed was masterfully executed because that's the way he heard it in his mind, and he loved chasing it. The process of discovery and the accomplishment of the goal was his bliss.

All the elements of his vision took shape majestically. That tone, the choice and personality of every note, his chordal playing and groove lock, that vibrato and stunning intonation, the "baddassery" of his sonic attitude, the clarity and absurd execution of all the innovative ideas he discovered were all supreme and a product of the desire of his inner ear. They were whipped with a whammy bar and mightily served to us on an immaculate silver platter.

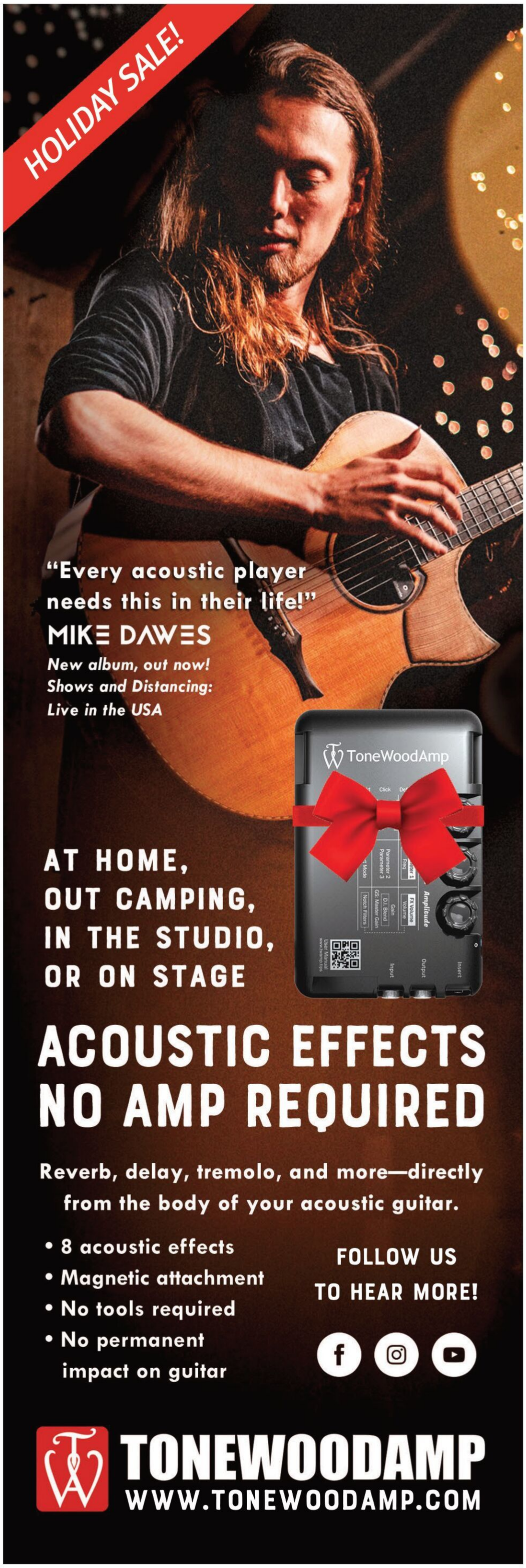
But perhaps the most engaging aspect of Edward was that smile. It was at the core of his musical DNA. On his face, it represented the joy he felt while playing. You can hear and feel that joyful inner light beaming in the harmonic structures of the songs he wrote, and man, do we love them. That's because they come from a joyful heart.

It's amazing how fortunate we were to have had him. 65 is not necessarily old, but in guitar years, it's not necessarily young. In this life, Edward Van Halen emptied his golden goblet for us, and our cups runneth over. He truly delivered.

Even though you may not have known him personally, many feel as helplessly gutted over his departure as if he was a personal best friend. There's that pull to want to thank him directly; to look him in the eyes with wholehearted sincerity and attempt to express to him what he meant to us. Though as you know, the words can never get that intimate feeling across, but the continuation of enjoying the myriad life-changing gifts he left us with can.

King Edward, you were exceptional... and we are grateful.

Steve Vai
10.14.20
Los Angeles
5:07 p.m.



TALKIN' 'BOUT LOVE

continued from page 50

anybody in history. He changed the game in a way that, for me, was even bigger than Jimi Hendrix. Hendrix is before my time. Don't get me wrong, I understand and I, of course, appreciate, respect and love Jimi, but for me Eddie was the guy that completely reinvented the guitar. You think about what came after him in the Eighties — without Eddie, I could probably name 100 guitar players that don't exist; the bands they created don't exist.

He's also the complete package. The guy is most known for his lead guitar capabilities, innovation and all that, but people overlook the fact that he's an unbelievable rhythm player, too. And he also happened to write unbelievable songs, from shit that's completely brutal — things like "Atomic Punk," "Lost Control," "I'm the One" or "Romeo Delight" — to writing some of the best pop songs of the last 40 years. There's nobody better.

He's the largest talent to have existed in my lifetime. What a fucking void it is to have him gone. It's such a crazy thing to wrap my head around. It goes without saying, he's going to be greatly missed.

TREY SPRUANCE (MR. BUNGLE, SECRET CHIEFS 3): "A CLEAR CHANNEL TO THE SPIRIT"

YOU CAN COUNT Mr. Bungle as one of the bands that wouldn't have existed if not for Eddie Van Halen. There's no way I would've picked up a guitar without Eddie — I'm 13, it's 1983. That's it. I feel like we get hung up on the fact that he's a guitar player, but he was such an advanced musician. As an improviser [he was] completely fluid and natural, with a clear channel to the spirit, regardless of his instrument. He was one of the great musicians of our time.

PLINI: "[HE] NEVER FAILS TO GET ME EXCITED TO PLAY MY GUITAR, IN HOPES OF CAPTURING EVEN 1 PERCENT OF THE JOY"

LIKE MOST PEOPLE who've ever wanted to play electric guitar, I came across EVH pretty early in my guitar journey. It can't be overstated what a monumental impact he had on everything about how the electric guitar is played in the current era — from techniques to tones and gear. It didn't take me long to hear elements of his playing in almost all my other guitar heroes, and unsurprisingly, even for the players who I couldn't hear the influence as directly, I found out soon enough that they would almost always cite him as a major influence. For this reason, I've always thought of EVH as *the* guy when it comes to the electric guitar. In the last couple of years, Van Halen's music has been a staple for me and my band on tour, either on the bus, as house music before we play or jamming riffs in soundcheck. One of my favorites is "There's Only One Way to Rock" from *Live Without a Net*. His performance never fails to get me excited to play my guitar, in hopes of capturing even 1 percent of the joy and energy he brought to it.

JASON HOOK: "HE WAS ALWAYS PATIENT, KIND AND CARING WITH ME"

I'LL NEVER FORGET the first time I got to see Ed play live — August 18, 1986, at the CNE Grandstand in Toronto. I was blown away. But it wasn't just his ridiculous technique and tone that made an impression; there was unique joy and happiness in his playing that I hadn't seen before. His smile was infectious and his energy astounding. Over the years he had an innate ability to write great songs that were fresh, energetic, fun and uplifting. That has always resonated with me as a songwriter. He was a true pioneer, a genius and a hard worker who was 100 percent dedicated to making great music. I relate to that and have him to thank for it. He also played from the heart, and I relate to that too. His sense of rhythm and melodic bending within the solos really influenced me — and like Eddie, I started off on drums too. So I've injected rhythm patterns into my leads, which you can hear on songs like [Five Finger Death Punch's] "To Be Alone" and "Brighter Side of Grey." He was always patient, kind and caring with me. I'm crushed. I will miss him dearly. My thoughts and prayers go out to Janie, Alex and Wolfie. I love you, Ed. Riff in peace!

Brad Tolinski and Gregory Adams contributed to this story. GW

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GUITAR WORLD
JANUARY 2021

BLACK AND *WHITE* AND *ED ALL OVER*

EDDIE VAN HALEN

WAS DOWN-TO-EARTH AND AS COOL AS F*@K – BUT HE WAS ALSO A GENIUS. THIS IS WHY.

RARELY HAS THERE been a relationship between an artist and a magazine like the one *Guitar World* shared with Eddie Van Halen. With more than 20 cover stories and additional pieces published by various *GW* offshoots like *Guitar Aficionado, Guitar Legends* and *Guitar School*, much ink has been spilled by us in the name of Van Halen through the years. Ed's appeal to our publication was obvious. As one of the greatest electric guitarists of the 20th century, and one of the most important guitar inventors since Les Paul, Leo Fender and Ted McCarty, his work was endlessly fascinating and worth reporting to our readers.

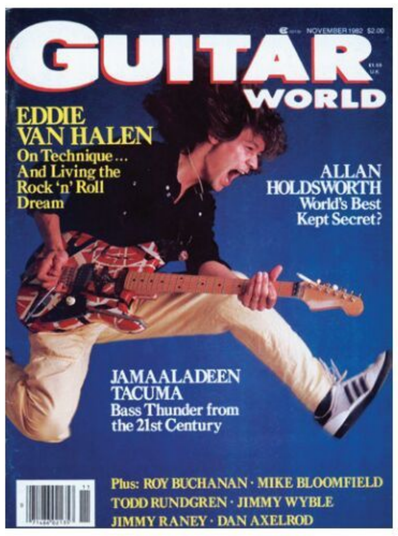
As a personality, he was funny, unvarnished and a surprisingly effective communicator. His interviews were always an appealing combination of "aw, schucks" humility, rowdy fun and straight-shooting insight, and he regularly spoke about his revolutionary playing techniques, such as tapping, as if they were no big deal, often laughing at the absurdity of his own ingenuity as if it was some other "Eddie Van Halen" that made it all up.

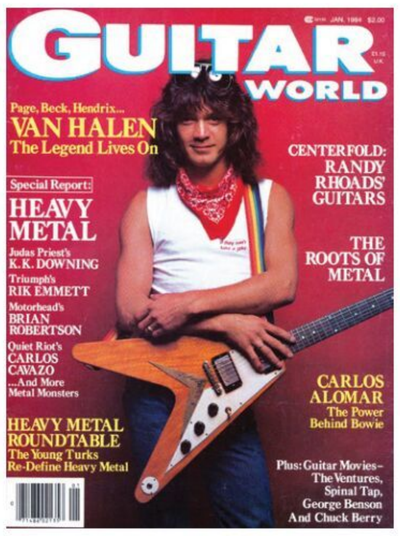
"I was just sitting in my room at home, drinkin' a beer, and I remem-

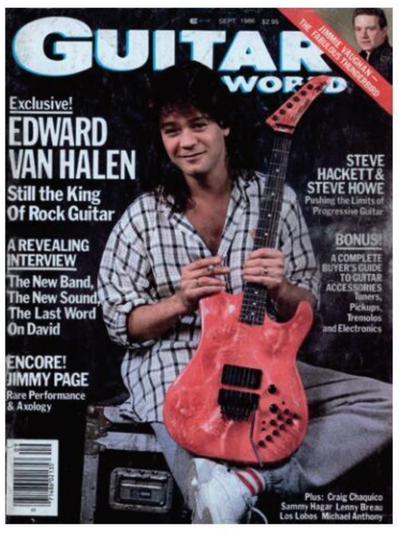
By BRAD TOLINSKI

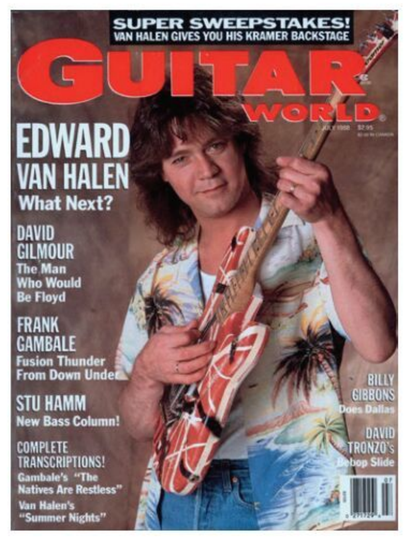
Eddie at home (circa 1981) with a few choice pieces of gear

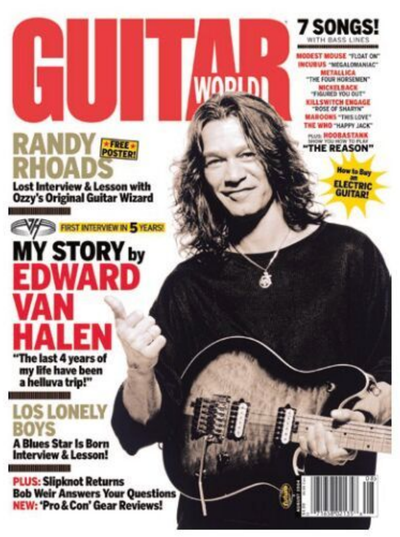
RICHARD E. AARON/REDFERNS











bered seeing people popping their finger on the fretboard and tapping out one note," he once told us in his distinctive gravelly voice. "I thought, 'Well, nobody is really capitalizing on that. Nobody was doing more than just one stretch and one note... real quick.' So, I started dickin' around and said, 'Fuck! This is a technique nobody really does!'"

Let's unpack that for a second.

What Ed was recalling was the guitar equivalent to Einstein's Theory of Relativity. Certainly no one would have blamed him if he embellished the tale or made that "a-ha!" moment more grandiose, but that wasn't his style. Drinking a beer... dickin' around... yelling "Fuck!" instead of "Eureka!" That was quintessential Eddie — unpretentious and totally relatable. And that is why his death on October 6, 2020, at Providence Saint John's Health Center in Santa Monica, California, at the age of 65 was like taking a cannonball to the gut.

But the question remains: Why did Ed always turn to *Guitar World* when he felt he had something to tell the guitar community?

Respect was important to him, but he also appreciated a good hang. And *Guitar World* was always a good hang. We didn't stare at him like a bunch of goons or treat him like Ghandi. To us, he was just an extremely talented dude who was obsessed with the guitar and liked to shoot the shit. In that way, he wasn't much different from us — except for the genius part.

And while he enjoyed being treated like one of the guys, now that he's gone, we find ourselves thinking deeply about the "genius part."

Sure, Eddie was cool, but it feels equally important to acknowledge what a breathtakingly original thinker he truly was. If you are a Van Halen fan, you might know some of the story, but if you love guitar history, much of it bears repeating.

THE GENIUS PART

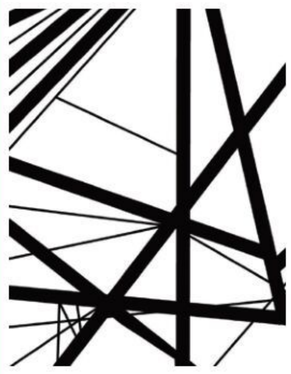
EDWARD LODEWIJK VAN HALEN moved to Pasadena, California, from his native Nijmegen, Holland, when he was 7 along with his parents and his older brother, Alex. When they arrived in 1962, Ed remembers, the cash-poor family had only "$25 and a Dutch-made Rippen piano," and what little of the former the family had went into teaching the children how to play the later.

By all accounts, those early years in the United States were not easy. Ed's dad, Jan, was a professional musician who played saxophone and clarinet in wedding bands at night but kept janitorial day jobs to make ends meet. Life for the boys wasn't much easier.

"When I came to this country, I was scared," remembered Eddie. "I couldn't speak English. I used to get the shit kicked out of me by white people, so to speak. I was a minority. My earliest friends were black kids in the neighborhood. I didn't have to manufacture pain to create later in life."

WHY DID ED ALWAYS TURN TO *GW* WHEN HE HAD SOMETHING TO TELL THE GUITAR COMMUNITY?

(Most of) our Eddie covers — from 1982 to 2016



Alex was the more extroverted of the two boys and worked hard to fit in, while Ed tended to retreat into a world of his own — a world of music. Both boys were trained to play classical piano, but Edward excelled, winning trophies in local music competitions. Neither particularly enjoyed the music they were being asked to play — they were more attracted to bands like the Dave Clark Five and Cream — but they learned the fundamentals that would serve them well in the ensuing years: rhythm, harmony, left- and right-hand independence and steely discipline.

Alex eventually drifted toward the guitar, while Ed started banging away at drums. In a cosmic stroke of luck, they decided to trade — or at least Ed was forced to defer when his older brother became more interested in pounding the skins.

"When I first picked up the guitar, there was no message from God or anything," Ed said. "Some things were easy, and some things were hard. But I didn't even think about whether it was easy or hard; it was something I wanted to do, to have fun and feel good about doing it. Whether it took me a week to learn half a song or one day to learn five songs. I never thought of it that way."

Those days melted into years, as the shy, gifted young man's guitar playing continued to improve. "I used to sit on the edge of my bed with a six-pack of Schlitz Malt talls," he remembered. "My

brother would go out at 7 p.m. to party and get laid, and when he'd come back at 3 a.m., I would still be sitting in the same place, playing guitar. I did that for years."

More than a few of those long practice hours were spent thinking about aspects of the instrument that most took for granted: "Since the beginning, everything I picked up off the rack at the music store did not do what I wanted it to do. Either it didn't have enough of something, or it had a bunch of Bozo bells and whistles that I didn't need. A lot of it had to do with the fact that I never took guitar lessons, so I didn't know right from wrong. I didn't know there were rules; I just knew what I liked and wanted to feel and hear."

His tinkering with instruments began early, starting with removing six strings from a 12-string guitar he bought from Lafayette Electronics and got more daring as he became more knowledgeable. After purchasing a goldtop Les Paul, he fearlessly took a chisel to the vintage instrument, and replaced the P90 bridge pickup with a louder and more powerful humbucker stolen from one of his other guitars. Then he decided he wasn't a fan of the instrument's gold finish, so he stripped it and repainted it black.

Edward destroyed a lot of guitars trying to get them to do what he wanted, but he learned something from every guitar he tore apart and discovered more things in the process.

WHICH BRINGS US to the story of how Ed built his iconic, red, black and white striped "Frankenstein," or "Frankenstrat," guitar — one of the most famous guitars in history, and the product of years of trial and error. After working on his goldtop Les Paul and getting a taste of guitar modification, Eddie acquired several other guitars that he would put on the operating table, including a 1961 Gibson ES-335 and 1958 and 1961 Fender Stratocasters.

"That 335 used to be my favorite guitar, because it had a thin neck and low action," he said. Frustrated by the fact that the ES-335 would go out of tune every time he depressed the instrument's vibrato arm, he took a hacksaw and cut the tailpiece in half so only the higher three strings would wiggle when he used the whammy bar. "That way I could always go back to the three lower strings to play chords if the vibrato made the high strings go out of tune," he said. "People tripped out on that, but I'd try anything to make something work."

As whammy-bar dives became a greater part of his playing style, Van Halen discovered that the Fender Strat's vibrato system was easier to keep in tune. Unfortunately, his picky bandmates considered the Strat's tone too thin. Eddie had a solution to that dilemma: he routed out the body of his '61 Strat and installed a fat-sounding humbucker in the bridge position.

"I slapped a humbucker in there and figured out how to wire up the rest of that shit," he said. "That got me closer to the sound I wanted, but it still wasn't right. The tone was still too thin."

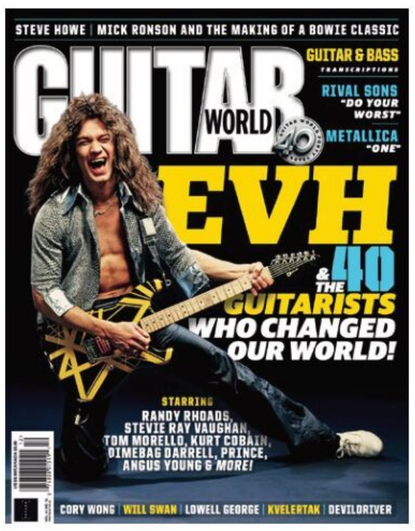
After months of experimentation and frustration, Ed decided to start from scratch and build his own guitar, using scraps from previous instruments and cheap parts purchased from some buddies he knew at Charvel's Guitar Repair, a small shop in Azusa, California, that specialized in hot-rodding traditional electric guitars.

At the time, Charvel and Lynn Ellsworth were making replacement guitar bodies and necks and selling them under the Boogie Bodies brand. Van Halen dropped by the factory sometime in 1975 and bought an ash Strat-shaped body for $50. For another $80, he acquired an unfinished maple neck. Because the body was pre-routed for three single coil pickups, Van Halen chiseled out a larger cavity to install a bigger standard humbucking pickup, nearest to the bridge. He pulled the humbucker from his Gibson ES-335 and mounted it to the new body — a move that enhanced the guitar's bass response, liveliness and sustain.

Though there were chambers for two more pickups, Van Halen left them empty; he couldn't remember the wiring circuit for installing additional pickups and tone controls. But as he later shrugged, "I never touched the tone controls anyway." He also installed jumbo Gibson frets on the fretboard, and a brass nut on the neck of the guitar and salvaged a vibrato tailpiece from one of his vintage Strat guitars to repurpose for this new, homegrown instrument.

To cover the empty pickup holes, he cut a piece of black vinyl and nailed it on, covering the cavity. The final and most distinctive touch was a black-and-white-stiped finish. Van Halen applied this by first spraying the body with several coats of black acrylic lacquer paint, then taping it up and spraying several coats of white lacquer paint over it. The tape was removed once the final coat was dry. The result of these modifications was a guitar that combined Van Halen's favorite aspects of his Les Paul, his ES-335 and his Strat.

A Frankenstein was born!



ED CONTINUED TO tinker with his Frankenstrat across the decades, making it into an even more formidable monster. In 1979 he had retaped the body of his black and white guitar and painted over it with red Schwinn bicycle paint, creating the guitar look most associated with Van Halen. Additionally, he gave his creation a little "trailer trash" flash by attaching red truck reflectors to the rear of the body and installing large eyehook screws to the horn and back of the guitar — a foolproof method of keeping his strap firmly attached to his instrument.

In addition to revamping the cosmetics, Van Halen would help refine another major guitar innovation: the locking tremolo system. Using a whammy bar was a major part of his playing technique, allowing him to bend notes dramatically. But excessive use often caused his guitar to fall hopelessly out of tune. He had developed a number of strategies to minimize the problem, but he was unable to come up with a solution that worked all the time.

Just as Ed's star was rising, a guitarist named Floyd Rose was dealing with the same set of issues. Using skills acquired from years of jewelry making, he devised an ingenious system of clamps that would lock the strings of the guitar at the nut and again at the bridge. Together they'd keep the guitar in tune even under extreme duress.

Rose shared his invention with his friend Lynn Ellsworth, who immediately thought of Edward. "So, I went with him to show Eddie the locking system I created," Rose says. "He liked it and gave me a guitar to put one on."

Ed picks up the story from there: "My role in the design and development of the Floyd was adding the fine tuners to the bridge... strings stretch, temperature changes, and depending on how hard you play, your guitar would go out of tune. So, you'd have to unclamp the nut, which involves loosening three screws with an Allen wrench, tune the guitar and re-clamp the nut down again. There wasn't time to do all this in between songs live. To put it simply, it was a pain in the ass."

So Eddie suggested adding fine tuners to the bridge. This would allow a player to lock down the strings, so they'd essentially stay in tune, but to still make subtle adjustments when needed. And it worked, becoming an essential device for rock players in the Eighties and beyond.

WE WERE TRYING to figure out how to wrap up this story, but Ed's restless modification of his guitar never really ceased. He continued to refine, tinker and invent for decades, creating new and better instruments for Kramer, Ernie Ball, Peavey and finally, his own EVH brand in partnership with Fender. [For more on this, do check out Chris Gill's tribute on page 30].

So, instead of ending a story which we'll be returning to forever, we'll simply go back to the beginning. As we noted at the top of this piece, when Eddie first started playing guitar, he said he did it "to have fun and feel good about doing it." Many years later, very little had changed.

When asked in 1995 what was the best thing about being Eddie Van Halen, he responded with an anecdote: "The other day, I was playing golf on a public course in Pasadena with these two old-timers, and one guy says, 'Shit, man, a bad day on the course is better than any good day at work.' And I started thinking, 'Well, I guess for you, but I like my work.' I'm really lucky, because I really enjoy making music. I don't consider it to be like clocking in and doing a job.

"I'm not making light of making music, either. It's hard work, but I enjoy what I do — creating something as opposed to making a part for an Impala or something. I'm just lucky to have found that. And that's half of it: me enjoying what I do. The other half is when other people dig it. That's like, 'Whoo! Home run!' It's a great feeling for people to like what you do. I do what I like and other people like it. It's a great payoff. How many people get to experience that?"

Not many... and thanks for sharing, Ed. It was a home run for us, too! GW

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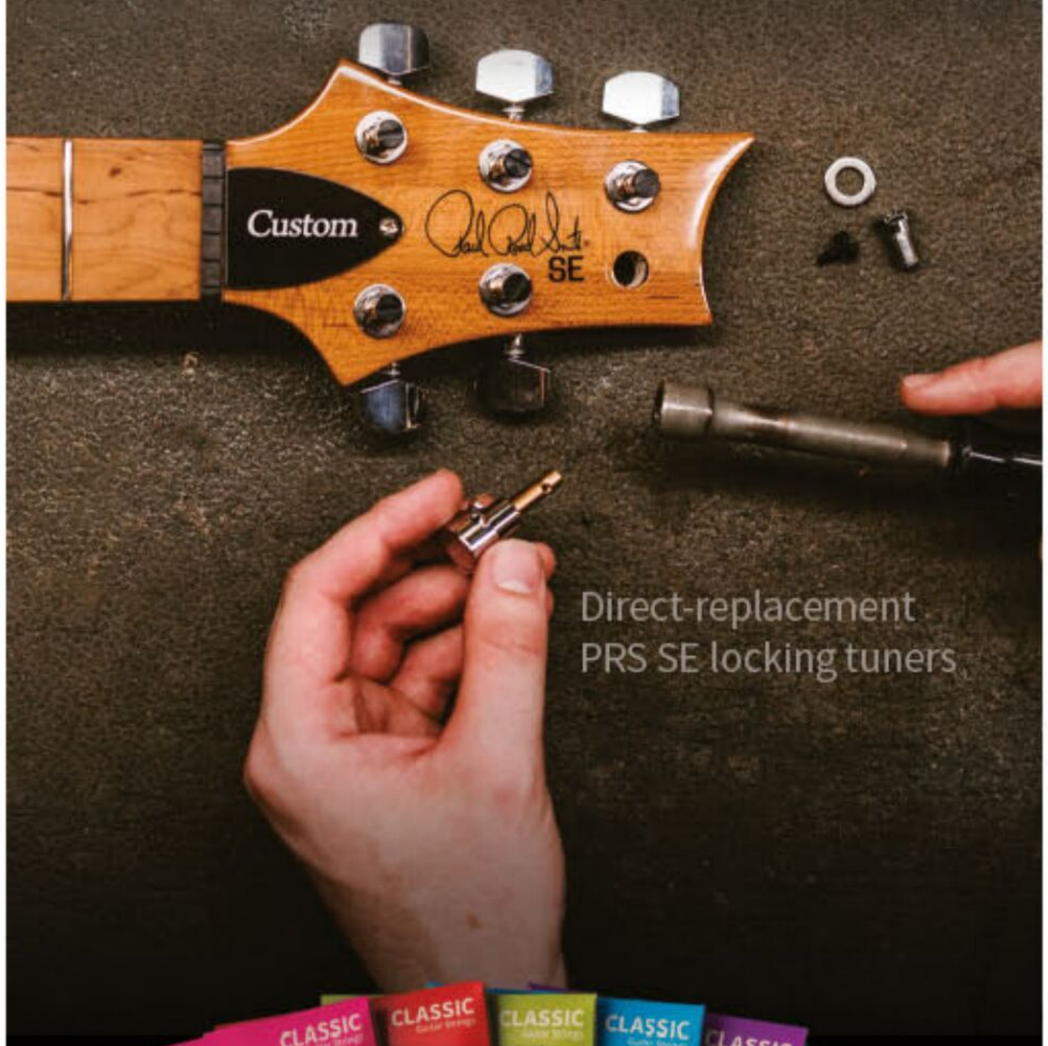

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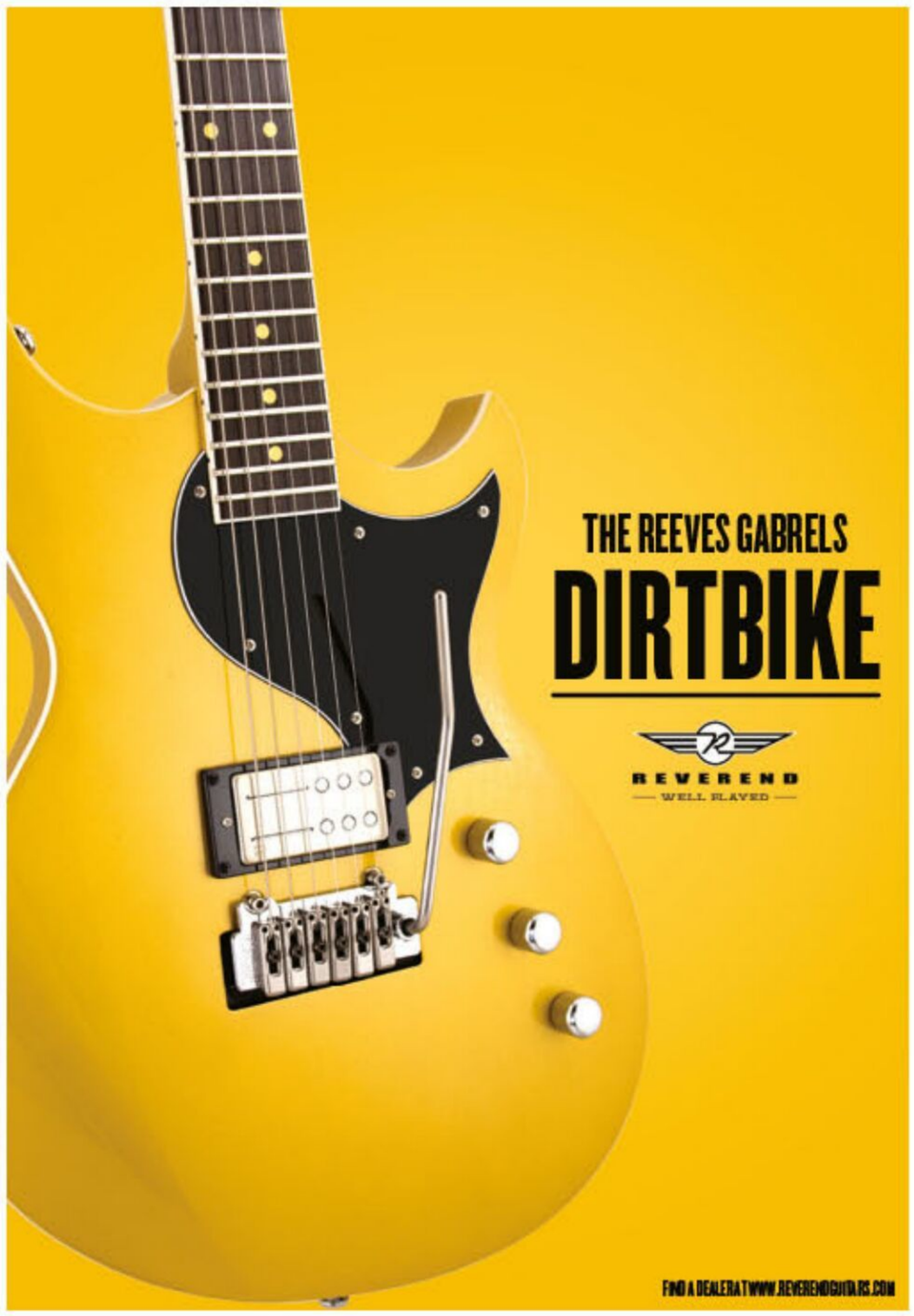


Van Halen
performs at
the Hard Rock
Hotel and Casino
in Las Vegas
in October 1998

GUITAR WORLD
JANUARY 2021

EDDIE VAN HALEN
IN HIS OWN WORDS

IN THIS COLLECTION OF QUOTES – STARTING IN 1981 AND ENDING WITH A 2016 INTERVIEW MAKING ITS FIRST-EVER APPEARANCE IN *GUITAR WORLD* – EDDIE VAN HALEN DISCUSSES EVERYTHING FROM DEBUSSY TO DAVID LEE ROTH'S FIRST SOLO OUTING, FROM "ERUPTION" TO "SPANKED," FROM COLLEGE TO CLAPTON, FROM HIS "BLACK SABBATH FUNK" TO HIS BELOVED EVH GUITARS AND AMPS

THE NATURAL
GW, January 1981

MY FATHER HAS been a professional musician all his life, and he said, 'Kid, you've got it,' Some people have got it and some people don't. Even people who don't have it can practice long enough to get it down to a point. But there's always a difference between a person who has the feel and those who don't. The difference is in the amount of emotion expressed in your playing. I listened to Debussy by two different pianists and it was like day and night. One guy had it and every note was beautiful. The other guy had lead fingers.

COLLEGE? WE DON'T NEED NO STINKIN' COLLEGE!
GW, November 1982

ON STAGE, IT'S different... that's my world, my life. I don't have to deal with being accepted by jocks or bikers or that in high school. The band is a family and I'm accepted in that family. That's what made me get into guitar, because I felt like I had nothing to lose. If I couldn't play guitar, I'd be pumping gas. I mean I got a low IQ. When everybody graduated, all the rich guys going, "Hey, which college are you going to?" and I'm going "College?!? I just went straight back home, locked myself in my room, played guitar, wrote songs, and hoped to God I got somewhere."

...AND A SONG CALLED "JUMP"
GW, January 1984

I THINK THIS next one is going to be a hellified record. The majority of the solos will be overdubs. It just depends on how it feels right. There's a fast boogie called "Hot for Teacher." There's another one called "Anytime, Anyplace" with a live solo in it. Lots of overdubs. My dad might play an intro for a song. There's a song called "Panama" with a live solo. And a song called "Jump."

CRAZY FROM THE HEAT
GW, July 1985

I THINK IT'S something [David Lee Roth] always wanted to do. I think it's great he's actually doing it. Put it this way — it's something I've always wanted to do and haven't done. I guess in a funny way, it explains Dave as a vocalist and lyricist. He did four cover tunes, but these songs do convey a message within him. "California Girls," "Easy Street," "Just a Gigolo" and one other one. But I'm sure it's going to happen in the true Van Halen tradition even though it's not Van Halen music.

NUMBERS GAME
GW, September 1986

THE WAY WE did [*5150*] is basically how I would have liked to have done all the previous records. And I think that's another thing that maybe drove Dave away. Because for *1984*, I built the studio and I started wanting to do things a little more my way, and I guess I turned some people off; I created a little friction. Not meaning to. I built the fucking story for the benefit of all of us, for the family, for the band.

PICKIN' 'N' GRINNIN'
GW, July 1988

I USE MY thumb and my middle finger when I pick. Actually, it depends. Normally, I pick like that, but when I do the hammer-on shit I hold it like that [wedges the pick between the first and second joints of his middle finger]... You see a lot of people go [sticks the pick between his teeth], and I just had to figure out somethin' else... And sometimes, when I use the wiggle stick, I hold it with my pinky and pick like that [holding the pick between his thumb and index finger, with the last three fingers slightly curled to form a fulcrum for the bar], pick the Mel Bay style — the way, I guess, you're supposed to, up and down, up and down. My bar is so loose that I don't have to keep these fingers straight. Those are the three different ways that I lose a pick.

SCOTT HARRISON/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

DOWN ON *DIVER DOWN*

GW, February 1990

[THE "HALF COVER tunes" *Diver Down*] pisses me off, 'cause at the time I had enough music of my own. You know that Mini-Moog riff that opens "Dancing in the Street"? I'd written that for my own song, but everybody wanted it for "Dancing in the Street." I said, "What?" So that's why I built my own studio. Put it this way: I'd rather bomb with my own songs than make it with someone else's. I don't buy the philosophy of "If you redo a proven hit, you're halfway there." That way, *you're* not there. I've played enough cover tunes.

MIGHT AS WELL SPANK!

GW, September 1991

LET ME TELL you where the title of ["Spanked"] comes from. Anyone who has ever spent any time in 5150 complains about the placement of our monitor speakers. They're strange because the room used to be a racquetball court. So Andy Johns walks in for the first time and says, "Hey, mate, your speakers sound kind of *spanked*." Spanked! That killed me. When something is beat to shit, it's "spanked." We quickly adopted it into our vocabulary and Sammy wrote a song around it.

E.C. WAS HERE

GW, March 1992

THE FIRST CONCERT I saw was Derek and the Dominos with Eric Clapton... To be honest with you, I was expecting something more powerful. If I would've seen Cream, I probably would've been blown away, because that's the era of Clapton that I really loved. The show was more of a Doobie Brothers Kind of thing — there was like this tambourine and bongo player. The power wasn't there... Al and I tried to get backstage; unfortunately, Eric had already left, but we did get to meet the tambourine player! Swear to God!

GETTING WARMER...

GW, April 1996

THE WHOLE STORY behind "Eruption" is unusual. It wasn't even supposed to be on the album. I showed up at the recording studio early one day and started to warm up because I had a gig on the weekend and I wanted to practice my solo guitar spot. Our promoter, Ted Templeman, happened to walk by and he asked, "What's that? Let's put it on tape!" So I took one pass at it, and they put it on the record. I didn't even play it right. To this day, whenever I hear it, I think, "Man, I could've played it better."

DRESSED FOR SUCCESS

GW, March 1998

IT'S ALL CONTRIVED. Even when I was in my twenties, or my teens, I knew music was about much more than that, But I dressed up funny and did all that stuff because it looked pretty silly with one guy up front dressed like that and me in the back being normal. So I played the game, so to speak. But I knew what music was really about ever since my earliest memory of hearing my dad downstairs in his music room, holding just one note on his clarinet for as long as he could.

TAKIN' NO PRISONERS

GW, August 2004

I GET EASILY bored playing the same thing, so I have given myself the freedom to change and play variations within the context of a song. Who made the rule that you have to play the same rhythm part under every verse? I'm not afraid to fall on my face. I think my ability has grown tenfold over what was on our early records, and it's because I care so much. I care so much that I don't care. It means so much to me that I allow myself to fail. I'm very simple in my complication and very complicated in my simplicity. If I hear a sound in my head I will stop at nothing to achieve it, because I feel there is nothing given to me that can't be achieved. It's a matter of letting go and being open to any possibility. I don't take prisoners 'cause I don't know where to store 'em. [*Laughs*]

IT'S HIS THING

GW's 30th-anniversary issue, late 2010

IT'S FUNNY BUT no matter how hard I tried to sound like the records — and I really tried — I always ended up sounding like me. We used to play "It's Your Thing" by the Isley Brothers, but everyone thought it was a Black Sabbath song because I was playing it through a Marshall. It was Black Sabbath funk! We would play "Get Down Tonight" by KC and the Sunshine Band — all that stuff. The stuff that was closest to my heart was Black Sabbath. But it was a blessing. If you play and play and play, after a while you discover the essence of yourself.

WILD RIDE

GW, February 2014

SOMEONE PLAYED ME his new record once, and every song on it was the same beat. Most of the songs were even in the same key. You could barely distinguish between the songs. He said, "Once you've got them, you don't want to lose them." That was so opposite of the way I think. I like to listen to records that go through changes and take you for a ride. I like things that come out of left field and keep your interest, where each song holds up individually and together they make a well-rounded collection. I prefer to make records that you listen to from beginning to end. I'm really not into recording just singles.

EVH ON EVH

Total Guitar, July 2016

You seem to be favoring the EVH Wolfgang model in recent years. Could you take us through a few of your favorite features on it?

Well, it's the ultimate guitar for me. Everything from that 12-string I took the six strings off, to the Frankenstein, to everything else I've broken or rebuilt — this is the ultimate guitar, which we still continue to improve on. Like that low-friction pot we just added it a year ago. We've upgraded it to stainless steel frets so they don't wear out. We're always just doing something. As Matt [Bruck] would say, 'Building a better mousetrap.'" I played a Special during "I'll Wait" during the last tour. I traded off between that and the Star guitar. I actually preferred it to the Star because it has the neck pickup. It just so happens that on the record I used the neck pickup, so for that I preferred the Special. And we're still tinkering. Just last week we were tinkering with different magnet types to make the guitar sound even better.

Does that come from a place where you live with something for a while and then your tastes change?

It's a natural evolution. I hate to put it this way, because it doesn't apply to everything — like my wife or anything — but... Everything guitar-based! [*Laughs*] It's not necessarily that I get tired of it, but after a while you go, "Hey, this could be a little better, I'd like a little more of this." Like the difference between the 5150 III and the IIIS. I didn't like the fact — even though a lot of people do like it — that on the 5150 III the second channel has a different tonal quality to the third channel. I want them to be identical in tonal response and quality. The same sound. So that when you're facing the other way and not looking at which channel you're on, you can't tell, except one is just fucking over the top overdrive for soloing and the other is rhythm so you can have your guitar full up and it won't drive you crazy feeding back. But yeah, we just continue to — in my mind — evolve and change and improve, and in turn give players a better product. It's an ongoing thing.

When you first designed the 5150, were you conscious of the fact that you were creating something that would become a benchmark in heavy guitar tones?

I had no clue. I just wanted something that I liked. I just wanted a high-gain amp that wouldn't blow up!

