

SPECIAL YEAR-END LEGENDS ISSUE!

GUITAR WORLD

GUITAR & BASS

TRANSCRIPTIONS

DOKKEN

TOOTH AND NAIL

MAROON 5

MEMORIES

AC/DC

BACK IN BLACK

HOME RECORDING
GEAR AND TIPS!

*"To my ears,
economy is
elegant."*

GEORGE LYNCH
JOAN JETT
DR. NICO
SAMANTHA FISH
& MORE!

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

THE EDGE

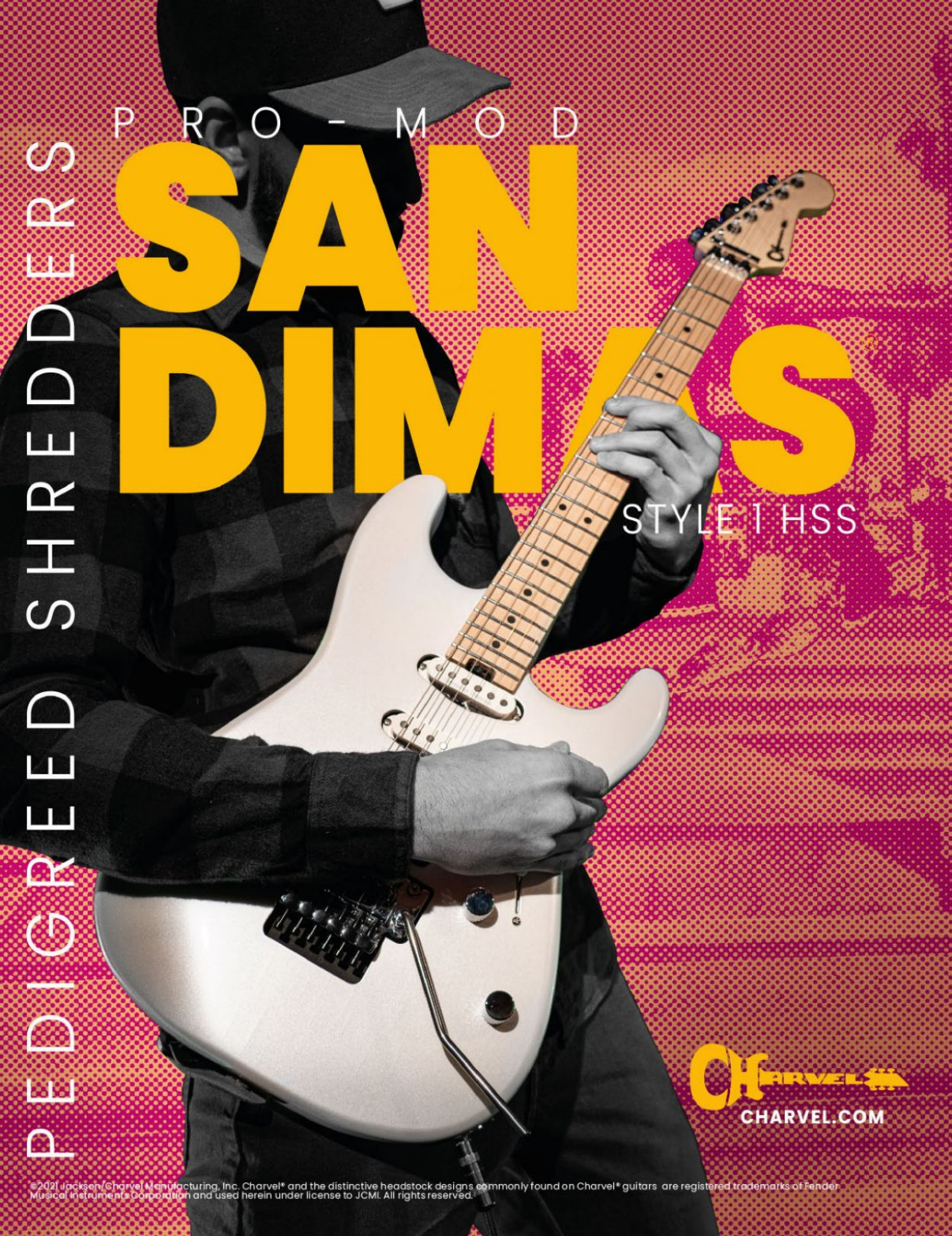
REVISITS **U2**
MILESTONES OCTOBER
& ACHTUNG BABY!
THE TONES. THE TRIALS.
THE DIGITAL DELAY.

THE
LEGENDS
ISSUE

FEATURING

JERRY CANTRELL
TOM MORELLO
POISON IVY
IRON MAIDEN
K.K. DOWNING
CARLOS SANTANA





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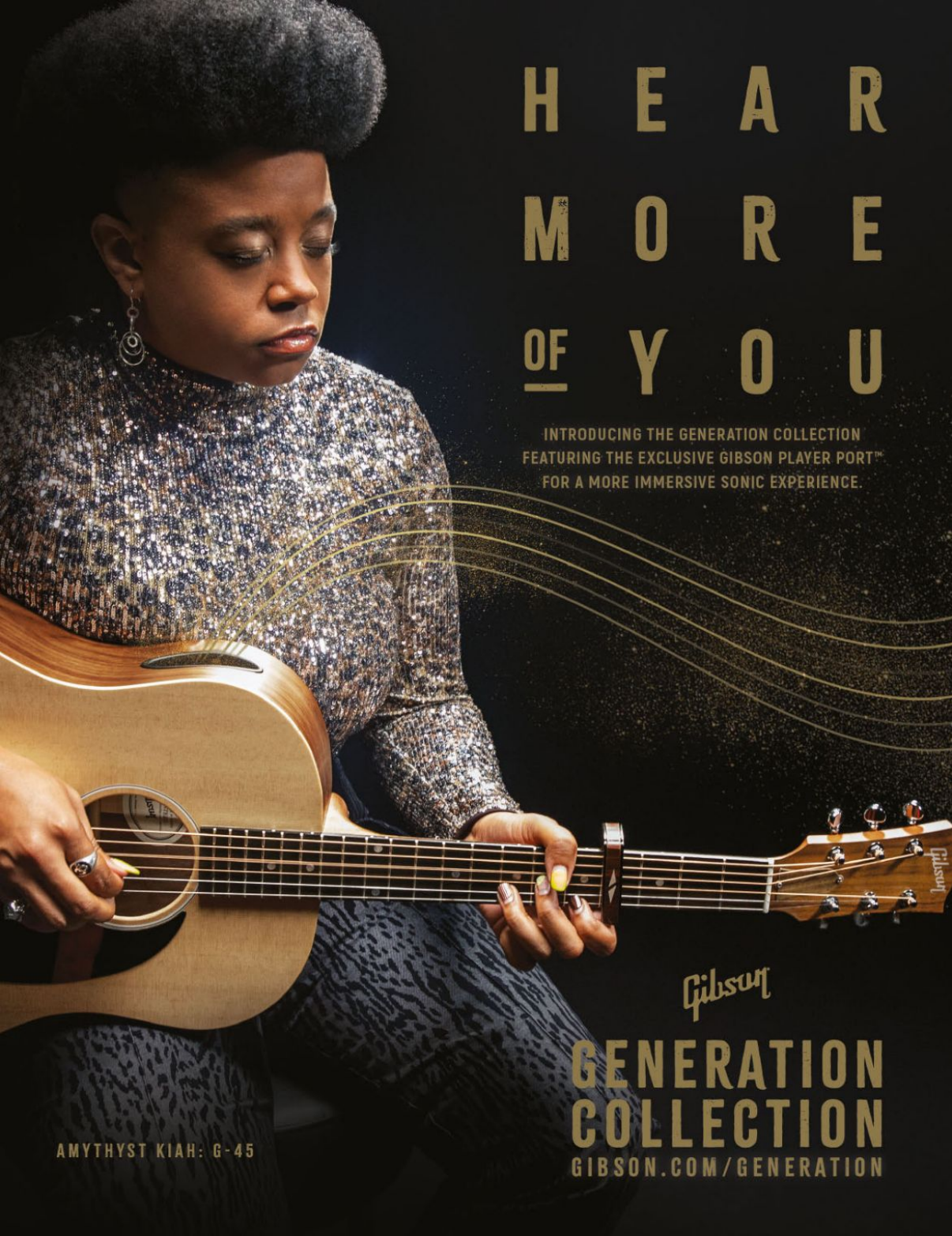
A full-page photograph of Joe Bonamassa in a dimly lit jazz club. He is wearing a black leather jacket, a white t-shirt, dark jeans, and a red and white baseball cap. He is playing a light-colored Epiphone Les Paul Standard electric guitar with a vintage-style case. A Gibson 75th anniversary speaker sits on the floor in front of him. The background features a red tufted chair, a stained glass window, and warm ambient lighting.

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JOE BONAMASSA
"LAZARUS"

1959 LES PAUL STANDARD WITH VINTAGE STYLE CASE



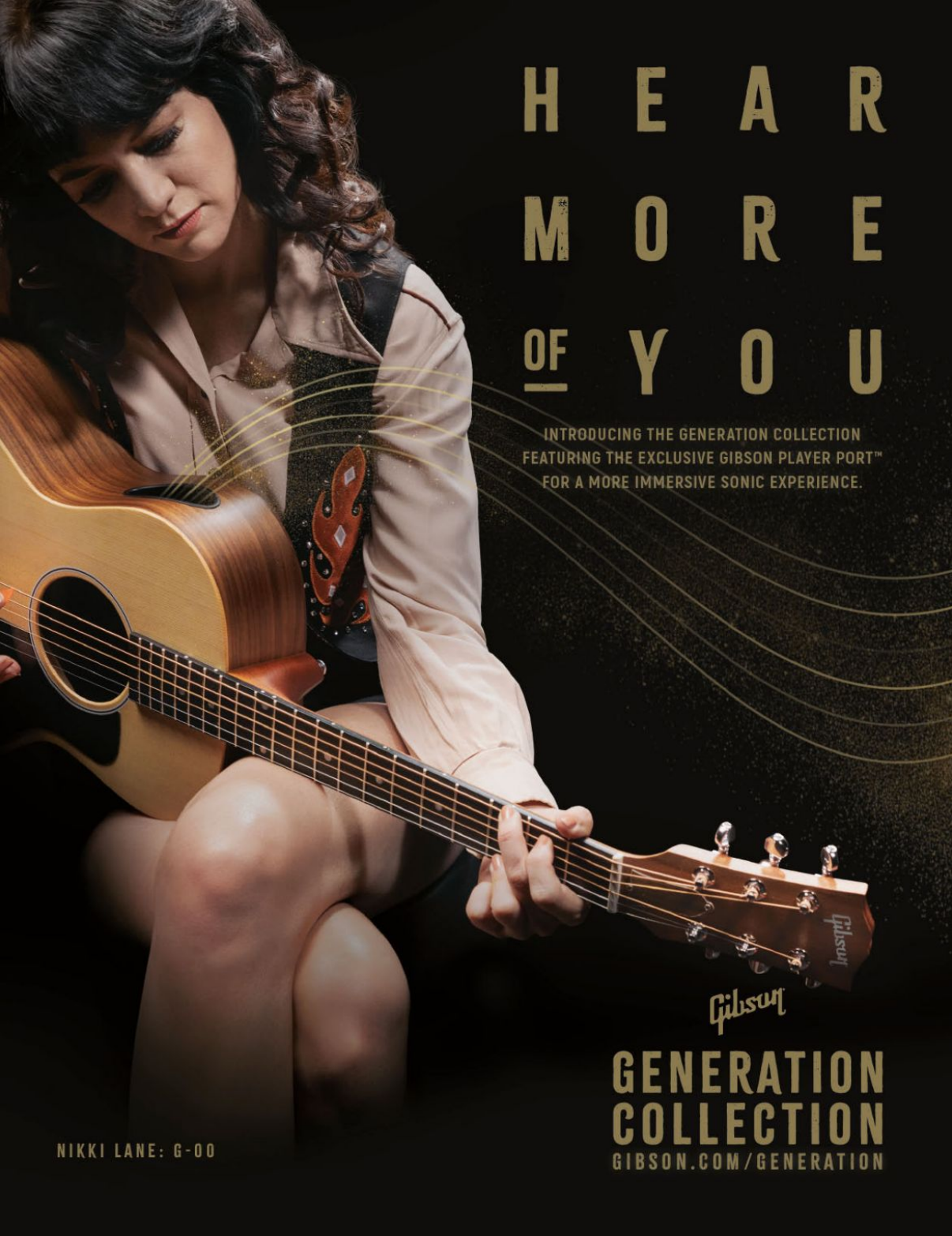
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AMYTHYST KIAH: G-45

A woman with dark, curly hair is seated and playing a light-colored acoustic guitar. She is wearing a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt with a dark vest over it. The guitar has a dark pickguard with a red and black design. The background is dark with some faint, glowing lines. The text 'H E A R' is at the top, 'M O R E' is in the middle, and 'O F Y O U' is at the bottom, all in a gold, serif font. The word 'OF' has a horizontal line under the 'F'.

H E A R M O R E O F Y O U

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NIKKI LANE: G-00



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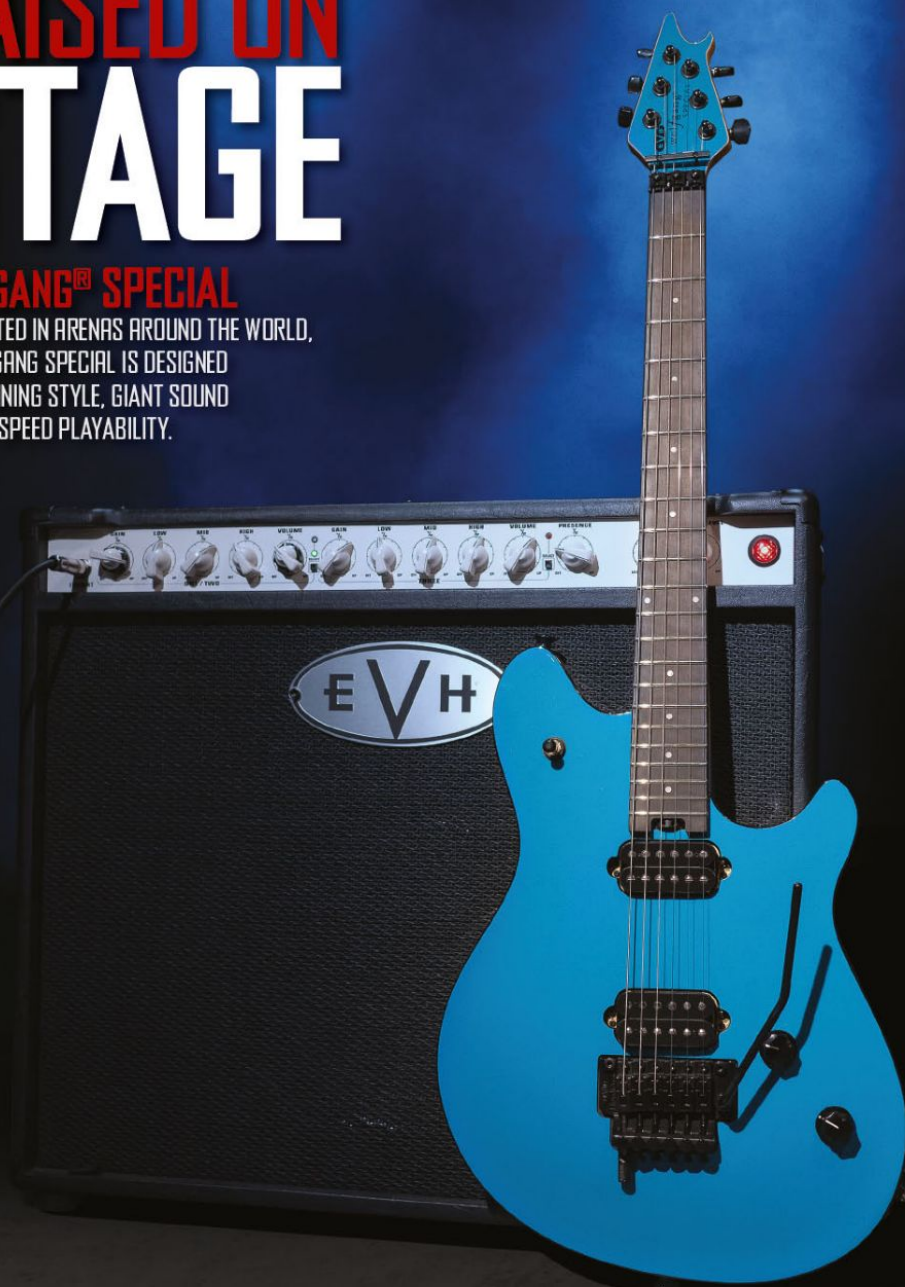
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The Cramps' Poison Ivy with her Gretsch 6120 in Dessel, Belgium, August 14, 1993

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WOODSHED

VOL. 42 | NO. 13 | HOLIDAY 2021

PORTRAIT OF A LEGEND

HELLO AND WELCOME to our jam-packed "Legends" issue — an issue with five different covers (For those of you following along at home, the Edge is on all the newsstand editions and one quarter of subscriber editions, while Jerry Cantrell, Poison Ivy and Tom Morello make up the remaining three quarters of the subscriber editions). Sure, we could've filled this issue with an entirely different collection of "legends" (Where's Eddie? Where's SRV? Where are Jeff, Jimmy, Jimi, Joe and Steve?), but we're proud of this quirky yet incredibly well-rounded batch, a batch that covers metal, pop, weirdo rock 'n' roll, hard rock and more. Anyway, as much as I enjoyed reading everything in this issue, the real treasure for me is Scott Rowley's Poison Ivy feature — a feature based on an interview he conducted ages ago and finally dusted off for inclusion within these pages. And speaking of guitarists who don't get the credit they deserve, let me also point you in the direction of Alan di Perna's Dr. Nico mini-feature in the Tune-Ups section. I admit I didn't know much about the late Dr. Nico before reading this story, but he's since been added to my ever-changing personal playlist. Oh, and Judas Priest fans definitely need to read the K.K. Downing feature. Yeah, let's face it... you might as well read the entire issue! (By the way, this month's Woodshed headline — "Portrait of a Leg End" — is a reference to an album George Harrison was plotting in the late Nineties. The cover art was gonna be a photo of a foot. Get it? Leg end? Foot? Good stuff...)



D. Fanelli

DAMIAN FANELLI
Editor-in-Chief

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Cheech & Chong & George

Thanks for the George Harrison cover [September 2021]. I'll add a Harrison studio performance that I've never seen mentioned anywhere: "Basketball Jones" by Cheech & Chong. Before you laugh, go to YouTube and listen. Yes, that's none other than George Harrison playing that slinky, tone-drenched riff. It sounds like he's playing a Strat through a Leslie — and it sounds incredible. I'm a longtime subscriber (I have every tab magazine going as far back as 1983 — *Guitar for the Practicing Musician* all the way through to *Guitar One*, *Maximum Guitar*, *Guitar World Legends*, *Guitar World Classics*, *Guitar World Acoustic*, *Guitar School* and *GW*), and I owe a debt to every transcriber, because I would never have made it this far in playing ability. Thank you for keeping *GW* alive and kicking with real tabbed songs in every issue!

— Mark Manzano

Morello — one of four covers this month!

Tom Morello has released three albums and a ton of feature work during the pandemic. He warrants a cover and then maybe a feature on how he did it without his engineer present. Then maybe venture into other artists and how they've adapted? COVID got me to sit still and iron out my home office/studio; I was able to record an EP and then collaborate on a bunch of tracks I would have never done otherwise. It made me realize I had all the stuff and capabilities but never took the time to sit down and map it out.

— Anonymous

More Buckethead, please!

The Eddie Van Halen tribute issue [January 2021] was great,

albeit published far too soon. Eddie wasn't the most technically gifted player to ever dial in a sweet overdriven tone, but he was as innovative as any and easily the most influential of his generation. There's something raw and organic about Eddie's playing, but the best word I can think of to describe Eddie Van Halen is "authentic." Then there's Buckethead. This dude doesn't have the celebrity wife (that we know of) or the heavy rotation of videos airing 24/7 on MTV (when videos on MTV was a thing). Still, he's a very underrated player and immensely prolific. If you look beyond the gimmick and the occasional 60 cycle hum you can hear on his recordings, there's some simple brilliance on a Buckethead discography that bends toward infinity. How many albums does he have, anyway? I'd love to see a full feature on the mysterious Buckethead. If not nearly as influential as Eddie, the guy is as authentic as anyone playing today.

— Bob Messinger

Will we see "2112" in 2022?

Aloha, *GW*! I haven't written since COVID. I'm so happy to keep getting a hard copy of *GW* in my mailbox; it reminds me of being a kid, getting excited about what might be in there! "Are they finally going to transcribe 'Xanadu' by Rush?" I wonder. "Some UFO with Schenker? Uli-era Scorpions?"

I enjoyed learning Eric Johnson's "Cliffs of Dover" [September 2021], so thanks; that's a fun challenge. I really appreciated the fingering! Details like that make your transcriptions superior! Sometimes you need to forget your pinky up at the top of the neck. That was such a valuable lesson for me, even though I've been playing for 39 years. When you put out your last "Eruption" transcription [February 2021], that was another great *GW*

moment, because it was meticulously transcribed with right- and left-hand fingering. *GW* also taught me about Billy Strings, who I am going to see soon! Thanks for the tip!

In conclusion, I would like to request Rush 2112 or *Hemispheres* transcriptions. Why not go big? I still think a funk lesson with many inversions would be a lot of fun as well. Thank you, *GW*. May you keep on publishing great new issues with eclectic song choices that inspire and instruct.

— Dave Pousho

Guitar tone, not skin tone

I have to say good job to the writers/editors for the Meet Me @ the Altar article [April 2021]. It's the first of its kind to not mention skin color. People don't want skin color to matter and say it shouldn't be a factor, but it always seems to get brought up like it does matter. Pointing out skin color is how divisions are perpetuated. Good job helping an artist make it by talent, not level of tan.

— Jerry Freese

Ode to Danny Kirwan

Thank you to Peter Green (RIP) for recognizing the wonderful talent of an 18-year-old Danny Kirwan — and to writer Richard Barrett and the *Guitar World* editors for remembering his contributions to the great blues giants, the pre-Buckingham/Nicks Fleetwood Mac [lesson feature, September 2021]. Once again, you've shown why *GW* is the best of the many guitar magazines offered.

Danny Kirwan was my favorite member of that band; with his many personal challenges, [his playing] was instantly identifiable when we dropped the stylus on the most memorable of FM's most creative compositions. I encourage all young blues enthusiasts to seek him out and listen to

his excellent sense of melody and emotion. We will remember his sad ending on the streets of London, but it's more worthwhile by far to revisit his contributions to the best music our generation has to offer.

— Bill Keenom, co-author,
Michael Bloomfield:
If You Love These Blues

About that Ernest Ranglin feature...

Thanks for including the feature on the often-overlooked influential Jamaican guitarist Ernest Ranglin [July 2021]. There is an incidental yet significant historical anomaly in the story when Ranglin refers (on page 59) to "a young singer from Trinidad by the name of Jackie Opel." Although Opel migrated to Jamaica from Trinidad around 1962, he was actually from Barbados. As his nationality is regularly misattributed in articles and records — with many also mistakenly believing he's from Jamaica — I thought I should help to set the record straight. I co-supervised a 2016 PhD thesis on Jackie Opel (who died in 1970), hence my interest in Ranglin's reference to the singer. The thesis was written by Elizabeth Watson at the University of the West Indies (Cave Hill Campus, Barbados).

— Dr. Mike Alleyne, Professor,
Popular Music Studies & Music
Business, Middle Tennessee
State University

A request for "Feels So Good"

I was just going through my dad's albums and came across a real gem: Chuck Mangione's *Feels So Good*. The playing on that album is fantastic, and Grant Geissman's guitar solo on the title track is so lyrical and challenging. So how about it? Would you consider transcribing "Feels So Good"?

— diamonddb68

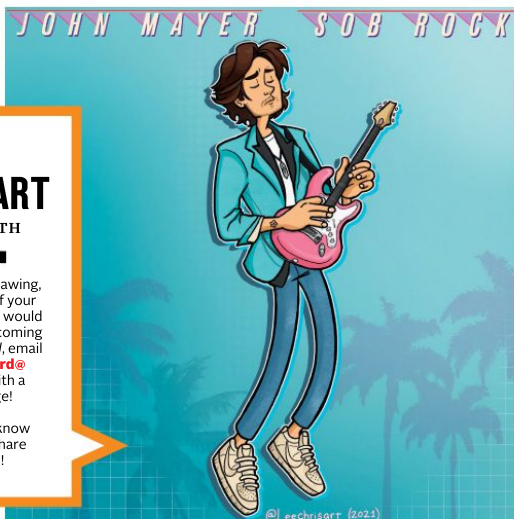
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READER ART OF THE MONTH

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

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



JOHN MAYER BY LEA CHRISTINE



SULLIVAN MARSTERS (GHOST OF THE ROBOT) BY SERENA TILTON

DEFENDERS of the Faith



Dan Buckley

AGE: 69
HOMETOWN: Coldwater, Ontario, Canada
GUITARS: Left-handed Hagstrom Swede through a Vox AC15 and Marshall Bluesbreaker pedal
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: "Story of the Blues," "Further on Up the Road" and various blues songs
GEAR I WANT MOST: Gibson ES-339 and any Marshall tube amp



David S. Thomson

AGE: 64
HOMETOWN: San Diego, CA
GUITARS: '58 Strat, five more Strats, '68 Gibson SG Jr., Gretsch Double-Jet w/Bigsby, Epiphone Korina Flying V
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Snake Oil Burlesque originals, the Groundhogs "3744 James Road," Jeff Beck Group "Situation," James Gang "Standing in the Rain"
GEAR I WANT MOST: '64 Gibson Trini Lopez



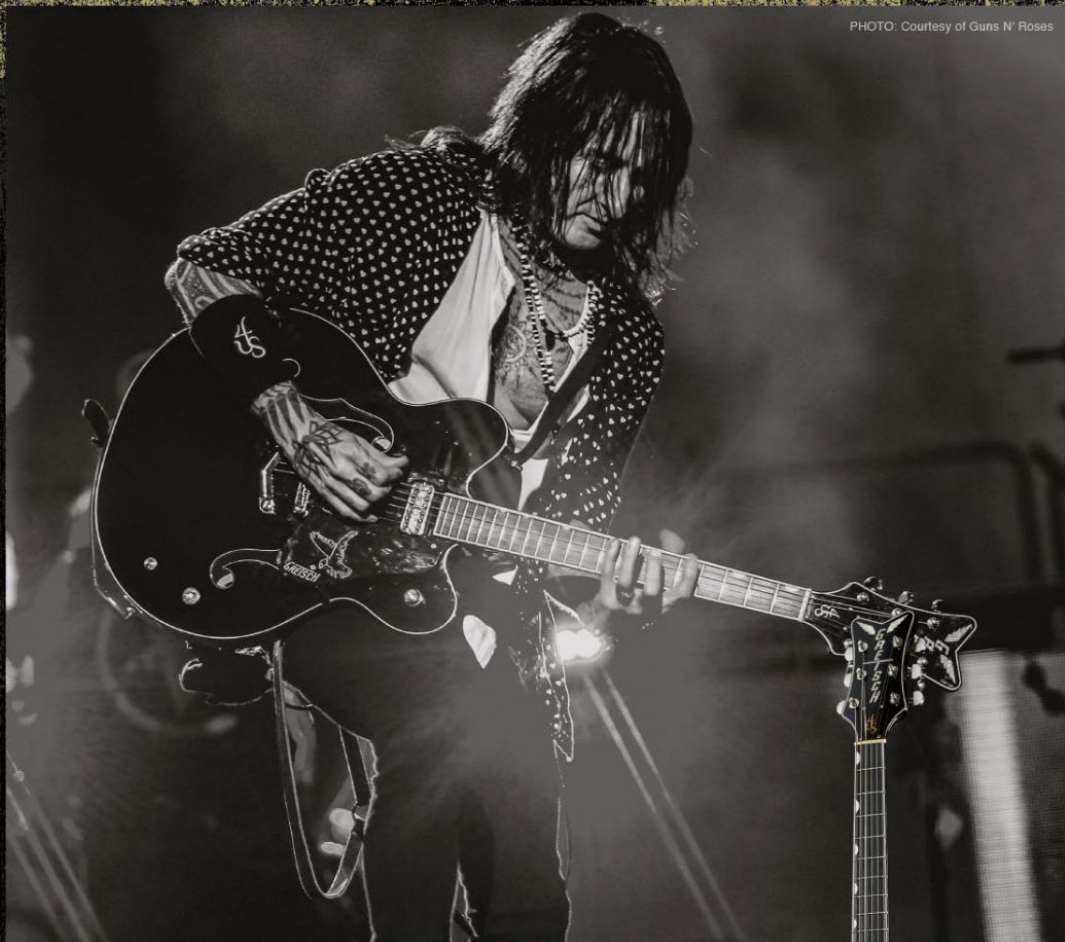
Patrick V. Hernandez

AGE: 32
HOMETOWN: Raleigh, NC
GUITARS: PRS SE Custom 24, PRS SE Custom 24 seven-string with Sentient/Nazgul pickups
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Angel Vivaldi "A Mercurian Summer" and "Serotonin," Sakata "My Grandfather's Clock," John Petrucci "The Happy Song (Cloud Ten)"
GEAR I WANT MOST: PRS SE Mark Holcomb SVN signature seven-string



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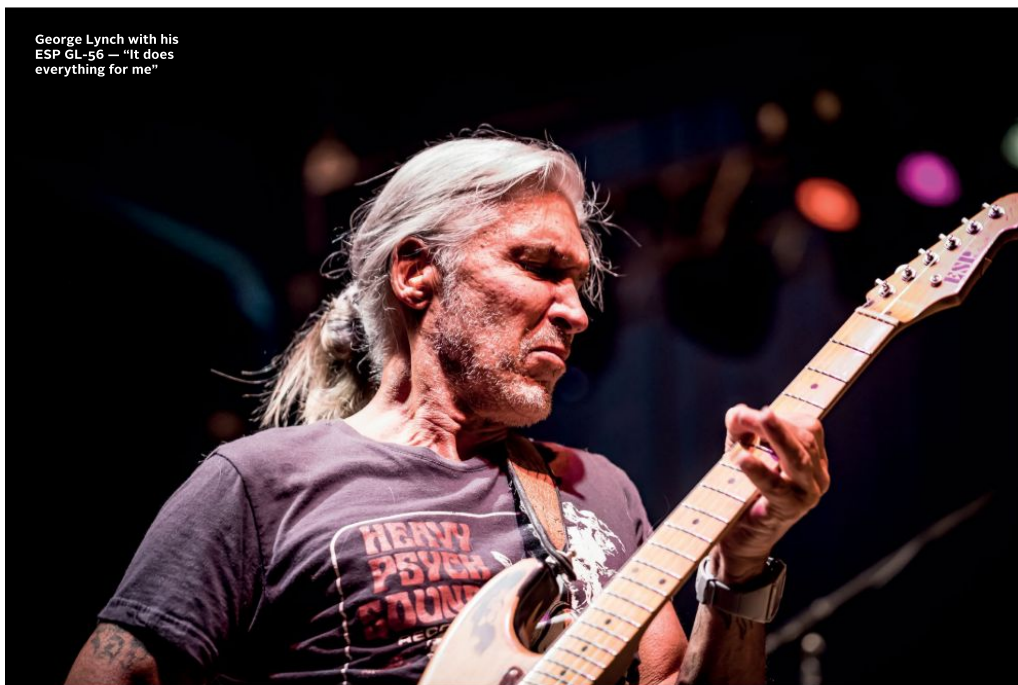
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George Lynch with his
ESP GL-56 — "It does
everything for me"



Talk About Overdue

DOKKEN AND LYNCH MOB TRAILBLAZER GEORGE LYNCH DISCUSSES *SEAMLESS*, HIS FIRST-EVER, FULL-ON INSTRUMENTAL ALBUM

By Amit Sharma

BELIEVE IT OR not, George Lynch's new album, *Seamless*, is his first-ever solo instrumental effort — even though it feels like the sort of thing he would have done a long, long time ago. His 1993 solo debut, *Sacred Groove*, had its instrumental offerings (as well as tracks with guest singers, including Glenn Hughes) and then in 2010 he released *Orchestral Mayhem*, on which he covered a number of classical masterpieces in his own inimitable style. So, technically speaking, an album of

original instrumentals has been a long time coming by now...

There are some really interesting fuzz tones on this record. What are you using?

The one I like the most is the Astrotone, made by Sam Ash Music in the Sixties. The most famous guy to use them was Leslie West. When you see that coiled cable coming out of his Les Paul Junior in old footage, that's going down to an Astro. I talked to him directly about this but didn't get a

clear answer; there was talk of him using two of those pedals in tandem. The Fuzz Face is the iconic one, and they're wildly inconsistent. Both the germanium and silicon versions can sound great if you get a good one. In germanium's case, they can be great or horrid, depending on humidity and temperature. There are minerals in the transistors that are affected by the weather.

Do you ever find that fuzz slows you down or gets hard to control? →

"Joe [Satriani] makes his guitar talk so great, letting his blues talk the verse and then going to the big hook for the chorus. I tried to do a bit of that"

You can get fast using fuzz if you use it in the right way. Look at Eric Johnson; his main tone is a Fuzz Face! It all comes down to how you set them up. I really like the AnalogMan stuff; they use the old stock chips and make a variety of different stuff. It makes you play stoner music, and I'm a stoner at heart. I probably love that stuff because I'm dumb. [Laughs] I grew up with Sabbath. They were my first heavy band — I had the poster on my wall. Plus, I'm a desert guy and lived out there around Joshua Tree for a while. I loved it! You can be clever and use fuzz like Josh Homme, who does simple stuff in very smart ways.

It often sounds like he's fighting his guitars at points.

Yeah! And I've gotten to the point in my career where I don't want my gear making it easy for me. I want to reach for it a bit more. Maybe it's a "getting older" thing. I've played other people's rigs with loads of processing and gain, super low action, tuned down with .08's or whatever, and I just don't like that kind of thing anymore. I used to, but now I feel like the easy stuff makes everyone sound the same. I prefer playing more like Jeff Beck — that guy can just talk with his guitar. I want to get closer to that more and more these days. I like the challenge, dynamics and purity of going straight into a Plexi or Tweed.

"Supersonic Hypnotic Groove Thing" reminds us of Joe Satriani in more ways than one.

I guess I emulated him in how I approached the arrangements — essentially replacing the vocals with guitar. Joe makes his guitar talk so great, letting his blues talk the verse and then going to the big hook for the chorus. I tried to do a bit of that on a few points over the album.

I saw you'd recently got a 1960 Black Beauty that was played on Prince and Rolling Stones albums. Tell us about that. I got that 1960 Custom from G.E. Smith. He's a session cat that ended up playing on



a lot of albums. It's the most worn-in and comfortable old-shoe kind of guitar. You open up the case and it's like, "Oh my god!" There's 70 years of history right there. I'm phasing it out a little bit because it was a new acquisition, so I got excited about it and now I'm mixing it up again more. My main guitar is still my ESP GL-56 Strat because it does *everything* for me. There's the single-coils, the PAF, all the switching capabilities plus a wonderful neck.

Is there anything else we're hearing on the album, guitar-wise?

Yeah, I have an ESP Les Paul that the Japanese Custom Shop made me in the Eighties. They had a real 1958 Gibson that they loaned me for an instructional video called *The Guitar Bible*. And, of course, they didn't let me keep it. [Laughs] But they promised to make me an exact replica — from the same tonewoods to even the same glue. And they did! So that's what I've used as my main studio Les Paul ever since. It does that chunky thing really well, so that's in the mix as well.

Earlier this year you brought out your own Lynch Mod to add an extra gain stage to higher-gain Marshalls. What have you learned about modding over the years?

Those came out pretty cool. They can get you into high-gain territory with no problem; you can dial in as much as you want. A JCM800 is already pretty high gain, and I tend to prefer the really early vertical-input 50W ones. But when you plug the Lynch Mod, it doesn't take anything away like a Tube Screamer does, which is more of a give-and-take thing. You give up some low-end and smoothness and dynamics for this awesome sustain and singing gain that's harmonically wonderful. With the Lynch Mod, you're not giving up *anything*. It just adds to what you have, and only when you want it to. You can use a little, completely bypass it or go totally nuts. There are no square waves in there!



WHAT'S ON MY PLAYLIST



JEFF SCHROEDL

ALTERED FIVE BLUES BAND

1

"I Smell a Rat"
Buddy Guy

Raw, ferocious blues. A blistering track recorded in 1979. The tension and pure emotion are palpable. An added bonus is Buddy's brother Phil on rhythm guitar with a hip, flanged tone.

2

"Pack It Up"
Freddie King

The Burglar is on my short list of desert island blues records, and this is the opening track. Where do I start? The voice, guitar tone and groove are dripping with vibe.

3

"Bad Love"
Luther Allison

I'm a sucker for a good slow blues, and this one is performed with conviction. The intro hits you right in the gut. It's from the album fittingly titled *Soul Fixin' Man*.

4

"Blue Bash"
Kenny Burrell

Jazz organ-guitar combos get me every time, whether it's Grant Green, Pat Martino, Wes or others. Kenny's solo on this cut is a swinging, funky masterpiece.