How does it feel, you're obviously used to being emulated, but still!

Yeah, I guess it's a wonderful feeling that people like the stuff we design. But even if they didn't, I would still use it! Because really, that's the bottom line. I have to like it otherwise it doesn't go out.

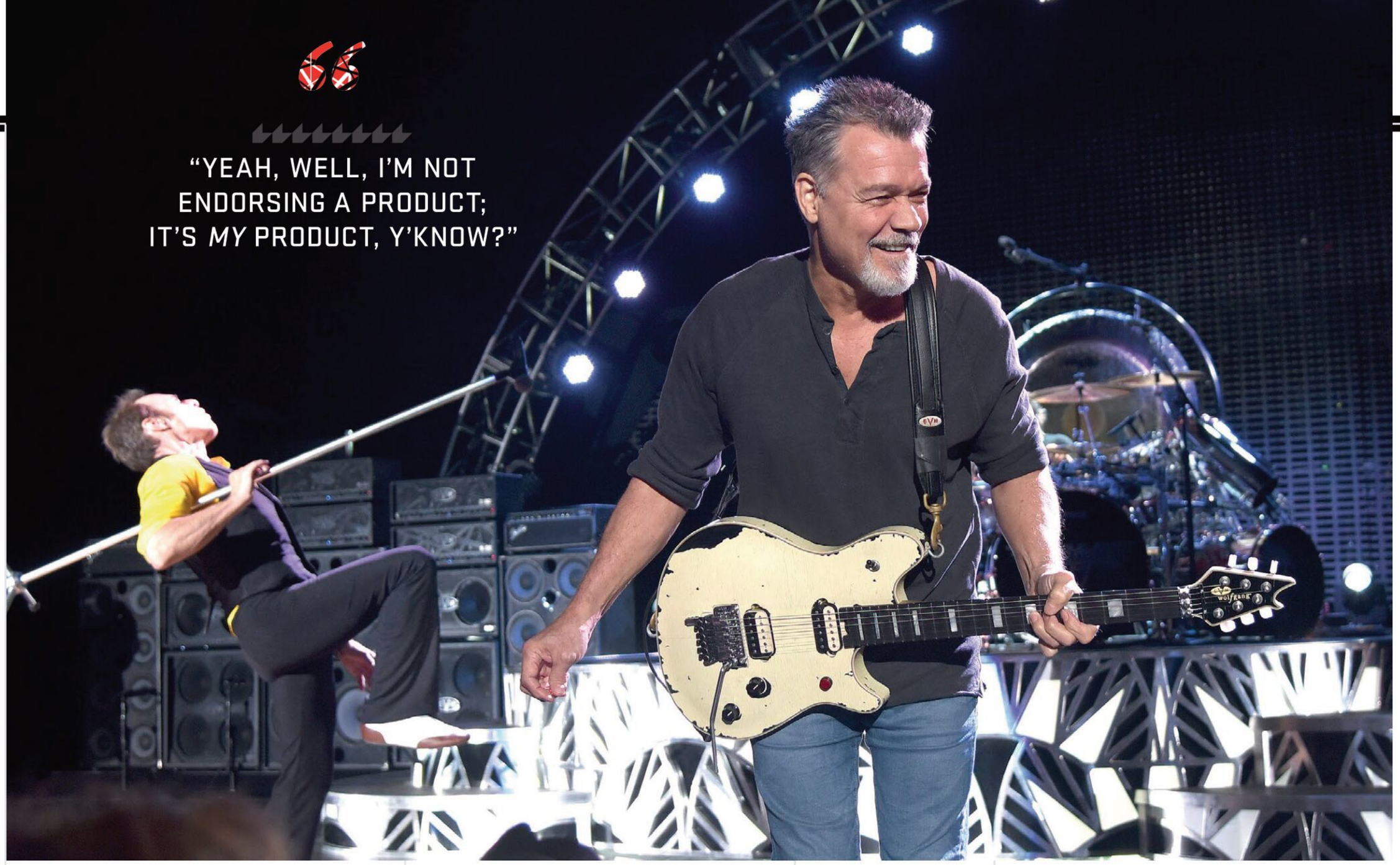
We heard an interesting story about you bench testing the 5150 III with feedback...

Oh yeah! I left it feeding back for a month! And

KOH HASEBE/SHINKO MUSIC/GETTY IMAGES

Van Halen in Tokyo in June 1978; [*from left*] Alex Van Halen, Michael Anthony, David Lee Roth and Eddie Van Halen

“I’D RATHER BOMB WITH MY OWN SONGS THAN MAKE IT WITH SOMEONE ELSE’S”



> “YEAH, WELL, I’M NOT ENDORSING A PRODUCT; IT’S *MY* PRODUCT, Y’KNOW?”

then I put a bass through it and left it for another month, because I wanted a really low frequency to see how the amp and the cabinet would hold up. [I’d try] different feedback frequencies, really high, then I’d muffle the other strings once I got the note that I wanted it to feedback at, and I’d just leave it. I’ll never forget, we had a Fender meeting with the powers that be to talk about something, and we’re walking up the hill to the studio here and they hear this, “Ooooh.” Then we open the door and it’s “OOOOOH” then we open another door and it’s just fucking screaming! And they all went “What the fuck are you doing?” and I’m like, “I’m crash-testing the amp!” I don’t like stuff to blow up. So then I take it out on tour for a whole cycle before it was released to the public. Nothing goes out until I’ve totally fucking crash-tested it.

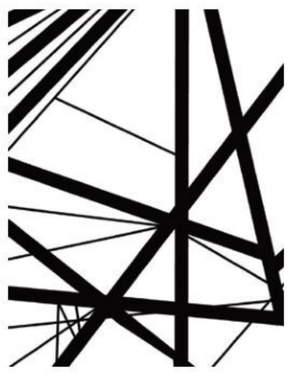
So did it break down?
No, it held up!

Were you secretly hoping that you’d be able to destroy it?
No, no! I mean, even when I was with Peavey, guitars would show up in stores or even to me with loose necks or this and that. So I went to Peavey and said, “Give me a Wolfgang” and I took the whole fucking guitar apart, right there, in the board meeting with Hartley Peavey sitting there, the owner of the company. I took the neck off, took the pickups out, took it all apart, then put it back together. The way I would. Then I grab the guitar, and I threw it across the fucking room and it hit the ground. I go, “Go pick it up.” The guy picked it up, and it was perfectly in tune, because the strings were stretched properly, the neck was tight, everything was the way it was supposed to be. I just looked at them and said, “Now tell me it’s [because of] shipping! It ain’t fucking shipping, you guys just aren’t setting them up right!” Attention to detail.

You seem very conscious of the fact that it’s your name on the gear.
Yeah, well I’m not endorsing a product; it’s *my* product, y’know? It’s definitely a team effort, I couldn’t do it on my own. But it’s a brand, it’s our company so to speak. The only variable or possible thing that we have no control over is tubes. Like last tour I blew a head once because I had a bad tube. But you know, you get a bad tyre on a car or whatever. We don’t make tubes. If we made EVH tubes, they wouldn’t blow! [*Laughs*]

You mentioned the Lunchbox earlier. It’s a small amp, but it has your sound.
Yeah, and that’s the whole point. It’s a 15-watt amp, and it just screams. I mean, you could play the LA Forum with that amp. It’s got a quarter-power switch that brings it down, we used EL84s in it, they’re great tubes. It sounds like a 5150.

David Lee Roth [*left*] and Eddie Van Halen in action at Shoreline Amphitheatre, Mountain View, California, July 16, 2015



Was it a challenge to scale that sound down?
Everything’s a challenge, basically. When we come up with the idea they build it, and send it over and then I’ll suggest changes and it’s just back and forth until it’s right. The pickups on a Wolfgang — we had two companies each build us 40 pairs of pickups. So we had 80 pickups, and I didn’t like any of them! So I ask Fender, “Who makes your Strat pickups?” They go, “Well, we do them in-house.” So I say, “Well, let’s build my pickup in-house.” First time around, first attempt, boom! That’s what I want! Because they listened. The other guys, I don’t know, I guess they just threw me something that they already had so they could say, “Hey, Eddie Van Halen uses this model pickup.” I mean it wasn’t the point; I would have used anything if it sounded the way I wanted, but it didn’t.

The power switching thing is kind of a continuation of the whole Variac idea.
Yeah! And on the combo version of the 5150 III it has a knob that does the same thing. It’s a different circuit, but it’s the same premise, so that’s actually more like a Variac.

Could you imagine what it would have been like to have had that in your early days?
Oh man! But these things happen for a reason, I guess... GW

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GUITAR WORLD
JANUARY 2021

THE PURSUIT OF TAPPINESS

ASSOCIATE EDITOR ANDY ALEDORT DEMONSTRATES HOW TO TAP

EVH STYLE

IN THIS COMPLETE, HANDS-ON LESSON

OF ALL THE things that remain most important to guitar players, such as being able to write cool, catchy riffs, solo with great feeling and being able to play perfectly in tune all the time, there's one desire that allures many rock players especially — *speed*. Just like the first time you stole your parents' car, there is for most players a certain thrill and exhilaration to playing fast licks. For these guitarists, one surefire way to achieve steadily continuous note production at high velocity is to use *fretboard tapping*.

Fretboard tapping is a technique for which both hands are used to independently sound different notes on the instrument. In fretboard tapping, a pick-hand finger sounds a note by tapping the fretboard on a specific string and fret. This technique allows a guitarist not only to play musical phrases rapidly but also to cover much wider areas of the fretboard than could possibly be reached with just the fretting hand. During the late Seventies, Eddie Van Halen blasted out of Southern California with an explosive sound that blew everyone away. His show-stopping solo masterpiece, "Eruption," recorded for the debut Van Halen album, featured long passages of fretboard tapping. Virtually overnight, Eddie was a star and fretboard tapping became *de rigueur* for aspiring shredmeisters.

In truth, fretboard tapping techniques can be traced back to earlier centuries: violin virtuoso Niccolo Paganini used similar techniques on the violin during the early 1800s, and a tapping-like technique known as selpe was used in traditional Turkish folk music. Examples of the tapping on electric guitar can be found throughout the 20th century, such as late-Sixties guitarist Randy Resnick's attempt to approximate saxophone great John Coltrane's "sheets of sound" in his work with John Mayall, jazz/rock pioneer Harvey Mandel's employment of the technique on many of his records, and avant garde genius Frank Zappa's tapping with the edge of the pick during his solo in "Inca Roads" (*One Size Fits All*, 1975). Let us also not forget Steve Hackett, Roy Smeck, Dave Bunker (check out "Dave Bunker on Ozark Jubilee Circa 1960" on YouTube) and Vittorio Camardese, whose circa-1965 two-hand tapping caused quite a stir when we shared a video on GuitarWorld.com back in 2013. (Be sure to Google "Amateur Guitarist Vittorio Camardese Displays Two-Handed Tapping Technique in 1965.")

In 1969 Emmett Chapman invented the Chapman Stick, an instrument intended to be played by pressing the strings down to a fretboard using the fingers of both hands. But, since the arrival of Eddie Van Halen in the late Seventies, fretboard tapping has been most widely associated with hard rock and metal. Randy Rhoads is another guitarist from the late Seventies/early Eighties metal era that, like Eddie, took fretboard tapping into new dimensions. By the mid Eighties, tapping had evolved even further at the hands of guitarists such as Joe Satriani, Steve Vai, Paul Gilbert, Jeff Watson (who tapped with four fingers of his pick hand) and jazz/fusion wizard Allan Holdsworth, among many others, and it remains prevalent today.

LYNN GOLDSMITH/CORBIS/VCG VIA GETTY IMAGES

By ANDY ALEDORT Photo by LYNN GOLDSMITH

Eddie onstage
in 1978

FOR AUDIO OF THESE LICKS, HEAD TO
GUITARWORLD.COM/JANUARY2021

Tapping Basics

FIG. 1a

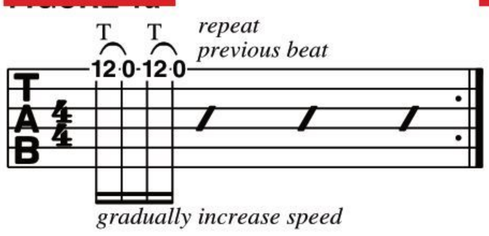
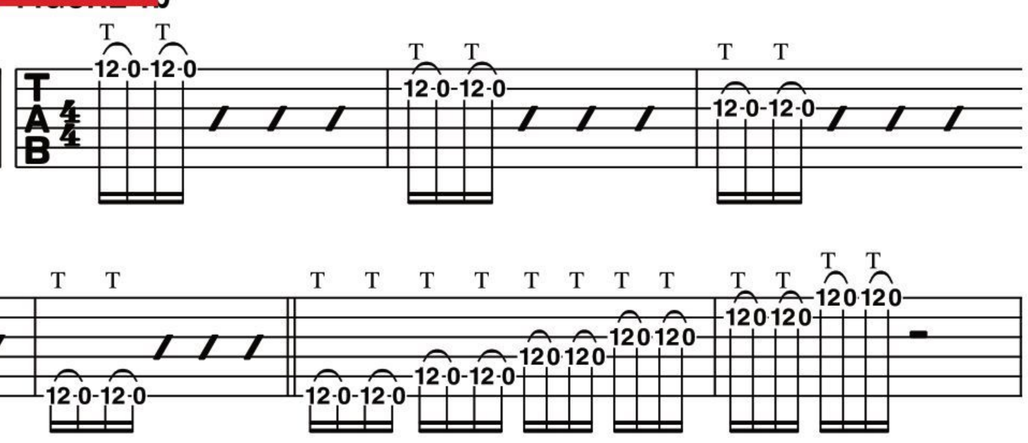


FIG. 1b



Adding One Note to Form Triplets

FIG. 2a

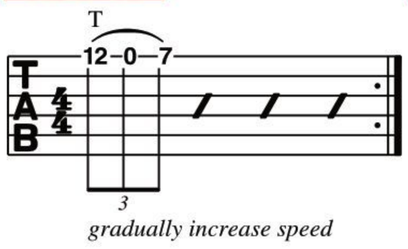


FIG. 2b

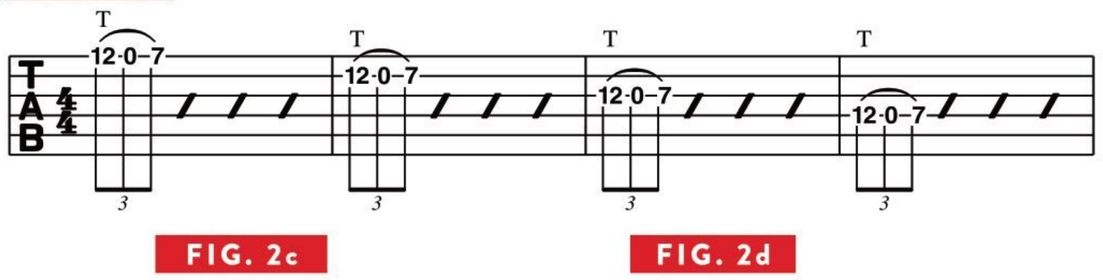


FIG. 2c

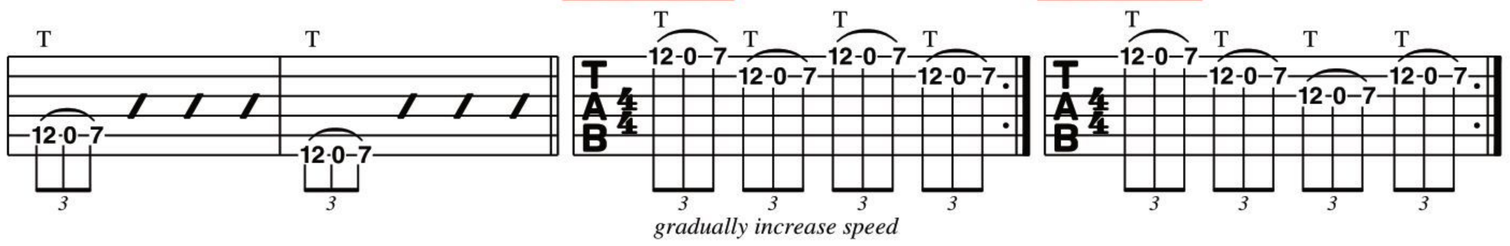


FIG. 2d

Moving the Fret Hand Around

FIG. 3a

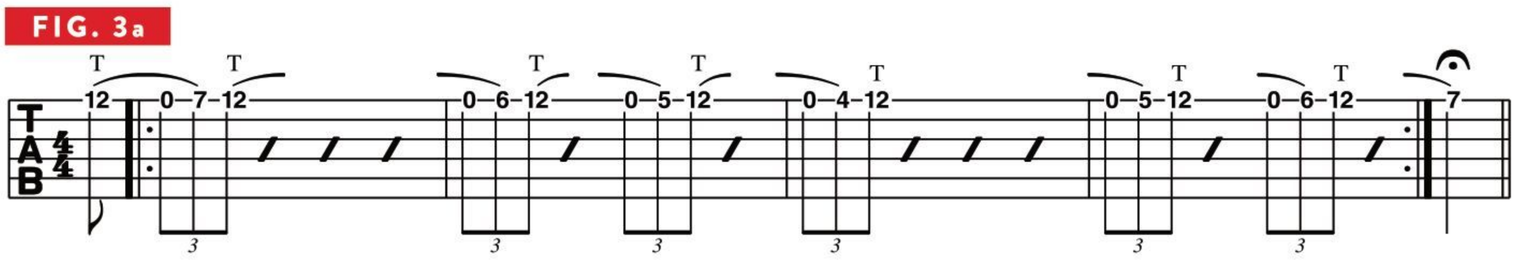
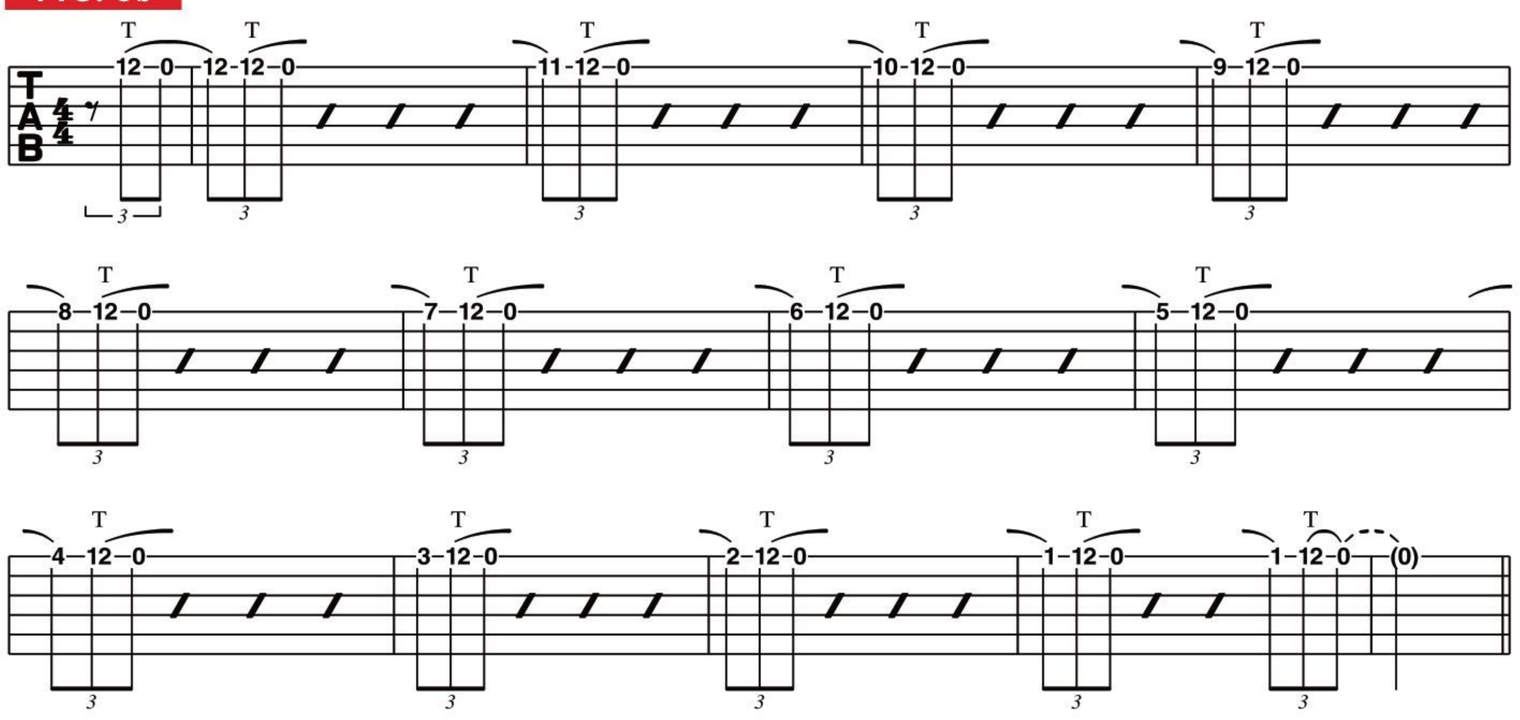
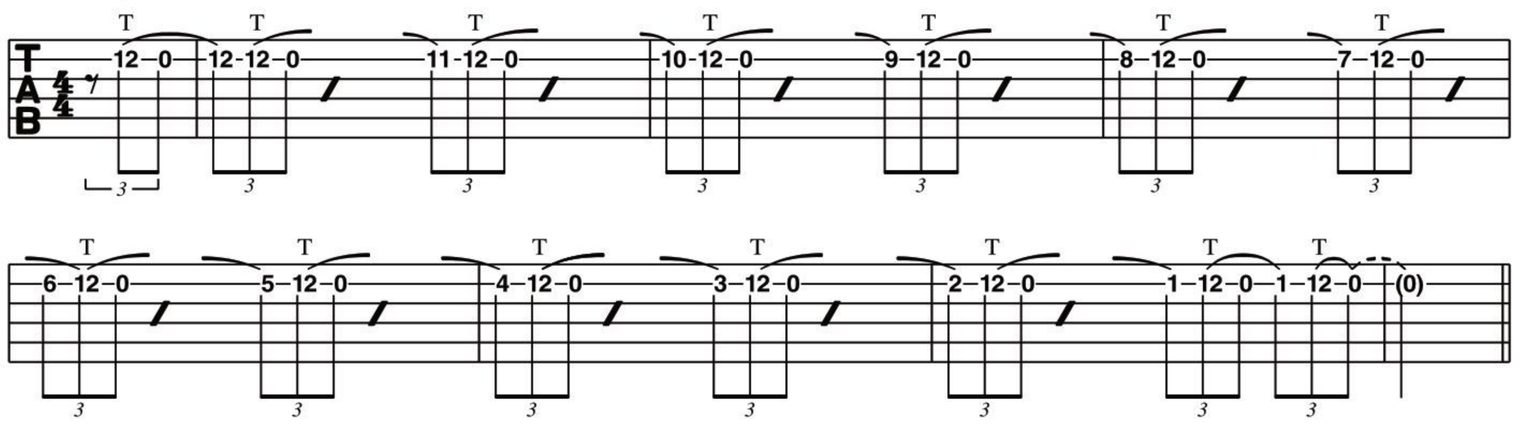


FIG. 3b



moving to other strings
B string:



TAPPING BASICS

LET'S BEGIN WITH the simplest tapping technique of all: applying a single tap with the pick hand. As illustrated in **FIGURE 1a**, use the tip of one of your pick-hand fingers — most players use either their index or middle finger — and tap the high E string at the 12th fret in order to sound a high E note. To produce an audible tone, the tap should be firm and, just like a hammer-on, land *behind* the fret (to the left of it, if you're a right-handed player). Keep the tapping finger pressed against the string and fretboard so that the note continues to ring. Whichever finger you choose to tap with, I recommend resting your pick hand's thumb on the top side of the guitar neck (near the low E string) in order to provide some stability and a tactile point of reference for the hand while tapping. Doing this also enables you to palm to mute the lower strings to prevent them from ringing sympathetically as you tap. As regards what to do with the pick, you have three options: 1) continue to hold it, 2) tuck it into your palm, or 3) let go of it temporarily, by either putting it down or clasping it between your lips (seriously).

When releasing the tapped note, the finger should flick the string slightly sideways, either in a downward or upward direction, so as to pluck the string slightly as the tapping finger releases it. This technique essentially accomplishes the same thing as a fret-hand pull-off, which is to keep the string vibrating by yanking it slightly sideways before releasing it. The best way to get started with this technique is to tap your pick hand's 1st or 2nd finger onto the high E string at the 12th fret, push-off (or pull-off) in order to sound the open E note, then repeat the sequence in a continuous loop, gradually increasing speed, as illustrated in **FIGURE 1a**.

The next step is to try doing the same thing on the other five strings. As shown in **FIGURE 1b**, begin by tapping and pushing off twice to sound four 16th notes on beat 1, repeat this four-note sequence three more times for beats 2 through 4, then move the process over to the next lower string..

ADDING ONE NOTE TO FORM TRIPLETS

NOW THAT YOU'VE gotten a handle on the basic tapping technique, let's add one note with the fret hand in order to sound a three-note combination known as a triplet, which is the most common

melodic "shape" used when tapping. After tapping and pushing-off (or pulling-off) to the open string, we're going to hammer a fingertip from the fret hand down onto the string in a movement similar to the pick-hand tap.

As shown in **FIGURE 2a**, start with a tap at the 12th fret on the high E string, push- or pull-off to sound the open E note, and then hammer the tip of your fret hand's index finger onto the string at the 7th fret, sounding a B note. These three notes together comprise an eighth-note triplet. Repeat the process with another tap, push/pull-off and hammer-on, and proceed to chain together the three notes into a continuous, unbroken loop while gradually increasing speed. The goal is to make all the notes sound at the same volume, and you'll need to listen critically as you play, to determine if you're tapping and hammering with sufficient force and pushing/pulling-off correctly. Like **FIGURE 1b**, **FIGURE 2b** has you moving this pattern over to all of the other strings. Once you feel comfortable with this technique and can execute it cleanly, ramp up the speed.

Many guitarists like to move quickly between two adjacent strings when performing tapped licks. In **FIGURE 2c**, the tapped triplet quickly alternates between the top two strings. It's also fun to do this with three strings, as demonstrated in **FIGURE 2d**. When you've got a handle on moving across the strings in this manner, try inventing some of your own string-crossing patterns.

MOVING THE FRET HAND AROUND

NOW, USING THE same 12th-fret tapped note, let's move the fret hand around to different positions in order to create melodic variations. In **FIGURE 3a**, I use the tapped note at the 12th fret on the high E string as a pickup in order to start the lick, with the open E string sounded as the first eighth note of the repeated eighth-note triplet. For the first four triplets, the fret-hand index finger frets a B at the 7th fret. The finger then moves down chromatically to the 4th fret across the next two bars, and then moves back up across the next two bars. There are an infinite number of melodies that can be created using this technique because, as the tap/pull-off keeps the string ringing, notes sounded with the fret-hand finger can be applied anywhere and in any order.

Many guitarists incorporate minor or major scales with tapping, but let's first incorporate the chromatic scale, which includes every note within an octave. As shown in **FIGURE 3b**, the tapped high E note and subsequent open E are both pickup notes to the downbeat (first note) of bar 1, which is a 12th-fret high E, sounded with a fret-hand hammer-on.

When alternately tapping and hammering at the same fret like this, you'll need to make sure each finger quickly gets out of the other one's way, so that they don't bump into each other. This triplet is played four times, after which the fret-hand note moves down to the 11th fret in bar 2 and proceeds to descend one fret at a time in each subsequent bar. Once you feel you can play this phrase comfortably, try moving it over to the other strings.

WHEN RELEASING THE TAPPED NOTE, THE FINGER SHOULD FLICK THE STRING SLIGHTLY SIDEWAYS, IN A DOWNWARD OR UPWARD DIRECTION

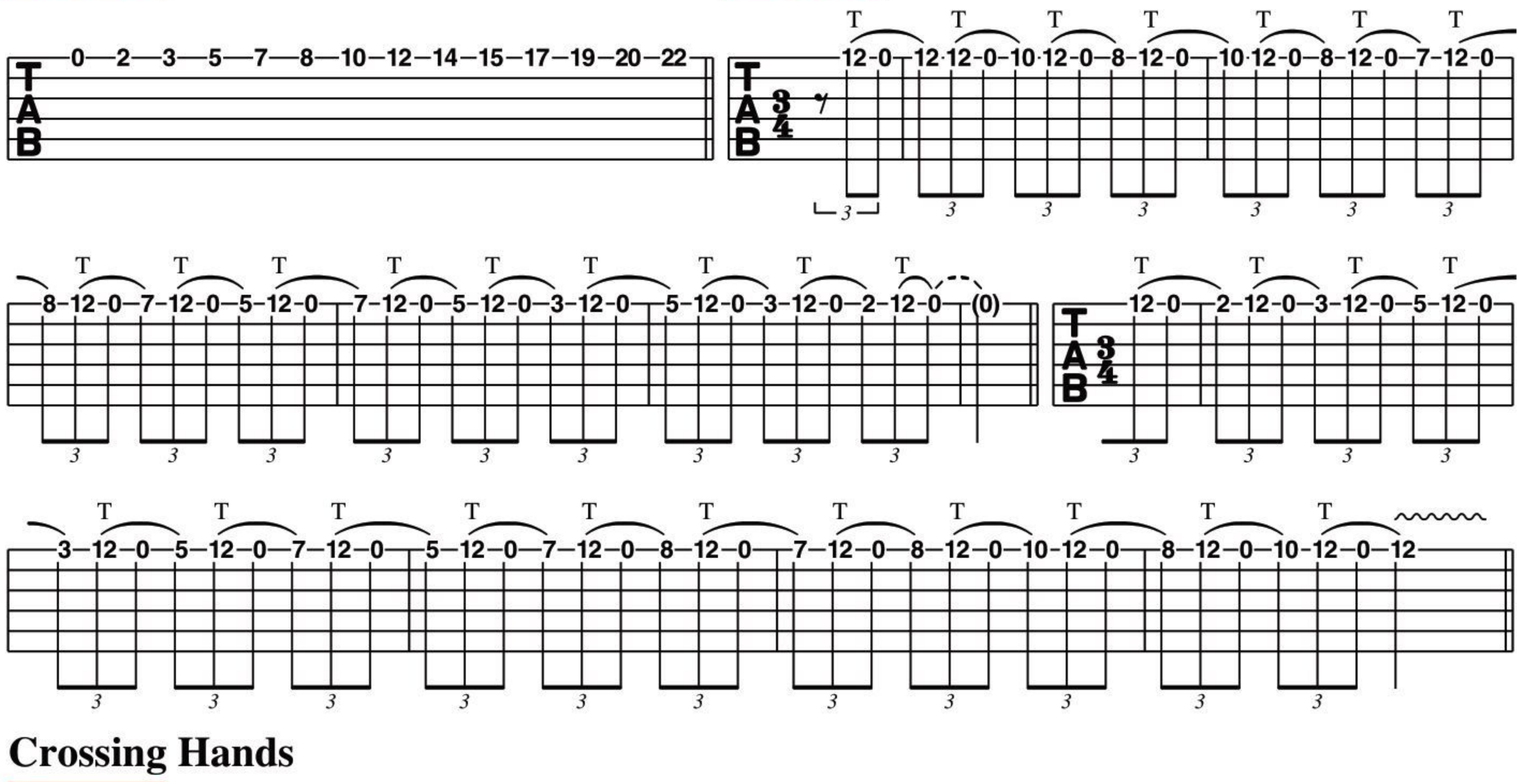
EMPLOYING SCALES

USING SCALES AS the basis for tapped figures is a technique employed greatly by guitarists such as Eddie Van Halen, Randy Rhoads, Steve Vai, Joe Satriani and many others, so let's bring a commonly used

Incorporating Scales

FIG. 4a E Aeolian mode

FIG. 4b



Crossing Hands

FIG. 4c

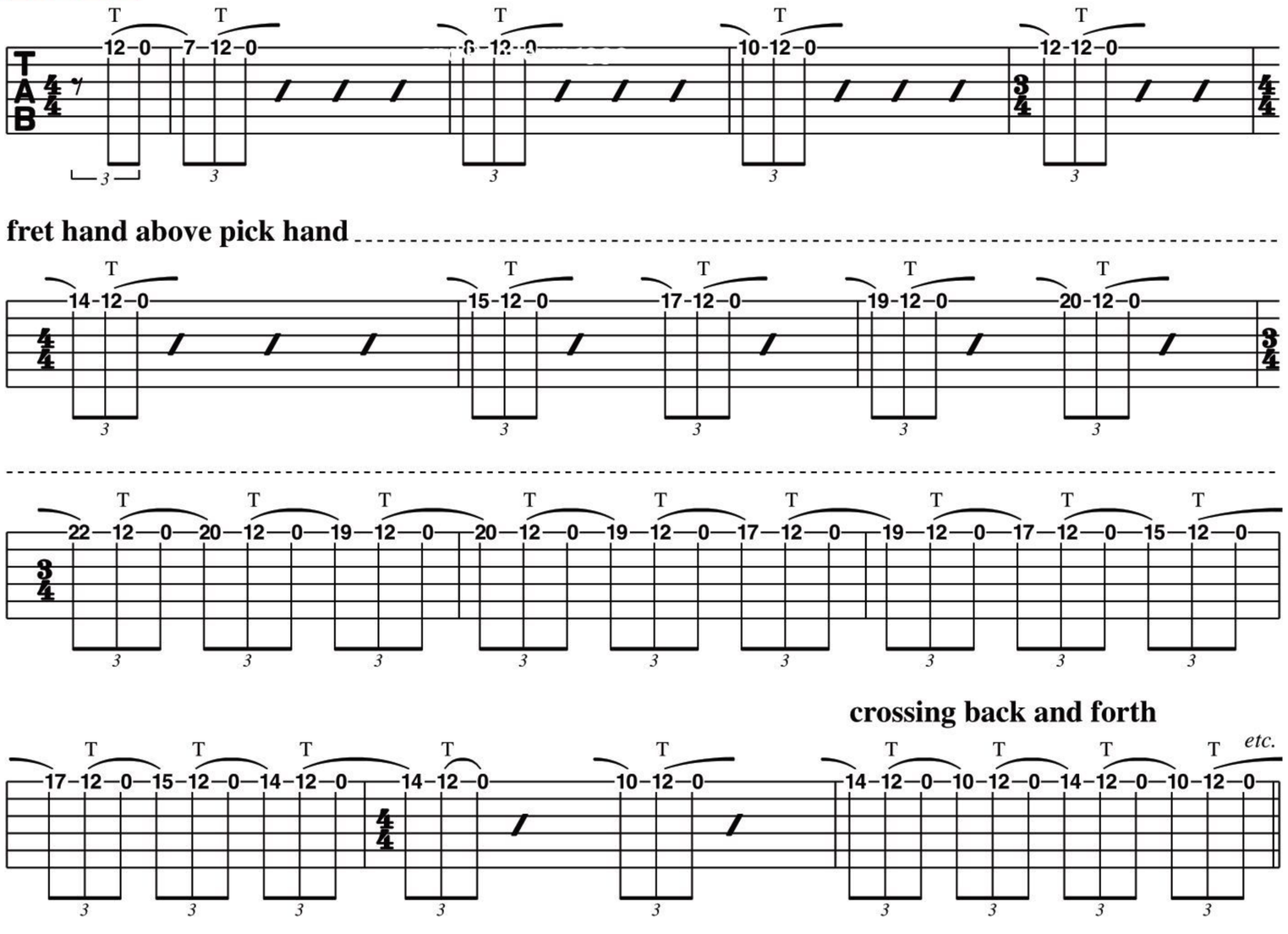


FIG. 5a B Aeolian mode

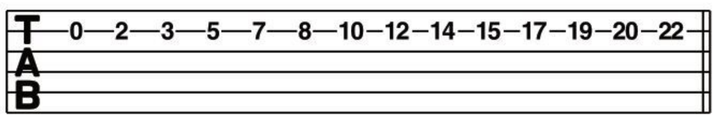
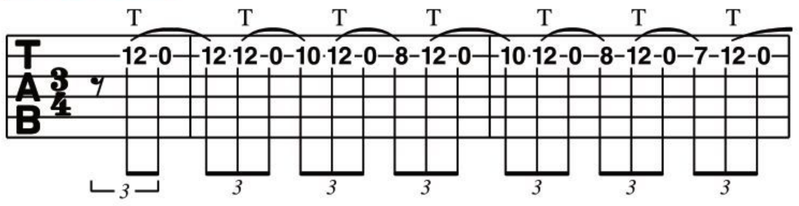
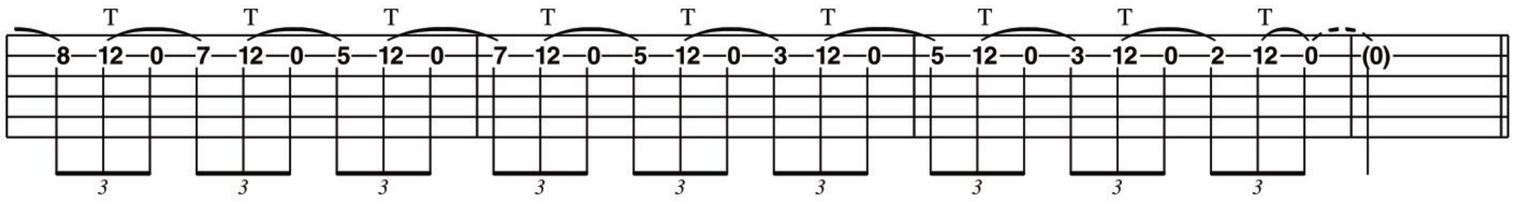
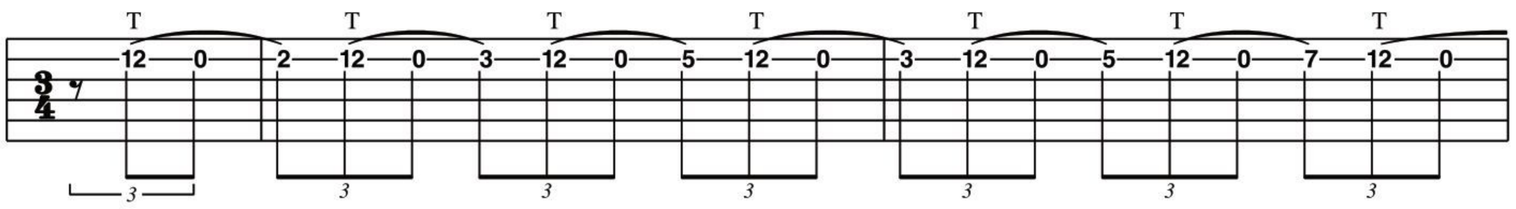
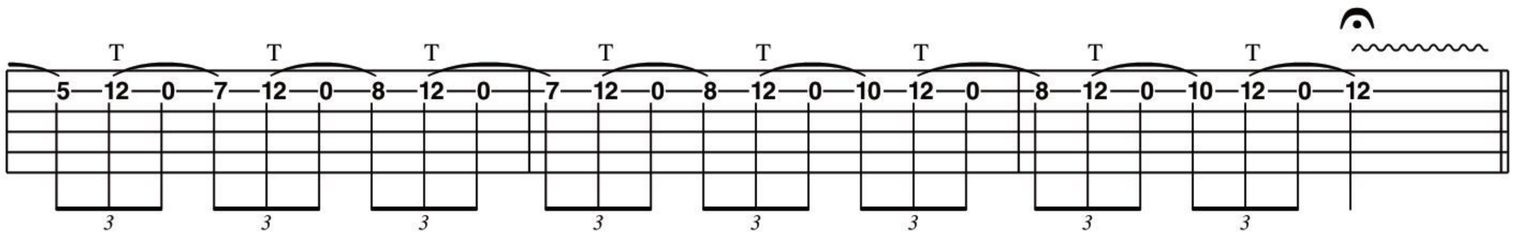


FIG. 5b









crossing hands

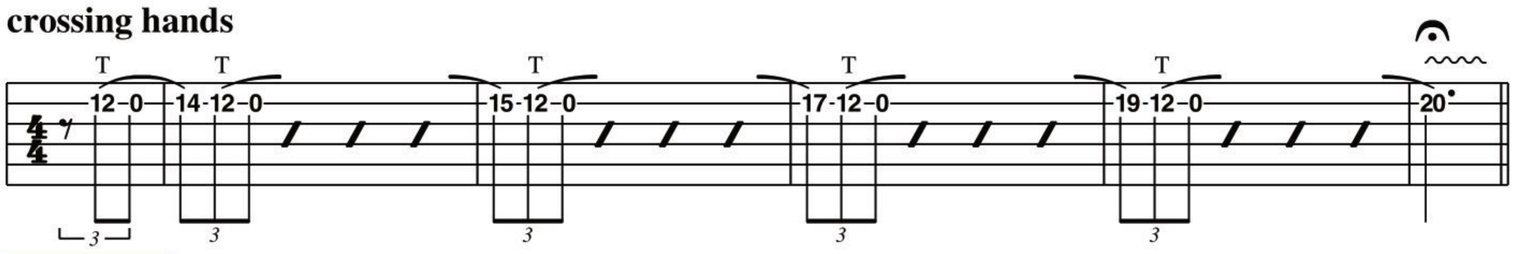
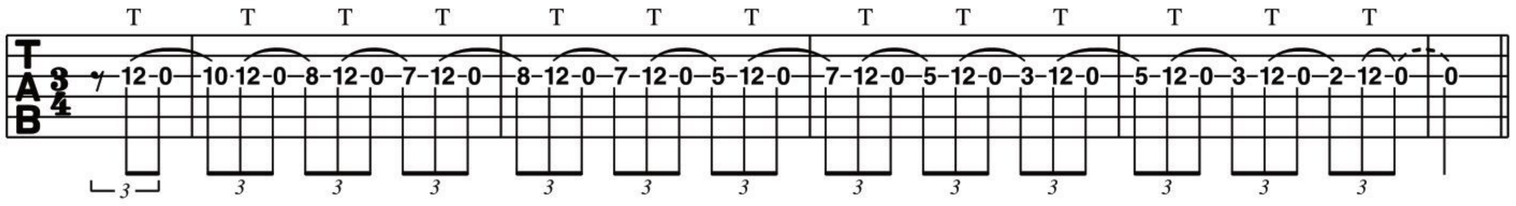


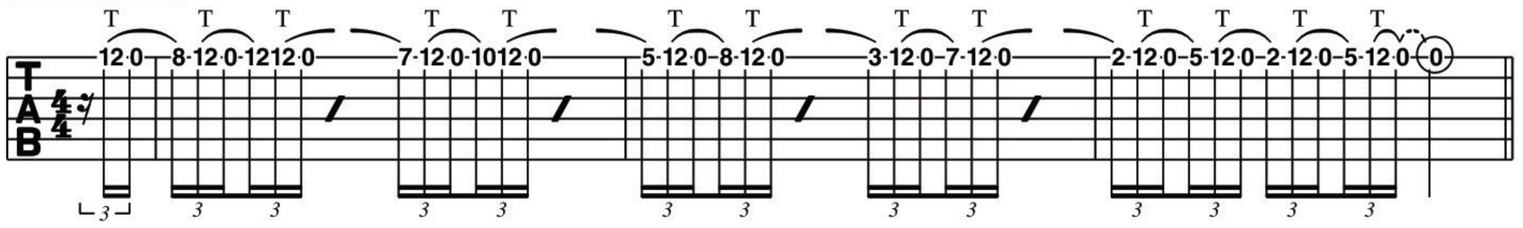
FIG. 5c (play ascending also, and move to all strings)

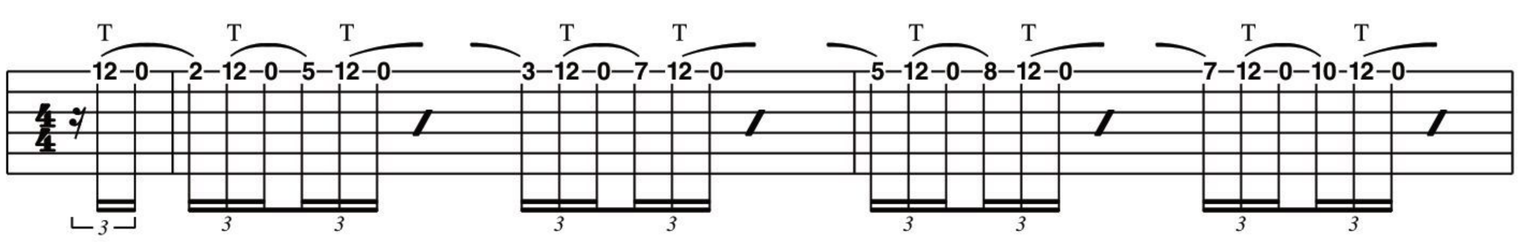
G String:



Tapping Thirds Apart: E Aeolian

FIG. 6a





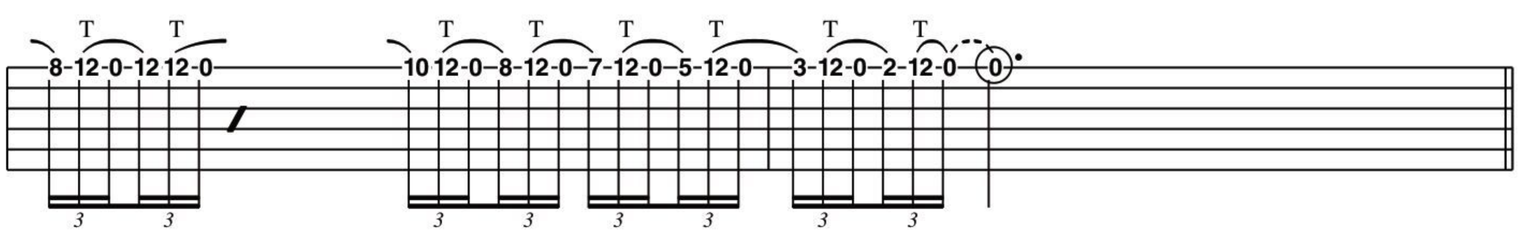
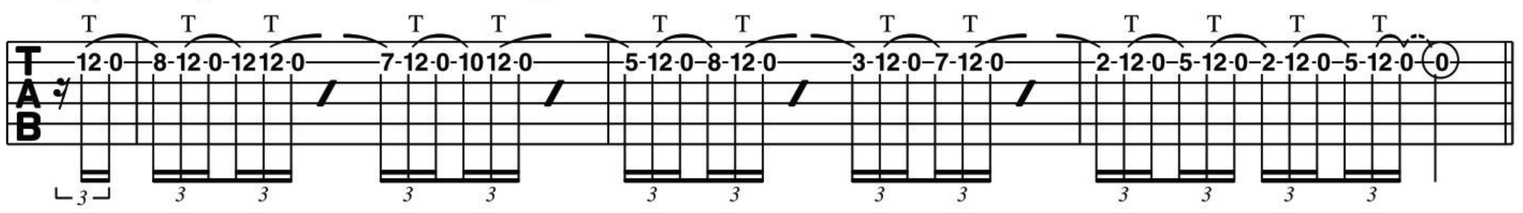
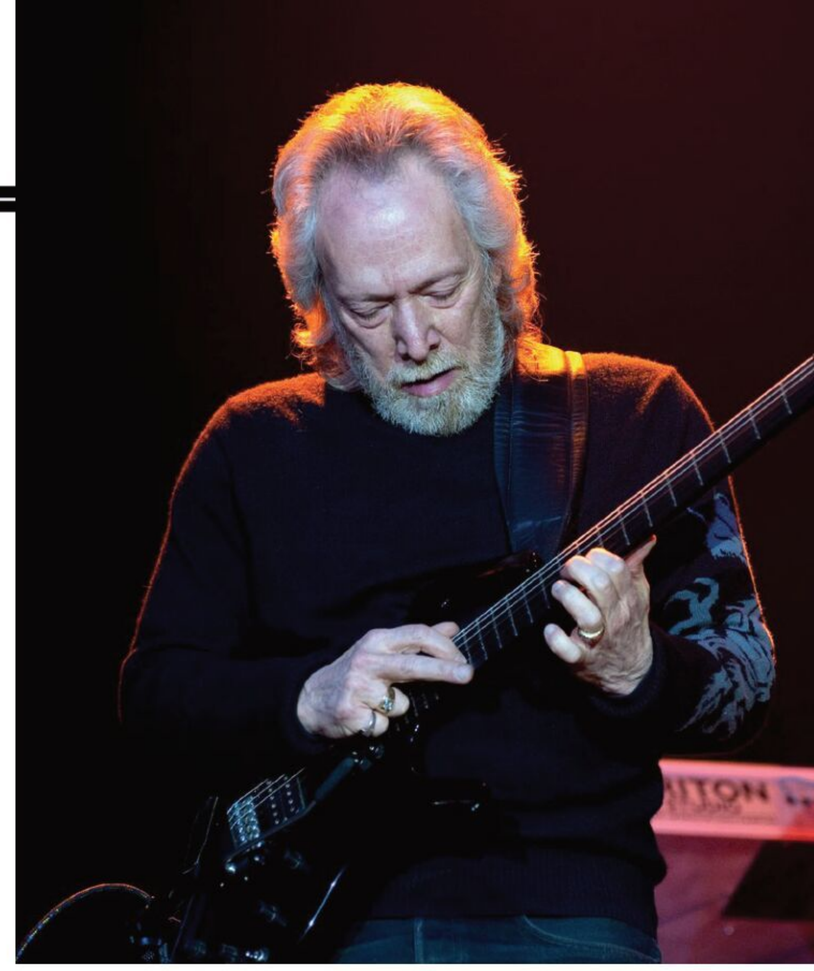


FIG. 6b B Aeolian

(play ascending also, and move to all other strings)





minor scale into the mix: **FIGURE 4a** illustrates the E Aeolian mode (E, F♯, G, A, B, C, D), also known as the E natural minor scale, as it is played across two octaves on the high E string. **FIGURE 4b** illustrates a descending/ascending tapped lick based on this scale, played in $\frac{3}{4}$ meter.

When playing tapped figures like these, you can create an effect that's both musically and visually cool by crossing hands, as demonstrated in **FIGURE 4c**. In bar 5 of this example, the fret hand hammers notes that are higher up the neck than the tapping finger and remains higher on the fretboard through bar 12. In the last bar, the fret hand crosses back and forth. Crossing hands is a great way to find more freedom and options for formulating tapped melodic ideas.

If we move this idea over to the other strings, we would sound the Aeolian mode (natural minor scale) in the key dictated by the open string. **FIGURE 5a** illustrates this concept as applied to the B string, sounding B Aeolian (B, C♯, D, E, F♯, G, A), and **FIGURE 5b** illustrates the **FIGURE 4b** lick as it would be performed on the B string, followed by some cross-hand melodies. **FIGURE 5c** shows the technique performed on the G string; continue the process across all of the strings.

TAPPING 3RDS APART

LET'S NOW ELABORATE on the scalar approach. Using E Aeolian, **FIGURE 6a** shows a lick wherein pairs of fret-hand notes are sounded three scale degrees, or *3rds*, apart, and then the pair descends the fretboard while remaining *diatonic to* (within the scale structure of) E Aeolian. The sound of this tapped figure is more arpeggio-like because each three-note melodic shape alludes to a different chord.

STEVE SNOWDEN/GETTY IMAGES

Harvey Mandel in action in Albuquerque, New Mexico, December 31, 2009

If we move this pattern over to the B string, the result is a phrase based on B Aeolian, as shown in **FIGURE 6b**.

USING ONLY FRETTED NOTES

ANOTHER COMMONLY USED tapping technique is to forgo the use of open strings and use only fretted, or "closed" notes. Previously, we created triplets with the combination of one tapped note, an open string and a fret-hand hammer-on. Now we'll go directly from tapped notes to fretted notes. In **FIGURE 7a,** the fret hand sounds the pitches of E Aeolian on the high E string, ascending and descending, while the pick hand repeatedly taps at the 12th fret. The initial 12th-fret tap in this example is a pickup note that's pushed/pulled off on the downbeat of the first bar to F♯ at the 2nd fret. In this lick, the listener's attention is drawn to the constantly changing fret-hand notes. In **FIGURE 7b**, the phrase is moved over to the B string. Try playing it on the remaining strings.

SYMMETRICAL SHAPES

ANOTHER FAVORITE TAPPING technique among shredders involves the use of chromatically ascending or descending symmetrical shapes formed with the fret hand. In the first bar of **FIGURE 8a**, the fret hand sounds notes that are three frets apart on the high E string, with a 12th-fret tap and a push/pull-off to the open string between each fret-hand note. Beginning at the 4th and 7th frets, the pair is moved one fret higher in bar 2 to the 5th and 8th frets, and then the ascending pattern continues through the next two bars, after which the shape descends in a similar fashion. **FIGURE 8b** illustrates the same pattern performed on the B string.

Using Fretted Notes Only

FIG. 7a

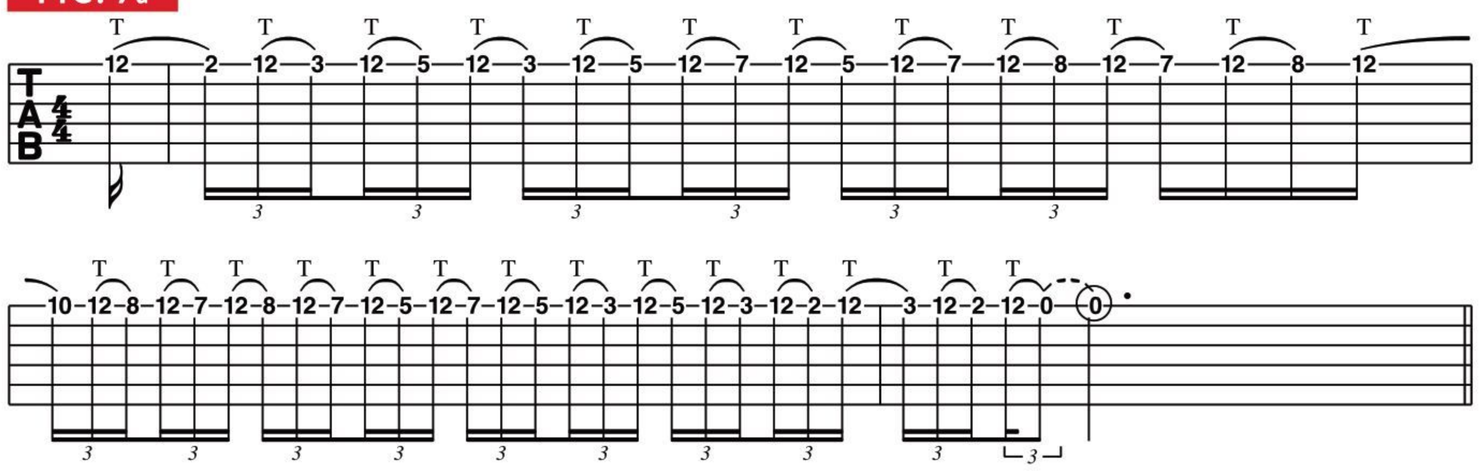
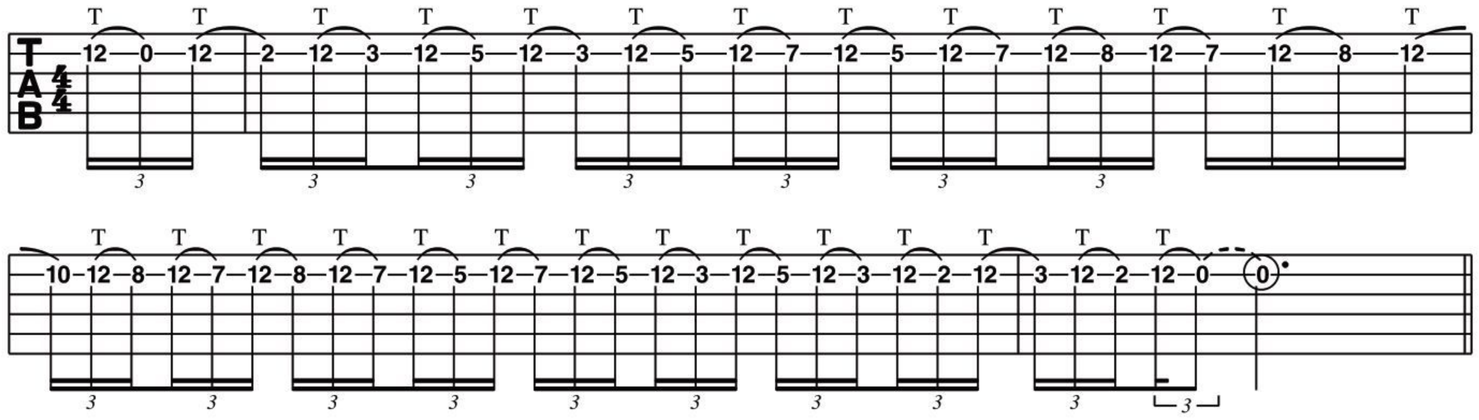


FIG. 7b (move to all strings)



Symmetrical Shapes

FIG. 8a

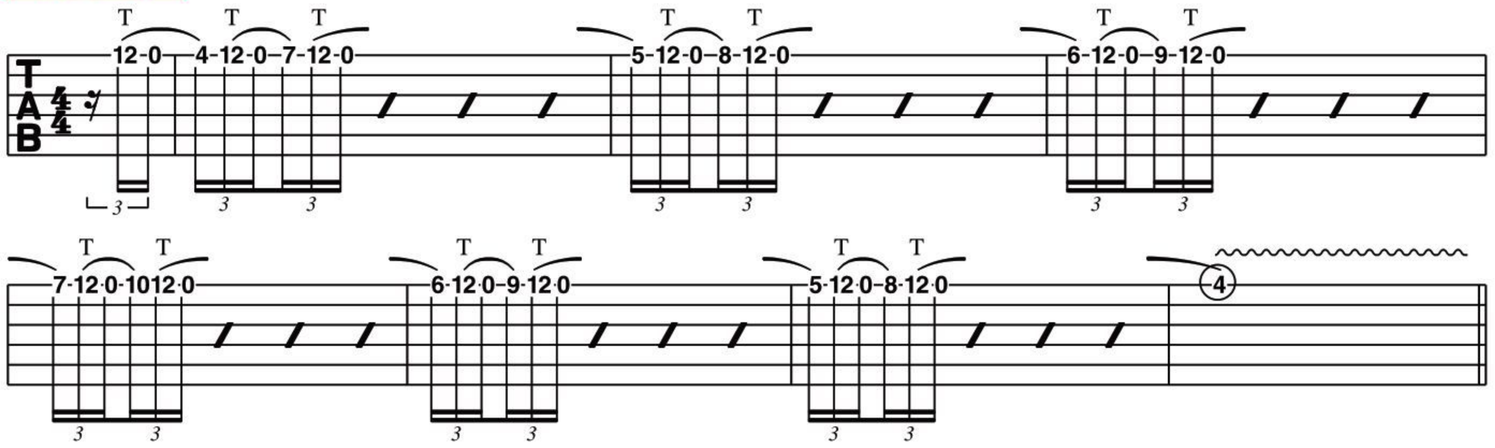
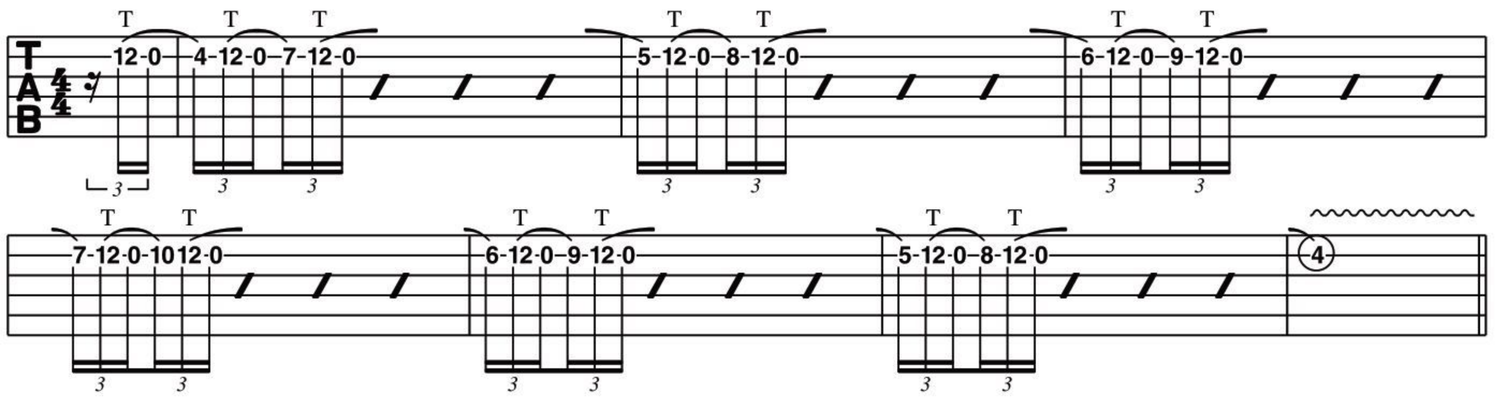


FIG. 8b (move to all strings)



MOVING THE PICK HAND AROUND

FOR ALL OF the licks demonstrated thus far, the pick hand has tapped at the same place — the 12th fret — while the fret hand has moved around. Now let's move the tapped note around while keeping the fret-hand note in the same location. In **FIGURE 9**, the tapping hand ascends the E Aeolian mode on the high E string with an open E note and a 7th-fret hammer-on sandwiched between each tapped note.

A TECHNIQUE FAVORED BY EDDIE — AND HEARD ON "THE CRADLE WILL ROCK" — IS THE USE OF DESCENDING AND ASCENDING TRIPLETS

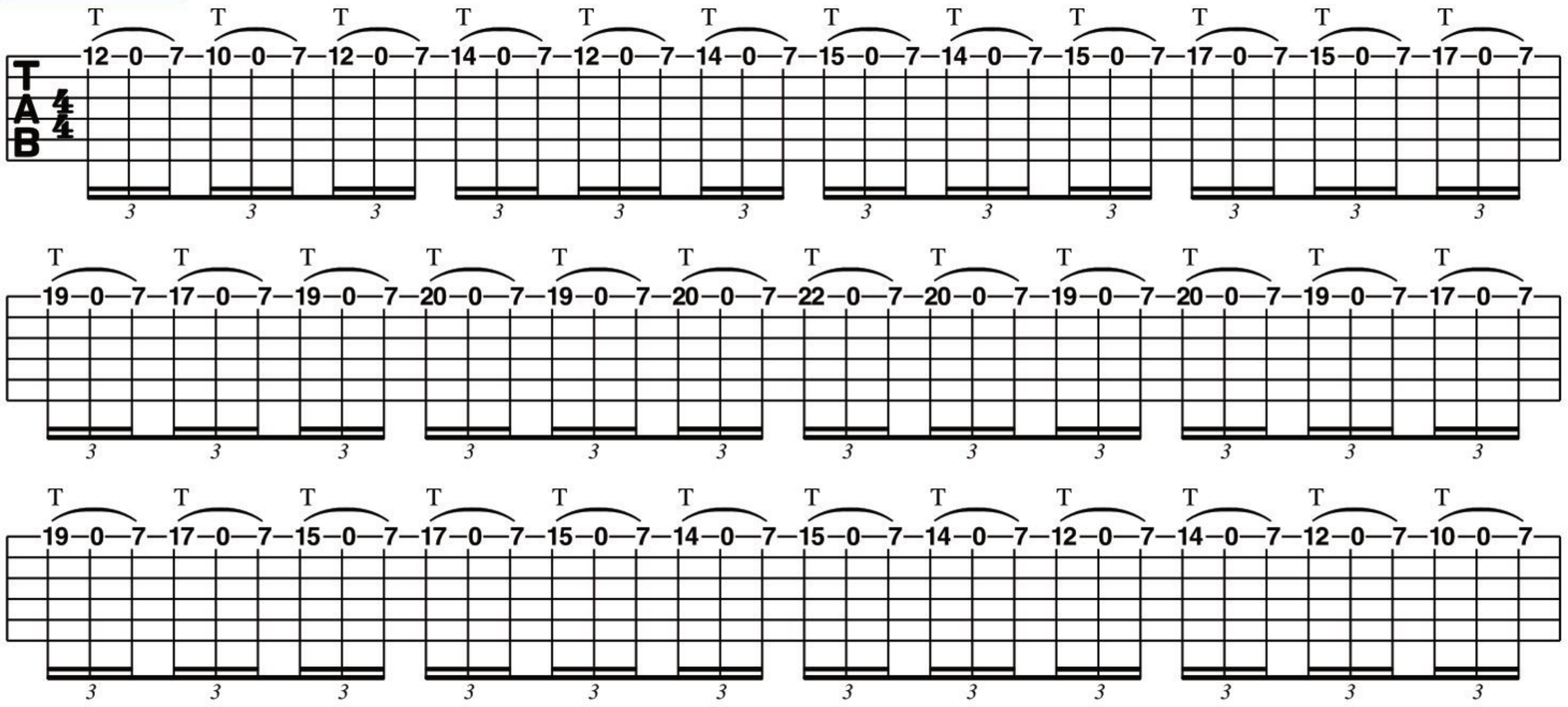
You can also try crossing hands with this technique, as demonstrated in **FIGURE 10**. In this lick, both hands push- or pull-off to the open E string, which creates a cool rhythmic effect.

TWO NOTES WITH THE FRET HAND

THE MOST COMMONLY used tapping pattern — one that's featured prominently in Eddie Van Halen's "Eruption" and "Spanish Fly" — is a triplet wherein a single tapped note is played in conjunction with two fret-

Moving the Pick Hand

FIG. 9



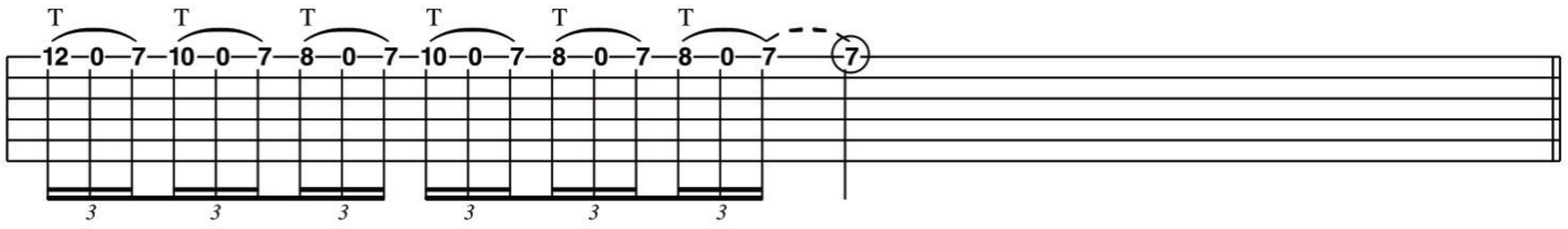
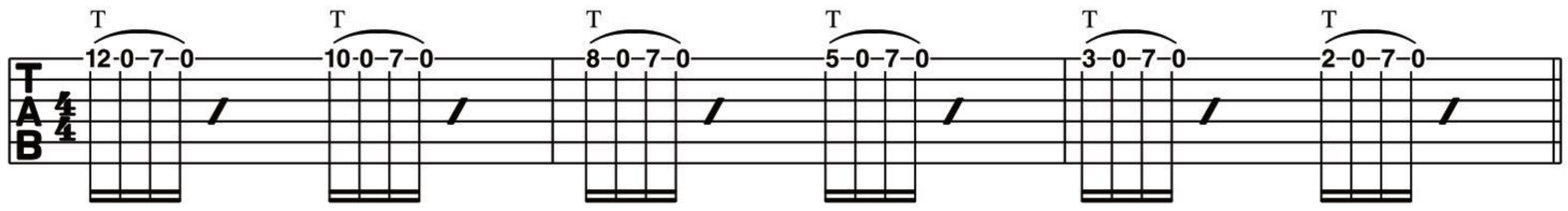


FIG. 10 crossing hands (play ascending also)



Playing Two Notes with the Fret Hand

FIG. 11a

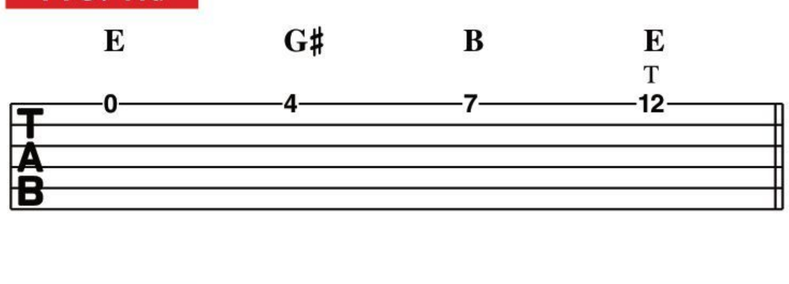


FIG. 11b

silent tap/pull-off

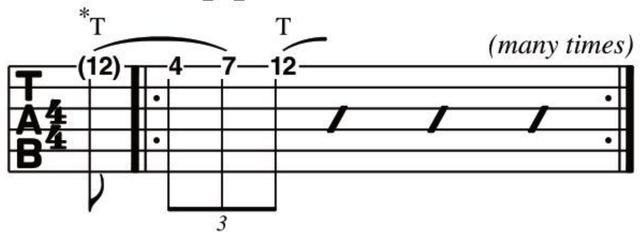
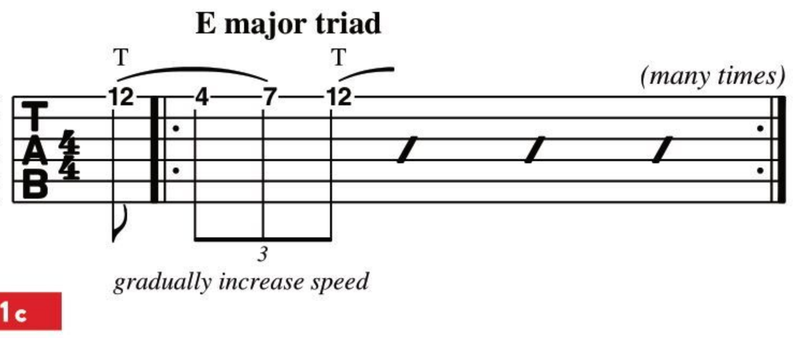


FIG. 11c



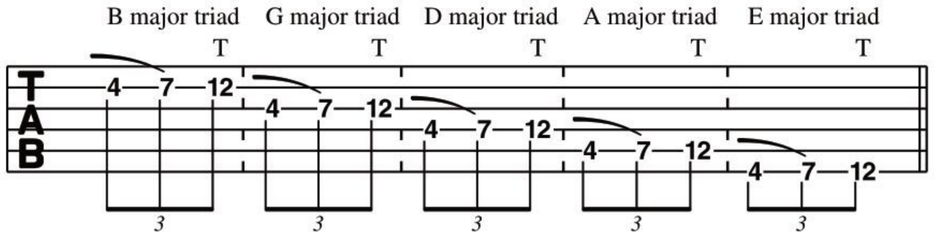
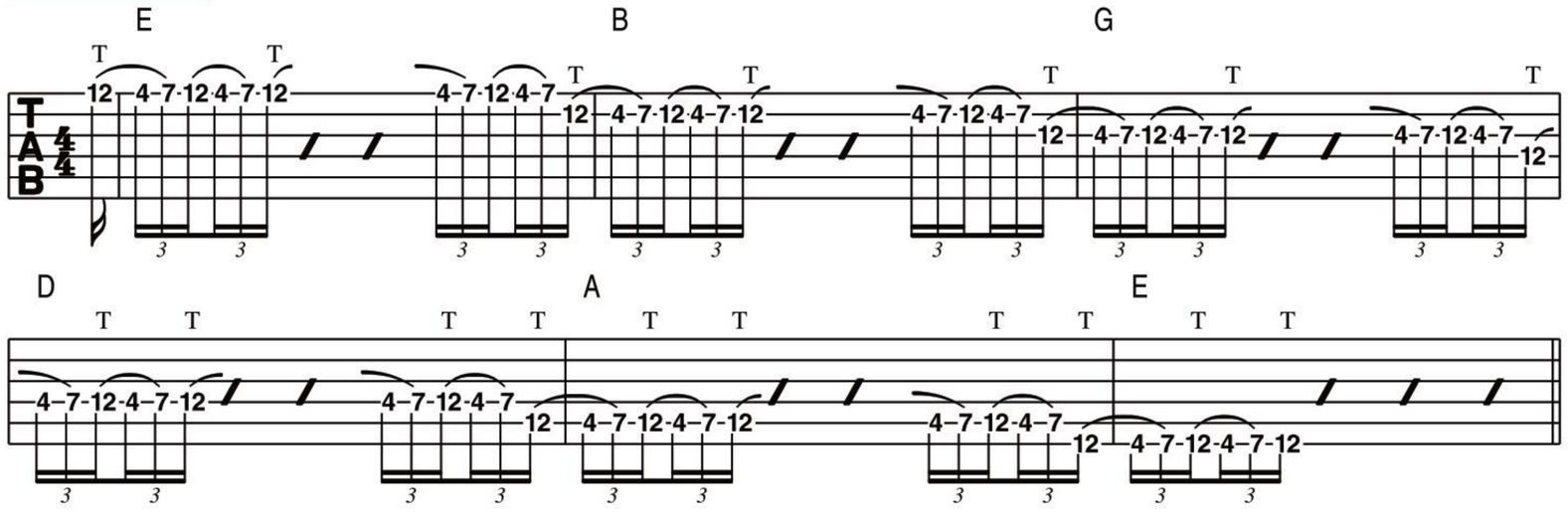


FIG. 11d



ted notes to form an arpeggio. Very often, the three-note shapes outline either a major or minor triad; which consists of the root, 3rd and 5th of a given scale. **FIGURE 11a** shows the notes of an E major triad played on the high E string: E is the root note, G♯ is the major 3rd, and B is the 5th. In the next bar, the high E note at the 12th fret is tapped as a pickup note and then pushed/pulled-off to the fret-hand index finger, positioned at the 4th fret. The fret-hand pinkie then hammers on to the 7th fret, after which the tap is reapplied at the 12th fret to complete the eighth-note triplet, then the sequence repeats. This phrase can be started with either a conventional tap at the 12th fret or by employing a technique known as a silent tap/pull-off.

As shown in **FIGURE 11b**, gently place the tip of the tapping finger on the string at the 12th fret without depressing the string to the fretboard, then push- or pull-off with the tip of the finger, in effect plucking the string in order to initiate its vibration. This gets the string ringing, and then the rest of the notes are sounded as before. As you move this pattern over to the other strings, you will sound major triads that correlate with each string, as shown in **FIGURE 11c**. Play each triad on each string individually and then in a repeating manner. When moving to the next lower string, notice that the tapping finger must arrive there first, in order to do the silent tap/pull-off before the fret-hand fingers follow suit. Also, moving across the strings in this way alludes to an inherent chord progression, one that is based on each of the open strings and moves from high to low: E, B, G, D, A, E. Eddie Van Halen used triad-based tapped figures in many songs to imply chord progressions.

16TH-NOTE FIGURES

IF WE REINCORPORATE open strings into these tapped three-note shapes, we get four-note figures that can be sounded as flowing streams of 16th notes. **FIGURE 12a** illustrates this procedure, and **FIGURE 12b** demonstrates the technique as it is moved across all six strings. Notice that the fret hand does two pull-offs in succession, with the pinkie pulling-off to the index finger, which then pulls-off to the open string. This move is known as a *double pull-off*.

SEXTUPLETS

IN OUR PREVIOUS example, each 16th-note shape ends with the open string. If we rearticulate the two fret-hand notes by hammering back onto them from the open string, we get a six-note figure, or *sextuplet*, as shown in bar 1 of **FIGURE 13a**. The first four notes of this six-note pattern are played just like the first four notes of **FIGURE 12a**, but here the fret hand goes on to perform a double ham-mer-on, from the open string to the 4th fret, then the 7th, executed with the index finger and pinkie. The six notes fall evenly within a single beat, and the pattern repeats many times. Once you get the sequence under your fingers and can play it quickly and cleanly, try moving the shape over to each lower string, as demonstrated in **FIGURE 13b**. Eddie Van Halen used these types of sextuplets, albeit based on minor triads, for the intro to the Van Halen classic, "Hot for Teacher."

DESCENDING AND ASCENDING TRIPLETS

ANOTHER TAPPING TECHNIQUE that was favored by Van Halen — one that can be heard on tracks like "Eruption" and "The Cradle Will Rock" — is the use of descending and ascending triplets. In **FIGURE 14a**, a single tapped note is followed by two fretted notes and is played as two 16th-note triplets, which together are metrically equal to a sextuplet. The fret-hand index finger and pinkie fret the 7th and 10th frets, respectively, and then move down chromatically to 4th position. In the first ending, the riff moves back up; in the second ending, it continues downward, culminating in 2nd position. **FIGURE 14b** shows the same idea on the B string.