5

"If That Ain't a Reason"
Joanne Shaw Taylor

I try to keep up with all the latest releases, and this is one of my favorites. Joanne's voice is as smoky as mezzal on the rocks. Great cover of the old Little Milton tune.

6

"Baptise Me"
Robert Randolph & The Family Band

The lyrics and groove are soaking with soul. Great blend of gospel, blues and funk with first-class production by Dave Cobb. I caught their show in Milwaukee at Summerfest. Excellent band!

ALTERED FIVE BLUES BAND'S NEW ALBUM, *HOLLER IF YOU HEAR ME*, IS OUT NOW VIA BLIND PIG RECORDS.



"For me, teaching is a practice in selfless activity," says Robben Ford, who recently launched robbenfordguitardojo.com

Robben Ford

ON HIS NEW ALBUM, THE RESPECTED BLUES-ROCK-JAZZ ACE DITCHES THE VOCALS IN FAVOR OF, WELL, MORE GUITARS, OF COURSE!

By Richard Bienstock

IN A MORE-than-50-year career, Robben Ford has played with everyone from Joni Mitchell and Miles Davis to George Harrison, Bob Dylan and Kiss. He's also released more than a dozen solo albums that highlight his mastery of blues, rock and jazz.

And yet, even for an artist who has seemingly done it all on guitar, he calls his newest effort, *Pure*, unlike anything he's recorded previously. "When I started writing this record, I was really trying to do something different," Ford says. What he wound up creating was something that captured a "pure" approach to music," he continues. "It was all about allowing the music to go in any direction it wanted to go."

Indeed, the songs on *Pure* run the gamut from the "straight-up blues shuffle" of "White Rock Beer... 8 cents," to the horn-assisted smooth funk of "Go," the dark fusion of "A Dragon's Tail" to the liquid chording of "Balafon," and the "slow blues

improvisation" of "Blues for Lonnie Johnson" to the expansive and harmonically rich title track. What's more, it's all fully instrumental, a path Ford hasn't followed since 1997's *Tiger Walk*. He decided to ditch the vocals, he says, "because I'm seri-

AXOLOGY

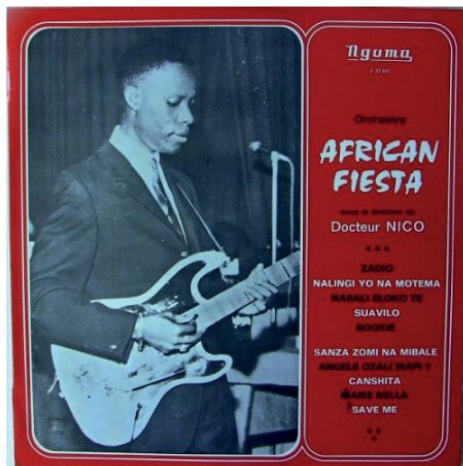
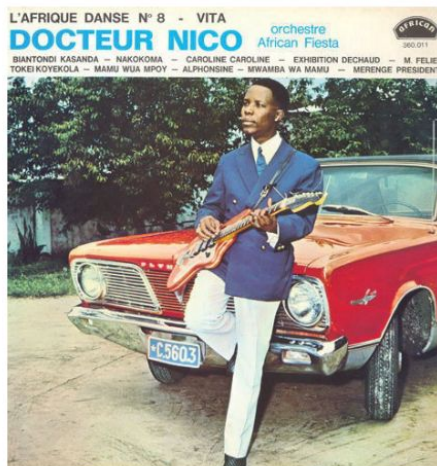
- **GUITARS** 1954 Gibson Les Paul (converted to 1959 specs), 1964 Gibson SG, 1952 Fender Telecaster, 1960 Fender Telecaster, Epiphone Riviera, two modified PRS McCarty models, Gibson B-25 acoustic
- **AMPS** Dumble Overdrive Special, Little Walter King Arthur, Little Walter 50-watt
- **EFFECTS** "I used the [Hermida Audio] Zendrive for overdrive, or the overdrive in the Dumble amp. Otherwise we used studio effects for all delays, chorusing, etc."

"Doing an instrumental record felt like a way to just play a lot more music. I could just be a guitarist, as opposed to a singer-songwriter-slash-guitarist"

ous about lyric writing, and it's demanding. You spend a lot of time writing and revising. So doing an instrumental record felt like a way to just play a lot more music. I could just be a guitarist, as opposed to a singer-songwriter-slash-guitarist."

When it comes to being a guitarist, Ford not only plays — he also teaches. He recently launched the Robben Ford Guitar Dojo website, which he says will encompass lessons, interviews, live performances, a gear page and more. "For me, teaching is a practice in selfless activity," he says. "I find that there's a tremendous joy in opening up and saying, 'Okay, here's what I've learned. This is what my experience has been.'"

As for where he'll head after the experience of creating *Pure*? "It's impossible to predict, because I've never made two records that are the same," Ford says. "Musically there's always something else that I'm moving toward, and then I move on, quickly."



Africa's Guitar God

AROUND THE SAME TIME ALL THAT "CLAPTON IS GOD" GRAFFITI WAS TURNING UP ON LONDON WALLS, AFRICANS WERE CALLING DR. NICO THE GUITAR GOD

By Alan di Perna

▶ WHEN JIMI HENDRIX passed through Paris on one of his tours, a guitarist he was keen to meet was Nicolas Kasanda wa Mikalay — the Congolese finger-picking electric guitar master more widely known as Dr. Nico, or to many across mid-20th century Africa, *L'Eternel Docteur Nico*. At around the same time that "Clapton is God" graffiti was appearing on London walls, Africans were calling Dr. Nico the Guitar God.

With good reason. If cascades of gorgeous-to-gritty tone, an effortless flow of sparkling, playful melody, harmonization and dazzling polyrhythmic syncopations make up your idea of six-string divinity, Dr. Nico surely belongs in your pantheon. He came along at an ideal moment in musical history and African history. In the late 1950s and early Sixties, the electric guitar had reached a golden age in its evolution as a musical instrument. As a result, the world went mad for electric guitars. In Africa, Dr. Nico was one of the key players who established a prominent place for the electric guitar in the popular music of the continent. In 1960, his native country — what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo — won its freedom from Belgian colonial rule. The people were ready to celebrate their liberation.

Dr. Nico helped forge the soundtrack for that party, initially as a guitarist for Le

Grand Kalle et l'African Jazz, called the first great Congolese band. He was only 14 when he first joined Kalle in 1953, and played lead guitar on the group's iconic 1960 single, "Independence Cha Cha." Often credited as the first pan-African hit record, the song helped popularize Congolese rumba — a style of dance music adapted from Cuban *son* and other Latin musical idioms.

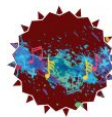
One thing that distinguished Congolese rumba from its Latin-Caribbean counterparts is that electric guitars took on some of the musical roles played by horns, woodwinds, pianos and other instruments in Cuban music. You can draw a parallel to Charlie Christian's work with Benny Goodman in the late Thirties and early Forties — using the then-new tonalities of the electric guitar to play solos and other parts more traditionally played by saxes, trumpets and the like. What Charlie Christian is to American jazz guitar, Dr. Nico is to Africa's vibrant guitar legacy — an originator and innovator.

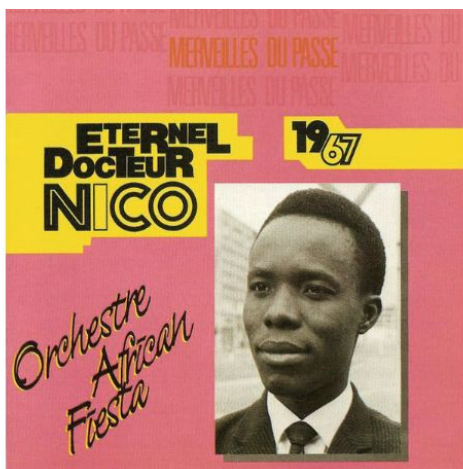
He played a major role in the creation of the unique, three-guitar style heard in Congolese rumba and subsequent genres such as soukous. Whereas rock, country and other American styles typically have two guitars — lead and rhythm — African dance music also adds a third guitar, playing what's known as *mi-solo*, or "half solo." While the rhythm

OVERLOOKED, UNDERRATED,
SIDELINED AND DOWNPLAYED SIX-
TIES GUITAR HEROES

guitar takes care of chording and comping, the *mi-solo* guitar often plays syncopated ostinatos known as *guaejeos*, which are based around the song's harmonic progression. *Guaejeos* are heard throughout Latin and Afro-Caribbean popular music. In salsa, to cite a familiar example, *guaejeos* are typically played in octaves by a pianist. But in Congolese pop, the role often falls to the electric *mi-solo* guitar.

Which leaves the lead guitar free to dance atop the swirling rhythmic maze created by the two other guitars, along with percussion, horns and other instruments. And this top line is where Dr. Nico's mastery shines through. The fecundity of his melodic imagination seems limitless at times — non-stop flurries of fluid arpeggios, double-stop harmonizations, rhythmic punctuations accentuating the plaintive, three-part male vocal harmonies of Congolese rumba, and taking center stage when the time for a solo rolls around. Which is a frequent occurrence in this style of music. As with all dance music, it's about generating and maintaining momentum — building up, breaking down, drawing dancers and listeners deeper and deeper





into the groove.

Actually, Dr. Nico is one of two great Congolese guitar originators. The other is Franco Luambo Makiadi, leader of the group TPOK Jazz. Both were boldly innovative and much-imitated stylists — the Hendrix and Clapton of their time and place. But where Franco was a bit more geared toward using the electric guitar to emulate traditional African instruments, Dr. Nico dove head-first into the fuzzy, tremoloed-out, mid-century modernism of the electric guitar.

There's a well known photo of Dr. Nico stylishly dressed in a blue blazer and tie, white shirt and trousers, leaning on the front grille of bright red 1965 Plymouth Barracuda and holding a Egmond Typhoon electric guitar — a cheap Dutch import — in a matching shade of red. Other photos show him with a blond German archtop and a white Hofner solidbody. None of these are great guitars, obviously, but Dr. Nico embraced their lo-fi tonalities to create a wild and beguiling range of guitar timbres. He's known for introducing things like tremolo and reverb into African guitar music. There's a kind of grainy, rough-edged poetry to the sound — a throbbing, murky miasma — that both complements and contrasts with *L'Eternel Docteur's* supple execution. A good example would be a track like “Toye na sango” by L'African Fiesta, a group he formed in 1963 after leaving Le Grand Kalle. With the gnarly harmonic overtones produced by cheap gear, Nico's guitar sometimes sounds like a steel drum or marimba. At the other end of the spectrum, he could bring the glistening glissandos of Hawaiian and country music

Dr. Nico was one of the key players who established a prominent place for the electric guitar in the popular music of the continent

to a ballad like “Pauline,” also by L'African Fiesta. He was truly international in scope.

Which was somewhat the point. Congolese rumba became the music of the rising middle class in the newly liberated African nation that had changed its name from the Belgian Congo to the Republic of Congo in 1960 — a country now taking its place on the international stage. The photo of Dr. Nico with the big American muscle car, snazzy suit and red guitar sums up the aspirational mood of that milieu. (Note, incidentally, that the color scheme is red, white and blue.) In the middle years of the 20th century, Latin music and dance crazes had become popular worldwide. Artists like the Cuban pianist Perez Prado were topping the charts in America, the UK and elsewhere. Dr. Nico had visited Cuba in the Fifties, absorbing the music firsthand.

For African musicians like Dr. Nico, the embrace of Latin rhythms represented a repatriation of sorts. Many of those rhythms had originated in Africa, brought to the

New World by the slave trade. It couldn't have been more timely to bring them back home to a nation that had newly achieved independence from European colonial rule. But the mid-century African musicians put their own twist on Latin rhythms. There's a gentle rhythmic lilt to Congolese rumba that's unlike anything from the other side of the Atlantic. This was enhanced by poetic lyrics in French (the language of the Belgian colonizers) and Lingala, one of the region's indigenous languages. And of course, there are those guitars — an undulating rhythmic labyrinth that's easy to get lost in.

L'African Fiesta's lineup fluctuated. Nico's brother Mwamba Dechaud was sometimes his co-guitarist. And by 1965 the group had morphed into African Fiesta Sukisa. Dr. Nico was said to be “difficult” to get along with, and a poor businessman. He left the music industry in the mid Seventies, following the collapse of his Belgian record label. He died in Belgium in 1985.

Just as he was leaving this earth, America was waking up to the splendor of African guitar music through the work of Nigerian band leader King Sunny Ade, who gained international exposure after signing with Island Records in 1982. Label chief Chris Blackwell was touting him as “the next Bob Marley.” Paul Simon brought South African music to the worldwide mainstream with his multi-platinum *Graceland* album in 1986, which helped focus some much-deserved attention on South African guitarist Ray Phiri. With these inspirations, guitar players in America and Europe began exploring African music. Today you can find video tutorials for pieces like “Independence Cha Cha” on YouTube. If you're a rock, blues, country, funk or folk guitarist in a rhythmic rut, Congolese rumba has the power to set you free.

In the Seventies and Eighties, the Congolese rumba music of Dr. Nico and his contemporaries became the basis for soukous, which would foster phenomenal guitarists like Dibo Dibala — known as “Machine Gun” for the rapid-fire accuracy of his playing. Soukous, in turn, spawned the stylish dance genres kwasa kwasa and zouk. Beyond this, rhythmically interlocking electric guitar patterns have become integral to so many musical styles all across Africa, from Tuareg bands and artists like Tinarawen and Mdou Moctar in the North to mbanqua groups like the Makgona Tsohle Band from South Africa.

In the vast continent of African electric guitar music, all roads ultimately lead back to Dr. Nico.

Thanks to Michael Newton for help in identifying some of Dr. Nico's guitars — AdP

Black Sheep might very well be Austin Meade's most varied album to date



Austin Meade

THE TEXAS BLUES-ROCKER REFLECTS ON STAYING PROLIFIC DURING THE PANDEMIC: "THERE'S JUST SOMETHING BAD ABOUT BEING ISOLATED FROM PEOPLE FOR THAT LONG"

By Jeff Kitts

▶ AUSTIN MEADE CAN barely keep up with himself. The singer-songwriter from rural southeast Texas witnessed the release of his third full-length album, *Black Sheep*, in mid March after a rather long pandemic-related delay, yet the 28-year-old guitarist is already looking ahead to the album's successor. "This record just came out and I'm sitting on a goldmine of other songs I've written during the break," Meade says. "I'll be in the studio again soon to make another record."

The "break" Meade refers to is, of course, most of 2020, which was largely a period of inactivity for the majority of people on the planet. *Black Sheep* was completed in November 2019 and originally scheduled for release in May 2020 — but Meade spent most of his idle time composing new songs rather than reworking the ones on *Black Sheep*. "We did everything from top to bottom in nine days in the

"We did everything from top to bottom in nine days in the studio"

studio," he says, "and I wanted to keep the record as a snapshot of where we were at the time. I didn't want to go back and change anything because I really felt that what we had done was pretty special."

Black Sheep might very well be Meade's most varied album to date — it's bluesy and soulful yet at times psychedelic and even somewhat Sabbath. Regardless of which song you're spinning — from the swampy album opener "Dopamine Drop" to the swirling title track that closes the album — the bulk of the music on *Black Sheep* would feel right at home being played between

laps during a televised NASCAR race.

For most of *Black Sheep*, which was recorded at The Panhandle House Recording Studios in Denton, Texas, Meade turned to his faithful PRS S2 Mira guitar: "It's kind of a mix of the cleans you get out of Fender-type guitars and the dirtier sounds you get from Les Pauls with humbuckers," he says. With the new music he's creating, however, Meade — who sports the most bitchin' horseshoe mustache since Hulk Hogan, not to mention a tattoo of his "favorite band in the world," Whitesnake — is writing much of it on an acoustic. "I'm looking to simplify things with the next record a bit because, on *Black Sheep*, we really nerded out with pedals and things. I don't want to get too lost in guitar sounds and stuff with the next record. It's more like, if I hum this melody, is it something that's going to stick in somebody's head? That's going to be my approach."

GOV'T MULE

GOV'T MULE



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"I feel like to its core, my voicing with my guitar playing and my singing, I come from a really bluesy background. I can't lose that," says Samantha Fish



Fish Tales

SAMANTHA FISH HAS EMERGED FROM LOCKDOWN WITH AN ALBUM THAT CELEBRATES THE FUN, STICK-OUT-YOUR-TONGUE SPIRIT OF ROCK 'N' ROLL. LET HER HELP YOU SHAKE OFF YOUR PANDEMIC BLUES!

By Damon Orion

► **FASTER**, THE NEW album from New Orleans blues-rocker Samantha Fish, doesn't sound like it was created during a dark time in history. With a slinky, devious opening riff and a flirtatious vow to "make your heart beat faster," Fish lets us know from note one that life in COVID lockdown hasn't taken the mischievous glint out of her eyes.

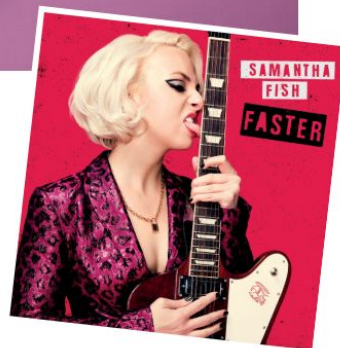
"This album... I feel like it's a big moment for me," the 32-year-old singer/guitarist offers. "I feel like we all went through something collectively last year. I think it's transformative for us as a group of people, but also individually, and so for me, this is about shaking off everything."

Though her first love is the blues, Fish has taken many musical styles to the fitting room over the years — soul, country and funk, to name just a few. This time out, her music intermittently recalls a time long before anyone had ever heard of the

coronavirus... namely, the Eighties. With its tastefully placed splashes of synth and occasional visits from the ghosts of Prince and David Bowie, *Faster* is long on catchy pop choruses and stick-out-your-tongue rock 'n' roll swagger.

The new sound owes much to the influence of producer Martin Kierszenbaum (Lady Gaga, Sting, Madonna, Feist). Along with co-writing several of the songs on *Faster* with Fish, Kierszenbaum became a *de facto* member of the band for this album, playing synth, piano, guitar and percussion. Rounding out an all-new studio lineup are bassist Diego Navaira of the Tex-Mex band the Last Bandoleros and drummer Josh Freese, who has worked with Nine Inch Nails, Guns N' Roses, Sting and A Perfect Circle.

Rapper/singer Tech N9ne, who is something of a legend in his and Fish's mutual hometown of Kansas City, Missouri, makes



a guest appearance on "Loud." Rattling off rapid-fire rhymes, he rides the band's chord changes with the ferocity of an impassioned lead guitarist.

"I always thought it would be so cool to get to do a cameo on one of his songs someday," says Fish, a longtime fan of Tech N9ne. "For him to come and do something on one of *mine* was really a treat for me. I'm super proud of that. I play it for all my Kansas City friends, and they're blown away."

Don't let her little dalliances with pop and hip-hop fool you, though. Gritty, blues-based rock is still Fish's North Star, and with *Faster*, she doesn't let us forget why *GW*'s readers voted her in at No. 7 in our 2019 readers' poll of the 30 best contempo-

rary blues guitarists.

With the same enthusiasm that she brings to her recordings and live performances, Fish recently gave *GW* the lowdown on the new album, the impact of COVID and her feelings about her own guitar playing.

The last time we spoke, you were getting ready to put out *Kill or Be Kind*. Then the pandemic came along. Were you in the middle of touring when COVID hit?

Yeah, we were on our European Kill or Be Kind Tour. As we left home, we were starting to hear about this COVID thing, and we were like, "Aw, it'll be OK." Then we were in the U.K., and they're like, "That's all the way down in the southern part of Europe. That's not happening here." And then within two weeks, everything just went mad. We had to fly home mid-tour. I've never canceled a tour before, so it felt really surreal: "Are we really doing this? We're really not going to finish this?"

Then there was this mad dash to get home, because at 2 a.m. on a Thursday, they told us if we weren't home by Friday in the U.S., the border was going to be shut down for 30 days. It didn't turn out to be true, but everybody panicked, and we bought the only ticket we could get. The only itinerary that worked was to fly us all the way from Amsterdam to Moscow, and then we had to sit in Moscow for about eight hours and then go all the way to New York. By the time I got home, I'd been in the airport for around 45 hours. I was like, "If I didn't have [COVID already], I might have it now!"

With all the madness that was going on when you were creating *Faster*, how is it that this album ended up having a fun, upbeat sound?

As I was writing the songs, when I first realized, "OK, we're not going anywhere for a really long time," the songs I was writing back in May and June were all really dark, apocalypse-driven and sad. I thought this whole record was going to be pretty dark, but as the year wore on, [I started] writing from a place I wanted to be rather than where I was. I wanted to feel empowered, positive, in charge and sexy. And then I started collaborating with Martin. He's such a positive person, and connecting with him brought a spark of positivity in my life that really felt absent for the five or six months leading up to our meeting.

I was shocked when we ended up with this really fun, energetic piece. I thought, This is going to be so much fun to play [live], and I think this is going to be uplifting to people when [COVID] is all said and

done, to have something that's maybe not so cathartic — not looking back, but looking forward.

I feel I was extra-prepared for this album. We had nothing to do but prepare! [Laughs] In the past, I have left a lot open to interpretation as far as the demos go. I would just sing a song into the phone on the acoustic, and that would be the demo for the song that the band would then learn, and we would flesh it out in the studio. This album, Martin really took charge of that production and had everything charted out. By the time the band entered the studio, all the band had to do was have fun and play. Normally, going into the studio, I have these jitters the night before day one or day two: "Oh, my God! Is this going to work?" This time I felt really ready. Who knew doing your homework would help, right? Mind blown!

"This time I felt really ready. Who knew doing your homework would help, right? Mind blown!"

Do you think the synths and pop hooks on this album will alienate your more purist fans?

I've been testing the waters for such a long time. Every album I've put out since 2015 has been pretty dramatically different from the last. I have the best group of people in the world around me. The fans, the band and the crew have gone through this abusive thing with me, where they've really held on, album after album. I really think there's so much blues guitar on this record. I feel like to its core, my voicing with my guitar playing and my singing, I come from a really bluesy background. I can't lose that; all I can do is color it a little differently, modernize it, shape it differently, record to record, but it's still there, still me, and I always try to keep my guitar forefront.

Tell me about working with an all-new band in the studio.

It kind of made me feel a little intimidated, 'cause these guys were all really super good, but we all got along really well, and it was fun. I'm a huge Nine Inch Nails fan. With Josh playing with them, I tried so hard not to be a nerd and ask, [in a *dopey*

voice] "So, are they nice?" [Laughs] But I couldn't help it. Josh is incredible in the studio. His ideas are incredibly creative. And Diego — a lot of times after you do an album, you go in there and you tune and you tweak and you move things around, but you talk to Martin about it, and he says, "I didn't touch a thing that [Diego] did." This guy just played perfectly, but with a lot of soul. And Martin did all the synths and pianos. Everything's incredibly well-layered and creative.

What gear did you use?

The tone is pretty straightforward: my [Gibson] SG, straight into a Fender Deluxe cranked all the way to 10. When I came in there, there were a bunch of amps to use, but I really like using smaller amps in the studio. You turn it up, and you can really get 'em to break up nicely, and they sound really good at a lower volume. And I always bring in my AnalogMan King of Tone pedal, but I can't tell you off the top of my head what songs we used it on.

On *Kill or Be Kind*, I really fiddled around a lot! [Laughs] I messed around with different pedals, textures, tones and guitar amps. [This time] we got in there, and Martin was like, "Man, we've got this killer tone, and this should be the connecting factor through all these songs." I used a [Gibson ES-] 335 on "All the Words," and I'm pretty sure I used a [Fender] Jazzmaster on the rhythm [track] of one of the songs, but I used my SG for the majority of the album. It's funny how divisive the SG is, but I think it's just a really versatile guitar. You can really change it up.

How close are you to being the guitar player you want to be?

[Chuckles] Oh, man! I'll never get there. I think most guitar players might say that, right? It's a puzzle you'll never put together, but you find little things that make you happy, and they continue to fuel the pursuit to get better. I've always felt like a student; I always feel like there's more to learn, and I try not to be too hard on myself, because I feel like at some point you've got to be confident and comfortable with who you are. It's like singing: you have the voice that you have. You can make it better, but you are given that voice. For me, I have my hands, and they do what they do. I do try to get better, and I want to learn, but I also see the value in having a voice and an approach that sounds like you. I want to keep that; I think that's unique, but I feel like there's a lot to learn, and I'll probably never be happy with it! [Laughs] That sounds terrible, but I don't think anybody's ever quite happy with it.

Six tips from a pro session guitarist

By Dan Maher

▶ WHILE THERE'S NO single path to being a professional session guitarist, there are certainly a few things you can do to put yourself on the right path. Here are six tips I wish I'd been given when I was starting out.

1. GET STUFF!

Get yourself an interface, speakers/headphones, mic and DAW (Digital Audio Workstation) and learn how to use them. Gone are the days of resident studio musicians; it's now possible to produce high-quality tracks in your bedroom with a modest setup. GarageBand comes stock on Macs, and most budget interfaces come with free versions of programs like Ableton Live. YouTube has a plethora of tutorials to help you get the most out of your software. [Editor's note: See page 30 for more ideas!]

2. SERVE THE MUSIC (NOT YOUR EGO)

No matter what, the focus should always be to make the music feel good. If you're creating an original part, assess what the song needs, guitar-wise — and do that! It's great to have chops, but having the maturity to use them sparingly is more impressive than overplaying. Treat the music with care and attention to detail and you'll go far.

3. BE VERSATILE

Broaden your skill set to bring more to the table. Learn to read notation in addition to developing your ears. Having secondary instruments like banjo and ukelele at your disposal never hurts, either. Listen to as many styles as possible so that when a producer (or online client) tells you, "This track needs a Freddie Green chonk" or a "Jeff Beck vibe," you'll know exactly what they're after and will have the sensibility to execute these styles authentically. This also applies to the sounds you choose.

4. SUPPORT THE VOCAL

Whether you're recording or playing live behind an artist, it's important to be a strong support for the vocal. The ability to play dynamically — with sensibility, solid



Dan Maher on stage in Australia in 2019 with his 1994 Ernie Ball Music Man Luke

timing and confidence — is paramount. Music is rarely about us as individuals; it's about the overall sonic experience we're giving the listener.

5. GET CLIENTS!

In order to get the ball rolling, you need to get your name out there from as many angles as possible, especially if you don't have a pre-existing network of clients. Start by making a website and Soundcloud profile (and link them!), then sign up to multiple freelancer sites such as Craigslist, Fiverr and Starnow. Upload some guitar loops/demos to give prospective clients a feel for your sound and playing. It's important to have examples of your work available when people search your name. Jammcard is an incredible app (if you live in the U.S.), a place where artists/producers can browse through musicians and hire who they believe will be the best fit for their song(s). It's an incredible networking tool, and I

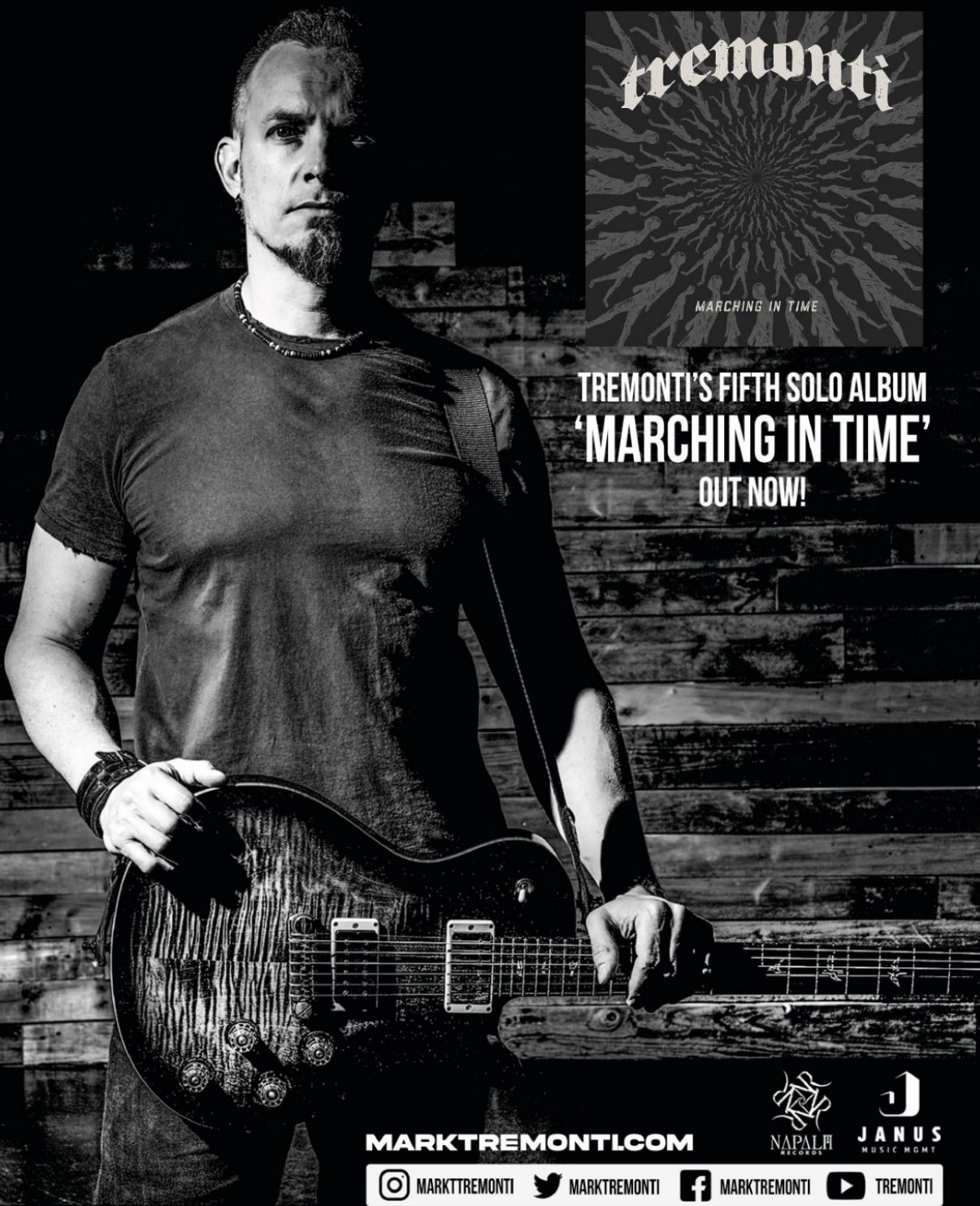
Nobody will care about your 10,000 followers if you can't play to a click track

highly recommend signing up.

6. BE SOCIAL

Social media is an incredibly powerful tool for networking and promoting your work. However, it's important to not let it take precedence over honing your craft and becoming a quality player. Nobody will care about your 10,000 followers if you can't play to a click track. Your online presence will be of greater value and authenticity if it's a reflection of your work as a musician, rather than serving your image alone.

The Sydney, Australia-based Dan Maher has been a session guitarist and sideman for more than a decade. For more info, find him on Instagram at @danmaher.



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HOW WE SWEET HOW WE

P.30

GW

BY AMIT SHARMA

*Want to throw your hat into the stay-at-home session guitarist ring — or just create masterpieces at home? Here's everything you need to get your **HOME STUDIO** off the ground, from interfaces to software and beyond*

UNIVERSAL AUDIO

OX AMP TOP BOX

\$1,299, uaaudio.com

▶ This reactive load box from Universal Audio might look like the kind of thing you'd pick up in the dusty basement of a second-hand store, but there's a lot more going on inside. First, it works like an attenuator, allowing you to play and record your tube amp at any volume with no compromise on tone, which could be handy for late-night practicing or performing in smaller venues. What makes this unit truly innovative, however, is its ability to provide album-quality mic, room and speaker-cabinet emulations, as well as compression, delay and reverb effects for recording. There's a headphone out for those hoping to work in total silence, as well as a Dynamic Speaker mode to nail the breakup and "cone cry" of an amp pushed to its limits. Given just how many guitarists have been swearing by the Ox, especially the professional demo types found on YouTube and Instagram, this could very well be the most revolutionary piece of recording gear in recent years.



THERE WAS A time, not even that long ago, when working musicians had only one way of getting their creative exploits out into the world. That was, of course, in the recording studio — where all the necessary tools for the job could be found under one roof, or several, depending on the budget.

Much has changed over the past two decades, to the point where many small to mid-level studios have struggled to stay in business. If they're the ones who lost out in this seismic shift for professional recording (and the industry around it), then it's the musicians who've won. Home recording has never been easier or more affordable, with digital recreations of old analog gear allowing us to conjure classic tones out of thin air. Thoughts on whether digital has fully caught up with analog will vary from person to person, but one thing's for sure — the gap between the two has never felt this close.

For guitar players, this can only be a good thing. You might, for example, want the sound of a \$100,000 Dumble Overdrive Special on your new EP, but you don't have the funds to take one home — if you're lucky enough to find one for sale, that is. Or you might want to use a Klon Centaur for extra gain on a solo, which means hunting down one for \$5,000 on Reverb. And the list goes on; the same goes for various cabinets, mics and pieces of outboard gear that many would love to own but few can truly afford or have enough space to keep.

There is a catch, however. We're now so spoiled for choice when it comes to desktop recording, deciding on how exactly to go about it can be an arduous and exhausting affair. Which is precisely why we've rounded up some of our favorite home recording tools that'll allow your creativity to flow as freely as your heart desires.

Given Neural DSP's successful plug-in ranges for Gojira, Plini and Cory Wong, it should come as no surprise that their new physical flagship is a work of wonder



NEURAL DSP QUAD CORTX

\$1,849, neuraldsp.com

When Neural DSP describe their brand-new Quad Cortex as “the most powerful floor modeler on the planet,” they’re really not lying. It’s the kind of unit that could run four different amplifier models and all kinds of stereo effects at the same time without even breaking a sweat. On top of that, Neural Capture allows it to replicate the sonics of any physical amplifier, overdrive and cabinet with mind-boggling accuracy — giving users a limitless library of sounds online, as well as the options to capture their own gear. It comes with more than 1,000 impulse responses and works well with third-party ones, too — which is very handy for recording, especially when you can move the virtual microphones around the speaker just like you would in real life. Given Neural DSP’s highly successful plug-in ranges for the likes of Gojira, Cory Wong and Plini, it should come as little surprise that their new physical flagship is a work of wonder.

IK MULTIMEDIA

AMPLITUBE 5 MAX

\$599, ikmultimedia.com

Launched nearly two decades ago, AmpliTube started making a name for itself in the modeling race very early on and consequently became one of the biggest amp simulators out there. This newest version is available in four tiers, with varying features and model counts for every kind of budget — from the free CS package, which includes 41 pedals, amps, speakers, mics and rooms, to the MAX, which carries more than 400. And, unsurprisingly, it’s this version that has the wow factor, thanks to its co-designed Fender, Orange, Fulltone and Mesa/Boogie collections, as well as the official Slash, Hendrix, Brian May and Dimebag Darrell packages that are normally sold separately. The new Volumetric Impulse Response allows for absolute creative control over the 100-plus cabinets, thanks to an impressive 143,000 impulse response measurements in total, so it’s unlikely you’ll ever need more.



POSITIVE GRID

BIAS AMP 2 ELITE

\$179, positivegrid.com

✓ In our review of BIAS Amp 2 back in 2019, we noted that the software was “so good you may never want to go back to playing a ‘real world’ amp or pedalboard again.” Two years later, we stand by that assessment. While other packages pride themselves on controlling all aspects of the signal chain, BIAS Amp 2 goes all-in on the, you guessed it, amplifier and speaker side of the rig. And when we say all-in, we really do mean it. It’s a high-performing virtual amp designer that allows users to customize and swap preamp tubes, power amp tubes, transformers and tone stacks, with endless possibilities for cabinets and miking. Then, of course, there’s the amp-matching technology that can mirror the tones on any audio file you drag into it, as well as a Tonecloud community for sharing different sounds around the world with minimal fuss. If you’ve ever wanted to build your own amp from scratch without electrocuting yourself, this could be just the ticket.



TWO NOTES TORPEDO CAPTOR

\$269, two-notes.com

*Digital recreations
of old analog gear are
allowing us to conjure
classic tones out
of thin air like never
before*

▲ If you like the sound of the Universal Ox but don't quite have the space or the budget, the Torpedo Captor will definitely be worthy of consideration. It retails for roughly \$1,000 less than the Universal Audio unit, and therefore doesn't have quite as many options for speaker emulations and effects. That said, more cabinet, microphone and power-amp simulations can be found via the free Torpedo Wall of Sound plug-in, so you're not limited to what it comes with, and more can be purchased beyond that. The attenuation is fixed to 20dB — again, not as versatile as the Ox, but what it does do, it does very well indeed.





NATIVE INSTRUMENTS

GUITAR RIG 6 PRO

\$199, native-instruments.com

Originally launched in 2004, Native Instruments' Guitar Rig has made a name for itself as one of the most intuitive recording packages for the modern musician. While the original version only had a handful of amps and effects to choose from, this sixth incarnation offers a whole library of different drag-and-drop sounds, from crystal-clean Fender-style amps to more metallic extremes, and all the pedals you could possibly hope for to "place" in front of them. There's also the Rammfire amp, designed in collaboration with Rammstein's Richard Z. Kruspe, which replicates his legendary Pre-500 Dual Rectifier — a bonus for those hoping to dial in the stadium-conquering distortion associated with the German heavyweights. Best of all, the newly developed Intelligent Circuit Modeling technology is successful in replicating the depth and behavior of hardware devices, giving enough reaction and realism to get the takes you need.