TAPPED BENDS

TAPPED BENDS ARE performed with essentially the same technique as a conventional tapped lick, except the fret hand incorporates bends into the melodic ideas. When a string is bent, tapping at a given fret will logically sound a higher pitch than when tapping onto an unbent string. **FIGURE 15a** shows the first five notes of the A Aeolian mode (A, B, C, D, E, F, G) tapped on the G string, beginning at the 14th fret. If you were to bend the G string up one whole step with your fret hand, a tapped A note will be found at the 12th fret, two frets (or one

16th-note Figures

FIG. 12a

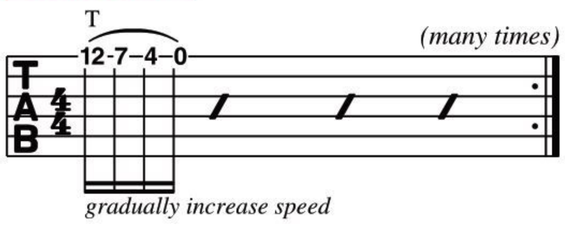
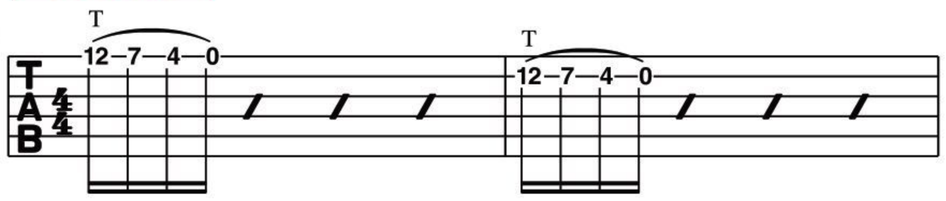
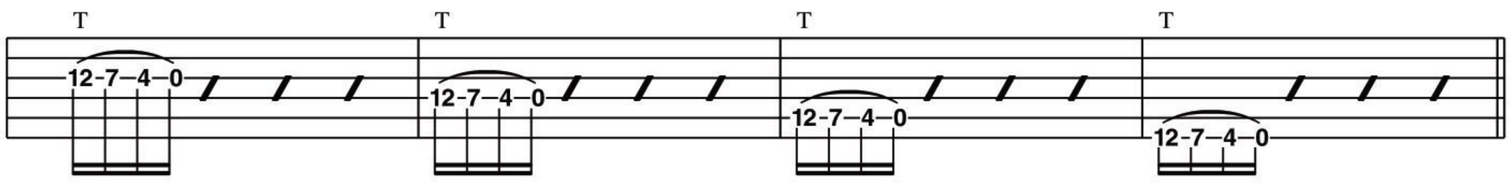


FIG. 12b





Sextuplets

FIG. 13a

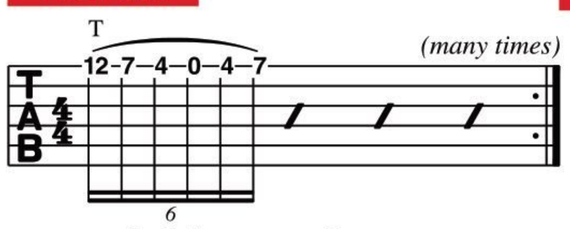
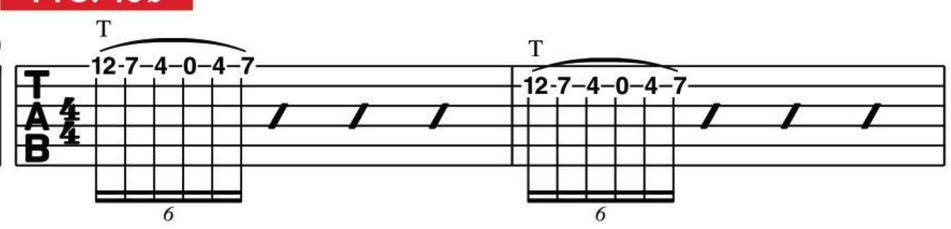
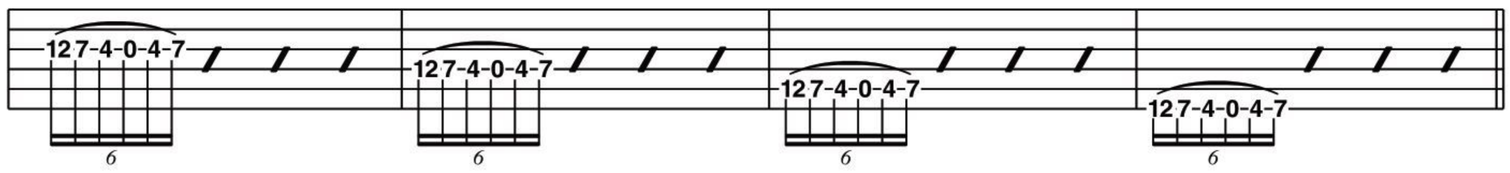


FIG. 13b





Descending Triplets

FIG. 14a

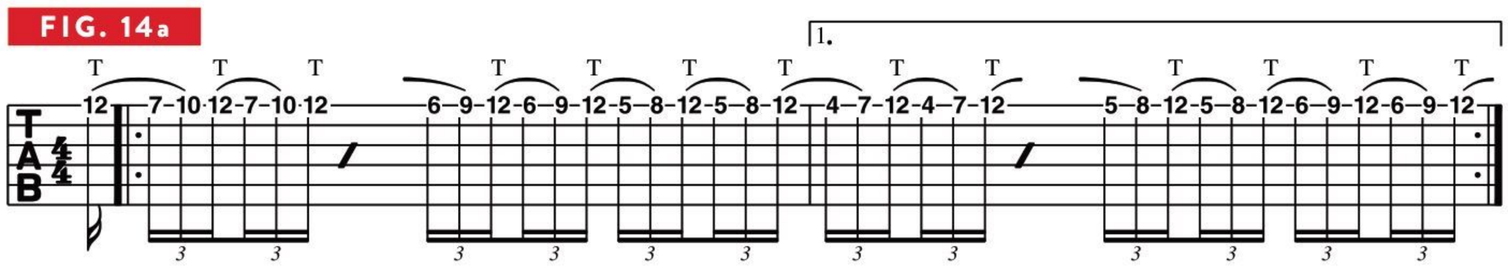
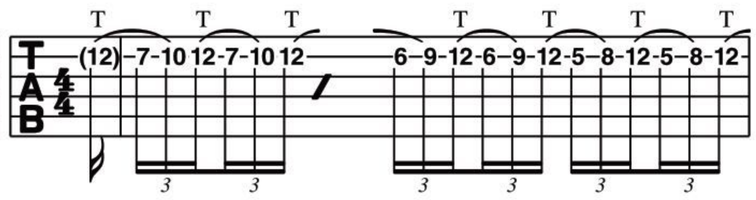
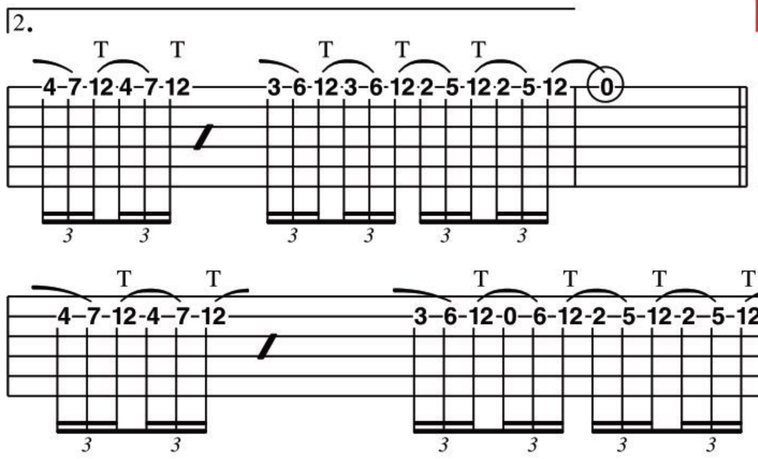


FIG. 14b





Tapped Bends

FIG. 15a

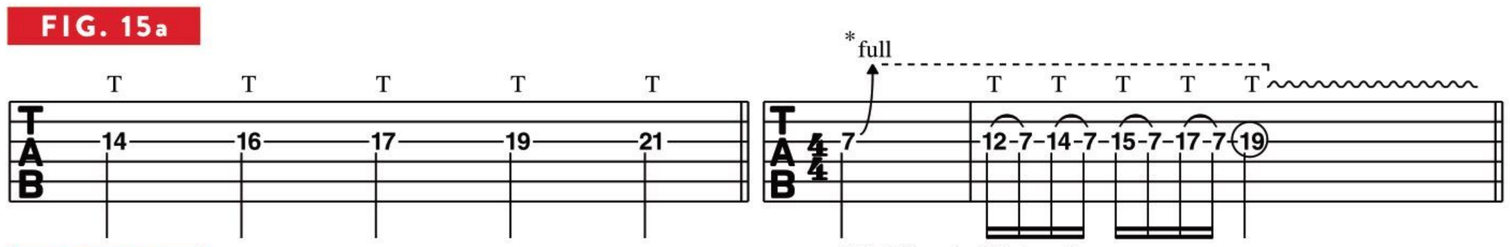


FIG. 15b

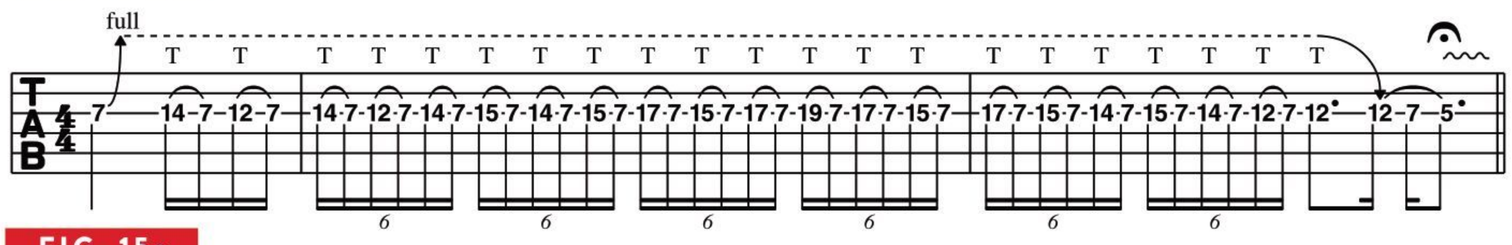
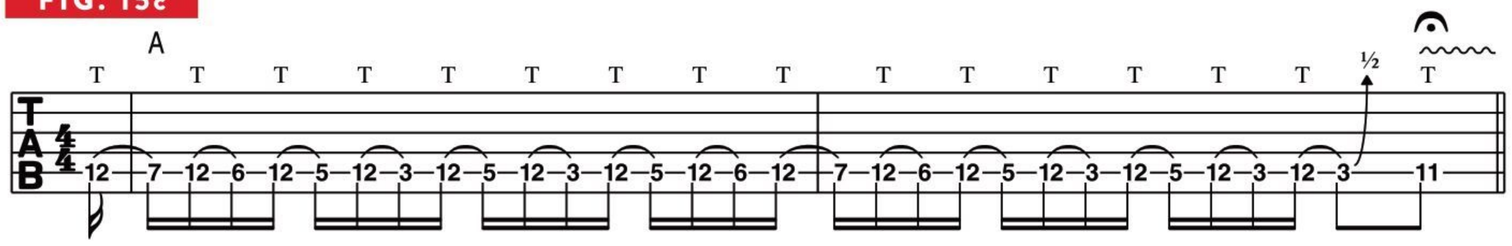


FIG. 15c



whole step) below its normal location, at the 14th fret. Likewise, tapping at the 14th fret will now yield a B note, one whole step higher than normal.

As shown in bar 2 of **FIGURE 15a**, all of the notes of A Aeolian are shifted down two frets when tapped onto a string that is bent up one whole step with the fret hand. The use of tapped bends was a staple of Van Halen's guitar solo spotlight for many years, and the riff in **FIGURE 15b** is based on a long series of tapped bends along the lines of the types of licks he liked to play with this technique. At the end of the lick, a tap is applied at the 12th fret while the string is bent, then the string is slowly released, or unbent, while the tap is held, causing the pitch of the tapped note to drop, after which the tap is released and the fret hand finishes the lick with pull-offs.

Another cool technique is to utilize the notes of the A blues scale (A, C, D, E♭, E, G) in conjunction with those of the A Aeolian mode, as demonstrated in **FIGURE 15c**. Aside from the fact that playing tapped licks on a low, wound string sounds especially good, I end the phrase by bending the string up a half step, from C to C♯, and while holding the bend, I tap at the 11th fret, sounding a high A, which is normally fretted one fret higher, at the 12th fret.

ALTERNATING BETWEEN TWO STRINGS

NOW LET'S TRY moving quickly between the top two strings while applying tapped notes that ascend and descend the fretboard. In **FIGURE 16**, three notes are sounded on each string, starting with a tap at the 17th fret that's followed by a pull-off to the 12th fret and then a hammer-on to the 15th fret. After this lick is played across beats 1 and 2, the tapped note moves incrementally up the E Aeolian mode as the technique is repeated, after which the tapped note descends in the same manner.

ALTERNATING AMONG THREE STRINGS

NOW LET'S ELABORATE on this technique by incorporating three strings. **FIGURE 17a** illustrates the A Dorian mode (A, B, C, D, E, F♯, G) played in 5th position, and in **FIGURE 17b** one tapped note is followed by two fretted notes in the same manner as the previous example, except in this case the three-note figures descend across three strings at a time, starting with the 1st, 2nd and 3rd strings, followed by the 2nd, 3rd and 4th strings, etc. There are countless options available when crossing over three strings at a time, so try coming up with some of your own tapping-across-strings inventions. (Using non-adjacent strings provides a cool twist.)

THREE FRETTED NOTES WITH ONE TAPPED NOTE

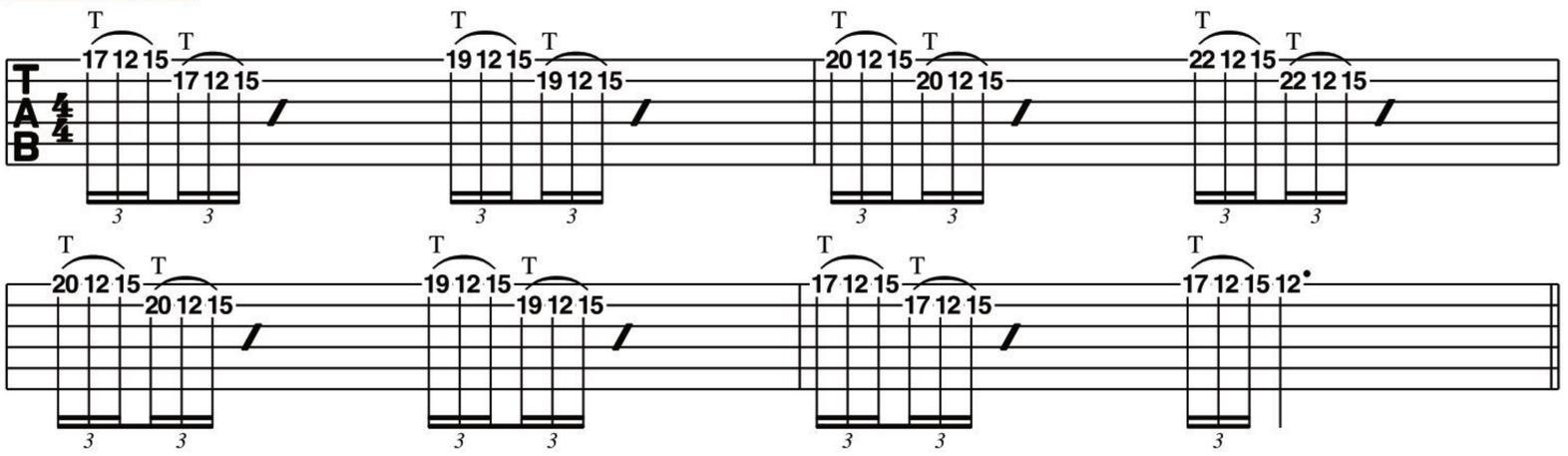
SO FAR, WE'VE used only two notes with the fret hand within our tapped figures. Now we're going to add another note to formulate licks made up of three fretted notes plus one tapped note. In **FIGURE 18**, a lick based on the E Dorian mode (E, F♯, G, A, B, C♯, D) begins with a tapped note followed by a double pull-off to two fretted notes. The four-note sequence repeats three times, and then the pattern is moved over to the lower strings as the fret positions are altered for the sake of staying within the same mode/scale. This lick is a bit tricky to play cleanly, so be sure to start out slowly and gradually increase the speed, and do whatever you can to keep unwanted sounds to a minimum!

Okay, now the ball is in your court: take the ideas presented in this lesson and try to come up with as many different inventions and permutations as you can possibly dream up. Fretboard tapping is a technique of unlimited potential, so don't be afraid to push the limits of possibility. GW

TAKE THE IDEAS PRESENTED INTHIS LESSON AND TRY TOCOME UP WITH AS MANY DIFFERENT INVENTIONS AND PERMUTATIONS AS YOUCAN POSSIBLY DREAM UP!

Alternating Between Two Strings

FIG. 16



Moving Among Three Strings

FIG. 17a

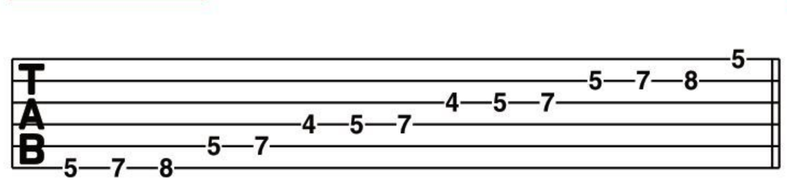
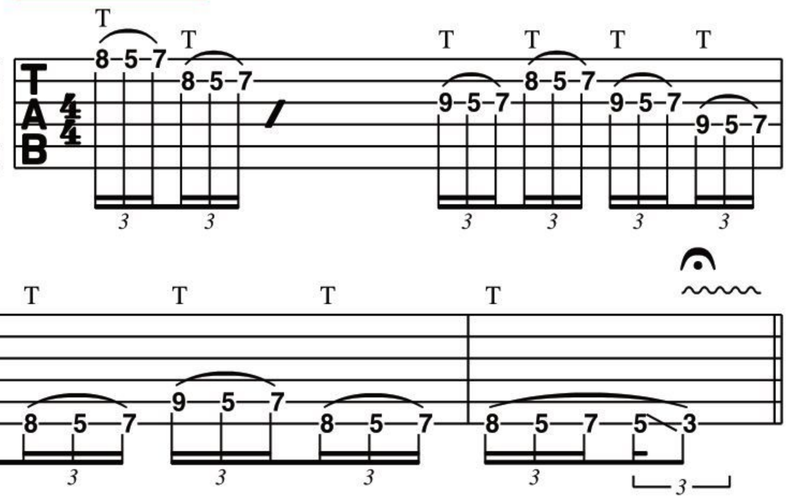
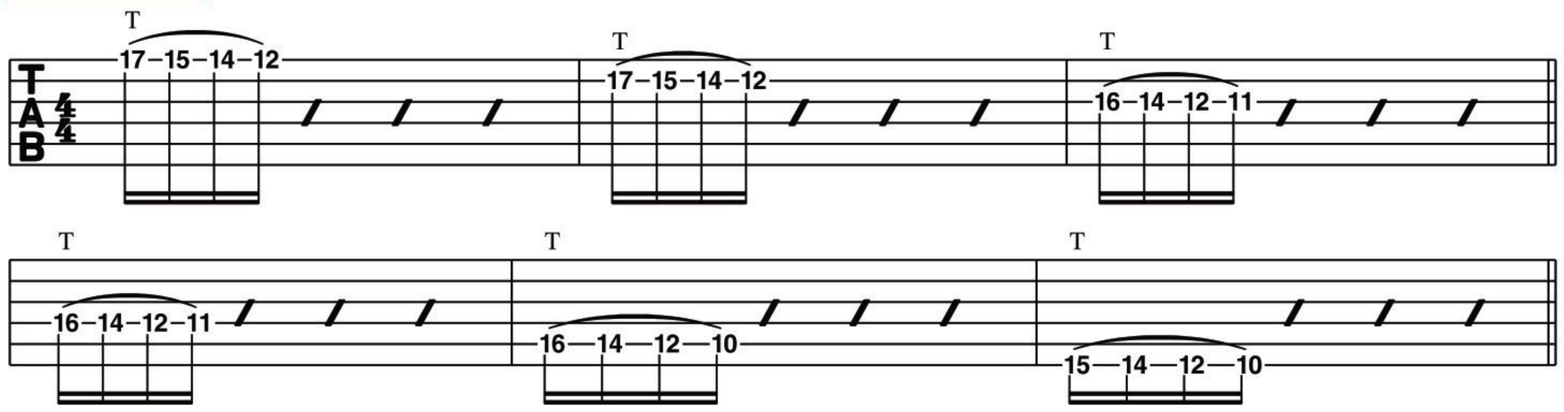


FIG. 17b



Three Fretted Notes with One Tapped Note

FIG. 18



THE LEGEND CONTINUES

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Eddie — in midair — during a 1998 Van Halen performance

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GUITAR WORLD
JANUARY 2021

BOTTOMS UP!

25 RIGHTEOUS EDDIE VAN HALEN DEEP CUTS

ON FIRE

VAN HALEN, *VAN HALEN* (1978)

GIVEN HOW SEMINAL Van Halen's debut album would become, it's hard to think of any of its 11 tracks as "lesser known." Though perhaps it's the deepest cut and final track on the record that documents the full metallic force of the four musicians in three perfect minutes, Eddie attacking his guitar with the same kind of aggression that thrash metal bands would be championing only a few years later. Being arguably the heaviest in this early clutch of songs, thanks to all the palm muting and chromatically ascending three-note-per-string runs, it was the perfect opener for many of the legendary performances around the debut release — including the highly bootlegged hometown show at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium on October 15, 1977.

BOTTOMS UP!

VAN HALEN, *VAN HALEN II* (1979)

When people think of the guitar mastery that dominated Van Halen's second full-length album, songs like "Spanish Fly" "Somebody Get Me a Doctor," "D.O.A." and "Women in Love" are usually the first to come to mind — and rightly so. Admittedly, "Bottoms Up!" can't compete when it comes to blistering alternate-picked triplets on acoustic or stadium-sized riffs, but what it does have is something truly exquisite — from seductively backed-down opening double-stops and ZZ Top-style boogie riffs to screaming leads treated with the kind of ambience you'd expect on a David Bowie album, tonally quite different from anything else the guitarist recorded. You can hear just how much fun they're having during the breakdown when the frontman momentarily breaks into laughter — and this was still only the beginning of their meteoric rise.

FOOLS

VAN HALEN, *WOMEN AND CHILDREN FIRST* (1980)

Few songs take the listener right into the room with the musicians in the same way as "Fools," which starts with a minute and a half of mainly Eddie before the full band comes in. And when you get to the solo, it's all there — from ear-splitting pinch harmonics, massive overbends and whammy bar dips and dives to the guitarist's gloriously aggressive and unorthodox blues-rock shredding, colored by the foamy wash of his script-logo MXR Phase 90. It often feels like Eddie's laughing his way through these songs, making it up on the spot and somehow catching lightning in a bottle. Though this band were now three albums in, their so-called "brown sound" was still every bit as alluring as it was on the debut.

LOSS OF CONTROL

VAN HALEN, *WOMEN AND CHILDREN FIRST*

Did Eddie Van Halen invent tech-metal and groove metal at the same time? When you hear "Loss of Control" and factor in the year it was recorded, it can certainly feel that way. Eddie attacks his 6th string in a way that many bands would later make a career out of, the likes of Tool and Pantera reinventing heavy music with more distortion a decade later. There are several reasons the solo section feels like a rocket taking off; there's an early run that ascends chromatically into extreme high-end string noise, some big slides across the neck plus a healthy dose of flanger from Ed's trusty MXR stompbox to color in all the scratches and dead notes. *Whoosh*, indeed.

COULD THIS BE MAGIC?

VAN HALEN, *WOMEN AND CHILDREN FIRST*

This penultimate track from the band's third studio album has a folky, almost Led Zeppelin-inspired swing to it and was the first time Eddie recorded with a slide. According to legend, it was pretty much his first time even trying to play with one — having been handed a bottleneck by producer Ted Templeman during the sessions. The rhythm guitars were played by David Lee Roth in the same tuning he used to record "Ice Cream Man" — open E, a

JOHN ATASHIAN/GETTY IMAGES

By AMIT SHARMA

half step down — Eddie in E♭ standard, switching between fretted notes and slide with the effortless ease of someone who had mastered the art of bottleneck long ago.

HEAR ABOUT IT LATER

VAN HALEN, *FAIR WARNING* (1981)

THE NOTE CHOICES and overall tone heard at the beginning of *Fair Warning*'s fourth track would become hugely inspirational for players like Steve Vai, particularly on his solo recordings. The extra-low bass notes were the result of tuning down a half step, as usual, but with the 6th string additionally dropped another whole step (to "drop-D♭" tuning: low to high, D♭, A♭, D♭, G♭, B♭, E♭), as with "Dirty Movies," "Sinner's Swing!" and "Unchained" — which would play a big part in the album's overall heavy sound. The solo features one of Eddie's most signature licks, an Em9 arpeggio (E, G, B, D, F♯) resulting from combining Em (E, G, B) and Bm (B, D, F♯) shapes using the 12th, 15th and 19th frets on the 1st and 2nd strings, which can also be heard a few bars into Eddie's legendary solo in Michael Jackson's "Beat It." Using repeating notes within wide stretches like this was one of many tricks employed by Allan Holdsworth, one of Eddie's biggest heroes, to confuse the ear.

SECRETS

VAN HALEN, *DIVER DOWN* (1982)

FOR A PLAYER who was not only dialing in but looking to invent new levels of distortion, there was an incredible sweetness to Eddie's cleaner tones, which often featured a perfect blend of compression, ambience and modulation to make the notes cut through. For live shows, Eddie would play "Secrets" on his yellow and black Kramer doubleneck and occasionally dial in a crunchy tone, allowing the ultra-clean parts on the recording to roar into breakup. The top neck would be tuned to drop-D♭ to add weight to the shifting suspensions, and then the lower neck to E♭ standard for the solo. With such colorful chords to play over, it's one of the more melodically modal leads from this part of Eddie's career, shifting through major and minor shapes before ending with a powerful minor-7 bend into the high root.

BLUES BREAKER

BRIAN MAY AND FRIENDS, *STAR FLEET PROJECT* (1983)

ROUGH AND READY as it may be, this 13-minute weekend jam between Eddie and Brian May ended up being one of the American virtuoso's earliest excursions outside of the band that took his family name. If you're looking to steal Eddie's best blues licks — and/or cop a few from someone many regard as his British counterpart — it's definitely worth a listen. With two icons going head-to-head, there's simply no second-guessing who is playing what, Eddie's unmistakably bright and scooped tone perfectly complimenting the Queen guitarist's mid-range warmth. In the mini album's liner notes, May explained, "You can hear us smiling as we search for answering phrases" during a spontaneous jam between musicians [who were] "just laying back and enjoying the fresh inspiration of each other's playing."

GET UP

VAN HALEN, *5150* (1986)

ANY DOUBTS OVER whether Van Halen could continue without David Lee Roth were put to rest on Sammy Hagar's debut. Much like Black Sabbath with Ronnie James Dio at the beginning of the decade, Van Halen had found a singer with his own identity who was able to tread new sonic ground, in this case on tracks like "Dreams" and "Love Walks In." But *5150*'s heaviest offering also proved that VH could still deliver guts and glory, hinting at what "Hot for Teacher" might've sounded like at double speed. Eddie also had a new toy in his hands, his Steinberger GL-2T — fashioned, of course, in his signature stripes.

A.F.U. (NATURALLY WIRED)

VAN HALEN, *OU812* (1988)

USING RINGING TAPPED harmonics to breathe life into a handful of simple chords is emblematic of Eddie's musical and tonal inventiveness and ability to "spice up" what would otherwise be fairly regular shapes on the fretboard. While the main riff isn't particularly fast, it's quite deceptive in terms of timing and feel, using a lot of open-string pull-offs that end with chromatic ideas that dramatically transition into the verses. Then, of course, there's that metallic part featuring staccato stabs against a palm-muted open string — more experimental in feel and reminiscent of the prog rock associated with bands like Rush — before Eddie goes on to deliver one of his best solos from this era of the "Van Hagar" years.

TOP 50 FROM 5150

NINE YEARS AGO, inspired by the release of Van Halen's *A Different Kind of Truth*, we felt the best way to pay tribute to the band's legacy was to pick the best moments from their catalog. We did exactly that in our April 2012 issue, which featured the following guide to "The 50 Greatest Van Halen Songs of All Time." Talk amongst yourselves!

1. Hot for Teacher
2. Ain't Talkin 'Bout Love
3. Unchained
4. Beautiful Girls
5. Runnin' with the Devil
6. Mean Street
7. Panama
8. Eruption
9. You Really Got Me
10. And the Cradle Will Rock...
11. Light Up the Sky
12. Everybody Wants Some!!
13. Ice Cream Man
14. Take Your Whisky Home
15. D.O.A.
16. Atomic Punk
17. Push Comes to Shove

SOURCE OF INFECTION

VAN HALEN, *OU812*

THE MINOR ARPEGGIOS that open "Source of Infection" seem pretty straightforward at first, incorporating open strings and notes tapped around the octave up at the 12th fret. The position shifts then get more tricky, with certain runs doubling in speed before returning back to the original tempo — a technique occasionally used by Eddie to catch listeners off-guard when in the studio and even more so live on stage. The solo is easily one of most aggressive on the album and quite a workout for the picking hand, with Eddie tearing through unison bends as if they were single-note runs with very few moments of rest.

SPANKED

VAN HALEN, *FOR UNLAWFUL CARNAL KNOWLEDGE* (1991)

IF EDDIE'S GUITARS sounded a bit different on the third Sammy Hagar-fronted release, it was because this was the period during which his rig went through its biggest overhaul. The guitarist ended his deal with Kramer and switched to Ernie Ball Music Man, who were already producing his signature strings. There were also some issues with his late-Sixties Marshall 1959 Super Lead "plexi" amp head, bought second-hand in England and used on the first six albums, so he ended up recording with his Soldano SLO-100 and a prototype of what would eventually become the Peavey 5150. For "Spanked," the guitarist used his custom-made trans-purple quilt Music Man doubleneck guitar, switching from the six-string baritone for the funky riffs to regular guitar for the solo.

RUNAROUND

VAN HALEN, *FOR UNLAWFUL CARNAL KNOWLEDGE*

THOUGH "POUNDCAKE" WAS rightly chosen as the big single for Van Halen's ninth album, "Runaround" still feels like one of Eddie's biggest moments on the record. It might not feature any Makita drills or melodies composed purely out of harmonics, but what it does, it does incredibly well. The riffs

feature slow bends to push and pull the notes and arpeggios to emphasize the movements, and even a couple of funk voicings more associated with the music of James Brown. It's also notable for carrying one of Eddie's most wah-heavy solos, honing in on the snarl of his aggressive blues licks and screaming double-stop bends.

MAN ON A MISSION

VAN HALEN, *FOR UNLAWFUL CARNAL KNOWLEDGE*

AFTER THE CURVEBALL of its curiously jazzy intro, "Man on a Mission" deserves a mention as one of the finest riffs from the Van Hagar period. Opting for E standard tuning in place of E♭ standard, Eddie snakes his way through open-string hammer-ons and pull-offs while Michael Anthony's bass climbs underneath in the key of A minor, and it's their combined, contrapuntal lines that create a magic greater than the sum of the two parts. The song's influence can be heard on the single, "17 Girls in a Row" by Steel Panther, a band who started life as a Van Halen tribute act on the Sunset Strip before taking on a life of their own.

THE SEVENTH SEAL

VAN HALEN, *BALANCE* (1995)

THE FOURTH AND final album from the Sammy Hagar era may sit among their less celebrated offerings, but it still has its exceptional moments. This opening track, also played in E standard tuning, is a dark and moody affair, starting off with some mystical chants, courtesy of the Monks of Gyuto Tantric University and supposedly similar to the relaxation sounds adopted by the guitarist in his quest for sobriety. The main riff is played by moving power chords on the D and B strings against a ringing high E, keeping the G string completely muted and allowing the notes played to bleed together and jangle in overdrive. Overall it's more of a rhythmic track and fairly light on the fretboard acrobatics that launched the guitarist's career, with verse parts that feel like a nod to Pink Floyd's "Another Brick in the Wall," which, to be fair, only adds to its ethereal majesty.

BALUCHITHERIUM

VAN HALEN, *BALANCE*

AS AN INSTRUMENTAL, "Baluchitherium" perhaps doesn't get the credit it deserves, as compared to early fan-favorites "Eruption" and "Spanish Fly," which naturally felt more groundbreaking for their time. It is, however, the sound of a guitar hero reinventing himself for a new age and experimenting into areas previously unexplored, arguably fitting more within the realm of film-score music than stadium rock. The piece was named after an ancient rhinoceros that roamed the earth 30 million years ago, the largest land mammal known to man. "For the instrumental track, we were actually working on lyrics and ended up going, 'Fuck it, it sounds pretty good without vocals,'" Eddie told *GW* in his February 1995 cover story. "So we left it. And Sammy was relieved... 'Okay, I got one less tune to work on." Eddie also explained how parts of the recording sounded like a collection of animals at a zoo, incorporating "a bunch of birds and chirps and dinosaur calls and the elephant sounds I've made... you can even hear my dog Sherman howling on there."

THE LITTLE THINGS

RICH WYMAN, *FATHERLESS CHILD* (1996)

THE THREE EDDIE guest spots on pianist Rich Wyman's second album, contributing guitar and bass, depict the guitar god in a different kind of environment — more honky-tonk than the hard rock he was generally known for. But that didn't stop him from getting up to his usual tricks for the solo, making his guitar sound like a dysfunctional lawnmower before delivering some thunderous blues licks in G. According to Wyman, Eddie saw a performance of his in Utah, and then brought him into the guitarist's 5150 Studio in Los Angeles to create the foundations for *Fatherless Child*, under the expertise of Led Zeppelin and Rolling Stones recording engineer Andy Johns.

HUMANS BEING

TWISTER: MUSIC FROM THE MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK (1996)

THE VAN HAGAR years were drawing to an end when the group were asked to record two new tracks for the soundtrack to the movie *Twister*, a project that Sammy later confessed he initially wanted no part in. You wouldn't have been able to tell from "Humans Being," however, as the song finds the band in great form. The intro chords reappear in the main riff with some of the major 3rds removed to make for a darker heaviness, while the drop-in dynamics and subsequent build-up between the solos is nothing short of breathtaking. But it's that second lead in particular that bears the mark of Eddie at his world-conquering best, thrashing and bending his strings into what feels like oblivion.

18. Little Guitars
19. Jamie's Cryin'
20. Dirty Movies
21. Somebody Get Me a Doctor
22. Spanish Fly
23. Jump
24. Little Dreamer
25. Women in Love...
26. Romeo Delight
27. So This Is Love?
28. Top Jimmy
29. Right Now
30. Where Have All the Good Times Gone!
31. I'm the One
32. When It's Love
33. I'll Wait
34. Girl Gone Bad
35. Cathedral
36. Sinner's Swing!
37. Feel Your Love Tonight
38. 5150
39. Hang 'Em High
40. (Oh) Pretty Woman
41. Tattoo
42. Finish What Ya Started
43. Why Can't This Be Love
44. One Foot Out the Door
45. She's the Woman
46. Dancing in the Street
47. Poundcake
48. Top of the World
49. Best of Both Worlds
50. Dance the Night Away

RESPECT THE WIND

TWISTER: MUSIC FROM THE MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK

THE OTHER VAN Halen contribution for the disaster film couldn't have been more different — a mesmerizing, otherworldly instrumental crafted by Eddie and Alex that deserves a mention as one of the guitarist's most powerful musical statements. And it nearly never existed. Originally, the second track for the soundtrack was going to be a ballad by the name of "Between Us Two," but it was rejected by the producers right as Hagar was leaving to rejoin his pregnant wife in Maui and unable to continue with the sessions. Ultimately, it came down to the Van Halen brothers to fulfill the group's obligations, and what they delivered was something truly spectacular.

FROM AFAR

VAN HALEN, *VAN HALEN III* (1998)

THERE ARE NUMEROUS reasons the only Gary Cherone-fronted Van Halen record rarely gets a mention in discussions of their discography. The mix didn't feel quite right, the album was double the length of their brilliantly succinct early masterpieces, and ultimately their new singer didn't seem to have the same kind of charisma outside of the fine rock group he was already known for fronting, Extreme. But that still wasn't enough to stop Eddie from finding his own moments to shine, like the orchestra of reverse guitars that build into his spine-tingling, E minor blues solo. It's one of the more direct and unambiguous leads in the guitarist's discography and the mark of a player who could hear what the song needed — in this case, some Gary Moore-esque bends coming straight from the heart.

LOST BOYS CALLING

THE LEGEND OF 1900 MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK (1998)

If you've ever wanted to know what Eddie would have sounded like when channeling his inner-David Gilmour and observing the English guitar hero's code of restraint, this final song on the soundtrack for an Italian drama film starring Tim Roth is just the ticket. Penned by Roger Waters and filmscore legend Ennio Morricone, it might not feature any guitar work from Eddie for its first two minutes, but what he does end up contributing is pure sonic gold, sticking to C♯ major pentatonic-based ideas for the leads and giving each note enough space to sing. Eddie engages a Fernandes sustainer for his second solo, its sound gently growling underneath the synthetic atmosphere and disappearing into a whisper for the passage's fittingly dramatic conclusion.

CATHERINE

SACRED SIN MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK (2006)

FOUND ON THE bonus disc of an obscure adult movie by Eddie's friend Michael Ninn, "Catherine" could very well be the deepest cut of them all. As well as some avant-garde footage of actress Audrey Hollander, the music video offers a striking glimpse into the maestro's life in the studio, wailing away on his guitar, pounding away on a drum kit and mixing it all together behind the desk. It's the sight and sound of a genius at work and very much in his element, his perfect storm of technique and phrasing continuing to be just as wildly inventive in the new millennium as it was in the late Seventies. It's easily one of the darkest tracks of the virtuoso's career — tuned down to C standard (low to high: C, F, B♭, E♭, G, C) and building in tension like a gothic opera — and yet still there's an unmistakable sense of bluesiness that always finds a way of cutting through.

CHINA TOWN

VAN HALEN, *A DIFFERENT KIND OF TRUTH* (2012)

DAVID LEE ROTH may have been approaching his 60s when he returned to the group for what would be their final full-length album, but the energy in these recordings is undeniable. Twenty-eight years on from his mid-Eighties farewell, you get the sense that this was a band making up for lost time, and now with Eddie's son Wolfgang replacing Michael Anthony on bass. "China Town" is one of the heavier offerings from the Van Halen-Roth reunion, starting with some tapped arpeggios on the 1st and 2nd strings before the band kicks into a hard groove. And Eddie's solo is just as aggressive, climaxing with a chromatically descending octave motif duplicated on bass.

IN THE MINI ALBUM'S LINER NOTES, BRIAN MAY WROTE, "YOU CAN HEAR US SMILING AS WE SEARCH FOR ANSWERING PHRASES"

AS IS

VAN HALEN, *A DIFFERENT KIND OF TRUTH*

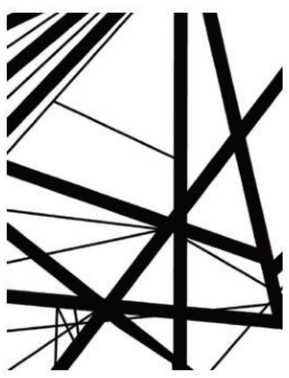
YOU'D BE FORGIVEN for thinking you were hearing early Alice In Chains when Eddie's guitar first appears on the comeback album's seventh track, its funeral-dirge quality sounding notably ominous and suspenseful for a band like Van Halen. That depth was the result of a detuning the 6th string down to B and the other five strings up a half step (low to high: B, A♯, D♯, G♯, C, F), turning the guitarist's EVH Wolfgang ax into more of an extended-range instrument. The low root chugs with a B7 shape on the adjacent strings before resolving to a double-octave E♭5 power chord. There's a solo tapped the whole way through, one of those classic breakdowns with spoken-word narration from their smooth-talking original frontman, and a fade-out of the band until all that's left is Eddie's heavily delayed ambient sustains.

BEATS WORKIN'

VAN HALEN, *A DIFFERENT KIND OF TRUTH*

AS THE FINAL track on the last studio release of Eddie's career, no one could have known it would effectively serve as his parting gift. It was in fact a reworking of "Put Out the Lights," which first appeared on the Gene Simmons-produced demos in 1976. And what a farewell it is, Eddie leaving three simple chords to ring out against Wolfgang's lower register before the band go into a verse riff that, much like early fan-favorite "D.O.A.," dances between an open A♭ power chord and an F note on the 6th string. Stepping on his wah for the last time in his band's studio career, bringing it to a glorious crescendo, the guitarist's feedback carries on ringing for the final 30 seconds of the track. But as his fans know, the sound of Edward Van Halen's brilliant guitar playing will echo for eternity. GW

Brian May and friend: Eddie Van Halen and the Queen guitarist in the early Eighties



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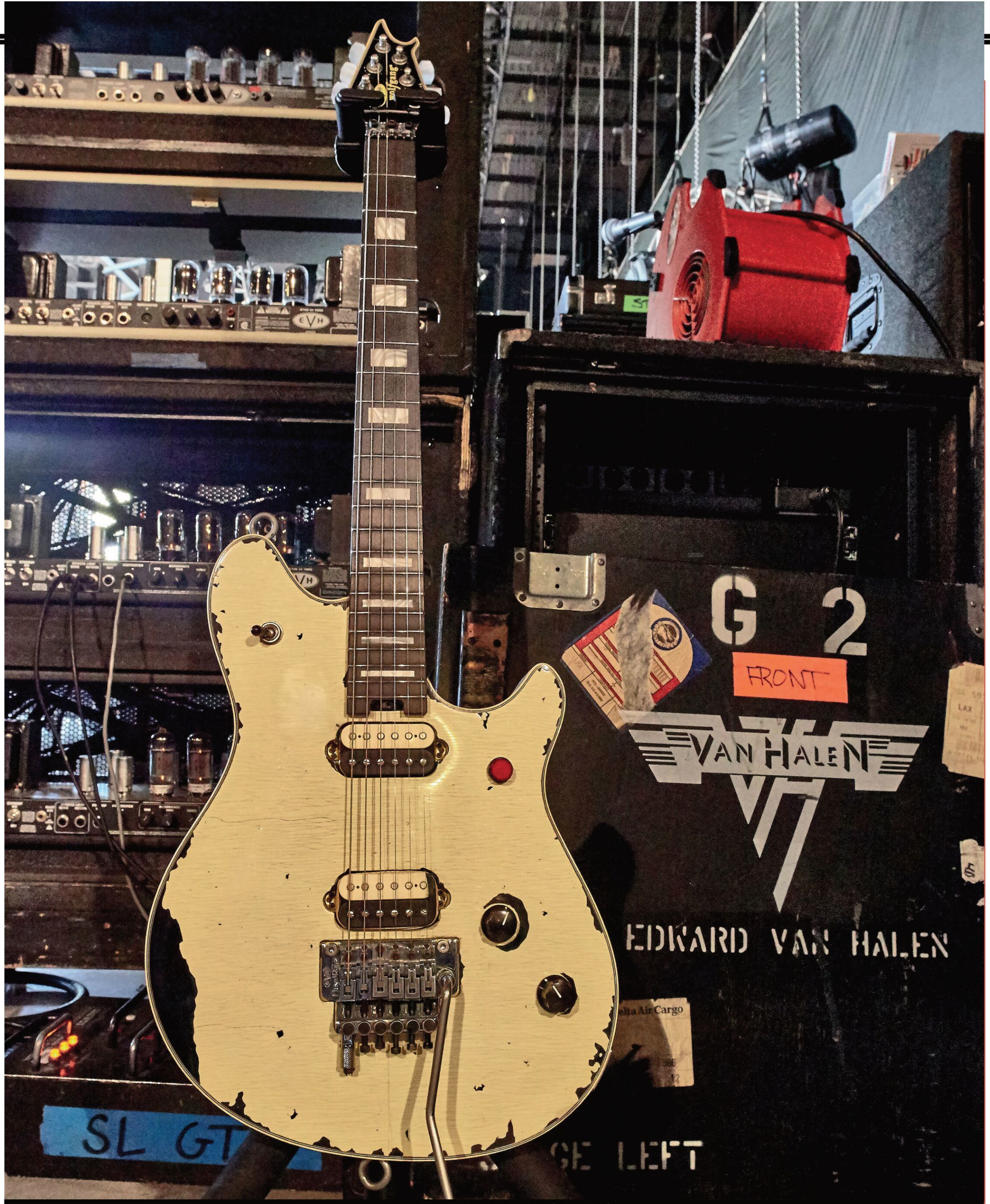

EVH WOLFGANG USA (IVORY)

Chip Ellis built this guitar and delivered it to Ed during rehearsals for the 2015 tour. “I wanted a white Wolfgang that was relic’d, so I asked Chip to build one for me,” Van Halen said. “He did a wonderful job. It sounded better than my trusty old Stealth Wolfgang, so it immediately became my main guitar.” Custom details (later available on the EVH Wolfgang USA Edward Van Halen Signature model) include the red kill switch for staccato effects and BI Tech HPU low-friction volume pot for smooth, noise-free volume swells.