IK MULTIMEDIA

AXE I/O INTERFACE

\$349, ikmultimedia.com

If you're looking to promote a new interface for guitar, who better than Joe Satriani to help explain why it's such a game-changer? "Gear is so important to unlocking the creative possibilities," he says in his AXE I/O demo, adding, "you now have over a million different sounds you can audition, record and save in the privacy of your own home, room, closet, tour bus or hotel!" Which is precisely why the 117 dB dynamic range and 3Hz–32kHz frequency response of the AXE I/O was designed to capture every sonic detail in each performance, keeping a sound that's pure and transparent when working with plug-ins and amp simulators. The unit also boasts a triple-topology discrete input circuit, with both pure and JFET stages to help go from ultra clean to tube-like break at the click of a switch. There's also a front-panel amp output for easy re-amping, a built-in tuner, and the Amplitube 4 Deluxe and Ableton Live 10 Lite packages that are included in the price.

AUDIENT SONO

\$299, audient.com

The Sono could very well be one of the most guitarist-friendly interfaces of its kind. First of all, it looks more like a pedal with controls that are fairly self-explanatory for guitar and bass players alike. Its main selling point, however, is the inclusion of a 12AX7 preamp valve to add more warmth to your signal and the Two Notes power amp and cabinet simulation that it comes with — a great example of analog and digital practices working together in perfect harmony. All in all, you get eight live rooms, 20 cabs with plenty more available online and eight mic models, plus the option to re-amp very easily. You can also route mics and synths through the preamp, and expand up to 10 inputs via ADAT for recording drums and live sessions, so there's definitely a lot to like here.




SSL

2+ USB AUDIO INTERFACE

\$299, solidstatellogic.com

Given their industry-leading pedigree for high-end mixing consoles and recording studio hardware, it's surprising it took so long for Solid State Logic to come up with something aimed at desktop users and musicians recording from home. But many would agree it was worth the wait, given how much of that ingenuity they included into the 2+, released in 2020. It's a 2-in/4-out USB interface with their own microphone preamps and Legacy 4K analog color enhancement, and a very old school design to reflect the heritage behind the name. Though perhaps less guitar-centric than some of the other interfaces in this list, the 2+ is one of the finest processors out there for home recording, capturing the full dynamic range of whatever you choose to record through the system.

The hardware comes with cut-down versions of Pro Tools and Ableton Live, plus plug-ins from XLN Audio, Softube and Focusrite

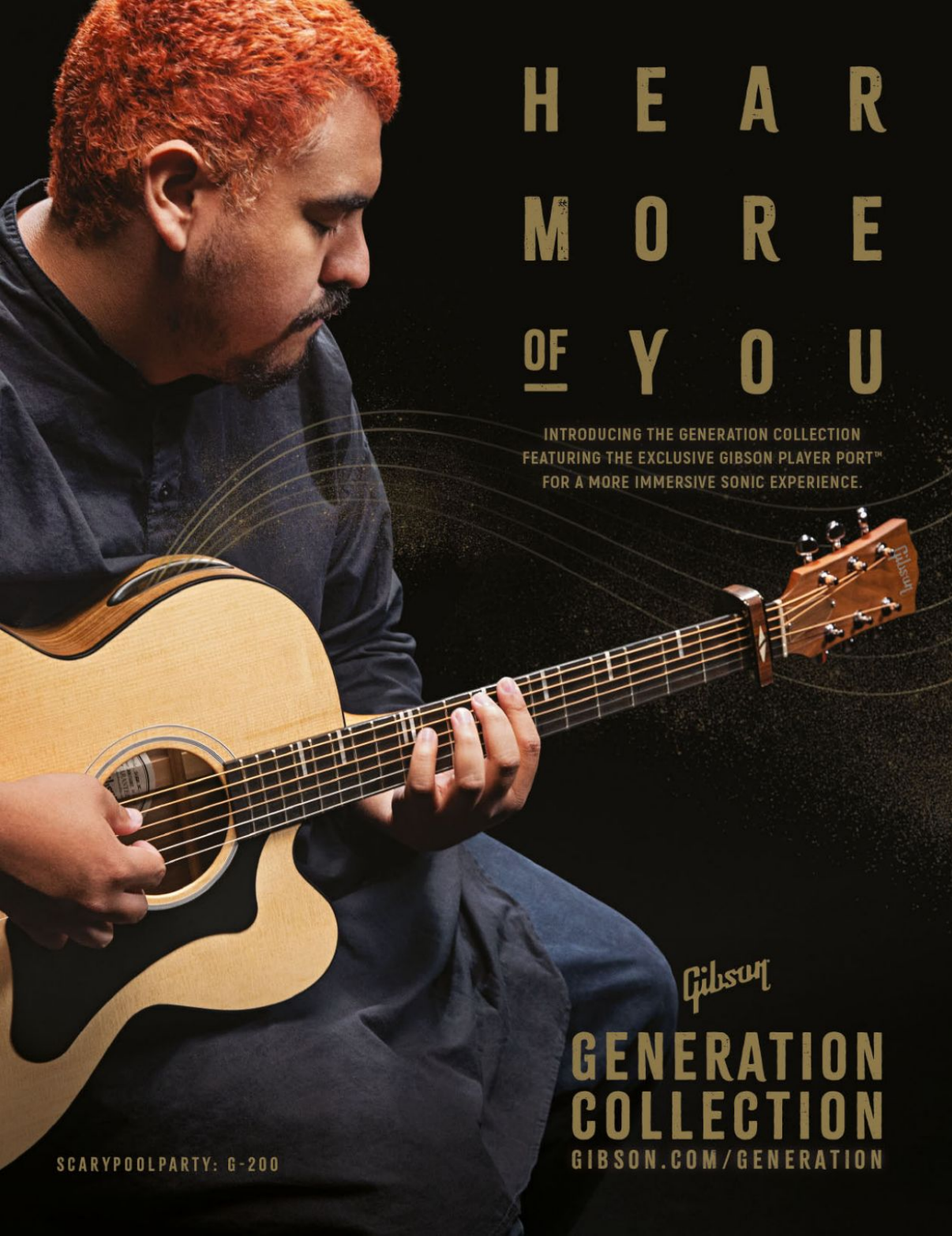
FOCUSRITE

SCARLETT 2i2 3rd GEN USB AUDIO INTERFACE

\$169, focusrite.com

Offering incredible value for money and high-performance, state-of-the-art signal processing, the Focusrite Scarlett ended up becoming the best-selling audio interface out there. And the good news is the British company is still looking for new ways to improve and upgrade it — as evidenced by this third generation of units in the series, released in 2019. The mic preamps now include Focusrite's acclaimed Air mode, modeled on the company's legendary ISA console transformers to give your signal a brighter and more open sound. The hardware also comes with cut-down versions of Pro Tools and Ableton Live, plus plug-ins from XLN Audio, Softube and Focusrite themselves. There are also options to buy it as a studio pack with headphones, a condenser mic and an XLR lead, giving you everything you need to get going in one bundle without breaking the bank.



A man with short, curly red hair and a beard is shown in profile, playing a light-colored acoustic guitar. He is wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt. The background is dark with faint, glowing concentric circles emanating from the guitar's soundhole, suggesting sound waves. The text 'HEAR MORE OF YOU' is displayed in large, bold, gold-colored letters in the upper right corner.

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THE LEGENDS ISSUE

HOLIDAY | 2021

MYSTERIOUS WAYS

In this exclusive interview,
**THE EDGE DELVES INTO
THE SOUNDS AND STRUGGLES
THAT FED TWO VERY
DIFFERENT U2 ALBUMS**

— 1981's *October* and 1991's *Achtung Baby* — both of which helped the band forge and refine their identity

U2 OCTOBER



EVER SINCE HE JOINED THE BAND THAT would become U2 — right around 45 years ago — guitarist the Edge has sought to be economical in his compositional choices. Every note he plays has a purpose and is dictated by whatever the song calls for.

“I like musical themes that create the biggest impact with the least effort, whether it’s [English composer Edward] Elgar or the Velvet Underground,” he says. “To my ears, economy is elegant.”

The Edge has used his unexpected, pandemic-

influenced time off the road to reaffirm that belief and keep his skills sharp. He’s worked on new music and continues to work on his composing skills. He utilizes guitar as well as keyboards and piano in an effort to “brush up on my understanding and ability to use some of these digital recording systems. These days, your laptop becomes a recording studio, so it’s been very liberating, in a way, to be able to develop music on my computer at home,” he says. “It’s been fun to really get into that.”

WORDS BY JOSHUA M. MILLER | PHOTO BY SAMY MOSHER



A Tele-toting Edge
on stage with U2
in Turin, Italy, in
September 2015

[from left] The Edge, Larry Mullen Jr. and Bono on stage in 2015 during U2's Innocence + Experience tour



And then there's his recent fascination with digital delay. "Digital delay for me was a way to add coloration, dimension, additional rhythm and a certain machine-age quality," he says. "I know more about the mathematics these days, but it's always about the part and the treatment evolving in tandem. It's an instinctive and playful process. I never 'use' effects."

No matter how elaborate his guitars and gear have gotten over the years, let alone the level of stardom the band has reached, the Edge hasn't forgotten the blood, sweat and tears the band has shed over the decades — and the unbridled joy of creating music. With the band's 1981 album, *October*, turning 40 and their 1991 album, *Achtung Baby*, celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2021, it's something that's been on his

mind of late. He hasn't forgotten the lessons he learned making those albums — and the band members' journeys discovering and refining what U2 is. While a lot has changed since those albums were released, much of what was learned on those albums still shows up in the band's music.

"We are continuing our exploration of melodic essence," he says. "It's where all other aesthetic considerations fall away, and you can get to something truly timeless."

In this exclusive interview, the Edge reflects on creating *October* and *Achtung Baby* — and how those transitional albums helped U2 find and refine their identity.

The creation of *October* was a real test for the band — and for you personally. What was that search for direction like, and how did you and

the band channel that into the music?

We were coming off an extremely busy period and ran slap bang into the cliché of all clichés when it comes to new songs: You have six years to write your first album — and then six weeks to write your second album. We came off the road and knew we wanted to follow up the *Boy* album as quickly as possible, but we really hadn't managed to write much on the road. Bono had got some early lyric ideas on the go, and then he lost his briefcase — or his briefcase was stolen from the dressing room. We never figured out where or how he lost it, but he lost it. So we ended up back in Dublin, kind of exhausted, spent and knowing there was a huge herculean effort required to come up with songs for this follow-up record.

"I always play 100 percent better if I have
**A SOUND I'M
 EXCITED BY AND
 THAT I FIND
 UNUSUAL
 OR NOVEL,**
 and kind of an entry into
 some other opportunity
 with a guitar"



DANNY NORTH

Luckily enough, we persuaded Steve Lillywhite to produce. And I think, really, he saved our asses in some ways, because Steve is so practical and so positive. We kind of fessed up and said, "Steve, look, we've got a few sketches, but that's kind of it. A few guitar riffs, basically. A few ideas for songs rather than even the beginnings of songs." So we went into the studio with Steve, and he said, "Come on, let's just start with what you have." We would literally go in, and I would work with Larry [Mullen Jr., U2 drummer] sometimes, or sometimes Adam [Clayton, U2 bassist] and Larry. We just laid down a bunch of these early drafts of compositions and slowly started to try and weld them together into cohesive tracks.

And Bono really came into his own, I

think, improvising on the microphone on that session. Thankfully we had a song called "Gloria," which we were pretty happy about, and that turned out to be the sort of lead track. But a lot of that record is really written in the studio in a very experimental state of mind. And it was our first entry into what became a kind of important creative strategy for us over the years, which is turning the recording studio into a songwriting tool.

How did you meet the challenge of working with such rough ideas?

I think it would be fair to say all we had at the start were some guitar riffs. "I Threw a Brick Through a Window," "Gloria"... I'm trying to think of the other ones. "I Fall Down" was probably written on piano, because at that point we had an electric piano that I used to use live. So, really, it was about composing music that felt like it could support a song, which I know is a strange thing, but having just come off the road, our instincts were fairly well honed for what was potent music.

And then it sort of put Bono in the hot seat. He's like, "Okay, we've got this track now — what are you going to do on it? What are you going to sing on it?" Which is really not the way songs are written. I mean, the best way to write a song is, you start with the chords and melody, and you build the arrangement. We were doing the exact opposite. We were building an arrangement that didn't have a song and relying on our singer's great melodic instincts to find a way into it vocally. From a guitar-sound point of view, back in those days, almost to the point where it was a freedom, we had limited amounts of guitars and equipment. We really did specialize.

I spent a lot of time homing in the guitar sounds, getting the treatments on the guitar as I wanted them. And all the effects, all the echoes, everything was put through the amplifier. There was no outboard; well, there's very little outboard treatment of the guitar sound. So it was all mono reverbs, mono echoes and distortions through the amp. And in some ways the beauty of that, of course, is that you're making your decision right there, and then at the beginning of the process, and you kind of get inspired by the sounds you're creating. I certainly, as a guitar player, always play 100 percent better if I have a sound I'm excited by and that I find unusual and novel, and a kind of an entry into some other opportunity with a guitar.

So, for instance, the guitar parts in "Gloria," those ideas are born from the sound I created with that echo, that slap-back echo. One of the bands I definitely was influenced by for that song was a band called the Associates. I loved what they were doing with their arrangements. But it was pretty simple stuff.

THE CUTTING EDGE

HOW THE EDGE INFLUENCED MODERN GUITAR

Compiled by JOSHUA M. MILLER

OVER THE PAST four decades, the Edge has influenced generations of music lovers to go that extra step and pick up a guitar. For many of those music lovers, *October* and *Achtung Baby* played important roles in their introduction to U2. Below, a host of guitar greats discuss the influence of the Edge, through an *October* and *Achtung Baby* lens.

TOM MORELLO

The Edge has challenged conceptions of what an electric guitar should sound like — and constantly pushed the boundaries of what an electric guitar can sound like. One of my favorite Edge moments is on "Love Is Blindness" on *Achtung Baby*. Apparently recorded in the midst of a pending divorce, Edge's playing is deeply emotional and sonically confrontational. The song has two very different solo sections. When I first heard it, I was blown away by the second solo, a passionate machine-gun flamenco assault. The first solo, on the other hand, sounded like someone had made a horrible mistake and left the tape running while Edge absentmindedly played a few disjointed notes (maybe left-handed?) and then kinda stopped and dribbled another couple notes awkwardly across the remaining bars. I later realized this was the genius solo on the track, capturing the artist's broken emotional state in a way no traditional solo could.

JOE BONAMASSA

There are few guitarists who can identify themselves with chords alone. The Edge can — with a single strum and inflection. Following in the footsteps of Link Wray and Pete Townshend, the Edge and U2 created classic song after classic song based on original, forward-thinking and simple concepts that were based on the classics. He's an innovator and a humble man.

JOEY SANTIAGO (Pixies)

He's influenced me to try to be different. I didn't necessarily try to copy his style, but I appreciate the way he stood out. On "Even Better Than the Real Thing" I liked that octave thing he used. But he was probably using the Whammy pedal — and I like that effect. "Gloria" showcases the way he uses his delays. He was really one of the first ones to play with a delay pedal, where he'd use the effect as an instrument.

ALEX STIFF (The Record Company)

I always look to U2 in my own writing process, in terms of how to turn the basic building blocks of "chords and riffs" into something more interesting. U2 has always made a sound that suggests that they reject anything conventional. The Edge has so much to do with that musical ground that is both avant-garde and rock n roll and is as memorable as the lyrics. They go hand in hand. Bono sings, the Edge answers.

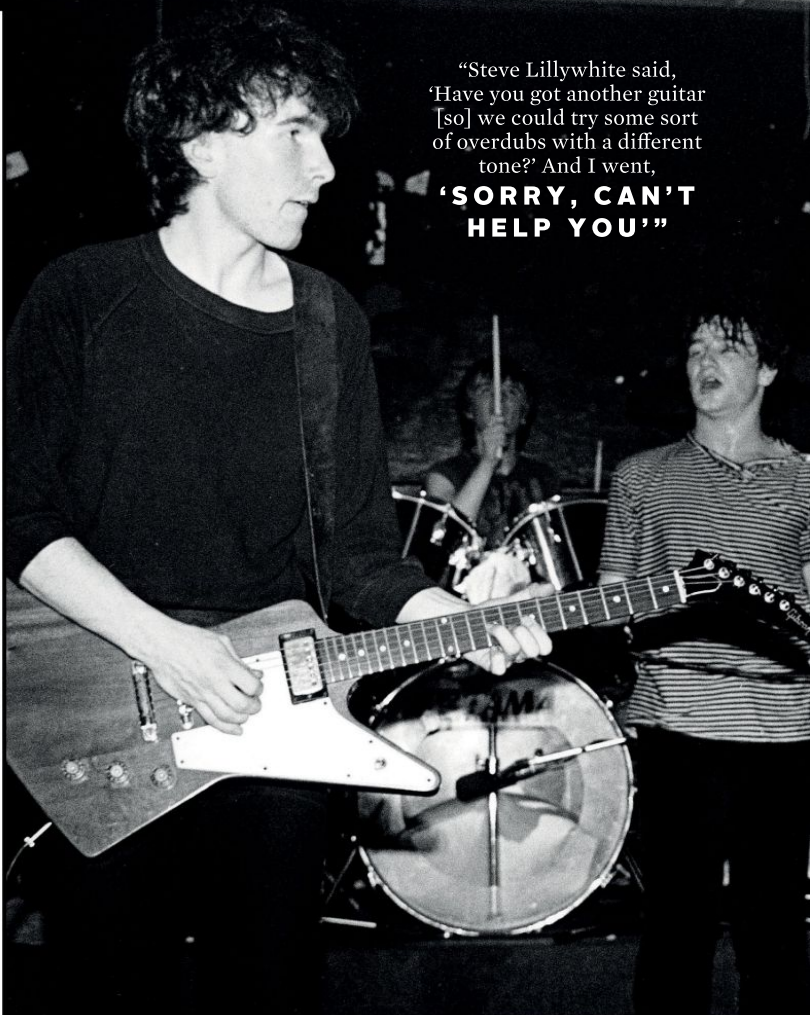
An example would be "Even Better Than the Real Thing." That chorus guitar — "dee da da dee da da dee, dah dah dah" — is as vital to the song as the lyric, each answering the other. Anytime I'm working out a new song, I'll ask myself, How do I "Edge" this?

MYLES KENNEDY (Alter Bridge, Slash)

Achtung Baby was a reinvention of sorts. For the most part, musically speaking, the record was a rejection of the identity established during their incredibly successful run in the 1980s. You can hear their evolution on tracks like "Mysterious Ways" and "The Fly," which manifest a hybrid of rock 'n' roll with the Euro dance music happening at the time. For me, there was another dynamic that was even more compelling. "One," "Acrobat" and "Love Is Blindness" showcased a darker side of the band that allowed the Edge to incorporate a melodically haunting and sparse approach. The end result were guitar parts that brought the perfect amount of drama without screaming, "Look at my fancy fretwork!"

CHRIS ARNDT (Jocelyn & Chris)

I've always admired the storytell-



"Steve Lillywhite said, 'Have you got another guitar [so] we could try some sort of overdubs with a different tone?' And I went, '**SORRY, CAN'T HELP YOU**'"

What guitars did you use on the album? How did they impact the songs?

My first professional standard guitar as a member of U2 was a Gibson Explorer, which I bought when I was 17. And that was my guitar. And I remember while making *Boy*, the first album, Steve Lillywhite said, "Have you got another guitar [so] we could try some sort of overdubs with a different tone?" And I went, "Sorry, can't help you. We don't have another guitar." We had one electric guitar in the band, one electric bass and one drum kit. That's how stripped back it was.

By the time we made our second record, I had bought a Fender Strat, but I wasn't so happy with the sound of the bridge pickup. I ended up swapping out that pickup for a

more full-sounding pickup. I actually went into a store in New York and said, "Look, I want it to sound more full; it's too bright, it's too shrill through my amplifier — and I'm not changing my amp. This is an amp I'm really wedded to. What can you suggest?" It was a [DiMarzio] FS-1, I think, that they put in the Strat. And it made a big difference. That was the formula for so many years going forward. I ended up buying a second black Strat as a spare and made the same adjustment.

So those are the main instruments — that and the [Yamaha] CP-70, and I think at that point I had just bought a lap steel. I was just so intrigued. I was in Gruhn Guitars [in Nashville], I think, and came upon this Art Deco lap steel, probably from the

VIRGINIA TURBETT/REDFERNS

U2 perform in Belgium during the *Boy* tour; [from left] the Edge (with his Gibson Explorer), Larry Mullen Jr., Bono and Adam Clayton



Thirties or Twenties. I'd never seen anything like it. It didn't have pedals, obviously, but the whole technique was all about slide. And it really taught me. That was the first time I really got excited about slide guitar. That's featured on a couple of tracks on *October*. Other than that, [there's] acoustic guitar, probably; I think we had one between us. We really were a pretty lean outfit in those days.

What surprised you most during the recording process?

Steve's a great producer to experiment with sound, but within — obviously — the constraints of the band's sound. We had a lot of fun with sort of Irish influences because we were going around Europe,

and we had a very tight set from the *Boy* album. So it was a very European year we had spent prior to coming back. I think something about coming back to Ireland at the end of it, we felt that we saw Ireland in a new light, almost. It gave us this perspective. And we were like, wow, there's a uniqueness here. Something you really don't find anywhere else in terms of sort of traditional Irish music vernacular. On the *October* album we started experimenting with Uilleann pipes. We brought in an Uilleann pipe player — that's the Irish version of bagpipes, but you don't actually blow into the bag, you use your elbow. And so, "Tomorrow" was our first real attempt to reference our Irish tradition of music. That was a real thrill. And then "Octo-

ing approach the Edge brings to his guitar playing. He's an amazing technical player, but he rarely plays parts that completely show off his speed or skill; you can tell his primary focus is adding to the music. That's the approach I try to bring to my own style. I'm a firm believer that the best guitar part isn't necessarily the fastest or the coolest — it's the one people remember.

Of course, it also helps that he's a creative genius with effects. It's kind of impossible to talk about the Edge without mentioning effects. He really pioneered new ways of thinking about guitar parts, using effects to turn a simple line into a rich, layered texture. I'm partial to the guitar solo from "The Fly" on *Achtung Baby*. It starts out sounding like a pretty standard — but awesome — guitar solo, but the effects sneak up on you. Before you know it, you're surrounded by a cosmos of guitar sound, with runs and licks overlapping and melodies popping out here and there.

CLINT LOWERY (Sevendust)

The main thing I've always been fascinated with — in terms of the Edge's evolution as a writer/player — is the way he's incorporated his influences into U2 songs. On "Mysterious Ways," it's the perfect blend of funk and Motown drenched with effects that modernized the sound and made an old blues riff seem futuristic and current. The intro for "One" has the authentic feel of a Hendrix riff. It has a hook within itself but sets the stage for an amazing vocal performance from Bono. It's a complex riff, yet it doesn't distract the listener from the vocal. The Edge is a master at that.

ZACH BLAIR (Rise Against)

I had never really heard anybody use pedals, specifically delay, the way the Edge had. I didn't know what it was when I was a kid — I thought it was just the way he was playing guitar, so it didn't make sense. I had no idea what was going on, and it blew my mind. Then, to hear where the Edge progressed, and took those initial ideas he was doing, with just simple pedals that everyone else had — and then they became the biggest band in the world.

Then, on later records, like *Achtung Baby* — hearing where that went with modern technology, but with the same concepts and genre-

Bono and the Edge on stage at the Ritz in New York City in 1981



ber," the piano track, that was the first time we'd really done something that was more orchestral and less out of the garage band/punk-rock, post-punk rock idiom. We were playing around with the difference, sort of composing ideas, and I wrote that on piano at home. And then again, it was fun with Steve to find ways to layer the sound and give it other dimensions. "Gloria" and "October" are the ones we probably played live more than anything else from this record. They're the ones that have stood the test of time.

Do you think playing piano — and dabbling in other instruments — makes you a better guitar player?

Not really a better guitar player, but I think

it all goes toward making me a better composer and songwriter.

October often gets overlooked in the scope of the band's catalog. How do you feel about it gaining some appreciation over the years, especially from guitarists?

I think *October* is a great testimony to the value of touring. We are so much more tight as a band having toured much of the previous year compared to the previous album. It's a remarkably coherent album. We had a very limited pallet, so we had to be inventive. "Gloria" is such a weird and beautiful song. It has some of the most unique guitar playing on a U2 record. We borrowed a Fender 12-string for the {continued on page 44}

pushing ideas, that was equally as mind blowing. I love that he never did what everyone else did. He never was going to go for the patented rockstar thing and do a guitar solo here or whatever. He was going to make what he was doing really interesting and genre-pushing — and he was going to challenge you.

JOHN PETRUCCI (Dream Theater)

I remember hearing "Sunday Bloody Sunday" on the radio for the first time. I'd never heard a guitar player orchestrate before — and it was so cool. He has such a big, unique and unmistakably identifiable voice on the guitar. It's the way he orchestrated his guitar parts; it wasn't the typical way a guitar player would play in rock. Sometimes he'd play power chords and stuff like that, but he'd also do more rhythmic things, using harmonics and muted notes for rhythms.

The way the guitar was used on "One" was so unique; the progression and the lyrics were the focus, with the guitar part just sustaining the high notes — and then the way the delay came in later in the song to build it up was incredible. It's one of the most incredibly built songs, kind of like a "Bolero" type of thing. By the end of the song, it's so huge, but it's so repetitive in a really hypnotic way.

And "Love Is Blindness" is another great one for sure!

DAVE KEUNING (The Killers)

Achtung Baby is probably my favorite, and I used to play along to every single song on the record. It's got delay and these great chord voicings — and it's a whole different thing. It kind of opened my eyes to a different way of thinking and made delay pedals such a cool thing to have on your pedalboard.

"Ultraviolet (Light My Way)" influenced my playing the most. Fun- nily enough, I think that's the one the Killers coincidentally covered for a CD where every band does a song of theirs. "One" kind of influenced some of the way I did things, too. The kind of changing the voicing of the chord as you go — like, he's playing off the third and the second. That's something I kind of took with me, for sure.

SATCHEL (Steel Panther)

At a time when guitar acrobatics were the norm, when Eddie and Yngwie {continued on page 44}



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THE CUTTING EDGE

continued from page 42

and Vai and countless guitar gods were playing as many notes as the human ear could register in a solo, there was the Edge. Fewer notes, more space. Awesome notes. Amazing tones. Vibes. I don't think there was any guitar player who heard the Edge back then who didn't get inspired. Who didn't want to play "less" after hearing him? He came up with two- or three-note riffs that were the sound of U2 — one of the defining sounds of the Eighties and Nineties as well.

October is full of classic Edge riffs and sounds. "Gloria" is one of the most memorable guitar riffs of the era, but every song is a master class on the use of space. Listen to the huge tones on "I Threw a Brick Through a Window" and how he lays out in the verses in all the perfect spots. "Scarlet" gives a taste of where he's going with his genius use of delay. He's one of the few guitar players in the history of rock that has defined his sound so clearly. He's the guy who makes you realize it's not your fingers holding you back — it's your mind.

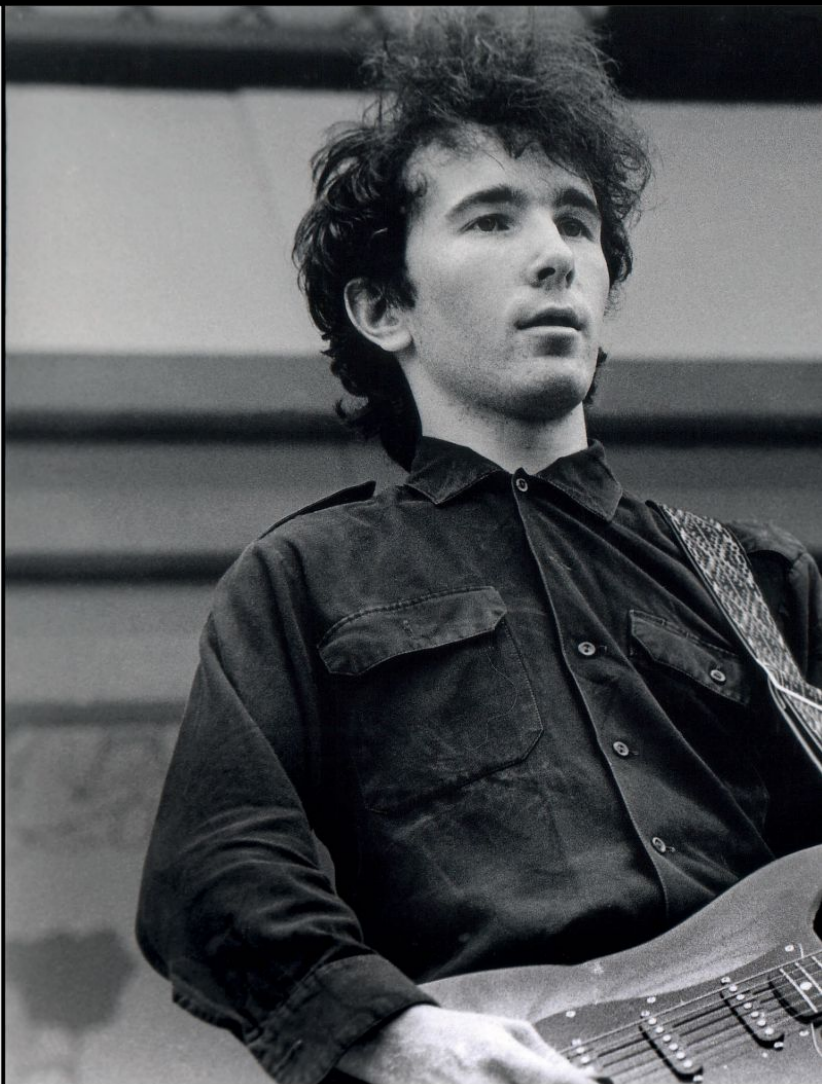
TIMOTHY SHOWALTER (Strand of Oaks)

There's an emotional factor to everything U2 does; it just plays into everything I love. I'm not a shredder, and it's never been my goal to be an acrobat on the guitar. I want to convey emotion — and that's what the Edge does.

He gave a lot of inspiration to guitarists who may never be the premier shredders of the world — but [they're] guitarists that know how to play and want so desperately to take the emotions in their heart and move them to their fingers and out of the amp and to people's ears.

JOSH KENNEDY (The Black Moods)

It's hard to be a guitar player and not have at least a little inspiration from the Edge, even if it's subconscious. He's not up there being flashy and playing a million notes. His "flash" is in the melody and beautiful notes he chooses. His use of his delays and his self-control are unparalleled. Hearing his style progress from *October* to *Achtung Baby* — it's amazing. It's akin to watching a childhood actor grow up in film or TV in front of your eyes, then go on to become this amazing



MYSTERIOUS WAYS

continued from page 42

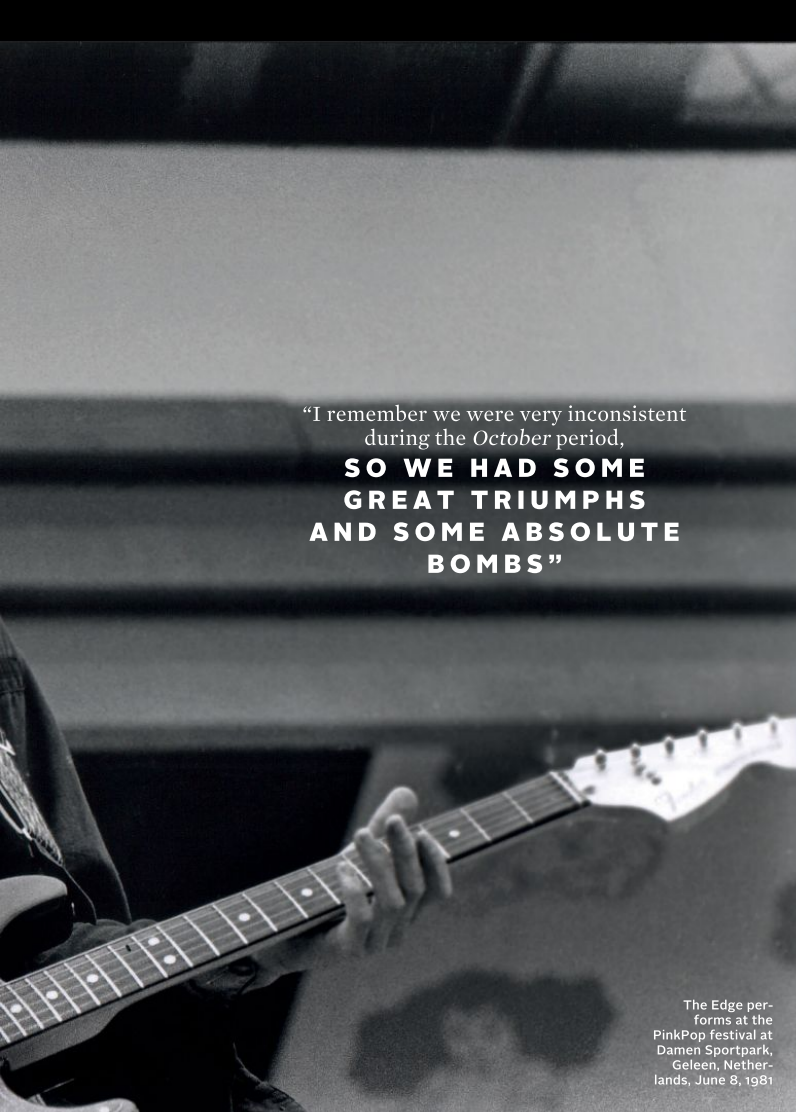
solos on "I Fall Down" and "Tomorrow." Dueling solos with Irish uilleann "elbow" pipes was a real musical experience. Vinnie Kilduff [who played the Uilleann pipes on the album] was amazing.

Achtung Baby was also a transitional album, but in a different way. The band sought to incorporate more influences and sounds. Why was it important to mix things up, and how did you tackle that challenge?

I think our main creative axiom early on was to innovate, and to not sound like other

acts, although we inevitably were part of a movement of bands that were thinking in those ways. So there was some borrowing of thoughts. But the need to be different and do our own thing serves us very well. I think we all felt by the end of *The Joshua Tree* [1987] and *Rattle and Hum* [1988] that there was a sort of weight of expectation amongst U2 fans, and maybe within ourselves, that kind of sense that we had established a sound, a thing, and it started to feel restrictive. It started to feel like we were being forced to repeat ourselves, or at least that seemed like the logical thing for us to do.

So we did the opposite. We doubled



"I remember we were very inconsistent during the *October* period, **SO WE HAD SOME GREAT TRIUMPHS AND SOME ABSOLUTE BOMBS**"

The Edge performs at the PinkPop festival at Damen Sportpark, Geleen, Netherlands, June 8, 1981

down, and really rolled the dice again on innovation and doing something very different and outside of our comfort zone. Assuming that, as we had done with *October*, when you really do put yourself in that sort of position where you don't know what you're up to, where you really have to use imagination and resourcefulness as your main kind of get-out-of-jail cards, that it will bring out of you unexpected things and bring you to unexpected places. That was the sort of spirit in which we went into the writing of that record.

What were some of your biggest inspirations for the album?

I was very inspired by the sonics that were going on in other more sort of subculture music forms. The industrial music scene was sort of really exciting at that time, and bands like KMFDM and the Young Gods were doing quite extreme-sounding recordings. I liked that as a jumping-off point. And then the other thing that was happening was this technological breakthrough that came through sampling, and first through hip-hop, and then through the back door and through the club scene of Manchester, into more guitar-based music, which was this advent of the use of drum loops and samples to inject a kind of more rhythmic quality to the work.

artist and win an Oscar.

SCOTT HOLIDAY (Rival Sons)

Diving deep into the Edge's sonic environment and his interesting percussive approach was something to behold — and to really relish in all its "freshness." This was at the height of hair metal and big, decadent power-rock ballads. What the Edge was doing couldn't have had less to do with all of that. And that idea, the idea of going right when everyone else was going left — it stuck with me. It really got in my heart.

Achtung Baby is just a monster album — a beautiful monster at that. From the first seconds into "Zoo Station," the giant aggressive guitar off the top, we can hear that something different is about to happen. Even before the album is 30 seconds deep, I'm thinking, "Would we have a Radiohead without this album? Not likely." Then again on "Even Better Than the Real Thing," right outta the gate, there's that huge whammy riff, something very new and progressive at this point in the game. There's so many interesting, radical, forward-thinking tones and riffs on just the first two songs alone! I've always been partial to "Tryin' to Throw Your Arms Around the World" too. A tonal callback to a classic Edge tone — that classic bouncing clean delay sound. His sonic palette grew so exponentially. To accomplish that expanse of tones, the Edge seemed to employ just about every new gadget and toy available, while simultaneously incorporating all the good ol' stuff too. Technical stuff aside, I've always considered the Edge a "painter of sound" — a description I've shamelessly pointed to in my own work. I say "painter of sound" as he's not so much a "technical virtuoso" in the way that we don't listen for tricky scales or runs, modes or arpeggios. Yet he's using sound like color. It's this sonic atmosphere we're swimming in when we listen to U2.