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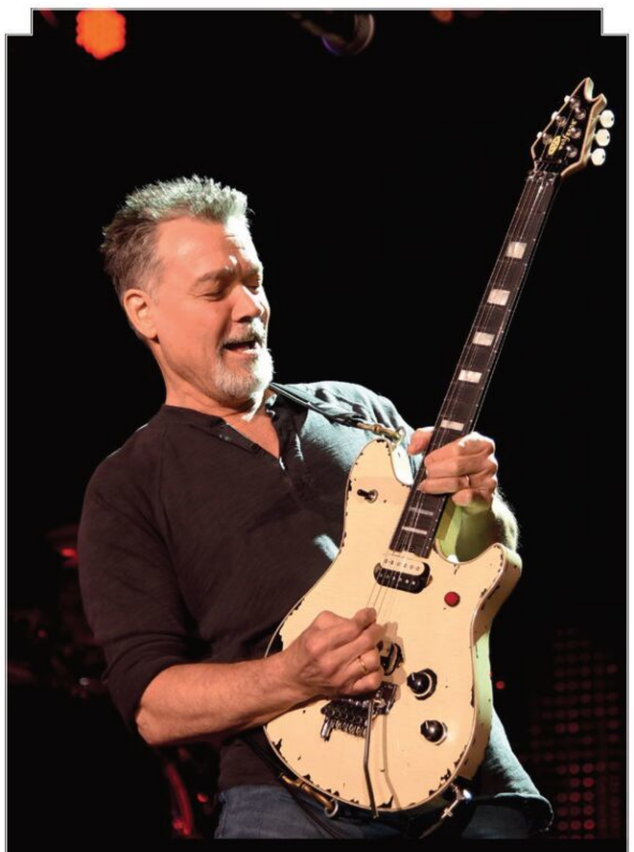


Van Halen plays his Ivory EVH Wolfgang USA during the band's final tour in 2015

PUT OUT THE LIGHTS

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE GEAR EDWARD VAN HALEN USED FOR HIS FINAL PERFORMANCES ON VAN HALEN'S 2015 TOUR

VAN HALEN'S 2015 tour, which started on July 5 in Auburn, Washington, and ended October 4 at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles, has now gone down in history as Edward Van Halen's final public performances with the band. Ed and his EVH business partner Matt Bruck graciously invited *Guitar World* to Van Halen's concert in upstate New York at the Bethel Woods Center for the Arts — the site of the 1969 Woodstock Festival — on September 6, 2015, to give readers an all-access look at the gear that Ed and his son, bassist Wolfgang Van Halen, used on the tour.

The resulting cover story, which appeared in *Guitar World's* February 2016 issue, was not the usual "rig report" list of guitars, amps and effects, but rather an in-depth article that revealed much finer details, including Ed's live setup signal path and exact settings for his amps and effects.

The photos of Ed's gear on the following pages were taken backstage before the September 6 show and were intended to accompany the article. Due to a lack of space and the decision to use performance photos of Ed and the band, most of these photos were cut from the final version that appeared in print. Also, a few of the ones that did previously appear were too small to show helpful detail. In honor of Ed's contributions to guitarists via his own EVH brand, we've decided to share these photos for public consumption.

In light of Ed's passing, these photos are a bittersweet memento of the final sounds that the public heard from his guitar. In fact, the EVH Wolfgang USA with relic'd Ivory finish seen here was not only Ed's main guitar throughout the entire 2015 tour, but it was also the very last guitar that he ever played on stage when he used it for the encore performance of "Jump." The final D♭ chord that Ed played on that guitar is still ringing out in the cosmos as well as the memories of Van Halen fans who witnessed what has now become a historic moment.

Ed's white Wolfgang is now also a symbol of the culmination of Ed's achievements in guitar design, developed over more than five decades of experimentation, innovation and endless pursuit of the ultimate tone. Similarly, the gear shown here — most of which he developed as well — represents his years of experience as well as his visions for the future. Ed may no longer be with us to personally participate in that future, but the guitars, amps and effects he designed as gifts for his fellow guitarists will allow his legacy to live on by inspiring players for many generations to come.

By CHRIS GILL

FACING PAGE: CHRIS GILL ABOVE: C FLANIGAN/GETTY IMAGES

EVH WOLFGANG USA (STEALTH BLACK)

This Stealth Black EVH Wolfgang USA was Ed's main guitar on Van Halen's 2012 tour, but it became a backup after he received the relic'd white Wolfgang USA about a month before the 2015 tour started.

EVH WOLFGANG USA (MATTE RED)

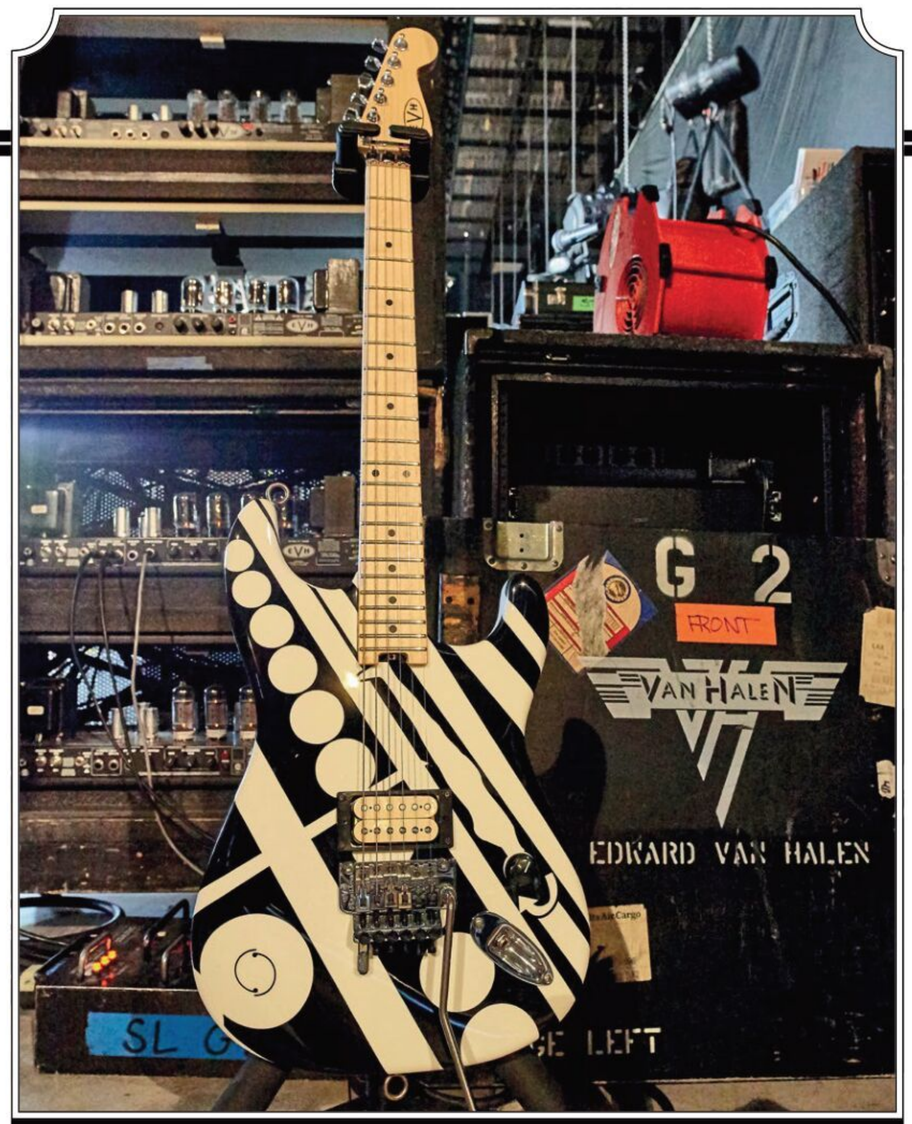
The Matte Red finish on this EVH Wolfgang USA guitar was not offered on any production models, making this guitar one-of-a kind. It was tuned to standard tuning and was one of four options (along with the Circles, Star and Wolfgang WG Standard guitars) that Ed brought on the 2015 tour for playing "I'll Wait."

EVH WOLFGANG MINI (SUNBURST)

"Little Guitars" returned to Van Halen's 2015 setlist, and Ed performed the song on this custom-made mini Wolfgang. Although his sunburst model has a Floyd Rose tremolo with D-Tuna, Ed removed the bar because he didn't use tremolo on the song.

EVH WOLFGANG MINI (AMBER)

Featuring a gorgeous quilted maple top with amber finish, this custom Wolfgang mini guitar was a backup for the sunburst mini.



EVH STRIPE SERIES CIRCLES

The EVH Stripe Series Circles model is a reproduction of a custom guitar Ed played briefly on Van Halen's 1981 *Fair Warning* tour, immortalized in the Oakland performance video of "Unchained." He later added layers of red, yellow and green paint to the original guitar, nicknaming the new makeover "Rasta."

CUSTOM "RASTA" REPLICA

Ed's friend Scott Smith made this custom replica of the "Rasta" guitar and gave it to Ed during the latter half of the 2015 tour. "Scott has made replicas of every guitar I've ever made," Van Halen said in 2015. "I gave my original one to Dweezil Zappa about 20 years ago."

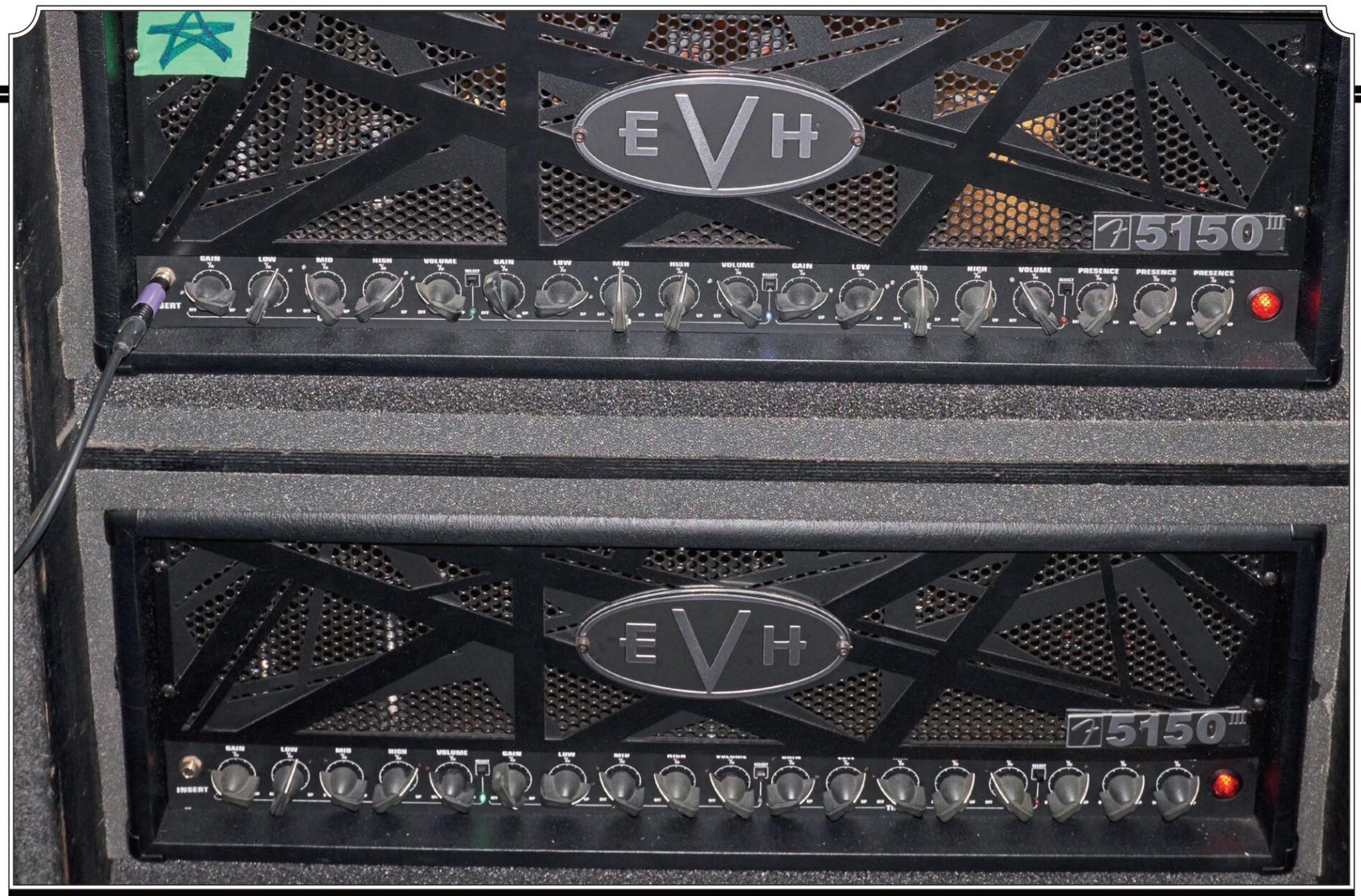
EVH STRIPE SERIES STAR

Like the Stripe Series Circles, the EVH Stripe Series Star had a short-lived production run in the mid 2010s and is highly sought after today. It is a replica of a guitar that Ed built from Charvel parts in 1980 and used on Van Halen's Invasion tour that year.

EVH WOLFGANG WG STANDARD

Proof that Ed stood behind every product his EVH brand produced, he played this Wolfgang WG Standard — the most inexpensive model offered by EVH — frequently during the 2015 tour. "I prefer the Standard over the Circles and Star guitars because it has a front pickup that I like to use for the solo in 'I'll Wait.' It's the most economically priced EVH guitar, but it plays just as good as the Special or USA and sounds great."

CHRIS GILL

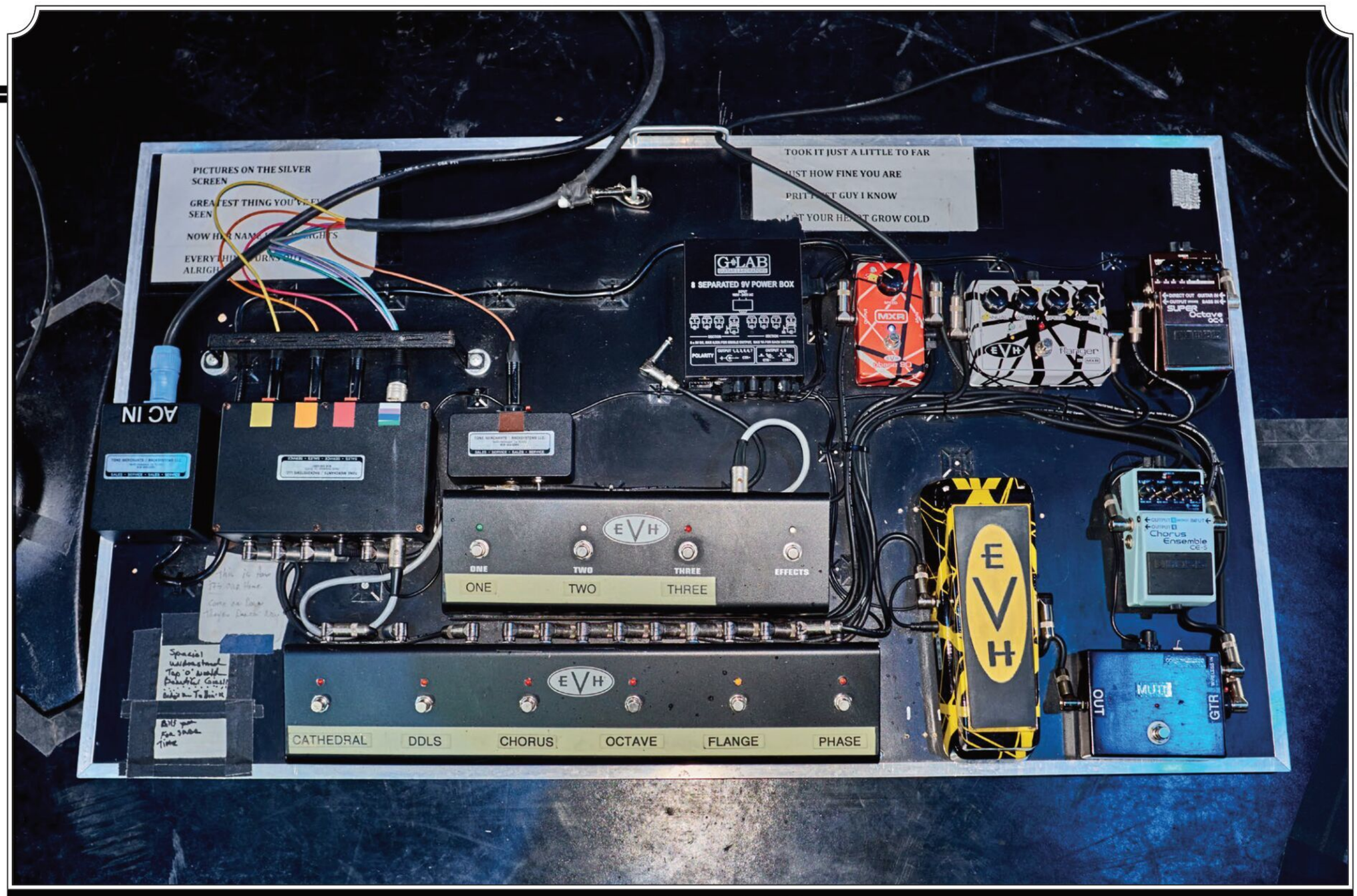


MAIN EVH 5150 III 100S

For Van Halen's 2012 tour, Ed relied on EVH 5150 III 100-watt heads that were modified, but for the 2015 tour he used a 100 percent stock 5150 III 100S that featured all of his custom modifications as standard features. The amp head on top with the green tape and star was the only amp he played for the entire tour, even though he brought six backups.

EVH 5150 III EL34 PROTOTYPE

This is the original prototype of the EVH 5150 III 100-watt EL34 amp. "I plug into it every couple of shows to see how it's holding up in its first road test, to see how it's maintaining its tone," Van Halen said. "The sound is very vintage Van Halen, but it also has the capability of achieving modern high gain tones."



PEDALBOARD

Ed was “old school” when it came to his pedalboard, preferring to have his stomp boxes accessible on stage where he could easily reach down and tweak them if necessary. The sheets at the upper edge and lower left corner were notes to remind Ed of the lyrics when he was singing backup vocals.

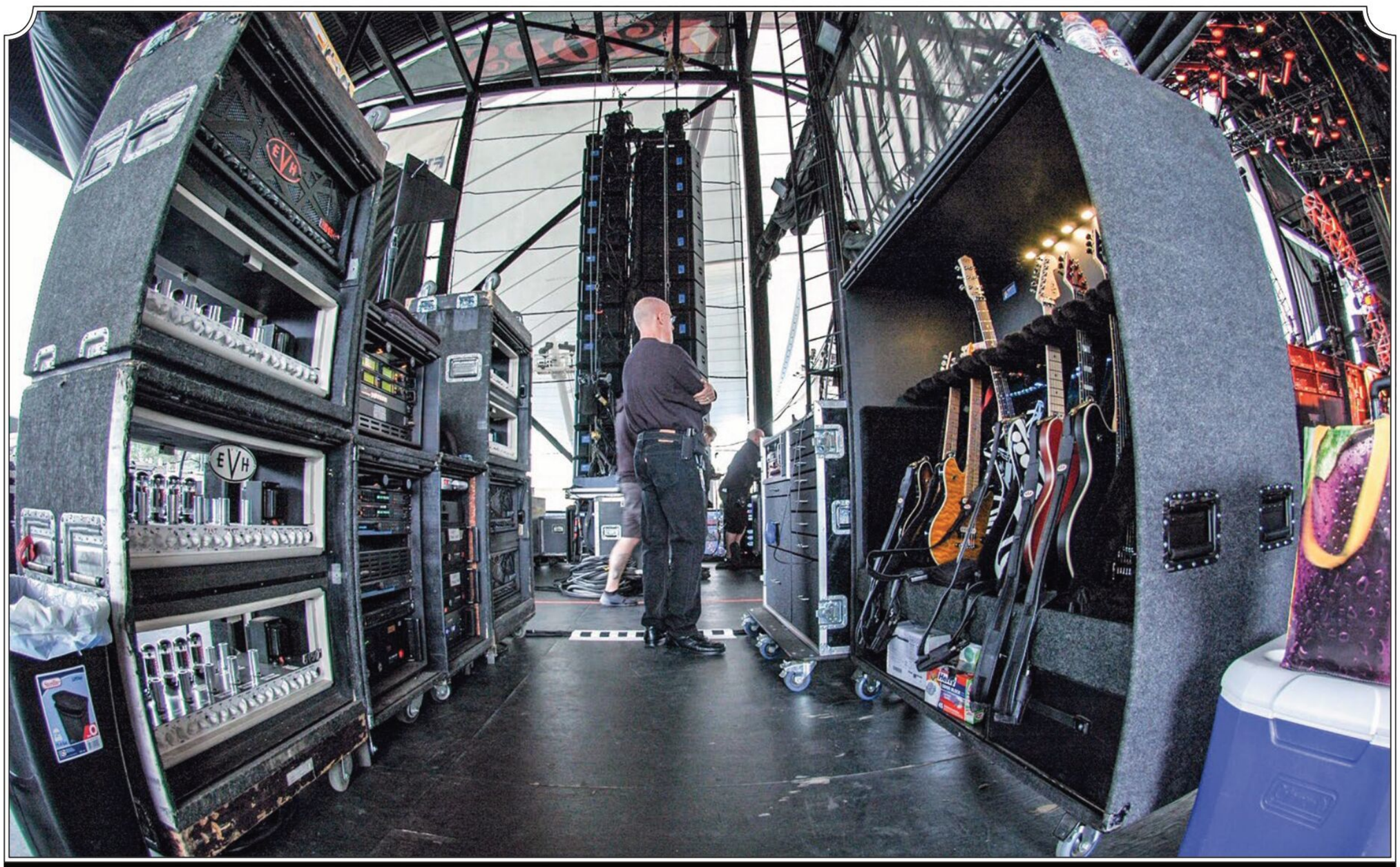
EFFECTS RACK

Ed used the Roland SDE-3000 digital delays mainly to create reverb-like ambience in his wet/dry/wet rig setup. His PCM70 “Cathedral” setting was cut from *Guitar World*’s February 2016 article due to space constraints — it’s the “double delay” algorithm with both delays set to 424ms, feedback 12 percent (both), mix 100 percent and the remaining parameters at 0.

CHRIS GILL

STAGE AMP WALL

The massive wall of amps and speakers seen on stage was mostly for show, as only the three miked EVH 5150 III 4x12 speaker cabinets were in use. The outer cabinets amplified the wet delay-processed left and right signals, while the center cabinet received a dry direct feed from the main 5150 III 100S head.



FISHEYE: STAGE LEFT

Ed's guitar tech Tom Weber at the stage-left "command center" where the guitarist's guitar, amp and effects racks were located.

RIGHT: MATT BRUCK ABOVE: CHRIS GILL

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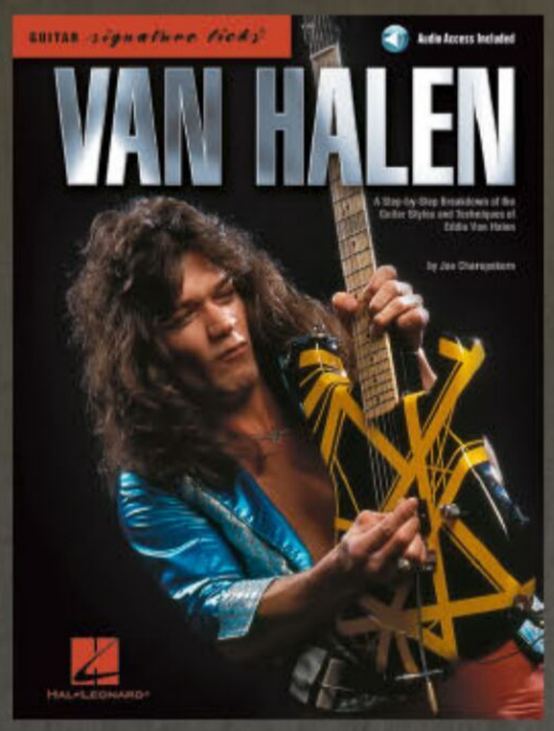

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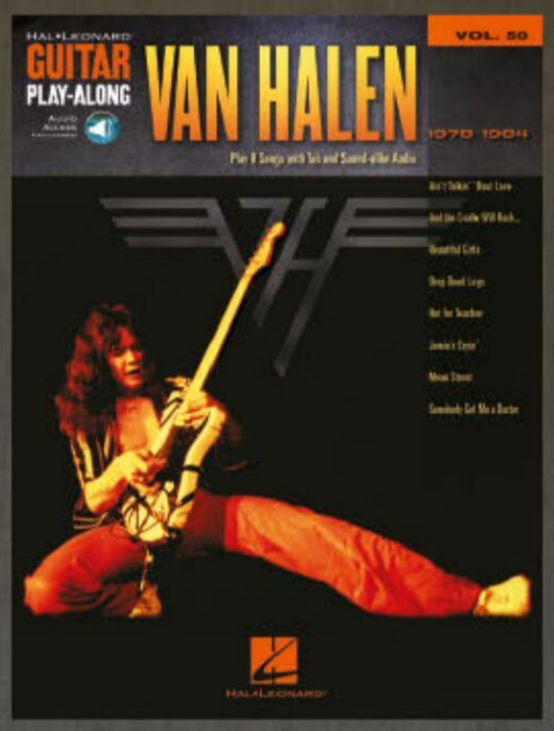

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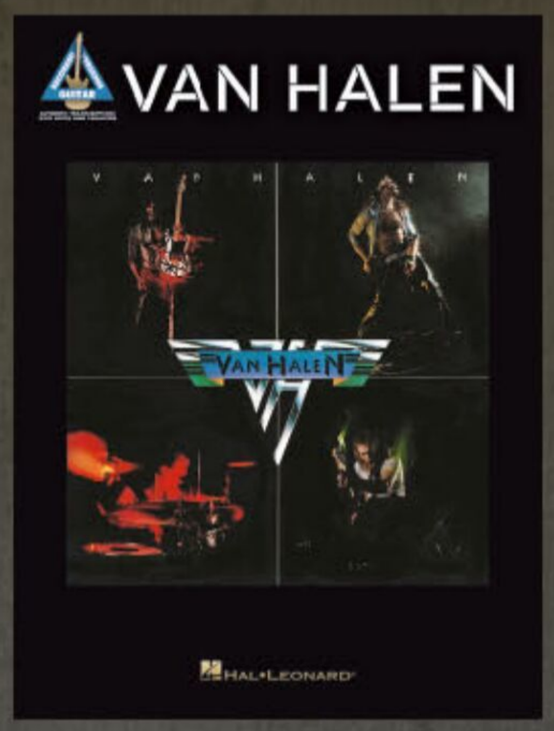

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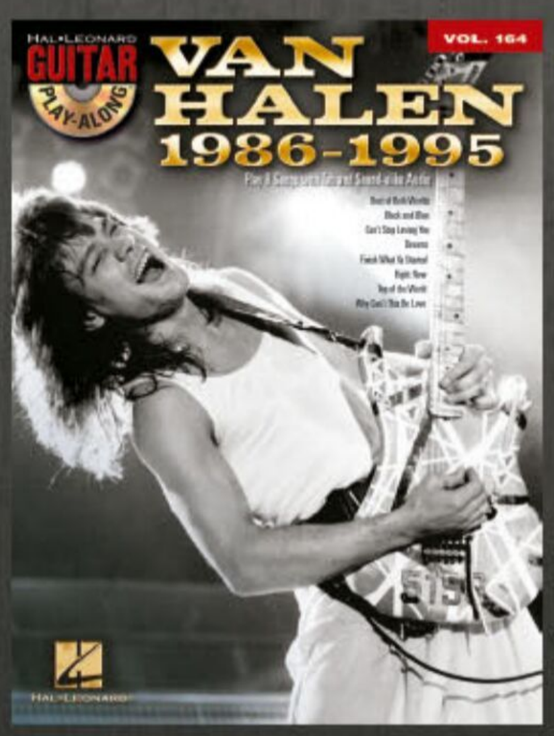

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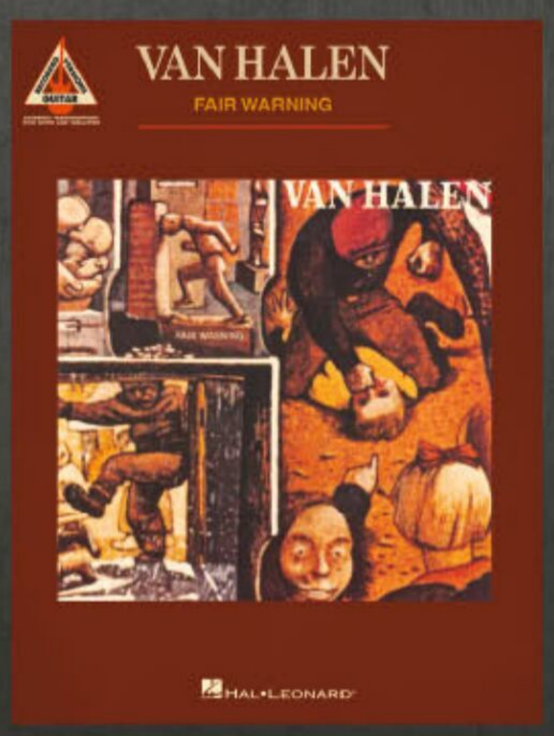

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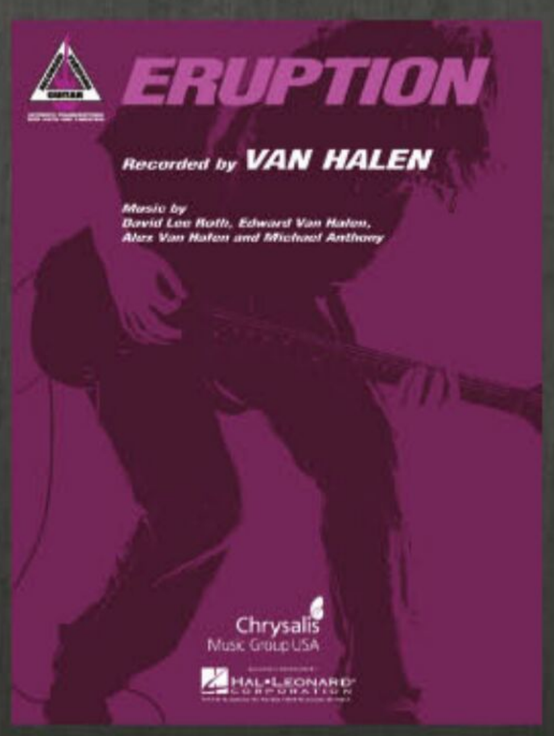

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SOUND CHECK

GUITAR WORLD PLATINUM AWARD EXCELLENCE

Everybody Wants One

EVH STRIPED SERIES FRANKIE

By Paul Riario

THE SHOCK HEARD around the guitar world came on October 6, 2020, when Wolfgang Van Halen heartbreakingly announced on Twitter, "I can't believe I'm having to write this, but my father, Edward Lodewijk Van Halen, has lost his long and arduous battle with cancer this morning..." For many, it's hard to imagine a musical landscape without the likes of legendary musician and pioneering guitarist Eddie Van Halen. There are not enough words on this page to encapsulate how Van Halen categorically pushed the limits of electric guitar-based rock with his uniquely fiery approach, let alone his incessant resourcefulness in tinkering with his guitars and amps to suit his trailblazing style of playing. Almost everything Eddie creatively unveiled led to vast imitations and innovations among a guitar community that tried to capture the very essence of his distinctive tone, style and flair for design. It's safe to say "Frankenstein," his most recognizable and iconic guitar, is the progenitor of the Superstrat (or "Frankenstrat") and essentially, a parts guitar slapped together for less than $150 at the time he built it. Maybe it was the *ennui* of late-Seventies music and the glut of lackluster instruments that inspired Van Halen to create this perfect beast, propelling him to emerge as the G.O.A.T., but no other guitar clearly evokes the player more than "Frankenstein." It is inherently unmistakable and original, like the man himself.

the gear in review

93
EVENTIDE
Blackhole

94
NEW EQ

95
BOSS
Acoustic
Singer Live LT

96
TAYLOR
AD17 Blacktop

Here for review, and introduced at the 2020 Winter NAMM Show, is the EVH Striped Series Frankie, which is markedly different from the other EVH Striped Series guitars, and a closer likeness to EVH's "Frankenstein." It's not an exact replica or a tribute (because the Frankie is a production model built by a specialized team), but you — like me — will still be completely floored by its staggering attention to detail, worn-in feel, fast playability and out-of-the-box EVH tone.

FEATURES From afar, the EVH Striped Series Frankie certainly makes you do a double take. It looks like Eddie's hallowed six-string — until you notice the shiny EVH-branded Floyd Rose double locking tremolo with EVH D-Tuna (for drop-D tuning), EVH-branded headstock and the lack of reflectors on the back, among other minor details. But more noteworthy, the spirit and feel of Eddie's original guitar is astonishingly captured in this relic'd model. For instance, you can feel the tape lines from its lacquer top coat that's been barely buffed between paint coats. The black stripes underneath the red paint further reveal Eddie's intention of changing its stripes (pun intended) from the original black and white guitar seen on the cover of Van Halen's eponymous album. Other features that contribute to its visual charm and sonic firepower are a basswood body coupled with a bolt-on quartersawn maple neck, graphite-reinforced truss rod with thumbwheel adjustment at neck joint, oiled finish neck with Eddie's modified "C" neck carve, 12– to 16–inch compound radius on its maple fingerboard with 22 jumbo frets, 25.5–inch scale length, white skirted Strat-style single volume control knob (labeled "Tone"), custom-partial black pickguard, aged hardware, EVH neck plate, EVH-branded Gotoh tuners and, most importantly, a direct-mount EVH Wolfgang humbucker with Alnico 2 magnets that measures approximately 14.6k ohm resistance. I'd also be remiss not to point out Eddie's mischievous "Easter egg" inclusion of a dummy Strat neck pickup and dummy five-way blade switch exposed in the routed middle position (just like on "Frankenstein" and incidentally, the pickup is functional — but it's a DIY job).

PERFORMANCE He might not have been the first, but no one before Eddie monopolized the fretboard better in ringing out harmonics and tapping, diving a tremolo and playing as fast and as furiously as he did. So I'll just flat out tell you: no other guitar I've come across can exploit and enhance those techniques more fluently than the EVH Frankie. For starters, the oiled finish neck is spectacular, and you may never return to a glossy or satin-finished neck after playing the Frankie. Its natural wood-feel encourages endless wanderlust as you glide across the neck and fretboard, and the comfortably slim neck carve emboldens wide interval finger stretches (in order to nail the "Ice Cream Man" solo). The solitary EVH Wolfgang pickup is also voiced perfectly. Using a friend's '78 Marshall JMP cranked, with the tone (volume) rolled down, the Frankie coaxes the snappy cleans of a Tele — with piano-like ring and woody midrange knock — and turning it up unleashes the most cutting musical midrange, where the guitar sounds massive. Whether you play with tilted overdrive or roaring distortion, the Frankie possesses a raw, unfiltered sound that delivers all you put into it with palpable definition. Any fleet-fingered pyro-techniques will make harmonics and notes pop loudly like fireworks. Of course, I can't stop shredding Van Halen songs on this guitar (and I'm sure that'll be the case for most who play it), but that aside, the EVH Striped Series Frankie is so blisteringly responsive, I just can't put it down. With guitars having sleeker lines, hotter pickups and various locking tremolo systems, the Frankie is a beautifully stark, stripped-down reminder of where it all started. Eddie once stated "I hate store-bought, off-the-rack guitars. They don't do what I want them to do, which is kick ass and scream." Well, Eddie, I think you accomplished the impossible with the Frankie.

CHEAT SHEET

- **STREET PRICE:** $1,699.99
  MANUFACTURER: EVH, evhgear.com
- The single EVH Wolfgang pickup with Alnico 2 magnets is a screamer of a pickup that encompasses richness and clarity with smoother highs and woody midrange.
- The oiled finish quartersawn maple neck with Eddie's modified "C" shaped neck profile offers unparalleled comfort and natural feel for shredding effortlessly.
- Just like "Frankenstein," the Frankie mounts a dummy Strat neck pickup (that works when wired in) and a dummy five-way blade switch in the middle position.
- The Frankie looks near authentic with a relic'd red with white-and-black-striped paint job, aged hardware, partial black pickguard, and volume control knob labeled "Tone."
- **THE BOTTOM LINE:**
  The EVH Striped Series Frankie is the closest interpretation of Eddie's iconic guitar in a production model, but more importantly, you won't find a better instrument that hits the trifecta in EVH looks, feel, and massive tone.

GUITAR WORLD PLATINUM AWARD EXCELLENCE

Lost in Space

EVENTIDE BLACKHOLE

By Chris Gill

EVENTIDE'S BLACKHOLE REVERB algorithm is one of the most popular and widely used effects featured in the company's Space and H9 Max pedals. Far more complex and sophisticated than average spring, room or hall environment reverbs, Blackhole can generate deep, luscious textures with silky smooth tails that trail off into infinity as well as distinctive hypnotic rhythms with stunning depth and tangible dimension, delivering incredibly musical and expressive effects that can elevate even an ordinary idea into something extraordinary.

The main drawback for musicians who wanted to explore the creative potential of the Blackhole reverb algorithm in pedal format was the price, with the most inexpensive option being the purchase of an H9 Core for $399 and the Blackhole algorithm for an additional $19.99. By packaging the Blackhole reverb effect as a standalone product, Eventide has reduced the access price significantly while also making it easier for users to control, program and modify sounds. Much more than a reverb effect, Blackhole is an instrument unto itself that is well worth its (now much more affordable) price.

FEATURES Housed in a compact, almost square-shaped box that's four inches wide, the Eventide Blackhole is a pedalboard-friendly effect that packs the power of a rackmount processor into a compact, stage-worthy stomp box format. Controls are arranged in two rows of three knobs each for Mix, Gravity (normal or inverse decay), Feedback, Size, Lo (350Hz boost/cut) and Hi (2kHz boost/cut). Pressing the LED next to the Feedback control accesses secondary parameters on five of the six knobs (all but Mix), consisting of Delay (pre-delay from 0 to 2,000ms), Q (resonance of Lo and Hi EQ), Depth (modulation), Rate (modulation) and Output Level. The left footswitch controls active/bypass functions while the right footswitch controls preset select and freeze functions. The LEDs above the footswitches are also buttons for activating latching/momentary switching and preset save functions. The rear panel provides a ¼-inch TRS input with mono/stereo switch, two individual ¼-inch outputs, expression pedal jack, guitar/line level switch and mini USB jack for software updates and MIDI functions.

The Blackhole pedal provides access to five onboard presets or a total of 127 presets accessible via MIDI. The free Eventide Device Manager software for Mac OS and Windows makes it easy for users to edit, program and store presets, download updates and more. System setup procedures including setting bypass mode (buffer, relay or DSP+FX), kill-dry active/inactive, MIDI channel, expression pedal functions, MIDI clock and control knob "catch up" can be accessed by holding down the Active (effect on/off) footswitch and the LED button next to the Feedback control or via the Eventide Device Manager software. Any grouping of control knob parameters can be assigned to the expression pedal.

PERFORMANCE Eventide effects have always been in a class of their own when it comes to excellence and professional-quality, and the Blackhole pedal is no exception to these high standards. The clarity of the guitar's original signal remains prominent and immaculate (when you want it to) and the resonance and decay tails of the reverb effects have a three-dimensional quality that envelops the player and listener alike with a gorgeous, luxuriant sheen. The Blackhole's effects consistently enhance a guitar's signal in an attractive, irresistible manner, maintaining stunning clarity when used with high-gain distortion and making even cheap practice amps sound like high-end audiophile gear.

For performers who like to tweak sounds while they play live and treat their effects like an additional instrument, I recommend engaging the control knob "catch up" function, which only activates the control knob once its physical setting matches the preset's saved setting. This allows for smooth, natural-sounding transitions and more predictable results. The Freeze function can provide mesmerizing note or chord beds for guitarists to improvise over, which creative players can also use to generate orchestral effects while playing solo.

Changing presets requires a quick tap or series of taps on the Freeze footswitch to select the desired preset, followed by a tap on the Active footswitch to engage the preset. This makes it easy to select any of the five presets in advance and make the switch when desired. Like any reverb effect, Blackhole sounds best when connected to an amp's effects loop, and the guitar/line level switch makes it easy to optimally match levels on amps that don't provide level controls for the effects loop.

CHEAT SHEET

STREET PRICE: $279
MANUFACTURER: Eventide, eventideaudio.com

- Five presets are accessible instantly on the pedal itself, with a total of 127 presets accessible via MIDI.
- The Freeze footswitch takes an instant sample or snapshot of the current sound when engaged and sustains it infinitely.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE** Delivering rich, complex textures, mesmerizing rhythmic effects and atmospheres that go well beyond the average reverb effect, the Eventide Blackhole pedal is an instrument unto itself that also provides an affordable gateway to the coveted Eventide sound.

Let's get you tuned in to some cool limited editions coming your way.

D'Angelico Guitars

DELUXE DC LIMITED EDITION GUITAR

The D'Angelico Guitars Deluxe DC Limited Edition is a performance-driven double cutaway semi-hollow that boasts a sweet, crystalline tone. The guitar features Seymour Duncan's Seth Lover A4 humbuckers for remarkable depth and robust dimension, a standard three-way toggle switch and coil-splitting push/pull tone knobs that offer tonal variations. An ebony fingerboard paired with the DC's 16-inch-wide semi-hollow body makes for untempered sustain, while an optional D'Angelico Shield Tremolo offers controlled vibrato. The Deluxe DC is available in Matte Charcoal, Matte Walnut and Matte Surf Green finishes and is limited to 50 pieces each, worldwide.