ZAC BARNETT (American Authors)

There's no denying that the Edge is one of the greatest guitar players of all time. And when you listen to his playing on *Achtung Baby*, one could argue it's his best. Not only does the Edge bring his classic signature U2 sound we all love from *The Joshua Tree*, but the way he experiments with melodies, effects and an overall

THE FLY ON THE WALL

Producer **STEVE LILLYWHITE**
SHEDS SOME EXTRA LIGHT
on the *October* and *Achtung Baby* sessions

STEVE LILLYWHITE HAS a very unique distinction; he's been witness to the monumental rise of U2. The band initially approached him to record their debut album, 1980's *Boy*. After a lengthy tour, U2 was running on fumes and looking for direction. So they turned to Lillywhite to help them craft *October*.

"My first thought was, 'I'm not going to do it,' because in those days, I had this strange, almost moralistic approach that artists should work with as many producers as possible," Lillywhite says. "As a producer, I could work with as many artists as I wanted, so why would they have to only have one producer when I could go and work with different artists? But they were happy with how I worked with them on *Boy*, so when they said, 'No, we want you to do our next album,' I thought, 'Okay, I'll do it.'"

U2 became the first band with whom he'd recorded two albums. The band was very unprepared this time around, partly because Bono was starting from scratch after losing a suitcase full of lyrics during the *Boy* tour. However, Lillywhite notes that the Edge was the glue that held everything together.

"It was definitely more fraught than the first album... not so much musically, although it was a little slower musically," Lillywhite says. "Edge is one of

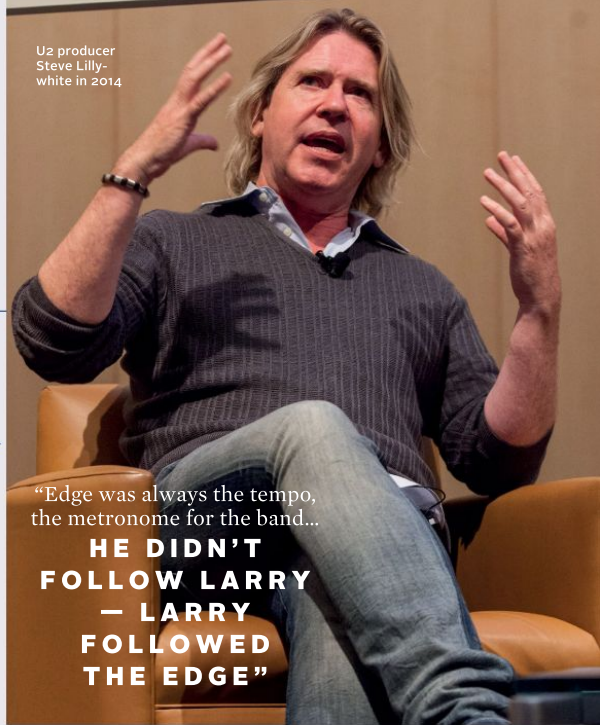
those incredibly patient people who really only has one speed, and that's slow and methodical. He's the scientist of the band, and he really only goes at this one steady speed, whereas Bono is running around like a headless chicken most of the time. Edge just holds it all down and holds it all together. He — dare I say — is the sensible one in the band.

"I've been with Edge where he can literally spend days working on the sound," he continues. "He can just be experimenting with a sound for days, but when it actually comes to recording his part, he will record it in one go. It's almost like when you paint a wall, you spend all your time on the preparation, and when you actually do the painting, it takes no time at all. That's what he was so good at."

Lillywhite also came in to work with the band in the later stages of the *Achtung Baby* sessions — after they'd worked with producers Daniel Lanois and Brian Eno.

"At that point, they'd become the biggest band in the world — a very, very different thing. And it's like, 'Let's go to Berlin because that's where David Bowie and Iggy Pop and Lou Reed went to make records,' so they went to Berlin," Lillywhite says. "For me, where U2 succeeded best on any of their albums is when they get the big picture of an album. That was the big-picture idea for *The Joshua Tree* — and that worked.

U2 producer
Steve Lilly-
white in 2014



"Edge was always the tempo, the metronome for the band..."

**HE DIDN'T
FOLLOW LARRY
— LARRY
FOLLOWED
THE EDGE"**

Achtung Baby, the big picture was Eastern Europe, and that worked so well.

"When they left Berlin, they had sketches; they didn't really have everything finished. At this point, my job had changed. I've gone from being the guy who was the producer, the main leader in the studio... The production team became a bit more like a relay race in the Olympics where the baton was passed to me for the final leg. Basically, Danny Lanois and Brian Eno were pretty tired because the band had really kept pushing them, so it was like they needed some fresh energy. It was like they passed the baton to me, and I took it over the finishing line. I got 'Even Better Than the Real Thing,' which works pretty well.

"They're still the same people, just bigger versions of what they were at the beginning," he adds. "The Edge has banks of everything, effects. And he'd pretty

much gone from one guitar on *Boy* to having just about everything that was possible that you could have.

ZOO STATION

Lillywhite recalls his favorite moments from both albums:

- "With 'Even Better Than the Real Thing,' I think the better versions are the remixes, which boosted the rhythms more. It's quite a dance-y track, and I think the version we did on the album didn't quite make the most of all that."
- "I enjoyed the slide guitar on 'I Threw a Brick Through a Window' as well as the guitar halfway through 'Tomorrow,' which has an amazing sound — it's not a sound that I'd ever heard from Edge up until that point on that album."
- "'Fire' [from *October*] was recorded in the Bahamas. Weirdly, it was done separately

from the rest of the album. They were on tour, and they took a break. Island Records had a studio called Compass Point in the Bahamas, and we flew from a gig in Miami down to the Bahamas for a five-day break that included three days of recording. So we went in and recorded 'Fire,' which was okay. It's got a great guitar solo, actually. I love that — with all sorts of octaves and stuff like that. That was a different thing."

- "If you put on *Boy*, the first thing you hear is the counting, then you hear 'I Will Follow' hard and strong and in your face. When you put on 'Gloria' [from *October*], for a start, it doesn't even start — it fades in. I don't know why I faded it in; maybe we didn't have a good beginning. Also, the very first lyric you hear is, 'I tried to sing this song.' That's not a guy coming out and going, 'I'm here to rock you.' It's a bit apologetic. And then the chorus is in Latin, not the sort of thing that was [likely] to get you a hit record. I think it was a confusing album to Americans because they'd heard *Boy*, they'd seen the band on stage, and went, 'Oh, my God, I love this band.' And then comes the second album, but it has a Latin chorus and the first lyric is, 'I tried to sing this song.' It maybe didn't give the right impression. But it's full of wonderful little musical nuggets, very emotional stuff and big, rolling drums from Larry."

- "[The Edge] will spend a week on a sound, and then he'll record it almost in real time. You listen to some of the guitar playing on *Boy* and *October* — it's no different to the guitar playing of now. What is different is that he's known as the guitarist for whom the sound is as important as the playing. For Edge, it's not about the playing, it's about the sound — and that's what sets him apart from all these other great musicians."

- "Edge was always the tempo, the metronome for the band... He didn't follow Larry — Larry followed the Edge. They'd all follow Edge because he has perfect timing. He never rushes." — Joshua M. Miller

So as we went into the songwriting, I felt this was definitely an area we could move into as a band and develop.

How did you put those sounds into action?

Put very simply, I just felt like U2 had the potential to swing in a way we hadn't up to that point. And so, I think that was the first time I actually had my own recording studio. The first and only time, since I don't these days, but that was a great freedom for me as well. I was able to use the studio again on my own as a rising tool, and using drum machines, mostly. I didn't tend to sample myself because in the end I knew Larry would be playing the drums, so it was more a songwriting and a production tool. But from a guitar point of view, again, it was like I was on the hunt for sounds I'd never heard, that we're going to be startling to the other members of the band, and our audience, because that, I found over the years, was always the inspiration that got people excited and got people focused.

What were some examples of that?

I had an array of different effects units we brought first to Berlin and then back to Dublin after the first sessions. The album was originally started in demo form in Dublin, in a little studio we always used around that time called STS. It was a wonderful, tiny little space in central Dublin. And the kind of ergonomics of it meant we were on top of each other the whole time. Ideas always seemed to come easily to us there. Surprisingly, we always came out of that little studio with the beginnings of something we knew we could build on.

We did our week or two-week session in STS, and out of it came a bunch of very basic ideas, but nothing finished. And then I did a little more work at home, and then we went to Berlin. In Berlin we kind of would try out this combination of the ideas we'd worked up together at STS, plus some of the stuff I'd worked up at home. We had a little bit of a wobble in Berlin at first. We were there with just Danny Lanois. I think "Flood" [Mark "Flood" Ellis, engineer] would have been there, too. But our songs weren't really taking flight in the way we had hoped they would. The room was huge at Hansa Studios in Berlin. It wasn't an intimate space, so we didn't have the benefit of that close proximity that we had in Dublin. We floundered for a while.

How'd you overcome that challenge?

I remember there was a clear division — Bono and Edge were pushing forward with these new thoughts and ideas, musically. Adam and Larry were, I guess, early on open, and then as things didn't start to fall into place, started to get very skeptical. So it was this kind of sense of, "Have we bitten off more than we can chew as a band? Are

we trying to kind of make up a huge adjustment in a very short space of time, maybe beyond our capability to really reinvent ourselves and make such a hard turn where we are actually in danger of coming off on the bend?"

We persevered through difficult few weeks, and the breakthrough track, which sort of got us back on track was actually "Mysterious Ways." I'd come up with this amazing guitar sound, which I laid on top of a very rhythmic track we'd worked up. I think it was, at that point, called "Sick Puppy" because it was such a rhythm thing. It initially was a drum machine, a bass and then this crazy guitar sound, but it wasn't really a song. To be fair to Adam and Larry, it was kind of an idea for a song. So I was fighting very hard for it to make the record. They were looking at me like, what is this? It's just a very funky verse, but that's all it is. And so, I'm trying to come up with parts we could add to that verse to turn it into a full-fledged song.

There's a couple of ideas that were tried [but] really didn't work. And then I go off to another room and I work up a few different options, come back in the room, and I'm like, "Okay, here's option A." And I play, I think, it was A minor, D, F, G, which is slightly strange sequence, but everyone, "Oh, that's interesting." And then I said, "Option B is C, A minor, F, C. That's my second." And Danny just went, "Hey, play those one after the other. Forget the other song, just play those two chord progressions." So, I played one into the next. And he had heard something, and he was totally on it, which is why it's very important to work with great producers. And everyone just went, "Yeah, that's interesting." So, I think I just took the acoustic guitar in the room, and we started playing around with these two chord sequences, and everyone just went, "Whoa, this is really, this has got gravitas. This has got — whatever it is we're looking for — this has got that quality."

We played for about 10 or 15 minutes, and Bono started singing in the room with us, and effectively, almost in real time, the song "One" came together, compositionally. Lyrically it took a little while, but pretty quickly the idea of "One" emerged. It seemed almost like that song was written on a universal basis but was almost our own story. It was the song we needed as a band to keep us sort of together and on track and unified. It was a little autobiographical as much as it was an attempt to tap into some sort of universal truth.

How did "One" develop into its final version?

That song was acoustic guitar for a very long time because that was the sort of jumping-off point. But when Brian [Eno] came along a few weeks later to Berlin, he loved it. He loved so much of what we were

darker tone elevates his playing to a new level. From the counterpoint melodies on "One" to the overly unique tone you find opening "Mysterious Ways," the Edge pushes guitar playing and riff writing to an epic new level. American Authors have always idolized his iconic sounds, but most importantly, his parts act as another vocal melody, proving that every element of a song is equally important.

SAMMY BOLLER

The Edge has one of the rarest hallmarks in music: no matter how many times you've heard his playing on records, you can always pick up something new. There is so much depth and nuance in everything he plays, it's just endless. I fell in love with U2 when I started playing in a band and writing music for the first time. The way the Edge composes and orchestrates guitar parts is something I admire and look up to. *October* is my favorite U2 album, and the main riff of "Rejoice" is one of my favorite recorded guitar tones of all time. *Achtung Baby* is another favorite; his playing and composition shine throughout. "One" is one of the first songs I ever learned on guitar.

JON FOREMAN (Switchfoot)

I remember sitting in the back of our parents' car as my dad drove through the suburbs north of Boston. The radio was playing, and "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For" came on. My dad pulled the car over, looked back at my brother and me, and said, "This is what real music is." It must've made an impact because years later I convinced the other guys in our Led Zeppelin cover band to step outside of the Zep catalog to play "Sunday Bloody Sunday."

Fast forward a few years to when *Achtung Baby* came out. I was a young kid who was supposedly getting ready for my heat in a local surf contest. But instead of suiting up, I was transfixed by what I was hearing. Dumbstruck. Standing there in the cold, letting the music wash over me. I had never heard guitar tones like that. So intentionally irresponsible, so perfectly irreverent. There was distortion and consonance, chaos and beauty. That opening riff! What a feeling! I could close my eyes and imagine a piano falling down a distorted stairway. "Zoo Station," "Until the End of the World" and "The Fly" were songs that felt like a beautiful collision. **GW**



doing, loved all the experimental rhythmic stuff, and thought we were really onto something fresh.

But in true Brian [form], it's "contrarian honest." He was like, "Well, the only song I really hate is 'One'." And he said, "It's not the song, but I think it's just the wrong arrangement. It's just, there's no duality. It's got this... It sounds exactly as you'd imagine a song like that would sound, should sound." And to be fair, I mean, John Lennon was a little bit of an inspiration for the way I was hearing it. And you know, some of his classics are that simple. So it was back in Dublin, later, I had another chance to get into my studio and was able to put together the compositional idea for "Until the End of the World," which was another important cornerstone. And so, we got back. All of us came back then after the break to work together in this little house called "Dog Town" — that's what we christened it. We occupied all the different rooms of the house in the basement and first floor. We made them into the control room, and other spaces became guitar booths, vocal booths and drum rooms. We set about really trying to define the sonic personality of these songs, some of which had a strong personality, like "Mysterious Ways." But some really didn't. So there's a lot of experimenting and a lot of guitar sound creation. And if you put up those multi-tracks, there's what made the final mix, but there are so many other things that didn't make the cut. A lot of really extraordinary sounds, because that was certainly my thing at the time — to try and find completely different tones.

There were a lot more sophisticated guitar effects available for the first time. I really found that appealing to just see what each one of these effects units could do.

Again, everything through the amp, with a few more guitars on board. I had a [Rickenbacker] 12-string. That's what I used for "Mysterious Ways," which I hope, maybe I didn't say, but that was what that song "Sick Puppy" originally was. It became "Mysterious Ways," but that was this funky sound.

What were a few of your favorite experiences using those more sophisticated guitar effects that were available to you?

It's always about finding a sound that's obviously inspiring — and quickly, so overly complicated units can sap inspiration. I did a bit of experimentation with harmonizers around that time, but nothing really went anywhere. I guess the sound I got for "Mysterious Ways" was a memorable discovery. We brought a prototype backing track to Berlin from a recording made in Dublin using drum machines. It was a very plain rhythmic foundation that we hoped to build up in layers, eventually to add real drums. That guitar sound and part from the Berlin sessions was the trigger for a lot of what transpired later on the track. By the time Larry played on it back in Dog Town, it was a very funky number.

Did the Rickenbacker 12-string impact songs in new and interesting ways? Was it your main guitar?

The Rickenbacker 12-string really came into its own while we were in Berlin, but I used other instruments quite a bit. There was a Les Paul Custom, which I donated to the first Music Rising charity auction. There was a beautiful Gretsch Country Club and my 1974 Strat. I think the Rick was useful in preventing me from going to any obvious places for guitar parts and sounds. It was instantly fresh and unusual, which helped me when I turned off the echo. **GW**

ABOVE: KOH HASEBE/SHINKO MUSIC/GETTY IMAGES RIGHT: CLAYTON CALL/REDFERNS

NEW ZOO REVIEW

THE EDGE and the PIXIES' JOEY SANTIAGO

revisit U2's Zoo TV tour

FOR THE EDGE and U2, the *October* tour and the Zoo TV Tour (which promoted *Achtung Baby*) couldn't have been more different. During the former, they were still discovering themselves as a band and even opened many of the dates for the J. Geils Band.

"I remember we were very inconsistent during the *October* period, so we had some great triumphs and some absolute bombs," the Edge says. "But later on, on the *October* tour, some of those new songs turned out to be very good live. 'Gloria,' particularly. 'I Threw a Brick Through a Window' became a big song live."

By the time the band released *Achtung Baby*, they had become one of the most popular bands in the world, headlining stadiums and arenas. The Zoo TV tour featured U2's most elaborate tour stage setup to date.

"Zoo TV was such a liberating creative opportunity because we didn't have to be serious and earnest," the Edge says. "We could be super intense and hard hitting thematically but disguise it in an anarchic and ironic mode of presentation. We had so much fun creating the show, and that made the shows more fun for the audience. Once we discovered the show itself had its own reason to exist beyond the album it was designed to promote, we never looked back. Our shows thereafter become something bigger than the sum of the parts... or should I say, on a good night!"

Below are some Zoo TV tour recollections from the Edge and Joey Santiago of the Pixies, who opened for U2.

THE EDGE: Bringing *Achtung Baby* to the Stage

BY THEN WE really had mastered the craft of presenting ourselves to a live audience. *Achtung Baby* had given us this completely new palette. But from a lyrical point of view, it allowed us to explore lyric forms that weren't in the classic kind of earnest post-punk political style of everything we'd done before — *Boy*, *Joshua Tree*, *The Unforgettable Fire*.

We quite consciously went, "We need other colors in our lyric-writing palettes." We were exploring humor, irony and contradictions of, say, a song like "The Fly," which is sort of inspired by Leonard Cohen, but the ability to talk about things that are obviously not true in a way that communicates something truthful. Those contradictions gave us a freedom to take the tour and really explore those ideas of the modern bombardment of our sensibilities via cable news. It was something we were very affected by. It was the Balkan Wars, the first time that any war in the world had been covered 24/7, and its impact.

We all kind of entered that bunker mentality. We caught a tiny little corner of what it must've been like to be in Sarajevo during the siege, just watching this coverage for hours and hours. All of those things got into the Zoo TV tour. And what's really great about those albums — and why I would be so crazy about recreating the sounds we had achieved in the studio. I knew if I got it to sound right out of the amplifier, I was doing 50 percent of the work for the out-front engineer. He wouldn't have to worry about anything. He'd just put up the fader and the guitar was set, and he could concentrate on drums and the things that are affected by atmospherics, etc. That was really a challenge — but fun — to meticulously go after these sounds I'd discovered in the studio and recreate them in a live context.

That album toured really well. Those songs really came through live. And it's the measure of an album, and it's the measure of the song — when you stand there in front of a live audience, if your song isn't great, it's going to be obvious to everybody. We were really thrilled with where those tunes — "Until the End of the World," "One," "Even Better Than the Real Thing," "Wild Horses." There are so many songs on that

record that we've been playing ever since. So, whatever that process was, I think it sort of beat those pieces of music into kind of indestructible songs by the end of that really lengthy process, because it was like only the very best ideas survived that process. Everything was, right up to the last minute, up for grabs.

I remember when we finished "One," I was listening to Bono sing the final vocal, and we were just about to dub. It was the last mix on the album, I think. I was just playing the acoustic guitar, and suddenly I hit on this guitar part for the ending, and it's like, "Wow, do I say anything? It's such a great part." So I said, "Look, I know we're out of time, but I have this part. I just want to put it at the end of the song." And there was this groan from everyone. And I said, "Look, I'll tell you what. I'll do it in one take. We're talking about five more minutes." So they said, "Okay."

So that's exactly what happened. I played the part once, they did one further mix with that guitar at the end — and that was the end of the album. It was like a few days later that we were listening back to the two, and I went, "Wow." That's the part I've been playing ever since. We were following inspiration. That was always the guiding light.



Pixies in April 1992; [from left] Kim Deal, Joey Santiago, Frank Black and David Lovering

JOEY SANTIAGO: *Achtung, Pixies!* You're Touring with U2

OUR MANAGER TOLD us about the offer to tour with U2. He seemed to think it was a good idea, so we did it, and it was a huge tour, one of the biggest tours we'd done at that time. I thought they were at the peak of their game, and my impression of them as a band was that they certainly knew what they were doing. They were huge, one of the biggest bands in the world at that time. The Edge was very professional and impressive [and had a] huge sound.

I've never seen a big concert like that. They had that ramp that would go into the middle of the audience. They'd go in the middle of the audience and play, probably, "One." I thought that was pretty cool.

Years later, during our reunion, Bono and the Edge would show up for our gigs and say hello. We played in Ireland, and we met them — Bono and the Edge — in Dublin. They really, really liked us. I remember one of the videos we had on MTV and some DJ really slammed it, saying, "Well, that's the last time we're going to play that," or something to that effect. Bono went on and defended the video.

Sometimes I wonder if they made *Achtung Baby* and they just said, "Let's blow this shit up," because it sounded like they definitely had the agenda to take over the world. — *Joshua M. Miller*



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BEAST FROM THE EAST



Iron Maiden's venerable guitar slingers —
— DAVE MURRAY, ADRIAN SMITH AND JANICK GERS —
 peel back the curtain on their gear, six-string interactions, musical growth
 and latest album, *Senjutsu*, a hard-rocking, heavy-riffing, legacy-securing behemoth

DAVE MURRAY IS laughing at *Guitar World*'s question, and, honestly, we can't really blame him. We've connected with the Iron Maiden guitarist to discuss his iconic metal band's new record, *Senjutsu*. It's an epic double album bursting with complex, head-spinning guitar action — and we've just asked him to pick out its single most challenging six-string moment. "Anything that sounds difficult ... was difficult to play!" he says with a chuckle.

Murray's good-natured jibe aside, *Senjutsu* is a truly formidable work of art. The New Wave of British Heavy Metal trailblazers' 17th album is a 10-song, 80-plus-min-

ute collection of classic Maiden grandeur and inimitable triple-guitar assault, courtesy of Murray and his compatriots Adrian Smith and Janick Gers. It's stacked with Iron Maiden's signature calling cards: dual-guitar harmonies, soaring solos, galloping rhythms, loud-soft dynamics and more merge with enthralling lyrical tales to lead listeners on one hell of a headbanging journey.

"*Senjutsu*' is very cinematic," says Smith of the stirring title track, which features taiko-esque drums, exotic guitar runs and multiple fiery leads. "There's a lot of dramatics on the album ... 'Days of Future Past' has a modern vibe, 'The Writing on the Wall' has a folkie vibe. [Bassist-songwriter] Steve [Harris] has come up with some classic stuff. His songs are getting longer and longer. He's gonna need a triple album next time. [Laughs] But if you're a Maiden fan, you're going to love it."

WORDS BY BRAD ANGLE | PHOTO BY JOHN MCMURTRIE

"Guitar should be a form of therapy.

**AND EVERYBODY
NEEDS THAT
AT THE MOMENT"**

—DAVE MURRAY



Iron Maiden's Dave Murray with a Fender Strat in 2019: "It has Seymour Duncans on it... You can pretty much get anything out of it, from clean to heavy"

"Because of our past we're a band that can afford to do that," says Gers of *Senjutsu*'s extended running time. "We take chances. There's no set three-minute song that goes exactly where you want it. ... You can have your fast metal stuff, 'Death of the Celts' where there's all the Celtic things, the Eastern-kinda [sounds] of 'The Parchment.' You've got the huge choruses of 'Hell on Earth.' It all adds to the album. So many ideas — it's quite breathtaking, really."

As Gers points out, any Maiden fan knows that the band has a well-established track record of pushing boundaries and continually raising their own creative bar. They helped set the standard for the NWOBHM sound with the one-two punch of their 1980 self-titled debut and the following year's *Killers* — before elevating the form to its stadium-filling, album-selling and artistically ambitious heights with their ensuing five-album run of stunners: *The Number of the Beast* (1982), *Piece of Mind* (1983), *Powerslave* (1984), *Somewhere in Time* (1986) and *Seventh Son of a Seventh Son* (1988).

Iron Maiden continued to follow their own course during the shifting musical trends of the Nineties and the new millennium — and they've been rewarded. They've sold more than 100 million records, headlined thousands of shows across the globe and created some of metal's most identifiable sounds and imagery, the latter built around their ever-evolving mascot Eddie (whose latest samurai incarnation ties into the themes of *Senjutsu* — a Japanese term that loosely translates as "tactics and strategy").

Along the way, they've influenced countless musicians — many of whom would become huge stars (including Kirk Hammett, Dimebag Darrell and John Petrucci). Iron Maiden have accomplished all this despite weathering multiple key personnel changes over the years. Their current long-running lineup — which has been in place since 2000's *Brave New World* — consists of bandleader Harris and the Murray/Smith/Gers guitar trio, plus drummer Nicko McBrain and singer Bruce Dickinson.

After nearly five decades as a band, Iron Maiden are an institution, and their legacy is secured. They could easily kick back, release greatest-hits compilations, play exclusive one-off shows — and watch the money roll in. But, Smith says, Maiden's motivation comes from a different source altogether. "I suppose you're trying to prove yourself every time," he says. "You're only as good as your last thing. Maybe it's some sort of deep-seated insecurity? I don't know. I just like to bring the best I've got to the table every time. I try hard. We all do."

Maiden's self-directed drive has helped the band hit new creative and commercial heights as they age. Their previous

record, 2015's *The Book of Souls*, was the group's first-ever double studio album, and it debuted at Number 1 in more than 43 countries. In 2018 they launched their most extravagant world tour to date, *Legacy of the Beast*, which presented a visually arresting experience filled with a career-spanning setlist of fan favorites.

Senjutsu continues the band's current prolific period. The two-disc behemoth was recorded back in 2019 and was originally supposed to arrive last year. But COVID stopped that plan in its tracks and put a halt to their ongoing *Legacy* tour. Things were quiet in the Maiden camp until summer 2021, when a few cryptic teasers started to appear online. In July of this year, Maiden went wide with the announcement of *Senjutsu* and dropped its rousing single "The Writing on the Wall."

The new song — which builds from a vaguely Western-style acoustic guitar line into a larger-than-life anthem — arrived with a stunning apocalypse-themed animated video conceptualized by Dickinson. "The Writing on the Wall" was written before the coronavirus encircled the globe, but the end-times concepts its video explores are pitch perfect for the unsettling, and often dire, global events of the pandemic era.

When *Guitar World* connects with the guitarists in August 2021 — Murray dialing in from his home in Hawaii with Smith and Gers calling from opposite ends of England (south and north, respectively) — the coronavirus has just infected one of their own. Only days before we speak, Dickinson announced that he'd caught a breakthrough case of COVID.

"Bruce caught something up, but I didn't speak to him yet," says Gers of the singer, who at press time was recovering at his home in England. "I think he went out for a birthday meal and picked something up from one of his kids. But I think he's okay, he's a tough boy. And he's had all his injections and whatnot, so he should be good."

Gers, Murray and Smith report that they've each managed to remain healthy. "Touch wood," Smith adds. "I'm very careful ... I stay at home a lot anyway."

The last time Iron Maiden were all in the same room together was when they recorded *Senjutsu*. The band had a break in the *Legacy of the Beast* tour, so they booked time with longtime producer Kevin Shirley at Guillaume Tell in Paris — the nearly 100-year-old theater turned recording studio where they cut *The Book of Souls*. "That room in Paris is amazing," says Murray. "It was an old art-deco theater: gorgeous, high ceilings and great vibe."

The studio and producer may have been

familiar, but the process of creating *Senjutsu* looked a bit different from past Maiden records. "Some albums we've spent weeks in a rehearsal room working out six, seven songs and then gone into the studio," Murray continues. "[This time] nothing was rehearsed. When we turned up to Paris, everything was done there on the spot."

The band members brought in material — from full demo tracks to riff snippets — and began to knock the ideas into full-fledged songs. But instead of strapping on their electrics and cranking their amps, the guitarists broke out their Gibson, Taylor and Martin acoustics. "We sat down quietly," Murray says of *Senjutsu*'s early sessions, for which he employed a Gibson Hummingbird. "Steve had an acoustic bass, we had acoustic guitars and we'd work it all out ... scribbling the chords down on our notepad. [Laughs]"

"We take the song in sections, break it down," Smith adds. "Nicko will sit there with his sticks, playing on his knees, just watching what we're doing. For sorting out songs, acoustic is the way to go. Especially because the songs we do are quite complex — you can't just go hell for leather, straight into it."

With the song foundations in place, the band grabbed their electrics to finalize and record the tracks. Murray's ax of choice was his sunburst Fender Stratocaster "that I've been using live for the last 15, 20 years. It has Seymour Duncans on it. ... You can pretty much get anything out of it: from clean to heavy." Like Murray, Gers employed a live mainstay: his custom black Strat outfitted with Seymour Duncan JB's that Fender made him in the Nineties.

For his part, Smith says he relied primarily on his custom green Jackson San Dimas with the "really distressed classic maple neck," plus his custom Jackson 12-string and his "old faithful" Gibson Les Paul Goldtop Deluxe that he's had since he was 18. "It's a great all-singing, all-dancing guitar," Smith says of the San Dimas. "You can get a real Strat sound out of it [and a] heavy humbucker sound, and you've got the whammy bar."

The guys say they kept their studio setups relatively simple for *Senjutsu*. They opted for tried-and-true British amplification: Marshall JMP and 2000 valve amp for Murray, JVM for Smith and a 100-watt prototype Marshall built for Gers (based on an old 200-watt monster he used in "the Gillan band back in the day"). The guitarists often went direct into their amps and preferred minimal effects. "For solos I kicked in a couple pedals, like Uni-Vibes and some phases and flanges," Murray says, "and Kevin would add some stuff from his magic rack of effects."

Maiden spent a couple months in Paris tracking *Senjutsu*, and when the sessions wrapped "everybody went off with grand hopes," Murray recalls. "We were to get

"I enjoy the process of seeing a germ
of an idea turn into this sonic wave onstage.

**IT'S REALLY AN AMAZING
PROCESS...**

It can be very stressful, though!"

—ADRIAN SMITH

Adrian Smith with his
signature Jackson San
Dimas in 2018; "You
can get a real Strat
sound out of it [and
a] heavy humbucker
sound — and you've
got the whammy bar"



GONZALES PHOTO/TERJE DOKKEN/PYMCA/AVALON/UNIVERSAL IMAGES GROUP VIA GETTY



Dave Murray [left] and Janick Gers on stage in Helsinki, Finland, 2018

back together and carry on the Legacy of the Beast tour. Then things happened ..."

The "things," obviously, were the coronavirus pandemic and its fallout, which still have much of the music industry (and the world) in a state of sustained disruption. The Legacy of the Beast tour has been pushed back until 2022, but, thankfully, *Senjutsu* is here to hold us over.

Clearly, it's been a long journey to get this far — and the guitarists are beyond excited that fans are finally going to hear their latest opus. In the following Q&A, which has been condensed and collated for clarity, Murray, Smith and Gers discuss the roots of *Senjutsu*, how they weave Maiden's three-guitar "tapestry," the benefit of embracing musical imperfections and much more.

The pandemic continues to impact so many people's lives. Iron Maiden are no exception. Bruce getting sick is the latest unfortunate example. Has the guitar been a good distraction during these uncertain times?

ADRIAN SMITH Yeah it was, especially during the first part of it. I did a lot of woodshedding, recording and writing. I went through periods for weeks when I was in the studio every day, playing cover versions, working on my singing... It was a great distraction and outlet during a crazy time.

DAVE MURRAY I've been playing more acoustic than electric, actually ... just keeping my fingers in semi-match shape. [Laughs] Just playing for the fun of it. If we're sitting down watching a movie, I'll have a guitar on my lap to keep my fingers working. I've been listening to Django Reinhardt. I love his stuff; he's amazing. It's difficult to play and really pushes you. I like that gypsy jazz style of playing because it's fun, exciting, upbeat and happy... That's what I've been doing to keep my fingers on the pulse.

JANICK GERS I play guitar all the time. I have them all over the house. I pick them up and just muck around ... I don't consider it practice. I've never been one of those people to sit and practice for six hours. I play quite a lot, but [I'm not] running over scales. Music's not that for me. I just enjoy playing guitar to bring the emotions out in your playing.

When did you start writing for *Senjutsu*?

SMITH I started thinking about the album about a month or two before we went in the studio. I always had recording equipment, going back to the Eighties with a little four-track TEAC with the cassettes. I had "2 Minutes to Midnight," "Wasted Years" that kind of thing on there. Nowadays, Pro-Tools is an amazing tool for writing... I'm able to bring in fairly sketched-out demos. I had eight or 10 [demos] and various bits or pieces. The main song I had was "Senjutsu" — with the big Kodo drums at the beginning, going into a very dramatic soundscape... I enjoy the process of seeing a germ of an idea turn into this gigantic sonic wave onstage. It's really an amazing process... it can be very stressful, though!

MURRAY Sometimes the guys would come in with demos, other times they'd have riffs. Also, a lot of it was worked out in the studio completely from scratch.

GERS There's no set way we do the writing. "The Time Machine," I was intending that to be all acoustic. But I put a guide down on the electric and it sounded so eerie. I thought, Oh, there's something in there... So we ended up keeping that.

***Senjutsu* has some epic compositions on it. Was there a particular song, or guitar moment, that was especially difficult to pull off?**

MURRAY [Laughs] Good question... It's a lot of heavy riffs and difficult patterns on this

album. Complex pieces. A lot of it was getting the timing: If you're playing a melody line, sometimes you don't have to be *right* on the note. You can lag back or push it forward a little bit to create a different kind of feel.

SMITH The most difficult ones were the ones I wrote myself, because you're invested in them so personally... I had a lot of trouble with "The Writing on the Wall." You've got three guitars playing the same riff — an open D chord — and the intonation is crucial. It's simple, but it's got to have the three guitars ringing on that one D chord, and everyone plays the chord slightly differently. We started recording and people were like, "Oh yeah, it's going well." And I'm like, "Nope. It sounds sour and out of tune." I'm very sensitive to that. I had to take a break and walk around Paris for a couple hours to get my head straight. [Laughs] I think we ended up having one guitar play through and then the other guys overdubbed it.

GERS I think the challenging thing was the amount of melodies behind the vocal stuff... But it's not about me. I'm looking to bring the songs together. From that context I think everything seems to fit and it all feels good.

Janick, following up on your point of playing for the song: How would you say Dave and Adrian's styles complement your guitar playing in that pursuit?

GERS Dave has got a very legato sound to his playing, a much smoother style. Adrian's very rhythmic in his playing. He has a different sound to what Dave has, probably a bit more spikey. It's more of a rock-n-roll sound. Then I bring in a ragged, aggressive, edgy sound that can move in a different way than Dave and Adrian... When you put those ways of playing together they balance off each other and give it a different texture... You might have one guitar crashing, one chugging, one playing behind the vocal melody — it's kind of like a tapestry. All the guitarists in the band are quite dynamic; we can all pull a solo off if we need to... [But] it's not about ego, it's about letting other people step forward and helping the song along. If we were egotistical, it wouldn't work. It would just be guitar battles flying all over the place. It's supposed to be about emotion.

***Senjutsu* does have a lot of emotionally evocative moments. I'm thinking about "The Parchment," the lyrical solos and stirring guitar harmonies...**

MURRAY There's some mysterious melodies there. It almost reminds me of a movie soundtrack theme...

SMITH I don't actually write a lot of guitar harmonies in my stuff. I did a little bit on this album, but Steve is crazy for this. He loves guitar harmonies... I'll take what



"I think your guitar playing changes when you get older.

**THERE'S NO
NEED TO GO MAD
ALL THE TIME"**

—JANICK GERS

Janick Gers with his favorite Strat in 2015: "I play guitar quite a lot, but [I'm not] running over scales. Music's not that for me"

he writes and put it into a musically [correct form], and he'll say, "No, that sounds too formal." So, he'll get you to play a harmony and then finish on a unison. Or Dave and I will play something and clash, and he'll go, "Ah no, leave that. I like that." So, it's not just like putting a guitar through a harmonizer, it's got a different edge to it.

You've all had long and influential careers with Maiden. What is the biggest area in which you've grown as players since you first started?

GERS Um, that's for the people to say, really. [Laughs] ... I think your guitar playing changes when you get older. There's no need to go mad all the time. It depends on what the other guitar player is doing. If he's playing a nice melody there's no point in you playing the same thing. You're trying to make the song interesting. It's not about you.

SMITH As far as composition goes, I seem to be more prolific these days. ... Years ago, it was a struggle to write something. You'd bring in your ideas and sit there with your guitar [volume] on number one, really clean, and tell the guys, "Here it goes." That is difficult. You're bearing your soul ... to a bunch of hairy-ass musicians. [Laughs] But now I can take in my nice Pro Tools demos, and they get the picture straight away.

As far as playing goes, I grew up singing and playing in a band, so I wasn't focused 100 percent on guitar. My influences were more [a] bluesy kind of rock. Of course, I loved Ritchie Blackmore, but I had no idea what he was doing. [Laughs] I couldn't play that. But Pat Travers, Johnny Winter, Paul Kossoff, the Thin Lizzy guitarists ... you could get more of the idea. I took that with me in Maiden the first time. ... And Dave taught me some stuff and away I went. Then when I left the band [in 1990] I worked with different people. I learned a lot from Roy Z, who was the guitarist in Bruce's band. [Editor's note: Dickinson left Maiden in 1993 to focus on his solo career. He rejoined in 1999.] He was very well schooled in technique, and he had a good way of putting it across. It really transformed my playing. So when I rejoined Maiden [in 1999] I felt a lot more confident — especially playing over fast stuff and alternate picking.

MURRAY I think now I feel more open to listen to any type of music. Back then it was blues or rock and that's it! [Laughs] Now I listen to all sorts of music: jazz and some country rock stuff that's coming out now, because a lot of it is very heavy. Also, fusion ... complicated stuff like Al Di Meola, or anyone who's playing something you don't expect. I keep going to Django, but that guy was amazing. For guitarists, and all musicians, it's about expression. You don't need to just play fast to express yourself. As they say: one note sounds better than a thousand notes a lot of the time. For guitarists, just enjoy what you're doing. It's like ... guitar should be a form of therapy. And everybody needs that at the moment. [Laughs] **GW**



"Some of [*The Atlas Underground Fire*] was recorded with that guitar of mine that looks like an SG, but it's not—it's a \$50 Kay, my first guitar," Tom Morello says

SENDING UP A FLARE

Sedulous tone maverick

T O M M O R E L L O

explains how simply recording big, hairy, gnarly guitar riffs into his iPhone became his “life raft for sanity,” getting him out of his bunker, forging new connections and birthing a creative oasis amid the chaos



TOM MORELLO HAD BIG PLANS FOR 2020 — first and foremost, a world tour with a reunited Rage Against the Machine that would’ve seen him rocking stages from Pittsburgh to Prague, Kansas City to Krakow. Instead, like all of us, he was stuck at home. “Pretty frankly, it was a time of great anxiety and depression,” Morello admits to *Guitar World*.

But then something shocking happened. “Weirdly,” he continues, “inspiration came... from Kanye West.”

Let us state for the record that, no, Morello has not collaborated with the hip-hop icon. Rather, he found encouragement in something West had said in an interview. “He was talking about how he recorded the vocals to a couple of his big hit records on the voice memo of his phone,” Morello recalls. “And I thought to myself, well, I have a voice memo on my phone. Can I just record guitar riffs that way? So I did.” Those riffs, he continues, “sounded kind of great, so I started sending them out

to various engineers and producers around the world. And that was the genesis for *The Atlas Underground Fire*.”

The follow-up to Morello’s 2018 solo effort, *The Atlas Underground*, the new *The Atlas Underground Fire* is built on a similar foundation, with Morello collaborating with a variety of musicians in a wide range of genres, from rock (Bruce Springsteen and Eddie Vedder on a cover of AC/DC’s “Highway to Hell”), metal (Bring Me the Horizon on “Let’s Get the Party Started”) and country (Chris Stapleton on “The War Inside”) to punk (the Refused’s Dennis Lyxzén on “Save Our Souls”), alternative (Grandson on “Hold the Line”) and reggae (Damian Marley on “The Achilles List”). “It was sort of a free-for-all creative process,” Morello says. “The Atlas Underground project allows me to go well outside my safety zone.”

That’s particularly evident in Morello’s deep exploration of electronic music — the new record features a slew of artists that inhabit various corners of the EDM world, including Mike Posner, Phantogram, Protohype and Sama’ Abdulhadi — which he says is foundational to the Atlas Underground spirit.

Morello performs with
Prophets of Rage at O2
Shepherd's Bush Empire
in London, August 12, 2019

"There was a reason why all those Rage Against
the Machine and Audioslave records said,

**'ALL SOUNDS MADE
BY GUITAR, BASS
AND DRUMS.'**

I was stealing from other genres, but finding a
way to make it come through a Marshall stack"



"What I've tried to do is create this alloy between two worlds. It's a cyborg — you don't know where the guitar ends and the EDM begins. To me, that feels like an exciting future for the electric guitar."

As for what *The Atlas Underground Fire* offered Morello in the present? "It allowed me to get out of the bunker," he says. "It was a way to create connections and find a musical community in a time of absolute isolation. Really, it was a life raft for sanity."

Is *The Atlas Underground Fire* a record that would have been made had it not been for the pandemic?

Heavens no. This is a record that was born of lockdown. From the time I was 17 years old to the time that the world shut down in March of 2020, I've had a nonstop creative motor on me of writing, recording and performing. And it all came to a screeching halt. For the first four months or so I was absolutely adrift. You know, I have a nice studio in my house, but I don't know how to work it. Like, I don't know how to move any of the buttons around. So I was like, "I'm not going to be able to play shows. I'm not going to be able to record music." But then I was reading an interview where Kanye West said he recorded the vocals to a couple of his big hit records using the voice memo on his phone. So I did that.

I'm imagining you seated in front of a big mixing desk, surrounded by gear in your fully stocked studio... with a little phone propped up on the console for you to record into.

[Laughs] Yeah. On a little folding chair. My laptop's open so I can have, like, the BPMs in my ears or whatever, and the phone is balanced on the edge of the laptop on a chair facing the amp. But you know, there's no manual that says, like, "The voice memo of your iPhone needs to be 8.4 inches away from the top left speaker..." I just set it up on a chair. And I've gotta tell you, the guitar sounded pretty freaking great. And a couple months in I did get a little mic to put on the actual phone. One of the guys that I work with was finally like, "Dude, we've gotta help you out in some way!"

How did working in this way influence the record?

It really affected the way I play and write. Because this is, what? My 21st studio album? And probably 20 of those records were made with four or five people in a room. I couldn't do that this time. So necessity being the mother of invention, the process wasn't, "Hey, let's jam, let's get a vibe in the room and see how it's going." It was "Here's the four biggest, hairiest, gnarliest riffs that I came up with today. Who should I send those to?" And maybe I'd send those to Bring Me the Horizon. And then the next day maybe it was, "I've got an idea for the solo

for 'Highway to Hell.' I'll send that to Bruce Springsteen." Every day was kind of this creative oasis in the middle of all the chaos.

So you weren't necessarily writing with specific collaborators in mind.

No. It was really just a free-for-all creative process. For example, the song that starts the record, "Harlem Hellfighter," I had four or five big-ass riffs that were low-hanging fruit on that particular day. And so I sent them to Jon Levine, who's a producer friend of mine that I've always wanted to work with. I said, "What do you think of these?" And he's like, "I'll get to work." And he sent me back a track that I could play over. Then the next day I had a few riffs that Bring Me the Horizon responded to, and that song was recorded on three continents — South America, Europe and North America. We just sent tracks back and forth. Actually, a number of the songs had very sort of extraordinary recording circumstances. Mike Posner, on "Naraka" — which is the Hindu word for "hell" — from the time we began working on the song until the time we finished it, he summited Mount Everest. Some of those vocals were recorded at 25,000 feet.

I recently read an article about climbers who attempt to summit Mount Everest. They don't always make it back.

They don't all survive. You pass the bodies going up and down. It's pretty crazy.

Mike Posner is one of several "non-rock" artists on *The Atlas Underground Fire*. What excites you about bringing the electric guitar into these other sonic realms?

I firmly believe that the electric guitar is the greatest instrument to ever be invented by mankind. There is no instrument with more power and nuance. There's nothing like the electric guitar — you can go anywhere with it, from a gorgeous Segovia classical piece to, you know, Sepultura destroying a stadium somewhere. But I think the electric guitar has a future, not just a past. And so working with artists who push me beyond what I've been comfortable doing before is very important to me. I always want to anchor the thing with the Sabbath/Zeppelin/Deep Purple riffs that are my bread and butter, but I never want to be stagnant. I always want to challenge myself and try to play stuff that I never imagined.

That seems to be an ongoing theme throughout your career.

Well, there've been countless times when people have counted the electric guitar-slash-rock-'n'-roll out, you know? And one of those times was when people were like, "You can sample electric guitar, so you don't need a guitar player anymore. A DJ can do that." So I said, "Well, I'm going to be the

DJ, only with a Marshall stack and my bare hands." Then when electronica came along there were all these acts like the Crystal Method and the Prodigy that were great rock 'n' roll bands that didn't necessarily have guitar in them. And I would approximate the sounds and the textures of that vibe, only, again, using my guitar and my bare hands. There was a reason why all those Rage Against the Machine and Audioslave records said, "All sounds made by guitar, bass and drums." Because I was literally stealing from other genres, but finding a way to make it come through a Marshall stack.

Looking at the more traditional rock aspects of *The Atlas Underground Fire*, you bring in Bruce Springsteen and Eddie Vedder to duet on a cover of AC/DC's "Highway to Hell." What's the backstory there?

Well, Bruce and Eddie and I have a history with "Highway to Hell." When I was playing with the E Street Band in 2014, we were in Perth, Australia, the home of Bon Scott, and I wanted to pay my respects at his grave. So I'm wandering around this Perth-ian graveyard at, like, 11:30 at night, and I'm unable to find it. I'm out there for about an hour, and then out in the distance comes this motorbike, like this little light in the cemetery. And this dude rides up — a heavy-set dude with a German WWII motorcycle helmet on and a T-shirt that reads "I don't give a shit, but if I did, you're the one I'd give it to." I'm like, "This guy is going to know where Bon Scott's grave is!"

Did he?

Sure enough, he did. So he shows me, I pay my respects, and I go back to the hotel. And when I get there I see Bruce in the bar. And I'm like, "Bruce, since we're here in Australia, do you think there's any way that the circle of the E Street Band and the circle of AC/DC might overlap?" And he goes, "I never really thought about that before, but I'll think about it now." And over the course of the next few days, we started rehearsing "Highway to Hell" at soundcheck. Then we were playing this huge soccer stadium in Melbourne, and Eddie Vedder happened to be at the show because he was on a solo tour at the time. And I had an idea. I knock on Bruce's door and I say, "We are in Australia, the land where AC/DC is king. What if we open the show with 'Highway to Hell' with Eddie Vedder?" And he was like, "That sounds like a good idea!" And we did. And if you think you've seen an audience go nuts? You haven't — unless you were there on that night. It was crazy.

So when I was making this record with a lot of great young artists on it — Phantogram, Grandson, Mike Posner, Protohype, Phem — I knew I wanted a song with my rock brothers on it. And I reflected back to that night and the transcendent apex moment of rock



Bruce Springsteen [left] and Morello on stage in Sydney, Australia, March 18, 2013

power that that felt like. I put the track together, sent it to Bruce. He sang two takes, and then I sent that to Eddie. And that's how it came together.

What gear did you use on the record?

Well, the advantage of being kind of trapped in my studio was that I would just go in there and pick up a guitar to be the flavor of the day. Some of the music was recorded on the "Arm the Homeless" guitar. Some of it was recorded with that guitar of mine that looks like an SG, but it's not — it's a \$50 Kay, my first guitar. I used my Audioslave-era Les Paul that I burned the Budweiser logo off of, the Soul Power [Stratocaster] guitar, the "Sendero Luminoso" Telecaster, the Jimmy Page [Gibson EDS-1275] double-neck... There was a complete freedom in the recording of the ideas on whatever day. It was just like, "I'm here alone, what guitar do I want to play? I've got 90 minutes until the grandmas and kids start screaming, so let's get in as much rock 'n' roll as I can!"

How about amps?

Pretty much just my regular Marshall half stack, the [JCM800] 2205. That's where the folding chair was — in front of that amp — so that's where I rested my phone, and that became the setup. As far as effects, a big part of the record was done with one of those little [Electro-Harmonix] POG pedals. It allows you to kind of sound like two gui-

tars and a distorted bass all at once, and so I relied on that pretty heavily. I also had the [Way Huge] Swollen Pickle, and then the Space Station, which DigiTech made in 1994 or something, trying to copy all my sounds and jam it into one shitty pedal. [Laughs] I still use that one.

Although you were more or less using your traditional gear, do you feel the tones came out differently due to the fact that they were being recorded through your phone?

It is a little bit different. But it is what it is. And there's something very liberating about that. I've always been about embracing limitations, and this was a pretty significant limitation. Not sonically, because the guitars from beginning to end sound pretty great, and they do it sometimes in different and unexpected ways, which I think is healthy. But the way I had to create changed the way I created. Normally if I'm doing a guitar solo I'll record a bunch of takes and listen back to them, and maybe there's some piecing together of this part and that part. But this time I would just blow into the phone and go, "Let's call that one 'Wednesday.'" Like, the "Highway to Hell" solo? That was a Wednesday, man. It was great to be able to let go like that and let the chips fall where they may. It felt like there was a lot of very intuitive playing on this record, and there were a lot of riffs that went in different directions than they would have had I spent

a lot of time overthinking things.

Not only were you attempting to reevaluate the role of the guitar in popular music, but also how, as a rock guitar player, you can create with and record the instrument in the studio.

Oh, absolutely. I mean, the first cornerstone of my playing is unapologetically and uncompromisingly big rock 'n' roll, and I will never budge an inch on that. That's what I get off on the most, going back to the first AC/DC and Kiss and Led Zeppelin posters on my wall. That just feels right and feels like home. At the same time, the other cornerstone of my playing has been to just disregard anything that has to do with tradition, whether it's melody or tone or sound, or even what part of the guitar to look at as a sound-maker.

You hear that on *The Atlas Underground Fire*.

That's been the common thread through everything, whether it's an Atlas Underground record or an Audioslave record. I need to feel a jam move air, but I also want it to challenge me. Vernon Reid called it the "What the fuck" factor, you know? Like, when you put on a record and you hear what must be a guitar but can't possibly be a guitar, you're like, "What the fuck?" I remember thinking about that over and over again as a young person, and as a young guitar player. Every record I make, I try to have as many What the fuck? factors as possible. **GW**

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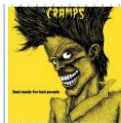
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QUEEN OF *The* STONE AGE

POISON IVY RORSCHACH WAS THE GUITARIST, SONGWRITER AND PRODUCER OF THE CRAMPS.

She never got the credit she deserved — but maybe it's not too late. In this previously unpublished interview, she looks back over decades of hoodlum music...



THEY CAME OUTTA Sacramento, California, and Akron, Ohio, their heads full of B-movie violence, cut-throat rock 'n' roll and fetish-mag filth. They were the Cramps. The men looked like creeps and killers. The woman, Poison Ivy, looked like a high priestess or a Fifties movie queen. In a flip of the usual showbiz dynamic, the singer wore high heels and ended almost every gig naked while his partner — the woman — ran the show. She produced, managed, wrote the music, played the guitar and frequently reached over to tune the guitars of her bandmates.

They might have seemed deviant, but the Cramps nevertheless played all-American music — the kind of music that had rocked the country before the British Invasion — a Frankenstein's monster stitched together out of the blues, doo-wop, rockabilly, country, R&B, exotica, garage rock, psychedelia, instro-surf and more. The Cramps were rock 'n' roll as remodeled by Roger Corman, Russ Meyer and John Waters. Their sound — and that of the music they popularized and reintroduced — echoes in the movies of Quentin Tarantino and haunts the soundtracks of Angelo Badalamenti.

They hung out with the Ramones and toured with the Police. The White Stripes owe them. Queens of the Stone Age covered

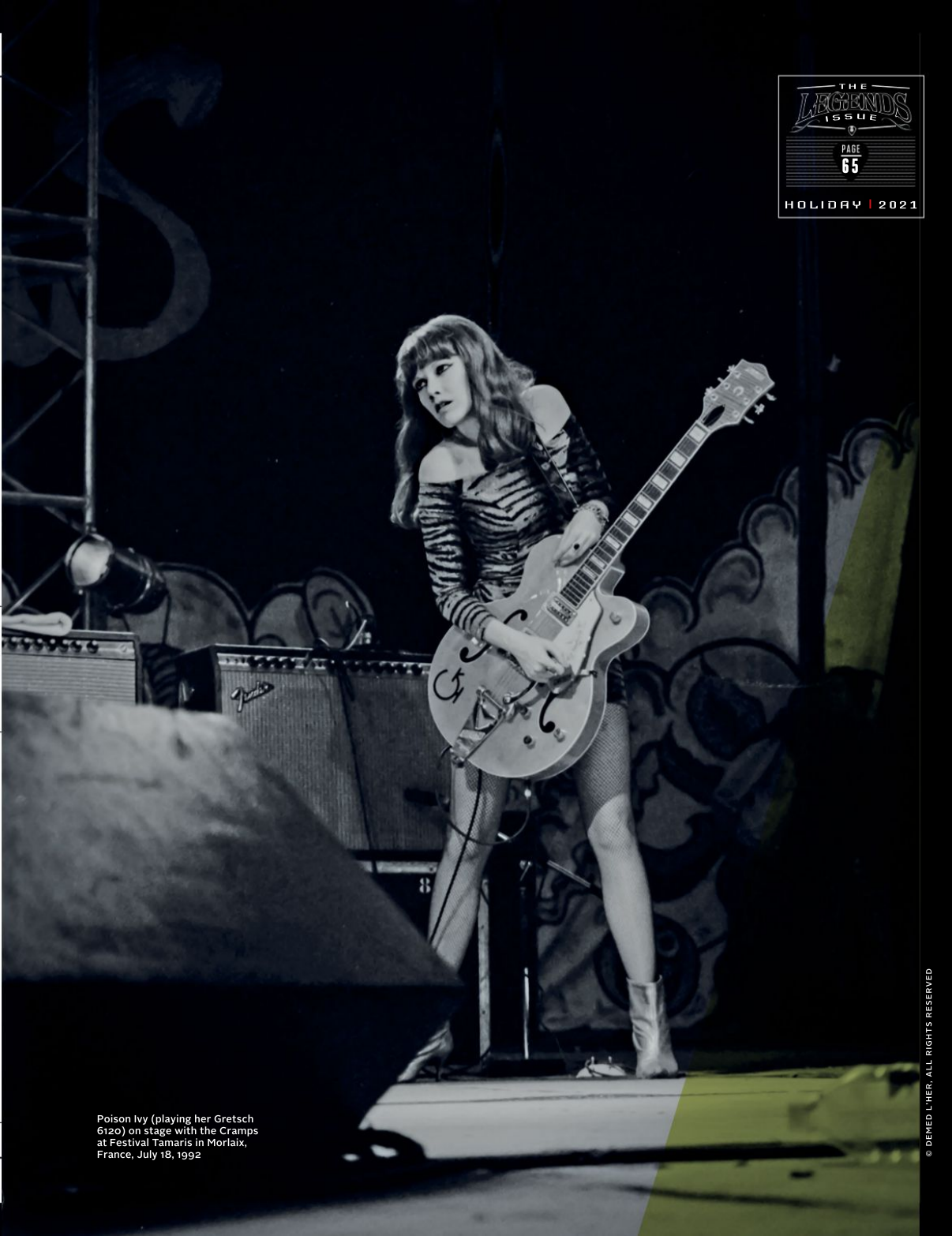
them. Nick Cave nicked two of their band members. My Bloody Valentine's Kevin Shields told *Guitar World* that he formed a band because of Cave's the Birthday Party and the Cramps. Fugazi/Minor Threat's Ian MacKaye once claimed that a Cramps gig kick-started the D.C. hardcore scene.

They were an influence on grunge, pioneered psychobilly and they spilled over into goth. They made other rock 'n' roll revivalists — with their songs about drive-ins and hot rods — look lame. The Cramps, you see, were born bad and stayed sick. Their songs were about drugs and sex, monsters and perverts.

They were dangerous, yeah. But, man, they were funny.

And at their heart was a couple. For all the drugs, deviance and delirium, the story of the Cramps is a *love story* — the story of Lux Interior (vocals, words) and Poison Ivy Rorschach (guitars, music). Lux took the vocal tics of rock 'n' roll and exaggerated and amplified them: stuttering, hiccupping, yelping and gulping for air. Equally, Ivy made her guitar squawk like a chicken or buzz like a fly. She took the mannerisms of Duane Eddy, Link Wray and Dick Dale and turned them up a notch. She took reverb, tremolo, sustain and fuzz — those bad, bad boys — and whipped 'em into shape, handcuffing them to licks sharper than stilettos. Other band members came and went. It didn't matter: Lux and Ivy were the Cramps.

WORDS BY SCOTT ROWLEY | PHOTO BY DEMED L'HER



Poison Ivy (playing her Gretsch 6120) on stage with the Cramps at Festival Tamaris in Morlaix, France, July 18, 1992

When Lux died suddenly in 2009 (from aortic dissection — his heart literally burst) the story ended. Ivy went underground — and *still* doesn't get the credit she's due. I interviewed her in 2003 for the guitar magazine I worked on at the time. I got a new job weeks later and the interview was never used. Until now.

"Nobody ever talks to me about music or guitar," she once said. "I'm the queen of rock 'n' roll, and for this not to be recognized is pure sexism."

Bow down before your queen.

IN THE BEGINNING, there was The Chord.

"Link Wray is all about The Chord," Ivy says. "A monumental chord and the drama of it. It's very haunting, stark. He had that thing I call 'the grind' — that really fast, grinding, dead strumming. With Link Wray it's about the chords and the drama. It sounds dangerous to me, it sounds spooky."

And alongside The Chord comes The Note.

"With Duane Eddy, it's all about The Note," she says. "A single note, just the ultimate twang. Duane Eddy also sounds spooky. They both have drama. He had those backing vocals that sound like they're ghosts, y'know, from hell. They just sound like they're dead to me. I always pictured it like they'd been on a chicken run or something and got killed and now there they are, howling away on Duane Eddy records. His early stuff like 'Ramrod' and 'Stalkin' was just rough, dangerous hoodlum music. That's who bought that stuff."

And once you've got The Note and The Chord, the final ingredient in this hoodlum gumbo is... aggression?

"Another guitarist I love is Ike Turner," she says. "He produced a lot, and he considered himself more of a piano player, but his guitar playing was totally unique. He musta got a Stratocaster the day it came out and he went nuts with the vibrato bar. It's insane. If you see pictures, he has these really long fingers and huge hands wrapped around a skinny Stratocaster neck."

A fascination with Jack Nitzsche's 1963 hit "The Lonely Surfer" led Ivy — or Kristy Marlana Wallace, as she was known then — to pester her older brother Jerry into showing her the basics of guitar playing. "Then when I was a teenager, I got even more interested," she says. "I had boyfriends that played guitar, and I was more interested in the guitar than I was in them. I would trick them into teaching me things."

Her life changed on Valentine's Day 1970 — the day she went to the Sacramento Memorial Auditorium to see Quicksilver Messenger Service, supported by Eric Burdon's War and Bo Diddley. It was a light-bulb moment. Diddley had long included a

female guitar player in his band. From 1957 to 1962 he had Lady Bo, aka Peggy Jones — aka "the Queen Mother of Guitar" — who played on classic singles like "Hey! Bo Diddley," "Mona" and "Road Runner."

When Jones left to go solo, Bo replaced her with another female player, the Duchess, aka Norma-Jean Wofford. Norma-Jean lasted until 1966. Bo apparently replaced her with a series of women he called the Duchess, but it's possible that the woman Ivy saw that night in Sacramento was actually Lady Bo, who had returned to the touring band that year.

Whoever she saw, the powerful woman onstage playing rock 'n' roll and oozing sex and style made an impact. "That did it," Ivy later told an interviewer. "They did all this synchronized box-step dancing, and she was in gold lamé. That just burned through my brain permanently."

By the time she met Lux, then called Erick Lee Purkhiser, she was an outsider and confirmed rock 'n' roll obsessive. (Was it Ivy's outsider status that led her to guitar playing? "Maybe it was," she says. "I didn't even think of that 'til you said it, but maybe that made it easier for me to consider playing guitar because I was such a misfit anyway. Maybe it's harder for someone who fits in to do that. For me, anything was fair game.") In Erick she had met her match. He was as batshit crazy about rock 'n' roll as she was, and they set about forming the Cramps.

In an age when band names were getting more abstract — Iron Butterfly, Aerosmith, Grand Funk Railroad — they wanted an old-school name like the Kinks, and they came up with one that referenced menstrual cramps. Kristy had already become Poison Ivy in 1973. The name came from the Leiber and Stoller-penned 1959 Coasters hit. "She's pretty as a daisy," go the "Poison Ivy" lyrics, "but look out, man, she's crazy / She'll really do you in / If you let her get under your skin." Seemingly about a dangerous female, and therefore befitting Poison Ivy's tough-gal schtick, Jerry Lieber later admitted the song was "a metaphor for a sexually transmitted disease — the clap."

Her band was named after period pains — and she was named after VD. Sex and danger were there from the beginning. "Lux and Ivy were rock 'n' roll names," she says. "We were 24-hours-a-day rock 'n' rollers."

IN A METHOD that prefigured sampling, throughout their career the Cramps borrowed bits and pieces from obscure tracks to make their own material. On their first single, "Human Fly," Ivy makes her guitar sound like the buzzing of a fly, in the same manner as the Tune Rockers' 1958 novelty hit "The Green Mosquito." The Riptides' "Machine Gun" and Bo Diddley's "Dancing Girl" went through the blender and were squirted out

"Maybe [being an outsider] made it easier for me to consider playing guitar —

BECAUSE I WAS SUCH A MISFIT ANYWAY.

Maybe it's harder for someone who fits in to do that"



as "Call of the Wighat." Ivy borrowed the intro chords of the Instrumentals' "Chop Suey Rock" (and Lux rewired the lyrics from Dall Raney and the Umbrellas' 1964 single "A Cat Called Domino." Sometimes the songs were so wild, and so perfectly welded to the Cramps' aesthetic, that you couldn't believe they were covers; take the Novas' "The Crusher" — a twisted "dance" record



[left] Bo Diddley band guitarist the Duchess (aka Norma-Jean Wofford) with a Gretsch Cadillac in the late Fifties.
[above] The Cramps' Lux Interior and Poison Ivy in action in Belgium, March 8, 1990

that instructs you to eye-gouge and “squeeze your partner’s head until she’s blue in the face.” Or Ronnie Cook and the Gaylads’ 1962 novelty song “Goo Goo Muck,” transformed into a sinister Duane Eddy-esque nightmare for the Cramps’ second album, *Psychodelic Jungle* (The lyric “I’m the night head-hunter looking for a head” changed to “looking for *some* head”). It turns out that American music in the Fifties and Sixties was some sick shit.

Ironically, this musical archeology was inspired by the British Invasion. “The first Led Zeppelin album came out when I was a kid,” she says. “I played it to death. It’s interesting to me now that bands that are influenced by Led Zeppelin don’t go back to the

things that Led Zeppelin and the Yardbirds would’ve been influenced by. They only go back to Zeppelin and Aerosmith. With us, we’d take it right back.

“My favorite Rolling Stones period is the early Sixties. That’s what got us into all the things the Rolling Stones were into — Howlin’ Wolf and Sonny Boy Williamson and all that. Everyone we knew did that. Everybody who was into the Kinks and the Rolling Stones was also buying all those blues records.”

The Cramps guitar sound came naturally. “I had one thing as a kind of criteria,” she says. “We loved Chuck Berry, but we had a rule that we wouldn’t do Chuck Berry licks. All rock ‘n’ roll from the Sixties, going into

the Seventies, was based on Chuck Berry, at the exclusion of any other influence. So even though we loved Chuck, we decided to do all we could to not have that influence. There was too much, y’know?”

Even the Sex Pistols had Chuck Berry licks. “Yeah. And it’s astounding; you never would hear Link Wray influences or Duane Eddy. We couldn’t figure it out because it was pure rock ‘n’ roll. It’s as monumental as Chuck Berry, and for it to be ignored seemed strange. So to this day, it’s a rule: we will not throw in a Chuck Berry riff.”

Do you have any other rules like that? “Uh, yeah. But I don’t know if I want to say ‘em.”

Oh, go on.

Lux Interior and Poison Ivy storm the Palace in Hollywood, January 27, 1995; "I had boyfriends that played guitar... I would trick them into teaching me things," Ivy says



"No," she laughs. "They're fetishes, mainly. Just pure fetish. But we're in a position to demand our fetishes and get them. No one ever complains. People say, 'If you join their band you'll be a slave to their whims.' But what's so bad about that? We have really *good* whims, so what's wrong with being a slave to that? I would have loved that opportunity."

For the early part of their career, Ivy played a Bill Lewis guitar — made in Vancouver, and perhaps most famous as the guitar David Gilmour used on much of Pink Floyd's *The Dark Side of the Moon* — that was broken after a security guard fell down some stairs with it after a gig in Paris. From the mid Eighties onwards, she played a 1958 Gretsch 6120, with patent-applied-for Filter'Tron pickups and a Bigsby. Her standby guitar was a reissue Gretsch 6120 Junior with TV Jones pickups. Both are strung with D'Addario XL115 strings, .011-.049.

Some people say Gretsch guitars don't stay in tune. Not Ivy; she insists that she has always had an *understanding* with hers. "Yeah, it's uncanny how much mine *does* stay in tune," she says.

"People say they can't believe it. I think it's a psychic relationship I have with it. An agreement. Sometimes it's hard to keep in tune if it's cold, and studios are cold, unfortunately, so I get tuning problems there. We did a show at London's Brixton Academy once and I couldn't stay in tune through one song because it was *freezing*. But if it's warm enough, that guitar will just work with me.

And, uh [*stern voice*], it'd *better*. We have an understanding."

Live, she used a Blackface Fender Twin Reverb. "But in the studio I like to record with small amps, just totally cranked." It was something she learned from British guitarist Chris Spedding, who produced the band's first demos. "It's not really good to fill the room with sound leaking," she says. "It's better to have a small amp with a good sound. I have this beautiful-sounding Valco amp. Valco made National and Supro, evolved out of Chicago. Just one 10-inch speaker, beautiful reverb and tremolo, and I've been using that at least since [1990's] *Stay Sick!*"

THE CRAMPS MADE eight studio albums and one classic live album (1983's *Smell of Female*), but their career was dogged by record company politics. 1986's career high point *A Date with Elvis* — a delirious, hilarious album on which Ivy played all the guitars and bass, and produced it too — didn't come out in the US until 1990. *Flamejob* [1994] came out on Creation Records and was buried as founder Alan McGee had a drugs-induced breakdown and their new signings, Oasis, went stratospheric. ("Creation crapped on us," Ivy says. In what way? "In every way.")

Early co-guitarists like Bryan Gregory and Kid Congo Powers got more credit than they were due, even though Gregory was really employed for his looks; he couldn't

tune his guitar and would wander over to Ivy's side of the stage for her to help out. "Bryan was mainly more of a visual thing. It's hard to say what he brought, guitar-wise. I had to do a lot of his parts on the albums, simply because he wouldn't even show up.

"Kid Congo had a unique style," she says. "On that first Gun Club album [*Editor's Note: The Cramps poached Kid Congo from Cramps-inspired LA rockers the Gun Club*], Ward Dotsen's the guitarist, and he's so good, but the parts he's playing were parts that the Kid was doing in the Gun Club. But again he was someone who couldn't tune his guitar."

The album that turned out to be their last — 2003's *Fiends of Dope Island* — featured a classic sign-off from Lux that was borne out of the two of them at home watching a music-awards show. "The big rock awards / Crowned a brand-new king," go the lyrics. "It shoulda been me instead / Don't they know that I'm Elvis Fucking Christ?"

"We were watching some awards show and Lux was like, 'Aw, you're kidding! If those guys are the kings of rock 'n' roll then I must be Elvis fucking Christ!'"

He was, too. The guy could eat up a stage.

"It goes back to the rock 'n' roll tradition of boasting — like Bo Diddley and Howlin' Wolf," she says.

"It's a blues tradition to boast about yourself that *you're* the king, with the biggest dick, the biggest queen, whatever."

The king might be dead, but the Queen of Rock 'n' Roll is still out there somewhere. Ma'am, we salute you. **GW**



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Jerry Cantrell with a still-unannounced (as of this writing) Gibson signature-model acoustic — the same guitar that appears in Cantrell's "Atone" music video

CANTRELL THEN & NOW



JERRY CANTRELL DISSECTS ALICE IN CHAINS'

rollicking past, present and future (including their eye-opening 1991 tour with Van Halen) and sheds boundless light on *Brighten*, his highly anticipated new solo album

JERRY CANTRELL LIKES TO KEEP NOSTALGIA at arm's length. "I never look back too much," he says. "I think if you spend too much time on the past, you're not moving forward. I was never the kind of guy to just kick back and cruise. I'm always thinking about getting over the mountain. I try to keep my eye on what's in front of me."

Even so, the guitarist is happy to spend part of our interview strolling down memory lane, reflecting on those years — now three decades ago — when his band Alice in Chains, along with

fellow Seattleites Soundgarden, Pearl Jam, Nirvana and others, fused punk, hard rock and metal for a sound that revolutionized music. "It was a cool time," he says. "It was very personal, and that's what made it cool. It was exclusive to you and your buddies and your extended friends who would show up to gigs. The musical community in Seattle was going on for a couple of years, and you could feel something percolating. It was just a good energy. Everybody was in a fucking band."

As for how he now feels looking back at that era in the rear-view mirror, Cantrell lets out a thoughtful sigh. "Sometimes that whole period feels like yesterday; other times it feels like it's an eternity ago," he says. "I think we all know that the clock moves a little bit faster than you'd like. Most of the time, it's a good distance away, but I have those other moments, too."

For most people, time stood still throughout much of 2020 during the initial wave of the COVID pandemic, and Cantrell was no exception — in virtual lockdown, he was forced to stay close to his home base in Seattle. Before COVID hit, he had just recorded most of the basics for his new solo album (a three-way production he shares with Tyler Bates and Paul Figueroa) in Los Angeles, and once he returned to Seattle he resumed work on the record at home studios in one-on-one sessions, or by sending files back and forth between musicians.

In a strange way, Cantrell almost welcomed the isolation. "I was glad to have something to work on through the whole thing," he says. "To be honest, it didn't feel very different from other recordings — being in a studio feels like you're in a submarine or a cave for months anyway. The only difference was the stress of worrying that nobody got sick, or more important, getting anybody sick. We were all trying to figure it out together, as was the entire globe, with the little information we had, learning a little more as time went on."

Depending on how you keep score, *Brighten* is either Cantrell's third or fourth solo album (in 1998 he issued *Boggy Depot*, and 2002 saw the release of *Degradation Trips, Volumes 1 and 2*), and as the record's optimistic and walloping title track suggests, the guitarist is in a pretty good place these days. Perhaps owing to the prevailing notion that he's a grim and gloomy dude, he lets out a warm laugh and says, "I feel like I've been in a pretty good place most of my life. I've been a lucky fellow to be able to make something that I care about and use my creativity as an artist, and also as a way to support myself. It's my job."

Cantrell kicks *Brighten* off with "Atone," a dusty and bluesy roar that seems to encapsulate everything about his signature sound — the gnashing stacked guitars, sweet-and-sour vocal harmonies and a king-sized riff that sticks to your ribs — in one neat package. There are few shades of darkness and solemnity; "Siren Song" is a heavy-duty mood piece, and the album closes with a chilling cover of Elton John's "Goodbye" that pairs doom-drenched guitars with swelling orchestral strings. But for the most part, Cantrell imbues his songs with a feeling that's startlingly sunny. Thanks to the pedal steel licks of Michael Rozon, a breezy Americana charm blows through country rockers "Prism of Doubt"

and "Black Hearts and Evil Done." And the gutbucket swagger of "Dismembered" echoes the freewheeling, down-home vibe of early Seventies Stones.

Among the tight-knit group of players Cantrell enlisted for *Brighten* (Gil Sharone and Abe Laboriel Jr. share drumming duties) is his longtime friend and fellow Seattleite Duff McKagan. "Like me, Duff's also got another band that's pretty good," Cantrell quips. On some tracks, McKagan came up with his own bass ideas, while on other cuts he deferred to Cantrell, preferring the guitarist's bass performances on demos. And on a couple of other songs, the two would "Frankenstein" parts, passing a bass back and forth between them. "Duff was very cool and would say, 'You should keep that part you played. I don't know if I can do it justice,'" Cantrell recalls. "I have such respect for him. He's a dear friend and a fellow Washingtonian. It really meant a lot to me to have him on the record."

If his own listening tastes are any kind of gauge, the guitarist thinks *Brighten* will have some legs once it's released. "Whenever somebody else hears a record, the artist is well fucking tired of it," Cantrell says. "I've been living with this one a lot longer than I normally would, and it still sounds good to me. It's got some light and some space and some things that are unique. You want to be familiar enough that you don't lose people, but at the same time, you want to get into some territory that maybe you haven't covered yet. And I think that this record is full of that. It's just a real rock 'n' roll record."

Staying with Seattle for a bit, I'm curious: In the late Eighties, before Alice in Chains got signed, and before the town became the epicenter for grunge, did you guys think that maybe you should relocate to New York or L.A.?

Actually, I think the reason we were able to develop into what we were was because we weren't in L.A. or New York, where the record companies were. We were outside the view a little bit until somebody started to notice. Soundgarden kind of started it off when they signed with A&M. Sub Pop was definitely a thing, but what took it world-wide was Soundgarden going to a major and [Mother] Love Bone getting a deal. Then we got signed by Columbia, and it just kept rolling.

In the early days of the band, was it hard for Alice to get gigs? Was the band embraced on the scene pretty quickly?

There weren't a whole lot of places to play at first. There were a couple of bars — the Central Tavern, the Vogue. We would play anywhere. We played VFW halls and roller rinks. There was an old converted garage; I remember going to see Mudhoney

"[The Van Halen tour] was really impactful from a career standpoint and also just an achievement level of, like, 'WOW, I GUESS WE CAN PLAY WITH THESE GUYS'."

there. We would just make do. It was really cool to be a part of it, especially at that age because you have dreams and feelings about what you'd like to do, and you're all the same age. At that age it's magical; you're kind of discovering stuff for the first time and going through it together.