STREET PRICE: $1,999.99
dangelicoguitars.com

Maxon

LIMITED EDITION 9-SERIES: OD9-40 OVERDRIVE AND SD9-40 SONIC DISTORTION 40TH ANNIVERSARY MODELS

Forty years ago, Maxon created a legendary line of guitar effects known as the Nine Series. To celebrate this milestone, Maxon is releasing two limited-edition 40th-anniversary versions of these iconic pedals. The Maxon OD9-40 Overdrive and the SD9-40 Sonic Distortion are true-to-spec reproductions of the original pedals from the Eighties. The OD9-40 Overdrive was originally marketed by Ibanez as the TS-9 TubeScreamer, while the SD9-40 Sonic Distortion was marketed by Ibanez under the same name. Modified by former Maxon chief engineer Susumu Tamura, both pedals have been converted back to the original buffered bypass switching in order to replicate the original versions as closely as possible.

STREET PRICES: $199 each
maxonfx.com

New EQ

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The Danelectro Silver Snark all-instrument clip-on tuner features newly designed "Hyper-Snark" tuning software technology that delivers spot-on, precision accuracy at lightning speed. Its stable and sensitive range also accurately responds to the lower registers of baritone or multi-strung bass guitars. Silver Snark is extremely light and robust with hard vulcanised rubber collar joints (the same material used in car tires) that are resistant to solvents and impervious to moderate heat and cold. The Silver Snark has an even longer extended battery life and a bright, colorful, easy-read LCD screen that remains highly visible in low stage lighting or in the glare of bright sunshine.

STREET PRICE: $19.99
silversnark.com

Boss Acoustic Singer Live LT

GUITAR WORLD GOLD AWARD PERFORMANCE

NEVER BEFORE HAVE I seen so many buskers burst into view than this past year. Social distancing and a lack of indoor venues have forced many a talented musician to literally take it to the streets, or perform at outdoor dining places. If that's your new normal, then portability and power should be your best friends when it comes to amplifying yourself. The good news is the Boss Acoustic Singer Live LT meets the criteria for both, as well as being the most streamlined and affordable professional acoustic amplifier in Boss's Acoustic Singer series. With all the basic essentials and more, the Acoustic Singer Live LT will have you up and running in minutes.

The Boss Acoustic Singer Live LT is rated at 60 watts and arrives in a compact tilt-back cabinet built for clarity and punch. The amp's highlight is its powerful bi-amp design, which means the custom-designed 6.5–inch woofer and dome tweeter are driven by two independent power amps for a far more optimized sound and efficient full-range response. The guitar and mic channels come with discrete analog input circuitry and independent three-band EQs, an Acoustic Resonance switch on the guitar channel (for three types of acoustic tone sculpting), an Enhance effect on the mic channel (for fuller, well-defined vocal tones), phase switch and anti-feedback notch filter. Onboard effects include delay/chorus on guitar channel, delay/echo on mic channel and independent reverb on both channels. The loaded rear panel features an Aux input with level control for backing music, XLR DI jack and phones/recording output, USB audio interface for computer recording/playback and two input jacks to control guitar and mic effects (using optional footswitches).

I auditioned the Acoustic Singer Live LT at an intimate outdoor gig and found myself pleasantly surprised at how capable the amp handled the alfresco setting. Setup was easy, and using my Taylor 12-string and Martin OM-28 I was able to quickly dial in a robust acoustic sound. I found the green setting on the Acoustic Resonance switch to have the smoothest voicing. The chorus and delay have Boss's top-notch quality tones and add great dimension if needed, but injecting reverb for colorful ambience is what I prefer. Activating the Enhance function provides a wonderful silky sheen for vocals, and adding a splash of reverb gave it real depth. I had quite a few people compliment on the range and natural sound that the Acoustic Singer LT delivered. One last thing to spotlight is the very handy USB out, where I could connect my computer (or compatible smart device) to real-time record my performance. Having that connectivity really elevates the Acoustic Singer LT from just a mere acoustic amp.

— *Paul Riario*

STREET PRICE: $399.99
MANUFACTURER: Boss, boss.info

GUITAR WORLD GOLD AWARD PERFORMANCE

Sweet Dreams

TAYLOR AD17 BLACKTOP

By Chris Gill

BAD TIMES CAN lead to great instruments. During the Great Depression, companies like Gibson and Martin built acoustic guitars with dedicated commitment to the highest-possible quality that extended to even the lowest-price entry level models, and today that period is considered the Golden Era for flattop acoustics. Taylor's statement that its new American Dream series is designed to "meet the needs of everyday musicians even in historically difficult times" certainly brings to mind that era's mentality, with a similar focus on keeping prices as affordable as possible while still delivering outstanding tone and comfortable playability. With its voluptuous rounded body shape, large soundhole and blacktop finish, the Taylor AD17 Blacktop evokes a certain Golden Era aesthetic that's reminiscent of Gibson's flattop L models from the early Thirties (albeit in a larger format), but it's a genuinely modern acoustic with simple yet highly attractive style.

FEATURES Built entirely in the USA from all-solid materials that include a Sitka spruce top, ovangkol back and sides and tropical mahogany neck, the Taylor AD17 features a full-size Grand Pacific round-shoulder dreadnought body shape that measures 16 inches across the lower bout and 4-5/8 inches deep. The neck has a 25-1/2 inch scale, 1-3/4 inch nut width and 20 vintage-style narrow width/medium height frets. What may look like binding is actually the natural spruce of the top, as well as black top purfling, and in lieu of ebony, Taylor employs Eucalyptus (which looks very similar to rosewood) for the fretboard and headstock overlay, and Italian acrylic 4mm dot inlays and peghead logo, all of which keep costs low while providing a refined appearance.

Taylor did not compromise where it counts most, as evinced by the AD17's V-Class bracing, the thinly applied finish and the rounded, chamfered edges of the body and fretboard. The AD17 Blacktop is a purely acoustic instrument, but if you need a pickup system Taylor offers the AD17e for only $200 more.

PERFORMANCE The back-to-basics simplicity of the AD17 Blacktop's appearance may be minimalistic, but its tone is astonishingly upscale and luxurious. Befitting its large, dreadnought-style dimensions, the AD17 delivers powerful volume projection but, unlike the typical scooped mids of a dreadnought, its mid-range is impressively boosted, providing a rich, sweet, well-balanced voice that is ideal for fingerstyle as well as punchy rhythm playing. The resonance and sustain is also impressive, with decay that retains body and blends seamlessly with the percussive blast of the initial pick attack. Playability is simply superb, with the neck providing a smooth slinky feel that lives up to the "dream" designation of the series name.

CHEAT SHEET

STREET PRICE: $1,499
MANUFACTURER: Taylor, taylorguitars.com

- The Grand Pacific round-shoulder dreadnought body with V-Class bracing provides an ideal balance of volume, projection and well-balanced tone.
- All-solid materials consist of a Sitka spruce top, ovangkol back and sides and tropical mahogany neck.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE:** Taylor may have cut the frills but they didn't cut any corners when it comes to delivering outstanding tone and playability with the AD17 Blacktop, thanks to a dedicated commitment to quality.

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COLUMNS

STRING THEORY

by Jimmy Brown

For video of this lesson, go to GuitarWorld.com/January2021

I GOT RHYTHM, PART 12

More fun with dotted-eighths syncopations

LAST TIME, I introduced an exciting rhythmic phrasing scheme, whereby you accentuate every *third* 16th note in $\frac{4}{4}$ meter and create a tricky-sounding "threes-on-fours" pattern known as the *dotted eighth-notes syncopation* (or *dotted-eighths syncopation*). Getting to know that pattern well and being able to count it will bolster your skills for playing and feeling rhythmically intense styles of modern music, such as prog rock, fusion, metal and funk.

What I'd like to do now is demonstrate how to apply that accent pattern to chords and fret-hand muted "scratch" strums, using the musical and fairly easy-to-follow "rhythm-within-rhythm" approach. What we're going to do is take the 16-note melody I had presented in the previous lesson, which, as you recall, was a line that walked down the A string and back, with each fretted note separated by three open A notes, and instead use a dominant 9th chord shape, which is a mainstay of funk, R&B and blues, and apply our accent pattern to it while keeping a down-up-down-up alternate strumming motion going (see **FIGURE 1**).

What we're doing here is pressing down on the shifting chord shape on every third 16th note, thus conveying the sound of dotted eighths syncopations. Meanwhile, we're keeping the rhythm going while lightly loosening our grip on the strings between each chord accent, to create those pitchless, percussive "scratch" strums (indicated with X's), which is a sound that you'll hear in the rhythm guitar styles of players like Cory Wong, John Frusciante, Prince and Jimmy Nolan from James Brown's original band.

As we saw last month, notice that, in $\frac{4}{4}$ meter, the dotted-eighths syncopation pattern takes three bars to cycle around to the point where the accent finally lands on beat 1 again. The chords I'm using here are arbitrary and serve to illustrate how neatly the pattern works with a sequence of 16 changing chords. Another option would be to just stay on the A9 chord the whole time, or start lower down the fretboard and ascend chromatically, eight times, then descend.

In last month's lesson, I mentioned the bad-ass bass riff in "Jungle Boogie" by Kool & the Gang. What I'd like to do now is use a similarly styled riff to present three different incarnations of the same melody and dotted-eighths syncopation pattern, as presented in **FIGURE 2**. The part labeled Gtr. 1 uses alternate-picked 16th notes with fret-hand muting. Gtr. 2 uses ties, while Gtr. 3 employs fret-hand muting to create rests, or "holes of silence." Notice the vertically aligned counting prompts above each part, which serve as a helpful guide here.

FIG. 1

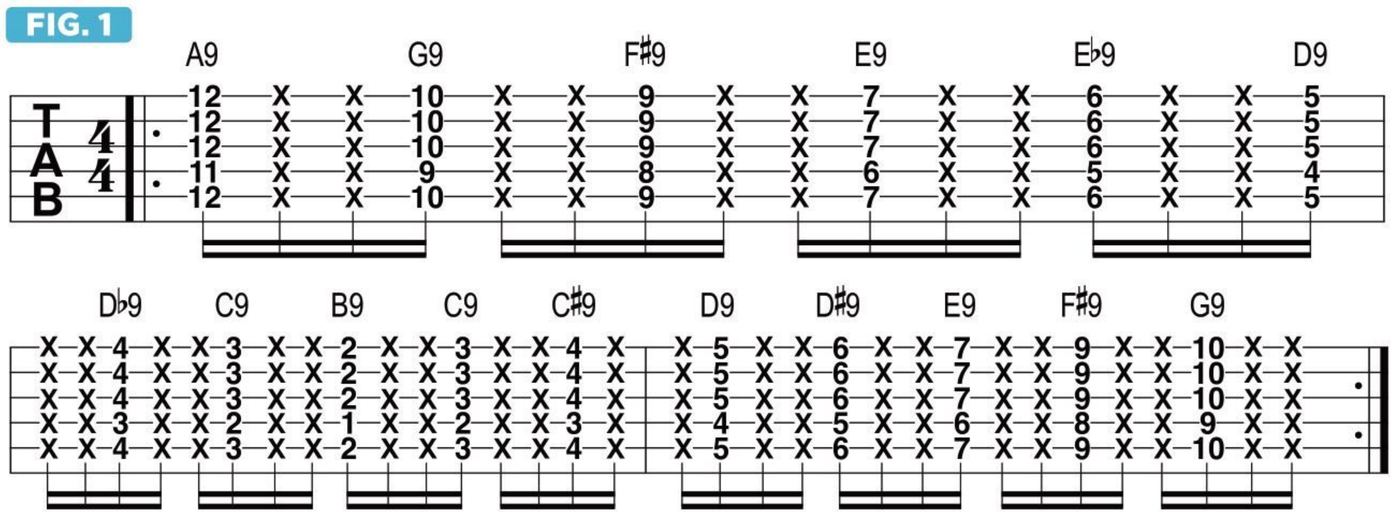
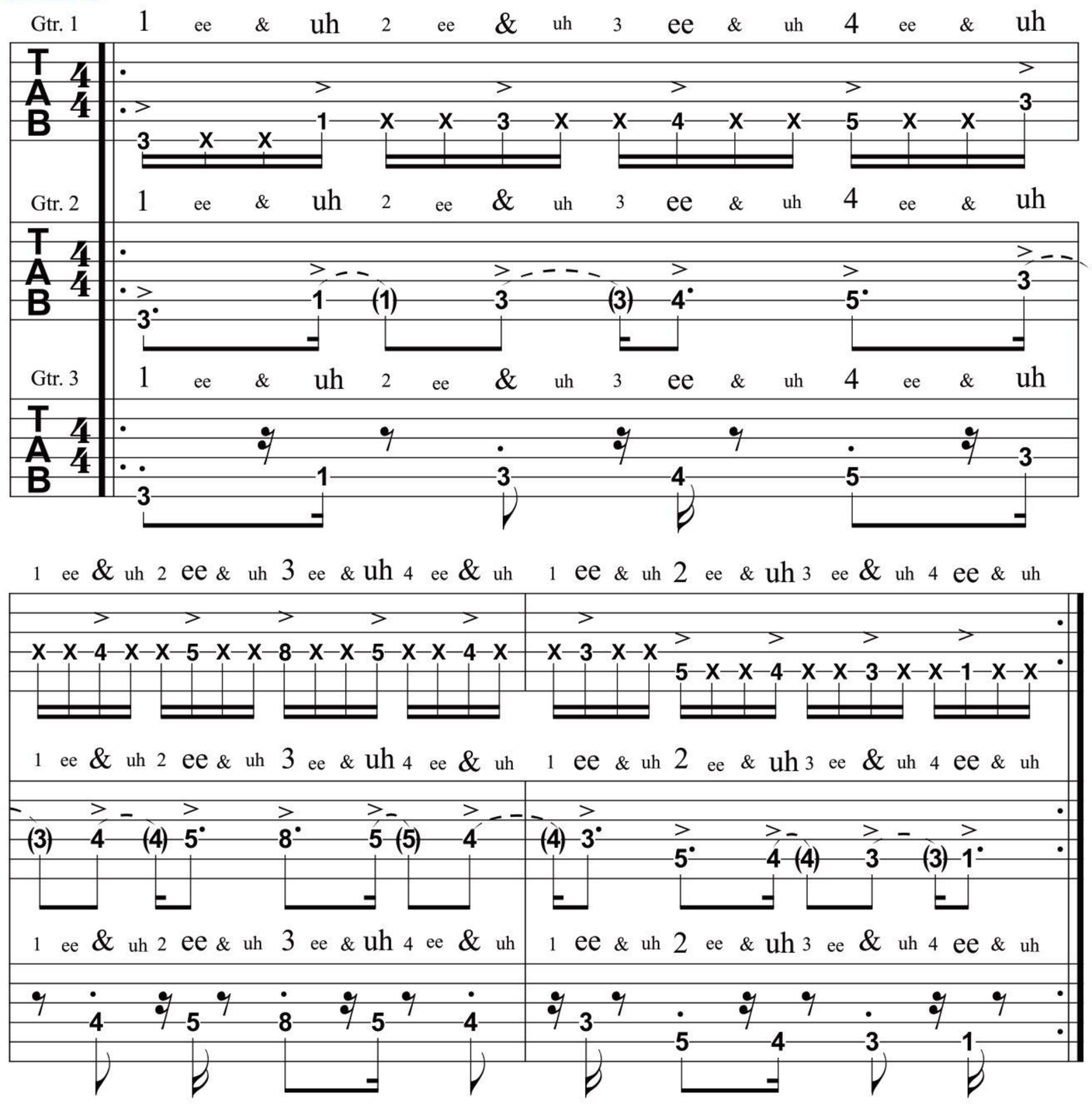


FIG. 2



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

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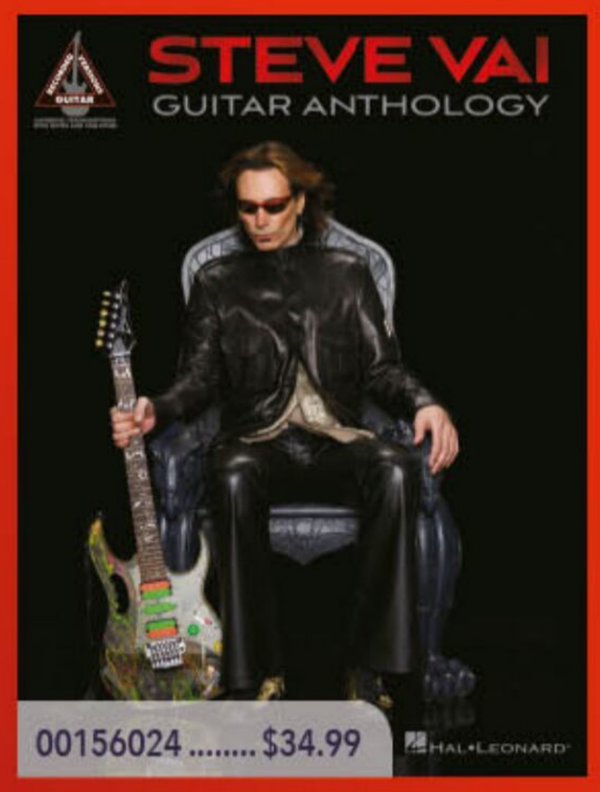

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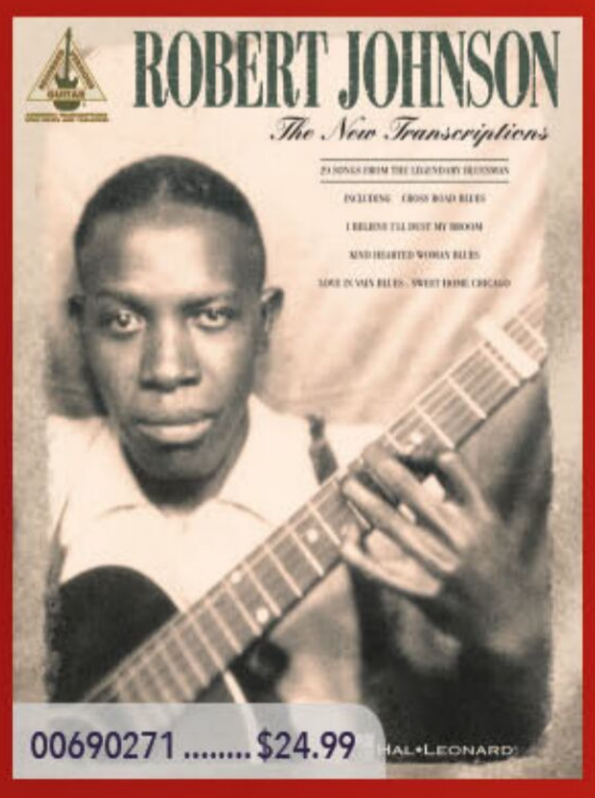

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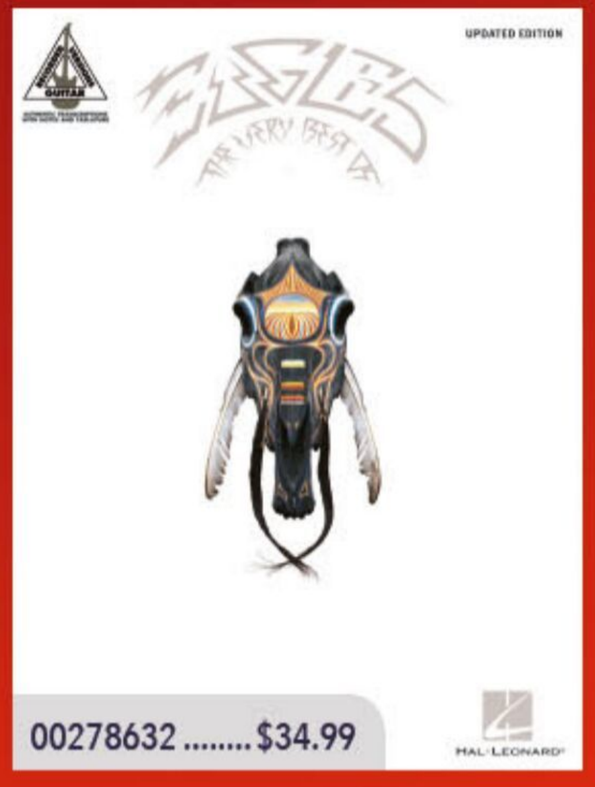

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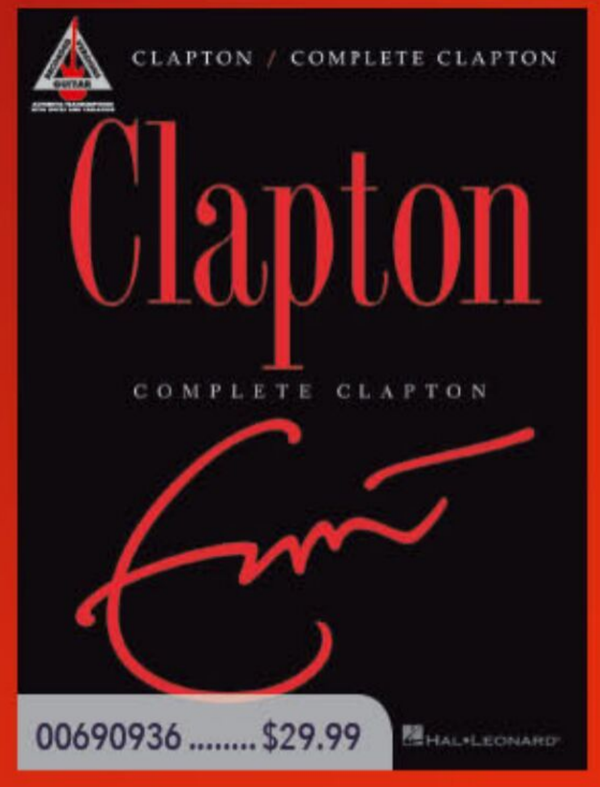

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COLUMNS

IN DEEP

by Andy Aledort

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FOUR UP, FOUR DOWN

Superimposing 7th-chord arpeggios over a single chord

IN THIS LAST of our three-part investigation of applying four-note arpeggios to solo phrases, we'll investigate different approaches to each arpeggiated shape and useful ways to connect one to the next. As a framework, we'll use a repeating two-bar vamp along the lines of that heard in the classic Allman Brothers Band instrumental "In Memory of Elizabeth Reed."

The solo sections of "Liz Reed" pretty much sit on an Am9 chord, with brief reference to the IV (four) chord, D, on beats 3 and 4 in the second bar of the repeating rhythm pattern. This D chord can also be analyzed as Bm7/A or D6/A. When soloing, you can either reference this chord or simply stick with an overall A minor tonality.

The chords, lines and arpeggios in this vamp are based on the A Dorian mode (A, B, C, D, E, F♯, G). The presence of F♯ in the scale makes the four chord, D, major, as its notes (D, F♯, A) live within A Dorian.

FIGURE 1 illustrates a repeating two-bar progression along the lines of what guitarists Dickey Betts and Duane Allman play on "Liz Reed." Notice the steady 16th-note syncopations and subtle balance of chordal accents with muted "dead-string" accents.

In **FIGURE 2**, a series of four-note arpeggios based on A Dorian is shown, starting with Bm7 (B, D, F♯, A). If we progressively move each chord tone up to the next scale degree of A Dorian, the result is Cmaj7, D7, Em7, F♯m7♭5, Gmaj7, Am7 and Bm7 at the top.

A common jazz technique is to string arpeggios together and alternately change direction. In **FIGURE 3**, I lay these arpeggiated shapes over the "Liz Reed" progression, alternating between ascending and descending shapes for each successive pattern. The first arpeggio is played low to high, and the next one is initiated by sliding the top note up to the next note of A Dorian. That becomes the first note of the next arpeggio.

When we reach the bottom, we can again slide up to the next scale degree to begin the subsequent ascending arpeggio. In **FIGURE 4**, the phrase begins in the highest position, followed by a descent of the fretboard through each successive arpeggio.

FIG. 1

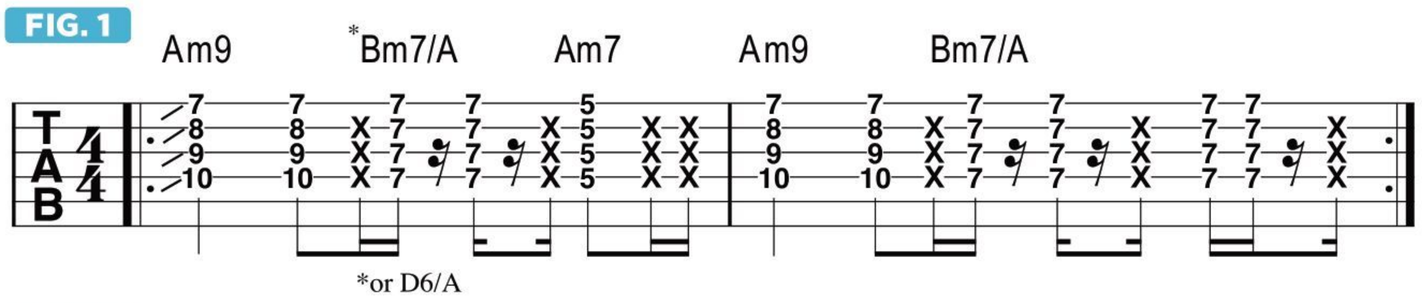


FIG. 2

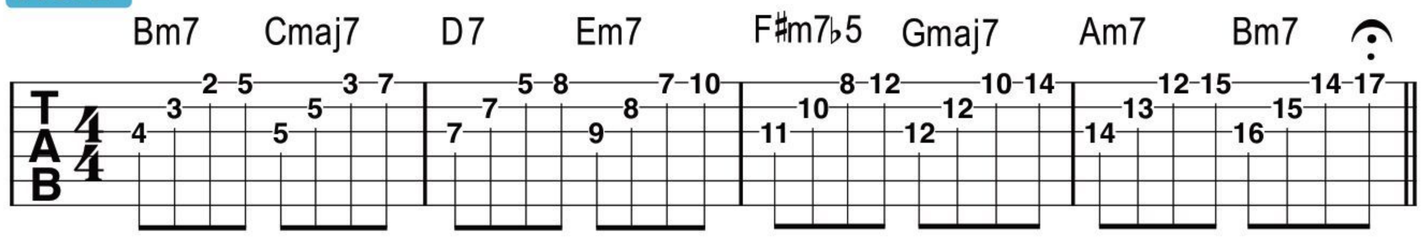
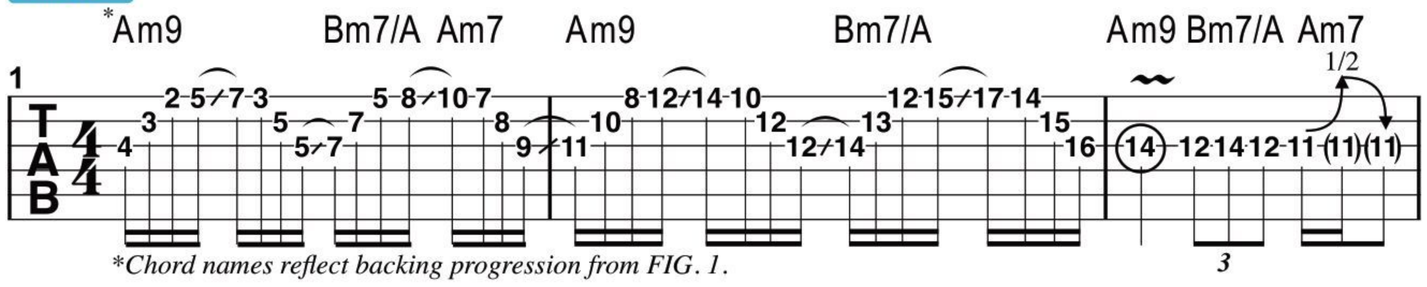


FIG. 3



**Chord names reflect backing progression from FIG. 1.*

FIG. 4

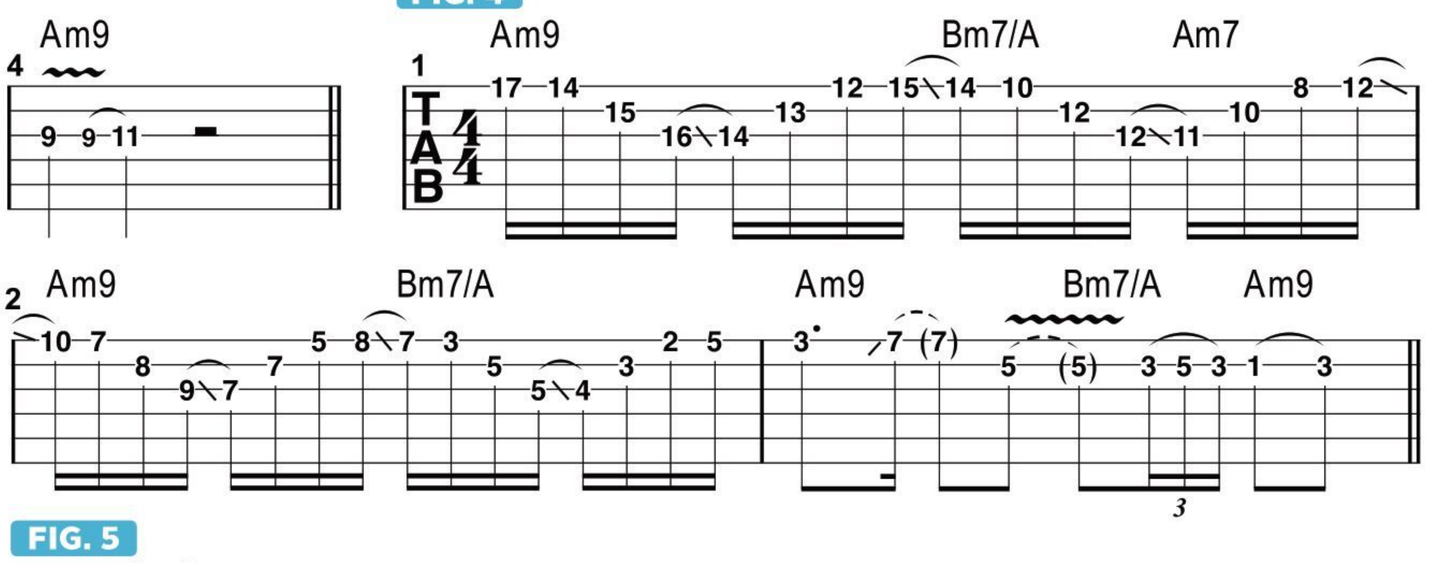
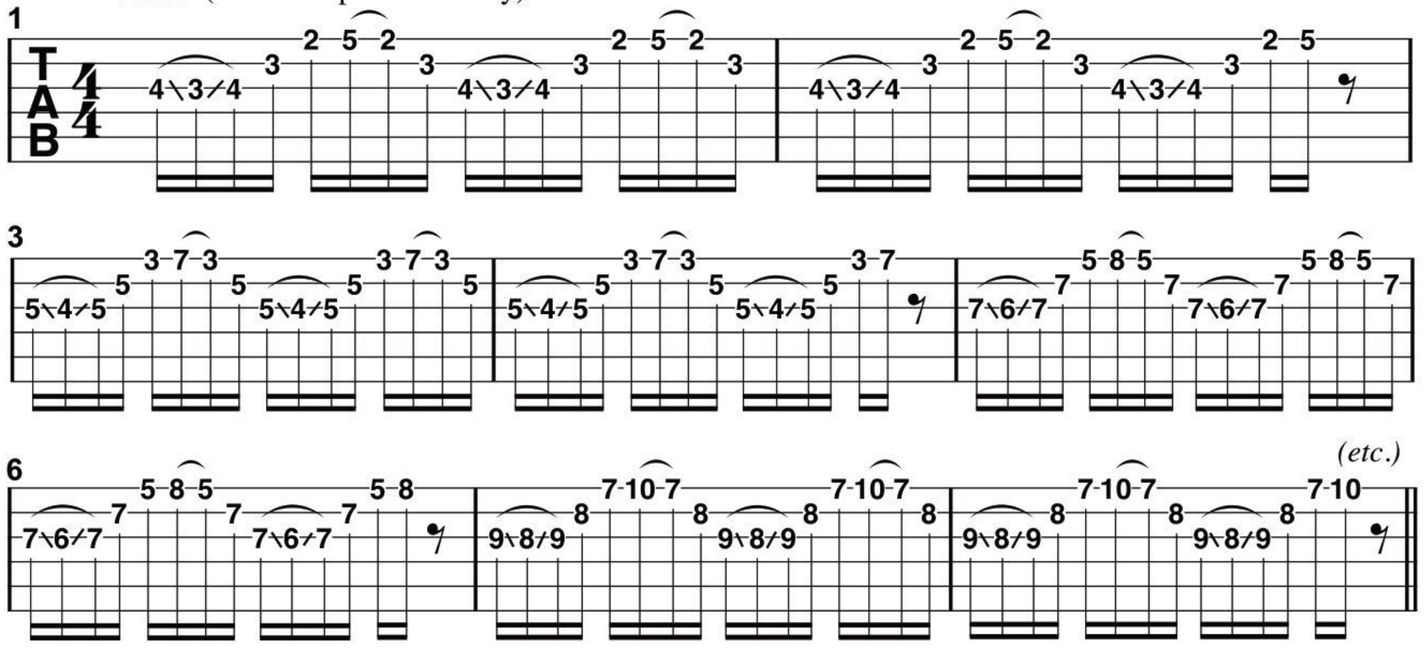


FIG. 5



Once you have these patterns under your fingers, you can create any number of variations, such as that offered in **FIGURE 5**, as each four-note shape is played as a repeated melodic "cell" before moving on to the next higher arpeggio.

***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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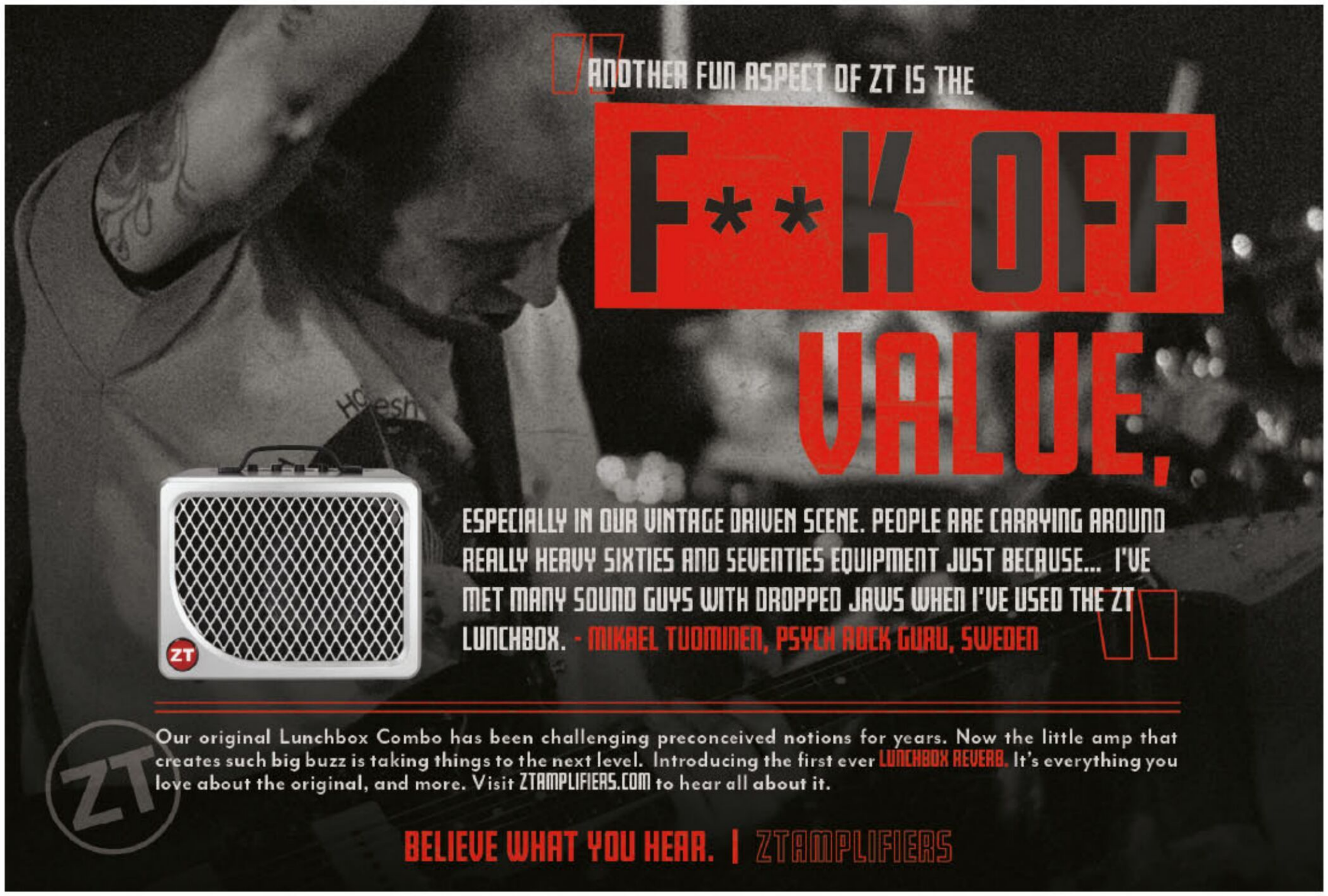


COLUMNS

MOORE POWER

by Vinnie Moore

For video of this lesson, go to GuitarWorld.com/January2021

TRIADIC INVENTIONS

Superimposing triads within soloing sequences

WHEN BUILDING A guitar solo, I try to take a few different approaches in order to widen its musicality and offer myself more choices than simply sticking with phrases based on the minor pentatonic and blues scales. One thing I like to do is take a broader view of the key or tonality I'm soloing in and utilize various triadic arpeggio shapes that are native to the tonic, or "home," tonality and its related scale or mode.

The term triad generally refers to the root, 3rd and 5th notes, or degrees, of a scale, the root being the 1st. But it can also include a sus2 or sus4 instead of the 3rd, or an upper-structure tone of a more complex chord, such as a 7th chord, as long as it's broken down into a three-note form (usually without the 5th).

The A natural minor scale, also known as the A Aeolian mode, is spelled A, B, C, D, E, F, G. intervallically, in reference to the scale degrees, that's 1(root), 2, ♭3, 4, 5, ♭6, ♭7. Within this scale structure, there are triads that relate to other chords. For example, **FIGURE 1** shows the notes of the triads F major (F, A, C) and C major triad (C, E, G). As you can see, both live within the tonality of A natural minor.

These triadic forms can be found in every fretboard position. Let's begin by building a phrase that stays within a specific one, namely 7th. In **FIGURE 2**, I play a line built from a few different triadic arpeggio forms, or shapes, that all reside within the A natural minor scale. I add an additional twist by playing the three-note forms in a rhythm of 16th notes, which are four-note groups, or "quads." And so the "threes against fours" rhythmic phrasing kind of disguises the transitions from one triadic shape to another, making them less obvious.

I begin by outlining a C major triad, then, on the upbeat of beat 2, I move up to F major, and on beat 4 I switch to a B diminished (Bdim) triad (B, D, F). In bar 2, I move up again, this time to a three-note form of Fmaj7 (F, A, C, E), followed by G major (G, B, D). I then work my way back down across the strings in reverse order. Most of the notes are picked, but notice the use of hammer-ons within each shape.