So even while you're searching for places to play, did real success feel attainable? What did success mean to you at the time?

Things were happening enough. We were cool and it was really pure. Our first big goal was to sell out the Central Tavern — that's the local legendary bar down in Pioneer Square. What mattered to us was being recognized as being a good band that could stand alongside a whole bunch of really good fucking bands from Seattle.



Cantrell with Gibson's new Jerry Cantrell "Wino" Les Paul Custom; "We've got some acoustics coming, some electrics coming. It's going to be cool"

Present company excluded, who was the best guitar player in Seattle back then? Who was just killing it?

It's tough to say; everybody's so unique. Kim Thayil is crazy. He's got a crazy style that is unique unto itself. It's a blend of different styles — super big and out of control, but right on the fucking edge of coming off the tracks and going right back on. I always admired his playing. I always liked Stone Gossard's style, too. Super punk, but also really melodic and based in some kind of regular rock, hard rock, blues-based riffs and stuff. Kurt Cobain was like a cross between punk and pop. His style had a lot of ferocity, and he wrote super-memorable, simple stuff. I don't know... If I had to pick one, it would be Kim.

Even though grunge owed a lot to metal, at a certain point in the Nineties it seemed as if alternative bands wanted to distance themselves from various aspects of the genre — it wasn't cool. Did you feel that?

I'm not sure about that. There might have been some changes about that attitude, maybe outwardly, verbally, but if you listen to the music, it's in there. It's in all of the bands. And if you listen to the rock radio up here, that's the thing. Rock radio was a super-strong staple. KZOK and KSW — and there was a cool college station that played all sorts of shit. This is a very rock-friendly environment; the Northwest has always been that way. Listening to the radio every night, I was awash in that stuff.

What about anti-major-label sentiments in the

Seattle community? Were you hearing things from your friends in town like, "Major labels are the enemy"?

With Sub Pop, it kind of went hand in hand with how we all started and operated and viewed ourselves. It was all do-it-yourself and not having some A&R guy telling you what to do. You did what you wanted. By the time the majors started coming around, we were all well-versed and well on our way. Collectively as a community, all of the bands had a real foundation and established what their identities were.

So we were kind of let loose on the world, and that kicked off pretty early. I guess that helped cement the idea that we didn't fucking need anybody telling us what to do. It was like, "We can write songs. We know how to rock. We know what our band

Cantrell (shown with a G&L Rampage) performs with Alice in Chains June 23, 1993, in Mountain View, California



sounds like." It was cool. I always loved that we — and most of us — had that experience. I think that's why the records that were created had such impact.

So much of the Seattle sound was built on raging guitars, but early on you started introducing acoustics into the mix. What was the initial reaction? Was everybody in the band on board?

The acoustic guitar has a thing all its own, and pretty early on we started messing around with some acoustic ideas. I think where it all came from was we were doing

a demo for Cameron Crowe and his [1992] movie *Singles*. He asked me to write a song for it, so I wrote "Would?" I kind of had Andy Wood in mind — he had passed away. We were always demoing stuff and trying things out. I was messing around on some songs with an acoustic, so we took the money from Cameron to demo "Would?" and then demoed six or seven other tunes. Five of them were what turned out to be *Sap*.

So we just had it around. We were aware at that point that our first record had some impact, and it was a rock record, but see, all

the music I grew up listening to and the artists I was influenced by... there are times to get quiet and use different feels and different sounds. It's not just about full force all the time. We messed around with every element we could. Our attitude was to do what we felt and never try to repeat what we already did, because that's done. So it was just about moving forward.

I've got to give credit to [Alice in Chains drummer] Sean [Kinney]. We were having a meeting one day and we had these tunes, and he was like, "Man, we should make an EP of those. I had a dream last night that we put those out on an EP and it was called *Sap*." So we did it. We were already writing some of the stuff that would become *Dirt*, and we knew it would be a while, so we said, "Why don't we put that out between the records? It's like a cool little thing for the fans. We won't advertise it or have the record company take out any ads or anything. We'll just make it, and then we'll put it in the stores." Columbia was down with that idea from a promotional angle. I'm glad we did that, because it opened us up. We didn't get pegged or be expected to follow a narrower kind of approach.

In hindsight, it was good that you released *Sap* so early in your career. As you say, it prevented you from being pigeonholed.

As long as you keep writing good songs. Fans are discerning. You throw them a turd and they're not going to dig that. I've always been a firm believer in this. I don't care if it's rap, country, disco, rock 'n' roll, metal, punk, whatever you want to call it — a good song is a good song, you know what I mean? As long as it's good, people will follow you.

Before Alice released *Dirt*, the band went on tour as openers for Van Halen. What do you remember about that tour and Eddie?

In our band, Van Halen was always well-loved and embedded in our psyches; and, of course, as a guitar player, Eddie is the top of the mountain in terms of uniqueness and a commitment to excellence. There was nobody like him, and there never will be. That's just the way it's supposed to be. That tour was really impactful from a career standpoint and also just an achievement level of, like, "Wow. OK, I guess we can play with these guys." I remember showing up for the first gig and walking up on the deck and getting ready to play the show. Eddie was sitting there with his guitar on, running scales and he's smiling and shit. He came over and introduced himself; he was hanging right on the side of the stage in my little pit with my guitars and my guitar tech.

Valerie was with him; Wolfie was newly born and in her arms. So that's how the

tour started for me, like, “Holy shit. OK, I’m standing here and fucking Eddie Van Halen is smiling and playing guitar and fucking meeting me. And I’m going to go on stage in about five minutes.” [Laughs]

I go on to play, and he stayed there and watched me. I think it was the worst fucking gig in my life — at least in my mind because I was so nervous that the dude was sitting watching me. Finally, he went back to his dressing room to get ready for his show, and I think I started to relax a little bit more. We stayed with Van Halen for a couple of legs and made really good friends with Eddie. There were a lot of late-night hangs, a lot of pool halls and bars. We’d always end up in each other’s rooms with a couple of guitars. When he came to town, he’d give me a call and vice versa. We also became friends with Sammy. He and I have been buds for a long time.

Let’s get into your new album. Beyond the sound of your voice, which is always so pleasing to hear, your stacked guitars have a sound all their own. Lots of guitarists layer guitars, but you manage to create a signature sound. What’s your secret?

I’ll go back to Eddie Van Halen. I remember reading one time about how Ted Nugent was perplexed by Ed’s sound. The story goes that he went over and plugged into Eddie’s shit to see what kind of secret stuff he had in his rig, and when he started playing he just sounded like Ted Nugent. I had the exact same experience. Once in a while at a sound check, I would plug into his amp and I sounded like Jerry Cantrell. In turn, Eddie would play through my shit and sound like Eddie Van Halen. It’s in the fucking hands. It’s in your flesh. You can mess with gear and it will give you a little bit of color, but it’s really in the flesh.

“Atone” has such a dirty blues vibe. What are your blues influences?

Yeah, I call that one a “psycho hillbilly stomp.” Blues — it’s hard to say. All rock ‘n’ roll is based on the blues, a mix of blues and country. That’s an interesting tune. I was chewing on it for a while. The main guitar riff and the chorus progression were in my head since probably the late Nineties. I demoed it with Sean on some shitty little tape, and then I lost it, so I had to go by memory. I had the chorus, but that beautiful middle section was something else — it takes you years to get to the point where you go, “OK, now it’s a fucking song.” The weird thing about it is, it’s in an open major tuning, but it sounds minor because of how I play it. Tyler Bates was mystified by that.

“Black Hearts and Evil Done” and “Prism of



LIKE A FINE “WINO”

**MEET GIBSON’S NEW JERRY CANTRELL
“WINO” LES PAUL CUSTOM**

AFTER TEASING A new signature guitar for Jerry Cantrell back in January — and revealing further details at Summer NAMM — Gibson has finally lifted the lid on the Alice in Chains guitarist’s new model.

Having undergone the company’s Murphy Lab treatment to carefully recreate the aesthetic of Cantrell’s original Wine Red “Wino” Les Paul Custom, this fresh six-string — of which there are only 100 in the world — doesn’t come cheap, with a hefty price tag of \$8,999.

Build-wise, the Murphy Lab Jerry Cantrell “Wino” Les Paul Custom features a weight-relieved mahogany body with a maple top, custom Cantrell mahogany neck with a hide-glued neck tenon, 12-inch-radius ebony fingerboard with MOP block inlays and aged gold hardware.

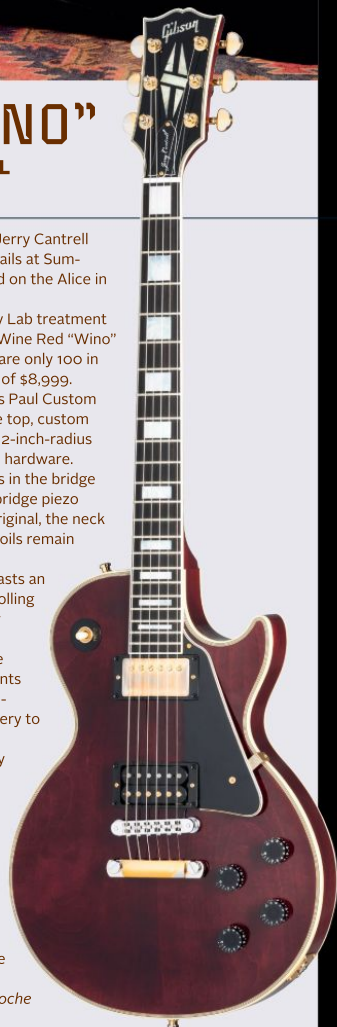
Electronics include a pair of 490R/498T humbuckers in the bridge and neck positions, respectively, plus a Fishman Powerbridge piezo pickup for on-the-fly acoustic tones. As per Cantrell’s original, the neck pickup features a gold cover, while the bridge pickup’s coils remain exposed.

As a result of the pickup configuration, the guitar boasts an unusual control layout, with a pair of volume pots controlling the neck and bridge humbuckers, respectively; a master tone knob and a third volume pot — in place of where an LP’s bridge tone knob usually sits — that controls the output of the piezo pickup. Other electronic appointments include 500K CTS Audio-Taper pots and ceramic capacitors, as well as a compartment on the rear for a 9V battery to power the Fishman Powerbridge piezo.

Rounding out the instrument’s spec sheet is multi-ply body binding, a black pickguard, 24.75-inch scale length and Grover kidney bean-style tuners. Each guitar comes with a certificate of authenticity and will be hand-signed on the back of the headstock by Cantrell himself.

“We have some really exciting things planned over the next four or five years,” Cantrell tells us. “The Wino is coming out first and then there will be a few other models after. Expect some really cool guitars either designed by the both of us or replicas of what I’ve played over the years with my own modifications.”

— Sam Roche



Cantrell — with another G&L Rampage — lets his hair up in Auburn, Washington, August 25, 2018



Doubt have a country-rock feel that's reminiscent of Elton John's *Tumbleweed Connection*, which was basically his love letter to country music.

You're in the right zone. You can really hear a lot of the roots of what I grew up listening to, the music of the Sixties, Seventies and Eighties and Nineties, too. Listening to this record takes me back to being a kid and discovering rock 'n' roll for the first time. "Prism of Doubt" reminds me of Steve Miller mixed with a little Frank Black Pixies. "Black Hearts" is cool; it's got a country-folk thing going on.

You've got the pedal steel there.

Great pedal steel player — Michael Rozon. He did four or five tracks.

Your harmonized guitar solo on "Black Hearts" works as a nice contrast.

Yeah, I get to do that every once in a while. Like on [Alice in Chains'] "Whale & Wasp" and a couple of solos, there's almost an Allman Brothers Band feel.

"Dismembered" sounds like it's coming from the Rolling Stones' *Exile on Main St.* period. Fair enough?

Yeah, there's a little Stones, a little Creedence. It's got all that. The record has some light and some space. It's like a summer record, almost. It's a very good driving record.

You do end on a somber note, though, with your version of "Goodbye."

Yeah, that's the last song on [Elton John's] *Madman Across the Water*. I didn't intend

for it to end this record; it was just one of those serendipitous things. One of the most amazing things for me has been developing a friendship with Elton. We got to record with him on the *Black Gives Way to Blue* record, which was incredible, and we've been to each other's shows — it's wonderful. I sent him a demo of my version of the song and I sent it to David, his partner; I just wanted Elton's permission and to make sure he was OK with me doing it. Four o'clock in the morning I get a call from David: "Elton is sitting at the breakfast table right now sobbing at how beautifully you did his song." Right after that, Elton called and said, "It's beautiful. It's fucking amazing. Of course, you have my permission."

What were your main guitars on the record?

It's always a healthy mix of Les Paul and G&L Rampages. That's my main mix, but I'll use anything to get the tone. We used a bunch of Gibson and Martin acoustics, some Guild. Mostly it was G&L Rampages, Pauls and SGs. I also used a couple of Explorers and a Firebird. There's a ton of Gibson on the record.

You have some of your own Gibson signature models coming out.

We've got a whole bunch of stuff planned for the next year or two. Everybody at the company has been really cool, and we've been trying to design kind of Cantrell versions of some Gibson classics. We're coming out with the Les Paul first. It's based off a translucent wine-colored Les Paul that I've had for years [Editor's note: Gibson

released the new Jerry Cantrell "Wino" Les Paul Custom this past August. See the sidebar on page 75]. I got four Les Pauls in the early Nineties — white, which turned into the cigarette-burned one. That's kind of got an iconic look to it. There's also a translucent blue one, the translucent wine and a black one. I use them consistently, but the first one out is the wine. We've done a few versions of the Cantrell signature model G&L, but these will be my first signature models for Gibson. We've got some acoustics coming, some electrics coming. It's going to be cool.

What's the status of Alice in Chains right now?

When we do a campaign, it's a good long commitment from writing, recording, getting a record out and then going out and touring it. Generally, we take a little time off after that. Unfortunately and fortunately, our time off was during the pandemic. I was planning on having this record out last year, touring on it last September, and then I'd see what's up with Alice. Everything got pushed back. Right now, I'm just concentrating on gearing up for a cool campaign and looking forward to doing some shows to support my record. With Alice, and also for myself, we wanted to be cautious and just wait. It looks like we're going in the right direction, but we're still seeing some countries fall back, and that's pretty tough for touring. I think I'm just going to wait. We're going to book some sort of announcement, some dates for next year. And then Alice will probably do some shows — probably next year — as well. **GW**

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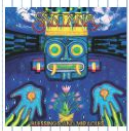
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The JOY OF BEING CARLOS SANTANA



And now, through the intervention of the guitar gods, we bring you a particularly spirited conversation with the celebrated six-string force behind **ABRAXAS, AMIGOS, SUPERNATURAL, ZEBOP!** and a brand-new album featuring a Kirk Hammett guest spot

C

ARLOS SANTANA IS one of a handful of guitarists whose style is so instantly recognizable that — if you hear just a handful of notes anywhere on the neck — there's no doubt who's playing them. He released his debut album, *Santana*, in 1969 and famously played at the Woodstock festival (where, some argue, he stole the show) that August. The following year, he cemented his rep with *Abraxas*, a now-classic album that stars three of his most popular songs — “Oye Como Va,” “Samba Pa Ti” and his cover of Fleetwood Mac’s “Black Magic Woman” — all of which have

been staples of rock radio for the past 50-plus years. As successful as Santana already was, however, his career shot to another level with the release of the star-studded *Supernatural* in 1999. Its worldwide crossover hit, “Smooth,” turned him into a household name.

“It was certainly an experience to have that level of exposure,” he says. “I remember I was in a hotel in L.A., and Jeff Beck was there. He looked at me and said, ‘It must be really something to be Carlos Santana right now, huh?’” [Laughs]

SANTANA'S NEW ALBUM, *Blessings and Miracles*, is certainly his most commercial album since *Supernatural* — and it, too, features its share of big-name guest stars, including Kirk Hammett, Chris Stapleton, Rob Thomas and Steve Winwood. It's packed with radio-friendly, hook-filled tunes that cover the entire gamut of his range, from Hendrix-fired rockers to his patented Latino blues dance tracks such as "Rumbalero."

"I've always really loved B.B. King and Peter Green, and I wanted to combine that with Tito Fuentes and Mongo Santamaria," he says. "To have that Latin feel and underpin it with blues guitar is — for me — the best of both worlds combined, really. It's a winning combination."

Santana, a deeply spiritual man, is a strong believer in the powers of the universe and positivism. Taking nothing for granted in his career, the word he most often uses to express his happiness with his life, his art and the new album is "joy."

The new album is called *Blessings and Miracles*, which is a very spiritual title. You've always been spiritual. Are you making a personal statement with this record?

Yes. It's about "frequency" — the frequency that the shamans around the world understand, also the aborigines, the American Indians, shamans from Siberia, every kind of shaman. For clarity, someone like Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, Jimmy Page or myself, the thing with music for us is that it is a holy experience. You can tell by the titles of the songs that we deeply believe. It's not show business or entertainment, with all due respect to that. This is like a mystical, meditative music to heal a twisted, crooked, infected world. I feel like we're almost "spirit doctors." I wake up to bring hope and courage to people, and I also wake up to receive the same thing. I love to hear all the music that I love, which is pure inspiration and joy. With this pandemic, people have become really thirsty for integrity and righteousness. There's a lot of deception and corruption in the world. You need to go inside your heart to hear what's really real in these times. It seems like TV news is only promoting fear and separation, and I find it to be very boring. I'm excited to hear the sound of birds, children and the stars at night twinkling. What I learned from this epidemic is to go even deeper into my heart.

How easy was it to put the album together, given COVID restrictions, etc.?

There is someone who orchestrates everything that happens and guides me to the incredible artists who come and partake with me. I think this has been true of my whole career. I'm one of the few artists, for example, who has worked with all three of the Kings — B.B., Albert and Freddie. Then you think of the artists from other genres, such as Paco de Lucia, John McLaughlin, Eric Clapton. It's like it's being orchestrated, and I just have to show up. So many people who I really admire! These days it is possible with technology to record with someone who can be on the other side of the world. That doesn't really matter, because I feel like we are sharing some kind of frequency in the moment.

Your career has spanned many decades, and therefore many changes in technology. Do you feel analog was always a better fit for music that's as organic as yours?

The principal is still the same, you know? You can cook with a microwave or a stove, and as long as the ingredients are right, it will taste good. The ultimate result is that it has to be delicious. [Laughs]

You have your wife, Cindy, on drums, and two of your children — Salvador and Stella — also appear on the album. I imagine it's pretty special to be able to share the creative process with them.

It is a wonderful, delightful experience to share the record with my family. Stella sings "Breathing Underwater" beautifully, and Salvador adds so much to "Rumbalero." It's like whipped cream on top. [Laughs] I get so much extra joy from making music with my family — it is a very special experience.

Are you always creating and stockpiling songs, or do you prefer to work to a deadline when you know you have a project coming up?

I believe it's important to constantly expand, expand and expand — by always creating and challenging myself. I'm looking forward, at the moment, to creating an album that is purely instrumental. Nothing will be geared up to radio or radio-friendly commerciality. In a way, I'm picturing something like a soundtrack, perhaps in the vein of an Ennio Morricone score for an imaginary spaghetti western — *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*, that kind of thing, you know? I talked about this with Eric Clapton and Derek Trucks, and that is something we will be working on together in the near future. We aren't going to be concerned about songs; it will be more about moods.

It's interesting that your next album won't be focused on radio airplay — since your new one is packed with commercial songs that are almost guaranteed airplay. It plays out like a collection of hit singles.

Thank you for saying that. It is a blessing to be able to work with writers like Dianne Warren and great singers such as Stevie Winwood. It's a joy, a real joy. It's so stim-

ulating. It is wonderful to be able to present yourself as a multi-dimensional person that can cover everything pretty much from A to Z in music. I can't wait for people to hear what an amazing job my brother Stevie Winwood does on "Whiter Shade of Pale." He also plays the organ on it, but what we did differently from the original is that there is a hint of African about it, and it is a very, very sexy version. [Laughs]

What made you choose that song to cover?

I just heard it in my head, you know? I was in Hyde Park in London with Eric Clapton and Stevie and I just heard it. I told Stevie about it to see if he had eyes to do something about it. I described what I was hearing and he heard what I heard; he understood exactly what I was trying to achieve.

"America for Sale" — which features Metallica's Kirk Hammett and Death Angel's Mark Osegueda — is a full-on burst of blistering rock.

It worked out by grace again. I think there is some kind of divine intelligence orchestrating for me to participate with these incredible artists. All I have to do is take a deep breath, be honest and sincere and play music that compliments the artist I'm playing with. We really tried to push ourselves to the outer limits with the solos on that song, though.

"Peace Power" — featuring Living Colour's Corey Glover on vocals — will probably be a stand-out track for a lot of listeners. It channels the spirit of Jimi Hendrix — and again — showcases the high-energy rock side of your playing.

You're right; there is definitely something of the spirit of Jimi on that song, and Corey did a fantastic job. It was originally going to be Lenny Kravitz, but he couldn't do it because of COVID. He was on an island and so was I, actually, in Hawaii, so we couldn't connect. But my wife Cindy suggested I call Corey; of course, things turned out brilliantly in the end.

The album covers a lot of different styles, and I guess rock fans will connect with "America," "Peace Power" and "Mother Yes," which also has the feel of Hendrix in the groove. In fact, the short piece at the end of the album, "Ghost of Future Pull II," feels like Jimi's "Third Stone from the Sun."

I'd love to do something in the future that is all rock-type material. I love rock music, you know? One of my favorite bands is AC/DC, and I am a huge Led Zeppelin fan, so I am really hoping I can do a pure rock album at some point. I know as well that there is a huge appetite from fans for heavy rock songs with a lot of guitar to the fore, and that is something I would really enjoy doing — as a change of pace from what people perhaps expect me to do. I think people are thirsty for energy and high vibrations where people can ward off darkness and insecurities.

"I was in a hotel in L.A., and Jeff Beck was there.

He looked at me and said,

**'IT MUST BE REALLY
SOMETHING TO BE
CARLOS SANTANA
RIGHT NOW, HUH?'"**



"I'd love to do something in the future that is all rock-type material... One of my favorite bands is AC/DC," Santana says

I know you mentioned the notion of a soundtrack-like album coming up next. The track "Santana Celebration" sounds very much like a piece from a movie. It actually reminded me of Lalo Schiffrin's work, particularly, oddly enough, *Enter the Dragon*.

You are absolutely correct. I love Lalo's work; I like music that is very visual and multi-dimensional. I'd love to do an actual soundtrack in the future. I'm open to offers. [Laughs]

On "Joy," you have a huge tone on the opening notes. That lulls us into thinking more of the same is about to follow — but you suddenly shift into a reggae groove that takes the listener by surprise. Although, given your love of the genre, and Bob Marley in particular, maybe we shouldn't be surprised?

Yes, I love Bob's music. "Joy" sums up everything about working on the record, and working with Chris Stapleton on vocals was a particularly joyful experience. We had the track partly prepared, but without lyrics and a vocalist, and we were discussing who could bring something special to the vocal. When I did my last album, *Africa Speaks*, in 2019, I didn't really care about having a hit single, but this time I wanted to get the songs on the radio. I asked my producer, who has really got his finger on the pulse of commercial radio at the moment, who would be cool for us to work with. A few names were thrown out, and then Chris was suggested. That seemed to be the very thing I was looking for. We called up his manager to see if he would be interested in taking part and writing the song with us. Again, whenever you ask the universe, God, Jesus or whatever you want to call it will answer you and give you what you want. The universe will comply with your request. If you ask, you're open, and if you're ready then things will come to you. It's not chance or luck or fortune; it's grace. Grace is a very tangible component or element that can work for you and with you.

"Move" reunites you with Rob Thomas, who sang on "Smooth" in 1999. Was that a conscious effort to reproduce some of that feel and magic?

Pretty much like the *Supernatural* album, there was an element of putting different bits and pieces and different artists together. At the time that "Move" landed on my lap, Rob called me up and asked me to see if I thought I could put some guitar on the track. As soon as I heard it, I thought, "Oh, yes." [Laughs] I heard the "Smooth" connection right away; it seemed to be such a natural, logical progression from that song to "Move." I like to say it's a song about awakening your molecules, igniting and activating yourself.



"We all have preferences in the instruments we choose, but in all honesty, you are the sound," Santana says

When you're collaborating with other artists, is there a lot of give and take, or will you have some fixed ideas that you might insist upon? Collaboration is pure joy for me. I like to just let things unfold in front of me and see where the spirit of the music takes me. Once I'm ready to play, everything is always done in one take; I'm always so present in the moment of what I am playing that I can express everything in that one take. I learned that from so many great artists — nail it on the first take and make sure that's the one.

Much like B.B. King, you have such an instantly identifiable style and sound. What's the secret to finding your own style on guitar? If there is such a thing as a secret, I guess it would be to not think about what you are doing. Emotion, passion and feelings are what we all have, and if you keep yourself open, you can let these things express themselves through your playing. I grew up on Peter Green and B.B. King and, of course, those two players have very different individual styles. The essence of that is that they let themselves honestly express what they were feeling through their instrument. B.B. King was originally the template for how I wanted to create my voice on the guitar, but after that period that players go through when they try to sound like their heroes, they have to find out who *they* are. I am very grateful that I've found something that is uniquely my own style.

When you're playing around the house or whatever, what kind of things do you play? Do you ever explore styles you're not familiar with?

When I was preparing to record this album, I spent a lot of time listening to *Lady Soul* by Aretha Franklin [1968]. All her vocal

lines, the horn parts, the keyboard parts, I learned every one of them. Eric Clapton does an incredible solo on "Good to Me As I Am to You." If you want to learn how to play the guitar and find something new, maybe make it sound like a voice, take your fingers for a walk with Aretha Franklin. [Laughs] I really just focus on what I'm going to need for the stage or the studio when I'm playing at home, I guess.

You've been a PRS Guitars player for many years, with a number of signature models. Are the PRS guitars you play off-the-shelf instruments, or are they customized?

You know, not so long ago I was actually playing a Stratocaster, but I got that out of my system and I'm back now with Paul Reed Smith. I use some of the signature guitars. They maybe tweak them a little here or there for my preferences, but they are basically the same guitar. Someone like Eric or Jeff or Stevie Ray, we can grab any guitar and we will sound good. It's you — it's not even the guitar anymore. I don't deceive myself into thinking, "Without this guitar, I won't sound good." It's you — you are the gift God gave you. We all have preferences in the instruments we choose, but in all honesty, you are the sound.

Amp-wise, is it still Mesa/Boogie for you?

I research sound all the time. I've been using Dumble amplifiers as well, plus Paul Reed Smith has just designed a new amplifier. I tried it last week and it sounds really, really good. Like an artist, you're always looking for different brushes and pencils. Expand and expand, don't be predictable, always find ways to make something new happen, you know? I've never been much of an effects fan, mainly just the wah. Believe it or not, I was in an elevator with Miles Davis and he asked me [does a

spot-on impression of Davis' husky voice], "Hey, you got a wah-wah pedal?" I said, "No." And he says, "I got one for my trumpet. You've got to get yourself a freakin' wah-wah pedal." I laughed and said, "OK, Miles." That was what got me to buy my first wah pedal.

You compiled *Sacred Sources, Vol. 1: Live Forever* about 30 years ago, based on your archive of live recordings of SRV, Hendrix, Marley and Marvin Gaye. You said at the time that you were an avid collector of live recordings. Are you still as passionate about it?

I am. I'm always looking for performances by Marvin Gaye, Bob Marley and particularly John Coltrane and Miles Davis in a live setting. It is easier to track down lost recordings with the aid of the internet than it used to be way back then, though. What I love about the internet is that when I wake up at 3 in the morning and can't get to sleep, I can go hunting for music from Africa, or the people that I love, or whatever.

"Samba Pa Ti" seems to be played on radio stations across the world nearly every day. I wonder, after 50 years, when you hear it, do you hear parts you wish you'd done differently?

Your intuition is incredible, because I was just thinking about that song a short while ago, because it was the first song I ever heard on the radio by Santana, and it was like looking at myself as another person. I was remembering a conversation I had with Eric Clapton when we were playing with Earth Wind & Fire in '75. He said, "Hey, Carlos. When you did 'Samba Pa Ti,' did it just come out all at once as one continuous piece of music?" And I said, "Yeah, Eric." [Laughs] I did record it in one take without any overdubs or anything, and to hear Eric Clapton express admiration was a very special moment. It's also cool to know that so many women got pregnant to the soundtrack of that song. [Laughs] What can I tell you? It never gets old. When a song comes to you as fully formed as that, it makes you believe there is a higher power out there that is giving us the music.

Given the many years you've been playing, have you ever experienced any painful hand problems? I know quite a few of your contemporaries have had some struggles in recent years, including Robby Krieger and John McLaughlin.

No, not at all. By the grace of God, I don't have any kind of "itis." No arthritis, tendonitis, meningitis. "Itis" and Santana don't get along, so I just dismiss them. [Laughs] I say go bother somebody else — don't bother me! **GW**

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A full-page photograph of K.K. Downing, a long-haired man with blonde hair, wearing a black leather jacket with a red logo on the sleeve and black pants. He is playing a white and yellow electric guitar. The background is a dramatic, fiery scene with a large, glowing orange and red planet or nebula on the left and smaller, glowing fragments on the right. The overall color palette is dominated by reds, oranges, and blacks.

The

SINNER

Is Here

K.K. Downing on stage with his custom signature V model (in Lightning White) by KxK Guitars

GUIGAR WORLD HOLIDAY 2021

K.K. DOWNING GIVES JUDAS PRIEST FANS A FEW MORE SERMONS TO STUDY

WORDS BY JON WIEDERHORN PHOTO COURTESY OF EXPLORER! RECORDS

FOR ANYONE WHO thinks Judas Priest co-founder K.K. Downing ran out of musical steam and mental energy when he “quit” the band in 2011 and was replaced by Richie Faulkner — you’ve got another think coming.

Downing’s new band, KK’s Priest, is pugilistic and propulsive, rife with instantly engaging riffs, blazing solos and memorable hooks. Does it sound like Judas Priest? Sure it does, but who has more of a right to make music that sounds like everything else he’s done than one of the forefathers of Judas Priest and the metal movement? KK’s Priest’s debut album, *Sermons of the Sinner*, the first major metal project on which Downing has played since Judas Priest’s 2008 operatic *Nostradamus*, is a feast of palm-muted riffs that burst into infectious, but not always predictable rhythms. From track to track, the music conjures the multifaceted strains of *Sad Wings of Destiny*, the anthemic surge of *Screaming for Vengeance* and *Defenders of the Faith*, and the jackhammer grind of *Painkiller*.

Beyond the album title, an unapologetic reference to Judas Priest’s 1977 fan-favorite “Sinner,” there are other musical and lyrical nods to Judas Priest, including the closing track “The Return of the Sentinel,” which nicks part of the opening lick from the 1984 song “The Sentinel,” and addresses the apocalyptic aftermath of a war fought by the main character. Throughout, Downing writes and plays like he’s still a member of Judas Priest — not to thumb his nose in the face of his former bandmates, but to prove his metal might and cement his legacy — and he doubles down on *Sermons of the Sinner* by hiring ex-Judas Priest singer Tim “Ripper” Owens to front the band.

“I suppose consciously or subconsciously, I didn’t know whether this was the last thing I was ever going to do, so I wanted it to be very

exciting and very metal,” Downing says from his home in the UK. “I think it’s a fitting example of what I’ve done before and what I plan on doing for quite a while. But you never know. I’m 69 now and I just lost my sister a couple weeks ago and she was 67. So, just in case this is it for me, I want it to be a lasting reminder.”

Downing’s aspiration to create a barrel-rolling Judas Priest-style record that features a former Judas Priest singer and song titles that reference Judas Priest songs has rankled his former bandmates so much that they threatened to hit Downing with a cease-and-desist order to prevent him from using the name KK’s Priest. They’re not the only ones to accuse Downing of heresy. Smack-talkers have called KK’s Priest a “desperate cover band” that threw together an album of “derivative” musical parts and hired a “Rob Halford clone” to play old Judas Priest songs live.

Downing is unrepentant about what he’s doing and insists that writing in a style that didn’t resemble Judas Priest would be disingenuous. Also, he has no regrets about hiring Owens, who certainly wails like Halford, but is also influenced by Ronnie James Dio and Philip Anselmo.

“There’s probably only three guys in the world that can do what Ripper, Halford and maybe Bruce Dickinson can do night after night,” Downing says. “I don’t know how they do it. It’s incredible. But I couldn’t have Bruce. I couldn’t have Halford. So Ripper was the obvious choice. We’ve made albums together, we’ve toured together and Ripper is a great guy. And, of course, he has been a Priest

before” [singing on 1997’s *Jugulator* and 2001’s *Demolition*].

When asked if he was ever concerned that something on the album might sound too much like the material he wrote for Judas Priest, Downing snickers a little and points out that, having played in Judas Priest on 16 albums over 42 years, it would be difficult and inauthentic to try to write in a different style.

“I’ve always been a Priest, and this is why I’m sticking to my guns now,” Downing says. “There’s people [in Judas Priest now that] I’ve never met playing my songs and solos calling themselves Priests. Why can’t I be a Priest? I can and I am. So this is KK’s Priest, and when you look at the history of this music, I am a big part of the past as well as the present and the future. I don’t want to discard my heritage, my legacy, who I am, what I sound like and my style of writing. It’s there for the world for now and the future, and that’s my new path and my new journey.”

THE PUNISHMENT OF THE SINNER

THERE’S A REASON Downing sounds defiant and even arrogant when talking about Judas Priest. He left the band before its “farewell” tour because he didn’t feel comfortable playing with Glenn Tipton anymore. When he discovered the band wasn’t retiring after all, he says he expressed interest in re-entering the fold, only to be rejected and ripped off.

“Lots of things were happening and coming to a boil in 2010 [right before the band announced the career-ending Epitaph World Tour],” Downing says. “Rob [Halford] released two albums in that year and did a world tour, including Ozzfest, with his band [Halford] playing Priest songs. At the same time, I wasn’t particularly happy with the last couple of Priest tours I had done and I wasn’t terribly excited about playing the farewell tour.”

As the Epitaph tour approached, Downing got tangled in band politics, bad timing and blown opportunities. Between then and the release of his 2018 autobiography, *Heavy Duty Days and Nights in Judas Priest*, he revealed few details about the terms of his departure. Now that he’s out of the band and on his own

with KK's Priest, the guitarist is spilling the beans about the behind-the-scenes machinations that led to his permanent dismissal.

"I never wanted to be a part of a big, public spectacle," he insists. "I just made it clear that I didn't want to play the final tour. But then they continued, which I never expected, and they didn't want any part of me, even though I was one of the only original members."

Downing's unhappiness with Priest circa 2011 had less to do with personality clashes than it did with what he viewed as the band's waning professionalism. In his book, Downing revealed that he grew increasingly frustrated with Tipton in particular.

"On these last tours [I played with the band], it felt as if some petty one-upmanship was going on. Whenever we ended a song, Glenn always, always had to make sure that the last sound that anyone heard came from his guitar... On many occasions, particularly near the end, I felt that Judas Priest's live performances were suffering."

Today, he elaborates on the other major element that marred his final tours with Judas Priest. "Glenn was drinking beer before the stage and on the stage between every song, and it was slowing us down," Downing says. "It made the rest of us feel insecure because it's just like if you drive in a car and somebody is drinking at the wheel—you just don't feel comfortable. I know it's rock and roll and everybody has a right to do it their way, but I like to be very efficient and I get off



Sermons is the first major metal project on which Downing has played since Judas Priest's *Nostradamus* (2008)

knew, we would still be talking to each other to deal with the purse strings," he says. "So I sent a letter saying I had given everything and I didn't have anymore

to give and I was retiring from the business, which wasn't true because I went straight into a production job with other musicians."

As the Epitaph tour approached, one of Downing's close friends told him he was making a mistake and that he should contact the band and tell them he changed his mind and he'd like to play the tour to create a nice book-end for his career with Judas Priest. Though he was resistant at first, Downing finally agreed and called bassist Ian Hill, with whom he had attended primary school starting in kindergarten. He asked Hill if he could see the

"I said, 'Ignore everything in my first letter,' because I felt like I was prostituting myself anyway. And then I said everything I really thought and explained what really made me not want to do the tour, and that's what got me in trouble and why they shut me out."

Downing didn't do as well with his golf course as he did in Priest and was forced to abandon the venture and sell the royalty rights to 136 Judas Priest songs to Round Hill Music to pay off his debts. But he insists he never sold his share of the band. When Tipton stopped touring in early 2018 because he was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease, Downing suggested that everyone in the band cast aside their grievances and he would rejoine as the lone longtime Priest guitarist onstage. He was surprised to find that no one wanted him back.

"When I was in the band, I was always the loyal Priest," he says. "I didn't leave for 14 years like Rob. I didn't leave for six years to do albums like Glenn did—with [drummer] Cozy [Powell] and [the Who bassist] John [Entwistle] [in 1997 and 2006]. I never had my own websites selling my own T-shirts. All of my good music went to Priest. And so, if I did retire, why wouldn't I be allowed out of retirement when there was an opportunity and a space? I was there before Rob and Glenn, and I was instrumental in re-introducing Rob back into the band after he did his other things, so why would he say, 'No, you can't be a member of this band anymore,' even though there was an opening? It doesn't make sense."