FIG. 1

FIG. 2

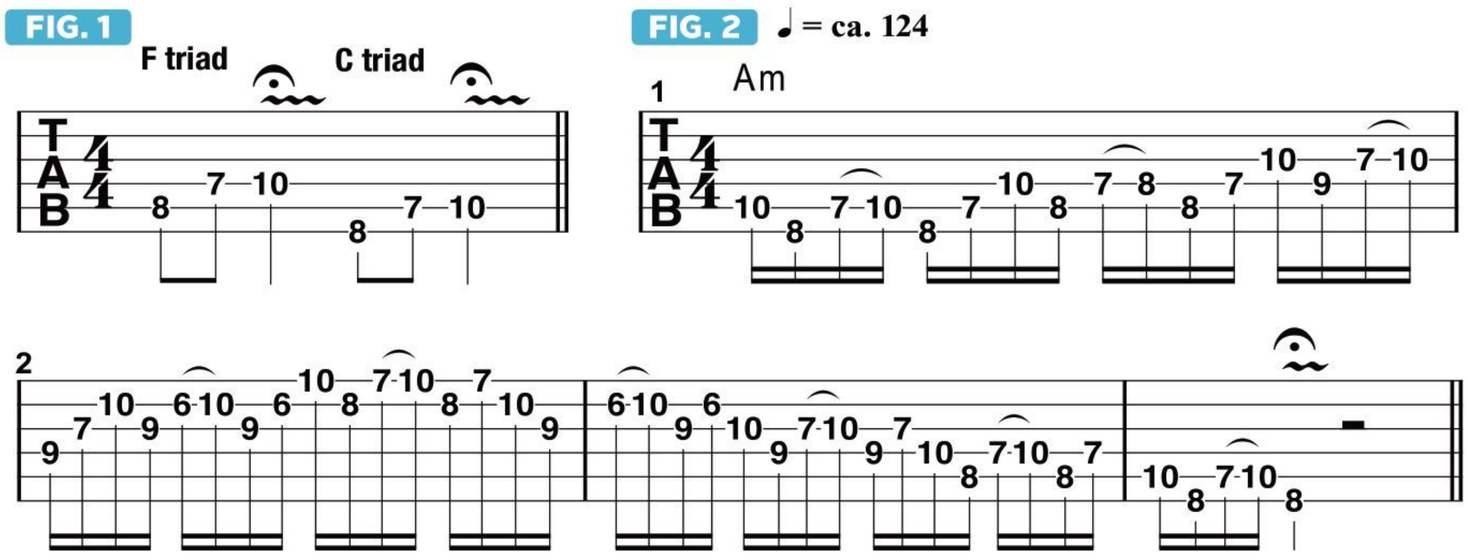


FIG. 3

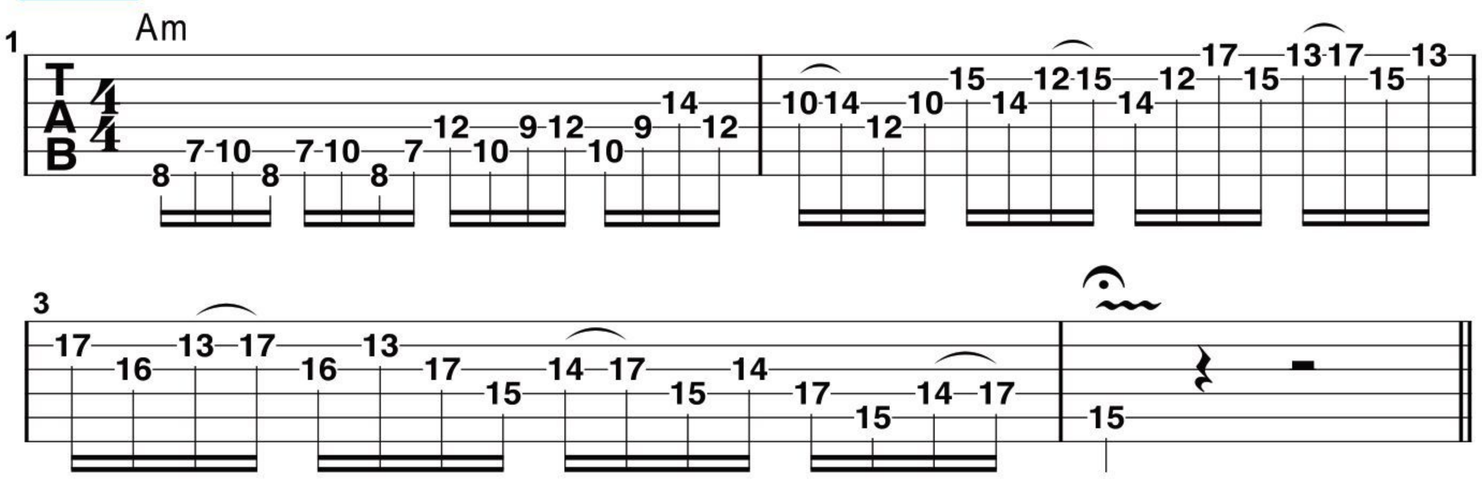
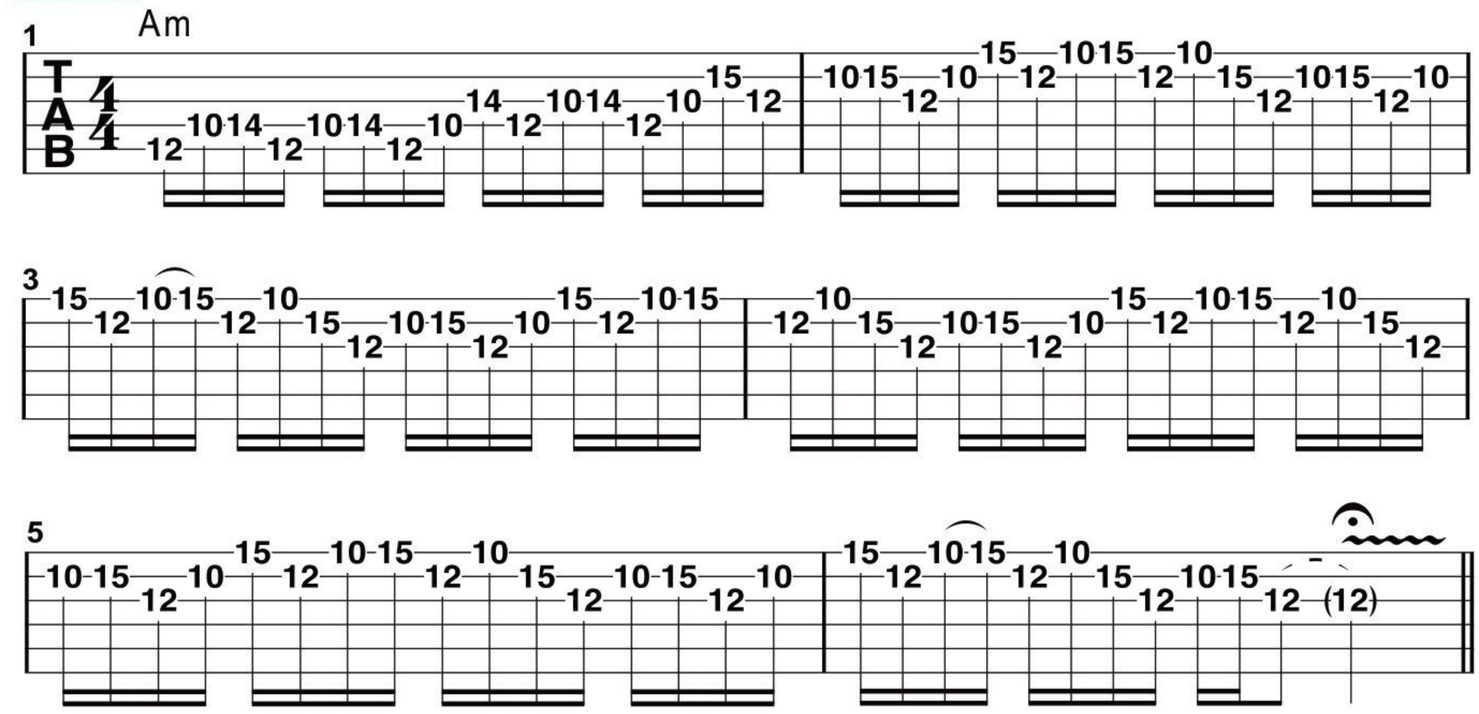


FIG. 4



Another approach is to move up the fretboard diagonally, meaning that each new triad is initiated with a shift up to a higher position. In **FIGURE 3**, I begin with the notes of a C major triad, but on beat 3 I move up two frets to outline G major then shift up two more frets to play a Dm arpeggio (D, F, A). On beat 2 of bar 2, I play a three-note form of Bm7♭5 (B, D, F, A, minus the ♭5, F), followed by Dm an octave higher. The line is then played in descending fashion, moving back down through each triad.

FIGURE 4 offers another approach, wherein I cycle between two triadic forms repeatedly, starting with Am to Dm, then Gsus2 (G, A, D) to G major (G, B, D).

Vinnie Moore is an American guitarist and has been a member of the British hard rock band UFO since 2003. He is one of the most influential and celebrated players to emerge from the 1980s virtuoso shred guitar era. Vinnie's latest album is 2019's *Soul Shifter*.

DAVID HEITUR

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COLUMNS

ACOUSTIC JOURNEY

by Molly Tuttle

For video of this lesson, go to GuitarWorld.com/January2021

BETTER THAN GOOD

How to play "Good Enough," part 2

LAST TIME, I cited my song "Good Enough," which I recorded for my 2017 Ep *Rise*, to demonstrate how I like to switch back and forth between a rhythm-based approach and a combination of crosspicking and single-note lines when accompanying myself. As I described, my guitar parts naturally encompass all three approaches, with the impetus to lay down a solid rhythm while also taking some freedom to embellish it with more intricate picking patterns.

This month, I'd like to continue exploring this approach, using more parts of "Good Enough" to further demonstrate it. As you recall, I perform the song with a capo at the 5th fret, so everything is relative to that and transposes up five half steps, or the interval of a perfect 4th. For example, what we would view as a standard "open" Em chord shape will sound a concert-pitch Am chord, and what's tabbed as a zero ("0") would actually be at the 5th fret.

When I play rhythm, my pick-hand is primarily "floating" above the strings, and more of the strumming movement is coming from the elbow. I flick my wrist with an up and down movement with a slight rotation. When I switch to leads, though, I tend to flatten my wrist and rest it gently on the guitar's bridge by the low strings. You need to become comfortable switching between these two pick-hand movements. With practice, it will become second nature.

FIGURE 1 represents the majority of the song form and demonstrates how I bring these different picking elements into play as it progresses. My mindset here is that I'm accompanying myself while singing, so I'll lay down a solid rhythm part under the vocal lines, and then take liberties with crosspicking and single-note melodies in the spaces between the vocal phrases, emulating the sound (and approach) of two guitars — a rhythm guitar and a second, lead guitar that chimes in with little melodic ideas and fills between the vocal phrases.

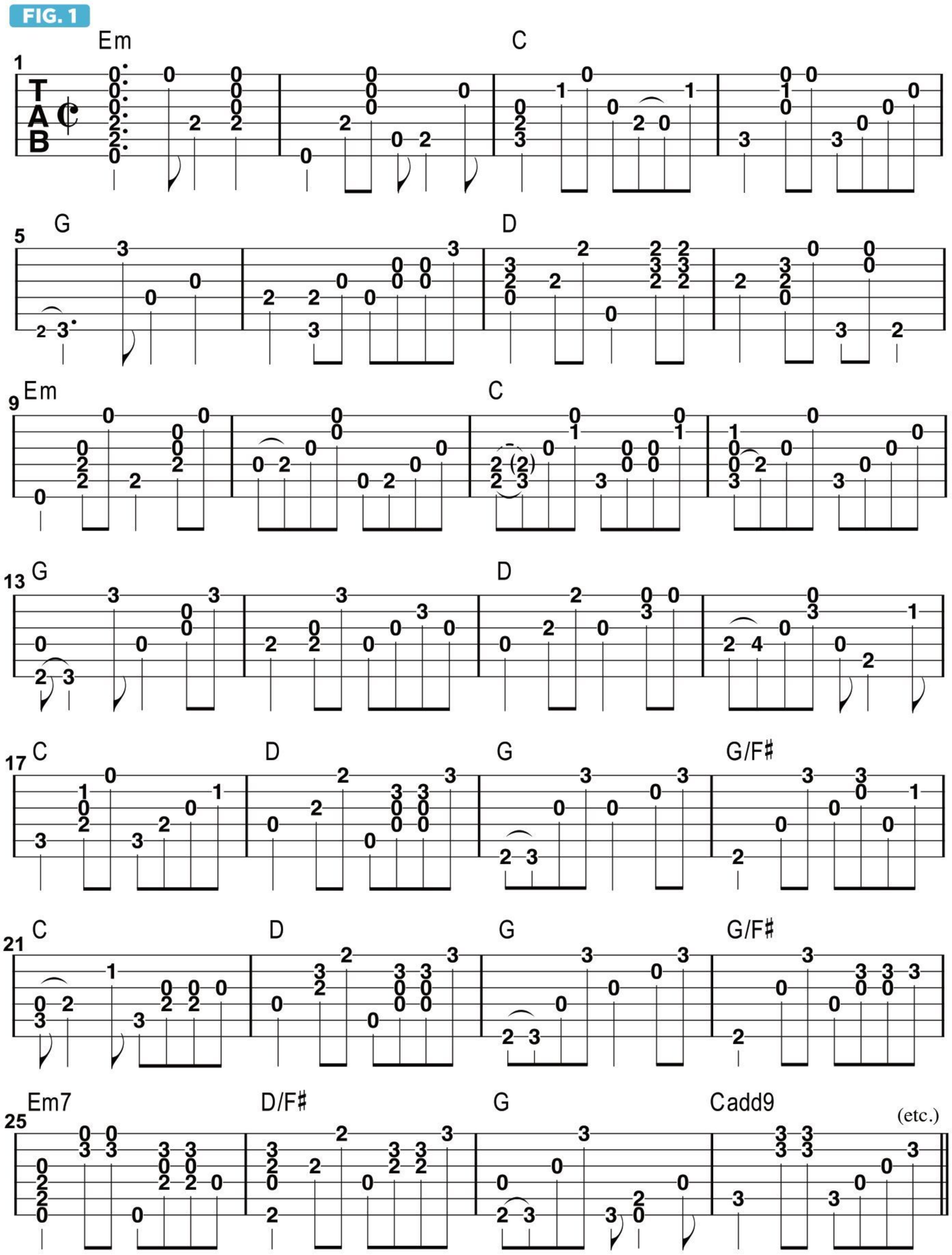
With the close-up, angled shot of my pick-hand in the video for this lesson, you can clearly see when, where and how I make these subtle shifts in technique. For instance, in bars 1 and 2, I'm primarily strumming the chords while adding bass-note accents on beats 1 and 2. In bar 3, there's a break in the vocal line, so I utilize that space to bring in some crosspicking and melodic lines.

Bars 4-9 are made up mostly of straight rhythm, but take notice of the few spots where I drop in single-note phrases and accented single notes. In bars 10-29, the approach switches to more crosspicking and active pick-hand technique.

Capo at 5th fret

All music sounds a perfect 4th higher than written.
All tablature positions and chord names are relative to the capo.

FIG. 1



Molly Tuttle is a supremely talented and diverse multi-instrumentalist and singer-songwriter who is well-versed in the languages of bluegrass, acoustic folk, pop and Americana. Her latest album, 2020's *...but i'd rather be with you,* is available now via Compass Records.

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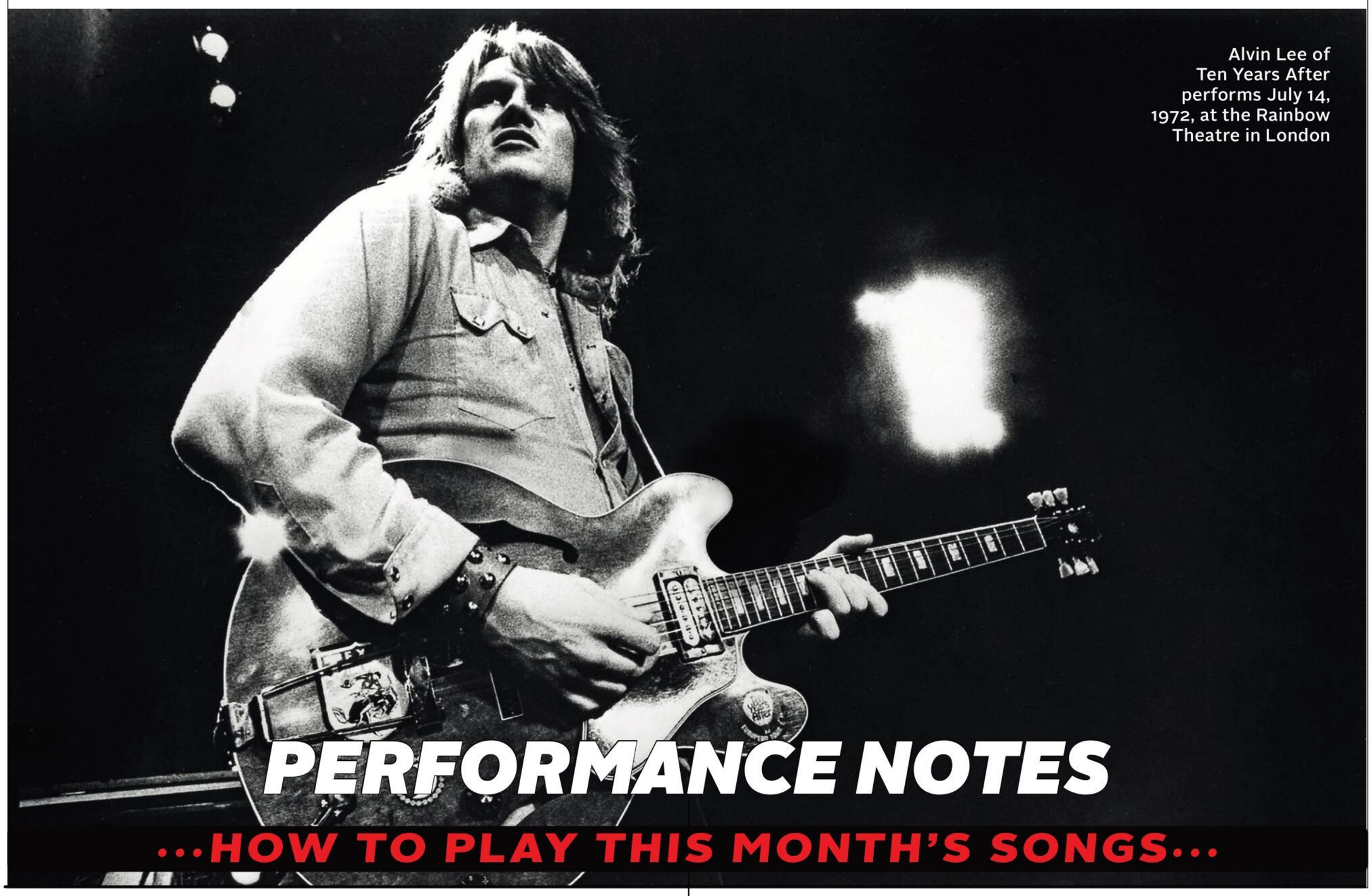


Alvin Lee of Ten Years After performs July 14, 1972, at the Rainbow Theatre in London

PERFORMANCE NOTES

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

"FALL TO PIECES"

Velvet Revolver

IN ORDER TO smoothly and comfortably perform the arpeggiated chords in this song's clean electric intro and verse sections (see bars 1-12, Gtr. 1 part), you'll need to use a picking pattern based on economy of movement. The fairly slow tempo allows for a few different picking possibilities, so experiment by feel until you find a combination of downstrokes and upstrokes that works well for you and flows nicely. I suggest using an approach known as *economy picking*. For those unfamiliar with the technique, it's essentially a combination of alternate picking and sweep picking. Use consecutive downstrokes when crossing from a lower string to the next higher one, and consecutive upstrokes when crossing to the next lower string. Many guitarists do this instinctively, and I suspect Slash does that too.

Regarding the fret hand during these sections, try to allow the notes of each arpeggiated chord shape to ring together as much as possible. Use this same "let-ring" approach with the Asus4 and A arpeggios in bars 13 and 15 of the song's pre-chorus, and again in bars 29 and 31.

The first chord shape in bar 4 can be a little tricky to negotiate, as you have an open C chord shape with the sus4 note, F, on top, on the high E string's 1st fret. Barre your 1st finger across the top two strings initially, then quickly pivot the finger so that it "stands up" on its tip, to continue holding the C note as you then pick the open high E.

When performing Slash's soulful string bends, such as those in bars 43-45, pay careful attention to your *intonation* (pitch accuracy). When in doubt, compare the bend's "target pitch" to its unbent equivalent on the same string. A whole-step bend (indicated in the tab by a "1" above the arrowhead) should match the pitch of the unbent notes two frets higher on the same string. A half-step bend (indicated by the fraction "½") should sound like the unbent note only one fret higher.

— JIMMY BROWN

"I'D LOVE TO CHANGE THE WORLD"

Ten Years After

WHEN PLAYING THIS classic rock song's four-bar intro (see bars 1-4, *Rhy. Fig. 1*), be sure to let the notes of each arpeggiated chord shape ring together as much as possible, as if you were playing the part on a piano and pressing down the sustain pedal for each chord and briefly lifting it between chord changes.

The smoothest way to pick the part is to use downstrokes for everything except the highest note of each chord, which is best picked with an upstroke. You'll find that using an upstroke every time you change direction and descend like this will make the part easier to perform and sound and feel smoother.

Alvin Lee's electric lead guitar (labeled Gtr. 2) enters during the song's first chorus (section C, bar 13) and is heard throughout the rest of the song. Lee uses a heavily-overdriven, echo-drenched neck-pickup tone, creating a wailing, psychedelic vibe. Initially, Lee plays melodically around his vocals, utilizing notes from the E minor pentatonic scale (E, G, A, B, D) in 7th, 10th and 12th positions. Notice the guitarist's extensive use of finger vibrato throughout the song, as well as soulful *pre-bends*, also known as "ghost bends" and "reverse bends" — silently bending a string up to pitch before picking it, then releasing the string.

During the second verse and chorus (sections D and E), Lee's lead lines build in intensity leading up to his solo (section F), where the guitarist cuts loose with some long, fluid lines. Check out bars 61-67 for some of the lightning-fast runs he was known for. Lee bases most of his runs on the E blues scale (E, G, A, B♭, B, D) and relies on finger slides and rapid-fire pull-offs to navigate quick shifts between 13th and 15th positions. Notice also how, during the song's final verse (section G), he punctuates his vocal lines with stinging, vibrato-ed unison bends on the top two strings, shaking the bent note on the B string while holding the unbent note on the high E string steady.

— VINCENT DEMASI

BRIAN COOKE/REDFERNS

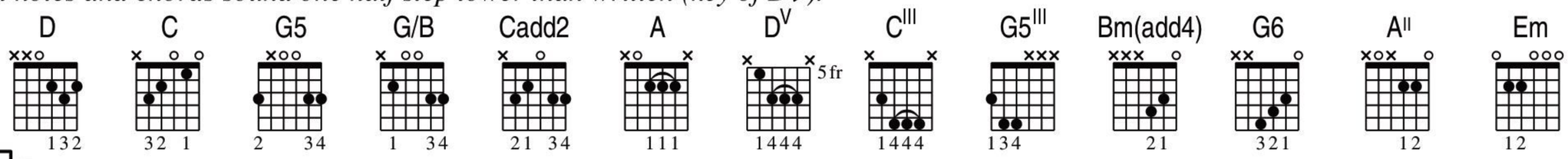
"FALL TO PIECES"

Velvet Revolver

As heard on **CONTRABAND**

Music by SCOTT WEILAND, DUFF McKAGAN, MATT SORUM, DAVE KUSHNER *and* SLASH • *Transcribed by* JEFF PERRIN

All guitars are tuned down one half step (low to high: E♭ A♭ D♭ G♭ B♭ E♭).
Bass tuning (low to high): E♭ A♭ D♭ G♭.
All notes and chords sound one half step lower than written (key of D♭).



A **Intro** (0:00)
Moderately Slow ♩ = 66

B **1st Verse** (0:14)

It's been a long year. . .

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 (see meas. 1)

"FALL TO PIECES"
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D C G5 G/B Cadd2

Gtr. 2 plays Fill 1 simile (see meas. 3)

7 Gtr. 1

Bass

D C G5 G/B Cadd2 D

9 Gtr. 2

Gtr. 1

Bass

C 1st Pre-chorus (0:43)

Every time I'm falling down. . .

C G5 A G5 D

12

Rhy. Fig. 2

(delay off) *

1/4

* *repeat previous chord*

end Rhy. Fig. 1 (w/dist.)

1/4

Bass Fig. 2

A G5 A G5

end Rhy. Fig. 2

15

1/4

end Bass Fig. 2

D (0:58)

17

D 1/2 C G5 G/B Cadd2

Gtr. 3 (elec. w/dist.)

f

Gtr. 2

Rhy. Fig. 3a *end Rhy. Fig. 3a*

Gtr. 1

Rhy. Fig. 3 *end Rhy. Fig. 3*

Bass

Bass Fig. 3 *end Bass Fig. 3*

19

D 1/2 C G5

E **2nd Verse** (1:12)

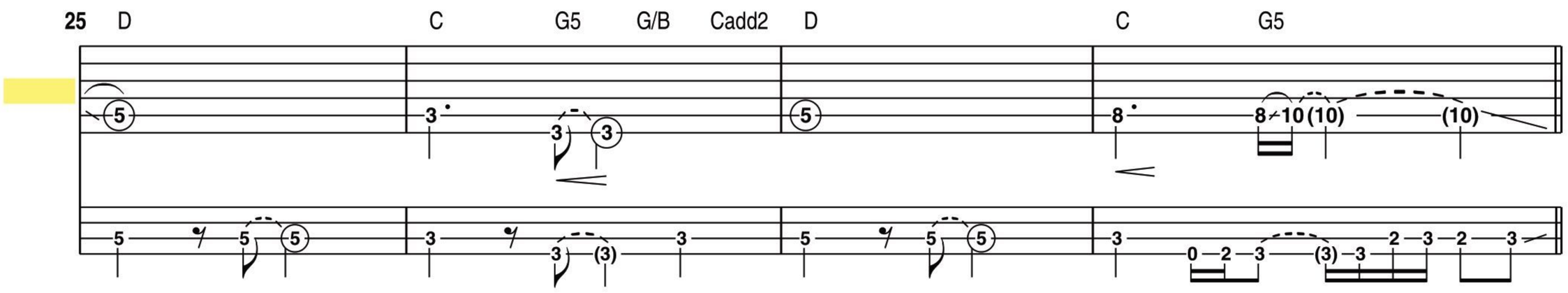
I keep a journal. . .

D C G5 G/B Cadd2 D C G5 G/B Cadd2

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 (see meas. 5)

21 Gtr. 2

Bass



F **2nd Pre-chorus** (1:41)

Every time I'm falling down. . .

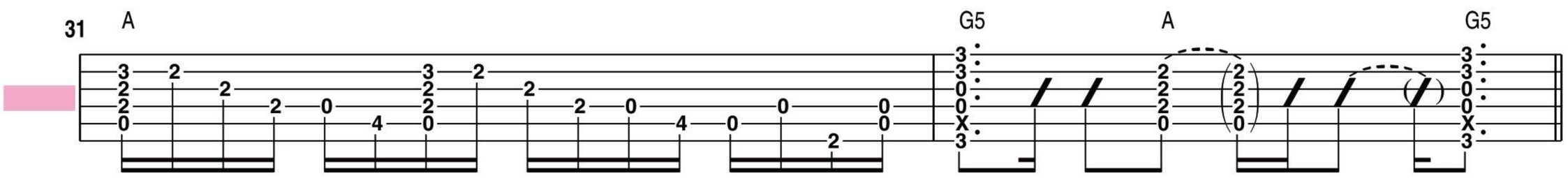
A G5 D

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 simile (see meas. 13)

29 Gtr. 1 (w/dist.)

1/4

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 simile (see meas. 13)



G **1st Chorus** (1:56)

Every time I'm falling down. . .

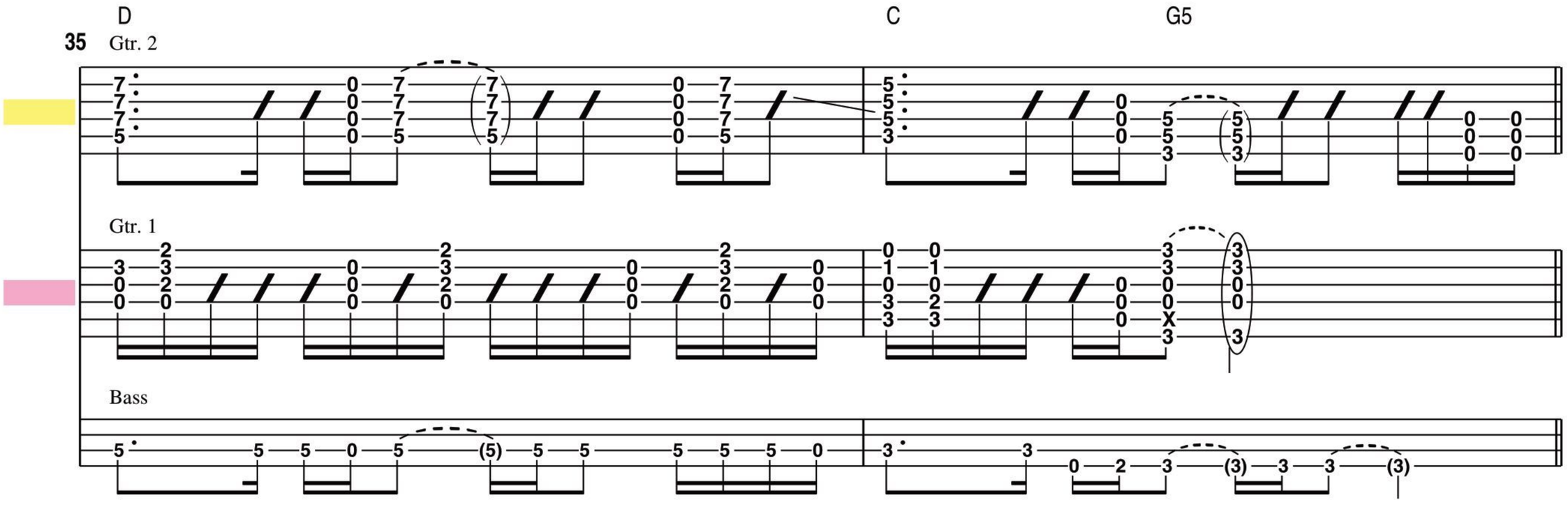
D^{V} C^{III} $G5^{III}$

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 3 three times (see meas. 17)

(play 3 times)

33 Gtr. 2

Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 three times simile (see meas. 17)



H **Bridge** (2:24)

All the years I've tried. . .

37 Bm(add4) G6

(w/clean tone)

* repeat previous beat

39 Bm(add4) A[II]

41 G5

I **Guitar Solo** (2:53)

D C G5 G/B Cadd2

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 3 three times (see meas. 17)

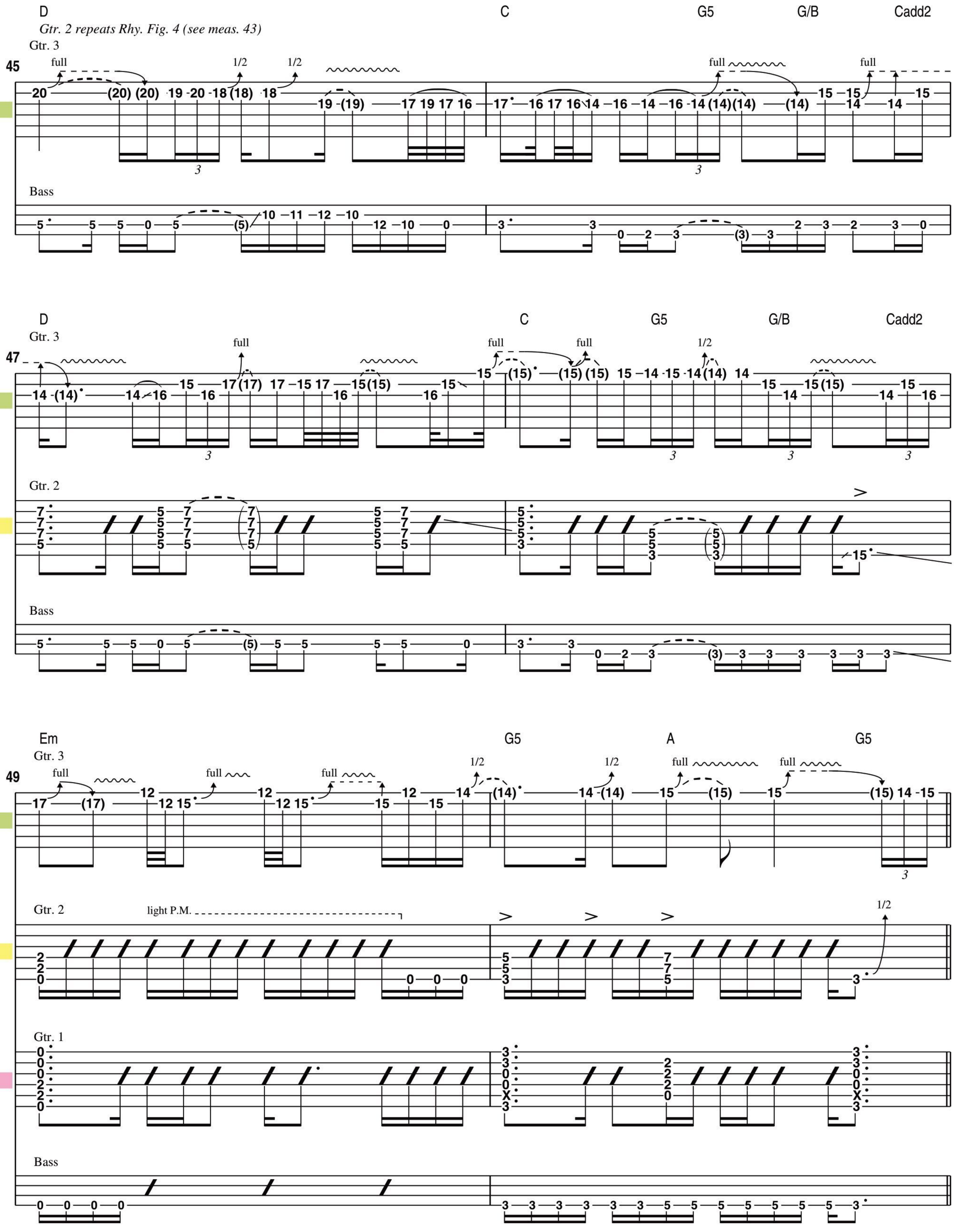
Gtr. 3

43 full full full full full full full

Gtr. 2

Rhy. Fig. 4 *end Rhy. Fig. 4*

Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 (see meas. 17)


D
C
G5
G/B
Cadd2
Gtr. 3
45
full
1/2
1/2
full
full
Bass
D
C
G5
G/B
Cadd2
Gtr. 3
47
full
full
full
1/2
Gtr. 2
Bass
Em
G5
A
G5
Gtr. 3
49
full
full
full
1/2
1/2
full
full
Gtr. 2
light P.M.
1/2
Gtr. 1
Bass

J **3rd Chorus** (3:22)

Every time I'm falling down. . .

D C G/B Cadd2

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 3 three times (see meas. 17)

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 3a three times (see meas. 17)

Gtr. 3 (first time only)

1/2 *grad. release* full *(play 3 times)*

51

Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 three times simile (see meas. 17)

D C G5 G/B Cadd2

53 Gtr. 2

Gtr. 1

Bass

K **Outro Chorus** (3:51)

Every time I'm falling down. . .

D C G5 G/B Cadd2

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 3 three times (see meas. 17)

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 3a three times (see meas. 17)

55 Gtr. 3 1/2 *(play 3 times)*

Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 three times (see meas. 17)

D C G5

57 Gtr. 3 1/2

Gtr. 2

Gtr. 1

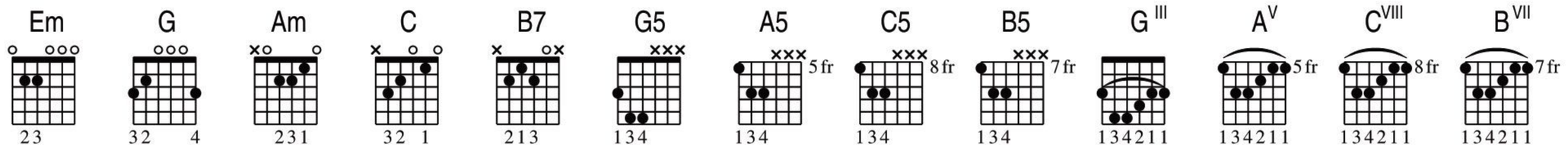
Bass

"I'D LOVE TO CHANGE THE WORLD"

Ten Years After

As heard on **A SPACE IN TIME**

Words and Music by **ALVIN LEE** • *Transcribed by* **JEFF PERRIN**



A **Intro** (0:00)

Moderately ♩ = 116

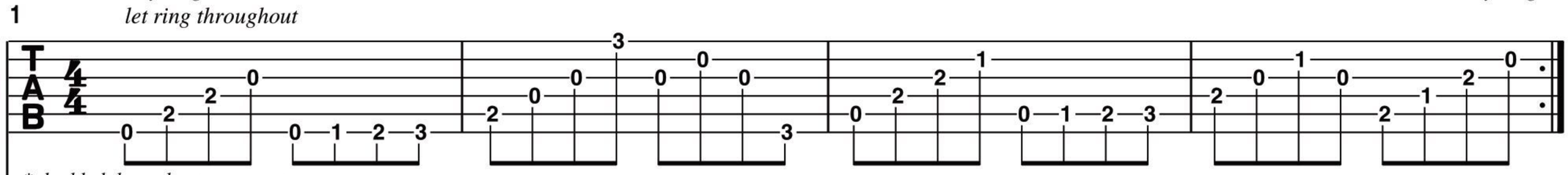
Em G Am C B7

* Gtr. 1 (acous.)

Rhy. Fig. 1 *end Rhy. Fig. 1*

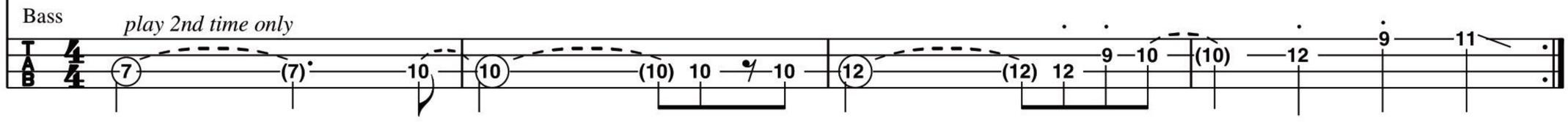
let ring throughout

1



** doubled throughout on repeat*

Bass *play 2nd time only*



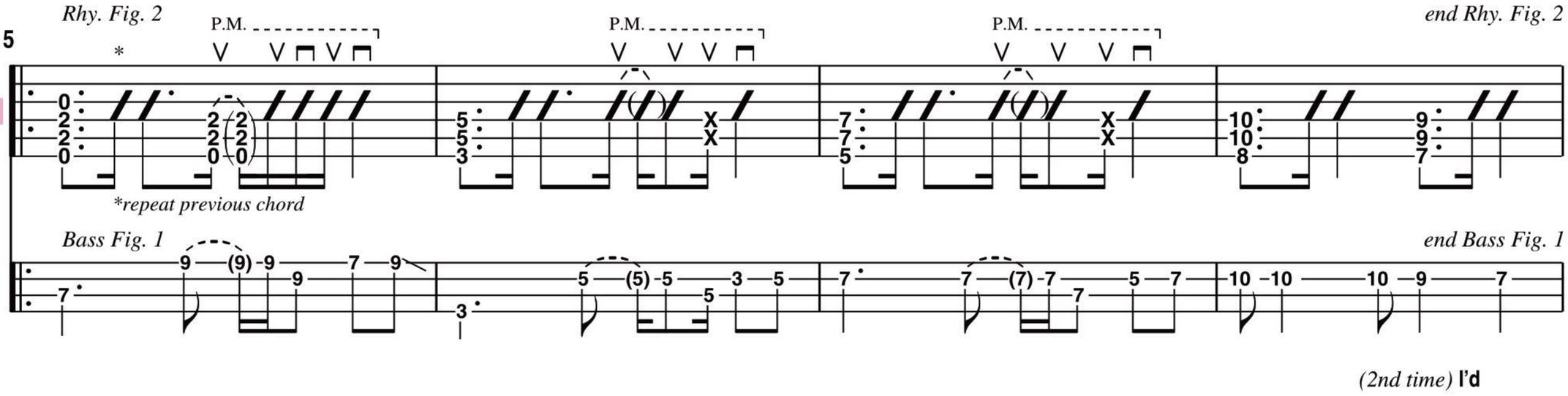
B **1st Verse** (0:17, 0:32)

Everywhere is. . .
Tax the rich. . .

Em G5 A5 C5 B5

Rhy. Fig. 2 *end Rhy. Fig. 2*

5



**repeat previous chord*

Bass Fig. 1 *end Bass Fig. 1*

(2nd time) **I'd**

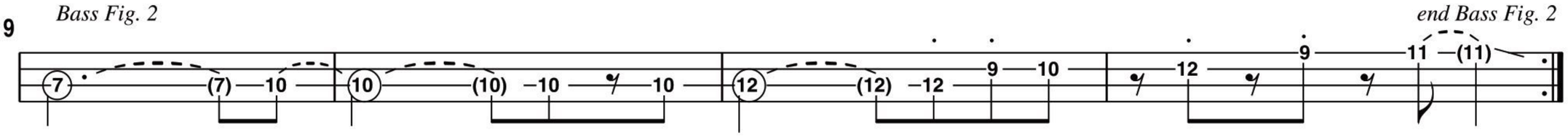
Em G Am C B7

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 (see meas. 1)

Bass

Bass Fig. 2 *end Bass Fig. 2*

9



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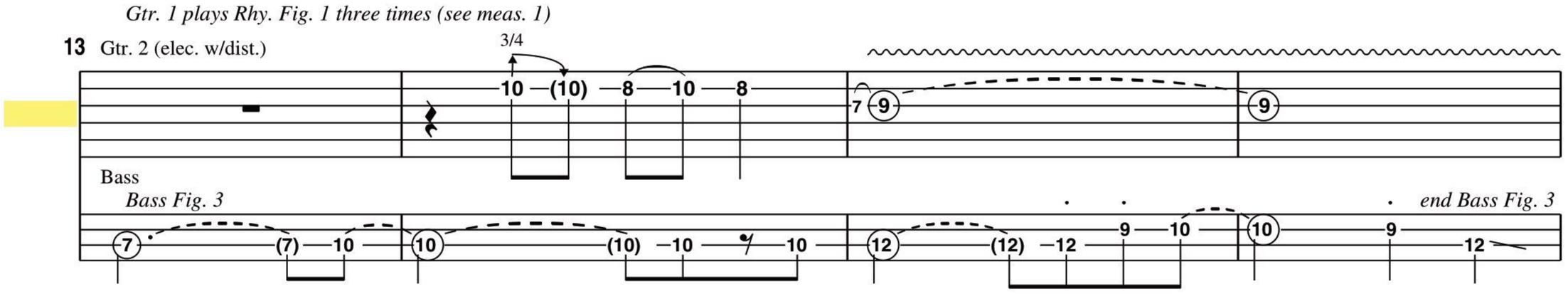
C **1st Chorus** (0:49)

Love to change the world. . .