"They didn't just close the door and shut me out. They tried to deny my contributions to the band... I begged them not to go the legal route..."

on the music being very tight, and it was losing some of that. And Rob was reading the teleprompter. We just seemed to be not the band that we were."

For Downing, the final insult came when the band asked him to write for a five-track EP to support the farewell tour. "I thought that idea stunk and my voice wasn't being heard," he says. "I felt that they should have listened to my opinion because I had been there a long time and I had a valid opinion, but it seemed as though people were ganging up on me. So I thought, 'Enough is enough. I'm out.'"

When Downing made it clear that he didn't want to play the farewell tour, management asked him to send an official letter of resignation. Under contract, he was still a shareholder and director in the company, so he wanted to leave on good terms. "As far as I

setlist for the Epitaph shows and the bassist sent Downing the list, but his demeanor was icy and no one else on the Priest team would talk to him.

With Downing's retirement letter in the file cabinet, Judas Priest issued a press release stating that Downing was leaving the band and had been replaced by "31-year-old guitar player Richie Faulkner... a great talent who is going to help set the stage on fire!"

In press interviews, the members mentioned that Downing was quitting the music business to operate a golf course he founded in Shropshire, on the Welsh border. In truth, Downing had no intention to stop rocking. Incensed by further comments that indicated the band would likely work on a new record after the tour, Downing sent a second, less-diplomatic letter to Priest management.

Instead of welcoming Downing back into the fold, Judas Priest immediately hired the co-producer of their 2018 album, *Firepower*, Andy Sneap [Sabbat] to play guitar on the tour alongside Faulkner. Then, Downing says, the group's handlers told him he wasn't entitled to any future band income.

"They didn't just close the door and shut me out," he says. "They tried to deny my contributions to the band. They tried to take all the revenue from me and not give me anything, not pay me anything. I begged them not to go the legal route. I said I'll come down, sit around the table and discuss it. They said no."

Now Downing and his former bandmates only communicate through lawyers, and the longer the conflict continues the more confusing the scenario becomes. Downing feels that by denying him money he is owed, his former

bandmates are punishing him for disagreeing with them and for being honest about what was happening in the band before he left. It's not just vindictive, it's cruel.

"They want to take everything away from me that I actually have an entitlement to, really, which is the right to the band name, the right to the imagery, certainly the rights to the T-shirts and things they sell," he says. "With *British Steel* or *Screaming for Vengeance*, I was instrumental in creating those images and I was promised a share of what I was a part of, but now they and their lawyers are saying no, I'm not. So, even if fans buy a T-shirt with artwork from *British Steel* or *Sad Wings of Destiny*, they get the money and I don't. So that was it, really. I had no choice but to continue as KK's Priest."

THE REVENGE OF THE SINNER

THE RUSTY, HINGED gate to KK's Priest started to creak open on August 11, 2019, at Bloodstock Open Air festival in Walton-on-Trent, England, when Downing was invited to take the stage with Ross the Boss (ex-Manowar) about two months shy of the guitarist's 10-year absence from Judas Priest (his last show with the band was October 17, 2009). The group covered Fleetwood Mac's "Green Manalishi (with the Two-Pronged Crown)" (which was on Priest's *Hell Bent for Leather*), "Breaking the Law," "Heading Out to the Highway" and "Running Wild." Then,

on November 3, after one night of rehearsal, Downing, Owens, Hostile guitarist AJ Mills, bassist Dave Ellefson (ex-Megadeth) and drummer Les Binks (ex-Judas Priest) played a one-off show at KK's Steel Mill in Wolverhampton, England, and lit up the packed crowd with the Judas Priest standards "Hell Bent for Leather," "Living After Midnight," "Breaking the Law," "Metal Gods," "Exciter" and more.

"That was great fun, and I got an appetite for doing it again," Downing says. "But I said, 'I'm not gonna try to put a band together around an album that isn't there. So I shut myself away for Christmas 2019, sat down and started playing. And I was amazed at how fast it all came together.'"

A week after Downing started working, he had completed the framework for the songs for *Sermons of the Sinner*. A few days later he finished the song intros, the main riffs, middle eights and melody lines, and had a lyrical and visual theme for the album. "It was like all this stuff was just waiting for an opportunity to come out of me," he says. "It felt good and the ideas are still coming so I'm already working on the next album."

The cover art for *Sermons of the Sinner* depicts a priest in a hooded brown robe standing at the edge of the ocean, with rocky cliffs and foreboding storm clouds looming in the background. The priest looks down at a large open book he holds in his open right hand. The front and back covers are decorated with golden "K"s. And in his left hand, the robed

man holds a sash that reads "Priest." Though the priest's face is shrouded by his hood, the long blond strands that stick out from the sides make it clear who the religious figure is supposed to be. If the visuals seem provocative they're meant to be.

"Those guys deceived the media and the fans for 10 years, and I've had to suffer the wrath of that," Downing says in a calm voice that belies his frustration. "I called the album *Sermons of the Sinner* because I became the sinner in people's minds because they think I deserted them. That's what they've been told, but that's not what happened. So, hey, I don't care what they say. I wish the guys all the success in the world, but I'm still a Priest and this is KK's Priest and I'm moving forward."

About a month after he plugged in the trusted Gibson and Hamer guitars he played for years in Judas Priest, Downing had a complete demo of *Sermons of the Sinner*, music, lyrics and all. Originally, he planned to deliver the album to his label in late April 2020, in time to schedule summer festival shows in Europe. With the help of Owens, Mills, Voodoo Six bassist Tony Newton and Cage drummer Sean Elg (who stepped in after Binks suffered a wrist injury), KK's Priest easily met their deadline, which was then pushed back substantially due to COVID, giving Downing and Mills extra time to fine-

KK's Priest [from left]: Tony Newton (bass), Downing, Tim "Ripper" Owens (vocals), AJ Mills (guitar) and Sean Elg (drums)



tune some of the guitar lines and hone the production. When asked how he was able to write and complete a multi-faceted batch of songs in less than a month, Downing says composing comes easily to him, but when he was a member of Judas Priest he had to compromise, which delayed the completion of the songs.

"I'm so glad now not to have to collaborate with Glenn and Rob on songs," he emphasizes. "I'm glad that if I think something's good, it goes on the record. I get to play the amount of solos I should have always been playing on a record, which is good for me because I can do it. I don't find any of it difficult."

Almost every song on *Sermons of the Sinner* features two or three pyrotechnic solo parts, and the way they blend together, one after another, is reminiscent of the way Downing and Tipton used to feed off each other, especially when KK's Priest launch into a harmo-

it's all being done. But there are so many fans out there that know what they love so bands just have to provide more of that, but with their own identity."

A quick glance at the *Billboard* rock charts doesn't offer much hope. Yet Downing remains optimistic and points to Greta Van Fleet as possible saviors or a fading genre. "We haven't had a Led Zeppelin, so why can't we have a bunch of younger guys that enjoy the band and are writing new songs, new material, and have a new face and a new voice?" Downing enthuses. "That gives me hope for what we're doing. There's a massive rejoicing in this album of our music and our legacy, which is an endangered species, in a way. So hopefully, KK's Priest will help us rise again, and maybe some of the musicians who like it will get on board and want to be a part of this music and write material like this in the

years to come so they can keep it going long after we're gone."

Leaving a lasting impression and remaining relevant have been objectives Downing has thought about more than usual over the past year. Recently, the rock world has lost such icons as Eddie Van Halen, Dusty Hill, Charlie Watts, Neil Peart, Alexi Laiho, Joey Jordison, Tim Bogert and early Priest drummer John Hinch, and every week it seems another rocker passes before his or her time.

"We're losing friends too often," Downing agrees. "That will probably accelerate as all of us get older and us dinosaurs fall off the edge of the earth. In 50 years, will we just be a page in a history book or will we still be kept alive by the new blood?"

"I wish I knew right now which way it's gonna go. I can only do my part to try to stay in people's heads as long as possible." **GW**

"There's people [in Judas Priest now that] I've never met playing my songs and solos calling themselves Priests. Why can't I be a Priest?"

nized lead. "What I really love is that I could have written this album now, which I have, or I could have written it in the future. And I could have written it 20 years ago," Downing says. "It's timeless because it isn't music for now, it's music for forever. Judas Priest probably got caught up in trying to create songs to fit a time for a while. We tried to keep inventing. I think it's more important to realize what works and stick to it."

In addition to striving to recapture the glory sounds of vintage Judas Priest, Downing wanted *Sermons of the Sinner* to stand out at a time when fewer bands are playing incendiary songs with complex guitar solos, and that by sticking to his loaded guns, his accomplished playing will inspire a new breed of guitar bands. He plans to continue pushing KK's Priest as long as he's healthy, but he knows that for metal to stay vibrant and captivating, younger musicians need to study their predecessors and grab the mantle.

"My advice to young bands is don't try to reinvent the wheel because there's already a fan base there and they already love this wheel," he tells us.

"You just have to give your interpretation or version of it. Don't try to invent a new style of metal or a new genre of music or whatever because

"We're losing friends too often," Downing says. "That will probably accelerate as... us dinosaurs fall off the edge of the earth"



SOUND CHECK

Fender's
new 75th
Anniversary
Strat



*the gear
in review*



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PIGTRONIX
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Classy Axes

**FENDER 75TH ANNIVERSARY AND
AMERICAN ULTRA LUXE FLOYD ROSE HSS
STRATOCASTERS**

By Chris Gill

▶ (TODAY IN BOOMER Tales) Way back in the mid Seventies when I was a teen, when you walked in a music store and asked for a Stratocaster, the reply was, “Sunburst, black, white, blonde or natural?” Today, it will probably take the sales rep half an hour to rattle off all of the available models even before getting into finish options. Fender currently offers more than 50 Strat models, including three Acoustasonic acoustic-electrics and artist signature guitars representing every imaginable style of music.

Simply put, a Strat is an essential instrument that every guitarist should own. Whether you don’t have one already or are thinking of getting another one, the two new models we looked at — the 75th Anniversary Stratocaster and American Ultra Luxe Stratocaster Floyd Rose HSS — offer procrastinators persuasive motivation to hit the “buy” button. These are some of the coolest-looking Strats Fender ever produced, but is their beauty more than skin deep? Read on.





Fender's Ultra Luxe Stratocaster Floyd Rose HSS



FEATURES The Fender 75th Anniversary Stratocaster celebrates the 75th anniversary of Fender along with similar commemorative Telecaster, Precision Bass and Jazz Bass models. This is a classic Strat through and through with timeless features, including an alder body, maple neck with maple fingerboard and three Vintage-Style '60s Single-Coil Strat pickups. Neck specs include 22 medium jumbo frets, a Modern "C" profile, 9.5-inch radius, 1.65-inch nut width and satin urethane finish. Other notable attributes include a five-position blade pickup selector switch, master volume, neck/middle tone and bridge tone controls, a two-point synchronized tremolo with bent steel saddles and four-bolt neck attachment to a vintage-style heel block and Anniversary neck plate. The most distinctive feature is the gloss polyester silver sparkle Diamond Anniversary finish on the body and headstock, which makes an eye-catching statement that tastefully complements the black/white/black pickguard and white pickup covers and knobs.

While the Fender 75th Anniversary Stratocaster oozes classic appeal, the American Ultra Luxe Stratocaster Floyd Rose HSS offers the more modern, hot-rod features of a super Strat. Fender offers two versions of this model: Mystic Black with rosewood fingerboard or Silver Burst with maple fingerboard. (both finishes are gloss urethane). We tested the former, which looks badass paired with leather and studs for Teutonic thrash shows or classy in combo with a tuxedo for wedding gigs that pay the bills.

This Ultra Luxe Strat's body is also alder, and the neck is decked out with 22 medium jumbo stainless steel frets, a 10-14-inch compound radius, 1.685-inch nut width, augmented "D" shape profile and Ultra rolled fingerboard edges. To provide comfortable, unrestricted access to the upper frets, the heel is

tapered and rounded and the treble cutaway scoop is contoured. Pickups consist of an Ultra Double Tap humbucking bridge pickup and two Ultra Noiseless Hot Strat single-coil neck and middle pickups wired to a five-position blade pickup selector, master volume, neck/middle tone and bridge tone controls. The S-1 switch embedded in the master volume knob splits the humbucker to a hot single-coil mode. Hardware includes a Floyd Rose Original double-locking vibrato bridge and nut, deluxe staggered tuners and one-ply anodized aluminum pickguard. A deluxe hardshell case is also included.

PERFORMANCE The 75th Anniversary Stratocaster costs only \$100 more than the Player Stratocaster (the most affordable Fender-brand Strat), making it an incredible value, thanks to its upgraded pickups and super-classy styling. For Strat purists and aficionados this model offers a familiar feel and playing comfort that's like a broken-in pair of leather gloves. The neck has heft without being too thick and unwieldy, providing smooth, comfortable playability and full-bodied tone. The pickups deliver a prominent midrange bark and shimmering treble that embodies what many players consider ideal Strat tone (a happy medium somewhere between Stevie Ray Vaughan's punch and Mark Knopfler's bite).

The American Ultra Luxe Floyd Rose HSS is one of Fender's most expensive production model Strats, but it's worth the extra cost for players who want nothing less than the best. The pickups are absolutely noise-free, and they produce a wide range of stellar tones with full body, clarity and dynamic response. The neck is faster than a Bugatti Chiron, and the Original Floyd Rose is built to last decades of dive bombs. Plus, both models look so good that you'll be the coolest person in the room when you strap one on.

STREET PRICES:

\$899.99 (75th Anniversary Stratocaster); \$2,499.99 (American Ultra Luxe Stratocaster Floyd Rose HSS)

MANUFACTURER:

Fender, fender.com

- Extremely cool designs highlighted by matching painted headstocks and contrasting pickguards and control knobs.
- The 75th Anniversary has three Vintage-Style '60s Single-Coil Strat pickups, classic master volume and tone knob configuration and five-position switch.
- The built-in Red Box provides eight separate speaker cabinet simulation settings, with different settings stored for each channel.
- The American Ultra Luxe Floyd Rose HSS boasts an Ultra Double Tap humbucker (bridge) with S-1 coil tap switch and two Ultra Noiseless Hot Strat single-coil (neck and middle).
- **THE BOTTOM LINE:** The 75th Anniversary model delivers classic Strat tone and playability for an affordable price, while the American Ultra Luxe Floyd Rose HSS offers the ultimate modern hot-rod experience for those who can afford to pay more.

The Cosmic Club

PIGTRONIX CONSTELLATOR
AND SPACE RIP

By Paul Riaro

IF YOUR MINI pedal cravings need to be addressed faster than the speed of light, consider checking out Pigtronix's lil' floor-stompers as future spacefaring voyagers for your pedalboard. Pigtronix launched a batch of stellar stompboxes with names like Gamma Drive, Moon Pool, Constellator and Space Rip that sound like they're right out of a SpaceX playbook, but they are very much "down to earth" analog mini-pedals with advanced circuitry and futuristic enhancements. Two of them reviewed here — the Constellator, an analog delay pedal with 600ms of modulated echo and two selectable Feel modes; and the Space Rip, an analog synth pedal featuring pulse width modulated (PWM) sawtooth and square wave voices in multiple octaves — integrate classic tried-and-true tones with unusual twists that yield inspiring results.

FEATURES Both pedals share the same lightweight metal housing, 9VDC power (no battery) and four-knobs format. In order for the diminutive Constellator to achieve its longer delay time, the pedal employs a pair of production replicas of the Panasonic MN3005 bucket brigade chips that offer impressive fidelity and headroom in an analog delay. Controls include Time (delay time), Mix (dry/wet ratio) Mod (modulation depth) Repeats (feedback amount) and Feel button switch (Selects between chorus or vibrato modulation).

The fab synthesizer-like undulations generated from the Space Rip are driven by its pulse width modulation (PWM) engine, which churns out bellowing sawtooth or square wave shapes that can be altered by using the following controls: Rate (speed of waveform motion) Tune (fine tuning or detuning of the pitched above synth voice) Mix (clean/synth blend), Sub (one octave down voice), Octave button switch (drops an additional octave down) and Shape button switch (sawtooth or square waveform



voice). Finally, the Constellator is buffered bypass, while the Space Rip is true bypass.

PERFORMANCE There is no shortage of analog delays to choose from, but I can say the mini Constellator stands head and shoulders above most. What's funny is I was expecting a little more "cosmos" from the Constellator, but what I heard instead was crystalline clarity in both headroom and signal, and certainly more warmly detailed echoes. Setting the Repeats knob at the third star of the constellations graphic on its face and setting the rest of the controls around 11 o'clock offers a great starting point for what I'd like to call a "cosmic cowboy" slapback echo. I also find its tape-echo saturation a sweetly controlled lo-fi sound, and having 600ms of it is more than enough to get your delayed point across. There's a beautiful sheen to the Constellator's overall tone, and adding either its plush chorus or silky vibrato to those echoes is a thoroughly enchanting must.

Pigtronix states that the Space Rip's pulse width waveforms "is produced by the onboard VCO being kept in a state of flux," and I can assure you they're not kidding. There is no shortage of kinetic energy propulsion in its octave-thickened belching, Radiohead-

inspired mangling of the signal, and oscillating bluster of whatever is being fed into the Space Rip. I found more of that "cosmic thing" with the Space Rip because it blasts off the minute you plug it in and is also aptly named — it's literally ripping your signal apart with a zipper-like tear from its throbbing sawtooth or square waveforms while being cushioned by multiple octave synthesized voices.

Tracking is spot-on — especially in its low and sub octaves — and pulling back on your pick attack bestows just enough pause to enjoy the roaring velocity of its fluctuating synthesized pulse that can sound otherworldly or like a wicked synth from the past. The onboard LFO controlled by the Rate knob allows you to decide how quickly and aggressively you wish to traverse through its undulating waveforms, the Tune control sounds best when it's finely-tuned, and truth be told, Mix should be fully wet for your guitar to jump towards warp speed.

For even more time and space vibrancy, I added in the Constellator for some infinite repeats. But if you're looking to get intergalactic, the Space Rip and Constellator provide a wildly fun rocket ride for their "far out" capabilities.

CHEAT SHEET



STREET PRICE:
\$179 (each)
MANUFACTURER:
Pigtronix,
pigtronix.com

● The Constellator features up to 600ms of analog echo, with a Feel button that engages smooth chorus or vibrato modulation.

● The Space Rip emulates analog synthesizer sounds with its pulse width modulated sawtooth and square wave voices in multiple octaves and zero-latency tracking.

● **THE BOTTOM LINE**
The Pigtronix Constellator modulated analog delay and Space Rip PWM guitar synth will take your tone beyond the stars as feature-packed mini pedals.



Instant Gratification

DACS HEADLINE GUITAR SWITCHER

By Chris Gill

DIGITAL MODELING AMPS, processors and apps offer studio guitarists an incredible variety of instantly accessible tones, but a lot of players still prefer the sound of genuine tube amps and real speakers captured by a microphone. Unfortunately, swapping amp heads and speaker cabinets to find the ideal tone is a bigger hassle and more time-consuming than accessing a menu and making a few clicks on an app or control panel. While that may not be a problem when working alone in a home studio, it can be a nightmare when impatient bandmates or clients are watching the clock.

The DACS HeadLine offers guitarists who want to instantly access a wide variety of amp and speaker combinations a pro-quality, powerful and easy-to-use solution. Up to eight amps and four speaker cabinets can be connected to the HeadLine relay switching box, which in turn is connected to a separate user interface/selector unit

featuring illuminated buttons for selecting amps and cabinets. The separate units allow the switching box to remain in the studio in close proximity to the amps and speakers while the selector unit stays within reach in the control room.

FEATURES The DACS HeadLine system consists of two 1U rack-mounted devices that each measure about 4 1/4 inches deep and are very lightweight. The relay switching box features just an illuminated on/off switch and 1/4-inch input on its front panel, while around back are another guitar input/tuner jack, eight 1/4-inch jacks to connect to each amp's input, eight 1/4-inch jacks for connection to the corresponding amp's speaker output jack, four 1/4-inch speaker outputs and a jack for a Cat 5/6 RJ45 network cable (Ethernet). The DACS HeadLine ships with a 16-foot cable that should be long enough for most applications, but longer lengths are easy to find at computer stores or online.

The interface/selector unit provides one set of eight illuminated push switches for selecting the desired amp and another set of four illuminated push switches for selecting the cabinet. Two cabinets can also be engaged at once, but just make certain that the selected amp can handle the resulting impedance. This unit also features a 1/4-inch guitar input on the front panel, while around back are separate 1/4-inch guitar output and tuner jacks along with an RJ45 control output jack.

PERFORMANCE Connecting amps and speakers to the DACS HeadLine switching box is very simple. Regular guitar cables are connected between the switcher and amps, while speaker cables are connected to the switcher's amp outputs and speaker input jacks. When an amp is not selected, it is automatically connected to a dummy load to avoid transformer damage. Also, users can only engage channels with speakers connected to them, and channels without



CHEAT SHEET



speakers cannot be activated. The only setup issue that users need to be mindful of is impedance matching between cabinets, especially when selecting speaker pairs.

The DACS HeadLine system truly allows guitarists to swap amp head and speaker configurations in an instant. There is only a short lag during switching when the guitar input is muted, but this is not a problem for studio applications. Being able to instantly compare different rigs while searching for the ideal tone is a revelation and godsend for players. HeadLine is also very useful beyond the recording studio for simple tasks like figuring out which speaker cabinet pairs best with an amp head. It is so much easier to choose the ideal speaker when one can compare and contrast differences and nuances within a few seconds instead of having to take a few minutes to unplug and plug in different cabinets and rely on one's memory.

STREET PRICE: \$1,853

MANUFACTURER:
DACs Digital Audio,
dacs-audio.com

- The relay switching box provides jacks for connecting up to eight separate amps and four speaker cabinets.
- A separate interface/selector unit can be placed remotely in the control room, allowing users to instantly select amp and speaker combos via push buttons.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE:** The DACS HeadLine Guitar Switcher system provides studio guitarists who prefer to use a variety of tube amps and speakers with the same instant rig-switching gratification as players who use digital modeling apps, processors and amps.

Buzz Bin



Taylor Guitars TaylorSense Guitar Health Monitoring System



REMEMBER WHEN ALL you had to do to protect and store your favorite Taylor acoustic was insert a soundhole humidifier or humidity-maintenance system in the case and think, "That'll do, right?" Oh, [Chuckle] that's so 2019. Sure, you'll still have to do those things, but Taylor Guitars — no stranger to modernity — has taken the process of activity tracking and hygrometer monitoring for your Taylor acoustic a level up with the introduction of the TaylorSense Guitar Health Monitoring System. "What kind of sorcery is this?" you hiss. No wizardry involved here (well, maybe some), but if you own a Taylor acoustic with an Expression System 1 or 2, ES-T or ES-N onboard pickups with a 9V battery, you can swap out that existing battery box for TaylorSense's smart(er) battery box equipped with advanced sensing technology that monitors your Taylor acoustic's current humidity and temperature, remaining battery life and, more astonishingly — physical impact incidents (no need to write another "United Breaks Guitars" song ever, Dave Carroll). And combined with the free companion TaylorSense app (available for iOS and Android mobile devices), you'll be able to track your acoustic's vital signs and receive push notification alerts if your beloved Taylor starts to flatline from any form of hostile humidity level or temperature changes, battery drain or aggravated bonks.

Installation of the TaylorSense battery box is fairly simple but takes a little maneuvering (you'll have to stick your hand in the soundhole to bend a clip), but outside of that, it's an easy replacement. From there, you'll need to register your Taylor from the app and pair your guitar via Bluetooth. Once completed, the TaylorSense Guitar Health Monitoring System uses low-energy Bluetooth to send your guitar's data to the TaylorSense app so you can keep track of and address any number of humidity and temperature issues that can ruin your acoustic. You can see those figures in hourly, daily and monthly stats, and if you encounter any problems, a "Fix" button directs you toward a wealth of informative tutorials, guitar care solutions and helpful how-to videos to rectify a host of setbacks or answer concerns with your instrument. The alert screen is essential (if you travel with your Taylor) for letting you know the time, date and measurement (in grams) of a potential drop or hit that occurred. Overall, the TaylorSense system is just a great monitoring tool to make you feel more at ease and connected to your acoustic. For me, it's fun to see how my Taylor is faring at all times. And if you're a tech geek or numbers guy, you can't beat the thrill of checking up on your Taylor or having the app alert you when it needs help. — Paul Riario

STREET PRICE: \$79.99

MANUFACTURER: Taylor Guitars, taylorguitars.com

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IN DEEP

by Andy Aledort



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WAHS GOING ON

Anatomy of a slide solo in open E tuning, part 4

WE HAVE NOW arrived at the fourth and final column analyzing a slide solo in open E tuning that I played over a backing track by guitarist Jim Oblon. (If you don't know Jim, he's a fantastic guitar player that you should check out!)

A quick review: open E tuning is spelled, low to high: E, B, E, G♯, B, E. For about 98% of this solo, I use an original Coricidin glass "bottle"-style slide from 1970; the great Duane Allman popularized the use of a glass Coricidin bottle for slide with his virtuoso slide work on such legendary recordings as "Statesboro Blues," "Don't Keep Me Wonderin'," "Done Somebody Wrong" and many other Allman Brothers Band classics. Combining the use of a wah pedal with a slide is an approach employed brilliantly by guitarists such as Jeff Beck, Earl Hooker, Joe Walsh and others.

The backing track for this solo consists of a chord progression that is a twist on a standard eight-bar blues form, starting with one and a half bars on the tonic, or I (one) chord, E, then switching to the IV (four) chord, A for the last two beats of bar 2. Bars 3-5 and the first half of bar 6 consist of the (five) chord, B, with the last two beats of bar 6 shifting to the b7 (flat seven) chord, D. The progression wraps up with two bars back on the tonic, E. Throughout **FIGURES 1** and **2**, my improvised lines outline each specific chord as it arrives in the progression; this is known as "playing the changes" while soloing.

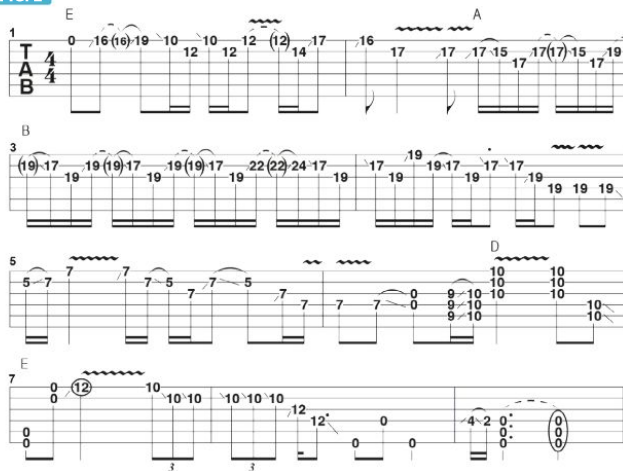
FIGURE 1 illustrates the next-to-to-last chorus of the solo and starts in bar 1 with a phrase played over an E chord on the bottom three strings, utilizing a variety of quick hammer-ons and pull-offs. In bar 2, the A and B chords are sounded with "barres" across the bottom three strings at the 5th and 7th frets, respectively, followed in bars 3-5 and the first half of bar 6 with licks based on the B minor pentatonic scale (B, D, E, F♯, A) with the major third of B, D♯, usually taking the place of the minor third, D.

In bars 5-7, I employ a technique known as *tremolo picking* to play phrases over the B, D and E chords. There are different ways to perform tremolo picking; my preferred

FIG. 1 open E tuning (low to high: E, B, E, G♯, B, E), w/slide and wah-wah pedal



FIG. 2



method is to pick the lower string (the G string in this case) with my pick-hand thumb and the higher string (in this case the B string) with my middle finger, while bracing my ring finger against the pick guard, as an anchor, or fulcrum. In order to make this technique sound correct, the B string must be muted when picking the G string, and vice versa, so that only one string is heard at a time (they should not ring together). The

tremolo picking technique is then employed further through bar 8, as I gradually slide to the 15th, 17th and 12th frets.

FIGURE 2 represents the subsequent eight-bar solo chorus, and here I take a single-note approach throughout, with the rhythm of the phrasing alternating between eighth and 16th notes. Again, notice how every phrase relates directly to each of the backing chords in the progression.

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.

THE GRISTLE
REPORT

by Greg Koch

For video of this lesson, go to
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ROCK 'N' ROLLExploring the glorious
sound of rock 'n' roll
rhythm guitar

I'M NOT GOING to lie to you; I'm a big fan of rock 'n' roll! I'm a huge fan of the Rolling Stones and was very saddened to hear of the recent passing of their legendary drummer, Charlie Watts, surely one of the absolutely greatest rock drummers of all time. As a young tyke, I used to play along to great live Rolling Stones records, such as *Get Yer Ya-Ya's Out!* and *Love You Live*. I love the Faces, with the incredible Ronnie Wood and, of course, Rod Stewart. I love Dave Edmunds... what I'm trying to say is, I like rock 'n' roll!

For this month's column, I thought it'd be fun and instructive to offer some examples of ways to embellish a little three-chord jam, kind of a "Let It Bleed"-type of thing, but in the key of A, based on the chords A, D and E. As I move through the repeating progression, I'm going to add "rando" rock filth to it, and then we'll break it down so that you can add it to your own "rock stew" and serve it up piping hot to the kids!

FIGURE 1 presents a 16-bar rhythm guitar jam I came up with that's based on an eight-bar chord progression that's played twice. The progression starts with two bars on the tonic, or I (one) chord, A, followed by two bars of the IV (four) chord, D, two bars of the V (five) chord, E and then a return to two bars of the tonic, A. In this example, I play through the progression twice, with the second "chorus" beginning in bar 9.

Bar 1 begins with typical Chuck Berry-style rock 'n' roll rhythm guitar, as I alternate between a root-5th A5 chord and a root-6th A6 or a root-flatted 7th A7(no3). At the end of bar 1, I offer a single-string melodic fill approach by utilizing the chromatically ascending notes C to C# (the minor 3rd to the major 3rd), followed by primarily single notes played on the D and A strings in bar 2.

In bar 3, I move to the IV chord, D, starting with a standard 5th-position D barre chord shape, which I embellish with a Keith Richards-approved G/D voicing on beat 3. Keith has made brilliant use of this move on countless Stones hits, from "Brown Sugar" to "Start Me Up" to "Hand of Fate" and many more classics. As you probably know,

FIG. 1

Keith has used open G tuning (low to high: D, G, D, G, B, D) on many of his songs, often with the 6th string removed, which facilitates this type of I-IV chord change in a way that couldn't be easier for the fret hand.

Getting back to our example, the V chord, E, arrives in bar 5 and is introduced via chromatic movement on the 6th string, similar to what I did over the A chord in bar 2, now using the notes G and G#. Bar 6 includes a groovy (can I say that?) technique on the upbeat of beat 2 into beat 3, as I play an *oblique bend* on the D and G strings. An oblique bend is two or more notes played together, one of which is bent while the

other(s) remain stationary. In this example, I bend the note on the G string up a whole step by pulling it in toward my palm while also fretting an unbent note on the D string, after which I release the bend and slide the two notes down to 1st position.

This brings us to the second eight-bar chorus over the progression, beginning in bar 9. As you play through the rest of the example, notice the slight variations in the single- and two-note licks, as well as the occasional three-note chord voicings. It may only be rock 'n' roll, but there are an infinite number of ways to rock, if you know what I mean!

Greg Koch is a large human who coaxes guitars into submission in a way that has left an indelible print on the psyches of many Earth dwellers. Visit GregKoch.com to check out his recordings, instructional materials, signature musical devices and colorful hats.

MELODIC
MUSE

by Andy Timmons



For video of this lesson, go to
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RESOLUTION
REVOLUTION

Finding satisfying melodic resolutions when soloing over “Electric Gypsy”

LET’S CARRY ON with our examination of soloing approaches to take with the song “Electric Gypsy,” which is built around a simple four-chord progression in the key of D major, D - A - Bm - G, with each chord lasting for a single bar.

In the last column, I demonstrated some musically effective approaches to connecting pairs of notes that are a diatonic 6th, or six scale degrees, apart, using notes that are the 5th and major or minor 3rd of each chord. For example, the pair of notes that make up the 6th over the D chord are A and F♯. Likewise, the pair of notes that represent the A chord are E and C♯. For the Bm chord, the notes are F♯ and D, which in this case are the 5th and the minor 3rd. And for the G chord, the notes are D and B.

Discovering the wide variety of ways in which one can move from each of these 6th shapes to the next as the chords progress can be inspiring and even revelatory, as there are nearly an endless number of ways to “present” each chord, harmonically speaking, as it arrives. This time, we will apply a similar concept — one of chordal resolution between 5th and 3rds — to the single-note approach.

FIGURE 1 presents a 16-bar solo comprising four choruses of our four-bar progression D - A - Bm - G. As I move from chord to chord, my goal here is to “connect” the major 3rd of each chord by devising melodic phrasing that naturally brings the listener to each appropriate interval, and to do so in a musically appealing and satisfying way.

The example begins with a partial, or what’s known as a pickup, bar, as I play on the last two beats of the last chord in the progression, G, to set up the first phrase over the D chord in bar 1. Notice that the last note of the pickup bar is a slide up to F♯, which is the major 3rd of D, but I bend this note up a half step to G on the downbeat of “one” over the D chord, and then release the bend back to F♯, thus resolving this short melodic phrase to the major 3rd of D. The repeated sounding of E-to-D melody notes after that sets up the resolution to C♯ over the A chord in bar 2. Bar 3 brings us to the

FIG. 1

The figure shows a 16-bar guitar solo in 4/4 time. The progression is D (bars 1-2), A (bars 3-4), Bm (bars 5-6), and G (bars 7-8), repeated four times. The notation includes fret numbers, bends, slides, and ties, illustrating melodic resolutions between chords. For example, in bar 1, a pickup bar sets up the D chord with a slide to F# and a bend to G. The solo continues with various melodic lines that connect the major 3rds of the chords in a satisfying way.

Bm chord, and here I save its minor 3rd, D, until the second half of the bar, where I then use it as a launching pad for a descending line to set up the major 3rd of G, B, on the downbeat of bar 4.

As the 16-bar solo progresses, my goal, first and foremost, is for the improvisation to sound effortless and natural while also presenting the listener with continual resolutions to the major 3rd of each chord as it arrives. In this way, soloing over these

chords presents a specific melodic challenge: to craft expressive improvised lines while also “describing” the implied harmony of the progression in a seamless and musical way.

Now that you have the idea, record this repeating chord progression using a looper pedal or some other device that you can then play along to and try inventing various ways to travel from chord to chord with an ear toward continual melodic resolution.

Andy Timmons is a world-renowned guitarist known for his work with the Andy Timmons Band, as well as Danger Danger and Simon Phillips. Visit andytimmons.com and guitarxperience.net to check out his recordings and many instructional releases

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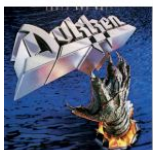
Performance Notes

FROM ANGUS YOUNG AND GEORGE LYNCH CLASSICS TO MAROON 5'S 2019 BLOCKBUSTER, HERE'S HOW TO PLAY THIS MONTH'S SONGS

By Jimmy Brown



"TOOTH AND NAIL" Dokken



THIS UPTEMPO EIGHTIES-MET-
AL classic showcases the shred-guitar virtuosity and musical brilliance and flair of the legendary George Lynch, a.k.a., "Mr.

Scary."

The guitarist is flying by the seat of his musical pants here, as he manages to ride and stay on top of a fast-moving musical tsunami. As such, there are some subtle rhythmic and melodic variations in the song's recurring riffs and pattern-based lead licks, which aren't really noticeable... until you go to transcribe or sight-read them.

For example, Lynch never plays the descending chromatic line at the start of the song (see bar 1) exactly the same way twice when recalling it later. (Notice the repeated E and B notes in the descent.) But to give you, the reader, consistency for learning the part, we chose to use only one pass/version of the run throughout the transcription. Similarly, we tried to keep the chart reader-friendly by notating Lynch's intended rhythms and notes throughout and avoided getting into minor variations on the repeats, which again aren't really noticeable at the song's brisk tempo.

The lightning-quick tapping licks George plays during sections E and F aren't as terrifyingly difficult to perform as they may seem at first. The key technical move here is to make sure your fret-hand index finger is pre-planted on the string and ready to "catch" the pull-off from the first tapped note. This is especially crucial when crossing to a different string, such as at the beginnings of bars 33 and 38-42.

Also critically important throughout the song is the invisible technique of *manual noise suppression*, which is performed primarily by palm muting any unused strings that are below the ones you're playing on, meaning the lower strings. This applies to everything from the double-hammer-ons and tremolo-picked lead runs at section H to the A5-D5 chord change first played in bar 3, for which you will definitely want to "choke" the open A string right as you play the D5. You can also do what Lynch does here and hook your fret-hand thumb over the top side of the neck to dampen the A string on the D5 hits.



"BACK IN BLACK" AC/DC



TO AUTHENTI-
CALLY PER-
FORM Angus and Malcolm Young's iconic, crushing intro and verse riff in this classic song, with its huge "holes

of silence," you'll need to dampen, or mute, the strings with both hands immediately after strumming each chord, as some of the notes are open and can't be easily and effectively muted with one hand alone. The fretted single notes leading up to the quick, descending finger slide in bar 6 also need to be short and crisp. This is achieved by loosening your fret hand's grip on each note immediately after picking it.