Em G Am C B7

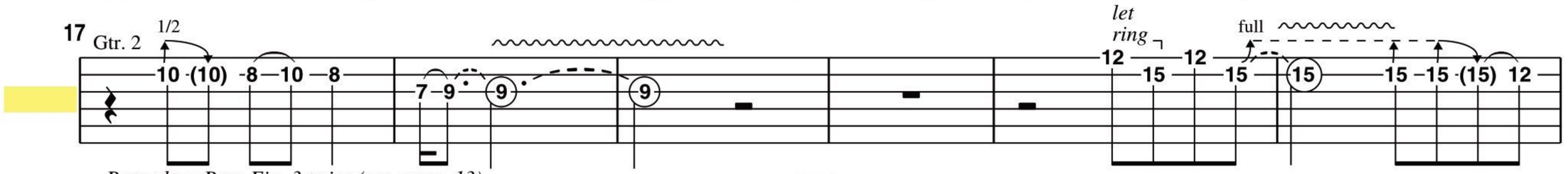
Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 three times (see meas. 1)

13 Gtr. 2 (elec. w/dist.)



Em G Am C B7 Em G

17 Gtr. 2



Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 twice (see meas. 13)

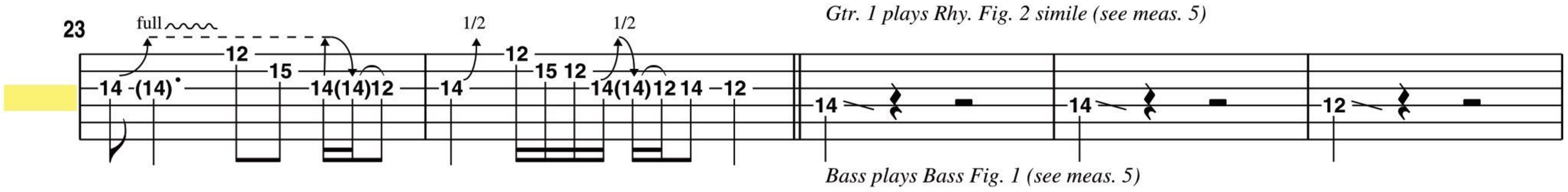
D **2nd Verse** (1:14)

Population. . .

Am C B7 Em G5 A5

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 simile (see meas. 5)

23

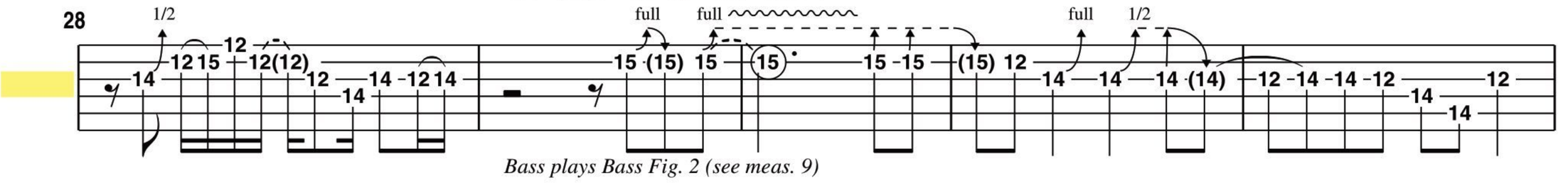


Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 (see meas. 5)

C5 B5 Em G Am C B7

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 (see meas. 1)

28

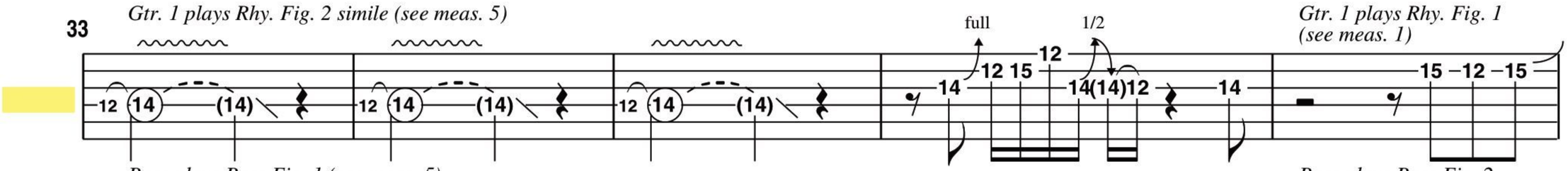


Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 (see meas. 9)

Em G5 A5 C5 B5 Em G

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 simile (see meas. 5)

33



Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 (see meas. 5)

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 (see meas. 1)

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 (see meas. 9)

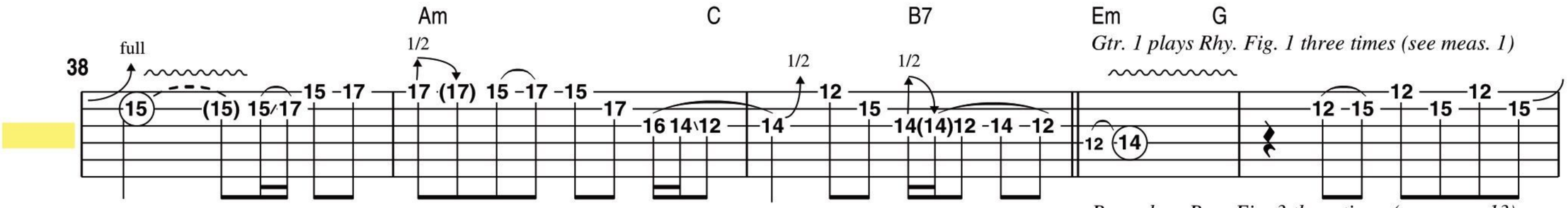
E **2nd Chorus** (1:45)

I'd love to change. . .

Am C B7 Em G

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 three times (see meas. 1)

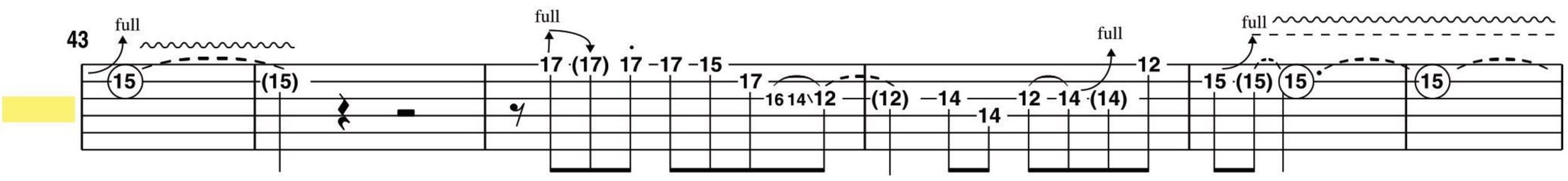
38

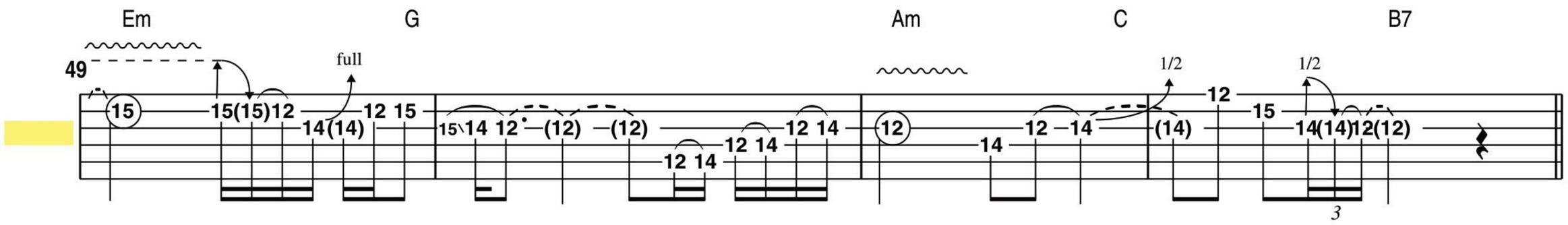


Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 three times (see meas. 13)

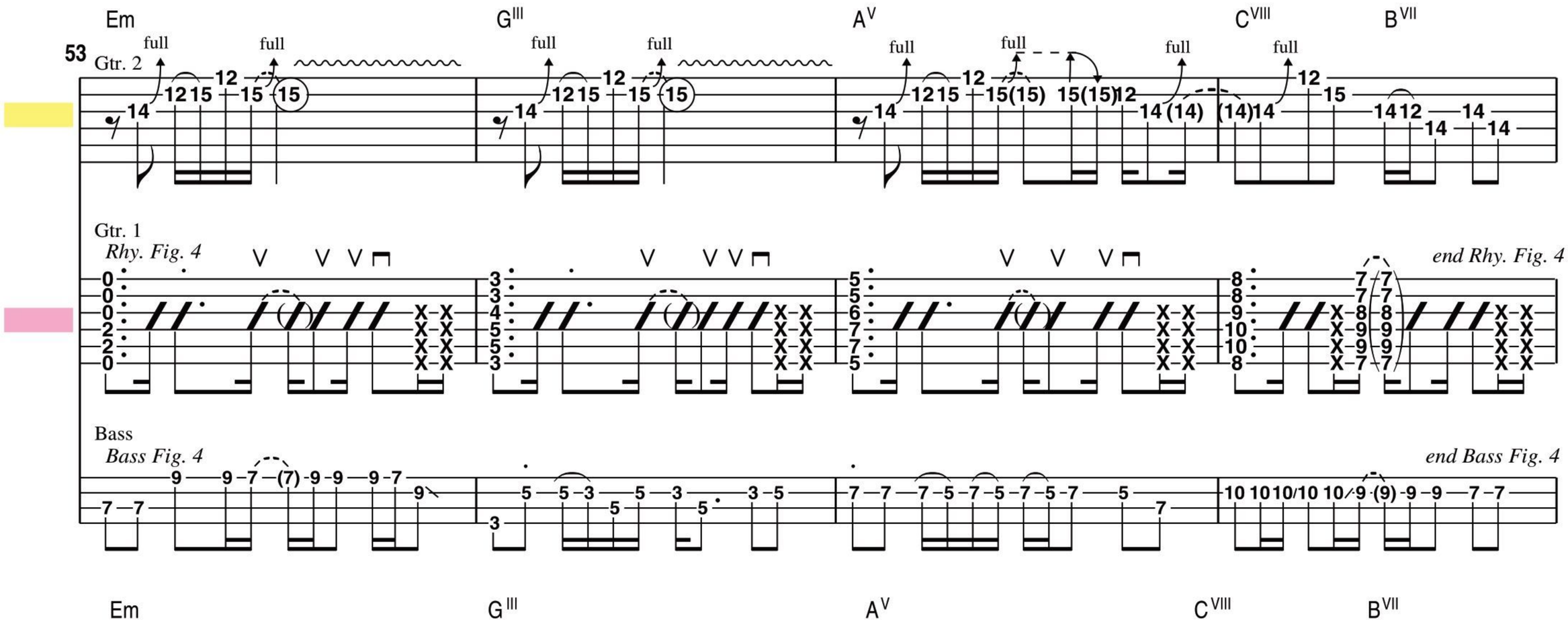
Am C B7 Em G Am C B7

43

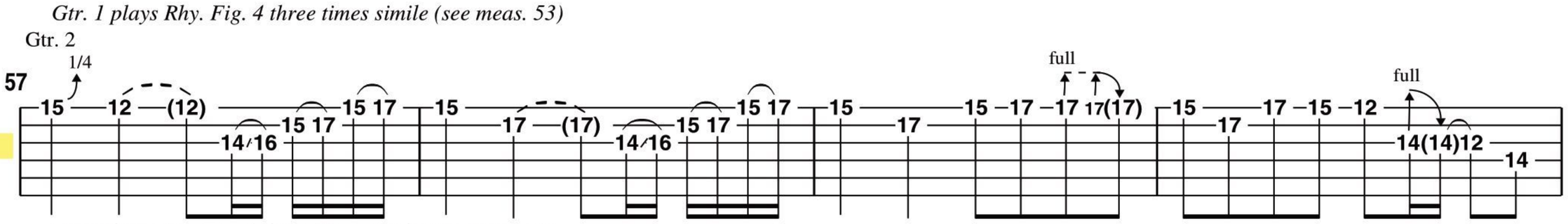




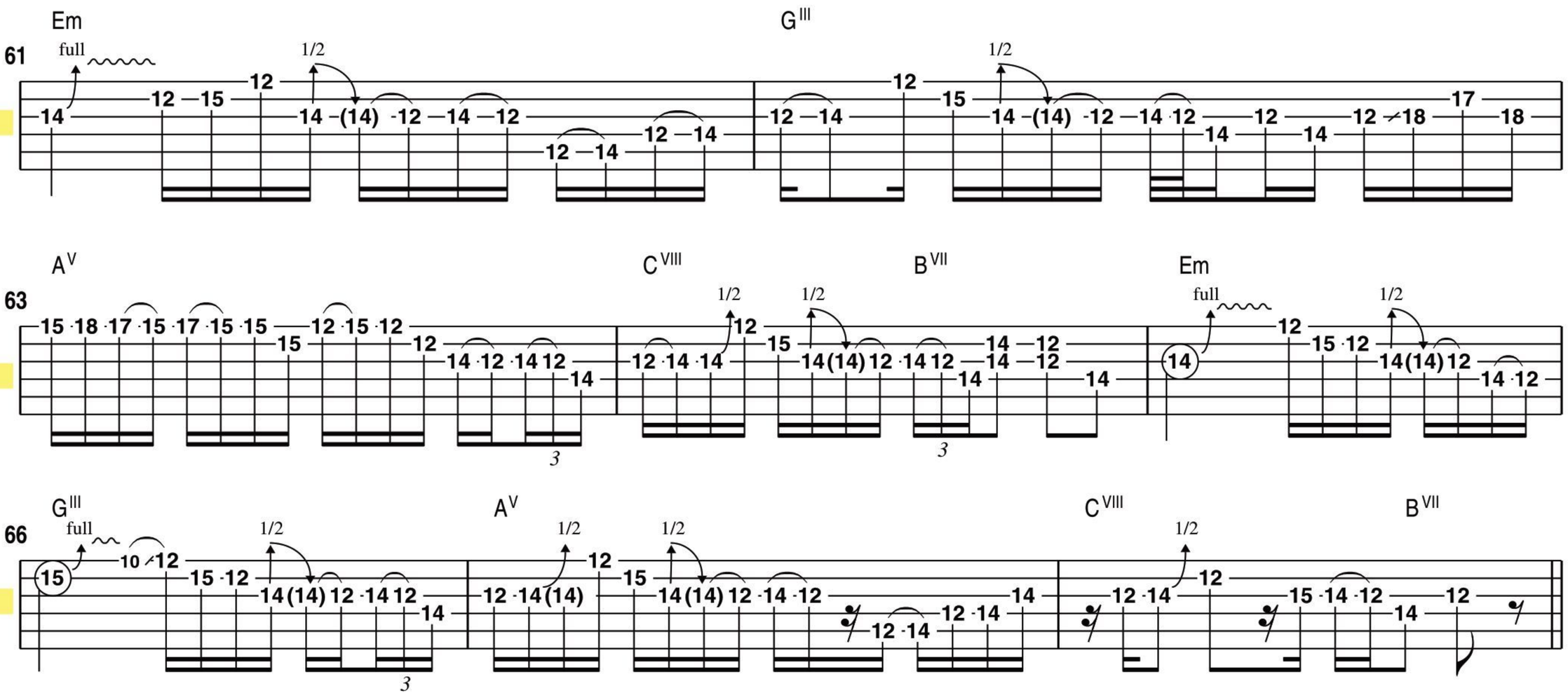
F **Guitar Solo** (2:09)



Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 4 three times simile (see meas. 53)



Bass plays Bass Fig. 4 three times simile (see meas. 53)



G **3rd Verse** (2:40)
World pollution. . .

Em G III A V C VIII B VII Em G III A V

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 4 twice simile

69 full full full

(repeat prev. measure)

Bass plays Bass Fig. 4 twice simile (see meas. 53)

C VIII B VII Em G Am C

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 twice (see meas. 1)

76 full full full

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 twice (see meas. 9)

80 B7 Em G

82 Am C

H **3rd Chorus** (3:12)
I'd love to. . .

B7 Em G Am

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 three times (see meas. 1)

84

Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 three times simile (see meas. 13)

C B7 Em G Am C B7

88

Em G Am C B7 Em

93 Gtr. 2 full

Gtr. 1

slow rake

Bass

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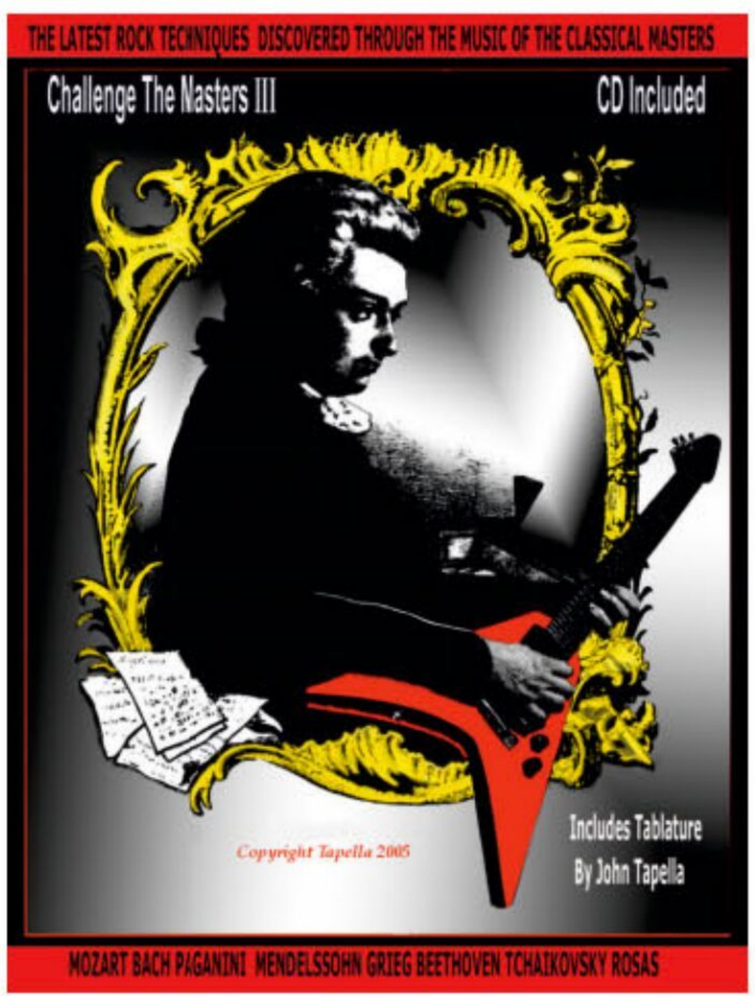

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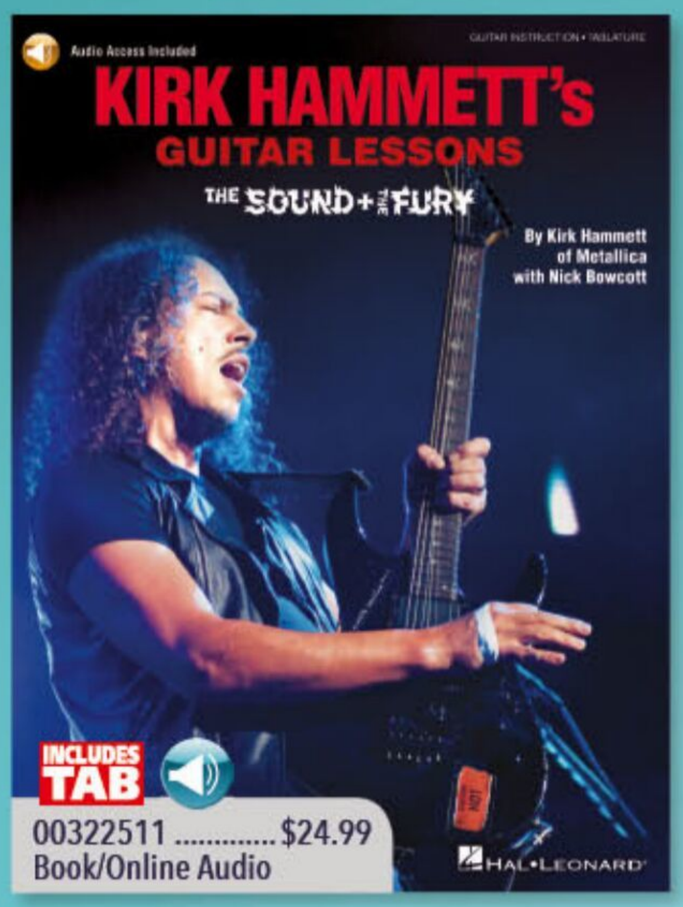

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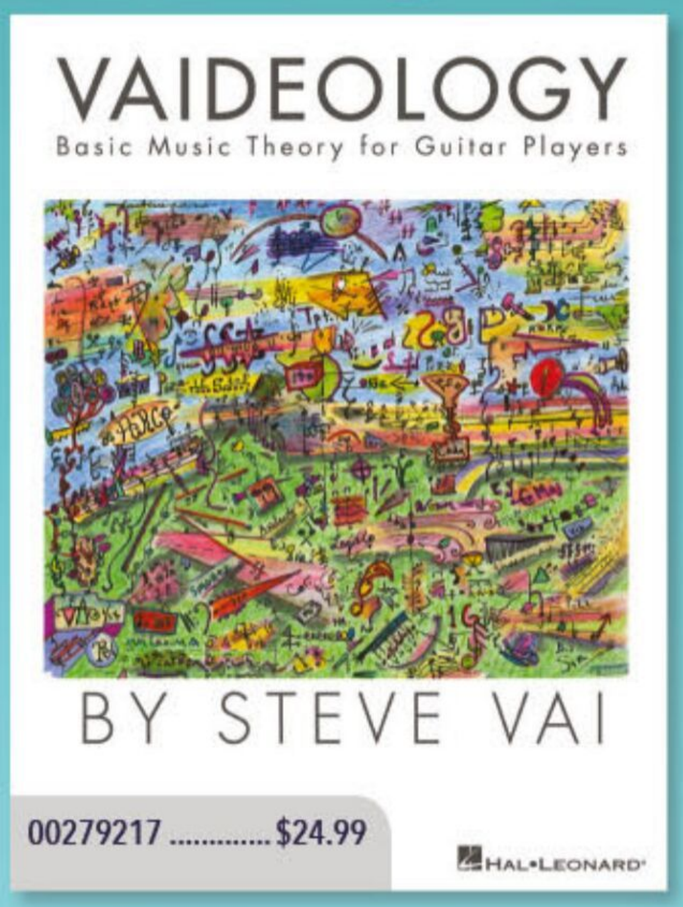

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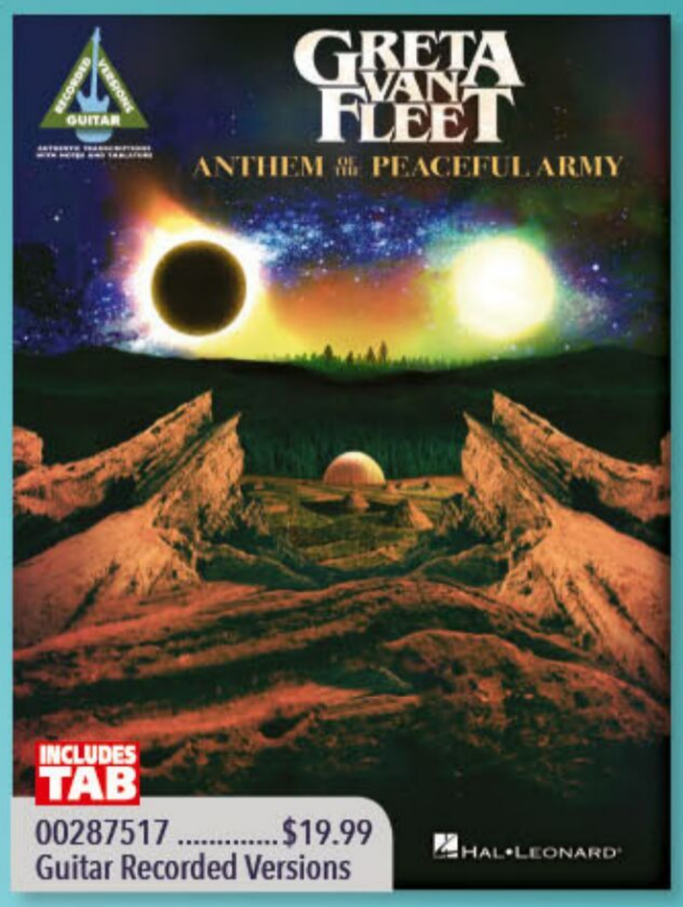

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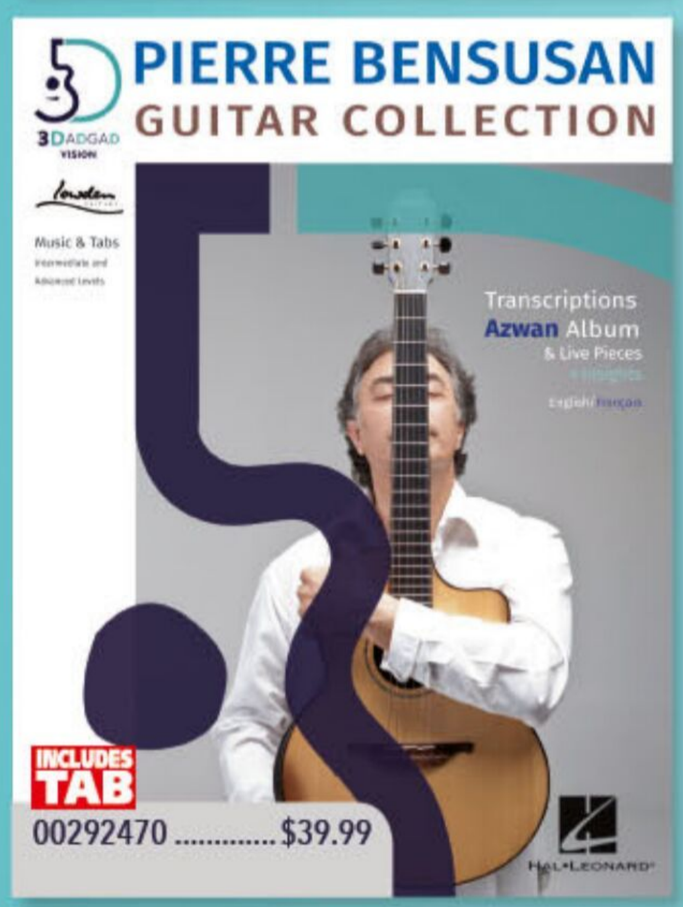

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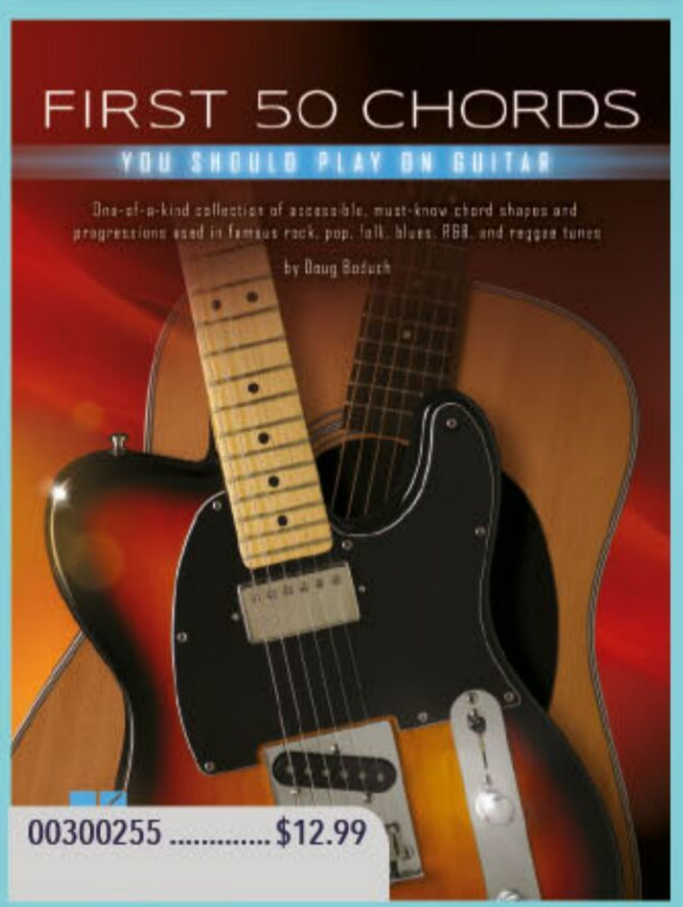

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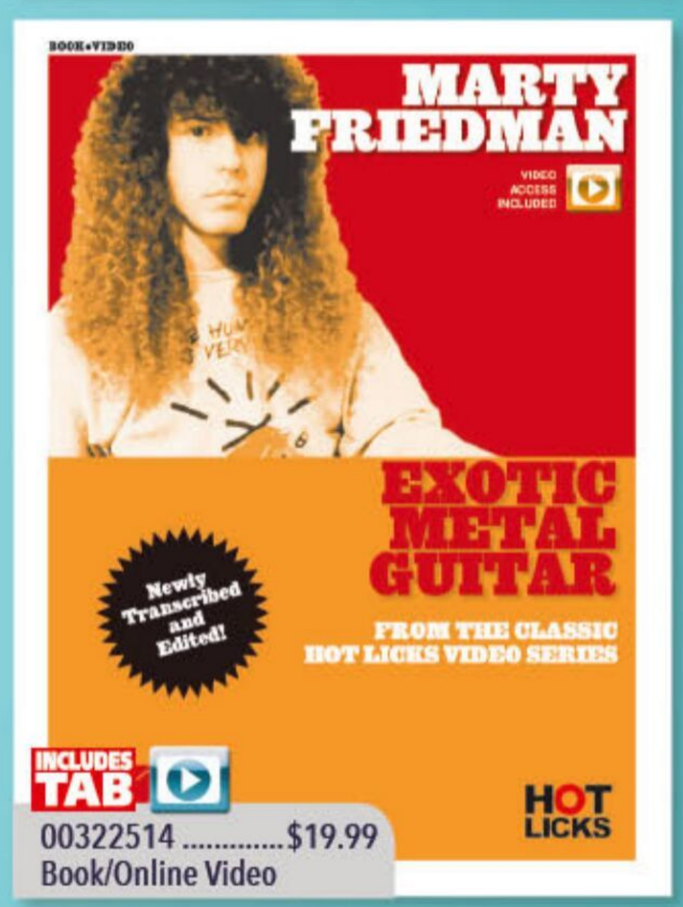

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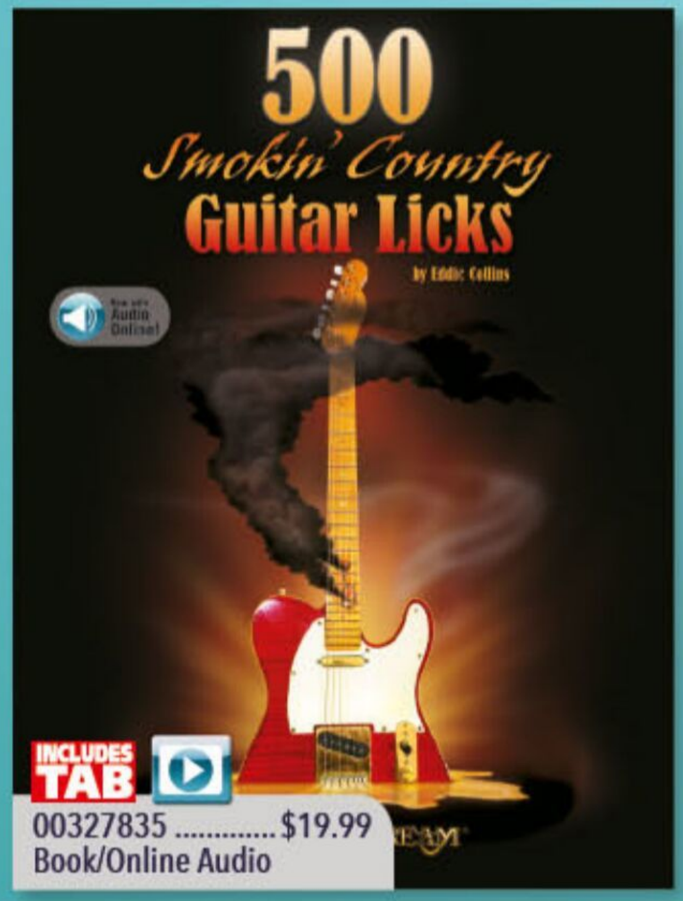

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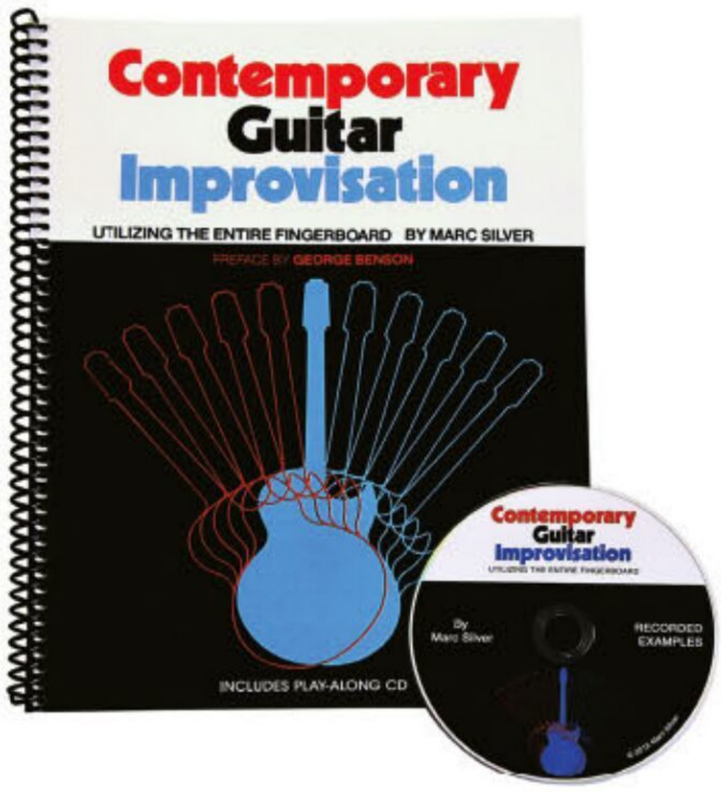

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"TATTOO"

VAN HALEN | *A DIFFERENT KIND OF TRUTH*, 2012 | GUITARIST: EDWARD VAN HALEN | STORY BY CHRIS GILL

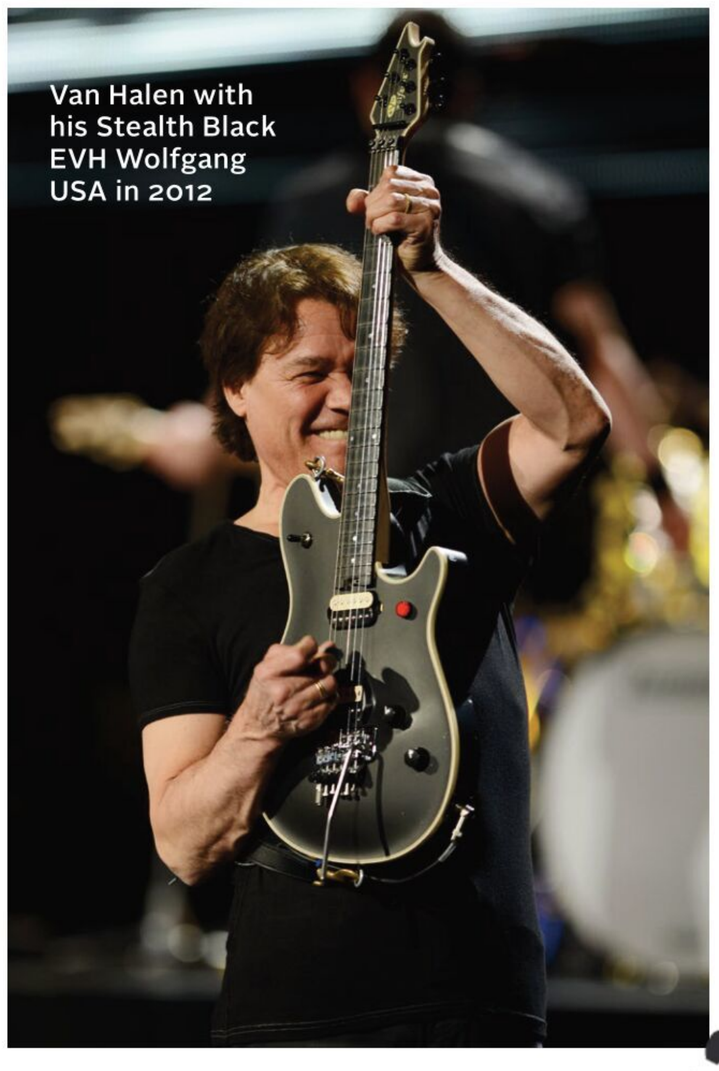
RELEASED IN 2012, Van Halen's *A Different Kind of Truth* was the band's first album since *Van Halen III* in 1998 and first new studio recordings released by the band since the three songs recorded with Sammy Hagar for 2004's *The Best of Both Worlds* greatest hits compilation. Because it was Van Halen's first album with David Lee Roth since *1984*, the band recorded the album with the goal of reproducing the "back to basics" simplicity and energy of its early albums combined with modern sonics to ensure that the album still sounded new and fresh.

"Tattoo," the first single released from the album, accomplished this in several ways. First, the song originated from "Down in Flames" — a previously unreleased original song dating back to Van Halen's mid-Seventies club days. Ed used a very straightforward rig to record the song consisting only of a guitar plugged straight into an amp with no pedals, but instead of using a single half stack like he did on Van Halen's debut album, he employed a pair of 50-watt EVH 5150III heads, each paired with its own EVH 5150III 2x12 cabinet, with one amp miked with a Shure SM57 and panned hard to one side while the other was miked with a Royer 122v ribbon mic and panned hard to the other side.

"All of the guitar tracks on 'Tattoo' were played through the 50-watt head and 2x12 cabinets," Ed recalled in his 2012 *Guitar World* interview about the album, where he also noted that his main guitar for the entire album was an EVH Wolfgang USA with a Stealth Black finish. "It has a slightly different tone than the 100-watt 5150III amps I used for the rest of the album (with 4x12 cabinets). It's pretty whomping. I also used the 50-watt head to record a few solos, like the one on 'Blood and Fire.'"

Ed's tone on the song is mostly dry, which allows it to cut through a relatively dense mix with huge bass and drums, multi-tracked backing vocals and keyboards. However, each of the main rhythm guitar tracks were processed during mixing with very short delays (28ms on one side and 32ms on the other) to thicken the tone and give the tracks a slight perception of distance or air. Engineer Ross Hogarth said he usually boosted the mids for Ed's guitar tracks at 1.5kHz, 3kHz or 5kHz using an API 550B equalizer, depending on Ed's input on how he wanted his guitar to sound. Here it sounds like Hogarth boosted 3kHz, but that may also be attributed to the 50-watt heads' more aggressive mids.

"Tattoo" also differs from most of the other songs on *A Different Kind of Truth* for Ed's use of standard tuning instead of his usual half-step down (E♭) tuning. Ed often used standard tuning for Van Halen's keyboard-oriented songs so he could easily employ open strings and open chords. For the song's conclusion, Ed performed volume-knob swells on his Wolfgang that were processed with the EMT140 plate reverb at 5150 to provide ethereal ambience.



Van Halen with his Stealth Black EVH Wolfgang USA in 2012

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ORIGINAL GEAR

GUITAR: EVH Wolfgang USA (bridge pickup), Volume: 10, Tone: 10

AMP: Two EVH 5150III 50W heads (Blue/Crunch channel, Gain: 10, Low: 8, Mid: 3, High: 5.5, Volume: 6, Master Presence: 6, Master Resonance: 10) each into EVH 5150III 2x12 cabinets with Celestion G12H 30-watt speakers

EFFECTS: (post/mix only) AMS DMX 15-80 28ms delay left, AMS DMX 15-80 32ms delay right, EMT140 plate reverb with API 550A EQ (for 50Hz cut) on ending volume swells

STRINGS/TUNING: DEVH nickel-plated steel .009-.046/standard

PICK: EVH/Dunlop .60mm Max-Grip nylon standard

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