Strum all the chords in the chorus (section C) using downstrokes, with the exception of the three back-to-back 16th-note rhythms on the G5 chord in bar 21, which are best strummed "up down up." However, for the rhythm part played behind Angus' guitar solo at section D (see *Rhy. Fig. 1*), do what Malcolm did and strum consecutive downstrokes for the 16th-note rhythms here, which are a bit easier to execute in this case, due to the smaller two-note chord voicings that are played on the bottom two strings only. Doing this will result in a tight, "chunky" attack.

What makes Angus' solos really sing and convey passion is his signature fast-and-furious, B.B. King-like "bee sting" vibrato. To produce the desired vibrato effect on the notes in bars 24 and 25, fret each note with your index finger and quickly and repeatedly bend the note sharp by pulling the string down toward the floor. The other fingers should fan out and quiver, to add leverage to the pull-down bending action. Of course, using extra-light-gauge strings makes bends and vibratos easier to perform.

Most of the remaining vibratos Angus uses in his lead licks throughout "Back in Black" are performed by pushing the string up and away from the floor, in most cases using the ring finger, with the middle finger supporting it one fret below, for added control over the vibrato's width, speed and evenness. This technique is especially expressive when shaking a note that's already bent, as Angus demonstrates so well in bars 28, 32, 35, 37, 54, 61 and 62.



"MEMORIES" Maroon 5



THIS HUGE-
LY POPULAR song features Maroon 5 vocalist Adam Levine setting poignantly nostalgic lyrics to an enduringly appealing, repeating

four-bar chord progression, which is borrowed from the famous classical piece "Canon in D Major" by late-17th-century German Composer Johann Pachelbel.

"Memories" is in the key of B major, and the primary accompaniment is an electric piano. For our guitar adaptation, however, we felt it was optimal to present the song to be performed as if it were in the key of C major, with all six strings tuned down one half step, to E_b standard tuning (low to high: E_b, A_b, D_b, G_b, B_b, E_b), so that everything sounds in the key of B. This makes for a set of chord voicings that is more familiar and finger friendly to beginner- and intermediate-level guitarists and also better matches those of the keyboard part, especially in regard to the low open Em chord, which would be unattainable in standard tuning. (You would need to instead play an E_bm chord.)

You'll notice the two different voicings for the C chord in the main Gtr. 1 part: There's the 3rd-position C barre chord (labeled "C^{III}") that begins the song, which is easiest to quickly mute with the fret hand right after strumming it, to achieve the desired *staccato* (short, clipped) articulation. And there's the regular open C "cowboy" chord in bar 3, which works better coming from the 1st-position F chord, voicing- and fingering-wise. Notice, however, that since this C chord includes the open G string, you'll need to use both hands to quickly and completely silence it right after it's played, on the last beat of bar 3. The same applies to the Em chord in the second half of bar 2.

The Gtr. 1 part, which is the main, repeating part in our arrangement, may be performed either with a pick — using a combination of flatpicking and strumming — or with fingerpicking or hybrid picking, using the bare fingertips (with or without a pick) to pluck the notes of the chords simultaneously, which will give you a more piano-like simultaneous note attack, as opposed to the staggered quick arpeggiation that strumming yields.

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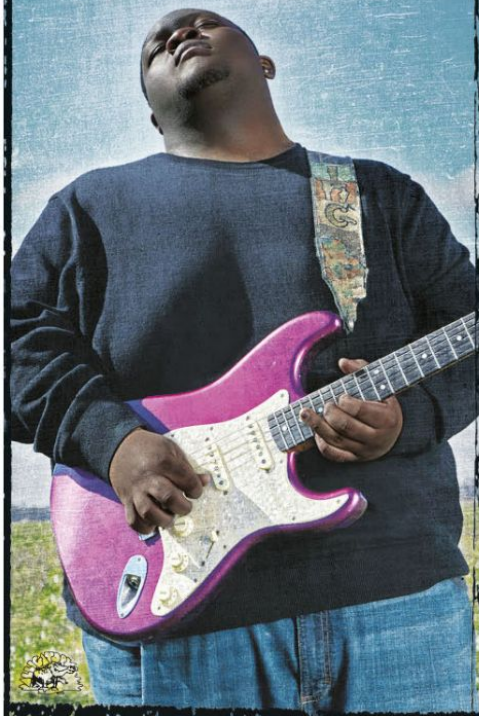
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"TOOTH AND NAIL"

Dokken

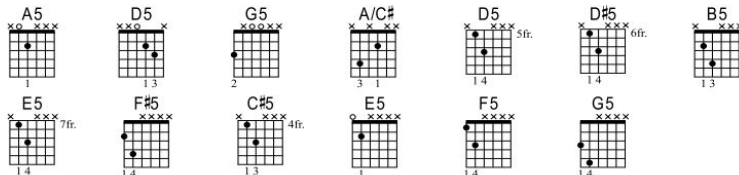
As heard on **TOOTH AND NAIL**

Words and Music by DON DOKKEN, GEORGE LYNCH, JEFF PILSON and MICK BROWN • Transcribed by JEFF PERRIN

All guitars are tuned down one half step (low to high: E_b, A_b, D_b, G_b, B_b, E_b).

Bass tuning (low to high): E_b, A_b, D_b, G_b.

NOTE: On the recording, all instruments sound slightly sharp of concert pitch, approximately 34 cents sharp. To play along, tune all strings accordingly.



A Intro (0:00)

Fast ♩ = 136 (w/double-time feel)

N.C.

N.C.(E5)

A5

D5

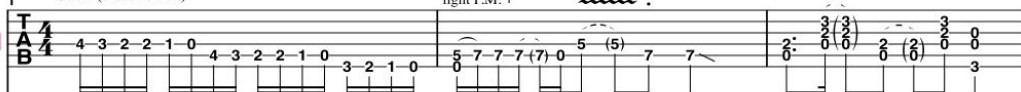
A5

D5

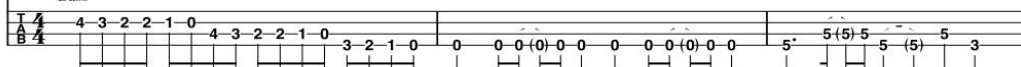
G5

Gtr. 1 (elec. w/dist.)

light P.M.~



Bass



N.C.(E5)

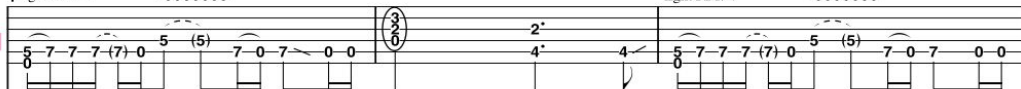
D5

A/C#

N.C.(E5)

4 light P.M.~

light P.M.~



A5

D5

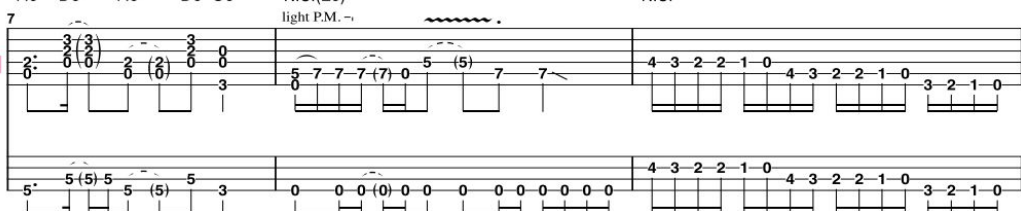
A5

D5

G5

N.C.(E5)

N.C.



B Verses (0:15, 0:50, 2:33)

1. Desperate living
2. Last generation
3. Desperate living

driving me mad
reckless and free
Tryin' to see

Writings on the wall
Up against the odds
Breaking all the rules

N.C. (E5)

D5 D#5

10 P.M. P.M. P.H. 1/4 P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M.

pitch: G

(play repeats simile)

Crushed all the hopes and the dreams we once had
Thoughts of revenge the are going through me
Only the strong are going to be free

Just to watch them fall
Fate lies in the cards
From a world of fools

D5 B5

14 P.M. slight P.H. 1/2 P.M. slight P.H. 1/2 P.M. P.M. P.M.

C Pre-chorus (0:29, 1:05, 2:47)

Tearing it up in the daytime

B5

18 P.M. slight P.H. P.M. slight P.H.

Burning it down at night

How

20 P.M. slight P.H. N.C.

D Chorus (0:36, 1:12, 2:54)

long does it take

to break the spell

N.C.(E5)

A5

D5

A5

D5

G5

N.C.(E5)

22

P.M.

slight P.H.

P.M.

slight P.H.

Straight to the top

D5

A/C#

N.C.(E5)

P.M.

slight P.H.

A5

D5

A5

D5

G5

25

1., 3.

2.

On 3rd Chorus, skip ahead to 1 (bar 59)

Tooth and nail

2nd time: How

N.C.(E5)

E5

D5

E5

N.C.

28

P.M.

P.H.

(pick scrape)

E Guitar Solo (1:26)

F#5

Gtr. 2 (elec. w/dist.)

C#5

31

T T T T T T T

17-9 14-9 14-9 14-14 17-9 14-9 14-9 14-9 17-9 14-9 14-9 17-9 14-9 14-9 16-9 12-9 12-9 12-16 9-12 9-12 9-12 16-9 12-9 12-9 12-16 9-12 9-12 9-12

Gtr. 1

P.M. - -

The first system of the musical score for 'The Little Boat' consists of two staves. The upper staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It contains a melodic line starting on a whole note G4, followed by a half note F#4, and then a half note E4. The lower staff is a bass clef with a key signature of one flat. It contains a bass line starting on a whole note G2, followed by a half note F#2, and then a half note E2. The piece is in 2/4 time, indicated by the '2' over the '4' in the time signature.

Bass

2 2 2 (2) 2 2 2 2 2 2 (2) 2 2 2 4 4 4 (4) 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 (4) 4 4

E5

F5

[illegible]

The second system of the musical score for 'The Rose Tree' consists of two staves. The upper staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It contains three measures: the first measure has a whole note chord of G2 and B-flat2; the second measure has a whole note chord of G2 and B-flat2; the third measure has a whole note chord of G2 and B-flat2. The lower staff is a bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It contains three measures: the first measure has a whole note chord of G2 and B-flat2; the second measure has a whole note chord of G2 and B-flat2; the third measure has a whole note chord of G2 and B-flat2. The notes are written as G2 and B-flat2 in the bass clef.

*Substitute top note (in parenthesis) on repeat.

2.

(play 3 times)

w/delay effect - - - - -

35

P.M. - - - ,

The second system of the musical score for 'The Little Boat' consists of two staves. The upper staff continues the melody from the first system, starting with a circled '2' and a dotted quarter note, followed by a half note, and then a circled '6' with a dotted quarter note. The lower staff continues the accompaniment, starting with a quarter note, followed by a half note, and then a quarter note. The system concludes with a double bar line.

(F#5)

37 
Rhy. Fig. 1
Bass Fig. 1

(C5)

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 twice (see bar 37)

Gtr. 2

(F#5)

39 T T T T T T T T

12-5 9-5 9-5 9-12 5-9 5-9 5-9 12-5 9-5 9-5 9-12 5-9 5-9 5-9 12-5 9-5 (5)

11-4 8-4 8-4 11-4 8-4 8-4 11-4 8-4 8-4 11-4 8-4 8-4 11-4 8-4 (4)

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 twice (see bar 37)

(C5)

(F#5)

[illegible]

G (2:00)

E5

D5

G5

B5

D#5

43 Gtr. 2

slight P.H.

slight P.H.

43 8° 7 (7) 9 (9) (9) 8° 7 (7) 10° 12° 10° (10) 8° 7 (7) 9 11° 12° 11 (11) 9 9° 11 (11) 9 8° (8)

Gtr. 1

Rhy. Fig. 2

end Rhy. Fig. 2

The first system of the musical score for 'The Rose Tree' consists of four measures. The first measure contains a sequence of nine eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, and E4. The second measure contains a sequence of seven eighth notes: D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, and E3. The third measure contains a sequence of seven eighth notes: D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, and E3. The fourth measure contains a sequence of eight eighth notes: D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, and D3. The notes are written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#4).

Bass

Bass Fig. 2

end Bass Fig. 2

[illegible]

D#5

Gtr. 2

slight P.H.

slight P.H.

slight P.H.

47 *Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 (see bar 43)*

H (2:14)

D5

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 (see bar 43)

51 
Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 (see bar 43)

B5

D#5

53 

2. **I** (2:26)

Go back to [B] 3rd Verse (bar 10)

N.C.

Gtr. 2
(trem. pick)

55 (rem. pres)

22° 20(20) 19 22° 20(20) 19 19° 17(17) 16 19° 17(17) 16 12° 10(10) 9 12° 10(10) 9 5° 3(3) 2 5° 3(3) 2

Bass

2 2 2 0 3 2 0 3 2

J (3:09)

long does it take

to break the spell

N.C. (E5)

A5

5 A

D5

65

(E5)

D5

A/C#

Gtr. 1

slight PH

100

slight PH.

59 P.M. *Andante* P.M. *Andante*

Guitar

Bass

straight to the top

Tooth and nail

N.C.(E5)

A5 D5 A5 D5 G5 N.C.(E5)

E5 D5 E5

63 P.M.

63 P.M.

K Outro (3:23)

Tooth and nail

Tooth and nail

N.C.(E5)

A5 D5 A5 D5 G5

N.C.(E5)

E5 D5 E5

67 P.M.

67 P.M.

Straight to the top

Tooth and nail

N.C.(E5)

A5 D5 A5 D5 G5

N.C.(E5)

71 P.M.

71 P.M.

N.C.

E5 D5 E5

74

74

"BACK IN BLACK"

AC/DC

As heard on **BACK IN BLACK**

Words and Music by ANGUS YOUNG, MALCOLM YOUNG and BRIAN JOHNSON • Transcribed by ANDY ALEDORT



A Intro (0:00)

Moderately ♩ = 94

N.C.

(0:05)

1 Gtr. 1 (elec. w/dist.) E5 D5 A5

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

Bass

Bass Fig. 1

4 N.C. E5 D5 A5 N.C.

end Bass Fig. 1

B Verse (0:26, 1:08)

- Back in black I hit the sack Number one I've been too long I'm glad to be back back Yes I'm
- Back in the back of a Cadillac A5 one with a bullet I'm a power N.C. Yes I'm

7 Gtrs. 1 and 2

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 twice (see bar 3)

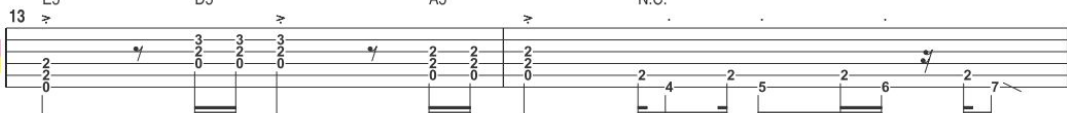
- let loose from the noose that's kept me hanging about I keep
in a bang with a gang They've got to catch me if they want me to hang 'cause I'm

9 E5 D5 A5 N.C.

- looking at the sky 'cause it's gettin' me high Nobody's Forget the hearse 'cause I'll never die rap I got
back on the track and I'm leadin' the pack gonna get me on another So

11 E5 D5 A5 N.C.

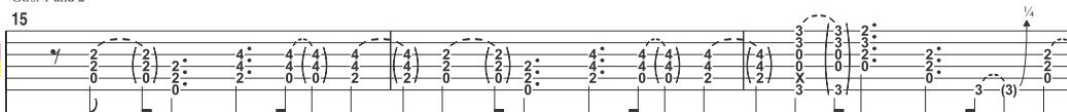
nine lives cat's eyes Usin' every one of them and running of wild my way } 'Cause I'm
 look at me now I'm just makin' my play Don't try to push your luck just get out of my way }
 E5 D5 A5 N.C.



C 1st, 2nd and 3rd Choruses (0:47, 1:28, 2:30)

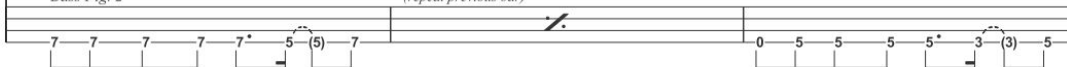
back Yes I'm back Well I'm back Yes I'm
 A5 E5 B5 B5/A B5 A5 E5 B5 B5/A B5 G5 D A5 (G5) A5

Gtrs. 1 and 2

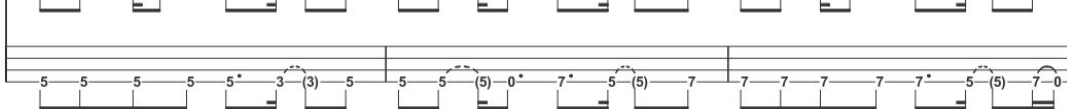
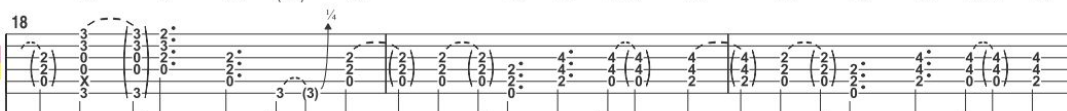


Bass Substitute Bass Fill 2 on 3rd Chorus (see below)
Bass Fig. 2

(repeat previous bar)

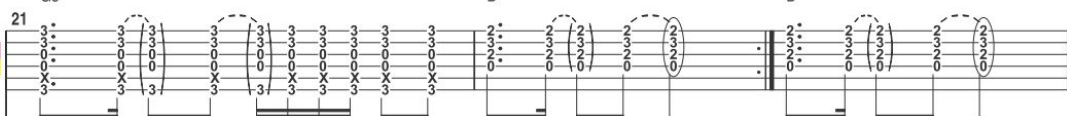


back Well I'm back back Well I'm
 G5 D A5 (G5) A5 E5 B5 B5/A B5 A5 E5 B5 B5/A B5



3rd time, skip ahead to [E] 1. go back to [B] 2nd Verse 12.

back in black Yes I'm back in black oh back in black
 G5 D D



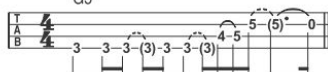
Substitute Bass Fill 1 on 2nd Chorus (see below)

end Bass Fig. 2



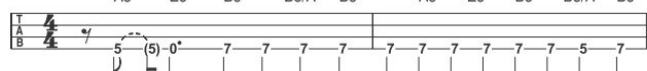
Bass Fill 1 (1:44)

G5



Bass Fill 2 (2:30)

A5 E5 B5 B5/A B5 A5 E5 B5 B5/A B5



D Guitar Solo (1:48)

E5 E7(no3) E6(no3) E5 E7(no3) E6(no3) E5 A5 E5 A5
 Gtr. 3 (elec. w/dist.)

24 P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M. P.M.

Gtrs. 1 and 2
Rhy. Fig. 1 *end Rhy. Fig. 1*

Bass
Bass Fig. 3 *end Bass Fig. 3*

E5 E7(no3) E6(no3) E5 E7(no3) E6(no3)

Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 1 two and one half times (see bar 24)

28 Gtr. 3 P.M. *let ring*

Bass

E5 A5 E5 A5 E5 E7(no3) E6(no3) E5

31 *Play Bass Fig. 3 twice simile (see bar 24)*

E7(no3) E6(no3) E5 A5 E5 A5 E5 E7(no3) E6(no3)

34 Gtr. 3 *go back to C 3rd Chorus*

E5 E7(no3) E6(no3) E5 A5 E5 A5 E5 E7(no3) E6(no3)

Well I'm

37 Gtr. 3

Gtrs. 1 and 2

E (2:47)

back in black

D

Gtrs. 1 and 2

40

Bass

F Interlude (2:50)

N.C.(E)

(1.) Aw yeah
(2.) Yes I am

Aw yeah
Oh

Substitute Bass Fill 3 second time (see below)

yeah
N.C.(A)

yeah

Aw yeah yeah
N.C.(E)

G 4th Chorus (3:10)

Well I'm

back

(I'm back) back

(I'm back) back

(I'm

A5 E5 B5 B5/A B5 A5 E5 B5 B5/A B5 G5 D A5 (G5) A5

Play Bass Fig. 2 (see bar 15)

back) back
G5 D A5 (G5)

(I'm back) back
A5

E5 B5 B5/A B5

(I'm back) back
A5

E5 B5 B5/A B5

Back in black
G5

Yes I'm back in black
D

A5

Out of the sack

P.M.

Gtrs. 1 and 2

Bass

*D string is sounded by pull-off.

Bass Fill 3 (2:55)

N.C.(E)

E5 E7 (no3) E6(no3)
Gtrs. 1 and 2 play Rhy. Fig. 1 until fade (see bar 24)

fade out

Bass Fill 4 (3:58)

(E6) (E5) (E7) (E6)



Y A B

4 0 0 0 5 6 7 12-13 14 5 5 5 4 4

"MEMORIES"

Maroon 5

As heard on **JORDI**

Words and Music by ADAM LEVINE, JONATHAN BELLION, JORDAN JOHNSON, JACOB HINDLIN, STEFAN JOHNSON, MICHAEL POLLACK AND VINCENT FORD • Transcribed by JEFF PERRIN

All guitars are tuned down one half step (low to high: **E_b, A_b, D_b, G_b, B_b, E_b**).

Bass tuning (low to high): **E_b, A_b, D_b, G_b**.

All music sounds in the key of B, one half step lower than written.

Gtr. 1 chords: (keyboard arr. for gtr.)

Gtr. 2 chords: (clean elec.)

A Intro (0:00)

Moderately Slow ♩ = 91

Gtr. 1 (keyboard arr. for elec. w/clean tone)
Rhy. Fig. 1

let ring throughout

end Rhy. Fig. 1

B 1st Chorus (0:11)

Here's to the ones that we got

Cheers to the wish you were here but you're not 'cause the

drinks bring back all the memories

of everything we've been through

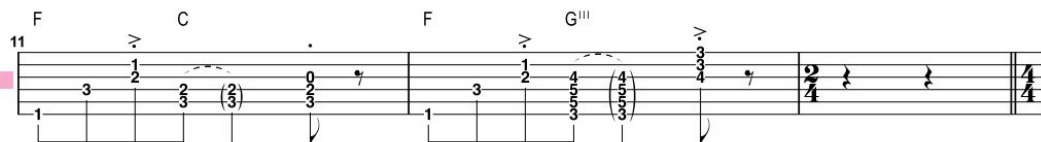
Toast to the ones here today

Toast to the ones that we lost on the way 'cause the

"MEMORIES"

WORDS AND MUSIC BY ADAM LEVINE, JONATHAN BELLION, JORDAN JOHNSON, JACOB HINDLIN, STEFAN JOHNSON, MICHAEL POLLACK AND VINCENT FORD.
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drinks bring back all the memories And the memories bring back memories bring back you 1. There's a



C Verses (0:33, 1:38)

1. time that I remember when I did not know no pain When I believed in forever and everything would stay the same Now my
2. time that I remember when I never felt so lost When I felt all of the hatred was too powerful to stop (Ooh yeah) Now my

C G Am Em F C F G

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

Gtr. 2 (elec. w/clean tone and reverb) (2nd verse only)

Rhy. Fig. 2

end Rhy. Fig. 2



heart feel like December when somebody say your name 'Cause I can't reach out to call you But I know I will one day yeah
heart feel like an ember and it's lighting up the dark I'll carry these torches for you that you know I'll never drop yeah

C G Am Em F C F G



D Pre-chorus (0:54, 1:59)

Everybody hurts sometimes Everybody hurts someday ay - ay But everything gon' be alright Go and raise a glass and say ay

CIII GIII Am Em F C F GIII

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 (see bar 14)

Gtr. 2

(Gtrs. 1 and 2)



E 2nd and 3rd Choruses (1:05, 2:09)

Here's to the ones that we got Cheers to the wish you were here but you're not 'cause the

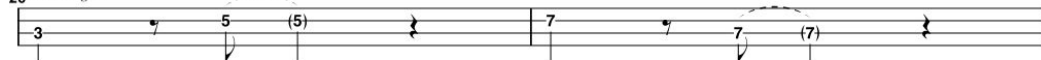
CIII GIII Am Em

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

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 three times (see bar 14)

Bass

26 Bass Fig. 1



drinks bring back all the memories of everything we've been through

28 F C F G^{III} *end Bass Fig. 1*

Toast to the ones here today Toast to the ones that we lost on the way 'cause the
you Doo doo doo doo doo doo doo Doo doo doo doo Doo doo doo doo

30 C^{III} G^{III} Am Em

2nd time on 3rd Chorus, skip ahead to [F] (bar 35) Go back to [C] 2nd Verse (bar 14)

drinks bring back all the memories And the memories bring back memories bring back
Doo doo doo doo doo doo doo Memories bring back memories bring back you 2. There's a

32 F C F G^{III}

[F] (2:41)

you Doo-doo doo doo doo...

(Ooh yeah) Memories bring back memories bring back

C^{III} G^{III} Am Em F C F G^{III}

Gr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 twice (see bar 14)

35 Gr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 twice (see bar 1)

Gr. 3 (elec. w/clean tone)

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 twice (see bar 26)

[G] Outro (2:51)

you Yeah yeah yeah

Yeah yeah yeah yeah no

Memories bring back memories bring back you

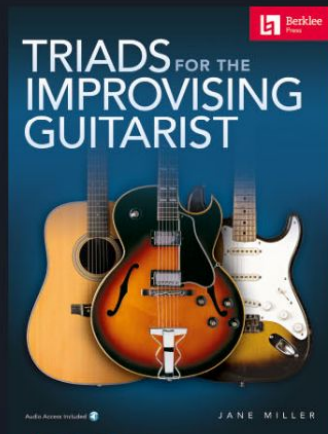
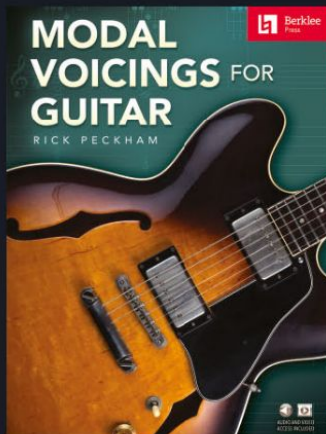
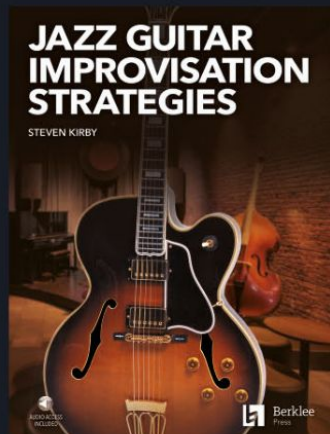
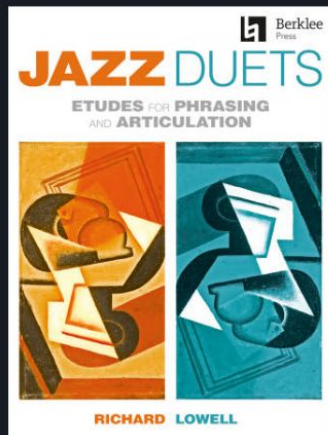
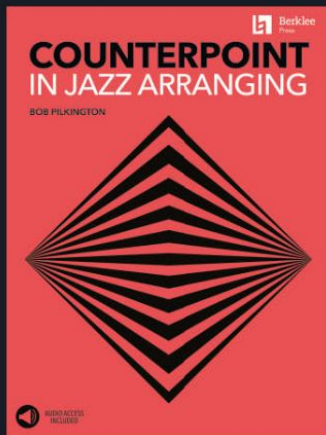
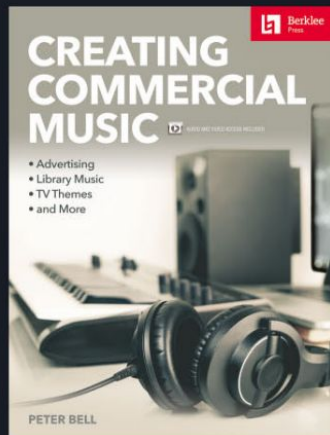
C^{III} G^{III} Am Em F C F G^{III}

Gr. 3

39

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By connecting the five patterns, the fingerboard suddenly becomes a familiar superhighway that takes you anywhere you want to go. You'll understand how and why these related patterns and chords work together so well across the entire fingerboard. Lessons 3 through 8 will take you even further.

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- How to improvise in one position over multiple chord changes and keys
- Chords with fingerings and voicings that you understand and can modify
- How to accurately (and creatively) interpret chord symbols
- How to substitute chords
- How to use pentatonic and blues scales over ANY types of chords
- How to apply the 5 patterns to sightreading
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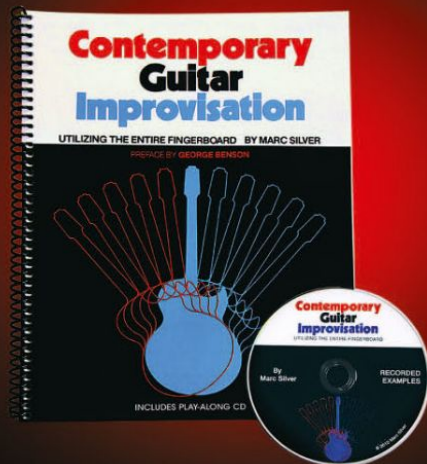
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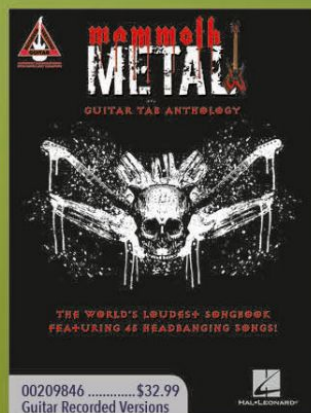
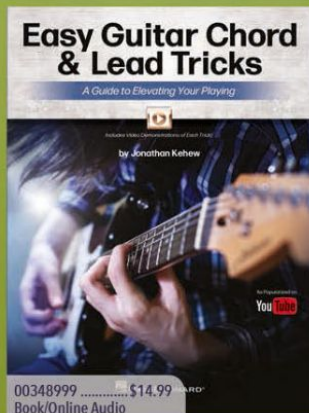
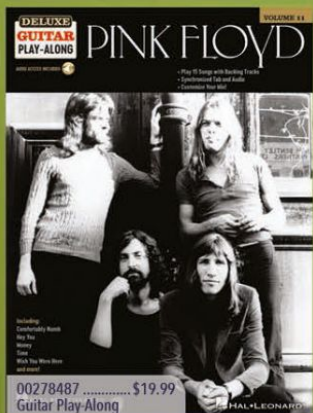
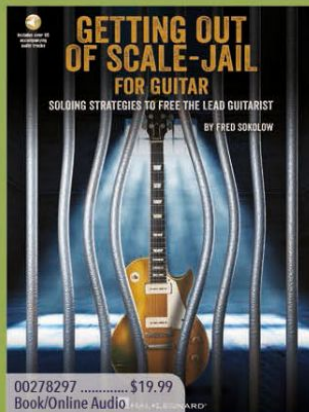
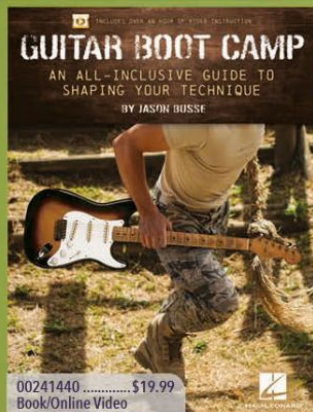
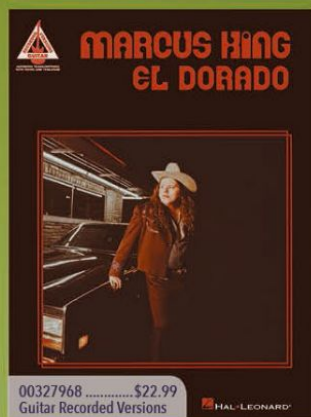
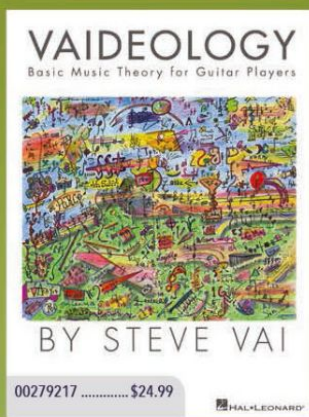
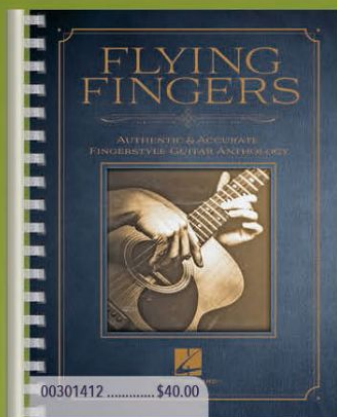


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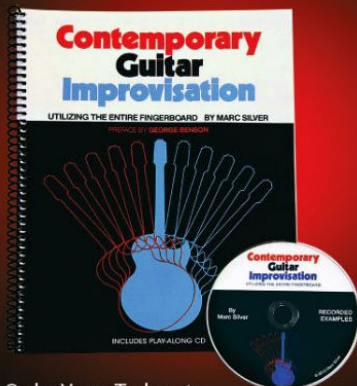
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"I LOVE ROCK 'N ROLL"

JOAN JETT & THE BLACKHEARTS | I LOVE ROCK 'N ROLL, 1981 | GUITARIST: JOAN JETT | STORY BY CHRIS GILL



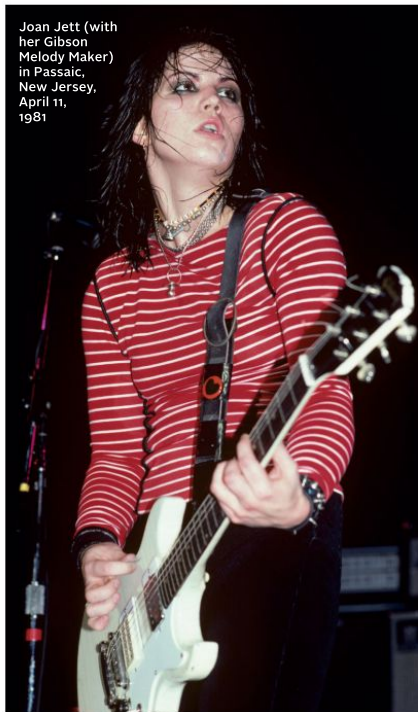
WHEN JOAN JETT released "I Love Rock 'n Roll" in the early Eighties, she instantly transformed herself from an underground punk/hard rock misfit best known for her role as the former rhythm guitarist for the Runaways into an international superstar and female rock legend. The single was a massive hit, reaching Number 1 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart in March 1982 and remaining in the top spot for seven weeks. Surprisingly, this was not the first time the song was released. The original version by the Arrows was issued as a single in the UK in 1975, and Jett recorded a different, previous version in 1979, which appeared as the B-side to her first solo single, "You Don't Own Me."

Jett recorded her first version of "I Love Rock 'n Roll" with former Sex Pistols Steve Jones and Paul Cook, and it's possible that Jones may have influenced the gritty, growling rhythm guitar tone that later emerged on Jett's recordings. While with the Runaways, Jett played Gibson Les Paul and Melody Maker guitars plugged into a Marshall stack, but after that she swapped the Marshall for a Music Man 212-HD 130 combo (Leo Fender's post-Fender answer

to his legendary Twin Reverb). Jett loved the sound of Jones' Les Paul/Fender Twin rig, and the Music Man delivered similar goods to a Twin and more.

Featuring a quartet of 6CA7 power amp tubes (the American equivalent of EL34s), a solid-state preamp and a pair of high-efficiency Electro-Voice EVM 12L speakers, Jett's Music Man amp provided wonderfully clangorous crunch, thanks to the power tubes being pushed to the hilt while the clean headroom of the EV speakers kept the overall tone tight, punchy and dynamic. Engineer Glen Kolotkin captured the Music Man's mighty roar using an Electro-Voice RE20 microphone pointed toward the edge of the speaker and placed a few inches away from the grill. Another secret weapon that boosted the punch further was the Red Rhodes Velvet Hammer 54 humbucking bridge pickup installed in Jett's circa 1965-66 Gibson Melody Maker. Wired in series, a Velvet Hammer humbucker typically delivers 21 to 22k ohms of DC resistance that can hit an amp's front end like a Ronda Rousey uppercut. With just a guitar, amp and some well-timed power chords, Jett crafted a vicious sound that redefined rock and roll and is still loved today.

Joan Jett (with her Gibson Melody Maker) in Passaic, New Jersey, April 11, 1981



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TONE TIP: *Crunch is the key, so crank up the Master Volume but dial in only a moderate amount of gain. The DiMarzio X2N isn't quite as hot as Jett's Velvet Hammer pickups, but its ceramic magnet provides suitable treble cut and midrange punch.*



ORIGINAL GEAR

GUITAR: c. 1965-66 Gibson Melody Maker Double with Red Rhodes Velvet Hammer 54 ceramic magnet humbucker (bridge) and 1971-72 Gibson humbucker (neck) (bridge pickup). Bridge Volume: 10, Bridge Tone: 10

AMP: c. 1978-79 Music Man 212-HD 130 combo (left channel, Input 1, Bright, Volume: 10, Treble: 8, Middle: 7, Bass: 3, Master Volume: 3, Deep) with two Electro-Voice EVM 12L 12-inch speakers

EFFECTS: None

STRINGS/TUNING: D'Addario XL110 (.010-.046)/standard

PICK: D'Andrea Delrex 390 Sharkfin 1.0mm

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